

THE JOURNAL OF THE MALTESE DIASPORA

MALTESE NEWSLETTER

OUR MOTTO: BUILDING BRIDGES

Editor: Frank Scicluna Email: honconsul@live.com.au

The dying tradesmen

An elderly man building a reed curtain (hasira)

Tucked away in narrow roads and alleys across the island are small, quaint shops that clearly have not changed in at least 50 years and where dying traditions are nursed.

The wrinkled owner, who still plies the trade he learnt from his father and known among villagers for his consistent and reliable work, usually sits inside, a scene that can well be extracted from a time capsule. Be it a cobbler's work station, an old coffee shop or an ironmonger displaying extinct tools, the setting is generally endearing and fascinating to the younger generation who can thus get a glimpse of Malta past.

Eddie Aquilina decided such scenes deserved to be saved for posterity and is working on a book that will immortalise them. "My work constantly takes me all over Malta and I could notice that certain traditions are starting to disappear. I thought to myself: I want to document them to last forever," said Mr Aquilina, known for the 360 Degrees book collection that contains spectacular views of Malta and Gozo.

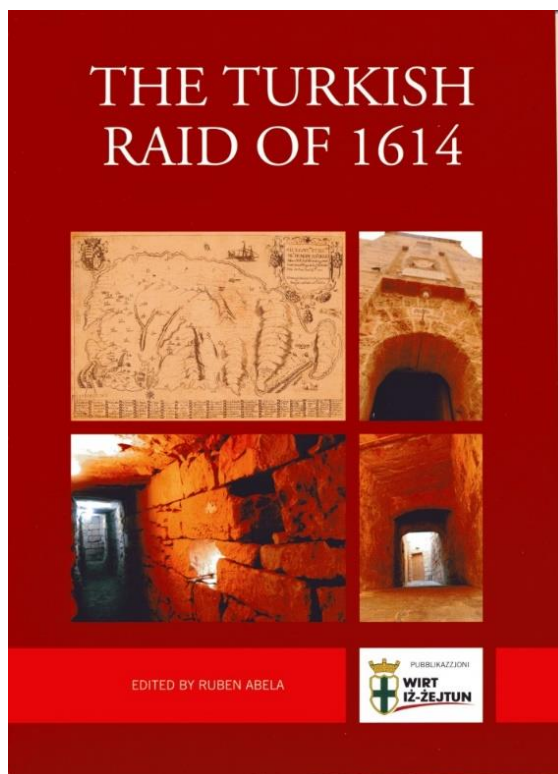
Entitled Traditions In Peril, the book, a work in progress by Miranda Publishers, will include a series of photos by Italian photographer Enrico Formica of Malta's age-old trades and existing shops accompanied by the stories behind the photos. It should be published towards the end of next year. Mr Aquilina started working on the book a few months ago and has already photographed a few shops and interesting characters.

"What always amazes me is that they do not realise how special they are. Whenever I tell them I want to photograph them for a book they cannot understand why," he smiled. He once asked an ironmonger in Rabat to feature in his book and the owner could not understand why he wanted to photograph "all this rubbish".

Some insisted on clearing up the shop or workstation or wearing their "good clothes" before being photographed but Mr Aquilina insisted he wanted to capture them in their everyday state. One person who stuck out in Mr Aquilina's mind was a petroleum seller, a man in his 70s who still goes around Malta in his colourful small truck with the pricelist painted on the side.

Anyone who knows of interesting traditions that deserve to be documented please contact us.

Book Review: *THE TURKISH RAID OF 1614*



Many of us Maltese who studied the 16th Century history of Malta would recall the Great Siege that ended in 1565 with the defeat of the invaders from the Ottoman Empires. Subsequently, the defeat of Lepanto, 1571, off the western coast of Greece, halted any further dreams of expansion in the Mediterranean. However in subsequent years (1598, 1603 and 1601) further incursions on the islands were made but to no avail. But in mid 1614, the Ottoman army embarked on a major assault, referred to here as "*razzia*" in Maltese, with some 52 galleys, obviously this time determined to inflict heavy losses.

Front page of the book containing the 8 papers presented during the second symposium organized by "Wirt iż-Żejtun" under the same title, commemorating the 4th Centenary of the historical event.

This no less important event in the annals of the Maltese history was the subject of a symposium held on the 5 July 2014 at the Old Parish Church of St. Catherine at Żejtun. It was organised by the revamped "*Wirt iż-Żejtun*". Eight papers by some of most learned historians were read at this event, eventually edited and published (2014) by Ruben Abela.



In the first reading, "**A Failed and Final Attempt: A Historical Account Of The Ottoman INCURSION of 1614**" by Giulia Privitelli (U of M) present a historical and socio-political context for this Ottoman incursion. It is based on 17th and 18th Century reports and accounts of the Order of St. John. At the same time, it explores contrasting perspectives of the political, military and strategic implications of the attack. It also aims to establish the impact of the attack on the Order of St. John and more importantly the local inhabitants.

Fort St. Lucian defended the intrance of Marsaxlokk Bay. (Photo: Nicholas Cutajar)

Charles Debono of Heritage Malta, contributes "**The Late Stages of The Ottoman *Razzia* on Malta in 1614**". His treatment of the *razzia* after the defeat at iż- Żejtun moves to the next scene, namely St. Thomas Bay. There they pillaged and sailed towards Mellieha Bay where they landed without difficulty. Ashore, they replenished their water supplies from *is-Salini* (today a nature reserve).



Before returning to the ship, a group made their way up the hill setting fire to farmhouses on their way. Before returning to their ships, they gained access to the Sanctuary of Our Lady and ransacked the sacred site. This skirmish proved again the importance of the small towers around the Islands in particular St. Thomas and St. Paul's (Wignacourt) Towers.

St. Paul's Bay Tower defended the bay it overlooks (Photo: Charles Debono, 2014)

Sandro Debono, is the Senior Curator of Fine Arts, Heritage Malta and his paper **"Art, Patronage and Resistance: Three Altar Paintings and the Aftermath of the 1614 Ottoman Attack"** takes a close look at the significance of a select group of altar paintings commissioned following the Ottoman attack. He attempts to read the history of the *razzia* and the events that followed through these paintings. The painting "Martyrdom of St. Catherine of Alexandria" painted around 1614 suggests some connections with the Ottoman's attacks. There are symbols and figures that suggest that much, such as a Knight in a full suit-of-armour carrying a spherical shield and other military artefacts (weapons, military banner) as well references to two knights.

But probably the most concrete evidence is the inclusion of the map of the grand harbour including a number of galleys at the bottom left side of the painting, possibly a painted version of an engraved map produced by Aloisio Gili, the Maltese master silversmith. Two other paintings, namely "Pope St. Clement" and "Pope St. Gregory" are also directly related to the 1614 *razzia*.



