



# Maltese eNewsletter

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The Journal of the  
Maltese Diaspora

Editor: Frank L Scicluna - Adelaide



**HISTORY OF MALTESE EMIGRATION TO FAR AWAY PLACES  
THEY STILL CALL MALTA HOME**



**MALTESE IN  
CORFU  
GREECE**

**MALTESE-CANADIANS  
WITH THE CONSUL GENERAL**



**MOIRA CUTAJAR - a local artist is giving a face to migration**



## Maltese spellcheck will identify mistakes and come up with alternatives

Posted On November 10, 2019 - Updated 10 November, 2019 8:31pm

Report: Ruth Castillo

After years of research, next year will see the start of a process for the Maltese language to have a spellcheck that

identifies and gives options for spelling errors that often hold people back from writing in Maltese. In next year's budget, the Government allocated funds for this project and a public call is expected to be made for those interested in developing this tool.

Some feel more comfortable writing in English rather than Maltese because they find difficulty where to insert the infamous 'gh and the'h. This difficulty can be overcome if Maltese – like other languages – has a spellcheck able to identify spelling and grammatical errors on the internet.

Conscious of the fact that the lack of this tool may result in the Maltese language being lost forever, especially in an online digital era, the Government will start work for the Maltese language to have this spellcheck, although developing it is no small feat.

Chief Executive of the National Literacy Agency, David Muscat told Television Malta that pursuant to META-NET – a study conducted in 2012, Maltese, Icelandic, Latvian and Lithuanian were shown to be the most 'endangered' language on the digital platform.

" Finnish and Estonian which are relatively small countries – already have tools that we do not have. It is important that Maltese continues to evolve and enters other spheres, particularly digital and technological and also have a spellcheck. "

Mr Muscat said that for the spellcheck to be successful it must be capable not only of identifying mistakes but also giving alternatives.

"It must know the Maltese grammatical and spelling rules. We are talking about one thousand six hundred rules at least. From the research we have conducted, there needs to be at least fifteen million different words. "

In the 2020 budget, the Government announced that it would be starting the process for the spellcheck to be available for use on the internet. Mr Muscat said the plan was for this to be at no charge.

" Initially it might start off with school children, who need it most and for educators .. and eventually – because the way this works requires a pilot project – it will be used by everyone and will be free of charge."

The government is expected to fork out 8 million Euro for this project, the first 1.8 million Euro are included in next year's budget. The government announced that in the hope of promoting the use of Maltese, a writing competition was going to be held where weight would be given to the literary works of Dun Karm and the Maltese language.



## COUNCIL OF MALTESE LIVING ABROAD update

These are the decisions and outcomes from the meeting held in Malta last October 2019

**Cultural Exchange Programme for the Maltese Diaspora** – The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion will act as a liaison between Maltese Living Abroad and the Arts Council Malta and its sister institutions, in an effort to import and export cultural projects.

**Registration of Property Online with the Planning Authority** – To request the Planning Authority to provide for a system through which Maltese living abroad will be informed formally about any development application on property in which they have a vested right.

**English Subtitles of Maltese Media for overseas distribution** – PSM (Public Broadcasting Service) will be considering the proposal of the subtitling of weekly news in English (which is sent to Australia and Canada) as well as French.

**e-ID to Maltese Diaspora to access info.mygo / ID Card for Maltese Living Abroad** – Identity Malta will be considering a means of providing Maltese Living Abroad with access Servizz.gov, possible through a digital ID.

**Citizenship Law Amendments** – Identity Malta will consider questions raised during the discussion and revert back to us.

**Heritage Malta Senior Passport** – Maltese living abroad visiting Malta can apply for this passport by visiting the local Council accompanied by a relative, presenting their passport (visitor's) and with the relative consent using his/ her address.

**Updating ACT XX of 2011** – All stakeholders, including the Opposition, will be involved in the review of the Act.

**Establishing a system to help Maltese Living Abroad who were affected by the close of Maltese Bank offices in their countries** – Bank of Valletta representative informed the Meeting that the Bank will reopen, on request, all accounts of individuals living abroad who were born in. The Bank has no choice but to ask of all documentation which clients have been asked for in order to keep these accounts open.

**Commemorating the Maltese Emigrants** –

The Council will consider the proposal for the setting up of a monument to commemorate migrants, possibly on the Exodus wall.

**Maltese Birthright Programme** –

The Council will consider any specific proposals from members about the setting up of a Maltese Birthright Programme for providing Maltese youth living abroad to visit Malta to connect with their roots.

**Suggestions from Committee members how to approach the younger generation (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> generation) being culture, arts etc.)** –

The main suggestion was to set up a website and a social media platform. This proposal is under consideration. For the time being, the Council agreed to keep the platform within the ministry's own online presence, yet this could be altered in the near future. With a view of setting up such a website, an expression of interest to gauge marketing and strategic companies would be published.

**Digital platform for the teaching of Maltese language)**– Council was updated about this platform which implementation is in an advance state .

### Maltese Citizenship by Birth <https://identitymalta.com/>

When Malta became an Independent State on 21st September 1964, the Independence Constitution established who would be entitled to an automatic claim to Maltese citizenship by either birth or descent and who may register as a citizen of Malta. The relative provisions of the Constitution regarding citizenship legislation were further complemented in 1965 with the enactment of the Maltese Citizenship Act (Cap 188). Later in the year 2000, the provisions concerning the abovementioned citizenship matters were removed from the Constitution and included in the Maltese Citizenship Act (Cap 188).

**Who became a citizen of Malta automatically with Malta's independence?**

Persons who were:

• Born in Malta before 21st September 1964 and at least one of their parents was born in Malta; OR

• Born abroad but his/her father and a paternal grandparent were born in Malta; &

• On 20th September 1964 they were still citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies.

**Who automatically acquired Maltese Citizenship by birth between 21st September 1964 and 31st July 1989?**

Persons who were:

- Born in Malta during the said period provided that their father, who was not himself a citizen of Malta, did not enjoy diplomatic immunity in Malta; OR
- Born abroad during the said period and at the time of birth their father was a citizen of Malta by birth (in Malta) or by naturalization or by registration.\*

*\*Maltese citizenship shall not be transmitted to the child of a person who had acquired Maltese citizenship by registration on the basis of descent.*

#### **Who became a citizen of Malta by birth on or after 1st August 1989?**

Persons born on or after 1st August 1989 who were/are:

- Born in Malta and at the time of their birth, their father or mother was/is a citizen of Malta or a person who enjoyed/enjoys freedom of movement (that is a person born in Malta of parents born in Malta before 21st September 1964) and ceased to be a citizen of Malta after emigrating; OR
- Born abroad and at the time of their birth, their father or mother was a citizen of Malta by birth (in Malta) or by naturalization or by registration.\*

*\*Maltese citizenship shall not be transmitted to the child of a person who had acquired Maltese citizenship by registration on the basis of descent.*

Acquisition of Maltese Citizenship by Registration

When Malta became an Independent State, the Independence Constitution established who could register as a citizen of Malta under the provisions of the same Constitution. Following amendments to Maltese Citizenship legislation in 2000, the provisions concerning the registration of persons as citizens of Malta were removed from the Constitution and included in the Maltese Citizenship Act (Cap 188).

On 1 st August 2007, there were further amendments to the said Act which made it possible for second as well as subsequent Maltese generations born abroad to acquire Maltese citizenship by registration.

#### *Who can apply for citizenship by registration?*

A person who is the:

- Spouse of a Maltese citizen married for at least five (5) years and on the date of application is still married and living with that citizen of Malta (Form B);
- Spouse of a citizen of Malta, who on the date of application is still married and who is, however, separated de jure or de facto, provided that the couple had lived together for at least five years after the celebration of the marriage (Form B);
- Widow/widower of a person who was a citizen of Malta at the time of his/her death and the widow/widower had been married and living with the now deceased person for at least five (5) years (Form B);
- The widow/widower of a person who was a citizen of Malta at the time of his/her death, and if not for the death of the person, the widower/widower would have been married to that person for five (5) years on the date of application (Form B);
- Widow/widower of a person who passed away before 21 st September 1964 and if it were not for his/her death he/she would have automatically become a citizen of Malta (due to the fact that he/she was born in Malta of a parent born in Malta too or was born abroad of a father and a paternal grandparent who were both born in Malta) and the widow/widower was still living with the deceased person at the time of his/her death or separated de jure or de facto after living with the person for at least five (5) years after their marriage celebration (Form B);
- Son/daughter born prior to 21 st September 1964 of a female born in Malta and who became or would have become, but for her death, a citizen of Malta on the said date (Form I);
- Son/daughter of a female citizen of Malta (who acquired Maltese citizenship by birth in Malta, and who was a citizen of Malta at the time of the son's/daughter's birth) and was born outside Malta on or after 21 st September 1964 and before 1 st August 1989 (Form I);
- Former citizen of Malta who does not automatically qualify for dual citizenship because he/she had not resided for a minimum of six (6) years abroad or was formerly a citizen of Malta by Registration or by Naturalization (Form D);
- Descendant, second or subsequent generation, born abroad of an ascendant born in Malta whereby one of the parents of the said ascendant was also born in Malta. If the descendant is a minor, then the person who has authority over the said minor shall submit the relative application on his/her behalf (Form K \ Form M).
- Contact your nearest Maltese Embassy, High Commission or Consulate for further information and assistance



## Junior Eurovision 2019 artist: Eliana Gomez Blanco

Nineteen public service broadcasters will take part in the 17th Junior Eurovision Song

Contest (JESC), in Gliwice-Silesia on Sunday 24 November, organized by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU).

Malta shall be represented by Eliana Gomez Blanco, a fourteen year old student from Hamrun, Malta, who was chosen by a jury and public vote during a national selection held in summer. Eliana started her singing career since the tender age of six, wherein she participated in various festivals both locally and abroad and never looked back until she reached one of her dream goals to participate in the Junior Eurovision Song Contest.

Eliana will be interpreting the song WE ARE MORE, with the lyrics by Rachel Suter, Jonas Thander, Joe Julian Farrugia and Kevin Lee, and composed by Jonas Thander and Rachel Suter.

