

# Maltese e-Newsletter

The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

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Is-Sena t-Tajba lilek u l-familja tieghek



*to all our wonderful readers*



**THE GOVERNMENT OF MALTA HONOURS  
THE EDITOR OF THE  
MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER**







**Prime Minister Joseph Muscat and cabinet ministers  
exchange New Year's greetings with  
Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna**

## **THE PRESIDENT H.E. MARIE-LOUISE COLEIRO PRECA FINAL CHRISTMAS MESSAGE - 2018**



In her last Christmas message President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca urges unity in fight against poverty and calls for a stop to violence against children and women

President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca

The poor do not choose to be poor, President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca said in her final Christmas message.

The President, whose term comes to an end in April, urged the Maltese to ditch indifference and unite in the fight against poverty.

"Nobody chooses to be poor; nobody chooses

not to buy their child a present... Let us stop blaming the poor," she said in a short video message to mark Christmas Day.

But Coleiro Preca also used the occasion to hammer home a message against domestic violence and violence against children.

"Let us make a resolution not to remain silent in front of domestic violence and violence against children," the President said.

She also called for compassion "for that girl who failed to make it to shore because she died at sea", the lonely elderly people and those with mental health issues.

In a message peppered with gratitude to the Maltese, Coleiro Preca thanked people for welcoming her and understanding her limitations.

She also thanked children, for opening up with her and delivering a plea in favour of the environment.

“Let us not be silent in front of injustice,” Coleiro Preca said.

President Marie Louise Coleiro Preca thanked everyone during her message for Christmas.

In her last Christmas message, the President dearly thanked the people who “as your President you have welcomed me, were gentle with me, understood my limitations both as President and as a person, and participated with us with enthusiasm so that work for the wellbeing of society does not stop and continues to grow”.

TVM reports that the President stated that “unity makes us a beautiful people and it makes us more beautiful when we assist those who are in suffering, in need”.

She thanked the people who voiced their suffering “which in a moment or other instances, it may be that we created it ourselves because we continued moving on and pretended not to hear our female neighbour shouting because her husband was beating her; or maybe we did not ask why that elderly person has not been seen for a week; or we pretend we do not know that this evening there are a few or many persons sleeping under a pavement, in a car or a garage. Or worse, when we ignored that child who failed to arrive on shore because he or she had drowned”.

She said that this makes her remember in Mary and Joseph, Jesus parents, who had traveled and found a cave and, surrounded by animals, a boy was born who changed the world into love.

She thanked the female youth who has a depression and told her “I feel very hurt when they tell me to stand up and get used to things; you do not need anything, Christmas is near”. The President said she understood that there is lack of awareness on mental health. For the new year, she said that we will make a resolution to deliver the campaign against child beatings, a campaign that reaches everyone especially the children themselves. “No, no one has the right to beat you, even if you erred, even to correct you”.

President Coleiro Preca thanked the Maltese and Gozitans, saying that peace between us does not mean we do not voice our concerns in front of injustices. Our greetings in these days for peace in our lives means justice.



### **MALTA NATIONAL ORDER OF MERIT “MIDALJA TAL-QADI TAR-REPUBBLIKA” FRANK L SCICLUNA MQR**

Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca – President of the Republic of Malta bestowed this great honour to Mr Frank Scicluna in the name of the Prime Minister Hon Joseph Muscat and the Maltese Government during the investiture ceremony at the Palace, Valletta on the 13 December 2018 -Malta’s National Republic day. Malta pays tribute to Maltese citizens who have distinguished themselves in different walks of life and whose contribution, dedication and achievement enrich the general well-being of their fellow countrymen as well as to foreign nationals who have distinguished themselves by their services in the promotion and fostering of international relations or who have earned the respect and gratitude of the people of the Maltese Islands. His services were also acknowledged by the Australian Federal Government.

**Marika Scicluna** Congratulations to my father, Frank Scicluna, who received the award of The Maltese National Order of Merit in recognition of service to the Republic of Malta. It is wonderful that you have been recognised for all your efforts, endless work and passion for supporting the Australian-Maltese community. You have given so much so generously as the Honorary Consul of Malta in South Australia for fifteen years, as a Maltese Language Teacher & Principal for 30 years, on various committees in our Australian-Maltese Community and Australian Ethnic Schools, and through his website and enewsletters, sharing your knowledge of Maltese history and culture. Congratulations too to my mother, Josie Scicluna, the amazing women behind this great man! For all your love, support and care which helped Dad do what he does best. Your family in Australia and abroad are truly proud and wish you many blessings. Enjoy celebrating in Malta and enjoy the Christmas festivities there although you are being greatly missed here especially by your little cherubs. Look forward to celebrating with you on your return to Australia.

## WE THANK ALL THOSE WHO SENT THEIR CONGRATULATIONS:

**Charles Chetcuti** and Joe & Marica Scicluna and 150 others, **Rosanne Vignogna** Congratulations Frank! What a huge honour & achievement ☺ **Katie Camilleri** Congratulation Frank - **Theresa Scicluna** Congratulations uncle frank, well deserved, **Jim Borg** Congratulations Frank. Very well deserved !What a stunning award to receive!! -- **Carm Baxter** Wish my father Nick was still alive to congratulate you Frank, so I will do it instead. So well deserved. Do keep in touch. Hello from Gozo.

**Peter Borg** Congratulations Frank, well deserved, your efforts do not go unnoticed, True gentleman Thanks for what you do for the Maltese community. Keep up the fantastic work.

**Elaine Fenech** Congratulations. Marika Scicluna are you parents staying over for long?

**Albert Coleiro** (NSW) That's my uncle !! very proud of your achievements and dedication

**Emanuel Camilleri** Well done guys you deserve recognition from Malta

**Denise Kapatan** Congratulations Uncle Frank. - **Marina Vsl D'Antonio** Congrats to your dad and mum. Hope they enjoy their holiday. - **Susan Furga** What an extraordinary achievement!!! Congratulations ... most deserving! - **Louis Parnis** Well done Frank proud of your award, a good friend. - **Bernadette**

**Buhagiar** Congrats Frank, **Josephine and Harry Zammit Cordina** Prosit Frank. A big well done to you. We sent a congratulatory email addressed to you in Australia. Congrats to your wife Josie as well.

**Christos Christou** Congratulations Excellence is within !

**Rhelma Badger** Congratulations Frank, what a wonderful achievement. Beautiful words Marika, there's an old saying, behind a successful man, there is a successful lady and that is so true. Enjoy your Christmas Malta n looking forward to catching up when you come back to Adelaide. Xo💕💕

**Joe Monsigneur** Congratulation Frank Scicluna - **Vanessa Blute** Congratulations xox

**Sharon Grillo Micallef and Anne Salotti** Congratulations Uncle Frank! And definitely to Aunty Josie too. We are so proud of you and know how hard you work for the Australian Maltese community. Enjoy the celebrations and safe travels. Love from the Galdies/Mathews/Salotti families xxxx

**Tara McCormack** Congratulations Uncle Frank! Enjoy the celebrations and have a lovely Christmas in Malta💕 - **Desiree Ferrao** Congratulations Frank & Josie!!

