

CONSULATE OF MALTA IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER

July 2013 FRANK L SCICLUNA - HON CONSUL - FULL OF HISTORY AND CULTURE OF MALTA

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Council of Maltese Living Abroad and the 4th World Convention of the Maltese Living Abroad (2015)



In a media release published on 21 June 2013, the Department of Information of the Government of Malta referred to the annual International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) organised by the International Organisation on Migration (IOM) and held in Geneva on the 18-19 June 2013. Established in 1951, the IOM is an inter-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration worldwide by serving the policy and programme needs of governments and migrants. Malta is a member of the IOM which has a regional office in Malta.

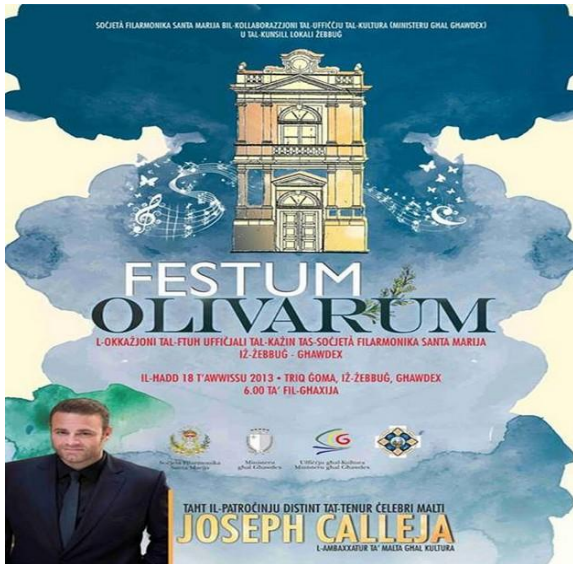
The focus this year was dedicated towards the realities impacting Diasporas today; their engagement in recipient host countries, their difficulties but also their positive contribution to both countries of origin and destination. The meeting provided an excellent opportunity for the Republic of Malta to pay tribute to the Maltese communities living abroad, particularly to their invaluable contribution to the economies of the recipient countries as well as their wealth of know-how and its potential to the benefit of Malta, all of which came about as a result of their courageous decisions to leave their homeland and migrate to foreign destinations.

In his statement, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Malta to the United Nations in Geneva, H.E. Dr. John Paul Grech, highlighted the efforts undertaken by the Government of the Republic of Malta in further assisting the Maltese communities abroad. In his statement, Ambassador Grech referred in particularly to the enactment of Act XX by the Houses of Representatives in 2011 establishing the '**Council of Maltese Living Abroad**' as well as a Directorate specifically dedicated to this cause operating from within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ambassador Grech spoke about the migration, return and re-migration trends and patterns of the Maltese Diaspora across time, highlighting, in so doing, the preferred countries of destination which received the majority of the Maltese Diaspora. He also underscored the excellent qualities of the Maltese migrants and their capacity to effectively integrate themselves well within foreign communities. He referred to their significant contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of their recipient host countries, adding to each, indelible aspects of Maltese traditional customs and beliefs.

The next conference of the Council of Maltese Living Abroad will be held on the 3 and 4 October 2013 in Malta. The representatives of Maltese in Australia are Professor Maurice Cauci, Dr Edwin Borg Manche, Lawrence Dimech, Dr Gaetano Pace and Frank Scicluna. In the next edition we will publish some of the topics for discussion.

FESTUM OLIVARUM (Olive Feast – Zebbug means olives)



The new band premises of the Santa Marija Philharmonic Society of Zebbug, are being officially inaugurated on Sunday, the 18th of August.

As part of the celebrations for the occasion the Santa Marija Philharmonic Band, in collaboration with the Zebbug Local Council, will be presenting 'Festum Olivarum,' a Musical Concert, under the musical direction of Mro. Joseph Grech, featuring classical and popular music excerpts

The concert will be held under the distinguished patronage of the Maltese Ambassador for culture, the world renowned tenor, Joseph Calleja.

The picture below shows the new Band Club Of Santa Marija Philharmonica Society of Zebbug – Gozo, Malta

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Vacant properties in Malta worth €7 billion

Following the publication of census statistics showing that one in every three Maltese dwelling is vacant, can Malta afford to build more? With official census figures showing the number of vacant properties shooting up by 36% in just six years, questions are being raised on the environmental and economic sustainability of further construction of new dwellings. The scourge of vacant properties dotting the island, some 70,000 of them, has been a long standing bone of contention, with environmentalists arguing that further development should be halted until the problem is resolved.



However, according to Malta Development Association vice-president Sandro Chetcuti, there is a solution in the pipeline.

Speaking with this newspaper, Mr Chetcuti suggests that the establishment of a new, more detailed property price index would help people who have vacant property on their hands to properly gauge the value of their property, and in so doing establish a benchmark sale price – the main hurdle for the owners of such property.

