



THE MALTESE NEWSLETTER
The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora



THE MOTTO - BUILDING BRIDGES NOT WALLS
EDITOR: Frank L. Scicluna OAM CONTACT - Email: honconsul@live.com.au

THE MALTESE NEWSLETTER - CHRISTMAS EDITION

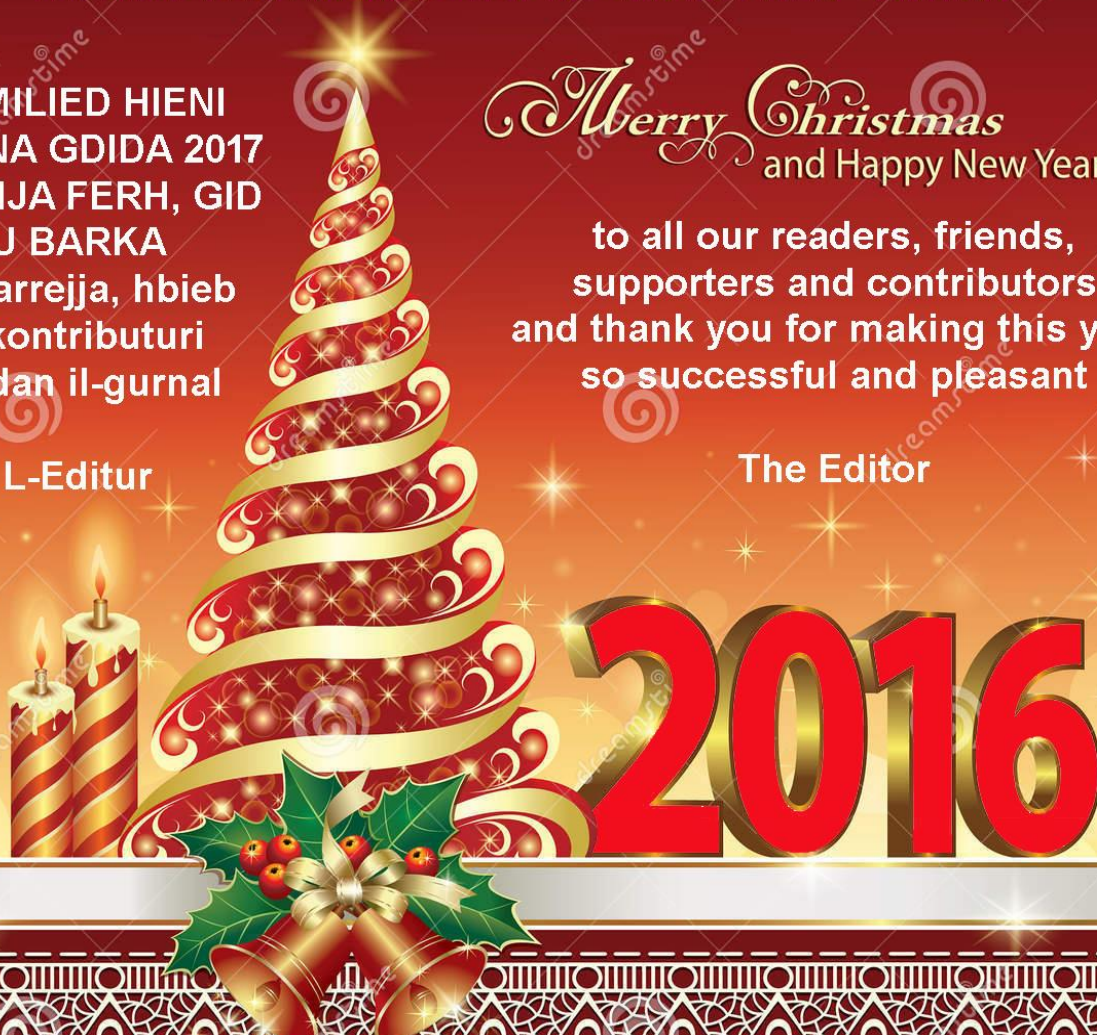
IL-MILIED HIENI
U SEŊA GDIDA 2017
MIMLIJA FERH, GID
U BARKA
lil-qarrejja, hbieb
u kontributori
ta' dan il-gurnal

L-Editur

Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year!

to all our readers, friends,
supporters and contributors
and thank you for making this year
so successful and pleasant

The Editor



BRINGING OUR READERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD TOGETHER



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM OUR READERS



(We can only fit a few of the many emails we received – others will appear next issues)

* Dear Frank, This is is a Christmas Greeting Card from St Dominic's Hostel (Aged Care Facility NSW) to you.. In this photo there are some residents re-enacting the Christmas Scene. We enjoy The Maltese News Letter. Very interesting and provides a means of learning. Keep it up. May the Good Lord shower great Blessings on us all in this Holy Season. **Sr Georgina Sultana O.P.** St Dominic's Hostel is an Aged

Care Facility, run by the Dominican Sisters of Malta and well trained and qualified staff; under the Direction of a Board of Management - a highly dedicated group of Professionals, on voluntary basis. **Administrator ST DOMINIC'S HOSTEL 171 Walters Road Blacktown NSW 2148**

- * Niehu ferm gost naqra The Maltese Newsletter, ghax fiha hafna artikoli interessanti , Grazzi . Il-Milied it-tajieb lilek u lil kullhadd u sena gdida mimlija hena u barka t'Alla . Il-Paci mieghek . **Miriam Belli**
- * Dear Frank and all the group involved Thankyou so much for the newsletter full of interesting news I can't wait till I open it when I see it in my inbox. God keep you all well and have a wonderful Christmas with the family god bless all .thank you **Vickie Aquilina - Melbourne** .
- * Niltaqa' ta' spiss ma' Ghawdxin li jghiduli kemm jieħdu gost jaqraw in-Newsletter billi minn żmien għal żmien jaraw ukoll il-kontribuzzjonijiet letterarji tiegħi u tagħrif ieħor ta' interess ġenerali. Nawguralek li tkompli għaddej b'din l-inizjattiva tiegħek ghax hafna jkunu jistennewha apparti l-fatt li sservi ta' holqa bejn il-popli. Nemmen li tiswielek hafna xogħol imma ninkuraġġik biex tkompli b'dan l-impenn tiegħek. Niehu l-okkażjoni biex nawgura lill-qarrejja kollha Milied hieni u qaddis u Sena Ġdida (nagħlaq 71 fl-ewwel jum tagħha) kollha risq u barka tas-Sema. Inselli għaž-żewġ ħuti bniet, Adelina u Rose li issa ilhom snin twal jgħixu f'Keilor Downs waqt li nsellem ukoll lis-semmiegħa li spiss jisimgħuni fil-programmi ta' Paul Vella (Melbourne). Awguri u Tislijiet **Kav Joe M Attard Victoria Ghawdex.**
- * Thank for the newsletter which you send me every year .we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year from **Henry and Carmen Navarro from London.**
- * First of all I like to thank you for all the good work you have done to us Maltese by giving us information whether it's Maltese history, Maltese news etc in which I enjoy reading and many times I copy them especially if there is information from Xaghra Gozo because that's where I was born, then I pass them around to family members to read. Frank on behalf of the Monash Maltese Seniors Social Group, I wish you and your family a Blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year full of good health.
- * I hope to see you again at our club in future when you are in Melbourne. Best regards. **Jane Galea Monash Senior Citizens – Melbourne Victoria.**
- * Diċembru magħna u għalhekk waslet ħarġa oħra tar-rivista letterarja online IL-PONT (Diċembru 2016). Din hija l-41 ħarġa ta' pubblikazzjoni bħal din. Did-darba fiha 34 paġna. Nittama li lkoll issibu xi ħaġa interessanti biex taqraw. Infakkarkom li l-Milied magħna, mela huwa ż-żmien li fih nagħtu anki ktieb jew kotba bħala rigali lin-nies li nirrispettaw u nħobbu. Minn hawn nawguralkom ilkoll u lil daww ta' madwarkom IL-MILIED IT-TAJJEB U SENA 2017 TAJBA FERM. Inselli **Patrick Sammut**
- * As we read the latest Newsletter 145 we reflected over the previous issues and couldn't stop thinking of all the hard work that you do to prepare for all the readers all over the world such material, so informative, presented in the most professional way. We now take the opportunity to wish you, your dear wife and family a very Happy and Holy Christmas and may the New Year bring good health, peace and lots of blessings. These wishes are also extended to all the readers of the Newsletter wherever they may be. May God shower all of us with lots of blessings. Regards from **Frank ,Carmen OAM,MQR & family Testa.**
- * I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for forwarding the monthly publication of the Maltese Newsletter. There are always many interesting recipes and articles to read and appreciate the hard work you put in to getting the newsletter published. Wishing you and your family a blessed Christmas and may the New Year bring peace, love and happiness to everyone. **Martese Wright and family**
- * Dear Frank and all the group involved. Thank you so much for the news letter full of interesting news I can't wait till I open it when I see it in my inbox .god keep you all well and have a wonderful Christmas with the family god bless all .thank you **vickie Aquilina Melbourne** .

