

Maltese e-Newsletter



The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

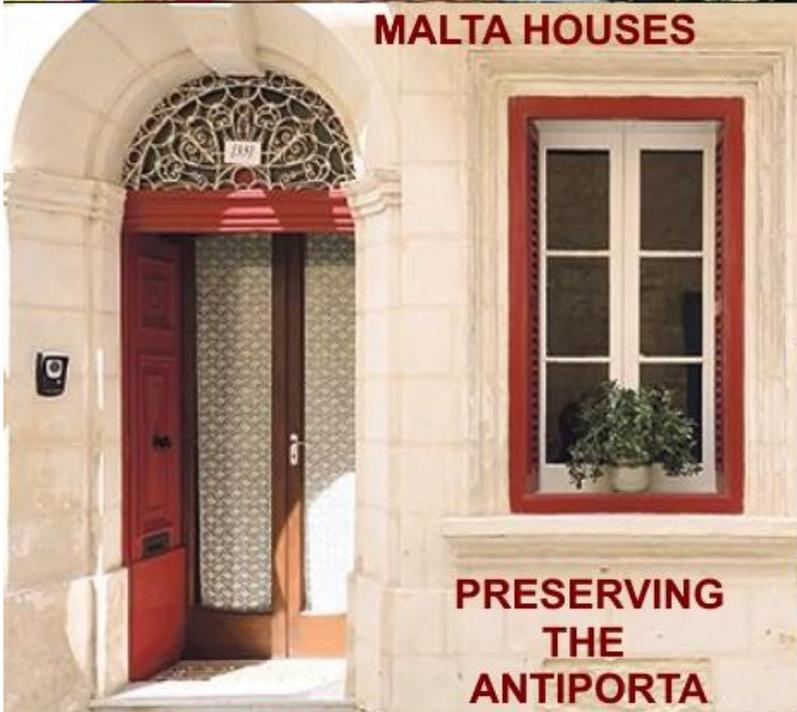
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YOUTH AND LEISURE



MALTA HOUSES



PRESERVING
THE
ANTIPIORTA

Happy
Australia
Day

January 26



QUEENSLAND

AND THE
MALTESE
CROSS

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Aġenzija Żgħażaġh was established in February 2011 to promote the interests of young people and to provide assistance to youth organisations and young people in achieving their potential. The aim in establishing Aġenzija Żgħażaġh is to mainstream youth related issues and further develop youth services. It enables further investment in young people and helps them realise their potential. Aġenzija Żgħażaġh's overall objective is to provide a coherent, cohesive and unified Government approach to addressing the needs and aspirations of young people and to realise the following benefits:

- For Young people: More actions within existing policies - Greater participation, empowerment and dialogue
 - For Policymaking and Policy makers: Change in attitudes and work culture to include a youth perspective - Greater coherence in policymaking - Better data and information on youth issues

The Mission of Aġenzija Żgħażaġh is to:

- Manage and implement the National Youth Policy to promote and safeguard the interests of young people which it pursues through the following policy measures.
- Youth Activity Centres at Villa Psaiġon and at Marsaxlokk
- The first Youth Cafes in Malta at Qawra, Msida and Cottonera
- The first Youth Hubs in Malta at St.Venera, MCAST, GCHSS and Junior College
- The Youth Information One Stop Shop in Santa Venera
- Awareness raising, listening to young people and promoting the role of Aġenzija Żgħażaġh at locally and at European level
- An interactive web portal Youth Information Malta and online support services *Kellimni.Com* .

At European level, the agency engages on an on-going basis with the Youth Working Party, Youth Minister's Councils, the European Commission, EU Presidencies, the Council of Europe, and other European bodies such as SALTO, ERYICA, EuroMed, EYCA and Eurodesk on youth related issues. Programmes and initiatives for the active engagement and participation of young people
Training and support is provided for young people through projects that will enhance their skills and competencies and empower them as both responsible individuals and active citizens in their communities. Projects include, inter alia: empowerment, civic engagement, music, volunteering, contemporary arts, specialized study support and drama.

Research - Research is essential within the youth field and that is why Aġenzija Żgħażaġh recognizes the importance of investing in this area. In fact, the Research Unit is one of the main pillars within which Aġenzija Żgħażaġh operates. This unit administers all research that the agency undertakes itself or commissions to other entities.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġh's research targets and focuses on the main areas concerning young people, mainly education, employment, environment, rights and responsibility, health and well-being, justice etc. The outcome of such research is then utilized by the Empowerment Unit within the same agency to design the programmes that Aġenzija Żgħażaġh implements with young people.
Policy development and mainstreaming - In addition to developing and implementing youth policy, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh also participates on relevant committees and working groups with the aim of promoting and supporting a cross-sectoral approach to issues that impact on the lives of young people.

Augustinians keep old tradition alive



Blessing of animals is oldest tradition of its type in Malta

Children present their animals at the annual blessing organised by the Augustinian community in Rabat.

Photos: Matthew Mirabelli



Two new-born piglets joined other animals of all shapes and sizes to be blessed in Rabat on Sunday, the oldest tradition of its kind in Malta.

The annual blessing of the animals is organised by the Augustinian community at St Mark's church on the feast day of St Anthony the Abbot, the patron saint of animals.

This year's edition began with Mass followed by a procession with the statue of the saint, accompanied by the L'Isle Adam band. Families then gathered in St Augustine Square for the provincial, Fr Leslie Gatt, to bless the animals.

Two horses from the Malta Police Force mounted section led the way, followed by countless dogs and horses, as well as ponies, cats, birds, the two piglets and even an alpaca.

The feast is believed to be the oldest of its kind on the island, dating back to the time of the Knights of the St John, when the Grand Master would send his horses to be blessed in front of the church where the feast of St Anthony the Abbot was traditionally celebrated.

'Kulhadd ihokk fejn jieklu' - DWAL GODDA Gharghur



Writer Randolph Bourne maintains that 'few people ever scratch the surface, much less exhaust the contemplation of their own experiences'. Gharghur's DWAL GODDA theatre group's forthcoming production 'KULHADD IHOKK FEJN JIEKLU' entices the audience to explore circumstances of itching and scratching caused as one is belittled and ridiculed and, possibly, also whether the one who causes it should be considered a case of ridicule him/herself.

The play revolves around a group of tertiary students researching how they could help those who feel ridiculed by discovering ways how to stand on their own two feet. After all, as a Chinese proverb proclaims, 'when the itch is inside the boot, scratching outside provides little consolation'.

THE ANTIPIORTA: A FADING TREND



The ANTIPIORTA is an inner door prevalent in Maltese homes – which simultaneously provides privacy and accessibility to those finding themselves on either side. This often-overlooked architectural characteristic is rapidly disappearing from our architectural landscape. This ANTIPIORTA is the subject of research work and an exhibition by Chris Briffa Architects at the Venice Architecture Biennale (May to November 2018), and Spazju Kreattiv, St James Cavalier in Malta (7th Dec 2018 to 3rd Feb 2019).

Chris Briffa Architects, a practice based in the heart of Valletta, Malta strives to be a contemporary ambassador that does not forget where it comes from. Already a similar award-winning project (<https://www.gallarija.com/>) has been carried out by the architecture studio in 2013, studying the marriage of the traditional 'gallarija' (closed balcony), with contemporary archetypes.

This new ANTIPIORTA project brings together a group of creatives with interests across media, to tackle this piece as a study, to examine its social and physical functions, document its passage over time, and imagine which direction the antiporta might be heading in.

ANTIPIORTA is part of the Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture Cultural Programme (Valletta Design Cluster), and the Spazju Kreattiv programme. The project is supported by the Project Support Grant, Malta Arts Fund – Arts Council Malta, and produced in collaboration with Camilleri Paris Mode and Halmann Vella.

