



THE MALTESE NEWSLETTER

The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

THE MOTTO - BUILDING BRIDGES NOT WALLS

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Happy New Year 2017

**TO ALL THE READERS OF
THE MALTESE NEWSLETTER**

Maltese Newsletter

FROM THE EDITOR



First and foremost, I want to thank you all for your loyalty, friendliness and patronage. As you may know, over the past three years, the editorial staff at THE MALTESE NEWSLETTER, has gone through significant transition and our journal spread like wildfire all over the world.

The past 12 months have been, at times, very challenging. Those challenges forced us to look within, and to focus on how to produce the best magazine to promote and share the history, culture, and heritage of the Maltese Islands. This is the last edition for 2016.

Our journal is bilingual, English and Maltese, because our aim is to reach the younger generation and instill in them the love and appreciation of the magnificent and colourful Maltese culture.

Maltese citizens are found all over the world and it is our aim to bring together all those who are interested in this little rock in the middle of the Mediterranean, share stories, preserve our culture, and build bridges in this global village. Please, share this journal with your relatives and friends.

I thank the many thousands who read, love and support our journal and a special thanks to those who participate and send emails, stories, poems or articles for publication. We appreciate receiving the hundreds of other journals, newsletters, newspapers and press releases.

I sincerely, wish everyone a healthy, prosperous and peaceful NEW YEAR 2017.

Frank Scicluna, Adelaide, Australia

Leaders call for peace, tolerance in Christmas messages



The country's leaders came together to convey the season's greetings to the Maltese public and called for more tolerance and less hate speech.

President Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, Opposition Leader Simon Busuttil and Archbishop Charles Scicluna gave short speeches at the launch of the *Milied Flimkien* campaign. The Opposition Leader said security is one of the things that we take most for granted. Expressing his solidarity with the German people, Dr Busuttil said the Berlin attack showed how important it was to treasure what is precious to us - security, serenity and peace.

Archbishop Scicluna said the angel standing next to baby Jesus in the Maltese crib at the Vatican carried the message 'peace on earth.' The events from the last hours, he said, showed the need for real peace among men.

Mgr Scicluna said Christmas was a time of peace and compassion and urged people to refrain from using hate speech. But he said this should be an all-year-round attitude, not just at Christmas time. "All of us on this stage have been the victims of hate speech. But does not just affect us – there are people out there who suffer because of the cruel words of others. Let us create a culture of peace in our homes, our places of work and in the media."

Referring to the recent terror events, the Archbishop thanked the authorities who provide security. "We should also thank God for protecting us from the wishes of those who would do us harm."

The Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said today was a rare occasion where all leaders could agree on something, and today this was the need for all to use words that unite, instead of divide. "Those who speak in a hurtful way do not represent the essence of the Maltese people. They are the exception not the norm and in fact we speak of them as individuals. But let us speak of the positive side of the Maltese. We may have very differing opinions but we always manage to come together as one big family."

Dr Muscat said one such example would be seen on Monday, during this year's edition of L-Istrina, when the Maltese donate out of a sense of duty. The Prime Minister also referred to the events in Berlin. "Terrorists want us to abandon our everyday lives, our traditions and the celebration of Christmas with our families. We must do the exact opposite for, the moment we stop is the moment they win."

Instead of making a speech, President Marie Louise Coleiro Preca gave up her time for the voice of children to be heard. She explained how the St Sebastian Qormi school had asked its pupils, in a creative writing exercise, to write down whatever they wished of politicians. Laura Sammut Birmingham, representing the children, read out the message.

She thanked the leaders for their sacrifices, adding that theirs is surely no easy job. "It does not matter if you do not always agree but you should discuss ideas, not people. We should not use words of hate."

The students said people were seemingly losing their human aspect and urged tolerance. "We should not categorise people. We cannot close our heart and reject those who are different from us. We would like to see the authorities working together so that the country moves forward. We want to see you do everything in your power so that no one lives in poverty and so that wealth is distributed fairly. We want to see initiatives to help those in need and the lonely - initiatives that make people happy. We should offer shelter to those who escape war, and provide them with a new start in life." Mrs Coleiro Preca said she was speaking on behalf of all the leaders when she said that they would all take heed of the message conveyed by the students during 2017. **THE INDEPENDENT 20 Dec 2016**

CULTURE

NEW YEAR'S TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS IN MALTA

New Year's Eve is one of the largest global celebrations because it marks the last day of the year in the Gregorian calendar, December 31, before the New Year. Count down to the New Year no matter where you are in the world.

In Malta the New Year's Eve Celebrations will unfold in one of Valletta's most cultural spots, the magnificent St George's Square. The historical Square encompasses Malta's strong Baroque identity, with buildings like the glorious Grandmaster's Palace which surrounds the area. In fact, the entire area has hosted over 20 000 people in past celebrations.



Since Valletta was announced the Capital of Culture for 2018, many exciting cultural events have been organized throughout the year in light of this honourable title. Valletta 2018 Foundation is one of the main sponsors of the New Year's Eve Festival, with the help of the Ministry of Culture, the Valletta Local Council and the Ministry of Tourism. The New Year Celebrations are definitely one of the most sought after events, attracting not only locals from all over the island,

but international visitors too.

The New Year's Eve celebrations will involve top local entertainers, who will be exhibiting their talents on the spectacular stage that will be set up in the square. Performances range from Malta's most talented bands and singers, to skilled DJ's mixing our favourite tunes of 2016. Maltese comedians will also be there to entertain the crowd and ensure that there is something for everyone!

The exciting countdown, the pop of the champagne cork, the many resolutions and the massive family lunch are all things traditionally associated with New Year celebrations the world over, but many countries follow particular traditions and customs.

This day, which marks the transition between the old year and the one about to start, is marked by different customs. In Germany people drop molten lead into cold water, so as to predict the future from the shape it hardens into.

They also customarily leave a piece of the food eaten on New Year's Eve on their plate until after midnight, as a way of guaranteeing a well stocked larder in the coming year.

In Australia, people tend to celebrate with picnics and camping on the beach. They start their parties on December 31, and at midnight they begin to make noise with any available instrument, to ring in the New Year.

In Belgium the feast is known as Saint Sylvester Eve, parties are thrown and, at midnight, kisses and good luck greetings are exchanged. On New Year's Day children write letters to their parents and godparents on decorated paper, and read these to them.

Between 3 and 4am on New Year's morning in Wales, the boys of the village go from house to house, sprinkling an evergreen twig on the people and the rooms of the house, to bring good luck. On New Year's Day the children travel around the neighbourhood singing songs, and are rewarded with coins and sweets.

Austrians call the event Sylvesterabend, that is, the Eve of Saint Sylvester. A spiced punch is prepared in honour of the saint, and decorations and champagne form part of the celebrations. The idea of chasing away all evil spirits of the old year is finalised by the firing of moroars, called boller. As in Malta, people attend midnight mass, and trumpets are blown from the church towers at midnight.

In Scotland it is known as the Night of the Candle and people prepare for it by cleaning their home and purifying it with a ritual, carrying burning juniper branches through the home.

The custom of the First Footer, which holds that the first person to set foot into a home on New Year's Day will bring good fortune for the coming year, is also practised. Traditionally, the first-foot is a tall, dark-haired male, as a female or fair-haired male are regarded as unlucky in some places.

Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly Circus are habitually teeming with crowds of people, waiting to hear the chimes of London's Big Ben, announcing the arrival of the New Year. Malta has plenty of its own celebrations to mark this major event, including spectacular fireworks, numerous parties, champagne and gatherings with family and friends. However, a number of more traditional habits have been lost over the years.

The sprinkling of white lime is one such tradition; common folk used to go out into the village streets on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day sprinkling lime on thresholds, as a symbol of purity. This symbolised a new beginning. After this they would ask the senior family member for a donation. This tradition was still practised in the 1930's.

L-istrina was another tradition observed on New Year's Day, and this lasted into the 1950's. Customarily people would not receive gifts on Christmas Day, but would instead go out on New Year's Day asking for gifts and little treats.

These traditions may have unfortunately died out, although some people still serve imbuljuta, a traditional Maltese drink made using cocoa, chestnuts, cloves and citrus zest. Nevertheless, there is no shortage of spectacular fireworks, merrymaking, exchange of good wishes and parties in the Maltese New Year celebrations.



Immaculate Conception school teachers, nuns dance to Justin Timberlake

Teachers at the Immaculate Conception school in Tarxien provided one of the most innovative Christmas clips by lip-synching and dancing to the feel-good Justin Timberlake hit *Can't Stop The Feeling*. Nuns joined teachers in dancing away to a delightful video which has racked up more than 80,000 views on Facebook.

"All members of staff would like to wish you all Happy Holidays and a Very Merry Christmas! Very big well done to teachers involved in creating this video Valerie," said the video posted by St Jeanne Antide College on Facebook. timesofmalta.com By Allied Newspapers Ltd

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of the MALTESE DIASPORA

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PROFILE

MONSIGNOR CHARLES SCICLUNA – ARCHBISHOP OF MALTA

His Grace Mgr Charles J. Scicluna was born of Emanuel and Maria Carmela née



Falzon in Toronto, Canada, on 15 May 1959. The Scicluna family moved to Qormi, Malta, in 1960 and to Lija, Malta, in 1976. Mgr Scicluna was educated at Saint Sebastian Primary School, Qormi, at the Saint Joseph Secondary Technical School, Paola, and at Saint Edward's College, Cottonera. He entered the Law Course at the University of Malta in 1976 and he graduated Doctor of Laws in 1984. After completing his Seminary studies and a Licentiate in Pastoral



Theology at the Faculty of Theology, Tal-Virtù, he was ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood by the Archbishop of Malta, Monsignor Joseph Mercieca, on 11 July 1986. Monsignor Scicluna was sent to read Canon Law at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and obtained the doctorate in Canon Law with specialization in Jurisprudence in 1991. After his Rome studies Mgr Scicluna worked on the Malta Metropolitan Tribunal as Defender of the Bond and was lecturer in Pastoral Theology and Canon Law at the University of Malta.

