

# Maltese eNewsletter

Journal of Maltese Living Abroad

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**MALTA EMIGRANTS' COMMISSION**



**Serving the Diaspora**

## CROSSING OVER

One last step in Malta, one first step in Australia  
two steps that changed me from an emigrant to immigrant,  
as I took the plunge and crossed the Rubicon of an uncharted destiny.  
Can a migrant change his identity the way he changes his nationality?  
This is the question that seeks an answer!!!

(the late) MANUEL NICHOLAS BORG - VICTORIA AUSTRALIA

## ‘Dar l-Emigranti’ - 50th Anniversary

### A fitting tribute

**Charles Buttigieg** February 10, 2021



February 10, 2021, marks the 50th anniversary of the laying of the Foundation Stone of Dar l-Emigrant, Castile Place, Valletta.

The building was erected as a permanent symbol of Maltese tribute to Maltese emigrants and a monument witnessing Malta's bond with them.

Its foundation stone was laid by Prime Minister Dr George Borg Olivier, and blessed by Archbishop Mgr Michael Gonzi. This special anniversary is a very timely opportunity to express appreciation to all those who have always had the best interests of Maltese emigrants

and their families at heart, primarily Mgr Philip Calleja, the indefatigable former leader of the Emigrants' Commission.

Mgr Calleja dedicated his life to up-rooted people, first as the champion of post-war Maltese migrants and their families and then as the leading pioneer defender of refugees seeking protection and help in Malta.

Up to March 2020, at the venerable age of 91, Mgr Calleja was still regularly making himself available at Dar l-Emigrant to help whoever knocks on his door seeking his advice or assistance. It was only the Covid-19 pandemic and the indispensable precautions that had to be taken, that kept him away from Dar l-Emigrant and what is most dear to him: helping others.

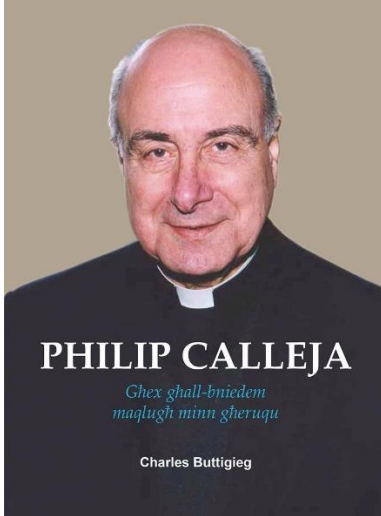
The late very able researcher and historian Fr Lawrence Attard OP, writing in the Times of Malta of June 24, 1975, on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Emigrants' Commission, said as follows:

"The history of migration from these islands, especially post-war migration, is now to a great extent the history of the Emigrants' Commission. That Commission was providentially fortunate in that since 1953 it has had as its driving force, Mgr Philip Calleja, who since then has dedicated his priestly life to migrants and to all people whose life has been effected by emigration.

"The enthusiasm of Mgr Calleja has inspired a dedicated group of people who willingly offer their services to prospective migrants, to their dependants and to Maltese abroad. These services are given to all who seek the help of the Commission; no fees are charged, no irrelevant questions asked and the whole procedure is conducted by experienced priests and lay people in total privacy."



Mgr Calleja enjoys various international and local recognitions for his lifelong sterling work for Maltese emigrants and asylum seekers reaching Malta.



On March, 16, 2010, Dr Stephen Gatt, President of the Federation of Maltese Abroad presented to Mgr Calleja a plaque which states as follows: "In recognition of a life time of service, labour and travail well in excess of the call of duty in the interests of Maltese Migrants across the diaspora."

Mgr Calleja was also granted a September 23, 2004, certification by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) "in appreciation for years of dedicated service and close collaboration The Emigrants' Commission was UNHCR's Operational Partner in Malta from 1987 to 2004, when UNHCR's role in the island had taken a new form in the light of Malta's Refugees Act.

On November 1, 2019, Mgr Calleja was also honoured by the University of Malta, acclaiming him "a meritorious candidate for the Degree of Master of Letters (Honoris Causa) of this Alma Mater."

In its motivation, the University recognised "the significant contribution made by Philip Calleja to the social wellbeing of our communities, especially through his persevering commitment to the welfare of migrants and his contribution to the process of relocation; through his role as founder of the Emigrants' Commission and of Dar I-Emigrant to serve as a hub to meet the holistic needs of migrants; and a person who had the foresight to act in favour of immigrants and to create services out of sheer altruism and love for humanity."

Dar I-Emigrant, which today also houses a digital Migration Museum that was intended to be officially opened in 2020, but the event had to be postponed because of the pandemic, is a fitting tribute not only to Maltese emigrants, but also to its founder: Mgr Philip Calleja, who became known as "The Emigrants' Priest" and "The Refugees' Samaritan".



**'A new door has been opened' – Cardinal Grech on appointment of first woman in the Bishops Synod**

Posted On February 7, 2021 - Updated 7 February, 2021 11:20am

In what has been described as historic, Pope Francis has recently appointed the first woman in the Bishops Synod.

French Sister Nathalie Becquart will be able to vote in this entity which provides counseling and debates some of the most controversial issues within the Catholic Church.

She will be working directly under Maltese Cardinal Mario Grech, who is the Bishops Synod's general secretary. Cardinal Grech stressed that this appointment "has opened a new door within the Catholic Church".

He noted that the decision reflects the Pontiff's wish for greater participation of women in the scrutiny process and in the Church decision making

## President George Vella announces conference for national unity

**National conference for national unity follows on President's pledge made in 2019 inauguration speech**  
by Matthew Agius

President George Vella has unveiled a new national conference on national unity.

The conference follows on Vella's pledge in his April 2019 speech upon his appointment as President of the Republic, to work towards the strengthening of national unity.

The conference will be held on 27 February at the Verdala Palace, with a panel led by Reno Bugeja, former PBS head of news and presenter of Reno Bugeja Jistaqsi; writer Aleks Farrugia; University of Malta pro-rector Prof. Carmen Sammut; Chamber of Commerce David Xuereb; Faculty of Social Wellbeing Dean Prof. Andrew Azzopardi; and Prof. Simone Borg.

Vella said he was concerned about the lack of unity in Malta. "The time has come for us to ask about which causes we must unite over... I insist that we must be united on certain issues." The President said that the event must be held "as far away from partisan politics as possible."

Vella said the COVID-19 pandemic had forced upon the Maltese a period of reflection that inspired a sense of solidarity for those stricken by the virus, as well as respect for medical frontliners and a realisation that foreign workers "such as those who clean our public benches" were far more important to Malta than previously believed.

"Our exchanges and discussions have to be dignified, based on civic and correct demeanour, and never result in attacks of a personal nature. We need to continue reinforcing those civil liberties for which we have striven over the past years, and eliminate all forms of discrimination. We need to fortify women's position in society and in the workplace. In this particular field, we have to guarantee those rights, which remain elusive ..." Vella had said back in 2019.

Vella has also gone on record saying that he wishes to see less abuse on social media, the likes of which tend to be less present on printed media and broadcasting. A serious, positive

contribution is expected from the public, said the President. "You can criticise but be constructive, not destructive.

Discourse must provide an alternative,

otherwise we'll just point fingers at each other," Vella said.

"This definitely does not contribute to national unity."

"Do we have respect for other opinions? Do we try to convince through discussion or force? This is because we have lost mutual trust and trust in the institutions." If you lose all trust in the institutions you will have no point of reference, said the President. "We must therefore find a solution. Education is key to this, he said. We must educate your children from the very beginning to show recognition and appreciation of what is Maltese. This includes history..." Vella went on.

