

# Maltese eNewsletter

## Journal of the Maltese Diaspora



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### THE PRESIDENT OF MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca said that while Maltese people have ended up living in every corner of the globe, they remained united by culture and by common values.

Malta still needs you, I am proud to be the President of every Maltese person, including those living overseas, and encouraged the diaspora to continue to give visibility to their country of origin.

End of term of office - April 2019

Malta and the ANZACs

### THE NURSE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

World War I  
1914 - 1918



**MALTESE  
COMMUNITY  
CENTRE IN  
AUSTRALIA  
ROBBED  
BY  
MASKED  
INTRUDERS**

## Maltese community centre in Australia robbed by masked intruders

'We thought it was a joke': Volunteers shaken by Cringila community centre robbery



George Cross Falcons Community Centre treasurer Mary Borg (left) and volunteer Elizabeth Walker. Mary's mother, 82-year-old Polly Magro, and Elizabeth were at the centre when it was robbed on Monday morning. Picture: Adam McLean

A group of Cringila community centre volunteers have been left shaken after two masked intruders robbed them of their hard-earned cash during a brazen and opportunistic Monday-morning attack.

Volunteers at the not-for-profit George Cross Falcons Community Centre have told how they first thought the

intrusion was "practical joke", before quickly realising the disguised duo's presence was something more sinister.

About eight people were inside the community centre - preparing for a weekly seniors' lunch event - when two masked men entered via a door off Lake Avenue about 8.30am.

"We were all doing our Monday morning chores ... we were buttering bread, making coffees and then two men walked in," office worker and volunteer Elizabeth Walker said.



"We thought it was a joke. We really thought it was a practical joke because they came in, they were very composed and they were very softly spoken and that's why we didn't register what they were really here for."

"It is a shocking thing because we don't deserve to have this happen to us. We are not people who make

millions of dollars, we just make the money to provide the food for the people who come in on a Monday," Ms Walker said.

### ***Staff treated for shock after masked intruders rob Cringila club***

Police are investigating after two masked intruders threatened staff and robbed a Cringila club Monday morning.

Police were called the George Cross Falcons Maltese Community Centre on Lake Avenue and were told the masked intruders demanded money from staff about 8.40am

Staff handed over some cash and the two people then fled in a silver-coloured sedan, police said. No one was injured however two staff members were treated for shock.

Lake Illawarra police are investigating and have appealed for anyone with information to contact Crime Stoppers: 1800 333 000.

Mr Louis Parnis, the president of the association, told us that security has been upgraded and the centre will continue to function as usual, serving the Maltese/Australian community of the region. He said he received thousands of messages of solidarity form all over the world.

We will keep you informed of any new developments.





FEDERATION OF MALTESE  
LANGUAGE SCHOOLS INC.

FEDERAZZJONI TAL-ISKEJJEL TAL-MALTI INC. (AWSTRALJA)  
916 87

ABN: 60 436

Dear Maltese Community Council leaders, Communicators and Educators.

The Federation of Maltese Language Schools (FMLS) have been supportive of retaining Year 12 VCE/HSC/SACE accreditation. VCE/HSC/SACE is the ultimate acknowledgment to students who sacrifice their Saturday mornings to study and learn the Maltese Language, their helpful parents, dedicated teachers and for all those who were involved in the exams.

The standard attained at VCE level should assist in maintaining a level of Maltese Language both spoken and written within the Maltese Community to future generation. The aging Maltese community would be the beneficiary of this.

The news that we do not have any students sitting for VCE in this the final year of the triennial allowance where we must have a minimum of 15 students nationally is a dire update. The fact that in Victoria we do not even have a teacher to teach VCE is even more dreadful. See attached letter from VSL.

The FMLS will be writing to the CEO OF THE Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) the Acting CEO of the NSW Education Authority (NESA) and the SACE Board South Australia requesting that:

That VCAA, NESA, SACE SA defer the loss of VCE accreditation for the Maltese language by 12 months to allow the Maltese community to rally to increase student enrolments.

That because of the low intake of students, the VCAA, NESA, SACE SA allow students or Adults from other states to attend classes by correspondence/directly in order to sit for VCE/HSC/SACE irrespective of the state residence.

As leaders of community affiliated community groups, communicators and educators, we are seeking letters of support from you to strengthen this cause. This is the last opportunity we have in trying to keep Maltese VCE/HSC/SACE for future generations. A draft letter of support is attached for ease of reference.

Please email your letters directly to the FMLS - [edwidgeborg@hotmail.com](mailto:edwidgeborg@hotmail.com) to collect and send as a group by not later than 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 2019. If you need further inform call me on 0432 629 909.

Thanking you in anticipation of a prompt support.

Edwidge Borg President Federation of Maltese Language Schools Inc. (Australia)

18 March, 2019

Ms Edwidge Borg - President

Federation of Maltese Language Schools Inc (Australia)

Dear Edwidge, Re: Maltese VCE

As you are aware, our school has been supportive of Maltese retaining its (Year 12) VCE accreditation and reaching the minimum number of 15 students. The situation has been made worse by the fact that States like South Australia and New South Wales no longer teach Maltese.

Unfortunately, this year we do not have even one student studying the language at either the Year 11 or Year 12 level at the Taylors Lakes Centre of the Victorian School of Languages. At the VSL Centre of Taylors Lakes, we have two Maltese classes, namely Years F-6, with Ms Sonia Aquilina Years 7-10, with Ms Gabriella Seisun. It is now problematic on how we can justify a VCE class for adults given that

☐ we are not aware of a Maltese teacher available who could take a VCE class

☐ the VCAA does not want the Victorian School of Languages to teach students from other Australian States. I therefore regret that we cannot assist with running a VCE class for adults.

One suggestion that I would make is to write to the CEO of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requesting that the VCAA defer the loss of VCE accreditation for the Maltese Language by 12 months as to allow the Maltese community to rally to increase the student enrolments. Letters of support could also come from the Maltese Community Centre, the Maltese Consul General and other key Maltese organisations. I'm also prepared to write a letter of

support on behalf of our school. Kind regards,

Frank Merlino Principal - Victorian School of Languages - Department of Education & Training

VSL Head Office 315 Clarendon St, Thornbury Victoria 3071 Australia PO Box 1172 Thornbury VIC



The editor of the Maltese Journal encourages all our readers, leaders, associations and members of the Maltese community all over Australia to write a letter of support so that our language will continue to retain its place in the education system in Australia. (see instructions above)

# Who Were the Knights of St John in Malta?

NICOLA COLLINS



From the 16th to the 19th centuries, Malta was ruled by the Order of the Knights of St John. But who were they and what did they do for the island?

The Order of the Knights of St John – also known as the Knights Hospitaller, Order of the Knights of the Hospital of St John in Jerusalem, and Order of Hospitallers – was a Catholic Military Order established in 603 when Pope Gregory commissioned a

hospital to be built in Jerusalem, with the main purpose of caring for the sick and injured pilgrims arriving at the Holy Land. By 1530, the Knights had arrived and settled in Malta, after being given the island by the King of Sicily, Charles I of Spain. The knights stayed in Malta and the island remained under the rule of the order for the following 250 years.

**ARRIVAL IN MALTA** - Following the Ottoman siege in 1522, the Order of St John were forced to leave Rhodes and, after several years of moving around Europe, eventually settled in Malta with Birgu (one of Malta's three cities) becoming their capital. The area surrounding Birgu was fortified with extra buildings to strengthen their defences including a fortress, Fort St Angelo, which was previously a Medieval castle known as Castrum Maris. Fort St Angelo was to become the knights' main headquarters during the Great Siege – a perfect location overlooking Malta's Grand Harbour. With Malta as their new home, the order began to produce its own mint of coins on the island – the scudo.

**UNDER ATTACK** - Facing Muslims, Barbary Pirates and the Ottomans, it was the Ottomans who attempted to take control of Fort St Angelo. However, hugely outnumbered, the Ottoman forces took to invading Malta's sister island of Gozo instead. Nearby Tripoli was captured by the Ottomans and the knights made a mission to repopulate the island of Gozo, while at the same time strengthening the Grand Harbour's defences with the construction of new fortresses of St Elmo and St Michael, around which the city of Senglea began to take shape. In the mid-16th century, however, one of the deadliest tornadoes ever recorded hit Malta, killing nearly 600 people and destroying four of the order's galleys – a major setback for the order.

