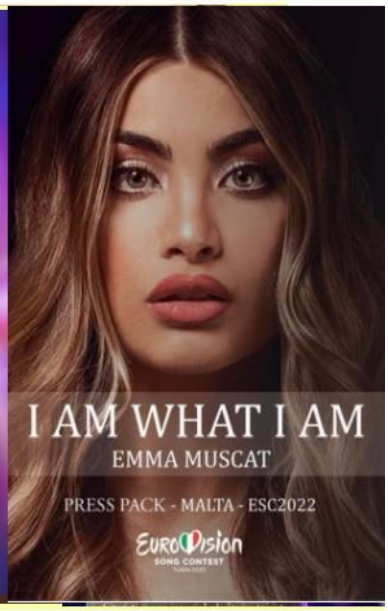
MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

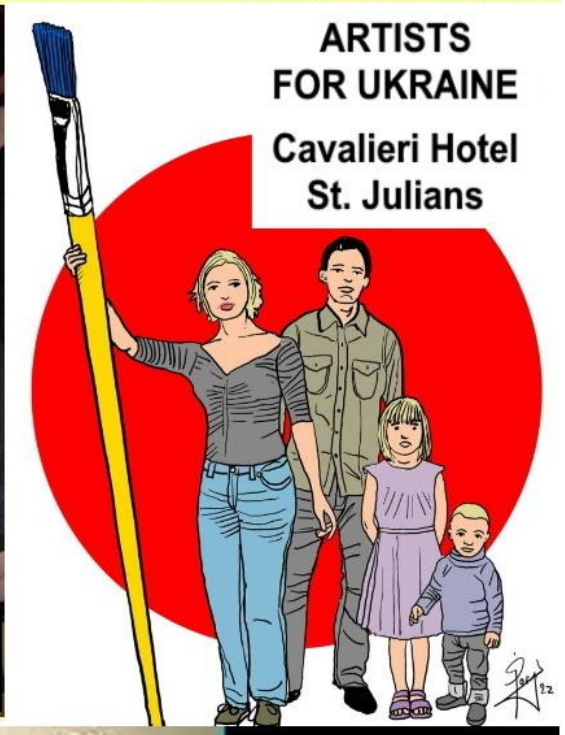
THE JOURNAL OF ALL MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

Editor Frank Scicluna OAM MQR

Contact: maltesejournal@gmail.com



The Hon. Anglu Farrugia, Spekaer of Malta Parliament presenting a Certificate of Appreciation to Agnes Caruana



The Malta International Spring Music Festival

Rest In Peace

JUDGE PETER ZAHRA

ABC NEWS

Respected NSW District Court Judge

Malta High Commission
Australia & New Zealand

Press Release
10/2022 05/05/2022
Subject: **The High Commission of Malta hosted the May Gathering of the Canberra Diplomatic Club at the National Press Club**

The High Commission of Malta for Australia and New Zealand had the privilege of hosting May's gathering of the Canberra Diplomatic Club at the National Press Club on Wednesday, 04 May 2022, attended by Deputy High Commissioner Gail Demanuele and a capacity crowd from the Diplomatic Corps, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Maltese Australian Association of Canberra and Queanbeyan and friends.

In his speech, the High Commissioner H.E. Mr. Mario Farrugia Borg spoke about Malta's strong bilateral relations with Australia, highlighting the Maltese Islands' rich culture and traditions, derived from its abundant history.

He also mentioned that Malta has one of the largest diasporas, estimated around 200,000 Maltese that have integrated and settled in Australia. The High Commissioner emphasised on Malta's huge steps forward in various fields, such as financial services, ICT, gaming, maritime activities, and the film industry. The High Commissioner proudly invited everyone to make Malta their holiday destination, renowned for its beautiful historical places, culture, sun and sea. The High Commission took the opportunity to showcase Malta's rich history by exhibiting Maltese stamps and banknotes, courtesy of President of the Maltese Association of Canberra & Queanbeyan Inc., Mr. John Vassallo. On display, the High Commission had some of Gozo and Mdina glass pieces together with Malta's bobbin lace, the bizzilla, courtesy of Mrs. Victoria Muscat, wife of former High Commissioner, Mr. Charles Muscat. The National Press Club generously served Maltese cuisine, including the traditional Maltese sausage, kapunata (stew vegetable dish) and "patata il-forn" (baked potatoes) for everyone to happily sample and partake.

Carbon dating unravels mystery of Żejtun's secret skeleton trove

New studies shed light on mystery skeletons discovered inside Żejtun church in 1969, and create new avenues for historical inquiry

by **Nicole Meilak**

Skulls galore: the skeletons date from the late 15th century to the 19th century, perhaps giving the lie to the folklore of an Ottoman invasion of Zejtun that led to the death of villagers inside the church (Photo: James Bianchi/MaltaToday)

A new study on the human bones found inside Żejtun's St Gregory's Church has helped unravel the mysteries surrounding the remains and offered an insight into the domestic life of Malta's noble families.

The study comes over 50 years after the skeletal remains were discovered at the church, with NGO Wirt iż-Żejtun celebrating the anniversary by shedding light on the real story behind these remains using the modern technology afforded to archaeologists today.

Carbon dating found that the oldest skeleton found inside the chruch dates back to the late 15th century, while the more recent remains date back to 19th century.

And five of the 35 skulls found at the church did not belong to Maltese people. Indeed, the skulls belong to five women from Sub-Saharan Africa who were likely "slaves" or servants belonging to Maltese noble families. This was corroborated by the parish archives, which show that many African slaves had been baptised and integrated into Maltese society.

Isotope testing further helped researchers identify what sort of diets these people lived on.

From the sample taken it seemed that six people shared a common diet, while one person appeared to eat a more vegetarian diet without fish or meat – namely, one of the five slaves identified during the study.

But this is not the first study of its kind. Wirt iż-Żejtun president Ruben Abela told MaltaToday that another study was carried out by two university academics in the late 1970s, where they determined the exact number of skeletons present, and whether they were adults or children. Some soil found on the remains suggests the skeletons had been buried elsewhere and later placed in the church.

"But this story in itself was always refuted. The staircase leading up the church passageway, as well as the passageway itself, is incredibly narrow – why would someone go through the trouble of transferring the remains to this high area, as opposed to placing the remains in a common burial area near or inside the church? This question added fuel to the folkloristic fire around this church," Abela said.

Human remains discovery

The discovery of these remains goes back to March 1969, when works were being carried out on the roof under the supervision of ĠanMarì Debono. Grezzju Vella, one of the young men working on the roof, found a small crack between two stones and mindlessly began to scrape at it.

After enough scraping he threw a stone in the narrow crack, expecting it to fall down through the roof and onto the floor of the church. But the stone never reached the ground, leading workers to believe there was a passageway between the roof and the church interior.

