

Ganni Beaver discovers the...

# Myths & Legends



Of  
Our  
Islands

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## The Legend of St. Dimitri

An old lady named Zgugina and her son Matthew lived on the outskirts of the village of Gharb in Gozo. Zgugina and Matthew were very poor.

Gozo's coast is dotted all around with small inlets and bays. In those dark and dangerous times the sea between Gozo and Sicily to the North and between Gozo and Tunisia to the South was infested with pirates.

Not far from the farmhouse where Zgugina lived with her son there is an inlet known as Wied il-Mielah and it was not the first time that in the dead of night these pirates landed secretly, pillaged and stole whatever they could find.

It so happened that one dark night, some of these men armed to the teeth with knives and swords found their way to the old woman's abode and stole her son Matthew. They carried him stealthily away and bundled him in one of their boats. His poor mother only realized he was gone when she woke up early in the morning and at once what had happened.

Grief stricken as she was, with tears streaming down her cheeks she made her way to the little chapel dedicated to St. Dimitri. There she knelt in front of the titular painting of the saint.

"St. Dimitri please bring back my son, please, please. He is my only purpose in life. Please, bring him back to me, I know you can. Go on your horse and bring him back. Please save him from the pirates and I will light an oil lamp for you in thanksgiving every day".

And thereupon, St. Dimitri taking pity on the faithful heartbroken woman tore himself from the painting and riding his gallant white steed galloped down the aisle, left the church and disappeared in a mysterious cloud of dust.





## The Legend of St. Dimitri

She could not believe her eyes. The horse's hooves made so much noise in the little church and she could see bright sparks flying from under its horse-shoes as they hit the stone flags. But of course it was all a dream for when she looked at the titular painting, St. Dimitri was still there astride his horse as he had been for as long as she could remember. On the other hand, she felt in her heart that her beloved Saint would not foresake her and she continued to pray.

Some moments later another strange thing happened. How was this possible! She could distinctly hear a horse outside neighing, snorting and stamping as if it had just returned from a long hard ride. She turned to gaze at the church door but it was so filled with bright light that she could see nothing and had to shield her eyes. Then out of the glare, smiling and with arms outstretched she saw her son Matthew emerging and running towards her. 'Thank you St. Dimitri for bringing my son back', the old woman kept saying repeatedly all the while hugging and covering her son with kisses. 'I knew He would hear me', Zgugina told her son.

When eventually the mother and her son left the chapel they noticed that St. Dimitri had miraculously left a horse-shoe imprint in the soft limestone a few paces away from the chapel as a memento of his favour granted to Zgugina. The mark of the horse-shoe can still be seen to this day. Folk from Gharb recount that on dark and moonless nights when the sea is calm, a ghostly light can still be seen shimmering in the depths of the sea and they believe that it is Zgugina's light still burning in honour of St. Dimitri.

# The town of Gharb, Gozo

- Gharb is one of the oldest Gozitan villages. Its name 'Gharb' is Arabic.
- There are no significant historical episodes related with Gharb, however the people of this village with their coastal lookouts, constantly relayed smoke signals to Malta, alarming the entire population from the constant perils of marauding Berber and Turkish pirates.
- The feast day falls on the 31st May.



- The most popular Shrine in Gozo, happens to be in Gharb. It is the one dedicated to Our Lady of Ta' Pinu at Gharb.

- Gharb's panoramic countryside tracks and valleys are ideal for walks such as a walk to the cliffs at Wied il-Mielah (picture on the right). There will be awaiting you a spectacular natural "window".



# Build A Pirate Ship

## What you'll need:

- 2 Milk Cartons
- 2 Straws
- Play Dough
- Black Cardboard Paper
- White Cardboard Paper
- Yellow Cardboard Paper
- Glue
- Scissors (round tipped)
- Tape



## How to do it:

- Tape a piece of construction paper about 1/2 way up the milk carton as shown in the picture
- Tape white cardboard paper over the rest of the milk carton
- Glue two blobs of play dough into the centre of the pirate ship
- Cut a two to three inch piece off the bottom of the second milk carton
- Tape it onto the ship (covering the play dough)
- Poke two holes in it (with a pencil) right above the play dough blobs.
- Cover with white cardboard paper
- Stick two straws through the holes you poked in the top carton
- Cut two large rectangles and two small rectangles from yellow cardboard paper
- Poke two holes in each rectangle with scissors or a hole punch and thread into the straws as masts.
- Draw windows and a door with a markers
  - Cut yellow circles and glue them to the side of the ship as portholes
  - Add a gangplank made of cardboard.





# Different Ways To Wear A Turban



## What you will need:

- A large piece of cloth of your choice

## How to do it:

- Just follow the designs
- Or have fun creating styles of your own





# *Pin the tail to St. Dimitri's horse*



- \* Enlarge template*
- \* Colour it in*
- \* Take turns to try  
to pin the horse's tail  
while blindfolded*

# The Legend of Calypso

In Homer's classic *Odyssey*, the island of Ogygia is the place where the heroic Greek Warrior Ulysses met the goddess queen Calypso and Gozo is reputed to be this very Isle.

After Ulysses took part in the siege of Troy he longed to return home but the gods decided to make his journey utterly difficult. His shipmates were all killed and he struggled single-handed for nine whole days and nights while his ship was battered by a raging storm and blown towards an unknown destination.

The ship carrying Ulysses home was tossed about by violent gales, sinking and rising on treacherous waves which flung him against the Mediterranean shores. As if this was not enough, his ship was one day struck by a thunderbolt. When the storm had subsided Ulysses sighted land in the distance and eventually managed to reach the shore safe and sound.

Ulysses slept for many hours on the sun-drenched golden sand and when he awoke and started looking around he was moved by the beauty of his surroundings. He could even hear strange music coming from high up on a hill out of a dark cave. Ulysses approached cautiously and as he drew nearer he was speechless at the sudden sight of a beautiful lady standing in the mouth of the cave. Her poise and figure, the deep blue-grey eyes and her long golden hair almost gave him a heart attack.

