



# Maltese e-Newsletter



The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

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**BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES**

## History of Maltese Migration should be taught in Schools

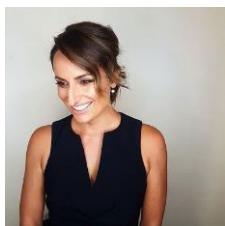


(Above) Prince Harry and his wife Meghan  
Duchess of Sussex with their newborn son Archie



Meaghna is pictured wearing the Ghonnella, a Maltese traditional headdress during her visit to Malta in 2015. Meghan Markle's great-great-grandmother was born in Malta in 1862

## 'Meghan is Maltese? Maybe she's my long-lost cousin'



### Jane Azzopardi (Channel 9, Australia)

'Us Maltese love to claim another as our own'. Maltesers are a proud bunch.

No, I'm not talking about the delicious chocolate, malty confectionary that melt and crack in your mouth.

I'm talking about the people. The short, tanned, friendly folk who inhabit that rock of an island (well, technically a bunch of rocks actually) in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea.

I would say "us Maltese" (even though I've never lived there and identify as proudly Australian) just love when we can claim another as our own. Come to think of it, us Aussies like doing that too.

Now it turns out Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, is about an eighth Maltese. Which is almost as good as getting another Aussie European Princess (shout out to Princess Mary) considering just how many of us Aussies are also a little bit Malteser too.

Nine's Jayne Azzopardi jokes whether she and Meghan Markle could be distant cousins. (Instagram/jayneazzo)

According to the 2016 Census, there were 175,563 people of Maltese descent in Australia and 37,614 Malta-born people residing in the country at the moment of the census. Considering Malta itself is home to less than half a million people, that's a pretty impress migration rate.

Now, it's worth pointing out here that Malta is home to about a dozen surnames (slight exaggeration, but only slight) and Markle is, quite obviously, not one of them. Azzopardi is. Every time someone I know visits Malta, I get sent photos of one shop or another featuring the Azzopardi name.

In fact, *The Times of Malta* reported, "The 2011 census collected a total of 19,104 surnames. The top 10 are: Borg, Camilleri, Vella, Farrugia, Zammit, Galea, Micallef, Grech, Attard, Spiteri and Azzopardi".

### Related

Any Malteser recognises another Malteser by their surname - and a big "Kif inti" (How are you) to all you Maltesers who are reading this!



I read this week that Meghan visited Malta three years ago to learn of her family heritage – Her great-great grandmother, Mary, was born there in 1862 – and was told that when she visited, everyone would look like her. I can relate.

I visited Malta for the first time with three friends, when I was 24. In our denim skirts, thongs and surf-brand t-shirts we were so obviously Australian. But every other person I saw, looked like they could be my cousin.

On our second day, we visited a jewellery shop in the capital Valletta – a place famous for making fine, silver filigree jewellery. We were in one shop and the man bent over his machinery looked up at us and said, "Let me guess, you girls are Australian". We laughed. Then he pointed at me, "But you, you are Maltese". "How did you know?" I asked. He shrugged. "What's your surname?" "Azzopardi" I said, the way I've always pronounced it.

"No, no, no," he wagged a finger at me. "It's AT-so-parr-di" he purred, with a theatrical flourish. "In Maltese, the double Z sounds like ts, like in pizza".

Now, if I tried to use that pronunciation in my Nine News sign off, I'd probably get laughed out of the newsroom (for different reasons than those clever - and highly unoriginal people - who ask me if they can come to my party next time) but I do like knowing that.

Like Meghan, I love learning about my Maltese heritage, and I'm also partial to a pastizzi every now and then. And now we can add another notable partial-Malteser to our list, and claim the most tenuous link to royalty.

**We love to hear from you**



## - Community Information Summary Malta-born

### Historical Background

The first Malta-born arrived in Australia as convicts in 1810, followed by the first free settler in 1838. The first organised migrant group arrived in 1883 when 61 Maltese labourers were recruited to work on the sugar plantations in Queensland. Many of these migrants returned to Malta because of the harsh working conditions they experienced.

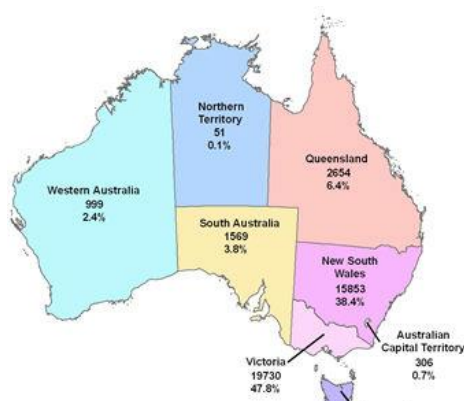
Migration from Malta to Australia gradually increased after 1905. The 1911 Australian Census reported 248 Malta-born residents. Between 1911 and 1919 a further 2000 migrated. The 1933 Census recorded 2782 Malta-born in Australia.

Immigration from Malta increased after 1944, when Maltese migrants were classified as 'white British subjects' for the purposes of Australia's immigration policy. In 1948 the Maltese were offered assisted migrant passage to Australia, and by 1954 in excess of 10 000 Maltese had settled in Australia. The majority of those who came to Australia left Malta because of poor socio-economic conditions or in response to government schemes to decrease Malta's population.

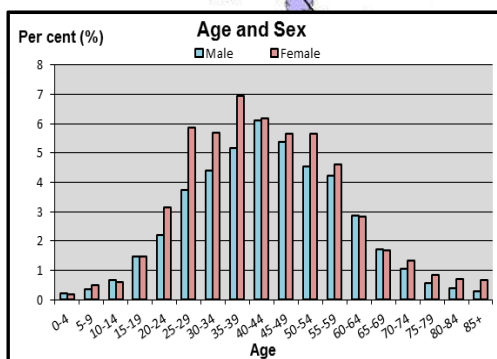
Before World War II, the Malta-born in Australia had been engaged in a wide range of activities including mining, sugar cane plantation work, railway construction and maintenance, forestry and urban industries. Maltese Clubs were formed in the 1920s in Adelaide, Broken Hill, Innisfail, Mackay, Melbourne and Sydney. In the post-war period the industrial centres, especially Melbourne and Sydney, became the major areas of Maltese settlement.

Most of the Maltese migrants who came in the 1950s were semi-skilled or unskilled workers and many were poorly educated, although a small number of Maltese medical practitioners also came to Australia. The 1981 Census recorded 57 000 Malta-born people in Australia. The numbers of Malta-born in Australia are expected to decline as the community ages. **MALTESE SETTLEMENT.** Most of the Maltese migrants who came in the 1950s were semi-skilled or unskilled workers and many were poorly educated, although a small number of Maltese medical practitioners also came to Australia. The 1981 Census recorded 57,000 Malta-born people in Australia. The numbers of Malta-born in Australia are expected to decline as the community ages. According to the 2016 Census, there were **175,563** people of Maltese descent in Australia and **37,614** Malta-born people residing in the country at the moment of the census.

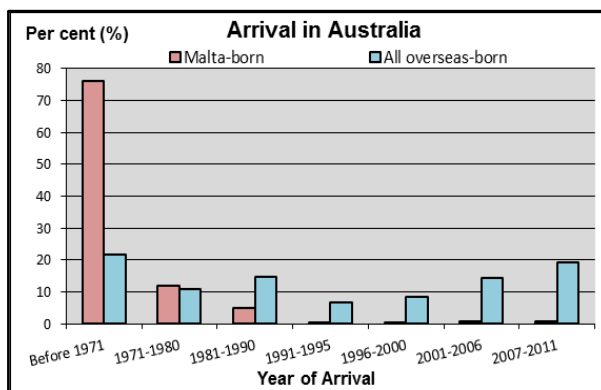
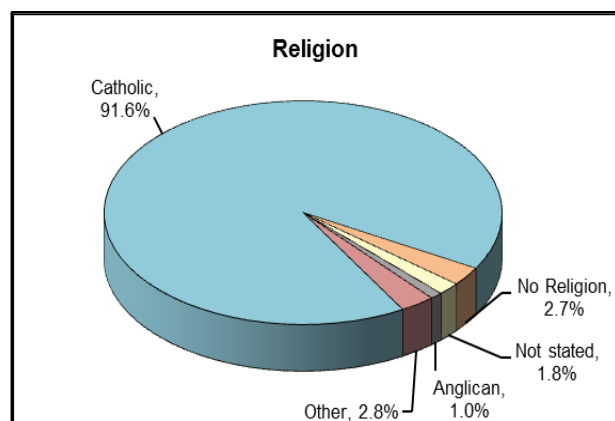
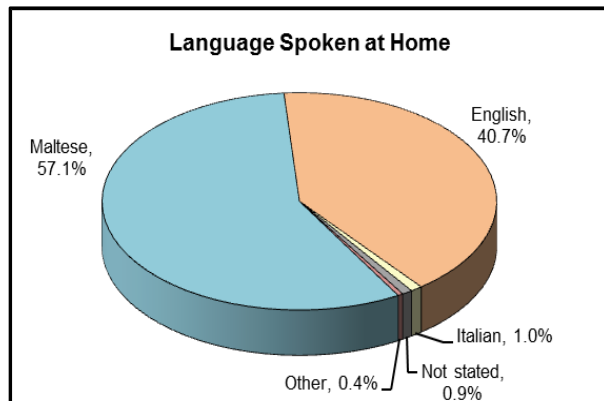
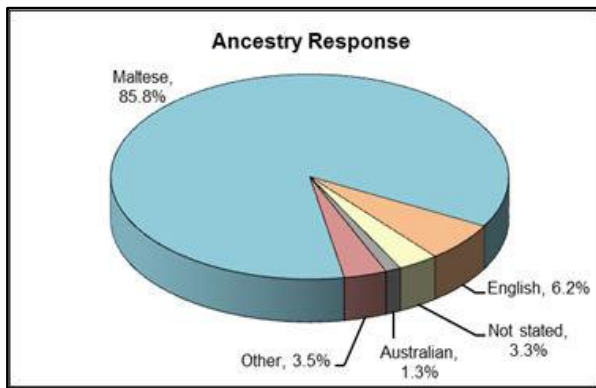
Today



**GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION** The latest Census in 2011 recorded 41,274 Malta-born people in Australia, a fall of 5.6 per cent from the 2006 Census. The 2011 distribution by state and territory showed Victoria had the largest number with 19,730 followed by New South Wales (15,853), Queensland (2,654) and South Australia (1,569).



**AGE AND SEX** The median age of the Malta-born in 2011 was 64 years compared with 45 years for all overseas-born and 37 years for the total Australian population. The age distribution showed 0.4 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 0.6 per cent were 15-24 years, 5.1 per cent were 25-44 years, 47.3 per cent were 45-64 years and 46.5 per cent were 65 years and over. Of the Malta-born in Australia, there were 20,989 males (50.9 per cent) and 20,285 females (49.1 per cent). The sex ratio was 103.5 males per 100 females.



**ANCESTRY** In the 2011 Census, the top ancestry responses\* that Malta-born people reported were Maltese (37,706), English (2,710) and Australian (553). In the 2011 Census, Australians reported around 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses\*, 163,990 responses were towards Maltese ancestry.

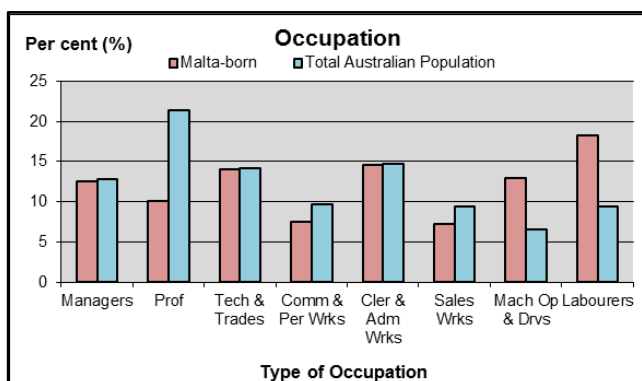
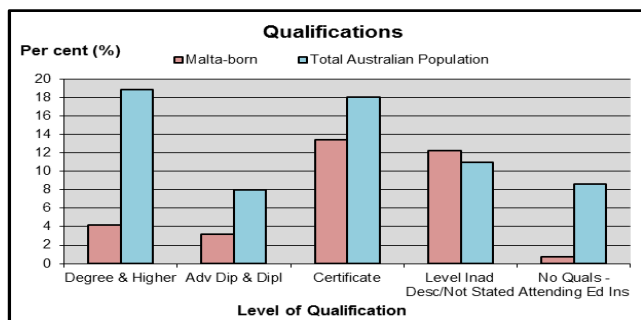
\*At the 2011 Census up to two responses per person were allowed for the Ancestry question; therefore providing the total responses and not persons count.

**LANGUAGE** The main languages spoken at home by Malta-born people in Australia were Maltese (23,559), English (16,789) and Italian (397). Of the 24,486 Malta-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 88.1 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 10.4 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.

**RELIGION** At the 2011 Census the major religious affiliation amongst Malta-born were Catholic (37,817) and Anglican (413). Of the Malta-born, 2.7 per cent stated 'No Religion' which was lower than that of the total Australian population (22.3 per cent), and 1.8 per cent did not state a religion.

**ARRIVALS** Compared to 62 per cent of the total overseas-born population, 93.8 per cent of the Malta-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 2001. Among the total Malta-born in Australia at the 2011 Census, 0.9 per cent arrived between 2001 and 2006 and 0.9 per cent arrived between 2007 and 2011.

**MEDIAN INCOME** At the time of the 2011 Census, the median individual weekly income for the Malta-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was \$360, compared with \$538 for all overseas-born and \$597 for all Australia-born. The total Australian population had a median individual weekly income of \$577.



Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing. Sources for the Historical Background are available on our website.  
© Commonwealth of Australia.

**QUALIFICATIONS** At the 2011 Census, 33 per cent of the Malta born aged 15 years and over had some form of higher non-school qualifications compared to 55.9 per cent of the Australian population. Of the Malta-born aged 15 years and over, 0.7 per cent were still attending an educational institution. The corresponding rate for the total Australian population was 8.6 per cent.

**EMPLOYMENT** Among Malta-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 35.7 per cent and the unemployment rate was 3.5 per cent. The corresponding rates in the total Australian population were 65 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively. Of the 13,665 Malta-born who were employed, 36.8 per cent were employed in either a skilled managerial, professional or trade occupation. The corresponding rate in the total Australian population was 48.4 per cent.

*Produced by the Community Relations Section of DIAC All data used in this summary is sourced from the Australian*

## More than 140 countries make up multicultural Blacktown – New South Wales - Australia

(Photo Below) Stephen Zahra, wife Dao Nguyen and daughter Haylee are the part of the changing face of Blacktown's demographics.



"Western Sydney is one of the most culturally diverse places in Australia, if not the world.

"Blacktown's diversity is quite higher than the state's and even higher than other places in western Sydney." Toongabbie's Abuzar Abdelrahim, Amna Saad of Seven Hills, Olaa Saad of Seven Hills and Toongabbie's Ayah Azrag are part of the 1.5 per cent of Blacktown's population from Africa.

FROM the Philippines to Iceland, more than 140 countries make up the diverse face of Blacktown in Sydney's west. The 2011 Census data revealed that among the 340,000 residents living in the Blacktown Council area, 143 countries were represented.

The impressive figure is almost enough to host a United Nations meeting in the Village Green, falling 45 countries short of representing the world.

Western Sydney University's Institute for Culture and Society sociologist Dr Shanthi Robertson said:





The average Blacktown resident is a woman born in Australia and aged between 25 and 44, but [Dr Robertson](#) said Blacktown was undergoing a rapid change in demographics.



Filipino group in NSW.

A total of 19,360 residents were born in the Philippines; the largest migrant group in Blacktown at 6.4 per cent of the area's population. They make up the largest population of Filipinos in NSW.

A total of 25,899 locals identified as a second or third generation Filipino.

Those born in India made up the second largest migrant group — 5 per cent of Blacktown's population — with 15,050 residents.

There were 22,070 residents who identified having an Indian heritage.

More than 20,000 Blacktown residents identified having Indian ancestry.

Residents born in New Zealand (7417), the UK (7394), Fiji (6486), Sri Lanka (3450), China (3067), Malta (2616), Pakistan (2581) and Sudan (2166) round out the top 10.

Blacktown had the largest population of Sudanese migrants, including those from South Sudan, in Australia.



cultures living together in one place."

Blacktown has the highest percentage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that call the area home in NSW — 2.7 per cent compared to NSW'S 2.5 per cent.

Aboriginal elder Uncle Gordon Workman is part of the 2.7 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Blacktown — the largest representation in the state.

What's really great to see is there isn't a particular ethnic enclave in Blacktown," she said. "It's more like 'superdiversity' with all these many different

# MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA

*United, Strong, Successful*

*Australia's Multicultural Statement*



nationalities,” she said. “It’s a really positive thing that Blacktown is so multicultural. New arrivals tend to be entrepreneurial ... and create a vibrant city.”

. Dr Robertson said **Blacktown’s key strength was the intermixing of locals** from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

Blacktown also has a large Maltese population including Carol Moreno (Camilleri), Michelle Camilleri, Mark Camilleri, Mary Cauchi, Rachael and Charmaine Cassar.

Dr Robertson said the rise in mixed marriages reflected how integrated Blacktown had become.

“Some second or third generations of intermixed marriages will have multiculturalism within themselves, identifying with many different

## Maltese connection to Adelaide runs deep



*Fr. Gabriel  
with his  
sister and  
her husband  
from  
Queensland*

Father Gabriel Micallef OFM came to Adelaide from Malta in 1996 for three months to assist with the closure of the Maltese Franciscan mission.

Fr Gabriel celebrates his anniversary with sister Toni and her husband Sam.

Twenty three years later he is still here, serving as chaplain to the ageing Maltese community which showed its gratitude and deep affection for the priest when he celebrated his 75th birthday and 50th anniversary as a priest in March.