- * I reciprocate warmly your Christmas wishes and thank you for a great product that makes us proud. I always forward the newsletter to my brother-in-law in Malta who in turn forwards it to quite a few friends. Best regards **Reno & Helen Demicoli Hoppers Crossing, Victoria.**
- * Merry Christmas to you and your family, Frank. God Bless **Greg Farrugia Canberra**
- * Well done for bringing such fabulous cultural information on Malta. I really enjoy reading your newsletter. There is such a wealth of information! Thank you. Regards **Manuel Grima**
- * Thank you for all the work you do in preparing the Maltese newsletter Edward and myself would like to wish you and Josie and all your family a happy Christmas. Thank you once again **Giovanna Borg-Barthet**
- * Once again thank you so very much for your efforts in the publication of the Maltese Newsletter. I have found yet another couple (through Aussie friends) who are Maltese and were not aware of this great connection you have created for us to our wonderful Malta and other Maltese in Australia. Keep up the good work and may I take this opportunity to wish you and yours the very happiest and Holy season. Regards **Vivienne Darwon (nee Attard)**
- * Thank you very much for the fantastic job you do supplying this wonderful newsletter. I wish you and your family a happy Christmas. Best regards, **John Micallef Malta**
- * Wishing for you and your family a Merry ,Holy Christmas,may the new year bring you good health,joy and peace. **Sam Gatt**
- * Thanks for 'The Newsletter', especially when you have news from Gozo!!! Would you kindly put attached ad in the community news corner. Thanking you & wishing you all the very best for Christmas & the New Year. Regards **Josephine and Ray Bigeni NSW**
- * May you and all your family and readers of the Newsletter have a Happy and Holy Christmas and a Healthy New Year 2017. Your old **Andrew Borg and family SA Australia**
- * Dear Frank, thankyou for the great work you do throughout the year keeping all us Maltese and no doubt other nationalities well informed, may you and your family as well as all of your readers have a very joyful, happy and holy Christmas. Regards **Tony Bartolo**
- * Thank you very much for the lovely letters I received this year. Best wishes for Christmas to you and your family, **Anna Caruana Australia**
- * Dear Frank Scicluna and all contributors of The Maltese E/Newsletters far and wide around Australia Another amazing South Australia E/Newsletter No 145 packed with cultural and valuable information. A true Maltapedia, valuable to all readers worldwide. It is good to see so many E/Newsletters being published today. The NSW Maltese Herald Newspaper was indeed a lifeline to many emigrants early 1960s until it closed. I was an earnest reader under the capable Editors Mr Lawrence Dimech and Mr Lino Vella and proudly contributed many articles over the years in the Maltese and English languages, reporting on activities etc., keeping my Maltese language alive. It was an acknowledged huge blow to the NSW Maltese community readers when the last Maltese Herald newspaper was published. We sadly missed the importance of its historical contents. Thankfully nowadays it is all good, blessed with the Maltese Voice of NSW, E/newsletters from Victoria and South Australia to proudly pass on to our contacts worldwide. I humbly thank all you brave editors and contributors for keeping us much informed with your varied content which, all combined offer Maltese readers much to enjoy and learn from. Keep the good work going. **Wishing all contributors and readers of this Journal a blessed Christmas 2016 and a healthy New Year 2017. Nancy Serg (nee Borg from Sliema)**
- * Many thanks for another Newsletter full of informative data and history. **Maria and Reno Camilleri**
- * Thanks a lot for the effort you put in this compilation. Keep it up and looking forward to receive more newsletters in the coming year. If by any chance you come across some information on the Mellieha Ghar u Kasa it will be greatly appreciated. I take this opportunity to wish you and all your loved ones a most Holy and Blessed Christmas and plenty of health to keep us informed of Maltese notifications. Very Sincerely, your friend **Victor Pullicino**
- * Thanks and congratulations for the Maltese Newsletter. Always very informative and interesting reading. Best Christmas Wishes to all Maltese Australians especially those whose origins are from Mosta. **Victor B. Caruana (Malta)**
- * Well done for this spectacular newsletter, mate . I'll send you something about Christmas in Malta .for you Xmas e-newsletter. Regards **Greg Caruana**
- * Thanks for the newsletter number 145. I'll print this edition and will post to my elderly parents. **Joe Dimech**
- * Grazzi u prosi minn qalbi għax-xogħol li tiegħi biex tnejn ilna "The Maltese Newsletter". Hija gazzetta ta' kwalità prima u tassew interessanti għall-Maltin kemm li huma Malta u kemm dawk imxerrdin mad-dinja kollha. Waqt li nselli hafna għalik u għall-għażiża martek ser nibgħatlek novella qasira tal-Milied li hija differenti ferm minn dawk li soltu naqraw. Nittama li toghġbok. **Lina Brockdorff**
- * Wishing you all the readers a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. **Victor Chircop-Sullivan**

Thank you, Frank, for the opportunity to include a Christmas message for The Maltese Community Newsletter. I have enclosed a short message flyer for your perusal.

I trust that 2016 has been a rewarding year for you. It has been a pleasure and honour to work with you and with the wonderful Maltese community throughout the year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your contributions to South Australia. My best wishes to you and your family for a Joyous Christmas. Have a Happy and Healthy New Year in 2017!

The Honourable Jing Lee, MLC Member of the Legislative Council
South Australian Parliament

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year 2017

Best wishes for a Holy Christmas - Wishing you Love, Peace, Joy & Health.. Let us hope that 2017 will be a year of achievements, for peace and harmony for a better WORLD.

The Committee of the Maltese-Australian Women's Association

wish to thank all those who supported our committee throughout the years.

Mrs Joyce Nagy President

Mrs Antoinette Mascari Hon Secretary

With best wishes to the Editor of The Maltese Newsletter. our appreciation, for the service to the community who read it with pleasure for empowerment, in History, Culture and Heritage

- * Thanks for the news I am sorry for Nick Bonello. A very Happy Christmas to you and all the readers of THE NEWSLETTE **Mons. Philip Calleja**
- * Wishing you and all your readers a happy Christmas and a bright New Year 2017. **Louis Parnis – President of the George Cross Club NSW**
- * Minn qalbi nghidlek KULL DARBA prosit ta kull ma jirnexxilek iggib f'din in newsletter. Verament interessanti u titlob hafna u hafna xoghol. Bless. **Fr. Norbert Bonavia**
- * Many thanks for your most excellent newsletter. As I indicated earlier some of your articles are of particular interest to our St John Knights Hospitaller Order members of which I am a senior member and newsletter editor. May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your newsletter and wish you a happy and holy Christmas and healthy New Year. **Hon. Roger Goldsworthy, AO Bailiff Emeritus, OSJ, CMSJ**
- * Thank you for beautiful Newsletters you send regularly. They are very interesting stories you publish every time. I wish a very happy Christmas and a Happy NEW year 2017 to your family and to all the readers of this Journal. Thank you and God BLESS. **Tony Buhagiar**
- * Wishing you and all readers a very happy Christmas and a healthy New Year from Vikie and Peter Krastamis.
- * Thanks for the most interesting and informative Newsletter. Wishing you and all the readers of the journal of the Maltese Diaspora a happy Christmas especially those who come from Malta. **Victor B Barbara.**
- * GREETINGS FROM: Sam Busuttil, Toronto, Canada, C. Bonnici Melbourne, Vince Zammit, Adelaide, Tom Vella, NSW, Bonnie Lee Galea, Adelaide (<http://bonnieleegalea.com>), Fr. G.S. Micallef, Chev Charles Figallo OSJ- Adelaide, John Calleja, Australia, Josephine and Harry Zammit Cordina -Malta, Charlie and Margaret Mifsud-Australia, Joe Dimech, Henry and Carmen Navarro- London UK, Sam Muscat – Australian-American Association, Dr Joseph Pirotta ACT, Charles Mifsud, NSW, Charlie and Mary Saliba, Sam Camillerii, Mark Micallef Perconte, Chev. Peter Paul Portelli, Catherine Vella, Fred Aquilina USA, David Pisani Australia, George Brimmer Melbourne, Paul Attard Malta, Antoine Vassallo, Carmela Galea Canada, Joe and Pauline Monsigneur ADL, Charles Gatt NSW, Paul Pulis Australia, Emmanuel Cauchi, Ted Camilleri, Claudia Sagona, Josie Desira, Monte Dimech Adelaide Australia, Caruana family, NSW, Alfred and Anna Flask ACT, Theresa Agius Adelaide, Grima family Victoria, Monica Taylor, Perth WA

Congratulations for the informative new Maltese publication and thank you for sending Cora and me a copy. What a tremendous contribution to the Maltese Diaspora in Australia by a hardworking person like you!! The publication impressed me much indeed by its very interesting entries - the youth, sports, studio dance lessons, ancient burial sites, subterranean and fortified tunnels and other archeological findings around the world, Maltese colonies in other countries, Swedish royalty officially wearing Maltese Crosses, let alone a photograph taken of the young Karmen Buhagiar, of EBI Maltese Radio committee, in the 1940s! I am truly impressed, and so are members of the Maltese

communities in Australia receiving copies of the Maltese paper. You have done, Frank, a great job for coming out with the project. I salute you, friend. Take care and regards to Josie, Dr. Dante & Cora Juanta – Philippines Community of South Australia



THE COMMITTEE OF THE MALTESE ASSOCIATIONS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA SEND ALL BEST WISHES FOR THIS FESTIVE SEASONS

