

# Maltese e-Newsletter



The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

Editor: Frank L Scicluna OAM

Contact: [maltesejournal@gmail.com](mailto:maltesejournal@gmail.com)



**ALL  
YOU  
NEED  
TO KNOW  
ABOUT  
PASTIZZI**



**Pope Francis shows off ball spinning skills  
alongside circus performers**



**TIFTAKAR  
IL-MADUM  
TA' MALTA?**

**REMEMBER  
THE MALTA TILES?**



## All you Need to Know about Maltese Pastizzi



It might seem like an odd thing to say, but pastizzi are one of the cornerstones of Maltese culture. Their aroma scents every other street due to the abundance of pastizzeriji in Malta; they're eaten at literally every single time of day, from breakfast to dinner to 5 a.m. after wild nights out; and they're one of the first things that any newcomer to Malta will inevitably hear about. So sampling a pastizz (or two, or three) is a must when in Malta, and that's non-negotiable. Sure, these inexpensive, flaky pastries are far from being the healthiest thing around, but that's why you'll have to simply

consider them as sinful treats and show some self-restraint with them!

Don't bite blindly into your first pastizz, though! This article will tell you everything you need to know about this local scrumptious snack.

**How were *pastizzi* invented?** - Little is known about when and how pastizzi were invented. It is known that even before 1200BC, much of the local diet consisted of bread, mainly eaten with vegetables and animal products such as cheese. Historians claim that the *torta* (pie) and the *timpiana* (pasta bake wrapped in pastry) emerged in Maltese cuisine as the people began preparing diverse dishes yet needed additional pastry as a belly-filler when there was not enough to go around. It is quite likely that these little pastry wraps emerged from this habit, making them a handy bite-size for easy takeaway.

**There are more flavours now than tradition suggests** - Pastizzi are traditionally known for coming in one of two main fillings: pea (pastizzi tal-pizelli) and ricotta cheese (pastizzi tar-rikotta). These have been the two staple pastizzi flavours for years and years, and even now they're easily the most popular and common variations around. However, if you're looking for more adventurous pastizzi, you're in luck, as quite a few pastizzeriji have decided to introduce some newer variations. Chicken pastizzi are growing in popularity, and if you look hard enough you'll even find rabbit and peppered steak pastizzi! The steady rise of Nutella pastizzi has furthermore challenged the idea that pastizzi have to be a savoury treat!

**Pastizzi come in different types** - Pastizzi are most commonly made with philo-pastry, resulting in its iconic flaky texture. If you prefer something a bit less messy, though, you can also find pastizzi made with puff pastry. These are known as pastizzi tax-xema, and are no less delicious!

If you're looking for something somewhat more substantial when you have a pastizzi craving, you could also opt for an qassata, which is a kind of larger, rounder pastry (a bit like a small pie) that is made of puff pastry and contains the same fillings you'll get with regular pastizzi. Qassatat are also commonly filled with spinach (and sometimes anchovies).

**You can get them at all kinds of vendors** Sure, pastizzi might be most commonly associated with street pastizzeriji like Maxims, Champs, Sphinx, and so on (we can't mention every single known pastizzerija – it's impossible). While it's very possible to get your pastizzi-fix on the go thanks to these places, there are other options you can check out.. Pastizzi are also commonly served at cafés, restaurants, and similar venues. In fact, perhaps the most famous place in Malta to get pastizzi from is the Crystal Palace in Rabat (known as is-Serkin), and that's actually a bar you can sit at.

Eating at such places could be your preferred option as you can sit comfortably while indulging. It's also likely that (depending on where you eat at) the pastizzi from restaurants will be a little healthier than the ones you'd get at street vendors. Just a few sit-down places to get pastizzi from are Café Jubilee, Il-Kikkra Café, Mr Maxims Jr Café, and Peristyle.

**What do you mean pastizzi can be gourmet?** - Eating pastizzi at a restaurant is one thing. Eating pastizzi that the Queen of England could enjoy is another. Pastizzi Gourmet is the brainchild of Marilu Vella, who has made ingenious steps with the idea that pastizzi can come in an assortment of flavours while still being guilt-free. The pastries you'd get at Pastizzi Gourmet are low-fat and home-made. In fact, you need to contact Marilu in advance (or go to Flora's café in Naxxar), pick up your preferred batch, and cook them yourself. It's completely worth it.

You don't really go to Pastizzi Gourmet for the standard flavours. In fact, even the classics have been updated here (with variations like 'pea and mint'). The focus here is on more unique takes on the pastizzi. The menu does change every now and then, but just to get an idea, Pastizzi Gourmet offer (or have offered in the past) gozo cheeselet, peppered pumpkin, snail, and tortilla de patatas & chorizo pastizzi – just to name a few!

You can even get dessert pastizzi, and the flavours here too are changed up often. Strawberry & chocolate were once made for Valentine's, apple & Cinnamon for Lent, and blueberry & strawberry for election season!

**You don't just need to be in Malta to have them** - Here's the really good news – though Pastizzi are definitely a Maltese phenomenon, you can find pastizzeriji all over the world! This is due to Maltese emigration, so pastizzi are most common in areas like Canada, Australia, and the UK.

**Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca** *President*

"I look forward to seeing the people of Malta and Gozo more united. We can disagree with each other, discuss our diverse opinions, without the need for hatred or personal insults. Moreover, each and every one of us, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, have the right to a 'private and family life'.

"I would like us all to respect this right, even when using social media.

"I would also like to see more child participation in our democratic processes to ensure that their aspirations are listened to and acted upon.

"This is after all their right, which is enshrined in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, of which we will commemorate the 30th anniversary this year."



## PERSONALITIES – ASPIRATIONS FOR 2019

**Joseph Muscat** *Prime Minister*

"During 2018, Malta has already achieved strong economic growth and unprecedented job creation. Yet, I firmly believe 2019 will be even better for the country. Our optimism is a result of the efforts of all families and businesses who work hard to register the positive results which are making Malta the best in the European Union with the ambition of becoming the envy of the world.

"In the New Year, the government will continue preparing Malta for the future. We will focus more on new technologies like blockchain and AI to ensure careers for students who today are in secondary school.

"We will continue to invest in infrastructure, from new roads to better connectivity between Malta and Gozo, and from new waste separation and recycling systems to innovative bottle refund programmes. We look forward to strengthening the education, health and culture infrastructure too.

"2019 will be a year of hard work on further reforms. We will commence widespread consultation for increased female representation in Parliament and for the constitutional reform. In the New Year, Malta will also become one of the few countries in which 16-year-olds can vote in national elections.

"While further reducing poverty and tackling challenges of families in need, Malta will keep promoting change as an integral part of its strategy for the future based on a resolve to continue being a living success."

**Adrian Delia** *Opposition leader*

"On a personal level, I aim to work harder on listening more carefully rather than simply hearing people. "On a political level, I believe there should be more respect, and therefore will persevere in my fight against hatred in politics.

"Whereas towards the country, I will continue to work in order to achieve a greater environmental conscience to bequeath a cleaner and greener Malta for us and our

children."

**Jo Caruana** - *Actress, writer and businesswoman*

"I hope 2019 will be the year that the environment and our heritage genuinely makes it onto the agenda in an effort to rectify some of the blatant damage that has been done in the past.

"From education to enforcement we need a solid plan to reduce our waste, protect the trees we have and plant thousands of new ones. Air quality is becoming a real worry and this needs to be tackled.

"In the business front, I hope more and more companies will look into how they cannot only reduce their negative environmental impact but also positively contribute to our community and the future of society. "We cannot make excuses anymore or hope someone else is going to come up with a solution for the problems facing us.

**Ira Losco** - *Singer*

"I believe in living every year with new challenges you set yourself, a few goals and peace of mind. The latter is always so difficult for me to achieve but I can really do my best to do so. Music is always at the centre of my professional life, while family has taken the centre stage in my personal life.

"I do hope to have more great times at both ends of the spectrum as I did in 2018.

"As a general thought I sincerely hope that people are more empathic and more considerate to each other, especially on social media which unfortunately has become a vehicle for hate in all generations."

"In 2019 we should foster mutual respect despite our differences and work with good sense, to direct economic progress in a sustainable manner so that prosperity is guaranteed.

"I am a proud European Maltese. As a citizen, family member and a doctor I will continue to cherish the wellbeing of society and the principles that uphold every person's dignity."

**George Vital Zammit** - *Public policy lecturer at the University of Malta*

"May 2019 remain a prosperous one for Malta with political leaders giving a good example and seeking sustainable endeavours.

"The environment and air quality cannot remain elusive goals this year.

"At a European level, I hope 2019 will be a year of hope and renewal. It is paramount that a clearly spelled out vision for Europe paves the way for nation states to remain key actors in promoting peace and stability. "Dissent should be embraced and understood, not crushed and ignored."

**Andre Schembri** - *Footballer*

"On a personal level I would like to be more proactive, stop overthinking and be more patient. I would also like to see my country to change from a money centric society to a more principled-centred society."



## ID-DAR TAL-PROVIDENZA – A HOME FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

### Who we are



Id-Dar tal-Providenza was founded by Mgr. Michael Azzopardi in 1965 with the aim of offering individualised residential services to Persons with Disabilities in a family-like environment which enhances and maximises their abilities with a view to ensuring their full participation in society. Today Id-Dar tal-Providenza is made up of three residences: Villa Monsinjur Gonzi, Villa Papa Giovanni and Villa Papa Luciani. It

also includes four community homes, called Żerniq in Siggiewi, Akkwarell in Qawra, Dar Pirota in Birkirkara and Shalom in Zurrieq.

