

CONSULATE OF MALTA IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER

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

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- *I am enjoying your newsletters very much, I have found them very interesting and knowledgeable, I am downloading them for my grandchildren so when they grow up and understand the info is there for them to read and they will get an understanding where their grandfather came from. Thank you once again Frank in emailing the newsletters to me Take care & God Bless Kindest regards Maera*
- *Thankyou for the latest newsletter as always! I really do look forward to them Many thanks – Jamie Whitecome*
- *Thankyou for sending the Newsletters. I print them and take them to my parents and they enjoy the read. Greg M*

Many reasons to visit Malta...



AUSTRLIAN CAPITAL CITY – CANBERRA

Canberra is filled with all types of fun, interesting things to do for couples, singles or families. The capital city of Australia has national museums, tourist attractions, historical sites and many natural wonders. You can stay in posh hotels, or you can camp in the bushland surrounding the city. Whatever you want to do, you'll find it in abundance in Canberra.

Canberra is a planned metropolis that architect Walter Burley Griffin envisioned as a garden city for some 25,000 people. The design was completed in 1912, and construction began in 1913. Political and economic complications prevented the city from being completed until the 1960s. Canberra is currently home to about 300,000 people. However, due to the unique de-centralized design, the city never feels crowded.



←Parliament House- Canberra ACT.

Floriade is Australia's "Celebration of Spring", and is a world-class floral exhibition. More than a million blooms go into the show, which stretches from mid September to Mid October.

As well as the stunning exhibits, there are also horticultural workshops, music, local artistry and events that include the spectacular Floriade NightFest.

If you like cultural attractions, you're in luck. Canberra is teeming with art museums and historical attractions for the entire family. Here's a list of a few of them.

The Australian War Memorial is a must-see museum. It has gallery exhibits, memorabilia, personal stories, combat displays, research

facilities and a sculpture garden. It casts a personal light on the nature of war.

The National Museum details Australian history and culture via interactive displays, high-tech exhibits and many art galleries. The museum also features several restaurants, theaters and a resource center.

Parliament House is a constant crowd-pleaser with free guided tours that begin every thirty minutes. The building is an architectural wonder with outstanding landscaping that is complemented by white pillars. It's an impressive site to visit. There's an incredible collection of 4,000 works of art in these hallowed halls. When you've worked up an appetite, check out the terrific cafe.

The National Gallery is located on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin. It concentrates on Australian artists, but there is also artwork from international talent. The National Gallery has children's exhibits, a sculpture garden, cafes and a gift shop.

The Australian National Botanic Gardens is a horticultural heaven for plant and flower lovers. It is home to rock gardens, native plants, eucalyptus lawns and its own rainforest. You'll be stunned by this beautiful garden.



KEVIN RUDD OR TONY ABBOT



WHO WILL BE OUR NEXT PRIME MINISTER?

FLAGS AND SYMBOLS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA



The National Flag of Malta

1. The Constitution provides that the National Flag of Malta consists of two equal vertical stripes, white in the hoist and red in the fly, with a representation of the George Cross, edged with red, in the canton of the white stripe; the breadth of the flag is one and a half times its height.



The emblem of Malta

- a. The emblem of Malta is described by the Emblem and Public Seal of Malta Act (Cap.253) as a shield showing an heraldic representation of the National Flag of Malta; above the shield a mural crown in gold with a sally port and eight turrets (five only being visible) representing the fortifications of Malta and denoting a City State; and around the shield a wreath of two branches: the dexter of Olive, the sinister of Palm, symbols of peace and traditionally associated with Malta, all in their proper colours, tied at base with a white ribbon, backed red and upon which are written the words "Repubblika ta' Malta" in capital letters in black.

b.

c. The Presidential Flag of Malta

- b. The Presidential Flag of Malta was introduced by Proclamation dated 12th December, 1988. This flag is flown on the President's official residences and offices and on all occasions at which he is present. It has the same proportions as the National Flag and consists of a blue field with the Emblem of Malta at its centre; and a Maltese Cross in gold in each corner.



The Merchant Flag of Malta

- c. The Merchant Flag of Malta introduced by the Merchant Shipping Act (Cap. 234) consists of a red field bordered in white, with a white Maltese Cross at its centre.



The pennant used by the Commander of the Armed Forces of Malta

- e. The pennant used by the Commander of the Armed Forces of Malta consists of a red field with the symbol of the Armed Forces in gold at its centre

. The pennant used by the Commissioner of the Police Force



- a. It is the custom to display the National Flag of Malta only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and stationary flagstuffs in the open. However, it may also be displayed at night on special occasions, and in such case it should preferably be floodlit.
- b. The National Flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously.
- c. The National Flag should be displayed near the main administration building of every public institution on all days when the weather permits and especially on National Holidays.
- d. The National Flag should be displayed during school days on or near every school building and in or near every polling place on election days.

