

CONSULATE OF MALTA IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER

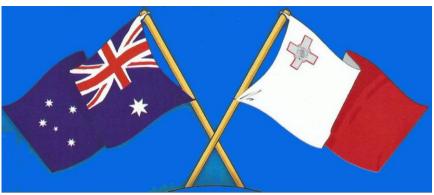
DECEMBER 2013 FRANK L SCICLUNA - HON CONSUL - LINKING MALTA AND AUSTRALIA

EMAIL: honconsul@live.com.au Website: www.ozmalta.page4.me

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EDITION

We, at the Consulate, wish you and your family a very joyful Christmas and a New Year 2014 full of hope, peace and God's blessings







MESSAGE FROM THE HON JENNIFER RANKINE MP MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Dear friends

It's a pleasure to have this opportunity to wish all members of our Maltese community the very best for the festive season.

As another year draws to a close, so comes the time that each of us reflect on the events of the year past, the challenges, and what has brought happiness to our lives.

On a personal level, I reflect on the joys brought by good friends and family – a sentiment that I'm sure is shared by members of the Maltese community. And as Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I reflect on the success of our State, its wonderful diversity, and how our harmony and prosperity owes so much to communities like the Maltese.

That is why I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for the tremendous

contribution that you've made to South Australia throughout 2013.

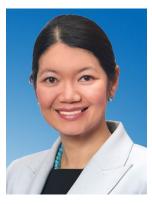
Your contribution to the construction of the ANZAC Memorial in Floriana which I was fortunate to visit last year, is a particularly notable and very moving example of your achievements, and it deserves special recognition and congratulations.

However, I'm also aware that there have been countless other examples of your energy and community spirit throughout the past 12 months, and there is no doubt our State, and indeed our nation of Australia is a much richer place because of the Maltese community.

The South Australian Government has always enjoyed a close friendship with the Maltese community - which is no surprise, given how famous the community is for its friendly nature and warm hospitality.

I look forward to continuing this friendship in the New Year, and in the meantime I wish each of you and your families a very blessed Christmas and hope that 2014 is filled with happiness and success for all. II-Milied it-tajjeb!

Hon Jennifer Rankine MP



MESSAGE FROM THE HON JING LEE MLC

'I trust 2013 has been a great year for the Maltese Community of South Australia. So many leaders and volunteers have contributed greatly to serve their community - I would like to thank everyone in the Maltese community for their excellent work and congratulate them for their achievements in 2013.

I would like to pay tribute to Mr Frank Scicluna, the Honorary Consul for Malta in South Australia for his wonderful work in serving the community. His consistent contributions through the Maltese Newsletter entitled "Building Virtual Bridges" must be highly commended. Frank is doing a marvellous job building those 'valuable' bridges in keeping everyone informed about important matters as well as the many interesting activities happening in South Australia. Thank you Frank for your on-going commitment and

outstanding effort!

Yes, I can hear "Jingle-Bells" ringing with Christmas fast approaching. Please accept my warmest wishes in wishing you, leaders and members of the Maltese community of South Australia a joyful Christmas with family and friends. Have a Happy and Prosperous New Year for 2014!

The Honourable JING LEE, MLC

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs

MESSAGE FROM H.E. JANE LAMBERT – AUSTRALIAN HIGH **COMMISSIONERFOR MALTA**

On behalf of all the team here at the Australian High Commission in Malta I would like to wish the Maltese community in South Australia a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to working with the community during 2014, which will be an important year as it will mark the 50th anniversary on 21 September of formal diplomatic relations between Australia and Malta. I hope you and your families have a safe and happy

F'isem it-team tal-Kummissjoni Gholja Awstraljana f'Malta, nixtieg lil-kommunita Maltija f'South Australia xewgat sbieh tal-Milied u s-Sena it-tajba. Ahna hergana li nahdmu mal-

kommunita matul il-2014, li ser tkun sena importanti minhabba li l-21 ta` Settembru ser jimmarka il 50 anniversarju ta' relazzionijiet diplomatici formali bejn I-Awstralja u Malta.

Nispera il inthom u I-familji taghkom ikollkom festi ferhana u bla periklu.



MESSAGE FROM JOSEPHINE ZAMMIT CORDINA - BROADCASTER - IL-BOOMERANG - MALTA

Lill-huti Maltin u Ghawdxin f'South Australia



Meta nhares lura lejn dawn I-ahhar ghoxrin sena u iktar li jiena kont midhla sew tal-Maltin u Ghawdxin kollha fl-Awstralja ma nistax ma tiginix in-nostalgija ta' dak kollu li kont ghamilt biex permezz tal-programmi tieghi dejiem inressagkom lein dawk l-gheziez li halleitu warajkom f'Malta.

Issa ili li waqaft milli nipproduci u nipprezenta I-progamm televiziv Waltzing Matilda ghal madwar sena u nofs izda sal-lum qhadni nzomm il-programm Il-Boomerang li jixxandar kull nhar ta' Sibt fuq Radju Malta 2. B'hekk xorta wahda zammejt dak il-kuntatt mal-Awstralja.

