



MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

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THE GAMES WE USED TO PLAY

Do you remember when we played with dolls, splashing in puddles and climbing trees when we were a children?

The simple pleasures that defined childhood for generations in Malta appear to be dying out as an increasing number of kids stay indoors and surf the internet instead.

A series of nostalgic photographs commissioned for a Bank of Valletta calendar highlight some of the traditional Maltese games that are dying out.

Photographer Joe P Smith staged the photos in narrow alleys and open fields in Zejtun, Vittoriosa, Marsascala and Gozo before traffic became a worry.

GAMES CHILDREN USED TO PLAY BEFORE THE INTERNET, THE IPAD AND THE MOBILE PHONE

Two little girls sit on the ground in a Żejtun alleyway and, with a look of concentration on their faces, flick marbles into a small depression in the road.

An old lady watches them, reminiscing about her childhood days when she played the same game, called *żibeġ*, with her friends.

This is one of the scenes captured in the 2013 Bank of Valletta calendar that focuses on past childhoods. The calendar turns back time to those days when children played with simple toys, like marbles, dolls and wooden carts – a huge contrast to today's 'digital childhood'.

This is the third calendar in the BOV series that captures times past.

The bank, working in collaboration with JP Advertising, commissioned historian Guido Lanfranco to provide details of the toys.

"Some of the toys came from private collections or from people who had been treasuring them since their childhood. The toys were very simple – pieces of rope, wooden slats, stones and beads – but there is a lot more to toys than just the item itself. For example, hopscotch represents the nine months of pregnancy," Mr Lanfranco explained.

"In spite of the simplicity of the toys, we could not find everything we needed and had to improvise in some cases. For example, children used to blow bubbles through a length of macaroni but you don't get long pasta tubes, so we used rolled up copybooks," he added.

Photographer Joe P. Smith staged the photos in locations that could easily have come out of post-war Malta: unspoiled alleys in village cores and open air fields, all of which captured the times when children could play outdoors without the fear of traffic and without the distractions of computers.

"For me, the look on the face of the elderly people we used for the photos (see cover) say so much about the memories they had of those times," Mr Smith said.

For details about the calendar and to watch a video about its making visit BOV's YouTube channel, accessible via www.bov.com or the BOV Club Facebook page.

Past amusements

- **Żibeġ** – Various games could be played, where children would compete for beads dealt out by every player. The most common involved making a shallow depression in the ground into which beads were flicked. Sometimes the beads' colours had different values.
- **Boċċi** – Before the advent of glass marbles, children made do with hazelnuts. Pre-war Codd-Stopper ginger bottles had a plain glass marble as a stopper and children often broke bottles to get it out.
- **Passju** – The rough diagram with nine, numbered compartments scratched on the ground represented the nine months of pregnancy, with the ninth-month section drawn with a bulge. Girls cast a stone from the starting point, hop towards it, to trip it on to the next number. Completing the set results in 'having a baby'.
- **Žugraga** – To spin a wooden top, children wound a string several times around it and learned to throw it sharply while holding on to the end of the string. This made the top spin for a short while.
- **Bombos** – This popular game could be played in several styles but all involved a boy at the front, well bent forward, while the other vaults over him, using his hands, in leap frog fashion.
- **Xixu** – A small length of wood was placed on a rigid edge on the ground and with a stick or rod was hit sharply on one end to make it fly as high as possible into the air.
- **Ara gejjja L-Mewt Ghalik**: The child has to guess which of the kids touched him/her while they sing..... "Ara gejjja l-mewt ghalik, biex tixwik, biex taqlik. Ara gejjja, ara waslet, din id-daqqa min tahielek?"



Maltese couple dies in traffic accident while on holidays in Australia

A Maltese couple, who were on holiday in Australia, have been killed in a traffic accident in Sydney's south-west.

Lorry Pulis, 57, and his wife Doreen, 58, from Birzebbuga, were killed when the car they were in collided with a semi-trailer, TVM said.

The 74-year-old male driver of the car, who was Doreen Pulis' brother, was also killed in the accident, which happened at around 11:20am local time (1:20am Malta) on Friday.

Two other passengers who were also in the car were taken to hospital, and are in stable condition, The Sydney Morning

Herald reported.

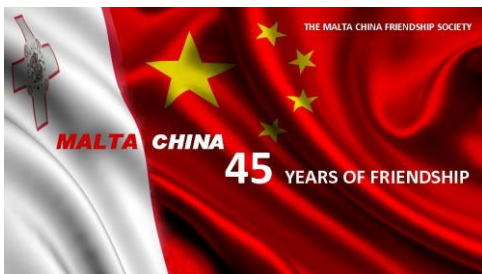
The newspaper said New South Wales Ambulance inspector Stephen Fulton described the scene at the accident as "distressing", and that 11 ambulance units, including two rescue helicopters, had been dispatched to the location of the accident, at Campbelltown and St Andrews roads.

The driver of the semi-trailer was not injured in the crash, the newspaper quoted a Fire and Rescue spokesperson as saying.

Campbelltown police duty inspector Michael Moroney said that, at this stage, it seemed that the trailer was not to blame for the accident, and that for some unknown reason the car the Pulis couple were in veered into the trailer's truck.

Although the Maltese couple and the driver were treated by paramedics, they died at the scene.

The couple had left to Australia on holiday last week, TVM said, and were also there to attend a wedding of the children of a couple they were friends with. Doreen Pulis was a caretaker at the Birzebbuga Primary School.



MALTA AND CHINA

Despite the long distance between China and Malta, the two countries both enjoy long histories and splendid cultures, and the friendly exchanges between them can be traced back to ancient times.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relationship in 1972, China and Malta have maintained friendly cooperative relations and political mutual trust. Moreover, economic cooperation and cultural exchanges have been increasingly deepened. The Chinese-aided construction of infrastructures has enabled great progress, and the economic agreements and memorandums reached between China and Malta have witnessed continuous development based on this bilateral economic relationship.

Malta joined the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as a founding member in 2015, making it one of the first European countries to join AIIB. In recent years, China and Malta have carried out cultural exchanges which have played an important role in strengthening the mutual understanding of the two peoples and consolidating the bilateral relationship. In addition, the Government of Malta has given the Chinese side support and assistance within its capacity for a long time, for instance, with the evacuation of Chinese citizens from Libya.

2017 was the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Malta, which provides us with an opportunity to implement the consensus reached by national leaders and carry forward the traditional friendship between our two countries. Let us work together to create a sound environment for developing pragmatic cooperation on science and technology, fishery, tourism and other fields, and foster new highlights on cooperation to further promote development of this bilateral relationship.



Maltese Community Council of NSW Inc.
are holding a Maltese Literary Afternoon

Saturday 3 March 2018 at 2.00pm

at The Maltese Resource Centre,
59b Franklin Street, Parramatta West.

Special Guest: Bestselling Maltese Author, Lorraine Vella

This Literary Session is part of the Maltese Literature in Australia Project
and is supported by the Arts Council of Malta, Cultural Export Fund

The Maltese community will have the opportunity to review, discuss and
compare notes with this well-known Maltese Author.

Entry is free and light refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP Emanuel on Mb: 0409 744 376

Kemm jiswa dan? (kemm yis-wa dahn?) – How much does this cost? - One of the phrases you will be using the most – whether out buying coffee or drinks, or souvenirs for that matter. When something is price-less, you can now ask for how much it costs, in Maltese!

Tista tghini? (tiss-ta teyny?) Can you help me? - The cry of lost travelers around the globe – knowing *how* to ask for help in the local lingo can be a lifesaver. From figuring out bus times, to asking directions to that great restaurant you heard about, you'll surely be needing some help at some point.

Mhux nifhem. (moosh nif-emm) I don't understand. - When friendly Maltese people randomly come up to you and start chatting in Maltese, this is the phrase to use. It is much more productive to show that you are not in fact, conversant in Maltese; maybe the conversation will resume in a language you both can speak.

4. Minn fejn int? (minn feyn int?) Where are you from? - You will probably hear this phrase constantly! This phrase will also come in handy when making new friends, especially if you're in a multi-cultural environment. Your new friends will love learning this small slice of Maltese!