**Kareena Spencer** Congratulations to your Dad & Mum Marika. I hope they have a lovely holiday!

**Alicia Matikulas** Congratulations what a fantastic acknowledgement of all his hard work xx

**Chrysi Karagiannis** Congratulation great news - **Dorianne Abdilla** Congratulations Frank Scicluna!

**Guy Deguara** prosit frank well done - **Augusta Soteriou** Congratulations to your father....you shoub e proud x💕 - **Trudy Ann** This is wonderful I am proud to be Maltese

**Debbie Baldock** Congratulations to you both. A great achievement - **Michelle Bercham** Amazing contributions to society. Congratulations - **Vickie Gauci** Well done Frank Have a lovely Christmas in Malta xxxx - **Helen and Mario Azzopardi** Well deserved recognition for your tireless work for the Maltese community. Thanks Uncle Frank love Mario and Helen

**Doris and Joe Attard (NSW)** - **Alfred Grech** - **Joe Attard (Gozo)** - **Andrew Borg (SA)** - **Rita and Felix Demicoli, H.E. Charls Muscat** - **Lino Vella (NSW)** - **Father Gabriel Micallef OFM (SA)** - **Nadya Chetcuti and Mary Scicluna (Malta)** **Richard Cumbo (Canada)** – **Hon Carmelo Abela, Minister of Foreign Affairs**, **Jim and Mary Micallef (Malta)**, **Paul and Gemma Barbara (Malta)**, **Rose and Paul Spiteri (Malta)**, **Hon Anglu Farrugia, Speaker, Malta Parliament**, **Hon Edward Scicluna, Minister for Finance**, **Ray and Josephine Bigeni, Mons. Alfred Vella -Emigrants Commission**, **Maurice Cauchi**, **Carmen Galea**, **Profs Steve Gatt**, **Dr George and Laura Boffa**, **Edwidge Borg**, **Tony Scicluna**, **Madaliene Scicluna**, **Margaret Mifsud**, **Michelle Pill**, **Joanna Pisani**, **Consul-General, Victoria**, **Emma and Roger Gammon**, **Marie Louise Privitera**, **Carmela Fenech**, **Dolores Muscat**, **Eman-Hany Habib**, **Paul Bugeja**, **Jane and Eugenio Agius**, **Sonya and Frank Morhante**, **Mary and Jim Gauci (Malta)**, **Marie Campbell**, **Lawrence Dimech (Co-editor of the Voice)** **Dr Gejtu Pace**, **Ray and Josephine Bigeni**, **Bernard Scerri (Canada)**, **Sandra Alexandra Micallef**, **Mary Pace-Feraud**, **Theresa Scicluna**, **Poppy KasKassas**, **Sharon Grillo (Malta)**, **Joseph A Xerri-Secretary of the Council of Maltese Living Abroad**, **Raymon C Xerri**, **Greg Caruana**, **Carmelo Cassar (USA)**, **Fred and Ida Aquilina**. **Marianne Vassallo**, **Brendon Marsh**, **Paul Sammut**, **Joe Attard**, **Spiro Tanti**. **Charles Balzan**, **Manuel Fabri**, **Emmanuel Fenech**, **Helen and Mario Azzopardi**, **Joe Mifsud (Malta)**





PHOTO : DOI - Jason Borg

Official photo of the award recipients at the President's Palace, Valletta on Republic Day 13 December together with Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca and the Prime Minister Hon. Joseph Muscat

## SOME OF OTHER RECIPIENTS - MIDALJA GHALL-QADI TAR-REPUBBLIKA

### RODERICK BOVINGDON MQR



PHOTO: DOI - Oliver Galea

Roderick Bovingdon was born in 1942 in Attard. He moved with his family to Sydney in 1959 and was the first person ever to obtain a pass in Maltese Language Advanced Level through Oxford by correspondence.

He graduated from universities of Sydney (Italian & Arabic; Health Counselling), New South Wales (Six Nursing degrees & Administration Diploma), New England (Philosophy & English Literature) and Malta (Education 1981-82; Maltese & Arabic 1994-98).

In 1968, he founded the first School of Maltese Language outside of Malta and, together with the NSW Dept. of Education, the Maltese Community Council of NSW, the Maltese Cultural Association of NSW and a group of individuals selected by himself, the Maltese Language School of NSW was founded in 1999.

Bovingdon also co-founded Fairfield Melita Drama Company, the Għaqda Kirrieba Maltija (Sydney), and the first Maltese literary journal in Australia, *Ix-Xefaq*. He was also a qualified broadcaster/journalist with the Special Broadcasting Service in Sydney. Amongst the numerous positions he occupied, he was appointed expert to the Council for Maltese Living Abroad; Director with the National Australian Accreditation of Translators & Interpreters and member of the Editorial Board with the Maltese Herald & Voice of Malta in Australia. Roderick Bovingdon spent his entire adult life at the forefront in the promotion of the Maltese language and culture. He was also instrumental in the initiation of a popular Maltese song festival in Australia (1947).



PHOTO: DOI - Jason Borg

## ALBERT MARSHAL MOM

Born in Attard in 1947, Albert Marshall has distinguished himself as a theatre and television director, playwright, poet, and TV presenter in a career spanning over 50 years. His literary and theatrical career started during the 1960s. During this time, Marshall was one of the founding members of the Moviment Qawmien Letterarju.

After a two-year stint working and studying in London, in 1971, Marshall started working in Maltese electronic media until 1980 when he emigrated to Australia. In Melbourne, he spent 15 years working in Australian

radio, theatre and television. He is the first Maltese national to direct at the Sydney Opera House, where he directed Mary Spiteri in Concert. Marshall was also the first Maltese to direct at the Grant Street Theatre for the Victoria College of the Arts. During this period, he founded the Harmonic 65 Culture Club, which he used as a platform for the launching of various cultural projects for the Maltese-Australian community, including the promotion of the teaching of Maltese as 'a language other than English'. Marshall occupied the post of Chairman of the panel responsible for the setting and assessing of the Australian national examination in the Maltese Language. In Melbourne, Marshall also pursued his postgraduate studies in Communication at Victoria University.

On his return to Malta in 1996, Marshall was engaged by the University of Malta to lecture in Communication Studies and lead the Distance Learning Programme at the Radju tal-Università. He was appointed CEO of the Public Broadcasting Services Ltd (PBS) in 1997, and three years later he moved to Super One Radio and Television where he started working as consultant and eventually as CEO. Marshall's literary works have been extensively published in Australia, Canada and Malta. He is currently working on the publication of his complete poetry works and a collection of his works for the theatre. Albert Marshall currently occupies the positions of Deputy Chairman of PBS Ltd and Executive Chair of Arts Council Malta.



PHOTO: DOI - Omar Camilleri

## LOUIS JOHN VELLA MQR

Louis John Vella was born and raised in Malta. He completed his education at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. In 1980 Vella relocated to California, USA where he completed his tertiary education at a University in California and started his professional career as a chief officer in a California public safety agency.

As soon as he arrived in California, he immersed himself in the Maltese Community, and soon became

one of its more active leaders, making it his mission to make Maltese communities more connected within themselves and with Malta by doing whatever it takes to bring Malta closer and more accessible to California.

Today, in California there are a number of active Maltese organisations that owe their emergence and a good dose of their success to Vella. With his full unwavering support, all of them work hard to promote and sustain Maltese culture, history, heritage, and traditions. Louis also created a successful scholarship programme for university students of Maltese descent, and an annual Maltese award that celebrates volunteer work among those less fortunate. He also organised multiple visits by Maltese dignitaries to California and annual charitable donations to Malta. He currently serves as Honorary Consul for Malta, and has served two 3-year terms on the Council of Maltese Living Abroad.





PHOTO : DOI - Jason Borg

## SIMON SCHEMBRI MQR

Born in 1969 in the United Kingdom, Simon Schembri is a traffic police constable who has shown great dedication to his work. This year, he was involved in a terrible traffic accident while on duty, where he suffered grievous injuries that included the amputation of an arm.

As a result of this harrowing experience, he established The Blue Light Foundation, which is a non-profit organisation that provides moral support, psychological help, and

financial aid to employees serving in emergency response and disciplined forces who suffer physical injury whilst responding to an emergency situation.

In 2013, he also proved himself when he assisted and escorted to hospital a pregnant woman who was in labour and was caught in heavy traffic. The child was reported to have the cord tangled to his neck, and had only few minutes left to live if Schembri had not intervened in time.



PHOTO: DOI - Omar Camilleri

## JOSEPHINE MAHONEY MQR

Born in Senglea in 1932, Josephine Mahoney is a renowned Maltese actress who, for more than 70 years, took part in various radio, stage, and television productions. She started her career in drama on Redifussion in 1947, and in 1949, she began acting on stage with the Sliema Dramatic Company. Amongst her early performances there are Anastasia, Id-Dar tas-Soru, Meta morna sal-Mellieħa, and Bizzilla u Velenu.

Josephine also wrote an autobiographical book, Oh Żmien Heħu, where she portrayed in detail the theatrical scene, the elegant and

rich costumes and also the different types of acting and the terminology used at that time. Her numerous performance choices reflect the most popular elements in the Maltese cultural scene. In fact, this is visible throughout her acting career on Redifussion, radio, and soap operas on television.







