



CONSULATE OF MALTA IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER

FRANK L SCICLUNA - LINKING THE MALTESE DIASPORA

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We thank our readers for making the **Maltese Newsletter** number 1. Besides being preserved at the Malta Migration Museum in Valletta, our journal is read by many politicians in Malta and Australia, government departments and agencies and thousands of Maltese and non-Maltese in Malta and all over the world. We thank you for your emails, input and support during 2014.

We hope that we receive the same next year 2015



selection from our Readers' emails



Ghaziz Sur Scicluna, Grazi u prosit ghan-Newsletter tieghek mimlija informazzjoni utli ghal min ghandu ghal qalbu dawk il-Maltin kollha li kellhom ihallu xtutna biex isibu l-bicca tal-hobz. Minn qalbi nixtieq nibda biex lilek bhala editur u mbaghad lill-Maltin kollha li jaqraw in-Newsletter tieghek kull gid u barka mis-sema ghall-Milied hieni u Sena Tajba mimlija sahha u sliem. Lina Brockdorff (nèe Mahoney) Pembroke, Malta.



We would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family blessings at Christmas time and may you be surrounded by love and happiness. Wishing you peace and happiness for the New Year. Thank you for producing such a top quality Maltese Newsletter. Your hard work and input is appreciated by many. We look forward to receiving each edition. Best wishes, Martese & Cliff

Wright



Words cannot express the joy that we feel when we read your most informative and very interesting Newsletter. We never stop to be amazed at the quality of the material that you always present. Well done and may God watch over you and keep you in good health so that you can keep on doing this most valuable work for the community at large. Along with my husband Frank, our seven children, sixteen grandchildren and three great grandchildren we wish you, all your family and all the readers of the Newsletter a very Happy and Holy Christmas and may the New Year bring joy, peace, good health and abundant blessings to all. Best regards, Carmen Testa, OAM, MQR.



Dear Frank, thanks for another wonderful issue of the Maltese Newsletter. GRAZZI u XEWQAT SBIEH!!

Nispera li jkollok Milied tajjeb u hieni. Georgina Scillio (Melbourne)



Merhba u xewqat sbieh min Malta Ghal festi li gejjin u wkoll ghas-sena l-gdida. J'Alla il-paci u s-sahha ikunu maghkhom dejjem. Nick Bonello (Malta)



Grazzi. Lil khom ukoll hbieb tal-gurnal Malti. Bhal issa jien qed ma' t-tifel fl'Amerka fejn ghadu kemm sar sacerdot u il-bierah qaddes l-ewwel darba. Kemm l'odinazzjoni u l-ewwel quddies a t tnejn kienu sbieh ferm. Sahha u Alla maghna. Lino Farrugia (Adelaide SA)



Dear Frank, Thank you for the card and I reciprocate with all my heart. Thank you also for your wonderful "Maltese Newsletter" I really look forward to receive it as it is so informative. Keep up with the good work. In the meantime I wish you and your family a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year. Lino Vella & Rita NSW Australia



Thank you for all the work you put into the Maltese Newsletters. We really enjoy them thoroughly. Wishing you both and all your readers a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Marie and Robert Chabert (Azzopardi) - Adelaide, South Australia



With these greetings, we wish to share with you a booklet of Christmas Songs in Maltese, that Clemente has just published online. To view this booklet, please click on <http://online.fliphtml5.com/bxaj/heuh/>. May the love that came with the birth of our Lord, the joys that were heralded, and the blessings that were bestowed upon us shine upon you on Christmas and always, Dr. Clemente and Mary Zammit (Victoria)



Both Myriam and I wish to reciprocate your kind greetings May Baby Jesus keep you and grant you all that you wish for God Bless. Joseph & Myriam Pavia

Treasurer - Vice President - Friends of Australia Association (Malta)
Emigrant's Commission 1, Castile Place - Valletta, Malta



May I wish you, your family and your staff a very happy Christmas and the best for the New Year, I also I thank sincerely and wish you the best for publishing that extremely informative "The Maltese News Letter". Thanking you again, I really appreciate the news contained in that News Letter with great appreciation..

Sincerely, Dr. Victor Chircop-Sullivan



Wishig you, your family and all the readers of this wonderful newsletter a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year - Nixtieq lilek, il-familja u l-qarrejja ta' dan il-gurnal Milied hieni u Sena Gdida mimlija hena.

Dr. Joseph Pirootta – Malta High Commission, Canberra, Australia



Grazzi mil gdid ghx-xoghol kollu biex tipproduci dan il-gurnal. Dejjem nistennih u naqrah bil-herqa.
Father Norbet Bonavia MSSP



We like to thank you for sending us the Maltese Newsletter during the year, and we like to wish you, your good wife and all the family, a happy holy Christmas and a healthy blessed New Year. Charlie and Margaret Mifsud.



I take this opportunity to thank you for your great service to the Maltese community in south Australia I commend you on the weekly newsletter, many are those that do not apprehend what it takes to produce a weekly newspaper with so much info and graphics that require research and more often than not needs editing. Well done Frank

Hilda and I send our seasons greetings to you and Josie. Mr and Mrs Psaila (Adelaide, Australia)



Peter Paul Portelli, the Grandmaster of the Knights and Dames of the Confraternity of St Peter and Saint Paul sends his best wishes to all our readers for a blessed Christmas and a New Year full of God's blessings.

