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Maltese e-Newsletter

Journal of Maltese Living Abroad

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Editor: Frank L Scicluna



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OSTRO

*The pleasure that comes from slowing down
and cooking with simple ingredients.*

'I love Ostro –
real food and
life-enhancing' –
Nigella Lawson



Julia Busuttil Nishimura

DESTINATION MALTA

THE SURRENDER OF THE ITALIAN FLEET
SEPTEMBER 1943



Joseph Caruana



21 September

from all the
Maltese Living Abroad

Happy
Independence Day,
Malta!



bajtar tax-xewk
prickley pears



People all over
the US
are going crazy
for pastizzi
thanks to

JOSEPH GAUCI

The Amazing SS Ohio That Saved Malta. The Captain Was Awarded The George Cross



Jan 27, 2019 [Joseph O'Brien, Guest Author](#)

The Mediterranean theater during World War II witnessed many dramatic operations—none more so than Operation Pedestal in August 1942. It came about because the island fortress of Malta, Great Britain's last remaining base in the Mediterranean after the fall of Crete and Greece, was under siege.

Malta sits in the Mediterranean Sea almost midway between Italy and North Africa. Its location was perfect for intercepting supply convoys to Field

Marshal Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps and Italian forces in North Africa.

This was not the island's first time being besieged with overwhelming force. Most famously, during the Crusades a religious order known as the Knights of Malta successfully fought off an invasion by Muslim troops. This tiny band of fewer than 500 men successfully held off an invasion force 20 times their size.

Reenactment of the Knights Hospitalers during the Great Siege of Malta.

Now in the 20th century Malta's small garrison of troops, planes, and guns would be forced to hold off the combined might of the German Luftwaffe and Italian Air Force. British Naval forces that were initially based at Malta were forced back to the relative safety of the port of Alexandria in Egypt by German air raids. Alexandria was out of range of almost all German aircraft. Malta was not so lucky.

Malta's air defenses consisted initially of only four antiquated Gloster Gladiator biplanes which were easily outclassed by everything in the German and Italian arsenal. These were later reinforced by newer aircraft such as Hurricanes and Spitfire fighter aircraft as well as light and medium bombers.

Faith, a Gloster Sea Gladiator Mk I, on the ground at an airfield in Malta, in about September 1940. The aircraft has been refitted with a Bristol Mercury XV engine and three-blade Hamilton Standard variable-pitch propeller salvaged from a Bristol Blenheim.

During the siege, Great Britain would try to fly in or ship in all the aircraft and men it could to reinforce Malta's defenses and help them keep fighting back. The population and defenders of Malta dug in to weather the storm.

https://youtu.be/gHW7xhCx_t0

Planes sortied daily from the island to harass German supply convoys as well as defend against incoming air raids. Malta essentially functioned like an unsinkable aircraft carrier. Daily, German and Italian air raids attempted to knock out Malta's air power.

Spitfire Vc (trop) in North Africa. The Spitfire arrived in Malta in March 1942, becoming the main RAF fighter

In fact, Germany and Italy were getting close to succeeding. Supplies on Malta, especially aviation fuel, were running low. The Allies, as the United States was now involved in the war, quickly hatched a plan to reinforce Malta's garrison. Codenamed Operation Pedestal, it was a convoy composed of supply ships, aircraft carriers to deliver more planes, and most importantly, tankers carrying precious aviation and diesel fuels.

OPERATION PEDESTAL, 13 August 1942. Air Attacks, The merchant ship WAIMARAMA explodes after being bombed

Among these ships was the one that would later be considered to be the savior of Malta: the SS *Ohio*. An unlikely savior, this large oil tanker was almost defenseless. Built in the U.S. for the Texas Oil Company (now Texaco) and launched in 1940, she was unceremoniously requisitioned and loaned to Great Britain earlier in 1942 to support the war effort. Manned by a brave British crew, she joined the relief efforts of Operation Pedestal.

The damaged tanker OHIO finally enters Valletta on the morning of the 15th supported by Royal Navy destroyers, after an epic voyage across the Mediterranean as part of convoy WS21S.

The operation's convoy was escorted and very heavily defended with heavy and light cruisers, destroyers, and multiple aircraft carriers. It was hoped with such a large escort, most of the precious supplies would get through to keep Malta alive.

The mighty escort force fought bravely to bring as much of the convoy through as they could. *Ohio* was particularly important as she carried vital kerosene and diesel fuels.

Ohio discharges her cargo in the Grand Harbour.

Even though the escorts fought hard, they could not protect the convoy from being attacked. Numerous supply ships were hit and sunk as were several of the heavily armed escorts. As for the *Ohio*, she was quickly torpedoed and heavily damaged.

Ohio nursed by a flotilla of destroyers and minesweepers.

This was not the end for her though. She was further damaged by multiple bomb hits and even two German planes which crashed onto her. Her brave crew refused to abandon ship and refused to abandon Malta. Putting out the fires and getting the situation back under control, they continued sailing the half-crippled ship.

Another bomb then knocked out her engines, forcing the *Ohio* to be taken under tow. With the aid of other ships she slowly but successfully made her way into the harbor at Valletta, where she proceeded to start to sink at the dock.

The damaged tanker SS Ohio, supported by Royal Navy destroyers HMS Penn (left) and Ledbury (right).

The British however were ready for this and more than willing to send salvage crews down to pump out her lifeblood of oil. Working nonstop and sometimes while under aerial attack, they were able to create connections to the swiftly sinking tanker. The salvage workers managed to transfer the precious fuel out of *Ohio*'s tanks and into an undamaged fleet auxiliary tanker.

Rear-Admiral H M Burrough, CB, who commanded the close escort, shaking hands with Captain Dudley Mason of SS Ohio

As the last drops were pulled out of the *Ohio* her keel settled on the bottom where she lay with her back broken, splitting in two. Later salvaged off the bottom, the two pieces of her hull were used first as storage and later as barracks facilities. They were then towed out to sea and scuttled after the war, leaving only some small pieces in Maltese museums to remember her by. Captain of the Ohio, Dudley Mason, awarded the George Cross for bringing the tanker into Malta.

The *Ohio* may have had a short career, but she and her cargo are credited with enabling Malta to survive the siege, which some people credit as a turning point in the war effort in the Mediterranean.

We are proud of our Maltese Achievers



74 years old but completes Camino de Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage in aid of Hospice Malta

Posted On September 12, 2020 - Updated 12

September, 2020 8:24pm
Report: Fiorella Pace

Aged 74, Anne Thompson, a British woman who has resided in Malta since her childhood, decided to follow the pilgrimage at Camino de Santiago de Compostela that terminates at the St Jacob Cathedral in Galicia in Spain. Thompson followed the pilgrimage in aid of Hospice Malta which is currently campaigning to raise funds to support its daily aid to the community. Anne Thompson's pilgrimage began towards the late of July and ended in mid-August. Although aged 74, she walked a total of 280 kilometres in aid of Hospice Malta.

To TVM she explained that a few after she conceived the idea she left Malta to undergo this experience alone without having prebooked any hostels.

"I thought if I could do that coastal walk it should be beautiful and I went by myself because I thought by the time I found people who would be prepared to come with me, who would be prepared to backpack, stay in hostels etc etc it would take forever so I decided I'd go because time doesn't wait for anyone and I'm getting older by the day."



We asked Anne Thompson how she described her experience and why she had decided to do this in support of Hospice Malta.

"Absolutely wonderful. The people were friendly. The scenery was magnificent all the way. The first day I walked along the beach on boardwalks, not actually walking on the sand, and the waves were crushing in..... The Camino is so well signposted that it's almost impossible to get lost because they have the yellow arrow and if you're going to Santiago you follow the yellow arrow, if you're walking it in reverse you follow the blue arrow.... The Hospice is known throughout the world and I decided that if I walked for the Hospice my friends here could support me but also my family in England could give their donations to their local hospices."

Hospice Malta CEO, Kenneth Delia, explained that currently Hospice is conducting a campaign under the name of 'Sunflower Campaign'. Annually, the Hospice provides financial aid to about 1,300 families and to maintain these services millions of euro are required annually.

