

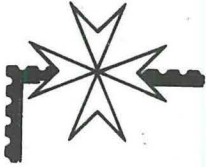
**Journal of**  
**THE MALTA PHILATELIC SOCIETY**

Lombard Bank - 225, Tower Road, Sliema



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# The Zeppelin

by Anthony Camilleri

An airship or dirigible is a bouyant aircraf that can be steered and propelled through the air. They stay afloat by means of a cavity filled with gas of lesser density than the surrounding atmosphere. They were the first aircraft to make controlled, powered flight. *ZEPPELIN* is a type of dirigible, more specifically a type of rigid airship pioneered by German Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, whose name it derived, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin became interested in constructing a 'dirigible airship' after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/1871 when he witnessed the use of French balloons during the Siege of Paris. He started working on various designs shortly after leaving the military. He eventually purchased the rights to the designs of Croatian inventor David Schwartz after the inventor died suddenly before successfully flying.

His first aircraft drew heavily on Schwartz's design. Due to the outstanding success of the Zeppelin design, the term *Zeppelin* in casual use came to refer to all rigid airships.

Construction of the first Zeppelin airship, th LZ1 (for "Luftschiff (Airship) Zeppelin") began in 1899 and the first experimental flight occurred on 2nd July, 1900 over the Bodensee, in the Bay of Manzell, Friedrichshafen lasting only 18 minutes. Many more airships followed and these were used for passenger transport and military purposes.

The DELAG (Deutsch Luftschiffahrt -AG) which can be considered the first commercial airline, served scheduled flights well before World War I and after the outbreak of the conflict, the German Military made extensive use of Zeppelins as bombers and scouts.

The German defeat halted the business temporarily, but under the guidance of Hugo Eckner, the successor of the deceased count, civilian Zeppelins experienced a renaissance in the 1920s. With the completion and delivery to the USA of LZ 126 in 1924, the Zeppelin Company reasserted its lead in rigid airship construction. It was in 1928 with the construction of LZ 127 'GRAF ZEPPELIN' and later LZ 129 'HINDENBURG'; that the golden age of the Zeppelin aviation really started, operating regularly transatlantic flights.

The Zeppelin used to operate from Friedrichshafen, Germany, to North and South America. As it did not visit Malta, all airmail from Malta to America had to travel by air and then by train to Berlin and finally to Friedrichshafen. The first time on which Malta airmail was accepted was the third flight of the Zeppelin to South America on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1933.

Prior to this mail franked with Malta stamps were further franked with Italian or German adhesives. Other letters from Malta are known to have been flown on the Zeppelins in 1933, 1934, 1935 and 1936. A few foreign letters are also known to have reached Malta after being flown on the Zeppelins.

The postage for letters and postcards was, for every 5 grams, 2s 4d to Brazil and 2s 9d to Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

# ERSTTAGSBLATT

DER DEUTSCHEN BUNDESPOST

## Sonderpostwertzeichen Ferdinand von Zeppelin

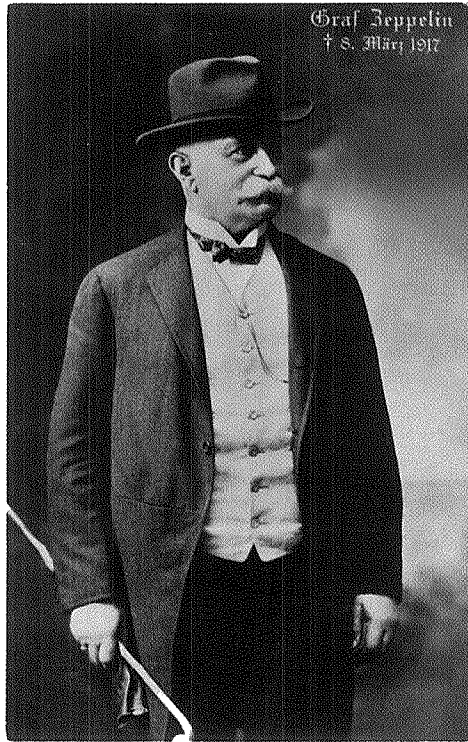


 **Postdienst**  
Deutsche Bundespost

8/1992

Nähere Angaben zu dieser Postwertzeichen-Ausgabe auf der Rückseite

75th Anniversary of the death of Ferdinand von Zeppelin



Count **FERDINAND ADOLF AUGUST HEINRICH von ZEPPELIN** was born in Constance on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 1838. In 1899 the ex German Army officer together with engineer Theodor Kober were instrumental in the manufacturing of the first ever airship – L.Z.1 – made of lightweight aluminum which ascended in the air for the first time on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1900. The prototype Zeppelin was driven by two 15 HP Daimler internal combustion engines each rotating two propellers. It was about 420 feet long and 38 feet in diameter. The hydrogen gas capacity totaling 399,000 cubic feet was kept in 17 gas cells covered in rubberized cloth. In 1908 he established at Friedrichshafen the Zeppelin Foundation for the development of aerial navigation and the manufacturing of airships. The first commercialized Zeppelin service started in 1910 and the first airships made bombing raids over London in the First World War. In the 1930s airship travel became fashionable as the German crafts – known as “flying hotels” – wafted passengers across the Atlantic. The longest scheduled flights were from Frankfurt to Rio de Janeiro. The Zeppelin flights to South America took five days as against five weeks by ship. Count von Zeppelin died in Berlin on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 1917.



After World War One HUGO ECKENER (10/8/1868 – 14/8/1954) succeeded count Ferdinand von Zeppelin who had first pioneered the Zeppelin line of rigid airships and had died on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 1917, as chairman of the Zeppelin Company. He kept the Zeppelin factory of Friedrichshafen on the lake of Konstanz in Wurttemberg in southern Germany from being retooled to produce other, and likely more profitable products.

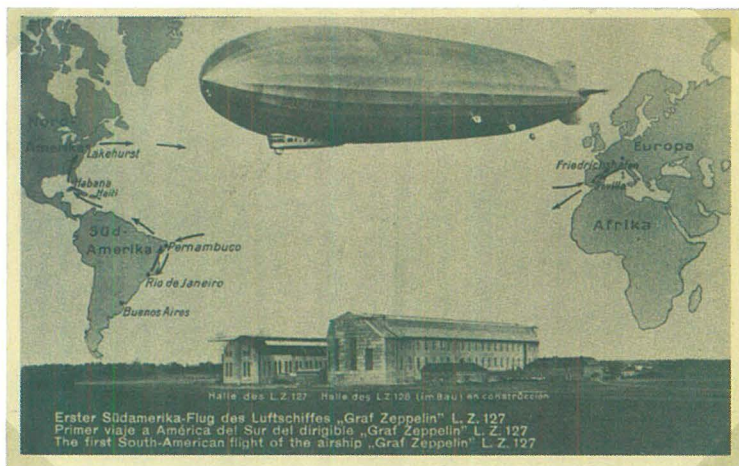
He supervised the construction of *Graf Zeppelin*, the most successful rigid airship ever built and captained it on most of its record setting flights including the first flight around the world by airship in 1929 which took three weeks and also made a Polar flight in 1931.

A master of publicity as well as a master airship captain Eckener used the Graf Zeppelin to establish the Zeppelin as a symbol of German pride and engineering.

During his many years as head of airship operations Eckener always made safety his absolute priority. His safety orientations had results under Eckener's leadership, the Company had a perfect safety record with no passenger ever sustaining serious injury on any of the more than one million air miles that the rigid airship flew.

With the rise of Nazi Germany came the nationalization of the Zeppelin operation. The Nazis replaced Eckener, who hated their leader Adolf Hitler, with men who were compliant with their wishes. Seeking to please the Nazi regime these newly promoted air-ship-men did not always follow Eckener's well proven safety procedures. Many blame that the reduced focus on safety led to the *Hindenburg* disaster in 1937.

After the destruction of the *Hindenburg* the rigid airship fell from favour and Eckener receded into the shadows. He died in 1954 at the age of 86.



The *L.Z. 127 "GRAF ZEPPELIN"* is considered the finest airship ever built. It flew more miles than any airship had done to that time or would in future. It was named after the pioneer of airships, Ferdinand von Zeppelin who held the rank of 'graf' or count in the German nobility.

*L.Z. 127* took to the air for the first time on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 1928 and with a total of 776 feet in length was the largest airship up to that time. It was powered by 5 Maybach 550 HP engines that ran on a new type of fuel called "Blau gas" and could carry a load of 60 metric tonnes.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> October 1928 *L.Z. 127* inaugurated its first long range voyage across the Atlantic completing the journey of 8050 kilometres in 81 hours 2 minutes. The return flight from Lakehurst to Germany took place on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1928 arriving in Frankfurt on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1928.

In August 1929 *L.Z. 127* circled the globe, the entire voyage taking 21 days, 5 hours and 31 minutes. It also made a Polar flight in 1931.

In October 1933 the "*Graf Zeppelin*" made an appearance at the "Century of Progress" World's Fair in Chicago.

During the ten years the "*Graf Zeppelin*" flew it made 590 flights including 144 ocean crossings. It flew more than one million miles and carried 13,110 passengers.

After the Hindenburg disaster public faith in the security of dirigibles was shattered and flying passengers in hydrogen filled vessels became intolerable. *L.Z. 127 "Graf Zeppelin"* was retired one month past the disaster and turned into a museum. In March 1940 Hermann Göring the German Air minister ordered the dismantling of the remaining dirigibles and the aluminium parts were fed into the German war industry.

