



# MALTA EU 2017

From January to July Malta had  
the Presidency of the European Union

wettaqna dak li xtaqna  
**WE DELIVERED**



## The Maltese eNewsletter



The Journal of the  
**MALTESE DIASPORA**

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THE LINK BETWEEN  
MALTESE LIVING  
IN MALTA AND ABROAD

We are proud of how far we've come. Our pride lies in the fact that we've managed to combine Politics and Culture into one Presidency Program from Major Summits to Cultural Exhibitions, this Presidency - organised by the smallest Member State of the EU - has proven Malta's significance capability and cultural richness. We have strived to gain the utmost from this unique opportunity for Malta, primarily for you as a Maltese citizen, but also for all European citizens, and our efforts have paid off.

We would like to have all our political achievements reflected in future presidencies, to ensure that our work lives on. Our achievements, however, are not all political in nature. Our achievements are rooted in your concerns and in your proposals. We listened and we delivered.

This is the 2017 Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union.



By POLITICO

*The Malta and European Union flags around the Auberge de Castille in Valletta | EPA/Domenic Aquilina*

For Malta, the EU's smallest country with a population of around 420,000, its first shot at the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU was pitched as the island's

coming-out ceremony. For smaller member countries, the presidency is as an extended advertising campaign, giving airtime to a country normally barely on the radar of the world's media.

But with potential calamity never far from the door in the form of Brexit, the migration crisis and other problems, the presidency also has a vital diplomatic role — brokering agreement among 28 nations with often wildly differing agendas. At times, cat-herding looks like a vastly simpler profession.

Tasked with leading discussions between EU governments as well as negotiating draft laws with the European Parliament, the role is at the centre of what Brussels does best: legislating. (Or at least attempting to.) And Malta turned out to be rather good at it — negotiating deals to push through legislation in dozens of policy areas.

Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, who once led opposition to EU membership in the island's 2003 referendum, described the opportunity as “fantastic” when POLITICO interviewed him earlier this year. He and his ministers took full advantage of the many press conferences that placed them alongside EU's political elite, who were gushing in their praise of Muscat at the closing Council summit last week. Calling a snap election only months after the presidency had begun didn't go down well in Brussels, though. The only other EU country to have an election during its presidency was Poland when Donald Tusk (now European council president) was prime minister — but even then it was required by the constitution, not the whim of its ruling party. In the event, Joseph Muscat won with massive majority.

## **Fish alien to the Mediterranean captured in Senglea**

### **Non-migratory species associated with shallow reefs**



Africa.

The intentional release of the species within Maltese waters through the aquarium industry was another possibility given its popularity within such an industry. The Guinea angelfish is not dangerous to humans and can be consumed, although it is not prized in commercial fisheries. Reports of new species can be sent to the Spot the Alien Fish campaign by e-mail through the [campaign website](#) or Facebook page.

The campaign is dedicated towards documenting the arrival of new species to Maltese waters, with such records surging in recent years. [timesofmalta.com](#)



## To cook, to bake, to eat and to treat.

to eat and to treat.

I love to eat, I always have. One of my earliest photos shows me sucking on a roast chicken leg, I was still a baby, I could't even walk and could barely hold the leg myself. Nothing has changed since those days, my early passion evolved into a lifetime love of good food and the daily enjoyments created in and through my kitchen. To gather at our long wooden table with friends and family, to share a great time over food and wine, that's a daily feast to me, the part of the day I always look forward to, to cook, to bake,

My mother has always been my culinary guide on this journey, through her I learnt and understood cooking and baking as an essential part of my life and who I am, something I enjoy so much and love to share with all the special people around me. I gladly experienced so many wonderful moments at her table or later on at my own, true feasts which became my most beloved memories caressing my soul! To enjoy good food is magical, it's like music, it can put you in a different time, place and mood whenever you want.

Many of my recipes are inspired by my mother, her sense for good quality products and her sensual approach to food. I enjoy my kitchen experiences with all my senses just like her, I want to smell it, taste it, feel and enjoy it! Another big influence on my cooking is the beautiful island of Malta in the Mediterranean where my boyfriend's family comes from. He is Maltese/ American but grew up on this rock, that's what he calls his island home south of Sicily. We spend lots of time there, especially in summer and every year brings more recipes into my life. I love the island's amazing seafood, the herbs, vegetables, the famous Gbejna cheese, coarse Maltese sausage and the ripe fruits, especially the lemons and oranges from my mother in law's garden. I'm lucky, the family is as obsessed with food as I am, we spend nights over wonderful dinners at friend's and family's houses, discovering new restaurants, or just enjoying the sea sitting on the rocks with a glass of wine in our hands and nibbling some Maltese snacks.

My cooking grew a lot with these influences. The two worlds, Malta and my current home city Berlin unite in my pots and pans and offer an unlimited source of inspiration to write daily about my cooking and baking. I started *eat in my kitchen* in November 2013 with the intention to share a new recipe each day and so far I never felt let down by my passion or creativity. I enjoy this experience, to share what ends up on our dining table in our old flat on one of Berlin's wide boulevards. So often my friends ask me what I am going to cook for dinner, looking for some cooking stimulation. That's what *eat in my kitchen* is about, I would love to make you curious to try out whatever catches your appetite. Feel free to play with the recipes, to assimilate them to your taste and create your own kitchen entertainment.

The products I cook and bake with are mainly organic, especially eggs, meat and dairy products. I always prefer to cook seasonal but – if the quality is right – I am not dogmatic about it. I love to find and support small producers of regional products like my sea salt which is from Mr. Cini's salt pans in Gozo. To me it is the best salt in the world and, as I always spend some time in Gozo's sister island Malta in the summer months, I love to visit him at his salt pans to stock up my salt for the next year.

All the photos on *eat in my kitchen* are taken by me as photography is another passion of mine. Most of them were taken at our home but sometimes I leave the house to share some other culinary adventures with you.

I feel thankful for all the great feedback I receive every day and I love to hear your opinion, questions or suggestions if you tried out some of my recipes. If you have any questions about *eat in my kitchen* please send me an [email](#). If you don't want to miss any of *eat in my kitchen*'s posts feel free to [subscribe here](#) for the weekly newsletter, you will get my *eat in my kitchen* posts daily when you subscribe with the *Follow* button at the bottom. Enjoy! Meike Peters xx



# JOURNEY TO THE UNKNOWN

*Ron Borg - Adelaide, Australia*



This is the continuing account about the Emigrant ships as told by their Maltese passengers that made the 16,000 Kms journey and came to settle in South Australia.

**Flaminia** was built in Pennsylvania and completed on December 1922. She had a remarkable profile, because she had **no funnel**. She started her life as a Freighter, named **Missourian**, operating from the American West coast to Europe and back.



In 1940 she was sold to the British Merchant Navy and renamed **Empire Swan**. In 1942 she was transferred to the exiled Belgian Government and renamed **Belgian Freighter**, but once again renamed **Capitaine Potie** when sold in 1946 to service the Congo and



The Missouriian as built

In 1954 she had another refit which included, replacement of her Diesel engines, increased deck space, swimming pool, with additional cabin space to accommodate 1024 passengers in moderate comforts. She was now named the **Flaminia**, and in **April 1955 made her first Voyage to Sydney Australia** via the Suez Canal, and continued with her journeys to Australia collecting migrants from Netherlands and Germany.



## MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

THIS SERIES OF 18 FEATURES WERE WRITTEN EXCLUSIVELY FOR OUR JOURNAL BY RON BORG. THEY ARE PRESERVED AT THE ARCHIVES OF THE MALTA MIGRATION MUSEUM IN VALLETTA, MALTA, AT THE MALTESE-CANADIAN MUSEUM AND ON THE WEBSITE [WWW.OZMALTA.COM](http://WWW.OZMALTA.COM)

In October 1959 she also **transported the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment from Malasia to Australia** after their end of a 2 year tour of duty. Flaminia continued to serve the route from Europe to Australia until she suffered a **fire in her accommodations** but made one last voyage to Australia after repairs were completed in 1961, after which, she was chartered by Israel's Zim Line for service between Marseilles and Haifa. In 1965, **she ran aground on a reef off Jedda**, but after being refloated, returned to Italy for repairs, which were completed in 1965. After repairs she returned to her former duties but was sold in **1970 to be broken up in Taiwan**.

