JOURNAL FOR MALTESE AROUND THE WORLD

# MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Editor: Frank Scicluna OAM MQR JP maltesejournal@gmail.com

We Keep the Maltese Living Abroad on the Map

HELP TO KEEP THIS JOURNAL ALIVE

Do You Care?

Nicole Spiteri
Miss World Malta

Amea-Jo Refalo

They left Burmarrad farm in 1951

**XUEREB FAMILY - Michigan USA**
**Courage of A Maltese Immigrant**

Heritage Malta

# YES, I DO CARE, FRANK

It will be a shame for our Australian-Maltese communities in all States of Australia (and the Maltese Diaspora) if The Maltese eNewsletter from South Australia ceases to exist as well. I still miss receiving the 'NSW Voice of the Maltese'. Both NSW and SA editors achieved much. Once the SA Maltese eNewsletter will cease to exist, then the Maltese Communities will slowly disappear with no voice left.

Shame, just when our young people are growing proud of their heritage, and not so shy, as before, to say at school that 'My parents are Maltese' as well as gaining interest about their emigrant forebears and what Malta has to offer them.

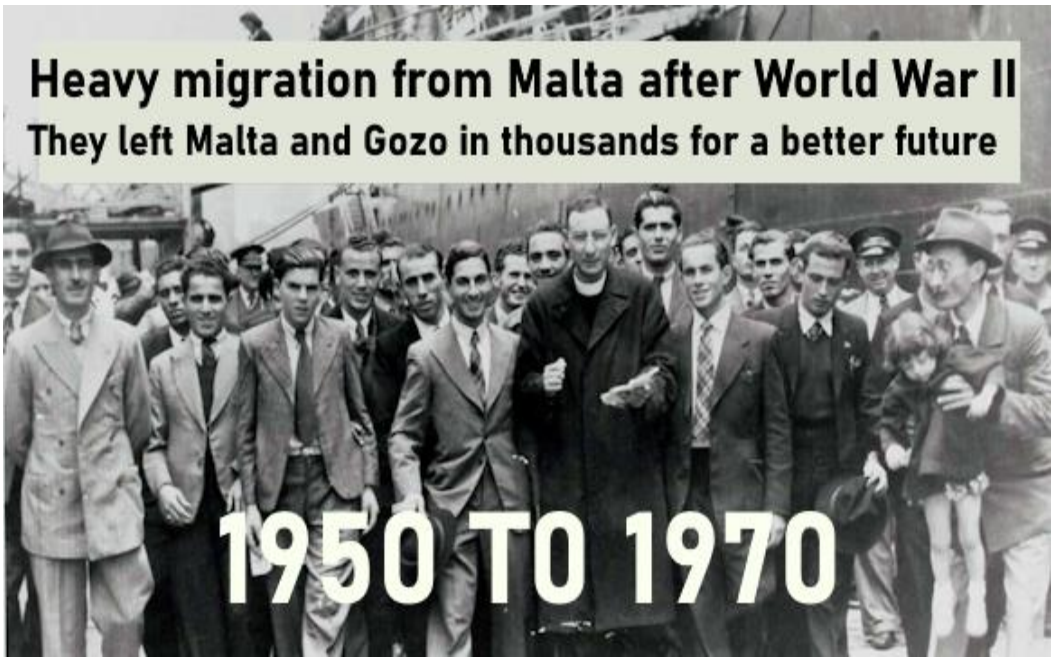
I personally am proud of what both editors of the newsletters in NSW and SA have achieved over the decades. I write this with good intentions, wishing that the Maltese clubs and communities give support to this journal and keep their good bonding, celebrations, Holy Feasts, involving, teaching and giving responsibilities to our Maltese/Australian young people, to continue with our beloved Maltese Traditions who make us elderly Maltese leaders etc proud who make us elderly Maltese leaders etc proud.

***PS: Young people of Maltese descent, please send your point of view.***

**Nancy Serg nee Borg OAM**

THIS JOURNAL IS A TREASURE CHEST FULL OF HISTORY OF MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

Hardships, Isolation, Successes, Achievements




**MALTA POPULATION CLOSE TO 600,000**

Minister Caruana mentioned how our country the population is approaching 600,000 and it will increase even more.

This clearly shows how big our problem is and the problem is affecting the whole country in many respects

**Share a thought**
**Share a memory**
**Share a photo**
**Share a story**
**THIS IS YOUR JOURNAL**

# Consular Services Office

**consularplus.gov.mt/**

**Committed to Excellence, Open to Change**

**The Consular Services Office (CSO) within the Directorate for Consular Services and Maltese Living Abroad has been set up to bring under one roof four main government services related to:**

- Legalisation of Documents
- Visa Advice
- General Consular Affairs
- Scholarships

Almost all provided services are supported by online forms which make it easier for clients to get the required services without the need to personally visit the office. However, due to the nature of some of the services provided this is not always possible. In that case the office is manned with dedicated officials who will guide their clients on what they need to do either by phone, email or through person-to-person contact. The CSO is committed to a high level of client service. Each of the four services ensure that clients are:

- treated with courtesy and respect;
- assisted in the shortest time possible; and
- provided with an efficient reply in the event of a feedback.

Suffice to note that the CSO receives amongst other an estimated annual 35,000 applications for legalisation services, 3,000 visa enquiries and 2,000 requests for general consular assistance. This explains the importance of the Office which serves as a point of reference on issues that concerns life-line issues as well as a showcase of the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade, the role of which is to be of service to Maltese nationals wherever they are in the world.

**Complaints and Queries**

Your complete satisfaction is essential to us. If you are not satisfied with our service and would like to lodge a complaint, it is best first to speak to the official who provided you with the service.

Subsequently, if you are not satisfied with the outcome or have a query or a suggestion to make, you are kindly invited to get in touch with the Consular Services Office by post, by phone, or by email to discuss your issue further.

Your complaint/query will be acknowledged promptly, and a reply will be provided within three (3) working days from its date of receipt. If, for some reason a reply is not possible within this timeframe, we will give you an indication of when you should expect a reply.