A Message from Ms Jane Lambert High Commissioner to Malta



On behalf of all the team here at the Australian High Commission in Malta I would like to wish the Maltese community in Australia a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We look forward to working with the community during 2015, which will be an important year as it will mark the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign and Malta will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in November. I hope you and your families have a safe and happy holiday

F'isem it-team tal-Kummissjoni Gholja Awstraljana f'Malta, nixtieq lil-kommunita Maltija f'Australia xewqat sbieh tal-Milied u s-Sena it-tajba.

Ahna herqana li nahdmu mal-kommunita matul il-2015, li se tkun sena importanti ghax se timmarka l-100 anniversarju tal-Kampanja ta' Gallipoli u Malta se tilqa' il-Kapijiet tal-Gvernijiet tal-Commonwealth ghal-laqgħa li jmiss f'Novembru li gej. Nispera il inthom u l-familji tagħkom ikollkom festi ferhana u bla periklu.

Jane Lambert High Commissioner
Australian High Commission Malta



Merry Christmas
from Australia

GUBLEW TAD-DEHEB



Kien Fr Stanely Tomlin, li bil-għajnuna tal-komunità tas-Socjetà Missjunarja ta' San Pawl, u bil-għan li jkun benniena ta' vokazzjonijiet, waqqaf il-Kulleġġ Missjunarju ta' San Pawl (magħruf ukoll bħala Sant'Agata) fir-Rabat. Din is-sena, dan il-Kulleġġ qiegħed jiċcelebra l-ħamsin anniversarju. Wasal iż-żmien li kull min b'xi mod kellu, jew għandu x'jaqsam ma' dan il-Kulleġġ, sew jekk student, ġenitur jew edukatur, iħares lura u jirringrazzja lil Alla għall-grazzji kbar li għaddiena minnhom.

Il-bidu tal-Kulleġġ kien pjuttost fqir. Kamra fl-ewwel sular u qalb ġeneruża laqgħu l-ewwel studenti. Għal ħafna snin, l-għalliema kollha kienu membri fis-Socjetà Missjunarja ta' San Pawl. Imma peress li s-Socjetà ta' San Pawl trid tmantni l-missjonijiet tagħha barra minn Malta, ħafna membri kellhom iħallu l-Kulleġġ biex jaħdmu fl-artijiet tal-missjoni. Il-providenza ta' Alla ma naqset qatt, u diversi lajċi nqabdu bl-entuzjażmu tagħna u offrew is-servizz tagħhom b'mod volontarju. Fosthom kien hemm is-Sinjuri Mario Farrugia, Victor Apap, Pawlu Mizzi, Josephine Grech, Kilin Spiteri, Charles Theuma, Sister Wallace, Ms. Maggie u oħrajn. Rajna wkoll il-providenza ta' Alla taħdem magħna għaliex minkejja li qatt ma ntabu mizati, il-Kulleġġ baqa' għaddej fuq saqajh. Bosta studenti għaddew mill-Kulleġġ, u llum sabu posthom fis-socjetà Maltija u barranija. Il-Kulleġġ kompli jikber u biż-żieda tal-*Junior School* fl-2011, in-numru ta' studenti huwa bejn wieħed u ieħor ta' 560, immexxija minn mitt edukatur.

Iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-50 anniversarju tinkoraġġina biex bħala komunità nħarsu lura u nirriflettu fuq l-affarijiet sbieħ li rnexxielna nwertqu, filwaqt li nħarsu 'l quddiem lejn il-futur. L-ispirtu ta' dan il-Kulleġġ Kattoliku jħaddan it-tagħlim ta' Ġesù Kristu, realtà li tkompli tissaħħaħ bil-kariżma tas-Socjetà Missjunarja ta' San Pawl. Din il-kariżma tinkoraġġixxi lil kulħadd biex ikun inklussiv fil-mod li jħares lejn il-ħajja. Il-Kulleġġ jemmen f'edukazzjoni ħolistika li tħares lejn l-aspetti kollha tal-personalità tal-istudenti, sew dik akkademika, psikoloġika, soċjali, fiżika u spiritwali. J'Alla Mons. De Piro jibqa' jħares mis-sema din l-opra ta' uliedu

Fr Silvio Bezzina mssp
Rettur

Nota tal-editur: Dan l-artiklu bghatu Father Norbert Bonavia. Fr. Norbert huwa qarrej regolari ta' din l-'Newsletter' u jkontribwixxi materjal għal dan il-gurnal. Filwaqt li nirringrazzjah minn qalbi tal-għajnuna tiegħu ta' matul is-sena u nitolbu biex ikompli jahdem fix-xogħol sieqi tas-socjeta'.



South Australia lights up for Christmas In Adelaide



Christmas lights in Victoria Square, Adelaide (ABC News)

Many South Australians have been enjoying the festive mood in Adelaide's Victoria Square, in the heart of the city, where a giant Christmas tree has been lit up at night.

