



# Maltese e-Newsletter



The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora  
Connecting Communities



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**Proud to be  
Maltese**



**MALTACAMP - GERMANY 2019**

**OUR MOTTO**

**WORKING  
TOGETHER**

**Eurovision Junior  
2019  
Eliana Gómez  
Blanco**

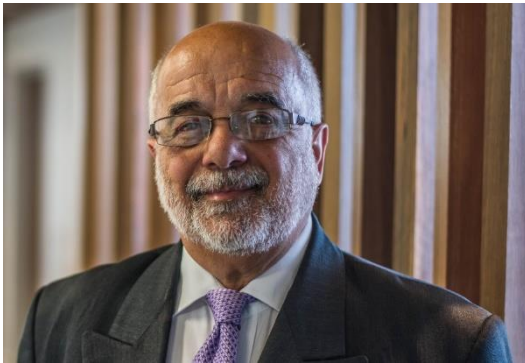


**Larissa Bonaci**

**CONNECTING COMMUNITIES  
IN MALTA AND ABROAD**



## Hon Consul for Malta in Western Australia JOE CALLEJA



Joe Calleja has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Richmond Fellowship of Western Australia since July 2005. He has nearly thirty years experience working with the community. He was previously Director for Court Support Services with the Department of Justice in Western Australia, Principal Social Worker of the Department for Community Services and Executive Manager of Kin Way Family Relationship Services.

He is the immediate past President of the Western Australian Association of Mental Health (WAAMH), current National Vice President of the Australian Association of Social Workers

(AASW) and on the boards of Community Employers WA (CEWA), the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Advisory Board (UWA), Psycho social Rehabilitation and Recovery Association of WA (PRRAWA) and the previous state government Social Inclusion Reference Group.

He was a member of the Ministerial National Marriage and Family Council and a Board Member of Family Services Australia. He is the non government representative on the Project Steering Committee for the development of the WA Mental Health Strategic Plan 2010 – 2020 and chairs the Centrelink Consultative Committee on Mental Health in WA. Prior to his training as a social worker he was a teacher for five years.



## Restoration of unique painting in Comino chapel

**Report:** Ruth Amaira

The Holy Family's flight into Egypt or their way back to Nazareth?

Catholics are more traditionally inclined to commemorate Our Lady, St. Joseph and the infant baby Jesus fleeing to Egypt on a donkey. But the Byzantine Orthodox tradition recalls the Holy Family's return to Nazareth with the central

figures of Jesus as a youngster holding his mother Mary's hand and behind them the figure of St. Joseph and the donkey. And it is this version that is found in a unique painting which hangs inside the chapel of Comino. The rector of the Chapel, says that on entering the chapel two years ago he noticed that the painting was damaged and needed restoring.

Mgr Joseph Attard: "I immediately saw that the painting was in a critical condition and I felt I had to do my best so that the only painting in this chapel which is part of our cultural heritage, is not lost forever". Although the artist is unknown, restorer Pierre Bugeja told us that at first glance it is likely to be early eighteenth century.

Pierre Bugeja: "it is rounded, but one can't exclude that it could have been rectangular and it is not know whether this painting was brought from somewhere else."

The painting had to be removed from its place and brought to Malta for restoration. It was not an easy job because the weather and the sea could have damaged it further.

Pierre Bugeja: "there is loose paint that is falling and if you come close, there is blistering which could have been caused by accident or as a result of lit-up candles nearby."

Now that cleaning has started, the process will continue to try to shed light on the painting's identity. The restoration project, which is being funded by BOV, is expected to be completed by May of next year.





## Eliana Gomez Blanco to represent Malta in Gliwice-Silesia!

Eliana Gomez Blanco will represent Malta in the Junior Eurovision Song Contest 2019 which will be held in Poland on the 24th November.

Singers Leah Cauchi and Martina Cutajar classified in second and third place respectively.

Eliana interpreted the song [Sto Male](#). In 2018, Eliana won 'I-Għanja Tal-Poplu Żgħażaġh 2018' festival with the duet 'Dwell'.

Twelve male and female singers interpreted their songs and musical talents in front of the judges, composed of Claudia Faniello, Ela Mangion and Deo Grech. 50 per cent of the votes was online voting and the other 50 per cent by the judges.

Meanwhile, the process is expected to begin for the selection of the song which Eliana will be singing in Poland.

### Who is Eliana Gomez Blanco?

Eliana already has a lot of experience as a singer being a resident singer on a local TV programme in Malta. As well as this, she has also represented the country in multiple international music festivals such as the 2018 Ghanja Tal-Poplu Zghazagh where she won with the song, "Dwell". Last year, Eliana also competed in the Malta Junior Eurovision Song Contest – the selection process for representing Malta at the junior contest.

When Eliana is not singing, her other passions include hairdressing and reading! At school, she is working hard to pursue her dream in becoming a doctor in the future. Eliana believes that you should, "always stay true to your own values and don't be influenced by others".

## Maltese Bishops in the Americas

### Abstracts from THE MALTESE MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE

*By Fr John Caruana*

Honduras

**Mgr Robert Camilleri Azzopardi** from Hamrun, started his mission in Honduras in 1979 as vice parish priest, then parish priest for 13 years, in a parish comprising of 78 villages. In 1993, he was appointed Superior of the Franciscan Mission and in 1995 as Rector of St Francis' Institute in Tegucigalpa serving 2,300 students, from kindergarten up to University. In 2001, Mgr Camilleri was made bishop of the capital Tegucigalpa, by Pope John Paul II. On the 24th of July 2004, Bishop Robert became titular Bishop of the Diocese of Comayagua in Central Honduras with a population of 700,000 Catholics.

**Mgr Jose Bonello** of Xaghra, Gozo, who also belonged to the Friars Minor, was made Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of Juticalpa by Pope Benedict XVI. As a motto for his new ministry he chose 'Patientia Omnia Potest' (Patience can achieve Everything). Contemporaneously, he was chosen for three periods as Counsellor for Central America in the Franciscan Foundation of the Province of the Immaculate Conception of New York. In 2009 he was nominated Vicar General of the Diocese of Comayagua by the bishop of the diocese Mgr Robert Camilleri OFM. He has been a missionary in Central America since 1989.

## Turks and Caicos Islands



**Mgr Peter Baldacchino** never imagined that he would become a priest, let alone a bishop. He had found his place in society with a good job as a Technical Manager with Canada Dry. He was attending the 4th World Youth Day in Santiago de Compostela in 1989 when he first felt the call to priesthood, but he tried to convince himself that he had no vocation. Helped by the brethren of the Neo-Catechumenal Way and by the late Dun Manwel Agius, Peter finally responded to the call in October 1990 and was sent to study at Newark, New Jersey, USA.