Creative Team; Creative Director: Chris Briffa. Curator: Andrew Borg Wirth. Artist & Videographer: David Zammit. Project Coordinator: Louise Spokes. Architectural Assistant: Katrina Galea. Research & PR: Lisa Gwen Baldacchino

**BINDING COMMUNITIES
TOGETHER**



MALTESE E-NEWSPAPER
Journal of the Maltese living in Malta and abroad
If you love Malta, its unique culture, history
and its people then subscribe to this journal.
You are most welcome to participate

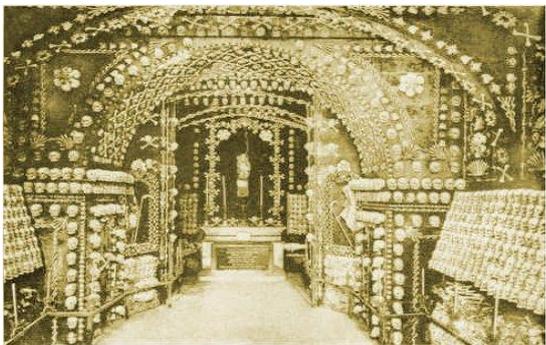
OUR PLANET

Ignorance is no longer an excuse for not taking care of our planet. After years of learning about all the things that are damaging the world, we still have a lot of problems with waste across the globe, and Malta is no exception

THE HISTORY OF THE MEDICAL TEACHING IN MALTA



Cottoner's School of Anatomy and Surgery - On 19 October 1676, Grandmaster Nicolas Cottoner formalised medical teaching at the *Sacra Infermeria* by the appointment of Fra Dr. Giuseppe Zammit as *lettore* in Anatomy and Surgery, while the School of Anatomy and Surgery was founded on the 19 December 1676 at the Grandmaster's expense. Instruction in theoretical anatomy and surgery was given to the barber-surgeons of the *Sacra Infermeria* and to all other youths who aspired to join the surgical profession provided that they could read and write. The building of the *Sacra Infermeria* [see picture] was commenced in 1574 and completed four years later under the Grandmastership of Jean L'Eveque de la Cassiere. This hospital catered for male patients. It continued serving its function for clinical teaching until the advent of French rule in 1798 when the *Sacra Infermeria* was taken over as a military hospital, a role maintained during British rule after 1800.



Anatomical teaching was carried out in dissecting rooms situated opposite the *Sacra Infermeria*. In the late 18th century, the anatomical theatre was in North Street facing the *Infermeria*. The "main door, situated next to the Nibbia Chapel [see picture], led to a large semi-circular hall which had 5 windows looking on to the street. Three dissecting tables were placed under these windows. On the wall opposite to the semi-circular side were 2 inscriptions, one reading "ex morte vita" and the other Abernethy's dictum "He who will not dissect the dead will mangle the living". In the centre of the hall were 2 large columns supporting the first floor, while at the farthest was a partition behind which were cupboards containing around 3,000 sets of

human bones. A small door led to an area under a flight of steps where the wash-basins were situated and from where one then passed to the outside into the Nibbia cemetery. Just by the main door was a flight of steps leading on to the first floor. The larger part of this floor was used as a lecture hall, while a small area just above the main door served as a Museum where several preserved specimens were kept. The farthest part of this floor was cut off to form the Professor's office".

Through the agency of Prof. Gavino Portelli, an anatomical theatre was built in 1822-23 in the courtyard of the Civil Hospital also in the vicinity of the Nibbia Chapel; however this survived only until the move of the Civil Hospital from Valletta to the Central Hospital in Floriana in 1850. Anatomical teaching reverted back to the Nibbia dissecting rooms, which continued being used until their destruction in 1942 during the Second World War. Anatomical dissection was in the post-war period transferred to a small room at the back of the Argotti Gardens in Floriana [see picture]. The facilities here were inadequate with lack of refrigeration requiring the cadavers to be covered with formalin-soaked sacking in between dissection sessions. Laboratory studies in chemistry, physics and biology continued in rooms situated in the University

Collegium Melitensis: Publica Universita` di Studi Generali - Through the intervention of Bishop Tommaso Gargallo and the Inquisitor Giovanni Ludovico Dell'Armi, Pope Clement VIII on the 12th November 1592 authorised the building of a *Collegium Melitense* in Valletta [see picture]. This college was to be managed by the Society of Jesuits, who through a Papal Bull of Pope Pius IV dated 29th August 1561 and confirmed by a subsequent Bull of Pope Gregory XIII dated 9th May 1578, was empowered to confer degree of Magister Philosophiae and Doctor Divinus. Grandmaster Martin Garzez laid the foundation stone on the 4th September 1595 and the building was completed in 1602. At the instigation of the Neapolitan Government, Grandmaster Pinto on the 29th April 1768 expelled the Society of Jesus from Malta. Despite protests lodged by the Bishop, the Inquisitor and the Cathedral Chapter, the Grandmaster appropriated all the revenue accruing from the property of the Society in Malta with the

Thank you for sending us the newsletter.

.Please accept our sincere belated congratulations on receiving the Maltese National Order of Merit, a prestigious honour indeed and we also thank you for your work, services and commitment with the Maltese Community in Australia. Thank you and God Bless. Best regards Lawrence Buhaqiar – Consul-General (NSW)

aim of setting up a "*Pubblica Università di Studi Generali*". After confidential negotiations with the Holy See, a papal brief *Sedula Romani Pontific* dated 20th October 1769 issued by Pope Clement XIV authorised the setting up the institution "with the privileges, prerogatives, pre-eminences, favours and honours granted to other public Universities". The decree constituting the University was signed by Grandmaster Pinto on the 22nd November 1769. The institution comprised two sections: a "*Collegium*" aimed at elementary and secondary education, and a "*Universitas*" to confer the degrees of *Magister Philosophiae* and *Doctor Divinus*. Later additions included the Faculties of Jurisprudence and Medicine. The *Collegio Medico* was set up on the 25 May 1771.



Evans Anatomy Laboratories - The 1947 University reforms led to an eventual clash of interest between the University and the Government. This clash led to the setting up of a Commission in 1957 under the chairmanship of Lord Hector Hetherington to assess the situation and propose remedies. The Commissioners expressed their doubt about the suitability of the old University building in Valletta, even considering the newly built Evans Laboratories close-by that were scheduled to house the science and anatomical laboratories. These views were echoed by John Cronin who was appointed in 1956 to report on the medical services of Malta. He further added that "The accommodation available for medical students seemed to me quite insufficient. I consider, therefore, that the building of a Medical School of adequate size, equipment and teaching staff is a necessity; which requires early attention, if doctors qualifying in Malta are to receive suitable training.....It is my view that in conformity with the well-tried practice of British medical schools, all students studying clinical subjects should be appointed as clinical clerks or surgical dressers to individual members of the Visiting Staff of St. Luke's Hospital for convenient periods..... The duties of these students would be to examine, keep notes, do dressings, perform simple treatment under supervision, and attend operation on the patients allotted to them. These appointments would of course be unpaid".

The recommendations of the Hetherington Report were gradually adopted. The Anatomy Dissection rooms were transferred from the totally inadequate Argotti Garden Laboratory to a more modern set-up with cadaver refrigeration facilities in the ground floor level at Evans Laboratories [see pictures]. The University Science Laboratories were also transferred to the new building. These facilities were long overdue. The medical student journal in an 1952 editorial commented that "The new laboratories, so long promised, are now, we are glad to say making their appearance very close to the main University building in Valletta. They have been sorely missed and several generations of medical students have had to make do with temporary facilities during their pre-clinical days. Soon, it is hoped, the pre-clinical years will be more adequately and more comfortably catered for than before".

Gwardamangia Medical School and Tal-Qroqq University Further funds allowed the building of a dedicated Medical School at Pieta-Gwardamangia, within the grounds of St. Luke's Hospital. The building of the Medical School was completed in 1963 and was in use during the academic year 1963-64. Clinical

studies could thus be transferred to the new facilities. Pre-clinical studies and the Faculty of Science remained at Evans Laboratories. In 1964 also, the Foundation Stone of a new University building [see picture] was laid down at Msida by the Hon. Mr. Duncan Sandys, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations during the Independence Celebrations. By October 1967, the first stage of the project was completed and science facilities were ready to be occupied. These included the Physics & Mathematics Block, the Chemistry and Pharmacy Building, and the Biological Science Building housing Biology, Physiology & Biochemistry, Anatomy and Dental Surgery. The facilities in Evans Laboratories, together with those in the Valletta University buildings were utilised to set up the University VIth Form - named Junior College. This ran the preparatory courses in Arts and Sciences leading to the Advanced level General Certificate of Education Examinations that were made a requirement for University entry. The Junior College was eventually amalgamated with other VIth Forms and placed under the direction of the Department of Education in 1973.