Based at the parish of Lockleys, the Maltese community chaplaincy has its origins in the years immediately after World War II when the Maltese began emigrating to countries like Australia in search of a more secure future.

But for Fr Gabriel, the reason for his journey to South Australia goes back to World War I when his father and a group of young men from Gozo were based in Thessaloniki in Greece and served alongside Australian soldiers. “I am here because of my father,” Fr Gabriel said.

With 11 other young Maltese men from the island of Gozo, Fr Gabriel’s father came to South Australia in 1922 and worked on the bridge at Murray Bridge.

“It was a very cold winter and so they decided to leave and go to Port Lincoln to work in the tuna industry but the industry closed down because of the Great Depression and they started walking

Dame University in Indianapolis, USA, but first he came to Australia to visit his sister in Queensland.

eastwards from farm to farm as helping hands,” he said.

“They (the farmers) would give them something to eat and then they would go to another farm. They walked all the way to Sydney.” Some of the group married and stayed but his father returned to the family farm in Gozo. “When we were growing up he always told us how beautiful Adelaide is.”

Named Stephen at birth, Fr Gabriel came from a large family – he was the 17th of 18 children. Several of his siblings died at a young age and he now has only one brother living in Gozo and a sister in Queensland. “We were poor but happy,” he said of his childhood in the picturesque fishing village of St Lawrence, Gozo.

After attending primary and secondary school on the island, Stephen joined the Franciscan Order and was given the religious name of Gabriel.

“As a family we were always around priests,” he said of his decision to join the priesthood.

“My father used to take care of the fields of the priests in the village, and their houses and estates.”

He was ordained priest on March 22 1969 and after a year of further study he started teaching at secondary schools. In the 70s he volunteered as a missionary priest in Tripoli, Libya, where he catered for the members of Maltese and English-speaking Catholic communities, many of whom worked in the oil industry. He met the controversial President Colonel Gaddafi several times.

In 1979 Fr Gabriel was called to be Superior of the Novitiate House on Gozo and fulfilled his dream of building a centre for youths. His other achievements include renovating a retreat house and building a new church and friary. In 1995 he was given the opportunity to attend a renewal theological course at Notre





In 2017 Malta celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the George Cross being awarded to the people of Malta and before we make a presentation I will give a brief history.

Italian and German bombers during the Second World War brought havoc to the island of Malta and the problem of supplies was soon felt by the inhabitants. An invasion threat in July 1941 ended in complete failure when coastal defences spotted torpedo boats of the Italian Special Forces. While the Maltese people suffered hunger a final assault to neutralize the island was ordered by the German hierarchy, however the people's heroism withstood every attack. This was the worst period for the Allied forces during this Second World War as the Axis forces clearly appeared to have the upper hand. German and Italian planes were striking the island day and night in an attempt to neutralize the British bases in Malta as they were constantly getting in the way of their naval attempts to supply Rommel's North African campaign. Malta's geographical position wedged as it is between Italy and North Africa as well as dividing the Mediterranean basin into east and west put the island in heavy danger. At the time of the George Cross award, military resources and food rations were practically finished. Fuel and ammunition were restricted and the population was on the brink of starvation.

An invasion of the island which was being planned by senior German commanders including Adolf Hitler, Field Marshall Erwin Rommel, the head of the Luftwaffe, Herman Goring and General Field Marshall Albert Kesselring was known as "Operation Hercules" (Unternehmen Herkules). This plan, stalled and was deferred until too late as on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1942 (the feast of Santa Maria) a convoy of Royal Navy and Merchant ships made port into the capital Valletta bringing vital supplies of fuel, food, air power and ammunition.

Andrew Magro (NSW)

### Maltese Branch of the RSL Presentation of replica of George Cross Award

15th April 1942



On the 15<sup>th</sup> April 1942, King George the 6<sup>th</sup> awarded the George Cross medal to the inhabitants of Malta to honour the brave people for their heroism and devotion that will long be famous in history. A total of approx. 3,340 air raids were performed on the island of Malta with 15,000 tonnes of bombs dropped between 1940 and 1944 making Malta the most bombed place on this planet. Some say this was more intense than the "Battle for Britain". On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1992, I had the privilege of seeing my dad James Magro who was in the Kings Own Malta Regiment and then the Royal Malta Artillery receive the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary George Cross medal with a whole heap of returned servicemen at Sydney Town hall. My dad told me over the years many frightful stories of what he, his family and his army mates had to endure during those dark days of the war. To honour the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the George Cross medal being awarded to Malta, we the Maltese Ex-servicemen's Association of NSW would like to present a copy of this award to Blacktown RSL.

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May The Maltese Ex Servicemens Association of made a presentation of a replica George Cross complete with the letter from King George 6<sup>th</sup> to Blacktown RSL. Included in the presentation is the history behind Malta achieving this award. This function was held at their General meeting. Approx 100 servicemen in attendance and it was presented to Bruce Scott, Senior Vice president, Blacktown RSL. Our president is Mr Charles Mifsud who is standing on the left hand side of Bruce. At the moment we are attending other RSL clubs in our area that has a museum to present them with this plaque to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Malta being awarded the George Cross.



## He Will Rock You! Freddie Portelli Becomes A Musical

Steffie Weenink

Malta's 75-year-old rock 'n roll legend Freddie Portelli, most famous for the classic *Mur Ħallini*, is getting his own musical this summer, in a show that will celebrate his greatest hits.

And to promote the show, Freddie Portelli will also be gracing our airwaves with a brand new song, which, like the musical, is named after his famous catchphrase: *Il-Kbir Għadu Ġej*.

*Il-Kbir Għadu Ġej*, the musical, is the brainchild of the team behind previous original shows *Balzunetta Towers* (2017) and *Ħanina Maddalena* (2018), with direction by Sean Buhagiar and Mro. Dominic Galea taking over the musical arrangements and live band.

Buhagiar grew up in Portelli's hometown of St Paul's Bay, and followed the cult singer's career closely. Eventually he worked with Portelli on a couple of concerts and the idea of a Freddie Portelli jukebox was something that began



floating around his mind. After establishing such a great relationship with Mro. Galea, and working on original Maltese musicals together, he felt this was the perfect timing for Portelli's very own musical. Mro. Galea has been friends with Portelli for a long time and was electrified at the thought.

One phone call to Freddie, and that was all it took. He was sold from the word go. The deal was eventually sealed over whiskey and chocolate cake.



The

musical is written by local heavyweight Malcolm Galea, the man behind many a successful pantomime and the infamous *Porn - The Musical*. Together with Buhagiar and Mro. Galea, they're working hard to bring us what they're calling Malta's own version of *We Will Rock You* or *Mamma Mia*.

Portelli is arguably Malta's highest-grossing singer and has had one of the longest careers in Malta's history, belting out hit after hit and amassing an impressive discography throughout his lifetime.

*Mur Ħallini* will obviously be one of the highlights of the show, but the musical will also feature many other known hits like *Viva Malta*, *Xewqat Sbieħ*, *Se Jkolli Nemmen* and *Għal Dejjem*. *Il-Kbir* will also feature lesser known jewels like *Bħalek Hawn Kemm Trid*, *Ma Taħraqni B'Xejn*. And it will obviously include the new release *Il-Kbir Għadu Ġej* which will promote the musical throughout the summer. So it's not just his classics that we get to re-live, but he's also back with what we're sure will be another hit.

Portelli is apparently phoning the team twice a day, attending recordings, sending feedback, writing notes and wants to see this happen more than anyone. And he's already thinking about the sequel! On the day, he will be invited to the premiere and be made to wear a suit - we're told it's going to be shiny and we can't wait.

***Il-Kbir Għadu Ġej* will be premiere on the 9th of August 2019 and run for two weekends at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta. Keep an eye out on social media for the release of Freddie Portelli's new single and some exciting cast announcements!**

*If you have a story to share send it to us*

## Remax Alive 2019 Cycling Challenge for Cancer is back



Next July, Maltese cyclists will travel over 1,200km from Oslo – through Hamburg and finishing in Amsterdam in just a week – from the 14th till the 21st of July.

The objective for this 7th edition is to raise funds for cancer research conducted at the University of Malta.

Speaking with Bay News Chairman of [ALIVE Charity Foundation](#), Nicky Camilleri said: 'This definitely means a lot to us because to date we have invested over half a million euro in medical cancer research for the betterment of the Maltese society'.

He said that although the stakes are high and as expected it is quite a challenging goal.

He added: 'The final result is rewarding knowing that all of the funds collected are going for the betterment of the Maltese society'.

The President of Malta Marie Louise Coleiro Preca attended the press conference organised at San Anton Palace in Attard.

Speaking with Bay News Her Excellency said: 'Research is of utmost importance and gradually and thankfully it is growing substantially in Malta'.

She thanked all those taking part in this challenge and admired their courage in taking on this endeavor for such a noble cause.

Medical experts said that currently half of the Maltese population are at risk of suffering from various types of cancer. They said cancer research cannot be done alone and that the Alive Charity Foundation's work serves an inspiration for everyone.

ALIVE Charity Foundation was the first charity foundation to raise funds for medical research in Malta. Funds from the first two years were directed towards breast cancer research, whilst the funds from the last two years have been directed towards children's cancer research.

