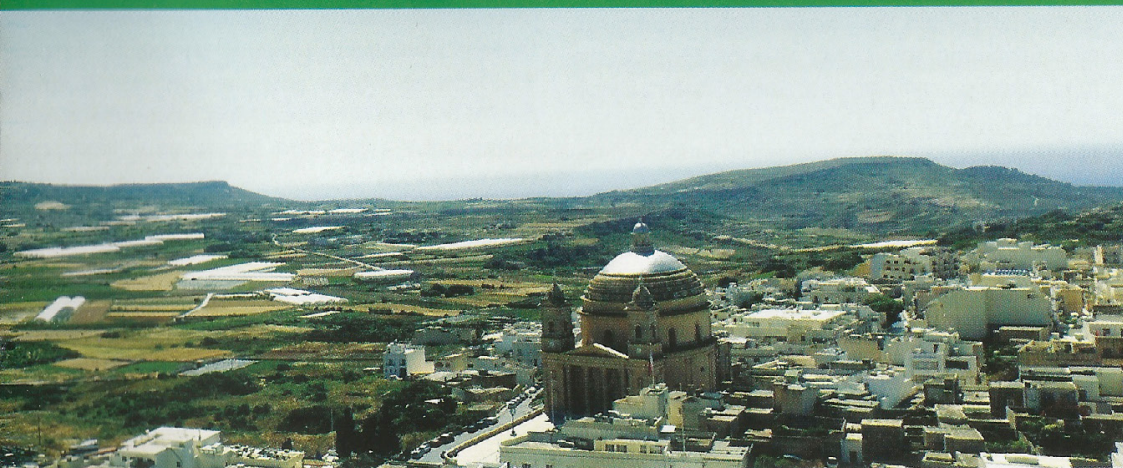


Discovering Imġarr

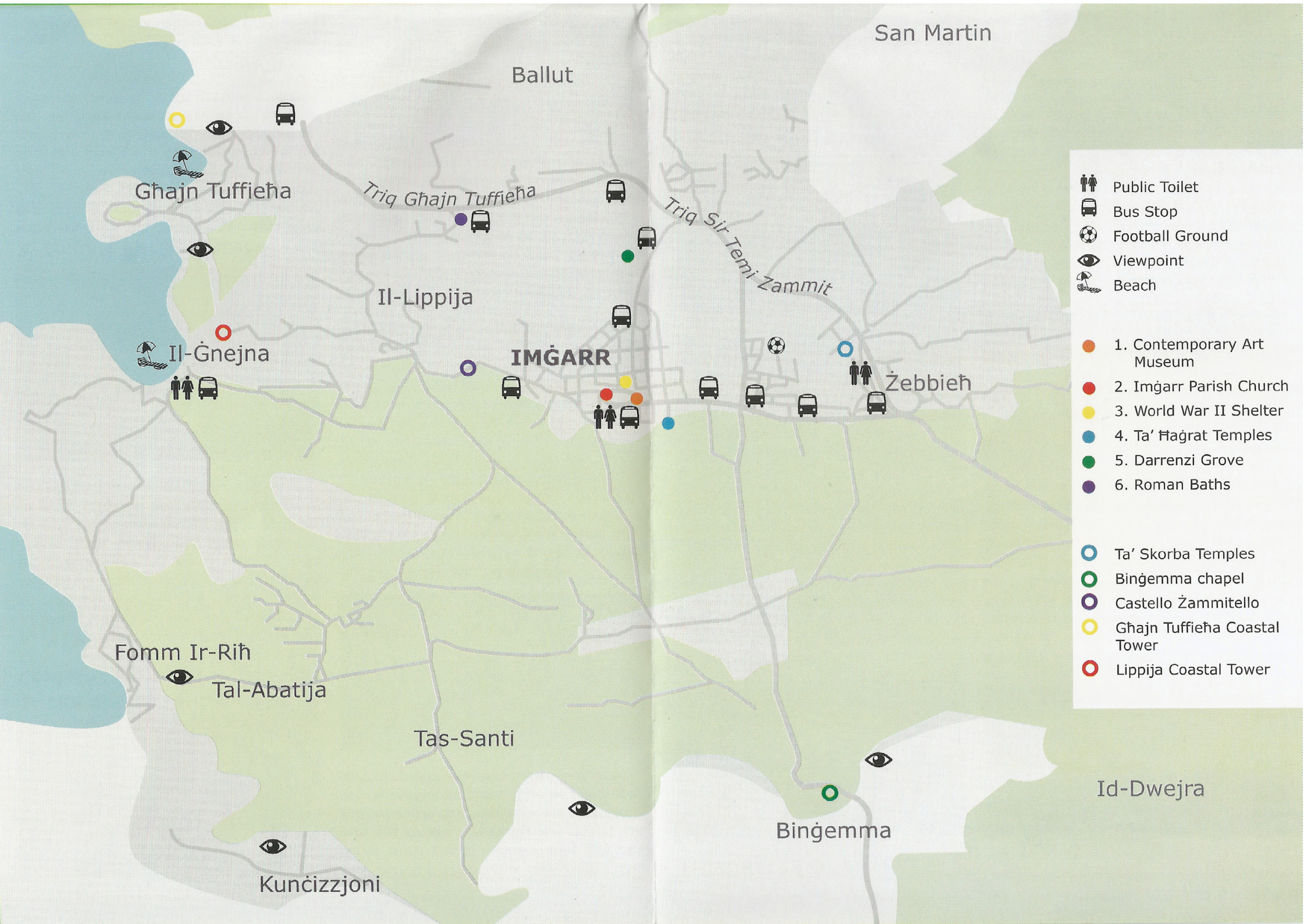
A unique rural trail and other sites worth visiting