She invited Ulysses inside the cave and provided him with princely attire, food and wine. Her name was Calypso, the Queen of Ogygia daughter of Jupiter the God of War.

Ulysses recounted his maritime adventures and his participation in the Trojan War and expressed his strong desire to find his way back to his

# The Legend of Calypso

homeland, Ithaca and to the arms of his beloved wife Penelope whom he knew in his heart yearned for his return.

He also longed to see his son Telamon again, but the selfish Nymph paid no heed to his request and instead spoke at length about herself and the island she ruled and promised him the kingship of the island as well as eternal youth and happiness.

Ulysses was adamant about his desire to return to Ithaca and this made Calypso weep passionate tears. In vain she implored him to stay with her and finally out of jealousy she plain refused to provide a new ship for him.

Thus the brave warrior became a prisoner and stayed in Ogygia for seven whole years. For Calypso they were seven years of bliss with Ulysses by her side. She tried to make his stay as pleasant as possible by offering him all the delights of the island, but he did not give up hope of seeing his wife and home again.

He prayed for deliverance every day and finally his prayers were answered. Jove, the supreme deity, dispatched his messenger Hermes to force Calypso to release her homesick prisoner and finally she reluctantly gave him permission to set sail on a new ship loaded with presents for himself and his family. She even ordered the Westerly wind to blow steadily to enable him to reach home safely.

Sadly Calypso watched the ship depart and disappear as a speck upon the horizon while she sang of her hero and the blissful years she had spent with him.



# Calypso's Cave

Calypso's Cave is located in a cliff just off Xaghra; overlooking Gozo's most sought-after the beautiful sandy beach of Ramla Bay.

It is presumed that the cave is a complex labyrinth, extending down to sea level at some points, however, stone boulders block the way a few metres inwards.

The cave's interior and exterior are not too impressive but the magnificent views over Ramla Bay and the valley make a visit to this cave very worth it.

On the shore below Calypso's Cave one can also observe the remains of the Marsalforn tower, a fortification built by the Knights of Malta in the early-eighteenth century to protect against sea-ward attacks.

## *How do I get to Calypso's Cave?*

To reach the cave, you have to follow Racecourse Street out of Xaghra. Before the road stops en route to Ramla Bay, there is a gift shop with a stone archway on the left. Through the archway you will find a flight of stairs dug into the rock. Downstairs you will find a platform and the entrance to the cave is an archway 1 metre high.

Entrance is free of charge. There is no artificial lighting inside, so a portable torch will come in very handy.





# Who was Ulysses?

Ulysses, was the King of Ithaca, a Greek island. He was married to Penelope and they had a son named Telemachus.

He was one of the Greek leaders in the Trojan War. The Greeks fought the

Trojans for 10 years, but Ulysses came up with an ingenious plan. He had the Greek army build a wooden horse that himself and 19 other soldiers could fit in. All of the Greek warships left the shores of Troy and

they left the horse behind. The Trojans thought it was a gift from the Greeks, so the people of Troy brought it through the gates of the city. Late that night, Ulysses and the others snuck out of the wooden horse and let the newly arrived Greek army through the gates. The Greeks burned down Troy. On leaving Troy Ulysses still had a long journey ahead of him.



Ulysses and his men set sail for Ithaca and after a few weeks of sailing ran out of food. They landed on an island, to look for food and water. They found a whole cave full of food, but soon found out the food belonged to a one-eyed giant called a Cyclops. Ulysses and his men tricked the Cyclops and escaped with the food.



Once again, Ulysses' men ran out of food, so they landed on another island. The sailors divided in 2 groups. Ulysses and some of the crew stayed with the ship, while the others went to look for food. The next morning, one of the "food-searchers" came running back to the boat. The sailor told Ulysses of a witch

named Circe who had turned the other crew members into pigs. At once, Ulysses ran with the sailor to Circe's palace, but on the way, the God Mercury came with a gift. It was a magical flower that would act as a shield on Ulysses from Circe's magic. Ulysses met with Circe and she tried to use her magic on him, but it didn't work, so she gave in and turned the crew back into humans. Plus, she warned Ulysses of the dangers to come. With lots of food, Ulysses and his men left the island.

Thanks to Circe, Ulysses overcame the next dangers. He overcame the dooming song of the Sirens (Mermaids) by plugging his ears and those of his crew. The sailors came upon the six-headed monster called Scylla. Though all of his crew were eaten by Scylla, Ulysses escaped, only to be washed ashore by a storm where a princess found him and took him to her father. The King gave Ulysses his fastest ship to use to sail home with. When, Ulysses reached Ithaca, he finally reclaimed his throne.

# The town of Xaghra, Gozo

- Apart from being in itself a beautiful place, the village of Xaghra is rich in historical heritage and therefore has plenty to offer to its visitors.
- Xaghra is encircled by the beautiful bays of Ramla, Ghajn Barrani and Marsalforn, and the valleys of Ramla, Ta' l-Ghejjun and Marsalforn.
- Ramla Bay with its unique honey-red sand is the most popular beach during summer.



- Here one can find the Neolithic Temples of Ggantija, which are acknowledged to be the oldest freestanding structures in the world.
- The village boasts an attractive windmill known as Ta' Kola Windmill, after its last tenant. The present windmill structure was built on 5th September 1786. It is the only windmill in Gozo that has its own original wooden machinery in good functioning order.
- The feast is celebrated every 8th September, locally known as "Il-Festa tal-Vittorja" commemorating the victory of the Maltese under the Knights of St. John over the Turks in the Siege of 1565.
- Bus Route: Victoria to Xaghra - Bus No.64, 65.
- Worth visiting: Xerri's Grotto, Ninu's cave, Old Toys Museum and Old Engines Museum





# The Legend of the Bride of Mosta

The nobles 'Cumbo' were good, kind hearted people that cared for those around them. They lived in a large tower on the outskirts of the village of Mosta, together with their beautiful daughter Marjanna and their numerous servants. Also living in their household was a slave they had bought and freed that went by the name of 'Haggi'.



very fond Marjanna.