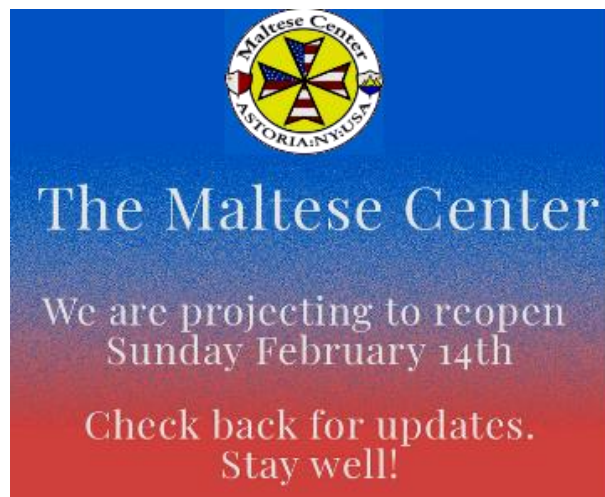
He has also called on MPs to retain a tone and vocabulary that befits the office they hold when debating their adversaries. The debate will also cover who much the Maltese people feel themselves represented by the institutions. Social inequality led to division, he said, adding that a plan was needed to implement social justice in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vella's address touched on a number of other issues of concern, amongst them the decline in the use of the Maltese language and lack of care for the environment.

In conclusion Vella said the answers were in the hands of the Maltese people. "If nothing, it should create a conscience about these things and raise awareness.

"I am pragmatic enough to recognise that things would not change overnight, but...it is our obligation to work together," he said adding that at least the exercise would reveal what needs to be changed. "If we can change, it would be a shame not to."





## **MALTESE CENTER IN NEW YORK USA**

### **WE CAN'T WAIT TO WELCOME YOU BACK!!**

27-20 Hoyt Avenue South, Astoria, NY, USA

We look forward to reopening our doors on Sunday February 14th. Please keep in mind that we will be following all NYC & NYS health protocols for the safety of our volunteers, members, & visitors. The lower hall, backyard, and bocce court will be open. 25% indoor capacity, social distancing, and face coverings (nose & mouth) must be followed at all times. This is tentative

and is subject to change in accordance with NYS guidelines.

As we anticipate reopening our doors on Valentine's Day we will be creating a "Show The Love" collage board but we need your participation by submitting a Maltese themed photo - below are some ideas

1. A photo at the Maltese Center
2. A photo in Malta
3. A Maltese item
4. A family photo

Email your submissions by February 12th to [info@themaltesecenter.com](mailto:info@themaltesecenter.com)

And show more love by following and liking us on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram @themaltesecenter. All our social channels are listed below.

A friendly reminder to our members who are up for renewal for February & March

you can now pay your dues [online](#). Not a member? Consider joining or making a donation to keep the Maltese Center alive. Thank you to all who have joined, renewed and donated!



**ORDER OF MALTA  
Australia**

## **NEWS**

### **Dr David Schuster appointed Member of the Order of Australia**

**Dr David Schuster,**

**Congratulations to member of the Order of Malta Australia, Dr David Schuster, who was recognised in the Australia Day 2021 Honours.**

**Dr Schuster was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to medicine as an anaesthetist, and to the community of Dubbo.**

Dr Schuster, who served Dubbo for 40 years as an anaesthetist, has also been active in ensuring the Order's Coats for the Homeless reach the homeless in the Orana region.

The **Order of Australia** is an order of chivalry that recognises Australian citizens and other persons for achievement or meritorious service.







## Order of Malta member recognised in 2021 Australia Day Honours

### Michael Mann AM

Congratulations to Ambassador Michael Mann AM who was recognised in the Australia Day 2021 Honours list and was awarded Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to tertiary education through strategic development initiatives, and to Australia South East Asia relations

Michael is a former Australian Government Ambassador to several places in Asia including Vietnam and is the Order of Malta's Ambassador to Cambodia and Thailand.

## One of the world's youngest knights

Igor Pletikosa has become one of the world's youngest knights in one of the Church's oldest orders.

The twenty-five year-old said he feels "honoured and privileged" to have been made a Knight in an Order dating back to the Crusades in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The Religious Education teacher at Mount Carmel College in Varroville, says being a member of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is a great way to witness to his Catholic faith.

"It's all about witness to me because it's apparent that in the secular society we live in, we need to act, not just talk about acting," he told *The Catholic Weekly*. "It's about being a model for my students and showing what it means to be a young Catholic male. I'm strong in my faith and I want to stand up for that."



## More than 400,500 vehicles on Maltese roads for a population of just over half a million

John Paul Cordina The number of licensed motor vehicles in Malta has officially passed the 400,000 mark, according to the latest



available figures. The National Statistics Office have confirmed that there were 400,586 licensed vehicles on Maltese roads by the end of September. The number of licensed vehicles has been on an upward trend for years, but this trend was momentarily reversed in the first half of 2020 as the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

But this rare drop proved to be short-lived, and the September figures have set a new national record.

5,160 newly-licensed motor vehicles were put in the road in the third quarter of 2020, an average of 56 per day. 67.6% of the total (3,490) were passenger cars; motorcycles or e-bicycles accounted for 17.6% (909). Most newly-licensed vehicles (54.9%, or 2,831) were used: 2,329 new vehicles were also licensed.

A total of 6,891 motor vehicles were taken off the road between July and September. Out of these, 34.4% were put up for resale, 31.2% were garaged and 31.1% were scrapped.

At the same time, 6,696 vehicles were returned to the road. 61.7% had been garaged, while 36.5% had been resold.

## Restoration of Australia Hall, Malta, Project (RAHMP)

A plan to restore Australia Hall in Malta is not a new idea. Many attempts have been made in the past with the most positive and promising commencing in 2015, around the 100-year anniversary of the First World War. As recently as 2019 workshops were planned between the current owners and Australis Facilities Management

(<https://www.australisfm.com.au/latest-news/malta-australia-two-nations-intertwined/>) with a view to restore the building and petition Triq A.N.Z.A.C to be renamed ANZAC Avenue with the planting of Eucalyptus trees on the property. Recent attempts have included a proposal by Din L-Art Helwa to undertake and pay for the restoration (Luciano Mule Stagno, Pers. Comms. 05 Feb 2021), however, progress appears to have fallen silent.

The future use and access of the building following a restoration remains unclear, and there are valid concerns on paying for work without any guarantee of any access to the building for the public. An asset with heritage values should be part of a community space and so some formal agreement with the owners would need to be made.

In the meantime, without a voice Australia Hall is destined to become another faded memory; another pile of dust and debris; the silent ghost of a monument to those people who ventured far from their families, friends, and homeland to participate in one of the most enduring events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The connection ANZACs made with the Maltese, that continues to this day, cannot be understated. For Dr Parnis, VP of the Australian Medical Association, "... restoring the building to something approaching its former glory would be a way to ensure the bonds of care and support that developed between injured diggers and local Maltese in the early years of World War One are not neglected." (Adrian Rollins 20 Apr 2015 "*When ANZACS landed on Malta*" Australian Medicine, Pg 29). Thankfully, there have been many voices in the past who have raised their concerns, within this newsletter, The Voice of the Maltese, and other news, and media outlets. The importance of this building to the local community, to Australians and New Zealander's, and for visitors to Malta is surely evident. As Surgeon and Veteran Susan Nehaus reflects: "Behind every name on every memorial, large and small, across this nation, there is a story of courage.". I would add that this courage is found in the connections found across so many nations.

Buildings are tangible connections to our past. We can see, feel, smell, hear and touch their presence, but it is also the intangible elements: the memories, the connections, the stories, and feelings that keep heritage places alive. As intimated in the BBC documentary on Malta: The nurse of the Mediterranean (<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-29650147>), Australia Hall was an important step for recovery through its service as an entertainment venue. It is with this in mind that it is hoped that Australia Hall's restoration can continue this step to recovery by providing current Veterans with purpose and service, and the community with a social space. The project can be used to identify those transferrable skills Veterans learn and their interests that can lead into further education and employment opportunities.

It is proposed that the building and its history be properly investigated and documented, and that a restoration plan, conservation plan, and business plan be developed to preserve the history of the building, secure it as a community useable space, and retain it as a memorial. To do this it is envisaged that RAHMP will be undertaken in three phases. The results of each phase will inform the direction of the next phase.

Phase one will comprise a feasibility study which will include a comprehensive structural assessment, an archaeological assessment, a significance assessment, full spatial recording, and background research. It is estimated this phase could be completed in a few weeks.