5. Kif tghidha bil-Malti? (keef tay-dah bill ma-lty?) How do you say that in Maltese? Your Maltese mates will love this! Most Maltese love teaching their foreign friends new words and phrases in their native tongue, and asking this is basically a free pass for learning ALL the Maltese words! You can think of random phrases and end your sentence with 'Kif tghidha bil-Malti?' and you'll get yourself a Maltese lesson in no time

Maltese Phrases for your next trip to Malta

Maltese is a pretty tough language to learn, we'll grant you that. There are tons of grammar rules to remember, the pronunciation can be somewhat hard to muster, and don't get us started about the silent letters! Last year, we had already shown you Seven Essential Maltese Phrases which could help you find your way around Malta, and we felt it was time for a little refresh. So here are very few Maltese phrases which will help you communicate with the locals, whether you're buying bread from the nearby bakery, or eating and drinking in one of the restaurants. <https://blog.shortletsmalta.com/about-us/>

Kompli bix-xoghol fejjidi li qieghed taghmel. Ghadek ma tafx kemm qed tghin nies bhali, Maltin antiki tas-sittinijiet. **Percy Eugene Cartwright Jnr**
Maltese living overseas love to receive, read, enjoy and save the Maltese eNewsletter. I know it is read all over the world. Josie Johnson (Borg) - Vic



WW1 and Malta's contribution

Among the fallen in the Dardanelles in 1916 was a Maltese Lieutenant **Herbert Huber** of the 1st Battalion KOMRM, who was attached to 1st Bn Royal Inniskillings Fusiliers; he was killed in action at Cape Helles in the operations immediately preceding the evacuation of Gallipoli. The King and Queen sent a telegram of condolence to Joseph Huber, Herbert's father and assistant treasurer to the government of Malta: "The King and Queen regret the loss you and the Army have sustained by the death of your son in the service of his country. Their Majesties truly sympathise with you in your sorrow."

In November, 1916, **2nd Lt Edgar Huber**, Herbert's brother, was killed accidentally at Salonika. The King and Queen caused a telegram to be sent to Edgar's father: "The King and Queen are deeply grieved to hear that you have lost yet another son in the service of the country. Their Majesties offer you their heartfelt sympathy in your fresh sorrow." **Telegram sent in November 1916 to Joseph Huber**

Major George Monreal (General list) was selected for special duty on the staff of the Admiral Superintendent and Senior Naval Officer, Malta, in connection with the Overseas Trade Division of the Admiralty War Staff. Monreal entered the army as 2nd lieutenant in the Wiltshire Regiment in 1896, became lieutenant two years later, and obtained his company in 1902. His staff service included employment in the Army Pay Department and Army Accounts Department. He was also an interpreter in Italian. He retired from the army in 1911.

Major Monreal saw some fighting in West Africa and South Nigeria, while employed with the African Frontier Force. His service gained for him the Medal with Clasp. In 1916 he attended the Allied Economic Conference in Paris.

In October 1916 the ceremony attending the conferment of academic degrees in the church of the University – the Jesuits' church – in Valletta, featured a very pleasing and unusual episode. Among the candidates for the degree of MD Surgeon, **Louis V. Gatt**, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, arrived towards the conclusion of the ceremony, immediately after the ship to which he was attached had entered harbour. The young officer in his smart uniform on entering the church was loudly applauded. On approaching the dais he was greeted by Governor Methuen who shook hands with him. Then the conferment followed. It was by sheer chance that the vessel had arrived in time.

In December 1916 the local newspapers announced the death of **Captain Paolo Micallef**, MD, 2nd Battalion KOMRM, after a protracted illness. He was the son of Achilles Micallef, notary to government, took his degree at the University of Malta in 1901, and was appointed to the post of analytical chemist at the Sanitary Department. Subsequently he joined the KOMRM as second lieutenant in 1897 and

was promoted lieutenant in 1900 and captain in 1907. He served with his battalion in Cyprus in 1915 where he commanded a detachment at Nicosia. The funeral of Micallef took place with military honours.

A War Office telegram informed Mrs Abela of Cospicua of the death of her son **Charles Abela**, who was killed in action. The deceased had left Malta previous to the war and was employed on a torpedo boat, having eventually joined the Cheshire Regiment.

Another Maltese subject paid the supreme sacrifice in the field of battle: **Private Edgar Sapienza**, 4th Infantry Brigade Canadian contingent. He saw some hard fighting in France. He had first emigrated to America and then proceeded to Canada where he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Also in 1916, the Australian Military Office in London stated that **Charles Bonavia**, who had been reported missing some 14 months before, was officially reported killed in action at Gallipoli. Bonavia was a land surveyor and architect. After graduating at the University of Malta he proceeded to Australia where he was employed with the Commonwealth government.

On the outbreak of the war he gave up his billet and enlisted as a private. He then joined the Australian Expeditionary Force and sailed for Europe. It was at first thought that Bonavia was killed during the landing at Gallipoli but from the announcement of his death it would appear that he fell while participating in one of the attacks which dislodged the Turco- Germans from their positions.

On the initiative of the Malta Chamber of Land Surveyors and Architects, of which Bonavia was a member, a memorial service was held at Victory church in Valletta for the repose of his soul. The service took the form of a Low Mass de Requiem, with Holy Communion inter Missam. The sum contributed for the purpose was distributed among charitable institutions.

The last batches of the **Maltese Labour Battalion** returned to Malta in February 1916. They were employed at Mudros during the operations in the Dardanelles "under very trying conditions". The men presented a war-worn appearance but generally in good health.

In September of that year there was another call of applications for the Malta Labour Battalion. Three hundred stevedores and 500 labourers were required by the War Office for service at Salonika. The terms of service included a three-month engagement subject to renewal, if required longer. Those engaged were subject to military law and were provided free accommodation and medical attendance. Each was provided with rations, mess tin, spoon, fork, knife, blankets, boots, socks, towel, suit, great coat and underclothing. Good characters and men of good physique were wanted, and no one under 18 years of age was accepted.

As was expected the call attracted widespread attention, as was the case when men were required for the Dardanelles. The battalion was under the **command of Major C. D. Vella**. A party of six orderlies of the Malta Corps of the St John Ambulance Brigade Overseas accompanied the Maltese battalion.

Prior to departure, the battalion, consisting of 850 units, paraded in Lascaris Ditch. Governor Methuen inspected the battalion and spoke very favourably of their work at the Dardanelles; in encouraging terms he exhorted them to maintain discipline and behaviour. The Governor's remarks were repeated in the vernacular by Major Vella. Great enthusiasm prevailed among the assembled multitude.

There were several Maltese military chaplains to the forces serving in Malta or overseas. These included **Rev. Mgr Can F. Ferris, Mgr Can P. Muscat, Fr Henry Bugeja, Rev. Can Edgar Galea Naudi, Fr J. Darmanin, Fr Alphonus Attard, Fr Anthony Bajada, Fr A. Copperstone, Fr Can. Cauchi, Fr G. M. Consiglio, OSA, Fr J. Verzin, Fr G. Dimech, Rev. Mgr E. Calleja Schembri, Fr Gabriel Bezzina, OP, Fr Richard Borne, Fr Albert Farrugia Bugeja, Rev. Mgr F. Cavendish**

Australia Hall in Malta where ANZAC troops enjoyed respite, recreation and rehabilitation in a state of shameful dilapidation.



The Great War was one of the deadliest conflicts in human history. With it came an urgent need to care for the wounded, and in 1915 a small island

in the Mediterranean found itself perfectly positioned for that purpose. Malta became known as the “Nurse of the Mediterranean”, and by the time the Armistice sounded in 1918, around 136,000 men had been treated there.

Malta had 27 hospitals in January 1916, which cared for some 2,000 new patients each week. The record for a single day stands at a staggering 20,994 patients, who came under the care of hundreds of doctors and nurses working tirelessly to save the wounded front line troops.

It was in 1915 that Australia Hall was built at Pembroke, a town in the country’s Northern Region. As the name suggests, it was built by the Australian branch of the British Red Cross as an entertainment venue for convalescing Anzac soldiers. It’s function wasn’t merely to distract wounded soldiers as they recovered from their physical injuries. It also saw to their mental, spiritual, and emotional needs as well.

The entertainment Hall was opened on January 16, 1916, with enough room to accommodate 2,000 people for stage productions, dances and other events. A library and reading room were later added, and after the war, in 1921, a projector was installed so that the venue could be used as a cinema. Providing soldiers with entertainment was a big part of the care that Malta offered.

But the years that followed were not so kind on the historic structure. Having passed into Maltese government ownership, the historic building was closed and became increasingly neglected. It was eventually gutted by fire in 1998, just two years after being formally recognised as a Grade 2 National Monument.

The derelict, roofless, fire-ravaged Australia Hall was controversially sold in 2014 into private hands. We have been pushing for the century-old venue’s restoration. With only walls remaining, renovation would cost millions of euros and require in-depth planning. But as an important part of Australia’s national heritage, we are hopeful that a solution can soon be found before it is too late.