He explains, “From my experience, most of the vacant properties on the market are old and, more

importantly, overpriced, which is a major stumbling block in reducing the number of vacant properties on the island. What I have found is that the owners of such property, many times people who have inherited the property, are not familiar with the property market and its fluctuations.”

The Malta Development Association (MDA) has been in discussions with the government over the prospect of creating a new property price index so as to provide indicative market prices per square metre for different types of property in different localities.



Villa Roseville – ATTARD

Villa Roseville is one of the best examples of Art Nouveau architecture.

Ħ'Attard covers a surface area of about seven square kilometers. Its population, including the modern estate of Misrah Kola and surrounding environs, is around 10,000. It comprises to its North, facing the city of Mdina, the flat expanse called Ta' Qali. Beneath it the area known as Ta' l-Ildward joins with Misrah Kola, across from Wied San Martin (St Martin's Valley), Wied Incita (Valley of Instigation) and Wied Irmiedi (Valley of Ashes), on the Żebbuġ side. Its western front is bordered by Wied is-Sewda (Black Valley), on the Qormi side. This is an anciently inhabited area known as Tax-Xarolla or That ir-Rahal and contains the “Tax-

Xarolla Catacombs”. On the 3rd of September, 1935 in a field known as ‘Ta’ Farrat’ near the Xarolla Windmill, a tomb was found dating to the periods of the Carthaginians and Phoenicians, alongside later Roman pottery remains. On the 13th of June, 1930, a Roman tomb was uncovered nearby.

To its East, up to Tal-Mirakli (of the Miracles) chapel on the Lija side, is a large zone called Ta’ Fġieni bordering the village core and the 17th Century parish church at its center, built by architect Tumas Dingli. Dingli, born and bred in Ħ'Attard, is best known for his work on Grandmaster Alof de Wignacourt's aqueduct, the former Porta Reale entrance into Valletta and several churches. Of these, only Ħ'Attard's parish church remains unaltered. South of the village core is the Sant'Anton quarter, named for San Anton Palace and the palace's botanic gardens, both built by the Knights between 1623 and 1636. It is now the official residence of the President of Malta and has long been a symbol of Ħ'Attard.

CRAZY MALTESE HOUSE NAMES

Maltese have some fascinating customs and reasons behind the selection of our house names. One custom is that of naming one's house using the first part of the Christian names of the partners who own that house. Here are some examples: 'Marton' - Mary and Tony, 'Josmar' - Joseph and Mary, 'Carvin' - Carmen and Vince, 'Charldor' - Charles and Doreen. Incidentally, DJ Bundy, a local DJ, once mentioned that there is a house in Zurrieq which was named "Condom" which we hopefully assume stands for the names of the proprietors rather than some kind of fetish for rubbery stuff. Some people can be so dumb at times.



< Did you know that St Joseph had a surname? Have a look at this house name!

Another custom is to find house names which are based on religious beliefs. Religious observance in Malta is strong and has been so for many centuries. Most of these house names usually bear the name of the proprietors' favourite patron saint or that of the patron saint of the village. For example if you go to Qormi you'll see lots of 'St Georges' and 'St Sebastians'. In Zabbar you will find many houses named 'Madonna tal-Grazzja'. Then there are those houses which are named 'God Bless Australia', 'America' or 'Canada'. These reflect the migration of the Maltese to the above mentioned countries and the successful life they once bore. And last but not least, I couldn't help taking a photo of this hilarious plate. It does give you a sense of welcome, doesn't it?

To draw your attention to some of the more interesting and delightful Maltese house names, we've put some of our favourites in bold. Have a look, they may help you choose your house name.

HOUSE NAME	MEANING
Armonija	harmony
Dar il-Mediterran	Mediterranean House
Dar il-Sliem	house of tranquility
Dar San Guzepp	St Joseph's House
Genna	paradise
Genna Ta'l-Art	heaven on earth
Merhba	welcome

EASTERTIME - The world of the figolli



Down under, the tradition of Maltese Easter figolla making is getting a boost. Maltese-descent Australian, Nanette Johnson, aka Ms Gourmet of foodie blog [gourmetworrier](http://gourmetworrier.com) fame, came up a couple of years back with what she called then "a hair brain idea to host a World Figolli Day". Well, following its resounding success, and its ability to capture the imagination of folk Maltese and non Maltese, it's proved to be less hair-brained and is now a regular calendar event – to mark Easter by both 'down under' and in Malta.

The 'day' is a virtual hang-out, if you like, of figolli makers worldwide. Nanette tells us to 'turn off our iPhones and shut down our MacBooks [wishful thinking!] and then head into the kitchen with our kids, nieces, nephews, nannas and nannus and have a bonding session with some dough and hopefully pass on a few Maltese culinary traditions while we're at it.'

