

MCAST LINK

WINTER ISSUE 41

➤ EUROSILLS
COMPETITION 2012

➤ EUROPEAN
ROBOTICS WEEK



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From left: Students Clint Saliba, Audrey Ann Camilleri with lecturer Ivan Fabri working on the Wi-Fi Controlled Home Surveillance Robot during the European Robotics Week

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



This issue features the presentation ceremony whereby MCAST awarded scholarships, adding up to a value of €803,726, to 59 students currently studying to obtain degrees or diplomas related to financial services or digital media. The scholarships were awarded as part of two EU funded programmes under the Training Subsidy Scheme MCAST (TSSM). They aim to provide qualified individuals with a wider choice of educational opportunities and also aim to satisfy the employment needs of two growth sectors of the Maltese economy, namely digital media and financial services.

MCAST students once again made the College and Malta proud by their achievements in international competitions. Jethro Farrugia and Matthew Monreal, Electrical and Electronics students, were awarded a silver medal in the EuroSkills Competition held in Belgium. Lindsay Aquilina, a student following the Higher National Diploma in Graphic Design at the Institute of Art and Design, placed second in the Nescafé Dolce Gusto coffee machine design Euro Design's Contest award ceremony held in Milan. Her original 'tattoo-style' design is featured inside the magazine.

Another interesting development this term, that is featured in this magazine, is the agreement with world-renowned tool company Milwaukee. The company donated 55 new, advanced and different power tools, worth over €19,000. These tools will enable the students to further their training and hands-on experience in the skills related to their areas of study.

The College participated in the European Robotics Week, aimed to highlight the growing importance of robotics in a wide variety of application areas. It showcased several interesting robots designed by the students themselves related to IT, electronics and mechanical engineering areas.

This edition features a new page dedicated to professional photography. As from this issue interesting photos taken by students currently following the Higher National Diploma in Photography at the Institute of Art and Design will be featured regularly inside this magazine. Feast your eyes and view the high-level photography reached by the students.

I wish you all the best for the festive season!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Caroline Balzan'.

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INFORMATION

MCAST AWARDS €803,000 EU-FUNDED SCHOLARSHIPS



Photos by DOI – Omar Camilleri



The Minister for Education and Employment, Hon. Dolores Cristina, presented MCAST scholarships to 59 students currently studying to obtain degrees or diplomas related to financial services or digital media.

The scholarships, adding up to a value of €803,726, were awarded as part of the Training Subsidy Scheme MCAST (TSSM), funded through two European Social Fund (ESF) programmes coordinated by the College, ESF 1.33 'Increasing ICT Student Capacity in Malta' and ESF 1.130 'Making VET Education More Relevant and Attractive'. The presentation ceremony was held at the MCAST Main Campus, in Paola, on Thursday 11 October 2012. The Hon. Minister was accompanied by the Minister's Parliamentary Assistant Hon. Stephen Spiteri, the Ministry's Permanent Secretary Dr James Calleja, MCAST President Mr Joseph Farrugia, MCAST Principal and CEO Mr Stephen Cachia, MCAST Deputy Principal Mr Anthony Saliba and other members of the College administration.

Individuals seeking higher education diploma or degree level studies to pursue careers in digital media or financial services were invited to apply for these scholarships. Fifty one awardees are following studies in computing and information systems technologies and management, networking and internet applications. Another eight students were awarded scholarships in accounting, finance, banking, economics and management.

MCAST launched the TSSM to provide qualified individuals capable of meeting the employment needs of two growth sectors of the Maltese economy - digital media and financial services. These scholarship schemes are assisting students in full-time programmes offered by local or international

private institutions, thus providing learners in Malta and Gozo with access to a wider choice of educational opportunities related to these two sectors.

'Increasing ICT Student Capacity in Malta' aims to meet the current and future employment demands of the Maltese ICT industry, by providing the necessary resources for MCAST to increase its student capacity in ICT vocational educational programmes. 'Making VET Education More Relevant and Attractive', the project financing the financial services scholarships, was launched to help MCAST improve the quality of, and increase, its vocational training opportunities to encourage more individuals to remain in education and obtain post-secondary qualifications.



MCAST and the world-renowned tool company Milwaukee announced a new collaboration through which the College will be receiving over 55 different power tools, worth over €19,000, to be used by its engineering students during practical sessions at its workshops.

The agreement was signed on Thursday 4 October 2012, by Mr Stephen Cachia, MCAST Principal and CEO, Mr Emanuel Attard, MCAST Chief Officer External Affairs, and Mr Dale McElveen, Milwaukee UK's Commercial Director, in the presence of MCAST President Mr Joseph Farrugia, at the MCAST Main Campus, in Paola. The signing ceremony was held at the end of an Information Talk entitled, 'Using Tools Safely', delivered by the College's occupational health and safety lecturers.

MCAST's Institute of Building and Construction Engineering, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering and the Institute of Mechanical Engineering will be receiving the new tools to be used in their respective workshops, where students conduct several practical sessions throughout the year. The availability of these new, advanced tools will enable the students to further their experience in the hands-on skills related to their areas of study.

The agreement, which was reached with the support of the company's Maltese sole agents Protrade Ltd, will also lead to further collaborations, including the organisation of seminars and lectures delivered by Milwaukee specialists, the sponsorship of Recognition of Achievement awards for students, study visits to Milwaukee centres abroad, as well as the sharing of other resources and tool innovations with the College's students, explained Mr Attard.

Milwaukee has successfully implemented similar collaborations with vocational education institutions in the USA, Australia and the UK. Mr McElveen said, "We are delighted that MCAST is now our first educational partner in Europe, outside the UK. We have seen the works on the new MCAST Campus project, as well as its ambitious plans for further investment in vocational education, and are confident that this College will soon be the envy of many European countries, with world class facilities through which Malta can reap great benefits in the coming years."

Mr McElveen added that as a global leader in professional power tools, Milwaukee invests heavily in innovation, focusing on mechanising manual tasks to help tradesmen improve their efficiency and quality.

"MCAST is committed to continue developing and upgrading its workshops and laboratories, where students acquire their first hands-on experiences and subsequently work on different learning and research projects as part of their educational programmes", Mr Cachia said. "In these facilities, under the guidance of lecturers and technicians, students find industry-standard equipment which they can use to safely put to practice what they learn during lectures."

Mr. Farrugia continued to explain that, "This experience is cemented through job placements and apprenticeships, where the students are able to grasp the processes and procedures adopted in real workplaces. Together, these two opportunities ensure that our students are adequately prepared to successfully secure thriving jobs as soon as they complete their studies."

AGREEMENT WITH MILWAUKEE

BRINGS LATEST TOOL TECHNOLOGIES TO MCAST

MCAST STUDENTS HELP FONDAZZJONI WENS



Students and staff from MCAST's Institute of Building and Construction Engineering, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, and Institute of Mechanical Engineering will be assisting Fondazzjoni Wens in the redevelopment of a building in Fgura into a new residential home for persons with disability. This will be the third time that MCAST will be assisting this voluntary organisation in the redevelopment of buildings into community homes for persons with disability. With the assistance of their lecturers, MCAST students have already completed the electrical and plumbing installation and tile-laying works in two similar homes, in Kalkara and in Paola. Another group of students from the Institute of Mechanical Engineering is now providing its assistance to design and install equipment that will help make these homes even more accessible to persons with disability.

Through this collaboration, the students learn more about this organisation, which strives to enhance the quality of life of persons with disability by helping them to become more independent and to fully participate in community life. They are also able to put to practice different skills and trades related to their areas of studies, such as electrical engineering, building services and construction engineering. The Hon. Minister for Justice, Dialogue and the Family, Dr. Chris Said, visited the organisation earlier this week and thanked all individuals and organisations who are helping to make these important community homes a reality.



FRESHERS' WEEK AT MCAST STUDENTS AIR THEIR VIEWS WITH NEW PRINCIPAL



On 9 October 2012, as part of this year's Freshers' Week at the College's Main Campus, students had the opportunity to hold a discussion on the theme 'My Kind of MCAST' with new Principal and CEO Stephen Cachia.



During the event, which was held as part of this year's Freshers' Week at the College's Main Campus in Paola, students were invited to propose ideas on how to improve their campus experience. During the discussion the students agreed that greater awareness about the significance of vocational education means that MCAST has become a very popular first choice for higher education among young adults in Malta. They emphasised the importance of the College's rigorous quality assurance procedures, suggesting that new and prospective students should be informed about these systems that guarantee the quality of the education they are to expect at MCAST. The students also called on the College's 10 Institutes to engage in closer collaborations to help students from different areas of study to join forces for more new multi-disciplinary research and learning opportunities.



They agreed with the Principal's proposal for greater student involvement in the MCAST Student Council and in the organisation of extra-curricular events on campus. In this regard, they urged student organisations to establish branches at MCAST. Mr. Cachia added that students should not focus on academic learning only, but should also work together to create a vigorous social community for an enjoyable, holistic campus life experience.

71 STUDENTS

COMPLETE MCAST AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE COURSES



MCAST celebrated the success of another 71 students who completed aircraft maintenance courses during a presentation ceremony at SR Technics' Hangar, at the Safi Aviation Park.

The presentation, which was held on Thursday 29 November 2012, included the awarding of certificates to the first 37 students who completed MCAST courses leading to the EASA Part-66 Category B Licences. Another 28 students completed courses leading to the EASA Part-66 Category A licence, while six students received certificates for the 'Aircraft Maintenance Mechanics' programme.

Over 450 students have completed courses offered by MCAST's Aircraft Maintenance Training Centre since it was established in 2007. The Centre, a joint collaboration between MCAST's Institute of Mechanical Engineering and Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, was set up to meet the demands of the growing aviation maintenance sector, where the potential for increased investment was being curbed by the lack of specially-trained workers. Within a few years, as it invested in advanced

training facilities and the recruitment and training of experienced lecturers, the Training Centre was officially recognised as a European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Part-147 Approved Centre to provide Part 66 Category A training and certification.

