

MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER



The journal of the Maltese Diaspora



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the
**PEOPLE
OF MALTA**

**IN FACE OF ADVERSITY
AUSTRALIANS UNITE!**

pages 2 and 3

**More than 1 billion animals
estimated dead in Australia wildfires: Expert**

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Keeping Maltese Communities Connected

“Bushfires” – In the Face of Adversity Australians unite!



By Ron Borg - Adelaide

Since November 2019, Bush Fires have been raging throughout this country of ours. “Scroched Earth” In NSW & ACT, in excess of 18 people died, 140 bushfires burning, 5 million hectares burned, greater than the size of Belgium, and 1500 homes destroyed.

In **Victoria**, 3 people died, about 30 bushfires burning, 10 million hectares burned, more than 110 homes or businesses destroyed and great numbers of animals killed .

In South Australia, 2 people have died, 25 bushfires burning, More than 200, 000 hectares burned, one third of Kangaroo Island burned, at least 88 homes confirmed destroyed.

In Queensland, 33 bushfires burning, 25,000 hectares burned, and 45 homes confirmed destroyed but the number is expected to rise significantly.

In W. Aust., 30 bushfires 30 bushfires burning, 1.5 million hectares burned, one home destroyed.

In Tasmania, 23 bushfires burning, 30,000 hectares burned, 2 homes confirmed destroyed.

In Northern Territory, No current bushfires but 5 homes confirmed destroyed.

In addition it is estimated that 500 million animals died, with at least 25,000 Koalas in South Australia. In the midst of this inferno that has ravaged this land The Australian people, Have showered their utmost respect and admiration on our brave and brazen Fire Fighters for their courage and conviction in endlessly fighting these terrible fires, saving lives, both human and animal, land, homes and businesses, and giving hope to so many unfortunates.



Their courage in facing these terrible infernos of incredible heat that even melts the metal of their own fire trucks, is just beyond belief. We have seen on the media views of the aftermath of bushfires that even melted the aluminium parts of vehicles caught up in these fires. (Alluminium melts at 660deg) !!

In the face of all this disaster, something brilliantly ‘uplifting’ has become apparent in this land. People from all walks of life have heard the ‘cry’ of those afflicted by this rapid and widespread disaster, that they have **opened their hearts, mind, and purses** and their has been an incredible outpour of generous help in the way of food, clothing, hospitality, money and personal service to aid both fire fighters and those that have suffered losses of homes, business, animals and property in these fires.

Stories of resilience are emerging from inside bushfire-affected communities too, such as that of a Malua Bay pharmacist, Raj Gupta, who has kept his pharmacy open despite the area having no power or mobile phone service and despite the fact that his own home burnt down in the fires this week.

Many evacuation centres are taking in domestic animals and even livestock, setting aside space for them alongside their owners.

Donations have been rolling in to Foodbank Victoria, with queues of cars lined up to drop off goods at its Yarraville donations point.

Refugee and migrant communities have also been organising support, on Thursday the Australian

Islamic Centre in Hobsons Bay, Victoria, held a sausage sizzle on Friday that raised \$1,500 for bushfire relief. The Muslim community has been organising bushfire relief since the fires started in New South Wales in November, and the Afghan community group the Kateb Hazara Association made a \$18,252 donation to the Rural Fire Service. In December a group of four men from Sydney's Muslim community in Auburn took a ute loaded with sausages, water and a barbecue, and drove six hours north to Willawarrin to cook for the community after fire tore through the small town in November. Many businesses around the country have opened their doors to evacuees, firefighters and the general community. The Hotel Motel 5 in South Grafton, for example, has been offering free food throughout the crisis.

It has been just awesome how Big businesses, Big name entertainers, Sportsmen and women, and other Organisations and celebrities have publically spoken out and generously donated big sums of money to assist in this disaster;

| Donor | Amount | | |
|--|--------|--|--------------------|
| Andrew Frost | \$70m | Chris Hemsworth | \$1m |
| Celeste Barber Facebook fundraiser | \$41m | Elton John | \$1m |
| Crown, Packer family | \$5m | Kaylen Ward – sold self nude photos | \$700,000 (est) |
| Coles | \$3m | Kylie and Danni Minogue | \$500,000 |
| BHP | \$2m | Justin Hemmes | \$500,000 |
| Westpac | \$1.5m | Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban | \$500,000 |
| Woolwoths (+boost paid leave to 4wks for Members in fire fighting) | \$1.3m | Pink | \$500,000 |
| NAB | \$1m | Scentre Group | \$500,000 |
| Commonwealth Bank | \$1m | Russell Crowe's Rabbitohs cap. | \$400,000 |
| ANZ | \$1m | Celeste Barty –Tennis Prize money | \$383,000 |
| Rio Tinto | \$1m | Vicinity Centers | \$250,000 |
| Pratt Foundation | \$1m | Rebel Wilson | \$100,000 |
| John and Pauline Gandel | \$1m | Country Road | \$100,000 |
| | | Spell | \$20,000 |

These are just some of the generous donors, but their numbers seem to be increasing continuously even as this article was being written.

Although the Government of Australia has been seen by the general public, to be lthargic in it's efforts to assist during this time of need by Firefighters, and victims of these ferocious Bushfires, the people have rallied, and are still rallying to the aid of the victims of these Bushfires around Australia.



FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR 75 YEARS AND OLDER

Senior citizens aged 75 and over can now ride buses for free, Transport Minister Ian Borg said on Monday. The Bus 75+ public transport scheme, announced during the 2020 Budget Speech last October, is an extension of existing schemes allowing children, students and people with disability to ride buses without spending money.

Launching the scheme in Mosta, Dr Borg said that eligible senior citizens would pay their bus fare as usual using a Tallinja card and then receive a refund for the full amount at the end of each month. Over 75s became eligible for free transport as of January 1, he said. An estimated 19,000 people qualify, he added. Customer service provider Centrecom will run an office which will take calls from customers who have questions about the scheme.

The government has been gradually rolling out free public transport schemes over the past years. Schemes apply to 14 to 19-year-olds, student Tallinja card holders, people with a disability and now over-75s.

Prime Minister Joseph Muscat has previously said that the government's long-term aim is to make public transport free for everyone. For further information about free public transport schemes, call 2248 3500 from Monday to Friday between 8am and 4.30pm.



700 years added to Malta's history

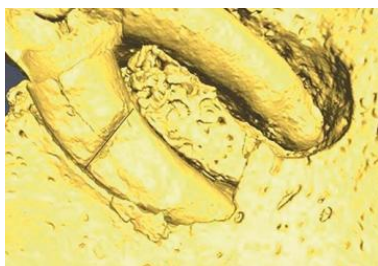
Researchers at Queen's University Belfast have discovered that the first people to inhabit Malta arrived 700 years earlier than history books indicate.

Researchers at Queen's University Belfast have discovered that the first people to inhabit Malta arrived 700 years earlier than history books indicate.

Through analysis of ancient soils, the researchers have found that the first inhabitants arrived about 5,900BC. Ground-breaking DNA analysis revealed they came from different parts of the Mediterranean

and Europe, including Africa. The researchers also found that a second colonisation arrived in 3,850BC from Sicily and lasted an extraordinary 1,500 years in Malta without a break.

Caroline Malone from the School of Natural and Built Environment at Queen's has been working at a burial site in Xaghra, Gozo, since 1987 and her teams have excavated 220,000 bones, representing between 500 and 800 people that inhabited the islands between 3,600-2,350BC.



Over the last five years, with funding from the European Research Council, an international group of archaeological experts have been analysing the ancient bones and examining the wider landscapes, building a detailed picture of life in prehistoric Malta.

Prof. Malone said: "We have made some fascinating discoveries on Malta at Queen's University Belfast, most recently through this international project. I have been working on the prehistory of Malta for over 30 years and the amount of detail we have extracted from these ancient skeletons is

remarkable. They change the entire understanding of the first Maltese people.

"Through radiocarbon dating, we have now been able to pinpoint that the first inhabitants arrived 700 years earlier than was previously thought and we have also identified several episodes of separate colonisation.

"Given the restricted land space of Malta, it is remarkable that the second colonisation survived for 1,500 years. This sort of settlement stability is unheard of in Europe and is impressive in terms of how they were able to live on an ever-degrading land for such a period of time."

