



THE MALTESE NEWSLETTER

The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

THE MOTTO - BUILDING BRIDGES NOT WALLS

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MALTA

Nurse of the
Mediterranean
1914-1918

0.59



Floriana Hospital

MaltaPost - 2014

MALTA

Nurse of the
Mediterranean
1914-1918

2.00



HMHS Rewa

MaltaPost - 2014

MALTA and the Gallipoli Connection

Anzac Day has been commemorated in Malta since 1916. Since 1979 the service has been held at the Pietà Military Cemetery as it contains the highest number of ANZAC war graves in Malta. The Cemetery is located in Triq Id-Duluri, Pietà.

Malta played a significant role in and during the Gallipoli Campaign with many Australians and New Zealand casualties being evacuated to Malta for medical treatment. From the spring of 1915, hospitals and convalescent camps were established on the islands of Malta and Gozo, to deal with the many thousands of sick and wounded from the Gallipoli and Salonika campaigns. Despite the courageous efforts of the doctors and medical staff, some of the casualties could not be saved and they were buried on Malta. Of those buried on Malta there were 202 Australian and 72 New Zealanders.

The Commonwealth war burials in Malta are unlike those found anywhere else. Many joint and collective burials were made as graves had to be cut into the rock underlying the island's shallow earth crust. These graves are usually marked by flat tablets that could take several inscriptions and, for the sake of uniformity; the same type of marker was used for single graves.



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Josephine Zammit Cordina

Remember me for the love I had for the Maltese in Australia”

Veteran broadcaster, Josephine Zammit Cordina retired in 2015 after spending more than 50 years in broadcasting half of them producing and presenting programs on the Maltese in Austria.

tvm.com.mt met Josephine before she recorded her last program ‘Boomerang’ on Radio Malta, which she started presenting together with Charles Coleiro in December 1984. Josephine Zammit Cordina started her career in broadcasting at the age of 29 with programs for schools, she was also a well-known stage actor, worked in various dramas on radio and television. But her name is closely tied with the popular Waltzing Matilda among the Maltese in Australia.

Her best moment arrived when she was awarded the honour ‘Medalja għall-Qadi tar-Republika’ and the recognition granted by the Australian Government when Josephine was made Honorary Member of the Australian Order. Expressing a wish before retiring, she said: “I would like to be remembered for my work and support to the Maltese in Australia, how much a loved and respected the Maltese in Australia”.

Lifetime Achievement Award

The edition of MTV Awards 2017 had 28 categories, two of which were chosen respectively by the public and by a judging panel. The Malta Television Awards also recognised two veterans of public broadcasting through the Charles Arrigo Lifetime Achievement Award, which was awarded to Mary Grech and Josephine Zammit Cordina. NB:- *Congratulations, Josephine, I would like to thank you on behalf of our readers for all the work you have done in the media for the Maltese in Australia. Frank Scicluna*



TVM and PBS stations top list of winners in MTV and IGM Award

[TVM News](#) Television Malta and PBS stations carried off a number of awards in two different ceremonies held yesterday evening, these being the Malta Television

Awards and another edition of the awards ceremony for journalism organised by the Institute of Maltese Journalists.

The comeback after seven years of the Malta TV Awards, organised by The House of Beauty in collaboration with the Broadcasting Authority, resulted in TVM programmes, together with presenters, producers and actors who are familiar faces on TVM screens, carrying off the absolute majority of awards, with the exception of a few categories.

News Centre journalists won three honours, including Keith Demicoli as the best newsreader and Mario Xuereb who won two awards for his documentary “Il-Maltin ta’ Izmir”, as well as with a special News Centre programme about the Brexit referendum.

Four of the six categories for the best programmes in different genres were won by TVM. These included awards for Xarabank, Malta u lil Hinn Minnha, Hadd Ghalik, Gadgets, Niskata and Qalb in-

Nies. Strada Stretta carried off the biggest number of awards for production and participating actors, winning no less than eight awards including one voted for by tele-viewers themselves.

This edition of MTV AWards had 28 categories, two of which were chosen respectively by the public and by a judging panel. The Malta Television Awards also recognised two veterans of public broadcasting through the Charles Arrigo Lifetime Achievement Award, which was awarded to Mary Grech and Josephine Zammit Cordina.

Meanwhile, in the 27th edition of journalism awards organised by the Institute of Maltese Journalists, journalists and journalism productions by PBS, both on Television Malta and on Radju Malta, carried off nine awards, including those in all categories related to broadcast journalism in news and current affairs programmes.

Journalist Keith Demicoli won four categories after the judges chose his journalistic works in the category for radio, reporting on Valletta 2018, journalistic reporting abroad and the best news script. Journalist Maria Muscat won an award for good use of the Maltese language in the services she produces for news bulletins. Alvin Scicluna from CVC Media, producers of Ghawdex Illum and Malta u Lil Hinn Minnha for Television Malta, won three categories – for the best television script features, broadcast journalism in televised filming, and best cultural journalism.

The Xarabank team carried off the award for investigative journalism – human interest stories, whilst President Emeritus George Abela presented the Gold Award for careers in journalism to the relatives of photographer Lino Arrigo Azzopardi and author Lino Bugeja, who both passed away last year.



Fil-present, gewwa Malta, hawn 8 studenti li gejjin mil-vilagg remot ta Bataan gewwa l-Filippini. Dawn l-istudenti huma parti mil-komunita li ghandu l-missjunarju tas-Socjeta taghna, Fr Joe Cremona. Fil-present hemm il-fuq min 80 tifel u tifla li barra li jigu assistiti fl-ikel u fl-edukazzjoni, qiegħdin jitghalmu wkoll il-musika klassika b'mod profesjonali hafna. Filfat giet iffurmata Orkestra bl-isem ta Jose Depiro Kabataan Orchestra, li din hija kollha magħmula mit-tfal tat-triq.

Is-sena l-oħra beda program interessanti, fejn studenti min dan il-progett jigu Malta għal kors intensiv ta xhar fuq il-musika. Meta jkun Malta huma jiltaqaw mat-teachers li jagħlmuhom fuq

Skype, jattendu għal lectures fl-Università dwar il-musika, jattendu għal programmi musikali l-ischool of music kif ukoll jattendu għal diverzi produzzjonijiet muzikali. L-ghan ta kollox hu, li meta jmorru lura, huma jagħlmuhom lil shabhom dak kollu li jakkwistaw min Malta.

Bi pjacir inhabru li l-istudenti ha jatu kuncert qabel ma jtilqu. Dan il-kuncert ha jsir il-gimgha 12 ta Mejju gewwa l-istitut ta San Gusepp, St Venera. Kollox jibda fis-7pm u dhul huwa b'donazzjoni li tmur għal progett innifsu. F'dan il-program musikali, ha tkunu tistaw tisimaw lit-tfal idoqqu siltiet klassici u magħhom ha jingħaqdu artisti oħrajn Maltin fi program sabih u interessanti. Grazzi kbira tmur lil Fr Louis Mallia ta l-ghajnuna, Mro Lindsey Mallia li hija l-kordinatri ta l-istudenti, Norman Cristina u l-kantanti tal-Vocal Booth.

Għal iktar informazzjoni - Father Norbert Bonavia MSSP norbertbanvia@gmail.com

FRIENDS OF AUSTRALIA CELEBRATE 40TH ANNIVERSARY



It was in April 1977 that Mgr. Philip Calleja founded the Friends of Australia Association (FOAA) in order to promote friendship and understanding between the citizens of Malta and those of Australia by means of cultural, educational and social activities. He always wanted to have a sustained link between the Maltese living in Australia and their parents and relations in Malta.

When a great number of Maltese migrants started coming back to Malta, they joined the Association led by Chev. Tony C. Cutajar OAM to keep contact with their country of adoption. How they enjoyed the films the Association used to show them about Australia at Dar I-Emigrant! You could hear them recalling excitedly and even with tears in their eyes the various towns and landmarks they could not forget.

