



THE MALTESE NEWSLETTER
The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora



THE MOTTO - BUILDING BRIDGES NOT WALLS

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AUSTRALIA IS A MULTICULTURAL NATION
LET'S CELEBRATE AUSTRALIA DAY TOGETHER

On Australia Day, 26 JANUARY, we come together as a nation to celebrate what's great about Australia and being Australian. It's the day to reflect on what we have achieved and what we can be proud of in our great nation. It's the day for us to re-commit to making Australia an even better place for the future.

Australia Day is the anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet of 11 convict ships from Great Britain, and the raising of the Union Jack at Sydney Cove by its commander Captain Arthur Phillip, in 1788.

Though 26 January marks this specific event, today Australia Day celebrations reflect contemporary Australia: our diverse society and landscape, our remarkable achievements and our bright future. It also is an opportunity to reflect on our nation's history, and to consider how we can make Australia an even better place in future.

We remember also our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders of Australia who lived and owned this land for over 40 000 years

PASSPORT TO MALTESE CITIZENS LIVING ABROAD



Many persons of Maltese background living abroad have had to wait a long time to obtain a Maltese passport for which they hankered for years if not generations.

While a passport is not really essential to prove citizenship, it is usually taken as its best indicator. Having a passport in your hand is something which can be flashed at an instant and generally goes unchallenged.

Some travellers owning a Maltese passport make sure that they take it with them whenever they leave the country

where they live, together with their local passport indicating their country of residence, to avoid any re-entry visa problems when they return home. While sometimes this could cause confusion at customs, it generally works well.

There are three distinct categories of persons who look at a Maltese passport in different ways:

Firstly, there is a category of young persons born outside Malta, whose parents were born in Malta, who desire a Maltese passport largely as a ticket to Europe. This is by far the largest category of potential passport applicants. In Australia alone it is estimated that there are around 200,000 persons who would belong to this category. Obviously, not all of these will be applying for a Maltese passport. To date, the number of persons in this category who have applied is no more than a few thousands.

These persons are often very keen to have such a confirmation of their citizenship. Many are proud to obtain a Maltese passport, particularly since it may take several months' wait before this is achieved.

Secondly, there is another category comprising persons who have all but lost Maltese citizenship, or perhaps more correctly, they were for years ignored and forgotten. I refer to those who left Malta several generations ago to settle in countries in North Africa and who have lost direct connection to Maltese lineage. Again the number of persons in this category is not known exactly, but in Australia for instance, there would be around 10,000 persons who belong to this category. No doubt there would be many more in France, UK, and other countries in Europe where these expatriates settled in the post-war period. This is a group of persons who craved for Maltese citizenship most acutely, and have appreciated the possibility of becoming reintegrated within Maltese society through the recent relaxation of evidence of proof required to obtain Maltese citizenship.

Both the above two categories have in common their great appreciation for having their Maltese citizenship confirmed through having a Maltese passport.

Thirdly, there is the category of persons born in Malta of Maltese parents whose citizenship was never in doubt. The majority of these persons left Malta in the 1950s and '60s, and most of them have now reached retiring age. For a while it was not allowed to have dual citizenship, but now that these problems have been resolved, these persons are considered automatically to be Maltese, irrespective of how long they have been living overseas. Their right to a Maltese passport is not in question.

What is the significance of a Maltese passport to this category of persons? I have been asked this question on several occasions. Many of us go to Malta every few years and carry with us both our Maltese passport as well as a passport of our country of residence – this makes re-entry much smoother. In reality, we do not need the Maltese passport to visit Malta or Europe for several weeks, but we take it with us anyway as an extra bit of insurance and ease of entry into EU countries.

While a Maltese passport is not really essential, it is certainly a certificate that is proof of membership of the larger Maltese community of which they are proud.

Some travellers coming back from Malta complain that there should not be any distinction whatsoever between Maltese living in Malta and those living overseas. It has to be made clear, however, that residents have rights which are not applicable to non-resident Maltese citizens. This includes a Maltese ID Card and Kartanzjan (seniors' card)

(mccv newsletter 2012)



THE MALTA HERITAGE TRUST

Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna, the Malta Heritage Trust, is a voluntary non-governmental organisation active in the field of heritage preservation. One of its principal objectives is to create awareness to encourage the better understanding and preservation of the cultural heritage of the Maltese islands. For this reason, over the years, FWA undertook the rehabilitation and restoration of various cultural properties. Today FWA

looks after several historic buildings and sites in Malta. These properties span 7,000 years of Maltese history, from pre-history to the 20th century. These range from a megalithic temple at Kordin to a great baroque gate once serving as the main entrance into the imposing 7km long Cottonera bastioned ramparts; and from a Victorian fort armed with the world's largest cannon to 20th century concrete defences.

Most of the cultural properties which FWA holds in trust, are made accessible to the public. In line with its objectives, FWA seeks to provide the visiting public with the highest form of interpretation that will enable a better understanding and appreciation of our cultural heritage. For this reason FWA also undertakes to build and maintain cultural collections with which to establish museums. Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna is governed by a board of trustees, whose role is to formulate the general policy, and to safe-guard the aims of FWA as spelled out in the organisation's statute. The daily management of the trust is entrusted to the office of the Chief Executive Officer. This office is made up from a small core of full-time personnel assisted by part-time and volunteer staff. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for all the functions of FWA. Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna is a not-for-profit organisation. All the revenue it generates goes towards the restoration, and ongoing conservation of its cultural properties. Funds are generated through membership fees, voluntary contributions and sponsorships; from the management of its sites as cultural attractions; and through the provision of heritage related services to public authorities and the private sector.

Notre Dame Gate - Cottonera



Built in 1675 by the Order of St. John as part of the Cottonera Lines to serve as its main gate for the Eastern Provinces, this grand baroque building survives complete and includes some marvelous architectural features which are not found anywhere else in Malta. It stands on four levels which makes it still the highest peak in the region. From its roof one can enjoy stunning views of most of the island. It consists of four large bomb-proof casemates standing upon each other flanking the roadway and crowned by a large gatehouse which originally housed the lifting mechanism for its portcullis gate. This building has a very rich and colourful history most of which is still visible in its stone in the shape of musket ball indentations and many graffiti left behind by soldiers of the Order's navy, the French and the British.

Following the nearby building of the Cottonera Military Hospital in 1870, the gate gradually started serving as an adjunct to the new military medical establishment.

Following the debacle at Gallipoli in 1915, thousands of wounded troops were brought to Malta for treatment and convalescence and some of these were accommodated at Notre Dame Gate for the duration of the Great War.



The Maltese Community Council of NSW invites the Maltese Community to attend, Australia Day Calibration, on Sunday, January 22nd 2017 at the (Wattle Room), 17 Miller Street, Merrylands NSW 2160, 4 pm. Admission is free. Light refreshments. Parking available. For more information, Contact Emanuel 0409 744 376

Maltese living abroad can still be Maltese



By Professor Maurice N Cauchi

From time to time, since 1969, it was considered important to organise conventions with the aim of bringing together members of the Maltese community from abroad, to give them the opportunity of highlighting issues, problems, ideas and even make suggestions for improvement of relations between them and the home country.

Since then, Conventions for Maltese Living Abroad have been organised in 2000 and 2010, and we are now approaching the latest convention to be held this month, under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

There was a time when it was assumed that once Maltese left the island, they were no longer interested and certainly never

encouraged to come back.

They were expected to assimilate as quickly as possible and forget their roots and their background. In fact, of course, this was pure fantasy which was most unlikely to happen.

Now, more than half a century after the original waves – one might even say a tsunami of migrants – left Malta in the 1950s and 1960s, the realities of the situation have become more clear.

A recent survey being carried out by the Maltese Community Council of Victoria shows that none of the original migrants have changed in any fundamental way from Maltese of the same background who have never left Malta. They still have the same basic culture, eat mostly the same food, congregate with other fellow Maltese, keep their religious and other habits and in practically all respects are Maltese.

Even more unexpected is the finding from another survey relating to the second generation, which indicates that quite a considerable proportion of young Maltese, while born and bred in Australia, still have a very soft spot for Malta, which they visit often, enjoying the friendship of their cousins. Most of them may have lost fluency in Maltese, but many of them keep in touch with what is happening in Malta through the now ubiquitous availability of internet, with ipods, ipads and other instantly available sources of information.

This may come as a surprise to those Maltese who never left the islands. They find it difficult to understand how, after all this time Maltese abroad can still be Maltese.

On the other hand, it is worth keeping in mind that Maltese of the first generation now constitute only about one fourth of all those who have a right to consider themselves Maltese citizens. As in Malta, the new generation is quite distinct from the old, with much better education, often having a tertiary education, and being more appreciative of the technical and social advancements associated with a modern society. It is important to distinguish between the two categories when one speaks of Maltese living abroad. They have a lot in common, but also a lot that is different.

