

THE JOURNAL OF THE MALTESE DIASPORA

MALTESE NEWSLETTER

OUR MOTTO: BUILDING BRIDGES

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Malta's Historical Australia Hall building must be restored

By Dr. Victor Borg (MCCV).

There is considerable concern within the Maltese-Australian community in Australia regarding the future of the historic building of Australia Hall located in Pembroke, Malta. This building was constructed to provide a place for entertainment and refreshments

for the thousands of ANZACs who were wounded in Gallipoli and taken to Malta for medical treatment and convalescence.

Australia Hall was built by the Royal Engineers and took two months to complete. It was officially opened on 22 January 1916 by the Governor Field Marshal Lord Methuen. The Australian Red Cross contributed £2,000 towards its construction cost. Some 58,000 soldiers had been nursed in various hospitals and nearby tented hospitals specially erected to deal with the large influx of wounded soldiers arriving on the island.

Australia Hall building in a derelict state When the British military facilities in St Andrew's Barracks were closed down in 1978, Australia Hall became the property of the Maltese government. In 1979 it was granted to the Labour Party on a long lease as compensation for the compulsory acquisition of land that the party owned in Marsa for use by Malta Shipbuilding Corporation.

Unfortunately, in December 1998 Australia Hall suffered severe damage when its ceiling of metal trusses and sheeting was gutted by fire. However, its sturdy four external walls still remained standing. Today the building with no roof is in a derelict state, open to the elements and damage by vandalism.

In 2010 the Labour Party was taken to court for failure to keep Australia Hall in good condition, as was required under the 1979 contract. These charges were dropped in October 2013, after the Labour Party was returned to government.

On 1 September 2014, the Labour Party sold Australia Hall and some surrounding land to a private company for €582,343, an amount considered grossly below its market value. It was reported that no money changed hands on this deal, and instead, the Labour Party's pending debts with the company were paid off. While it is not known what the new owners of Australia Hall have in mind for the site, since 1996 the building has been classified by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) as a Grade 2 building of historic, architectural and contextual value (as it forms part of a larger protected military complex). Thus, development in the area is so far restricted.



The history of Australia Hall forms an integral part of Malta's important role in ANZAC history. It is a fitting reminder of the valuable services provided by many volunteer Maltese nurses and medical practitioners to thousands of Australian and New Zealand servicemen. Their efforts earned Malta the title of "Nurse of the Mediterranean".

We urge Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muscat to commit the Maltese Government to the restoration of Australia Hall to its former glory as a monument to the excellent longstanding relations between Malta and Australia. Need for restoration ... the dilapidated hall Australia's High Commissioner to

Malta wants restored. Picture: Ella Pellegrini. We commend the Australian High Commissioner H.E. Ms Jane Lambert for her efforts to save Australia Hall and her contacts with the current owners to explore restoration options and ensure that the building is not demolished.



Celebrazzjoni ta' Maria Bambina jew il-Vittorja fil-Kattidral ta' Saint Mary's Sydney -2016

Ta' kull sena l-Maltin ta' Sydney niltaqu biex niccelebaw il-festa ta' Maria Bambina fil-Kattidral ta' St Mary's Sydney. Din hija l-okkazjoni fejn bhala nazzjon Malti, nirraqrzjaw lill-Alla, li bl-intercessjoni ta' Marija Santissima, Malta harget rebbieha fuq iz-zewg Assedji horox, kemm dak kontra t-Torok fl-1565 u l-iehor aktar ahrax ta' bejn is-snin tal-1939-1945.

Fil-hajja ma' hemmx isbah, aktar milli wiehed japprezza u jkun rikonoxxenti lejn Alla u Marija Santissima ta' kemm dejjem harsu lill-gzejjer Maltin, mhux biss fl-imghoddi, izda wkoll fiz-zmienijietna. Ghalhekk ahna naghmlu premura li ta' kull sena l-Maltin kollha ta' dan l-Istat ta' New South Wales, fl-Awstralja, jippartecipaw f'din il-festa, biex bhala nazzjon, nirringrazzjaw lill-Alla u l-Madonna.

Din il-festa tat-twelid tal-Madonna hija aktar maghrufa fost il-Maltin bhall il-Bambina jew il-Vittorja, ghaliex kienet nhar il-festa tat-twelid imqaddes taghha meta Malta u Ghawdex kisbu r-rebha mistennija mid-dinja Nisranija fuq il-qawwiet tal-Musulmani fl-1565.

Il-Maltin tal-Istat ta' New South Wales, ta' kull sena jattendu bi hgarhom fejn bosta minnhom jivvjagaw mill boghod ghal diversi sghat, anki bil-ferrovija, bil-coaches jew mini-vans biex kull min irrid jattendi jkollu l-opportunita' biex ma jitlifx din il-festa nazzjonali, celebrazzjoni ta' fidi u wirt storiku.

Is-Sacerdoti Maltin flimkien ma' Reverendu Fr Tarcisio Micallef MSSP li huwa l-Kappillan tal-Maltin fl-Arcidijocesi ta' Sydney, ikkoncelebraw il-quddiesa flimkien, fil-waqt Fr Dominic Sultana, qassis zghazugh minn Ghawdex, kien il-predikatur. Dr George Boffa SMOM, kien ic-ceremonjier li mexxa l-okkazjoni, fejn semmha ukoll ghamel irrakont tal-okkazzjoni.

Il-purcissjoni li bdiet fis-2.30 pm, imxiet madwar il-Kattidral, fejn l-akkolti akkumpanjaw lic- Ceremonjier, is Sur John D'amato. Il-Kummissarju Gholi ghal Malta is-Sur Charles Muscat u martu Victoria, flimkien mas-Sur Salvino Giusti Konslu Generali ghal Malta u l-Offucjali Konsolari, akkumpanjaw wara l-bandiera Maltija. Bhal kull sena ohra, numru sabieh ta' Kavalieri ta' Malta, l-Ordni Militari Sovrana ta' San Gwann attendew ghal din il-quddiesa. Attendew ukoll is-sorijiet tal-Frangiskani tal-Qalb ta' Gesu minn Wollongong u soru Dumnikana min Blacktown. Is-Sinjorina Ana-Louise Vella, liebsa l-kurazz ta' Malta akkumpanjata minn

numru sabieh ta' tfal u zagħżagħ liebsin il-kustum Malti, u l-ghaqdjet akkumpanjaw warajhom. Fost dawk li attendew kien hemm il-president tal-MCC is-Sur Eammanuel Camilleri u martu Theresa.

L-ghaqdjet Maltin li hadu sehem akkumpanjaw bil-bnadar tagħhom waqt il-purcissjoni, mad-dawra tal-Katidral fejn ghamlu xena tassew sabieha bil-kuluri ta' kull lewn. Is-Sur Charles Galea Brother tal-Muzew, mexxa r-Ruzarju u l-kor ta' La Vallette taht id-direzzjoni tas-Sur Victor Floridia, kantaw innijiet sbieh tal-Madonna kif ukoll il-kant tal-quddiesa u fl-ahhar kantaw l-Innu Malti mal-Maltin prezenti.

Is-Sacerdoti Maltin imxew quddiem l-istatwa ta' Marija Bambina li hi meqjuma fil-kapella ta' San Pawl f'Dar De Piro, Stanley Street East Sydney. Din l-istatwa kienet imbierka mil-Kardinal Gilroy fl-14 ta' Lulju 1963 fejn dak iz-zmien il-Kapillan tal-Maltin kien Fr Publius Cassar OFM Cap u warajh kien ha hsiebha, Fr Leonard Busuttil OFM Cap.

