

# MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

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The journal of the Maltese Diaspora

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ADELAIDE  
AUSTRALIA

**PETER BORG**  
Owner and Founder  
at Knights of Malta  
Merchandise

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**ROYAL OPERA HOUSE - VALLETTA, MALTA -- After and Before**



Who are the members of the  
COUNCIL OF MALESE LIVING ABROAD?

**FREE CARMEN THE MALTESE**

CORONAVIRUS  
2020



Carmen just wants to live her life in Melbourne  
the way she wants. Bingo, Pastizzi and the clubs.  
Go to her facebook page - [facebook.com/carmenthemaltese/](https://facebook.com/carmenthemaltese/)



## COUNCIL OF MALTESE LIVING ABROAD



Hon Evarist Bartolo



Joseph A Xerri - Sec



Alexander Grima



Angelo M. Grima



Antonella Berry Brincat



Claudia Caruana



Denis Muniglia



Edwidge Borg



Brandon Azzopardi



Emanuel Camilleri



JosAnn Cutajar



Marie-Louise Previtera



John Vassallo



Mario A Sammut



Nadim Kanawati



Susan Schembri



Journal  
for Maltese  
Living Abroad

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**Maltese eNewsletter**

**WE THANK OUR READERS,  
CONTRIBUTORS AND SUPPORTERS.**

**We cordially invite the members of the  
Council to write on this journal anytime.**

**Working Together - We Succeed**



Readers always ask about the Council for Maltese Living Abroad and its members. These are your representatives and their aim is to seek to protect and promote the rights and interests of the Maltese living outside Malta.



### **John Vassallo (Canberra – Australia)**

**Mr John Vassallo is the new member of the Council for the Maltese Living Abroad to represent the Maltese in other states in the Commonwealth of Australia but not Victoria or New South Wales. s role in this position and his work within the Maltese community of Canberra (SBS Maltese Program)**

John Vassallo was born in Victoria, Gozo in 1954. He attended the Lyceum in Gozo and the University of Malta (RUM), then started as a high-school Teacher (Maths and Science). After 2 years, John left teaching and became a Quality Assurance Officer at Farsons in their soft-drink Department.

John married Marylin (nee' Grech) in 1978. She was born in Sydney and always dreamt of returning to Australia. So three months after getting married, they emigrated to Sydney, Australia. John joined the Federal Public Service (Australian Taxation Office) and in 1980 moved to Canberra to work in Computers. He studied part-time and achieved the BA (IT Systems) at University of Canberra in 1984 and continued studying for the Post Graduate Diploma (IT Business Solutions) in 1986.

In 1988, John left the Public Service and started an IT consulting agency mainly working with the various Federal Departments in Canberra. He sold this business in 2018 to retire.

Community Service: John's passion has been 'helping others' - being a Leader in the Scouting Movement for over 45 years, Fund-Raising Co-ordinator at Schools that the children attended; Board Chairman of the local Primary School, Acolyte at the local Parish;. John was awarded the 'Volunteer of the year - Community Impact' in 2002. John is a registered Justice of Peace here in Canberra; President of the 'Maltese Australian Association of Canberra and Queanbeyan', Treasurer of the Philatelic Society of Canberra and on the Finance Committee of our Church Parish.. John is a Knight with the Order of Malta (Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John's of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta).



### **Susan Schembri (Canada)**

**Susan** is honoured to be a member of the Council for Maltese Living Abroad since 2018. She holds dual Canadian and Maltese citizenship.

Susan migrated to Canada in her late teen years. She met her husband Saviour in Vancouver British Columbia (BC) Canada. They have 2 daughters and 2 grandchildren. Susan graduated from UBC with the Fellowship of the Institute of Canadian Bankers, and retired as a Senior Risk Manager from one of Canada's largest Banks.

Susan has a passion for keeping the Maltese living abroad connected to their birth country. She was President of the Canadian Maltese Association of BC and is presently the Treasurer for the Federation of Maltese Living Abroad. She is the sole distributor of Maltese goods in BC, she plans regular events and since 1986 she continues to be a major contact through which the Maltese Community in BC stays connected.

One of Susan's latest endeavors have been the success of having the Maltese program "Lehen Malti" aired in BC. Susan is the glue of the Maltese Community in BC.

Through her representation on the CMLA she hopes to further support open connection between Malta and Maltese abroad for generations to come.

**NB: The editor of this journal was a member of the Council for six years**

**Keeping Maltese Communities Connected**

**Journal of Maltese Living Abroad**





## HUMANE MENTAL HEALTH DISCOURSE AND ATTITUDES IN SOCIETY

### Dr Lynn Faure Chircop

On the eve of World Mental Health Awareness Day, One Voice Malta Initiatives & Life Resources Foundation will launch a national campaign on **Humane mental health discourse and attitudes in society**.

This initiative is a collaborative platform. It will bring together private and public persons, entities, organisations & NGOs related directly or indirectly to mental health issues with the aim to:

1. Increase awareness and education on mental health issues;
2. Target the use of oppressive, degrading language and societal practices in relation to mental health
3. Set up guidance on how to speak about mental health in an enabling manner

Follow the launch of **Together With One Voice** and meet our incredible line up of contributors to promote humane mental health discourse and attitudes in society at the link

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLIFdG-oQQE&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1CWL9EMpDjVe0F9tO\\_6dDYvPrvq5f\\_DmNagDa0j\\_el4HeR9G-2kPCsa8g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLIFdG-oQQE&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1CWL9EMpDjVe0F9tO_6dDYvPrvq5f_DmNagDa0j_el4HeR9G-2kPCsa8g)

Dr. Lynn Faure Chircop - Founder of TOGETHER WITH ONE VOICE

Dr. Roderick Bugeja - Life Resources Foundation / Lecturer UOM

Dr. Paulann Grech - Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Health Science University of Malta H.E. President Emeritus Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca

Dr. John Cachia - Commissioner of Mental Health

Dr. Stephanie Xuereb - CEO Mental Health Services

Dr. Stephen Spiteri - Member of Parliament & Shadow Minister for Health

Ms. Miriam Teuma - CEO Agenzija Zghazagh

Mr. Philip Chircop - Founder Grandparents Malta Foundation



**Dr. Roderick Bugeja**

During an online discussion on the subject matter the organisers gave a brief description of the project and launched an audio-visual production - 'I Owe It All To You' – penned and composed by DrLYNN and edited by George Aquilina.

Please find the link below of the Lyric Video "I Owe It All To You" published on DrLYNN 's facebook page. Listen and watch the video at <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=340772043844230>

**World Mental Health Day 2020:** World Mental Health Day is celebrated on October 10 every year to raise awareness of mental health issues across the globe and promote good mental health for people worldwide. This was first celebrated in 1992 at the initiative of the World Federation for Mental Health, a global mental health organization with members and contacts in more than 150 countries.

The theme for World Mental Health Day 2020 is Kindness in the view of the coronavirus pandemic, this year Mental Health has been a major topic of discussion across the globe and people are understanding why it is important to stay healthy mentally and emotionally. Coronavirus has affected thousands of people worldwide mentally, physically, financially, or emotionally but you need to overcome all that and learn to live peacefully.

## The Story of the Camilleri Family



The Camilleri family emigrated to Australia 1962

*Photo - Left: Joseph, Paula, Georgina, Joseph, (Jimmy) Emanuel. Back: Anthony*

After making all the necessary application and interviews to emigrate to Canada, the Cuban crises changed the Camilleri's plans. An urgent letter to Melbourne Australia paved the way to alter the family destiny.

Joseph Camilleri known as 'Il Jimmy ta' Hal Luqa' or 'Jimmy tal-Fjur' was a brilliant Maltese folklore singer (Ghannej) his popularity in Malta was such that when he visits country towns, he attracts many Ghanneja followers. In Hal Luqa Malta to-day stands a memorial, bust of Joseph Camilleri, a contribution to his achievements in folklore

singing.

**Jimmy** as he was known by the Maltese Community emigrated to Melbourne Australia with his son Emanuel on the MV Fearssea, Sitmar line arriving at station pier on September 1962.

The news that Jimmy was arriving, had brought many Maltese to Station Pier port Melbourne.