Maltese National Anthem

Words by: Dun Karm Psaila Music by: Robert Sammut

**Twieled H iż-Żebbuġ
fl-1871**



In 1922, Sammut composed, among other things, a short hymn-like melody. A Dr Laferla, Director of Primary Schools in Malta, obtained the melody, and asked known priest Rev. Karmenu Psaila (alias Dun Karm) (1871-1961) to write the lyrics. Dun Karm began writing, and suddenly conceived the idea of writing a school hymn in the form of a prayer to the Almighty. Dun Karm, who was later to become National Poet, wanted to bridge the gap existing between the political parties, all with the strong ties of religion and patriotism. *Innu Malti* was sung in schools afterwards but was first performed publicly on 27 December 1922 and again on 1923, during two concerts at the Manoel Theatre.

On 3rd February 1923 another concert was held at the lavish Manoel Theatre of the Għaqda Kittieba tal-Malti. The anthem was played by the Birgu Società Man and performed by the children of Sliema Government girl's school, with Dun Karm

verses. Orchestration was later composed by Maestro Vincenzo Ciappara for the King's Own Band and played on the 8th 1936. The Maltese government declared the anthem as the official Maltese anthem in 1945.

L-INNU MALTI

**Lil din l-art ħelwa, l-Omm li tatna isimha,
ħares, Mulej, kif dejjem Int ħarist:
Ftakar li lilha bl-oħla dawl libbist.**

**Agħti, kbir Alla, id-dehen lil min jaħkimha,
Rodd il-ħniena lis-sid, saħħa 'l-ħaddiem:
Seddaq il-għaqda fil-Maltin u s-sliem.**

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE MALTESE NATIONAL ANTHEM:

*Guard her, O Lord, as ever Thou hast guarded!
This Motherland so dear whose name we bear!
Keep her in mind, whom Thou hast made so fair!*

*May he who rules, for wisdom be regarded!
In master mercy, strength in man increase!
Confirm us all, in unity and peace!*



Farmers start to harvest Mġarr's delicious strawberries

Strawberry growing in Malta has an interesting historical background. Maltese farmers are experts in growing this delicious crop. It grows well in the openfields, but also in greenhouses. If you are making plans to organise a group activity, or simply want to have an eco experience while on holiday, then strawberry picking is a great hands-on activity.

This is a perfect eco experience for a group activity. It enables participants to enjoy nature and appreciate the hard work behind such a delicate fruit. Historical and traditional aspects about strawberries and good farming practices will be featured in this workshop.

Hundreds of luscious, fat strawberries were handpicked by Mġarr farmers from the fertile fields in Żebbiegħ area in preparation for the upcoming Strawberry Festival.

Under the watchful eyes of President George Abela, who stopped by on a short visit, farmers began harvesting the tasty Mġarr strawberries, known for their flavour and sweetness.



Dr Abela thanked the farmers for their work and pointed out that theirs was not an easy job; it was not an eight-to-five job.

Maltese farmers supplied the market with fresh and local produce and it was important to support the farming industry.

Thousands of strawberries from Mġarr will be sold on April 14 during the highly popular Strawberry Fest, known as Festa Frawli, in the main square of Mġarr.

During the fair, now in its seventh year, visitors will not only be able to buy freshly-picked strawberries but also taste a wide variety of desserts, snacks and beverages, all of course made from strawberries.

Professional chefs will also be preparing strawberry-based gourmet dishes such as ravioli and homemade strawberry wine and jams.

L-Ilsien Malti



Mela f'tit taż-żmien ilu kont qed nitkellem ma' persuna mlaħħqa sew u skużat ruħha talli l-ittri tiktibhomli dejjem bl-Ingliż, flok bil-Malti. Skużat ruħha għax hasbet li qed tonqosni mir-rispett, imma spjegatli li hi thossha *handikap* (din hija l-kelma li użat) hafna li ma tafx tikteb bil-Malti.