Nixtieq lil kull wiehed u wahda minnkom Milied hieni u ta' paci u nibghat I-awguri tieghi u ta'zewgi Harry biex ilkoll tidhlu f'sena gdida li tkun ta' gid spiritwali u materjali.



MESSAGE FROM FATHER GABRIEL S MICALLEF OFM - Chaplain to the Maltese Community in

My dear ones, Make sure to keep Christ in your hearts, your families, your homes and your surroundings not only at Christmas but throughout the whole year. Happy Christmas to all.

Gheziez, - Aghmlu minn kollox biex izzommu lil Gesu' f'galbkom, fil-familji taghkom, fi djarkom u fl-ambjent li tahixu fih, mhux biss fil-Milied imma matul is-sena kollha. Il-Milied it-Tajjeb lilkom ilkoll.



MESSAGE FROM EDGAR AGIUS OAM JP PRESIDENT MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF S.A.

The true spirit of Christmas is to give and share with those less fortunate.

It is a time that priority should be to catch up with family and friends and also keep in mind that many are those who spend Christmas home alone. Share the joy, share the food, receive and pass on God's blessings.

On behalf of the Maltese Community Council of South Australia, I wish you and your families a very happy. holy and safe Christmas and a new year full of God's blessings.



MESSAGE FROM ANTONIA ABELA - PRESIDENT - MALTESE GUILD OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

To our members from the Maltese Guild of South Australia. We had a very busy year with many activities during the year such as the September Ball, our bus trip to Wentworth for a weekend. As a club we had lots of fun and enjoyment throughout the year. We wish all our members and their families a wonderful and safe Christmas. Thank you for your support during the year and looking forward to see

you all in the new year. Wishing you a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.



MESSAGE FROM CHARLES FARRUGIA - PRESIDENT - RSL MALTESE SUB BRANCH -SOUTH **AUSTRALIA**

Another year has passed and Christmas is around the corner.



A time for family and friends to gather together and enjoy and celebrate each other's company. From all the committee and members of the Maltese RSL, we wish the Community a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year From the President and Committee of the RSL Maltese Sub-Branch SA.

MESSAGE FROM CARMEN SPITERI – PRESIDENT – MALTESE QUEEN OF VICTORIES BAND – SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The President and Committee of the Maltese Queen of Victories Band extend the compliments of the Festive Season to all within the Maltese community. Our thanks goes to all musicians and those who have supported the Band throughout 2013. May the Christmas spirit fill your hearts and

homes with harmony and joy.

MESSAGE FROM JOHN MANGION - PRESIDENT MALTESE COMMUNITYY RADIO PROGRAMS - 5EBIFM

On behalf of the Maltese Community Radio, and the committee, I would like to thank the consulate for giving us the opportunity to send this message to the readers of this magnificent newsletter. Our committee produces three programs in Maltese specifically for the members of the Maltese community of South Australioa on 5 EBIfm - Adelaide. On behalf of the committee members Carmen, Bernadette and Doris, I wish you all a very merry, holy and safe Christmas, and a prosperous New Year 2014. May God bless you all. AWGURI U SAHHA Inselli ghalik hafna.

MESSAGE FROM HELEN ENGLISH CO-CHAIRPERSON – MALTESE AGED CARE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



The Maltese Aged Care Association Inc. extends to our clients and friends our best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our marvellous volunteers and staff for all their efforts throughout 2013.

MESSAGE FROM CONNIE VIDAL - COORDINATOR MALTESE PROGRAM ON 5PBAFM -



I wish the listeners of our weekly program and the readers of this wonderful newsletter a Christmas full of happiness and blessings and a happy new Year 2014. Our program has been on air every Saturday morning at 10.30 an continuously for these last 31 years and still going strong. Grazzi

MESSAGE FROM TESSIE MANSUETO – PRESIDENT – ST. CATHERINE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA On behalf of the committee I wish the members of our society and also the readers of this newsletter a very Happy Christmas and a bright new year 2014.



MESSAGE FROM FRANK GRIMA – PRESIDENT – SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION OF SA INC
On behalf of the Maltese Senior Citizens Association of SA Inc. The President Frank Grima and the
Committee would like to wish all members, sponsors, and all Maltese Community in general a very Merry
Christmas and a Prosperous and safe New Year.

MESSAGE FROM NICHOLAS BONELLO OAM – CHAIRMAN ANZAC MEMORIAL COMMITTEE – MALTA

To our many friends and their families in South Australia who over the last few years in their own way helped us to make the ANZAC Memorial project become a reality, I send my colleagues and my best wishes for a Merry Christmas, and may the new year 2014 be full of prosperity and happiness to all.

WE WISH TO THANK AND RECIPROCATE GREETINGS THAT WE RECEIVED FROM OUR READERS. It is not possible to list them all.

The True Meaning of Christmas

Christmas is the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, who is considered the Son of God, and the savior of all people. With the birth of Christ, Christianity essentially begins; thus, Christmas also celebrates the beginning of Christianity.

Though Christmas is normally celebrated on the 25th of December, strong evidence suggests that Jesus may have in fact been born in the spring. Though many Christians date Christ's



birth as the end of the "Before Christ" or BC era, most believe Christ's birth can actually be dated to 4 BC. This is a bit ironic, since the Christian era is thought to begin with the birth of Christ, but actually begins later.