There have been several issues which have been raised in previous conventions and which need to be kept in mind. These include issues relating to the rapidly ageing population, loss of language and culture, issues relating specifically to youth and communications with Malta.

Conventions like the one taking place this month at the Conference Centre, Valletta, are meant to bridge this gap. It allows participants to discuss issues prevalent within the communities they come from. They might even make recommendations for those in authority to examine and hopefully follow through.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs should be congratulated for ensuring that such conventions are held at relatively shorter intervals of five years, in contrast to the much longer intervals between conventions in previous years.

[First published in The Sunday Times of Malta on 19 April 2015]

Lord Gort's granddaughter visits the Malta at War Museum and the War HQ Tunnels



A most exciting and evocative visit was made by Lord Gort's granddaughter Mrs Anne Harries to the Malta at War Museum, the War HQ Tunnels and the Saluting Battery while on a brief stop at Malta.

Gort was a much loved wartime governor of Malta and a leading British military figure. He is widely credited with saving the island in 1942 from the clutches of certain defeat. He is also the one who personally brought with him the George Cross to present to the nation. Gort was known to have nerves of steel which is why at Malta's darkest hour Winston Churchill installed him as governor of Malta and Commander-in-Chief.

Mrs Harries is the daughter of one of Lord Gort's daughter. During her visit at the Malta at War Museum she was shown a number of star objects with a direct connection with her illustrious grandfather such as the very flag flown on his car on the day that he presented the George Cross to the nation in Valletta in 1943 and the original script for his parting speech which was broadcast over the then Rediffusion radio service before he left the island in 1944.

At the War HQ Tunnels she was shown the cubicle used by both Governors Dobbie and Gort throughout the siege which gave them quick access to the Combined Operations Room in case of need. Mrs Harries was accompanied by her husband David and family friend Mrs Jane McGregor. For FWA this was a great honour to be able to host a direct descendant of the Saviour of Malta.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS – DISTRICT 22



Cross of Malta

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States adopted for its symbol the Cross of Malta, which has a heritage of honor, duty sacrifice and courage that dates back to the 11th century.

The Cross has its origin in the Knights of St. John, a strict order of crusaders originally founded to maintain a hospital for pilgrims journeying to the Holy Land. From this order evolved two divisions, the knights Templar, famed for their ability to fight, and the Knights Hospitaller, humanitarians who provided for the sick and distressed. The Knights established branches throughout Europe and moved their headquarters to Cyprus. From Cyprus the headquarters was eventually moved to Rhodes in the 14th century and was

transferred from there to the island of Malta in the 16th century. There it became known as the Knights of Malta.

The insignia of the Knights of Malta is basically the same as the one used today by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It is an 8-pointed cross formed by four arrow heads meeting at the points. Each represents one of the Beatitudes taken from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The arrowheads indicated the knights were willing to fight for the principles of Justice and truth, although their order was basically a peaceful one.

This outlook is similar to that of the VFW, devoted to peace, but comprised of men and women who have fought and are willing to fight again, for those principles which embody the individual liberties and

dignities of men. The fundamental objectives of the organization are set forth in a charter granted it by the Congress of the United States in 1936.

History shows that the Cross of Malta, the emblem of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, is 1,000 years old. Nearly ten centuries ago the Maltese Cross was made the symbol of fighting men who were united by a solemn pledge of comradeship to fight for freedom and to aid the sick and the needy. Those ancient obligations are still symbolized by the Cross of Malta today, for the more than two million former servicemen who are the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The Cross of Malta is the symbol of their battles in time of war and of their campaign to defend the God given rights of human beings in time of peace. The Cross of Malta symbolizes the compassion, or sympathy, of those men and women for the needy. It is the sign of services which our contemporary veterans render to help make living a little better for everyone. To appreciate fully the original meaning of the Cross of Malta we must look back a thousand years, to the Crusaders serving in the Middle East. There we find the Knights of St. John, the worlds first great brotherhood of warriors pledged to chivalry. The Knights of St. John represented all walks of life. They were noblemen and priests, artisans and laborers. Regardless of those differences, however, they were united by a solemn pledge of unwavering courage and compassion. Together they fought against oppression. They carried their crusades far from home across deserts and seas, into the Holy Land, Cyprus, Rhodes and Malta. At the same time they administered to the sick, the needy and to the poor. The Crusaders adopted the Cross of Malta as their insignia because its eight points represented the eight Beatitudes prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount.

Those, in effect, declare

- (1) blessed are the poor in spirit
- (2) the meek
- (3) the pure
- (4) the merciful
- (5) the peacemakers
- (6) blessed are they that mourn
- (7) seek righteousness
- (8) blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake.

The Cross of Malta had a religious origin but the Knights of St. John also made it their battle standard for the liberation of all men, women and children who suffered oppression. The ideals for which the original Crusaders fought parallel the principles of democracy today, freedom and justice.

Centuries passed to the year 1899. Again fighting men banded together. Again they pledged themselves to campaign for the rights of mankind and to administer to the sick, the needy and to the poor. That was the birth of a new organization, known today as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Why did the Veterans of Foreign Wars select the Cross of Malta emblem? What has been added to the Cross and what does the symbol mean?

Let us look at the VFW ensign closely. We see the eight-pointed Maltese Cross. Upon the Cross is superimposed the Great Seal of the United States, encircled by the name, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Within the circle is the American eagle, the emblem of a proud nation whose warriors of many generations have fought and sacrificed to preserve the free mans way of living. Between the four arms of the Cross, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has added the suns rays to emphasize the vigor and warmth with which the present day brotherhood defends our ideals. Every detail in the VFW emblem has definite meaning. The Cross, the rays and the seal together symbolize the vows, purpose and character of men and women who have traveled far from home to defend humanity.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is the worlds oldest and largest overseas war veterans organization.

It is chartered by the Congress of the United States. That charter states specifically that The purpose of this corporation shall be: Fraternal, Patriotic, Historical and Educational, To preserve and Strengthen Comradeship among its members, To assist worthy comrades, to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans. To maintain true allegiance to the government of the United States of America and fidelity to its constitution and laws, to foster true patriotism, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom, and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies whomsoever.

Upon joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a person vows in the presence of Almighty God and the members of this order to maintain loyalty to the government, to the VFW, and to his fellow comrades. When the Cross of Malta is bestowed upon a new VFW member, he or she is pledged to advance the principles of the organization. Like the original Crusaders 1,000 years ago, the 2.1 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars today fulfill their vows through a wide variety of vigorously executed services.

The VFW is also joined by 750,000 members of our Ladies Auxiliary in our efforts. They foster true patriotism, and strengthen the institutions of freedom by word and deed. They improve their cities, towns and neighborhoods through community service. They give aid to worthy comrades and to the widows and orphans. They extend helping hands to the needy and the sick. Like the original Knights of St. John, those who wear the VFW Maltese Cross express their comradeship in terms of service. These are the reasons why the Veterans of Foreign Wars chose the Cross of Malta as its emblem. The Cross of Malta symbolizes truly the character and objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. People qualified through military service to wear the VFW Cross of Malta do so with pride because that emblem represents the highest of ideals. Every member has earned the Cross of Malta proudly - and he or she wears it proudly.

MALTESE IN BRAZIL

Text by [Dr. Thomas Bonnici](#) Professor of English Literature at [State University of Maringá](#)



Maringá - Paraná - Brazil

First Maltese Emigration to Brazil

Although reliable statistics are unavailable on the Maltese in Brazil, it seems that there were three differently aimed emigration instances of Maltese to Brazil. Research on this topic has been done only in Brazil. Difficulties, however, are great. Due to the fact that the Maltese had a British passport, the Brazilian authorities enlisted all Maltese coming to Brazil as British. There are even cases of some Maltese who changed their surnames giving them an "English" spelling.

When one looks at the São Paulo telephone directory one will find many "Maltese" surnames: Aquilina, Attard, Balzan, Bonello, Bonnici, Calleja, Caruana, Cassar, Falzon, Fenech, Friggieri, Galea, Grech, Grima, Mallia, Meli, Muscat, Pirota, Pisani, Said, Saliba, Sammut, Schembri, Spiteri, Tabone, Vassallo, Vella, Zahra, Zammit. Even if the spelling above has been taken *ipsis litteris*, one has to interpret the existence of these surnames with great caution since São Paulo is a melting-pot of Italian, Sicilian and Lebanese emigrants. Some contact has been tried with these families but was unfortunately discontinued.