A man named Toni Manduca who worked in the 'Dejma' fell in love with Marjanna. He pooled all his courage and asked Marjanna's father for her hand in marriage. Her father happily agreed to the match and a date was set for the wedding.

Sadly Haggi took the news badly and vowed he will get vengeance one way or another.



One day, without uttering a word to anyone, Haggi left the tower and never returned. Instead he embarked on a 'Xprunara' (merchant ship) and hid until he returned to Turkey.

In less than a year however, Haggi was back in Malta. This time he was not alone but accompanied by a party of Turkish men. They disembarked and started their journey for Mosta.



# The Legend of the Bride of Mosta

The Cumbo Tower was in full buzz as preparations were being made for the wedding feast. Marjanna was happily sewing, the servants decorated the place whilst Toni was kept busy with the wedding invitations dispatched by hand to family and friends.

Late in the evening Haggi and his comrades knocked on the Tower's main door. The Marquis Cumbo opened the door never imagining what was awaiting him on the other side of the door.

The moment he opened Haggi and his party were on him. Haggi killed him. With feline agility he ran to Marjanna's room and kidnapped her.

The following morning, news of her abduction reached all four corners of the island. Toni vowed he will find her. Failing to find her in Malta he dressed up as a Turk and left for Turkey.

After months of looking for her, he found out she was being held in the Sultan's Palace. With the help of the Sultan's daughter, she dressed up as a page and fled the Palace to be reunited with her love Toni.

They ran to the port where a small ship awaited them. Silently they rolled down the sails and left the dock heading for Malta.

Toni and Marjanna's happiness was short lived as on reaching Malta, Marjanna's health began to wane and soon after she died.

Toni was heartbroken with sorrow and grief. As time passed his aching heart healed yet he never forgot his beloved Marjanna or the kind hearted spirited that helped her elope to return to her home country.



# The Bride of Mosta Public Gardens



Just above the town with views back over the town of Mosta is the L-Gharusa tal-Mosta public gardens.

It is a well preserved stretch of the British-built defensive wall and walkway, the Victoria Lines, which runs along the natural ridge.

The lines make a great walk with expansive views and an easy path underfoot.





# The town of Mosta, Malta



- Mosta is a town situated at the centre-north of the island of Malta, with a population of over 19,000 making it one of the largest towns on the island.



- *Local Feast:* In Mosta they celebrate the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. It is celebrated on the 15th August. This day is a public holiday and is celebrated with lots of music, food and fireworks.



- *Mosta Dome:* One of the main attraction in Mosta is the Mosta Dome or the Rotunda, which is the third largest unsupported dome in the whole World with an internal diameter of 37.2 metres and walls nearly 9.1 metres

thick.

- *Malta Aviation Museum* is located on the outskirts of Mosta, at the ex-Royal Air Force Airfield in Ta' Qali.



- *The Cumbo Tower* (mentioned in the Legend of the Mosta Bride), was the stronghold of Mosta in the middle Ages. One of the oldest surviving structures in Mosta.

**Mosta  
Coat of Arms**





## The Miracle of the Rotunda

The gigantic dome of Mosta's Parish Church (Santa Marija Assunta - Assumption of the Virgin Mary), also known as the Rotunda is said to be the 3rd largest church dome in Europe.



Built from 1833 to 1871 on the site of a previous church, it was designed by Giorgio Grognet, whose

plans were closely based on the Pantheon in Rome.

On April 9, 1942, during an afternoon air-raid, a 200kg Luftwaffe bomb pierced the dome (two others bounced off) and fell among a congregation of more than 300 people awaiting early evening mass. Miraculously it did not explode.

A replica of the bomb is now on display in the sacristy.





# The Legend of Speranza Valley

Whoever roams around the countryside of the Northern side of Mosta through its valley will come across a beautiful small chapel built on a rock bridge. This is the Chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Hope (Il-Madonna ta' L-Isperanza).

In the medieval times there lived a hard working widower who lived with his only daughter Marija. Marija helped her father as much as she could.

They would spend most of their time milking their goats, filling milk bowls to be used for the manufacture of cheese. In the afternoon Marija would work in their fields.

On one of these occasions she took longer than usual. As she started her long walk back towards home, she heard voices in the distance behind her. Marija realized that they were no friends but Turkish pirates on a raid.

Being so far from Marija ran as far as her legs could take her towards the valley feeling hopeful that the pirates will lose her tracks. She ran even faster with heart hammering in her chest. Marija jumped over low hanging walls as she clambered down the side of the valley. She dragged herself through trees, hedges, bushes and shrubs until she reached the opening of a cave. Marija entered the cave pushing herself as far back as she could away from the entrance to avoid detection. She sat down on the cave floor out of breath.

Marija prayed with her whole heart to the Virgin Mary to save her life and keep the pirates away from her. At that very moment a huge spider spun a web covering the entire cave opening. Marija kept praying oblivious to what had just happened.



# The Legend of Speranza Valley

Few minutes later the pirates arrived at the cave's entrance. Marija held her breath for the longest moment in her life afraid she might make a noise and give out her location.

'I cannot see her', one pirate said.

'Maybe she went in that cave', another one said.

'How can she be in that cave? Can't you see the spider web covering the entrance? It would have thorn had she passed through there!' Another pirate spoke scolding the other one.

Marija kept praying fervidly.

'Dear Lady you are my only hope. Please deliver me from this evil. If I live to see another day I promise I will strive to build a shrine in your honour where all your devotees can visit you'.

