



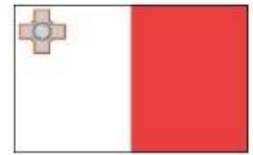
Maltese e-Newsletter



The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

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**His Excellency
Dr George Vella**



**A Special Edition dedicated to the
new President of Malta
Dr. George Vella**

MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

**The Maltese living abroad
congratulate you, Mr. President and
we are all very proud of you**



The Prime Minister Joseph Muscat and Dr. George Vella

**Speaker Anglu Farrugia
at the swearing-in
of the new president
of Malta**



President George Vella takes oath of office

On the 4 April 2016 Dr George Vella arrived at the Grandmaster's Palace in St George's Square to take his oath of office as the tenth President of the Republic of Malta.

Accompanied by his wife Miriam, the President-elect walked to the Palace from St John's Co-Cathedral where, at the request of Dr Vella himself, an inter-religious ceremony had been held.

Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, accompanied by his wife Michelle, arrived at the Square a short time later, followed by President Marie Louise Coleiro Preca.

The new President George Vella took the oath of office and appended his signature, after which he read the Proclamation before also signing it. The Proclamation was also signed by the Prime Minister.



Who is George Vella?

Report: Ruth Castillo

George Vella. He was born in Żejtun at the height of WWII and today he is 76 years old. He studied at De La Salle Collge

and graduated from the University of Malta as a doctor of medicine in 1964. He has always continued to live in the town where he was born. He is married to Mariam and they have three children: Claire, Elaine and George... as well as seven grandchildren.

After working for two years at St Luke's hospital, he became the doctor at the dockyards for the next seven years, until 1973. For the next 40 years, he worked as a family doctor who was greatly sought after by families in Żejtun. For more than ten years he was also the official medic for Air Malta after he specialised in the field of aviation medicine in the UK.

He contested the general election on the Labour Party ticket for the first time in 1976. He made it to Parliament two years later following a casual election. Dr Vella served as an MP in eight legislatures and was a member of various parliamentary delegations which attended international fora. In the four elections which he contested, he was always elected from two districts.

In 1992 he was elected Deputy Leader of the Labour Party responsible for parliamentary affairs. During the 1996 – 98 legislature, Prime Minister Alfred Sant appointed him Deputy PM and Foreign Affairs Minister. He remained in the role of PL Deputy Leader until 2003. He served in the Cabinet once again during the last legislature when PM Joseph Muscat appointed him Foreign Affairs Minister. That legislature signaled the end of his political career as Dr Vella decided not to contest the general elections in June 2017.

He is known for his interest in foreign politics, especially in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and the Gulf. He has shown particular interest in following what is happening in Libya. After ending his ministerial role he was nominated and served on a committee of experts who prepared a report about the future of the Commonwealth. Last November, he was appointed a member of the Order of St Michael and St George by the Grandmaster of the Order – the Duke of Kent. The honour awarded to Dr Vella was given in recognition by the UK for his political work which included the relations between Malta and the UK and in the Commonwealth. Among the other honours he has received there is the National Order of Merit awarded to Dr George Vella on Republic Day 2017.



Zejtun residents gather in street to say goodbye to Dr George Vella

A large number of Zejtun residents woke up early this morning to gather round in the street where Dr George Vella lives, next to the Church,

to tell him goodbye before he made his way to his inauguration ceremony. From children to the elderly, those who have known him for many long years not only as a politician but also as a family doctor, everyone wished Dr Vella the very best on receiving this honour as President of the Republic.

Country's highest authorities present at Co-Cathedral for inter-religious ceremony



The country's highest authorities have gathered at St John's Co-Cathedral for the religious ceremony prior to the swearing-in ceremony of the new President of the Republic. Among those present is the incoming President George Vella, outgoing President Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, and Opposition Leader Adrian Delia.

At Dr Vella's request, the ceremony is an inter-religious one which includes leaders of other Christian

denominations, as well as leaders from the Islamic, Jewish, Buddhist and Bahai faiths.

"The President of the Republic has the privilege to be the Head of State. We want to see in him a defender of Malta's heritage in every sense – cultural, historical, artistic, architectural and natural," Archbishop Charles Scicluna told George Vella during his homily.



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MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

The Editor, staff and readers
of **THE MALTESE JOURNAL**
wish our new president best
wishes during his term of
office as the head of the
Republic of Malta

A look back at Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca's Presidency



Report: Ruth Castillo TIMES “The Presidential nominee symbolises our best values as Maltese and Gozitans. Family values, but also values of the choice of a woman who has made her choices in life. It is clear to me that the agenda of Presidential nominee Coleiro Preca will be a social agenda.”

These were the words of Prime Minister Joseph Muscat during a media conference when he had announced that Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was to become the ninth President of the Republic of Malta. It was evident from the very beginning that President Coleiro Preca would have an active role in society.

In her first Presidential address, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca had stated that her Presidency would be focusing on social justice and inclusivity. “I believe that the Presidency has to be a shield for liberty, democracy and human rights. For this reason I will be focusing my energy for further cultivation of a culture of social justice built on a basis of respect and inclusivity, tolerance and diversity – all values which should continue to make us proud of being Maltese and Gozitans.”

Throughout her Presidency, President Coleiro Preca launched a number of entities and initiatives with the aim of fostering unity as well as a culture of peace among the people.

Two months after taking her oath of office, in June of 2014, President Coleiro Preca announced the setting up of the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, with the aim of creating space where people could get together and discuss issues beneficial to society.

Also set up within the Foundation, among others, were the National Institute for Childhood, the National Centre for Research on the Family, and the National Observatory for Dignified Living. “The idea is to create unity through joint efforts.”

The Foundation also united non-governmental organisations who work in the cancer field, under the National Cancer Platform which was set up in 2015.

During this presidency, a reform was carried out in the structure of the Malta Community Chest Fund, which saw the entity being transformed into a Foundation. Also set up was the President's Trust, to support disadvantaged youths in society.

The incident which had occurred in the tenth edition of Paqpaqli għall-Istrina in 2015 was one of the worst episodes of President Coleiro Preca's Presidency. “We feel squeezed dry. There is no other way to describe our anguish as a result of this tragedy.”

A number of important events took place in Malta during this Presidency, among them the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government, known as CHOGM. Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, were present for this meeting.

In 2017, for the first time ever Malta held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

President Coleiro Preca was the first Maltese President to join the Arraiolos group, which groups together non-executive Presidents within the European Union. The first meeting of this group in Malta was held in September 2017. Twelve non-executive Presidents of European Union member states were in Malta for the biggest ever meeting of the group since its inception in 2003.

