



# Maltese e-Newsletter



**The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora**

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The most romantic  
experience  
by night



**MDINA  
THE SILENT CITY**

## MDINA – THE MEDIEVAL AND MYSTERIOUS CITY

Mdina is a fortified city, situated on the highest hill in Malta, in the northern region. Back in the day, until the medieval times, it was in fact Malta's capital. The city still remains within the city walls and have a population of only approximately 300 people. The history of Mdina can be traced back more than 4000 years. According to tradition the Apostle St Paul is said to have lived here after being shipwrecked on the Islands back in 60 AD. Its medieval name – The Noble City – is a very apt description of Mdina, as is the more common name Mdina is now known by – The Silent City.

We used the hop on hop off bus to get to Mdina from St Julian's. It probably isn't the quickest way of getting there but it did give us the opportunity to sit on the top deck of the bus and take in the Maltese countryside. As we arrived so did another half a dozen or so other buses – both sightseeing ones and public ones. This in turn created the impression that it was going to be heaving with people once inside the city walls, as people edged towards the city gates, which were featured in Game of Thrones, eager to see what was waiting on the other side.

The chatter once inside subsided as people were obviously taken aback by the beautiful buildings they were greeted with – it truly is an open-air museum just waiting to be explored and is one of Europe's leading examples of walled cities. The Norman and Baroque architecture and wandering the narrow cobbled streets are easy to navigate. Mdina is fully pedestrianised with only the few residents that live there being allowed to drive in the city. However you can hire a horse-drawn carriage to take you round the city if you aren't to stable on your feet or you fancy adding a bit of romance to your visit. Considering the number of people piling off the buses, it was not overcrowded once inside.

If 'getting lost' in the city is not your thing there are plenty of audio tours that you can download directly to your phone or iPod for around 5 euros. We found the one available on **Get Your Guide** very useful. It includes 17 audio tracks and a map and takes around 1 hour to complete.

There are a number of sites to see in Mdina including:

**The Mdina Cathedral**- The late 17th-century St. Paul's Cathedral was designed by architect Lorenzo Gafa. It has a lavish interior and the museum has a collection of coins, silver plate, religious vestments and some woodcuts by the German artist Albert Dürer.

**Palazzo Falson** – is a palace in Mdina. It is believed to have been constructed between around 1495 and mid-16th century, although parts of it might date back to the 13th century. This makes it the second oldest building in the city. It is open to the public.

**The Bastion** – take a walk to the bastion which offers panoramic views over the Maltese countryside. It is even possible to see over the **Mosta Dome** from here. Don't forget to check out the elegant buildings built near the bastion and submerge yourself in old world charm.

**The Mdina Experience** – you will never know Mdina better! a 30 minute show to experience Mdina's fascinating journey through time. Relive Mdina's 7000 years of triumph and tribulations – the cult of the mother Goddess – the shipwreck of St. Paul – the medieval city half destroyed by earthquake and gloriously rebuilt

**Palazzo Vilhena** – is a French Baroque palace. It is named after António Manoel de Vilhena, the Grand Master who commissioned it. It was built between 1726 and 1728 to designs of the French architect Charles François de Mondion. Since 1973, it has been open to the public as the **National Museum of Natural History**.

Following a great morning of exploration there was only thing for it – lunch. There are many reputable restaurants in Mdina but the busiest for lunch by far was the **Fontanella Tea Garden** which is famed for its cake and views across Malta. Unfortunately, we couldn't not get a table upstairs, therefore missed out on the views, we also didn't have cake (there was just no room after our sandwich) but I can confirm it looked amazing and looking back I should have got a piece to take back to the **hotel** with me.

It may be a small city but it is rich in history (and currently on the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites). Not the ideal place to base yourself when visiting Malta due to its lack of facilities and amenities however Mdina is a must see place in Malta – it is unique and truly stunning.



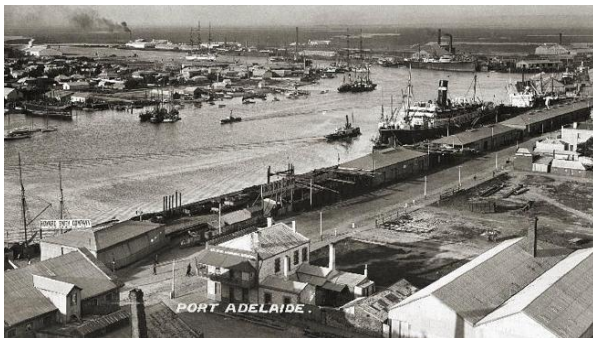
# Maltese in South Australia



The first Maltese to arrive in Australia was a convict Felice Pace. He arrived in Sydney in 1810 together with a group of prisoners from England and Ireland. Antonio Azzopardi was the first free settler and he set foot in Australia in 1837. A Maltese Franciscan priest, Fr Ambrose Cassar, migrated to Australia together with a group of 61 labourers and 9 stowaways in 1881. They attempted to settle in Queensland to work on sugar cane farms but their plan was unsuccessful as the conditions were extreme.

We do not know who was the first Maltese to settle in South Australia. However, Francesco DeCesare, a Maltese scholar who travelled across Australia during the 1880s, recorded a very interesting but sad story of Adelaide's first Maltese he encountered. His name was C. Fabri and his occupation was a land surveyor. Decesare stated in his work Reports Upon the Unsuitability of the British Colonies in Australia as a Field Maltese Emigration that he met Fabri who at that time was employed by the government as a draughtsman. Unfortunately, he was retrenched due to economic measures taken by the government. To survive he had to sell his professional instruments and books. His health deteriorated so much that he finished up in Adelaide's Destitute Asylum where he eventually died.

According to the 1911 census there were 248 Maltese in Australia. The number increased considerably in the years to follow. However, in 1912 the Australian Government excluded Maltese immigrants from the assisted passage scheme as a result of trade unions bans on "cheap labour". In the same year the Government legislated the new policy of White Australia called the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act. This unfair exclusion of the Maltese made of mockery of the fact that they were British subjects and held a British passport.



The bans remained in force until 1948. Yet, between 1911 and 1919 over 2000 Maltese migrated to Australia. They encountered some opposition and most of them had to find work in remote areas such as the Mt Lyell copper mines in Tasmania, at Broken Hill mines and on the Pine Creek to Katherine railway in the Northern Territory. In 1914 there were approximately 385 Maltese working on the Pine Creek to Katherine railway line and another 200 working at Mt Lyell mines. In South Australia significant number of Maltese worked at Port Pirie. Father

Fenech, a Maltese Carmelite priest, was assisting new arrivals to settle in other States. He even arranged for them to travel to the Northern Territory.

In December 1913 Joseph Vella from Mellieha, Malta and his friend Paul Abela, decided to emigrate to Australia. They left Malta for Naples, Italy. They continued their journey to Australia aboard the Otway. The two friends were able to find a job as labourers within a week however when they lost their jobs they run out of money and they experienced poverty and hunger. They lived in the bush not very far from Port Adelaide. Every day they walked from the port to the city in search of work. During this period Joe and Paul lived on scraps, grass and tree roots.

