

A Report of Blue Flag Activities

Summer 2011



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Activity at Bugibba Perched Beach: Painting Nemo on the Wall

Introduction

The Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) managed six beaches during summer 2011. The beaches were operated with a sustainable management approach and abiding to international criteria. The aim of retaining the current Quality Awards and upgrading them in quality and quantity was a priority. Awards include the Blue Flag (BF) that requires achieving 100% of the BF criteria and Beach of Quality (BOQ) that requires over 70% of the same criteria. Through sustainable beach management operations locals and tourists can benefit from the good use of the coast while respecting the natural environment.

The beaches managed by MTA during summer 2011 were:

1. St. Georges Bay, (flying the Blue Flag)
2. Bugibba Perched Beach, (Blue Flag)
3. Mellieha Bay, (Beach of Quality)
4. Golden Bay, (Beach of Quality)
5. Qawra Point
6. Font Ghadir rocky coastal stretch



The Blue Flag Programme necessitates the organisation of a number of Environmental Educational Activities on every beach; a minimum of five on Blue Flag beaches and a minimum of three on Beach of Quality beaches. The MTA has worked beyond the required criteria and organised a number of activities that may be valid for all beaches together. Furthermore, MTA has worked to build a relationship with experts who can offer professional guidance for particular events. Marine Biologists, Divers, Archaeologists, professional trekkers, photographers, lecturers and Astronomers, all offer assistance for good results every time.

Hundreds of children from Malta's summer schools, scores of adults through mailing lists together with physically or mentally impaired people are involved in MTA Blue Flag activities every year.

MTA activities have one particular criterion; *Learning through Fun*, enjoyable experiences that are branded into the minds of the participants - Edutainment for the young, and the young at heart.

Endangered Species, Sea-level Rise, Global Warming, Climate Change, Renewable Energy, what does this jargon mean to children? The Blue Flag activities organised during summer 2011, focused on the same pressing issues that are being dealt with at global level, in a tangible manner; Conservation of the Natural Habitat and creatures that dwell therein, saving water and reducing energy consumption.

Many of the activities organised also encouraged participants to re-use and re-cycle. For one particular activity, two schools were encouraged to find used materials, create a hat and decorate it with nature-related objects like dried leaves, artificial flowers, or toy animals. On the beach, all hundred children proudly paraded their hat creations. The messages conveyed during this activity included:



- ▼ Re-use of Materials
- ▼ Care for Nature
- ▼ Self protection from UV rays

Children's activities begin in the classroom, continue on the beach and end again in class with reader-friendly material prepared for use by teachers.

When summer reaches its peak in Malta, beach activities start getting difficult under the strong sun rays on warm sand. Conversely, the evening sea breeze can offer a heavenly relief to a coastal experience.

Evening walks; sunset on the sea; listening to sea birds; tasting traditional, organic food delicacies; watching meteor storms and learning about the rare sand dune flora of the Islands, are activities that have always been fully booked ahead of the event.

Malta's Blue Flag activities did not stop there. We visited coastal archaeological and cultural sites which abound in Malta and Gozo. Children loved to dirty their hands at the Old Potters' House creating sea creatures that they had learnt about, or lending a hand in the Tree for You campaign (34U), of Malta's National Park. The release of injured turtles back into the sea, snorkelling and messing with paint are activities that children keep asking for.

Malta's Blue Flag events instil environmental awareness to ensure the future of beaches and a sustainable planet.

1. Activities for all Beaches

Blue Flag Photographic Competition and Exhibition

The Photographic Competition (Seaside Impressions) organised this year was divided into two categories; for children under 15 and for adults from 16 upwards. Emphasis on the coastal environment, marine, flora and fauna, was clear in the rules for photographers to focus upon.



Advert for the Media

Eighty (80) photos were submitted and the best thirty were displayed in an exhibition at the foyer of the three-hundred-year-old Auberge d'Italie, which houses the offices of the Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism Culture and the Environment (PSTCE), the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA), and is currently acting as a Tourist Information Office. The Parliamentary Secretary presented the prizes to the winners.



Application Form



Poster for shop windows



Launch of Photographic Competition at St. George's Bay

The exhibition remained open for the big night *Notte Bianca* and together with a great number of other exhibitions around Malta's Capital City, was visited by hundreds of people.



Exhibition at Auberge d'Italie



Presentation of Blue Flag Award to Malta Tourism Authority by Nature Trust Malta

Educational Seminar and Beach Process Awareness for MTA Beach Staff

Every year the Malta Tourism Authority prepares all beach staff by holding an in-house



seminar. The seminar focuses on beach management operations, code of conduct for beach users and legislation excerpts that may be of interest to staff. Experts in the field are invited to explain, by means of visuals, what every operation entails. The following figure is the programme implemented during the Seminar of 2011.

The seminar was reinforced by training the people through first hand experiences on the beaches, whereby besides beach management, they learn about the sensitive areas of each bay, particular beach processes and beach development, terrestrial and marine flora and fauna, and sand dunes where applicable.

Programme for Beach Staff Seminar 25th May

Time	Subject	Speaker
9.15	Opening	Pauline Dingli <i>Seminar Organiser</i> MTA
9.15	Introduction – Beach Management Operations	Ray Azzopardi <i>Senior Manager</i> MTA
9.30	Beach Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▽ Opening of Beaches ▽ Code of Conduct ▽ Signage ▽ Swim zones ▽ Beach cleaning and sifting ▽ Uniforms and tags ▽ Water quality, daily, and hand-over reports ▽ Measure of supervisor performance ▽ Team work and Delineation of work ▽ Coastal processes, flora and fauna 	Adrian Mallia <i>Director ADI</i> <i>Associates</i> <i>Environmental</i> <i>Consultants</i>
10.30	Water Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▽ Sampling and sampling points ▽ Laboratory process ▽ Print-outs for notice boards ▽ Physico-Chemical monitoring and reporting 	Charles Bonnici <i>Senior Principal</i> <i>Environmental</i> <i>Health Officer</i>
11.15	Blue Flag <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▽ What is Blue Flag and Beach of Quality ▽ The Criteria ▽ Activities ▽ The flags ▽ Advantages of achieving a Blue Flag 	Vince Attard <i>President Nature</i> <i>Trust Malta</i>
11.45	Coffee break	
12.00	Blue Flag Activities for 2011	Pauline Dingli
12.20	Beach Management contacts and logistics	Roderick Zammit <i>Beach Mmgnt</i>
12.30	Questions	



Beach Management / Beach Processes Session

Beach Management

- Sand Sifting
- Waste separation bins
- Signs and Code of Conduct
- Clean toilets
- Walkway and disabled ramp



Bathing Water Quality Lecture



Blue Flag Awareness



Material prepared for beach activities and for the classroom

Various packs were prepared and printed in-house to be distributed to participants during different activities with different age groups and also follow up material that was given to teachers. MTA encourages 'fun lessons' that offer an experience that will help the student

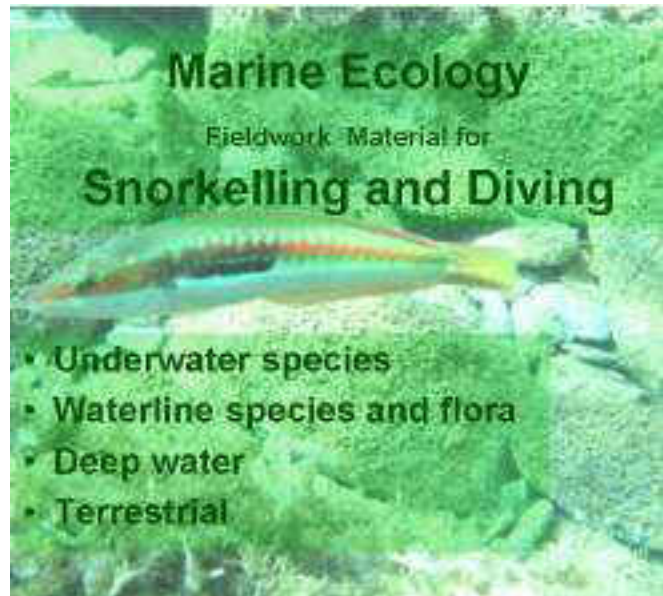


remember better the message that was being conveyed. Material included: Laminated pictures for snorkelling and painting, prepared walks for adults during evening walks or experiences, ecological bookmarks, sea animal pictures for sand building, clay moulding and painting, lists of wild plants in Maltese, English and Botanic names for the children to match and join following some research.

Two Books named *Shab* (Clouds) aimed for different age groups were given to hundreds of participants. The books encouraged creative writing based on the painting present on every page of the book. A book on historical places was given to adults during cultural events.