President Coleiro Preca carried out ten state visits and five official visits abroad, the first one to Slovenia in 2015, and the last one to Israel and Palestine at the beginning of this year. She also had three audiences with Pope Francis, at the beginning and at the end of her Presidency, as well as

another special audience in December 2016, when she had personally thanked the Pope for the opportunity afforded by the Holy See to Malta to become the first country outside Italy to put on show a crib in St Peter's Square.

Throughout the five years of her Presidency, every year President Coleiro Preca visited Maltese patients recovering in hospitals abroad, mainly in the UK. The President also addressed a number of international fora and was given several international honours, including an *honoris causa* doctorate by Leicester University.

At the end of her Presidency, in a message of thanks to President Coleiro Preca, Prime Minister Joseph Muscat stated that the Cabinet felt the President's efforts should not be brought to an end with the end of her five years as President.

"She has served with unbounded energy, and she has left her mark and had a great effect on the lives of thousands of Maltese and Gozitans. She was a symbol of unity, as well as a driving force for the women in our society to move forward and to continue to make progress. The Cabinet of Ministers has passed a unanimous vote of thanks towards Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, and we look forward to supporting her as a Government as she continues in her role of running the Foundation for Social Wellbeing, through which she will continue to give a very important contribution to Maltese society."

Former President Coleiro Preca presents gifts received during state visits to national collection

Report: Ruth Castillo

A precious collection of state gifts given to President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca by foreign dignitaries now form part of Heritage Malta's national collection and are now permanently in the office of the President at the Palace in Valletta, a total of 26 prestige gifts.

These include a lace tablecloth intertwined with gold leaf given to the Maltese President by Queen Elizabeth II; a Venetian Murano vase presented by Italian President Sergio Mattarella; a Lapis Lazuli necklace presented by Chilean President Michelle Bachelet – and in all, 26 such gifts that are now in the Heritage Malta collection.

Brian Gatt, the President's Aide-de-Camp, said, "If you look at these gifts, each country presents a gift that normally has ties to their own country. However, some are personalised but President Coleiro Preca expressed the wish these remain at the Palace to be enjoyed by the public." The gifts are now in the Perellos Room at the Palace.

Emmanuel Magro Conti, the Curator of Heritage Malta said that past Presidents had left a few state gifts to Heritage Malta and these are distributed between museums and San Anton Palace. One of these is a gift that was presented to the President by Pope John Paul II. Emmanuel Magro Conti, Heritage Malta Curator, said, "There are four items, two of mosaic, one in bronze and an ancient manuscript that was presented by Pope Paul John II who is today a saint; these were presented to Maltese Presidents who visited The Vatican and during the two visits that Pope John Paul II made to Malta."

Magro Conti said that according to documentation the practice of presenting state gifts to Malta goes back to the 17th Century when the Knights were in Malta. Reigning monarchs would send their ambassadors bearing such gifts and these were usually a portrait of the monarch. These are to be found at the Valletta Palace.

"Worth mentioning is that in the 18th Century one was a portrait of Queen Catherine the Great of Russia by Levitsky, an important artist and there are only less than six of his paintings outside Russia and a renowned painting of Louis XV presented as a gift with a dedication on the portrait."

Curator Magri Conti said Heritage Malta has plans these gifts will eventually be put on public display.

The Maltese Presidency and its connection with St George



St George by Pietro Paolo Caruana (1823). Photo: David Frank Bugeja. Right: George Abela (left) carrying a copy of the titular statue of St George of Victoria.

Swedish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard once said that 'Life is best understood backwards' and he could not have been nearer to the truth. For writers, researchers and historians, the proverb is of the utmost importance since they all base their studies on what had already happened, hoping that in doing so, they will help their fellow men live

their future better.

As soon as I read on the newspapers that politician George Vella is to be the next President of the Republic of Malta, I could not stop thinking of the connection that the last three presidents have either with Qormi or with its protector St George of Lydda. Living in what is being considered by many as a post-Christian era, focusing on such a connection may sound both provincial and parochial at best. However, since there is a basis for a bond between the two, I will proceed just the same to state my point.

Facts are facts and they are not subject to fashion. Ironically, the Maltese office of the President of the Republic has managed to confirm St George as the quintessentially 'Maltese' saint.

President Emeritus George Abela was born in Qormi on April 22, 1948. He was baptised in the parish church of St George of his native town and in 1974 he started his connection with Qormi FC as club treasurer and was appointed president in 1976. His connections with Qormi run deep; he was called George after the patron saint of the locality in which he was born and bred.

It is a standard tradition that national institutions such as royal families and old orders of chivalry have their own protector saint

His successor Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was born in Qormi on December 7, 1958. Born and baptised in St George's parish church, she was educated at St George's Primary School in Qormi before proceeding to other schools and later on to the University of Malta from where she graduated as notary public. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was elected President of the Republic of Malta on April 4, 2014. A parliamentary resolution on April 1, 2014, approved her nomination as the ninth President of Malta.

George Vella, the 10th President of the Republic of Malta, was born in Żejtun on April 24, 1942. As far as I know, he has no connection with Qormi but he was born on the morrow of St George's Day. Having graduated MD in 1964, the year of Malta's Independence, later on he became lecturer at the department of physiology and biochemistry at the Royal University of Malta. It is an interesting fact that his one and only son is also called George.

With so many connections with April 23 and with St George, the Christian saint of old whose image decorates our national flag, I would like to humbly suggest to our new President of the Republic to take into consideration the possibility of naming St George as the protector saint of the office of the President of the Republic.

It is a standard tradition that national institutions such as royal families and old orders of chivalry have their own protector saint. So it would be a significant gesture to proclaim this martyr-saint of old – who is already revered as one of Malta's celestial protectors and Gozo's patron saint – to proclaim him as the Protector of Malta's highest office. In Britain, St George is the patron saint and protector of the monarch and in the Vatican city-State, April 23 is a holiday since Pope Francis's original name is Jorge Mario. Even at a time when religion no longer plays the main role in Maltese society, such a gesture might hold an ecumenical significance as Malta moves from being a predominantly Catholic country to a place where peoples from various countries, cultures and faith come together.

More women in the House

The popular vote will still be reflected as it is today with the mechanism only adding on to the final result

Only nine women MPs were elected on their own steam or through a casual election in 2017: the situation has not changed much in 70 years but a proposed legal reform could see an additional 12 women take up a parliamentary seat.



The Maltese government has proposed a constitutional amendment to ensure greater female presence in the House of Representatives.

