



**CONSULATE OF MALTA IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER**  
**MARCH 2014 FRANK L SCICLUNA - LINKING MALTA AND AUSTRALIA**  
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## JOSEPH CALLEJA IS OPERA READERS' CHOICE



Maltese tenor Joseph Calleja has won the Readers' Award in the prestigious second annual International Opera Awards. The 36-year-old triumphed over Polish tenor Piotr Beczala, American mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, American soprano Renée Fleming, Peruvian tenor Juan Diego Flórez, Russian soprano Anna Netrebko and Welsh bass-baritone Bryn Terfel.

The awards recognise the achievements of all the performers, producers and teams that work in opera. The winner was selected through a public vote.

Mr Calleja was overjoyed: "When I saw the list of my fellow colleagues who were nominated for this award I of course felt privileged to be in such great and esteemed company. "I thank everyone involved in this 'operatic Oscar' event for helping keep opera alive and kicking and a huge thank you to all of those who took time to vote." The award was organised by Classic FM.

## Air Malta Appoints Joseph Calleja As Brand Ambassador



Air Malta has appointed the world-class Maltese tenor Joseph Calleja as its brand ambassador. Calleja has risen to international stardom and has appeared in over 28 principal roles in most of the world's leading opera stages including New York's Metropolitan Opera, London's Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, the Vienna Staatsoper, the Deutsche Oper, Berlin, Vienna State Opera, and the Zurich Opera. His third solo album released last year on Decca, *The Maltese Tenor*, debuted as the best-selling vocal album on the core classical charts in the U.K. and Germany.

Speaking during the press conference organised to announce this agreement Air Malta's Chief Executive Peter Davies said, "Air Malta is proud to have appointed Joseph Calleja as its Brand Ambassador. Mr Calleja's status in the international arena is impressive. His reputation as a renowned performer with a Maltese identity makes him undoubtedly one of the best ambassadors the airline can have to promote both Malta and Air Malta. This agreement is yet another milestone in the airline's efforts to support the promotion not only of the airline's new brand identity but also of the Maltese islands overseas."

Philip Saunders, Air Malta Chief Commercial Officer, said: 'We are thrilled to welcome Joseph Calleja as Air Malta's Brand Ambassador. Joseph is an outstanding representative for our Islands and stands for all that is great about Malta. This is a perfect partnership as Air Malta also aspires to become the ambassador, guide and broker for the very best that the Maltese Islands can offer.' Tenor Joseph Calleja said, "I love Air Malta and I am proud to be associated with our national airline. Everytime I board an Air Malta aircraft I immediately feel I'm in Malta. I am looking forward to be the airline's brand ambassador through which I can also promote my Maltese heritage."

## SPAGETTI BIR- RIZZI



## SPAGHETTI WITH SEA URCHIN

Perhaps the most requested pasta dish in the Maltese Restaurants! When we were young we used to dive in shallow waters and using just a fork we managed to pull out dozens. Mum used to open them remove the sandy bits and give us some maltese bread to mop out the delicate sweet and salty roe. AAhh, so heavenly delicious. This is a very simple dish, and I can assure you that there is no need of fancy gadgets or extra special techniques to master, yet each mouthful will give you the taste of our sea!

500g Spaghetti or Linguine (long pasta is a must)  
100g Sea Urchin roe or approx 1 heaped tablespoons per portion  
2 large tomatoes peeled and chopped  
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped  
1 clove garlic crushed  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsely  
Salt & Pepper

Bring a large pan of salted water to a boil, add pasta and cook for approx 7 minutes till al dente. Meanwile heat olive oil in a large frying pan, add chilli and garlic then chopped tomatoes and stir. Drain pasta reserving 1 cup of liquid. Add pasta to tomato sauce, also add the reserved pasta water and toss on high heat. Add sea urchin roe the last minute and toss quickly. Finally sprinkle chopped parsely and serve immediately.

## AUSTRALIA HALL – IT IS ONLY A COLONIAL BUILDING

By [Conrad Thake](#)

The former Australia Hall in Pembroke is today a sad carcass of a once dignified public building, with its interior totally gutted out and left in a state of utter dilapidation.



During World War I (1914-1918), Malta had a special role to play as a nursing station within the Mediterranean where several hospitals and convalescent camps were set up to tend to the casualties of the war. Australia Hall was built in 1915 by the Australian Branch of the Red Cross who raised funds to finance a combined recreation centre/theatre building that would serve to entertain wounded soldiers belonging to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC).