Phase two will comprise a digital (virtual) reconstruction of the building and, if feasible, the physical reconstruction. The virtual reconstruction will provide an accessible and interactive experience for learning, exploration, and reflection of the site. A conservation management plan, interpretive plan and business plan will also be developed at this stage.

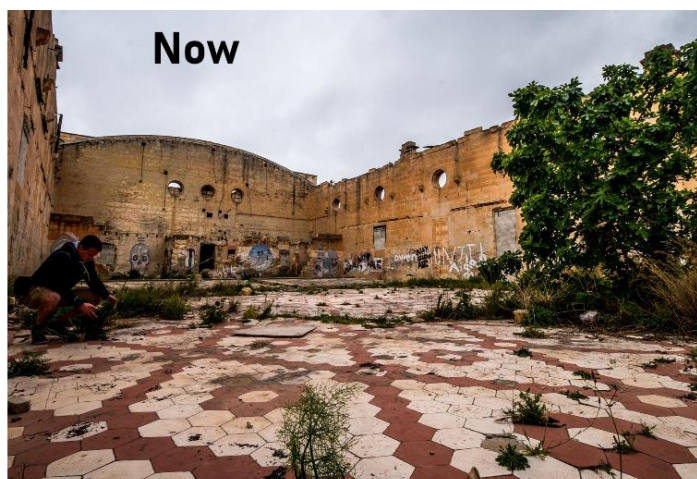
Phase three will involve enacting the conservation plan, doing the interpretive works, and implementing the business plan. It is hoped that this will provide local services, employment and become a valuable part of the tourism industry.

It is envisaged that the work will be carried out collaboratively by Maltese and Australian/ New Zealand specialists and include Veterans with logistics support from Ex-Service Organisations. It is hoped that pathways to academia will be provided in conjunction with the universities of Australia, New Zealand, and Malta. The aim is that with the restoration the project will help in the recovery of Veterans while serving as a platform for future employment and education pathways for service personnel transitioning into civilian life.

It is hoped that the building, once restored, will serve as a place of exploration, learning, experience, and reflection, and as a community space including a library, social and conference centre for the public and visiting researchers to utilise.

We thank you for your support. Contact can be made through our Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/VESA.RAHMP>), or writing to us at: RAHMP PO Box 12 Daw Park, SA, 5041.

Andrew Wilkinson  
Archaeologist, Veteran



## **AUSTRALIA HALL - PEMBROKE, MALTA**

### **Andrew Wilkinson**

I have been interested in this building since visiting Malta two years ago. As a veteran, an Australian and a Heritage professional I would love to see this building restored, and ideally as a project providing recovery and activity for injured veterans. The restored building would serve nicely as a memorial, a museum, entertainment venue and a base of operation for Australian researchers (there are a few) working in Malta.

Membership CAA-A (<https://members.caa-international.org/>)

Mentor for Veterans in University (<https://www.flinders.edu.au/study/pathways/military-veterans>)

Veteran Transition Research Group (<https://veteransatuniversity.edu.au/>)





## Il-Festa tal-Madonna tal-Kunċizzjoni

Kitba ta' Joe Axiaq – Victoria, Australia

Fit-8 ta' Diċembru fil-festa tal-Madonna tal-Kunċizzjoni, hekk kif inqum ommi kienet tgħidli, "Illum il-festa tiegħek..." Kienet tgħidli hekk, għax twelidt fit-8 ta' Diċembru. Kiemha kien meqjus, b'ċertu sodisfazzjon li kont xxurtjat li twelidt f'dan

il-jum tal-Madonna, li tant kellha devozzjoni u qima lejha, bħall-poplu taż-Żebbuġ.

Meta kbirt ftit ieħor kienet tgħidli bil-qima u d-devozzjoni li minn dejjem il-poplu taż-Żebbuġ kellu lejn il-Madonna tal-Kunċizzjoni, għax f'waħda mill-kappelli tal-knisja, hemm kwadru tal-Madonna taħt dan it-titlu, li l-poplu taż-Żebbuġ dejjem irrikorra lejha meta kien jintlaqat minn xi nkwiet. Fiż-żmien, li l-furbani u l-Misilmim kienu jattakkaw il-gzejjer Maltin, jgħidu li wiċċ il-Madonna f'dan il-kwadru kien jibda jisfar.

Meta konna nkunu fuq l-irdumijiet għolja biex ninzlu f'Wied il-Għasri, missieri kien jirakkuntalna li meta l-Misilmin u l-pirati kienu jkunu deħlin biex jankraw ix-xwieni tagħhom hemmhekk, kienu jaraw mara kollha dija fuq is-sies, b'fardal mimli ġebel. Kienet tibda titfgħalhom il-ġebel, sakemm ikollhom jerġgħu lura. Il-ġebel mill-fardal ma kien jispiċċa qatt; kienet tibqa' twaddab il-ġebel lejn il-bastimenti tagħhom, sakemm ikollhom isalpaw lura. Ġew li kienu jarawha wkoll fit-toroq tar-raħal tagħmel l-istess, jekk xi Mislem jew tnejn, kien jirnexxielu jiskappa t-tgaġġir tagħha u jitle' minn Wiel il-Għasri saż-Żebbuġ.

Għalhekk in-nies taż-Żebbuġ minn dejjem kienu devoti ta' dan il-kwadru u jagħmlu wegħdi u jixgħelu xema' u jagħtu dehbijiet, b'ringrazzjament tal-wegħdi li jkunu qalghu. Għall-habta tal-1723, minn dan il-kwadru nsterqet ħannieqa prezzjuża tad-deheb li kienet madwar għonq il-Madonna u li kienet ingħatat b'wegħda. Ir-raħal kollu kien ixxukkjat u mkexkex minn dan l-att sagrilegu. Malajr sar magħruf, li kien bidwi li seraq il-ħannieqa tal-Madonna. Haseb li mill-bejgħ ta' dik il-ħannieqa, kien se jikseb somma flus u jgħix kuntent. Imma l-kuxjenza ma ħallitux bi kwietu. Meta għaraf kemm kien kbir id-dnub tiegħu, mar iqerr u radd lura l-ħannieqa. Iżda xorta waħda ma setax isib serħan. Tilef moħħu, iddispra u qatel ruħu b'idejh.

L-istess

ħannieqa reġgħet  
insterqet minn  
madwar għonq il-  
Madonna fl-1762. Din

id-darba kien ġuvni Malti, li seraq il-ħannieqa. Bħal fil-każ l-ieħor, ma setax isib serħan, wara dak li kien għamel. Tilef moħħu, iddispra u qabel ruħu b'idejh. "Mal-Madonna tal-Kunċizzjoni m'hemmx ċajt," kienet tgħid ommi, li kienet tħobb tirrakkonta dawn iż-żewġ grajjiet. "Kull darba li għamilt wegħda magħha, dejjem qalghethieli."

Meta wasalt fl-aħħar sena tal-Iskola Primarja u kont se nagħmel l-eżami għal-Lyceum għat-tieni darba, tlabt lill-Madonna tal-Kunċizzjoni biex tgħaddini. Jien ma kontx inħobb nittawwal fil-kappelli tal-knisja għax id-dalma u d-dellijiet tax-xema' fuq l-inkwatri skuri kienu jagħmluli diqa mill-biża' tal-istess li kienu jgħidulna waqt id-duttrina. Dik is-sena, ftit xhur qabel dan l-eżami tqil, kont għaddej min quddiem il-kappella tal-Madonna tal-Kunċizzjoni waqt is-servizzi tal-Ġimgħa l-Kbira.

Għall-ewwel darba f'ħajti ħarist sewwa lejn il-kwadru. Dakinhar wiċċ il-Madonna donnu kien aħmar. Ma nafx kinex id-dellijiet tax-xema' tixgħel, imħallta mad-dawl batut mill-bieb tal-ġenb tal-knisja. Meta mort lura d-dar staqsejt lil ommi, "Ma jgħidu li meta wiċċ il-Madonna tal-Kunċizzjoni jisfar, tkun ġejja xi diżgrazzja fuq ir-raħal. U meta wiċċ il-Madonna jihmar?"