According to the measure presented this week in a press conference that opened the phase of public consultations on the subject, in the event that a parliament resulting from the election does not guarantee a representation of at least 40% for both genders, up to 12

parliamentarians of the underrepresented gender will be elected in parliament, to ensure a fair representation.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms, Giulia Farrugia Portelli, stated during the conference her intention to pass on the message that “if I have succeeded in having a career in politics, all women can”. Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, during his speech, underlined the Government’s conviction that Maltese society should guarantee a balance between genders to promote inclusiveness.

The Prime Minister also wanted to highlight how this is not a system that provides for quotas, and consequently this mechanism will not deprive some elected officials of their seat, but will add a certain number of parliamentarians to reduce the gender gap between the elected”, if it will be necessary. Muscat added that all opinions contrary to this proposal should be listened to and carefully evaluated, to ensure the best possible development of the law itself.

The government’s decision to introduce corrections to the electoral law comes from a series of critical elements relating to the state of Maltese politics, especially when compared to the situation in other European countries. The document includes a FAQ section, which explains the reasons that led to this choice. The document also refers to the Democracy Index 2018, which states that similar measures adopted in other European countries such as Spain, Slovenia, Portugal, Belgium, France and Ireland have led to good results, while the quota mechanism has always caused numerous controversies and debates. The document also shows that the objective of the reform is to lead to a situation in which both genders have a representation (indicated as “critical mass”) of at least 33%. The committee that worked on the proposal suggests for this measure to stay into force for 20 years, before being put to the scrutiny of the parliament, which will then have to decide whether to maintain it, modify it or eliminate it.

In Republican history, until today Malta has seen only 27 women elected as parliamentarians.

(ITALPRESS/MNA) Source: medNews

day-to-day business.

42 years since Karin Grech was murdered

It has been nearly 42 years since Karin Grech was killed by a parcel bomb. The case goes back to 28 December 1977 and has not been resolved.



Grech, the daughter of doctor Edwin Grech was only 15-years-old, when she picked up a letter addressed to her father. The teenager was in the presence of her brother when she opened what she thought was a Christmas gift. Grech was rushed to St Luke's Hospital however she lost her life within half an hour. The case is considered to be the first terrorist attack in Malta.

Who is Edwin Grech?

Professor Edwin Grech was the head of the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at St Luke's Hospital. At that time the doctors at St Luke's Hospital were on strike at the Hospital due to an industrial action after the doctors were at odds with the government then. Grech who was a doctor in the United Kingdom was asked to come to Malta and head the department until the industrial dispute came to an end. Grech was seen as a strike-breaker.

There is no forensic evidence linking the bomb to the doctors' strike and on the same day other parcel bombs were sent to another doctor and then Labour MP Paul Chetcuti Caruana. However the bomb did not detonate.



New Maltese bishop appointed in Peru

Bishop-elect Giovanni Cefai

Fr Giovanni Cefai MSSP has been appointed bishop of the newly set up territorial prelate of Santiago Apóstol de Huanané in Peru, which is part of the archdiocese of Arequipa.

Archbishop Charles Scicluna, Gozo bishop Mario Grech, and Auxiliary bishop Joseph Galea-Curmi congratulated the bishop-elect and said they would pray for the Lord to help him in his new

mission.



Fr Cefai was born in Żebbuġ, Gozo in 1967 and joined the St Paul's Missionary Society in 1984. He was ordained priest in 1997.

During his priesthood, Fr Cefai served as director of the De Piro Youth Animation Centre in Malta and was parish priest of the parishes of Santa Cruz and San

Pablo Apóstol, both in Arequipa. He was also regional superior of the St Paul Missionary Society in Peru.

The territorial prelate of Santiago Apóstol de Huanané is formed of 20 parishes in which more

than 200,000 people, around 85% of whom are Catholic, live. The territory includes 15 priests spread on 18,000 square kilometres of land, 75 times the size of Malta.

You made Gozo Proud – Gozo's Special Olympics team members



BY [GOZO NEWS](#) - Gozitans turned out in force to give a warm welcome and congratulate the three young Gozitan members of the Special Olympics Malta team – Maria-Pia Saliba, Carmelo Pace and Giuseppina Galea, who made all of Gozo so proud.

The Ministry for Gozo organised a special event to mark their wonderful [gold and bronze medal wins in swimming and cycling](#) at the Special Olympics World Games held earlier this month in Abu Dhabi. Between them they won six medals – four gold and two bronze. Minister for Gozo Justyne Caruana welcomed Maria-Pia, Carmelo and Giuseppina to cheers from the

crowds present. She congratulated them on their great success and each was presented with a trophy to mark their achievement. A large cake was shared by all in honour of the occasion.



Dr Caruana said that the commitment, determination and sacrifice and shown by these three Gozitans athletes was rewarded through their achievements and the honour for themselves and the country.

The Minister said that although she was not physically present at these games, she had still followed what was happening through social media and direct communication with the athletes and their families. She pledged her full support to the young athletes. And said that a big thanks goes to the families

of our athletes, Anna Calleja the Special Olympics Malta National Director, managers, coaches, all Special Olympics volunteers, and to all the people for their support of the athletes who represented our country. The young Gozitans presented Minister Caruana with a camel, a memento brought back from the desert of Abu Dhabi – not a real one of course.....*Photographs by Alain Salvary*



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2019 Eurovision Song Contest Tel Aviv Michela

Michela who has just turned 18 years of age, currently lives on the tiny island of Gozo - part of the Maltese archipelago known as a hidden gem in the Mediterranean. Her voice, described by many, as memorable, powerful, with a breathtaking breaking point all wrapped in one. She loves a wide range of genres from pop, country to soul.

From an unknown talent, she exploded on the X-Factor stage, leaving the judges speechless, to winning the final, as if that is the only thing she was born to do. Previously, she won the Music Talent League in Lithuania, was a finalist in the 'Baltic Voices' competition and attended 'Ultimate Artist' in the artist development programme in Hertfordshire London, where she also worked with Rhianna's producer.

Michela describes herself as "an average teenager but when I start singing it's as if my voice takes over my entire being. Aretha Franklin once said that you sing soul with your whole body. I know exactly what she means." Michela who is currently signed to Sony Music will be representing Malta in the 2019 Eurovision Song Contest 2019 in Tel

Aviv. Official Video: <https://youtu.be/tdyQ-ebzFgk>



Art on barrels (photo: Matthew Mirabelli)

Wine barrels have often been used and repurposed as furniture pieces. Now they have been used as a canvas by 10 local artists who have produced fine works of art for the Bettija'rt | wine.art.living barrel exhibition organised by the Delicata winery.