Several months later the rest of the family, Paula wife, Tony, Joseph and Georgina arrived to join Jimmy and Emanuel.

Emanuel who to-day holds the position of president of the Maltese Community Council of NSW, remember the humble beginnings in Australia of the Camilleri Family.

Life was difficult in those days; we had no social welfare, if anyone had a problem then the priest was the person to see, I remember the turmoil of the Vietnam war and conscription, many Maltese sent their sons back to Malta to avoid being called up. While others took their chance, I was one who luckily my birthday was not drawn through the conscription ballot.

Today I am survived by memories of my family, my father who still generate interest with people I meet in our community, my mother Paula who endured hours in a small kitchen preparing meals for the family and those visitors who called at our place to socialize with my father, our house was like a hotel, during the weekend full of friends listening to a tape recorder pumping out the sound of guitars and voices of the best folklore singer (Ghanneja.) of that era.

I have been residing in Sydney since my marriage in 1969, but I never forget the places I loved, Malta and Melbourne, which I visit at every opportunity. Now in the twenty first century our family had expended with first, second and third generation sibling scattered around Australia and America, and who knows if in the future some members of the clan will ever settle back in Malta, [Submitted by Emanuel Camilleri JP]





# AUSTRALIA HALL IN MALTA

## Saving this icon



**Story by Charles Miranda in Malta - Daily Telegraph Jan 2015**

In this Gallipoli Campaign centenary year, Australia Hall (described in the article as having been sold by Malta's Labour Party to pay off some of its debts) has made the national news in Australia.

This is an excellent piece, with good photographs – but note that the number of Gallipoli Campaign wounded which it gives as having been brought to Malta for care is that of ANZAC men only. The total number was around triple that. The hall accommodates up to 2000 men. (Picture supplied by Ella Pellegrini.

There is a common misconception in Malta that Australia Hall was built by the British using British public funds ('tar-regina'). In reality, it was built during the actual Turkish campaign using private donations from thousands of people in Australia who were called upon to do this for their compatriots, and responded enthusiastically.

**This knowledge only serves to make its recent history all the more repulsive: something that exists because ordinary men and women in Australia gave money they could ill afford to have a place built for their sons, brothers and fathers who were wounded in war on the other side of the world. Whatever happened to this historic building???**



How is the Pandemic affecting you? Riding the Covid-19 Wave in Brimbank is a project by Brimbank Libraries to document the current global pandemic, at a local level, within the Brimbank community. We are aiming to capture the voices, stories and experiences of our diverse community at this moment in history. Send us your images, written work and videos that capture how this period has impacted your life. Submissions received will be collated for an exhibition. Find more information and submit your experience here: <https://www.brimbanklibraries.vic.gov.au/index.php/what-s-on/512-riding-the-covid-19-wave-in-brimbank>



## One of the most beautiful architectural palaces in Malta

San Anton Palace is one of the most beautiful heritage monument in the country.

The Palace, which currently serves as the official residence of the President of Malta, was built around 1620 by Grand Master de Paule and throughout its history saw various alterations that changed it from a villa into a palace.

The works included a majestic tower, a stone

balustrade parapet while during the years the two upper floors of the building were demolished after they were heavily damaged during thunderstorms.

Grand Master de Paule had named the San Anton palace after his patron saint, St Anthony of Padova. The palace also has surrounding beautiful gardens which were opened for the public in 1882. Today, the palace boasts of precious works of art of great cultural value that decorate many of its rooms which hosted various foreign dignitaries and leaders throughout the years.

The magnificent characteristics and history of this palace are being featured every Sunday on TVM, before the 8pm news, on the programme 'Mill-Palazz'.



## Maltese doctor - a Dame in Queen's honours list

Clare Gerada is the first Maltese woman to be awarded a damehood

A UK-based Maltese doctor has been made a Dame by Queen Elizabeth II, in recognition of her trailblazing 40-year medical career in the UK.

Clare Gerada is the first Maltese woman to be awarded a damehood by the Queen, who named Gerada in her yearly

honours list "for services to general practice". It is the second time Gerada was named in the Queen's birthday honours, after she was awarded an MBE in 2000 for "services to medicine and drug misusers". Gerada said she was "humbled" by the award.

"I'm proud to have been able to serve my patients, my profession and my community for more than 30 years," Gerada wrote on Twitter on Friday night.

"I'm also told I'm the first Maltese woman to receive this award. Chuffed".

Gerada's parents were both Maltese who emigrated to the UK in the 1960s. Inspired by her father, a doctor from Żejtun, she studied medicine at University College London and trained in psychiatry.

She led the Royal College of General Practitioners as its first female chair in 50 years and is an expert on mental health and substance misuse.

### How Clare Gerada wants to help burnt-out Maltese doctors

Gerada serves as the medical director of NHS Practitioner Health, a state-run confidential service for UK-based doctors and dentists who suffer addiction and mental health issues, and also continues to see patients as a GP. "I began working in general practice as a 10-year-old, when I would accompany my father on his rounds after his Saturday morning surgery," she wrote in a 2010 editorial for the *Malta Medical Journal*. She is one of 12 women to be appointed a Dame Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire this year.



## REMEMBERING THE WEST GATE TRAGEDY 50 YEARS ON MALTESE AMONG THE DEAD MELBOURNE – AUSTRALIA

The Age – Australia 17 years ago

Just before midday on 15 October 1970, a 120 metre span of the half-built West Gate Bridge collapsed into the Yarra, Melbourne, killing 35 workers. A royal commission to investigate the cause of the collapse attributed the failure to a litany of errors in the structural design and method of erection of the bridge. The commission's findings paved the way for the strengthening of occupational health and safety laws in Australian workplaces.

The workers were killed when a section of the West Gate Bridge collapsed during construction. What is not so well known is that the surviving workers were sacked four days later and offered no assistance or support. When they returned to work almost two years later, the builder refused to re-hire the union shop stewards so their workmates went on strike for seven weeks. Health and safety have come a long way since 1970 but only after too many lives were lost and thanks to the role of unions.

It was the morning the world fell from under their feet as they worked atop the West Gate Bridge. Workers, from the supervisors to the riggers and the welders, heard bolts pop from their sockets like exploding light globes. Steel groaned in a futile effort to resist and maintain its integrity as gravity pulled hard. The section of bridge span in question was 128 metres of concrete and steel. The steel changed colour as it tried to hold on. The concrete cracked and exploded. The bridge's skeleton shook and trembled. Then, in the blink of an eye, span 10-11 of the construction phase, weighing in at 2000 tons, broke away and dropped 50 metres.

**The two Maltese workers were two of the unfortunate victims - Tony Falzon, 32, also a carpenter, who had emigrated from Malta seven before and Victor Gerada – ironworker.**

In those interminable seconds before the huge span plummeted 45 metres (150 feet) into the mud and waters of Melbourne's River Yarra, a young Maltese migrant, boilermaker's assistant, **Charlie Sant**, had the presence of mind to sit down on a box and await the worst and he was of the survivors.

### **Widow remembers the darkest day**

It had been a windy day and when Victor Gerada came home from work, he told his wife he had felt the bridge "moving about in the wind". His wife, Doris, was dismissive: "How could it move with all that concrete on it?"

That was two nights before part of the West Gate Bridge collapsed, killing 35 workers, including Mr Gerada, 32. With four young children to support, Mr Gerada, an ironworker, had left a job at ICI for better pay working on the bridge. The last day he went to work, Mrs Gerada was sitting at home in Altona breastfeeding her four-month-old baby when news was flashed on the television that the bridge had collapsed. The life she had built with her husband of 11 years was also wrecked.

Mrs Gerada said she knew immediately that her husband was dead, even though a neighbour took her to the site to check. She remembers the moment she saw his sleeve hanging down from a stretcher: "I couldn't move. I wanted to go and see his face but I couldn't walk."

The months following his death were hard: "I lost my memory for a while. I didn't know what was going on. I was like a zombie."

A friend cared for her baby until she could cope again. She did not remarry and for the last 33 years, as she will today, she has visited the bridge to mourn.

The couple, both Maltese-born, met in Malta when she was 18 and working in a cigarette factory and she said no one could replace him. "He was a saint. He never went out, never went for a beer. All he





had was his family. They don't do husbands like that anymore." For 19 years, she refused to cross the West Gate Bridge because it made her think of her husband and ask: "How could such a thing happen?"