The Centre's courses include those leading to the attainment of the EASA Part-66 Category A Licence as well as other programmes that constitute a part-requirement for the attainment of the EASA Part-66 Category B Licences. These are two of the three different levels of licences, known as the "EASA Part-66", required by EASA from technicians or engineers in the aviation maintenance sector.

The growth of the aviation maintenance sector is a very important development in the Maltese Islands, explained Mr Joseph Farrugia, MCAST President. "It is a shining example of our economy's transformation, of how it is managing to generate new investment with new job opportunities in a forward-looking sector with a high value-added potential. MCAST's training opportunities in different art, science and technology fields are crucial to the



development of a flexible and skilled workforce required for continued economic development."

Ms Jutta Trimmel, SR Technics' General Manager, explained that within a few years, the company established itself as one of the major players in this sector, employing 150 workers and sponsoring several MCAST apprentices. SR Technics offers continued support to the College, especially by providing students with different on-the-job training opportunities. Ms Trimmel encouraged the students to continue studying throughout their lives. "This is a very competitive market and you need to constantly further your skills to advance. Embrace learning – it is a lifelong skill."

By hosting this presentation ceremony in the hangar of one of the companies operating in this sector, MCAST is emphasising its strong links with industry, explained Mr Stephen Cachia, MCAST Principal and CEO. "This relationship helps MCAST ensure that it continues to offer young and adult students with up-to-date training

opportunities, reflective of the latest developments in the industry. As a result, our graduates find it easier to secure employment as soon as they end their studies." He thanked the MCAST staff involved in the development and delivery of the aviation courses and congratulated the students on the successful completion of their studies.

Some of the Training Centre's courses are co-financed by the EU through a European Social Fund project entitled 'ESF1.34 - Addressing Skills Mismatches in the Aviation Maintenance Industry'. Through this project, MCAST obtained over €2 million to acquire new tools and equipment for its aircraft maintenance workshops, to develop new teaching materials, and to finance additional lecturing hours to provide training to more students.

The Training Centre is also supported by other Approved Aircraft Maintenance Organisations (MROs) operating in Malta as well as companies and government entities related to this sector.



EUROPEAN ROBOTICS WEEK



MCAST participated in the European Robotics Week, held between the 26 and 30 November 2012. As part of the European Robotics Week the College organised several activities aimed at inspiring prospective students to pursue robotics-related careers.

This event was organised as part of an EU project aimed at promoting the importance of robotics in our daily lives.

Groups of secondary school students visited the College to find out more about the world of robotics. They joined lecturers in hands-on robotics exercises and met applied science, electronics, ICT and mechanical engineering MCAST students currently working on different robotics-related projects as part of their studies.



MCAST STUDENTS MEET HRH PRINCE EDWARD



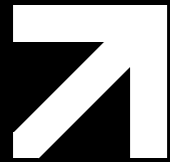
MCAST students who were commissioned by Banif Bank to present works of art for the Bank's 2013 calendar were given the unique and prestigious opportunity to meet HRH Prince Edward at an event organised as part of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Forum.

A cohort of second-year students preparing for their Higher National Diploma in Fine Art at the Institute of Art and Design were given the opportunity to showcase their work during an evening of youth talent organised by the President's Award Committee in Malta at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, supported by Banif Bank.

Banif Bank CEO Joaquim F. Silva Pinto greeted The Earl of Wessex at the La Vallette Hall and introduced him to the aspiring young local artists who proudly presented their artwork. In attendance were MCAST Institute of Art and Design Director Mr Stephen Vella and the student's lecturer Ms Sarah Mamo. HRH Prince Edward took time to view each and every work and to chat to the students who explained the concepts behind their art.

The idea behind the initiative was to offer students an important platform where they could exhibit their work. The Bank believes that this opportunity was a catalyst for the students' future careers as art professionals.

PARTICIPATION AT ME am CHIC WOMEN'S EXPO 2012



Students following the Hairdressing Course at the Institute of Community Services participated in the ME am CHIC Women's Expo 2012 held at MFCC between the 16 and 18 November 2012. They carried out several hair dressing duties while representing MCAST on the Schwarzkopf Stand. Besides enriching their portfolio, students had the opportunity to work on different clients groups with different requirements and thus gain more hands on experience and knowledge.

DRESS DOWN DAY

On an initiative of two members of staff Ian Jones and Andrew Luke Micallef, together with their Director, the Institute of Community Services launched a fund-raising campaign with a deference: a colour coded dress-down day on the last Wednesday of every month. The colour and theme was PINK for the first event and the funds raised – a reasonable amount of €407, is to be donated to Breast Cancer Awareness Organisations.



EUROSKILLS COMPETITION 2012



ELECTRONICS TECHNICIANS **AWARDED SILVER MEDAL**



Spa-Francorchamps, the famous Formula 1 racetrack in Belgium, hosted the third edition of the EuroSkills Competition between the 4 and 6 October 2012. More than 450 young persons from all over Europe competed against each other in more than 40 areas. This year the Maltese contingent returned with a silver medal.



The EuroSkills Competition 2012 was a spectacular international promotion of skills, centred on the best practice of hundreds of talented students, selected through national competitions. Plumbers, cooks, web designers, electricians, electronic technicians, welders, florists and hairdressers were tested against tough European standards for 20 hours. This year, MCAST represented Malta with a team of six competitors in five categories: electronics, welding, web design, graphical design and printing technician.

Unlike in race events, entrance to the racetrack was free-of-charge thus attracting more than 40,000 visitors including policy makers, government representatives, educational organisations (schools, vocational education and training centres, universities etc) and representatives of public and private entities. Besides the competition itself, visitors had the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities through the 'Try-a-Skill' Programme which is aimed at inspiring students in their training and career choices.

The EuroSkills Competition is a European professional body and most of the European countries are affiliated members. The Competition Development Committee is responsible for the overall organisation of the event. The competition is supported by a number of people from each participating country. Every country is represented by an Official and Technical Delegate together with a number of Chief Experts (CE), Deputy Chief

Experts (DCE), Experts (E), Team Leader and competitors. This all depends on the country's representing contingent.

The Experts, together with the Technical and Official delegate, form the backbone of the country's team delegation. The Expert is responsible for providing management, guidance and leadership throughout the competition and needs to liaise with the competitors to provide feedback about their progress to the Technical Delegate. During the competition the Technical Delegate, who acts as a Jury President, plays an important part in the smooth running of the whole EuroSkills Competition. Thus these must be of the highest integrity, honest, objective, fair and prepared to cooperate.

Malta participated in the previous EuroSkills Competitions held in Rotterdam in 2008 and in Lisbon in 2010 and obtained good results. Below is a list of medals won by MCAST students during the EuroSkills Competitions:

Rotterdam 2008:

- Silver medal in Web Design
- Silver medal in Electronic Technicians. They also won the day prize.

Lisbon 2010:

- Gold medal in Web Design
- Silver medal in Graphical Design.

BELGIUM SPA 2012:

- Silver medal in Electronic Technicians.



The competitors are tasked with real life situations and tested against "tough European standards" for 20 hours. Before the start of the competition both the competitors and their respective experts visit the competition venue to check equipment, verify that all tools are available, check material where applicable and carry out simple tests. This is of utmost importance to all competitors and is always done prior to the start of the competition.

Jethro Farrugia and Matthew Monreal competed as a team in the Electronics Technician category and bagged a silver medal for Malta. Both students joined the College at MCAST Foundation Electrical and Electronics Engineering Level 2 and progressed with their studies. The two students were tasked with challenges where they had to take the right decision in the shortest possible time. Their tasks included assembling a lift simulator, finding faults in the lift's electronic board and implementing

repairs. Both students were involved in the design of electronic boards and developed a particular programme for the lift.

Participation in the EuroSkills Competitions is very beneficial and helps the participants. The ideas developed in test projects, the discussions held prior to and during the competition, and the international exposure enriches their experience and knowledge.

The EuroSkills Competition exposes and promotes vocational skills practised all over Europe, thus assisting to promote vocational training. This in turn will attract more students to follow vocational courses. Students following vocational training are exposed to a variety of professional careers and have got a number of advantages over academic based courses. Graduates integrate more easily in jobs offered in industry and are being offered great opportunities.



VOCATIONAL TEACHER TRAINING UNIT

A WARM WELCOME TO MCAST'S NEW STAFF MEMBERS



The Vocational Teacher Training Unit organised its annual one-day Welcome Session to introduce new members of staff to the College ahead of the new academic year.

The new colleagues were welcomed at the Administration Building on the 10 October 2012. Ms Veronica Sultana, Coordinator of the Vocational Teacher Training Unit (VTTU), gave a short presentation entitled 'Introducing MCAST – Malta's Leading Vocational College'. They were introduced to the heads of the various MCAST administrative departments, who gave them an overview of the responsibilities and the services offered by their respective offices. These included Mr Ray Farrugia, the Registrar, Ing Vince Maione, Quality Assurance Director, Mr Oscar Borg, Administrative Director, Mr David Vella, Media and Public Affairs Manager, Perit Deborah Borg, Projects Manager, Mr John Bartolo, Information and Student Support Services Director and Mr Laurence Zerafa, the MCAST Librarian. The day's programme also included a tour of the MCAST Main Campus, visiting the different facilities available to students and staff.

During his welcome address, Mr Stephen Cachia, MCAST Principal and CEO, welcomed the new members of staff and assured them of his support in their work and wished them all the best of luck for the academic year ahead. Mr Anthony Saliba, the Deputy Principal, gave a quick outline of the main areas of his responsibilities.