**THE MALTESE QUEEN OF VICTORIES BAND
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
AND
THE MALTESE CHAPLAINCY FESTIVITIES GROUP**

Present

ANDY VENNING
COMEDY HYPNOTIST

Come along and enjoy a night of fun and laughter

When : Saturday 9 th March 2019

Where: 456 Henley Beach Road, Lockleys South Australia 5032

Time: Doors open at 6.30 pm

\$35.00 p/h (includes all the Pizza you can eat)

Drinks at the bar.

Tickets: Lilian 0431772521 Jane: 82687168 Katie: 04293105

**ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE CHURCH MALTESE CANADIAN
COMMUNITY**

Parish 3224 Dundas Street West, Toronto, Ontario M6P 2A3

St. Paul the Apostle Feast Day Celebrations



Friday February 8th. 2019 at 7.00p.m

Concert featuring the Malta Band and a variety of vocalists.

Saturday February 9th. 2019 at 7.00p.m.

Dinner & Dance in honor of St. Paul our Patron Saint. A good DJ, good food and wine on the table. Come and enjoy yourself with so many others on the day of our Parish 's Patron. Tickets are available by communicating with Freda Mifsud (416-762-1891) or the Office.

Sunday February 10th. 2019 at 10.30a.m.
Bilingual Mass in honor of St. Paul. We wish to congratulate all the parishioners on this Wonderful and prestigious Day of our Parish and especially our New Pastor Fr. Mario Micallef MSSP.

We will keep him in our prayers so that God will continue to guide him on this new assignment that he gave him over here in

Toronto Canada to be a sign of Hope for so many who need guidance and vision in their life.
Happy Feast to you all.

Fr. Manuel

Australia Day in the City: Let's Celebrate



Adelaide's CBD will come alive with colour, music and a carnival atmosphere when more than 70 multicultural groups participate in the 2019 Australia Day Parade starting at 6pm on Saturday 26 January. Dressed in traditional costume, the groups will have the opportunity to showcase the richness and vibrancy of their culture and promote multiculturalism to the wider South Australia community.

The Parade will make its way from Victoria Square along King William Street to Elder Park where up to 40 000 people are expected to attend a free concert featuring The Veronicas and The Sundance Kids, and the fireworks finale as part of the Australia Day in the City celebrations. Australia Day in the City is organised by the Australia Day Council (SA) in conjunction with the Adelaide City Council.



New Year Festival - Year of the Pig

Next month, a number of South Australia's Asian communities will celebrate the 2019 Lunar New Year, officially starting the Year of the Pig.

According to the lunisolar Chinese Calendar, the first day of the Lunar New Year is observed when the new moon appears between 21 January and 20 February. This year, the first day of the Lunar New Year will be on Tuesday 5 February 2019. The Lunar New Year celebrations varies from one Asian country to another and is sometimes known as the *Spring Festival* in China, *Tet* in Vietnam, *Seollal* in Korea and *Losar* in Tibet.



PRESIDENT COLEIRO PRECA RECEIVES HONORARY DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LAWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

President of Malta Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca has been made an honorary graduate by the University of Leicester, UK.

The university bestowed the honorary degree at its graduation ceremony on Friday 18 January 2019 at De Montfort Hall in Leicester.

During her acceptance speech, President Coleiro Preca thanked the University of Leicester for the honour which they bestowed upon her, adding that "this is a truly memorable moment in my life, which I will treasure forever."



REMEMBERING OUR PIONEERS:

An Enduring Legacy

Josephine Zammit AM MBE (1925-1988)

A WOMAN WITH A VOICE IN N.S.W.

Josephine Zammit was a Maltese broadcaster and community worker in New South Wales, Australia.

Josephine emigrated to Australia from Malta with her husband

Charles in 1952.

Josephine was born to Paul and Pauline Darmania in 1925, the youngest of a family of six, Josephine qualified as a teacher in 1945 at the age of 20 years. She married Charles Zammit, a building contractor, in 1947, which ended her teaching career (as used to be the case in those days). She migrated to Australia in 1952 when she was 27 years old, and was soon involved in social work.

In the late 1960s the couple became Australian representatives of the Malta Emigrants' Commission and Josephine became involved in radio broadcasting as part of her welfare work with migrants. She was a pioneer of ethnic station 2EA in Sydney and continued her active involvement with ethnic radio broadcasting until the mid-1980s.

Josephine received many other honours for her dedication to the Maltese community in Australia, including The Midalja Għall-Qadi tar-Republika in 1995, Honorary member of the General Division of the Order of Australia in 2003 and the Gieh il-Hamrun in May 2011.

Josephine went to Malta and became involved in the *Single Women Migrants Scheme* of the early 1960s, becoming a member of the Malta Emigrants Commission. She accompanied five girls to Australia in 1962 under this scheme. As the Australian representative of the Malta Emigrants Commission she helped newly arrived migrants. In a single year they nominated 66 Maltese migrants and helped them to find accommodation and work.

Josephine was also involved in other areas involving Maltese migrants. She organized the Maltese Australian Women's Association in the early 1970s and later helped form the Maltese-Australian Social Welfare Association. In addition she organised 'Malta Day' at *Goulburn College of Advanced Education*, and gave talks about Maltese culture. She was also:

- Foundation member of the NSW Ethnic Communities Council
- Member of the **NSW Ethnic Consultative Council** (later Ethnic Affairs Commission),
- Member of the **Australian Ethnic Affairs Council**

Josephine was best known as an ethnic radio personality in Sydney. This started in 1975 when Mr Al Grassby, the then Minister for Immigration, announced the launching of 2EA Radio station. Josephine Zammit was appointed coordinator of the Maltese program. This was on a voluntary basis. Broadcasting started on 9 June 1975 in Sydney and Melbourne.

Josephine received the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal and the MBE in 1978. She always regarded herself as Maltese and returned to Malta frequently.

She passed away at the age of 63 on May 4, 1988.





Foreign Ministers' meeting held in Malta

Malta hosted the 15th Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the 5+5 Western Dialogue on 17 and 18 January.

This ministerial meeting was co-chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion Carmelo Abela and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Abdelkader Messahel, as current co-presidents of the 5+5 foreign ministers.

Participants at the meeting were the foreign ministers of Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia. High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini, Secretary-General of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) Taieb Baccouche, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) Elisabeth Guigou, Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Nasser Kamel, and President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean Pedro Roque also participated as partners.

Foreign ministers adopted the Valletta Declaration on 'Working Together: A Sustainable Future for the Western Mediterranean' having three overarching themes - sustainable development, youth, migration and mobility. They exchanged views on the challenges being faced in the Mediterranean region and discussed important regional matters of mutual concern such as the situation in Libya the Middle East Peace Process and the Sahel. Migration, climate change and the fight against terrorism and radicalisation were also among the topics of discussion. Minister Abela underscored Malta's conviction that dialogue leads to the creation of joint initiatives to further "our pursuit of sustainable development and achieving stability, security and prosperity in our region".

The importance of youth was also widely highlighted as they remain at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and are an asset and a solution to development challenges in the region. To this effect, for the first time ever, a breakfast meeting was also held, in cooperation with the Anna Lindh Foundation, with a number of young leaders concurrently participating in the Young Mediterranean Voices New Leadership Seminar, which was also being held in Malta. Minister Abela described this exchange as an enriching experience which connected the political leadership with the youths from the regions, and contributed to the overall success of this ministerial meeting.

Foreign Minister of France Jean-Yves Le Drian also launched the 'Sommet des Deux Rives' which will take place in Marseille in June 2019. A French initiative, the summit will seek to generate new momentum in the Western Mediterranean through an inclusive and open agenda that gives an important role to the region's particularly active civil society.

At the end of the meeting, Minister Abela thanked the Algerian co-presidency for its work over the past two years, and welcomed the announcement by Libya to take over the Southern co-presidency for the next two years. This meeting was preceded on 17 January 2018 by the 8th High-level Meeting of the National Parliaments of the Member States of the 5+5 Dialogue, hosted by the House of Representatives. Maltaindependent.com.mt

QUEENSLAND AND THE MALTESE CROSS

George N Busuttill former Malta High Commissioner for Australia



I refer to the letter entitled The Maltese Connection (July 30). The contention that the Maltese Cross was adopted on the Flag of Queensland because the wife of the very first Governor of Queensland, Sir George Bowen, was Maltese seems to be inaccurate.