In the view of this reviewer, the contribution that best demonstrate a tenacity of research and search for facts is **"Clemente Tabone: The Man, His Family and the Early Years of St. Clement's Chapel"** by independent researcher, Anton Bugeja. Clemente Tabone is well known for his contribution in the defence of the lower south-east of Malta in his role during the *razzia* but most importantly for the construction of St. Clement's chapel at the extreme of the Zejtun. The author reviewed current literature on Clemente Tabone and primary documents.

A focus on his family, main events in his life and his extensive properties are mostly supported by new evidence. The main events in the life of Clemente Tabone are reassessed as a result of new documentation. The presenter of this paper awaits further documentary discoveries to ascertain Clemente's role in *razzia* and how

or if this event is linked to the construction of St. Clement's chapel which he financed. *Clement's Chapel, Zejtun. Photo by Anton Bugeja*



Fiona Vella, a free lance writer and PRO of *Wirt Iz-Zejtun*, contributed at the Symposium: "**Folklore Impressions of an Ottoman Attack**". She examines traditional know-ledge, customs, oral and artistic traditions that have evolved over the years. Her main target is the old parish church of Zejtun, St. Gregory's Church and the discovery of human bones hidden in secret passage inside the dome of the chapel.

This author has had access to the site and though very comprehensive in the amount of human remains and some artefacts, it still remains a mystery. Carbon-dating and DNA examination of the bones may shed some light on the provenance of these bones and ascertain if they are related to the 'razzia'. This old church is associated with the national traditional procession which unfortunately is only a shadow of what it used to be.

Human remains found in the secret passages of the old Parish Church, Zejtun.

Photo.: Fiona Vella, 2014

Godwin Vella, Head Curatorial Affairs, of Heritage Malta contributes "**A Rural Community on the Frontier**" in which he evaluates centuries of hostile incursions on the Maltese Islands and other areas of the central Mediterranean. He argues that Zejtun's location placed it at the forefront of any incursion from the Ottoman and corsairing adventures. Quite interesting and useful is his reference to old hamlets that disappeared around 1419, such as *Sajd*, *Fuqani*, *Harrat*, *Spital*, *Gawhar*, *Hantun*, *Bidni*, and *Far* to name a few. The author draws on the defence of the hamlets in the south-east through the demographic aspects, high walls of abodes and the use of the old parish church. The latter, due to its position, the Old Parish Church building offered a unique watch over the south-east coast. Interesting too is the location. Quite impressive is how the defence of the South East of Malta was supported by the various hamlets grouped in defence strategies. Very interesting account indeed!

Stanley Fiorini's "**The South East of Malta and its Defence System**" is very useful account of how defence system developed during the time under review. Interesting to the reader too are some of names of hamlets that formed 'casals' formed the "*Maħras*" of coastal watch. The fortified old church of St. Catherine was in a direct view of Mdina (reviewer's note: *the statue faces Mdina*).

The Hospitaller Defensive Strategy in the 17th Century: A need for a coastal defences is the subject of a learned paper by Stephen C. Spiteri (UM). The Order of St. John, after securing the safety of their convent and naval facilities within the confines of the Grand Harbour, embarked on a huge program of building fortifications and coastal defences. These were designed to vigilant sentinels as well as physical barriers to invasion. In this paper, the author suggests that the raid of 1614 was not meant to capture the Island of Malta and Gozo, but "an opportunistic raid with vague military objectives"

Nick A. Cutajar (*ex-committee member of the original "Wirt iż-Żejtun" of the 1970's*).

For details, contact the Ruben Abela,
Editor @ wirtizzejtun@gmail.com.

Maltese traditional clock presented to the United Nations in Vienna

The Ambassador of Malta in Austria, Mr. Keith Azzopardi presented a traditional Maltese clock, known as the "Arloġġ tal-Lira" to the Director General, Mr. Yukiya Amano, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This clock, which was manufactured by Maltese gilder Arthur Vassallo, will become a permanent feature



at a prominent place within the premises of the UN Vienna International Centre where it will thus serve as a promotion for the cultural heritage of Malta. During the presentation of the clock, Ambassador Keith Azzopardi thanked Director General Amano for the contribution of the Agency in the area of nuclear energy and underlined once more the support of the Maltese Government for the work of the Agency on international level. He referred to how Malta benefits in a direct way through the Technical Cooperation Programme and also expressed the hope for further

cooperation between Malta and the Agency in future.

On his side, Director General Amano thanked Malta for the presentation of the clock and praised its participation, and above all for its support to the Agency.

The presentation of the traditional Maltese clock was possible thanks to the financial support extended by the Vienna International Airport.

Malta commended for its preparations for the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, to be held in Malta for the first time in 2017

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The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr George W. Vella, met Dr Greg Munro, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, to discuss the preparations for the next biennial conference of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) which will be held in Malta from the 21st to the 24th November 2017 at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta. This is the first time Malta will be hosting this conference, after the successful CHOGM which was held last November. The theme of the conference is *"Fit for the future: capacity and resources for effective local government"* and the outcomes of this Conference will be presented to CHOGM 2018, which will take place in the United Kingdom.

Secretary-General Munro said that the Management Committee responsible for this Conference commend the work being done in Malta in preparation for this event. He underlined the fact that this event will be a good opportunity for Malta to showcase the work that is being done on a local level. He said that this Conference will focus on strategies aimed at boosting local governments' resource base and capacity to improve its performance and service delivery and ensuring it is fit for purpose to meet the demands of the future. Dr Munro emphasised that CLGF conferences are not 'talking shops', but result in practical policy recommendations for implementation by the members throughout the 53 Commonwealth countries.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr George W. Vella, thanked Dr Munro for all his support. Minister Vella assured Dr Munro that Malta will be using its experience to address the security concerns related to this Conference while promising the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' help for a successful conference. Minister Vella said that he is looking forward to a fruitful conference, showing that the Commonwealth is still relevant for today and the future.

Maltese actor wins Best Overall Actor in US film awards



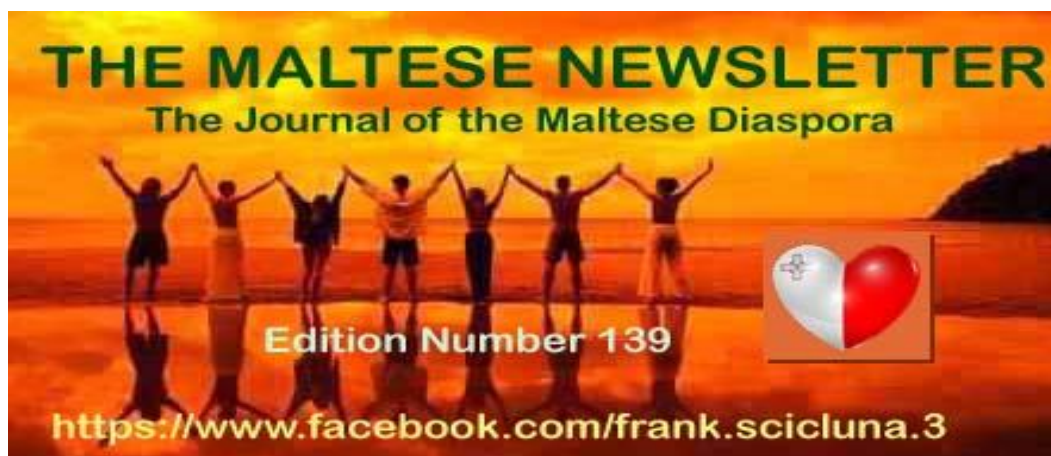
Maltese actor Joe Azzopardi has won Best Overall Actor at the Best Actors Film Festival in San Francisco in addition to two previous accolades for the short film *Head*.