Books *Shab* given to young students





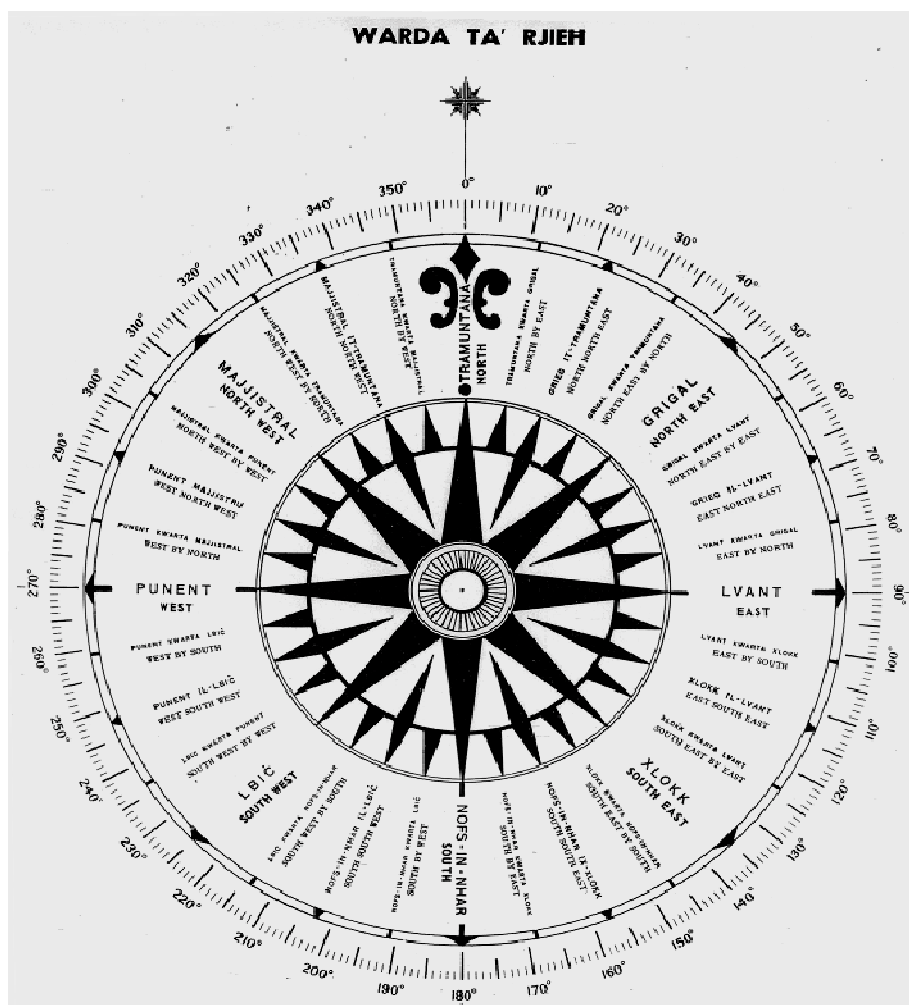
Plastic cards prepared and researched by a Marine Biologist



Plastic Cards researched and prepared by a Marine Biologist



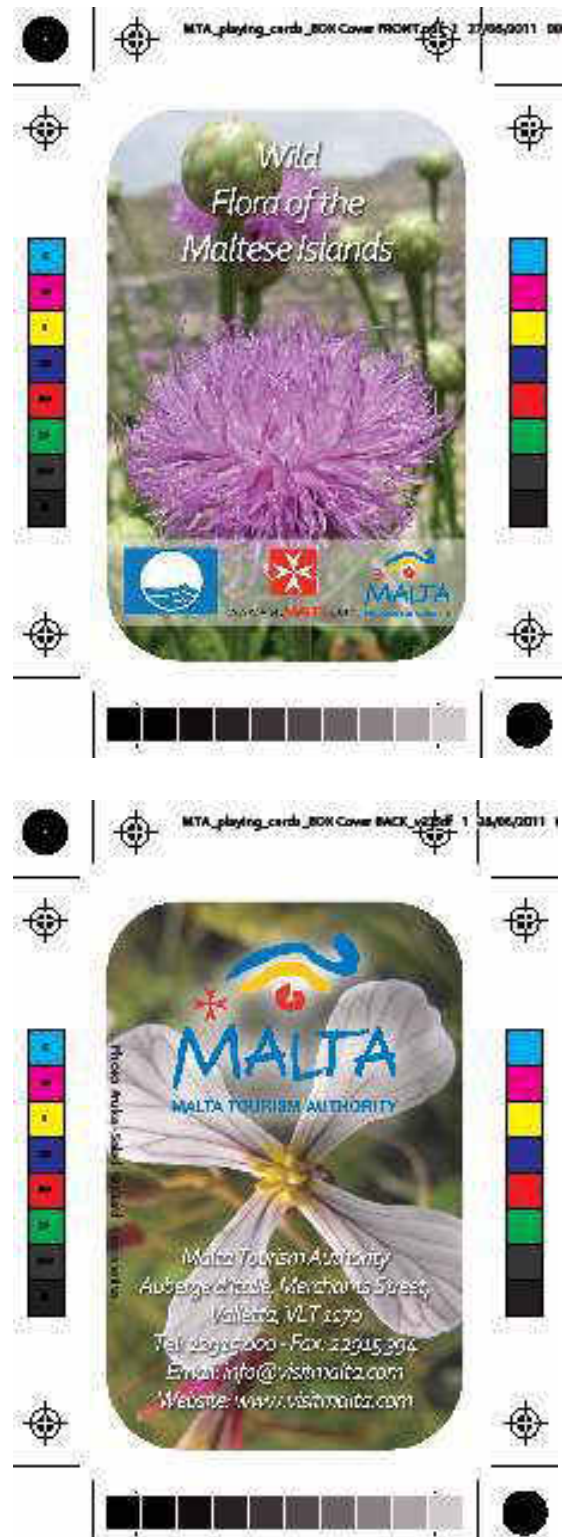
Wind Vane in two Languages



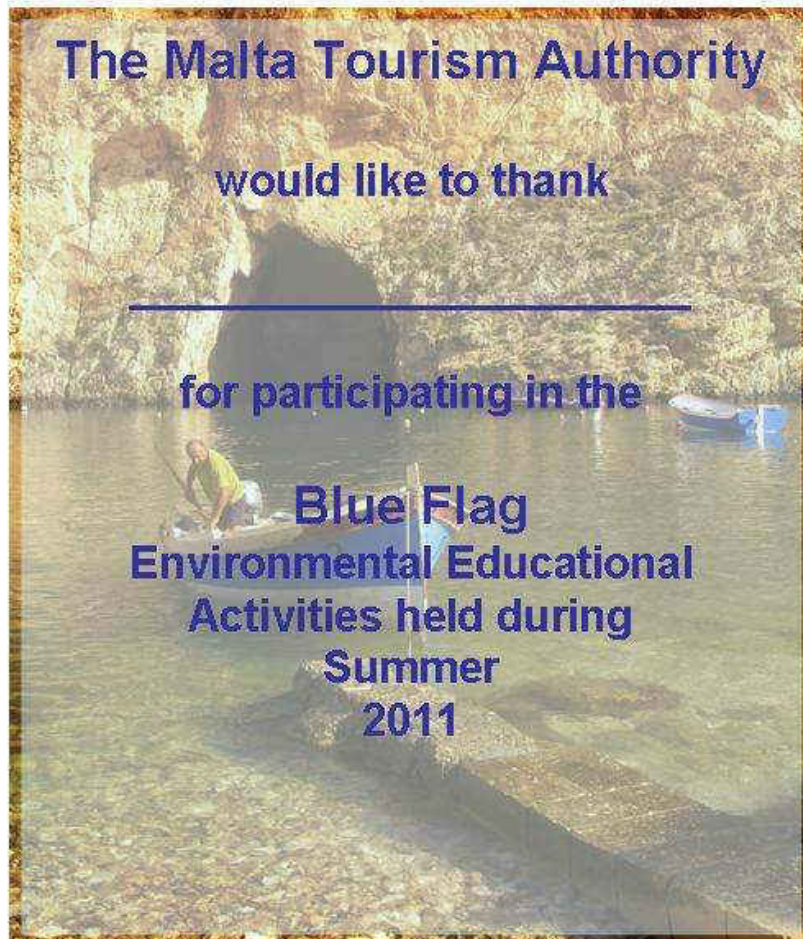
Conservation of the Natural Habitat

Conservation of the Natural Habitat is an issue that was brought up in activities for adults as much as for children. Fifty four (54) wild flora species of the Maltese Islands were photographed and researched in different languages (Appendix 4). To make them attractive for participants, they were printed in the form of Poker cards. They were received well during activities and it was decided that the creation of real cards would make the project more long lasting. The design was sent for print and small plastic cards will be used in future activities. These will replace the creation of wild flora bookmarks that were distributed in the previous years.