The funds raised by ALIVE mainly go towards the human element of research, such as funding PhD research scholarships, as well as funding new and ongoing research.

The post [Remax Alive 2019 Cycling Challenge for Cancer is back](#) appeared first on [89.7 Bay](#). Original article found on [897 Bay News](#)



### In memory of Victoria Calleja

*Born in Birkirkara, Malta on July 4, 1935*

*Passed away in Adelaide, South Australia May 6, 2019*

*Wife of Charlie for 62 years (deceased)*

*Mother of John, Victor, Mario, Catherine, Charles and Dolores*

*Mother-in-law of Grace, Mary, Michelle, Emanuel, Olimpia and Giacinto*

*Grandmother of Simon, Melissa, Victoria, Joanna, Joshua, Sarah, Joseph, David, Siobhan, Nadine, Reuben, Carlo, Luke, Johnny, Peter and Christina*

*Great Grandmother of Isabella, Alessio and Amelia*

*Left Malta with her husband and six children to Australia in 1974*

*A loved and respected member of the Maltese community of Adelaide*

**Rest in Peace**



# MALTESE OF WOOLLOOMOOLOO WHARF

By Dr Barry York



*Dr. Barry York*

A few years ago, I was approached by the producers of the popular SBS TV series, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, to appear in an episode about one of Australia's leading entertainers, Adam Hills. I was surprised to learn that Hills had a Maltese great grandfather who migrated to Woolloomooloo, Sydney, in 1912. My oral history work over many years had focused on Maltese migrants and someone from the production company asked if I knew anything about the Maltese community in Woolloomooloo back then. Immediately, my mind turned to a collection of oral histories I had recorded in the 1980s on cassettes that were carefully stored in shoeboxes in a cupboard at home.

I had written books on the larger question of Maltese migration to Australia and had an understanding of the context for the Woolloomooloo community. I also knew of print sources that would provide factual information. But what oral history could provide went to a different, deeper, level entirely. In my cassette collection were interviews with two women who migrated from Malta to Woolloomooloo with their mothers in 1913 and 1914. Both had grown up there, as part of the wharf community. I recorded Christina Couch (nee Farrugia) and Jean Barrett (nee Rizzo) in Sydney in 1984 when they were aged in their 70s. As I located the cassettes and dusted them off, it suddenly struck me: the two interviews represent voices of migration a hundred years ago!

The subjective accounts of daily life in Woolloomooloo, in the rectangle of streets pushing 500 metres back from the bay, is unique and priceless. Had the recordings not been made, the individual memories would have been lost; though I wish to point out that my friend and fellow historian, Mark Caruana, had interviewed both women before me, and it was through him that my own opportunity arose.

Woolloomooloo today is highly sought after real estate, with a largely gentrified population. The Finger Wharf is a heritage site, with up-market apartments developed above it and posh restaurants around it. In 1912, it was

a tough working class community with many migrants. Back then, the wharves were booming, employing hundreds of labourers, sometimes running three shifts

per day. The houses were gas lit but comfortable and, in some ways, similar to those in Malta: double-storeyed, bedrooms upstairs, dining area downstairs, no front yard, steps leading to the pavement. As in Malta, this allowed individuals to sit out the front after work and chat with passers-by.

Jean Rizzo and Christina Farrugia both hailed from dock towns in Malta's Grand Harbour. Jean's father, Joseph, was a dockyard worker while Christina's was a deep-sea diver. It is likely that Christina's father had worked on the construction of Malta's Breakwater—a major project lasting from 1903 to 1909—and his skills were in demand in Sydney when the huge wharf was being built at Woolloomooloo from 1911 to 1915. Christina recalls him later working on the pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge when it was being built. The 'pull' of Australia was its reputation as 'l-art tal-futur' (the Land of the Future), where hard work was rewarded with good wages.

Malta was a British colony and migration within the Empire was seen as offering a better future than migration to traditional destinations along the north African coast. Australia at this time was developing rapidly, expanding its trade with Europe. There was abundant work in quarries, factories, road and rail construction, and on the wharves. The Maltese who settled in Woolloomooloo were pioneers of urban migration.

There are patterns in history, but within the patterns are multitudes of individual stories. The fathers of both women made the voyage to Australia on their own, with a view to testing the conditions and bringing out their families later on. John Farrugia made the move in 1911 and did well as a diver on the wharf project. When he sent for his family two years later, he had ready for them a rented house in Plunkett Street, a few minutes' walk from the wharves.

Jean's father, Joseph, obtained a 'working passage' on a boat in 1912 and initially laboured on road construction around Mount Lyell, Tasmania, before moving to Woolloomooloo, where he worked on the wharves and arranged passage for his wife and two-year-old Jean in 1914. A few hundred Maltese worked at Mount Lyell when he was there but many gradually headed north, in part because the wet, cold conditions



on Tasmania's north-west coast were so different to the Mediterranean climate. When Jean and her mother disembarked at Sydney, Joe took them straight to the house he was renting in Nicholson Street, in the heart of the wharf community. Prior to that, he had boarded at the Farrugias' place with a dozen or so other Maltese wharf workers.

The Farrugias' house attracted many new arrivals. As Christina recalled: *"Any new people who came to Australia, friends would bring them to our place, and they were always made welcome ... They'd bring their mandolins and we'd have real good old sing-song ... and they'd talk about home and different ones would ask my mother to write a letter home because some of them couldn't read or write."*

The Maltese language was spoken and Maltese cuisine prepared. In the absence of refrigeration, rabbits and chooks were slaughtered fresh. One can imagine the streets of this quarter filled with the scent of baked macaroni and 'stuffat tal-fenek' (rabbit stew) and, in the evening, the sound of a mandolin or guitar being played by a Maltese wharf labourer, sitting on his doorstep. There would also have been a strong scent of horses, as there were 'hundreds of them', with some carriages drawn by eight horses. And of course, on a warm breezy night, there was the saline scent from the bay.

Sometimes migrants suffer homesickness but, according to Jean, her parents were very satisfied at Woolloomooloo. Her mother, Katarina, had been a seamstress, sewing clothes for the Royal Navy in Malta. Her mother told her that life was very hard in Malta. Neither parent had any desire to return, and they never did. The family felt 'comfortable', especially with extra income earned when Katarina started a sewing business from home.

The community was a tight-knit one and Jean and Christina recalled at least four other Maltese families among their neighbours—the Carabotts, Cassars, Vassallos and Zahras. "We went to [St Mary's Cathedral] school with their children and we all grew up together'. There were also many single Maltese men who had to wait until after the War to bring out their families. Jean Barrett recalled: *"(The Maltese) always used to stick together. You know what I mean? Go on picnics together. Down in Woolloomooloo there'd be no radio or television then so after ten, the men would go and sit out on a step or in the gutter and just talk there, and the women, when they had finished their tea business, they'd go out too but mostly you'd find all the men out there talking ... it was always in Maltese!"*

There appears to have been a high level of class solidarity with 'foreigners' permitted to join the Wharf

Labourers Union. The community was ethnically diverse: Maltese wharfies lived alongside the Australian-born, English migrants and Italian fishermen. Neither woman felt they were ever discriminated against while growing up in Woolloomooloo. On the contrary, both speak highly of their Australian neighbours. According to Jean: *"we had no trouble with them at all, the Australians. My mother mixed up well with them. My father did too, with the men on the wharf. And I did at work too. But I will say there were some people who used to complain."*

Both women married Maltese men in Sydney. In 1927, Jean married a Maltese by the name of Harry Barrett from her hometown, Senglea, and Christina married Charles Cauchi from Sliema in 1930. Christina's husband changed his surname from Cauchi (pronounced 'Cow-key') to Couch in order to avoid discrimination in employment. Her brothers in Sydney also changed their surnames: from Farrugia to Ferguson. The practice of changing Maltese surnames to English or Scottish ones interests me because in 1947 my Maltese father, Loreto, changed his surname from Meilak (pronounced 'May-lak') to York for similar assimilationist reasons.

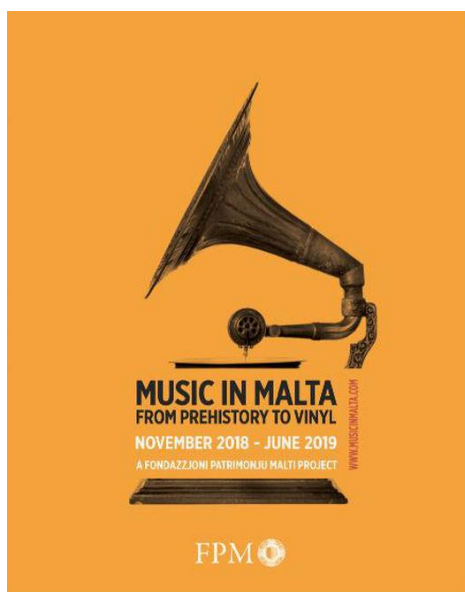
The interviews capture some of the Maltese culture of that era. As a small island with a few dozen common surnames, nicknames developed as a way of differentiating people with the same names. Christina recalled her father's nickname was 'Ganni I-Bughaddas', which means 'Johnny the deep sea diver'. Thus her dad could be distinguished from any other John Farrugia by reference to his occupation.

