

The Journal of the  
MALTESE DIASPORA



# Maltese e NEWSLETTER

In the lands that I work, I walk, and  
I live, I respect and acknowledge  
the traditional custodians and  
cultural knowledge holders of these lands  
Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders

## The Maltese Parliament building in Valletta



**Hon. Anglu Farrugia - Speaker  
Parliament of Malta**

**In this edition:**  
**European Song Festival,**  
**Mackay Maltese Community,**  
**Nostalgia – Rediffusion,**  
**Order of Malta, Greek Orthodox Church,**  
**Aboriginal Australians,**  
**Santa Venera, Astra Theatre – Gozo,**  
**Naval Disaster 1913,**  
**And much more**



# PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA



Maltese constitutional development has had a rather turbulent history. Under the Order of St John, from 1530 to 1798, democracy was unknown even as an inspiration. The French period was short-lived, from 1798 to 1800, and was marked by an armed insurrection within months of its

commencement. With the approval of the King of the Two Sicilies, whom the Maltese still recognized as their lawful sovereign, the British were invited in and the French eventually had to leave.

In 1814, by the Treaty of Paris, Malta became a British possession. Its first Constitution was granted in 1835. However, its Council of Government was by nomination. In 1887, for the first time in its history, Malta acquired representative government through a Council which was composed of a majority of Maltese elected members. By the turn of the century, the political situation became tense as the 1887 constitution was slowly dismantled until representative government was revoked altogether in 1903.

The political aspirations of the Maltese grew stronger and in February 1919 a newly constituted National Assembly unanimously resolved to request the British government to grant a new constitution with full political and administrative autonomy. Events came to a head on 7 June 1919 when riots broke out as a result of which four Maltese were killed by British troops. This crisis paved the way for the formation of a responsible government through a new constitution, granted in 1921. Thus Malta had its first government composed of Ministers who were themselves Members of and responsible to a Legislature which the Maltese people elected. Malta obtained independence from the UK in 1964 and became a Republic in 1974. Thirty Years later, in 2004, Malta joined the European Union

## The role of the Speaker of the House of Representatives - Parliament of Malta

The Functions of the Speaker of the House are to ensure that order is maintained during sittings of the House and that the parliamentary rules (Standing Orders) are respected. The Speaker is also requested to give rulings in the event that issues arise on the application of these Standing Orders and that members follow the correct procedures. He or she does not have an original vote but has a casting vote in the event that there is a tie in a vote in the House. The Speaker presides over the Standing Committee on House Business, the Standing Committee on Privileges and on any other Committee as directed by Parliament. The Speaker is the principal office holder in the House of Representatives. The current Speaker is Dr Anġlu Farrugia, was first elected Speaker on 6 April 2013 in the 12th Legislature. He was subsequently elected Speaker in the current Legislature on 24 June 2017.

## Mission Statement of the Parliament

The Maltese House of Representatives, through its elected representatives, is accountable to the people of Malta for the provision and conduct of representative government in the interest of Maltese citizens. Towards this end, the Office of the Clerk is duty bound to deliver effective, apolitical, professional and innovative services to support the efficient conduct of representative government in the interest of Maltese citizens.





## ANZAC CENTENARY 1918 – 2018 REMEMBERING THE HEROES OF GALLIPOLI

**REVEREND JOSEPH DIMECH**, Chaplain with the Maltese Labour Corps, serving at Gallipoli in 1915 is a relation of Anglu Farrugia, the speaker of Maltese Parliament. Dun Guzepp Dimech, as he was known, used to live in Mosta with his parents. His mother was a Greek from Corfu'. He was a tall man and member of the British Army and Chaplain with the Maltese Labour Corps.

Maltese Labour Corps during WW1 arrived in Gallipoli during September 1915 where they gained a reputation as good workers. In September 1916, a battalion of Maltese was raised, composed of labourers, drivers and stevedores, which arrived for service in Salonika during October and from there onto the Lines of Communications. (Information supplied by Greg Caruana NSW)



## Christabelle Borg will represent Malta In the Eurovision Song Contest 2018 at Lisbon

Her song about mental health awareness beats son and father duet

Christabelle Borg (photo far left) will be representing Malta in the Eurovision Song Festival in Portugal after winning maximum points from both the foreign jury and televoting on Saturday night.

Her song *Taboo* obtained 123 points, placing above Richard & Joe's *Song for Dad*, a father and son duet, which won 98 points. Brooke's *Heart of Gold* placed third with 84 points.

The song, which is intended to raise awareness on mental illness beat other favourites for the title. Her victory gives her a passport to represent Malta at the Eurovision Song Contest in Portugal in May.

Christabelle could not contain her emotions from the moment it emerged she was the jury's choice. Her team broke into celebrations as presenter Colin Fitz read out the televoting vote. The song was written by Johnny Sanchez, Thomas G:son, Muxu and Christabelle herself.

The final of the song festival was held at the Malta Fairs and Convention Centre, Ta' Qali.

A total of 16 finalists competed to represent Malta in the 63rd edition of the contest.

Christabelle took on the baton from Claudia Faniello, who represented Malta with her song *Breathlessly* last year in Ukraine.

The finalists were the following:

Aidan – *Dai laga*; Mariana Conte – *Rocket*; Jasmine – *Supernova*; Matthew Anthony – *Call 2morrow*; Danica – *One step at a time*; Dwett – *Breaking point*; Lawrence Gray – *Love renegade*; Richard & Joe – *Song for dad*; Tiziana – *First time*; Eleonor Cassar – *Back to life*; Rhiannon – *Beyond blue horizon*; Brooke – *Heart of gold*; Christabelle Borg – *Taboo*; Deborah C – *Turn it up*; Avenue Sky – *We can run*; Petra – *Evolution*



## MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion is offering the Maltese Diaspora this service to strengthen the link between the ministry and the Maltese citizens and associations living or operating abroad.

### **VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION OF PROMINENT MALTESE LIVING ABROAD FORM P**

**What is the purpose of Form P and who can register?** Article 10 of Act XX of 2011 requests the set up of a register of prominent Maltese living abroad. This register shall include Maltese nationals who have distinguished themselves in their respective profession, vocation or work outside Malta. Those Maltese nationals who fall under these categories can fill Form P and submit it to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion.

### **VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS Form O**

**What is the purpose of Form O and who can register?** Article 10 of Act XX of 2011 requests the set up of a register for Maltese Diaspora non-governmental organizations set up outside Malta, which are involved in the promotion and protection of the interests of Maltese living abroad. Those non-governmental organisations that fall under these categories can fill Form O and submit it to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion.

What will the personal information provided be used for? All personal details collected through this notification are processed in a confidential manner for the specific purposes mentioned in question A and in accordance with the Data Protection Act, Chapter 440 of the Laws of the Republic of Malta. All personal data collected through Form O will be kept by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion for a maximum period of 3 years. The Data Controller is the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Any Maltese Diaspora non-governmental organization which intends to request, apply or register for any local, regional, national and European funding of any kind in the Republic of Malta, must, contact the Office of the Commissioner for NGOs to fill the necessary forms and register with the said Office. Without such registration, no NGO can benefit from form any public funding.

### **VOLUNTARY NOTIFICATION FOR MALTESE CITIZENS TRAVELLING AND/OR LIVING ABROAD**

**WHO CAN FILL NOTIFICATION D?** Notification D can be filled for three main reasons: (1) as a first-time applicant and (2) to update a previously filled Notification D; Notification D should be filled and submitted by any Maltese citizen who intends to travel and/or already resides outside the territory of Malta for the following reasons: (1) Permanent Resident; (2) Holiday; (3) Employment and (4) Other reasons. It is important that Notification D is filled for each member of the family or group.

**WHY SHOULD I FILL AND SUBMIT A D NOTIFICATION?** Notification D should be filled to assist the Maltese Government through the Directorate for the Maltese Living Abroad to act as a point of reference when the applicant requires assistance in cases of emergency, and when this assistance can be offered.

**WHAT WILL THE INFORMATION I PROVIDE BE USED FOR?** All personal details collected through this notification are processed in a confidential manner for the specific purposes mentioned in question B and in accordance with the Data Protection Act, Chapter 440 of the Laws of the Republic of Malta. The Data Controller is the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The information being provided could be made accessible to the competent authorities should the need arise in cases of emergency, for the provision of assistance as cases may require.

• Permanent residents abroad: details are retained for a period of five years; • Holiday: details are retained for the period indicated by the applicant; Employment: details are retained for the period indicated by the applicant; Other reasons: details are retained for the period indicated by the applicant. Upon expiry of the period referred to above, the Manual notifications will be destroyed by the Directorate and any electronically held information will be deleted, should the applicant not renew the notification or no update is further submitted by the applicant. The retention period will be automatically renewed when the notification is updated. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will do its utmost to offer the best possible service. However, in the event of extraordinary circumstances when contact is not possible with you or the next of kin the Ministry cannot be held responsible and in such situations you are directed to contact the nearest Embassy, High Commissioner and/or Consulate.

If you have questions or wish further information write or e-mail to: The Director, The Directorate for Maltese Living Abroad, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Palazzo Parisio, Merchants Street, Valletta VLT 2000, THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA Telephone: +356 2204 2371 / 2204 2208 / Fax: +356 2207 2387 Email: [malteselivingabroad.mftp@gov.mt](mailto:malteselivingabroad.mftp@gov.mt)

To download the forms O, P and D go to the Government website <https://foreignaffairs.gov.mt/en/pages/Council-for-Maltese-Living-Aboard.aspx> <https://foreignaffairs.gov.mt/en/Pages/Maltese-Living-Aboard.aspx>

## How to save the Maltese language from extinction



While Maltese literature is doing very well and publications are relatively strong, the everyday use of the language in the digital world is minimal, and there's little hope this will be reversed

### **Evarist Bartolo – Minister for Education**

A 2012 study by the University of Manchester on the use of language in Europe makes glum reading. Scientists from this university, together with other European researchers, concluded that 21 out of the 30 languages on which they carried out research, risked becoming weak, or even non-existent, due to the digital revolution.