MALTA'S CONTRIBUTION IN WORLD WAR 1

by Michael Galea

The first arrivals in Malta of the wounded soldiers from the theatres of war made history. A stream of ambulance wagons and motor-cars swept through Valletta on their way to the landing places, attracting crowds of spectators along the route. Afterwards, the vehicles returned in different directions for the hospitals and other places where accommodation had been provided. In Strada Reale, "hats were raised and handkerchiefs waved as the vehicles approached, the crowds pressing forward to catch a glimpse of the soldiers recumbent on stretchers or seated".



**World War One (1914-18) 55,000 Anzacs from the Gallipoli campaign were taken to Malta for treatment.
Picture: Courtesy of Malta's Heritage**

From among the frequent arrivals from the Dardanelles, one would single out "a remarkable episode providing the material for a romance in real life". The ship was moored in Sliema Creek. "During the landing of the wounded, the shrieks of a woman were heard among the crowd. The excited woman had recognised her husband whom she had not seen for nine

years."

British wounded from the Balkan front were brought to Malta, which provided hospital accommodation for well over 18,000 sick and wounded. The island's resources were taxed to the utmost

The hospital ship Asturias, with wounded from the Dardanelles, was torpedoed in the channel but the torpedo missed its mark. Arrivals included the New Zealand hospital ship Maheno.

The French government placed at the disposal of the French Red Cross, a vessel belonging to the Messageries Maritimes, the Charles Roux, which was fitted out as a hospital ship. It was used for both French and British casualties.

For the first time since Italy's intervention in the world conflict, the hospital ship Re d'Italia of Lloyd Sabaudo Coy arrived in Malta and berthed at Sa Maison. Four Maltese doctors, namely P. Biasini, Balzan, Azzopardi and Inglott, and several English nurses, proceeded with the ship. Other Italian hospital ships followed. The Lloyd Sabaudo provided six of its fine fleet for the purpose.

The hospital ship Assaye arrived in Malta with a large party of Canadian and English lady nurses. The novel uniform of the Canadians attracted great attention. The ship was en route to the Balkans.

Sir Thomas Lipton's yacht Erin arrived in Malta on her second voyage from South Hampton to Salonika. She was carrying a number of nurses and medical stores. Sir Thomas embarked on the yacht to Marseilles.

The British steam yachts Sunbeam, owned by naval writer Lord Brassey, and Liberty, owned by the eminent physician Sir James Porter, were converted into private hospital ships. They called at Malta en route to the Dardanelles.

A French ship arrived in Malta with 720 Syrian Jews, mostly French citizens. They were embarked at Beirut upon escaping massacre by the Turks. These refugees were being conveyed to Corsica.

Among the wounded who arrived in Malta were several Turkish officers, some of whom died of their wounds on board the hospital ship on their way to Malta. They were buried at sea.

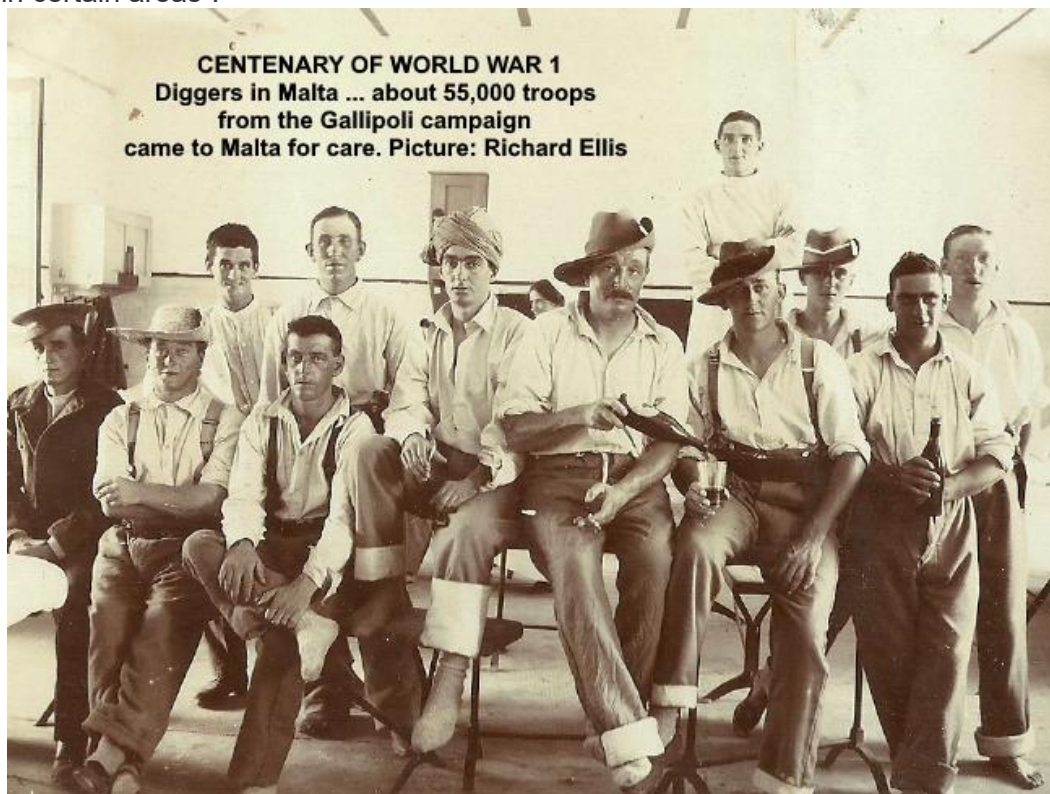
Egbert Rizzo, a Maltese residing in Constantinople prior to the outbreak of the war, was deported to Urfa and was subsequently allowed to return to Constantinople with several other British citizens, including Maltese. The Turkish government issued instructions that all British citizens were to be well treated.

The more serious cases were sent on to England from Malta, while a good number of the first arrivals left Malta to rejoin their respective regiments.

Strong contingents of medical officers and trained nurses continued to arrive from England and were absorbed in the various hospitals on the island. Male nurses at the Central Civil Hospital, Floriana, spontaneously offered to devote their off-duty days to the wounded in the hospitals. When Italy joined the Allies, plans were mooted towards establishing convalescent homes in Sicily.

British wounded from the Balkan front were brought to Malta, which provided hospital accommodation for well over 18,000 sick and wounded. The island's resources were taxed to the utmost.

As the conflict continued, a local newspaper wrote: "Funeral services will be held in the churches of the island by order of the Archbishop for the souls of those who have fallen in the war. It would be suggested that the people of this island might give further appropriate expression to the feelings which animate them by bedecking with flowers the honoured graves of those who succumbed to their wounds in Malta." It would be added that the ringing of bells "so highly favoured by custom is not always a necessity, especially in view of our limited area, so we trust that bell ringing will be restricted as much as possible in certain areas".



In the event of any cases of cholera developing on board a hospital ship during the voyage to Malta, the patient was to be at once transported to Comino, where arrangements were made for a small hospital. If disembarkation was impossible, the patient would be taken to the Lazaretto on Manoel Island, where complete isolation was arranged. If any

cases of cholera occurred at the Dardanelles, they would be treated at Lemnos.

Following an appeal for help in connection with the housing of convalescent patients, unfurnished private houses in different parts of the island were placed at the authorities' disposal

There was a remote danger of cases developing on board ship. For this reason, Governor Methuen set up an ad hoc committee which included Dr G. Caruana Scicluna, Prof. Temi Zammit and Dr A. Critien to decide on the best means to meet this possible danger.

Following an appeal for help in connection with the housing of convalescent patients, unfurnished private houses in different parts of the island were placed at the authorities' disposal, including the Archbishop Palace in Mdina.

The Marchesa Scicluna placed at the disposal of the authorities the palatial Villa Dragonara. The Carmelite Friars offered the upper floor of their convent at St Julian's. The Vincenzo Bugeja Institute at Hamrun was equipped as a hospital. The Army Pay Office at Auberge de Baviere in Valletta was moved elsewhere and the building converted into a hospital.

The government school in Sliema was turned into a hospital to house 450 patients; it was known as St John Hospital. Nevertheless, school started as usual as alternative premises were made available, including the Juventutis Domus and part of the Carmelite Convent by Fr O'Grady and Rev. Prof. A. Cuschieri, respectively. San Anton Palace and Verdala were also used to accommodate patients.

There was also a generous response from Maltese owners of motorcars and carriages who readily lent their transport for the conveyance of the sick and wounded from the quay to the hospitals on the arrival of hospital transport ships. Besides, owners of motorcars and carriages offered to take out convalescents for drives.