- * The Maltese Community Council of SA, The Maltese Guild of SA, RSL Maltese Sub-branch, Maltese Queen of Victories Band, Maltese Community Program on EBIFM, The Blue Grotto on PBAFM, The Maltese Chaplaincy Festivities Committee, The Maltese Aged Care Association of SA, St Catherine Society of SA, Senior Citizens Association of SA, The Maltese Community Chaplain and the Consulate for Malta in South Australia [Hi](#)
- * Thank you for the Newsletter. I took the opportunity to order the Simshar DVD which I have been wanting to buy for so long. God bless all those who contribute in this Newsletter. It is a great asset to the Maltese who were born overseas because they will learn so much about the Maltese culture and customs both old and new. God bless you all. Sr. Vittoriana Debattista, Adelaide.
- * Ghaziz Sur Scicluna, insellimlek. Jien issa ilni nircievi *The Maltese Newsletter* mhux hazin. Ghalkemm dejjem bil-hsieb li niktiblek u nirringrazzjak ghal dan is-servizz utli li qed taghmel, jiddispjacini ma wasalt qatt. Imma illum irrid naqdi dan id-dmir u nirringrazzjak hafna ta' dan il-ktejjeb mimli informazzjoni u taghrif generali pprezentat b'mod hekk sabih u attraenti li jgaghalek taqrah. Nifrah u nawgura l-isbah xewqat lilek u lill-kollaboraturi tieghek ghal dan il-mezz ta' ghaqda fost il-Maltin imxerrdin mad-dinja u jalla tkomplu sejrin hekk ghal hafna snin ohra. Grazzi mill-gdid u tislijiet mill-qalb. **John Formosa, Malta.**
- * Hi Frank we wish you and all your family a Merry, Holy & Safe Christmas and a Happy, Prosperous and Healthy New Year 2017 from Lucy and me. I always look forward to your very informative and interesting Newsletters. Keep up the good work. Regards. George Brimmer, Melbourne,

**Dear Frank may we take this opportunity to thank you for your magazine and also to wish you and your loved ones and all the readers of the magazine
A HOLY & HAPPY CHRISTMAS and
A NEW YEAR OF PEACE, GOOD HEALTH & PROSPERITY
C.N Mifsud...MQR. JP. Sydney.**



MAGICAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT IN VALLETTA! 8 – 10 December 2016

This Christmas, your children's favourite characters turned the City Theatre into a winter wonderland with adrenaline rush songs and crazy choreographs in an energetic concert by the National Children's Choir.

The most beautiful Christmas songs were performed to a lively rhythm to make the young and old sing and dance. The Magical Christmas Concert was featured by an array of Disney's best scores of all time along with the world's most amazing Christmas songs.

Surely an alternative, yet fun for all children with spectacular visuals, synchronised lights and continuous animation. The concert was creatively produced and choreographed in order to turn the theatre into an amazing one hour and 30 minute party for all youngsters IN attendance.

31/12/2016



THE VALLETTA NATIONAL 2017 NYE CELEBRATIONS ARE BACK

The event aims to bring the magic and festive atmosphere throughout most of our capital city in this magical night.

The Celebrations are being organised by the **Valletta 2018 - European Capital of Culture** Foundation in collaboration with **G7 events** and supported by the

Ministry for Tourism, the Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government and the Valletta Local Council. St. Georges Square once again will host the main The event aims to bring the magic and festive atmosphere throughout most of our capital city in this magical night.

THE CHRISTMAS DAY WWI TRUCE ASSEMBLY



✳ The Christmas Day Truce happened 102 years ago today, between England and Germany, when both sides laid down their weapons in a 2-day respite from World War I to wish each other Happy Christmas, exchange items — and play football.

THANK GOD FOR THIS JOURNAL - No wonder this Journal is read in so many countries. It is free, non-political, bilingual and an encyclopedia of the history, culture and heritage the Maltese Islands. It also contains the history of Maltese migration since 1900 and biographies of famous Maltese people in Malta and overseas. Lawrence Mizzi – Malta

Newsletters are archived at www.ozmalta.page4.me/



The song was first performed on Christmas Eve 1818 at St Nicholas parish church in Oberndorf, a village in the Austrian Empire on the Salzach river in present-day Austria. A young priest, Father Joseph Mohr, had come to Oberndorf the year before. He had already written the lyrics of the song "Stille Nacht" in 1816 at Mariapfarr, the hometown of his father in the Salzburg Lungau region, where Joseph had worked as a co-adjutor. The melody was composed by Franz Xaver Gruber, schoolmaster and organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf. Before Christmas Eve, Mohr brought the words to Gruber and asked him to compose a melody and guitar accompaniment for the church service. Both performed the carol during the mass on the night of December 24.

The original manuscript has been lost. However, a manuscript was discovered in 1995 in Mohr's handwriting and dated by researchers at c. 1820. It shows that Mohr wrote the words in 1816 when he was assigned to a pilgrim church in Mariapfarr, Austria, and shows that the music was composed by Gruber in 1818. The earliest manuscript that exists and the only one in Mohr's handwriting is preserved and the first edition was published by Friese (de) in 1833 in a collection of *Four Genuine Tyrolean Songs*.

In 1859, the Episcopal priest John Freeman Young, then serving at Trinity Church, New York City, published the English translation that is most frequently sung today, using three of Mohr's original six verses.^[4] The version of the melody that is generally used today is a slow, meditative lullaby or pastorella, differing slightly (particularly in the final strain) from Gruber's original, which was a "moderato timesiciliano". Today, the lyrics and melody are in the public domain. The carol has been translated into about 140 languages.

The song was sung simultaneously in English and German by troops during the Christmas truce of 1914 during World War I, as it was one carol that soldiers on both sides of the front line knew.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Alles schläft; einsam wacht
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Hirten erst kundgemacht
Durch der Engel Halleluja,
Tönt es laut von fern und nah:
Christ, der Retter ist da!
Christ, der Retter ist da!

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Gottes Sohn, o wie lacht
Lieb' aus deinem göttlichen Mund,
Da uns schlägt die rettende Stund'.
Christ, in deiner Geburt!
Christ, in deiner Geburt!

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light;
Radiant beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Gattline Celebrates 25 years

By Caroline Smith

Fr. Gatt (left) with the Emeritus Archbishop Hickey when he was awarded the Saint George Preca Award from community service in 2012 by the Maltese Professional and Business



For many people, Christmas is a joyous time, when family and friends gather in the spirit of the season and to care for one another. For others, it is a time of loneliness and stress, when the might need some extra support and advice.

And it is with this in mind that Father Michael Gatt set up a telephone helpline 25 years ago, allowing him to bring his experience as a former parish priest and air force chaplain to the fore, providing callers with support, information and a listening ear.

The Gattline - as it is known - has been operating since further help. 1991, and initially ran only from 1-31 December, with Fr Gatt receiving approximately 100 calls each year. Along with his work on the helpline, Fr Gatt has a long from people around Australia and even overseas.

However, following his retirement from St Kieran's in 1971. parish in Osborne Park in 2015, he extended it to an all-year-round service. Looking back on his many stories of people in need, Fr Gatt said the most important thing was maintaining a conversation with people, and letting them know they were not alone. "There was one woman who called me in the evening, and did not introduce herself, and I though shw was ringing me locally, but then she told me she was ringing from Canada," he said.

"I told her, it's too expensive for you to be calling me, so send me an email", and so we corresponded for many months after that. "She told me she had a breakdown, but I counselled her and we became good friends. I'm still in touch with many of these people, some of them have known me for 20 years."

Whenever necessary, he directs his callers to other people and services, such as psychologists or doctors, who can provide further help. Along with his work on the helpline Father Gatt has a long and distinguished career serving parishes in Western Australia, starting from his arrival in Perth from Malta in 1971.

He has been based at churches in Swanbourne, Victoria Park, Moora, Gingin-Chittering, Manning and then finally Osborne Park, where he retired after 15 years, in 2015. In addition to this, he has also served as chaplain at Pearce RAAF Airforce Base, following his own service in the RAF from 1957-59.

Fr Gatt can be reached on his helpline 24 hours a and didn't introduce herself, and I thought she was day, on 9440 5379, or at gattline@bigpond.com

P.Calleja

WELDILNA SALVATUR



La Diċembru jinsab magħna
Reġa' wasal il-Milied –
Din il-festa hekk imferrxa
Mal-irħula u l-ibliet!

U kif jista' jkun mod ieħor
La tweled Ġesù Bambin
F'għar ġo Betlem, għeri u fqajjar
Sabiex jifdi l-midinbin.

Ma ssibx rokna ġewwa d-dinja
Fejn ma jfakkrox il-Milied;
Din il-festa tnissel l-hena
Anke fejn l-imħabba ntfiet!

Għaliex hija festa sempliċi
Tat-twelid ta' Ġesù ċkejken
Li ma sabx post fil-lukanda
'Mma ġo għar fqajjar u msejken.

Hemmhekk Ġużeppi u Marija
Kellhom iqattgħu l-ħin
Sakemm waqqgħet dalma sfiqa
U tweled Ġesù Bambin!

U l-aṅġli kantaw ferħana
Ma' kulhadd xerrdu l-aħbar
B'vuċi għolja u ferreħija
B'dak il-għaġeb illi sar!

