

Maltese eNewsletter



Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

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GEORGE VELLA SET TO BE PRESIDENT

George Vella is set to become Malta's next president, Prime Minister Joseph Muscat confirmed on Tuesday afternoon. In a tweet, Dr Muscat said that he was nominating former Foreign Affairs minister to be Malta's next Head of State. He will be the 10th President of the Republic of Malta



Malta's president is nominated by a simple parliamentary majority, meaning Dr Vella's ascent to the post is now all but a formality.

Dr Muscat said that the nomination had the unanimous approval of cabinet and the Labour Party's parliamentary group.



**An evening of Music for
String Orchestra
with the Georgian Sinfonietta**

**Becc is proud
to show off
her
Maltese Cross**

Anecdotes being compiled from bus drivers, conductors and owners

Archive project will save memories for future generations



Michael "Zinnu" Cutajar, 68, 1962 to 2011, conductor, driver and owner: As a regular driver on the Żurrieq route, he had to compete with colleagues coming from Qrendi and Mqabba to be the first one to get to Luqa and pick up passengers from there. More passengers meant more money. However, police officers at terminus points made sure that buses did not leave before the church bells struck the quarter, half hour, or the

hour. It was not unknown for Żurrieq drivers to 'bribe' the church sacristan to put the clock forward by a minute or two, so that buses could get away with leaving early and reaching Luqa first. Photos provided by Malta Bus Archive

Bribing the sacristan to put the church clock forward, so that buses could leave the terminus early and pick up as many passengers as they could on the way to Valletta, is not a fact you would find in some history book. But this and many other anecdotes, photographs and documents uncovered over the past few months are fitting in like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle which the National Archives of Malta hopes will present a clearer view of the history of Maltese buses.

The Malta Bus Archive project forms part of a larger National Archives project called Memorja – an oral, sound and visual archive.

"Wherever we go and whomever we interview, they are always so happy to learn that such a central part of the Maltese culture of the 20th and early 21st century is being recorded for future generations before it is too late," Richard Stedall, Malta Bus Archive coordinator told Times of Malta.



Consiglio Mamo, 82, 1954 to 1977, driver: Bus drivers and conductors used to be fined for all sorts of things – and fines could be the equivalent of a day's wage while penalties included being suspended from driving or conducting for eight days (15 days for serious breaches). Contraventions included 'being improperly dressed' (such as not wearing the uniform cap, socks or wearing a uniform that was not clean or pressed) or having a dirty bus – even just a couple of tickets on the floor could land you a fine. Drivers were not allowed to drive too fast or too slow, and when loading the bus at

the terminus, they had to remain sitting behind the wheel. Police sergeants would carry out inspections on buses too, making sure they were in good running order.

A central part of the Maltese culture of the 20th and early 21st century is being recorded

The bus archive, which will also be accessible online, is not limited to just recording memories of people who worked in the industry. Mr Stedall called on readers who remembered anything related to the buses owned by the British Military, tourist souvenirs, maps and timetables, tickets, bus body builders, bus chassis importers, conductors, supervisors and traffic police among others to come forward.

Together with volunteers he has been interviewing bus owners, drivers, conductors and builders since August. The interviews are done in Maltese, as it is important to capture any phrases or vocabulary that are unique to the industry.

Meanwhile, a volunteer is helping translate the interviews in English for the benefit of any non-Maltese speakers who might be interested.

Get in touch on mbaf@maltabusarchive.com or look up www.maltabusarchive.com for more information, especially if you remember buses in World War II or if you would like to lend a helping hand as a volunteer.



Joseph "Boqboq" Ellul, 72, 1977 to 2011, driver: He remembers the first female bus driver, and how unusual this was in such a male-dominated industry. Women often ended up owning a bus after their husband passed away, while forward-thinking couples would register the bus in the wife's name so that she would have some assets. Although he was offered a job with Arriva in 2011, he refused partly out of solidarity to the owners, and also because the wages were incredibly poor. Instead he switched to coach driving. He still drives a coach for the family he used to drive route buses for.



Charlie "Kalatru" Borg, 65, 1966 to 2011, conductor, driver and owner: Strikes were common throughout the years, but especially from the late 1960s through to the 1980s. It was not uncommon for Charlie to reach Valletta and be ordered to park his bus and leave it switched off. Sometimes strikes were announced in an ad-hoc manner. More often than not these strikes were called due to inadequate wages. In the 1960s, the government ordered the police and the army to drive government trucks and buses as emergency public transport. The latter were

taken out of drivers' garages and were parked on the parade ground at Floriana, where they suffered all kinds of damage.



Francesco Tonna, 85: His late father, Carmelo, and uncles Joseph, Salvatore and Paul, all Rabat carpenters, built around eight bus bodies in the late 1930s and late 1940s. When he was 13 in 1946, he helped his uncle Paul build the body on a new Bedford bus chassis for a Rabat owner, which was then named after Saint Mary. In those days the body frame and many of the interior fixtures and fittings were made of wood, built from ash or beech, with Douglas fir used for the floor. Mahogany was used for many of the internal fixtures.





Over \$9,000AUD raised in aid of Id-Dar tal-Providenza

February 28, 2019/

Over \$9,000AUD were raised in fundraising concert organised by The Friends of Providence House NSW group in aid of Id-Dar tal-Providenza. The Australian “Festa ta’ Ġenerozità”, combining fundraising and entertainment, was held at the La Vallette Social Centre in Blacktown on Sunday, 24th February 2019. The final sum raised will be presented to Fr Martin Micallef, Director of Id-Dar tal-Providenza, at the start of the annual Volleyball Marathon which this year will be held on July 5th, 6th and 7th.

Special guests for the afternoon were Lawrence Buhagiar, Consul-General of Malta for NSW, Godfrey Sultana Vice President of La Vallette Social Centre and the group’s major sponsor, George Vella of Breakaway Travel, Blacktown.

This was the third fundraiser of its kind and the La Vallette Committee and volunteers are to be commended and thanked for their part in providing the use of their hall, which looked amazing. Another thank you goes to all the entertainers including the popular MCA Choir, for their professionalism and for offering their services for free. They all kept the capacity crowd entertained for over four hours!

The Friends of Providence House NSW, extend their appreciation and heartfelt thanks to all those who attended as well as to all the Sponsors, especially Breakaway Travel, Minchinberry Fruit Market, Zammit Ham & Bacon Curers, and Limestone Café at Schofields. The Voice of the Maltese and the Maltese E-Newsletter (SA) and community Radio Stations 2GLF and WOW FM are also acknowledged for their ongoing support.

(Report by Marisa Previtera - The Friends of Providence House of NSW,)



Sing it loud, sing it proud... Kor Malta I

Ronald Cassar



The Arts Council Malta (ACM) has launched Kor Malta, an exciting project which sees the country having its own national choir. The need for the set up of a national choir was felt for quite some time and with this project, the ACM will be filling this void, also delivering an electoral manifesto promise by the government for the setting up of a national choir.

Like it did with previous initiatives, the ACM is committed in making this project another success story, with its funding being included in the ACM's budget proposals.

ACM's chairman Albert Marshall said the council is fully committed in making Kor Malta a huge success.

"Like with other successful initiatives and projects that the ACM launched in the past couple of years, including Festivals Malta, Teatru Malta and Zfin Malta, Kor Malta will be having our full commitment and backing.

"Future plans include concerts with the national orchestra, solo concerts and touring abroad. The Maltese public will be proud of our national choir," said Mr Marshall.

Kor Malta will consist of choristers who already form part of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra chorus. They will be supplemented by new choristers which were chosen by audition.

Kor Malta will also be providing professional training for its choristers with masterclasses by local and international tenors and tutors.

Next week, in preparation for its launch concert, choristers will undergo masterclasses with world-famous tenor Nicholas Mulroy.

The engagement of a tenor of the calibre of Mulroy for these masterclasses is another feather in the cap of the ACM and will surely benefit the choristers.

The Liverpool-born tenor has performed at many of the world's greatest concert halls: the Sydney Opera House, the Boston Symphony Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Royal Albert Hall, Berlin Philharmonie and much more.

Mulroy started his career as a chorister at Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral before studying Modern Languages at Cambridge and voice study at the Royal Academy of Music.

He has since been in high demand all over the world in a wide range of concerts, recitals and opera engagements.

Paul Curmi folklore Dancers

The Paul Curmi Dancers Folklore group takes the name of its founder Paul Curmi. Mr. Paul Curmi started his dancing career in the pre Second World War years at the tender age of 12, under his guidance of his elder brother Richard. Paul's youth was in effect characterized by his deep passion for dancing and he spent his teen years researching into dance literature and practicing practically all types of dance disciplines.