If you do get baking, be sure to take photos and/or videos and post your figolli photos to the World Figolli Day © flickr group. Your glorious creations will then be pinned to the World Figolli Day © pinterest board.

GGANTIJA TEMPLES – Xaghra, Gozo



Seven megalithic temples are found on the islands of Malta and Gozo, each the result of an individual development. The two temples of Ġgantija on the island of Gozo are notable for their gigantic Bronze Age structures. On the island of Malta, the temples of Hagar Qin, Mnajdra and Tarxien are unique architectural masterpieces, given the limited resources available to their builders. The Ta' Hagra and Skorba complexes show how the tradition of temple-building was handed down in Malta.

The Ġgantija Temples in Xaghra, Gozo, are one of the most important archaeological sites in the Maltese Islands. Their listing on the UNESCO World Heritage List makes them a site of universal significance. The site consists of a megalithic complex of two temples surrounded by a massive common boundary wall, and raised on a high terrace wall. The origins of Ġgantija date back to between 3600 and 3200 B.C., with the larger temple being the first to

be built. Extensive restoration work was carried out in the early 20th century to ensure the monument's preservation

The megalithic site of Ġgantija must always have raised some curiosity in the local population, and even before it was first excavated by Colonel John Otto Bayer in 1827, the gigantic ruins were for a long time associated with a mysterious race of giants, eventually giving rise to the name of the site, "ġgant" being Maltese for giant. From as early as the 16th century down to the present day, Ġgantija has always attracted visitors to the island, and thanks to notable artists and distinguished visitors, we are in possession of priceless drawings and paintings of the site even before its excavation in the early 19th century.

One of the most striking features of the entire complex is the enormity of the megaliths in which it is constructed, and the considerably good state of preservation, notwithstanding the age of the monument. This is perhaps most significant in the boundary wall which encloses the two temples, and which is built in rough coralline limestone blocks standing at right angles so as to provide enough support for the smaller courses of stone in the upper levels. Some of the megaliths exceed five metres in length and weigh over fifty tons.

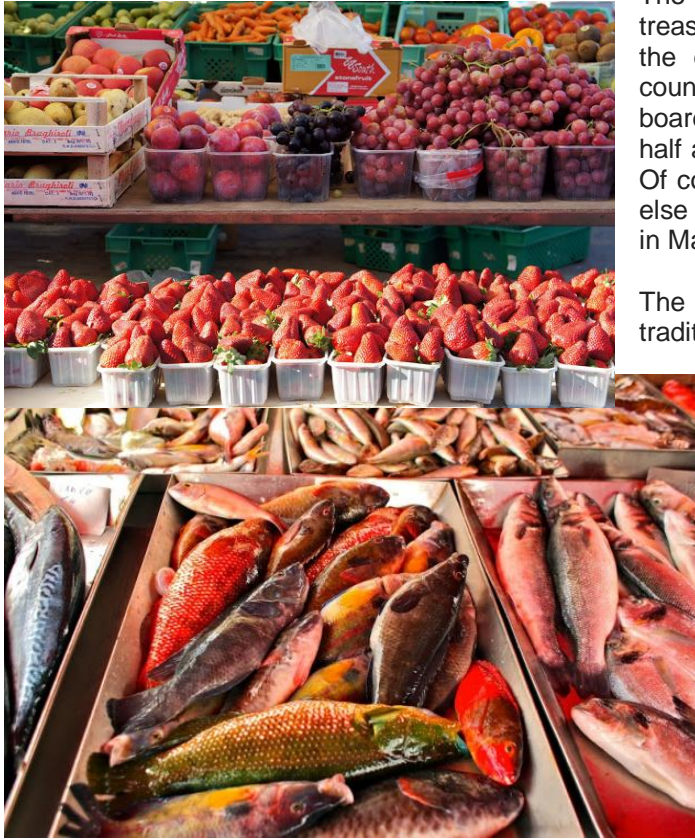
The hard-wearing locally-quarried coralline limestone is used extensively at Ġgantija, and is one of the reasons behind the preservation of the monument. The softer Globigerina limestone is reserved for inner furnishings such as doorways, altars, and decorative slabs. Each temple consists of a number of apses flanking a central corridor. This architectural style is reflected in all the megalithic temples of Malta, with the number of apses varying according to the period in which the temple was constructed. The inwardly inclined walls suggest that the temples were roofed over, possibly making use of timber beams, reeds and clay for waterproofing. There is evidence for the internal walls to have been plastered and painted over, as proven by two plaster fragments with red ochre originating from Ġgantija and preserved at the Gozo Museum of Archaeology.