At the moment, Id-Dar hosts approximately hundred and fifteen persons between the ages of fourteen and over eighty years. It also offers respite services on a regular basis to families of persons with disabilities, thus offering them support to enable the disabled family member to continue to live within their family.

A small community of Sisters of St Joan Antide Thouret popularly known as Sisters of Charity have been living and giving their service to the Home since 1968 when the Home hosted the first residents.



Id-Dar tal-Providenza  
Djar tal-Persuni b'Dizabilità

These last few years id-Dar tal-Providenza has been affiliated with a foreign agency from Glasgow (Scotland) called SPRED Special Religious Development which offers a network of services designed to assist persons with intellectual disabilities to become integrated into parish assemblies of worship through the process of education in faith.

Id-Dar tal-Providenza is also affiliated with European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities which represents over 15,000 support services for Persons with Disabilities across Europe. Four and a half million euro per year are required for the running of the Homes.

### Application for Residence

We believe that the place of persons with disability is within the family, if it is their wish. Most disabled people find that their home, surrounded by loved ones, is the most natural and conducive to his or her development. But sometimes particular circumstances in the life of a person with disability may necessitate a permanent residence in a home.

For this reason Id-Dar tal-Providenza offers residence to persons with disabilities (mostly persons with intellectual disabilities and other disabilities who find themselves in such situations. For more information kindly contact us on: [info@dartalprovidenza.org](mailto:info@dartalprovidenza.org) or telephone: (00356) 21 464 915.

### VISION

Id-Dar tal-Providenza which takes its name and charism from the Gospel is primarily a residential organisation committed to empowering persons with disabilities in a family-like environment which enhances and maximises their abilities with a view to ensuring their full participation in society in accordance to the Gospel and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

### MISSION

- To provide individualised, long term and respite residential services to persons with disabilities in full respect of their rights and dignity. 2. To promote the holistic personal development and social inclusion of service users, including their autonomy and self-determination. 3. To provide opportunities to employees to develop their skills and to enhance the value of their work 4. To provided a meaningful experience of volunteering. 5. To collaborate with other organisations active in the field of disability to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities and of their families.

## VALUES

- The values of Id-Dar tal-Providenza are rooted in the Gospel teachings, We believe that human life is sacred, having equal and unconditional value. We profess an intrinsic respect for all persons regardless of their strengths and abilities.
- We have faith in Divine Providence reflected in an approach that ensures that lack of resources shall not impede our work.
- We believe that the family is the foundation of society and therefore we provide support to the family such that the person with disability is enabled to continue living within one's family should this be the disabled person's own wish.
- We strive to develop a community spirit, reflected in an approach that seeks to empower persons with disabilities, to uphold their right to privacy and self-determination, to promote interdependence and to provide the appropriate support for service users.

**Make a Donation** Funding Id-Dar tal-Providenza, which is built on faith in Divine Providence, relies to a very large extent on the generosity of its benefactors and the public donations it receives to live up to its mission. Id-Dar Tal-Providenza gratefully receives donations from benefactors in Malta and from all over the World. Donations arrive by post or are delivered direct to our reception front desk, they also come in the form of inheritances and legacies and via newspaper and local radio obituaries where monies are requested to be sent to Id-Dar Tal-Providenza instead of flowers. Occasionally donations are received for special services and for prayers for the sick or bereaved, for newly married couples and birth of children.

**The 23rd edition of the Dar tal-Providenza's traditional New Year's Day 2019 charity marathon raised a total of €1,275,442 million in donations by the time its phone lines closed late Tuesday night. This constitutes a record year for the fundraiser, with the amount donated being even greater than the €1.25 million which were raised during last year's marathon.**

You can make an online donation [Contact Information](#)

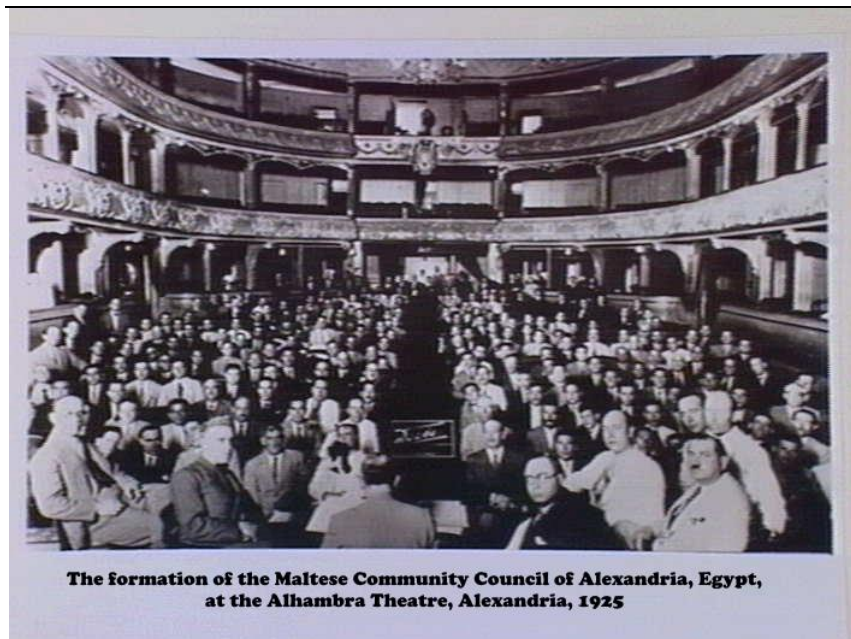
Id-Dar tal-Providenza

Lapsi Road, Is-Sigġiewi, SGW 2822 MALTA

Tel No: (+356) 21462844

Fax: (+356) 21467925

Email: [info@dartalprovidenza.org](mailto:info@dartalprovidenza.org)



**The formation of the Maltese Community Council of Alexandria, Egypt, at the Alhambra Theatre, Alexandria, 1925**

The **Maltese of Egypt**, also known as **Egyptian Franco-Maltese**, are an ethnic minority group in [Egypt](#). Though culturally very similar to the Franco-Maltese of Tunisia and Algeria, most people of Maltese or part-Maltese descent born in Egypt remained British subjects.

They are immigrants, or descendants of immigrants, from the islands of [Malta](#), who settled in Egypt largely during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and intermarried heavily with Italians, French and other Europeans. Those with a French father assumed French citizenship.

## All you need to know about the mysterious islet of Filfla



*Undoubtedly the archipelago's most enigmatic island, Filfla has been through its fair share throughout the ages. Lisa Borain viewingmalta.com*

Located at the most southerly point of the Maltese Archipelago, Filfla is a small, uninhabited isle five kilometres south of Malta. The rocky platform was originally attached to the south-west coast of Malta.

The name is said to come from *felfel*, Arabic for pepper. The name probably originated either due to the isle's tiny size or its original shape which may have been reminiscent of a small pepper. Later, it was

referred to as *Piper* on maps, which is the Latinised form of *felfel*.

Apart from the wall lizard and door snail endemic to the isle, as well as being home to one of the largest known colonies in the world of the European Storm Petrel, Filfla is undoubtedly the archipelago's most mysterious island.

It's believed that Filfla was likely sacred to the neolithic inhabitants of Malta, who built the temples of Hagar Qim and Mnajdra on the Maltese coast opposite the isle. Some historians speculate that the mysterious offshore rock silhouetted against the midday sun on the southern horizon may have possessed some symbolic or sacred significance of context to the two ancient temples and stone calendars located within 500 metres of each other.

**THE LEGEND OF ITS CREATION** - The legend of Filfla's creation goes that *Il-Maqluba* (a sinkhole with a surface area of around 6,000m<sup>2</sup> situated in the village of Qrendi in Malta) was inhabited by people who lived dissolute and sinful lives. They ignored heedings of their sinful ways, and as a result, God punished them by engulfing the hamlet. Angels are then said to have thrown a fragment of the hamlet into the sea, creating the islet of Filfla.

**IT WAS BIGGER** - Filfla was previously much larger than its current 2.5 hectares. The land mass has reduced drastically by millennia of sea pounding, and of recent history, heavy bombing practice by the British and other naval and air forces.

**A CHAPEL WAS BUILT THERE** - A map of Malta dating back to 1798 depicts a chapel on Filfla, which was built inside a cave in 1343. The chapel was destroyed by an earthquake in 1856, which also sank part of the island. The titular painting of the Madonna accompanied by saints Peter and Leonard bears the date 1604, and had been removed from the chapel. It's now preserved in the parish church of St Catherine in Zurrieq. The remains found Copper Age and Bronze Age ceramic pot pieces (sherds) have been found on Filfla, which are said to be preserved in the National Museum of Archaeology. Bronze Age or later cart ruts were reported by Fr Emmanuel Magri as existing on the isle until the end of the 19th century. Sir Themistocles Zammit reported finds of Temple Period pottery on Filfla in the 20th century.

"Temple period remains have also been found on the islet, probably belonging to a sailor's shrine. These include pottery, jars and bones of animals. Whether it was inhabited or just visited is however still an open discussion..." (Farrugia Randon 2006:43).

**IT WAS USED AS TARGET PRACTICE** - Since Filfla's flat surface somewhat resembles a ship, it was easily used by the British and other naval and air forces as target practice, which resulted in a large part of it being destroyed. Further, a huge amount of unexploded artillery was left in the shallow waters surrounding Filfla, originating from the hundreds of unexploded shells which missed their mark. This ordnance was never cleared and many took it upon themselves to dive for it to retrieve the explosives for conversion into festive fireworks. To this day, fishing is prohibited within a one nautical mile radius of Filfla to reduce the risk of netting any unexploded shells.