The upsurge in the number of tourist visiting the islands during the 1960's was creating a demand for typical Maltese entertainment. It was this phenomenon that had prompted the Malta Tourist Board to approach Mr Curmi and asked him to introduce for the first time in Malta, Maltese folklore dancing. Paul Curmi accepted this proposal and dedicated all his energies towards this new venture. He delved deeply into local past customs and eventually came up with a series of folklore dances related to both peasantry and aristocratic mediaeval activities. His numbers are a vivid depiction of humble fishermen's chores, the lively village festa celebrations, and harvest time reveling, in direct contrast to the sophisticated moments of the noble people of Mdina, and the leisurely paces of the spouse and guest at the traditional Maltese wedding performance. Paul Curmi is also responsible for composing the typical Maltese folk music which accompanies the various dances.

The company's wardrobe was ably managed by Mrs Mary Curmi, Paul's wife, today the wardrobe is managed by his daughter Mrs Odette Mercieca Curmi and his grandson Mr Eldridge Saliba Curmi. All the costumes worn during performances were designed after a careful study of illustrations of our forefather's apparel found in the local museums and the National library. The different costumes can be considered to be authentic; the peasant clothing being made from water colored hand loomed material adorned with hand made lace and complemented by linen pantaloons and underskirts, the Ghonnella gown is made from heavy silk whilst the bride's wedding gown is made of pure damasque... They are all in fact heirlooms in their own right.

The tradition set by Paul Curmi is set to continue from one generation to another. From his daughters the late Prima ballerina Doris Saliba Curmi, and Director Odette Mercieca Curmi to his grandchildren, Director Eldridge Saliba Curmi, and granddaughters Berthille Mercieca Curmi and Ewange Vidal Curmi who all form part of the group. Demand for the group's performances is ever on the increase.

The school today has flourished immensely and today it offers a host of various dance disciplines. The mixture consists of: Classical Spanish, Flamenco, Modern Jazz, Latin American, Classical Ballet, Hip-hop, Oriental Folkloric Belly-dancing, Yoga, Pilates, Zumba Fitness classes and last but not least, Maltese Folk Dance! The school offers excellent tuition in all areas by employing fully qualified teachers and instructors including foreign Exams with ISTD, Rad, SDS, Batd London & U.K..

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Excellence
in dance
since 1940!



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Play Shows Different Side of Lazarus

Coryse Borg



This year's passion production by the theatrical company Dumnikani Beltin carries the name of *Faxex* (bandages), which is a direct link to one of the main characters.

The plot of *Faxex* revolves in fact around a dear friend to Jesus, Lazarus and his family. We are transported alongside their growth as friends until the very last few instances of Jesus' life.

The script also includes scenes from the resurrection, as well as the moment the Apostles are blessed by the Holy Spirit and given their mission to spread the word of Jesus amongst mankind. Amongst his many disciples Lazarus, together with his family, are portrayed as the first people to spread Jesus' teachings. In this passion play, Lazarus is placed under a different spotlight especially to what we are used to reading in the Holy Scriptures.

This drama production evokes the emotional events of Good Friday and the Resurrection, the most important events of Christianity within the sidelines of Jesus's mysterious life.

Scriptwriter Etienne Micallef has once again taken care of the script, while stage direction has been entrusted to Frank Micallef, a veteran in the direction and production of Holy Week stage ensembles.

Dumnikani Beltin has been producing Holy Week theatre productions since 1974. For over 45 years these religious productions have depicted the passion, death

and resurrection of Christ as well as providing an annual gathering of avid theatregoers towards the cultural events related to the Lenten season.

There will be three shows on the following dates: Monday 15th April at 7.15pm, Wednesday 17th April at 7.15pm and Friday 19th April (Good Friday) at 9.30 am. All shows will be held at St Dominic's Hall, Merchant Street, Valletta. Tickets can be purchased by contacting Joe Zammit on tel. no: 99451909.

IT'S ALL ABOUT KINNIE.



Frank, it's interesting to read the article about Kinnie in your latest Newsletter. I think we will never know the true history of the product. When I was still in Malta I heard a different story.

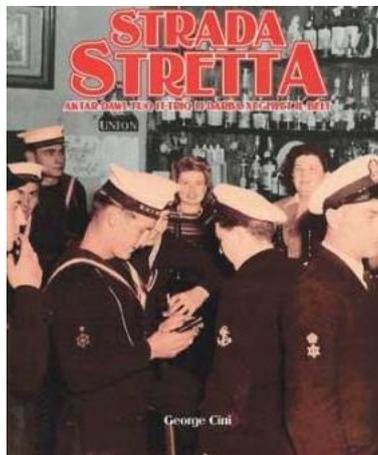
According to Maltese historian Guze Galea, one of the Miceli / Farrugia's families was working/training in Italy and was imprisoned in Italy during WW2. As he was from a distinguished well known family, known even in Italy, rather imprisonment, he was accommodated with some monks in a Monastery up North. These monks were producing a particular brew from herbs they grew in their vast property. This Maltese gentlemen convinced the monks to sell him their recipe. He brought the recipe with him to Malta and the rest is history. As you may know, in Italy, up to a few years ago, you could still buy their "Chinotto". And it was also available (maybe still is) to buy the "Chinotto" from a Grocer in Findon area here in S.A. Just as a point of Interest. Thanks for a wonderful magazine. Keep them coming.

Regards. **Nick Cutajar (Adelaide)**

The Pied Piper of Strada Stretta

Noel Grima

Strada Stretta: Aktar Dawl fuq it-Triq li darba xeghlet il-Belt. Author: George Cini. Self-published in 2015. Extent: 276



The story is by that born raconteur that is Maurice Caruana. Although he later soared to very different heights in Malta's civil service, he spent the years between 1961 and 1966 as a health inspector with special reference to Strada Stretta.

In the chapter dedicated to him in this book, Mr Caruana tells of his perennial fights to enforce health regulations in the area.

Once, neighbours came to him protesting about an abundance of rats in the area. They seemed to be coming from a residence which was always found to be closed. One day, when all patience had ebbed, the door was forced in and Mr Caruana found an old and ailing man in his bed, surrounded by rats everywhere. The neighbours said he often played the flute to them. Hence the title of this review.

George Cini, the author, has broken new ground with his two books on Strada Stretta, this being the second. So much interest has been raised that there have also been one or two spin-offs about the Gut, as Strada Stretta was known, as a television serial and if I remember correctly, a play too, none of which had any connections to Cini's books.

This book is mainly a transcription of many interviews carried out by the author with people who lived and worked in Strada Stretta in its heyday. Although some of the interviews refer to the war years, most refer to the 1950s and the 1960s when British and later American ships used to visit. Some of the people who were interviewed have since died and, were it not for these interviews, their memories would have been lost. The interviews are literal, word for word, even to the interviewees' way of pronouncing Strada Stretta as Sada Stretta, etc, their preference of saying street names still in Italian, and their colloquial pronunciation of Maltese such as 'giex' for 'zewg'.

The book is an interesting and precious record of a closed world restricted to just one area - Strada Stretta - where people knew each other and defended each other milk the British soldiers or sailors until the victims, plied with drink, could see no more and were milked more. It was a closed community down there where bars changed hands, barmaids made good money and so did the waiters and even the boys, were many earned money they would never dream of earning with an office job.

With such crowds in such a narrow space, and with all that drink around, it was inevitable that fights broke out but they were usually sorted out by the British military police or Red Caps. The Maltese did themselves well not just through selling drinks and food, nor just by selling small items like matches, through hosting drunk sailors in the small lodging houses instead of going back to the ship, through selling of naval uniforms and other items the Maltese were forbidden to buy, as from Naafi.

Some people today associate Strada Stretta with prostitution but the book explains that the red light activities took place elsewhere, just round the corner. And obviously the music, the dancing and the drinking were many times the preparation for sex. The much-maligned barmaids often gave the sailors a rendezvous, which they then did not keep. The names of the bars, restaurants, lodging houses take us back to an era when Britain ruled the waves and the names of the people mentioned many times were inter-related through marriage, or other blood links. The book also includes an index of names mentioned throughout the book.

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Mill-Qarcilla sas-Salib

Kitba ta' Greg Caruana NSW Australia

Il-Qarcilla hija tradizzjoni marbuta mall-Karnival li kienet issir sa mitt sena ilu fil-Belt kif ukoll fl-irhula . Li kien jgri hu li f'xi hin filghodu , wiehed liebes ta' Nutar kien ikun f'xi kantuniera u jibda jaqra l-kuntratt taz-zwieg ta' xi koppja li tkun se tizzewweg ; b'lehan gholi b'kitba mqabbla u mimlija hmerijiet u botti biex idahhak lin-nies tal-madwar li kienu jingabru u jiehdu gost isegwu lin-nutar; u din l-istess Qarcilla kien jaqra bicca f'kull kantuniera tal-Belt jew rahal . Ghalkemm xi drabi kien ikun hemm xi frazi li ma tinzilx tajjeb ma dawk li kienu jingabru.