**THE GREAT SIEGE** - The constant battle between the Order of the Knights and the Islamic Ottoman Empire over the rule of the Mediterranean came to a head in 1565 in the form of the Great Siege. The Ottoman sultan, Suilemon the Magnificent, gave orders for Malta to be invaded, sending 40,000 men to fight against 700 knights and 8,000 soldiers in a quest to take over Malta. As the situation became desperate, the council requested that the fortresses of Birgu and St Michael were abandoned and concentration should be put in protecting the island purely from Fort St Angelo. Grand Master of the Knights, Jean Parisot de Vallette refused profusely. After a considerable hesitation, help was eventually sent from the Viceroy of neighbouring Sicily under the orders of Philip II of Spain.

The course of the Great Siege saw the Turks winning over Fort St Elmo and attacking Fort St Angelo and Fort St Michael whereby almost all the knights and soldiers defending them were killed. The Maltese people aided the knights as much as possible by throwing boiling oil and stones on the Turks from the top of the fortifications. On September 7, after a long and desperate wait, Catholic reinforcements arrived from Sicily in the form of the 'Gran Soccorso'. Not as great in numbers as expected, the help was enough for Turkish Admiral, Piali Pasha, to realise his ships would soon be surrounded. On September 8, the Turks destroyed all their tents on Malta, and the following days saw the Turks back on their ships heading home, defeated

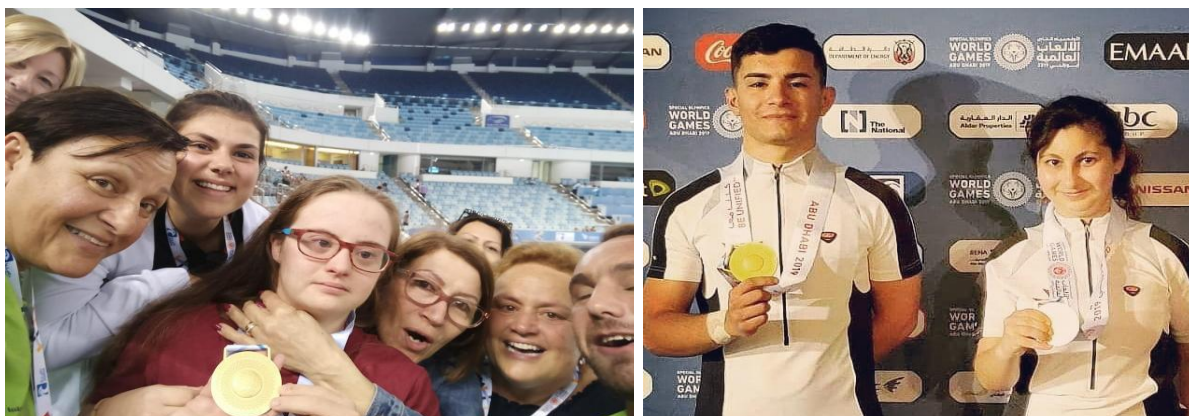
**THE FUTURE OF THE ORDER** - La Vallette was named a hero throughout Catholic Europe and was awarded a dagger, and a gold and jewelled sword by the Holy Roman Emperor, Philip II of Spain. Vallette was now on a mission to restore the areas ruined during the siege and appealed to the European Courts to build a new city on the area known as the Sciberras Peninsula. In 1566 the

foundation stone was laid for the city 'built by gentlemen, for gentlemen'. The new city would be known as Valletta.

The Knights of the Order of St John remained in Malta for the next 200 years. In 1798, the island came under siege again by the French forces under Napoleon. The order was expelled and the islands of Malta came under French occupation. This remained until 1800 when the Maltese rebelled against the French and the islands became protected by the British. In 1802, the islands were returned to the order but remained under British rule. Malta continues to celebrate the end of the siege on September 8 every year, known as Victory Day.

## **Updated: Five gold medals for Special Olympics Malta in Abu Dhabi**

**Two silver medals won in table tennis**



**Maria Pia Saliba holds her gold medal in Abu Dhabi.**

Special Olympics Malta won its first medals at the World Games currently being held in Abu Dhabi. n Gozitan swimmer Maria Pia Saliba won the first gold medal for the Maltese contingent when she placed first in the 25 metres butterfly.

The second gold medal of the day for Special Olympics Malta came from the track and field events as Ann Ebejer stormed to victory in the 200 metres race.

The Unified Bowling team, formed by Peter Mallia, Philip Gruppetta, Amanda Cini and Jessica Farrugia topped the competition to hand the Special Olympics Malta their third gold medal of the day. Later in the day, Malta struck success in the cycling competitions.

Guisepina Galea and Carmelo Pace both won a gold medal in the 2km time trial race.

It is the first time that Special Olympics Malta was represented in such an event.

The other two medals won by the Maltese team came in table tennis where Warren Schembri and Doreen Vella both took silver.



## **AN INVITATION TO THE MEMBERS OF THE MALTESE COMMUNITY IN ADELAIDE**

### **REUNION PICNIC**

**Venue:** REUNION PICNIC at Bonython Park, Port Road (opposite Coca Cola Building)

**Time:** from 11.00am onwards

**Date:** 31 March 2019

**BYO:** Food, Drinks. Chairs and photos you may want to share

This is an opportunity to bring your family and friends together and catch up with those who you don't see on a regular basis

**For more information Contact:** Lawrie Caruana 0407 886 899 or Catherine Saliba 0438 825 174





## New Zealand shooter pencilled Malta on his gun barrel

One of the attackers of the New Zealand massacre inscribed 'Malta' on his weapons twice: once on the barrel of his shotgun and another time on the foregrip of his assault rifle. The shotgun inscription specifically said 'Malta 1565' in reference to the Great Siege of

Malta. The foregrip inscription read 'Malta 1571' in reference to the Battle of Lepanto, when Malta sailed out to seek a 250-galley Muslim fleet at Lepanto, Italy.

The Australian-born shooter had even published a 40-page manifesto on image-board website 8chan. Malta was not invoked in the shooter's manifesto but Islamophobic and white supremacist rhetoric riddles the pages. Most of the writings appear to be non-sensical however. The guns used by the murderer (he had at least six in his car) were covered in racial slurs like 'Kebab Remover' and 'Migration Compact.' Another scribbling reads: 'Vienna 1683' – a reference to the Battle of Vienna – another historic clash between Christian and Ottoman forces.

**WE WHOLEHEARTEDLY CONDEMN THIS BRUTAL ACT AND WE ARE IN SOLIDARITY WITH OUR FELLOW NEW ZEALANDERS – WE ARE AGAINST HATE AND RACISM**



## Feel The Magic – the project

*Feel the Magic* represents a strong three-year vision that seeks to place the arts and creativity at the heart of Gozo's future. The project supports the implementation of a series of high-profile concerts in collaboration with international and national organizations and aims to develop a co-ordinated yearly programme of events. This year's offer features:

**Feel the Magic of Brass – Kempinski Hotel, San Lawrenz**

**Feel the magic of Piazzolla – Independence Square,**

### **Victoria**

**Feel the Magic of Musical Theatre – Cittadella Ditch, Victoria**

**Feel the Magic of Classics – Exhibition Hall (Ministry for Gozo)**

**Feel the Magic of Christmas – Saint George's Basilica, Victoria**

### **Mission Statement**

Chorus Urbanus Productions is a non-profit organization that is a very active protagonist in the national cultural scenario. It is the organization's mission to co-ordinate and present notable cultural events throughout the year. It is our policy to produce and present concerts of a very high standard both by local and international artists within the limits of our budgetary constraints, that are however generously supported by the Gozo Cultural Support Programme Fund. The *Feel the Magic* Project is spread over four major concerts per year (one for every season) and one Grand Concert featuring various soloists, Choir, Children's Choir, Orchestra, and Choreography. Orchestra and , in the open-air during the Summer months.