**THE MEDIAN LINE BETWEEN MALTESE AND LIBYAN WATERS** - In the early 1980s, the Maltese Government appealed to the International Court of Arbitration in The Hague to include Filfla in their deliberations when calculating the median line between Maltese and Libyan waters as a result of a dispute which arose between the two countries for oil-exploration purposes.

**ADMIRE IT FROM AFAR** = Given its status of scientific importance, Filfla is off-limits to visitors. However, it can be clearly admired from the stunning Dingli Cliffs or beautiful Blue Grotto, amongst various other spots in Malta.



## Profile – Prof. Edward Scicluna, Minister for Finance



Professor Edward Scicluna is Minister for Finance in the Labour Government of Joseph Muscat and a Member of the Maltese House of Representatives, having been elected from the 5th and 8th Districts in March of 2013. He was also elected in 2009 to the European Parliament where he served for four years as Vice-Chairman of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee and as the European Parliament's representative on the European Statistical Advisory Board (ESAC).

His previous appointments included that of Professor and Head of the Department of Economics at the University of Malta; Chairman of the Malta Council of Economic and Social Development (MCESD), Chairman of the Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA), Electoral Commissioner, Central Bank Director, Mediterranean Insurance Brokers Ltd. director, Chairman in charge of political discussion programmes organised by the Malta Broadcasting Authority (MBA), Chairman of the HSBC's Malta Funds Sicav plc and Structured Funds Sicav plc, Chairman of CWG plc, director at San Antonio Hotel and Spa, and board member of the National Euro Change-over Committee (NECC).

Internationally he carried out consultancy work for the EU Commission, UNESCO, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the governments of Albania, Croatia, Libya and Turkey; and served on the Council of Europe Development Bank Auditing Committee. He was frequently sought for economic advice by the IMF annual delegation to Malta and Rating Agencies FitchIbca, Standard&Poor's, and Moody's. Prior to Malta's entry into the Eurozone he was appointed as a Euro expert by the EU Commission.

Edward graduated from the University of Oxford with a Diploma with distinction in politics and economics; from the University of Malta with a First Class Honours BA degree in Economics, and the University of Toronto with a Masters and Doctorate in Economics.

Edward is married to Astrid née Bartoli and has two children Mark and Katya.



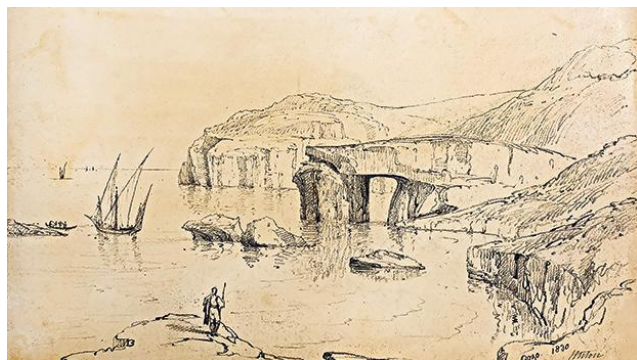
- From left to right:
- 1) Dr Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta;
  - 2) Dr Anglu Farrugia, Speaker of the House of Representatives
  - 3) Owen Bonnici, Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government;
  - 4) Julia Farrugia Portelli, Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms, Citizenship and Simplification of Administrative Processes;
  - 5) Helena Dalli, Minister for European Affairs and Equality.

### SOME MALTESE PERSONALITIES



## Dwejra's Azure Window was '50 years older' than thought

### Fresh light on window's age shed in new book



*The Azure Window from A History of Għarb by Patrick Formosa.*

An illustration in a new book sheds fresh light on the age of the Dwejra Azure Window, setting its birth date almost 50 years before what was previously thought.

Questions about the iconic landmark's age arose soon after its sudden collapse in March 2017, with many positing theories as to just how old it actually

was.

Photographer Daniel Cilia had told *Times of Malta* the window could be around 140 years old. He had noted that an 1866 journal entry by Edward Lear did not mention the Azure Window but featured in an album by photographer Richard Ellis dated 1879.

Read: Azure Window probably inherited name from nearby less-popular crevice

An 1854 illustration of Dwejra found in a book by Thomas Spratt about the geology of Malta and Gozo also showed no opening in the cliffs, Mr Cilia noted.

As the social media reacted to Mr Cilia's comments, an illustration that attempted to dispute the 140-year theory soon emerged.

An 1824 aquarelle of Dwejra Tower, published in *The Coastal Fortifications of Gozo and Comino* by Alfred Sammut-Tagliaferro showed the window in the background. Still, it was unclear whether it was an archway or a cave. *The Gozitan landmark was at least 187 years old when it collapsed*

A pencil drawing in a newly-published book by Patrick Formosa, illustrated by Mr Cilia himself, indicates that the Gozitan landmark was at least 187 years old when it collapsed.

The drawing by Lt Col. Richard Irton was dated 1830 and illustrations of other landmarks contained in the same album could be easily dated to 1830, confirming the pencil drawings' origins, Mr Cilia said.

*Architect Svetozar Andreev's proposal called 'The heart of Malta', a polygonal structure made up of mirrored steel faces.*



Once it collapsed, the window continued to capture the attention of several, including artists and engineers who reimagined the structure in some new form.

Among others, architect Svetozar Andreev has recently launched a proposal called 'The heart of Malta', a

polygonal architectural structure made up of mirrored steel faces.

The structure would have the same size and proportions of the original limestone arch and, according to Mr Andreev's Russian architectural firm, it would blend with the landscape. The proposal includes over 5,000 square metres of exhibition space laid out over five spiral floors, with a dynamic laser show in which each spiral step represents 1,000 years of Maltese history.

When the window collapsed, the government had launched an international initiative inviting people to submit ideas such as Mr Andreev's artistic installation and artificial recreation.

According to news portal Newsbook, the government received just one proposal by a Gozitan developer to build a hotel and heritage park in the area.



## Pope Francis shows off ball spinning skills alongside circus performers

Pope Francis has given a new meaning to the Hand of God as he spins a football on his finger.

The Pontiff was presented with the ball by a member of the Circus of Cuba during his weekly general audience in the Pope Paul VI hall, at the Vatican.

Pope Francis thanked the circus artistes and said: "Beauty always raises the heart, beauty makes us all better, beauty brings

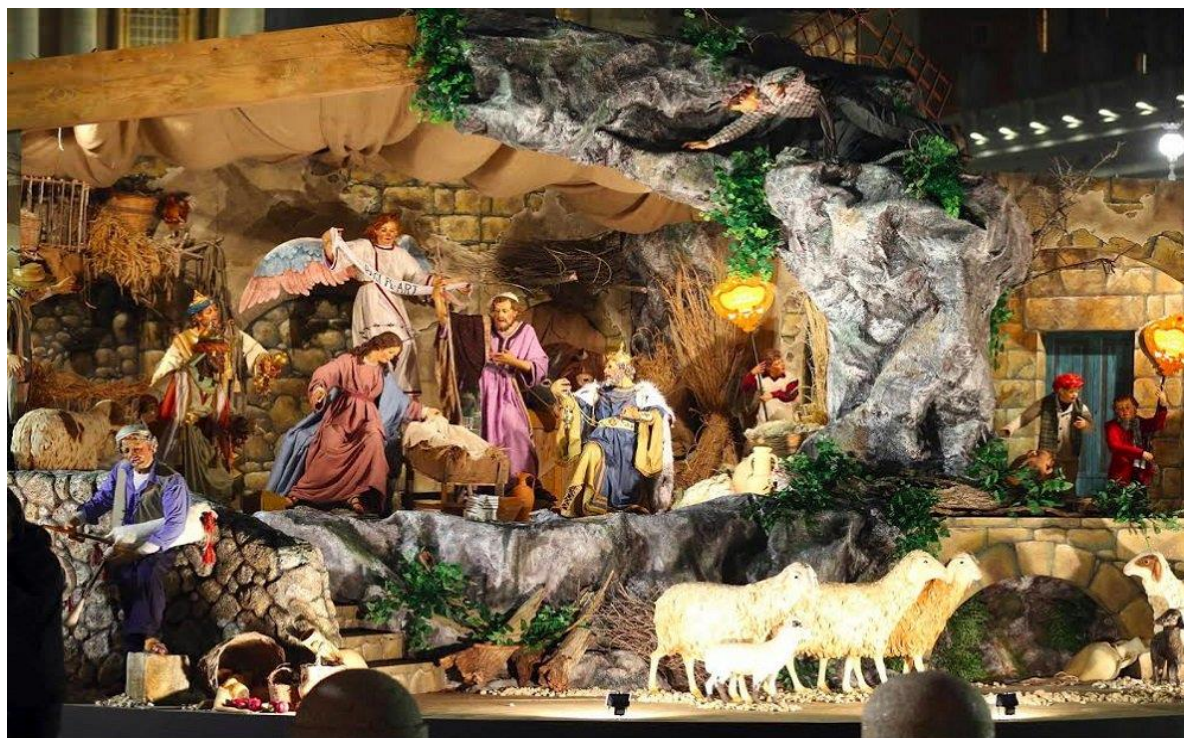
goodness and also to God." One of his predecessors, Pope John Paul II, had been a goalkeeper during his youth in Poland and became a Liverpool fan.