Day turned into night but Marija did not move. Come morning she decided to pluck all her courage and make the long journey home back to her father. Her father was overjoyed to have his daughter back in his arms once more.

The news of Marija's miraculous survival ran like wildfire throughout the island and people flocked to the new building site to pay homage to Our Lady. Those visiting donated what they could to Marija's noble cause and with the help of the local priest and some local villagers the Speranza Chapel was built.

# The Speranza Chapel

- Below you can see The Speranza Chapel ('Speranza' meaning 'hope').
- The beautiful chapel built by Marija and all the devotees that contributed to its building.
- The Chapel was built between 1760 and 1761.





# The Legend of Tal-Maqluba

There was once a tiny village in Qrendi. This tiny village was divided into two; the northern side belonging to the Count whilst the southern part belonging to the Baron.

In between these two factions there was a small church with a small piazza. A well was situated in the middle of this piazza for everyone's use.



Most of the people living in the southern part were farmers that lived off their own farmland and breeding of livestock. None of them being exactly rich.

Those living on the northern side were merchants and rich people that once every month would gather in the church's piazza to sell their goods at a market. For the women, this market served as a showcase to show off their best work done by such as lace and basket weaving. The men mostly kept to themselves discussing rents and taxes.

The rich people were more after fine clothes and materials with their mesmerizing vibrant colours.

As time went by Sicilian bankers and merchants started visiting the market too adding to the sales and purchasing carried out during this day. Who started with sheep could afford a cow.

However this new situation did not go down well with all the inhabitants of the village. Poor people remained poor whilst rich people became even richer.



# The Legend of Tal-Maqluba

Unhappiness brought envy with it and that's when the fighting began. The count and the merchants decided they wanted more land to build bigger and better homes. The farmers and all those living mainly on agriculture strongly disagreed. More than ones it came down to a physical fight.

The village's wise man always advised his neighbours, 'Stop this fighting, God's infinite care reaches everyone of his creatures. Birds have never died of hunger'. But no-one ever dared listen.

Then came the day when an earthquake shook the land violently. A good number ran to the church to pray and little while later the tremors stopped. They thanked God for delivering them from this ordeal and solemnly promised to change their lives to end the fighting and treat each other like brothers and sisters.

This peace was however short lived as a few months later the were back to the same attitude of before. The Count and the Baron were in an endless feud about who gave the biggest parties and offered most food.

The wise man advised them once more, 'change your ways or the ground will swallow you'. But they all laughed at him. Hatred and envy reigned. Poverty grew worse.

A few farmers at seeing this declining situation, worried about the future of their own families, decided to leave the village for good and find somewhere better to live. This earned them the blessing of the village's old wise man.

# The Legend of Tal-Maqluba

Few days after a downpour commenced. It rained incessantly for seven days and seven nights. Most of the people fled to higher ground escaping the water flooding the valley. Terror reigned among the villagers.

Black clouds hid the sky from their view. Thunder boomed and lightning lit up the sky. The earth shook once more. The moment it subsided, the villagers dared venture out of their hiding place. They were met with a



terrifying view. A little far away they saw that a huge rock had fallen from the sky and was now being tossed and turned by the waves in the sea.

‘Holy Mother of God!’ They shrieked in unison. ‘That is where our homes once stood!’

Remembering the wise old man’s words, they ran to the village but what they found instead was an enormous crater spewing heat and fumes. The terrified people stood watching in silence.

‘This is your land. Grave to envy and hatred’, the old wise man’s voice carried in the wind and reached the villagers ears.

*Moral of the legend: Hatred and Envy begets only division and disagreement. So let us strive to make the world a better place!!!!*





# Il-Maqluba

Il-Maqluba, Qrendi, Malta is a mysterious crater/hole.

Il-Maqluba has a number of Maltese folklore stories and legends.

On the 23rd November 1343, Malta experienced one of its most severe winter storms ever, possibly accompanied by an earthquake.



It was at this time that il-Maqluba was formed.



This is a natural depression formed by the collapse of the underlying caves. It is now a sinkhole, collecting rainwater from a three-mile radius and helping to maintain our underground water supplies.



# The town of Qrendi, Malta

- Qrendi is a small village in the southwest of Malta, with a population of approximately 3000 people. It is near Mqabba and Żurrieq.



Hagar Qim

- Within its boundaries are two well-known Neolithic temples called Mnajdra and Hagar Qim. Parts of these Neolithic Temples are said to be the oldest standing structures in the world. They date back to 3500-2200BC

and are listed as Unesco World Heritage sites.

- In this village two feasts are held annually. The feast of Our Lady of Lourdes is celebrated either on the last Sunday of June or the first Sunday of July and the feast of Santa Maria on August 15.
- This village alone has one main parish church and six other churches and chapels.
- The chapel of St Matthew lies on the edge of a large, deep hole in the ground, known as Il-Maqluba.

**Qrendi**  
**Coat of Arms**



# The Legend of Ghar Hasan

Hasan was a Turkish slave. He was tall, handsome and with a heart of gold. Yet his heart was heavy with sorrow. Hasan was very young when he came to Malta but despite being treated with great care his heart yearned for the day when he could return to his birth place.

When he grew older, his master, a cotton merchant, gave him the permission to leave for Turkey. Whilst in Malta, Hasan had laid eyes on his master's daughter, Maria whom he loved immensely. This made his stay in Turkey unbearable. Thus he returned back to Malta.

He looked for the girl and found her in the field harvesting cotton.

'Maria, you know how much I love you. I have returned just for you.'

Maria was in love with Hasan too. That same night, without a word to anyone, she gathered her belongings and left with him to a cave in a cliff where he had once dwelt.

The cave overlooked a treacherous sheer drop into the sea. When he was still a slave, Hasan would come up here to either explore its interior or just to gaze at waves crashing onto the cliff face below thinking how he could escape Malta to return to Turkey.