Photo - MGOZ - Terry Ca

**AWAY IN A GOZO MANGER**

**Bethlehem is brought to life in Ghajnsielem. Bethlehem f'Ghajnsielem is an animated Nativity village currently set up in Gozo spread over 20,000 square metres of land.**





## ANGELO AND FRIENDS

## Kav. Joe Attard (Ghawdex)



Caption turi mument mill-kunċert 'Angelo and Friends' li sar nhar it-Tlieta 18 ta' Diċembru fil-Knisja parrokkjali ta' Ghajnsielem li matulu t-tenur żagħżuġh Ghawdexi Angelo Muscat (attiv hafna wkoll fil-Chorus Urbanus u li għadu kemm irritorna minn għadd ta' master classes fl-Awstrija) kanta għadd ta' Christmas Carols u kant festiv ieħor, akkumpanjat minn orkestra li kienet taħt id-direzzjoni ta' Dr Mro John Galea. Fil-kunċert li għalih attendew għadd sabiħ ta' parruċċani, Ghawdxin u barranin, flimkien mas-Sindku t'Ghajnsielem is-Sur Franco Ciangura u l-Ministru għal Ghawdex Dr Justyne Caruana, flimkien mat-tenur

Ghajnselmiż hađu sehem ukoll s-Sopran Marvic Baldacchino u l-Baxx Noel Galea. Bis-sengħa u bi hlewwa Lelio Spiteri ppreżenta s-Serata waqt li l-Kav Joe M Attard kien mistieden jaqra l-poeżija li kiteb għal dal-Milied – 'Ara...wasal il-Milied'. Fil-knisja gotika tal-Madonna ta' Loreto kienet tirrenja atmosfera mill-isbaħ bit-tiżjin sabiħ tal-Milied u l-Presepu artistiku. Bhalissa jiġbed l-attenzjoni ta' kulhadd f'dan ir-raħal insibu l-Proġett ta' 'Betlem f'Ghajnsielem' kif ukoll għadd sabiħ ta' presepi u Siġra tal-Milied magħmula minn madwar 1300 landa tal-birra bl-inizjattiva tal-Kunsill Lokali li propju f'dawn il-jiem organizza wkoll Jum Ghajnsielem bil-ġieħ dis-sena jingħata lil Joseph Ciantar, għalliem fis-Seminarju Minuri t'Ghawdex.

## Żewġ Kunċerti tal-Milied

F'dawn il-jiem sbieħ u għezieħ f'Ghawdex ma jonqsux il-Kunċerti tal-Milied. Sib t il-hin li nattendi għal tnejn minnhom; wiehed fil-Bażilika ta' San Gorg Victoria mill-Chorus Urbanus taħt id-direzzjoni ta' Dr Mro John Galea li matulu l-Kor kanta għadd sabiħ ta' għana tal-Milied f'diversi lingwi. Introduċa l-programm il-President tal-Kor il-Perit Edward Xerri waqt li l-preżentatriċi kienet il-brava Amanda Ciappara Mizzi. Fil-Bażilika Gorgjana kien hemm pjaċir u gost li jiġbu magħhom biss il-jiem ta' matul il-Milied. Il-Chorus Urbanus jinqeda b'dan il-Kunċert biex jgħin finanzjarment lil Community Chestfund u fil-fatt ingabret is-somma ta' '1 fuq minn eld ewro għal dan il-għan nobbli.

Ftit jiem wara kont mistieden biex nippreżenta l-hames edizzjoni tal-Christmas Concert mill-Kor numeruż Regina Angelorum – Nativitate Domino 2018 taħt id-direzzjoni ta' Mro Franco Cefai fil-Knisja Arċipretali taż-Żebbuġ li l-Arċipriet il-ġdid tal-parroċċa l-Kan Dun Gwamm Sultana ha' hsieb żejjen u dawwal b'mod tassew stupend. Ha' sehem ukoll it-trumbettista bravu Jason Camilleri li huwa wkoll is-Surmast Direttur tal-Banda Viżitazzjoni fl-Għarb. Indaqqu bosta kanzunetti tal-Milied fosthom ukoll uħud godda li nkitbu għall-Kor mill-Viċi Parroku tal-Parroċċa Fr Geoffrey G. Attard. Mro Franco Cefai li huwa wkoll l-Organista tal-Kor, aktar kmieni din is-sena kien mistieden jieħu sehem fil-hames edizzjoni tal-International Organ Festival fejn jieħdu sehem organisti mid-dinja kollha. Matul dis-serata flimkien ma' Jason Camilleri esegwew silta minn dak il-festival prestiġġjuż: 'I sing to the Almighty God' u 'Share my Yoke'. Lejn tmiem il-kunċert, il-Korista Alexia Vella nġhatat Premju mill-Arċipriet għas-sehem assidwu tagħha fil-Kor kif isir kull sena.

**Maltese e-Newsletter**



**FIND US ON FACEBOOK: frankscicluna.3**  
**Malta Migration Museum - Valletta, Site; ozmalta.com**  
**Maltese Canadian Archives - Toronto -**  
**Gozo National Library**

**OMM U T-TIFLA KELLHOM SUCCESS FL-EZAMI TAL-HSC (YEAR 12)**

Georgia Tabone u ommha, Penelope Tabone kellhom success fl-HSC ta' l-2018. Mhux haga tas-soltu li dan jigri. Imma id-determinazzjoni tal-familja Tabone li jzommu l-Malti bhala l-lingwa taghhom jiena nqisu att erojku li ghandu jaghti ezempju lill-Maltin mhux biss fl-Awstralja imma wkoll f'Malta.

Georgia kienet l-unika kandidata li ghamlet l-HSC din is-sena fi NSW. Li tghaddi hames snin taddendi l-lezzjonijiet fis-Saturday School of Community Languages f'Seven Hills NSW Australia mhux haga facli. Bil-appogg tal-familja taghha, Georgia irnexxiela tispicca l-kors kollu.

Penelope dahlet ghal dan il-vjagg b'etuzjazzmu kbir. Kienet tigi ghall-lezzjonijiet fi Blacktown Library kif ukoll fi Skola Maltija f'Ringrose. Mr Charles Galea mexxa lil din l-istudenta fuq il-programm ta' SSCL. Hija hadmet bla serhan biex fi zmien qasir tilhaq il-livell mehtieg. Penelope mara tad-dar riedet tlahhaq mal-htigijiet tal-familja, ix-xoghol volontarju kif ukoll l-istudju. Prosit tassew Penelope ghal dan is-success.

Kienet sena fejn ma rajna `l hadd jersaq u jiehu nteress fl-istudju tal-Malti bis-serjeta. Fis-snin li gejjin ma ghandna lil hadd li lest li jidhol ghal dan l-istudju ta' l-HSC. Jekk ahna ma jkollnix hmistax-il student mill-Awstralja kollha, hemm il-periklu li l-HSC tal-Malti jispicca u mieghu jispicca wkoll l-accreditation li ghandna ma' l-universetajiet.

Issa huwa iz-zmien li l-istudenti tal-Year 6 japplikaw biex jidhlu fis-SSCL u student maturi li jridu jaghmlu l-HSC din is-sena ghandhom sa Frar biex japplikaw bhala student adulti independanti. Irridu wkoll insahhu n-numru ta' studenti fl-iskola ta' Seven Hills. Biex klassi tigi approvata jrid ikollna ghaxar studenti. Kull ma hemm sa issa huma hames studenti biss.

Jiena nappella lill-familji Maltin biex jinkoraggixxu lit-tfal taghhom jiehd u l-opportunita unika f'hajjitahom biex jiehd u bis-serjeta l-istudju tal-Malta.

Ghal aktar taghrif morru fuq il-website tas-Saturday School of Community Languages fejn tistghu tapplikaw online jew titolbu applikazzjoni. Tistghu ukoll tikkuntatjaw lil Charles Galea fuq mob 0400485239.