In its heyday the hall could accommodate up to two thousand men as stage productions, dances, and other forms of recreation were regularly held there. Later a library and reading room were introduced and around 1921 a projection room was added to the structure so that the hall could also be

used as a cinema.

When the British military facilities in St Andrew's Barracks were closed down in 1978, it was returned to the Maltese government and transferred to the Labour Party in exchange for other property. In December 1998, a fire gutted the hall's entire roofing system of metal trusses and sheeting. Only the external masonry shell has survived. Today the roofless shell of a building is vulnerable to the natural elements and vandals have left their marks on what remains of the building.

Public consciousness and awareness of the need to safeguard our historic architectural heritage has increased notably in recent times. However, I suspect that our appreciation for buildings and structures dating to the time of the Order of St John is distinctly greater than that of British colonial architecture, this being even more so in the case of military architecture. British military buildings and complexes have explicit political associations loaded with the trappings of colonial rule. In asserting our identity as an independent island-state we seem to have unconsciously rejected the legacy of our former colonial masters. This is the sad predicament of an important part of our architectural heritage.

The former Australia Hall is crying out to be restored and rehabilitated to a use which would serve the needs of the local community. This begs the question as to how long all we will continue to close a Nelson's eye to this shambolic situation.



## TIFĦIRA LIL MALTA

Int sabiĥa, o Malta tagħna!  
Mhux għax Malti nfaħħrek jien;  
issemmik id-dinja kollha,  
magħruf ġmielek kullimkien.

Imgħottija bl-isbaħ sema,  
l-għona dawl ix-xemx tagħtik,  
ma xxawtekx, bil-ħlewwa  
ssaħħnek,  
għid iġġiblek u tqawwik.

Fik il-bard lil ħadd ma jikser  
meta x-xemx tgħaddilek bgħid,  
ma jġix inhar tul sena  
illi ma jsaħħnekx xi ftit.

U l-art tiegħek kulma tagħmel  
kollu tajjeb, kollu bnin;  
ġewwa bliethom il-frott tiegħek  
jixtiquh wisq barranin.

Illi l-għid bil-wisq tagħtina  
qaluh fl-ibgħad żminijiet  
filli tagħti, għad li żgħira,  
tisboq 'il bosta artijiet.  
B'kull tifħir, o għira mbierka,  
il-għorrief semmewk, kitbuk;  
għal insiġ idejn uliedek  
elfejn sena ilu faħħruk.

Liema ħaġa li fik tinbet  
tieba u benna ma turix?

Il-laringa, il-frawla tiegħek  
min fid-dinja ma jsemmix?

U x'ingħid mill-għasel tiegħek,  
liema bniedem ma jfaħħrux?  
Jekk iduru d-dinja kollha  
oħla minnu ma jsibux.

Fik il-qronfla, fik il-warda,  
biex tħawwilhom l-angli għet  
imkien ġmlelhom, imkien bħalhom,  
fihom riħa tas-smewwiet

Ġewwa fik, o għira tagħna,  
ħlief il-ħlewwa ma tidhirx;  
u kif le, jekk ismek, ismek  
ħlief il-għasel ma jfissirx?



The ceremony of the unveiling  
the ANZAC Monument at the  
Argotti Gardens Floriana Malta  
25 May 2013





## GLUTEN FREE MALTESE PUDINA BY MARK SAID



### Ingredients:

1 loaf of country life gluten free bread  
4 cups of milk  
Zest of 1 orange  
1/2 cup fruit meadly  
4 tablespoons brown sugar  
3 tablespoons cocoa powder  
100gms of 85% dark chocolate  
1/2 cup glasse cherries  
2 egg

### Method:

Breakup the bread into small pieces, place in a bowl with milk and soak for 30 - 60 mins, combine rest of ingredients and mix well pour into a slice tray and decorate with almonds and cherries, bake in a fan forced

oven at 180 degrees for 40mins

## ROOT AND TRADITIONS

By Doris Fenech

Small communities of farmers and fishermen inhabited in various caves or big huts "giren" near picturesque and fertile valleys with abundance of the best natural spring water - "Ġnien Ingraw", "San Niklaw", "il-Qammieħ", "l-Imgiebaħ", "Għajn Żejtuna", "l-Imxagħxa", and "Għajn Żnuber".

Medieval dwelling were situated on high ranges and perfectly hidden into the valleys so they will not be seen by the pirates and corsairs ("pirati"), when they landed at Mellieħa Bay ("il-bajja tal-Għadira").