The first Maltese emigration to Brazil occurred in the 1910s. In the wake of massive European migration to South America in the last decades of the 19th Century and the first decades of the 20th, the Maltese Emigration Committee prepared to send some 30 families made up of field labourers to Brazil. On the 28th March 1912 a party of 73 emigrants made up of 13 families left Valletta on board the French steamer ss. Carthage for the port of Santos in Brazil. Father Pietro Paulo Charbon of Birkirkara accompanied the party. After changing over to the transatlantic steamer ss. Provence, they arrived in Santos on the 26th April, 1912. On the 18th April 1912 another group of 106 persons left Malta and arrived in Santos on the 19th May, 1912.



Maltese in Coffee Plantation

The first group was sent to work in the coffee plantation on the fazenda Santa Eulalia in the municipality of Brotas, state of São Paulo, about 183 km from the city of São Paulo. The second party was sent to do the same field work at the fazenda São José de Fortaleza. However, homesickness, insufficient information, lack of preparation, incompatibility and a lack of clear emigration policy from the British government in Malta caused the failure of this emigration. By August 1913 emigration to Brazil came to an end. Many returned to Malta, others stayed and fended for themselves.

Second Maltese Emigration to Brazil

The second emigration of Maltese to Brazil occurred in the late 20s and it was somewhat linked to the British entrepreneurship of railway building and maintenance in the state of São Paulo. Practically all present Maltese in Brazil knew Mr Dominic Colier (or Coleiro) from Floriana. He had an administrative post in the railway company linking São Paulo to Santos and the state of Paraná. In the last years of his life he lived as a pensioner paid by the British government.



Mr. Colier with Maltese priests and sisters.

Third Maltese Emigration to Brazil

The third one occurred in the 50s and it was totally different from the previous ones. In the 50s Dom Geraldo Sigaud, then Bishop of Jacarezinho at the far east of the north of the state of Paraná, invited the Maltese Franciscan Sisters to help him in the diocese which was developing into a great economical region.

In the 1920s the northern part of the state of Paraná consisted of dense forest and a huge jungle. The land was bought by the Sudan Cotton Plantations Syndicate led by Simon Joseph Fraser (Lord Lovat) who planned its development according to well established rules. Thousands of emigrants from Europe and from the neighbouring state of São Paulo, began buying lands and transformed them into coffee plantations, cities and towns. The area hitherto inhabited scantily by Kaingang Indians was teeming with thousands of people in the space of thirty years.

Needless to say, the spiritual needs of these people were enormous and the Maltese Franciscan Congregation offered to send some sisters to Rolândia and Jaguapitã. However, in 1956 this huge diocese was subdivided into three dioceses: the diocese of Jacarezinho, Londrina and Maringá. Exactly at the beginning of the diocese of Londrina, the Archbishop's Seminary in Malta sent two seminarians, John Busuttill from Rahal il-Gdid and John Xuereb (deceased) from Naxxar, to study Theology at the Diocesan Seminary in Curitiba, the capital of the state of Paraná, in the south. They were ordained priests in 1959 by Dom Geraldo Fernandes, then Bishop of Londrina.

He had come to Malta and invited priests and seminarians to go to Brazil. In 1960, Bernard Gafá from Msida, Carmel Mercieca from Qormi, Francis Debattista (deceased) from Tarxien, Joseph Agius and Joseph Xuereb, two Gozitan seminarians, began their Theology course in Curitiba. In the meantime Fr. Peter Fenech from Dingli and Fr. Frank Tabone Adami from Gzira began their work in two Brazilian parishes. By the 60s all the above were working in the recently built towns of the north of the state of Paraná, together with Fr. Carmel Mifsud of Zejtun and Fr. George Zammit (deceased) from Birzebugia.

In the 50s and 60s the missionary spirit of the Franciscan Sisters helped them to open creches and schools not only in the above mentioned places but also in the town of Presidente Prudente (in the south-west of the state of São Paulo), São Martinho, Umuarama and Curitiba.

On the other hand, the Maltese Province of the Dominicans sent many of its priests to the diocese of Paranaguá, Ponta Grossa and Curitiba, all situated in the south of the state of Paraná. The Augustinians sent their priests to the state of Mato Grosso in the town of Três Lagoas where a huge dam was being built at that time and there was a great concentration of workers with their families, to the city of São Paulo and to Belo Horizonte, in the state of Minas Gerais.

Parallel to what was happening in the south of Brazil, Gozitan priests were attending the invitation of Dom Carlos Coelho and Dom Helder Câmara, bishops of Olinda and Recife in the state of Pernambuco, the northeastern state of Brazil. Fr. Paul Raggio from Birgu was the only Maltese diocesan priest in Recife at that time.

Returning to the mid-60s, the spirit of Vatican II urged many seminarians to leave their homeland and go to Brazil. Thomas Bonnici from Zebbug, Paul Pirotta from Naxxar, Paul Brincat from Birkirkara, Carmel Bezzina and Philip Said, both from Zebbug, Edwin Parascandalo and Vincent Costa, both from Birkirkara, Lawrence Gauci from Mgarr, Anton Sammut (died in 1976) from Gzira and Peter Camilleri (died in 1992) from Floriana came to the seminaries of São Paulo and Curitiba and after studying Theology began to head parishes in the north of Paraná.

Due to the subdivision of the diocese of Londrina into that of Apucarana and Londrina, many others were reshifted to the diocese of Apucarana and others such as Dominic Camilleri from Floriana, Lucas Azzopardi from Rabat and Michael Pace from Hamrun are still working in the same diocese. Two lay missionaries, Tony Camilleri from Floriana and Mario Briffa from Rahal Gdid came for two years in Apucarana to help in parish work.

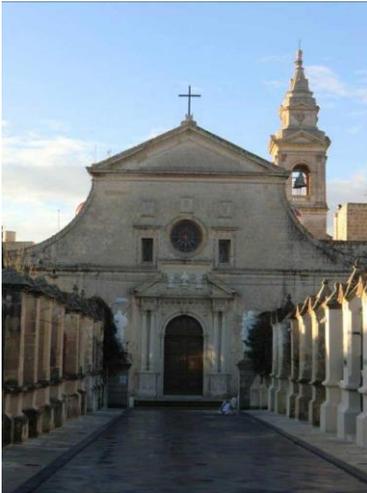
The Archdiocese of São Paulo and other adjacent dioceses received other Maltese priests such as Xavier Cutajar, Daniel Balzan, John Mallia, Andrew Zammit and Paul Mercieca.

In 1977, the Maltese Dominican priest Walter Ebejer, brother of the late playwright Francis Ebejer, was consagrated Bishop of the diocese of União da Vitória in the south of the state of Paraná. After many years of diocesan work in Mosta and St. Julian's, Fr. John Caruana of Mosta decided to come to Brazil in 1984 and is still working in the Archdiocese of Maringá.

The Augustinian Sisters of Malta who had already a big boarding house for girls in Paranaíba, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, have now other pastoral responsibilities in Nova Londrina, in the state of Paraná.

Besides the above-mentioned priests, friars and nuns, there are some married Maltese too in Brazil. John Busuttil worked as an accountant in the Volkswagon car industry in Santo André and on retirement keeps a small restaurant in downtown Londrina. Paulo Pirotta works at the Volkswagon car industry in Santo André. Thomas Bonnici is full professor of English Literature at the State University of Maringá. Edwin Parascandalo is the director of the National Service of Commercial Apprenticeship. Anthony Zammit and his sister Helen live in São Paulo. He works at the Felixal and she is a telephone operator. Dr. Vincent Flores Porsella, professor at Mackenzie University in São Paulo and a retired civil servant of the Education Department.

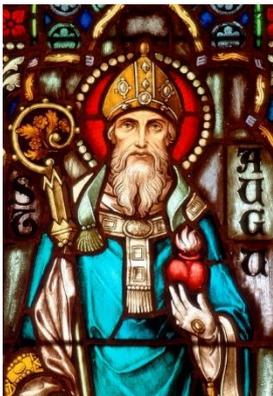
THE AUGUSTINIAN PRIORY – RABAT, MALTA



It is surprising to learn that, although St. Augustine is regarded as its spiritual father, the founder of the Order was not actually St. Augustine who died in the 4th century. In fact the Order was instituted much later, in 1244, when small groups of hermits scattered throughout Europe united to form larger communities based on the teachings of St. Augustine.

Although the date of the original Priory at Rabat is uncertain, it is known that by 1460 the Augustinians were already installed there. There are those who hold that the first Priory was built in 1383 and was sited halfway between Mdina and the present site at the top of Saqqajja Hill. This first building was destroyed in 1551, when Dragut, the famed Muslim corsair and scourge of the Mediterranean, landed an army in Marsamxett Harbour.

The Knights of St. John who had arrived in Malta in 1530 had not yet had time to build any defences and sought refuge in St. Angelo. The Maltese in Mdina realised that a Priory a hundred metres or so beyond the walls would serve as an excellent platform from which to attack the bastions, so they sallied out and destroyed the Priory. Everything pertaining to the church and the sacristy (including objects made of gold and silver), as well as the priory (friars' clothes, library, cloak room and archive) were lost. Despite the threat of excommunication, none of what was taken has ever been recovered.