From the very beginning when relations between the two countries were not so good, the FOAA wrote to both governments asking for the restoration of these relations. Prime Minister Fraser had written back asking for good will among our peoples. We again wrote to both governments and to the Press calling for the re-establishment of the post of High Commissioner for Malta. We made our voice heard again concerning double taxation, dual citizenship and the Australian government's decision to charge payment for visas authorising entry into Australia.

The FOAA held talks on Australian pensions and Social Security benefits and organised a survey and questionnaires for the recipients of the Australian benefits. Together with Mgr. Calleja we held talks with the Minister and Director of Social Security about the prospective new agreement dealing with social services. The outcome of these talks was very satisfactory.

Together with the Emigrants' Commission we held occasions to welcome prominent people from Australia like Prime Minister John Howard, Mgr. (later Cardinal) George Pell, Archbishop of Melbourne, Mgr. Grech, the new Bishop of Melbourne, Governor General Bill Hayden and other members of the government, not to mention the various Australian High Commissioners.

Indeed, these have been 40 years of a great number of activities including meetings with authorities, in-house discussions, surveys, educational visits and various social events especially on such occasions as Australia Day, Anzac Day and Christmas. The committee always took an active interest and participated in talks to improve the situation of returned migrants, like double taxation, dual citizenship and fees for visas.

Over the years, the FOAA not only served as a link but also as a great help when problems cropped up especially in connection with social security benefits, taxation, citizenship, visas and pensions. Visit Dar I-Emigrant on a Tuesday morning and you will meet members and non-members alike waiting to consult the dedicated Virgil Bugeja and his group.

Not so long ago, Chev. Cutajar and Mr. Bugeja as Secretary were in the forefront when returned migrants' children found difficulties to enter junior lyceums because they had to sit for a Maltese language examination.

They had talks with the authorities on Australian pensions and the reciprocal agreement dealing with Social Security benefits. They also managed to obtain facilities for direct banking of Australian pensions. In 1998 they wrote to the Maltese government asking for dual citizenship for children born of Maltese parents in Australia. Our services include information on Maltese and Australian pensions, emigration qualifications, citizenship of both countries, passports and ID cards for returned migrants, employment, in Malta in liaison with ETC, advice on taxation and on the purchase of property in Malta. This can be very time-consuming especially where complicated application forms are concerned.



Recipients of the Order of Australia - Mgr Philip Calleja, Mrs Josephine Zammit Cordina, Virgil Bugeja and Tony C. Cutajar together with the former High Commissioner for Australia Jane Lambert.

A very frustrating problem for us is that of returned migrants on Maltese passports who had not obtained a return visa to Australia should they wish to go back. However, the FOAA enjoys an excellent rapport with the Australian High Commission in Malta as well as with various government departments, especially that of Social Security. The same can be said about our superb standing with Centrelink Australia.

Eight years ago, Chev. Cutajar was awarded an Honorary Medal of the Order of Australia by

the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia for services to Australia-Malta bilateral relations. Chev. Cutajar had previously been presented with the Fairfield Council Shield of Australia during his visits Down Under. The same OAM medal was also

awarded to Mr. Bugeja last year for his dedicated work in the Association. Thus the two of them join Mgr. Calleja who was recipient of the same honour years back. After 37 years at the helm, Chev. Cutajar resigned from President of the FOAA and he's been replaced by Mr. Virgil Bugeja who has been giving sterling work as the Secretary.

The Present Committee members of the FOAA. Not in the photo is the new member Mrs. Tania Walters.



The Friends of Australia Committee is made up of:
President: Virgil Bugeja
OAM

First President and co-Founder: Chev. Tony C. Cutajar
OAM

Vice-President: Myriam Pavia

General Secretary: Frank Micallef

Treasurer: Joe Pavia

Members: Alexandra Taliana, Benny Vella, Albert Camilleri, Paul Sammut and Tania Walters.

The Association

feels that thanks are due to Mgr. Calleja and Mgr. Alfred Vella for their continuous help and encouragement, as well as to the present and past Australian High Commissioners – the Patrons of the FOAA. It is our sincere wish that relations between Malta and Australia continue to improve in every way for the benefit of all concerned.

To celebrate the 40th anniversary, the Association will be joining the Emigrants' Commission in welcoming the new Australian High Commissioner, Her Excellency Julianne Hince, to *Dar l-Emigrant* on Friday 26th May at 5 p.m. This will be followed by a reception for the occasion.

Ad Multos Ann

How women ran Malta during World War II



*Air raid warden Mary Ellul would rescue people from under the rubble.
Photos: Simon Cusens*



Irene Condachi

One of the best kept secrets of World War II is that the island was being run on the work done by women, according to research on female unsung heroes. "Wartime history has been written by men and, 70 years on, it is about time to share the story of the emancipation of a whole generation of Maltese women – albeit for a brief period – as a result of the war," Simon Cusens told this newspaper. Irene Condachi, a doctor who single-handedly inoculated and examined at least 20,000 schoolchildren under war conditions.

Mr Cusens will be publishing a book based on research he recently carried while reading for his Master's degree, the first academic study into the role of women in WWII Malta. He was speaking to the *Times of Malta* ahead of a talk in aid of charity organised by the Grand Commandery of the Castello on Friday.

Mr Cusens's research shows that military intelligence staff pools, offices, laundries, schools, hospitals, entertainment venues and Malta's most influential newspaper – the *Times of Malta* – were mostly directed by women.

Run by Mabel Strickland, the newspaper had a crucial role in uplifting the moral of people during the war, he said. One of Mr Cusens's favourite unsung heroes is Irene Condachi, who single-handedly inoculated and examined at least 20,000 schoolchildren under war conditions and without any means of transportation. A woman of Maltese and Greek Orthodox descent who lived

in Luzio Street, Sliema, Dr Condachi was one of the only two WWII female doctors that Mr Cusens knows of.

In 1941 and 1942, she hitched rides and walked from one government school to another to examine between 10,000 and 15,000 children a year. Dr Condachi used to prescribe a petroleum-based ointment for those with scabies and she is credited with eradicating the condition from government schools. As the war progressed, she was joined by an ophthalmic doctor and a dentist and the team started the school medical service.

Mr Cusens believes that, because of her Orthodox background, Dr Condachi was not under the Church's hold as much as fellow women were. In fact, women working outside of their home were frowned upon and considered taboo 70 years ago. But the looming war, which saw all men aged 16 and up conscripted for military service, led to a sudden shortage of public service and labour intensive workers.

From teachers to farmers, many men disappeared from the workforce and this led to a compromise between the Church and the government. The colonial government managed to persuade the Church to call on parishioners to join the passive defence services. At least 10,000 women came forward and enrolled as first aiders, air attack and anti-gas instructors, aid-detachment nurses and secretaries, among others.

One of these women was Mary Ellul, popularly known as 'Mary the Man', from Sliema. She was a woman with phenomenal strength, reputed for dealing with rowdy sailors by chucking them into the Sliema sea when she worked as a bouncer after the war.

During the war, the white-haired, tall and tanned air raid warden would rescue people from under the rubble and she is mostly remembered by those who survived the war for her rescue efforts following the attack on St Rita Street, in Sliema

Special hand postmark for Saint Peter and Saint Paul church, Nadur



A special hand postmark is being issued by MaltaPost on Friday, to mark the occasion of the 50 years as a Basilica granted by Pope Paul VI on the 26th of June 1967 and 150 years since the consecration of Saint Peter and Saint Paul parish church in Nadur, Gozo, on the 12th of May 1867.

A special hand postmark will be used at the Nadur Post Office, this coming Friday, the 12th of May.

A programme of activities in celebration of these anniversaries are taking place in Nadur this week and will continue in June.

Orders may be placed online at www.maltaphilately.com or by mail from the Philatelic Bureau, MaltaPost p.l.c. 305, Triq Hal Qormi, Marsa, MTP 1001 – Telephone 2596 1740 – e-mail: info@maltaphilately.com



Photos above show Nadur Parish Church facade as it was when it was consecrated 150 years ago and the Nadur Basilica Insignia: the Papal Bell and the Papal Ombrellino.