In Conjunction with this project, a three-page article was written and published in a local magazine (Appendix 4). The article was written in Maltese to be read by as many people as possible. It dealt with the people's perception of Weeds and how these *weeds* were utilised by our ancestors as medicinal and aromatic herbs. The article stresses that weeds are natural heritage that needs to be conserved. Furthermore, if their particular habitat is degraded or destroyed, it is most likely that the plant species will not survive.



Design of Playing cards with the theme - Wild Flora of the Maltese Islands



Tree Sowing Activity



Tree sowing is an activity that took place in a summer school with two classes of different age groups. Parks Malta from the National Park distributed photos with information of indigenous trees of the Mediterranean to the first group. They discussed the photos and were happy to reply to the questions that they were asked. In the meantime, the children in the second class were busy dirtying their hands with soil, seeds and water sowing the tree that they were to take home.



The young group watching how to sow the seeds of the Mediterranean Trees

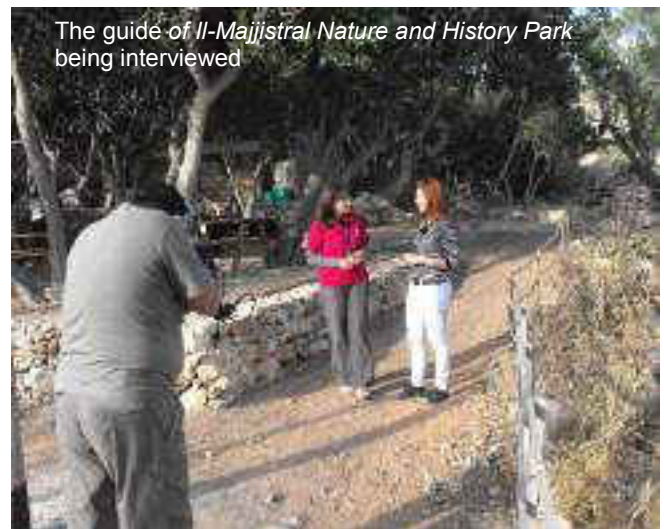
The groups changed places for the second session of the morning. The activity was coordinated by Mr. Ebejer of the Parks Department who was well prepared for such an activity.



Mad-Daqqa T'Ghajn TV Programmes

The Malta Tourism Authority sponsors Educational programmes that are aimed for the local population. One series of TV programmes focus mainly on the coastal environment, the shoreline and underwater features. The producers of the programme, in turn, offer five programmes from a series of thirteen to the Beach Unit of the MTA.

The beach unit prepares a campaign, an issue, or activities that need to be highlighted with locals, to be aired on the programme. This year's theme was *Love Your Beach – Do not Litter*. The first programme dealt with beach management and how MTA strives to keep the beaches clean for beach users. The following programmes showed clips of most of the Blue Flag activities organised by the Beach Unit, and highlighted the messages that the activities conveyed.



The guide of Il-Majjistral Nature and History Park being interviewed

The TV station that the programmes were aired upon, repeated these educational programmes three times each in different hours of the day so that they could reach larger audiences.

Beach Libraries

A Cabinet with books was installed on various beaches to encourage all beach users to read during idle hours.

Library Cabinets were placed at:

- St. George's Bay
- Bugibba Perched Beach
- Mellieha Bay
- Font Ghadir
- Qawra Point



Sand Wheelchairs and the Roaming Exhibition were exhibited with the beach library during most of the events that took place on the beaches.

Mellieha Bay Activities

Mellieha Bay, also known as Ghadira Bay, is Malta's the largest sandy beach of Mellieha. Besides being a beautiful beach, Mellieha Bay encounters interesting beach processes where the sand deposits are very dynamic; it also houses interesting flora and fauna together with a number of historic buildings and a Nature Reserve. It is frequented by thousands of people on a daily basis during summer.

The MTA started Beach Management at Mellieha Bay during 2009 where a number of problems that were present on the beach started to be tackled. The process continued during 2010 where a Beach Code of Conduct and a By-Law were implemented with continuous monitoring. Most of the Blue Flag criteria, including Environmental Educational activities where implemented and water quality testing was consistently reported to be very good.

During 2011, the MTA Beach Unit gave extra attention to Beach Management, Beach Safety and Environmental Educational activities. Feedback from the general public was positive.

The Hat Parade

The Hat Parade started in the classroom where children were encouraged to find materials that could be re-used such as textiles, carton and plastic. All children were shown pictures of different hats and were encouraged to create new hats and decorate them with ornaments like dried leaves, artificial flowers, and toys in the shape of animals or other nature-related objects.



Poster prepared for beach notice boards

The children worked hard for hours, while the teachers conveyed three messages, namely; reuse and recycle, care for nature and self protection on the beach from UV rays. The morning on the beach was a feast of hat creations which they paraded along the walkway.





Hat Parade at Ghadira Bay



Hands across the Sand

Joining hands for a clean energy future was an International event held on the 25th of June, where over 40 countries world wide united in one activity, in an effort to create awareness on clean air and to end our dependency on dirty fuels.

Blue Flag International recommended that Blue Flag operators join in this initiative called *Hands across the Sand* and symbolically join at one moment in time to embrace clean energy.

Malta also participated in the awareness activity with people who were on the sand at Mellieha Bay.



Music from recycled waste products

Another activity at Mellieha Bay on the day included creating music from recycled waste, where two band maestros created the instruments, displayed them and toned them for people,



in particular children. Seven identical bottles with different amount of liquid; seven tin cans with sand; plastic and wooden pipes of different thickness and large plastic containers making various sounds in every position placed.

The musicians taught each person one note with timing. When all people played their note according to the timing instructed, the result was surprisingly real music.



Sand Building Activity for the Very Young

The activity was held with the younger classes of Mellieha Adventure School, but although it



was meant for the very young, parents and other beach users joined in the fun. Sand building started with about 40 children and ended with more than 60 people making fish, pyramids and castles of all kinds.





Sunset Summer Solstice

Some of the following activities were coordinated with the Malta Astronomical Society. During the first activity, Summer Solstice, Professor Ventura explained how the seasons change from an



Summer Solstice at Il-Majjistral Nature and History Park

A guided walk will take us to the cliffs of Edna Migeon at sunset where we will learn more about the summer solstice with Prof Frank Ventura from the Astronomical Society of Malta. This event is supported by the Malta Tourism Authority.

The summer solstice is an event which was possibly used in the past for calculating temple alignments and drawing up agricultural calendars.

For more info: www.mta.org.mt

Date: Tuesday 21st June
Time: We leave at 6.00pm from near Golden Key Bus Stop.
Length: 3km over rough terrain along cliff edge.

Note: Bring a small flashlight and wear comfortable clothes and shoes. Walking sticks are recommended for those whose walking is not steady.
 There is no fee for the event per se but donations are welcome.






astronomical point of view, the difference between Equinox and Solstice, and other stars that were visible during the clear summer sky.

The summer solstice is an event which was possibly used in the past for calculating temple alignments and drawing up of agricultural calendars.



Professor Ventura explaining his charts



Reach on the Beach

In an effort to eliminate the cigarette butts from the sand, the Malta Tourism Authority has continued the campaign that was in effect the previous year. Large cigarette ashtrays were

posted on the beaches, different portable ashtrays for sand and for rocky shores were distributed to smokers by the beach supervisors, posters were placed on beach notice boards and adverts were commissioned on the local media. The Malta Medical Students Association (MMSA) had joined the campaign by launching the Reach on the Beach campaign with anti smoking and Melanoma skin Cancer awareness. Both campaigns were joined in one activity at Ghadira Bay whereby the MMSA measured the nicotine inside the chests of chain smokers who volunteered to undergo the tests. Information about the UV rays and the effect on the skin was given to participants of the activity.



Golden Bay Activities

The August Meteor Storm

The dark summer sky, dotted with tiny stars in places that are not yet polluted with light, can offer a spectacle to observe. When the night is busy shooting perseids, it is worth spending hours watching the “show”.



Astronomers and photographers prepare for this activity from weeks before and the MTA took this opportunity to coordinate an activity for people who are not normally aware of such happenings.