One of the most remote villages in Malta is Imġarr. Distanced from any other locality, it has retained its distinctive rural character and serenity. Its coastline extends from Fomm ir-Riĥ Bay to Ġhajn Tuffieħa Bay, embracing in between the picturesque Ġnejna Bay. It is believed that Ġnejna and Ġhajn Tuffieħa bays served as safe haven to pirates during the much early centuries. In the 17th century, two watch towers were built in prominent positions to watch and protect against invasions from the South.

A walk through the remote part of the village is a parallel to a quick informative study of the island's archaeological time frame. The village of Imġarr has two of the oldest known places of worship and most ancient free-standing structures in the world; Ta' Skorba and Ta' Ħagrāt Temples. Whilst visiting the outskirts of the village one will find the Thermal Roman Baths, which formed part of a Roman Villa that included statues, various amphorae, and also small areas of mosaic Roman floors which are still intact.

The Southern boundary of Imġarr is delineated by a natural geological barrier known as the Great Fault that formed a natural defence wall which was fortified and extended in the late 19th Century by the British Empire. The complex network of linear fortifications, collectively known as the Victoria Lines, is a unique monument of 19th Century military architecture. At the turn of the 20th Century, the imposing church with an unusual elliptical cupola was constructed through the contribution of local peasants who embarked on a massive fundraising campaign during desperate times.



San Martin

Ballut

Ghajn Tuffieħa

Triq Ghajn Tuffieħa

Triq Sir Temi Zammit

Il-Lippija

IMĠARR

Żebbieħ

Il-Ġnejna

Fomm Ir-Riħ

Tal-Abatija

Tas-Santi

Kuncizzjoni

Bingemma

Id-Dwejra

- Public Toilet
- Bus Stop
- Football Ground
- Viewpoint
- Beach
- 1. Contemporary Art Museum
- 2. Imġarr Parish Church
- 3. World War II Shelter
- 4. Ta' Ħaġrat Temples
- 5. Darrenzi Grove
- 6. Roman Baths
- Ta' Skorba Temples
- Bingemma chapel
- Castello Żammitello
- Ghajn Tuffieħa Coastal Tower
- Lippija Coastal Tower



1. The Tempra Museum of Contemporary Art

Situated in the premises of Imġarr Local Council close to the Parish Square, this museum hosts about four hundred and fifty (450) contemporary art and sculpture from all over the world. Amongst the range of artistic works exhibited in this collection, one can admire works by Pablo Picasso, Lilika Papanicolaou, Carlos Diaz, Olaf Schabbach, Christiane Peugeot and many more. For more information on this artistic collection and related events, one can visit Imġarr Local Council.