Others have been taking in the traditional Christmas display based on nursery rhymes and other children's themes on the banks of the River Torrens at Hindmarsh, in the grounds of the brewery. The Adelaide Hills town of Lobethal attracts tourists and locals by the busload at this time of year for its Christmas lights displays on many of the houses and other buildings. Further afield, towns from the Riverland to the south-east are also involved in the Christmas cheer, with light shows, carols services and other activities. Churches across South Australia mark Christmas Day with midnight mass or morning services, as families

gather to share the season.



Best places to watch the Christmas lights 2015 Kobe, Japan **After the Great Hanshin Earthquake in 1995, Italy loaned the city thousands of hand-painted bulbs built in to overarching structures called luminarie to commemorate the victims. The event proved so popular that it became a tradition and the festival is now in its 18th year, with between 3 and 5 million people visiting every year.**

5 Christmas Customs in Malta

Posted by: Grazielle Camilleri



Christmas is celebrated by millions of people around the globe. It is the time of year for family gatherings, prayer, Christmas carols, and Christmas trees and also time for shopping and exchanging gifts. Despite all these things happening, there still exist today a few Christmas traditions, passed on from generation to generation, customs that are unique to the islands of Malta and Gozo. **1. The Sermon of the Child**

Christmas still retains a strong religious element for the Maltese. The participation in churches increases around Christmas with a special attendance on Christmas Day. Churches are full for sermon services with the Midnight Mass still retaining its popularity. One of the oldest traditions would be 'The Sermon of the Child' (Il-Priedka tat-Tifel). A boy or a girl usually aged between 7 and 10 years old is chosen to replace the celebrating priest in delivering the sermon of the Midnight Mass. This special performance is highly anticipated from all persons present that day. For a few months leading to Christmas Day, the parents, brothers and sisters would have helped the child practise the speech to perfection encouraging it to give it their all. It is a highly prized event for every child who is chosen. This lovely tradition is believed to have started in 1883 in the little village of Luqa where a boy called George Sapiano was the first altar boy to deliver the sermon. After the Midnight Mass, it is also a custom for the local parish priest to offer cooked coffee and date cakes (mqaret) to



the members of the community.

2. Children's Procession

In almost every town and village, following the Midnight Mass, a children's procession is organised by the religious society. What happens during this event is that a statue of baby Jesus is carried shoulder high while children walk behind it through the village streets, carrying lamps and lights along the way singing old traditional songs such as 'Ninni la Tibkix izjed' (sleep and cry no more). This heart-warming custom goes way back, when the Saint Dun George Preca had set up the first procession in the Hamrun village in 1921.



3. The Vetches (Gulbiena)

Vetches (gulbiena) are specifically grown in Malta and Gozo in November and December to be used as a Christmas decoration in houses and churches around the islands. It is traditional to sow wheat, grain or even canary seeds, placed on cotton buds in flat pans for about five weeks before Christmas. These are left in dark corners in the house until the seeds produce white and stringy shoots. The Maltese are quite creative with these vetches. I have

seen them used in window sills, in the crib next to the statue of baby Jesus or placed along the front facade of the crib.



4. The Nativity Crib (Il-Presepju)

Another one of the sweetest and oldest Maltese traditions is the Nativity Crib (Il-Presepju). The first-ever recorded crib was found in Rabat and was housed by the Dominican Friars in 1607. The idea of crib building originated in Italy where St Francis of Assisi re-enacted the Birth of Christ. From here it spread all over Europe and eventually the World, each country adapting the crib to its own traditions, trades and style of costumes. Although this is not a purely Maltese tradition (because it is also practised by other countries), along the years the Maltese crib has developed its distinctive features. Cribs are found almost in every Maltese home and each family gives it their personal touch. Depending on

the size and structure of the presentation they are usually built with rustic stones known as 'gagazza', very abundant in the Maltese countryside. In recent years, crib enthusiasts have turned to another medium, the paper mache. This makes cribs more solid and lightweight. Wood and paints are also used. Cribs are then decorated with clay statues (Pasturi) representing The Holy Family, The Magi, the shepherds with their flocks of sheep, the baker, the bag pipe player, folk singers, angels, fishermen, drum players and obviously the simple man who is full of wonder and awe (L-Ghageb tal-Presepju) which all the Maltese joke about. The cribs are embellished with all sorts of interesting decorations including the unmistakable growth of vetch (gulbiena) grown in flat pans some five weeks before Christmas.

5. Traditional Maltese Christmas Lunch and Dessert

Maltese families and restaurants have a wide range of foods at Christmas and the amounts of food served in one day are enough to feed the family for an entire week! By tradition, the Maltese house-wife keeps the fattest rooster, (hasi) especially for Christmas Lunch. This is roasted at the local bakery in a casserole with fresh potatoes and vegetables. The traditional dessert that is served at Christmas is the Treacle Ring, (Qaghqa tal-Ghasel), and the most traditional 'coupe de grace' is the serving of the hot Chestnut and Chocolate beverage, (l-Imbuljuta tal-Qastan). This is made using cocoa, chestnuts, cloves and citrus zest. I'm sure many readers have very fond memories of



Christmas past which are closely linked with nostalgic thoughts of family, love and security. Together with culture and tradition, families worldwide have their very own Christmas trademarks which undoubtedly go a long way into the making of a child's most magical Christmas. May this magical spirit of Christmas descend upon you and all your families this Christmas. A Blessed Christmas to you all!