The argument made is that because a number of European languages are used by a proportionally small number of people, these would not generate enough resources to integrate fully within the digital world.

"Icelandic, Latvian, Lithuanian and Maltese are at the highest risk of disappearing, while other languages such as Bulgarian, Greek,

Hungarian and Polish are also at risk" the report concludes. Anecdotal analysis lines up with the evidence. Today's modern iPhone or Android phones, and their apps, are entirely in the English language. Maltese translations of this software, or organic applications produced in Maltese, are the absolute minority. This also applies to everyday computers, which by default are in English, and very small numbers are operated through the Maltese language.

There are relatively decent translations of popular computer software and websites, such as Google Mail and Facebook, however, the use of the English language in these cases is also prevalent locally. This is a very important element related to the use of languages, because while Maltese literature is doing very well and publications are relatively strong, the everyday use of the language in the digital world is minimal, and there's little hope this will be reversed. I do believe that one of the most important steps we can take in the short-term is to introduce the Maltese language in the mass-produced devices, principally Apple and Android products, to make sure that when someone in Malta types in a Maltese word it is understood, recognised and there is a proposed correction in case of a mistake. However, that is the short-term. In the long-term we must work on strategies to make sure the omnipresent use of digital services around us have the possibility to be introduced in the Maltese language.

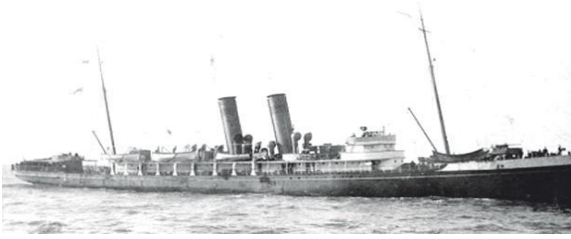
Machine translation is indeed gaining traction, however, such features are often reliant on user input to strengthen the quality of the translations, similar to what Google Translate does. Google Translate is a positive first step, but it leaves a lot to be desired with translations of full paragraphs not up to scratch. This is not a problem reserved only for our language since it can be seen in various other cases. However, this is a technology which is constantly improving, including through individual user input. If the Maltese language perishes in the digital world, it will create a wider effect on our future generations. The presence of the Maltese language here is of the utmost importance.

Not preparing for it, especially with some great technologies around the corner such as Google's Quest Visual, would be a shame. This is not a challenge faced by our language only. Countries such as the Netherlands and others in the Baltic, with considerably larger populations than ours, are also at risk. We must make sure we have the strategy in place to maximise this technology and make sure our language continues to thrive. Absence in the digital world would mean being absent in everyday life. Saviour Azzopardi



## MALTA'S WORST NAVAL DISASTER DURING WORLD WAR ONE

Seventy Maltese officers and ratings died in the Aegean Sea when HMS Louvain was torpedoed by a German submarine and sank 100 years ago



HMS Louvain was built as in 1897 by the Earle Company in Hull, UK. It was initially named SS Dresden and operated as an English passenger ship up until 1915. In that year, the Royal Navy renamed the ship HMS Louvain and used it mainly as an armed boarding steamer ferrying men and mail around different ports in the Mediterranean. SS Dresden will always be remembered for the mysterious

disappearance of the famous diesel engine inventor Rudolf Diesel while travelling aboard the ship.

On the evening of September 29, 1913, Diesel boarded SS Dresden in Antwerp on his way for a meeting with the Consolidated Diesel Manufacturing Company in London. After having dinner, he retired to his cabin, leaving word to be woken at 6.15am. He never answered the call and was never seen again. His bed had not been slept in and his coat and hat were neatly folded.

*The Times*, Monday, Feb 04, 1918; pg. 6;

### NAVAL VESSEL SUNK. LOUVAIN TORPEDOED IN MEDITERRANEAN.

#### LOSS OF 224 LIVES.

The Secretary of the Admiralty makes the following announcement:—

H.M. armed boarding steamer Louvain (Lieutenant-Commander M. G. Easton, R.N.R.) was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine in the Eastern Mediterranean on January 21.

Seven officers and 217 men were lost.

The next of kin have all been informed, except in the cases of a few naval passengers, whose next of kin will be notified immediately the necessary information is received.

The Louvain was originally the Dresden, and was renamed early in the war. Her normal employment was in the Great Eastern Railway Company's service between Harwich and the Hook of Holland. She was of 1,830 tons, built by Earle's Company (Limited) at Hull in 1897.

A Reuter telegram from Malta, dated January 26, says:—So far as is known 70 Maltese are missing as the result of the loss of the Louvain. These included practically all naval ratings from assistant engineers to ordinary seamen, of whom 24 formed part of the crew, while the remainder were intended for disposal among ships of the Fleet. Since the Battle of Jutland this is the heaviest loss Malta has sustained at any one time during the war.

Ten days later, a Dutch boat, Coertsen, came upon a badly decomposed corpse of a man. The corpse was in an advanced state of decomposition and could not be recognised. However, personal items retrieved from the corpse were later identified by Diesel's son Eugen as belonging to his father. There are various suicide and conspiracy theories that seek to explain Diesel's death but none can be substantiated to be proven correct.

More than 230 men had lost their lives in the tragedy, over 70 of which were Maltese

On January 18, 1918, HMS Louvain was sailing a regular run from Malta to Mudros on the Greek island of Lemnos in the north Aegean Sea. The ship left Malta at 3pm escorted as far as the Corinth Canal and then passed independently through the canal. It was met by HMS MTB Colne at the eastern end of the canal. The ship was carrying mail, officers and ratings on passage to Mudros. Many of the ratings were Maltese on their way to be assigned to other Royal Navy ships.

At about 9pm on January 20, the German submarine UC-22 sighted an escorted HMS Louvain and decided to lay mines in front of the steamer and at the same time positioned itself for a torpedo attack. After laying

10 mines, UC-22 began its torpedo attack.

A cutting from *The Times* of February 4, 1918, reporting the tragedy. Note the part relating to the Maltese who lost their lives on board the Louvain.

The first torpedo was fired from a range of 600 metres and hit its target. However, as UC-22 was close to the destroyer escort, the submarine itself came under attack. When UC-22 surfaced about an hour later, HMS Louvain was no longer visible and the destroyer escort was performing rescue operations. The captain of UC-22 concluded that, seeing that visibility was excellent, with minimal wind and a flat sea, HMS Louvain must have sunk very quickly.

A court martial was held soon after the disaster and the findings placed no blame on either of the British ships. The enquiry noted the reports made by the captain of HMS MTB Colne that Louvain had been hit on the stern port quarter by a torpedo that penetrated the hull and entered the dynamo compartment. Louvain began to sink rapidly by the stern.

Although the order to abandon ship was issued and lifeboats were being lowered into the sea, these began sinking as soon as they hit the water, mainly because they were still attached to the deck davits as the latter became level with the water.

The commanding officer of the Colne was blamed for making a false radio call that may have delayed the arrival of other ships to hunt for the submarine and provide further assistance. The court also stated

that HMS Louvain should have been zigzagging on its track but was unable to apportion blame as neither the master nor the master of the watch had survived.

With the loss of so many men, the aftermath of the tragedy was hard to come to terms with. It was estimated that more than 230 men had lost their lives in the tragedy, over 70 of whom were Maltese. Twenty-four formed part of the crew of HMS Louvain while the others were due to serve on various ships of the British fleet.

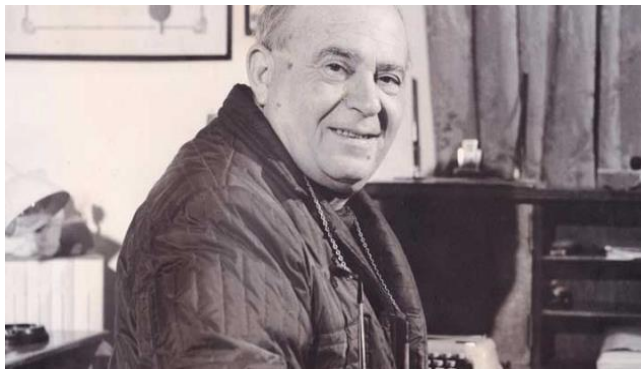
Malta had not suffered such a heavy loss since the Battle of Jutland in 1916.



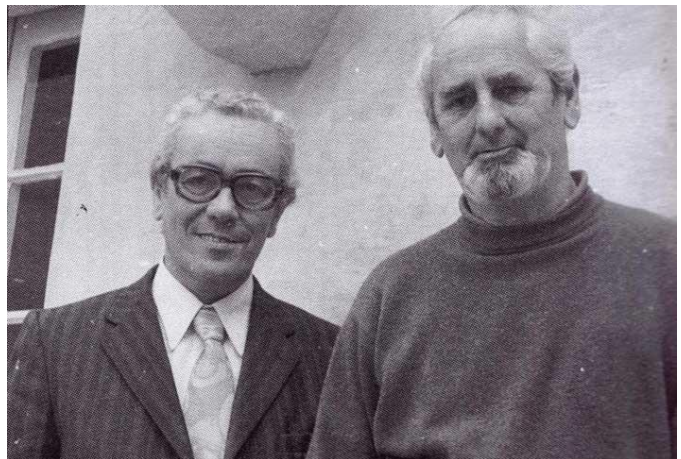
Lest we forget

January 20, 2018, will mark the 100th anniversary since the sinking of HMS Louvain. A fitting remembrance service should be organised in honour of these men. All those who lost a relative on the ship and would like to pay tribute to these men may call Mr Azzopardi on 7983 5319 or e-mail [salvuazz@hotmail.com](mailto:salvuazz@hotmail.com). Saviour Azzopardi is the chairman of the Glarac Association Malta.