A week later, the VTTU also held an Induction Session for MCAST's new lecturing staff. Ms Veronica Sultana presented an overview of the key features making up the vocational education learning set-up of the College. A short review of the characteristics of outcome-based programmes of the various awarding bodies within MCAST's curriculum was presented. This gave the lecturers an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the link between the competences required for employability and the established learning outcomes which facilitate the process of teaching. The lecturers were also introduced to the vocational assessment strategy of the College which is based on

grading criteria. After passing through these general specifications the new colleagues were briefed on the documents making up MCAST's policies, procedures, regulations and guidelines which can all be accessed through the MCAST website.

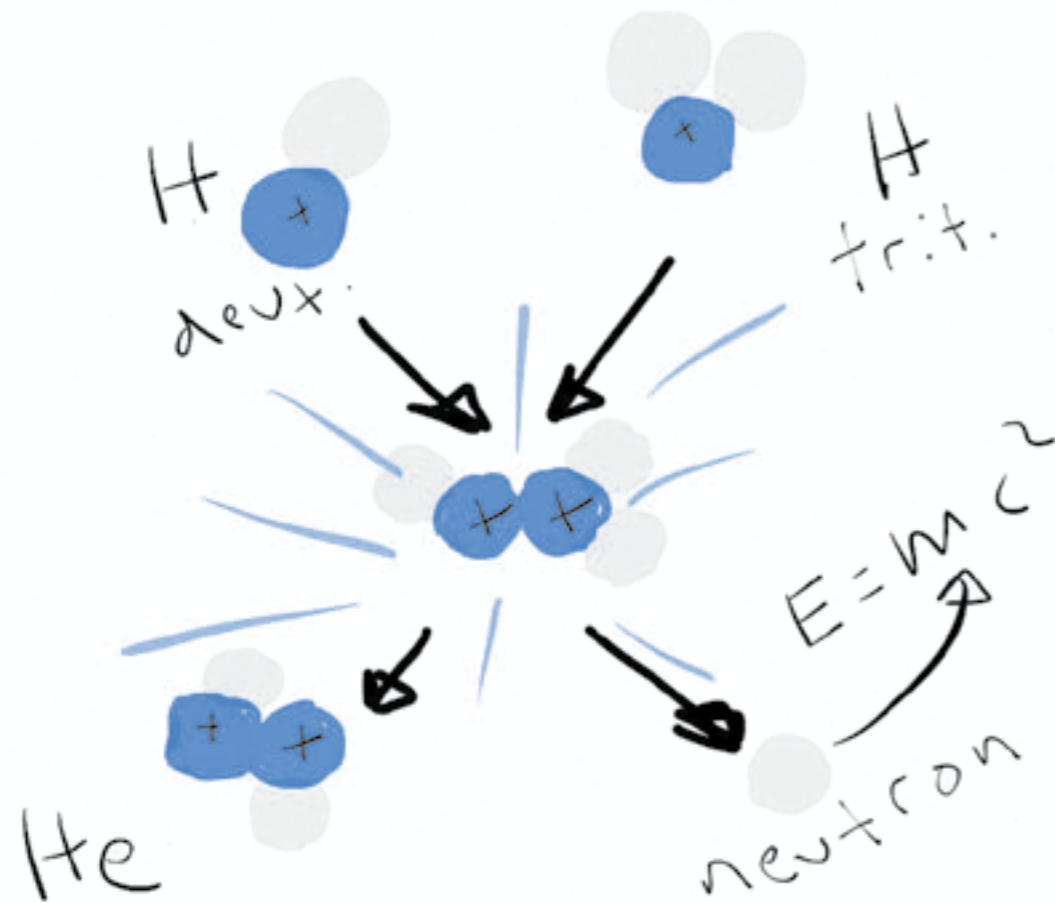
The new lecturing staff were recruited from different academic and industrial backgrounds. Some have more teaching experience than others, while others would have greater industrial experience in the subjects they are called to lecture. While one appreciates all types of experiences as providing a fundamental beginning of good teaching practice, a review of the recommended teaching and assessment methodologies in a vocational set-up is given utmost importance. Ms Sultana delivered a session focusing on the importance and benefits of the student-centred approach in both teaching and assessment processes.

The event also included a hands-on experiential session delivered by Ms Tatjana Chircop, an MCAST lecturer. The new lecturers were given the opportunity to go through the actual exercise of planning to deliver a vocational programme. They went through the planning and mapping of coursework as well as designing tasks related to assignment briefs. They even had a chance to find out more about the verification process of assignments. This was brought together with a review of the different learning styles and the different communication skills a lecturer could use to enrich his/her delivery and assessment methods and ensure that the learning experience is successful.

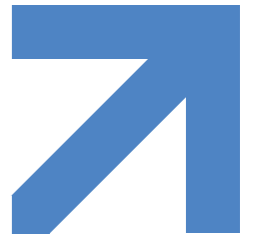
The successful outcome of these sessions was a result of good team work. The VTTU would like to thank the new staff who enthusiastically participated in all the activities that were planned and the MCAST members of staff who contributed to the organisation of these events, particularly Ms Grace Barbara, VTTU Clerk, Mr Salvu Grech, Precincts Manager, Mr Stephen Cassar, Mr Pierre Bonello and the rest of the Precincts team, Ms Carmen Spiteri and Ms Marisa Darmanin from Clentec, Mr Mario Falzon from the Communication, Media and Public Affairs Office, Mr Joseph Zammit, Mr Robert Cassar and Ms Sandy Demicoli from the Information and Student Support Services Department.

STUDENTSHIP AT FUSION FOR ENERGY

By Jean Paul Vella



Student Jean Paul Vella, currently reading for a Bachelor in Engineering degree in Electronics and Control, recounts his participation in a studentship in Barcelona from July to September 2012.



The main task during my studentship at Fusion for Energy was to carry out an extensive survey on a software tool which is used to simulate the IWS (In Vessel Viewing System) performance. The IWS mainly consists of six identical units located at the lower level of the ITER Vacuum Vessel (VV) and deployed on request in order to perform in-vessel inspections, either between plasma pulses or during a planned shutdown. This inspection includes visual examinations of plasma-facing components to verify damage and possible presence of particles/objects, and metrology measurements to assess global erosion and to estimate in-vessel dust quantities. Each IWS unit is made of the following two main subsystems:

- an IWS probe, capable of performing the laser-based in-vessel viewing and metrology
- a deployment system, capable of moving the IWS probe from its stowed position to its various working positions.

The studentship was mainly divided into three main phases including the debugging phase and suggestions for improvements, benchmarking of the software and a mapping study.

The debugging phase mainly consisted in becoming familiar with the software functions and using these functions to check for errors or bugs. Also improvements to the software functions and ergonomics were suggested in order to make the software more user-friendly and most importantly satisfy the real needs of the final user.

The scope of the benchmarking phase was to check and verify that the results and plots generated by the IVVS software (iVx) are correct. This task was carried out by comparing the plots achieved by the software versus plots generated by a Matlab code from the same point of view domain.

The mapping study mainly consisted of analysing a number of case studies set by the adviser and finally arriving at a set of conclusions about each of the cases. For example, one of the test cases was to analyse the benefit of having an elbow over a solely linear deployment.

The work carried out during the studentship period was documented in a final report and delivered in the form of a presentation.



KENNY MUSCAT

NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR



Mr. Kenny Muscat is the new Deputy Director of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering.

Mr. Muscat graduated with a B.Eng (Hons) in Electrical Engineering from the University of Malta in 2006. He worked as an Engineer at ST Microelectronics for three years where he was responsible for yield and quality improvement of several back-end processes in the manufacturing of BGA Integrated Circuits.

In 2009 Mr. Muscat joined the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering as an Assistant Lecturer. He delivered modules in Mathematics for Technicians / Engineers, Product Development and Innovation and Engineering Design. He was also assigned shadow lecturing duties for two modules in Renewable Energy Sources as part of the B.Sc(Hons) in Power Generation and Renewable Energy Sources. Mr Muscat was entrusted with the role of verifier on several engineering related modules and also acted as a mentor to degree students working on their thesis.

In November 2010, Mr. Muscat was promoted to Institute Coordinator and Lead Internal Verifier. As Institute Coordinator he assisted in the administration of the Institute and as Lead Internal Verifier, he ensured that the verification process for BTEC Engineering modules at Levels 3 and 4 were running smoothly.

In September 2010, Mr. Muscat successfully completed the Postgraduate Certificate in Vocational Education and Training offered by MCAST. At the same time he also progressed to the grade of Lecturer. In November 2011 he graduated with a Masters degree in Integrated Product Development specialising in Product Engineering, Manufacturing Engineering and Management.

For the past seven years he carried out voluntary work mainly with youth. He was involved in the organisation of youth exchanges and the delivery of several training courses mostly related to teamwork, leadership and the use of sports to make a difference in children's lives.



BUILD UP SKILLS

ENERGY TRAINING FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Project Reference Number: IEE/12/BWI

*By Martin Borg
Deputy Director
at the Institute
of Building and
Construction
Engineering*

'Build Up Skills' is a European initiative spanning across all the European Union member states. The objective of this project is to provide vocational education and training for the existing workforce within the built environment sector. It is supported and financed by the Intelligent Energy Europe Framework and by the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs. The first phase of the project will be concluded by July 2013, with the development qualifications related to energy efficiency and renewable energy.

MCAST, together with the Malta Chamber Foundation (MCF), the Malta Intelligent Energy Management Agency (MIEMA) and the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC) are the main local partners on this project. Additionally, this project is supported by various local institutions and stakeholders within the construction and renewable energy sectors.