After requesting Grand Master Claude de La Sengle to give them a place where they could continue living their life as a community, even for a limited time, the Augustinian friars obtained the use of Santo Spirito Hospital (today the National Archives) in Rabat. In 1555, they managed to obtain from Bishop Domenico Cubelles the chapel dedicated to St. Mark the Evangelist at the top of Saqqajja Hill. This chapel is exactly in the same spot where we today find the side chapel dedicated to the Holy Spirit in St. Mark's Church. Obtaining the necessary permits was not too difficult as the Order of St. John followed the Augustinian rule. Besides, an Italian Augustinian, who later became the Prior General of the Order, Spirito Pelo Angosciola O.S.A., was a well-known preacher to the Knights. In fact, he was asked by La Valette to deliver the address at the laying of the first stone of the City of Valletta on the 28th March 1566.

The construction of the new church started on 13th August 1556, to the design of the Maltese architect Ġormu Cassar and the foundation stone of the church was laid in the same year. The construction of the church was completed in 1588. A very interesting fact is that this church is architecturally a miniature model of St. John's Co-Cathedral. Cassar had obviously experimented successfully with a structure that he was later on to translate to the Knight's Church in Valletta.

Around two hundred years later however, it was felt that most of priory had to be rebuilt again due to the damage the long years had caused to the fabric. For this reason, in a Chapter which took place on 15th March 1739, all the friars agreed to build a new priory – the third one on Saqqajja Hill. After many consultations, Andrea Belli's design was recommended partly because he was the foremost Baroque architect of his day (he was also the architect of the Auberge de Castille, Valletta, and the Mdina Cathedral Museum and in fact the priory's grand 'scala regia' or double staircase is reminiscent of these buildings) and partly because of the way he managed to incorporate the previous building.

The arrival of Napoleon Bonaparte in Malta was bad news for the Augustinians. On a visit to Mdina, Napoleon's carriage lost a wheel and the great general took the opportunity to visit the Augustinian priory. The terrified prior gave him all the information he sought about the property of the Order with the result that the French, as was their custom, carried away all the treasures of the priory and melted down what they could in order to provide payment for the troops.

In the priory's chapter of 1st May 1854, it was proposed to renovate the choir. As our Augustinian guides pointed out, the friars often used to practically starve themselves in order to release funds to pay for the work. This work, together with that of the lectern, was left in the hands of Ġużeppi Galea of Rabat. The design was drawn up by artist Giovanni Galdes and approved by architect Galizia. It consisted in the removal of one of the two titular paintings – that of St. Augustine by Mattia Preti, which was later hung in the sacristy. The original titular painting of St. Mark the Evangelist by Girolamo Muziano, was left where it was but had to be hung at a higher level to allow space for a marble statue of St. Augustine, the work of Pawlu Triscornia, underneath it. Thus was the difficulty of an Augustinian Order running a church dedicated to St. Mark resolved. The High Altar of the church was consecrated by Bishop Gaetanu Pace Forno OSA on 9th October 1896.

The last war too left its mark on the Priory. On the feast day of the Sacred Heart, on 12th June 1942, a tragedy took place. In a 9.45pm air raid, a powerful bomb struck and demolished the house opposite the large window of the refectory, in Main Street. The stones of the stricken house and shrapnel from the bomb peppered one side of the refectory, which was badly damaged as was the level above it, where the students resided. Fortunately, the friars had finished eating a quarter of an hour earlier than usual and thus had had enough time to go down to the shelters. However, on that day, one of the students, who was too ill to leave his cell, died tragically.

A couple of paintings in the sacristy of the great of the Augustinian Order provided some interesting information. Bishop Pace Forno, mentioned above, was a thorn in the side of the British authorities in Malta to the extent that the mere mention of his name usually drew the remark of "Forni si, Pace no". Another well known Augustinian was Paul Micallef (1859-1865) who became Prior General of the Order of St. Augustine and later Bishop of Pisa. The Augustinian Order has celebrated the elevation of theologian Mgr. Prospero Grech to the rank of Cardinal, only the second Maltese to obtain that high status.

At the priory there is also an extensive library, housing some 30,000 volumes. A love of art and beauty is also intrinsic to the Augustinian tradition and it is nowhere more evident than in the magnificent paintings that adorn the Rabat priory, including one of the oldest paintings known on the island. This painting of Sicilian origin was originally thought to be the central panel part of a triptych dating back to medieval times. However the discovery of a fourth panel established the fact that the painting must have been one of a set of five. This sumptuous painting has suffered damage over the centuries and the friars are now trying to have it restored.

Help for Refugees – Augustinian Province of Malta



Migration was there, is still here and will still remain in the future. After seeing the increase in the challenges offered by the migration crisis and following 6 September 2015 Pope Francis' appeal to welcome a family of refugees, an internal discernment process begun in the Maltese Augustinian Province on all this. Following various internal discussions and even within the Maltese Augustinian Justice and Peace Commission, it was decided to use the only available space in St Mark's Priory in Rabat. The same space was before used as a store for outside feast decorations. The space was transformed and refurbished to accommodate and welcome a refugee family. The project was mostly financed internally and with help of other beneficiaries. An interesting aspect of this project is that the project is done in coordination with JRS Malta. The refugee couple, from Eritrea, Coptic, were welcomed on 11 October 2016. Just the day before, while the Augustinians were celebrating St Thomas of Villanova's feast, the Saint of the Poor, they blessed the home to accommodate and welcome them. At the same time, the wife was given birth to her first son, Eyakiem. The friars opted that they will welcome them within St Mark's Augustinian complex in Rabat instead of helping them far away in other places as this, within itself, is a statement of welcome that will leave its mark on our hearts and attitudes. This project is another way to dialogue and encounter them, to hear their fears, their hopes, their difficulties, and their joy. Surely, this will not solve the whole migration problem but it is an act of mercy and compassion, both in the Year of Mercy and also in the Bi-Centenary celebrations of the Maltese Augustinian Province.

Toronto Feature: Little Malta



This text is from the free Toronto in Time app, which was created by The Canadian Encyclopedia and is available from the App Store and the Google Play store.

Visit its companion website, which is linked below, to explore all the features of the app online.

(Photo left) Bake Shop Storefront, Toronto, 2012 (photo © by Davina Choy).



(Photo left) St Paul the Apostle Church, 2012

This church replaced the original St Paul the Apostle church in 1956 (photo © by Davina Choy).

Toronto Feature: Little Malta "Spiritual Beach for Little Malta"
This text is from the free Toronto in Time app, which was created by The Canadian Encyclopedia and is available from the App Store and the Google Play store. Visit its companion website, which is linked

below, to explore all the features of the app online. Malta may be one of the world's smallest countries, but at one time Toronto was home to two different Maltese neighbourhoods: one in the Junction, and one downtown, near Dundas and McCaul.

When Maltese immigrants arrived in Toronto in the early 20th century, fleeing over-population and unemployment, many of them were unable to speak English. Although they were able to get by, they found themselves unable to take part in every aspect of their Catholic faith, as there were no Maltese-speaking priests who could hear their confessions. Several Maltese priests visited Toronto in the years between the world wars, and found themselves listening to several years' worth of confessions! These priests soon started the ball rolling towards establishing a Maltese church in Toronto.

St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church was established for the Maltese Catholic community in 1930, starting as a simple basement church. By the 1940s, the Junction had become the centre of Toronto's Maltese community and as immigration increased after the Second World War a larger church was needed. In 1956, a new building was erected, and a rectory and an auditorium added four years later. Franciscan fathers of the Province of Malta run the parish. In recent years, the stretch of Dundas between Runnymede and Clendenan has been recognized on street signs as "Little Malta," and is one of the few Maltese neighbourhoods outside of Europe.



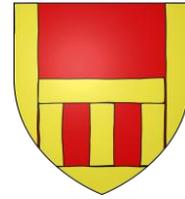
THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

**The Commonwealth
in 2017**

From Malta's leadership role in the EU and the Commonwealth to the first ever Commonwealth Trade Ministers' Meeting and the launch of The Queen's Baton Relay, 2017 will present new opportunities to deepen Commonwealth ties and strengthen Commonwealth values. [Find out more](https://www.thercs.org/blogsnews-and-blognews-and-blog/news-and-blog/the-commonwealth-in-2017/) about the events that will shape the coming year for the Commonwealth.