We treat all feedback confidentially, deal with it promptly, and use it to improve our service.

**Visiting hours***

**1st October – 15th June** - *Monday to Friday:* 08:00 – 12:00, 14:00 - 15:00

**16th June – 30th September** - *Monday to Friday:* 08:00 – 12:00

*** One should present an Identification document to gain access to the CSO. Failing to do so, entry in the Office will be prohibited.**

**Contact Details** **Telephone**: +356 2124 2191 | +356 2204 0000 **Email**: consular.mfet@gov.mt

**Address:** 18, Zachary Street, Valletta, VLT 1133 Malta

**Thanks for your donation**

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**Name - Frank Scicluna**

*A point of interest to our readers*

# Julian Assange flew to freedom on $40M private Vistajet registered in Malta

. The Bombardier Global Express 6000 corporate aircraft that made that long journey with Julian Assange from the UK, Thailand, Siapan (Marianas Islands) and Canberra carried the Maltese aviation registration 9H-VTD.

Owned by the large corporate jet provider Vistajet, which has its head-office in Malta, it is one of many similar plush anonymous aircraft registered by Vistajet in Malta. Their aircraft are based around the EU. The round trip is reputed to have cost $778,000 and was paid for by private supporters.

Since relocating operations to Malta, VistaJet has its centre at SkyParks Business Centre Luqa, LQA 4000 and consistently recorded double digit growth in passengers and flight traffic. Its global fleet flies to over 1,900 airports in 187 countries, covering 96% of the globe.

The WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange paid $500,000 to fly him from London to Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands last month is none other than the same plane Taylor Swift chartered when she famously rushed from a Japan concert to watch her boyfriend Travis Kelce win the Super Bowl in Las Vegas back in February, flight logs show.

Assange, 52, and Swift, 34, both hired the 2017 Bombardier Global 6000 executive jet with the tail number 9H-VTD from the flight company VistaJet, according to photos from their respective journeys. The luxury aircraft can carry 14 passengers and sleep seven, with cabin lounge chairs converting into comfortable beds. Th jet, which sells for up to $40 million, can fly for 13 hours over a range of 6,000 nautical miles, according to VistaJet's website. The plane has a roomy cabin with headspace of six-foot, two-inches — ample room for the 5'11"

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https://foreign.gov.mt/
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THE COUNCIL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD SUPPORTS THIS JOURNAL
WHICH IS INCLUDED IN THEIR WEBSITE (SEE ABOVE)

# Public call to share memories of the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum

Press Release

***Queen Mary of Teck visiting the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum on January 26, 1912. The visit was recorded in detail in the Museum Annual Report***

In collaboration with the National Archives of Malta and their Memorja project, Heritage Malta is announcing a new initiative to document the recent history and personal connections of the community with the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum.

This call for stories seeks to gather memories and photographs from individuals connected to the site, enriching the narrative of this UNESCO World Heritage Site with personal insights and experiences.

The project aims to collect anecdotes and experiences of the Hypogeum from before the 1980s, highlighting the site's influence on visitors and residents.

Heritage Malta invites those with recollections or old photographs of the site to share their stories. These contributions will not only enhance the historical record but also provide a unique perspective on the cultural importance of the Hypogeum.

Individuals who have photographs related to the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum are encouraged to participate as well. With the owner's approval, Heritage Malta will make copies of any photographs shared, for inclusion in its archival collection.

"Whether you visited the site decades ago, lived nearby, or have family ties to the area, your stories are invaluable. Your input is worth gold," say the organisers.

The Hal Saflieni Hypogeum is a unique underground burial complex dating back to between 4,000 and 1,500 BC.

This Neolithic wonder, carved from living rock, showcases the remarkable craftsmanship of Malta's ancient inhabitants. Discovered accidentally in 1902, the Hypogeum was one of the first sites in Malta to be listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. It stands as a testament to the island's rich prehistoric heritage.

*Anyone with memories or information about the Hypogeum can contact Heritage Malta by calling 2365 4353 or 2166 1565 during office hours or by e-mailing info@heritagemalta.org. There is no deadline for submissions and participants can choose to be interviewed or submit their stories in writing.*

# Paul - the Missionary

## Fr Lonnie Borg mssp

*by Frederick Gingell, 2024, Oil on Canvas, 91.4x61cm.*

This painting of the Apostle Paul is a twin painting to the Assumption of Mary into Heaven, painted by Frederick Gingell, a Maltese artist, in 2022.

Both paintings were commissioned by the Paulist Missionaries to represent the two patron saints of the Missionary Society of Saint Paul. In 2015 Frederick Gingell also painted a portrait of the Founder, the Servant of God Joseph De Piro.

Before becoming a follower of Christ, Saul was a prime example of a 'righteous' Jew. He was a Pharisee, and was educated by a highly respected rabbi called Gamaliel. His Jewish credentials included his heritage, discipline, and zeal. Following his conversion, the Apostle Paul was one of the most influential leaders of the early Christian church. He played a crucial role in spreading the gospel to the Gentiles during the first century, and his missionary journeys took him to many foreign lands. "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation." (Mark 16:15)

In the painting, St Paul's stature is not conventional, he is shown as a formidable preacher, which after all, he was. Similar to the painting of the Mary in the Assumption, St Paul is standing on missionary ground, represented by the national flowers of the countries where Paulist Missionaries are working.

Paul's attire is both Jewish and Roman, he was born a Jew but was also a Roman citizen. The white under-garment, or tunic, is caught up at the waist by the red girdle. The outer garment is a Roman toga, purple in colour, symbolising the sacrifices the missionary goes through. Over his shoulders, Paul is wearing the Jewish prayer shawl with tassels, striped in black and white. Paul is carrying a sword, symbolising both his martyrdom and the Word of God; in his letter to the Ephesians he writes "Take the ... sword of the Spirit." The book in his hand represents the gospel he preached.

His audience, like that of that of the Paulist Missionaries, consists of both children and adults coming from different cultures. The man is wearing a Canadian bunchberry flower design on his shirt and is sitting next to him is his Filipino wife. Their daughter has an Australian Golden Wattle on her red top. Sitting on the grass is a Peruvian girl. The child squatting in the foreground represents all other cultures. The colour of the sky signifies Paul's conversion from darkness to light.