Both women sound very Australian and Christina self-identified as Australian. Jean regarded herself as Maltese but added 'I've been here a long time'. She still spoke Maltese at the local club where she liked to play bingo with other Maltese women.

The Library has digitised the two interviews and they are scheduled to go online. When that happens, people anywhere in the world with access to the internet will be able to experience this particular aspect of history, of century-old migration to Australia, through listening to the individual voices of those who lived it.

*DR BARRY YORK is a historian at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House. He began recording oral history interviews for the Library in 1988 and was a Harold White Fellow in 1997. His email address is Barry.York@moadoph.gov.au.*

*This article was first published in [THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA MAGAZINE](#) (March 2016 at pages 16-19).*



## MUSIC IN MALTA – FROM PREHISTORY TO VINYL

*Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti's* next major project delves deep into the story and development of music and sound in Malta via the colourful influences of the Mediterranean basin. The project titled *Music in Malta – From Prehistory to Vinyl* will consist of a major exhibition as well as a full programme of performances by local and foreign musicians.

The exhibition will run between 14th April and 16th June of 2019 and is being guest-curated by Dr Anna Borg Cardona, music historian and one of the leading authorities on local musical folklore and folkloristic instruments. It will cover the history of music in Malta from prehistory all the way up to the early twentieth century. Through a display of musical instruments sourced from Maltese private and public collections, it will demonstrate how Malta's

traditional instruments and sounds fit into a Mediterranean context.

The public will also simultaneously appreciate these sounds at the various performances that kicked off last November 2018 and will run until June 2019. This programme includes a variety of genres and styles from popular, folk and classical traditions, which may be connected historically, geographically or musically with Malta, helping to give a perception of local musical traditions in a Euro-Mediterranean context. The performances are being co-organised by **#EngageCREATIVES**, a creative support platform for organisations run by Renzo Spiteri and Gaby Giacchino.



**TONY BUHAGIAR - #21**

BORN - 03-10-1955  
HEIGHT - 166CM  
WEIGHT - 74KG

FOOTSCRAY - 1985  
GAMES - 21  
GOALS - 36

### Anthony Francis Buhagiar

is a retired **Australian rules footballer** who played in the **Victorian Football League (VFL)**.

Known as **Tony Buhagiar**

Nickname **The Little budgie**

A pint-sized **rover**, he made his senior debut for **West Australian National Football League** club **East**



**Fremantle** in the earlier 1970s as a free-spirited 16-year-old. By 1979 he had become a premiership player, represented Western Australia at state of origin and gained **All-Australian** selection.

In 1981 he crossed the **Nullarbor Plain** and joined Victorian Football League club **Essendon**. One of only three players to debut for the Bombers that year he had an immediate impact on his new team kicking 42 goals to be their leading goalkicker, winning their best first year player award, coming third in **The Age's** player of the year award, and eighth in the **Brownlow Medal**. He was also a member of Essendon's **night premiership**, a midweek knockout competition played on a Tuesday night during the season.

As his career with Essendon progressed, the awards continued to flow including being the team's leading vote getter in the 1982 Brownlow Medal, most determined player in 1983 and state selection again in 1984. Although small in stature (166 cm and 74 kg), the courageous rover/goalsneak became a crowd favourite and was affectionately known as "The Budgie".

In his four years with Essendon, Buhagiar played in seven finals games and was among the team's best players in five of them, proving his reliability in big games. He was a part of Essendon's ill fated 1983 **grand final** team, which suffered the biggest loss in grand final history until that time.

Essendon were to avenge their defeat in the following year's grand final, but it was to be without the "Budgie", who, after an injury interrupted season, was named only as an emergency.

Disappointed at having missed the Premiership, Buhagiar decided to return home to East Fremantle, but was talked into resurrecting his VFL career with **Footscray**. He played the 1985 season with the Bulldogs, which include three more finals, and finished the season with a handy 36 goals. He returned to East Fremantle in 1986.

Buhagiar was a board member of the **Fremantle Football Club** from 2000 until 2009.

## LOUIS SHICKLUNA MALTESE/CANADIAN SHIPBUILDER

This memorial located in Victoria Lawn Cemetery, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada is in remembrance of three young children. They are the offspring of Joseph & Mary Shickluna and grandchildren of the celebrated Louis Shickluna. Myra was born and died in 1879, Thomas (Tomey) Shickluna was born in 1875 and died on 28 August 1879 from acute dysentery. Leo also died from acute dysentery a few days later on 2 Sep 1879.



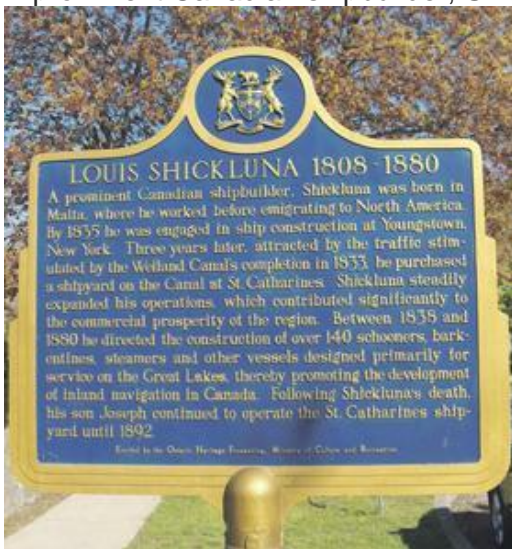
The memorial shows 3 young children seated around a lamb, a common symbol on the graves of children. Myra aged 6 months Tomey aged 4 years Leo aged 15 months Children of Joseph and Mary Shickluna

*Weep not for me, dear parents dear.  
I am not dead but sleeping here. My  
glass is run; My age you see. Wait  
but awhile and follow me.*



The patriarch of the Shickluna family in Canada was Louis Shickluna who was born in Malta in 1808 into a family of shipbuilders. He emigrated to North America disembarking in Quebec and moving to the United States where he was employed as a ship construction worker in Youngstown, New York State. In 1835 he visited his family in Malta, probably to claim his inheritance from his wealthy parents. In 1838 he moved to Ontario, Canada to pursue opportunities with the recently completed Welland Canal at St. Catharines and became one of the city's most notable citizens with a reputation of being a skilled shipbuilder, constructing over 140 vessels including snub-nosed schooners designed to make maximum use of the canal locks, barkentines, steamers and other vessels designed primarily for service on the Great Lakes. He is recognized in Canada's Maritime History and his story is detailed in a plaque unveiled on November 29, 1979 on Yates Street, St. Catharines, Ontario.

A prominent Canadian shipbuilder, Shickluna was born in Malta, where he worked before emigrating to North America disembarking in Quebec. By 1835 he was engaged in ship construction at Youngstown, New York. Three years later, attracted by the traffic stimulated by the Welland Canal's completion in 1833, he purchased a shipyard on the Canal at St. Catharines. Shickluna steadily expanded his operations, which contributed significantly to the commercial prosperity of the region. Between 1838 and 1880 he directed the construction of over 140 schooners, barkentines, steamers and other vessels designed primarily for service on the Great Lakes, thereby promoting the development of inland navigation in Canada. Following Shickluna's death, his son, Joseph continued to operate the St. Catharines shipyard until 1892.



Due to failing health and rheumatoid arthritis he left the shipyard to his sons. Following his death in 1880, (he is buried in Victoria Lawn Cemetery, situated

beside Welland Canal in east St. Catharines) his son, Joseph, continued to operate the St. Catharines shipyard until 1892.



[Keith Micallef](#)

## MSSP's departure from Blacktown NSW after 30 years



### The MSSP has given 30 years of pastoral service in New South Wales

The Maltese community in Blacktown, Australia, was up in arms following the decision by the Missionary Society of St Paul (MSSP) to leave this New South Wales suburb after 30 years of pastoral service due to a shortage of priests.

However, Fr Mark Grima from the MSSP's headquarters in Rome told the Times of Malta that if a Maltese priest from Melbourne or even from abroad would be able available, they would consider holding certain services on special occasions.

Founded in 1910 by Mgr Giuseppe DePiro, the missionary society has established several houses not only in Australia but in other parts of the world such as Peru, Pakistan, Canada and the Philippines.

The MSSP's departure from Blacktown was communicated in a letter from the Australian provincial Fr Ivan Burdian who announced that Fr Noel Blanco would be leaving on February 17.

His departure was attributed to ill health and to the fact that the Society did not have enough priests to continue this pastoral service.

The correspondence was read during the Saturday evening Mass on February 2, at a jam-packed St Francis chapel which is part of the La Valette Social Centre. The latter is a hub for the Maltese

#### **Editor's note;**

***We, the members of the Maltese community of Adelaide are also concerned that if our only Maltese Diocesan Chaplain, Fr. Gabriel Micallef, who is about to retire, will return back to Malta, the Maltese community will be left without a spiritual leader. This journal was informed that it is not likely that the present chaplain will be replaced and the presence of the Franciscan priests will end after seventy since the late Fr. Giles Ferriggi OFM established the parish of Christ the King at Lockleys after arriving from Malta in 1947. Fr. Ferriggi was the first parish priest of the same parish from 1952 to 1979.***

community, which incorporates a home for the elderly, many of whom are Maltese..

