

CONSULATE OF MALTA IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER

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

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Medium-term cooperation plan between Malta and China in the pipeline



Photo: Reuben Piscopo, China's Prime Minister Li Keqiang and Malta's Prime Minister Joseph Muscat

A medium term plan cooperation plan covering a number sectors between Malta and China was discussed during a meeting between Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat and his Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang, this morning. The plan includes close collaboration in education, in the services sector as well as in infrastructure.

The meeting was held at the Bangchuidao state guest house in Dalian, in China as part of the Prime Minister's visit to this country where he is also attending the Annual Meeting of the New Champions organized by the World Economic Forum.

The Maltese Prime Minister said that rather than taking "sporadic initiatives" both sides agreed to plan in advance for the next five years. He added that the proposal to draft a plan as put forward by the Chinese Prime Minister. Dr Muscat said that the draft of this plan will be presented in the coming months. "This is not a question of Malta requesting money from foreign countries, but one of investment" said the Prime Minister. He said that the memorandum of understanding signed with China Power Investment is a good example of how Malta can attract strategic partners if it adopts the right



Six months of Labour



Half a year after the Labour Party's biggest electoral triumph since 1955, **Keith Micallef** analyses the highs and lows of the Muscat administration.

The 'Malta Tagħna Lkoll' (Malta belongs to all) slogan was central to Labour's election manifesto.

It emphasised meritocracy, the need for change, civil rights, as well as restoring the party's traditional left-wing social policies, which had been put on the backburner during Alfred Sant's leadership. The PL was elected with a mandate to reduce utility tariffs and bound...



Indigenous



The Australian Government apologises to Indigenous Australians

I move that today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history. We reflect on their past mistreatment. We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations - this blemished chapter in our nation's history.

The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation. For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written.

We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians.

A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again. A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity.

A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed.

A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility. A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia.

On 13 February 2008 the then Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, moved a motion of *Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples* with specific reference to the Stolen Generations.



Where ON EARTH IS MALTA LOCATED?



If you ask people "Where is Malta located?", don't be surprised if you get a blank or confused look.

Some people (typically from neighbouring Mediterranean and European countries) have indeed heard of the island of Malta before. But for a lot of people, the island's whereabouts are virtually unknown!

At some point in your life, you may have run across or heard someone mention the world famous Maltese Cross. Most likely you would have also heard of the Maltese Falcon novel and movie. But many, fail to make a connection between the popular cross, the movie and Malta.

Few usually know the exact location of the Maltese Islands, unless they've visited the islands of course!

A large number of non-Europeans are simply clueless about where is Malta and many have not even heard of it. So if asked, they might even reply with another question: "What is Malta?" :)

Needless to say though, those who have visited the wonderful Maltese islands will undoubtedly carry with

them their fond memories of Malta through all their lives.

A map of Central and Southern Europe ... Can you spot where Malta is?

Open a world atlas or look for it on a world map on the Internet and you'll be faced with just a small dot! Yes. That is how



small Malta is. Literally, blink an eye and you'll miss it.

Some maps don't even feature the Maltese Islands!

This is why those who visit, find the Maltese islands so fascinating! Nobody believes that such a small country can have such a rich and long history. That is, until they're here, and they experience and "feel" the history of Malta on their skin while strolling along historic paths and streets.

The Maltese islands are **an archipelago of islands right in the centre of the Mediterranean sea, between Sicily and North Africa.**

If you're not that familiar with the Mediterranean region, you might want to have a look at our [Map of the Mediterranean](#) page for information and maps of the Mediterranean Sea and its countries. The islands are the most southerly country in Europe and consist of Malta, Gozo, Comino, Cominotto and Filfla. The last two islands are uninhabited. Quaint fortified medieval cities will leave you speechless!

Malta's capital city is **Valletta**. The whole city is a World Heritage Site. If you're not sure from where to start with your sightseeing, we recommend that you pop by at the Malta Tourist Information Office, right at the entrance of Valletta. You can pick up maps of Malta, brochures, etc while deciding on where to visit next. If you have a look at a map of Malta, you will immediately notice the sheer compactness of the island.

Make no mistake though, when you visit, **there is so much to see and do here that you'll be reluctant to leave!**

Incredibly beautiful churches seemingly "in the middle of nowhere" are a common sight in Malta and Gozo

So next time someone asks you "Where is Malta located?" be sure to give the correct answer.

Even better, **show them a host of photos from your unforgettable holiday in Malta ;-)**



FEDERATION SQUARE – MELBOURNE, VICTORIA



It's increasingly hard to imagine Melbourne without Federation Square. It is home to major cultural attractions, world-class events, tourism experiences and an exceptional array of restaurants, bars and specialty stores, this modern piazza has become the city's meeting place.

Since opening in 2002, Fed Square has become one of the most visited attractions in Melbourne with close to 10 million visits in 2012.

The Ian Potter Centre: National Gallery of Victoria Australia, presents the history of Australian art from the Colonial period

and the Heidelberg School through to contemporary art, as well as a suite of galleries dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) is the first centre of its kind in the world, ACMI celebrates the moving image in all its forms, such as film, television and digital culture.