Sir George Ferguson Bowen (1821-1899) was indeed the first Governor of Queensland, from 1859 to 1868, but his wife was not Maltese, but Greek, having been born in the Greek island of Zakynthos, one of the seven Ionian islands off the west coast of Greece.

Sir Bowen was chief secretary to the government of the Ionian islands between 1854 and 1859, when they were still a British protectorate. He married his wife Diamantina, daughter of Count Candiano di Roma, who was

President of the senate of the islands in 1856. The Roma family were local aristocracy and her father being president of the senate was the titular head of the islands from 1850 to 1856.

This subject reminds me about my state visit to Queensland in April 1993, in my capacity as Malta's High Commissioner to Australia at the time, when I paid a courtesy call on the Governor Mrs Leneen Ford. I observed that Queensland was not only closely linked to Malta through our pioneer migrants who settled in the sugar cane region of Mackay in the 1880s, but also through the state emblem on Queensland's flag that depicts the eight pointed cross of the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta.

The Governor was not aware of this connection and asked her aide de camp to investigate the subject and before my return to Canberra I was given a two-page report on the subject and a copy of the Queensland Government Gazette Vol XIX Notice published on November 29, 1876 (see below).

Subsequently the design was incorporated as part of the Queensland Coat of Arms. However, the fact remains that it is not known for certain exactly why the Maltese Cross with a superimposed crown was chosen as a suitable badge. Over the years various theories have been propounded and the one given best credence is that as the Victoria Cross was first bestowed in 1857 by Queen Victoria at the close of the Crimean War, and as Queensland was established in 1859, it would be a natural association of ideas to ally Queensland - "the Queen Victoria Land" with the Victoria Cross, which of course is in the form of a Maltese Cross with the Royal Arms and Lion superimposed.

The latter theory, and the fact that the actual proposal of the Maltese Cross was not put forward until 1876, quite some years after Governor Bowen left Queensland, are regarded as significant arguments against the theory that there was some association between the Maltese Cross and Lady Bowen.

In fact it is to be pointed out that Sir George Bowen retired from the Civil Service in 1886 and his only association with Malta was in 1887, when he chaired the Royal Commission on a new Constitution for Malta.

Coat of Arms of Queensland

James R. Dickson, Colonial Treasurer, The Treasury Queensland Brisbane, November 15, 1876

Government notification

**The Journal of the Maltese
DIASPORA**

maltesejournal@gmail.com

**Let's build bridges
not walls**
Martin Luther King

His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has been pleased to direct that in the future the Badge of the Colony be emblazoned in the centre of the Union Flag for use by the Governor and to the employment at the Queensland Government shall be as herein described: Argent on a Maltese Cross Azure a Queen's Crown Proper.

Malta's Sister Island - Gozo



Gozo, the second largest island of the Maltese archipelago, is situated some 6 km northwest of Malta, 80 km south of the nearest landfall in Sicily and 298 km north off the African coast. Gibraltar is 1836 km to the west and Alexandria, Egypt, 1519 km to the east. With an area of 67 sq km, it approximates in size Hong Kong Island. Its population has risen to almost 30,000, a fifth of whom lives in the capital Victoria, better known as Rabat.

The island has been inhabited for the last 7000 years gaining a succession of different but related names. The earliest,

from Punic times, is GWL (pronounced Gôl), a Phoenician word meaning a round ship, possibly in reference to the island's shape from a distance. The island is locally known as Ghawdex (pronounced awdesh), a name that dates to the Arabic rule and used since the turn of the second millennium. The name "Gozo", Castilian for joy, has been adopted since the Aragonese rule (1282-1530).

Though ruled from Malta from time immemorial, Gozo has had semi-autonomous governments several times in its history. It had its municipium minting its own coins in Roman times (218 BC - AD 535), and lately, between 1961 and 1973, it was administered by the Gozo Civic Council. Gozo also enjoyed a short period of autonomy between 28 October 1798 and 5 September 1800. The island is now governed like any other part of the Maltese Islands. The executive functions of the central Government are carried out through the Ministry for Gozo, established 14 May 1987.

The island of Comino and the uninhabited islet of Cominotto are considered part of Gozo both for civil and religious purposes. Lying almost midway in the Gozo-Malta Channel, they cover an area of 2.8 sq km. Gozo and Comino, though part of Malta, remain essentially different with their own particular traditions and cultural variations.



I wish to draw your attention to page 22 of the e-newsletter 249.

This article shows a picture of a house - on bottom row/right.

Your blogger's article is rather outdated. This is how this house looked during my visit in 2016. It has been beautifully restored. Showing craftsmanship which Malta still has aplenty. You will agree the house looks

beautiful. This house was my childhood home, between 1955 - 1973.

So, of course during my visit to Malta in 2016, I simply had to go and see how it was looking. Looking rather beautiful !!

I note that the new owners have this property for short-term lets, on Booking.com. With kind regards Victoria Foster

George Vella, if appointed President, would break 25-year 'legal' hold on presidency

Stephen Calleja



If George Vella, as reported in the local papers, is sworn in as Malta's next President of the Republic, he would be breaking a 25-year hold of the Maltese presidency by members of the legal profession.

Vella, a former Foreign Minister and deputy leader of the Labour Party, retired from politics at the end of the last legislature, having served as an MP between 1978 and 2017, except for the 1981-1987 term.

He is the favourite to be appointed as Malta's 10th President in April, when the five-year term in office for Marie Louise Coleiro Preca expires.

A doctor by profession, Vella would become the second member of the medical profession to take responsibility of the highest position in the country. The first and only doctor to be named President so far was Censu Tabone, who served the country as its head of state between 1989 and 1994.

Since then, the post has been occupied by four lawyers and a notary public.

The four lawyers are Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, who was President between 1994 and 1999, Guido de Marco between 1999 and 2004, Eddie Fenech Adami between 2004 and 2009 and George Abela between 2009 and 2014.

Coleiro Preca, a notary public, was appointed in 2014 and she will hand over the reins on 4 April, a date that has come to be associated with the presidency since the last six Presidents have been appointed on the fourth day of the fourth month.

Coleiro Preca is the ninth President of the Republic, the seventh to come from the legal profession.

The first two Presidents were also lawyers, Sir Anthony Mamo, who was in charge when Malta became a republic in 1974 until he was replaced by Anton Buttigieg, who was President between 1976 and 1981.

Apart from Censu Tabone, the only other President of the Republic who did not come from the legal profession was Agatha Barbara, who served between 1982 and 1987. Barbara was a teacher by profession. Albert Hyzler and Paul Xuereb served as acting presidents – never getting the full title of President – respectively between December 1981 and February 1982, and between February 1987 and April 1989. Hyzler was a doctor while Xuereb worked in journalism and education.



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e-Newsletter**

**The Journal of the Maltese
living in Malta and Abroad**



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Traditional Maltese NOW AND THEN

Centuries-old, but still alive and kicking today **Elsa Messi**

Traditional Maltese crafts make up a huge part of this tiny island's rich history, traditions and culture. Most date back several centuries, and although some are unfortunately a dying art, there are many people and artisans who are keeping the tradition alive and a lot make awesome souvenir gifts.

Lace-making (*bizzilla*) *Bizzilla* is one of the oldest traditional craft and is often linked with nobility. Maltese lace is very sought after, can often be sold at auctions or is sometimes worn by people high in society such as the clergy. It is often made with Spanish silk but the inclusion of the Maltese cross into the lace pattern helps make this craft local AF. Still one of the most beloved and popular traditional crafts on the island, lace-making is very big in certain areas like the sister island of Gozo.

Filigree The art of Filigree consists of weaving together fine threads of gold or silver to create ornate motifs or intricate jewellery. Although you can buy ready-made filigree all over the island, watching it being made is satisfying AF!

Weaving Weaving is one of the oldest Maltese crafts dating back to the prehistoric times. It involves interlacing threads to create fabric used for clothing, rugs and other products. It is a lost art in modern times, but there are a handful of locals who are keeping the tradition alive by hosting workshops and demonstrations.

Clock-making The Maltese clock consists of a wooden case (relating to that other wood-making craft that is *arkett*) and comes in many different sizes. It was mostly found in the homes of the super rich centuries ago. These clocks are usually heavily decorated with gild or hand-painted flower patterns. Nowadays, real Maltese clocks are a collector's item but replicas can be found around the island.