Thank
you



*We would like to thank all the readers
who sent a donation to help us
producing this Maltese Journal*

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Please, donate

Heritage Malta buys Napoleon letter ordering the plan for Malta's invasion



In 1798, **General Napoleon Bonaparte** wrote a letter to his men to set sail for Malta - that letter would be the start of the French invasion of Malta!. 222 years later, his letter is **now back in Malta**, and this time, it's **available for everyone to see**. Visit the National Museum of Archaeology during Public Service Week to see this unique exhibit, of charge!

Heritage Malta has just acquired the letter by which Napoleon Bonaparte ordered General Desaix to gather the troops and set sail towards Malta, which, up until 1798, had belonged to the Order of the Knights of St John.

"This letter has great significance for Maltese history," explained Liam Gauci, the Maritime Museum's principal curator. "In it, one can also observe Bonaparte's strategic military mind at his peak, just prior to his Egyptian campaign."

The National Agency for Cultural Heritage acquired this artefact for the sum of €60,000 during an auction by renowned auction house Sotheby's. The letter was acquired

through national funds, and it is now making its way to Malta.

"This document forms a crucial part of the Maltese tale, which is why we deemed its acquisition to be paramount," stated Minister for National Heritage, the Arts, and Local Government José Herrera.

"Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign brought

together the largest expeditionary fleet ever assembled in the Mediterranean," explained Mario Cutajar, Heritage Malta's Executive Director. "This letter will therefore be displayed within the context of the Maritime Museum, once restoration works are completed."

"The purchase of this document is a statement of intent by the national agency of a continued commitment of purchasing unique artefacts for the nation emphasised Noel Zammit, Heritage Malta's CEO. "Napoleon's 1798 letter represents a milestone in our nation's modern history, and it is the perfect companion to the extraordinary memoirs of Ċensu Borg Brared, purchased last year."

**IF YOU ARE MALTESE
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THIS IS YOUR JOURNAL**



Consulate General of the Republic of Malta to Canada

MALTESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

Are you Canadian of Maltese ancestry?

Have you ever checked if you do qualify for Maltese citizenship? If you do, once you obtain your Maltese citizenship, you can obtain a Maltese passport which gives you access to all of the 27 European Union countries and much much more.

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**It's not just us!
People all over
the US are going
crazy for pastizzi
thanks to this
guy**

Joseph Gauci, Owner of Malta Joe's in Tucson, Arizona

We meet the man behind the Arizona business, Malta Joe's.

While *pastizzerias* are on almost every corner of Malta and Gozo, they are a rarer sight abroad. And it's that unique selling point which has allowed one man to crack the notoriously competitive American food market.

Joseph Gauci owns a *pastizzi* shop in Tucson, Arizona, with the straight-to-the-point name of **Malta Joe's**. As well as serving locals from his shop, Joseph says he's the only company in America which

ships the traditional Maltese snack all over the States.

But how did it start? "I was born in Westchester, New York. My mother was from Tarxien and my father was from Paola. They moved to the States in 1950. I spent my life in New York and had a wonderful career as a recording engineer in Manhattan for more than 30 years."

"During this time, I started making *pastizzi* over the holidays for my neighbours. They all said that I should do something more with this

idea. So, I did. But I had no background in food or business. I had learned to make *pastizzi* from my mother as we ate it all the time growing up, but to make it for the masses I had to step up my game. So, I travelled to Malta and met with Chef Mario of Primavera Caterers in Tarxien. He allowed me to train with some of the top *pastizzi* makers on the island. They were happy to show me the ropes of mass



production, as long as I showed them my plane ticket back to the States, since they didn't want any more competition in Malta!"

Joseph's parents leaving Malta in the 1950's

"I chose to base myself in Tucson as it's a beautiful city and is a very foodie type of place, where people will try all kinds of dishes. I set up my business in 2016 and it was an instant smash. All it took was giving people a sample of some *pastizzi* and they were hooked."

"I started out with a simple menu at first - including the traditional ricotta cheese and split pea and curry variety - but over the next three-years I branched out to include the *tal-pizelli* version - which includes a blend of beef, onions, garlic and green peas - as well as creating something especially for the people of Tucson called The South West.

Branching out

As well as catering for locals, Joseph also expanded his network of customers by adapting his recipes to include vegans.

"I have many vegan friends who don't have a lot of options when it comes to snacks, so I decided to try and bake them an alternative split pea and curry *pastizzi*. Vegans don't eat margarine, so I found a vegan friendly vegetable spread. It took me a long time to get the recipe right, but when I nailed it, they just took off! I also make Apple Strudel Pastizzi and Nutella Pastizzi for special occasions and holidays." *Vegan pastizzi adapted to suit the American market*

Staying on top

So how does Joseph plan to push his business forward?

"Right now, our customers are mostly Maltese. We sell all over the United States and I am the only business shipping *pastizzi* with a website!. Joe has also his first food truck on the road which we've called The *Pastizzi Express*. I think it is a great way for people to build a relationship with *pastizzi*." *We knew it was just a matter of time before the rest of the world realised how addictive they are!*



BONNIE LEE GALEA - ADELAIDE MUSIC & ART – FRI 11 OCT, 2019

JAZZ IN CHEEK ART & MUSIC

MUSIC & ART at TWO SISTERS FOOD & WINE

JAZZ in CHEEK Trio ~ ART & MUSIC / Cheeky Jazz, Smokey Blues & Swinging Rhythms.

TWO SISTERS WINE & FOOD – 'FRIDAY ON MY MIND'

Friday 11 OCT, 2019/ 6pm -10pm

Goodwood Rd, Goodwood {next door to the Capri Cinema}

ART – 6pm Art Exhibition Launch [nibbles & drink specials]

'Silly Goose Designs' by Kerry Reid & 'Bonnie Lee Galea ART'.

These girls from Blonde Bombshells of Jazz show are exhibiting their Artistic side with a selection of pieces.

Bonnie & Kerry would love you to join them for their

exhibition launch & live music to follow. **MUSIC – 7pm to 10pm**

Live Music [open for dinner, wine, coffee]

With Richard Coates on Keys, Bonnie Lee Galea on voice & Quinton Dunne on double bass & special guests. Fun tunes for all.

Goodwood Institute opposite the Capri cinema on Goodwood Rd.

Ph: 0412 572 402 Office Hours or Em: chris@goodwoodinstitute.com.au

THE TRAGEDY OF HMS GLORIOUS

FRANCIS POLIDANO written by Saviour Azzopardi

When I first wrote to Frank Scicluna about my wish to write stories to do with the sinking of HMS.Glorious, as well as other R.N ships which had suffered Maltese casualties, it was with the intention of sharing information that may have over the years been forgotten. Another well known contributor to this Journal, Greg Caruana, put me in touch with Frank and I am pleased to say Frank gladly accepted my contribution to this journal.

The sinking of HMS.Glorious sent shock waves throughout Malta when news of its sinking became known on the 10th June 1940 two days and three nights after the tragic sinking. HMS.Glorious had been part of the Mediterranean Fleet for nearly ten years and many had fond memories of its ships crew.

I became involved in the Glarac Association through my wife Iris. Her uncle Francis Polidano was one of the many men to loss their lives on board HMS.Glorious.



Francis Polidano

Francis was the youngest son of Emanuel and Carmela Polidano of Floriana. Francis was a fun loving young man always ready for a good joke or prank. Unfortunately tragedy struck their family when in 1939 his father Emmanuelle died and the family lost a dear one as well as a breadwinner. In those days, with a war looming on the horizon jobs were very scarce.

One day Francis was talking to his mother when he gently broke the news to her that he had joined the navy. His mother was very angry and upset with this news and asked him why he had done so. His answer was that he wanted to contribute to the family and seeing jobs were scarce he joined the navy which was recruiting

heavily at that time.

His older brother Carmel, or Charlie as he was often called, was also in the navy and he too asked his brother as to why he had joined the navy. His reply was "why not, you're in the navy as well". His brother quickly pointed out to him that he had enlisted in the navy during peace time not during a war.