<https://www.thercs.org/blogsnews-and-blognews-and-blog/news-and-blog/the-commonwealth-in-2017/>

Xaghra Association of NSW



XAGHRA ASSOCIATION OF NSW Incorporated was officially formed in 2008, though it had been operating for the previous 5 years. One of its aims and objectives is to preserve the Maltese cultural and religious values and traditions. An annual dinner dance to commemorate the festa of the nativity of Our Lady, or as it is known by the Maltese, 'Il-Vitorja', is celebrated on the first or second Saturday after the 8th of September (depending on what day the 8th of September falls on).

In the past special guests of honour from Malta came to celebrate this event with us. Amongst them were Monsignor Carmelo Refalo (currently Archpriest of Xaghra), Monsignor Joseph Sultana (currently Archpriest of Gharb), Canon Michael Galea, (currently the assistant director of Arka foundation, a home in Gozo, Malta, for people with disabilities). Last year we had amongst us a very young priest, Fr. Richard Nazzareno Farrugia, who is still studying in Rome. Also last year Monsignor Mario Grech, Bishop of Gozo, Malta, came on a pastoral visit to Australia. The Xaghra Association was asked to look after the program for NSW & a special organising committee was formed. It consisted of 3 of its committee members, members representing the community as well as the President of the Maltese Community Council of NSW.

A religious & social program is prepared for the visiting clergy when they come to NSW so they can outreach to the Maltese community at large. We organise fundraising trips which have taken us interstate as well as overseas. We also go to the 'Tal-Vitorja' festa in Melbourne and celebrate with the other Maltese and Gozitans there. We thank our loyal supporters and sponsors for their continuous support, which is greatly appreciated. The association has helped missionaries, charities, not for profit organisations and individuals overseas.

Office Bearers: **President:** Josephine Bigeni JP **Assistant President:** Mary Anne Teuma
Secretary: Mary Sultana **Treasurer:** Raymond Bigeni



Maltese-Australian Women's Australia Day

**Nhar l-Erbgha 25 ta', il-Maltese-Australian Women's
Association ser jorganizzaw Australia Day f'De Piro
House Stanely Street Sydney.**

**Fl-10.30 am quddiesa u qabel ikun hemm il-qrar wir-Ruzarju, wara jkun hemm ic-
celebrazzjoni tal-quddiesa mil-Kappillan tal-ghaqda Fr Tarcisio Micalleff MSSP.
Inkomplu bil-morning tea/coffee u wara jkun servut il-ikel. Importanti li jkun hemm
booking biex issir l-ordni tal-ikel. Cemplu lil Joyce Nagi fuq: 9718 2795**



*Il-Ġawhra
ta' H'Attard!*

*Ġawhra
f'Malta!*

**Nilqgħu
donazzjonijiet
għall-xogħol li
se jsir fuq il-vara
u l-pedestal**

**APPEAL FROM
ATTARD – MALTA**

Many thanks for the interesting newsletters you keep sending us unfailingly on time. Keep up the good work. This time round I work voluntarily in my parish. I'm the Secretary of the Beni Kulturali Group - ATTARD PARISH. Right now we are collecting donations for the restoration of our titular statue and its pedestal. Is there a way please how you can help us find ways how we can trace people living in Australia and who are originally from Attard so that we encourage them to donate money towards this noble cause? I understand there can be more than one way how we can contact

these people. Many heartfelt thanks and kind regards , Elizabeth Mallia Secretary Beni Kulturali Group Attard Parish Email: elizmallia@gmail.com

20% EARLY BIRD OFFER

RUSSIAN MASTERS

PAVEL KOLESNIKOV Piano	TCHAIKOVSKY Piano Concerto No. 1
JEAN-MARC BURFIN Conductor	SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No. 5

JANUARY TICKET SALE!! Get in early* and snap up a 20% discount on tickets for the first concert in MPO's Russian Masters concert series.

On the 5th of February, brilliant young Russian pianist Pavel Kolesnikov will join the orchestra to perform Tchaikovsky's First Piano

Concerto under the direction of French conductor Jean Marc Burfin, and Guest Leader Carmine Lauri. The second half of the programme will feature Shostakovich's epic Fifth Symphony. Written at the height of Stalin's oppressive reign this symphony paints a vivid picture of Russia at that time. **Jean-Marc Burfin** – Conductor **Pavel Kolesnikov** – Piano **Carmine Lauri** – Guest Leader
DATE & TIME: 05/02/2017 - 6.00pm-7.45pm **LOCATION: Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta - MALTA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

THE MALTESE NEWSLETTER
The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

Archived at the
 Malta Migration Museum - Valletta
 and at
www.ozmalta.page4.me



Bikes Are Part of Malta's Solution, Not Its Problem

David Grech Urpani *Photo by Tonio Lombardi*

By now, it's sadly common knowledge that Maltese roads are not the safest in the world. Through a combination of too many people on the road, and quite a lot of them not *really* adhering religiously to our driving laws, fatal car accidents have shockingly stopped being a surprise – until one of them hits home. Going out on any given night always gets the same reaction from wary parents; "Be careful on the drive home. It's not you that I'm worried about, it's the other drivers."

In the nine months since new legislation was passed on people driving and using their mobile phones in March 2016, more than 6,000 people were fined for texting and driving. Top that off with 5,000 people who didn't wear their seatbelt and at least one person being fined for driving drunk every week the year before (with so many more clearly going unnoticed), and we've got a pretty dire situation on our hands when it comes to driving safely in Malta. It's all summed up in our surprising collection of traffic fines. Even if new drinking laws were proposed a couple of weeks ago and reportedly only a couple of people were stopped for driving under the influence over the holidays, the problem is far from solved. And it only took 2017 a couple of hours to remind us of this ugly truth. Add to the mix that with this absolutely batshit statistic that, up till August 2016, there were more than 350,000 vehicles on the road. To put that into perspective, that's *way* more than one car per adult *legally allowed to drive* on the island. And to make matters even worse, the stock of license vehicles frequently hits an increase average rate of 36 vehicles per day.

The truth is there is a way to alleviate these vehicular problems, and that's to have more bikes on our roads. Scooters and motorbikes are better for the environment, drastically decrease traffic congestions, and are also extremely fun to drive. Admittedly, they come with a level of danger to a degree which a car doesn't, but that arguably helps in increasing self-discipline on the road. The real problem, of course, is the lack of discipline and respect that someone who would be interested in trying out biking confronts on a daily basis.

"Unfortunately, there seem to be a lot of people whose perception of bikers is based on a single asshole on a loud motorbike who gave them a fright once while they were half asleep at the wheel", a Lovin Malta wrote in last week. Which seems pretty much on target. There aren't enough people outside the biking community who think bikers are a good thing. And the people who could (and *should*) be getting interested in the prospect of trading in their car for a motorbike are either shunning it away because of stupid misconceptions, or rethinking it because of shockingly frequent tragedies.

You know we've got a serious problem when this is an actual thing a human being said in 2017: The problem is there are too many cars on the road at any given time, and most of them don't really respect one another to the degree that they should. Bikers are more often than not the only ones that end up taking the brunt of it all. And unfortunately, that brunt is not only emotional and psychological with people hurling abuse at what they consider are "reckless bikers with a really bad attitude" – it's also physical. Of course, it goes without saying that the same amount of restraint needs to apply from the side of the biking community as well. If you've just learnt how to ride a bike and you're aware of the current situation on Maltese roads, then maybe you shouldn't be considering buying a super bike just yet. If that doesn't really occur to you, then maybe you shouldn't even be legally allowed to think about it for now until the situation gets at least a bit better. The bottom line is we all need to be pulling the same rope, because at this rate, our roads are only becoming an even worse and more fatal tug of war.

Charlie Clews and Johnny Catania doing one of their comical turns in the 1950s.



Charles Clews and Jonny Catania and the Radju Muskettieri -Memories

Charles "Charlie" Clews was a comic actor and script writer. Clews was one of the very first contributors to the local Maltese radio (then Rediffusion). Clews was the driving force of the Radju Muskettieri (The Radio Musketeers). Although he worked closely with a number of other well known personalities, his closest partner was Johnny Catania.

The son of William George Clews and Maria Scerri, Charles was born in Senglea on the 27th Sep 1919. He was educated at the Lyceum, Valletta and at the Dockyard Technical College as an Engine Fitter Apprentice. During World War II Clews was a member of the Dockyard First Aid Squad and was presented with a Certificate (3-Chevrons) for his services.

In the midst of the Second World War, Charles and some friends formed a *Concert Troupe*, which performed comical shows to the workers at the Dockyard. The Naval Authorities approved these shows as they heightened the morale of the workers during such a difficult time. These shows were becoming increasingly popular, and encouraged by many spectators, Clews together with Nestu

Laiviera (later Speaker of the House of Representatives), Fred Underwood, Johnny Catania and Laurie Bellizzi formed *Stage Commandos Variety Company* and started giving shows in theaters all over Malta.