Excavations have brought to light the remains of animal bone, thus suggesting some sort of ritual involving animal sacrifice. The use of fire is evidenced by the presence of stone hearths. A number of libation holes in the floor may have been used for the pouring of liquid offerings. The innermost sections of the temples were possibly screened off from the outer parts. It is probable that during ceremonial activities, the congregation would have assembled outside the temple complex, since the large forecourt in front of the two temples was purposely raised by the same temple builders, and is a common feature in Maltese temple architecture.

Of particular interest are a small number of prehistoric objects found at Ġgantija, and today preserved at the Gozo Museum of Archaeology. These include two stone heads, in typical artistic style of the Temple Period, a large stone block with a snake relief, and a phallic symbol. Ġgantija was in use for about a thousand years, after which time it was abandoned and later used as a cremation site by Bronze Age inhabitants.

**WHEN IN MALTA VISIT THE ANZAC WAR MEMORIAL AT ARGOTTI
BOTANIC GARDEN FLORIANA**

SUNDAY MORNING MARKET AT MARSAXLOKK



The Sunday morning fish market in Marsaxlokk is a national treasure. As Merlin so rightly put it, "People travel halfway across the country to buy their groceries!" Granted, it's not a large country, but it was still impressive to see - for example - the man boarding the bus back to Valletta with his bag of white beans and half a dozen hot peppers. Another man boarded with shoe inserts. Of course, fish is the main event, but why buy anything anywhere else when you can use it as an excuse to spend Sunday morning in Marsaxlokk?

The town is as picturesque as can be with its harbor full of traditional *luzzus* (heavy, wooden fishing boats painted bright blue, yellow and red and decorated with a set of eyes - a style said to date back to the Phoenicians) and old limestone buildings. Here you have the second largest harbor in a country literally surrounded by them - and it's filled with fishing boats. It's such an idyllic setting for a fish market that it could feel like a movie set if not for the familiar European market schlock bookending the fishmongers. Knock-off Cars toys and cheap shoes anchor dreamy atmosphere right back down to earth. It took us a while to reach the fish, passing through the inedibles and then the green grocers and bakery stands. And the flowers - wow, Spring is in full bloom. People packed into the market avenue, making their way down the aisle between the two rows of shaded stands. Even when a few raindrops began to fall, the mood remained energetic and jovial. People caught up, children helped push

strawberries and pastries, couples strolled in their Sunday best. It was a town a-bustle packed with the fruits (and vegetables) of their labor. The produce is in that great transitional period right now. Cabbages sit in boxes, their big unfolding leaves asking for a little more attention before the fluffy, leafy greens take over. Tight little artichokes look downright seductive next to dimming brussel sprouts. Carrots are no longer the brightest kid on the block. This is *the* market in Malta - even people in Valletta, which has its own Sunday market - drive over to Marsaxlokk to pick up what they need. As the man in charge of our rental apartment put it, "anything here (Valletta) will be there (Marsaxlokk) - and then they have more." Of course, by "more" he meant fish, fish, fish! Even in the outlying fishless sections you feel the true bait and tackle nature of the place. Notice the gas pumps for boats. When we ducked around them to get past a particularly dense crowd, we got our first real look out into the water. There was just as much activity out there as onshore. People came to and fro unloading, loading, taking a small boat out to their bigger boat with the ease of someone riding an escalator. Sunday is clearly not a day of rest for the residents of Marsaxlokk. For butchers, definitely. Not a single meat vendor present - a European market first.

Husband and wife teams worked in tandem at every aspect of their family business. On the boats, they untangled lines and nets, on the dock, they gutted and cleaned fish side by side. Malta just legalized divorce last year. Until then, it was one of three countries in the world in which it was outlawed (along with Vatican City - where I'm pretty sure most of the citizens aren't allowed to marry either - and the Philippines). Well, looking at the teamwork on display, I'd guess that the residents of Marsaxlokk weren't part of the majority who voted for legalization of de-coupling. Who'd hold the other end of the line? It was really sweet to see the way the town's fishing industry ran - the casual conversations and jokes shared between a man and woman in gut-specked aprons.

Once you hit the fish section of the market, you hit it hard. All of a sudden there's a veritable aquarium (albeit full of still lifes) around you. Since the fish are all caught locally, a lot of the stalls had these sort of potpourri bins filled with downright tropical looking catches that didn't fit into one of the conventional groups. Sometimes, you'd bend in to look a little closer and a fish would start flopping around at your approach. It was just playing dead! Crafty as a shark. Moray eels and [slipper lobsters](#), gnarly fish that looked like coral. The cluster of tabletops was a stunning visual, so clean and vibrant that you barely noticed the characteristic grit of most fish or meat markets - the blood and guts, sharp knives and bandaged hands. In the in-flight magazine on Air Malta, we read an article about the fishermen of Marsaxlokk. It mostly

focused on the beauty of the antique boats and the current struggle of lifelong anglers due to increased EU regulations on overfishing. But it also read: "[Marsaxlokk] stages the life and drama surrounding the central occupation of fishing, which has remained largely unchanged." With everything going on Sunday morning, this still rang out as undeniably true. I'd go to Marsaxlokk on Sunday morning to buy shoe inserts, too. Just to be part of it.