Glass blowing One of the Maltese crafts that hasn't really died down is mouth-blown and hand finished glassware, usually bursting with colour and still adorning home interiors all over the islands. Many tourists love to not only watch glass-blowing, but also participate as a way of getting immersed in Malta's culture. The process begins involves melted coloured beads which are blown into a shape. The objects you can make are endless such as drinking glasses, vases, bowls, candle holders and more. Interested? You must check out the Mdina Glass Blowing Factory.

Il-*Ħuttaba* Dates were much simpler before. You did not have to pluck up the courage to talk to anyone and be rejected — the *Ħuttaba* was there to save you from the major cringe and embarrassment of being rejected in the middle of Paceville.

L-*Għonnella* Who cannot pull off an *għonnella* like a queen? Nobody, that's who. This stylish head dress is practical AF and can be worn whenever. Maybe we can add some tweaks to it — Why can't we wear a PVC *għonnella* when it's raining? And why do we have to endure the scorching Maltese sun without any sort of coverage? We want our pale lilac PVC *għonnella*, now.

The Victory Kitchen Maybe we do not want the Victory Kitchen back under the same circumstances as when we had it the first time round, but seriously, what is not to love about the the concept? You can collect and eat home-cooked meals in exchange for coupons. *Hemm xi naqa għaġin bil-bovril jew?*

Il-Borża ta' San Martin We are not talking about the BS bag of chocolate kids get nowadays. We're talking about the real *borża*. We want our figs, our walnuts, chestnuts, the damned fruits and the delicious *ħobża ta' San Martin*. And we want it *now*.

In-Newwieħa Back in the old days when someone died, a group of women were hired to wail, scream, cry, pull at their own hair and over-dramaticise the whole funeral. Why would you want people to come to your funeral when you can have the *newwieħa*?

The Weddings Traditional Maltese weddings were just ethereal. The bride would walk around under a heavily decorated canopy with folk singers serenading her *all the way to the church*. We need to get the Maltese weddings back ASAP. And while we're at it, we should totally bring back the knights to ruin our weddings by murdering the grooms and kidnapping the brides.

No matter how much of a global village the whole world's becoming, there are always some traditional curiosities that manage to remain hidden and mysterious to many people out there. And no matter how many times we're asked about them, we revel in telling their story one more time, explaining the cultural passion most of us have towards these sometimes centuries-old traditions. Well, in the case of these seven pieces of Maltese culture and tradition, you might not need to.

Love of Fireworks Remember when, last summer, the feast of Żurrieq (a village with a population of just over 11,000 people) broke the world record for the biggest single firework ball, making the whole sky look like that one scene from *The Lord of the Rings*? Well apparently, so does the internet! The GIF version of the video that went viral in Malta hit the likes of Reddit and Facebook, and now the world is torn between thinking it's fake and wanting to come and experience our weekly summer firework extravaganzas in person!

Potato-Blood When a starchy vegetable is one your biggest exports and manages to get half a million views on YouTube, you can't really shy away from saying it's part of your tradition. It's so much part of our tradition, that some of us have it right in their blood. The 2018 video went so viral, that it now has its own Know Your Meme database entry! We made it guys; now, everyone knows that an integral part of Malta's culture is patata.

Habit of Shooting Down Birds

You can't expect to open your doors to the digital age and not build a bad reputation on certain things you label as tradition. The 2015 Spring Hunting Referendum was a months-long crusade that quickly (and inevitably) turned political and left most of us bruised and disenchanted. With the (eventually victorious) portion of the population constantly claiming that hunting is an integral part of Maltese culture, this local tradition was quick to get on a lot of countries' radars...most of the time, however, for all the wrong reasons.

Pastizzi, The Cornerstone of Our Country The first, second and third thing on a person's mind when you ask them about traditional Maltese food. The tiny pastries have made it to food blogs worldwide, and are slowly penetrating international

communities. There's a very big chance that pastizzi will be the only Maltese tradition a tourist will know about before coming to our country, and we want to make sure that it stays that way.

Love for Kinnie You know your country's traditional soft drink's made it when, up to this week on Reddit, people living in Utah are trying to get their friends from Canada to bring down a couple of bottoms through customs. Unless you're like these two *expletives* above here, who pretty much hate everything about Malta...including Kinnie.

Dedication to 80s Box Office Flops For most people around the world, Popeye was a 1980s box office flop that saw one of Robin Williams' least successful (albeit still hilarious) character portrayals. For Malta, it's that time we built an entire village for a film set and kept it there as a mini theme park turned party venue. And as the years go by, everyone's taking notice of this sheer dedication to big names over good ratings, with Popeye Village actually making it to Reddit as a curiosity.

GOSTRA tradition Perhaps one of the very first Maltese forays into the viral world is this amazing photo of the traditional gostra in St. Julian's. Strangely enough, it also feels like the most adequate part of Maltese tradition to go viral, seeing as this particular tradition (and most importantly this picture) says much more than a thousand words about the country it's from. The photo has not only been featured on Reddit and other social media multiple times, but has also sparked a wide variety of memes, including some of our favourites:
Lovingmalta.com

Maltese Orphans From Around The World Bid Beloved Sliema Nun Farewell As She Passes Away

Sister Crocifissa Tedesco was renowned for her loving work at the Ursuline Creche

Johnathan Cilia 3 days ago



Maltese people have expressed their sadness at the passing of a mother-figure nun who was renowned for her love and caring work at the Ursuline Creche in Sliema.

Sr. Crocifissa Tedesco is being remembered by people all over the world, from the USA to Scotland, who she helped raised as orphans in Malta.

"This nun was a mother figure to many like me, all her life was dedicated to raising orphans," said Lawrence Grech, one

of the children that grew up under her care." She deserves to be known, not forgotten."

"RIP from all of us in Scotland, you were a great mother to me as a little boy in Malta," said another man. **"I ended up meeting her after 40 years, and it's an incredible thing; she recognised me and remembered my name"**

Lawrence - who was institutionalised at a very young age and was raised by the Sister - couldn't believe she recognised him after not seeing her for 40 years. He said her positive and loving demeanour made all the difference in his childhood.

Pictured above: Sister Crocifissa Tedesco with a young Lawrence Grech, and their reunion 40 years later

"I had a photo with her from my time at the Creche, and out of curiosity I started looking for her and I found she was still at the Creche. I ended up meeting her after 40 years, and it's an incredible thing, she recognised me with my name. For some reason she recognised me, and she told me I was special and that's why she remembered me," he said.

"It's stunning - these sisters do incredible work and shouldn't be forgotten," he said



WATCH: Alexandra Alden Brings Some Serious Nostalgia In New Single On Malta's Changing Landscape

'On the world stage, we

are losing touch with nature'

Lovingmalta.com **Johnathan Cilia**

Maltese musician and X Factor Malta judge [Alexandra Alden](#) has released her latest single 'Wild Honey & Thyme', and it is a soft, nostalgic throwback to a more innocent time in everyone's lives.

"I was frustrated by how the landscape of Malta and Gozo is being consumed by buildings, litter and all sorts of pollution," [Alex](#) said. "Having been studying in the Netherlands while reading about overdevelopment in the news was getting me down, it made me feel helpless and like I couldn't do anything."

"The only way to vent the frustration was to write a song about it," she continued. "On the world stage, we are losing touch with nature. We are overvaluing the manufactured instead of adapting and evolving with the natural."

The music video portrays Alden taking on two roles opposed to one another

In one role, she is carefree and at peace with her surroundings, enjoying the familiar landscape which is available to everyone. In her other persona she is luxuriously wealthy, but disconnected, despairing and lost.

"We see nature as something separate from ourselves rather than as an extension of ourselves," the singer-songwriter explained. "If we feed our bodies junk then it they will look like junk and feel like junk."

The video is a collaboration between Alden and Marie Claire Portelli

"[Marie Claire](#) did the camera work after I approached her with the concept," Alden said. "We edited the video together in a very effortless way, bouncing ideas off each other. The process was very natural and we have a great creative flow which I haven't experienced with anyone else when it comes to visuals. The process was so seamless, that we let each other into our vulnerable spaces of creativity without even noticing."

The video-making process flowed easily

"We would have moments when the footage just magically slotted into place followed by great lightbulb, 'aha' moments together in the continuation of the story," she said.