The project is sub-divided into phases and MCAST's role includes the analysis of the national status quo report. The aim of this analysis is to primarily quantify the existing workforce within the construction sector and to identify the existing VET provision related to renewable energy and energy efficiency. MCAST in conjunction with the Malta Resources Authority and the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry has already provided training for Solar Thermal and Heat Pump installers and Photo-Voltaic installers.

The second phase of the project focuses on building a national platform for vocational training programmes, that will lead to qualifications, in the building industry. This requires the development and implementation of a response strategy, based on the results of status quo analysis. The main objective of this phase is to develop a national roadmap to ensure that skill gaps are adequately addressed, by means of vocational and education programmes for the existing and future workforce within the built environment sector.

RESPONSE STRATEGY LEADING TO PROVISION OF CVET PROGRAMMES

1. Analysis of status quo
- ↓
2. Content analysis of directives
- ↓
3. Skill matching and identification of gaps
- ↓
4. Training needs analysis (Train the trainer)
- ↓
5. Curriculum and CVET programme development
- ↓
6. Embedding within existing IVET programmes



These activities are beneficial to the students following courses at the Aviation Maintenance Training Centre (AMTC). The students were given the opportunity to mingle about with people holding various positions within the local Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facilities. These are their potential future employers. They also had the opportunity to showcase the MCAST Piper Seneca II Maintenance aircraft. It was hectic for the students due to the huge response from the general public. People were mingling around the MCAST aircraft, from the minute the gates opened, right through the time when the public was asked to vacate the exhibition area. Nevertheless the inexhaustible enthusiasm that the students present had, kept them going throughout the whole day without a minute of rest, so much so that a number of students were showing the visitors around the aircraft from the outside, the cabin and the aircraft cockpit, whilst other students explained the works of the engines of the Piper Seneca II. A lot of people also took the opportunity to sit at the pilot's seat and be given a quick overview of what the various controls in the cockpit do, how the various control surfaces are moved, and what each of the control surfaces achieves.

Whilst the students were attending to the MCAST aircraft or scouting around the various MROs present at the events, MCAST was also welcoming members of the public, some of whom were potential MCAST students, as well as parents of present and future students. The objective of MCAST's participation was not only to promote the aviation courses, but also to give information on the multitude of courses offered by all the MCAST institutes. In fact the MCAST staff present were kept very busy attending to the various queries from people coming from all walks of life, who were either interested in furthering their studies in a specific field, or else were considering a career change, and therefore required retraining to do the change.

MCAST received positive feedback and appreciation from the general public, from the Malta Aviation Society, organisers of the Malta International Airshow, as well as Malta Enterprise, organisers of the Safi Aviation Park Open Day. Undoubtedly a word of thanks goes to both of the above organisations, together with all those who made MCAST's participation in these events, not only possible but a great success, namely MCAST staff – both academic and administrative – as well as the Aviation Maintenance students who were on the front line at both events.

INSTITUTE PARTICIPATES IN THE MALTA INTERNATIONAL AIRSHOW

By Ing Leo Scicluna

The Institute of Mechanical Engineering once again participated in the Malta International Airshow and, for the first time, also participated in the Safi Aviation Park Open Day on the 7 October 2012.

HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN PHOTOGRAPHY

By Angela Cassar

Photography is widely perceived by the general public as pointing the camera and shooting your subjects, or rather 'capturing the moment'. The Higher National Diploma Photography Course goes beyond this simplistic concept and helps us delve deeper and discover the true meaning of photography.

We were guided by professionals to perfect our technique whilst seeking our own style. At the rate the industry is growing, simply producing a technically correct image should not be the main aim of a photographer. It is imperative that one gives his/her image something more valuable/ unique, not only for the sake of the art form itself, but also because it is what prospective clients, reputable suitors nowadays look for.

The projects covered throughout the course present us with the opportunity to work within different fields of photography and gain a better understanding of each sector. These include portraiture, studio work, location work as well as experimental photography. Every project entails a process starting with the research, idea

generation, development and the execution of the end product. This process disciplines us to be more efficient and innovative in our future projects.

These studies have enabled us to embark on a journey of discovery, which in time will enable us to be more knowledgeable in the highly competitive field of photography.

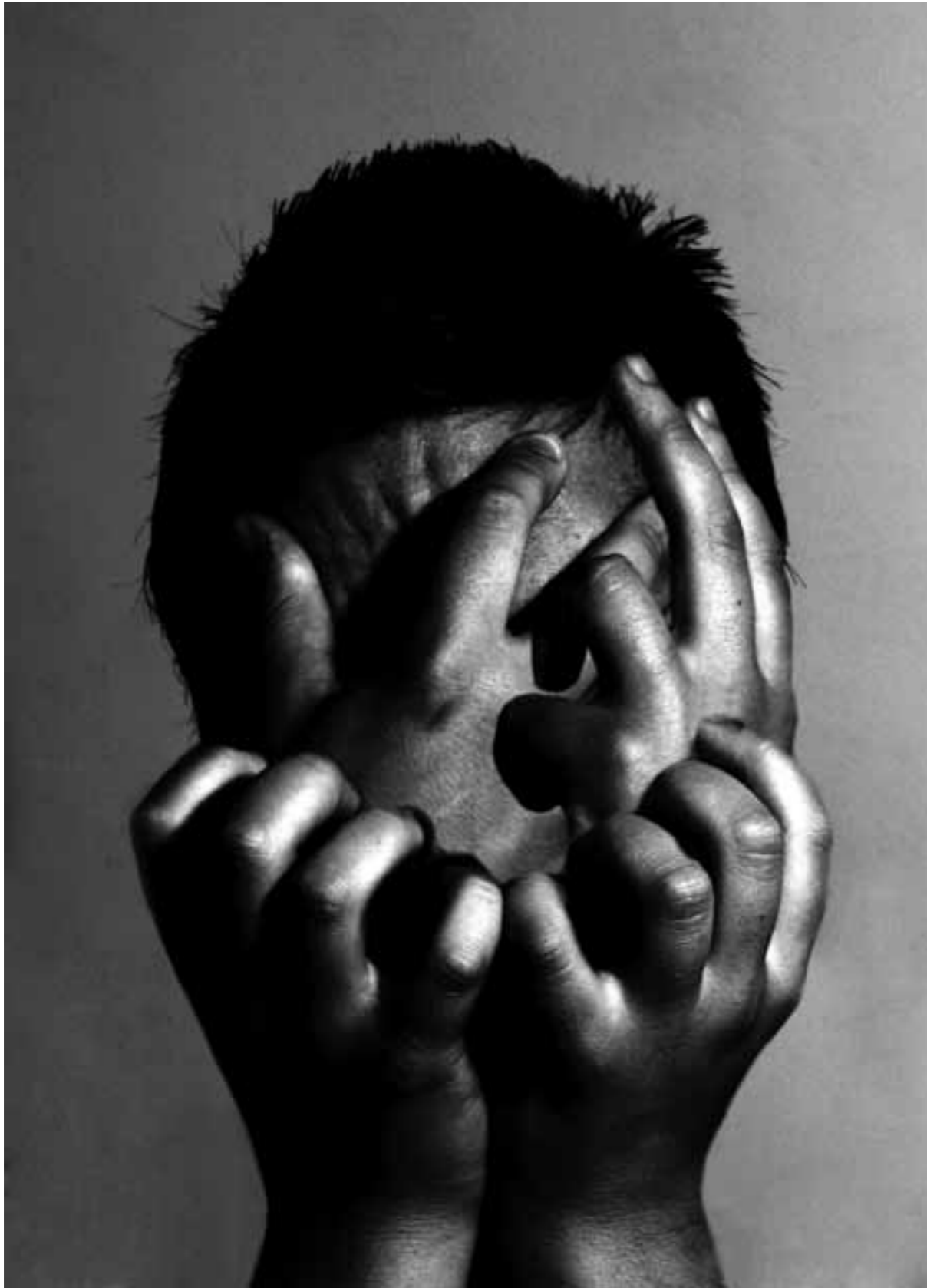
My definition of photography has not changed, but evolved. I personally believe that Susan Sontag encapsulated the meaning of photography when saying:

To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability.

SONTAG, 1977, P.15



Guilt



Haunted



Drunk



My tears are becoming a sea



Vinci



Weight



Caught



Thoughts are shadows



Venus



Infinity

MALTA'S NESCAFÉ® DOLCE GUSTO® DESIGN VOTED **2ND BEST** IN THE EURO DESIGN CONTEST



Lindsay Aquilina, a student following the Higher National Diploma in Graphic Design at the Institute of Art and Design, placed second in the Nescafé Dolce Gusto coffee machine design at the Euro Design's Contest award ceremony that was held in Milan. Ms Aquilina, who started the European contest in the 18th position, climbed all the way up until the second spot after NESCAFÉ® Dolce Gusto® coffee lovers continued to shower their love on her design on Facebook.

The vote is another feather in the cap for Lindsay Aquilina who topped the local contest from the participating 252 designs. Lindsay's organic design entitled Melody, drew more than 3,700 votes on Facebook which determined her position behind the most voted design from Portugal.

Lindsay's inspirations came mainly from tribal symbols. Although the design is "tattoo-like" in black and white with a touch of colour, the design inspires a number of imagery such as Maltese lace, Maltese silver filigree, insects, flowers and tribal totems. The design is so elegantly detailed that one can see different images every time, making the machine design surprisingly interesting on a daily basis.

'This was a great experience which I truly enjoyed! Participating in a European event has many benefits. Besides making new friends it gave me a boost in my personal life and my career!' said Lindsay Aquilina when contacted.