Filmkien ma' Fr Tarciso Micallef MSSP Kappillan tal-Maltin fid-Djocesi ta' Sydney, ikkoncelebraw ukoll, Fr John Briffa SDB Salezjan, Fr Emmanuel Gatt OFM Conv. min Warrawong Wollongong, Fr Laurie Cauchi PP kapillan ta' Malabar, Fr Carmelo Sciberras u Fr Dominic Sultana minn Ghawdex, li qed izur l-Awstralja. Fr Dominic ghamel panigirku fuq Marija Ommna fejn kulhadd ha gost jisma dan is-sacerdot zagħżugh jippriedka b'entuzjmu religjuz bil-lingwa ghaziza tagħna.

Il-kongregazzjoni mxiet wara l-istatwa ta' Marija Bambina, waqt kant u talb tar-Ruzarju. Ta' kull sena membri mill-ghaqdjet, membri mill-komunita' flimkien ma' xi tfal, jiehdu sehem fil-Liturgija. L-Ecc Tieghu is-Sur Charles Muscat u is-Sur Salvinu Giusti, i Konslu Generali, qraw l-ewwel u t-tieni qari rispettivament, it-Talb tal-Fidili kienu nvokazzjoni generali filwaqt li sar talb bit-tema tas-Sena tal-Hniena minn membri tal-ghaqdjet Maltin. Fr Tarisio Micallef MSSP ir-ringrazzja lil kull min ghen biex din ic-celebrazzjoni tkun ta' devozzjoni u success bhal hafna snin ta' qabel. Wara kulhadd gie stieden biex jattendu għal riceviment ippreparat minnu, mill-voluntieri tal-MSSP, u mil-Maltese-Australian Women's Association, fejn hafna nies attendew f'Dar De Piro, biex ikomplu jiccelebraw flimkien f'atmosfera ta' festa Maltija. Nisperaw li nergghu niltaqghu sena ohra għall-Festa tal-Vitorja li tkun it-Tieni Hadd l-10 ta' Settembru 2017. Proset lil kull min attenda jew hadem biex din ic-celebrazzjoni tkun ta' success għad unur ta' Marija Bambina. **Rev Fr Tarcisio Micallef MSSP Kapillan tal-Kommunita' MALTIJA f'Sydney fl-Arcidijocesi ta' Sydney**

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Il-Quddiesa tas-6pm f'San Gorg' – GHAWDEX



Mhux biex niftaħar imma jiena nhobb nisma' regularment il-quddiesa tas-6pm fil-Bażilika ta' San Gorg' Victoria li milli jidher hija mogħtija immankabilment lil ex Arcipriet ta' din il-Parroċċa Monsinjur Guzeppi Farrugia. Xtaqt nuri l-apprezzament tiegħi lejn dan is-Sacerdot kult u bravu li ma jonqos qatt li jieqaf mument qasir wara l-qari tal-Vangelu u jagħmel riflessjoni qasira li tkun dejjem fiha x'ittieghem. Naturalment biex tagħmel hekk is-sena kollha trid tkun veru ppreparat u mghallem sew u ma tibżax mill-microphone. Dan jagħmlu b'sengħa u ħila u ma tiddejjaqx tisimghu u ma tindunax kif jaharbu dawk il-ftit minuti! Nahseb li huwa wiehed mill-ftit jekk mhux l-uniku sacerdot

li nistgħu ngħidu li jhejji omelija kuljum. Ma nafx x'isir bnadi ohra biex inkun għidt kollox imma dawn hawn huma l-fatti li għalihom nista' nixhed jien! Kull min jafu mill-qrib lil dan l-individwu jaf li huwa persuna intelligenti, ħabib tal-ktieb u li l-pinna tiegħu hija wahda tajba u li minn tahtu hargu bosta sacerdoti u professjonisti billi għal żmien twil għallem fis-Seminarju tagħna kif ukoll fl-Universita' tal-Qroqq! Nifrahlu u nawgurulu biex ma jehdiex iżomm dan l-appuntament tiegħu magħna f'din il-knisja fil-qalba ta' beltina li qed tagħti servizz lil tant Ghawdxin u Maltin u barranin li jfittxuha ta' kuljum. Dnub li minn xi xhur 'l hawn twaqqfet il-quddiesa ta' nofs inhar matul il-gimgha; żgur li ma kenitx lussu u bi ftit tas-sagrificċju setgħet tkompli ssir għal dawk li forsi dak kien il-ħin idejali li jisimghu quddiesa u għal ohrajn li kienu jidhlu jisimghuha kif jinzwertaw għaddejjin minn hawn!

Kav Joe M Attard

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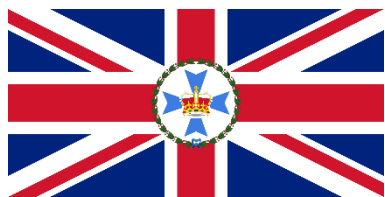
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THE MALTA GARDEN AT MACKAY, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

(Picture left) Flag of Queensland

The Malta Garden is the first of five themed gardens and precincts within the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens that pay homage to the cultural heritage of Mackay. Immigrants from the islands of Malta in the Mediterranean came to Australia in their thousands after Australian Federation in 1901, to seek a better life. Many settled in the then small city of Mackay primarily to work in the sugar industry, harvesting sugar cane by hand. Today, Mackay boasts the largest population of Maltese immigrants and descendants in an Australian regional centre.

The garden features several iconic and interpretative themes to represent Malta. A stylised aqueduct or viaduct - a system of bridges and channels primarily used to transport water, is represented here in stone and metal and is based on several impressive solid stone structures that can still be seen today in Malta built in both Roman and recent history. A sand Bocce Court represents a vanishing style of the popular ball game that was traditionally played on sand, which many people around the world today play on grass.

Malta has experienced thousands of years of trade and invasion and flora from around the world has been brought to and flourished in the sunny, dry climate. This garden features plants that originates in arid and semi-arid climes, or are drought tolerant, that will grow in Mackay's wetter climate.

Special and usual plants include:

- Carob Tree – *Ceratonia silaqua* – used today as a coffee or chocolate substitute, this tree from northern Africa and the Mediterranean also has special significance in biblical and modern day agricultural uses in Malta.
- Ruby Saltbush - *Enchylaena tomentosa* var. *tomentosa* – the orange fruited form of this Australian native succulent has silver leaves and is taller than coastal varieties. Ruby Saltbush often grows in harsh locations such as intertidal zones and mangrove fringes as well as inland salt lakes and marshes. Like many plants important to the peoples of Malta – the small fruit is edible.
- Desert Rose - *Adenium obesum* - a perennial succulent from Arabia's semi-arid regions and tropical Africa that has a distinctive fleshy, bottle-shaped trunk and beautiful flowers. Desert Rose is related to Frangipani and Oleander and makes an excellent pot plant.
- Bismarck Palm – *Bismarckia nobilis* – a striking palm from Madagascar with large silver-grey fan shaped leaves. This palm suits dryer, exposed conditions in warm climates.

This is an 'unfinished' garden that will in future also feature traditional stone walls, shade structures and a rockery with more unusual Australian native and exotic succulents.

Exotic cuisine from across the globe

A wide range of foreign treats and traditional cuisines made their way into the mouths of festival goers in north Queensland. The festivities were part of an annual Global Grooves event highlighting the diverse range of cultures in north Queensland.