We can learn a lot from the mistakes made by the first Maltese. The lack of water, coupled with the destruction of soil that takes centuries to form, can cause the failure of a civilisation

The data, which is being presented in Malta tomorrow, has revealed that the first inhabitants were robust and healthy, with some of the best teeth that archaeologists have ever analysed. One skull showed that sophisticated dental work had been carried out as early as 2,500BC – an abscess had been lanced from the root of a tooth.

The inhabitants cared for their sick, injured and elderly and were hardy and determined, continuing with their daily tasks, despite being in chronic pain from advanced bone degradation. They survived on meat, cereals and pulses but, as time went on, they ate less meat and almost no fish.

The researchers also made important discoveries on climate change and the methods of farming that were used by analysing soil cored from deep valleys, which contained ancient pollen and animal evidence from past environments. Prof. Malone explained: "Climate change fluctuations made Malta uninhabitable in some periods of prehistory. There was a substantial break of around 1,000 years between the first settlers and the next group who settled permanently on the Maltese islands and eventually built the megalithic temples."

She added: "While the first inhabitants were able to survive for a long period of time, they ultimately had to downscale radically when the conditions became too difficult. Their destructive farming methods had a catastrophic impact on the soil and, combined with drought, meant that eventually it all came crashing down as the islands became much too dry to sustain dense agricultural practices.

"We can learn a lot from the mistakes made by the first Maltese. The lack of water, coupled with the destruction of soil that takes centuries to form, can cause the failure of a civilisation. The second group of inhabitants to Malta in 3,850-2,350BC managed their resources adequately and harnessed soil and food for over 1,500 years. It was only when climate conditions and drought became so extreme that they failed."

The group of experts included researchers from Queen's University Belfast, University of Cambridge, Liverpool John Moores University, University of Malta, University of Plymouth, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage Malta and Heritage Malta.

Five PhD students took part in the programme, which has helped to train the next generation of experts in this area.



SHAWN SALIBA

"From a very young age, I have always been interested in churches and feasts. I'm 31 years old and I'm a sculptor. This is my full time job. Being a sculptor is an inborn talent inherited from my great grand-parents because they were also stone-sculptors.

I wanted to follow their path. Sculpting, painting or gilding were three options offered at the School of Art. However, I opted for sculptor. At first, it wasn't easy because you couldn't establish a well-paid price since I was a beginner. I have various works of art: at Kirkop, Naxxar, Gozo and even Australia.

While working, I listen to sacred music or other music linked to the task I would be working on. My social activities are also related to what I like doing: exhibitions, concerts and feasts."
Shawn Saliba in Mosta, Malta.

CONGRATULATIONS

I have just received the 300th issue of "THE MALTESE JOURNAL"

300 issues in such a short time. What an achievement

I take this opportunity to congratulate you and your team for all the hours of hard work and dedication to reach such an amazing milestone of 300 issues. Congratulations on this important milestone and thank you for keeping us up to date with all the latest news and history of our beloved Malta. May the New Year brings you lots of JOY, HAPPINESS & GOOD HEALTH

Regards Harry & Mary Bugeja (Adelaide)



Watch preparations in Malta for Chinese New Year celebrations

The Chinese will be celebrating 2020 as the year of the rat. In Chinese culture, this animal is the symbol of abundance, wealth and fertility.

The Chinese new year is celebrated with the Spring Festival and is considered as

the most important feast in China and for Chinese around the world.

In Malta, the director of the Chinese Cultural Centre – Xialong Yang – said that the start of the Chinese year will be celebrated in Malta with the collaboration of many other entities, similar to recent years. He said that this celebration reunites families.

"It's a time for a family reunion. Whatever you do – wherever you are – you're suppose to come back home to have new year dinner or to enjoy a cultural event together with your family members."

Tony Cassar Darien, Artistic Director of the celebrations said that the events will reach their peak with an arts festival on the 19th January at Mediterranean Conference Centre with the participation of a group of popular artists from the Hebei province.

"The spectacle is characterised by acrobatics, martial arts – Kung Fu – shows that please the Maltese. It also includes interesting music with original instruments. Hebei is a region famous for its tourism mixed with a culture and history of a very strong theatre".

The Chinese new year's day will be celebrated on the 25th January.

Another edition for you to
read, enjoy and share maltesejournal@gmail.com

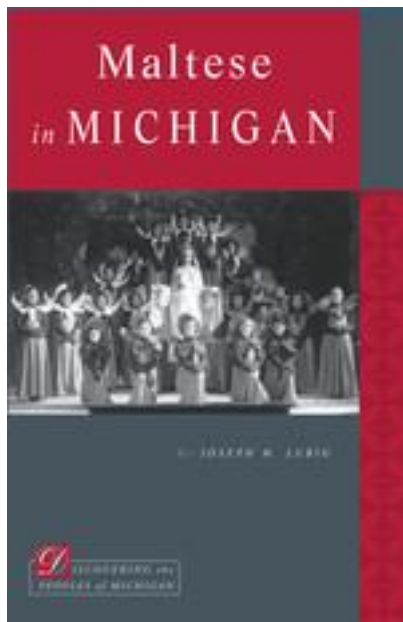


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MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER
The Journal of Maltese living in Malta
and abroad

MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

This journal of Maltese living abroad is preserved at the Malta Migration Museum - Valletta, on Facebook and Twitter, the Maltese-Canadian Archives, Toronto and Gozo National Library and on www.ozmalta.com. Several organisations and institutions print the journal and distribute it among their members. Our readers share it with their family and friends.



MALTESE IN MICHIGAN - USA

Joseph M. Lubig

THE MALTESE AS EARLY PATRIOTS IN AMERICA

Given the strategic location of Malta in the Mediterranean and the fact that it was tiny and overcrowded, it was natural that Maltese went with the Knights of Malta and other nations to find a new life and opportunity in the Americas. The first governor of New France, Chevalier de Montmagny (1636–1648) was a Knight of Malta and brought associate knights with him. It was at this time that a small Maltese population began to reside in Quebec. Under Montmagny, the Knights provided financial assistance to the first Jesuit missions to the Native Americans.

Between 1651 and 1665 the...

COMING TO AMERICA PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II Perhaps the social restrictions placed on males due to the dense population of the

country combined with the desire for better paying or more consistent work led to the start of the waves of emigration. The first movement out of the country began in 1883, when seventy workers emigrated from Malta to Queensland, Australia. Political complications put this plan and additional ideas of mass emigration to Australia on hold. At the turn of the nineteenth century Maltese migrants were looking at North Africa, with a few making the journey to Australia and the United States, specifically to New Orleans.

WORLD WAR II AND IMMIGRATION The Maltese did not come to the America because of political or religious persecution, disease, or famine. The Maltese came to the United States to capture a better life for themselves and for their children. Emigration has been a release valve for the Maltese government, as evidenced by the incentives offered to potential migrants. One of the incentives offered after World War II was the “assisted passage grant,” allowing government-sponsored passage for Maltese to emigrate to Canada, England, Australia, and the United States for a fee of \$25 (in U.S. money), with the Maltese government paying the rest of the expense.

ONE FAMILY’S JOURNEY Through written histories and personal interviews with the seven Zampa children we can see that the path from Malta to America did not always go according to plan. The plans for their journey would be completed in two phases with Michael, the father, traveling to Detroit first with daughters Rosemarie and Yvonne. Stella would stay in Malta with Victor, Henry, Margaret, Marion, and Irene. Michael Zampa was able to book a flight for him, Yvonne, and Rosemarie aboard a plane to Tunis. The three left on October 6, 1946, aboard a small plane with twelve other passengers.

CONNECTIONS TO THE CHURCH The Maltese are clearly affiliated with one religious group. It is easy to understand from their history that 98 percent of Maltese adhere to the Roman Catholic faith.

The Maltese who came to America and to Michigan kept their allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic church of the first Maltese in Detroit was staffed by Maltese priests. Father Attard tells of the early Maltese church in Detroit:

A prominent Maltese within the community in Detroit since 1920 was the Rev. Michael Borg who had arrived in that city to work among the Maltese in December 1920. The Maltese...

THE STRUGGLE TO BECOME "AMERICAN" Maltese priests, acting through the National Welfare Conference, advocated for Congress to relax the 1921 and 1924 laws limiting immigration. The strong Maltese connection to the Roman Catholic Church made the Maltese attentive to the pleas

of other Catholics when they encouraged the Maltese to assimilate. Americanization committees worked diligently to teach immigrants to appreciate and understand democracy.