On his enlisting, Francis was posted to HMS St.. Angelo as an Assistant Steward. Unfortunately for Francis his career in the navy was to be a short one. He was posted aboard the aircraft carrier HMS Glorious. HMS Glorious left Malta after some routine work at Malta Drydocks and set out for Alexandria. Upon her arrival in Alexandria the captain of HMS Glorious received order to head straight to England so it could join the Home Fleet. HMS Glorious played an important part in the Norwegian campaign. On the 8th June 1940 Francis along with 1531 other shipmates from HMS Glorious, Acasta and Ardent were lost during a battle with two German battle cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*.

Here in Malta the tragedy of this battle did not end on the 8th June 1940.It was to drag on for more months to come. The anguish of his mother and the rest of his family were to continue as they were told that he could have survived and might be held in a prison of war



Carmel Polidano

camp. Besides the shock of your loved one being in a fierce battle now comes the idea of the suffering in a prison of war camp. Carmela was asked to provide clothes and blankets and food by the Red Cross. This was to go on for a number of months as they said that they thought that they had found him. Carmela would often ask her other navy son, Carmel, about whether it was possible that his brother surviving the harsh battle. His reply was one that was probably known around the navy sailors but not yet broadcasted or told in newspapers, and with a heavy heart he told her that if he was lost overboard he



Frank & his younger sister
Mary



Lizzie Polidano; Carmela (mother) & Carmel

would not have survived, so cold was the water in that region. Almost a year had gone by before the MOD sent Carmela a letter informing her that unfortunately they had to presume that Francis was dead as all attempts to find him had failed.

Why did the MOD wait so long to declare all those men dead? Why did it leave so many families waiting and hoping in vain? They knew that only 40 men had been picked up and survived. They knew that no English or

German ships had picked up survivors. The only survivors were picked up by Norwegian ships and this by chance not because they went out searching for them. So why prolong the outcome? It only brought more heartache to the families.

Carmela was asked to go to the UK to be presented with Francis war medals, but she refused as by this time more tragedy had struck her family when she lost her youngest daughter, Mary, during one of the air raids on Floriana. She died of shrapnel wounds aged just 17.

The fact that so much secrecy was tied to this battle (a Hundred Year Secrecy Act was imposed on all files to do with this battle) made it more difficult for correct information to be passed on to relatives of the men on HMS Glorious. Many used to think that this event happened during the evacuation of Dunkirk, which had taken place during May and June. My mother in law Lizzie used to talk about these events as if they had just happened. You could see tears in her eyes as she recounted these stories, and anger in her voice at a tragedy that still has unanswered questions to this day, even after so many years.

The Glarac Association Malta is a non-profit organisation whose sole aim is to keep the memory of these men alive. Donations to our association are gratefully appreciated.

Anyone wishing to make contact with me for more information regarding HMS.Glorious is to contact me on salvuazz@hotmail.com – SVAIOUR AZZOPARDI

Il-festi ġew u marru! Joe M Attard – Victoria Gozo



Filli mela ġejjin u issa u f'hin wiehed spiċċaw! L-istaġun tal-festi wasal fi tmiemu. Kif jaf kulhadd dis-sena l-festi ħabtu ħafna ħażin għax l-imxija tal-Covid 19 ħarbtet lil kulhadd u għadha magħna u l-ġejjieni hu ħafna inċert. Irridu naraw

x'sa jiġri hekk kif l-iskejjel jerġgħu jifih beraħ il-bibien tagħhom. Bla dubju l-iktar li batiet l-ekonomija li hija s-sinsla tan-nazzjon. Il-festi tagħna ħadu daqqa ta' ħarta u fuq barra tista' tgħid kważi ma sar xejn b'eċċezjonijiet żgħar. Tar mar-riħ tant logħob tan-nar, tlielaq tal-bhejjem, marċijiet, tiżjin fit-toroq, il-Wirja Agrarja fil-Ġonna Pubbliċi ta' Villa Rundle u tant u tant attivitajiet kulturali marbutin mal-festi tagħna. Talingas fil-knejjes tagħna, b'ħafna restrizzjonijiet stajna nduqu xi ftit mill-benna tal-festi tagħna.

F'nofs dil-ġimgħa morna sax-Xagħra biex ingawdu l-festa tal-Bambina. Minn dar-raħal Għawdex għadu kemm kiseb id-disa' Isqof tiegħu Monsinjur Dun Anton Teuma li nemmen kulhadd ħa gost bih għax fih naraw bniedem intelliġenti, umli u ħabrieke li tant għandu għal qalbu l-ġid tal-familja, li hija l-perm tas-soċjeta. Nawgurawlu u nifirhulu. Ix-Xagħra hija tassew art għammiela u dejjem żejnet lid-Djoċesi Għawdxija b'għadd ta' vokazzjonijiet. Insellem minn hawn lil ex Arċipriet Mons Ewkarist Sultana li tant ħadem b'risq dawn il-vokazzjonijiet saċerdotali li minn fosthom ħarġu wkoll xi Isqfijiet. Ix-Xagħrin tilagħbilhomx għall-festa u jafu jiddevertu u jorganizzaw. Għandhom tempju l-ġmiel tiegħu u Arċipriet ħabrieke u ntelliġenti. Nawgurawlu u nifirhulu! Il-festa tat-Twelid tal-Madonna hi marbuta wkoll mar-rebħa tal-Maltin u l-Kavallieri fuq il-qawwa tal-Mislem fl-Assedju tal-1565 kif ukoll r-rebħa fuq l-Allejati fl-Erbgħinijiet. Festa f'nofs il-ġimgħa taf terġa'

tharrek il-kurrent u ġġib xi ftit turizmu ntern li lilna jagħmlilna ħafna ġid. Lejliet it-8 ta' Settembru l-Kunsill tal-Kultura fi ħdan il-Ministeru għal Għawdex ġie li organizza xi Serata ta' tifikira f'Misraħ Indipendenza, Victoria bis-sehem tal-Banda tal-Pulizija flimkien ma *Re enactment* tal-Istorja tagħna. Importanti l-preżenza tagħna li tisser apprezzament ta' dak kollu li għamlu għalina l-antenati tagħna biex illum aħna nistgħu ngħixu fil-kumdità u fil-liberta. L-Ottosettebre hu għalina festa partikulari fil-kalendarju tal-festi nazzjonali tagħna. Ma ġie b'kombinazzjoni. Huwa jum li kiber magħna. Ġrajja mill-isbaħ: U bħal kull ġrajja oħra fl-istorja maż-żmien ħadet postha fi pjan ikbar ta' evoluzzjoni soċjo-politika.

Intant wara x-Xagħra titfaċċa l-aħħar festa, din id-darba mhux xi festa kbira parrokkjali b'għadd ta' baned u ħruq tan-nar, imma festa ħelwa u modesta li jagħmlu l-patrijiet Kapuċċini lill-Madonna tal-Grazzja hekk kif taqbad it-triq lejn il-bajja ta' Marsalforn. Hawnhekk insibu kunvent qadim ħafna fejn għix u miet Fra Baskal, magħruf għal qdusija tiegħu. Il-Patrijiet għandhom knisja ħelwa li tfur bin-nies u d-devoti ta' San Piju tal-Pjagi ta' kull meta jiltaqqgħu hawn dawn il-gruppi ta' talb. L-esperjenza tkun waħda sabiħa. Trid tkun preżenti biex iġġarrabha. Kif toħroġ mill-knisja tilmaħ ix-xbieha ta' dal-patri twajieb, dejjem imżejna bil-fjuri u x-xemgħa. Festa li niesna tagħmel għaliha wkoll għax ħafna drabi s-sabiħ issibu fis-semplicità tal-ħaġa. Wara kollox il-festa tal-Madonna tal-Grazzja fiha l-ingredjenti kollha li nsibu fil-festi l-kbar u llum nistgħu ngħidu li dix-xaqliba tar-Rabat kibret sew.

Insomma kif jgħid il-Malti, 'kull mibdi mitmum'. Wara l-festa tal-Grazzja ma nkunux bogħod mill-istaġun tal-Ħarifa u xi taqliba tal-arja ma tonqosx. L-aħħar kwart tas-sena fih is-sabiħ tiegħu wkoll. Żgur li tispikka l-ġabra fil-familja u l-ftuħ mill-ġdid tal-bibien tal-iskejjel, dis-sena mhux neqsin minn għadd ta' problemi. Għal-lum ħa nieqfu hawn. Nerġgħu niltaqqgħu!