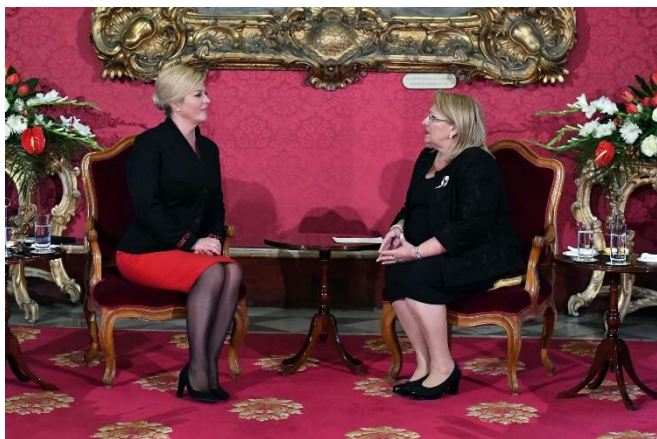


Photo - DOI - Jeremy Wonnacott



Photo - DOI - Kevin Abela

STATEVISIT TO MALTA BY THE PRESIDENT OF CROATIA H.E. KOLINDA GRABAR-KITAROVIĆ

(photo left) The Croatian President call on the President at The Palace, Valletta (photo right) Official welcoming ceremony at St George's Square, Valletta The Croatian president Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic paid a State visit to Malta from the 8th to the 10th of May 2017. The three-day official visit of the Croatian president is the first such visit to this European country, which is presiding over the EU for the first six months of this year.

During her visit, Grabar-Kitarovic had a meeting with her Maltese counterpart Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca in the Maltese capital of La Valletta. In addition, Grabar-Kitarovic held several working meetings; with the Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta Angelo Farrugia, as well as with other people from the political and cultural life of Malta. Her itinerary expected included a visit to migrant families at Hal Far. The visit of the Croatian president to Malta coincides with the celebration of Europe Day on the 9th of May.

Postage stamp issue – Castles in the EUROPA 2017 series



On Tuesday, MaltaPost is releasing a philatelic stamp set bearing the theme 'Castles,' as will other European postal administrations. The Malta stamps feature two towers, which served as defence, particularly during the period of the Knights of St John and are based on works by artist Cedric Galea Pirota. The St Agatha Tower features on the €0.59 stamp, also known as the Red Tower, built in 1647 during the reign of Grand Master Lascaris de Castellar. The Tower commands views over Mellieha Bay, Comino as well as Gozo.

The €2.19 stamp depicts the Gourgion Tower in Xewkija, Gozo, which was built in 1690 by Giovanni Gourgion the personal secretary of Grand Masters Gregorio Carafa and Adrien de Wignacourt. Unfortunately, it was demolished in 1943 to make way for an airfield that was considered necessary for the Allied invasion of Sicily. These stamps will be issued in two sheetlets each bearing 11 stamps. Each stamp measures 44mm x 31mm, has a 13.9 x 14.0 (comb.) perforation bearing the Maltese Crosses watermark. The sheetlets measure 158mm x 150mm. The stamps were produced by Printex Ltd in the offset process and the issue consists of 39,600 of the €0.59 stamp and 35,200 of the €2.19 stamp. This issue will be available from all Post Offices in Malta and Gozo. Orders may be placed online at www.maltaphilately.com or by mail from the Philatelic Bureau, MaltaPost p.l.c. 305, Qormi Road, Marsa, MTP 1001; Telephone: 2596 1740, e-mail: info@maltaphilately.com



LOCATION Malta Band Club 5745 Coopers Avenue Mississauga, ONTARIO,
CANADA L4Z 1R9 Tel:(905) 890-8507

The Malta Band Club

The evolution of The Malta Band Club began with the formation of the Malta Band in the late 1960's.

In 1971 The Malta Band Club was incorporated as an Ontario Not for Profit Organization whose sole purpose would be to maintain The Arts and Cultural Traditions of Malta in Canada. The Malta Band became the only Maltese marching band outside the Maltese Islands. Over all these years our club has and still does offer musical lessons and other cultural activities to our members' families. The result of this can be seen by looking at our Band that has a range of band members ages ranging from 12 to 85 years.

Various Presidents Of Malta, Maltese Prime Ministers and other dignitaries were welcomed at our club over the years, some at our old location in the Junction Area and after 1995 at our present location 5745 coopers Ave in Mississauga.

Today our Club is host to the Malta Pavilion which takes part in Carassauga, the annual Festival of Cultures in Mississauga. People of Maltese and foreign cultures pass through our doors to enjoy Maltese Cuisine, Maltese folklore and take a journey through time to enjoy the history of the Jewel of the Mediterranean.

This 11,000 sq ft building has facilities for seating 400 people for functions such as Dinner Dances, Malta Day, Concerts performed by our own Malta Band, Thursday lunches, banquets and other smaller functions all catered by our volunteers right on location.

We encourage all Maltese to come and bring their families, spend some time here.

This is your club, the heart of the Maltese Family.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Prisdent – Anthony Vella, Vice President – Leli Grech, Secretary – Virginia Church, Treasurer – MaryRose Aquinina, Memebrship Sec. – Carmen Grech, Band Director – Martin Azzopardi, Youth Activities Dir. – Fred Portelli, Member – Joe Camilleri

Upcoming events: Anniversary Dinner Dance Sat 27 May 2017
Garnita Spaghetti Nite Sat 10 Jun 2017

Voices distributes €190,000 to charity

Thursday, 11 May 2017 THE MALTA INDEPENDENT



The VOICES CELEBRATION concerts, held last October, raised €190,000 which will go towards 26 voluntary organisations to help finance a series of projects aimed at assisting the vulnerable

The VOICES CELEBRATION concerts which marked the finale of VOICES, looked back at its 25 years of existence, revisiting some of the most memorable moments and musical numbers.

On 3rd May, the VOICES Foundation distributed the funds raised to the selected beneficiaries following the recommendations of the VOICES Beneficiary Advisory Board, which analysed all project applications received. The selected projects included Walking the Yellow Brick Road, a project by the Paolo Freire Institute, which works therapeutically with children to support their emotional and relational well-being, The Malta Hospice Movement with a project set to optimise IT to enhance communication and improve services to families and carers, and a project by Centru Tbxix that focusses on the physical well-being of children attending their summer schools in the cottoned area. In all, 26 projects benefited from the VOICES CELEBRATION funds. Other projects included those managed by the St. Jeanne Antide Foundation, SOS Malta, Zghazagh Azzjoni Kattolika and Sisters of Charity, among other voluntary organisations. While addressing the guests at the fund-giving ceremony, VOICES Foundation Chairman Antonello Gauci said "The past 25 years of VOICES would have not been possible, if it weren't for the hard work of hundreds of people who volunteered to this cause, and it is because of these people that we are here today."

The VOICES Foundation has also just launched a €25,000 Start-up Initiative Fund and is inviting organisations or individuals to apply for one-time funding of a project that would reflect the Foundation's aims – that of bringing people together in a positive and creative environment and to be a voice for the underprivileged. The fund will be awarded to that organisation or individual whose project successfully meets the Foundation's criteria. To download the Fund application form, as well as the Regulations and more information, visit the VOICES website, www.voices.org.mt

The VOICES CELEBRATION concerts were organised in collaboration with The Vodafone Malta Foundation and supported by Kinnie, APS Bank, Island Caterers Ltd., Martini, ICE Malta, Marks & Spencers, StudioSeven, San Michel, Bathroom Design, MAV, Nexos, The Sound System Co.Ltd. and The Classic Group.



