

# MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

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The journal of the Maltese Diaspora

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## Australian Cuties



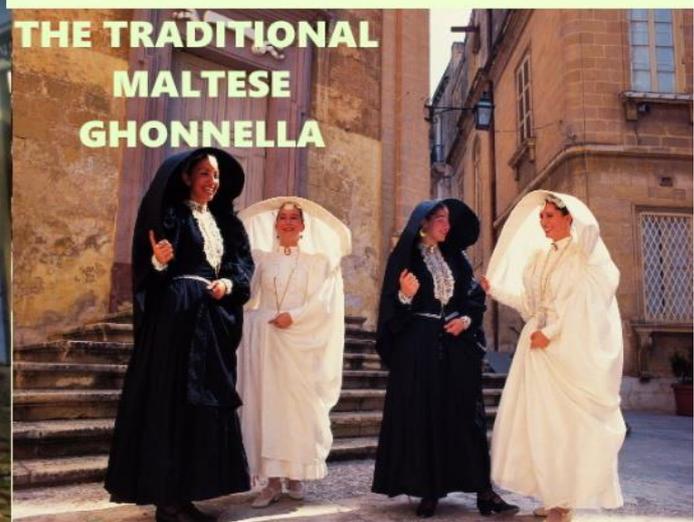
*All I want  
for Christmas  
is  
Nanna's Imbuljuta  
See recipe inside*



CHRISTMAS  
IN VALLETTA



## Maltese living Abroad



THE TRADITIONAL  
MALTESE  
GHONNELLA

## Istrina will go ahead, President George Vella says



Photo: DOI - Clifton Fenech



**Sick people do not choose when they need help, President George Vella says, insisting that L-Istrina serves as an occasion for unity despite the political turmoil.**

**by Karl Azzopardi - KARL is an IGM press awards (Human Stories) winner of 2019**

President George Vella has said that the yearly fund raiser, L-Istrina, will go ahead despite the on-going political turmoil.

“Sick people do not choose when they need help”, President George Vella said. Vella and his wife were visiting the Public Broadcasting Services, where they met with the board of directors, the management and workers of the national broadcaster.

Following the visit, an agreement was reached between the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF) and the Public Broadcasting Services (PBS), where the plan for this year’s edition of L-Istrina was formulated.

The agreement was signed by former Labour MEP Marlene Mizzi representing the MCCFF and PBS CEO Charles Dalli.

PBS Chairman Tonio Portuguese expressed his delight at the agreement, stating that the national broadcaster has a role in social aspects.

President Vella also stressed that the PBS must inform its viewers in a critical and objective manner with the “utmost responsibility”.

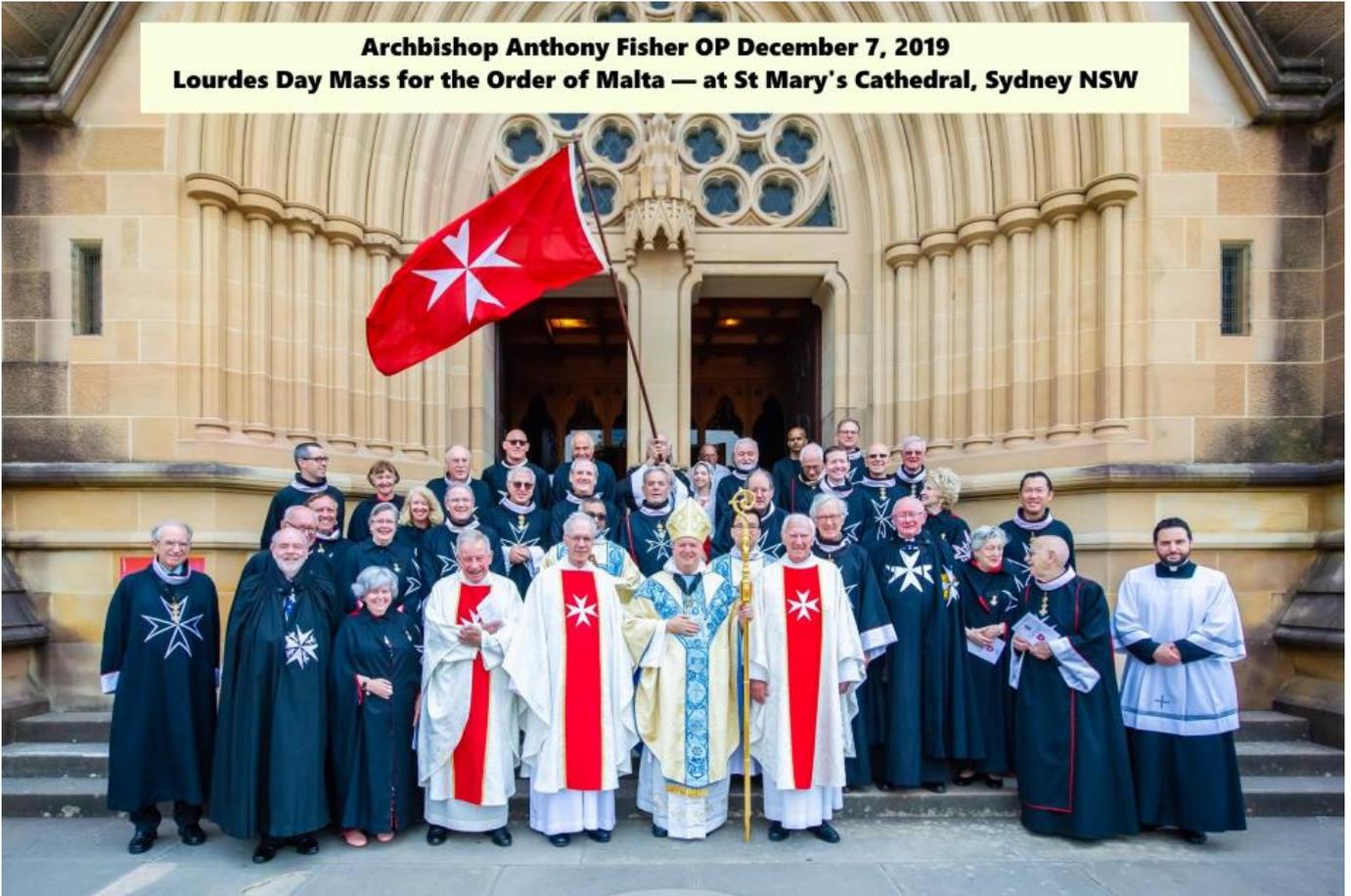
The annual fundraiser will go ahead as in previous years on the 26 December.

“When the sick are involved, we all have to come together and show our collective effort despite what the country is passing through,” Vella stated.

Send us your comments, stories and  
articles to share with other readers  
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**Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP December 7, 2019  
Lourdes Day Mass for the Order of Malta — at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney NSW**



**MALTESE-CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWS  
Melita S.C. Member's Christmas Dinner Dance  
8 December 2019 - the Consulate-General of Malta to Canada, Dr Raymond Xerri  
attended the Melita Soccer Club Member's Christmas Dinner Dance  
at the Rizzo Banquet Hall in Etobicoke. A great evening, excellent food and a good crowd.**





**Bethlehem**  
f'Għajnsielem 2019

| DECEMBER 2019   |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Friday, 13th    | 3.00pm – 8.00pm  |
| Saturday, 14th  | 4.30pm - 8.00pm  |
| Sunday, 15th    | 2.30pm - 7.30pm  |
| Wednesday, 18th | 9.30am - 12.00pm |
| Saturday, 21st  | 4.30pm - 8.00pm  |
| Sunday, 22nd    | 2.30pm – 7.30pm  |
| Wednesday, 25th | 3.30pm – 8.00pm  |
| Thursday, 26th  | 2.30pm - 7.30pm  |
| Saturday, 28th  | 4.30pm - 8.00pm  |
| Sunday, 29th    | 2.30pm – 7.30pm  |
| JANUARY 2020    |                  |
| Wednesday, 1st  | 3.30pm - 8.00pm  |
| Sunday, 5th     | 2.00pm - 8.00pm  |

Live nativity village spread over 20,000sqm

For more information call +356 21561515  
or visit [facebook.com/bethlehem.ghajnsielem](https://facebook.com/bethlehem.ghajnsielem)

Thousands of visitors are expected to attend this year's edition of Bethlehem f'Għajnsielem in the island of Gozo, Malta. .