The song, with a message urging youths to be positive and not give up, is a two-language mix, English with some verses in Maltese. Watch and Listen here - <https://youtube/wu4TBECwLqA>

May I kindly ask our friends to support our Malta representative at the Junior Eurovision Contest, There will 19 participating countries in Poland. Please. Watch her song/video on Youtube. The EBU's voting system is 50%/50% televoting and juries. We need a strong vote from Australia, thanks. We need to exploit every opportunity to promote our song and Malta in this highly popular junior festival. I am sure that you will support us and to this end we are ready to discuss further. Thanks in anticipation, Best regards Tonio Portuguese Chairman PBS Board of Directors

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES - Albania Armenia Australia Belarus France Georgia Ireland Italy Kazakhstan *Malta* North Macedonia Poland Portugal Russia Serbia Spain The Netherlands Ukraine and Wales

AGĠORNA RUHEK  
BL-AĦĦAR AĦBARIJET

tvm.com.mt

### GOOD NEWS REGARDING THE LEARNING OF MALTESE LANGUAGE ONLINE

**Soon everyone interested in learning Maltese, wherever you are,  
is becoming a reality**

The learning of the Maltese language will soon be available online through the creation of an online digital platform, a project which is being carried out through the Ministry for Education and Employment which has now passed into the tender preparation phase.



## ADELAIDE 2019 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

**This year the Maltese community of Adelaide was fortunate enough to be invited to participate in the Christmas Pageant. Multicultural SA have a float in the Pageant and the Maltese community was one of six to take part.**

The Christmas Pageant is one of South Australia's icon, loved by young and old alike. The first Pageant was held in 1933, so the Pageant is 86 years old.

Each community was allowed seven people to take part. So the word was put out amongst the Maltese and we were able to get seven interested persons. Arrangements were made to try on various traditional costumes and everyone went home with their outfit. Multicultural SA organised a meeting for all participants, at which time we were informed of everything we needed to know about Pageant day and what was expected of us.

Finally the day arrived and we all congregated at our allotted spot along South Terrace. We were required to be there reasonably early. You can imagine how much organisation and effort goes into gathering some 1800 participants and ensuring everyone has their equipment etc. A very appetising breakfast was supplied, catering for all tastes.

Various marshalls and crew members were on hand to direct us to our correct spot and before long there we were in front of the float, flags in hand and lined up ready to start. The day was quite cool, which ultimately acted in our favour, because after walking 3.3 kms at a steady pace you can work up quite a sweat. Large crowds had gathered and lined the streets of Adelaide ready to enjoy the various floats and ultimately welcome Father Christmas to our city.

Venny Spiteri, dressed as a Maltese local, lead our group, holding a sign which indicated we were the Maltese Community and displaying a message of "Miliid Hieni" (Merry Christmas in Maltese). Next were Carmen and Tiana in their red and white peasant outfits, followed by Gabriella, Rohan, Lily and Serena in traditional formal wear. We had a most enjoyable time, waving our flags and wishing all a Merry Christmas. There was a sea of faces of many delighted children. Many children held out their hands hoping for a "high five" from the passing parade. We were more than happy to oblige, which added a great sense of community and sharing to the day. As we progressed, at intermittent times, we heard shout outs from the crowd, saying "Viva Malta" and "we are Maltese" with accompanying applause. We gave them an extra wave and smile.

It was a great privilege, honour, delight and joy to take part in the Christmas Pageant. Our Maltese community was well served and proud of those who participated.

Photo above: Carmen, Venny, Tiana, Lily, Serena, Rohan, Gabriella.

## Maltese artistic crib to be exhibited at Christmas Village in Vienna



Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government Owen Bonnici gives a press conference about the Maltese Crib in Vienna

**The Maltese artistic crib will be exhibited in Vienna, after being on display in Vatican Square in 2016, Manger Square in Bethlehem in 2017, and Valletta in 2018 as part of the European Capital of Culture celebrations. The crib will be placed in the Vienna University Campus' Christmas Village.**

Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government Owen Bonnici referred to the fact that once again we are working towards exporting our culture. "This is another great opportunity to showcase the ability of Maltese artists in a central location which is visited by 600,000 Viennese people every year and thousands more of other locals and tourists which visit this Christmas Market, which is one of the largest Markets in Austria. This is all in line with our strategy to further strengthen culture diplomacy, whilst also providing a wider international platform to our artists."

Owen Bonnici also announced that KorMalta, which is our country's first national choir, will be singing traditional Christmas tunes during the Maltese Crib inauguration.

This time around, the mounting of the crib was structurally modified from that of the previous three years, due to Vienna's environment and weather, therefore, most original statues which were created and designed by Gozitan artist Manwel Grech have been retained.

The part depicting the nativity has been recreated and was given a more traditional Maltese crib look. The cave was designed and manufactured by Jennings Falzon with the help of Norman Hill. They both worked under the supervision and assistance of Culture Directorate officials, led by Emanuel Vella and Architect Paul Buhagiar and Herbert Debattista.

The Maltese crib will be inaugurated on the 15th of November by the President of Malta George Vella, in the presence of Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government Owen Bonnici. Dr Michael Ludwig, Mayor of Vienna, is also expected to attend. This initiative was also possible thanks to the assistance of Natasha Meli-Daudey, Malta's Ambassador to Austria.

## Family of six and all play a musical instrument

Report: Nigel Mifsud TVM.COM.MT

Musicians that play bass, the trumpet, the clarinet and the horn, and all live under the same roof.

The Cassar family say that music runs through their blood and although their parents have been performing in bands for over 50 years the youngest member of the family has no hesitation in urging them to continue to improve their levels.



On entering the Cassar home one can hear each member of the family practicing on their instrument.

The mother, Carmela, said that next year it will have been 50 years since she first played the clarinet in a band. She said in those days it was highly frowned upon, even by her parents, that she should enter a band club. However, she finds that playing her instrument is her greatest relaxation because otherwise she would just be a housewife. Having a husband that appreciates and understands music was one of her principle desires because they can understand each other.

Father Carmel said the family is surrounded by music that brought the being of the family because he had met his wife during a carnival celebration band. He said music relieves his daily routine and helps him to relax. He attends the band club and only misses out when he is unwell.

All the family members carry out their individual rehearsals but also help each other. The two brothers, Ludwig and Isaac, play with the local band and practice to professional level.

Ludwig explained that music is a pleasure to hear but playing it is of greater satisfaction and poses a challenge that has to be accomplished.

Isaac said his father used to encourage him to join the band but he did not play an instrument but he would accompany his father to hear the band marches and attend the programme and that eventually lured him to play an instrument. Currently he is still undergoing musical studies in practice and theory and he eventually hopes to be chosen for the national youth orchestra.

Two other Cassar family members are also musicians and one of them is in the national orchestra.

Music has also taken family members to different continents and the best experience was that of being part of the local band that played at The Vatican for the Pope.

Asked whether they had ever all played together, the family said that although they are all under one roof and sometimes were on various band stands, they had never actually had the chance to all play together. However, this is still an aspiration they all have.



### **German Embassy Valletta**

**30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall,**

**German Ambassador Walter Haßmann and his wife hosted a reception for HE the President Dr. George Vella and HE the First Lady and a large crowd of their Maltese and international friends. They were entertained brilliantly by a detachment of the Malta Police Band under the baton of Assistant Commissioner Anthony Cassar. A historical East German "Trabant" car in front of the residence evoked visitors' memories of times long past.**



SAT, NOV 30 AT 10 AM - 3 PM

## Annual Craft Show

Maltese American Community Club

522 5221 Oakman Blvd, Dearborn, Michigan 48126

If you live in Michigan (USA) and are in the Metro Detroit Area - come out and support local artisans and small businesses owned by Maltese Americans! Why go out on Black Friday when you can sleep in and get Maltese Items! Come out and support your own and small business! Show is from 10 AM - 3 PM. Please be advised, that most businesses are cash only if coming to the show. If you are abroad and interested in some of the items, some of the website links are

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/petitepatriots> <http://www.gracefulstainedglass.com/>

**WHAT IS THERE UNDER MY FEET?**  
 Science at the service of the exploration and conservation of Heritage

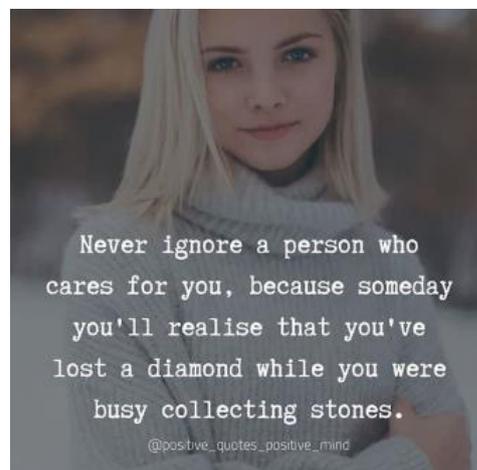
**PUBLIC LECTURE**  
**Dr Sebastiano D'Amico**  
 Department of Geosciences, University of Malta

**Saturday 30 November 2019 11.00am**  
**Il-Haġar | Heart of Gozo Museum**

Free entrance    Seat reservation: [events@heartofgozo.org.mt](mailto:events@heartofgozo.org.mt)

The Maltese personalised jersey is fantastic! I have bought it for my Nannu's 90th birthday & he loved it when he opened it. The perfect gift! Excellent seller. Rachael really went out of her way for me. I will definitely be recommending Petite Patriots to my family & friends.

I am in Australia (Sydney) and from the time I ordered to when the jersey arrived was one month. So about 3 weeks to be made and 1 week for shipping. Much faster than I expected.





# Malta Raffa Bowls Club

## *Bowlers in Austria 2019*

**The Malta Raffa Bowls Club aims to:**

- Divulge the game to a wider audience.
- Provide much-needed facilities for our national athletes to prepare themselves for international events.

• Enables the game to be offered to children within the existing Sports Malta frameworks. The club is made up of six committee members, having Malta’s top player Mr David Farrugia as club Secretary.

