

7 pages.

7-12-99

7th December 1999

Dear Cormac and Alice,

Further to our conversation this morning I am attaching various cuttings.

The letter on The Independent written by Steve Chetcuti was written under his own steam. In fact you will note that he has the wrong info about British Gas. We will send him an e Mail to thank him and also to point out politely about this British Gas info for future reference.

The letter in the Sunday Times was written by Daniel but signed by Kevin Camilleri because when we asked Kevin, Matt's friend, to write it he wrote a lot of things about Matt and him re scouts and we thought this would not interest people and would get us no where really so we changed a lot of paragraphs for him and he signed it for us.

The last paragraph was also slightly changed for us by the newspaper which changed a bit the sense.

Anyway will be in touch to get your views.

We also had a mass said for their needs which was attended by quite a lot of people in a Chapel near by our house.

Regards,

*Simon*

## we making a move?

From Mr Joe Schembri

COMING OUT of the recent KPMG e-commerce conference, I could feel the air of excitement and enthusiasm which prevailed. Enthusiasm in people, who realised that what was said during the sessions were dreams, finding realisation as they hear them, a discussion of possibilities which are changing the way we think about business, entertainment and all aspects of democracy.

The business community is motivated to start riding the wave of e-commerce and reap the benefits. I believe, however, that we need the government to take a pro-active role to give direction, regulate and make sure that 'all' enterprises benefit of e-commerce. It is true that in other countries the private sector is the motor of e-commerce, but it is also true that the government has played its part, even in countries as liberal as the USA.

While self-regulation and market forces ensure that the players compete to survive, the total 'backing out' of Government will result, to quote the US commercial attaché to the EU, "in a Wild West".

The government is called upon to act on four main levels:

- 1) providing general direction and vision
- 2) providing a solid infrastructure
- 3) facilitating the adoption of the technologies to all enterprises, private and public
- 4) creating the necessary legal and regulatory framework

I am suggesting this role to the government, without implying that the other relevant parties should not be consulted. Beyond this, please let us not allow the communications technology industry to get too politicised!

Should the government not in-

tervene with 'light regulation', and should the law of the jungle prevail, businesses could feel confused or cheated and reject the technology at such an early stage. This is the danger, a situation where we miss the boat of global Information Technology development. We do not have much time, especially considering what our competitors in Singapore, Bermuda and other small countries are doing.

On the other hand, the private sector should not wait for the government to act, and it was encouraging to hear presentations like that of Eric Muscat about a vision for an information communications technology industry for Malta. Indeed, I am more convinced, following the conference, that we can develop a whole new sector in Malta which will mean direct foreign investment and immediate job creation. This will, of course, require a solid legal framework, a topic covered extensively by Dr Michael Frendo in the Friday morning session.

The only thing which worried me during the conference was its lack of 'outreach'. While the turnout was indeed encouraging, the delegates were mostly people involved in the e-commerce scenario, rather than local businesses. With that one must add that most examples and case studies presented referred to big, multinational enterprises and not SMEs, which in fact, make up the lion's share of Malta's economic players.

In fact, it would be a good move to follow up this conference with a series of 'outreach' seminars addressing all sectors of the economy and government departments.

J. SCHEMBRI  
Birkirkara

From Fr Emmanuel Agius

I READ the article "Stress, priests and demons" ("A Christian Outlook," *The Sunday Times*, November 21). The first part regarded the secular clergy in UK.

I am a Maltese secular priest who has been in England for the past 27 years. I live on my own and my rural parish is spread out over a large area and I can at times feel isolated from the surrounding parishes. Yet I do not feel the stress and depression as expressed in the article. My pastoral work is very rewarding! Of course, some situations of priests can lead to anxieties but I beg to differ with the conclusions reached by Fr Danson and Fr Sumner. I would like to point out the following:

We need to distinguish between pastoral work and administrative work of the parish. It is the clerical system of the Church and not the priests that needs to be transformed according to the spirit of the Acts of the Apostles. There are several ministries which do not require an ordained minister and most probably can be better fulfilled by the laity.

We need first of all to prepare the people for ministry and then pass on to them the responsibility for it. Then they, and not the priest, should be accountable to the bishop, the Curia and the people of God. This is easier to say than to put into practise.

It is imperative that the bishop has a personal relationship with every individual priest. It is important that all talents of every priest are acknowledged and in use for the benefit of

the people of God. Talents are gifts of the Holy Spirit to the whole Church. If we do not make good use of the talents already present in the Church, how can we ask for more?

Every week, my bishop invites three priests to join him for a humble lunch (soup, bread, cheese, fruit and coffee) and before or after lunch every priest has a half-hour-long private talk with him. He meets every one of us at least once a year.