Some of the images inexorably tied with this celebration are things like shepherds in the snow, and the fierce cold of a winter night when Jesus was born. This is an unlikely scenario, though it is quite possible that the Jews participating in the census and taxation were extremely crowded in Bethlehem.

Sextus Julius Africanus, a 3rd century Christian missionary, is believed to have first espoused the theory of Christ's birth as December 25th. This worked well when the Romans later largely converted to Christianity because Christmas could be tied to pagan winter rituals, making it more palatable. Historical records suggest some forms of celebration dating back to the early 4th century CE.

Charles Dickens must be mentioned as inspiring many of the traditions we now regularly practice as part of Christmas celebrations. His phenomenal classic *The Christmas Carol* published in 1843 changed it to a moderate, family oriented holiday. This differed from past celebrations which often verged on the anti-Christian, and which involved pursuing hedonism with graceless abandon.

Today, some argue, the holiday has been inexorably corrupted by the commercialism with which it has come to be associated. For the poor, it may well be a time when, to quote Dickens, "want is keenly felt." Dickens uses this as an argument for practicing charity and "keeping Christmas in our hearts" on every day of the year.

However, it can be stated that for the many joyous family celebrations where poverty is not a factor, there are still many where poverty is felt at Christmas, and where families despair that there is not even money to give their children basic necessities as gifts. Such a thought is sobering when one ponders the Christian message as one of personal sacrifice, kindness to others, and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Still, many Christians feel that even a Christmas with the overt trappings of commercialization has a special feeling that can only be attributed to faith. It can be a time to renew one's faith, or merely come closer to the birth of a religion which sustains many. In touching on Christ's message, even small children may begin to understand the sacred nature of the celebration to Christians.



Christmas events in the Maltese Islands



If you are planning a holiday to Malta in December or early January then you are in for a special Christmas treat. For the Maltese, Christmas is a very special holiday and the country has adapted both Italian and British traditions over the years and made them it's own

As you would expect, the streets are adorned with beautiful Christmas lights and Christmas carols can be heard throughout the islands. The country has rich religious traditions and there are many activities that take place in over three hundred churches across the islands.

Houses in Malta are also decorated with typical twinkling lights and Christmas trees. One of the main Christmas



one of the main Christmas traditions is the crib 'Presepju'. Cribs are made of newspapers which are moulded, glued and painted to resemble a cave. Ready made ones can be bought in different sizes. Small clay statues are then placed in the crib.

Nowadays you can find a variety of plastic ones as well for sale. Cribs in Malta come in all different styles and sizes. Some go for the extended crib which usually takes up the whole dining table and includes all aspects of life in

Bethlehem. Others even include mechanical moving objects like windmills, moving donkeys and lights. Flowing rivers are also common. These cribs are then placed in front of the window on street level so passers by can have a look. There are also open cribs usually in garages which occupy a whole room and are open to visitors at a small charge or donation. Sometimes you might even come across a live crib which includes a real donkey and cow in a manger.

Having been a British colony for almost two hundred years, Malta is the only country outside the United Kingdom where a traditional pantomime is still held. This year there are two productions taking place. "The Curse of Snow White" is being held at the Manoel Theatre while "The Wizard of Oz" will feature in a Panto at the M.F.C.C. complex in Ta' Qali. Besides the Pantos and religious events, this year's events calendar is pretty full. There are also various musical concertos, Christmas Caroling, a traditional Italian Circus and much more. Winter in Malta is pretty mild and this enables many outdoor activities to take place. For the second year running several Christmas Villages are being set up throughout the islands



DREAMING OF A MALTESE CHRISTMAS

You are not likely to have a white Christmas in Malta. Weather conditions resemble those of Betlehem, the birthplace of Christ. The temperature during Yuletide fluctuates from a maximum of 19 degrees Celsius to a minimum of 9C.

Christmas festival, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, is observed around the Christian world on the 25 December the date believed to have been fixed by St Hyppolytus in the 3rd century. Christmas is a feast of peace and goodwill to all humans. Christmas is Christmas everywhere, but there are certain characteristics that make Maltese Christmas different from that of

many other countries.

The streets of towns and villages are decorated and lit with multicoloured lights (festuni). Shop windows display the usual Christmas decorations and a large variety of toys and presents to lure Christmas shoppers who jam the streets. Christmas trees (is-sigra tal-Milied) and the figure of Father Christmas (Santa Claus) are seen all over the place. The

main feature, which is a typically Maltese tradition, is the number of cribs (presepji) that can be seen in

public places and in private homes.

The first Maltese crib we know of is that found at the Benedictine Nuns in Mdina and bears on its framework the year 1826. Another crib of the same period is found in Vittoriosa but this has been over restored and there is almost nothing left of the original structure. The main characters in the crib are naturally Joseph and Mary with baby Jesus together with the cow, the donkey and the sheep; and the

three Kings who came to visit the new born baby bearing gifts of myrrh, frankincense and gold.