Tgerbu, għosfru elfejn sena
Din il-ġrajja għadha magħna
U kull darba li nfakkruha
Qalbna bil-ferħ dlonk tistagħna!

F'nofs id-dar nibnu l-Presejpu
Illi jgennien għal warajh
Lit-tfal, žgħażaġh u anzjani –
U bla sforz, kulhadd minn rajh!

Kulhadd jibgħat kartolina
Lil qrabatu u lill-ħbieb;
Scrooge ma jibqax xħiħ u rgħajjeb
'Mma għal kulhadd jiftaħ il-bieb!

It-tifel jithejja sewwa
Għall-prietka minn tal-Milied
Fi ftit kliem jirrakkuntalna
Kemm ta' Kristu l-fidwa swiet!

Jalla dal-Milied dis-sena
Jimla 'l qlubna b'ferħ ġenwin
Li biss jista' jagħtihulna
Dak Ġesù ħelu Bambin!

Bambin ċkejken ejja tweled
Ibqa' dieħel fil-qalb tagħna
Imliha bil-ferħ u l-hena
U la titlaq qatt minn magħna.

Hemm ġo Betlem kien tweldilna
Ġesù Kristu s-Salvatur;
Jekk id-dinja trid tgħix hienja
Lejh bilfors din għandha ddur!

Kav. Joe M. Attard Victoria, Għawdex 2016

**IL=MILIED IT-TAJJEB lill-anzjani
u l-morda Maltin tad-Dijaspora**

Timpana for Christmas

Kirsten Jenkins

This dish is Malta's answer to pasta pie. It is most likely Sicilian in origin, given the proximity of the two Mediterranean islands, however countless regional versions exist in Italy, where it is known as timballo. The basis for this home-style pie is macaroni, penne or other tubular-shaped pasta tossed in a stew made from several different meats, including beef and offal, then encased in puff pastry for an extra-hearty bake.



Ingredients

- **2 tbsp** olive oil
- **1** onion, finely chopped
- **3** garlic cloves, finely chopped
- **2** bay leaves
- **150 g** bacon, chopped
- **200 g** minced beef
- **100 g** minced pork
- **100 g** chicken livers, cleaned, roughly chopped
- **2 tbsp** tomato paste
- **200 g** canned chopped tomatoes
- **125 ml** (½ cup) beef stock

- pinch of grated nutmeg
- **250 g** penne or other tubular pasta
- **60 g** (¾ cup) finely grated parmesan
- **3** eggs
- **5** sheets frozen puff pastry, thawed
- **1 tbsp** milk

Parsley salad

- **2 cups** flat-leaf parsley
- **1** eschalot, thinly sliced
- **50 g** (¼ cup) baby capers
- **1 tbsp** lemon juice
- **2 tbsp** olive oil

Instructions

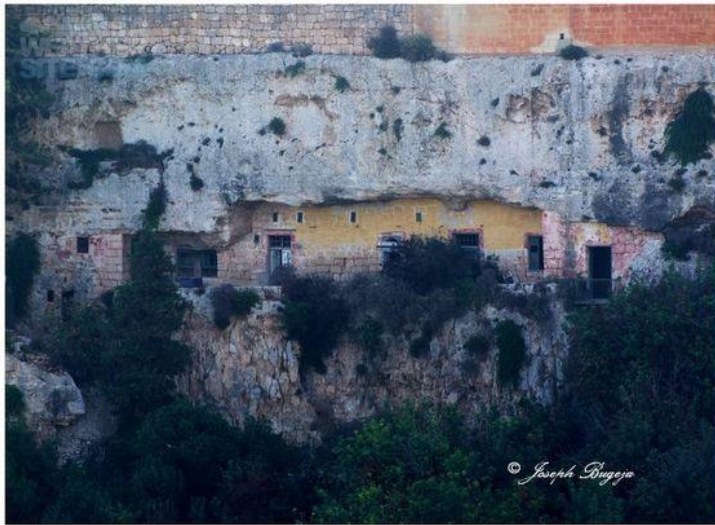
Heat oil in a large, heavy-based pan over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 7 minutes or until softened. Add garlic, bay leaves and bacon, and cook for 4 minutes or until bacon starts to brown. Add beef and pork, and cook, breaking up lumps with a wooden spoon, for 7 minutes or until browned. Add livers and cook, stirring, for 4 minutes or until browned. Add tomato paste and cook for 2 minutes, then add tomatoes, stock and nutmeg. Season with salt and pepper, and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low and cook, covered, for 15 minutes or until liquid has reduced slightly. Remove from heat.

Meanwhile cook pasta in a large pan of boiling salted water until al dente. Drain, add to sauce with parmesan and 2 lightly beaten eggs, mixing to combine. Cool.

Preheat oven to 220°C. Using a 20 cm plate, cut 4 rounds from 4 pastry sheets, then cut 4 smaller rounds from remaining pastry sheet. Lightly grease 4 x 375 ml (1½-cup) springform pans or baking dishes, then line with the large pastry rounds. Divide pasta mixture among pans and top with smaller pastry rounds, crimping edges to seal and trimming excess. Whisk remaining egg with milk, then brush tops of pastry. Bake for 10 minutes, then reduce oven to 180°C and bake for a further 15 minutes or until pastry is golden. Set aside for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, to make parsley salad, combine all the ingredients in a bowl and season with salt and pepper. Turn timpana out of pans and serve with salad.

Photography Derek Swalwell



Walking down Għar u Casa Street - MELLIEĦA

Rear of an apartment block in Għar u Casa Street with caves in background.

Anyone who has visited the Ispica caves in neighbouring Sicily will have developed a taste for troglodyte dwellings. Mellieħa boasts its own set of caves in the valleys leading down to the bay at Għadira.

The discovery of fossil remains of hippopotamus bones in one of the Mellieħa caves gives a sense of how far back in time this place goes. Names like Wied ta' Ruman

(Roman Valley) and Għar Sqalli (Sicilian Cave) hint at how steeped in its own history this locality really is.

Pottery shards are a common find directly below these caves, many of which are found on an inland cliff overlying Tas-Sellum. When the cave dwellings were finally abandoned by the occupants not so long ago, they began to be used for storage.

Adapting troglodyte dwellings to make them more habitable with add-on constructions has long been the case at Mellieħa. A hotel in the area has its pool bar in one of these caves. Some of the houses in this village which splays the valley have the kitchen or bedroom area hewn out of solid rock.

A real estate company promoting developments in the area gushes about “bewitching cave dwellings and houses that cling to the rock face”.

One particular example of an early troglodyte dwelling extension is fondly named Għar u Casa, combining the word for cave in Maltese and house in Italian, with a humorous link to the word għarukaża, meaning something shameful. “There is even a street named after it which runs through remnants of fields edging what used to be the main watercourse. Walking down a dirt track called Għar u Casa Street, under Mellieħa Heights, one gets a sense that things just don't seem right.

In earlier times the inhabitants must have been needed some kind of rope from above, or a ladder (sellum) from below, to reach the less accessible caves. Possibly the modern equivalent is the snakes and ladders of the planning application process which grants or refuses penthouse extensions.

Mellieħa is one of the nicest and most picturesque cities in Malta. Besides the Red Tower and the War Shelters there are a few other places of interest, one of them is it-Torri l-Abjad near Little Armier, L-Għar u Casa (unfortunately, both privately owned?). Also the beach at Mellieħa Bay (l-Għadira), Armier, Cirkewwa, Santa Maria Estates, lL-Kortin, Popeye's Village, the Wild Life Refuge and of course lL-Madonna at l-Għar and don't forget the Santwarju, also the little chapel at lands end past Armier. Mellehin call it tal-Kuncizjoni. Mellieħa has spectacular views, with Comino and Gozo in the distance. And how can you miss the church sitting on top of the hill? Mellieħa is unique, and has some of the nicest people living there, so it is no wonder, Mellieħa was recently named a European destination of excellence.

And finally to mention Mellieħa's favourite song il-bajja tal-Mellieħa sung by the late Sam Bartolo and the New Cuori. This is the reason Mellieħa is the most sought after city in Malta to live at.

Joseph Calleja, Manteca, Ca



Christmas in New Zealand

New Zealand celebrates Christmas much like Great Britain and North America. Christmas is on December 25. Santa Claus, or Father Christmas, brings presents to good children. Homes are decorated with strings of lights and decorated trees. People in New Zealand sing Christmas carols and have a large Christmas dinner.

What is different about Christmas in New Zealand is the weather. Since New Zealand is in the Southern Hemisphere, December 25 is in the summer. There is no snow or cold weather. Many New Zealanders, also known as Kiwis, go to the beach or have a barbecue on Christmas Day. Santa sometimes arrives by boat, rather than a sleigh.

Because the weather is warm, parades during the Christmas season are popular.

In December, the pohutukawa tree blooms in New Zealand. It is now known as the New Zealand Christmas tree, because of its bright red flowers.

Much of the Christmas food in New Zealand is like the food in Great Britain. Roast beef, plum pudding and potatoes are popular. New Zealanders like a special dessert for Christmas called a pavlova. It is a special meringue with a soft center. It is topped with whipped cream and fruit, such as strawberries, passionfruit and kiwi.