Being the only worker small enough to fit into the void, Vella ventured into the passageway with a rope to guide him and a box of matches to light the way. He burned through the matches quickly, lighting one after the other so he could explore the passage.

At one point he dropped the box of matches. He went to pick it up, and accidentally brushed his hand against a human skull.

The skeletal remains frightened him heavily, jolting him to escape the passageway – never to return back to the church.

There are some disagreements over who discovered the passageway first: graffiti carvings along the wall suggest that two others entered the same skeleton-laden passageway in 1909, 60 years before Grezzju Vella's own gruesome

discovery. This may have been the origin of the local folk tales of "secret passageways" in St Gregory's church.

Indeed, the church is shrouded in myth and mystery.

One such folk tale builds on the Ottoman Empire's last major attack against Malta, known as "the last attack" (l-aħħar ħbit), when raiders pillaged Żejtun and neighbouring towns. The story goes that the discovered bones could have been the remains of women, children, and elderly who sought shelter and were eventually killed in the church.

Ruben Abela points out that there is no documentation corroborating this story, but it did serve as inspiration for a ballad penned by Walter Zahra – father of famed novelist Trevor Zahra – after the passageway was discovered. "Folk can be beautiful, and everyone enjoys it – it fosters nostalgia for the past."

This isn't the end of the road for this discovery. "Like other studies this raised more questions than it did answers," Abela remarked. Future studies could adopt DNA testing to determine who these people were, while archaeological endeavours throughout the rest of the church building could shed further light on its mysteries.

At this stage, the questions around these remains hinge on the identities of the people buried and how their skeletons ended up in the roof of a church. The current church was built on the site of an older private chapel dedicated to St Mark and St Jacob belonging to the noble Bonici family – could these people have been buried there and eventually placed in this passageway? Could these skeletons have been the remains of such noble families?

The study was funded through the Small Initiatives Support Scheme established by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector. Debra Camilleri, a senior executive within the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, developed the study through her thesis. Bernardette Mercieca, who also works with the superintendence, studied the human bones and catalogued them.

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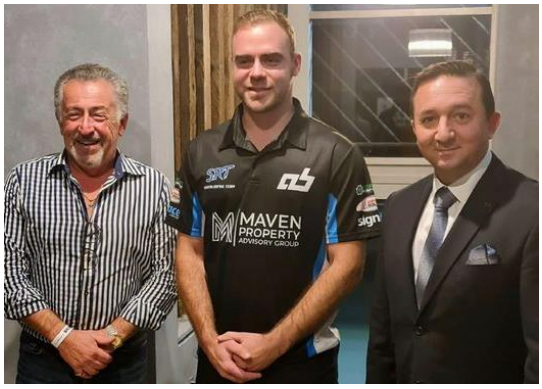
The study was carried out in collaboration with Heritage Malta's Diagnostic Science Laboratories, under the supervision of Matthew Grima



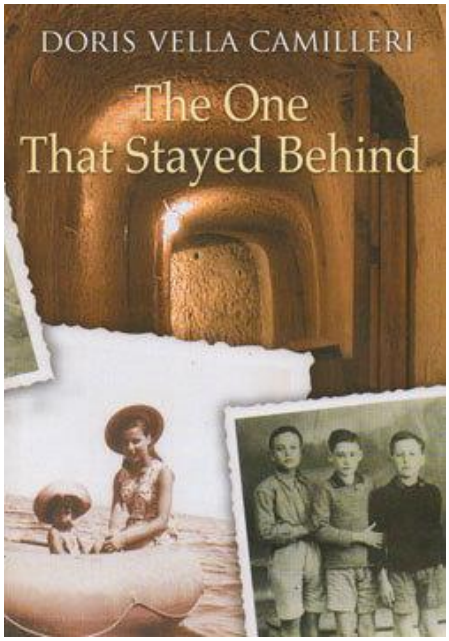
Development Manager at Maven Property Advisory Group, Mr Aaron Borg, gave a presentation about his business, his early achievements and how his resilience, against all odds, also led him to become one of Australia's top racing drivers.

Looking forward to possibly lure Aaron to visit Malta and hold some master-classes in go-cart racing, life skills and professional race car *driving.*

Photo: Sydney Norg, Aaron Borg and Lawrence Buhagiar NSW Consul General

Bernadette Bennie Blanco·

Jerry Casha is visiting his mom, Anna, who migrated to Detroit in 1952. Jerry made the house some pastizzi (yum) and that's his dad's pic on the apron working at the DAC. Anna turned 95 and you can't even tell. Wow!



There was talk of war and all of us even the Maltese trying to help our allies, to fight our enemies, the Italians and the Germans. It was soon realized that the three cities standing on the bastions across the Grand Harbour and close to the dockyard would be a target for the enemy, and the people who lived there, would be in mortal danger. A new kind of aeroplane appeared, and they were Italian planes. They flew very high, never swooping down on us, and did not throw any bombs. Ten they began to drop bombs, but they fell mostly in the sea. Then another kind of plane appeared in the sky, and they were German bombers.

They flew low over our Island, and dropped bombs as well. My father knew most of the farmers on the remote cliffs, and so he decided to move us into a large cave in the cliff. During the day we were given a proper room. My brothers had the greatest fun here, because they were the first to spy the German planes. Then it happened that the steep hills were cut off by barbed wire and became a target practice area for our allies. After a while we went back to our village when the public shelter in our street was complete. Night raids became more frequent, and so our father out bunk beds inside our rock cubicle. Then one Saturday in March 1942, remains in my mind to this day. It was the afternoon and the siren had sounded so often that day that there was no point in going up and down at the end of each raid.

When the O'Briens came down into the corridor, mother was ready to listen. In her dream mother had seen a black ugly sea and in the middle was Our Lady, the Star of the Sea as we used to call it. After a while she saw the heads of many people on the surface, then the sea turned blood red. Vitoria, a neighbour who lived on the same street, appeared in the doorway carrying her two-year old child, and she told them that many torpedoes are falling from the sky. At her words Charlie, just thirteen went off down the corridor to see them. Joseph tried to follow but mother was quick to grab him by his woollen jumper. Then all the lights went out, and I was thrown from my chair. I heard a great clanking of chains and saw a brilliant flash of light as powerful and fast as lightning as it swept down the corridor over all the people huddled there, some sitting, some standing. One great moan from them as if they were breathing their last breath.

Then total silence. I think the blast from the explosion must have got into our little room for I seemed to remember nothing for some time. When I awoke, no one was moving or speaking. Everyone seemed to be buried in a black pit. I tried to speak, where are we but no answer. A voice answered me, and it was my mother. I ask my mother, are we in hell? And my mother said yes, yes. My mother had some matches to shone in the pitch dark, and I saw lot of faces around me not moving at all.