Troglodyte known around Mellieħa - Calypso cave, "Għar Bettiewes", and "Għar San Niklaw", "Għar tas-Sellum", "Għar Butomna", "Għar iċ-Ċumnija", "Għar Kiteb".

St. Nicholas cave ("Għar San Niklaw"), known by the farmers as ("Għar il-kbir"), or ("l-Għar tal-Ħamiem"), was one of the largest caves. The larger part of the cave was used for dwelling and to keep their animals. On the smallest part on the right side of the cave it was used as a chapel, the old farmers recollect ("il-Knisja"). The cave was plastered and an icon of frescoes paintings was painted. Some trace of colour of the icon are still visible.

Another church-cave found in Mellieħa was the Crypt of Our Land of Mellieħa known as is-Santwarju tal-Madonna. A Byzantine style fresco icon of Our Lady holding Christ on the right hand side, was painted on the rock. According to an old tradition the icon of a Mother and Child was painted by St. Luke, when he was shipwrecked in Malta together with St Paul. The icon was restored many times and some of the original painting is still perceptible.

## MALTESE CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

An old shepherd in Malta tending to his sheep. This has become a very rare sight.

### The Local Shepherd

From Autumn till Spring, shepherds ("raħħala"), were kept very busy herding the flock ("nerħla"). Sheep and goat's milk



was very important, shepherds and household made good traditional cheeslets. Milk was boiled before drinking or given to children.

Early morning ("maż-żerniq"), the herdsman used to milk goats and sheep before taking them to graze on the good and the tranquil pastures of "id-Delli", "il-Miżieb", "wied ta' Rdum", or "l-Aħrax", and bring the flock ("merħla"), back by 4p.m.

The shepherd watched the flock while resting on a rock or laying on the grass in the shade, with his faithful dog rounding up the reluctant flock.

The flock had a rope ("ħannieq"), around the yoke and whenever the shepherd had any curious goat or sheep he tied a long rope to the neck tie holding a small stone at the end, to stop it from running away. In springtime young goats, and lambs ("ħrief"), were let to run around in the fields with the flock.

In summer sheep were manually sheared ("iġiżżuhom"), for their wool ("suf tan-nagħaġ"), washed and spindled ("magħżel"), to be winded into tread and waved in cloth ("drapp tal-insiġ"), to be used for garments and blankets.

### The Peasants

The peasants ("bdiewa"), bounded the scattered patches of soil with rubble walls ("ħitan tas-sejjeħ"), to protect their crops from strong wind and to stop the soil from eroding.

They worked very hard from sunrise to sunset fighting the elements to cultivate. The fields were tilled at the right season to get a good harvest - clover ("silla"), barely ("furrajna"), hay ("tiben"), and other fodder ("għalf"), for the animals.

They planted potatoes ("patata"), onions ("basa"), pumpkins ("qargħa ħamra"), and other seasonal yield crops packet in wicker basket ("mezez"), to sell at the vegetable market center "pitkalija".



### AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND ARMY CORPS



### MALTA - THE NURSE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN 1914 - 1918

Ambulances at St Andrews Hospital - Malta - circa 1915.

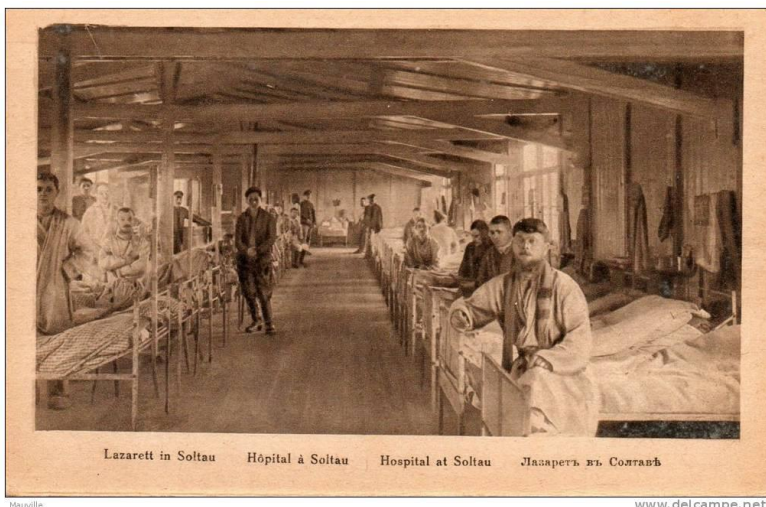
(thanks to Wayne Saillard on Malta for these great reference images set here)

Malta was justly described as the Nurse of the Mediterranean during WW1. In all 27 hospitals and camps were set up. The peace establishment of the RAMC in Malta in 1914 was 23 officers, 150 other ranks and 12 nursing sisters of the Queen

Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Service. On the declaration of war, the majority of regular RAMC officers were withdrawn from Malta for active service elsewhere, and replaced by four RAMC Territorial Force officers, four officers and nearly two hundred men of the 1st (City of London) Field Ambulance TF.