He was soon posted to the Missio Sui Juris of the Turks and Caicos Islands (British West Indies) by Cardinal Theodore Mc Carrick in 2009. For Mgr Baldacchino, work among youths is very important regardless of one's religious affiliation. What is important is that youths are being kept off the streets which are becoming very unsafe. Pope benedict XVI made him Chaplain to His Holiness and in 2014, Pope Francis appointed Mgr Baldacchino as new Auxiliary Bishop for Miami.

## Brazil

As a newly ordained priest, **Fr Vincent Costa**, formerly of B'Kara, started his pastoral activity in the Cathedral Nossa Senhora da Gloria in Maringa, Parana, Brazil. He gave great importance to pastoral work with Youth Together. Together with Edwin Parascandolo, he was sent to Sao Jorge, a parish in the interior. Fr Costa remembers with special gratification his work in the parish of Nossa Senhora das Gracias in the city of Sarandi, then a very challenging periphery. There he planted the methodology of the Comunidades Ecclesias de Base, dividing the parish in about twenty-one small communities, a move that was very well accepted. From Sarandi he was appointed the coordinator of the pastoral activity of the Archdiocese of Maringa. After four years he flew to Rome for post-graduate studies specialising in the gospel of St John. His thesis was titled, "Historia e Fe' a Comunidade Joanina according to Raymond E. Brown." On returning to Brazil, he was once again appointed Coordinator of Pastoral Activity after which he was made Auxiliary Bishop to Bishop Albano Cavallin of the Archdiocese of Londrina. Five years later he became titular bishop of the Diocese of Umuarama still in Parana. Today he is titular bishop of Jundiari in the State of Sao Paulo.

**Mgr Walter Michael Ebejer OP.** Among the first Dominicans to go to Brazil was Mgr Walter Michael Ebejer born in August 1929 in Dingli. The Dominican Order sent him to follow a two year course in Philosophy at Hawkesyard Rugely, Staffordshire and another two years in Theology at Blackfriars Hall, Oxford. He was ordained priest in Malta in 1954, and gained the Dominican Academic title of Lector in Philosophy and Sacred Theology. During the time he spent teaching at St Albert the Great College in Malta, he gained by correspondence, a Diploma in Languages of the Intermediate Arts from the University of London.



But all this academic success was overshadowed by a single dream: becoming a missionary at the frontiers of the Church. He started his mission in Brazil with his companion Fr Iznard Farrugia OP. in the Diocese of Goias, in the heartland of Brazil. After three years he moved to Faxxinal in the State of Parana. He lectured at the new Theology School for Laymen and at the Studium Theologicum for seminarians in Curitiba. He also taught Dogmatic Theology for six years before he was appointed bishop-elect of the new Diocese Uniao de Vitoria by Pope Paul VI on the 3rd December 1976.

Peru **Rev Redent Maria Gauci** born on December 27 1920 in Valletta, was ordained priest through the Order of the Carmelite Friars in 1943 at the hands of Mgr E. Galea. He went to Peru with another three companions in 1949. Aged 41, he became the first Prelate of the first territorial Prelature of Chuquibamba under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Arequipa in June 1962. He was later in April 1967 consecrated **bishop** at St John's Co-Cathedral. At the age of 57 he resigned for health reasons, returned to Malta and died at the Blues Sisters hospital on February 10, 1978.



We are proud of all the Maltese achievers around the globe

## ramona portelli



Born in 1979, RAMONA PORTELLI has been a freelance writer for these last past years, during which she has interviewed various local and foreign personalities. Ramona started her career by interviewing local Maltese personalities such as television presenters and producers, singers and

artists, as well as other important figure heads such as the Archbishop of Malta.

The life, experience and the stories of various other local female and male models, local bands, tribute artists, ex-prisoners, deejays, artists, actors, dancers and whole range of other persons, have been immortalized through Ramona's writing. Ramona has enhanced her portfolio by interviewing foreign celebrities such as worldwide artist and music producer - Edward Maya, Hollywood actresses Nectar Zadean and Tracie Dinwiddie, singer Baby D, Rugby player - Paul Marzella, and Australian singer Renee Cassar amongst others.

For a short period of time, Ramona Portelli was the assistant editor of the controversial magazine Playpen and part of the production team of the local television show - Str82dpoint - broadcasted on One TV.

She has interviewed local personalities for her section 'Celebrity Interviews' on [www.kidsmalta.com](http://www.kidsmalta.com) - a website dedicated to parenthood, in which personalities from the media and the political scene shared their experiences on parenthood with Ramona and her followers.

Her work is not solely limited to conducting interviews as she is lately venturing into the PR aspect. She started by being responsible for the PR of the popular TV shows Mhux Ghal Kulhadd and

Ghal Kulhadd aired on TVM, presented and produced by Clare Agius. The professional work shown in these productions did not go unnoticed as she was soon engaged by Nancy Buhagiar for taking care of the TV shows Mill-Klikka Taghna, Flimkien ma' Nancy and Mix-Xoghol ghad-Dar which were broadcasted on ONE TV and NET TV.

Similarly, she was responsible for the PR of the television show - SHUFFLE which was presented by Jean Claude Micallef & Morena, and broadcasted on NET TV.

Currently she conducts interviews and writes articles for a number of local newspapers and magazines. These include the weekly **KULLHADD** newspaper published every Sunday, IT-TORCA published on Sundays, the daily newspaper **L-ORIZZONT** as well as contributions to the monthly magazines **MUZAJK**, **MANIC!** and **WOW**.

Ramona Portelli used to manage, update and promote two local websites [www.manicmalta.com](http://www.manicmalta.com) and [www.hotel-accom.com](http://www.hotel-accom.com).

Manicmalta.com is a website which features an event guide of events as well as an array of daily news from the area of art, music and entertainment. Ramona also contributes to the Article & Interviews section by interviewing several local personalities from TV presenters, and Malta Song Festival singer winners amongst much more. On the other hand hotel-accom.com is an easy to use, online website for hotel and other holiday accommodation situated both in Malta and abroad.

As from January 2010, Ramona Portelli took charge of a new blog on [www.okmalta.com](http://www.okmalta.com), where she asks particular, interesting and sometimes cheeky questions to various local media personalities and as well foreign artists. The direct link for this blog is <http://www.okmalta.com/blog-town/>

In November 2015, Ramona Portelli started conducting online blogs for MaltaTV ([www.maltatvchannel.com](http://www.maltatvchannel.com)). In December 2015, Ramona Portelli was engaged with LA VOIX ACADEMY (Director : Gillian Attard) as a PR Manager





## GOOD CATHOLIC GIRL WINERY SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Good Catholic Girl is the venture of Julie Ann Barry, one of the many children of the late Jim Barry. She says, 'Having been born into a Catholic wine family, in vintage, my fate was sealed. My Limerick Vineyard was planted in the Armagh area of the Clare Valley in 1997, with cuttings taken from my father's famed Armagh shiraz vines planted across the paddock.' The Shiraz is named The James Brazill, Jim Barry's Christian names. She takes up the story thus: 'In 2008 I made my first Clare Valley Riesling, "Teresa", named after my mother, who is the true GCG (good catholic girl), and loves Clare Riesling, and who may in time consume my entire production of 108 dozen!' Things have moved decisively since then, with multi-vintage wines on offer at the cellar door, which breathes history from every pore.