This painting took a lot of time to develop for two reasons: being a pair, the painting had to have something in common with its twin, and, at the same time, it needed to place the historical Apostle Paul in contemporary times.

# Pope Francis receives Grand Master of Order of Malta

Pope Francis receives in audience Fra' John Dunlap, the Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in the Vatican.

**Vatican News**

Pope Francis' audience on Thursday morning with Fra' John Dunlap, the Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, lasted 25 minutes and focused on the humanitarian work carried out by the Order across the globe.

As per tradition, the meeting took place a few days after the feast of St. John the Baptist, patron saint of the Order of Malta, which is celebrated on 24 June.

Members of the Sovereign Council and the Order of Malta's ambassador to the Holy See, Antonio Zanardi Landi, were also present. Afterwards, the Grand Master and the Grand Chancellor, Riccardo Paternò di Montecupo, had a meeting with Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, the Vatican's Secretary for Relations with States and International Organizations.

According to a statement released by the Order of Malta, the discussion was characterized by great cordiality and served as an opportunity to outline the Order's main spiritual, humanitarian, and diplomatic activities carried out in the past year across 120 countries, involving a network of 13,500 members, 100,000 volunteers, 52,000 employees, and over 100 diplomatic missions.

## Humanitarian aid in Ukraine and the Holy Land

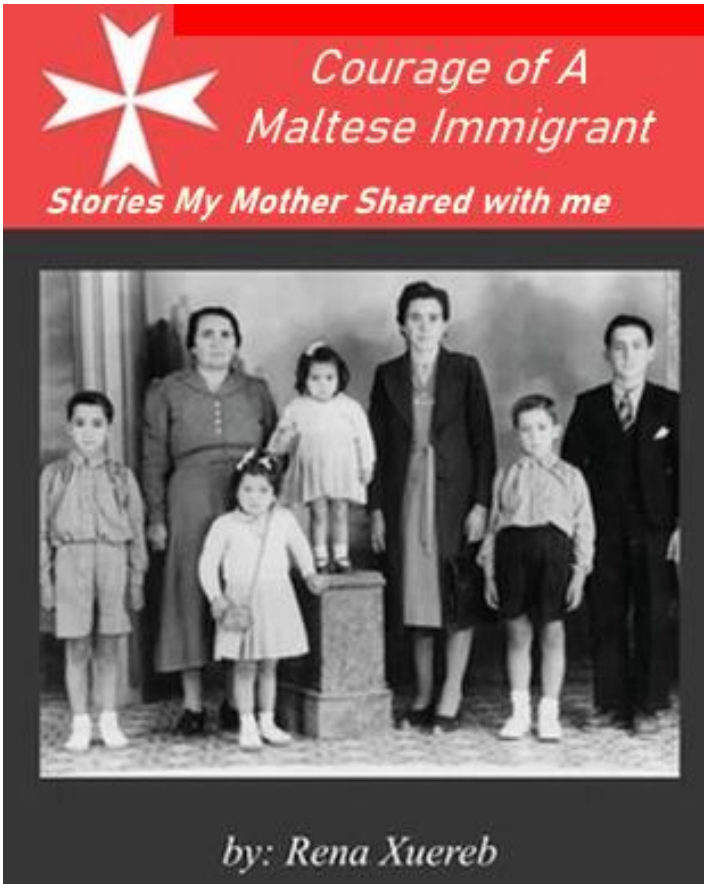
The Order's website reports that its assistance to the Ukrainian population, which includes medical and social support, the distribution of food and medicine, transportation and reception points in various locations across Ukraine and neighbouring countries, was a key topic of the conversation.

Discussions also focused on the Order of Malta's presence in the Holy Land, where it runs the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, which has seen the birth of over 100,000 babies since 1990 and is the only hospital with a neonatal intensive-care unit in the region.

Recently, the Order launched an aid program for the population of Gaza in collaboration with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

## Gifts

At the end of the meeting, Fra' Dunlap presented Pope Francis with a medal depicting Our Lady of Mount Philermos, a symbol of the Order of Malta's Marian spirituality. The Pope reciprocated with a bronze bas-relief of Saints Peter and Paul and papal documents.




# Michigan Central: Courage of A Maltese Immigrant

Santiago Esparza

Rena Xuereb (pronounced "Shweer-eb") was four years old when she woke from a nap and saw her first American building – the train station in Detroit.

"Thousands of people came through that train station," she said. "I am glad the station was able to be preserved. It holds a lot of memory."

"Courage of a Maltese Immigrant" is available on Amazon and popular bookstores like Barnes and Nobel and www.ingramspark.com

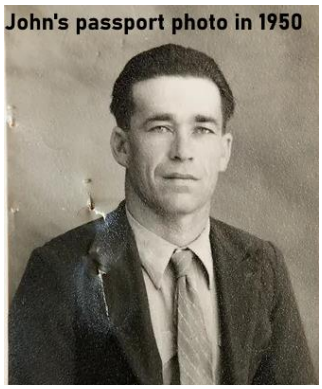
Xuereb recently wrote a book about her family migrating to the United States from Malta in the 1950s. The book, "Courage of a Maltese Immigrant" pays homage to her mother, Josephine, bringing six children from their family farm to Detroit. Her father, John, had come a year earlier to work for the Ford Motor Company.

***The Xuereb's first family photo which was taken in America, in 1954. From left: Top row Joe, Frank, Dolores, Victor and Grace. Bottom row: Josephine, Rena and John.***

"I don't know where she found the courage to bring six children to a foreign country," she said. "My mom could not speak English. It must have been scary for her."

Xuereb now lives in Belleville after residing in Corktown and Southwest Detroit. She said younger relatives would continuously ask about family history and she decided she would compile it in written form for them. "My nieces and nephews were always asking questions," she said. "I decided to write an outline. It was pretty good and I made it into the book."

The train station always loomed large in her life. It was her entryway into Detroit, it was always in the background of where she lived in the area and it made her sad to see it slowly decay.




