

## The lovely and friendly people of Malta and Gozo

A SPECIAL  
FEATURE ON  
DAPHNE CARUANA  
GALIZIA



### The Maltese eNewsletter



The Journal of the  
**MALTESE DIASPORA**

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THE LINK BETWEEN  
MALTESE LIVING  
IN MALTA AND ABROAD



## Malta Investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia killed in bomb blast

By Amy Wilson-Chapman

Journalists worldwide are mourning the loss of influential investigative **journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia** after she was murdered when a bomb blast tore apart her car in Malta on Monday.

Caruana Galizia started her journalism career in 1987 as a columnist for 'The Sunday Times of Malta', but her most recent and provocative work was writing one of Malta's most popular blogs 'Running Commentary'.

After publication of the Panama Papers, Caruana Galizia followed up with her own reporting, uncovering more information on local political figures involved in the leak.

It was this reporting that lead Politico to name her as one of '28 people who are shaping, shaking and stirring Europe'.

The controversial journalist fought for press freedom in Malta even after her bank accounts were frozen earlier this year after she reported that the deputy leader of the Labour Party, Christian Cardona, and his EU presidency policy officer, Joseph Gerada had visited a brothel.

She continued to fight the injustices in her country with her final blog post, 'That crook Schembri was in court today, pleading that he is not a crook', published not long before the attack. Local media reported that Caruana Galizia had filed a police report 15 days ago saying she was being threatened.

ICIJ director Gerard Ryle said he was shocked by the news and condemned the attack.

"Caruana Galizia has been at the forefront of important investigations in the public interest and has exposed offshore dealings of prominent political figures in Malta," he said.

"ICIJ condemns violence against journalists and is deeply concerned about freedom of the press in Malta. ICIJ calls upon the Maltese authorities to investigate the murder and bring the perpetrators to justice."

Caruana Galizia was also the mother of long-time ICIJ developer and data journalist Matthew Caruana Galizia.

Statements from across the globe were flooding social media as journalists learned of the news.

Times of Malta online editor Herman Grech said Caruana Galizia was "loved and resented in equal measure in politically-divided Malta – but she will go down in the Mediterranean island's history as one of the most influential writers.



## Pope Francis sends condolences on the death of Daphne Caruana Galizia



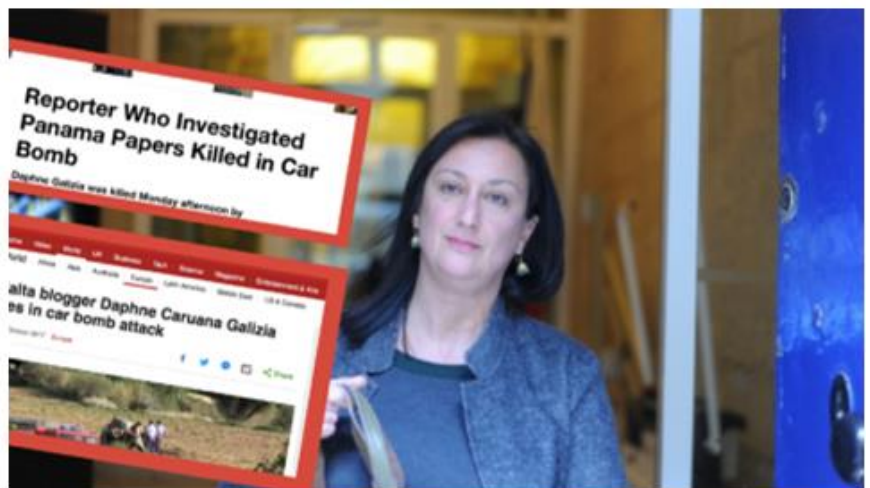
**Pope Francis has expressed his condolences on the tragic death of Daphne Caruana Galizia.**

Cardinal Pietro Parolin the Vatican Secretary of State wrote, "saddened by the tragic death of Daphne Caruana Galizia, His Holiness Pope Francis offers prayers for her eternal rest, and asks you kindly to convey his condolences to her family." "The Holy Father also assures you of his spiritual closeness to the Maltese people at this difficult moment, and implores God's blessings upon the nation."





## IN LOVING MEMORY OF DAPHNE CARUANA GALIZIA



**R.I.P. MONDAY 16 OCT. 2017 BIDNIJA, MALTA**







Outrageous fashion, delicious food and drinks plus bands, celebrities and more all RSVP to the race that stops the nation.

As the world looks on, Australasia's best-known raceday explodes with colour, action, excitement and celebration. Emirates Melbourne Cup Day is known as 'the race that stops the nation', and with good reason. Taking place on Tuesday 7 November 2017, this is an unmissable event in spring's social calendar.

For a few minutes in the afternoon more than 100,000 people watch in awe as the world's best stayers run the world's most famous race – the AU\$6.2 million Emirates Melbourne Cup. As the horses cross the finish line the crowd erupts and you can hear the cheers for miles.

Run over 3,200 metres, the Emirates Melbourne Cup is widely considered to be the best staying handicap in the world. Offering the richest prize in Australian sport – an 18ct solid gold trophy valued at AU\$175,000, a day on the track at this iconic event is a unique chance to watch history in the making.

Off the field the drama doesn't stop either.

PROGRAMM

Maltese Literature Group Inc.  
Grupp Letteratura Maltija Ink.

F'Għeluq it-Tmienja u Tletin Sena  
mit-Twaqqif tal-Grupp

*jippreżenta*

Programm

Mużiko-Letterarju

Dr. Joe Abella, Fundatur,  
Grupp Letteratura  
Maltija  
President 1979-1984

Members u Membri tal-Grupp Letteratura Maltija waqt BBQ għand il-Membri tagħna Frank u Draga Bonetti

**Il-Hadd, 17 ta' Settembru, 2017**  
Fic-Centru Malti

(1979)
477 Royal Parade, Parkville
(2017)

Gheżież Hbieb tal-Grupp Letteratura Maltija (MLG),

Il-Programm tal-Lejla Mużiko-Letterarja li tellajna fiċ-Ċentru Malti ta' Melbourne fis-17 ta' Settembru 2017 jinstab pubblikat *online* f'format ta' *flipbook*. Dan kien possibbli, b'hal fil-każ tas-sena l-oħra, bis-saħħa t'għajnuna li sibna mingħand Dr Clemente Zammit.

Ikteb il-link ta' hawn taht biex tkun tista' taqrah.

