



# Maltese e-Newsletter

The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora

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Photo: Mark Micallef Perconte

ANNUAL RELIGIOUS  
FESTAS RESTRICTED  
DUE TO COVID-19



Artist  
Justin  
Bonnici  
Zabbar  
Malta

## thank you

MURAL ARTIST DESIGNS THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO COVID-19 FRONTLINERS



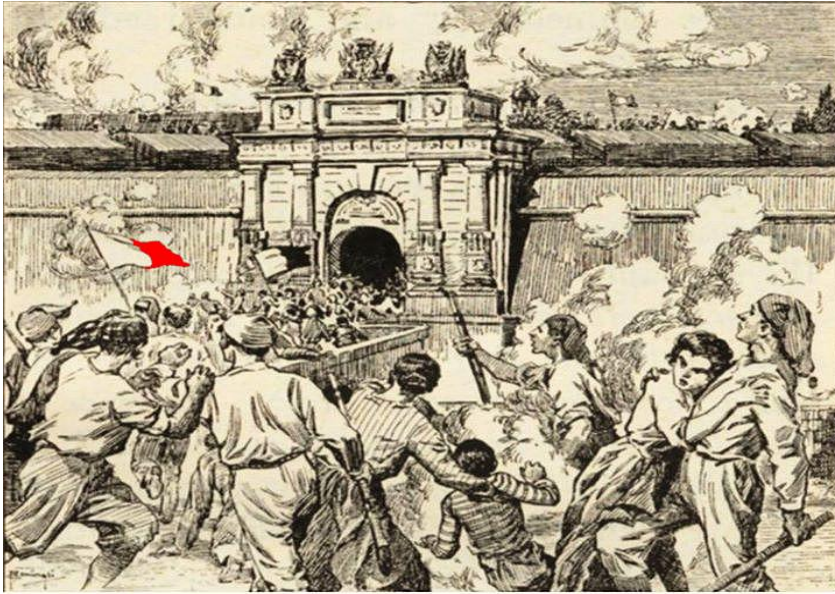
## WE ARE GOING TO MISS YOU

CONNECTING  
MALTESE COMMUNITIES  
LIVING ABROAD

Malta, Gozo, Canada  
Australia, USA, UK, EU,  
South Africa, Middle East,



# French Occupation of Malta



The **French occupation of Malta** lasted from 1798 to 1800. It was established when the Order of Saint John surrendered to Napoleon Bonaparte following the French landing in June 1798.

## FRENCH INVASION OF MALTA

On 19 May 1798, a French fleet sailed from Toulon, escorting an expeditionary force of over 30,000 men under General Napoleon Bonaparte. The force was destined for Egypt, Bonaparte seeking to expand French influence in Asia and force Britain to make peace in the French Revolutionary Wars, which had begun in 1792. Sailing southeast, the convoy collected additional transports from Italian ports and at 05:30 on 9 June arrived off Valletta. At this time, Malta and its neighbouring islands were ruled by the Order of Saint John, an old and influential feudal order weakened by the loss of most of their revenue during the French Revolution.

The Grandmaster Ferdinand von Hompesch zu Bolheim, refused Bonaparte's demand that his entire convoy be allowed to enter Valletta and take on supplies, insisting that Malta's neutrality meant that only two ships could enter at a time.

On receiving this reply, Bonaparte immediately ordered his fleet to bombard Valletta and, on 11 June, General Louis Baraguey d'Hilliers directed an amphibious operation in which several thousand soldiers landed at seven strategic sites around the island. The French Knights deserted the order, and the remaining Knights failed to mount a meaningful resistance. Approximately 2,000 native Maltese militia resisted for 24 hours, retreating to Valletta once the city of Mdina fell to General Claude-Henri Belgrand de Vaubois. Although Valletta was strong enough to hold out against a lengthy siege, Bonaparte negotiated a surrender with Hompesch, who agreed to turn

Malta and all of its resources over to the French in exchange for estates and pensions in France for himself and his knights. Bonaparte then established a French garrison on the islands, leaving 4,000 men under Vaubois while he and the rest of the expeditionary force sailed eastwards for Alexandria on 19 June.

## REFORMS

During Napoleon's short stay in Malta, he stayed in Palazzo Parisio in Valletta (currently used as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs). He implemented a number of reforms which were based on the principles of the French Revolution. These reforms could be divided into four main categories:

## SOCIAL

The people of Malta were granted equality before the law, and they were regarded as French citizens. The Maltese nobility was abolished, and slaves were freed. Freedom of speech and the press were granted, although the only newspaper was *Journal de Malta*, which was published by the government. Political prisoners including Mikiel Anton Vassalli and those who took part in the Rising of the Priests were released, while the Jewish population was given permission to build a synagogue.

## ADMINISTRATIVE

All of the Order's property was surrendered to the French Government. A Commission of Government was set up to rule the islands.



# The healing power of music.

Rev. Dr Joseph Zammit

-Social distancing has been the leitmotif of these past turbulent weeks. A tiny entity, which, while tuning its dissonant melody, has wreaked havoc on the harmony in social and personal relationships. Grandparents were not allowed to be visited by their loved ones during the Easter festivities, let alone to embrace each other.

Music is considered as a universal language. It is understood by all and everybody. Music creates bridges. Music unites. Recently, we have been witnessing people encapsulated in their homes and estranged from one another, coming out on their balconies and expressing their feelings through song, dance, banging of utensils... Even DJs organized themselves on balconies in order to recreate relationships.

Usually artists are said to express their true self in their work. This holds not only for painters, architects, sculptors... but also for musicians. Hence, music reveals and amplifies one's identity. If music does not convey and propose valid messages, it will lose its call to be an instrument which enhances relationships, solidarity and well-being.

If words in lyrics, if melodies in sound, if tunes from instruments, become, ever more, a reflection of the human search for the truth that lies hidden in every human being, the truth which dilutes itself in the love that creates true relationships, then we can hope for a better future, a healthier one.

Music will, or has to, be rediscovered as a friend to our children, and especially to our youths, but not exclusively, because even our grandparents need to feel appreciated and cared for, and not left alone. Music will become a universal instrument

accepted by all, to serve humanity in its most fundamental craving for true relationships.

The English rock and roll band, Tremeloes' 'Silence is golden', should not remain only a song which vested decades in harmony, but also a universal lesson especially to the new generations who, perhaps, instead of vocal ability, harmony, melody, ability to play an instrument, prefer loud noise and void voices to music. Whereas, as the saying goes, even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise. Silence does not mean only to be speechless but also to be attentive, and to listen.

The American romantic musical, 'The sound of music', which has been a celebrity during the aftermath of World War II, and onwards up to this very day, indicates exactly the value of music and how valuable musicians are in creating sound and healthy relationships.

If we want music to be an antidote for solitude today, can it not serve as healer of relationships tomorrow? A massive national orchestral concert, after this trauma is over, would perhaps wipe away from our memory the scar which this invisible but effective virus has inflicted on our relationships.

The recent and much appreciated initiative, "Malta together", on our national social media, which Health Superintendent professor Charmaine Gauci labelled as "An inspiration for our nation", cannot but confirm that a grand national concert in the future, which we are proposing, is far from impossible. The social distancing will thus have been beneficial not only in eradicating the harmful virus from amongst us, but also in letting let loose our creative spirit. Thus, we ought to present, live on stage, the coming together of musicians, creating harmony, symbolizing our hopes for a better future

## MALTA'S SUMMER FESTIVITIES CURTAILED

This summer should have seen the celebration of about 80 annual parish feasts that are an important section of the Maltese culture. They attract thousands of tourists from all over the world. The coronavirus pandemic has spoilt the normal celebrations in the interests of safety precautions and therefore festivities are of a different nature. The church liturgical functions will be held in a closed church and shown on the digital media but the band marches, street decorations, procession with the statue and fireworks will be heavily restricted.

## US Prof. Eric Scerri – Chemist, Public Speaker, Author and Educator

**Eric R. Scerri** was one of many Maltese from Egypt who were expelled from there at the time of the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956. He was 3 years old at the time.

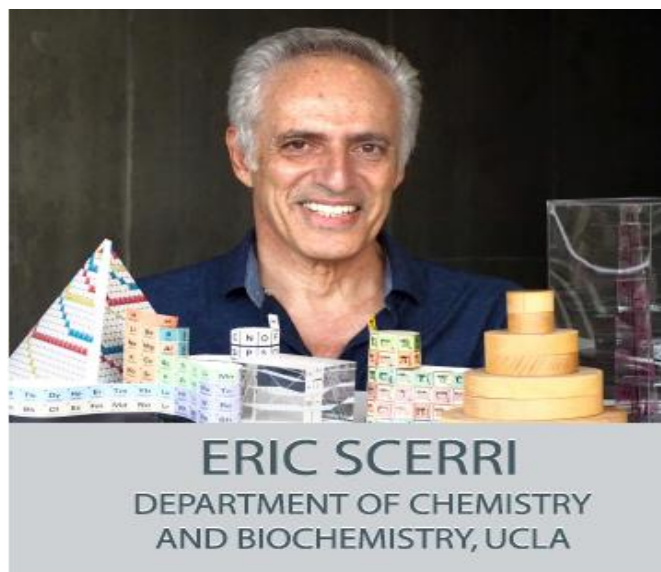
His family subsequently went to the UK, then Libya for 6 years then back to the UK where he had all his education from age 10 onwards. For the past 25 years he has lived in the US where he is a lecturer at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) as well as an author on chemistry, philosophy of science and history of science. In recent years he visited Malta twice and gave lectures to the Chemistry Department and so accomplished something that he had been one of his big ambitions. Eric is the founder and editor-in-chief of *Foundations of Chemistry*, an international peer reviewed covering the history and philosophy of chemistry and [chemical education](#).