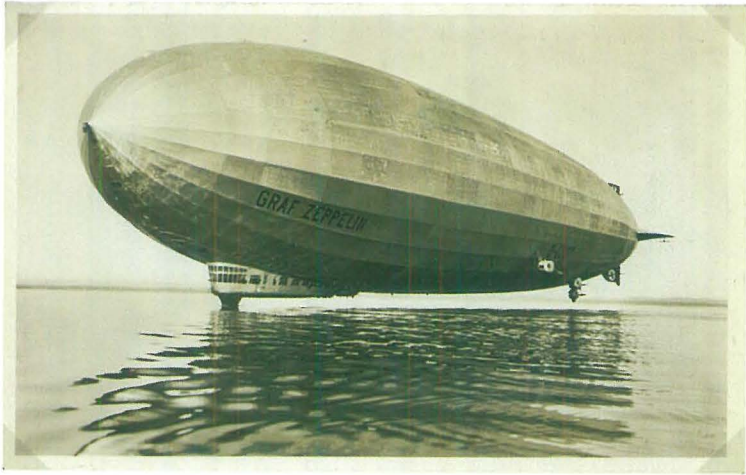




Historische Erste Weltreise des Luftschiffes „Graf Zeppelin“ (L. Z. 127) in 20 Tagen  
Landing in Friedrichshafen am 4. September 1929

Round world tour by L.Z. 127 “GRAF ZEPPELIN” sponsored by American press tycoon William Randolph Hearst who requested the tour to officially start in Lakehurst. Starting there on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1929, *Graf Zeppelin* guided by Hugo Eckner, flew across the Atlantic back to Friedrichshafen. She stopped there to refuel before continuing across vast Siberia to another stop in Tokyo. From Japan the *Graf Zeppelin* continued across the Pacific to San Francisco before heading south to stop at Los Angeles. This was the first ever non-stop flight of any aircraft across the Pacific Ocean. The ship continued thence across the United States, over Chicago and back to Lakehurst on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1929.

Arrived back in Friedrichshafen on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1929.



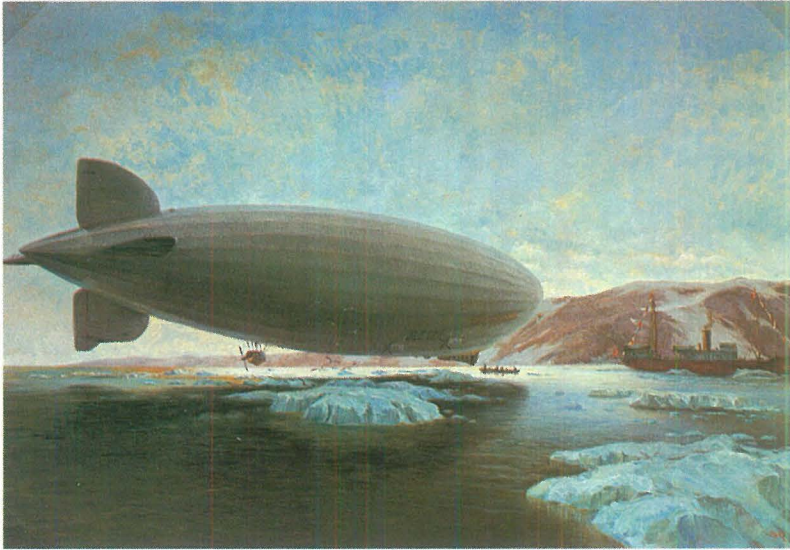
The Graf Zeppelin practicing a water landing on the Bodensee (Lake Constance) in preparation for the 1931 polar flight.

24th-31st July 1931 trip to the Arctic

In 1931 the Graf undertook yet another amazing flight, this time to the northern Polar region. This lesser known flight was a scientific flight whose principal purpose was to explore and conduct a massive aerial survey and mapping of the Russian Arctic. One of the achievements of the flight was the water landing to meet and exchange mail with the Russian ice-breaker MALYGUIN.

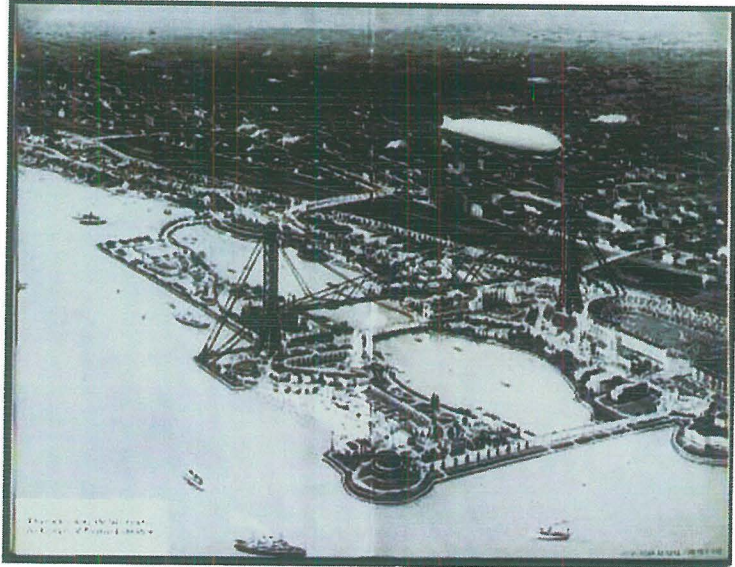


The distinctive Polarfahart cachet



*L.Z. 127 "GRAF ZEPPELIN" meets the Russian icebreaker MALYGUIN in the Arctic.*

Between 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July 1931 the *Graf Zeppelin* was on an Arctic flight. The pilot was Hugo Eckner, Lincoln Ellsworth was the navigator and a Professor Somoilovich was an observer. They traveled some 8000 miles with a flight time of 132 hours. On July 27<sup>th</sup> they had a mail exchange with the Russian ice-breaker MALYGUIN on which the Italian aeronautical engineer and Arctic explorer Umberto Nobile was a guest. The rendezvous took place at Hooker Island, located in the Franz Josef group of Islands.



26th October 1933 - L.Z. 127 'Graf Zeppelin' hovering over the Century of Progress International Exposition

After circling Lake Michigan near the Exposition for two hours, Commander Hugo Echener landed the 776 foot airship at the nearby Curtis-Wright Airport in Glenview. It remained on the ground for twenty five minutes (1.00pm to 1.25pm)



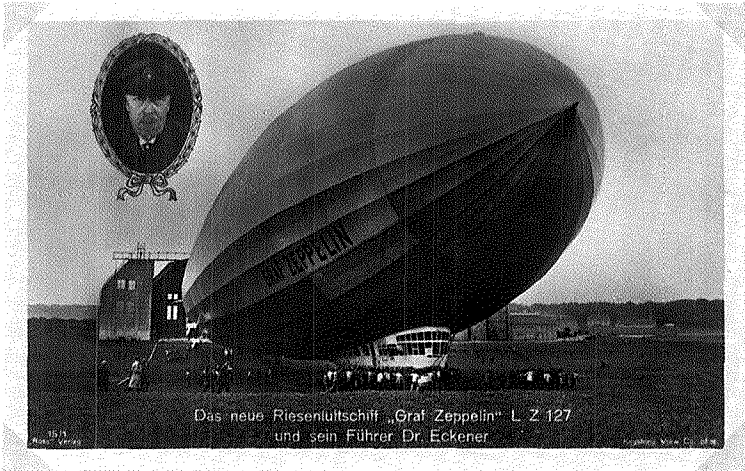
Commemorative cachets used for the Exposition flight



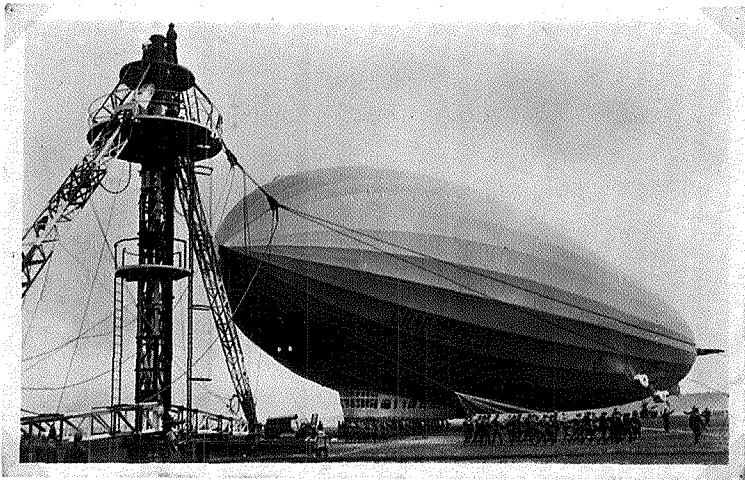
L.Z. 127 "GRAF ZEPPELIN" and gondola



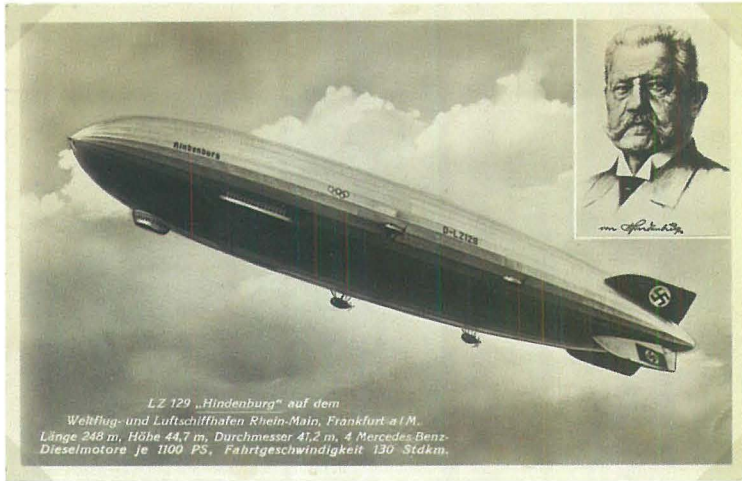
L.Z. 127 "GRAF ZEPPELIN" parked in hanger



L.Z. 127 "GRAF ZEPPELIN" being moored outside hanger  
Inset Hugo Eckener "GRAF ZEPPELIN" pilot



L.Z. 127 "GRAF ZEPPELIN" moored at mast



Inset Paul von Hindenburg, President of Germany from 1925 to 1934

In 1936 the Zeppelin Company with the financial aid of Nazi Germany built the L.Z. 129 "HINDENBURG". Named after Paul von Hindenburg (1847-1934) the late President of Germany, the German passenger airship measured 803.8 feet in length, was 135 feet at its widest point and weighted approximately 242 tons. Its lightweight framework known as duralumin was at first intended for filling with non flammable helium gas instead of flammable hydrogen but the embargo by the United States because of the looming war prevented German access to the required large quantities of helium, and the *Hindenburg* was fatefully converted to a hydrogen design. It had four 1200 HP Mercedes Benz engines that could power it at a speed of 84.4 miles per hour and came complete with numerous sleeping quarters, a library, dining room, and a magnificent lounge with a grand piano and large windows. It had a crew of 61 and cabins for 72 passengers in luxurious comfort.