Sixth edition of Bethlehem f'Ghajnsielem inaugurated by the President

Photographs: MGOZ/George Scerri

Following weeks of hard work by the many volunteers who worked on this very popular Nativity Village, this special event that marks the start of Christmas in Gozo, was Nativity Village. The pageant seeks to replicate, in a live manner, the atmosphere and environs of Bethlehem at the time when Jesus Christ was born over 2000 years ago.



Fr Joe Cardona blessed the commencement of the four-week-long event as the President of Malta together with the Minister for Gozo Dr Anton Refalo, Parliamentary Secretary Stefan Buontempo for Local Councils, Mayor Francis Cauchi, Project manager Franco Ciangura and Christmas in Gozo Chairman Joe Mifsud.

President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca said that she was very impressed with what 'Bethlehem f'Ghajnsielem' has to offer and augured that this village will be a place of unity for all the families during this festive period.

The main attractions in the Nativity Village include a carpenter's shop, the blacksmith, the baker, the tavern and vegetable market, weaver, the craft market, and fields with the shepherds and animals, to name but a few.

Fort Chambray, for the first time will feature prominently in the Nativity Village story, and will be turned into a Roman fortress with soldiers and horses etc. Visitors will also have the opportunity embark on small river crossing using a traditional Maltese boat, this attraction will be inaugurated next week.

There will also be an interactive smartphone application narrating the Nativity story while the visitors walk around the sites of the village. Last year Bethlehem f'Ghajnsielem Nativity Village, achieved the National Record for the largest live crib.

Mata Records officials had measured the land area and the number of actors, which resulted in 20 acres of land and 201 actors, thereby winning the record. More than 20,000 thousand people including children, had visited the attraction during its first week of opening last year. The event will close with the traditional Adoration of the Magi on Sunday, the 4th of January 2015.



7 of Europe's Most Amazing Sweet Treat Alex Conomos



Get to the heart of a country's sweet spot and you're well on your way to understanding the very soul of those people.

Here are 7 delicious desserts..

1. Dobos Torte - This Hungarian beauty was invented 130 years ago; that's impressive staying power in the fickle world of dessert fads (take note cronuts). Five layers of sponge cake and chocolate buttercream are topped with a firm caramel glaze and crushed nuts. Patisier József Dobos pioneered the use of buttercream to extend the cake's shelf life, a clever idea in the pre-refrigeration age. Pick up a slice from any patisserie or cafe throughout the country.



2. Liquid nitrogen ice cream - Cooking with liquid nitrogen is not exactly an age old technique but it has revolutionised ice cream production. Leading the charge is Chin Chin Labs, tucked away in London's Camden markets. Pick your flavour and watch as the ice cream custard mixture is whipped into a frenzy with liquid nitrogen, delivering ridiculously smooth, dense and crystal-free ice cream to order. Saffron and sesame seed ice cream with salty caramel sauce and pistachio crumbs A myriad of curious flavours rotates regularly; try tonka pineapple one week and pumpkin cheesecake the next. They also get creative with their toppings (white chocolate coated potato chips anyone?).



3. Calisson - You can't take two steps in Provence without tripping over a display of these stunning beauties. Each one perfectly almond shaped, they are made from candied fruit paste and marzipan with a thin layer of royal icing. The flavours represent the beautiful produce and colours of southern France.

My favourite place to buy them is La Cure Gourmande. Why L'Occitane hasn't developed a calisson flavoured range is beyond me.



4. Cinnamon Buns - My one-a-day kanelbulle habit kicks in almost instinctively whenever I am in Sweden or surrounds. I first discovered the Finnish version of these beauties at London's Nordic Bakery and have been obsessed ever since. They are an icon, to the point where the Swedes celebrate a National Cinnamon Bun Day (that's the 4th October for anyone planning ahead). Fika (coffee time) wouldn't be the same without this intensely spiced and buttery coil of dough topped with pearl sugar. Swedish cinnamon buns typically contain cardamom as well as cinnamon which gives them a subtle spicy

flavour.



5. Mont Blanc - This dessert is traditionally made with a base of sweet pastry, topped with puréed sweetened chestnuts and whipped cream (resembling the real Mont Blanc). Often the chestnut puree is thinly piped like a mass of spaghetti strands. At the legendary Conditorei Schober in Zurich, they flip their layers around but who cares really, when it tastes this good?



6. Flódni - A traditional Hungarian Jewish dessert made from apples, ground walnuts, poppy seeds and plum jam, spread between thin layers of pastry. The flavours compliment each other beautifully and the combination is subtly sweet. Popular on the Jewish holiday of Purim, flódni is often prepared by Jewish grandmothers and commonly found in bakeries in Budapest's Jewish quarter.