### **MORE CONGRULATORY MESSAGES**

- ❖ Happy New Year. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on behalf of the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus for the prestigious award MQR you have received from the Maltese Government. It is a recognition of the hard work that you do among the Maltese in South Australia. May God bless you and continue to inspire you so that you can continue to bring the Maltese Community all over the world together through the Maltese E Newsletter. You keep reminding us of our childhood and our ways and traditions in our dear country Malta. Good luck for the future. Regards, Sr. Vittoriana DeBattista
- ❖ I did not know of the great honour bestowed on you, my wife Madlene and I most sincerely congratulate you on recognition so fully deserved. Happy New Year to you and your family, sincere regards, Richard & Madlene Cumbo
- ❖ Congratulations for a well deserved recognition of your service to the Maltese community . Thank you for producing this magazine, it is much appreciated. Blessings for the new year to you and your family . Mgr Charles Gauci – Bishop of Darwin
- ❖ Congratulations and thank you for sending me your Journal. Hope you and your family have a safe and prosperous new year. Mario Bezzina and Family Keilor Melbourne
- ❖ I take this opportunity to congratulate you for the prestigious awards you recently received from the Prime Minister as well as from the President of Malta. It's a distinguished honour which you fully merit. God Bless Dolindo Cassar [Gozo]
- ❖ Congratulations on your well deserved award. Your dedication and contribution towards the fund-raising is significant indeed. Wishing you the best for the New Year 2019. Your publication is very well presented and always most informative. Thank you With kind regards. Thank you for the first newsletter for 2019. Regards Greg Muscat
- ❖ I would like to congratulate you on receiving the prestigious medal of THE NATIONAL MALTESE ORDER OF MERIT, and would like to thank you for all the work that goes to give us, the maltese people around the world, this beautiful journal every month. Regards, Olga Ellul Melbourne.
- ❖ Wishing you a happy ,healthy and prosperous NEW YEAR 2019 to you and all your family Thank you for the Maltese Journal God Bless . Cheers
- ❖ How proud and humble you must feel on receiving such a recognition. Well deserved. May God give you the strength to continue with your good work in 2019. We thank you and wish you and your family a wonderful New Year. Cheers, Mireille Daw – South Australia
- ❖ While thanking you for publishing this interesting journal, i would like to wish you a happy new year filled with many special blessings from above. May god bless you an keep you in his loving cae to be of help to others. Yours Sincerely Sister.Teresia Buttigieg
- ❖ prosit u prosit tassew tal-Journal of Maltese Living in Malta and Abroad. Kemm niehu gost naqrah u nitpaxxa bik. No wonder you got your 'award'...very well deserved!! Mill-gdid nixtieqlek verament Sena Gdida ta' hena, sahha, u paci. Keep well... Carmen (Galea) Toronto, Canada
- ❖ Congratulations Frank on the well-deserved recognition and have a happy 2019! Dr. Gioconda Schembri
- ❖ Well done – Dolores Cristina (Malta), Joe and Carmen Chetcuti, Charles and Grace Chetcuti, Frank and Valarie Busuttil, Doris and John Mangion, Frank and Jane Grima, Charles and Adelaide Farrugia OAM (SA), Victor V Vella (NSW), Charles Coleiro (Malta)
- ❖ Tislijiet u PROSIT tal-unur misthoqqi "Midolja Ghall-Qadi Tar-Repubblika"ta' Malta, f'ceremonja gewwa l'Palazz, 13 ta' Dicembru 2018 Valletta Malta. Nancy Serg nee Borg OAM

**I share this great honour with all the members of the Maltese community of Adelaide who are so respectful, generous and beautiful people. Being a member of this community I feel proud and privileged. They have given a good name to their homeland – MALTA among the multicultural society of South Australia. Our wish for 2019 is to see unity, cooperation and love amongst us all.**





## **DAWK PRESEPJI SBIEH LI RAJT!**

Kienet tassew ideja sabiha u ta' min ifahharha dik tas-Sezzjoni tal-Kultura fi hdan il-Ministeru ghal Ghawdex li torganizza kompetizzjoni ghall-isbah presepju u b'hekk tghin finanzjarjament lil dawk li xtaqu jibnu u jesebixxu xi presepju matul il-jiem li ghaddew ghax b'hekk stjajna ngawdu presepji tassew sbieh imxerrdin ma' parti kbira mill-gzira taghna. Dan seta' jsir ukoll billi l-Ufficcju tal-Kultura ppubblika lista ta' dawn il-presepji bil-hinijiet tal-ftuh u fejn jinsabu. F'pajjizna l-petrol mhux irhis u allura hadd ma jiehu gost joqghod jinqala' u mbaghad forsi jsib xi presepju jew tnejn maghluqin! Barra minn hekk mhux dejjem jirnexxilek issib il-Presepju mill-ewwel u allura mportanti li l-partecipanti kollha jkollhom xi forma ta' tabella (bil-lejl mixghula) biex tiggwida lil dak li jkun. Affarijiet zgħar li nahseb il-Kunsill jitlobhom u ma jiswewx wisq biex taghmilhom. Intant, sa minn meta kont għadni tifel f'dar omni, jien trabbejt bil-presepju d-dar (ara ritratt) u kbirt b'din l-imħabba lejn dan il-wirt li nemmen qed ikompli jiehu l-hajja anke bis-sehem li qed tagħti l-"Għaqda Hbieb tal-Presepju Ghawdex-Malta 1985" li fl-4 ta' Ottubru li ghadda għalqet 33 sena minn mindu twaqqfet fir-rahal ta' San Lawrenz minn tlett sinjuri: Gorg Borg, il-Kan Dun Mikiel Borg u Joe Galea li huwa l-President tal-Għaqda.

Ghamilt mezz li ma nitlifix ic-čans li mmur inżur dawn il-presepji u veru ma ddispjačinix. Rajt kif ghamilt u ksibt lista tagħhom u ta' kull fl-ghaxija kont naqbad il-karozza u nara xi ftit minnhom ghax ngħid is-sewwa ma kenux ftit. Inkitbu ghadd għmielu ta' presepji bejn statiči u mekkanici. Żgur li kien hemm iżjed imma ppreferew li ma jintrabtux bil-hin tal-wiri. Wiehed minnhom kien żgur dak tal-presepista bravu Frankie Mizzi li joqghod fil-bidu tal-Fontana li għandu presepju trid seba' ghajnejn biex tarah, presepju li ddur mieghu dawra mejt waqt li tisma' wkoll kummentarju bil-Malti, bl-Ingliż jew bit-Taljan. Qrib Pjazza Sant Wistin Salvinu Cremona mhux biss bena l-presepju imma żejjen ukoll il-fačcata ta' daru li żejnet triq shiħa u tefgħa ta' gebla bogħod dhalt fil-foyer tal-Oratorju Don Bosco biecx nara l-presepju tagħhom!

Intant il-preseppi li rajt kollha għoġbuni. Bdejt billi rajt dak ta' Giovanni Cassar li dis-sena bena iehor fil-Knisja Katidrali. Mhux bogħod mill-preseppu ta' Giovanni mort nara wkoll il-preseppu mekkaniku għall-aħħar ta' Joseph Attard ta' Triq Sagħtar Victoria. Bieb ma' bieb il-Knisja ta' San Frangisk fil-Victoria rajt ukoll preseppu mekkaniku li għoġobni ħafna wkoll (ara ritratti) waqt li fil-Qasam tas-Subien tal-Museum fix-Xagħra nsibu preseppu armat is-sena kollha li ta' kultant tiżdiedlu wkoll xi ħaġa ġdida. Hawnhekk din id-dar tfur bl-attività dawn il-jiem qaddisa li kienu tant għal qalb il-Fundatur Dun Gorg Preca. Nibqgħu fix-Xagħra u l-Preseppu ta' Victor Agius li jibni fid-dar tiegħu, ukoll jiġbed l-għajn; dan iż-żagħżuġh artist jagħti daqqa t'id ġmielha lil għaqda f'raħlu biex tkompli tippromovi l-kultura tal-Preseppu, u din is-sena wkoll organizzat tour tal-Preseppi fir-raħal. Fix-Xagħra wkoll Aaron Agius ta' Triq Gajdoru tana preseppu sabiħ flimkien ma' oħrajn li jinsabu fil-Knisja Parrokkjali.. Fil-Qala, għoġobni ferm ukoll il-preseppu ta' Anthony Bajada u iehor fi Triq it-Tempju kif ukoll wirja ta' Preseppi fiċ-Ċentru Parrokkjali tar-raħal Guzeppin. Il-Preseppu fil-knisja Arcipretali kien ħelu wkoll. Hawnhekk qsamt it-triq u dħalt nara wkoll il-Preseppu li għamlu fil-Qasam tas-Subien tal-Museum fejn issa għandhom lis-Sur Paul Grech bħala s-Superjur il-ġdid. Fix-Xewkija fil-każin tal-football daħħluni nara preseppu ħelu; bieb ma' bieb rajt ukoll dak taċ-Ċentru Parrokkjali fejn jiltaqgħu ta' kuljum għadd ta' żgħażaġh. Fil-Knisja Parrokkjali l-Arcipriet żamm bħas-soltu l-appuntament tiegħu wkoll kif ukoll taħt l-istess knisja.

Għoġobni mmens dak li bena fil-Bażilika ta' San Gorg iż-żagħżuġh Gorg Camilleri b'pasturi li ngabu minn Sqallija. Anton Sillato ma naqasx li jagħtina preseppu sabiħ li bħalu għamel iehor fuq wieħed mill-altari tal-Knisja ta' San Frangisk. L-aħwa Emmanuel u Carmel Grech kienu responsabbli minn żewġ preseppi – wieħed f'darhom fi Triq il-Kapuċċini Victoria, u hawnhekk ta'min iżid li Manwel jagħmel ukoll il-pasturi tiegħu, u iehor qrib il-Funtana tat-Tritoni fil-belt Valletta. Fiċ-Ċenru tal-Vokazzjonijiet fix-Xagħra reġa kien hemm preseppu għal wiri flimkien ma' għadd sabiħ ta' preseppi li jibnu t-tfal. Teddy Caruana mir-Rabat imma jgħix fix-Xagħra daħħalni nara l-preseppu li bena fi Triq Vestru kif għamel ukoll Raymond Bonello li ħafna drabi ma jżarmax xogħlu qabel ma tkun daħlet sewwa s-sena l-ġdida. Din is-sena rajt preseppu sabiħ ukoll fil-każin tal-Banda Victory. Lill-Qasam tas-Subien fin-Nadur li tant ikun imzejjen u armat sabiħ dawn il-jiem mhux biss nifirħilhom għal Preseppu kbir li jiehu kamra sħiħa imma wkoll għall-kuncert tal-Milied li għamlu fil-Bażilika tan-Nadur..