A map showing approximately where HMS Louvain was sunk by UC-22 on January 20, 1918.



(Top) Wistin Born OP On the right; Charles Arrigo and Nicholas Monsarrat, author of the *Kappillan of Malta*



## THE KAPPILLAN OF MALTA TRANSLATED INTO MALTESE

After almost 50 years since its first publication in 1973, the world bestseller *The Kappillan of Malta* will be published in Maltese for the first time.

The translation had been made by Wistin Born, the renowned author of *Is-Salib tal-Fidda* (The Silver Cross), less than a year after the novel's first publication.

With Monsarrat's permission—who then lived in Gozo, in the village of San Lawrenz—Wistin Born, in those days a well-known personality on public broadcasting, translated the book in order that Charles Arrigo reads it on *Rediffusion*.

The original manuscript with Wistin Born's translation has been under lock and key for almost 50 years in a private archive. Now, for the first time, the translation is to be published unabridged and in a critical edition.

The novel narrates a striking story of courageous love during Malta and Gozo's worse moments of World War II. It is also a powerful message intended to hearten anyone going through difficult times.

The new edition, entitled *Il-Kappillan ta' Malta*, will be edited by Mark Montebello and published by the editorial house SKS.

## A THANK YOU LETTER FROM KENYA - AFRICA

Dear Mr. Scicluna, This is Sr. Michelina Micallef from the Slums of Kenya. I have been in this mission for 53 years and I love it very much. It is not easy, but with God's grace I continue till the end. I tell you the truth I really enjoy receiving the News Letter. Very colourful and interested. I admire your dedication to produce all that information. May God bless you and give you strength to continue this mission. Next time I will tell you more about my mission in Kenya. May God bless you. Yours Sr. Michelina Micallef

## MACKAY MALTESE CLUB – QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA



### REPORT: MACKAY MALTESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL (SKOLA MALTJA MACKAY)

BY Mrs Carmel M Baretta 26.01.2018

Founded on 24 October 2007 by Sister Pauline Bonavia and Mrs Carmel Baretta, the Mackay Maltese Language School has held weekly classes at Francis of Assisi Home in Dupuy Street, West Mackay for the past 10 years. John and Kate Formosa are our patrons and supporters.

Initially, 14 students enrolled at the School followed by 31 the following year. The teacher was Sister Pauline. Numbers remained constant until 2011 and as a consequence, Mrs Stella Borg took up a teaching role in August 2010.

During this time students learnt to recite the Maltese Anthem, made Figolli for Easter, constructed and decorated a Maltese float for the Mackay Sugar Festival (and won!) prepared and shared Maltese food at dinners at the Home, part-took in a Food and Wine Evening in honour of HE Francis Tabone, Maltese High Commissioner, and were involved annually with our Lady of Victories celebrations at the Home.

In 2012, Pat Grech (teacher) and Doris Gauci (assistant) joined the school. The following year a "Lifter" was donated to the Home and Certificates of Achievement were introduced and presented annually to the students and teachers at the Christmas break-up.

Our School has been affiliated with Federation of Maltese Language Schools Inc (AO4807) since it was established on 2 August 2008 and representatives have attended meetings and professional development seminars regularly over the past 10 years. Currently, Pat Grech is secretary of the organisation. Rose Bristow was secretary for the previous 2 years. Rose joined our ranks and has been teaching the advanced students for the past 4 years. In 2015, after volunteering for 5 years, Stella Borg retired to take up grandmother and baby-sitting duties. Sister Pauline has taken a break for the past 4 years due to ongoing commitments at the Home.

Rose introduced new text books to the classes including: My First 750 Words in Maltese, Maltese Grammar Essentials in Context and Speaking Maltese by Charles Daniel Saliba. These books have proved invaluable for teachers and students alike and provide a continuity of lessons which was previously lacking. Promotional flyers introduced and distributed at various community and multicultural functions held in our district have created an awareness of our School.

Over the years, our students have taken part in "Global Grooves", an annual multicultural festival held in Mackay. We have made "Puddina" samples for the public, took part in traditional dress parades, displays including the Knights of St John, Maltese artifacts, traditional Maltese food and one year we sewed and paraded costumes of the Knights as well as Maltese traditional folk wear.

In 2017, the teachers, parents and students collaborated to perform a play at our break-up titled "A Bus Tour to Habana". It was enacted by all the students who spoke entirely in Maltese! It was a great hit!. A replica of the Habana bus was built from cardboard and hung from the ceiling on bungy straps to enable movement of the vehicle. Sound effects, eg. Horn blowing and the grating of gears, added to the event. A Maltese dinner and presentation of certificates completed a wonderful evening.

Our teachers volunteer their services and the sisters provide a very comfortable venue for the classes. Students pay \$40 per term and family concessions are provided. Any surplus monies are donated to the Home (cupboard, lifter etc.) as well as to the John E Smith Foundation for Young Handicapped People. Travel expenses over the past 2 years have also been reimbursed for teachers attending FLMS Inc meetings and seminars.

Sadly, Rose Bristow has resigned to focus on her university studies and I am retiring as co-ordinator. To date we have only one teacher (Pat) and she requires transport to and from lessons. A number of advanced students have indicated that they will not be returning this year but we still have 5 students at the intermediate level and at least 4 people who wish to begin classes. Will our School survive? Time will tell.





## THE PRIEST WITH THE FORGIVEN TATTOO

The Maltese 35-year-old has spent the year performing in front of huge audiences around the world.

*Fr Robert Galea: "In Australia no one comments about tattoos and gym – there's bishops, even cardinals, who go to the gym every day. It's only here that people are confused [by my look]." Photo: Jonathan Borg*

Robert Galea is wearing black skinny rolled-up jeans, a pair of black Converse and stripy coloured socks. The sleeves of his black T-shirt fall exactly on his heavily muscled, tattooed biceps.

This Maltese 35-year-old has spent the year performing repeatedly in front of a 50,000-strong audiences around the world. His young fans jostle to take selfies with him; his concerts are sold out within minutes; he is booked three years in advance and an X-Factor crew flew to his house four years in a row to convince him to take part. Oh, did I mention he's a priest?

That's slightly important, as all his singing, tattooing, and gym-busting is related to his vocation. It is his way of bringing people back to the fold of the Roman Catholic Church.

Fr Rob, from Ibraġġ, got his calling at the age of 21. At the time he had a girlfriend for four years, but when abroad, he saw a priest performing at a concert who had "this great energy of spreading love around him".

It got him thinking and "eventually my girlfriend and I decided to break up." [He gives blood whenever he visits Malta on holiday](#)

How did you know that it was your calling, I ask. "Well, you don't know for sure. I mean how do people know that they married the right person? All I know is that I am very happy as a priest," he says.

At 23, after he completed his first degree, he entered the seminary in Tal-Virtù. A year later it was time for the compulsory gap year which all seminarians must undertake before they pursue their studies.

"I opted to go to university in Melbourne. It was a conscious choice because I wanted to be far away from Malta for that year." In Australia, he ended up singing in front of Pope Benedict XVI during his meeting with youths and his act was a great hit.

"By the end of my gap year, I was being constantly asked by the diocese to stay on and finish my studies there instead of returning to Malta." He refused and came back.

However, his superiors here – the then Archbishop Paul Cremona and Monsignor Anton Gouder – encouraged him to head back. "It was not easy because I had no family, no relatives, nothing," he says. But 12 years on, he is still there: technically he belongs to the Maltese diocese but is on loan to the diocese of Sandhurst as a missionary.

In his first year there, he used to go to church to "a mass of white hair". Church-goers were all at least five decades older than him. "There were no young or middle-aged people anywhere," he says.

So he devised a plan to go and reach out to young people: he wrote music for clubs and then went knocking on club doors. His music soon was in demand. Next, he set up a band and started recording music. Then he set up this outreach movement called 'Stronger Youth' which is now one of Australia's largest youth ministries.

Today he ministers about 300,000 young people in a year. He travels, in Australia or around the world for about three days a week to address crowds, sometimes as big as half a million – he gets 800 invitations every year for these kinds of events.

This week, for example, he will be heading to Canada where he will be giving a keynote speech to 50,000 students and 10,000 adults and then sing some songs. Income from these events, he hastily clarifies, goes back entirely to the youth ministry. Like all other priests he simply gets a stipend "which is less than half the minimum wage in Malta".

The rest of the week he spends at his parish, where apart from saying Mass, and administering weddings and funerals he reaches out by "hanging out in bars, singing in pubs, going to prisons".

He has made it his mission to talk to young people who have never heard the gospel. He talks a lot about his love of God and Jesus. "I go as someone who is in love with God and wants to share that love with others," he says a number of times.

But I bet those teens in the crowds fancy him quite a bit. I don't know of any priest in Malta who has tattoos (or those muscles come to that – although he wouldn't flex them for our photographer), I tell him. He brushes

this off. "In Australia no one comments about tattoos and gym – there's bishops, even cardinals, who go to the gym every day. It's only here that people are confused [by my look]," he said. Daily exercise is discipline and meditation, he says. In fact, the first thing he does when he lands in a new country is to put on his shoes "and go for a run".