The nativity village which is celebrating its 11th anniversary, will open on Friday. Just a couple of minutes' walk from Mgarr Harbour, the

village aims to recreate the nativity scene in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago as if you were really.

Attractions include a fisherman's port, a 30-metre suspended rope bridge which visitors can cross to take a trip along a 'river' on a Maltese boat, as well as a bakery, blacksmith, carpenter, a wine tavern, an open-air market and an inn. There is also a picnic area.

The main attraction, however, is the crib, with baby Jesus in the caring hands of Mary assisted by Joseph. More than 150 actors in full costume bring the village to life each year.

Bethlehem f'Għajnsielem will remain open until January 5.

## MDINA AFTER DARK



For such a small island, Malta sure packs a lot in. You've got beaches, lovely harbour towns, and enough centuries-old sights to keep you busy for weeks.

And when it comes to history, Malta is up there with Italy and Greece.

The island boasts so many sights, it's like a vast open-air museum. Nowhere more so than Mdina, as this stunning city is shown by drone photographer [Neil Camilleri](#) show.

The so-called Silent City is a great example of an ancient town and is considered one of the finest in Europe.

Most people visit Mdina during the day but many are discovering Mdina's beauty at night.

The Silent City really lives up to its name after dark, according to [Visit Malta](#).

The best time to visit Mdina at night is when there's a full moon as the added light helps to bring the city to life. You don't even need to spend any money. Just have a quiet wander around Mdina's narrow streets and enjoy the peace and quiet. Or see if you can spot any of the many ghosts that are believed to inhabit the buildings.

One woman wrote: 'Visited earlier this month, went again at night with friends and it was so atmospheric. The view from the walls was fabulous, you can see much of the island and as it was quite dark, all the lights were on down below.'

'In the hot weather, I recommend an evening visit, much cooler and a lot fewer people, no horses and carriages. Another posted: 'Mdina is a must see if visiting Malta, go as late as you can to avoid the crowds.'

'It's narrow streets and honey coloured buildings seem to whisper history to you as you pass by at night. Another TripAdvisor reviewer added: 'If it wasn't for the electric lights you might believe you had travelled back to medieval times.'

'Day or night, Mdina has a magical quality, and that's what makes it one of my favourite places on the island.'

## 13 December - Republic Day 2019 | Honours and Awards



Photo : DOI - Omar Camilleri

### NATIONAL ORDER OF MERIT COMPANION

#### KARMENU VELLA KOM

Born in Zurrieq in 1950, Karmenu Vella graduated in Architecture and Civil Engineering from the University of Malta, and later obtained a Master of Science in Tourism Management from the University of Sheffield. Vella served and contributed to the Maltese democratic process for over four decades.

### HONORARY OFFICER

#### PROF. JOVAN KURBALIJA UOM Prof.

Jovan Kurbalija has a professional and academic background in international law, diplomacy, and information

technology. He has been a pioneer in the field of cyber diplomacy since 1992 when he established the Unit for Information Technology and Diplomacy at the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies in Malta. Prof. Kurbalija is the Founding Director of DiploFoundation and the Head of the Geneva Internet Platform.

**PROF. RAYMOND MANGION MOM** Raymond Mangion was born in Hamrun in 1959. He was a script-writer for rediffusion and radio at a very young age. In 1978, he was the first person in the history of broadcasting in Malta to initiate a long series about the Maltese towns and villages and about Maltese biographies. In 1981, he started criss-crossing Malta to conserve for posterity the Maltese nation's collective memory. His work now consists in the conservation of hundreds of memories. In the same year, he assisted the then President of Malta Dr Anton Buttigieg in the writing of his auto- biography 'Il-Mingel tal-Gwerra'.

**TONY ZAHRA MOM** Tony Zahra was born in Sliema in 1945 and he is currently the President of the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association. Zahra is considered one of the pioneers of the Maltese tourism industry and throughout his career he has owned and managed tour operating companies in the UK and Holland, a Destination Management company, hotels and other accommodations in Malta. He started his business career at the age of 18, investing in a car hire company.

### HONORARY MEMBER

**PROF. JOSEPH A BUTTIGIEG MOM (POSTHUMOUS)** Born in Hamrun in 1947, Professor Joseph A. Buttigieg completed his undergraduate work and a master's degree at the University of Malta. He earned a second postgraduate degree, a B.Phil from Heythrop College in Oxford, England and then migrated to the United States in order to pursue his Doctorate in English at the State University of New York where he earned his Ph.D in 1976 with a dissertation on aesthetics in James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. That same year he moved to Las Cruces, New Mexico, to teach at New Mexico State University. In 1979 he was naturalized as a US citizen.

### MIDALJA GĦALL-QADI TAR-REPUBBLIKA

**ANTHONY BEZZINA MQR** Anthony Bezzina was born in Paola, in 1948. He is a renowned entrepreneur and considered as a local leader in maritime affairs. He is highly respected in his locality for his contributions in the social and philanthropic spheres. After completing his studies, Bezzina joined his father in the family business. Showing initiative and maturity well beyond his years, he advanced through the ranks currently occupying the position of Director of all the companies forming part of Bezzina Group.

### FR ĠANMARI CAUCHI MQR

Can John Mary Cauchi, better known as Fr Ġanmari Cauchi was born in 1942 in Gharb, Gozo. In 1963, when he was 21 years of age, he moved to Brazil to pursue his studies in Theology. Archbishop José Maria Pires ordained Father Ġanmari Cauchi as a priest in the diocese of Paraiba in 1967 where he gave service for around 50 years. Father Cauchi was the Bishop of various parishes and he assisted farmers through an organization

of the Brazilian Catholic Church known as the Land Pastoral Commission whose aim is to help poor farming families to acquire a piece of land, often having lived on it for several years

**JOE GRECH MQR** Born in 1934 in Cospicua, Joe Grech is renowned for introducing songs in the Maltese Language to an international audience. Grech won the first Malta Song Festival in 1960 which was held at the Radio City Opera House in Hamrun with his own composition "Vola Uccellino". In 1962, he won again in the same Festival with the song "Żgħażaġħ Rebbieħa". In 1965, he was chosen to represent Malta in the Italian Festival of the town, Martina Franca. In 1967, Joe managed to establish himself as one of Malta's most popular pop singers with songs like "Il-Kaċċatur", "Il-Festa Tagħna", "Ku Klu Ku Klu", "Il-Lejla tal-Vitorja" and "Nhar San Girgor". Joe Grech managed to record four consecutive 45rpm records in less than two years. These records continued to increase the popularity of Joe both in Malta and amongst Maltese migrants abroad.

**LINO GRECH MQR (POSTHUMOUS)** Born in 1930 in Sliema, Lino Grech was a distinguished Maltese actor, director and writer of theatre works. Through his initiative, a number of drama schools were set up in Malta and he dedicated his life to promote drama and theatre.

**ALFRED C. SANT MQR** Alfred C. Sant was born in Mosta in 1945. He has always shown a keen interest in culture particularly in contemporary music. Over a period of fifty years, together with composer Ray Agius, Sant wrote a number of renowned pieces which became part of the Maltese folklore, namely 'L-Ewwel Tfajla li Ħabbejt', 'Computer', 'Sal-Aħħar', 'Fjura fil-Kantina', 'Fejn Thobb il-Qalb' and 'Dak Kien Żmien'.

**ATHLETES OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS MALTA MQR** The 28 athletes of Special Olympics Malta, who participated with different challenges in this year's Special Olympics held in Abu Dhabi, won 40 medals, 12 gold, 13 silver and 14 bronze in 9 different sport disciplines. Let personal challenges hold them back. Through their success, these athletes confirmed that they have all the necessary skills to compete with other athletes from around the world.