Inkomplu għaddejjin b'din il-karellata ta' preseppi. Lejla waħda mort Għajnsielem fejn naħseb li marru wkoll bosta mill-qarrejja biex iżuru l-Preseppu ħaj li dis-sena kompli jikber – Betlehem f'Għajnsielem! Hawnhekk ukoll rajt għadd ta' preseppi ta' valur, wieħed mibni mill-artist per ecċellenza Pawlu Stellini taħt il-Knisja Parrokkjali armat b'pasturi mprezzabbli li l-artist qed jixtri bil-mod mill-Italja (magħrufin bħala ta' *Landi*) flimkien ma' oħrajn tassew sbieħ. . F'Għajnsielem ukoll Matthew Zerafa bena preseppu fi Triq Bengħasi u minn wara l-ħgieġ stajt nara wkoll il-preseppu li għamlu l-Patrijiet tax-Xatt. Il-ħabib tiegħi Herman fil-Pjazza tas-Santwarju mill-ġdid żamm l-appuntament annwali tiegħu. Fiż-Żebbuġ, fejn halla l-karkura x-xitan, fuq ir-riħ tal-Qbajjar, David Xuereb bena għadd ta' preseppi li ma tixbax toqgħod tiflihom bir-reqqa! Fil-pjazza tar-raħal dħalt ukoll f'garage fejn rajt preseppu tal-gebel li fakkarni f'Għawdex tal-imġhoddi meta gżiritna kienet tfur bi preseppi ta' dix-xorta. L-Arcipriet il-ġdid t'hawnhekk ukoll tana preseppu sabiħ fil-Knisja Arcipretali. Fix-xaqliba tan-Nazzarenu fix-Xagħra, taħt l-istess knisja rajt iehor statiku sabiħ u nteressanti li kien hemm snin li kien ikun ukoll bix-xita niezla. Kemm fin-Nadur kif ukoll fix-Xagħra rajt żewġ preseppi veru ħajjin li jsiru b'tant saġrificju ta' dawk li jieħdu sehem fihom.

Qabel nagħlaq ninsab ċert li ħafna minnkomb sabu ħin imorru jaraw il-Wirja annwali ta' Preseppi li tagħmel l-Għaqda Hbieb tal-Preseppu f'Għawdex li matul Mejju tal-2010 kienet ospitat fostna għadd sabiħ ta' Preseppi mill-Italja kollha li tpaqxew bil-preseppi tagħna. Dan x'irnexxieli nara jien; żgur li ma rajtx kolloxx u allura Prosit lil kull min ħa xi inizjattiva biex jissokta jxerred il-ferħ tal-Milied.

Kellna wkoll diversi msieraħ flimkien ma' Triq ir-Repubblika Victoria (li kienet tibqa' sejra sax-Xatt tal-Imġarr) mixgħulin tajjeb kif ukoll xi toroq fl-irħula tagħna; ma' dawn iżid il-Ġonna Pubbliċi ta' Villa Rundle; u dan żgur kompli jżid il-ferħ tal-Milied fil-poplu tagħna. Minħabba kwistjoni ta' tul, ma tkellimtx dwar l-għadd sabiħ ta' serati mużikali li kellna fil-Victoria u f'diversi rkejjen ta' gżiritna li bla dubju għalihom niesna saret tiffolla mhux ħażin. Għoġobkom dan il-*post mortem*! **Kav Joe M Attard - Victoria Għawdex**





The Seekers and Dobe Newton of The Bushwackers. Its lyrics are filled with many historic and cultural references, such as to the "digger", Albert Namatjira and Ned Kelly, among others. Wikipedia

### Lyrics

I came from the dream-time  
From the dusty red-soil plains  
I am the ancient heart  
The keeper of the flame  
I stood upon the rocky shores  
I watched the tall ships come  
For forty thousand years I've been  
The first Australian

I came upon the prison ship  
Bowed down by iron chains  
I bought the land, endured the lash  
And waited for the rains  
I'm a settler, I'm a farmer's wife  
On a dry and barren run  
A convict, then a free man  
I became Australian

I'm the daughter of a digger  
Who sought the mother lode  
The girl became a woman  
On the long and dusty road  
I'm a child of the Depression  
I saw the good times come  
I'm a bushie, I'm a battler  
I am Australian

We are one, but we are many  
And from all the lands on earth we come  
We'll share a dream and sing with one voice

# I Am, You are We are Australian

Song by Bruce Woodley and Dobe Newton

"I Am Australian" is a popular Australian song written in 1987 by Bruce Woodley of

I'm a teller of stories  
I'm a singer of songs  
I am Albert Namatjira  
And I paint the ghostly gums  
I'm Clancy on his horse  
I'm Ned Kelly on the run  
I'm the one who waltzed Matilda  
I am Australian

I'm the hot wind from the desert  
I'm the black soil of the plains  
I'm the mountains and the valleys  
I'm the drought and flooding rains  
I am the rock, I am the sky  
The rivers when they run  
The spirit of this great land  
I am Australian

We are one, but we are many  
And from all the lands on earth we come  
We'll share a dream and sing with one voice  
"I am, you are, we are Australian"

We are one, but we are many  
And from all the lands on earth we come  
We'll share a dream and sing with one voice  
"I am, you are, we are Australian"

"I am, you are, we are Australian"

Another edition for you to  
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**MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER**  
The Journal of Maltese living in Malta  
and abroad

## CANADA in 2017 Celebrated 150 Years

Canada celebrated its 150th birthday in 2017. we're reflecting on our country's past and shaping the vision for its future. This national milestone was also tied to the <sup>[1]</sup>WE Movement because Living WE is what living in Canada is all about—bringing people together and giving them the tools to change the world. We unite as a country and pledge to continue building a stronger Canada by taking action in four areas that are fundamental to our Canadian identity.

## Diversity & INCLUSION

The diversity of Canada's population is what makes it strong. Canada 150 would like to continue building a welcoming Canada where everyone has a place and the ability to reach their full potential. Canada 150 promotes diversity and inclusivity and builds relationships based on common interests.

## Youth

Youth have an incredible ability to lead and the power to shape Canada's legacy. Canada 150 wants to engage and inspire

young people in all areas of Canadian life with initiatives for youth and by youth that will empower young people to become engaged in civil society and build trust in their government.

## Reconciliation WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Canada 150 would like to support efforts toward national reconciliation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians and help begin a new era of nation-to-nation relations.

## Environment

Canadians have a fundamental responsibility toward the environment; we are its caretakers. Our vast and diverse landscape is a source of pride and national identity. Canada 150 will promote and support environmental consciousness to protect our land, water, air and wildlife.

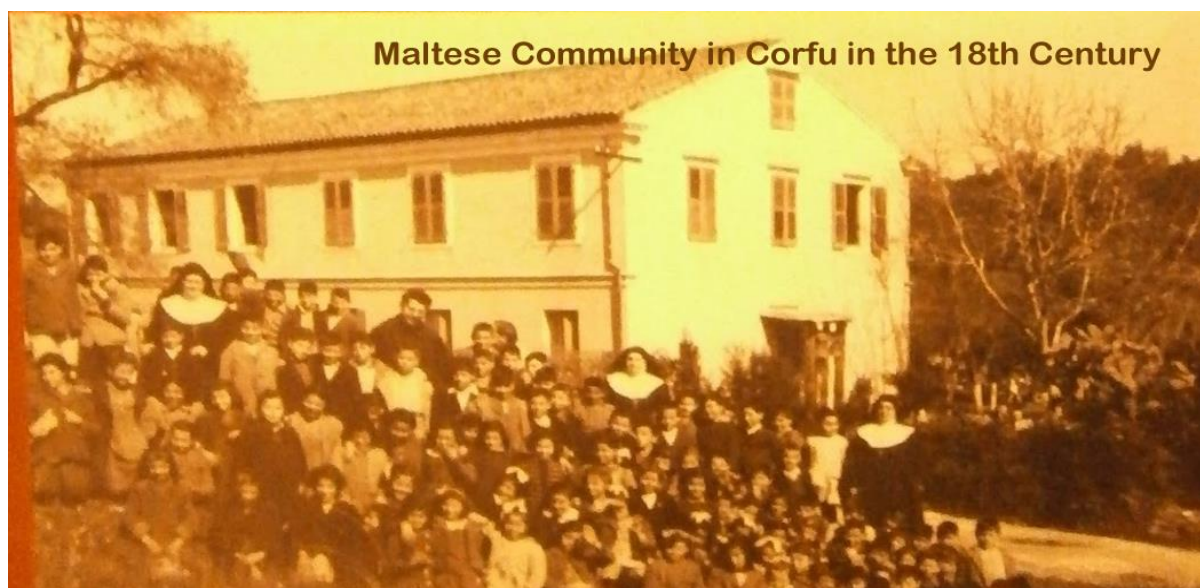
## How Old is Canada Really?

In 2017 the Canadians commemorated a big milestone this year in its history...150 years since confederation! But does this truly represent Canada's age?