The "*Hindenburg*" took to the air on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1936 and on 6<sup>th</sup> May inaugurated its first transatlantic flight from Europe to the United States, the trip taking 60 hours with the return trip taking less.

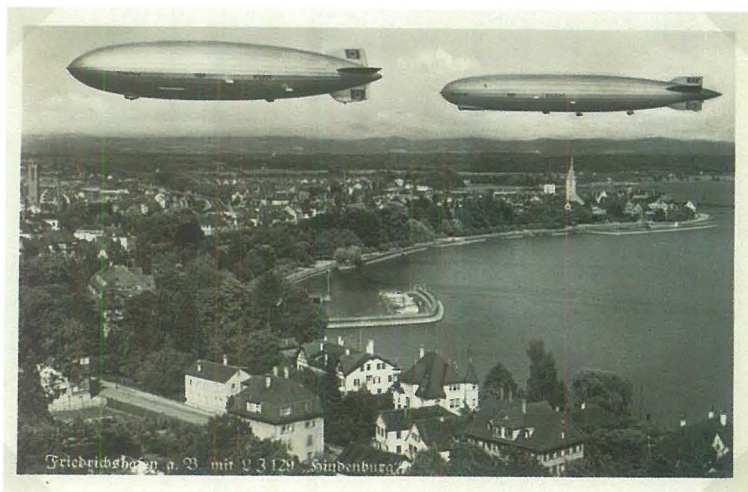
The majestic airships "*Hindenburg*" and "*Graf Zeppelin*" were emblazoned with the swastika on their vertical fins and flown on many propaganda flights, showing off the power of the Nazi movement.

On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1936 the "*Hindenburg*" was present at the opening ceremony of the eleventh modern Olympic Games in Berlin. Moments before the arrival of Adolf Hitler the airship crossed over the Olympic Stadium trailing the Olympic flag from its tail.

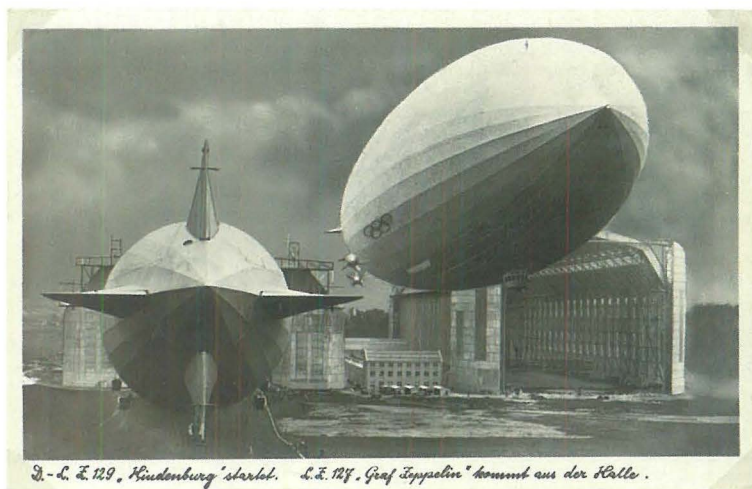
During 1936, its first year of commercial operation, the *Hindenburg* flew 191,583 miles carrying 2,798 passengers and 160 tons of freight and mail. In that year the ship made 17 round trips across the Atlantic Ocean with 10 trips to the United States and 7 to Brazil. It also completed a record Atlantic double-crossing in 5 days, 19 hours and 51 minutes in July.

On 6<sup>th</sup> May 1937 at 7.35pm the "*Hindenburg*" with commander Max Pruss at the helm had just crossed the Atlantic after taking off from Frankfurt two and a half days prior on its first transatlantic voyage of the season. Thirty-six passengers and a crew of sixty-one were on board. As it reached its final destination in New Jersey, it hovered over its landing spot and was beginning to be pulled down to the ground by landing lines by over 200 crew men when disaster struck. A small burst of flame started just forward of the upper fin, then blossomed into an inferno that quickly engulfed the airship. Thirteen passengers, twenty-two crewmen and one civilian on the ground lost their lives in the space of 37 seconds. Its destruction seen by horrified spectators in New Jersey marked the end of the commercial use of airships.

Germany had constructed one more large airship, the "*GRAF ZEPPELIN II*" which flew on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1938. However the start of World War II, coupled with the disaster that had befallen the *Hindenburg* earlier, kept this airship out of commercial service. It was scrapped in May 1940.

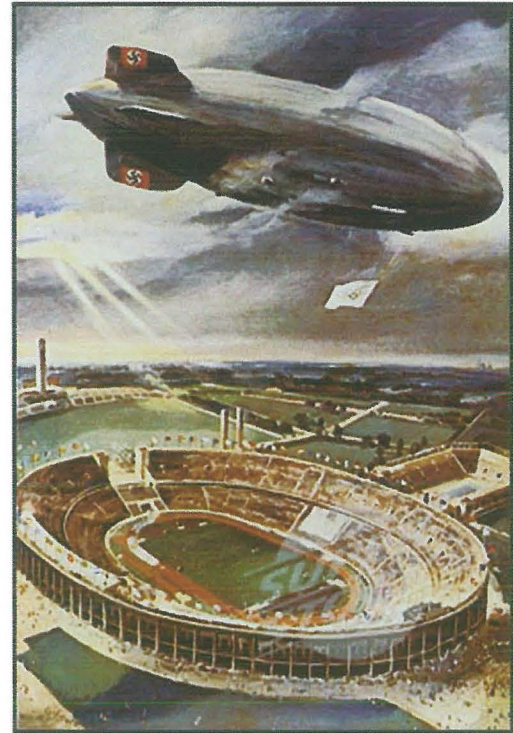


Airships L.Z. 129 "HINDENBURG" and L.Z.127 "GRAF ZEPPELIN"  
flying over Friedrichshafen and Lake Constance



Airships L.Z. 129 "HINDENBURG" and L.Z.127 "GRAF ZEPPELIN"  
moored near their respective hangars





The Olympiafahrt cachet

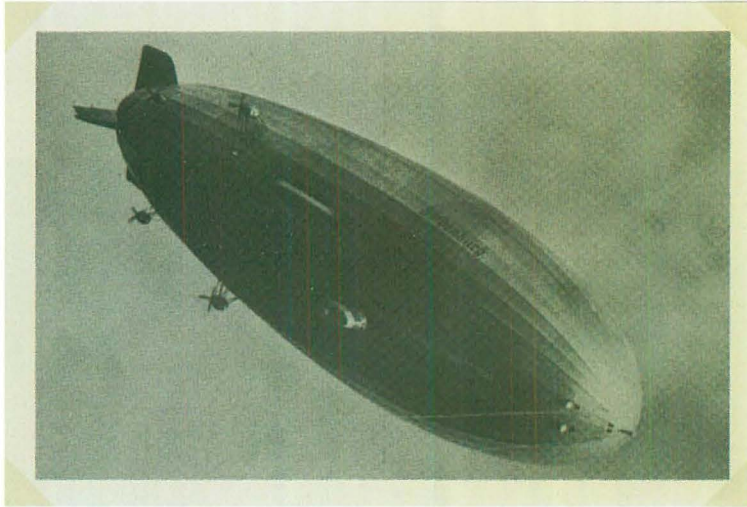
On August 1st the "HINDENBURG" was present at the opening ceremonies of the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin. Moments before the arrival of Adolf Hitler, the airship crossed over the Olympic Stadium, trailing the Olympic Flag from its gondola.



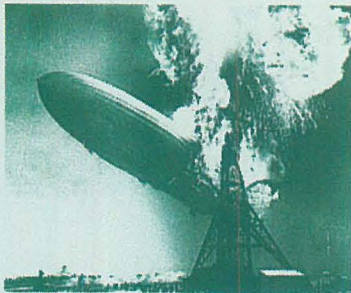
Picture postcard carried on the 'HINDENBURG' on its first flight on March 29 1936. The German airmail issued stamp is tied with the airship onboard cancel. These cards were later sold to the public to raise funds to help finance the Zeppelin Company.



On May 6, 1937 the German Zeppelin "HINDENBURG" L.Z. 129 caught fire while approaching a mooring mast at Lakehurst Naval Air Station, New Jersey. The flames first appeared near the tail and within 37 seconds completely engulfed the ship. Of the 97 people on board, 35 and one ground crew member were killed.



L.Z. 129 "HINDENBURG" in flight



On May 6, 1937 the German Zeppelin HINDENBURG LZ-129 caught fire while approaching a mooring mast at Lakehurst Naval Air Station New Jersey. The flames first appeared near the tail and within 37 seconds completely engulfed the ship. Of the 97 people on board, 35 were killed and one ground crew member was killed.