She kept faith with her husband in other ways, staying in the house they built together until her four children - Joe, Charlie, Rita and Stephen, renamed Victor - were married. Danny Gardiner said he and three other former West Gate Bridge workers organised the annual memorial ceremony "so that people don't forget that

### **1970s: The West Gate Bridge disaster, 1970**

One of Australia's worst industrial disasters occurs when a section of West Gate Bridge collapsed during its construction, killing 35 men on the 15 October 1970. *Port Melbourne, West Gate Bridge. September 1970,*

## **Emeritus Dean and Professor in Tropical Medicine Herbert Michael Gilles (1921 – 2015)**



*Professor Herbert Gilles at the Wellcome Witness Seminar on 'British Contributions to Medical Research and Education In Africa after the Second World War' courtesy of History of Modern Biomedicine Research Group. Photo credit: Wellcome Library, London*

**Vice-President, former Dean and Professor in Tropical Medicine  
Herbert Michael Gilles CMG UOM KCSJ MSc DSc MD FRCP  
FFPH DMedSc.**

In a first reaction the Director of LSTM, Professor Janet Hemingway, said 'Professor Gilles has been an extra-ordinary tropical medical physician, and a great friend and long-standing colleague to many of us. We will miss his wit, his endearing enthusiasm and his ability to engage students and staff at all levels.'



*Prof. Gilles receiving the insignia of Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George from Queen Elizabeth II, 2005*

LSTM's longest serving Vice-President and former Dean, Professor Herbert Gilles was an exceptional figure in the world of tropical medicine. In 1949, Professor Gilles was House Physician on the Tropical Ward of the Liverpool Royal Infirmary, while studying for the Diploma in Tropical Medicine at LSTM. During this time he struck up a friendship that would influence LSTM and the course of tropical medicine as well as his own career.

As he explained at the time, "I was approached by the Dean of LSTM, Professor Maegraith, to take up the position of Lecturer at Large, which I readily accepted and which lasted from 1960 to 1965." The role took him to Nigeria, where he formed a department of preventative medicine at Ibadan University.

In Nigeria, Professor Gilles became the mentor of Professor Adetokunbo Lucas, emeritus WHO Director for Tropical Disease Research. 'I lost my close friend and adviser', said Professor Lucas. 'From 1962 onwards Professor Gilles was my mentor in redesigning public health teaching at the University of Ibadan. This is sad news indeed'

Returning to LSTM in 1965, he was offered a Senior Lecturer position by Professor Maegraith, before taking the Warrington Yorke Chair in Tropical Medicine.

Professor Gilles retired in 1986, having spent the previous five years as Dean of LSTM. His colleague, friend and former Director of LSTM, Emeritus Professor David Molyneux said in response to Professor Gilles death that 'I was privileged to have been able to count on Herbert Gilles as a colleague and friend for so many years in the School. He was one of the most celebrated tropical physicians of his

generation and throughout his life was committed to Liverpool. Always approachable, gentle and modest he offered the wisest of counsels. He was deeply respected throughout the world and the Schools greatest ambassador, his expertise was without peer. He will be greatly missed but he leaves an enduring legacy. Our sincere condolences to his beloved family.'

Professor Gilles continued to teach in Ireland, Italy and Malta and helping postgraduates who are seeking further training overseas. He was awarded the CMG for his outstanding work overseas in 2005 and in 2008 he was appointed Companion of the Most Exalted Order of the White Elephant by the King of Thailand for his involvement with the faculty of Tropical Medicine at Mahidol University in Bangkok.

Professor Herbert Gilles has contributed significantly in his field, publishing over 150 papers in scientific journals besides writing a number of books, including 'A Short Textbook of Public Health Medicine for the Tropics', co-written with Professor Lucas and first published in 1973, still used today by medical students with the 5<sup>th</sup> edition in preparation.

Since his retirement he remained involved with LSTM as vice-President and had a keen interest in the [FEPOW](#) project. In 1994 he was recipient of LSTM's highest award, the [Mary Kingsley Medal](#).

Herbert Michael Gilles was 94 years old when he died.

## Malta Diary Notorious characters – fascinating stories – some little-known aspects of shady Maltese characters

ALBERT FENECH

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jerome.fenech>

Every country has its share of notorious characters, Malta no less. I will relate the stories of some of the most notorious but strangely enough little is known or nowadays heard of them unless one bothers to delve back in the annals of history.



### The rise and fall of Abate Abbot Giuseppe Vella

Giuseppe Vella was born in Valletta, Malta in 1749. He died in Mezzomonreale in Palermo, Sicily in 1814. Sadly, he has not been given credit where credit is due – even though a highly negative and dubious credit. Academically he was accomplished and was highly fluent in Italian and claimed to be highly fluent in Arabic including the reading and writing of Arabic script.

Completing and continuing his studies in theology and the humanities he became a friar and was henceforth known as Abate (Abbot) Giuseppe Vella.

### Abate Vella claimed to have discovered ancient Arabic parchments

In 1780 he moved to Palermo in Sicily to follow a course of studies on the strength of a legacy which he inherited from his convent nun aunt from

monies paid by the faithful for the hearing of Holy Masses for the souls of the dead still in Purgatory. His fame exploded towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century when he made some highly startling claims that shook the nearby Italian peninsula and reverberated throughout Europe because his claims shook the very foundations of all European history.

Jien Christiane u jafuni b'Christina. Se nikteb ftit versi sabiex nitlobok tistax ixxandar, lil Michael Camilleri jafuh b'Kelinu Camilleri, tal-laqam "tas-slet". Huwa ghandu 75 sena. Ohtu Ganna tghix Franza u mizzewga liz-ziju tieghi. Hija tghalbitni nghina ghax ix-xewqa taghha hi tisma b'ahbaru, ghaliex f'daqqa wahda ma semghetx iktar minghandu u jien hawn fl'Awstralia iktar qrib taghhu ghalek saqsiet lili. Madana kollu jien ma nghandix mirakli, hlief insaqsi xi wiehed bhalek tistax tghini. Ohtu Ganna ghanda 81 sena u miskina tixtieq tisma minghandu. Christiane Sultana





Vella also claimed to have discovered lost books by Livy Titus Livius

Out of the blue Abate Vella announced that in his researches he had discovered no less than seventeen hitherto "lost" books by the Roman historian Livy (Titus Livius) while simultaneously he claimed to have come across a number of Arabic parchments which he was translating.

Having set the background for his intended rise to fame, Abate Vella published the theory that the Arabic documents he had translated showed clearly that the people of Sicily and some parts of Europe were in fact Arabian and not Sicilian or European at all. He titled his document 'Storia della Sicilia Islamica' (The History of Islamic Sicily).

Vella's fraudulent claims threw the Italian peninsula into confusion

His "revelations" took Europe by storm because they threatened the very proud Latin and Roman and later Christian foundation of the peninsula and many other parts of Europe. Suddenly, the ongoing glamour of a Latin and Christian Europe began to founder. It was like being told abruptly that the people you knew as your parents were not your parents at all because your actual parents were somebody else.

A hot debate spread throughout European literary and historic circles because on these "facts" it seemed the whole history of Europe had to be re-written.

However, doubts began to set in solidly about his literary ability and indeed his knowledge of Arabic began to be questioned soundly as the debate continued to rage.

Abate Vella died totally discredited in Palermo Sicily

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Tickets are \$15 each (+0.50 transaction fee per ticket)  
500 tickets available

Raffle is being drawn on Tuesday 1 December at 8pm live on our Facebook page.