What about the hundreds of years of European history, the thousands of years of indigenous history, and the millions of years of natural history that have shaped Canada?

**It is great news that the Government of Malta has honoured the editor of the Maltese eNewsletter. Sam Agius**





## MALTESE IN CORFU

Corfu has a population of 120,000, with some 45,000 in Corfu Town, on the island's east central side. The residents are largely Greek Orthodox but some 2,000 are Catholic, and of Maltese descent.

The origins of this small community began in 1819, when the British governor of the Ionian islands, Sir Thomas Maitland, decided to build the palace of St Michael and St George, in order to represent British hegemony over Zante, Lefkada, Ithaca, Kefalonia and Corfu, with Paxos and Antipaxos, as well as the Maltese islands.

This majestic building was erected in the centre of Corfu Town, mostly by Maltese and Gozitan stonemasons, in Malta stone, imported expressly for this purpose on British warships.

Hundreds of Maltese settled on the islands and many married local girls. After some generations many gave up their Maltese language and adopted the local Greek, from the islands of Lefkada and Kefalonia to the main island Corfu (Kérkyra).

Some Corfiot-Maltese surnames are Azzopardi, Cuschieri, Debono, Spiteris and Xuereb.

Their community grew to about 4,000 by the 1960s when, because of the fraught political and economic situation, many of them emigrated to Wales.

Today 2,000 remain, served by a Maltese-Corfiot archbishop, Ioannis Spiteris, and two priests of Maltese origin. This is a dwindling community that faces stiff taxes from the Greek State, as opposed to the Orthodox clergy, who regularly receive a stipend.

Indeed, the island's most famous church is an elaborately decorated Greek Orthodox one dedicated to St Spyridon, which contains the relics of Corfu's patron saint.

Its red-domed bell tower is a local landmark, while inside its ceiling murals show the life of the saint, who was born in Cyprus and performed many miracles before he died in AD350.

*This is a dwindling community that faces stiff taxes*

His remains are kept in a silver casket, which is opened four times a year to show his mummified face. The saint is then paraded through town to commemorate the fact he saved the island's residents from famine, Turkish invasion and twice from plague: these annual processions attract many local and foreign visitors.

Despite being a minority, there is still a Maltese Catholic church in the central part of Corfu Town.

The Nazis destroyed their original church in 1944 and burned its centennial archives.

The church of Saints Iakovos and Christophoros (SS. James and Christopher) was rebuilt in a simple Latin style and decoration after World War II.

Today it is large but plain. Masses are said in Greek, and even in various languages on Sundays.

This old Maltese Catholic community faces a difficult future and it may disappear altogether.



## Maltese in uniform serving the Crown and its allies

*Royal Navy bandsman Enrico Portelli, who was lost on HMS Black Prince. Right: Royal Naval Air Service rating Francesco Attard of Rabat.*

Our small island is renowned to have produced excellent seamen, soldiers and gunners. Even before Napoleon ousted the Order of St John from Malta, the Royal Navy

employed numerous Maltese in its service. Like countless others, many paid the ultimate sacrifice; some even a hero's death.

Twenty-five Maltese are recorded as having been present during the Battle of Trafalgar while serving in the navy; four of them were Royal Marines and five were actually on HMS Victory. Vincenzo Abela of Senglea was one of 60 Maltese from a complement of 215 men on HMS Juno during the early 1790s.

Juan Battista Azopardo was born in Senglea in 1772 and had mastered the tartana San Antonio e l'anime dell'purgatorio in Malta, and later served the French, Dutch, Spanish and British, the latter under Admiral John Jervis. His naval career was full of action, especially in Argentina's war of independence against Spain, so much so that in 1810, the Argentinian government granted Azopardo the rank of lieutenant colonel and commander of the first national navy.

Those who could, like the eldest son of affluent politician Camillo Sceberras, sought a commission in the British Army. Captain Rinaldo Sceberras, 80th Regiment of Foot, is commemorated by a monument at the Upper Barracca. While serving with the regiment in India in 1845, he was killed in the taking of the Sikh's standard and being instrumental in its capture – a feat that demoralised the enemy and helped win the battle. This year, Malta is commemorating a number of special anniversaries connected to episodes in the island's history. An event that greatly involved Malta and which changed the world is undoubtedly the start of hostilities in what was then referred to as 'The Great War' or 'The war to end all wars'. Nowadays, it is referred to as World War I, as the one that followed was even greater, and did not serve to end all wars, but was just a prelude to many others in various regions.

*The Maltese-Australian soldiers were not included on the ANZAC memorial*

Although Malta was not directly involved in the fighting, it played a major role in many aspects. The hostilities never came to our shores although there was one occasion where Zeppelin LZ 104, designated L 59 by the German Imperial Navy and nicknamed Das Afrika-Schiff, took off from its base at Jamboli, Bulgaria, to attack the British naval base at Malta. It was lost on April 7, 1918, during its voyage.

The role of the islands during this war was more related to troop movement to the fronts, naval repairs, supplies, and in particular as hospital and convalescent camp for thousands of British and troops of the Empire in 1915, that earned it the name of 'Nurse of the Mediterranean'.

The war effort required manpower and as a result, Maltese workers and the economy enjoyed the boost that wars usually bring. The Admiralty's dockyard was at full capacity, shops were doing good business, as were the bars, while many Maltese worked as auxiliaries with the British Services to meet the demand and vacuum left by the troops since they were required at various theatres of the war. But no doubt a larger contribution was given by the Maltese who wore the 'King's uniform' and were either already enlisted in the British Army and the Royal Navy, or even in the armies of the dominions and colonies.

The soul is just as important as the body, and the role of the Maltese clergy in uniform who served overseas is not to be overlooked. Towards the end of 1917, Fr Edgar Salomone of Mgarr, Malta, offered himself as a volunteer working as a military chaplain to the British troops in the Balkans, in particular to the Maltese. Another was Rev. J. Verzin, ACE, who had accompanied the KOMRM contingent to Cyprus and had possibly spent some time in Crete.[Denis Darmanin]





The Maltese American Benevolent Society, Inc. (M.A.B.S.I.) is a benevolent society situated in the heart of Corktown, Detroit that's main purpose is to promote the advancement of the Maltese American Community in the Metro Detroit and surrounding areas, as well as educate and welcome any other ethnicity to join and participate in our family oriented club.

2015 was the 75th anniversary of the club, however the club has been situated in it's current location since 1963. The club consists of a bar/lounge area, rental hall (large and small) as well as several means of entertainment. We pride ourselves on our gatherings with the largest and most ornate being the Feast of The Virgin Mary ( Marija Bambina)(September 15)) but celebrated over Labor Day Weekend at

the club.

Here you will find delightful Maltese foods and treats including but not limited to: Pastizzi, Rabbit Stew, Baked Rice and Macaroni, Figoli, among others. This celebration is family oriented and there is all day entertainment.

In addition to the aforementioned, the club also promotes many sporting events throughout the community, sponsoring and have sponsored several men's and co-ed soccer teams. MABSI's main commitment is to promote awareness of the Maltese Heritage as well as help the Maltese American Community in the Detroit and surrounding areas maintain and promote the heritage we all share.

The club has recently added cooking and baking classes to our offerings and the first several were very well received and were quite successful. We have offered classes on Qassatat, as well as Brigoli, and plan to offer Figoli in March in preparation for Easter.

As always, should you have any questions regarding the club, or membership do not hesitate to ask. We at MABSI are always at your service. You can easily contact us via email, writing to [maltese\\_american\\_benevolent\\_soc@yahoo.com](mailto:maltese_american_benevolent_soc@yahoo.com)

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

##### **Celebration of life for Edgar Grech Cumbo** *January 13, 2019*

Join us for the celebration of life for Edgar Grech Cumbo at 1:00 pm at the MABSI club. The event will last from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

##### **Monthly Mass with Fr. Mallia** *January 18, 2019*

You are invited to celebrate Mass with us on Friday, 18 January 2019 at 6:30 pm at the club. Food will be served following the mass.

All are welcome!

##### **New Year's Potluck and Membership Meeting** *January 27, 2019*

Come join us for a potluck lunch! Bring a dish to share or food will be available for purchase. The potluck begins at 1:00 pm and will be followed by the first General Membership Meeting of the year at 4:00 pm. The meeting is also the opportunity for new Executive Board Nominations

##### **Painting Party Fundraiser** *February 01, 2019*

Join us at 6:00 pm at the club for a Painting Party fundraiser! Cost is \$30 dollars for what should be a really fun occasion!

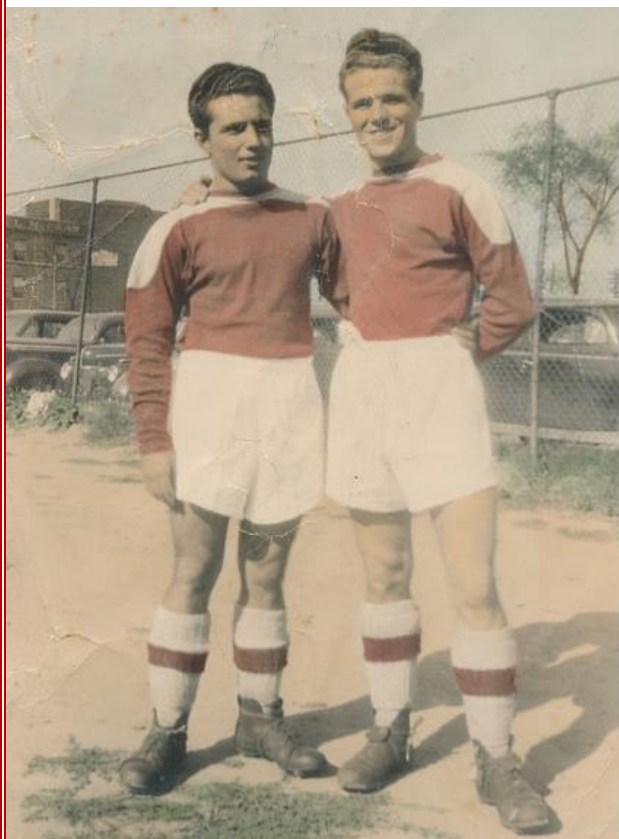
##### **Superbowl Party** *March 03, 2019*

We know the Lions won't be in it, but come join us for the Big Game of the year! The Club will host its annual Superbowl party with dinner (\$10) and drinks from the bar available for purchase.