Mistaken as German illegal immigrants they were detained by the police. When they were cleared, the police helped them to find work on a small merchant ship. Joe later moved to Broken Hill on the border between South Australia and New South Wales to worked as a miner with Paul's cousin. Joe then moved to Sydney and found a job working on the railway lines. He later settled in Mackay, Queensland.



Frank Schembri, who worked as a canteen manager on British ship when he was in Malta, arrived in Adelaide in 1915. He commenced his working life in Australia at Port Pirie. Later, he moved to Adelaide where he opened a grocery shop at Glanville. Three years later he was able to pay for the passage for his wife and daughter to be with him. In 1922 Frank built an ice-cream factory behind his shop. For twenty years he managed the factory and his business flourished. Then, in 1942 he switched to producing soft drinks. In the late 80s Frank's son was still running the family business in Alice Springs.

The darkest period in the history of Maltese migration in South Australia occurred in the 1920s when they were savagely discriminated against. The Australian Government banned them from being employed with the Australian railways. The irony is that a large number of them served in World War I. The majority of the Maltese suffered hunger and despair in spite of many of them were skilled artisans. Mr Gunn, the South Australian Premier, regarded the Maltese as "uninvited immigrants" and refused to assist them to find employment.

So, the Maltese set up tents along the River Torrens near the city and made their living from selling vegetables and fruit. They received help and support from the Maltese Club which was situated in 158 Hindley Street, Adelaide. They formed their own association and called it the Adelaide Unemployed Maltese Organisation and lobbied the Federal and State Governments to lift up the ban. Unfortunately, their efforts were fruitless and the ban stayed. Many of them returned to Malta or went to other States and found work on small farms run by fellow Maltese Australians.

Malta, being a British colony, served as a strategic base for Allied forces during World War II. The Maltese Islands suffered heavy bomb damage to most of its buildings. When the war ended Malta and the Maltese were physically and economically under a heavy stress. Malta and Gozo were overpopulated and the unemployment was very high. Therefore, between 1948 and 1973 a large number of Maltese paid the Australian Government ten pounds, sold up their belongings and took ship for Australia under the Malta-Australia Passage Scheme.

The range of social background of migrants was wide so where their skills and ages. Some were married with children, but many were single. The lucky ones had relatives already in Australia, but the majority did not. The Maltese left home not because of political or religious oppression; they had one idea in common - to build a better future for their children and for themselves as there was great unemployment after WW2 and most Maltese had large families.

Most Maltese have prospered and have no regrets; but there were those who wish they have never left Malta. Some of them went back and many returned to Australia again, unable to settle in either country. Today nearly every family in Malta has an immediate relative living in this continent OF Australia.

### *Mississauga Sports Hall of Fame Inducts Joe Schembri - Canada*



Joe Schembri grew up in a country where he can't recall ever seeing any ice. Even after living in Canada for close to 60 years, he still hasn't laced up a pair of skates. "I'm from Malta and soccer is the sport there," Schembri said. "Nobody has seen a hockey rink or anything like that there."

Despite never playing the game, he still developed an appreciation for it, enough so to become a longtime executive with the Mississauga Terriers AA program. His son Reg played the game in the 1970s, and Joe and a

group of parents decided to form their own team that eventually turned into multiple clubs under the Terriers banner. On June 8, 2017 Schembri was one of six individuals inducted into the Mississauga Sports Hall of Fame. "I don't know much of hockey as far as playing it, but it shows that even if you don't know much, you can always help," he said. "There's room for everybody."

## INDEPENDENT INQUIRY CLEARS PRIME MINISTER ANY WRONGDOING



Prime Minister of Malta the Hon. Dr Joseph Muscat MP announced the outcome of the independent inquiry, led by Magistrate Aaron Bugeja, regarding the allegation that the company 'Egrant' belonged to him or his wife. The inquiry took 15 months to establish all the details of the allegations, down to the smallest details.

Dr Joseph Muscat expressed his full commitment to seeing the publication in full of the 1500 page-long inquiry, as it is in the national interest to publish the full extent of the details in the "frame-up" concerning Dr Muscat, his wife, his family and some of the family's closest friends. The inquiry clarifies that this was a clear attempt at a frame-up against Dr Muscat in a professional and personal capacity, both as Prime Minister of Malta and as a family man. Moreover, this was deemed to be a coup at

destabilising Malta's success and socio-political structures.

On 22 July 2018, Dr Joseph Muscat gave a press conference on the completion of the inquiry which leaves no doubt that the accusations were false. The documents were falsified, as were the signatures on these documents. Dr Muscat regrets that some mistrusted in him and his family and believed that the accusations were genuine. Dr Muscat added that the accounts given by witnesses to the case were highly inconsistent and contradicting one another, illustrating that due diligence was not performed by who should have verified the verity of the documents.

The web of deceit that was created surrounding the independent inquiry has been dispelt, and the allegations of connections of the Prime Minister with the Egrant company and involvement with transactions within Pilatus bank, which have been proven untrue.

The independent Magistrate inquiry clarifies that Egrant was neither the Prime Minister's company, nor any member of his family's. It was confirmed that neither the Prime Minister, nor his wife, nor Keith Schembri, Konrad Mizzi or John Dalli, was involved in corruption and/or money laundering from Azerbaijan.

Dr Muscat also noted that the outcome of the inquiry, including the testimony of Daphne Caruana Galizia and of Maria Efimova, will not affect his resolve to see that justice is done in uncovering all the facts pertaining to the persons who allegedly carried out, currently under arrest, Ms Caruana Galizia's murder.

The fabrications of the web of deceit involving the Prime Minister, his wife and family created immense hardship. Prime Minister Muscat warned that fact-checking is essential before believing the verity of allegations, which put himself and his family through under fire for false accusations.

Dr Muscat said that if there was even the slightest truth to the allegations in the findings of the inquiry, he would have resigned as Prime Minister with immediate effect. The intricate web of deceit was an attempt at endangering Malta's stability with complete disregard to the country's wellbeing. The current Leader of the Opposition takes on the full responsibility of the wrong-doings of the former leader of the Opposition.

In the interest of transparency, Dr Muscat is adamant that the full copy of the inquiry is published by the Attorney General's office and hopes the law-enforcement authorities are allowed to perform any necessary investigations in finding who is behind the false accusations and the falsified documents and signatures.

Dr Muscat thanked the Maltese and Gozitan people who, despite the serious allegations, kept their faith in him as Prime Minister and stated that he always maintained he had nothing to do with the accusations. Dr Muscat remains fully committed to keep serving the Maltese and Gozitan people as Prime Minister.

**Frankly, I am quite staggered at the high quality of your newsletter magazine including the content, the layout, the graphics and the thought that goes into it to ensure a smooth flowing of articles. Well done indeed!**  
**Regards, Paul Zammit – Sydney, Australia**





**Darwin** is the capital city of the Northern Territory of Australia. Situated on the Timor Sea, Darwin is the largest city in the sparsely populated Northern Territory, with a population of 145,916. It is the smallest, most northerly of the Australian capital cities and acts as the Top End's regional centre.