### **Xaghra Association of NSW Inc.**

**INVITES YOU TO COME & CELEBRATE AUSTRALIA DAY, 2019**

**With a Dinner Dance Date: Saturday 19 January 2019**

**Time: Doors open 6:30 pm for 7:00pm start**

**Place: Mandavilla Function Centre 1788 The Horsley Drive, Horsley Park**

**Entertainer: Joe Apap**

**Dinner: 3 Course Meal, Beer, Wine, Soft Drinks, tea, coffee, pastizzi & fruit platters**

**Contact: Ray & Josephine Bigeni: 9627 4182, Mob: 0439 974 182**

**M'Anne Teuma: 9627 4641 Vicki Micallef: 0425 210 436**



## MALTESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO HONORS VIETNAM ERA VETERANS

Fred Aquilina



Photograph courtesy of Charles Vella, Phd

Pictured in the photo above are the attendees:

Front row, left to right: Pauline Henderson (accepting for her brother SP4 Tony Scerri, U.S. Army), E3 Vincent Attard, U.S. Navy, BT2 Charles Camilleri, U.S. Navy, SP4 Richard Cairns, U.S. Army, Mona Vella Nicholas (Maltese Historical Society President), Honorable Louis Vella (Honorary Consul General for Malta), Brian Ciappara (President of

the Maltese-American Social Club)

Second Row, left to right: SP4 George Borg, U.S. Army, 05 Cdr. Fred Aquilina, U.S. Navy, Ret., Ida Aquilina (accepting for her brother E3 Raymond Muscat, U.S. Army), SP4 Chris Borg, U.S. Army, SP4 Charles Abela, U.S. Army, SP4 Ron Borg, U.S. Army, E4 Peter Schembri, U.S. Army, SP5 George Spiteri, U.S. Army, E5 Lewis Vella, U.S. Air Force, E3 Pacik Agius, U.S. Navy, E3 Victor Debono U.S. Army.

Veterans not in photograph:

Michael Axiak, E5 Sal Deguara, U.S. Air Force, E3 Larry Grech, U.S. Air Force, E5 Benjamin Spiteri, U.S. Navy, E3 Charles Spiteri, U.S. Marines, E4 Roger Tonna, U.S. Air Force, BM3 Philp Vella, U.S. Navy.

### MALTESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO HONORS VIETNAM ERA VETERANS

As November 2018 was the 100th anniversary of the end of "the war to end all wars" (WW I), it is a time of remembrance and recognition as well as an opportunity to give gratitude to all the men and women who have sacrificed so much.

The Maltese community of the San Francisco Bay Area, through the initiative of the Maltese Historical Society (MHS), led by president Mona Vella Nicholas, and with the support and cooperation of the Honorary Consul General of Malta in San Francisco, Mr. Louis J. Vella, hosted an event on November 18 at the Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco to recognize and honor the Maltese-American servicemen who were deployed to Vietnam or served during the Vietnam era. Twenty two veterans and their families were able to attend the crowded function.

This is not the first time that the MHS has recognized Maltese-American veterans. Previously, the MHS has honored those Maltese-American veterans who were in the Armed Forces of the U.S. during the Korean Conflict; and on the 75th anniversary of the awarding of the George Cross to Malta in 1942, an event was held to remember those who served in Malta during WW II.

Following the introduction by the Maltese Club president, Brian Ciappara, and the playing of the national anthems of Malta and the United States of America, Mona Vella Nicholas related a brief history of the Vietnam era. This was followed by an address by the Honorary Consul General, Louis J. Vella, who not only acknowledged the planning, effort and dedicated work accomplished by the MHS to bring this event to fruition, but also connected the Vietnam conflict with the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM).

With the conclusion of the war in the early 70s, the people of the U.S. generously donated two Patrol Craft Fast (PCF, also known as Swift boats) to the people of Malta. The PCFs were used for 41 years by the AFM for interdiction of contraband, and for patrolling the waters around Malta. Tragically, on September 7, 1984 on one of those missions, one of the Swift boats was carrying a large load of illegal fireworks, seized by law enforcement. As the Swift boat was on its way to dispose of them off Gozo, the fireworks exploded, killing 5 of the 6 AFM personnel as well as two policemen. The heavily damaged PCF was repaired and returned in service until both PCFs were decommissioned in 2012. The one that had been involved in the accident is now on display at AFM Maritime Squadron's Haywharf base as a memorial to those 7 men who lost their lives. The other Swift boat was returned to the U.S. where it is now displayed and operated as a tour boat at the San Diego Maritime Museum. As it sails in San Diego Bay, it proudly flies the American and Maltese flags on its stern.

After the address, each of the Maltese-American veterans was introduced and given the opportunity to expound on their Vietnam/Vietnam era duties and experiences. Although each had his own story to tell, all expressed their gratitude for the recognition by the MHS, and indicated that this was the first time many of them had received accolades for their service during the Vietnam era.

Each veteran was then called on stage to receive a certificate of service and a "Vietnam Era Veteran" patch which was presented by Hon. Consul Vella and Mr. Mike Dimech, vice president of the MHS.

Following the presentations, the veterans, their families and members of the Maltese club were treated to refreshments that had been prepared by the MHS and volunteers from the Maltese Club.



## Former AFM patrol boat added to US National Register of Historic Places

<http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2018-09-22/local-news/former-afm-patrol-boat-added-to-us-national-reserve-of-historic-places-6736196684>

A Vietnam-era patrol boat that was used by the Armed Forces of Malta for decades before returning to the United States has been added to the National Register of Historic Places, the San Diego Union Tribune has reported.

The 51-foot long Swift boat joins three other museum ships on the register, which identifies buildings, sites and objects considered worthy of preservation because of their historic and cultural significance.

The vessel, named C24 and later P24 by the AFM, spent many years in Maltese service, and was eventually retired in 2012. It was handed over to the Maritime Museum of San Diego, where it was restored. Today it is used for 75-minute tours around San Diego bay, bringing back many memories for Vietnam war veterans.

The P24's sister vessel, the P23, is still displayed at the AFM Maritime Squadron's Haywharf base. That particular vessel had been at the centre of a horrible tragedy in 1984

at the centre of a horrible tragedy in 1984, when an explosion took place while illegal fireworks were being disposed of at sea. Five soldiers and two police officers were killed. Another soldier, the only survivor, was severely injured. The C23, as it was named then, was repaired and went back into service as the P23. It was decommissioned in 2010.

The P23 and P24 spent more than 40 years in AFM service.

They were donated to Malta by the US in 1971, after having been used to train military personnel for the Vietnam War.



"Swift boats, so-named because of their speed and agility, were adapted from Gulf of Mexico oil-rig vessels and used during the war to patrol the Vietnamese coastline, intercepting supplies headed to the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army," the San Diego Union Tribune said.

"They also went up and down the rivers and canals of the Mekong Delta for troop extractions and other special operations. About 3,600 men served on swift boats during the war, including John Kerry, the former senator and U.S. secretary of state, who received a Silver Star for his actions on board one in 1969."

The P24, now formally known as PCF 816 (patrol craft fast), never went to Vietnam, having been used in the States during the war before coming to Malta.

"PCF 816 is a tangible reminder of the service and dedication of so many swift boat sailors and allows visitors the opportunity to better understand what they sacrificed," said Kevin Sheehan, the museum's librarian and manager of collections. The other vessels on the National Register of Historic Places are the Star of India, launched in 1863 and now the world's oldest active sailing ship; the Berkeley, an 1898 steam ferry that spent 60 years operating in San Francisco Bay; and the Pilot, built in 1914 in San Diego and now the oldest active pilot boat in the country.

## Vittoria Muscat and Vincenzo BARTALO



My mother Vicky's mother, my Nunna, Fedela was the second daughter of Vincent Bartalo.

Vincenzo Bartalo Studio Photo

Vincent Bartalo married Vitttoria in ....? They came to Australia in 1925 and he returned to Malta alone in 1927. His four out of five daughters, Fedela, my Nuna, Dominica, Carmen and Jana and only son Jo - Guiseppe who travelled with him, stayed in Australia to, carve out interesting, productive and fulfilling lives.

Felela Sultana (nee Bartalo) at the Front Gate of 33 Targo Road, Pendle Hill. Four of Five Sisters Bartalo in The Bay of St Paul, MALTA before leaving for Australia Left-Right Carmen, Jana, Fedela and Dominica.

Eldest - Mary -Anne stayed in Malta.

Mary-Anne had five children. Her husband died. Lost 21 year old son in Malta due to a motor bike accident. She married again and bore 3-5 more children.