Malta had four military hospitals in 1914. The Military Hospital in Cottonera, Mtarfa Barracks Hospital, St Julian's Forrest Hospital with 20 beds used mainly for venereal diseases, and the Valletta Station and Military Families Hospital. There was also a small military hospital on the neighbouring island of Gozo and the large Royal Naval Hospital at Bighi.





**LAZARETT HOSPITAL** – Manoel Island, Malta - The first batch of 600 casualties from the Gallipoli landings arrived on 4th May 1915. Barges of wounded men were unloaded gently on to the quayside outside Valletta's ancient Sacra Infirmaria hospital, which can still be visited today. It was built by the Knights of St John in the sixteenth century and has one of the longest wards or halls in Europe. From here the wounded were sorted and moved on to the other hospitals around the island. Local Boy Scouts ran errands for the soldiers, posting their letters and bringing them magazines. There was a rose garden at the back of the hospital where a weekly concert was held for the patients.

An additional 39 nurses arrived on 7 May 1915. A total of 240 medical officers, 567 sisters and VADs, as well as 1,760 men of the RAMC attended the sick and injured. In October 1915, a combined Franco-British force was landed at Salonika to assist Serbia in its war against Bulgaria. From Salonika came 2,600 officers, including members of the nursing services. Up to 64,500 other ranks were received at the hospitals of Malta up to August 1917, the majority arriving during the summer and autumn of 1916.

The Australian/Newzealanders casualties from Gallipoli and Salonika were initially treated at Malta and Egypt. In 1917, however, submarine attacks on hospital ships made it unsafe to evacuate from Salonika, and five General Hospitals were mobilized in Malta for service in Salonika so the number of beds in Malta fell to just under 13,000. The number of sick and wounded treated in Malta from May 1915 up to February 1919 was approx 58,000 from the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, and 78,000, from the Salonika Expeditionary Force. Not all patients survived of course. Private Donald Haldane of the Royal Fusiliers died of wounds received at Gallipoli and is buried along with the other casualties in Malta's Pieta Military Cemetery.

## CONFUCIUS CULTURAL INSTITUTE AT UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

### HELD CHINESE TEA ART LECTURE

Confucius Institute at University of Malta 2012-05-02



Recently, teachers of Confucius Institute at University of Malta have brought a wonderful lecture about Chinese tea art to over 100 students and teachers from St. Martin's College.

On the lecture day, the auditorium was filled to capacity, everyone was curious about Chinese tea art. At the very beginning, the Chinese teacher introduced the close relations between tea and Chinese culture and the basic knowledge about Chinese tea and tea tools, then, the Chinese teacher demonstrated how to follow eight steps to make Wulong tea, which brought the lecture to a climax. The students and teachers carefully and attentively to the interesting introduction and elegant demonstration provided by the Chinese

teachers, they were all anxious to taste the newly-boiled tea.

The successful tea art lecture not only helped St. Martin's College students to get more thorough and concrete comprehension about Chinese tea and Chinese culture, but also laid a good foundation for further co-operations between Confucius Institute at the University of Malta and local schools.



### **FIRST EVER GRADUATES IN CHINESE - UNIVERSITY OF MALTA**

The first graduation ceremony for students of the Diploma in Chinese was held at the University of Malta.

This was the first time that students at the University of Malta could study Chinese at tertiary level. The course leading to Diploma started in October 2010, once the Confucius Institute at the University of Malta had been established.

Both courses leading to the Diploma in Chinese and the B.A. / B.A. (Hons) in Chinese are offered by the Confucius Institute through the

Department of Oriental Studies, Faculty of Arts.