Julia Busuttill Nishimura on the comforting power of Maltese ravjul

These crescent-shaped pastries used to fill her family freezer. Now the author pays tribute to those memories

by making ravjul at home.

By Audrey Bourget

"I grew up mostly eating Maltese food. It was very ingrained in our family gatherings, especially for special occasions. My dad is from a very big family so we'd go to my cousins' house and my aunty would be cooking in the kitchen. We'd go to the Maltese club and eat there every week," recalls [Julia Busuttill Nishimura](#).

"I didn't know anything else until I went to primary school and started seeing other kids eating. I realised there was that whole other type of food," she adds, laughing.

The cook and author of lauded cookbook [Ostro](#) spent her childhood south of Adelaide, never too far from a kitchen. "One of my earliest memory of making food, or my parents making food, is going to the sea to collect seawater and come back and make [ricotta](#)," she says.



"We ate lots of broad beans. I remember podding kilos and kilos of broad beans at my grandparents' on the back

step. We'd dry them and make this thing called [bigilla](#), a dried broad bean and garlic dip with lots of parsley."

But the ultimate comfort food for her family, [raviul](#), was not made at home, but bought from the Maltese club. These thick Maltese-style ravioli are filled with ricotta and parsley.

"We'd have dozens and dozens in the freezer and it would be our comfort food, our go-to weeknight meal. Our parents would ask how many we wanted and we'd give them a number and they'd boil how many we wanted. We'd have them with this really simple tomato sauce," she says.



Because ravjul

are hard to find in Melbourne, Busuttill Nishimura has learned to make them herself, using her aunt's recipe: "I love making them now because it reminds me of home. They're kind of half-moon-shaped, really rustic and chewy, not really delicate, which I quite like."

She usually makes a big batch on the weekend, with the help of her son Haruki. "Even if he doesn't always help me, I always give him a bit of dough and he plays with it. I think it's important to be around people making food. Hopefully, he'll grow up loving to cook," she says.

"We'd have dozens and dozens in the freezer and it would be our comfort food, our go-to weeknight meal. Our parents would ask how many we wanted."

Some of the ravjul are eaten right away, and the rest are frozen or sent to her mum.

Over the years, Busuttill Nishimura has gained a loyal following for this exact type of recipe; simple and focused on a few quality ingredients. "My approach is quite flexible and open. People can take my recipes and change them. It's really simple, kind of rustic home cooking, it's not fussy," she explains.

It usually resonates with people, and even more right now. In the last few weeks social media has been flooded with photos of people cooking cakes, pies, and pasta from [Ostro](#), which she says she finds very humbling: "The current situation has re-emphasised how important food and cooking is in my life. A lot of people are rediscovering how much joy you can get from cooking a meal. It can bring so much joy, lift you and comfort you."

Julia's debut cookbook 'Ostro' was released in September 2017. As an Australian of Maltese descent and an Italian speaker, who is married to a Japanese man, Julia and her food represent everything that is good about modern Australian eating. She deftly brings together a broad range of cuisines and culinary influences using the very best produce on offer.

<http://www.julia-ostro.com/cookbook>

The man who brings music and joy to the streets!

Mari Van Rooij with his Maltese mobile street organ:

THE TERRAMAXKA.

The terramaxka is an old instrument that formed an integral part of Maltese Folklore in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was very popular in the Maltese islands and a frequent feature in traditional festas, carnivals and even everyday life, cheering people for a small donation during a time when local bands were still in their infancy.

The word 'terramaxka' is corrupted from 'kitarra magica', meaning magic guitar, except this was no guitar but a mobile barrel organ. The Terramaxka is entirely crafted in wood. It is brightly painted and decorated with figures or puppets in elegantly painted clothes which often 'danced' in time to the music. It plays music via stenciled pieces of cardboard. Each song, melody or tune has its own stencil. It is operated by turning a handle on the side which rotates a cylinder studded with pegs that open the valves to produce a preset tune. Kappa Vision spotted and photographed Mari in front of the Grand Hotel in Mgarr, Gozo on the 31st of May 2019.

ABOUT THE OWNER From GuideMeMalta .com.

Mari came to Malta for the first time in 1977. He was working on a ship at the dry docks when he experienced the island through fresh eyes. As with so many expats living on the island, Mari fell in love with and married a Maltese lady, and



settled here. And while he has carried on working with ships which take him to all corners of the world, his hobby is to play his restored terramaxka on Maltese streets and functions. Mari's first terramaxka dated back to 1929, which he restored himself to be used in public as it was used throughout the past century. Way past its glory days of playing on the streets of Amsterdam, it was in a bad state and immediately needed repair. Mari restored the instrument in the city, and towed it behind his car all the way back to Malta. In 2012, the garage in which it was stored burned down, disintegrating the beautiful instrument with it. This didn't stop Mari. He purchased a new one which began its life in Paris. Again, he restored it in Amsterdam and painstakingly towed it to Malta.

"This generation has stopped enjoying this kind of entertainment. When I play on the streets, it's mostly the older tourists and young children who stop to listen and engage. I play different types of music to appeal to different audiences. My generation likes it because it makes them nostalgic, although I have made it a point to incorporate new songs by popular artists such as Bob Marley and Lady Gaga," says Mari. Photo Copyright © Kappa Vision / Jean-Paul Borg

How an Italian plane was hijacked and flown to Malta in 1942



Four men were taken prisoner in Corfu. But that was just the beginning

Jeffrey Sammut

Beaufort of 217 Squadron based in Malta. Photo: Pinterest.com

On July 28, 1942, Bristol Beauforts of 217 Squadron took off from Malta in search of an Italian supply ship which was known to be sailing south of Greece.

One of the Beauforts was piloted by Lieutenant Edward Strever, of the South African Airforce. His navigator was an Englishman, Pilot Officer William Martin Dunsmore, while two New Zealanders, Sergeants John Wilkinson

and Alexander Brown, served as radio operator and gunner.

The Italian merchant ship was spotted off the coast of Sapienza Island. The torpedo bombers hugged the surface of the sea to start their torpedo runs. They were met by a hail of flak. The torpedo dropped by Strever ran true and slammed into the side of the Italian vessel but the Beaufort was badly shot up in the process. The pilot realised that the aircraft was doomed and there was no option left but to ditch into the sea.

The crew scrambled out and took to their dinghy which had floated free. They started paddling towards the Greek coast in the blazing July sun. However, a Cant Z.506B, an Italian floatplane, spotted them and landed close by. The Allied crew were ordered on board and became prisoners of war.

They were flown to Preveza harbour, Corfu, where they were well looked after by their Italian captors. After enjoying a hearty meal, they were allowed the use of the officers' mess for the rest of the day. In the evening, they were treated to an excellent supper, and then some Italian officers vacated their rooms in order to allow the downed crew a good night's sleep. Guards posted outside the doors and windows made sure that none of them would escape.

Wilkinson pointed out of the window and shouted 'Look!' or 'Spitfire!', which distracted the radioman enough for him to be knocked out with a well-laid punch

After breakfast, they were told they were to be flown to Taranto, Italy, for interrogation and imprisonment. After being photographed together with their captors, the sullen Beaufort crew boarded Cant Z.506B, Serial no. MM45452. The Cant's crew consisted of the pilot, Tenente Gaetano Mastrodicasa; co-pilot, Mar Allesandro Chiara; engineer Serg. Trento Losi; and wireless operator/gunner Av Sc Marc Antonio Schisano. There was an extra passenger, police sergeant Giulio Scarcella, who, armed with a revolver, was detailed to guard the prisoners.

With every turn of the Cant's propellers, the Beaufort's crew were getting closer to a long confinement in a prisoner of war camp. They did not relish this prospect so they decided to try to overpower the Italian airmen.

There are different accounts of how they managed to do so. Some say that Strever tried to grab a bottle of oil to use as a weapon but the radio operator took it off him. Then Wilkinson pointed out of the window and shouted "Look!" or "Spitfire!", which distracted the radioman enough for him to be knocked out with a well-laid punch.

The cockpit of the Cant Z.506B, photographed after its capture. Photo: Malta Aviation Museum

Other accounts state that the guard was airsick so he was easily overwhelmed and the revolver taken off him. Then he was used as a live shield when the enemy pilot drew out his revolver.