Carmel Baretta helped out at the Maltese language, food and culture stall. "People are a little bit hesitant to learn Maltese; I believe it is not an easy language to learn," Carmel said. "But they certainly like trying the Maltese puddina, which is a typical Maltese food made from dried bread and mixed fruit." (ABC: Sophie Kesteven)



Mary Cassar
MORE FROM MACKAY, QLD

A Maltese twist:

Mary Vassallo, author of recipe book *Maltese Cooking*, serves pigeon over turkey on Christmas day.

"We go to Christmas mass ... then we come home and get all the family together and then we have a lunch together," she said. "Usually Christmas lunch is mainly done with three types of meat ... because we're Maltese background it's usually pigeons

and chicken and rabbit - because they're the things we grew up with."

Mrs Vassallo said she will also be making pastizzis (Maltese cheese pies) - which are her children's favourite - and ghagin fil forn (baked macaroni) which is a staple in the Maltese diet.

"I find people are more interested in food now (and willing to try new things) because the cultures are changing," she said.

For dessert fruit is a popular choice as well as pudina (a Maltese bread pudding).

A Festival of Love that's all about charity



Ghajn Tuffieha Watch Tower - Photo Fran Stivala

Dozens of volunteers will gather at Ghajn Tuffieha this September for a festival that will help make the world a little bit better, as all profits will go to charity.

Organised by NGO The Bubble, the Festival of Love will be held from September 23 to 25 at The Elysium in Ghajn Tuffieha and the surrounding area.

Half of the proceeds will go to the Garden of Smiles project by the Right to Smile foundation, which provides women in India and

Kenya access to opportunities by exploring their creative potential and narrowing gender gaps in their education system.

A fifth of the proceeds will go to The Gaia Foundation for integrated coastal zone management, 15 per cent to the NGO Why Not? for educational workshops and events, and another 15 per cent goes back to The Bubble for next year's festival.

It is a festival for hippies, for rockers, for children and for old and young alike

Asked about the main attractions for this year's festival, Duncan Fenech from The Bubble said the event is multicultural – a festival that brings together workshops and interesting talks, as well as live music and artists. "I would say that the main attraction is the atmosphere. Essentially, it is just a group of people wishing to make a positive change to the world around them and urging more people to do the same, and having fun doing it." But is it a festival for hippies? "Yes, it is a festival for hippies, a festival for rockers, a festival for children and a festival for old and young alike. So do I agree? Yes and no. The Bubble is a festival for everyone," Mr Fenech said. "The Bubble attracts a mixed crowd by means of word of mouth and an organic marketing system. Each participant, such as the workshop leaders, artists or musicians work on inviting and bringing their own friends."



The festival, which last year raised nearly €13,000, depends on the help of volunteers. Around 120 people subscribed this year, and while some usually drop out, there will be around 80 lending a helping hand.

Ninety per cent of the volunteers are based in Malta, half of whom are Maltese. About 10 per cent are flying in especially for The Bubble from the UK, Germany and some other countries, as well as Maltese who live abroad, Mr Fenech said.

For Leigh James Marshall, who is from the UK, doing voluntary work abroad allows a person to develop an alternative set of skills.

"I have strived in my development to adapt in new and challenging environments. I have been presented with opportunities to collaborate with a variety of like-minded people and to share knowledge and experiences. Volunteering for a non-home NGO is a privilege." For more information, look up The Bubble on Facebook.

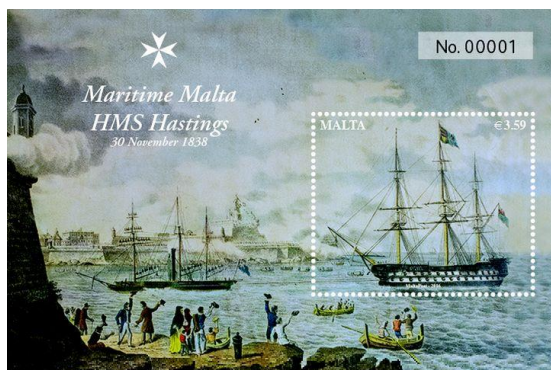


MALTESE DOWNUNDER

Join us on C31 Melbourne and Geelong (channel 44 in Melbourne) Sunday at 4pm, Monday at 2pm or Tuesday at 2.30pm to meet Ted & Michelle Caruana and hear their success story!

The show can be watched all around Australia/the world via the LIVE stream link on www.c31.org.au/series/1313 or the c31 app! And if you miss the show, go on this same link to watch it on

demand later on next week!



Postage stamp issue: Maritime Malta Series IV HMS Hastings

MaltaPost will be issuing miniature sheet bearing one stamp entitled Maritime Malta Series IV- HMS Hastings. This stamp portrays a lithograph of a drawing by Charles Brockdorff circa 1838, showing the arrival of Queen Adelaide on board HMS Hastings into Valletta Grand Harbour on the 30th of November 1838.

The arrival of the Queen was marked by a royal salute fired from Fort Ricasoli and Fort Saint Elmo, after which twenty-one guns were fired from each of the man-of-war. Battalions of soldiers assembled on the most prominent batteries to cheer the Queen as she passed by. The Queen left Malta on the 1st of April 1839.

The stamp carries a face value of €3.59 and the issue consists of 15,000 miniature sheets. The stamp measures 49mm by 40.5mm with a perforation of 14.2 x 14.2 (comb.) and bears the Maltese Crosses watermark, while the sheet measures 120mm by 80mm.

This philatelic issue will be available as from Thursday, the 15th of September, from all Post Offices in Malta and Gozo, online at www.maltaphilately.com or by mail from the Philatelic Bureau, MaltaPost p.l.c. 305, Qormi Road, Marsa, MTP 1001; Telephone: 2596 1740; email: info@maltaphilately.com.



DRIVING IN MALTA

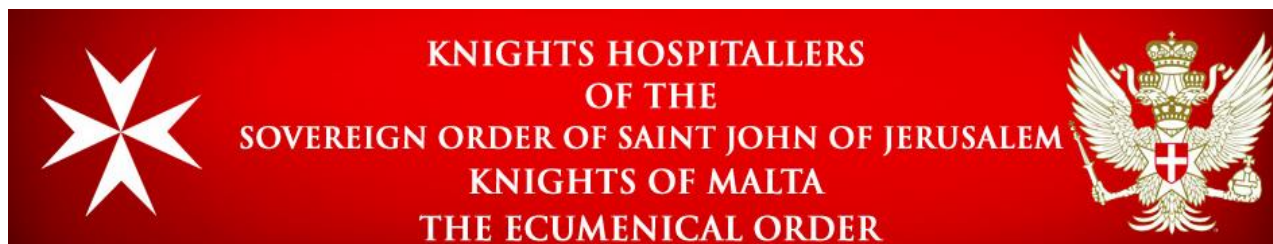
A lot has been said about driving in Malta and the state of the Maltese roads. While some of it borrows itself from reality, most of it is an exaggeration of past tourist tales. The truth is that since there are no major motorways in Malta, most of the driving is similar to many other European city centres – organised chaos. Roads are not as good as they should be but nor are they the off-roading experience some make them out to be. A more recent concentrated effort to improve road safety awareness (including a number of speed cameras) and road infrastructure have helped to make driving in Malta a rather more pleasurable experience. Just don't expect drivers to respect the inner and outer lanes!