The group gathered early, watched the sun set on the sea enjoying the summer breeze until it got dark. Astronomer, Mr Borg explained star movement and the stars that they were about to see. Some 40 people attended the activity and the feedback was strong enough to repeat the activity on another day with the name Stars and Sea Birds.



Astronomer Mr. John Borg explaining movement of the stars



Photo by Christian Falzon

Stars and Sea Birds

A similar activity to one mentioned earlier is the observation of stars while listening to sea birds as they return to their nests after a day of flight. People were encouraged to get a lunch pack and they could enjoy the sunset while eating their dinner.

The group stayed late star gazing while the astronomer John J. Borg explained the night sky by means of a star wheel, according to the day and month of the year and the location that they were in.



Stars and seabirds – 5th August 8pm Blue Grotto Belvedere - Żurrieq



Stars and seabirds

Nature Trust (Malta), in conjunction with John J. Borg and the Astronomical Society of Malta, is organising a coastal Blue Flag event sponsored by the Malta Tourism Authority on 5 August. The event will take place at the garden along the Żurrieq promenade, overlooking Blue Grotto, from 8pm onwards. Participants will be invited to observe the moon and the night sky and then follow a talk about Cory's Shearwaters and hear them as they return to their site near Wied iż-Żurrieq.

Booking is not required. If you need more information email: anna@naturetrustmalta.org

Website: www.naturetrustmalta.org

Photo credits:

Moon by Leonard Ellul Mercer

Cory's Shearwater by John J. Borg



Snorkelling at the Park

Il-Majjistral Nature and History Park is a Natura2000 site that includes part of Mellieha and Golden Bay. It hosts rare and endemic flora and fauna species, interesting geological features and an occasional Military Heritage site amongst others. The MTA holds Blue Flag events at the Park every summer. Snorkelling at the Park was held in collaboration with the Park Guide and with Sharklab Malta. Plastic guide cards were produced to assist the students in understanding marine species. The activity lasted for three hours where the children were grouped every half an hour according to their availability.





The following are a few of the comments that were received by MTA:

1. *We must thank you for everything! The opportunity to participate on your activity was unique! It was really good to know the Majjistral Park and to get to know the nature in Malta. The snorkel was something that must be done again! We will from now, "look and see" things in a different way! Best regards, Adalberto and Cláudia Portugal.*



2. *We really enjoyed the snorkelling so thank you for that too - it has made me want to pursue it as a hobby in the future and maybe even do scuba diving! We are back in England now and missing Malta already - will try and contact you next time we are there (next year unfortunately..) to join you on another snorkelling trip! Tamsin, UK.*



Kidz on the Beach on World Environment Day

An activity for children was held at Golden Bay with the Majjistral Nature and History Park Guide on World Environment Day. The activity was part of a programme organised by a local Council and MTA coordinated an environmental activity for children, within that programme.

The Park Guide produced marine products formerly beached on the sandy shore and she explained their origin and how they integrate within the coastal processes. Other flotsam was discussed so that children would encourage their families to keep the beaches litter free.



An Experience of Organic Farming at the Majjistral Park

This event was the first event that opened the Blue Flag Environmental and Educational activities for summer 2011 and was also held in collaboration with Il-Majjistral Nature and History Park and Koperattiva Rurali Manikata.



Meeting place for the Nature Walk

The activity, the first of its kind, took place at the Park and started at Manikata, late afternoon. People had pre-booked for the activity and 45 turned up on the day.

The congregation started moving towards the rural part of the locality where a walk commenced. Along the walk, on the rugged terrain, the Park guide stopped occasionally and gave information on the interesting flora, fauna and archaeology found at that particular spot.



SUNSET AND LOCAL FOOD
Date: Saturday 21st May 2011
6.30pm – 9.30pm
www.majjistral.org

The Malta Tourism Authority and the Park management bring you another free event at the park - an evening coastal walk followed by tasting of local products i.e.w Manikata Farmers Cooperative.

Book early as places are limited - walks@majjistral.org

Bring some water and a small torch.

This activity requires pre-booking as numbers are limited.

Logos: IL-MAJJISTRAL NATURE AND HISTORY PARK, MALTA MALTA TOURISM AUTHORITY



The Park Guide explaining on the local flora and fauna

The coastal edge offered spectacular views and the group enjoyed the silence being broken by the chirps of the Maltese National Bird, the Blue Rock Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*).



The group listening to the Blue Rock Thrush (Malta's National Bird)

Towards the end of the walk the crowd entered the farm of the cooperative that is experimenting on organic farming. The farm representative explained what it takes to make agriculture in an organic manner and the challenges that the farmers face both to grow the products and also to put them on the market at a higher price.



Park Guide distributing Brochures with information on the Park



Ir-Razzett tal-Qasam venue for the final stages of the walk and tasting of local organic produce

An esplanade on the Park was lit with candlelight and torches. A table decorated with organic food was prepared for everyone to taste after enjoying the last rays of sunset. All the food presented was produced and preserved on the Park to be sold during similar events. This included home made jams, honey of different flavours and other delicacies like olives and olive oil, capers, sun dried tomatoes, peppered cheeslets and fruit.



The Majjistral Park Experience ended at Manikata Parish Church five hours after it started.

Boat Building at Golden Bay

The last activity for Golden Bay and for the whole summer was a boat building activity that was organised in collaboration with *Jugs Youth Company*. The groups were first made aware of sensitive pockets of the beach including sand dune remnants, sea currents and processes that act on Golden Bay.

Four groups of people were each given cardboard (obtained from a white-goods vendor) and plastic sheets to create a boat, cover it with plastic to make it unsinkable and race it in the water to a specific buoy and back. This acted as a team building activity that included poem composing, singing and creativity. The activity lasted around four hours.





One of the finished boats-SOS Titanic



Racing out to sea

Font Ghadir Activities

Font Ghadir is a rocky, linear, coastal stretch in a popular tourist area. Although the sea water is always crystal clear, the area was most popular for sunbathing, diving and evening strolls along the promenade, rather than for swimming.

The Malta Tourism Authority understood the potential that this coastal stretch offers for bathers and introduced beach management including the introduction of a bridge for access into the sea, ladders and swim a zone area demarcated with floatables monitored by lifeguards.



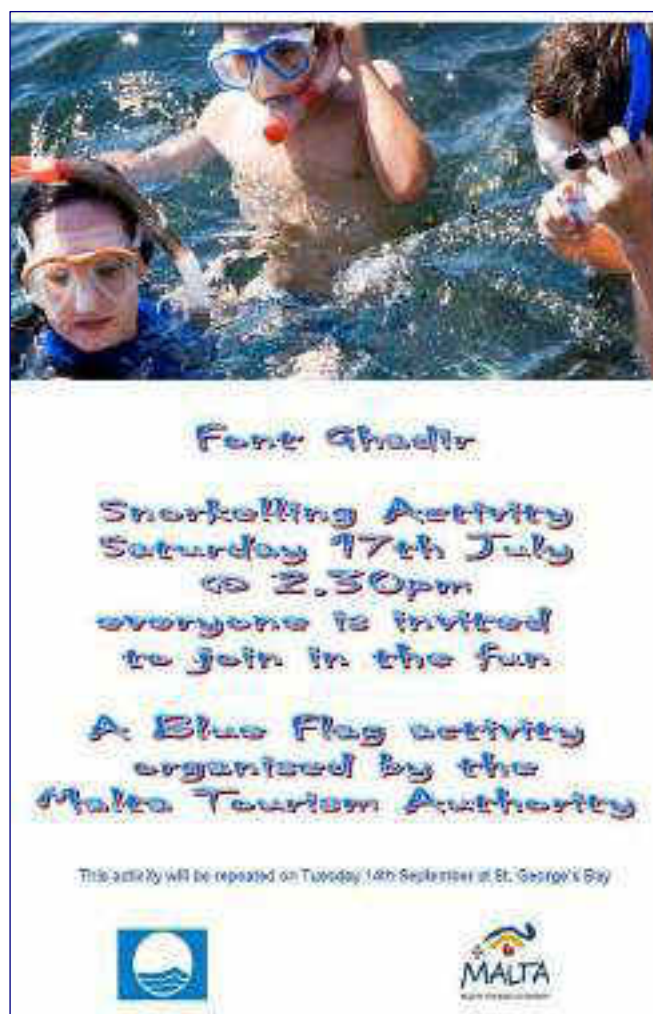
Font Ghadir Beach Library

Immediately people, including whole families started frequenting the area from very early in the morning. This measure helped ease pressure and the carrying capacity of swimming areas in the vicinity. Positive feedback was given in the local media, and also by old people who lived in the area. They could access the water easily for an early morning dip.