My story begins with my paternal Grandmother Dorothy Douglas Wilson, the quintessential good catholic girl. She was one of four children, the youngest being her only brother James Brazill Wilson. As a child I was always fascinated by the gold locket that my grandmother wore, always requesting she open it and show me the photos inside. All she would say was, "This is Jim my brother, and this is Neil my youngest son."



I was happy with those answers and left it at that, not realizing that my grandmother was too heartbroken to give me any further details for fear, I suspect, that I would keep asking questions and she would become upset.

It was many years later and long after my beloved grandmother had died that I found a tiny piece of yellowed newsprint (94 years old in fact) which read; *WILSON.- In loving memory of Lieutenant J.B. Wilson, 52nd Battalion, A.I.F., killed in action at Mouquet Farm, France on the 3rd September, 1916. – Inserted by his mother, father, and sisters.*

Dorothy went on to marry Fred Barry a Christian Brother's scholar and they had four children. When her first son was born, my father, she named him in honour of her deeply missed and loved brother James Brazill, a name my father carried with pride throughout his life. The other photo in the locket, if you are wondering, was of her youngest son Neil who died at the age of 8 after a tonsil operation, an operation my father made sure none of his six children had!

Dorothy's Catholic faith was deep and strong as was she, and it was her faith, I have no doubt, that sustained her through her darkest moments, I know she would be delighted that I have named my Limerick Shiraz after two very important and loved people in her life. To keep the bloodlines pure, my one hectare of high ground was planted with cuttings from my father's famed Armagh Shiraz Vineyard just across the paddock. The first release of 'THE JAMES BRAZILL' Shiraz was in 2005 which was picked on 2/4/05 the day Pope John Paul 11 departed for Heaven. I followed this with the release of my 'TERESA' Riesling in 2008. By the grace of God it has been full steam ahead ever since, and I am delighted to report that I now have a swag of GCG devotees. Many of whom are convinced that the consumption of Good Catholic Girl wines will fast track them to heaven!

*Maltese Journal - Packed with the stuff you love*



## FEAST OF THE "VITORJA" IN SYDNEY

### INVITATION

**Reverend Father Tarcisio Micallef MSSP,**  
the chaplain for the Maltese community in the Archdiocese of Sydney,  
is inviting the Maltese community, family and friends to

#### **IL-VITORJA - OUR LADY OF VICTORIES**

on

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2019** at  
**St Mary's Cathedral, College Street, Sydney**

The procession starts at **2:15pm**,  
but it is important to be early to find a seat.  
Mass will be concelebrated by Maltese priests.

Rev Father Tarcisio Micallef also invites children and young people to participate in the indoor procession around the cathedral wearing Maltese traditional dress or Holy Communion attire.

For further information call

**Father Tarcisio Micallef on 9380 8398** or  
to register your child's/children's interest in participating, call  
**Antoinette on 0438 639 986 by 31<sup>st</sup> August.**

Children who participate will be recognised with a certificate of attendance  
and a small momento.

**ALL WELCOME!**

#### **WHY DO THE MALTESE CELEBRATE "IL-VITORJA"?**

Every year, the 8th of September arrives to remind us yet again of Malta's richly varied culture as we remember Victory Day. An important date in the country's festive calendar, Victory Day is a celebration of both faith and freedom. It celebrates the island's multi-layered history and religious identity – two elements that are closely intertwined to form the backbone of the Maltese nation.

On this national holiday, which is locally referred to as both *il-Vitorja* (the Victory) and *il-Bambina* (the holy infant Mary), various celebrations and traditions take place to mark no fewer than one religious and three historical events: this year being the 77th Anniversary since the Ohio SS sailed into the Grand Harbour saving Malta from famine and surrendering to the enemy of World War II.

1. The Knights of St John's triumph during the Great Siege against the Ottoman Turks in 1565.
2. The nation's rebellion during the French occupation of Malta in September 1800.
3. The end of Italy's hostilities against the World War II Allies in 1943.

The Maltese also pay homage to *il-Bambina* for her intervention during World War II, saving the nation from famine and starvation when the oil tanker, SS Ohio, sailed into the Grand Harbour as part of the Operation Pedestal convoy in August 1942 (known as the Santa Maria convey by the Maltese). Loaded with essential supplies, the tanker just barely surfaced as it was also bombed.

	<p><b>MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER</b></p>		<p><b>Journal of the Maltese Diaspora</b></p>
<p><b>Read, Enjoyed, Shared and Respected by thousands of readers</b></p>			

He who drinks sleeps,  
He who sleeps doesn't sin,  
He who doesn't sin is holy,  
Therefore he who drinks is holy.



VIA 9GAG.COM

**Q**ui bibit, dormit;  
qui dormit, non peccat;  
qui non peccat, sanctus est;  
ergo qui bibit, sanctus est.



## Meet the team behind Mqabba's dramatic fireworks display



Final preparations are underway for one of the highlights of the Festa season **Jacob Borg**

Mqabba is renowned for its annual fireworks spectacle held on the eve of the feast of the Assumption.

While enjoying the popular fireworks display in Mqabba on Wednesday, spare a thought for those enthusiasts who have spent the past year working to ensure the one-and-a-half hour pyrotechnics bonanza goes off without a hitch.

"The moment of the actual display is the tensest moment of the year, as always.

"The fun for us starts again at 11pm, once everything has worked out as planned," the display's coordinator Jason Borg, from St Mary Fireworks Factory, tells Times of Malta.



Mqabba's fireworks display, starting at 9.30pm, is considered one of the highlights of the summer festa season.

The event will include a 26-minute synchronised display split into three different parts.

Working under the scorching August sun, a team of people spent over a week undertaking the final preparations for the display in a field just off the Mqabba bypass.

Taking centre stage is a 57-metre tower with 6,000 fireworks shots rigged to it.

Four kilometres of wiring has been used to hook up the thousands of fireworks to a central control point.

Taking centre stage is a 57-metre tower rigged with 6,000 fireworks shots that will invariably steal the show.

With a glint in his eye, Mr Borg promises that tonight's display will include an innovative new element never seen on the local fireworks scene.

Keeping his cards close to his chest, the fireworks enthusiast says those curious about this innovation will have to come see the display for themselves, as he won't be giving any prior details. The display is certainly not lacking firepower.