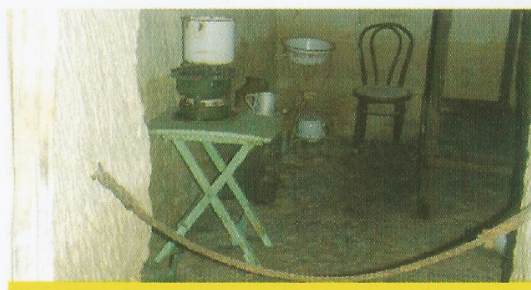
2. Imġarr Parish Church

At the turn of the 20th Century, Imġarr was a small farming village with a growing population and the residents craved for a larger parish church. Guided by Fr. Girolamo Chetcuti, the community organised a massive fund raising campaign to finance the construction of a large church. As per local custom, the new church was to be built around the small old church, which later was to be pulled down once the project was completed.

On 2nd June 1912, the first stone was laid down and from then on, the village residents increased their efforts in the fund raising campaign by selling agriculture produce to the Maltese population. The building of the church was a slow process with residents volunteering after their daily farm work mainly by transporting stones with their mules and carts.

Imġarr parish church cupola is elliptical on plan, an unusual design (hinting the oval) chosen to remind the people of the importance of contributing thousands of eggs towards the fund raising campaign to build their parish church. Mr. Gammari Camilleri, the chief builder, together with the headmaster Mr. John A. Cilia, volunteered for this difficult and delicate task. The new unfinished church was blessed on 13th August 1939 but the works came to a halt during World War II. The elliptical cupola was completed in 1946 with the guidance of the then headmaster Mr. John Cilia together with local masons.

Since the construction of the parish church, the villagers remained devoted to their patron saint, the Blessed Virgin Mary. The village 'festa' is celebrated on the first Sunday after 15th August. In order to carry the statue of the Virgin Mary during the 'festa' procession, the bearers have to pledge offerings which are then distributed among charitable institutions and for the upkeep of the Church.



3. The World War II Shelter

Situated in the Imġarr parish square, this shelter is one of the largest underground locations of its kind in Malta. It reaches a depth of twelve (12) metres and extends to an overall length of over

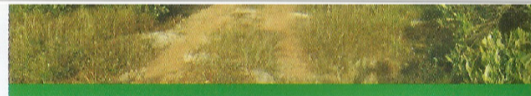
two hundred and twenty five (225) metres. Dug during World War II, manually using only pick axes and shovels, the shelter was cleaned out and restored to its original state and has recently been opened for the public. It can be accessed by purchasing tickets through Il-Barri Restaurant.



4. Ta' Haġrat Temples

One of the Maltese megalithic structures enlisted as a UNESCO World Heritage Site is located at Ta' Haġrat area in Imġarr. These temples consist of two adjacent megalithic buildings, built entirely from large coralline limestone masonry. The West Temple is the oldest structure and like the nearby Red Skorba Temple, it dates back to the year 3600B.C (Ġgantija Phase) and similarly consists of three half-rounded chambers with a central path. Part of the East room of this temple was removed to be replaced by another temple structure that was built around 3300BC. The larger temple has an imposing massive facade.

Ta' Haġrat Temples were unearthed in 1917, when a local farmer reported noticing some large stones in a field. Following the report, the site was excavated by a team led by Sir Temi Żammit, a pioneer in Maltese archaeology. Amongst the invaluable artefacts found on this site, a small stone model of the temple was discovered and this shed light on the way the Neolithic temples were constructed and roofed over.