His tattoos, in case you're wondering, are religious. The one on his left arm says 'Forgiven'; the one on his right is a biblical quote from Romans 10, about the importance of evangelisation.

And he doesn't wear a collar because it's bad news in Australia. "I was attacked three times because of it – shouted at, spat at and mugged. Sadly the collar has become synonymous with child abuse cases."

He trailed off, frowning, angry and frustrated at the priests who abused their role and "took away people's hope and destroyed lives".

"They must get the justice they deserve and even that can never undo what they did to others," he says.

"We harmed our credibility and our mission and it's going to take us a long time to trust the Church as a beacon of hope again," he says, acknowledging that the world is going through a time where it is rejecting the Church's voice.

Still, he thinks the Church should keep speaking out, because would Jesus be quiet in the face of injustice?

"We still need priests around; we need priests who are real, who are true to themselves."

He is in Malta because he wants to reach out to the Maltese youngsters. And he is doing that by recording an album with singer Ira Losco, whom he says has been very generous in her collaboration.

"Ira is someone who is loved by the country that I love. She represents the contemporary music scene here," he says.

One of their songs is about how life can break you into a million pieces "but when our brokenness comes together then we become a work of art".

His singing even took him to the stage of X-Factor Australia two years ago. He sailed through the auditions but stopped just before the finals and the signing of contracts. He pulled out, he says, to "protect my ministry, my vocation and my heart". He didn't want any compromising dancers behind him while he's singing and he couldn't be busier than he already is. So what's in the pipeline?

"I just want to make God famous ... Who knows I might contest the Eurovision one day," he jokes.

Or maybe he's only half-joking. Now that would be the ultimate outreach method to get all the Maltese people back in the fold.



Do not be too quick to answer, "Of course, it's a little island smack bang in the middle of the Mediterranean!"

But did you know that there are 29 places in the world named Malta! These are the places in the world named

Malta; 11 places in America, 3 in Portugal, 2 in the Russian Federation, 2 in the Netherlands, 1 in Turkey, Romania, the Philippines, Montenegro, Latvia, Croatia, Greece, Colombia, Brazil and Bosnia. The places in America named Malta are in Texas, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Montana, Iowa, Illinois, Idaho, Colorado and Alabama. As far as I know, there is only one place named Gozo! (Submitted by Ron Borg – Adelaide)



## THE GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF DAMASCUS IN MALTA



The **Church of Our Lady of Damascus** (Greek: Εκκλησία της Παναγίας της Δαμασκού) is a Greek Byzantine Catholic Church in Valletta, Malta. It is also called *Id-Damaxxena* (Our Lady of Damascus).

The Greek Catholic Church of Our Lady of Damascus in Valletta is the only one of its kind in the Maltese islands. This small oasis of peace, serenity and unity at the very heart of bustling Valletta offers a unique spiritual experience. Here, visitors have the opportunity to spend some moments of silent reflection and prayer, surrounded by beautiful icons and under the motherly gaze of the *Panaghia* ('All-Holy') Lady of Damascus. In this church, Christians from many different traditions from all over the world come together in prayer. Catholics of all rites, Orthodox of Greek, Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Georgian and

Albanian backgrounds, as well as Oriental Orthodox faithful from Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Syria, Armenia, and Iraq find in the Church of Our Lady of Damascus an ideal spiritual ambience where to pray and also to attend the Divine Eucharistic Liturgy in the Byzantine rite. Moreover, this place of worship also attracts visitors from many non-Christian backgrounds who cannot but admire its delicate architectural features and its collection of icons harmoniously arranged throughout the church



In this photo Papas George Schiro' recovering an icon from under the debris following the destruction of the Church by enemy shelling. 1942

**Original Church** - The original church was built upon the request of Giovanni Calamia to house the icon of Our Lady of Damascus brought over from Rhodes by the Knights of St John when they were expelled from the island by the Ottoman Empire. By 1580 the church was finished. In 1587 the Icon of Our Lady of Damascus was solemnly transferred from Vittoriosa to the new church.

**Present Church** - On March 24, 1942, during one of the bombings of Valletta, the Church of Our Lady of Damascus was hit and completely destroyed. Many icons were lost under the debris of the church. It was because of the initiative of Papas George Schiro' that

the Church was rebuilt and reconsecrated on August 15, 1951 by Archbishop Georgios Halavazis.

**Present use** The church is mainly used by the Greek Catholic community of Malta for Divine Liturgy. The church is also used by the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, by Armenian Orthodox Church, by Russian Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox and Belarusian Orthodox.



Farrugia OFM and a delegation. The church is situated at 132 A, Archbishop Street, Valletta.

**Sub-Diaconal Ordination of Dennis Mifsud** - On Sunday, December 18th 2016, the Personal Parish of Our Lady of Damascus in Valletta witnessed the Clerical Tonsuring, the institution of Lector and the Ordination to the Sub-Diaconate of Dennis Mifsud, a member of our parish. His Grace Mgr. Manuel Nin O.S.B., Apostolic Exarch of Greece and Titular Bishop of Carcabia imposed his hands and invoked the Holy Spirit on the ordinand. The Ordination Mass was concelebrated by Mgr. George Mifsud Montanaro, Fr. Anton

## ENTERTAINMENT OF MY CHILDHOOD DAYS!

By Ron Borg – Adelaide, Australia



Here I am in the 'senior' years of my life, and as I look around me and see how the majority of the children keep themselves entertained most of the time, I wonder how my generation survived without the electronic gadgetry of Play stations, Virtual Realities, Pokémon, and Television in the mid fifties when I was a little urchin in Malta.

Television or portable Radios were not around, and Video games weren't even heard of. The old valve Radios were not prevalent in most households, but in any case not readily accessible for use by kids like me.

In the 50's the only entertaining saviour, for us was a device called the "Rediffusion". This was a two channel (A & B) system which gave us a choice of English programs on one channel and Maltese on the other.

It was a ready source of entertainment for us then because most families had the Rediffusion, around which us young ones used to huddle on a weekly basis to listen to our favourite programs. We looked forward to the sound of the "**Dragnet**" music theme which heralded our exciting episodes of the Detective series '**Dick Barton**'. Wow!



Another regular series in Maltese which we used to eagerly look forward to was the thriller, "**Il- Farfet l-Ahdar jaccetta**". Boy, what excitement it used to instil in us. A variety show which used to keep the whole family entertained was "**Il-Muskettieri**", performed by the '**Stage Commandos**' with those great stage entertainers Charlie Clews, Johnny Catania, Armando Uroso and Johnny Navarro singing their very witty ditties, and oh how we laughed when we used to listen to the hoarse voice of '**Carmena Abdilla**' expounding her funny and sharp remarks during the regular

serial of "**Il-Hitan tas-Sejjieh**". Hilarious, especially when we heard the village idiot, '**Spiru Cefai**' coming out with his extremely amusing nonsense. His voice alone was enough to set us off in fits of laughter.

To keep the mums of the happy, there were also the Culinary programs ran by 'Carmen Carbonaro' with her kitchen and home hints reciting some delightful recipes like "**Ir-Ricetta tal-Biskuttini tal-Lews Morr**". It kept the mums interested! I also recall that on a Sunday, I think, there was a delightful musical program from Holland, on the BBC Channel, compared by the singer '**Max Bygraves**' which was called "**Tulips from Amsterdam**". Even though there were only two Channels, they still offered varied programs. The Rediffusion was a simple devise, but none the less, it kept us entertained in those early days in Malta.



The Maltese radio service 'Rediffusion' interviewing emigrants  
Malta Valletta 1950

Rediffusion Malta Ltd began operating as a radio station for Malta and Gozo by means of a license issued by the British Governor, since in 1935 Malta was still a British colony.

The service consisted of two channels – one which used to transmit BBC programmes originating from the UK which used to arrive in Malta via short wave, while the other used to broadcast programmes from other foreign stations, especially Italian ones.



# MALTESE SCATTERED AROUND THE WORLD

## MALTESE IN AMERICA



Grave of Orlando Caruana, who fought in the [American Civil War](#).

The first immigrants from Malta to the United States arrived during the mid-eighteenth century to the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. Many Americans assumed Malta was part of Italy. In some cases "Born Malta, Italy" was put on tombstones of Maltese because of the confusion. At this time and in the nineteenth century the Maltese who emigrated to the United States were still scarce. In fact, in the 1860s, only between five and ten Maltese emigrated to the United States every year. The majority of them were agricultural workers, and, in the case of New Orleans, market gardeners and vegetable dealers. After World War I, in 1919, Maltese immigration to the US increased. In the first quarter of 1920 more than 1,300 Maltese immigrated to the United States. Detroit, Michigan, with jobs in the expanding automobile industry, drew the largest share of immigrants. It is believed that in the following years, more than 15,000 Maltese people emigrated to the United States, later getting U.S. citizenship. A significant percentage of early Maltese immigrants

intended to stay only temporarily for work, but many settled in the US permanently. In addition to Detroit, other industrial cities such as New York City, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, California, attracted Maltese immigrants.<sup>[28]</sup> After World War II the Maltese Government committed to pay passage costs to Maltese people who wanted to emigrate and live at least two years abroad. This program led to increased emigration by the people of the island and made up approximately 8,000 Maltese who arrived to the United States between the years 1947 and 1977. Malta's government promoted Maltese emigration because Malta was overpopulated.<sup>[28]</sup>

The majority of Maltese immigrants arrived in the first half of the twentieth century, settling in cities like Detroit, New York City, San Francisco, Houston, and Chicago. The majority of Americans of Maltese descent now live in these five cities, particularly Detroit (approximately 44,000 Maltese) and New York City (more than 20,000 Maltese), in the latter them, most of the people of Maltese origin are concentrated in Astoria, Queens.<sup>[28]</sup> A Maltese community thrives in San Pedro and Long Beach.<sup>[28]</sup>

The 2010 American Community Survey estimated 35,103 Americans of Maltese ancestry.<sup>[29]</sup> Of these, 24,202 have Maltese as their first ancestry.<sup>[30]</sup> This includes Maltese born immigrants to the United States, their American born descendants as well as numerous immigrants from other nations of Maltese origin.