"It was always there," she said. "My sister took the train to and from college and my son often walked past it on the way home from class at Cass Tech High School. "Everything has come full circle."

The Ford Motor Company spent six years and $950 million renovating the train station as part of a 30-acre innovation hub in Corktown.

Dominick John Davis, Xuereb's son, said the renovated station means a great deal to his family's history. He plays bass in Detroit native Jack White's band and they friends grew up together and remember the station's gloomy appearance.

He performed along with White on June 6th at the debut of the renovated building. Their mothers were in attendance, he said.

"It was amazing," Davis, now of Nashville, Tenn., said. "It was wild running into people from back in the day." There are anywhere from 14,000 to 40,000 people of Maltese descent living in metropolitan Detroit, according to various surveys. The largest population of people of Maltese descent outside of Malta is in Australia. That is where Xuereb's father was headed before deciding to come to America and work for Ford.

It took about a year, but he saved enough to buy a home and a car and send for his family, who were living at their farm.

"It was such a hard life farming," she said. "My mom was amazing. I wanted her story out there. Now our family history is preserved."

***About the Author:*** *Rena Xuereb is the youngest of seven children of John and Josephine Xuereb. She lives in the city of Belleville, Michigan with her husband Fernando Campos. They have five children and six grandchildren. She is a member of the Maltese American Community Club in Dearborn where she is a trustee on the executive board.*

## CHORAL CELEBRATION FIL-KNISJA TAL-PATRIJIET F'GĦAJNSIELEM

Nhar it-Tnejn filgħaxija kor ta' tfajliet mill-Merchants Taylors' School mir-Renju Unit taw Kunċert ta' mużika sagra fil-Knisja tal-Patrijiet ta' Gieżu fl-Imgarr Għajnsielem fuq inizjattiva tal-Fondazzjoni Papa Gwanni Pawlu t-Tieni u li għalih attendiet udjenza numeruża. Il-Kor kien taħt id-direzzjoni ta' Marie Claire Grenasan waqt li l-pjanista kienet Caroline Smith. Matul il-Kunċert li dam madwar siegħa u nofs, dan l-Kor ta' tfajliet li kien qed jagħmel Tour fil-gżejjer Maltin, interpreta diversi għanjiet fosthom 'Ave Verum Corpus', 'City called Heaven', 'You'll never walk alone', 'Ecce Panis Angelorum', 'Can you hear me' u oħrajn popolari mal-pubbliku.

Intant il-Fondazzjoni Papa Gwanni Pawlu t-Tieni se tkun qed tippreżenta kunċert ieħor mill-Abbey School – Music Ensemble in Concert nhar is-Sibt li ġej fil-Pjazza ewlenija tal-Knisja Parrokkjali f'Għajnsielem fis-7.30pm. Kulħadd mistieden.

**Kav Joe M Attard**

# Garden of Life at Xagħra cemetery Gozo

A new area, called *Ġnien il-Ħajja* (Garden of Life), has been created at Xagħra cemetery, following the completion of the new extension of the burial ground and the restoration of the old part of the cemetery, including 'the garden of reflection' last year.

The idea to create Ġnien il-Ħajja came to fruition after several Xagħra families who emigrated to other places and had to be buried abroad, will be remembered by affixing their photos and inscriptions on large rocks scattered around the garden.

Xagħra archpriest Carmelo Refalo said it was sad that after these people, who loved and dedicated their lives to their village, but had to leave Gozo for a better living, were to be forgotten.

"Today we find Xagħra parishioners who are buried in other cemeteries in Malta, Gozo and abroad and whose memories are not recorded in the village," he said.

"With this new novel idea, families and friends can now pay their respects to these people who are not buried in this cemetery."

Along the path of *Ġnien il-Ħajja*, one finds natural vegetation which embellishes the surroundings.

During the excavation of the place an antique rubble wall pertaining to the old cemetery was unearthed. In the near future the Way of the Cross will be affixed to the wall.(Source: Times of Malta)

# ISLAND OF GIANTS

*Figure from Zaghra Circle, on display at Ggantija Museum. Photo © Garry Shaw*

**Today we have another contribution from Timeless Travels Magazine. On a recent visit to Malta's prehistoric temples, Garry Shaw endeavours to enter the minds of Malta's temple builders, once thought to be a race of giants by the local inhabitants.**

Once upon a time, Sansuna, a giantess on the island of Gozo, went to the town of Ta' Cenc, placed huge stones upon one of her shoulders and carried them 4 km to their current resting place at Ġgantija, "the Place of Giants". A multi-tasker, she did this while holding her half-giant, half-human baby over the other shoulder. Taking these heavy stones, she then built the temple complex of Ġgantija and afterwards allowed the local people to worship within. More unusually, and perhaps irrelevant to the story (but hey, it's often the little details that make a tale believable), she lived exclusively on broad beans and honey (though some versions replace the honey with water). As old legends go, it's an entertaining one but it's not the only explanation for Ġgantija's megalithic prehistoric temple complex. I had also read that it had served as a defensive tower, again built by a race of giants (naturally).Entering the Ġgantija archaeological site in Gozo, Malta's sister island, I could immediately see why such legends had evolved.

Approaching the temple from the rear along a modern walkway, the path alive with brightly coloured flowers, an enormous wall of grey interlocking monoliths, some weighing at least 20 tonnes, rose into view. Its lower course was formed of imposing vertical standing stones, while above, its upper levels were laid out horizontally. Taken together, it looked like an ancient game of giant Jenga, 6m tall, or perhaps a rapidly failing game of Tetris. Many of the monoliths were mottled by weathering as if they had been briefly dipped in sulphuric acid. Tufts of green grass protruded from the gaps between stones. Scholars, discounting the possibility of a giant-enhanced workforce, have estimated that 50 men were needed to erect a single one of these exterior megaliths and that the entire temple took around 30,372 days to construct. To add to its complexity, though appearing to mark a single building, this great wall is actually a D-shaped enclosure that encompasses two separate temples to the north and south, each with its own entrance from a common forecourt. It was a temple complex rather than a single building and it had rested on this spot since around 3500 BCE.