5. Darrenzi Grove

This olive (*Olea Europea*) and cypress (*Cupressus Sempervirens*) grove was planted in the 1960s and has lately been renovated to serve as a recreational space in a serene rural setting. Ta' Darrenzi woodland provides a unique natural environment, where one can unwind and enjoy the Maltese countryside. Being located on a high ground, this grove also serves as a landscape observatory as it boasts panoramic viewpoints overlooking Ġhajn Tuffieħa valley and the hills to the south of Imġarr.



6. The Roman Baths at Ġhajn Tuffieħa

The Ġhajn Tuffieħa Roman Baths, or rather their remnants, consist of a group of structures and mosaic pavings that were once part of a complex Thermae Romanae. Powerful members of high-ranking Roman families came frequently to Malta and used this villa as a stopover on their way to colonies on the North African coast. This archaeological site is situated on top of a fertile valley with groundwater surfacing at the Ġhajn Tuffieħa spring, from which the place takes its name.

OTHER SITES OF INTEREST



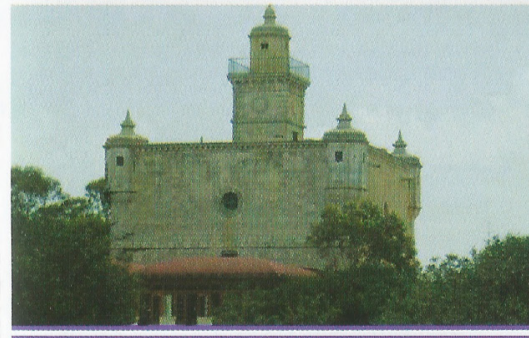
Ta' Skorba Temples

Ta' Skorba Temples are considered as one of the oldest places of worship known to mankind and enlisted as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Excavated in the 1960s by archaeologist Dr. David Trump, Ta' Skorba holds the remains of two temples, built in different archaeological periods. The oldest temple known as Red Skorba, dates back to what is known as the Ġgantija Phase which is dated between 3600-3300B.C., whilst the Grey Skorba Temple dates back to the Tarxien phase between 3150-2500B.C. Red Skorba Temple is better preserved and is in a form similar to that of Ta' Haġrat Temple in Imġarr, with three half-rounded chambers with a central path. The Grey Skorba Temple is found on the Eastern side and has four chambers, two on each side of an internal path.



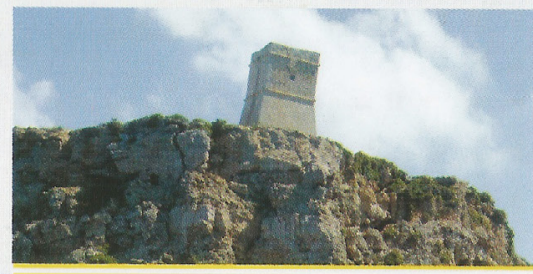
Binġemma chapel and whereabouts

On top of Binġemma hamlet on the Southern limestone cliffs of Imġarr, one can visit a chapel whose portico provides a viewpoint over the northern part of the Maltese Islands. The Binġemma chapel that was built in the 17th Century is dedicated to the Virgin Mary of Itria (Hodegitria in Greece). This chapel has a south facing door and contains a solid stone altar as well as a painting on canvas of Our Lady of Constantinople. On the eastern side of Binġemma chapel, one can follow a trail that leads to the valley and cliff side. At this spot one can observe the numerous Punic Tombs that were dug in the steep cliff and were later used by troglodytes during the Jewish persecution of the 16th Century. The concealed nature of these tombs was lost when the British forces fortified these cliffs in the late 19th Century and removed potential hiding sites in the cliff face.