During the war years the Malta Centre of the St John Ambulance and the British Red Cross Society were amalgamated for the better and more efficient organisation in aid of the sick and wounded. They became known as the Ladies Committee, which was composed as follows: The Countess Lucan, Miss Calvocoressi, Mrs Clapp Zammit, Mrs F. P. Denaro, Mrs A. M. Galea, Mrs Lewis Hall, Miss Gatt and Mrs Pringle.

It was a very active committee, organising concerts by local civic bands, variety entertainment and performances, cinema shows (sometimes screening scenes of the war), excursions, tea sessions, talks; promoting donations in kind such as cakes, fruit, flowers, books (a box of books was received in Malta from Queen Mary), magazines, newspapers, games, playing cards, gramophones, cigarettes, cigars and tobacco. The committee actively supplied caps, mufflers, gloves (these were with a thumb piece but without divisions for the fingers), mittens (with short fingers or at least a knitted hole to cover the palm and were long above the wrist). The government provided for exemption of custom duties on gifts to the troops received from abroad.

A novel initiative was the holding of a hospital football league. Some 17 hospitals entered their teams. One of the first matches, which took place at the Marsa, was played between two Royal Army Medical Corps teams – Valletta Hospital and Baviere, ending with the score: Baviere 2, Valletta Hospital 0.

Another novel idea was the setting up of a club for nurses; they used to meet in the Ladies Room at the Union Club.

There were excellent reports of the services rendered by the Boy Scouts, who found in the new arrivals ample opportunities for exercising their training. "These little handy men have been a great use to us, strangers to the island, and their willingness and energy have been much anticipated."

This was the general scenario and overall atmosphere prevailing throughout the island in the turbulent war years. No wonder Malta earned the title of "nurse of the Mediterranean".



**Maintaining one's culture, values
and heritage is beyond price**

THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

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PIETA MILITARY CEMETERY MALTA

WORLD WARS 1 & 2

LOCATION INFORMATION -

The Cemetery is located in Triq id-Duluri (Our Lady of Sorrows Street), 2 kilometres south-west of Valletta on the road to Sliema. On the edge of the

Gwardamanga district, the entrance is on Triq Il-Principessa Melita, leading to Triq Tal-Pieta and Msida Sea Front and Creek.

The earth is shallow on Malta and during both wars, many joint or collective burials were made as graves had to be cut into the underlying rock. During the Second World War, such work was particularly hazardous because of air raids. Most of these graves are marked by recumbent markers on which several inscriptions could be carved, and for the sake of uniformity, the same type of marker was used for single graves.

HISTORY INFORMATION - From the spring of 1915, the hospitals and convalescent depots established on the islands of Malta and Gozo dealt with over 135,000 sick and wounded, chiefly from the campaigns in Gallipoli and Salonika, although increased submarine activity in the Mediterranean meant that fewer hospital ships were sent to the island from May 1917. During the Second World War, Malta's position in the Mediterranean was of enormous Allied strategic importance. Heavily fortified, the island was never invaded, but was subjected to continual bombardment and blockade between Italy's entry into the war in June 1940 and the Axis defeat at El Alamein in November 1942.

At the height of Axis attempts to break Malta's resistance in April 1942, the island and her people were awarded the George Cross by King George VI. Malta's defence relied upon a combined operation in which the contributions made by the three branches of the armed forces and Merchant Navy were equally crucial. Although heavily pressed in defence, offensive raids launched from the island by air and sea had a crippling effect on the Axis lines of communication with North Africa, and played a vital part in the eventual Allied success there.

There are 1,303 Commonwealth casualties of the First World War buried or commemorated at Pieta Military Cemetery, including 20 Indian servicemen who were cremated at Lazaretto Cemetery. Second World War burials number 166. The Commission also cares for 772 non-war graves in the cemetery and 15 war graves of other nationalities.

A changing Malta: More crowded, more foreigners, more men



Malta's population is fast approaching the half-a-million mark with new figures showing an average increase of 10,000 every year since 2013

by **Kurt Sansone**

Malta's population is fast approaching the half-a-million mark with new figures showing an average increase of 10,000 every year since 2013.

Released by the National Statistics Office, the population estimates show there were 460,297 people living on the islands by the end of 2016.

Growth was three times the increase registered in 2009 when Malta's population was recorded at 414,027.

The population increase between 2013 and 2016 mirrors the country's extraordinary economic growth, which has necessitated the importation of foreign labour.

The NSO figures show that the vast majority of the population increase was a result of foreigners coming to live and work in Malta.

In 2016 alone, foreign nationals relocating to Malta accounted for 84% of the 9,882 increase in population.

Immigration from other EU countries accounted for the largest group of foreigners making Malta their home in 2016 with 8,968 relocating to the islands. However, these were partly offset by the departure of 3,226 EU nationals.

People who came to Malta from countries out-side the EU, numbered 6,687 in 2016 but these were partly offset by the departure of 4,119.

An increased foreign labour force has also contributed to a shift in balance between men and women. Whereas until 2013, Malta's population was made up of more females than males – explained by the higher life expectancy of women – this was reversed between 2014 and 2016.

In 2016, there were 231,663 men living in Mal-ta as opposed to 228,634 women. This was a result of the higher number of foreign men who relocated to Malta for work purposes.

From the almost 9,000 EU nationals who moved to Malta in 2016 and the almost 7,000 non-EU nationals, 57% and 56% respectively were men.

The estimates also show that there were 88,458 people aged between 0 and 19. Those aged between 20 and 39 numbered 137,863, while those between 40 and 59 numbered 117,967.

There were 96,990 aged between 60 and 79, while the 80+ cohort was made up of 19,019.

GROUP FESTA SANTA MARIJA - N.S.W. - AUSTRALIA

Are organising a dinner for the Mgarr community and their friends

On Sunday, 11th March 2018 from 1.00 pm onwards

at La Valette Social Centre Blacktown. BUFFETT with 2 bottles of wine on each table. Soft drinks and beer can be purchased from the club.

Caterer Pelapidas Entertainment provided by

Charlie Muscat (taz-Zebbiegh) and the Vella Sisters, and supporting guest Natasha Tatarinoff,

All profits go towards Mgarr Band Club Donation: \$55 dollars

For more info and tickets, please call:

Agnes: 9626.6753 or Mob: 0432 714 735 La Valette Centre: 9622 5847

This is sponsored by Breakaway Travel Blacktown

Malta U-16 girls pay visit to Prime Minister

timesofmalta.com



Malta U-16 girls together with the technical staff at Castille.
Photo: Joe Borg/Malta FA

"Well done for your feat" were the opening words of Prime Minister Joseph Muscat as he addressed the players of the Malta Under-16 girls team at Castille on Thursday evening.

The members of the Malta U-16 girls squad, technical staff and Malta FA

officials paid a courtesy visit to the Prime Minister following the team's successful participation in the recently-held UEFA Youth Development Tournament.

Led by coach Dorianne Theuma, Malta obtained convincing wins over Andorra, Gibraltar and Liechtenstein at the Centenary Stadium to wrap up their commitments with maximum points. Dr Muscat said he insisted on organising this event as quickly as possible as he wanted to give due recognition to the Malta FA for their work in youth development and the progress in women's football.

"I received a blow-by-blow account of your win against Andorra as one of my daughters was a ball girl during that match," Dr Muscat told the young female players. The Prime Minister encouraged them to keep working hard to maintain their progress and to approach every match with a winning mentality, even when facing bigger teams. Ludovico Micallef, the Malta FA vice-president who led the delegation, thanked the Prime Minister for inviting the Malta U-16 girls squad to Castille in recognition of their success at the UEFA Girls Youth Under-16 Development tournament.

"The results achieved by our girls show that women's football in Malta is heading in the right direction," Micallef said. Also present for this courtesy meeting was Dr Clifton Grima, the Parliamentary Secretary for Sport, Youth and Voluntary Organisations who congratulated the Malta U-16 girls team for their performances in the UEFA tournament.

Dr Grima described the young players as ambassadors as "every time you wear the national team's shirt, you are representing our country and you do it with honour". The Prime Minister presented the team with a commemorative trophy as well as a token gift to all the members of the Malta FA contingent. On behalf of the Malta FA, Ludovico Micallef presented Dr Muscat with a framed photo of the Malta U-16 girls team after their win over Liechtenstein and a signed ball.