### **Aims and Objectives:**

The philosophy behind the setting up of this project is triggered by a culturally rich and eminently educational approach. Our policy gives a high priority to the promotion of top-level local talent to share the limelight with foreign high-calibre artists. It is our objective to enhance the international status of the Project with seasoned local and international performers being invited to perform a varied repertoire that promises to be exciting in its exploration of the magic of the Arts.



## **CHAPLAIN FOR THE MALTESE COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA - FR. GABRIEL S. MICALLEF OFM**

**Celebrating 50th anniversary as a priest, 75<sup>th</sup> birthday and 23<sup>rd</sup> years in Adelaide as Chaplain to the Maltese Community in South Australia.**

Father Gabriel Micallef was born at the village of St. Lawrence in Gozo, Malta on the 24 March 1944. His parents were Giuseppe and Marija nee Apap and was named Stephen. He joined the Franciscan Order on 30 September 1960 and ordained priest on 22 March 1969

Served in Gozo during 1969 — 1974. Fr. Micallef served also in Libya as Maltese and English Chaplain and Parish Priest for the American Com. from 1974-1979. He was Father Guardian at the Gozo Novitiate House between 1979-1985

During his time he built a Youth Centre and a feast and decorations storage. Between 1985-87 he served again, on and of, in Libya. Father Micallef was appointed superior at the Retreat House Bahar-ic-Caghaq, Malta 1987-96. He renovated the Retreat House, erected the Stations of the Cross around the complex and built the new Church and Friary at Palm Beach, Malta.



*In the photo on the left – Father Giles Ferriggi (deceased) together with Father Gabriel Micallef.*

He arrived in Adelaide on 26 July 1996 and was appointed Chaplain to the Maltese Community in South Australia. He is also on loan to the Archdiocese of Adelaide since 1997.

Father served also as Parish Administrator of Christ the King Church. He is also the Spiritual Director of the Maltese Community Council and several Maltese associations in

South Australia. He looks after the spiritual needs of the members of the Maltese community in this State. Fr. Gabriel celebrates Holy Mass in Maltese at the parish church of Christ the King, Lockleys every second



Fr. Gabriel with Bishop of Tripoli - Libya  
Mgr. Attilio Previtali O.F.M

Sunday of each month at 3.00 pm. He also conducts baptisms, weddings, anointing of the sick and funerals for the community members as well as social work and confessions. He enjoys the respect of all who know him especially the Maltese in Adelaide. Fr. Gabriel also celebrates Mass at the Maltese Cultural Centre, Beverley and at St. Brigid Church for the Maltese Senior Citizens..

Here is the list of Franciscan priests who served at the Christ the King Parish, Lockleys South Australia

Fr. Giles Ferriggi 1948 – 2000, Fr. Sebastian Camilleri 1949-53 and 1992-2003, Fr. PeterPaul Meilaq 1950-60 and 1976-1078, Fr. Vittorin Alessandro 1952-54, Fr. Benedict Ellul Mercer 1957-1958, Fr. Leopold Farrugia 1962-75, Fr. Philip Briffa 1962-68, Fr. Marcellinus Mejlaq 1967-75, Fr. Edward Zammit 1972-75, 1978-83 and 1994-2003, Fr. Emidius Cremona 1977-78, Fr. Felix Mansueto 1979-1991, Fr. Richard Grech 1983-84, Fr. Godfrey Micallef 1987-93, Fr. Anthony Vella 1992-95 and Fr. Gabriel Micallef 1996 -

*The Editor and readers of this journal wish our chaplain  
**Ad Mustos Annos***

**Fr Gabriel Micallef**  
**50 Sena Saċerdot**  
**1969 – 2019**

Fuq xewqa tas-Sur Scicluna -  
Ta' dal-'Journal' editur  
Qiegħed nikteb poezija  
Għax iż-żmien jaħrab w imur

Mindu Fr Gabriel għalaq  
*Hamsin Sena* saċerdot  
Mill-idejn l-Arċisqof Gonzi –  
Prelat integru u sod!

F'San Lawrenz Gabriel twieled  
Lejn it-tmiem tat-Tieni Gwerra  
Ġo familja fqira w twajba  
Li mank biss ma kellhom serra

Biex ikabbru l-uċuħ tagħhom  
U b'hekk jgħajxu lill-familja  
Imma fejn il-barka t'Alla  
Minn tal-ferħ tathom il-milja.

Kien għadu daqsxejn t'abbati  
Fil-knisja tar-raħal tiegħu  
Meta beda sa minn kmieni  
Lil Frangisku jhaddan miegħu

Sa ma spiċċa ċ-ċoqqa libes  
U sar żagħżuġ Frangiskan -  
Fil-kunvent tal-Imġarr hieni  
U laħaq ta' ħajtu l-pjan!

Hawnhekk stinka w tħabat bosta  
Biex lill-knisja jarma sewwa  
Biż-żebgħa u bil-pittura  
U bl-irham li tara ġewwa!

17 – 03 -2019

Għamel żmien jgħalliem l-iskola  
Fejn żgur wettaq ħafna ġid  
Fost studenti li illum kibru  
B'rieda soda tal-ħadid.

Ta sehmu wkoll fl-Oratorju  
Li hemm f'Pjazza Sant Wistin  
Fost tant tfal, żgħażaġħ w adulti  
Magħhom għadda ħafna ħin!

Spiċċa anke' ġewwa l-Libja  
Fost tant ġnus kbar u mħalltin  
F' nofs tant ġiri u periklu  
Kif fassallu d-destin!

Sa ma reġa' lura f'Għawdex  
Gwardjan fil-kunvent tal-Imġarr  
U f'Baħar iċ-Ĉaġħak sa rifes  
Il-ġid għamel kull fejn mar.

Tlieta w għoxrin sena għosfru  
Mindu f'Adelaide issetilja  
Minn dil-ħidma kollha sfieqa  
Mhux lakemm issa jirpilja.

Imma għalih aħna nitolbu  
Sabiex ikompli għaddej  
Pass pass miexi miegħu Alla  
Fiż-żmien kollu illi ġej!

Għażiż raheb ta' Frangisku  
Nixtieqlek saħħa ta' plier  
Dawn l-awguri mill-qalb, ilqa'  
Ġejjin m'għand il-Kavallier!

Kav Joe M Attard  
Rabat – Għawdex



## MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

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## Parish Church of Christ the King - Lockleys SA



The Parish of Christ the King at Lockleys this year has celebrated its 59th Birthday. The Parish of Lockleys and the South Australia. Maltese Community Chaplaincy know their origin to the same and one person, Fr. Giles Ferriggi OFM.



It all started in the immediate years after World War 2 when the Maltese started emigrating to the four corners of the globe, looking for a more promising future, since back home jobs were becoming hard to acquire.

Fr. Giles together with other Maltese Franciscans offered their services abroad with the emigrants and he arrived in Adelaide in 1948. The then Archbishop of Adelaide, His Grace Matthew Beovich offered him residence

at Archbishop's House in the city and appointed him as Chaplain to the Maltese Community.

A year later he was joined by Fr Sebastian Camilleri and both were offered a plot of land with a big house at Lockleys. The Chapel in this Franciscan House served as a place of worship for the neighbourhood. It became the church for locals and many Maltese migrants. The dream and vision of the first Franciscans started becoming a reality. Their pastoral work increased, so much so, that in November 1950 another priest from Malta, in the person of Fr. Peter Paul Mejlac, joined them. A Nissen Hut to serve as a Church was built next to the house and was blessed by Archbishop Matthew Beovich on August 3, 1952 thus giving birth to the New Parish. Malta kept sending Friars to help in the running of the Parish to date, fifteen in all. In 1960 a bigger Church dedicated to Christ the King started to be built and was officially blessed on September 3, 1961 while the Nissen Hut now was to serve as a Parish Community Hall.