"Tiġi b'kull waħda int," qaltli ommi, b'nofs daħka. "Din qatt ma smajtha." "Għax illum waqt li kont għaddej minn quddiem il-kappella tal-Madonna tal-Kunċizzjoni wiċċ il-Madonna kien donnu aħmar."

"Min jaf," qaltli aktar bis-serjetà, milquta minn xi ħsieb li xegħeb f'daqqa f'moħħha, donnha tipprova tinterpretar xi messaġġ moħbi, "tinsiex int twelidt fil-Kunċizzjoni, tifel speċjali għall-Madonna."

Insejt kollox, imma meta ħareġ ir-riżultat tal-eżami u għaddej biex nibda l-Iskola Sekondarja, ftakart li kont tlabt lill-Madonna tal-Kunċizzjoni. Tgħid dakinhar riedet tgħidli biex ma ninkwetax u ma noqgħodx inħabbel rasi li ma kontx se ngħaddi mill-eżami.





## A new word introduced into the Maltese vocabulary - IMHOBZA

Minister Justyne Caruana being shown around one of the Maypole bakeries. Photo: MFED

The word *imħobża* was launched into the Maltese vocabulary on Friday.

The word is made up of the words 'love'

(*imħabba*) and 'bread' (*ħobż*) and will be given to a heart-shaped product that the bakery Maypole will be producing on the occasion of Valentine's Day, celebrated on February 14.

*Imħobża*'s composition was approved following consultations with Michael Spagnol, a lecturer in Maltese linguistics at the university.

Company director Sebastian Debono said Maltese bread had always been linked to culture with various types of bread relating to festivals and other cultural days. Education Minister Justyne Caruana said that although small, Malta had its own rich language, an official EU language which should be treasured and passed on to children. She also noted that the culinary art and culture of the Maltese *ftira* is now part of the UNESCO's list of [intangible heritage](#).

During a meeting with the National Literacy Agency, she emphasised the need to strengthen the Maltese language, while understanding the importance of other languages.

## Malta Is Officially A Member Of The International Wheelchair Basketball Federation



Michela Muscat

Malta has officially become the latest member of the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation of the European Zone, one of four; Asia Oceania, Africa, Europe, and America.

IWBF (International Wheelchair Basketball Federation) is the governing body for wheelchair basketball across the globe, a

non-profit organisation whose chief purpose is to help provide opportunities for people with a lower limb disability to be able to play wheelchair basketball!

This game isn't entirely new either of course, as wheelchair basketball is played in over 100 countries worldwide and currently, the total numbers of players globally equate to approximately 30,000!

"Malta Wheelchair Basketball Association is committed to empower individuals to reach their full potential on and off... Posted by [Malta Wheelchair Basketball Association](#) on [Tuesday, February 2, 2021](#)

Elsewhere, the IWBF have also welcomed Ethiopia, The Republic of Rwanda, and Liberia! The president behind the organisation also added, ***'It is always a pleasure to add new members to the IWBF family, but it is even more so given the challenging circumstances the world is facing. It is especially***





*encouraging to see further engagement in the Africa Zone, an area we are focusing on, and is testament to the great work being done by the Zone.'*

He concluded, *'We would like to welcome all four into the wheelchair basketball family and we look forward to working with them as they not only progress and develop the sport within their countries but showcase and drive social inclusion*

My first artistic work I did here in Mtarfa was a full-size aeroplane, a World War 2 Hurricane. Two years later I constructed another aeroplane for which I was awarded by the Malta Records as being the largest aeroplane made from cardboard. This is my hobby and my satisfaction lies in seeing a piece of cardboard take life whilst I create an object. In 2016 I built a train for Military Mtarfa. I created the last train model which was running on the island from cardboard. Mr Paul Galea had helped me a lot by providing me with the design from which I could sketch the train I created. Everything was to scale. With this train I had managed to obtain the honour of being included in the Guinness Book of Records for the largest train made from cardboard. It is made up of 100 pieces and I spent nearly 500 hours working on it. It is a pity that a place where it can be exhibited permanently was never found and it has been left in pieces in a warehouse.

If you do not take care of cardboard it has a lot against it. Now my dream is to create a large robot which would be around a storey and a half high. I also work on stage and theatre backdrops because I am an enthusiast. The past two years I have been writing a poem a day and uploading it on FB. I keep them like a calendar and when I have nothing to write I use a photograph and create a poem from it" - Stephen. in [Mtarfa, Malta](#)

Joseph Howard  
the first Prime  
Minister  
of Malta  
1922



academy. He joined the commercial sector - the tobacco industry - and was appointed director of Cousis Cigarettes. Between 1914 and 1925 he served as consul of Japan and later President of the Chamber of Commerce.

In 1912, Joseph Howard was elected member to the Council of Government after being nominated by the Comitato Patriottico. In 1921, he joined the

## THE FIRST PRIME MINISTER OF MALTA – joseph howard

Born in Valletta in 1862, Malta's first Prime Minister under the Colonial Government, Joseph Howard was educated at the Lyceum and abroad and served as an officer in the French Military

UPM of Mgr. I. Panzavecchia and was elected Senator in the first Maltese Parliament. As Panzavecchia did not accept the premiership, Governor Lord Plumer offered the post to Howard. Between 1921 and 1923 Joseph Howard managed to lead the first Maltese Government with the support of the Labour Party. His successes were mainly due to his keen sense of tolerance and the result of his vast experience in administration.

Howard was regarded as the gentleman 'par excellence' and was held in great esteem by politicians of all political creeds.

Joseph Howard was President of the Government emigration committee and in 1919 he headed the Maltese delegation to France which discussed the employment of Maltese labour in that country.

He was also President of the Societa' dell'Arte, Manifattura e Commercio and President of the La Societa Filarmonica La Valette. He was also made Officer of the British Empire (OBE).



**Roots & Routes**

**Giving life to the young Maltese emigrant experience.**

Contact Agenzija Zghazagh to share your story on their new podcast.

agenzija.zghazagh@gov.mt  
youth.gov.mt

agenzija zghazagh  
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR YOUTH, SPORT AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

## What is Roots & Routes?

**A LINK** Roots & Routes is a new initiative by Agenzija Zghazagh, the National Youth Agency of Malta, which seeks to connect with young Maltese (16-30 years) living abroad

**A VOICE** The project gives voice by podcasting a series of interviews with Maltese young people living abroad in which they speak about their specific concerns with their roots as we explore identity,

nationality, migration and global mobility.

**A COMMUNITY** The project seeks to encourage the creation of a wider community that is sensitive to the needs and concerns of young people, particularly in relation to the narrative of young migrants.

**WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?** Maltese young people 16-30 years old living abroad are being invited to participate in this initiative. 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th generation migrants are welcome.

**WHAT WILL PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?** Participating young people will be involved in a recorded short conversation (about 10 minutes) with a youth worker from Agenzija Zghazagh exploring their connections with Malta. Senior Youth Worker

**AGENZIA ZGHAZAGH,** St. Joseph High Road Sta Venera Malta

**INTERESTED** Looking forward to getting to know you Maria C Borg

**EMAIL** maria-carmela.borg@gov.mt

**WEBSITE** www.youth.gov.mt or find us on Facebook - Agenzija Zghazagh

## Brimbank Community and Civic Centre



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**Your guide to low cost and no charge classes, courses, and programs**

Join this friendly, inclusive, women only group to build connections, enjoy time together and break cycles of isolation and loneliness

**Booking required prior to attending. Ring: 9249 4800**

Term 1 sessions to be held on Sunday 28 February, 28 March 2021

**Next Session Sun 28 Feb, 2:00pm - 4:00pm**

Fees & Sessions No charge Monthly All Session Dates: Sun 28 Feb, Sun 28 March 2021

Cr - Dr Victoria Borg





## MALTESE IN BROKEN HILLS NSW

**Broken Hill** is an isolated mining city in the far west of outback New South Wales, Australia. The "BH" is the world's largest mining company, BHP Billiton, refers to "Broken Hill" and its early operations in the city. Broken Hill is located near the border with South Australia on the crossing of the Barrier Highway and the Silver City Highway, in the Barrier Range. It is 315 m (1,033 ft) above sea level, with a hot desert climate. The closest major city is Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, which is more than 500 km to the southwest. Broken Hill has been referred to as "The Silver City", the "Oasis of the West", and the "Capital of the Outback"



**Charlie said that when they left Malta, they had so much bad weather between Malta and France, they almost drowned three times...**

Although over 1,100 km (684 mi) west of Sydney and surrounded by semi-desert, the town has prominent park and garden displays and offers a number of attractions such as the Living Desert Sculptures.