One of the Malta Raffa Bowls Club future projects is to build premises to function as training grounds and recreational area in order to increase awareness about Raffa Bowls also by promoting this sport to the younger generation.

In the future, through its pitches and clubhouse, the Malta Raffa Bowls Club aims to: divulge the game to a wider audience, provide much-needed facilities for our national athletes to prepare themselves for international events and enable the game to be offered for children within existing Sports Malta frameworks.

A special thanks also goes to Fairwinds Management Limited, proud supporter of the Malta Raffa Bowls Club and Mr David Farrugia. Thanks to the constant support of Fairwinds Management Limited, the club is able to sustain the marketing expenses of the club and also personal expenses for Mr David Farrugia during his hours of training and competitions abroad.

Malta Raffa Bowls Club is registered with  **SPORTMALTA**

<http://raffabowls.com.mt/>



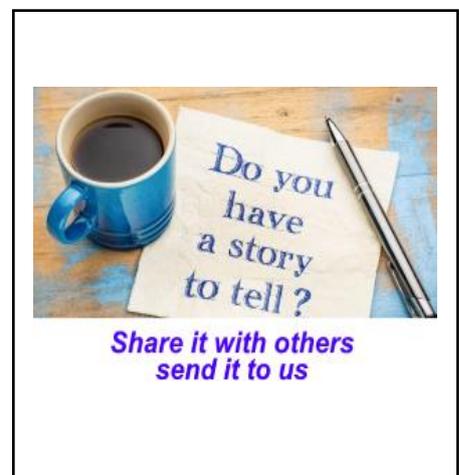
### Are you thinking about selling?

Robert is an experienced real estate professional working in Adelaide. Call now for a free property appraisal report to find out what your house is worth in today’s market. Robert can fluently converse in Maltese

Robert D’Amato  
 M 0452 544 668 P 08 8271 1111  
 Email: robert.damato@harcourts.com.au  
 Harcourts VennMillar RLA 266403  
 414 Goodwood Road, Cumberland Park SA 5041

**Harcourts VennMillar**

If your property is currently listed with another agent please disregard this communication



## THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S VISIT TO VICTORIA LAST MARCH

From 11 to 15 March this year The High Commissioner for Malta in Australia, HE Charles Muscat, visited the State of Victoria. He visited the Consulate General of Malta in Melbourne and met the new Consul General Mario Farrugia Borg and renewed acquaintances with members of the consular staff in Melbourne. The High Commissioner and Consul General Farrugia Borg were also interviewed by Mr. Joe Axiag, of the SBS Maltese Broadcast in Australia, which was aired nationally on Maltese radio on Tuesday and Friday. Accompanied by Consul General Farrugia Borg, the High Commissioner visited the Maltese Community Centre in Parkville where he met the new President, Ms. Marlene Ebejer, and the other newly appointed members of the executive committee of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria (MCCV). Assurances were exchanged of continued cooperation and collaboration between Malta's Mission in Australia and the MCCV.



*L-R Andrew Gatt, MCCV Secretary, Fr. Edwin Agius MSSP, Antoinette Ciantar MCCV Treasurer, Marlene Ebejer MCCV President, High Commissioner Charles Muscat, Antonia Camilleri MCCV Assistant Secretary, Mario Farrugia Borg, Malta Consul General and Victor Borg MCCV Vice President*

On his 3rd day, the High Commissioner, accompanied by Consul General Farrugia Borg, visited the Maltese Community in La Trobe Valley, Morwell, led by Honorary Consul for Malta, Mr. Mario Sammut. Present at the reception were Mr. Russell North, Local Member of Parliament, Melina Bath, State Member of Parliament, Councillor Dale Herryman, representing the Mayor, Mr. Laurie Patton, representing the La Trobe Valley Authority,



Hon Vice-Consul Mr. Mario Sammut,  
High Commissioner H.E. Charles Muscat  
Consul General Mr. Mario Farrugia Borg

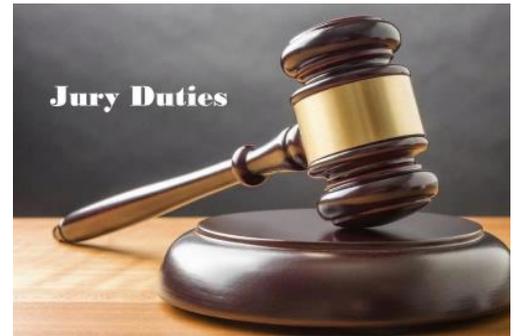
and Dr. Christian Lee, Chairperson Gippsland Ethnic Council. Former Federal Member of Parliament, Mr. Robert Sercombe, introduced the High Commissioner to the Hon. Richard Wynne MP, Minister for Multicultural Affairs. The High Commissioner mentioned and aired his concerns over Census reports that showed a decline in the number of Malta born people living in Australia and the possible adverse effect that this information would have in the allocation of local services to the Maltese as an ethnic group, i.e. Maltese language being taught in public schools to preserve and promote the language in Australia, translation services for non-English speaking Maltese in Australia, access to federal, state and non-government grants awarded to ethnic groups and how it is affecting the Maltese programmes on SBS and other ethnic media. The High Commissioner brought to the attention of the Minister other issues relating to the Maltese diaspora. The Minister and his Secretary have taken note.

The High Commissioner also visited with Consul General Mario Farrugia Borg, the Maltese Cultural Centre of Victoria in Albion, where he was welcomed warmly by the President, Mr. Peter Paul Portelli and other members. The local Ghanejja group performed a number of Ghana (spirtu pront) and the Malta Own Philharmonic Band performed the Maltese and Australian National Anthem. The lacemakers gave an excellent show of their work on the trajbu and pillows. It was an excellent cultural show and welcoming reception in honour of the High Commissioner and Consul General Mario Farrugia Borg.

**This visit demonstrated the High Commissioner's sincere desire to assure the different Maltese Communities in Victoria of his unequivocal support and to encourage them unite as one people with common interests and goals**

## A PART OF OUR CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE NOT TO BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED

*By Venny Spiteri - Adelaide*



A rewarding or daunting experience? For me, it was both. Jury duty is an integral part of our legal system and should not be taken lightly.

Persons registered on the electoral roll are chosen at random to complete jury duty. Once called for jury duty you are committed for a whole month. You must report in every day, whether you are required or not is then decided. Sometimes matters are adjourned or sometimes you are there for a couple of hours and then excused for the rest of the day.

I was called up just before my 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. The first day was orientation day – well I woke up with a painful back – so I placed an ice pack on it for some hours before arriving at the Court. Till this day I don't know how I managed to put on my socks and shoes!! The whole day was very interesting with loads of information on how the system works and how ultimately 12 people are selected for jury duty for any particular matter.

So the first Monday I went into the Courts and what! yes I was selected to be on the jury for a trial. Each juror is allocated a number, no names allowed so witnesses and the accused do not know who you are - a protective measure. The judge discusses the impending case beforehand, so if a juror is acquainted with any witnesses or the accused they must inform the judge immediately and they are then excused from serving at that particular trial. Also the lawyers are given the opportunity of objecting to you being on the jury. This all occurs before the final selection of the 12 jurors.

Sitting in the jury section in Court I found to be daunting, as it seemed that every person in that room has their eyes on you, especially the accused. Each juror is given pad and pencil to take down notes during the trial and when there is a break the jurors are ushered into the jury room to contemplate the evidence they have heard, as it progresses. Once the

case has been fully heard and all evidence has been presented the jury retires to the jury room to discuss the case and hopefully reach a verdict. At this stage all jurors are asked to surrender their mobile phones. The sheriff takes the phones and secures them. Jurors are not permitted to discuss details of a case outside of the jury room, so the phones are taken to ensure no one is tempted to phone anyone whilst the jury is considering their verdict. I was on my particular case for a week. The remaining 3 weeks I spent going back and forth into the Courts, hoping that my number would come up again – but it did not. What a month that was!

Well, a couple of years later a group of Year 12 students were doing an assignment on law Courts and found that persons 70 or over were not eligible for jury duty. The students raised this issue as being discriminatory. The government took their opinion on board and the rules were changed. Days before my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday I was again called up for jury duty. I was actually happy about that, as I had enjoyed my previous experience. Again on the first day I was selected onto a jury. That case went for 2 weeks.

Both cases were interesting to see the accused's lawyer endeavouring to get his or her client acquitted of the charge and the prosecuting lawyer doing their best to have the accused found guilty of the crime. Being on a jury is not an easy task – the jury has to make a life changing decision – is the accused Guilty or Not Guilty?

**Why can't we all get behind this journal and support it. It has reached a stage of becoming a bonding link between readers near and far. Let's make use of the modern technology and help in retaining and sharing our beautiful culture and promote our wonderful Maltese Islands.**

**John Vassallo**

## A local artist is giving a face to migration



**Moira Cutajar is out to translate humanity's common language to canvas**

*The issue of migration dominates the headlines, yet it is hard to follow, according to local artist Moira Cutajar.*

Turning our backs to the harsh realities of global migration is what most of us, unfortunately, tend to do, says Moira Cutajar.

The woman with a strong passion for art believes that art can make people more aware of the harsh realities of global displacement. It is for this reason that she set about creating a series of paintings highlighting the plight of migrants in the Mediterranean.

“My main intention behind this recent set of paintings is to depict the dramatic aspects of migration and the terrible suffering it brings with it,” the artist says.



Three of the paintings in the series depict scenes of crowded boats, bursting with desperate migrants crossing the Mediterranean in search of a better and safer life.

The other pieces depict faces of children, each representing people that are deeply affected by the crisis in the Mediterranean, such as the Kurds, Syrians and Africans.

“I purposely depicted children as I wanted to bring out their expressions of innocence. The sad thing is that it’s not just children that are innocent in all this but, in many cases, adults are too,” Ms Cutajar adds.

Through her art, she would like to convey a specific message and draw attention to it.



Moira Cutajar has a strong passion for painting portraits. She particularly enjoys the challenge of portraying the character, mood and emotions of her subjects on canvas

<https://timesofmalta.com/>



“My aim is to portray the fact that, behind this tragedy, there exist real people who are suffering and experiencing a heartbreaking reality.