Joe Azzopardi and his father Winston Azzopardi had already won the Best Actor and Best Director awards in the short film category.

The award for Best Overall Actor, which was handed during a ceremony on Saturday, was collected by the Maltese consul Louis Vella.

Written and directed by film producer Winston Azzopardi, the 24-minute film features Joe Azzopardi in a solo role of a sailor locked inside the toilet of a boat steaming along the busy Sicily straits to Malta.

Last month, *Head* won the Best Short Film award at the Rome International Film Festival as well as the audience choice award at the festival. Winston Azzopardi has worked as a producer and production manager on films like *Troy* and *13 Hours*.



IL KTIEB TA' JOE AXIAQ – 'IL BOGHOD LI JIFRED' minn Joe M Attard

Dawn il-ġranet irċevejt bil-posta mill-Awstralja ktieb ta' novelli bil-Malti li jgħib dan l-isem, Il-Boghod li jifred miktub mill-kittieb Ghawdex Joe Axiaq li twieled u trabba ż-Żebbuġ Ghawdex u li emigra lejn l-Awstralja fl-1974. Joe kien wieħed mill-pijunieri tax-xandir bil-Malti fl-Awstralja fl-1975. Hadem fit-twaqqif tal-Maltese Literary Group fl-Awstralja fl-1979 minbarra li kien involut f'għadd ta' kumitati b'risq it-tixrid u ż-żamma tal-kultura Maltija fl-Awstralja. Kompla bit-taħriġ u l-istudju tiegħu fil-ġurnalizmu, il-management u t-teknika tal-produzzjoni tal-programmi tar-radju. Hadem mal-SBS (Special Broadcasting Service) f'diversi karigi fosthom bħala Senior Producer, Gurnalista u issa bħala Executive Producer tal-Programmi Maltin.

Joe Axiaq huwa kittieb ta' novelli u poeżiji li xxandru fi programmi letterarji kemm f'Malta kif ukoll fl-Awstralja, rivisti u paġni letterarji u antoloġiji Maltin. Ko-awtur tal-kotba tal-poeżiji Bejn Vjaġġ u iehor (1979), Irjeh (1987), u l-ewwel ġabra ta' poeżiji tiegħu Imxi fit passi miegħi (2014). Kiteb u pproduċa għadd ta' radjudrammi u programmi letterarji għall-SBS. Huwa ppubblika wkoll għadd ta' artikli fuq sfond storiku dwar il-filosofu, kittieb u edukatur Dr Joe Abela, Dr Joe Abela Ħajtu f'Ħidmietu.

Din l-aħħar publikazzjoni ta' Joe Axiaq tigbor fiha sitta u għoxrin novella li għandhom sfond Malti Awstraljan u hafna minnhom huma stampati f'gazzetti, u antoloġiji letterarji f'Malta u fl-Awstralja. Ghalkemm il-ġrajjet u l-karattri huma fittizji, l-aspetti tal-ħajja Maltija fl-Awstralja u l-ambjent tal-ħajja f'Malta u f'Ghawdex li l-awtur halla warajh fis-snin Sebghin huma reali u tifikriet ta' żmien li għadda.

L-isfond ta' dawn in-novelli jehodna lura fiż-żmien meta l-emigrazzjoni lejn l-Awstralja minn Malta kienet fl-aqwa tagħha fis-snin hamsin, sittin u sebghin tas-seklu li halliena. Il-Maltin u l-Ghawdxin kienu jsiefru bil-mijiet meta l-faqar kien jidher u jinhass ġmielu. Hafna drabi kienu jkun żgħażaġh għadhom tfal li jhallu kollox warajhom biex jaħdmu fil-fabbriki u f'xogħol manwali, koppji għadhom jizzewġu jew irġiel miżżewġin li jtilgħu waħidhom biex ifaddlu u jlestu dar għall-mara u t-tfal. Il-bičča l-kbira ta' daww li jsiefru kienu nies ta' bla skola li jhallu x-xogħol tar-raba' u l-ħajja fir-raħal bl-skop ta' futur aħjar għalihom u għal uliedhom. Fi żmien meta vjaġġ lejn l-Awstralja kien jieħu xahar bil-vapur u l-kommunikazzjoni kienet bl-ittri li jdumu ġimghat shaħ biex jaslu, il-firda bejn daww li jibdwu ħajja ġdida fl-Awstralja u l-għeżiež tagħhom li jhallu warajhom f'Malta u Ghawdex, kienet wegħha ta' qalb li l-ebda ġid u ġejjieni aħjar ma jdewwu. Dejjem tibqa' tama li l-Malti fl-Awstralja jerga' lura lejn pajjiżu, imqar għal ftit, biex jara dak li halla warajh u l-għeżiež tiegħu. U ghalkemm hafna minn daww li marru l-Awstralja mxew 'il quddiem w addattaw ruħhom f'pajjiż barrani, hafna oħrajn qatt ma sabu l-futur u s-suċċess li holmu meta hallew lil art twelidhom.

Dan hu li sa ssibu meta tqallbu dan il-ktieb tal-kompajżan tagħna Joe Axiaq flimkien ma' Malti tajjeb u mexxej li Joe qed jagħmel hiltu biex ma jhallihx imut fost il-ġenerazzjonijiet Maltin u Ghawdxin li llum hemm jgħixu f'downunder. Lil dan il-ħabib nawgurawlu ħidma fejjieda biex ikompli jikteb f'lsienha u jissokta jxandar lil tant Maltin u Ghawdxin li qed jgħixu f'dak il-kontinent hekk kbir!



Consul-on-the-Move

The Consul-on-the-Move programme was launched on 5 May 2016 and will provide certain consular services normally available at Malta's Embassies and Consular posts, in different locations. Such services will include the collection of biometric passport applications. This programme conforms to the Government's vision to have governmental services closer to the citizen. This programme will be targeting 5 main areas which are Canada, USA, Italy, UK, Australia and New Zealand.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs saw the need to work on such a programme after the introduction of biometric passports, for which the applicant has to personally visit an Embassy or a Consular Office for biometric data to be collected. This was resulting in an inconvenience for the Maltese citizens living abroad especially since there were added expenses for travel, lodging, and other related costs. This project is being launched after an agreement was reached with the Passport Office in Malta to enable this 'roaming service' to take off.