"She has a background in visuals and filmmaking and has a solid portfolio of work, having worked with artists such as Joe Roscoe previously, however, the video idea only came about after we agreed to just work on an instagram collaboration together. She has a keen eye and sensitivity which I really admire in her process."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=RDmOlg34qnFBw&v=mOlg34qnFBw>





Golden Jubilee for Sister Carmen Caruana

Sr. Carmen was born in Sliema, Malta. The third eldest to Rosario (Rosie) and Barbara (Mifsud) Caruana. The family of six was sponsored by relatives, leaving Malta on December 15 on the Florentia disembarking at Sydney on January 26, 1951. The family endured a horror journey by train, encountered floods in Northern New South Wales, and followed by a 30-hour marathon to Mackay, with three toddlers and a baby.

Rosie, Sr. Carmen's father was well known in Mackay. He had worked as a naval man in Malta, and then worked for 13 years as a stoker at the Mackay Gas Works and travelled by bicycle. By 1965 the family had increased to twelve, four girls and eight boys. Whilst still a young girl, Carmen came to the home on weekends, lived with the sisters, and did voluntary work. This continued until she entered the convent at 16-and-a-half years.

Sr. Carmen left her large, loving and close Christian family to take up her life with the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus. Sr. Carmen has the distinction of being the first female from Australia to enter the Order based in Malta. Both Sister Ottavia and Sister Carmen are patrons and life members of the Mackay Maltese Club and have been strong and enduring pillars of the club since its inception in 1993.

Sr. Carmen Caruana celebrated her Golden Jubilee as a Franciscan Sister of the Heart of Jesus on October 5. The centrepiece of the celebration was a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Bishop Michael McCarthy, Fr. Don White & Fr. Stephen Hanly in St Francis Church in Mackay. After the mass attended by over 150 members of the Mackay Community, the celebrations continued with a buffet dinner and entertainment at St Francis of Assisi Home. Sr. Carmen's brothers and sisters and their families also joined the celebrations. Her brother, Frank made an entertaining and insightful speech about her love of God, her family and those she has spent a lifetime caring for in Mackay.

For over 50 years, the sisters of Francis of Assisi have become her family, just loving and caring, but with greater emphasis on service to their Christ. The sisters continue to live their vision of the home: "Serving with compassionate and generous love, those we care for". (Mackay Maltese Club Newsletter)

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"You have ideas and expect that someone will run with them. But you have to be the change agents yourselves, and you have more tools than ever to do it — to network"



Praying for society through art

Fr A. Sahaya Belix surrounded by children while painting in Tamil Nadu, South India.

An Indian Catholic priest is inviting the public to immerse themselves in his “spiritual art” and get in touch with their inner selves.

Fr A. Sahaya Belix, who is currently displaying 20 of his colourful paintings at Ir-Razzett tal-Markiz Mallia Tabone,

in Mosta, has made it his mission to create a “healthy society” through art and craft.

“Art is the expression of the soul. Art leads man to be in touch with his inner self. I make my act of painting a prayer,” he told the Times of Malta. “

Fr Belix comes from a place called Devasahayam Mount, in Tamil Nadu, south India, where Blessed Devasahayam Pillai, a faithful layman who lived in the 18th century, was shot to death for his faith in Jesus Christ. Fr Belix was ordained priest seven years ago and served as a youth director in his diocese of Kottar for five years.

The self-taught artist has been painting since childhood but says he developed his spiritual art, which is born out of meditation, through his priestly formation.

He later did a diploma in expressive art therapy. The experience inspired him to formulate what he calls “neuro aesthetic spirituality” (NAS) which combines aspects of psychology, spirituality and art.

“When one practises NAS, it makes positive changes in the right side of the brain,” he claimed.

“Those who don’t paint can achieve the same wellness through seeing and contemplating a painting.”

That is because his works are full of images and symbols meant to draw the viewer into a “deep spiritual experience”.

Fr Belix also does speed painting, an artistic technique where one has a limited time to finish a work, to explain the word of God. He stars in some YouTube programmes and delivers spiritual art therapy and awareness programmes for children, the sick and the elderly in India.

Through the exhibition, titled My Sweet Memories of Malta, Fr Belix recounts his personal and “beautiful” experience of the island, which he has visited three times.

His paintings combine elements of Maltese and Indian culture, heritage, nature and, of course, spirituality.

A striking aspect of these works is surely the use of bright colours, which reflect Fr Belix’s Indian background.

“India is a country of many colourful spices, flowers and soil. This has influenced me a lot in my choice of colours,” he noted.

He added that such colours also have therapeutic qualities, as they stimulate the senses and can cause positive changes in the mind and body.

All proceeds from the exhibition, which runs until January 26, will go towards the medical expenses of kidney patients in India.

The Razzett tal-Markiz Mallia Tabone, in Mosta, is open from Monday to Saturday from 6 to 8pm and on Sundays from 10am to noon and from 6 to 8pm. For more information, visit www.talentmosti.com. To follow the priest’s work, visit the Facebook page ‘Art is All Fr Sahaya Belix’.

Maltese e-Newsletter

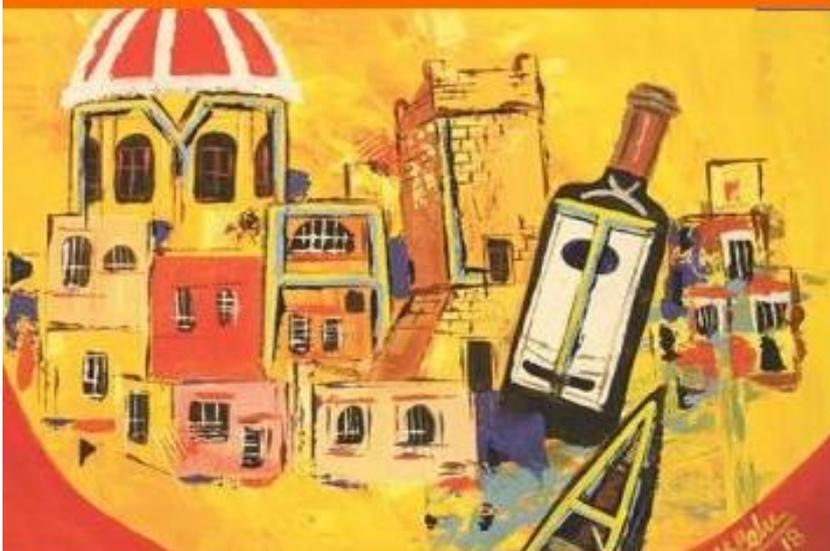
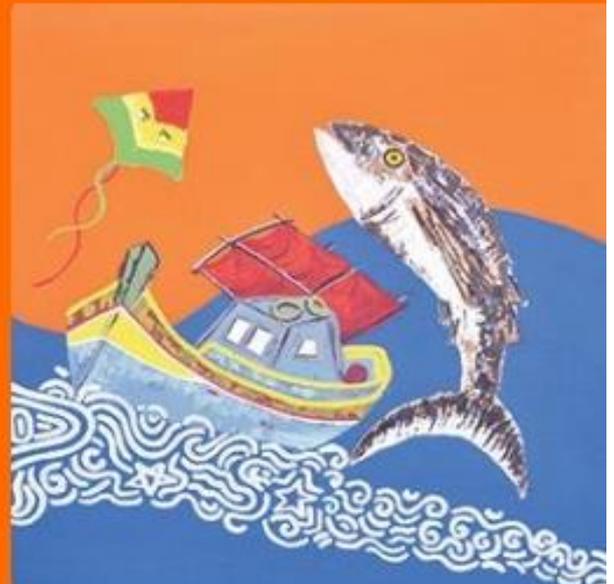
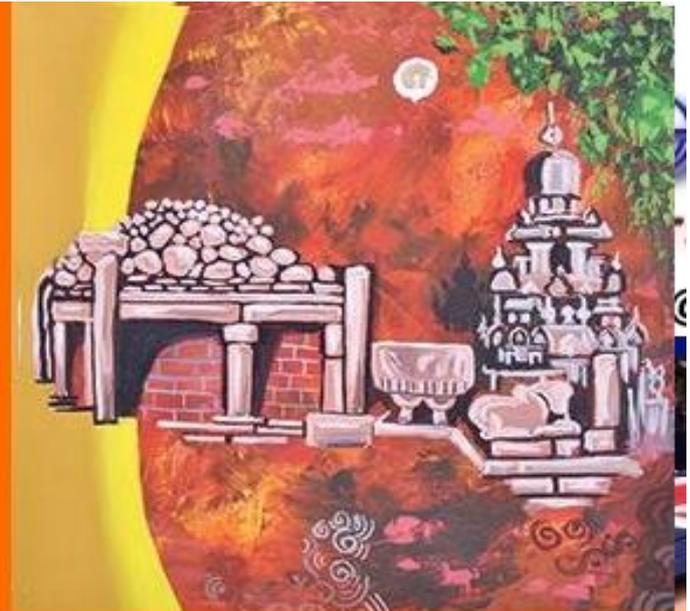
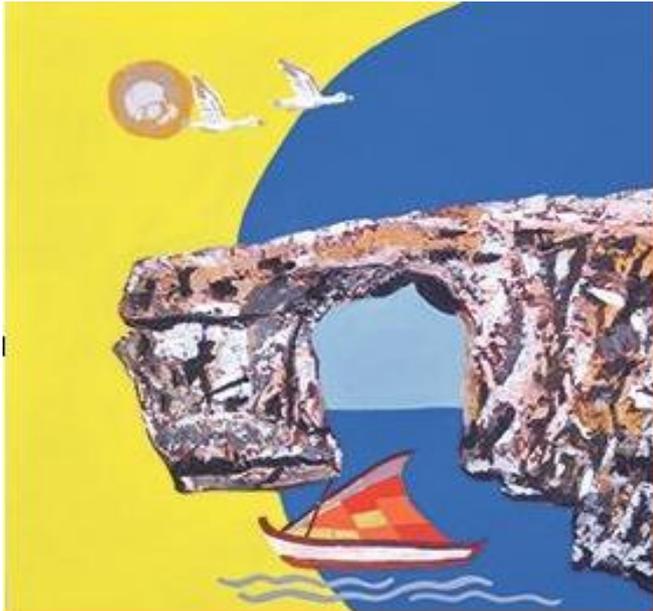