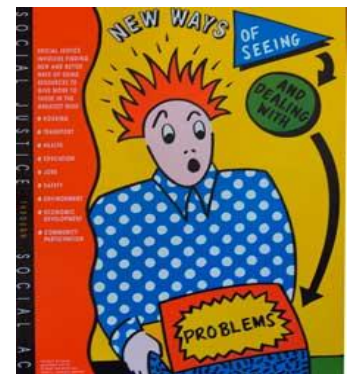
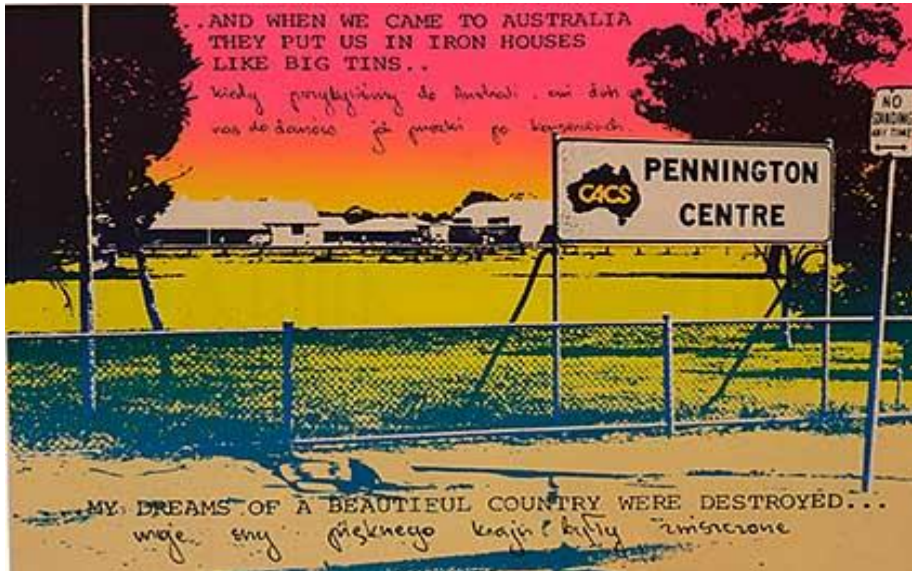
Posters Empowering Community: A Historical Snapshot of SA Poster Artmaking

Kerry Packer Civic Gallery Exhibition

Exhibition dates: Monday 15 May - Wednesday 31 May

Gallery open Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm (Thursdays until 7pm)

Hawke Building level 3, UniSA City West campus, 55 North Terrace, Adelaide



This timely exhibition of historical poster art will represent many social issues

relevant from the early 1970s through to the 1990s in South Australia for the 2017 History Festival.

The exhibition will feature significant posters with social and political commentary produced in this era and represent a historical snapshot of Community Media Association (Co-Media) and Community Arts Network (CAN) and other organisations behind this important movement of politically motivated poster making. In an era before digital social media, the poster was used as a political tool to actively communicate information and debate to a mass audience.

The screen printing genre was a legitimate method of producing art highlighting the community's social conscience and the posters are now a historical record of those times and highly sought after collectable items. The collection of nearly 200 posters produced or printed by Co-Media, CAN and other organisations since the early 1970s, were bequeathed to The Graham F Smith Peace Foundation on the closure of CAN in 2006. As a not-for-profit, non-funded organisation, The Peace Foundation has been supporting artists for over 25 years to represent social, Indigenous or environmental issues

PRESENTING ANOTHER MAGNIFICENT EDITION OF

The Maltese eNewsletter



The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

READ, ENJOY, SHARE AND KEEP ON SUPPORTING
OUR INFORMATIVE MAGAZINE

TWELVE BEACHES GET BLUE FLAG ECO LABEL



Twelve beaches have been awarded the Blue Flag Eco label by Blue Flag International for achieving the eco-label trusted by millions around the globe.

The Blue Flag programme is operated under the auspices of the Foundation for Environmental Education and is headquartered in Copenhagen, Denmark.

For the beaches to qualify for this award, a series of stringent environmental, educational, safety -related and access-related criteria must be met and maintained.

In Malta, Blue Flag is represented by Nature Trust –FEE Malta. NT-FEE Malta runs all five of the FEE International Programmes being Eco School, Blue Flag, Green Key (an international eco label for Hotels and Restaurants), Young Reporters for the Environment, and Learning About Forests.

The selected beaches are: Fond Ghadir Sliema, managed by the Malta Tourism Authority, St George's Bay St Julian's, managed by Malta Tourism Authority; the Westin Dragonara Beach Club St Julian's, managed by Westin Dragonara Resort; the Qawra Point Beach, managed by the Malta Tourism Authority; the Bugibba Perched Beach, managed by the Malta Tourism Authority;

Għadira Beach managed by the Malta Tourism Authority; Golden Sands Beach, managed by the Malta Tourism Authority; Għajn Tuffieha Bay, managed by the Gaia Foundation; Islands Edge Beach managed by the Paradise Bay Hotel;

Ramla Bay, Gozo, managed by the Gaia Foundation; Hondoq ir-Rummien Bay, managed by the Malta Tourism Authority and Marsalforn Bay, Marsalforn.

Making cheaper, better solar panels, in Malta



A solar research lab in Marsaxlokk is on the cutting edge of PV technology

Research scientist Prof. Luciano Mule Stagno outside the former military barracks, now converted into a solar research laboratory.

A vibrant team of researchers and engineers is nudging Malta toward the frontline in solar energy innovation.

The University of Malta's Institute for Sustainable Energy based in Marsaxlokk now boasts a world-class solar research lab. Led by Prof. Luciano Mule' Stagno, the laboratory is tucked demurely to one side of the bay in renovated ex-military barracks, converted to house over 40 pieces of cutting edge equipment.

Research has started at the lab to find ways of improving efficiency in solar energy systems and making them cheaper. The benefits are not just for Malta but for the entire world as nations wean themselves off fossil fuels.

Efficiency in solar panels has been inching higher worldwide as competing manufacturers try to outdo each other. Even small improvements can give one supplier an edge over rival firms with any gain multiplied as production of solar panels runs into the millions.

As a PhD student at Missouri's University of Science and Technology in 1991, Prof. Mule Stagno studied defects in silicon, used for the production of photovoltaics. Working with the pioneering firm MEMC, (now SunEdison), he continued research on silicon wafers for integrated circuits/solar cells and is the author of nine patents held by the company.

Returning to Malta with a solid background as a solar research scientist after working in the United States, Asia and Europe, Prof. Mule Stagno first took the initiative to apply for European Regional Development funding for the laboratory in 2010.

The application to research ways of improving solar panels was made in response to a call for projects related to climate change. But the Maltese government had already applied under the same scheme for several projects of national priority. The bid for funds to equip a solar research lab had to wait until a second try under the next call.

The grant for €4.2 million finally came through but getting the solar research lab up and running within barely 18 months was a tight deadline to meet.

By 2015 all the equipment had been procured for the study of defects in semiconductors and other solar materials. The fully equipped laboratory now has the ability to build its own solar thin films and basic solar cells for testing.

The main object of study is to detect miniscule defects in the silicon 'wafers', used for production of solar panels. Impurities such as undesirable atoms of another material (carbon or oxygen) can lower the performance of integrated circuits.

Silicon is grown industrially as a crystal. Defects so small that they are at the atomic level can lower efficiency of silicon cells. Problems may appear early in the growing stage of the silicon crystal. Worst affected are high end solar cells. In semiconductor devices, the smaller the chip, the more a defect in materials is likely to be problematic.

A long term goal for the ISE laboratory is to eliminate these problems for industry while keeping costs down.

BAŻAR

B'RISQ

İÇ-CENTRU PASTORALI
SGĦAJTAR, NAXXAR

12, 13, 14 u 19, 20, 21
TA' MEJJU

Il-Ġimgħa mill-4.30 sas-7.30
Is-Sibt mid-9 sa 12 u mill-4.30 sat-8
Il-Hadd mid-9 sa 12

İKUN HEMM HELU, PJANTI, KOTBA,
AFFARIJİET GHAD-DAR,
RİGALI, ĠUGARELLI
U HAFNA AFFARIJİET OHRA



Qed jingabru affarijiet godda
jew użati biex
jinbieghu waqt il-bazar
Napprezzaw hafna l-ghajnuna

Grazzi mill-Qalb!