However holding certain educational activities for children on this coastal stretch was not easy due to the uneven shore platform. Furthermore, when summer reaches its peak in Malta, activities start getting difficult under the strong sun rays, during school hours. For this reason, one snorkelling activity was held with youths, one children's activity was held in an Old Potters' House away from the beach and another activity took the children on an environmental educational tour. A Beach Library was stationed all summer at Font Ghadir.

Snorkelling for Youths

The snorkelling activity held on the 17th July was aimed for teenagers. A diver and marine Biologist were employed to explain what flora and faunal species one was expected to experience in this area. Plastic cards were printed for the activity so that youths could see the species with their particular names. Response for the activity was good and feedback was also very good. The marine Biologist was happy with the interest shown by the participants.



Poster affixed on beach notice boards



During the activity



Educational Tour: Conservation of Nature

An Educational tour was organised for school children whereby they could see farm animals, frogs, insects, a herb garden and learn about natural flora. Some commented that living in an apartment had never given them the opportunity to admire certain animals living on the farm. The children loved selecting the right plant food to give to the particular animal.



Watching dragonflies on water lilies



and searching for frogs

and fish



feeding chickens



Hands in Clay for Marine Species

The second activity was an experience at an Old Potter's House. The children were given a short lecture on marine species and given the moulds. They had another short lecture on the history of the place, ancient pottery and how to handle clay. A special T shirt with the slogan; *Love your Beach Do not litter* was given to each child so that they may be uninhibited in enjoying themselves and get dirty. The children loved every minute of it while their teachers and head teachers contacted us to repeat the activity with other children in winter.



The team with their clay instructor



Bugibba Perched Beach Activities

Painting Nemo on the Wall



Another messy and fun activity was the painting on the wall. The children were given pictures of fish to analyse, copy and paint on a paper on the wall of Bugibba Perched Beach. Some 55 metres of paper was mounted along the wall for all 50 children to paint their fish.

Special colour that is safe for children was purchased and mixed in different containers with paint brushes. All children were given a T shirt to protect their clothing and enjoy themselves.





Bugibba Flag Race

For this activity a large number of flora and fauna posters were printed, laminated and posted onto a stick to form a flag. The flags were placed on one side of the beach and three players, each representing a team, had to grab a flag, discuss with his team if the particular species lived underwater, terrestrial or both, then run along the beach to place it in the appropriate area designated for that particular habitat. The race was received well by the children.





Coastal Archaeological and Ecological Walks



Two walks were created specifically for the St. Paul's Bay, Bugibba and Qawra areas. An experienced trekker was consulted for the route selection. The draft walks, Salina Walk and Xemxija Walk (Appendix 1 and 2), were tested and re-routed to incorporate the most interesting sites possible. The walks proved to be a success with people of all ages and were repeated a number of times, with tourists, students and locals. Many of the participants requested to take home the printed walk to pass on the experience to other family members.



Xemxija Walk



Xemxija Walk starts from the Olympic Grove at Xemxija, past the Simar Nature Reserve, on to the cliffs where archaeological remains bound in the area, passes to Rdum Rixwan or Mistra heights and ends near an unused quarry above Mistra Bay.

Come and Join us



St. Paul's Bay Walk

Along Bajda Ridge and Rdum Rixwan
A walk to discover the heritage sites and scenic views at Xemxija and Mistra Bays on Wednesday 18th August at 6.00pm meeting point Xemxija Bay



On Thursday 7th July, 2011, a group of 25 students from Bessel Gymnasium Secondary School of Minden, Germany, accompanied by three of their teaching staff, were taken on a guided tour of Xemxija to Rdum Rixwan Walk at St. Paul's Bay. The group, led by the Master in charge Mr. Steffen Boch, followed with interest the historical information of the sites, the seaside and countryside landscape.



Foreign Students walking along Xemxija amidst Cart Ruts and Punic Tombs

Near Xemxija Ancient Apiary



Their guide Dr. Joseph Borg indicated specimen of a range of wild flora encountered along the way, as well as a brief overview of local agricultural and aquaculture practices of the area.

A Beach Library was available at Bugibba Perched Beach throughout the summer.



Qawra Point Activities

Qawra Point is a short rocky stretch that hosts a natural pool, a small shingle beach and has a rock, like an island attached to it. Qawra Point lies close to Bugibba Perched Beach and forms part of the same Local Council – St. Paul's Bay. Activities for this bay had to be adapted to fit a rocky shore, yet remain as safe as possible for participants.

Snorkelling for School Children

Two schools with 85 children accompanied by parents and teachers took part in this snorkelling marathon. A team of eight divers, a marine biologist, a diving coordinator and a number of helpers were involved. Additional lifeguards and beach supervisors were employed for the day. The children were divided into small groups that were each led by a diver to the sea.



Marine Biologist explaining about sea life

Plastic cards with fish and flora images were distributed and the instructor gave some information on the marine environment. Snorkelling gear was provided to every child. They were instructed how to wear the gear and breath through it. Some children, in particular girls, were over excited as they had never used a snorkel before.



When the activity was over, both parents and teachers asked for a repeat of the event. The children had fun and requested some of the photos that were taken during the activity.





Salina Bay Walk

Salina Bay Walk covers the expanse of Ghajn Rihana Valley which joins Wied il-Ghasel at Salini. Along the riparian walk one passes by three rural chapels, through the Burmarrad plain, past the Tal-Qadi Neolithic Temple, a Bird Park, the ancient Salini Salt Pans, Cart Ruts, Catacombs and a Fougasse or stone cannon.



Salina Catacombs

Finally the walk ends at Kennedy Grove which forms part of the Salina National Park. This walk has been repeated with various groups as an evening walk. It is a guided walk, however, the material provided (Appendix 2) enables people to walk along the selected route fairly easily.

Salina Catacombs



A group of locals at the tal-Qadi Neolithic Temple



and near the Fougasse (stone cannon)





Entering Salina Catacombs



and the Bird Park



Grand Master's Coat of Arms on the façade of the Ximenes Redoubt at Salina





Kennedy Grove rest area



Group of tourists at Tal-Qadi Neolithic Temple



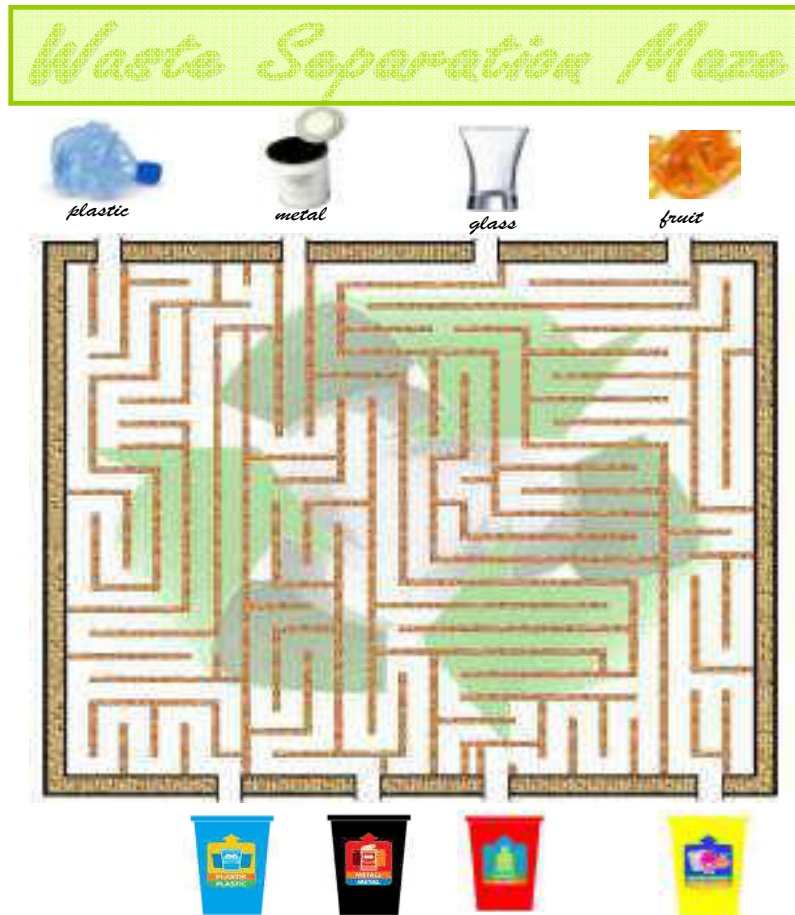
and at the Salina Catacombs

Activities at St. George's Bay

The first event for St. George's Bay had the theme *Waste Separation*. Two activities were organised simultaneously at two opposite ends of the same beach, with one school taking part in one event and another school in another. The schools changed places for the different activity.