He is a world authority on the history and philosophy of the [periodic table](#) and is the author and editor of several books in this and related fields. Dr. Scerri was a participant in the 2014 [PBS](#) documentary film -*The Mystery of Matter*.

Eric Scerri attended Walpole Grammar School in Ealing. He received his BSc from [Westfield College \(University of London\)](#), his Certificate in Postgraduate Study from the [University of Cambridge](#), his MPhil from the [University of Southampton](#), and his PhD from [King's College London](#).

Scerri's research has mainly been in the history and philosophy of chemistry, in particular on the question of the extent to which chemistry reduces to quantum mechanics. He has specialized in the study of the periodic table of the elements, including its historical origins and its philosophical significance. More recent writings have included critiques of claims for the emergence of chemistry and the existence of downward causation.

In addition to historical and philosophical work Scerri has published numerous articles in the chemical education literature, including accounts of the electronic structures of transition metals and the occurrence of anomalous electronic configurations.



In *A Tale of Seven Elements* (2013) Scerri recounts the story of the discovery of the seven elements missing from the periodic table shortly after the turn of the 20th century, including the setbacks, misguided claims, and sometimes acrimonious priority debates and disputes.

In December 2015, Scerri was appointed by [IUPAC](#) as the chair of a project that will make a recommendation on the composition of [group 3](#)—whether it should be the elements [Sc, Y, La and Ac](#); or [Sc, Y, Lu and Lr](#).

Most recently (2016) he proposed a new evolutionary approach to the philosophy of science based on seven case studies of little known scientists such as John Nicholson, Anton Van den Broek and Edmund Stoner. Scerri has argued that these lesser known figures are just as significant as the heroic personalities in that they constitute the missing gaps in a gradual evolutionary and organic growth in the body of scientific knowledge. Although he rejects the occurrence of scientific revolutions as envisioned by [Thomas Kuhn](#), Scerri very much supports Kuhn's notion that scientific progress is non-teleological and that there is no approach towards an external truth.

Second editions of Scerri's two most cited books were published in 2019 and 2020





## Friends of Providence House NSW donate \$16,000 to Id-Dar tal-Providenza.

May 21, 2020

During the last sixteen months, the sum of \$16,000 was raised by the **Friends of Providence House NSW** who usually present their donation to **Id-Dar tal-Providenza** at the annual Volleyball Marathon which is held on the first weekend of July at the Home's parking lot in Siggiewi.

Due to the COVID-19 Global Pandemic restrictions, the marathon had to be cancelled but the much needed funds have been directly transferred much earlier than planned to Id-Dar tal-Providenza to help keep up with the services it offers to its residents in the various homes.

These funds are the result of many months of hard work during 2019 and 2020 in the Maltese community of Sydney and surrounding areas. They consist of a major sponsorship by **George Vella of Breakaway Travel, Blacktown**, competitions, donations, raffles and the annual "Festa ta' Generozità" which was held earlier this year, together with a donation of **\$5,000** by a very generous anonymous benefactor.

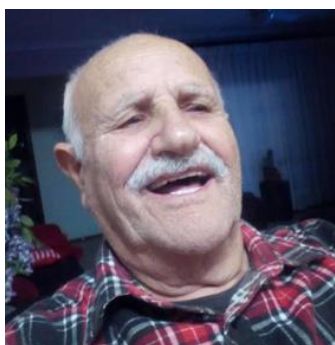
**Jim Borg**, the Coordinator of Friends of Providence House NSW, together with his team, **Marisa Previtera** (Secretary) and **Miriam Friggieri**, (Treasurer) stay in regular contact with **Fr Martin Micallef**, Director, of Id Dar tal Providenza.

Mr Borg said that his group will continue with its fundraising initiatives for what he describes a much respected and beloved institution in Australia as well. On behalf of the residents, Fr Martin thanked the Friends of Providence House NSW for their continuous support and promised prayers.

### **Friends of Divine Providence House Group NSW Australia**

The Group was founded in October 2011 with the aim of raising funds for Id-Dar tal-Providenza, Malta.

The Friends of Providence House Group is the official Ambassador to Id-Dar tal-Providenza in New South Wales, Australia. The Group also intends to continue to organise tours and other activities in order to raise future funds for this magnificent charitable organisation.



### **VALE JOHN TANTI - PARRAMATTA MELITA EAGLES – N.S.W. AUSTRALIA**

It's with deep sadness, that we announce the passing of John Tanti, a long time Parramatta Melita Eagles supporter and father of First Grade manager Mark Tanti.

John was a regular at Eagles games and always up for a great chat and laugh. His humour was certainly infectious. John was a former player for Tarxien in Malta whose passion for Maltese Football and football in Australia was unrivalled. John's stories of driving down to Melbourne to watch Sunshine George Cross win the Australia cup and travelling everywhere to watch Melita play were always intriguing.

John was no more proud than of his family, and his proudest moment was seeing his son, Mark manage the Eagles First Team. On behalf of all Eagles players, our board

& supporters, we offer John's family our deepest condolences. Rest In Peace John - forever an Eagle

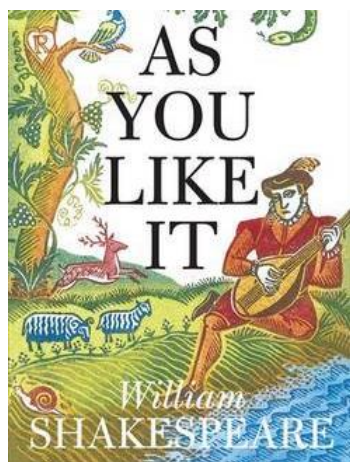
David Frendo – President

## As you like it

By Sean Richardson NSW Australia

The suffocating heat of a Maltese summer day was drawing to a close. With my first step from the car, the remnant of the cold air-conditioning on my skin was overwhelmed by the blanket of humidity. Moisture extracted from my brow formed beads which swelled into streams of salty sweat running down my face. Surrounded by other guests who seemed less affected, I walked through the gate and into the oasis of the San Anton Gardens.

A blast of green in the town centre of Attard. A lush suburban oasis settled amongst a Maltese landscape burnt brown by the summer sun and parched from endless dry days. A summer as fierce as any in Australia, not by the sheer heat but crushed under the relentless roiling thirty degree days without the relief of a cooling wind.

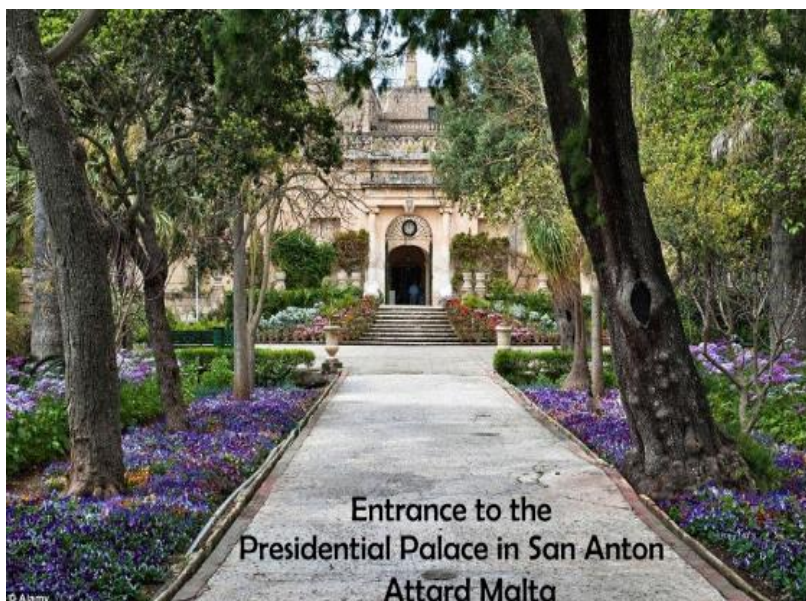


The palace buildings peeked from under the Garden's canopy of trees which dotted the stone path. Palms and jacaranda threw a cover over the green grounds. Their trunks a dark contrast against the limestone walls encasing the palace grounds in a barrier of golden yellow glowing in the

dull evening light. We stepped onto the grounds that were acquired in 1600 by Antoine de Paule, a knight of the Order of St. John.

A drink station loomed into sight alongside the stone paths. With a bright yellow can of cold Cisk cold in one hand and a chilled glass of local Marsovin white wine in the other we were welcomed to the night under the canopy.

The cooling drinks on a stifling evening allowed a moment to reflect. While workmen were breaking the grounds to dig into the limestone substrate and start the construction of a villa for Antoine de



Paule, William Shakespeare was in Stratford upon Avon putting the finishing touches and premiering a play to be titled; *As you like It*.

Just as Shakespeare entertained both the common people and royalty, San Anton has hosted European royalty and has been the scene of many community events.

400 hundred years after Shakespeare completed the play in England, here in San Anton palace we would be captivated by a performance by the dramatic club delivering Shakespeare's words under a blanket of stars twinkling on a Maltese summer night.

The darkness of night took hold, amongst a hundred others we were seated around the stage, the actors performed; Uttering those famous words.. *All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players.*

Sitting in the gardens of the President's official residence, with our fellow travellers we played our part and we were transported back hundreds of years to Shakespeare's world. Simultaneously we witnessed the richness of Maltese society woven into the islands' history - influenced over different eras by visitors from across the Mediterranean infusing the island with different architectures, influencing the landscape, evolving the language and the local Maltese artists bringing Shakespeare's play to life 400 years after he penned those words.





## The Buskett Forest and the Maltese Falcon

**Antoine P Borg**

When the Knights were given the Maltese islands they were asked to pay tribute of a Maltese Falcon

every year to the monarch of Sicily. It's a strange request, and there are colourful stories around this tribute.