For certain services being provided, an additional administrative fee will apply. The additional administrative charge for passport applications is €100 for each application over and above other related fees.

All consular services currently available at Malta's Embassies and Consular Offices continue to remain available.

Several visits have been scheduled for 2016 and an indication of visits for 2017 is already available. The list of scheduled visits is indicated below. This initial schedule takes into consideration areas where there is a high concentration of Maltese nationals. Other locations may be considered, depending on the need. Note that service is available by appointment only. For further information and appointments, please contact your respective location focal point as indicated below.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Location	Email	Telephone
Canada	Consul.toronto@gov.mt	+1 (416) 207 0922/0989
USA	Consul.washington@gov.mt	+1 (202) 4623611/2
UK	Consul.london@gov.mt	+44 (0) 207 292 4800
Italy	Consul.rome@gov.mt	+39 06 687 9990
Australia	Consul.melbourne@gov.mt	+61 (02) 6290 1724



SARAH AZZOPARDI

Seventeen year old Sarah Azzopardi is a young blogger in her free time, outside of her studies. Her blog was created in July 2014 as a way to connect with other like-minded people that share my love for makeup, fashion, photography and writing.

Here we ask Sarah a few questions:

What inspired you to get into the fashion industry?

As far as I can remember I have always had my say in what to wear. I started from a young age picking my own outfits and had quite a big say in what clothes I liked. Like many others I went through the 'awkward' phase but fortunately I found YouTubers that helped me go through this time! Upon finding the blogging community I began paying more attention to fashion and nowadays I get most of my inspiration from Instagram, personal style bloggers and magazines.

What do you think of the blogging industry in Malta?

I am quite new to the blogging scene when compared to other Maltese bloggers who have been doing this for a number of years. During the two years that I have been blogging, I have seen a numerous amount of new blogs being created. Although the blogging community is small, it is definitely on the rise.

What tips would you give anyone starting in this field?

I would suggest to start by doing a few simple searches in google for blogging tips. There is a plethora of posts related to this topic which range from how to start a blog, how to manage social media, how to take blog photography, lists of blog post ideas and so on. An important part of the blog is the name, so it's important that it is chosen wisely. Next I would suggest looking into personalizing the blog by installing a template. The basic templates that come with Blogger and WordPress are nice but you can go a step further by finding ones for free or even purchasing one. The most important thing is to enjoy the content that you put up and above all have fun!

Finally, can bloggers really make a living out of this profession?

Yes, I do believe that bloggers can make a living from blogging although it is very hard to achieve. This most probably requires countless years of hard work, dedication and motivation.

Follow Sarah's blog over www.whatsarahwrites.com

How to survive (and thrive) in village life in Malta



by Amanda Holmes

Village life and prams seem to go together faces of Malta - just a stone's throw away from each other

Malta is a city surrounded by water. This is a phrase you hear time and again, whether as a local or visiting the islands. It's used in both positive and negative ways. Let's start with some facts, and then see what Malta, the city state, not just the island state means.

Certainly, Malta is urban and has a heavy population density for its 316km square size: it has around 1,200 people per square kilometer (3,000 per square mile). It is the EU's most densely-populated country. Which means you're up pretty up close and personal to your neighbours; and all the more so in peak summer, when there's huge people pressure on beaches and in bars. We take a look at what the cheek-by-jowl nature of Malta means.

You can find a lot going on outside your door without having to travel far. For instance, there's a vibrant, city-style arts, music, clubbing, and cultural scene within around a 15 minute car journey for most people. You

can be as rural as Malta can get, and then be in the 'Golden Mile' of St Julian's entertainment and nightlife hub within half an hour of deciding to go out for the night. The beach is only around 15 minutes away too!

You're likely to meet someone you know, even if you go out alone. Whether you go to an event, the beach or shopping, it's almost impossible to do so without meeting someone who at least has a passing knowledge of who you are. This can have negative aspects too of course, as you might have wished for some time out in peace, or to go somewhere surreptitiously/incognito. In most cities, you wouldn't often bump into someone you know, but Malta is village life writ large living next door to trappings of a city – five-star hotels, upscale restaurants, swish yacht marinas and so on.

The juxtaposition of new and old, the beautiful and the ugly. As our photo shows, these pairs sit side by side, literally, in Malta. If you embellish your house or flat, you really do have to look very closely at 'location, location, location' as you may easily have a car scrapyard just over the wall, as above. When holidaying in larger countries, you can usually cherry pick the picturesque/historic bits to see, avoiding ugly industrial areas; in Malta you can't. As tiny islands, confined by their watery barrier, there's no hiding the ugly bits from most people's view. As a country, it has to have its complement of mess – the industrial zones, power station and urban sprawl – all fairly near to the parts that are postcard pretty. But Malta is beginning to revamp the ugly: until relatively recently, a man-made mountain of rubbish featured all too prominently as a blot on the landscape. Thanks to EU funds, it's being turned into a natural park!

Love thy neighbour takes on a new meaning in Malta. We doubt you'll always love them when you're this close in space. A friend of mine suffers summer with her neighbours watching TV in their back yard – yes, they carry it out, blasting out noise, as it's too hot inside the house to watch in comfort. Conversely, neighbours can and do watch out for each other in a positive ways as well, especially in villages. **You can see the main historical sites and beauty spots on a day trip** (as cruise liner passengers do). Nowhere is really far from anywhere, which means short-stay visitors can pack it in. Send us your experiences after visiting Malta for the first time..

A window on the Maltese Character



by Andrew Borg Cardona

The 'Ghonella' died out long ago. But not so other Maltese customs and habits.

When I moved to Sweden, I attended a lecture by a sociologist specialised in Swedish culture who gave some tips on how to better interact with and understand the inhabitants of my Scandinavian host country. The guy explained, for example, how a Swede finishes his sentences before another contributes to the conversation; a far cry from the Mediterranean style of having three people talk at the same time (hopefully on the same subject) within the same conversation! Though no sociologist myself, I've attempted a list of certain common characteristics which I dare to say are Maltese.

Talking is shouting When many Maltese people talk, they tend to be rather loud. Years back, I used to work as a group leader for Scandinavian kids learning English in Malta. On several occasions, these kids mistook a friendly conversation between two locals as a fight! I suppose the loud tone of voice, the vivid hand gestures and the occasional physical contact gave that impression. When in a conversation with a Maltese person who just doesn't stop blabbering, it might be a good idea to interrupt them if you have something to say. They might actually be waiting for you to share the speaking duties! The average Maltese conversationalist won't pause that often, so you need to create your own opening most times (unless you're given an easy entry by being asked a question). Yes – we're loud... but it's all rather harmless (most of the time)!