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Malta Migration Museum - Valletta

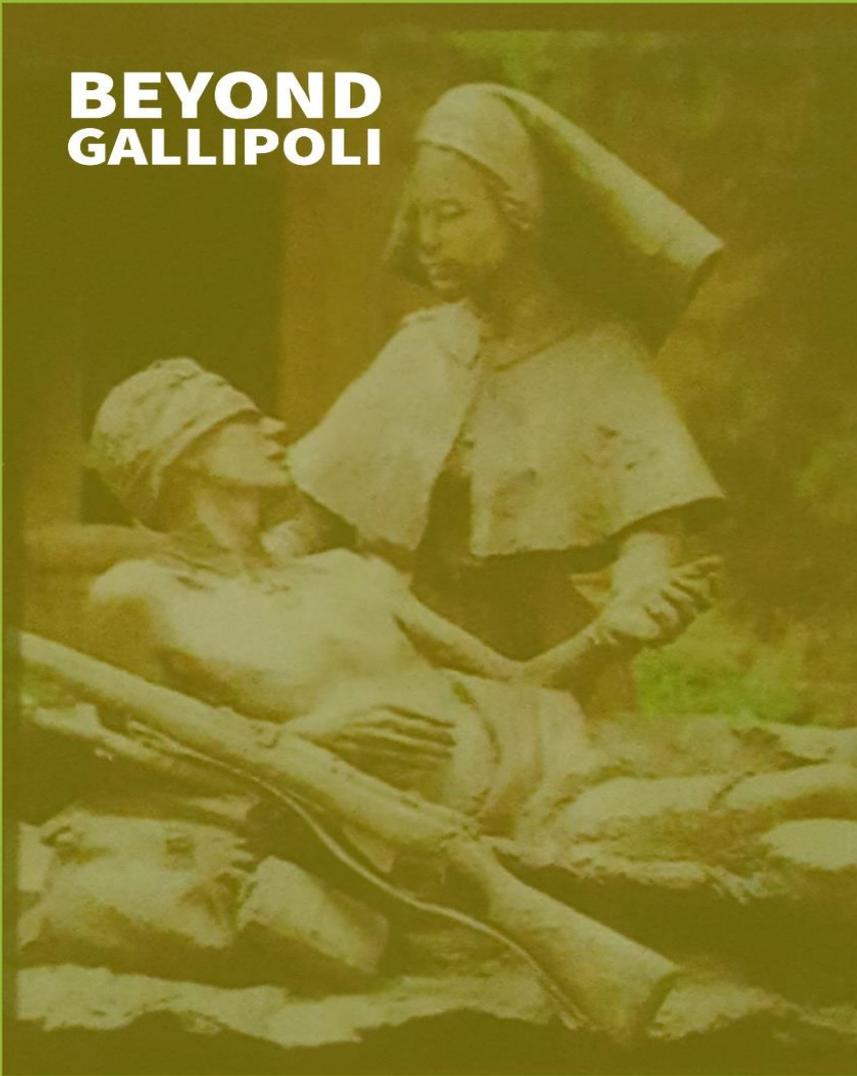
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The art works of Fr. Sahaya Belix an Indian Catholic priest are full of images and symbols meant to draw the viewer into a "deep spiritual experience"

BEYOND GALLIPOLI



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BEYOND GALLIPOLI reminds us what happened behind the scenes of Gallipoli. Thousands of sick and wounded ANZACs journeyed to Malta (which was known as the Nurse Island of the Mediterranean) for medical and hospital treatment. It also reminds us of those buried ANZAC's in Malta, the Hospital Ships, Doctors and Nurse Volunteers, the role of the Red Cross, the Australian Hall which was built in 1915 and more. To remember those thousands involved in **BEYOND GALLIPOLI**, South Australia will feature in the First ANZAC sports scheduled to be played in Malta between Australia, New Zealand and host Malta. The event is tentatively scheduled for 25th April 2020 after the traditional ANZAC Service held in Pieta "Military" Cemetery. The Adelaide Launch on the 16th March 2019 will kick start the planning process, outline the first ANZAC Day sports program and will include special announcements throughout the evening.

Door and raffle prizes plus sports memorabilia will be available for auction

Please circulate in your next Maltese e newsletter to inform your readers to join me on 16/3/2019 for a 4 course dinner evening launching the first ANZAC sports played in Malta . People holidaying in Europe around April 2020 is a must to visit Malta on ANZAC DAY 25/4/2020 for a busy day of events plus a special evening meal. Tickets are available for the Adelaide function ,book early to avoid disappointment , contact Mob. 0414932481 to arrange tickets or enquiries. Regards

John Calleja – Adelaide - Malta ANZAC - Campaign Director - South Australia

**I am looking for an online Maltese language course. I reside in Queensland and my Pa was Maltese. Unfortunately, Pa did not teach us Maltese and I am keen to learn. Could anyone please advise if this course is still available as I tried to use the page links without success. Kind regards,
Michael Conrad safetyfs@bigpond.com**

A Classic Showcase

Don Bosco Grand Concert 2019 mill-Gozo Youth Wind Band



Jikteb il-Kav Joe M Attrad minn Ghawdex

Il-‘Gozo Youth Wind Band’ fi hdan il-‘Gozo Youth Wind Band and Orchestra’ tinsab tagħmel l-aħhar thejijiet intensivi biex tippreżenta l-Kunċert Annwali tagħha fl-okkażjoni tal-festa ta’ San Ġwann Bosco fil-Victoria bl-isem ta’ ‘A Classic Showcase’. Kif għamlet dejjem fis-snin li għaddew il-‘Gozo Youth Wind Band’ tagħmel hilita kollha biex tintroduci xi arrangamenti godda fix-xena mużikali lokali waqt li toqgħod attenta li tagħmel minn

din l-okkażjoni serata pjaċevoli li tkun tappella għal kulhadd. Fil-programm tal-Ħadd filgħaxija 3 ta’ Frar 2019, fuq il-palk tal-Oratorju Don Bosco se tkunu tistgħu tisimghu fost l-oħrajn xogħlijiet li sa jinkludu highlights mill-Musical ‘Mary Poppins’, ‘Viva Verdi’, ‘Queen in Concert’, , mużika mis-Soundtrack tal-film ‘Ben Hur’, ‘Pirates of the Caribbean’, ‘Abba Magic’, siltiet mill-‘Fiddler on the Roof’, u mill-film ‘The Good, the Bad and the Ugly’. It-Trumbettista promettenti Theo Farrugia se nkunu nistgħu nisimghuh fil-‘Ballade Romantika’. Il-kunċert bħal kull sena jagħlaq bl-Innu lil San Giovanni Bosco, patrun tat-tfal u ż-żgħażgħ.