From Afghan cameleers to Filipino book-keepers and Maltese miners, this is the story of Broken Hill's non-English speaking migrants; people who arrived in a harsh and alien outback mining town and chose to call it home.

- It was really difficult in Malta. I had an uncle who had migrated to Broken Hill fifty years previously. He was really happy, so when I was seventeen I decided to leave Malta and join him in Broken Hill. *Rosina (Rose) Micallef*
- Dad had a house ready for us in Crystal Street. There were two or three houses with one big yard. No fences between us and we were all Maltese. *Emily Tonna*
- We chose Broken Hill because there was work available on the mines; we brought our families out to join us and helped them become part of the Broken Hill community.
- We had the Maltese Club. It was next door to where the Duke of Cornwall is now. The Club was for Maltese only. We used to gamble at baccarat. *Paul Sultana*
- We travelled by ship or aeroplane to reach this country. Often the trip was long and uncomfortable. We were apprehensive about the new life that awaited us.
- I realised I didn't want to leave here. My home may not be as beautiful as other homes but to me it is beautiful. *Dina Spagnol*
- Ten of us left school together; a few decided to go to Australia and we were like sheep; we followed one another. *Paul Sultana*

- We left on the "Orsova" on the 22nd of May, 1961. The trip out wasn't very easy or pleasant. The first few days were really sad, because we left our family. It was an English ship so we couldn't talk to anybody because we didn't know the language. *Marija Zammit*
- I can remember my grandmother dressed in black, waving her hanky at us. Many arrived and knew no-one. We were apprehensive, lonely and confused in a land about which we knew so little. Some were greeted by family and friends. We shared tears, laughter and a wonderful sense of relief that we had finally arrived. We experienced language difficulties, isolation and loneliness. We shared extreme weather conditions with our neighbours. Dust storms water restrictions were part of life.
- **Life was not easy for the early Maltese migrants in Australia**

## Who is Sarah Bartolo?

*Since her debut as a tree at the tender age of five, Sarah has delighted audiences all over the world and has become a talented, charismatic and exuberant actor and singer.*

*Sarah is constantly working on TV, film, new media and commercial*



*productions. She has performed in many theatre shows her favourite being Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz and has created two solo cabaret shows The Misadventures of Miss Bouzy Rouge and They Say The Neon Lights Are Bright? She also sang at Carnegie Hall to help promote the film Florence Foster Jenkins which was definitely one of the highlights of her performing arts career.*

*After a lovely stint in New York, she is now back in Melbourne, Australia focusing on her screenwriting career having written a TV pilot Can We Be Friends? This fun and fabulous musical comedy has been selected for the Pasadena International Film Festival and the Las Vegas International Film & Screenwriting Competition and is ready to be involved in a bidding war with HBO, Amazon and Netflix.*

*Sarah enjoys mid-century vintage, gin martinis with extra olives, spending time with her nephews and pretending she is in an old Hollywood musical.*

*For any enquirers or bookings, please visit [www.sarahbartolo.com](http://www.sarahbartolo.com) or @sarahbartolo on Instagram*



If you are Maltese living abroad and have a story to tell share it with others.

Send it to us:

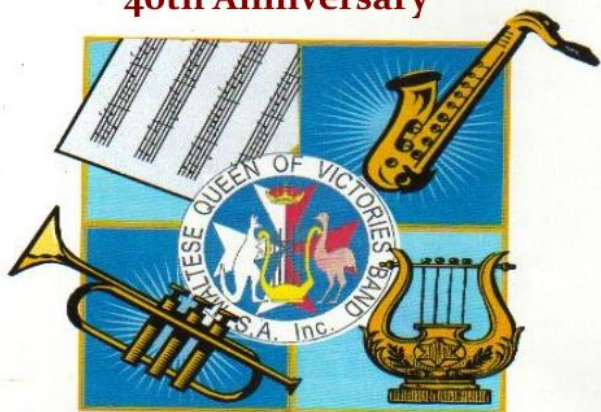
[maltesejournal@gmail.com](mailto:maltesejournal@gmail.com)



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



## Maltese Queen of Victories Band SA Inc. 40th Anniversary



One could say that the beginning of the Maltese Queen of Victories Band dates back to August 1979, where, after a



**RAYMONG GRIMA**

memorable concert in Adelaide by the visiting singing Maltese priest Father David Azzopardi, the Maltese Franciscan Friars together with the

Maltese Chaplaincy Council organised two buses to travel to Melbourne in November to catch Father David a second time on his last show before returning back to Malta.

The supporting act that night at the Melbourne Town Hall concert was the two year old Maltese Own Band Philharmonic Society of Victoria, (also known as the M.O.B.) a Maltese style Festa band that performed by playing traditional Maltese Marches.

To the delight and amazement of the visiting Adelaide audience this immediately activated their feelings of, one day, Adelaide having it's own Maltese band. The following year in October 1980, the Maltese Chaplaincy Council and the Franciscan Friars organised Adelaide's first big Maltese style Festa, the Feast of **Our Lady Queen of Victories (Il-Bambina)**. The newly acquired beautiful statue of the Bambina had arrived and was introduced to the Maltese Community of South Australia at the Feast. The participation of the Maltese Own Band of Victoria who were invited to come to Adelaide back in August the year before enhanced the feast. There were some 80+ musicians plus supporters made the trip to Adelaide from Melbourne on the five coaches.

In listening to the M.O.B. playing religious hymns in the Procession and creating that joyful Maltese Festa atmosphere playing popular Marches in the nearby streets and in the "Christ the King" Parish grounds, this had an immediate effect on the Adelaide Maltese Community.

After the success of the Feast a number of youths and their parents became eager and excited and started to seek the support of the Franciscan friars and the Maltese Chaplaincy in the hope of starting our very own Adelaide Maltese Community band.

Thanks to the hard work and dedicated efforts of many people, some 40+ years ago the birth of the Maltese Queen of Victories Band of South Australia became a reality on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1981 at the band's first General meeting held at Christ The King Parish hall.

Once music mentors and teachers were found, music theory lessons commenced to some 50 students ranging from the ages of 8 to 55 years of age by Mrs Antoinette Azzopardi. Musical instruments on loan were also introduced a few months later and practical lessons were given by the band's first Musical Director Mr William Azzopardi in the classrooms of the St. Francis Parish school.

The M.Q.V.B. has over the years become an integral part of the Maltese tradition and Culture here in Adelaide. The band has performed in every feast of Our Lady Queen of Victories since 1981 and also in other traditional feasts such as, the Feasts of St. Paul, Mnarja, Good Friday, St. Peter in Chains, San Gejtanu, Santa Marija and at the Feast of St. Catherine V.M. since 1986. Other Maltese events include the Centenary of Maltese Migration in Rundle Mall, 50th Anniversary of the George Cross award to Malta, George Cross Plaque Ceremony in Prospect, Enfield City Soccer Club (The Falcons) founding ceremony, Maltese Festival at Adelaide High School, Fr. Giles Ferriggi Golden Jubilee,

The band was in popular demand performing at the many various Italian Festas and State and Multicultural events such as the Ethnic Schools Parade in the city of Adelaide, the celebrations of the World Parade, S.A's Jubilee 150 Celebrations in Elder Park, Australia's Bi-Centennial Celebrations, The Papal Visit Pope John Paul's visit to Australia, the Australia Remembers Celebrations, Anzac Day and many others.