He served in the parishes of Attard, Saint Gregory's Sliema and Iklin, Lija. He also served as Vice Rector at the Major Seminary between 1994 and 1995 when he was called to the Vatican to work on the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Segnatura as Substitute Promoter of Justice. In 1996 he was appointed Postulator for the cause of beatification and canonisation of Dun Ġorġ Preca. In October 2002, Monsignor Scicluna was nominated Promoter of Justice at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith detailed to investigate and prosecute the more grave crimes reserved to the exclusive competence of the Congregation.

He has also lectured widely on issues concerning child protection in the Church, visiting a number of local churches in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Australia. While working in Rome, Mgr Scicluna also helped with chaplaincy work at the Convent of the Nuns of Saint Bridget, Piazza Farnese, and as Extraordinary Confessor at the Venerable English College in Rome. Mgr Scicluna is a Visiting Lecturer in Penal Processes at the Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome). On 6th October 2012, Pope Benedict XVI nominated Mgr Scicluna as Auxiliary Bishop of Malta and Titular Bishop of San Leone. He was ordained Bishop on 24th November 2012.

On 28th November 2012, he was nominated member of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. On 18th October 2014, following the resignation of Mgr Paul Cremona O.P. from the office of Archbishop of Malta, Pope Francis nominated Mgr Scicluna as Apostolic Administrator *sede vacante*, with the authority to govern the Archdiocese of Malta until the new Archbishop of Malta takes canonical possession of the Archdiocese. On 21st January 2015, Pope Francis nominated Mgr Scicluna as President of the Special College within the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to hear appeals in processes concerning serious offences established under the *Motu Proprio Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela*.

On 27th February 2015, Pope Francis appointed Mgr Scicluna as Archbishop of Malta.

PROFILE

THE NEW HON CONSUL FOR MALTA IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PAUL CALLEJA has been officially appointed Honorary Consul of Malta residing in Perth with jurisdiction for Western Australia.

Paul Calleja was born in Birkirkara, MALTA and migrated to Western Australia as a child with his family in the early 1950's.



His primary and secondary educations were obtained in Catholic schools. Aspirations for the religious life drew him to De La Salle institutions at Cronulla and Burradoo in New South Wales where he furthered his studies. A number of his fellow Cronulla students' later filled eminent positions in the NSW and Federal governments in addition to the Supreme Court.

After two years training with the De La Sale brothers Paul Calleja chose not to pursue the religious life in favour of a teaching career in Perth. Once graduated he taught in Catholic and State schools in the city and rural areas as well as two year teaching assignment with the Zimbabwe Department of Education and Culture. His teaching career cumulated in heading the Faculty of Society, Environment and Business at a senior Catholic college.

Interest in Maltese cultural, political and social affairs occupies an import part in Paul Calleja's life. His contribution of articles to the Maltese Herald spanned over 20 years. He served nine years with the Maltese Association of Western Australia committee, conceived and later foundered with others, the Maltese Professional and Business Association of Western Australia (MPBA) and brought together interested individuals in the creation of the Child Migrants of Malta (CMOM) which succeeded in having a monument being erected at Pinto Wharf in Malta's Grand harbour to honour former Maltese child migrants who suffered unintended consequences during the child migration years.

Paul Calleja also takes pleasure in history and writing. These interests coalesced in his four books—Maltese of the Western Third, Tales of Two Migrants, Benedetto's War and Son of Vietnam (unpublished). He also collected and compiled newspaper articles pertaining to the Maltese in Western Australia spanning a period over 100 years then published the collection in collaboration with MPBA under the title of WA Ink.

Religion is also important to Paul Calleja. He feels the need to assist his local parish by serving as the vice chair of his parish's Parish Council. Paul Calleja is married, has two adult children, one grandchild and another on the way.

***I am addicted to
The Maltese Newsletter
and read it
from cover to cover***

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Malta's Consul-on-the-Move program update

21 Nov 2016 Malta's Consul-on-the-Move programme update

The *Consul-on-the-Move* program was launched by Malta's Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr George Vella on 5 May 2016 and provides certain consular services normally available at Malta's Embassies and Consular posts, in different locations. Such services include the collection of biometric passport applications. This program conforms to the Government's vision to have government services closer to the citizen.

After the successful introduction of the *Consul-on-the-Move* in South Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand and Queensland, this service will now be introduced in Western Australia on Friday and Saturday 20-21 January 2017.

In Perth the venue will be at the Maltese Association of Western Australia club at 1 May Holman Drive, Bassendean,

The Consul-General for Melbourne will be facilitating the collection of passport applications from those Maltese residing in Perth in addition to gathering of biometric data necessary for the issuing of the passports.

Western Australia will become the third Australian State in which the *Consul-on-the-Move* service will be introduced. There are plans to provide this service to all applicants who are eligible in all Australian States where there is inadequate access for the issuing of passports, as long as there is sufficient interest and demand that justify such travel.

The Consul-General for Melbourne will be in Adelaide, South Australia on the 24 and 25 March.

Meanwhile, the Minister for Foreign Affairs is proceeding with this project not just in Australia, but also in Canada (Vancouver u Edmonton and St Johns), the USA (San Francisco, California, Detroit, Houston, and Los Angeles), the United Kingdom (Cardiff in Wales and Edinburgh in Scotland), as well as in two cities in Italy (Milan and Catania in Sicily).

Hence the *Consul-on-the-Move* is a worldwide program with the participation of five Maltese consulates in those countries: Toronto, Washington, London, Rome and Melbourne. It is a pilot project over a five year period.

So Maltese migrants or their descendants who live far from certain Maltese Embassies or Consulates in Australia and other parts of the world, no can take an interest and plan to make use of the *Consul-on-the-Move* service.

This service is available by appointment only. In Australia, the service may be accessed by contacting the Malta High Commission in Canberra and seeking further information about this program as well as guidelines on the documentation required.

For further information and appointments please contact your respective location focal point as indicated below

Australia	consul.melbourne@gov.mt	+62 02 6290 1724
Canada	consul.toronto@gov.mt	+1(416)297 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

CULTURE

NEW YEAR'S EVE IN MALTA



New Years Eve in Malta The southern European nation of Malta, which is officially referred as The Republic of Malta, celebrates its New Year on the date of January 1, following the Georgian calendar system. A day before, i.e. on December 31, which is popularly called as New Years Eve all over the world, is the day of major celebrations all over Malta. New Years Eve is an important time in the lives of the natives of Malta, as it brings in enormous amount of happiness and celebration time.

The celebrations in Malta are high on spirit and energy, which justify the title

of the 'the wildest party destination in the entire European continent' as conferred to Malta. Celebrations on New Years Eve in Malta On New Years Eve in Malta, people in huge numbers make a visit to city restaurants, clubs, and pubs to be a part of the community celebrations. Most of these restaurants and party clubs start aggressively promoting and advertising their places and the parties scheduled to happen on New Years Eve, well before the arrival of New Years Eve.

Also, they ensure to pull as much crowd as possible to cash in the celebration time, by offering luring packages, and by putting special arrangements of celebrations in place. With feasting and drinking being an internal part of celebration tradition in Malta, every public party place ensure to have the best menu on the platter for the evening, well accompanied by finest o champagne and wine. During the time of New Years Eve, one gets to see the best of Maltese cooking, which is an amalgamation of the original cooking of the inhabitants of Malta, and those who come out of other place to get settled in Malta. Many of the Maltese dishes are Sicilian or Moorish in origin, and their consumption during significant times such as on New Years Eve, reflect the influence Malta has gained over the years from foreign territories.

Many people have their own house parties, which are by no means less entertaining and pleasurable than the community parties. Good music, fine dining, and the companionship of near and dear ones make it a warm and special place to be in on the very special day of New Years Eve. Those looking to have a comparatively soothe celebrations head over to the beautiful beaches to spend some quality time with close friends and family on New Years Eve. However, irrespective of the nature of celebrations, New Years Eve on an overall aspect remains a family oriented affair in Malta.

Countdown culture and Fireworks on New Year's Eve in Malta The countdown culture is not that old, and for the fact officially occurred for the first time in 2010 only. It was for the first time in the long history of Malta to have any such nature of celebration, and it was usual for people to be over-excited. Expect the same to occur at St. George's Square of Valletta. With the significant point of midnight drawing close, being a part of thousands on the streets, and counting down the last few moments in concord is simply an unforgettable and extraordinary feeling. It is well accompanied by the spectacular fireworks-show which is set off at the stroke of midnight to give a royal welcome to New Year, and to mark arrival of New Year with style. However, the fireworks show is not as spectacular or extraordinary to hold a special mentioning. While keeping in consideration of the fact that Malta hosts International Fireworks Festival, one does expect something unusual and unique, which usually doesn't come out on New Years Eve.