**LORANNE VELLA ZAHRA MQR** Lorraine Vella Zahra was born in Gozo in 1971. During her undergraduate project research in 1994, she isolated, identified and named a novel bacterium belonging to the genus Salmonella - abbreviated as Salmonella Gozo - in honour of the island where it was first isolated. She subsequently graduated with first class honours in pharmacy from the University of Malta's Faculty of Medicine and Surgery. Vella Zahra continued postgraduate research in medical microbiology at the University of Malta's Department of Pathology. Her work focused on clinical diagnosis of fungal infections, securing local project funding to support Maltese immuno-compromised patients with concomitant fungal disease. As a result, in 1995 she successfully established the first medical mycology laboratory for the clinical study, isolation and identification of pathogenic fungi.

**JOHN ZAMMIT MQR** Born in 1948, John Zammit is the current president of The Malta Cycling Federation. During his competitive career, not only did he represent Malta in some important events abroad, but he also had a three-year spell with Sicilian club GS Lampolet of Catania where he won numerous honours during those three years..

**ON HONORARY BASIS JOSÉ-MARÍA BALLESTER FERNANDEZ FONTES MQR**

José-María Ballester Fernandez Fontes was, until 2005, director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage of the Council of Europe. He has been responsible for the proclamation of the Camino de Santiago as the first

European cultural itinerary.

**ROLAND ORESTE CASSAR MQR (POSTHUMOUS)** Roland Oreste Cassar, was born in Egypt in 1934 where he lived until he was seventeen. At this young age, he left the country to pursue an aeronautical engineering degree in England. He stayed in Bristol for 13 years and there he was given an assignment to design the vertical tail section of the famous supersonic airplane, the Concorde.

**NATALIE LOUISA MARIA MUSCHAMP MQR** Natalie Muschamp is the managing director of Step up for Parkinson's. She originally studied dance in the Netherlands and has completed a Masters by research in dance studies in Malta. The first connection with Parkinson's disease (PD) was within Natalie's own family.



## MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

### The Journal of Maltese Living Abroad

Don't miss the next issue - Christmas Edition

*Participate by sending us Season's Greetings*





## TWINNING: MALTA AND MILLBRAE

Neville Mifsud

Mosta grove, Millbrae.

Credit: [www.ci.millbrae.ca.us](http://www.ci.millbrae.ca.us)

Millbrae is host to the largest population of emigrant Mostins, as the natives of Mosta are known in Maltese. At the request of this expatriate community, together with the efforts of the Millbrae City Council and under the auspices of the Sister Cities Initiative, various social and cultural exchanges have occurred over the years.

These exchanges began with visits by official representations of both city Councils to their sister cities but soon grew to include pen-pal programs wherein children in both cities are encouraged to discover the similarities and differences between their homes, as well as initiatives linking teachers, students, scouts, and even members of their respective philharmonic societies. As a testament to these links, every year student exchanges, or performances by cultural troupes or bands take place in their counterpart cities.

The respect between the two cities manifested itself over the years in a number of measures. Some of these signs of comradery include an original stone from the Mosta Rotunda belfry, which was a gift from the people of Mosta to those of Millbrae; the stone now lies in front of the Millbrae Town Hall, and a main street in central Mosta is named Millbrae Avenue. Furthermore, both localities now have respectively named groves with the city names of their counterparts. Trees are planted each time an official visit is made by Counsellors to their respective sister cities. It is here that the fruits of the relationship are enjoyed by members of the community seeking shade from their equally sunny climates.

The example of Mosta's sister city success set off a process of twinning across the Islands. We must appreciate how there is nothing quite like a good idea whose time has come — but moreover we as Maltese will remember where it all began!

Before 1996, the Maltese people were fairly unfamiliar with the idea of sister cities. It took a highly successful first connection between the city of Millbrae, California and Mosta on the Island of Malta to get the ball rolling.

Millbrae already had a sister city but on 8 April 1996 an agreement was signed between delegations from both cities in the Town Hall of Mosta. This signing was the beginning of a flourishing and positive relationship between the two cities and set the standard across the Maltese Islands for what a city twinning would be like.

There can be no doubt that this pairing has been a success; the question is rather what do the two municipalities have in common that drives the keen mutual interest shown by citizens and counsellors on both sides of the pond?

Geographically speaking, 8,9 miles separates the two. Millbrae being a part of the San Francisco area is perhaps more familiar on the map than is Mosta, though the most populous town on the Maltese Islands, an island nation in the Mediterranean Sea located approximately 6 miles south of Sicily. The distance between the two communities is bridged by the close human bonds of their inhabitants.

**Awguri u xewqat sbieh ghal Milied u Sena Gdida lil Frank u kull min jahdem ghal Maltese Newsletter ghall-artikoli sbieh u ta' interest li jkun fiha . Il-Milied it-Tajjeb u Sena mimlija gid u barka tal-Mulej. Miriam Belli Melbourne.**

## LIST OF TOWNS AND SISTER CITIES IN MALTA

The Republic of Malta has one sister city: Bainbridge Island, Washington, United States. In addition, a number of individual cities, towns and villages in Malta have sister cities abroad. In most cases, the association, especially when formalised by local government, is known as "town twinning" (though other terms, such as "partner towns" or "sister cities" are sometimes used instead), and while most of the places included are towns, the list also comprises villages, cities, districts, counties, etc. with similar links.

### **Attard**

Élancourt, France

Pieve Emanuele, Italy

### **Birkirkara**

Grosseto, Italy

### **Birgu**

Belvi, Italy

Saint-Tropez, France

### **Għajnsielem**

Bethlehem, Palestine

Tolfa, Italy

### **Għarb**

Castrolibero, Italy

Massafra, Italy

Torrent, Spain

Tortona, Italy

### **Għasri**

Ottenschlag, Austria

### **Gżira**

Wałbrzych, Poland

### **Hamrun**

Scilla, Italy

### **Kalkara**

Crespellano (Valsamoggia),

Italy

### **Kirkop**

Rousset, France

### **Marsa**

Bridgwater, England, United Kingdom

Marsaskala is a member of the Douzelage, a with:

### **Marsaxlokk**

Cadeo, Italy

### **Mellieħa**

Adenau, Germany

Ayia Napa, Cyprus

Cavriglia, Italy

### **Mgarr**

Mathi, Italy

### **Mosta**

Millbrae, United States

Ragusa, Italy

### **Munxar**

Ragalna, Italy

### **Nadur**

Troisvierges, Luxembourg

Žagarė (Joniškis), Lithuania

### **Paola**

Calcinaia, Italy

### **Pembroke**

Pembroke, Wales, United Kingdom

Pembroke Dock, Wales, UK

Roccalumera, Italy

### **Qala**

Malfa, Italy

Lanciano, Italy

Leni, Italy

Santa Marina Salina, Italy

### **Rabat**

Tarquinia, Italy

### **Saint Paul's Bay**

Agios Pavlos, Greece

### **San Ġwann**

Monreale, Italy

### **San Lawrenz**

Colle Umberto, Italy

### **Sannat**

Pisoniano, Italy

### **Santa Luċija**

Carlentini, Italy

Gabiano, Italy

Gusu District (Suzhou), China

### **Santa Venera**

Orvieto, Italy

### **Senglea**

Cassino, Italy

Zarasaj, Lithuania

### **Sliema**

Białystok, Poland

### **Swieqi**

Taormina, Italy

### **Tarxien**

Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria

### **Valletta**

Palermo, Italy

Piran, Slovenia

### **Victoria**

Nichelino, Italy

### **Xagħra**

Chevaigné, France

Kunszentmiklós, Hungary

Offida, Italy

### **Xewkija**

Castelvenere, Italy

Modica, Italy

Pachino, Italy

### **Xgħajra**

Colletorto, Italy

Pelplin, Poland

### **Żabbar**

Eschborn, Germany

Villabate, Italy

### **Żebbuġ**

Agira, Italy

### **Żebbuġ, Gozo**

Maletto, Italy

### **Żejtun**

Celano, Italy

Tocina, Spain

### **Żurrieq**

Angermünde, Germa

Borgo Maggiore



## **Nghidu kelma? Maltese language school alive and thriving in Sydney**

**'A much stronger  
connection to Malta'**

Printed in The Times of  
Malta 12/12/20

Jessica Arena

Students at the Maltese  
Language School of New  
South Wales, Sydney,  
Australia. Photo: Maltese  
Language School of NSW

The phrase *'tkellem bil-*

*Malti*' (speak in Maltese) can often be divisive and provocative but this is astutely not so for the Maltese Language School of New South Wales, in Sydney, Australia.