The exhibition is now open to the public at Is-Suq tal-Belt, Valletta Food Market until April 24, running each day from 8 am till late.

Ten artists are collectively exhibiting their so called 'bettija'rt', which is an artwork made from a decommissioned wine barrel or bettija in Maltese. Each finished piece reflects "the joys of wine, art and good living in Malta today and through the ages".

Some of the works explore unconventional techniques such as multi-patterned paintings with shape and line being driving forces. For the majority of artists, the use of colour is important and often explosive. In some cases, however, colour has been stripped away, leaving the barrel bare but covered with ingenuity and hard graft.

Following a successful call of interest for artists by Delicata, 10 artists were selected to take part in the winery's innovative barrel art exhibition and contest organised in association with Is-Suq tal-Belt, Valletta Food Market.

This year's exhibiting and contending artist finalists are surrealist Joseph Barbara, talented painter and model Claire Attard Vella, multi-media artist David Xuereb, globetrotting artist Caroline Said Lawrence, expressionist Carmel Bonello, palette-knife virtuoso Francis Galea, up-and-coming artist Priscilla Gatt, ceramist and painter Donald Camilleri, multi-talented artist Sara Pace and creative illustrator Zack Ritchie. Admission is free to encourage the public to visit, view and vote for their favourite work of art at www.delicata.com/vote/.

The recipient of the 2019 Bettija'rt grand prize and the runner-up, winning cash prizes and gifts, shall be determined by a final jury panel decision. The members of the jury are Anna Grima, Kevin Casha, Mariella Pisani Bencini and Georges Meekers for the organising Delicata winery.

More information on Bettija'rt | wine.art.living can be obtained at www.delicata.com.



MEUSAC Connecting people to the European Union

Posted On March 31, 2019 - Updated 31 March, 2019 4:52pm

What should the European Union do? What can it do? What exactly is the European Union? How should it change? Should it interfere or not? And if so, how, when and where? What does the future hold for the

European Union?

These and many other questions are often discussed over lunch, on the streets, at work, inside shops, in newspapers, on TV and radio, and on social media.

These are questions which you might ask when you feel your rights have been impinged upon and when things are not going well in Europe or in your country, or when you feel excessive interference by the EU in local affairs.

Whether you realise it or not, the European Union affects your every day life: the food you eat, buying or selling, traveling, the waste you leave on your doorstep, toys and electronic products you own, your work, health and safety conditions, and a thousand other things.

Are we better off inside the European Union or not? Is it better for us to have to follow a multitude of rules, or are we better off controlling our own destinies and leaving things in our hands? What strength does a small country like ours – with less than 0.1% of the EU population – have? Or does this in fact mean that despite our size we still have a place at the table equivalent to that held by the largest Member States? Does it pay us to be members if only to partake of the funds, which has allowed us to carry out many projects?

Learn about these questions and more in a new website page tvm.com.mt with the input of [Meusac](http://meusac.com). Through this page you will be able to follow news and information about the European Union to better understand this Union that you have been a citizen of for 15 years.

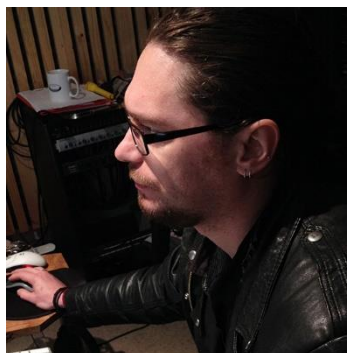
Besides ongoing current affairs, MEUSAC will contribute with articles, videos and other information about the European Union, which on a daily basis affects all of us one way or another.

Follow this page and let us know what you want to know more about info.meusac@gov.mt or <https://www.facebook.com/meusacmalta>.

Find us on Facebook and Twitter and also at the
Malta Migration Museum - Valletta
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Andy Busuttil



Greg Seiler



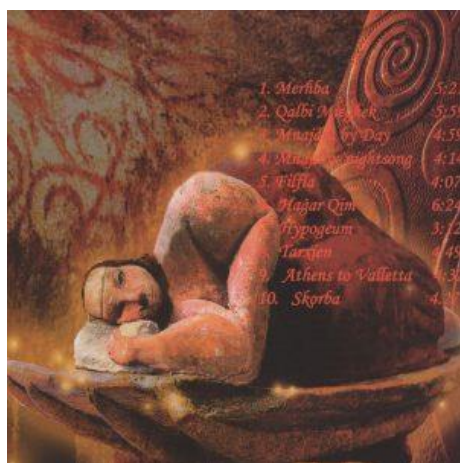
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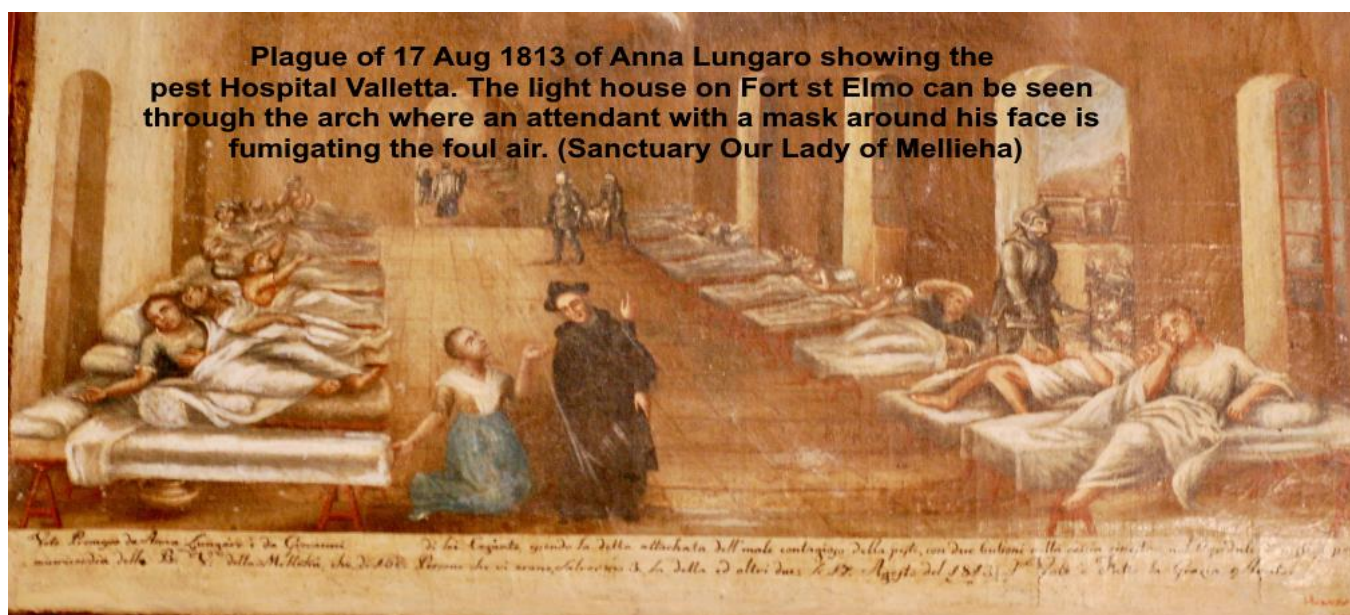
Andy is the owner and principal engineer of Blue Mountain Sound. Andy's great strength, aside from his substantial studio talents, is his capacity to make clients feel comfortable and at home and to be able to work at their best when recording. He also works brilliantly with clients in the mixing and mastering stages of their projects. He is collaborative and highly consultative and a fount of valuable information.