A whopping 12,000 shells will be let off during the display. For the traditionalists, the single shot fireworks let off from the ground will also feature tonight.

After the synchronised display, attention will then move to Mqabba's main square where 20 Catherine wheels of varying sizes will top off the night's spectacle.

Preparations for this year's display have been taking place under the watchful eye of Jason Borg, from the St Mary Fireworks Factory.

Dear Mr Scicluna,

I take again this opportunity to thank and congratulate you for preparing for us, Maltese in the diaspora, this very interesting newsletter. And please allow me to greet two persons mentioned in this your last issue of this newsletter:

1. Mr Joseph Xerri (or Sherri), a very close friend of my in Qormi throughout my childhood and youth; i met him when I was in Toronto three or four years ago;

2. Mr Ganni Pace, whom I have known and with whom I have collaborated a lot, when, for nine years I was parish priest in Guardamangia.

My regards and God bless you. + George Frendo O.P. Archbishop of Tirana-Durres, Albania



## Michael Gatt - A Versatile Priest

*Fr Gatt is most known for his caring personality and award-winning helpline, which he sets up over the December period, providing counselling to people struggling with marriage breakdowns, drugs, mental illness, or isolation. Photo: Supplied.*

**By Amanda Murthy**

Father Michael Gatt may have turned 81 years old this February, but those who have crossed paths with him would describe him as the jolly, energetic and versatile priest who goes out of the way to spread positivity and hope.

Having accomplished a great deal in his years of priesthood, Fr Gatt now enters yet another chapter in his life as he celebrated his Golden Jubilee anniversary on 30 March.

To commemorate the auspicious event, which fell on Good Friday, many gathered to share a simple symbolic fish meal with him.

Many addressed Fr Gatt's contribution throughout the years, including Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB, who acknowledged the generosity of Fr Gatt.

"I hope this day is one of deep joy for you as you reflect on all the Lord has been able to do in and through you for His people and for His Church," Archbishop Costelloe said.

"I am very grateful to you for your commitment, your generosity and your fidelity."

Born in Haz-Zebbug, Malta, a day before Valentine's Day in 1938, Fr Gatt is six of nine children to Philip and Micelina Gatt. He received his formal education in Philosophy and Theology, with emphasis in Law and Psychology, and served in the Armoury with the Royal Air Force in Malta for three years, before receiving his calling to join the Priesthood.

He was ordained by Archbishop of Malta, Michael Gonzi on 30 March 1968.



*Maltese born, now-retired priest Fr Gatt is seen as a jovial, energetic and versatile person to the Perth community. He is seen with a monkey on his back during one of his visits. Photo: Supplied.*

Fr Gatt arrived in Western Australia in 1971 and was given the role of Chaplain at the Maltese Migrant and Hollywood Repatriation Hospital until 1982.

From 1974 until his placement at St Kieran's, where he retired in 2015, Fr Gatt spent time as a Parish Priest in Swanbourne (1974-78), Victoria Park (1979-1982), Moora (1982-1984), Gingin-

Chittering (1984-1990), and Manning (1990-2000).

His caring nature and psychological background contributed to his empathy for the lonely and isolated, especially during the Christmas period.

This steered him to set up a Helpline he dubbed "Gattline", which has been operating throughout the month of December for the past 26 years.

The on-going Gattline receives an average of 100 calls every year, and has helped many people struggling with marriage breakdowns, drugs, mental illness, or isolation. Last year, Fr Gatt made headlines again when he married 20 couples over a 20-day period.

"It was such a privilege to be able to prepare and instruct people of good faith who wanted to be married in the Church, and not in a garden or on the beach instead," Fr Gatt said. "It was an experience that gave me joy."

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# Father Michael Gatt

## A Versatile Priest



For further details please visit my website  
[www.michaelgatt.net](http://www.michaelgatt.net)



## A celebration of friendship and solidarity. In Germany the international camp for the disabled



### ORDER OF MALTA NEWS



An assortment of multi-coloured T-shirts, a Babel of languages, laughter, prayers and dancing, where “every day is a celebration”, a celebration of friendship and solidarity. This is the Order of Malta’s International Summer Camp 2019 for the disabled and their volunteer friends coming from 24 countries.

Organized this year by the German association in the foothills of the Zugspitze in Bavaria, for a week the camp will host some 500 people between staff, volunteers and the disabled aged between 18 and 35 years. It was these people who, in the splendid setting of the Benedictine monastery of Ettal, welcomed with their smiles and their overwhelming vitality Grand Master Fra’ Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto for a three-day visit, accompanied by the Grand Chancellor, Albrecht Boeselager, the Grand Hospitaller, Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel and the President of the German Association, Erich Lobkowicz.

During the various social gatherings, from meals in the canteen to the numerous outdoor activities, and not least meditation and prayer, the Grand Master expressed his sincere gratitude and appreciation for the immense dedication and organizational efforts of the Order’s young members. “Try to preserve the joy that fills your hearts during these days and take it with you in everyday life,” Fra’ Giacomo said during the mass celebrated in the church of St. Kajetan in Munich,

attended by all the Malta Camp participants as well as the Bavarian Interior Minister Joachim Herrmann, who had enthusiastically supported this event.

After the Mass, Chloe, a Dutch girl in a wheelchair, repeated over and over again, almost fearing she wouldn’t experience it again: “It’s the greatest week in the year!”. And her twenty-year-old friend Reinier accompanying her explained: “You only understand it when you come here: you think you’re here to help them, but then you realise that it’s also they who help us”. It is precisely this “concept of reciprocity that makes this experience unique which, together with faith, constitutes the added value” of the Order’s summer camp, as Fra’ Roberto, the spiritual guide of the Italian team, pointed out.

This success of this formula is also proved by the numbers: launched in 1983 with some sixty participants, the International Summer Camp now boasts over 500 participants, including 180 disabled guests, and 40,000 hours of voluntary work, involving constant daily care and attention by the young volunteers to ensure the disabled persons’ physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

The next international camp will be hosted by Italy, in Ciampino just outside Rome, in August 2020

*We are still growing and going strong*  
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## Summer Camp 2019

The Maltese contingent participated in the Order's International Holiday Camp (Malta Camp) at Munich. The contingent consisted of 12 volunteers and 9 guests. The team was ably led by Daniel Benson Camilleri, whereas Fr Savio Vella was the accompanying Chaplain of the Maltese Association. Ms Rachel Barthet is the team nurse. Over 500 participants from around 20 countries travel took part in the camp from 3rd to the 10th August 2019, at the Benedictine Abbey Ettal, in the middle of nature and mountains in Bavaria, about one hour's drive from Munich.