Founded in January 1999, the school has been operational for the majority of the last two decades and is currently educating about 60 students of a variety of ages.

Since restructuring in 2007, it has flourished to include three locations in New South Wales and is working on opening other campuses, school principle Mary Pace Feroud told *Times of Malta*.

"Our aim is to offer tuition based on modern methods, leading to the learning and practice of speaking, reading, writing and an in-depth knowledge of the language, history, culture and customs of the island of Malta," Ms Pace Feroud says.

New South Wales is home to around eight million people where just over 7,000 listed themselves as Maltese or having Maltese ancestry in the last census, the majority of whom reside in the Greater Sydney area. The school welcomes students of all ages, from age six to adults, which Ms Pace Feroud says show a lot of interest in staying connected to Malta.

"I'm happy to say that we have even welcomed students totally unconnected to Malta and who are interested in learning the language, sometimes even after visiting the island on holiday," she says.

The school is staffed entirely by native Maltese speakers and teachers have access to ongoing development courses through the NSW Federation of Community Languages as well as ongoing support from the NSW Education Department and the Maltese government.

"We want to encourage communication in Maltese within family members and between friends whether they live in Australia or in Malta," Ms Pace Feroud says.

Proficient students who would want to further their studies even have the opportunity to sit for a Higher School Certificate in Maltese language.

Natalie-Lisa Agius, 25, whose grandparents were born in Gozo, has been attending classes at the school for the past two years.

"My *nannu* is from Xewkija and my *nanna* from Xaghra," Ms Agius says. "I've never been to Malta but it's absolutely my dream to go there and feel more connected to my heritage and get the chance to meet my other family members."

Ms Agius adds that learning Maltese was rewarding but came with its own challenges, particularly having grown up speaking only English and having no one to practise conversations with at home.

"I think not being around those who speak Maltese often makes it hard for me to pick up but I am slowly getting the hang of it," Ms Agius remarks.

"I study as much as I can between my jobs and I have little notes in my phone when I have the spare time. I think if you put in the time and effort, it isn't any harder than learning another language."

The Maltese community in Australia is still very strong, Ms Agius notes, and there are still pockets of the community who speak primarily in Maltese. She hopes she will be proficient enough to join them soon.

“Learning the language makes me feel I have a much stronger connection to Malta,” Ms Agius admits. “I hope that more Australian-Maltese like myself join in and learn Maltese because the culture, the food and the history behind the language is amazing.”



## Service Dogs Malta Foundation

Our aim is to help people with a condition or a disability by providing them with a service dog that has been trained to overcome some of the difficulties they face on a day-to-day basis. Why Service Dogs? A service dog is the key to independence for many disabled people. Beyond opening doors and flicking light switches, dogs offer companionship and emotional support.

We aim to help:

- hearing impaired persons
- persons on the autistic spectrum; persons who are wheelchair bound or have mobility issues; individuals needing alert for conditions such as seizures and diabetes; individuals with

psychiatric conditions

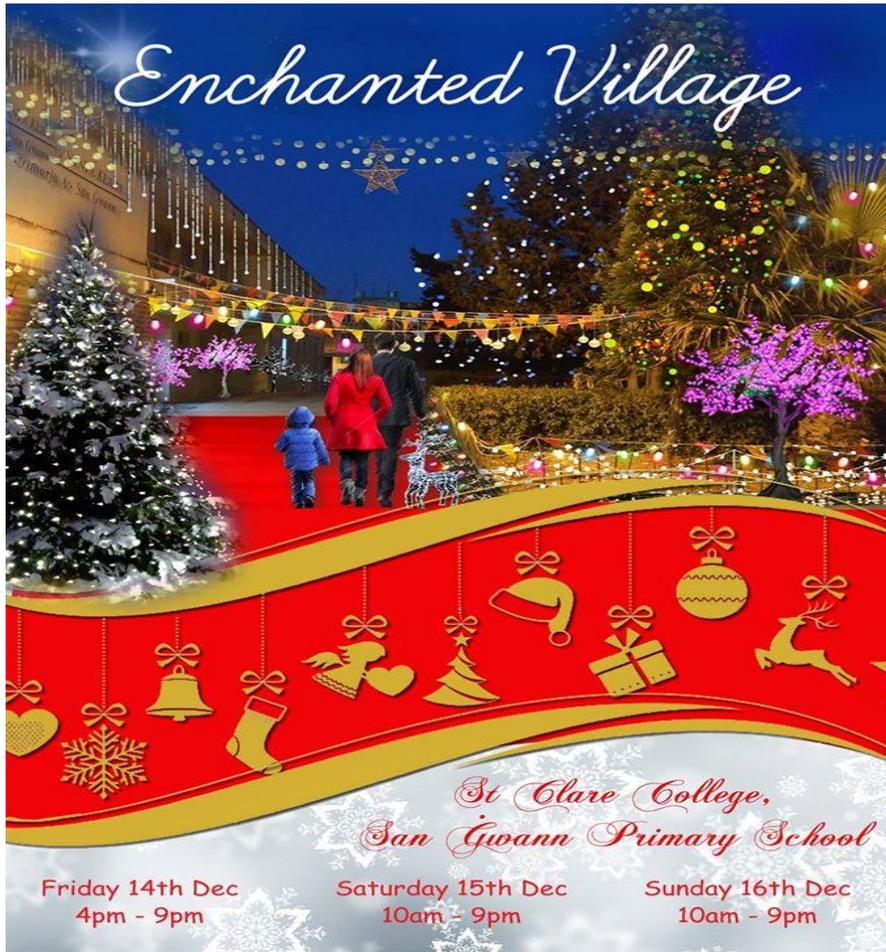
Our ultimate aim is to ensure that no person who could potentially benefit from a service dog is left without one. How does it work? Once a match has been made between a service dog and a person with a disability the service dog is given to the person free of charge (subject to terms and conditions) on condition that the dog will continue to be monitored on a yearly basis. It can take some time for a dog to be trained to meet the specific needs of a potential partner and the process can cost upwards of €15,000 per dog.



## IT-TENUR ZGHAZUGH ANGELO MUSCAT

It-Tenur zaghzugh Angelo Muscat ghmel success gewwa Kensington Londra fid- 9 ta' Novembru 2019 fejn kanta zewg solijiet bil-lingwa Armena waqt "Multinational tribute to Komitas" ipprezentat minn Klingen Choir and Cultural Association, taht id-Direzzjoni ta' Maestro Sipan Olah u il-pjanista Evgenia Terentieva. Hadu sehem diversi kantanti internazzjonali u attendew diversi ambaxxaturi u nies distinti fosthom l-Ambaxxatrici tal-Armenia.

Kif ukoll it-Tenur Angelo Muscat ma waqfx fir-rutina tijaw tal-kant minhabba li ftit wara li rega gie Malta kellu jkanta ghal Opening Ceremony ta' MEP Malta li kienet taht il-patrocinju tal- Eccellenza tieghu t-tabib George Vella President ta' Malta. It-Tenur kanta Lil Xulxin miktuba minn Diane Cutajar u Muzikata minn Dr. John Galea kif ukoll Ideale komposta minn Francesco Paolo Tosti akkumpanjat fuq il-pjanu minn John Cutajar.



This 3-day event will transform our school into an Enchanted Village. Apart from the stalls which will offer a unique shopping experience to all visitors, various activities for the whole family will take place throughout the whole weekend. Kids will have the opportunity to meet and take a photo with Santa, listen to animated stories and have fun in the kids' area. Our main stage will host a variety of Maltese talent to entertain you while treating yourselves to some traditional food and a perfect glass of mulled wine.

All this and much more during the first edition of Enchanted Village Entrance to this event is FREE.



**THE MALTESE  
 CENTRE  
 27-20 HOYT AVENUE  
 SOUTH  
 ASTORIA, NEW YORK  
 USA  
 SATURDAY  
 DECEMBER 14, 2019  
 AT 7.00 PM**

## Grandparents and grandchildren compete in Christmas confectionery



Photo: DOI - Clifton Fenech

Photo Clifton Fenech

About 60 grandparents and their grandchildren took part in a competition in the making of cakes and Christmas logs organised at the San Vincenz de Paule Residence and titled 'Tan-Nanna Helu Manna'.