“Many might not exactly consider these paintings to be uplifting pieces of art, but they nonetheless reflect the sad spirit of the times,” she says.

“Most days, both the local and foreign media are rife with scenes of helpless migrants fleeing their countries.

“Millions of desperate people have been forcibly displaced from their homes – it is so hard to wrap your head around such numbers. Every day we witness the drowning of migrants in the Mediterranean is a sad day, not just for Malta, but for the entire world.”

Ms Cutajar strongly believes that art has the power to generate public debate and change public opinion.

“I’d like my paintings to make space for those voices that are generally suppressed by politics. Art is considered by many to be a language, one that enables us to talk and to listen to voices other than our own,” she notes.

“I hope to think that art can give migrant voices a means of being heard in an otherwise cruel, and ultimately unsympathetic, world. I want to show – through my paintings – that people from all over the world share a language that goes beyond the borders of the world we live in.”

*The Sunday Times of Malta* art critic Joe Agius praised the artist’s works.

“There is a quality in each of Moira’s migrant-themed pieces,” he said.

“Her theme is very contemporary. There is a freshness in the way she treats what is today a very sad story for humankind. “Moira’s portraits abound with universal qualities where the emotion embraces the viewer before the identity of the subject. Each piece deserves to be exhibited.”

About the artist –

## MALTESE IN CORFU

***Bernard Vassallo joined a group of Maltese visiting Corfu. Inset: inside St Spyridon Church.***



Corfu has a population of 120,000, with some 45,000 in Corfu Town, on the island's east central side.

The residents are largely Greek Orthodox but some 2,000 are Catholic, and of Maltese descent.

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

and Corfu, with Paxos and Antipaxos, as well as the Maltese islands.

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

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

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

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

Today 2,000 remain, served by a Maltese-Corfiot archbishop, Ioannis Spiteris, and two priests of Maltese origin.

This is a dwindling community that faces stiff taxes from the Greek State, as opposed to the Orthodox clergy, who regularly receive a stipend.

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

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

*This is a dwindling community that faces stiff taxes*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**THE MALTESE JOURNAL IS PRESERVED AT THE**

**Malta Migration Museum – Valletta; Maltese-Canadian Archives, St. Paul's Church, Toronto; Gozo National Library & several Maltese Community Centres; Facebook and Twitter and website [www.ozmalta.com](http://www.ozmalta.com)**

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## The fate of the Maltese in Nazi-occupied Corfu

German forces occupying Corfu, Greece, sought to deport the Maltese inhabitants to Germany for forced labour in May 1944

Diana Siebert



The grave of Antonia Zammit Novello and others in a Catholic cemetery in Corfu, with inscriptions in Latin and Greek characters.

From 1815 to 1864, the islands west and south of the Greek mainland, including Corfu, formed an independent State called the United States of the Ionian Islands, under the protectorate of the UK. The British brought Maltese people to work as stonemasons in Corfu – initially because they were skilled in working with Maltese stone that had been imported for the new British Lord High

Commissioner's residence, known as the Palace, and for other planned representative buildings. After the Italians, these Maltese became the second largest group of Catholics living in Corfu.

The British Order of St Michael and St George had its seat at this palace. This order, nowadays ranked as the sixth highest of the UK, was specially founded to honour inhabitants of the Ionian Islands and of Malta who had earned merit in the service for Great Britain. It was only later opened to men from the Commonwealth.

The emigration of Maltese people to Corfu ended when the island was transferred to Greece in 1864. By the 20th century the Maltese were socialised in the Greek language, but remained distinctive mainly because of their religion, their surnames (numerous of which can still be found to this day) as well as their British citizenship.

Corfu used to be a highly contested island. In the 19th century, Italy in particular sparked a cultural battle through its settlements and various educational, cultural and charitable activities. By the time of the Risorgimento there was a clearly felt drive towards the east.

Half a century later, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini sought to realise this militarily as from the first year of his reign. For several weeks in August-September 1923, Italian fascist troops occupied the island.

On the first day of the occupation they ordered foreigners, among them more than 2,000 predominantly Maltese-British citizens, to present themselves in their consulates immediately. Thus, Maltese Corfiots were treated differently than their fellow islanders; they were regarded as 'inner foreigners'.

Since this incident, especially because Archbishop of Corfu Leonardo Brindisi had then welcomed the Italian military forces, the Catholics were generally considered as agents of Italy. Not all Catholics were Italians though. Until World War II, the Maltese formed the majority of the British citizens in Corfu.



*The former British Lord High Commissioner's residence, also known as the Palace, in Corfu town, built by skilled Maltese stonemasons using stone imported from Malta. Several Maltese individuals are honoured for their merits at the Palace.*

In October 1940, Italy tried to invade Greece from recently annexed Albania, and at the end of 1940, the Italians started to bomb Corfu again. In April 1941, they finally occupied the island. Rome dealt with the Ionian Islands and the Greek mainland separately: they

created a particular political entity for the Ionian Islands, introducing a new currency and separate press agencies – the aim of which was to annex the islands to the Italian mother country.

After the ceasefire between Italy and the Western allies in September 1943, the Germans occupied Corfu after heavy bombardments.

In Greece, there was a variety of linguistic, ethnic and religious communities of which the Germans hardly had any knowledge. This is partly due to the fact that modern Greece – since its foundation (1821-1833) and well into the 21st century – was conceived as a mono-ethnic state: Following the extended population exchange of the Greek-Orthodox and the Muslim people between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s, it was undesirable to even mention the suspiciously viewed Slavic, Albanian and other minorities.

Thus, it is not surprising that, at first, the German military administration was not aware of the linguistically integrated Maltese in Corfu. If the Maltese had been the only Catholics on the island, the Germans might have spotted their distinctive surnames somewhat earlier.

But only few months later, beside the Jews, the Maltese, too, attracted the attention of the German occupiers, who, after heavy bombardments by the Western allies, felt irritated by the presence of British citizens in Corfu. In a letter from the German headquarters in Ioánnina, Greece, to Corfu, dated April 10, 1944, it was stated: “All English citizens who are still on the island are to be confined promptly, everywhere and on the spot, and to be deported here. All English citizens need to be seized.”

The occupiers needed a few months to find out that there were “nearly 1800 people with British citizenship” in Corfu – among them quite a few Greek-speaking Maltese. The Germans were suspicious about the fact that the Maltese had inherited the British citizenship from their ancestors – something that had been normally an advantage rather than a disadvantage for them.

On April 14, 1944, the Corfu military intelligence branch of the infamous 104th Jägerdivision (hunter division) reported to the superior corps group in Ioánnina that there were “around 562 Maltese” in Corfu. This usually well-informed unit did not know much about the presence of the Maltese, so it asked “for guidance how to treat the Maltese and whether confinement is an option”.

One week later, on April 20, Corfu reported more in detail to Ioánnina, referring to only one source – “the former English Consul Papadaki Perikles still resident in Corfu”.

The letter stated: “Apart from few exceptions, these people [with British citizenship] belong, in terms of their national traditions, mainly to the Maltese and to the Greek people. Only a minor part is in command of the English language. [...] The vast majority of these British citizens were born in Corfu and inherited their British citizenship from their parents or grandparents, who had been born in Malta [...]. This part of the population is found everywhere on the island. All its members live on farming.” An additional list of names included only a few British citizens who did not have any connections with Malta.

While some Maltese authors claim that the Maltese in Corfu mainly lived in the city – and mostly in the quarters of Sarocco (San Rocco), near the Catholic graveyard and around Mandouki, during the war many city dwellers fled to the countryside in order to escape Italian, German, British and US bombs as well as to have better access to foodstuffs.

Afterward, Ioánnina was contacted not just from ‘below’ but also from ‘above’ – in this case by the Heeresgruppe E (Army Group E) of the high command of the Nazi German Wehrmacht. Apparently, by now, the German troops had found themselves in a somewhat difficult situation, for the letter dated April 21 received an entry stamp six days later, on April 27. A photo of the letter and its translation are featured here.



A grave in a Catholic cemetery in Corfu. The inscription reads: “Ioannis Mikalef, 23, murdered in Athens under the Germans”.

On April 27, the corps group in Ioánnina reported to the High Command (Army Group E) about the queries until then. On May 2, Ioánnina finally passed on the following “suggestion” of Army Group E to the Commander of the island in Corfu – namely, to deport the integrated Maltese to labour camps into Germany: “Army Group E suggests to deport the

Maltese fit for military service from Corfu to labour camps into the Reich and at the same time keep some influential Maltese as hostages in order to secure a reliable attitude towards the German occupation. Corps Group requests instant response.”

Luckily this “suggestion” could not be put into action. A few months later, the Germans had to leave the island in order not to be geographically separated from their headquarters.

The German SS and Wehrmacht proceeded to exterminate Corfu’s Jewish population. Jews had lived in the city for centuries; yet they were less assimilated than the Maltese.

Most of the approximately 2,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz. This was not an easy task due to a lack of ship capacity – and the German Navy even took into account that its fighting capacity would be thereby weakened.

Later the German occupiers were busy securing their retreat in October 1944. The German army conducted the Shoah in Corfu at a time when other armies would rather have focused on avoiding their own military doom. Instead of saving their skin, they regarded the systematic extermination of the Jews more important.

The difficult situation the German forces found themselves in might explain why the Maltese escaped this fate. Besides, the Germans in general treated the British better than the peoples of eastern Europe. Thus, the Maltese of Corfu got off lightly. After the war the Italians were harshly ushered out of Corfu. The Maltese remained. They form roughly two-thirds of the island’s Catholic population today. Sotirios Micallef was Corfu’s mayor from 2007 to 2010.

On April 21, 1944, the Heeresgruppe E (Army Group E) of the high command of the Nazi German Wehrmacht sent the following memo to the corps group in Ioánnina:

“April 21, 1944 High Command Army Group E Group Ic/AO No 5234/44 geh. (secretly) Ref. Foreigners in Corfu. To: Corps Group Ioannina

“Following reports at hand, there are 1,600 Jews, several English, 562 Anglo-Maltese and 17 French citizens in Corfu who, like the former Greek officers, have not yet been registered.