To have it all complete St. Francis Primary School was built and was officially opened in 1966 and a new Hall replacing the Nissen Hut was built in 1980. To add flavour to it, on the same grounds adjoining the Friary, the Maltese Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1987 started running their St. Raphael's Home for the Aged and in 1990 were housed at the old Friary House and made it their Regional House, where the Friars moved to a newly bought adjoining residence.

**Maltese e-Newsletter**



**FIND US ON FACEBOOK: [frankscicluna.3](https://www.facebook.com/frankscicluna.3)**

**Malta Migration Museum - Valletta**

**Maltese-Canadian Archives - Toronto, Canada**

**Gozo National Library - website - [www.ozmalta.com](http://www.ozmalta.com)**

## - New gold and silver coins



I have just finished going through your Maltese Journal 258. Congratulations on a well-balanced journal . I look forward to receiving it, because apart from being a pleasure to read, it keeps me in touch with not only important Malta news but also what's happening within the Maltese Community in Australia. Thank you for keeping The Australia House shameful state alive. Every time I see these recent photos they bring tears to my eyes. I remember 1985 when a group of Maltese community leaders were invited as guests

to fly to Malta on the inaugural Singapore Airline direct flight to Malta. That was a great experience and it gave the group a chance to meet with various representatives of both sides of the political arena, including the then Prime Minister, Dr Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici and Dr Fenech Adami, leader of the Opposition . The issue of Australia House was discussed then and both sides agreed that it should be well maintained and preserved as a memory of the bond that has bound Malta and Australia for over a hundred years. Jim Borg NSW



## A VERY SUCCESSFUL FUNCTION ORGANISED BY THE GEORGE CROSS FALCONS COMMUNITY IN NSW

*Photo: Charles Mifsud,  
Stacey Saliba, J Anvil (Ian  
James Vella) and Louis  
Parnis*

The George Cross Falcons Community Centre had the pleasure of presenting to all its members and guests near and far the amazing and very entertaining Maltese star JANVIL and Stacey Saliba. It was the best show the Centre has had and no one was disappointed. On behalf of the President, Louis Parnis, Committee and Volunteers would like to thank Janvil and Stacey for a wonderful concert which we, the Illawarra Maltese Community, friends and family will never forget and a great thank you to all the supporters of the Centre for being there to enjoy this momentous occasion.

Ian James Vella, stage name J Anvil, born August 4th, 1975 in Attard. 8 year's ago Ian decided to trust himself and participated in the Malta's Song for Europe festival. His song YOU, composed by Augusto Cardinali, with lyrics by John Attard were chosen among more than a hundred others and was one of the 22 finalists competing to win the honour of representing Malta in the Eurovision song contest 2005. At his young age Ian has already accomplished a lot in life. As dancer, husband, and father and now as a singer, his story is quite inspiring.





## Beyond Gallipoli

### A very successful function in Adelaide

BEYOND GALLIPOLI reminds us what happened behind the scenes at Gallipoli in WW1. Thousands of sick and wounded ANZACs journeyed to Malta (which was known as the Nurse Island of the Mediterranean) for medical and hospital treatment. It also reminds us of those buried ANZACs in Malta, the hospital ships, hospitals, doctors and nurses, the role of the Red Cross, the Australian Hall which was built in 1915 and more. To remember those thousands involved in BEYOND GALLIPOLI, South Australia will feature in the First ANZAC SPORTS scheduled to be played in Malta between Australia, New Zealand and host Malta. The event is tentatively scheduled for 25th April 2020 after the traditional ANZAC Service held in Pieta Military Cemetery. The Adelaide Launch (Dinner Dance) was held on Saturday the 16th March 2019 to kick start the planning process, outline the first ANZAC Day sports program.

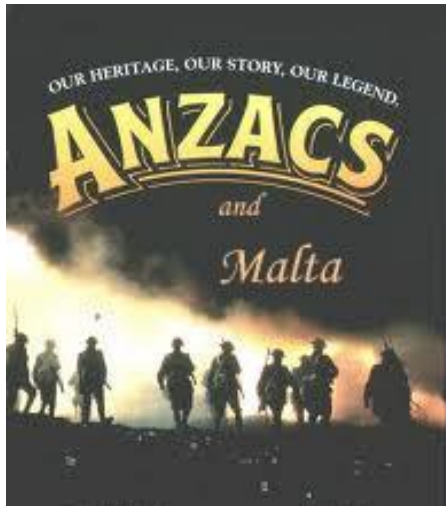
The organisers received positive feedback not only from the 170 people who attended the event , also attracted lots of interest and support from Canberra – Governor General and Ministers. The function was held at the Sicilian Club, Klemzig. John Calleja, the Malta ANZAC Campaign Director and volunteer added a special military service at the start of the evening recognising the 18 South Australian ANZACs buried in Malta.

The audience included: Politicians, Mayors, Deputy Mayors, War Widows Guild ladies, teachers and the general public – all stayed to the end enjoying the live music and the excellent food. The Hon Consul of Malta in South Australia, Frank Scicluna, delivered a moving speech reminding the important role Malta played in WWI as the Nurse Island of the Mediterranean, the Maltese people working tirelessly establishing hospitals, assisting doctors and nurses and more. He mentioned also the efforts of the Maltese community of South in contributing to the establishment of the ANZAC monument in Firoiana, Malta.

John Calleja said that, “The purpose of the fundraising evening was to raise funds for rowing boats to be send to Malta in readiness for ANZAC Day 2020. Eighteen (18) Adelaide students [Ages 16 -18) will be chosen to race in Valletta Harbour against Malta best rowing students [ Boys and Girls] in a friendly but competitive race. It is expected 3 teams will be competing – more details provide later in the year.”

With plenty of raffle prizes, door prize, and plenty of sporting memorabilia for silent auction, made the evening a very successful event. More future functions are planned to make this project eventuate.





## Anzacs, Malta and the First World War

THE hospitals and convalescent camps on Malta dealt with more than 135,000 sick and wounded troops, mainly from the campaigns at Gallipoli and Salonika from 1915 onwards, according to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Many soldiers died from their wounds and Pieta Military Cemetery contains the graves of 1303 casualties of the First World War.

There are also 166 burials from World War



**MALTA - Australia Hall - 2016**



**ANZAC soldiers nursed at Cottonera hospital, Malta in WWI**

Two.

Trooper William Sharpe is one of 204 Australian and 72 New Zealand servicemen from the First World War buried on Malta.

In May 2013 a new memorial was inaugurated in memory of the Anzacs who lost their lives at Gallipoli and during World War Two.

On its steps are recorded the names of those Anzacs who died for their country.

The memorial stands in the Argotti Botanical Gardens in Floriana, not far from Pieta Military Cemetery.

The Anzac presence in Malta during the First World War is also recognised by the naming of Triq Anzac or Anzac Street in Pembroke, Malta.

On this street are the remains of Australia Hall.

Although now derelict due to severe fire damage in 1998, Australia Hall stands as a monument to the Anzacs on Malta



and the Australian Coat of Arms is still clearly visible above the front door.

The Australian Branch of the Red Cross and donations from Australian public built the hall for the benefit of the soldiers of the empire. It opened in January 1916 and was extremely popular with the Anzac troops and the doctors and nurses from the hospitals and convalescent camps. On a busy night well over 2000 soldiers would pack into the hall.

## Too much, too young? Buttigieg could become the first millennial US president



He is the son of a Maltese immigrant, Christian, contemporary of Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard, Rhodes scholar at Oxford, city mayor before his 30th birthday, Afghanistan war veteran, piano player, polyglot, fan of James Joyce and, now, at the grand old age of 37, would-be first millennial president.

Buttigieg speaks Arabic, Dari, French, Italian, Maltese, Norwegian and Spanish to greater or lesser extents but has a Midwestern understatement that seems to neutralise Trump-era sneering and anti-intellectualism.

US Presidential hopeful Pete Buttigieg announced yesterday morning that he meets the funding threshold to participate in this summer's US presidential debates. The South Bend, Indiana, mayor said says he's received contributions from 65,000-plus individual donors. In an email to supporters, Buttigieg said, "we weren't even close" to 65,000 donors when the DNC originally announced the requirement but the 37-year-old combat veteran and Maltese descendant says more than 76,000 people have now donated to his campaign.