Some versions say the sergeant, who was on his first flight, was enjoying the panorama out of the window. While he was so distracted, the radio operator was subdued, and when the Italian pilot pulled out his gun, it was knocked out of his hand by a comrade in the ensuing confusion.

Whatever happened, the end result was that Strever and his men ended up in control of the Italian float plane. It transpired there were no maps or charts on board as the Italian crew had flown this route

regularly. Lieutenant Strever had no choice but to order the Italian pilot to fly towards Sicily. When the island was spotted, he made him turn south towards Malta.

However, their troubles were not over. Serg. Losi, the flight engineer, pointed out that they were running out of fuel. To make things worse, the Cant appeared on the Malta radar and four Supermarine Spitfires from 603 Squadron were scrambled to intercept the unidentified plane. The British fighters



spotted the lone aircraft about ten miles off Malta, flying just above the surface of the sea and quickly attacked.

Dunsmore took off his white vest and started to wave it frantically out of the cockpit window as a sign of surrender. This did not deter the British fighters. One of the Spitfires riddled the Cant's wing with cannon shells and machine gun bullets, so Strever ordered Mastrodicasa to alight on the surface of the sea. Some accounts mention that when the aircraft landed on the sea, the engines stopped – the fuel tanks were empty!

The Beaufort and Cant crews photographed together. Photo: Malta Aviation Museum

HSL 107 (High Speed Launch) was dispatched to the scene but when it attempted to tow the Italian aircraft, its engines started overheating so eventually, the Cant was towed to St Paul's Bay by a seaplane tender. The rescuers were amazed to find Allied airmen inside the Italian craft. One was reported to have commented "We thought it was old Mussolini coming to give himself up!"

The fortunes of war – it was now the Italians who were prisoners of war. But they seemed to take it well. In fact, one of them produced a bottle of wine from his suitcase and they all drank a toast before they went their different ways. Strever and Dunsmore were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for this exploit while Wilkinson and Brown were given the Distinguished Flying Medal.

All four survived the war. The Italians were, in their absence, court-martialled and found guilty of allowing the enemy to capture their aircraft. The Cant was painted in British colours and, for a time, used for Air Sea Rescue.

It was now the Italians who were prisoners of war. But they seemed to take it well. One produced a bottle of wine from his suitcase and they all drank a toast

There was another occasion when an Italian aircraft was captured intact. On the night of January 25/26, 1942, Tenente Aldo Bellenzier, the pilot of a Red Cross Cant Z.501, become lost while searching for the crew of another Red Cross flying-boat, which went missing after being attacked by Malta-based fighters. One must note that British fighters were ordered to shoot down these Red Cross rescue aircraft on sight.

In the dark, he spotted what he thought was the Italian island of Linosa. In fact, he was over the north coast of the Maltese archipelago. He called for help on the radio and his message was picked up in Malta. The British, who had him on radar, obligingly switched on a searchlight from Mellieħa. Bellenzier thought that the searchlight was the beacon requested from Linosa to guide him in and landed his Cant close to Comino.

The crew took to their dinghy and landed on the small island, waiting for their Italian compatriots to come to their aid. In fact, they soon heard a launch approaching but instead of the awaited help, it was an RAF launch, and the four Italians were apprehended.

Next morning, the policeman stationed on Comino found a pack of playing cards, a rubber dinghy, four life-jackets and a bag with signalling flags on shore. The Cant Z.501 was towed to Mġarr Harbour by local fishermen. Then the British decided to tow the aircraft to Kalafrana but it capsized and sank off Sliema in rough seas.

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Signing in Malta of final Italian armistice during World War II

The British battleship Nelson, moored to No. 8 buoy in Grand Harbour. It was moored in the same place when the final Italian armistice document was signed on board the ship on September 29, 1943.

In World War II, the island of Malta, which is located almost exactly in the center of the Mediterranean (like a cork centered in the hourglass between the eastern and western Mediterranean), took on enormous significance as the only British naval base in the 2,000-mile stretch of sea between Gibraltar and Alexandria. The island barred the north-south route across the Sicilian Narrows that connected Mussolini to his African empire. Early on the morning of June 11, 1940, the Italian air force, the Regia Aeronautica, carried out the first of 3,340 Axis air raids on the island over the next three years, when it became the most bombed place on earth. Initially the island was defended by three obsolete Gloster Gladiator biplanes known to the Maltese people as Faith, Hope, and Charity. On August 1, 1940, 12 modern Hurricane fighters landed at Malta from the small carrier Argus to reinforce the island's air defense. Potentially, Malta posed a serious threat to the Axis, but in the first six months of the war the few submarines based there rarely sighted an enemy ship, and scarcely knew where to look for one. As a result, in the second half of 1940 the Italian Navy escorted almost 300,000 tons of supplies to their Libyan ports with a loss of only 2 percent of the ships sent.



Italian General Giuseppe Castellano signing, on behalf of Italy, the Italian armistice at Cassibile, Sicily, on September 3, 1943. Looking on are Italian aide Luigi Marchesi, left, and General Walter Bedell Smith.

As Churchill had dreaded, Mussolini's military debacle in Libya led Hitler to intervene in the Mediterranean. On December 10, 1940, Fliegerkorps X, a balanced force of 350 aircraft trained in anti-shipping attack, arrived in southern Italy, its primary task to gain air control over the central Mediterranean and to attack British shipping. Its power was dramatically shown on January 10 the following year when the aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious was badly damaged while escorting a convoy through the Sicilian channel. Illustrious was subjected to further heavy attack while undergoing emergency repairs in Valletta Harbor before it escaped to Alexandria. This attack heralded the first German blitz on Malta. The island managed to hold out until, in April 1941, Fliegerkorps X was diverted from southern Italy to prepare for Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. Toward the end of June, codebreakers at Bletchley Park (northwest of London) broke the new Italian cipher machine referred to as C38m. This

gave details of all planned convoys from Italy to Libya. A second advantage was the development of airborne radar (ASV), which could locate surface ships at night. In the last seven months of 1941, Malta's air and naval forces waged an increasingly powerful campaign to restrict the flow of supplies to Rommel's forces in North Africa.



But for the welcome news that the United States was now an ally in the war, the winter of 1941 was a cruel month at sea for the British. Three days after Pearl Harbor, Japanese planes sank the Prince of Wales and the Repulse off the Malay coast. In the Mediterranean, German U-boats transferred from the Atlantic sank the carrier Ark Royal and the battleship Barham. Four British cruisers hit Italian deep-water mines off Tripoli, sinking two of the ships instantly. The most spectacular Italian naval operation came when Italian two-man human torpedo teams sank, in the naval harbor at Alexandria, the last two remaining British battleships in the Mediterranean, Queen Elizabeth and Valiant.

A weakened British Mediterranean Fleet was grim news for Malta, but even more serious was Hitler's transfer of an entire air corps from the Eastern Front to Italy and North Africa to regain control over the sea route to Tripoli. German Field Marshal Albert Kesselring boasted that he would "pound [Malta] to dust." The 400 German and 200 Italian aircraft in Sicily were only 10 minutes' flying time away from Malta, whose position became desperate. Convoys could not get through, nor could the Royal Navy operate from Valletta. Food

supplies dwindled, while dysentery, tuberculosis, and polio were rampant. The Axis siege of Malta was one of the longest and grimmest in the struggle to control the Mediterranean.

In March 1942, the first 15 British Spitfires were flown to Malta from the aircraft carrier Eagle and on April 1, Churchill asked Roosevelt to loan the large American carrier Wasp. Two days later the president agreed and on April 20 Wasp flew off 47 Spitfires. Churchill made a second request and on May 10 Wasp and Eagle flew more planes on to the island. The Axis could no longer take air superiority for granted. An elated Churchill telegraphed Roosevelt: "Many thanks for all your timely help. Who said that a wasp couldn't sting twice?" The climax of Malta's war for survival came between August 11 and 13, 1942, when Churchill organized a 14-ship convoy around the fast oil tanker Ohio, loaned by the United States. Once through the Straits of Gibraltar, the convoy ran a four-day gauntlet of Axis naval and air attack. No fewer than 784 Axis aircraft attempted to stop the convoy. The famous Operation Pedestal convoy had started with 14 merchant ships, of which nine were sunk along with the aircraft carrier Eagle and several warships damaged or sunk. The remaining merchant ships, bringing the largest cargo since the previous year, arrived at Valletta to be greeted by the Maltese people with tears of joy. The Ohio crawled into port the next day, lashed between two destroyers to keep her from sinking. The courage shown by the Maltese people and the garrison was an inspiration to the Allied cause in a time of crisis. Saved from a calamity on the scale of Singapore and Tobruk, Malta was restored as a serious threat to Axis supply lines to North Africa. Nevertheless, the naval effort to sustain Malta, involving as it did the loss of many British ships sunk or damaged, has not gone unquestioned. The costly battle for Malta has been called the "Verdun of Maritime War."