##### **Monthly Mass with Fr. Mallia** *February 15, 2019*

You are invited to celebrate Mass with us on Friday, 15 February 2019 at 6:30 pm at the club. Food will be served following the mass. All are welcome!!

Next page – few photos from the society's archives



One of the more prominent of organizations sponsored by the Maltese American Benevolent Society was its soccer clubs. For many young immigrants it was a taste of home in a foreign land. Pictured here is Sam Scerri (left) and Charles (Germanis) DeMarco (right) prior to a game at a field in Detroit, Michigan in 1948.



John Mifsud is pictured here in his US Army uniform during the Korean War. John's parents came to Detroit in the 1920s. He was born in Detroit. Too young to participate in World War II, John volunteered for the Army during the Korean War and served overseas.

This photograph was donated digitally in 2013 by Rose Mifsud, John's wife.



#### DEMARCO FAMILY

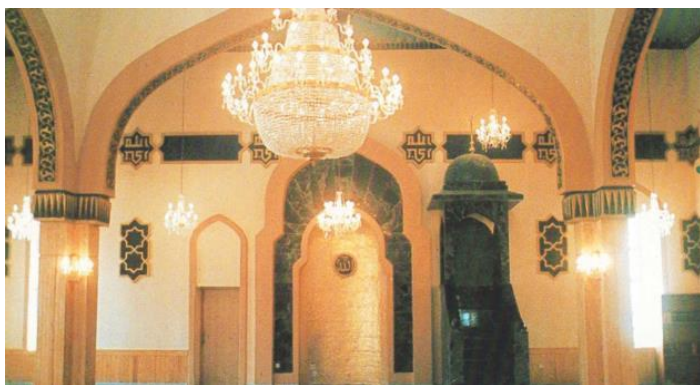
Charles (Germanis) DeMarco is pictured here with his wife, Gelarda and daughter, Diane in front of their car and house on Abbott Street in Corktown during the mid-1950s.

Charles first emigrated to Windsor, Ontario in 1948 before returning to Malta in 1950. He returned later that year with his wife Gelarda and the family settled in the Corktown neighborhood of Detroit.

The three Azzopardi brothers pictured here from left to right, Joseph, Wilfred and Anthony prepare to board their flight to the United States at Malta's Luqa International Airport on October 17, 1956. The boys left Malta to join their father in Detroit. USA







## Islamic Centre in Malta commemorates its 40th Anniversary

*Joe C. Cordina*

The Islamic Centre in Malta is currently celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary since its foundation stone was set up at Korrardino hill in Paola. Two years later its Minaret or steeple synonymous to a mosque and from where the Imam calls the faithful to prayer, was ready and carved its place in Malta's skyline.

Up to that time, Moslems in Malta, had no adequate place where they could meet to practice their religion. These Moslems were mainly members of the diplomatic missions and their families, sailors on ships arriving here for repairs and maintenance at the Malta Dockyard and Pakistanis working with Air Malta. Other Pakistani came as doctors together with Arab ones during the strike by Maltese doctors. But then when in the early seventies Malta started to open up relations with the Arab World this representation of Islam orientated persons increased as Arab personnel started to come to Malta as Company representatives and shareholders in joint-venture schemes between Malta and the Arab countries, as Professors at the University, pilots, engineers, technicians and doctors. With these there was also an influx of Arabic students. Other Arab personnel just came as tourists.

Of particular prominence of this new inclination of Malta's foreign policy was aimed at the Arab country of Libya. Malta had acquired its Independence from Britain in 1964 and its neighbour Libya had liberated itself from foreign interference in 1969 and Malta then under a Nationalist Government led by Dr Gorg Borg Olivier, was the first country to recognize the new state of the Libya. Two years later the Malta Labour Party led by Mr. Dom Mintoff came into power. It immediately increased the relations between the two countries which resulted in an increase of Libyan Moslem personnel coming to Malta as Company representatives, sailors on military craft coming here for repairs, technicians etc. A good number of Libyan teachers came to teach Arabic in Maltese schools, when this was made a compulsory subject. And a great number of Libyan youth came as students to study at Institutes set up in Malta by Libya. At one time these students amounted to 900 and not to mention their teachers and staff at these institutes.

All this influx of Moslem orientated personnel living in Malta opted for the need of a place of their own where they could practice their religion. At those times, the Islamic community used to meet at the Turkish Cemetery at Marsa for their religious practices. These were led by a certain Mr Subhi Billu who started to act as an Imam, the person who leads the community in prayers. But this place was not adequate as an actual place of worship and soon became too small to cater for the increasing numbers of adherents to the Moslem religion in Malta. This community then decided to contact the new World Islamic Call Society which had just been set up in Libya with the aim of helping Moslem Communities in their needs and asked its help for the building of a mosque in Malta.

Their application was accepted and representatives of this Society came to Malta to check out a proper site. The place chosen was the hill of Korrardino in Paola in the place known as Ta' Kordin. An application



was lodged with the proper Maltese Authorities on April 11, 1975 and was accepted five days later on April 16, 1975. Three years later Colonel Mu'Ammar Gaddafi then leader of the Libyan Arab Republic came to Malta to lay the foundation stone.

The first part of the Mosque to be finished was the Minaret in 1980. The first celebration to be held on the premises though still incomplete was the commemoration of the Birth of Prophet Mohammed a year later. As work progress the Islamic Centre began to take shape. After the Minaret, the actual Mosque was finished and then the ancillary buildings housing the needed amenities and offices as well as a hall, a library, a small cemetery, a large parking space, a children playground and a school for Moslem children. Maria Abatool School today is a well equipped primary and secondary school. Meanwhile a proper Imam was chosen to lead the Islamic faithful in their prayers and other exercises of their religion Mr Mohammed El Saadi. And Mr. Saadi is still the Imam to this present day. It is apt to mention that Mr. El Saadi was behind the setting up of Maria Abatool School as well as other projects at the Islamic Centre

When applying for permit for building of this Islamic Centre in Malta, the World Islamic Call Society had stated that this project had the aim of enabling Moslems in Malta to have their own place where they could meet together to discuss and learn more about their religion and to have their own place for worship and also to have also a place where they can meet to spend their free time together. But the Society stated that this Islamic complex was also meant to serve and strengthen amicable relations between Malta and the Arabic/Islamic worlds as well as to create an atmosphere of cooperation, understanding and mutual respect.

Now that forty years have passed since the laying of the foundation stone, one can easily say that the Islamic Centre at Korradino hill in Paola has achieved all the aims mentioned in the application of the World Islamic Call Society. Not only has it become a focal point for the Moslem community who besides converging there for the daily and the main Friday prayers also make use of services offered but this Centre has become also a source of information for all those who are interested in learning more about the Islamic faith and Islamic culture. The Islamic Centre has made an impact on the Maltese scene also with regards to projects which through the local branch of the World Islamic Call Society have been projected for the social and beneficial nature for Maltese Society.

But besides all this and above it, the Islamic Centre at Korradino has also succeeded to establish amicable relations with the Catholic Church authorities in Malta, based on mutual respect and understanding. These relations of friendship and tolerance have developed in reciprocal visits and participation in joint celebrations of religious commemorations. Theses staunch relationships have also led to the holding of ecumenical meetings between the Islamic Community and Christianity in Malta. One such meeting was the Seminar held at the Malta University in 1980. The final Communique issued at the end of that Seminar had declared that, "the two sides believed in the continuation of dialogue and promised to take the necessary steps to achieve its continuation". The Malta Branch of the World Islamic Call Society, through the Islamic Centre at Ta' Kordin, is offering a venue where this dialogue can continue and also with the wish to continue to augment the good relations already existing between the State and the Church Authorities in Malta.



### **The Malta Lace Club - Klabb Bizzilla Maltija - Keeping the Maltese lace tradition alive!**

Founded in 2005, the Malta Lace Club (or Klabb tal-Bizzilla Maltija, as it's known in Maltese) is the place where lace makers meet, socialize and share their interest in the beautiful traditional craft of Maltese lace.

**Photo: Visitors at Birgufest admiring the talented lace makers at work!**



## Classical winter serenades

Antonín Dvořák. Right: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

The Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Michalis Economou will perform works by Dvořák and Tchaikovsky at an event entitled Winter Serenades at The Phoenicia Malta, on January 11.

The programme includes Antonín Dvořák's Serenade for Wind Instruments, Op. 44, and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings in C major, Op. 48.

The term 'serenade' originally referred to a musical greeting performed in honour of someone but by the classical era, it also came to describe light, tuneful works for instrumental ensembles. Dvořák and Tchaikovsky's works were written within two years of each other in the 1880s, but each seeks to evoke the mood of an earlier time, and both can count Mozart, himself the author of some of the most notable examples of the genre, as an inspiration.