Christmas is the beginning of summer vacation for many New Zealanders. Many people will play sports or have fun outside.



Christmas decorations along a street in Auckland, New Zealand



The pohutukawa tree is known as the New Zealand Christmas tree.



The pavlova is a popular Christmas dessert in New Zealand.

Dedicated to our friends and readers in New Zealand.

Maltese Christmas Sweets Recipes



Qaghaq ta' l-Ghasel

(Honey / Treacle Rings) Although not excessively difficult to make, they take quite a lot of patience and time to prepare.

You can buy these delicious pastries all year round from confectionaries but they are mostly consumed during the Christmas season.

Ingredients

(for the pastry)

- 400 grams (or 14.10 oz) flour
- 75 grams (or 2.64 oz) semolina
- 1 egg yolk
- 100 grams (or 3.52 oz) unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- Water
- *(for the filling)*
- 400 grams (or 14.10 oz) treacle
- 150 grams (or 5.29 oz) sugar
- 1 tablespoon chopped candied fruit
- Grated rind of an orange or tangerine
- Grated rind of a lemon
- 1 tablespoon cocoa
- 1 tablespoon aniseed liqueur
- A little semolina
- Pinch of cloves
- 2 cups of water

How to make the pastry Sieve the flour in a bowl with the semolina. Rub in the unsalted butter and pour in the egg yolk and sugar. Mix and knead well to form a dough. If necessary add some water. Tip: You can make the pastry beforehand and keep it in the fridge until you're ready to do the filling.

Making the filling Mix all the ingredients except for the semolina in a saucepan. Bring to the boil slowly and simmer. Add semolina gradually to the mixture until you get a thick consistency. It is very important that you keep stirring the mixture constantly. Let the mixture cool down before continuing.

Making the honey rings First roll out the pastry thinly. Cut it in rectangles (approx. 20 cms x 8 cms). Now take some of the filling and place down the middle of the pastry rectangles strips and form into cigar like strips. Then roll the pastry over the filling and bring the ends together to form a ring. Cut short slits into the pastry at intervals. While baking, some of the filling will come out of these slits and transform the rings into attractive black and white rings. Put the rings into a floured baking tray. Bake in a moderate oven until the pastry is barely coloured (usually takes some 20 minutes).



Top Christmas Customs in Malta

Christmas is celebrated by millions of people around the globe. It is the time of year for family gatherings, prayer, Christmas carols and Christmas trees, and also time for shopping and exchanging gifts. Despite all these things happening, there still exist today a few Christmas traditions that have been passed on from generation to generation, customs that are unique to the islands of Malta and Gozo.



The Sermon of the Child

Christmas still retains a strong religious element for the Maltese. Participation in churches increases around Christmas with a special attendance on Christmas Day. Churches are full for sermon services, with Midnight Mass still retaining its popularity. One of the oldest traditions would be 'The Sermon of the Child' (*Il-Priedka tat-Tifel*). A boy or girl usually aged between 7 and 10 years old is chosen to replace the celebrating priest in delivering the sermon of the Midnight Mass. This special performance is awaited with great anticipation from all persons present that day. For a few months leading up to Christmas Day, the parents, brothers and sisters would have helped the child practise the speech to perfection, encouraging them to give it their all. It is a highly prized event for every child who is chosen. This lovely tradition is believed to have started in 1883 in the little village of Luqa, where a boy called George Sapiano was the first altar boy to deliver the sermon. After Midnight Mass, it is also a custom for the local parish priest to offer traditional Maltese coffee and date cakes (*mqaret*) to the members of the community.



Children's Procession

In almost every town and village, following Midnight Mass, a children's procession is organised by the religious society. What happens during this event is that a statue of baby Jesus is carried shoulder high while children walk behind it through the village streets, carrying lamps and lights along the way and singing old traditional songs such as '*Ninni la Tibkix Iżjed*' (sleep and cry no more). This heart-warming custom goes way back to when Saint George Preca set up the first procession in the village of Hamrun in 1921.



The Vetches (*Ġulbiena*)

Vetches (*ġulbiena*) are specifically grown in Malta and Gozo in November and December to be used as a Christmas decoration in houses and churches around the islands. It is traditional to sow wheat, grain or even canary seeds, placed on cotton buds in flat pans for about five weeks before Christmas. These are left in dark corners of the house until the seeds produce white and stringy shoots. The Maltese are quite creative with these vetches. I have seen them used in window sills, in the crib next to the statue of baby Jesus, or placed along the front façade of the crib.



The Nativity Crib (*Il-Preseppju*)

Another one of the sweetest and oldest Maltese traditions is the Nativity Crib (*Il-Preseppju*). The first ever recorded crib was found in Rabat and was housed by the Dominican Friars in 1607. The idea of crib building originated in Italy, where St Francis of Assisi re-enacted the Birth of Christ. From here it spread all over Europe and eventually the world, with each

country adapting the crib to its own traditions, trades and style of costumes. Although this is not a purely Maltese tradition (because it is also practised in other countries), along the years the Maltese crib has developed its distinctive features. Cribs are found in almost every Maltese home and each family gives it their personal touch. Depending on the size and structure of the presentation they are usually built with rustic stones known as '*gagazza*', very abundant in the Maltese countryside. In recent years, crib enthusiasts have turned to another medium, the paper mache: this makes cribs more solid and lightweight. Wood and paints are also used. Cribs are then decorated with clay statues (*pasturi*) representing The Holy Family, The Magi, the shepherds with their flocks of sheep, the baker, the bag pipe player, folk singers, angels, fishermen, drum players, and obviously the village simpleton, who is full of wonder and awe (*L-Għageb tal-Preseppju*), and whom all the Maltese joke about. The cribs are embellished with all sorts of interesting decorations including the unmistakable growth of vetch (*għubiena*), grown in flat pans some five weeks before Christmas.

Traditional Maltese Christmas Lunch and Dessert (*L-ikla tal-Milied*)



Maltese families and restaurants have a wide range of foods at Christmas, and the amounts of food served in one day are enough to feed the family for an entire week! By tradition, the Maltese housewife keeps the fattest capon (*hasi*) especially for Christmas Lunch. This is roasted at the local bakery in a casserole with fresh potatoes and vegetables. The traditional dessert that is served at Christmas is the Treacle Ring, (*Qagħqa tal-Għasel*), and the most traditional 'coupe de

grace' is the serving of the hot Chestnut and Chocolate beverage, (*l-Imbuljuta tal-Qastan*). This is made using cocoa, chestnuts, cloves and citrus zest. I'm sure many readers have very fond memories of Christmas past which are closely linked with nostalgic thoughts of family, love and security. Together with culture and tradition, families worldwide have their very own Christmas trademarks which undoubtedly go a long way into the making of a child's most magical Christmas. May this magical spirit of Christmas descend upon you and all your families this Christmas. A Blessed Christmas to you all!





CHRISTMAS IN CANADA

Canada is very much like the United States in the fact that it is a melting pot of cultures and traditions, particularly around the holiday season. Each person, from whatever background they hail from, has contributed their country's traits. Take, for instance, the Christmas tree (Germany), Santa Claus (United States) and lights in the windows (Ireland).

Though some traditions still hold fast, like the **kissing ball** and singing old Christmas carols, Canadians have joined the United States in commercializing the holiday. A few French Canadian families hold firm and postpone opening gifts until New Year's Day, but many have converted to the English tradition of presents on Christmas Day. The turkey has also become a primo centerpiece in Christmas Eve and Christmas Day meals in Canada. Roast goose and beef are still prevalent but the American bird has made its place in Canadian holiday tradition.



Christmas in Canada was celebrated by two distinct groups of people: the French Canadians and the English Canadians. First, let's take a look at the French Canadians.

French Canadians focused more on Christmas Eve as the primary aspect of the holidays. The family would prepare for days for the main meal, the *reveillon*, and then decorate the Christmas tree before Midnight Mass. They also displayed the **crèche**, or Nativity scene. The **reveillon**, their Christmas Eve dinner, was a meal with meat pies, other dishes and a chocolate cake in the shape of a Yule log. The *reveillon* was also the time children can open small gifts in their stockings, saving the bigger gifts for New Year's Day. Christmas Day for French Canadian families was a time to relax and enjoy each other's company.



The English Canadians celebrated Christmas Day with gifts in the morning, a midday church service and a huge feast consisting of roast goose, beef and plum pudding. English Canadians also had the **kissing ball**, a ring of evergreen branches that symbolized the end of the winter solstice but was used by young men to steal kisses from single women beneath it.

The **Boston Christmas Tree**, the Canadian tradition of sending a Christmas tree to Boston every year during the holiday season, was the result of the Halifax Explosion over eighty years ago. Two ships collided on December 6, 1917, killing approximately 2,000 people and injuring at least 9,000 more. Hundreds of acres of land were destroyed by a tidal wave caused by the explosion. The town of Boston sent nurses, doctors, medical supplies and more to assist the Canadians and in thanks, the Canadians sent a Christmas tree. This tradition has continued throughout the years.



Dedicated to our friends and readers in Canada.