Taking the South Temple first, I walked down a central corridor flanked by four oval chambers (referred to as "apses" by scholars), two to each side. These led directly to a fifth apse at its far end, giving the entire arrangement the slight appearance of a shamrock. The walls stood tall above me, unchanged in thousands of years, though their rough appearance was once smoothed by plaster. During excavations, archaeologists had found ritual furniture in one of the South Temple's apses, including altars decorated with spirals but now heavily weathered. In the similarly designed but smaller North Temple, the entrance was originally very low, forcing visitors to crouch down as they entered, a feature bound to please the vertically challenged but surely with a greater purpose. As I explored, all I could think was: what was the meaning behind these curious features?

Luckily, my wanderings at Ġgantija were accompanied by Daphne Caruana, curator of Gozo's sites and Vince DeBono, my expert guide for the duration of my time in Malta. After

viewing the temple complex we headed into Ġgantija's modern visitor centre where we came into the presence of some of Malta's famous "corpulent anthropomorphic figures", as the more scholarly literature calls them, or "fat ladies" as they are more popularly known. One obese figurine clutched her stomach, her prominent nose and eyes turned upwards to the sky. Another sat placidly, fat fingers locked in contemplation, resting on round thighs twice as big as her upper body. Her head was missing.

Close by was a single statuette depicting twin corpulent figures seated side by side on a couch, one holding a tiny representation of an equally corpulent individual. It had been excavated at the Xagħra Circle, a burial site close to Ġgantija. "*This is a very significant artefact,*" said Daphne. I brought my face closer to the glass. Their pleated kilts formed an almost unbroken chain and as with the other figures nearby, their arms rested on chubby legs. Unlike the others, however, their lower legs and feet had been painted with red ochre. "*As it's prehistory and we have no written records, it's very difficult to say what the artist or sculptor intended*", said Daphne. "*What we can see for sure is the high level of artistry behind it. It's quite exceptional.*" I agreed, and asked why the figures were carved so plump. "*This is very typical of the body shape that we find in Maltese Neolithic statuary*", she replied. "*For a long time it was interpreted as the mother goddess but we'd like to go a bit beyond that. In fact it's quite clear that, for example, this particular piece is very intentionally genderless. So it's either male or female. But there is a lot of emphasis on showing the corpulent lower body part. And that, I think, can very easily signify well-being.*" In prehistoric Malta, when resources were limited, I could certainly see how fat equalled prosperity.

Other objects were even harder to interpret. From the Xagħra Circle, a group of paddle-shaped figurines, each armless and legless and bound together when interred, had been unearthed. These had been designed to be held (they cannot stand on their own) and some had been purposely left unfinished. Because some are more complete than others, Daphne suggested that they might represent "the cycle of life, the idea of starting with nothing and then developing". But as she had earlier warned me, "*the figurines are so heavy with symbolism that you can't really just give a solid meaning and interpretation to what they could actually signify.*" As we talked, questions filling my mind, I wanted to discover more about Ġgantija's place in the development of Maltese prehistoric beliefs. And if possible, I also wanted to better understand the mind of the Maltese temple builders themselves. It was time to explore further

*This article was originally published in Timeless Travels magazine.*

MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER
The Only Voice of the
MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

**THE MALTESE ASSOCIATIONS OF MALTESE LIVING ABROAD NEED TO UNITE AND BUILD BRIDGES INSTEAD OF WALLS**

# Mystery still shrouds 'worst' Malta tragedy in World War II

*HMS Glorious in Grand Harbour. Photos provided by Salvu Azzopardi (Photo right) Giuseppe Zahra with his wife Polly, daughter Mary and baby.*

When his father died in 1939, Francis Polidano, 20, joined the Royal Navy, only to perish a year later, together with 50 other Maltese serving on the aircraft carrier HMS Glorious.

Their relatives are still waiting for answers about the incident in which 1,531 men lost their lives. It was the worst tragedy for Malta during World War II, according to Glarac Association Malta chairman Salvu Azzopardi .

Francis Polidano, a relative of Mr Azzopardi, took up the job as an assistant steward aboard the aircraft carrier at a time when war was looming on the horizon and jobs were very scarce.

His mother, Carmela, did not take the news well and his brother, Charlie, who was also in the navy, pointed out that he had enlisted during peacetime, not during the war.

HMS Glorious left the island after some routine work at Malta Drydocks and headed for Alexandria. Upon her arrival there, the captain received orders to go straight to the UK so that the carrier could join the Home Fleet. It played an important part in the Norwegian campaign and the British forces evacuation from Norway.

*Francis Polidano*

But tragedy struck on June 8,1940 when the carrier, escorted just by two destroyers, was intercepted by the German battlecruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and was sunk by gunfire. Over 1,200 died.

But there was not to be any closure for the Polidano family who, for months, was told that Francis might have survived and was being held prisoner. His mother was asked by the Red Cross to provide clothes, blankets and food, telling her that he could have been traced. Almost a year later, she received a letter informing her that, unfortunately, Francis had to be presumed dead as all attempts at finding him had failed.

Mrs Polidano was told to go to the UK to receive her son's medals but she could not make it because tragedy struck her family again. She lost her youngest daughter, Mary, 17, to shrapnel wounds during one of the air raids on Floriana.

Mr Azzopardi said that when news of the aircraft carrier's sinking reached England, both parliamentarians and the public raised questions on why the aircraft carrier was allowed to leave the safety of a convoy with only two destroyer escorts just months after the sinking of HMS Courageous in similar circumstances. Furthermore, the carrier had, strangely, not been flying combat air patrols. It also transpired that a Royal Navy heavy cruiser – HMS Devonshire – had been very close but did not assist. The cruiser was carrying the Norwegian royal family, Norwegian MPs and Norwegian gold bullion.

## Share you Hal Saflieni Hypogeum memories with Heritage Malta

Heritage Malta has announced a new initiative to document the recent history and personal connections of the community with the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum.

This is being carried out in collaboration with the National Archives of Malta and their MEMORJA project.