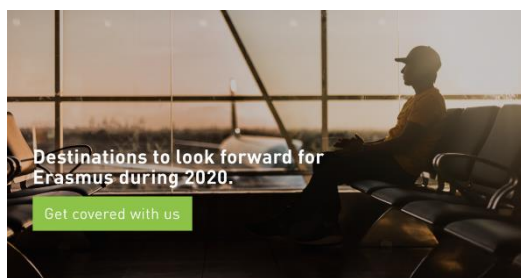
The industrial city of Detroit had the largest Maltese colony, which by 1924 probably counted some 5,000 members. Most of the men worked in the car industry. The Americanization Committee of Detroit established a Maltese Information Bureau, which printed a circular letter...

KEEPING THE MALTESE IDENTITY One way for an ethnic group to establish itself in a community was through the media. The need for immigrants to know they were in a familiar setting could help them carry the customs, folklore, language, and customs of their home country to their new world. The Maltese in Detroit established this link between their old and new identities through media and social events that helped reinforce their identity.

The first attempt at a weekly paper for the Maltese in Detroit had its roots at the Maltese American Printing Company. This is the same company that was collecting donations for...

THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS During the first wave of immigration in the 1920s some Maltese opened up their own eateries. One place at 972 Michigan Avenue was called the So Different Restaurant, boasting that it was "The best place to eat." Other eateries followed, such as the Melita Bakery at 2511 Fifth Street, which achieved popularity because it could offer breads baked in the traditional Maltese style.

Father Attard writes of several other local Maltese businesses during this period. Grech and Brincat operated the General Grocers on Howard Street; John Vella ran the School of Dancing at 1355 Howard Street; and Anthony DeGuara,



Erasmus Destinations to Look Forward to in 2020

Published on December 31, 2019

Everyone dreams of living abroad, whether for a month, a year, to study, or to work. It is a dream that a lot of people harbour but might not necessarily act on. This is because moving away from

home is an extremely massive leap away from your comfort zone and it might deter people away.

There are a variety of means by which one can travel and make life a bit easier for them. Erasmus is one such means. The Erasmus Programme is a European student exchange programme established in 1987. The notion behind this was to promote mobility and unity throughout Europe. It has done as such for more than 3.3 million students in the European community, with around 4000 universities and 31 countries which are participating in the project.

Erasmus is a great opportunity to meet amazing new and open-minded people while also discovering a new country with the opportunity to call it home for a small amount of time. There are a lot of ways which you can apply for Erasmus, with many students already enrolled being enrolled in bachelors or masters and applying through the university they are currently attending. That is why most Erasmus applicants are students applying for a student exchange, but many might not be aware that Erasmus offers traineeships or the opportunity to teach abroad.

Wherever you will be travelling, make sure to carry out very extensive research on the country where you will be visiting. It is always essential to be as prepared as possible for what you might encounter, so do set aside enough time to do your research well.

Prague, Czech Republic This is one of the most in-demand places for Erasmus. This is simply due to the affordability of the country. Housing is not expensive, you will find students paying around €100 a month and living expenses are also quite low. Besides being an affordable destination, Prague also offers the luxury of proximity with other neighbouring countries. Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, Germany, or Slovenia are only

a bus ride away. If you ever have the time and money to do so, it is greatly suggested to take some time to visit different countries while you have the chance.

Don't worry about a language barrier – although nothing can compete with Malta, being such a multicultural city, English is still widely spoken by locals in Prague.

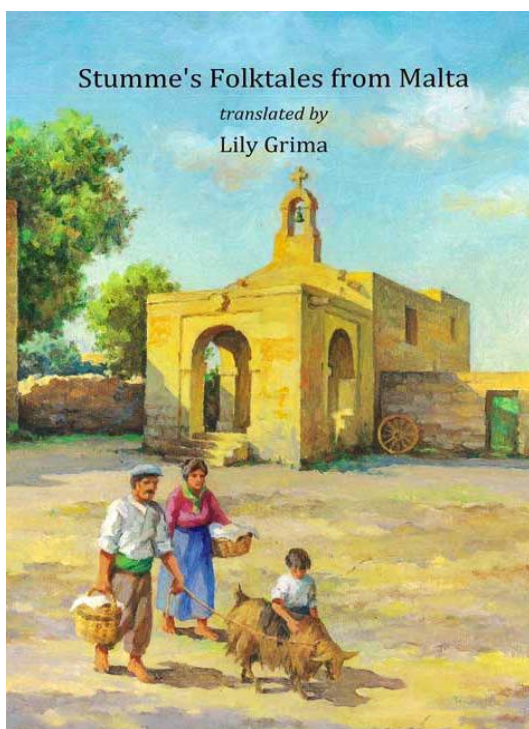
United Kingdom There are many universities which you can visit in the UK and all of them offer a wonderful and refreshing experience. Whilst the universities in the UK are very well established, another key factor which should not be overlooked is the lack of language and cultural barriers, allowing facilitated communication and easy integration. The United Kingdom is also a beautiful country with plenty to visit and many activities constantly going on. Wherever you go, whether it is to Birmingham, Glasgow, Limerick, London or any other university in the UK you will truly get to have a unique experience with a lot of memories to come back with.

Housing in the UK is not the cheapest, and it is suggested that alongside the stipend that Erasmus gives you, you should either find a small part-time job or have some of your own money saved up to support you.

Groningen, The Netherlands This university is one of the largest universities in the whole country, with around 175 courses to choose from and 9 faculties. There is something for everyone in this university, but the problem is that the price can be quite daunting. This is probably one of the most expensive cities in the whole programme but within the Netherlands, it is one of the most affordable. Depending on how long you will be staying, getting a part-time or weekend job should not be a problem and it will help you immensely. Getting a bit of money on the side will help you tenfold.

The climate in the Netherlands is something to get used to. The city is also filled with clubs and bars, which are open most days. This city offers one of the best university atmospheres that Erasmus has to offer, so make sure to check it out!

Erasmus offers something for all, with most countries in the EU offering boundless possibilities. This list only scratches the surface with regards to locations to visit. England has a lot of opportunities within itself, not to mention the rest of the United Kingdom and Ireland. Prague is very affordable and the Netherlands offers one of the best student lifestyles out there. Before applying to a placement, ensure to have had a look at what student life is like in the area you will be living in. Making sure that above all that you're safe and secure, is essential. And whilst you cannot safeguard against all eventualities, a GasanMamo [Travel Insurance policy](#) can offer you the peace of mind you'll need to thoroughly enjoy your foreign adventure without the need to worry about the "what if"s. GasanMamo Insurance Ltd. is authorised under the Insurance Business Act and regulated by the MFSA



[BDL Books. Malta](#)

Stumme's Folktales from Malta –

Translated by Lilly Grima

A chance discovery of the original 1904 publication of Stumme's Maltese tales at the British Library led Lilly Grima to her wish to translate the tales into English to make them widely available to readers and researchers.

Among these tales one finds 'The Priest Dun Pawl', 'The Fisherman's Son', 'Xemx and Qamar' and 'Diamantina'. Grima currently works as a freelance Maltese-English translator and interpreter.

Price: €12. Available from our shop in San Gwann and online at: <http://bit.ly/StummeMaltaFolktales>



Remembering the Mass Maltese Migration

Published on March 10, 2015 gasan.com

It is said that more people of Maltese descent live away from our shores than live here natively, with the largest communities of Maltese emigrants in existence living in Canada, the UK, US and Australia.

The Beginning The Maltese started to emigrate during the 19th Century. The first place they settled was the North African coast, particularly in Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt. Most of these communities have since been displaced following the rise of independence movements in those countries as their peoples wished to secede from their colonial masters.

20th Century At the turn of the 20th Century, Maltese people began to trickle into Canada, Australia and the UK. The inter-war years saw some 15,000 Maltese leave their homeland for the big industrial cities of the US, primarily Detroit. However, the mass emigration that's clearly entrenched in our country's collective memory began to take place post-World War II.

Australia Australia was the primary recipient of Maltese immigrants in the post-war years, with over 66,000 leaving our shores between 1946 and 1970. In fact, some 57.6% of all people to emigrate from Malta during those years headed for Australia. Over 140,000 people emigrated during those years in total – a staggering 30% of the entire population.

It was the Maltese government itself which catalysed the mass exodus through its Emigration Department. It paid emigrants' passages to their adoptive countries, which was undoubtedly a great incentive for leaving Malta.

Economic Considerations The advent of oil-fired shipping during the 1940s had meant that ships no longer had to stop for refuelling at Grand Harbour, Malta's economic hub at the time, seriously impacting the island's economy. In addition, a decline in the island's strategic importance following the end of World War II meant that work was increasingly hard to come by.