The band also had the honour of being invited by the Consulate of Malta in South Australia to perform and play a big part of the welcome celebrations of visiting Maltese dignitaries the Archbishop of Malta Joseph Mercieqa, the Prime Minister Laurence Gonzi, Malta Presidents Censu Tabone, Agatha Barbara and Marie Louise Coleiro Preca

The band has travelled to perform in the state of Victoria at the Maltese Feasts of Our Lady Queen of Victories, Feast of St. Paul, San Gejtanu, the Good Friday Procession and the feast of Christ the King (L-Irxox) with much success and made a lot of friends with the other Maltese bands of Victoria.

Some of the highlights in the bands history include the **"15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Musical Extravaganza Concert"** in 1996 under the direction of Mro. Cosimo Cavauiuolo and the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert **"A Musical Odyssey in 2001"** under the direction of Mro. John Chetcuti both held at the Parks, Arts and Function Centre in Adelaide. The introduction of the band's first Music Compact Disc and the launching of it's first Chronological History book of the MQVB. **"20 years of Devotion, Challenges and Achievements"** compiled by one of the Founders, ex-President and Percussionist Mr. Joseph Chetcuti. The M.Q.V.B. currently consists of 25 Musicians and continue to rehearse each Wednesday night at the Lockleys Parish Hall and although the Maltese Community of South Australia is decreasing in numbers every day, it is due to the commitment of time and effort of these dedicated musicians that the band continues to prosper in providing the gift of music to the Italian Community and to the S.A. Maltese Community Associations, followers and supporters.

On behalf of the President Joseph Camilleri and the Executive Committee of the Maltese Queen of Victories Band of South Australia, we take this opportunity to thank all past and present Franciscan Friars, Musical Directors, Assistant Musical Directors and mentors, past and present Musicians, Committee Members, band members, flag bearers and the Maltese Community of South Australia for their support to the band over the last 40 years.

In Closing we would also like to thank the bands of Victoria **The Maltese Own Band Philharmonic Society, The St. Albans Melita Band** and **The M.M.G. Concert Band** for their continued friendship and support. **Happy 40<sup>th</sup> year Anniversary to the Maltese Queen of Victories Band of S.A.**

**'AD Moltos Annos'** We thank the editor of this journal, Frank Scicluna, for publishing our write-up and for his support in the past.

**RAY GRIMA BAND MUSICIAN AND EX-PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER**



**The Maltese Queen  
of Victories Band  
Is the pride of  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA**





## THE UNPOPULAR WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY AND THE DICTATION TEST 1901-1958

This King's Theatre playbill poster circa 1909, promoting the play 'White Australia or the Empty North', illustrates the role race played in creating national identity. Poster designed by

Troedel & Co.

While the Australian Government encouraged British immigration with offers of assisted passage, at the same time it restricted non-Europeans, especially Asians from immigrating to

considerably in the years to follow. However, in 1912 the Australian Government excluded Maltese immigrants from the assisted passage scheme as a result of trade unions bans on "cheap labour". In the same year the Government legislated the new policy of White Australia called the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act. This unfair exclusion of the Maltese made of mockery of the fact that they were British subjects and held a British passport. In December 1913 Joseph Vella from Mellieha, Malta and his friend Paul Abela, decided to emigrate to Australia. They left Malta for Naples, Italy. They continued their journey to Australia aboard the Otway. The two friends were able to find a job as labourers IN Adelaide within a week however when they lost their jobs they run out of money and they experienced poverty and hunger. They lived in the bush not very far from Port Adelaide. Every day they walked from the port to the city in search of work. During this period Joe and Paul lived on scraps, grass and tree roots.

The darkest period in the history of Maltese migration in South Australia occurred in the 1920s when they were savagely discriminated against. The Australian Government banned them from being employed with the Australian railways. The irony is that a large number of them served in World War I. The majority of the Maltese suffered hunger and despair in spite of many of them were skilled artisans. Mr Gunn, the South Australian Premier, regarded the Maltese as "uninvited immigrants" and refused to assist them to find employment.

In 1947 the Misr had embarked on her first voyage to Australia carrying on board a number of passengers who had originated from the Middle East. When the Maltese arrived on the Misr and disembarked first in Melbourne then in Sydney, some sections of the Australian Press

Australia.

The *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901, or the 'White Australia Policy' as it became known, stated that immigrants had to write and sign, in the presence of an Immigration Officer, a passage of 50 words in a European language as directed by the officer. The Dictation Test was usually first given in English. If the prospective immigrant passed, but was considered to be racially or politically unsuitable, the officer could then give the test in another European language. The Dictation Test was given 805 times in 1902-1903 with 46 people passing, and 554 times in 1904-1909 with only six people passing. After 1909, no person passed the Dictation Test. People who failed the test were refused entry to Australia and were deported.

According to the 1911 census there were 248 Maltese in Australia. The number increased

had taken them for Levantines. And this is about the White Australia Policy under which Maltese people were barred entry to Australia as immigrants:

White Australia Policy, policy of Australia restricting non-European immigration in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The policy was developed by the British colonies of Australia, mainly in response to Chinese immigrants, who were attracted to Australia by gold rushes in the 1850s. Later the policy was expanded to cover Eastern Europeans, South Americans, Africans, and people from islands near Australia. The colonial and federal governments claimed the laws were needed because immigrants often worked for low wages and in poor conditions,

thereby worsening conditions for all workers. Although these fears were real, many Australians also believed they were racially superior to immigrants, and a significant minority believed the races were so different they could never form a homogeneous.

The *Immigration Restriction Act* remained in force until 1958, when the Dictation Test was abolished, and was not fully dismantled until the introduction of the *Racial Discrimination Act* of 1975. For a copy of the original *Immigration Restriction Act* and a further discussion of its history go

to <https://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item-did-16.html>



THE MALTESE-CANADIAN COMMUNITY  
OF TORONTO READS, LOVES AND RESPECTS  
THE JOURNAL OF THE MALTESE LIVING ABROAD







**Mill-Ufficju Komunikazzjoni – Arcidiocesi ta' Malta  
IL-PELLEGRINAĠĠI U L-PURĊISSJONIJIET FIŻ-ŻMIEN TA'  
PANDEMIJA**

**IR-RANDAN U L-ĠIMGĦA L-KBIRA 2021**

B'responsabbiltà lejn is-saħħa tal-poplu Malti fiż-żmien ta' pandemija, il-Knisja f'Malta u

Għawdex mhix ser torganizza pellegrinaġġi, purċissjonijiet u manifestazzjonijiet matul ir-Randan u l-Ġimgħa Mqaddsa ta' din is-sena.

Il-Knisja tkegħgeġ lill-poplu Nisrani biex matul ir-Randan jisma' l-Kelma ta' Alla, jingabar fit-talb u jagħmel karità. Il-Knisja timpenja ruħha biex permezz tad-diversi entitajiet tagħha tipprovdi opportunitajiet biex il-poplu Nisrani jkun jista' jagħmel dan.

Il-Knisja se tibqa' tevalwa s-sitwazzjoni tas-saħħa pubblika u aktar 'il quddiem toħroġ direttivi dwar kif għandha tiġi ċelebrata l-liturġija tat-Tridu tal-Għid.

L-Isqfijiet ta' Malta u Għawdex ikegħgu lil kulhadd biex inkomplu nosservaw id-direttivi għall-ħarsien tas-saħħa biex tassew niehdu ħsieb xulxin.

Lent and Easter Week outdoor activities, including Good Friday processions, have been cancelled by the Church for this year.

In a statement, the Curia said that this decision was taken "with responsibility" because of the Coronavirus pandemic. All pilgrimages, processions and manifestations during Lent, Good Friday and Easter Sunday have been cancelled. The Church urged the faithful to pray and perform acts of charity.

It will monitor the situation and will eventually issue instructions on how the Church services during Easter Week will be celebrated.