Then she noticed that the mattress was slowly smouldering, and in the light, I could see two long legs dangling from the top bed. Mother said it's Victoria. The blast had thrown Victoria right across the room into the top bunk, face down with her baby partly underneath her. The mother put out the sparks as she could after she lifted the child. Then my mother as ked me where's father, and I told her, he went upstairs to the entrance. Then myself and my mother climbed the few steps and we noticed that Joseph was killed as well. Yes, everybody was dead, and what else can one expect in hell?

We looked into the little private room opposite ours to see if they were about, but we could see no one moving inside. Carefully my mother walked a few steps and her feet touched something with a long thick sock and an army style boot, and she discovered was my father. At the end soldiers could be seen in the haze, opened the exit which had been blocked and had come to our help. People now started to wake up, and there was wailing, moaning and cries of pain.

We just stood there watching the soldiers a few yards away lifting the bodies unto stretchers, the new born baby first, and the at last they reached us. The air raid had been so fierce some workmen had sought shelter in our street shelter, that was why so many died, about 30 at least. Now everyone was talking not of war but of famine. Every supply ship was under heavy attack by the enemy. In August the news came that a big convoy carrying food, clothing and fuel, though heavily attacked, had entered the harbour and as

if by a miracle, on the feast of Our Lady, it docked safely.

The tanker Ohio was singled out again and again for attack. It was on fire, its engine crippled and was in danger of sinking, yet it managed to make it into port, its cargo intact. Many weeks later an unexpected visitor came to our house to see my mother. She was the mother of Robbie, Charlie evacuee friend. Charlie, another neighbour Guzi and Robbie all now dead My mother remembered so well, that Charlie was sent to buy her a birthday cake, and she realised that the boys must have spent the lost pound note on this photograph, and since then, she held it to her heart. In those days the priest took care of all his parishioner's problems and one day, he took Paul and Mario, then aged 8 a 6 yrs old away, and took them to a charity-run residential home. A place then had to be found for my two little sisters. In fact the sisters found themselves in a residential school for ricaduti, run by nuns. It was a special school for the children of families who had fallen on hard times.

Now I was the only one left behind on our house. Ann a friend of mine at the high school, often used to invite me to her house for lunch. The time came for me to leave high school, and my mother wanted me to go to the University as I had good grades, it was either that or become a nurse or a teacher. At the end I decided to be a teacher. As soon as I was out of college my uncle and aunt and their two little girls came to visit us. Seeing me left alone in the house. They insisted t I go and stay with them at their summer house by the beach. But the carefree life did not suit me.

I kept thinking of my promise to bring my own family together back home. I wrote to the headmaster of the boy's school to tell them that we were going to take the boys away to come and stay with us. The next hurdle was to remove the girls from their school. But I knew this would be difficult because the girls had to stay until they were sixteen. Therefore, I decided to get a teaching post in Mosta and so, I present my case. The decision rested the Department of Education. The department on humane attitude and kindness approved my case so that our family could be reunited.

I wasn't a bit afraid to say my bit, and I had chosen my career to be able to take them to school with me, and I would be looking after them at home, and so, the department, could do nothing but give in. Home after school and I had to coach my two sisters for their entry exam to my old secondary grammar school, which was the only one of the kind that was free. With my good salary and mother's pension, we could afford to send Paul to high school, while Mario just thirteen was still at school but because he was good with his hands, her eyes was to join the British Navy. In fact, Mario was flown over to England and became a cadet in training at the Naval Academy. Years later I visited London again, after I was thereon a teacher's excursion, and I had wanted to remain there for good, but at that time, the thought of my mother and my sisters, still at school, had held me back. This time was different.

Paul was abroad as a singer with his band, and Maria and Mona found clerical positions in a local bank. I do remember so well that my mother fainted at my wedding, and the next day we went on honeymoon and a new life in London. When the date of Maria's wedding was announced we decided to spend one whole month back with my family, or what was left of it. Years later her doctor diagnosed a woman's problem, and she must rest, but she asked her husband to go up to the roof with her, to feel the cool breeze from the sea. On the last night before they were due to leave, Maria walked out onto the balcony, but she tripped over it, and fell headlong over the low iron balustrade onto a car parked below.

Some time later Mona came to visit us, and there she met, fell in love and married an artist. They were blissfully happy for some time. Until he was killed in a car accident. After many years living in England and America, my husband and I, went back to live in Malta, to the great joy of my mother who was by then old and living along. Mario married an English widow with three children, and they married, he went to live in England with his new family. Mona stayed in London and brought up two daughters. My husband and me were blessed with 5 grandchildren. Greg Caruana

Shame Day' protest outside the Russian embassy

Christine Amaira The Ukrainian community in Malta joined in the global event in protest of the Russian invasion. Photo: Jonathan Borg

Ukrainians who fled their country in recent weeks and others who have lived in Malta for a few years on Sunday held a small but poignant protest in front of the Russian Embassy in Malta to mark what is being called Russian Shame Day.

The Ukrainian World Congress called on Ukrainians all over the world to hold similar events as Russians prepare to hold their annual May 9 celebrations of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in the second world war.

Russians celebrate Victory day on May 9. Protestors renamed it Shame day. Photo: Jonathan Borg

Standing in front of the embassy in Kappara, many clad in their country's blue and yellow flag, the Ukrainians again called on world leaders to help stop the invasion that has devastated their country and taken away the lives of many of their relatives and friends.

Hanging on the embassy gate was a banner with the words 'May 9 Russian Shame Day,' the word Shame replacing Victory.

Laid out on the street in front of the compound were photos of 21 Ukrainians, victims of Putin's invasion, hanging on small wooden crosses. In front of each one was a red candle. The youngest victim was three months old.

Photos of some of the victims of the war in Ukraine were laid in front of the Russian Embassy during the protest. Photo: Jonathan Borg

The protesters carried placards with messages saying "Europe can stop Putler", and "Hitler = Putin".

The protest started with those present singing the Ukrainian National Anthem, followed by a minute of silence.

Among the speakers at the event were Rita, a young woman who fled Ukraine, as well as her mother, who both read out their emotional messages in Ukrainian.

Sergey, who left Ukraine a few years ago, said the Russian invasion started back in 2014, when Russian forces occupied the Crimean peninsula, and started what he described as the "genocide of Ukrainians".

"That is when our country fell in decay, chaos and anarchy", said Sergey.

Ukrainians clad in their national flag protest in front of the Russian Embassy in Kappara. Photo: Jonathan Borg

Two girls, Natalia and Olga, dressed in typical Ukrainian embroidered tunics recited a poem in their mother language, followed by the now familiar "Slava Ukrayini" salute, meaning Glory to Ukraine.