First place in the cake competition went to grandma' Karmena Vassallo, with second place going to Mary Baldacchino and third place to Carmen Agius Delicata. In the contest for best Christmas log, first place went to grandma' Kathleen Mifsud, Doris Grech placing second and Maria Sant third.

The jury was made up of chefs Neil Darmanin, Anton B.

Dougall, Carmen Tedesco and Anton Baldacchino.



## MALTA UNION OF TEACHERS commemorates its 100th anniversary

The Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) has commemorated its 100th anniversary with a new monument at the Mall in Floriana. The monument depicts a seated girl reading a book, with an open door in the background, symbolising the concept of an

open mind with a thirst for education. The message from this monument is that education transforms a person and opens new doors. The monument is the work of artist Chris Ebejer and takes its place among several other monuments at the Mall garden in Floriana.

Union President Marco Bonnici stated that although the present situation is not normal, the inauguration of the monument has taken place in order to stress the union's collective commitment to push the country towards normality. Bonnici recalled the Malta Union of Teachers is the oldest union in Malta, having been set up in 1919. The MUT President added that the monument symbolises the way in which students should remain at the centre of the union, adding that it is not by chance the figure in the monument is female, as the nine other historic monuments in the Mall are all males who had an important role in history. President George Vella stated that teachers have a crucial role in society, as education is Malta's only resource.

**NEXT ISSUE OF THE MALTESE JOURNAL**

**THE CHRISTMAS SPECIAL EDITION**

**CHRISTMAS IN MALTA AND AROUND THE WORLD**

**Send us your contributions or messages**



## Is-Seher tal-Milied

Għal darb'ohra qiegħed nikteb  
f' dal-Milied xi ftit tal-vrus, ,  
għax dil-ġrajja ssahħarni –  
mill-qalb hierġa dawn il-ħsus!

It-Twelid tal-Bambin ċkejken  
'il fuq minn elfejn sen'ilu  
għadu l-qofol tal-istorja –  
il-ġnus qima jagħtu Lilu.

F'lejl kiesaħ, għeri u xitwi  
ried jitwieled dal-Bambin  
sabiex jifdi d-dinja kollha  
maħfra jagħti 'l-midinbin!

Biex ġie fostna xejn ma għażel  
xi palazz, jew xi dar kbira  
izda stalla bi ftit tiben,  
grotta mħarbta, żghira w fqira.

Biex ma jmutx mill-bard u l-kesħa  
kellu biss baqra u ħmara  
illi saħħnuh bin-nifs tagħhom –  
O x'kellha d-dinja tara!

Bil-mod l-għar beda jimtela  
bir-ragħajja u n-nagħġiet  
illi ġrew 'l hawnhekk bi ħġarhom  
f' dik il-ħemda, f' dak is-skiet.

F'ħin qasir id-dlam iċċarrat  
b'kant tal-aŋgli ferħanin  
illi dawlu s-Sema kollu  
biex isellmu lill-Bambin.

Qalb Marija u Gużepi  
imtlew b'ferħ ma jitfissirx  
li nħass mar-rkejjen kollha  
għalkemm forsi ma jidhirx!

O kemm kienet ixxurtjata  
din il-Belt ċkejka ta' Betlem  
fejn tal-ġnus ir-Re dlonk twieled –  
kulhadd lilu mar isellem!

Slaten għonja mill-bogħod terrqu  
għax riedu jiltaqgħu miegħu  
għaliex fehmu li dal-bniedem  
joqogħdu għall-Kelma tiegħu!

Halli niġu issa għalina!  
ngħarblu ftit dan il-Milied!  
Qegħdin nifhmu din il-ġrajja  
kemm għalina din xi swiet!

Kif qegħdin inhejju ruħna  
sabiex nilqgħu lill-Bambin!  
qegħdin nibnu l-Presepju  
bil-pasturi hekk helwin!

Qed immorru għan-Novena  
u nimxu wara l-Bambin,  
inkantaw il-Christmas carols  
mat-tfal tal-Mużew ċkejknin!

Jew inkella lkoll medhija  
wara x-xiri tar-rigali  
u fil-ġenb qegħdin inwarrbu  
dat-Twelid qaddis, speċjali!

Dal-Milied, O Bambin ċkejken  
ejja twieled fil-qalb tagħna;  
saltan, għammar ġewwa djarna  
u qatt la tabbandunana!

**Kav Joe M Attard**  
**Victoria 2019**



## MARVELLOUS MALTESE TRADITIONS

Crèches, nativities, or cribs – whatever your preferred nomenclature, there's no doubt that these advent-themed displays play a major part in Christmas celebrations all over the world. And yet, the true masters of the Christmas crib are undoubtedly the Maltese. Found on every street corner across the city, these nativity scenes are among the most popular and important Maltese traditions.

Given that it was settled by ancient Phoenicians, played a part in the Odyssey and was supposedly home to St. Paul, Malta excels at all things old fashioned. It's only logical that the Christmas crib (or presepju as it's known) has found a permanent home at the Inquisitor's Palace. They are not the only unique Maltese traditions, though; visitors should also try Imbuljuta tal-Qastan, drunk once a year after Midnight Mass.



### PRESEPU -CHRISTMAS CRIB

The Christmas Crib's origins can be traced directly back to the early 17th century, when Dominican friars in Rabat set up their own, local crib display. A tradition imported from neighbouring Naples and Sicily, the very first cribs were supposedly imported by noblemen, though they weren't immediately embraced by locals; rumour has it they many were burned as firewood. But despite that failing vote of confidence, it didn't take long for the tradition to take root, and for the cribs to adopt their own, uniquely local appearance.

Visually, Maltese presepju differ from generic nativity scenes in their depictions of the Maltese landscape. Mary, Joseph, and Jesus may be found within a manger, but here it's surrounded by rocky stones, porous caves, Maltese flour windmills, and ancient ruins – all signifiers of the traditional Maltese landscape, in other words. Aside from the setting, the figurines in the cribs, called pasturi, were also traditional, and produced by Maltese artisans out of sculpted and painted clay.

### IMBULJUTA TAL-QASTAN – CHESTNUT DRINK

While no Christmas in Malta would be complete without meandering amongst these elaborate displays, the small island is also home to a number of other offbeat traditions that travellers should do their best to discover. On Christmas Eve, for instance, a sweet “soup” of chocolate, chestnuts, and orange peel known as Imbuljuta tal-Qastan is enjoyed after the Midnight Mass (instant cocoa mix it certainly isn't). The Christmas Eve Procession that takes to Malta's streets – with a life-sized baby Jesus in tow – is another colourful local tradition, while the Maltese “Sermon of the Child” sees pint-sized speakers address those attending Midnight Mass. But among these Maltese traditions, few are as ancient and beloved as the Christmas crib. Keep an eye out if you're visiting during the advent – it shouldn't be long before you spot one.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups dried peeled chestnuts
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup cocoa powder
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 6 cloves
- ½ teaspoon spice blend (cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, etc.)
- Rind of 1 mandarine
- 4 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3 tablespoons sour cream (optional)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wash and soak the chestnuts for at least 8 hours.
2. Drain and put the chestnuts in a pan. Add 4 cups of water, cinnamon, cloves, cocoa powder, sugar, spice blend and mandarine rind cut in small pieces.
3. Bring to a boil and simmer until the chestnuts are tender, about 1 hour.
4. At the end of cooking, break the chestnuts into small pieces with a large spoon without crushing them.
5. Dissolve the cornstarch in a little water and add to slightly thicken the sauce.
6. Serve hot in a cup or a bowl.





## **MALTESE LIVING ABROAD**

**MARIANNE CURLEY** is a Maltese-Australian author best known for her *Guardians of Time Trilogy* and *Old Magic* books. She has had to overcome tremendous difficulties that are of inspiration to many.