Federation Square host over 2000 events each year, it buzzes with cultural festivals, exhibitions, event launches, performances, forums, films, concerts and fashion shows. Life at Fed Square is so rich that there's sure to be something exciting going on whenever you visit!

Taste Melbourne's culinary diversity at one of Federation Square's sixteen diverse restaurants, cafes and bars. From espresso bars and burger grills to Northern Chinese and authentic Australian cuisine, there's something to suit all tastes and budgets.

Art-lover, film buff or souvenir hunter, you will love shopping at Fed Square. Federation Square's cultural attractions and bustling event calendar are also supported by a great range of tourism experiences, including guided tours, bicycle hire, Yarra River cruises, sightseeing day tours and free tourism services at the Melbourne Visitor Centre.



Sydney Opera House

Sydney Opera House from the harbour. Photograph courtesy of Andrew Watt.



Sydney Opera House must be one of the most recognisable images of the modern world - up there with the Eiffel Tower and the Empire State Building - and one of the most photographed.

Not only is it recognisable, it has come to represent 'Australia'.

Although only having been open since 1973, it is as representative of Australia as the pyramids are of Egypt and the Colosseum of Rome.

The Opera House is situated on Bennelong Point, which reaches out into the harbour. The skyline of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the blue water of the harbour and the Sydney Opera House, viewed from a ferry or from the air, is dramatic and unforgettable.

Ironical, perhaps, that this Australian icon - the Opera House with a roof evocative of a ship at

full sail - was designed by renowned Danish architect - Jørn Utzon (1918–2008).

In the late 1950s the New South Wales (NSW) Government established an appeal fund to finance the construction of the Sydney Opera House, and conducted a competition for its design.

Utzon's design was chosen. The irony was that his design was, arguably, beyond the capabilities of engineering of the time. Utzon spent a couple of years reworking the design and it was 1961 before he had solved the problem of how to build the distinguishing feature - the 'sails' of the roof.

The venture experienced cost blow-outs and there were occasions when the NSW Government was tempted to call a halt. In 1966 the situation - with arguments about cost and the interior design, and the Government withholding progress payments - reached crisis point and Jørn Utzon resigned from the project. The building was eventually completed by others in 1973. After

more than 30 years, the Sydney Opera House has its first interior designed by Utzon. The Utzon Room, a transformed reception hall that brings to life Jørn Utzon's original vision for his masterpiece, was officially opened on September 16 2004.

The Sydney Opera House was included in the National Heritage List in 2005, and inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2007.

Sydney Opera House facts and figures

The Sydney Opera house:

- Was designed by Danish architect Jørn Utzon
- Was opened by Queen Elizabeth II on 20 October 1973
- Presented, as its first performance, The Australian Opera's production of *War and Peace* by Prokofiev
- Cost \$AU 102,000,000 to build
- Conducts 3000 events each year
- Provides guided tours to 200,000 people each year
- Has an annual audience of 2 million for its performances
- Includes 1000 rooms
- Is 185 metres long and 120 metres wide
- Has 2194 pre-cast concrete sections as its roof
- Has roof sections weighing up to 15 tons
- Has roof sections held together by 350 km of tensioned steel cable
- Has over 1 million tiles on the roof
- Uses 6225 square metres of glass and 645 kilometres of electric cable

Here is the next Consular Newsletter

Please, read it and enjoy
When you finish pass it on to your
relatives and friends



**The more you learn about Malta
the more you love it**



Hi Frank,

Many thanks for your no.15 newsletter which is most interesting. Going through it one finds a lot of information which increases his or her knowledge about Malta and Australia.

Renewed thanks and kind regards to you and Josie.

Josephine and Harry Zammit Cordina - Malta 09/09/2013



MEPA gives councils €30,000 for car-free day activities

10 councils and five NGOs to host car-free day activities

Malta has over 300,000 cars...



James J. Piscopo

MEPA has allocated €30,000 for 10 local councils and five NGOs, for the hosting of various activities on car-free day. CEO Johann Buttigieg said MEPA wanted to have an active role to assist local councils to raise awareness on the reduction of carbon emissions.

"When you consider the fact that there are over 300,000 cars in Malta, we hope that such activities take place more often," Buttigieg said.

The chief executive called on the public to make much better use of public transport, saying that the service had improved since its inception.

A committee composed of members of MEPA, the Malta Resources Authority, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, Transport Malta and local councils chose the councils and NGOs that will benefit from the funds.

The councils chosen are Birgu, Kalkara, Floriana, Santa Venera, Attard, Fgura, Dingli, Lija, Mellieha, and

Ghajnsielem (Gozo). The NGOs are Friends of the Earth, Anici Band Club Qormi, Inspire, Don Bosco Oratory and Bicycling Advocacy Club.



Smart City in Malta: Strong future

Speaking at a conference on internet potential for growth, Economic Growth Parliamentary Secretary Edward Zammit Lewis said the government was committed to leading the way by providing the necessary investment and structures.

He confirmed that the government was determined to turn Smart City into an ICT national showcase. "The internet", he said "has become more than a tool, it is now acting as a new working environment for innovation".



The Legend of Zgugina (OR THE LEGEND OF ST. DEMETRIUS)

This legend is set in Gharb, a remote and 'mysterious' village. It is not surprising that dark stories of mystery and imagination like Zgugina grew up round the village of Gharb. In the days of old when there were hardly any made-up roads and little means of transport, even in a small place like Gozo, the village of Gharb seemed remote and almost unreachable.