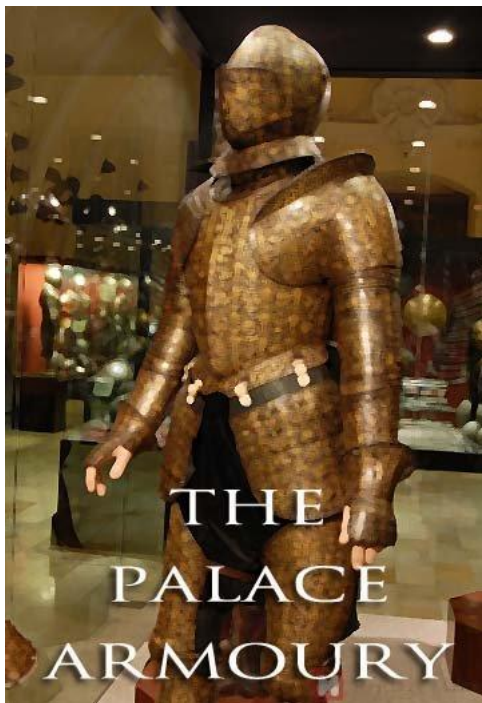
Fis-sew, niltaqa' ma' hafna nies kompetenti fis-sugġetti tagħhom u mlaħħqin sew, iżda li, b'xorti hażina, meta jiġu biex jiktbu xi kitba żgħira bil-Malti, imqar nota qasira, jiktbuha bl-Ingliż għax jahsbu li jaqgħu għaċ-ċajt jekk meta jiktbu bil-Malti jiehdu xi żball. Issa ngħiduha kif inhi, il-Malti sa f'tit taż-żmien ilu ma kienx mġhallem bħalma jintgħallmu l-ilsna tat-twelid, u b'xorti hażina kien migi mġhallem qisu lsien barrani. Il-persuna li semmejt qabel spjegatli li meta kienet għadha tifla tal-iskola, kienu jgħallmuhom il-Malti darba fil-gimgha: nhar ta' Gimgha fl-aħħar lezzjoni. U biex tagħqad, f'nofs il-lezzjoni kienet issir bħal *assembly* qasira.

Tistgħu tobsru x'lezzjoni kienet issir! Jien niftakar li, fl-iskola fejn kont, kienu jgħallmuna kollox bl-Ingliż, u mn'alla li għall-Malti inzerajt għalliem tajjeb hafna għax kieku llum...Dun Karm, li bħal daż-żmien nfakkru t-twelid u l-mewt tiegħu, ukoll għadda minnha din l-istorja. Biżżejjed ngħidu li sa qabel l-1912 kien jikteb bit-Taljan biss, għax bit-Taljan Taljan kien għadu l-ilsien poeżija bil-Malti meta kellu qatt. Id-diskors fuq kemm nwarribu l-Ingliż. Anzi, dan l-bżonnu, u miegħu għandna l-Ġermaniż. Imma lsienna Maltin għandna dejjem Malti.

Aa Bb Ċc Dd Ee Ff Ġġ Gg
Għgh Ħħ Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll
Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss
Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Żż Zz

biss kienu jgħallmuhom u t-ufficjali. Huwa kiteb l-ewwel 41 sena, imbagħad ma reġa' lura jiswa l-Malti ma jfissirx li rridu ilsien internazzjonali għandna bżonn ilsna oħra bħall-Franċiż u dejjem jiġi fuq quddiem, u mal-nibqgħu niktbu u nitkellmu bil-

←Dan huwa l-alfabett Malti. Il-kwistjoni ta' l-ilsien Malt hi marbuta ma' l-istorja ta' Malta. Il-gzejjer tagħna kienu minn dejjem taht il-hakma tal-barranin li ma kienx jaqblilhom li jgħinu l-izvilupp ta' l-ilsien Malti għax kienu jafu tajjeb li l-ilsien tal-pajiz mahkum jgib miegħu qawmien nazzjonali u jnissel fil-qlub mahkuma u mjassra sentiment kbir ta' patrijottizmu. F'din il-qagħda l-poplu tagħna kien jahseb u jitkellem kif riduh il-barranin. L-ilsien tagħna qatt ma kien magħruf bħala kien ufficjali, la mill-Gvern Civili u lanqas mill-awtoritajiet tal-knisja.



The Palace Armoury is found in the Grandmaster's Palace in Valletta, Malta. The Armoury houses one of the world's most extensive arms collections in its original buildings and the most visible and touchable symbols of the past glories of The Knights of St. John., what's more one can find crossbows, swords, arms, guns, shotguns and bronze cannons. The Knights of St John were a unique brotherhood of resolute warrior monks. From Malta, their island stronghold, these combatant aristocrats carried out their crusades against the Ottoman Turks.

Although only a fraction of its original splendour (the "organised robbery of art treasure and historic treasures" by Napoleonic forces after 1798 being the primary reason for the reduction in the size of the collection) the Armoury still contains material of Italian, German, French and Spanish origin, from principal arms production centres. Examples of splendid parade armour by master armourers command pride of place. The armour decorator's art is displayed on various exquisite pieces.

Exotic examples of Turkish armour are also displayed in the Islamic & Ottoman section. The Palace Armoury is a very popular tourist attraction. It is one of the most valuable historic monuments of European culture.

The Order's arsenal was transferred to the Palace by Grandmaster Alof de Wignacourt in 1604, but in 1975 the whole collection containing 5721 pieces were moved to its present site on the ground floor. During the 1850's the collection was supposed to be moved to London to be kept safe from future attacks, however this was never done and finally in 1860 the Armoury was

officially opened, being Malta's first public museum.

More important pieces in the collection are the Italian Sallet, the fascinating La Vallette armour, the Wignacourt parade armour, the 'Pompeo della Cesa' armour, the Cuirassier armour, swords and rapiers, early crossbows, the Italian 'snaphaunce' pistol, heavy bronze artillery pieces as well as a smaller bronze canon.