Darwin's proximity to South East Asia makes it a link between Australia and countries such as Indonesia and East Timor. The Stuart Highway begins in Darwin, extends southerly across central Australia through Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, concluding in Port Augusta in South Australia. The city itself is built upon a low bluff overlooking the harbour. Its suburbs spread out over some area, beginning at Lee Point in the north and stretching to Berrimah in the east. Past Berrimah, the Stuart Highway goes on to Darwin's satellite city, Palmerston, and its suburbs. The Darwin region, like much of the Top End, experiences a tropical climate with a wet and dry season. Approximately 6-8 weeks leading up to Darwin's wet season, a period known locally as "the build up" sees temperature and humidity both increase. Darwin's wet season typically arrives in late November-early December and brings with it heavy monsoonal downpours, spectacular lightning displays and increased Cyclone activity.<sup>[8]</sup> During the dry season, the city is met with clear skies and mild sea breezes from the harbour.

The greater Darwin area is the ancestral home of the Larrakia people. On 9 September 1839, HMS *Beagle* sailed into Darwin harbour during its surveying of the area. John Clements Wickham named the region "Port Darwin" in honour of their former shipmate Charles Darwin, who had sailed with them on the ship's previous voyage which had ended in October 1836. The settlement there became the town of Palmerston in 1869, however was later renamed Darwin in 1911. The city has been almost entirely rebuilt four times, following devastation caused by the 1897 cyclone, the 1937 cyclone, Japanese air raids during World War II, and Cyclone Tracy in 1974.

In 2006, the largest ancestry groups in Darwin were Australian (42,221 or 36.9%), English (29,766 or 26%), Indigenous Australians (10,259 or 9.7%), Irish (9,561 or 8.3%), Scottish (7,815 or 6.8%), Chinese (3,502 or 3%), Greek (2,828 or 2.4%), Italian (2,367 or 2%) and Maltese (174)

Darwin's population is notable for the highest proportional population of Indigenous Australians of any Australian capital city. In the 2006 census, 10,259 (9.7 per cent) of Darwin's population was Aboriginal.

Darwin's population changed after the Second World War. Darwin, like many other Australian cities, experienced influxes from Europe, with significant numbers of Italians and Greeks during the 1960s and 1970s. Darwin also started to experience an influx from other European countries, which included the Dutch, Germans, and many others.<sup>[42]</sup> A significant percentage of Darwin's residents are recent immigrants from South East Asia (Asian Australians were 9.3% of Darwin's population in 2001).

Darwin's population comprises people from many ethnic backgrounds. The 2006 Census revealed that the most common places of birth for overseas migrants were the United Kingdom (3.4 per cent), New Zealand (2.1 per cent), the Philippines (1.4 per cent) and East Timor (0.9 per cent). 18.3 percent of the city's population was born overseas, which is less than the Australian average of 22%.

Darwin has a youthful population with an average age of 33 years (compared to the national average of around 37 years) assisted to a large extent by the military presence and the fact that many people opt to retire elsewhere.

The most common languages spoken in Darwin after English are Greek, Australian Aboriginal languages, Italian, Indonesian, Vietnamese and Cantonese.

### Religion

Christianity has the most adherents in Darwin, with 56,613 followers accounting for 49.5 per cent of the population of the city. The largest denominations of Christianity are Roman Catholicism (24,538 or 21.5 per cent), Anglicanism (14,028 or 12.3 per cent) and Greek Orthodoxy (2,964 or 2.6 per cent).<sup>[46]</sup> Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus and Jews account for 3.2 per cent of Darwin's population. There were 26,695 or 23.3 per cent of people professing no religion.

### Population growth

Darwin is one of the fastest growing capital cities in Australia, with an annual growth rate of 2.6 per cent since the 2006 census. In recent years, the Palmerston and Litchfield parts of the Darwin statistical division have recorded the highest growth in population of any Northern Territory local government area and by 2016 Litchfield could overtake Palmerston as the second largest municipality in metropolitan Darwin. It is predicted by 2021 that the combined population of both Palmerston and Litchfield would be 101,546 people.

**YOU ARE SINCERLEY INVITED TO SEND A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATION TO  
BISHOP-ELECT CHARLES GAUCI BY WRITING TO [maltesejournal@gmail.com](mailto:maltesejournal@gmail.com).  
THE MESSAGES WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT EDITION.  
BISHOP-ELECT GAUCI IS THE SECOND MALTESE/AUSTRALIAN BISHOP IN AUSTRALIA.  
HE STILL TREASURES HIS MALTESE HERITAGE AND HE ALWAYS SUPPORTED  
THE MEMBERS OF THE MALTESE COMMUNITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA. EDITOR**



## **MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER**

### **The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora**

**This electronic newsletter is a personal project and started when I was the principal of the Maltese Language School of Adelaide in 2013 to assist students to better understand the history, culture and heritage of the Maltese islands. Over the years it has grown into a popular journal which reaches readers living in Malta and abroad. It is free, non-political and bilingual. We thank the various newspapers, magazines, websites, other sources and contributors who help to make this journal informative and valuable.**

**The Editor**



**We are one, but  
we are many  
And from all the  
lands on earth  
we come  
We'll share a  
dream and sing  
with one voice  
"I am, you are,  
we are  
Australian"**





Dear Mr Frank Scicluna -

I write to you to convey news that the European Commission recently contacted the University of South Australia to advise that the Hawke EU Centre has been awarded more than \$600,000 to establish a **Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence** and

a **Jean Monnet Network**, aimed at strengthening Australia-EU relations through research, teaching and diplomatic activities. These most prestigious EC grants are funded from Brussels under the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Programme of Actions, and represent a major boost to UniSA's developing and deep engagement with Europe. I have worked with my team at UniSA over the last year in the development of these grant applications, and I am really thrilled that we will have this opportunity to develop and deepen public diplomacy initiatives and international research projects on Australia-EU relations.

The Hawke EU Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence will commence operations in Adelaide from 1 September 2018. I will also lead the new Jean Monnet Network, which will be based in the Centre, and represents a consortium of researchers from universities in Australia, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, New Zealand and Japan. The principal focus of our work, both in terms of public diplomacy and research projects, will be the digital revolution – from artificial intelligence (AI) to advanced robotics to Industry 4.0.

In undertaking activities under these exciting new EU grants, my team and I will engage with European delegations to Australia, civil society representatives, industry and government partners. This engagement will frame our research and public diplomacy in ways that are relevant to stakeholders and ensure we produce outputs that productively inform policy and business practices relating to modern robotics, AI and Industry 4.0.

I would like to express my thanks for the support you have provided to our Centre over recent years, and to say that we very much look forward to developing and deepening our work together in the coming years under the terms of these new funding arrangements.