Grazzi tal-appoġġ tagħkom u tislijiet mill-qalb,

*Paul Vella*

<http://online.fliphtml5.com/bxaj/xczj/>

## CONCERT ST TERESA'S EFFINGHAM (Senior School Choir from England)

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Blessed Virgin of Ta' Pinu  
Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017 at 7.00 pm



Press Release - The JP2 Foundation will be commemorating the Liturgical Feast of Saint John Paul II on Saturday 21st October 2017 with a High Mass celebrated by Bishop Mario Grech followed by a concert of Sacred Music by St Teresa's Effingham Choir from the UK. The choir will also be animating the 6.30pm Mass live broadcasted on TVM2.

St Teresa's Effingham is situated in the Surrey Hills near Dorking. There are at present 420 girls attending the school, both boarding and day pupils. The school has an impressive tradition of excellence in music, art, drama and sport. The choir holds 45 female voices. The members of the choirs love singing and performing. They have been guest performers at the Mole Valley Youth Show Case at the Dorking Halls. Previous tours include Venice, performing in St Mark's Cathedral, Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, Verona, Florence, and last year the choir enjoyed visiting Sicily. The choir also appears regularly in the Godalming festival. Timothy Caister is the Director of Music at St Teresa's Effingham, and is also a profession musician. He is currently the sub-principal french horn player in the City of London Sinfonia. The commemorating event will take place at Our Lady of Ta' Pinu Basilica, Gharb, which Basilica was visited by Pope John Paul II on the 26th May 1990. The general Public is invited to attend.

**Chev. Joe M Attard**



Irene Cooper - Queensland

### NEWSLETTER 189

What a marvellous e-Newsletter and so much information. It is mind boggling! Where do you get all that information from. Thank you once more for all the research and the information you so kindly produce. I have forwarded it to my Maltese friends here on the Gold Coast.





Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus (South Australia) Incorporated

## St Raphael's Home for the Aged

2 Franciscan Avenue, LOCKLEYS SA 5032  
Telephone: (08) 8353 6022 Facsimile: (08) 8235 1995

### *Brief History of St Raphael's Home for the Aged*

***Celebrating 30 years since moving to Lockleys from Fullarton on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 1987***



*Photo: (back) Fr Gabriel Micallef ofm; His Grace Archbishop Phillip Willson; Fr Charles Gauci; and Fr David Scumff ofm. (front) Sr Natalia Calleja; Sr Vittoriana DeBattista; Sr Bonnie Attard; Sr Ottavia Monsigneur, Sr Anna Mifsud and Sr Saveriana Caruana. Sisters Ottavia, Anna and Saverina are from Mackay Queensland.*

The story of St Raphael's Home begins with the formation of the 'Catholic

Braille Writer's Association' in 1936. In 1955 this Association started on a task of raising sufficient funds to purchase a Nursing home for the elderly Catholic Blind persons. This was to be known as

St Raphael's Home for the Aged Blind as St Raphael is the patron Saint of the Visually impaired. The Home, originally a private hospital, was purchased, renovated and furnished, and it was opened on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 1960 with 14 residents at what was then 173 Fullarton Road, Fullarton SA.

The Religious Order of the Daughters of Charity undertook the management and the running of the Home and in 1965 further rooms were added, bringing the accommodation to 30 residents. After few years the Daughters of Charity advised that they had to withdraw because of other demanding charitable missions.

In August 1971 His Grace Archbishop J. Gleeson invited the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus to assume responsibilities of the Home from the Daughters of Charity. In October of the same year, three (3) sisters, Sr Clementa, Sr Pierpaola, and Sr Juliana took over the care of the blind and elderly of the home at Fullarton. After 10 yrs of care and service, the Franciscan Sisters received ownership and the administration of the Home from the Catholic Blind Association.

The Home in Fullarton needed to undergo huge repairs to meet the government's building requirements of that time. The Home's condition was making it impossible to continue to operate there. Archbishop J. Gleeson and St Raphael's Committee with Sr Oliva, Administrator of St Raphael's, took all possible initiatives of finding another suitable site for a new home, to no avail.

The late Rev. Fr Giles Ferriggi ofm learned about the Sisters having difficulty in finding a new site for a new home and offered the sisters the vacant land that was behind the Friary. After securing the site at Franciscan Avenue in Lockleys to build a new home and a convent for the sisters, an application was

submitted to the government for financial assistance. Grants were granted and in no time the vacant area behind the friary took a different sight.

The Foundation Stone was laid, and within two years (on the 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 1987, exactly 30 yrs today) the Home receive the residents from the old Home in Fullarton. On the 25<sup>th</sup> October of the same year the Home was officially opened and blessed by Emeritus Archbishop J. Gleeson.

Many sisters attended this memorable occasion, amongst them were two Mackay sisters, Sr Ottavia Monsigneur, the Regional Superior of that time, and Sr Saveriana Caruana who with her professional expertise in building and maintenance was great support during the building process. (*I remember vividly the many trips she took down from Mackay during those two years*).

Over the years many of the sisters were transferred to other communities, never to be replaced. For the last 5 five years the religious community was made of Sr Anna Mifsud; Sr Bonnie Attard and Sr Leonide Magro. Very recently the Lord took our dear Sister Leonide to His Care. She is our first sister who died in Adelaide.

As the government's demands on Nursing Homes continue to increase, the sisters requested the support of another facility. The society of St Hilarion Inc. aged care was chosen to assist in the clinical care and support of St Raphael's Home. The Franciscan Sisters remain the sole owners of St Raphael's home, providing pastoral and spiritual care along with daily support to their residents.

Following the example of Jesus who touched and healed the sick and in imitation of our Foundress M. Margerita's virtues of Love and Compassion, we the sisters, endeavour to continue our Christian ministry of healing with simplicity, joy and compassion through a life full of compassion towards one another and those who are in our care. "Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do it to me". **Sister Bonnie Attard FCJ**

## REMEMBERING THE PAST

### A personal account of world war 2

**Gerald Montanaro Gauci recounts the tragic events that occurred on October 11, 1942, when a bomb dropped on a shelter in Rabat.**

The monument in Howard Garden, Rabat, in honour of the casualties of World War II. The names of the casualties of October 11, 1942, are engraved on it.



It was October 11, 1942, a few minutes after 1pm. I was seven years old and it was to be the most traumatic day of my life. Nine of our neighbours were killed that day.

Three years earlier, Neville Chamberlain very famously had declared "I have to tell you... our country is at war with Germany" and 10 months later, Benito Mussolini declared "L'ora segnata del destino batte il cielo della nostra patria".

Malta was deeply immersed in war. We had moved from our home in

Old Bakery Street, Valletta, to a small house in front of Howard Gardens in Rabat to avoid the devastation of our capital city. This is how it all happened on October 11.