MALTESE RECIPE

CHESTNUT SOUP - IMBULJUTA



If you like chestnuts you will absolutely love Imbuljuta tal-Qastan. This Maltese beverage is traditionally served after Midnight Mass and on New Year's Eve. It's made of dried chestnuts, cocoa powder, whole cloves, water, sugar, dark chocolate and citrus zest and it tastes like heaven! Malta's

Imbuljuta (pronounced something like: Im-bul-yu-ta) is one of my very favourite things to eat. For me, it is the essence of Christmas. It also takes me back to my childhood and it revives the excitement that the season should bring. It used to be served and shared after

midnight mass; unfortunately, nowadays plain hot chocolate is served instead. Pity.

- 250g dried chestnuts
- 1 x 15ml tablespoon cocoa powder (not drinking chocolate, please)
- 3 tablespoons golden caster sugar
- 1 small cinnamon stick
- 1 whole tangerine peel (There's no need to cut this into pieces.)
- ¼ teaspoon cloves
- 500ml water
- 50g dark chocolate, cut into chunks

Give the chestnuts a good rinse under water, discard any that seem off. Place the rest in a large bowl, cover them with a fresh batch of cold water and leave to soak overnight. The next morning they will be ready to be cooked, but first remove any brown skin that remained attached to the chestnuts. Drain, put them in a heavy-based pan and cover with them with 500ml of cold water. Switch on the heat to medium and let them cook until they are tender, for I would say, around 40 minutes or so. Add the cocoa powder, caster sugar, cinnamon stick, tangerine peel, cloves and dark chocolate. Give everything a stir and let the ingredients come together and cook for another 30 to 40 minutes or so. Now it's ready to be scooped into your favourite mug! This is gooey and rich so be careful! Serve hot. But boy, it's good! Enjoy!

Maltese appointed minister of Order of St John



Fra John Edward Critien has been voted the new Foreign and Interior Minister of the Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint John, the government said.

Born in Sliema, Fra Critien was also appointed head of the chancellory, the office responsible for relations with national associations, talks with third parties and the implementation of the order's internal administration. He would be leading the order's diplomatic missions in the world.

New Year celebrations around the world.



The Scottish New Year is known as Hogmanay and both New Year's Eve and New Year's Day were also known as Daft Days.

In 1582, the Gregorian calendar reform restored January 1 as New Year's day. Although most Catholic countries adopted the Gregorian calendar almost immediately, it was only gradually adopted among Protestant countries. The British, for example, did not adopt the reformed calendar until 1752. Until

then, the British Empire —and their American colonies— still celebrated the New Year in March. The Scottish New Year is known as Hogmanay and both New Year's Eve and New Year's Day were also known as Daft Days. The first Monday in January is a holiday and is referred to as Handsel Monday. In Scotland New Year's Eve is called Hogmanay or Night of the Candle. Foods such as three cornered biscuits called Hogmanays are eaten. Other foods that are special at this time of year are wine, cordials, cheese, bread, shortbread, oatcake, currant loaf and scones. After sunset people are known to collect juniper and water to purify the home. The Scots prepare for the New Year by cleaning their houses. This was believed to have been a purification ritual. They would perform a ritual of burning juniper branches which they carried throughout the house so as to remove any lurking germs and diseases. The food they would eat at New Year was Haggis, shortbread, scones, oatmeal cakes, cheese, whisky and wine as well as traditional New Year black buns.



Netherlands. In the Netherlands people burn Christmas trees on street bonfires and let off fireworks to ring in the New Year and as a way of driving out the spirits of the old year.



South Africa. In South Africa people ring in the New Year with church bells ringing and gunshots being fired. For those in the Cape Province New Year's Day and Second New Year's Day are full of a carnival atmosphere as there are carnivals where people dress in colorful costumes and dance in streets to the sound of drums.



Switzerland. In Switzerland people celebrate Old Sylvester's Day on Jan 13 according to the Julian calendar. People go through the streets dressed in costumes and hats representing good and evil spirits. They believe good luck comes from letting a drop of cream land on the floor New Year's Day. This was said to bring a year of overflowing abundance.

CULTURE

MALTA FEATURES IN NEW YORK TIMES

Overlooking Valletta's Grand Harbour, a memorial to those who died in the Siege of Malta during World War II. By Gisela Williams Nov 2016 Credit Luis Díaz Díaz



Malta's Emerging Capital by the Sea

With a history as rich as it has been dramatic, Valletta has become a laid-back coastal destination with a thriving creative class.

People love to invade Malta. The Mediterranean island nation, situated between Sicily and Tunisia, counts among its unwelcome guests the Romans, the Ottomans, Napoleon and, in the early 20th century, hundreds of Russian aristocrats fleeing the fall of the czarist autocracy. For the

most part, the Maltese were having none of this. Napoleon was forced out after just two years, and the Knights of Malta — effectively, and against all odds — defeated the Ottoman Empire's much larger forces. In Valletta, Malta's capital, people still bring up the Great Siege with enormous pride, boasting about it as if they had actually been there.

For all of Valletta's interest in the past — the city is a Unesco World Heritage Site, and the 16th-century Saint John's Co-Cathedral in the center of town has been magnificently preserved — it has become in recent years a vibrant cultural destination, with an appeal that is both historic and modern. The area's Baroque architecture now houses boutique hotels instead of knights in armor, while none other than Renzo Piano has refurbished the parliament and historic city gate. Art is increasingly moving indoors as well, with several ambitious galleries on the horizon, and MUZA, a new National Museum of Fine Arts.

Valletta, like the rest of Malta, is a pastiche of historical influences. Its language has undertones ranging from Arabic to Italian, among a variety of other dialects. The same is true of the food, a unique mix of Mediterranean and North African influences — which, as it turns out, is one of the more positive results of all those invasions.

Baroque Winter Sunshine in Malta: the Valletta International Baroque Festival - 2017



John Cathedral Valletta

Par David Karlin,

Why go to a Baroque music festival? You may have favourite works from the period, which have stood the test of time. Or the opposite: you're jaded with hearing the same old symphonies and concerti and the festival gives you a chance to sample the thousands of baroque works that aren't often played. You may be fascinated to hear real Baroque specialists, who understand every nuance of their instruments and are continually exploring new ways of making this music sound authentic. Perhaps you simply love the environment of the Baroque with its ornate gilt work and dramatic paintings and sculpture. Chapel St.

Whichever of these hits your sweet spot, you'll find plenty to tempt you in Malta in January, where the 2017 edition of the Valletta International Baroque Festival runs from January 12th to 28th. There's plenty of familiar Bach during the festival, or you can go for Handel's *Water Music* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks* on the last day, preceded by Purcell opera arias. There are explorations of composers like Zelenka, Boccherini or Jacques Duphy. There are top ensembles like The Sixteen or Ensemble Correspondances. And if you love the baroque but haven't yet experienced some of Valletta's churches, you've been missing out.

But you may also want to head for a festival to experience something completely different, and that's certainly what you'll get on 14 and 15 January at the Teatru Manoel, in the shape of Lully's *Atys* performed by the Centre de musique baroque de Versailles. Except that this isn't Lully as you know it: this is an opera parody, performed with marionettes. Back in the 18th century, once an opera was performed, it duly gave rise to parodied versions, often with *commedia dell'arte* characters in place of the heroes and heroines and popular tunes dropped in, to the delight of audiences. Parodies were staged in official theatres, but also in the local fairgrounds, to the point that the Comédie-Française succeeded in banning actors from the fairground theatres on copyright grounds. The producers duly substituted marionettes – and that's what the Versailles people are bringing to Valletta (with real singers and musicians, of course). The Teatru Manoel is a lovely theatre, the archetype of golden Baroque, and with eight of the festival's 25 events, it's the most important venue. You'll also want to visit St John's Co-Cathedral, where you can take in the opulence of the gilt decorations – whether you find them delightful or excessively gaudy, it's an experience not to be missed. On 13 January, you can hear Ensemble Correspondances performing Charpentier's *Te Deum* and Henry du Mont motets. Seeing them in 2014, Bachtrack's Julie Jozwiak suggested that the angels must have been quivering with pleasure at hearing such fine interpretations of Charpentier. Seeing their du Mont motets a year later, Julie praised them as having "irreproachable technique in the service of the purest musicality." On 23 January in the co-cathedral's Oratory, Chicago-based early opera specialists Haymarket Opera perform Alessandro Stradella's oratorio *San Giovanni Battista* – be warned, it's a small space and capacity is limited.

There are performances at four other churches, the festival opener being at the Ta' Ġiezu Church with a trumpet-based programme by Italian 18th-century specialists Concerto de' Cavalieri, who have performed in some of the world's most prestigious venues: in last year's festival, Katy Wright described them as "vivacious yet stylish, with a direct yet colourful sound" and noted their infectious enthusiasm. The largest scale concert – and your chance for a change from 100% pure baroque – is on 26 January, with the Malta Philharmonic performing a series of modern baroque-inspired works, ranging from Mahler and Respighi to a newly composed guitar concertino. Another larger ensemble is the European Union Baroque Orchestra, which performs Bach Cantatas on the 25th. At the other end of the scale, London-based period piano specialist John Irving performs Bach's French Suites in a lunchtime concert entitled "Bach and the Spirit of the Dance" on 15 January at the National library of Malta, a stunning neoclassical building a stone's throw from St John's. There are also solo violin, viola da Gamba and lute concerts.