Since 1983, members of the Order of Malta have hosted the annual Maltacamp in a different country every year. Over 500 young people aged between 18 and 35, come together from around the world, including guests with various disabilities and volunteer carers. They live together, befriend one another and share exceptional experiences. For one week in the summer, guests are offered a packed program of diverse activities, workshops and experiences. The volunteers are a group of young people committed to giving people with disabilities opportunities and experiences away from their day to day lives. Camp is more than just a break from daily routine it's an opportunity to get out in the world and be inspired by what it has to offer.



Recent camps have been held in France, the Netherlands, Ireland, Hungary, Poland and Great Britain. Guests have had the opportunity to kayak, horse-ride, fly in light aircraft, scuba dive, and try indoor skydiving. Guests receive 24-hour care from volunteer helpers of the same age often resulting in lifelong friendships. The Maltese

Association would like to thank the sponsors and the young volunteers that made the participation in this international event possible.

**Some people never learn – instead of working together as Maltese living abroad, they try to destroy the good work the others do. Let's unite – and by our example we attract our younger generation to join us and to continue building on the achievements we manage to produce. LBJ**



## Team offers record €17,000 to carry Sta Marija statue in procession Claire Caruana

'It is a family tradition' says winning team leader



A record €17,000 were offered on Sunday by a team of men to carry the statue of Sta Marija in the evening procession in Mgarr.

€14,000 were offered for the 'privilege' last year and the year before, which was a record for the time.

The 'battle' this year was between two teams, who made bids in auction-life fashion after the Angelus on the church parvis. The winning group was headed by Wistin Vella.

In comments to *Times of Malta*, Mr Vella said he was happy

that his team had once again secured the winning bid. Describing how the tradition had been passed on from one generation to the other, Mr Vella said he looked forward to continue being part of the event in the future.

Twelve people will be involved in the carrying of the statue, he said.

A portion of the funds will go to charity and the rest for maintenance of the church and the organisation of the feast. The tradition dates back to 1923, when feast participants were asked to contribute to cover a deficit in the previous year's feast.

People who do not form part of the winning group will still be allowed to help carry the statue in part of

the procession. The feast activities started with another collection last week. A motorcycle ride between Mgarr and Dingli on the feast proper of Sta Marija - on Thursday - raised €1,502 which will be donated to Dar Bjorn.

Both Mgarr and Dingli celebrate the feast of Sta Marija on the first Sunday after August 15.



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## Żejtun barber who “will close up shop when he dies”!

Report: Ruth Castillo

He started cutting hair when he was 13-years old and today, at the age of 68, he doesn't intend to stop. Żejtun barber, Louis Cassar, told TVM why he placed a note on his barber's door that “he will close up shop when he dies”.

Cassar's shop is a few metres away from the Żejtun church, where his father started the trade and a place where Żejtun clients used to go for a chat and relax.

“I remember when I was still a boy, my mother used to bring tea to my father; I used to accompany her. I remember my father having a newspaper at the shop and read news to the clients – those days there were many people who couldn't read”, Louis recounted.

Louis inherited the barber's trade from his father, who died at a young age. He recounted how he started cutting hair 55 years ago. “I trained for a year with him and my father died. I continued to go there and once he told me ‘Louis I want to tell you something: you are capable of working anytime, go and open the shop’. I told him I am going”.

His shop has kept its old style with wooden benches and armchairs....however many of the old tools are now exhibited in a cabinet. “I used to shave clients' beards with a penknife, however with time I stopped and concentrated on haircuts only”.

Although he already passed the retirement age, Louis does not intend to close up shop and he placed a note that he will do so when he dies!. “I did that because of rumours by people and I am not that ignorant to realize the intentions”. He also said that there is no one in the family or relatives who want to continue with the family trade.



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ceramics, stone, bronze, marble and even concrete. His works are to be found in various public places and churches, as well as in private residences.



de Marco.

## Sculptor Ġanni Bonnici dies

The death has been announced of sculptor Ġanni Bonnici at the age of 86 years. Bonnici was born on 4 September 1932.

Bonnici began studying art at a young age, and in 1954 was awarded a School of Art scholarship to continue studying in Rome, where he obtained a Diploma in Sculpture.

On his return to Malta, Bonnici started teaching, for the first time, ceramics in schools. In fact, he will be remembered for his beautiful works as a ceramist and sculptor. Bonnici worked in terracotta,

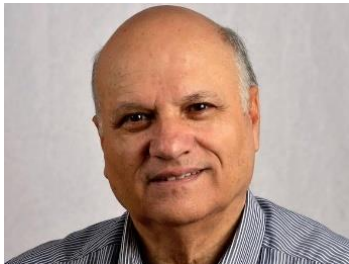
*Gianni also sculpted the ANZAC monument at Floriana*

One can appreciate Bonnici's artistic skills in the various crucifixes in the churches of Santa Luċija, St Sebastian in Ғal Qormi, the chapel of the nuns of St Catherine's convent in Ғ'Attard and the chapel in Pwales. The Independence monument is also further evidence of his artistic skill. Bonnici's works are also to be found abroad in several European countries as well as in Canada, Australia and the US.

Bonnici had been awarded Ġieħ il-Mosta as well as the prestigious M.O.M (Member of the National Order of Merit) by President Guido

## “Il-lingwa Maltija hija bħal omm u nithassar min iqisha bħala barranija”

Miktub minn Maria Azzopardi

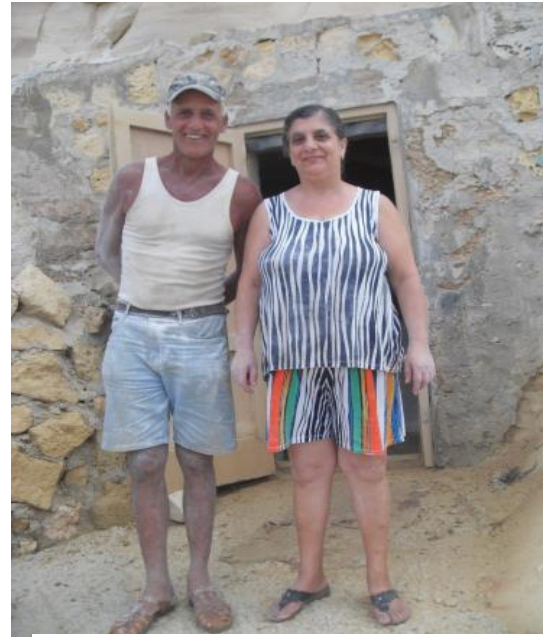


Il-kittieb Trevor Zahra: Min jgħid li l-Malti m'għandniex bżonnu juri kemm għandu faqar ta' kultura Wara d-dikjarazzjoni minn Godfrey Leone Ganado li l-Malti għandu jiġi kkonsidrat bħala lingwa barranija u jitneħħa minn sugġett obbligatorju għax tul il-professjoni tal-accounting qatt ma kellu bżonn il-lingwa Maltija, inewsmalta tkellmet mal-kittieb Trevor Zahra fejn esprima l-ħsibijiet tiegħu dwar din id-dikjarazzjoni.