'This was once my home', Hasan said once in the cave.

'And now it is going to be mine too', Maria answered him with a smile.

'No my dear Maria, you deserve more, way much more. A grand home awaits for you in my homeland.' He sat down on a rock and told her the story of his life.

# The Legend of Ghar Hasan

His father had been the Turkish Sultan's Grand Vizier. On his 6th birthday, his father took him on a trip on a galley. On the journey they met up with a Maltese galley and fighting broke out. His father was killed in the skirmish whilst he was taken slave.

'They celebrated my return with grand festivities. After some time I was appointed as Captain of a galley. I travelled with it to return to Malta. Now they are at sea awaiting my signal to come closer to shore.'

Maria did not utter a word. Her head hung low. She understood fully well what had Hasan been through and for that she loved him even more. Yet she was a Christian while he was a Muslim. Thoughts upon thoughts assailed her mind.

'Now my relatives are awaiting fervently to meet you,' he said in a firm voice.

At that moment a deep silence fell broken only by the cries of the occasional seagull passing by. Hasan fell asleep with his heart soaring with happiness.

Maria on the other hand did not sleep at all. She was happy to be with her love but her heart was heavy with sorrow thinking of her beloved father. She wished she could tell him where she was and what she was about to do. 'He will definitely be angry with me', she thought.

Back at the house, Maria's relatives were waiting impatiently for her return. Her father was deeply worried for her especially after he was informed of Hasan's return to the island and that he had been spotted



# The Legend of Ghar Hasan

next to the house late that afternoon. He called upon the local police to help him in the search.

As dawn broke they neared the cave. At the very same moment a Turkish ship moved close to shore. Hasan wound a rope through hole in the cave wall, wound it twice around his waist whilst he wound the other end of the rope around Maria's waist. Gently he began lowering her down.

Behind him numerous voices shouted their anger at him. In panic he slipped and fell down the cliff. Maria did not have time to react. The moment Hasan let go of his rope she fell onto the rocks. Hasan fell a little away from her howling in pain.

In that crucial moment Maria and Hasan's gazes met in a silent agreement and both exhaled their last breath.

Deep silence fell. Up in the cliff the police looked away in sorrow. 'May they rest in peace', said Maria's father as he made the sign of the cross.

The crew of the Turkish galley saw this tragedy unfold before their very own eyes. They disembarked and gathered the dead bodies of the two lovers and took them aboard. The galley sailed towards the horizon.

No one knows where the dead bodies of Maria and Hasan were taken. It is said that the story of their tragic love reached far away shores inspiring others to set aside differences and build a new society upon happiness and love.

*Moral of the Legend: Love knows no barriers of religion, skin colour, culture or country of provenance.*



# Ghar Hasan



- Ghar Hasan is located in the outskirts of Birżebbuġa, Malta.
- It is a natural cave that was formed by the sea 70 metres above sea level. From the cave, you

can enjoy a stunning view through the naturally formed window.

- Ghar Hasan has a length of 0.72 kilometres..



# The town of Birzebbuga, Malta

• Birzebbuga (or BħBuga) is a seaside resort not far from the fishing village Mar-saxlokk in South-East Malta.

• Birzebbuga is approximately 8 miles (13 kilometres) from the City of Valletta.



• It has a population of 10,000 people.

• It has been very popular among Maltese and foreign holiday-makers for decades.

• They celebrate the feast of St. Peter in August.

• This village is perhaps best known for its important archaeological sites, especially Ghar Hasan, Għar Dalam and Borg in-Nadur and a sandy beach commonly known as "Pretty Bay".



• The village name "Birzebbuga", from the Maltese, means a "well of olives". It is theorized that in farmers built wells where they kept their harvested olives submerged into sea water to keep them fresh for market day where they would sell them to the other villagers.



**Birzebbuga**  
**Coat of Arms**





# The Myth of Il-Gawgaw

In the past, December 24 was considered a most unfavourable day for anyone to be born on.

According to a superstitious belief which lingered on among the Maltese up to the end of the 19th century, persons who were born on Christmas Eve were to

be transformed into a ghost called "il-Gawgaw".

This happened only once a year, on this day, while these persons were asleep. In the form of a "Gawgaw", they wandered about frightening people with their groaning.

Children were told that if they misbehaved, the "Gawgaw" would kidnap them and take them far far away in a distant land, where they would die of hunger and loneliness.

Towards dawn the persons transformed in a "Gawgaw" returned home exhausted. By the time they woke up in the morning they would have resumed their human form, quite unaware of their nocturnal actions.

According to the legend, the remedy against this transformation consisted in inducing the sufferer to sit up all night and to count the holes of a sieve from eleven o'clock at night to the following Christmas morning.

# Ghost Cookies

## What you'll need:

- 110grams unsalted butter, softened
- 100grams caster sugar
- 1 medium egg
- 1/2 table spoon vanilla extract
- 250grams plain flour
- 1/4 table spoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1/4 table spoon baking powder
- 1/4 table spoon salt
- Cling Film (Stretch and Seal Film)
- Coloured Icing Pens



## How to do it:

- Beat the butter, sugar, eggs and vanilla until fully combined
- Mix in the flour, baking powder, salt and bicarbonate of soda until fully combined.
- Cover the bowl with cling film and chill in the fridge for 2 hours.
- Preheat the oven to 180C fan assisted.
- On a lightly floured surface, roll out the combined mixture to 1cm thick and cut out the ghost shapes.
- Grease and lightly flour a baking sheet.
- Place the ghost cookies on the tray, 1



inch apart and bake for 5 minutes, until the edges just begin to turn brown.

- Cool on a wire rack.
- Decorate with coloured icing pens.