### **YOUNG PEOPLE FROM MALTA AND FINLAND VISIT THE GOZO SPCA**

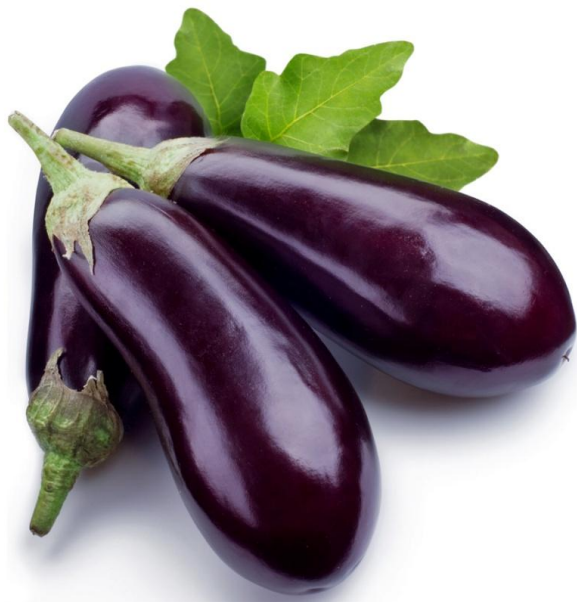


Young people from Malta and Finland who were participants of a Youth Exchange called 'Snapshots,' financed by the EU Youth in Action programme, recently visited the Gozo SPCA centre in Victoria.

The group enjoyed a morning helping out with socialising puppies at the Centre.

Whilst they were there the group gave a name to one of the new puppies, christening her 'Sulo,' which means sweet in Finnish. Youth in Action is the EU Programme for young people aged 15-28 (in some cases 13-30). It aims to inspire a sense of active citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future.

Youth in Action is a programme for all. It promotes mobility within and beyond the EU borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social and cultural background.



## BRUNGIEL - EGGPLANTS

This lovely, old fashioned Southern eggplant variety produces very high yields of glossy, black eggplants that range from an oval to a teardrop shape. The eggplants are of a substantial size and are borne on large, vigorous plant of an upright type growth. The plants are extremely productive and is a continuous setter of fruits that makes it ideal for home or market use, ideal eggplant variety for slicing, stuffing and baking

Eggplant is a species of nightshade commonly known in British English as aubergine and also known as melongene, garden egg, or guinea squash. It is known in South Asia, Southeast Asia and South Africa as brinjal and in Malta “brungiel”

## STEAMED EGGPLANT SALAD

If you have a passion for eggplant, you will love this recipe. Again, it is super-simple to prepare, but produces such an interesting result. I love the texture of steamed eggplant – it’s velvety, sloppy and drinks up flavours thirstily.

Because eggplant is rather robust in its character, I have teamed it

with this rather fine and pungent dressing. If desired, this salad can be prepared in advance and assembled just before serving.

- ☐ 1 large Eggplant aubergine peeled
- ☐ 2 teaspoons sea salt
- ☐ 1 tablespoon finely sliced spring onion scallions
- ☐ ground white pepper
- ☐ 0.25 cup malt vinegar
- ☐ 2 tablespoons shao hsing wine or dry sherry
- ☐ 3 Cloves Garlic finely diced
- ☐ 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- ☐ 1 tablespoon light soy sauce
- ☐ 0.5 teaspoon Sesame Oil

1. Cut eggplant lengthways into 1.5 cm (3/4 in) slices, then cut each slice into 1.5 cm (3/4 in) strips.
2. Sprinkle eggplant with salt on both sides and lay on a tray in one layer. Set aside for 10 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, to make the dressing, place all ingredients in a small heavy-based saucepan and bring to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for 2 minutes or until slightly reduced, then set aside.
4. Place eggplant in a colander and rinse well under cold running water.
5. Drain and pat dry with kitchen paper.
6. Arrange eggplant in one layer on a heatproof plate that will fit inside a steamer basket.
7. Place plate inside steamer and position over a deep saucepan or wok of boiling water and steam, covered, for 6 minutes or until eggplant is just tender when pierced with a knife.
8. Carefully remove plate from steamer and allow eggplant to cool slightly.
9. To serve, arrange eggplant on a platter and spoon over reserved dressing.
10. Sprinkle with spring onions and pepper.