We will be in further contact once our exciting programme of activities commences later this year, and I very much look forward to collaborating with you and other external stakeholders through our Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence and Jean Monnet Network. Kind regards

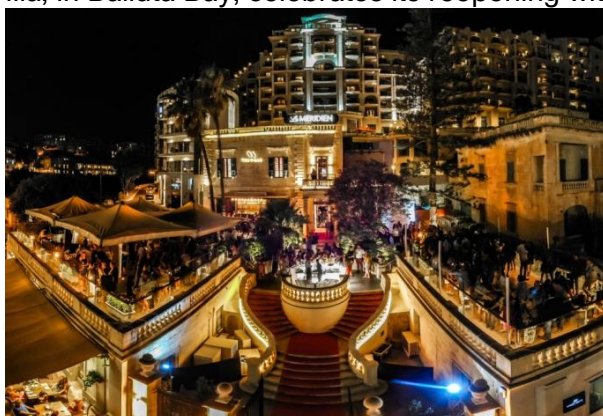
**Professor Anthony Elliott FASSA, FCCT | Dean: External Engagement**

Executive Director: Hawke EU Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence

University of South Australia | Level 5, Hawke Building, 55 North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5001

## The 19<sup>th</sup> century gem in St. Julian's makes a comeback

The Villa, in Balluta Bay, celebrates its reopening with a big summer party



8 August 2018, 9:54am

The Villa, the 19th century gem of Le Méridien St Julian's Hotel & Spa, pulled all the stops for its comeback celebration with sparkling cocktails whipped up by Nori bartenders, and tempting bites prepared by Taro's kitchen brigade.

Alex Incorvaja, Le Méridien general manager, thanked all those present and said this was part of his team's journey to becoming Malta Marriott Hotel & Spa on the island in summer 2019, following a multimillion euro refurbishment and conversion. "Boasting views

of the tranquil Balluta Bay, the restoration of The Villa, together with the move of Taro and the creation of Nori, is an extremely important milestone for the hotel and patrons seeking authentic and innovative cuisine within the area," Mr Incorvaja



## 47 new cars on the roads every day – [timesofmalta.com](http://timesofmalta.com)

### 54.8 per cent of the 'new' cars were bought second hand



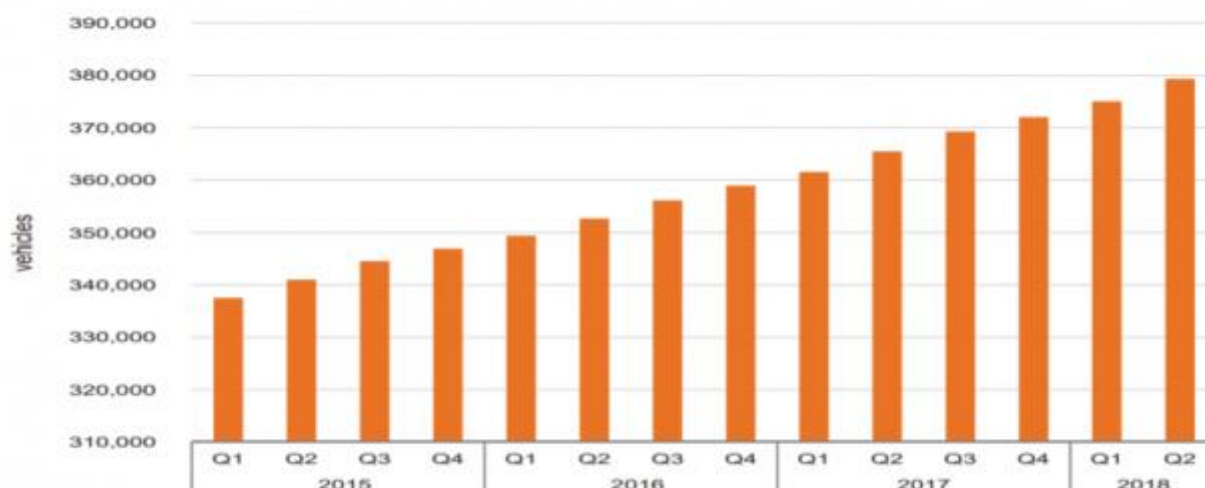
The number of licensed motor vehicles rose to 379,338 by the end of June, an increase of 3.8 per cent over the same quarter in 2017, official figures issued on Thursday show. Just 0.5 per cent of all cars on the roads were electric or hybrid vehicles.

A total of 78.1 per cent were passenger cars, 13.6 per cent were commercial vehicles, 7.2 per cent were

motorcycles/quadracycles and All Terrain Vehicles (ATV), while buses and minibuses amounted to less than one per cent.

Between May and June, the number of cars increased by a net average rate of 47 vehicles per day. [During the first quarter of 2018](#), the stock of licensed vehicles had increased at a net average rate of 33 vehicles per day.

**Chart 1. Stock of licensed motor vehicles**



New licences issued during the period under review amounted to 7,069. With 5,115 (or 72.4 per cent of total), the majority of new licences were issued for passenger cars.

This was followed by motorcycles/e-bicycles with 999 new licences or 14.1 per cent. Newly-licensed 'new' motor vehicles amounted to 3,197 or 45.2 per cent of the total, whereas newly licensed 'used' motor vehicles totalled 3,872 or 54.8 per cent.

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An average of 78 vehicles per day were newly licensed during the quarter under review but a total of 7,084 vehicles were taken off the roads. Out of these, 37 per cent were put for resale, 31.9 per cent were scrapped and 28.3 per cent were garaged.

Vehicles that had their restriction ending during the quarter under review totalled 4,249. The majority were recorded as being for resale (2,662) or garaged (1,549).

At the end of June, 228,574 vehicles (or 60.3 per cent of the total) were running on petrol-only engines, while vehicles having diesel-only engines reached 147,738 (or 38.9 per cent of the total).

Electric and hybrid vehicles still accounted for less than 0.5 per cent of the entire stock, with a total of 1,636 vehicles.



## HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF VICTORIES VALLETTA

**1565** - Eve of 8 September: The Knights of the Order of St John and the Maltese, led by Grand Master Jean Parisot de Valette, are victorious over the Ottoman invaders. Sorely depleted and unable to face a winter the great armada of Suleiman the Great sailed away bringing an end to the Great Siege. It is said an apparition of the Blessed Virgin and an armed warrior had terrified the enemy during the night.

**1566** - 28th March: Grand Master Jean Parisot de Valette, 49th Grand Master of the Sovereign and Military Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta, lays the foundation stone of the new fortress city, later to bear his name, Valletta.

**1568** - 21 August: Death of Grand Master de Valette who fell ill of a fever after hunting at St Paul's Bay. According to his wishes he is buried in the Crypt of the church until his remains were removed by his successors to the new Cathedral of St John.

**1617** - The church is made a Parish of the Order of St John and it is dedicated to St Anthony Abbot. The Order continued to embellish it with numerous works of art. The image is of the 'Mater Boni Consilii', a rare cultic painting donated to the church by Grand Master Emanuel Pinto de Fonseca.

**1699** - By 1699, Grand Master Ramon Perellos y Roccaful had enlarged its apse. The paintings on each end above the altar show St Anthony Abbot and St Anthony of Padova. These were brought to Malta in 1530 by the Knights of Malta after Charles V gave the island to the Order as its stronghold.

**1716** - Grand Master Perellos commissions the Maltese artist, Alessio Erardi to paint the vault with monumental scenes depicting the Life of the Virgin. Erardi finishes the vault in two years.

**1752** - The Bailiff of Majorca, Fra Ribas de Montelieu, on the orders of Grand Master Pinto de Fonseca, enlarges the front entrance embellishing it with its beautiful baroque façade. A bronze bust of Pope Innocent XII, Antonio Pignatelli, sent as a gift earlier to the Grand Master by the same pope, stands over the entrance.



**1802** - The funerary monument to the last Venetian Grand Admiral, Angelo Emo is erected. Emo died in Malta in 1792 while on a naval mission and willed that his heart be buried here. The rest of his remains are buried in Venice.