Zahra qal li meta jaqra jew jisma' kumment ta' xi ħadd li jgħid li l-Malti m'għandniex bżonnu, jew li għandna nqisuh bħala lingwa barranija, ikun jixtieq jgħidlu, “Ғabib, tassew nithassrek... bħalma nithassar lil min jaasal jgħid li m'għandux bżonn lil ommu, jew li jqisha bħala barranija.” Mill-banda l-oħra, Zahra qal li jibqa' tassew skantat meta jara li minkejja dħalna f'millennju ġdid, xorta waħda għadna nsibu persuni li joħroġu “ideat skaduti, redikoli u li ma ssibhom f'ebda pajjiż ċivilizzat.” Huwa zied jgħid li “l-ebda nazzjon, denn tal-isem, ma jaasal jgħid li l-lingwa nattivha tiegħu m'għandux bżonnha, jew li għandha titqies bħala lingwa barranija.”

B'dispaċir, il-kittieb qal li min joħroġ b'ideat bħal dawn, “ikun qed juri kemm għandu faqar ta' kultura u kemm hu maqtugħ għalkollox minn dak li qed isir fid-dinja ta' madwaru. Ikun qed juri li lanqas biss hu konxju li l-lingwa għorr magħha l-identità u l-kultura kollha tal-pajjiż, u li ma tistax tifred il-waħda mill-oħra.”

Zahra tenna jgħid li huwa jirrifjuta li jiddiskuti ma' persuni bħal dawn, “bħalma nirrifjuta li niddiskuti ma' xi ħadd li jkun għadu jemmen li d-dinja hija ċatta” Il-kittieb Immanuel Mifsud sostna li kumment bħal dan iqisu bħala stupidu “għaliex jixhed mentalità mhux arkajka imma wkoll limitata.” Huwa zied jgħid li naturalment min jgħid hekk għandu kull dritt li jkompli jgħid hekk u li “b'ebda mod ma jien ngħid li ħadd m'għandu d-dritt għal din il-fehma, imma il-konsegwenza hija li se jkun hemm min ikompli iqis din il-fehma bħala stupida. Huwa tenna jgħid li bħala persuna jipprova ma jkunx stupidu u “allura minix se nikkonkludi li għax qatt ma ġejt bżonn, ngħidu aħna xi accountant, allura għandna nneħħu l-accountancy mil-lista ta' sugġetti li ngħallmu.” **DALWAQT ISIR DNUB LI TITKELLEM BIL-MALT. Fiex wasalna!!!** [www.inewsmalta.com](http://www.inewsmalta.com)



*Alfred and Mary Attard*

## ALFRED ATTARD “ I should be relaxing and not harvesting salt”

Glen Falzon tvn.com.mt

Although many very much look forward to summer to be able to change their normal work routine, the same cannot be said for Alfred Attard who for the last 40 years has been harvesting salt in the heat of the summer months to be able to earn his living.

Alfred stated that although his health is not what it used to be, he still tenders the aspiration that his work will not terminate with his passing away and that his children will carry on with his work. All those who go past Xwejini Bay in the inner reaches of Marsalforn in Gozo will have certainly seen him at some time. At the crack of dawn Alfred can be seen sweeping and collecting salt from this picturesque area of Gozo.

This has been a lifetime's work for Alfred – producing natural salt from sea water.

He said the work is hard and he has been doing it for 42 years and fully knows the hardships because his father-in-law had initiated him to the work and shown him how it is done and he is happy with that. It is work he enjoys doing.

Alfred said work on the salt pans extends from April to September and if the weather permits, into October. Much of the work takes places under a blazing sun. In recent years he has found this work irksome because he is now growing older but he still works in the sun. Last year during the harvest period he was ill and this year he has had to make up for it.

Still deploying the traditional manner of carrying the salt on his shoulders he has spent the summer working alone and doing everything himself – and he does not intend to stop.

As long as he is able, he will continue although many tell him he is now aged and he should be relaxing.

Now aged 63 it appears the harvesting of salt will come to an end with his passing away because his children are not interested in taking it up.

He said one is a policeman, the other is a priest and his daughter is a teacher and when he asks if any of them can help him they all tell him they have many other things to do. He has to abide with that and carry on alone.

However, until the Almighty calls him to a better world he will continue because he feels like being in the seventh heaven and would not exchange his work for anything because that is what he loves doing – harvesting salt.

Does he dream of salt? “Naturally”, Alfred said. “Salt is everything”.



## Gaulitanus Choir off on 18th concert tour abroad, this time to Latvia [GOZO NEWS](#)



Gozo's Gaulitanus Choir will soon be departing on its next foreign venture abroad – this time to Riga for a concert tour of Latvia.

The choir are making the tour, which will be its 18th abroad, at the invitation of Riga's Blagovest Chamber Orthodox Choir, one of the top Latvian choirs which the Gaulitanus Choir hosted in Gozo during the last edition of Gaulitana: A Festival of Music.

The full programme is being fully co-

ordinated by Blagovest and the Sing Latvia organisation, while the concert tour is supported by the Project Support Grant, Malta Arts Fund – Arts Council Malta.

The choir's repertoire will essentially consist of a mixture of Maltese secular and sacred music, including various compositions by the Gaulitanus Choir's founder-director Colin Attard, who will also be directing the choir in Latvia.

The Gozitan choir will open its artistic events with an afternoon concert at the wonderful National Botanic Garden of Latvia in Salaspils, just south-east of the Latvian capital. The concert is being held in collaboration with the Elpa choir. The second commitment will be in Kuldiga, with an early evening concert in St. Catherine Church.

This event in this state-protected Evangelical Lutheran church, which is the oldest place of worship in this charming medieval west Latvian town, is being held in collaboration with the Rate choir.

The choir will end its commitments with a grand concert at Riga's iconic St Peter's Church in the very heart of the old town, in collaboration with the Association of Culture Institutions of Riga City Council.

The Blagovest Chamber Orthodox Choir will be joining the Gozitan choir for the second half of the concert. *Photo: Gaulitanus Choir – Basilica di San Francesco – Assisi*

*The Mackay Maltese Club invites you to*  
**OUR LADY OF VICTORIES**  
**FESTA MASS & NIBBLES**  
 Friday 6<sup>th</sup> September - 7:00pm  
 Francis of Assisi Home  
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*Please bring a Plate of Food*

**FESTA DINNER & CELEBRATION**  
 Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September - 7:00pm  
 North Mackay Bowls Club  
 74-76 Malcomson St, North Mackay  
 Buffet Dinner - \$45 per person  
 Major Raffle, Lucky Door, Live Music  
*R.S.V.P. by Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August*  
*Rose Borg: 0418 788 363*  
*Money to be paid by Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August*



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Please, urge our younger generations to read this journal and encourage them to love, preserve and share our culture, history and traditions.