The image below, distributed to the students, gives a clear idea what the organiser had in mind for activity one. The sand was sifted before the event and a maze was created by means of red tape and sand mounds. Heaps of litter that had been accumulated was cleaned and placed at one end of the maze while coloured bins were posted at the other end of the maze. Children were divided into groups and each group had to walk through the maze to find the right bin for

the litter object in hand. Competition was strong and the support from team members assisted the players in finding the bin colour quicker.



Recycle Three on Tuesday (*Irričikla Tlieta it-Tlieta*)

Wasteserve Malta was the organiser of the games in Activity Two which included quizzes with prizes. The children were given a lecture where they had to memorise what was being said so that they could answer the questions and given a prize. All children were attentive and participants received educational books, pencils and an attractive baseball hat.



Talk regarding Safety and Lifeguard Services at Sea

The *Socjeta Nazzjonali tas-Salvatagg*, operators of the lifeguard services in Malta, was requested by a kindergarten teacher to give some information to his students. The MTA was happy to assist and commissioned the Society to prepare a morning for very young students. After the activity the teacher sent his comments.

“The talk was very interesting and the two speakers used basic language which the children could understand. They also talked about the sea crab and jellyfish awareness. The school is looking forward to next year’s talk when everyone at the Kindergarten Centre would be attending.”



Beach Library, roaming exhibition and sand wheelchairs at St. George's Bay



Appendices

1. Xemxija Walk – St. Paul's Bay
2. Salina Walk – St. Paul's Bay
3. Material for Classroom
4. Playing Cards (Pdf)
5. *Wirt Naturali* Article



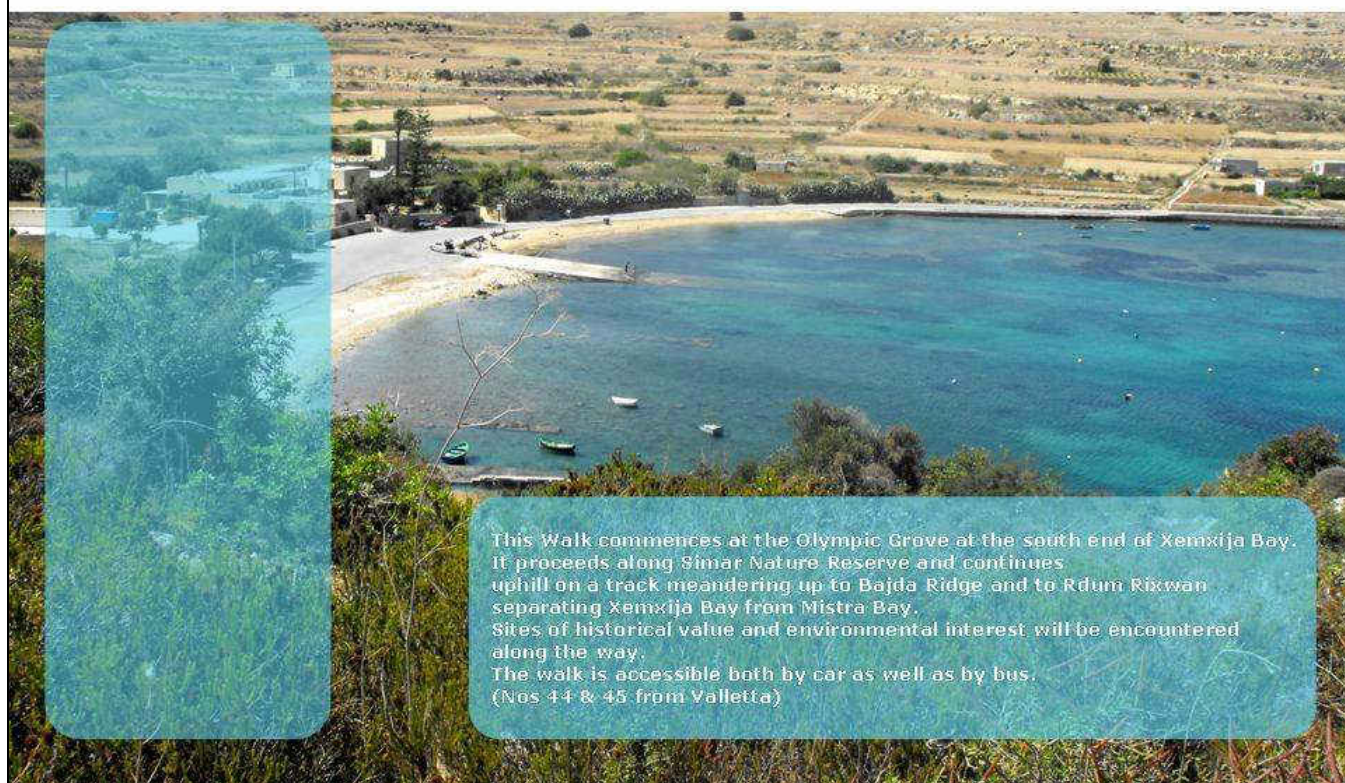
APPENDIX 1

Xemxija Walk - St. Paul's Bay
(Bajda Ridge and Rdum Rixwan to Mistra)

St. Paul's Bay Walk

Bajda Ridge and Rdum Rixwan Walk

*A walk to discover the heritage sites and scenic views at
Xemxija and Mistra Bays*



APPENDIX 2

Salina Walk - St. Paul's Bay
(Ghajn Rihana – Kennedy Grove)

SALINA & ST. PAUL'S BAY BLUE FLAG WALK



APPENDIX 3

Sample of Education Material for Classroom

Ecology

Most of the park, which is 3.0km long and 2.3km wide, forms part of the protected Special Area of Conservation (SAC) of international importance known as 'Rumid-Id-Qelli' Malle (Coastal Cliff) a Natura 2000 site forming part of Europe's natural heritage. It hosts a diversity of habitats such as clay slopes, endemic coastal landscapes (boulder terraces), maritime and cliff-top parquie and steep, temporary freshwater rockpools, meadows, agricultural land (both abandoned and in use), as well as a sandy beach and associated dune - which together harbour a vast array of flora and fauna including species which are rare or endemic.



Diversity in the area is quite rich and varies according to the habitats present - with Maltese Spurge, Wild Thyme, Wolfbane, Mediterranean Heather and Sea Squill dominating the more exposed parts, whilst the rare Shrubby Crown Vetch and larger shrubs, small trees and climbers, are found in the sheltered areas. Several ornamental species are known in the area.

Land

The park is of High Landscape Value and is characterised by two wide karstic plateaux, the bay of Ir-Ramla ta' Miskunja (Golden Sands), the headland of Rias i-Malle, encircled by a string of boulders forming a landscape unique to Malle, and the cliffs, which continue along the coast as Rumid-Majless and Rumid-id-Qelli, up to the north end of il-Prajet (Anchor Bay). The rock layers most in evidence here are the Blue Clay underpinning the Upper Coralline Limestone, whilst some exposed layers and collapsed boulders of Greensand can be identified by their orange colour.



History

Today most of this area is still a haven for users of the British Period, with various military structures, including rifle ranges and barracks. There are also about 100 features of archaeological or cultural interest that have been recorded from the area, including ancient tombs and alignment cart ruins.