**Carmen Chetcuti** (nee

Borg) with her **mother Annie, 3 brothers, and 2 sisters**, voyaged on the Flaminia along with other Maltese migrants including **Ganni** and his **wife Katie Desira** and their **son Sam**. Carmen recalls that the **food and amenities were good**. Her family arrived at Port Melbourne on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1959 to be welcomed by her oldest brother **Leli**, and then travelled by Overland train to Adelaide.

My own family, the **Borg family**, with parents **Walter** and **Mary**, my **older sister Marlene**, my **younger brother Norbert** and I **Ron**, ( the writer of this series '**Journey to the Unknown**' ) left **Hamrun Malta in 1960**, to voyage on this ship **Flaminia** to the new "**Land of Promise**", **Australia**. The look

on the faces of friends and relatives standing on the wharf waving goodbye to their departing loved ones was sad, but I must say, as the 13 year old teenager that I was, it felt exciting to be on this new adventure into the unknown! A couple of blasts on the ships horn and the ship pulled away, and

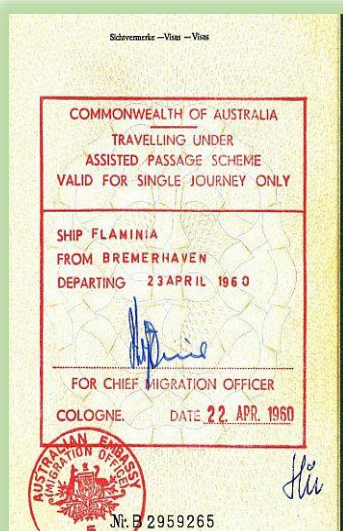


**The Borg family on their first days in Adelaide.**

sailed through the Valletta harbor in all it's glory. Another Maltese family travelling with us that we had known was the **Callus family**.

Life on the ship was a bit of an adventure, and quite a bit different from playing games on the streets in Hamrun, where we could ride the noisy "*Scooter tal-ball-races*", play '*Bocci*' (Marbels) in the street, fly a kite (*Tajra fuq il-bejt*) or run with a bicycle rim on a stick (*Ic-Cirku*) on the kerb (*fuq il-bankina*) and get told off by the neighbours! However along with 3 other mischievous boys, we always found 'interesting' things to do and amuse ourselves. One boy was full of mischief. He used to collect tea spoons from the dining room tables, and then proceeded to show the rest of us kids how he could toss the spoons into the turbulent waters of the ship's wake, and watch to see how long they could bounce around on the frothy surface, before they sank! Pretty silly, but none the less it was interesting to watch by a bunch of young kids with not much else to amuse themselves with!! I also recall vividly that there was a Juke Box in the ship's Lounge. The favourite song at that time was the **Italian song Marina**. Most of us knew the words by heart, but none of us had abundant money in our pockets to play the Juke Box, however our young inventive Maltese minds came to our assistance! The **Maltese Halfpenny** coin, aided with a bit of spittle to lubricate it with, seemed to make the Juke-Box work and play our favourite discs, as good as the equivalent Italian Coin (worth about 2 shillings). We enjoyed the songs, but we were delighted that we could make the Juke Box work for only half a penny. ( I pity the poor ship's person who had to empty the coin box with all that spittle in it! Yuk!! ).

Conditions on the Flaminia, were reasonable except that most passengers, Maltese, Croatians, and others were '**not too happy**' with the **breakfast food** that was being served. Anchovies, Gardiniera, an that type of stuff, was not the kind of breakfast that most passengers were used to. Complaints about this food fell



**Replica of an assisted passage document**

on deaf ears with the ship's staff, consequently, some passengers were getting a bit disgruntled, (especially some Croatians I think!) got a bit 'hot headed and threw a few of the **Deckchairs overboard!** Before things got too hot, the Priest on the journey, took steps to talk to the ship's Purser Officer and explained the passengers' disenchantment with the quality of the breakfasts being served, and in their wisdom the ship's managers rectified the problem by serving more suitable food for breakfast immediately. (Before they lost any more deck chairs or anything else!!!!) Movies, or should I say one movie was shown on the open deck throughout the entire journey. It was "Doctor Cyclops" in Black and white. It was that old the throughout the whole movie there were lines showing on screen like railway tracks! (Quite funny actually!!) Just before arriving at Fremantle, the seas were pretty rough, we saw a Tuna fishing boat which would sometimes disappear from sight in the enormous waves and then re-appear later bobbing up and down like a cork. However our ship seemed to cope well with the rough waters, I think it actually had Stabilizers which helped a lot. On arrival at Fremantle, I vividly remember that dad bought us a great bunch of Bananas, the most beautiful we had seen for nearly a month.

After the short stop at Fremantle, the ship continued on to Port Melbourne where to be greeted by our friends the **Arthur and Connie Ash** and our old neighbours from Malta, the **Tanti family**. It was lovely to meet up with old friends, and share some great food as well! We were later farewelled as we caught the Overland train for the last leg of our trip. Destination Adelaide!

**Godwin Gauci** with his parents, **Richard and Josephine**, and **younger sister Bernadette**, left Malta at midnight on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August 1961.

As a young fellow, Godwin recollects that going past the Galley, there was always an awful **pungent smell** which tended to upset many passengers as they went past on their way to the dining room, for their all too often regular meal of Pasta. On a more pleasing note, it was good to recall that as the **Flaminia** **crossed the Equator**, the crew were dressed up in **Marmads and King Neptune** costumes and the passengers enjoyed a great Party! The Gauci family arrived safely at Port Melbourne, on Friday 22 September 1961, and finished their journey to their new home via the Overland train.

**Bernadette Gatt** with her **mother Emma**, recollects that another Maltese migrant **Lilly** made that voyage on the Flaminia in October 1960, but the most memorable event on that journey, was the birth of two babies, a boy and a girl. Yes, all sorts of things happen at sea!

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**This Series "Journey To The Unknown" will continue in the next Newsletter**

## Maltese woman wins international beauty pageant

**Dajana Laketic was crowned Miss Princess of the World 2017**



A 26-year-old Swatar resident has been crowned Miss Princess of the World 2017, beating contestants from 39 other countries.

Ms Laketic also won an award for best national costume. Dajana Laketic, a Maltese woman of Serbian descent, also scooped up awards for Best National Costume and Miss Bikini. A human resources manager who speaks seven languages, Ms Laketic is no stranger to overseas competition, having represented Malta in other competitions on four previous occasions.

She and seven other finalists competed for top spot aboard cruise ship MSC Meravaglia, with Argentina eventually placing second and Slovakia third.

Ms Laketic won a cash prize, one-year rent on a Czech Republic apartment, a paid trip to Canada, various designer dresses and beauty products.

Alan J. Darmanin and Jeff Francalanza of Glow Promotions serve as Malta directors of the competition. Ms Laketic with the competition's national directors of Malta.

## Kont Taf Li? Czechoslovakians might have saved the Mosta Dome

*Antoine Borg Micallef*



On April 9, 1942, during one of the many Luftwaffe WWII air raids, two bombs descended on the Mosta Rotunda in the centre of Malta. The smaller bomb (at 50 Kg), bounced off the church, but the much larger SC500 Kg bomb pierced the dome and crashed into a congregation of over 300 people. The bomb did not explode, sparing everyone inside, and the Maltese hailed this as a miracle. However, this 'miracle' might actually be the result of Czechoslovakian workers defying the Germans by producing a bogus bomb.