It is very easy to blame the bishop for what is wrong in the diocese. His is almost a mission impossible. It is obvious that in several dioceses there are a small number of priests - the stars of the show (!) - who like to have their ten fingers in every pie and consider the rest of their brother priests as only good for celebrating Mass and administering the sacraments.

I read the interpretation of the questionnaire prepared by Discern and was surprised to read that: "From a psychological aspect the prayer life of the priest is considered on an equal level, as other forms of rest, from pastoral work..."

I am convinced that the prayer life of the priest is the greatest source of strength and support by the One who called us to continue His work of salvation. We need more spirituality than psychology, we need to depend more on the grace we received at our ordination than on our own human talent. We need to think more about the example set by St John Mary Vianney!

E. AGIUS  
Midhurst, W. Sussex, England

## Remembering Matthew Aquilina

From Mr Kevin Camilleri

MATTHEW AQUILINA went missing in the early hours of December 3, 1995. Matthew was one of six people assumed to be on board the Piper Lance aircraft which reportedly disappeared on its way to Malta from Tunisia.

Everybody knows about the ongoing investigation of the incident and the countless questions that, until today, remain largely unanswered. Yet, over the past four years, very little has actually been said about the missing persons themselves.

I had first met Matthew through Scouting and his loyalty and dedication towards the Group, his Unit and his friends left a mark on us all.

We spent innumerable hours at headquarters planning expeditions, plotting routes, maintaining equipment and drafting activity schedules. Today the Venture Unit Room at Shima Headquarters is the living proof of Matthew's dedication.

The walls are covered with photos of the unforgettable days when he was Venture Scout Leader. To this day, many of the manuals, reports and guidelines he worked on are still the most valuable source of training the

full implications took a long time to sink in. As one of Matthew's close friends, I remember receiving the news with incredulity. The ensuing days of numbness and confusion are hard to forget.

Last October, the Shima Scout Group celebrated its 90th anniversary and launched a multimedia CD, which includes a very sombre and emotional piece about Matthew and his contribution to the Group.

Today, four years after the incident, we are still in a state of semi-numbness. Boards of inquiry, court cases, conflicting evidence, bureaucracy, allegations and investigations have led us no further than when we started. Some believe the case is simply one of a straightforward air crash, while others feel there is much more hidden behind the facade.

I feel that Matthew's family and friends, as well as the loved ones of the other passengers on the Piper Lance, have a right to know the truth. The board of inquiry set up to investigate the aircraft's disappearance has not yet published its report. However, the board itself, often after numerous requests, had to wait for evidence to be presented in court by the authorities. A

Aviation official testified under oath that the Maltese Air Traffic Control tapes had been recycled. These tapes strangely reappeared at a subsequent sitting. To add insult to injury, however, they were not immediately deposited before the board.

Many times, the Maltese authorities would blame the Tunisian side for unnecessary bureaucratic delays, yet the Maltese tapes were being deposited in court over three years after the incident. The Tunisian tape saga, then, is known by all and has featured several times in local media reports.

Many questions still remain unanswered in relation to the wreckage find, together with the keys and the wallet of the pilot. Also, I feel that not enough serious and thorough investigations have taken place vis-à-vis the distress signal picked up by the compass satellite a few hours after the disappearance of the aircraft as well as the reports issued by the two seagoing vessels reporting sightings of a life raft which were subsequently cancelled.

As time passes, optimism fades away; yet the candle of hope remains alight. Matthew will never really leave us after all. We can only trust in the Lord that the truth will be known one

## Waste of public funds

From Miss Heana Curmi

IN HIS Budget Speech the Finance Minister announced measures to curb abuses by some people of government health services leading to



With regards to the Maltese Air Traffic Control tapes, for instance, in one of the earlier sittings of the Inquiry, a senior official of Civil Aviation, under oath, testified that the Maltese ATC tapes had been recycled. These tapes strangely reappeared at a subsequent sitting. To add insult to injury, however, these tapes were not immediately deposited before the Board. Many times, the Maltese Authorities would blame the Tunisian side for unnecessary bureaucratic delays, yet, one must note that the Maltese tapes were being deposited in Court over three years after the incident. The Tunisian Tapes saga, then, is known by all and has featured several times in local media reports.

Many questions still remain unanswered in relation to the wreckage find, together with the keys and the wallet of the pilot. Also, I feel that not enough serious and thorough investigation has taken place vis-a-vis the distress signal picked up by the Cospas satellite a few hours after the disappearance of the aircraft as well as the reports issued by two sea-going vessels reporting sightings of a life-raft which were subsequently cancelled.

As time passes, optimism fades away, yet the candle of hope remains alight ~~no~~ matter how dim the flame may be. Matt will never really leave us, after all.