The Ukrainian community thanked the Maltese people for their generosity with them, and for welcoming them so warmly into the country, and expressed their hope that the war in their country would soon come to an end, and together with it, an end to the misery and suffering of the Ukrainian people.

THE SITUATION OF THE MALTESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA IS GRIMM - UNITE OR PERISH

A fact that no one can deny is that the Maltese Community in Australia is shrinking and is in danger of becoming extinct. If you look at statistics, you'll find that many Maltese associations have closed down or are in grave danger of discontinuation. It is very importance NOW that we, that are left, UNITE AND WORK TOGETHER if we want to survive.

According to Jim Borg of NSW the Phoenician Club, Melita Eagles and Melita Stadium are gone. Greystanes Church which was built by the Maltese community and for many years administered by Maltese priests is lost forever. In the whole of New South Wales there is only ONE Maltese priest serving the thousands of members of the community. Horsley Park Church which was funded by the Maltese and administered by the MSSP is now in the hands of a non-Maltese religious order. The MSSP pulled stumps at the Chaplaincy In La Valette Social Centre in April 2019. News the Dominican Order in Malta has decided to offload the St. Dominic Aged Care facility Is Being Offloaded. According to some rumours even some schools of Maltese language are struggling to survive.

In South Australia the Maltese community, during the last few years lost the Maltese Language School of Adelaide, the RSL Maltese Sub-branch, the Maltese Blue Grotto Radio program PBAfm – Salisbury. The Church of Christ the King at Lockleys, the hall and the presbytery built and funded mainly by the Maltese and administered by the Franciscan Maltese priests for over 60 years are all handed over to other administrators. Since the last Maltese Chaplain – Fr. Gabriel Micallef, retired and now living in Gozo there is no Maltese chaplain in Adelaide to look after the spiritual needs of the Maltese especially the elderly. The same story is repeated in the other states of Australia.

Janes Aglus from Adelaide Australia sent this photo while visiting her mother and daughter Tessa at Zejtun Malta.

H.E. George Vella, President of Malta presented Mr John Aquilina with his Letters of Credentials following his appointment as the Ambassador of Malta to Brazil.
Dr Vella thanked him for his work in China and wished him well in his future role as Ambassador to Brazil.

Gorgeous! This Malta-style enamel sign in Valletta is giving us major nostalgia

about 2 years ago

It's one of the few left on the islands.

Jillian Mallia *www.guidememalta.com*

Now this is spectacular, and it's not something you'd see everyday. Back in the day, such enamel signs were a hit and basically every shop was signed accordingly. Today, they are quite the rare sight as modern decor crept its way in. But, if you head to the capital, you might find old relics of the sort.

"This is one of the few remaining enamel signs left on the island," notes Facebook page maltatype. The sign reads "Carmelo Delia House Furnisher" which was situated in Valletta at number 163 right by J. Azzopardi jewellery. It seems to be in St Lucia Street.

There's something about such signage that automatically makes you think of a time gone by and a history that is long gone. It's sad to see such beautiful parts of Maltese culture so dilapidated. Maybe some innovative soul will create a way for these to be frozen in time.

Written by Jillian Mallia

A book lover, writer and globetrotter who loves exploring new places and the local gems that the Maltese Islands have to offer. An avid foodie and arts fanatic, Jillian searches the island and beyond for the perfect settings to write about.

The readers of the
MALTESE JOURNAL
wish the Maltese Community
Council of NSW
every success
In all it's ventures

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Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, Maltese Clubs in Australia, NZ, UK and USA
Aged Care Facilities and FACEBOOK. Subscribe now- maltesejournal@gmail.com

Malta once had its very own Charlie Chaplin?

What a throwback!
Kim Vella January 2022 www.guidememalta.com

Local archival project Malta Audio Visual Memories took to social media to tell the story of the country's very own Charlie Chaplin.

Interviewee Raymond *Vella25th* Farrugia recalls how his father, George Farrugia, once dreamt of becoming a priest. Funnily enough, it was this very dream that led him to discover the genius works of Charlie Chaplin.

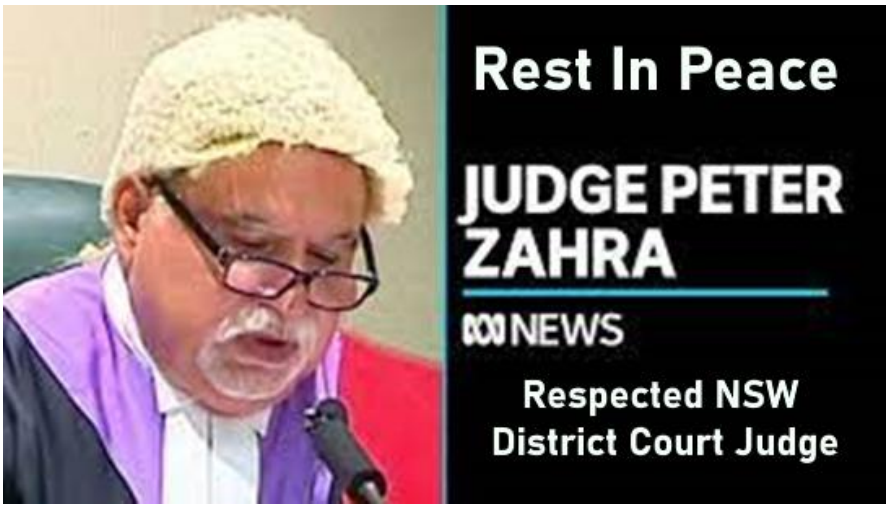
Over the years, George's love for Charlie Chaplin grew and he eventually started performing in Sliema where he slowly yet surely began to gain a following. It wasn't long before it became almost impossible to *not* come across George! The performer would often be invited to put up shows in bars and different establishments. Variety show producers would ask him to perform with other local artists. George was also very active in the annual carnival.

After returning from his travels in Belgium, he found it hard to find a job and ended up performing at the casino. This is where he was eventually discovered by a producer from the BBC who invited him to go to the UK to film a series about Malta's Charlie Chaplin. George's last movie was directed by Elio Lombardi and was produced in colour. As with all great legends, the era of black and white television came to an end, and with it, so did Charlie Chaplin. *Share this with a Charlie Chaplin fan!*

Written by Kim Vella - A highly curious explorer always looking to find her next adventure. Kim loves sharing her experiences and what's happening on the Maltese Islands. When not writing, you'll probably find her playing around with some clay or somewhere surrounded by trees. She's always up for listening to people's stories about anything to do with nature, a passion project or issue you feel needs tending to.