Technically, the Emperor Charles V granted "Tripoli, Malta and Gozo" to the Knights. We like to think it was just the islands but there was a fair amount of land in northern Africa included in this deal.



And, if we're being picky, there were several conditions to this grant including a non-aggression pact with the Kingdom of Sicily. The token price of one Maltese Falcon is the only unusual request in the list. The Knights had to pay one falcon every year on the 1 November (All Saints' Day) to "the viceroy or president of Sicily." Unlike the situation today, Malta was covered in woodland at the time. People cut trees for ship building or for agricultural purposes decimating the lush scenery which our ancestors knew. The Knights realised something needed to be done<sup>1</sup>. They planted trees in an area now known as

*Have you visited Buskett in Malta?*

'Buskett', derived from the Italian word 'Boschetto' meaning 'forest'.

This is not far from the site of the **mysterious cart ruts**.

The area had been used for pagan rituals around the summer solstice. In the post-Roman period, locals held orgies in Buskett. The Roman Catholic Church incorporated these rituals into their own. The feast of St Peter and St Paul is now celebrated in the area on 29 June. The orgies are no longer part of the festivities though!

Apart from planting Aleppo pines, carob trees and Italian cypresses, the Knights embellished this zone in many ways. They imported soil from Sicily for their terraced gardens, planted groves of fruit trees and ensured fresh water stream to irrigate the place. Here they trained falcons which were then used as tribute to the King of Sicily<sup>2</sup>.

But why did the King ask for a falcon before the Knights trained falcons there?

The Maltese had practised falconry since the thirteenth century, right in this area. Falcons used to migrate from Morocco and stop here which is how the Maltese encountered these majestic animals. This was when they were ruled by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III, King of Sicily. He was an avid hunter and even wrote treatises about the sport<sup>2</sup>.

Such was the high regard for falcons trained in Buskett that a special Knight would travel with the bird by sea on its way to Sicily. On occasions when the bird died in transit, the news caused international horror<sup>2</sup>.

Over the foliage - Maltese falcons were legendary long before the Knights arrived in Malta and were used by the Knights during their stay. Today you'd be hard pressed to see birds of prey flocking to the area - and most people would think of Bogart's 1941 film before they'd mention Buskett.

**You may read me  
anywhere**



## France: Drive-in-worship and flash your hazard lights to receive the Eucharist

Photos: CNEWS

While many in Malta eagerly await the reopening of Churches, a congregation in France has found a way of attending mass and receiving the Eucharist while respecting Covid-19 measures.

Yesterday, 500 worshipers attended a mass celebrated by the Bishop of Châlons-en-Champagne, and they listened to mass from their cars.

The altar was placed on a trailer, and attendees followed the mass by turning on the radio on the station that was airing the live broadcast at the time.

Those who wanted to receive communion were asked to flash their 'hazard lights', and to disinfect their hands before receiving the Eucharist from the priest, who also disinfected his hands before.

## Gluten Free Kannoli Tal-Irkotta (Ricotta Cannoli)

Today I woke up with the urge to make these Cannoli. They are not at all difficult to make, although you

do need the metal tubes on which to roll the pastry. Just be very careful as they are very sharp.

**So for the pastry you need** (for approx 12)

150g Gluten Free Bread Flour (I used NutriFree but Dr Schar is good too)

15g of chilled butter

7g of Cocoa powder

1/2 tsp sugar

Pinch of Salt

1/2 tsp vanilla essence

70 to 80 ml of white wine

### **Ricotta Filling**

250g Ricotta

150g Icing Sugar

1/2 tsp Vanilla essence

1/4 cup Candied peel

1/4 cup Chocolate bits

Put the flour and dry ingredients in a bowl, add the butter and

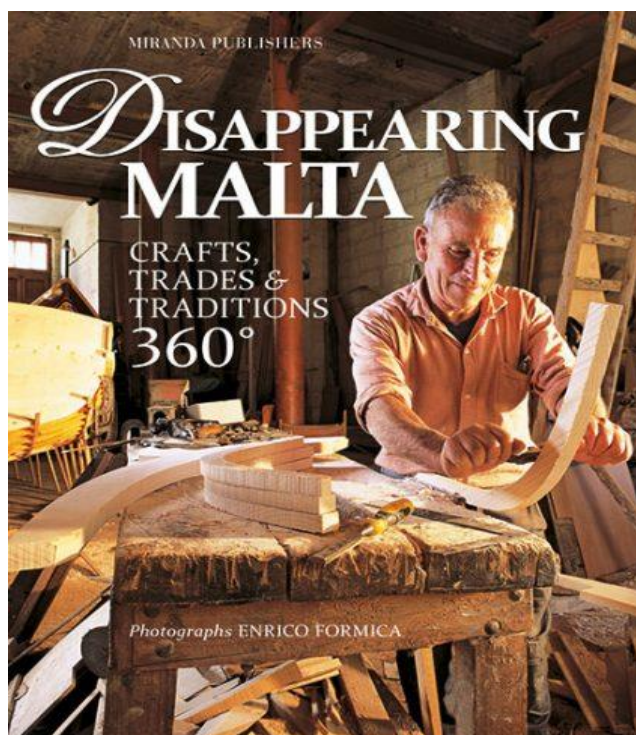
rub in. Add the white wine slowly until it comes together into a dough. Place in a bowl, cover and leave to rest for not less than an hour.

In the meantime, you can prepare the filling by mixing the ricotta with the icing sugar, add the vanilla, the candied peel and the chocolate bits. Mix until combined.

Roll the dough and cut into circles. Grease lightly the metal tubes. Place the circle of dough on a ring and lightly moisten with water, where they overlap otherwise when frying they will fall apart. Heat some oil in a small pan, or use a deep fryer. When oil is hot enough, fry the Cannoli until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. When they cool down, fill the Cannoli with the ricotta and dip the ends in kibbled almonds if desired. Dust lightly with icing sugar and enjoy!!







Hardback – 220 pages - €140.00 comes in a slipcase

**Author; Fiona Vella**

**Disappearing Malta** is a record of history in the making. The vanishing trades, crafts and skills. Portraits of men and women who bring their disappearing skills to what was once Malta's traditional way of life.

As the Islands move forward so traditional crafts and skills begin to fade away slowly, becoming a part of recent history. This book reflects a vanishing world once taken for granted with portraits and interviews of men and women who for many years added their natural expertise to the nation's way of life.

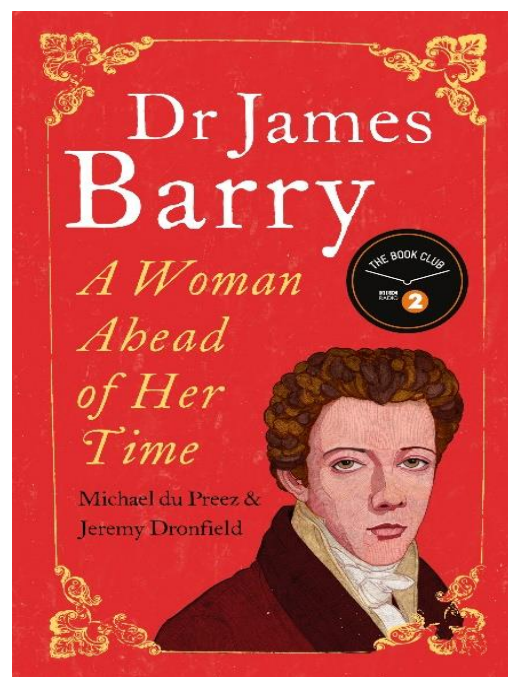
**PHOTOGRAPHY BY ENRICO FORMICA**

TEXT IN ENGLISH – PUBLISHED November 2016

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<http://www.bdlbooks.com/heritage/6197-disappearing-malta-360.html>

**Free, bilingual  
and non-political  
I LOVE IT**



Antoine P Borg

## **The mysterious secret life of the female doctor James Barry**

There weren't many female physicians in the 19th century. Irishwoman Margaret Bulkley pretended to be Dr James Barry for over 40 years to practise medicine. This article explains how this happened, Bulkley's life in Malta and how we know what happened.

**HER EARLY LIFE** Most sources agree Margaret Bulkley was born in 1789 in Cork, Ireland<sup>1</sup>. Her father was a merchant who supplied the formidable British Navy based in Cork. With the 1798 rebellion her father lost his business and ended up in debt<sup>2</sup>.

Margaret and her mother fled to London<sup>2</sup>. They lived with her mother's brother the painter James Barry<sup>2</sup>. Margaret decided to disguise herself as a boy to be able to study medicine<sup>2</sup>. She adopted her uncle's name and Edinburgh University accepted her in either 1809 or 1810. Dr John Barry. At university rumours soon started to spread; not that he was a woman, but that he must be a pre-pubescent boy. People were so sure a woman couldn't get a university education it didn't even occur to them "James" might be female. She returned to London a qualified surgeon.

Taking another bold leap, Barry joined the British Army<sup>2</sup>. Some records claim this was as a hospital assistant on 05 July 1813, before becoming the Medical Inspector for Cape Town in 1815<sup>3</sup>. Other sources claim he went to Cape Town in 1812. In due course, the British forces sent Dr Barry to Malta.

**BARRY IN MALTA** For 46 years<sup>4</sup> Dr Barry fooled everyone in the four corners of the world<sup>2</sup>. On 02 November 1846, the army posted Barry to Malta as the Principal Medical Officer for the islands. He arrived from Gibraltar on 17 November<sup>4</sup>. In December 1846, days after arriving, Barry attended a service in St Paul's Cathedral in Valletta. Governor Sir Patrick Stuart scolded Barry for sitting in stalls reserved for clergy.