He also told 'Fox News Sunday' that "all of the signs are pointing in the right direction" to shift from just exploring a 2020 run to becoming an official candidate. Buttigieg is making waves in the early days of the 2020 campaign.

At a CNN town hall in Austin, Texas on 11 March, he took Vice President Mike Pence to task, observing how his state's former governor and he have different views of their Christian faith and that he doesn't understand Pence's loyalty to President Donald Trump.

Buttigieg said his feeling "is that the Scripture is about protecting the stranger, the prisoner, the poor person, and that idea of welcome. That's what I get in the Gospel when I'm in church." He said Pence's view "has a lot more to do with sexuality, a certain view of rectitude." Buttigieg said he is puzzled by Pence's strong support for the president.

He also pointed out that experience was what qualified him to run for president - despite the fact that he is only 37-years-old and represents a city of roughly 100,000 people.

And in doing so, Buttigieg took a shot at both President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence: "I have more years of government experience under my belt than the President. That's a low bar. I know that. I also have had more years of executive government experience than the vice president."

He added that he had "more military experience than anybody to walk into that office on day one since George H.W. Bush. "I get that I'm the young guy in the conversation, but experience is what qualifies me to have a seat at this table."

Buttigieg said the question was "fair" and that he "shouldn't be running if I weren't prepared to answer it". The mayor's age often comes up on the campaign trail, in part because Buttigieg looks even younger than his 37 years, a fact he often notes. "I understand the audacity of running for president at my age especially because sometimes downstairs I'll still get carded when I order a beer," he said.

He also joked a bit with CNN's Jake Tapper about the pronunciation of his last name, which has baffled some Americans. Last year, his husband, Chasten, tweeted a list of possible pronunciations: "boot-edge-edge," "buddha-judge," "boot-a-judge" and "boo-tuh-judge."

Pete Buttigieg, mayor of South Bend, Indiana, knows he's a long shot for the White House.

In a recent Monmouth University poll, only 14% of Democrats and those that lean Democrat could form an opinion of him and 58% said they had never heard of him.

Should he win the Democratic presidential nomination and defeat President Trump in 2020, Buttigieg, 37, would be the youngest, and first millennial, president in US history, the first candidate to go straight from the mayor's office to the White House and the first gay president.

## Holqa: International Youth Arts Festival

**Holqa** has established itself as a regular on the Maltese cultural calendar. Previously known for its focus on theatre and performance, the annual youth Festival organised by Ġ.F. Abela Junior College has extended its branches to all spheres of visual and performing arts, becoming an International Youth Arts Festival.

The Festival is going to be held between 25 and 29 March 2019 in various spaces around the College. The opening is on 25 March at 14:00 in the Junior College Auditorium. On 28 March, Venue18 at Junior College in collaboration with Inizjamed will hold an open mic session for all.

In its sixth edition, the Festival, offers various opportunities to youths who work in the local visual arts and performative arts scene to showcase their talents and exchange various experiences with youths from different countries. This year's theme is diversability, which sees a collaboration between participants from local foreign schools, alongside entities that work with clients with various abilities to create a dialogue through art.

Along with performances by foreign participants from Ireland, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria and France, the programme will showcase the talent of the Junior College Orchestra, band, dance group, visual arts group and Teatru Kullegġ. In its aim to promote local talent, and in view of this year's theme, the Festival will include participants from MCAST, Gozo's Sir Michelangelo Sixth Form together with Spero, Aġenzija Sapport, Opening Doors and Maria Gauci. During the week of activities, the Festival goers will have the opportunity to experience different theatrical styles, music concerts, dance shows, visual arts exhibition, documentaries and films, structured discussions, interviews and workshops.

This year Holqa is working closely with Opening Doors to put up a Festival that celebrates diversity in all its forms. Holqa would like to thank Aldo Cauchi Savona, Sandra Mifsud, Mary-Ann Cauchi u Arts Council Malta, Alka Ceramics and Inizjamed. Holqa is made possible thanks to help of Premju tal-President għall-Kreattività, Buzzer Stationers and HSBC.

### Programme

#### Monday 25 March

14:00 Opening Ceremony and performance by Spero

#### Tuesday 26 March

09:00 Special Performance: Nicole Frendo

09:20 Performance Gozo Group

11:00 Special Performance: Kaylie Magri

11:20 Performance Aġenzija Sapport

14:00 Performance Belgian Group

15:00 Performance Żfin Kullegġ

#### Wednesday 27 March

09:00 Performance Rock Band JC in canteen

0900 Performance Irish Group in Auditorium

1100 Pottery workshop (Art room)

1100 Performance Spanish Group

#### Thursday 28 March

12:00 Performance MCAST

14:00 Martina Zammit interviews dancer Maria Gauci + mentor Rachel Calleja

15:00 Performance JC Orchestra

20:00 Open Mic @ Venue18 with Inizjamed

#### Friday 29 March

09:00 Performance Italian Group

11:00 Performance Bulgarian Group

13:00 Performance Teatru Kullegġ

14:00 Closing Ceremony

[Leanne Ellul]

Adrian Rollins Published: 20 Apr 2015. Please, voice your opinion about this issue. We need support.







## MaltaPost new philatelic items to mark stamp exhibition in Italy

The Milanofil stamp fair is taking place this weekend in Italy and MaltaPost's Philatelic Bureau will be participating with a variety of Maltese stamps related to various popular themes

The stamp fair is an annual event where international postal operators showcase their philatelic items. The Philatelic Bureau is issuing an Occasion Card, Personalised Stamp/Cover and a philatelic numismatic cover featuring the exhibition logo for the event. The Occasion Card will be available for sale from Friday, the 22nd of March at all Post Offices.

Orders for the Personalised Stamp/Cover may be placed online at [www.maltaphilately.com](http://www.maltaphilately.com) or by mail from the Philatelic Bureau, MaltaPost p.l.c. 305, Qormi Road, Marsa, MTP 1001 – Telephone 2596 1740 – e-mail: [info@maltaphilately.com](mailto:info@maltaphilately.com)



## Miriam Gauci to star in Puccini's masterpiece – Manon Lescaut

This year's opera production for Gaultana: A Festival of Music is Puccini's masterpiece – Manon Lescaut.

The opera is being presented following an absence of over 20 years from the local stage, with Miriam Gauci featuring in the title-role, following on her "triumphant and touching" Madama Butterfly in 2017. Gaultana said that Des Grieux will be interpreted by acclaimed Puccini singer Enrique Ferrer – renowned for his dramatic power, personality and musicality. The tenor boasts an impressive career performing in prestigious opera houses including La Fenice, Arena di Verona, Torre del Lago and the Carnegie Hall.

Lucio Gallo returns to Malta to perform Lescaut following his "first-rate" and "unforgettable Scarpia" for Tosca at the Aurora Theatre last October, and Geronte will be sung by Luciano Leoni. The cast is complemented by Didier Pieri (Edmondo, Dance Master, Lamplighter), Joseph Lia (Innkeeper, Naval Captain), Ken Scicluna (Sergeant) and Clare Ghigo (Singer).

Enrico Castiglione is directing the production, saying that he "seeks to portray a contemporary approach to Prevost's classic where life and love are a game during which winners and losers abound."

As such, Gaultana said that the director's set designs take cue from the card-playing scenes in the opera's plot. The surtitled production will be conducted by Colin Attard, featuring the Gaultanus Choir and the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra.

Manon Lescaut, part of the OPERA+ Weekend in the Festival programme, will be held on Saturday, the 6th of April. Booking is open via ticket helpline 79045779.

Gaultana is supported by the Gozo Cultural Support Programme of Arts Council Malta in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo and partnered by APS Bank

## Saint John Paul II a 'significant ship' – Royal Institute of Naval Architects



### New Virtu Ferries catamaran gets a prestigious notation

The hull of the Saint John Paul II was specifically designed for Mediterranean weather conditions.