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The plague in Malta in 1813



The way the plague in 1813 disrupted life in Malta and gripped the population in a terrifying fear can still send a chill down the spine of anyone who reads of such episodes.

An extremely vivid description of how that outbreak spread and the way the British authorities tried to curb it is presented in the latest edition of Treasures of Malta.

Treasures of Malta is published three times a year by Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti in association with the Malta Tourism Authority.

Typesetting, colour separations and printing are by Progress Press.

In the feature about the plague, that lasted about 10 months and wiped out 4,500 people, Giovanni Bonello presents a vivid description of the terrifying effects of the plague and how, in spite of its horrifying results, some people still tended to think it would not hit them, with thieves stealing property from the victims of the scourge.

The courts, the theatre and other buildings where the public met, including churches, were closed down and the harbour areas placed under medical supervision.

The carriers of the disease were members of the crew of the Maltese brig San Nicola sailing under a British flag that arrived at Marsamxett from Alexandria on March 28, 1813.

Dr Bonello writes: "...men on board showed obvious symptoms of the plague. Malta had been virtually free from that scourge for over 163 years, and now the dreaded curse appeared again among us...

"The board of health turned jittery at the threat of a plague reservoir moored at the centre of the harbour. They wanted the ship towed out and burnt. The owners insisted on compensation. After 13 days haggling, the floating coffin left for Alexandria".

The colonial government ordered that anyone withholding information of an appearance of the disease or who concealed infected people would be sentenced to death.

Valletta was segregated into separate districts by means of barricades, fences, gates and armed guards. Signs painted on doors by day and lanterns by night advertised those houses where the infection had visited. Criminals were press-ganged under armed surveillance to remove and bury corpses, caking them in quicklime in communal graves and clearing garbage from infected houses.

"Though under military escort, these convicts in their red and black robes, their faces hidden by hoods, spread as much terror as the plague they were engaged to control.

"Their guards, generally frightened of the delinquents in their charge, rarely restrained them from painstaking rounds of rape and robbery," Dr Bonello wrote.



Cart to carry the victims of the 1813-1814



Nicola Bartolo supplying water to the infected in their huts surrounded by a sanitary cordon manned by troops



Votive offering showing plague victims being carted off to mass graves. In 1813



Communion being given to a plague victim.
Source: Public domain.

CONVERSATIONS

- Bongu u nittama li tinsab tajjeb. Ghal darb'ohra nixtieq niringrazzjak u naghtik prosit ghall-Maltese eNewsletter numru 261. Fih dejjem insib xi haga gdida li ghalkemm hija dwar Malta ma nkunx smaġt biha qabel. Did-darba interessanti ferm l-artikolu dwar l-ihirsa tal-Belt Valletta. Komplij sejjer u tislijiet Lina Brockdorff (Malta)
- Congrats on your 260th edition of the Maltese journal. Your large clientele is the indication of its popularity, Prosit! Opening of the next edition on its arrival becomes the day's priority, John Briffa
- Prosit tassew Frank... Grazzi, kull paġna hi mimlija taġhrif veru interessanti.... Tislijiet Rita D Malta)
- As usual Frank, a fantastic edition of your journal. Keep up the great work please mate. Regards.
- Manny Borg Thomastown, Victoria.
- I always enjoy this journal I learn so much about the history and culture of Malta. I always look forward to the next edition and I open it as soon as I receive it. This is truly the journal of Maltese scattered around the world. Thank you again and please don't stop producing such a wonderful newsletter.
- Frank and Valerie Busuttil (Adelaide)
- Edition of the Maltese Journal 261 was fantastic. I do not know how you manage to collect all those information about our beloved Malta.. Peter Mallia USA
- Hi Frank, I'm a proud Australian Maltese, can you please include me on your distribution list. With thanks – Barry Formosa (Australia)
- I know a lot of people in Canada who read, love and appreciate the Maltese Journal. L.Camilleri (Canada)
- I recommend this journal to all my relatives and friend and all the Maltese in Malta and Gozo and all those who live overseas. It is a unique newsletter and can be read on facebook and many other places. It is certainly a strong link between us all. Josephine Buhagiar
- Frank we support you all the way. You are providing a good service for all Maltese abroad. C.Cefai

INNU MALTI

Kliem ta' :
Dun KARM PSAILA

Mużka ta' :
ROBERT SAMUT M.D.

Maqlub bl-Ingliż minn :
Miss MAY BUTCHER



Dizinn ta' :
HARRY FARRUGIA

Mahsub minn :
IVO MUSCAT-AZZOPARDI

Mitbugh mix-
X. T. Q. M. u P.



L-Innu Malti

Maltese:

Lil din l-art hełwa
l-Omm li tatna
isimha
Hares Mulej kif
dejjem Int harist:
Ftakar li lilha bl-
oħla dawl libbist.

Agħti kbir Alla id-
dehen lil min
jaħkimha
Rodd il-ħniena
lis-sid saħħa
'l-ħaddiem:
Seddaq il-għaqda
fil-Maltin u s-sliem.

English:

Guard her, O Lord,
as ever Thou hast
guarded
This Motherland so
dear whose name
we bear!
Keep her in mind,
whom Thou hast
made so fair!
May he who rules,
for wisdom be
regarded,
In master mercy,
strength in man
increase!
Confirm us all, in
unity and peace!