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Family remembers a Maltese pioneer In Mackay - Queensland

Shakira Sellen

GAETANO Zammit embarked on the trip of a lifetime when he arrived in Australia 106 years ago.

Mr Zammit was born in 1890 in the Maltese town of Qormi and arrived in Sydney, Australia, in 1914 before making his way to Flat Top Island on a ship in 1917.

He and fellow passengers then travelled by a small boat up Mackay's Pioneer River.

MILESTONE: It's been 106 years since Mackay resident Gaetano Zammit arrived in Australia.

Mr Zammit was known to be one of the pioneers of Mackay after spending all his life in the city.

He also met Veneranda Azzopardi whom he married in Qormi, Malta, in 1928 before returning back to Mackay.

His granddaughter, Melissa Schembri, who lives in Mackay, said he was one of the few people in about 1930 to own a car, which replaced his horse and sulky.

The car he bought that year was a Whippet sedan.

He was also one of the first to own an electric milking machine as he owned a dairy farm in North Mackay.



Mr Zammit's daughter, Carmel Zammit, said her father was well known in the Mackay community.

"On his retirement from dairying some of the property was subdivided, and a number of streets in the area, which included North Mackay State High school and playing fields, were created, and that's when they put Zammit St," she said.

"The street that bears his name adjoins the old Eimeo Rd, and the corner of which became the site of the Zammit home where he lived until his advancing years."

He then decided to move to the St Vincent de Paul home.

The family will remember the milestone at a special event. On Sunday they will hold a reunion for all family members to celebrate Mr Zammit's coming to Australia in 1914.

It will be held at Northern Beaches Bowls Club at noon. Ms Schembri said one of his grandchildren who can't make the event would be celebrating in a special way.

"One of his grandkids can't make it on Sunday, but she lives in Sydney," she said.

"So she's actually going to have lunch on Sydney Harbour at the same time we're having lunch in Mackay.

"I said why don't you go on Sydney Harbour and you can imagine what it was like coming into the harbour all those years ago." Gaetano Zammit died at the age of 95 on July 21, 1986.

YOUTUBE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrZiZvt54VI>

THE MALTA BLESSING



Dear Mr Scicluna I am a Catechist at Catholic Enquiry Centre.
Can you help me in disseminating this song to the Maltese Living Abroad. Joe Aquilina



“As soon as it rains the prickly pear season ends” – a prickly but very nourishing fruit

Report: Andrea Rossitto

With the harsh summer sun now starting to mellow, and with the rains about to come down in bucketsful any day now, the Maltese and Gozitan countryside will start being revived. And as soon as the September rains start, the

prickly pear palms which are such a feature of the countryside start shedding their fruit. A fruit which is enjoyed by many.

Teddy Farrugia is one of the farmers who at this time of year have whole corners of their land overflowing with prickly pear palms. In a comment to [tvm.com.mt](https://www.facebook.com/TelevisionMalta/videos/2684147451838897/) Teddy explained that prickly pears should ideally be harvested in the morning when the thorns are still soft after the night dew. Once the sun rises, the thorns become stiff.

All prickly pears are good, whether red, yellow or green. Nutritionist Dr Antonella Grima told [tvm.com.mt](https://www.facebook.com/TelevisionMalta/videos/2684147451838897/) that prickly pears contain fibre, vitamin C, natural sugar and only some 40 calories per 100 grams. Despite this, Dr Grima said prickly pears should be eaten in moderation and ideally washed down with a drink of water. Asked whether the taste of the prickly pear varied, Teddy explained that fruit from a young tree is sweeter in taste and has fewer seeds.

<https://www.facebook.com/TelevisionMalta/videos/2684147451838897/>

9/11 USA - Maltese man who lost his life on that day



An unfortunate twist of events sealed Brian Cachia's fate

GuideMeMalta.com 11th September 2020

September 11th will forever be remembered as the day that changed the course of contemporary world history, and today marks 19 years since the tragic events unfolded in New York.

Facebook / Kim Tùng Hác

Amongst those who lost their life

19 years ago was Brian Joseph Cachia, an American citizen of Maltese descent. His grandfather, Joseph, originally from Zabbar, had emigrated to America during WWII and started a new life on the continent.

On the day of the attack, Brian had been called in to work earlier than usual. A technical problem caused the computer whizz to rush in to fix it. His office, situated on the 103rd floor of the North Tower, was within the trajectory of American Airlines flight 11 when it crashed into the tower at 8:46am. Facebook / Todd Hauser



In comments given to Times of Malta, family members narrate how at the time, 26 year-old Brian was one of the company's newest employees. He had been working for the company for approximately a month, and had proposed to his partner the week prior to the tragic events. "If only he hadn't gone in early... we never heard from him after the plane hit", Joseph reflects.

Facebook / Tedd Hauser

In a haunting YouTube video published on September 20th 2008, user kpharloff (a.k.a Kevin Harlow) posts a tribute to his family friend, and recounts intimate memories of their childhood together. Kevin recalls how in times past, Brian had owned a little keyboard and used to write melodies. In an ode to his friend, Kevin recreates one of his tunes and adds his own twist to it. "Wherever you are now, my personal belief is that the mind cannot cease, it goes beyond the body but that's my belief. Brian wherever you are, this is to you".

In total, 2,977 people perished that day - including over 400 firefighters and law enforcement officers – with more than 6,000 civilians and servicemen sustaining serious injury.

US wildfires: Residents who've lost everything share harrowing tales of survival

Faith Karimi



Published: 11/09/2020 Updated: 11 September 2020 9:14 pm that some people are going through in the US as wildfires rip through parts of the country is something Australians well understand.

With some neighbourhoods in ashes, residents of Oregon, California and Washington states have shared harrowing tales of survival [after a series of wildfires left 15 people dead.](#)

Overwhelmed firefighters struggled [to contain the massive orange flames](#) as rescue workers searched through communities burned to the ground.

As of Friday morning, they had discovered at least 11 victims in California and a total of four others in [Washington state and Oregon.](#)

Oregon resident Tiffany Lemmerz said she's lost everything but is just glad her family's alive.

One of several wildfires raging in the state arrived at her doorstep while she was at work Monday.

Her daughter, six, as well as her niece and sister were in her house in Blue River.

A view of a layer of smoke generated by the over two dozen wildfires burning in California. Credit: Anadolu Agency via Getty Images

As she was rushing home to get them, she got into a wreck, [she told CNN affiliate KOMO.](#)

She pleaded with a sheriff deputy to give her a ride home, but they couldn't make it with the flames.

The blaze was so fiery, it melted the back of her car.

Firefighters from the Junction City Fire and Rescue rushed to her home and got them out.

"My kids' alive, that's all I care about," Lemmerz told the affiliate.

"I can't say anything else. My kid is alive and it was very close."

‘My kids’ alive, that’s all I care about.’

In Oregon, numerous wildfires have killed at least three people and [nearly wiped out the southern cities of Phoenix and Talent](#).

Authorities have said they fear they’ll find more bodies as they access more neighbourhoods.

In Portland

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler declared a state of emergency Thursday night, closing city parks and activating evacuation sites for people in threatened areas.

About a half million people have fled their homes in Oregon - more than 10 per cent of the state’s population. And that number is expected to grow.

Thirty-seven wildfires remain active in the state, down from nearly 50 earlier this week.

A family looks at the destruction of their home at Coleman Creek Estates mobile home park in Phoenix, Oregon on Thursday. Credit: CNN

The blazes have scorched about 900,000 acres across the state, [the Oregon governor’s office said](#).