The sarcophagus is the work of the Maltese sculptor Vincenzo Dimech

**1837** - The church becomes Garrison Church to the Royal Malta Fencibles, (1815 – 1861) later the Royal Malta Artillery.

**1942** - April 23: In a night of heavy air raids, a blast from a bomb that destroyed the Royal Opera House nearby also damages the church ceiling. By a miracle it does not fall.

**1943** - September 8: The Italian fleet surrenders to the Allied Forces outside Malta. The date acquires a double significance for the Maltese. The Church is now that of 'Our Lady of Victories'.

**1965** - July 9: Din I-Art Ħelwa (national trust of Malta) was founded as a voluntary not-for-profit organisation. Its mission is to safeguard the historic and natural heritage of the Maltese Islands.

**2000** - Valletta Rehabilitation Committee and Din I-Art Ħelwa campaign to restore the neglected church which has immense spiritual, historical and artistic significance for the island.

**2002** - Its external masonry and roof are restored by the Valletta Rehabilitation Committee with the financial support of PwC Malta and the efforts of Din I-Art Ħelwa.

**2004** - Work starts to save its ceiling paintings by Alessio Erardi. Painted between 1716 and 1718, neglect, water infiltration, damp and a bomb blast had left their mark.

**2008** - By 2008, through the efforts of the Valletta Rehabilitation Committee, conservation by the Courtauld Institute of Art had succeeded in saving three important segments of the vault.

Image shows Lisa Shekede, Senior Conservator at work.

**2011** - Sept 8: The government of Malta entrusts the church in guardianship to Din I-Art Ħelwa, national trust of Malta, striking another victory for the cultural patrimony of the Maltese Islands.

Image of the classic allegory of 'Victory' from the Alessio Erardi vault paintings, after restoration.

The pastoral functions of the church carry on daily. The Reverend Monsignor Dun Anton Galea has held the office of Rector of the Church for over 20 years.



## *Din I-Art Ħelwa*

Din I-Art Ħelwa, National Trust of Malta, is a non-governmental, not-for-profit, voluntary organisation founded in 1965 to safeguard the historic, artistic and natural heritage of Malta. Since its foundation, Din I-Art Ħelwa has restored and managed numerous cultural sites of immense historic and environmental importance.

We promote the preservation and protection of historic buildings and monuments, the character of our towns and villages, and places of natural beauty and importance and the flora and fauna of such places, especially in relation to the problems arising from modern urban development. We stimulate the enforcement of existing laws and the enactment of new ones for the protection of our natural and built heritage.



## New anatomy centre near Gozo hospital scheduled to be completed in September

[www.independent.com.mt](http://www.independent.com.mt)

A new anatomy centre next to Gozo General Hospital in Victoria is scheduled to be completed this September, and an artist's impressions of the development has been released by Barts and The

London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University of London, the university said in a statement.

"Carrying a bespoke design for a modern anatomy centre, the building will be equipped with the most up-to-date facilities to support anatomy and clinical skills teaching. The unique facility will be the focus of teaching activity from September 2018, in time for Year 2 medical students to continue their anatomy studies and for the new intake of first year students. The building will also

A new anatomy centre next to Gozo General Hospital in Victoria is scheduled to be completed this September, and an artist's impressions of the development has been released by Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University of London, the university said in a statement.

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"A central feature of the building is its anatomy lab where students will undertake practicals and tutors will lead demonstrations using anatomical specimens and models. The lab will include a dedicated area for learning anatomy through dissection, and will be equipped with facilities for showing clinical images, videos of surgical procedures and specialised computer imaging. The building also has a central courtyard, which will provide an outdoor space for students and staff. The development is part of the ongoing construction work for a new medical school at Gozo General Hospital, which is due to be completed in Spring 2019."

Professor Anthony Warrens, Dean for Education at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, said: "We are delighted to see our new state-of-the-art anatomy centre taking shape. These facilities combined with the high-quality educational programme which we're already delivering, will give our students the very best start to their medical careers and help train the next generation of doctors."

Dr Nadine Delicata, Chief Operating Officer at Steward Health Care Malta, said: "Steward Malta is honoured to have Barts onsite within the Gozo Hospital campus, and we are looking forward to contributing toward the education of medical students at Barts. Together both The lab will include a dedicated area for learning anatomy through dissection, and will be equipped with facilities for showing clinical images, videos of surgical procedures and specialised computer imaging. The building also has a central courtyard, which will provide an outdoor space for students and staff. The development is part of the ongoing construction work for a new medical school at Gozo General Hospital, which is due to be completed in Spring 2019."

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## Maltese Festa Series II – Latest MaltaPost stamp issue



The second series of stamps depicting titular statues of various churches around Gozo and Malta is being issued by MaltaPost this Tuesday.

The following processional statues will be featured: St. Paul in Valletta, St. Peter & St. Paul in Nadur, the Immaculate Conception in Hamrun, Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Mdina, St. Gaetan in Hamrun, St. Julian in St. Julian's, St. Dominic in Valletta, St. Catherine in Zurrieq, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin in Senglea and that of Our Lady of Consolation in Gudja.

The statue of Saints Peter and Paul in Nadur was commissioned by its parish priest, Rev. John Camilleri, in 1882 and crafted by Gallard et Fils in Marseille, France. Upon arrival in Malta, the statue needed some finishing touches and the Capuchin friar GioBattista Mamo carried these out.

These 'Maltese Festa Series' stamps carry a face value of €0.26 each. They were produced at Printex Ltd by the offset process and the issue consists of 1,000,000 stamps.

The issue will be sold in sheets of 10 stamps and each stamp measures 31mm by 44mm with a perforation of 13.9 x 14.0 (comb) bearing the Maltese cross watermark. Each sheet measures 182mm by 115mm.

The stamps will be available as from tomorrow, Tuesday, the 14th of August, from all Post Offices in Malta and Gozo.

Orders may also be placed online at [www.maltaphilately.com](http://www.maltaphilately.com) or by mail from the Philatelic Bureau, MaltaPost p.l.c. 305, Triq Hal Qormi, Marsa, MTP 1001; Telephone: 2596 1740, e-mail: [info@maltaphilately.com](mailto:info@maltaphilately.com).

The first set in the 'Maltese Festa Series' was issued last year and also included cards, sheets and envelopes.

A special binder completed this set. Should anyone wish to purchase the first issue and/or the binder, please contact the Philatelic Bureau, Telephone: 2596 1740. [gozonews.com](http://gozonews.com)

## Pizza with Fresh Cheeselets (Gbejniet)



### Ingredients:

- 2 fresh cheeselets (Gbejniet friski)
- 1 large ripe tomato
- black olives (with stone)
- fresh basil
- Tomato puree
- 1 clove Garlic
- olive oil
- sea salt & fresh pepper

### Method:

In a small pan heat some olive oil, and fry the garlic (very finely chopped), until it gets golden.

Add the tomato puree and stir.

Add salt and pepper and some chopped basil.

Open the pizza dough.

Cover the base with the sauce.

Cut the tomato and fresh cheeselets in slices and place alternating in a circular way covering the face of the pizza

Place a few olives randomly.

Bake for about 19 minutes until base is cooked well.