1. Lil din l-Art he-lwa, l-Omm li tat-na i-si-mha... Ha-res, Mu-
2. Agh-ti, Kbir Al-la, id-deh'n lil min jah-ki-mha... Rodd il-ħnie-
1. Guard her, O Lord... as ev-er Thou hast guar-ded... This Moth-er-
2. May he who rules... for wis-dom be re-gar-ded!... In mas-ter

1. lej... kif dej-jem Int ħa-rist:.... Fta-kar li lil-ha bil-oħ-la dawl lib-bist!....
2. na.... lis-sid, saħ-ħa 'l-ħad-diem:... Sed-da q il-għaq-da fil-Mal-tin u s-sliem!....
1. land so... dear whose name we bear!... Keep her in mind... whom Thou hast made so fair!
2. mer-cy, strength in man in-crease!... Con-firm us all... in u-ni-ty... and peace!...

Congratulations on your 260th edition of the Maltese Journal.

Thank you for all the interesting articles, I enjoyed reading the one on Traditional Maltese Street Games, it took me back to my childhood, playing with my friends in our street and remembering the happy times playing till sunset. I try to read the articles, written in Maltese but I struggled to understand it all. I love to keep in touch with the happenings of my birthplace and having two siblings and their families still living there I still feel very much a part of our tradition and culture, even though I left those shores 57 years ago. Yours Sincerely Dolores Muscat - Adelaide

A website listing family-friendly activities in Malta and Gozo has recently been launched – [Family Time Malta](#).

Anna Gallo, founder of the Family Time Malta, said that the website is aimed at providing families a comprehensive list of organisations, activities, and businesses who cater for their recreational needs.



It was officially inaugurated last week under the patronage of President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, who emphasised that children have the right to play in a safe and fun environment, and also the importance of quality family time in their development as future good citizens.

Anna Gallo, said, “the idea behind this initiative is to provide a platform for families with children from birth to 12 years of age including children

differently abled, to plan quality time together.”

“Although, in fact, there are many options available to families in Malta, until now it’s been very hard to find this information quickly and easily.,” she added.

She explained that it is a guide and resource for parents thanks to its interactive section. Among its many features, the website includes a section listing what activities are happening complete with customisable filters and geo-location making the user-experience easier and personalised.

Family Time Malta is also supported by Office of the Commissioner for Children, Heritage Malta, Visit Malta, Ministry for the Family, Children’s Rights and Social Solidarity, Nature Trust Malta, Esplora, Aquarium, Italian Institute of Culture and Marsa Sport Club.



Starts 20th Apr 2019

Ends 21st Apr 2019

**Malta's only
Aquarium**

[St Paul's Bay](#)

Join us this Easter for a special 2 day event where our

aquarium will turn into a unique setting for an Easter egg hunt. Sounds like a simple Easter egg hunt? Well, you may think you are looking for traditional egg but in fact in the marine and reptile world there are many different types that come in all shapes and sizes. so follow the map.. Look closely and pay extra attention to the unusual. Find them all and you may just get a yummy treat! Alongside the Easter egg hunt we shall also have Face painting and Arts and Crafts within the Aquarium so many things to keep those little ones entertained this Easter... It's going to be EGGcellent



Gemma Portelli

Gemma Portelli (1932 - 2008) was one of Malta's most popular actresses of the 20th century.

Gemma was born on 30 September 1932 in Valletta. She attended St Joseph High School in Rabat and eventually changed over to St Catherine High School in Sliema.

Stage career

At a tender age, she was already being cast in radioplays broadcast on Rediffusion. This was the beginning of a long illustrious career for Gemma.

Her sister, Connie and her brother, Lino were her companions on radio during these early days. Soon, Gemma was instrumental in setting up a foursome whose ambition was to put on all-round performances on radio and the theatre. The quartet was made up of Gemma, her sister Connie and two young lads, Paul Portelli and Richie Azzopardi who eventually became their respective husbands. In 1957, Gemma sought greener pastures and became involved with the legendary Radju Muskettieri performing next to the immortal Charles Clews and Johnny Catania. For long years, Radju Muskettieri brought joy, laughter and happiness into the homes of the Maltese people. Gemma's fate was sealed.

During the sixties Gemma and her husband Paul started performing as a duo calling themselves The Bluebirds. The Bluebirds toured Malta and Gozo with their popular repertoire of songs and comic sketches that used to split their audiences' sides with laughter. The duo Gemma and Paul soon became household names and loved by all and sundry.

Perhaps Gemma's biggest success was her brilliant interpretation of Ġoma in Lino Grech's social teleseries *F'Baħar Wieħed*. Another highlight of her brilliant career was the television series *Fuq Tlieta Toqgħod il-Borma* featuring Gemma Portelli at her best as an all-rounder.

Gemma loved Australia: she visited downunder four times, and accompanied by her husband, Paul, toured around the country playing to full houses and filling the hearts of the Maltese-Australian community with joy and happiness – and an overdose of nostalgia. As if not to lose contact with her beloved migrant audiences she was a regular contributor in the *The Maltese Herald*, a Sydney-based weekly paper.

Gemma kept on working, both on stage and on radio and television, until the end of her life. During most of the scenes in her last appearance on television in *Horrox Borrox*, Gemma had to perform sitting most of the time due to her frail physical state.

Awards & recognitions

For her life-long career as an entertainer who succeeded to take an entire nation by storm with her inimitable talent, Gemma Portelli was honoured with Ġieħ ir-Repubblika.

Gemma and Paul had a son, Martin who lives in the USA, and a daughter, Kora.

She died on 21 February 2008 at the age of 75



Jerusalem-born Knights of Malta

A global charity

When it comes to European ministates — an exclusive club that includes countries like Andorra, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and San Marino — the [Sovereign Military Order of Malta](#) may be the most microscopic of them all.

Unlike the minuscule Principality of Monaco, which has 39,000 inhabitants crammed into two square kilometers of Mediterranean coastline — or the even tinier Vatican, with 1,000 people occupying barely half a square km in downtown Rome — the SMOM, as it's commonly abbreviated, has neither citizens nor territory.

And that's just fine with Daniel de Petri Testaferrati, president of the Order's 105-member Maltese Association.

"One of the Order's great strengths, ironically, is that it has neither territory nor citizens," de Petri explained. "We therefore don't need an army, we can't be invaded, and we can't be eradicated by a foreign force."

Another irony is that, despite its long-winded name, the Knights of Malta — officially known as the "Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta" — was neither founded in Malta, nor is it headquartered there.



Nuns listen to a Christmas speech by the Daniel de Petri Testaferrata, president of the SMOM's Maltese Association, thanking them for their works of charity throughout the year. (Larry Luxner)

The SMOM's vital statistics are certainly impressive. Its 14,500 members, 25,000 employees and 80,000 volunteers are currently active in 120 countries. And it commands an annual budget of 1.5 billion euros, all of it funded through donations and membership dues.