The Journal of the
MALTESE DIASPORA

Maltese
e NEWSLETTER



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FUN FACTS ABOUT MALTA

<https://9gag.com/gag/aVDYZen>

MALTA WAS A BRITISH COLONY UNTIL 1964

THERE ARE NO FORESTS OR RIVERS ON MALTA



MALTA IS HOME TO POPEYE'S VILLAGE

'MALTA' COMES FROM A GREEK WORD WHICH MEANS 'HONEY'

WHEN TOURISTS ARRIVE, THE POPULATION TRIPLES



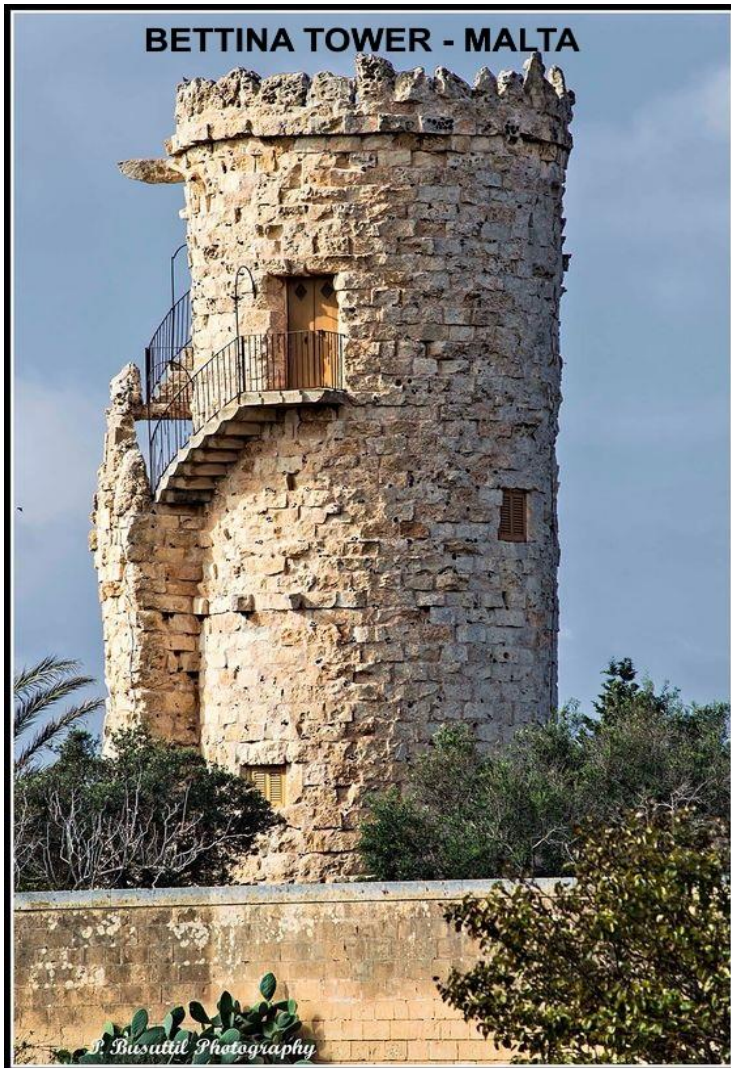
MALTA'S MEGALITHIC TEMPLES ARE SOME OF THE OLDEST FREESTANDING STRUCTURES IN THE WHOLE WORLD

MALTESE IS THE ONLY SEMATIC LANGUAGE WRITTEN IN LATIN SCRIPT

Aa

VALLETTA IS AMONG THE WORLD'S MOST CONCENTRATED HISTORICAL AREA'S

BETTINA TOWER - MALTA



NOSTALGIA

www.pinterest.com.au/pin/

**"Il-Pupa tac-Carruta"
Old Street Games
in Malta**



**"Ic-Cirku"
Old Street Games
in Malta**



**KEEP ON SENDING YOUR ARTICLES, COMMENTS AND EMAILS
BE PART OF THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF MALTESE CULTURE**

THANK YOU - GRAZZI





GOLD COAST 2018

XXI COMMONWEALTH GAMES: 4 – 15 APRIL

As the first *regional* Australian city to host the Commonwealth Games, it will be the biggest sporting spectacular the Gold Coast has ever seen.

The 2018 Commonwealth Games will be held at Gold Coast City, in the southeast of the Australian state of Queensland from 4 – 15 April 2018. This will be the 5th time that Australia has hosted the Games, the others being – 1938 Sydney, 1962 Perth, 1982 Brisbane and 2006 Melbourne.

The Gold Coast 2018 Games venues have been planned so that 80% of the venues are within a 20-minute vehicle journey of the Games Village which is to be built at Parklands, Southport adjacent to Griffith University and Gold Coast Hospital.

One of the key technical aspects of Gold Coast City's successful bid was the fact that the city already has 80 percent of the planned venues in place. The vast majority of venues are located within 20-minutes driving time of the Athletes Village in Parkwood and are broadly grouped into three areas; Central Gold Coast City, North Gold Coast City and South Gold Coast City. The only sports that will be held outside of Gold Coast City will be track cycling and the preliminary rounds of Basketball which will be held in Brisbane and Cairns/Townsville respectively, along with the shooting which will be held in neighbouring Belmont.

2018 Commonwealth Games Village - The 2018 Commonwealth Games Athletes Village will provide accommodation and services to 6600 athletes and official in a purpose built 1252 permanent dwellings: 1170 one and two bedroom apartments and 82 three bedroom townhouses at Southport, Gold Coast.

Transport - The Gold Coast light rail system, connects directly a number of the key games venues including the Gold Coast City Aquatic Centre, Broadwater Parklands and the Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre with the major accommodation centres of Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach and the Athletes Village at Parklands. An extension to the system was announced in October 2015, connecting the current terminus at Gold Coast University Hospital to the railway line to Brisbane at Helensvale. The extension opened in December 2017 well before the games.

MALTA - Malta will aim to participate with a contingent of approximately 22 athletes in Athletics, Aquatic Swimming, Cycling, Squash, Weightlifting, Shooting, Gymnastics, Wrestling and Lawn Bowls. Malta's participation in the Commonwealth Games dates back to 1958 in Cardiff, Wales.

VISUAL ARTS



**Gold Coast
2018**

XXI Commonwealth Games



Arboria | Architects of Air (UK)

5 – 15 April 2018

Kurawa Park, Broadbeach, Gold Coast - Free

You'll be amazed by the beauty of light and colour when you enter the luminarium - a monumental, walk-in sculpture that has enchanted millions of people across the globe.

Journey through the dazzling maze of winding paths and soaring domes and awaken your sense of wonder.

Since 1992 over three million visitors in more than 40 countries across five continents have immersed themselves in the spectacular, luminous world of *Arboria - Architects of Air*. For the first time, the Gold Coast will experience this special installation.

"Suddenly the world outside seemed to be forgotten, we had all been transported into a whole other world of light." Audience member. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult (maximum 4 children per adult). The luminarium is wheelchair accessible. Festival 2018 is a free state-wide celebration of arts and culture, which will showcase Queensland's creativity to visitors during the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.

In Brisbane, Festival 2018 offers everyone in the city free world-class entertainment with a program featuring music, exhibitions, theatre, dance, film, comedy, markets and more. Bring your family and friends and take part in the free events on offer from Wednesday 4 to Sunday 15 April 2018. .

To find information on celebrations on the Gold Coast, or in Cairns or Townsville, [visit the Festival 2018 website](#). Festival 2018 is presented by The Star Gold Coast, produced by Brisbane City Council and supported by the Queensland Government.

TO ALL OUR READERS - It is of paramount importance for us to know that you are receiving this journal and you like it. Please, let us know. The number of readers is increasing every week. We welcome the new subscribers. The journal is bilingual, multicultural, historical and keeps us in touch with Malta and with one another.

I'm just an everyday person

ANTHONY MICALLEF



I'm just an everyday person. But let's come back to that later. What I am writing about today, started on Monday 13th of March 2017 on the steps of Buckingham Palace. And with a message from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II locked inside, after 388 days, it will reach it's landing place on Australia's Gold Coast at the Opening Ceremony of the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

But that won't happen without a five-day (21st-25th September) stopover in Malta where I will have the honour of carrying it myself.

For those that don't know me, I will let you know that I'm blessed to say that sport has given me many highlights over the years, lifetime memories in fact.

Among them, having my name engraved outside the Olympic Stadium after working at the Sydney 2000 Olympics, and in 2015 leading Malta as head coach to a 35-34 rugby league victory over Belgium at Leeds' famous Headingley Stadium in 2015.

In no way will I sit here to compare one with the other, but Saturday 23rd September 2017 is the day I carried the Queen's Baton.