As in their country of origin, Maltese Americans predominantly practice Roman Catholicism as their religion. Many are practicing Catholics, attending church every week and actively participating in their local parishes.

## MALTESE IN GREECE - CORFU

A large community of descendants of Maltese Italians is still present in Corfu.<sup>[23]</sup> Their forebears came to the island during the 19th century, when the British authorities brought many skilled workers from Malta to the Ionian Islands. The British needed married men so that their work would be continued by their children, and as a consequence 80 people (40 families from 1815 until 1860) were transported to Corfu, whose descendants remain on the island today. In 1901, there were almost one thousand people in Corfu who considered themselves to be ethnic Maltese. In Cephalonia the number was 225. There were another hundred Maltese spread among the other lesser islands of the Ionian Group. Maltese emigration to these islands practically ceased when the islands were returned to Greece in 1864. Because of the union with Greece, a number of Maltese families abandoned Corfu and settled in Cardiff, Wales, where their descendants still live. In Corfu, two villages on the island bear names testifying to Maltese presence: Maltezika is named after Malta and Cozzella got its name from Gozo. In Cozzella the Franciscan Sisters of Malta opened a convent and a school in 1907. Those two institutions still flourish. In 1930, the Maltese in Corfu had their own priest who looked after their welfare while he kept useful contacts with the ecclesiastical and civil authorities in Malta. That priest was the Rev. Spiridione Cilia, who had been born in Corfu of Maltese parents and became the parish priest of the Maltese community. The Corfiot Maltese community currently numbers 3,500 people in the entire island. They constitute the center of the Catholic community of Corfu, but not one among them speaks the Maltese language. The former mayor of the city of Corfu, Sotiris Micallef, is of Maltese descent.

## MALTESE IN ITALY

The town of Pachino, in the south of Sicily, was developed based on a royal decree of Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies of 1760. Prince Ferdinand invited the Maltese neighbors to populate the new country and more than thirty

families accepted the invitation. The first families were: Agius, Azzoppard, Arafam, Bughagiar, Bartolo, Caldies, Bonelli, Cammisuli, Borgh, Cassar Scalia, Boager, Fenech, Ferruggia, Grech, Mizzi, Meilach, Micallef, Mallia, Ongres, Saliba, Sultan, and Xueref.

### **MALTESE IN LIBYA**

A community of Maltese in Libya was established in the XIX century. They remained in the country throughout the XX century, as they were not subject to expulsion by the Qaddafi regime in the 1970s.

### **MALTESE IN NEW ZEALAND**

The first recorded Maltese migrant to New Zealand was Angelo Parigi, who is listed at St Patrick's Church in Auckland as having married 16-year-old RoseAnne McMullen on 4 July 1849. He was described as "a boatman born in Malta". Others followed including a James Cassar for whom some letters remained unclaimed at the Auckland Post Office in 1864. In 1883, Francesco Saverio de Cesare, who was tasked by the Government in Malta to assess the "suitability of the British Colonies in Australia as a field for Maltese Migration", reported that: "At Auckland I met three Maltese, there settled for several years, and at Tauranga another one, employed as a cook; they are doing well; and have no idea of returning to Malta. They told me there are some other Maltese, whom they know, settled in Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin." The Maltese Association of Wellington was founded in 1989, with Carmen Dalli as president. The latest census puts the number of Maltese residents in New Zealand at 222.

### **MALTESE IN EGYPT**

Some Maltese had been present in Egypt as early as the era of Napoleon and his conquest of Egypt. The proximity between the two countries and the similarity between the Maltese and Arabic languages have led many Maltese to settle in Egypt in the past, mainly in Alexandria. Like the Italians who settled in Egypt, the Egyptian-born Maltese constituted a portion of Egypt's Roman Catholic community. By 1939, up to 20,000 Maltese were living in Egypt. Practically all of these were French-speaking, and those with a French parent had French as their mother tongue. In many middle-class families (especially in Alexandria and Cairo) a language shift had occurred, with Italian used as the home language alongside French; a large minority of Egyptian Maltese (for example those of the Suez Canal Zone) still retained Maltese as their mother tongue. This number was greatly reduced by emigration years after, and almost completely wiped out by expulsions in 1956 due to the Maltese being British nationals. Most of the Egyptian Franco-Maltese settled in Australia or Britain, where they remained culturally distinct from immigrants from Malta. Those with French citizenship were repatriated to France (most often to Marseille). Post-war Malta in general did not accept refugees from Egypt.

### **MALTESE IN GIBRALTAR**

A Maltese community has existed in Gibraltar since shortly after its capture by an Anglo-Dutch fleet in 1704. The majority of the Spanish inhabitants were then expelled, leaving behind a garrison to be serviced by immigrants, mostly from Malta and Genoa. Immigration from neighboring Spanish towns soon followed, giving Gibraltar a very cosmopolitan population. Gibraltar's prosperity attracted immigrants from neighbouring Mediterranean lands and in 1885 there were about 1,000 Maltese people living in Gibraltar. Early in the 20th century the British undertook vast naval works and improvements to the existing fortifications of Gibraltar to make the rock practically impregnable. Many Maltese worked in the dockyard and others operated ancillary businesses. However, the economy of Gibraltar was not capable of absorbing a large number of immigrants from Malta and by 1912 the number of Maltese was already in decline (not above 700) as they returned to the Maltese Islands. Eventually those who stayed in Gibraltar became very much involved in the economic and social life in Gibraltar, most of them also being staunch supporters of links with the UK.

### **MALTESE IN BRAZIL**

The first Maltese colony arrived in Brazil in 1912 on board the SS Province, that landed in the port city of Santos with 73 persons. Another 106 arrived later the same year. All started working in the coffee plantations in Sao Paulo and in Fortaleza. As holders of British passports, they were considered by the Brazilian authorities as any other British subject. Many of them later returned to Malta. A second group of Maltese emigrants moved to Brazil in the 1920s, to work on the railroads; among them was Dominic Collier from Floriana, who held an administrative position in the Sao Paulo-Parana railway company. The third phase of Maltese immigration to Brazil, in the 1950s and 1960s, had a different, religious rather than economic, motivation. The Franciscan Order of Malta had been asked by the State of Parana to send priests and sisters to the growing diocese of Jacarezinho. Maltese priests later spread also to the States of Sao Paulo and Pernambuco. In 1977 father Walter Ebejer - brother of Francis Ebejer - was consecrated bishop of the diocese of Vitoria do Sul. Common surnames among the Brazilian Maltese include Busuttil, Zammit, Azzopardi, Balzan, Cutajar.





Debbie Williams Photography

## ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIAN SMOKING CEREMONY

Smoking ceremonies are an ancient custom among Aboriginal Australians in which native plants are burnt to produce smoke to ward off bad spirits, acknowledge ancestors and pay respect to the land and sea of country. The smoke

is believed to have healing and cleansing properties.



## DNA study finds aboriginal Australian the oldest human civilization

By [Shawn Price](#)

A new DNA study has found the Australian Aborigines are the oldest continuous human civilization on Earth, with a direct, traceable history going back 50,000 years. Photo by Pomin Oz/Shutterstock

COPENHAGEN, Denmark, Sept. 22 (UPI) -- The indigenous people

of Australia are the oldest existing human civilization on Earth, a new DNA study has found.

In what is the most comprehensive study of the people commonly known as aborigines, researchers found a direct line going back more than 50,000 years. The new study, published in the latest edition of Nature, sheds new light on the human species.

DNA gave researchers the ability to follow ancient human lines and conclude the ancestors of aborigines were likely the first to cross an ocean and perhaps even interbreed with other hominin tribes.

"This story has been missing for a long time in science," said Eske Willerslev at the University of Copenhagen, who led the study. "Now we know their relatives are the guys who were the first real human explorers. Our ancestors were sitting being kind of scared of the world while they set out on this exceptional journey across Asia and across the sea."

Studying 83 indigenous Australians and 25 Papuans, Willerslev and his team found that after aborigines arrived in Australia, they remained an isolated group until about 4,000 years ago.

"They are probably the oldest group in the world that you can link to one particular place," he said.



Santa Venera, located in the outer harbour region of Malta is about two kilometres away from the capital of Valletta and has an estimated population of almost 9000 residents. In 1918, Santa Venera became independent – it no longer formed part of Birkirkara. Nowadays Santa Venera is regarded as an urban area with a rural heart.

Santa Venera features some old buildings which left their historical mark on the place. Such places include the Wignacourt aqueduct which was used as a water supply. Along the road leading to Hamrun through Attard one finds the aqueduct built between 1611 and April 1615, during the times of the Grand Master Aloof de Wignacourt, to supply water to the capital city Valletta. Across from the arches supporting this aqueduct is the famous palace known as Casa Leoni built by Gran Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena and finished around the year 1730. This palace, which today houses a ministry, is surrounded by a garden, which was one of the most beautiful gardens in Malta.

Up until 1798, Casa Leoni was used by reigning Grandmasters but after an uprising in the countryside against the French, it became one of the headquarters of the Maltese insurgents. The name derives from the four lion statues that adorn the façade and also because it formed part of the Vilhena coat of arms. The palace is characterized by gardens which were a replica of the San Anton Gardens, but on a smaller scale. The palace has been used for diverse reasons, such as a ministry for home affairs and social policy and as a ministry for health and parliament secretary for the aged.