Europe. Rich in history and charm, with a great sense of hospitality towards visitors and above all with a temperate and warm climate for most of the year.
Malta, with its strategic position in the center of **the Mediterranean Sea** , has always been a crossroads of exchanges of different cultures, also due to so many peoples who have dominated this small archipelago throughout its history. This is why **the island's musical tradition is very old, strong and widespread** . The aim of this International Festival is to make sure that the different musical traditions from all over the world come together in Malta, for mutual exchange and enrichment.
During the days of the Festival, parades and shows will be held in various locations on the island , which will feature musical bands, wind orchestras, Marching Bands, folk bands, bands with majorettes, majorette groups, flag-wavers, bagpipe groups, Street bands .
Come and discover Malta in spring!

Today Malta is certainly one of the most important countries in the tourism sector in the world



Sydney's legal community is in mourning after NSW District Court Judge Peter Zahra died suddenly in hospital following a stroke.
The respected judge was appointed to the bench in 2007 after a lengthy career as a criminal barrister. He oversaw numerous high-profile cases, including those of *Hey Dad!* star Robert Hughes and collar bomb hoaxer Paul Douglas Peters.

District Court judge Peter Zahra died on Sunday 8 May 2022

Judge Zahra had been presiding over another prominent case, the embezzlement trial of Guy Sebastian's former manager Titus Day, when he suffered a stroke at his home in Sydney's inner west about 8am on Thursday.
He was taken to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, where he died on Sunday.
On Monday, the jury in the Day trial was brought into court to be told that Judge Zahra had died. The jurors gasped, and one female juror offered her condolences to his friends and family.

Judge James Bennett told the jurors that Judge Zahra was “a very good friend” and everyone in the court was feeling his loss. He said the trial would continue with the existing jury and a different judge on May 16.

Judge Zahra pictured in 2003, when he was a senior public defender.

In a statement, Judge Zahra’s family said the much-loved husband and father “passed peacefully on Sunday 8 May 2022 surrounded by his family”.

“Dad was a special soul and touched the lives of everyone he met,” they said on Monday. “We have received many lovely messages and memories that demonstrate the type of person he was, he had a big heart and wanted to see everyone achieve more than what they ever thought possible.

“In honour of our Dad and his life, we encourage everyone to have a hot chocolate and share a dad joke in his honour. Those who knew him would know he loved a good (bad) joke!

“We would ask that you please respect our privacy at this time and provide us the space to celebrate the life of a man who will create a void that will be difficult to fill.”

Judge Zahra served as a senior public defender from 2001 to 2007, appearing in major murder and drug trials for clients including Kathleen Folbigg, who was jailed in 2003 over the deaths of her four children.

He wrote a number of legal textbooks, including one on drug law, around a busy schedule which sometimes saw him writing judgments at 4.30am.

Attorney-General Mark Speakman said Judge Zahra made a significant contribution to the law and legal profession over many decades, culminating in becoming one of the most senior judges in the District Court.

“During his 15 years on the District Court bench, Judge Zahra earned the deep respect of his judicial colleagues, those at the Bar who appeared before him and the profession more broadly,” Speakman said.

“On behalf of the people and government of NSW, I offer my sincere condolences to his Honour’s wife, daughter and sons, his extended family and his many friends and colleagues. Vale Judge Peter Zahra SC.”

Michael McHugh, SC, president of the NSW Bar Association, said the entire profession “deeply mourns the passing” of Judge Zahra, whose distinguished career as a barrister began in 1988 before he took silk 12 years later.

“Judge Zahra was a leader in the legal profession and a role model to many,” McHugh said. “[He] served as a crown prosecutor, public defender and the senior public defender before serving most recently as a well-respected judge of the District Court of NSW.

“We have lost an esteemed judge and a very good man. Judge Zahra’s passing is a great loss to the administration of justice in NSW.”

Judge Zahra was one of the readers of THE MALTESE JOURNAL.

We are proud of our Maltese Achievers

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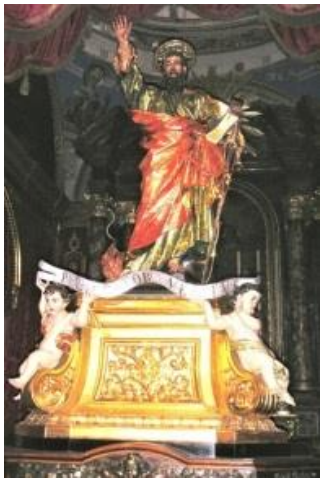


http://www.kliemustorja.com Martin Morana

DWAR SAN PAWL HEMM BOSTA LEĠĠENDI FOSTHOM LI:
Il-post fejn il-bastiment li kien riekeb fuqu San Pawl, kien fuq sikka qrib waħda miż-żewġ gżejjer, fil-bajja li illum iġġib ismu. L-episodju tan-nawfraġu seħħ verament, għax hu mniżżel fl-Atti tal-Appostli, kapitlu 28, biss ħadd ma jaf biċ-ċert fejn ġara dan l-episodju.
Statwa ta' San Pawl fil-knisja tan-Nawfraġu ta' San Pawl, il-Belt
Waqt li San Pawl kien qiegħed jiġbor il-ħatab biex titqabbad ħuġġieġa, dan gidmitu lifgħa. Skont il-leġġenda, San Pawl qala' ilsien il-lifgħa u tefgħu fl-art u dan l-ilsien infirex mal-gżejjer Maltin, u għadu jinsab sal-lum, tant li meta n-naġġara tal-barrieri jsibu forom triangolari fil-blat, li fil-verità huma fossili tas-snien tal-kelb il-baħar ta' żminijiet ġeoloġiċi antiki, dawn jaħsbu li dawn huma lsien il-lifgħa, magħrufa aktar bħala, 'Lsien San Pawl'.
Meta mal-gidma, San Pawl farfar il-lifgħa minn idu, is-sriep kollha f'Malta ma baqgħux velenużi.
Meta skont it-tradizzjoni, San Pawl kien ippriedka fuq l-għolja tan-Naxxar leħnu nstema' saħansitra minn Għawdex.
San Pawl inżamm priġunier fil-Grotta taħt il-knisja parrokkjali tar-Rabat, tul it-tliet xhur li dam Malta. Ma' din il-leġġenda hemm marbuta s-superstizzjoni li l-blat ta' din il-grotta jfejjaq lill-dawk li jsofru minn xi avvelenament.
Meta San Pawl mar iż-Żejtun, biex bħal f'irħula oħra, jikkonverti l-abitanti ta' hemm għat-twemmin Nisrani, l-abitanti ta' hemm ma ridux jaċċettaw it-twemmin tiegħu. Kos, min jaf min kien li qala' din il-ħrafa! Wara kollox, jekk San Pawl kien miżmum fil-Grotta ta' San Pawl, mela dan ma seta' jmur imkien!

