Comment & Letters

Illogical solution for Mrieħel bypass

- Transport Malta continues to embarrass avoid modern approaches to protecting pedestrian and means to see even more people being walked.
- In the latest twist to the Mrieħel bypass saga (Mrieħel Bypass Just Got More Dangerous, December 3), TM’s response to the death of two young girls on this bypass is to install traffic barriers reportedly on the basis that “...for safety reasons, people have to be discouraged from walking along arterial roads”. This is truly astonishing; rather than taking steps to encourage drivers to drive responsibly they are now invited to drive carelessly. They will also have barriers to prevent them going off the side of the road. If “low-see-thru” – this will be for nobody else’s benefit because the idea behind the barriers is to keep the road clear of pedestrians at the first place.

- Installing barriers to deter pedestrians instead of addressing the problem of danger to pedestrians by introducing some form of traffic calming goes against the principle that roads are a public space which belongs to everybody and that there must be mutual consideration for all those who might need to use it, be it pedestrians, children or cyclists. This misguided decision adds yet another no-go area for humans by giving priority to motor traffic and not people when the needs of both can, and should, be accommodated.

- The reasoning behind this decision would be acceptable if this bypass was a long stretch of high-speed motorway, but it is not. It is a short one-mile bit of road which separates a small community from Qormi’s centre.

- In an earlier letter a suggested solution was to calm the traffic by creating a roundabout at the junction with the side road leading into the industrial estate and installing one or two well-posted zebra crossings with bell/beacon flashing signs from Qormi’s centre to the roundabout.

- The zebra crossings would have a slightly raised platform with a central refuge island and clear road markings and possibly a rumble strip to remind drivers of the crossing ahead. This would exert sufficient traffic calming to slow traffic slightly and it would make the road safer for people to cross without unduly lengthening the transit time because pedestrian need to cross very seldom.

- As things now stand, vehicles must anyway slow down to around 60km/h at about halfway along the bypass in order to avoid being caught by a speed camera; this, of course, encourages drivers to drive as fast as they can before they slow down for the camera. If, say, a speed limit at low 60km/h were to be imposed on this short bypass it would cause very little delay. Travelling at 80 kph, a distance of one mile can be covered in 72 seconds; travelling at 60 kph, it will need 96 seconds. Therefore travelling faster at 80 kph represents a saving of just 4 seconds. The logical and common-sense solution is to introduce some form of traffic calming as, for instance, zebra crossings, which would reduce travelling time only by a few seconds. Surely the welfare of pedestrians – and human lives – are worth more than these few seconds!

George Debono
Sliema

Little girl’s dramatic experience of big dog

A couple of days ago a huge Rotweiller attacked a soft toy which was in the hands of a little girl at a St Julian’s restaurant. Thank God I did not injure the girl, although it gave her and her parents the fright of their life.

The owner of the dog should have known that he should not let his dog out, especially when it was on a leash. And for the safety of the public he should ensure that the dog is appropriately muzzled when he takes it out.

Let us hope that the owner, and indeed all owners of large dogs, will make due care in future.

Stefano Fiorini
Sliema

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Falling standard of the Maltese language

- There’s been plenty of genuine criticism that the Maltese don’t speak their language properly. However, there is also the issue of the foreign words when there is the equivalent in the vernacular. The main culprit for this sad state of affairs is the media, especially the various TV stations. They are to blame for the bastardisation of our language. The people responsible for the respective stations should explain that the presenters always speak proper Maltese and tell their guests beforehand to do the same if it’s a Maltese programme. News-casters are not to blame if they use foreign words in front of them is badly constructed or not up to standard. In the old days these were seen beforehand by a man responsible to check the script. The recent unfeasible howler which was repeated a number of times by the different newsreaders was kapax in Kollaqja (left feet) as if the woman never heard the singular word sitting. And why are not the telephone numbers and street names in the commercials not always said in Maltese? Why, for example, use foreign words in presenting the whole evening in English and then not seem to be quite comfortable doing it, with a few words here and there in Italian. Had it been an English presentation, I would have perhaps accepted an English version. But with all the participants being Italian, I see no reason why the presentation was all done in English.

What a shame to our unique Maltese language.
Doreen Borg
Sliema

Car spaces reserved for the privileged

- I would like to know why policy is being used by the Siggiewi local council in issuing permits for reserving parking spaces in the village square. On Sunday, part of the square was reserved from 10.30 a.m. till noon because a wedding was taking place. Residents who had parked overnight were asked to move their vehicles to make way for the wedding guests cars. This is an outright discrimination. It seems that some are more privileged than others, and neither do they have the luxury of having their own reserved parking space. I wonder if the council is there to safeguard the residents’ rights or otherwise.

Louise Siggiewi
Siggiewi

Malta and Gozo’ or ‘Malta of Gozo’?

I read with interest Joseph M. Brin- caphane’s article titled “Malta and Christ- ian Gozo” (December 6) and it was with satisfaction that it concludes with “The documentation that has become available...can allow us to trace a picture into the medieval form of Christian continuity under Muslim rule in Malta and Gozo.” It is “the singsignificance in the belief of the conclusion we give to that” I find fault and on which I would like to comment.

Prof. Brincaphane disagrees with the interpretation of the place name Melita or Melitaea as Gozo situated to any recent joint publication ‘Tristis’ et Melitago. which he arrives at in his paper, and each of Malta and Melitea’s name. Prof. Brincaphane concludes that I should take into account the geographical position of each of the two times “Melite” is mentioned (cf. 8IVc) occurs in connection with St Paul’s appearance on Malta. It is clear that the poet here intends to be as factual as possible, the island was called “Maltas”’. This is mentioned twice in the reference text to the archipelago: “Melita et Melitaea” (we then learn that the island was called Maltas), ‘Malta’ is mentioned twice in the text to the archipelago: “Melita et Melitaea” (we then learn that the island was called Maltas). This is mention ed twice in the reference text to the archipelago: “Melita et Melitaea” (we then learn that the island was called Maltas). This is mention ed twice in the reference text to the archipelago: “Melita et Melitaea” (we then learn that the island was called Maltas).

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