Down from the village of Gharb is Wied il-Mielah (Salty Valley) leading down to the sea, a place reputed to be a nocturnal landing place for pirates and corsairs who in those days infested the sea between Gozo and Sicily. It was not the first time that in the dead of night these wicked seadogs landed secretly and pillaged and stole whatever they could lay their hands on.

The legend goes that a lady called Zgugina lived in a small house not very far from Wied il-Mielah. She was very poor and her only possession was her loving son

Matthew (Mathew). It so happened that one dark night a boat-load of these men armed to the teeth with knives and swords found their way to the woman's abode and stole her son Matthew. They carried him stealthily away and bundled him in one of their boats. His poor mother only missed him when she woke up early in the morning and she realised at once what had happened.

St Demetrius on horseback

Grief stricken as she was, with tears streaming down her cheeks she hardly knew how she made her way to the little chapel dedicated to St. Demetrius. There she knelt, her face to the floor in front of the titular painting of the saint. "St. Demetrius please bring me back my son, please, please. He is my only possession and my only purpose in life. Please, bring him back to me, dear St. Demetrius. I know you can. Go on your horse and bring him back. Please save him from those fiends and I will light some oil for you in thanksgiving every day until I die".

And thereupon, San Dimitri taking pity on the poor faithful woman tore himself from the painting and riding his gallant red steed galloped down the aisle, left the church and disappeared in a mysterious cloud of dust. pirate ship Zgugina could not believe her eyes. The horse's hooves made so much noise in the confined space of the little chapel. She could even see bright sparks flying from under the horse-shoes as they hit and skidded on the stone flags. But of course it was all a dream for when she looked at the titular painting, St. Demetrius was still there astride his horse as he had been for as long as she could remember. On the other hand, her heart was full of hope and she strongly believed that her dear Saint would not forsake her. So she continued to pray and wring her hands in grief. She would continue praying and pleading until San Dimitri would hear her prayers. Moments later another fascinating thing happened. How was this possible!

She could distinctly hear a horse outside, neighing, snorting and stamping as if it had just returned from a long hard jog. She turned around to gaze at the church door but it was so flooded with bright light that the poor woman could not see anything and she had to shield her eyes.

Then to her great amazement, out of the glare, smiling and with arms outstretched she saw her son Matthew come running towards her. "Thank you St. Demetrius for bringing my son back to me", Zgugina kept saying repeatedly all the while hugging and covering her son with kisses.

I knew he would hear me, Zgugina told her son. Dear St. Demetrius, I love Him so much. When eventually the mother and her son left the chapel they noticed that St. Demetrius had miraculously left an imprint of a horse-shoe in the soft limestone a few paces away from the chapel as a memento of the favour He had granted to Zgugina, the lady from Gharb, Gozo. The mark of the horse-shoe can still be seen to this day. Folk from Gharb recount that on dark and moonless nights when the sea is calm, a ghostly light can still be seen shimmering in the depths of the sea and they believe that it could only be Zgugina's oil still burning in honour of St. Demetrius.



A Tribute to Maltese Buses: A trip down memory lane



The 2nd of July 2011 was the last working day of the traditional Maltese buses. What looked like something that would never happen, "suddenly" materialized!

The cheerful and unusual buses bowed their heads to new, more comfortable buses on the 3rd of July 2011, when Arriva took over the public transport system.

Still visitors to the islands could not believe that they could no longer board the much loved Malta buses!

This page is a tribute to the old, traditional Maltese buses that served the country well for over 100 years!

The classic Maltese buses now live on in books, posters, souvenirs, stamps and all sorts of memorabilia which one can find on the Maltese Islands. More importantly though, these beautiful buses will **live on in the memory of those who were fortunate enough to see or use them!**

Testament to the magnetism that these vintage buses had are the **thousands of photos** that visitors to the Maltese Islands used to take of these buses. These buses were definite attention grabbers and a sure conversation starter!

After all, not a lot of countries have such unique buses that anyone that sees them would want to take a picture of them!

Remembering ...

- the beautifully hand painted **“welcome aboard”** signs at the bus entrance and the driver with a cigarette between his lips giving out tickets and change.

- the stickers, statues, photos, rosary beads, a horn (or two, one can never be too careful with the evil eye), small curtains ... these were all part of the "furniture" in the **driver's cabin!** And yes a statue of St. Mary right next to a mini poster of a famous topless model can co-exist ... they definitely did on Malta buses anyway!

- bus drivers can have **pets** too! Usually a bird in a tiny cage placed strategically somewhere in the driver's cabin, so the driver can hear the bird sing ... whether the bird actually ever opened its mouth (or beak in this case) is an entirely different story!

- the untouchable **jammed windows** ... try to open these windows and you die (at least that's the message that one could see in some of the drivers' eyes if you made the slightest attempt at opening them!)

- the **music** ... anything from the latest summer hits to the driver's favourite festa marches or football anthems.

- impromptu **refueling stops** or wait for it ... a quick **pastizzi stop** where the driver suddenly stops the bus, jumps out of the cabin and disappears ... only to come back a couple of minutes later with half a dozen pastizzi! All this while the bus is still in service.