Us and them I get the feeling that Maltese people have a predisposition towards creating an 'us and them' scenario. Whether it's the rivalry created by politics, football or even affection for a particular village festa or affiliation to a

specific band club, the Maltese do tend to get rather clannish. The outcome of this 'tribalism' ranges from fun teasing and competition (such as with healthy football rivalries) to scenarios which are much less fun. Political and even festa or band club rivalries have tended to get way out of hand in the past. Nowadays, there's also a sentiment of 'us and them' creeping in with relation to the presence of certain foreigners on the island.

Rules are there to be broken. Many Maltese people seem to have a strange relationship with rules, sometimes closing an eye – or even two – in the process. This is positive when a person is given precedence over a rule in the name of common sense. It is less positive when people ignore rules and get away with it for their own selfish needs. Politicians tend to be major culprits on this last point. When driving, Maltese people tend to break the rules – though the extent of this ranges from person to person: some commit minor infractions, but others put lives at risk through their selfishness.

Families tend to be close to each other. This is no doubt helped by the geographical proximity we share with each other. In recent years, the family bonds seem to be somewhat weakening but you will still find families meeting up rather often – and not just immediate family but also cousins, uncles, aunts and grandparents. You will also find that there are less than the classical 'six degrees of separation' between people around here ... many times just one degree suffices! This obviously has its advantages and disadvantages.

Wholly Roman Catholics? According to the CIA World Factbook (no less), 98% of the Maltese population are Catholics. But while the Church still has a strong political influence on the country (we still have no divorce or abortion, for example), it has much less of an influence on people's daily lives than before. And I get the impression that Church attendance among younger generations is declining. While older generations may still get scandalised by certain discussions and behaviours, the younger generations of Maltese are much less likely to do so. Nevertheless, they too are probably still somewhat more closed minded than their northern European counterparts.

In the end... When you build a strong friendship with a Maltese person, it's a friendship for life! So, despite the defects (and which culture doesn't have any?) it's worth making the effort to see through the differences and embrace what is positive in the Maltese



Traditional Maltese “QOFFA” could be facing extinction

John Mifsud is one of the last surviving people who can make a traditional Maltese qoffa (right). Photo: Mark Zammit Cordina

The traditional Maltese qoffa (WICKER BASKET) risks extinction unless something is done to revive interest in the dying trade, according to 81-year-old John Mifsud who has

been weaving cane shopping baskets since he was six.

“Apart from me there are just a few old men – I’d say two or three at most – who still make the Maltese qoffa. When we die, it’ll be the end,” Mr Mifsud says, standing in his Hamrun shop surrounded by a variety of wicker baskets, hats and hasiri (cane curtains).

“People who learn how to work with cane, nowadays, don’t learn how to make the qoffa. It’s a lot of hard work. You have to hold the cane between your toes and bend over – so you are always working with your head down – and weave the cane with your hands. So your hands are touching your toes,” he says as she demonstrates the manoeuvre with surprising agility.

He then straightens up slowly and explains that it takes him about three hours of that to make a typical Maltese qoffa.

The Maltese qoffa, he explains, can be distinguished from other cane shopping baskets because it is made of local, yellowish cane and has a few lawyers of darker strands. He learnt the trade, which has been in his family for generations, from his father when he was six. Although he has three sons, only one of them does cane work – but not the qoffa.

Mr Mifsud recalls a time when there was a type of wicker basket for everything.

Apart from the qoffa, which served as a shopping bag, there were special baskets to carry strawberries, for bingo, the ones farmers used for vegetables and those used to keep ferrets for the purpose of rabbit hunting. "When the bikini came to Malta I couldn't keep up with the workload," he chuckles.

"Their mothers did not let them wear the bikini. So they used to put it in the qoffa and put a towel over it. They'd wear it later."

The qoffa took a strong blow when plastic shopping bags took over, he says, adding that he did not believe there was hope of the qoffa ever returning.

This was due to two factors: people no longer use cane shopping baskets and, secondly, those who want a traditional qoffa are not willing to pay €20 since they compare the price to cheaper imports from China. And, he says, the same applies to other types of cane baskets and ornaments made by local tradesmen.

"A basket used for hampers means half a day of work but the Chinese imports are sold for €3 each. I just cannot compete with those prices," he says.

"It upsets me when I see people willing to pay lots of money for the chocolates and wines inside the hamper but they don't appreciate the basket," he says as he massages his sore, swollen hands.



Those who still appreciate the qoffa are a dying breed and mainly consist of elderly women who never changed their ways.

"It's funny when they come to me and complain that the bottom of their qoffa gave way after 20 years. I ask them if their fridge or washing machine lasted as long," he says.

Holding on to history

Danielle Borg Cardona uses a qoffa when she goes grocery shopping. Photo: Darrin Zammit Lupi

Whenever Danielle Borg Cardona goes grocery shopping she never forgets to take her qoffa which she describes as an environmentally-friendly, sturdy bag that also allows her to hold on to a Maltese tradition.

"It's just so convenient. Nowadays, people carry a bag around with them and they are not as sturdy as the qoffa. Besides, you'd be surprised how much you can fit," she says.

Ms Borg Cardona, 53, says she was always fascinated by wicker baskets. Over the years she built a small collection of baskets, including cane shopping baskets, which she used to decorate at home. Then she started using some of them to go shopping. "I thought: might as well. When I go shopping I put my handbag in it so I only carry one bag and, on my way home, I carry by shopping home in the qoffa instead of a plastic bag," she says.

Over 530,000 passengers movements at MALTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT in September GOZONEWS.COM

September became the third consecutive month to register more than half a million passenger movements this year with a total of 531,962 passengers welcomed at Malta International Airport. This translates to an increase of 5.8% over the same month in 2015, the airport said today.

It said that September's upturn was bolstered by improved connectivity to the Maltese islands throughout the summer. Seat capacity, which indicates the number of seats available to Malta, registered a 4.2% rise over last year; a natural development following the combined efforts to improve the airport's network.

"Moreover, at 87.5%, September's seat load factor (SLF) experienced a growth of 1.3 percentage points, indicating that airlines were very efficient in filling up these available seats."

Malta's top drivers of traffic remain the UK, Italy, Germany, France and Spain, with all five markets registering varying degrees of growth ranging from 2% to 14%.

The growth of the French market mainly stems from an increased capacity to one of France's major airports, Paris Orly. Furthermore, September marks Spain's third consecutive appearance among Malta International Airport's top five markets, following added flights on the Madrid route.

MIA said that "although they did not secure a spot among the top five markets last month, both Poland and Switzerland experienced a remarkable hike in passenger movements compared to 2015, amounting to 36% and 14%, respectively."

Up until the 30th of September, Malta International Airport hosted 3,894,040 passengers – a growth of 7.5% over last year. Aircraft movements grew by 2.4% while seat capacity increased by 5.3%. The seat load factor also rose to 83.4% compared to 81.7% last year.

This is the stuff of nightmares": Susan Carland's perfect joke about husband Waleed Aly.