Fraditionally, the crib figurines (pasturi) were made of clay. Apart from the principal figures they include shepherds minding their flock, street singers, the shepherd's pipe and drum players, a farmer feeding the animals, woman carrying a flour sack, the sleeping man and the man sprawling on his stomach and perched on top of the grotto looking down at Baby Jesus. These fragile penny clay figurines were easily acquired few years ago. Nowadays modern plastic figurines are more commonly found in the Maltese family crib.

The tradition of building cribs in churches and homes began in the 13th century by the Franciscan friars. The actual crib where Christ was born was brought from Betlehem in the seventh century and is preserved at the Liberian Basilica in Rome.

The tradition of the Christmas tree and Christmas cards (il-kartolini tal-Milied) was imported from Germany in the 19th century. There is also a connection between the exchanging of presents and the feast of St. Nicholas (Santa Claus), the patron saint of children. Saint Nicholas was a bishop who lived in the 4th century and his feast is celebrated annually on the 5th December.

Nearly in every town and village a procession is held with children carrying a small statue of baby Jesus and singing Christmas carols along the way. In every parish church in Malta and Gozo during midnight Mass a small child, dressed as an acolyte, recites a sermon narrating the birth of Christ.

Christmas offers a splendid occasion for family gatherings. In most houses an attractively decorated Christmas tree is put up beneath which are placed the various presents wrapped in colourful paper. Christmas pudding (il-pudina tal-Milied) and turkey (id-dundjan) became popular during the first and second world wars when thousands of sailors and soldiers from the British Empire were stationed in Malta. The Island was a military and naval base for the allies. Prior to these wars a rooster (serduq), rather than turkey, was the bird to be served at Christmas dinner. The traditional Christmas banquet normally includes the delicious Maltese dish called timpana, backed macaroni covered with crusty pastry. A special kind of honey-and treacle rings (gaghag tal-ghasel) are eaten during the Christmas festivities.

An old tradition that survived up to this day is the sowing of wheat, grain and canary seed (gulbiena) on clots of cotton in flat pans four weeks before Christmas and nurtured in the darkness of cupboards in the kitchen. These seeds shoot up and remain as white as Santa's beard. They are then placed next to the infant Jesus and around the crib.

custom which unfortunately vanished many years ago was the playing of bagpipes (iz-zagg). They characterised

the music of the shepherds who tended their flock on Christmas night. Folk memory in Gozo records that for the midnight Mass on Christmas Eve bagpipes were played in churches striking a genuine pastoral note. The most popular Christmas carol, which is translated in every language on earth, is 'Silent Night". Here is the Maltese version:

O Lejl ta' Skiet - lejl tal-Milied Lejl ghaziz - lejl qaddis

Dawwlet is-sema il-kewkba li ddit Habbret li l-fidwa tal-bniedem inbdiet;

Kristu huwa mhabba bla qies! Kristu huwa mhabba bla qies

MALTESE CHRISTMAS CRIB (Presepju)



The earliest Maltese crib known to date is that found at the Benedictine Nuns in Mdina and bears the year 1826 on its framework. Another one of the same period is found in Birgu but this has been over restored and there is almost nothing left of the original crib.

The famous Father Papale whose works are well known in Sicily and Italy also worked in Malta but none of his cribs have as yet been traced. The Maltese crib was influenced by Sicilian standards as in the case of other religious, cultural and social traditions still found on the island. The more popular family crib of that time was made from papier mâché and cardboard or 'gagazza' which was the residual material left from burnt coal. Such cribs included invariably the silver star on the grotto with paper faces of angels

and cherubs, the windmill and a well or fountain.

The larger Maltese cribs included with the grotto a valley, a waterfall, Rachel's tomb, hills, the city of Jerusalem in the background, a field, the bakery, scenery at the background and the use of corn and vetch grown in small pots placed in front of the crib.

Dun Gorg Preca, the founder of the Society of Christian Doctrine, showed a special attachment to the Christmas mysteries and thus through his society contributed substantially for spreading the love for cribs and statues of Baby Jesus in the majority of Maltese households. The crib has today moved slightly away from this traditional theme. Materials like 'gagazza' have been substituted by polystyrene. Nonetheless the crib has retained its charm and magic through the generations.



CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA

Family claim Guinness World Record for Christmas light display with 502,165 flickering bulbs Father-of-three David Richards, from Canberra, Australia first won title in 2011 with 331,038 lights

However, he was beaten by a family from New York who installed 346,283 - but Mr Richards vowed to regain title



- His family have now officially broken the record with 502,165 lights - much to the annoyance of his neighbours
- Lights will raise money for charity and cost £1,400 to run for a month

An Australian family who put more than half a million Christmas lights on their house have claimed a world record - for the second time. Father-of-three David Richards from Canberra first won the title in 2011 with 331,038 lights, but was beaten by a family in New York who put up 346,283. His family vowed to take regain the title this Christmas - so installed more than 31 miles of wire with

502,165 lights, glowing reindeer and loud music around their suburban home, to the irritation of some neighbours.