A picture is
worth 1000 words



TANKER WITH MIGRANTS REFUSED ENTRY

05 August 2013, 09:43

A tanker that picked up irregular migrants off the coast of Libya has been ordered to turn back and take them to the nearest port of call, with the government saying that it will be refused entry in Maltese territorial waters.

The MV Salamis picked up 102 migrants 45 nautical off the Libyan coast after it was requested to do so by the Italian authorities.



The tanker was instructed to turn back to take the migrants to the closest safe port of call, which was Libya. The instructions it was given were ignored and the tanker continued on its way to Malta.

The government informed the captain that as the migrants were not in danger, the tanker would not be allowed into Maltese territorial waters. In a statement, the Nationalist Party said that the government is taking the same position as that adopted by the previous administration – one based on international law.

The opposition confirmed that in identical situations in the past, other vessels had been refused entry into

Maltese territorial waters when the vessel was closer to other ports. NGOs strongly urge Italy and Malta to ensure that all decisions involving the fate of the migrants aboard the MV Salamis give top-most priority to the preservation of their lives. In a statement, nine NGOs (aditus foundation, JRS Malta, Migrants' Network for Equality, SOS Malta, KOPIN, Integra Foundation, Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants, Organisation for Friendship in Diversity) said that while legal and political sensitivities are of course central to the determination of responsibilities and obligations, these should not override or ignore the need to ensure the safety of all rescued persons and of the rescuing crew.



The RAILWAY IN MALTA 1870 to 1931

A railway was first proposed in 1870 by J S Tucker. So was the desire to reduce the journey time from Valletta to Mđina from 3 hours to less than half an hour. This was the start of a long and protracted design and construction period. Proposals to use the J B Fell patented narrow gauge railway system were dropped and in 1879 Wells-Owen & Elwes consulting engineers, Westminster, London were engaged to design the railway. The Malta Standard Wednesday December 8 1880 announced- "...that there are unmistakable signs that in a short space of time, the inhabitants of these Islands may be able to boast of possessing a railway." Acquisition of the land took longer than expected so it was not until 3 pm on Wednesday, 28th February 1883 that the first official train left Valletta Station for Notabile. The journey took about 25 minutes and an account of the opening appeared in The Malta Standard_Thursday March 1 1883. Almost 60 years after Locomotion No1 carried the first passengers on the Stockton & Darlington Railway, 27th September 1825.

Money was always a problem. In 1890 it became clear that the Malta Railway Company Ltd. was bankrupt. The line was closed on 1st April 1890 by the Supervision Board and the Government. The railway had operated for only seven years.

The Government of Malta acquired the railway and reopened the line on 25th January 1892. During the time that the line was closed several improvements were undertaken including the replacement of the timber viaduct at Porta Reale. In 1895 plans were made to extend the line to service the new Mtarfa Barracks. The extension was opened in 1900 at a cost of £20,000. Some years later in 1912 The Railway Magazine ran an article on the railway.

In 1903 a Tramway Company was formed to run services between Valletta and the Three Cities

and Zebbug and Hamrun. The competition had an immediate effect on the finances of the railway. Further competition from the Malta bus service was too much for the railway to compete with. The line closed on 31st March 1931. The Railway Magazine in July 1934 recorded The Closing of the Malta Railway. Even before the railway was closed there was talk of converting the line into a highway and so it came to pass for much of the route has been surfaced with Tar Macadam making it still possible to walk most of the route from Valletta to Mtarfa. Roads built on or almost on the line include: Triq Mile End, Triq Kappilan Mifsud, Triq il Ferroviija, Triq Salvu psaila, Triq il Ferroviija L Qadima, Triq il Linja.

GENERAL ELECTION 2013 - Australia decides

PM Kevin Rudd and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott have launched the opening salvos of the election campaign that looks set to centre on the economy.



Prime Minister Rudd called the election for September 7, after meeting with the governor-general in Canberra on Sunday.

The battle will be about who Australians trust to steer the economy through the challenges now that the Chinese resources boom is ending, he said.

'The boom, of course, has fuelled so much of our nation's wealth,' Mr Rudd told reporters.

'That boom is over.'

The opposition leader, who flew to Canberra on the election announcement, said he and his coalition team were determined to build a 'better Australia'.

'We will build a stronger economy, so that everyone can get ahead,' Mr Abbott said.