We were at table having lunch. In my younger days it was still customary for families to have their meals together. Somehow my mother had managed to put together a Sunday roast. Suddenly we heard a bomb explode in the vicinity of Saqqajja. She picked up my three-month-old sister and rushed down the

stairs leading to a cellar where we had a small shelter. We all followed, my father doing so very reluctantly.

The early months of 1942 saw the heaviest bombing. When German General Erwin Rommel was about to lose North Africa, the air raids came to a halt. But the sound of the siren was heard again in the autumn. German Luftwaffe commander Albert Kesselring had decided that in order to secure his hold on Sicily, it was necessary to attack Malta from the air once more.

Our neighbours had grown accustomed to the air raids and instead of taking refuge in the public shelter in front of our house, they stood in front of its entrance and watched the dog fights over Ta' Qali. This was why there were so many terrible fatalities.

I cannot forget the shrill whistle of the bomb piercing our ears as it hurtled down to destroy our home, nor the blast that blew us down the steps leading to our shelter and the horror that followed.

*I cannot forget the shrill whistle of the bomb piercing our ears as it hurtled down to destroy our home*

I cannot delete some pictures from my memory.... the picture of my brother and myself climbing through the debris and over the dead bodies of two of our neighbours, their limbs lost, and rivers of blood everywhere as we struggled to get out of the entrance of the shelter. The picture of the head of another of our neighbours plastered against a wall. And, most macabre of all, the picture of an Alsatian dog picking a limb from a dead body and running as fast as it could towards Howard Gardens to feast on it.

I remember the kindness of Professor and Mrs Degiorgio who collected my brother and myself and literally nursed us in their home at Boscetto Road for several days until we recovered from the shock of the blast. I also remember the kindness of Madre Emilia of the Sisters of St Joseph who collected my other two-year-old brother and, subsequently, practically adopted him.

An Italian bomber flying over Malta.

At the time my father kept a diary. An entry made a few days after that tragic day records how he accompanied my mother, who had a very bad head injury, together with my three-month-old sister soaked in blood and thought to be dead, to the Conservatorio Vincenzo Bugeja in Santa Venera which had been turned into a hospital. He also recounted how for a full five hours after the bombing, he did not know whether my brothers and myself were alive or dead.

The diary also describes how my father slept in the surviving part of the cellar that night. The next morning Mrs Randon who lived a few doors away brought him coffee and Professor Degiorgio brought him a basin, a jug of water and a razor. He then discovered that he had no money whatsoever. He wrote how Dr Marius Bugeja "was very kind and gave him some money". Such is the fate of a High Court judge in the midst of war.

John Pullicino in his book, *A Lawyer at Large*, also describes the raid. "In Waggon Street, the old Strada Carri which ran past a row of small white houses down to the vegetable market, the Pitkalija, the bodies were whole but the blast had shrunk them up and dwarfed them. Men and women with old faces had the bodies of little children in strange jointless poses like discarded puppets over which the grey-pink of dust slowly descended on a sultry October afternoon.

"The people who died in Waggon Street were, I believe, the last air raid victims of the war in Malta." Seventy-five years on and approaching the venerable age of 83, I am entitled to a little reflection. The greats of history are not the likes of Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon but their unsung victims. I accept freedom does not come free, still it is difficult not to be a pacifist.

#### **Casualties on October 11, 1942**

<b>Josephine Borg, aged 24</b>	<b>Toninu (Anthony) Caruana, aged 10</b>	<b>Gola (Angiolina) Falzon, aged 14</b>
<b>Joseph Fsadni, aged 28</b>	<b>Madalena Galea, aged 28 years</b>	<b>Carmel Grech, aged 30 years</b>
<b>Antonia Grixti, aged 46 years</b>	<b>Peter Vella, aged 52 years</b>	<b>Maria Zahra, aged 44 years</b>



## A to Zed Stamps – Gozo Philatelic Exhibition next month



The annual Gozo Philatelic Exhibition – A to Zed Stamps – organised by the Gozo Philatelic Society, will be inaugurated next month by the Ministry for Gozo Justyne Caruana.

The exhibition, now in its 18th edition, is being held in the Gozo Ministry Exhibition Hall, starting Friday, the 3rd of November; it will remain open till Thursday, the 9th (including Saturday and Sunday)

Stamp collectors and the general public, will as usual, have a wide range of stamps to view, social philately, junior offerings and samples from the Juncker Melitensia collection. Items on show include Vintage and Modern Stamps, Postal history, Rare Postal Items and much more. Albums, Cards and stamps etc. can also be acquired by Junior, Beginner, and Advanced Collectors. Participation applications can be requested on [secretary@stamps-gozo.org](mailto:secretary@stamps-gozo.org) <<mailto:secretary@stamps-gozo.org>> but there is no charge for visitors.

Distribution of certificates and prizes (sponsored by MaltaPost) to all exhibitors takes place during the GPS AGM in January. The committee said that this year it is experimenting with a new classification system to continue strengthening interest. Visitors to the exhibition will be able to pick up copies of the latest GPS Newsletter, the award-winning full-colour quarterly. Junior visitors can also claim free stamps. MaltaPost will also be issuing a commemorative postmark on the 3rd of November, from its Victoria Branch Post Office, with the GPS offering a limited edition postcard and personalised stamp.