Fedela married Salvatore (Sam) Sultana. He arrived in Australia from Gozo in 1925. Fedela was an market gardener and cook. She retired when her sight became impaired. She was a prayerful woman who in her declining days would walk around Pendle Hill reciting the rosary with her beads in her pocket. She passed away on 14/12/71 and was interred at Pine Grove, Minchenbury on The Great Western Highway.

Dominica (Aunty Cascun) married Paul Cascun.

They built a large two storey orange brick house on The Great Western Highway at Pendle Hill. They had an amazing garden with any manner of



things growing.

Guiseppe CUZAP (Jo) married another Carmen in Malta. He used to attend weekly Saturday night Mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church at Wentworthville. He died of old age, maybe a heart issue at age 75.

Carmen (Aunty Portelli) married Anthony Portelli. They operated a general store next to Baiada Chickens on the Great Western Highway at Girraween. They and Baiada's bought 20 acres of land each. One all the way to Mandoon Road. They had a double wedding with Jana and Charlie Baiada. Vittoria passed away on 13 August 1945. The inscription on her headstone at North Rocks Cemetery, interestingly calls her Victoria Bartolo, not her given name of Vittoria or her married name of Bartalo.



## ABOUT CLIFFORD BORG

Clifford Borg is best known for his piano miniatures, which are recognisable by his traditional classical technique imbued with jazz/pop sensibilities. Clifford's music comprises "stimulating, delicate pieces that ooze sentiment and energy applied in varying juxtaposed measures," in Times of Malta music critic Michael Bugeja's words. Eric Montfort, also a music critic for the Times of Malta, stated, "What is striking about Borg is how he manages to roll so many influences and make them his own."

Born in Malta into a musical family on 11th May 1976, Clifford was exposed to several different kinds of music from a very young age. Clifford Borg has weld these experiences into a style which is varied in its points of reference, but which is at the same time melodic and minimalistic creating a very stringent musical dramaturgy. A comparison with any contemporary or classical piano artist or style does not really make sense in Borg's case. His piano style is unique- a kind of epic orchestral soundtrack played without an orchestra.

Clifford began playing the piano at the age of five. Six-year-old Cliff, with his two sisters, already played in his father's band, entertaining patrons at their family restaurant and later at hotels, clubs and even on national television as The Islanders. Clifford gave a live solo performance on Malta's national television station when he was ten years old, where he played Fur Elise, Moonlight Sonata and Ballad pour Adeline.

Clifford Borg's public performances have since gone far beyond the shores of his island home. He has performed in prestigious cities such as London, Dublin, Amsterdam, Brussels, Berlin and Paris, as well as in several other European cities and also in Egypt. Some of the most important performances in the international scene included a piano recital at the European Commission in Brussels and in Saint James Church in London. In Malta, some of the important recitals include two exclusive concerts that were held for the President of Malta, who were Dr Guido de Marco and Mr George Abela respectively and at Manoel Theatre for Teatru Unplugged in 2004.

De Marco had stated, "His music has certainly touched and left a sentimental feeling in our hearts." Indeed, Clifford's audiences are captivated by the medley of emotions that are evoked by his music. His performances well-received by audiences and critics alike, in 2000, Clifford released his debut album *Drifted*, followed by *Origin* in 2008, both of which are piano based albums. In 2014, he released *Cross Origin* which is a cross- over of different musical styles and was recorded in Germany, Belgium and in Malta. Music from Cross - Origin is being played on international radios such as Guido's Lounge and Sunset Emotions. Clifford was composing his own music as soon as he obtained a diploma in piano practical and theory (ALCM) at an early age. His first composition, "Longing Dawn," placed 7th in Malta's most prestigious song festival. "Hoping," from the album *Drifted*, was remixed as an ambient dance track and was the third most requested and played track by local artists on Capital Radio.

"Emergence," from the album *Origin*, won the Best Music and Digital Film Award at the Swan Lake Moving Image and Movie Awards (SL:MIMA), an international event recognising the art of creating stimulating visual imagery set to new age piano music. "Emergence" also won Best Video for Digital Film, which was

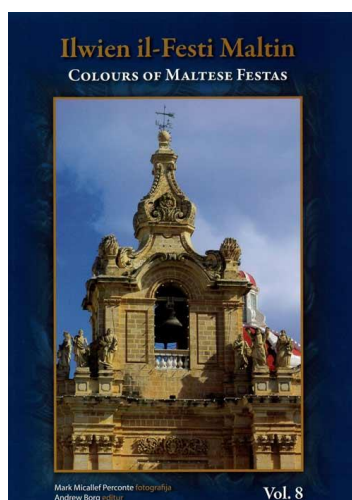


directed by Markus Mayr, and was also selected in a compilation called *Acoustic Visions*. *Origin* was released in Germany by Timezone Records.

Clifford's musical experience includes collaborations with local singer Chiara, other artists and international pianists. As part of the band Counting Clouds, his music features in three other albums: *Dream Sequence* and *Toka*, 2014, and *Breeze*, 2015. His music is played regularly on Enlightened Piano Radio and in May 2016, Clifford played with EPR pianists in Berlin and at Lago Maggiore (Italy).

In Clifford's opinion, one of his most important works is the piano-based chillout track "Eco Ballad" and "Simplicity in a kiss" with STJ, released by Davino Records, because the project promotes the preservation of the environment whilst promoting education to the audience to conserve our planet.

Clifford Borg continues to immerse himself in his music and musical compositions, performing recitals and concerts on a regular basis. In February 2018, Clifford has released a new album "Eco Harmony" which consists of unreleased tracks and collaborations and was nominated for the Enlightened Piano Radio and will perform at Berlin Philharmonic in October 2018. Clifford is available to perform at a variety of events, performances and piano recitals.



## ILWIEN IL-FESTI MALTIN - L-Ewwel Tmien Volumi

Gheżiež qarrejja,

Kif tafu t-tmien volum ta' ILWIEN IL-FESTI MALTIN jinsab għall-bejgħ. Qed nohorgu dan l-avviż għal dawk li għadhom ma akkwistawhx:

L-ewwelnett jinsab għall-bejgħ fil-ħwienet ewlenin ta' Malta u Għawdex (tkunu ta' għajnuna kbira għalina jekk tirrappurtaw lilna fejn dan il-ktieb ma ssibuhx għall-bejgħ);

B'mod speċjali għall-Beltin, din l-edizzjoni tinkludi l-festi ta' San Pawl u San Duminku kif ukoll hemm il-paviment il-ġdid tal-Bażilika tal-Karmnu u l-istatwa l-ġdida ta' Santu Wistin. Għaldaqstant ILWIEN IL-FESTI MALTIN qed jinbiegħ ukoll minn żewġ ħwienet importanti li hemm il-BELT VALLETTA, jiġifieri SAULUS li jinsab fi Triq San Pawl, qrib il-Knisja ta' San

Pawl u BETLEHEM li jinsab fi Triq Melita kantuniera ma' Triq Nofsinhar;

Barra minn hekk DEER PUBLICATIONS se jkollha stand fl-attività NATALIS NOTABILIS li se ssir fit-toroq l-antiki tar-Rabat (in-naħa tal-Knisja ta' Ġiezu) mnejn tkunu tistgħu takkwistaw kemm il-volumi minn 2 sa 8 ta' ILWIEN IL-FESTI MALTIN, kif ukoll xi kotba oħra li aħna nippubblikaw;

Nixtiequ navżaw ukoll li qed niġbru l-ismijiet ta' min hu interessat li jkollu l-ewwel volum, bil-ħsieb li jekk intellgħu ordni tajba, nerggħu nippubblikaw verżjoni limitata;

Aħna noffru servizz individwali wkoll f'każ li ma tistax tmur f'hanut jew fl-attività msemija: ikkuntattjana permezz ta' din l-email jew fuq facebook biex inkunu nistgħu jaqduk, kemm rigward VOLUM 8 kif ukoll għall-oħrajn minn nru 2 sa 7. Grazzi mill-qalb. Ma din l-email għandkom issibu l-posters bil-festi f'kull volum!