Business groups were relieved to see an election finally get off the ground after three years of minority government, urging both sides to take the opportunity to lay out plans for Australia's future.

'Finally, a light at the end of what has been a very long and dark passage in Australia's federal leadership,' CPA Australia chief executive Alex Malley said in a statement.

'An election has always been the only way to put an end to the indulgent political games the nation has been forced to endure for years.' Opening salvos from the two leaders centred on the economy's triple-A rating, one of only eight countries in the world to have the top ranking from all three major agencies.

FOLKLORE AND LEGENDS - Some popular remedies

In this article I am listing a few aspects of medicinal lore and practice in Malta and Gozo. Needless to say, while some of the herbs and actions have a recognised curative virtue and still flourish among peasants, most of the popular remedies mentioned are nowadays being discarded and relegated to the limbo of forgotten things, as they are bound to be with the spread of education among the masses.



COMMON ONION (basal): When some spikes of the sea-urchin get under the skin, an onion is cut up, roasted over a fire and then applied hot to the skin to draw out the spikes. Sliced onions are also rubbed over the parts of the skin affected by a wasp's sting.

SQUIRTING CUCUMBER (faqqus il-hmir): A concoction of this cucumber is especially prescribed for persons suffering from jaundice. Another remedy is to make patients smell the squirting cucumber, and people believe this is enough to drive off jaundice.

RUE (fejgel): If a mare stamps on your foot, you have only to apply the triturated leaves of this plant to the swollen foot and this will prevent the collection of extraverted blood under the skin. Others apply some rue leaves fried in oil as an embrocation to crushed parts of the body. And to heal an eye disease called gidri tal-ghajnejn peasants often chew some rue leaves and then breathe the smell into the affected eyes.

BORAGE (fidloqqom): A decoction of this plant is taken by persons suffering from frequent fits of coughing. The same holds good for the plant known as marrubja (white horehound). A popular remedy against measles (hosba) consists in putting a piece of red cloth on or near the patient, or in covering him with red blankets. This practice was prevalent among mothers attending

the child health clinics during the measles epidemic of 1946.

The custom of hanging red clothing in case of illness characterised by the appearance of a rash is by no means new, nor is it confined to the Mediterranean countries. It is recorded that John of Gaddesden, court doctor under Edward II of England, got rid of **smallpox** by wrapping the sick person in red clothes, and that he thus cured the heir to the throne himself.

Also from the child health clinics come two other popular beliefs. According to one, the mother of a newborn babe has to eat a hen's neck and head on the day following child birth, and if she fails to do so the child will take more than three months to start keeping its head erect. The famous Sicilian folklorist Giuseppe Pitre gives an interesting parallel in Sicily, but with the difference that it is the father, not the mother, who has to eat the hen's neck in order to ensure that the baby's neck newt" may move freely. The other belief requires the placenta to be macerated with rain, or buried in the soil and then watered to prevent the baby suffering from skin eruption.

LEMON (lumi): Sliced lemons are rubbed over warts and ringworms to stop their growth. A common remedy to stop nose bleeding is to place an iron key on the sufferer's neck. Carrying a dried fig in one's pocket is a good preventive against piles, while those suffering from rheumatism carry a dried fish in their pockets as a charm.

The white or albumen of the egg will cure children suffering from dysentery, and when applied to the broken legs of goats will help to reset them. To cure a sty (xghira) children throw seven grains of barley into a well. According to what I heard from the market fish vendors, sailors carry a dried fish called serduq il-bahar (seacock) next to the skin as a protection against malaria.

To cure **WHITLOW** (diebes) one has to boil some crumbs and ask a breast-feeding mother for the favour of some drops of her milk on them. This mixture is then put over the swollen finger. Mothers, however, will not volunteer to give this service unless the patient assures them that he will keep away from the fire when applying the medicament because, if the patient stood too near the fire, it would dry not only the crumbs but also the milk in the mothers' breasts.

To wean their young, Maltese mothers smear their breasts with an extract from the aloe tree (sabbara), which tastes very bitter. Mothers sometimes preserve the umbilical cord of a newborn child in powder. If the baby then develops a cold, the umbilical cord is given to the child to smell. This, it is believed, drives away the cold.

OUR NEWSLETTER APPEARS ON STARSAND STRIPES MALTA WEBSITE

<http://www.starsandstripesmalta.com/COMISAN.html>

NICKNAMES IN MALTA

By Grazio Falzon



What's in a name? In the villages of Malta and the sister island of Gozo, each family has its own nickname. Individual persons may also have separate nicknames.

The Maltese word for nickname is "laqam" (from "tlaqqam" meaning "to graft"). Indeed a nickname is grafted to the identity of a person, family or group and serves as a social label. Surnames are mainly used for official reasons.