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22

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50th anniversary cover of the "HINDENBURG"s disaster

# MALTA

## Zeppelin Mail

1933 (1st - 12th July) - 3rd South America Flight



Registered cover to CURITYBA/PARANA (Brazil) franked with the K.G. V 2/7½d stamps cancelled by the G.P.O./MALTA/JU 26 33 dater. By air to Roma/28.6.33, endorsed on 1st July by the Friedrichshafen handstamp and also having confirmation 'gondola' cachet of the 3rd South America Flight applied in blue. PARANA-CORREIO AEREO-CURITIBA/-7.VII.33 arrival datestamp on front

# MALTA

1933 (1st - 12th July) - 3rd South America Flight



Cover to BUENOS AIRES (Argentina) handed at *Munich P.O.* with K.G.V 2/9d stamps affixed to be forwarded 'under cover to the P.M.G. in Malta' who on receiving it endorsed it, cancelled the Maltese stamps with the AIR MAIL/MALTA/2 JUN 1933 datestamp, gave it a Ref. No. *G.P.O. Malta Ref. 1118/33* and sent it back to Germany via *Roma/-3 6.33.18*, taxed 730c in manuscript, *Ventimiglia/-5 6.33.16*, *Paris R.P./6.30 -9-6 1933*. Endorsed at Friedrichshafen on 1st July 1933 and confirmation of 3rd South America Flight 'gondola' cachet in blue.

# MALTA

1933 (5th - 15th August) - 4th South America Flight



Registered cover to RIO de JANEIRO (Brazil) franked with the K.G. V 2/7½ stamps cancelled by the G.P.O./MALTA/JY 29 33 datestamp. Italian transit marks Roma & Firenze 31.7.33 and Milano 1-8.33. On 5th August endorsed at Friedrichshafen where it also received the appropriate cachet in red orange of the 4th South America Flight. TARDE-RIO-5A SECCAO-2AT./-9.V111.33 arrival datestamp on reverse.

# MALTA

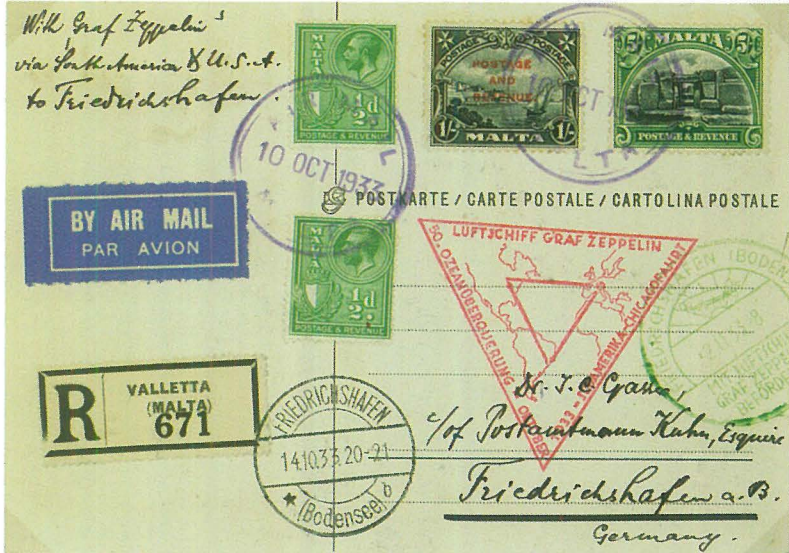
1933 (2nd - 12th September) - 6th South America Flight



1½d UPU Malta Post Card addressed to RECIFE/PERNAMBUCO (Brazil) franked with additional K.G.V 4d and 2/- stamps, cancelled with the violet AIR MAIL/MALTA/25 AUG 1933 rubber datestamp. By air to ROMA/31.8.33 as per backstamp, onwards to Germany where it was endorsed at FRIEDRICHSHAFEN/2.9.33 together with confirmation of the 6th South America Flight 'balloon' cachet in black. PERNAMBUCO - 4A - SECCAO - TARDE/-5.1X.33 arrival datestamp on front.

# MALTA

1933 (14th October - 2nd November) - 9th South America Flight  
Known also as "Century of Progress" Flight



Registered postcard addressed to FRIEDRICHSHAFEN (Germany) franked with the K.G.V 6/1d Maltese stamps cancelled with the circular AIR MAIL/MALTA/10 OCT 1933 violet rubber datestamp. Flown on the Graf Zeppelin return trip from South America. By air via Roma/12.10.33 and endorsed at Friedrichshafen on the 14th October 1933 together with confirmation of the 9th South America Flight 'Triangular' cachet in red. FRIEDRICHSHAFEN (BODENSEE)/.2.11.33-8 special green cachet applied on its return back to Germany.



# MALTA

1934 (23rd June - 6th July) - 3rd South America (ARGENTINA) Flight



Registered cover addressed to CURITIBA/PARANA (Brazil) franked with K.G.V 3/- stamp cancelled by AIR MAIL/MALTA/19 JUN 1934 rubber datestamp. Manuscript Reference No. *Malta 1404/34* in red ink. Transit Roma/21.6.34, Milano/22 & 23.6.34. Endorsed at Friedrichshafen on the 23rd June 1934 together with confirmation of ARGENTINIENFAHRT cachet in violet. PARANA - CORREIO AEREO - CURITIBA/30.VI.34 arrival datestamp.

# MALTA

1934 (1st - 11th September) - 7th South America Flight



Blank card addressed to RECIFE/PERNAMBUCO (Brazil) franked with K.G.V 2/5½d stamps cancelled by the violet AIR MAIL/MALTA/27 AUG 1934 rubber datestamp. Endorsed at Friedrichshafen on 1st September 1934 together with confirmation of the 7th South America Flight cachet: '\*DEUTSCHE LUFTPOST c EUROPA-SUDAMERIKA' applied in red. Letter "c" in outer rim of cachet indicates Friedrichshafen dispatch. Backstamped ROMA \* DISTRIBUZIONE/29.VIII 34-X11 transit mark and PERNAMBUCO - 4 SECCAO - TARDE / -4 IX.34 arrival datestamp.

# MALTA

1934 (13th - 23rd October) - 10th South America Flight



Card addressed to RECIFE/PERNAMBUCO (Brazil) franked with 2/5½d K.G. V stamps cancelled with AIR MAIL/MALTA/26 SEP 1934 datestamp. Sent via Italy to Stuttgart/6.10.34 for departure by Lufthansa DLH catapult service going by airplane via Gambia and Natal. Red flight cachet with 'STAR' symbol used at Stuttgart applied. However post officers reading the routing instructions at the top forwarded the card to Friedrichshafen/13.10.34 to connect a week later with the zeppelin service to South America. Here another red flight cachet with the 'b' symbol that was used at Friedrichshafen was again applied before boarding the zeppelin. RECIFE (PER.) - 4a. SECCAO - NOTTE/16.X.34 arrival datestamp.

2- 1934, 10th South America Flight: This cover has no backstamps between Malta and Germany, but I assume it went on the same way like the 1933 over. Anyway, the cover reached Stuttgart on October 6, 1934 between noon and 1 pm according to the arrival on the front and back side. This October 6 arrival was in time to make the Stuttgart October 7 early morning departure for South America: This was the Lufthansa DLH catapult service going by airplane via Gambia and Natal to South America. At Stuttgart, there was also the red flight cachet applied with the STAR symbol. But before sending the cover on the October 7 DLH/catapult flight, the post officers read the routing instruction which says ZEPPELIN and did not send the cover by DLH/catapult service. Instead the cover was forwarded to Friedrichshafen to connect a week later with the zeppelin service to South America. At Friedrichshafen a similar flight cachet was applied, this time with the letter "B" instead of the STAR symbol (STAR cachet was used at Stuttgart/later at Frankfurt while the B cachet was used at Friedrichshafen). Then zeppelin flight to South America. This is the only Malta cover I know flown on this flight.

# MALTA

1934 (8th - 19th December) - 12th South America "Christmas" Flight



Registered postcard to RECIFE, PERNAMBUCO (Brazil) franked with K.G.V 3/3d stamps cancelled with the AIR MAIL/MALTA/3- DEC 1934 violet rubber handstamp. Transit Milano/-4.12.34 datestamp struck on reverse.

Endorsed at Friedrichshafen with confirmation of the 12th South America Flight 'Christmas' cachet in green.

Backstamped PERNAMBUCO 5A SECCAO - MANHA/12 X11.34 arrival mark.

# MALTA



1934 (9th July) cover from Malta to RECIFE/PERNAMBUCO (Brazil) with the K.G. V 2/4½d stamps cancelled by the violet AIR MAIL MALTA rubber date stamp.  
 G.P.O. MALTA 1547/34 reference number entered in manuscript red ink.  
 Cover was intended to travel on the Zeppelin 4th Flight to South America of 21st July 1934 but for some reason it missed the flight.  
 Manuscript *Par Graf Zeppelin* deleted. Instead it went via Roma/12.V11.34, Ventimiglia/14.7.34 and on to Marseilles-MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION/15.7.1934.  
 The cover was then carried by the French "Air Maritime" arriving at PERNAMBUCO on the 29th July 1934 as per back stamps.

The following items were mail which was intended to go by Zeppelin but missed the flight

# MALTA



This Graf Zeppelin postcard postmarked 2 June 1933 appears to have been sent to catch the Zeppelin Italian Flight, which took place on 28/29 May 1933.

The manuscript reads *Malta-Rome/Round-trip Flight* (crossed out)/*Drop-off: Livorno*. Apparently, it was quite normal for mail-drops from the Graf Zeppelin at certain locations whilst en-route (i.e. it didn't land). In this case however, there was no mail-drop planned for Livorno, although other cards and covers carried on the Italian Flight are similarly inscribed, suggesting advanced information may have indicated this. This postcard was posted too late to catch the Graf Zeppelin at Rome, as it departed for Friedrichshafen on 29 May 1933. By 3<sup>rd</sup> June the Graf Zeppelin was on its way to Brazil, arriving there on 6.6.33, (2<sup>nd</sup> South America Flight). Incidentally this Flight included a planned mail-drop at Barcelona, Spain en-route.

This postcard seems to have been conveyed on the existing SANA airmail service to Rome, which was flown by Dornier Wal I-AZEC on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1933 (Tripoli-Malta-Syracuse-Naples-Rome). From Rome it appears to have travelled by surface to Holland, arriving there on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1933 as per back stamps.