More real concerns are the traffic congestion that can build up in certain areas of Malta during rush-hour times - around Valletta on weekdays and around the Northern localities on weekends. Parking is also very difficult in certain localities especially in Valletta, Sliema and St. Julian's. There are, however, designated car parks around these localities and it is advisable to use them. All upmarket hotels have their own parking facilities. Most tourist

attractions including beaches have a car park with an official parking attendant present. These are usually tipped circa €0.60 upon your departure.

Being an ex-British colony, the Maltese drive on the left. Speed limits are 50km/h in urban areas and 80km/h on the short stretches of open road available. Seat belts are compulsory for all passengers. National and international driving licences are accepted. The minimum age of renting a car is 21 even though an extra supplement is usually applicable for drivers up to 25 years of age.

It is also very advisable to have a good road map since the road network of the islands is a maze and the lack of a major motorway means that it is usually possible to get to your destination in more ways than one. For this reason, road signs or directions by locals can be rather confusing. <http://www.mydestinationmalta.com/usefulinfo/driving-in-malta>



Remaining relevant in a world so different from the days of the first Crusades takes a special kind of commitment. Very few Orders of Chivalry have survived into the modern day, but one Religious and Sovereign Order, of particular importance to the island of Malta, has not only survived through the centuries, but has grown, both in significance and size, enormously. And indeed, with 12,000 Knights and Dames, 80,000 trained volunteers and 11,000 employees, the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta (also known as the Knights of Malta) is as dynamic an organisation today as the day it was founded, almost one thousand years ago.

And while the military function of the Order has lapsed entirely, the original Hospitaller and Social initiatives of the Order have expanded to reach right around the globe. Operating in 120 countries around the world, the Order now runs hospitals, hospices, medical centres, drug rehabilitation centres, old people's homes, schools and universities, as well as offering humanitarian and disaster



relief to victims of armed conflict or natural catastrophe. In Malta, of course, the Order's sovereign territory from 1530 to 1798, where every town, village and hamlet, every street corner and every mile of coastal landscape (dotted with watch towers) bears some reminder of the Order's permanence, the Knights of Malta are mainly remembered for the glorious heritage they left the Maltese people. Valletta, the island's exquisite Baroque capital built by Knights in 1565, with its palaces and auberges to house the noble Knights who lived here, the bastions and curtains that encircled and protected the city from the then almost constant threat of invaders, and the chapels, churches and cathedral built by the era's best architects, decorated and enriched by the most renowned artists of the time, is most people's first introduction to the Knight's extraordinary determination to turn the barren island

they were ceded as their base in 1530 into a fitting domicile for what many considered one of the most glorious Orders of Knights in existence.

But often, here in Malta at least, the glory of the Knight's magnificent past tends to overshadow the perhaps more mundane, but infinitely more immediate glory of the Order's present. In fact, the Order of Malta is one of the few Orders created in the Middle Ages which is still active today. However, while in the past most of its Religious Knights came from chivalrous and noble Christian families, today the majority of Knights belong to all classes of society. All Knights must meet the traditional requirement for the bestowing of knighthood, that is, they must distinguish themselves for special virtues. "Battles are no longer fought with swords;" the Order writes on its website, "but with the peaceful tools of the fight against disease, poverty, social isolation and intolerance, as well as the defence and promotion of the faith." While there are only a small number (some 38) Professed Knights who have made the traditional vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, in the Order today, there are some 12,000 Secular Knights and Dames, whose commitment is to living to Christian principles and the inspiring principles of the Order. Beyond that are the 80,000 permanent trained volunteers and 11,000 doctors, nurses and other personnel. Together this formidable body of people raise funds for and run the numerous hospitals, clinics, care centres, dispensaries, foundations, schools, universities and other facilities the Order maintains all over the world.

Headquartered since 1834 in Rome, in Palazzo Malta in Via Condotti, the Order is now led by the 78th Grandmaster, Fra' Andrew Bertie. The Order's national organisations (including its Grand Pories, National Associations, relief organisations and foundations) in the countries where they are present, are then responsible for carrying out the Order's activities. The permanent institutions – such as hospitals, hospices and old peoples' homes – are either managed directly by the Pories or Associations, or by subordinate bodies.

Millions of people around the world, across Europe, to South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, have benefited over the years from the care and assistance offered by the Order. From a maternity hospital in Bethlehem, and specialist neurology hospital in Rome, to palliative care hospices for the terminally ill in England, Belgium and Germany, general hospitals in a score of countries, leprosy hospitals in Senegal and Cambodia, HIV / AIDS centres in Argentina, specialist diabetic centres in a host of countries, centres of the disabled, for the elderly, for children, adolescents, the homeless and drug addicts, each type of specialized institution present in scores of countries across the world, the Order is carrying out its Christian, Hospitaller mission today as vigorously as ever before in its 1000 year history.

Keeping alive the order's original motto: "Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum"; (defence of the Faith and assistance to the poor and the suffering), modern day Knights, Dames, Chaplains and Volunteers of the Order of Malta, though they may no longer be building 'cities by gentlemen, for gentlemen; are nevertheless creating and expanding structures whose value to the human race goes far beyond the measure of aesthetic beauty.

Official Site of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta

NOSTALGIA



MAERA ZAHRA

SENT US THIS BEAUTIFUL PHOTO OF THE KAROZZIN

Gozo tunnel movement wants project up and running by 2028



Front Favur il-Mina warns Gozo risks losing its identity and turning into a retirement home if a tunnel is not constructed soon between the island and Malta. The group of students backed by both parties in parliament argues that a tunnel will throw a lifeline to a waning Gozo.

Gozo risks turning into a retirement island if a tunnel is not built soon between it and Malta, the group campaigning for the project has warned.

Jonathan Mintoff told MaltaToday. “Gozo’s population is declining and business on the island is suffering, due to its poor accessibility.”

He noted that there is only one shop in his own home village of Ghasri, that caters for the village’s 300 or so mostly elderly residents. “A trip from Helsinki to St Petersburg by train these days lasts two hours...that’s around the same time it takes to travel from Mgarr to the centre of Malta.”



Mintoff, along with fellow Gozitan students Beppe Galea and Carla Galea, set up the ‘Front Favur il-Mina’ late last year to campaign in favour of the tunnel proposal.

Although both government and Opposition have backed the project, the students are not resting on their laurels and have warned that time is of the essence.

The reason is that the three Gozo ferries will eventually wear out and will have to be decommissioned by 2030 at the latest, according to projections by economist Gordon Cordina. Cordina conservatively predicts that the replacement will cost around €120 million, with maintenance and fuel costs estimated at a further €21

million per year.

“The tunnel will cost around €300 million and will have a lifetime of around 100 years, so it will be more financially sustainable than the Gozo Channel in the long-term,” Mintoff said. “However, it must be up and running before the ferries are decommissioned, ideally in twelve years at the latest.

“Given that the project is expected to take between seven and ten years to build, we are still in time, but only just. It’s a ticking time-bomb...” The Front Favur il-Mina will hold a national conference in Mgarr on Saturday, in which they will urge the government to commission geological, environmental impact and social impact studies on the feasibility of the tunnel as soon as possible.

“Unfortunately, government has been dragging its feet on commissioning such studies,” Galea said. “It certainly seems like a viable project – there are 25 sub-seabed tunnels in Norway after all – but what’s the point of speculating without any concrete data?”

Gozo’s population is officially estimated at 37,000, but the Gozitan students warned that this figure includes people with Gozitan ID cards who live in Malta and that the island’s population is closer to 15-20,000 people.