In this context, we can appreciate just how appealing boarding a ship taking you half way around the world, possibly never to return home, would have been.

Although Malta is actually more populated nowadays than it ever was, there was a perception that the island was heavily overpopulated in the post-World War II era which, in combination with the state of the economy, also made leaving Malta the best prospect available for many people.

A Phenomenon Comes to an End The mid-1970s saw the decline of mass emigration from Malta, although people still leave our shores for new opportunities to this very day. In the 21st Century, probably the most significant emigration of Malta people has occurred in Belgium and Luxembourg as they took up employment at EU institutions.

We are unlikely to ever see another mass migration phenomenon in our history, but nevertheless, here's to all who took the plunge into the unknown, succeeded and proudly fly our flag in far-flung destinations today!



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA TO CANADA

MALTESE-CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

Donation from Consulate General of Malta to Canada to 'Dar tal-Providenza' (Providence House) on behalf of many Maltese-Canadians.

The Consul-General of Malta to Canada, Dr Raymond Xerri aided by his son, Armando Antonio Xerri presented a donation of €700 to 'Dar tal-Providenza'

as part of the Annual marathon of fund-raising for this much-respected and much-needed [Maltese Catholic institution](#) that offers residences for [persons](#) with special needs.

This donation has been collected through the sales of renowned Christmas Carols, 'O Helu Bambin' (O Sweet Jesus) an [original](#) set of CDs project of [Gozitan](#), Fr George Oscar Buttigieg of the [Franciscan](#) Order in Malta

There was words of [praise](#) by 'Dar tal-Providenza' Chairman Fr Martin Micallef and by Fr Buttigieg who were both present to the [ceremony](#).

MAHAT - 'My target was to get to a place of peace'



After escaping from Al-Shabaab in Somalia and enduring two years in Libya, Somali refugee Mahat was rescued by the Lifeline search and rescue boat in June 2018

By Anna Camilleri

"Before the problems at home in Somalia started, I never thought about coming to Europe. But then there were a lot of problems. Every morning there was someone, like my relatives and my friends, getting killed. Then I feared for myself and I ran away."

Mahat set foot in Malta in 2018 with nothing but the clothes on his back,

and arriving in a safe country marked the end of a long and treacherous journey that he had to take in order to survive. Having grown up in Mogadishu and working in a stable job by his early 20s, Mahat's life was hit by tragedy in 2015, when his father was killed by the armed militant group Al-Shabaab. The murder shocked and traumatised Mahat's family, and when he himself was targeted by Al-Shabaab, he realised he had to flee his home.

Rescue at sea

As time went by, Mahat worried that he would never be freed from detention, but on the night of 20 June, Mahat was placed on board a flimsy boat with around 130 other people. He knew what a great risk leaving itself would be and was fully aware that many people who make the crossing do not make it alive. "All the smugglers promise is that they will give you a boat, put you on the sea, and then it is either you die in the sea or you're safe. They do not care."

After a night at sea in complete darkness, a boat was spotted in the distance.

Worried they would be turned back to Libyan shores, where they would face further violence, there was some panic among the people on the boat. "Some people were not sure what to do. Others wanted to jump in the sea. They were afraid, because if the boat was from Libya, they would be killed."

When they discovered that it was in fact a rescue boat, they were overcome with relief and joy. They were then taken on board the Lifeline. Mahat remembers the kindness of the crew, who warmly greeted

all people on board and immediately provided them with medical attention, water and food. "I feel very grateful that they saved me."

With the deterioration of the weather and in the midst of a dispute between Member States on assigning a port for disembarkation, the Lifeline was allowed to dock in Malta on 28th June, on the condition that some of the people on board would be relocated to other EU Member States. "When I arrived on the Lifeline ship, I heard about Malta. That was the first time."

Since arriving in Malta and being granted Subsidiary Protection, Mahat has been working to rebuild his life. He is burdened by memories of a difficult past, but he is trying to get back on track.

He now has a job as a Somali cultural mediator for an organisation that provides services to refugees and asylum-seekers in Malta. He enjoys this job, which allows him to support other refugees, but his dream is ultimately to further his studies. "I want to become someone known by people, a respected person... like a doctor."

This will not be straightforward for Mahat. Even as a qualified and experienced professional, he will have to start almost from the beginning, a stark reality facing most refugees who have had to leave everything behind.

At the same time, Mahat maintains his ambition. He has started studying science at MCAST, a higher education institute in Malta, and lives in a shared house with other refugees, where he feels comfortable yet independent. He spends his free time exploring Valletta and other parts of the island.

Over a year after he was rescued at sea, Mahat has come a long way. Step by step, but not without further obstacles, he is still looking ahead... looking towards his future with optimism, hope and determination.

Thanks for keeping me on your mail list. I appreciate your newsletter is exceptionally interesting and the presentation and content equally so. I always look forward to receiving it. I am 83 years old, have lived in Malta all my time except for only 4 years when I was in the diplomatic service and was attached with the Rome embassy, but I learnt so much about Malta from your newsletter.

I have compiled some customs and traditions which were in use during my time - mainly the fifties and sixties - and which are now extinct or rarely used. I wonder if you feel it is worth publishing in the newsletter. I am sure that your readers would find them interesting.

Traditions in Malta 70 years ago most of which have disappeared completely

By Joe Lanzon



I grew up in the Cottonera area in the Fifties, a few years after the end of the Second World War which brought devastation in this southern area of Malta. There were many traditions, customs and practices - religious, behavior, dressing attire and others - which we were expected to follow. But looking back now over the years, I think that while some of these were pretty outrageous, some others would

have contributed to a better world if they were still in use today.

The world has progressed enormously in all fields but we had to pay a cost in the loss of some of our traditions and customs which were part of our heritage. I have looked back 70 years and remember the traditions, customs and practices which have disappeared completely or are seen very rarely today. Come with me for a stroll down memory lane. We'll look at those which were but are no more. We'll remember with nostalgia some of our religious traditions which have changed, our dressing attire which looks funny today and our behavior which has declined rather than improved over the years.

At a glance you'll see life in the Fifties and Sixties which was austere, simple, slow and lacking comfort, but we were safer, more happy, more trustworthy, neighborly and friendly, less depressed and angry about everything. Come, let's stroll together and bring back memories of a time long passed and gone.

Religious

1. *House Visits for Last Rites ('Vjatiku')*. The procession of a priest with the Host and an altar boy ringing the bell passing down the street to give the last rites to a dying member of the community. People would kneel and say a short prayer for the moribund as the priest with the Host passes in front of them.
2. *Good Friday Penance*. The parishioners showed solidarity with Christ's suffering by doing penance not only by abstaining from eating meat and other palatable food or delicacies but also by wearing black ties or black arm bands and by refraining from shaving.
3. *Church Segregation*. The segregation in church with males on one side and females on the other side. Furthermore, all females would not enter the church unless they have their heads covered.
4. *The 'Bulletin'*. This was a small card given by the Parish Priest to members of his community who he considered to be good church-going Catholics. To those he considered not to have attended Sunday Mass and not received Holy Communion he would not give him the Bulletin or change the old one with a valid one therefore branding him as a lapsed Catholic.
5. *The 'Soutanes'*. This traditional black 'soutanes' was worn by all priests. Not one wore trousers, which more practical, as is the norm today.
6. *Blessings*. Before leaving house, children would ask their parents for their blessing. "*Bless you my son*" they would reply. I was standard procedure. No child would leave house without it. Even adults used to ask their parents for their blessing.
7. *Benediction*. Children would cross the street when they see a priest to ask for his benediction and kiss this hand.
8. *The Limbo*. We were taught that newly-born babies who died before being baptized would not go to heaven but to the 'Limbo'. After the Seventies and Eighties the church did not continue to support this theory.
9. *Holy Rosary*. In the evenings most families would take out chairs outside their doors and indulge in chatting with each other and then would recite the Holy Rosary. It was a ritual of practically all the families in our street.
10. *'Il-Laptu tal-Madonna tal-Karmnu'*. Most children and a good many adults too, used to have this 'laptu' dangling from their neck inside their shirt.
11. *The Evil Eye*. It was common for houses to be fumigated with burnt olive oil in order to banish the dreaded evil eye from the house.

Dressing Attire.