When visiting The Palace Armoury in Valletta you will be given an audio guide which gives a detailed insight to the history of the military and the armoury's many treasures.

For extensive information on the history of the palace armoury and detailed information on its extensive collection read Dr. Stephen C Spiteri's entire book "Armoury of the Knights" online courtesy of MilitaryArchitecture.com.

VISIT THE CULTURAL MALTA WEBSITE -www.culturalmalta.org/index.php/Heritage/The-Palace-Armoury.html

CHILDREN GO GREEN Bank of Valletta recently extended its 'green' culture to the children of BOV employees during a fun-



packed day organised at the President's Kitchen Garden in San Anton, ATTARD.

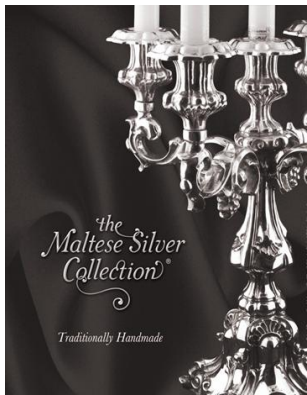
Throughout the day, a group of 50 children, aged 7 to 12, participated in educational games and activities focused on environmental issues related to waste reduction, energy saving and carbon footprint. The children experienced first-hand how they too have a role to play in taking care of the environment.

Stephanie Agius, CSR co-ordinator at Bank of Valletta explained her satisfaction at the outcome of the event and said: "The environment has become an important aspect for the bank and through such an initiative, we are extending our green values not only to our people but also to their families."

Bank of Valletta keeps the environment high on its agenda, ensuring that its environmental responsibility features prominently across the organisation, both at strategic and operational levels.

MALTESE SILVERWARE AND FILIGREE

With the advent of the Knights of St. John and with architects building a rosary of magnificent churches, silverware in all manner of shape and form came into its own. Palaces, churches, patrician homes, knightly residences and the Holy Infirmary were adorned and endowed. All this helped the trade along as the use of silverware and silver ornaments in elite and ecclesiastical circles became the order of the day. What has been produced over the centuries from 1530 onwards is now a precious part of Malta's patrimony. Mention 'Maltese Silver' and association with coffee pots, sugar bowls and library lamps is immediately made. For many years collectors have sought after Maltese silver in international auction rooms and by collectors.



Maltese silverware is an important part of the country's patrimony and is much sought after by collectors in international auction rooms. This craft, which flourished under the Knights, is still carried on in small workshops across the Islands. These jewels beautifully express Maltese symbols which are unique for Malta and Gozo. A wide variety of made in Malta sterling silver jewellery are available in this category. The very popular hand-made sterling silver Maltese Cross comes in various shapes and patterns making it suitable to all ages and preferences.

There are sterling silver jewellery items that can be used as earrings, pendants, rings, necklaces, bracelets as well as many other decorative items making them suitable for a gift or as a souvenir. Filigree is a delicate variety of traditional jewellery that is made from thin strands of silver or gold that are twisted into different forms, shapes and designs and made into exquisitely original jewellery pieces. Filigree as a jewellery-making technique was born in the times of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Etruscans and slowly the tradition spread to different parts of the world. Maltese filigree owes its remotest origins to the ancient Phoenicians who moved around the Mediterranean, spreading their culture, traditions and skills throughout. In fact filigree is still worked today in various other Mediterranean countries like Italy, and Greece, and even in Portugal. Today one can find impressive filigree in very different parts of the world, but each region has its own patterns, designs and type of workmanship that differs considerably from the rest. That is what makes Maltese filigree so unique. Traditional, handmade and still retaining unique aspects that make it stridently different from all other types of filigree around the Mediterranean, Maltese filigree is highly appreciated by jewellery connoisseurs.



EXPLORING GOZO.

Gozo Folklore may be considered to embrace all the habits and customs of our civilization, all its numerous activities, the quality of the houses people lived in, the dress they wore, the food they produced and ate, their social dealings with one another, their education and religious life, their festivals and amusements, together with beliefs in the afterworld, superstitions like the evil eye as well as innumerable other facets of human life.

Maltese and Gozo folklore is concerned with all this. It explores the history, literature, folktales, old wives tales, old-time trades, legends, children's rhymes and games, traditional herbal medicine, nicknames, proverbs, birth and death rituals, feasts, long-forgotten sensational incidents like unsolved murders and old customs from Malta and Gozo.



Lace making in Gozo is still practised although in a much smaller volume than years ago. Writing this article is making me remember my young days, how we used to play in the streets every evening after school and on Saturday mornings. In those days Gozo was free from cars and we had the streets all to ourselves. We used to have so much fun playing together that our mothers found it very hard to make us quit and go in for supper.