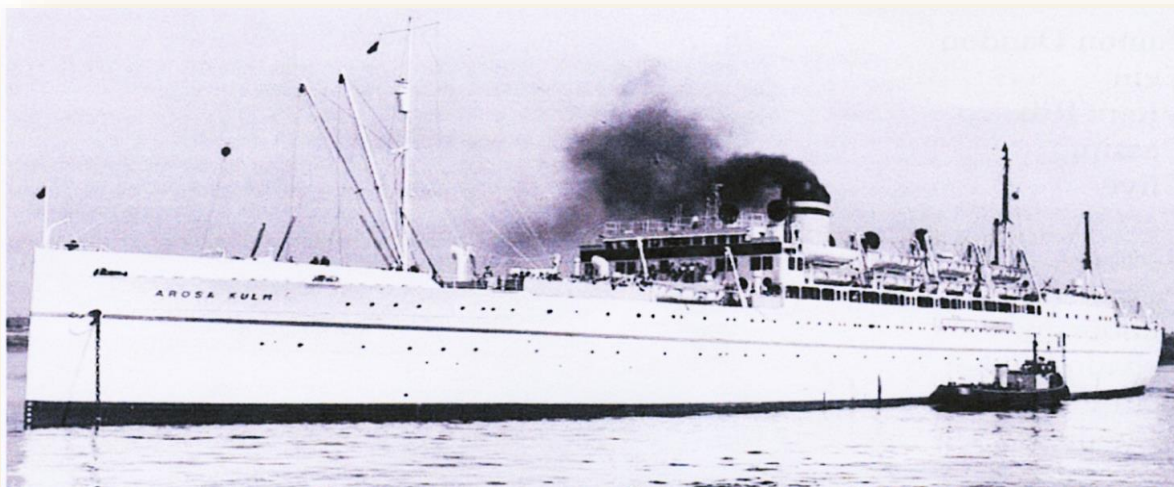


## *Journey To The Unknown*

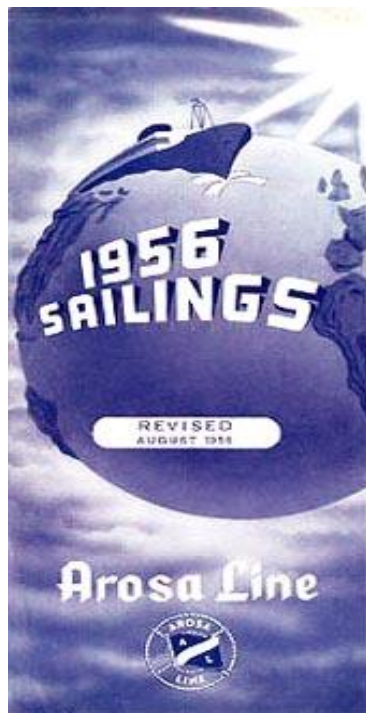
*By Ron Borg - Adelaide, Australia*

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

### *The Arosa Kulm*



The **SS Arosa Kulm** was a passenger ship, which was launched in Pennsylvania USA in 1920, and ended up as scrap in Belgium in 1959. It started its working life as the US Transport **Catigny** carrying 7,555 troops at a speed of 17 knots, and in 1924 became the transatlantic freight and passenger transport, **American Banker**. In 1940 it was transferred to a Belgian shipping company and managed to survive WWII and re-entered passenger service in 1946 as the **City of Athens** with 200 berths. It was re-named **Protea**, and re-fitted with 965 berths, **probably the worst of any ship at that time!** Panama's **Arosa Line** bought the ship in 1952, adjusted accommodations to 900, and renamed her the **Arosa Kulm**. Although she made many trips to Canada, Hamburg, and Southampton, the Arosa Kulm only visited Australia 4 times.



**Richard Saliba** voyaged in 1956, on the **Arosa Kulm** unaccompanied, but cannot remember names of any Maltese emigrants on his ship, but he vividly remembers **three interesting events** on the ship's journey.

One event is that of a rather sad **romantic story about a "young pair of sweethearts"**. On the journey, a young man, madly in love with his sweetheart, found out that his beloved girlfriend, took a fancy to one of the crew and started keeping company with him. The young man was so hurt with this betrayal that he decided to jump over the side of the ship. Luckily, a Maltese passenger nearby, managed to grab him and save him from his ill fate. **Oh the pains of love!!!**

Another **sad love story** that Richard recalls is one about a woman on board ship that was married by *proxy* to a man in Melbourne who was supposed to be waiting for her arrival in Melbourne. Apparently some passengers that were her husband's acquaintances, notice that **she was "playing up"** with one of the crew members, and decided to inform the husband in waiting of his betrothed's "infidelities"! consequently, the lady arrived in Melbourne to find herself stranded with **NO HUSBAND** waiting for her! Ooh, love hurts!!! Richard also recalls that the ship was held up for a week in Fremantle because the Authorities had found **holes in the ship's lifeboats**. (Not very safe is it!) After all these intriguing events on his ship, Richard Saliba was glad to arrive safely at Port Melbourne in May 1956.

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





**HOLDEN**

## Holden workers salute the end of the Lion Factory to close on Friday 20 October 2017

Bernard Humphreys, The Advertiser

October 19, 2017



THE first of the last drinks for the homemade Holden were a few quiet beers that slid down easily at the Old Spot Hotel on Thursday, but the drinkers were keen to keep the proverbial glass half full.

Elizabeth plant workers Mark Murray, Paul Waldron, Robert Payne and Peter Clarke were philosophical about the carmaker's Elizabeth closure today and agreed the company had done a fair job of preparing its people for the end of theirs.

The five-millionth Holden car to be made in Australia came down the line at the Elizabeth plant in August 1990. Ron Hocking is pictured with a VN Calais.

Three members of the Holden family and about 140 special guests celebrated the 50th anniversary of the merger of Holden's Motor Body Builders and General Motors (Australia) at the Adelaide Festival Centre in 1981.



It didn't seem like a company PR line, for there's no need for that now. If anything, they were being upbeat for the sake of those more uncertain about their futures.

"I hate to be negative," said Mr Murray, clearly meaning it.

"But I know of some couples with high mortgages and a couple of brand-new cars in the garage and with their wages cut it's going to be a tight squeeze," said the 54-year-old tyre-and-rim specialist, who is now planning a Bali holiday

before starting a new career in the security industry.



Mr Clarke told *The Advertiser* the company had informed staff that "80 per cent of the workers have already got jobs or are in the process of getting jobs". "What I'm concerned about is that for every one person at Holden, there's five people in the supply chain outside."

To that, Mr Murray added: "A lot of people have lost their jobs without any bloody back-up".

Meanwhile, he said, millions of dollars worth of unused parts, including perfectly good wheel rims, were being crushed and thrown out because selling them separately would cause insurance complications.

## BESPOKE MATCHMAKING SERVICE LANDS IN MALTA



### Berkeley International swaps online dating for the personal touch

Ms Watty and her team are excited about launching in Malta. Photo: Berkeley International

Finding love while juggling a professional career and busy lifestyle can be a daunting prospect.

And while online dating services and apps have exploded in popularity over the past years, they have not made it any easier for people to find their soulmate.

The trick, said Berkeley International's Hilde Watty, is 'hearthunting'.

"We don't do anything online. We meet members, talk, interview, and we don't do photographs. We talk to you about the person you would like to share your life with."

Berkely International is a bespoke matchmaking which helps commitment-oriented singles in the world's largest cities discreetly find love.

Members include CEOs, lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs and successful working professionals, and hail from anywhere from London and Paris to New York, Hong Kong, Monaco and Melbourne.

Ms Watty, who is the company owner and managing director for France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and now Malta, said the firm's success was down to the fact that the agency's matchmakers "take a personalised interest in every member, meeting face-to-face to discuss lineage, preferences, and prospects."

Matchmakers get to know members and discuss their goals, hobbies and outlook on life. "Everything we do is exhaustive as well as being absolutely tailored and spoke. The team's mission is to make personalised introductions and give members the best possible chance at finding a long-lasting relationship," said Ms Watty.