“Referring to the Anglo-Maltese, further details have already been requested via telephone. Furthermore, it is requested that the abovementioned get registered and that the former Greek officers should report by appointment several times monthly to the German office, the way it is carried out just like in the rest of the area under the control of the Army Group.

“For the High Command Army Group E Chief of General Staff.”

On April 27, the Ioánnina corps group sent the following reply to the

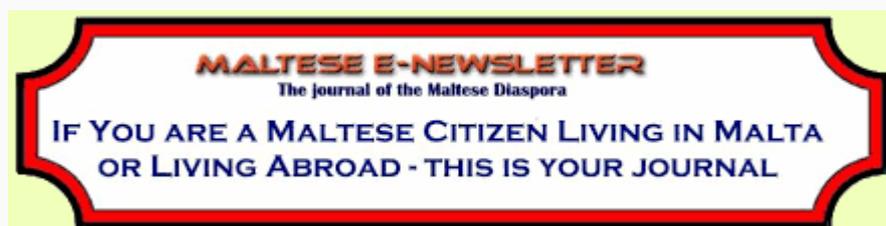
High Command:

“Ref: The Maltese in Corfu.

Results of thorough examination of the Maltese in Corfu.

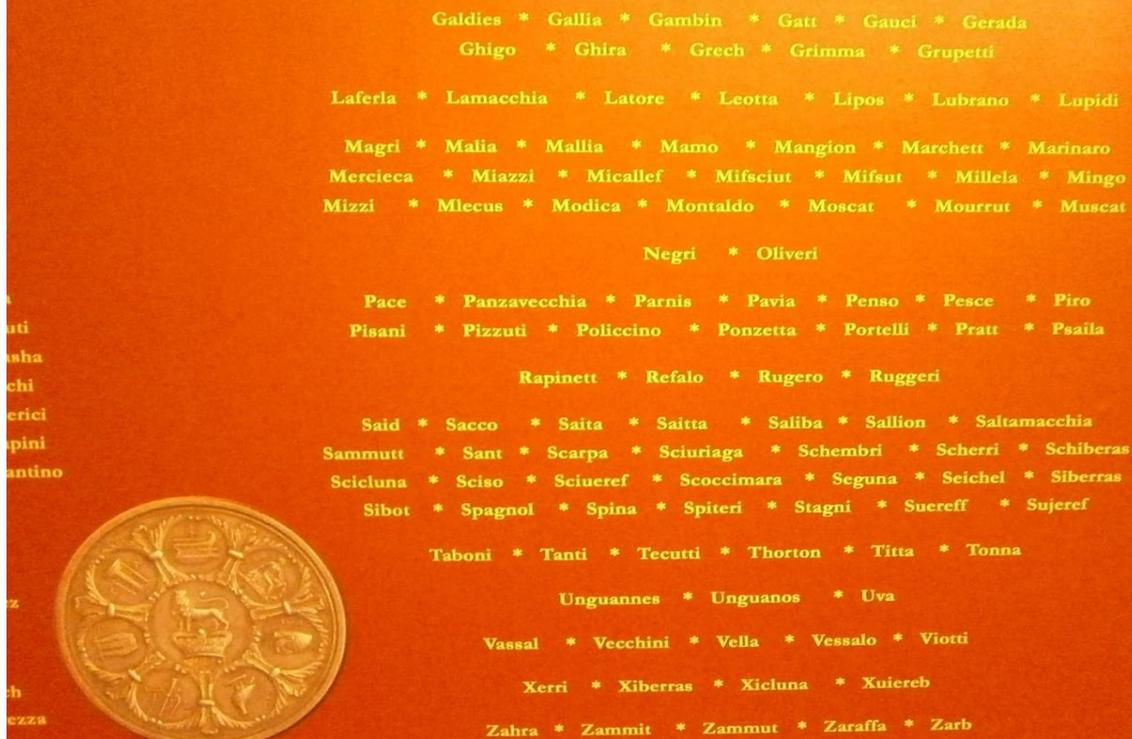
- 1) The Maltese are not more Anglophile than the Greek population of the island.
- 2) A special connection to England has not been detected.
- 3) They possess Greek citizenship.
- 4) They are completely integrated into the Greek population – as merchants and farmers.
- 5) Indications which confirm espionage suspicions have not been found so far.

“For the reasons stated above, confinement of the Maltese in Corfu or their deportation does not seem to have priority at this point. “Report on the situation in Corfu will follow.”Corps group Ioánnina “Dep Ic”



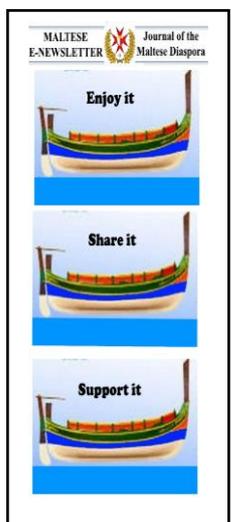


### MALTESE SURNAMES USED AT THE IONIAN ISLANDS



### MALTESE SURNAMES IN CORFU

Another part of history I knew nothing about. My two favourite holiday Islands and I never knew of this connection. It is really interesting. Just started tracing my family tree and my great great grandfather was one of the immigrants who came across in the 19th century. I live in the UK. . Is there a way to trace back Maltese families who immigrated to Corfu. Family Xuereb is the name I am looking for. Spiro Vella





## The celebration of the feast of Saint Martin i "Gewz, lewz, gastan, tin, kemm inhobb lil San Martin"

St Martin's feast, which is commemorated on the 11th of November, is full of traditions in the Maltese islands. It occurs at a time when walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts and dried figs are found aplenty in Malta, and hence the saying "hazelnuts, almonds, chestnuts, figs - oh how I love St Martin". St Martin of Tours was a Roman soldier, who was converted to Christianity in his adulthood following a dream which he had after helping out a poor man on the street. In Maltese culture, St Martin's feast is celebrated on the Sunday closest to the 11th November, in the village of Bahrija, where an annual fair and small procession takes place.

There are many traditional recipes related to the feast with the "Torta ta San Martin" (St Martin's Tart) and "Il-Borza ta' San Martin" (St Martin's Bag), being the most common. All recipes feature a mixture of figs, walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts and oranges. The "Borza ta San Martin" was and is still very popular with children as they receive a bag full of the assorted nuts (still in their shells), fruits which include oranges, tangerines and pomegranates and sweets. The bags were also decorated for the occasion, and the larger and fuller they were was a reflection of wealth by the giver.

### Maltese Center in Astoria NEW YOK - USA

malta MT <http://www.eattheworldnyc.com/2019/04/maltese-center.html>



After some travels to Malta in late summer last year, I briefly did a search for the Maltese community and events in New York City and was pleasantly surprised to find the Maltese Center in Astoria.

Sitting just south of I-278, the center has views of traffic on and off the Triborough Bridge and sits conveniently close to the Astoria Blvd station on the N line. This group was created in 1979, the building opened in 1982, and is the only one in town nowadays. Decades ago, the Maltese community was a bit more prominent and there were a few centers around, but the mission here is to bring everyone together and keep the community and culture strong for Maltese people in New York City and their families who are raised here.

The only other artifact of Malta nowadays is nearby Leli's Bakery, written about here in 2014 and which caters their famous *pastizzi* to the Maltese Center on Sundays and some other occasions. For a quick sampling, go there first as the center is technically just for members. Once you make friends during an event, multiple friendly folks will invite you back for *pastizzi* and coffee on the weekend.



They do put on quite a few of these events, of which I have been monitoring but unable to attend until this past weekend when they threw a *majjalata*, a traditional whole hog roast. This kind of event was one I unfortunately did not make when visiting the Mediterranean island nation,

but is wildly popular as a type of gathering and excuse to get together, eat, and talk to friends and family. Their Facebook page, which you should give a follow if you want to see future events, started teasing photos of the uncooked pig during the morning of the event.



As people started to show up even before the listed start time, filtering downstairs to the center's event space, a DJ was spinning and the bar was ready to quench your thirst. Some members took their seats and kept their eyes on the buffet table and on the back door, where presumably the hog would arrive from. When the main course finally did show up, it was announced it needed to cool but not for long. Folks with growling bellies were encouraged to start with some of the various pasta salads and side dishes that were

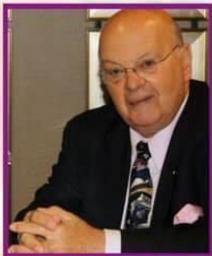
available.

Eventually, the butcher's knife acted like a dinner bell, the *thwack, thwack* of meat being carved and cut into small pieces got everyone's attention and the meal was ready to be served. After enjoying these proceedings for a bit (below), I took my plate over and was given a huge portion of different pieces and skin, an enormous amount of meat for one person to consume. It seemed to be their way of making sure nothing would go to waste because the beast had plenty to go around despite the good turnout.

Before I left the counter, the man serving pushed a squeeze bottle towards me and encouraged the generous usage of a vinegar sauce. I doused my pig and went back to the table to enjoy.

After everyone was stuffed, a woman from the center started preparing slices of bread with what initially looked like bright fruit jam but was actually a sweet tomato spread. When I came over and showed my curiosity, another woman was happy to explain this was *hobz bizzajt* (below), a common Maltese snack whose consumption on the island she compared with the way US Americans eat chips.

The whole event was put on to raise money for the Maltese Center Dolphins, the organization's football club, and patrons were encouraged to wear their favorite club jerseys. Others were put on the walls and a good assortment of teams were represented although the Maltese community seemed to have overwhelming support for Manchester United, with Juventus, the US national team, and Tottenham also represented. Thankfully only one man put on a hideous Chelsea jersey and made his daughter do the same.


**ALBERT VELLA**  
**1942 – 2019**

THE MALTESE CENTER COMMITTEE, ITS MEMBERS, AND THE MALTESE COMMUNITY SEND THEIR DEEPEST CONDOLENCES TO HIS WIFE THERESA AND FAMILY. ALBERT WAS ALWAYS INSTRUMENTAL TO THE MALTESE COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA, AND WAS ALSO AN HONORARY PRESIDENT OF THE MALTESE CENTER.