DWAR IL-KONTI RUĠĠIERU HEMM UKOLL BOSTA LEĠĠENDI, KOLLHA FROTT TAL-INTERPRETAZZJONI FANTAŻJUŻA TAD-DILETTANTI TAL-ISTORJA. FOST DAWN INSIBU DAN LI ĠEJ:

- Il-Konti Ruġġieru llibera lill-Maltin mill-ħakma tal-Għarab. Dan mhu veru xejn għaliex x'aktarx kienu l-ilsiera Nsara barranin biss li l-Konti Ruġġieru ħeles mill-jasar.
- Li l-armata tal-Konti Ruġġieru żbarkat fl-inħawi ta' Miġra l-Ferħa biex imbagħad is-suldati ggranfaw mal-irdum, biex telgħu l-art, ħaġa li kull min jaf minn xiex inhu magħmul dan l-irdum, hi xi ħaġa impossibbli. Din il-leġġenda tingħad biex tispjega l-isem tal-inħawi. 'Miġra' tfisser nixxieha, u 'ferħa' tfisser nixxieha żgħira, għaldaqstant l-isem hu interpretat ħażin.

- Li l-Konti Ruġġieru ta lill-Maltin il-kuluri tal-bandiera tiegħu, abjad u aħmar. Mhu veru xejn. L-ewwel nett ma nafux jekk dan il-konti kellux il-bandiera tiegħu, wisq inqas nafu x'kuluri kellha. Il-kuluri tal-bandiera Maltija bi probabbiltà kbira oriġinaw mill-arma tal-Università tal-Imdina.
- Tpinġija meħuda mill-ktieb ta' Laspina li żmien ilu kien jinqara fl-iskejjel primarji tal-gvern

Li l-Konti Ruġġieru stabbilixxa darba għal dejjem il-Kristjaneżmu bħala r-reliġjon waħdanija ta' Malta. Jingħad ukoll li kien hu wkoll li stabbilixxa l-amministrazzjoni l-ġdida Normanna f'Malta. Mhu veru xejn, għaliex il-Konti Ruġġieru, ġie Malta speċifikament biex jaffronta lill-mexxejja Għarab – Musulmani – Maltin li minkejja li dawn kienu liberi li jmexxu kif iridu huma, dawn kellhom jirrikonoxxuh bħala l-mexxej veru tal-gżejjer Maltin, issa, li kienu jagħmlu parti mir-renju tiegħu. Kien it-tifel tiegħu, Ruġġieru II, li fl-1127, stabbilixxa l-amministrazzjoni Normanna b'mod fiss f'Malta.

- Li kien hu li bena l-ewwel katidral fl-Imdina wara l-ħakma Għarbija, u li kien hu li stabbilixxa l-ewwel parroċċa tal-Birgu.

Sfortunatament, dawn il-leġġendi għad hawn minn jemmen li huma veri. Sa ftit snin ilu, fil-katidral tal-Imdina, fl-4 ta' Novembru, kienet anki ssir quddiesa speċjali għar-ruħ il-Konti Ruġġieru!

LEĠĠENDI MARBUTA MAL-FURBANI U T-TOROK

Jeżistu wkoll leġġendi relatati mal-iżbark tal-furbani u l-ħtif tal-abitanti tal-gżejjer Maltin. Fil-ktieb tiegħu, *Leġġendi, Misteri u Għajdut mill-Gżejjer Maltin*, Clifford Vella jelenka 25 leġġenda marbuta mal-inżul tat-Torok u l-furbani f'Malta. Fost l-istejjer l-aktar magħrufa hemm dik tat-tfajla tal-Mosta li hekk kif niżlu l-furbani l-art biex jaħtfu n-nies u jeħudhom magħhom bħala skjavi, din ħarbet u nħbiet ġo għar fin-naħa tal-Mosta. Hekk kif daħlet fl-għar hi fetqet għanqbuta minsuġa mal-wesgħa tal-bokka tal-għar, biss hekk kif it-tfajla daħlet ġewwa, il-brimba reġgħet ħititha warajha. Meta l-furbani waslu ħdejn l-għar u raw l-għanqbuta mhux mittiefsa dawn ħasbu li fl-għar ma daħal ħadt u għalhekk ma daħlux ifittxuha hemm. B'ringrazzjament talli skappat milli tkun maqbuda, din it-tfajla bniet il-kappella tal-Madonna tal-Isperanza sewwa sew fuq l-istess għar fejn inħbiet.

Imbagħad hemm l-istorja ta' Ħasan li ħataf tfajla Maltija u kaxkara miegħu lejn għar li jinsab f'xifer l-irdum ta' Ħal Far. Meta l-Maltin indunaw li Ħasan sata' kien mistoħbi f'dan l-għar, dawn marru għalih. Ħasan ipprefera li flok li t-tfajla tinħeles u hu jkun maqtul mill-kotra rrabjata, jaqbeż bit-tfajla minn fuq l-irdum għal isfel.

OUR AIM IS TO PROMOTE MALTA AND ITS HISTORY, CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY AND PRESERVE THEM FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. THE ONLY JOURNAL PRODUCED 100% IN AUSTRALIA

Marie Benoit's Diary: Anne Frank Travelling exhibition launched by Tayar Foundation

Marie Benoît

Julius Nehorai, Sarah Azzopardi-Ljubibratic (Tayar Foundation), Dr Isabelle Sammut, Levien Rouw (Anne Frank House, Amsterdam) and Joy Gafà in the exhibition hall

The Tayar Foundation for Jewish Heritage in Malta has been active since it was set up in 2019. I have been following its fortunes in remembrance of a dear friend, Shelley Tayar. This time I received an invitation from its Chairman, Julius Nehorai and the committee to the launch of the travelling exhibition Let Me Be Myself: the Life Story of Anne Frank. This was held at the Aula Magna at the University of Malta Valletta Campus on Thursday 24th February. One can hear the life story of Anne Frank again and again but it is always moving. Man's cruelty to his fellow men can never be understood or accepted, yet it goes on.

Compere that evening was Dr Isabelle Sammut, a human rights lawyer and Anne Frank House educator. She explained that the exhibition shows the story of Anne Frank from her birth in 1929 to her death in Bergen Belsen concentration camp in 1945. The speaker then went on to give details about the exhibition: "Each exhibition panel contains images and texts about the world around Anne Frank, the rise of Hitler, the persecution of Jews and the Second World War. Apart from this, the exhibition contains a contemporary section dedicated to young people today. Here, visitors to the exhibition are made to reflect on issues relating to prejudice and exclusion, as these young people speak about how they see themselves and how strangers also respond to them."

Let Me Be Myself is one of the various travelling exhibitions which the Anne Frank House has developed. Over the years, they have been visited by over 10 million people in over 80 countries. "It is a privilege to have this exhibition here with us today," Dr Sammut continued.

Dr Sammut thanked various volunteers and helpers working with the Tayar Foundation here in Malta.