1. *The traditional tailor*. When a man wanted to have a new suit he would go to the tailor for measurement and then return some days or weeks later for a fit. There were tailors in every town and village.
2. *'Bell Bottom' Trousers*. These trousers had very wide bottoms which used to flap while walking. They were like those worn by the British sailors in those times.
3. *Fountain Pens in breast pockets*. It seemed that every man had a fountain pen clipped on his jacket's breast pocket. They were useful for a pen when needed. It also gave a man some sort of status.
4. *'Tie Pins'*. These were supposed to keep the tie from flapping but it was more of a decoration than anything else because they had beautiful art decor or gold finish.
5. *Shoes metal strips*. We used to fix metal strips on the soles of our shoes. We liked to hear the sound of the metal hitting the ground as we walked. Maybe because they gave a feeling of identity.
6. *'Galoshes'*. These were rubber covers for shoes to be used on rainy days and therefore not soak your shoes and socks.
7. *'Brylcream'*. Rubbing creasy brylcream on our hair to make it shine and hold it in place.
8. *Separate white shirt collars*. These were stiff and very uncomfortable especially in the hot summer months.
9. *Bicycle Clips*. Those using a bicycle, which were high and uncomfortable, would clip these bicycle clips around the bottom of their trousers to climb the bike and not to have their trousers flapping while riding.
10. *The White Canvas Shoes*. These were soft, light, glaring white and used in summer only. But they used to get dirty easily so the owner would apply a white liquid called '*Pajpli*'. When the shoes dry up they would be clean and as white as snow. Similar shoes are called tennis shoes today.



Charlene Farrugia Bozac

By Ron Borg (Adelaide)

Recently my colleague at the Maltese Radio program in Adelaide, Bernadette Buhagiar, started telling me about her talented Pianist niece, her sister Censina Farrugia's daughter in Malta. As an amateur musician, I was enticed into revealing if this boast was just that of an aunty bursting with pride or not!

What a surprise! Charlene Farrugia is indeed an extremely talented, world renowned Pianist "and is currently listed as a Piano Professor at the Music Accademy in Pula Croatia", and one of the world's great women pianists.

Charlene was born in H'Attard Malta in September 1986, to parents Vincenza and Charlie. Charlene fell in love with music and the piano at the age of 6 years thanks to a toy piano that her sister Colette had shunned, but which Charlene instantly grew attached to, waking up at night to play it. Her mum engaged a very experienced piano teacher for her, Dolores Amodio Chircop, and to this day Charlene blesses Dolores

for her "Open mindednes". Charlene's grandfather played the piano alongside the late composer Charles Camilleri in the former's Hamrun home. "Since then, my passion for music has been the driving force behind the hours of practice I do on a daily basis. The life of a musician is made up of many sacrifices," she says matter-of-factly, recalling without regret that, after the last day of the scholastic year, while her friends began their summer holidays, she would immerse herself completely in the piano.

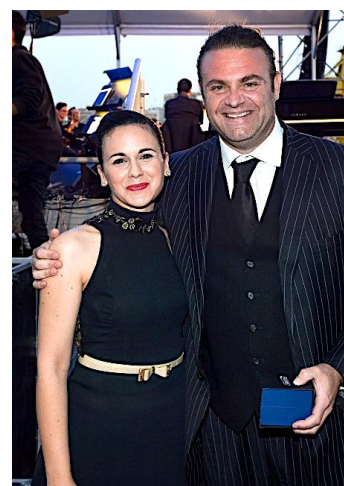
Her extensive performances took off after her debut with the National Orchestra of Malta at the age of 13. She was the youngest soloist to ever perform with the National Orchestra of Malta, and her performance, which was received by a standing ovation. At the

age of 14 she toured Piladelphia USA, and gave several recitals to great public acclaim.

After finishing her musical education with Ms Amodio and a Professor Michael Laus at the University of Malta, Charlene continued her studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she graduated with an MA in Piano performance together with an LCRAM. With her late father's encouragement, Charlene met the Maltese National Composer Charles Camilleri in 2000, and performed with the Malta National Orchestra Praised by musicians, audiences

and music critics as an "*enfant terrible of Maltese piano*", she was one of the most prominent performers of the younger generation. Charlene went on to gain many achievements in her brilliant career, some of which are; First prize winner of 10 International Piano Competitions, she has been invited to perform recitals in, France, Ireland, Malta, Croatia, Hungry, Slovenia, Holland, Belgium,

Philadelphia, Italy, Portugal, Monaco, Romania, Virginia, Rotterdam, Austria, and many others. She has also premiered several works for solo piano and chamber music all over the world, and on many occasion, she has been invited to conduct Master classes and sit as a juror in European Piano



With Tenor Joseph Galea



Competitions. She has had notable performances for Heads of State and other dignitaries like Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Boris Johnson, and many others. She has performed with partners like world renowned Maltese Tenor, Joseph Calleja, famous Clarinetist Dimitri Ashkenazy, and violin virtuoso Ning Feng. She has recorded for labels Naxos, Parma and Sony. There are so many brilliant achievements that this young talented lady has acquired that it is impossible for me to list them all in this brief snippet of her endeavours.



Charlene lives with her young family in Croatia, her husband Franko Bozac's home country, and where she has been awarded a full-time post as piano professor at the Academy of Music in Pula. Franko, is also a very talented musician who is an Accordion Professor at the Pula University, who conducts master classes and seminars in Croatia and neighbouring countries, and was awarded a medal for his outstanding musical achievements in Croatia. Asked how it felt getting the Award for the Best International Achievement, she emotionally responded that it made her finally feel appreciated in her own country.

Charlene & Franko together in Concert

Charlene continued to perform at concerts until she was about six months pregnant with five-month-old Antonio. "A few hours before my son was born, I was practicing intently on my piano at home. Needless to say, my son prefers the sound of the piano to that of any other musical instrument!" Charlene is a committed member of the highly prestigious Euro Mediterranean Music Academy, (EMMA), a network of music institutions, universities and philanthropic foundations brought together in the shared interest of music and the promotion of peace in the Mediterranean and Middle East regions, bringing music to deprived areas. Charlene lives with her young family in Croatia, her husband Franko Bozac's home country, and where she has been awarded a full-time post as piano professor at the Academy of Music in Pula. *Charlene's thoughts*, I love eating Strudel, When I have some time to spare I enjoy walking in the countryside, My favourite holiday destination is Croatia, One living person I admire is my piano teacher Ms Amodio, A character in fiction I like very much is Asterix, If I could change one thing about myself it would be my perfectionism, My dream job is my present one, that of concert pianist, My kind of music is classical music, If I won the lottery I would travel the world, My motto is "The time to be happy is now." *"Let Music be the global instrument for peace and education!"*



Writers Note; *It makes me proud to say that this brilliant World Acclaimed Musician who has achieved so much is Maltese!*

Keeping Maltese Communities Connected



The last Maltese voice on Australia's airwaves

Joe Axiaq is the last man standing

TIMES OF MALTA

Sept. 2019

Joe Axiaq stands timidly at the entrance to SBS offices in Melbourne's Federation square.

"*Merħba* (welcome)," he says with a smile, as he whisks me into the enormous building. This soft-spoken man is the last bastion of the Maltese language on Australian public radio.

Australia was, and for many young migrants today still is, the land of opportunity. Workers here enjoy the highest national minimum wage in the world. Work is in abundance and conditions are among the best in the world. But the thousands of Maltese who decided to take the risky leap to Australia also had to endure loneliness and the scar of detachment from their island nation.

In an age before the internet, switching on the local radio and hearing broadcasts in their mother tongue brought a heart-warming smile to the faces of Maltese migrants.

Many of the Maltese who first migrated to Australia are now in their late 60s and as the Maltese-speaking population continues to decline, so too does the demand for Maltese programmes on public radio.

Mr Axiaq is, quite literally, the last of a dying breed.

"SBS radio provides news and programmes in more than a hundred different languages. There has been an increase of workers from Asia, particularly China and India. That's why so many desks carry these two particular flags," he explains as we walk through the newsroom.

The census showed that the community who spoke Maltese in Australia had dropped to around 34,000

Past another cluster of small desks and we finally land on a small cubicle space with photos of Malta on it. "This is where I work from. I hold the only Maltese desk in this office."

Joe Axiaq with Winter Moods lead singer Ivan G Mr Axiaq arrived in Australia in 1974. A year later, SBS started ethnic broadcasting services and that is when he wanted to get involved. "I started off as a volunteer. Then I decided to take broadcasting more seriously so I took a course in media and radio."

For several years later, he worked at the radio station on a part-time basis. But as he became more involved in radio, he decided to take the leap forward and dedicate his full-time hours on SBS radio.