Moreover, it pointed out that the MSSP's departure would also bring to an end the migrant chaplaincy in the Parramatta diocese as of April 21.

"If the number of priests are dwindling, we believe that the Maltese communities should be given priority over other parts of the world where the MSSP is also present," they said.

"One option would be to relocate a priest from one of these countries, or else from within Australia," they added.

However, when the Times newspaper contacted the MSSP's headquarters in Rome, the Society threw cold water on this possibility.

While acknowledging that their departure from Blacktown would be sorely missed, Fr Grima noted that MSSP members did not limit themselves to celebrating Mass, but were very active in hospital visits, ministering the elderly in homes and supporting families.

"As the Provincial of Australia, Fr Ivano Burdian has shared with the congregation it was after a long process of discernment that we came to this decision to pull out," he said.

He pointed out that the ministry was very particular as it could only be served through a Maltese priest.

"Our Maltese priests in Australia are getting older (some are still ministering at the age of 80 and over, while others had to retire) and Maltese vocations in Australia or Malta are few," Fr Grima said. Consequently, the Society's options were limited, he added.

"However we still keep our options open," he added.

"Should a Maltese priest from Melbourne or abroad be able to temporally offer his service on special occasions, I see no reason why it should not happen." (Times of Malta)

## Maltese Falcons: The Canadian Aces at Malta



people. Canadians with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and the Royal Air Force (RAF) were not just part of the battle; they punched far above their weight, and several Canadians took their place in the pantheon of Malta's—and, indeed, the war's—great aces.

As the siege intensified through 1941, a series of dangerous resupply

missions known as the Canadian “Club Runs” took place, delivering fighter aircraft and pilots to Malta via aircraft carrier from Gibraltar, to help defend the island and regain air superiority. The first of these Club Runs, Operation Hurry, delivered 12 Hurricanes on board His Majesty's Ship Argus in August of 1940, and the last, Operation Train, which saw HMS Furious delivered 29 Spitfires for Malta, two of which failed to arrive.

**A Lasting Legacy** The Canadian aces—and indeed all the Canadian fighter pilots, from Rouleau, who never made it, to Beurling, whose career was meteoric—played a hugely important role in the Battle of Malta.

In the Battle of Britain, only four per cent of the pilots who flew during the engagement were Canadian. In the Battle of Malta, that proportion had risen to 25 per cent, and Canadians made up an even greater percentage of the aces. Given that pilots were chosen for Malta service for their experience, tenacity and abilities, these figures are a testament to the ascendancy of Canadian fighter pilots among the Allies over the course of the war. *This story was first published on the [Vintage Wings of Canada](#) website in 2016.*

*By Dave O'Malley*

In the summer of 1942, Malta, a small island just 80 kilometres south of Sicily in the Mediterranean Sea, was the most bombed place on earth. The strategic importance of the Allied-controlled island was magnified after the North African front opened in 1940, providing the Allies with an excellent staging platform from which to attack naval, land, and air targets in the central Mediterranean. Because of this, the island found itself under siege from the Axis powers for nearly two and a half years.

As in the Battle of Britain—the fight that would go down in history as the great mythic aerial battle of the war—fighter pilots became the lynchpin in the defence of Malta. But, unlike the Battle of Britain, the pilots fighting in the Maltese skies could not retire to a cozy pub at night, go to sleep with their wives, or catch a show in London's theatre district on a weekend's leave. It was hot, dusty, dangerous, lonely and relentless work – and deprivation was the order of the day.

Day after day, month after month, young men still in their 20s rose up to stop German and Italian bombers from destroying more of Malta and its

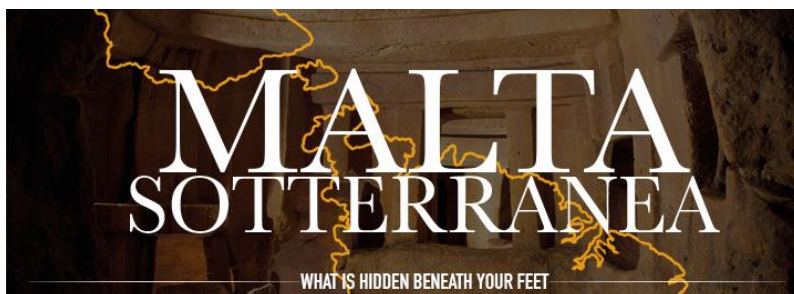


## What happened behind the closed doors of Fort St Angelo?

Forty years ago, on 31st March 1979, Fort St Angelo in Birgu was the last military site which

saw the departure of the British military forces from the Maltese Islands. For many centuries, this fort had always been administered by foreign authorities and therefore, there was little access to it for the Maltese people. Heritage Malta's latest exhibition '**Behind Closed Doors**' at **Fort St Angelo**, will reveal intriguing narratives that took place at this military site during its occupation by the Royal Navy between 1906 and 1979. **The exhibition will remain open to the public until the 8th September 2019.**

While the bigger picture of this exhibition will present the naval use of the fort and the architectural modifications which were done to it to address the necessities of the time, the core of this event will focus on personal recollections. With its access strictly prohibited to civilians and with clearly defined spaces where Maltese and British servicemen were allowed to enter according to their work and rank, only a few individuals had ever visited all the areas of the fort. Such experiences, together with a number of personal artefacts which were recently donated to Heritage Malta, will shed light about what happened behind the closed doors of HMS St Angelo during its occupation by the Royal Navy. Aimed to forge an immersive experience, this exhibition will give the opportunity to visitors to 'enrol' with the Royal Navy by choosing one of four ranks available. The exhibition unfolds over five different areas in Fort St Angelo where visitors can explore and discover the history and use of this military building, together with life at the fort during the Royal Navy's occupation, particularly through re-created areas in the fort such as the dormitory, the bar, and different uniforms used during this period. **Fort St Angelo is open daily between 09.00 till 17.00hrs (last admission at 16.30hrs).**



## **QRENDI CAVE(S)**

The opening, in the summer of 1858, of a hard stone quarry in the search of a durable stone suitable for the construction of the new naval dock brought about the discovery of a bone-cave containing the remains of hippopotamus and other animals, near the Phoenician remains at

Qrendi. Mr. Horner reported this in his presidential address to the Geological Society in 1861, consequently adopting the name of Qrendi for this quarry and cavern in his notice of this interesting discovery.

On the demise of Mr. Horner, Dr Leith Adams M.B., F.G.S., F.R.S, who arrived in Malta two years subsequent to the first discovery was entrusted with the investigation of this interesting and important find. His more recent labors amongst the debris enabled him to procure similar remains and to learn the history of the cavern from the quarrymen. Reports were later submitted to the Royal Dublin Society Journal and the British Association Geologist Society. Throughout his investigations, several additional caverns were located and

excavated.

Bones of extinct animals are fairly abundant in Malta, and many paleontologists have made these islands their hunting ground. Renown experts in this field included Spratt, Busk, Parker, Falconier, Lieth-Adams, Issel, Caruana, Cook, Tagliaferro, names which will always be connected with the Paleontology of Malta.

The animals discovered include elephants, swans, and hippopotami, none of which could thrive far from a rich vegetation and a large expanse of water. According to Profs. Hull and others, the Mediterranean Sea was once a series of fresh water lakes connected with one another by channels, and with land passages



from Europe to Africa at the strait of Gibraltar, Sicily, Malta and Egypt. Along these passages, the early pachyderms and ruminants traveled southwards to North Africa when they were driven by the increasing glaciations of Europe.

The remains of those animals that tarried on the Maltese bridge were in the course of time, washed into fissures, caves and ravines where, fossilized by the action of soil and water, they have been discovered in a more or less perfect condition.

The Maghlaq Cave No. 3 was also discovered in 1858, and consisted of a cavern opening horizontally containing the remains of Hippopotamus pentlandi together with a solitary molar of one of the elephants. Although a considerable amount of the fossilized remains were found in a damaged state, the same cannot be said about the remains of Hippopotamus pentlandi and Hippopotamus minutus that were otherwise found in a perfect condition. Discovered within the same cave were remains of Myoxus melitensis, bird bones and entire recent land-shells.

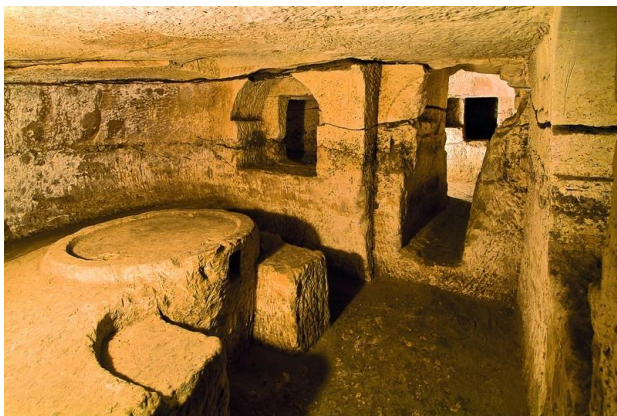
Dr Leith Adams also discovered the Mnajdra Gap Cave No 6 in 1863. Just a few meters from the Maghlaq cave No 3. Within this cave portions (apparently entire skeletons) of elephants in conjunction with enormous quantities of the bones of Myoxus melitensis and of large aquatic birds including Cygnus falconeri. Fragments of chelonians with recent land-shells belonging to Helix, clausilia and bulinus were also found.