7 Qagħaq tal-Għasel (Honey Rings)

Qagħaq tal-għasel are sweet pastry rings filled with a treacle mixture. Literally translated they are 'honey rings'; but there is absolutely no honey in the recipe. The main ingredient in the filling is treacle. In Maltese treacle is known as *għasel iswed*; so probably that is why they are known as honey rings. Years ago village people used *qastanija*, and not treacle, for their *qagħaq tal-għasel*. This was made by melting down honey-combs after the honey had been extracted from them. In all probability *qastanija* is a corruption of the Italian *castagna*, which means chestnut. It might be that it was so called because the mixture was the colour of chestnuts. But there are absolutely no chestnuts in the mixture. Through the years *qastanija* was substituted by black treacle. For those who have a very sweet tooth, sugar

is added to the filling mixture.

THE MALTESE LIVING IN MALTA, GOZO, AND ABROAD ARE ALL ONE FAMILY. THEY ALL DESERVE TO BE TREATED EQUALLY. THE THOUSANDS OF MALTESE WHO TRAVEL TO MALTA EVERY YEAR STRENGTHEN THE BOND THAT EXIST BETWEEN THEM AND THEY HELP THE MALTESE ECONOMY AND THEY PROMOTE MALTA ALL OVER THE WORLD. THEY STILL LOVE THE MALTESE LANGUAGE, CULTURE, TRADITION FOOD AND ARTS.

THANKS TO PBSTV THE MALTESE IN AUSTRALIA CAN WATCH THE MALTESE NEWS TWICE A WEEK ON SBS 2 TELEVISION AND KEEP UP TO DATE WITH WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OUR HOMELAND - MALTA

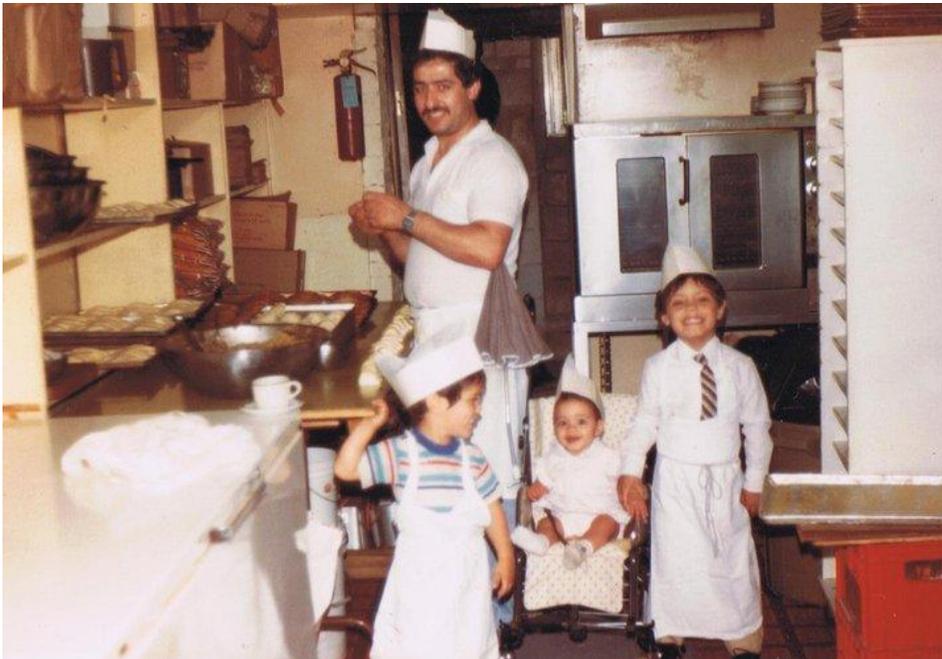
Pastizzi, Qaghaq tal-Ghasel and the occasional gossip ... in Canada

Malta Independent Monday, 25 August 2014,

Tucked away at the west end of The Junction, in Toronto, the bakery shop is extremely popular. Newspaper cuttings, photos and maps of Malta are lined on the wall. On a television screen, a live stream of the Grand Harbour is featured. People make their way in to buy pastizzi (cheesecakes), qaghaq tal-ghasel (honey rings) or to dip some krustini in their tea.

In the area known as Little Malta, local traditions have been kept alive – be it religious processions or the traditional figolla during Easter. Charlie and Antoinette have almost become like trusted family members for the regular customers. Only a few weeks ago, the couple closed the shop for a day, because one of their daughters was getting married. The customers panicked, thinking it had shut down for good. The hub offers a source of comfort, especially for the elder generation.

“We know what they’re going to order as soon as they walk in. They trust us with their stories. We’ve laughed at their jokes, but we’ve also cried with them. News of someone who’s ill or has passed away travels fast, and a cloud of sadness can be felt amongst us,” Antoinette says.



The beginning

Back in the 1920, hordes of Maltese immigrants made their way to Canada. In a basement situated at Dundas Street, in a place known as the Junction, Toronto, they started to meet up, sharing experiences from their home island, and gossiping about mutual acquaintances. It was there the Maltese community in Canada began. It was there the Maltese soccer club and the Maltese band club got together. In fact, over the years, the area became known as Little Malta.