Blinding: Half a million Christmas lights have wowed and annoyed neighbours in equal measure in Canberra. Speaking about his achievement, father-of-three David Richards, who claimed a world record for the second time, said: 'I just love Christmas'

Maltese Christmas pudding

Christmas pudding is a popular dish in Malta around the Christmas holidays. Many people are surprised to find out that it isn't pudding at all. It is actually a moist, cake-like sweet bread, filled with nuts, raisins and other dried fruit. There are many variations on how to make Christmas pudding and how to serve it. This recipe makes a very rich, moist pudding, particularly if made one to two months ahead to allow time for the fruity flavours to develop.

Serves: 8-10 Preparation time: 1 hour, plus overnight standing

Cooking time: 2 to 6 hours

You will need

125g ready-to-eat prunes, chopped

225g raisins

225g currants

225g sultanas

50g mixed candied peel (preferably in large pieces)



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Chopped rind and juice of 1 lemon

50g chopped almonds

1 cooking apple, peeled, cored and grated

1 medium carrot, peeled and grated

225g molasses sugar

225g suet (I use vegetable rather than beef)

125g fresh white breadcrumbs

125g plain flour

½ tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp ground coriander

½ tsp freshly ground nutmeg

3 eggs

150ml strong ale

1 tbsp black treacle

2 tbsp rum, to serve

Method

- 1. In bowl one, put the first nine ingredients in the list and mix together.
- 2. In bowl two, put the next seven ingredients and mix together.
- 3. Mix together the contents of bowls one and two. The easiest way to do this is with very clean hands.
- 4. Whisk the eggs and ale together and stir into the mixture. Stir in the black treacle.
- 5. Cover and leave to stand overnight in a cool place.
- 6. Butter a pudding basin and put a circle of greaseproof paper in the base.
- 7. Pack the mixture into the basin and smooth the top. Leave a 2.5 cm head space.
- 8. Cut a double layer of greaseproof paper or baking parchment into a 33cm circle. Make a pleat and cover the pudding. Tie with string around the edge, then tie with more string and make a handle so that it can be easily lifted in and out of the pan.
- 9. Put the basin in the top of a steamer of simmering water and steam for the required time (see Tip). Alternatively, put the basin on a trivet (or an upturned saucer) in a large heavy-based saucepan. Pour boiling water around the edge until it comes two-thirds of the way up the side of the bowl. Cover with the lid of the pan and simmer for the required time. Remember to top up with boiling water every hour.
- 10. Cool. Put on a new greaseproof or parchment cover, and then cover tightly with foil.
- 11. Store in a cool dark place until Christmas. It will keep for up to six months.
- 12. Steam for two hours before serving.
- 13. Turn out on to a warm serving plate. Warm two tablespoons of rum in a small saucepan. Set alight and carefully pour over the pudding. Place a sprig of holly on the top and serve.



CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT IN AUSTRALIA

Carols by Candlelight is an Australian Christmas tradition that originated in southeastern Australia in the 19th century



and was popularised in Melbourne in 1937. The tradition has since spread around the world. It involves people gathering, usually outdoors in a park, to sing carols by candlelight, accompanied by a band. Today, the largest such event is held annually at the Sydney Myer Music Bowl in Melbourne's King's Domain Gardens on Christmas Eve since 1938.

History

One of the earliest forms of Carols by Candlelight began in the 19th century, when Cornish Miners in Moonta, South Australia gathered on Christmas Eve to sing carols lit with candles stuck to the brims of their safety hats. [citation needed] The

tradition spread through Victoria and Melbourne, until it was popularised in 1938 by Norman Banks, a radio announcer, then with Melbourne radio station 3KZ. Whilst walking home from his night-time radio shift on Christmas Eve in 1937, he passed a window and saw inside an elderly woman sitting up in bed, listening to Away in a Manger being played on the radio and singing along, with her face being lit by candlelight. Wondering how many others spent Christmas alone, he had the idea to gather a large group of people to all sing Christmas carols together by candlelight. The first ever such event was held in Alexandra Gardens the following Christmas, 1938, and was attended by around 10,000 people.

Following World War II, the Carols became so well patronised that the decision was made to move it to the neighbouring park in King's Domain. In 1959, the newly constructed Sidney Myer Music Bowl provided a permanent venue, where they are still held to this day. Funds raised from donations, ticket, and candle sales are given to Vision Australia (formerly the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, RVIB).

Broadcast

The program is broadcast live every Christmas Eve by the Nine Network from the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, Australia-wide. The event is also broadcast live to eastern Asia, many Pacific Islands and New Zealand. The event was hosted for 18 years by Ray Martin. Because of the arrangement the show often features Nine stars such as Hi-5, and more recently, stars from Nine's hit series, The Voice.

Events

Similar events are now held all over Australia, usually arranged by churches, local councils, or other community groups. They are normally held on Christmas Eve or the Sunday or weekend before Christmas.

One of the most notable is Carols in the Domain, held annually in Sydney.