JOHNNY CATANIA



JOHNNIE NAVARRO



NOSI GHIRLANDO



ARMANDO URSO

NOSTALGIA RADIO MUSKETTIERI SHOW



CHARLIE CLEWS

With "*Radio Muskettiere*", which he co-founded in 1945 with Catania and Armando Urso, Clews introduced a new kind of humorous show and a novel kind of comedy sit-com for Cable Radio, known in those days as Rediffusion and Radio, Series like *Toto Tanti*, *Fredu Frendo Sghendo*, *Mabbli I-Fabbli I-Kuntistabbli*, *Ninu u Karmena Abdilla* were very popular among the Maltese.

Clews had two very successful tours to Australia, in 1964 with Johnny Navarro and in 1984 with Johnny Catania, where they had shows at the Royal Opera House in Sydney. He left the Dockyard as a Surveyor and in 1964 started his career as a journalist with the Union Press. He has also been contributing a humorous column to *It-Torca* for several years. He is the author of seven booklets of a humorous nature in Maltese and of a great number of scripts for radio, comedies and sketches, and songs for the stage. His play *Dar Fuq ir-Ramel* has been translated into English, and included in Prof. A. J. Arberry's *Maltese Anthology*. Clews was chairman, Board of Film and Stage Censors (1955-58) and member, Film and Stage Censors' Board (1971-87). In 1996 he was awarded the *Midalja għall-Qadi tar-Repubblika* (MQR). The Broadcasting Authority presented him with a Trophy for long service on Stage and Radio 1998

IN GUARDIA PARADE 07/05/2017 11:00 - 11:40

The IN GUARDIA PARADE is a re-enactment that portrays an authentic event that took place regularly inside Malta's major fortifications of the Order of St. John. The re-enactment portrays the inspection of the fort and its garrison by the Grand Bailiff of the Order of the Knights of St. John in charge of military affairs. During the re-enactment, of the fort's garrison - some 50 re-enactors in all, kitted-out in their uniforms perform their military drill to demonstrate to the Grand Bailiff its state of readiness. The show begins at 11.00hrs and lasts 40 minutes. In case of inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstance the event may

be cancelled without prior notice. When in doubt it is best to contact the Tourist Information Centre at Melita Street, Valletta on tel: 00356 22915440 1 / 2.

- **Venue**

- **Fort St. Elmo**
- **Phone:** +356 22954000
- **Email:** info@heritagemalta.org
- **Website:** <http://www.heritagemalta.org>
- **More Info »**

- **Organiser**

- **Contact:** Malta Tourism Authority
 - **Phone:** +356 22915440
 - **Email:** info@visitmalta.com
- **Website:** <http://www.visitmalta.com/en/in-guardia>

THE FRIENDS OF PROVIDENCE HOUSE GROUP**IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE HAMRUN CLUB**

Are organising **A FUND-RAISING NIGHT** at the Hamrun Club,

100 Jackson Street Marsden Park on **Saturday 18th February 2017 at 6.00 pm**

For entertainment there will be:

Charlie Muscat, MCA Choir, Katelyn Vella, Joe Apap, Alee, James Cassar, Charlie Camilleri, Martin Vella.

Donation of \$10 p.p. goes to the House of Providence, which offers a home for persons with disabilities. Besides, there will be chocolate wheel and even a raffle on the night.

Maltese food will be served such as rabbit with spaghetti, bake macaroni, bake rice, stuffed eggplants with mince, steak and chicken and lots, lots more. You can purchase Maltese lager, Kinnie, Aussie beer, soft drinks, tea and coffee as usual from the bar.

Everybody is free to buy and drink what he prefers, but it can help the kitchen persons, if whoever want to eat, he should put an order first, so that they will know beforehand.

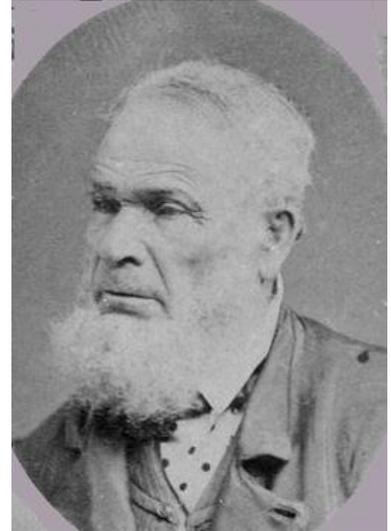
I urged you to come along and enjoy this wonderful evening and be happy in help a very worthy cause. Any other free donations are mostly welcome.

For more inf. please ring Greg : 0411517187 or Jim :0418 825 591.

ANTONIO AZZOPARDI FIRST MALTESE FREE SETTLER IN AUSTRALIA

The first Maltese to arrive in Australia were convicts, transported in the 1810s for deserting their British regiments. Malta was then a British colony.

In this photo - Antonio Azzopardi (1805-1881) Australia's First Maltese Free Settler. Son of Angelo Azzopardi a merchant of Zejtun, Malta and Euphemia Cachia. Printer, lithographer, draughtsman for the early Melbourne, Victoria, Australia Herald Newspaper which later became the Herald Sun. Was a sailor/seaman/engineer on sailing ships and steamers in Port Phillip Bay having arrived in Melbourne in July 1839 on the Mary Hay. By 1881, the Malta-born population of Victoria was only 73. This was in spite of the fact that emigration was vital to Malta, a small, resource-poor country, and Britain encouraged emigration as part of a strategy of populating the Empire with white British subjects.



Britain's intentions conflicted with Australia's 1901 **Immigration Restriction Act**, which kept the number of Maltese arrivals low in the early 20th century. During World War I Maltese immigration was severely restricted, and a quota system for Maltese **immigrants** was introduced in 1920. International pressure resulted in the quota being raised in 1923, and 395 Malta-born people lived in Victoria by 1933.

In 1948 an assisted passage agreement was signed with Malta, the first such agreement Australia had made with any country other than Britain. This resulted in large numbers of arrivals, peaking in the 1950s. By 1966, the Malta-born population of Victoria was 26,452.

Since the mid-1970s there have been far fewer **immigrants** from Malta, and the number of Malta-born Victorians has declined slowly. In 2011, Victoria had the largest Malta-born population in Australia, with a total of 19,728 people. Maltese was spoken at home by 63% of community members, while most others spoke English.

Today, the community is concentrated in Sunshine and Keilor. They are evenly spread across the employment spectrum. Almost everyone in the community is Catholic, and the church has played a vital role since the early years of settlement. Many other organisations in Victoria also help to maintain the rich legacy of Maltese history, language, music and religion, coordinated by the Maltese Community Council of Victoria.



National Congress Battalions Militia

The **National Congress Battalions** (Italian: Battaglioni del Congresso Nazionale, Maltese: Battaljuni tal-Kungress Nazzjonali), also known as the **Truppe di Campagna**, was an irregular military set up in Malta just after the Maltese rebellion against French rule in September 1798. It existed for two years before being disbanded on 11 September 1800. The battalions were also referred to as the **Maltese Army**^[1] or the **Maltese insurgents**.

Ta' Xindi Farmhouse, which served as Vincenzo Borg's field headquarters. It is one of the few surviving landmarks of the blockade.

History

From 1530, Malta had been administered by the Order of Saint John. The islands were occupied by French forces in June 1798, when Napoleon ousted the Order during the Mediterranean campaign of 1798.

On 2 September 1798, while the French were looting artifacts from a church in Rabat, the Maltese rebelled and opened fire on them. The French retreated to the fortified city of Mdina, but on 3 September, the rebels managed to enter the city from a sally port and the French force surrendered.^[3] Most of the towns and villages fell into rebel hands over the next few days, but the French held on to the fortified positions in the Grand Harbour area (including the capital Valletta) and various other forts in Malta and Gozo. On 4 September, the Maltese formed a National Assembly, and its first task was to create an armed force to blockade the remaining French forces. The force, which was known as the Battaglioni del Congresso Nazionale or the Truppe di Campagna, came into existence in the following days, and it consisted of a number of village battalions, which had their origins in the Order's militia setup prior to the French occupation. Notary Emmanuele Vitale, who had led the attack on Mdina, was appointed Generale Commandante of the army. The first battalions to be set up were those of Birkirkara and Żebbuġ, which were led by Vincenzo Borg and Francesco Saverio Caruana. Vitale, Borg and Caruana became the three main leaders of the insurrection.