MALTESE COMMUNITY  
COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

**FIGOLLI MAKING  
CLASSES**

**When: Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**2 Classes**

**Time: 9.30am to 12.00pm**

**or**

**1.30pm to 4.00pm**



**Where: Catholic Regional College  
38 Sydenham Rd (enter via Pecks Rd) Sydenham**

**Cost: \$30 per person (children must be over 5 years old and be with a supervising adult)**

**Refreshments will be provided. Bring your own rolling pin, apron and cutter if you have a special one**

**To register, please visit our website [www.mccv.org.au](http://www.mccv.org.au) or for further information phone our office 9387 8922**

**Places are limited so register TODAY!**

**Thank you for forwarding the Maltese Journal**  
I do love reading it very, very much as it has a comprehensive amount of very interesting and educational articles. A compilation of stories that really awaken the interest of all those who read them. Great work! Proset!  
Grazzi hafna  
Pauline O'Brien



## Carnival tragedy of 1823



The **Carnival tragedy of 1823** was a human crush which occurred on 11 February 1823 at the Convent of the Franciscan Friars in Valletta, Malta. About 110 boys who had gone to the convent to receive bread on the last day of carnival celebrations were killed after falling down a flight of steps while trying to get out of the convent.

At the time of the tragedy, Malta was under British rule and experiencing a famine, and it had become a tradition to gather 8- to 15-year-old boys from the lower classes of Valletta and the Three Cities to participate in a procession during the last few days of carnival. After the procession, they would attend Mass, and they would be given some bread afterwards. This activity was arranged by ecclesiastical directors who taught catechism, and its main aim was to keep children out of the riots and confusion of carnival.

It happened on 11 February 1823. Children were gathered and attended mass at Floriana, but the ceremony lasted an hour longer than usual. The children's procession to the convent in Valletta occurred at the same time as the carnival celebrations had ended, so they met with many people who were

returning home. At this point, some adults and children from the crowd mixed in with the boys in order to receive some free bread.

The boys entered one of the convent's corridors from the vestry door in the church, and were to be let out through another door in St. Ursula Street. The bread was to be distributed at the latter door.<sup>[3][4]</sup> Although the vestry door was usually locked to prevent boys from reentering to receive more bread, this time the door was left open since the boys were late. Due to this, more men and boys entered without anyone realizing.

Those who had entered began to push the boys queuing in the corridor, who were shoved to the end of the corridor near a half-open door. At this point, a lamp went out leaving the corridor in darkness, and the people inside began to push forward even more. The boys at the front fell down a flight of steps, blocking the door in the process.

Those who were distributing the bread as well as some neighbours rushed to assist the children after they heard screams. They managed to open the doors, and many boys got out and were revived. However, a number of boys had already died due to suffocation or being trampled upon.

The exact number of casualties is not known. Records of the Sacra Infermeria show that 94 bodies of boys aged between 15 and 16 were brought to the hospital on 11 February, and they were buried the following day. However, contemporary records such as *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and *Historical Chronicle* reveal that "no less than 110 boys perished on this occasion".

An investigation led by the Lieutenant Governor took place after the disaster, and a report about the findings was published a few days after the incident. The investigation concluded that the stampede took place as a result of a succession of errors, and no one was accused for the deaths of the children.



## ALFRED ATTARD Harvesting salt

Glen Falzon  
tvm.com.mt

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



Alfred and Mary Attard

earn his living.

Alfred stated that although his health is not what it used to be, he still tenders the aspiration that his work will not terminate with his passing away and that his children will carry on with his work.

All those who go past Xwejini Bay in the inner reaches of Marsalforn in Gozo will have certainly seen him at some time. At the crack of dawn Alfred can be seen sweeping and collecting salt from this picturesque area of Gozo.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

However, until the Almighty calls him to a better world he will continue because he feels like being in the seventh heaven and would not exchange his work for anything because that is what he loves doing – harvesting salt. Does he dream of salt? “Naturally”, Alfred said. “Salt is everything”.

*Keeping Maltese Communities Connected*



The Journal of Maltese Living Abroad

## FRANK BUSUTTIL PROMOTS MALTA'S CULTURE IN ADELAIDE



**Frank and Valerie Busuttil**

Frank Busuttil, a Maltese-Australian from Seaford Rise, South Australia and an ardent lover of Maltese culture and history, held an interesting exhibition at the Southern Cross Nursing Home, at



Onkaparinga Lodge, South Australia. The exhibition was very well received by the residents and staff and everyone showed interest in what Malta has to offer. The artefacts exhibited included the following – several Maltese prints, photos and crafts as well as Maltese Boat (Dghajsa), old Maltese Buses, Maltese Lace, Mdina Glass, Maltese Wooden Balcony and Door, Filigree, Maltese Limestone, Maltese Cab (Karrozin) Canon and also a 1756 Gold Coin of Grand Master Pinto. Frank would like to hold more exhibitions in future in different locations.

## FOUNDATION BOOKS OF MALTESE LITERATURE WARD TA' QARI MALTI – L-EWWEL KTIEB

*Carmel Galea NSW*

The literature of Malta, though relatively new, has been written in the hearts and minds of the Maltese centuries ago. You find in the soul of the oral traditions that harboured the warm, first ambers of fire that will start the much-awaited written word of this old language.

Indeed, it was suppressed by the overwhelming foreign cultures over many centuries that never gave the Maltese language the space and that significant breath of life that would start the birth of Maltese literature. The mortified state of mind that you cannot write your thoughts, express your emotions and aspiration was a long-suffering journey that was not easy to endure.

The sheer obstacles of our forefathers of literature faced were enormous. They had to break out of the mould of foreign intellectual dominance and grasp the freedom to know themselves and express their emotions and aspirations in the language of the people. It was easily said than done when the language lacked the tools and literate grassroots.

The education of the masses in the language of their country had to shed ties of the foreign idiom and forms of other dominant languages mainly Italian and English. Maltese had to become a structured platform for the education of the masses. A colony under the enormous strain of British domination could not have its language emerged unless the British colonial government hadn't started the process to get the nation's language 'out of the kitchen' and let it be exposed to the wide experience of the people of Malta. This added the momentum that Maltese literature needed to have the breath that it so much needed to start its life.



Saydon and Aquilina, two leading lights in the firmament of the Maltese language, were the founders of 'Ghaqda tal-Malti Universita'. It was they, who fought strenuously to elevate the Maltese language at par with other languages, namely, English and Italian. It was in 1932 when a new dawn broke on for Maltese and opened the way for our language to become a compulsory language at all levels, exams, law courts, university and in every corner of Maltese life. It took hold of the status as the official language, our national language.

Our ancestors knew quite well that unless you elevate the literacy of the nation and disseminate the education of the Maltese language to all the grass roots of the Maltese, one could not achieve outcomes that make the people to appreciate the literature. Universal education was the key to achieve this. Soon when primary education became compulsory, Maltese textbooks came rolling into the classrooms of state schools. Maltese texts with Maltese contents and written in the idiom of the people, a breath of fresh air permeated through Maltese society. Together with the print media, The Rediffusion and more impetus by the University of Malta through the Chair of Maltese, we came to realise what Vassalli had dreamt about many years ago to have our national language.

In this article I want to discuss three seminal works that Saydon and Aquilina gave us through 'Ghaqda tal-Malti Universita' under the series title 'Ward ta' Qari Malti' published in 1936.

In the introduction to the first volume, Saydon and Aquilina, admit that they found it hard to build an anthology of works by Maltese authors when literature was still in its infancy. '**Ward ta' Qari Malti : I-ewwel ktieb**', both authors selected works that were short and not loaded too much with difficult words. In order to help the students and teachers to understand the meaning of texts, both authors skilfully inserted footnotes of great value to students to understand the meaning of texts. The authors also evaluated each work and discussed the critical aspects of the work presented.

### *Biographical note:*



ilina and Saydon used the analogy of the garden to portray the growth of Maltese literature from planting, taking roots and grew to flowering. The texts selected were attuned to this analogy. Saydon shows optimism that the Maltese authors presented were mature, improved their styles and were able to produce works of high calibre. For the young students they presented works that were of good quality by young, still living authors that exhibit new genre and themes so that the young are encouraged to love, respect and deepen the love to the Maltese language.