Tim Diacono

Gold coin issue representing the Maltese 'patakka'

The Central Bank of Malta issued a numismatic coin in gold representing the copper four tari 'patakka.' This coin has a face value of €5 and will be sold at €60 (including VAT).

In 1566, Grand Master Jean de Valette embarked on the building of the fortress city of Valletta. As the Great Siege of 1565 had drained the Order's treasury, the Grand Master resorted to the minting of thousands of fiduciary copper coins to make up for the shortage of gold and silver coinage. The thousands of men working on the building of Valletta were given their weekly wages in copper.



The copper four tari coin, which was known by the Maltese as 'patakka,' circulated at par with Maltese and Sicilian silver coinage. This parity became unbalanced after 1636 as a result of the minting of an excessive amount of copper coinage. The 'patakka' and the other copper coinage of the Order remained in use in Malta during the early years of British rule. It ceased being legal tender on 25 April 1828.

The Bank's gold numismatic coin was designed and engraved by Noel Galea Bason and is of proof quality. The obverse shows the emblem of Malta and the year of issue 2016. The reverse features a representation of a 'patakka' issued by Grand Master

Jean de Valette and depicts a Maltese Cross.

The coin will be struck at the Royal Dutch Mint in 0.999 gold, has a weight of 0.5 grams and a diameter of 11 mm. The mintage is limited to 2,500 coins. The coin may be purchased directly from the Malta Coins Distribution Centre's online e-shop facility. Alternatively, the public can visit the Malta Coins Distribution Centre counter at the main building of the Central Bank of Malta, Castille Place Valletta.

For more information please contact the Bank's Malta Coins Distribution Centre by email on mcdc@centralbankmalta.org or by calling (+356) 2550 6006/7.

Kunċert tal-Indipendenza f'Għawdex

Dan il-Gvern għoġbu jfakkar lill-pubbliku Għawdexi fit-52 Anniversarju tal-Kisba tal-Indipendenza b'kunċert mużikali f'Misrah Indipendenza Victoria mill-Banda tal-Forzi Armati ta' Malta nhar il-Ħadd 18 ta' Settembru filgħaxija. Pubbliku numeruż kien preżenti fosthom il-Ministru għal Għawdex Dr Anton Refalo, is-Segretarju Parlamentari Dr Justyne Caruana, Frederick Azzopardi MP, kif ukoll l-ex Ministru għal Għawdex Anton Tabone. Il-Banda kienet taħt id-direzzjoni ta' Warrant Officer I Jonathan Borg. Iż-żagħżuġ Għawdexi is-Solista L/Bdr Jason Frank Camilleri daqq 'Andante et Allegro' ta' Joseph Gut Ropartz u kien milqugħ tajjeb hafna. Il-Banda fethet il-programm bl-'Overture Zampa' ta' Herold u għaddiet biex tkompli tiddeverti lil dawk preżenti billi interpretat l-'Melody in C' ta' Carmeol Galea, 'Pomp and Circumstance' ta' Edward Elgar, l-'Overture' mill-'Ballet Suite Knights of Malta' ta' Mro Charles Camilleri fuq Arrangament ta' Victor Zammit, 'A Salsburg Impression' ta' Dizzy Stratford, selezzjoni minn 'Top Hat', tal-kompożitur magħruf Irvin Berlin, u l-'Innu Rewwixta' tal-Profis is-Surmast Joseph Vella. Għoġbitni hafna l-'Pasadena' ta' Jacob de Haan u għakemm ma nafx min kien is-solista, irrid nagħtih il-Prosit għax tassew hareġ bl-unuri kollha.

Qabel l-Innu Malti hadna gost ukoll nisimgħu 'Għawdex, inti Djamant' tal-kantant mibki Għawdexi Dominic Grech li kellha arrangament għal banda minn Mro Joseph Debrincat. Grazzi lill-Kumitat tal-Kultura fi hdan il-Ministeru għal Għawdex li mlielna parti mill-Ħadd filgħaxija b'dan il-kunċert ta' tifikira li kien ipreżentat mis-Sopran Rosabelle Pavia; wara bqajt sejjer ingawdi l-aħhar parti tal-festa tal-Madonna tal-Grazzja għand il-Patrijiet Kapuċċini qabel ma nfethu bibien is-Sema u tawna l-ewwel bexxa xita wara xhur twal ta' nixfa! **Kav Joe M Attard Victoria Għawdex**



CHANGING FACE OF MALTA

Debbie Caruana Dingli

In 1876, Edward Caruana Dingli was born into a family of artists in Valetta, Malta. He studied at the British Academy in Rome and returned to Malta to paint the folk life of his native land.

One of his paintings that found its way to innumerable postcards and prints shows a happy Maltese girl resting beside the road with a basket of oranges.(see picture below)



Debbie Caruana Dingli has carried on the family tradition of painting local human stories, but the stories have changed. As far back as 2008, she decided to include portrayals of migrants and refugees in her gallery exhibitions. "I was keen on the subject from a human perspective. Immigration is a subject where I feel many have lost their sense of humanity due to the

antagonism they feel towards this pressing issue...."



She continues,

"the other day, my son Bruce mentioned that we spend all our life hearing about how we're supposed to love our neighbour and give them the cloak off our back, and now we're finally being put to the test," she said.

Posted by James Gurney



Alexia Coppini

ALEXIA is a Maltese painter who creates fantastic seascapes and ethereal skies.

The common thread in Alexia's paintings is representations of big skies and vast seas. They represent the natural environment in the most tranquil manner. Each painting speaks for itself. Alexia lives by the sea and is therefore easily absorbed by the beauty of the sea and the natural environment. Alexia's paintings evoke a sense of the spiritual as well as the fluid nature of the sea, and the light in the air creates a play with memory in timelessness.

Her interest in art started when she was at school and continued later in life. Alexia studied art under the guidance of Ms Margaret Chircop, her art teacher at the Convent of the Sacred Heart. During these years she developed her talent and later discovered that life could be better fulfilled through artistic expression that gives satisfaction not only to herself but also enjoyment to whoever shares in her work. Later in life Alexia attended art courses by Mr Anton Calleja and Ms Debbie Caruana Dingli. The artist is versatile in various subjects, which include portraits, still life and animals. She also has a great passion to draw and paint images from marine and landscape. For her the natural environment is a great source of inspiration.

In her last exhibition, Alexia Coppini shows the public a series of seascapes, skies painted in oil on canvas, oil on steel as well as a series of oil paintings on weathered wood. Her work creates the effect of a 'cinemascope' of nature. Abstraction occurs naturally. The artist attempts to convey the overall atmosphere of an area. For Alexia her paintings are vistas or windows to the outside world. They are the projection of the 'self' through vivid depictions of vast seas, some of them calm and others with surfing tides expressing turbulence. We know that in various cultural traditions the sea is considered as a source of life. It stimulates imagination and enhances imaginative expression in art, poetry and mythology. Stormy seas represent emotional upheavals, whereas calm seas evoke a sense of peace of mind. It is also stated that to return to the sea means to return to the mother's womb, which is also an encounter between life and death.

In one of her paintings called 'Heaven' we see a circular composition of clouds in the form of a mandala. This is not the first time that Alexia created a composition consisting of a formation of clouds in the sky in circular form. In psychological terms it represents the symbolical aspect of wholeness or a self-representation of the process that is called 'individuation' - becoming a single, homogenous being, self-realization. In other words it is this individuation which consists of the bringing together of the conscious and the unconscious.