The ceiling of the Mosta Dome is a spectacular architectural accomplishment at an internal diameter of 37.2 metres. One can notice the repaired areas where the SC500 Kg bomb penetrated the ceiling in the top left side. (Photo credit: K B)

Like many European countries, Czechoslovakia was occupied under Nazi leadership, which sought to eradicate the Czech nationality through the atrocities we now read in history books. Those individuals that were not 'Germanized', deported or exterminated in concentration camps were recruited as labourers in the German empire to sustain its military campaign.



At the time, Malta was part of the British empire and was engaged in the Siege of Malta, in which the Axis Powers flew over 3,000 air raids spanning a two year period in the hopes of weakening RAF powers in the central Mediterranean. This earned Malta the unsavoury record of being one of the most bombed countries in WWII.

Mosta is a central village in the main island of Malta, which was generally not a main target by war planes given its considerable distance from ports and airports. This tiny village, is home to the impressive Mosta Dome (or Rotunda), which has the third largest church dome in Europe and the ninth largest in the world at an internal diameter of 37.2 metres.

*A replica of the bomb is still present in the church's sacristy today. (Photo credit: GibMetal77)*

Legend stands that Skoda workers in Pilsen in Bohemia created the SC500 Kg bomb that fell on Mosta Dome, but instead of filling it with explosives, they filled the metal shell with sand and a note which probably waved the middle finger at Hitler and his Nazi regime.

The act that the bomb did not explode will unfortunately go down in historical myth, as British troops took the unexploded bomb and detonated it. As such, there is no recorded evidence to support this claim. The Maltese population thanked the Virgin Mary for saving their lives (the Mosta Dome is dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady) and have since hailed this as a miracle, while Czechoslovakians have quietly lauded the efforts of Skoda labourers in Pilsen (which is now part of the Czech Republic following the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia into the former and Slovakia). While I am one to understand and accept that the battered Maltese population of 1942 would naturally see this as a miracle, and more importantly as a sign of hope, I would like the Skoda

version to be true as well. It evokes an important sense of quite defiance in the face of dictators such as Adolf Hitler, the likes of which still unfortunately exist in the 21st Century.

Be it the Virgin Mary or Czechoslovakian workers in Pilsen, Malta was spared from a horrific wartime incidents that faithful Thursday morning.



*The Queen lays a wreath during the annual Remembrance Sunday Service at the Cenotaph memorial in Whitehall, London, last year.*

## **Prince Charles to lay Remembrance Day wreath on Queen's behalf**

Caroline Davies

[MSN](#) |

The Queen has asked Prince Charles to lay her wreath on Remembrance Sunday in a further sign of the gradual transition of duties within the royal family and an acknowledgement of her age.

In a break with tradition Charles will place his 91-year-old mother's floral tribute at the base of the Cenotaph in Whitehall on 12 November while an equerry will lay 96-year-old Prince Philip's wreath.

It is the first time the Queen will be present at the Remembrance Day service and not lay a wreath.

The Queen and Philip will watch the ceremony from a balcony at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office overlooking the Cenotaph, traditionally used by female royals including the Duchess of Cornwall and Duchess of Cambridge.

A Buckingham Palace spokeswoman said: "The Queen wishes to be alongside the Duke of Edinburgh and he will be on the balcony."

Philip retired from performing solo public duties earlier this year, though will still accompany the Queen on certain occasions.

The Remembrance Day service would require the elderly couple to stand for a significant amount of time.

The Queen's wreath is laid on behalf of the nation. The Remembrance Day service is seen by the Queen as one of the most important events in her diary and she has only missed it on a handful of occasions because of either being abroad on tour, or due to pregnancy.

Her decision to hand the responsibility over to Charles is illustrative of how both Buckingham Palace and Clarence House see the heir gradually taking over more of his mother's duties.

Since she no longer undertakes long-haul travel, he already represents her on official visits overseas, including at the biennial Commonwealth heads of government meeting.

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# Maltese Food Products are not protected at European Level



The European Union has specific schemes aimed at the promotion and protection of specific names of quality agricultural products and foodstuffs. These schemes were enacted in order to ensure that certain food products retain their traditional production practices, and are still produced in their designated place of origin. With this respect, it is sad to see that Maltese foodstuffs have not been included in these schemes since Malta joined the EU in 2004.

Gbejniet are currently not covered by the EU's geographical indications and traditional specialities. This means that at the moment any EU member state can produce such cheese and market them as gbejniet, to the detriment of the authentic

Maltese product. Photo credit: Colorgrinder

Malta does not seem to have any product registered under this scheme, although a legal notice indicated that the Gozitan sweet oranges (Lumi Laring ta' Ghawdex) have been listed, yet they do not appear on the EU's database. However, Maltese wines have been listed in the separate wine portal called E-bacchus.

I am confident that the inclusion of Maltese foodstuffs in such a scheme would have great benefits to the local agriculture industry, as well as to other Maltese food industries that would like to preserve the integrity of the products that they are selling. So I am proposing the following list of Maltese foodstuffs that the government may wish to apply for protection:



Babinella is a small pear that is native to Malta, and it fits the bill for protection under these EU schemes! In fact, an initiative in 2009 saw Babinella being well received in Marks and Spencer in the UK.

- Figolli
- Sfineg ta' San Guzepp (Rabat, Malta)
- Lumi Laring t'Ghawdex (Gozitan sweet oranges)
- Prinjolata
- Gbejniet (Maltese Cheeselets)
- Maltese Ricotta
- Galletti
- Frawli ta' l-Imgarr (Mgarr Strawberries)

- Hobza tal-Malti (Maltese Bread, especially the one from Qormi)
- Pastizzi and Qassatat
- Babinella
- Maltese Potatoes
- Zalzett Malti (Maltese Sausage)
- Bigilla
- Maltese Liqueurs (Prickly Pear, Pomegranate, Orange, Lemon, Honey)
- Torta tal-Marmorat
- Imqaret
- Qaghaq ta' l-Appostli (Apostle's Ring Bread)
- Qaghaq tal-hmira (Sweet Yeast Rings)
- Qaghaq ta' l-ghasel (Honey Rings)

## Malta: the Land of Honey



Malta has around 220 beekeepers over just 316km<sup>2</sup>. The country's name is tied to honey that has been prized for its flavour and health benefits. Local researchers are finding out just how unique it is and some of its powerful properties.

Malta is well renowned for its pure honey. In fact beekeeping in Malta has a long history. Proof of this is the name the Greeks gave Malta. They called the island 'Melite' (Μελίτη) which derives from the Greek word 'meli' (μέλι) that means honey. Photos credits: Times of Malta, Cordyline on Panorama, Mario Galea

A sub species of the honey bee (*Apis Mellifera Rutneri*) is endemic to the Maltese Islands. This type of bee used to live in the wild. Nowadays you can still find some but they have become very rare due to diseases.

In the past Maltese honey was considered a delicacy and it also used to be exported from the island. It is believed that the Phoenicians introduced the domestication of beekeeping in apiaries and earthenware jars. In fact some Punic apiaries remain. In the Maltese countryside one can still find apiaries called 'Miġbħa' that date back to Punic times. One of them is the Xemxija apiary that is one of the oldest in the world. In theory this apiary is still in a state of use, however nowadays the beekeeping technique is different with movable frame hives.

In Malta, until the 1950's bees were kept in earthenware jars. These type of jars were made of clay and without a bottom. At the top they had a closure with small holes. These jars were kept under carob trees in order to get a good shading from the sun. Sometimes they were also placed in niches in rubble walls made especially for these jars. But those who had the means used to build apiaries in their fields. These apiaries were specially built rooms or caves which had their opening closed by a wall. An opening in the wall would allow the bees to enter the cave.