‘Il-Gozo Youth Wind Band’ għal min ma jafx tikkonsisti f’madwar 50 mużiċist żagħżuġh Ghawdxi, kollha studjaw il-mużika, li jiltaqgħu regularment biex jippreparaw għall-kunċerti bħal dan li jsiru matul is-sena f’okkażjonijiet differenti. Din hija s-17 il sena li dawn iż-żewġ ensembles ‘The Gozo Youth Orchestra’ u ‘The Gozo Youth Wind Band’ qed jagħtu kunċerti varji. Ta’ min ifakkar li l-‘Gozo Youth Orchestra’ se tippreżenta s-Show mużikali ‘Queen meets Coldplay’ fis-16 ta’ Marzu 2019 fuq il-palk ta-tejtru tal-Opra Aurora Victoria u għat-12-il darba konsekuttiva, ‘Opera vs Pop under the Stars’ nhar it-Tnejn 29 ta’ Lulju 2019 kif ukoll iktar tard, il-5 edizzjoni ta’ ‘Stage and Proms on the Sea’ it-Tnejn 9 ta’ Settembru 2019.

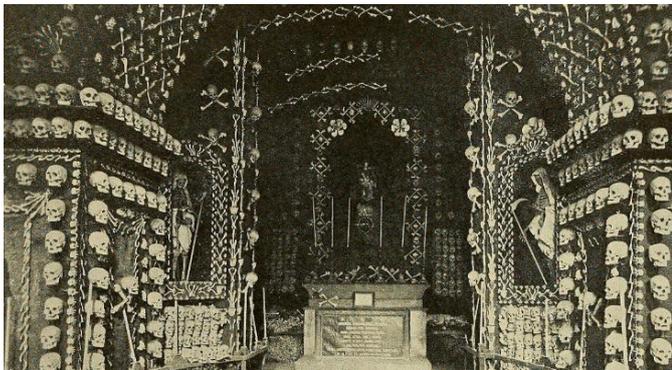
A classic Showcase se jkun ipprezentat il-Ħadd 3 ta’ Frar fis-7pm fuq il-palk tat-Tejtru tal-Oratorju Don Bosco Victoria mill-‘Gozo Youth Wind Band’ taht id-direzzjoni mużikali tal-Fundatur tagħha Mro Dr Joseph Grech. Id-dhul huwa b’xejn u kuħadd huwa mistieden li jkun f’postu kwarta qabel għal madwar siegħa u nofs ta’ divertiment mill-aqwa għall-familja kollha. Għall-iktar informazzjoni wieħed jista’ jikteb f’dan l-indirizz: gozowindbandorchestra@yahoo.com

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Lost Maltese Treasures: Valletta's Chapel of Bones was decorated with human skeletons



Macabre or what?

Melanie Drury

Valletta has always been a city of many wonders. One of these was the now-extant Nibbia Chapel - a small place of worship which was located near a cemetery where the deceased from the Sacra Infermeria hospital were buried. Its crypt was lavishly decorated with human

bones, giving the underground burial space the moniker The Chapel of Bones. Although it looked like something out of a horror movie rather than a place of prayer, The Chapel of Bones became a huge attraction, until an air raid on Valentine's Day 1941, at the height of World War II, ravaged the site.

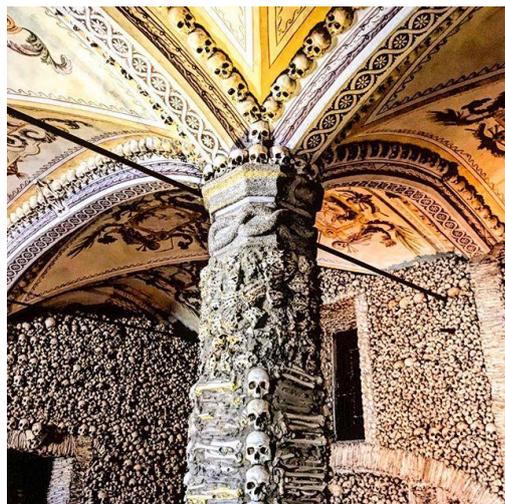
Nibbia Chapel was originally built in 1619 near the Sacra Infermeria cemetery by Fra Giorgio Nibbia, a knight of the Order of St John. Dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy, it was intended as a place of prayer for the souls of the deceased patients of the hospital of the Order.

In 1730, the original chapel was dismantled to make way for a hospital extension and it was rebuilt in the Baroque style in 1731. The new building consisted of an octagonal structure with a dome, pilasters and pediments. More importantly, the chapel included a vaulted underground crypt which served as an ossuary. When the Sacra Infermeria cemetery was cleared in 1776, its human remains were transferred to the ossuary, but it was only in 1852 that a certain Rev Sacco, then the chaplain of the hospital, had the grand idea of decorating the crypt with pretty patterns formed with human bones. The crypt had one altar on which was inscribed a Latin lament on the ephemerality of life, requesting prayers for the dead. This crypt became known as the Chapel of Bones.

Fun Fact: Rev Sacco was not unique in his inspiration. Chapels of Bones are, apparently, quite a thing in Roman Catholic culture. You'd think that the same Catholic Church which today abhors the celebration of Halloween, partly because it deals with the macabre, would have opposed such an idea. Rather, there are several other chapels decorated with human bones around the world.

For example, the PICTURE MNEXT PAGE 16th century Chapel of Bones is located in Évora, Portugal. It is lavishly decorated with bones, skulls and entire bodies hanging from the wall. Eeek!

Now check this one out (NEXT page on the right) and try not to have nightmares tonight. This Roman Catholic chapel in Kutna Hora in the Czech Republic is known as the Sedlec Ossuary ('Kostnice' in Czech). Located in the crypt of the Cemetery Church of All Saints, it is said to contain the bones of around 40,000 to 70,000 people!



So the Maltese project not only went ahead but gained much popularity. Even Malta's very own Saint George Preca used the Nibbia Chapel of Bones to speak about Christian eschatology - the part of theology concerned with death, judgement and the soul's final destination. Indeed, November, the month of the dead, saw several pilgrimages to this chapel. But, as mentioned above,

Nibbia Chapel was severely damaged by aerial bombardment during World War II and its ruins were demolished in the late 1970s.

Today, the foundations of the site are located in the parking lot of Evans Building near St Elmo in Valletta, but the Chapel of Bones is no more.

Or so they say. It is believed, by some, to have survived the bombing, with the crypt still boasting its macabre decoration and still containing the sarcophagus with the remains of the Italian knight Fra Nibbia (1555-1619). Yet, no one has rediscovered it yet. Perhaps, one day, they will.

Pellicano and Curmi at Australian Open for Juniors



Helene Pellicano will open her Australian Open campaign against Hungary's Adrienn Nagy.

Malta will be represented by two players at the Australian Open for Juniors that gets under way on Saturday morning when Helene Pellicano and Francesca Curmi will open their commitments in the girls singles.

This is the first time that Malta is represented by two players in a grand slam tournament for juniors and for both players this

will be their appearance in the prestigious Melbourne championship.

Ranked 57th in the ITF junior list, Curmi will be the first of the two Maltese players in action in Australia when she is scheduled to open proceedings on Court 14 against Australian Annerly Poulous in the first round.

For Curmi this will not be her first appearance in a grand slam tournament as last year she represented Malta at the French Open, Wimbledon Championships and the US Open.

The winner of this match will face either Briton's Victoria Allen or Sada Nahimana of Burundi in the second round. Curmi is accompanied in Australia by her coaching trio of Matthew Ascjak, Francesco Palpacelli and Marco Salerno. Pellicano will make her first appearance in a Grand Slam tournament on Sunday after she was drawn to face Hungary's Adrienn Nagy.

The young Maltese player, who trains at the Lozano-Altur Academy in Valencia, will be looking to gain some valuable points in the tournament as she looks to continue to soar in both the ITF and the world rankings. Pellicano, who is trained by Juan Giner, is currently Malta's highest ranked player in the world list at 715 while she is currently 42nd in the ITF rankings.

However, she faces a tough test against Nagy who is seeded 11th in the tournament.

The winner of the match will be facing either Russia's Daria Frayman or Natsumi Kawaguchi, of Japan.