"The Order started off as a small fraternity of monks in Jerusalem. One monk from [the Italian duchy of] Amalfi began ministering to the

ill. He realized that the pilgrims en route to Jerusalem were encountering medical problems, since they'd generally travel on foot," de Petri explained. "He initially set up a hospital which eventually spread to most of the Mediterranean."

In 1113, Pope Pascal II decided to form this band of brothers into a proper religious order, with the ability to elect leaders, mint their own coins and fly their own flag. They settled first in Cyprus, then in Rhodes, finally establishing themselves in Malta in 1530 and remaining until the French, under Napoleon, forced them out in 1798.

Commemorative coins, passports and other documents issued by the Sovereign Military Order of Malta are displayed at the SMOM's local office in Valletta, Malta. (Larry Luxner)

No diplomatic ties with Israel Since then, the Order has been based in Rome, where, in 2013, its members marked the 900th anniversary of its founding [with a procession](#) through St. Peter's Square, a Mass in the basilica, and an audience with then-Pope Benedict XVI. At present, the SMOM has diplomatic relations with 108 nations including most of Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Germany, the newest country to recognize the Order, formalized bilateral ties earlier this year.

"Many people ask me, 'why on Earth does a small NGO like yours require diplomatic recognition?'" de Petri said. "The truth is, this organization actually manages to use its diplomatic credentials, not for the fanfare and the pomp that goes with sovereignty, but as a means to gain access to areas where organizations like the Red Cross simply can't get into."

Although the Vatican formally recognized Israel in 1993, the SMOM and the Jewish state still don't have diplomatic relations — even though the Order began life in Jerusalem more than a thousand years ago.

"Sadly, we do not, but we're working on it," de Petri said. "There has been an exchange of communications with the State of Israel, and we very much hope this will lead to diplomatic relations."

In 2013, archaeologists working in Jerusalem's Old City [found the ruins](#) of the Order's first hospital, dating back more than 900 years. The building, located in the heart of the Christian Quarter, was believed to have been in use between 1099 and 1291 – treating as many as 2,000 patients at a time.



The Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, which serves Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank, is operated by the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. (Photo courtesy SMOM)

Meanwhile, the SMOM enjoys recognition at the ambassador level with Palestine. The [Holy Family Hospital](#) in Bethlehem, which has operated since 1895, is one of its most important humanitarian projects worldwide. Run by a staff of 140 doctors, nurses, orderlies and other professionals, the facility was forced to close in 1985

because of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but was partially reopened later as a 28-bed maternity unit.

Since February 1990, the hospital — located only 800 meters from the birthplace of Jesus Christ — has delivered more than 75,000 babies, including 4,200 in 2017 alone; it also performs around 30,000 outpatient consultations and examinations a year. In 2013, a donation from the Belgian government allowed the facility – considered among the best in the West Bank — to open a new pediatric and neonatal care unit for people living in villages around Bethlehem.

Three categories of knighthood “When one talks about the Knights of Malta, the first image that comes to mind is that of a crusader bearing a sword,” de Petri said. “Today, however, the Order is a global, articulated international structure that devotes itself entirely to the care of the sick and needy.”

Even though a third of the Order's members are Americans, the United States doesn't formally recognize it. Nor does Britain or France.

De Petri began volunteering with the Order in 1989, made his first pilgrimage to Lourdes, France, in 1991 and officially joined the SMOM in 1998. Two years later, he was elected as a member of the council of the Maltese Association, and in 2015, he became its president. The skyline of Valletta, Malta's capital, at sunrise. Despite its name, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta was neither founded in Malta, nor is it headquartered on the Mediterranean island.

“The word ‘military’ does not refer to a sword or a gun, but by the fact that we are classified by the Vatican as a military order,” he explained. “The Order of Malta is of the Church, therefore it owes its obedience to His Holiness, the Pope. As far as religious matters are concerned, when we're talking about temple matters, we act in partnership with the Vatican.”

The Order consists of three categories, de Petri explained.

“At the top are those men — and they're only men — who have taken the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Essentially, they are monks known as Knights of Justice who have devoted themselves entirely to the Order,” he said. “The third class, about 13,000 knights and dames, constitutes the vast majority of our members. I'm in the second class.”

This middle category “are those members of the third class who wish to dedicate themselves more.” He said the group — consisting 1,500 knights, including 16 in Malta — was “born out of necessity, in that the Order of Malta realized it had too few Knights of Justice to run itself properly.”

Nobility and philanthropy De Petri said 99 cents of every dollar the Order receives in donations go directly to the hospitals, first-aid clinics and rescue operations it maintains around the world.

“Here in Malta, every member pays 400 euro per year in dues,” he said. “You'd spend far more to be a member of a country club.”

One of the many local charities the Knights of Malta funds is the Conservatorio Vincenzo Bugeja, which provides residential care for 22 teenage Maltese girls from broken homes. The girls, aged 11 to 18, all have psychological, emotional and social difficulties.

“The Order has helped us with many activities which all the girls are invited to, like children's parties and day trips to Gozo,” said Helene Micallef, an official at the St. Venera home. “At Christmas, the Order gives us gift boxes for the girls. But what they look forward to most of all is the annual trip to Lourdes, where they sponsor one child every year.”



WHY I WAS BORN!

PUBLIC TALK BY FORMER SUNDAY TIMES OF MALTA EDITOR
LAURENCE GRECH

SATURDAY 13 APRIL 2019 | 11:00
IL-HAĠAR - HEART OF GOZO MUSEUM
FREE ENTRANCE

The next public talk in the Saturday series hosted at Il-Haġar museum (Pjazza San Ġorġ, Victoria) will be delivered in English by Sunday Times of Malta former editor Laurence Grech. "I was born thanks to the war" will be on 13 April @ 11am. Mr Grech loves to quip that he was born "thanks to the war". He was in fact born in the post-war 'baby boom' in 1948 to a school headmaster from Ghajnsielem, Gozo, and a teacher from Valletta 17 years his junior, both of whom had their lives deeply traumatised by the war. After a brief introduction about the part played by Malta in the war, Mr Grech will recount the tragic circumstances which brought his parents together and the incredible story both families lived to tell. Entrance is free but booking on events@heartofgozo.org.mt is recommended.