Barry took a room at the Claredon hotel in Valletta before settling in the modern town of Sliema. His Sliema landlord swore he knew Barry was a woman because he would say of him "Dan ix-xitan ghandu ikun mara." (This devil should be a woman.)

Sliema was growing in the 1840s. Barry must have lived close to the Chapel of Divine Grace which the British administration funded. Given Sliema's size and what society was like, Barry must have known the Prince of Capua too. It is interesting to note that Barry and Penelope Smyth – the Prince's wife – are both Irish women living in Sliema, Malta in the 19th century.

On 06 September 1848 a cholera epidemic hit the troops in Fort St Elmo<sup>7</sup>. Barry refused to diagnose this as cholera having seen an outbreak in Mauritius in 1819. He insisted this was a case of diahorrea<sup>6</sup>. Two other surgeons backed this conclusion blaming stagnant water as the cause<sup>6</sup>. Barry performed a post-mortem on an alleged cholera victim showing it was not the case<sup>4</sup>.

**FERRIED ACROSS THE HARBOUR – VALLETTA, MALTA** In 1849, Barry introduced a bus to cart sick soldiers up to the military hospital from Customs House quay<sup>6</sup>. While there were ferries to take soldiers across the harbour from Fort Ricasoli, there was no further transportation for them. Some were too

weak to walk up the steep hill to the hospital<sup>6</sup>. No one did anything about this till Barry changed the situation.

The Duke of Wellington commended Barry's work in preventing a typhus epidemic<sup>4 5</sup>. He promoted Barry to the highest rank available to an army doctor – Inspector-General of hospitals. This is the equivalent of Brigadier-General.

On 01 April 1851, the Malta Times reported on Barry's departure from the islands for Corfu noting that "*the soldiers and the poor particularly, as well as a numerous acquaintance amongst the first circles in the island will regret their loss*". Dr Barry is well-known for advancing medicine in many ways.

### **BARRY'S MEDICAL CAREER**

Dr Barry went on to advance medicine as we know it<sup>2</sup>. His insistence on hygiene started in South Africa where Barry's temper and outbursts revolutionised healthcare<sup>3 5</sup> and predated Florence Nightingale's instructions in the Crimea.

### **DR JAMES BARRY IN THE 1840S**

He developed a plant-based cure for syphilis and gonorrhoea<sup>5</sup>, promoted the novel notion of clean water, fresh air and a healthy diet<sup>3 5</sup>, and introduced a vaccination for smallpox<sup>5</sup>.

In 1826 (or 1820<sup>3</sup>) he carried out the first successful Caesarian delivery<sup>2</sup> where both mother and child survived. Dr Barry managed to keep his secret up till the moment of his death.

**DEATH** On 25 July 1865, Dr Barry died in Marlyebone<sup>6</sup> London<sup>2</sup>. He'd left strict instructions that they should bury his body with whatever clothes he was wearing at the time of death. This is an obvious ploy to ensure no one discovers the truth about Margaret/James. Sophia Bishop was the charwoman employed to lay out the body and who discovered the truth. She tried and failed to blackmail the British Army about this<sup>2</sup>.

She went to the press with the news which was broadcast in Dublin first, before the rest of the Empire. The Malta Times later reported this on 05 October 1865.



## WW1 TROOPER WHO REWROTE HISTORY BOOKS

*Photos: Left: the great grandniece of Trooper Martin with Norman Briffa, heart surgeon. Right: Trooper Martin*



**First heart operation on soldier was performed in Malta in WWI** Historians always assumed soldiers of the Great War did not undergo heart surgery - new research shows they were wrong

It is a tale of First World War bravery and innovative surgery that has emerged nearly a century later after a chance encounter between strangers. Norman Briffa, a consultant cardiac surgeon, was asked to give a talk in September 2011 to the patrons of a Sheffield theatre company.

After he had finished his History of Surgery lecture, audience member, Sheila Hobson, questioned his assertion that wounded soldiers had not had heart surgery until the Second World War. Although she had no medical training, Mrs Hobson insisted it had long been known within her family that her great uncle, Trooper Robert Martin, had undergone and survived major heart surgery during the First World War after being wounded.

Dr Briffa told Mrs. Hobson that he “respectfully doubted” her claims but, because of her insistence and his interest, he asked her to supply details so

that he could investigate. Sure enough, after extensive inquiries, he managed to unearth documents written at the time that proved that Mrs Hobson’s claims were accurate and, in her words, medical history “will have to be rewritten”.

Meanwhile, Dr Briffa was so touched by his discoveries about Trooper Martin that he has paid his respects to the heart patient he never knew by visiting his overseas grave. Robert Hugh Martin was shot in the chest during the Salonika Campaign, in what is now Thessalonika, Greece on November 14, 1917 – his 21st birthday. He was transferred to Malta then known as the *Nurse of the Mediterranean*.

Treatment was limited at the time and underwent complex heart surgery in early 1918, after medical experts concluded that without such treatment he would die. Although the operation was successful, Trooper Martin contracted an infection that claimed his life.

He died on March 14, 1918, still aged 21. Dr. Briffa said the amazing efforts of the heroic British army surgeons in treating heart injuries were largely forgotten. “Trooper Martin died only because antibiotics had not yet been invented. Now I feel sure similar efforts took place in other theatres of the Great War and that there were long-term survivors.” Mrs. Hobson still possesses postcards sent home by Trooper Martin after arriving in Malta.

**WE ARE VERY PROUD OF  
ALL THE MALTESE  
ACHIEVERS  
IN MALTA AND ABROAD**



## IT-TORRI L-AHMAR

### THE RED TOWER

**Saint Agatha's Tower** (Maltese: *Torri ta' Sant'Agata*), known also the **Red Tower** (Maltese: *Torri l-Aħmar*) is a bastioned watchtower in Mellieħa - Malta.

Saint Agatha's Tower was built between November 1647 and April 1649 to a design by the architect Antonio Garsin.

The structure consists of a square tower with four corner towers. Cannon ports in the turrets gave interlocking fields of fire commanding the base of the walls and the gateway, with other large cannon ports in the faces of the main tower. The outer walls are approximately four metres thick at the base and the interior of the tower is enclosed by a barrel vaulted roof. The corner turrets are surmounted by very characteristic fish tail crenelations. A chapel was located within the tower.

The tower is situated in a commanding position on the crest of **Marfa Ridge** at the north west end of Malta, overlooking the natural harbour and potential enemy landing site of **Mellieħa Bay**, with clear views over to **Comino** and **Gozo**, and also eastward to the line of watchtowers along the north shore of Malta that linked it with the Knights headquarters in **Valletta**. It was the Knights' primary stronghold in the west of Malta, and was manned by a garrison of 30 men, with ammunition and supplies to withstand a siege of 40 days. The ammunition of other fortifications in the north of Malta, such as **Aħrax Tower** and **Wied Musa Battery**, was also stored in the tower.

Like many of the Knights' early defensive structures, St. Agatha's Tower was strengthened during the early 18th century. A low profile rubble wall **entrenchment** was built around the flanks of the tower in the form of a **redan** trace. Due to this, the tower also functioned as a **redoubt**, similar to **the one at Żabbar** during the **French blockade**. It continued to have a military function throughout the British period, and was manned during both World Wars. From the **British** period it continued its military function being used as a radar station by the **Armed Forces of Malta**.

**Present day** By the close of the 20th century St. Agatha's Tower was in poor repair, with one turret completely missing and another turret severely damaged. The tower was gradually restored by **Din l-Art Helwa**, starting in 1999 and completed in 2001, assisted by substantial industrial sponsorship.<sup>[1]</sup> As part of the restoration work, the damaged turrets were replaced, the walls and roof were rebuilt, eroded stone facing was replaced, interior walls were scraped and painted, the original floor was uncovered, and the interior staircase to the roof was rebuilt. Due to the extreme unevenness of the floor, this was recently covered by a wooden surface with glass apertures through which one can view the original slabs. The tower is still in the care of Din l-Art Helwa and is open to the public.

## Journal of Maltese living abroad highlights popular recipes



By **Coryse Borg**



The 321st edition of the Maltese e-newsletter the Journal of the Maltese Diaspora is full of interesting stories, anecdotes and historical events.

This edition of the 'journal of Maltese living abroad' features a number of popular recipes, including those for *galietti* and various dips such as *bigilla*. It also includes an interview about storytelling in Maltese with teachers Paul and Rose Spiteri, a report about Gozo and the history of American civil war hero Orlando Emanuel Caruana. The e-newsletter is edited by Frank L. Scicluna. <https://newsbook.com.mt/en/>

More information may be obtained via email: [maltesejournal@gmail.com](mailto:maltesejournal@gmail.com)



## FOLLOW THE GREAT COOKING OF MALTESE TRADITIONAL FOOD BY ANNA CREMONA



(picture) Traditional Honey Rings

**fil-kċina - Episode 3 Treacle Rings\ Honey Rings\ Qagħaq tal-għasel**

**Embassy of the Republic of Malta to the United States** posted a video to playlist #fil-kċina.

The Embassy of Malta in collaboration with Ms Anna Cremona will be bringing you weekly Maltese Cookery videos on the Embassy's Facebook page. In addition, we are also launching the #fil-kċina Virtual Cook-Off.

Join the #fil-kċina Virtual Cook-Off by sending us a selfie with your final cooking result for the weekly recipe. The Embassy team will then choose a lucky winner every week by having his/her selfie published on the Embassy's Facebook page.