This call for stories seeks to gather memories and photographs from individuals connected to the site, enriching the narrative of this UNESCO World Heritage Site with personal insights and experiences.

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Heritage Malta is inviting those with recollections or old photographs of the site to share their stories. These contributions will not only enhance the historical record but also provide a unique perspective on the cultural importance of the Hypogeum.

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The Hal Saflieni Hypogeum is a unique underground burial complex dating back to between 4000 and 1500 BC. This Neolithic wonder, carved from living rock, showcases the remarkable craftsmanship of Malta's ancient inhabitants.

Discovered accidentally in 1902, the Hypogeum was one of the first sites in Malta to be listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. It stands as a testament to the island's rich prehistoric heritage.

Anyone with memories or information about the Hypogeum can contact Heritage Malta by calling 23954353 or 21691595 during office hours (Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm) or by emailing info@heritagemalta.org

There is no deadline for submissions, and participants can choose to be interviewed or submit their stories in writing.

The composition of the Maltese communities is rapidly changing. As the old pioneers passed away or no longer active, the new generation (most of them born overseas) are trying to keep alive the link between themselves and Malta. We support them.

## *Inter Supporters Club Gozo (Malta)* Annual General Meeting, the 2024-26 Committee

During the Annual General Meeting held recently, the Inter Gozitan Supporters Club, Joe Bajada, Alvin Grech and Shaun Paul Attard were confirmed in the positions of President, Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

In his message, Joe Bajada said that last season gave us certain satisfactions by winning 2 honours including the Championship which gave us even the second star and for this occasion we organized a wonderful free activity for members, as well as similar activities on a smaller scale during this season for our members.

Very nice experiences that we organized for members including a Tour for a Champions League match between Inter and Atletico Madrid last February 20 where 3 of our members were flag bearers before the match, as well as a small member of ours, was chosen to be one of the children in the walkabout before the players enter the dressing rooms for a match against Napoli on March 17, 2024. Undoubtedly these were unforgettable experiences.

Bajada said that the next step for the coming season after the change in leadership where Beppe Marotta was appointed President, is what we look ahead with a certain optimism in the coming season Inter will also try again to be among the protagonists in Europe. He said that as a Gozitan club even though we are a small club, we have a big heart that beats with Gozitan heart and blood. He reiterated that even though we are small, we are the only ones in Malta and Gozo who do not take any extra money whenever our members ask us to bring them tickets for Inter games.

Bajada said that we continued to believe in ourselves so that what we managed to establish nine years ago with total recognition from the Centro Cordinamento, we continued with the help of everyone and our task is to start looking forward to the celebrations of our 10th anniversary.

He ended his message by thanking everyone from the bottom of his heart, including fellow officers, Alvin Grech and Shaun Attard for the great work they do, which together with the others we are still going on with. Bajada appealed to the members of the Committee for everyone who can give their part to do it, because with a little bit of everyone, we will be able to continue with our work while giving special thanks to the Central Committee of the Kercem Festival for cooperation absolute that they find what they have so that we can meet them during all these years. Joe Bajada appealed to Interisti Gozdxin on the importance that during these weeks everyone who wants to enter or renew the card so that they don't leave it to the end so that they don't come out disappointed and that way they have the material guaranteed.

The Gozian Club has announced that, as they have done in previous years, they will honour the most loyal members and this year this recognition will be given to Joseph Camilleri.

During the Annual General Meeting, the 2024-26 Committee is formed as follows:

**President: Joe Bajada Vice President: Noel Borg Secretary: Alvin Grech**
**Assistant Secretary: Chris Portelli Treasurer: Shaun Paul Attard**
**Assistant Treasurer: David Zammit Members: Christian Portelli; Aaron Scicluna; Joseph Camilleri, Ramon Pace and Alan Joe Mifsud**
**Spiritual Director: Fr. Joe Borg Mssp**

## "My mother encourages me to sing in Maltese" Brian Gatt

"My mother encourages me to sing in Maltese because over time they are being forgotten and I enjoy seeing the audience cheering and smiling". Little Amea-Jo Refalo declared this when asked about her love for singing and singing in the Maltese language.

The little one started singing in Maltese because in the family she has both her uncle and her father who are active in singing and playing Maltese traditional and folk songs (GHANA) in various activities organized in the villages.

She startet singing sang in Maltese for the first time at the age of three but as she sang fol songs for the first time with her uncle a few months later when she was four years old. That day she sang the refrain of 'Bużnanna' while a recording of a television program was being made.

"Apart from my uncle who is active in the group 'Tal-Fuklar Group', I am an active member in the folk group 'Cittadella' where I sing folk songs such as 'Jiena Tifla tal Kampanja' and Bum Bum il-Bieb' while dancing too. She finished by telling us that in the future I would like to learn the guitar so that I can play and sing and that although she is a little shy seeing people happy helps her to forget everything and have fun.

## Historic day for Maltese basketball

It was historic day for Maltese basketball as both men's and women's team reached the final of the FIBA Small States of Europe Championships.

In the men's competition being held in Andorra Malta defeated Gibraltar in the semi final, and in the women's, competition being held in Pristina Kosovo, Malta defeated Albania to register the fourth successive victory and reach the final.

The men's team had the better of Gibraltar 85-79 and took sweet revenge after suffering defeat against the same opponents in the group opening match. Malta went in front at the start of the second quarter and never looked back despite Gibraltar's strong return in the final quarter.

Samuel Deguara with 25 points and Kevin Cassar with 15 were Malta's best scorers. Malta will face either Andorra or San Marino who play in the second semi final.

The women's team kept marching on and after winning all three matches in the group, yesterday they easily beat Albania in the semi final. The Malta girls dominated the game with a powerful start in which they built a 15-point lead.

In the end Malta cruised to a 75-62 victory with Amber Constance Melgoza again Malta's leading scorer with 17 points, closely followed by Stephanie De Martino and Kristy Galea both with 15, and Danika Galea with 14.

In Sunday's final Malta will probably face favourites Norway who play the second semi final against Cyprus.