# MALTA



1934 (27 June) registered cover to RECIFE/PERNAMBUCO (Brazil) sent via Rome 29.6.1934, Genova 30.6.1934, flown on the German Catapult mail service starting at Stuttgart on 7.7.1934, Bathurst 9.7.1934, arriving Natal 11.7.1934 just off the coast, and finally Pernambuco 12.VII.1934. The Catapult mail service was flown by Dornier Wal J II D-AFAR *Samum* on its first revenue service.

The Deutsche Luftpost marking was used at Stuttgart from February 1934 to indicate a special connecting flight for 'Zeppelin' services but in this case the postal clerk at Stuttgart realised that even though the cover was marked via Zeppelin, it would get to Pernambuco quicker on the catapult mail service than waiting for the next (4<sup>th</sup>) Zeppelin flight.

Some further research has yielded the answer - your cover was flown on the German Catapult mail service between Bathurst, Gambia and Natal, Brazil. The service in question started at Stuttgart on 7.7.1934, Bathurst 9.7.1934, arriving Natal 11.7.1934. The Catapult mail was flown by Domier Wal J II D-Afar Samum on its first revenue service.

The cover ties in quite nicely, with the Stuttgart datestamp of 7.7.1934 and Pernambuco arrival on 12.VII.34, the day after the flying boat arrived at Natal just up the coast. (Note that the postmark looks to be 12.VII.34, not 19.VII.34 as stated above.) Presumably, the postal clerk at Stuttgart realised that even though the cover was marked via Zeppelin, it would get to Pernambuco quicker on the catapult mail service than waiting for the next (4th) Zeppelin flight.

On a more general note, from 1934 the Zeppelins and Catapult flights operated at roughly the same frequency providing two flights per month, increasing and towards the end of the year, the schedules were integrated to provide a regular weekly service. There is a book titled Deutsche Lufthansa - South Atlantic Airmail Service 1934-1939 which covers the subject - on page 151, part of the schedule for 1934 is printed both Zeppelin and Catapult flights. There's a low resolution image on webpage <http://www.hahnstamps.com/dlh-catapult-flights-2.html>

**For more information on Malta Zeppelin, please consult the 40th Anniversary of the PSM Journal Vol 35/1 -April 2006, Malta Zeppelin, by Dr A Bonnici**

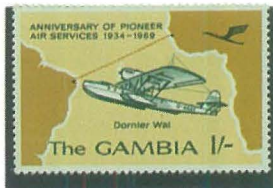
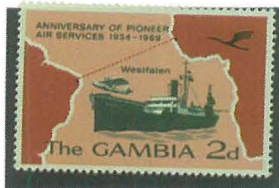


## MALTA

After the "HINDENBURG" disaster on May 6, 1937 when commercial flights by German airships ceased, the South Atlantic flights were operated solely by flying boats and, later, seaplanes. A total of 328 crossings was made before the service was withdrawn.



Cover addressed to BUENOS AIRES (Argentina) franked with K.G.V1 3/- stamps cancelled by AIR MAIL \*MALTA/SP 5 38 metal datestamp. At Frankfurt '\*DEUTSCHE LUFTPOST c EUROPA-SUDAMERIKA' cachet applied in red. Onwards to Gambia where "WESTFALEN" was anchored with a Blohm and Voss HA 139 aboard waiting catapulting off for the Atlantic flight. The "SCHWABENLAND" was anchored off the coast of South America. Arrival backstamp BUENOS AIRES/C.G./ARGENTINA/11.9.1938. Finally on 12 SEP 1938 the British Embassy applied an oval blue receiving mark.



# An exclusive set of ten stamped and postmarked cards from the NAG (National Archives Gozo Section)

JOSEPH BEZZINA  
FRANCESCO PIO ATTARD  
nag@gov.mt

The NAG – the *National Archives (Gozo Section)* – serves as the deposit for the records produced or received by Government entities in Gozo in the transaction of their affairs. It is housed in a purposely built hall adjacent to the National Library in Victoria-Gozo.

## 1 ▪ The National Archives Gozo

The ball was set rolling on 1 August 1989, when the Ministry for Gozo engaged Joseph Bezzina, an archivist by profession, to set up the archives. The first documents to be moved in were the registers of the former *Universitas Gaudisii* – a regional government founded around 1350 to manage the island and promote local interests. The NAG was officially inaugurated on 24 November 1989 by Anton Tabone, then Minister for Gozo, and Dr Ugo Mifsud-Bonnici, then Minister of Education.

The NAG was conceived as the public record office for the documentation produced and received by past and present Government departments and establishments in the islands of Gozo and Comino. In 1991, the *Staff Development Organisation* of the Office of the Prime Minister clearly laid down that: *Records originated by the Ministry for Gozo, Gozo sections of government departments, and by public bodies established for Gozo should be deposited at the Gozo Section of the National Archives which has been set up adjoining the Gozo Library* (Circular OPM/E/82/83 [July 1991]).

The NAG has twenty-eight different FONDS, deposits coming from an equal number of entities. Each fond is divided into as many SECTIONS as is deemed necessary to reflect the various responsibilities or activities of the entity. Sometimes, a particular office produced records related to various activities. In that case, each activity is considered a separate *section* and numbered accordingly to avoid the splitting of sections into sub-sections. Every single ITEM in each section is given a consecutive number.

## 2 ■ Ten commemorative cards

Since 1989, the NAG had organised sixteen major exhibitions. The first was held on the occasion of the inauguration of the NAG in November–December 1989; the last between March–April 2018. Since the seventh exhibition held in October–November 2007, the NAG has issued a commemorative card on the day of the opening. A limited number of cards were stamped and hand postmarked at the Victoria Post Office on that day.

The idea of a stamped and hand postmarked card were of the late George Vella (1948-2014) of the Gozo Philatelic Association. The choice of both the subject of the exhibition as well as that of the card was made by Joseph Bezzina, the Assistant National Archivist, in charge of the NAG. George Vella eventually designed the card, prepared it for printing, and took care of their stamping and cancelling. George Vella designed Cards 1 to 5; Francesco-Pio Attard, archives assistant, designed Cards 6 to 8; while Paul Falzon, another archives assistant, designed Cards 9 and 10.

The following hand list includes: (1) the number of the card; (2) the topic of the exhibition; (3) the date of the inauguration and postmark; and (4) the subject of the card. It must be noted that the hand-written digit on the back indicates the number of postmarked cards, while the printed digit refers to the total number of cards issued.

### CARD 01

THE CITADEL THE CROWN OF GOZO

18 OCTOBER 2007

#### **Iċ-Ċittadella (1536)**

An artistic impression of the Citadel as depicted in the map of Malta and Gozo reproduced by JEAN QUINTIN D'AUTUN in his book *Insulae Melitae Descriptio ex commentariis rerum quotidianarum*, printed in Lugduni (Lyons) in the year 1536. The bell-tower of the *Matrice* – built sometime after 1424 – dominates iċ-Ċittadella. This book is considered as one of the earliest guide books to Malta and Gozo.

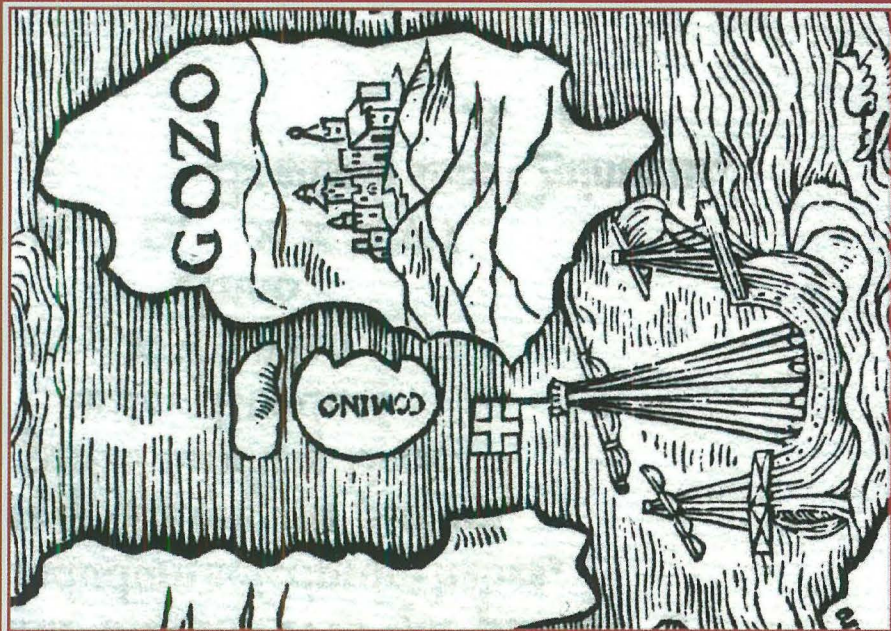
### CARD 02

THE COASTAL DEFENCES OF GOZO

30 OCTOBER 2008

#### **Garzes Watchtower (1821)**

An artistic impression of the *Garzes Watchtower* guarding Mgarr Harbour in a lithograph by Edouard de Montuélé (1821). In a report of 1599 on Gozo's defence problems, Giovanni Rinaldini, a military engineer from Ancona, emphasized the necessity of a tower to guard the Gozo-Malta channel. Grandmaster Martin Garzes, aware of its urgency, decided to finance its building out of his own purse. He died on 7 February 1601 and six years after his death, a tower was raised on the promontory



Card 01



*The Citadel - the crown of Gozo*  
 Exhibition opening • 18 October 2007  
 Archives Awareness Week • 2007

• Impresjoni artistika ta' Ċittadella kif tidher fil-mappa ta' Malta u Ghawdex stampata fil-ktieb ta' Jean Quintin d'Autun, *Insulae Melitae Descriptio*, stampat Lugduni (Lijon) fis-sena 1536. Il-kampnar tal-Knisja *Matriċi* - mibni wara s-sena 1424 - jiddomina Ċittadella.

• An artistic impression of the Citadel as depicted in the map of Malta and Gozo reproduced by Jean Quintin d'Autun in his book *Insulae Melitae Descriptio*, printed in Lugduni (Lyons) in the year 1536. The bell-tower of the *Matrice* Church - built sometime after 1424 - dominates the Citadel.