**WE THANK ALL THE READERS OF THE
JOURNAL ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO SEND
CONTRIBUTIONS AND EMAILS
TO SAY THANK YOU**

iSurvey: Majority want permanent link between Malta and Gozo after the election

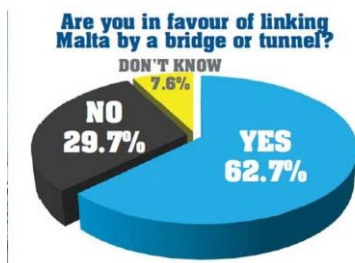


Helena Grech

A majority are in favour of a permanent link between Malta and Gozo either by tunnel or bridge, the seventh edition of *The Malta Independent's* iSurvey shows.

Respondents were asked: Are you in favour of linking Malta by a bridge or by tunnel? Overall, 62.7% of respondents replied in the affirmative, 29.7% disagreed, while 7.6% could not decide either

way. The scientific survey was commissioned by *The Malta Independent* to Business Leaders and a total of 600 respondents took part. Both Nationalist Party (PN) and Labour Party (PL) governments have dangled the idea of a permanent link between Malta and Gozo before the people, however for all the discussions and consultation exercises that took place, not much progress has been made.



The Nationalist Government had rushed a proposal to build a tunnel before the 2013 election. At the beginning of this legislature, both ideas of a bridge or tunnel were being considered by the labour administration. Two year's into the PL government however, at a 2015 budget speech delivered by Finance Minister Edward Scicluna, it was announced that studies show the lack of viability of building a bridge, with discourse shifting to the possibility of a tunnel.

Back in March 2017, Prime Minister Joseph Muscat addressed a public consultation in Gozo, against a backdrop of the newly refurbished Ċittadella, where he said that "This government is committed to deliver on the tunnel promise" but the project "will take time as lots of studies need to be carried out first".

So far, Dr Muscat's government has commissioned seismic and geological studies. Criticism has been levelled over the lengthy period of time that has passed between the bridge being declared as non-viable and the number of studies launched in relation to the tunnel. While the aforementioned studies have already been commissioned, traffic impact assessment, social and economic assessments have not yet been carried out. The feasibility of massive disruption to the surrounding environment would also need to be extensively assessed.

The PN has been tight-lipped about its electoral proposals, just four weeks ahead of the upcoming snap election. It has so far however revealed its plans for Gozo, and apart from proposing to amend Malta's Constitution and turn Gozo into a dedicated region, it has also pledged to launch studies within Dr Simon Busuttil's first 100 days in office. If works are deemed viable for a tunnel, he pledged that works will start soon after. Should Gozo be declared as a region one would consider applying for EU funds to help build the tunnel.

Both parties have been speaking about a permanent link between the two islands for several years, and whosoever wins the election should drastically increase progress according to the seventh edition of the iSurvey. The April 2017 iSurvey - the seventh of its kind - was commissioned to Business Leaders Malta on behalf of *The Malta Independent*. Respondents were contacted between 25 April and 3 May, while a snap election was announced on 1 May. More info on the iSurvey will be disclosed throughout the week.

What's it REALLY like to EAT your way round Malta?

By Helen Coffey



MALTA'S turquoise sea and hot, Mediterranean climate make it a popular summer holiday spot – but this sunny island also boasts a burgeoning restaurant scene and is perfect for a short break.

Malta restaurants: The island has a thriving foodie scene. Close your eyes and think of Malta and what do you see? Maybe the perfect spot for a summer holiday, with the bright sun overhead gently burnishing your skin while unbelievably blue waves lap the shoreline.

Maybe a richly historical country, with buildings dating back to 1530 when the Knights of Malta came and set up shop on the island, constructing a whole city, Valletta, around them. Maybe the recently collapsed Azure Window on nearby Gozo, which played the backdrop to Khaleesi and Drogo's wedding scene in the Game of Thrones television series.

What you might not see is a thriving, diverse foodie culture, ranging all the way from modern fine dining to traditional street food – but it's one of Malta's best kept secrets.

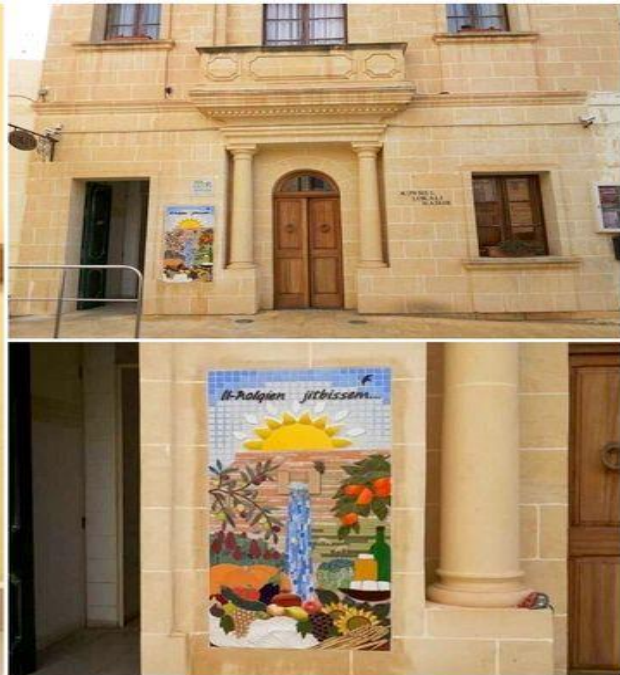
Five-star dining

Malta and Gozo both boast a plethora of restaurants to choose from, serving a range of traditional dishes such as rabbit stew, and all manner of seafood. There's often an Italian flavour running through the menu – unsurprising considering the island's proximity to Italy – but Maltese cuisine has its own unique style.

Bahia (bahia.com.mt) is a fresh, modern restaurant nestled in the winding streets of Lija, which opened in October. Sleekly furnished with trendy whitewashed walls adorned with abstract art pieces, it offers a seasonal menu that changes five times a year. A delicate yet flavourful starter of prawn carpaccio with wasabi and ginger foam will set you back €10.50 (£9.10) and a main course of meagre with seasonal vegetables costs €22.50 (£19.50)

A hop and a skip over to Gozo on the ferry (€4.65 return), and Ta' Philip (taphilip.com) is best in show. This cleanly designed, simply furnished establishment is overseen by Philip himself, a whirling ball of pure energy and charisma who prizes authentic local produce and simple, traditional dishes above all else. Despite having only been open a year, his new venture is fully booked every weekend – reservations are recommended. The menu changes weekly apart from Philip's staple dishes – suckling pig and braised rabbit.

The rural village of Nadur depicted on newly installed mosaic panel



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A Mosaic art panel completed by Mary Portelli of Gozo Mosaic, has been installed on the front of the Nadur Local Council offices.

The panel depicts the abundance of agricultural produce of Nadur and is titled Il-holqien jitbissem – which is from the poem 'In-Nadur' by Patri Matthew Sultana.

It represents many of the features seen around the village of Nadur, valleys, the sun, fruit, vegetables, flowing water, flora, fauna and insects. Work on the mosaic was first started during the Nadur traditional agricultural fair in June last year.



Five Belgian Shepherds join the police dog section

Five Belgian Shepherds have been added to the dog section of the police force.

The dogs are named Kira, Janco, Sky and Tuzzi will join the explosive detection within the section, while Chase will work as a protection dog.

During their induction ceremony, Home Affairs Minister Carmelo Abela spoke of the work done by the dog section, and said that in total there are 32 police dogs with the unit.

He said that since 2016, the explosive detection dogs conducted 655 searches. The drug detection dogs conducted 58 searches and the protection dogs were used 368 times.

Minister Abela also praised the canine instructors, and spoke of discussions with the Board of the Disciplinary Corps Academy regarding possible new police canine instructor training.