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If you haven't already done so, follow us on our social channels. <https://www.facebook.com/MMGConcertBandofVictoria/>



## Alfred Gatt (1873 – 1937)

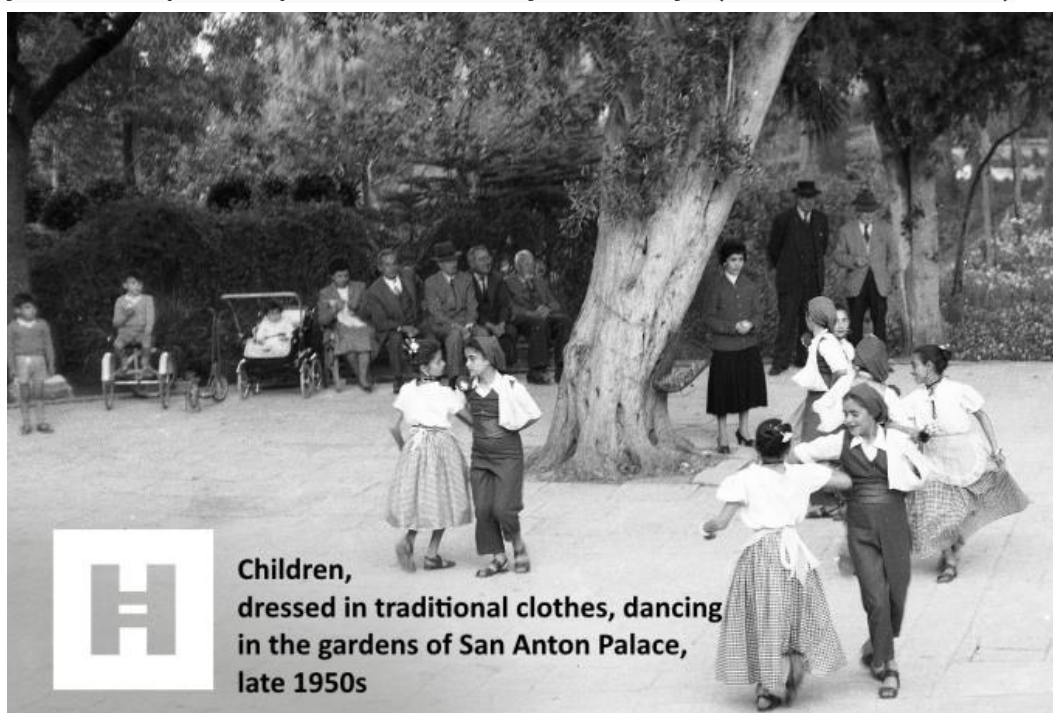
Dun Alfred, as he is popularly known with the Maltese, was a saintly diocesan priest whose wonderful human and spiritual qualities drew towards him thousands of Christians. He was mainly sought as a confessor and counselor. Many were sure that he had the charisma of healing and of reading the future and knowing the unknown.

Gatt was born on January 12, 1873, in Valletta, Malta, and was known for an ordinary good life for over forty years. But nothing special was noted in him and even through his first twenty years as a priest, except his sense of duty, his exactness in everything and his efforts to learn also from his own weaknesses.

Ordained priest in 1900, he served humbly in St. Paul's Collegiate Church and from 1909, as spiritual director to the Cloistered Nuns of St. Ursula's Monastery in Valletta. All changed for Reverend Gatt when, in 1921, his superiors posted him to the Church of St. Nicholas of Bari, known as that of "Tal-Erwieħ", or of the Holy Souls, in Merchants Street, Valletta, as chaplain of the Sodality of the Souls, where he soon became a confessor to many.

At first, it seemed to he was to lead the quiet life of a spiritual advisor who was to pass all day hearing confessions. But his charming gentleness drew to him all those who were in distress. He seemed to be able to penetrate the mind of penitents. Wonderful facts were attributed to him. Many claim that they recovered from illnesses through his intercession. But he himself attributed everything to the supernatural power of the Holy Face of the Suffering Christ, to whom he was particularly devoted.

Although Gatt suffered of an inflammation in the heart tissue, he was not allowed to rest during the last sixteen years of his life. People thronged to him all day long with Gatt hearing confessions for some twelve hours a day. He retired only when seriously ill just two weeks before his death. He passed away a saintly death on March 26, 1937, being Good Friday. His grave at the Santa Maria Addolorata Cemetery remains a place of pilgrimage to many to this day. (Charles Micallef NSW)



Children,  
dressed in traditional clothes, dancing  
in the gardens of San Anton Palace,  
late 1950s





## DAPTO CITIZENS BOWLING CLUB, NSW CLUB EXECUTIVE OFFICER SHAUN PARNIS

He was born in Bankstown, New South Wales, Australia and works at Dapto Citizens Bowling Club. He represented Malta in the 2006 Commonwealth Games and 2010 Commonwealth Games.

He was selected as part of the Maltese team for the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast in Queensland where he reached the semi finals of the Pairs with Brendan Aquilina.

In 2020 he was selected for the 2020 World Outdoor Bowls Championship in Australia.

The **2020 World Outdoor Bowls Championship** will to be held at the Broadbeach Bowls Club, Musgrave Hill Bowls Club and Club Helensvale on the Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia.



*Shaun teaching kids Sullivan and Amali nippers making sure survival in our waters*

Originally scheduled from 23 May to 7 June 2020, before the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak forced the postponement of the event as Australia's borders are closed to foreign travellers. It was rescheduled from 22 May to 6 June 2021 but then suffered a further delay with new dates of 7 September to 19 September being announced.

There are eight events that determine the 2020 world champions, the men's singles, doubles, triples and fours and the women's singles, doubles, triples and fours and in addition there are two overall team winners who receive the Leonard and Taylor trophies respectively.

**Postponement** The event followed suit of other sporting events around the world in early 2020, with the outbreak of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic wreaking havoc across the sporting industry. On March 17, 2020, World Bowls and host organisation Bowls Australia made the decision to postpone the event. No time was set as to when the event would be postponed

until, due to the uncertain nature of the coronavirus. "We believe this is the right decision to minimise the risk of public exposure to the coronavirus, which the World Health Organisation recently declared a global pandemic," World Bowls Chief Executive Officer Gary Smith said at the time.

It was announced that the event would be held on 25 May to 6 June 2021



## Scheduling of Medieval chapels

- Santa Duminka, Had-Dingli (Hal Tartani)
- Santa Marija ta' Bir Miftuh, Gudja
- San Ċir, Rabat
- Wasla tal-Familja Mqaddsa mill-Egittu, Kemmuna
- Santa Marija ta' Hal Xluq, Siggiewi
- Santa Marija tas-Sokkors, Bormla

**6 Medieval chapels awarded  
highest level of protection at Grade 1**



6 medieval chapels of historical importance have been accepted to be scheduled at Grade 1 and thus awarded the highest level of protection. Minister for National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government José Herrera, said that this comes following submissions made by the Superintendence of

Cultural Heritage to the Executive Council of the Planning Authority, Two of these chapels (Santa Duminka, Had Dingli (Hal Tartani) and Santa Marija ta' Bir Miftuh, Gudja) were among the first 10 parishes that were documented in 1436 apart from those of Birgu and Mdina. The 6 sites proposed for scheduling are Santa Duminka, Had Dingli (Hal Tartani); Santa Marija ta' Bir Miftuh, Gudja; San Cir, Rabat; Wasla tal-Familja Mqaddsa mill-Egittu, Kemmuna; Santa Marija ta' Hal Xluq, Siggiewi and Santa Marija tas-Sokkors, Bormla.

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage has an essential role in ensuring the protection and safeguarding of our country's national heritage, said Minister José Herrera.

"It is of great importance that our country's historic buildings continue to be safeguarded and protected as these buildings are an integral part of our history and the identity of our country," stated the Minister. He added that the Superintendence "carries out instrumental work in a continuous manner so that most our country's heritage is not lost once and for all."



#### *About Albert Fenech*

*Born in 1946, Albert Fenech's family took up UK residence in 1954 where he spent his boyhood and youth before temporarily returning to Malta between 1957 and 1959 and then coming back to Malta permanently in 1965. He spent eight years as a full-time journalist with "The Times of Malta" before taking up a career in HR Management but still retained his roots by actively pursuing freelance journalism and broadcasting for various media outlets covering social issues, current affairs, sports and travel.*

## ROSARIO MIZZI AND ANTONIO AZZOPARDI

ALBERT FENECH



**Rosario Mizzi and Antonio Azzopardi were hanged for murder but was Mizzi framed and was Azzopardi buried alive**

### **ROSARIO MIZZI – "IL-LAJS"**

The scene now moves forward to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and two very controversial death penalty executions of Rosario Mizzi known as "Il-Lajs" and Antonio Azzopardi known as "Ninu Xkora" in 1894 and 1908 respectively.