For more information visit the company's Malta Facebook page @BerkeleyInternational, call on 2546 6742 or email [hilde.watty@berkeley-international.com](mailto:hilde.watty@berkeley-international.com)



### "RUSSIAN ICON: PRAYER AND MERCY", AN EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO 25 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE ORDER OF MALTA INAUGURATED IN ROME

Rome, 12/10/2017

"Russian icon: prayer and and mercy" exhibition opened on 10th October in the Museo di Roma, Palazzo Braschi. Running until 3rd December, 36 icons from the 17th-18th centuries will be showcased to highlight two essential elements in the spiritual life of both the Catholic and Orthodox churches: precisely prayer and mercy.

Mounted to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of official relations between the Russian Federation and the Sovereign Order of Malta, the exhibition is also particularly significant this year, since the 320th anniversary is being celebrated of the official launch of relations between the Russian Empire – led by Peter the Great – and the Order at the time when it ruled the island of Malta.

The exhibition was inaugurated in the presence of the Lieutenant of the Grand Master Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto, members of the Sovereign Council and some 300 people including envoys of the Catholic and Orthodox churches, diplomats, representatives of Italian



institutions, civil and cultural authorities. The excellence of the Russian craftsmen, capable of constantly renewing the spiritual message while maintaining the figurative tradition, is proved by the artworks exhibited. Some icons come from famous studios and workshops, while others have arrived from Russian regions in which local schools and styles of iconography developed.

The project, sponsored by the Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Holy See and to the Sovereign Order of Malta and by the Grand Magistracy of the Sovereign Order of Malta, was promoted by the Sovrintendenza ai Beni Culturali of the city of Rome. The cooperation of two important museums in Moscow, the Andrey Rublev Central Museum of Ancient Russian Art and Culture and the Private Museum of the Russian Icon founded by Mikhail Abramov, was fundamental.

As the Lieutenant of the Grand Master Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto wrote in the introduction to the exhibition catalogue "I am confident that the splendour of these works will promote a greater and better knowledge of the Russian spiritual and artistic heritage and reinforce dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox religions.

## The Mdina siege of 1429 was 'greater than the Great Siege' of 1565



Mdina, Malta's old capital, has been besieged many times in the past but it was only defeated twice - the latest being in 1798, by the Maltese.

This was the contention of well-known photographer Daniel Cilia, who gave a talk on the subject at Marsa Sports Club last Wednesday.

Many of Mdina's earlier sieges are lost in antiquity and details are sketchy. The first

instance must have been in prehistoric times. Those who walk around the newly-restored Mdina ditch can see carved in the side walls the remains of silo pits which must have been used to store grain, not water, in the Bronze Age.

The recent restorations in the area have yielded many archaeological remains which are still being studied so no conclusions have yet been reached.

In around 700BC, the Phoenicians came to Malta. They were not warriors but traders and must have appreciated Malta for its safe harbours. Temi Zammit found an oriental looking, most probably Punic, limestone head in a Roman well close to the Domus. The Phoenicians later founded Carthage in Tunis and Malta fell to the Romans in the Punic Wars.

The Romans called Mdina 'Melita' and the town was far larger than it is today. Back then it extended from today's Mdina on one side to St Paul's Grotto on the other. In fact, the remains of the ditch on that side is still visible outside St Paul's church and it continued in the wide road that has now been created in front of the church.

With the breakdown of the Roman Empire, Malta formed part of the Byzantine world but was used mostly as a place to which political prisoners could be exiled. By the time of the Byzantines Mdina was reduced to its present dimensions. Most probably they also strengthened the bastions, creating the round tower one can still see facing Mtarfa.





**The people of Mdina welcome the arrival of the soldiers of the Gran Soccorso. Detail D'Aleccio painting at the the GM Palace, Valletta**

In 870AD, the Muslim Arabs from North Africa, who had attacked Sicily from the north, slowly overcame Sicily and then conquered Malta. Mdina was attacked and taken and the rest of Malta followed.

In 1090, the Normans attacked southern Italy and later Sicily and finally Malta. No fight ensued and Mdina's gates were opened to the invaders. Most probably no fight ensued and Mdina's gates were opened to the invaders.

The first recorded siege of Mdina took place in 1429 and it can be considered as greater than the Great Siege of 1565. At that time, North Africa had been taken over by the Sunni Muslims called Hafsi who wanted to re-occupy Sicily. Malta, being in the middle, was attacked first.

At that time, Malta's population consisted of some 5,000 to 6,000 people and the invading army had some 18,000 fighters. Malta had no foreign soldiers to help defend it, as it had in 1565, but Mdina was well-prepared for such a siege.

There is a story that the invading troops placed bread at the entrance to the city to taunt the defenders that the invaders had bread while the Maltese did not. But during the night, the Maltese crept out of the city and placed *ġbejniet* on top of the bread to show they had not just bread but also *ġbejniet*.



This siege is also renowned for the religious legends surrounding it. Originally, the legend said St Paul, sword in hand, appeared defending the city. Mattia Preti later painted the scene for Mdina Cathedral but he depicted the Hafsi as Ottoman Turks.

**The Despuig Bastion sally port used by the Maltese to enter Mdina during the French Occupation.**

### Occupation.

A far more recent depiction is in St George's Basilica in Gozo which has not just St Paul but also St Agatha and St George appearing to defend the Maltese. Nothing is known about the 1429 siege except that at some point the invaders must have given up and left. The next siege of Mdina took place in 1551, the one known for the sacking of Gozo. Earlier, the knights and Andrea Doria had attacked Dragut's well-fortified town of Mahdia, outside Tunis, and destroyed it.

In retaliation, Dragut, who had also lost a brother during a previous raid on Gozo, vowed vengeance. His force landed in Marsamxett but found Birgu too well-fortified to be attacked, so then tried to attack Mdina, but found that too well-fortified too. So they moved to Gozo, attacked and overcame the Cittadella and murdered or took the Gozitans into slavery.

One of the main streets of Mdina is Villegaignon Street and it is named after the knight who strengthened the Mdina defences during the 1551 siege. Even in this siege, there are legends of supernatural help. It is said that St Agatha appeared on the bastions to encourage the Maltese and in fact every year, on her feast day, a procession is held from Mdina Cathedral to Rabat, Malta.





## A picture speaks a thousand words



Part of the Good Friday Procession in Qormi ca.1930/1940. This photo was donated to the National Archives in digital format by Mr Frans Buttigieg. Accession Ref: 2016-07

## The first passport photo - Malta



Salvatore Portelli's passport... the first bearing a photo. Right: A British Army officer stationed in Malta. Photos: National Archives of Malta

One hundred years since photos were first included in Maltese passports **Leonard Callus** sifts through the yellowing documents at the National Archives of Malta to get a snapshot of life a century ago.