*we can only trust in the Lord that we*

*think we are known as Matt*  
*Kevin Camilleri*  
*really thought on that way*

# THE MALTA Independent

Friday 3 December 1999

**Achieving Together: A National Agenda for Tourism**

## Treating the tourist as

### Jury trial

### Accused acquitted

A 57-YEAR-OLD man walked out of court a free man after a panel of jurors acquitted him of the attempted murder of his brother 11 years ago.

Ganni Vella was found not guilty by seven votes to two after jurors spent four and-a-half hours deliberating at the end of the nine-day trial.

However, he was convicted of excusable grievous bodily harm because of his agitated state of mind at the time of the incident which precluded him from realising the extent of his actions.

continued on page 4

### Missing Piper Lance

## Four years on and still no answers

### Steve Chetcuti

FOUR YEARS to the day have passed since the Excelair Piper Lance disappeared over the seas between Malta and Tunisia but no answers have, as yet, been forthcoming.

The commission of inquiry set up to investigate the ill-fated flight have not yet presented a report to the government on their findings.

The minister for transport Censu Galea told *The Malta Independent* no report had been submitted.

"To my knowledge, the inquiry has not been concluded. No report

has been presented to the government till now," he said.

The minister said the administration could not pressurise the commission to conclude such a delicate inquiry.

Asked about the numerous rumours and claims which surrounded the case, Mr Galea said all information received was passed on to the commission as the ministry could not carry out their own investigations. He said he had no idea when the report would be ready but stressed "the sooner the better".

The commission of inquiry was set up on 4 December 1995, the day after the incident. The commission is chaired by Dr Philip Seiberras and includes captain Franz Sturmier and engineer Louis Giordania.

Meanwhile, the families of the six people who went missing are

still waiting for answers.

Captain Carmel Bartolo, 47, from Zebbug, was piloting the aircraft. The passengers were 43-year-old Philip Farnigia, Matthew Aquilina, 22, British national Michael Williams, Tadeus Gorny, a Polish national, and Irishman Desmond Boomer.

The single-engine Piper was registered in Malta as 9H-ABU. Although some wreckage was recovered by some Tunisian fishermen, the bodies of the six men were never recovered.

Numerous have theories surfaced regarding the final hours of the ill-fated flight between the North African continent and Malta. It was however taken as an established fact that the flight actually crashed into the sea at high speed at a 35-degree angle.

continued on page 3

### Your guide in career

1-800-444-1-800

Millennium countdown - 28



# Paola dre Black Chr

**Greta Borg Carbott**

SHOPPERS in Paola's main square are in danger of being hit by falling masonry unless something is done urgently, Paola mayor Stefan Zahra warned yesterday.

He said a block of flats in the busy shopping area was in imminent danger of collapsing onto the pavement.

"The building is an eyesore and a threat in our main square," Mr Zahra told *The Malta Independent*. "We do not want to have a black Christmas in Paola this year."

The flats had been the site of an explosion in March 1992 in which a mother and her child had been killed, the mayor said, and he was now concerned another tragedy could happen.

"We have been constantly removing rubble and stones off the pavement after storms," local council secretary Kevin Borg said. "Passers by are in

constant  
warned  
for any  
happeni  
"The ow  
pens."

Mayor  
contacte  
action h  
building

And, w  
ing the s  
new dev

The bl  
and is a  
Club, so  
other bu  
Mr Zah

Not to  
which h  
structur

## Missing Piper Lance

### Impact with the sea would have automatical set off the ELT emergency signal

continued from page 1

But this was placed in doubt by Cormac Boegner, Desma's father who told the board of inquiry last April he had been informed the plane had not "gone down in water".

One of the theories was that the flight was diverted over Lampedusa airspace to avoid bad weather but this fact was never recorded. On the night of the incident, a distress signal was picked up by the CosmoSat satellite which showed the plane coming from the east of Tripoli.

Sightings and reports were received the day after the incident. An oil support vessel *Sensory Offsherey* claimed something was visible in the sea but this was not confirmed.

Another vessel, the *Gonfulut*, reported to the Malta controller that six men had been spotted in a life raft. Again, this went unconfirmed. A check with the London Lloyds list revealed the vessel was not registered casting doubts on the veracity of the reported sighting.

A British oil platform also reported a plane ditching close to the coast but yet again the report could not be confirmed.

Mystery surrounds the few hours before the flight supposedly ditched at Djebba Airport. Some of the passengers had contacted their relatives in Malta stating the bad weather was delaying the flight.

no calls ever arrived in Malta.

Another intriguing point was that the impact with the sea would have automatically set off the ELT emergency signal but