I also remember how every night before going to sleep I used to watch my great-aunts at work making lace (bizzilla) far into the night - - Bless their Souls.

Gozo folklore - - On this small island old customs die hard and this is particularly true in the case of Nicknames and some religious rituals related

to superstition like the evil-eye. On the contrary the use of Maltese proverbs in everyday language has completely disappeared.

NICKNAMES

Gozitan and Maltese families especially in the villages still use and retain their old family nicknames. Sometimes it is easier to locate a person by asking for him by his nickname than by his name or surname.

For example 'where does George -of Antonia- live? Nicknames may have an association to anything: to colours (Joe of the Black), to nationalities (Joe of the English), to trades (Joe of the Shoemaker), to animals (Joe of the Snake) and so on.



←Typical maltese balcony, made of wood and closed. Part of Maltese and Gozo national heritage

Nicknames (Laqmijiet in Maltese) may sometimes be funny or sarcastic, like (Joe of the Giant) when Joe happens to be a midget of a man. Some people choose their own nickname (Joe the Ginger) because of his fair hair but mostly it is bestowed on people whether they like it or not, such as (Joe of the Bald One).

This is a very interesting aspect of Gozo Folklore and I like to think that this phenomenon pertains to the Maltese Islands alone but I have no idea if this is true or not. In any case nicknames are an integral part of our culture and folklore, like the "Ghana" and a number of simple local products which are still made today in the old-fashioned way. Folksinging in Gozo, Ghana to guitar accompaniment 'Ghana' means folksinging and is pronounced - Ah nah. It is still practised today but on a much smaller scale than formerly and in Malta more than in Gozo. Some people today regard the Ghana as 'low' like fit only for the low people and would like to see it die a natural death. On the other hand there are others who aim to keep the Ghana alive and growing in popularity. This group includes University professors and learned people from all walks of life who believe that the Ghana is an integral part of our folklore. I sympathise with the latter group of course because I love Folklore.

During an Ghana session there is inevitably a guitar player who 'accompanies' the singer musically . Sometimes there is more than one guitar, one playing some lead notes and 2 or 3 others who do the accompaniment.

When there are 2 or more singers they sing in turn and usually they 'answer' one another. This usually brings a smile to the listeners and onlookers since the singers like to pull each other's leg. The guitar is

at times assisted by a tambourine and a piano- accordion. Long years ago the Ghana was the main item of entertainment in many occasions especially during Carnival and the traditional feast of St. Gregory. This is also true with regards to brass bands.



Carnival - 1957
Mikie! Abel "il-Bambinu" and Grezju Elul "ta' Canča"

STARS AND STRIPES MALTA NEWS

Improving US Entry Process

US Travel has setup a website to lobby the Congress to make the visitor entry process into the US simpler and more efficient. This can be achieved by employing more people and by investing in technology that will make the process of entering the USA quicker... (Rest of the story at <http://starsandstripesmalta.blogspot.com/2013/08/improving-us-entry-process.html>).

President Obama to Join "Let Freedom Ring" Commemoration

President Obama will speak at the August 28 Let Freedom Ring ceremony on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom... (Rest of the story at <http://www.starsandstripesmalta.com/News/News201308.html#NW20130813>).

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DOWN SYNDROME CLINIC OPENS IN BIRKIRKARA

The clinic was opened due to the lack of continuous care for Down Syndrome individuals who are aged 16 and over. The clinic's first step will be that of learning the medical history of individuals who visit the clinic followed by a thorough examination.



A medical plan will then be discussed by a multi-disciplinary team of health professionals while routine blood tests will be conducted, including other health services' referrals, according to the exigencies of the individual.

The aim of the programme is for conditions associated with the Down Syndrome condition be tackled from the beginning and treated immediately so that complications and risk factors are reduced.

The team will also provide support to the individual's parents or guardians.

The clinic will also be organising a number of group sessions where health-related issues are discussed between the parents

or guardians of the individual and the team of health professionals, where special tailor-made diets will also be provided. Those interested in making use of the clinic's services may call on 2149 4960 or send an e-mail on dsc.mfh@gov.mt.



BUILDING VIRTUAL BRIDGES

Maltese Language School of Adelaide- Australia



Visit the school website on www.ozmalta.page4.me

Irregular migrants in Malta with Italian Visas



Newspapers reported that a number of irregular migrants are entering Malta with Italian Visas. This information was brought to light during an interview with a migrant from Niger who has been living in Malta for over five years.

The 37 year old migrant alleges that irregular migrants from Italy are coming to Malta, with most of them ending up working illegally and even taking up residence in the various open centres strewn around Malta. The migrant alleges that it's hard to keep tabs on all the migrants who enter and leave the open centres daily.

The migrant, who works legally as an electrician with a local contractor, reveals that his work colleagues include nine other African immigrants. Of these, only two had entered illegally

into Malta. The other seven are all migrants from Italy, who came to Malta legally after being given temporary visas by the Italian government.