"I had to leave my managerial job at a leading telephony company and pursue a career in radio. In 2005, I became executive producer for the Maltese programmes."

Maltese enjoyed a privileged position in the SBS programming schedule. It was one of the first six languages SBS initially broadcast in, with Maltese community leaders lobbying for its inclusion on the airwaves.

Up until 2013, with Mr Axiaq as executive producer, the Maltese language community enjoyed daily programmes transmitted on SBS radio. He had six journalists working on Maltese language productions.

"Things changed after the 2012 census results. SBS had to undergo serious revision in the programme schedules after it had remained unchanged for almost 20 years. The census results showed that the community who spoke Maltese in Australia had dropped to around 34,000. These results also showed that there were other ethnic communities which were growing rapidly. SBS, understandably, had to address this change in demand."

From a team of seven broadcasters, the Maltese representation at SBS offices was reduced to one. "And now here I am. The last one," he tells me defiantly, as he explains how daily programmes have now been reduced to just twice a week.

Like his fellow producers, he had to adapt and evolve. Nowadays, radio producers provide an on-demand service and podcasts which can be heard online.

For Mr Axiaq, the service offered by SBS is relevant to the Maltese community now more than ever.

“Through SBS radio, we are still reaching an isolated segment of the Maltese community in Australia who is not able to use the internet to keep in touch. We tend to assume that everyone has access to unlimited information through the simple touch of a button. When we make these assumptions, we tend to forget about these senior Maltese nationals in Australia.”

Throughout his long career at SBS, he has had the opportunity to interview dozens of Maltese political leaders and MPs who landed in Melbourne or Sydney for an official visit.

With former Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi.

“I have interviewed presidents, prime ministers, members of parliament and archbishops. But one thing which always amazes me is how when they’re here, irrespective of their political colour, they conjure this high sense of unity among the Maltese community in Australia.

“I have also interviewed people who were willing to tell their story of how they came to Australia. And it’s then when you realise that coming this far away from home is a story of pain and sacrifice. But they are also stories that show you how the Maltese are a determined people who adapt easily in order to survive.”

Future ‘not promising’

Research shows that the average Maltese SBS radio listener is over 65 years old. That means many of the radio shows Mr Axiaq produces could soon become irrelevant as they lose all their audiences.

“The future does not look promising,” he admits. “Not only for the Maltese programmes on SBS, but for all the government services offered to the Maltese community in Australia. My dream is to have some form of Maltese content on SBS radio after I leave this place.”

But he understands that the services offered at SBS work in direct relationship with the demand

or that language. And although future generations of Maltese migrants will most probably not speak Maltese, one can only hope that they are in some way reminded of an island far away which their forefathers used to call home.

It-Tifel li baqa’ rieqed ta’ Joe Axiaq

(ritratt li xxokkja lid-dinja fl-2015 kien ta’ Aylan Kurdi, tifel ta’ tliet snin li l-gisem tiegħu spiċċa mkaxkar mal-mewg fuq xtajta fit-Turkija, qisu rieqed. Aylan, huh u ommu mietu fl-aħħar attentat iddisprat biex jaslu fejn il-graba tagħhom fil-Kanada. Aylan twieled fis-Sirja meta diġà kienet bdiet il-gwerra. Missieru biss baqa’ ħaj meta l-familja ħarbet fuq dghajsa wara li kien irrappurtat li l-applikazzjoni tagħhom għal refuġju ma kinitx aċċettata).

It-tifel li raqad fuq ir-
ramel
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tidħaq lill-imqajmin;
baqa’ rieqed johlom il-
ħolma

ta’ meta jikber u jikkarga azzarin,
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u ħaduh fuq dghajsa ’l bogħod
fejn isalvaw l-imgharrqin.

It-tifel li dahal mal-mewg
baqa’ rieqed fuq ir-ramel
jistenna ’l huh, lil ommu
jaslu mal-mewg tal-mitlufin.
U holom li tilef triqtu
u qiegħed f’bieb il-ġenna
jilqgħuh hemm huh u ommu
mal-Madonna u l-Bambin.

Joe Axiaq (Melbourne, Awstralja)
05/01/16



Grazzi mill-qalb, tal-magażin li ġimgħa wara l-oħra, tiegħu ħsieb tippubblika, wara li tikteb u tiġbor l-informazzjoni flimkien u tissettja kollox m’mod għaqli li jolqot l-għan. Mhix haġa faċli li tipproduċi biċċa xogħol bħal din; u int ilek tagħmel dan, għal snin sħaħ bla waqfien. Meta kollox qed inin fil-komunità tagħna u qegħdin nitilfu servizzi u attivitajiet fil-komunità li konna mdorrija bihom, magażin bħal dan jagħmillek il-kuraġġ li l-preżenza u l-ħajja Maltija għadha qawwija u b’saħħitha fl-Awstralja. Jalla l-Bambin ikompli jagħtik is-saħħa u l-kuraġġ biex tkompli b’din il-biċċa xogħol matul l-2020 u għal ħafna snin wara. Joe

Malta Rugby League (MRL)

NEVER GIVE UP

WHAT'S COMING UP IN 2020?

Feb - International 9's
Feb - Junior Heritage Pathways
March - Malta XIII
April - Masters
May - Domestic Championship
June - Womens and Mens Test
July - Locals v Expats Origin
Oct - 2 x International Tests
Nov - Euro Championship



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2019 INGUARDIA
RE-ENACTMENTS AT
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12 19
January
11.00hrs - 11.45hrs

Heritage Malta VisitMalta.com



In Guardia! 12 & 19 January

Fort St Elmo, Valletta For this historical re-enactment at Fort St Elmo, the Fort will open at 1000 hours, with In Guardia! starting at 1100 hours. The National War Museum will open at noon. **Price:** €10 for adults, seniors and students, €5 children. Tickets for the National War Museum only are available on the day from noon onwards (at normal admission prices).



The glorious History of Valletta Football Club is famous for its players. Here is an extract of two of its famous players taken from the Hall of Fame;

<http://www.vallettafc.net/>

VALLETTA SOCCER PLAYER CHARLIE WILLIAMS

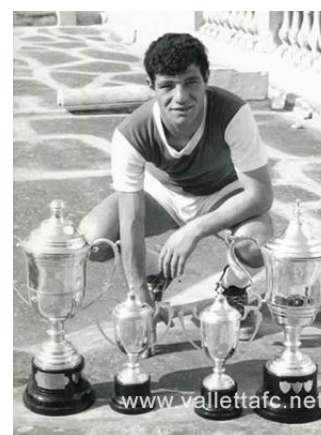


Charlie Williams was born and raised in Valletta, Malta on 15th of February 1944. Charlie learned to play the beautiful game of soccer in the streets of Valletta, often playing with a cloth ball or a tennis ball since a very young age. At the tender age of ten, he started playing organized soccer for the Valletta Lilywhites in the Valletta youth league which used to be played at the Xara Grounds (i.e. the Independence Arena in Floriana) every Sunday morning in front of huge crowds.

Charlie entered Stella Maris College when he was 11 years old and quickly established himself as one of the top players that Stella Maris College ever had. Despite only being 11 years old, he represented his school's top team on a regular basis.

Between playing at his school and his local Valletta Lilywhites team, Charlie would train and play soccer an average of 4 hours per day, 7 days a week.

During his playing days at the Independence Arena, he was discovered by Valletta FC officials and was asked to join Valletta FC at the age of 13 years old. At 16 years old, Charlie was the captain of the Valletta FC minors



team, while also playing for the under 21 team and the Valletta FC reserves team on a regular basis.

By now everybody in both Valletta and Malta was seeing Charlie Williams' potential in the game of soccer, and consequently, the Malta Football Association (MFA) quickly picked him to represent Malta as a youth International.

*St Joseph Str Valletta Lillywhites team
Charlie Williams sitting far right.*



Charlie Williams made his Valletta FC debut at age 17 and made the number 4 shirt his own. He quickly became

Valletta's mainstay, playing the important role of a midfielder.

Charlie was considered to be one of the strongest players in Malta during the 60's and also one of the top technical players. He scored many important goals for Valletta FC and to this day Valletta fans still talk about the amazing goal he scored against Norwich City FC. Another crucial goal that Charlie scored was against Floriana FC 3 minutes from time to give Valletta FC their 1962/63 championship.

During his stay with Valletta FC, Charlie Williams won all the honours. He won the League Championship, Scicluna Cup, FA Trophy and the Cassar Cup.