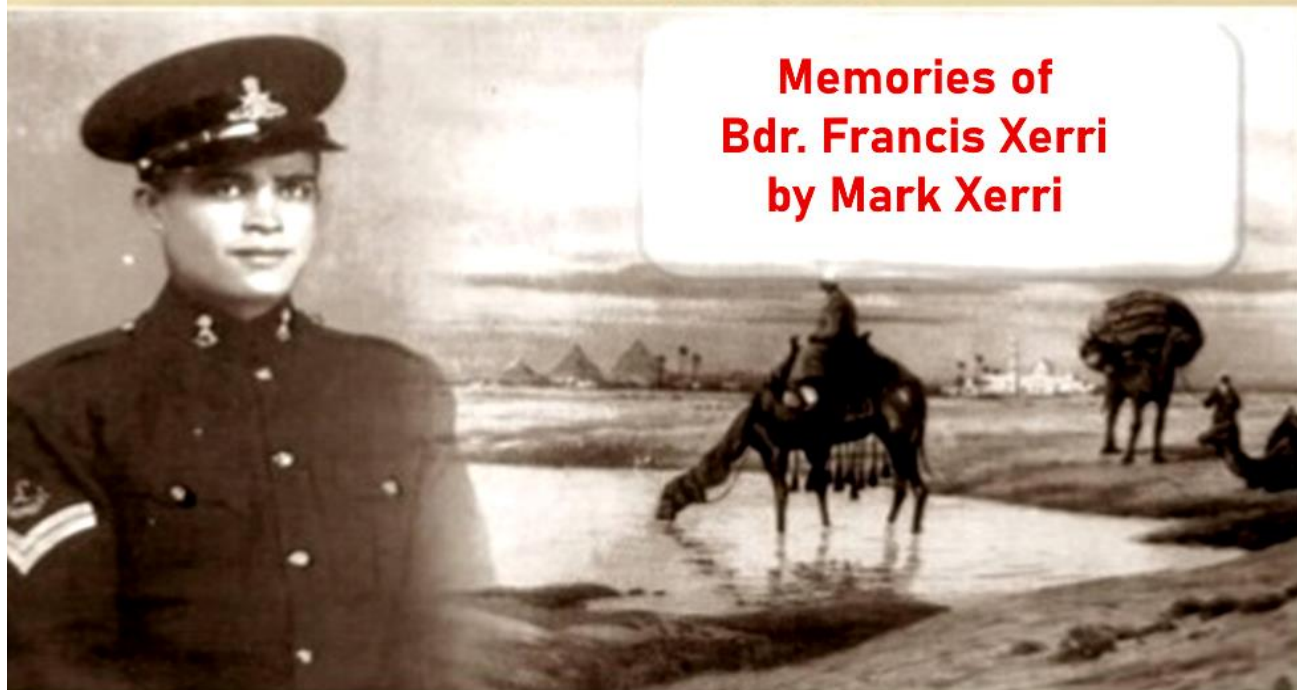
Aquilina makes emphasis on poetry in this volume. He believed that Maltese poetry writers were better at writing poetry than prose. He thought that the fact that more works in science and other academic subjects were written in foreign languages, they gave little space for Maltese authors to practice the writing of prose. In emphasizing poetry, Aquilina believed like M.A. Vassalli that poetry teaches the skills of writing Maltese. Each poem had its own soul. It would be dead poetry if we have poetry rhyming without profound thoughts that uplift human beings. Aquilina suggested the loud reading of poetry recitals by heart. This he believed increases the critical analysis of poetry. **[TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT EDITION]**



*Carmel Galea (Charles) has been teaching Maltese at the Saturday School of Community Languages since 1997. Many HSC students have passed through this unique Maltese class and many found their way disseminating our language in our community. Charles has been instrumental, with other collaborators, to set up the Akkademja Maltija NSW and the Skola Maltija Sydney which have become a magnet of Maltese language teaching in around Sydney area. Charles has been President of the Akkademja for many years and it is only now that he retired from this position to dedicate more time to family and teaching. Hope that these three studies I am presenting will be a starting point for students to deepen their study in Maltese literature.*

**SGT. FRANCIS XERRI****NOSTALGIA**

**Memories of  
Bdr. Francis Xerri  
by Mark Xerri**



*My late father Sgt. Francis Xerri served with the only Maltese army unit to serve outside Malta during WWII. He served in Egypt in 1940 under Capt G.C. Micallef Eynaud, who later became Colonel of the 3LAA Regt. RMA. My father used to recount how his unit left Malta for Egypt on Tuesday 7 May of 1940. Under the command of Major JV Abela, more than 200 men from the 5HAA Battery were given a very big farewell as they marched down to Grand Harbour, Valletta to board the SS Strathmore for Alexandria. On arrival in Egypt the Battery, with their 3.7 Heavy guns, was positioned at Aboukir. From about August of that year, there were several German air-raids on Aboukir and Alexandria with some direct hits and several casualties. At that time General Wilson, the British C-in-C visited the Maltese Battery. My father also recalls the help received from the Maltese community of Alexandria. About Christmas time that year, the Maltese soldiers received the bad news that Malta was under siege and was suffering from shortage of food. Several food parcels were organised by the Maltese Battery and sent to Malta. My father Sgt Francis Xerri returned to Malta with his Battery in March 1943 and passed away on the 22nd of December, 2007.*





**Hundred years since the first Maltese responsible Government. We have prepared a desk calendar that includes unpublished photos and other records, sourced from various archives, to commemorate these events. One may obtain a copy from our Reading Rooms (Rabat, 1921-2021  
Address: Triq l-Isptar, Rabat RBT 1043, Malta  
Webpage: <https://nationalarchives.gov.mt/>**



**St Paul's church in Munxar, Gozo;  
altarpiece by Roberto Caruana Dingli  
[Photo: jjpzammit]**



**St Paul's church in Marsalforn, Gozo; altarpiece  
'Shipwreck of St Paul' by Giuseppe Bonnici  
[Photo: jjpzammit]**





## IL-PAPA' XTARA MOBILE

Il-papà mar xtara mobile,  
Mudell ġdid tassew sabiħ!  
Nesa l-video u l-gazzetti,  
Ilu ġimgħa ħsiebu fih.

"X'meravilja!" jibda jreden,  
"Żgur bħal dana qatt ma rajt,  
Anki jdoqqlok Happy Birthday,  
W għall-Milied: is-Silent Nighť.

"Fih il-logħob bħal tal-kompjuter,  
U messagġi li jkellmuni...!"  
U dam siegħa mrekkien waħdu  
Medhi jagħfas il-buttuni!

Liz-zijiet ċemplilhom kollha,  
Lill-ħbieb tiegħu u l-ġirien,  
Lin-nanniet u lill-kuġini,  
Il-card ħlieha f'tlitt ijiem.

Ma' kull ħarġa, ma' kull qadja,  
X'battikata, x'waħda din!  
Dlonk tarah bil-mobile miegħu,  
Bħal pistola f'cintorin.

Hu u jsuq iħobb iċempel,  
Jagħmel l-isbah diskussjoni,  
Għad xi darba jaqbdu l-Warden  
U jċapċaplu ċitazzjoni!

Fi triqitna għal għand in-nanna,  
Illi toqgħod in-Naxxar,  
Dorna lura mħabba l-mobile  
Għax insieh warajh id-dar.

Il-Ħadd l'għadda, fil-quddiesa  
Smajt ħoss ċkejken, mużikali,  
Kien il-mobile qed iċempel  
F'nofs is-Salm Responsorjali.

Fid-dar tagħna l-ħajja nbidlet,  
Għandna ċerta serjeta',  
Sirna aktar effiċjenti  
B'dan il-mobile tal-papà.

U x'ħin rani mmissu nitfa,  
Trid tarah... qajjem irvell!  
Ħatafhuli minn idejja,  
Qalli: "Dak mhux ġugagarell".

**WE THANK OUR READERS  
WHO MADE OUR JOURNAL  
OF MALTESE LIVING ABROAD**

**NUMBER ONE**



I keep the e-newsletters on a USB for future reading. J. Borg - USA