The Maltese acknowledged King Ferdinand of Naples and Sicily as their sovereign, and also appealed to Horatio Nelson for protection. Throughout the rest of the siege, the Maltese insurgents were aided by the British, Neapolitans and Portuguese.^[2] In 1799, Czar Paul I of Russia sent a diplomat to the insurgents promising his support and protection.^[5]



The Maltese insurgents made a number of successful assaults throughout the course of the siege, including the capture of St. Thomas Tower and St. Julian's Tower. The insurgents did not manage to capture the major fortifications, such as the city of Valletta, the Cottonera Lines, Fort Manoel and Fort Tigné, but they managed to prevent the French from retaking land outside the fortified positions. Throughout the course of the siege, the Maltese constructed a number of camps, batteries, redoubts and entrenchments surrounding the French-occupied harbour area. The most important insurgent fortifications were the Corradino Batteries, Ghargħar Battery, Tal-Borg Battery and Tas-Samra

Battery.

At its peak, the army consisted of 10,000 men,^[1] of which 2,505 were men-at-arms.^[7]

The French eventually capitulated to the British on 4 September 1800. The Maltese battalions were disbanded by British Civil Commissioner Alexander Ball on 11 September.

Between 1800 and 1801, gold and silver medals were struck to commemorate the blockade, and were awarded to leaders and distinguished members of the National Congress Battalions. These are now among the most highly prized Maltese medals.

Structure

The army was made up of the following battalions:^[8]

**Birkirkara Battalion - Għaxaq Battalion - Kirkop Battalion - Mqabba Battalion - Qormi Battalion
Żabbar Battalion - Żebbuġ Battalion - Żejtun Battalion - Żurrieq Battalion**

The battalions were divided into companies and platoons. Some of the larger battalions had artillery and engineer sections, as well as military bands. A grenadier company known as the Granatieri was also established, and it was responsible for guard duties at Casa Leoni in Santa Venera. The majority of the army did not have uniforms, but the Birkirkara Battalion was supplied with locally made cotton uniforms. The Generale Commandante, the general staff, the Granatieri and some artillery units also had their own uniforms.

Weapons

At the outbreak of the rebellion, the insurgents were poorly armed, having only hunting rifles, muskets captured from several armouries, and a few swords, pistols and locally made pikes. Between 19 and 24 September 1798, the Portuguese Navy and Royal Navy supplied the insurgents with a large number of muskets and cartridge boxes. The Maltese also had artillery pieces captured from various coastal fortifications such as Saint Mary's Tower and Mistra Battery. These were taken to the many insurgent positions encircling the harbour area.



Hello there! I'm Vlad, a part time traveler from Romania and my passion is discovering new places with a camera in my hand. This is my wonderful experience of Malta, the paradise of the Mediterranean

Every time I think about Malta and the Maltese traditions I automatically think about the mixed cultures – you can see it in the people, in the language, in all the beautiful places and certainly in the food. Eating in Malta has definitely been one of my favorites parts of the trip. Malta (and all the things that are part of this country) is basically part Arabic, part Italian, part English and part unique identity. I think that only here you will find a combination of cannelloni con ricotta and halva on the same plate. When you take these elements apart you can identify the Italian components and the Arabic components. I think that is a common mistake.

At some point I stopped seeing the Maltese cuisine as a combination of different elements and acknowledged it as a unique and different cuisine. That was the moment when I really understood and enjoyed it.

Eating in Malta: a quick history

When you look back at the history of this country, you can understand why the Maltese cuisine has so many outside influences – Malta was under Roman rule in Antiquity, had an Arab period in the Middle Ages, was occupied by France between 1798 and 1800 and was part of the British Empire. Also, location is another factor that played a major role in defining the culture of Malta – Sicily, Tunis and Libya are close.

However, I believe that the Maltese cuisine has its own identity. Moreover, you can identify unique aspects of the dishes when you travel to Gozo.

There is a saying in Maltese that can summarize the importance of food in the traditions – “Tuna l – pastizzi ha mmutu zghar” (that can roughly be translated as: *give us pastizzi so we die young*). Pastizzi are a traditional pastry that can reach up to 600 calories per piece. Don't let that stop you though, they're definitely one of the first things you should be eating in Malta.

Traditional food Appetizers.



I only had three kind of appetizers: Gozo cheese (Ġbejna) with Gozo olives, pasta with rabbit sauce and Bigilla. Often the appetizers are on the house. Gozo cheese (Ġbejna) is made either from goat milk or sheep milk and along with the local version of ricotta are protected by the EU legislation. You can eat it as is or deep fried it and served it with salad and olives. Rabbit dishes are very common in Malta. They became very popular after the lifting of the hunting restrictions and the domestication of the wild rabbits. Bigilla is a dish made of mashed beans and it can be eaten with roasted bread.

Meat dishes.

Rabbit stew

Rabbit meat is found in different Maltese dishes. Rabbit stew (Stuffatt al-fenek) is considered to be the national dish, while fried rabbit (fenek moqli) is also popular among the locals. If you want pork meat you can try the stuffed pork (Falda Mimlija), filled with cheese, parsley, sausages and...a hard boiled egg.

As for the fish dishes – lampuka is consider to be the national fish, but you can choose different fishes and sea food like sea bream, sea bass, sword fish, calamari and octopus stew. I tried two dishes with swordfish and cooked vegetables. The swordfish was grilled and the vegetables were roasted. It was one of the best fish dishes I've ever eaten.

Bread and bread based dishes



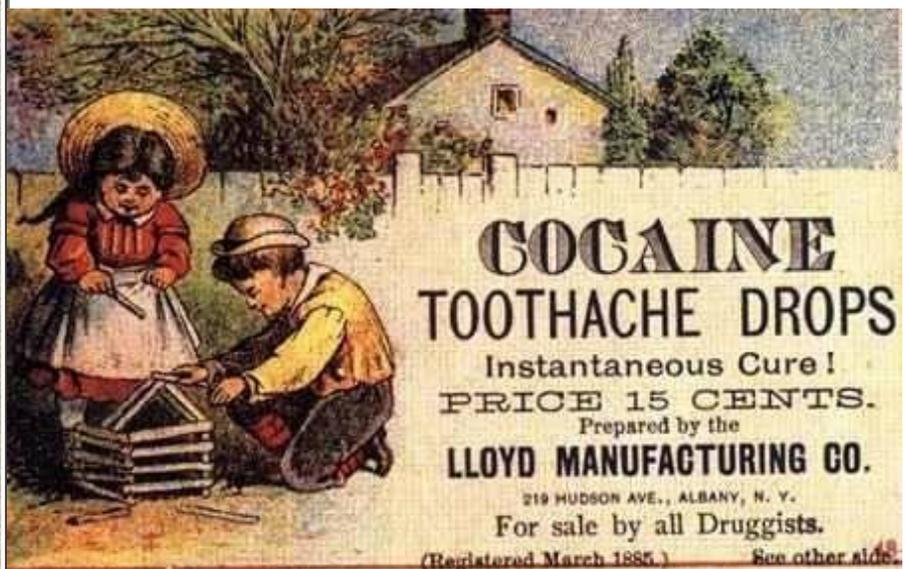
Ftira is sometimes advertised as the Maltese version of pizza but let me assure you, the only thing that ftira has in common with pizza is the flat bread base. I tried two versions of ftira: Ta' ŻeppiĊirwilla (Ftira base topped with thin sliced potatoes, sliced beef, tomatoes, garlic and parsley) and Tal-Baldas (Ftira base topped with thin sliced chicken breast, tomatoes, onions, fresh sage, black olives, white wine and olive oil). If I had to describe these dishes I would call them a stew on a flat bread, and avoid

referring to them as pizza. **Maltese bread (Hobżtal-Malti)** is a very consistent sourdough bread that has a nice crust. I had the chance to eat some bread made in a wood oven as part of the Bigilla starter and I loved it. **Street food** Unfortunately I didn't had the change to discover the Maltese street food as much I as wanted. I've only tried some pastizzi in Mosta, on my way to Mdina. Since it was early in the morning and I was a bit hungry, the smell that came from the bakery caught my senses. It was impossible to miss those treats.



The Presidency of the
United States of America
January 2017

UNUSUAL OLD ADVERTISEMENT submitted by Harry Bugeja



CELEBRITIES WITH MALTESE ANCESTRY



Malta may be just a speck on the world map, but some of our compatriots have set the scene for many superstars to be born and entertain the world. Australia has Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman. Iceland has Bjork. Sweden's got ABBA. But what about us? Well... You'll be surprised.

Kerry Ingram – Rising to fame as Princess Shireen in *Game of Thrones* – the little girl who was burnt at the stake – Kerry's still at the beginning of her career. What many may not know is that Kerry's grandfather lives in Imqabba and is Maltese. If that's not random, I don't know what is...



Edwige Fenech – I guess her surname gives the ancestry away here. Born to a Maltese father and a Sicilian mother in France, Edwige is one of those *CineCitta* actresses with more talent than one person should have. Among her many accomplishments, the two that stand out the most are when she was asked by Quentin Tarantino to star in *Hostel: Part II* and producing *A Merchant of Venice*, which starred Al Pacino.