There's more rare opera in the shape of Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*, a short opera buffa concerning a domineering maidservant who tricks her master into marrying her and those succeeds in becoming the lady of the house by right as well as de facto. It's staged by Rome-based Associazione Musicale Giacomo Carissimi. The climate, by the way, should help to sway you: Malta has the warmest winters in Europe with 10 hours of daylight per day in January, daytime temperatures averaging 15°C and the likelihood that you'll get sunshine. With your choice of instrumental, ensemble, choral and operatic concerts, Valletta in January is the perfect place to hear great music in lovely surroundings and beat the winter blues. *This article was sponsored by the Malta Tourism Authority. Notes on opera parody are taken from Françoise Rubellin's article.*

Lina
Brockdorff

FIL-MISRAH TA' EIN KAREM

Elisheva kellha t-tarbija ta' sitt xhur fuq diegħ wieħed waqt li bl-ieħor qabdet bomblu tal-fuħħar biex tftitx tmur iġġib l-ilma mill-ġħajn tal-misraħ. Ma setgħetx tkompli ssajjar għax ma kienx fadlilhiex qatra ilma. B'xorti tajba mhux li kellha wisq bogħod għall-ġħajn għax kieku kien ikollha tħalli lil binha ma' xi ġirien, kien beda jitqal ġmielu.

Xhin waslet fil-misraħ indunat li kien hemm bosta mir-raħħala għalkemm hemm tistenna li jitnikkru jpačpču n-nisa li jħallu darhom biex iġorru l-ilma. Ma damitx ma fehmet għaliex dak l-eċċitament mhux tas-soltu.

Qrib il-ġħajn minn fejn jieħdu l-ilma tax-xorb kien hemm ħawt kbir li minnu soltu jixorbu ż-zwiemel, ħmir, bġhula u xi nġhaġ u mġhoż ukoll, ilma ġieri nieżel mill-ġholjiet Karem. Imma dak in-nhar ma kinux l-animali tas-soltu li resqu 'l hemm biex jixorbu. Kienu tliet iġmla.

Nġhiduha kif inhi, lanqas ma kienet haġa rari li tara xi ġemel jixrob minn hemm, li mhux tas-soltu kienet id-dehra ta' tliet irġiel lebsin b'mod stramb. Żgur li ma kinux Lhud, lanqas ma kienu ragħajja, ħaddiema tal-ġħalqa jew xi negozjanti, setgħu kienu slaten minn art imbegħda, ilbishom rikk tal-bellus miksi perli u deheb kien jixhed dan. Tnejn minnhom, b' gilda f'tit skura kienu mitlufin jikkellmu bejniethom waqt li l-ieħor beda qisu jiggosta lil dawk in-nisa ċassi jħarsu lejha. Halli għalihom in-nisa, billi ma jbatux bil-kurżità!

Elisheva waqfet f'tit il-bogħod minn dak it-tielet raġel li kważi kellu tbissima fuq xofftejh. Hi wkoll kellha kurżità kbira mhux li ssir taf min hu, imma xi jumejn qabel kellha esperjenza li għaliha baqgħet misterjuża. Min jaf jekk dak kienx xi saħħar, xi studjuż kbir li jaf jispjegahilha? Mill-banda l-oħra mara mhux soltu tkellem lil raġel barra t-triq, bilkemm lil żewġha. B'daqshekk? X'seta' jġirilha? Setgħet tipprofitta ruħha mill-fatt li kienet avvanzata ġmielha fl-età, halli għalihom jgħidu li jridu n-nisa l-oħra.

Qorbot lejn dak ir-raġel tal-ilbies sbejjah u tat-tbissima fuq xufftejh. Erhiet il-bomblu tal-fuħħar mal-art għax it-tarbija beda jiżzerżaq 'l isfel. Sellmet lil dak ir-raġel b'inkin żgħir u qaltu: "Ja Sidi, qalbi qed tgħidli li intom ġejjin min-naħa ta' Bethlehem. Nixtieq insaqsi xi haġa ... għax xi jumejn ilu kont fis-setaħ tagħna fil-ġholi u rajt kewkba ta' dawl mhux tas-soltu li damet biċċa mhux hażin miexja u wara waqfet għal f'tit, imbagħad għebet għal kollox. Taf, jekk jogħġbok tgħidli x'kien dak il-fenominu għax ... għax għandi kuġinti Marjam li bħal issa aktarx li tinsab hemm, din qed tistenna tarbija, emminni mofħni fiha ... Tgħid mort imqarrqa, kienet biss l-immaġinazzjoni tiegħi?"

"Mara, sewwa qed tgħid. Kienet kewkba speċjali dik! U kellek taraha int ukoll! Jien ma nafx min inti, imma ladarba Jaħweh riedet tara dak il-fenominu jfisser li xtaq jgħaddilek il-bxara ... Iva, għax dak in-nhar tweekled tarbija speċjali li aħna t-tlieta ġejna minn artijiet 'l bogħod biex inqimuh. Id-dinja għad tinbidel bit-tagħlim tiegħu ... fl-istess hin wisq nibża' li l-istess niesu mhux ser japprezzawh. Għad ibati ... għad ibati ferm dak it-tarbija ... u miegħu għad ibati wkoll dak li għalih qed iħejji t-triq ... X'jismu dan ibnek, mara?"

"Jismu Jochanan."

"Ismagħni sew, mara ... La jibda jikber Jochanan, ftakar irrakkontalu dwar dik il-kewkba, tinsiex, għax hu għad ikollu sehem kbir fil-missjoni ta' dak li tweekled f'Bethlehem ... dik it-tarbija ta' kuġintek."

Kif qal hekk għolla jdejh it-tnejn fuq ras it-tarbija, refa' rasu 'l fuq u talab: "Il-barka ta' El Shaddai ta' Izrael tinzel fuqek, mara u fuq dan ibnek Jochanan. Inħossni xxurtjat li ltqajt magħkom."

"Jien ukoll, ja Sidi!" temtmet Elisheva waqt li baqgħet iċċassata tħares lejha. Imbagħad sellmitlu, ġabret il-bomblu minn ma' l-art u bid-dmugħ nieżel ma' wiċċha marret timla' l-ilma. U żammet f'qalbha sa ma mietet il-kliem li darba qalilha dak ir-raġel fil-misraħ ta' Ein Karem.

Dr Claire Falzon LLD

Notary Public of Malta. A trained and qualified lawyer in Maltese Law

Advice on and drawing of Power of Attorney documents to be used in Malta, as duly authorised by the Government of Malta.

Legal Advice, explanation and translation of wills and other legal documents drawn in Malta.

Assistance with settlement of deceased estates in Malta.

CONTACT: claireminogue@bigpond.com



Martha Fenech wins Miss Universe Malta 2016

Martha Fenech crowned Miss Universe Malta 2016 !!!!

26-year-old **Martha Fenech** defeated 23 candidates to win the crown of **Miss Universe Malta 2016**. The grand finale of Miss Universe Malta 2016 took place on 26th August 2016 at Hilton Malta. Martha will now represent Malta at Miss Universe 2016 which will take place next year in Manila, Philippines. Martha represented St. Julian's region at the pageant. Malta returns to the Miss Universe pageant after a hiatus of 15 years. first runner-up crown went to Christine Mifsud who represented Fgura region whereas the second runner-up crown went to Miss Swatar, Dajana Laketic. The newly crowned Miss Universe Malta Martha Fenech is a Miss World Alumni she represented Malta at Miss World 2008. Kathlene Farrugia in 1968 became the first woman from Malta to compete at the Miss Universe pageant. Malta is one of those few countries that is yet to place at Miss Universe pageant. In 2001 Rosalie Theuma was the last delegate from Malta at Miss Universe. Earlier winner of Miss Malta used to be Miss Universe but now the winner goes to Miss World pageant.

Another marvellous newsletter. I actually wait for this newsletter and have used some of the information amongst my international friends who decided to visit Malta. Some of the information has been quite mind blowing as even though I am Maltese, I was not aware of such information. I belong to an armchair travel class and so any new information is priceless.

Thank you so much for all the hard work you put in, to produce such an informative newsletter. Wishing you a Marvellous Christmas and a Harmonious New Year 2017. I have the Honour and the privilege to have been chosen as one of the new board members of FMLA in Australasia. Thank you for your support. Mrs Irene Cooper

Dear Frank, On behalf of our members I wish to thank you for the committee photo and profile of our association that was published in your previous newsletter. Thanks and may you and yours have a Merry Christmas. Regards, Tony Pace-Feraud, Secretary, Maltese Bowlers Social Group NSW



His Excellency Hieu Van Le AC (Vietnamese: *Lê Văn Hiếu*; born 1 January 1954) is the 35th and current Governor of South Australia, in office since 1 September 2014. He had previously been the state's lieutenant-governor since 31 August 2007, as well as a chairman of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission (SAMEAC). Le is the first person of Asian heritage to be appointed a state governor in Australia. Le was born in Quảng Trị, South Vietnam, in 1954. He was raised and educated in Đà Nẵng, and attended Dalat University. He fled Vietnam from the new communist regime in November 1977, and came by boat to Darwin as a refugee in 1977 with his wife Lan and about 40 other people. He sends his heartfelt greetings for Christmas and the New Year 2017.