Close by, two Maltese siblings opened up a coffee and pastizzi shop. In 1950s, a church run by Frangiskani was built a few doors up.

Charlie Buttigieg moved to Canada in 1973. Five years later, he moved back to his hometown in Gozo, where he

met his wife Antoinette. Shortly after they moved back to Canada, Charlie started helping out part time at the bakery shop.

During the late 70s, a recession hit Canada and many workers were laid off, including Charlie himself. At the same time, the siblings owning the shop were intending to sell the place. At that point, the married couple considered two options, moving back to Gozo, or buy the bakeshop. Initially, the couple’s plan was to stay in Canada for five years, however thirty years on, they haven’t looked back. And the bakeshop plays a determining factor. The shop offers a wide variety of Maltese tradition food, however pastizzi remain the sole favourite, and it is not only popular among the locals. Foreigners have come to love them, and go to the area specifically to try them out.

Besides the fresh product, the company sells a large number of frozen pastizzi. Customers come from all over Canada bearing large ice coolers to transport the food back to where they’ve come from. Some travel for hours to get to the shop. Some purchase up to 30 dozens of the product. Before 2001, the product was also exported to the United States, however following the 9/11 attacks, the country placed a number of restrictions.

Most foreigners used to refer to pastizzi as cheesecakes. But Charlie and Antoinette wanted to completely abolish the term in their shop. “People would come in asking for them, and we’d tell them we’d run out. They’re let down for a second, before we proceed to ask if they mean pastizzi, in which case, we have plenty,” Charlie says with a smile. Gradually, the Maltese term started being used.

In Canada, people still purchase the local product to celebrate lifetime events – be it christening, weddings, or funeral. It is always the first food item to run out.



A taste of home

Besides offering the traditional foods, Charlie makes an effort to create a home feeling for his Maltese customers, while creating the chance to boast about his home country with the foreigners.

Streaming the live online webcam on screen, customers can see the view of Barrakka, or the Grand Harbour. Last April, along with thousands in Malta and Gozo, customers followed the inauguration of Marie Louise Coleiro Preca as president. During summer, they follow television programmes featuring the local festas.

“Some of the elderly get tears in their eyes, simply at a glimpse

of their hometown,” Antoinette says.

In the surrounding area, the Maltese community still engage themselves in local traditional rituals –the procession on the feasts of our Lady of Sorrows, Santa Marija and the Vittorja. In June, they celebrate Mnarja at a park close by.

A number of local prominent figures have visited The Malta Bake Shop. Guido DeMarco, Censu Tabone, Eddie Fenech Adami, Alfred Sant, Rizzo Naudi and Archbishop Paul Cremona have all been there. Musicians Benny and Tonia even wrote a song called The Malta Bake Shop in Toronto.

Looking ahead

When the couple took over the shop, they were still relatively young and bringing up three young children. From a young age, the children helped around the shop in the own little ways. Today the eldest, Josef is a neurologist leading his own clinic; Antoine is a music director, Holly a cake decorator and Ivy a Mezzo Soprano. But despite having their own profession, they are still very fond of their family’s bake shop. They’ve also considering taking over the shop once their parents retire.

“We’d hate having to sell the shop once we retire. It is part of our family today. At the same time, we’re so proud of what our children have managed to achieve, and we wouldn’t want them to give it up for the business.” Asking them what it’s like working with your spouse, they laugh. “We do have our little arguments, just like every other couple, and we do disagree on certain procedures. But today we both have our roles at the shop, and we try not to get into each other’s way – as much as possible.”

Considering the couple’s love for their home country, I ask them whether they ever considered returning back home. “We have two homes. Malta will always remain our country, but Canada today means family to us – all our children were born and brought up here. Back in 1970s, we said we’d try living abroad for 5 years then head back. 30 years have passed, and we haven’t looked back.”

Besides Charlie and Antoinette, four employees work at the shop during weekdays. Over the weekends that number verges onto six or seven employees. Employees of different nationalities work at the shop – a Brazilian is in charge of the pastry. Another two have Maltese origins – one is half polish, the other half Syrian. Most have managed to learn a few basic Maltese words – at least enough to manage an order request in Maltese..

IL-PUCISSJONI BIL-BAMBIN

Il-Milied hu festa kbira
Li jfakkarna fil-Bambin
Illi twieled f'grotta fqira
Sabiex jifdi l-midinbin!

Kienet lejla hekk imwiegħra
Kesħa niezla, fit-triq ħadd;
Imma dak li kellu jġri
Žgur ma kontu tobsruh qatt.

Žewġ persuni tassew foqra
Kienu jħabbtu l-bibien
Sabiex ftit tal-kenn isibu
Mill-maltemp u d-dagħbien.

Izda ħadd ma lilhom sema'
U tahom saqaf ta' dar,
U allura sabu s-sħana
Ta' ġwejdin baqra u ħmar

Illi kienu rieqda siekta
Ġewwa l-blat f'daqsejn ta' għar
Fi dlam li taqtgħu b'sikkina
Ħlief id-dawl ta' kwiekeb žgħar.