Alexandra Houle

© AAP Image/Dan Himbrechts Susan Carland and Waleed Aly.

Susan Carland has cheekily called out “a few elected Australian politicians” in an Instagram post about halal certified **Vegemite** — featuring her husband’s name.

Carland, who is married to The Project co-host Waleed Aly, shared a snap of a tube of Australia’s favourite spread with the usual logo replaced by ‘Waleed’.

Beneath the customised tube, Carland captioned the image, “This is the stuff of nightmares for a few elected Australian politicians (and there’s halal certification on the back too)”. We have a few ideas about who the post might be indirectly addressing, ourselves.

Since becoming Halal certified in 2014, the traditional condiment has been criticised by a number of elected officials, including Jacqui Lambie and George Christensen.

The former was outraged that the certification allegedly directed grocery dollars to religious taxes, while the latter feared that the product funded terrorism.

Perhaps the most notorious of all is Pauline Hanson, who claimed without evidence that halal certification is rejected by 98 per cent of all Australians. Carland converted from Christianity to Islamic religion at the age of 19 and has a PhD at Monash University.

Australia's National Anthem

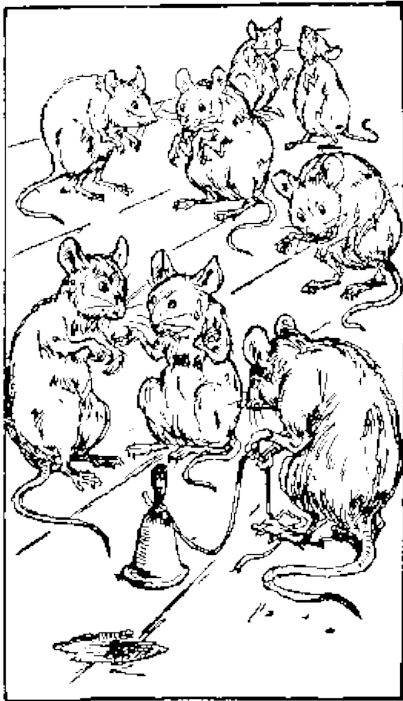
Advance Australia Fair

Australians all let us rejoice,
For we are young and free;
We've golden soil and wealth for toil,
Our home is girt by sea;
Our land abounds in nature's gifts
Of beauty rich and rare;
In history's page, let every stage
Advance Australia fair!
In joyful strains then let us sing,
"Advance Australia fair!"

Beneath our radiant Southern Cross,
We'll toil with hearts and hands;
To make this Commonwealth of ours
Renowned of all the lands;
For those who've come across the seas
We've boundless plains to share;
With courage let us all combine
To Advance Australia fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing
"Advance Australia fair!"

by Peter Dodds McCormick, 1878.

THE MICE AND THE CAT Aesop's fable



There lived several families of mice in a big mansion. Life was good for them as there was always an abundance of food, especially in the kitchen. But one day, the master of the mansion brought home a cat. Since then, life became miserable for the mice.

Day or night, the cat would prowl the mansion. The mice dared not come out of their dens because the cat was always lurking around.

As the days passed, the mice became weaker and weaker because they could not venture out of their dens to find food.

Finally, an old mouse said, "We cannot go on like this, or we will all die of hunger and thirst very soon. We have to find a way to deal with the cat."

"Indeed, we have to come up with a plan," agreed another mouse. "Let's get all the mice together tonight and see if we can think of something."

Soon, it was nightfall. All the mice had gathered at their usual meeting place in the mansion.

The eldest mouse cleared his throat and said, "I'm sure all of us have not been very happy of late because of our common enemy,

the cat."

All the mice nodded their heads and muttered their agreement.

The eldest mouse continued, "We must therefore act together now and come up with a plan to deal with the cat. Or we will all end up as the cat's meal one day" One of the mice suggested killing the cat, and every mouse agreed it was a good idea. So, the mice began discussing various plans about how to kill the cat. But as soon as someone proposed a new plan, others would reject it as unworkable.

Finally, a young mouse said, "We may not be able to kill the cat, but perhaps we can think of a way to know its whereabouts. That way, if we know it is coming, we will have time to run"

The other mice cheered at the suggestion. The young mouse continued, "I have a plan. It's very simple, really. All we need to do is to hang a bell around the cat's neck. Wherever it goes, the bell will ring.

If the bell is really big, we can even hear when the cat is coming before it is even close!" All the mice jumped and clapped at the idea.

Suddenly, a wise old mouse said, "That is a very brilliant idea. Now, who will hang the bell around the cat's neck?"

Moral: It is one thing to say that something should be done, but quite another to do it.



Please, accept our sincere congratulations for the beautiful journal you produce regularly. It is with great pleasure to receive it and we always share it with all our families and friends, here in Canada and other countries. It is such a unique publication which is serving to unite us – all Maltese/Australian/Americans/Europeans and others scattered around the world. We also read it on your website ozmalta.page4.me and facebook. We look forward to read it at the Migration Museum. The Maltese Newsletter is

far the best on the net. Carmelo and Mary Pace – Canada

Fr. Lawrence E. Attard OP – R.I.P.



On Wednesday 5 October 2016 the death of Fr Lawrence E. Attard OP was announced. Fr Attard who was 80 years old, formed part of the Dominican community in the parish of St. Dominic, Sliema. The funeral will be held on Saturday 8 October at 9.00am at Jesus of Nazareth Parish Church, Sliema.

P. Lawrence was born in Birgu, son of Dominic and Lorenza Scicluna. He studied at the seminary and became a Dominican novice. He furthered his studies in Dublin where was ordained a priest. In the same city he graduated in theology and obtained a B.A. Hons. He followed a course in Italian literature with the Università degli Studi of Milan. He completed his studies at Oxford University from where he obtained an M.A. in modern history.

Back in Malta he taught Dominican students and those of INSERM. For many years he was a member of the Emigrants Commission, editor of the magazine *Lil Hutna*, co-ordinator of the program on Radio Malta - *Magazzin tal-Emigranti*, and broadcaster on other channels. He visited several communities of Maltese emigrants and took part in meetings on Maltese people living abroad. He was also one of the main speakers at the two conventions on migration held in Valletta in 2000 and 2010. Fr Attard was invited by universities in Europe and Africa to talk about the Maltese emigratory movement. Since 2009 he had been invited by the University of Malta to teach in the Maltese Studies course in particular about Maltese emigrants. The participants were graduate students reading for their M.A. Fr. Lawrence wrote six books on Maltese emigration and published the history of *Xirka ta' l-Isem Imqaddes t'Alla*, Malta. He also published a study on the political thoughts of Dante Alighieri.

As a member of the Dominican Order he was prior of the Convent of Rabat, Parish Priest at St. Catherine's Home, Attard and Parish Priest at Jesus of Nazareth parish, Sliema. He was given the award *Premju Ġieħ Il-Birgu 2014*. His name is listed in The Australian Encyclopaedia, Dictionary of Maltese and Gozitan Writers Yesterday and Today, Maltese Biographies of the Twentieth Century and Dictionary of Maltese biographies. An interview with him about his writings is held at the Canberra Library.