**KEEP THEM IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS**  
**MAY HE REST IN PEACE**

WE HAVE KNOWN ALBERT FOR MANY YEARS. HE WAS ALWAYS A VOCAL LEADER WHO ALWAYS CONTRIBUTED TO THE MALTESE COMMUNITIES TO WORK TOGETHER, GET INVOLVED AND PROMOTE THE MALTESE CULTURE. ALBERT ATTENDED MANY FUNCTIONS THAT WERE HELD AT THE MALTESE CENTER. HE CONTRIBUTED TOWARDS THE FUNCTIONS AND EVENTS. MANY TIMES, ALBERT TRAVELED IN THE MORNING FROM TORONTO TO NEW YORK, ATTENDED THE MALTESE CENTER'S FUNCTION AND WENT BACK TO TORONTO IN THE SAME DAY.

ALBERT WAS VERY DEDICATED TO HIS BELIEFS. AMONGST OTHER THINGS THAT ALBERT SPONSORED OR BEEN PART OF WERE, BOV MEETINGS TO HELP THE COMMUNITY, SOCCER TEAMS, CULTURAL EVENTS, DONATED AND SPONSORED THE NORTH AMERICAN MALTESE COMMUNITY TROPHY, OUR MEMORIAL PLAQUE, ETC. ALBERT, WAS ALWAYS THERE TO HELP, NO MATTER WHAT. IT ONLY TOOK AN EMAIL OR A PHONE CALL, AND HE WAS THERE TO HELP.

ALBERT WAS AN EXAMPLE OF SOMEONE WHO LOVED HIS FAMILY, MALTA, THE MALTESE COMMUNITIES AND THE MALTESE HERITAGE. ALBERT ALWAYS PROMOTED AND HELPED THE COMMUNITIES. HIS CONTRIBUTIONS WILL ALWAYS BE WITH US.

YOUR FRIENDSHIP WILL BE MISSED. **SAHHA HABIB**



## JOHN AQUILINA WRITES ABOUT LINO VELLA

There are many ways to describe the Australian way of life and Australian character. The Maltese character has developed over millenia and has been documented in tens of thousands of publications over the centuries. How does one in a few words best describe these characteristics and bring them succinctly into sharp focus? Personally, I can think of no better way than to describe the qualities that for many of us sum up the character of Lino Vella AM, MQR. Lino is a person who loves life to the fullest. He loves his family, his sport, the company of his friends, his adopted homeland Australia, the land of his birth Malta, as well as everything about Malta and the Maltese.

One might say that is fine, but those characteristics can also be attributed to several other persons. So what makes Lino Vella so special? His early childhood in Malta starts to give us a clue. From the outset we see a caring, ambitious, young person whose love for adventure and boundless energy broaden his horizons both physically and intellectually.

At the age of eighteen he is on board the *MV Sydney* heading for Australia, leaving behind his family, his friends, and all that is familiar to him, for an uncertain future. Perhaps some of this adventurous spirit came from his father, a naval man who had seen horizons beyond Malta and who encouraged Lino to emigrate because he feared there would be no future for his son in Malta.

Whatever the real reason, and only Lino can really tell us, he is bound for adventure, forging a new life in a new land. Once in Australia the years pass quickly. Marriage to Barbara, a family, football, friends, hard times, good times all come in rapid succession. However, even with eyes firmly focused on the future, there was still the longing for the past. Perhaps this was not so much for the material things left behind, but more so for the qualities, the values, the sense of family, the tradition, the history, the religious ritual, in essence, the basic elements of what it is to be Maltese.

Without much of a formal education, some limited writing lessons and instructions he had received from his father, and with the help of a few friends, *The Maltese Herald* is born. Lino is 24, has lived in Australia a mere six years, and with the participation of others is giving birth to a publication which

through many trials and tribulations participation would defy the odds and survive at least for half a century.

The same adventurous, brave, determined characteristics that brought Lino to Australia were also

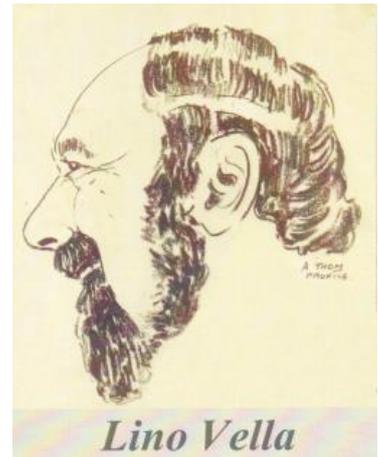
to play a part in the development of *ajourna/* which not only would bring to Maltese Australians news from and about Malta, but would also at the same time record the history of Maltese Australians and be part of making that history as well. Lino would be the first one to say, such is the quality of the man, that there were many others who played a decisive role, and who should share in the honour and recognition.

We acknowledge that this is true, but that is not the point. Nothing sticks together for so long unless there is something there that provides the leadership and symbolises that strength, determination and unity of purpose. Lino has been, and continues to be, that leading and binding force. This has often been at substantial cost to him and his family, both in terms of finance and health although Lino would be the last person to acknowledge this fact

In this, as well as in many other ways, Lino's contribution to the history of Maltese migrants to Australia has been unique. And through the *Maltese Herald*, many chapters have been added to the general history of postwar migration in Australia, something which lamentably has been largely sorely neglected.

This is only one reason why the extraordinary contribution of this outstanding person, who has been such a motivating force in our times, deserves to be recorded. There are, ofcourse, also his admirable and endearing human qualities which have made him a desired friend of all, and an enemy of none.

To Lino, and through him to his family, colleagues and friends, we say "Grazzi".



**Dear Mr Frank Scicluna, Thank you so much for this journal, I appreciate the work you do to keep high the level of the Journal and the interesting information.  
Best Regards Antonio Bartolo**



LINO VELLA AND JOHN AQUILINA

John Aquilina was born in Malta and at a young age migrated to Australia with his parents and younger brother. He graduated from Sydney University, and then worked as a high school teacher of History and English in public schools for almost ten years.

John was elected Mayor of Blacktown in 1977 and in 1981 he became a member of the New South Wales (NSW) Parliament.

Mr Aquilina was elected as a Minister for several years, and held many ministerial portfolios, including Education and Training for six years and seven months. Other Portfolios he held were Natural Resources, Youth and Community Services, Fair Trading, and Lands and Water Resources. Mr. Aquilina then served for four years as the Speaker of the Parliament, and finally for a further four years as the Leader of the House in the NSW Legislative Assembly, until his retirement from active politics in 2011.

During his long term in public life Mr Aquilina had substantial interaction with many migrant communities, including a large number of Chinese Australian migrants, many of whom played significant roles in business and commerce.

Mr Aquilina visited China in an official capacity on several occasions. This included twice as the Minister for Education and Training to sign contracts for the exchange of teachers, as well as the signing of Memoranda of Understanding. On another occasion, while Speaker of the NSW Parliament, Mr Aquilina led a Joint Delegation of Members of Parliament to various key Chinese National and Provincial centres. While Leader of the House, Mr Aquilina launched a major publication on indigenous Chinese and Australian art at the

## Ambassador JOHN AQUILINA

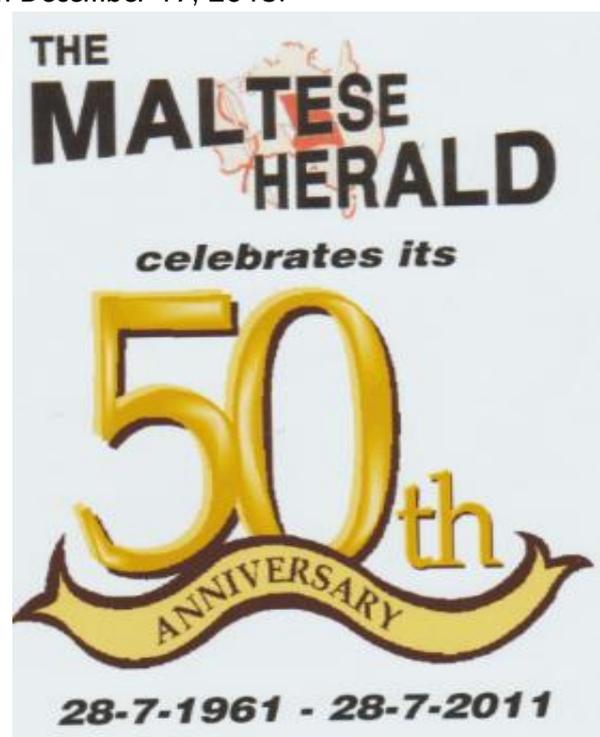
Australian Pavilion of the Shanghai World Expo. He also attended a major conference of Business, Industrial and Political Leaders in Changchun City.

Mr Aquilina has received numerous official international honours for his work in public life, including Officer of the Order of Merit of Malta (U.O.M.), The Order of Australia (A.M.), The Polish Officer's Cross, The Slovenian Order of Services, The Philippines Congressional Medal of Achievement, and the Papal Knighthood, Commander of the Order of St. Gregory the Great, from His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

Although Mr Aquilina resided in Australia for many years, he has always closely identified with his Maltese heritage. He was honoured to have been invited to represent Malta as its High Commissioner to India, as well as several SARC countries, and to now be appointed as Malta's Ambassador to China. His Excellency, the Hon. John Aquilina U.O.M., arrived in China with his wife Ann to take up office

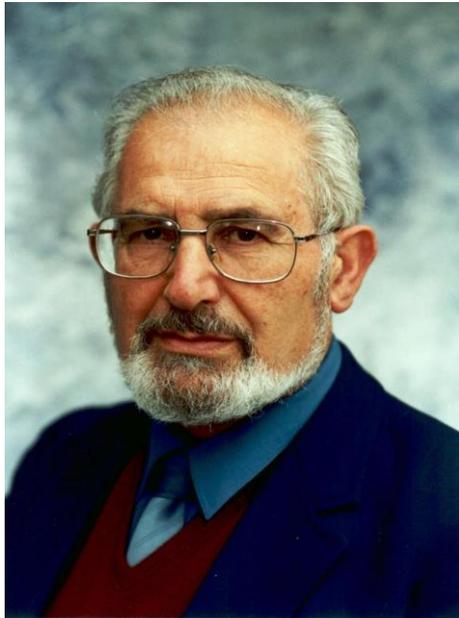


on December 17, 2015.