Put fresh basil on top and serve !

## MALTESE/GOZITAN FTIRA (FTIRA GHAWDXIJA)



by amaltesemouthful@gmail.com

Our traditional flatbread mainly famous in Gozo and topped with special Maltese/mediterranean ingredients has become to be known as Gozitan ftira or ftira Ghawdxija. This is served all over Gozo and Malta.

The first time I had heard about this type of 'pizza' was when I was on holiday with my mum in Malta in her family village. We were at the Mgarr bakery and my mum asked the baker if they had any of the special pizza they used to sell with anchovies, tomatoes and sliced

potatoes. Unfortunately they did not sell it anymore and my mum was very disappointed. It was then mentioned that it was a type of ftira topped with different type of toppings. Not sure why this wasn't sold any more in the bakery but we soon discovered Gozo was where it was a speciality.

There are many famous bakeries/restaurants in Gozo and Malta that sell Gozitan/Maltese ftira, some more famous than others. What makes this a ftira and not a pizza, which is what it seems at first glance, is the dough that is used which produces a unique taste. The toppings used vary but most seem to have sliced potatoes on top. One of the common ftira toppings include sliced tomatoes, anchovies/tuna, capers, olives and potatoes. Another common ftira is usually topped with Maltese cheese (gbejneit), beaten eggs, sliced potatoes and sometimes even Maltese sausage.

My guess is the dough that is used by bakeries to make our traditional sourdough bread and also our smaller ftira sourdough bread is used to make the Gozitan ftira. This is flattened, topped with ingredients mentioned, and then finally placed in the wood ovens to produce what had become to be known as Gozitan ftira.

I have yet to master the art of sourdough breadmaking but am hoping to soon enough. If you are ever in Gozo, do try their Gozitan ftira. You won't be disappointed!





## ***A Maltese Mouthful and ME***

**Marlene Zammit** - [amaltesemouthful@gmail.com](mailto:amaltesemouthful@gmail.com)

It all began for me in a small town called Agnes Banks on a vegetable farm. A town part of the Hawkesbury in Western Sydney, Australia. My family are Maltese and they love to cook Maltese food, as well as produce amazing produce. My dad came to Sydney from a small village in Malta, Bidnija in the 70's. My mum's parents (Nanna and Nannu) came to Sydney from another nearby village in Malta, Mgarr in the 50's.

The farm provided an abundance of fruit, meat and vegetables which we used in most of our meals. This is where I learnt about Maltese cooking. I didn't cook much during this time but I watched, learned and of course ate. Two and a half decades later I left Sydney for London. 2005 was when I left behind my family, friends and part of my culture. In the last few years I have gone back, not back to Australia but back to my culture through its food and history.

My family in Malta and Australia still farm fruit, vegetables and animals today. Their invaluable understanding of how they produce their food has enabled them to understand how to best use their produce to create beautiful meals in their 'Maltese' farmhouse kitchens which have been shared among their family and friends. I have now produced my little farmhouse kitchen in London sharing and cooking Maltese meals among many others with my family and friends. My small Maltese inspired vegetable and fruit garden is also on the cards!

During all this time I studied, worked, travelled the world, married an Irish man from Dublin (In Malta), had two beautiful girls, Theodora and Aurelia, and have now settled in SW London. How lucky I am.

My finance and accounting undergraduate degree enabled me to work in Sydney and eventually London. In London I then continued my studies in Yorkshire completing a Masters in Environmental Economics. I wanted to combine my interests with the beautiful world we live in.

During this time I also travelled far flung amazing countries including India, Ethiopia, Syria, Tunisia, all throughout Central Asia, China, other South East Asian countries, Pakistan and South America. I always made time for my cultural roots by visiting Malta regularly. What has always fascinated me is the different produce we eat, how we eat it and how our history has had an impact on this. Malta's food culture has definitely been influenced and impacted by our historical events. What an amazing food tapestry this has created.

I visit Malta yearly. I love spending time with my family in their farming villages, other villages in Malta and I love exploring our history. I am always fascinated by this beautiful Island and the food culture our families have passed on. Their love of food and produce still continues today.

The world is such a small place now and we are all integrating at a rapid pace. My family is Irish, Maltese, Australian and now British. For now, I want to bring the Maltese part of my culture into my family through food and share this with you.

***A Maltese Mouthful*** is all about cooking, eating and sharing Maltese food, from my kitchen. Theodora and Aurelia will hopefully thank me for it one day. For now they are doing what I once did – watching, learning and eating.

I hope you enjoy trying Maltese cooking if you haven't already, or this blog encourages you to cook more Maltese recipes if you do anyhow. Perhaps it will encourage you to explore your own food culture more. What an amazing food history around the world we have.



Dr. Gianrico Farrugia

## Gianrico Farrugia, M.D., elected as new president and CEO, Mayo Clinic

ROCHESTER, Minn. — The Mayo Clinic Board of Trustees announced on Friday, Aug. 10, that it has elected Gianrico Farrugia, M.D., vice president, Mayo Clinic, and CEO of Mayo Clinic in Florida to succeed John Noseworthy, M.D., as president and CEO, Mayo Clinic. Dr. Noseworthy remains president and CEO, Mayo Clinic, through his retirement at the end of the year. Drs. Noseworthy and Farrugia will work closely together through this period of transition.

Dr. Farrugia has been vice president, Mayo Clinic, and CEO of Mayo Clinic in Florida since January 2015. In this role, he has led a staff of more than 6,400 staff members. During his tenure, Mayo Clinic's Florida campus has established itself as the destination medical center for the Southeast. There have been significant

investments in people, technology and expansion, including the opening of the new 190,000-square-foot Harry T. Mangurian Jr. Building for patients seeking cancer, neurology and neurosurgical care. In 2017, Mayo Clinic was named the best hospital in Florida in *U.S. News & World Report's Best Hospitals Honor Roll*.

Prior to serving as vice president, Mayo Clinic, and CEO of Mayo Clinic in Florida, Dr. Farrugia was director of Mayo Clinic's Center for Individualized Medicine, which is responsible for bringing genomics into routine clinical care. Dr. Farrugia also was co-founder of the Center for Innovation at Mayo Clinic.

Dr. Farrugia, native of Malta, has spent 30 years as a Mayo physician. He is jointly appointed in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Department of Internal Medicine, and the Department of Physiology and Biomedical Engineering. He is a member of the Mayo Clinic Board of Trustees and Mayo Clinic Board of Governors. He also is a professor of medicine and physiology, and a faculty member in biomedical engineering at Mayo Clinic Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. Dr. Farrugia completed his undergraduate training at St. Aloysius College, Birkirkara, Malta, and earned his medical degree from the University of Malta Medical School.

Dr. Farrugia is the co-author of *Think Big, Start Small, Move Fast: A Blueprint for Transformation From the Mayo Clinic Center for Innovation*, a book highlighting the need for change in the delivery of health care. He has published more than 250 articles on genomics and the treatment of disorders of gastrointestinal motility. "Dr. Farrugia brings an impressive depth of experience to this role," Di Piazza says. "A prolific investigator and inventor, and an accomplished executive, he has been at the leading edge of innovation across the breadth of Mayo's clinical and research mission."