- the fascinating ability of some of the passengers to suddenly go deaf and ignore the driver completely when he yells **“Full Up!”** ... this resulting in the driver yelling even more, this time round like a mere madman “I said FULL UP Can't you understand Maltese” !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

- and perhaps the No. 1 shocker ... in summer, some bus drivers used to drive their bus **barefoot!**



The Luzzu - A traditional boat that demands attention!

A uniquely Maltese boat, the **luzzu** together with the **dghajsa** is the “unofficial” Maltese national symbol.

The days when Valletta's Grand Harbour was littered with these colourful boats are long gone. However, the **Maltese boat** has stood the test of time and is still alive and kicking today.



Believed to be of Sicilian origin, these multi coloured boats can be found today in all Maltese fishing villages. They are indeed one of the main attractions in **Marsaxlokk**, which is Malta's largest fishing village.

You can also catch a glimpse of these unique Maltese boats at Wied iz-Zurrieq, Marsascala, St Paul's Bay and at many other seaside villages.

When the sea is dead calm and it's a clear and beautiful summer day, you may get the opportunity to **catch a solitary luzzu out at sea** – a soothing and breathtakingly beautiful sight that will make a perfect postcard moment.

This Maltese boat is a **highly sturdy sea craft** and is very much preferred by the local fishermen to other modern sea crafts. The boat is built from wood and it is believed that the design dates back to hundreds of years. In the old days, it was much smaller and had sails. Nowadays, these boats are much larger and are powered by a diesel engine.

Red, blue and yellow are the predominant colours in these boats. Although other bright and vibrant colours can be used as well. The colours of the boat are rarely ever changed, mainly **out of superstition**.

So a fisherman will continue painting his boat in the same colours that his father and grandfather had used before him. Superstition plays an important role with these boats. All Maltese boats have the **Eye of Osiris** painted on them.

The eye is believed to protect the fishermen from any harm when they're at sea.



Better promoted gardens Philip Agius, Guardamangia



Versailles gardens in Paris.

How I wish that we would better promote our public gardens among tourists. In France, one can visit Versailles, Vicomte, Chantilly, Fontainebleau or Saint-Cloud and, in Italy, Boboli Gardens are well known.

Obviously, we do not have that sort of richness, like a Hall of Mirrors, but we do have sculptors who can produce classic statues, engineers to advise on the building of small cascades and fountains, similar to the one outside the Palace, in Valletta. Our baroque heritage must be appreciated better by tourists. Indeed, Maltese youths and children ought also to better appreciate our architecture. Let us try to put more 'classic statues' in public gardens. A cascade, water falling from a two-storey high rock structure, thus enhances buildings, adding some form of a baroque garden.

My idea is to embellish public gardens and make them a living venue with theatre activities, educational tours and an art gallery, especially classic art. How about setting up a group to promote such an idea? Some of our 'old' gardens, like Ġnien Romeo Romano, that was modelled on a French-style garden, and other public gardens could thus be better publicised among tourists. Ġnien tal-Milorda, in Pietà/Floriana and the Ospizju, deserve to be better promoted.

AN OVERVIEW ; Malta Gardens and Parks

Malta Gardens and Parks are quite small, when compared to similar sites in other European countries. However, they make for a pleasant refreshing break from the summer heat. Malta weather is synonymous with little rainfall and lots of sun so the gardens also provide additional “green” to a somewhat dry land.

Many gardens in Malta are located on Malta’s historical bastions and from a lot of these gardens you can get fantastic views of the island’s impressive fortifications!

Others are located at the centre of towns and villages and provide a tranquil ambiance for those seeking to get away from the hustle and bustle of the town. All Malta Gardens can be easily reached by bus. Some have kiosks in them and many have toilet facilities as well. Almost all are wheelchair friendly.



List of the top Malta Gardens and Parks

San Anton Palace and Gardens

San Anton Palace and Gardens are situated in Attard.

The palace is the official residence of the President of Malta. Some of the trees

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Buskett Gardens



Buskett Gardens are the only extensive woodland on the Maltese Islands and were planted by the Knights of Malta to be used as a hunting ground.

Buskett is located some 2 kms away from Rabat Malta.

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Ta Qali National Park

Ta Qali National Park is a wide open space not too far away from Rabat Malta.

Originally used as an airfield during World War II, the park is today Malta’s favourite spot for picnics, especially on Sundays.



Upper Barrakka Gardens



Said to be one of the best points from where you can savor the Grand Harbour in its full glory, the Upper Barrakka Gardens are located near Castille Place in Valletta.

The gardens were planted in 1661.

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HASTINGS GARDENS

Located on top of Valletta's bastions, Hastings Gardens provide great views of Manoel Island, Msida, Floriana, Sliema and Marsamxett Harbour.

They are named after Lord Hastings who was the Governor of Malta.



Argotti Botanical Gardens

Situated in Floriana, these botanical gardens were planted in 1774.

The Knights of Malta used Argotti Gardens for medical purposes. These gardens offer fantastic views of the fortifications of Floriana.



Air Malta to participate in international air show

For the second year running, Air Malta will play an active part in the AirX Malta International Air Show to be held between 28 and 29 September.