The winner will receive a goodie bag via courier at home. All submission photos

can be sent by email on [events.washington@gov.mt](mailto:events.washington@gov.mt) by Wednesdays evening

The competition is open to all our Maltese Community in the United States and Canada



## Australia - Outback pub issues fines to patrons who talk about the coronavirus outbreak for a good cause

**Claudia Poposki**

Marree Hotel, 598 kilometres north of Adelaide, South Australia, shared a picture of a donation tin near their tap beers in hotel who banned conversations about coronavirus - forcing people to donate \$2 every time they mention the deadly outbreak - has raised \$502 to be donated to the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

With lockdown restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic being eased in many parts of the world, restaurants are slowly returning to business while adhering to strict social distancing measures. From

seating capacity being reduced to waiters wearing masks and partitions being installed to create space between guests, here are some ways in which restaurant owners are reopening their outlets.

RFDS provides healthcare to people who live in isolated communities in Australia's outback. Joe Calvert, the pub's manager, told Daily Mail Australia the hotel intended to keep the tin out as long as coronavirus remained a topic of conversation - including when borders open back up.

'The peak of people dropping money into the tin happened the first week it was put out,' Mr Calvert, the owner of the pub, said. 'It dropped when people were off the roads but it's picking back up again.' He said the business has only been able to do takeaway meals and drinks and host accommodation.

The business will reopen fully on June 5 and Mr Calvert encouraged people to visit once travel is opened up again. 'We thought we would give the local people a break from it all,' he said.

'They're taking the ban in good spirits.' Mr Calvert said with the news occasionally playing in the background at the pub people do slip up. 'People can't help themselves. Over the last three days we have raised more than \$100,' he said. Social media users were highly impressed with the pub's move at the time. 'Best bloody post I've seen on Facebook in the past few months,' one person said.

South Australia has not had a new case of coronavirus in two weeks - but have not gone as far as to declare themselves as free from the pandemic. South Australia's last remaining COVID-19 patient Paul Faraguna, 68, walked out of hospital on Thursday after contracting the virus on the Ruby Princess cruise ship.

He had been in hospital for two months, according to the [ABC](https://www.abc.net.au).



## The Maltese of Constantinople

In 1829, at the age of 18, my Great Great Grandfather Andrea Callus

was part of a wave of Maltese people choosing migration in search of a better life, who went to Constantinople in Turkey. He was born in Zebbug in Malta in 1811 into a fairly affluent family. His father Joseph was the owner of a large cotton spinning mill but in 1813, disaster struck Malta in the form of an outbreak of bubonic plague which claimed the life of his father while he was still a toddler. In the years that followed, the economy went into a sharp decline and the cotton industry all but vanished. Many people went to North Africa but a sizable number chose to go to Constantinople (Istanbul) and Smyrna (Izmir), both then part of the Ottoman Empire.

When Andrea arrived, he was not alone. A casual glance through the parish registers of the Latin RC churches throws up many Maltese surnames; Azzopardi, Buttigieg, Borg, Calleja, Cassar, Gristi, Pace, Spiteri, and many more. Other Calluses crop up, such as Antonio Callus and Francesca Ascathari who married in Constantinople in 1831. It is possible therefore that this couple migrated at the same time as my ancestor and may even have been related to him. At its peak, the Maltese community in Constantinople was thought to number around 4000..

Another sizable colony lived in the port city of Smyrna (Izmir). This is where the other half of my Maltese ancestry came from, as around the same time, the family of my Great Great Grandmother Marie Anne Griscti, also migrated to Turkey, while she was still a baby.

In this post I shall focus on the origins and development of the Maltese community in

Constantinople in the first half of the nineteenth century; who they were, how and where they lived and how they related to the other communities around them. I will write about the Smyrniot Maltese community in a future post.

### Earliest Maltese Settlers

It might seem strange that so many Maltese would choose to migrate to the territories of their historical arch enemy, the Turks. In truth there were probably always a number of Maltese seafarers in transit around the ports at Constantinople and Smyrna, but because Malta's rulers, the Knights of St John, never made peace with the Ottomans, very few settled there. Indeed they would not have been welcome as the Maltese, under the Knights, were heavily engaged in piracy all around the Aegean (Borg, A.). If any Muslims were found on ships they boarded they could expect to be sold into slavery by the Maltese corsairs (although this was a fate that was reciprocated). Unsurprisingly, the Maltese were considered unruly ruffians by the Ottoman Turks, a reputation which proved hard to shake off all along the Eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean as far as Egypt and as late as the early twentieth century. The few Maltese that did live in Turkey may well therefore, have had good reason not to want to return home.

The Scottish traveler Charles MacFarlane visited Smyrna and Constantinople in 1828 and wrote extensively of his trip. He made several remarks about the quarrelsome and disreputable behaviour of the Maltese lower orders who he also feared were not to be trusted after dark! In fact, so bad was their reputation that the local governor or *bey* of Galata arranged for several hundred Maltese and Ionians (who were considered just as bad) to be rounded up and summarily

shipped off to the Dardanelles. The bey got into trouble however, when a prominent Ionian doctor got caught up in the sweep and complained to the British Consul who then waded in to the rescue (MacFarlane, 1829)!

The make up of Maltese residents probably only started to change when Malta became part of the British Empire in 1814, because Britain, as one of the western states granted "capitulations" by the Sultan, had a completely different relationship with the Ottoman Empire

The new Maltese migrants were part of this milieu. Although there were many Maltese working as sailors and dockers in Constantinople and Smyrna in the first half of the nineteenth century, increasingly others from the merchant and educated classes started to arrive and establish themselves in the Levantine trades and professions. They included doctors, lawyers, writers and artists and small business entrepreneurs such as my Great Great Grandfather Andrea, who set up business as a ship chandler in the Galata district.

By the mid 1800s he and many others were well established and successful. For instance, some of his Maltese relatives included Emmanuel Griscti, his brother in law, who owned a forge in Galata and his wife's cousin, Antonio Griscti, who also owned a chandlers. Andrea's daughter Elise, married Joseph Calleja, whose family also originated from Malta. Joseph and his brother Antoine worked for the Imperial Ottoman Bank which was based in Galata. Meanwhile Joseph Callos (sic, possibly related), was an importer/exporter of window glass. Unusually, his business was based in Stamboul in Eminonu (near the Spice Bazaar) and he lived in Pera.



## Untouched ancient tomb discovered in Tarxien

**Tomb, possibly dating back to Punic period, contains urn with ashes**



Photo: QP Facebook  
A tomb that has been lying undisturbed, possibly for thousands of years, has been uncovered in

private land in Tarxien.

The burial site, with its stone sealing slab still in place, probably dates from the Punic period, according to experts.

It was unearthed in recent weeks by archaeologists with the architecture and consultancy firm QPM Limited, under the supervision of the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage.

The firm said the undisturbed tomb was a rare occurrence in Malta, revealing a chamber with an intact set of burial paraphernalia.

The untouched urns to the sides of the chamber still contain ashes resulting from cremation rituals, and are accompanied by an amphora and small sized pots which most probably held funerary goods. The Phoenician-Punic period of the Maltese archipelago dates from around 700 BC to 218 BC.

### Human remains in ancient Tarxien tombs



**A cluster of seven tombs was discovered during construction**

Photo: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Skeletal remains of two adults were found in a cluster of seven tombs discovered during construction work in the south-eastern limits of Tarxien.

The plots, all neighbouring each other, included land that had not been developed before.

In a statement the National Heritage Ministry said a tomb had been discovered in the area way back in 1974.

The tombs, discovered between 2018 and 2019, mainly consist of the typical shaft and chamber found across the Maltese islands and which were in use during the Punic and Roman periods about 2,500 to 1,800 years ago.

These tombs were discovered during archaeological monitoring by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage during the early stages of construction work. Considering the known archaeological sensitivity of the site, the development permit was tied to a monitoring condition. In such cases the superintendence directs archaeological investigations through freelance archaeologists who monitor the works and document any discovered features.

An excavation team from the superintendence, which includes an osteologist, carried out the investigation of two sealed tombs.

The contents of two tombs

One tomb included the remains of two adult skeletons, an amphora (large water jar) and a patera (a double handled bowl). The tomb was sealed with a large stone slab.

The second tomb included a number of funerary pottery urns containing burnt human bone. The urns were covered with either bowls or plates.

There was also a trefoil jug, an oil lamp, a number of small pottery vessels, an amphora and another patera.

This chamber was also sealed with a large stone slab and was used between the Punic and Early Roman Period, circa the fourth and second Century BC.

This necropolis shows that burial practices in the classical period varied within the same context, including both inhumations and cremations.

"Discoveries in this condition are becoming increasingly rare because archaeological remains are finite and non-renewable.

"More importantly, this discovery further proves the need to have monitoring conditions included in development permits as well as to have professional archaeology monitors on site to be present during development works," the ministry said in the statement. The superintendence will investigate the other tombs in the coming months.

Studies on the excavated items will yield information about the people buried in the tombs (sex, age, traumas and whether they suffered from particular diseases) and the funerary practices.

The superintendence has meanwhile set up a temporary exhibition at its offices in Valletta with information on the site, showcasing some of the objects from one of the excavated tombs.

## Captain Henry Curmi OBE (1890–1967)



*This article was published in the Australian Dictionary of Biographies, Volume 13,(MUP), 1993*

***In 1929 he was appointed to Australia as Malta's first commissioner for migration.***

Henry Felix Curmi (1890-1967), diplomat, was born on 2 October 1890 at Sliema, Malta, eldest of eight children of Giorgio Curmi, civil servant, and his wife Paolina, née Decelis. Educated at the Royal University of Malta, Henry served in various civil service departments, among them the lieutenant-governor's office, before taking up a commission in the King's Own Malta Regiment of Militia in 1910. After being mobilized in the Royal Malta Artillery in 1915, he served from 8 September at Gallipoli where he was mentioned in dispatches. He was also stationed on Lemnos, in Egypt and in Palestine, and was promoted lieutenant in 1917. During the war he met Bessie Evelyn Simmonds, an English nurse stationed in Malta. She converted to Catholicism and they were married on 23 April 1919 at St Polycarp's Church, Farnham, England.