Let Me Be Myself is now also an online and interactive exhibition. This version of the exhibition will be shown to multiple schools around Malta over the next seven weeks, making it possible - amidst a pandemic - to reach thousands of students and young people. Also the physical exhibition will be touring four locations around Malta.

Did you know of Gozo's "Ghazziela" tradition that wards off the harshest of thunderstorms?

Written by Jillian Mallia

As the first post-summer rains hit, head to Zebbug and get your hands on this craft.

The hilltop village of Zebbug in Gozo is famous for its lacework, beautiful parish church and for bearing the brunt of some of our winter's harshest storms when they come about. Locals have long practiced a tradition unique to the village to protect them from storms while also dedicating their work and prayers to the Madonna of Ghazziela.

Behold the *ghazziela* tradition, named of course after the Madonna of Ghazziela. The highly original tradition which is primarily a devotion to the Madonna and also said to protect homes from the harshest of storms, sees locals producing small talisman from unleavened bread dough as early as July, in order to make enough for the entire town and end some.

Legend has it… According to legend, one night during a storm, a poor family that lived on the outskirts of the village had a dream that snakes of fire tried entering the home through the window. They didn't manage to get through because of a wheel-like talisman that lit up and blinded the snake. Legend has it that when the mother of the family told the parish priest about her dream, he ordered all families to make the same wheels from a piece of dough. And the rest... well has continued through history and into the present.

Making the ghazziela Volunteers congregate for about five consecutive Sundays in order to make enough by the second Sunday of September which is when the *ghazziela* are given out, timed with the expected first post-summer rains. They are cut out into the shape of a spinning wheel which was said to be the Madonna's craft, while also incorporating the letter 'M' since the town has a strong devotion towards Virgin Mary. The talisman is then baked and stored in cardboard boxes.

When the big day arrives, the *ghazziela* are taken out of the boxes, the excess flour dusted off and displayed in straw baskets on the church parvis. After mass, the talisman are blessed and handed out to locals: adults receive two each while children receive one.

No one knows exactly when, how or why this interesting tradition started but it Zebbug's first parish priest's will (dating back to 1737) does show that left a trust fund to the community in order to continue making the *ghazziela*.

The Zebbug Parish in Gozo celebrates the Feast known locally as *Il-Madonna tal-Ghazziela*. The feast is celebrated on the nearest Sunday to the 12th of September, the liturgical feast-day of the Holy Name of Mary. The tradition of the *ghazziela* is peculiar to Zebbug parish; it is only in Zebbug, Gozo that the *ghazziela* is made by the local people. The Zebbugin manufacture about 7,000 *ghazziela* which are then freely distributed to both locals and foreigners. After the 4.00 pm Mass, the procession with the statue of the Virgin Mary marched through the streets of Zebbug accompanied by the Santa Marija Band. The Rosary is recited during the procession while the Band played various Marian hymns. The celebration ends with the Benediction and the kissing of the Relic.

THE ART OF FILIGREE

Arts and Crafts

The meaning of the word "Filigree":

The English word filigree is shortened from the earlier use of filigreen which derives from Latin "filum" meaning thread and "granum" grain, in the sense of small bead. The Latin words gave filigrana in Italian which itself became filigrane in 17th-century French.

The intricate art of the Filigree has added a gentle touch to the Maltese local market. Not only is it inimitable but it adds value to Malta's heritage.

The art of filigree can be traced back to ancient Egypt and can be found throughout the Mediterranean and Asia. **Filigree is a delicate art of jewellery that involves the use of fine threads of gold or silver, woven together to create ornate motifs.** More than most other types of jewellery, filigree is valued more for the artisan's skill than the actual material used. The more intricate and ornate the design, the more valuable the object.

Malta's filigree legacy dates back to the Phoenicians who spread this technique throughout the **Mediterranean** and beyond. However, local artisans have made it all their own, with the most prominent motif being the eight pointed cross. This ubiquitous symbol is found in different variations, with or without gemstones, gold or silver, and on bracelets, earrings, and brooches.

While filigree can be purchased at most jewellery shops around Malta and Gozo, the experience of watching the jewellery being made there and then is not one to be missed. Whether at the **Ta' Qali Crafts Village**, or at any obliging jeweller, this delicate and fascinating process is worth watching.

While modern pieces with varying motifs, materials, and quality make an excellent gift, it is the antique pieces that represent the most value. If you're lucky enough to come across these rare pieces, don't pass up the opportunity to purchase a piece of Maltese heritage.

NEW Friday Night "OPEN MIC" Event at
LA VALETTE SOCIAL CENTRE INC.
175 Walters Road, Blacktown 2148

Introducing the **MARIMBA BAND** playing the last Friday of every month from 7.00pm to 10.00pm.

First show on Friday 20 May 2022

Great opportunity for musicians and singers to take part in this live entertainment program **"Open Mic"**.
All participants must provide for the band 3 to 5 sheets of music for backing.
It is also an opportunity for everyone to have a dance and socialize with others. All welcome.

*** FREE ENTRY ***

A raffle will be organized for the support of the program.
Please join us and have a great night.

***** Kitchen and Bar will be open from 5.00pm *****

For further information contact:
Paul Falzon 0411 844 279
Rita Falzon 0421 452 939

A recipe for traditional Maltese biscuits sprinkled with sesame seeds. This recipe has been passed down from generation to generation, however the biscuits were originally made at bakeries or sold at confectionery shops.

Ingredients

- **250 g**plain flour
- **2½ tsp**baking powder
- **pinch**of ground cloves
- **pinch**of ground aniseed
- **4 tbsp**olive oil
- **75 g**sugar
- grated lemon rind
- **1**egg
- **3 tbsp**water
- **2 tbsp**sesame seeds

Maltese traditional biscuit with sesame seeds

Cook's notes

Oven temperatures are for conventional; if using fan-forced (convection), reduce the temperature by 20˚C. | We use Australian tablespoons and cups: 1 teaspoon equals 5 ml; 1 tablespoon equals 20 ml; 1 cup equals 250 ml. | All herbs are fresh (unless specified) and cups are lightly packed. | All vegetables are medium size and peeled, unless specified. | All eggs are 55-60 g, unless specified.

Instructions

Sift the flour and baking powder into a large bowl. Add the cloves and aniseed.

In a separate bowl, add olive oil, sugar, lemon rind, egg and water. Mix well. Pour liquid mixture into the flour mixture to form the pastry.

Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F). Make equal shapes of rings or fingers, and dip in sesame seeds.

Place on a lined baking tray and bake for about 20 minutes or until golden brown.

Store in a biscuit tin.