The national airline will participate with an Airbus A320 aircraft during the flying display programme on September 29. The 21st edition of the show will be held at the Malta International Airport.



Last year, on the first day of the air show, Air Malta took the opportunity and showcased its brand new aircraft livery. The livery was greeted with great enthusiasm and given a warm welcome by the air show visitors. On the second day, a momentous flypast by the airline's Airbus A320 aircraft in the new livery with the historic aircraft icon, the Spitfire, brought a fitting end to last year's edition. The fresh new look of Air Malta and the flypast were one of the highlights of last year's event.

This year, Air Malta will be launching a competition on social media to select two aviation enthusiasts together with their preferred guest who will be given a chance to meet the legendary Red Arrows pilots during a nighttime cruise through the Grand Harbour. Held annually in September, the Malta International Airshow is one of Malta's largest outdoor family events. The event, organised by the Malta Aviation Society attracts huge crowds of Maltese and foreigners interested in aviation.

Over the years, the air show has attracted many interesting aircraft including F-14s, F-15s, F-16s, F-18s, the L-39, A-4 Skyhawks, Tornados, the B-52, the Spitfire and the Hurricane. The air show has also hosted national display teams including the Red Arrows, Patrouille de France, Frecce Tricolori, the Spanish team Patruila Aguila, the Swiss PC-7 Team, the Breitling Jet Team, and many other types of aircraft from all over the world.



Brian Role` – Malta's International Illusionist



Born in Gozo, Malta, with a love of magic since he was old enough to hold a deck of cards, Brian became a professional magician since 2000, bringing surprise and wonder to audiences around the world since then. With a deep rooted fascination for every aspect of magic and illusion, he has created a variety of close up and stage shows to entertain and amaze.

The Wonderment Of Magic

One major element that drives Brian in his magical career is the wonderment he creates in audiences. The expressions of sheer astonishment as items disappear from their hands during close up magic, or the hushed sense of awe in an audience that sees something impossible happen during stage magic – these are what push Brian to scale even greater heights as a master illusionist.

Brian has also taken his magic off the stage and onto television screens, with appearances in many Maltese shows. Performing set pieces in front of cameras, as well as ad-hoc street magic, Brian Role` has become a household name in Malta.



International Magic Affiliations

The credentials of a magician are as important as his ability to perform, and Brian is a well respected member of numerous prestigious magical organisations around the globe.

He is a full member of both The Magic Circle and the International Brotherhood of Magicians, two well known and highly respected international organisations that define the standards of excellence in this field. In addition, he is also the president of Malta Magician's Society IBM Ring 202, as well as a member of the International Society of Magicians.

An Illusionist Around The Globe

From South America to Asia, Brian's shows have wowed audiences around the world. He has brought the art of magic and illusion to Spain, India, London, Mexico, Greece, Dubai and Malta.

He is also a regular performer on cruise ships, having given numerous shows aboard MS Grand Voyager, MS Color Magic and MS Color Fantasy.

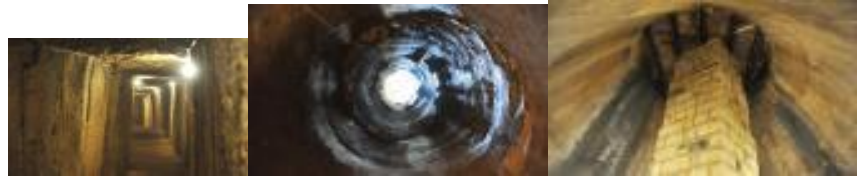
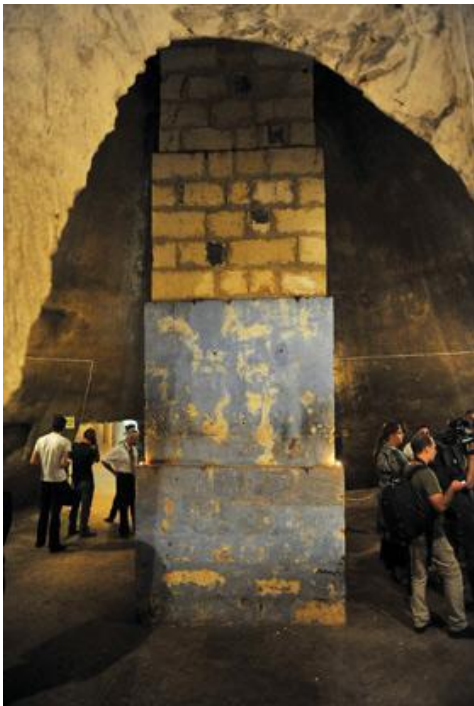
In Mexico, Brian co-starred in a spectacular illusion display, giving 35 performances that brought amazement to the faces of over 250,000 people. He has toured Spain, and even appeared at the exclusive 'Leela Palace' in Goa, India. There, he performed for various MPs and VIPs, along with the owner of the hotel. He has also performed 21 shows at the 'Le Royal

Meridien' in Mumbai.

Of course Brian has not forgotten the land of his birth, and has hosted a large number of variety shows, theatre performances and high level corporate events throughout Malta and Gozo. His TV appearances and shows have made him a household name on the island. Brian continues to develop his magical and illusionist skills, working continuously to bring new and exciting shows to audiences.