Honey was gathered once a year after the wild thyme honey season, usually around the Feast of St. Anne which falls on the 26th July. The honey making process is quite a busy one for the beekeeper. He needs to observe the bees at work in order to add extensions to the jar. The gathering of the honey was a little messy too. A long knife was used in order to cut off the combs with honey. The liquid was then placed in a pail or a pot and covered. Before bee smokers were available, the beekeepers used to burn some grass in old cooking pans and extinguish it to make some smoke in order to enter near the bees and not be stung.

These techniques started to change in the 50's as the first movable frame hives and other tools began to appear. These were generally imported from Britain. The hives were then copied from them and crafted locally. Till today the British Standard hive is common in Malta.

In old times honey was a commodity for the general household. Before the invention of sugar refining, honey was the only means of sweetener. It was also cheaper than cane sugar. Although nowadays the whole process has changed, one cannot forget our fathers that without any modern knowledge and tools managed to place Malta in the world map of honey. In fact Maltese honey is still regarded as one of the best around the world.

## Four sons went to war, only one returned. How Malta saved my family...



### 100 years later, family letters and documents inspire a trip to Malta

Casualties arriving from Gallipoli at Cottonera Hospital, now St Edward's College.

Lieutenant A.E. 'Bobbie' Johnson, 1/5th Manchester Regiment

My wife Sarah and I had spent time reading through piles of family letters that had been stored away since World War I. Letters from four sons who went to fight in the war had been lovingly kept in bundles by their mother Florence Rosalie. Florence was a widow and a mother who demonstrated great resilience, devotion and sacrifice during the Great War... qualities epitomised by the people of Malta.

Bobbie, who was to be my grandfather, was shot in the chest while fighting with the 5th Manchester Regiment in Gallipoli and sustained serious injuries. He was taken by hospital ship to Malta. By reading letters and telegrams sent to Bobbie's mother, we were able to establish that he was first of all taken to Cottonera Hospital, now St Edward's College, where he was operated on. Bobbie's mother had been notified of his injury and on June 30, 1915, was written to by the then Governor of Malta, Lord Methuen:

"I visit your son about four times a week and am very sorry to say that I have no good news to give you. The wound is a very serious one and he has been operated on by one of the best London surgeons, Balance, of St Thomas'... A more perfect hospital, high up on a hill, tended by the Blue Sisters, who are loved by all in Malta and backed by one of the kindest of our Army Sisters, you can rest assured of your son's comfort. We mean to pull him through if we can."

*A fascinating story, a great lady in the Great War*



On July 12, 1915, Florence received a telegram from Malta: "Delay in progress. Think your presence necessary. Doctor."

Within six days, Bobbie's mother had been issued with a passport and travelled by rail through war-torn France and sea from Marseille to Malta to be with her son. She arrived by steamship on July 18, 1915. By this stage Bobbie was convalescing at the Blue Sisters' hospital.

Florence Rosalie Johnson

Due to the wonderful people of Malta and the great talents of doctors and surgeons like Balance, Bobbie pulled through. Florence remained in Malta until August 24, 1915; Bobbie was taken back to England and completed his recovery in hospital at home but he wasn't well enough to return to active service.

Sadly, Bobbie's three brothers lost their lives and were laid to rest on the Western Front in 1916 and 1917.

Sarah and I enjoyed a very interesting visit to what was Cottonera Hospital, hosted by professor John Portelli, chairman of the Board of Governors of St Edward's College. We also visited the Blue Sisters' Casa Leone Hospital, which is now an old people's home in St Julian's. For a family with current military connections, this was a professionally enlightening visit to a wonderful island as well as a personal pilgrimage. A fascinating story, a great lady, in the Great War; my great granny.

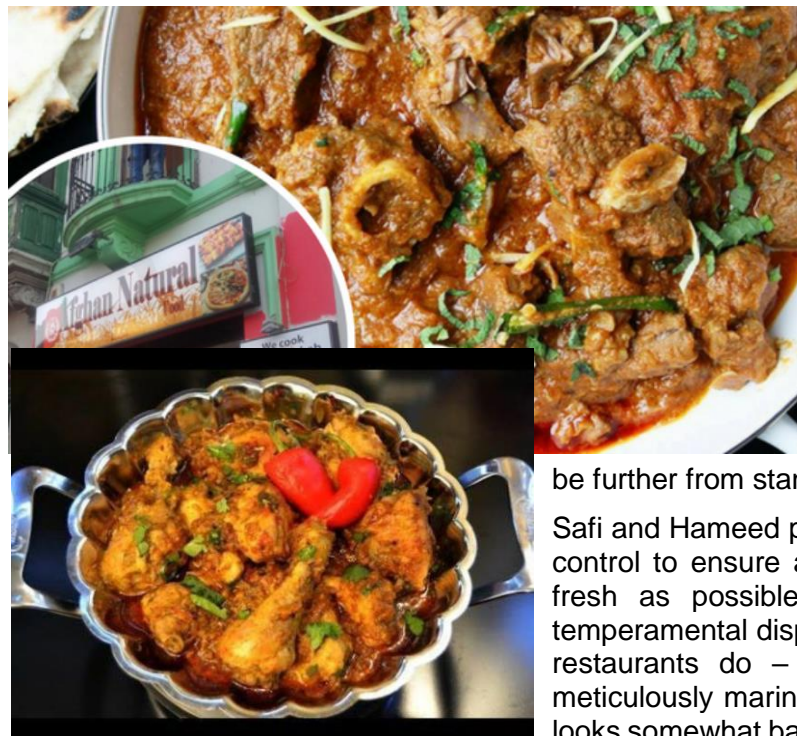
*Colonel Graham Johnson currently serves in the British Army's Medical Service.*

Source: *Time of Malta*



## Malta's First Afghan Restaurant has landed in Hamrun and it's Ethnic Perfection by Mike Finnegan

Safi Abdul Haq and Hameed Rehman moved to Malta from Afghanistan in January and quickly noticed there were no restaurants offering cuisine from their home country. So they opened one: the very first Afghan restaurant in Malta.



Those who've tried Afghan Natural's lamb curry know it's like treating your taste buds to a festival of spices. And there's a lot more where that came from.

Afghan Natural Food in Hamrun has only been operating since April, but it's already made huge waves with its carefully prepared ethnic cuisine. Menu items may look familiar to your typical local kebab shop - with lamb kebabs, lamb and chicken curry, naan bread and chicken tikka - but rest assured, this restaurant's approach to satisfying customers couldn't

be further from standard.

Safi and Hameed personally conduct diligent ingredient-quality control to ensure all food prepared for their customers is as fresh as possible. They refuse to display their meats in temperamental display coolers - as most other Middle-Eastern restaurants do - so they don't compromise any of their meticulously marinated meats. The result? A restaurant which looks somewhat bare from the outside, with food that is bursting

with spices and fresh flavour. That's a fair trade in our book.

### Chicken curry

Afghan Natural's popularity has been growing rapidly - all through word of mouth. Some of Malta's top chefs and restaurateurs have been known to stop by to observe Safi's artistic approach to cooking his ethnic dishes using a traditional clay Afghan tandoor. Many of Malta's top chefs have since become regulars.

"We're the first Afghan restaurant in Malta - and when we decided to open a traditional Afghan restaurant here, some people said, 'No, no...just make it a Turkish restaurant like all of the others...' We wouldn't do that though," Hameed said.

"We wanted to share real Afghan food, and real Afghan culture with the people of Malta. We want to show people what our culture is really all about. And sharing our food is a great way to do that. So our sign out front proudly says Afghan. Natural. Food."

**"We want to show people what our culture is really all about. And sharing our food is a great way to do that."** Safi chimed in from beside the tandoor where he was preparing fresh naan bread: "And 'natural' is just as important. All fresh and natural foods with homeopathic properties. You feel good as you eat it, and you feel great after."

After trying some of their most highly recommended dishes – the lamb curry and lamb kebab - Lovin Malta realised Afghan Natural had lived up to the grassroots-hype. Safi was absolutely right, the food not only tasted significantly fresher than similar items you might find at a Turkish restaurant, but there was no grease-induced food-coma afterwards.