A NEW AUSTRALIAN by Deborah Abela

Story and Background
Teresa: A New Australian is the story of a young girl and her family who, like Deb's dad, survive the war and sail to Sydney.



Even though Australia offers so much, everything feels strange and new. Teresa desperately misses her family and friends in Malta, especially when she is bullied for simply being different, but like Deb's Nanna Teresa, she is a fighter. She survived a war and she is determined to make Australia her home.

Story and Background

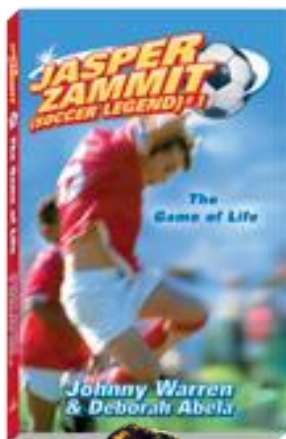
This book was inspired by Deb's father, who was born in a cave in Malta during a bombing raid. After the war, her seven-year-old father and his family made the long journey to Australia, but their new home wasn't always an easy place to be.

The Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, knew Australia needed a bigger population to build the nation and to protect it if there was another war.

With only 7 million people, he declared the country had to 'populate or perish', so he championed migration, but he was also a staunch supporter of the White Australia Policy, which meant Australia wasn't always welcoming of the new arrivals.

www.deborahabela.com

PUBLICATIONS BY DEBORAH ABELA



Written by best selling children's author, **Deborah Abela** with soccer hero Johnny Warren, the Jasper Zammit series follows Jasper, his best friend Lil and their team, the Rovers, as they train hard, play their best and make life long friendships along the way - just like the Socceros really!

Full of soccer tips and anecdotes from Johnny Warren and full-on training sessions and heart stopping matches from Deborah Abela, Jasper Zammit is perfect for girls and boys who love their soccer.

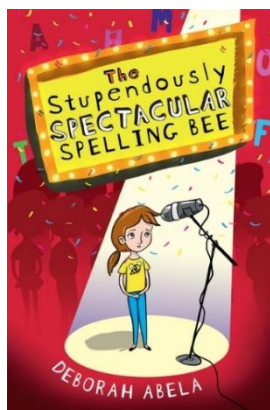


Johnny was an Australian soccer legend. He captained the Socceros in the World Cup in 1974 and dreamed of Australia being there ever since. Johnny was passionate about encouraging kids to play and enjoy soccer ... so the Jasper Zammit books are jam-packed full of his facts, tips and stories.

This series is dedicated to Johnny who died in 2004.

ANOTHER MAGNIFICENT BOOK BY DEBORAH ABELA

A heart-warming story about a girl who's too afraid to follow her dreams, and the family who



India Wimple can spell. Brilliantly. Every Friday night, she and her family watch the Stupendously Spectacular Spelling Bee. When the Wimples suggest she enter the next Bee, India says she's not good enough – but her family won't hear it and encourage her to sign up.

There are plenty of obstacles to reaching the finals: something in India's past has made her terribly shy, and moving on to each round involves finding the money to make it happen.

And finally, there's Summer Millicent Ernestine Beauregard-Champion, a spoilt rich girl who is determined to win – and isn't afraid to step on anyone

who gets in her way.



Salvina and Paul Vella

PAUL, GRAZZI MINN QIEGH QALBI

Gheziez hbieb, hawn kopja PDF tal-Folju tal-Grupp Letteratura Maltija tal-Victoria. Jiddispjacini li din id-darba kien ftit tard minhabba impenji ohra. Ghal min ma jafx jien ukoll xandar voluntier ta' programmi Maltin fuq Radju Komunitarju f'Melbourne u bhalissa konna ghaddejnin bir-radiothon fejn nigbru fondi biex inkompolu nxandru dawn il-programmi. Jekk ikun hemm xi hadd li jixtieq jisma' dawn il-programmi ghiduli u nkun nista' nibghat 'link' fejn il-programm ikun hemm ghal xahar shih u tistghu tisimugh meta tkun trid. Tislijiet

Paul Vella, PRO, GLM Email: paul.vella44@gmail.com

Paul, grazzi tal-fuljett tal-Grupp Letteratura Matija ta' Victoria – verament interessanti

Admiralty House building in Valletta to be restored



The Grade 1 scheduled Admiralty House building located in Valletta will undergo restoration and rehabilitation works following the granting of a planning permission by the Planning Commission.

The works will include the restoration of the building's two street facades, situated in South Street and Old Mint Street, internal alterations and change of use from a museum to offices.

The project will also include the installation of photovoltaic panels, which will be mounted flat, directly on the roof and will include interventions to make the building accessible to all.

Once the project is complete the offices will be used by the Attorney General whose offices are currently located within the Grand Master's Palace and which will be vacated as part of its regeneration. Furthermore, the artefacts of the museum will be relocated to the Auberge d'Italie which is being redeveloped into the new National Museum of Fine Arts.

The works will be carried out according to an approved Restoration Method Statement and were consented to by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage and the Planning Authority's Heritage Planning Unit. The Admiralty House dates back to 1570 and was remodelled in 1760 as a residence for Knights of the Order of St. John. From 1821 to 1961 it became the residence of the British naval Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean fleet. In 1974 it was inaugurated as the National Fine Arts Museum.

HOW ABOUT RESTORING AUSTRALIA HALL AT PEMBROKE NOW???



Maltese Association of WA

Children's Christmas Party

For member's Children & Grand Children aged 12 & under)



Sunday 11th December

10:30am to 1:30pm – 1 May Holman Drive Bassendean



Heaps of activities and Fun, lunch & a drink provided to each registered child,
plus a visit from Santa Clause who will give each child a gift



Cost \$25 per child (please pay at the bar)



Member's Name: _____

Girl's Name:	Age:	Boy's Name:	Age:



Maltese Association of WA



Melbourne Cup Luncheon - \$20 per person

Tuesday 1st Nov 2016 - 10am to 2pm at 1 May Holman Drive Bassendean

Chicken and Champaign lunch provided (1st glass of Champaign free)

Games, quizzes, raffles, sweeps plus heaps of prizes whilst watching the great race on the BIG screen



Purchase Tickets
@ the Bar from
October



Maltese Association of WA



**Bingo is now played at the Club on the
last Wednesday of each month**



Family and Friends welcome

Doors open at 6:00pm with Eyes down at 7:15pm



AHBARIJET MINN GHAWDEX

MILL-KAV. JOE ATTARD

DAR STELLA MARIS – GHAWDEX



Mario Grech bierek u inawgura Sala sabiha fid-Dar Stella Maris, li s-Socjeta Missjunarja ta' San Pawl, fiz-Zebbug Ghawdex li sa sservi bhala post fejn wiehed jista jingabar fis-skiet ghat-talb u r-riflessjoni, Lecture room, inkella Conference room. Kif qal l-Isqof fil-messagg li ta f'din l-okkazjoni, imkien bhal dan huwa mportanti fil-hajja tal-bniedem biex iressqu iktar lejn il-Hallieq u jaghtih ic-cans li jitkellem mieghu. Il-post tassew jilqghek u dan grazzi ghad-disinn u l-ghamla li rnexxielu johloq Mario Cassar, artist kontemporanju miż-Zebbug, xoghol mgħmul mill-gilt

tal-annimali pittur u perspeks, li fisser lil dawk kollha li attendew għall-ftuh, is-sinjali u x-xbihat li rnexxielu johloq biex hareg b'ambjent tassew uniku.