In fact, the Italian government had adopted a policy back in 2011 which gave irregular migrants temporary visas to travel around most of Europe. This policy had almost caused a diplomatic incident with France, which at the time had suspended all train services from Italy in a bid to stop irregular migrants to cross into France with their Italian visas.

Over two years later, there seems to be no system in place which is stopping these migrants from entering Malta by means of their Italian visas. While these migrants can come to Malta, the migrants who had entered Malta's shores illegally are not able to leave the island, because they are not given a Visa by the Maltese authorities.

The migrant explained that this situation is increasing Malta's immigration problem, as it is forced to continue to take in migrants who come legally by plane with temporary visas, as well as those who enter illegally 'by boat'. On the other hand, the immigrants who had entered Malta years ago are still unable to leave.



NATIONAL WAR MUSEUM – Fort St Elmo, Valletta, Malta

The National War Museum is housed within Fort St. Elmo. The Fort, at the tip of Valletta, is itself famous for the part it played in the defence of Malta in The Siege of 1565 and again during World War 2. The War Museum is testament to the vitally important role Malta played during wartime post 1800 under British rule. Most of the exhibits are from World War 2 & include an Italian E-boat, an anti-aircraft gun and the jeep used by General Eisenhower when in Malta ("Husky").

Of particularly special interest are the 'George Cross', awarded to Malta for "gallantry" during the Second World War and the 'Gloster Gladiator' christened "Faith," a bi-plane fighter which fought in and survived the bitter conflict. The Museum pays tribute to the resolve of the Maltese civilians with photographic panels depicting the harsh conditions they endured as well as the extensive damage Malta suffered from air raids between 1940 – 1943. There are a host of awards on display given to servicemen & civilians alike as well as the illuminated scroll presented by Franklin D. Roosevelt to the "People & Defenders of Malta" It's no wonder Malta earned the reputation as the "Fortress Island." Be sure to have a look around. Check opening times as renovations to Fort Elmo & The Museum have been undertaken.

Caravaggio's Sanctuary in Malta

Caravaggio's violent exploits led him to Malta, where he would seek absolution from The Knights of St. John, and paint some of his most celebrated works.



The beheading of St. John the Baptist, 1608 | Exposed at St. John Co-cathedral, Valletta Malta - WikiCommons

Caravaggio's short and intense life seems thoroughly entwined with his art; physicality, passion, the contrast of light and dark; all are terms that could arguably describe the painter as much as the paintings. Notoriously aggressive, his behaviour was often overlooked by the authorities due to the high influence of his patrons, but when he killed a man in 1606 a price on his head caused him to flee Rome for Naples and then Malta to seek protection and amnesty with the Knights of St. John.

The Knights of St. John, also known as the Knights of St. Malta, were the last surviving outpost of the network of military religious orders that evolved in the time of the crusades.

After being driven out of Rhodes by the Ottoman Empire in 1522, the Knights of St. John retrenched in Malta and increased their fortifications on the island. Caravaggio, known for walking Rome with a sword at his side, saw the potential for absolution from these knights who had dedicated their lives to God by serving him as soldiers.

Alof de Wignacourt, 1547-1622 | WikiCommons

The Grand Master of the Order, Alof de Wignacourt, was evidently impressed by the arrival of the precocious artist, who at the time was most famous painter in Rome. He admitted him to the service and commissioned *The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist* (1608) as an altarpiece. This painting was amongst the largest Caravaggio would ever paint, with life-size figures inhabiting the huge space of the canvas. It is also the only painting Caravaggio ever signed – in this case, done with the red blood pouring from St John's severed neck and signed F. Michelangelo. The F is for Fra, brother, signifying his new religious affiliation. Like the Knights whose order he now belonged to, it was as if the sword had finally brought him closer to God.

His attempt at spiritual devotion to a quieter life within a religious order did not last, and he was imprisoned just a few months later, following a violent brawl with other knights. Remarkably, he managed to escape from the castle and leave the island unnoticed. He was expelled from the Order in absentia but left the Knights of Malta with some of his most important paintings, including the huge *The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist* (1608), and the *Portrait of Alof de Wignacourt with his Page* (c. 1607-1608).



The paintings no longer travel, and for those wanting to see them face to face, a journey to Malta is the only way.

COMPASS JELLY FISH FOUND IN GOZO



A new jellyfish species to Malta, known as *chrysaora hysoscella* and which measures 20cm in diameter, was found on Wednesday by a swimmer at Ramla l-Hamra bay in Gozo.

It belongs to the compass jellyfish species family which are commonly found in waters in the Atlantic, and in Spain, France and Italy.

The compass jellyfish has a saucer-shaped bell, with 32 semi-circular lobes around the fringe, each one with a brown spot <http://www.arkive.org/compass-jellyfish/chrysaora-hysoscella/> - ref2. On the upper surface of the bell, 16 brown V-shaped marks radiate outwards from a dark central spot. The mouth, the only opening to the exterior, is located on the centre of the underside of the bell, and is surrounded by 4 arms.