Safi cooks his meats twice in order to remove all fat – which also helps customers with the guilt factor of eating out. Being able to watch Safi throughout his entire traditional cooking process helped tremendously as well. You can taste the concentration and care he pours into each and every individual order. Your only regret will be not having visited Afghan Natural Food sooner, we promise you.

## The Museum Exhibition Malta's Worth Waiting For

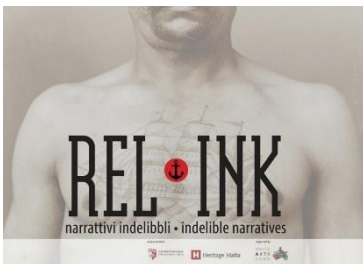
A heavy dose of nostalgia **Nicole Parnis**

A highly anticipated exhibition exploring the history of tattoos in Malta will be open to the public from the 7th of October at the Maritime Museum in Birgu. Back in the early 20th Century, tattoos



were rare and rebellious - thought to be something reserved for criminals and of course rowdy sailors - which is what makes the Grand Harbour Marina venue so fitting! **'REL.INK - Indelible Narratives'** is an ongoing project which aims to trace as much of the history of early Maltese tattoo culture as possible. The pioneers of the cause have put out a call for anyone over the age 75 and tattooed to join in and contribute to the archive with photographs or even just their backstories. The Maritime Museum

exhibition will showcase the pieces of the puzzle that have come to light since the project's conception, linking in existing artefacts from the museum— and it doesn't disappoint. The exhibition is curated by Pierre Portelli and researched by Dr Georgina Portelli, in association with Heritage Malta and the University of Malta.



There's lots to be discovered, and artefacts include photographs, testimonials and even antique passport documents which describe seafarers' tats in depth, in French! It turns out, Maltese sailors had close links to the port of Marseilles in the South of France, which is historically well known as a crossroad for trade and immigration. The sailors would

spend a lot of time away from home for merchant trips and seasonal work on the continent, and often returned back to Malta with more than they set out for...

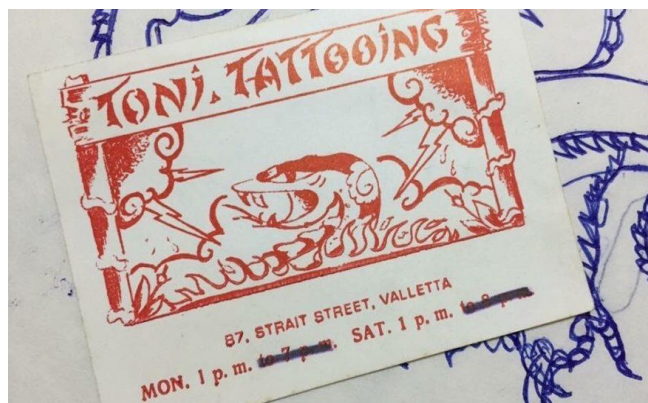
Early maritime tattoos were simple yet painful, with blue or black ink pierced into the skin with needles whilst the skin was held taut. Numbers, symbols and initials were popular - used to mark journeys, religion or lovers back home. By the arrival of the electric tattoo machine, things got a whole lot more fun. Scantly clad women, mermaids, anchors and ships became motifs associated with seafaring culture, for obvious reasons. But tattoos amongst Navy servicemen, seafarers and port workers were much more than just an act of rebellion, they set apart sailors from non-sailors. Tattoos were markings of pride in seeing the world, and the hardship endured at sea—a lifestyle the land workers would never really understand.



The Maltese have a very special place in the history of tattoos. As sailors from a small island in the middle of the Mediterranean, you can just imagine the rich culture that went with working out at sea or in the ports, at a time when our surrounding waters drove our very economy. If you weren't a sailor or a serviceman, you might have been

a sail maker or a coalman. Not forgetting the fishermen, and of course the fishermen's wives who'd run the show back on shore.

The REL.INK archives also aim to track down the island's earliest tattoo parlours who'd open their doors to not only to the Maltese but Army and Navy servicemen stopping by in the Med!



*Possibly the first photographic record of a Maltese tattoo artist. Via Liverpool's Tattoo Museum.*

The REL.INK exhibition unveils that tattoos have a huge place in our history and culture, and an exhibition like this, hosted by Heritage Malta and The Malta Arts Fund is *exactly* the sort of level of relevance we should be aiming for. Linking in memorials from Maltese sailors tattooed as far away from home as Singapore and as familiar as Strait Street, the exhibition is informative and captivating for all audiences, which is important. Nowadays, tattoos have a huge place in modern society and popular culture— they're accepted as an expression of individuality for just about everyone, regardless of perceived class or gender. Delving deeper into the origins of tattooing might just teach you a few things about our brave ancestors, and you're bound to leave feeling a little patriotic at your Mediterranean roots. Who knew we were such trendsetters?

**REL.INK - Indelible Narratives** will run from the 7th October to the 29th December at Malta Maritime Museum, Birgu from Monday to Sunday: 09:00 - 17:00. Admission is free.



I obtained your contact details from Mrs Nancy Serg OAM, from Sydney. I am writing to you as I am supporting a worthwhile cause and hope that you will publish my message.

My name is Edward Caruana. My parents were both born in Malta. Mum (Mary [née Fenech]) was from Casa'l Paola and Dad (Tony) from Cospicua. I have done a few things in my life, including being in St John Ambulance for 25 years. I am an avid table tennis player, playing since the age of 10 and now playing competition.

I was a Lecturer in the Discipline of Medical Radiation Sciences, at The University of Sydney for 20 years taking voluntary redundancy to look after my ageing mum. Both Mum and dad passed away. I am currently an IT Manager, at The Parramatta College, NSW.

I am participating in an upcoming event that is both very important and an honorable cause. It is the 2017 Ping Pong-A-Thon (a 24 hour table tennis marathon that supports the work of seven amazing organisations committed to protecting and caring for young people impacted by human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Asia).

The event I will be participating in is being held in Sydney at Five Dock on October 22nd, 2017. I am hoping that you can help me raise needed funds for this cause. I would like to ask you to donate to support

my participation in this event. Click onto the following link to go to the donation page (this will give a detailed explanation too): <http://tinyurl.com/yakyfdv1>

Donating online is fast and secure, and you and I will both get immediate notification via email of your donation. Note that this will be Tax deductible. Please don't procrastinate; donate by Wednesday 18 October, 2017.

I am hoping that your readers would email this page to their friends and families to encourage them to donate. Sponsorship would be greatly appreciated for such a worthwhile cause. I am hoping to raise at least \$500. Thank you in advance for your support. I really appreciate it. Kind regards, Edward Caruana



## Bertu's Gym: 35 years and still going strong

**Bertu's Gym has established itself as the iconic place for all fitness and boxing enthusiasts around Malta** Kevin Grech

Bertu's Gym is celebrating 35 years since its opening on 10 October, 1982. Bertu's Gym was opened by

former boxing champion Bertu Camilleri at first as a small gym to train local boxers and it was one of the first gym's on the island at the time. As time progressed Bertu saw the need to expand and he invested in more weights and equipment. The gym suddenly became Malta's top gym for the beginner and experienced bodybuilder as the results started to show with most of Malta's top athletes coming from Bertu's Gym.

As boxing remained Bertu's number one priority, he makes it a point to start training boxers at a very young age. Bertu's hands on experience in the sport of boxing are the key to producing some great boxers. The gym has become the home of various Maltese athletes excelling in boxing and bodybuilding who have also been ambassadors of Malta in international competitions achieving great results. Walking up the stairs to the gym, you will always find Bertu waiting to greet you with a smile. Bertu's gym is not a place where you do your exercise and just leave, but it also has a family oriented atmosphere. Anyone is welcome to come and visit both the main gym and women's gym, try out equipment and familiarise oneself with the premises and staff. During these open days the premises shall be open from 7am - 9pm. More information about Bertu's Gym can be found on their official Facebook page or you can call on Tel: 2141 3406.