Castello Żammitello

Whilst walking down the typical country road to Ġnejna Bay, one will come across Castello Żammitello, an 18th Century fortified house constructed in the Norman architectural style. According to a famous local legend, Lucia, the only daughter of Baron Bernardo Żammit, disappeared from her bedroom on the morning of her wedding to a wealthy Sicilian count. Believing that Lucia had been abducted by corsairs, the Baron mounted an armed search of Ġnejna Bay, which proved futile. One year later, the bells of a local church started tolling unexpectedly, and a vision of the missing Lucia, clad in a nun's habit, appeared before the altar. She told the villagers that she had run away from home to avoid marrying the elderly Count and, having taken nun's vows, had spent the past year tending to the wounded in a foreign land until she was killed by a stray arrow.



Ġhajn Tuffieħa Coastal Tower

The Ġhajn Tuffieħa Tower is situated on the headland jutting between Ġhajn Tuffieħa Bay and Golden Bay. During his rule, Grand Master Jean Paul Lascaris felt that the northern part of Malta was not properly defended, with Imġarr and its surroundings being the most vulnerable to enemy attacks. Thus in 1647, he ordered the construction of this tower at the Ġhajn Tuffieħa headland as well as the installation of two cannons.



Lippija Coastal Tower

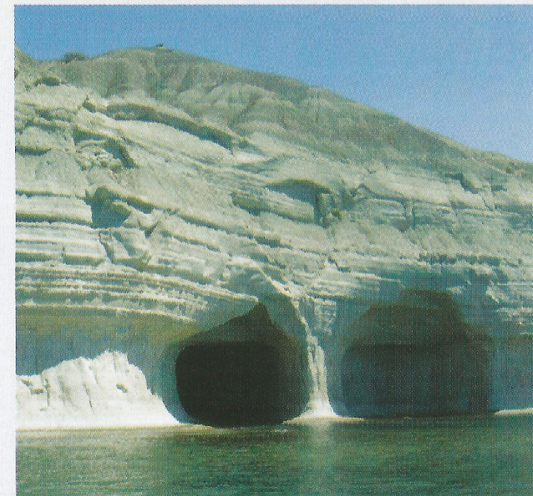
The Lippija Tower guards the beaches of Ġnejna Bay and Ġhajn Tuffieħa Bay from a strategically high position. This tower, built in 1657, was part of a massive coastal fortification project embarked on by the Order of the Knights of St. John, in the quest to defend the Maltese Islands from enemy and pirate attacks. This project was aimed at reducing loss of life and valuable possessions as well as to help populate the Northern part of Malta. Had these coastal fortifications been built a century before, the Turkish armada would have been defeated in a much shorter siege.



Beaches and Bays in the West coast of Imġarr

The rural village of Imġarr is bounded by picturesque coastal cliffs as well as headlands and bays to the West. Apart from their remarkable natural beauty, Ġnejna Bay and Ġhajn Tuffieħa Bay enclose golden yellow sandy beaches with crystal clear blue waters that attract a large number of swimmers during the sunny summer months. An interesting natural trail connects the two bays through il-Qarraba headland which boasts of one of the most beautiful clay slopes of the Maltese Islands.

The coastal cliffs to the South of Ġnejna Bay are of particular geological interest and the best way to experience these breathtaking views is by a boat ride from Ġnejna to Fomm ir-Riħ Bay. The latter is a pristine inlet with rocky coast and clear blue sea surrounded by high cliffs. Fomm ir-Riħ Bay is a boating and diving paradise not to be missed.





Il-Qarraba Headland



L-Imġarr Local Council

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Tel: 21520011 27520011

Email: mgarr.lc@gov.mt

Website: www.mgarrlc.com

Opening Hours

1st October - 15th June

Mon, Wed, Fri - 8am-12pm 1pm-3pm

Tues & Thurs - 8am-12pm 1pm-4.45pm

Sat - 8am-11.30am

15th June - 30th September

Mon to Fri - 8am-2.30pm

(except August till 1.30pm)

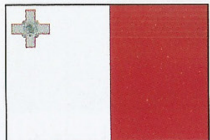
Sat - 8am-11.30am



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Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007 – 2013



Axis 3 – *Improving the Quality of Life in Rural Areas*
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