Two nights ago, it arrived into Malta from pint-sized Gibraltar, leaving our shores for Mediterranean neighbours Cyprus this coming Monday.

And the process ultimately grew legs on the Tuesday evening prior, when I met Mr Joseph Cassar to pick up my batonbearer's shirt from the Malta Olympic Committee (MOC) offices after work.

I've known Mr Cassar since 2005, my formative years on the island, and it was Mr Cassar who invited me to carry the Queen's Baton some three months ago via email. I didn't need to think about it. I quickly accepted.

Mr Cassar is like a sitting duck to Malta's involvement in the Olympic and Commonwealth Games. The number of Small Nations, Commonwealth and Olympic Games he has been involved in is probably greater than the number of times I have holidayed around my native Australia.

This is not the first time the Queen's Baton has come to Malta, Mr Cassar tells me. "It is the third or fourth time".

And so, it is confirmed I will be a Batonbearer on Saturday morning at the starting point - Malta Yacht Club.

On the Friday night however, it is time to suit up (albeit lounge suit thanks to the warm evenings we enjoy) for a reception at the residence of Australian High Commissioner to Malta H.E Ms Julianne Hince who has welcomed a full house of representatives from Malta and beyond, as well as the Queen's Baton itself and the Baton Relay staff that are with the Baton for every step of the journey through all 71 member nations.

In a formal setting following speeches from Ms Hince and The Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Sport and Voluntary Organisations Clifton Grima, the audience is treated to a performance of three songs by Aboriginal performers from Koomurri.

It's a touching performance bringing back memories of Australia where I called home until the age of 26. As a schoolchild, I saw similar performances and was taught much about Australia's history through similar folk, as well as being introduced to tasting delicacies such as kangaroo, while my brother's boast of having also tried the likes of crocodile.

But now, Saturday morning is here. And after an early morning alarm is set, I take the five-minute scooter ride down to the Malta Yacht Club for a timely 8.15am arrival.

I meet familiar faces from the Baton Relay team, namely Colin - a Scottish photographer engaged to follow the Baton relay. His commitments will see him travel across 32, if not 38 of the 71 countries. Talk about landing a dream job!

After some typical delays waiting for 'the boat' that will be the feature of this morning's baton carrying, it becomes evident that I won't actually be carrying the baton on land.

Yes, I too hop onto the boat, and the person carrying the baton on the boat somewhere off the coast of the Malta Yacht Club is actually me.

Shock, horror. No, in all honesty, it was no stress, but I did have to ask them a few questions, such as "is this baton a replica? or is this the original baton". It turns out that the baton is quite special, more than the Olympic Torch for example, because there is no replica. There is no other baton. This **'IS THE QUEEN'S BATON'**.

More than a boat, we set sail on a locally crewed yacht for the Sliema side of the harbour.

The water is quite smooth, the only other sounds are that of the odd boat a hundred metres away, we have a gorgeous backdrop of the iconic Valletta bastions with the sun climbing up behind it. I get a quick selfie (below) with Mr Cassar and the Baton Relay member responsible for the Baton's safety. Hashtag QBR2018 (#qbr2018)! :)

With the sun climbing fast, the background for my carrying will have to be Manoel Island, and with photographer Colin on the rib floating nearby, there I am. ***"The next few minutes are pretty real, yet in a way also surreal. I'm handed the Queen's Baton and head to the front of the yacht"***.

And all the while, honestly trying to keep my balance. Even the skipper's son, who I befriend for the short time there, has to get a good grip so as not to slip as we head into slightly choppy waters.

I think to myself "I'm probably the only guy in Malta that can't swim, but here I am, I'm the one responsible for carrying the baton on a yacht in the middle of the Maltese harbour".

Earlier, the man responsible for the safety of the baton, offers me the option of a wrist strap, just in case the baton drops out of my hand. I'm also told that should the baton fall into the water, "it will sink", but "at least, it's lighting may make it visible as it sinks".

I won't drop the baton! There's no way I will drop the baton.

Yelling across from the rib, Colin wants the perfect shot. His boat circles a couple of times in order to catch the perfect shot. These shots will go around the world pretty soon.

And he shouts: "Smile. Plenty of smiles. Hold it in your left hand. Hold it up. Move that rope away from across your face. Smile".

The Queen's Baton relay in Malta doesn't have the fanfare one might expect. But I can understand that, given Malta has only ever won two bronze medals in Commonwealth Games competition.

And so, on this boat, or should I say on this yacht, it's just the MOC and Baton Relay officials, the yacht's crew, and us.

As simple as it is, the baton itself is pretty amazing. Every part of it represents something, a superb design by Queensland-based Designworks.

I call it a somewhat paper-clip design, about as heavy as I expected. 1.4 kilograms to be precise.

Part of it is made of Macadamia wood, native to the Gold Coast. For many years back home at my parents' house in Sydney, we had a Macadamia tree bordering ours and the neighbour's side fence.

The other part of the baton is made of recycled plastic, reclaimed from the ocean off the Gold Coast, host of the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Within the baton, is a window. Inside that window, one can see the note with the Queen's message.

The note is folded and so "no, one can't read the message just yet".

The centre of the baton is illuminated by LED's, and a GPS within the baton traces it's every move.

"People will ask, why did I carry the Queen's Baton. The answer is simply, because I'm an everyday person".

The Queen's Batonbearers are everyday people who inspire others to be great.

Nominated by their peers for achievements and contributions to their community, a Batonbearer has the honour of carrying the Queen's Baton and representing their family, friends and community with pride.

I concur with this statement from the Queen's Baton Relay website; ***"Being a Baton-bearer is an experience that people treasure, and above all, baton-bearers should expect to have fun, celebrate and create memories that will last a lifetime"***.

I have instagrammed a couple more pictures and a short video, you click here to have a look.

You can follow the Queen's Baton Relay at the official website, www.gc2018.com/qbr or via Instagram using the hashtags *qbr2018* and *gc2018*.

It's great being an everyday person!

Tislima lill-Isqof Emmanuel Barbara OFM Cap (1949 – 2018)

Mill-qalb jiena xtaqt insellem
Lill-Ordni tal-Kapuċċini
Il-għaliex l-imghoddi tagħhom
Pjaċir kbir lili jagħtini.

Tul is-snin dawn l-aħwa mbierka
Lil Malta għamli ħafna gid
U hekk għadhom qegħdin jagħmlu
B'rieda soda tal-ħadid.

Tul Jannar ta' din is-sena
Sewwa sew fil-ħames jum
Tilfu wiehed minn uliedhom
Illi kien afdat bit-tmun

Fil-Knisja ta' ġewwa l-Kenja
Bħala Isqof ta' Malindi
Sakemm il-Mulej sejjahlu
Biex minn hemm iħalli r-riedni!

U ma' San Franġisk ilaqgħu
Fil-gholi minn tas-smewwiet
Fejn qatt iktar mhu se jsaltnu
Niket, dwejjajq jew imwiet!

Matul ħajtu dan il-Patri
Studja wkoll barra minn xtutna
Biex seta' jkun f'qagħda tajba
Li jgħalliem bosta minn ħutna.

Għall-bżulija w l-għaqal tiegħu
Kien Ministru Provinċjal,
Kappillan fl-isptar Ċentrali
Jaqdi morda tfal u kbar.

Gawdew mis-servizzi tiegħu
Anke l-Korp tal-Pulizija
Kienu bosta l-Ministeri
Illi okkupa bla tbatija!

Fil-missjoni spiċċa Isqof
Sa ma l-Mewt ħabtitlu l-bieb
U b'hekk kellu fis jinfired
Minn tant qraba, aħwa w ħbieb!

Nemmen illi issa postu
Max-xirka tal-qaddisin
Fejn issaltan it-tgawdija
Fejn bla tmiem huma s-snin!

Ta' insara illi aħna
Dmirna nħennu għall-mejtin
Biex l-Isqof Manwel Barbara
Dlonk jinghaqad mal-henjin.

Tislima lill Isqof Silvestru Magro (miet is-Sibt 20 ta' Jannar 2018)

Il-Knisja tagħna Maltija
Mas-snin tatna frott sabiħ –
Fost dawn hemm Silvestru Magro
Isqof wisq maħbub qatigh.

Ta' sitta u sebgħin sena
Halla dan il-Wied tad-Dmugh
Warajh ħalla ġewwa l-Libja
Tant Maltin kollha jibkuh.

Illi lilhom bit-tbatija
U bid-determinazzjoni
Saħħtu tahom mingħajr biża' -
Ma ħarabx minn dil-missjoni!