Thanks for all the newsletters you have sent us this year. We have thoroughly enjoyed them. May I take this opportunity to wish you and Josie and your family a Happy, Holy Christmas and a Wonderfully Blessed New Year! I'm afraid I am at least three newsletters behind as I have been away twice in the last two months. This means that Mum is also behind as I print the newsletters off and, once I've read them, I pass them on to her. We look forward to your newsletters for 2017. God bless. Rosemary Norton and on behalf of Lora Baldacchino - Adelaide

Thank you for putting together the monthly newsletter and continuing to give us a link to our beloved Malta. Wishing you and your family a merry Christmas and a peaceful new year. **Grace Vella**

Greetings and best wishes to all from **Josephine and Harry Zammit Cordina - Malta**



- * Ippermettili nroddlok ħajr li ta' kull xahar tieġu ħsieb tibgħatli dan il-fuljett minn South Australia, tax-xogħol kbir li tieġu u tat-tagħrif li tistampa fih. B'mod partikolari din l-edizzjoni tal-Milied, bit-tradizzjonijiet, għanjiet, riċetti Maltin eċċ, eċċ. Grazzi ħafna ta' din il-ħolqa bejn Malta u l-Awstralja, prosit u kompli b'din il-ħidma fejjieda b'risq il-Maltin. Nixtieq nawgura l-Milied u s-sena t-tajba lill-Maltin kollha t'hemmhekk. Tislijiet minn Malta John Bason - l-Imsida, Malta
- * Dear Frank Both Myriam and I wish you and your family a very happy Christmas. Please keep the good work going as you are doing a great job for the Maltese Australian link God bless you Regards Joe and Myriam Pavia
- * Għan nom tiegħi u tal-mara Margaret , nixtieq niringrazza lilek u l-mara tiegħek Josie ta l-edizzjonijiet tal-MALTESE NEWSLETTER li tibgħatilna ma tul is-sena li huma tant apprezzati Grazzi Nixtieq ukoll natikhom il-Milied it tajjeb u sena ta sahha , mhabba mimlija Paci 2017 . Take care Karmenu Mifsud .
- * Thank you all for your efforts during 2016. Having a background in printing, I have a fair idea of the work involved in putting an issue together. Thank you and best wishes for the Christmas period. Frank Vella, Seven Hills, NSW
- * WOW FRANK! This special Christmas edition of the newsletter is amazing! Congratulations for your hard work once again.
- * We take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones one more time Happy Christmas and a New Year filled with Joyous occasions, good health and God's blessings. Sahha w 'Sliem Maria and Armando Catania.- Melbourne
- * Many happy returns to you and your loved ones :) Rebecca Cremona – Writer/Director – Kukumaisha (+356 79068065
- * Thank you for sharing the newsletter. I truly enjoyed reading it. Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy 2017 Mary Vella Gomes Secretary Maltese American Social Club of San Francisco USA
- * May the Peace, Love and Joy of Christmas remain with you and your family throughout 2017 and beyond....With Love, Antoinette, Joe & Family Bajada



The Hon Jay Wilson Weatherill is an Australian politician who is the 45th and **current Premier of South Australia**, serving since 21 October 2011. Weatherill has represented the House of Assembly seat of Cheltenham as a member of the South Australian Branch of the Australian Labor Party since the 2002 election. He sends his best wishes to all the members of the Maltese community in South Australia..

Prosit and a million thanks for a wonderful Christmas edition. It contains heaps of information on our beloved festa tal Milied go Malta. I will certainly conserve this

edition for future reference.

Million thanks also for page 11 dedicated to the Ghar u Casa at Mellieha as I had requested. Thanks is not enough. Really much appreciated. Frank nawguralek nerga minn qieh qalbi il Milied Hiena mimli sahha u mhabba lilek u il familja kollha. Awguri il habib Victor Pullicino



Dear Frank, Thank you so very much for the Special Christmas Edition of the Maltese Newsletter. I read all the articles with so much interest and delight but with particular interest in the Top Christmas Customs in Malta. "The Sermon of the Child" brought back to me such a wonderful feeling of having my dear father with us at this particular time of the year although he has been passed on for over 23 years. I have on display, along with our other Christmas decorations the attached little gift that my dad (Joseph Attard) was given when he at the age of 9 years. He gave the Sermon the Child in our beautiful church in Naxxar (1931). I feel so proud of him as he was not a man of many words and quite a humble man in many respects but still was able to deliver his talk and receive this beautiful gift as a remembrance and to

pass on to us. My family and I wish to and your family and all the readers a very Happy New Year and much health and happiness for 2017. Regards, Vivienne and Roger Darwon, (nee Attard)

Message by High Commissioner Charles Muscat Canberra Australia



This year was another challenging and rewarding year for the High Commission and Consulates in Australia & New Zealand.

As High Commissioner, I had the privilege to welcome to Australia H.E. the President of Malta and her entourage and travel with them to Perth, Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne. Most of you would know that Her Excellency's visit went extremely well. The Consul on the Move (a 2-year pilot project) was launched also this year and its initial success testifies to the efficient and effective coordination between the High Commission, Consulates General and Honorary Consuls in the various states visited, including Wellington, NZ. All these would not have been achieved without the exceptional work of all staff and

officers involved.

From January till June 2017, Malta will assume the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It will be an extremely challenging role considering the political climate and recent developments in the EU, and elsewhere, but as our Prime Minister & Deputy Prime Minister said, "it will be intense and testing but will be an opportunity to show our capability and maturity as a Nation". My appointment as High Commissioner for Malta to Australia was extended by our Government for another term and as such I look forward to be of further assistance to our Maltese Communities wherever they may be in this vast continent.

One of our main goals for this festive season and the New Year is to be more tolerant towards each other so we may understand each other better. Also keep moving forward and reach out to those who are in need of our help. After all this is what Christmas is all about. Let's remember that Christ was born in a manger. This fact should instill in us a sense of humility. On behalf of myself, my wife, Victoria, my Deputy and staff at the High Commission in Canberra, Consuls General and staff in Sydney and Melbourne and all our Honorary Consuls and their staff in Australia and New Zealand, I wish you all a blessed Christmas and a Peaceful and Prosperous 2017.

Hon Grace Portolesi – Adelaide, South Australia



Season's greeting from the Chair, South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission.

Grace Portolesi is the first woman to hold the position of Chair of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission assuming the role on 1 September 2014.

Grace served in the South Australian *Parliament* from 2006 – 2014 representing the electorate of Hartley in Adelaide Eastern suburbs.

In 2009, Grace was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General, Minister for Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

The following year she was appointed Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Multicultural Affairs, Youth and Volunteers.

She later held the Education and Childhood Development portfolio

before moving on to be Minister for Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology.

The CITTADINI Maltese Cultural & Theatrical Association Inc

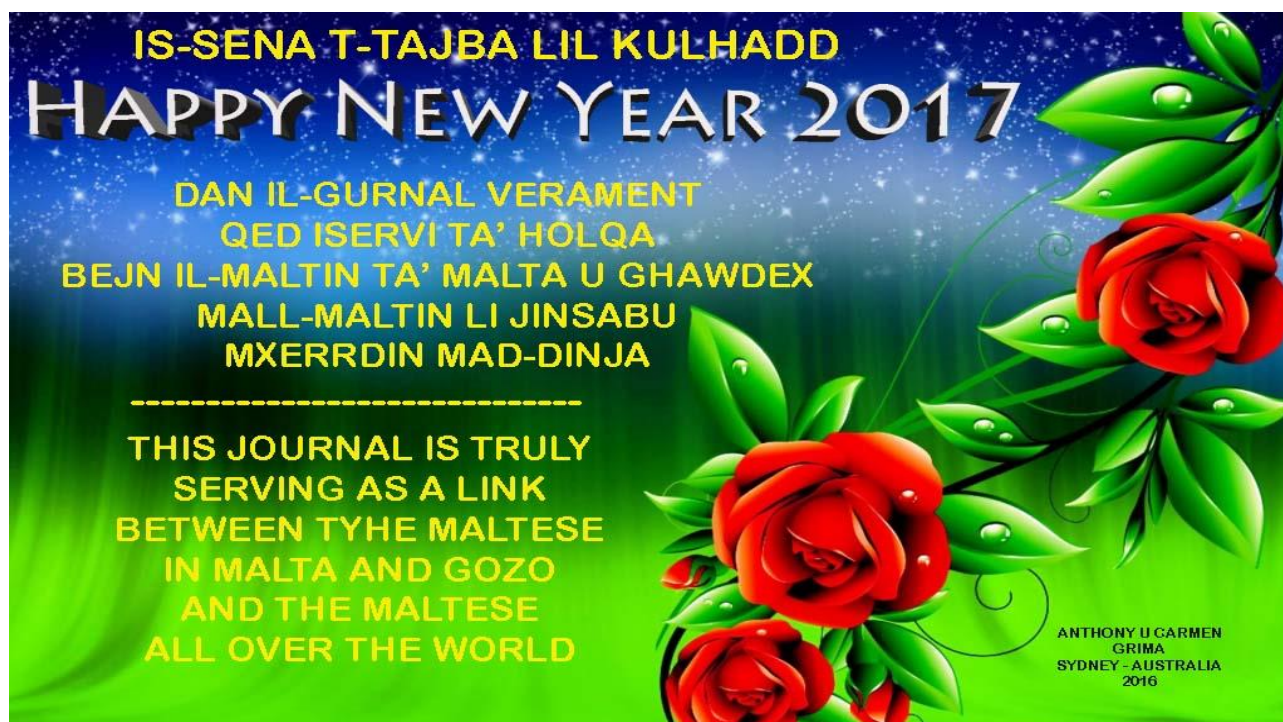


The aim of the Cittadini, as the association is commonly known, is to provide theatrical stage entertainment by presenting various regular stage comedies each year and it has been doing so since 1972. Originally the Cittadini formed part of the Maltese RSL Sub-Branch. Later, in 1978, it forged its own entity and became incorporated.