## **HOW MALTA FREED ITSELF FROM BRITISH DOMINATION**

By Syd Lewis"

The British Governor took power to maintain law and order and the Constitution was revoked in 1959. *At the beginning of 1959 [February], the British [Admiralty and Dockyard] did a rather silly thing. Without any other form of communication, they added a typed note into the workers pay packets which said that as from the end of March, just one month hence, 6000 of them would be out of a job. Now, I ask you?.....and they were surprised when the work force started a full blown riot in the Dockyard. It didn't last for too long, but much damage was done in the Yard, including to the Admiral Superintendent himself, Rear Admiral J. Lee-Barber who was punched and assaulted and pelted with stones.*

*Fortunately his injuries were minor, but the sheer shock of this reaction was enough to scare the British rigid. That they could do this to a loyal work force full well knowing that there was no alternative employment in the Three Cities where most of the workers lived, was stupidity in the extreme. Malta was now run by an Executive Council.*

*In 1961 self-government was restored and Borg Olivier was returned in 1962 helped greatly by the Church of Malta. Soon after in 1964, Malta won its independence within the Commonwealth.*

Thus Her Majesty The Queen remained the Head of State of Malta with an appointed Governor General acting in her name living on the Island.

Malta aspired to even greater things and now wanted economic independence also. Malta signed an agreement with Britain to receive £M50 [part loan] over a period of 10 years in return for the continuing use of the military bases on the Island. Traditionally dependent on British military spending Malta had now to diversify its economy, and set about encouraging tourism and manufacturing. Then the beginning of the final phase began when in 1967 Britain announced massive and rapid defence cuts for the Island affecting all aspects of Maltese workers working for the Admiralty.

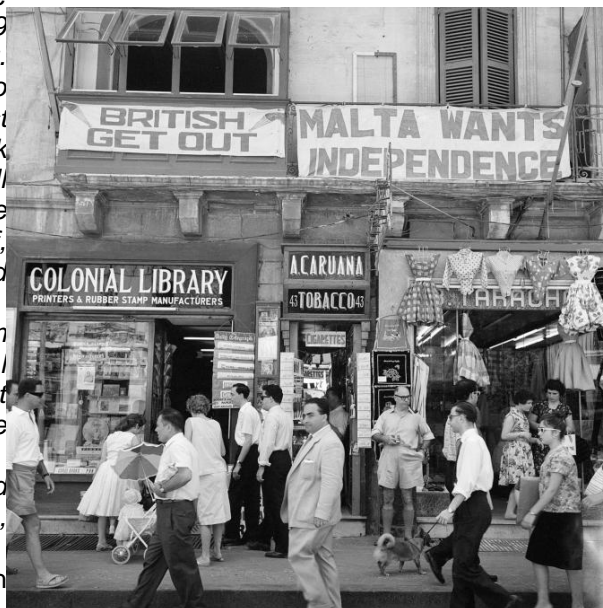
The people of Malta were quite naturally concerned and negotiated with the British to slow down the timetable of cut-backs.

This Britain agreed to do. In 1971 Dom Mintoff became Prime Minister and predictably informed us that the Defence and Assistance Agreement would be cancelled unless it was substantially revised in Malta's favour. Britain was unimpressed but Mintoff played on NATO fears that Malta might instead become a base for hostile forces. In 1972 Britain agreed that Malta was to receive an annual payment of £M14 from combined NATO and UK sources. In December 1974 when Malta became a Republic with a Maltese President as Head of State, it retained its Commonwealth membership. It is well known that in 1979, the last of the British Forces left the Island, and in the case of the Royal Navy manifest in the sailing of HMS London from Dockyard Creek. However, what might not be known is the way Malta played her International Card. For many years, Malta had been the home of the British Forces in the Mediterranean and was therefore agreeing, albeit reluctantly, to being in-arms with the British militarily. In 1979, Malta declared to the World that from henceforward, she would be completely NEUTRAL in all matters of war and that the United Nations would record a Declaration of Non-Alignment. Malta entrenched this article into her constitution.

It would appear that many Maltese people have been told about the 'Irish Fortune' and how joining the European Community acted as a panacea to all her ill's.

They have been told that Malta too will see dynamic changes in her economy and moreover, that they will become a rich country without the need to rely on her two [current] 'dollar-earners', namely tourism [many hotel beds remain empty throughout the year] - and light manufacturing [13,000 are currently unemployed which is worrying for the economy]. During my recent visit I got to talking with a Maltese lady who was clearly older than myself. Her father had been a doctor on the island and moreover, one of the first British trained medical men. I got to talking about tourism and did she think that joining the EU would bring in more visitors.

I was quite surprised to hear that during the 1920's and 1930's many British tourists came to Malta for a summer holiday and brought in important currency.