Canadian John Paul Attard, a Toronto Transit Commission collector, told a man on subway tracks to bring him back from brink



'Life-changing' exchange helped save young man, but for nearly 15 people a year, the story ends differently

VERONICA HENRI, TORONTO SUN

John Paul Attard doesn't consider himself a hero. But maybe you should be the judge of that. On the morning of April 26, the 54-year-old customer service representative and TTC employee of 24 years saw a man standing on track level-northbound, at Dundas Station. He immediately asked a TTC employee to cut the power, which stops all trains three stations away from speeding towards the incident. Attard rushed to the man's side and sat on the ledge in front of him. That is when he noticed the hospital bracelet on his arm, which was cause for concern.

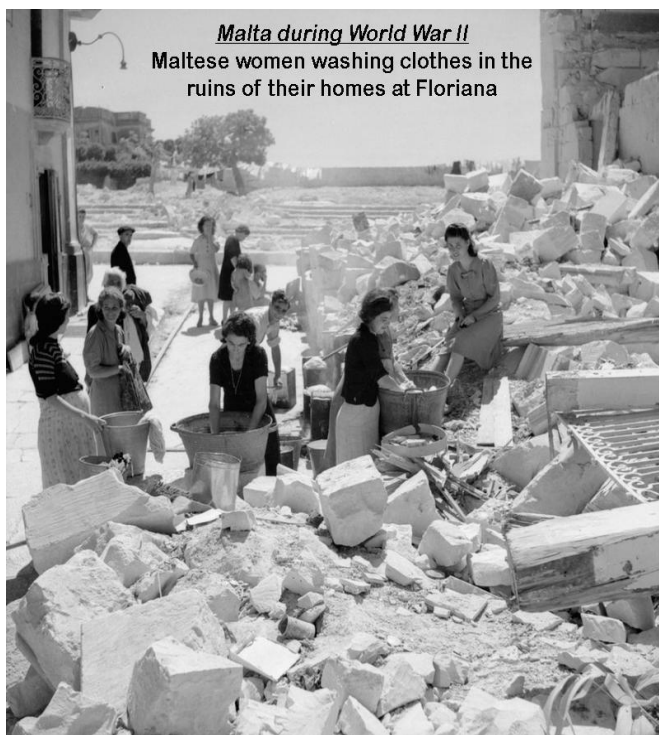
"I said to him, 'Are you having a bad day?' He said 'Yes,' and that he wanted to hurt himself," said Attard. "So I decided to embrace him and give him a hug."

The offer of a hug was part of his training as a health and wellness coach. The unidentified man in distress – described as a youth in his 20s with a medium build – was shaking, Attard describes.

After a round of deep breathing exercises, Attard then told him to repeat the words, "I am strong."

The entire rescue attempt took about 30 minutes and at one point, Attard had everyone on the north and southbound tracks chanting, "I am strong." in unison. Those waiting on the platforms applauded as the man was pulled off the tracks to safety by police and TTC workers.

"Stress is a very very serious issue,...mental illness goes undiagnosed and these people are human beings," he said. "We need to treat them like gold. It is all about making the world a better place. This isn't about ego."



Malta during World War II
Maltese women washing clothes in the ruins of their homes at Floriana



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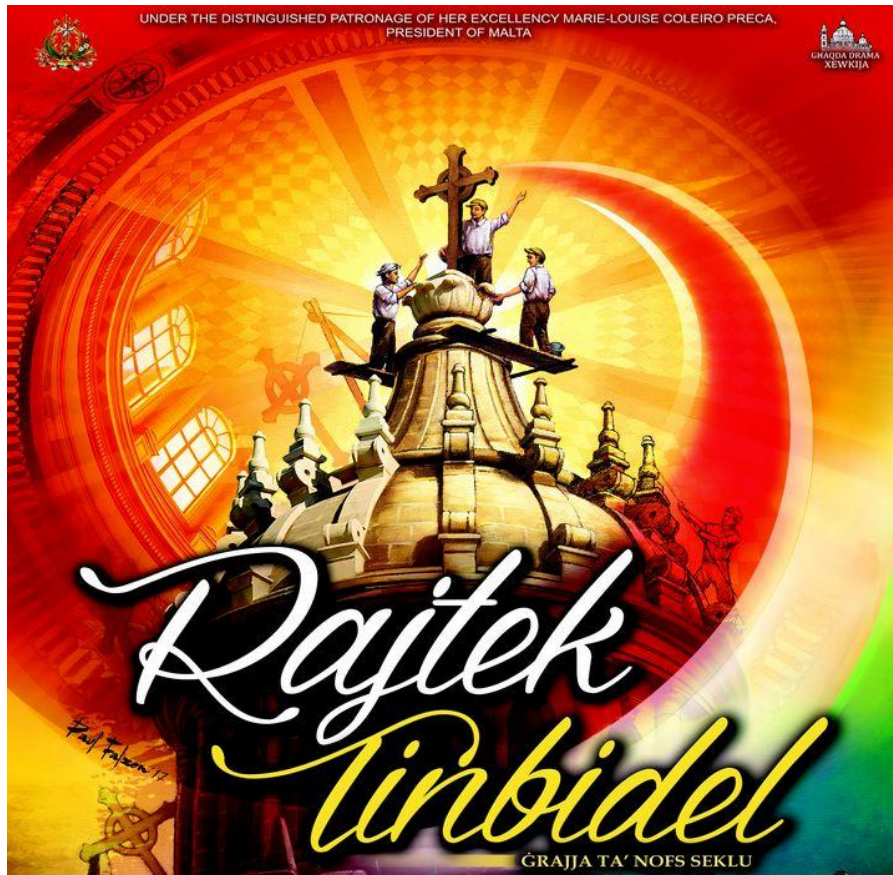
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Rajtek Tinbidel: History of Xewkija village Gozo over the last half century



Next weekend – Rajtek Tinbidel – an original musical by Ghaqda Drama Xewkija, will be presented live in the Xewkija Rotunda, Gozo, under patronage of President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca.

With lyrics by Mario Borg, composed by Jeffrey and Julie Thomas, and produced by John Attard, who is also the script writer, the musical will tell the wonderful history of the village over the last half a century, from the completion of the construction phase of the Rotunda, right up to the present day with the inauguration of the new pipe-organ.

Rajtek Tinbidel comprises nineteen musical numbers which cover the major events that took place during this period.

Lasting just over ninety minutes, the musical flows effortlessly between time periods, drama and music merging beautifully and naturally into each other, the organisers said.

They added that the original music is a mixture of pastiche intertwined with original compositions reflecting in a most natural way, the mood of every scene. With joyful moments as well as tragic ones; there are scenes from village life, some humour, and even a waltz.

The musical is in Maltese, however, there will be sub-titles in English to make the story understandable to all visitors.

“A masterpiece in Maltese stone,” is how the Xewkija Rotunda is described by many, and indeed it is, the organisers said. This building, along with never-seen-before photographs and films projected on a large screen, special effects, costumes and a twenty-piece orchestra, led by Maestro Anthony Borg, will be used to create a magical setting that will take the audience back in time to the very core of the events being covered.

“This production will exalt the main past protagonists of Xewkija, their sacrifices, and at times, their heroic acts, giving them deserved recognition. The story of a village, in the heart of Gozo, that with hard work, determination, love and faith, chiselled the island’s skyline forever.”

Rajtek Tinbidel is being performed on Friday, the 19th and Saturday, the 20th of May, starting at 8:30pm to 11:00pm. Entrance is free and seats can be reserved by calling on 79069710 or 79301954 or send an email on rajtektinbidel@yahoo.com



Michelle Stevens (above) thinks this Maltese man called Tony who immigrated to Australia in the 1970s may be her father. Photos provided by Michelle Stevens

Australian woman looking for Maltese man who could be her father

A woman from Australia is looking for a Maltese man who moved Down Under more than 45 years ago and could be her father.

Michelle Stevens, who lives in Tasmania, has fragments of information and two photos of a man whose name was Tony – or a version of that name such as Anthony, Antony or Antonio. She is looking for any information and hopes newspaper readers recognise the man, who would probably be in his 80s by now.



Ms Stevens told this newspaper that the man was in Melbourne, Victoria, in the

early 1970s, probably at the Rob Roy Hotel.