Mizzi had been sentenced to death by hanging, for murder. However, shortly after his execution doubts began to emerge as to whether he had actually been guilty as charged, for murder. At the time Lord Gerald Strickland was Secretary to the Government and he was soundly criticised for a miscarriage of justice. When later he became Malta's Prime Minister he called the whole affair "a dirty business" to confirm there had been a complete miscarriage of justice and that Mizzi had been framed for a murder he did not commit.

Lord Gerald Strickland was accused of complicity in Rosario Mizzis frame up



### **TERRINU BONO – "Terrinata"**

Ironically, later, Strickland was himself the victim of a frame-up. He was the leader of the Constitutional Party (pro-British) in heated rivalry with the Partito Nazionale (pro-Italian) during the build-up to the Second World War. Nearing the eve of the General Election (which Strickland was expected to win), the PN produced a "witness" named Terrinu Bono who swore an oath that he had seen Strickland wearing the robes of a freemason and entering the freemasons' lodge in lower Valletta. In highly Roman Catholic Malta, this was an enormous scandal, a bombshell. The Church immediately stepped in and pronounced an "interdict" on Strickland, his party and his newspaper which meant that anybody who voted for his



party (which was then in coalition with the Malta Labour Party) or read his newspaper would be guilty of mortal sin.

Subsequently, Strickland lost the election but it later emerged that Terrinu Bono, who worked as a waiter, was a known drunkard and a liar and had been paid by the Partito Nazionale to fabricate the story! Hence, Terrinu's name became part of Maltese parlance because ever after the term "Terrinata" signified a frame-up i.e. being framed – and this perpetuated his notoriety!



### **ANTONIO AZZOPARDI "NINU XKORA"**

However, our concern here is with Antonio Azzopardi known as "Ninu Xkora" who was born in Valletta but resided in Hamrun. "Xkora" means sack and his nickname came about as a result of his being constantly seen carrying a sack slung over his shoulder, a trait which was commonplace in those days, the sack being used to collect all useful bits and pieces that others had thrown away.



Azzopardi was found guilty of murdering his daughter's fiancé, sentenced to death and duly hung. As was the custom in those days, burial had to take place just one hour after the execution and thus Azzopardi was hastily buried.

Shortly after doubts began to creep in as to whether he had actually died on the gallows or whether he had been buried alive. Azzopardi was a tall man and some doctors said the length of rope was too short for a man of Azzopardi's stature. This meant he had probably not completely broken his atlas vertebrae and was therefore still alive although unconscious.

The newspapers "In-Nahla" and "Risorgimento" took up the story and the doctors that had pronounced him dead took libel proceedings against the newspapers. Surprisingly, they lost the case as the media lawyers cited the story of a girl who fell from a balcony and although her head and neck were badly twisted she was still alive.

This reinforced the probability that Antonio "Ninu Xkora" Azzopardi had in fact been buried alive.

As a boy I remember stories of Ninu's ghost being "seen" woefully plodding through Hamrun's main road at night and bad boys (like yours truly) were very often threatened with being taken away by Ninu in his sack unless they sharply mended their ways!

Hamruns St Joseph High Road in the 1920s said to have been haunted by the ghost of Ninu Xkora

## **How superstitious are we really – is it inculcated in the Mediterranean character?**

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Palmistry all in the power of your hand born lucky or unlucky

My younger brother Edward was aged about four at the time. Unlike me, with my dark hair and dark eyes, he had a head of silvery-golden hair and his eyes were a dreamy light blue.

We were out on a stroll with my dear late mother Pauline when she stopped to talk to a lady acquaintance. The lady looked at my brother and said “What beautiful eyes he has”.

### **The Inquisitors Palace at Vittoriosa**

A few days later Edward started complaining of vision problems and it was noticeable his eyes were crossing each other. A visit to the optician confirmed he had what is medically termed as “a lazy eye”. Spectacles were ordered and he has had to wear them ever since.

Nothing but nothing would convince my mother otherwise than that her acquaintance had put a curse on Edward by remarking on his “beautiful eyes” – a belief she carried to her grave scores of years later. That is, a curse out of envy and jealousy.

### **A variety of stones all said to ward off evil spells**

Some years back a Maltese historian – Yanika Schembri Fava – carried out research on the extent to which the Maltese believe in curses and the banishment of evil spirits. She not only went through literary works and came across whole volumes of poetry about curses and the evil eye, but also studied this phenomenon throughout Maltese towns and villages.



She concluded that when we speak about a curse it is when a person, for some reason or another, either out of anger or envy, wishes to put a curse on someone else.

The power of the curse and the exercise of evil is common throughout the Mediterranean region and was widespread in the Maltese Islands throughout the centuries and as far back as pre-Roman times. Indeed, there was a time when everybody believed in the power of a curse, perhaps less so nowadays with a high proportion of sceptics – that is, until some misfortune befalls them!

It was a common belief that there are those who are born with the ability to put curses on others, and indeed there are those who actually still believe this. Others even

believe that they are born cursed, living continuously under a black cloud and that everything they touch, instead of turning to gold, turns to dust. But do the Maltese believe in the power of the curse? Yanika Schembri Fava, who has researched this subject, says yes.

“From my research it emerges that there is full belief in the curse, although perhaps in poetry one doesn’t find it anymore, but in general people still believe that there are those who can put a curse on others, and many still believe in the evil eye and making the sign of the horn to ward off evil is still very popular”



### **Evil eye tattoo - Warding off evil from the depths on fishing boats**

In the past, many used to come out with a litany of advice on how to ward off the evil eye with many superstitions that this used to bring about a curse.

“Cleansing” one’s home against the evil eye was more popular in the past, with people using rock salt, garlic cloves as well as olive oil and olive leaves – which are mixed in a pan and set on fire together with a piece of clothing belonging to the person who is thought to have put

the curse on them. At the Inquisitors’ Palace there are ancient verses even in Arabic about the power of the curse and the evil eye.

It is still an annual practice that a priest from the parish visits all the homes of residents to accord an annual blessing which also acts as protection against the penetration of evil spirits.

Such superstitions were already being felt from the time of the Roman Inquisition. Protecting oneself from being cursed was a daily necessity among the common people.

### **A line of salt laid behind the front door will ward off evil**

As weird as it may seem the evil eye (*L-Ghajj*) is commonly accepted as ‘a fact’ – even by the Church (according to some). The common belief is that a person can place a curse on you just by looking your



way. In Malta (and in Italy) it is believed that making the sign of the *Qrun* (direct translation is a bull's horn) will deflect such evil. The *Qrun* is done when you point your index finger and your little finger, and it is considered permissible to do such a sign behind your back to ward off any evil.



### The two finger sign to ward off the evil eye

Putting a line of salt on the floor behind your front door will prevent the evil eye from entering your house. If you feel your house does have negative energies, you can cleanse it by burning olive tree leaves at midnight on Easter while reciting prayers.

To prevent others from cursing you there are other precautionary measures such as spitting on your hair before throwing it away.

All fishermen invariably have an eye painted on both sides of the prow of their boats, looking down into the sea to ward off the evils

below the water.

When someone died, it was common for relatives to cover all the mirrors in their house with a black cloth as a sign of respect: looking in the mirror was considered to be a sign of vanity and disrespectful of the deceased. Another tradition was that of removing handles from the front door when someone passes away. These also used to be removed on Good Friday and the front door adorned with black cloth.

On a happier note, whenever there is a marriage in the family or a new baby is born, it is custom to hang a coloured ribbon on the front door's handle. White is for marriage, pink is for a baby girl and blue for a baby boy. This is a very sweet tradition but unfortunately it's slowly disappearing from custom too – although still used.

It is highly noticeable too that football players from Mediterranean countries and others of the Roman Catholic religion make the Sign of the Cross several times when entering or leaving the pitch while Muslim players extend their palms skyward at hip level while looking up to thank Allah. This is all to show their gratitude and thanksgiving for having played well and having avoided injury.



After months of inactivity, KorMalta has decided to finally return to choral singing with a project that brings the choir to its origins. KorMalta will sing open air in an amphitheatre. It was in Greece in fact that the word 'chorus' was born and was related both to sing and dance.