## MANWEL CASSAR

### Poet, novelist and playwright



The Maltese community of Australia lost one of its prominent members this month of November in Melbourne at the age of 85 years.

Born in Msida, Cassar studied at the Lyceum and St Michael's Training College and was subsequently employed as teacher at the government school in Msida.

Cassar emigrated to Australia in 1955 and was employed first as a teacher before joining the federal civil service.

Cassar has always been very active in Maltese literature and started the Ghaqda tal-Letteratura tal-Maltin fl-Awstralja in 1959. He is also a member of the Akkademja tal-Malti. He has written and published a large number of poems in Maltese. Cassar was sub-editor of the journal *Malta* in Melbourne, member of The Australian Poetry Lovers Society, and co-editor of anthologies of poetry by Maltese-Australian authors. He has also written several articles about Maltese-Australian literature in Malta and Australia-based papers. Cassar, who writes in English and Maltese, has translated

Edgar Wallace's *The Four Just Men* as *L-Erbgha tal-Haqq* which was published in *Il-Berqa* (September-October 1952). Many of his poems may be found in *Driegh ma' Driegh* (1971) and in *Irjeh* (1987).

Cassar also studied painting at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology where he obtained a Diploma in Fine Art (1984) and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree (1985). He has exhibited his paintings at various exhibitions.

Cassar has also been very much involved in dramatic society activity and was member of the Council of the Malta Star of the Sea Dramatic Company and of the Maltese Performing Arts Association.

Cassar was married to Josephine Spiteri and they have five children.

Source: *Maltese Biographies of the Twentieth Century* (1997), editors Michael J. Schiavone and Louis J. Scerri

Saturday, February 22, 2020

The Latrobe Valley Maltese Festival (Victoria) celebrates the food and culture of Malta - it's a taste of the Mediterranean in Morwell! The day will be filled with Maltese entertainment, exhibitions and stalls.

Come and indulge in traditional Maltese food and drink and dance. The crowds will be entertained throughout the day with live music both in and outside Kernot Hall. The first Maltese Festa in 2018 attracted more than 8000 people - make sure you save the date, this one's going to be even bigger!



## The Maltese Cross: Its



## origin and importance to Malta

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Introduced to Malta by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem upon taking possession of the islands in 1530, the Maltese Cross has become an intrinsic part of Malta's culture and heritage, as well as a much-cherished symbol by the Maltese.

What is the Maltese cross?

**The Maltese cross is a symbol that is most commonly associated with the Knights of Malta (also known as the Knights Hospitallers), who ruled the Maltese islands between 1530 and 1798.** The Maltese cross is nowadays widely used and associated with Malta as a country, used by the national airline Air Malta as part of its livery, and even featuring on the Maltese Euro coins, for example.

What does it look like?

The shape of the Maltese cross is star-like with four V-shaped arms that are joined together at the tips. It's frequently used either in black and white or red and white and is symmetrical both vertically as well as horizontally

What's the history behind the cross?

Although the Maltese cross is most famously associated with the Knights of Malta, as well as Malta itself as a country, it is thought the symbol evolved from a closely resembling cross found on coins minted in Amalfi (an Italian republic) during the 11th century.

What's the meaning of the Maltese cross?

**The Maltese Cross formally adopted by the Knights Hospitallers of St. John in 1126**, stylistically owes its origins to the crosses used in the crusades, when it was identified as the symbol of the "Christian warrior": **Its eight points denote the eight obligations or aspirations of the knights**, namely "to live in truth, have faith, repent one's sins, give proof of humility, love justice, be merciful, be sincere and wholehearted, and to endure persecution".

With time, **the eight points also came to represent the eight *langues*** (or "tongues", but in effect national groupings) of the noblemen who were admitted to the famed order, namely those of Auvergne, Provence, France, Aragon, Castille and Portugal, Italy, Baviere (Germany), and England (with Scotland and Ireland).

**The Maltese cross remains the symbol of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta**, which is still in existence (and active as an international organisation for medical and humanitarian aid) today. As part of its present-day teachings, the cross represents eight beatitudes (or 'blessings'). A good first aider in service of the Order of St. John is Observant, Tactful, Resourceful, Dextrous, Explicit, Discriminating, Persevering and Sympathetic.

The Knights and the Maltese Cross  
The Knights of Malta (Order of St. John) can trace their origin to a group of monks attached to a hospice built in the Holy Lands to aid pilgrims. Over time, the monks started offering an armed escort to travellers as they passed through perilous Syrian territory. Following the success of the First Crusade, the Knights Hospitallers evolved into a military order.

The link between the Maltese Cross and these islands was forged with the Knights' arrival in Malta in 1530. By then, the Cross had become the established symbol of the Order, and as the Knights set about putting their stamp on these islands

through their inspired architectural feats and patronage of the arts, so the Maltese Cross provided the signature to this glorious legacy. The Cross found itself on coats-of-arms, palaces, hospitals, the entrances and gates to various forts and towers, on fortifications as well as on coins, cannon, monuments, churches, paintings and frescoes, furniture, silverware and jewellery.

Valletta is home to the world's largest concentration of portrayals of the Maltese Cross. The palaces and churches constructed during the long rule of the



Knights, as well as the many treasures they house, are bedecked with this representation of aristocratic and autocratic power. The Maltese Cross, however, has come to epitomise not only one of Malta's most glorious historical periods but also anything which is intrinsically Maltese.

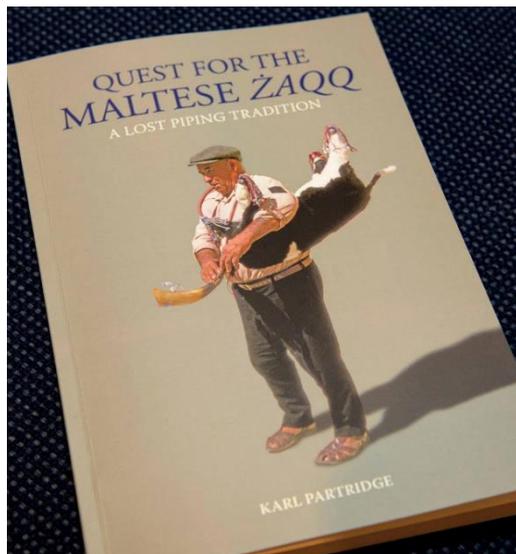
How the Maltese Cross is used nowadays

Today, the Maltese Cross is undoubtedly the single most recognisable symbol of the Maltese Islands. It's no coincidence that this emblem forms part of the logo of a number of local institutions, including the Malta Tourism Authority, Malta Enterprise, and the Islands' flag-carrier, Air Malta, not to mention the national football and rugby teams' official strip.

Many Maltese houses still incorporate the Cross in their stonework. A visit to any souvenir or gift shop will also reveal an array of local crafts adorned with the Maltese Cross. Apart from the obvious t-shirts and key-chains, you will find the Cross on a generous variety of quality lace and filigree products, all kinds of jewellery, pottery and glassware, brass door knockers, as well as items made from limestone.

It seems that the Maltese Cross, a symbol which chivalric warriors first wore with pride hundreds of years ago in faraway lands, has found a permanent home on this little archipelago in the middle of the Mediterranean!





## Keeping Maltese bagpipe tradition alive and kicking

Losing the żaqq would be equivalent to losing a priceless ancient monument, according to the man who documented the Maltese bagpipe before the last active player passed away. And in his bid to lend this unique bagpipe a lifeline, Karl Partridge will be playing and speaking about the żaqq at a conference in Glasgow – the first time the instrument will feature in an international bagpipe convention.

Dr Partridge, a consultant ecologist by profession, documented the żaqq with Prof. Frank Jeal 40 years ago, publishing their findings in the Galpin Society Journal in 1977.

Some 30 years later, Steve Borg, co-founder of the Maltese group Etnika, tracked down the pair in England. They told him they wanted to pass on a document on the instrument to a Maltese person interested in reviving the tradition. He suggested they hand it to the National Archives, so in 2013 they presented field documents, audio recordings, photographs, slides and folk music instruments, including the żaqq, żafżafa, chanters, reeds and different components of the instruments that the farmers had given them in the 1970s.

*As a folk instrument it has a place in Maltese society even today and I believe more effort needs to be invested in securing its future*

Their research had been carried out between 1971 and 1973, when Dr Partridge's parents were living in Malta. At that time there was only one active player left – Tony Cachia Il-Ħammarun of Naxxar (he died in 2004).

So then 22-year-old Dr Partridge got Mr Cachia to make him a żaqq and he learned how to play it while looking for former żaqq players in Naxxar, Mosta, and Vittoriosa. Although they could still play, these former players had no working instruments of their own, so he recorded some of them playing his own.

Dr Partridge noted that in the 1970s there was little interest in Malta in documenting traditional music. Although this changed just before Il-Ħammarun died, today there were very few active players in Malta and the żaqq still led a precarious existence. Unfortunately, the complexity of musical motifs and ornamentation has been lost, he added.

Dr Partridge believes that Il-Ħammarun had his own style, and were it not for him, the żaqq could have become extinct. However, the melody he played was simpler and less varied than that of the older players.

“It would be great if some of the new players could re-learn the older music and re-introduce the richness of this very ancient and uniquely Maltese tradition.”

Dr Partridge was speaking to this newspaper ahead of the lecture next month on the Maltese żaqq at the third International Bagpipe Conference. He believes the żaqq is important internationally as a unique type of bagpipe. The instrument has never had the international recognition it deserves and as far as he is aware, it has never been previously discussed at an academic conference.