L-ewwel qarcilla kitibha Dun Felic Demarco ghall-Karnival ta' l-1760 . Issa dan l-ahhar, din giet aggornata minn Olvin Vella u Trevor Zarha. Il-Karnival kien jibda s-Sibt li kienu jsejhulu tat-tfal; imbaghad ikun hemm tlett t'ijiem, il-hadd; it-tnejn u t-tlieta, li kienu jissejhu tlett t'ijiem tal-bluha.

Din is-sena l-karnival kellu jigi pospost ghall dan il-weekend minnhabba il-maltemp kbir li laqat il-gzejjer Maltin u beda mill-gimgha; is-Sibt; il-Hadd, it-Tnejn u t-Tlieta. Dan wara diversi xhur ta xoghol mill-volontieri, fejn dawn il-gruppi jqattaw granet shah jahdmu u jitghallmu dan ix-xoghol artistiku.

Sintendi l-ghada tal-karnival jibda r-Randan. L-Erbgha li jigi Ras ir-Randan hi maghrufa bhala l-Erbgha ta' l-irmied. Dak nhar tigi ccelebrata quddiesa fejn c-celebrant ibierek l-irmied u kull min jattendi jispicca bis-sinjal tas-salib fuq mohhu, li s-sinifikat tieghu hu li trab konna u trab insiru. Issa li jkun spicca l-bluha u x-xalar; u jibdew Erbghein jum ta'-sawm, astinenza u l-penitenzi. Dari kienu jsumu l-Erbghin jiem shah barra l-Hdud u l-festi kmandati u l-Gimgha u ma jittikelx laham u prodotti gejjin mill-bajd u halib u latticini (ikel gej mil-halib). Ghad hemm min nhar ta Gimgha speċjalment fid-Duluri u l-Gimgha l-Kbira ,”isumu hobs u ilma”. Fl-irhula speċjalment kien jkun hemm nisa li jaqilbu l-borom rashom l-isfel ; li jfisser li f'dan iz-zmien mhemmx tisjir zzejjed....Izda minkejja din ir-rigrosita kollha ta dari ; min jiftakar dawn iz-zminijiet zgur li taqbd u nostalgija sabieha.

Il-ftajjar ta l-incova jew tas-sardin kienu speċjalta ta' zmien r-Randan. U f'certu lokalitajiet bhal Ghawdex, l-istuffat tal-fekruna kien platt infittex immens. F'xi Knejjes ghadhom jghattu l-inkwadri u l-Kurcifiss bl-izar vjola minnbarra l-Via Sagra; isiru l-ezercizzi spiritwali, u l- Via Sagra. F'xi knejjes johorgu l-istatwi tal-gimgha l-Kbira wahda fil-gimgha . L-ahhar zmien tar-randan jdahhalna fil-gimgha mqaddsa;

Nhar il-Gimgha qabel Hadd il-Palm tigi ID-DULURI, festa devota hafna ghalina l-Maltin, fejn f'bosta lokalitajiet tohrog il-purcissjoni bil-vara tad-DULURI li ssir bhala pellegrinagg li fiha jinghad ir-ruzarju Mqaddes. Sahansitra anki hawn f'Sydney din issir ta' kull sena fic-centru Malti La Valette fejn hafna Maltin Awstraljani jattendu bi hgarhom u b'devozzjoni. U nigu ghall Hadd il-Palm fejn issir il-purcissjoni bill-weraq tal-Palm u z-Zebbug .

Interessanti din taz-zebbug ghalix f'dawk iz-zminijiet kienu jemmu bl-ghajn; allura kienu jdendlu qatta zebbug f'xi kamra ta l-annimali, ma xi luzzu jew kajjik; kienu wkoll juzawh bhala aspereges meta jifaw l-ilma mbierek fuq xi hadd li jkun qed imut. Il-Hamis lejlet il-Gimgha l-Kbira, l-knejjes jkunu miftuhin minn filghodu fejn issir Quddiesa wahda fejn waqt il-quddiesa jsir il-hasil tar-riglejn lil 12-il ragel li kienu jirraprezentaw it-tnax l-appostli. Wara jsiru l-visti tas-seba' knejjes fejn jintrama l-artal tar-ripozizzjoni jew is- Sepurklu. Minn hawn sa l-Ghid filghodu ma jsirx daqq ta qniepel u f'xi postijiet bhan-Naxxar, iz-Zejtun tintrama Cuqlajta kbira li li tintuzha flokk il-qniepen.

Il-Hamis u l-Gimgha fill-ghodu ghad hemm f'Maltat id-drawwa li xi uhud kienu n-nies imorru jaraw wirjiet ta vari tal-passjoni u bhal f'Bormla, l-Golgota li tkun bhall presepju kbir dwar il-passjoni mill-ahhar cena sa fuq is-Salib.. Ghal xi l-Hamsa ta' fil-ghaxija jibdew hergin il-purcissjonijiet tal-Gimgha l-Kbira li tkun maghmula minn numru ta personaggi bil-ilbies bibliku sabieh u ilbies rikk tas-sudati rumani ; illum dawn kibru fin-numru fejn hemm postijiet li jkollom fuq erba mitt participant bejn irgiel, nisa u tfal. is-Sibt fil-ghodu, lejliet l-Ghid il-Kbir tkun tkun gurnata kwietta u ma jsir xejn hliel li xi nies ikomplu jaghmlu l-uzanza li jsuru seba knejjes filwaqt li jitolbu il-via Sagra. . Fil-ghaxija tigi ccelebrata il-funzjoni ta Sibt il-Ghid fejn ibierku l-Blanzun, l-ilma imbierek; iz-zejt u l-balzmu u wara tibda l-quddiesa. Fil-Glorja jixghelu il-knisja mill-gdid u jibdew idoqqu l-qniepen u il-Hadd fil-ghodu issir il-Festa ta l-Irxox bid-daqq tal-marci brijjuzi u l-girjiet tradizzjonali ta l-irxoxrt. Ghad hemm xi lokalitajiet li jghamlu l-festa ta' l-Irxox fil-ghodu u il-kappillan tal-post ibierek il-Figolli lit-tfal.

IL-PJAZZA TAR-RAHAL

Victor V Vella BA MA (NSW)

Għandek issibha f'kull belt u raħal. Ilha parti mill-pjan ta raħal kull fejn tkun u ssibha fic-centru mdawwra bil-bini ta kull għamla u daqs u pjan. Forsi ma tkunx bħal pjazza l-kbira bħal dik ta –l-Arc de Triumph ta Parigi imma it-toroq principali jibded u jispicaw fiha . Thossha iżjed għax iżjed kienet prominenti fil-bliet u r-rħula ta dari u speċjalment f'dawk ta l-Ewropa fejn il-pjazza hawn min isejjilha l-ewwel universita tad-dinja, aktarx b'xi knisja jew katidral fuq naħha u b'xi fontana fin-nofs fejn in-nies kienu jiltaqgħu jippassiġgaw u jgħidu kelma.. Forsi dak kien l-ewwel skop tal-pjazza li tiltaqa li tpaċpac u taqsam xi informazzjoni fuq ir-raħal jew il-belt, fi żmien meta it-tpaċpic kien l-uniku mezz ta komunikazzjoni, wicc ma wicc jew fi grupp ta ħamsa jew sitta, tisma lil xi hadd li ..'jaħdem barra mir-raħal' jew li ġej min xi raħal iehor jirakkonta lil widnejn għatxana u kurjuzi biex jisimgħu x'qiegħed jiġri madwarhom.

Hafna stejjer hemm kienu jibded ...fil-Pjazza fejn il-kelma sabieha jew kerha kienet titwield u trabbi l-gwienah u tixtered u tinforma li ... ġejja l-gwerra, jew li fil-belt kapitali bdiet ir-rivoluzzjoni, ...jew li qegħdin imutu in-nies bil-għatx għax fir -raħal l-iehor ...ix-xmara jew in-nixxiegh nixfet għal-kollox . U sejrjn...