The Cittadini also aims to provide much needed culturally orientated performances by presenting their stage shows in the Maltese language to the Maltese-Australian community not only in Sydney, but also in other regions in NSW and has travelled and performed in other States.

The Cittadini is often asked to support other Maltese associations with their social activities. It also supports worthy charitable activities, has performed in a number Maltese musical productions and continues to engage 2nd and 3rd generation Australian-Maltese in their stage activities.

The Cittadini is a charitable organisation and is based at Greystanes, NSW.



FEATURE

ST. ELIAS CARMELITE COLLEGE - ST. VENERA



Many are the diocesan and religious priests who attended the Carmelite Secondary school and I am writing this article as a Carmelite Friar as well as a former Mount Carmel College Student. We can say that the Carmelite school has passed through three phases. The first was at its inception, when it was named *Schola Mariano Apostolica*; the second was when the school became Mount Carmel College and the third came about when the name of the college name changed to Saint Elias College.

It was with great joy that, on 29 October 1944, the Carmelite Province formally opened the institution *Schola Mariano Apostolica*. At the beginning the purpose of the school was to educate those children who felt the calling to become Carmelite friars. At first these children were only taught subjects that were not taught in public schools such as Latin, Italian, Singing and other subjects that were required for priestly and religious vocations.

The plan was that at a later stage a new college would be built for the students where they could be taught all subjects under one roof. The Carmelite school began operating in the Carmelite Priory in Valletta on the top floor of the old novitiate, which at the time served as trial quarters for the first year students aspiring to become Carmelite friars. The first friars to teach in the school were Fr Lawrence Sammut, Fr Redent Gauci, Fr Allessandru Busuttil and Kerubim Farrugia. Later on several other friars began teaching at the school.

In 1952, the Schola Mariano Apostolica, which was located in the Valletta Carmelite Priory, moved to Chateau Lonz in Saint Joseph's Street, Hamrun (at the time, this part of Santa Venera formed part of Hamrun). The first entrance exams were held on the 22 and 23 of September 1952 and in May that same year, the Provincial Chapter decided that, upon his return from his studies in Rome, Fr Emmanuel Gatt O.Carm would become the new rector of the college.



In the first year, when the college was at Chateau Lonz, there were about 60 students in addition to the rector and seven other friars. The work of Fr. Emmanuel was to bring this college up to par with other secondary schools of the time. For this reason, on 22 July 1955, the Prior Provincial Fr Carmel Vella wrote to the Archbishop of Malta Msgr. Michael Gonzi requesting permission to open a new school under the name of Mount Carmel College for students of every social class. With permission granted by the Archbishop, Fr Emmanuel then wrote to the Education Director J.P. Vassallo requesting permission to open this new school. Permission was granted on 18 November 1955.

In the June of 1967, the Prior Provincial Fr George Borg, together with his council, decided to build the college in the Santa Venera, Carmelite Priory garden and to be constructed with all the necessary modern facilities of the time. The College opened its doors to students in October 1970 and was officially blessed by the Prior Provincial Fr Gustin Sant on 28 December 1971. Due to the high demand from the growing number of students, the College premises needed enlarging. As a result, a second floor was added in 1974. The new building comprised various facilities such as a library, music chamber, a canteen and a gym. In 1994 new apparatus was bought for the Physics laboratory.

On 6 January 1998, the rector Fr Charles Mallia O.Carm wrote to the Prior Provincial Fr Amadeo Zammit to ask to study the possibility of changing the name of the college. The Provincial, together with his council, granted the request for the name to be changed from Mount Carmel to Saint Elias College since the Carmelite Province is under the protection of the Prophet Saint Elias.

Today St Elias College has various modern facilities including, a library, laboratories for computer studies, biology, physics, chemistry and home economics, learning centres, offices, a hall, a staff room, a gym, a games room, an art room, a reading room and a chapel.

There is much to be said about this college and the ongoing activities that take place but I will not delve any further in this article. However, something worth mentioning is that for the past few years St Elias College has been participating in *EkoSkola*, the aim of which is for students to become accustomed to respecting creation and the surrounding environment, from a young age, while contributing and striving towards achieving sustainable development. This programme is being integrated into their study curriculum in order to become part of their formal education and be put into practice.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the rector Fr Jurgen Cucciardi and all the staff at the College for their beneficial work in aiding the students. *Fr Hermann Duncan O.Carm Balluta*

Il-Pupa

Għandi pupa wisq sabiħa,
aħmar wiċċha bħall-peprin.
B'par għajnejn minn lewn is-sema,
bħalha żgur ma ssibx ħelwin.

Il-mamà bħali tlibbisha,
mid-drapp stess tal-libsa tiegħi.

Oħti ż-żgħira nistħajjilha,
meta jien noħroġha miegħi.

Fejn immur dejjem noħodha
għax mingħajrha ma jien xejn.
Minn fejn ngħaddi nisma' jgħidu:
"Dawna donnhom pupi t-tnejn!"



Lanċa Ġejja



Lanċa ġejja u oħra sejra
minn Tas-Sliema għal Marsamxett,
il-kaptan bil-pipa f'ħalqu
jidderiegi l-bastiment.

Sewwa sewwa f'nofs ta' baħar
il-kaptan ħassu ħażin,
ma kellux min idur miegħu
daru miegħu l-baħrin.

Agħmillu karta, agħmillu karta,
agħmillu karta għal tax-xjuħ!

TIFTAKAROM DAWN IL-POEZIJI SBIEH

WITH THANKS- Vince Camilleri



Mr Speaker - Hon Anglu Farrugia

**Speaker of the House of Representatives
Parliament of Malta**

Dr Anglu Farrugia LL.D. M.Jur. (*magna cum laude*), has assumed office after being elected Speaker of the House of Representatives, Parliament of Malta, during the first sitting of the Twelfth Legislature on 6 April 2013.

Dr Farrugia first entered Parliament in 1996, and was re-elected in 1998, 2003 and 2008. Between 1998 and 2008, Dr Farrugia was the Shadow Minister for Justice. In June 2008, he was elected as the Labour Party's Deputy Leader responsible for Parliamentary Affairs, and served for five years as the Opposition's Shadow Minister on Employment and Workers' Rights.

Dr Farrugia was Chairman of the Standing Committee of the House for the Consideration of Bills between 1996 and 1998, and an *ad hoc* member between 1998 and 2013 on the same committee. Between 1996 and 2008, he was also a member of the Privileges Committee of the House of Representatives.

Dr Farrugia headed the Maltese Parliament's delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) between 1996 and 1998, and served as a member of the delegation since then till 2008. He has travelled abroad on a number of EU and OSCE missions as an international observer during the holding of various elections, including the ones in Georgia (1999), the Presidential Election in Palestine (2004), the US Presidential Election in 2004, the Montenegrin Independence Referendum (2006) and the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Zambia (2006).

Dr Farrugia also served as a member of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Standing Committee on Human Rights.

Prior to entering politics, Dr Farrugia moved up the ranks within the Malta Police Force from 1977 to 1996, leaving the Force in the rank of Police Superintendent. During this period, he graduated as a lawyer from the University of Malta.

Dr Farrugia was born on the 29th December 1955 in Mosta, and is married to Carmen née Zammit. They have a daughter, Caroline, who is a practising lawyer.

AUSTRALIA DAY 2017

**Xaghra Association of NSW Inc.
INVITES YOU TO COME & CELEBRATE AUSTRALIA DAY
2017**

With a Dinner Dance

Date: Saturday 21 st January 2017

Time: Doors open 6:30 pm for 7:00pm start

Place: Mandavilla Function Centre

1788 The Horsley Drive, Horsley Park

Entertainer: Joe Apap

**Dinner: 3 Course Meal, Beer, Wine, Soft Drinks, tea, coffee,
pastizzi & fruit platters For more information contact:
Ray & Josephine Bigeni: 9627 4182, Mob: 0439 974 182
M'Anne Teuma: 9627 4641**

**The Maltese Community Council of NSW
invites the Maltese Community to attend,
Australia Day Calibration, 2017**

on Sunday, January 22nd

at the (Wattle Room),

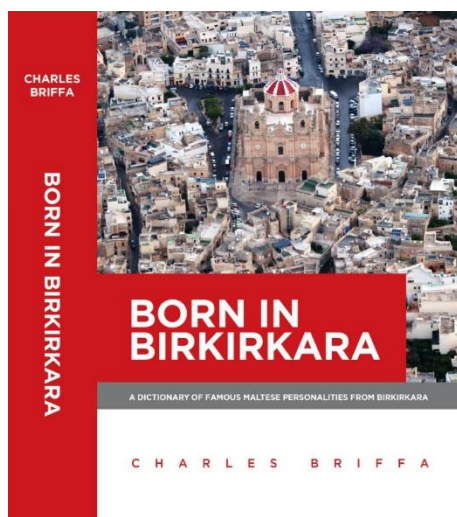
17 Miller Street, Merrylands NSW 2160, 4 pm.

Admission is free. Light refreshments.