My Dad was born in Gozo and moved to Australia when he was only 15. He eventually settled on the Hawkesbury River in New South Wales. He returned to Gozo when the war ended and met my mother. They married within three

months and moved to Australia. (Photo) **Marianne Curley and her family**

Mum became homesick and they moved back. But Dad was a farmer and longed for the open spaces and green fields of Australia. In August of 1957, as a family of five, they returned to the Hawkesbury River property. Two years later I was born.

My teen daughters asked me to write a book for their age. I had attempted to write commercial romance, with no success. I was about to start another romance when my thirteen-year-old daughter complained there were not enough books for her age to read. Her sister, older by one year, agreed and that is how I started writing books for young adults.

I found I loved writing for young adults. It was challenging and exciting with more complex plot lines and themes I could explore, and young adult readers appeared to enjoy my writing style.

I find inspiration almost anywhere if I'm looking for it. I listen to music, look through photographs or glance at passing scenery in a car or train. Our world is full of ideas. They surround us wherever we go.

The plot for *Old Magic*, my first published novel, came to me while I was having lunch in a park with friends on Dorrigo Mountain. Our children were walking across a field together when a mist rolled in from behind them. I watched as the mist caught up and continued to roll past, making the children almost invisible. It struck me how magical the scene was.

My readers are my proudest achievements, through their emails and messages, that have given many reasons to be most proud of them. My readers have let me know how my books, the characters and stories within, have affected them, inspired them, assisted them in tough times, and changed their lives. Surviving my type of cancer was a miracle that I thank God for every day. The odds were not in my favour, I had a 30-35 per cent chance of surviving, and without a successful transplant I would have died within two months of my diagnosis. I am thankful for my sister Therese for giving me her stem cells and for the prayers and support I received from my friends and relatives.

I could not write for years. Weeks after surviving my transplant, and on the way to recovering, I sustained a fall in my hospital room, that broke my back. My bones were weak from the chemotherapy, my spine crumbled, and I lost several vertebrae. My spine wasn't strong enough for any supportive treatment. The pain when I moved was unimaginable. Because of this, I was unable to write again for a few years.

Only focus on today. Whatever you are facing, life can become complex and at times overwhelming. You think you can't cope. Don't think of all you have yet to do, just think about what you have to do today. Only today. Tomorrow will come, there's no doubt about that. Think of what you must do tomorrow, when it is tomorrow.

I dream of visiting Malta. I had planned to visit Malta as a reward after my cancer battle, but by then I'd had the fall which made travelling difficult. So sadly, I've never had the chance to visit Malta, which just makes me miss it more. My hope is that one day I can overcome my physical difficulties enough for a long visit.



## Maltese Living Abroad: the vice-president of National Geographic



Angelo Grima talks about his job and his love for  
02Malta

LifestyleMaltese abroadUSASociety  
Claudia Scavuzzo

*Angelo Grima is a Maltese born in the United States into a family from Nadur, Gozo who had emigrated to New York more than 60 years ago. Mr Grima is one of the Maltese who have made a name*

*for themselves in the US. He joined the National Geographic Society in 1992 and is now its Vice-President.*

My family emigrated to New York the year before I was born. They wanted to try and make a better living. In the decade after World War II, there was not a lot of opportunity in Malta, particularly in Gozo where my parents are from. My father had been in the British merchant marine during the war, and he had been to New York a couple of times.

I chose to study law because I wanted to use it in a practical way to achieve some good. I was interested in both philosophy graduate school and law school. It was a close call, but law eventually won out.

My job at National Geographic is great. There's never a dull moment, whether it is developing a partnership to help us fund an expedition to Mount Everest or launching a new educational initiative. The thing I enjoy the most is helping to get the message out about the wonders of the planet and the increasing need to protect it. I am proud of helping to make a positive difference for our explorers in the field and, through their work, for the world at large.

I love going back to Malta to visit. I have been back at least twenty times over the years. I still have relatives and friends there, and it is a beautiful country. Although the people I know are all in Gozo, I make it a point to stay at least a few days on the main island and see as much as I can. We still have the house that my mother grew up in in Nadur, which makes things easy once we're there. The challenge is finding enough time to make the trip.

BirdLife Malta are doing a great job. I am also really pleased with the greater attention being paid to preserving the distinctive and historically important things in Malta, as well as the advanced recycling and conservation efforts.

I became a Maltese citizen last year. But I don't intend to move there permanently - my family and most of my friends are here. I certainly would like to maintain a residence in Malta and look forward at some point to spending more time there and learning how to speak the language.

I regret not learning Maltese. My parents spoke Maltese with each other all the time, but they always spoke English with us. I don't blame them at all. At times it was difficult having a name like mine growing up here, and I think they were concerned that not being able to speak English well would have made it worse. Still, I regret that we did not speak Maltese more when we had the chance.





## Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto forced to close

**Society played integral role in lives of Maltese migrants settling in Canada**

The Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto building has now been sold. Inset: Richard Cumbo. Photos: Richard Cumbo

It was once in charge of relief for the besieged Maltese during World War II and its float for Toronto's centennial parade won first prize.

But nearly a century since its foundation, the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto has had to close down as the Maltese community in the 'junction' neighbourhood continues to shrink.

Richard Cumbo, a life member of the society and curator of a Maltese-Canadian museum, told *Times of Malta* that its building in the junction had been sold. The 97-year-old society was founded in 1922 to promote the establishment of a Maltese Roman Catholic church.

Its goal was achieved during the economic depression with the building of the first St Paul the Apostle church in 1930. According to Mr Cumbo, the society played an integral role in the lives of Maltese migrants settling in Canada and it was the main voice of the Maltese in Toronto for decades until more clubs were founded in the 1960s.

During World War II, the society's president, Angelo Cutajar, and its committee looked after the Malta Relief Fund. When a new and larger church was required by the community, the founders and members chipped in. A new church was built in 1956 and the society kept financially supporting it until the late 1960s.

It was during this time that other Maltese associations took root in the neighbourhood. But while these clubs could purchase their own buildings it took many years for the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto to do so since it had been investing its money in St Paul's.

As the years rolled by it became increasingly difficult to find volunteers to serve the club as the Maltese community aged and shrunk and no new migrants moved there from Malta. Mr Cumbo, who served on the executive committee for over 35 years, noted that another club that suffered the same fate was the Maltese Canadian Club of London, Ontario. It closed down in December last year.

Despite all this, the Maltese still get together for various events, organised by other clubs such as the Gozo Club of Toronto, the Maltese Canadian Federation, the Malta Band Club in Mississauga and the Melita Soccer Club. (First printed in the Times of Malta)

According to Mr Cumbo, the heart of the community in the 'junction' remains St Paul the Apostle's Maltese parish, which is administered by the Missionary Society of St Paul since 1999. Previously, the parish had been run by the Franciscan Fathers of the Malta Province.

The church's complex also hosts a Maltese-Canadian museum, curated by Mr Cumbo himself, where information about the Maltese-Canadian community has been preserved for posterity and will, hopefully, outlive the clubs.

## Maltese owners turn down \$2 million offer to sell their 'pastizzi' shop in Toronto



Like Malta, the price of property in Toronto has exploded and large developers are trying to buy up rows of small businesses to change them into large, luxurious apartment blocks and high-end shops. As a result of this, many residents with an average income and small shop-owners are being pushed out of the area.

However, the Buttigieg family, which has been managing the Malta Bake Shop for the last 40 years, has refused to budge. Interviewed by the newspaper, Antoinette, who manages the shop with

her husband Charlie, said that she would not know what to do if she had to sell their shop, because more than a shop, it is their living room and their clients are part of the family.

Maltese have had an uncanny ability to spread across the globe and set up shop, serving our greatest food to all four corners of the world. Canada is no different, with Toronto's 'Malta Bake Shop' featuring some of our proudest dishes getting the love it deserves in a facebook video that's already racked up 170,000 views.

A little taste of nostalgia, the 36 year-old bakery serves pastizzi. But Pizelli fans look away because Malta Bake Shop only serves a ricotta and a minced meat pastizz. Vegetarians may actually be a little bit more hopefully, with the shop preparing veggie pastizzi on order.

Timpana, another one of crowning achievements, looks right at home in wintery Canada. While an almond tart and *qaghaq tal-ghasel* means that the bakery serves our favourite lenten and Christmas treats all year round!