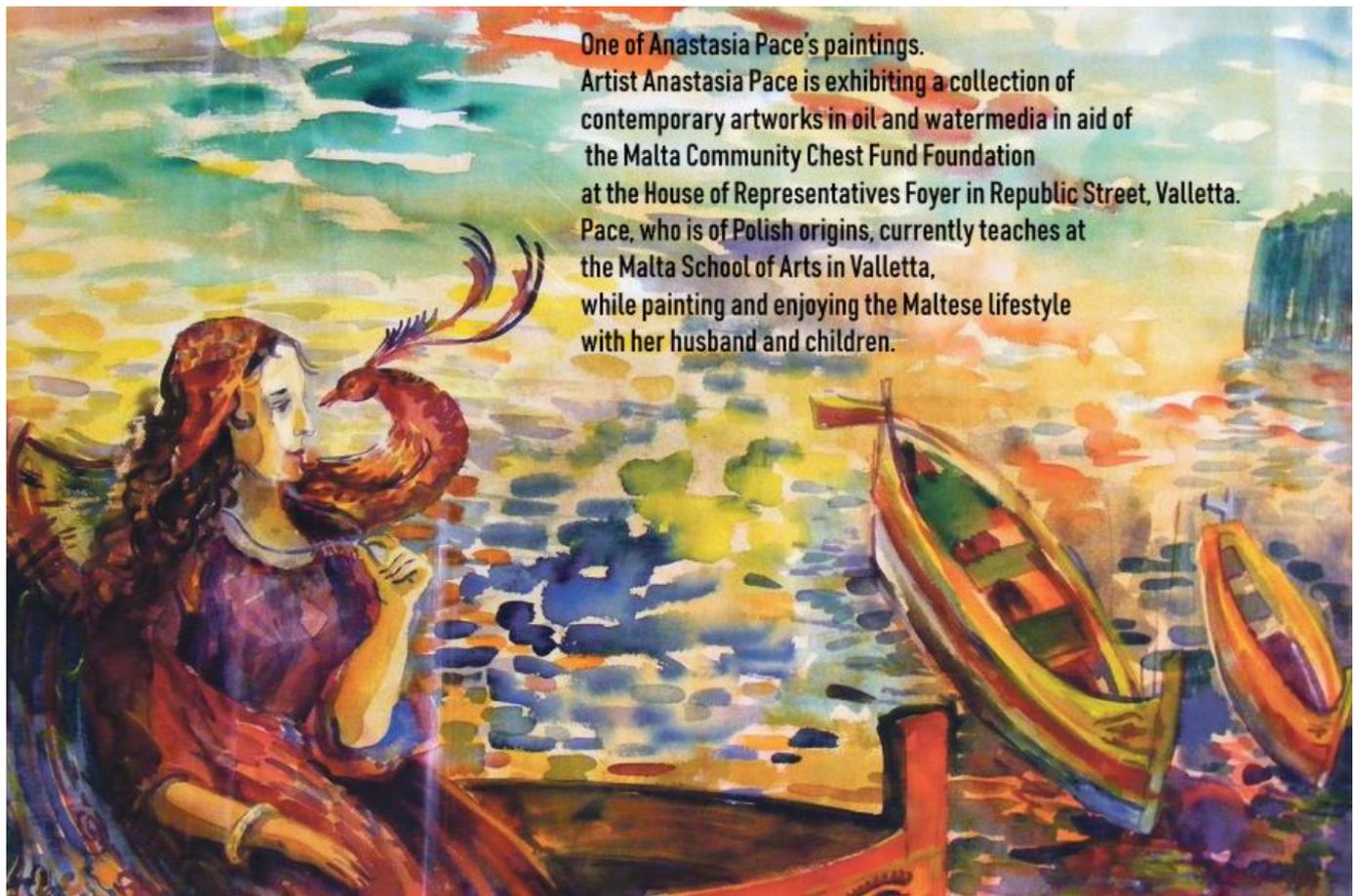
Dr Partridge, who often plays the instrument in County Down in Northern Ireland, will start off his lecture by playing a new żaqq he made recently.

Asked whether the instrument was still relevant today, he said: “Definitely – its loss would be equivalent to the loss of a priceless ancient monument. As such it is vital that it continues to be played.

“The żaqq is a primitive bagpipe and I know that there is a certain ambivalence towards it in Malta. However, as a folk instrument it has a place in Maltese society even today and I believe more effort needs to be invested in securing its future,” Dr Partridge said, stressing that while it was classified as a primitive bagpipe, the music of the żaqq as played in the past was not primitive in any way.

**John Magro**, official photographer writes: Friday 8 November, book launch of "Quest for the Maltese Żaqq - A Lost Piping Tradition" authored by Karl Partridge and published with the collaboration of the National Archives of Malta with Midsea Books. At the David Bruce Hall of the Mediterranean Conference Centre. One of the events of the Malta Book Festival.

The music was quite complex and required good playing skills.



One of Anastasia Pace's paintings. Artist Anastasia Pace is exhibiting a collection of contemporary artworks in oil and watermedia in aid of the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation at the House of Representatives Foyer in Republic Street, Valletta. Pace, who is of Polish origins, currently teaches at the Malta School of Arts in Valletta, while painting and enjoying the Maltese lifestyle with her husband and children.



## Magic Malta is about to get more magical with Carlo, Gordon and Anna

Report: Daphne Cassar

The ordinary is about to become extraordinary as of next Monday with Carlo, Anna and Gordon who will be live on Malta on Magic 91.7 FM.

The three exuberant characters who each come with their own radiophonic experience will take listeners on a musical journey interspersed with dynamic moments where we will discover new facets to their personalities and characters. And comic moments will be guaranteed.

They are each getting ready for this new adventure in their own way.

Carlo admits that he is excited and curious about how he will sound at the other end of the microphone because he is accustomed to asking questions not answering them. Gordon is practising how to be punctual ... while Anna said she couldn't say no to Carlo's adventurous proposal! Music, news, current affairs, entertainment, and humour. The ingredients which will spice up Carlo's Breakfast Cafe from 6: 30 am onwards, on Magic Malta 91.7. Starting on Monday 18 November with Carlo Borg Bonaci, Gordon Bonello and Anna Vella.

**Latrobe Valley Maltese Festa - Victoria**



We are incredibly proud that the Latrobe Valley Maltese Festa 2018 was awarded the Latrobe City Community Event of the Year at the Australia Day Awards at Kernot Hall Morwell. To be recognised for such a prestigious honour is humbling and testament to the hard work of not only the committee who accepted the award today, but all of the amazing volunteers and sponsors who made the event possible. We can't wait to do it all again! — with Mario Sammut, Frank Bezzina, Ray Ancilleri, Anita Butterworth, Luke Butterworth and Thomas Libreri.

**KONFERENZA EWROPEA F'MALTA DWAR L-EDUKAZZJONI KATTOLIKA**

**EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ABOUT CATHOLIC EDUCATION**



Members: Malta -Albanija, l-Awstrija, il-Bożnija- Herzegovina, il-Belġju, iċ-Ċekja, il-Ġermanja, id-Danimarka, Spanja, Franza, il-Greċja, il-Kroazja, l-Ungerija, l-Irlanda, l-Italja, il-Litwanja, Malta, l-Olanda, in-Norveġja, il-Polonja, il-Portugall, ir-Renju Unit, ir-Rumanija, l-Iskozja, is-Slovenja, l-Iżvezja, l-Iżvizzera u l-Ukraina ma' l-Isqof Awżiljarju Joseph Galea-Curmi

FOR YOUR ATTENTION

**La Valette Social Centre**  
175 Walters Road, Blacktown

**Carols by Candlelight Show**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2019**  
The show starts at 6.30pm in the Main Hall

**COME & ENJOY THE SPIRIT OF  
A MALTESE CHRISTMAS WITH US**

Featuring the following singers:

**JOE APAP ~ NATASHA TATARINOFF ~ MCA CHOIR**  
directed by Marisa Privitera ~ Victor Mifsud ~ and the Kids  
from the Maltese Language School of NSW

There will be a pageant about our traditional  
Maltese Christmas, together with a Christmas Message  
by Marco Caruana

Nannu Santa will be coming to the La Valette, so please  
bring a present for your children with their name on it,  
so that Santa will give it to your kids

For safety reasons, battery-operated Candles  
will be on sale for a \$1.00 each.

**ENTRANCE IS FREE**

For more information, please call:  
**Greg** on 0411 517 187....**Agnes** on 0432 714 735  
**Antoinette** on 9622 5847.....

*Kids are wanted to dress for the Christmas Pageant.  
Please call Agnes*

**new years eve**

Tuesday 31 December 2019 - Doors open 7.30pm  
**Welcome the New Year**

**2020**  
Happy New Year

**at La Valette Social Centre**  
175 Walters Road, Blacktown  
and Dance the night away with  
**Charlie Camilleri and The Rockin Mustangs**



Tickets: Members \$60 - Non-Members \$65  
Children (8-12Yrs) half price  
**Buffet Dinner**  
FREE Beer, Wine and Soft Drinks  
Catering by: **Charlie's Family Restaurant**  
For tickets contact:  
Frances 0412 320 432 - Antoinette 9671 2992  
Centre 9622 5847

  
Newport Maltese Association and Seniors Group Inc.

**New Year's Eve Dinner Dance**  
Will be held on  
Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2019  
From 7pm to 1am.  
at  
**The Emerald**  
213-215 Settlement Road, Thomastown  
Pre-Dinner Drinks, Five course meal  
plus, wine, beer and soft drinks  
Book Early. Don't miss out.  
Come and join us in the fun and celebrate the  
New Year for only \$105 per head  
Bookings with Carmen Casa on 9436 8196  
Music: DJ Domenic

Dress code: Gents Jacket & tie. Ladies: After Five  
Children not admitted.

**Christmas Carols at Hamrun Club**  
100 Jackson St Marsden Park  
Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> of December  
Face drawing & Ballon artists  
for the kids starts at 3pm  
Santa will arrive straight after the Carols  
For more details, please ring:  
Joe Borg on 0414 429 391

  
**Gday Maltaussies Show**

**Joe Borg**  
Producer / Director  
mobile: 0414 429 391

email: support@gdaymaltaussiesshow.com  
facebook: Gday Maltaussies Show  
website: www.gdaymaltaussiesshow.com  
youtube: Gday Maltaussies Show  
watch show live: http://www.tv5.org.au  
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