The scope is unprecedented. For the past ten years, the state has seen an average of 500,000 acres burned each year.

Adding to the grim outlook, Wheeler’s emergency order says the city has limited firefighting resources because some have been deployed to assist in other parts of the state.

‘Doomsday’ glow

Kristen Marin lives north of San Francisco in Mendocino County, where a wildfire has turned the skies a dull orange colour.

“It feels a little like doomsday,” Marin [told CNN affiliate KNXV](#).

“It felt like it was night all during the day time. The air quality was awful. The crickets were chirping. The floodlights were on, thinking it was dark.



“Everything is covered in ash. It smells like smoke. You’d think that you were in a fireplace.”

A woman walks along The Embarcadero under an orange smoke-filled sky Wednesday in San Francisco. Credit: CNN

‘A beast’

“It was terrifying,” resident Nancy Hamilton told CNN of the fires that tore through the Berry Creek area.

“It was a beast. The thing is a beast.”

While the full extent of the damage remains unclear in many communities, the wildfires have taken a toll on human lives.

Authorities found seven bodies in Northern California on Thursday as firefighters battled multiple ravaging wildfires, raising the total number of victims in the state to 10.

Across California, more than 2.5 million acres have been scorched this year alone, according to Cal Fire, and Governor Gavin Newsom has [pointed to climate change](#) as a primary factor in the wildfires.

“Wildfires are a big part of the seasonal challenge,” Newsom said.

“The challenge we’re facing now is the extreme fire events that we believe are climate-induced.”

**In Washington**

Washington state resident Darrell Herde woke up to a stranger pounding on his door this week. He barely escaped

“He was yanking on my door and telling me to run. I thought he was a little nuts. I didn’t think it was that bad,” said Herde, a resident of Graham.

“Five minutes after, I walked out the door. It was crawling through trees,” the 71-year-old told [CNN affiliate KIRO](#).

Firefighters monitor the Bear Fire burning in Oroville, California, on September 9. Credit: Noah Berger/AP

"And you can't believe how fast those embers were flying at you."

He found his home a pile of rubble. Now he just has the clothes on his back.

"Someplace in that pile, there is my mother's rings, and it tore my heart out," he said.

"That's something that sort of killed me this morning. The rest of this stuff - it's stuff that you can replace."

Tragic death

A 1-year-old boy was killed and his [parents were badly burned](#) as they tried to escape the wildfire in Washington, officials say.

The family was visiting their property in a rural area west of Spokane and evacuate in the middle of the night when the wildfire got closer.

The Creek Fire burns along a hillside in the Cascadel Woods community of Madera County, California. Credit: Noah Berger/AP

They abandoned their vehicle and ran to a river to escape the menacing flames, [CNN affiliate KCRA reported](#).

The couple was rescued from the river but their son did not make it.

"The enormity of these fires, the geographical scope, the intensity, and the destruction are unequal in Washington State history," Governor Jay Inslee said.

The UK maintained the Air Ministry Pigeon Section during World War II and for a while thereafter. A Pigeon Policy Committee made decisions about the uses of pigeons in military contexts. The head of the section, Lea Rayner, reported in 1945 that pigeons could be trained to deliver small explosives or bioweapons to precise targets. The ideas were not taken up by the committee, and in 1948 the UK military stated that pigeons were of no further use. However, the UK security service MI5 was still concerned about the use of pigeons by enemy forces. Until 1950, they arranged for 100 birds to be maintained by a civilian pigeon fancier in order to prepare countermeasures. The Swiss army disbanded its Pigeon section in 1996. In Malta the British Services had the Malta Signals Coy of which Carrier Pigeon Loft Unit No 126, Carrier Pigeon Loft Unit No 131, Carrier Pigeon Loft Unit No 132, Carrier Pigeon Loft Unit No 282 formed part. Some lofts were kept on the roof of Auberge de Castille in Valletta. The lofts were pulled down in the early fifties.



Anthropology professor answers the unanswerable: who are the Maltese?



Professor Mark Anthony Falzon offers insight into a few Maltese characteristics after 7,000 years of habitation.

Lisa Borain

The first thing University of Malta Professor Mark Anthony Falzon says when we meet is, "before we go into anything, I just want to put a disclaimer out there that you can't generalise on an entire nationality - it's impossible. When I refer to certain characteristics which the Maltese tend to

have, I'm talking about the popular vein."

Fair enough. So now for the question. **Who are the Maltese?**

"200 years ago, the question 'who are we?' wasn't asked. Nationalism wasn't on the cards. It's only in the last several decades that we've taken to asking this question. The answer brings together different criteria: ethnicity, politics, bureaucracy, culture... and with respect to culture, the Maltese are not a homogeneous group because of the islands' history. Malta has always been a country on the move. In the past, the entire economy was built around the strength of the Grand Harbour, and social connotations were implied along with that."

Malta was swarming with migrants, and you would hear a number of languages in and around the harbour area. In fact, in the 17th century, up to 35 per cent of local women in the harbour area married foreigners. Not much has changed, except that this melting pot has been extended throughout the country, well beyond the harbour area.



With a population of over 430,000, Malta is nowadays home to 63,000 migrant workers from all over Europe, along with migrants from sub-saharan Africa, the Philippines, and various other countries. Even in one of Malta's oldest industries - fishing - the boat workers are largely Indonesian and Egyptian. So, it's probably safe to say that Malta's population is still on the move... even more so than was the case a couple of decades ago.

"These migrants, and also visiting tourists, help the locals when asking who they are, because it calls for the Maltese people to present themselves to a group. They have to brand, present and sell themselves as something, which, in this case, is hospitable and welcoming."

Traits & characteristics

"The Maltese have always sold themselves as welcoming, but with websites (such as this one!) that guide visitors 'off the beaten track' and GPS technology, everywhere is accessible, which means that very little is left solely for the Maltese. I find that there's a slight resentment growing here, as the number of visitors is unsustainable, but at the same time, there is an appreciation for tourists and what they bring to the economy."

This brings us to a second characteristic. Visitors might notice a mercenary side to the Maltese. Professor Falzon thinks that this



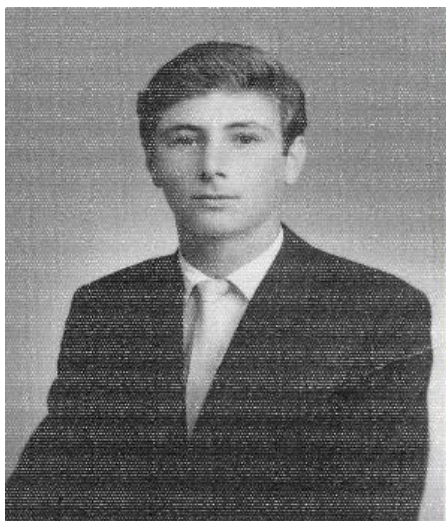
My father immigrated to Australia onboard the ship The Roma, arriving in Melbourne 23rd Feb 1963 pictured on the left. He made friends with two other men I am wondering if anyone may know the men. It would be a wonderful thing to unite them on the eve of my dad's 80th birthday.
Julie Sultana

could perhaps be due to Malta's limited lack of resources throughout history. After all, when the Knights of St John arrived, apart from the harbour, there weren't any natural assets available on the island; no wood to build, no soil to grow. In fact, licensed piracy, which was referred to as corsairing, was a big economic driving force into the 18th century. Corsairs would work under the knights, who would then take a tax cut.

"Corsairing was on the fringes of legality, but it was still legal. There's an expression in Maltese that goes, *Malta qatt ma rrifjutat qamħ* - which translates, 'Malta has never refused grain'. This refers to our position of having limited resources and being surrounded by hostile people. This has become part of the Maltese character - beggars can't be choosers. Let's not bite the hand that feeds us."

Malta's small size also influences the psyche of the Maltese. There's a sensitivity which stems from an anxiety here, particularly when communicating with foreigners, says Professor Falzon.