# The York (Meilak) Family Story

Dr. Barry York

It was 70 years ago - 30th June 1954 - when my parents, Loreto and Olive, and I disembarked from the 'Himalaya' at Station Pier, Melbourne, to start a new life in a new country.

As a migrant child, I grew up to make a contribution in the field of immigration and ethnic history. I undertook much original research and had several books and research papers published. My generation of migrants' parents were too busy in the factories (like my dad) to pay attention to 'ethnic history'. But through their dedication and sacrifices, many of their children went to university and a few of us studied History and became aware of the new fields of research in the Australian story.

Forty years ago, I recorded my first proper oral history interview - which was with a Maltese migrant. I kept recording oral history interviews, including for the National Library, and currently have recorded 499 such interviews, mostly with migrants: Maltese, Italians, English, Poles, Lebanese and most recently a project about the Indian diaspora.

Among this audio-archive are more than 30 interviews, recorded in the mid 1980s, with migrants who came to Australia in the 1910s and 1920s - in other words, migrant voices from a century and more ago.

My Maltese dad had been stationed in London after the War with the Royal Air Force (which he joined in Malta in 1940) and married my Londoner mother in 1947. My parents benefited from the post-war assisted migration scheme - 'Ten Pound Poms' scheme. I was three (and travelled for free). The 19,000 km voyage took about a month.

Life is full of irony. My mother told her brother and sister at Tilbury Docks that she'd be back in two years. My dad was really keen to emigrate to Melbourne but mum not so. However, they both believed the move would be good for me, their son, as London had experienced 'The Great Smog' of 1952, which killed thousands of Londoners in one weekend. It was mostly babies and the elderly who died (ie, the authorities ran out of coffins). My parents told me that I developed a bronchial problem because of the smog and I'd "cough my lungs up" in my cot. They made the decision primarily for me.

My dad had two brothers in Melbourne - Joe Meilak and Michael Meilak. Joe, a wharfie, kindly nominated us for assisted passage and provided initial accommodation in his humble West Melbourne home.

Accommodation was a big problem for new arrivals. It didn't work out with Joe and his lovely wife, Daisy, and we then went to live in Coburg with uncle Michael. Again, it didn't work out and for the next 20 months we went from boarding-house to boarding-house - five in all, in Coburg and Brunswick. They weren't always nice places.

Then, in 1956, my hard-working parents put a deposit on our own home in Shamrock Street, West Brunswick. It was a joyous occasion, especially for me as a kid who had been technically 'homeless' from the age of three to five.

The irony was that my mother fell in love with Australia very quickly. She loved its wide open spaces, the friendliness of the people and the lack of formal hierarchy in the workplace. It took her a while to adjust to calling her boss "Stan" rather than "Mister Long".
My dad, who had been so keen to emigrate, hated it here in the early years. He found it "backward" and had expected Melbourne to be a mini-London. He never really adjusted to Australia and, despite having changed his name in London after the War, always said he was Maltese. He identified as Maltese rather than Australian, and never engaged in the hyphenated 'Maltese-Australian' concept. In his final years, he even said to me: "Leaving Malta was the worst mistake I ever made". (Though of course, he didn't just 'leave', he volunteered to fight Fascism and Nazism and was sent overseas by the RAF).
My mum died 21 years ago and dad 15 years ago. They were typical migrants - hard working, determined to make a better life than they had back in their homelands, pursuing the elusive butterfly known as happiness. They settled well into the community of Brunswick, Melbourne, where they resided for 40 years. I feel privileged to have grown up there for 30 years, years in which my hometown was an unselfconscious multicultural community, very working class, dotted with factories, textile mills and quarries even in the residential areas.
I cannot know how I would have ended up had I grown up in London. And I am not nationalistic, so I don't say that "Australia is the best country in the world". But I am very grateful to my parents for bringing me here. I'm glad to have grown up in Australia and especially in a place like the old Brunswick.

## Merħba

# L-Ghaqda tal-Malti (Universita)

## Dwarna (ta' fuq fuq)

L-Ġħaqda tal-Malti - Università, imwaqqfa minn Rużar Briffa u Ġużè Bonnici fl-1931, hi għaqda studenteska bl-għan tagħha li tippromwovi l-Malti u l-oqsma kollha marbuta miegħu mal-istudenti u lil hinn.

### L-GĦANIJIET TAL-GĦAQDA HUMA LI:

- taħdem għall-ġħarfien sħiħ tal-ilsien Malti fl-oqsma kollha tal-ħajja u tal-kultura Maltija;
- tqanqal interess u studji fil-lingwa u fil-letteratura Maltin, kemm fost l-istudenti tal-Università u ta' istituzzjonijiet edukattivi oħra, kif ukoll qalb il-pubbliku ġenerali u l-awtoritajiet;
- tħaddem u tħarreġ kompetenzi u mezzi relevanti għall-oqsma letterarji u lingwistiċi tal-Malti;
- tfakkar awturi Maltin, jew oħrajn li kitbu dwar il-Malti jew bil-Malti;
- tgħin lill-istudenti biex itejbu l-ħiliet fil-kitba u jippubblikaw ix-xogħlijiet tagħhom fil-pubblikazzjonijiet tal-Ġħaqda.

## Gozitans named as National Cycling Champions

Aidan Buttigieg of the Gozitan D Sports Lab club, has once again been named National Champion of the Elite Category Time Trial 2024, a competition organised by the Maltese Cycling Federation.

For Aidan Buttigieg, this was the second title in his career, successfully defending this Time Trial Championship, with a maximum total of 600 points over three wins.

Stephen Grima also of D Sports Lab finished as National champion in the Masters 50+ with 400 points, while Matthew Galea (Gozo CC) finished as the National Junior champion with a total of 400 points.Liam Daly of the Gozitan club of Shamrock Stars SC finished as the National champion under 14, with a maximum total of 600 points.

His teammates from the same club, Jake Refalo (525 points) and Neil Cassar (465 points) finished behind him. Nina Debono also from Shamrock Stars SC won the same category reserved for Girls with a maximum of 600 points.

In the Under 12 Categories, Zek Debono of Shamrock Stars SC finished third with 445 points, while Ria Debono also of Shamrock Stars SC finished second in the same category reserved for Girls.