The *Saint John Paul II*, delivered to Virtu Ferries on February 6, 2019 by shipbuilders Incat Tasmania, has been selected for the prestigious notation 'Significant Ship 2018', by the highly respected Royal Institute of Naval Architects (RINA).

The Institute was founded in London in 1860, with the aim of advancing "the art and science of

ship design." Institute members occupy positions of high standing in the maritime industry worldwide, including universities and leading maritime institutions.

RINA publishes a highly select annual list describing the most innovative and important commercial vessel designs delivered during the year by shipyards worldwide.

*Saint John Paul II* was described by Robert Clifford, Incat chairman, as the "most revolutionary built by the yard." Over the last decade Incat has delivered 44 large commercial fast ferries as well as smaller craft. The standard, well-trying, Incat Wavepiercer Hull design was modified after extensive hydrodynamic model trials, using the latest computational fluid dynamics methodology, in the state-of-the-art UK Ministry of Defence Ocean Basin Research facility in Gosport, Hampshire. This cutting-edge research was headed by Seaspeed Marine Consulting Limited UK.

This is the first time such research model testing has been carried out on high speed vessels of this tonnage and is a world first for Incat, Seaspeed and the Maltese maritime industry. The result is a hull specifically designed for Mediterranean weather conditions.

Passengers have a choice between travelling club class on the bridge deck or euro class on the main deck. Significantly, although the vessel is classed by international classification society DNV GL, to carry 900 passengers, there are 1,134 seats on board, including 138 outside on the two passenger decks, to ensure enough selective seating for everyone.

The interior design, with additional space in all lounges, is an added attraction. The garage is designed to carry 23 heavy commercial trailers or 167 cars. In commissioning the interior design of the vessel, Virtu has relied on 30 years of surveyed passenger feedback on the Malta-Sicily route and the experience gained from building the other six vessel that preceded *Saint John Paul II*.

The *Saint John Paul II* complies with the International Maritime Organisation HSC Code 2000 rules, as amended, the Malta Flag Statutory Requirements, Italian Port State Rules and EU Directive 1999/35/EC.

Members of the public will be invited to visit the vessel at the Virtu terminal in the coming weeks. An announcement to this effect will be made via the local media.

Virtu is a 100 per cent Maltese-owned company and it is with pride that all Virtu vessels fly the Malta flag.





## JUM IL-ĦELSIEN Freedom Day

## Malta Freedom Day in 2019

### Sunday, 31 March

Malta Freedom Day celebrates the end of the Defence Treaty and the withdrawal of British troops and the Royal Navy from Malta on 31 March 1979. In 1964, Malta gained [independence](#) and subsequently became a [Republic](#) in 1974. It would however take another 5 years for the British to completely withdraw from the islands and close its naval base.

Malta Freedom Day is celebrated on 31 March annually as a day of great national pride. Freedom Day marks the first time in centuries that Malta was free to rule itself without any kind of foreign influence

### Malta Freedom Day Facts & Quotes

- Malta gained its independence by drastically raising the price of rent for the British to park their ships. Britain's decision to pull out of Malta was eventually made by the royal family based largely on the fact that the cost of rent was too high.
- Malta is the smallest economy in the European Union. The nation only produces some 20% of the food it requires annually and it has little access to fresh water sources.
- Maltese took power in 1971 but allowed the British to continue using the island as a naval base for a rent fee of \$36.2 million.
- The Defence Treaty began in 1964 when the Maltese and the British agreed on mutual defence and assistance and allowed the British to maintain a military base on the islands.
- *Let freedom reign. The sun never set on so glorious a human achievement.* – [Nelson Mandela](#)



### CARLA CAMILLERI

Carla Camilleri is a Maltese born, New Zealand Soprano based in Auckland. Carla is currently completing her final

year of her Bachelor of Music at the University of Auckland under Dr Te Oti Rakena.

She performs regularly throughout the community in various performances and recently featured in the University's Opera, 'L'enfant et les Sortilèges'. She is a member of the New Zealand Youth Choir and regularly performs in concerts with

them around the country. She hopes to pursue a career in professional singing and performance upon completing her post-graduate studies.

Carla is a voice student at Auckland University in Classical Performance. She understudied 'The Mistress' for the 2016 Auckland season of 'Evita', plays the piano and speaks Maltese. Carla joined NZYC in 2017.



## 18

## BAJTAR TAX-XEWK F'MALTA *PRICKLY PEARS IN MALTA*



When traveling down almost any country lane around the islands it is often hard to miss the ever abundant cacti that flow over the *Ħajt tas-Sejjieħ* (rubble wall / dry stone wall) lining the roads. These flat cacti are the source of one of Malta's more unusual products and national obsessions ... the prickly pear.

Prickly pears are known as 'Bajtar tax-xewk' (*Opuntia ficus-indica* or Indian Fig)

Throughout the heights of summer, the Prickly pear reigns supreme in Malta's landscape. The small fruit gradually emerges throughout the year attached to

the end of the leaves and are ripe when they turn into any variety of bright colors. One will find shops and vans that sell them, kindly they remove the spines, which is certainly a relief. However, some brave souls may choose to pick and peel them for themselves, though this is best left to hardy folk whose hands seem glorious immune to the little spines. When peeled the color inside is a positively diverse rainbow of options with greens yellows, reds, and purples being among the more common.

While abundant, Malta does not seem to make a great deal of use from its Prickly pear harvest. In Sicily, they are adventurously turned into a plethora of delectable treats including candies, granitas, sorbets, ice creams and jellies as well as serving it up as dessert in restaurants. Here it is usually served one of two ways, either raw, where it has flavors similar to watermelon, honeydew melon, strawberries, and figs, or as the traditional liqueur Bajtra.

The procedure required to make the liqueur Bajtra begins with the extractions of the juices, and while the process is complicated and does require some effort, the fermentation process is similar to that of winemaking. When completed it appears as a baby pink liquid, should be served ice cold and lends itself dutifully as a delightful after dinner drink.

It is widely believed that prickly pears have medicinal properties. Many chemical compounds have been extracted from it which have been found to be useful against several conditions especially inflammations. In Malta, it was used against stomach aches, bone pain, inflammations, and insect stings.

Interestingly, a species of scale insect thrives on the prickly pear. This insect produces carmic acid which is used to make cochineal, a red dye used in red food coloring and cosmetics. The dye was used by the Aztec and Mayans in Oaxaca, Mexico, and exported to Europe, today it is still used as the coloring agent for all red Smarties.

So prolific is its place within Maltese culture that between 1975 and 1988 Malta's coat of arms featured a prickly pear plant, along with a traditional *Dgħajsa* and other symbols. We do hope you get the opportunity to enjoy them while you are on the islands.

**The Editor, staff and readers of the Maltese Journal are in solidarity with the Muslim community of New Zealand after the massacre of 50 worshippers. We are all united against hate and racism.**



# ANIMALS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

## The Pigeon:

Pigeons were used throughout the Front Line to communicate with Allies and send important messages to each other. Pigeons play a very important role during the War, they were difficult to catch, even almost impossible. Because of their speed they were able to send messages quite quickly. For pigeons to find their way to get home, they stayed at lofts before they were used during the war; whenever they were taken away from their loft, they would surely return home with the message without a problem!



## The Horse:

Horses were used throughout the Frontline on all sides of the War. They were used for transport for both humans and weapons and equipment. Horses played a useful role during the war, they were used for Cavalry Battles. They were also often used to carry the Artillery close by the Front Line. Hundreds and thousands of Horses were used on all sides of the War, but very little survived and most of them have died.



## The Dog:

Dogs were used within trenches to send messages between each other. Dogs were proven useful because of how well trained they were, their fast speed and travelling over any type of terrain. They were messengers. Not only were they used to send messages throughout the trench, but also served as a little companion to soldiers, to remind them of home comforts. Some dogs were even just attack dogs, to kill the enemies who attack near by.



When the war began, Europe's armies had an understanding of warfare that put the use of cavalry in high regard. Soon, however, the deadly terrain that evolved around trench warfare rendered cavalry attacks nearly useless on the Western Front. But the need for constant resupply, movement of new heavy weaponry, and the transport of troops demanded horse power on a massive scale -- automobiles, tractors, and trucks were relatively new inventions and somewhat rare.