In the middle Maghlaq Cave No 5 located a few meters distance from the Maghlaq Cave No 3 remains of Myroxus melitensis together with teeth of arvicola besides bones of large birds, small frogs and recent land shells were discovered.

Dr Adams further reports in 1863, of the discovery of the remains of the largest forms of elephant. A much mutilated skull with penultimate true molars was found within the Maghlaq Fault (No 7) Cave

Work on the Mnajdra Gap cave was recommenced early in December 1865 at a point where work had previously terminated. This section of the cave with its largest length in access of 30 meters with a maximum width of between four and fifteen meters was covered with parent rock and structure and stalactite. Fossilized remains were found in greater abundance and in the best state of preservation, teeth and tusks of elephants, the remains of the large dormouse and land-shells were found through out the cavern.

Remains of birds were also very common not only in this cave but also in all the localities. Foot and wing bones represented raptors of large dimensions from Mnajdra Gap where likewise water birds including Gigantic Grallae and anseres were plentiful. The presence of a very large river-tortoise was repetitively by the discovery of heads of femurs and other portion of the skeleton.



## Hidden Beneath your feet – Tal-Mintna Catacombs

Tal-Mintna Catacombs were 'discovered' in 1860 by Dr. A Caruana and Captain Strickland. This was Caruana's first contact with a catacomb, when together with Capt. Strickland R.N. he climbed down a well in a cattle-pen to explore the Tal-Mintna hypogea at Mqabba. These Hypogea are found in the south of the village, in an area known as Tal-Mintna (Hence the name)

The Known Archaeologist David Trump also points out the detail and great work within these hypogea .

The complex was a number of detached underground sets of burial chambers grouped collectively next to each other. Originally separate, these three separate catacombs are now connected to form one larger complex. Like similar small clusters found in the vicinity, the interior is made up of small galleries and tombs carved out on both sides of the passageways. The visible Triclinium (Agape Table) suggests that this site extends to Pale-Christianity. The burial chambers are richly decorated and carved scallop-shells can be seen on a number of window tombs many times accompanied by decorated pilasters flanking the entrance of each tomb. Eight triangular recesses for oil lamps are pierced in the wall opposite the agape table.

The area round Mintna is full of similar small Christian groups, indicating the presence of an early Christian community in the surrounding area.



## DIONE AQUILINA PHOTO ALBUM

### Sir Paul Boffa Dockyard Photo

*The then Prime Minister Paul Boffa (Gaetano Aquilina is the first to the right of Paul Boffa holding work gloves in hand)*

As with many old Maltese family albums, it is incredibly amazing how many historical

sketches may be retrieved providing readers not only with rare photos but enriching information about political, social and cultural events as well as places visited. This is a case in point with the Family Aquilina album. Dione Aquilina, who hails from San Gwann is a fraternal twin with his sister Doris and is the owner of this album. These are some photos and accompanying stories.

Background information about Dione gives interesting aspects of his working career in Canada where he migrated in the 1950s and later on when he returned to his home country, Malta. He enjoys his retirement years after spending the last 22 years of his working life in Canada.

During his working career in Canada, Dione worked with the *Canadian Pacific Rail Company* which later became the *Via Rail*. Starting off as a *Soda Jerk* (which is another name for an ice-cream and salad maker) he progressed in his career being promoted to several positions and terminating his career in Canada as a *Train Steward*.

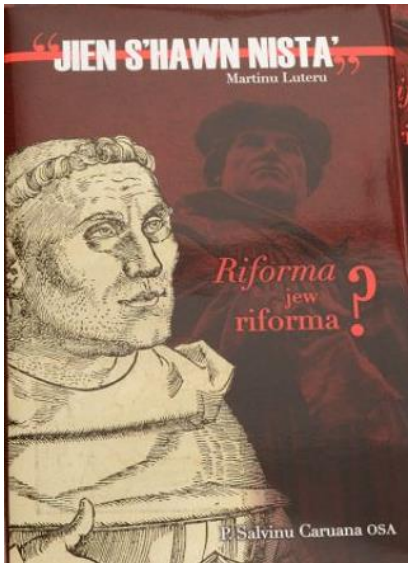
The most historical photo is the one which showing Dione's father, Gaetano together with a group of other Dockyard workers posing with the then Prime Minister of Malta, Paul Boffa (later Sir). The Prime Minister is wearing his familiar hat and in his characteristic pose with one hand in the right pocket of his suit jacket. The flames can be seen emerging out of the forge on the far right of the photo.

The photo was taken after the Second World War at a time when Contino L. Preziosi formed the *National Assembly*. During the period following the Second World War, the Labour party won the elections in 1945 but in 1946 resigned *en masse* due to the layoffs at the *HM Dockyard*. On 10th September 1947, Douglas Governor-in-chief pushed the new constitution which took effect on 22 September 1947. With this, the senate was abolished and the legislative body which the Labour Party won. Dr. Paul Boffa M.D became Prime Minister but the split in 1949 brought the party to a downfall and Mr. Dominic Mintoff was elected leader of the labour Party, which he then styled as *Malta Workers Party*. Dione remembers his father saying that the photo was taken during Boffa's visit to the Dockyard during October as Gaetano celebrated his birthday during that month.

Prior to the commencement of the Second World War hostilities, Gaetano had been asked together with other Dockyard workers to work in North Africa. During service in North Africa, war broke out and Gaetano was one of the workers who had escaped capture by the Germans when they advanced on Benghazi. His family had already abandoned hopes of seeing him again, but providentially he made it back home to Malta. He suffered shell shock as a result of the bombardments and other close calls from the German and Italian artillery and airforce shells.

After the war, Gaetano was employed as a blacksmith at HM Dockyard producing rivets for ships and boilers and other equipment. This trade died out with the advent of welding. As a blacksmith the work consisted also of creating objects from wrought iron or steel by forging the metal, using tools to hammer, bend, and cut.

Blacksmiths in Malta also produced objects such as gates, grilles, railings, light fixtures, furniture, sculpture, tools, agricultural implements, decorative and religious items, cooking utensils and weapons. This was the case during wartime Malta, when the local availability of such items was scarce due to supply convoys not reaching the island.



## Ippreżentat ktieb ġdid dwar Martinu Luteru

Nhar is-Sibt 26 ta' April 2019, fis-Sala Santa Rita fi ħdan il-Monasteru ta' Santu Wistin fir-Scerri, Pro-Dekan tal-Fakulta' tat-Teologija fl-Universita' ta' Malta għamel id-diskors prinċipali ta' madwar 35

minuta li fih għamel apprezzament tal-ktieb I nistgħu ngħidu huwa kapulavur tal-letteratura reliġjuża Maltija u li jitratta l-figura kontroversjali tal-monaku Agostinjan Martinu Luteru li għex bejn l-1483 u l-1546. Il-volum fih ukoll 46 paġna ta' ritratti tal-kulur. Fi

Rabat, Għawdex, saret il-preżentazzjoni tal-ktieb ġdid Here I Stand. Martin Luther. Reform or reform? tal-istudjuż u riċerkatur magħruf Agostinjan Patri Salvinu Caruana OSA. Il-ktieb, li fih madwa 500 paġna, huwa xogħol diversi snin ta' riċerka f'postijiet differenti. Il-Professor Mons Hector

tmiem id-diskors, il-Provinċjal Fr Leslie Gatt radd ħajr lil Patri Salvinu għall-kontribut siewi u kontinwu tiegħu li qed iwassal biex il-poplu Malti jsir jaf ħafna aktar lil Santu Wistin. Patri Salvinu ilu għal dawn l-aħħar tletin sena jgħalliem fi ħdan l-Istitut Agostinjan f'Malta u l-Fakulta' tat-Teologija fl-Universita'. Il-ktieb jinsab għall-bejgħ mingħand il-Frangiskani Konventwali (ČAK) f'Birkirkara kif ukoll direttament mill-Kunvent Agostinjan fil-Belt Valletta. Fi tmiem il-launching tal-ktieb, Patri Pirjol Adeodata Schembri OSA hejja refreshments għal dawk preżenti



## The Black Procession

On the initiative of the Vittoriosa Good Friday Commission and in collaboration with Heritage Malta, the old streets of Vittoriosa witnessed the revival of a procession that was known as 'Il-Purċissjoni s-Sewda' (The Black Procession) and the re-enactment of the translation (the transfer of relics from one place to another) of a highly venerated reliquary. This

procession had been discontinued in 1879 by Bishop Carmelo Scicluna after he ordered that only one Good Friday procession may be held in each parish.



Il-Purċissjoni s-Sewda used to involve the participation of several people, men and women, all dressed in black, who were either penitents or else doing a penitence, sometimes by enduring severe sacrifices during the procession. Even the participating confraternity members used to dress in black.