Andrew Borg u Mark Micallef Perconte

## Air Malta Flights To Mumbai, New York And Toronto



**Tourism Minister Konrad Mizzi is eyeing North America and Asia after Europe and the Middle East**

**Johnathan Cilia**

Malta's Tourism Minister has voiced his vision for Air Malta to being long-haul flights to faraway destinations like New York City, Toronto, and Mumbai in the coming years.

In an interview on TVM's Xtra, Konrad Mizzi said that he believed Malta could be flying to these international cities in three or four years time.

"If the country wants to increase its economic growth, we need better connectivity. We need to look forward and dream that, in to three to four years' time, why shouldn't we have flights to New York, Toronto, or Mumbai?" Mizzi asked.

A representative from the Malta Tourism Authority confirmed this long term plan, saying: "Konrad Mizzi's long term vision for Air Malta's network is to expand it to mid and long haul routes, and mentioned the possibilities of New York in the US and Mumbai in India."

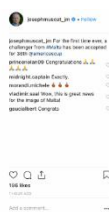
With 2018 being the first year that Air Malta made a slim profit, after years of losing money

The company is now focused on tightening up its business and expanding into new areas.

The airline is looking to expand its network for shorter haul routes, such as cities like Cairo, in order to expand further in the Mediterranean. Indeed, the airline is hoping to establish itself as the "airline of the Mediterranean", with the possibility of hubbing in different islands situated in the Mediterranean such as Sicily. Following a delegation in Toulouse attended by the Tourism Minister, potential plans for collaboration on a flight Academy with Airbus, and the possibility of cost-effective measures such as getting an A321 XLR for Air Malta's fleet, were also discussed

The A321XLR is one of the latest aircraft by Airbus and would carry extra fuel and expand the range of the A321LR aircraft, which recently claimed a long-distance record for single-aisle jets.

## First Ever Maltese Sailing Team to Compete in America's Cup



Malta is now officially the smallest country to ever mount a challenge for the sailing competition **David Grech Urpani**

For the first time in history, a Maltese yacht will be participating in the America's Cup, the oldest international sporting trophy.

Malta's Altus Challenge has officially been confirmed as the fourth challenger to be accepted for the prestigious race's 36th edition in early 2021, alongside

challenger of record Luna Rossa (Circolo della Vela Sicilia), American Magic (New York Yacht Club) and INEOS Team UK (Royal Yacht Squadron).

As expected, this news also means that Malta is now the smallest country to ever mount a challenge in the archaic cup's history... which spans an impressive 167 years.

Prime Minister Joseph Muscat took to Instagram to celebrate this historic moment in Maltese sporting history, as many more celebrated the Royal Malta Yacht Club's achievement.

The Malta Altus Challenge will present its full team (including both Maltese and international sailors) in the first quarter of 2019.

"This is a massive opportunity for our club to promote Malta and the skills that exist in the marine industry on a global stage," Commodore Godwin Zammit said.

The entire premise of the America's Cup revolves around the reigning champion (known as the defender) battling it out against the challenger. The timing of each match is determined by an agreement between the defender and the challenger, a tradition that goes all the way back to 1851, when the titular schooner *America* had won the trophy which was donated to the New York Yacht Club after a race around the Isle of Wight in the United Kingdom.



The most recent champion of the America's Cup (affectionately known as the Auld Mug) is the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, who have already won the trophy three times (they first won it back in 1995).

For the third time in the cup's history, the royal new zealand yacht squadron is the team to beat. Malta Altus Challenge might be facing a relatively restricted budget - especially when teams like Oracle are rumoured to

have spent some \$300 million dollars to defend their stewardship of the trophy just five years ago - but the team is planning a one-boat campaign and said they "don't need the biggest team", quoting New Zealand's own relatively small size and great success in previous editions



**EPIPHANY CONCERT**  
featuring  
**MIRIAM CHRISTINE & VICTORIO GAUCI**  
Friday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019  
St Anthony of Padua Church Ghajnsielem  
8:00pm

## EPIPHANY CONCERT 2019

### Press Release

The Franciscan Friars together with the JP2 Foundation are holding the Second Edition of the End of Season Epiphany Concert on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at St Anthony of Padua Church Ghajnsielem run by the Franciscan Fathers which is found on the way to Qala from Mgarr. The event is being sponsored by the Ministry for Gozo, Visit Gozo, the Ghajnsielem Local Council, the Grand Hotel and Ferdie's Restaurant.

As last year the concert will host a different repertoire from that presented during this season. The songs are interpreted by Pop Singers Miriam Christin and Victorio Gauci. The event

will start at 8.00pm and entrance to the concert is free but a donation will be appreciated.

The Grand Hotel which is few meters down the road from the concert venue will be serving a buffet after the concert. Booking is recommended by calling 2216 1000.

### Stqarrija għal l-istampa

Il-Patrijiet Frangiskani flimkien mal-Fondazzjoni "JP2" qed jorganizzaw it-Tieni Edizzjoni tal-Kunċert fi tmiem ta' l-istaġun nhar il-Ġimgħa 4 ta' Jannar 2019 fil-Knisja ta' Sant Antnin ta Padova f'Għajnsielem li tinsab fit-triq lejn Qala mill-Imgarr. L-avveniment huwa sponsorjat mill-Ministeru għal Ghawdex, "Visite Gozo", il-Kunsill Lokali ta' Ghajnsielem, il-Grand Hotel u r-Ristorant ta' Ferdie.

Bhas-sena l-oħra, il-kunċert se jospita repertorju differenti minn dak ipprezentat f'dan l-istaġun. Il-kanzunetti huma interpretati minn "Pop Singers" Miriam Christin u Victorio Gauci. L-avveniment se jibda fit-8.00pm u d-dhul għall-kunċert huwa b'xejn iżda donazzjoni se tkun apprezzata.

Il-Grand Hotel li huwa ftit metri 'l isfel fit-triq mill-post tal-kunċert se jservi "buffet" wara l-kunċert. Il-prenotazzjoni hija rrakkomandata billi ċċempel 2216 1000

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The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

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**The island of the  
Knights of Malta**



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## Film Review | Bahar Zmien (Of Time and the Sea)



Maltese-Australian filmmaker Peter Sant presents a beautifully shot and occasionally inspired experimental feature **Baħar Żmien (Of Time and the Sea)**

by Teodor Reljic

Another brick in the wall: Ruth Borg (left) in Peter Sant's baffling allegory Bahar Zmien, and Narcy Calamatta. Photo: Michael Galea

Maltese-Australian filmmaker Peter Sant returns to the native isle to present a beautifully shot and occasionally inspired experimental feature **Baħar Żmien (Of Time and the Sea)**, which had a private screening earlier this week in anticipation of its short debut run at Spazju Kreattiv at St James Cavalier later this month.

Co-written with novelist Alex Vella Gera, the film is unapologetically devoid of a conventional plot and boasts some high game performances from both veteran and fresh local acting talent.

It is set in an entirely archetypal space, with its characters rooted in an atemporal version of Malta in which microwave dinners co-exist with Quixotic knights in uselessly shining armour, and where the 'King' (Narcy Calamatta thrilling to a crusty ogre role with gusto) is fading away.

It is a slow-moving experience running entirely on symbols, as delivered through the familiar rocky, garigue-eaten seaside landscape and stilted dialogue that – let's face it – makes the best of some bad habits Maltese actors can't seem to shake off.

But while it's tempting to say that cinematographer Martin Testar should take the bulk of the credit here – the setting really is a character – it is in fact Ruth Borg who is to be commended for providing this experiment in abstraction with a real emotional centre. Her prowess as a physical performer shines through in every scene, especially the non-verbal ones, where her intuitive way with facial expression sucks us into her plight... even if we're puzzled as to where all of this is going.

In less adventurous hands, this could have been a roll-call of cliches; luckily, Sant allows his Imp of the Perverse to freshen up our idea of what Maltese iconography can look like on screen.

Dear Frank

**Congratulations** on being awarded MQR earlier on this month, a well deserved one. I am not sure if the e-newsletter, 'The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora' is having a break for Christmas. Is it possible to have the attached flyer in it & if space permits.

Thanking you for all the hard work you put into producing such a newsletter. I print it out for the Maltese groups I work with & have it available for them, whoever wants to have a read of it. I take this opportunity to wish you & your family a Blessed Christmas & a Prosperous New Year.