## MALTESE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS IN ADELAIDE ON 5 EBIFM 103.1

5EBI 103.1 fm is located in the heart of Adelaide, South Australia and broadcasts a vast array of international music, world news, current affairs, plus much more, in dozens of languages, catering to South Australia's rich and diverse cultures.

Our coverage includes the entire Adelaide metropolitan area and the surrounding country region, plus we have links to multicultural radio stations interstate.



### MALTESE COMMUNITY RADIO PROGRAM

(PHOTO left) The present broadcasters

Carmen Debono, Bernadette Buhagiar, Doris Mangion and John Mangion

The first Maltese broadcast in Adelaide was transmitted on 16 October 1977 on the radio station 5UV, the station of the University of South Australia. The foundation members were Father PeterPaul Mejlaq OFM, Frans X Falzon, Gejtu Grech (all deceased) and Joe Monsigneur. The MCR broadcasts programs in Maltese on Mondays 6 – 7 pm and Sundays 7.30 – 8.30 am. The MCR has been serving the Maltese Community, including all the Maltese associations in SA, for over 37 years.



## VATICAN SAYS HAWK CLAIM WAS PRANK

Updated: 17:40, Thursday April 10, 2014



The Catholic weekly *Credere* (Believe) has been caught in a delayed April Fools' prank about the Vatican recruiting a hawk to protect the Pope's doves after two were killed by a crow and a seagull.

The publication said a bird of prey named Sylvia, who was specially trained for the task in northern Italy, has been taken on by the Swiss Guards following the incident in January.

But a Vatican official told AFP the report, which was due to appear in the Italian weekly's Thursday edition and was relayed by other newspapers, was an 'April Fools' they picked up'. Doves are traditionally released from the Vatican a few times a year as signs of

peace.

But when two children let fly the white-feathered birds from the window above St Peter's Square on January 26 this year, they were caught in a brutal mid-air attack in front of horrified onlookers.

The use of birds of prey to scare off unwanted pests is not new: they are often used at airports and football stadiums to get rid of pigeons and have even been deployed at Rome's historical monuments to preserve them from pigeon droppings.

## THE EARTHQUAKE OF 18 SEPTEMBER 1923



This event is well described in the local newspapers (*Malta, Daily Malta Chronicle*), and was also recorded on the Milne seismograph in Valletta. Unfortunately, the seismogram did not yield useful information since the shock appears to have thrown the mechanism out of alignment.

The majority of the population took to the street in panic in both islands, although the shock appears to have been felt most strongly around the harbour area in Malta (*Daily Malta Chronicle*, 19/09/1923).

Damage reported was mainly nonstructural, such as collapses of stone crosses on churches, cracks in church domes, the most serious being that of St. Paul's church in Rabat, and cracks in the walls of many residential

and commercial buildings. This damage may be considered as of Grade 2, and the local site intensity has been assigned as VI.

The earthquake was reported to be slightly felt in Syracuse, Sicily, but is not listed in any of the catalogues. It can therefore be assumed that this is a «Sicily Channel» event, possibly on the Malta Escarpment, given that it was more strongly felt to the east of Malta. The *Daily Malta Chronicle* reports that «We are authoritatively informed that the disturbance must have occurred some 50 or 60 miles away from the Island.» The ISC bulletin lists it as 35.5N, 14.5E, about 35 km south of Malta, with no other information, however, for this period, location of earthquakes deriving from instrumental data is unreliable.

## **FORT SAINT MICHAEL IN THE GRAND HARBOUR**



Fort St Michael is a fortification which is now destroyed except for the outer bastions which can still be seen to this day.

The fort was built by the Order of Saint John after the 1551 attack, on the peninsula then known as Isola di San Michele formed by Dockyard Creek and French Creek in Grand Harbour. The fortified city of Senglea which was later built around the fort is still known locally as I-Isola.

The original fort was begun in 1551, initially under the patronage of Grand Master Juan d'Homedes, to a design by the military engineer Pedro Pardo d'Andrera, and extended to a fortified city by Grand Master Claude de la Sengle during the Knights' preparations for the Siege of Malta.

The fort's design is very similar to that of Fort St. Elmo on the Sciberras Peninsula, with the exception of a bastioned front and a

ravelin.

Fort St Michael was one of three forts defending the Knights stronghold in Grand Harbour during the siege, along with Fort St Elmo and Fort St Angelo. Fort St Elmo fell, but Fort St Michael withstood the siege, though massively damaged, the scene of some of the most desperate fighting of the siege. It withstood 10 assaults from the Ottoman Turkish attackers.