Joseph Calleia – Before the tenor, there was the actor. And while today he's all but forgotten by the Maltese, Joseph Calleia's fame would be similar to Leonardo Di Caprio's today. Born in Malta, the actor went to Hollywood and played various roles, and worked alongside Rita Hayworth in *Gilda*, Ingrid Bergman in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Lucille Ball in *Lured* and with Orson Welles in *Touch of Evil*. He was one of the Golden Age of Hollywood's most popular and ubiquitous actors.



Bryan Adams – This Canadian legend's grandmother was Maltese, and in case the feud between Valletta and Floriana needed any kindling, she was from Floriana. In fact, his ancestry had been officially revealed to us a few years back when Adams held a concert in Pembroke.



Britney Spears – When our descendants will read about our cultural history some 200 or 300 years from now, there will definitely be a chapter on how 2007 was an uber eventful year for celebrities. The one who had made the most headlines was Britney Spears for shaving her hair off and attacking a car with an umbrella. It seems like Britney's great grandparents were also the talk of the town back in the 1920s when they were living in sin. More importantly to our cause however, was Britney's great great grandfather, Edward Richard Portelli, who was born in Malta in 1873.

So yes, they may not have a Maltese passport and, yes, not everyone would directly associate them with this little island. But they still have Maltese blood running through their veins

<http://www.eve.com.mt/>



ANOTHER FEAST OF GENEROSITY FOR DAR TAL-PROVIDENZA

During the New Year's Day Feast of Generosity, organised by RTK4Charity, **€980,911** were raised in aid of **Dar tal-Providenza**.

The dry but rather chilly weather did not dampen the large crowds' enthusiasm as they made their way to Siggiewi on the 1st January 2017. The generous benefactors made their donations under the big tent set up in the parking lot. As has now become custom, various parishes in Malta and Gozo also made special collections during church celebrations, and presented them during the telethon.

The Director, **Fr Martin Micallef**, said that this year's edition of the Feast of Generosity has once again shown the solidarity with and generosity of the Maltese people towards Dar tal-Providenza. He thanked the civil and political authorities for their support, as well as all those hundreds of volunteers that took part in the organisation of the Feast.

The first official visitor was **Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna**, who also celebrated Mass in the Home's chapel. He said that Dar tal-Providenza, whose residents cost €100 per person per day to maintain their quality of life, is a monument to the culture of life, and through it, our nation spreads the values in favour of life and human dignity, so that we can be a source of hope and support to all of Europe. After midnight, Archbishop Scicluna phoned in during the live broadcast as he felt that he should also thank the Maltese public for its generosity.

Other visits were made by the President of Malta, Her Excellency **Mrs Marie Louise Coleiro Preca** and her husband Mr Preca; **Dr Chris Cardona**, Minister for the Economy, Investment and Small Business who stepped in for the Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muscat who is away from the island; **Dr Beppe Fenech Adami**, Deputy Leader of the Nationalist Party who was representing the Leader of the Opposition Dr Simon Busuttil who is also away; the Parliamentary Secretary for the Rights of Persons with Disability and Active Ageing, **Dr Justyne Caruana**; Archbishop Emeritus, **Mgr Pawl Cremona OP** and Vicar General **Mgr Joe Galea Curmi**. Members of Parliament from both sides of the House and representatives of constituted bodies also made it to Siggiewi during the day. As part of the Feast of Generosity, **€32,010** were raised through an auction of various works of art donated by more than hundred Maltese and foreign artists. Various bids were placed online, but most bidders were there personally to follow the process.

The live television broadcast started at 9am with Holy Mass and continued till just after midnight, when the total sum collected during the day was announced. **TVM1, TVM2, ONE TV, NET TV** and **FLiving Channel** took part for long stretches of the 15-hour televised marathon. This included entertainment provided by the top singers on the island and various entertainers that managed to create a festive family atmosphere.

Bonnie Lee Galea



Bonnie Lee Galea Sultry, Sophisticated & Stylish!

Although she has many talents her first passion & profession is MUSIC occasionally

combining her paintings & charcoals in performances or as backdrop projections for Art Launches.

Bonnie has performed, managed & marketed her own bands professionally since 2000

throughout Northern Territory, Queensland & South Australia.

With her Maltese background, this songstress has a

vast repertoire extending from early classics to current contemporary numbers & occasionally her own compositions will keep you mesmerised with her translation of each song

The Maltese Newsletter – The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora - Hoping everyone had a wonderful end to 2016 and looking forward to Great times in 2017.

We have some DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES to start you off this week ALL INFO & LINKS BELOW

SUN 22 JAN 2017 Q & I

Bonnie Lee Galea & Quinton Dunne
The Market Shed on Holland
 1 Holland St, Adelaide
9am -11am
 FREE Entry

Fri 27

Bonnie Lee Galea DUO
At The R Bar 'Regattas'
 223 Flinders St, Adelaide
6.30pm -9.30pm
 FREE EIn the Bistro

Sat 28

BONFIRE Acoustic Grooves
With Bonnie Lee Galea Trio
At The German Club
 223 Flinders St, Adelaide
6.30pm -9.30pm
 FREE Entry
 In the Bistro

FEBRUARY

Sun 5

JAZZ in CHEEK

With Bonnie Lee Galea, Quinton Dunne & special guest

At The Sheoak Café
For some AFTERNOON JAZZ

38 Sheoak Rd, Belair, SA
4.30pm -7.30pm
 FREE Entry
 Bookings Recommended

UPCOMING IN OUR NEXT MAIL OUT
more February Gigs &

More info on BESSIE BILLIE DINAH
For ADELAIDE FRINGE 2017.

Stay Tuned!!! Hope to see you at a show or two....

Bonnie Lee Galea

Web: <http://bonnielegalea.com/>

Top job for Maltese-Canadian



Rocky Mountaineer, the world's largest privately owned luxury tourist train has appointed Steve Sammut as its new President.

Mr Sammut is of Maltese descent. Both his parents are from Rabat.

The company, which is based in Vancouver, said that since joining Rocky Mountaineer in 2012 as the executive vice president and chief financial officer, Mr Sammut had been delivering consistent growth in both domestic and international markets.

"It is a new era at Rocky Mountaineer and we are very pleased to have a leader of Steve's caliber at the helm" said John Furlong, chairman of the board. His passion for the company, deep knowledge in capital markets and broad business acumen from the hospitality and real estate industries will continue to be invaluable to our organization."

Prior to joining Rocky Mountaineer, Mr Sammut was chief financial officer with Intracorp Projects Limited, a leading real estate development firm and was also active in a variety of senior leadership roles at the global resort operator and developer, Intrawest ULC, including Corporate Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer for the Real Estate Division. Source: TIMES OF MALTA

Maritime Malta Series IV - HMS Hastings – MALTAPOST – STAMP ISSUE SEPT 2016



This issue consists of a miniature sheet bearing one stamp portraying a lithograph of a drawing by Charles von Brocktorff, circa 1838. It shows the entry of the dowager Queen Adelaide on board the HMS Hastings into the Valletta Grand Harbour on 30 November 1838.

Queen Adelaide married William IV in 1818. Together they helped to restore the popularity of the Royal Family at a time when Republicanism was taking over in Europe. Queen Adelaide outlived her husband, and remained the Dowager Queen until her death in 1849. She fell ill after her husband's

passing away in 1837 and was advised that she needed to enjoy a good climate such as that found in the Mediterranean.

The news that the Queen Dowager Adelaide of England was to visit Malta was published in the Government Gazette (no. 1455) on 24 October 1838. This information stated that the Queen had left England on her way to the Mediterranean on 3 October in the 'Hastings'. On 14 November the Government Gazette informed that the 'Hastings' had arrived in Naples, and finally on 26 November news about the programme of the Queen's arrival was announced.

On the day, the 'Rhadamanthus' was ordered to prepare to tow the 'Hastings' into the harbour. The squadron was under the command of Admiral Sir Robert Stopford and consisted of a total of eight ships; the Princess Charlotte 104, the Asia 84, the Vanguard 80, the Bellerophon 80, the Minden 74, the Barham 50, the Carysfort 26 and the

The entrance of the Queen into harbour was marked by a royal salute fired from Fort Ricasoli and Fort Saint Elmo, and afterwards twenty-one guns were fired from each of the man-of-war. Battalions of soldiers assembled on the most prominent batteries in order to cheer the Queen as she passed by. People were overjoyed with the arrival of the Queen it being the first time that the flag of a crowned head had entered within Grand Harbour.

The Queen left Malta on 1 April 1839. The Anglican Cathedral of St. Paul in Valletta remains known as a monument to this visit as during her visit the Dowager Queen contributed £10,000 for the construction, furnishing and endowing of the Cathedral. The foundation stone was Laid in 1839 to the final designs of William Scamp.