The revived WWII air shelter in Malta



A World War II shelter that has lain hidden under the Auberge de Baviere in Valletta for more than 70 years will be opened to the public for the first – and only – time in October.

The 'war experience' was created after volunteers from the Land Department excavated the former well and removed more than 200 sacks of rubble.

The well, which is located underneath the Land Department building, was built during the time of the knights, but Valletta residents drained it in the early 1940s so they could take refuge from bombing raids. The shelter includes a number of 'private rooms'. During a visit, Parliamentary Secretary Michael Farrugia applauded the work.

He said the Government wants to enhance the historic aspect of Valletta and called on other departments to make sure the treasures underneath the capital's surface were exposed and kept in a good condition.

Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna also contributed to the works to make sure the historic aspects of the shelter are kept in the right condition and to create an ambience akin to the war. The shelter will only be open to the public for the Notte Bianca on October 5.



MALTA'S HOLIDAYS AND NATIONAL DAYS

From 1964 to 1971, the Nationalist Administration officially celebrated the National Day as September 21, the anniversary of Independence. "However, because of strong political differences between the Nationalist Party and the Labour Party over the nature and extent of Malta's 'independence', the Labourites always objected to such recognition of September 21."

Therefore, when the Labour Party came to power in 1971, the Government withdrew September 21 and substituted it with September 8, the date celebrating "two famous sieges in Maltese history: the Great Siege by the Turks in 1565 and the second by the Axis powers during World War II". "Now, with the change to December 13 as National Day, September 8 has reverted to its former status as an annual holiday." The cables point out that the Nationalist Party continued to hold annual public meetings on September 21 but these have been "sharply opposed" by the Labour Government.

"In this small island city State, where many political issues loom larger than they might elsewhere, the question of which date is most appropriate for Malta's National Day has become an increasingly bitter one," the cable says.

“As a matter of fact, the Nationalist Party has even stated that, when it is returned to power, September 21 will be reinstated as the official National Day in place of December 13,” it concludes. However, the Nationalist Party opted to have five national days instead of picking one when it was elected in 1987. Yet, this did not quell the decades-long debate on national days and recently many politicians have floated the idea of reaching consensus over one special day.

Prime Minister Joseph Muscat has suggested reducing the number of national days to two. Besides its five national days, Malta also has an additional nine public holidays for good measure, making one wonder whether the Australians are more confused today than they were four decades ago.

Public holidays Malta 2013

Tuesday	01/01/2013	New Year
Sunday	10/02/2013	Saint Paul's Shipwreck
Tuesday	19/03/2013	Saint Joseph
Friday	29/03/2013	Good Friday
Sunday	31/03/2013	Freedom Day Malta
Wednesday	01/05/2013	Labour Day
Sunday	12/05/2013	Mother's Day
Friday	07/06/2013	National Holiday Malta
Sunday	16/06/2013	Father's Day
Saturday	29/06/2013	Saint Peter & Saint Paul
Thursday	15/08/2013	Assumption of Mary
Sunday	08/09/2013	Victory Day Malta
Saturday	21/09/2013	Independence Day Malta
Sunday	08/12/2013	Immaculate Conception
Friday	13/12/2013	Republic Day Malta
Wednesday	25/12/2013	Christmas

NATIONAL DAYS MARKED IN RED



Stuffed Aubergines-Eggplants (Brungiel Mimli)



This is another traditional Maltese recipe of parboiled aubergines stuffed with meat and baked in an oven until done. Many think that cooking aubergines is complicated since you need to put them under salt for a couple of hours before you cook them. When I'm in a hurry I don't do this and I still get finger licking results!

Ingredients (for 2 persons)
 2 medium sized aubergines (eggplants)
 1 onion, sliced
 1 garlic clove, crushed
 300g minced meat (mix of beef and pork)
 2 tbsp margarine (or butter)
 2 tsp tomato purée
 60g breadcrumbs
 4 tablespoons grated cheese, Worcestershire sauce
 grated salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste

Method

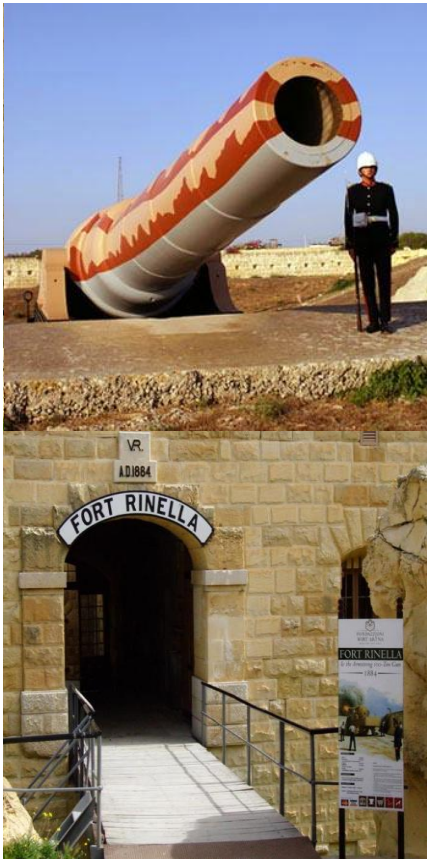
Cut each aubergine in half lengthways. Bring a pan of lightly-salted water to a boil, add the aubergine halves and parboil for about 10 minutes. Remove from the water and scoop out the pulp. Retain the pulp.

In the meantime, melt the margarine (or butter) in a pan, add the onion and garlic and fry for 5 minutes. Now stir in the meat, reserved aubergine pulp, tomato purée, and add a few drops of Worcestershire sauce. Fry, stirring frequently, until the meat is no longer pink. Take off the heat. Stir in the cheese then season to taste with salt and black pepper. Arrange the hollowed out aubergine halves in a baking dish and stuff with the meat mixture. Sprinkle the breadcrumbs over the top then transfer to an oven at 200°C and bake for 30 minutes. Serve hot.

To make this meal more substantial you can add sliced potatoes and onions. Start the potatoes about 45 minutes before the aubergines.



FORT RINELLA – Kalkara, Malta



The Fort stands just east of the entrance to Grand Harbour and was built between 1878 – 1886 by British engineers. Its purpose was to house the Armstrong '100 ton gun,' the largest cannon in the world, (which is still here) with its barrel of nearly 10 metres long and the capability of firing a 1 ton shell up to 8 miles.

It could pierce 21 inch steel armour at a distance of 3 miles. It was installed at Fort Rinella in response to the Italian army who equipped themselves with battleships boasting very strong armour and similar cannons onboard. The British also hoped to safeguard the route to India through the Mediterranean and Suez by equipping both Gibraltar & Malta with the '100 ton guns.' During World War 2, the Fort was used as a lookout point and to store supplies.

The museum inside shows in detail the lives of the garrison soldiers based there & explains how the huge gun was fired using a steam powered hydraulic system. During the tour, volunteer guides wear period uniforms and use original equipment as well as perform reenactments including the firing of an old Victorian cannon, all to make the history of Fort Rinella come to life for the visitor. In fact, once every year in May, the huge '100 ton' gun is fired to keep it active and rightly attracts a large audience.

Fort Rinella is located in Kalkara, just along the coast from Valletta's Grand Harbour, and is open daily. Check times for the reenactments etc so as not to miss out.



First Holy Communion for a very special five-year-old Curia grants permission for girl with a brain tumour to have ceremony early



Little Shezyan Zammit slips into a velvet dress that is reminiscent of her favourite princess, Cinderella, and prances around her parents' apartment, chattering excitedly.

She can hardly contain her anticipation for Sunday when she will receive her First Holy Communion, aged five.

The Curia granted her special permission to fulfil her dream before she starts receiving chemotherapy in October to remove a brain tumour.

Her parents, Vince Carl and Marisa Zammit, recount how, a few months ago, she started to run a high fever, which left her listless and lethargic.

"She would complain of severe headaches. At times, she would scream in pain," Ms Zammit, 28, says. "She ended up spending more days sick at home than at school." In April, the couple had one of the worst experiences a parent could go through: their daughter had developed a tumour at the back of her head.

"Doctors told us to enjoy her as much as possible and give her all she desired. What did they mean?" Ms Zammit remembers thinking at the time. "If the chemotherapy doesn't work, they would need to operate," Mr Zammit, 39, explains. "We were told there was a high risk of her either suffering brain damage or... passing away."

Mr Zammit suffers from neurofibromatosis, a disorder in which the nerve tissue grows tumours that could be benign but may cause serious damage by compressing nerves and other tissues. "It was bad enough being told that Shezyan and our one-year-old son, Ezekiel, might inherit the condition, but knowing that Shezyan has a brain tumour..." His voice trails off. Life has dealt the family a couple of rough blows. Living in a rented San Gwann apartment, they battled poverty, struggling to put food on the table while paying for Shezyan's numerous, pricey medications.

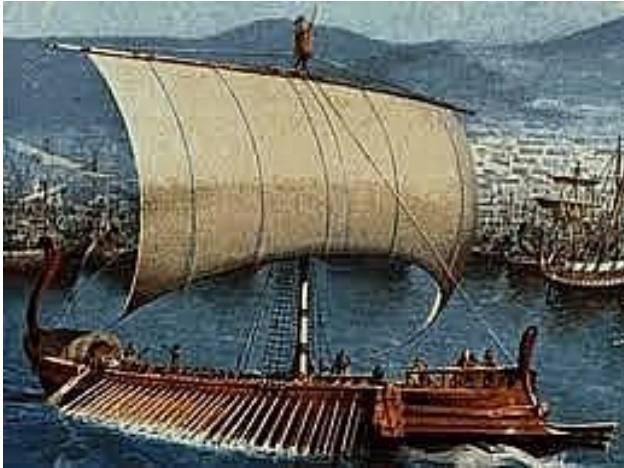
Mr Zammit works as a porter and his wife had to give up her job to care for their little girl. Yet a ray of hope came in the form of Daqqa t'Id foundation, an NGO that helps the sick, run by Charles Saliba. Mr Saliba was shocked to find out that the girl he had heard was ill was actually Shezyan, whom he had known before.