The light in some of her sky paintings is bright and pure and the scene seems almost to vibrate. Sometimes there is no horizon or when she captures the line which separates the sea and the sky a sense of drama is felt. Alexia's panoramic canvases of the sea are set either early in the morning or sometimes late in the evening especially during the magical time of day when colours are dynamic and range between the darkest darks and the lightest lights.

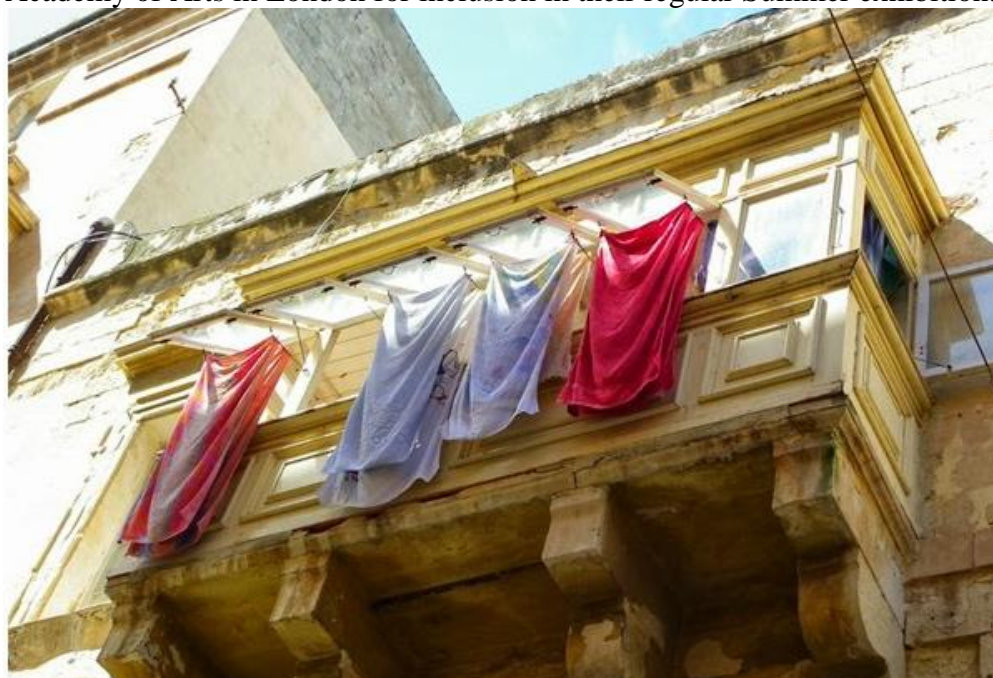
Alexia's attitude to her art and to creativity is two-fold: an intimate eye for what is beautiful and appealing in nature and her emotional connection with the world. In one of her exhibitions, we find the images of a 'bull' which is a symbol of power and energy. The bull is a symbol found in many epochs and mythological cycles. It is an archetypal image that reached heights of importance and dominated the iconography of various cultures signifying sexuality and regeneration as well as 'man's spiritual nature over his animality'. As already stated, other symbolic images in this art show include the dragonfly which is also a reference to the symbol of transformation and life's ever-

constant process of change. Precisely, the artist is in constant change and the 'dragonfly' sparks the creative power of her imagination. The artist is in fact living in an aura of great fantasy.

Through her art Alexia is lives in times of joy and serenity. It is another artistic statement in her continuous exploration of nature. The artist's pictorial vocabulary is made of imaginative harmonies which are not difficult to forget. And yet her canvases have another function, which is to make us escape from our modern crises, and which ultimately reveal an aesthetic sensibility towards nature.

Alexia has exhibited in various collective exhibitions and no less than 17 most successful solo shows at: Artitude Gallery, The Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry, on board The MS Hera, The Royal Malta Yacht Club, The Malta Maritime Authority, Hilton Olbia - Sardinia, Brown's - Valletta Waterfront, The President's Palace, San Anton, The Art Lover's Gallery in Porto Cupecoy, St Maartin, The Caribbean, The Plaza Mall, Sliema, The Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta, Alexia Coppini Fine Art Gallery, Sliema, Casa Ellul, Valletta, Le Meridien Hotel, St Julians, Spinola Terrace, St Julian's Malta and Sonesta Maho Resort, St Martin, The Caribbean. These exhibitions have aroused interest in her works and introduced her to an ever widening clientele.

Alexia has been entrusted with various important commissions in Malta, and apart from exporting numerous works has also travelled to Holland to carry the execution of large murals. She has recently personally presented two paintings, a seascape and an abstract, to the Board of the Royal Academy of Arts in London for inclusion in their regular Summer exhibition.



Washing day in Valletta

Newssletter 135 - Interesting material. For your info, Gananton Vassallo's "Int sabieha Malta Taghna" was unofficially used as our national anthem prior to Dun Karm & Maestro Sammut's getting together for our present masterpiece "Lil Din L-Art Helwa". Re Malta Lace: my grand aunt Marjanna (Manann) Ciantar, formerly seventeen years a nun with the Augustinian Order in Rome, was very proud of having produced all the Maltese lace for Pope Pius X (I think he was the one but could be another one of the later Piuses. Re Gibraltar. Lovely place. Been there twice. Fond regards Roderick Bovingto

Broadcasts in Maltese in Melbourne

RADIO

The following is the program schedule for broadcasts in the Maltese language in Victoria. Unless otherwise stated, each program is of one-hour duration.

SBS RADIO – MELBOURNE 93.1



Mr Joe Axiaq
Executive Producer

- **Friday at 12 noon – SBS 2/FM analogue** (also on digital radio and digital TV)
 - **Saturday at 2.00 pm – SBS 2/FM analogue** (also on digital radio and digital TV)
- Maltese radio programs are also available over the internet as follows:
- **Internet Live and On-Demand** – <http://www.sbs.com.au/maltese> (live and catch up listening)
 - **iPhone and Android app** – *SBS Your Language* app (live and catch up listening)
 - **Podcasts of program segments** – <http://www.sbs.com.au/podcasts/your-language/maltese>

3ZZZ ETHNIC COMMUNITY RADIO – 92.3 FM



Mr Lewis Stafrace Convenor Maltese Programs W: <http://www.3zzz.com.au>

5.00 pm – 6.00 pm, Monday and Friday

10.00 am – 11.00 am, Saturday



STEREO 97.4 FM COMMUNITY RADIO

Wednesdays – Mr Ray Anastasi, Co-ordinator

Thursdays – Mr Charles Zammit

W: http://www.stereo974.com/program_grid.php 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm, Wednesdays and Thursdays (2 hour program)

RADIO 3 RIM 97.9 FM



Local Community Radio Station for western area of Shire of Melton that can be heard in Metropolitan Melbourne.

Miriam Vella Broadcaster

6.00 pm to 8.00 pm, Tuesdays (2 hour program)



RADIO NORTH WEST FM 98.9

Victoria Northern Suburbs Community Radio

Emmanuel Brincat

Producer – Presenter 6.00pm – 7.00pm, Fridays

TELEVISION

PBS News from Malta every Thursday and Sunday

Two news bulletin from the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), Malta, are televised every Thursday and Sunday at 8.00 am on SBS TWO. Check the local TV guide.