The gardens are a main attraction of the area dating back to the 18th century. Today, it is well kept by the local council and has many features. It specializes in citrus and ornamental trees, evergreen and flowering hedges, ponds and fountains which were unfortunately vandalized. There is also a restored farmhouse that highlights a small collection of traditional farming tools and farmhouse furniture. Next to the farmhouse, one



## Santa Venera

can find a fully functional water pump (sinja). There is also a cat sanctuary and a honey production

facility together with a small museum sheltering honey making tools that were used in the past.

The first church dedicated to Santa Venera was built in the year 1473 on a rocky plain hill between Birkirkara and Msida. In the year 1550 the church was enlarged slightly and repaired. The church was rebuilt from scratch and was completed in 1688. The Carmelite Friars have been running St Venera Churches since 1912. One of the people that were buried in the old church is Fra Gakkin Vivas, who was a Neapolitan hermit who in fact founded the hermitage of Santa Venera that was built in 1742 and adjacent to the church. Fra Vivas brought over Sicilian hermits from the order of San Kalogheru. Fra Gakkin Vivas was of a noble decent and found support from the Maltese nobility, amongst them were Rafael Dorell who was one of the ancestors of Lord (Strickland), a Former Maltese politician from the 1930s.

In the Church of Misraħ Santa Venera we have beautiful paintings and statues. One can treasure the works of Mattia Preti and Giuseppe Cali'. At Santa Venera there are also a number of chapels and religious institutes such as the APAP Institute built in 1954, the Sacred Heart chapel, which is a part of the Cini Institute for homeless girls and the St Joseph Institute, which was dedicated in May 1916. At Santa Venera one also can find the Conservatorio Vincenzo Bugeja whose foundation stone was laid in 1876. Due to the rapid increase in the population it was felt that a new parish church should be built and the foundation was built on 1990.

Last year, after 400 years since the aqueduct was being built to supply water to the capital city, MITA was built to supply technology to the Maltese Islands. This beautiful modern building, which looks like a luxurious cruise ship is in Railway Road c/w Żonqor Road. Further down, in Triq il-Kappillan Mifsud, one still can treasure the remains of the railway wall. San Ġorġ Preca lived his last times of life in Triq Il-Parroċċa, Santa Ven

**Life is not a  
competition.  
Life is about working  
together**



**READ - ENJOY  
AND SHARE**



**THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER**

**The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora**





*Luke Doherty, Tom Hanley, John Quin, Amy Brazil, Gerry O'Malley, Limerick Post, Tom Lyons and Ciaran Harty*



ORDER OF MALTA  
IRELAND  
AMBULANCE CORPS

## In 2018 the Order of Malta Ambulance Corps is celebrating 70 years in existence serving the people of Limerick.

As part of **Order of Malta Ireland**, the Limerick Unit is part of an Ambulance Corps which is one of the largest voluntary providers of first aid, ambulance and community care services in Ireland.

The Ambulance Corps has developed into an organization of more than 3000 members across more than 80 units throughout communities on the island of Ireland. The Limerick Unit being the largest unit in the Mid-West region contributes to over 160,000 volunteer hours given nationally by members of the Ambulance Corps. In 2015 over 5,800 people were treated by its members with 515 of these transported to hospital for further care. Based out of their premises on Davis Street the Limerick Unit's fleet of emergency vehicles supplements the overall fleet available nationwide, which is the largest fleet in the voluntary ambulance sector.

Part of the Limerick City Major Emergency plan volunteers from the Limerick Unit have previously assisted in evacuation of St Mary's Park during times of flooding and more recently were placed on standby during Storm Ophelia.

Whilst first and foremost a voluntary ambulance service the Limerick Unit along with their colleagues across the country volunteer at various events at both a local and national level. As part of the framework of the Prehospital Emergency Care Council the Limerick Unit trains its members from the level of First Aid Responder, through Emergency First Responder up to the registered practitioner level of Emergency Medical Technician.

With strong links to communities across Limerick City volunteers from the Ambulance Corps regularly provide community care services such as transport for the elderly and sick to efforts on a more national scale such as travelling to Knock and Lourdes and indeed providing volunteers to international youth camps.

The youth section in the Ambulance Corps known as the Cadets provide first aid training and activities. The Cadets cater to children aged between 10 and 16 and is run by the senior members of the organization.

*Luke Doherty, Sgt Maria Colbert, St John's Ambulance Brigade, Amy Brazil, Kathleen Quin, Ciaran Harty and Tony O'Mara, Picture: Dermot Lynch*



Throughout 2018 volunteers from the Ambulance Corps will be a common sight across Limerick with over 15 individuals' events occurring throughout the year from participating in Pay it Forward on Bedford Row in March to a guided history tour of locations in Limerick associated with the Order in July.

In September the City of Limerick will host the Ambulance Corps National Competitions in which teams of medics from units across the country will participate in live emergency simulations and scenarios openly across the city for all to witness. In previous years these scenarios have involved simulated drowning and BBQ explosions in city centre Parks. Any scenario is possible within the city.

Officer in Charge of the Limerick Unit Adj. Bryan Crosby admits 'I may be slightly biased in hoping for a home win we are looking forward to welcoming all our colleagues to Limerick for what always promises to be a great weekend'





## NOSTALGIA

The Journal of the  
MALTESE DIASPORA

**Maltese  
e NEWSLETTER**



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REACHING READERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD



## TEATRU ASTRA – GHAWDEX

Write up and photo

Chev. Joe M Attard, Gozo

**Teatru Astra** is celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary since its official inauguration as the prime cultural complex on the island on January 20, 1968.

The high expectations have not only been met along the years, with the spacious Astra boards offering high end wide spectrum of entertainment, ranging from the light to the classical, but happily surpassed. Local talent rubbed shoulders with international artists of note to offer high powered representations

which put Gozo on the global map regarding show business. Indeed, nothing succeeds like success. Teatru Astra can rightly claim to be the defining point in the local milieu turning Gozo from nowhere into somewhere when it comes to multi-faceted high-calibre cultural offerings. One can say that 1968 was a happy year for Gozo in general and Victoria in particular.

This is not to say that pre-1968 there was nothing going on. This is to say that the new premises, hitherto unmatched on the island, offered the appropriate space for things to happen on a new scale. In fact the oldest legally instituted band on the island, the La Stella Vincitrice, had been a trailblazer throughout the previous era. The La Stella Philharmonic Society had in fact been instrumental in introducing to the public diverse genres of musical entertainment not least the much loved operetta. With the inauguration of the Teatru Astra's acoustically perfect auditorium making it the best venue of its kind in the Maltese islands, productions could reach hitherto unscaled heights *tout-court*.

The patrons could enjoy productions such as *The Merry Widow*, *La Principessa della Czardas*, *The Gondoliers*, *The Great Waltz*, *Geisha*, just to name a number of the numerous operettas staged, as well literary masterpieces by Goldoni (*Il Bugiardo*), Feydeau (*Il Cappello di Paglia di Firenze*), Moliere (*Le Malade Imaginaire*), Shakespeare (*The Merchant of Venice*) and a host of other plays making the Teatru Astra a byword for excellence in the field. Visiting companies featured prominently and practically all the major companies in Malta were billed to perform some time or other. These leading Malta companies staged such operettas as *Die Fleremaus*, *The Gypsy Baron*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Calamity Jane*, plays such as *View from the Bridge*, *Processo a Gesu'* and so on.

Perhaps the greatest contribution which Teatru Astra has made has been in the world of opera. Setting off to a flying start with such opera legends as Aldo Protti and Nicola Rossi Lemeni there was no question of stopping. In fact after three decades, opera at the Astra has reached truly international standards with memorable productions mixing the best of local talent with top of the range artists. Teatru Astra is justly proud to have launched the meteoric career of Joseph Calleja when he was called by Prof. Mro Joseph Vella, resident conductor, to interpret the role of Macduff in *Macbeth* at the age of 19. Landmark productions of *Aida*, *Turandot*, *Macbeth*, *Otello*, *Boheme*, *La Traviata*, *Lucia di Lamermoor*, *Norma*, *La Gioconda*, among others have proved that size really does not matter when it comes to reaching high peaks. What matters is talent and the will to never rest on one's laurels.

These recent years, Teatru Astra has ventured into the world of the Musicals. Adopting the same rigorous standards which have been the salient characteristics of the theatre, it is not far off the mark to observe that the productions of *Grease* and *Evita* would have graced any West End theatre. This year Lloyd Webber's *Jesus Christ Superstar* is being staged.

The ethos which has sustained the La Stella Philharmonic Society throughout the years, namely the undiminishing strive for perfection in the diversification of the cultural product, has yielded sterling results. The Teatru is committed to intensify its efforts to ensure that the standards achieved, not only will be maintained, but surpassed.

Rita Camilleri, Sliema





## John Gardner MP Member for Morialta

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Dear readers of the Maltese eNewsletter

Australia proudly boasts the largest Maltese community outside of Malta and here in South Australia the Maltese community makes a tremendous contribution to our great state.

The special bond between our countries has ever grown over more than a century of mateship, forged through the shared trauma of World Wars and strengthened through the great successes of so many Maltese people in their new country. Australian war graves in Malta will always remind us of our shared past and current connections.

In the years ahead we hope that our bonds will include increased growth in trade between our countries. We have a stable and quality relationship that will continue to flourish.