# Ghost Milk Bottles

## What You'll need:

- Bottles (Glass or Plastic)
- Googly Eyes
- Black cardboard paper
- Glue
- Scissors (Round Tip)
- Straw

## How to do it:

- Take the bottle and wash it thoroughly
- Stick the googly eyes as shown in the picture
- With black cardboard cut out the shape of the mouth. It could be cut out in an oval as shown in the picture or any form you like.
- Stick the cut outs under the eyes as shown in the picture



- Alternatively to sticking the eyes and mouth you may try your hand at either drawing them yourself or put picture stickers instead.





# Treasure at Fort Ricasoli

The Maltese ghost is often referred to as "il-Hares" (plural "Ihirsas").

Once, a "hares" in the form of a Turk, awakened a workman at Fort Ricasoli (by the Grand Harbour) and told him of a big treasure within the fort area.



This workman told one of his colleagues and together they went to look at the indicated spot. They found a lot of coins. As in other local folk tales the coins were turned to coal.

The following night the "hares" reappeared and beat up the workman for sharing the secret.

The moral of this legend is: What the "hares" tells you is for your eyes and ears only!



# About Fort Ricasoli...

- *Fort Ricasoli is a large fortification built by the Order of the Knights of St. John between 1670 and 1693.*
- *It occupies the promontory known as Gallows Point that forms the eastern arm of Grand Harbour, and the north shore of Rinella Creek.*
- *Together with Fort Saint Elmo and Fort Tigné it commands the approaches to Grand Harbour and Marsamxett Harbour.*
- *Fort Ricasoli was designed by the Italian military engineer Antonio Maurizio Valperga, as part of Grand Master Nicolas Cotoner's extensive fortifications around Grand Harbour. It is named for the knight who financed a large part of the works, Fra Giovanni Francesco Ricasoli.*
- *Fort Ricasoli was active in the defence of Malta during the Second World War. Structural alterations and additional gun emplacements on the seaward bastion bear witness to its continued use and evolution as a military installation.*
- *The fort has suffered significant damage from enemy action in the siege of Malta during World War II, when much of the internal structure was badly damaged. The gate has been rebuilt, but the internal buildings including the Governor's House have been lost.*





# The town of Kalkara, Malta

- Il-Kalkara is a small picturesque village in Malta.
- It's population is approximately 3,500 people.
- The name Kalkara is derived from the Latin word for lime (Calce), and it is believed that there was a lime kiln present there since Roman times.
- Kalkara forms part of the inner harbour area and occupies the area around Kalkara Creek.
- The town has its own Local Council and is bordered by the city of Birgu, and the towns of Haz-Zabbar and ix-Xghajra.
- In July they celebrate the feast of St. Joseph.