Many young people visit Malta and they say that it is the most fascinating place in the world.

## Consul-on-the-Move Program

The **Consul-on-the-Move Programme** was launched on 5 May 2016, in accordance with the Passports Office within Identity Malta Agency, and conforms with the Government's vision to have Governmental services closer to the citizens. It provides a number of Consular services (that are normally available at Maltese Embassies and Consulates) in different locations.

The need for this Programme was seen after the introduction of biometric passports, that led Maltese applicants living abroad to go physically to the nearest Maltese Embassy or Consulate in order to capture biometric data. This was resulting to an inconvenience, especially due to additional expenses including costs for travel and accommodation.

This Programme is currently focusing on **Australia, Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand**. All Consular services currently available at the Maltese Embassies and Consulates continue to remain available.

For certain services provided, an **additional administrative fee** applies. In accordance with Legal Notice 221 of 2016, the administrative charge for passport applications is €100 for each application, whilst that for citizenship applications is €50 for each application, over and above other related fees.

The following is the **updated list of scheduled visits for 2019**:

COTM Scheduled Visits - 2019		
<b>Cairns (Australia)</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	JVIB, 108 Mulgrave Road, Cairns City QLD 4870
<b>Mackay (Australia)</b>	6-7 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	Venue to be confirmed
<b>Brisbane (Australia)</b>	9-13 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	Honorary Consulate of Greece 10 Eagle Str, Brisbane City Qld 4000
<b>Cardiff (UK)</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	Titan House Cardiff Bay Business Centre Lewis Road, Ocean Park, Cardiff CF24 5BS
<b>Alberta (Canada)</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> -29 <sup>th</sup> September 2019 (Tentative date)	Venue to be announced
<b>Michigan (USA)</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> October 2019	Venue to be announced
<b>Manchester (UK)</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2019 (Tentative date)	Venue to be announced

**It is worth noting that the service is available by appointment only. For further information, one may wish to contact the respective location focal point as follows:**

Location	Email address	Contact number
Australia/New Zealand	consul.canberra@gov.mt	+61 (02) 6290 1724
Canada	consul.toronto@gov.mt	+1 (416) 207 0922/0989
USA	consul.washington@gov.mt	+1 (202) 4623611/2
UK	consul.london@gov.mt	+44 (0) 207 292 4800

It is highly recommended that closer to the scheduled date/s of the visits, one consults the relevant Mission/s coordinating the visits to ensure that there are no changes in dates and venues.



### The Star Of Strait Street: Larissa Bonaci Wins Best Actress In Spain Amid Performances All Over The World - [Johnathan Cilia](#)

A Maltese actress is making waves abroad, performing everywhere from San Francisco to Australia to London – and she's won some massive awards to boot. You may recognise Larissa Bonaci from her signature hair, but it's about time we started recognising her for her international achievements after winning Best Actress at Spain's Festival de Cine en Corto Ciudad de Vera in April.

**She was given the prestigious Best Actress award for her role in the short film FEAR, which was directed by Juan Jose Serrano Olmedo**

Check out some stills from her award-winning performance in the dramatic film *"The award was a reminder to keep working hard."*

"The industry is tough but rewarding in its own way," Larissa told Lovin

Malta "Of course, it was a huge surprise as I didn't even know I was nominated. The scenes in the rain were pretty intense as I had to be wet for hours – but it was all worth the while!"

**The film itself also won Best Script and Best Short Film, competing with over 1,000 different movies from 62 different countries**

**Besides her awards, Bonaci has been busy moving between London, Australia and San Francisco performing the [Star of Strait Street](#)**

Based on a true-life love story from World War II, this musical by Philip Glassborow takes viewers back to the wild days of Valletta's most famous street. Both trips were funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion.

*"The beautiful singer Christina Ratcliffe arrives at The Morning Star in "The Gut" to entertain the troops. Then she meets the dashing RAF air-ace, Flying Officer Adrian Warburton. And the rest is history! Staying on in Malta throughout the war, Christina works in the Lascaris War Rooms. She's awarded the British Empire Medal for her services to the RAF, and becomes known as 'Christina of George Cross Island'"*

In November 2018 she and her fellow actors even performed the musical as part of the Voila! Europe Theatre Festival in London, funded by The Arts Council Malta – Cultural Export Fund.

**Lari has even done some commercial work for UK-based brands**

**Larissa is currently working on something special for her fans**

"I'm producing my own project with some amazing people here in London – it's still early stages but getting there!" she said. "We're also performing Star of Strait Street at the end of September at City Lights in Valletta – people can check out my Facebook or Instagram for updates. Oh, and I'm also doing some stand-up comedy, in fact, have a gig tonight! People usually laugh, so I guess it's a good sign."

With all this under her belt in just a couple of years, who knows what's next in store for Malta's newest starlet? Share this article to show your support!



## Maltese Cuisine

### Ross il-forn - Baked Rise (SERVES 4)

#### Ingredients:

- 300g long grain rice
- 200g minced pork
- 200 g minced beef
- 4 rashers bacon
- 200g ricotta
- 4 eggs well beaten
- 200g tomato pulp (you can use fresh tomatoes the taste would be even better!)
- 100g Kunserva (tomato paste)
- 1tsp sugar
- 2 medium sized onions (chopped)
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 75g parmesan cheese
- 100grms Rikotta (optional)



#### Method:

In a pot, fry the onions with some olive oil till translucent, add bacon, and mince. Mix well so that meat cooks evenly, Add tomato pulp, kunserva, salt and pepper to taste and sugar. Cook sauce for about 20 mins on low heat. In a separate pot boil rice, drain and put back in empty pot, mix with cooked sauce Add  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the beaten eggs with rice and sauce and mix well. Pour the rice into a greased baking dish, and pour evenly the remaining eggs on top. Bake in a hot oven until top becomes golden brown for around 30 mins.

### Galletti Recipe (Biscuits Maltese love to eat)

#### Ingredients:

- 1kg self-raising flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 50g fresh yeast
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 cup warm water
- 60g melted butter
- Extra warm water



#### Method:

1. Dissolve the yeast and the sugar in a cup of warm water until the mixture is frothy.
2. Mix the flour and the salt in a large bowl and add the melted butter.
3. Add the yeast mixture and mix well.
4. Add the warm water as you go along to ensure a doughy consistency. When done, the dough should not be sticky.
5. Knead the dough on a bench top. Then place in a large bowl, cover it and leave the dough to rest for an hour or so.
6. Knead the dough again and cut it in small portions.
7. Roll out the portions as thinly as possible (you can use a pasta machine) and with a scone cutter or a glass cut the pastry in small circles.
8. Place the individual circles on a lightly dusted oven tray and bake until they are golden brown.