Għal kuntarju, għoxrin sena
Dam itterraq ġewwa l-Libja
Qalb perikli, imwiet, biża,
Tant mibegħda u invidja!

Fuq il-oil rigs ma kienx jonqos
Li ta' spiss imur iżur
Lill-ħaddiema fost periklu -
Bil-ferħ qalbu kienet tfur.

Bla minn demmu ċarċar qatra
Dan l-Isqof kien martri kbir
Illi għex ġo żewġt ikmamar
Hadem, stinka bla tnikkir.

Mons Silvestru żgur ta' ħajtu
Sabiex jara l-merħla tiegħu
Tissielet kontra l-kurrenti
Li t-taqbid dlonk iġib miegħu.

Issa mar il-premju jieħu
U jiltaqa' mal-Ħallieq
Wara illi għadda ħajtu
Fuq art ħarxa kollha għollieq!

Ta' insara illi aħna
Ej nitolbu għall-mejtin
Biex malajr ħuna Silvestru
Jidhol fost il-Qaddisin!

Post dan l-Isqof issa ħadu
George Bugeja wild ix-Xagħra;
Jalla jgħix fil-kwiet u l-għaqda
U fil-Libja l-paċi jara!

Kav Joe M Attard
Victoria Għawdex

**Ahna niringrazzaw lill-Kav. Joe Attard
li dejjem jinkludi poeziji bil-Malti lill-gurnal**



*Evone Scicluna, Basil Pavis and Joe Mallia.
Photo provided by Rebecca Pavis*

by Sarah Carabott - Archives – TIMES OF MALTA

Basil finally finds his cousins after year-long search

Readers help out to solve family riddle

A search for family in Malta that started last year has turned a full circle, with an 89-year-old Brisbane man finally tracking down his relatives. For Basil John Pavis, born in England, the search has been an intriguing one, with clues first pointing at the possibility that his surname was actually Paris and, later, Pons.

With the help of several people, including the St George's parish office in Qormi, Times of Malta readers and social media users, Mr Pavis has finally met two of his cousins in Dingli.

Evone Scicluna and Joe Mallia, two of seven siblings, are the first paternal relatives Mr Pavis has ever met.

The meeting, which took place earlier week before Mr Pavis returns to the UK was "terrific" as it followed what he thought was another dead-end. Orphaned as a child, Mr Pavis was the only son of George and Mabel-Blanche née Matthews. He knew that his father, who everybody called George Pavis, was originally from Malta and had died from war wound complications in England in 1934.

It was only last year that he discovered that his father was actually called Giuseppe Paris, after Reed's School, in Surrey, provided records of his mother's application to enrol him at the London Orphan School.

Then, in a surprising twist following an appeal in the Times of Malta for any surviving relatives to come forward, it was discovered that the family name was Pons. In his research, James Agius, a volunteer at the St George's parish office, found that the family name was sometimes even mistakenly written as Bons and one time even as Borg.

Mr Pavis arrived in Malta in March with his daughter Rebecca to narrow down the search. The parish's records showed that his paternal grandparents had 10 children. One of them, his aunt Georgia, had given birth to at least two children who were around her father's age. Sadly, following another appeal in Times of Malta about the two women – Carmela and Emmanuela of Qormi – Mr Pavis and his daughter were told they had died.

Mr Pavis, a father of eight, thought he had reached a dead end. But the family did not give up. They received a lot of e-mails and social media messages and got a break when his wife, Linda, posted the latest appeal article that appeared on Times of Malta and some photos on a Facebook group called 'Searching for lost friends and family Malta'.

Father and daughter finally met Ms Scicluna and Mr Mallia, children of Emmanuela, whose last residence had been Msida.

The meeting was anything but a dead end because they learnt that Mr Pavis has several more relatives in Melbourne, ending his fears that he would never meet anyone from the family side of his father.

*Dreams are like the stars of the night,
You can't really touch the stars,
But, if you follow a star,
It will lead you somewhere,
So never stop dreaming in life,*



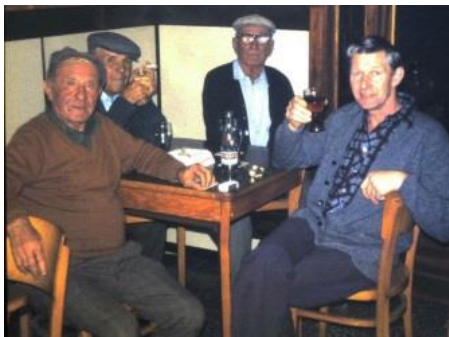
TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

By Lynn Kansas – United Kingdom

So, my return in 2016, some 40 years after the last time I visited, was a remarkable experience for me, and I loved every minute of it. I had a brilliant time reconnecting with the places I remembered, as well as a couple of very special ladies who were a massive part of making our holidays to Malta so

wonderful.

Our families love affair with Malta started in the 1960's. My Dad started working at Manchester Airport, in the UK, as ground maintenance crew for British Airways (back then it was known as B.O.A.C.). In those days staff travel was a perk of the job, and my Dad sure made use of it, as it gave us free standby air tickets. Not to be sneezed at in those days. Family holidays followed to Majorca and Cyprus, then Dad heard through the lads at work that Malta was the place to go. From the very first time we visited Malta in the late 1960's, our family loved it. This led to us coming back some 14 times between 1967 or so to around 1976. We always stayed at the same place in St. Paul's Bay, simply known to us as **The Farewell Bar**. This fantastic place consisted of a bar/restaurant with self catering flats above, which is where we stayed. We came to know the owners, the Couchi family - 9 siblings, plus their extended families. Three of the sisters, Carrie, Rina and Doris primarily ran the bar/restaurant and the self-catering flats, so we knew them very well, each time we returned it felt more and more like a home away from home.



My father at The Farewell Bar, St. Pauls Bay with the locals

My Dad just loved to get to know all the locals, especially the fishermen. Two I remember were Pepe and Didi, Dad would buy them a Wine and Kinnie - the local drink of choice, sit in the bar and chat. He even went out with them a few times on their early morning fishing trips.

My mum and Dad went back to Malta a few more times during the 80's and 90's, once we kids had flown the coop. Mum stayed in touch through Christmas cards for many years, but then sadly

contact dwindled. I often wondered what had happened to Carrie, Rina and Doris. For many years I kept telling my husband that one day I would love to go back to Malta, although I was a little nervous that so many things would have changed and it would be unrecognisable.

Finally, in October of 2016 our plans were in place, we were heading back to Malta, I was so excited. Although I knew the name of the street where the Farewell bar was located in St. Pauls Bay, I did not know the exact address, although I could picture it so clearly in my mind, and knew that once I got back to Malta I would be able to find it no problem. I tried doing some research, trying to find out if the bar was still there, and searching for the Couchi sisters on social media but had no luck. I started following a Facebook page called St. Paul's Bay, Malta History - I reached out to them, asking if they knew anything about the Farewell Bar. I was pretty surprised when I got a response, they had gone to take a look, telling me that it was no longer a working bar, but was still a home to two elderly sisters. I was amazed!!! Could they be Couchi sisters??!

Finally, we are back in Malta, and although on this trip we were staying in St. Julian's, I couldn't wait to go back to St. Pauls Bay; albeit with nervous trepidation. St. Paul's or *San Pawl il-Baħar* as it is known locally, was always a fairly sleepy place back then, now, it is even more so. Bugibba and Qawra, the

areas adjacent to it were starting to be built up in the early 70's, and are now the main areas for tourists in this part of the Island.

We headed straight for the harbour and parked the car. As I got out of the car I just smiled. Yes, a few changes but still totally recognisable. Perhaps the biggest landmark, St. Pauls Shipwreck Church, standing in the middle of the road. The Giillieru Hotel was another landmark heavily engrained in my memory, many hours spent fishing from the dock at the front of this Hotel.

We walked from the harbour through this narrow street, I led my husband straight to The Farewell Bar (I have to keep calling it that, even though it is no longer a bar). The sign is gone from over the door, and the colour of the door was slightly different, but I knew it in an instant. Wow! I almost had to pinch myself that I was really here again after all these years. My husband and I took some photos, and I was just wondering whether I should pluck up the courage to knock on the door, to see if anyone was home. I mean really, to come all this way and then to not find out if there were still members of the Couchi family there, well, that would have had me wondering for the rest of my life. I was literally just about to knock on the door, when it opened and two elderly ladies came out. I just could not believe it, I recognised Doris and Rina straight away. I think they were a little taken aback when I said their names. I quickly explained who I was and mentioned my Mum, and Dad - "Ged with the Pipe" - then I think they remembered. By this time I was very teary eyed. They very kindly invited us in for a beer and a chat. We learned that Carrie had passed away, as well as a few of their other siblings, very sad news to hear. We talked about all the fun times and I think they were amazed at how much I remembered - it was very special to be sitting there, in the space where all the bar tables and bar had been, which incidentally apart from the addition of a couch and a TV was little changed from 40 years ago.