Il-binja tagħha stess avolja jekk ma tkunx kbira kbira daqs it-Tsainamen Square ta Beiġing fic-Cina, tagħtik idea ta ġabra , ta kenn, ta post fejn tiltaqa għall-arja. Malajr il-ħsieb itir lejn il-pjazze tar-rħula u tal-bliet ta Malta' bħal il-pjazza tal-Mellieha u dik ta l-Imdina, fejn hekk kif tidhol ġo fihom thoss il-kenn mil-Majistral u wkoll certu frisk u rwieħ meta tasal is-shana tal-Lbic. Min jaf x'kellu f'mohhu minn iddesinja jew ippjana l-ewwel pjazza. Jista jkun li bdiet bħal xagħra fejn xi erba kienu jiltaqgħu u jgħidu kelma jew iduqu l-inbid tas-sena l-ġdida. Jista jkun li min bena il-knejjes u l-katidrali jew xi operahouse, xtaq li jkun hemm wisa biżżejjed biex jtgawded. L-idea tal-Bernini li jibni dik il-pjazza imponenti ta quddiem San Pietru b'dik il-kolonnata ta madwarha li tkompli toffri kenn fix-xita u dell fis-sajf zgur li kienet li l-pjazza kienet tilqa u thaddan il-folla bħal-idejn miftuha ta Kristu!

Waħda mill- aspetti sbieħ ta Ruma huma l-pjazze...Ftit minnhom tant huma mimlijin bi statwi u fontani Ili jagħtik li ssejilhom muzewwjet fil-berah. Mal-folol li tara u tiltaqa magħhom meta tmur Piazza Navona jew Piazza Barberini jew Piazza di Spagna li hi kbira biżżejjed biex tgawdi dak ittharaġ li jibda mil-monumnet tan-Navicella , dak tad-dgħajsa iż-żghira li hi baxxa biżżejjed biex thallik tgawdi il majesta ta dak it-tarag kollu li jwasslek sal- knisja tat-Trinita dei Monti. Izjed il-fuq semmejt li barra il-wisgħa u l-ispazju u bini u palazzi ta madwarhom, kull pjazza Rumana hija msebħha wkoll b'monumenti u fontani li jkomplu jimlew u jsebħu dawn il-pjazez. Jekk niehdu biss il-Pjazza Navona b'dik il-fontana enormi fin-nofs, li jisimha Il-fontana ta l-Erba Xmajjar l-Arkitet u skultur Bernini ried jgħaqqad l-ikbar erba xmajjar tad-dinja il-Ganges ta l-Indja, in-Nil-ta l-Egittu x-xmara de laPlata Ta l-Amerika t'isfel u d-Danubju ta l-Ewropa . ffontana waħda. U meta i-Papa Innocento X....inawgura l-fontana tant kienet shana li ġieghel lil Bernini jiftah l-ilma tal-fontana kollu biex johrog mil-fontana ħalli jfawwar il-pjazza u n-nies setgħu jiffriskaw!.

Il-pjazze ta Malta jidhru umli hdejn dan il-kobor u d-dekorazzjoni, imma xorta qdew l-iskop tagħhom u għadhom..... sakemm ma jigux fgati bil-progress modern. Il-pjazza hi parti mil-ħajja tagħna bħala Maltin speċjalment mil-ħajja tar-rħula. Hi parti mill-identita tagħna bħala Ewropej , bħala Maltin. Li,'sejjer sal pjazza' kienet biex ngħid hekk is-sentenza ta kull fil-għaxija biex tiltaqa u tgħid kelma u ssib x'qiegħed jiġri mar-raħal. U izjed....

Għax il-pjazza titbiddel skond l-istaġun. Titbiddel ukoll skond l-okkazzjoni u fil-pjazza tittendi x'qiegħed jiġri jew tagħtik ħjiel x'sa jiġri. Jekk tibda tara xi erba iħaffru u jwaħħlu l-arbli madwarha u xi wiehed jizboh il-faccata u jagħtik li tgħidlu: X'naqra żebgħa u kemm tgħajjat'...speċjalment jekk tkun bil-kulur tat-tumerik skur (tahlita ta isfar u ahmar) . Allura malajr tibda ixxomm ir-riħa tal-qubbajt u tisma il-banda doqq l-aħħar innu u tara l-aħħar dawl tax-xema tal-purcissjoni dieħla l-Knisja tissielet maż-żiffa. U ta kuljum mal-mota ta l-Ave Marija tittendi li wasal xi haġa, u n-nies fil-għaxija jibded jimlew il-ħwienet ta madwar il-pjazza.

Jew meta kont tara trakk fin-nofs tal-pjazza b'mejda fuqu u fuq il-mejda il-bandiera ta xi partit rasha l-isfel, ma tridx tkun għaref li tgħid ,' għax il-lejla hawn miting ta ...U iva mhix haġa kbira li jiġi l-prim ministru ...għax l-affari naqra bagħtutha!' u hekk kif isir il-hin tibda tingabar il-folla daqqa żgħira u oħra kbira biex tisma , u tgerger, u tidhak u tikkommenta , biex u forsi taqbad tarf kif se tivvota fl-elezzjoni li waslet. U tajjeb li tmur u tkun preżenti għax jekk toqgħod quddiem forsi jarak il-ministru jew Sam Caruana Abela tal-partit l-iehor għax jekk jitle hemm cans li jhallik tibni dawk l-erba tirgħien fir-rampa biex l-ilma ma jidhollok fil-garaxx!. Kultant il-pjazzi tinbiddel ukoll f'vetrina fejn ir-raħal jew in-nies juru x'inhuma , ma min iżommu, x'jilbsu u xejn xejn jidhru li jeżistu... li huma ħajjin, u wkoll fejn waslu fil-ħajja tagħhom...

Speċjalment meta tigi il-festa . Il-pjazza tħallat kollox . Fil-festa mad-daqq tal qniepen u mal- ħoss tas-Sinfonija l-‘Italiana in Algeri ‘ ta Rossini u ma l-għajjat taż-Żebbugi tal qubbajt u bil-purciġsioni b’kollox il-pjazza tieġu idea ta paletta ta pittur b’dawk il-kuluri, mudetti, ħsejjes u rwejjaħ. Tista tfakkrek ukoll f’ xi kwadru tal-pittur Olandiż Brueghel, għax kull fejn tħares tista tara gruppi ta nies li flimkien jiformaw il-kwadru ta raħal . Kollha liebsin mill-aħjar b’dawk il-ħafna kuluri jgħajtu daqs xi tikitrakka li ttaqqablek widnejk.

Imma Il-pjazza ma toqghodx tistenna il-festa biex tieġu l-ħajja. Għax fir-rutina ta kuljum il-pjazza xorta tilbes ħwejjeg differenti. Ħemm il-libsa tal- kummerċ: madwarha għandek issib il-ħwienett , tax-xorb, tal-kafe , tal-pastizzi, tas-sajd, il-parrukkier , ta l-insib , l-ispizjar , tal-gazzetti , tal-ħwejjeg u tal-ħbula . Tista tinqeda minn kollox: hi dinja zghira li b'erba passi ssib ruhek f'ħanut differenti, jekk ukoll ma jfettillekx titla erba tarġiet u tidħol il-kazin għal-dawra bixkla jew rami . Jekk ukoll ma jfettillekx titla erba tirgħien oħra u tidħol għal-benedizzjoni . Għax il-pjazza hi kompluta,hi dinja zghira li tiġbor u tgħaqqad u tifred u tikkompeti, u timmaġina u tiekol u tixrob u taqtgħek ukoll ftit mill-art jekk tkun trid. Fiha ukoll il-liberta għax meta kien jaasal zmien l-karnival kienetb tingabar il-bluha tar-raħal' Le mhux kollha , imma xi tnejn jew tlieta li fit-tlett t'ijiem tal-karnival joħorġu minn qoxrithom u bla kliem u bla sliem idaħħku u jferrħu lin-nies u jithaltu mal-briju tal- maskri tal-Karnival. Kien bħal żvog li min kien irid jitbellaħ mingħajr ma jweġġa kien inehhi l-maskra ta kuljum u jilbes dik tal-karnival li jkun ilu sena sħiħa jaħseb u jippjana x'ħa jagħmel biex idaħħak u juri li hu wara kollox għandu s-sieġha tiegħu ukoll.

It-Taljani ihobbu jgħidu, 'E tutto una parata' Iva hu kollox parata, kollox marc biex tidher. izjed u izjed il-ħajja tal- u fil-pjazza . Speċjalment fil-festi fejn u meta il-guvni b'għajnejh jgħarxu bħal ta seqer ikollu minn fejn jagħzel għax it-fajliet tar-raħal tarahom għaddejnin jippassiġġaw matul il-pjazza u kultant jieqfu biex jaraw minn hemm madwarhom , U bejnietna mhix haga kbira i l-għajnejn jiltaqqu ma par għajnejn oħra u il-ħarsa titbiddel fi tbissima!. Min jaf kemm ħbibberiji u xi ħaga izjed fonda, bdew fil-fest jew fil-pjazze! Jekk ma għamlet xejn il-pjazza ħelsitna milli toqghod tkabbar ix-xitla tal-ħabaq li mil-ħoħor ta t-tieqa setgħet tispicca fuq rasek mad-daqq romantiku ta kitarra.!