Archaeology

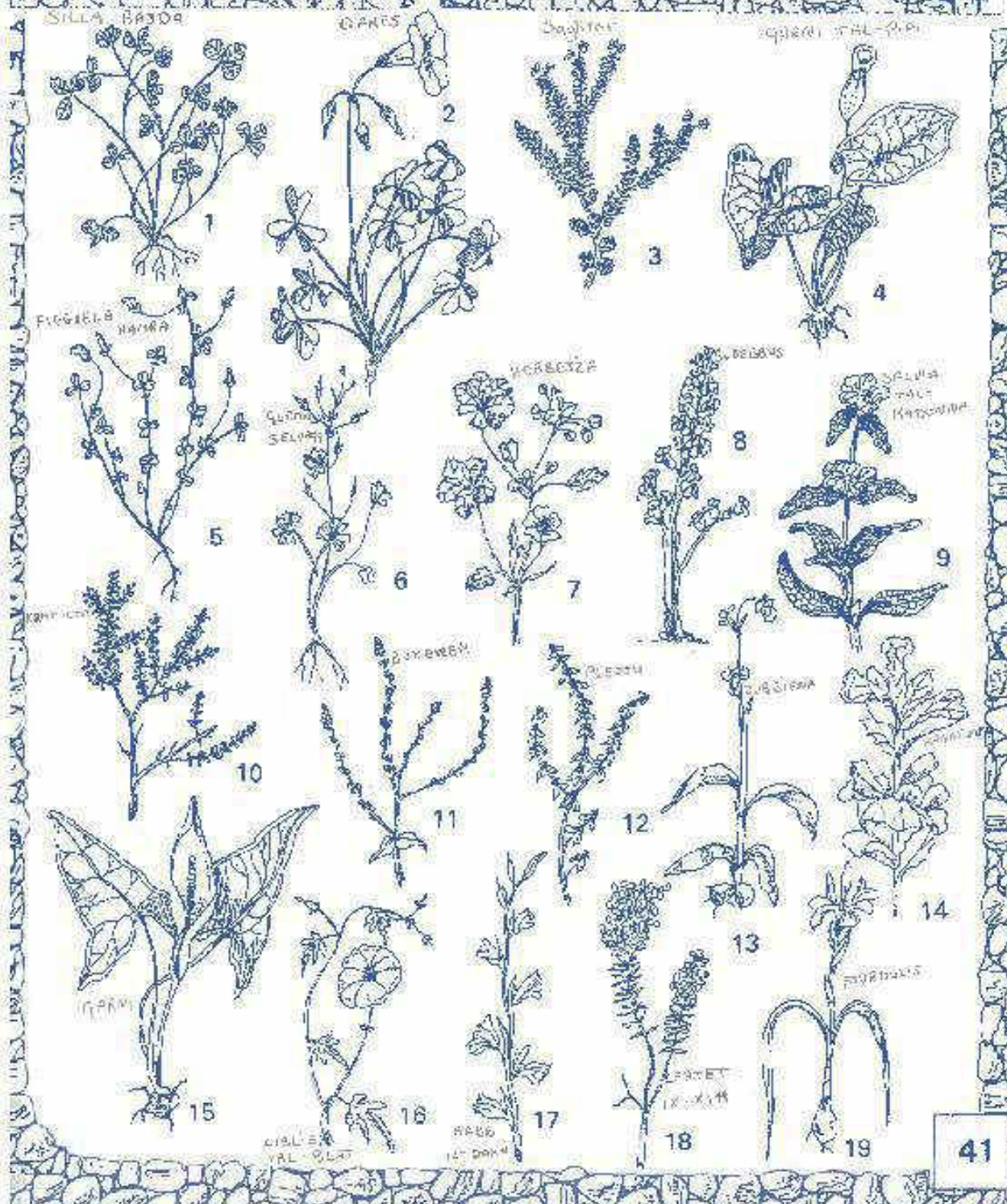
Various of the Park are still in use today for small scale agriculture whilst there is ample evidence to show that the rural traditions here date back at least to a couple of centuries. This can be witnessed by the maze or dry stone walls surrounding small fields and old rural settlements and structures. Most conspicuous amongst these is the Glina, a traditional stone corbelled hut used by farmers for storage or shelter.



Details of these features can be obtained from the Park website at

We see the various features of the park as being interconnected agriculture blends with the environment, which in turn blends with tourism, sport, health, leisure and the appreciation of our natural, cultural, rural and coastal heritage. The management of the park has three principal aims: to highlight this interconnected, to secure this heritage for future generations, and to serve as an example for the Natura 2000 network of sites in the Maltese Islands.

Flowers



41

Flowers:

Index of English and Maltese words

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. White Clover | <i>Silla Bajda</i> |
| 2. Cape Sorrel | <i>Qares</i> |
| 3. Wild Thyme | <i>Saghtar</i> |
| 4. Friar's Cowl Arum | <i>Garni tal-Pipi</i> |
| 5. Winged Pea | <i>Figgiela Hamra</i> |
| 6. Crane's Bill | <i>Geranju Selvagg</i> |
| 7. Mallow | <i>Hobbejza</i> |
| 8. Maltese Broomrape | <i>Budebbus</i> |
| 9. Jerugagemm Sage | <i>Salvja tal-Madonna</i> |
| 10. Lesser Calamit | <i>Kammilta</i> |
| 11. Vervain | <i>Bukexrem</i> |
| 12. Penny Royal | <i>Plejju</i> |
| 13. Brown Orchid | <i>Dubbiena</i> |
| 14. Acanthus | <i>Hannevija</i> |
| 15. Lords and ladies | <i>Garni</i> |
| 16. Bindweed | <i>Leblieb tal-Blat</i> |
| 17. Corn Flag | <i>Habb-il-Qamh</i> |
| 18. Mediterranean Heather | <i>Lefjiet ix-Xih</i> |
| 19. Wild Iris | <i>Fjurdulis</i> |
| 20. Borage | <i>Fidloqqom</i> |
| 21. Mullein | <i>Xatbet l-Andar</i> |
| 22. Pearl Grass | <i>Fanali</i> |
| 23. Scarlet Pimpernel | <i>Marira hamra</i> |
| 24. Heliotrope | <i>Ghobbejza Bajda</i> |
| 25. Snapdragon | <i>Papoċċi</i> |
| 26. Caper Plant | <i>Kappar</i> |
| 27. Campion | <i>Il-sien l-Ghasfur</i> |
| 28. Hair's Tail Grass | <i>Denb-il-Fenek</i> |
| 29. Field Scabious | <i>Skabjoza</i> |
| 30. Bird's Foot Trefoil | <i>Orempuċ</i> |
| 31. Creeping Cinquefoil | <i>Frawli Solvagg</i> |
| 32. Bitumen Clover | <i>Silla Tal-Blat</i> |
| 33. Bladder Campion | <i>Qasqajza</i> |
| 34. Buttercup | <i>Ċfolloq</i> |

APPENDIX 4

Nature Conservation cards
And article



Haxix Hazin jew... Wirt Naturali?

Siltiet storiċi li jbexxqu tiegħa fuq l-imghoddi ta' raħal twelidna

minn Pauline Dingli

Għal hafna minna, ix-xtieli li jikbru wahedhom fil-kampanja Rabtija huma haxix hazin! Tant hu hekk, li sa ftit snin ilu, dipartimenti tal-gvern kienu jiddokumentaw x-xaghari bħala "wasteland"; art li m'hi tajba għal xejn.

Hwawar mediċinali

Jekk naħsbu ftit malajr niftakru xi nanniet tagħna jfittxu l-Ikkatta Pietra għal xi hadd li jbat bl-uġigh tal-gebla, jew buġexrem għaċ-ċirkolazzjoni tad-demm, Sfajġel u Ilma Żagħar għal uġigh ta' zaqq, Hurrieq għas-Seqi u hafn'aktar. Issib studjużi li jgħidu li jekk għandek marda, fittex fix-xtieli ta' madwarek u ssib il-kura. Fiż-żmien tal-lum il-kura nsibuha f'pilloli maħdumin mill-istess pjanti. Sa ftit tas-snin ilu, il-Faqus il-Hmir, li narawh jikber kullimkien, konna nibzghu minnu għax jekk wiehed jifqghu u jidhol fil-għajnejn jista' jikkawża nuqqas ta' dawl temporanju. Issa nafu li qed jirrispondu tajjeb hafna fl-esperimenti li xjentisti qed jaqsmu fil-kura kontra l-kanċer. L-antenati tagħna għaddewna l-fejġan bi hwawar mediċinali naturali u hasra jekk inhallu dan il-wirt jintilef.

Hwawar aromatiċi

Mingħajr il-hwawar aromatiċi l-ikel tradizzjonali



Bezzul il-Baqra - Blue Stonecrop

Malti ma jibqax jinxamm u jtieghem l-istess. Nehhi l-Bizbież mill-Patata l-Forn, ir-rand minn mal-fenek jew il-kappar minn maz-zalza tal-lampuki u t-toghma ma tibqax l-istess. Qatt xrobt xi ftit kamumilla biex tikkalmak qabel torqod, jew menta friska biex tqajmek filghodu? Dawn tal-aħhar tista' ma tixrobhomx imma xorta jkollhom l-istess effett jekk tużahom f'kull forma ta' sapun li tinhasel bih jew żjut li jindilku fuq il-ġisem.

Għaldaqstant, il-haxix hazin ta' madwarna huwa parti sostanzjali minn haġġitna u wirt naturali rikk għar-Rabat, li hemm bżonn li nipproteġuh u nżommuh sostenibbli. Aktar ma jkollna pjanti

Int Rabt?

differenti aktar il-biodiversità tal-flora tkun sinjura, anke jekk biss biex nitpaxxew bil-kuhuri li joffru fl-ghelieqi taghna.