In 2018 TVM had met with the Buttigieg family at their Toronto shop. See what they had to say in that interview: **Maltese in Toronto eat pastizzi at baptisms and funerals**

The sense of community among the Maltese can be felt everywhere that the former President Marie Louise Coleiro Preca has visited in 2018, and she confirmed this once again when she dedicated Sunday to meeting up with Maltese emigrants and their families in Toronto

The largest Maltese community in Canada can be found in this city.

The President paid tribute to the Maltese who decided to go to the other side of the Atlantic in the last part of the 19th century, when they emigrated to Canada. During a symbolic ceremony at Malta Park, the President raised the Maltese flag, so that it can fly over the area where the Maltese built families, businesses and even founded organisations. In fact, the area of Dundas has come to be known as "Little Malta"

The first group of Maltese emigrants arrived in Toronto as far back as 1826. Many of them settled down in the area known as The Junction. It is estimated that the Maltese population here in Toronto numbers more than 40,000, 17,000 of whom are first generation.

The Maltese have continued to keep their weekly appointment, and after hearing Mass at the St Paul Apostle Church, they stop for *pastizzi* at the nearby Malta Bake Shop. Managed by Charlie and Antoinette Buttigieg for the last 35 years, the success of the Gozitan couple has led to them distributing the famous Maltese delicacy, as well as other Maltese food and pastries, to 33 supermarkets throughout Canada and the US.

Antoinette said that "when they are born they come from the baptism in Church and take *pastizzi* with them for their party, and when they die there is the funeral home, and after the viewing they come here to take *pastizzi* for when they gather together to pay their respects to the person who died."

Further up, one finds the shop Malta's Finest. Julian Zammit told TVM that although he has had the shop for 21 years, his *pastizzi* are still popular.



Julian explained, “these are my cheese *pastizzi* that we make. We have the ones with corned beef, peas and onions. We have the meat *qassatat* (pies) here. We make cookies and *qaghq tal-ghasal* (honey rings) and *biskuttelli* (biscuits)”.

The President also visited Nannu’s Pastizzi, owned by Chris Zammit, which although located outside of Toronto, is also gradually achieving success.

“It’s not that popular because we are the only Maltese cuisine in Mississauga, but everybody that seems to come in and try it, they sure come back”.



**MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER**  
The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora  
IF YOU ARE A MALTESE CITIZEN LIVING IN MALTA OR LIVING ABROAD - THIS IS YOUR JOURNAL

**IF YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL  
SEND IT TO US**



Amy Buhagiar (NSW) was awarded The School Principle’s Certificate whilst achieving Academic Excellence in Japanese. Amy studies German apart from other academic subjects, takes vocal lessons, whilst training hard in Martial Arts of Wing Chung.

**The Maltese Canadian Federation**  
Will Be Holding  
**The Annual Seniors Christmas Dinner**  
On Sunday, 15th December 2019  
At 1:30 PM - the Depiro Hall  
St Paul The Apostle Church.  
Tickets Are \$10.00 Each

|                             |              |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Joe Sherri                  | 416-571-3944 |
| Malta Band Club             | 905-890-8507 |
| Paul Portelli               | 416-830-0198 |
| St. Paul The Apostle Church | 416-767-7054 |



## Christmas contest Models of Malta 2019 – and the winners are ...

75 contestants in total took part in the Christmas contest Models of Malta 2019, organized by Ivan Gaffiero. Many took part -from toddlers to grandparents.

Yesterday, the final was held in Montekristo, where Salaya Agius from Floriana won the title of Miss Teen Christmas, Donna Micallef from Birkirkara won the title of Miss Christmas, Michelle Vella a mother of five, won the title of Mrs. Christmas while Josef Grixti from St Venera won the title of Mister Christmas. Philis Bonnano Azzopardi, 62, won the title of The Christmas Model grandmas

Chrizaya Attard and Rebecca Chircop won the title Little / Junior Miss Christmas and Medision Col won the title Junior Mister Christmas. During the contest there were several surprises in store for many going through a difficult time.



## CAPPELLA SANCTÆ CATHARINÆ

*Then & Now*

*Cappella Sanctae Catharinae*, Malta's only male choir, was set up in 2009 by a small group of musicians sharing a common passion for late Renaissance and early Baroque polyphonic music.



The original motive for setting up the choir was as a performance project in connection with the restoration of the Church of St. Catherine of Italy in Valletta. The restoration of the church having been completed, and following much critical acclaim, the original members took the decision to make the choir a permanent fixture giving regular performances in various venues across Malta.

The choir remains unique not only for being the only all-male choir in Malta, but also for presenting early polyphonic music in its original setting. Over the years, CSC has performed together with Dame Emma Kirkby OBE and the Valletta International Baroque Ensemble (VIBE) in 2012, and in the 2013 edition of the Valletta International Baroque Festival. In 2015, the choir collaborated with renowned early music ensemble Ludus Venti to present a programme in commemoration of the 450th anniversary of the Great Siege of Malta, 1565. During this concert, the choir brought back to life a piece of music written specifically during and about the Great Siege. In 2016, CSC was invited by the Valletta Local Council to present a concert of sacred music commemorating the 450th anniversary of the founding of the city. In 2018 the choir was invited to be part of the *Music in Malta: From Prehistory to*

*Vinyl* project organised by *Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti*. The choir is celebrating its 10th anniversary this season with a choral tour in Rome. In April 2020 the choir will be doing a choral pilgrimage under the title *7 Churches*, a project commissioned by the Valletta Cultural Agency.

The choir is also committed towards preserving and promoting intangible heritage, and is currently engaged in a project to preserve old Maltese carols before they are lost forever. CSC also seeks to collaborate with other organisations, such as *Din l-Art Helwa* and the *Notarial Archives Foundation* to help restore heritage and bring it back to life through music. In doing so CSC brings music closer to the community, while promoting excellence in music. The choir is also engaged in the *Maltese Carols Project* - an ongoing research project to salvage our intangible musical heritage.

### THE MALTESE JOURNAL Maltese Living Abroad

- are proud of their homeland
- are proud of the Maltese language, history and culture
- are interested in the political, social and religious arena
- are concerned when a crisis arises and pray for a solution to be found
- like to be accepted and treated as extended members of the Maltese community
- want to be given all the privileges when they visit Malta for a holiday or their relatives
- receive acceptance, appreciation and recognition of their efforts to make a good name for their country
- proud of the quiet achievers of Maltese living abroad
- recognise the Maltese Journal as the link between Maltese living in Malta and Abroad

### MALTESE TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL

These are the opening stanzas of the very popular Maltese Christmas carol written by the Jesuit Andrea (Indri) Schembri in the second half of the nineteenth century for Maltese migrants who settled in North Africa.

The melody was probably based on an already known older melody. The carol is always sung by children on Christmas Eve during the processions of the child Jesus organised by the Society of Christian Doctrine (MUSEUM).

#### IL-BENNIENA TA' GESU BAMBIN

*Ninni la tibkix iżjed, Ninni Ġesu Bambin,  
Hallih għalina l-biki, Għax aħna l-midinbin  
Ejjew ejjew ja Anġli, Mis-sema mija, mija,  
Taraw 'l Alla li ħalaqkom, Bambin ġewwa l-fisqija.  
Ejjew, taraw b'għajnejkom lil dan Alla tal-ħniena,  
Bambin sabiħ u ħelu, ininni ġol-benniena  
Ninni, la tibkix iżjed.....  
Hallu ragħajja ħallu, il-merħla tan-nagħġiet,  
tibzġħux min jindokraham, Hemm l-Anġli tas-smewwiet.  
Hallu, u ejjew taraw, Fil-Grotta l-ġid li ġiena;  
Hawn Alla bambin ċkejken, ininni ġol benniena.  
Ninni, la tibkix iżjed....*



The Gozo Youth Orchestra in collaboration with  
7 Star Pyramid Productions and Festivals Malta  
proudly presents

**Christmas rocks the Astra** 2ND EDITION

A Rock Orchestral Tribute to  
**THE BEATLES**  
Plus Seasonal (Rock) Favourites

Featuring:  
**CASH & BAND**  
GOZO YOUTH ORCHESTRA  
under the Direction of Joseph Grech  
GOZO COMMUNITY CHOIR  
& PICCOLE STELLE CHOIR

Special Guests:  
**Cheryl Balzan, Sarah Bonnici,  
Kurt Cassar & Ludwig Galea**

**Astra Theatre, Victoria, Gozo**  
Friday, 27th December 2019, 20.00 hrs.

Ticket Helpline: Astra Bar - 21 556 256 More info on [www.teatruastra.org.mt](http://www.teatruastra.org.mt)

Event supported by

Wara s-suċċess li kisbu s-shows orkestrali 'QUEEN meets COLDPLAY' u 'Not Just..The WALL', issa l-Gozo Youth Orchestra taħt id-direzzjoni ta' Mro Dr Joseph Grech u s-7SPP, bil-koperazzjoni sħiħa tal-Festivals Malta u Christmas in Gozo, se jipprezentaw show Rock Orkestrali fuq il-palk tat-Tejtru Astra Victoria fis-27 ta' Diċembru, show unika u esklussiva mlaqqma Christmas rocks the Astra and The Beatles (it-tieni edizzjoni).