Australia is a land of opportunity and growth. The opportunities and lifestyle available to all our citizens in modern Australia would not be the same without the millions of migrants who have come to our shores. The Maltese community plays an important role in that migration story. What you and your ancestors have added to our culture over decades adds a rich diversity, reflects a strong work ethic and an inherent desire to build a better future for all our children.

The bonds between our ancestry and our identity remain strong. As the Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I am so pleased that the Maltese heritage of your community will never be forgotten, and in the years ahead I know that our broader Australian community will continue to benefit from the stories that your children will continue to carry forward about their heritage.

## IL-KARNIVAL MAGHNA WKOLL Kav. J.J. Attard, Gozo - Malta



Ta' kull sena hafna min-niesna tistenna b'herqa l-Karnival. Għadek issib hafna dilettanti ta' dawn il-festi folkloristiċi u rikrejattivi li jafu l-bidu tagħhom qabel il-wasla tal-Kavallieri fostna.

Naturalment dawn il-festi tradizzjonali u popolari jiddependu hafna fuq il-burdata tat-temp. Fil-għira tagħna l-Karnival din is-sena beda fl-Garb l-Ħadd filgħodu 4 ta' Frar u jibqa' jkarkar sat-Tlieta l3 ta' Frar ( il-Ħadd se nkun nippreżenta l-Karnival fir-raħal fuqani taż-Żebbuġ waqt li

l-għada t-Tnejn filgħaxija jien inkun qed nippreżenta l-Karnival f'Ta Sannat; ) meta s-soltu fi Triq ir-Repubblika Victoria jkun hemm il-Gran Finale li jinkludi żfin fi Triq Fortunato Mizzi bis-sehem tal-kumpaniji taż-żfin, maskri grotteski, karrijiet trijonfali u baned. It-tfal tal-iskola flimkien mal-għalliema jieħdu gost b'jumejn vaganza, għad li hafna minnhom jieħdu sehem mal-iskola tagħhom.

U allahares ma kienx hekk. Jekk ma tinvestix fit-tfal, il-gejjieni tal-Karnival jista' jkun wieħed imċajpar. Ta' tfal li konna niftakarni nfittxu fil-gwardarobbi t'ommi u nsibu xi libsa tgħodd għalina u erhilna nxidduha u nigru mat-toroq tar-Rabat b'wiċċna mgermed b'xi tapp ta' flixkun maħruq u b'xi bastun f'idejna!

Jien trabbejt fl-atmosfera tal-Karnival għax missieri, Alla jaħfirlu, mhux darba u tnejn kien jiġbor madwaru salt ħbieb u jidhlu fl-enclosure fuq xi truck u jaqsmu lil kulħadd bid-daħk billi darba niftakar għamli operazzjoni medika u darba oħra tellgħu rocket fil-qamar! Kont inħossni fis-seba' sema nigri fil-garage ta' missieri narahom jibnu l-float, jiżbghu l-maskeruni u jhejju l-kostumi. Dak kien żmien! Mhux ta' b'xejn għadni nieħu gost mippreżenta xi programm jew serata tal-Karnival għalkemm issa qbiżt is-sebghin sena!

***O żmien ħelu kif għaddejtli***

***Żmien ta' meta kont bla ħtija***

***It-tifkira biss hallejtli***

***Biex il-għira nħoss għalik***

***Int ma' terġa' iżjed għalija***

***U sal-mewt indum nibkik!***





## One of the largest Disney puzzles in the world being pieced together for "Puttinu cares"

Ten groups of volunteers are about to assemble 40,320 pieces of the world's largest Disney puzzle in order to raise money for Puttinu cares.

*The Malta Independent on Sunday* asked puzzle enthusiast and brains behind the idea, Steven Galea, about the aim of the project. Galea said that after assembling the jigsaw and laminating it, it would be donated to Puttinu Cares, hoping to

raise €40,320, one euro for each piece, and for the puzzle to be placed in one of the children's wards at Mater Dei.

The 22-foot wide and 6-foot tall puzzle will feature colourful and bright scenes from classic Disney films, including *Lion King*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Peter Pan*, *Cinderella* and more.



A tour around Galea's office quickly reveals his passion for jigsaws, where a puzzle which has been laminated and framed hangs on nearly every wall. He has roughly over 30 puzzles just at his workspace.

"This has always been my hobby" he states, explaining that through Facebook, Galea came across a group of people who shared his similar interest in puzzles. From there he found that one man had assembled a jigsaw and given it to a hospital, "I thought well that's a nice idea". Galea decided to try something similar but on a bigger scale. Purchasing one of

the largest puzzles in the world, Galea called on friends and family to see who would be willing to help.

"The jigsaw comes in 10 bags, so it made it possible to split off into 10 groups, making it a group effort" he said. "The idea initially was to assemble the puzzle and then have it framed and put up in a children's ward, but then I thought is this enough? I came across shocking statistics that every month, around 90 children from Malta go to England for medical treatment. This costs Puttinu €20 million a year. I knew then that this idea needed to evolve so that we could collect money for these children and their families," Galea said.

"When it's finished it will be really beautiful" Galea explained, emphasising that none of this could have been done without the many people who were willing to give up their time and money to such a cause.

"This is my idea and I am coordinating it, but without all these people who have sprung out of nowhere, who volunteered within two weeks of voicing my ideas, it would not be possible." The deadline for the puzzle to be completed is May 2018, the day of the Puttinu Marathon. Donations can be made by sending an SMS on the following numbers: 50617380 - €2.33; 50618939 - €6.99; 506199225 - €11.65, or by deposit or transferring into BOV account 40020775252

**This journal is quite unique. The last edition (NEWSLETTER 203) was exceptional and it brought tears to my eye. It had so many varieties of topics – cultural, historical etc. I never knew that Maltese citizens are so spread around the world. It is also good to know the Maltese living abroad are making us proud by excelling in their fields, like Judge Rosemary Aquilina (USA). Manuel Borg.**

## Blue Grotto, Malta: Unique Places around the World



This locale gets its name from the intensely blue colour of its waters, but it is in severe danger today due to climate change.

*Il-Hnejja*, the famous natural arch that extends over and into the waters of Malta's Blue Grotto.

The Blue Grotto is a system of seven sea caverns, located on the outskirts of the southern town of Żurriq, on the small Mediterranean island nation of

Malta. The area should not be confused with its namesake, the Blue Grotto in Capri, Italy. The caverns are themselves unique limestone formations, with stunning views of water, flora, and fauna. The largest and most popular cavern is commonly referred to as the 'Blue Grotto' Cavern.

The grotto is popular among visitors to Malta, which is easy to navigate because its area spans only 17 by 9 miles at its extents. Malta is easily accessible by plane, within three hours from many major European cities, and from them connections to the UK, North Africa, and the Middle East. There is ferry access to Sicily, Italy, from the port in Pozzallo. Getting to the grotto from Żurriq involves travelling around 1.2 miles (2 kilometers) west to the harbor of Wied iż-Żurriq, and hiring a "dgħajsa", a water taxi, for around €8 (\$8.67 USD). In addition to regular boat tours, there are also rock climbing, scuba diving and snorkeling tours for those so inclined.

Blue Grotto features a 140-foot arch, *Il-Hnejja*. The arch is a unique byproduct of the local coralline limestone, which tends to fracture and erode from the constantly pounding waves. The grotto is also widely recognized for its ultra-clear water, which appears as stunning shades of cobalt blue when sunlight hits the white sand at the bottom of the caves, and reflects against the colors of plants, sea creatures, and minerals in the limestone. Filmmakers favor the area for its inimitable natural aesthetics.

The limestone of the grotto contains marine fossils, because the entire island of Malta was submerged millions of years ago. Plants and animals are visible through the water in the caverns, and divers can see barracudas, jacks, octopus, and morays in the water itself. The caverns also offer a view of Ffilia, an inlet uninhabited by humans, which is home to endemic species, such as the Maltese wall lizard. As one would expect, culinary fish and seafood are available throughout Malta. Local delicacies include sea urchin and octopus, as well as lampuka fish, which is the main ingredient in Maltese lampuki pie.

Malta has a good reputation as a very safe destination, and a trip to Blue Grotto can be made safely with the assistance of experienced tour guides. It is not possible to touch the floor of the sea, so access to life jackets is crucial, especially for children and those who are not proficient swimmers. The waves, and their tendency to erode the rocks, can be dangerous, especially in stormy conditions. Even when the weather is calm, boat guides carefully time entrance to the caves in relation to the rhythm of the waves. Unfortunately, the natural infrastructure of the Blue Grotto, and all of Malta, is extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change, particularly to rising sea levels and coastal erosion. Rising temperatures provoke devastating invasions of local ecosystems by non-native wildlife as well. Malta has made climate change a serious priority, in part because its only significant natural resources are said to be its mild climate and limestone. Increasingly, tourists are encouraged to see the Blue Grotto less as an idyllic blue water paradise, and more in terms of its rich heritage and as a hot spot for eco-tourism.

## Gužé's kiosk and his delicious almond drink 1940/50



I thought readers would enjoy having a glimpse at how the former Bonello Kiosk at St Anne's Square in Sliema looked in 1940/1950. This, before the Bonellos looked after it. It had no name and was fondly remembered as il-Gabbana ta' Gužé, and he was known as Gužé tal-Gabbana.

He was renowned for the refreshing almond drink or ruġġata tal-lewż morr, made with fresh almonds and some delicious concoction made with very tiny fresh strawberries. These pictures were taken in the late 1940s. I hope they evoke happy memories to whoever remembers the gabbana this way.