The Maltese proverb "Skond ghamilek laqmek" (your nickname reflects your behavior) underlines the personal and social implications of the endemic use of nicknames.

In general nicknames are rather innocuous. When they refer to some weakness they are usually good-humored. A few can be rude if not crude.

Most nicknames are preceded by the preposition "ta" (of). One is referred to by first name followed by family nickname. Thus: Toni tal-Ggant (giant), Marija ta'l-Ghoqdija (knotty). A person may be specifically referred to by the definite article plus the nickname. Thus: il-Hotbi (the hunchback), il-Qanfud (the hedgehog).

Nicknames that describe a personality trait are the most expressive. Typical examples: "ta' Tontu" (stupid); "ta' Xewwiex" (troublemaker); "tal-Pupa" (doll); "tal-Patann" (chubby); "ta' l-lzdingat" (sloppy); "tan-Nittien" (lecher); No wonder some Maltese become paranoid about their nicknames. And there is no way one can get rid of one's nickname. Everybody is stuck with their nickname(s) through thick and thin.

Many nicknames derive from names of animals. These nicknames provide insight in the psycho-social dimensions of language.

Here are a few examples of nicknames derived from animals: "ta' Gelluxa" (young bull); "tal-flieles" (chickens); "il-Kavall" (mackerel); "ta' Hanfusa" (beetle); "tas-Summiena" (quail). A priest who was nicknamed "il-Gurdien" (rat) is philosophical if not downright theological about his sobriquet! He says he endures it as a purgatorial penance.

The most prevalent nicknames are those referring to occupations; e.g. "tas- Surmast" (school principal), "tas-Saqqafi" (roofer), "tal-Melh" (salt vendor), "tar-Rizzi" (hawker of sea-urchins), "tas-Siggijiet" (man in charge of chairs in churches). Entire towns and villages are given nicknames. These nicknames originated when villages and towns were isolated from each other. This separation led to parochialism verging on hostility.

"Tar-Redus" (manure) stigmatizes the town of Tarxien. This nickname triggered a violent disturbance some years back.

On the feast-day of the patron saint in the neighboring town of Pawla, the local Band Club played a tune mimicking bleating of goats. Pawlites baa'ed along with the march; which was just too much for Tarxienians. Violence erupted and police had to intervene.

Some village nicknames owe their origins to legends. Zejtun has a peculiar nickname. Zejtuners are known "ta' saqajhom catta" (flat-footed). According to legend, the inhabitants of Zejtun were the only Maltese who rejected the religion preached by Saint Paul after his shipwreck on the island. They stamped their feet in protest to Paul's proselytizing. The man from Tarsus wasn't amused by this "barbarian" (not just in the biblical sense:-) behavior and laid a curse on the villagers and their descendants. (As a Zejtuner my own feet are proof positive of the apostolic curse).

Helping Hands helps Maltese Diabetes Association



Having one organization raising awareness about something is very strong, having two is twice as strong!

That is what the Maltese Diabetes Association and Helping Hands will be doing during the next few weeks. For the third consecutive year they will be working together on a campaign to raise awareness about Diabetes.

Helping Hands will be selling the new issue, Issue 56, of their Helping Hands Family Magazine around Malta and Gozo and it will be in aid of the Maltese Diabetes Association. This issue is a special yearly issue, because it is full of healthy recipes from start to finish. All the recipes are done in collaboration with the Health Promotions Department, and there's something for everyone; Meat, fish, chicken, starters, snacks, desserts, vegetarian, gluten-free, all are included in the new issue.

Apart from the recipes, the new Helping Hands issue contains a lot of information on Diabetes, awareness information, how to use insulin correctly. The publication will also feature true stories from people who live with diabetes and also information on Bulimia.

The proceeds of the sales of the Helping Hands magazine, Issue 56, will be going to the Maltese Diabetes Association, so when the people buy the issue they will not only be helping themselves by acquiring all the healthy recipes and information but also will be helping the Maltese Diabetes Association. During the previous two campaigns, Helping Hands have given €20,000 to the Maltese Diabetes Association, and also given a total of €942, 000 to other different charity organizations.

In Malta the new Diabetes issue of the Helping Hands family magazine can only be bought from the Helping Hands sales representatives, who one can recognize from the Helping Hands name tag they carry with them.

Mdina & Rabat

The history of Mdina traces back more than 4000 years. According to tradition it was here that in 60 A.D. that the Apostle St. Paul is said to have lived after being shipwrecked on the Islands. Furthermore it is said that St. Paul resided inside the grotto know as Fuori le Mura (outside the city walls) now known as St. Paul's Grotto in Rabat. Lamp lit by night and referred to as "the silent city", Mdina is fascinating to visit for its timeless atmosphere as well as its cultural and religious treasures.