Parking available.

For more information, Contact

Emanuel 0409 744 376



BORN IN BIRKIRKARA

By Charles Briffa

This biographical collection is a compilation of personalities born in Birkirkara, Malta

A biography seeks, in a narrative style, to record some of the actions of individual personalities. And the biographer is concerned with the truth about individuals that actually lived. Biographical subjects are always interesting because they deal with human nature and they often try to satisfy some of the readers' curiosity

about other people's inestimable merits and qualities.

The list of famous men and women born in Birkirkara includes actors, artists, civil servants, doctors, educators, entrepreneurs, humanitarians, musicians, naturalists, patriots, poets, politicians, presidents, religious, scholars, sculpting, singers, sports people, writers and many more.

Everybody has a part to play according to their potentialities. The book is, therefore, the guardian of individual knowledge that is deemed worthy of reinstating. Subjects, appearing with their subjectivity as much as possible, are human procedures, incarnate beings that need to be exalted as items present in our memory. And each subject is understood as a contributing factor of our culture's presence. Humanism is, thus, understood both as a historical recollection and as the construction of the subjective citizen. Cover photo: Mum Sulth

CHRISTMAS EGGS

Fiona Vella



Natives watched eagerly with awe as the foreign traders unwrapped large ostrich eggs decorated with exotic painted designs. The Phoenician merchants were sure that the ornamented eggs will be sold out in a matter of minutes, for this race possessed the key to humanity's heart – the ability to manipulate a sense of wonder. Centuries later this magic still lives ... an ingenious craft which started far away in an Australian farm has recently been introduced to our islands by CANDICE FAVA, whose artistry in egg decoration is a joy to

behold.

"I have fond memories of my childhood. My family lived in a farm in Australia from which we used to sell eggs. We had lots of clients but one particular client attracted my attention since she regularly purchased a substantial quantity of eggs. One day I decided to ask her why she always needed so many eggs and she promised that the next time she called at our farm, she will bring me a gift to show

me. I felt deeply curious and I awaited her next visit with much anticipation. When she came she brought me a little jewel box adorned with lovely fabrics and accessories. I could not believe that she had actually made it with one of the eggs from our farm! It was such a fascinating idea that I made up my mind to learn this craft. I was blessed to have so much eggs to experiment upon and my mum urged me and gave me ideas to be creative. Eventually I succeeded to learn how to empty the eggs and clean them thoroughly without breaking them. The first item I made was a jewel box which I painted with a bright nail polish. I was so delighted when I saw it ready! Today I realize that it wasn't much and I keep it hidden away. However, it is very dear to me as it reminds me from where it all started."

Looking at the variety of decorated eggs in her shop NewEggsperience in Żabbar, it was clear that Candice had learned the craft quite well. I surely found it hard to understand how she could carve out doors, windows, shelves and other designs from a simple egg-shell. And like the famous incredulous St Thomas, she had to allow me to hold an object in my hands in order to affirm that it was really made out of an egg.

"People everywhere react in this way with regards to these items since most think that eggshell is too fragile to work with. However the eggs which I use today are provided by foreign farms who specialize in this sector where probably the birds are given food mixed with fragmented shells in order to harden the quality of their eggshells. This craft is so widespread in different countries that there are also factories which sell a variety of cleansed eggs."

Yet when Candice came over to Malta, she was quite shocked as there were no shops who sold the accessories needed for this work.

"This craft was totally unknown in Malta but with the help of my husband I searched on the internet and I succeeded to buy all that was necessary online. Egg decoration had become an essential part of my life and I simply could not stop creating new things. Initially I did these objects for my personal satisfaction. Then surprisingly, when I started to give them out as gifts, I began to receive requests from my friends to make something for them. Eventually I had so many finished objects and I saw so much interest in my work, that I decided to fulfill another dream of mine and I opened this shop."

A range of eggs of various sizes and colours were ready to be transformed into new creations. Likewise, small jars of colourful paint and a multitude of various decorations were crying out to become part of a new charming object.

"I'm always dreaming of what I can do next. I work with all sorts of eggs, starting with the smallest ones of love-birds and parrots, and moving on to larger ones such as those of pigeons, quails, ducks, geese, emu, rhea and ostrich. The geese' eggs are the most practical because of their size and shape. Other eggs are relished for their natural particular characteristics such as the blackish colour of the rhea eggs and the large shape and pearly shade of the ostrich eggs."

For the Christmas season, Candice has come up with exquisite original creations.

"Christmas time is wonderful and I love to reflect its warm sensations and meaning in my works. Cribbs are the most requested although I have a vast selection of other items too. I'm constantly pondering over new creations as I thrive hard to provide unique hand-made objects which one could give to that special person who deserves such an exclusive gift.

Some clients have even asked me to show them how these creations are done in order to be able to produce them for themselves and also to compose their very own personal gift this Christmas. I instructed them how to do Christmas crackers first and many clients were delighted to see that even they could produce beautiful objects. For after all, it's all a matter of creativity, dedication and much patience."

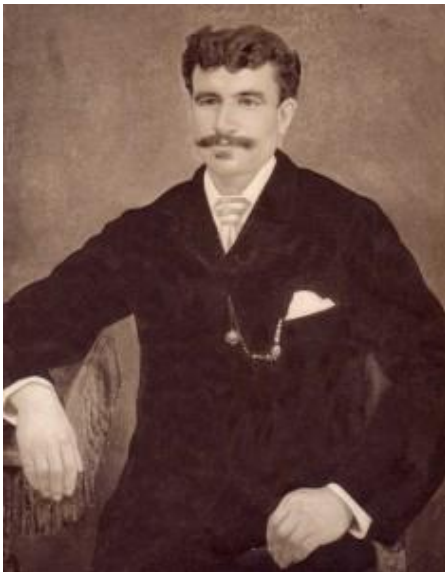
I asked her whether she was worried that these very clients would one day become her very competitors.

"Probably some of them might but I have no problem with that. Instead I feel great satisfaction when I understand that I succeeded to initiate the love for this craft in these islands. For after all what is the value of such creativity if you can't share it with others?"

(Note: An edited version of this article was published in FIRST Issue December 2011)

CULTURE

OUT OF ITS SHELL



No one can really say what inspired Indri Dimech known as Il-Mikk in 1898 to start decorating the façade of his property in Ghaxaq with hundreds of snails and seashells which he collected from local and foreign beaches. However, some suggest that he might have seen such decorations when he was living abroad.

Known to be able to do whatever came up to his mind, within two years, Indri turned the two upper sides of the walls of his property in a huge canvas as he craftily designed them with religious symbols made out of snails and seashells. He embellished this artwork further by adding also three niches, a statue, and some writing which included his surname. Soon this property became renowned as Id-Dar tal-Bebbox (the house of snails).

More than a century later, much of this unique artistic work has somehow succeeded to withstand the test of time. Yet considerable sections of it have been lost and what remains is in dire need of preservation and restoration. For many years, the Local Council of Ghaxaq has been trying to obtain the necessary funds to save this singular property in St Mary Street but no one seems to be interested to protect this national cultural heritage.

"A recent application for funds in a scheme that was dedicated to the restoration of historical sites was disqualified since the work to restore Id-Dar Tal-Bebbox was going to take more than six months. Moreover, we were informed that there were no workers available in the Restoration Section who could do the type of work required for this property," said Darren Abela, Mayor of the Ghaxaq Local Council.

"We were all very disappointed to receive this news. It is deplorable to notice that it is always the same Local Councils who receive the funds to do restoration projects in their localities whilst our locality always ends up with nothing! Although we are in favour of such works, we find it difficult to understand why similar sites obtain the funds to be restored, whereas this property in Ghaxaq which is unique, continues to be ignored."

Abela insisted that about fifty years ago, this house was considered to be his village's jewel while today, it is regarded as the village's sorrow as it is painful to look at its pitiful state.

"Everyone who sees this house or who hears about it recommends us to restore its old decorations before we lose them once and for all. And yet, nobody has ever come forward with any solid action to commence these works."

No estimate of the value of the work required has ever been done because such a project requires particular expertise which till now was not located.



"At the moment, there are three different families living in this property and they have all agreed that this work should be done. I hope it won't be too late if we'll ever have the funds to start this project. It is already doubtful whether the snails and seashells which have fallen out could ever be replaced."

It would definitely be a pity to allow further deterioration of this place. Indeed, Indri Dimech's work was deemed significant enough to be included in the National Inventory of the Cultural Property of the Maltese Islands where there is detailed information about the niches and the statues which form part of Id-Dar tal-Bebbox.

High up on the main facade which bears the date 1901, a small stone statue of the Virgin Mary, the patron saint of Ghaxaq, stands triumphantly on a large sphere of clouds. Below it, on the left hand side, one can observe

a niche with a stone statue of St Joseph holding baby Jesus; a saint which is also very cherished in this village and for whom a secondary feast is dedicated. On the right, another niche was constructed to contain the stone

statue of St Andrew; the saint which has the same name as Indri. Both these niches have been lavishly decorated with beautiful patterns made with snails and seashells and coloured with paint in between. Only the first three letters of the surname Dimech remain intact on the aperture of the left balcony, the middle balcony displays the letters C. Asciak, whilst the word Malta is still in one piece on the right balcony.

Another niche with three stone statues showing a crucified figure of Christ accompanied by the Virgin Mary and St John the Evangelist claims the attention at the center of the other facade. Unfortunately, many of the shells which composed the intricate designs around this niche are now lost.