YELLOW PAGES COMPETITION



Claire Marie Borg, a student following the Higher National Diploma in Graphic Design, clinched first prize with her entry for the Yellow Pages front cover competition. The Yellow Pages board once again opted to launch their design competition among students at the Institute of Art and Design. Thus, Graphic Design students were able to submit their entries for judgement. Claire Marie's design, which placed the Yellow Pages publication within the renowned Ħaġar Qim temples, plays on the ongoing theme adopted by Yellow Pages, which revolves around the historical significance of the Yellow Pages book as being always by everyone's side. As part of this collaboration, Yellow Pages donated €300 worth of books to the Institute of Art and Design.



STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN THE BERLIN INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Six young Maltese film makers participated in the Berlin International Literature Festival, in Germany. The Maltese representatives in this festival included Jean-Pierre Briffa, Claudia Cachia, Gian Luca Mercieca, Matthew Muscat Drago, Kathleen Pearson and Darryl Schembri. They have just completed their studies in Media (Moving Image) at the Institute of Art and Design. The students presented six experimental short films dealing with the intertwining of secular daily life and religion, as part of the festival's section 'Europe Now'.

The films produced were inspired by a module in experimental film production, which forms part of the students' degree studies at MCAST. After the screening, three of the young filmmakers went on stage, to discuss their experience during the films' production and to answer questions by the audience. The students were accompanied by Stephen Vella, the Institute of Art and Design Director. Prof Veruschka Götz, from the Institute for Printed Media at Mannheim University of Applied Sciences, and Prof Hartmut Wöhlbier, Head of the Institute for Interactive Media at the same university, also assisted the six film makers during the films' production and their screening in Berlin.

The International Literature Festival Berlin is one of the biggest annual literature events in Germany, presenting new talents alongside recognised masters of world literature. Every year it includes about 180 events in 11 days, presenting over 150 authors and artists, with works including prose, poetry, children's and youth literature, political discussions, film adaptations of literature, and more.

WORK PLACEMENT IN GERMANY



Jennifer Mallia, an Art and Design student currently reading for a B.A. (Hons) in Fine Art, participated in an Erasmus work placement in Ruhr Recklinghausen, Germany.

Jennifer started out her work experience by translating German texts into English and editing photos for a bilingual catalogue. She then worked with a well-established artist called Emmy Rindtorff, where she had the opportunity to produce artworks and to exhibit her own work in a local museum at the Kutscherhaus (house of art) Recklinghausen. She was interviewed by journalists and also featured on two newspapers and websites. During her free time she visited some of the major internationally known museums such as the Van Gogh Museum and the Folkwang Museum. Jennifer also visited dOCUMENTA 13 in Kassel, a large exhibition which takes place every five years.

INTERN AT TOLY PRODUCTS



In an interview with MCASTlink, Chiara Darmanin, winner of this year's Toly Make-Up Packaging Design Competition, relates her experience as an intern at Toly Products, the international company operating in Malta in the design and manufacturing industry.

HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCE AT TOLY PRODUCTS?

Winning an internship with Toly Products was an achievement and an honour for me. This internship gave me the opportunity to experience and compare the differences between working as a designer in an established company and being a full-time student.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT FROM THIS INTERNSHIP?

This experience has been invaluable from multiple perspectives. I have enhanced my skills and knowledge in a range of areas including software. I also grasped the importance of working within a design team, especially throughout the idea generation process, which often saw us combining together different ideas. I also learnt about the importance of deadlines and multitasking at the place of work, which were emphasised so much by the lecturers at the Institute.

HOW HAS MCAST PREPARED YOU FOR THIS KIND OF JOB?

This experience has made me aware of the important skills and knowledge that MCAST has imparted to me and that are so essential for me to work in this type of position. For example the training on the design process, involving problem identification according to the client's brief, idea generation and definition of possible design solutions, through to the realisation of finalised sketches and designs.

DO YOU RECOMMEND THIS EXPERIENCE?

I feel that the time spent at Toly Products has made me realise how deep my love for design work is. It has allowed my learning to come full circle. I became aware of the importance of effective communication at different levels through art and design work, especially when presenting proposals to peers or even clients. Apart from being honoured at winning this competition, the opportunity to work within an internationally renowned company such as Toly Products will undoubtedly give me an edge in terms of portfolio and experience. Definitely recommended!



SIXTY DAYS OF ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

By Christine Gellel – Higher National Diploma in Animal Management



This year I had the opportunity to participate in a two-month Erasmus placement in Salento, Italy. Through this placement I had the opportunity of working in three locations including a sheep and cow farm, a dog's sanctuary and a veterinary clinic.

On the farm there were five hundred sheep and twenty cows to be milked every day in order to produce a variety of different cheeses. The experience of working on the farm was great as I had the opportunity to work with animals and also because I had the chance to work in different situations that vary from those found locally. I found this experience very enriching.

The dog sanctuary hosted around a hundred abandoned dogs. Lucia, the sanctuary keeper, is a wonderful woman, taking care of these homeless dogs all by herself and giving them the second chance they truly deserve. I also helped to rescue dogs from the streets. Although this got my adrenaline rushing because of the spirit of adventure this entailed, I always wondered how such beautiful, loving creatures can be thrown out on the streets facing the perils without companionship.

The dog sanctuary also had a small clinic where, once or twice a week, Dr. G. Madaro came to neuter and/or treat the dogs in need. I helped the vet prepare for the

surgeries and assisted where necessary. Apart from feeding and cleaning kennels and yards, I also took the dogs out for walks, removed the annoying fleas and ticks from puppies and gave them flea treatment, as well as bathed and groomed the canine guests, cleaned wounds, played with puppies and perhaps most importantly, helped new owners find a four-legged match.

In order to raise the much-needed funds for the sanctuary, a dog show for mixed breed dogs was organised. The turnout was satisfactory. I assisted in the organisation of this event and felt that my contribution was of enough value to help this sanctuary and the very good work that was being done there.

Every afternoon I went to the veterinary clinic where three impeccable veterinarians, Dr. M. Vetrugno, Dr. R. Manca and Dr. G. Garzia, taught me several things related to the handling of animals, the preparation of vaccinations and the cleaning of surgical instruments. There were also some rare cases and procedures that I had never seen before such as dermatological conditions, paralysis and also genetic eye problems.

This adventure in the Southern tip of Italy is an experience that I will treasure as I learnt so much from it!

THE NUMBER π PART 2



By Alexander Farrugia

In our last column, we discussed Archimedes' method to calculate the number π to any required degree of accuracy, which he used to calculate the value of π correct to 2 decimal places. In Part 2 of this series about the number π , we shall look at the work of two Chinese mathematicians, who managed to find better approximations of π between the third and fifth century A.D.

Liu Hui's method to find the value of π

Liu Hui was a Chinese mathematician who lived at around the third century AD. His method to calculate π bears some resemblances to Archimedes' method, but instead of working with an inscribed and circumscribed polygon, he used an inscribed polygon and another inscribed polygon with twice the number of sides as the first one. In Figure 1, we have an inscribed hexagon in green and an inscribed 12-sided polygon (called a dodecagon).

As one can see, the area of the 12-sided polygon is the area of the hexagon plus the area of six identical white triangles, and it is much closer to the area of the circle than the area of the hexagon. Thus, Liu Hui continued to double the sides of the polygon, and only calculate the increase in area due to the small triangles; he did not need to calculate the area of each new polygon from scratch. Note that if the radius of the circle is 1 unit, the area of the circle would be $\pi \times 1^2 = \pi$, and hence, by increasing these smaller and smaller triangles to the area of the hexagon, he got closer and closer to the value of π .

To calculate the area of the hexagon, we need to calculate the area of six identical equilateral triangles of side 1 unit. We had done this in our second article if you remember. If the radius of the circle is 1 unit, the area of the hexagon would be $\frac{3}{2}\sqrt{3}$ units (approximately 2.5981). It must be remembered that in the third century A.D., it was still difficult to evaluate square roots of numbers, as was the case in Archimedes' era.

Now we need to find the area of each blue triangle. Consider the diagram in Figure 2.

Figure 1
Inscribed 6-sided and 12-sided polygons

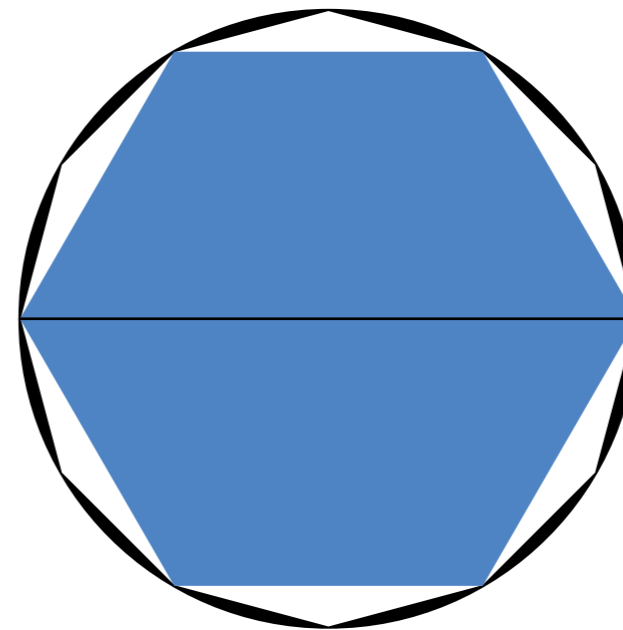
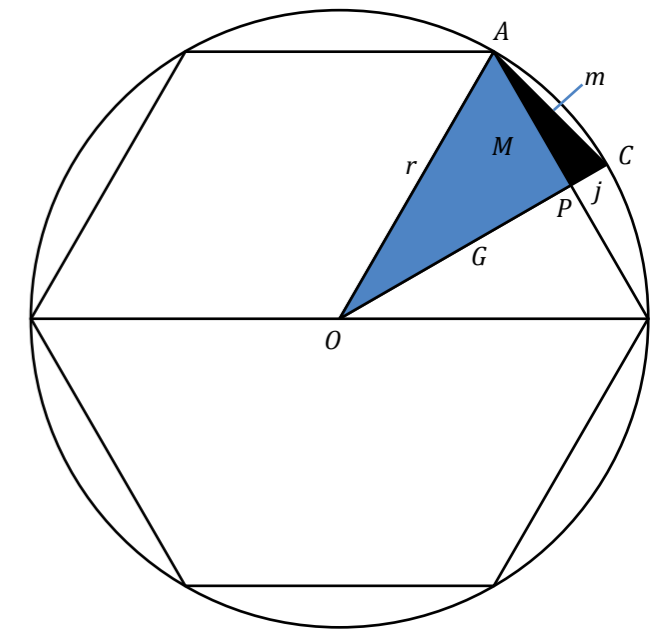