The Maltese Newsletters
are preserved at the
MALTA MIGRATION MUSEUM
and on our website
www.ozmalta.page4.me

IMPORTANT NOTICES

**MALTA HIGH COMMISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA - CANBERRA -
CONSUL-ON-THE-MOVE PROGRAMME**

Submission of biometric passport applications from Maltese nationals

The Malta High Commission of the Republic of Malta in Canberra is pleased to announce its second visit of the Consul in South Australia, as part of the Consul-on-the Move programme - which facilitates the processing of applications for the Maltese biometric passport - between

Friday 24 March and Saturday 25 March 2017

from 0900hrs to 1700hrs to accept passport applications at the following venues:

The Community Centre Progressive Hall, 47 LeHunte Street, Kilburn South Australia

The Maltese Cultural Centre 6 Jeanes Street, Beverley, South Australia

Apart from passport applications, the Consul will be available for other consular services. The Consul-on-the-Move Programme is strictly by appointment only. Maltese nationals interested to avail themselves of this service are to seek an appointment and/or request further information by sending an email to consul.canberra@gov.mt or honconsul@live.com.au

Appointments will be accepted until 21st March 2017. Requests after this date cannot be entertained



in Valletta. Photo credit: Jonathan Borg

**Valletta National New
Years Eve Celebrations
Details Announced
Valletta 2018**

Chairman Jason Micallef (centre) announcing details for New Year's Eve festivities earlier today. From left to right: MTA Chairman Gavin Gulia, G7 Director Owen Spiteri, Valletta 2018 Foundation Chairman Jason Micallef, Valletta Mayor Alexiei Dingli and Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government Owen Bonnici announcing details for New Year's Eve celebrations

Following the success of the last few years, Valletta now boasts a New Year's Eve national celebration on par with other capital cities, in Europe and beyond. The event aims to bring the magic and festive atmosphere throughout most of our capital city on this special night. The celebrations are being organised by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, in collaboration with the Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government, the Ministry of Tourism, the Valletta Local Council and G7 Events. St. George's Square once again will host the main stage and will see the very best of Malta's top local artists and bands.

Furthermore, this year the event will host international guests and X factor UK 2015 finalists Reggie and Bollie. The line-up for the night includes Ozzy Lino, Daniel Cauchi & the Big Band Brothers featuring Marit Kesa, followed by hosts DJs Pierre Cordina and Clint Bajada who will take over and play some of the best hits of 2016. The Digital Projections, a collaboration between the Valletta 2018 Foundation and MCAST, will also be projected on the Palace façade, with a special countdown to usher in the new year, followed by a live performance by energetic international guests Reggie and Bollie. Finally, DJ Mykill and Trumpet Live will close off the night. - See more at: <http://valletta2018.org/news/valletta-national-nye-celebrations-details-announced/#sthash.vbchK4mL.dpuf>

IL-MILIED QABAD IT-TRIEQ mill-korrispondent taghna l-Kav Joe M Attard



Nhar is-Sibt filgħaxija 3 ta' Diċembru l-Ministru għal Għawdex Dr Anton Refalo xegħel id-dwal tal-Milied fil-belt Victoria waqt serata għall-familja kollha li fiha hađu sehem il-korijiet tat-tfal Ta' Sannat, taż-Żebbuġ u l-Piccole Stelle tal-Belt Victoria li lkoll kantaw għanjiet ferrieħa tal-Milied. Pubbliku numeruż attenda għal din l-attività għalkemm fil-Victoria kienu għaddejjin żewġ attivitajiet oħra. Tat sehemha wkoll kantanta żagħżuġha kif ukoll Joe M Attard li qara l-poeżija tiegħu 'Tweldilna Salvatur'. Il-grupp The Travellers kompli żewwaq is-serata waqt li l-Ministru għal Għawdex fid-diskors tiegħu tkellem dwar l-ispiritu veru u nistrani tal-Milied, is-sens tal-ħbiberija u s-solidarjeta li għandhom jsaltnu bejnietna b'mod speċjali f'dan iż-żmien u kif il-parties u r-rigali m'għandhomx jiġu l-ewwel f'dan iż-żmien imma l-ħniena u l-moġħdrija. Temm jgħid 'illi l-Presepu b'Gesu' Bambin jibqa' ċ-ċentru tal-attivitajiet tal-Milied; ma niddejqux ngħidu dan u kburin b'dak li nemmnu!' U ta' dan l-Onorevoli haqqu punt u ċapċipa!

Evolution Intant fl-istess ħin tal-programm fi Pjazza Indipendenza, fit-Tejtru Astra, tefgħa ta' ġebba bogħod kien qed jittella fuq il-palk spetaklu ta' kant u żfin mill-kumpanija Power House taħt id-direzzjoni tal-artista Għawdxija Melanie Zammit bl-isem ta' 'Evolution – The Story of Song and Dance' bis-sehem ta' għadd kbir ta' żeffiena u kantanti li jiffrekwentaw din l-iskola. Dan ix-show kien parti mill-kampanja 'Keep it Real' li biha d-direzzjoni xtaqet iżżommna konxji mill-marda tal-kancer, marda qerrieda li teħtieġ soluzzjoni u fejqan. Pubbliku numeruż ħanaq is-sala tat-Tejtru Astra għal dan l-ispettaklu kulurit u movimentat li dam sejjer madwar tliet sigħat li wriena kif fil-gżira Għawdxija jeżisti ħafna talent u potenzjal li hemm b'żonn nissuktaw nieħdu ħsiebu, nikxfuh u nikkurawh.

Sursum Corda Dejjem fl-istess ħin u fl-istess lejla, fis-sala teatrali tas-Seminarju tal-Isqof Victoria, fl-okkażjoni tal-150 sena mill-ftuħ tas-Seminarju kien qed jiġi mniedi l-ktieb tal-istoriku Rev Dr Joe Bezzina 'The Sacred Heart Seminary – The Heart of Gozo' fil-preżenza tal-Isqof t'Għawdex Monsinjur Mario Grech li ta messaġġ f'din l-okkażjoni kif għamel l-istess l-awtur Bezzina u r-Rettur l-ġdid tas-Seminarju Dun Richard Nazzareno Farrugia. F'din il-lejla li għaliha attendew bosta ħbieb u benefatturi tas-Seminarju, ħa sehem is-Sursum Corda String Quartet f'Kunċert ta' Mużika Klassika u Kontemporanja li esegwixxa xogħlijiet ta' Handel, Caccini, Mozart, Caruana, Charpentier, Frisina, Vivaldi, Jenkins, Corelli, u Gruber bis-'Silent Night' famuża tiegħu li nqalbet f'diversi lingwi.

Monument lill-Isqof Cauchi L-għada l-Ħadd filgħodu, fil-pjazza ewlenija tal-Għarb quddiem il-Knisja Parrokkjali, il-Ministru għal Għawdex Anton Refalo u s-Sindku tar-Raħal David Apap kixfu monument life size tal-Bronz, xogħol l-artist Għawdxij Adonai Camilleri Cauchi f'ġieħ l-Isqof Emeritus imwieled fl-Għarb fl-1929, Monsinjur Nikol G. Cauchi. Għall-okkażjoni Joe W Psaila kiteb 'Cantata' mmużikata minn Mro Antoine Mercieca li tkantat f'dik il-għodwa; l-istess Psaila għamel suġġeriment fid-diskors tiegħu biex pjazza ħdejn iċ-Ċentru Ragħaj it-Tajjeb (li nbena mill-Isqof Cauchi) tissemma għal dan il-persunaġġ Għawdxij li lill-Knisja u lill-gżira tagħna tant għamlilhom ġid u li jidher li ntlaqa' mill-Ministru għal Għawdex. Inqraw ukoll żewġ poeżiji tal-okkażjoni waħda minn Joe M Attard li wkoll ippreżenta din l-okkażjoni, u oħra mill-istudenta mill-Għarb Anabelle Portelli. George Mercieca tkellem dwar il-ħajja letterarja ta' dan l-Isqof waqt li Fr John Meilak qara d-diskors li zijuh l-Arċidjaknu Monsinjur G. B. Gauci kiteb dwar il-ħajja reliġjuża tal-Isqof Cauchi. Qabel it-tberik tal-Monument mill-Isqof Mario Grech, tkellmu wkoll is-Sindku tar-raħal u l-Ministru għal Għawdex.

Sakemm tidher din il-kitba nemmen li l-Milied ikun fl-aqwa tiegħu u għalhekk nappellakom biex ma tibzghux mill-ksieħ u x-xita imma araw li tmorru n-Novena tal-Milied, tibnu l-Presepu fid-dar u tmorru taraw il-bosta presepi li jinbnew mal-gżira Għawdxija biex b'hekk inkomplu nsafnu l-kultura tal-Presepu li huwa l-qofol ta' dawn il-festi għeżieħ!



Valletta 2018, together with the MCAST Institute for the Creative Arts, presents a series of Digital Projections every Christmas season. During this year's festive season these shows shall once again colour up the façade of the Grand Master's Palace at Saint George's Square. There shall also be a special audio-visual show on New Year's Eve ushering in the New Year as part of the Valletta National New Year's Eve celebrations. These projections are designed by MCAST BA Graphic Design and Interactive Media students.

This year's projections will be shown between the 23rd December – 30th December. On the 31st December a special show will welcome the New Year as part of Valletta's festive season celebrations.