Hemmhekk twieled bin il-bniedem
Bejn Gużepi u Marija –
F'ħakka t'għajn is-sema mtela
B'mijiet t'angli ferreħija.

Din il-ġrajja aħna nfakkru
Hekk kif jasal il-Milied –
Tal-Mużew il-Purċissjoni
Kemm fl-irħula u l-ibliet.

Kien il-qaddis San Gorġ Preca
Fl-annu wieħed u għoxrin
Tas-seklu illi ħalliena
Illi ħallem lill-Maltin

Biex lejliet kull Milied Malti
It-tfal joħorġu bil-Bambin
U jgorrh mimdud f'maxtura
Waqd il-kant t'għanjiet ħelwin.

Din id-drawwa daħlet sewwa
U n-nies lilha tistenna,
Il-fanali t-tfal iġorru
Il-ferħ jixbaħ lil tal-Ġenna.

Lejn it-tmiem dlonk sabi ckejken
Jagħti l-priedka tal-Milied
Li bis-sabar ikun tgħallem -
Għid lil ommu kemm ħin swiet!

O Gesu' ħelwa tarbija
Erga' twieled fil-qalb tagħna;
Aħfrilna ħtijietna kollha –
Irriduk li tibqa' magħna.

Bierek l-inħawi fejn ngħixu,
Ibqa' dieħel ġewwa d-djar
Thalli qatt ħarstek titwarrab
Minn fuq l-adulti u ž-žgħar.

Agħmel li dal-ferħ Miliedi
Jidħol fil-qalb ta' kulħadd;
Inwiegħduk li nagħmlu l-almu
Biex minn hemm ma joħroġ qatt!

Kav Joe M Attard
Victoria Ghawdex



Festive Maltese Christmas Traditions

If you're lucky enough to be spending the December holidays in the beautiful Mediterranean isle of Malta, you'll be treated to sunny weather, delicious traditional dishes and of course, the numerous cultural traditions that make up a genuine Maltese Christmas. Here are a few examples of the Christmas traditions you will experience while travelling in Malta:



Traditional *Presepju*

The majority of Maltese people are devout Catholics, and Christmas on the island is steeped in deep-seated religious traditions. Christmas cribs, known locally as *presepju*, are displayed in churches and homes, with clay figures or *pasturi* making up the Nativity scene. Malta's Christmas cribs are intricately detailed works of art.

Christmas Eve Procession & Midnight Mass

The traditional procession on Christmas Eve has been popular since the 1920s; the procession route is adorned with lights and a life-size figure of the baby Jesus is carried at the front. Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve also plays a prominent role in a traditional Maltese Christmas celebration. The service includes Christmas carols and a reading of the Nativity story by a young boy or girl, aged between 7 and 10, instead of the priest or minister. This long-standing tradition, known as *Priedka tat-Tifel* or the Preaching of the Child, dates back as far as 1883.

Planting Grain

Five weeks before Christmas, Maltese families traditionally sow seeds and grains on dampened cotton buds and leave them to grow in dark corners of the home. The buds eventually produce white grass-like shoots which are used to decorate the Christmas cribs.

Honey Rings & Chestnut Soup

Much of the festive Christmas menu in Malta was inspired by the island's previous British rule, which means tourists will be treated to roast turkey (or sometimes a rooster) with vegetables, mouthwatering fruit-mince pies and good old Christmas puddings. There are also

some traditional Maltese dishes to be tasted at Christmastime; sweet pastries known as *Qaghaq tal-Ghasel* or “honey rings” are a popular festive dessert, while a hot chestnut and cocoa soup known as *Imbuljuta tal-Qastan* makes the perfect winter night-cap after a sumptuous Christmas dinner. Figs and deep-fried date rolls are also popular Maltese Christmas treats.

Oranges for the Queen

Another long-standing national tradition is to send Maltese oranges to the Queen of England as a Christmas gift. The tradition was first started by celebrated Anglo-Maltese journalist and politician Mabel Strickland, and was revived by Malta’s High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Joseph Zammit Tabona, and his wife Susan, in 2009. Six dozen oranges from *Villa Parisio* are presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in a beautifully hand-crafted wooden chest.

With so many fascinating traditions and beautiful cultural celebrations, Christmas in Malta is sure to be a truly special experience.



Republic Street, Valletta, Malta
NOSTALGIA



MEMORIES

Joseph Borg with his mortar shell ashtray

Cultural background ; Maltese

Town and country of origin ; Rabat, Malta

Migration journey ; Valetta Grand Harbour, Malta on 26 February 1950

Place of arrival in Australia ; Sydney on 1 April 1950

First home in Australia: I lived with my parents and four siblings in Nickson St, Surry Hills in inner city Sydney. My uncle secured the house for us before we

came over.

First job in Australia: My dad worked in the spare parts department at Leyland's car factory in Surry Hills when I was 11 years old.

Other Job: Selling newspapers; builder's labourer; TV studio soundproofing; mould polisher and chrome plater at ACI glass manufacturing, Redfern; chrome plater for cars and aircraft at Lucas Aerospace, Zetland – all in inner city Sydney.