When you bake these biscuits don't forget to send me some!!!!



The State Rooms are the show piece of the Presidential Palace sited at the heart of Malta's World Heritage capital city of Valletta. The Palace itself was one of the first buildings in the new city of Valletta founded by Grand Master Jean de Valette in 1566 a few months after the successful outcome of the Great Siege of Malta in 1565. The Palace was enlarged and developed by successive Grand Masters to serve as their official residence.

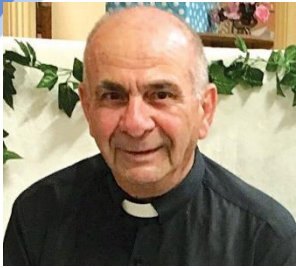


This is the Grand Chancellor Hall, which was the first hall marked for decoration in the Palace's early history. It measures 26m x 11m and it's the single largest state hall and it's overlooking St. George's Square. This hall was utilised during important gatherings.

The highlight of this hall is the cycle of the 1565 Great Siege fresco paintings by the Italian artist Matteo Perez de Alesio.

This cycle illustrates the main events of the siege of Malta by the Turkish army between May and September 1565 in 12 episodes.





**Father Gabriel Micallef  
OFM**

### **A TOKEN OF APPRECIATION BY THE MALTESE COMMUNITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

A special edition will be dedicated to Fr. Gabriel before he returns to Gozo after 23 years of continuous service to our community in Adelaide to show our appreciation and to wish him God's blessings in his retirement. This is an opportunity to send a message to be included in the booklet which will be presented to him on September 15, when the community will hold a farewell function to our loved and respected chaplain at Christ the King Church, Lockleys, South Australia.

Send your message to: [maltesejournal@gmail.com](mailto:maltesejournal@gmail.com). We thank you in advance.

▶ **89.7 BAY**

Bay Entertainment



### **"KLIEM IX-XIH, ZOMM FIH!" – ALL THE USEFUL THINGS OUR NANNIET TAUGHT US**

AUGUST 14, 2019 EDWARD BEZZINA

Our nanniet aren't always the easiest people to deal with, granted, but no one can question their vast experience of life and devalue their opinion on important life matters. Here are some useful

things our nanniet taught us ...

**"KUL HA TIKBER!"** The most synonymous phrase associated with Maltese nannas is "Kul ha tikber!"; "eat to grow!" Albeit funny, this phrase serves as the perfect persuasion to convince rebellious grandchildren like ourselves to dig in and finish the plate. On the contrary, parents' efforts to make the young ones eat are dwarfed by nanna's sweet whisper. Grandparents and grandchildren tend to forge an inseparable bond simply because of this comical yet heart-warming instruction at the table.

**"NONFQU LIRA U NGEMMGHU TNEJN"** All throughout our late teenage years and even into adulthood, our nanniet were the first to insist that we should "nonfqu lira u ngemmghu tnejn" which translates into: "spend a penny and save two". While teenagers may not appreciate the concept of saving at such a young age, following the elders' advice will undoubtedly pay dividends in the future. So much so that it is inevitable that young parents will surely drill this "il flus urihom id-dlam" mentality in their children's minds.

**"TGHODDX IL-FLIELES QABEL MA JFAQQSU"** The wisest words I ever heard from a my nanniet were: "Tghoddx il flieles qabel ma jfaqqsu" and "Min jistenna, jithenna". The first translates into: "Don't count the chicks before they hatch" and the last translates into: "He who waits, reaps". Both these old Maltese proverbs found their relevance much later on in my life. Above all, these words grounded me whilst ensuring that I harboured abundant patience, allowing me the grace to wait, hope and persist for positive things while nevertheless keeping my feet on the ground by not making high expectations. It's never too late to start putting what your nanna taught you into action. All kinds of nanniet need some TLC, so a visit to one or more of the many Maltese retirement homes won't hurt either. Show them some love! And we all can agree that whatever is said about the Maltese elderly, the undisputed truth still remains that "tan-nanna, helu manna!"

Share your experience with your elderly heroes – [maltesejournal@gmail.com](mailto:maltesejournal@gmail.com)



**Send us your comments, stories and  
articles to share with other readers**  
[maltesejournal@gmail.com](mailto:maltesejournal@gmail.com)



The participation by Maltese troops abroad has been limited. During the First World War Malta was not directly involved, yet during this time a significant overseas deployment did take place. It did not take the form of front line troops; rather it was some 5,500 locally enlisted men who volunteered for overseas service with the Maltese Labour Corps. At least 120 men lost their lives on active service, very often from disease. They are buried across various cemeteries mostly in Greece. It is a deployment that has received little attention and is all but forgotten.



## Maltese Labour Corps comes onboard – December 26th, 1917



**Wednesday, Dec 26<sup>th</sup>, 1917 Reveille 5. Nice morning. Usual routine. 400 Maltese men come on board, a Labour Company. Slept on mess deck floor. Awfully crowded & bad smells. Still in Malta Harbour.**

Since the early days of the Salonika front, the creation of basic infrastructure to support the Allies, such as piers, roads and railways, had been a challenge. This need for infrastructure was echoed in all the theatres of war. Originally each Infantry Division in the British Army had a battalion that, while trained for fighting, would be engaged primarily in labouring work. These were called the Pioneer Battalions. When this proved insufficient to meet requirements, the Labour Corps was formed in January 1917 and comprised men from across India, South Africa, Egypt and the rest of the Empire.

Men of Maltese Labour Corps in Gallipoli, 1915

Over the course of the First World War, over 5,500 islanders served with the Maltese Labour Corps as non-combatants in support of the Allies. They were employed on three or six month contracts with the option to re-engage and the pay was comparatively good. In early 1915, the first 864 recruits were deployed to Gallipoli and Mudros, a major staging post on Lemnos. They were withdrawn at the end of 1915 from Gallipoli and from Mudros in February 1916.

In Autumn 1916, a further group of 900 Maltese labourers and stevedores was raised. This re-formed First Battalion of the Maltese Labour Corps went to Salonika in October to work on the Lines of Communication – linking the front line to its supply bases. A Second Battalion was raised in December 1917. It is possible that the Labour Company which sailed on the HMS Kashmir and slept on the mess deck floor was part of this Battalion.

1. **References & Further Reading**
2. 'The Labour Corps of 1917-1918' in the Long Long Trail
3. 'Maltese Labour Corps during WWI' in The Times of Malta
4. 'The Maltese Labour Corps during World War I' by Prof. Albert Caruana and William Zammit PhD, University of Malta
5. Posted in [December 1917](#), [War Diary Tagged HMS Kashmir](#), [Labour Corps](#), [Malta](#)