There are also 24 tentacles around the edge of the bell, grouped in threes. The colour of this jellyfish varies, with a variable level of brown pigment <http://www.arkive.org/compass-jellyfish/chrysaora-hysoscella/> - ref2. The catching arms around the mouth opening resemble a bridal veil and can grow much

longer than the tentacles. A compass jellyfish begins life as a male but eventually turns female in the course of its one year of life.

Baby shark born at the National Aquarium



A baby shark was born at the Malta National Aquarium recently.

The shark, a Nursehound (*Scyliorhinus stellaris*) was born from an egg collected from a dead shark at the fish market.

Sharklab Malta and the National Aquarium have teamed up in an effort to breed sharks. Sharklab Malta collects eggs from dead sharks which are then delivered to the National Aquarium where they are displayed and cared for in the Shark and Ray egg display tank. The baby shark will now be monitored and fed until it is strong enough and may be released into the wild. The hatching program run by Sharklab Malta is also supported by the Malta Aquaculture Research Centre and MCAST Agribusiness.

ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL of ST PAUL & THE CARMELITE CHURCH – Valletta, Malta

Standing close to one another, these two churches form the most remarkable aspects of the Valletta skyline. The Anglican Cathedral boasts the tall spire of over 60m while The Carmelite Church is represented by the large silver dome. It was Queen Adelaide who, while convalescing in Malta, commissioned the first protestant church by paying for it and laying the first stone of The Anglican Cathedral in 1839. It was finally completed in 1844, but not before the original British architect committed suicide when problems developed with the structure. The church was dedicated to St Paul as a reminder of the first Christian missionary to Malta shipwrecked here in 60 AD. The Carmelite Church was Valletta's first functional church, opening in 1570. It has undergone several transformations over the years and was particularly badly damaged during World War 2. These 2 churches can be found near Independence Square in Valletta.