Wearing an ill-fitted waistcoat over a shabby shirt, Salvatore Portelli looks suspiciously at the camera as he poses for the very first passport photo on January 13, 1915.



The 25-year-old general labourer from Għarb had his application signed by the archpriest and Mr Portelli's signature is an unsteady cross, indicating the man's illiteracy and background.

Inexplicably, six months had to pass for the next photo to be included in a passport application in Malta. By June 1915 photos became a compulsory component of this travelling document.

Although the first Maltese passport was issued on Independence Day in 1964, the National Archives of Malta in Rabat hold hundreds of thousands of passport applications dating back to 1870.

The oldest surviving passport application at the archives is dated April 23, 1870, and was issued to Giovanni Mifsud from Valletta who was travelling

to Benghazi.

But passports are much older. The concept of being under one ruler's protection, while in the land of another, existed, at least, since biblical times.

Politician and Times of Malta owner Mabel Strickland's passport.



Since the early 19th century the Maltese used the British passport. The Privy Council granted passports up to 1794 when the Office of the Secretary of State took over issuing passports; a function still retained by the Home Office. In 1858 the passport acquired its role as a British identity document and since then the language switched from French to English.

While other countries, including France and the US, were increasingly adding holders' physical descriptions on passports, such as height and eye colour, the British government resisted developments described by then Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston as "degrading and offensive".

He "didn't want British people being perused by foreigners," according to Martin Lloyd, author of *The Passport: The History of Man's Most Travelled Document*.





This situation prevailed until the beginning of World War I when security considerations gained the upper hand. In the early weeks of the war, German naval reserve officer Carl Hans Lody was arrested on suspicion of spying for Germany using a fake US passport. He was found guilty and executed at the Tower of London on November 6, 1914.

The existing concerns about the lack of a photograph and physical description on passports increased following Lody's capture and execution. This led to the enactment of the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1914, which came into force on January 1, 1915 making it compulsory to have a photo and a personal description on passports.

The passport application form for the Maltese, as British subjects, was redesigned and from June 1, 1915 a photo had to start being included, together with the reason for travel; and information about the applicant's particular features, such as height, colour of eyes and hair, shape of forehead, nose, mouth, chin, face, complexion of skin and any special features.

The application form had to include the maiden name and place of birth of married women (wife or widow) travelling on their own. Provision was also made for those born abroad, who derived their status as a British subject, from their father or paternal grandfather's place of birth (Malta).

All of this led to the first modern British passport, which was also used in Malta, consisting of a single page, folded into eight, and held in cardboard cover. The passport, valid for two years, included the holder's photograph, signature, and personal description. At times it even included fingerprints. Several changes and developments marked these years.

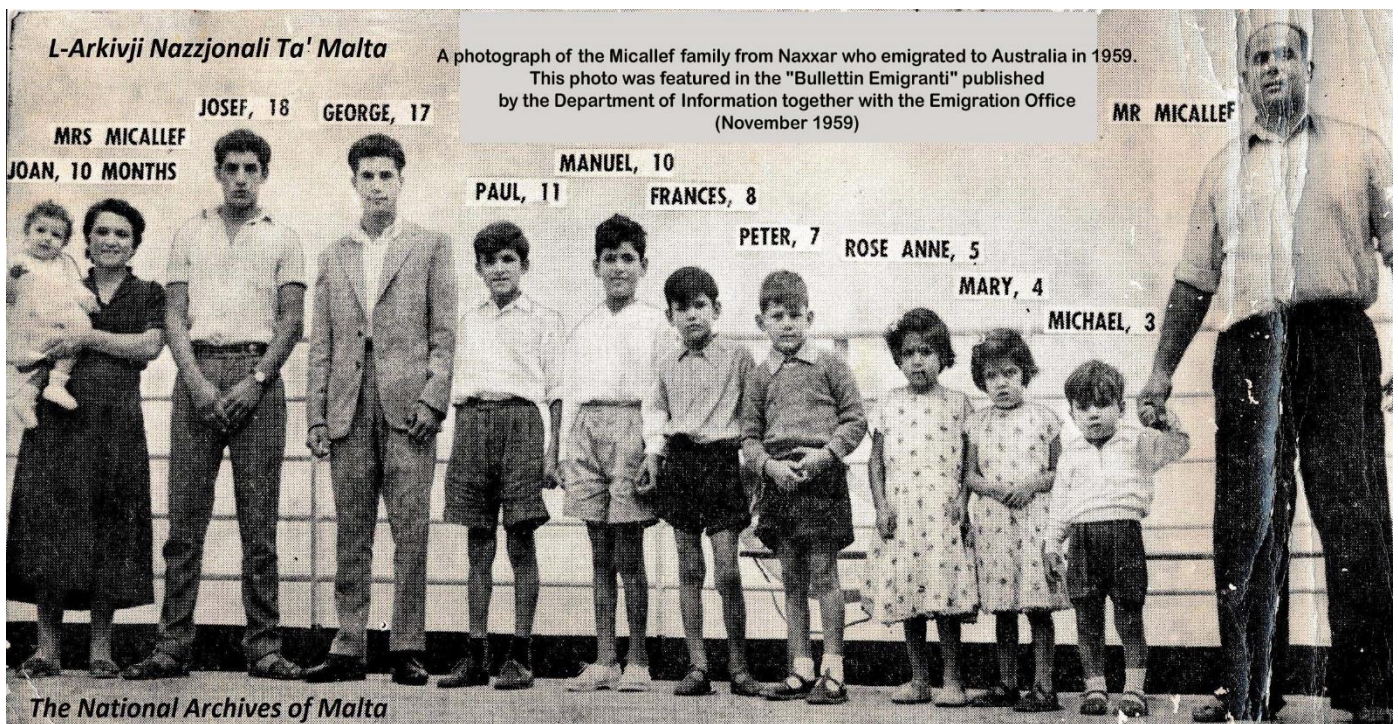
The Maltese changed their travel dynamics, destinations and motivations. Travel to certain former Mediterranean littoral destinations such as Corfu and Gibraltar, went down while trips to Tunis and Egypt continued.

After a botched attempt by 214 Maltese to settle in Australia in September 1916, no passports were issued for travel to this country between 1917 and 1920. There was a rush to the US between 1919 and 1921, until America introduced emigration quotas in the early 1920s. Not all those seeking a passport were migrants. The reason for travel had to be indicated on the passport application, and besides emigration these included travelling to undergo an operation and for health reasons.