Christmas Eve 2012 marked the 75th anniversary of Carols by Candlelight, a much loved event that has become a tradition in households around Australia.^[1]

In Victoria

In North Balwyn Carols in the Park is held annually. In 2011 it moved to Macleay Park, North Balwyn and in 2013 will be on Saturday 14 December. Formerly known as Carols by Candlelight it was first held in 1980 in Leigh Park and has been drawing an estimated four to five thousand people. The brass band Boroondara Brass leads the Carols and will be joined this year by the Open Door Singers. Santa, *stunt motorcyclist David Russell*, usually lands in on his trusty Suzuki motorcycle sleigh. The Carols conclude with a spectacular fireworks display. Tim Blowfield, Committee, North Balwyn InterChurch Council 2013. In 2012, 10,000 people attended the celebration in Victoria.^[2]

Around Australia

In **Sydney**, Carols in the Domain (broadcast by the Seven Network) attracts high-profile international performers, and offers free tickets to the live event.

In **Brisbane** the Lord Mayor's Christmas Carols (Carols in the City broadcast by Network Ten) are held normally the first Saturday in December, at the Brisbane River Stage in the Brisbane City Botanic Gardens.

In **Perth**, Carols by Candlelight are held in mid December at the Supreme Court Gardens, while other events are held at Fremantle, Scarborough and Rockingham. In 2012, Suzie Mathers performed during the IGA Carols by Candlelight in Perthhttp://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carols by Candlelight - cite note-3

In **Adelaide**, Carols by Candlelight is held in the weeks before Christmas in Elder Park on the banks of the River Torrens. In 2012, 30, 000 people witnessed the event.

In **Newcastle**, New South Wales, Carols by Candlelight are held in mid December, both at Speers Point Park on the edge of Lake Macquarie and at King Edward Park in the city near the beach.

In **Hobart**, due to the urban nature of the city, there are three main carols services. One each in Clarence, Glenorchy and the main ceremony in Sandown Park in Sandy Bay, Hobart itself.

In **Canberra** the annual Carols by Candlelight is held in Commonwealth Park. It is a traditional Carols with community singing of carols lead by Woden Valley Youth Choir and one of the local bands such as Canberra City Band. Guest Artists are featured - usually drawn from the local community. The event is normally held on the last Wednesday of the school term, from 7.00 pm. Donations are collected for a local charity with \$14,180 raised in 2012 for the Snowy Hydro Southcare Helicopter service. In 2011 and 2012, Auslan interpreters provided interpretation for members of the regional deaf community and that service is expected to continue.http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carols by Candlelight - cite note-5



<u>Celebrating Christmas in Malta</u>

A Nativity crib

In Malta, Christmas is known as "II-Milied" and celebrated on December 25. Here, the festival is traditionally centred on presepju or Nativity cribs. During Christmas time in Malta, cribs are built almost everywhere and by everyone. These are then decorated with figurines, called pasturi—representing Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, the shepherds, angels, villagers and animals such as cows, donkeys and sheep.

On December 24, Maltese churches are decorated with lights and nativity cribs built by churchgoers. The figure of the baby Jesus is placed on the main altar at the midnight hour of Christmas night, commemorating the birth of the Messiah. A Maltese group known as Friends of the Crib see to it that the crib tradition remains alive.

The tradition of displaying cribs first began in 1617, when the first true Maltese crib is believed to have been made and displayed in the Dominican Friars Church in Rabat. Since then, the custom has gained its ground and gone from strength to

strength.In 1921, the renowned priest George Preca organised a Christmas Eve procession with a life-size figure of the infant Jesus being carried at the front.

The idea became very popular with people of all ages, and this was how the very special Maltese traditional Christmas procession started. The custom is hugely popular even today, and forms an integral part of the Christmas Eve celebrations. Every home in Malta has its own Christmas tree, decorated with light bulbs, tinsel and other items of embellishment. The interior of every house is adorned with Christmas wreaths, candles and all sorts of other decorations. It is traditional to sow wheat, grain and canary seed, or gulbiena, on cotton buds in dark corners in the house. These are sown five weeks before Christmas and left undisturbed.

At around Christmas day, white grass-like shoots sprout from the seeds. These are then used to decorate the crib or the statue of baby Jesus. On Christmas Eve, a procession is held, followed by the midnight Mass service, which is attended by most of the Maltese population, who are Catholics. After Mass it is customary to greet "II-Milied It-Taijeb" (Merry Christmas), to all those assembled. Christmas day in Malta is a time to celebrate with family.

All extended members of a family assemble in one house for lunch, and stay there till the evening. Christmas lunch in Malta traditionally consists of "dundjan" (turkey), "qaghaq tal-ghasel" (honey rings) and "pudina tal-Milied" (Christmas pudding). Christmas dishes in Malta are heavily influenced by British traditions.



Santa Claus



The origin of Santa Claus begins in the 4th century with Saint Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, an area in present day Turkey. By all accounts St. Nicholas was a generous man, particularly devoted to children. After his death around 340 A.D. he was buried in Myra, but in 1087 Italian sailors purportedly stole his remains and removed them to Bari, Italy, greatly increasing St. Nicholas' popularity throughout Europe.

His kindness and reputation for generosity gave rise to claims he that he could perform miracles and devotion to him increased. St. Nicholas became the patron saint of Russia, where he was known by his red cape, flowing white beard, and bishop's mitre.

In Greece, he is the patron saint of sailors, in France he is the patron of lawyers, and in Belgium the patron of children and travellers. Thousands of churches across Europe were dedicated to him and some time around the 12th century an official

church holiday was created in his honor. The Feast of St. Nicholas was celebrated December 6 and the day was marked by gift-giving and charity.