**Bertu Camilleri** - Bertu Camilleri started his career in a Gym in Hamrun. Soon after, he caught the eye of the late Iron Man of Europe, Charles Saliba who trained him in the Youth Gym Sliema. At that time Bertu established a record of three hours nonstop skipping the rope (Two years later, he broke the already established record by another two hours, accomplishing a total of five hours of nonstop skipping.). Two veterans, the late Francis Attard of Mosta and Paul Cassar of Msida took charge of his training at the Mosta Boxing Club. Later on Bertu decided to immigrate to the United Kingdom. In England, Bertu acquired the experience of British boxers and trainers. He went to the well known Jack Solomons Gym where he used to fight 3 times a week against British Boxers. When Bertu returned to the island in 1969, he kept working in the sports industry until he achieved his ambition of opening a gym in 1982.

**About the gym** - Bertu's gym is divided into three levels. The ground floor is dedicated to the female athlete. The main level of the gym is equipped with free weights and the latest gym equipment on the market to satisfy all their clients needs. The gym also has a very well equipped cardio section. On the top floor, you will find a gym solely dedicated to boxing. Bertu's gym is ideal for any individual who wishes to train in a friendly environment and at the same time achieve desired results. One will also find helpful and qualified trainers available at any time. The gym is fully airconditioned. Bertu Camilleri is always looking to invest in the latest equipment to further satisfy his client's needs.

## Why most Maltese share the same 100 surnames by

Kristina Chetcuti



Linguist Mario Cassar Photo: Jason Borg

Any Sherlock can detect a number of things from my surname. Chetcuti is a clear indication that my ancestors bred cackles of baby chicks or that they used to laugh gently – like giggling chickens apparently – or that they used to be masters of the house.

Of course, not everything is passed on over the generations. I have never seen a chick come out of a shell, my laughter is more bear-like than a tinkle, but I like to pretend that I am master of the house. Like my age-old Arabic one, each surname has its own tale, and given that there are about 20,000 of them in Malta there are lots of stories to go about.

What is certain is that our surnames are very indicative of our country's multicultural history.

"There is no surname more Maltese than any other," said linguist Mario Cassar. "It really jars sometimes that the most racist of people have a surname that would take them back to the roots of the culture they are racist about," Dr Cassar said. The 2011 census collected a total of 19,104 surnames. The top 10 are: Borg, Camilleri, Vella, Farrugia, Zammit, Galea, Micallef, Grech, Attard, Spiteri and Azzopardi. And 25 per cent of the population – 99,516 – own just these 10 surnames. A total of 178,018 people – 44 per cent – have surnames which make it to the top 25 list. But here is the stunning news: 76 per cent of the population – 307,886 people – share the same 100 surnames.

"This means that three-quarters of the whole population carry the top 100 surnames, while the remaining 23.98 per cent – 97,076 people – share the remaining 12,210 surnames," Dr Cassar said. This, he said, probably shows a degree of inbreeding. "That is why we suffer from a lot of chronic illnesses – such as diabetes."

Gozo – due to its smaller size – gives a clearer picture of this idiosyncrasy. One typical Gozitan surname seems to be Rapa but the surname Xuereb is predominate in Għajnsielem, Mintoff in Għasri, Debrincat in Munxar, Grima in San Lawrenz, Sultana in Xagħra and Cini in Żebbuġ. "If you meet a Gozitan with Buttigieg as a surname you can almost be certain that he'd be from Qala," Dr Cassar said.

*If you meet a Gozitan called Buttigieg you can almost be certain that he's from Qala*

There are also some peculiar trends in Malta, such as the strong showings of Abela in Żejtun, Aquilina in Għargħur, Bugeja in Marsaxlokk, Magro in Qrendi, Dalli in Gudja, and Busuttil in Safi. Other less marked, but equally clear concentrations are manifest in the cases of Carabott in Marsaxlokk, Sacco in Kirkop, Bezzina in Għargħur, Abdilla in Safi, and Manduca in Mdina. Penza, for example, is an overwhelmingly Luqa surname.

Dr Cassar explained that Maltese surnames may easily be divided into three surname groups: Semitic (Arabic and Hebrew), Romance (mainly Italian, Sicilian, Spanish and French), and English (as well as Scottish, Irish and Welsh). Today one also has to factor in other European and international family names which accumulated through recent ethnic intermarriages. The number of Semitic surnames is only around 50, but despite this low number, most of us have an Arabic surname. "Each one of these Semitic surnames is borne by a significant aggregate of families, whereas many of the more modern Romance and European surnames are less numerous," he said. Surnames have reached the island over many centuries in complicated historical and linguistic conditions, and because Malta has always been a place for coexistence of various ethnic groups. And they always developed in parallel with the language.

After the Norman invasion, the indigenous Muslim population, although subjected to Christian rule, still

kept its cultural and linguistic heritage. The expulsion of the Muslims in the 13th century, and that of the Jews in the 15th century, however, brought about the final rupture of the powerful cultural ties which had bound Malta to the North African Arabo-Berber world. "Since then, barring latter-day English influence, the dominant cultural driving force in Malta has come from Sicily, Italy and other European, mainly Mediterranean, countries," Dr Cassar said. By the late middle ages, the majority of typical Maltese surnames were already well established – not only such obviously Semitic ones such as Abdilla, Agius, Asciak, Bajada, Bugeja, Buhagiar, Borg, Busuttil, Buttigieg, Caruana, Cassar, Chetcuti, Ebejer, Farrugia, Fenech, Micallef, Mifsud, Saliba, Zerafa and Zammit, but many others which are clearly of European extraction (mainly Sicilian, Italian, Spanish, and Greek) like Azzopardi, Baldacchino, Portelli, Brincat, Bonnici, Cachia, Cardona, Cilia, Dalli, Darmanin, Debono, Formosa, Gatt, Galea, Grima, Aquilina, Mallia, Pace, Falzon and Vella. Probably, the oldest documented surnames in Malta are Grech, Calleja, Falzon, Attard, and Lentini. Grech and Calleja go back to the 13th century Angevin times. Internationally-renowned tenor Joseph Calleja probably got his surname from a Greek derivation and not from Spain – as is most commonly believed. "The names Martinus and Leo Calleya appear locally in 1277, before the Spanish ruled Malta, so that is why it is more plausible for Calleja to have originated in Greece," Dr Cassar said.

Surnames are conventionally divided into four broad categories according to their original source: those derived from personal names, those from place names, those from occupational names, and those from nicknames. Behind each one there is particular significance. The Prime Minister's surname – Muscat – is Italian or French and dates back to the late middle ages. Its origin may refer to a grower of muscat grapes, or a producer or merchant of muscatel, a strong sweet wine made from the muscat grape grown in the Loire Valley. But it can also mean 'fly' from the Italian mosca or the Jewish 'nutmeg'.

Busuttil, the surname of the Opposition leader, is probably a derivative of the medieval Maltese surname Busittin – meaning master of 60 men. "He could have been the leader of 60 militiamen assigned to guard the local coasts against piratical attacks," said Dr Cassar. The custom of surname-giving, even in Malta, was mainly motivated by the emergence of new administrative practices inherent in the medieval feudal system. As societies became more complex, and taxes started being collected, a more refined system of names developed to distinguish one individual unambiguously.

#### 10 MOST COMMON SURNAMES:

Vella, Attard, Camilleri, Grech, Portelli, Butigieg, Sultana, Azzopardi, Siteri and Zammit.