British and French forces imported horses from colonies and allies around the world, a near-constant flow of hundreds of thousands of animals across the oceans, headed for war. One estimate places the number of horses killed during the four years of warfare at nearly 8 million.

Other animals proved their usefulness as well: Dogs became messengers, sentries, rescuers, and small beasts of burden. Pigeons acted as messenger carriers, and even (experimentally) as aerial reconnaissance platforms. Mules and camels were drafted into use in various war theatres, and many soldiers brought along mascots to help boost morale.

Only a couple of decades later, at the onset of World War II, most military tasks assigned to animals were done by machines, and warfare would never again rely so heavily on animal power.





## Case Against Karmnu (Carmelo) Psaila

Karmnu Psaila was Maltese by birth and British subject who traveled to Libya in

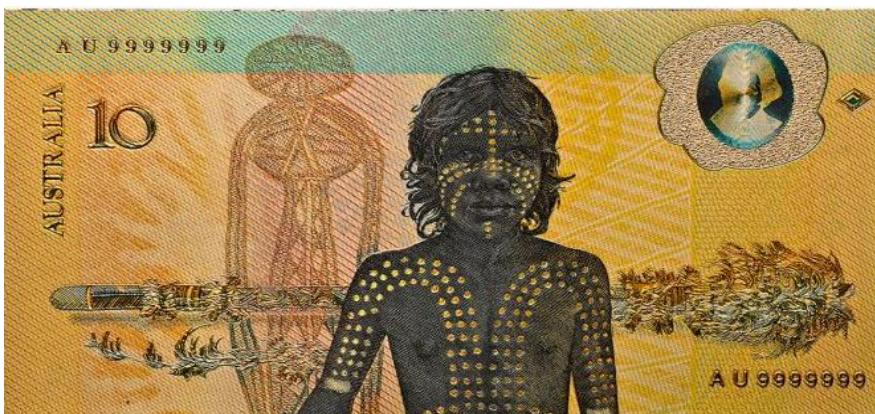


1921 to start and life with his wife Vittoria. He owned a barber shop in the shopping district of Suk el Turk in Tripoli. Life was good for the fourteen years he lived in Tripoli until he started talking against Mussolini, the Italian ruler of Libya at the time.

In the beginning of 1936, he was being observed by officers who later confirmed that every morning between 5:30 am to 7.00, Psaila spent his time at the Café Italia, in the Piazza dell-Orologio, reading the Italian newspapers among them the “Avvenire di Tripoli” and commenting unfavorably in public on every item of news, which had a ring of victory for the Fascist Italy. Psaila, made the same comments to his clients and to the neighboring shopkeepers. Psaila was in the habit of disparaging Italy and to make matters worse he continued to an increasing degree his inexplicable aversion to Italians. Later having become aware that he was being watched, Psaila placed small notices on the mirrors of his shop requesting his clients not to speak of political matters. Too little to late I suppose because soon after that he found himself before a special tribunal being accused of, in the time of war, spreading exaggerated and tendentious with the object of depressing the public spirit and engaged in activities likely to cause harm to the national, vilifying the Italian, making use of insulting expressions followed by acts of scorn.

There is no doubt regarding his guilt. All the witnesses were in the position to give evidence in detail regarding the facts. The fate of Psaila was made quite clear. After deliberation, the Court found Psaila guilty for the crime of political defeatism. He was sentenced to three years and eight months imprisonment. The Court also ordered that Psaila, on the conclusion of his sentence, should be expelled from the territory of the State.

## THE BANKNOTE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD *Australia's first modern polymer banknote receives a stunning tribute, finished in precious gold!*



After decades of research and experimentation by the CSIRO, Australia became the first country in the world to introduce polymer banknotes. It was the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, 1988, and the note was a special commemorative issue honouring the bicentenary of European

settlement in Australia. It was a ground-breaking release – for Australia, and the world. Our own polymer pioneer has now been immortalised in a beautiful replica, complete with a 24-carat gold finish! Eye-catching and affordable, this exquisite tribute is a must-have for all Australian collectors. It's available exclusively in Australia through Macquarie Mint.

## **MALTESE EMIGRANTS ALL OVER THE WORLD**



Although the Maltese Islands has a population of more than 450,000, it is estimated that the number of Maltese living around the world is many hundreds of thousands higher. That is because over the past two centuries thousands of Maltese left their homeland in search of a better future elsewhere.

In today's terms, they would have been 'economic migrants' and surely not 'illegal immigrants' because their mass migration from Malta was not just organised but also encouraged, especially in the 1960's when it was a handy solution to Malta's economic problems at its dawn of Independence in 1964. Many of these went to Englishspeaking countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia.

A century earlier they had just ventured in the Mediterranean and Maltese communities can today be traced in Tunisia, Gibraltar, Libya and Egypt. When pondering on issues related to the wave of illegal immigrants hitting the Maltese shores, the Maltese people surely know what it feels like to have to leave your mother country in search of a better life far away. In 1948 Australia signed an assisted passage agreement with Malta, the first that Australia had made with any country other than Britain. This resulted in large numbers of arrivals, peaking in the 1950s, with many hundreds travelling on the SS Asturias. The [passenger lists](#) indicate that most were young tradesmen, many travelling with brothers but without their parents. Maltese passengers who arrived on the Asturias are invited to submit their stories for publication.



Passport Photo

### **THE AZZOPARDI FAMILY**

Mary and her three boys - Tony, 5 years, Roger, 4 years and Godwin, 3 years - migrated from Malta to Australia, arriving on 25th August 1949. Father 'Edgar Azzopardi' had arrived earlier to work on a farm in Narrawong, near Portland, Victoria. The family was sponsored by the farmer as there was a shortage of farm hands after the war. Our parents felt there would be a better future for the children in Australia. As a four year old on the SS Asturias I recall getting lost on this enormous ship, and the purser eventually taking me back to my mother. I also recall my mother buying wares off the boats that came out to the ship

in the Port of Aden. They would raise baskets on ropes with the wares in them and then lower them again with money to pay for them. There are many members of the extended families now, and all are residing in Australia Roger Azzopardi Melbourne

### **MALTESE PRIESTS ALWAYS ASSISTED MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA**



Fr Ben Azzopardi and a number of Maltese men before leaving Malta for Australia in 1958. Australia, over the years, had a significant number of priests and religious working among the Maltese migrants.

Malta was an emigrant's country, however, it has not only sent its people to other countries but also priests who used to take care of them. Being predominantly Catholic, the Maltese community had many priests who were active in parish work, scripture teaching and charitable activities. A number of diocesan priests and

religious including Capuchins, Franciscans, Carmelites, Dominicans friars, and in later years the Missionary Society of St Paul, Franciscan Conventual, Dominican Sisters of Malta, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Augustinian Sisters and the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Maltese priest used to depart with every ship full of emigrants leaving the island some 50 years ago. Some of them decided to stay on. The new immigrants had needed help, especially since many were illiterate and could not communicate with their families back in Malta without



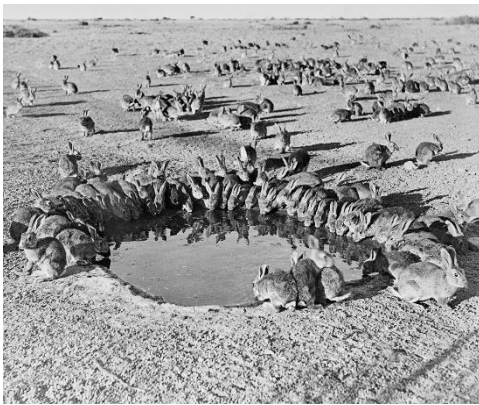
assistance. But staying on in Australia was no easy feat for priests who initially did not receive any financial assistance.

"We tried hard to get them some assistance and they started getting AUS\$10 a month, which did not even cover their travelling expenses to visit the Maltese living in different areas of Australia," he said pensively. Over the years some 200 Maltese priests have served in Australia, some of whom were the sons of Maltese migrants born on the continent. There are still 66 Maltese priests in Australia.