Some obtained a passport to study abroad, others sought to leave the island for business, other had their servants flown over, wives wanted to join their husbands or visit relatives, while others travelled to claim inheritance. Travel as a holiday and for pleasure started to emerge around 1924. The main destinations were Italy and "the Continent". However, quite often applicants who enjoyed a higher standard of education refused to disclose their travel reasons adding the phrase "for private affairs".







## remembering the past



**Maltese Celebrate Independence.** Members of the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto mark Maltese National Day in front of old city hall as they celebrate anniversary of nation's independence. There are about 20000 Maltese in the city. After raising Maltese flag at cenotaph to honor their dead; they held two soccer matches and dance at club. 1970



# Maltese in Toronto chronicling their story in a museum

The place once hosted between 6,000 to 8,000 first-and second-generation Maltese



The museum houses documents, photos and objects that chronicle the history of Maltese migrants in Toronto and across Canada.

As the number of first- and second-generation Maltese in Toronto dwindles, the community there is chronicling their story for posterity in a museum that has just opened its doors to the public.

*Museum curator Richard Cumbo. Photo: Mark Zammit Cordina – timesofmalta.com*

The museum, in the St Paul the Apostle Church

complex on Toronto's Dundas Street West already exhibits fossils and old artefacts, such as Roman coins donated by Maltese migrants. There are also several photos, documents and recordings of the first Maltese migrants in Canada.



Its curator, Richard Cumbo, is in Malta on one of his frequent visits. "I've been here over 30 times, and every time I leave, a part of me stays here. There will come a day when there is nothing left of me to go back," the 69-year-old told the Times of Malta.

Mr Cumbo's family emigrated from Sliema when he was aged just three, and he only visited the island for the first time back in 1968. For years, he had been dreaming of the ideal country to live in, and when he stepped foot on the island, it ticked all the right boxes.

He immediately fell in love with the island and came back at every opportunity. Mr Cumbo actually planned on returning for good in 1969, but although he made the trip,

the uncle he was meant to stay with passed away suddenly, so he had to return to Toronto.



Nowadays, it is impossible for him to move to Malta since all his children and grandchildren live in Canada. Following his first trip, in 1971 he started volunteering with the Maltese Canadian Society of Toronto, which was founded in 1922 and is the oldest active Maltese club on the North American continent.

"If it weren't for that club, there would not have been a St Paul the Apostle Church complex. The club members were so committed that during World War II, under the Malta relief fund, the society collected hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Maltese in

Malta."



Maltese migrants departing for Toronto from

Valletta in August, 1952.

Fr Raymond Falzon OFM, who was part of the Franciscan community that took care of the St Paul the Apostle parish, started collecting artefacts from migrants in the late 1980s. However, the museum was only opened to the public by Fr Manuel Parnis this year.

Asked about the significance of the Maltese community in the neighbourhood known as the Junction in west Toronto, Mr Cumbo explained that the place once hosted between 6,000 to 8,000 first-and second-generation Maltese.



One of the many old photos in the museum showing early Maltese migrants living in the Junction neighbourhood. Seen here is the Micallef family around 1923.



At that point in time, it was the highest concentration of Maltese in one place outside of Malta. But the number has now decreased to a couple of thousand.

Over the years, the area has also hosted several bakeries, but nowadays there is only one Maltese bakery. Meanwhile, the number of clubs there has decreased from around nine to just two: the Maltese Canadian Society of Toronto and the Melita Soccer Club.

A third organisation – the Malta Band Club – has moved out of the area.

However, there is still a community keen on Maltese culture in the Junction, and a group of around a dozen people are currently learning the Maltese language under the tutorship of Carmen Galea. Ms Galea believes that more than a lack of enthusiasm, the decrease in the number of people who help to organise cultural activities is a result of the busy lives that people lead nowadays.

The float created by the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto at Toronto's centennial celebration in 1934. The float won first prize.

The old St Paul's facade, built in 1930. The church has been an integral part of the Maltese-Canadian community in west Toronto. The St Paul the Apostle Church complex nowadays.

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## High prices send Malta soaring in buy-to-rent league



**Malta's soaring rent prices are biting hard at home, but keen observers abroad are watching out for good returns on property buys** - Matthew Vella For according to payments company WorldFirst, Malta is now ranking second in a European 'buy-to-let' table of the best returns from properties that are rented out. With Ireland topping the league table for the second year in a row, soaring rents in Malta have now placed it in second position.

The average yield on an Irish property stood at 7.08 per cent in August 2017, up from 6.54 per cent in 2016, and far ahead of the rest of the EU-28. Malta's average yield was set at 6.64%, pushing the island up an impressive six rungs from its 2016 eighth-place ranking. The research used property and rental prices collected by the Numbeo database, which sources data from official statistics agencies as well as private companies. Buy-to-let yields are calculated using annual rental income as a percentage of how much a property costs to buy. Malta has become an attractive destination for foreign workers lured by a host of financial services and gaming companies being set up in Malta, but also by a booming construction industry.

The influx has, in turn, sent rent prices soaring. A MaltaToday exercise to find out how big the increase in rental prices has been in Sliema, Mosta and Mellieha between 2010 and 2016, using data obtained from classified listings in the Sunday Times of Malta, showed at least an 80% price increase for Sliema alone. And data from the Central Bank of Malta shows that between 2013 and 2016, under Labour's first administration, property prices went up by 25% in just three years. This compares with the slump of 0.2% that took place between 2008 and 2013, during Lawrence Gonzi's second PN administration, and the 34.6% boost between 2003 and 2008. When Malta joined the EU in 2004 prices skyrocketed by 20% in that year alone. Altogether, property prices have gone up by a significant 67.2% between 2001 and 2015 and show no sign of slowing down. High yields make property investment appear very attractive. Construction projects in Malta have now been geared up for massive high-rise projects, while first-time buyers are not required to pay any property tax in a government scheme that has been ongoing since 2013. Source: maltatoday.com.mt

## Waving the Maltese flag for the first time



Charles Farrugia. Photo: Chris Sant Fournier

Charles Farrugia remembers the very first time he waved the Maltese flag when the island gained independence 50 years ago.

And he was not alone. Hundreds of other children around him enthusiastically waved the red and white cloth that had now taken on a whole new meaning. Before that day he never had a reason to wave the Maltese flag, which only replaced the British one 50 years ago.