For this reason, the choir will perform repertoire from the Renaissance to the Contemporary era, all centred on the themes of dancing together, singing together, praying together and partying together.

This is the very essence of the choir: to be united, to be together, it said in a statement. Although the concert, named 'KorMalta – United We Stand: From the Renaissance to Today' will be free of charge, booking still needs to be made beforehand [here](#).

The concert will take place on the 17<sup>th</sup> and

## KorMalta returns to choral singing

18<sup>th</sup> October at 5.00 pm at the Greek Theatre, MCAST Institute of Creative Arts complex, Mosta. The 37 choristers will be divided into three groups. COVID-19 measures being taken into consideration

As soon as the health authorities published the guidelines useful for returning to singing in choir, KorMalta took steps to return to rehearse by fully adhering to these guidelines. For this reason, KorMalta started doing study sessions outdoors, in small groups of choristers, in particular at the MCAST Amphitheatre.

The project had the dual purpose of returning to meet KorMalta, and sing in person, and be a small example in their choral world, of how it is possible to return to activity by following the guidelines in a total way. As a COVID-19 precaution, all guests' temperatures will be taken and hands must be sanitised upon arrival. Guests will be asked to wear masks throughout the event and social distancing respected at all times. [NEWSBOOK.COM]

# THE ARCHBISHOP'S CURIA

From church .mt.



Palazzo Manresa was erected by Fra Francesco Rosignoli, a Jesuit, as a Retreat House between 1743 and 1751 in a quite area of Floriana which was slowly developing as a suburb of Valletta. The baroque building stood on a high ridge with an unobstructed view of Marsarmxett Harbour. The building features this intricate portal on an outstanding facade, all of which were recently restored. Archbishop Charles Scicluna was instrumental in ensuring that Casa Manresa undergoes these extensive refurbishment and maintenance works.

The archbishop's curia, as it is known, was intended mainly for the purpose of organizing spiritual exercises as had been designed by the Founder of the Society of Jesus, St. Ignatius, during his stay in the town of Manresa, Spain. Fra Rosignoli became the first rector of the House.

## ARCHITECTURE

Its main door is flanked diagonally with a set of columns and is reached

by a flight of steps. It is decorated with garlands on its frames and is surmounted by a figure of the Madonna and Child. The facade extends both sides with two rows of windows with elaborate sculptures.

Internally, the building is likewise decorated with tines portals, classical corridors and an imposing staircase.

**THE CHAPEL** But the principal attraction is the chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Manresa, designed by the famous Renaissance Italian Architect, Carapēcchia.

It has a unique oval shape and has five altars, all of which with paintings by the Order's favourite painter, Antoine Favray.

**WORKS OF ART** The main altar is made of intricate marble and mosaic and it is adorned with a silver reliquary bearing the relics of St. Calcedonius, an early Christian martyr. A second chapel, dedicated to St. Calcedonius, is found at the back of the Palace having a separate entrance through Vincenzo Bugeja Street. This chapel was constructed by Fr. Domenico Calvi, the successor of Fra Rosignoli.

The corridors are decked with a collection of paintings while the refectory hall is covered with colourful murals by Pasquale Leonetti, commissioned by Fra Calvi.

The Palace became Diocesan Seminary in 1858 which had been for many centuries at Mdina. For a brief period in 1921, the Seminary returned to Mdina until Palazzo Manresa was adapted and enlarged to accommodate the increasing number of students.

During the war the building was damaged and was later restored and modernized.

When the Mater Ad Mirabilis Teachers' Training College at Tal-Virtù, Rabat, was forced to close down in 1977, the Seminary moved to Tal-Virtù while Palazzo Manresa became the Archbishop's Curia. All the pastoral and administrative offices of the Archdiocese were transferred from the Bishop's Palace in Valletta to Palazzo Manresa at Floriana. The old Valletta Curia now houses the church's tribunals.

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## MUŻIKA KLASSIKA FIT-TOKK T'GĦAWDEX

Ikolli nistqarr li ma ddispjacinix li lqajt l-istedina tas-Sinjura Mariella Spiteri Cefai għall-Kunċert ta' mużika klassika u semi klassika li hija stess idderigiet fi Pjazza Indipendenza Victoria nhar il-Gimgha fil-għaxija 9 ta Ottubru 2020. Kien qed jiehu sehem il-Cordia Kwartet bis-sehem ukoll tal-klarinet u pjanu. Milli stajt nara hađu sehem baritnu u tenur minn Malta u żewġ soprani femminili minn Għawdex. Minhabba din l-imxija ma tqassmux programmi (nifhem li xorta setghu dawn tqiegħdu fuq mejdina x'mkien qrib il-palk u kulhadd mar ha kopja) u allura la niftakar l-ismijiet tal-partecipanti u lanqas il-bicċiet li smajna li kienu ferm interpretati tajjeb mis-solisti għalkemm is-sehem tal-Compere kien wieħed tajjeb. Il-pjazza li fiha jien min jaf kemm ipprezentajt serati varjati iżda li issa ma għadnix niġi msejjah, forsi għax ma għadnix tajjeb (għalkemm dejjem tgħallimt li “l-

inbid jissokta jitjeb iktar ma jgħaddi ż-żmien minn fuqu” u li “ż-żmien isajru l-bajtar”), kienet mimlija bin-nies li lkoll setghu jgawdu d-distanza soċjali bla tbatija u dan dovut għax-xogħol siewi li għamlu l-uffiċjali tal-Kunsill tal-Kultura fi hdan il-Ministeru għal Għawdex li kien responsabbli minn din l-attività kultura. Harget serata bnazzi u sabiha u l-atmosfera kienet wahda ferm tajba u jalla jkollna iktar bħalha għalkemm dan il-virus harbat lil kulhadd u ma nafx kemm ser itul! Grazzi mill-għid u Prosit lil Mariella tal-istedina għax kieku ma kenitx hi ma kontx inkun naf b'din l-attività; ma niftakarx li rajt xi Poster x'imkien għal dan l-appuntament! L-għajta nofs il-bejgħ nismagħhom għidu!

**Kav Joe M Attard**

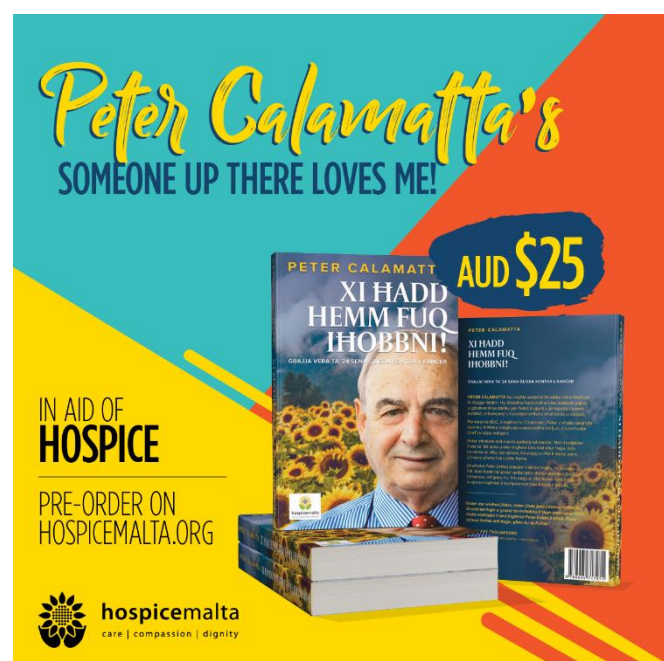
## HOSPICE MALTA - CARE/COMPASSION//DIGNITY

HOSPICE MALTA is a registered NGO with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations. For the past 30 years, Hospice has provided patient-centred palliative care, as well as psychological

assistance, to persons suffering from serious illnesses including cancer, motor neuron disease, and other illnesses related to heart, liver and respiratory conditions. Hospice's services, which are provided to over 1300 patients annually, and include also the provision of equipment (e.g. syringe drivers, wheelchairs, hospital type beds etc.) for home use, are completely free of charge. Hospice also looks after the families of the patients during this difficult time and provides support and bereavement counselling. We depend heavily on a large number of volunteers who assist the multidisciplinary team in terms of services, day to day operations, planning and assisting at events. We manage to sustain these services mainly through the generous donations we receive during the year, as well as a number of fundraising initiatives which are held. At the moment we are

promoting Peter Calamatta's Book recalling how he is a long term cancer survivor. This book called "Xi Hadd Hemm Fuq l'hobbni" and prized AUD\$25 ( Please see photo) is an inspirational book to those passing through difficult times. All proceeds from the sale of this book are going to Hospice Malta.