He represented Valletta FC in European competitions, playing against Dukla Praha in the UEFA Champions League (formerly the European Cup) and against Real Zaragoza in the UEFA Europa League (formerly UEFA Cup Winners' Cup).

At the age of 18, Charlie Williams made his International debut playing for the Malta National Football Team against Italy C. Charlie also played for the Malta National Football Team at the Liguria, Italy tournament where Malta finished in 3rd place, beating Italy and tying Holland.

At the age of 23, Charlie was already a Maltese soccer star, so it was not a surprise when first Norwich City FC, and then the newly formed professional soccer league in the USA, National Professional Soccer League (NPSL), were recruiting Charlie.

Unfortunately, for both Valletta and Malta, in 1967 Charlie decided to sign a professional contract to play in the NPSL, which later became the NASL. Charlie was a pioneer in the game of soccer in America. He spent 10 years playing in different leagues in the USA.

Charlie Williams' transfer fee in the 1967 season was in the region of \$5,000 which was paid by his American team, to Valletta FC. It was by far the biggest transfer fee ever paid to any Maltese club in those days where weekly wages in Malta were around \$20 or 7 Maltese pounds.

After his American soccer playing days were over, Charlie retired from playing and decided to take up a coaching career. He did this with huge success as well, and in 1995 he was voted Best Coach in the State of New York. Charlie Williams was also the owner of his own Soccer Academy in the USA, a school which he operated from 1993-2006.

Charlie retired from soccer activities and decided to move back to his home country of Malta in 2010. Charlie Williams is a true Valletta born and raised icon in Maltese soccer, as witnessed by the new issued book called "Gheruq Beltin" ("Valletta Roots") which features top Valletta born individuals that made Valletta and Malta very proud.



WENZU GABARETTA

Wenzu Gabaretta was born in Alexandria, Egypt in 1917 of Maltese Parents. Gabaretta originally played at centre forward, but he preferred to play in goal and on leaving school, he joined Melita FC of Alexandria as a goalkeeper. He was soon rated as the best goalkeeper in the city. In 1936 he felt the urge to return to his father's land and it was not long before his talents were recognised by the Tigers of Floriana. He was an instant success and at the end of the 1936-37 season, he was snapped up by St George's. Gabaretta's career really came into its own after the war when he established himself as the best goalkeeper on the island. His record speaks for itself and one would need a whole volume to describe all the exploits of this colourful personality. Yet, despite his great goalkeeping

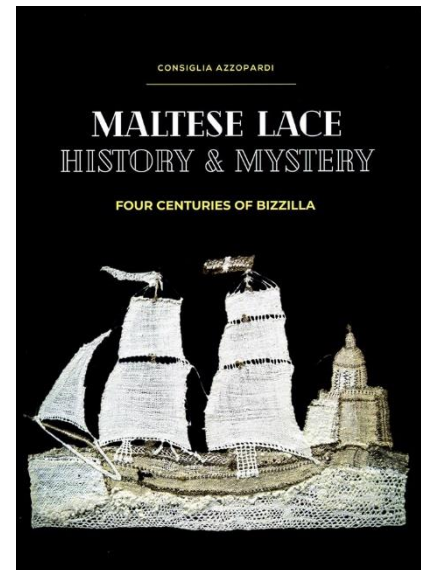
abilities, Gabaretta did not win many honours. This was perhaps the only anti-climax of an otherwise illustrious career. In a career spanning over 15 seasons, he only won three major honours. An FA Trophy, a Cassar Cup and a Victory Cup medal are meagre rewards for such a great football personality. Apart from St George's Gabaretta played with Floriana Tigers, Floriana FC, Sliema Wanderers, Valletta FC and Rabat FC.



(Taken from:

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Maltese Lace: History and Mystery: Four Centuries of Bizzalla



Maltese Lace, History & Mystery - Four Centuries of Bizzilla
Price: €120

Available from our shop in San Gwann, the Malta Post Book Store in South Street, Valletta and online: bit.ly/MalteseLaceHistoryMystery

Consiglia Azzopardi is making a substantive contribution to chronicling the history and technique of Maltese Lace from its origins to the present day, worthy of her long scholarly commitment to the topic. *Maltese Lace, History & Mystery: Four Centuries of Bizzilla* is ultimately a labour of love. It is put forth by a lace maker who not only practises the art herself but also actively seeks out others to encourage and promote the tradition. For Consiglia, lace-making is a passion as much as a trade.

Lace-making is a deeply embedded part of Maltese culture people take great pride in. It is rooted in an industry that has evolved over a dozen generations and occupied many thousands of women over the years. This is ultimately their story recounted in the context of the people and events that brought them together, the ups and downs of the lace market, and the many outside influences that further define Maltese history.

Beautifully illustrated, meticulously documented, and written in a nuanced style that honours both the peasant artisans and their more affluent patrons, *Maltese Lace: History and Mystery: Four Centuries of Bizzilla* is sure to appeal to all those who truly appreciate how the art of lace-making can bring people together across continents and across the centuries. Joseph Roebuck, MD, PhD



MALTA UNITES TO PROVIDE A HELPING HAND WITH AUSTRALIAN BUSH-FIRES

It seems like anything anyone can talk about right now, all around the world, is the ongoing Australian bush-fires, and rightly so.

Over the past week, the

Australian bush-fires have reached a whole new level of danger, pushing countless amount of people out of their homes, and leading various species to extinction.

And while Australia is miles away, Malta is still coming together to do whatever we can to provide a helping hand. And here's how you can do your bit! People from all over the island have been urged to donate whatever they can to the cause. (Bay Radio – Malta)

Rugby community left shocked by death of Leo Mifsud

Tributes have been paid to former Malta international rugby player Leo Mifsud.

The former Falcons player, from Valletta, passed away suddenly at the age of 50.



Kavallieri (Knights) Rugby Club described him as 'a true gentleman on and off the pitch' in a post on social media. Malta Rugby Football Union president Kevin Buttigieg added: 'Malta rugby has lost a real gentleman. 'Leo was always that guy who puts a smile on your face. 'He was a solid player on the pitch and a gentle giant off the pitch.' 'Leo was in the first ever international team that played for Malta against Moldova. 'He will be missed by many a true gentleman has left us.'



Bathed in almost 3,000 hours of sunshine and 546mm of rain – weather for 2019

2019 ended on a rather chilly note as the air temperature dropped to a lowest minimum of 7.6°C on the last two days of the year and hail pelted parts of the islands.

However, December was generally warmer, sunnier and considerably drier than the climate norm, the Met Office said in a statement. In contrast, the year started with a wetter-than-average January, which produced 99.8 mm of much-needed precipitation.

Having drenched the islands in 107.4 mm of November rain and contributed circa 19% of the year's total rainfall, the eleventh month of the year was the wettest of 2019. M

arked by a total absence of rain, on the other hand, June was the year's driest month as well as one of six months in 2019 to produce rainfall levels that fell short of respective monthly quotas.

Registering a highest maximum air temperature of 37.8°C amid the first heatwave of the meteorological summer, last June became the hottest one on record since 1923.

Exactly a month later, as a second heatwave rippled across the island, the mercury rose even further to hit 39.6°C and establish the 9th of July as the hottest day of the year.

While the sea offered some respite from the sultry weather to many tourists and locals, monthly sea surface temperatures were higher than average throughout the year, bar in May.

The 23rd of February was the year's coldest day, seeing the air temperature dip to a frigid 3.7°C and a severe Gregale storm batter the Maltese islands with winds blowing at a maximum speed of 54 knots. A total of 47 thunderstorms were reported at the Meteorological Office throughout the year, with October taking the title of stormiest month of 2019 after having clocked up an above-average total of 11 thundery days.

In 2019, sunshine was certainly not in short supply, with the sun making an appearance for a full 2992.1 hours. July was the sunniest month of the year, during which the sun shone for just over 368 hours.

Despite being the duller month of 2019, December outshone the climatic norm by almost 14 hours, treating visitors and islanders to more sunshine than expected at this time of year.



WE ARE BEAUTIFUL BLACK

Rania Tajuri in Paola, Malta.

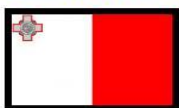
"A person's skin colour doesn't define him/her. Underneath that skin, is a soul, a heart, a personality. If we had to look beyond the physical appearance and look more carefully at the person underneath, we would be making a huge step forward.

About 28 years ago, when I was in primary school, I remember I felt very sad when I heard children saying: "We're not going to play with her because she's black." I used to go back home bitter and sad because the other children wouldn't play with me. Nowadays, I feel that the situation has improved significantly, in terms of how locals look at me and treat me. They're far more accepting.