Figure 2
Finding the increase in area between the 12-sided and 6-sided polygons



Remember that $r=1$ in our case. Triangle OAB is equilateral, so $AP = \frac{1}{2}AB = \frac{1}{2}$. Triangle OAP is a right-angled triangle, so by Pythagoras' Theorem:

$$\begin{aligned} OA^2 &= OP^2 + AP^2 \\ 1^2 &= OP^2 + \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^2 \\ OP^2 &= 1 - \frac{1}{4} = \frac{3}{4} \\ OP &= \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \end{aligned}$$

Since OC is also a radius of the circle, $PC = 1 - OP = 1 - \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}$. Triangle APC is also right-angled, so its area is equal to $\frac{1}{2} \times AP \times PC = \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} \times \left(1 - \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}\right) = \frac{2-\sqrt{3}}{8}$ square units. Since this area represents $\frac{1}{12}$ of the area of all the white triangles in Figure 1, the area of the white triangles is thus $\frac{2-\sqrt{3}}{8} \times 12 = \frac{3}{2}(2-\sqrt{3})$ (approximately 0.4019). So this quantity is the difference in area between the 12-sided polygon and the 6-sided polygon, so the area of the 12-sided polygon is $2.5981 + 0.4019 = 3$ units... much closer to the value of π .

Liu Hui then continued to double the number of sides of the polygon, thus producing even better approximations of the number π . After getting to a 96-sided polygon, he got the approximation $\pi \approx 3.141024$.

When he continued doubling the sides of the polygon from this point onwards, he noticed that the difference in area between a polygon and another polygon with half its sides is approximately a quarter of what it was for the previous iteration. From this observation, he managed to show that $\pi \approx 3.1416$, which is correct to four decimal places, thus improving on Archimedes' approximation by 2 decimal places.

Zu Chongzhi's improvement

At around the fifth century AD., another Chinese mathematician, Zu Chongzhi, used Liu Hui's method to find an even better approximation to the number π . Incredibly, he used a polygon with 12288 sides and applied Liu Hui's method to show that $3.1415926 < \pi < 3.1415927$ thus finding π to an astonishing 7 decimal places. This value for π would remain the best approximation to the number π for the next 1200 years.

He also showed that this is close to the fraction $\frac{355}{113} \approx 3.1415929$, which is π correct to 6 decimal places. Today, it is proven that this fraction is the best possible fractional approximation to π using only three digits for both the numerator and denominator.



BYDGOSZCZ POLAND

A STUDY VISIT *By Conrad Aquilina – Subject Co-ordinator for English*



I had the pleasure of visiting a city with the dubious and quite unpronounceable name of Bydgoszcz, in the north of Poland. Flanked by a series of rivers and waterways, this colourful city perceives itself as Poland's own answer to Venice and if the series of cultural initiatives in Poland's eighth-largest city maintain their current exciting momentum, Bydgoszcz will rightfully merit the title of European Capital of Culture in 2016, two years ahead of Malta's own Valletta.

While I am not averse to cultural tourism and scenic touring when I can afford it, my five-day visit in Poland was the result of participating in a CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) study visit programme organised by two young, dedicated and energetic academics who lecture in English studies, literature and composition at Kazimierz Wielki University. KWU is a relatively young university which has been developing over the years to become the largest educational institution in the city, covering thirty-four subject specialisations and offering first and second degrees up to Master's level.

My decision to apply for the study visit, 'Academic writing skills, a necessity for education and work', was based on a number of reasons, chief of which was my interest in determining the importance given to academic writing skills in other EU countries, especially in non-academic institutions. Secondly, I wanted to gauge the success or otherwise of the various methods used to assess quality, content, relevance, accuracy, style and general use of language in directed writing, a language skill often assessed subjectively and arbitrarily. In this respect, it is my belief that Malta needs to provide for specific strategies to address the growing problem with writing at all levels, since it is becoming evident that at tertiary level a number of students from various faculties and institutions often struggle with paper and dissertation writing, the reason often being that English writing is considered to be secondary and only temporarily relevant rather than a logical requisite.

Mikolaj Sobosinski and Michal Mochoki, our hosts and organisers enriched our stay in Poland by merging daily visits to a number of faculties and institutions with informative

seminars, cultural tours (of major interest, neighbouring medieval Torun, birthplace of Nicolaus Copernicus) and a daily savouring of Polish cuisine and beer. The study visit was time-intensive but very productive on a number of fronts. I personally enjoyed meeting a number of teaching professionals who graciously invited us to observe their lessons and interact directly with their students. Such daily visits allowed the study visit participants to draw comparisons with their own country's educational systems as well as to distinguish pedagogical trends between a gimnazjum (lower secondary education), teacher training colleges, private vocational higher institutions and non-vocational higher institutions. In a number of cases I remarked that while I found some resistance to, or incomprehension of spoken English upon my arrival in Poland, with the elder generation being incapable of communicating in the language, this was generally not the case with the younger generation, especially a number of graduates at Kazimierz Wielki University who seemed excited to pursue their studies at masters and doctoral level in English, possibly because they recognize the opportunities that await them by embracing multi-lingualism.

Additionally, this study visit was instrumental in bringing together the shared expertise of various educators and management professionals from England, France, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, Italy and Turkey, together with Poland, who questioned the challenges, shortcomings and opportunities of education in relation to the study visit theme. Individual daily presentations facilitated discussion and opened the floor for debate. Representing Malta's case and drawing from personal lecturing experience on written English at both vocational (MCAST) and non-vocational (University of Malta) institutions, my presentation gave an overview of present education in Malta, with shortcomings and solutions, specifically drawing links between education and employment, graduate statistics in relation to gender, pass rates in formal education and a quick analysis of our students' skills base. One particular point I stressed was that there is a limit to independent thought which cannot

be restricted to mere opinion, and that if listening skills are related to speaking, then academic writing is a process which involves a degree of critical thinking and evaluation, and is therefore ultimately linked to reading.

At the end of what was perceived by all as a very fruitful encounter, all fifteen study visit participants had to compile a group report to be presented and eventually published by CEDEFOP on their site. Some of its salient points are:

- Decelerated learning, the idea that more is synonymous with less, and that in today's hectic world of fast foods and living on the fast lane, over-crammed curricula may not be digested by all learners.
- The integration of social media like Twitter or Facebook and IT technologies like Google blogs to make education more accessible and desirable, in particular facilitating foreign language learning as another useful tool.
- Separating the different language skills of speaking, listening, writing and reading and allocating adequate teaching sessions for each rather than integrating them into one session.
- Demystifying reading as a practice which is tiring or school-related and making it enjoyable and engaging by encouraging a revision of attitudes towards both 'low' and 'high' culture.
- An over-reliance on worksheets and notes which leads to books being avoided or under-valued.

This was my first actual experience of forging academic links on this scale, the results of which has led to interest by Kazimierz Wielki University in Poland to develop an exchange programme with MCAST for students and teaching staff alike, as well as embarking upon other EU-funded projects and research. Talks are underway.

PAOLO

*Ah finally the spirit of the season is kicking in! I hope you are all doing well out there! This edition of MCASTlink features the life and career of one of the best house underground deejays in the world. Ladies and gentlemen, **Paolo Mojo!***



By Jurgen Borg

Paolo Mojo is firmly established as a leading light on the underground house music scene with a large global following and a consistent production schedule that keeps him in demand all over the world. A true 'international', there are not many countries that haven't had a touch of the Mojo magic. He has earned himself a formidable global fan base thanks to his hectic schedule. Womb in Tokyo, Ministry of Sound in London, Avalon in Los Angeles, Warung in Brazil, Wonderland in Ibiza, Chinese Laundry in Sydney and Zouk in Singapore are just some of the venues he graces consistently. It is all built on the back of a consistent, high profile discography. 2011 saw five consecutive Top 10 Beatport genre releases in a row - from his own singles Engine Room and All Night Alright, to the collaboration Pitch Black with Zenbi, his now legendary remix of Filthy Rich Love Lost on Neurotraxx Deluxe to the single Wasted Youth on Deeperfect, the hits kept flowing throughout 2011.

Previously successful singles were released on Noir (Crazy for You), Hysterical (Disco Kiss) and Younan Music (He's The Man) and his track 1983 on Eric Prydz' Pryda Friends has become a true club classic. He has also released tracks on Pryda and Mouseville (the only 'outside' artist to do so) and a varied and vast list of other labels. These include Stereo, Saved, NRK, Cr2, Bedrock, Toolroom, Renaissance, Great Stuff, Positiva, EQ Recordings, Factomania, Little Mountain, Curfew Nervous and Ego Records. At the heart of his work lies his own label Oosh, which over the course of the last three years has landed him two BBC Essential New Tunes and two Beatport overall top ten hits. It is no surprise then, that he was name checked as one of the hottest producers of the year in 2008 by Pete Tong on BBC Radio One, and has scored two well received Essential mixes for Radio One already.