*J. J. J. J.*

• Sponsored by HSBC - the world's local bank  
 • Limited edition of 200 cards

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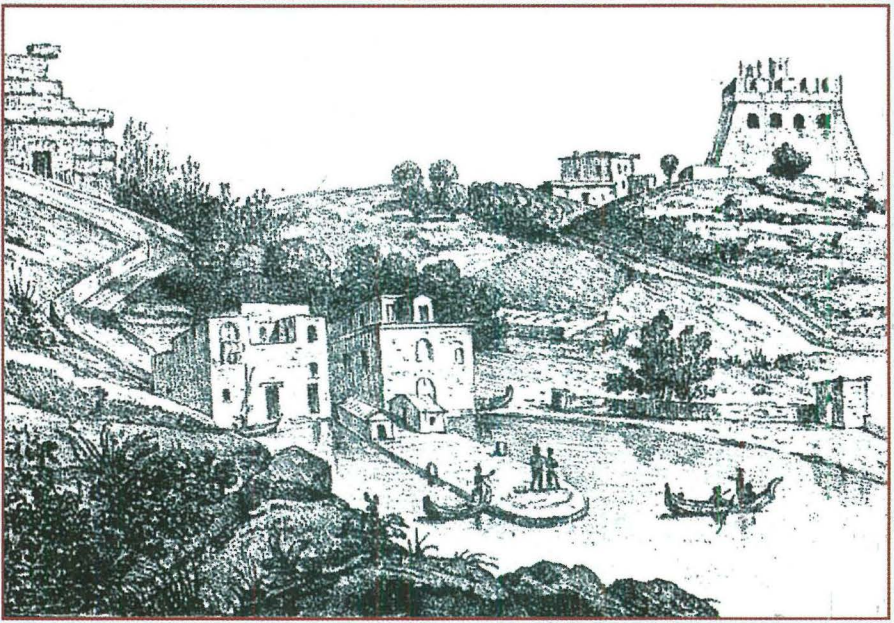
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NATIONAL ARCHIVES GOZO • 02

Card 02



*The Coastal Defences of Gozo*  
 Exhibition opening • 30 October 2008  
 Archives Awareness Week • 2008

• *It-Torri ta' Garzes* fuq ir-rih tal-Port tal-Imġarr litografija ta' Edouard de Montule (1821) (kollezzjoni privata). It-torri nbena fis-sena 1607 u ssemma għall-Granmastru Martin Garzes li hareġ il-flus għall-bini tiegħu. Kien mahtut għall-ġebel tiegħu fis-sena 1848.

• *Garzes Watchtower* guarding Mġarr Harbour in a lithograph by Edouard de Montule (1821) (private collection). It was built in 1607 and named after Grandmaster Martin Garzes who financed the construction out of his own purse. It was als dismantled in 1848.

• Sponsored by HSBC – the world's local bank  
 • Limited edition of 200 cards

1/200

© NATIONAL ARCHIVES GOZO • CARD NO 02




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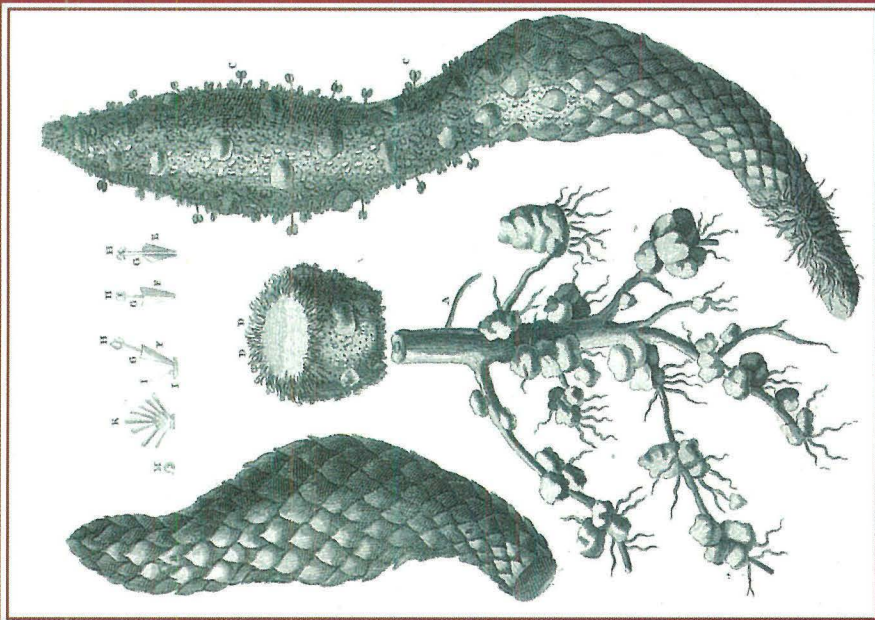
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Card 03



Herbs, health, and hospitals of Gozo past  
 Exhibition Opening • 1 October 2009  
 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Archives Inauguration

• **Gherq Sinjur** – the *Cynomorium coccineum* – l-iktar haxixa mediċinali magħrufa ta' Malta u Għawdex tikkonsisti f'zokk lixx, bellusi, tawwali, ahmar skur, u hi parassita fuq gheruq ta' hxejjex oħra. Kienu jemmnu li tikber biss fuq *Flaġret il-General* (Dwejra-Għawdex). Inċiżjoni ppubblikata minn G. & I. Robinson, Londra, 1 ta' Mejju, 1804 (kollezzjoni privata).

• **Gozo fungus** – the *Cynomorium coccineum* – the medicinal herb *par excellence* of Malta and Gozo is a stocky, very deep red plant without branches and with reduced leaves. Believed to be endemic to *Flaġret il-General* (Dwejra-Gozo), the plant is *not* a fungus but a herb without chlorophyll and parasitic on the roots of other plants. Etching published by G. & I. Robinson, London, 1 May 1804 (private collection).

• Sponsored by HSBC – the world's local bank  
 • Limited edition of 200 cards

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flanked by Wied il-Kbir/Mġarr valley on one side and Wied Biljun on the other. The site is now occupied by apartments. The workmanship as well as the design was possibly borrowed from the tower at Capo Passero on the southernmost tip of Sicily, the closest point to the Maltese archipelago. Its construction was concluded in 1607 and was spontaneously called *Torre Garza* after the late Grandmaster. It was alas dismantled in 1848.

### CARD 03

HERBS, HEALTH, AND HOSPITALS OF GOZO PAST

1 OCTOBER 2009

#### ***Għerq Sinjur* or the Gozo Herb (1804)**

The etching – printed by G. & I. Robinson, London, 1 May 1804 – depicts one of the most prized medicinal herbs of Malta and Gozo – the *Cynomorium coccineum*, the Gozo fungus, known in Maltese as *Għerq Sinjur*, literally the rich root. It is a stocky, very deep red plant without branches and with reduced leaves. The supposed fungus is in fact a rare leafless herb without chlorophyll and parasitic on the roots of other plants. It lives invisibly below ground for most of the year attached to the roots of the Golden Samphire and other succulent shrubs which grow near the sea. In late spring and early summer it sends up spikes covered in hundreds of minute red flowers. It was sought due to its astringent and haemostatic properties and considered the best cure for haemorrhages and diseases of the blood. The dried stalks were pulverized and mixed with wine or water and taken as a potion. It was believed that the herb is endemic to *Ħaġret il-Ġeneral*, an islet at the mouth of il-Qala tad-Dwejra on the western coast of Gozo.

### CARD 04

GOZO DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE – A DWINDLING HERITAGE

7 OCTOBER 2010

#### **Stone balcony at *Il-Mandraġġ* (1909)**

This watercolour by Vittorio Boron (1909) was printed in colour in the book by FREDERICK W. RYAN, *Malta*, London 1910. Ryan wrote that “Gozo, even more than Malta, presents its people and its buildings a distinctly Oriental appearance”. This early eighteenth century balcony embedded in *Il-Mandraġġ* area of Rabat-Gozo is embellished with a beautiful floral design sculptured on its fronts

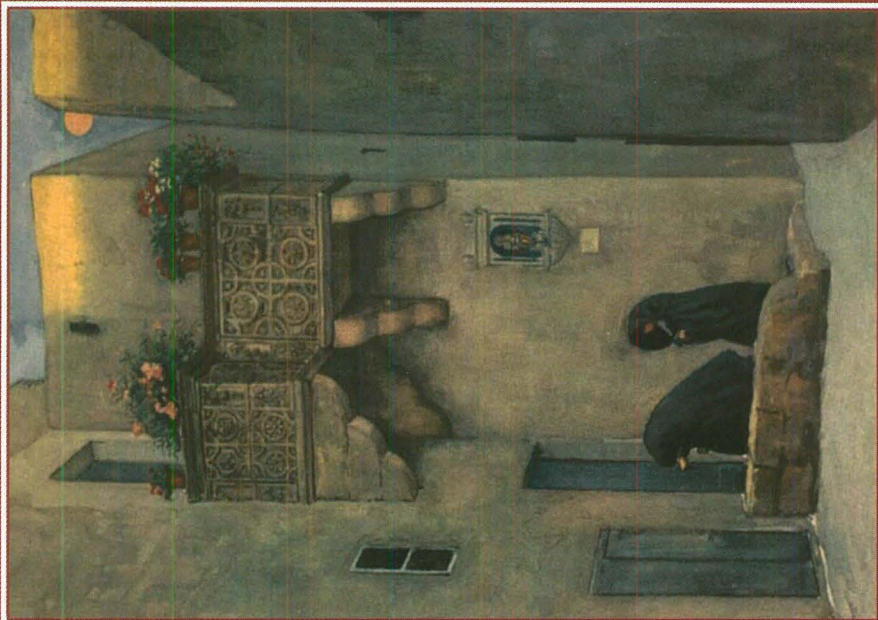
### CARD 05

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE GOZO CIVIC COUNCIL

9 JULY 2011

#### **Coat-of-arms of Gozo, Comino, Victoria, and the villages of Gozo (2011)**

On 14 April 1961, the Government enacted *An Ordinance to make provision for*



Card 04



*Gozo Domestic Architecture*  
*a dwindling heritage*  
 Exhibition Opening • 7 October 2010

• **Gallerija ornamentali tal-ġebel** - gallerija tal-bidu tas-seklu tmintax, *Il-Mandraġġ*, Rabat-Għawdex, imżejjna b'disinn florejali sabih skolpit fuq il-faċċati tagħha (akkwarella ta' Vittorio Boron (1909), stampata fil-ktieb ta' FREDERICK W. RYAN, *Malta*, London 1910).

• **Ornamental stone balcony** - this early eighteenth century balcony in the *Il-Mandraġġ* area of Rabat-Gozo is embellished with a beautiful floral design sculptured on its fronts (watercolour by Vittorio Boron (1909), printed in the book by FREDERICK W. RYAN, *Malta*, London 1910).

• Sponsored by Dr Victor Bajada LL.D. **VB Holdings Ltd**  
 • Limited edition of 200 cards

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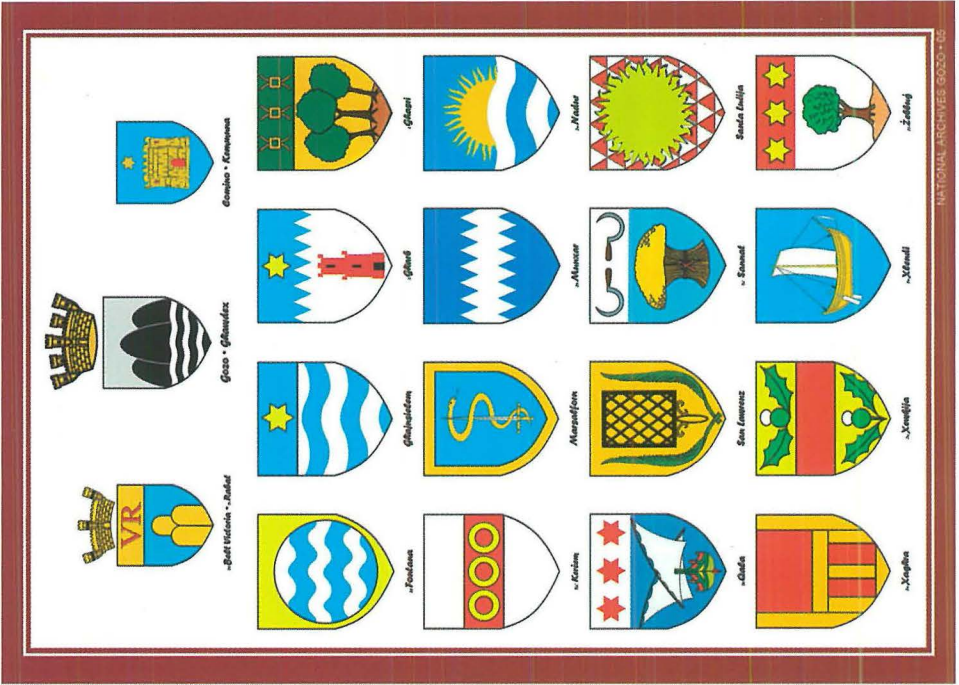


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Card 05



*Il-Klamsin Anniversarju mit-twaqfiq  
tal-Kunsill Ċiviku ta' Għawdex  
1961 - 2011  
Fiftieth Anniversary from the foundation of  
the Gozo Civic Council  
Exhibition Opening • 9 July 2011*

*[Handwritten signature]*

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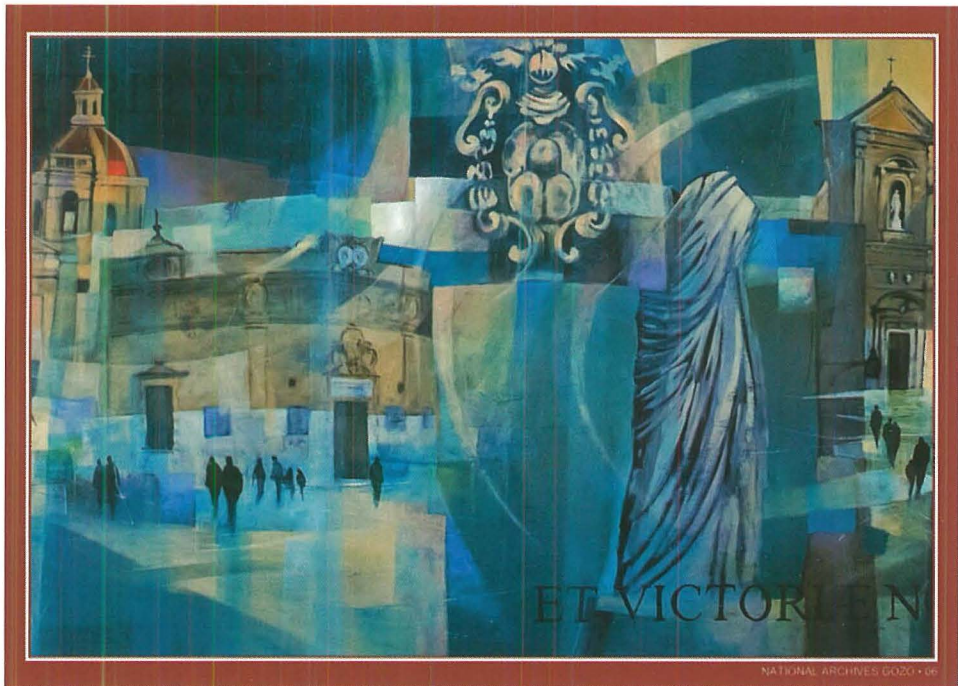
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• With the collaboration of the National Archives Gozo Section  
• Limited edition of 500 sets

*1/100*



Card 06

NATIONAL ARCHIVES



*Il-Belt Victoria*  
*Mija u Kamsa u Għoxrin Sena Belt*  
 1887-2012  
*Città Victoria*  
*One Hundred and Twenty Five Years a City*  
*Exhibition Opening • 8 June 2012*



*John Grima*

**VICTORIA 125** SENA 1887 - 2012  
 A MAGNA MAXIMA BELT

• Detail of painting by John Grima at the Victoria Local Council.  
 • Sponsored by the Città Victoria Local Council.

© NATIONAL ARCHIVES GOZO • CARD NO 06

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MALTA

VICTORIA 125 SENA 1887-2012 A MAGNA MAXIMA BELT

€0.37

*Local Government in Gozo and for purposes connected therewith.* The Gozo Civic Council was born as a statutory local government. It was elected by general suffrage on 4 June 1961 and met for the first time on 4 July. It was officially inaugurated on 10 July 1961. This commemorative card issued on the occasion of this fiftieth anniversary depicts the coat-of-arms of the island of Gozo, the island of Comino, the town of Victoria, the fourteen districts, and the three localities.

*On this anniversary, a separate set of twenty cards (not in this general series) was issued with each of the above mentioned coat-of-arms and each card carries the motto of the respective locality in Latin, in Maltese, and in English.*

#### **CARD 06**

**CITTÀ VICTORIA – ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS A CITY**

**8 JUNE 2012**

#### ***Oppido Ius Civitatis Attribuit (1887)***

A particular from the painting *Oppido Ius Civitatis Attribuit Et Victoriae Nomen Indidit* by John Grima (2004) that hangs at the *Banca Giuratale*, the official seat of the Victoria Local Council. On 10 June 1887, Queen Victoria acceded to the wishes of leading Gozitans to declare their town a city. Sir John Lintorn Arabin-Simmons, Governor of Malta, issued this official *Notice* declaring Ir-Rabat as a *City*: “His Excellency the Governor directs it to be notified that Her Majesty The Queen, in compliance with a prayer of a petition signed by the Lord Bishop of Gozo, the members of the Chapter, and of the principal inhabitants of Gozo, has been graciously pleased to consent to the town of Rabat in that island being on the occasion of Her Majesty’s Jubilee officially declared a CITY and its name changed into that of VICTORIA” (*Government Notice* No 75 of 10 June 1887).

#### **CARD 07**

**ENGAGEMENTS AND WEDDINGS IN GOZO PAST**

**29 NOVEMBER 2013**

#### ***A typical Maltese Wedding (1888)***

An engraving of a typical Maltese wedding executed by GIUSEPPE BROCKTORFF (d. 1894) and published in the book by P.P. CASTAGNA, *L-Istorja ta’ Malta bil-gżejjer tagħha*, I, Malta 1888, between pages 360-361. A Maltese love story in bygone years often began with the planting of a pleasant smelling shrub in a flower pot. A mother who had a marriageable daughter planted and tended with care a plant of *ħabaq*, or *merqtux*, or *nagħnigh*; basil, or sweet marjoram, or spearmint. When the plant matured and filled the air with its sweet smell, she placed it on the *ħarriega*, a stone jutting out about a span from the wall of a house beside a window, to attract the attention of marriageable young men. Marriage customs vary greatly from one culture to another, but the importance of the institution is universally acknowledged.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES: GOZO 07

Card 07



*Gherusija u Tiggjiet  
f' Għawdex ta' Imghoddi*

*Engagements and Weddings  
in Gozo Past*

Exhibition Opening • 29 November 2013

- *A Wedding Procession* — engraving by GIUSEPPE BROCKTORFF (d.1894) in P.P. CASTAGNA, *L-Istorja ta' Malta bil-gżejjer tagħha*, I, Malta 1888
- Sponsored by HSBC plc
- Limited edition of 200 cards

1/200

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES GOZO - 08

Card 08



*Gozo Anniversaries*  
on the 25th anniversary of the inauguration  
of the National Archives Gozo

*Anniversarji Għawdxin*  
f'għeliq il-25 anniversarju mill-ftuh  
tal-Arkivju Nazzjonali Għawdex