Waltzing Matilda *Waltzing Matilda* was a very popular TV program about Maltese in Australia produced by Mrs Josephine Zammit Cordina MQR, AM for many years and used to be shown on the national PBS TV station in Malta as well as Channel 31 in Australia.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MALTESE COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Maltese migrants arriving in Australia - 1949

The mass migration of the Maltese people during the late 19th to mid-20th century has been both a significant and major phase towards Malta's layered past. As a consequence of increased population, unemployment and political unrest, the Maltese islands experienced the exodus of thousands of families and individuals. Many travelled to distant lands such as Australia which, like America, Canada and the United Kingdom had opened its doors to migrants who were in search of a better life. As a result of this mass departure, a strong affiliation between Malta and Australia was established. Australia looked towards Malta for skilled labour in agriculture and construction whilst Malta saw an opportunity to relieve the Islands of over population and unemployment.

To assist inform prospective migrants of the living standards, conditions and employment opportunities within Australia, an Emigration Committee was established in Malta on the 21st January 1919. The Committee had been inactive since the outbreak of WWI however the demand saw this organisation

re-establish itself in an attempt to assist potential migrants. In the same year, the Emigration Bureau in Malta was also established and ran parallel to the Committee.

The Bureau provided literacy tests, health certificates and examination for Maltese migrants wanting to visitor emigrate to other countries. In an attempt to assist these migrants enter into these countries, the Emigration Committee commenced free evening classes. Two levels of education were introduced. The first level, was for people who were illiterate and the second was for those who knew how to read and write but wanted to improve their English. By March 31st 1920, the evening classes were being controlled under the direction of the Elementary Schools Department instead of the Emigration Committee. Although many at first took advantage of the free evening classes, numbers gradually decreased and by 1921 the courses had been discontinued.

GIUSEPPE SPITERI was one of the first persons with a Maltese surname who arrived in New South Wales Australia on the "ADMIRAL GAMBIER" on 29 November 1811. He was sent as a convict and could have worked in various parts of the colony. After several years he obtained Ticket of Leave and in 1835 he was given a Conditional Pardon.

Another Maltese who arrive in Australia in the beginning of the colonisation was another convict by the name of Felice Pace. He arrive in Sydney in 1810 together with a group of prisoners from England and Ireland. Antonio Azzopardi was the first free settler and he set foot in Australia in 1837.

A Maltese Franciscan priest, Fr Ambrose Cassar, migrated to Australia together with a group of 61 labourers and 9 stowaways in 1881. They attempted to settle in Queensland to work on sugar cane farms but their plan was unsuccessful as the conditions were extreme.

We do not know who was the first Maltese to settle in South Australia. However, Francesco De Cesare, a Maltese scholar who travelled across Australia during the 1880s, recorded a very interesting but sad story of Adelaide's first Maltese he encountered. His name was C. Fabri and his occupation was a land surveyor. Decesare stated in his work *Reports Upon the Unsuitability of the British Colonies in Australia as a Field Maltese Emigration* that he met Fabri who at that time was employed by the government as a draughtsman. Unfortunately, he was retrenched due to economic measures taken by the government. To survive he had to sell his professional instruments and books. Decesare wrote *In Adelaide, retired at the Destitute Asylum, I found a Maltese by the name of C Fabri, who says he was a perito agrimensore [a skilled land surveyor], and that he went there in search of employment as land surveyor; that he travelled on foot several hundreds of miles inland;*

was employed for some time by the Government as draughtsman but afterwards dismissed as they reduced the number of employees in the Survey Department, and that,, not having any means to live upon, he was obliged to pawn all his professional instruments and books and his clothes, so that he was reduced to a state of starvation; and from a sense of humanity, the Government lodged him for some time in that Asylum. The Director of that establishment told me that according to the regulations he could not keep him any longer, and that he had written to the Chief Secretary. The Under Colonial Secretary showed me a correspondence which had passed between the said Fabri and Sir William Robinson, the Governor, the result of which was that the Governor recommended that he should be kept there till they found some employment for him.

However, they say, that they have kept him already long enough and that they could not keep him any longer; and moreover, that they had offered him an employment at seven shillings a day, which he refused. I asked what that employment was; and when I was told that it was a manual one, for carrying earth in a wheel barrow, I remarked that it was not expected that a professional man would adapt himself to such work. In fact, when questioned by me, Fabri said that he would die of starvation rather than humiliate himself to that degree.

As the Government were not authorised to pay his passage to Malta and send him back to his country, and even if they were disposed to do that for him, serious objections might arise against their action, in as much as it would be a bad precedent, which might be cited on other occasions. I agreed with them to keep him at the Asylum till I arrive at Malta, report the case to the Government or the family of Fabri, who live at Vittoriosa, would send the necessary amount for paying his passage to Malta. I beg therefore to submit this matter to the consideration of the Government in order that, if they think proper, the necessary steps may be taken as to enable him to return to Malta. His health deteriorated so much that he finished up in Adelaide's Destitute Asylum where he eventually died.

According to the 1911 census there were 248 Maltese in Australia. The number increased considerably in the years to follow. However, in 1912 the Australian Government excluded Maltese immigrants from the assisted passage scheme as a result of trade unions bans on *cheap labour*. In the same year the Government legislated the new policy of White Australia called the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act. This unfair exclusion of the Maltese made of mockery of the fact that they were British

subjects and held a British passport.

The bans remained in force until 1948. Yet, between 1911 and 1919 over 2000 Maltese migrated to Australia. They encountered some opposition and most of them had to find work in remote areas such as the Mt Lyell copper mines in Tasmania, at Broken Hill mines and on the Pine Creek to Katherine railway in the Northern Territory. In 1914 there were approximately 385 Maltese working on the Pine Creek to Katherine railway line and another 200 working at Mt Lyell mines.

In South Australia significant number of Maltese worked at Port Pirie. Father Fenech, a Maltese Carmelite priest, was assisting new arrivals to settle in other States. He even



arranged for them to travel to the Northern Territory.

In December 1913 Joseph Vella from Mellieha, Malta and his friend Paul Abela, decided to emigrate to Australia. They left Malta for Naples, Italy. They continued their journey to Australia aboard the Otway. The two friends were able to find a job as labourers within a week however when they lost their jobs they run out of money and they experienced poverty and hunger. They lived in the bush not very far from Port Adelaide. Every day they walked from the port to the city in search of work. During this period Joe and Paul lived on scraps, grass and tree roots.

Mistaken as German illegal immigrants they were detained by the police. When they were cleared, the police helped them to find work on a small merchant ship. Joe later moved to Broken Hill on the border between South Australia and New South Wales to work as a miner with Paul's cousin. Joe then moved to Sydney and found a job working on the railway lines. He later settled in Mackay, Queensland.

Frank Schembri, who worked as a canteen manager on British ship when he was in Malta, arrived in Adelaide in 1915. He commenced his working life in Australia at Port Pirie. Later, he moved to Adelaide where he opened a grocery shop at Glanville. Three years later he was able to pay for the passage for his wife and daughter to be with him. In 1922 Frank built an ice-cream factory behind his shop. For twenty years he managed the factory and his business flourished. Then, in 1942 he switched to producing soft drinks. In the late 80s Frank's son was still running the family business in Alice Springs.

The darkest period in the history of Maltese migration in South Australia occurred in the 1920s when they were savagely discriminated against. The Australian Government banned them from being employed with the Australian railways. The irony is that a large number of them served in World War I. The majority of the Maltese suffered hunger and despair in spite of many of them were skilled artisans. Mr Gunn, the South Australian Premier, regarded the Maltese as 'uninvited immigrants' and refused to assist them to find employment.