With an astonishing work ethic in the studio and his endless special re-edits, he is an innovative DJ whose enviable technical ability and a thriving, huge loyal underground fan base, ensure that he will remain a star of the scene for many years to come.





THE INTERVIEW

CAN YOU RECALL THE TIME WHEN YOU FIRST DISCOVERED THAT MUSIC WOULD BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF YOUR LIFE?

From a very early age to be honest. I used to be the kid who would sit by the stereo at house parties and demand to play the music. I made mix tapes using two cassettes. I played around with the piano and quickly started to collect and devour all kinds of music.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU THE MOST?

Talent, passion, creativity and risk takers.



WHY HOUSE AND TECHNO MUSIC?

I find house and techno music give me the whole range of expression as there are ways to articulate every emotion and state of mind. I love their hypnotic nature and the ability they give you to create a mood with people. You do not always need a vocal to do it, although vocals work well too. It is literally the soundtrack to life.

A QUESTION WHICH WE ENJOY ASKING: MUSIC UNITES US ALL IN A COMMON ATTITUDE OF JOY AND HAPPINESS... HOW MUCH OF THIS STATEMENT WOULD YOU CONSIDER TO BE TRUE IN RELATION TO THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES YOU HAVE VISITED?

I would agree completely. Music is the common thread that has run through all my experiences all over the world. Quite simply if it wasn't for the music I wouldn't have been there.

YOU HAVE PERFORMED IN MALTA, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE?

I have played four times in Malta, a couple of smaller gigs and a couple of Sunday night summer parties. The summer parties were exceptional to be honest. I miss those nights!

WHEN DID YOUR FIRST GIG ABROAD TAKE PLACE, HOW OLD WERE YOU?

I worked as a consultant in the city before working as a full time DJ. My first gig abroad was in 2001, in Tel Aviv, Israel and I was 24 at the time.

WHAT ARE THE BASIC INGREDIENTS TO YOUR SUCCESS?

Belief in yourself. If you believe in yourself it will infuse everything you do. It is really important. There will be moments where it is stronger than others, but if you keep that fundamental belief in yourself it will really pay off.

FUTURE PLANS?

More of the same, touring and producing. At the moment I am focusing on new material so I am quite heavily involved in the studio.

ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO IMPART TO ASPIRING ARTISTS?

Do not be afraid to listen to people who inspire you and take your cues from there. That is how all music is made, building and adapting and twisting what's gone before. After all if you are not inspired by something, then you're just not inspired - period.

There you go... another issue and another phenomenal artist to go with it. As with previous interviews, we would like to thank Paolo for his time and wish him the very best of luck for his future plans! As for you guys out there I would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year! Make the very best out of this time, enjoy it to the full (because we all know that the best clubbing happens during these days) but do take care and be careful – next year promises to be better than this one, so make sure you get to see it. Drinking is a yes if you are not planning to drive but a definite no if you are going to. Thanks for following – until next time!



THE OLYMPIC GAMES

LONDON 2012

By Adele Muscat – Sports Co-ordinator

It is the dream of any sports person to attend the Olympic Games and mine even more so having been the Sport Psychologist for the Maltese Olympic Committee for 13 years and a lecturer on this subject at MCAST. Although I had already attended the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, I was looking forward to London 2012 since these promised to be big games.



The first priority is to keep focused on your task. Mine was to help the athletes prepare for their competition mentally and to help them deal with the many distractions present at the biggest sporting event in the world. Distractions which are at times difficult to handle even for me, now having attended a multitude of Small Nations Games, Commonwealth, Mediterranean and Olympic

Games. I also had an administrative role since I also hold an executive post within the Olympic Committee. Administrative duties were various. Collecting any mail received, checking out transport, greeting and looking after the many guests visiting the Olympic Village, booking and getting tickets for our athletes and officials to be able to go and watch other games etc.

So yes, our days at the Olympic Games were full. Also, there are lots of emotions that need to be handled. Athletes are anxious about their competition, so are coaches. Administrators are keen on getting the results and keeping everyone happy.

Distractions present included the atmosphere in the Olympic Village. Here you have all the official teams, all the top athletes living together in flatlets. So you go into the gym and see the American Basketball Dream Team training away, you go for lunch and in the huge refectory you bump into Michel Phelps trying to hide himself in a large hoodie so as not to be recognised. Usain Bolt lived in the block in front of us; the American sprinters and swimmers – Tyson Gay, Alison Felix, Ryan Lochte lived next door; the Italian boxers would come out and train just below our windows in the afternoon. So there was a lot of action all around and a lot of famous people on every corner.

The days in the village at times passed quickly. Very often they involved breakfast and then going with the athletes to their competition. After lunch we would do any administrative duties or tour the village with some guests. Later on in the evening I would have sessions with athletes who requested them and visit the gym or go for a run. Once our team had finished competing we then had the opportunity to watch some games

too. I managed to watch men's hockey, men's water polo, men's football final, women's tennis final, men's tennis semi-finals, athletics, swimming, equestrian, women's gymnastics and men's double trap shooting. I was also lucky enough to have a great seat (not too far off from the Royal family) for the Opening Ceremony. Unfortunately not all the team can parade in the Opening Ceremony, however I then got my turn in what was to be an amazing closing ceremony with all the well known British bands and singers.

Seeing the Maltese athletes in action brought on a lot of emotions. It takes a lot out of them: some are happy, some are disappointed. But all have put in their all to try and achieve the best result possible for them and for their country. Seeing other top athletes in action, the crowd cheering on especially when a British athlete is involved... or Usain Bolt, what a great atmosphere.

Of course all big games come with their drama. The security checks, the terrorist threats, the doping cases, the nasty injuries and sporting disappointments. There are also the interesting stories such as that of Oscar Pistorius who competed with prosthesis in both the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the case of Semenya, the South African female athlete who needed to undergo gender testing and the tales behind Chinese athlete training regimes and athletes from war-torn countries. It was also the Ramadan, so this did put added strain on the Muslim athletes.

The London Olympic Games were good games, they left a legacy but like all games they bring on the sadness that all is now over and that it will be four more years until the next Games. No doubt Brazil 2016 will be games that everyone will look forward to too.

MCAST FITNESS GYM

CORRADINO CAMPUS



The new gym at the MCAST Main Campus is now open. Students and members of staff may make use of this gym between 10:00 hrs and 18:00 hrs on weekdays. The gym may be closed for a couple of hours per week due to it being used by sports students for lessons. The gym is free of charge for all MCAST students and members of staff. Please do make sure you wear the proper attire, use own towels when using the machines and handle all equipment with care. A gym instructor will be on site to offer assistance.



CAMPING

Between the 7 and 9 November 2012 all students studying sports within the Institute of Community Services attended a team building camping activity at the Scouts Headquarters in Golden Bay. The students were accompanied by their lecturers Dorianne Bonnici, Renzo Kerr Cumbo, Dermot Galea, Matthew Muscat Inglott and Sports Co-ordinator Adele Muscat.

The lecturers organised a number of different activities for the students. These included the always popular beach volley, beach soccer, beach handball and dodgeball. Fun games were great fun too and were very well run by the final year sports students. Matthew Muscat Inglott also organised fieldcraft sessions. The first session included an outdoor lecture on finding direction without a compass. This covered finding North using the sun, stars, moon, and constructing an improvised compass. The second session focused on judging distance. He went over various techniques to estimate the proximity of objects or features, and calibrated walking pace to 100m in order to judge the distance covered during trekking. The skills learned were used on a tough trek on the final night.

The students also had the opportunity to learn Bootcamp. Bootcamp is an army-style approach to physical fitness that includes physical training sessions involving plenty of sprinting and lifting including fireman's lifts!



This camping trip proved to be very valuable for students and staff alike and was a thoroughly enjoyable experience. Any members of staff that would like to organise a camping trip for their students are asked to contact the Sports Co-ordinator.

JANUARY TOURNAMENTS

Any students interested in participating in a tournament and forming part of the MCAST Sports Team are asked to contact the Sports Co-ordinator, Ms Adele Muscat by sending an email on adele.muscat@mcast.edu.mt. Every year MCAST competes against Junior College Sixth Form, Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School, St. Aloysius Sixth Form, De La Salle Sixth Form, St. Martin's Sixth Form and Gozo Sixth Form. One may choose to participate in football, basketball, volleyball and table-tennis. Both males and females are invited to participate. These tournaments will take place in January 2013.



MALTA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION TOURS

A number of MCAST students have been helping the Maltese Football Association (MFA) with its stadium tours. These tours involve taking younger students from other schools around the MFA facilities and teaching them about the history of football in Malta. At the end of the session the MCAST students hold a practical football session for the younger students. The MFA presented certificates to our students who helped in this initiative.

OUT IN THE WILD

ADVENTURE SPORT IN ALASKA

By Adele Muscat – Sports Co-ordinator



Some of us fancy 5 star hotels, others will want a cruise, some fancy partying, whilst others fancy shopping. My friends and I seek adventure out in the wild, far from it all, from the phone, email and internet and the hassles of everyday life.

This year our wild spirit took us to Alaska, an expensive destination but one which left us in awe throughout the trip. Nadia Haber, Art and Design Lecturer and I, together with another friend Andrew embarked on a trip of a lifetime last August, during the summer recess.

Alaska is a difficult destination to travel in on your own so we decided to join two outdoor companies. On arrival at 11.30pm we took on the arduous task of driving for some 3 hours in the middle of the night in what is moose-infested country. This can be very dangerous and one must be very cautious. Just a

couple of hours later we started off on our adventure with white water rafting. Seeing there was not much water at this time of the year it was nothing too tough... nonetheless Nadia still managed to land unceremoniously overboard... thank goodness for the dry suit! Our next activity was glacier trekking on the Matanuska Glacier. First we had the task of putting on the crampons the right way round, then trying not to stumble on these stiletto like pinnacles. But we soon got the hang of them and trudged along amongst the icy pinnacles and crevasses. Such magnitude, all that ice around you, what an amazing sight!