Would you kindly pass on this information to the Maltese communities. Should you require more information about Hospice and Peter Calamatta's Book, please do not hesitate to contact me on [andrew.zammit@hospicemalta.org](mailto:andrew.zammit@hospicemalta.org). Our contact telephone no. is [00356\) 21440085](tel:0035621440085).





## FREE CARMEN THE MALTESE

Carmen just wants to live her life in Melbourne the way she wants. Bingo, Pastizzi and the clubs.

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## Four Maltese runners in World Athletics Half Marathon Championships



NEWSBOOK <https://newsbook.com.mt/>

world, including Ugandan Joshua Cheptegei, who in the past three months broke two world records on the 5k and 10k distance. In the women's race, Ethiopia's Netsanet Gudeta, who won in Valencia two years ago in a women-only world record time, will defend her world half marathon title.

In preparation for the event, the four athletes took part in a three-week training camp in high altitude in Font Romeu, France, to ensure that they are prepared in a professional manner for this important appointment.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, only elite athletes will be taking part, with the mass race being cancelled. World Athletics (WA) is however encouraging runners all around the world to run a half marathon wherever they are on 17 October 2020. Joining the virtual run is completely free – you only need to create an account on the specifically created online platform.

Prior to the departure, Andy Grech, President of Athletics Malta said: "This is one of the most important annual appointments for the Maltese athletic community. As an Association, we have sought to give our athletes the best possible preparation despite the challenges we've faced in the past months. The four athletes have really pushed hard over the past weeks and I look forward to a number of top performances this Saturday".

Four Maltese long-distance runners have left Malta for Gdynia, Poland, where on Saturday they will be taking part in the World Championships on the Half Marathon distance.

Lisa Bezzina, Joelle Cortis, Charlton Debono and Stefan Azzopardi will be flying the Maltese flag in this important bi-annual event which had originally been scheduled earlier this year but postponed till October in view of the current coronavirus pandemic.

The delegation will be led by Andy Grech, Athletics Malta President, while the team will be supported by National Team Endurance Coach Ivan Rozhnov.

These athletes will be running the 21.1k distance along side some of the best talent around the

**Some people never learn. They try to put you down when you are succeeding and achieving as we say in Maltese – Hadd ma jghidlek ahsel wiccek biex tkun isbah minni**





**Malta Radio station 89.7 Bay rebrands**

**Bay has embarked on a new schedule which will see you through the coming weeks and months,**

***We are proud of our Maltese Achievers***



Established in 1975, the The Malta School of Music – originally situated in Old Bakery Street in Valletta, has been the one of the most effective governmental schools in the music performance and artistic field. Over the years thousands of students have attended music lessons at the school and many of them furthered their studies both locally and abroad.

The Malta School of Music is now situated in the newly refurbished centralised premises in Hamrun and forms part of the Visual and Performing Arts Schools under the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Innovation. The School of Music engages of Malta's top musicians and pedagogues who constantly strive to help each students achieve their highest potential in music appreciation, music knowledge and understanding, composition, performance and musicianship through exciting and effective music programmes and opportunities.

Furthermore the school endeavours to invite various foreign tutors to provide master classes and workshops for students and teachers in which new approaches and methodologies are experienced and explored. The main objective of the school is to prepare students for careers as creative musicians and performers who can successfully contribute to the further development and evolution of the musical heritage.

The School of Music offers forty-one different courses, which cater for the young learner and for the advanced student. Students at the school attend a weekly individual performance lesson on the instrument of their choice as well as a group music knowledge and understanding lesson. Our youngest students start their musical training through specially designed courses in Music and Movement, which provide a solid foundation for the years to come.

The school caters for the study of practically all the orchestral instruments as well as bagpipe, accordion, saxophone, contemporary guitar, contemporary voice, bass guitar, pianoforte and classical voice. In addition to the study of the traditional concert repertoire, students are encouraged to work on various styles including contemporary and jazz, and to endorse works by local composers.

Students at the School of Music benefit from unique opportunities in which they can perform varied repertoire in chamber setting and also form part of the various ensembles that participate in various performances both at school level and in various venues around the island throughout the year. Some of these include the cello, clarinet, flute, guitar, saxophone and violin ensembles, jazz combos, the wind band and various other groups that are set up through the hard work of the respective teachers. All music performance courses are combined with the harmonic and historical background gained during the music knowledge and understanding classes. Aural perception, harmony and counterpoint, musical history, orchestration, analysis, sight-singing and performance involve a wide range of activities and strategies for building up our students' musical profile.

The Malta School of Music respects and values the worth of each student, offering individualised and differentiated programmes in the pursuit of knowledge and learning through experience. The open communication between students, staff and administration helps us to achieve a better understanding of the needs of our school as a community whose individual members are a source of creative energy in a diverse and ever-changing musical world. The academics at the School of Music are very proud of the students' various accomplishments over the years and look forward to more years of creative output.



#### MALTIN LIVING ABROAD

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Posted by [Melisande Aquilina](#)

The Maltese wall lizard, or '**Gremxula ta' Malta**', is a small lizard with a slender body, a scaled head and a large abdomen, and is endemic to the Maltese islands and to the Pelagian Islands; a group of small islands found between [Malta](#) and Tunisia. It is found nowhere else in the world.

The Maltese countryside abounds with wall lizards, especially in spring and summer. These emerge in the early morning and spend a great deal of their time sunning themselves on stones and walls, thence their common name of 'wall lizard'. The wall lizard feeds mostly on insects and small animals such as beetles, ants, woodlice and snails, however it can also survive on fruits and vegetables. This lizard is not harmful in any way, and can moreover be beneficial to man, since it actually feeds on a number of animals which are considered to be pests.

Not every individual wall lizard has the same colour scheme. Some are predominantly green with a yellow or orange coloration on the underside of the neck, while others are more drab, being mainly brownish and without the bright coloured neck. The males are generally larger than the females, and more brightly coloured, as well as being more territorial. The territorial male positions himself in the centre of his chosen territory and bobs his head up and down to display the brightly coloured neck region. He does this to simultaneously warn off any other males, as well as attract females.

If a female lizard is attracted by this display, the couple will engage in a courtship 'dance' which involves the two running after each other until they eventually mate. A few days following the mating, the female will lay her eggs either in soil or under a stone. This generally occurs in spring, and the eggs hatch in the following period from June to August, that is, in the summer months. During this season, the Maltese countryside becomes filled with a multitude of hatchlings all running about in search of food, before the onset of the cold winter months.

## THE MALTESE WALL LIZARD

### "IL-GREMXULA"

When the weather turns cold, lizards seek sheltered places where to spend the summer months. The local wall lizard does not hibernate as do lizards which live in colder climates than those of the Maltese islands.

There are a number of folktales associated with these lizards, especially those found on the islet of [Filfla](#). Perhaps the most widespread of these claims is that the wall lizards of Filfla actually have two tails. Many lizards have the ability to shed their tail if they are hotly pursued, especially if they are grabbed by it. This is a defence mechanism, after which the lizard is then able to re-grow a new tail. Occasionally the old tail does not separate completely from the body and is left attached to it by a piece of skin. When the new one grows, the two tails fuse, and the lizard may seem to have two tails. This phenomenon happens to lizards the world over, and is not peculiar just to the subspecies which lives on Filfla. Different islands of the Maltese group have different subspecies of wall lizard living on them. These different races vary both in size and coloration. The lizards of the islands of Malta, Gozo and Comino are the most populous of these subspecies, and are normally greenish and speckled. The largest subspecies of the four, lives on the island of Filfla, and is generally blackish with blue spots. The islet of Fungus Rock has its own subspecies of wall lizard, which has a reddish belly. Following a rat invasion a decade ago, the particular subspecies found on the Islets of Saint Paul, known as the Selmunett Wall Lizard, is unfortunately, believed to have become almost extinct.