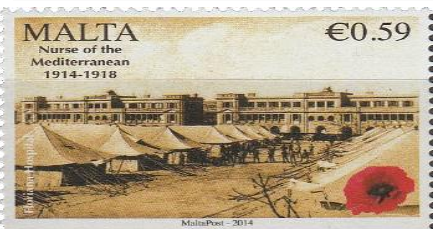
Captain Curmi's interest in Maltese emigration was stimulated by his

successive appointments as secretary (1921) to the minister for labour, posts and agriculture (who had responsibility for migration) and as secretary (1922) of Malta's emigration committee. In 1928 he was made commissioner for labour and in 1929 was appointed to Australia as Malta's first commissioner for migration. His arrival coincided with the Depression which provoked intense anti-immigrant feeling. Having undertaken gruelling trips from Perth to Cairns (Queensland) and Melbourne, in 1930 he returned in ill health to Malta. He was replaced by [H. W. Potts](#) and then by the Melbourne solicitor Frank Corder.

In June 1936 Curmi came back to Australia as commissioner for Malta. Next year he was appointed O.B.E. His office at 108 Queen Street, Melbourne, became a focal point for Maltese settlers throughout the country, as well as a base for the Malta Relief Fund, which raised money and food for the besieged Mediterranean island during World War II. A central and recurring issue for Curmi was the Federal government's refusal to

recognize the Maltese as 'white British subjects'. He worked patiently to alter Australian policy and attained formal success in 1944. In addition, he played a key role in negotiations which led to the Malta-Australia Assisted Passage Agreement in 1948. During Curmi's second period as commissioner, the Maltese in Australia increased from some 3000 to about 10,000. He retired in 1952 and was appointed C.B.E. that year.

Curmi's strong and charming personality was born of a sense of personal worth which carried over into his dignified representation of Malta. While fully Maltese, he was very aware of things British. In Malta he had been general secretary of the Boy Scouts' Association. He was an avid reader of European and Church history; in his retirement, he indulged his interest in wood, leather and ivory work, and was secretary of the Arts and Crafts Society of Victoria. Predeceased by his wife, and survived by their three daughters and two sons, he died on 5 March 1967 at Kew and was buried in Springvale cemetery. [B. York]







## About Canada's culture

languages are spoken, and almost 50 per cent of the population was born outside of Canada.

**They're progressive** - When Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his cabinet in 2015, it was a first for the country: an equal number of women and men. There were also two aboriginal members, and three from the Sikh community.

**They're outdoorsy** You'll find most Canadians seem to have at least one passion that allows them to enjoy the great outdoors, from skiing and

Here are 10 things you need to know about Canadians before you visit.

**They're not American** - Although their country boasts some truly beautiful scenery, most Canadians' favourite geographical feature is the border that separates them from the US. Canadians are different to Americans, and they don't enjoy being mistaken for their southern neighbours.

**They're extremely friendly** - Stand around looking confused in any Canadian city for a few seconds and someone will offer to help you. You'll see strangers striking up conversations on public transport. You'll find you walk into a bar and immediately have friends. Canadians are like that. By submitting your email you are agreeing to Fairfax Media's [terms and conditions](#) and [privacy policy](#).

**They love hockey** - "Hockey" in Canada means ice-hockey, and it's a national passion that eclipses any other facet of life. Yes, it's confusing that such polite, peaceful people are obsessed with one of the most brutal sports on the planet, but ice-hockey is the game of choice.

**They're multicultural** - Though you might assume most Canadians are of either British or French origin, the fact is the majority now descends from other parts of the world. In Toronto, more than 140

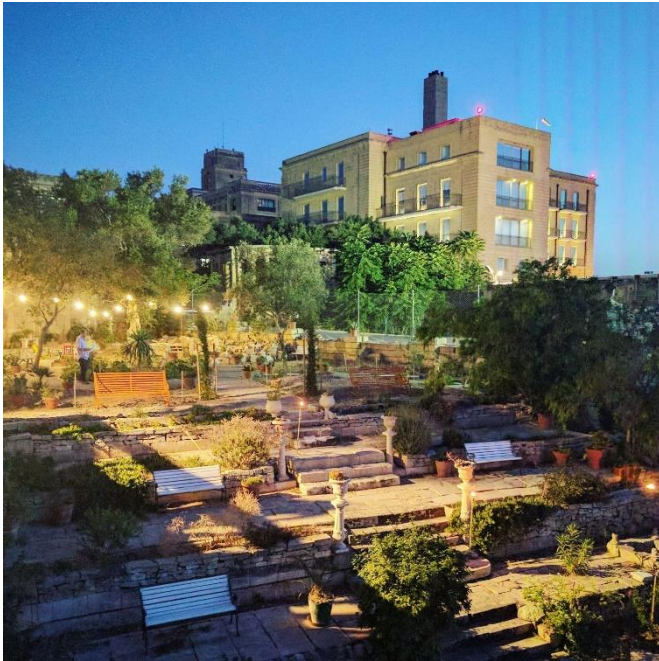
snowboarding to hiking, mountain-biking, rock-climbing, camping, canoeing and snow-shoeing.

**They're prone to frequent apologies** One of the cliches you'll hear about Canadians is that they're forever apologising – and it has some basis in truth. There's something very charming about having someone tell you they're sorry, even though it was clearly your fault.

**Their coffee is terrible** - There's an increasing focus on good, locally sourced food in Canada via the "100-Mile Diet"; however, their coffee is uniformly terrible. Canada's most popular coffee shop is Tim Horton's, a chain founded by a former ice-hockey star that dishes up a very average brew.

**Their capital city is Ottawa** In a similar way to the fact most people don't seem to have ever heard of Canberra, many are taken by surprise when they discover Canada's capital: Ottawa. It's not exactly a tourism hub, but it will be popular during Canada's 150th birthday.

**They're just like us** One of the most important things you notice about Canadians is that, essentially, they're just like Australians: similar values, similar traditions, similar history, similar ideals. It makes Canada a very easy place to visit.



## Villa Frere in Pietà gets highest level of planning protection

A historic villa with an extensive landscaped garden in Pietà has been given the highest level of protection by the Planning Authority.

Villa Frere, an 18th-century neoclassical building with botanical gardens built on terraces at its rear, is now a Schedule 1 building. It was previously classified as a Schedule 2 structure.

The decision was taken by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage.

"We strongly feel that Villa Frere merits the highest level of protection. The heritage richness of this property is not

only tied to the architecture of the villa and its terraced gardens but also important is the social and cultural experience that this property was exposed to," said Martin Saliba, who chairs the PA's executive council.

Villa Frere had fallen into ruin after being

abandoned for decades. Over the past years, a group of volunteers has worked to gradually restore the garden and building and open them up to the public.

In 2019 Heritage Malta [handed management](#) of the site over to an NGO, Friends of Villa Frere.

Edward Said, who was the NGO's founder, said the reclassification was welcome news

"It reassures us that the sterling work and dedication many volunteers put into carefully conserving the existing fabric of the property over the last seven years and making it accessible to the public is not time wasted," he said.

"The Villa and its unique grounds standing are distinct and once internationally acclaimed. The estate attained a carefully planned yet organic design, defined by the Pietà' hillside landscape rather than based on formality and symmetry which usually

characterise Maltese gardens. Together with Heritage Malta we will keep working to preserve this State-owned property for future generations."

Built during the 18th century, the villa became the residence of Sir John Hookham Frere, an English diplomat.

When Frere's wife died, he built extensive terraced gardens on the rear of the property which was previously garrigue. Some 13 wells were dug to irrigate the area. The gardens contain a number of rare architectural features: among them are an exedra built at the highest level of the gardens which is referred to as a 'tempietto', a belvedere and a blind arcade. These botanic gardens also have two rural structures, arched reservoirs, covered passages, staircases and ponds.

In the 1930s, some of the gardens were taken over for the construction of St Luke's Hospital. In the 1970s and 1980s, another part of the structure was taken to develop as a state school.

Mikiel Anton Vassalli, considered to be one of the fathers of the Maltese language, was a good friend of Sir John's and was a regular visitor to the gardens. Sir John Hookham Frere died at his residence and was buried at the Msida Bastion Cemetery which is in direct sight of Villa Frere.

**I live in Malta and I like this journal because it keeps closer to my relatives who are in Australia LBG**



## MALTESE FAMILY REUNIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

**The Friends of Malta GC Newsletter Number 108 September 2016**

By Eric Ruggier

In 1948, my father, Dr William Ruggier, who was Maltese but living and working in Suez, Egypt, felt that with the political changes it would be prudent to emigrate. He chose Durban, South Africa, and, in August, 1948, we - my father, my mother, Helene (born Ansara) and my siblings and I - boarded an Italian boat, the 'Toscana', and set sail for Durban. My brother George was 18 years old; I was 16 and had just finished writing my Matric exams; and my sisters Hilda, Marlene and May were 14, 10 and 8 years old respectively.

In South Africa, we five children married and had children of our own. Most of the family is still in South Africa. Some are still in Durban, others are in different locations in South Africa (Cape Town, Johannesburg, Plettenburg Bay and the Midlands) and some have emigrated to the UK, Australia and USA.

It was in 1987 that we first thought about having a family reunion, to bring all the families together, and at Christmas that year, approximately 30 family members gathered at a country lodge, near Mooi River in the Natal Midlands, about 100 miles from Durban. That reunion was so successful, we all decided to continue with these family reunions. We now have them every four years, meeting all over South Africa. Reunions have been held at the seaside, in the mountains and in the winelands.

The reunions have mostly been held over Christmas and usually last for five nights. In all, we have had five reunions; the most recent was at Stellenbosch, in the Cape winelands, near Africa, the UK, Australia and the USA. It was held at a hotel on a wine estate and the hotel offered many facilities.