According to Filippo Cipriani, secretary to the Inquisitor Paolo Passionei, it was Fr Mikiel Grima, a great devotee of the Passion of Christ, who collected the various sacred relics which form the renowned reliquary. He spent two years searching for them

across Rome and all of them have a connection to the Passion of Christ. This reliquary arrived in Malta in 1753 on the insistence of the Inquisitor Paolo Passionei and it was welcomed with much celebrations, both at the Inquisitor's Palace and at St Lawrence's Parish Church, both in Vittoriosa. Up to this day, the reliquary retains considerable devotion.



After 140 years, the Inquisitor Palace's chapel received again this historical reliquary which was left exclusively exposed to visitors along the day. During the evening, members of the Collegiate Chapter of St Lawrence gathered at this chapel to recite prayers and then carry the reliquary throughout the procession. Confraternity members led the procession, followed by the reliquary, and a huge crucifix which was carried by a number of individuals with hooded faces.

A considerable crowd participated in this procession which ended at St Lawrence's Parish Church for the Holy Blessing in front of the reliquary.



Portrait paintings of Leopold II, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (19th century) and Charles IV, King of Spain (18th century) are currently being restored by Heritage Malta - Conservation Division as part of the ongoing Grand Master's Palace renovation project

These two portrait paintings form part of the Grand Master's Palace permanent collection.

Alexander Smyth has flown to Malta to race for the European Maltese Nationals. He had his first race on May 12 and came first! We're very proud of him!

He'll be racing representing Malta all over Europe. Alex was also selected for the 2018 commonwealth games at the Gold Coast to race for Malta.

Alex is son of Evelyn Smyth (nee Puli) and James Smyth

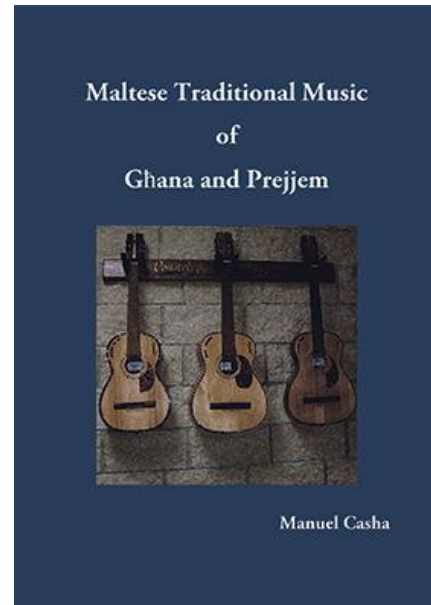


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## Songs from the soul of a nation



**Manuel Casha: Maltese Traditional Music of Ghana and Prejjem**



Self-Published, 2016.

For the vast majority of us, Maltese folk-singing (ghana) is at best a closed book, a genre which we struggle to understand. A new book was published in 2016 - *Maltese Traditional Music of Ghana and Prejjem*, by Manuel Casha throws a distinctly new light on this topic.

It is not often that a book dedicated to Maltese folk singing comes to hand and, for this, we have to thank Casha who has striven hard for decades to ensure that this unique form of self-expression is not lost forever. As he says in his introduction, "the soul and psyche of a nation are often embodied in its folkloric past".

This type of folk singing was limited to certain aficionados, and was even frowned upon by the so-called educated elite. It is not surprising, therefore, that it was foreigners who published what is arguably the best collection of Maltese folksong (Bertha Ilg and Hans Stumme in Germany) over a century ago.

In the past, Maltese ghana has been the channel through which the working classes have expressed their views, their protests, their reactions to political or religious squabbles which have occurred from time to time in Malta.

Casha has been involved in recording and documenting ghana for a long time. He has been a teacher of the guitar in Australia for several years, and can boast of a considerable following from young guitar players, some of whom have reached a proficiency equal to the best found in Malta.

Through his published CDs, which are now archived in The National Library of Australia, he has ensured that future generations would be in a position to share and possibly enlarge on this heritage.

With the massive wave of migration that took place in the immediate post-war period, many folksingers left Malta to settle in Australia and elsewhere. They brought with them their guitars, as well as their love of ghana, which they enjoyed to display, to entertain their friends and to remind themselves of the Malta they had left behind and still hankered for. By the mid 20th century, thousands of Maltese had emigrated to other countries in search of a better life, carrying with them their musical heritage to the countries of their settlement.

In a chapter on migration, Casha remarks: "They now sang about their homeland, family and friends they left behind. They sang about their battle with homesickness. They sang about the prejudices they encountered in the new countries, where they were merely outsiders seeking acceptance. Some sang about the inequality and harsh working conditions. Some about the freezing climate, to which they were not accustomed or, conversely, the oppressing heat they toiled in.

Many sang about the loneliness of living in rural areas, in isolation on their farms or working as farm hands. Others were employed in sugarcane plantations, engaged in backbreaking work and suffocating heat, and singing about their difficult plight. One must remember that many Maltese had to face the culture shock of



leaving a generally urbanised environment in Malta, to surviving in a vast land where, in some cases, your next-door neighbour lived miles away."

Casha remarks: 'I am encouraged, of late, by the number of students who choose għana and prejjem for their thesis for their degrees of PhDs. This has shown that a new generation Maltese see this music genre as their heritage and not something to sweep under the carpet.'

Casha himself is largely responsible for this resurgence. Through his interest, involvement in recording and documenting these songs he has been a prime mover in the resurgence of għana in Australia. He has made sure, through his published CDs, and by ensuring that all this heritage is now archived in The National Library of Australia that future generations would be in a position to share and possibly enlarge on this heritage. *The book can be obtained from the author, e-mail: mannec@optusnet.com.au*

*Price: 25AUD plus postag*



## B E A U T I F U L

Did you know? With less than 1,000 kilometers from the Red Sea to the northern border – the Israel National Trail was ranked by National Geographic as one of the top 20 epic trails worldwide...

Indeed, Israel is a breathtaking country, offering magnificent views, golden beaches, green landscapes, vast deserts, snowy mountaintops and vibrant cities nestled between thousands of years' worth of extraordinary historical and cultural sites.

Like its topography, Israel's citizens have a unique inner and outer beauty – consisting of a fusion of immigrant communities which have come together from all corners of the globe in a common vision and a rich culture that defines Israel.

## D I V E R S E

Did you know? Although its national food is the Falafel - only Tokyo and New York City surpasses Tel Aviv's sushi consumption per capita. Now that's fusion!

In Israel, all people; Jews and Arabs, Muslims and Christians, religious and secular, as well as LGBTQ reside together in a bastion of coexistence in the heart of the Middle East.

The country has come to signify openness, personal expression and freedom to live and let live. A collage of cultures, customs and traditions are what helped Israel forge itself as a symbol for making the desert bloom and turning it into an oasis of tolerance.



## S E N S A T I O N A L

Did you know? Israel has absorbed more immigrants than any other country, in its short history, with newcomers from more than 100 countries.

Indeed, Israel's beauty and variety make it a sensational place to experience while providing a quick, fascinating and dynamic lifestyle for its citizens and tourists alike. You will be pleasantly surprised to discover the country's vast and varied culinary, music and art scene, which combines dozens of styles from its diverse population stemming from around the world.

Life in Israel is innovative, while at the same time, still connected to its rich history. Israel is a destination filled with warmth, openness, and love that will leave everyone who visits with memories (and friends!) to last a lifetime. Celebrate and share the beauty and diversity of Israel!

## Minestra - Thick Vegetable Soup

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The preparation of minestra is a serious business in the Maltese islands and much discussion takes place between and within families about which vegetables should be used and whether it should or should not be mashed. Some people think that our minestra is much the same as the Italian minestrone of which there are number of variations. However, the Maltese minestra is a very different dish – it is always very thick with the vegetables in large pieces or mashed and we don't, as a rule, use haricot beans or green beans either – preferring split fava beans.

### Ingredients:

100g favetta (fava beans);  
2 – 3 large onions;  
3 large potatoes;  
2 bunches of Maltese celery – the thin stems can be chopped or leave the bunches whole;  
3 or more carrots;  
1 to 2 turnips;  
half a small cauliflower or cabbage or a little of both;  
400 g pumpkin (both the yellow and the firm white variety if possible);  
1 tbs olive oil;  
1 tbs tomato puree (optional)  
100 g thick pasta, such as zibbec (beads – Italian *Canneroncini*)



### Method:

Wash the beans thoroughly and leave to soak for a few hours. Chop all the vegetables roughly and not too small. Place in a very large saucepan (because pulses and pasta will be added later). Pour on boiling water to reach about half way up. Add the tomato puree and salt and pepper.

Cover, bring to a boil then simmer very gently for about two hours, stirring occasionally. You may prefer to add the cauliflower or cabbage later on since they don't require such lengthy cooking. Cook the favetta separately and add towards the last 30 minutes.

When all the vegetables are cooked, add the pasta and simmer for a further 12 minutes. Now add a good tablespoon of olive oil and stir it in. Add freshly grated Parmesan when serving.

**What are you waiting for?**  
**Join the family, now**