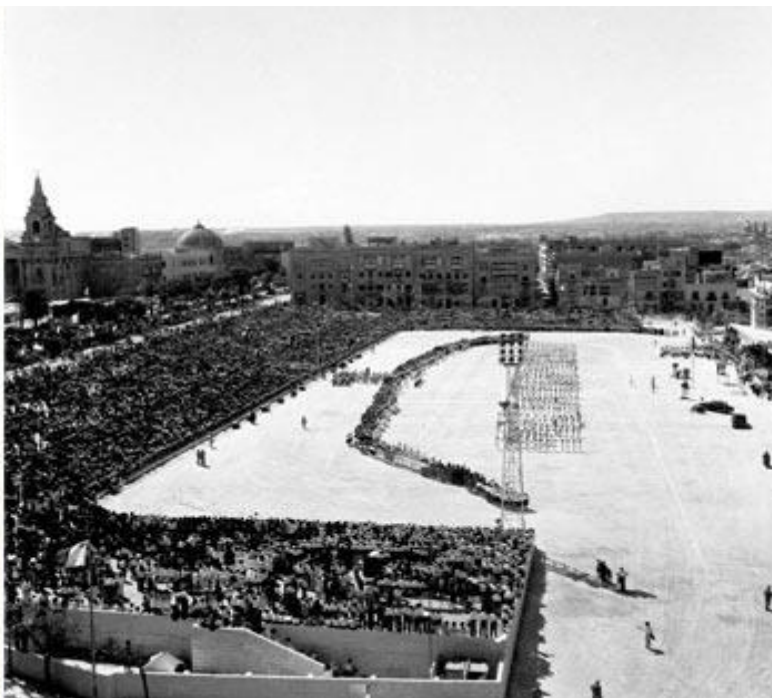
"It was a bright and sunny day. It was so hot, I remember wondering how long we were going to have to stand there," the 63-year-old from Paola recounts.

Mr Farrugia, then prefect of his Grade 3 class, was one of a group of students dressed in white who stood in formation to outline the words Malta Indipendenti during the children's rally in Independence Arena, Floriana.

We even had a greater sense of pride in our schoolwork... I remember looking forward to go to school

"I was the second one in the first D... I had to be careful, as there were two Ds. After finding our position we sang the Maltese anthem."

The Times of Malta had reported that on September 23, several thousand schoolchildren took part in a rally held at the Independence Arena. About 1,100 boys and girls representing various schools marched past and were addressed by Prime Minister George Borg Olivier.



Eight-year-old Charles (right) with his brothers George (left) and Mario. Right: Charles Farrugia was one of those who took part in the children's rally marking Malta's Independence 50 years ago.

The schoolchildren were each given a small cloth flag to wave during the rally. It was the first Maltese flag Mr Farrugia held in his hand and he took it back home with him. Despite his age, Mr Farrugia understood to some extent that the country was changing hands, and at school, although talk about politics was nearly nonexistent, the children had been briefed about the historical moment.

Raised in Paola, Mr Farrugia eventually joined the Royal Air Force and Navy, and later started his own business and raised three children of his own.

Comparing today's Malta with that of 50 years ago, Mr Farrugia speaks of discipline; an aspect of the Maltese culture he attributes to the British rule, which he says has, unfortunately, fizzled out over the years. "Etiquette – the way we dealt with people, spoke and dressed – was totally different. We even had a greater sense of pride in our schoolwork... I remember looking forward to go to school," he says.

And when he later worked with the British Services, he had to always be clean-shaven and combed. "They were so strict with us at work that back then we were already prohibited from walking on grass or throwing cigarette butts on the ground."

"At Mass you would not see anyone in flip-flops and shorts... people were very different then, and so was the lifestyle.

"I remember my parents would even manage to save up some money despite the little they made, while today you can barely make ends meet. Back then people would even make their own clothes for example, while today we have everything but we are never satisfied.

"Progress is important, but we cannot forget our parents' sacrifices, as they were the ones who made this progress possible," Mr Farrugia added.



Il-Bidwi Malti - The Maltese Farmer



Farming will not survive another 10 years, according to Paul, a 40-year-old born into a family of farmers. This gloomy forecast is rooted in several issues – from a lack of appreciation of local produce to competition from abroad.

“The work has always been tough, but it has become tougher as expenses increase and farmers’ profits decrease. Salaries in other sectors keep going up but ours, after working day and night, keep going down,” he says.

Like the majority of his fellow farmers, Paul takes his produce to the Pitkalija in Ta’ Qali, where pitkali (middlemen) sell it to vendors, who in turn sell it to consumers. The farmer has no say over his product’s price tag, and there is no traceability of the amount of fruit and vegetables not sold and therefore thrown away, Paul explains.

Recently, Paul was told that his cauliflower was sold at three different prices by three different middlemen: €4, €3 and a mere 10c per box, each containing seven cauliflowers. This means that in the latter case, the farmer made 1c5 on each cauliflower, which could ultimately be bought for 80c or €1 by the consumer. In this case, Paul made a loss, as each seedling cost him 5c. ***Farmers often feel like they are ‘playing a lottery’ when deciding which crop to grow***

Malcolm Borg, deputy director at Mcast’s Institute of Applied Sciences, pointed out that this excluded all other farming expenses, such as fertiliser, pesticide and energy costs.

Mr Borg is in charge of MSAST’s Centre for Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences. He said farmers have no leverage. And while the hard work was time-consuming, their income was threatened by imported fruit and vegetables. When there is low supply of a particular produce in Malta and farmers are earning a decent amount, crops are imported. This increases the supply, therefore reducing the local farmers’ profit once again.

Fellow farmer Mark spoke of the ever-popular strawberry. If a farmer does not make, on average, between €1.75 and €2 per (kilo) pot, they would not cover their expenses, he said.

At the Pitkalija both farmers have been paid anything between 60c and €2.50 per pot. While it is in the pitkali’s interest to sell the produce at an adequate price, because of commission, Mr Borg believes that harvest should be graded, and a minimum price set for each produce. As things turned out this year, Paul is hoping he manages to cover the expenses. The market drives the price, so the higher the supply, the lower the profit. Farmers often feel like they are “playing a lottery” when deciding which crop to grow.

At the same time, there is no insurance that covers farmers, meaning they could lose their investment overnight if, for example, strong winds wreaked havoc among their greenhouses. Mr Borg said that according to latest data, there are around 1,200 full-time and 17,000 part-time farmers.

Several rely on another income, and most often, farmers themselves discourage their children from taking up farming. There are farmers who prefer selling off their land to developers than using it for farming, he said, urging the authorities to give more importance to this sector.

Paul who has had to cut down his full-time farming job to part-time because “it’s not worth it”, recounted how his wife recently complained that whenever he made some profit, he had to spend it on the following season’s crops. “I realised I was addicted to this job. Not even having to work on Sundays puts me off. I know that I making a little profit, which is not equivalent to the sacrifices I make, but I love it.” Source: Time of Malta