Biex turi kemm kienet demokratika il-pjazza kienet ukoll f'ħafna irhula il-ground tal-futbol,. Iva kliem naqra kbir biex tiddekrivi għaxar t'itfal jiġru wara ballun tat-tennis b'erba ġebliet bħala lasti. U jekk b'xott qawwi il-ballun jaqa fil-gardin tas-Sur Ang jew tal-Kappillan jew ikisser il-ħġieġ tat-tieqa ta Rafel allura addio il-partita u jkollu jndahal is-surgent li jsibha bi tqila biex jitla it-tarag jgħaġġel u l-pjazza issir qorti ta investigazzjoni ta delitt bla demm! Imma mil-pjazza is-sħab malajr jgħaddi u l-għada l-logħba tkompli għax ...'it-tfal xi ħaga iridu jagħmlu."

U l-pjazza tkompli bir-ritmu tagħha. Avolja ibdlulha isimha biex tinstema izjed moderna u tintona mal-progress u mil-Pjazza San Pawl ,mhix ħaga kbira li i issa saret Pjazza Hurrieq, xorta għadha hemm imdawra bil-bini u f'ħafna kazi mimlija bil-karrozzi. Imma Il-pjazza –għadha l-post li tiġbor raħal u li toffri post ta kenn, post ta-celebrazzjoni post ta divertiment u post fejn ir-raħal kien joffri l-aħħar tislima lil parruccani tar-raħal. Dik , kont sa nġhid, kienet il-pjazza tar-rahal. L-ispazju forsi jibqa , imma dak li jiġ ri fiha qieghed jitbiddel bis-sieġħat



VICTOR V VELLA

Teacher, Author, Journalist, Broadcaster.

Podcasts, articles, photos on the history, culture, politics and social matters from a Maltese-Australian perspective.

Born in Mellieħa in 1939, Victor V. Vella did his primary schooling at the local school and finished his secondary education at the Lyceum High School, gaining passes in 9 subjects at the Oxford University Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level). While joining the ranks of Emergency teachers he continued his studies by correspondence to gain 3 passes in Latin ,History and English at the London University Certificate of Education. (Advanced Level).

He started his tertiary Education at ST. Michael's Training College, then under the leadership of De La Salle Brothers where he gained the Teachers'Certificate and started teaching at the same primary school he had attended attended 15 years before. In 1961 he moved to St Joseph Technical School, Paola, and later transferred to the branch of the same school at Naxxar where he was then in charge of the English Department.

In 1968 he decided to emigrate and try his fortune in Australia, with his wife Victoria and first born child, Edel. In Australia he tried his hands at different jobs however he discovered that teaching was in his blood so joined the NSW Department of Education teaching English and History in Secondary Schools.

He discovered that teaching in NSW was more challenging and exciting, both regarding the actual approach to teaching as well as the way schools and staff were organised. He had to get used to mixed classes and the weekly staff meetings which were of great assistance in the organisation of staff and students and the general running of the schools.

Outside The Classroom

During his teaching career in NSW Secondary schools Victor got involved in pastoral care, especially in 'integrating' new and foreign students into the various schools. He was in the forefront in setting up centres for teaching basic English to non-English speakers before being sent to cope with English and other subjects in various schools and classes. This reduced the trauma of the students and made it easier for those of non-english speaking backgrounds (N.E.S..Bs) to follow the curriculum and take part in sports and other activities.

As part of this 'bridging the gap' program, Victor organised activities in schools such as the World Wide Week at Arthur Philip School where he also invited the flames of students to participate in the activities and to offer to cook ethnic food for the occasion. This was a breakthrough as many migrant parents were either hesitant or downright afraid to contact school in the 1960s and '70s.

In the beginning of the 80s Victor was the multicultural consultant/education officer for the whole of the Liverpool Region of Education for three years. His position entailed visits to the various schools, the organisation of in-service courses for teachers and establishing support and resources for NESB students.

Victor Vella introduced the teaching of the Maltese language in the curriculum of the Primary and Secondary Education in NSW and was instrumental in having Maltese accepted as a Higher School Certificate subject. He received the Bacjhelor of Arts from Macquarie University and Master of Arts from Sydney University.

Beyond The School

Victor spread his wings further when he tried his hand at presenting workshops as part of Pre-Marriage Education courses organised by Centacare (Parramatta), a Catholic organisation catering for educating and counselling adults with drinking, gambling and marriage problems. He did this on weekends for 5 years after which, on his retirement from school teaching, he managed a team of 12 educators who presented these courses.

Soon after Victor arrived in Australia, he was approached by Fr. Paul Baron to join his committee of Maltese migrants who had just acquired 5 acres with an old house and an older chicken shed in Blacktown NSW with the aim of establishing a club for the Maltese community.

He soon became the secretary of a large, moribund committee and faced strong opposition to make it smaller and workable, only to face an official resumption of the property by the N.S.W government which entailed finding and moving somewhere else, the new location continuing to this day. As plans had been fully prepared to start building a small club on the old premises, the committee decided to take the government to court to seek compensation for the loss of property, the new acquisition & costs. The result was a double success. The government allocated extra money and the case set a precedent. The La Valette Social and Religious Centre was, in the words of our Barrister Wilcox, 'the first organised ethnic group to take an Australian government to court'.

Victor was instrumental in organising the first Women's Auxiliary which assisted the committee at the annual Debutantes' Ball and other events during the year.

The major event which the committee organised was the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the official start of migration from Malta. This was held at the Sydney Opera House. Victor prepared and presented the main feature of the evening which consisted of a slide and commentary presentation on the history of Maltese Settlement in Australia. This event was highly praised both for the content and its presentation in Federal Parliament by Alan Cadman who was then a member.



MARSAXLOKK VILLAGE SQUARE

Maltese village squares are beautiful things. They're majestic, quaint, serene and inviting. They're what make places instantly recognisable to anyone who doesn't live in them, and what makes them home for the people who do.


 MEDERRANEAN CONFERENCE CENTRE
 in collaboration with

 European Foundation for Support of Culture
 proudly presents
an Evening of Music for String Orchestra
 with the
Georgian Sinfoniëtta



Conductor: Alexei Galea Cavallazzi
 F. Mendelssohn: String Symphony no 9 in C
 C. Nielsen: Little Suite for Strings op 1
 J. Grixti: Music for Strings
 J. Vella: Sinfoniëtta for Strings op 36

**Sunday 24th
March 2019
at 18:00**

Duration: 70 min
 Tel: 2559 5750
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La Vallette Hall
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AN EVENING OF MUSIC FOR STRING ORCHESTRA WITH THE GEORGIAN SINFONIETTA

by [Mark Bugeja](#)

The Mediterranean Conference Centre in collaboration with the European Foundation for Support of Culture proudly presents an evening of Music for String Orchestra with the Georgian Sinfoniëtta on Sunday 24th March 2019 at 18.00 at La Vallette Hall, Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta.

The Georgian Sinfoniëtta has established itself as one today's leading chamber orchestras in the world. It not only plays regularly in Georgia and is the backbone of the Tbilisi International Baroque festival, it also tours Europe on a regular basis.

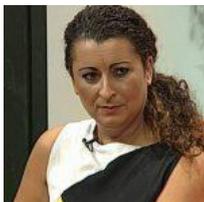
Together with Conductor Alexei Galea Cavallazzi who needs no introduction, they shall present a programme of music for string orchestra. Mendelssohn's string symphony nos 9 shall open the concert followed by the Little suite by one of the most important composers of the

20th century Carl Nielsen.

Maltese Music shall be represented by "Music for Strings" by Malta's most internationally performed composer, Dr Jesmond Grixti. The last piece of the evening shall be by the late Joseph Vella whose works are already part of the concert repertoire in Malta and elsewhere. His Sinfoniëtta opus 36 shall be a fitting climax to a programme of music from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Galea Cavallazzi whose international career takes him to any countries has been invited to conduct this orchestra a number of times in Tbilisi. This is the second concert of the Georgian Sinfoniëtta in Malta.

The Mediterranean Conference Centre continues its excellent work in the field of culture by producing classical music events of the highest standard and at a reasonable price.