*The Malta Philharmonic Orchestra will perform Winter Serenades in the Grand Ballroom of the Phoenicia Malta, Floriana, on January 11 at 7.30pm. For tickets, visit [www.showshappening.com](http://www.showshappening.com).*



## The good, the bad and Comedy Knights

Photos: Jonathan Borg

They promise "more madness and mayhem" in their "rundown of the good and the bad of 2018" and, judging by previous editions of The Comedy Knights' annual serving of satirical sketches, that is what the audience will get.

The sixth edition of their Christmas show is aptly titled Let's talk about six.

"These past five years have been a great ride for the show," the founder of TAC Theatre and show director, Wesley Ellul, said.



"This year, however, we are going back to the foundations and to a more light-hearted approach.

"Given the fact that very little has changed in Malta over the past year – apart from every single neighbourhood, which is now unrecognisable thanks to the construction boom – we will try and be a tiny flicker of light within these darkest of times," he added.

The script, by Chris Dingli and Steve Hili, features some of the audience's favourite characters: the

Sliema Girls, the Bormla Babes, the First Lady and Cowseff and Delia, along with many new ones who will also be singing and dancing.

The cast includes Mr Dingli himself, Colin Fitz, Pia Zammit, Marc Cabourdin, Thomas Camilleri, Jo Caruana, Steve Hili and Chantelle Micallef Grimaud.

The show, which opened on Boxing Day, is being produced at the Salesian Theatre, in Sliema, between today and Sunday, January 9 to 12, at 8pm and on January 13 at 3pm and 8pm.

For more information visit [www.ticketline.com.mt](http://www.ticketline.com.mt). or [www.comedyknights.com](http://www.comedyknights.com).

[WWW.TIMESOFMALTA.COM](http://WWW.TIMESOFMALTA.COM)



## 'How I'm seeing Malta disappear through its doors'



### Photographer shoots the death of Malta's architectural history

*Expedition and photography producer, [writer, and blogger HELEN JONES-FLORIO](#) shudders at the sight of another building permit proposing to cement Malta's architecture.*

I first arrived on the island of Malta, three years ago, with my husband, photographer, Jason Florio, after he got a call to come to document the migrant and refugees rescues in the Mediterranean and the Aegean, for a local NGO. We had been living and working in West Africa, on various assignments and personal photography projects. The contrast between living in a developing country to one that appeared to be an overload of concrete and glass, multistory structures, was stark.

In Malta's defence, Tigne Point, Sliema, was our first port of call. For those who know the green and beige edifice, will almost surely understand my first (mis)impressions.



I seriously wondered what would inspire me to get my camera out. Yet, thankfully, within those first few days, I discovered "the doors" - Malta's beautifully decaying, colourful, vestiges of its history.

To find my bearings, I walked... and I walked. It's the only way that I know to get a real sense of any place I've ever landed in. So, leaving the vast concrete and glass apartment complex, perched on a peninsula, I turned down one narrow side-street after another – off the main drag of Sliema – and the true architectural beauty of Malta began to reveal itself.

During those first days on the island, my unintentional 'Disappearing Malta' series began to take shape and I've been photographing the doors and facades of the old structures ever since.

I now have a growing obsession to capture the decaying beauty of the abandoned Maltese houses of character, closed up shops, warehouses, and so on, should they disappear completely.

I'm fascinated by the hues, the textures, the varying stages of dilapidation, the intricate details in the many designs of the doors, the history – who lived in a house like that? What happened to them? Does the house belong to anyone, anymore?



**HELEN JONES-FLORIO**

Each and every door or facade has a story - and, someone, somewhere on the island can tell it. And, I want to see what's behind the doors – hence, I'm often peeking through letterboxes, and broken windows!

I hail from England, steeped in history, where millions of people flock from all over the world, every single day, to see our historic buildings. Our heritage. Yet, often, I have to be reminded of this – when a friend from abroad comes to visit and wants me to do the tourist thing with them.

*Our local band club bar was recently closed down, to make room for yet another new*

*bar/restaurant*

Do I have to? But, it's then that I realise how much I take it all for granted. So, I do understand that it's easy to become blasé about what surrounds us – become oblivious to the beauty that is there, right in front of us, until that is, it's gone. For good.

I'm not saying that Malta should live in the past. I get the need for development. In many cases, it has to happen to propel an economy forward.

But, having lived long-term in two major capitals, London and New York, where 'rejuvenation', 'gentrification', 'generi-fication' - however you want to tag it - has left its mark, which sadly, all too often means taking something away.

A place begins to lose its character, its personality, communities dissipate. For example, our local band club bar was recently closed down, to make room for yet another new bar/restaurant (in an area that is already overwhelmed with them).

Where have all those now-familiar to us faces - whose local it has been for decades long before we arrived - gone now? These meeting places (much like the bantaba's in West Africa - often simply a crudely-made wooden platform beneath the shade of a huge tree - where the community meets to talk anything from politics, to farming, to local gossip) are an integral part of any community - the glue that holds it together.

I'm sure that some of the old buildings are well beyond repair - not worth the investment to restore. But surely there has to be a balance, to work harder to preserve Malta's architectural history, and to retain the allure of a place; especially, when the island has such a huge influx of tourists each year?

The number of friends who visit and exclaim: 'We love Valletta!'. The same is rarely said about, for example, Sliema or St Julian's – the once architecturally-characterful bays (I've seen the old photos!) now almost entirely lined with cookie-cutter concrete and glass high-rises, elbowing their way into every bit of airspace, the skyline littered with cranes, dust in the air is palpable.

facade has a story – and, someone, somewhere on the island can tell it. And, I want to see what's behind the doors – hence, I'm often peeking through letterboxes, and broken windows! Disappearing Malta – doors, and facades ©Helen Jones-Florio. 'Canberra' storefront, Valletta

'Having lived long-term in two major capitals, London and New York, where 'rejuvenation', 'gentrification', 'generi-fication' – however you want to tag it – has left its mark, which sadly, all too often means taking something away.

## UNHCR commemorates the work of Fr Dionysius Mintoff and the Peace Lab



The UN Refugee Agency Office in Malta has commemorated the work of Fr Dionysius Mintoff and the John XXIII Peace Laboratory for their work in helping refugees and migrants.

The Peace Lab was set up in 1971, following an appeal made by Pope John XXIII calling on the world to reflect on peace.

The site — originally part of the Hal Far airfield, which saw intensive air combat during World War

II — includes a sanctuary and a number of associated buildings, and is surrounded by extensive gardens. It now serves as a sanctuary of peace and a home to many refugees and migrants. Since 2002, Peace Lab has provided shelter to refugees and migrants, along with various activities in an environment conducive to learning, inclusion and acceptance.

“UNHCR commends the commitment of Peace Lab and Fr Dionysius Mintoff in providing shelter, support and, most of all, a home to the refugees and migrants who arrived in Malta,” UNHCR Representative to Malta Kahin Ismail said.

In 2010, Fr Mintoff received the Franciscans International Inaugural Award of Human Rights in Geneva. Fr Mintoff was one of the founders of Franciscans International, which has offices at the United Nations centres in New York and Geneva.

Inspired by Franciscan principles and the life and work of Pope John XXIII, Fr Mintoff launched the ‘Award for Kindness’, given to a boy or a girl who consistently — and without being prompted to — performs acts of goodness.

In 1971, he founded the John XXIII Peace Laboratory in Hal Far, named after Pope John XXIII. He never looked back and has since then striven for the Peace Lab’s success in its mission of peace education.

Fr Mintoff and Peace Lab volunteers are active in defending migrant and refugee rights in Malta. Leading by example, Fr Mintoff opened his doors to fellow men in need when he established a residential centre for refugees and migrants on Peace Lab grounds.

**Caption: Fr Dionysius Mintoff with UNHCR Representative to Malta Kahin Ismail**

### MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

*All Maltese should be proud of their country, its past and traditions.  
No other small country can boast of such a rich history, and of a cultural fabric  
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Read and enjoy this wonderful journal of all the Maltese living in Malta  
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## Full scale police operation triggered by man on spider-slaying quest



Neighbours triggered alarm after hearing death threats

A full-scale police operation was triggered in Australia when neighbours sounded the alarm over a man shouting death threats at his home.

Wanneroo Police were soon on site to tackle the 'threat' but what they actually found was that the man had slain an arachnid.

The incident unfolded in the suburbs of Perth, when a person called the police on his neighbours.

He had overheard the man repeatedly shouting "Why

don't you die?". There was a crying toddler in the background and the screaming man's partner could not be heard. But instead of the expected domestic violence, the police found that the man had bravely 'murdered' a home-invading arachnid. The shouting and loud death threats were caused by the man's "serious fear of spiders".



### ORDER OF MALTA

**Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem:  
4,700 babies born in 2018**

"No injuries sighted (except for spider). No further police involvement required," the police log read. The size and type of the spider was not disclosed.



Some 4,700 babies were born during 2018 in the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, next to the Church of the Nativity and run by the Order of Malta since 1990. This is the only facility in the region capable of treating infants born before the 32nd week of gestation, thanks to its neonatal intensive care unit and its highly specialised staff. Nine percent of all the children born in the hospital – where Christians and Muslims work together in what is often called a "oasis of peace" – are in need of the treatment offered by its state-of-the-art incubators and equipment.

The Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem also manages a mobile clinic that, five days a week, visits United Nations refugee camps and remote villages in the West Bank desert, often without running water and electricity. Twenty-five percent of the women assisted are refugees who otherwise have no access to medical services.

In 2017, more than a thousand women over childbearing age were treated by the mobile clinic. A vital activity for the female population in a region which for decades has been the centre of tensions.





The Old City Entrance



The Royal Opera House



Children in the Street - no traffic



A Five-Pound Note



Traditional head-dress GHONNELLA



The Fisherman Friar

## MALTA - NOSTALGIA