Nowadays, my friends are happy when I'm around. Many still think that I'm a foreigner. Even when I'm working, as a nurse, some patients think that I'm a foreigner. Whenever I hear a racist comment from a patient who doesn't know that I've understood every single word, I try to reason with them. They're certainly shocked when I speak back in Maltese. Malta is starting to embrace diversity. Do you know what my children say to me? "Mum, don't be sad because people say you're black. We are beautiful black." That's what their teacher taught them last year and they remembered it.

I believe that the younger generation are more accepting of people from different cultures. I think that the older generations are somewhat more skeptical. One has to bear in mind that we're no different or no less equal than white-skinned folk."

Learn to speak



Maltese

**With Skola Maltija Sydney
at the George Cross Falcons
Community Centre Gringila**

**Children's and Adult Classes commencing
Term 1 2020**

Contact Annemarie on 0405 126 444 or
georgecrossfalcons@gmail.com
to request an enrolment information pack



Skola Maltija Sydney is a Program of Akkademja Maltija ta' NSW Inc.
Supported by the NSW Community Languages Schools Program, NSW Department of Education

<https://www.facebook.com/skolamaltijasydney/>

George Cross Falcons Community Centre-Gringila NSW

We are now taking enrolments for 2020!

During our lessons, we not only learn how to read, write and speak Maltese, but share knowledge and stories about the history, culture and traditions of the Maltese people in Malta and Australia. Primary class will commence on Saturday the 8th of February, and Adult Beginners class starting on Thursday the 13th of February.

Please contact Annemarie via phone, email or Facebook Private message for more details.



Oasi Foundation volunteer wins national award

Marisa Scicluna has won the National Award for Voluntary Work in recognition for her long years of service in support of the Oasi Foundation. The award is organised by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector and is presented by the President.

Ms Scicluna started working within Oasi since 1997 and has set up a group of some 60 volunteers supporting Oasi through a range of fund-raising

activities. She had also personally supported many families of drug victims using Oasi's services. During the same ceremony, Gabriella Meli won the award for young volunteers. The Migrant Offshore Aid Station won the award for volunteer organisations while Tangiers International Company Limited won the award for volunteer corporates.

"I often speak to my bird because he's my friend. In the shop, we let him out of the cage but he goes back in by himself. It's true that he's not free but that's his life. And he's not suffering. He reminds me of the film "The Legend of 1900"- about a man who was born and raised on a ship. That's where he remained because he didn't know any better."
— Natalie in Hamrun.



MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal of the Maltese Diaspora





THE FEAST OF ST. HELEN BIRKIRKARA, MALTA

"Our work throughout the year comes to light during the local feast. This is voluntary work but it's also our passion. During the year we have several activities, not only related to the local feast but also with the local band club and other religious feasts such as the Holy Week and the Annual musical concert. There are different types of volunteers, some are here all year round, others show up every now and then and some appear during the week of

the feast. I believe that in the South of Malta feast celebrations are still huge but what makes this feast special is that there is a strong devotion towards St Helen and the fact that the procession is held on Sunday morning. I always look forward to the feast but at the same time it can be a headache because you have to make sure that everything goes smoothly and there's no trouble. The element of competition and rivalry makes a feast more interesting. I'm not referring to insults or fighting or hate speech; I'm talking about sensible rivalry that challenges youths to work harder and prepare for a greater feast."

with Antoine Smile Sammut, Henry Bray, Luke Camilleri, Kyle Saliba, Edward Cutajar, Kerstin Falzon, Kurt Agius, Sunnery James & Ryan Marciano, Antoine Borg, Duncan Xuereb and Renal Caribbean in Birkirkara, Malta.



THE ART OF GANUTELL

"Ganutell was a monastic craft. It was how nuns earned their living. I started learning this craft when I was 15 years old. I learnt it from the Ursuline sisters in Valletta. Every petal represented a prayer. They taught me the technique and with a lot of practice, I perfected my skill.

I have orders for the next seven years. You can't rush this kind of work because it requires a great deal of time, patience and precision. I take it as a challenge. My greatest satisfaction is seeing my work displayed in churches. I never say, "I'm done" or "I'm ready" because I believe that there's always room for improvement. I try to do my work to the best of my abilities because there's my reputation on the line. I do this kind of work all year round. When I'm making ganutell, I try to adhere to the subject as closely as possible. I think of the place or the location and then choose the colours and the flower types to go with it. This is not a part-time job, this is my whole living. This is my life. I'm always on the go. I don't do this only for profit, I do this work because it's my passion."

— Joshua from Tarxien.



I SPEAK MALTESE WITH MY CHILDREN

"Although I live in Australia, I speak in Maltese with my children, and sometimes in the local dialect as well ("Melliehi"). There's no snobbery or fuss. I've been away for 37 years now. First, I visited my sister in Australia who encouraged me to move there. Eventually, I moved there. I come to Malta every two years- to visit my father who has grown old but is still alive and well. Malta holds a prominent place in my heart. I believe that God has granted me far more than I deserve."

— Anne from Mellieħa.

<https://www.facebook.com/thepeopleofmalta/>



**BUS TO PORTARLINGTON FAMILY PICNIC
SUNDAY 26TH JANUARY 2020**



Bus leaves from Sunshine at approx 8am
and will leave Portarlington approx 5pm
Cost: \$20 per person
For bookings contact Louis Ph 0432 498 536

Maltese Own Band Philharmonic Society Inc.

Postal Address: PO Box 76 Sunshine VIC 3020

Email: malteseownband@gmail.com

Instagram: www.instagram.com/malteseownband

Facebook Page: facebook.com/malteseownband

An event that we are organising for the Maltese Community in Melbourne on Sunday 26th January 2020. We are also interested in booking stallholders to hold a stall at the event on the day.

Regards, Danielle Ward-Smith Secretary

THE MALTESE OWN BAND PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY INC
AND THE PORTARLINGTON CRICKET CLUB PRESENT THE

**2020
Portarlington Family Picnic**

- Music by the Maltese Own Band
- The award winning Andrew Portelli and his Elvis Tribute Show
- Traditional Maltese Music
- Social Bocci Games
- Bingo
- Jumping Castle
- Childrens Entertainment
- Community Market Stalls
- And much more!

26 January 2020 Opens at 10 am
Portarlington Cricket Ground – Sprout Street
Entry: \$5 donation per car or
Gold Coin Donation for Walk ins

For more information
email malteseownband@gmail.com




**A MASSIVE THANK YOU TO
OUR BRAVE FIREFIGHTERS WORKING
TIRELESSLY ACROSS AUSTRALIA**

“THANK YOU!!!!”



**WE APPRECIATE
ALL YOU DO**

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**IF YOUR ORGANISATION,
COMMUNITY, CLUB OR
ASSOCIATION IS PLANNING EVENT
SPREAD THE WORD AND SEND US
THE INFORMATION AND WE
PUBLISH IT AT NO COST.**



**Share it with others
send it to us**



Australia Day Celebration

Organised by the

Maltese Community Council of NSW

Time: 4:00pm to 6:00pm

Entry & Parking Free

Light Refreshments

Sunday 19th January 2020

Holroyd Function Centre

Waratah Room

17 Miller Street Merrylands



MALTESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL OF NSW

A division of the Maltese Community Council of NSW Inc.

Established in 1999

Learn Maltese!

Learn the Maltese language, the culture, lifestyle, cuisine, traditions and about the amazing history of the magnificent Mediterranean islands of Malta and Gozo.

Our trained and experienced teachers are qualified in language teaching and have Maltese study credentials.

Classes available for students from 6 yrs to adults at all levels of ability in the Maltese language.

Classes are held at

Saturday mornings 9:00 am – 11:15 am

Horsley Park Public School

1759 The Horsley Drive, Horsely Park NSW

(entry from Walworth Road)

~ENROLMENT DAY~

Saturday 1st February 2020, 9:00 am to 11:30 am

Classes for Term 1 commence on Saturday 8th February 2020

For more information:

Email: malteselanguageschoolnsw@hotmail.com

mobile: 0400-376-607

10 BENEFITS OF LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE

1. Boosts brain power
2. Improves memory
3. Sharpens the mind
4. Enhances decision making
5. Your first language is improved
6. Improves academic performance
7. Increases networking skills
8. Provides better career choices
9. Enhances ability to multitask
10. Keeps the mind young and active

Eton Institute

AHNA NITKELLMU

BIL-MALTI