National legislation is in place to protect the Maltese wall lizard and capturing or killing this animal is illegal. Public appreciation and participation is of the utmost importance and it is imperative for us to safeguard these reptiles which are unique and part of the natural heritage of our country.

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## Prison in Fort Saint Angelo Il-Birgu, Malta

This almost-forgotten underground dungeon housed several convicts over the years, including Caravaggio.



**ONE OF MALTA'S MOST** well-known landmarks, Fort Saint Angelo, was fortified in 1530, when the Order of Saint John came to the island. The original structure, which was crumbling, was rebuilt and became the residence of the head of the Catholic military order, as well as the organization's headquarters.

The massive fort has several rooms that reflect its crucial role in Maltese history, especially during the Great Siege, which took place a few decades after its construction. But beneath the fort itself lies a prison which was greatly feared and housed many high-ranking offenders within the order. It was rediscovered by the British in 1913.

The guva, or oubliette, was chiseled out of stone underneath the fort and could only be accessed through a trapdoor in its ceiling. The oval-shaped prison is situated opposite the Chapel of Nativity, and was originally a water cistern. Soon, however, errant knights were locked up there to languish as punishment for various crimes. Shelves and niches were carved into the walls to hold candles or lamps.

One of the most notable prisoners who served some time in the guva was the infamous artist Caravaggio, who was confined there in the early 17th century before he escaped the fort and the island.

Scratched on the walls of this grim and often unnoticed oubliette are various designs and inscriptions, dating back to as early as 1532, almost immediately after the fort's construction. A lot of the graffiti, which is written in different European languages including Latin, reflects the despair of those holed up in the underbelly of the vast fort.

A later inscription by a knight who was accused of stealing silver from the church and melting it down, reads:

"John James Sandilands // Imprisoned in this living grave // Where evil triumphs over good // To the satisfaction of my enemies // So much for friendship."

Sandilands was later executed for his crime. Another prominent inscription features the shield of a French knight, whose family escutcheon is a swan beneath a chevron, with a right and left star respectively and a rose. The names of Italian knights Leonardv, Brvnnv, and Annibale Parucci are still seen, with the year 1573 carved underneath the inscriptions from the Bible.

The guva was most likely a temporary prison, holding convicts for brief periods. Although the oubliette is not accessible, there is a monitor which shows the 360 degree interior, as well as photographs of the graffiti and its history.

**WHEN WE CONNECT, WE FEEL BETTER**



## MALTESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

Do not forget to  
encourage Maltese  
Canadians to apply for  
the new Lehen Malti  
Scholarship for  
2020-21

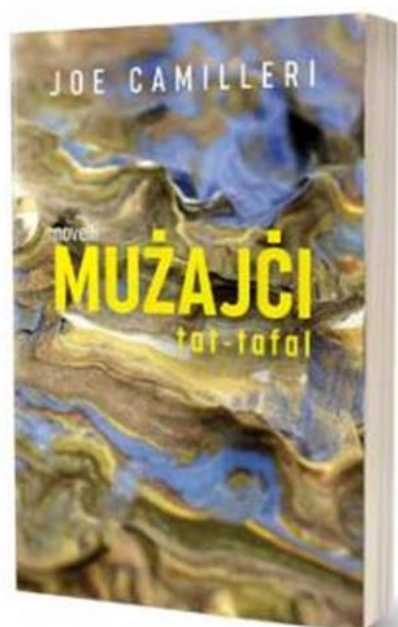


### New -Lehen Malti- \$2000 Scholarship 2020/21 scholastic year.

#### Qualification Details:

- Applicants must be of Maltese descent & live in Canada
- Submissions must be for Post Secondary Education & Training
- Submit a paper of no less than 1000 words on the  
Maltese Migration to Canada
- Submit a 5 minute personal video stating why you should be considered
- Deadline for receipt of all applications is October 31st, 2020.
- Applications and videos can be sent electronically to Lehen Malti at:  
lehenmalti@hotmail.com

## Mużajċi tat-tafal (clay mosaics)



Another book of short stories by Joe Camilleri

*Mużajċi tat-tafal* (Clay mosaics) is another publication of short stories by Gozitan writer Joe Camilleri. The 323-page book, another prestigious production by Horizons, contains 16 stories of a psychological, introspective and socio-cultural nature. *Mużajċi tat-tafal* includes a critical overall study by Prof. Charles Briffa of Camilleri's short story-writing.

In this publication, some characters give an impression of strength and wholeness. Yet hidden cracks pervade their personality. Human fragility provides an underlying thematic coherence. One discerns contemporary and post-modern themes such as inner, familiar and cultural conflicts, the pangs of separation, social emargination and inacceptance, unattained aspirations, the exploitation of labour. Various emotions surface in these narratives. Yet, the yearning for love predominates.

These short stories are mainly set in a local environment. The characters are ordinary people. Many of them are victims of fear, of insecurity, of tension, of uncertainty, of disillusion and frustration. Some

want to reconcile their past with their present, but are fearful of the skeleton in the cupboard. Marital situations flare up due to lack of genuine communication and unnecessary stubborn pride and pique. Other vulnerable characters are victims of unscrupulous people, of their obsessions or else of schizophrenia. Many are nostalgic, endowed with a rich heart. They yearn for a cuddle of appreciation and desire to be understood.

These literary short stories are written in a very pleasant and flowing style. Camilleri makes use of flashbacks, zigzagging between past and present experiences. Readers find thought-provoking patterns of expressive realism and symbolism, with underlying subtle comments. The author uses idiomatic and modern Maltese, with a wide semantic field. The use of dialect makes dialogue more realistic and compelling.

*Mużajċi tat-tafal* ought to appeal to a wide range of readers. It is the fourth publication of short stories by Joe Camilleri, following *Solitudni fil-Folla* (2007), *Fir-Rokna tas-Silenzju* (2008) and *Żwiemel tar-Riħ* (2010) which were very well received by readers and literary critics.



Assoċjazzjoni Wirt il-Kalkara notes with satisfaction the restoration works being carried out throughout this year on several derelict buildings and structures found in Fort Ricasoli. It was this Association that back in 2018 started a campaign of information and awareness regards the much-needed comprehensive restoration on the largest fort in Europe. The Association took the initiative to prepare a detailed report on the extensive damage found and provided several other suggestions one can opt to safeguard, restore and upkeep this fort. In 2019, with the efforts of the Kottonera Foundation under the chairmanship of Hon. Glenn Bedingfield, cleansing works, maintenance and evictions were initiated.

Within the same year, the Government of Malta allocated an investment of €1,000,000 so that

## RESTORATION OF FORT RICASOLI - KALKARA

restoration works commissioned by the Restoration Directorate could start on several derelict structures and buildings. Throughout this year 2020 several restoration works were carried out among of which were in dire need of attention. The Assoċjazzjoni Wirt il-Kalkara, not only would like to praise the professional work that is being carried out by the Restoration Directorate and the ongoing management from the Kottonera Foundation but would also like to appeal to the Government of Malta to allocate more funds for this year so that restoration works could continue on this massive project, especially on the particular zones that are at the most dangerous state of collapse. By collaborating and working together, and with keen expectations of alternative use of this fort, we will continue working hard to preserve our heritage. Credit for photo: Restoration Directorate



**MALTESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWS**  
**Book of the Month in Canadian Book Stores**  
**for Maltese Canadian author Marthèse Fenech**  
**Congratulations Marthèse!**

Malta is becoming well-known by many in Canada  
 and throughout North America  
 thanks to your magnificent novels and writing around and  
 about the glorious period in Maltese History  
 the Sovereign Military Order of Knights of Saint John of Malta.

**WHO CAN AFFORD NOT TO  
 READ THIS MALTESE  
 JOURNAL?**  
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 KNOW THE INFORMATION  
 PUBLISHED IN THIS JOURNAL.**  
**OUR JOURNAL IS READ AND  
 ENJOYED AT HOMES,  
 LIBRARIES, SCHOOLS, CLUBS,  
 NURSING HOMES,  
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 GOVERNMENTS'  
 DEPARTMENTS AND  
 AGENCIES. OUR AIM IS TO  
 PUBLISH THEM IN A BOOK.**  
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**maltesejournal@gmail.com**