The duration of this event is 70 minutes. Tickets for only 10 euros. For more information and tickets kindly call on 2559 5750 or www.mcc.com.mt

This article has been brought to you by resident www.okmalta.com blogger Ramona Portelli

March 3 - April 11

sun-sat: 9am-5pm

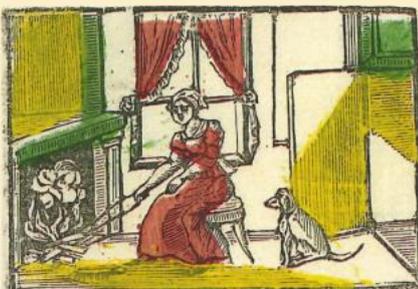
The Maltese Cinderella & her Sisters



dra. Veronica Veen
 celebrates her prize-winning book
The Maltese Cinderella
and the women's storytelling tradition
 with an **exhibition** about the **Gozitan il-Germudija story**
 highlighting the social environment and precursors from other countries
in il-Hagar Museum (2nd floor) Pjazza San Gorg, Victoria
 including a free **creative quest** through the exhibition

* * *

fri. 8 March, 3pm: free sneak preview for women
 sun. 10 March, 11.45am: official opening
 thur. 14 or tues. 26 March, 2.30-4.30pm: guided tour/workshop*
 sat. 23 March, 11am: lecture* * booking required
Veronica will often be present, also to sign her book for you



Dry dochters had een' heer, doch één uit d'eersten echt!
 Die werd de taek van asschepeoster opgelegd.



Heer zustrén smolen haer, en nemen 't minst te baet,
 Dewyl zy nydig syn op 't overschoon gelaet.



Het meisje zwoegt en slooft, blyft selve slecht gekleed,
 En zorgt dat 't fraesi toilet der zustrén zy gereed.



A



Dr. Veronica Veen

Cinderella is one of the most beloved fairy tales. There exist thousands of variants around the world. Especially women have identified with the degraded heroine, who triumphantly ended up as a Queen.

Also Malta had some of its own Cinderellas, though of a less passive nature, published around 1900.

The find of *il-Germudija* in 1992, a special variant of Cinderella, gave me a fresh incentive to study the socio-cultural importance of fairy tales. Told by 'common', but often experienced and wise people, they are deeply rooted in the relations and contradictions of a society and a period. They are able to deal with these frictions in often entertaining narratives, giving perspective, hope and solace to people who are excluded and 'not seen'. So obviously to women and girls who are unfortunately often still in need of improvement of their position. This may explain why a story about a degraded girl such as Cinderella who eventually reaches a happy life, became popular around the world. Significantly, it were foremost women who told it and later also studied and commented it. In feminist circles there arose criticism of certain domestic, dependent, and passive aspects of the heroine and the inevitable marriage as happy end. They failed however to see it in the social, 'living' context and what fairy tales traditionally are all about. But especially in Malta the heroine is all but passive and takes her fate firmly in her own hands. Veronica is available for interviews and further material, including copies of the book itself. Please send requests to info@heartofgozo.org.mt

A Maltese Cinderella sheds light on persecuted lives Fairy tales reveal what life was like back for women in early 1900s



Summer night stories: A typical women's gathering on the street, that could still be seen in the 1980s. Here, storytelling could flow in a natural way during the daily conversations.

Unknown Maltese derivations of the fairy tale Cinderella can shed light on women's histories, uncovering the voices of persecuted women in the early 1900s, a study has found. In the story of *il-Germudija* (the Sooty One), cultural anthropologist and historian Veronica Veen discovered a

"very deviant variant" of the fairy tale that echoes the lived experiences of young women in Malta and Gozo.

Sher published a book called 'The Maltese Cinderella and the women's storytelling tradition'. In it she "sheds light on the fortitude of women who have struggled to discard soot for respect and admiration", according to the foreword by Jack Zipes, a world specialist in fairy tales.

The tale, discovered by Dr Veen in 1992, is told by Marija, an elderly Gozitan woman.

Gianna, Marija's niece, later retold the story to Dr Veen, explaining that the heroine, despite being "the one with all that soot," always knew to keep up her self-esteem and to take destiny in her own hands.

"And having children is simply left out by Marija, as being not exactly her point," Dr Veen notes. "Perhaps she did imply that happiness can well be possible without offspring, a situation of which she was a good example herself."

Cinderella, described by Dr Veen as "a passive heroine," was appropriated into Gozitan culture, inspiring young women in the early 20th century to aspire to more than house-keeping and married life.

The heroine is instead an energetic and self-conscious maid, who manages to surpass obstacles "without the usual helping animals or fairies' help".

"It is under oppression and persecution that women attempt to speak their truths," notes Zipes, saying that the tale provides a literary narrative that reflects the values of the society at the time.

Dr Veen describes Marija's tale as a work of art which can easily rival the best of the classical Maltese fairy tales.

The book, the fruit of two and a half years of study and writing based on 30 years of fieldwork mainly on Gozo, is richly illustrated and contains 30 stories. They can be enjoyed as such, though they embed a vivid picture of their social, cultural and historical context.

"This yields a surprising insight into Maltese women's traditional life and experience in those special, less patriarchal communities," says Dr Veen. *TIMES OF MALTA* November 6, 2017 by Denise Grech

(Antoine Vassallo)

THE FADING ECHOS OF HAX XLUQ



Because of the ever rising number of cars on Maltese roads, and the resulting increase in traffic, people have started getting creative in which roads they take. Long ignored by-roads suddenly see a surge in popularity as soon as someone realises that through them lies a less encumbered way of getting to where they want to be and is then promptly followed by countless others.

That is how the roads criss-crossing between fields and quarries of Siggiewi are seeing considerably more people passing through these days. Even though these casual visitors to the area have come to go through on a daily basis most would be hard pressed to point out where the Chapel of The Assumption of Our Lady is located. The hectic pace of life does not allow for attention to anything apart than from what one is doing in that moment so unless traffic forces them to take an unexpected detour, they would never notice the side road at whose end this chapel is cosily put away. It is perhaps too much to expect people to go through these roads at a more leisurely pace when they have a bit more time, and to get to know the beauty that lies along them such as this chapel. And yet they should. For this is a quaint little chapel was once one of six that could be found in the area that was known as Hax Xluq. It here that the first seeds of what was to become Siggiewi were sown.

This hamlet was one of four that made up Siggiewi (the other three being Hal Kbir, Hal Niklusi and Hal Kdieri), one of the oldest parishes in Malta. A visit here is the opportunity to experience the fading fingerprint of our forefathers; most of the houses and other buildings that made up Hax Xluq have long gone but this chapel continues to help keep their memory alive. There is no clear date as to when this chapel was built but it was there in 1575 when it was said that to be in a dilapidated state. Indeed, it seems that in the following years it was almost completely destroyed until a benefactor, Gann Pawl Buttigieg, stepped in to pay for its rebuilding in 1583. Since then it has been kept alive, a source of pride and devotion, whilst all around it faded away.



CHAPEL OF SANTA MARIJA, BUBAQRA - ZURRIEQ

There are some words in the Maltese language that reflexively make you titter like a schoolboy (or girl) upon their mention. For me, Bubaqra is one of those words conjuring in my head images of booming cows floating around. As I said, a childish reaction but what can I do? Learning the origin of that name has helped a bit with the illusion being replaced by the reality that Bubaqra is simply how centuries have twisted and

shaped the original name of a place known a Bu Bakkari (meaning early riser) the rather unimaginative title given to an area where the first rays of the morning sun tend to hit the island. Whatever the origins of the name, the area is thought to have been a prosperous one, as evidenced by the number of chapels that were built here – ones dedicated to St. Leo, St. Michael, St. Andrew and one dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady.

The latter forms the basis to the present chapel which was probably built around 1450 and was in good enough state for Mons Dusina to allow it to remain open when the Papal Delegate and inquisitor to Malta made his tour of local churches in 1575. Nevertheless, the chapel fell on hard times and was dilapidated by 1658 only to be rebuilt after the plague of 1676. Truth be told, this is probably the least emotive chapel that I've come across so far. It mirrors the area that surrounds it, full of new buildings that have rapidly eaten up the fields in which it once stood. This rapid increase in population necessitated a much bigger place of worship, something that the procurator Salv Farrugia saw to in the 1960, overseeing the building of a much larger annex at the bag. Today the chapel is dedicated to St Mary and is a focal point of the area, busily providing for the ever growing religious needs of the hamlet of Bubaqra. Sadly, however, functional rarely equates to charm and whatever this chapel possessed in the past, it has almost entirely lost.. **POSTED BY PAUL GRECH**

MALTESE PREFER OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY OVER RENTING



The Maltese population appears to be inclined to prefer ownership of property as opposed to rent. According to Eurostat data, home ownership in Malta in 2014 stood at around 80% compared to the average of 70.1% in the EU.

A vast amount of Maltese individuals also hold a second residence. Also based on Eurostat data, 18.4% of local respondents held a second residence, in comparison with the 15.6% of the EU population. Many of these properties are summer or holiday residences, while

others are bought for investment purposes.