Caterina from Calabria,
Italy and Elizabeth of
Maltese heritage,
celebrating the flavours
of the Mediterranean
from Spain to Greece at
DALMATINO RESTAURANT
in Melbourne



*

TWO BEST FRIENDS BRINGING HOMEMADE MEDITERRANEAN FLAVOURS TO PORT MELBOURNE

Caterina & Elizabeth have a unique partnership. The pair met seven years ago and each day their friendship just gets stronger. We have a genuine love of hospitality and we endeavour to ensure that this shines through when you walk through the doors at 280 Bay Street, Port Melbourne. Caterina originally from Calabria, Southern Italy and Elizabeth of Maltese heritage are set on celebrating the flavours of the Mediterranean from Malta to Spain to Greece. This restaurant has been a Croatian restaurant for the last 17 years and now is a **MALTESE AND ITALIAN RESTAURANT**.

They had a Maltese night introducing their cuisine to the general public and the response was overwhelming.... Especially when our customers tried our "Stuffat tal-fenek" (Stewed Rabbit) and Maltese Ravjul, The consensus from customers was MAGNIFICO.

The Maltese flag is proudly flapping around outside my restaurant and so many people are so very proud to see it being displayed. My front menu window has the Maltese George Cross which again is making our Maltese population in Port Melbourne so very proud.

I am proud of my heritage and would like the support of the Maltese of Melbourne to support this Maltese Restaurant and try magnificent cuisine that they have to offer.

The restaurant is available for functions, private bookings, celebrations- You name it We'll find a way to make it happen.

GET IN TOUCH Dalmatino is located at 280 Bay St, Port Melbourne, VIC. Opens Tues-Sun: 12.00 noon-9.30 pm. To make a booking call (03) 9645 6584 or visit dalmatino.com

Elizabeth Williamson nee Sciberras and Caterina Renda nee Briganti
Owners of Dalmatino Mediterranean Restaurant



Queen Victoria Building – Sydney – New South Wales



The Queen Victoria Building is an elegant multilevel retail outlet which stands proudly in the heart of Sydney. It is a much-loved and busy thoroughfare, as the Town Hall underground railway station opens into the building's basement. Many office workers commuting to and from the city each day are persuaded into some last minute retail therapy or a great coffee on the way past.

The Queen Victoria Building is named after Queen Victoria from England and was built in 1898 as a monument dedicated to her. At that time, Australia was in a recession and the elaborate features of the building were included so the government could employ a diverse range of tradesmen and craftsmen on a worthwhile project. The site before this time was used for the Sydney Markets, and the Queen Victoria Building was constructed to replace it with a shopping centre that also provided work for a range of other people in retail services. The building plays a key role in the lives of Sydney-siders today, yet the building also has a long and interesting history that tells stories about Australia's relationship with England. Address: 455 George St, Sydney, NSW, 2000.

Presidential Palace at the St. Anton Gardens Attard



It is currently the residence of the president of the republic: it is surrounded by a private garden and a large public garden. It was Antoine de Paule, elected Grand Master in 1626, who bought the land and built this sumptuous villa as a personal residence: it was closer to Valletta than the Palazzo Verdala. He was criticized for his way of life: he had built this large villa to house his guests and also his innumerable servants: cooks, cooks, tasters, torchbearers, wigmakers, valets charged to go up the clocks, doctors. He had also built a chapel in the palace. From the tower there is a splendid view of the surrounding

area. Several great masters and English governors have lived in this beautiful palace. The large public garden is of Baroque style; It has an orangery and is a pleasant place of leisure: there are many exotic plants.



The Maltese RSL Sub-Branch will be laying a wreath at Martin Place Cenotaph (Sydney) on ANZAC Eve starting at 4:30pm. We meet up 15-20 minutes beforehand. The wreath laying service generally takes anything between 5-10 minutes. Those who attend form up in pairs and march up to the Cenotaph. Andrew Magro (Treasurer) will then read out a short history on one of the Maltese WWI soldiers. We then play the Last Post, have one minute silence then the Reveille is played. On ANZAC DAY, the Maltese contingent meet up at Chifley Square at around 10:30 - 11:00 am to get ready to march in formation. We generally start marching at about 12:30pm. We form up in three rows following behind the three flags, Maltese, Australian and the British flag. We do make sure any ex-service personnel present lead the group.

The RSL Maltese Sub-branch of South Australia invites the members of the Maltese community of Adelaide to participate in the ANZAC DAY dawn ceremony which will be held at the Prospect Memorial Gardens, Wilcox Avenue, Prospect at 6 am on the 25 April 2019. The president of the branch, Chev. Charles Farrugia and the Hon Consul for Malta Frank Scicluna will lay a wreath at the foot of the Maltese memorial which is situated in this garden of remembrance.



Dan ir-ritratt juri lill-Kav Joe M Attard waqt Att Penitenzjali li l-Fondazzjoni Gwanni Pawlu t-Tieni organizzat fil-Knisja ta' San Gakbu Victoria fl-okkażjoni tal-14-il sena mill-mewt ta' dan il-Papa Pollakk li matulu nqraw poeziji tal-awtur dwar ir-Randan b'riflessjoni minn Fr Joe Cardona u siltiet mużikali fiq il-pjanu minn Mro Stephen Attard.

LOCAL HISTORY

IT-TERRAMAXKA – THE STREET ORGAN

The word *terramaxka* comes from the Maltese words *kitarra magica*, which means, magical guitar. In English, this instrument, is given a variety of names including, street organ, crank organ, barrel organ, fair organ and so forth. Street organs were imported in Malta from European countries such as France and Switzerland during the late nineteenth century.

A huge diversity of these organs could be found in Malta. The most common terramaxka was a very light weight organ usually hung

round the neck of the busker, and rested on a small pole. These were operated using punched cards. All genres of music were played including the tango, operas, polka and waltzes. Some organs were operated by a crank turned by hand. Others were larger, usually decorated with flags and small wooden statues, these were driven by a donkey or the owner himself and attracted many young children. Similar to nowadays jukeboxes, were the coin-operated organs, called café organs, which were more commonly found in cafés and pubs popular to sailors. Finally, there were also terramaxkas found in homes of wealthy people. These organs used to be richly ornamented with gold and precious stones.

The terramaxkas were very common in the Maltese islands and were frequently exhibited to the public in local festas where the noisy bands were out of the way. Unfortunately, these marvellous instruments have long been gone, some sold to Americans and others were broken. Luckily, we have the only terramaxka left on the Maltese Islands to bring back the memories of our ancestors.

Mari Van Rooy www.terramaxka.com

It is up to us really to keep promoting and passing on what makes us 'Maltese'. Our culture will only die out if we let it.

Keep on supporting this journal in order to preserve what our forbearers have passed on to us for generations.

Looking forward to see you for the next edition