So, the Maltese set up tents along the River Torrens near the city and made their living from selling vegetables and fruit. They received help and support from the Maltese Club which was situated in 158 Hindley Street, Adelaide. They formed their own



**The late Fr. E. Ferriggi and the present
Maltese Chaplain Fr. G S Micallef OFM**

association and called it the Adelaide Unemployed Maltese Organisation and lobbied the Federal and State Governments to lift up the ban. Unfortunately, their efforts were fruitless and the ban stayed. Many of them returned to Malta or went to other States and found work on small farms run by fellow Maltese Australians.

The First Maltese chaplain for the Maltese community in South Australia was Father Giles Carmelo Ferriggi, a Franciscan Friar, who was the instigator in the building of the Christ the King Church at Lockleys. He was also the first parish priest of the same parish from 1952 to 1979. He arrived in Adelaide in 1948. Fr. Ferriggi serves in the Australian Army as a chaplain for many years. He died at Fulham SA on Thursday, 27 January 2000 at St Hilarion Home. The present

chaplain for the community is Father Gabriel Micallef OFM who is also the Chaplain of the Maltese Community Council of South Australia Inc.

Malta, being a British colony, served as a strategic base for Allied forces during World War II. The Maltese Islands suffered heavy bomb damage to most of its buildings. When the war ended Malta and the Maltese were physically and economically under a heavy stress. Malta and Gozo were overpopulated and the unemployment was very high. Therefore, between 1948 and 1973 a large number of Maltese paid the Australian Government ten pounds, sold up their belongings and took ship for Australia under the Malta-Australia Passage Scheme.

The range of social background of migrants was wide. So were their skills and ages. Some were married with children, but many were single. The lucky ones had relatives already in Australia, but the majority did not. The Maltese left home not because of political or religious oppression; they had one idea in common - to build a better future for their children and for themselves.

Most Maltese have prospered and have no regrets; but there were those who wish they have never left Malta. Some of them went back and many returned to Australia again, unable to settle in either country. Today nearly every family in Malta has an immediate relative living in this continent.

ARGOTTI BOTANICAL GARDENS – FLORIANA, MALTA

Argotti gardens provide a quiet space to relax in, accompanied by a number of trees and flowers species Argotti Botanical Gardens dates back to 1774 and is situated in Floriana, a short walk from capital of Malta, Valletta.



Villa de Argote situated at the Botanic Gardens
in Floriana

Villa de Argote, situated at the botanic side of the Argotti Gardens, in Floriana.

The gardens were originally the private gardens of Grandmaster Pinto and only became a botanical garden in 1805. At that time medicinal herbs and plants were grown at Argotti Gardens and today a small part of that area is still used by the University of Malta for educational purposes.

You will also find plenty of oaks, oleanders, potted plants and cacti and several fountains, ponds and water towers. A small horticultural museum

set in part a villa displays both local and foreign seed, plants, gardening maps and record for people to visit.

One of the main attractions of Argotti Botanical Gardens is the spectacular views over Floriana's fortifications and the gardens is popular with locals and tourist alike who want to relax and enjoy the scenic beauty.

The Argotti Botanic Gardens hold a modest collection of Mediterranean-type plants which offer a pleasant garden setting at the outskirts of Malta's capital city, Valletta. The garden serves as a scientific research facility dwelling into different plant-related aspects, including plant phytochemical extraction, bioactivity testing, and the role of soil microbes and invertebrates in wood deterioration and compost formation. Therefore the garden's aim is to assist in the teaching of University students of several University departments.

However, the garden also fulfils a number of missions:

- It is actively involved in the conservation of indigenous plants, and nursery-growing for the rare and endangered species.
- It holds a seed bank in which is stored a number of indigenous and non-indigenous seeds for reference and propagation purposes.
- It contains a small micro-propagation laboratory for the practice of artificial propagation of endangered indigenous plants *in vitro*.
- It holds a herbarium, used for indigenous flora and for the preservation of plant voucher specimens for reference purposes.
- The Argotti Gardens work to promote interactive education amongst schoolchildren. Assisted by qualified dedicated guides, the students are led through tours which aim for hands-on practical work on plant nurturing. Tours are also extended to the public, commissioned by local councils, voluntary organisations and societies.

When you visit the Argotti Gardens you will be able to see the impressive ANZAC Memorial which was inaugurated on Saturday 25 May 2013 by the Malta's Foreign Minister, Dr George Vella, and the chairman of the ANZAC Memorial Committee Malta, Mr Nicholas Bonello OAM.

MALTA AND THE ANZACS CENTENARY THE NURSE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

MALTESE SERVICEMEN IN WWI



3rd London Regiment, 1914 in Malta

The 3rd London Regiment sailed with the 1st London Brigade from Southampton to Malta, arriving in Valetta on the 14th of September 1914 to take over the garrison, allowing the regular units to return home for service in France. They left Malta on the 2nd of January 1915 landing at Marseilles on the 6th, the travelled north by train 17th Brigade, 6th Division on the 17th of February. When war was declared, the garrison on Malta totalled 6,000 servicemen of all ranks. These forces came under the command of the governor, General Sir Leslie Rundle, who was replaced in 1915 by Field Marshal Lord Methuen. Many Maltese who fought in the war joined the armed forces of Canada and Australia as well as the British Army.

In January 1917, 95 Maltese officers served outside of Malta with a further 13 serving as surgeons on British hospital ships. Locally raised units included the King's Own Malta Regiment of Militia with a strength of 3,393, the Royal Malta Artillery with a strength of 1,032 and the Royal Engineer Militia which a contingent of 136 men. None of these units served at the front but by taking part in garrison duty they allowed British troops to be deployed overseas.

The total number of Maltese from Malta who served in the army in any capacity during the war is estimated at 15,000, with the Maltese Labour Corp accounting for 7,000. One battalion



unloaded ships at Gallipoli with a further two battalions serving at Salonika. A further 1,500 Maltese were employed in the motor transport work of the Army Service Corps. The number of men killed and injured in the Labour Corps totalled 300.

(Photo above) RNA Seaplane base, Malta, 1917-1918

Maltese also served at various Royal Naval establishments with 10,000 employed at the Dockyard Naval Ordnance Depot, 2,400 in coaling, 1,300 on sea-going service and 200 in mine sweeping. A number of Maltese also served aboard British ships at Jutland with 778 employed by the Royal Air Force.

Malta's most significant contribution to the war was its role as a military hospital base. Following the first landings in Gallipoli in April 1915, a total of 4,000 wounded servicemen were treated in hospitals in Malta. By June over 6,000 beds were made available and the end of September 13,000 men were under treatment in hospitals, camps and schools. At its height, the number of wounded reached 20,000, with dysentery and typhoid accounting for the same number of casualties as gunshot wounds.

As a result of the Gallipoli campaign alone, approximately 2,500 officers and 55,400 other ranks received treatment in Malta. To deal with the casualties, the size of the Royal Army Medical Corps increased to 334 medical officers, 913 nurses and 2,032 other ranks. In July 1915, Sir H R Whitehead was appointed Surgeon-General. He was succeeded in March 1916 by Surgeon-General Sir Thomas Yarr. Women assisted the injured via the Voluntary Aid Detachment, the Red Cross and the Church Army. Private subscriptions to the British Red Cross and St. John Ambulance amounted to £18,562. Due to its role in tending the war-wounded Malta became known as **the nurse of the Mediterranean**.



Sailors on HMS Prince George, Malta, 1917-1918



WW1 Military Medal