Ma nistax ma nsemmix li, bhal kull haġ'ohra, il-bniedem jabbuża minn kolloxx. Is-sustanzi u l-poter li joffru l-pjanti, matul iż-żminijiet, intużaw ukoll biex iħawru valeni u żjut li jaqhmli hsara kbira lill-bniedem.

L-ekosistemi fejn jgħixu l-pjanti

Riċerka turi li Malta għandna madwar 10,000 speċi ta' flora u fauna differenti, l-istess ammont li għandhom għejjer hafna ikbar minn Malta, bhall-Ingilterra. Il-Flora f'Malta tikber f'madwar tnax-il ekosistema differenti li jinkludu: Boskijiet (Woodland); Masġar b'siġar żgħar (Maquis); Xagħari (Garrigue); Blat jew għelieqi b'haxix baxx - steppa (Rocky Steppe/ steppe); Widien (Watercourses); Għadajjar li jdumu bil-ilma wara x-xita (Rainwater Rockpools); Għadajjar bil-ilma salmastru (Saline Marshland); Kosta bil-blat baxx (Rocky Shore); Sisien tat-tafal (Clay Slopes); Gharam tar-Ramel (Sand Dunes); Sisien ta' Blat imwaqqa' (Boulder Scree) u Rdumijiet.

Fl-ekosistemi Rabtin insibu wkoll speċi importanti, bhall-granċ tal-ilma helu, il-Qabru, li jgħix biss fir-Rabat u bħalu eżatt, imkien aktar fid-dinja.

Id-daqs tal-ekosistemi ivarja hafna. Mhux kollha huma rikki fil-flora, hemm uħud qrib il-baħar li bejn ir-raxx tal-ilma baħar u bejn il-mewġ iħabbat mal-blat, ma tantx isalvaw pjanti. L-istess il-boskijiet fejn ma tidholx xemx biżżejjed biex jgħixu l-pjanti ta' taht is-siġar, aktar u aktar jekk l-għeruq tas-siġar ikunu densi. Ekosistemi oħrajn bħal-widien, f'pajjiż relattivament xott bħal Malta, issib ferm aktar haġja li ddum tgħix mal-ilma helu jċarċar. Aktar minn hekk, l-ilma jgħorr miegħu żrieragħ li jinbtu t-tul kollu tal-wied. Ix-xagħri fih diversità impressjonanti fosthom familji ta' orkidi,



Erika - Mediterranean Heath



Berwieq - Branched Asphodel

l-Erika u s-Sagħtar; filwaqt li l-Għaram tar-Ramel iżommu pjanti li jgħixu f'kundizzjonijiet diffiċli. L-Għaram tar-Ramel huma rari f'Malta, għaldaqstant il-pjanti tipiċi tal-gharam huma rari wkoll. Uħud minn dawn il-pjanti jinkludu: l-Pankrazju, ġmiel ta' fjura tfuħ, qisha ġilju li tthur bil-fjuri f'Awwissu (bla ilma) u fir-ramel (bla hamrija). Insibu wkoll ix-Xewk tar-Ramel (Sea Holly), ix-Xewk l-Isfar, il-Giżi ta' Malta u l-Peprina s-Safra fost oħrajn.

Huwa dokumentat li l-Għejjer Maltin tilfu 109 speċi ta' pjanti indiġini tul iż-żminijiet, filwaqt li 298 speċi oħra jaqgħu taht kategoriji li huma fil-periklu li jintilfu, fosthom, 85 li huma endemiċi. Xi whud minnhom huma fdalijiet minn eluf ta' snin ilu (Pre-glacial), oħrajn m'għandhom l-ebda relazzjoni ma' familji ta' pjanti oħra madwar id-dinja, oħrajn huma limitati madwar il-pajjiżi tal-Mediterran, filwaqt li xi whud huma komuni f'Malta imma skarsi ferm madwar l-Ewropa. Għaldaqstant, dawn il-pjanti kienu mharsa bil-liġi.

L-akbar periklu għall-pjanti u l-abitat tagħhom hu l-bini fuq art verġni, inkluż toroq godda u parkeġġi, u t-thaffir tal-barrieri, li qed jieklu mill-art kuljum u l-hin kollu. Peress li Malta għandha popolazzjoni densa, hafna drabi ma jistax ikun evitat dan l-iżvilupp.

Żviluppi stagjonali

Mal-ewwel xita wara n-nixfa tas-sajf, malajr jibda jfeġġ il-haxix u johroq il-blanzuni. Hekk kif l-ghelieqi jibdeu jiehdu l-kulur, issib li xi fjura jew oħra qed tiddomina l-paesagg. Ikun hemm snin li tiddomina pjanta u snin oħrajn li l-istess pjanta bil-kemm tkun tidher. Dan ikun jiddependi mit-tip ta' pjanta nnifisha, miż-żmien li tibda x-xita kif ukoll mill-ammont ta' xita li tinzel. Certu siġar, bħal taż-żebbuġ, ifuru bil-frott f'sena waħda u s-sena ta' wara tkun fqira. Dawn l-aħhar snin fil-kampanja Rabtiġa rajna festa ta'



Peprina Safra - Yellow Horned Poppy



Saghtar - Mediterranean Thyme



Orkida Tfuh - Scented Bug Orchid



Pankrazju - Sea Daffodil

Berwieq Roża. Il-Berwieq iwagga' l-fjura u minnha tohroġ żerriegħa li tibqa' mwahħla maz-zokk. Il-bdiewa jgħidu li jekk il-Berwieq ikollu żerriegħa abbundanti ikun riesaq sajj ta' frott abbundanti, jew viċi versa.

Pjanti introdotti

Peress li storikament Malta dejjem kienet okkupata minn popli differenti, dawn kellhom influwenza fuq il-forma tal-paesagg li għandna illum, u dan jinkludi l-kampanja fejn kienu introdotti diversi xtieli, siġar u arbuxelli agrikoli li għadna nikkultivaw sal-lum. Ċerti pjanti bħal Lellux Isfar u l-Qarsu, huma pjanti li kienu introdotti mill-Ingliżi. Huma pjanti sbieħ li jagħtu kulur lill-għelieqi, imma huma pjanti li nvadew il-kampanja Maltija bil-konsegwenza li hađu post pjanti oħra Maltin.

L-Awstralja timpjega timijiet ta' nies f'kull dwana biex jaraw li fil-pajjiż ma jidhol l-ebda animal, insett, xitla jew żerriegħa minn barra l-pajjiż. Fil-passat kienu importati speċi li għamlu hafna hsara lin-natura indiġina (tal-post) u li issa, l-Awstraljani mpennjaw ruħhom li dak l-iżball ma jerġa' jsehh qatt. Ftit tas-snin ilu, Malta dahlu speċi ta' Palm li kien fihom insett (Palm Weavel) li qed jeqred siġar tal-palm li għandhom mal-mitt sena. Illum saret komuni li tara xi palma mejta l'hawn u l'hinn, ma' Malta kollha.

Konkluzjoni

Fir-Rabat, partikolarment il-Bahrija, l-Imtahleb, il-Kunċizzjoni nistgħu niftaħru li għadna ngawdu whud mill-aqwa rqajja' ta' kampanja arjuza fil-qzejjer Maltin, fejn familji shah jistgħu jgawdu arja nadifa li mhux dejjem issibha f'lokalitajiet oħra. Hafna jiġu nhar ta' Hadd igawdu dan il-ġmiel naturali. Madankollu rridu nkunu ahna li nipproteġu dak li hu wirt tagħna. Mixja fl-Imtahleb ftiit tal-ġimghat ilu ltqajt ma' għelieqi li wara l-hajt tas-sejjieħ kellhom fridge, cupboard ta' kċina ċelest, salott kannella u numru kbir ta' boroż mimlijin bl-iskart u mxerrdin ma' kullimkien.

Ambjent naturali nadif, f'saħħtu u mimli kuluri ifisser aktar saħħa u hajja ta' kwalità ahjar għalina li ngħixu fih, sta għalina kif inżommuh! Ix-xtieli ta' madwarna huma Wirt Naturali u mhux Haxix Hażin.

Messaġġ Ambjentali

In-Natura rari tiegħi żball - dejjem l-użanzi

Messaġġ tal-Ġurnata

X'uhud ifittxu l-ferħ, oħrajn joħolquh. Il-ferħ jittiehed.

(Footnotes)

¹ Falzon Sultana 2002; Wildlife of the Maltese Islands. Publ. Birdlife Malta