Several other designs which include religious symbols, particularly those connected to the Passion of the Christ, can also be recognized. A number of other forms show angels, crosses, palm trees, lions, unicorns, fountains, churches, Ghaxaq's coat of arms, and many others.

Relatives of Indri Dimech who often worked as a sailor in the Middle East narrated how he used to return from his voyages carrying numerous shells. Once back home in Ghaxaq, he would cover the facade of his property with bedsheets and continue working on his masterpiece. It is not known whether these sheets served as a protection against the sun or whether he intended to surprise his neighbours once he was finished with his work.

At the time, Indri's property functioned as a bar wherein men gathered to have a drink and to socialize after a hard day's work. In there, those who were devoted and passionate about the feast of St Mary met to discuss the events which had to be organized. Meanwhile, this place served also as the hub which sparked the idea of the establishment of the first social club in Ghaxaq that was to be dedicated to the titular of the Assumption of Mary.

Even Indri gave a helping hand to decorate the square that was located in front of his property during the feast. Numerous oil lamps and coloured paper turned the surrounding environment in a surreal atmosphere, especially with his bizarre property in the background.

Today, this property stands in the core of the village, just a few metres away from Ghaxaq's parish church. Although Indri is gone, his aptitude to mesmerize still lingers on as passers by are captivated by the strange designs that he created. Hopefully, as soon as possible, the authorities would appreciate this gem for its uniqueness and would take the necessary actions to restore back its beauty and allure of bygone days.

(This article was published in the 'Homes' Supplement issued with The Sunday Times of Malta dated 3rd April 2016 – Fiona Vella)

Kav. Joe M Attard - Ghawdex

IL-MILIED - L-ISBAH ZMIEN TAS-SENA

Matul is-sena ahna nfakkru u niccelebraw hafna festi sbieh u gheziez imma jiena nemmen li zmien il-Milied huwa l-isbah zmien tas-sena. Nammetti li l-Ghid huwa l-ikbar festa fost il-festi li ghandha l-Knisja ghax dan ifakkar il-qawmien mill-mewt tal-Iben t'Alla maghmul bniedem u San Pawl jikkonferma dan meta jghid li kieku Gesu Kristu ma rxu tax, il-fidi taghna kienet tisfa fix-xejn!

Imma ma nafx ghaliex mal-wasla tal-Milied qalb il-bniedem tibda ggarrab ferh mhux tas-soltu, ferh li jahkem lil kulhadd, mill-kbir saż-żghir, mill-ghani sal-fqir, saħansitra lis-suldati fil-gwerra li darba minnhom hargu minn gewwa t-truncieri tagħhom u nghanqu flimkien ikantaw u jixorbu flimkien biex l-ghada regghu għal li kienu.

Anke Scrooge, fil-'Christmas Carol' ta' Charles Dickens, hass li kellu jifrah u ried ikun il-Milied li bidillu hajtu bhal-lejl min-nhar u ghamlu bniedem gdid. Fil-gzejjer taghna wkoll dan il-ferh thossu u tarah; eżempju mill-aqwa hija l-Kampanja ta' Karita' li ssir kull sena l-ghada tal-Milied u li nemmen fiha jiehu sehem kulhadd.

Dan hu l-Milied, festa ta' paci u solidarjeta' u jalla dawn iż-żewġ ingredjenti jibqgħu magħna s-sena kollha. Importanti li fil-familja nibnu l-presepu ghax dan igibilna mill-gdid quddiem ghajnejna l-grajja sabiha ta' Betlem li ghalkemm kienet wahda mill-iżghar bliet ta' Ġuda, isimha ma jithassar qatt ghax tat lid-dinja l-feddej tal-ġnus.

Cert li fil-gżira t'Għawdex il-kultura tal-presepu hija wahda qawwija u dan mertu tal-Għaqda Hbieb tal-Presepu li twaqqfet f'San Lawrenz f'Ottubru tas-sena 1985 u qatt ma ħarset lura. Minn dak inhar 'l hawn il-presepu kompli daħal f'kull dar u llum hafna huma dawk li anke jifthu biebhom beraħ biex in-nies tmur iżżurhom u titghaxxaq bis-sengħa u l-fantasija tal-presepisti tagħna.

Fis-sala ewlenija tal-Ministeru għal Għawdex hemm il-wirja annwali tal-Preseppi u fin-Nadur u fix-Xagħra barra l-għadd ta' preseppi li hemm għal wiri hemm wkoll Preseppju haj biex ma nsemmix Betlem f'Għajnsielem li hi esperjenza unika u indimentikabbli li hadd ma għandu jitlifha. Jiena nattendi ukoll għan-Novena fil-parroċċa tiegħi u tassew ingarrab ferħ li ma nistax nesprimih bil-pinna għax huwa ferħ qaddis li ma tagħtihx id-dinja u ninsab lest biex issa nieħu sehem fil-purċissjoni bil-Bambin li ta' kull sena jagħmlu l-membri tal-Museum lejliet il-Milied qabel il-quddiesa ta' nofs il-lejl li għaliha wkoll inkun minn tal-ewwel mal-familja tiegħi.

Din is-sena sa jerga' jsir wara li tispicċa l-quddiesa ta' nofs il-lejl fil-Bażilka ta' San Gorg, kunċert tal-Milied mill-Gozo Youth Band taħt id-direzzjoni ta' Mro Jos Grech; ejjew kompli ddevertu magħna wara l-funzjoni tal-knisja fil-pjazza ta' quddiem il-knisja! Bla dubju t-toroq imzejna u r-rigali u l-ħelu tajjeb hemm posthom ukoll fil-Milied. Imma l-ikbar rigal tibqa' dejjem it-tarbija divina! Nawguralkom Milied hieni u qaddis!

NOSTALGIA – Sorry, these bathing costumes are not for sale anymore

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lill-familji tagħkom
Milied Hieni u Qaddis
u Sena Ġdida mimlija
Saħħa, Risq u Hena*

Paul u Sakina Vella

*u mill-Kumitat u l-Membri kollha
tal-Grupp Letteratura Maltija tal-Victoria*



**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**

—
FROM COMINO MAGAZINE

DEAR FAMILY AND FRIENDS IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN ONE REMEMBERS THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST AND YES THE COMING OF A NEW YEAR. IT'S SO EASY NOWADAYS THAT ONE CAN KEEP IN TOUCH SIMPLY THROUGH THE INTERNET WHEREAS BEFORE WE USED TO SEND CARDS AND MAYBE ONCE A YEAR MESSAGE **OUR MESSAGE FROM OUR HOUSE TO YOUR HOUSE IS:**

**MAY THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS FILL YOUR HOME WITH PEACE
YOUR HEART WITH LOVE AND YOUR LIFE WITH ENDLESS JOY
WISHING YOU A HOLY AND HAPPY CHRISTMAS
HARRY AND MARY BUGEJA & FAMILY**

Another marvellous newsletter. I actually wait for this newsletter and have used some of the information amongst my international friends who decided to visit Malta. Some of the information has been quite mind blowing as even though I am Maltese, I was not aware of such information. I belong to an armchair travel class and so any new information is priceless .

Thank you so much for all the hard work you put in, to produce such an informative newsletter. Wishing you a Marvellous Christmas and a Harmonious New Year 2017. I have the Honour and the privilege to have been chosen as one of the new board members of FMLA in Australasia. Thank you for your support. Irene Cooper

Buskett Gardens The only extensive woodland in Malta



Situated some 2kms south of Rabat Malta and east of Dingli Cliffs, **Buskett Gardens** are the only large areas of woodland in Malta!

Locally known as *Il-Buskett*, meaning a small wood, Buskett Gardens were planted by the Knights of St. John and the original purpose of the gardens was for them to serve as a hunting ground.

In Buskett, you will see plenty of orange and cypress trees, cactus, leguminous carobs and many other trees and shrubs.

When you go there, you can either explore the area by using the pathways lined with stone walls or venture off into the woods. **Best time to visit is spring**, when the gardens are full of wild flowers and natural springs.

The area is very popular with Maltese people and many go there for picnics or simply to walk and savor the fresh air and lovely surroundings.

Buskett becomes the island's centre of attention on the festival of **L-Imnarja in June**.

This highly popular festival has thousands of Maltese people and visitors flocking to Buskett every year.

To find out more about L-Imnarja's origins and what goes on during this festival, visit our **Imnarja** page.

Verdala Palace

While you're in Buskett, you will also see the majestic **Verdala Palace** towering over the woodland.

Verdala Palace was built in 1586. It was used as a summer residence for Grand Master Hugues Loubeux de Verdalle. The palace was designed by the **famous Maltese architect Glormu Cassar**.

Cassar designed many other prominent buildings in Valletta which is the **capital of Malta**, including the beautiful St. John's Co-Cathedral. The palace has four towers, one in each corner but they're only there for aesthetic purposes because Verdala Palace was never intended to have defense towers. It was simply used as a hunting retreat for summer. Long after the Knights of Malta period ended, the British started using the palace as a summer residence for the Governor of Malta. **Nowadays, Verdala Palace is used as the summer residence of the President of Malta.** The palace has some impressive frescoes in its main hall. Unfortunately, the palace is not open to the public.

Getting there

For information about which bus routes best serve these beautiful gardens, visit www.arriva.com.mt and check out their journey planner and timetable sections.

If you're going by car, make your way to Rabat, then follow