Flimkien mal-hafna mistiednin, parruccani u hbieb tal-MSSP li attendew kien hemm ukoll is-Segretarju Parlamentari għall-Anzjanità Attiva u Persuni bi Bżonnijiet Speċjali Dr Justyne Caruana u l-familja, l-Arċipriet u l-ex Arċipriet tar-rahal kif ukoll il-Vigarju Reġionali tal-MSSP, Fr Frankie Cini li radd hajr lil dawk kollha li għenu f'din l-inizjattiva gdida f'din id-dar li fethet il-bibien tagħha lura fl-1974. Fid-diskors tiegħu Fr Norbert Bonavia mssp, li jmexxi din id-dar tal-irtiri huwa rringrazzja lil tant sponsors u benefatturi li għenuh biex seta' jasal għal dik l-okkazjoni tal-inawgurazzjoni.

Dar Stella Maris tinsab f'tarf iż-Zebbug, imperrca fil-gholi u maqtugħa għaliha, tefgħa ta' gebla bogħod mill-playing field u l-iskola primarja tar-rahal u ideali biex wiehed jinqata' f'tit għalih bogħod mill-ghagħa u storbu tal-hajja biex jingabar jitlob u jistrieħ. L-MSSP kien twaqqaf minn Monsinjur Guzeppi De Piro bil-ghan li jevangelizza lid-dinja u riżultat ta' hekk il-patrijiet tiegħu jinsabu mferrxa ma' diversi bnadi tal-globu jahdmu biex iwasslu l-aħbar it-tajba kull fejn jirfsu waqt li jghinu mill-aħjar li jistgħu lil tant foqra u indigeni li jiltaqgħu magħhom.

GUBLEW MARJAN



Nhar il-Hadd, 9 ta' Ottubru wara nofs inhar fil-Victoria, Ghawdex, sar il-Gublew Marjan mmexxi mill-Isqof Djoċesan Monsinjur Mario Grech, akkumpanjat mill-Kappillani u Arċiprieti Ghawdxin flimkien ma' għadd sabih ta' sacerdoti u religjużi, fratellanzi mill-parroċi. Wara li mexa bil-kuruna jghid r-Rużarju, minn Pjazza Santu Wistin sa hdejn is-Seminarju tal-Isqof wara l-kwadru tal-Madonna ta' Pompej li qed jagħlaq 50 sena minn meta kien gie nkurunat f'Misraħ Sant Wistin mill-Isqof Monsinjur Guzeppi Pace, il-pubbliku numeruż preżenti seta' jsegwi kollox minn fuq is-sigġijiet li ntramaw apposta quddiem is-Santwarju tal-Madonna ta' Pompej.

Quddiem dan is-Santwarju mbağħad Monsinjur Isqof Mario Grech mexxa Konċelebrazzjoni ta' tifkira li kienet animata mill-kant sabih ta' Dorianne Portelli u l-kor akkumpanjati fuq il-pjanu minn Mro

Antoine Theuma. F'din l-okkażjoni Monsinjur Isqof ma qagħadx lura milli jagħtina messagg li ha madwar 25 minuta li matulu huwa għamel riferenza speċjali għall-Qari tal-Ġurnata b'mod speċjali l-fejqan ta' Nagħman mil-lebbra kif ukoll il-fejqan tal-ghaxar lebbri u kif wieħed minnhom biss reġa' lura biex jirringrazzja lil Ġesù u dan kien Samaritan. Anki Nagħman imur lura għand Eliżew għax għaraf fih il-medjatur ta' Alla u sqarr il-fidi tiegħu fl-uniku Mulej. Mela tnejn lebbri u tnejn mhux Lhud, ifiqu għax jemmnu fil-kelma tal-mibgħut tal-Mulej. L-Isqof għamel ukoll riferenza għall-ittra miktuba lil Timotju li turina li s-salvazzjoni hi fi Kristu Ġesù.

L-Isqof tkellem ukoll dwar dawk il-persuni li huma fit-tieni relazzjoni u kif nistgħu ngħinuhom biex jgħixu hajja normali kif ukoll dwar l-importanza u l-qawwa tar-Rużarju. Nemmen li l-hafna Għawdxin li hađu sehem f'din l-okkażjoni lkoll jemmnu fil-qawwa tar-Rużarju u lkoll jgħidu din it-talba tant għal qalb il-Madonna qabel ma jmiddu rashom fuq l-imhadda għal mistrieħ. Min-naħa l-oħra, l-E.T. dejjem jagħmel hiltu biex jgħaddi tagħlim ta' fejda kull meta jsib ruħu quddiem il-folol u jwiddeb u jwissi halli l-poplu t'Alla ma jitbighedx mit-triq it-tajba li trid twasslu għat-tgawdija eterna.



We are Calypso Radio and we love what we do. Over the years Calypso Radio became an established name in Maltese households and businesses alike. Launched as a community station in 2004, and nationwide in 2005 Calypso Radio remains the nations favourite music station and aims at entertaining its

audience not just through music but also by offering a warm and homely feeling to it's listeners by its cheerful line up of presenters!

Calypso Radio is Malta's only Retro Music Station giving it's priority to the massive decades of the 60's, 70's and the 80's playing the greats such as 'The Beatles', 'ABBA', 'BeeGees', 'Hot Chocolate', 'Lionel Richie', 'Rod Stewart', 'Tina Turner', 'Air Supply', 'Percy Sledge', 'Duran Duran', 'Madonna' and others... Italo Hits are certainly not absent, where an array of Italian music is played daily. Our music menu is never ending and this is the reason Calypso Radio remains Malta's favourite!

Calypso Radio gives the opportunity to its listeners to request their favourite tracks, receiving an immense amount of texts daily, mainly selecting their favourite songs from the 60's, 70's and 80's... This has naturally made Calypso Radio the Nations Favourite radio station.

Telephone 52102055 SMS 50614102

Administration & Sales 21578022

Emails frank@calypsoradio.com, calypsoradio1@gmail.com

Address Calypso Media Communications Ltd

28, New Street in Valletta Road, Luqa LQA 1559 Malta