## Rabbits introduced in Australia with catastrophic results

1859: Rabbits were successfully introduced into Australia



In 1859, European wild rabbits were introduced into Australia so they could be hunted for sport. Within 50 years, rabbits had spread across almost the entire continent, with devastating implications for Australia's indigenous flora and fauna. The proliferation of rabbits was the fastest of an introduced mammal anywhere in the world.

Australia is home to at least 150 million feral rabbits, which continue to have a huge impact on our environment.

Dr Brian Coman, author of *Tooth and Nail, The Story of the Rabbit in Australia*:

*The rabbit has, in various times and places, been a treasured pet, a commercial farm animal, a valued subject of the hunt, a major ecological force and an economic pest ... In Australia,*

*the rabbit has survived drought, fire, flood, diseases, predators, poisons and other stratagems devised by man and remains this country's most serious vertebrate pest.*

On Christmas day 1859, Thomas Austin, a self-made wealthy settler, released 13 European wild rabbits on his estate, Winchelsea, Barwon Park, Victoria. They had been specially collected and sent to him by a relative in England.

However, this was not the first diffusion of rabbits on the continent. Andrew Miller, commissary for the First Fleet, listed five rabbits on the initial transport. They were probably silver greys, a popular breed for hutch rearing in England at the time. But they were never released into the wild.

The results of the release of the European wild rabbits at Winchelsea was quickly apparent. By 1866, hunters bagged 14,000 rabbits on the Bawron Park estate. With abundant food sources, good ground cover and a lack of predators, the rabbits raced across the landscape.

By 1880, rabbits had crossed the Murray River to New South Wales and had reached Queensland by 1886. In 1894, they had traversed the Nullarbor and populated Western Australia.

To put the dissemination into context, the spread of rabbits over Britain took 700 years while the colonisation of two thirds of Australia, an area 25 times the size of Britain, took only 50 years. The rate of spread of the rabbit in Australia was the fastest of a colonising mammal anywhere in the world.

### Rabbit-proof fences

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, different methods of rabbit control were tried, including trapping, rabbit warren ripping, fumigation and bounty systems. However, the most visible control method was fencing. Fences became an integral component of what settlers in the late 19th century began to see as a war against the rabbits. The first extensive fences were built in central New South Wales and the initial success of private fencing encouraged state governments to construct even longer ones.

Between 1885 and 1890, demand for wire netting increased from 1600 to 9600 kilometres per year. It is estimated that by the height of the fence construction boom there were 320,000 kilometres of rabbit-



proof fence across Australia. The most iconic barrier was the rabbit-proof fence built between 1901 and 1907 that extended 3256 kilometres north to south across Western Australia.

A rabbit-proof fence divides pastures in Victoria, 1963. National Archives of Australia A1200, L44185 However, the Western Australian fence, like almost all the very long government-sponsored fences, was unsuccessful for a number of reasons: it was completed after the rabbits had already crossed into the state; and the constant deterioration of the fence meant there was almost always somewhere the rabbits could cross.

By the late 1940s, the rabbit population had rapidly increased to 600 million. This was due to a number of high rainfall years with subsequent good harvests, as well as the Second World War, which had reduced manpower for trapping and fence maintenance.

#### Rabbitohs

Though rabbits were a scourge, they were also a free source of meat in lean years. During the 1930s Depression, many people shot or trapped rabbits for food, or even became rabbitohs — itinerant rabbit-sellers.



Lorry-load of rabbits, Braidwood, New South Wales, early 20th century. National Museum of Australia

#### Myxomatosis

Initial tests on myxomatosis, a rabbit-specific virus, that took place in 1943 before had been inconclusive. However, in the years following the war, farmers were being eaten off their land by rabbits and public pressure increased to find a solution. Trials restarted on myxomatosis in 1950.

Initially, the new trials, conducted on the Murray River in Victoria by the newly formed CSIRO, looked to be a failure but rains in December 1950 produced more mosquitoes, the vector that spread the virus, and the disease spread with incredible speed.

The scientists who witnessed it were shocked, as the renowned microbiologist Frank Fenner said: ‘... for scale and speed [the myxomatosis epidemic] must be without parallel in the history of infections’. It is ironic that an animal that thrived better than any other introduced mammal in the world was now dying out at record speed.

However, rabbits began developing a resistance to myxomatosis, just as they later did to the calicivirus, which was released in 1995. Their numbers are now on the rise again in Australia.

#### Significance

The effect of rabbits on the environment has been catastrophic. Rabbits can survive on almost any plant matter: shoots, herbs, grasses, grains, leaf buds. The long-term result of rapidly reproducing rabbits is overgrazing by an extremely large population, which can lead to a collapse of indigenous plants and the native animal species that eat them. Excessive grazing also leads to soil erosion, which affects pasture yields and water quality. It is estimated that rabbits cost the Australian economy more than \$200 million per year.

Rabbits are one of Australia’s most visible introduced species. Australia’s native plants and animals adapted to life on an isolated continent over millions of years but since European settlement they have had to compete with a range of new animals for habitat, food and shelter. These introduced species have had a major impact on our country’s soil and waterways and on native plant and animal diversity.

<p><b>Maltese e-Newsletter</b></p> 	<p><b>The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora</b></p> <p>Malta - small in size but great in history</p> <p>Subscribe: <a href="mailto:maltesejournal@gmail.com">maltesejournal@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>WE ARE STRONG WHEN UNITED</b></p>
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## X Factor Malta star Michela Pace releases Eurovision Song Contest music video



**X Factor Malta winner Michela Pace will perform 'Chameleon' as her Eurovision Song Contest entry for Malta this year**

X Factor Malta winner Michela Pace will perform 'Chameleon' as her Eurovision Song Contest entry. After keeping Eurovision fans in suspense since winning Malta's first ever season of X-Factor, Michela Pace has finally revealed her Eurovision Song Contest entry. She will sing *Chameleon*, a song written and composed by Joacim Perrson,

Paula Winger, Borislav Milanov and Johan Alkanas.

Michela is just 18 years old and hails from Gozo. She won the first season of X Factor in Malta, which finished back in January and the winner's prize was a record contract and the chance to represent Malta at the 2019 Eurovision Song Contest in Tel Aviv.

Malta debuted at the Eurovision Song Contest in 1971, but finished last in its first two attempts. After trying again in 1975, Malta waited until 1991 to return to Eurovision but has participated every year since then.

Malta has taken second place twice, first with [Ira Losco](#) in 2002 with *7th Wonder* and again in 2005 with [Chiara's](#) *Angel*. Malta has also finished in third place twice, with Mary Spitar's *Little Child* in 1992 and again with Chiara's first Eurovision entry, *The One That I Love*.

After two years without qualification from the Semi-Finals, Michela will be the fifth female solo artist in a row to represent Malta (following [Amber](#), Ira Losco, [Claudia Faniello](#) and [Christabelle](#)), and will be hoping to make it third time lucky and return Malta to the Grand Final this year.



## The Pink Tea Garden

The Pink Tea Garden, an exclusive Times of Malta event, organised by Malta's leading women's magazine, in collaboration with Tettiera, is the ideal space for networking with like-minded guests and experts, while learning about the latest top-quality products and services in the field of health and well-being. It includes tea talks and tasting sessions, as well as a variety of workshops, touching on topics that range from a holistic approach to ageing to the farm-to-fork and crop-in-a-pot concepts, mindfulness, the benefits of essential oils and even sustainable fashion. Nourishing products on display can be discovered and sampled, while a goodie bag is up for grabs. The programme also includes vegan food demos, and a light and nutritious lunch served by Camilleri Caterers, followed by vegan and raw sweets by Jo's Delights, and washed down with refreshing healthy drinks, including flowing Tettiera tea, infused waters and Dr Juice smoothies.

<https://ticketline.com.mt/bookings/Shows.aspx?ProductionId=653>

**Venue Skorba Farmhouse Gardens at Vincent Eco Estate, Zebbiegh**