**TOP 10 SURNAMES:** Borg, Camilleri, Vella, Farrugia, Zammit, Galea, Micallef, Grech, Attard and Spiteri.

<b>Tonna</b>	chubby	<b>Vella, Bellizzi, Belli</b>	beautiful
<b>Magro</b>	lean	<b>Formosa</b>	handsome
<b>Rossi</b>	red haired	<b>Cortis</b>	courteous
<b>Bianco, Balzan</b>	white haired	<b>Preziosi</b>	precious
<b>Bruno, Moroni, Morana</b>	dark-skinned	<b>Imbroll, Briguglio</b>	meddler
<b>Losco</b>	short-sighted	<b>Falzon</b>	deceitful
<b>Ghirsci</b>	cross-eyed	<b>Grixti, Montanaro</b>	rough
<b>Testa</b>	big head	<b>Mangion, Manduca, Manicaro</b>	gluttons

## Bambinella and Duck Eggs



**Bambinella.....** a very small pear, present in most vegetable shops here in Gozo and Malta. The season for this unusual, pretty fruit is summer. *Pyrus Communis* var. *Bambinella....* is also called "The Small Maltese June Pear".

This 'miniature' pear is a familiar sight on our Maltese Islands. In 2009 it was exported to London and sold at Mark's and Spencer's! Native to Malta?

Yes. But unique to Malta? I cannot

state this unless I am 100% sure... and I am not. It might grow in Sicily because of our similar climates, and I have also read that trees are exported to the UK and grown in Kent. So, in this case, I shall not say: "unique"....as my friend Shaun taught me!

Bambinella have a pink-blushed skin and are crisp in texture. The crunch is followed by a sweet tart taste. Delicious. Like apples, pears, peaches, plums, strawberries, cherries and almonds they come from the rose family, *Rosaceae*. They can be cooked or eaten raw. Perfect for a last minute addition to a picnic by the sea. Just a wash and go! This is what I would call 'fast' food.

My friend Samuel has 3 ducks. And the first 3 eggs were very kindly passed to me! Fantastic! Duck eggs have twice the nutritional value of hens' eggs. With more albumen and richer yolks, the mix rises better and makes fluffier cakes and pastries. Perfect for baking! Bigger than hens' eggs and with shells that vary in

colour depending on the breed of duck, they have a 'rustic' look to them. Pretty, even. Some have a tint of blue-green, others speckled. Nice enough to use in decorating.

My frangipani mix, some sweet pastry, all made with duck eggs. Bambinella almond tart. Just substitute hens' eggs with duck eggs in your recipe. Another tip... add some finely grated lemon zest to the frangipani. It will bring out the flavours of each ingredient.

In an ideal world, i would live in a beautiful Mediterranean house with my own Bambinella, Lemon and Almond trees, ducks running around and a fantastic Le Cornue oven. So, the closest I can get to this dream is baking this tart, that does taste like a dream... like my dream to be precise!

**Claire Borg**





## TE FIT-TAZZA BLOG

tefittazza.com

### Meeting up with Lisa Gwen

*We recently met up with Lisa Gwen from @Maltadoors to discuss a potential collaboration. With her Instagram account, Lisa is brilliantly documenting the beautiful aesthetics of Maltese facades as many of them are being lost to make space for new developments. We invited her to write a guest blog post about her experience!*

It's funny how a (non?) project which took off randomly and unintentionally, practically takes over one's identity. I'm no longer Lisa, or Gwen. Or even the person who used to work at The Times, or the one to speak to about arts funding or exhibitions. I've 'become' MaltaDoors. *Tal-bibien*, as others affectionately refer to me. I am not door obsessed however; I'm simply a lover of light and architecture.

As Lewis Carroll rightly wrote in *Alice in Wonderland* – 'tis "curioser and curioser". Alice seems to follow me about, or rather, the contrary. The door imagery in the

tale, coupled with the copious symbolism has always made perfect sense to me, most especially where this project is concerned. Because the doors are really an excuse, for many things – after all, they are but entrances and exits, thresholds, all at once creating opportunity yet providing obstacle.

At first, I didn't get all the interest in the quirky captures which I had decided to organise on an Instagram account. I thought it was due to the times we are living in – to the fact that visuals tend to play an all-important role in our lives, or that we have this need to look for, and recognise beauty (in all its forms).



The aesthetic of the images is, however, secondary. The purpose, and what I can only describe as a need to document, has long taken over. After all, documentation, visual or other, is a means of preservation. That's why it's so easy to connect my images, with the work of *Te fit-Tazza* – the purpose and long-term intention of our work is one and the same. Ours is an attempt to 'preserve' portions of Malta, whilst repeatedly being confronted by a context and environment which is being altered, at an alarmingly fast rate.

So now, 15 months later – my non project has actually turned into a project. But I want it to be about the stories held behind, in front of, or even within the doors, rather than a mere visual documentary. There are stories to be told about the often custom-made wrought ironwork designs; other stories concern the house-names, the door knockers or even the religious icons affixed to the facades. My ever-fertile imagination ran off to *Wonderland* ages ago, to a land where doors had personalities, faces, human characteristics...

Anything that holds your attention is worth exploring. I am doing just that.

Check out some of our favourite Maltese doors and if you want to explore more, make sure to follow Lisa on Instagram @maltadoors.

## FRENCH OCCUPATION OF MALTA 1798 -1800

The French occupation of Malta lasted from 1798 to 1800. It was established when the Order of Saint John surrendered to Napoleon Bonaparte following the French landing in June 1798. In Malta, the French have established a constitutional tradition in Maltese history (as part of the French Republic), granted free education for all, and established the freedom of press, such as with the publication of the *Journal de Malte*.



The French abolished nobility, slavery, the feudal system, and the inquisition.<sup>[3]</sup> The only remaining architectural feature of the French occupation is probably the defacement of most coat-of-arms on the façades of buildings of the knights.<sup>[4]</sup> The French capitulated Malta for various reasons including hunger, disease, and from local rebellions supported by the British navy.

**French invasion of Malta.** - On 19 May 1798, a French fleet sailed from Toulon, escorting an expeditionary force of over 30,000 men under General Napoleon Bonaparte. The force was destined for Egypt, Bonaparte seeking to expand French influence in Asia and force Britain to make peace in the French Revolutionary Wars, which had begun in 1792. Sailing southeast, the convoy collected additional transports from Italian ports and at 05:30 on 9 June arrived off Valletta. At this time, Malta and its neighbouring islands were ruled by the Order of Saint John, an old and influential feudal order weakened by the loss of most of their revenue during the French Revolution. The Grandmaster Ferdinand von Hompesch zu Bolheim, refused Bonaparte's demand that his entire convoy be allowed to enter Valletta and take on supplies, insisting that Malta's neutrality meant that only two ships could enter at a time. Capitulation of Malta to general Bonaparte

On receiving this reply, Bonaparte immediately ordered his fleet to bombard Valletta and, on 11 June, General Louis Baraguey d'Hilliers directed an amphibious operation in which several thousand soldiers landed at seven strategic sites around the island. The French Knights deserted the order, and the remaining Knights failed to mount a meaningful resistance. Approximately 2,000 native Maltese militia resisted for 24 hours, retreating to Valletta once the city of Mdina fell to General Claude-Henri Belgrand de Vaubois. Although Valletta was strong enough to hold out against a lengthy siege, Bonaparte negotiated a surrender with Hompesch, who agreed to turn Malta and all of its resources over to the French in exchange for estates and pensions in France for himself and his knights. Bonaparte then established a French garrison on the islands, leaving 4,000 men under Vaubois while he and the rest of the expeditionary force sailed eastwards for Alexandria on 19 June.



The Main Gate of Birgu had its coats of arms defaced during the French occupation

During Napoleon's short stay in Malta, he stayed in Palazzo Parisio in Valletta (currently used as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs). He implemented a number of reforms which were based on the principles of the French Revolution. These reforms could be divided into four main categories:

**Equality** - The people of Malta were granted equality before the law, and they were regarded

as French citizens. The Maltese nobility was abolished, and slaves were freed. Freedom of speech and the press were granted, although the only newspaper was *Journal de Malta*, which was published by the government. Political prisoners including Mikiel Anton Vassalli and those who took part in the Rising of the Priests were released, while the Jewish population was given permission to build a synagogue.