After the Reformation, European followers of St. Nicholas dwindled, but the legend was kept alive in Holland where the Dutch spelling of his name Sint Nikolaas was eventually transformed to Sinterklaas. Dutch children would leave their wooden shoes by

the fireplace, and Sinterklaas would reward good children by placing treats in their shoes. Dutch colonists brought brought this tradition with them to America in the 17th century and here the Anglican name of Santa Claus emerged.

In 1822 Clement C. Moore composed the poem <u>A Visit From Saint Nicholas</u>, published as The Night Before Christmas as a gift for his children. In it, he portrays Santa Claus:

He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly,
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

Other countries feature different gift-bearers for the Christmas or Advent season: La Befana in Italy ~ The Three Kings in Spain, Puerto Rico, and Mexico ~ Christkindl or the Christ Child in Switzerland and Austria ~ Father Christmas in England ~ and Pere Noël, Father Christmas or the Christ Child in France. Still, the figure of Santa Claus as a jolly, benevolent, plump man in a red suit described in Moore's poem remains with us today and is recognized by children and adults alike around the world.





GARLIC PRAWNS for Christmas in Australia

"From garlic prawns, to chilli prawn salad cocktails and canapés, Australians have enough recipes you need to "throw another shrimp on the barbie"!

Ingredients

- 80ml (1/3 cup) olive oil
- 80g butter, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1kg medium green prawns, peeled leaving tails

- intact, deveined
- 1/3 cup loosely packed finely chopped fresh chives, to garnish
- 4 slices crusty bread, to serve

Method

Step 1

Preheat oven to 200°C. Place four 250ml (1-cup) capacity ovenproof dishes on a baking tray. Place 1 tbs of oil in each dish. Place in preheated oven for 2 minutes or until hot. Step 2

Meanwhile, melt butter and garlic in a saucepan over low heat. Add prawns and stir to combine. Remove from heat. Step 3

Divide prawn mixture among prepared dishes. Cook in oven for 8 minutes or until prawns curl and change colour. Remove from oven.

Step 4

Place dishes on plates. Sprinkle the prawns with chives and serve with bread.

Chilli Prawn Salad



• 1 garlic clove, crushed

Ingredients

- 375g dried medium-width rice noodles
- 2 carrots, peeled
- 2 Lebanese cucumbers
- 1 red capsicum, deseeded
- 4 tbs lime juice
- 2 tbs fish sauce
- 1 tbs soy sauce
- 1 tbs brown sugar
- 1 cup fresh mint leaves
- 1 tbs peanut oil
- 1kg Large Green Australian Banana Prawns, peeled, tails intact, deveined
- 2 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped

Directions:

- 1. Place noddles into a large bowl and cover with boiling water. Stand for 10 minutes or until soft. Drain, refresh in cold water and drain well. Set aside.
- 2. Using a vegie peeler, slice carrots into long thin ribbons. Quarter cucumbers lengthways and slice diagonally. Cut capsicum into shreds.
- 3. Combine lime juice, fish sauce, soy sauce and sugar in a small bowl an stir until sugar has dissolved. Toss noodles, vegetables and mint together gently. Drizzle over dressing.
- 4. Heat wok or frying pan over medium-high heat. Add oil, prawns chilli and garlic and toss for about 2 minutes or until prawns change colour. Add to noodle salad and serve



NOV.30, 2013

JUNIOR EUROVISION WINNER: IT'S GAIA CAUCHI FROM MALTA!



Gaia Cauchi, a small girl from a small island, has just won big. The 11-year-old singer cruised to victory at Junior Eurovision 2013, blowing away televoters and jurors with her powerful vocals and infectious smile. Her song may be called "The Start" but we have a feeling that this is just the beginning of a long and successful career.

The Junior Eurovision winner comes from a rural village called Mgarr, but she's been competing on bigger stages for a while now. She placed first in the junior section of the popular San Remo festival, and was recently honoured at the 2013 Malta Music Awards. But young Gaia still has her feet planted firmly on the ground. During her victory speech she thanked her vocal coach Gillian Attard and her parents. After the televised broadcast cut, she told reporters, "I am so happy!"

As you can see in these photos, Gaia was overwhelmed with emotion in the moments after her victory. She repeatedly wiped her eyes in between smiles and hugs from competitors.

Ahead of the contest, all signs seemed to point to Malta's first victory at Junior Eurovision. Gaia placed first in our poll, and she also finished first with our jury of music unprofessionals. Even so, there were critics who suggested her song wasn't exciting enough for JESC and that it was perhaps a bit too mature. Fortunately we knew Gaia had plenty of inner strength to handle the talk, as evidenced by the lyrics of her song. You can't hold this girl down.

Cause I have this voice inside That I don't want to hide But people told me I can't do it I know that I'l get through it

I know that I can make it I'll reach for the stars - Beautiful - What do you think about Malta's victory? Has Whitney Houston been reincarnated as a Maltese girl? Does Mariah Carey need to call Gaia for vocal lessons?