"I believe this anxiety results in an assertiveness to prove that we are not small minded. The reality is that the Maltese are no smaller minded than people living in small towns within large countries. You don't live all over England. You live in a town, which is possibly the size of Malta. All the same, the Maltese tend to repeat this notion - we are small. I believe this close proximity is what gives people meaning to their lives. It's not parochial, but rather what makes up part of a rich existence," he explains.



"Another final interesting aspect of the Maltese is that on one hand they can be quite nation deprecating and on the other, they think that Malta is the centre of the universe. This is one of the key paradoxical characteristics that makes a Maltese person uniquely Maltese," he continues.

"The unanswerable question of where this might stem from makes it a strong character trait. If it was simply a series of events throughout history that added up to this trait, it wouldn't so much be a part of a character, but rather a simple result. It doesn't come from anywhere. It's just who the Maltese are."



ANTHONY PORTELLI

On the 31st August 1965,
55 years ago my dad,
Mum, sister Rita and myself
left Malta on board a QANTAS flight
to join our other brothers
Joe and Charlie
and my other sister Lucy
in Australia. Arriving at
Essendon Airport in Melbourne
on the 2nd September 1965



Written by
Lisa Borain
Lisa is a
copywriter/editor
with an adventurous interest
and penchant for all things
Maltese.

British author's former Gozo residence given protective status – Nicholas Monsarrat

The former Gozitan residence of renowned British author Nicholas Monsarrat and a palazzino in Zejtun have both been given a



Grade 2 protection status by the Planning Authority for their architectural, historical and social significance.

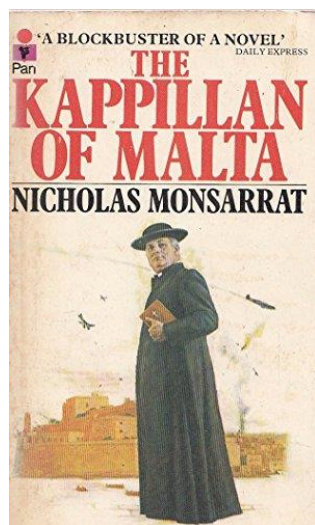
The process for these properties to be scheduled was carried out in close collaboration with the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage, the PA said in a statement today.

The property in San Lawrenz, Gozo which Nicholas Monsarrat purchased and moved into in the late 1960s comprises of two similar vernacular dwellings, each built around a front courtyard.

Although the two-storey property has undergone

rehabilitation works, the built fabric of both structures remains almost untouched.

The property enjoys an extensive mature garden at the back and underground cisterns. Traditional vernacular features such as a shaded arcade around the courtyard, a 'setaħ' terrace at ground floor



and stone staircases are evident in the dwellings.

Monserrat who was a popular English novelist, best known for his work, *The Cruel Sea*, purchased the property in 1968 on the last day of a week-long holiday in Gozo. In 1973, Monsarrat wrote the book "The Kappillan of Malta" in this property, a book he is well known for in Malta. He died in August 1979.

In Zejtun, the Authority scheduled a palazzino in Triq Luqa Briffa. Located within the urban conservation area, the palazzino exhibits a neo-classical architectural style with a symmetrical and elevated façade. The decorative wrought iron 'logg' above the main doorway bearing the initials 'D' and 'Z' alluding to its original owners, namely the Testaferrata and Zamitello families.

The facade is characterised by a central projecting balustraded parapet wall supported by two columns. The main doorway lies between the two columns and is flanked by traditional louvered timber windows above which is decorative masonry work. Internally, the property exhibits traditional features consisting of framings around the doorways, architraves and decorative pilasters along a 'tal-anima' staircase, 'gavda' mouldings and a traditional roofing system containing timber beams and stone slabs.

Most of the rooms are built around a courtyard that leads onto an extensive formal garden having an elaborate and decorated gate which leads onto Triq il-Hall. This formal neo-classical garden has a central traditional walkway embellished by columns along the length and width of the garden. The property also has a small 'barumbara' on the roof as well as access through the basement to private chambers of an air-raid shelter.

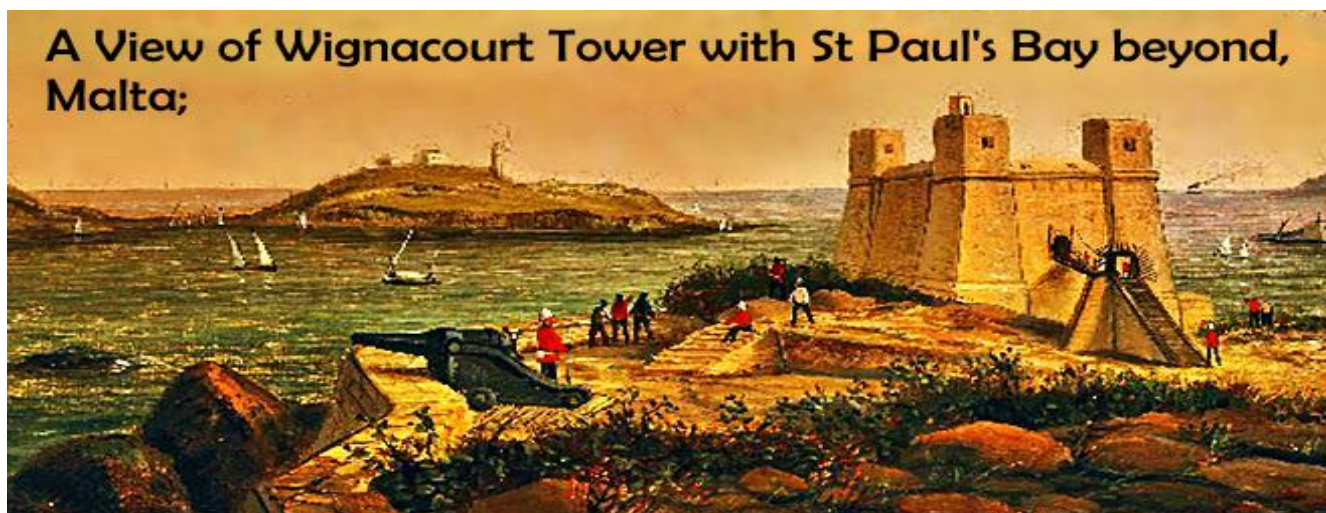
God Save Australia, Canada and USA



This is the frontage of a house in Xaghra, Gozo with a reference to a country to which Maltese migrated to. One can find several such references - be they house names, flags or logos - on the residences of Maltese migrants who have returned to their native land, usually in their old age. Kangaroos, maple leaves and eagles: an unmistakable link to the main countries of the New World - Australia, Canada and the United States - involved in the phenomenon that saw a good amount of Maltese emigrating to a foreign land in the early 20th century, as a result of the collapse of a construction boom, and again after World War II, when the birth rate increased significantly. <https://www.facebook.com/kappavision/>

Carmen Garcia

God Bless these countries that helped so many Maltese when they, heart-broken, left Malta in the 50s, 60s and 70s. We are sad about your great worries of all that happened lately in our dear Malta. May God bless Malta, always!!!





He still wears his grandfather's wedding suit which is almost 120 years old

Report: Andrea Rossitto www.tvm.com.mt/

We should not be consumed by materialism. It is good to put something away for a rainy day although, as the saying goes, we are all dead in the end. Sometimes an item from the past can put a smile on our face and can bring back a flood of memories as soon as we come across it. It could be an item which might remind us of our loved ones who are no longer with us.

Apart from the photos and number of letters he has collected over the years, John Cilia from St Paul's Bay still has the wedding suit which belonged to his grandfather Wistin. However, John has not left this suit on the shelf. In comments he gave to tvm.com.mt John said that if a special occasion crops up when he needs to dress elegantly, he wears the suit in which his grandfather got married. He estimates that the suit he inherited is over 120 years old, since his grandfather got married in 1907.

Although the suit is old, John says that the jacket and trousers are in perfect condition and it has never been moth-eaten. John added that he sometimes decorates the suit with one of the medals which his father received when he was with the Royal Malta Artillery. Among these is a medal given to his father by the British Governor Sir Robert Laycock.

At the age of 83, John, whom everyone knows as Johnny, is still very active. His youthful smile is always there. His sweet character, for which he is known, charms everyone he meets. Every day, he keeps himself extremely occupied. He goes for a walk, goes swimming and does every sort of odd job which needs doing.

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