Għal xi wħud mill-parreċipanti din se tkun it-tieni esperjenza. Mal-orkestra din id-darba se tingħaqad il-Cash and Band flimkien ma' għadd ta' solisti magħrufa li jinkludu lil Keith Anthony, Kurt Cassar, Ludwig Galea, Cheryl Balzan, u Sarah Bonnici.

Il-"Gozo Community Choir" u l-Kor "Piccole Stelle" se jieħdu sehem ukoll.

## JAMES VELLA BARDON

On 26 November Maltese author James Vella-Bardon's debut *The Sheriff's Catch* met with great success at the 2019 Royal Dragonfly Book Awards, placing first in the categories of Best Novel, Best Historical Fiction and Best Cover Design. The novel's YouTube trailer also placed second in the best Book Trailer category.



*"Looking back to when we first started the Royal Dragonfly Book Award contest in 2011, I am amazed and impressed by the quality of entries from one year to the next,"* said Linda F. Radke, President of the Royal Dragonfly Book Awards, *"I want to extend my sincerest congratulations to all of our winners."*

This year has proven a year full of international critical acclaim for Vella-Bardon's debut novel, which tells the story of a Maltese-born sharpshooter Abel de Santiago, a reluctant passenger aboard a galley of the Spanish Armada. Santiago subsequently finds himself shipwrecked in 16<sup>th</sup> Century

Ireland and hunted across Connacht by a brutal English Sheriff.

2019 hardly kicked off when on 9 January the novel won the ebook Cover Design Award, with its design conceived by Vella-Bardon and acclaimed cover designer Mark Ecob being described by judges in the US as an *"outstanding example of using hand lettering to create a unique and historical look, while implying an adventurous and gripping tale"*.

Further accolades were to follow the following month when on 3 February *The Sheriff's Catch* was listed as a Finalist at The Wishing Shelf Independent Book Awards, after being judged by two Reading Groups in London and Stockholm. The award's judges declared the novel to be a five-star read and summed it up as follows: *"a feverishly-paced historical adventure populated with memorable characters. A Finalist and highly recommended."*

Success was also achieved across the pond on 7 May when Sheriff was named on the Finalist list at the Eric Hoffer Awards in the US, a list that features less than 10 per cent of nominees. All Eric Hoffer

Finalists also received an independent review from The US Review Of Books which named *The Sheriff's Catch* a 'Recommended Read' and described it as follows:

*"Fans of historical epics will find much to love in this riveting tale of one man's revenge in the midst of a continent's turmoil. This well-plotted story full of adventure, danger, and history is wonderfully told, and Abel is a character not soon forgotten."*

More accolades were to follow when 'The Sheriff's Catch' was named a Finalist in the 'Outstanding Historical' category at the UK's Independent Author Network Book Of The Year Awards on 17 October 2019. It also won the first reader poll on The International Community Of Book Readers Facebook Group, in which readers from across the world voted for Vella-Bardon to talk about his novel to group members via a thirty minute live feed.

These achievements are more impressive when one considers that the debut novel is genre fiction and seeks to avoid any formula that appeals to a mainstream readership. That said, the novel was so well received in Malta that it rose to third spot on the Agenda Bookshop bestseller list in July 2018. It was also the first time a Maltese national broke the domestic top ten in English fiction.

*"It's really interesting to observe how Maltese fiction in English is received by critics and readers both in Malta and internationally"*, said Vella-Bardon, when asked to comment on his debut's achievements, *"and of course it's also very encouraging."*

*The Sheriff's Catch* is in Malta available for sale from Agenda Bookshop, Merlin Library, BDL Books and WHSmith.



## DONATION OF BOOKS

Dr Raymond Xerri, Consul General of Malta Canada donated children Drawing Books in Maltese and English to the pastor of St Paul The Apostle, Fr Mario Micallef and Melita Soccer Club, newly reelected president George Xuereb to be given as gifts to Maltese-Canadian children during the Christmas parties.



## THE MALTESE-CANADIAN BUSINESS NETWORK



### ASSOCIATION

(M.C.B.N.A.) headed by Joseph Sherri and his youthful team, in full coordination with the High Commissioner of Malta to Canada, H.E. Kieth Azzopardi recently organised a very successful business networking event in Etobicoke.

The very well attended event had a variety of events, a dinner, networking sessions,

celebrating Maltese-Canadian businesses by honouring successful Maltese-Canadian business, and exchanging of business cards and contacts to work on a first-ever Maltese-Canadian Business Directory.

The event was introduced by the President of the MCBNA and all of the members of the M.C.B.N.A. took turns in presenting the event. Dr Raymond Xerri, Consul General of Malta to Canada addressed the event in absence of the High Commission who could not attend because of problems at the #airport in Washington D.C. .

Dr Xerri encouraged the 80-strong businesses present to work on a Business Directory and spread from coast to coast to coast, work on the connection with businesses in Malta and exploit CETA to the maximum. The M.C.B.N.A. plans to organise another event in early 2020.

LEARN MALTESE  
FOR PLEASURE, WORK OR  
TRAVEL  
BEGINNER ADULT CLASSES



### **Parkville and Sunshine**

Registrations are now open for 2020  
Maltese Language Classes  
6 FEBRUARY 2020 AT PARKVILLE  
13 FEBRUARY AT SUNSHINE - VICTORIA

Embrace the Maltese Culture through the  
Maltese language

WHERE: MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL VIC Inc.  
477 Royal Parade PARKVILLE  
and  
14 Watts Street SUNSHINE VICTORIA

WHEN: THURSDAY AT 6.00PM (Parkville)  
THURSDAY AT 6.30PM (Sunshine)  
Tel: 03 9387 8922 or 0412 115 919 after hours  
<https://mccv.org.au/services/language/>  
Email: : admin@mccv.org.au



**IT'S 1000 DAYS SINCE  
GOZO'S FAMOUS AZURE  
WINDOW COLLAPSED**

**Maltese Community Council of Victoria, Inc.**



Meet the MCCVs new manager, Cheryle Lupa. Cheryle has been with us for few weeks now and she is already making her mark. Cheryle has a Maltese background and has previous

management experience. Cheryle has a Business Degree which will certainly be an asset to meet her responsibilities to manage all operational tasks of the centre, staff leadership/mentoring, process efficiencies and will work closely

with the Executive Committee. Cheryle is already out there networking. This week meeting Elizabeth Drozd the CEO of the Australia Multicultural Community Services. When you are next at the MCCV be sure to say and welcome to Cheryle. (Elizabeth on the left and Cheryle on the right



**Join the Maltese Own Band  
in celebrating Christmas!**

**Christmas Carols**  
Supported by the Maltese Community  
Council of Victoria

**Saturday 21st December 2019**  
Maltese Community Centre  
477 Royal Parade Parkville

Mass will be held at 6pm  
Doors open at 6:30pm  
Free Entry

RSVP to Register your attendance for catering purposes:  
malteseownband@gmail.com  
Food & drinks available to purchase at bar prices



**MALTESE CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE  
PARKVILLE - VICTORIA**