Charlie Borg, Joe's father, at The British Flag, Rabat, Malta, late 1940s

"That's Dad in his bar. Over there they're up at four o'clock in the morning. People used to have a drink and a cup of coffee before they go to work. We used to live upstairs and I remember when I was a child we used to steal a bottle of beer and take it upstairs."

Dad was here in Australia in the '30s. There was four brothers [who came to Australia] and [Uncle] Tony was a merchant cook. He jumped ship and ended up in Australia. He went back to Malta once and talked my dad into coming to Australia just before the 1930s. During that time the [Sydney] Harbour Bridge was getting built and they worked on the bridge and the railway.

After about ten years, Dad said to his brothers [he's] going back to Malta. He was going to get married to Mum because they used to write to each other. He worked hard when he was in Australia, made a bit of money, bought the shop in Malta.

[I was born in] 1939. My sister tells me that when the [Second World War] air raids were on, which were every night, we weren't allowed to have any lights, only candles. You could hear the bombing miles away.

We came on a full passage to Australia [via] the Suez Canal, Aden. It was a bit more like a first class passage. It's the *Ocean Victory*. I remember a lot about the ship. It was in poor condition, a wreck. When the ship got here it never went anywhere else, it got scrapped

Joe's mother Josephine and Borg and Vassallo children en route to Australia on the Ocean Victory, February 1950. Joe Borg is standing on the left. His future wife, Annie Vasallo, is crouching at the front.



I'm glad I am a Maltese because their cooking is out of this world! But Australia is my home isn't it? I've got children who are born here.

OBJECT MY DAD USED TO HAVE IN THE BAR



coffee pot That's [an enamel] pot used for coffee in Dad's bar in Malta because there's no electricity. There was gas and a primus in those days.

bar items Dad used to buy whisky from Dewar's for his bar. He bought so many cartons they used to give him ashtrays and whisky jugs.

vases (cannon cartridges)

These are cartridges that were fired from Malta over German planes [in WW2]. We used them [to display] peacock tails. My aunty had peacocks and we used to pluck the tails out of them. They were beautiful.

ashtrays (mortar shells)

They were mortars. They used to light them up and fire them off the ground. They cut the top off and put a Maltese George Cross on it. Now it's an ashtray. They never wasted anything after the war.

salt and pepper shakers (bazooka shells) These salt and pepper shakers were ready to be fired from the bazooka. If that was fired, the top would be lost. Maltese army experts would have diffused them.

trunk We had two trunks. That one had Mum's stuff in it and a bit of jewellery. It's still got the labels [for] where we ended up at Nickson Street, Surry Hills in Sydney.

news article (late 1950s) Dad made the news after he got crushed under a forklift at work. His heart gave away, he died at South Sydney Hospital. An open heart [surgeon] massaged his heart and Dad sort of came back alive. We were there for hours, me and my brother, not knowing what to tell Mum.

car My 1940 Buick was bought second-hand in October 1956 and I've still got it. That was my first car. I was sixteen. In those days there was no seatbelts so I used to have anything up to fifteen people in the car, kids and all. They used to stand on the running boards and hang onto the window.



VISIT THE WEBSITE OF THE MALTESE – AMERICAN ASSOCIATION <http://www.starsandstripesmalta.com/>



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Basetec In the Community

Basetec Services PTY LTD is an Adelaide company specialising in high-pressure pipes for oil and gas projects around the world.



Charles was born in Australia of Maltese parents. He said that, "It is our passion at Basetec that we give back to the community we operate in, fundraising activities are held regularly throughout our offices and highlight the support for varying associations and causes that our people are passionate about. We instill in our staff as part of our company culture, to give back to the people that help make our business the success story that it is today.

Basetec proudly continues to support non for profit organisations as well as industry advocates such as The Water Industry Alliance, South Australian Chamber of Mines Energy, The Industry Capability Network and The Arab Chamber of Commerce just to mention a few.

Managing director Charles Figallo

We thank Charles for supporting the Maltese Community of South Australia and especially for his wonderful and energetic work as CEO of the MALTA ANZAC MEMORIAL COMMITTEE (SA) to raise funds to assist in the building of the magnificent ANZAC War Memorial at the Botanical Gardens, Floriana, MALTA.

Preparations for Joseph Calleja concert in full swing



Preparations for Maltese tenor Joseph Calleja's Christmas concert on December 27 are in full swing.

This concert will be an intimate affair with a venue capacity of just 800 people. Calleja will be accompanied by guest singers and the BOV Joseph Calleja children's choir, under the direction of the soprano Gillian Zammit.

Seats for the concert are available against a donation of €100 each, and can be reserved [online](#).

All proceeds from the event will go towards the BOV Joseph Calleja Foundation, set up last October to help exceptionally talented children in the field of the performing arts to realise their full potential.

The foundation also supports children with difficult social backgrounds and those whose situations are not catered for by existing social support programs.



**NEXT EDITION: ALL ABOUT THE NEW YEAR 2015
SAHHA - HBIEB**