For entertainment, events such as mountain biking and zip-lining were organised each day, both on the wine estate and off the estate at nearby tourist attractions. There were more sedate activities such as art lessons and backgammon competitions and there was also lots of free time during which family members could do their own thing. We are fortunate to have a "Deacon" in the family so were able to have Christmas service without needing to leave the venue.

It is lovely to see so many generations getting together and having so much fun. For many of us, it is only every four years that we meet up and so the build-up, as the date draws near, is full of excitement (and some stresses finalising the organisation) with everybody looking forward to the start. We will next meet on Christmas 2019. The proposed location will be somewhere in the Natal Midlands, the same area as the very first reunion back in 1987.

Our family reunions have brought us all closer and made us feel the spirit of our family - our bond has strengthened and deepened over the years, and this has largely been a result of our reunions. In spite of the passage of time and the great distances separating family members, both within South Africa and internationally, we have never lost touch with each other and the reunions have been an event not only to look forward to, and in which to get together, but also to get to know one another. Our children ("the cousins") and their children ("the 2nd cousins") would never have been able to form such tight bonds without them.

We all look forward to each reunion as a time to renew acquaintances and marvel at the development of the younger members. Without doubt, the reunions have given all of us a deeper sense of "belonging" and a greater sense of "family".

**IF YOU HAVE AN INTERESTING STORY TO TELL WHY DON'T YOU SHARE IT WITH OTHERS. WE HAVE READERS OF ALL AGES, NATIONALITIES AND CREEDS. SEND IT TO US. OTHERS DID.**

## MALTESE MIGRANTS ON THE SKAUBRYN ON THEIR WAY TO AUSTRALIA



**Some of the Maltese male survivors of the MV Skaubryn on the wharf in Aden. The ship caught fire on its way to Australia not long after coming out of the Suez Canal and into the Indian Ocean**

**1951-58 - - Number of voyages - - 4    Number of Maltese Passengers - 2576**

The Skaubryn left Malta on the last day of March 1958, having embarked 169 men, women and children at Valletta. About 3 days out of Aden, in the Indian Ocean, fire swept the decks from the direction of the engine room and soon the vessel was engulfed in flames. Passengers were assisted to lifeboats, the ship was abandoned and soon sank. Some passengers were rescued by the 'CITY OF SYDNEY', a tanker and a tug. Returned to Aden, the passengers completed their journey to Australia in "Roma" and "Orsova!". No one lost their life in direct consequence of the fire



### Steven Cremona Mackay Maltese Pride

Hi Everyone!! 😊 Hope you all are well! We are 2 Maltese Brothers and a Cousin here in Australia on a working holiday visa. We've been here since January and staying safe in Regional Australia for these past 2 months! So far even with everything that happened this year it has truly been one of the best self development experience in my life.

We've already been Fruit Picking here but Harvest ends these

next two weeks and we would like to Find something in the Mackay area to complete our Visa Requirements in order to be able to stay in Australia for another year.

I'm told that there are Maltese with Cane Farms that supposedly harvest starts in June and we would appreciate if anyone here has any contacts that we might able to reach out to.

I trust that you would be able to help out fellow Maltese and would gladly share some Cisk Lager with you guys!

Thanks! <https://www.facebook.com/Mackay-Maltese-Club-Inc-1871269173098669/>

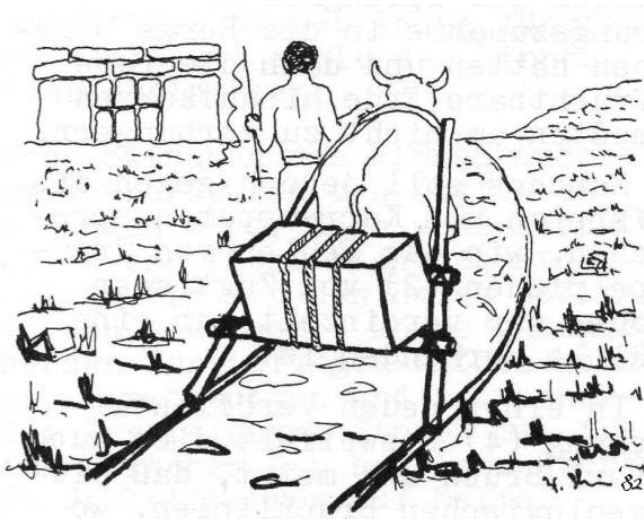
**Consulate General of the Republic of Malta to Canada** shared a video from the playlist #fil-kcina FACEBOOK.



In a number of locations across the islands of Malta and Gozo in the Mediterranean sea are complex network of parallel tracks cut into the limestone rocks that are apparently man-made. They are called "cart ruts" because of their



resemblance to tracks left by carts. The tracks are up to 60 cm deep and have an average distance of 110 to 140 cm between them. Some of the tracks cross each other while others branch out to form junctions creating an illusion of a great railway station switching yard. The age and purpose of the tracks are still a mystery, but it's generally presumed the ruts formed around 2,000 BC after new settlers came over from Sicily to start the Bronze Age in Malta.



There are different theories about how these tracks were created. Some scholars believe that the tracks were formed by carts or sledges carrying heavy cargo across the island, such as stones from quarries or megalithic blocks in order to build temples. The heavy wooden wheels or sleds would have leave furrows on the top soil. Over time, the furrows would be deeper and deeper until they

scrape the limestone floor. When the area was abandoned, standing rainwater in the furrows started decomposing the limestone creating tracks in the bedrock. Other theories maintain that the cart-ruts were used as irrigation channels for the distribution of water from springs up to the agricultural terraces, although this is unlikely as parallel tracks would serve no purpose in irrigation.

One of the most complicated networks of cart-ruts is found at "Misrah Ghar il-Kbir" near the Dingli Cliffs. The site was nicknamed as "Clapham Junction" by an Englishman named David Trump because it reminded him of the busy railway station by the same name in London. The cart-ruts seem to be present everywhere and run in all different direction, covering an area of about 8 hectares or more. Some of these tracks actually run towards ancient quarries, supporting the theory that cart ruts were formed by rock carrying sleds.

Tracks like the cart ruts at Malta and Gozo are present on other places in the world such as in Sardinia, Sicily, Italy, Spain, Greece, France and Germany. Not all are of the same origin and not all had to fulfill the same purpose. Some are built with stone brick gutters, some are weathered wagon tracks and some grooves caused by natural erosion. Some of them are simply weathered Roman roads. But the rail tracks on Malta are unique and very impressive. It is very likely that they are simple traces of transport mediums, such as grinding poles of wood.

<http://www.messagetoeagle.com/maltatraces.php#xzz36n1HTm2d>



**Waltzing Matilda** is Australia's best-known bush ballad, and has been described as the country's "unofficial national anthem".

The title was Australian slang for travelling on foot (waltzing, derived from the German *auf der Walz*) with one's belongings in a "matilda" (swag) slung over one's back. The song narrates the story of an itinerant worker, or "swagman", making a drink of billy tea at a bush camp and capturing a jumbuck (sheep) to eat. When the jumbuck's owner, a squatter (wealthy landowner), and three mounted policemen pursue the swagman, he commits suicide by drowning himself in a nearby billabong (watering hole), after which his ghost haunts the site.

The original lyrics were written in 1895 by Australian poet Banjo Paterson, and were first published as sheet music in 1903. Extensive folklore surrounds the song and the process of its creation, to the extent that it has its own museum, the Waltzing Matilda Centre in Winton, Queensland, where Paterson wrote the lyrics. In 2012, to remind Australians of the song's significance, Winton organised the inaugural Waltzing Matilda Day to be held on 6 April, the anniversary of its first performance.

The song was first recorded in 1926 as performed by John Collinson and Russell Callow.<sup>1</sup> In 2008, this

recording of "Waltzing Matilda" was added to the Sounds of Australia registry in the National Film and Sound Archive which says that there are more recordings of "Waltzing Matilda" than any other Australian song. Boil the billy, will you? Here are the lyrics of the first two stanzas

*Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong,  
Under the shade of a Coolibah tree,  
And he sang as he watched and waited till his  
billy boil,  
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me.*

*Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda,  
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me,  
And he sang as he watched and waited till his  
billy boil  
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me.*

*Down came a jumbuck to drink at that  
billabong  
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with  
glee,  
And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his  
tucker bag  
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me.*

*Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda,  
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me,  
And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his  
tucker bag  
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me.*



**NOSTALGIA - GATHERINGS AND REUNIONS**  
**Annual General Meeting of**  
**The Association of Maltese Communities of Egypt**  
**Imperial Hotel, London, Sunday, 25th June 2006**



Standing: Alan Grech, Reynold Briffa, Lawrence Bugeya, Harold Beaton, Edith Vidolich, Kathryn Vella, Gerard Briffa, Joe Borg Hampton, Herbert Magri-Overend, Doreen Borg Hampton, Frank Galea, Eric Peralta, Frank Gregory, Irene Woodward, Margaret Eustance, Marthese Cuschieri, Terry Eustance, Evelyn Cassar, Laura Centofanti, Carmen Caruana, Jenny Schlegel, and Ann Robinson.

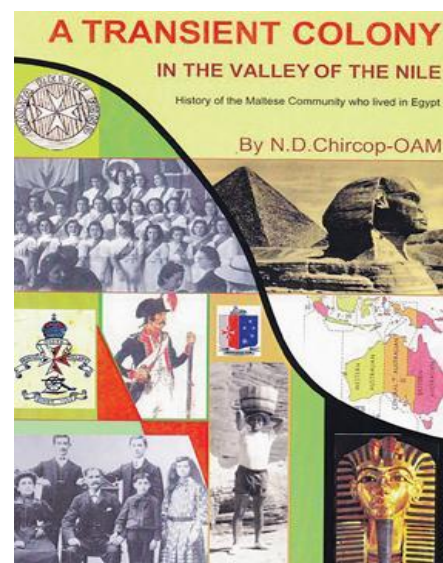
Sitting: Rosaria Grech-Cumbo, Odinea Peralta, Veronica Magri-Overend, Marlen Grech, Marie-Therese Smith, and Yseult Camalich.