- See more at: <http://valletta2018.org/events/digital-projections/#sthash.Wxr5aYIV.dpuf>



€1,500 fine if you step on Azure Window

Dwejra landmark is now a no-go zone
Gozo's iconic Azure Window has been officially established as a no-go zone, the government announced this morning. Trespassers could face a hefty €1,500 fine and bollards will be installed close to the

landmark which is slowly being eroded, Environment Minister Jose Herrera told a news conference.

The emergency order will be valid until June next year, when it will be replaced by permanent legislation that will allow the Environment Resources Authority to hand out administrative penalties on the spot. The decision comes just days after a video emerged of a man jumping off the rock, dislodging rocks in the process.

The emergency conservation order was published in Government Gazette last night. A special committee has also been set up to analyse ways and means of protecting the landmark.

The structure consists of two main rock layers: Upper Coralline Limestone, a hard, durable stone, and Blue Clay Limestone, a softer, malleable stone susceptible to erosion.

As much as 90 per cent of the outer layer is estimated to have eroded over the past 30 years. The Gozo Tourism Association and the San Lawrenz council earlier this year said that allowing visitors to walk on top was of grave concern but they lacked the resources needed to monitor the area adequately. A park ranger will now be hired to monitor the site. Times of Malta – 3.12.2016



Christmas in Greece

On Christmas Eve, children travel from house to house offering good wishes and singing kalanda which is the same as carols.

Greek families leave a fire burning to keep away the Killantzaroi. The Killantzaroi are goblins that emerge from the center of the earth and slip into people's homes through the fireplace. They are more trouble makers than harmful. They are believed to do things such as extinguish fires, ride on people's backs, braid horse's tails, and sour the milk.

In Greece, St. Nicholas is the patron saint of sailors. He saves sinking ships from the angry sea.

The Christmas feast consists of pig and christopsomo or "christ bread". This bread is made in large sweet loaves and the crust is engraved to portray the family's profession.

Fishing boats are decorated with christmas lights during the holiday season.

Most homes decorate a christmas tree with tinsel and a star.

Presents are exchanged on January 1st, St. Basil Day.

Christmas in England

It is cold, wet, and foggy in England at Christmas time. People burn a yule log to bring warmth and happiness

Families hang holly, ivy, other evergreens and mistletoe inside and outside their homes

Families gather together on Christmas Eve and read "A Christmas Carol"

Family and friends gather together at midday to enjoy Christmas dinner

At Christmas dinner a colorful cracker is found next to everyone's dinner plate. A cracker is a paper covered tube. When the ends are pulled the cracker makes a loud pop. Inside you will find a paper hat to wear to dinner, candy, small toys, and a riddle to read aloud at the dinner table.

The traditional Christmas dinner is roast turkey with vegetables and sauces. Dessert is a rich fruity pudding. The English gift giver is called Father Christmas. Children leave an empty stocking or pillowcase at the end of their bed and hope they will be filled in the morning

Christmas in Germany

German families countdown the days until Christmas by using an Advent wreath and Advent calendar. Homes are filled with the smell of sweet loaves of bread, cakes filled with candied fruit, and spicy cookies

Children write letters to St. Nicholas or the Christ child asking for presents

The tradition of the Christmas tree started in Germany

Most homes have more than one Christmas tree

Children leave their shoes outside filled with hay and carrots to feed St. Nicholas's horse. If the children have been good, he leaves candy, apples, and nuts for them in their shoes.

Christmas in Italy

The Christmas season lasts for 3 weeks in Italy. It goes from December 17 to January 6.

During this time children go from home to home reciting Christmas poems and singing.

In Italy, children wait until January 6, Epiphany to open their presents.

The children's presents are delivered by Befana, a kind ugly witch who rides on a broomstick.

Panettone is a traditional cake filled with candied fruit that is very popular during the holiday season.

Manger scenes and Christmas carols originated in Italy.

Christmas day is reserved for church, family, and feasting.

Shepherds come into the town and go house-to-house playing bagpipes and singing carols.

Christmas in the USA

Santa Claus was born in the US in the 1860's.

Most Americans celebrate Christmas by sending cards and giving presents.

Homes have Christmas trees decorated with lights, ornaments, and sometimes tinsel

People also love to decorate the outside of their house with lights, and lighted figures of Santa, reindeer, snowmen, manger scenes, and much more.

American Christmas characters include Rudolph, Frosty, and the Grinch.

People love to play Christmas music throughout the entire month of December, and some even start in November. Christmas dinner isn't the same for all Americans, but most eat roasted turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce, vegetables, and desserts.

Christmas in Australia



I think this photo expresses the feeling best. For first-time visitors from the northern hemisphere, it can be a real shock because it's scorching hot, it's laughter and fun, it's family and friends, it's a BBQ, it's beach, it's cricket, it's beer ... lots of ice cold beer and it's singing Christmas carols. Yes, we sing White Christmas, Rudolph, Frosty the Snowman, Winter Wonderland, Let It Snow and other stuff that has nothing to do with our Southern Hemisphere climate ... but we sing them with great gusto anyway at the kids event "Carols in the Domain" in Sydney and at the "Myer Music Bowl" in Melbourne which is telecast to all

Australians on National TV every Christmas eve.

The typical Christmas lunch/afternoon event is a barbeque. Often by the pool or some waterway. Often just wearing thongs (flip-flops) ... on our feet! Australian's head to the beach at Christmas time because 80% of us live within just 50 kilometers of one and it's the coolest place to be on a scorching hot Christmas day.

Family Christmas lunch - Typically held outdoors because of the heat and at one long table where the extended family can gather and sit. Often with a 'hot' roast turkey and 'hot' Christmas pudding but washed down with plenty of ice cold beer and good cheer.

The Christmas Tree

Be it real or artificial; traditional, fancy or LED; the Christmas tree has become part and parcel of the Christmas tradition. During the festive season it can be seen everywhere – adorning houses, front yards, squares and shopping plazas.

One of the most popular festive decorations is certainly the Christmas tree. Be it real or artificial, it is usually the biggest ornament and gets by far the most attention.

In the 1600s, Christmas trees were decorated with apples, nuts, dates, pretzels and paper flowers. Over time, candles were added to light it up. It also became customary to add sugar ornaments such as candy canes. On the other hand, the Russians had a very particular way of decorating the tree. Banned after the October Revolution, the Christmas tree was re-instated as a symbol of the New Year rather than Christmas. For them, the star on top of the tree became symbolic of the Red Star and not the Bethlehem Star. They decorated it with various figurines of airplanes, bicycles, space rockets, astronauts and characters from Russian fairy tales. After the fall of the USSR this custom was kept and to date the New Year still outweighs Christmas in popularity.

Nowadays, the most common decorations for the tree are baubles, tinsel, garlands and ribbons as well as small Christmassy figurines like angels, snowmen, robins, etc. Fairy lights – be they either in one colour or mixed up with coloured lights to brighten it up – also play a central role in the decorations.

However, rather than selecting ornaments and decorations ad hoc, one can get more creative and select a colour theme for the tree. For instance, if the colour red is chosen, decorations can be selected accordingly. Red baubles, red garlands and tinsel. One can then add velvet or satin ribbons and flowers to add texture. Sometimes, red is paired with gold to make the tree look more elegant. An angel or Bethlehem star is usually selected as a tree topper. This too can be selected according to the theme chosen.

A tree skirt to hide the Christmas tree stand is the final touch. Some skirts are quite smart with embroidery trimmings. Others can sport a brightly printed nativity scene or any other Christmas-related picture.

When everything is done, all that is left is for presents to be placed underneath the tree!

FEDERATION OF MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

The Directors (Administrators) of the Federation of Maltese Living Abroad FMLA for the upcoming two year term are as follows:

Mr. Kristian Bonnici, President
Mr. Edwin Bonello - Australasia; Region
Mr. Andrew Bonello - Australasia
Mr. Sergio Bonnici - Australasia
Ms. Claudia Caruana - US/Canada; Region
Mr. Brian Ciappara - US/Canada
Ms. Irene Cooper - Australasia
Mr. John Mier - US/Canada
Ms. Mildred Meyer - US/Canada
Mr. George Portelli - Australasia
Ms. Susan Schembri - US/Canada

Thank you everyone for volunteering your time to form part of the new Board of Directors of FMLA for the next two-year term. As you all can see we have a new President and 5 new members from the Region of Australasia and 5 new members from US/Canada Region. The FMLA Constitution calls for 5 more members from UK/Europe Region. We have no candidates from the UK/Europe region who as yet have volunteered, however this does not mean there are no qualified individuals from that region; far from it. It simply means that the new President and Board of Directors have the clear mandate to decide how best to fill the 5 position from the UK/Europe Region according to the language of the current FMLA constitution. I have including all the e-mail contacts of everyone who has been in contact with us during the duration of the election so that finally everyone would know who is who and you all can start communicating amongst each other.