Certain demographic changes as well as an increase in the demand for housing have had an impact on property. The influx of foreigners residing and working in Malta has also significantly increased demand, brought about by several factors including the success and need for skilled resources in certain economic sectors, government residency and immigration schemes, and the stable economic and political climate in Malta compared to other countries.

Certain areas are affected by this more than others, as evidenced by the rise in rental rates and property prices in locations such as Sliema and St. Julian's; areas such as which have also become less affordable for local families. All around the world, price hikes in the real estate industry continue to persist in some countries, while prices slashed in others, leading to various negative repercussions in their economies.

When looking at foreign case studies might help to identify economic trends, Malta might be more suitably compared to cities as opposed to countries. For example, London's prices continue to rise, while some believe that they will soon drop and others believe that the influx of foreigners and the limited space will sustain this upward trend going forward. Research has also shown that contrary to locals choosing ownership over renting, the majority of Maltese passport buyers prefer to rent instead.

13th-century chapel being restored



St John the Baptist chapel in Għargħur dates back to 1223. Restoration work which is being carried out on the chapel of St John the Baptist in Għargħur is expected to be completed in two weeks' time. The chapel, which dates back to 1223, is said to have been the first church in the village.

Photo: Matthew Mirabelli

The chapel is built in globigerina limestone, with a main facade showcasing a triangular pediment resting on two corner pilasters and surmounted by an intricately sculpted belfry. Through the years, the building suffered damage on the side elevation overlooking the Għargħur cemetery, where several areas on stonework were in an advanced state of deterioration.

The work is being carried out by the Restoration Directorate.

Everything to Expect When Visiting a Maltese Home for the First Time

We're here to prevent you from getting a heart attack

Thea Formosa - <https://lovinmalta.com>

If you've ever brought a friend over in Malta and it was their first and last time, maybe this article will shed some light as to the reasons why. Or maybe if you're about to visit a friend's house for the first time, you can keep these in mind, to not get the fright of your life.

We've all been there. If you're lucky enough to never have experienced any of the following, we're pretty sure you've at least heard about them. Here's everything you need to know before visiting a Maltese home.

GET READY FOR THE FAMILY PET TO GREET YOU AT THE DOOR - You've heard about Buttons before, about how cute, friendly and adorable he is. But I guess you had no idea of Buttons' sheer size, or the fact that as soon as you enter the door, he is going to pounce you. *"Uwejja, mellsu ftit ħalli jieqaf jinbaħ, mhux ħa jigdmek ta!"* I think I'd rather not risk it, to be honest.

BE AWARE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A GRANDFATHER CLOCK ON ANY CORNER - You might not jump out of your skin every time your grandfather clock chimes upon the hour, every hour, as we're pretty sure you're used to the sound at this point. But believe us when we tell you that any guest visiting your house after sunset will probably be horrified by the tune that follows your clock striking 7 pm.

THAT SMELL OF MINESTRA, KAWLATA AND BRODU IS HERE TO STAY - Ok, this is probably more common in *nanna's* house, rather than your typical Maltese home. But the scariest part about this is that you genuinely never know when it is going to hit.

As soon as you open the *antiporta*, the heart-wrenching smell hits your face and you can feel your stomach coming up to your throat. But it's too late now; you'll probably be smelling like this for the next good 48 hours.

SHOUTING FROM ONE FLOOR TO ANOTHER IS A NORM - You're minding your own business, sitting in your best friend Maria's room while she is doing her makeup, getting ready to go to Paceville. All of a sudden, you hear a thundering sound from below, and Maria just normally replies, on top of her lungs.

"MARIA!!!!!!" "AW" "MUR AQLALI L-ĦWEJJEG, SABIĦA"

"MARIA!!!!!!" "IJWA AW" "WADDABLI NAQRA L-PYĠAMA QALBI"

Do you think they heard them from Comino?

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR GIGANTIC PORTIONS OF FOOD _ You've heard about the myth before, but you never thought that it would actually happen to you, or at least you hoped it never would. It is finally time to meet your *kunjata* for the first time.

You go inside the house, sit awkwardly at the table and hold your breath as you're presented with a plate of food double the size of your face. As if that wasn't enough, as soon as you manage to munch on the last bite, *kunjata* rushes in with a mini buffet of *pasti*, tea and homemade cakes.

LOOK OUT FOR NEIGHBOURS STARING AT YOU FROM THEIR BALCONY - You've finally managed to find the house after several winding roads on Google Maps. Finding a spot to park your car was also a bit of a pain, but it's ok; at least you got there in time. You walk nervously to the front door, and just as you're about to ring the bell, you hear: *"Aw sabiħ, Mhux qedin hawn ta! Marru s'għand il-Lidl daqs siegħa ilu."* Thanks friendly neighbour. I totally didn't see you right there. *"Qed tħossha s-sħana jew? Kollox iweħħel!"*



MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER
Journal of the Maltese Living in Malta and Abroad
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Valletta bustles with activity amid carnival's sights and sounds

Children and grown-ups alike have flocked to Valletta to enjoy carnival's floats and dance parades

by Massimo Costa



Carnival is in full swing in Valletta

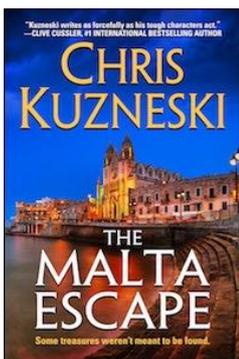
Valletta's is awash in a sea of colours and sounds, as this year's carnival celebrations, bringing joy and merriment to the many locals and tourists who visit the capital, are in full swing.

Carnival's traditional floats, poking fun at one theme or another, children dressed in a variety of costumes, and dance troupes parade through Republic Street, in what is one of the city's most anticipated yearly events.

Although last weekend's storm caused some damage to the floats, with one having been completely destroyed, this did not stop the enthusiasts - who spend an entire year working on their creations - from quickly repairing them and ensuring they arrived in Valletta to delight onlookers.



This year's turnout appears to be high, and the pleasant weather has likely helped bring people out of their homes to join in on the fun.



THE MALTA ESCAPE

Payne & Jones - Book 9

#1 INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

AN ANCIENT TREASURE: While visiting the scenic country of Malta, Payne and Jones bump into an old friend, who has come to the islands to search for a long-lost treasure of the Knights Hospitallers, an organization that dates back to the First Crusade in 1099 AD.

A VENGEFUL CRIMINAL: When Ivan Volkov—the ruthless leader of a Russian crime syndicate—is betrayed, he is willing to do anything to get retribution. Protected by a team of hackers and henchmen, he travels to the Mediterranean where he leaves a trail of bodies in his wake.

A FINAL SHOWDOWN: Before leaving Malta, Volkov learns about the ancient hoard, one with possible ties to Paul I and the Russian Empire. With pride and riches on the line, he focuses his wrath on the only people who stand in his way. But Payne and Jones refuse to back down as they try to locate one of the most important treasures of antiquity, while battling one of the world's most dangerous criminals in a deadly fight to the finish.

Torri Mamo, Marsascala



Although referred to as a tower this building was a fortified country residence built by the Mamo family in 1657 as protection against invading pirates from nearby St Thomas Bay.

The building has a unique shape with sixteen sides. On entering one finds a beautiful round domical-roofed room leading to four smaller rooms forming the four arms of the cross. On the left-hand side a staircase leads to the roof with wide views over the bay and surrounding countryside.

A two-metre ditch surrounds the Tower and there was formerly a draw-bridge. In the ditch there is a 4th-

century Roman tomb which was probably originally from the Phoenician period. Over the years the Tower has had many owners. It was inherited by Lord Strickland, Prime Minister of Malta from 1927-33 and was then sold. In 1940 it was taken over by the British military authorities as a regional headquarters, and a pill box was constructed on the roof.

It was subsequently rented to a family from Zejtun but due to severe deterioration they gave up the lease in 1987. It was then handed over to Din l-Art Helwa by the Ministry for Culture, and a study of repairs required to the external walls was made in 1988, and deteriorated stone masonry was replaced. Pilasters were erected to be able to install a gate at the entrance from the road. Between 1994-95 flagstones were laid on the floor and the restoration of the external walls as well as the installation of internal and external lighting was completed.



TAL-BAKKARI RUINS IN ZURRIEQ

Sometimes it is the memory of the place that stays with you. Others it is the story. This is one of the latter.

It is common for people to pass by the Tal-Bakkari remains and judge it as just another abandoned site, especially when the weeds have been allowed to run wild. And, in a country that is laden with historical and archaeological treasures, the probability of that is even higher. Yet, even so the story is one that stuck with me. It all starts with the arrival on the island in 1091 of a Norman noble man – Roger the First

of Sicily – and his army. Together with his brother Robert Guiscard he had invaded and conquered most of Southern Italy and, having done so, decided to conquer Malta in order to stave off any possible invasion from North Africa.