Ice-climbing, was the next activity, one I had always dreamt of doing. Apart from the crampons on our feet, now we also had an ice-axe in each hand... I could already see myself hitting myself accidentally with it... in fact I still have some scars on my hands! With ice-climbing you need to first kick in one foot in at right angles to the ice wall, then kick in the other foot then dig in one ice-axe into the ice, then another, step by step up. You also need to consider the hollow patterns in the ice... in some places the crampons and ice axes will go in much more easily and keep you stuck in there, otherwise you will just fall of and end up dangling on the safety rope, legs in mid air and axes hitting you at all angles! What one has to consider too is the lactic acid accumulating in your arms as this can make it difficult to keep on proceeding up the ice face.

On the next part of our trip we met some other travellers and our guide Scott, a Canadian. The other travellers included two female Portuguese lecturers and a Danish professor who we were to spend the next eight days with. We started off with a long drive to Denali national park. On the way we stopped for a short trek. And here we got the first of many bear talks. Our guide explained how we were to handle any bears. If we encountered a black bear we were to challenge it, basically box it back... yeah right. If we encountered a brown bear we needed to wave our arms above our head to look bigger, talk to it and sing to it... seriously have you ever heard my

singing... bear would run miles I guess. If the bear makes contact with you, you are to play dead. As to moose you need to run as you can outrun a moose and hide around the trees. Luckily enough we didn't encounter any big animals on this trek but being out there on your own, makes you be very much on your guard.

The next day we spent 8 hours in a bus looking for wild animals and enjoying the amazing scenery all around. Luckily enough we did get to see a couple of moose and bears close up as well as a fox and some birds. That evening we went for dinner where the bus from the film 'Out into the wild' is situated. The next day we visited the dog sledding company and we went for another trek. Then we returned to our tent for our second night sleeping in the wild. Here again one has to be careful not to leave anything with a smell in the tent for fear of the bears coming over to explore. They will move away if they smell human but will come and check any other smells, whether they are toiletries or chocolate. One needs to keep away at least 300 feet from a bear and not intimidate it in any way. Only a couple of days after our visit to Denali, a curious traveller got killed photographing a bear close up.

After some travelling we awoke to an amazing day in Valdez. Glorious blue skies and snow capped mountains for miles all around us. Often referred to as



the "Little Switzerland" of Alaska, Valdez is beautifully situated at the base of the towering Chugach Mountains on the shores of Prince William Sound. Made famous by the Alaska Pipeline, and later the Exxon Valdez oil spill, Valdez has become a popular tourist destination. We made our way to the kayaking company where we were kitted out and then made our way on the boat which was to take us into Prince William Sound for our kayaking amongst the icebergs trip. What an absolutely amazing experience this was.. Kayaking for a couple of hours amongst breaking ice-bergs, freezing water, curious seals, the tinkle of the ice and the amazing views of snow capped mountains and glaciers all around you. What a truly enjoyable experience.

The next day we caught the ferry and once again made our way across Prince William Sound to Seward. Here we went out for a glacier and wildlife cruise into the heart of Kenai Fjords National Park. We observed abundant wildlife that can be including whales, sea otters, endangered Stellar sea lions, Dall porpoises, and colonies of nesting sea birds – including Puffins, cormorants, and Bald Eagles to name a few. On the way we visited an active tidewater glacier and watched and listened for falling ice. This is one of Alaska's premier wildlife and glacier viewing trips. That eve we were to sleep in a hotel. I was ready for this at this point...nothing like a proper warm shower, laundry service and a cosy double bed! The next day whilst the others opted for another glacier trek I decided to do the city thing. or rather small town thing! I visited the very interesting sea life centre where I learnt more about the Exxon-Valdez oil spill and how the wildlife in this area had been affected. We then made our way to our final campsite where we could have a cosy bonfire and toast marshmallows and drink mulled wine!

The next day, Nadia and I opted to go fishing. This was a real laugh... we caught... each other, trees, our instructor, the anchor line... and finally we caught some 7-8 fish each including some huge soc-eye salmon, dolly vardons and trout. The only problem is that rules regarding fishing are very strict over there and no, the 'imma jiena Malti' doesn't work. We could only keep one fish of each kind we caught and anything over 16 inch you can't keep and anything below 12 inch you can't keep either. Which totally restricts what you can take home with you. We only ended up keeping one fish and having it for dinner that evening. But Nadia and I were a sight to see with those huge fishing dungaries, throwing the line time and time again in this little fishing boat and across the river bed, surrounded by huge red salmon. That afternoon we then went for a trek where we encountered a linx. Thank goodness it wasn't too curious.

On our last day with this company we drove back towards Anchorage where we said our goodbyes and spent some time discovering the sites of this town. Here we spent three days relaxing, doing some shopping, visiting the Alaska native heritage centre where we got to know more about the Eskimos and rubbing noses. We also visited an Ulu knife factory and went for a bike ride along the Tony Knowles Trail. The highlight of this trip was coming face to face with a male moose with full antlers... thank goodness for good brakes on the bike, otherwise I would be mince meat.

This was truly a magnificent trip, and definitely I would choose the wild option instead of the cruise any day. Spending so many nights in a tent can be uncomfortable at times however being so close to the wild is an experience few can talk about. The journey there and back is tough... four flights – Anchorage, Seattle, San Francisco, Frankfurt, Malta and takes nearly three full days of travel. But it surely was worthwhile!





THE CHRISTMAS STORY

LUKE 2:1-21

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them and they were so afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will towards men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

PEACE AMONG MEN OF GOOD WILL (Luke 2:14)

What would the world be without people of good will? People who willingly give their part and strive for justice, peace, harmony and joy; people who are ever ready to listen to other people's pain and difficulties and do their utmost to alleviate their hardships; people who out of their free will volunteer to give a helping hand to do something beautiful for others? Christmas invites each and every one of us to be men and women of good will. Such an invitation is open to all whether Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Gnostic, Sceptic or Atheist! All of us are called to be people of good will! This good will in us seems to please God's eyes immensely. In fact some Holy Bibles translate Luke's verse 14 as "Peace among men with whom He (God) is pleased." And God is promising his peace to us... a different kind of peace, a deeper kind of peace that only the heart can perceive.

LAI D HIM IN A MANGER, BECAUSE THERE WAS NO PLACE FOR THEM IN THE INN (v.7)

An episode which impresses me every time I read the Christmas story is that of Joseph knocking at people's houses and asking at the inn for a place where Mary could give a decent birth to her son Jesus. Yet there was no place for Jesus! The evangelist John describes this painful event as scandalous. "He (Jesus) was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive Him." (John 1: 10-11)

We Christians know who this Jesus is. He is the Saviour of the world, our Saviour, my personal Saviour. Jesus is the son of God made man. No other religion has its GOD becoming MAN, putting upon himself our humanity (and what it implies!) and dying for us on the cross, rising from death after three days and now sitting at the right hand of God the Father, interceding for us all. This same Jesus will come at the end of time to have justice done. It is this same Jesus for whom there was no place at the inn! There was no place for this loving God!

The inn in Luke's Gospel can easily be referred to our hearts, to my heart! And I should honestly ask myself today what kind of place do I have for Jesus in my heart! Is there a place for Him at the inn?

BE NOT AFRAID (v. 10)

This is the assuring message of the angels to the frightened shepherds. "Do not be afraid." How much we need to hear that ourselves today in our moments of tragedy, of failure, of illness and pain, of anxiety and insecurity! Do not be afraid. And we know the reason

for this: because Jesus is with us as much as He was with the apostles on the boat threatened by the raging sea. He (Jesus) might seem at times to be absent, asleep, indifferent, cool... Until, at one point, He wakes up and commands the wind and the waves to calm down! (Luke 8: 22-25)

Once I received an email with the 365 moments where this consoling, encouraging message is proclaimed in the scriptures. I was amazed to learn that there was one for each day of the year! How much we need to hear that!

I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS OF A GREAT JOY WHICH WILL COME TO ALL THE PEOPLE (v. 11)

We are not afraid (that afraid!) because of the good news, the good news who is Jesus Himself. Jesus who is Love, Kindness, Mercy and Compassion. Jesus who knows everything about us. Jesus in whose warm heart and hands we strive to live and move forward. Jesus the only way to the loving Father. Jesus the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep. Jesus the Way, the Truth and the Life. Jesus who accompanies us on life's journey. The ever present Jesus. Jesus who has overcome our worst enemy – death. Jesus the Resurrection and Life. Jesus our great brother who made us beloved sons and daughters of Our Father in Heaven. Jesus who takes us with Him to Heaven, so that where He is, we will be with Him also!

Note that this good news of great joy is for all the people (of the world). So it is news for you too!

LET US GO OVER (v. 15)

That was the challenge taken up by the shepherds. It needed faith, it needed energy, it needed leaving the comfort of their sleeping bags and the warm fire, it needed leaving their herds aside, it needed waking up and searching! And they found Jesus.

What does this tell us? It is telling us that we too should go over. Are we ready to take up the challenge in faith? Are we ready to set aside our comforts, our securities and our usual plans? Are we keen to find Jesus? Is He worth searching for?

HE WAS CALLED JESUS (v. 21)

This is Jesus whom we are celebrating this Christmas. He is the only reason for this great world-wide festivity. Nothing else should take his place. His name should shine on Christmas Day. It means 'Jahweh saves'. And we do need his saving love, the saving love of Emmanuel – God is with us. Come Jesus. Come to us. We need you badly!

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