## Tony 'Bayzo' Camilleri, star of Gensna and Malta Bums frontman, dies at 70

**Tony Camilleri, star of rock opera Gensna and Malta Bums frontman, has died aged 70**

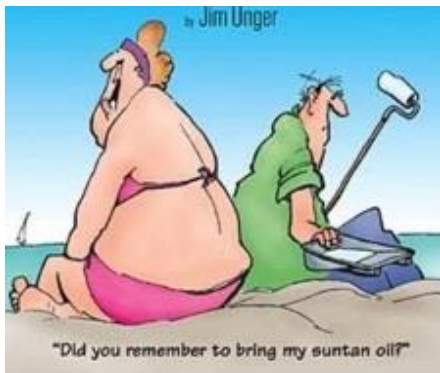
The Maltese musician Tony 'Bayzo' Camilleri has passed away, at 70. Camilleri was a musician and singer, best known for his work with The Malta Bums in the 1960s, and his role in the rock opera Gensna. He was also known for his solo work, which saw him tour the world and win

the hearts of thousands of Maltese around the globe.

'Bayzo' joined The Malta Bums following Freddie Portelli's departure, and released many songs including 'L-Ewwel Tfaġġa Li Habbejt' which became widely popular.

He was also part of the 1980 rock-opera Gensna, which was staged more than 40 times and revived 20 years later, and again in 2014. Camilleri last gave a public performance on 1 October last year at the Rockestra, where he was a special guest. He was born on 3 April 1947 and was a St Paul's Bay resident.

Family, friends and musician took to social media to remember the musician



**DID YOU REMEMBER TO BRING MY SUNTAN OIL?**

**We thank all our readers from all over the world. Your support and encouragement keep us going in our mission to unite the Maltese Diaspora. Please, keep on sending your contributions, emails and stories and join this one big happy family. Editor**





PHOTO: DOI - Omar Camilleri



## Pigs, cows and birds: V18 celebrates Maltese idiom

*Kif Jghid il-Malti* is presented by Valletta 2018 and is an adaptation of 13 commonly used Maltese proverbs



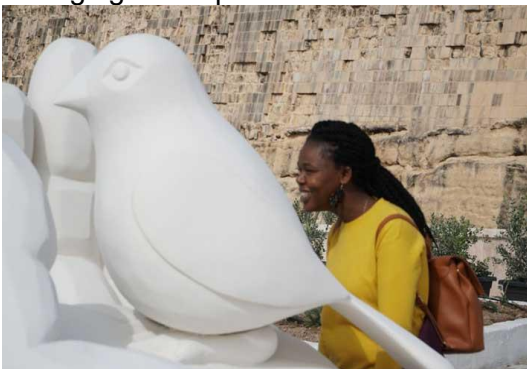
by Yannick Pace

**'A bird in the hand is worth a hundred in the sky – Birds of the same feather flock together**

Visitors to Valletta will have the opportunity to brush up on their knowledge of Maltese proverbs after a series of public art installations depicting 13 commonly-used Maltese proverbs were unveiled this afternoon. The temporary installations are aimed at celebrating Malta's linguistic heritage.

The project, called *Kif Jghid il-Malti*, is being presented by Valletta 2018, with Valletta 2018 Foundation chairman Jason Micallef and V18 Parliamentary Secretary Deo Debattista unveiling the temporary installations together with artist Joel Saliba.

The project is intended to celebrate the beauty and creativity of the Maltese language by adapting 13 Maltese proverbs. "As an artistic concept, '*Kif Jghid Il-Malti*' engages with these proverbs with the aim of bringing to the public's attention Malta's linguistic heritage," said the foundation in a statement.



It added that the project also reflected on the European Year of Cultural Heritage by presenting the Maltese language as living patrimony. "A link between the past and the future in the form of cultural heritage."

Saliba, who created the works, said they were intended to be thought provoking and to cause people to reflect on the language.

The project, supported by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, is the creative work of Ikona Artworks Ltd. Joel Saliba and Margaret Pace are the creative team behind the project who originated the concept and installation designs, assisted in the process and

research by Sara-Lee Zammit. Chris Galea for the logistical support and Perry Scenic Ltd for the manufacture of the installation works.

To be truly advocates of freedom of expression, openness, solidarity and diversity, we must use our voice not only to challenge the offenders, racists and haters; but also, to celebrate the wonderful diversity of our society



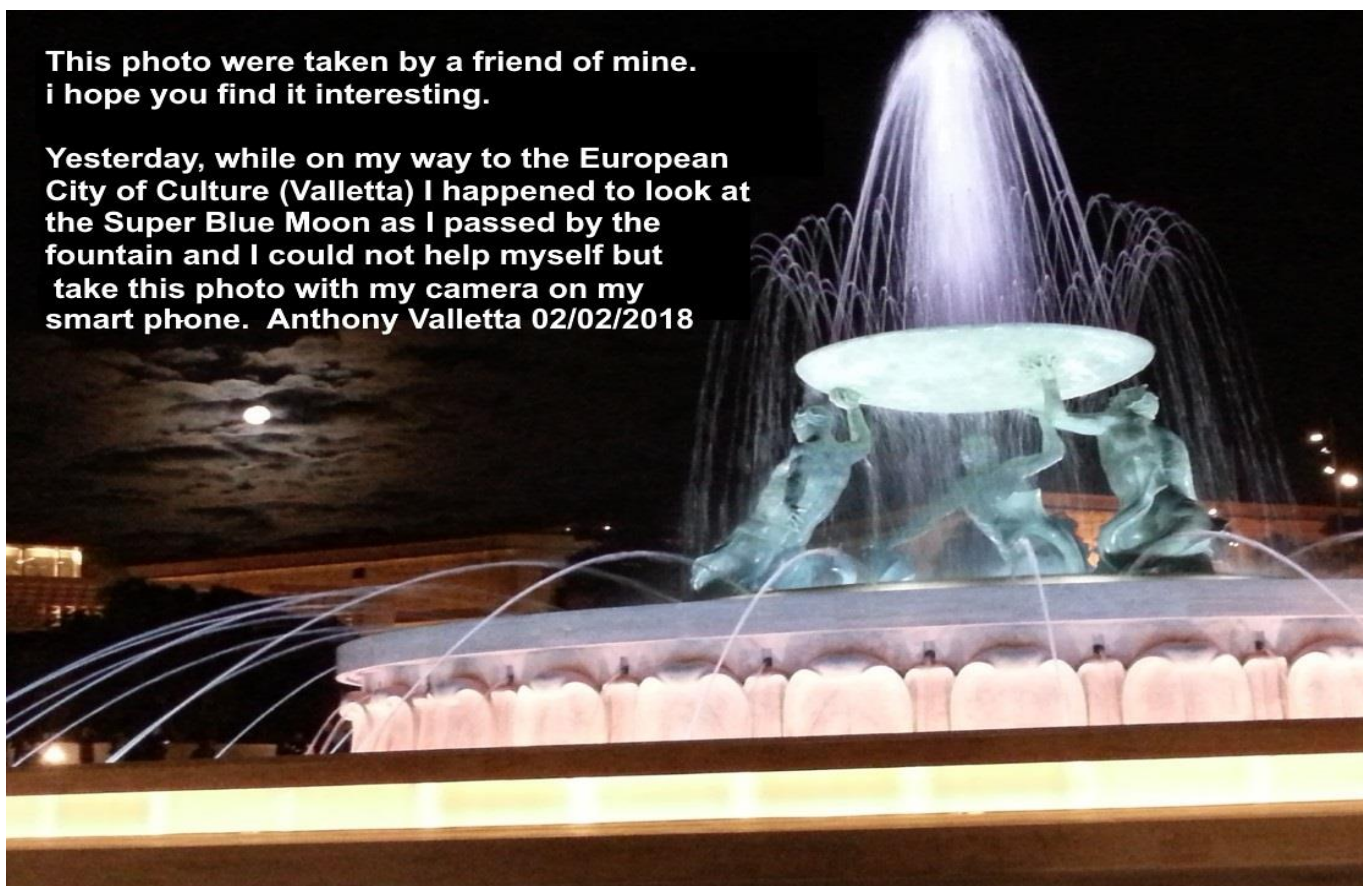
## Unione Cattolica San Giuseppe - Il Habib (now Lehen is-Sewwa)

Il Habib was a weekly Maltese language publication issued by Unione Cattolica San Giuseppe (UCSG). Issue No. 1 was published on 1 February 1912. In its first issue, there is published Dun Karm Psaila's first poem written in Maltese ('Quddiem Xbieha tal-Madonna' – In front of a statue of Our Lady).

The story goes that Dun Karm, not knowing what to write, kneeled in front of a statue of Our Lady he had in his room and prayed "Dear Mother, show me what to write. I want to start with a poem for you". This led to the writing of this beautiful poem. Up to that date, Mgr. Psaila's published poems were written in Italian. Mgr. Psaila is the National Poet and wrote the Maltese National Anthem (written in 1923).

The cost of this publication was of 'sitt habbiet' and its first director/ editor was Guze' Muscat Azzopardi who later on was the first president of I-'Ghaqda Kittieba tal-Malti' (Maltese writer's association) which eventually became 'L-Akkademja tal-Malti'. An extract from the minutes of the first meeting held in relation to this publication shows that not less than 1,500

copies were sold of Issue 1, after which another 663 issues were published. The decision to end the publication and favour the spread of another publication called 'Lehen is-Sewwa' came on October 26th,



**This photo were taken by a friend of mine.  
i hope you find it interesting.**

**Yesterday, while on my way to the European  
City of Culture (Valletta) I happened to look at  
the Super Blue Moon as I passed by the  
fountain and I could not help myself but  
take this photo with my camera on my  
smart phone. Anthony Valletta 02/02/2018**