Going back to Malta after so long away really was very special for me. Catching up with Rina and Doris was definitely the highlight of the trip for me. But it was also great to be able to show my husband all the great places I remembered, like Valetta, Mosta, and the Blue Grotto to name a few. Truly a walk down memory lane. I managed to compare some of the old family photos I have to the new ones I took in 2016.

FAREWELL BAR – ST. PAUL'S BAY



**Fun to compare - me in 2016, and my mum and dad in 1995
No longer a working bar, but is still a home to two elderly sisters**



***Doris, Rina and I a special reunion
for me***

Malta's population rises to 460,000

www.independent.com.mt

Malta's population rose to 460,297 in 2016, according to the latest data issued by the National Statistics Office. Back in 2006, the total population stood at 405,616.

While the aforementioned numbers takes into account foreign nationals, the total number of Maltese people living on the islands in 2016 stood at 405,976.

"In 2017, benchmark revisions were undertaken for the estimation of migration flows. National methodologies and data sources were reviewed and updated leading to a revision of the time-series data on population counts from 2012 - 2016."

The release said that there were methodological improvements which led to the revision of migration flow data for European Union (EU) and regular Third Country Nationals (TCN).

"The share of the total population that is foreign is 11.8%."

Persons under 18 made up 17% of the total population, while a further 18.8% were aged 65 and over.

Life expectancy at birth for 2016 stood at 80.6 years for males and 84.4 years for females, while life expectancy at age 65 stood at 19.7 years for males and 22.1 years for females, the NSO said.

The figures show that the total population on the islands in 2015 stood at 451,569. The main reason for the rise is immigration of EU nationals, and of third country nationals.



Sports Awards 2017: Duncan Micallef wins for second time, San Giljan team of the year

Duncan Micallef and Yazmine Zammit Stevens won the main awards yesterday in the 58th edition of the Malta Sports

Awards, which was organised by Sports Malta and the Ghaqda Gurnalisti Sports. For Duncan Micallef it was the second consecutive victory in this top award, whilst for Yazmin Zammit Stevens this was a first time. Waterpolo champions San Giljan (photo) won the team of the year award after a very tight finish with the women national Basketball team.

Special guest in in yesterday's event was Italian ParaOlympic athlete Giusy Versace

All winners

Sportsman Of the Year: Duncan Micallef (Drag Racing)

Sportswoman Of The Year Award: Yazmine Zammit Stevens (Gymnastics)

People's Choice Award: Ella Borg (Gymnastics)

Team Of The Year Award: San Giljan (Waterpolo)

Coach Of The Year: Angela Adamoli (Basketball)

International Event Of The Year: Malta Racing Club

Official Of The Year: Paul Sultana (Basketball)

Youth Female Athlete: Sarah Xuereb (Ten-Pin Bowling)

Youth Male Athlete: Edward Xuereb (Ten-Pin Bowling)

Special Olympics Male Athlete: Rodney Gauci (Squash) www.independent.com.mt

Special Olympics Female Athlete: Joanna Vassallo (Bowls)

*Methodist Church***Neo-Gothic Hall in Floriana to be Restored**

This building, in Floriana, served as a Methodist Protestant Church of worship and was designed by architect Thomas Mullett Ellis. Built between 1881 and 1883 to replace the one near the upper Barracca gardens, this building was the first in Malta to be equipped with electric incandescent lamps.

On the departure of the British in the 1970's, it was handed over to the Maltese authorities and is now used as an auditorium for cultural presentations. It has been renamed **Robert Samut Hall** after the composer of the Maltese National Anthem. It has a neo-Gothic facade with elaborate carving that can be seen nowhere else in Malta.

The Planning Commission granted planning permission for restoration works to be carried out on the façade of the this building. The restoration works will include the professional cleaning of the stone saving the time-gained natural patina, removal of flaking paint, the replacement and reinstatement of deteriorated stone and the re-pointing and finishing of stonework where necessary, which will entail the removal of existing defective mortar joints, and repointing. Two missing gargoyles, which are spouts designed with a grotesque face to convey rainwater away from the side of a building, will be have to be replaced.

St. Publius Parish Church - Floriana

The church of St. Publius was still being built when Floriana became a subsidiary of the parish of St. Paul in Valletta. The church was finished in 1768 and became the Parish church of Floriana on the 15th March 1844 dedication. Its facade and belfies were completely altered at the turn of the century. It was hit by enemy bombing during WWII and part of the facade and the dome were demolished. Everything was reconstructed after the w





Traditional Food Eaten during Lent in Malta

Victoria Vella

As in many cultures, food is an integral part of Maltese culture and tradition. Come Lent, many look forward to traditional foods and embrace this period. Now this may contradict what Lent is about- abstinence and sacrifice- but we wouldn't be Maltese if we didn't find a way around this to still enjoy good, hearty, food.

Traditional Maltese food for the Lenten period includes “qagħaq tal-Appostli” (Apostles' Rings), which are circular loaves of unleavened bread studded with roasted almonds and sprinkled with sesame seeds. I remember many times when I got in so much trouble after being sent down to the town square to buy bread from a little van in the street and by the time I got home, had nibbled at all the roasted almonds- much to my mother's dismay. These are traditional more towards the end of the lenten period (around Easter week) and many town squares are littered in the evenings with these same little vans selling Apostles' Rings to the masses after attending church.

Traditional recipes include Ricotta Pie, Qaqoċċ Mimli (stuffed artichokes), Bebbux (snails), Pastizzi tal- Inċova (anchovy cakes) and Qassatat tal- ispinaċi (Spinach cakes). Many of you will recognise these foods from your own cultures, but, every country prepares them in different ways, and if I am honest, when my mother puts down a plate of Qaqoċċ- complimented with a slice of Maltese traditional bread dipped in tomato paste and olive oil- I feel a sense of nostalgia for my childhood.

Although sweets go against the “fasting” specifications, the Maltese have also found a way around this to make sure their sweet tooth is satisfied – road rage and hunger don't go very well together. J In the days of old, these were sweets “allowed” during this time of year, as they do not contain any sugar, but are made with almonds, honey, milk, flour and spices.

Traditional sweets:

Honey cakes (known as Kwareżimal- from the word quadragesima- meaning 40 days of Lent)

Qassatat tal- ħelu (sweet biscuits)

Karamelli (Carob Julep sweets)

<http://www.amlanguage.com/traditional-food-eaten-lent-malta/>



Anna Sultana's

Soppa tal-Kirxa Tripe Soup, Maltese Style

We knew it was Lent when Ma dished up more soups.

In Malta the Catholic Church ruled Sundays, holy days and meals. Lent was a time of fast and abstinence. No fooling around. You walked around for a whole day with ashes on your forehead. Lousy meals were a part of the season. Live with it.

If you're unfamiliar with those terms, abstinence meant no meat on Wednesday and Friday during Lent. Actually that was a bit of a joke. We didn't eat that much meat. Hey, heard of the Mediterranean Diet?

But the one-two punch of Lent was fasting. That meant two half meals and no snacks. And that one main meal better not make up for what you were missing.

Your Lenten meals were being recorded in a celestial diet record book more strictly than anything Weight Watchers would expect you to do to lose 3kg.

Fasting. What is it about religion and food?

Okay... Mama wanted to follow the Church's rules. She wanted to avoid living with a hungry family. Especially a hungry Nannu. He didn't cope well with a rumbling belly.

Catholic Moms knew a few diet tricks. Fill the belly with water namely soup.

Weight Watchers didn't invent that trick.

This is a Maltese Lent staple. Filling and not something you'd find in a fancy restaurant. The priests and Nannu approved. So did the budget. That's just our way. How about this unusual recipe – **Tripe**

Soup Soppa tal Kirxa

Simmer for about 2 hours

800 g (about 2 pounds) tripe, cut into small pieces

2 litres of water

Add

1 cauliflower, finely chopped

1 turnip, finely chopped

1 cabbage, finely chopped

2 tomatoes, chopped

400 g pumpkin

4 large potatoes, finely chopped

1 onion, finely chopped

Bring to the boil.

Reduce heat and simmer until the vegetables are done.

Season with salt and pepper.

Serve with grated Parmesan cheese.

Posted by Margaret Ullrich