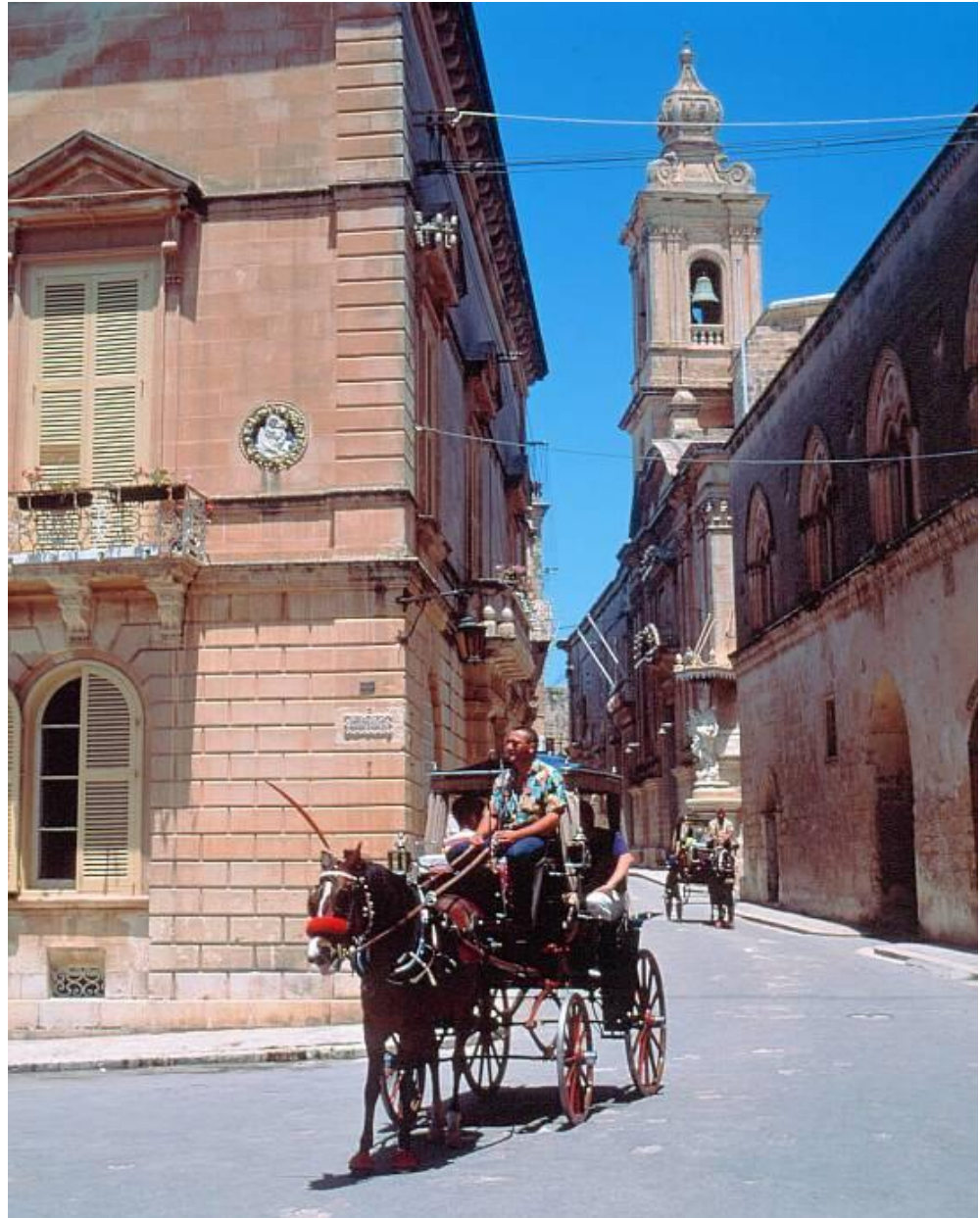
TARXIEN TEMPLES

The Tarxien temples are the most complex of sites in Malta. Also discovered accidentally in 1914 by local farmers who struck stone blocks whilst ploughing a field. The job of excavating the site was given to Sir Temistocles Zammit, Malta's first Director of Museums who carried out the work between 1915 – 1917. The temples consist of 4 megalithic structures with separate entrances connected by a square court & date back between 3600 – 2500 BC. They were a tremendous 'find' & gave a much better understanding of prehistoric Malta. Particularly of note were the large spherical stones found at the site which provided a clue as to how the huge megaliths used in the temples were rolled into position. The site was probably used for rituals and animal sacrifice as bones & flint blades were found in a carved altar. A chamber was also found between the thickness of 2 walls separating 2 of the temples. The site also offers detailed carvings, altars and decorated screens. Located in Tarxien itself and make sure you check opening hours before visiting.

KARROZIN

A picture is
worth 1000 words

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Horticulture training for refugees and asylum seekers



Since June 2012, the University section of the Argotti Botanic Gardens was buzzing with a different activity from its usual day to day running. The HORTES project, short for Horticulture Training as a Means to Enhance Skills of Refugees and Asylum Seekers aimed to do exactly what its title says - this ERF funded project endeavoured to teach refugees and asylum seekers the basics of gardening.

The course was spread over three levels, from beginners' to advanced, each taking approximately three months to complete. The first months were dedicated to intensive preparation for the course. The refugees and asylum seekers, who came from three open centres, two in Hal Far and one in Marsa, attended bi-weekly theory sessions and practical training.

Refugees and asylum seekers staying at open centres were targeted for this initiative because at this stage they would be preparing to leave their centre to find a home and make a fresh start. The acquisition of new skills enhances their chances of employment and helps them in their process of integration. Dr Joseph Buhagiar, Director at the Gardens and leader of the project, together with his team at the Argotti Gardens, was actively involved in teaching students different aspects of plant biology, plant identification for both ornamental and wild species, plant water needs, plant nutrition and compost, amongst others.

The bottom line was teaching students how to care for plants in a local garden environment, how to deal with different techniques of plant propagation, pruning, spotting disease and methods of eradicating the problem. The group participated in different practical sessions, putting theory to practice in the garden. The practical sessions were often on a one-to-one basis with Argotti gardening and technical staff.

Practical sessions included handling garden equipment and machinery, use of scaffolding to reach the trees for pruning, watering and irrigation, planting of ornamentals for display, seed collection, cleaning and sowing. The students were also given an opportunity to set up a small garden at their respective centres, to care for in between lessons. For this purpose, seeds, seedlings and ornamental plants were given, together with a set of tools.

The course was formally concluded at the end of June 2013 which also marked the completion of the initiative. In a final ceremony held at Argotti Botanic Gardens, the students received certificates of attendance for the levels they had attained. Representatives of the Argotti team and of the different open centres were present. This initiative gave this group of refugees and asylum seekers the tools and skills to be more successful in finding a job in the gardening industry.

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## **WIRJA SANTA MARIJA -Gozo**

There were a record number of participants and visitors for 'Il-Wirja ta' Santa Marija' the annual agricultural show, held at the Villa Rundle Gardens in Victoria last Wednesday and Thursday.

The Ministry for Gozo said today that compared to last year, the total number of participants rose from 130 to 158. There was also a substantial increase in exhibits, which included produce, livestock, poultry and vegetables, from 3638 last year to this year's 5065. The largest increase in exhibits were in poultry, eggs and rabbits, which rose from 632 to 1,074.

The Ministry said that this shows the dedication and commitment of the organisational panel from within the Ministry for Gozo, which is headed by Anton F. Attard, so that it encouraged not only exhibitors from Gozo, but Malta as well. 'Il-Wirja ta' Santa Marija' has been taking place in Gozo since 1855.