He was also in Hobart, Tasmania, in the early 1970s and may have resided or worked at the Aberfeldy Hotel.



“My mother, Amy Smith, was friends with him at that time, both in Melbourne and in Hobart. I have no surname for him, but I was told that there might be some reference to my middle name, Rena,” said Ms Stevens, whose search for Tony has been difficult.

As far as she knows, Tony was a Maltese migrant who was deported back to Malta at the beginning of the 1970s. All she knows is that he was seeing her mother in Melbourne at the time of her conception.

“He spent a short time in Hobart, Tasmania, met some of my family and was deported back to Malta for what I assume was breaking the rules of his visa.”

Her mother kept photos of him, and her older sister thinks he is Ms Stevens’ father. Their mother died when Ms Stevens was 13, and she never told her Tony’s surname.

Ms Stevens has noticed a strong resemblance between her own sons and Tony, and would like to find out if he is her father.

The 45-year-old remembers seeing photos of Tony when she was a child.

“His photos were in my mum’s personal photo album... There were no other photos of men I didn’t know in the album.

“Mum told me his name was Tony but never mentioned anything else, other than that my father would come and find me when I turn 21, which he never did.” When her mother passed away, she left her belongings to her daughter, and the photos were still in the album.

Ms Stevens can be contacted on rena120471@hotmail.com

ARCHIVES: Um el Faroud tragedy



Just over 20 years ago nine dockyard workers were killed in an explosion on board a small Libyan tanker in the Drydocks

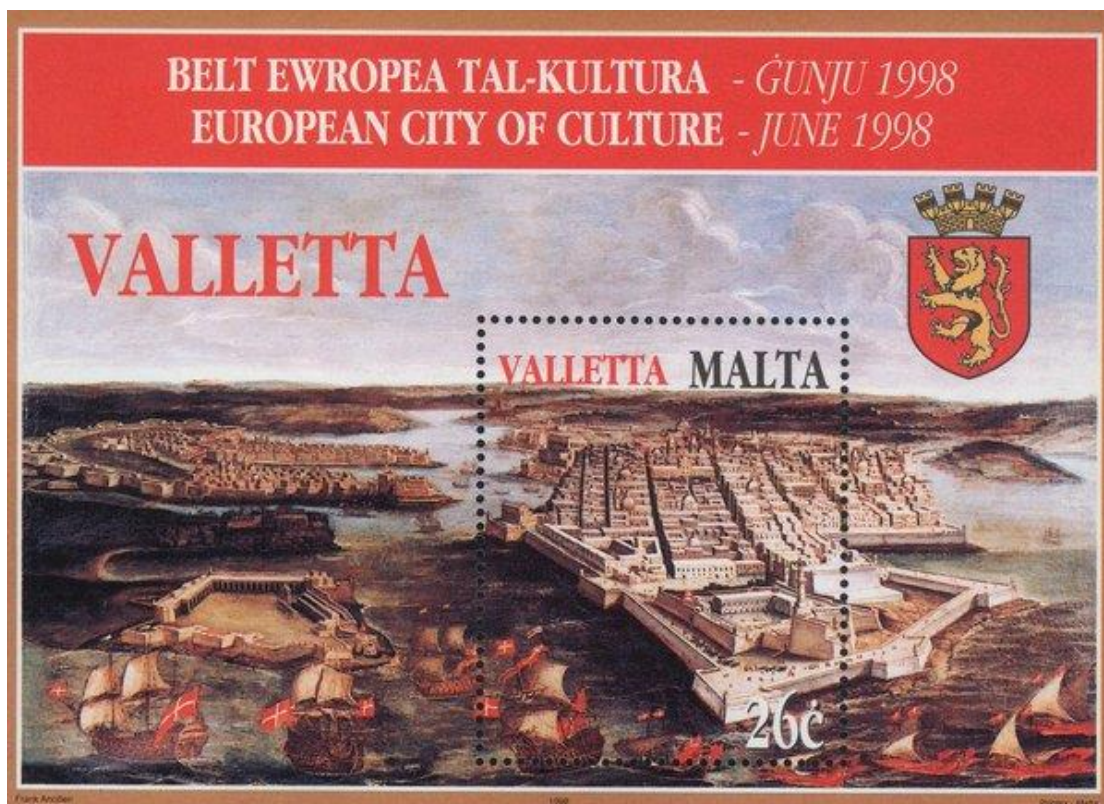
More than 20 years nine dockyard workers were killed in an explosion on board a small Libyan tanker in the Drydocks. The nine were working on the Libyan state-owned Um El Faroud tanker in Dock No. 3 when, at around 10:15pm, an explosion on board ripped the tanker's central section.

Seven of the workers- George Aquilina, 24, of Qormi, Charles Callus, 46, of Valletta, Mario Hales, 39, of Mqabba, Simon Mifsud, 26, of Birgu, Simon Pisani, 22, of Msida, Angelo Sciberras, 51, of Zabbar, and Anthony Vassallo, 29 of Dingli- died instantly.

The other two- Paul Seguna, 37, of Zebbug and George Xuereb, 58, of Qormi suffered grievous injuries, which they later succumbed to at St Luke's Hospital. While in the ambulance, Xuereb reportedly asked the medical staff what had happened to his co-workers.

The ship suffered severe structural damage too. An inquiry was launched and it resulted that the explosion occurred due to accumulated gas in one of the tanker's holds. In 1998, when the inquiry was concluded, the ship was towed out to sea by Wied iz-Zurrieq for usage as an artificial shipwreck and a diving attraction. A brass plaque was stuck to the ship as a memorial to the nine workers.

With the tanker anchored to its final destination, it took four hours for workers to fill it up with enough water to sink it, a scene that was witnessed by thousands of people. In 2006, a heavy storm ripped the ship into two sections, right across the middle.



Next Year 2018 Valletta, Malta's Capital City, will be the European City of Culture
Valletta was also the European city of Culture in 1998

MALTA DIARY: From Sydney, Australia to Mosta

“Maltese People in Malta” Lillian Chetcuti Riolo Albert Fenech



She walks...and she snaps...pictures of course, pictures of Malta and the people of Malta. That is her passion. Bubbling with enthusiasm, as busy as a bee, a tennis player, a mother of three children Kimberley, Kayley and Kenzey and Mario the Mechanic her husband to keep busy and on his toes as he runs his garage business, Lillian Chetcuti Riolo takes everything in her long stride with a strong dose of brash Australian but with Maltese blood flowing through her veins.

We met at her mother's former home town Mosta, where Lillian now lives. We took the first ten strides and met an aunt, stopped said hello and g'day, strode another ten strides and met a cousin and strode yet another ten strides and met yet another cousin, besides greeting her friends and acquaintances on the way. But that's Malta all over – you

just can't get away.

Lillian first caught my attention when I saw her taking part as a panel member in a television discussion programme debating whether Maltese traditions and Maltese characters are dying out. Her distinctly broad Oz accent and spoken Maltese with a mixed Mosta-Oz accent immediately struck me as being so cute but mainly because while some Maltese and returning Maltese migrants prefer to stick to English, Lil did her best to parley in Maltese.

Introducing her, the programme coordinator defined her as having her own facebook page titled 'Maltese people in Malta' and her enthusiasm for taking loads and loads of pictures and posting them on her site to remain a present and future hallmark of what Malta and Maltese people are all about.

She is not and never has been a professional photographer and has never aspired to be one. She loves taking pictures as a hobby and she loves picturing Malta and its people. This was one lady I had to meet and interview and so we met up and talked. *“What inspired me to start Maltese People in Malta? Well first of all I love taking photos of beautiful Malta and its people.”*

Lillian was born in Sydney, Australia where her parents still live in the Wetherill Park area and was schooled and grew up in Sydney, her parents – her mum Betty from Mosta and her dad Jim from San Martin – having emigrated there many years ago.