I'm Dreaming of a Green Christmas

Follow these top tips to keep your festive season ecofriendly

Christmas just got a little greener and a little wiser with help from eco blogger and mother of two Kirstine McKay and her environmentally friendly Christmas trees.

"I love celebrating Christmas and

making our home beautiful and welcoming, but I wanted to make sure I wasn't harming the planet in the process" said Kirstine.

After years of apartment living where disposal of a 'real' tree was difficult and it's wilted mess not what she wanted to see on return from Christmas holidays, Kirstine set out to design her own gorgeously green tree. "I'm very passionate about showing how our homes can be sustainable AND beautiful" said Kirstine.

The Eco Xmas Trees are made in Australia from sustainable timber and they use non toxic zero VOC paints. The trees are designed to be easily assembled or flat packed for minimal storage and used year after year.

Eco Xmas Tree are selling the trees on-line at www.ecoxmastree.com.au

Kirstine has also designed and handmade a range of Christmas decorations and accessories to compliment the trees. With the tree ticked off your Christmas list, here are some of Kirstine's tips to help keep the festive season as green as possible.

ECO Christmas Tips:

- 1 Look for locally made products
- 2 Choose gifts made from recycled or sustainable sources
- 3 Avoid plastics and battery operated gifts
- 4 Keep food waste to a minimum by buying less, composting or using a worm farm
- 5 Leave disposable plates, cutlery and napkins OFF the list
- 6 When wrapping presents; use a cloth bag like a Santa sack or Christmas stocking, recycle kids art works or use brown paper tied up with natural jute string for a range of beautifully handmade Christmas stockings and Christmas sacks. Stockings and sacks aren't just for Santa!.



The St. Mary Youth Section (Sezzjoni Żgħażagħ Santa Marija) of Mqabba is organising 'Milied Imdawwal' in the Parish Square, between Friday 20th and Sunday 22nd December 2013, from 6pm till 10pm.

Amongst the various attractions, the spotlight will focus on an animated Nativity scene (based on the Live Crib which this Youths Section is renowned for), and a model of the Largest Live Crib (certified by the Malta Records), along with an exhibition of the four editions of the above mentioned Live Crib.

One will also have the opportunity to taste numerous of traditional Christmas food and drinks, whilst being entertained with a show of singers, musicians and dancers throughout the evening.

A Kids Area will also be available for any young attendants, who will also have the opportunity to take a photo with Santa Claus in his comfy

home. Traditional tools and artisan items (which will be on sale during the event) will also be exhibited.



<u>UNUSUAL 2013 Christmas Stamp – CANADA :</u> Saint Anne with the Christ Child

Canada's Stamp Details

This year's religious stamp features a rare glimpse into the family life of Jesus Christ. While most familial paintings show baby Jesus in the arms of his mother, Mary, 17th-century artist Georges de La Tour places the swaddled infant in the care of his maternal grandmother, Saint Anne.

Anonymously donated to the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) in 1991, the oil on canvas was part of the AGO's European collection and was painted around 1645-50. The artist, de La Tour, was born in Vic-sur-Seille, France, in 1593, and died in Lunéville, France, in 1652. The painting demonstrates his signature chiaroscuro technique, with the candle held by Saint Anne creating a sharp contrast between light and dark.

Australia Post celebrates Christmas with traditional stamps

Australia Post has officially marked the start of the festive season with the release of this year's Christmas stamps, featuring the familiar emblems of Christmas and the traditional Nativity scene.

"Australians enjoy sending and receiving their Christmas greetings through the post, it's a more personal and real experience," said Australia Post Managing Director & CEO Ahmed Fahour.

"Even in this digital age, sending a card is still a strong Christmas tradition. Australia Post has a long and proud history of helping connect Australians to their family and friends, whether they live in Australia or overseas."

"At this time of year, we always remind people to post their Christmas cheer early. After all, the sooner you send your cards, the more time your friends and family have to enjoy them (and it gives them plenty of time to send one back)."



"As usual, card-only stamps in Australia will be five cents cheaper through the Christmas period - just remember to write 'card only' on the envelope."

The two traditional Christmas stamps depict the Virgin Mary and Christ Child and Shepherds adoring the Christ Child. They are based on a painting by Australian artist Paul Newton, which is shown fully in the miniature sheet.

The four non-traditional stamps feature familiar Christmas symbols: a Christmas tree, gift, candle and a bell. They are designed by Lisa Christensen of the Australia Post Design Studio.

When choosing Christmas cards, senders should remember to select standard card sizes (no larger than 130mm x 240m) to qualify for the 55c stamp rate for Australia and \$1.70

(New Zealand), \$1.80 (Asia Pacific) or \$2.55 (rest of the world) stamp rate for overseas.

The full stamp range is available from participating Australia Post retail outlets, via mail order on 1800 331 794 or online at auspost.com.au/stamps from 1 November 2013 while stocks last.

For further information about Christmas postal rates, international and domestic posting deadlines and tips on correct packaging, visit the staff at your local Australia Post retail outlet, telephone 13 13 18 or visit <u>auspost.com.au</u>.





GOD BLESS 2014

Lets pray for a year
with new peace and contentment
new fortune and friends
May God bless you and your family
throughout 2014
and may you have
an unforgettable new year