Mdina has had different names and titles depending on its rulers and its role but its medieval name describe it best - '*Citta' Notabile*': the noble city. It was home then, as now, to Malta's noble families; some are descendants of the Norman, Sicilian and Spanish overlords who made Mdina their home from the 12th century onwards. Impressive palaces line its narrow, shady streets. Mdina is one of Europe's finest examples of an ancient walled city and extraordinary in its mix of medieval and baroque architecture.

Like nearby Mdina, Rabat played a major role in Malta's past and is a prime source of its cultural heritage. This large provincial township was part of the Roman city of Melita, with the sites and archaeological

relics found testifying to the town's importance during the Roman period.

For many centuries, religious orders have established themselves within the precincts of Rabat and Franciscans, Dominicans and Augustinians still flourish here in their spacious convents and monasteries, catering for the religious needs of parishioners in their churches.

The town is a commercial centre and acts as a market to its large agricultural hinterland. It is also well established on the tourist map due to its archaeological and historical sites: The Roman Villa (Domus Romana), catacombs, St. Paul's Grotto and the fine churches and monasteries.

EU immigration: 'Malta is the smallest state, and we are carrying a burden that is much bigger than any other country'

The tiny island of Malta has received 17,743 mainly African migrants this decade - the equivalent, in Britain, of 2.5 million people. And it is struggling to cope, Prime Minister Joseph Muscat says.



Would-be immigrants sit in their dormitory at the Safi barracks detention centre. Photo: Ian Noel Pace/Demotix By Colin Freeman, Valletta and Nick Squires in Rome

MOHAMMED ABDI, an asylum seeker from Somalia, counts himself to have made two new sets of friends this month. One is the "generous" people of Malta, who took him and 102 other African migrants in after their boat got into difficulties as it trafficked them towards Europe from Libya. The other is the European Court of Human Rights, which stopped Malta's prime minister, Joseph Muscat, from flying them back to Libya after claiming the island could not cope with more illegal immigrants. "It would have been wrong to send us back to Libya," beamed Abdi, 30, who now lives in a dormitory in an immigration detention centre surrounded by 20 foot high barbed wire fences. "We are sorry for the people of Malta, who are very generous, but we do need help as conditions are terrible in my country."

Perched on a tiny but strategic set of islands between Europe and Africa, the Maltese have long prided themselves on their ability to repel unwanted invaders. In the 1500s, their resident Knights of St John were the heroes of Europe after seeing off the Ottoman Turks, and in the Second World War, they won the George Cross for helping Britain to keep Hitler at bay. Their latest efforts to turn back a foreign armada, however, are unlikely to win such plaudits. Or not from the European Union, anyway, which last week was embroiled in a bitter row with Mr Muscat's government over its plans to return Mr Abdi and his ilk to Libya, from where they came in a people-smuggling boat.

Regional Development Fund - Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Archaeological Park

The temples of Hagar Qim and Mnajdra, both World Heritage sites, are currently suffering from deterioration and structural problems arising mainly from exposure to the elements. Following the recommendations of an international meeting of experts in 1999, a Scientific Committee was set up in 2000 to study the causes of this deterioration and to find ways and means to stop it. Studies carried out include environmental monitoring, thermographic measurements, further stone sampling and analysis, measurements of water runoff, and 3-D scanning of both sites and the surrounding terrain. The committee identified a number of problems namely rain, fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity, solar radiation, and pollution, including also sea salt aerosol, Sahara dust, sulphur oxide and nitrous oxide and volcanic emissions, as well as biological organisms. The committee thus proposed that the temples should be protected by temporary shelters which would provide additional time for research into the long-term preservation of the sites.



Operational Programme I – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013
Investing in Competitiveness for a Better Quality of Life
 Event part-financed by the European Union
 European Regional Development Fund
 Co-financing rate: 85% EU Funds; 15% National Funds



Investing in your future

In 2003 an international competition for the design of shelters for the two temples was launched under the auspices of the International Union of Architects. The European Union

through the European Regional Development Fund provided 4.2 million Euros whilst the UNESCO World Heritage Committee endorsed the project. The shelters are designed to be reversible, but also to last long enough for more research to be carried out so that a long term solution can be found. The ongoing environmental monitoring will continue when the shelters are in place, and the data obtained will be compared to data collected during the years prior to the erection of the shelters. In 2008 work started on the erection of two shelters which should last for the next 25 to 30 years, during which period work will continue on the consolidation of the temples, as well as research to identify long-term alternatives to sheltering. During the last quarter of 2008 work was carried out on the erection of the steel arches that will be support the shelter membrane. The membrane was fully install in 2009.



For those of you who feel you need to do just a little more exercising.

Repeat as necessary

Sent to us by our friend Harry Bugeja