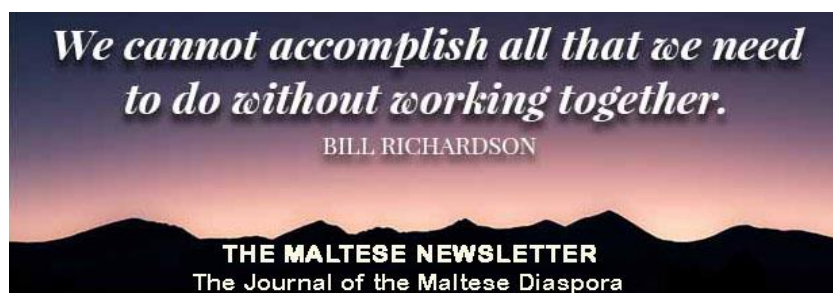
At this point I want to thank the two Election Commissioners, Fr. Victor Camilleri and Eddie Micallef, who assisted me to conduct this election and I also want to thank Professor Maurice Cauchi for his feedback and support. I would like to let the new President and the new Board of Directors know that you have a lot of support among the Maltese diaspora throughout the world.

Louis Vella, Election Commissioner, USA

"It is now public knowledge that the number of people of Maltese origin living overseas has overtaken the number actually living in Malta. This has prompted the recommendation, made originally as long ago as 1938 by the well-known Maltese-French author, Laurent Ropa, that there should be a federation of all Maltese living overseas with a view to co-ordinate their activities, and in particular to maintain Maltese language and culture.

This concept of a 'Greater Malta' has now been accepted by politicians on both sides of the great divide. Such a rare degree of unanimity was displayed at the recent convention held in Malta last March where several measures were announced to ensure greater cohesion, greater access to Malta's cultural heritage, improvement in the means of teaching Maltese language and several other worthwhile and long-overdue processes to ensure that Maltese living abroad will feel that they still form an integral part of the Maltese community." (TIMES OF MALTA 2010)

We, the Editorial team of THE MALTESE NEWSLETTER, wish the new committee of the FMLA every success in all its future ventures and we promise you our sincere support and work together for the benefit of the Maltese Diaspora— F.L. Scicluna - Editor





MISSION

"As we face a world where economic distress is a fact of life, the plight of those who suffer – the poor, the sick, the homeless, internally displaced persons, refugees, the disabled, the elderly – becomes ever more acute. We, as members of a lay religious order with a centuries-old tradition of caring for the poor and the sick, are crucially aware of the need to look to our fellow men. This has been our mission since our foundation and it remains our mission and our focus today."

Fra' Matthew Festing, 79th Grand Master

Upholding human dignity and caring for people in need



Il-Milied it-Tajjeb
Merry Christmas



The Sovereign Order of Malta is one of the oldest institutions of Western and Christian civilisation. A lay religious order of the Catholic Church since 1113 and a subject of international law, the Sovereign Order of Malta has diplomatic relations with over 100 states and the European Union and permanent observer status at the United Nations. It is neutral, impartial and apolitical.

Today, the Order of Malta is active in 120 countries caring for people in need

through its medical, social and humanitarian works. Day-to-day, its broad spectrum of social projects provides a constant support for forgotten or excluded members of society. It is especially involved in helping people living in the midst of armed conflicts and natural disasters by providing medical assistance, caring for refugees, and distributing medicines and basic equipment for survival. Across the world, the Order of Malta is dedicated to the preservation of human dignity and the care of all those in need, regardless of their race or religion.

Founded in Jerusalem in the 11th century, the Order of Malta has a long history of service to the vulnerable and the sick. This 900-year history is reflected in its full name: Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta. Since 1834 the Order of Malta's government seat has been in Rome, where it is guaranteed extraterritorial rights.

The Order of Malta operates through 12 Priories, 47 national Associations, 133 diplomatic missions, 1 worldwide relief agency and 33 national volunteer corps, as well as numerous hospitals, medical centres and specialist foundations. It does not pursue any economic or political goal and does not depend on any other state or government.



HOW CHRISTMAS IS CELEBRATED IN MALTA

You are not likely to have a white Christmas in Malta. Weather conditions resemble those of Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ. The temperature during Yuletide fluctuates from a maximum of 19 degrees Celsius to a minimum of 9C. The Christmas festival, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, is observed around the Christian world on the 25 December - the date believed to have been fixed by St Hyppolytus in the 3rd century. Christmas is a feast of peace and goodwill to all humans. Christmas is Christmas everywhere, but there are certain

characteristics that make Maltese Christmas different from that of many other countries.

The streets of towns and villages are decorated and lit with multicoloured lights (festuni). Shop windows display the usual Christmas decorations and a large variety of toys and presents to lure Christmas shoppers who jam the streets. Christmas trees (is-sigra tal-Milied) and the figure of Father Christmas (Santa Claus) are seen all over the place. The main feature, which is a typically Maltese tradition, is the number of cribs (presepi) that can be seen in public places and in private homes.

The first Maltese crib we know of is that found at the Benedictine Nuns in Mdina and bears on its framework the year 1826. Another crib of the same period is found in Vittoriosa but this has been over restored and there is almost nothing left of the original structure. The main characters in the crib are naturally Joseph and Mary with baby Jesus together with the cow, the donkey and the sheep; and the three Kings who came to visit the new born baby bearing gifts of myrrh, frankincense and gold.

Traditionally, the crib figurines (pasturi) were made of clay. Apart from the principal figures they include shepherds minding their flock, street singers, the shepherd's pipe and drum players, a farmer feeding the animals, woman carrying a flour sack, the sleeping man and the man sprawling on his stomach and perched on top of the grotto looking down at Baby Jesus. These fragile penny clay figurines were easily acquired few years ago. Nowadays modern plastic figurines are more commonly found in the Maltese family crib.

The tradition of building cribs in churches and homes began in the 13th century by the Franciscan friars. The actual crib where Christ was born was brought from Bethlehem in the seventh century and is preserved at the Liberian Basilica in Rome.

The tradition of the Christmas tree and Christmas cards (il-kartolini tal-Milied) was imported from Germany in the 19th century. There is also a connection between the exchanging of presents and the feast of St. Nicholas (Santa Claus), the patron saint of children. Saint Nicholas was a bishop who lived in the 4th century and his feast is celebrated annually on the 5th December.

Nearly in every town and village a procession is held with children carrying a small statue of baby Jesus and singing Christmas carols along the way. In every parish church in Malta and Gozo during midnight Mass a small child, dressed as an acolyte, recites a sermon narrating the birth of Christ.

Christmas offers a splendid occasion for family gatherings. In most houses an attractively decorated Christmas tree is put up beneath which are placed the various presents wrapped in colourful paper. Christmas pudding (il-pudina tal-Milied) and turkey (id-dundjan) became popular during the first and second world wars when thousands of sailors and soldiers from the British Empire were stationed in Malta. The Island was a military and naval base for the allies. Prior to these wars a rooster (serduq), rather than turkey, was the bird to be served at Christmas dinner. The traditional Christmas banquet normally includes the delicious Maltese dish called timpana, backed macaroni covered with crusty pastry. A special kind of honey-and treacle rings (qaghaq tal-ghasel) are eaten during the Christmas festivities.

An old tradition that survived up to this day is the sowing of wheat, grain and canary seed (gulbiena) on clots of cotton in flat pans four weeks before Christmas and nurtured in the darkness of cupboards in the kitchen. These seeds shoot up and remain as white as Santa's beard. They are then placed next to the infant Jesus and around the crib.

A custom which unfortunately vanished many years ago was the playing of bagpipes (iz-zaqq). They characterised the music of the shepherds who tended their flock on Christmas night. Folk memory in Gozo records that for the midnight Mass on Christmas Eve bagpipes were played in churches striking a genuine pastoral note.

The most popular Christmas carol, which is translated in every language on earth, is 'Silent Night'. Here is the Maltese version:

O Lejl ta' Skiet - lejl tal-Milied

Lejl ghaziz - lejl qaddis

Dawwlet is-sema il-kewkba li ddit

Habbret li l-fidwa tal-bniedem inbdiet;

Kristu huwa mhabba bla qies!

Kristu huwa mhabba bla qies

Malta Postal Museum launches Comic Book



Malta Postal Museum launches comic book based on the adventures of its mascot Peppi Pustier

Hot on the heels of a successful inauguration last June, the Malta Postal Museum has launched an exciting time-traveling comic book based on the adventures of its mascot Peppi Pustier.

Peppi Pustier: Lost in Time is an eighties inspired time travelling adventure and tells the tale of a hardworking postman who is suddenly teleported to different time periods in order to deliver a number of important letters. Reminiscent of the movie Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure this craftily and subtly written tale, is set

in Malta and highlights key events of our history in a colourful and innovative way.

"Children will surely be moved by our intrepid postman who despite huge odds manages to deliver letters to people the likes of Mikiel Anton Vassalli, wounded soldiers and Prisoners of war over a 400-year period. Our young visitors are enamored by the museum's collection and the stories they tell and this launch of our comic cements their knowledge and contributes to a better learning experience here at the museum" commented Lara Bugeja, curator of the MPM.

The artist behind the comic is Fabio Agius, a staff member of the Malta Postal Museum, local comic artist and leading organizer of the Malta Comic Con.

The comic will be launched during the Malta Comic Con at the MFCC Ta' Qali during the first weekend of December. The Comic Con will be open on Saturday 03 December between 10.00am and 6.00pm and Sunday 04 December between 11.00am and 7.00pm. The comic can also be purchased from the Malta Postal Museum located at 135, Archbishop Street, Valletta VLT1444. For information about the museum, please visit www.maltapostalmuseum.com