Regards Josephine Bigeni

## Over €7 million raised, setting new L-Istrina record

President anticipated the 'generosity' that would prevail

Jubilation as new record set. Photo: Via Facebook



### Updated at 6.20am

Locals dug deep into their pockets to donate just over €7 million to the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation on Boxing Day, in a record-breaking edition of L-Istrina.

The annual charity telethon beat last year's [€6.04 million total - itself a record](#) - shortly after 11pm, and the donation counter continued to tick over as the clock neared midnight when the show ended.

President Marie Louise Coleiro Preca said she was convinced people would be

celebrating the generosity and solidarity of the Maltese at the end of 12-hour charity telethon L-Istrina, which kicked off at noon on Wednesday.

In her final appeal as president, Ms Coleiro Preca said there was not one activity she attended where people did not express their gratitude for the help received.



Photo: Mark Zammit Cordina

Authorities and Maltese personalities gathered on Wednesday to encourage people to donate to annual telethon L-Istrina, which raises money for the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation.

Ms Coleiro Preca said Malta was renowned for its generosity, with hospital managements from other countries telling her they had been amazed at how the Maltese always helped each other out.

Speaking before the President, Deputy Prime Minister Chris Fearne said he had worked with children and

families who needed operations.

"I know how it can be a trauma for their families," he said.

"Funds are important, but it's not just about finances. The fact there are thousands who feel moved enough to donate fills people with courage."

In a televised video message, Prime Minister Joseph Muscat encouraged people to donate, saying sometimes those who donate eventually end up in need themselves.

It would be the first L-Istrina he would miss, he said, adding that he and his family were there in spirit.

Opposition leader Adrian Delia encourage people to open their eyes and ears to what was going on around them: "We cannot donate just to give, but we must give everything we've got, Dr Delia said.

From his end, Archbishop Charles Scicluna stressed the importance of people's contributions, saying Christmastime should be a concrete sign of hope and love.



## Healthcare in Malta

The Sacra Infermeria was used as a hospital from the 16th to 20th centuries. It is now the Mediterranean Conference Centre.



Malta has a long history of providing publicly funded health care. The first hospital recorded in the country was already functioning by 1372.[1] Today, Malta has both a public healthcare system, known as the government healthcare service, where healthcare is free at the point of delivery, and a private healthcare system.[2][3] Malta has a strong general practitioner-delivered primary care base and the public hospitals provide secondary and tertiary care. The Maltese Ministry of Health advises foreign residents to take out private medical insurance.[4]

**Comparisons** - In 2000, Malta was ranked number five in the World Health Organization's ranking of the world's health systems,[5] compared to the United States (at 37), Australia (at 32), United Kingdom (at 18) and Canada (at 30). The healthcare system in Malta closely resembles the British system,[6] as healthcare is free at the point of delivery.

It moved up four places in the Euro health consumer index from position 27 in 2014 to 23 in 2015. It was said to have decent accessibility to healthcare, but indifferent treatment results.[7]

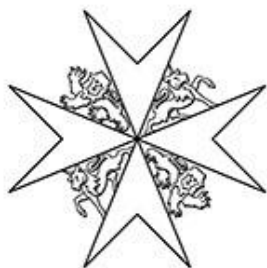
**Facilities** - The Mater Dei Hospital, Malta's primary hospital, opened in 2007. It has one of the largest medical buildings in Europe.

The University of Malta has a medical school and a Faculty of Health Sciences, the latter offering diploma, degree (BSc) and postgraduate degree courses in a number of health care disciplines.

Malta also has voluntary organisations such as Alpha Medical (Advanced Care), the Emergency Fire & Rescue Unit (E.F.R.U.), St John Ambulance and Red Cross Malta who provide first aid/nursing services during events involving crowds.

The Medical Association of Malta represents practitioners of the medical profession. The Malta Medical Students' Association (MMSA) is a separate body representing Maltese medical students, and is a member of EMSA and IFMSA. MIME, the Maltese Institute for Medical Education, is an institute set up recently to provide CME to physicians in Malta as well as medical students. The Foundation Program followed in the UK has been introduced in Malta to stem the 'brain drain' of newly graduated physicians to the British Isles. The Malta Association of Dental Students (MADS) is a student association set up to promote the rights of Dental Surgery Students studying within the faculty of Dental Surgery of the University of Malta. It is affiliated with IADS, the International Association of Dental Students.

A 30-year concession on healthcare services in the Gozo, Karin Grech and St Lukes hospitals was granted to Vitals Global Healthcare in 2015. The Medical Association of Malta objected because of "the complete lack of experience of the operator, and the dangers of government relinquishing its control of management and the resulting profit motive." [8] In 2018 it was transferred to Steward Global Healthcare in January 2018 and precipitated a doctors' strike.[9]



## Museum of THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

### Clerkenwell, London

The **Museum of the Order of St John** in Clerkenwell, London, tells the story of the Venerable Order of Saint John from its roots as a pan-European Order of Hospitaller Knights founded in Jerusalem during the Crusades, to its present commitment to providing first aid and care

in the community through the St John Ambulance Brigade and running an Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem. The museum is a member of the London Museums of Health & Medicine.[1]

**Building** - The Museum is based in St John's Gate, Clerkenwell, a 16th-century gatehouse in London, England that once formed the entrance to the Priory of Clerkenwell. This dates back to the 11th century and was once the English headquarters of the Order of St John. From here Hospitaller Knights went out to the Holy Land and later to Cyprus, Rhodes and Malta. They served in hospitals treating pilgrims, and fought to defend Christian interests in the Holy Land and the Mediterranean. Tours take visitors to the



oldest surviving part of the medieval Priory, the Norman crypt, as well as the 16th century church above.

They then return to the Gate House, which after the Dissolution of the monasteries was put to many uses, with Shakespeare, Dr Johnson, Hogarth and Dickens all taking part in its story. The Gate was eventually bought back by the Order in the late nineteenth century, and is now beautifully decorated with heraldry, stained glass, gilding and carving to create glowing interiors, designed by John Oldrid Scott. Here visitors can see the fine furniture and painting collections.

The Museum in the Gate House tells the story of the history of the Order of St John and St John Ambulance. The Museum completed a spectacular renovation in November 2010. It was supported by funders such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and was designed by leading architects Donald Insall Associates, who had previously written the building's Conservation Plan. Exhibition design company Metaphor undertook the internal exhibit design. This

redevelopment has given the Order's remarkable and internationally significant collection the context it deserves, including updating interpretative techniques, bringing more of the collections out of storage, and improving conservation conditions.

**Order of St John collections** - The collections of artefacts from the history of the Order of St John are extremely varied, covering all aspects of the history of an Order founded in the eleventh century and operating in most European countries.

There are archaeological finds, architectural fragments and social history material relating to the Priory site; seals and numismatics, including an important collection of Crusader coins; arms and armour, mainly European plate armour but also an example of Turkish Ottoman mail; drug jars, mortars and weights from the Hospitallers' pharmacy in Malta; decorative arts (portrait medals, ceramics, glass, silver, furniture, jewellery, insignia, textiles, ecclesiastical vestments) reflecting the tastes of the European aristocrats who joined the Order and became significant patrons of the arts.

The painting collection includes religious art, particularly images of patron saint of the Order, St John the Baptist, portraits of Grand Masters, Knights and clergy, sea and landscapes, depicting naval battles and views of Malta; prints and drawings include portraits of the Knights, topographical views and maps showing the famous fortifications on their island homes, as well as prints of the English Priory and the surrounding area of Clerkenwell.



## Swedish-Maltese Family Is Changing Malta For The Better And

their example is inspiring others



### David Grech Urpani

Since 1999, Camilla Appelgren has spent every summer here in Malta. As of five years ago she's a permanent resident. In that time she's organized about 30 clean-ups all over the island. Along with her two children, her Maltese boyfriend and his own two children, Camilla hopes to inspire and educate others... and things are finally kicking off big time.

"I came here 18 years ago as a language student living with a Maltese family in Bugibba," Camilla remembers. "I was only 14 years old, and I fell head over heels in love with this island. When my kids were going to start school, I moved here permanently and started working as a diving instructor."