Sagħtar magazine goes digital with new app

Sagħtar magazine launches its own digital app for people to read the magazine online as well as make use of a number of new features

by **Sebastian Vassallo**

Minister Julia Farrugia Portelli looks back at previous editions of the popular Sagħtar magazine

Readers will now be able to read the popular Sagħtar magazine on their mobiles after the Sagħtar foundation launched its own digital app.
The foundation developed the app with €20,000 investment through the VOPS scheme, under the auspice of the Ministry for Inclusion, Voluntary Organisations and Consumer Rights.
Inclusion minister Julia Farrugia Portelli remarked that this initiative is equally nostalgic as it is innovative. "The new app will allow thousands of adults to look back on their childhood and memories of time spent on school benches," she said.
The minister was happy to report that, after 51 years and around 370 publications, Sagħtar will continue to improve and jump into the digital world.

Elaine Germani, chairperson of the Sagħtar foundation, explained that the app is free and serves as the natural continuation of the foundation's project so that Sagħtar can reach the youth of today.
"We needed to make a technological leap to reach more children, aside from the magazine now thanks to the app one can also listen to stories in Maltese while reading them alongside a number of new features."
Germani hoped that this new app will encourage children and their parents to continue to develop an enjoyment for reading and learning in Maltese.
Marco Bonnici, president of the MUT, thanked the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS) for the funds to implement this project.
"These funds meet a social and educational function for Maltese and Gozitan educators and students As the MUT we will continue supporting the work of the foundation for these initiatives that are part of the professional role of the MUT apart from its capacity as a trade union," he said. CEO of the MCVS Mauro Pace Parascandolo said that "one of the strong aims of the MCVS is to support voluntary organizations with their work in the community."
Parascandolo went on to say that the project that ticked all of these boxes was helped thanks to the funds of the VOPS scheme so that this initiative that many remember from childhood continues.

The St Sebastian Seniors Association Vic. Australia

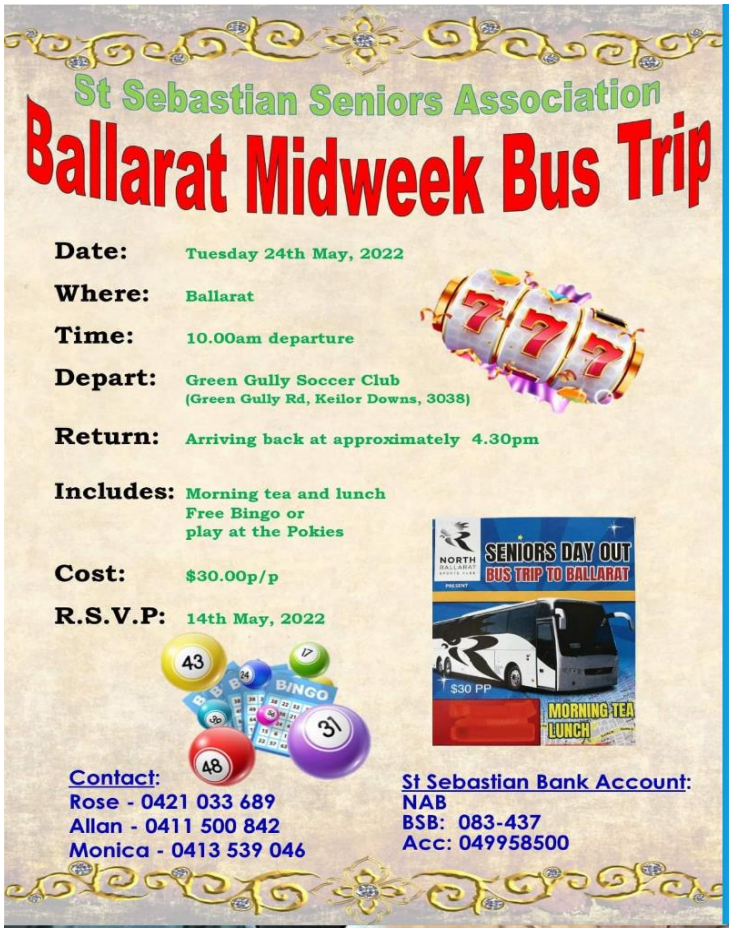
was set up in 1990 and is still going strong.

The committee and club members are predominantly of Maltese descent, yet welcome anyone and everyone from various cultures and ages to take part in the monthly events. Events include family social nights, bus day trips and weekends away. We start the year off with our Liturgical Mass and we celebrate special occasions throughout the year including Mother's Day, Father's Day and Christmas. To keep with our Maltese tradition, we host our two-day festivities mid-year.

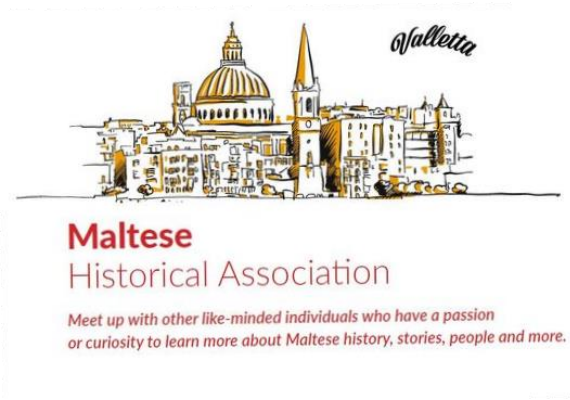
Our committee is dedicated in supporting its members, so please feel free to contact us with any enquiries.

Monica: 0413 539 046, Rose: 0421 033 689 or Lorraine: 0435 097 398

Email Address: st.sebastian@outlook.com.au



Lorraine Batres
St Sebastian Seniors Association Vic. Australia



Dear Members and Friends of the MALTESE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

We are delighted to announce our upcoming presentation for the month of May. We really hope you can join us. The presentation will be held on Zoom on Tuesday 17th of May 2022 at the time of 6:50pm. Australian eastern standard time. 1050am cet

Please note the earlier then usual start time.

Joe Scicluna is a Maltese ex-pat living in France. Like all of us, he is passionate about the history of the Maltese people. In our next presentation he will talk to us about three eyewitness accounts written by Frenchmen during Malta's tumultuous French period, which he translated into English. These books give a different perspective to what many Maltese believe to be their true history based on a narrative passed on to us throughout the centuries. Two of the eyewitnesses had lived in Malta for several decades and understood Maltese society very well. The third eyewitness is none other than Napoleon himself who spent a mere two weeks on Malta. Joe will also talk about his own historical novel, "The Malta Soldier" which is based on dramatic events that took place during the first years of Malta's British rule.

It is a beach in Mellieħa situated southwest of Il-Majjistral Nature & History Park and southwest of Popeye Village.

Exploring Ras Il-Wahx - Park Tal-Majjistral Malta.
This is a hard trek but very interesting apart from the beautiful views and even what looks like an old settlement .