The Mayo Clinic Board of Trustees, a 31-member group of external business and thought leaders, and Mayo physicians and administrators, is responsible for patient care, medical education and research activities at Mayo Clinic's Arizona, Florida and Minnesota campuses, as well as Mayo Clinic Health System with dozens of locations across the Upper Midwest. Karl W Oestreich

*I congratulate you in producing such an informative paper and I should add that I constantly forward it to both my friends in Australia as well as in Malta. I would like to wish you all the best in performing your complex duties and research and do hope that your joint endeavours will continue to contribute to the social and cultural development of the Maltese community in Australia and to some extent overseas. I wish you new successes happiness and health. Greg Fenech – Brisbane, Australia*

## The First Ever Maltese-Indian Film Festival Is Here

This wonderful platform will give the opportunity to film-makers across the world to showcase their work



Chiara Micallef

This is the first film festival of its kind, and it's totally building bridges between India and Malta. This wonderful platform will give the opportunity to film-makers across the world to showcase their work.

The Brand Ambassador and Jury Member at the festival will be Vidya Balan, an Indian actress who's been making waves in the scene lately.

She will be joined by Hindi blockbuster director, Vijay

Krishna Acharya. One of Acharya's long-awaited movies, *Thugs of Hindostan*, will be shot in Malta.

"Malta holds a very special place in my heart, both as a filming location and as a gorgeous country with truly wonderful people. I am extremely happy to be a part of the first Malta India Film Festival and I look forward to a greater cultural exchange between our two countries," Acharya said during the press conference.

"It is always a pleasure to be part of a cinematic platform that encourages film-makers. The Malta India Film Festival brings forth not only a unique opportunity for talent to come together but also the beautiful and magical country of Malta," Vidya Balan said during the press conference.

"With the support of the Government of Malta and backing of Streamcast Studios, I am sure this is only the beginning of a new venture for the Indian film industry," she said.

This long-awaited film festival will be held in Malta from the 14th till the 16th of December later this year. It will be open for film-makers across the world who will be using either local or Indian elements in their movies.

There will be all sorts of categories and genres for this festival, including feature films, short films and also documentaries. Shortlisted entries will be graded by the jury during a three day screening in Valletta.

The Minister of Tourism, Konrad Mizzi was in India to support the Festival in Mumbai on August 9th. "We are thrilled that Streamcast Studios has initiated this exciting platform of the Malta India Film Festival. Malta and India have a lot of commonalities including their love for food, fireworks and films. Malta has been a partner to many iconic Hollywood films and we're thrilled that '*Thugs of Hindostan*' has paved the path for Indian blockbuster cinema in Malta," Mizzi said.

"From our end, we are committed to providing every possible support and facility that we can to make Malta a preferred destination for the magical and musical cinema of India" he said.



## RIZZI - SEA URCHINS, UGLY BUT GOOD

While on the outside they don't seem to be the most appetising of meals, sea urchins are comparable to oysters for delivering a fresh, straight-from-the-sea flavour. Depending on how they are served, raw sea urchin can have a sweet subtle flavour with that unmistakeable sea-salt freshness that only comes with locally caught seafood.

The spiny little critters are also popular in seafood-crazy Japan, where they are imported from many Pacific Ocean countries and served raw as sushi, called *uni*.

As well as serving it raw as an appetiser, the Italians like to put it in a simple pasta to bring out a rich roasted quality in the flavour. Find it on menus in good coastal restaurants as *ricci di mare*.

Here are a few tips to help you on your way to a new culinary discovery.

The recipe actually uses thawed rizzi, since you can buy it frozen, but it's always best to go for the fresh stuff if you can get it. Sea Urchins are a traditional Mediterranean seafood dish, very popular in Malta during the summer. A few years ago it was common to see locals by the sea picking rizzi and eating it with traditional Maltese bread, tomatoes, fresh mint, capers and a little bit of olive oil. It is eaten raw and basically you just need to pick the yummy orange stuff with a small knife or a spoon. Nowadays rizzi are legally protected and you can only pick a few rizzi to eat there and then.

The best fresh rizzi come from the crystal blue sea of Zurrieq. If you're looking to pick and eat fresh rizzi, make sure that you don't eat the flat jet black rizzi (rather than a rounder dark brown). These flat ones are called 'patrijiet' which translates to 'monks' and they're not edible. So here we are with a rizzi recipe for you. You can actually make some mixed seafood apart from the rizzi, and use the exact same ingredients, just divide the sauce half way through and cook the rizzi & mix seafood in individual pans. This is how to do it, but before you start, pour yourself a glass of white wine, it will make it much more enjoyable. Sparking Wine/Champagne goes well with rizzi.

### Ingredients:

If you're using frozen rizzi, one small container will serve three people

Garlic

Chilli (optional)

Fresh lemon juice

Fresh Parsley or Mixed Herbs

Couple of cherry tomatoes

Spaghetti or Bucatini (brown pasta if you prefer)

### Method:

Fry garlic in olive oil until golden

Add cherry tomatoes in half or quarters

Bit of herbs and/or parsley

Throw in the lemon juice & chillies

Add a lug of white wine, lower the heat and leave to simmer for a bit

You can drop a pinch of salt and fresh pepper into the steaming pan according to taste

Serve with extra virgin olive oil



Most restaurants will serve raw sea urchin already cleaned in the shell. If you want to try preparing freshly-caught urchins yourself, you will have to get physical.

Firstly, arm yourself against the urchin spines by using a towel or an oven glove to hold the urchin gently in one hand while you open the shell.

Using a knife or a pair of kitchen scissors, make a small incision in the underside (flatter side) of the urchin and cut carefully in a wide circle around the bottom of the shell.

After removing the base of the urchin shell, clean out the inside to remove the black internal parts. You might want to rinse it carefully with running water. You should be able to see around five bright orange fingers attached to the upper portion of the shell – this is the edible part of the urchin. Carefully scrape out these orange segments and enjoy, either raw like Japanese sushi or cooked with spaghetti, Italian-style. Add a squeeze of lemon to the roe to further enhance the flavour.

## Ġanni l-bidwi

Ġanni l-bidwi razzett għandu,  
 fih irabbi l-annimali  
 mogħża u ħmara fih insibu  
 kif ukoll xi sitt majjali.

Għandu žiemel abjad kollu,  
 baqra smina u tal-ħalib,  
 tiġieġ, flieles u kelb iswed,  
 li ta' dawn huwa l-ħabib.



## Katarin

Katarin ġibtlek lampuka.  
 Katarin kebbes in-nar.  
 Katarin iftaħ it-tieqa,  
 ħalli joħroġ id-duħħan.



## Il-Mara tal-Qaqoċċ

Naf mara li tħobb il-qaqoċċ  
 tnax tiekol kull kwarta bl-arloġġ,  
 u biex ma taħlix  
 il-qxur ma tarmix  
 imma tħithom u tagħmel papoċċ.



## Toninu

Wagt li Toninu, kien qiegħed jaqra,  
 b'qattus maġenbu, u kelb daqs naqra,  
 dahlet in-nanna, inkiss inkiss  
 u tatu bewsa, kif kien imiss!