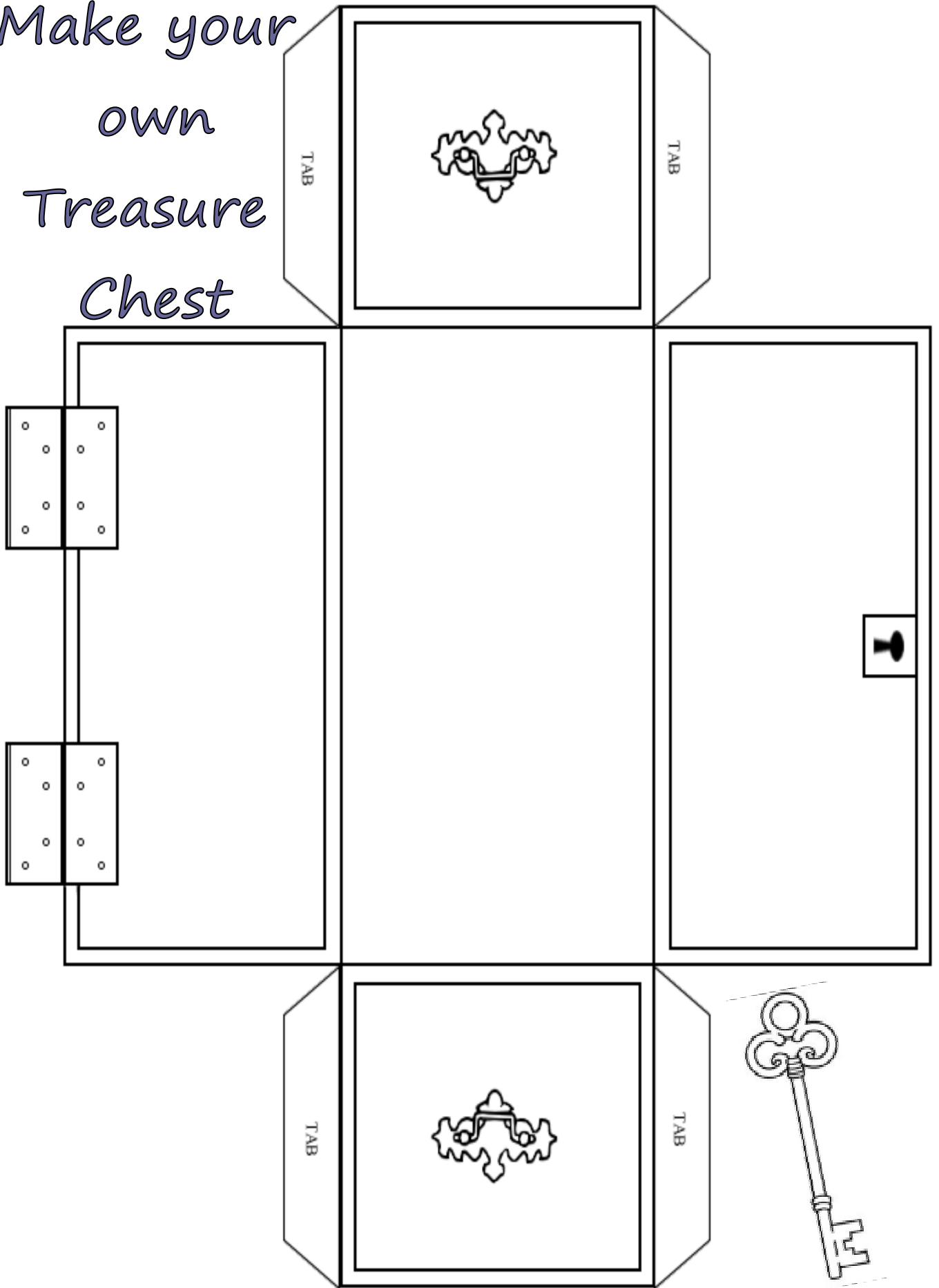


**Kalkara**  
**Coat of Arms**





# Make your own Treasure Chest



# The Legend of Kastell Zammitellu

Zammitellu, as he was known way back in those days was the acquired name of the Baron Zammitello that dwelt in a castle in Mgarr. Zammitellu was a very wealthy man. So wealthy was he, that he could afford having a ship of his own that would aid him in importing corn to the island. Notwithstanding his huge fortune, Zammitellu was a well known miser.

One day, a Sicilian, a wheat and cotton merchant, fell in love with Zammitellu's daughter Lucija. Lucija on the other hand did not like him at all. Lucija was well loved and respected. She had a heart of gold and more often than not spent her time nursing those in need and taking care of the sickly. Her one true wish was to become a nun of the Red Cross and devote her life to helping others.

'Leave out these trivialities', her father the Baron would often tell her. 'I am your father and only have the right to decide upon what you can or cannot do. I already told you I want you to become my friend's wife'.

These words saddened Lucija a great deal but found that she could not do anything to help herself. Especially since from that very same week, her father gave his permission for the preparations for the wedding to commence.

In the castle, chandeliers were dusted to a shine and fine curtains hung in every room. Fine drapes were hung down the walls of the local church and wooden poles were erected in the streets leading to it where banners were to be hung up.

The local people were very excited and couldn't wait for the day of the feast to arrive. All but Lucija.

Her heart was heavy with sadness and dreaded the moment dawn would break on the day of her own wedding for that day



# The Legend of Kastell Zammitellu

would be the day when her dream and wish would be destroyed forever.

As the saying goes, 'time waits for nobody' and the eve of the wedding arrived. Baron Zammitellu called for his daughter, 'Now, stop all this crying. Tomorrow you will be wed to a very wealthy groom. Make sure that you are faithful and loving as your mother was with me.'

'Father,' Lucija said, 'how can I?' And with that she broke down crying. 'I have never seen this man, how can I love him and be his wife?'

'Enough!' her father yelled at the top of his voice, 'what I say goes and no one will dare go against me'.

Lucija wished she could stop herself from crying but she found out she could not and ran to her room. That night Lucija did not sleep a wink. She left her room and went out of the palace for a walk to calm her troubled spirit. The moment she turned round a corner however, shrouded by darkness, a group of people surrounded her and kidnapped her.

Early the following morning, noble families and friends, governors, and more began assembling at the castle. All of them went out of their way to look the best and most fashionable. Among them were the groom and his relatives who had arrived from Sicily late that night.

At around noon, the feast began. The Bard took out his guitar and began singing a song full of praise for the Baron. At the end of the end everyone was impatiently waiting for the bride but Lucija did not show up.

They looked for her in her room but found it empty. They looked in castle's gardens but no luck in there too. The groom got tired of waiting and together with his relatives returned to Sicily empty handed. The Baron on the other hand was so saddened with the disappearance of Lucija that a serious sickness got to him and he died soon after.

Her disappearance saddened the whole village as everyone loved and respected Lucija. But she never returned home. Still they waited for her.



# The Legend of Kastell Zammitellu

Soon after the plague afflicted the island. The hearts of the local villagers were saddened further at having to deal with the outbreak of this terrible disease too. They all wished even more that the kind hearted girl of the castle would return to them.

One night the town's church bell began ringing and it rang throughout the whole village. A group of villagers went to the church to investigate. The church door was wide open and a blinding light was seeping through it.

They went into the church and right in front of the alter they saw an apparition of a nun. She opened her arms as if calling them to come forward to her.

'That's Lucija,' one of the villagers said.

'Yes', said the apparition, 'I am Lucija'.

Lucija told the story of how she was kidnapped on the eve of her wedding and how she ended up on the battlefield nursing the injured.

'I have given my life for those I have loved. Today I am here to do the same with you and keep these troubles away from you.'

The apparition dissolved into thin air but the sick stood up and walked once more. Lucija, helped by a divine intervention had helped heal them all.



# The town of Mgarr, Malta

- Mgarr or Imgarr, formerly known as Mgiarro, is a small town in the North-West of the mainland of Malta.
- Mgarr is a typical rural village situated in an isolated region, west of Mosta.
- Mgarr is surrounded with rich farmland and vineyards.
- It has a population of approximately 4,000 inhabitants and are mostly farmers or are engaged in some sort of agricultural activity.
- Mgarr has two important prehistoric sites: Ta' Hagra, which is still in a good state of preservation, stands in a field near the village centre; Ta' Skorba, excavated in 1963, lies just outside the village.



- The people of Mgarr celebrate the feast of the Assumption of our Lady on the 15th August.

- Mgarr is renowned for its restaurants specializing in Maltese cuisine

especially rabbit and horse meat.