.Although an Ozzie, she had a natural curiosity to retain her family roots and often asked relatives for pictures from the past of her grandparents and other relatives, but few were actually forthcoming. As a youngster she holidayed in Malta a number of times, staying with her grandmother in Mosta. Then, Cupid intervened and she met Mario the Mechanic and they have now been married for the last 24 years. Initially they went to live in Sydney but then decided to return to Mosta where they have lived ever since.

“I do not go looking or plan to find these scenes for photos. When I am out and about with my family or friends or shopping in my daily routine I see all types of Maltese traditional foods or ways and take photos of all I see so I can share them with people around the world for those that for any reason cannot make it to visit Malta.”

As one of many hundreds of thousands of people of Maltese origin spread around the world with many of them having dual nationality, Lillian has a large following mainly in Australia, Canada, Britain, the United States, New Zealand and of course Malta itself. She has experienced the enigma of “what” and



2The day's work done time to sit and relax in late summer afternoon hoping to catch a cooling breeze or two.

"who" she is – Australian or Maltese? It is not always a question with a satisfactory answer as I myself have experienced having lived for so many years in England after being brought up and schooled there.

"So I try and keep Malta, their birth place, their home town or their holiday go-to, in their lives even while living so many miles away. I get great pleasure too when I get feedback from all those that appreciate my photos that I take for others."

Lillian started her facebook page four years ago and now the facebook site Malta and the Maltese People is packed with thousands of pictures reflecting day-to-day aspects of Maltese life and Maltese scenes. The basic message is not to admire the technique of the picture but rather to rekindle the memories contained in the featured subjects.

During a normal week she gets between 60,000 and 70,000 hits on the page but in one particular week it rocketed to 150,000 hits, her greatest ever week. Current data and identity protection legislation sometimes poses a problem but

Lillian has a charming way of tackling the situation.

"When it comes to taking a photo of someone, I first ask them if I can take a photo of them which at times can be a bit awkward but since I have been living in Malta and have been around so many different personalities I do not get offended if I am refused or ignored."

Whilst many do not object, some do and nowadays Lillian has become so well-known she is often aware of a situation that when walking into a people place there are a few who mutter and whisper "it's that woman that takes pictures and puts them on the internet". Lillian takes it all in her stride with her normal optimism and verve.

She loves playing tennis, loves watching her daughters play rugby and hummed and hawed indecisively when I asked her point blank that if Australia and Malta were to face each other in Test cricket, who would she support? The rest of the time is spent running the family home, taking pictures of course and socialising, being active in a group labelled 'Aussies in Malta'. You really have to be on your toes to keep up with Lillian!

NOTE: Needless to say, all these scenic pictures were taken by Lillian together with thousands of others. I asked her why she never captioned them – *"I leave that to people's imaginations."*



About Albert Fenech

Born in 1946, Albert Fenech's family took up UK residence in 1954 where he spent his boyhood and youth before temporarily returning to Malta between 1957 and 1959 and then coming back to Malta permanently in 1965. He spent eight years as a full-time journalist with "The Times of Malta" before taking up a career in HR Management but still retained his roots by actively pursuing freelance journalism and broadcasting for various media outlets covering social issues, current affairs, sports and travel.

<http://b-c-ing-u.com/2015/12/23/malta-diary-from-sydney-australia-to-mosta-maltese-people-in-malta/>

Cospicua Church bombed: the situation in Malta in 1944



The titular statue of the Immaculate Conception in Hamrun. As the crowd started heading towards Cospicua, the event took the form of a national pilgrimage.

Following pressures, especially by Soviet dictator Josef Stalin for the opening of a second front in western Europe, on June 6, 1944, the Allies launched Operation Overlord – the long-awaited liberation of France. Following two months of slow fighting in hedgerow country,

the British and Americans broke out from the Normandy bridgehead.

Soon, the Allies were racing across France. On August 15, in an effort to aid their operations in Normandy, the Allies launched Operation Dragoon – the invasion of southern France between Toulon and Cannes. Paris was liberated on August 25 by the Free French.

Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery persuaded Allied High Command to launch Operation Market Garden to take bridges in three main cities – Eindhoven, Nijmegen, and Arnhem. British XXX Corps was unable to link up with the troops near the bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem.

In the meantime, the Germans were preparing a massive counter-attack in the west, known as the Battle of the Bulge, which started on December 16. After initial successes in bad weather, the German advance was eventually stopped and pushed back to their starting points by January 15, 1945.

After Sicily fell into Allied hands and the south of Italy was captured too, the Germans started retreating northwards. By this time, Luftwaffe air raids on Malta decreased. However, as the Germans retreated northwards, Malta still remained in their minds. The last alert was sounded at 8.43pm on August 28, 1944, and the final 'All Clear' was given at 9pm.

When at the start of the war enemy bombers began attacking Malta, several bombs were dropped in the vicinity of Cospicua parish church due to its proximity to Dock No.1. Although the surrounding buildings were nearly demolished, the church did not suffer any damage. However, Cospicua's Collegiate Chapter decided to transfer the titular statue of the Immaculate Conception and the titular

painting and other works of art to Birkirkara for safe keeping..



During an extraordinary meeting held at Bonnici Institute in Hamrun, the Collegiate Chapter solemnly pledged that if the church survived the heavy raids, when war ended they would return the titular statue and painting in a pilgrimage from the collegiate of Birkirkara to Cospicua. The pledge was confirmed by Archbishop Dom Mauro Caruana in a decree on July 29, 1941.

Although the war was still raging in Europe, and as the Collegiate church had survived the attacks, the Collegiate Chapter decided to fulfil the pledge made in 1941. After receiving the necessary permit from Archbishop Mgr Michael Gonzi to fulfil the pledge by a

decree from the Curia on October 1, 1944, the Chapter decided on October 19, 1944, to form a deputation to plan the solemn pilgrimage with the titular statue and painting.

The pilgrimage was held on November 19, 1944, and almost the entire population of Cospicua gathered at about 7am in the parish square of Birkirkara. However, it was soon evident that the throngs of people present were, in fact, coming from all over Malta and the pilgrimage took the form of a national event rather than a purely parochial one.

The titular statue of the Immaculate Conception left collegiate church of Birkirkara on November 19, 1944.

All the balconies from Birkirkara to Cospicua were covered with silk cloths and with framed pictures of Our Lady surrounded by roses. The pilgrimage started with a solemn Mass at Birkirkara's St Helen's basilica, after which the church bells started ringing festive melodious notes.

All religious orders and institutions of Cospicua and religious organisations from other parishes together with thousands of people of all ages from Malta and Gozo joined in the pilgrimage. At least 16 band clubs from all over Malta participated in the pilgrimage and displayed their standards. The pilgrimage stopped occasionally along the way to Cospicua, most noteworthy at Hamrun.

Meanwhile, in Europe, the Allies wanted to help the Yugoslav partisans fighting the Axis occupiers by all means. Royal Navy submarines and other small surface warships navigated close to remote Yugoslav shores along the Adriatic to pick up injured and sick comrades and to transport them to Italy and Malta for necessary treatment.



These partisans consisted of both men and women dressed in army uniforms. The most senior partisan officer in Malta was Jerko Juricic. They were mainly housed in Tas-Salib Camp, Rabat. Tatiana Rajic, who was of Russian origin and was married to the personal doctor of the leader of the partisans, Marshal Tito, also came to Malta. She was a Yugoslav prima donna and a well-known singer at the Belgrade Opera House who also entertained the Yugoslav royal family before the war.

A leaflet distributed on the occasion of the return of the titular statue of Immaculate Conception to Cospicua.

The British Command in Malta took advantage of the partisans' stay on the island and eagerly helped train all able-bodied ones in armed combat and the handling of machine-guns, mortars and personnel carriers, especially in the Mellieħa Bay Camp.

Many of the Yugoslav partisans had come to Malta in a very poor state of health or badly wounded, and failed to return to their country. They were buried in places such as Mellieħa Bay cemetery and Ta' Braxia, among other cemeteries.

Relevant artefacts and information can be seen at Heritage Malta's National War Museum in Valletta.

Charles Debono is Curator of the National War Museum.