Whatever his motives, he is regarded as a benevolent conqueror who left the ruling *qadi* in place, once these had agreed to pay tributes to him, of course. Maltese children are (or at least were) taught that he tore a red and white off his banner which he gave it to the locals with this eventually becoming the Maltese flag. The biggest change that Count Roger brought about, however, was in the island's religious culture. Even though the *qadi* were allowed to stay, his own Roman Catholic background meant that there was a greater incentive for the locals to adopt that religion. Which is what they did and which brings us back to story of Tal-Bakkari. Because one of the ways that those who were eager to show that they had adopted the ruler's religion had was that of building a chapel and that is what led to the construction of this chapel. That is what I see when I look at the four pillars that remain: the worried peasants unsure of what the future had in store for them trying to find a way to earn some security. It is something that adds inflections to the character of these people; it makes them feel like real people. And that's why the story, more than the place, has stuck with me. **POSTED BY PAUL GRECH**



Mechanised Ground Fireworks Festival back for 13th edition

The event will see eight fireworks factories competing for the title by exhibiting two mechanised catherine wheels each

The 13th edition of the National Mechanised Ground Fireworks Festival will be held on Saturday 4 May (File Photo)

The thirteenth edition of the National Mechanised Ground Fireworks Festival will be held on Saturday 4 May and will see eight fireworks factories compete for the title of national champion.

The festival, which will be held at the Floriana Granaries, is being organised by the Floriana local council in collaboration with the Malta Tourism Authority, and the Tourism Ministry. It will be held on the eve of the feast of St Publius.

In a statement, the local council said that like in previous years, each of the participants will be competing by exhibiting two mechanised

catherine wheels each.

It added that the winner would be chosen on the merits of three categories: best mechanism, best products used and originality of exhibition in terms of design and movement.

The jury will be composed of three pyrotechnics experts as well as "a Maltese national, and expert in the local pyrotechnic tradition" who will act as chairman to the jury.

Fireworks will be evaluated during assembly, during combustion as well as through videos before the winner is announced the following Monday.

Floriana mayor Davina Sammut Hili said the council had felt the need to revisit the festival in order to attract more visitors while keeping returning attendees satisfied.

As of this year, she said, the previous year's winner would be commissioned to close the festival with a display known as "it-tapit" that "crosses the entire width of the granaries".

Tourism Minister Konrad Mizzi lauded the initiative while stressing that the event could yet grow and improve in quality.

For this reason, he said that the Malta Tourism Authority had felt the need to support the festival by placing it in its annual "tourist calendar".

The participants in this year's festival are:

St Gabriel's Band Club Firework's Association – Balzan

St Peter in Chains Fireworks Commission – Birzebuga

Our Lady of the Girdle Fireworks Complex – Gudja

Our Lady of Lily Fireworks Complex – Mqabba

St Philip Fireworks Complex- Zebbug

Our Lad of Mount Carmel Fireworks Complex – Zurrieq

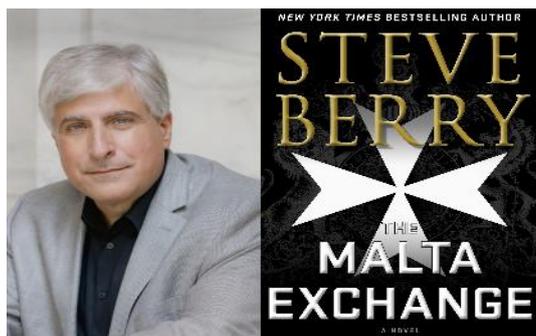
St Catherine Fireworks

Complex – Zurrieq

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**THIS SPACE
COULD BE
YOURS**





The Malta Exchange

Cotton Malone Series Book 14

Synopsis

A deadly race for the Vatican's oldest secret fuels *New York Times* bestseller Steve Berry's latest international Cotton Malone thriller.

The pope is dead. A conclave to select his replacement is about to begin. Cardinals are beginning to arrive at the Vatican, but one has fled Rome for Malta in search of a document that dates back to the 4th century and Constantine the Great.

Former Justice Department operative, Cotton Malone, is at Lake Como, Italy, on the trail of legendary letters between Winston Churchill and Benito Mussolini that disappeared in 1945 and could re-write history. But someone else seems to be after the same letters and, when Malone obtains then loses them, he's plunged into a hunt that draws the attention of the legendary Knights of Malta.

The knights have existed for over nine hundred years, the only warrior-monks to survive into modern times. Now they are a global humanitarian organization, but within their ranks lurks trouble — the *Secreti* — an ancient sect intent on affecting the coming papal conclave. With the help of Magellan Billet agent Luke Daniels, Malone races the rogue cardinal, the knights, the *Secreti*, and the clock to find what has been lost for centuries. The final confrontation culminates behind the walls of the Vatican where the election of the next pope hangs in the balance. Buy the book from [AMAZON](#)

TAL-BAKKARI RUINS IN ZURRIEQ



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Assault on Naxxar: 675 new apartments

Former Trade Fair grounds now have three separate projects seeking planning approval



by **James Debono**

Together the three developments, which have yet to be approved, would result in the construction of 675 apartments

The area formerly occupied by the Trade Fair grounds of Naxxar is now subject to three individual projects that will see 675 apartments added to the town.

A new development promoted by Charles Camilleri – whose interests included the Mistra Ridge project and the Jerma Palace development – will bring 64

apartments and seven penthouses in a five-floor building on a field by Pjazza Celsi.

Camilleri owns the 3,361sq.m site, which is located right outside Naxxar's urban conservation area where development is limited to just two and three storeys.

A further 491 apartments have already been proposed on the Trade Fair grounds owned by Sciclunas' Estates, the holding company belonging to the heirs of the Marquis John Scicluna, who run the Palazzo Parisio home and gardens.

The plans originally included towers rising to nine storeys, with conference areas and a 1,400sq.m supermarket, and a car park for 1,100 vehicles, raising public concerns over traffic problems in the area. Indeed, the development is likely to generate 2,635 daily car trips to and from the new development. Naxxar is already served by a supermarket inside the village, and is located within driving distance of three others in Mosta and Birkirkara.

Yet another application is an eight-storey tower for 113 apartments proposed by SPTT Properties on the nearby trade fair carpark. The company was formed in 2018 by various commercial groups: they include Dutch business group Wygron Beheer, Malta property group Belair – one of the driving forces behind Gzira's 17 East high-rise, hotelier Ian Decesare's Sonnet Inv, Ab Initio Limited, JND properties, L.A. Developments, J&J Holdings, IN Space, as well as other independent property owners and also legal consultants.

Together the three developments, which have yet to be approved, would result in the construction of 675 apartments.

The local plan approved in 2006 states that the area where the 71 apartments are being proposed can be developed as housing units. Previously this site had been designated as a "white area", where no development could take place. In 2017 the Planning Authority approved development parameters for the site, setting a building height limitation of 17.5m and removing the obligation set in the local plan to develop the area in a comprehensive way, paving the way for separate applications on different plots. On that occasion the Naxxar local council had objected,

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Join us for the

ADELAIDE LAUNCH

of the

First ANZAC Sports in Malta

to remember the thousands involved in **BEYOND GALLIPOLI**

This launch event will kick start the planning process and outline the program for the First ANZAC Sports in Malta, scheduled to be played between Australia, New Zealand, and Malta, in April 2020.

**Saturday 16th March 2019
7pm - Midnight**

**Sicilia Social & Sports Club
45A O.G. Road, Klemzig**

Tickets \$50 per person
includes 4 course meal
Drinks available to purchase

Live entertainment
Door prizes & raffles
Sports memorabilia available for auction
Special announcements
throughout the evening

BEYOND GALLIPOLI Behind the scenes of World War I

Thousands of sick and wounded ANZAC soldiers journeyed to Malta, the 'Nurse Island of the Mediterranean' for medical treatment during the war.

Beyond Gallipoli reminds us of the ANZAC soldiers buried in Malta, the Hospital Ships, Doctors and Nurse Volunteers, the role of the Red Cross, the Australian Hall built in 1915, and more.

ANZAC Memorial, Argotti Botanical Gardens Floriana, Malta, unveiled in May 2013



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 ANZACs 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 25 th April 2020 after the traditional ANZAC Service held in Pieta "Military" Cemetery.

The Adelaide Launch (Dinner Dance) on the 16 th 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.

For further information

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MALTA AND THE ANZACS

MALTA

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MEDITERRANEAN**

**WORLD WAR I
Malta - Australia
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LEST WE FORGET

MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER