



THE MALTESE NEWSLETTER

The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

THE MOTTO - BUILDING BRIDGES NOT WALLS

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Grandmaster

Gardjola Gardens

Gardjola Gardens in Senglea's bastions offer spectacular views of the Grand Harbour

The gardens were planned by Grandmaster De La Sengle in 1551 with a lovely guard tower built on the tip of the bastions. The guard tower, 'Il-gardjola', has various symbols sculpted on such as an eye, an ear and the crane bird, representing guardianship and observance protecting the Maltese shores.

Our readers
are from all over
the world

The Gardjola is located in Senglea, perched on the bastion with fantastic panoramic views over Marsa, Valletta, Grand Harbour and Fort St. Angelo

A Sad Day in Maltese History

THE RIOTS OF THE 19 JUNE 1919

The four victims: Karmenu Abela (Valletta), Giuseppe Bajada (Xagħra, Gozo), Manwel Attard (Sliema) and Wenzu Dyer (Vittoriosa)

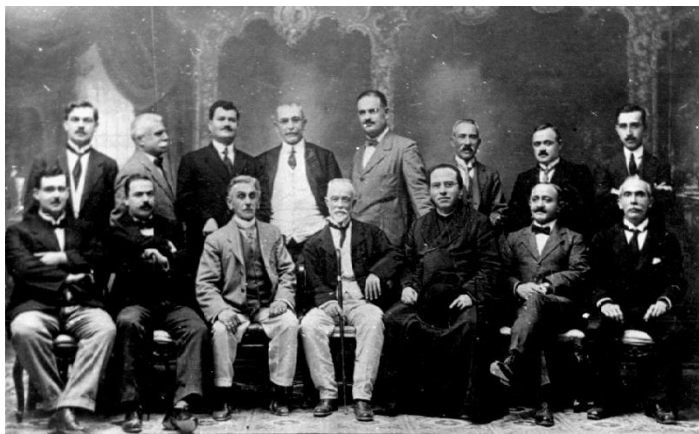


Sette Giugno (7 June) is one of Malta's national days. It is the day to commemorate the death of four Maltese rioters on June 7, 1919. The incident is now marked as a day when Maltese nationalism first surfaced during the British Colonial period. This was a time when Malta's economy was dominated by its status as a military outpost. The price of grain had risen sharply, and prices of bread were to increase. This was largely due to the fact that Maltese merchants were crippled by the costs of insuring their cargo, due to the threat to shipping in the Mediterranean.

The flour merchants pleaded with the British government of the time to allow a subsidy, but they were scoffed at. And so, bread prices spiked and the life of Maltese people went from hard to harder. On the day, they converged on Valletta, and the government of the time had no idea what was in store. It completely underestimated the gravity of the situation.

The first spark of unrest centred on the Maltese flag defaced with the Union Jack flying above the "A la Ville de Londres." This incident sparked the uprising. The death of the President of the Court some days earlier had required all governmental departments to fly the Union Flag at half mast, including the Bibliothèque buildings in Piazza Regina, and the meteorological office.

The crowd moved on to the meteorological offices, housed in a Royal Air Force turret. After breaking the glass panes, the mob entered the offices ransacking and destroying everything inside. Some individuals climbed onto the turret, removing the Union Jack and throwing it into the street. The crowd burned the flag along with furniture taken from the offices nearby.



A Rare 1919 Photograph, Depicting The members who worked to pacify The Sette Giugno Riots. Monsignor DePiro is clearly seen seated next to Dr. Filippo Sciberras.

In Strada Teatro, the offices of the Daily Malta Chronicle were broken into, with pieces of metal jammed in the workings of the presses to break them. While this was taking place, other crowds were attacking the homes of perceived supporters of the Imperial government and profiteering merchants in Strada Forni. Ten soldiers, led by Lieutenant Shields, approached the offices of the Chronicle, which

were surrounded by a crowd which then began to throw stones and other objects at the soldiers. The same happened in Strada Forni, where six soldiers were trying to stem a crowd of thousands.

The soldiers broke and opened fire. The first victim of the uprising, Manwel Attard, fell in front of the Cassar Torregiani House. Other individuals were injured. Ġużè Bajjada was hit near Strada Teatro, and fell on top of the Maltese flag he was carrying. The officer in charge began shouting for the firing to cease. Meanwhile, in the Chronicle offices, an officer ordered his men outside, since there was an evident smell of gas in the building. To clear a way out, the officer ordered a soldier to shoot low, away from the crowd. This shot hit Lorenzo Dyer, who tried to run away.

Disturbances continued the next day, with crowds attacking the palace of Colonel Francia, who also owned a flour-milling machine. Royal Malta Artillery soldiers were used to protect Francia's house, but they did not fire on their own people. The crowd forced its way in and threw furniture, silverware and other objects outside. In the evening, one hundred and forty navy marines arrived, clearing the house and street of crowds. Carmelo Abela was in one of the side doorways of Francia's house, calling for his son. Two marines proceeded to arrest him, and when he resisted, a marine ran him through the stomach with a bayonet. Abela died on June 16.

Boomerang, curved throwing stick used chiefly by the Aborigines of Australia for hunting and warfare. Boomerangs are also works of art, and Aborigines often paint or carve designs on them related to legends and traditions. In addition, boomerangs continue to be used in some religious ceremonies and are clapped together, or pounded on the ground, as accompaniment to songs and chants.



The Aborigines used two kinds of boomerangs and many varieties of boomerang-shaped clubs. The returning boomerang (the name derives from the word used by the Turawal tribe in New South Wales) is light, thin and well balanced, 12–30 inches (30–75 cm) in length, and up to 12 ounces (about 340 grams) in weight.

It varies in shape from a deep, even curve to almost straight sides of an angle. The ends are twisted or skewed in opposite directions either as the boomerang is being made or after it has been heated in ashes.



The boomerang is thrown with a vigorous action in which the thrower may run a few steps to gain greater **impetus**. It is held at one end, above and behind the thrower's shoulder, with the concave edge to the front, and swung forward rapidly with the flatter side underneath. Just before release, added impetus is given by a strong wrist movement; it is this spin, together with the skew of the edges, which determines its unique flight pattern. If thrown downward or parallel to the ground, it sweeps upward to a height of 50 feet (15 metres) or more. When thrown so that one end strikes the ground, it ricochets into the air at terrific speed, spinning endwise. It completes a circle or oval 50 yards (45 metres) or more wide and then several smaller ones as it drops to the ground near the thrower. A figure-eight course may also be followed.

Returning boomerangs were used only in eastern and western Australia as playthings, in tournament competition, and by hunters to imitate hawks for driving flocks of game birds into nets strung from trees. The returning boomerang is generally considered to have developed from the nonreturning types, which swerve in flight.

The nonreturning boomerang is longer, straighter, and heavier than the returning variety. With it animals were maimed and killed, while in warfare it caused serious injuries and death. One type has a picklike hook at one end. Boomerang-shaped, non-returning weapons were used by the ancient Egyptians, by Native Americans of California and Arizona, and in southern India for killing birds, rabbits, and other animals.

Today boomerangs are often made of high-grade plywood and fibre glass. Boomerang competitions—measuring the speed and distance of thrown boomerangs as well as the accuracy and catching ability of the thrower—are held regularly throughout Europe, North America, Australia, and Japan.

VERDALA PALACE and “IL-BUSKETT”



Majestic view of Verdala Palace in the heart of the Woodland of Buskett.

With the arrival of the Knights of the Order of St. John, various activities started to be introduced in Malta. One of these was hunting for pleasure. Although land in Malta was not conducive to this kind of activity, a few kilometres away from Mdina there was a small wooded area, which became a favourite hunting place. Grand Master La Valette built his small hunting lodge in the area. Later on, another Grand Master, namely Verdalle

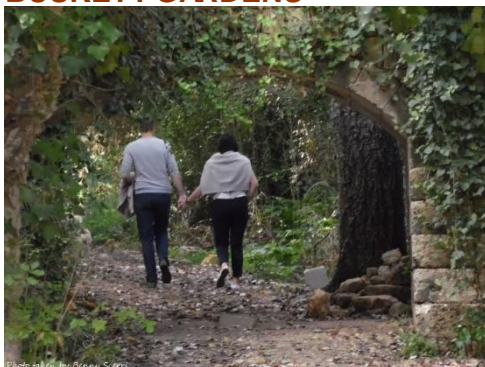
decided to build a proper countryside fortified palace next to this hunting lodge. The palace was built to the designs of Glormu Cassar, the Maltese architect. The palace is surrounded by a deep and wide ditch, and although it was never meant to be a fortification, the architect planned it to resemble a fortified place.



There are four turrets at each corner, and it gives the impression of a very strong fort. The rooms inside the palace are richly decorated. There are frescoes depicting the most important events in the life history of Grand Master Verdalle, which were painted by the Florentine artist Filippo Paladini. There are other interesting pieces of furniture which enhance the large rooms of this palace. During the 18th century the palace was restored by Grand Master Vilhena who mostly concentrated on the upper floor. Here we find paintings depicting the various buildings that were built by this grand master in Malta. The Palace has had a varied history. It was also used by the British administration to hold French officers

as prisoners at the beginning of the 19th century. The palace was then used by the Governors as their summer residence and today, following restoration works it is being used as the President's summer residence. On the same grounds of the palace there is a small but highly interesting church, dedicated to St Anthony the Abbot.

BUSKETT GARDENS



The Buskett Gardens are located in a fertile valley located to the south of Rabat and just east of Dingli. The gardens are at their best in the spring but they offer shade from the harsh mid-summer sun and offer a quite place for a walk in the winter months. Verdala Palace is located on the edge of the Gardens.

Many different trees and shrubs grow in the gardens but there are also many fruit-bearing trees there as well. This is one of the greenest areas in Malta. Indigenous forests once covered Malta, but trees were cut down for shipbuilding in the era when galleons plied the Mediterranean waters and for agricultural purposes.

Perhaps the Buskett Gardens offer a glimpse of what Malta looked like in those days. The gardens are very popular with Maltese people. People often visit the gardens to go for walks in the peaceful settings of the garden and to enjoy a picnic in the shade of the trees, or to work in woodland area. The gardens are also the site of the popular feast of Imnarja (the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul) which is celebrated on June 29th. Hundreds of people flock to the gardens the night before the 29th to eat the traditional Maltese dish of Rabbit Stew cooked in wine and to listen to traditional folk music and singing and then in the morning there is the annual agricultural show.

Buskett Garden is Malta's only large area of woodland. It was planted by the Knights as a hunting ground. It lies next to Verdala Palace, in a valley, just inland from Dingli Cliffs. Buskett has vineyards, oranges, olive and lemon groves, and is heavily wooded with native, hardy species such as Mediterranean pines.

You can stick to the pathways lined with ivy-clad stone walls or venture off into the woodland. From autumn to spring you are bound to find plenty of interest, from wild flowers, natural springs, and woodland creatures. The wood leads up hill to the more formal gardens of Verdala Palace.

Panopies of foliage spread their shade over the valley floor, providing a welcome respite against the heat of summer. There are orange and cypress trees, irregular cactuses, leguminous carobs, aromatic firs and the Judas tree, which foretells Easter with its pink blossom.

The Verdala Palace is perched on a hilltop overlooking Buskett Garden. It was built by Grand Master Hughes de Verdalle in 1588 as a summer residence. It is now used as a summer residence by the President. Following restoration, this elegant building now serves as the presidents summer residence. The palace is not open to the public, but it does offer a notable landmark visible clearly from Dingli Cliffs, towering as it does over Buskett woodland.

New-look Malta retains Waterpolo title – Valhmoor Camilleri



Jordan Camilleri holds the MVP trophy with Malta coach Karl Izzo (left) and his assistant Anthony Farrugia.

The waterpolo national team retained the EU Nations Cup title for a second successive time with a perfect record of five wins out of five in Szczecin, Poland, yesterday (21 May 2017).

Coach Karl Izzo named various young players in his squad for the tournament as he continued with his preparations ahead of the European Championship qualifiers.

Andreas Galea, Miguel Zammit, Jake Tanti and Zack Mizzi were all handed a chance to stake their claim in a team that played without chief goalscorer Steve Camilleri who has just finished his season in the Italian league.

Malta brushed aside Switzerland (16-8), Ireland (19-9), and Poland (14-4) before they faced their biggest test against South Africa.

The match was evenly balanced with the Maltese sealing victory when winning a high-scoring final session 6-4 for a 12-10 win, assuring themselves top of the spot.

Yesterday, the national team played their remaining match against England and finished in style when racing to an 11-6 victory.

“Winning this tournament fills us with great confidence,” Izzo told Times of Malta.

“Five wins from as many matches against very strong opposition is very encouraging. We fielded a relatively new side here. There was a very friendly atmosphere in the group and that was mirrored in our matches.

“I would like to thank ASA president Joe Caruana Curran and his Executive Committee for making possible the team’s participation in this tournament. For us it’s very important to keep figuring in this kind of competitions for the players to gain more experience at this level. “There was also great support from the technical staff, particularly Anthony Farrugia and Marco Vella.” **RESULTS: Malta vs Switzerland - 16-8 Malta vs Ireland - 19-9 Malta vs Poland - 14-4. Malta vs South Africa - 12-10 Malta vs England - 11-6.**

timesofmalta.com



MGR. JOSE' AGIUS JIKTEB MILL-BRAZIL

Ghaziz Frank,

Mill-gdid grazzi hafna tal- Bulettin tal-emigranti u PROSET tassew! Qed nitghalle m hafna taghrif dwar Malta u dwar l-Awstralja li qatt qabel ma kont tghallimt. Jien ilni nieqes minn Malta u nghix il-Brazil il-fuq minn 56 sena. Satattant, kwazi l-familja kollha tieghi jnsabu f' diversi bliet tal-Awstralja. Ghalekk, is-safar ghalija kien dejjem ta' mrar u ta' ferh fl-istess hin. U maz-zmien, in-nostalgija aktar tikber. Ghalekk illum qed nibghatlek poezija ohra li jsimha "NOSTALGIJA".

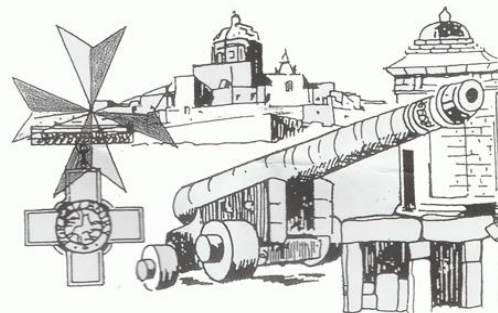
NOSTALGIJA

Bhax-xemx tax-xitwa tiddi,
Tiddi u ma ssahhanx.
Bhan-nar gewwa huggiega
Jahraq u ma jdahhanx.

Hekk hija n-nostalgija
Li tinbet spiss fil-qlub,
Meta jien stess minn gewwa
Inhossni tant midrub..

Nixtieq li nerga lura
Lejn tat-tfulija s-snin,
Niltaqa' dawk li dari
Minni tant mahbubin.

U nerga nzur it-toroq,
Nghaddi mill-moghdijiet
Bil-hofo u l-ghadajjar,
Fejn jigru l-ilmijiet.



Bejn hdura tal-ghelieqi,
Mizghuda b' silla l-gmiel
jew bl-isfar takingliza
U l-qamh jizbel ghammiel.

Nilmah lil dawk li darba
Iss' ilu hafna snin
Kienu shabi fl-iskola...
Uhud diga mejtin!

Iz-zmien ma jergax lura,
Fadalli t-tifkiriet:
Titnissel nostalgjijs,
Jimirhu l-hsibijiet!

Jose' Agius (Rolândia, - Brazil : 27/05/2017)





PERSONAL EXPERIENCE – John Micallef, NSW –

Australia Thank you for the Maltese Newsletter.

As you may be aware I am a recent subscriber and I really appreciate touching base and keeping in contact with my family heritage through the varied and interesting articles. I particularly enjoy the testimonials and life experience stories of the contributors to the newsletter as well as the historical features and travel experiences in Malta. The format and presentation of articles in the newsletter make it very readable and it is a credit to you and the producers of the newsletter.

My background and association with Maltese culture has not always been positive. I was the youngest of 8 siblings of a migrant family from Malta. I was the only child born in Australia. My mother and 7 children arrived in Australia on the 26th December 1949. My father preceded her 3 months earlier to find an abode and work. It must have been a much desired reunion when my mother arrived because I was born on 6th October 1950, not much over 9 months later. My family referred to me as the "little kangaroo",

I was an Australian, the only member of our family that was at that point in time. Growing up in Australia, I cherished my Aussie status and did all I could to disassociate myself from my Maltese connection. I refused to speak Maltese and always responded in English when family spoke to me in Maltese. I was immersed in the Maltese language and understood it well and this held me in good stead in my adult years as I will explain later.

During my school years, I would avoid friendships with other Maltese even though the schools I attended at Our Lady of Mt Carmel Wentworthville and St. Simon Stock College Pendle Hill had a high Maltese student enrolment. To my shame I would even mock Maltese kids and families, even my own. Most of the Maltese boys lived on chicken farms or market gardens and they didn't care much for sport especially rugby league. On sports days these boys would often prefer to be on their farms attending to animals or their pigeons. I got on really well with my Anglo-Australian friends as well as with Maltese acquaintances of which I had a few mainly through the contacts my older brother had.

I never experienced the racism my brother had experienced mainly because I was fair skinned partly due to the fact that my great grandfather was English. His name was Alfred George Peckham. He served in the Royal Navy and was stationed in Valletta. I was named after him, Alfred John Micallef, though my six older sisters didn't like the name Alfred so they brought me up as John. My brother had a darker Maltese complexion than me and along with his Maltese friends was called a "wog" which he and I found hurtful.

As a young adult I would refuse to show much interest in Maltese girls and my brother and I let our parents know we would not get involved with Maltese girls though I did date a couple. Five of my sisters married Maltese men, one sister married an Italian/Australian man, my brother married an English girl and I married an Australian.

My interest in Maltese culture and history was kindled when I was 49. After many years of being a teacher and ultimately a school principal where I encouraged children to embrace their cultural background and heritage I decided that I should practise what I had been preaching to my multicultural students. In 1999, at the age of 49, my wife and I visited Malta for 3 weeks. I fell in love with Malta the moment I laid eyes on it from the window of the plane. My eyes were filled with tears and I was overcome by emotion as the plane came in for landing. As I left the Air Malta plane with excitement and set foot on Maltese ground I fell to my knees and kissed the earth. I felt I was finally home even though Australia will always be my first home.

Over the next 3 weeks I absorbed the culture, history and the connection with relatives I had never met previously. After being immersed in the Maltese language as a child even though I refused to speak the language, I had an outpouring of language that I had barely ever used and I spoke Maltese at every opportunity.

I was encouraged and helped by the generous and understanding Maltese people with whom I conversed. This was particularly beneficial to me later on when my mother developed dementia, lost the use of English and reverted back to her first language, Maltese. I was able to comfortably relate to her during those difficult times.

Since my first visit to Malta in 1999 I have been back in 2000, 2005, 2008 and in 2016 I took my 2 adult children to Malta to show them their heritage. I have always encouraged my children and 7 grand children to be proud of their cultural background and heritage and hopefully they will all experience first hand the beauty of Malta's culture and heritage. [The Maltese e-Newsletter is much appreciated and I will pass it on to my family members and friends to maintain that special link we all share.](#)

BIS-SAHHA Traditional Wine Festival in Santa Lucija next month



GOZONEWS.COM

Next month sees the return of the Bis-Sahha Wine Festival in the quaint village of Santa Lucija in Gozo – a festival of wine, live music and local food, which is organised by Ta' Klula Foundation.

This traditional festival is very popular with locals and visitors alike and will take place in the main square, on Saturday, the 17th of June.

Visitors to the festival will be able to enjoy wine and traditional food, with live entertainment taking place during the evening. Starting from 8.00pm onwards, entrance is free.

Ta' Klula Folkloristic Foundation of Santa Lucija warmly invites everyone to join them for this special evening. Santa Lucija, Gozo may be reached via bus 313. The last bus is at 11.00pm.

Valletta's Teatru Rjal may get a 'convertible roof'



Miriam Dalli

The Labour Party in government would launch consultations and evaluate the potential of installing a retractable roof over Renzo Piano's open-air theatre in Valletta.

Whilst keeping in mind the aesthetic features of the ruins of the former Royal Opera House, a Labour government would look into how the installation of a retractable roof – if even possible – can be done. The open-air theatre has

been the subject of much controversy, with many questioning the use of a roofless theatre. Its current design limits the use by artists whilst to increased noise complaints by residents – who according to Prime Minister Joseph Muscat also want to file a class action lawsuit. “We have no doubt that this is a controversial proposal and we know it's a delicate matter. We wanted to include it in the electoral manifesto because the site is underutilized and because the numerous complaints I receive from residents will put the site out of action,” Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said. Flanked by Culture Minister Owen Bonnici and Tourism Minister Edward Zammit Lewis, Muscat said the theatre was designed roofless because there had been “no budget”.

The challenges facing the proposal will not only be one of aesthetics but also of “complicated engineering” and sound proofing. The Labour government, Bonnici added, would look into the possibility of utilizing the underground vaults. According to the minister, the proposal to install a retractable roof originated from the artists themselves. “We will consult with everyone... we will treat the matter as delicately as possible,” the minister pledged. timesofmalta.com



The Statue of Liberty

The Statue of Liberty (Liberty Enlightening the World) is a 225-ton, steel-reinforced copper female figure, 151 ft 1 in. (46.05 m) in height, facing the ocean from Liberty Island¹ in New York Harbor. The right hand holds aloft a torch, and the left hand carries a tablet upon which is inscribed: "July IV MDCCLXXVI."

The statue was designed by Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi of Alsace as a gift to the United States from the people of France to memorialize the alliance of the two countries in the American Revolution and their abiding friendship. The French people contributed the \$250,000 cost.

The 150-foot pedestal was designed by Richard M. Hunt and built by Gen. Charles P. Stone, both Americans. It contains steel underpinnings designed by Alexander Eiffel of France to support the statue. The \$270,000 cost was borne by popular subscription in this country. President Grover

Cleveland accepted the statue for the United States on Oct. 28, 1886.

The Statue of Liberty was designated a National Monument in 1924 and a World Heritage Site in 1984. On Sept. 26, 1972, President Richard M. Nixon dedicated the American Museum of Immigration, housed in structural additions to the base of the statue. In 1984 scaffolding went up for a major restoration and the torch was extinguished on July 4. It was relit with much ceremony July 4, 1986, to mark its centennial.



POPE AND PRESIDENT MEET

Octopus Stew – Stuffat tal-qarnit

by www.amaltesemouthful@gmail.com - Marlene Zammit



Every time my family had either bought an octopus or my dad managed to get one somehow when he went fishing, this is what we made. Maltese octopus stew. A stew made with Mediterranean staples – onions and garlic, tomatoes, olives, capers and wine.

We didn't have octopus stew very often in our house but it was a real occasion when we did. It was only now and again that my dad would bring one home when he went fishing and I am not

sure how he managed to catch it. I think it was always tangled in his line by accident. In Malta octopus are caught by spear fishing. Every time octopus would get mentioned in my family the stories of the great octopus catches would start flooding. We knew of octopus being caught in Malta in Gnejna Bay or the beaches close by.

I made this octopus stew in a tomato sauce. When my family made this stew, potatoes were also added to make a one pot meal. I have done this in the past but have decided going forward that I won't. I prefer to eat the stew with roast potatoes. The other options are to eat the stew with crusty bread, or how my girls will be eating their stew tonight, with pasta.

Before cooking your octopus you should tenderise the octopus with a mallet or rolling pin. It also helps to tenderise your octopus by freezing it first. Leave out to defrost for a few hours, tenderise with a mallet or rolling pin and then cook as per the instructions. I hope you enjoy your octopus as much as I do!

Cook time 1 hour 35 mins

This can be made as a one pot meal by adding 6 peeled and quartered potatoes after simmering for 30 minutes. Otherwise this can be served with crusty bread or even pasta. The octopus can be tenderised by using a rolling pin or mallet. Another way to tenderise the octopus is to freeze it first for a few days and then defrost before cooking.

Ingredients

- 3 onions finely diced
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 3 garlic cloves crushed and chopped
- 1 kg octopus (I bought two small octopus) tenderised with a mallet and chopped into 5 cm pieces
- 4 tomatoes (500 grams) chopped
- 20 black olives
- 2 tablespoons capers
- 150 ml red wine
- lemon zest of 1 lemon and a squeeze of lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon each of thyme, mint, basil and parsley
- 6 potatoes peeled and quartered (optional)
- 100 grams peas (optional)

- Chopped herbs and lemon zest to garnish
- Olive oil for frying
- Salt and pepper

Instructions

1. In a heavy based dish fry the onions on low heat for ten minutes.
2. Add the tomato paste and fry for 1 minute.
3. Add the garlic and fry for 1 minute.
4. Fry the octopus for ten minutes and stir continuously.
5. Add the tomatoes and cook for ten minutes.
6. Add the olives, capers, wine, lemon zest and a squeeze of lemon juice, and the herbs.
7. Simmer for 45 minutes with the lid on.
8. If adding potatoes add half an hour after stew is simmering.
9. Once the stew has been simmering for 45 minutes add in the peas.
10. Simmer for a further 15 minutes without the lid on.
11. Serve with roast potatoes, or crusty bread, or pasta.
12. Garnish with some chopped herbs and lemon zest.

The Mighty Knights of Malta!



The Knights of Malta (full name: the Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem) were formed in 1085 and were originally a community of monks who were responsible for taking care of the sick at the Hospital of St John in Jerusalem. Years later, the Knights became a military order who were responsible for defending the crusader territory in the Holy Lands.

Hundreds of years later in 1530, the Knights arrived in Malta as they had been forced to leave the island of Rhodes by the Turks. Apparently the Knights were given the choice of Malta and Tripoli and chose Malta as they were said to prefer it. Once the Knights were settled on the island they set about transforming it and created extremely powerful defences, fortresses and watch towers as well as a number of churches and palaces. They also created the incredible city of Valletta, which the grandmaster at the time, Jean Parisot de La Valette declared should be "a city built by gentlemen for gentlemen." It is still an incredible city, as well as a recognised UNESCO World Heritage site.

The Knights of Malta were made up from wealthy European aristocratic families, typically from Italy, Spain, England and Portugal. Although they were volunteer Christian crusaders, they lived very extravagant lifestyles! The strategic location of Malta made it an obstacle for attacks from Muslim countries on Christian Europe and indeed there were many Ottoman attacks between 1551 and 1644. The most famous of all the attacks was the Grand Siege of Malta that took place in 1565. In this battle, 30,000 Turks were defeated by 600 Knights and 600 soldiers and volunteers. It was quite an incredible battle and not one that the Ottoman empire expected to lose when they set out! However, the military knowledge of the Knights and the bravery of the Maltese people provided to be a winning combination! This win is said to have triggered the decline in the Ottoman empire and it's power over the Mediterranean and Europe!

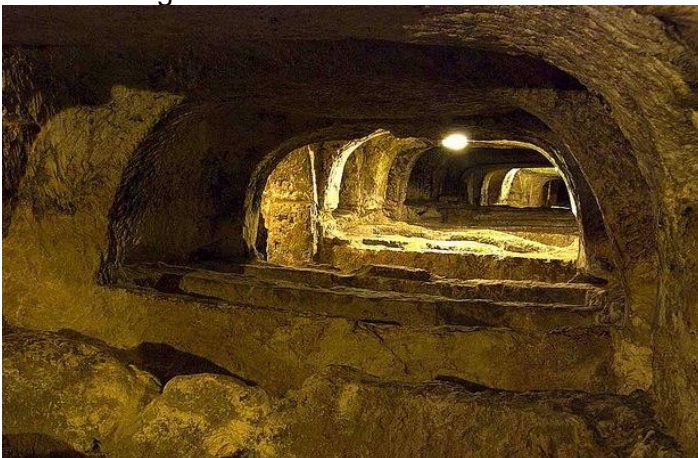
Malta's Catacombs, Aliens & The Disappearing Children; True or Urban Myth?



Originally Posted by National Geographic MALTA, VALETTA – Tradition holds that before the British government sealed up several tunnels, one could walk from one end of Malta to the other underground. One of the labyrinths, discovered by excavators, is the Hypogeum of Hal Saflieni, in which excavators discovered the bones of over 33,000 people who had been sacrificed by an ancient pagan neolithic cult.

National Geographic, Aug. 1940 issue, told of several school children who had disappeared without a trace in the Hypogeum. British embassy worker Miss Lois Jessup convinced a guide to allow her to explore a 3-ft. square "burial chamber" next to the floor of the lowest

room in the last [3rd] sub-level of the catacombs. He reluctantly agreed and she crawled through the passage until emerging on a cavern ledge overlooking a deep chasm. In total shock she saw a procession of TALL humanoids with white hair covering their bodies walking along another ledge about 50 feet down on the opposite wall of the chasm. Sensing her they collectively lifted their palms in her direction at which a strong "wind" began to blow through the cavern and something big, "slippery and wet" moved past her before she left in terror to the lower room, where the guide gave her a "knowing" look.



Later she returned after the 30 school children and their teacher[s] had disappeared in the same passage that she had explored, only to find a new guide who denied any knowledge of the former guides' employment there. She heard reports however that after the last child had passed through the "burial chamber" and out onto the ledge, a "cave-in" collapsed the burial chamber and the rope connecting them to the lower chamber was later found to be "cut clean".

Grieving Mothers of several of the children swore that for a week or more following the disappearance they could hear their children crying and screaming "as if from underground". Other sources state that an

underground connection exists or did exist between Malta and reaches hundreds of miles and intersects the catacombs below the hill Vaticanus in Rome. source: THE REALITY OF THE CAVERN WORLD, by Riley Crabb; Commander X; NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC magazine, Aug. 1940

The Hypogeum is an incredible piece of history that will marvel any visitor on a trip to Malta. It is believed to have been built between 3600 and 2500B.C. and historians suggest that the underground building was not completed before the Neolithic population of Malta appeared to vanish. It was discovered in 1899 along with the remains of 7000 bodies and other artefacts such as the 'sleeping lady' which is on display in Valletta at the Museum of Archeology. The site is believed to have been built as some sort of shrine and is made up of 3 underground levels. Two of these levels are open to the public and contain halls, passages and chamber rooms. Walking round the Hypogeum you will definitely sense the mystery to this ancient building and you will certainly begin to question it's purpose and role in Malta's history. In fact, many historians are still questioning what this magnificent building was used for.



STATUE OF A GRANDMASTER

Sculptor Joseph Chetcuti at work on the 2.5-metre statue of Grand Master Jean de Valette. Photos: Matthew Mirabelli

Grand Master Jean de Valette did not live to see the completion of the city that adopted his name but he will soon stand proudly within the historic walled citadel... or, at least, his statue will.

A bronze effigy of the great man who carved out a new chapter in the island's history feature prominently in St Catherine Square, a few metres away from where he had laid the foundation stone in 1566.



The 2.5-metre-high statue depicts the 49th Grand Master of the Order of Malta, wearing armour underneath a tabard, in motion, as if striding. He holds the city's plan in one hand and the sword of victory in the other.

Sculptor Joseph Chetcuti, said this was the image many had of the Knight Hospitaller, an illustrious hero who led the island through one of the greatest sieges against the notorious Ottomans. Mr Chetcuti wanted to etch a feeling of gallantry and a sense of victory in the towering figure of de Valette.

"The sculpting process required a lot of attention to detail and patience... you can't hurry through or take any shortcuts," he said.

The final product was made of silicon bronze (a mixture of copper, zinc and silicon), Mr Chetcuti first carved the statue in clay. The sculptor then shaped a plaster mould on the clay figure. The plaster mould was then used to cast a gypsum statue. A silicon mould was shaped on the gypsum statue and wax was poured into the silicon sleeve to create the third statue. Pipes (colati) were stuck to the wax statue, which was later cut in three and covered in a flame-resistant material, known as grog. This was placed in an oven for a week and a half.

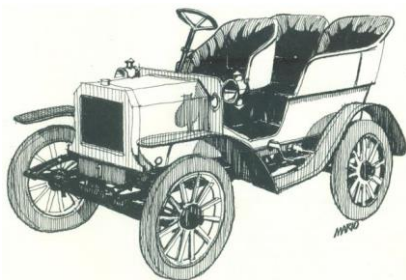
When the wax evaporated, bronze was poured in the three grog pieces. These bronze pieces were stuck together after the grog was removed.

The completed statue was refined and painted over for protection against the elements..



Mr Chetcuti studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence and the School of Art in Malta. He had set up a foundry about 20 years ago. His work included the replica of Antonio Sciortino's Les Gavroches at the Upper Barrakka Gardens, in Valletta and the replica of the face of Christ on the façade of St John's Co-Cathedral, also in Valletta.

Malta's first ever registered car



Malta's first ever registered car, a 1904 Siddeley, originally having the registration number 1, has been brought back to Malta. The car was taken to the UK 44 years ago. The 1904 Siddeley was shipped back to Malta by Express Trailers.

The car's early history is still being researched. In 1907 the Siddeley found itself in Gozo where it terrified the Gozitans, who named it "il karrozza tan-nar", the car of fire. It was the first vehicle, other than that of the horse-drawn variety to be seen on the neighbouring island. The car was eventually stored in a windmill and forgotten for almost 60 years until it was rediscovered again by David Arrigo and Brian

Mizzi in 1968. Its discovery is still considered to be the most important 'Barn Find' on the Maltese Islands to date. Although in a dilapidated state, it was complete. It was bought by a British collector and taken to the UK but Mr Arrigo has finally managed to bring it back to Malta.

JP2 FOUNDATION
POPE JOHN PAUL II FOUNDATION
JP2 Memorial Festival - 10th Anniversary
Press Release 2007-20017



The JP2 Foundation will be hosting the Phoenix Singers from Bournville, Birmingham UK at Our Lady of Loreto Parish Church in Ghajnsielem.

The choir holds 120 singers, of all ages and from all over the city and beyond. The

Phoenix choir sings for enjoyment and put on regular concerts to raise money for local charities, sometimes in local venues, at other times in the City or as guests of choirs elsewhere in the country. They also tour abroad every other year. The choir has a repertoire of a wide range of secular and sacred music, from gospel to 'pop', classical to folk; such as Karl Jenkins' The Armed Man, Mozart's Requiem, Zimbe by Alexander L'Estrange and Howard Goodall's Eternal Light.

The Phoenix Singers will be participating on Friday 2nd June 2017 during a Mass starting at 7.00pm followed by a sacred music concert at the Ghajnsielem Parish Church on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the canonisation of Saint Ġorġ Preca which took place in June 2007 at the Vatican. The General Public is invited to attend.

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*Hello! Frank, firstly I wish to congratulate you on the excellent Maltese News editions. I am amazed how you fill every edition with so many very interesting subjects which I find extremely interesting, please keep it up.*

*While I am writing, I wish to refer to your Maltese News edition number 167, page number 6. The article on this page mentioned a Doctor Condachi, prescribing a petroleum based ointment to patients who contacted Scabies.*

*This brought back memories... You see I also contacted Scabies very bad, I was about six years old, and it was about during 1942. I was admitted to St. Luke's Hospital, in the Quarantine section. My hair was Shaved off, and I was completely naked,. The wardens or nurses used to spread this yellow/greenish jelly like ointment all over my body with a long spatula, and the bed sheets used to stick to my body. I do not remember how long I was in the hospital for. But one thing I never forgot, that is my Mother visiting me, and was not allowed to come near me, because of quarantine rules, I remember her waving at me from afar. For many years after I used to have nightmares of my mother waving at me with tears in her eyes. It took quite a few years for me to get over these nightmares. Fond regards Vince Camilleri*





## Alfred Sant's "Fid-Dell tal-Katidral" performed in Morocco

The best selling play is gaining international recognition



Alfred Sant's *Dans l'Ombre de La Cathédrale* (In the Cathedral's Shadow), a theatrical representation in French based on his best seller *Fid-Dell tal-Katidral*, has been performed at the 'Comedrama International Festival' in Oujda, a city in northeast Morocco, a week after it was staged in Montrouge, Paris.

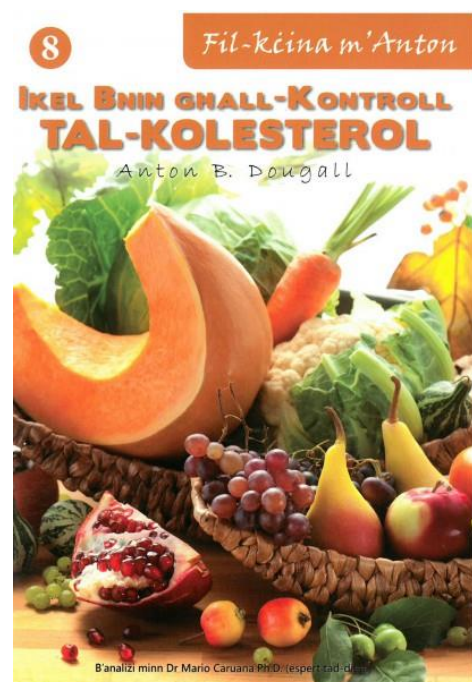
Translated by Charles Briffa, Anne Bérélowitch adapted and directed the French version of the play, which is being performed by the group *Instant MIX*.

The performers plan to make a multilingual representation of *Dans l'Ombre de La Cathédrale*, incorporating various passages in Maltese. The play intends to tour a range of countries, including Malta in 2018-2019.

After the representation in Oujda, Bérélowitch told the media of the outstanding performance, explaining that the Moroccan audience "praised the fact that we were looking at history and its lessons. Young members of the audience, including other participants from Iran, Egypt and Algeria were thrilled by the play-within-the-play structure.

"Many took a long time to understand it was not 'real'. Both audiences in Montrouge and Oujda felt absorbed into the historical scene and followed it as if they were following a movie."

Sant's best-selling play was first published in 1994. After placing second in a national play writing competition in 1976, it was then performed at the Theatre of the University of Malta under the direction of Joe Friggieri



## Fil-Kcina Ma Anton – Ikel Bnin Ghall-Kontroll Tal-Kolesterol

Anton B. Dougall

Number of Pages: 80

€5.95

Hu diffiċli li ssajjar minghajr xaham; wara kollox dan xorta hu mehtieg fid-dieta taghna. Importanti hafna, izda, li nikkontrollaw il-konsum tax-xaham, speċjalment ta' dak li gej mill-annimali bhal bejken, butir u xaham misjub fil-laham fost ohrajn. Ix-xahmijiet zejda jikkawzaw bosta problemi fis-sahha fosthom mard tal-qalb. Jekk tixtieq tikkontrolla l-kolesterol minhabba kundizzjoni li tbat minnha jew ghal skop ta' prevenzjoni, dan hu ktieb ideali ghalik. Fih Anton B. Dougall u Dr. Mario Caruana, noffrulek taghrif baziku dwar tipi differenti ta' xaham li jista jaffettwa l-kolesterol fid-demm. Qabel tibda ssajjar, tajjeb li tiffamiljarizza ruhek sew mat-tipi ta' xahmijiet li

jezistu. Kull ricetta, ghalkemm hi ghal 4 persuni, toffri analizi tal-konsum totali ta' xaham min kull persuna.

## The romance that rocked Strait Street | Philip Glassborow, Polly March & Larissa Bonaci



Following its debut in Valletta, musical production *The Star of Strait Street* – which recounts the true and bittersweet wartime romance between Christina Ratcliffe and Adrian Warburton – is returning for another show. Writer Philip Glassborow and actresses Polly March and Larissa Bonaci about the show

*Teodor Reljic*

*Larissa Bonaci (left) and Polly March. Photo by Justin Mamo*

**What are the origins of *The Star of Strait Street*, and how did the concept develop into the production which we will be experiencing?** **Philip Glassborow:** I'm a writer based in Britain, and I visited Malta for the first time just a few years ago when Polly March directed my musical 'The Great Big Radio Show' at the Manoel Theatre. I fell head-over-heels in love with Valletta and the islands and the Maltese people, as well as the talent base of gifted actors and singers one can find here. Then I heard about a true-life love story set against the background of World War II. And it sounded like a wonderful subject for a musical play – because Christina Ratcliffe was an entertainer working at the Morning Star, just off Strait Street, and so we could bring in some of the wonderful swing music of the 1940s which she would have performed.

**Which aspect of the 'Strait Street experience' would you say the story taps into, and do you think it lends a contemporary relevance to the production?** **Glassborow:** Strait Street was always a vibrant hub for entertainment. There were clubs and bars and cafes with live music catering for the visiting servicemen. And alongside visiting singers like Christina Ratcliffe, and dancers like Levy Wine, there were many home-grown local performers such as 'Bobby' the female impersonator, and a contortionist called 'The Sparrow'. Strait Street may have been the 'red-light district' of Valletta, but it also provided regular work for many musicians and performers.

**The story clearly has a rich historical background – what would you say are some of the most striking details to emerge from this tale, and what does it reveal about Malta at that time?** **Polly March:** The quite extraordinary resilience and courage of the people of the Maltese Islands. Under heavy, continual bombardment, the men and women of the Royal Malta Artillery, The Police, The Civil Defence, those at the dockyards or at the airfields, all worked ceaselessly to keep the island free from occupation. They had no food, no fuel, no ammunition – and yet they fought on. This little musical has, at its heart, a love song. A love song for the people of the Maltese Islands, whose courage and unquenchable spirit shone brightly at a time of terrible danger and privation. While many people who saw the show originally were moved to tears by the memories it evoked, many younger ones seemed to have no idea what their grandparents and great-grandparents had endured. They were moved too, and wanted to know more.

**Beyond the historical context, what is the emotional core of the story, and how does it come across in the production?** **March:** Christina met Adrian when he was stationed here in Malta; she was working as an entertainer at 'The Morning Star'. Once the war started and the dance hall closed, she created The Whizz Bangs Concert Party, and they toured anywhere and everywhere. And whilst doing that, she was also working as a 'plotter' at Lascaris War Rooms. Most of the men and women working there were British, and she persuaded the RAF that the Maltese girls she knew did have the language skills to work as plotters as well, and her great pride was that in time her entire shift, of which she was Captain, was composed of Maltese girls, some as young as sixteen. And she taught them dance routines as well!

Adrian was a recce pilot and away a lot; that they were in love was plain to all. She had to continue here,



doing the concert party gigs and working at Lascaris, whilst he was flying missions. And sometimes, of course, she was on duty, when he was flying. The tension must have been unbearable during those moments.

What you see in the play is Larissa Bonaci as Christina in the 1940s, and I play her in the 1970s. The older Christina remembers the high points of her life, and conjures up her younger self. That Christina takes us through the good times and the bad, the joys, the tears and fears. I get to play ten other roles as well, which may well be a record.....

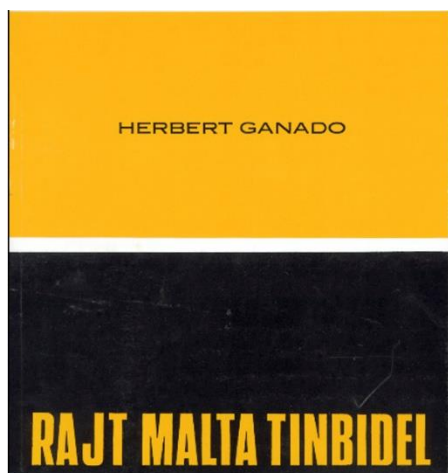
When Adrian disappeared, in very mysterious circumstances, Christina always held on to the belief that he would never have left her, that he would be coming back for her, sometime. He was the most decorated pilot in the RAF, with six awards for gallantry. He was crazy and brave, the ultimate dare-devil hero – if anyone could come for her, he would. And so she waited. And waited. Until her death in 1988. And she was awarded The British Empire Medal ‘for meritorious service and devotion to duty during the period of the heavy air bombardment of Malta’. The letter telling her of the award was dated 26 May 1943. And, poignantly, we are performing on that very same day...

**What do you make of the recent ‘revitalisation’ of Strait Street? Would you say the production taps into some of the cultural and commercial currents that are influencing the Street’s emergence as a trendy spot in Valletta?** Larissa Bonaci: I would say that this performance is a typical example of that wave of revitalization, perhaps more from a cultural than a commercial aspect, given that it brings back the ‘buzz’ of the life of Strait Street in 1940’s.

**What do you make of the local theatrical scene? What would you change about it?** Bonaci: The local theatre scene, despite being constantly active, is rather limited in the sense that it is quite small. I think we are in the era where the notion of a ‘global’ Malta is becoming a relative reality and as such this island can use that potential to expand the local scene by taking it abroad and vice versa, invite foreigners to stage their work on the island. There is always room for more collaboration which speaks to an audience who is constantly looking to be moved by beautiful stories. **What’s next for you?** March: Straight into directing *The Taming Of The Shrew*, at San Anton Gardens, for the MADC. And more performances of *Star of Strait Street*! Bonaci: Well... hopefully a world-wide tour of *Star of Strait Street*!

## DR. HERBERT GANADO – RAJT MALTA TINBIDEL

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBuCb3Pe20>



Way back in 1977, Dr Herbert Ganado, a Maltese lawyer, editor, politician, author and historian published a set of four volumes about the period in Malta’s history between 1900 and 1969, aptly named ‘Rajt Malta Tinbidel’. I believe that an English translation called ‘My Century’ by Dr Michael Refalo has just been published in Malta. Also Radio 101 in Malta has put on YouTube, in 30 minute installments, the four volumes read by Manoel Cauchi. I take this opportunity to congratulate you on the high standard of your publication, The Maltese eNewsletter. The above link is for the first installment, perhaps you may wish to advise your readers of the availability of these YouTube.

Best regards Mario Bonnici

## WWII performer's friend Lisa found 70 years later Sarah Carabott



*Lisa Mallia's memories of Strada Stretta and the people who lived there remain vivid. Photo Chris Sant Fournier*

More than 70 years after she was photographed walking alongside Christina Ratcliffe, a cabaret performer decorated for her wartime efforts, Lisa Mallia will relive the “harshest yet loveliest years”. On Friday, Ms Mallia will watch a musical called *Star of Strait Street* about her post-WWII friend, whom she met aged eight in the Morning Star club on St Nicholas Street, Valletta.

In March, this newspaper ran an article about Ms Ratcliffe, who landed in Malta as a cabaret performer and later enrolled as a civilian plotter in the Operations Room in Lascaris. The people behind the play, by Philip Glassborow, asked readers whether they knew Lisa, a girl who appeared in a couple of photos with Ms Ratcliffe.

“My sister Rosie saw the article and called me up. When she mentioned Christina, I didn’t let her finish her sentence. I immediately asked: ‘Christina of the Morning Star?’” Ms Mallia, née Debattista, told the Times of Malta. The woman, aged 80 years and two months, was born, raised and married in Valletta.

Despite moving to Cospicua, she inched her way back to the capital, moving to Floriana and then Valletta, but she soon had to leave for St Paul’s Bay because of her husband’s business. “I mourn Valletta, and if I had to move back, I would. I really miss the sense of community and family we had there. We all cared for and looked out for each other,” added Ms Mallia, accompanied by her grandson Ryan d’Ugo.

One of seven siblings who lived together in one large room, Ms Mallia will never forget how, as soon as the air raid siren would go off, they would all head to the shelter holding a striped red sofa cover over them, shielding themselves from shrapnel. “I remember shrapnel raining around us. We would then wait it out at the shelter until the all-clear was sounded.”

In those years, her mother ran a ‘bazaar’, which stocked toiletries, linen and pillows, among other products, in Strada Ospedale, close to Strada Stretta. The shop has since been pulled down. Sometimes, she would send eight-year-old Lisa after barmaids to collect some of the money they owed, which they paid back in instalments.

“I would go up Strada San Giuseppe, turn the corner and step into the Morning Star. Christina, who used to sing there, immediately took a liking to me. “It started off with a ‘Hello’ and a ‘What’s your name?’ and led to several walks along the streets. “Sometimes, she would buy me sweets. I remember that on the day that photograph was taken, Christina had asked me to help her carry a cauldron. I was all dressed up, wearing a belt and handbag given to me by my grandma Rose.” She lists a series of shops, recalling the owners’ names and nicknames, performers and customers of her mother, known as Mari ta’ Njellu.

The post-war years kept Ms Mallia busy, as she did several odd jobs, including styling barmaids’ hair, tailoring and cleaning houses. They were the “harshest but loveliest times”. She will always remember Ms Ratcliffe, whom she considered a great friend, as “endearing” and someone “you could not help but fall in love with”. Ms Mallia last saw Ms Ratcliffe before she left Malta to visit her family in the UK. Ms Ratcliffe eventually re-turned to Malta, but they never met again.





## **Father JULIAN CASSAR (USA)**

Born in St Julian's Malta on August 27, 1952, I grew up within a loving family with two parents John and Mary Cassar, both deceased, and two older sisters Josephine and Rosemarie (husband Carmelo Garzia, deceased,) and two younger brothers, Paul (deceased,) married to Kay, and Marcel, married to Maria with two sons, Julian Jr and Peter. I was ordained a priest on June 19, 1977 and served for 4 years in my hometown St Julian's. In 1981, I started my pastoral ministry in New York, both on Long Island and upstate New York. In 2003, I moved to the west coast serving in the Diocese of Baker in Eastern

Oregon. Presently I am the pastor of St Francis of Assisi parish in Bend, OREGON, starting my ministry there on October 17, 2013.

### **My childhood in the 1950s**



*(left) With my sisters Josephine and Rosemarie in our family garden. (right) As an altar boy*

I go back today to the fabulous 50s as I share with you a few black and white photos of my childhood, growing up in my hometown of St Julian's, in Malta.

With a population of close to



8,000 people at that time, St Julian's would explode in the 1970s and even later, creating a few splintered communities known as The Gardens, Swieqi, The Village, tal-lbragg, Paceville and Pembroke, although the heart and soul of the fishing village remains around the old Lapsi church. I was actually born not more than 200 yards from the church, where we lived at St Angelo Street, but in 1956 we moved to the Ta Giorni area, where my sister still lives in the house we all grew up in.



St Julian's has become quite cosmopolitan now with hardly any room to expand, as properties, hotels, restaurants and apartments as well as night clubs have taken over the entire village. Still, the picturesque Spinola Bay is untouched, as fishing boats are seen dotting the inlet, and people enjoy a stroll on the promenade all the way to Balluta and Sliema, a popular trek for joggers in the early hours and everyone else in the evening hours, hoping for a cool breeze after a warm summer day. Soccer is a big sport in Malta, and all children learn how to play, just as American children learn baseball or softball. Each team would have a young boy as their soccer mascot,

carrying the ball before the game starts, and simply posing for the group photo. St. Julians soccer team, 4 of whom were uncles and cousins.

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## UK Chelsea flower show: 'abandoned Maltese quarry' wins top prize



James Basson's display – lauded by judges as 'faultless' – is designed to show how humans and nature interact on Malta

It was not supposed to be pretty, but the judges certainly found it impressive. James Basson's take on an abandoned Maltese limestone quarry has won best in show at this year's popular Chelsea flower show.

The construction, which includes slabs of limestone and evergreens, perennials and ground cover, was designed to show the interaction between humans and nature on the island, Basson has said, and draws attention to the balance that needs to be maintained.

OMG we just got best construction award and BEST IN SHOW!!!!

"I am absolutely thrilled to have won best in show for the first time," Basson said on Tuesday. "It is an incredible feeling and a testimony to the hard work of the whole team."

He thanked his wife, Helen, as well as Crocus, the nursery that built the garden, and his financial backer, M&G Investments, for the roles they played.

"The garden is faultless and outstanding in terms of both construction and attention to detail," said the chair of the judging panel, James Alexander-Sinclair, after the decision was announced.

Discussing his design beforehand, Basson stressed its ecological message. After a research trip to the Maltese quarry that the garden is intended to evoke, he told the Daily Telegraph that it was "not supposed to be pretty. It is stark and monumentally brutal."

"I am fanatical about quarries anyway; the cleanliness and purity of them can be like a contemporary building. I love the graphic patterns of the blocks, the scouring marks, and the way nature regenerates after man has left. A client told me about this one, and when I had the chance of coming to Malta for a design job, I came to see it and was blown away," he said.

His design was divided into zones, each with its own ecology. It included shrubland, the landscape of the hills of the Mediterranean coastline and clifftop scenes, echoing the variety seen in Malta







The Queen, then Princess Elizabeth, talking to the head of the laundry, Carmela Agius, wearing the traditional faldetta, when she visited patients at Bighi Naval Hospital on Christmas Eve 1949. Picture: Frank Attard.

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