Photo - Herbert Magri-Overend

**A Transient Colony in the Valley of the Nile**  
**Nicholas D Chircop OAM**

To download PDF version of the extracts from the book, click on this link: [A Transient Colony in the Valley of the Nile](#) by Nicholas D Chircop OAM

**The History of the Maltese Colony in Egypt**  
**throughout the 19th and 20th Century**





## Ivan Magri-Overend MOM (1916-06)

***On 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006  
Ivan Magri-Overend  
died peacefully at the  
age of 91.***

Born in Cairo, Egypt,  
Born in Cairo on May

13, 1916. Ivan's parents were Durante MAGRI-OVEREND and Melita Evelina FRENDO de MANNARINO. His maternal grandfather was Salvatore FRENDO de MANNARINO, author and educator, who was related, three generations down, to Don Gaetano MANNARINO of the Clerics' Revolt fame of 1775. His maternal great grandfather was Giuseppe WOLGESCHAFFEN MALFIGIANI, the first Impresario of the Royal Opera House in Malta.

Ivan was educated at the Khoronfish College, which was run by the De La Salle Brothers in Shoubra, Cairo. He was vice-President of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, at the school. He obtained his Bachelor of Philosophy degree and then studied Law at the "Ecole Francaise de Droit", Cairo, but discontinued his studies in 1936 after the Egyptian Legislature passed "The Abolition of the Capitulations Bill".

In 1938 he married Erminia, daughter of Giuseppe BONELLO and Clorinda Maria CHELES, and had two sons, Herbert and Randolph. Erminia died in November 1944, at the early age of 29 years. Randolph is married, with no children, and currently lives in Australia. Herbert is married to Veronica and has a son Mark and two daughters, Michelle and Tania.

In 1945, Ivan married Maria CUCCOVILLO, daughter of Grazia TODISCO, and they had two daughters, Daphne – who is single – and Clelia. Maria died suddenly in November 1982. Clelia is married with two daughters, Francesca and Kay.

Ivan's energies were spent in journalism and social work. He was the Secretary and Managing Editor of "RAYON" – Catholic magazine in Egypt, a member of the board of "Il-Qawmien Malti", which was founded by Anthony Said of Port Said, the Editor-in-Chief of "Il-Habbar Malta Fl-Igittu" – a monthly

review of the Maltese Community of Cairo and an Honorary General Secretary of the Community Council, as well as the Maltese Benevolent Society of Cairo.

In 1953, Ivan left Egypt and took his family to England and joined the firm of Sassoon and brothers, in London. Following the Suez crisis in 1956, he was one of the founders of the Association of Maltese Communities of Egypt.

In 1965, he conceived the idea of commemorating the Fourth Centenary of the 1565 Great Siege of Malta. The "Maltese Migrants Convention" followed a suggestion by him and was held in Malta in 1969. He was its co-Chairman with Monsignor Philip Calleja, of Dar I-Emigrant.

He has been President of the "Association of Maltese Communities of Egypt" for many years, and still is and, until an accident outside his home, he was the Editor of its Newsletter. For several years, he was also Hon Gen Treasurer of the George Cross Association and brought its finances up to a creditable balance. He assisted in the financial aspects of The Bell outside the Upper Barracca in Valletta, Malta.

He is the author of several papers concerning mainly the migration of Maltese to other Mediterranean countries, and his works have been used by others in their research. In fact, he lectured students at the University of Malta on the subject one year, and presented two papers at the Convention of Leaders of Associations of Maltese Abroad and of Maltese Origin, in Malta, in 2000.

Ivan handed his large collection of books on Malta, and other subjects, to his son, Herbert, who now edits the AMCoE's Newsletter, and who followed him as the Association's President in June 2006.

He was awarded the Order of Merit at the level of Member in December 1999, and was invested by the President of Malta in January 2000, at The Palace in Valletta, Malta.

He had five grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, two great-great-grandsons and one great-great-granddaughter.

Ivan died on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006, at Wexham Park Hospital, near Slough. The funeral was held on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> Decembe





## Joanna's amazing Maltese Bread Pudding Recipe

by meike peters

When my gorgeous friend Chris told me about his friend Joanna Bonnici and her fabulous skills in the kitchen I knew that I had to meet her! He praised her food so much that I sent her an email the same day he mentioned her!

Many generations of women in Joanna's family have been great cooks and food lovers. Her grandmother and aunts, her sister who lives in Sicily, but her mother especially, all influenced and taught her to become the fantastic cook she is today. Her cooking is honest, very intuitive with lots of respect for good ingredients. She likes to go back to the traditional cooking of the past and to adjust it to her personal style. Joanna loves to enjoy life, she loves to cook, to eat and to share her creations with her family and friends. She reminds me a lot of my mother, the two women celebrate cooking in a similar way and appreciate the time they spend in their kitchens. For them, the feast doesn't start at the table but in their culinary working space.

At one point Joanna decided to compile all the wonderful family recipes in a book to pay tribute to the

creations of these women and also to save their recipes for future generations. She has a little box stuffed with cards, recipes for soups, cakes, puddings, pastry, meat, fish and pasta dishes, which she plans to turn into a book. It's a culinary treasure box and I'm very happy that I got the chance to try a few of these creations.

Joanna told me that she would cook a traditional Maltese meat dish with me called Bragioli (*Bragoli* in Maltese), beef olives stuffed with egg, bacon, cheese, parsley and breadcrumbs, but Joanna makes her roulades with pork. They were divine, the meat was juicy and tender, the sauce was thick and rich in flavours. She prepared two versions, one made the traditional way with peas and the other one is her creation, with green bell peppers. This dish is often served as two courses, first the sauce with pasta or potatoes and then the meat as a main course.

We met Joanna in the morning, my boyfriend happily joined in when I told him about her cooking, and she treated us to the most amazing food for hours. She served our coffee together with Maltese bread pudding, a recipe by her mother, which I will share

with you on Sunday and which was the best bread pudding we ever ate (my Maltese Mama Jenny agreed on that after she tried a piece)! We had fresh bread from a bakery in Gharghur sprinkled with olive oil, a luscious salad of rucola and sweet figs stuffed with soft blue cheese (like *dolcelatte*) before we savored the delicious Bragioli. Joanna finished the menu off with little short crust tarts lined with a thin layer of sponge cake and filled with ricotta and candied fruit. She garnished the tartlets with bittersweet chocolate and hazelnuts, a perfect Mediterranean dessert similar to kannoli. When she offered us her homemade ice cream made of condensed milk (a Maltese speciality) with a big smile on her face, we couldn't refuse. This woman just loves to share her kitchen creations!

I fell in love with Joanna's food, so much that I decided to ask her if she would like to share some of her recipes once in a while on *eat in my kitchen*. We will start with her Maltese bread pudding. There's so much I can learn from her about Maltese cooking and I look forward to the delicious recipes to come!

### Maltese Bread Pudding

stale rolls or Panini, torn into bite sized chunks, 6 (about 500g / 17 1/2oz)

fresh milk 11 / 4 1/4 cups

mixed fruit 250g / 9 ounces

orange, juice and zest, 1

desiccated coconut 3 tablespoons

dates, chopped, 100g / 3.5 ounces

apricot jam or marmalade (or whatever there is in the pantry) 2 tablespoons

sugar 3 tablespoons

cocoa powder 2 tablespoons

a pinch of nutmeg

a pinch of vanilla

a pinch of cinnamon

tangerine zest 1 teaspoon

amaretto di Saronno (or whiskey) 2 tablespoons

Mix the milk, orange juice, vanilla, amaretto and marmalade. Combine the remaining ingredients in a large bowl and add the milk-orange mixture. Mix with your fingers and let it soak for an hour.

Set the oven to 180°C / 355°F and line a 23 x 28 x 4cm / 9 x 11 x 1 1/2" baking dish with parchment paper.

Fill the pudding mixture into the lined baking dish and bake in the oven until the top of the pudding is firm and springy. Insert a skewer to check if the pudding is done.

May be served with warm custard or on its own with a cup of tea.





## REMEMBER AND HONOR

Posted by the Maltese Centre  
27-20 Hoyt Avenue South, Astoria,  
USA

"I believe our flag is more than just cloth and ink. It is a universally recognized symbol that stands for liberty and freedom. It is the history of our nation, and it's marked by blood of those who died defending it." --John Thune

On Memorial Day, we thank the men and

women who gave their lives serving our Military for the freedoms we are so blessed to have. Freedom isn't free.

Have a peaceful weekend. Stay well. *The Maltese Center*

***The Maltese Center is following the NYS guidelines. These guidelines are set forth by NYC and NYS and will be reviewed again on May 15th.***

***The Maltese Center will be CLOSED until further notice . We will continue to keep you updated as needed. Please stay safe and healthy***



## VOTE FOR MALTA

**EUROPA 2020**

**'ANCIENT POSTAL ROUTES'**



[www.posteuropa.org/europa2020](http://www.posteuropa.org/europa2020)

This year's theme is "Ancient Postal Routes". The Maltese stamp features a map of the Mediterranean Sea with Malta, Sicily and Italy at its core. Being an island, key naval routes are highlighted such as the Malta/ Pozzallo, Malta/Messina and Malta/Naples routes. A vessel known as I-Ixprunara or 'speronara' features on the left-hand side.



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