Joe Bajada, Secretary General of the Maltese Cycling Federation stated that ”these successes are a very important step in the continuation of the development of the sport of cycling on the island of Gozo.”

## Jamie Cardona Headlining Charlie Chaplin’s Comedy Classic the Great Dictator

By Clara Sciberras

Prepare to be dazzled as the iconic Charlie Chaplin film, “The Great Dictator,” comes alive on stage next week!

**The talented Jamie Cardona will be taking on the starring role of the Barber, who returns home after losing his memory in a brutal war, only to find his country transformed into a place of persecution and tyranny under the iron fist of dictator Adenoid Hynkel.**

Cardona will be playing both characters, portraying a dual role as both the compassionate Jewish Barber and the despotic fascist Hynkel, showcasing the stark contrast between good and evil within one person.

Joined by old allies and new friends, the Barber embarks on a courageous journey to resist his oppressors. His tale of bravery culminates in a twist of fate, allowing him to deliver a poignant message of unity and peace to the world.

In the 1940 movie, Charlie Chaplin headlined the film, also taking on the dual role. The film resonated strongly with audiences and became the actor’s most commercially successful work.

Earlier this year, local actor Cardona sold out his controversially hilarious one-man show, “Mid-Djajru Ta’ Student fi Skola tal-Knisja,” where the actor allegedly “flashed” the audience.

Nikolai Azzopardi Productions is set to bring this timeless classic to life through an incredibly talented cast, headlined by Cardona himself. The production is directed by the acclaimed Malcolm Galea, with movement direction by Moritz Zavan Stoeckle and original music composed by Aleandro Spiteri Monsigneur.

“The Great Dictator” will be performed at the Valletta Campus Theatre during the first two weekends of July. Tickets are available now at ticketline.com.mt.

# DOWN MEMORY LANE

## Maltese club in Australia closes down

## 1951 - 2003

**Times of Malta**

**19 May 2003 Albert W. Agius**

*The committee and winners of one of the Miss George Cross Falcons Quests. Picture courtesy of George Bartolo.*

The George Cross Falcons Club of Wollongong NSW has closed down. The decision was taken by a diminishing hard core who have been trying, against the odds, to keep it going. It was a bitter pill to have to swallow but it was perhaps inevitable as support for the club has been waning over recent times.

The expenses to keep the club open have been creeping steadily upwards, especially insurance premiums. At the same time there has been a general apathy.

Many Maltese migrants who opted to go and work in the industrial Wollongong region chose to buy houses in Cringila, Warrawong and Port Kembla.

The club was set up in June 1951 when a group of Maltese immigrants agreed to pay one shilling each weekly with which to buy flowers to decorate the multi-purpose hall in Warrawong where a priest from Port Kembla used to come and celebrate Mass on Sunday mornings.

The club took care of the social, cultural and spiritual needs of the Maltese families. Fr Victor Bonello's efforts led to the growth of the parish and the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus came down to Warrawong from Mackay, Qld, to open a Catholic school and a convent. They helped to cater to the spiritual needs and the Maltese community of the Illawarra district reciprocated with its support.

Under the guidance of stalwarts like George Bartolo and Lorry Pavia the group became organised and became affiliated with the George Cross League of Sydney and later became the Maltese Guild and changed the name again later to George Cross Falcons Club.

The group bought a plot of land in Lake Avenue, Cringila on which they built a club house.

The club committees made valiant efforts over the years to attract younger elements of the Maltese community by organising sporting activity. George Cross Falcons Club even ran a football team but this folded after a few years. They organised Miss Quest pageants.

The club house was later extended to accommodate the playing of bocci, a game that became a good attraction and lasted longer than football, but these activities received short-term support. The youngsters' interest could not be sustained.

In more recent times, a welfare officer operated from the club but to no avail.

There are some 800 Maltese living in the Wollongong area. It is indeed a shame that the successful efforts to build such facilities for the Maltese community are going to waste.

***Read the article on the next page.***

# THE GEORGE CROSS FALCONS COMMUNITY CENTRE 2006-2024

The Club, which changed it name to a Centre, is situated ten minutes outside Wollongong and forty minutes from Liverpool. The Club was built in 1951 to serve the Maltese community that arrived in Illawarra NSW to work at the steel works. It has also served the community as a welcoming place for the Presidents, Prime Ministers and other dignitaries who travelled to Australia from Malta to meet the Maltese community of Australia.

The Centre was temporarily closed in 2003 but in 2006 all that changed, as the new Centre committee accepted the importance of solidarity and changes.

President Louis Parnis brought lots of management skills to our Centre from previous employment and territory education, we now reaping the rewards and after 19 years of dedication making sure the financial position of the George Cross Falcons Centre Inc. is viable to cover all the expenses in maintaining the premises and payments of all the bills when due.

We encourage everyone to attend the Centre at some time to appreciate all the work we have achieved in the last nineteen years, things like renovation of the amenities block, Murals, air-conditioning of the whole premises, 4 memorials, solar panels on the roof, extensions, workshop and a community garden sponsored by Endeavour Energy. We are seeing regular buses attending the famous Monday's Senior Day playing bingo and three three-course meals for only $8.00.

The Committee ten years ago committed to refurbishing the original room built underneath the premises and the President formulated a plan and today the room is completed and fully furnished to host one of the Men's Shed Workshop.

The Men's Shed idea was a great success and the committee commissioned to build a larger shed funded by the State Government welcoming some 9 nationalities every week, helping maintain work as needed at the Centre.

We are proud to support the Greenacres group of men and women with disabilities to work in the workshop. The GCFCC celebrates the Malta National Feast of Our Lady Queen of Victories annually in September and sponsor a free after-party for all attending.

Cringila Centre Language School is available to all ages at no cost to students and a Folklore -dancing group performs in nursing homes in the area.

The Centre is also patronised by members of other nationalities like the Australian Craft ladies and the Italian and Portuguese groups. We take the opportunity to thank the volunteers and State and Federal Governments and to all that who donated funds to enable us to complete this great project for the local Community.

Send us you
favourite photos