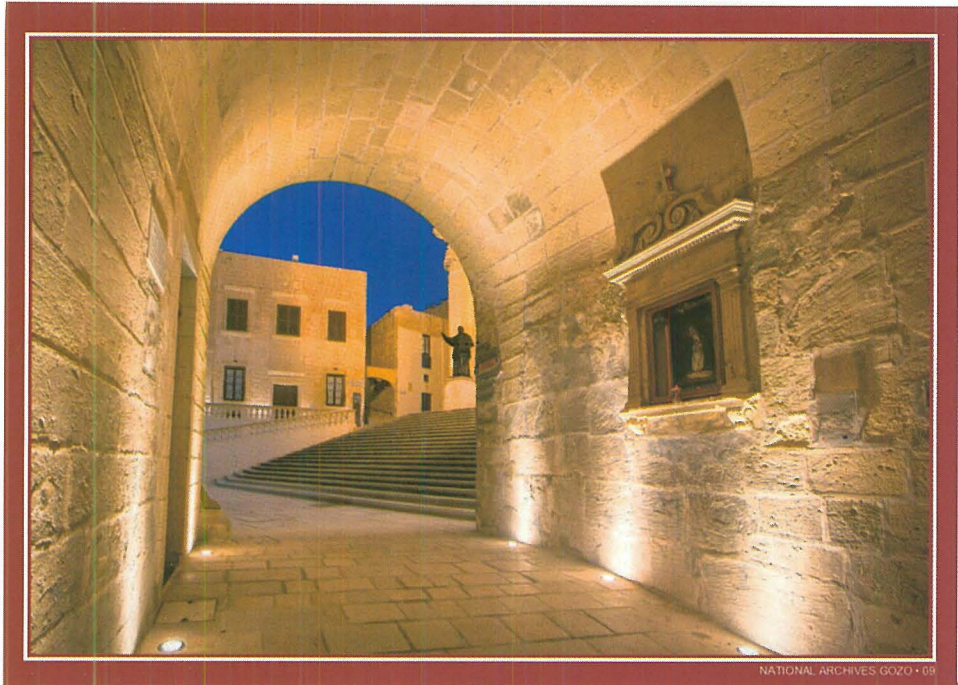
*Exhibition Opening • 24 November 2014*

- *The Solemn Entry of His Lordship Mgr Michele-Francesco Buttigieg, first Bishop of Gozo, into the Cathedral (23 October 1864) — monochrome painting by PAWLU CAMILLERI-CAUCHH (private collection) (1984)*
- *Sponsored by HSBC plc*
- *Limited edition of 150 cards*

1/30

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES GOZO • 09

Card 09



*Historical Niches of Gozo  
on the 27th anniversary of the inauguration  
of the National Archives Gozo*

*Niċċ Storici ta' Għawdex  
f'għelug is-27 anniversarju mill-feuħ  
tal-Arkivju Nazzjonali Għawdex*

*Exhibition Opening • 12 October 2016*



- The niche of *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad* – the Blessed Virgin Mary of Solitude by an unknown artist (1559) under the arched entrance of the Pjazza tal-Katidral, site of the earliest documented shrine in Gozo – photo Paul Falzon (2016)
- Sponsored by HSBC plc and by the fourteen LOCAL COUNCILS OF GOZO
- Limited edition of 150 cards

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## CARD 08

GOZO ANNIVERSARIES

24 NOVEMBER 2014

### **The solemn entry of the first Bishop of Gozo (1864)**

A number of anniversaries were celebrated in Gozo during the year 2014 and they were all commemorated in this exhibition. The most important was the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Diocese of Gozo. It was established by Blessed Pope Pius IX through the apostolic bull *Singulari Amore* on 16 September 1864. Michele-Francesco Buttigieg, a priest from Gozo, was appointed first bishop of the new diocese. He made his solemn entry into the Cathedral Church on 23 October 1864. This artistic impression of the solemn entry was painted by Pawlu Camilleri-Cauchì (1985) and first published in the book by JOSEPH BEZZINA, *Religion and Politics in a Crown Colony. The Gozo-Malta Story*, Valletta 1985, pages 312-313.

## CARD 09

HISTORIC NICHEs OF GOZO

12 OCTOBER 2016

### ***Nuestra Señora de la Soledad***

The *niċċa* (plural *niċċeċ*) or shrine is a religious image, usually in some sort of a small shelter or niche, placed at a crossroads, by a road or pathway, or in the middle of the countryside. The niche of *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad* – the Blessed Virgin Mary of Solitude – is in Triq Bieb l-Imdina under the arch leading upon the Cathedral Square. It is by an unknown artist and dated 1559. Devotion to *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad* goes back to the rule of the Aragonese (1283-1530) who promoted this devotion in their possessions. It is one of the oldest niches still standing in Gozo.

## CARD 10

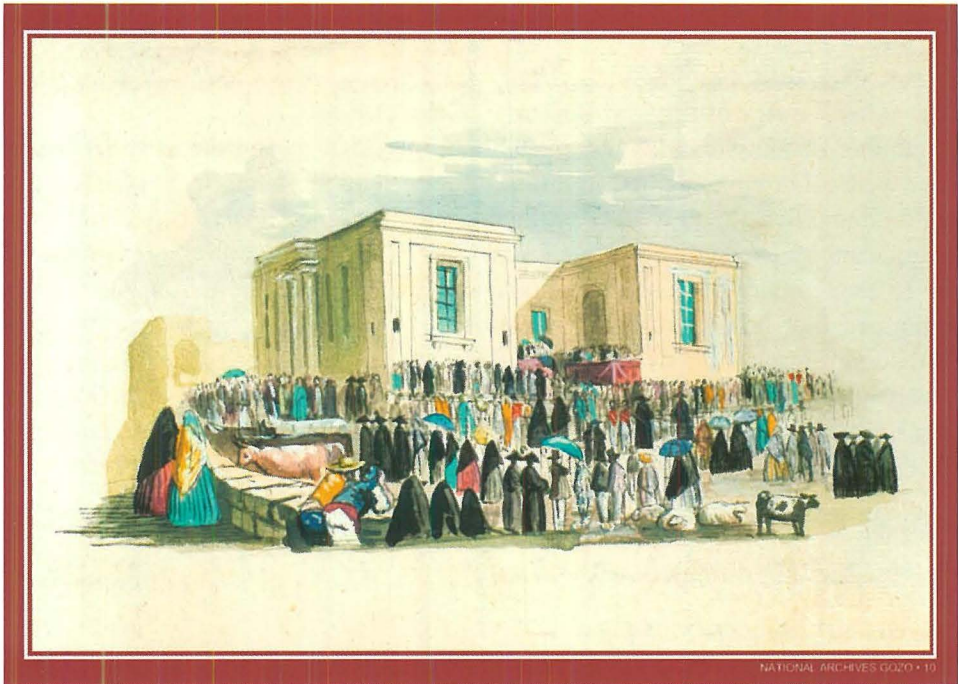
HISTORIC ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE ACTS OF NOTARY ANTONIO PORTELLI

21 MARCH 2018

### ***Il-Wirja ta' Santa Marija***

Notary Antonio Portelli practised his profession in Gozo between 1839 and 1877. He whiled away his free time by embellishing the title-pages of some of his notarial volumes with ink drawings and water colours. This water colour is an exceptional eye-witness record of the first organised *Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition* of 14–15 August 1855 – known to this day by its original name as *Il-Wirja ta' Santa Marija*.

The mid-August festivity of Santa Marija has attracted large crowds of people from Malta to Gozo for at least half a millennium. The mainly farming community of the island capitalized on the occasion to market their products. The first *Wirja*



NATIONAL ARCHIVES GOZO • 10

Card 10



*Historic Illustrations  
in the Acts of Notary Antonio Portelli  
on the 29th anniversary of the foundation  
of the National Archives Gozo*

*Illustrazzjonijiet Storici  
fl-Atti tan-Nutar Antonio Portelli  
f'għeliq id-29 anniversarju mit-  
iwaġġif tal-Arkjvu Nazzjonali Għawdex*

*Exhibition Opening • 21 March 2018*

ANTONIO PORTELLI (1809–1877)  
*Il-Wirja ta' Santa Marija*  
The Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition  
(1855)

- This water colour is an exceptional eye-witness record of the first organised *Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition* of 14–15 August 1855 – known to this day by its centuries-old name as *Il-Wirja ta' Santa Marija*.
- Sponsored by the **Ministry for Gozo and HSBC plc**
- Limited edition of 150 cards

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1/100



on the feast of Santa Marija can be traced back to 1738 when, according to a contemporary diary, it was already an established event.

It was held in the grounds of the new Government Schools complex in Triq Vajringa, Ir-Rabat, pictured in the background, and was inaugurated on 14 August at six in the morning and remained open up to the following morning. This watercolour provides a bird's eye view of this *Wirja*. People can be seen entering into the grounds from both sides of the school. In the foreground there are a number of cows and some sheep. The crowd is made up people from all walks of life – peasants dressed in their best; ladies from the higher classes wearing the *għonnella*, the traditional head-dress; a number of gentlemen formally dressed with jackets and top-hats, notwithstanding the mid-August heat; a number of women with brightly coloured umbrellas to shield themselves from the sun; as well as several priests in black cassocks and copes, a circular cape reaching to the ankle, complete with a *cappello Romano* or *saturno* hats, a hat made of beaver fur or felt. The podium in the middle is draped in red damask and a number of exhibitors are queuing up to get their prizes.

*On the occasion of this exhibition, a separate set of ten cards (not in this general series) was issued. They depict the ten best watercolours of Notary Antonio Portelli. Further info: nag@gov.mt*

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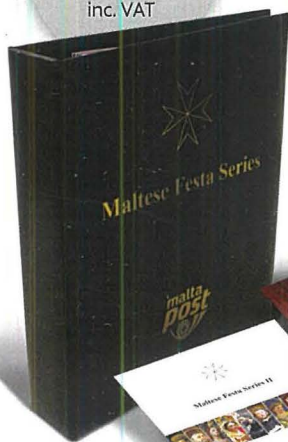
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