**Mgarr  
Coat of Arms**



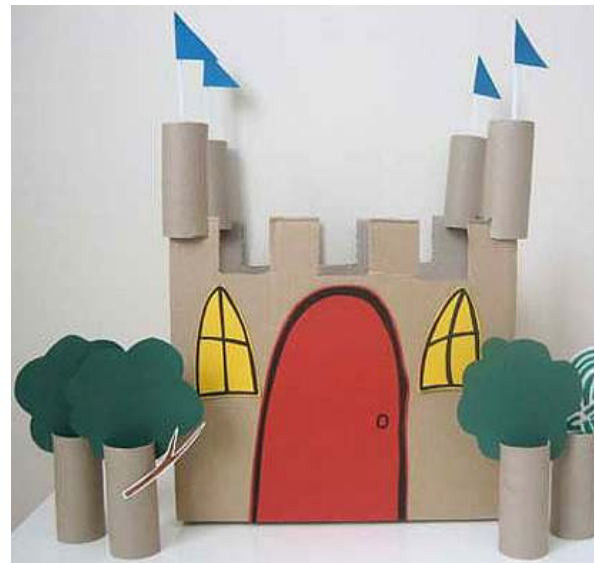
# Build your own Castle

This is another great craft that can be done using recycled items from home such as cardboard boxes and empty toilet paper rolls.

Take a peak at the ideas below and try your hand at building your very own castle.



It can be used as a desk tidy or you may even turn it into a house for your cats.





# The Legend of Brave Toni Bajjada

Since childhood Toni Bajjada was never one to be scared easily. His mother was very protective of him especially since that fatal day when his father went out to work in their field and was never to be seen again. 'Pirates will come and take you away', she told him repeatedly.

'When I grow up I will show them what I'm made of!' he would readily answer. True to his word, when he grew older, he embarked himself on a merchant ship and with the fervent hope that one day he will find his father and take him back home.

Unfortunately for Toni, the moment he stepped on the land of Barbary he ended up in a fight and he the Muslims took him to their chief. 'I will take this one', the chief told them, 'take him to my ship', he ordered and they obeyed him dutifully.

The chief was a very big man. He had a very peculiar nose which was bent like an eagle's beak. His beard was red earning him the nickname of Barbarossa.

Pointing at the newcomers he ordered, 'Put them onto the rowers' benches'. Toni remained silently to the side until he decided to ask, 'What would you have me do?'

'I want to you to do something else. My cabin is filthy. Clean it up and make sure you do not break anything!' Not another word came out of Toni's mouth. From that very moment, he grabbed a bucket, washed the floors, coiled ropes, collected tools that were strewn around the deck.

It wasn't long before Toni and Barbarossa became fast friends. Gradually Barbarossa began to trust him more and more and occasionally would let him roam alone free.

# The Legend of Brave Toni Bajjada

This gave Toni the chance to disembark as soon as they entered a port and try to uncover more information on the whereabouts of where his father was being enslaved.

'God All Mighty', Tony prayed fervently in his heart, 'Please let me find my father!' Every morning, he would mingle with the workers and discreetly try to discover whence they came from. Until, one of them answered, 'I am from Malta. I have been here more than ten years. They kidnapped me from my own field'.

Toni took a deep breath, 'This must be my father', he thought to himself. 'Where did you live?'

'Naxxar!' He answered. Toni wished he could hug his father but was scared he could be discovered. They made plans for Toni to come for him during the night and together they will escape.

On that day arrived unexpectedly the Fleet of King Charles V of Spain and the moment the Spanish landed a terrible battle broke out. Toni joined them and in a short while the city fell. Barbarossa fled.

Toni together with his father returned to Malta shortly. The Grand Master sent for Toni as soon as he heard of his adventures abroad. He congratulated him on his new found freedom and asked him about the situation in the Muslim country he had just returned from. Toni gave him all the information he could. He also volunteered to lead other Maltese with their own battles. And that is exactly what he did, as had it not been for the skill he showed a lot of Maltese would have lost their lives in Gerba. This earned him the respect by both Knight Romegas and Grand Master La Valette.

'Make sure you equip yourself well', Toni would say to the Grand Master often. 'Barbarossa wants to take Malta and see the crescent moon flag over the bastions'.

At hearing these words La Valette became considered. It did not take long until he began strengthening the fortifications of all fortresses. High and thick walls of bastions were soon erected around Fort St. Elmo and Fort St. Angelo. He also erected a fortress on the Salvatur's hill.

# The Legend of Brave Toni Bajjada

One morning, the Turkish fleet appeared on the horizon and by nightfall its ships filled all our ports. Some berthed at Marsamxett where they disembarked their men and weapons and open fire towards Fort Saint Elmo. The Knights of St. John fought back. A terrifying battle took place. Thousands of Turks lost their lives but still they continued the fight. The Maltese on the other hand held fast against the enemy. Toni Bajjada encouraged them continuously. For a whole month he swam back and forth from Fort Saint Angelo with messages from La Vallette. In the meantime, the Turks attacks on the fort increased drastically and the fort's defense began to slowly wade. Toni Bajjada at times would disguise himself as a Turk and visit the enemy's camps in search of information. On other occasions he would go to Sicily asking for help.

In the end help arrived, notwithstanding all the obstacles he had to go through, Toni walked from Imdina to Saint Angelo and through the Turk's camp to deliver the good news. The Grand Master was overjoyed. He had enough reinforcements to hit the Turks hard and send them back home defeated. 'You are Malta's hero', the Grand Master La Valette exclaimed. 'Had not been for your skill we would not have managed to win against an army of 30,000 men!'

Toni Bajjada's bravery remains till this date an outstandingly huge example of skill, bravery and patriotism.



# The town of Naxxar, Malta

- Naxxar is a village in the central north of Malta.
- Its population is approximately 13,400 people.



- The Naxxar parish church is dedicated to Our Lady of Victories.
  - The feast is celebrated on September 8.
  - Naxxar is famous for its cart ruts (cart tracks) that curve and twist down the Great Fault escarpment.
- In-Naxxar there is a square dedicated to Toni Bajjada—Misrah Toni Bajjada.
  - Naxxar borders with the towns of Għagħtur, Iklin, Iija, Mosta, Pembroke, St. Paul's Bay and Swieqi.
  - The town's motto is – *Prior Credidi* – meaning *The First To Believe*.

*Naxxar  
Coat of Arms*