Camilla admits that being from Sweden definitely helped her bring to Malta a certain heightened awareness and respect for nature, but the island's local councils were surprisingly helpful. "The councils are of course happy that I do this for free, but they also use it to show citizens that we all have a responsibility to keep our towns clean. They sponsor me with skips, bags, gloves and sometimes

even water and fruit for the volunteers. Besides, the closeness to the people is so awesome - I haven't lived in any other country where I had mayors' numbers saved on my phone!"

### **"I haven't lived in any other country where I had mayors' numbers saved on my phone!"**

One of the most important things for Camilla is the need for everyone to pull their own weight. "There is no easy solution for it. We as citizens need to make the world sustainable, not push it for just the government to solve. When I started there were plenty of times it was only me and my children showing up... it was sad, but we did what we went for and still felt motivated."

Trying to organize at least one clean up per month in different areas around Malta, Camilla also tries to raise awareness of a zero waste lifestyle. "We all bring reusable bottles with water and use reusable gloves. Plastic is never used. I also highly encourage people to bring their children, because they are the future. By kids seeing us doing this, they will for sure think twice before littering."

### **"I also highly encourage people to bring their children, because they are the future."**

Over the years, Camilla's clean ups have received very different reactions. "The feedback is a complicated story, and as foreigner, I'm sometimes taken as doing something I shouldn't be doing. I've been told to go back to my country a couple of times whenever I try to give feedback and opinions on online forums, but I've also heard very good stuff."

She recounts how she's experienced Maltese people who seem ashamed that a foreigner has to be the person to try and inspire a change like this. "More and more Maltese join in on my clean ups. And I'm glad it's finally happening, because Malta is my home now. Sweden is going abroad. That is how strong I feel about this island. All my memories from my teenage years are here, and I want to make sure my children have ones that are just as beautiful."

### **"Malta is my home now. Sweden is going abroad. That is how strong I feel about this island."**

In fact, Camilla's children are a very big part of this whole initiative. "They're actually the reason I do this. My son wants to become an animal rescuer and every summer he spends hours snorkeling and brings back plastic from the sea so the turtles won't eat it. They are my heroes... it's that simple."



## Ghonnella: Malta's Traditional Headdress

Nicola Collins

Sometimes referred to as Faldetta, Ghonnella, a traditional Maltese headdress, is becoming something of a rarity to spot across the island. Here's a closer look at the ghonnella and its history up to the present day.

Dating back to the 16th century, during the time of the knights, women from the more well-to-do families adorned ghonnielen (pl.) in both white and bright colours. As a symbol of their wealth, the ghonnella was seen as appropriate dress as it covered the majority of the body. At a time when only the face of a lady should be seen, it was also often accompanied by a huge fan. Bearing a slight resemblance to the Turkish *charshaf*, the ghonnella is unique to both Malta and sister island of Gozo. In addition to covering the body, another main purpose was to provide shelter from the intense Maltese sun, while capturing cool breezes and protection from rain and winds.

Made of predominantly black rich silk or cotton, the headwear features an arch shape framing the top of the head, with loose material draped either side, falling to mid-calf length, to be clasped in the hand. The arch is formed by having cardboard, cane or even whalebone stitched inside. From its introduction until the mid-20th century this was common wear among elderly spinsters and members of the religious Christian sect 'Il-Muzew' as formal Sunday wear for female churchgoers. Despite its former popularity, the headwear also had its disadvantages. Women wearing ghonnella had their sight restricted and during high winds they were particularly difficult to wear as the arch caught the wind and the loose sides had to be held tightly with both hands to keep them in place. Following its demise during World War II, today it is very rare to see ladies wearing this headdress but is still considered part of the island's traditional costumes.

During later years, remaining in dark colours, the headdress became more common, with women taking to wearing these during everyday duties. Brides took to wearing white ghonnella, while it is alleged that peasants were sometimes seen wearing green. There are many theories behind the origin of this garment and today the truth remains unclear. Stories include that it originated from a long skirt that was often thrown above the head to help provide shade, while some historians believe it was influenced by both Italian and Sicilian mourning rituals of the time and introduced to the island of Malta during the reign of the Knights of St John. There is also the belief that it could possibly be an adapted version of the Spanish *mantilla*.

Although no longer spotted on the streets of Malta as daily wear, the ghonnella still lives on in Malta and Gozo. Souvenir shops boast dolls dressed in the traditional wear, galleries hold Maltese paintings of street scenes depicting the headdress in everyday life and decorative ghonnella often comes to life as part of the wonderful costumes during feasts, re-enactments and carnivals taking place in village to village across Malta and Gozo all year long.

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## MALTA AND GOZO: WHAT IS THE FREE CHILDCARE SCHEME?

The Free Childcare Scheme is an initiative which was promised in the Government's Electoral Manifesto in 2013, whereby Government provides free childcare services to parents/guardians who are in employment or are pursuing their education, with the aim

to help families achieve a work/life balance.

The childcare service is either provided directly through government services or alternatively through Registered Childcare Centres.

If you are interested in getting to know more about how this scheme works visit the website

<https://freechildcare.gov.mt> for more information.

If you are already benefitting from the Free Childcare Scheme, you may keep track of your child's/children's profile/s by clicking here and logging in using your eID credentials (username = your ID card number, password = your eID password and click on "Logon using e-ID").

Who is eligible for the Free Childcare Scheme?

**Where are the childcare centres eligible for the scheme located?** An updated list of eligible childcare centres can be found on the Free Childcare Scheme website: <https://freechildcare.gov.mt> For further information, please call 25982222 or email us on [freechildcare@gov.mt](mailto:freechildcare@gov.mt)

**Are these Childcare Centres licensed?** Yes, all the Centres listed online are licensed and monitored by the Department for Quality Services in Education (DQSE) within the Ministry for Education and Employment.

**How should I decide which Centre to apply to?** Selecting your preferred Childcare Centre is a matter of personal choice. Once you select your centre, you should contact them directly in order to initiate the application process.

### A GUIDE TO THE FREE CHILDCARE SCHEME

The free childcare scheme is an initiative which was launched in april 2014, whereby government provides free childcare services to parents/guardians who work or who are pursuing their education. The childcare service is offered through the registered childcare centres listed here: <https://freechildcare.gov.mt>

Children whose parents are either both employed or in education can benefit from the free childcare scheme.

'Parents in work' refers to both parents/guardians who are employed, or a single mother/father/ guardian who is employed and paying social security contributions.

'Parents in education' refers to parents/guardians who are pursuing their education, leading to a recognised qualification. In this case, applicants have to provide a statement of course attendance from the respective educational institution. In addition to the application, applicants not following a course at the University of Malta, MCAST or ITS are to provide a statement of course recognition from the NCFHE (National Commission for Higher Education).

In the case of single parents, applicants should provide evidence of their current status. Documentation submitted should be: either the child's birth certificate or a legal document, such as a Decree from the Maltese Courts, indicating that the single parent has full care and custody of the child.

The scheme may also be extended to parents who are not in employment due to terminal illnesses. In such cases, parents are advised to contact us on 25982222 or [freechildcare@gov.mt](mailto:freechildcare@gov.mt)

The age group for this scheme is for children from three months up to three years of age. Free Childcare is terminated once the child is eligible to enrol into Kindergarten 1 provided by the state.

State kindergarten has two intakes during each scholastic year: 1st October and 1st February. Children will be admitted to Kindergarten 1 on the 1st October provided that the child would have attained three years of age by the end of December. Children will be admitted to Kindergarten 1 on the 1st February provided that the child would have attained three years of age by the end of April.

Using Scholastic year 2018 / 2019 as an example, a child is eligible for Kindergarten 1 on the 1st of October 2018 once he/she would have attained three (3) years of age by the end of December 2018. A child is eligible for Kindergarten 1 on the 1st of February 2019 once he/she would have attained three years of age by the end of April 2019. Therefore, all children who will be three years of age by the 31 December 2018 will no longer be eligible for free childcare with effect from the 1st of October 2018. After this, all children who will be 3 years of age by the 30th of April 2019 will no longer be eligible for free childcare with effect from the 1st of February 2019.

It is important to note that this applies to all children, even those whose parents/guardians intend on sending their children to a Church or Independent kindergarten. Once a child becomes eligible for kindergarten as indicated above, the Free Childcare