## Ix-Xufier

Tiri, tiri, tanna,  
 u aħna s'hawn wasalna.  
 Qus, qus, qus  
 u x-xufier kemm hu gustuż.  
 Okkli, okkli, okkli,  
 U x-xufier kemm  
 għandu nokkli.  
 Ana, ana, ana,  
 u x-xufier kemm hu minn tagħna.  
 Qusa, qusa, qusa,  
 u x-xufier għandu  
 l-għarusa.



## Iz-Zija ta' Ħal Lija

Darba z-zija ta' Ħal Lija  
 ġiet għalija filgħaxija.  
 Oħti Pija qabdet fija  
 għax iz-zija ferħet bija.  
 Jiena sfart daqs il-lumija,  
 qbadt qasrija tfajtha 'l ħija.  
 Ilqatt iz-zija li din toqgħod  
 numru mija, Triq San Lija, ġo Ħal Lija!



## CHILDREN'S POEMS AND NURSERY RHYMES FROM MALTA





## History of Malta in Stamps Paleontology and Philately

- 1c Skeleton of Prehistoric animal (Pleistocene Period) (SG 1638) - 2c Ruins of stone temple (SG 1639)  
 5c Carved stone pattern (Late Temple Period) (SG 1640) - 7c Pair of Pots (Bronze Age) (SG 1641)  
 9c Gold statue (Phoenician and Punic Period) (vert) (SG 1642) - 10c Mosaic (Roman Period) (SG 1643)  
 19c Gold coin (Byzantine Period) (vert) (SG 1644) - 26c Carved stone (Arab period) (SG 1645)  
 37c Painting (Norman and Hohenstaufen Period) (vert) (SG 1646)  
 50c Stone tablet carved with shield (Angevin and Aragonese Period) (vert) (SG 1647)  
 51c Gold pattern with central Maltese Cross (Knights of St. John) (SG 1648)  
 63c Painting of officers and crew disembarking in rowing boats from ships (French Period) (SG 1649)  
 68c George Cross (British Period) (vert) (SG 1650) 86c Independence (vert) (SG 1651)  
 1.00 Republic (vert) (SG 1652) - .08 EU Accession (vert) (SG 1653) - 5.00 Arms of Malta (vert) (SG 1654)



## MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal of the Maltese Living in Malta and Abroad  
 Read, Enjoy, Share and Support our Journal



# Il-Ħwawar #1



**Gulġien**  
Sesame seeds



**Ħabaq**  
Basil



**Ħaxixa baslija**  
Chives



**Ħlewwa**  
Anise



**Karfus**  
Celery



**Kemmun**  
Cummin



**Klin**  
Rosemary



**Kosbor**  
Coriander



**Krexxun**  
Watercress



**Merqdux**  
Marjoram

[ilmaklem.com](http://ilmaklem.com)



Children playing on a war tank  
during WW2



Women with their traditional headgear  
Ghonnella (circa 1940)

**LET'S NOT LEAVE HISTORY A MYSTERY**





Il-Gostra

## RUNNING UP A GREASY POLE IN MALTA - IL-GOSTRA

During the height of summer, when it is customary to hold feasts (*festi*) throughout Malta and Gozo, a popular game near the seaside is that of the *gostra* or greasy pole which today, in the face of other more popular and more modern

sports, still forms an essential element in the customs and traditions of Malta's folklore. The word itself derives from the Italian *giostra*. The latter has a different meaning to that practised in Malta, as it refers to the mediaeval tournament of the jousts while the one in Malta deals with a sea sport with a greasy pole.

It is thought by many that the sport of the *gostra* must have evolved alongside the Maypole and *kukkanja*, which were practised in Palace Square opposite the Grand Master's Palace in Valletta. Others believe that the sport must have been introduced from nearby Sicily in later days.



Be that as it may, perusal of some old prints would suggest that the sport flourished some time after the start of the British period of domination in these islands, following the expulsion of the French under Napoleon in 1798. In fact a particular print shows the Union Jack hoisted both on a high pole as well as at the end of the greasy pole, to be snatched by the winner.

Whatever the historical connections, the sport had become very entertaining, as can be verified from the accompanying Picture which shows Balluta Bay, opposite the church of Our Lady of

Mount Carmel. The barge carrying the greasy pole is the centre of the fun game in action, with a ferryboat close by used to tow the barge itself. The very large number of spectators, both from high vantage points and in all types of small and large craft including *luzzi*, *dghajjes* and *frejgatinis* is ample evidence of the sport's popularity at the time.

The spectators know that to run up the greasy pole is no mean task, and there is always the danger that moving quickly up the pole tends to unbalance many participants, who often fall awkwardly into the sea and at times even hurt themselves. Consequently, on the whole the *gostra* attracts the younger and more daring sportsmen.

It must be mentioned that to reach the target, the sportsmen have to run up a pole that is smeared with grease or some other slippery element. Its total length is about 10metres and it protrudes from a boat. The pole stretches out into the water, and only half of it is covered in grease, but in order to have a higher chance of reaching the flags before slipping off the slippery wood, most competitors prefer to run up the pole, hoping they can maintain their balance long enough to snatch one of the coveted prizes. This sometimes causes them to fall awkwardly hitting the log on their way down into the sea and injure themselves.

Today, the traditional game is only held in the towns of Msida and Spinola Bay, in honour of St. Joseph and St. Julian and also at Bugibba (near St. Paul's Bay).

*A Prayer for You  
in your Ministry*



Holy Lord,  
we ask that you  
shine your loving light  
on your faithful minister.  
Guide, support and strengthen  
your servant in fulfilling your will  
and in carrying out this service of love  
to your people.  
Amen.

## A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS TO BISHOP-ELECT CHARLES GAUCI

God has blessed you with the strength and abilities. You've done such a great job along the way in earning this elevation. Much love and blessings coming your way. The Lord helped you to succeed. This new work attests to your strong character and discipline. May you be blessed with all the good things you deserve.

Only those who fight for their dreams will have the blessing of performing them. Your continuing efforts, strong will power and your belief in the Good Lord made this advancement well deserved. We're so pleased for your success. Our prayers to God are to give you good health so that as His shepherd you look after his sheep

**Harry and Mary Bugeja and family – Adelaide, Australia**

I would like to add a little story of how I came to know Charles Gauci and maybe the first Maltese in South Australia. One day one of my workmates told me that a Maltese family arrived from Malta and finding themselves very lonely. As soon as I got their address I paid them a visit. As soon as the door opened I introduced myself to Charles' father John Gauci and told him the reason for my visit. I was ushered in and introduced to the rest of the family - Violet Charles' mother and their children one of whom was Charles (fr charles)

Charles' father was amazed when I told him that my visit was to check if they were in need of anything. He more than thanked me and told me that they were not lonely at all because Charles' grandparents and family lived here in Adelaide. I did know his grandparents very well - the Briffa family who lived on the Grange Road Hindmarsh. That's how I met Father Charles Gauci for the first time. Whoever would have told me that this teenager one day was to become a bishop - Harry Bugeja- Adelaide



**You still have the  
chance to send a  
message of  
congratulation to  
Bishop-elect  
Charles Gauci.**

**Join hundreds of  
others who have  
already done so.**

**CIAO – SEE YOU NEXT WEEK FOR ANOTHER EDITION OF  
THE JOURNAL OF THE MALTESE DIASPORA**