He set about tirelessly working to bring together her two greatest loves: princesses and the Holy Mary, of whom she is a big devotee. It was Shezyan's greatest wish to receive Holy Communion before her health deteriorated further, a wish that received the full backing of paediatrician Victor Calvagna. Through the intervention of the parish priest and numerous sponsors, Mr Saliba managed to organise a Holy Communion Mass on Sunday, which will be followed by a lavish reception featuring horse-drawn carriages and a red carpet. About 300 people, including Shezyan's schoolmates, are invited. Later, on September 19, President George Abela will be receiving Daqqa t'Id and the Zammit family. "I can't reveal much more except that Sunday will be an absolutely special day for a very special little girl. "It will be packed with surprises. Shezyan is loved by everyone in San Gwann," Mr Saliba said. At that, Shezyan runs into her bedroom and emerges with a picture of the Virgin Mary, clutched close to her heart. What does she tell the Virgin Mary? "That I love her very, very much," the little girl replies. "I ask the Virgin Mary to heal me."



VILLAGES IN GOZO - GHARB AND TA' PINU

Gharb and Ta Pinu are closely connected since Karmni Grima who heard Our Lady talking to her came from Gharb



Remains of the Phoenician occupation were found at Gharb and according to Can G. Piet Agius de Soldanis 'ix-Xaqqufija' was a small hamlet where Romans used to live in the days of old.

In this remote village we find Byzantine names like 'Kardusa' near San Dimitri. Chev. Vincent Bonello explains that it might be possible that around the 7th Century, after being expelled from North Africa, some monks might have built chapels or monasteries in these areas. It could also be possible that the Byzantines inhabited the Islands before the Arabs did.

After the Arabs took over these islands Arabic became the official language. More than any other village in Gozo the older people still use such Arabic words as 'Wied id-Dluka', 'Wied ir-Rahab', 'Ghammar' and 'cuplajs', 'srew', 'ghannewwel' in their every day language.

About 60 years ago the people of Gharb used to wear the 'Kabozza' in the cold winter nights. The Arabs introduced the 'Kabozza' in these islands and it was always associated only with the village of Gharb. It was a kind of a cloak of heavy material with a hood and reaches down almost to the ankles.

Language scholars often cross over from Malta to listen to old people from Gharb talking in pure Gozitan dialect. Great Siege of Malta During the Great Siege of Malta in 1565 Gozo could not offer much help but this village was more or less involved owing to its position in the West of the Island of Gozo. Smoke signals used to be sent whenever enemy vessels were sighted. Grandmaster La Vallette was happy with the small part that Gozo played in the Great Siege. 'Kap il-Malti' served for many years as a sentinel against attacks from enemy ships.

An extremely interesting Folklore Museum centred around old-time tools and trades is open to the public on a daily basis. It is managed by the Local Council and the small fee is real value for money. Speaking from experience I found it very interesting indeed.

This Village is situated on the West side of the Island. It is not small in area but has a small population. It is a very quiet locality and is very popular with foreigners who settle in Gozo. The locals tend to be rather secluded although friendly and helpful. Many of them keep a few animals like sheep and goats and like to work in the fields on a part-time basis. Behind the village further to the West a wide expanse of open country and rocky terrain adds further allure to the village. From the cliffs one can see an open view of the Mediterranean to the West.



The Sanctuary of Ta' Pinu is an architectural masterpiece built in an isolated site in the island of Gozo, in the valley between the villages of Gharb and Ghammar. It is a shrine to Our Lady of Ta' Pinu, that welcomes all the visitors who wish to pray or simply admire the splendid sculptures and craftsmanship of designs on the Maltese stone inside the church. The Basilica of Ta' Pinu is one of the most visited places on the island of Gozo – Malta, not only by Maltese people but also by many tourists. Inside you will

contemplate great architecture and witness the devotion of the Maltese, expressed on items like helmets, casts, photos, babygrows hanged on the walls as offerings from promises attended by Our Lady.

Removal of City Gate graffiti to cost €4,000



Removing the graffiti sprayed on the new Valletta entrance last month will cost €4,000, Times of Malta has learnt.

A spokeswoman for the Infrastructure Ministry yesterday said the works will start on Monday and will take “one or a few days”. Studies have been held on ways to remove it without damaging the stonework. The black stencil, depicting a girl and a boy arching their arms to form a heart, appeared on the left side of City Gate overlooking the ditch in the early hours on August 29.

Il-Papa Franġisku joħroġ il-kartiera biex iħallas flokk

Charmaine Attard



Fil-jiem li għaddew, il-Papa Franġisku mar jiltaqa' mal-grupp ta' pellegrini li akkumpanjaw lill-Kappillan tal-Parroċċa ta' Santa Lucia di Pescantina li mar Ruma biex jagħti bħala rigal lill-Papa l-karrozza *Renault 4*. Il-Papa mar bl-istess karozza fil-post fejn kien hemm il-pellegrini, biex jagħtihom merħba.

Hekk kif tifel resaq lejn il-Papa biex jagħtih flokk, il-Kappillan Dun Renzo Roca qallu li normalment il-flokkijiet ibigħuhom €5 biex jigbru fondi għall-attivitajiet li jorganizzaw fil-parroċċa, iżda li dak kien rigal għalih.

Madanakollu l-Papa baqa' jinsisti u ħareġ il-kartiera u ħallas għall-flokk hu stess