Co-Cathedral was painted black by the Maltese so that the French troops would not realize that it was made of silver and melt it down into bullion.

The French rapidly dismantled the institutions of the Knights of St. John, including the Roman Catholic Church, and the Maltese people were not happy about this. There were economic problems and the French government did not pay wages or pensions anymore, and began taking gold and silver from banks and palaces of the Order.

Church property was looted and seized to pay for the expedition to Egypt, an act that generated considerable anger among the deeply religious Maltese population. On 2 September, this anger erupted in a popular uprising during an auction of church property, and within days thousands of Maltese irregulars had driven the French garrison into Valletta and the Harbour area. Valletta was surrounded by approximately 10,000 irregular Maltese soldiers led by Emmanuele Vitale and Canon Francesco Saverio Caruana, but the fortress was too strong for the irregulars to assault. The Maltese built siege fortifications surrounding the harbour area to bombard French positions. The Maltese who were gunned down by the French were Giovanni Cortis, Giuzeppi Borg, Mario Cortis, Marozz Galea, Giovanni Chircop and Maruzzo Vella (See plaque)

Help from Britain arrived later in the year and, in 1799, Captain Alexander Ball was appointed Civil Commissioner of Malta. The French garrison in Valletta finally capitulated to the British on 4 September 1800, and Malta became a British Protectorate. The French surrendered on 5 September of that year.

**Gozo** - On 28 October 1798, Ball successfully completed negotiations with the French garrison on the small island of Gozo, the 217 French soldiers there agreeing to surrender without a fight and transferring the island to the British. The British transferred the island to the locals that day, and it was administered by Archpriest Saverio Cassar on behalf of Ferdinand III of Sicily. Gozo remained independent until Cassar was removed from power by the British in 1801

**Educational** - Primary schools were to be set up in the main towns and villages, while 60 students were to be allowed to study in France. The University of Malta was to be renamed *Polytechnique*, and scientific subjects were to be taught there. However, none of these reforms were actually implemented due to the short duration of French rule.

**Church-State relationship** - The church's extensive property on Malta was taken over by the Government, and religious orders were only allowed to keep one convent each. The Inquisition was also abolished, and the last inquisitor was expelled from the islands. Later on, French troops began to loot church property, and this was one of the main reasons of the Maltese uprising.

**Maltese uprising** - The silver gate in St. John's



## ILWIEN IL-FESTI MALTIN VOLUM 7

Qbiżna n-nofs issa u ninsabu sodisfatti ħafna li l-proġett li dhalna għalih intlaqa' tajjeb ħafna minnkomp id-dilettanti tal-festi Maltin u Għawdxin u minn dawk li jhobbu dak kollu li jikkarakterizza l-patrimonju artistiku Malti. Fil-fatt, nistghu ngħidu bla tlaqliq, li l-proġett li ħlomna bih jinsab miexi fuq bażi soda ħafna u dan grazzi għalikom.

Qed inżommu l-wegħda tagħna, li noħorġu volum wieħed fis-sena, biex filwaqt li nżommu ritmu kostanti, l-anqas ma nagħfsu żżejjed lid-dilettant, billi l-prezz tal-pubblikazzjoni tagħna mhux wieħed irħis. Intant, wasalna biex iniedu is-seba' volum, u kif għamilna dawn l-aħħar snin, lilkom li wrejtu interess ġenwin f'din il-pubblikazzjoni u dejjem ħallastu minn qabel, qegħdin navżawkom personalment b'ittra privata, biex tkunu tistgħu terġġu tgawdu mill-offerta tagħna ta' qabel il-pubblikazzjoni.

Filfattma' din l-ittra għandek issib formola t'applikazzjoni li qed nistednuk timlieha u tibgħatha flimkien ma' ħlas ta' €35 (flok €45). B'dan inti mhux biss tkun qed tassigura l-kopja tiegħek bi prezz imraħhas, iżda tkun qed tgħin lilna nwettqu dan il-proġett li qed jiswielnha l-eluf kbar ta' ewro. Napprezzaw ħafna anzi jekk inti theġġegħ lil oħrajn jagħmlu bħalek u jħallsu bil-quddiem għall-kopja tagħhom. Nieħdu din l-okkażjoni biex nirringrazzjawk mill-ġdid tal-interess tiegħek fil-pubblikazzjonijiet tagħna. Nies bħalek jagħmlulna kuraġġ biex inkomplu l-mixja li qbadna sena ilu u li fi ħsiebna nkomplu fis-snin li ġejjin. Inhegħgek tgħaddi din l-email lil shabek. Tislijiet minghand,

**Andrew Borg = Cervus 72A, Triq Doni, Rabat Malta = tel. 9938 5496= [deerandrew@gmail.com](mailto:deerandrew@gmail.com)**  
**Mark Micallef Perconte = 55, 'Sandrina', Triq l-Antinni, il-Mosta = tel. 7905 8691= [markmicallef1985@gmail.com](mailto:markmicallef1985@gmail.com)**

## Tom Saintfiet appointed Malta coach



**Belgian coach has vast experience in international football** Staff Reporter

The Malta Football Association announces the appointment of Tom Saintfiet as the new coach of the national team. Saintfiet, from Belgium, takes over the reins of the national team with immediate effect. He succeeds Pietro Ghedin whose five-and-a-half-year tenure at the helm of the national team came to end after the Malta's final 2018 World Cup qualifier against Slovakia last Sunday.

Aged 44, Saintfiet is a UEFA Pro qualified coach with a wealth of experience in international football, having worked as national coach of several countries, mostly in Africa and Asia. Saintfiet was awarded the job after emerging as the stand-out candidate in a thorough evaluation exercise carried out by the Malta FA Technical Centre over the past months. His credentials are also endorsed by the Belgian FA.

"Saintfiet's footballing knowledge and qualifications allied with his vast experience in international football where he has coached several developing nations, made him the outstanding candidate for the post of Malta coach," Norman Darmanin Demajo, the President of the Malta FA, said. "We are pleased that Saintfiet has accepted our offer to become national coach and we are convinced that he will do an excellent job both for the national side and as a prominent member of our technical sector." Saintfiet, who took up coaching at the young age of 24 after his playing career was curtailed by injuries, expressed his satisfaction at his appointment as the new Malta coach. "I'm honoured to be the new national coach of Malta," Saintfiet, who is also the author of the book 'Trainer Zonder Grenzen' (Trainer Without Borders), said.

"My ambition is to help the Maltese national team move forward and also assist in the long-term development of Maltese football at all levels with the backing of all the stakeholders." Saintfiet's first match in charge of Malta will be the friendly against Estonia, to be played on 12th November, 2017 at the National Stadium. The Belgian will be presented to the media in the coming days.

**TOM SAINTFEIT** Born in 1973 in Mol, Tom Saintfeit began his coaching career at the age of 24, becoming the youngest manager in Belgian football.

## • Welcome to TSN – Third Country National Support Network Malta



The third country national support network in Malta (TSN Malta) is the first national network of third country national organisations working for the welfare and integration of third country nationals.

TSN Malta believes in the participation of diverse

groups and cultures whose voice is important to the development of Malta and the people within its territory. It believes that third country nationals are strategic to the development and stability of Malta, their countries of origin, the European Union and the world. Their rights and well-being need to be ensured. TSN Malta believes in the importance of peace building among diverse nations, peoples, faiths, ethnicities and political beliefs.

TSN Malta is built on the principle of solidarity, self-representation and self-determination. This is because third country national organisations, groups and communities can best represent the needs of their own members, in a way they determine, and by establishing solidarity and sharing resources with each other. These principles are important in ensuring the development of leadership and the diverse skills and competences associated with organisational and personal growth and development.

TSN Malta seeks to develop a strong partnership with other networks and local organisations in Malta, to build bridges, work on common goals and share achievements.

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