The rebuilding and development of the fortified city of Senglea after the siege continued until 1581. The name Fort St Michael became associated with the landward bastion of Senglea, also known as the St Michael Battery, or the St. Michael's cavalier. This was largely dismantled during extensions to the dockyard area at the end of the 19th century and construction of a new primary school in the 1920s. The remainder was badly damaged by aerial bombing during the Siege of Malta during the Second World War. After the war the ruins were dismantled and the site made into a public garden.

However, the impressive seaward bastions of the fort remain, heir to Fort St Michael's original site and purpose, as does the Senglea Main Gate, which has recently been restored, after the post war reconstruction collapsed in the late 1960s due to heavy rainfall.





## RISE AND DECLINE OF TORONTO'S MALTESE COMMUNITY

**With its immigration halted and an aging generation passing on, Toronto's Maltese community struggles to stay connected.**



Albert Vella, 68, still finds reason to celebrate his Maltese roots, despite a declining population in Toronto's Maltese community. He is organizing a cocktail reception for visiting Maltese tenor Joseph Calleja on Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2010.

When Albert Vella learned that renowned Maltese tenor Joseph Calleja was coming to Toronto, he called the singer's publicist in England and began organizing a reception to greet his countryman.

Toronto's Maltese community is old and closely knit, and hosting guests from home and embracing them as family simply runs in its blood.

But the party that the community is throwing for the tenor Wednesday at the Ambiance Banquet Hall also sheds light on an

immigrant community in decline – with its immigration to Canada coming to a halt, an aging generation passing and descendants becoming full-fledged Canadians.

"It is part of our culture to greet any Maltese visiting here," said Vella, 68, who came here with his wife and three children in 1977. "But to be honest, we try to find any excuse to get the community together to celebrate our affiliation with Malta. We are still part of Malta."

The first documented Maltese arrived in Canada in 1826 and the majority came after World War II. In the community's heyday during the 1970s and 1980s, there were more than 45,000 Maltese in Canada, though the 1986 census reported a population of only 21,855. In the latest census, only 4,675 people in Toronto identified Maltese as their mother tongue.

While most Maltese immigrants came earlier in the last century as economic migrants, Toronto Maltese historian John Portelli said the last wave, arriving here between 1977 and 1982, fled political instability back home.

Migration from the small Mediterranean country has literally ended since, as its own economy thrived.

"The older generation started dying gradually, no more immigrants are coming and some have returned," said Portelli, a professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

"The community is definitely declining. The language is lost among the second generation."

The Maltese's success in integrating into Canadian society also contributes to its own decline, said Portelli, who came to Canada in 1977 with a Commonwealth scholarship for his graduate studies at McGill University.

Up until the early 1980s, the old Maltese Village in Toronto's Junction area was home to more than 8,000 Maltese Canadians, who now have spread across Greater Toronto.

The number of social clubs in the Junction has dropped from nine to four. Just a few years ago, the community's monthly newspaper, L-Ahbar, also folded, apparently due to declining circulation. "There is still the colonial attitude and influence that 'you'd better speak English than Maltese.' The bias is still there today," said Portelli, 56. "Integration can help you economically, but it kills you in terms of maintaining your identity."

Joe Sherri, president of the Maltese Canadian Federation, said the group was made up of 20 social clubs at its inception in 1980; today only 12 are left.

"If you go to any of our clubs on Fridays or Saturdays, you won't find any young people there," said Sherri, 63, who came here in 1965 for job opportunities and now runs his own food distribution business. "Our biggest challenge is to get our young people involved." These days, young Maltese only show up at big community celebrations such as annual Mnarja, the festival of light, in June. The only hope of closing the generation gap is to draw youth in through groups such as the Malta Band Club or its popular soccer club, said Vella.

"Something that concerns us a lot is where to find the new blood to replace the old blood," lamented the retired banker, whose three adult children, all professionally employed, speak very little Maltese. "We don't have an answer yet."

## **MALTESE COMMUNITY IN MACKAY QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA**

I have been receiving your newsletters for almost a year now and I thoroughly enjoy them. I often share lots of stories at our own Mackay Maltese Club meetings as to which I am President of. I am Australian born to Maltese parents. My mother was born in Australia to Maltese parents and my father was born in Gozo and he migrated to Australia with his mother and two other siblings over 89 years ago. My fathers family are pioneers of the sugar cane industry. I am very proud of my heritage and we are trying to foster our culture here in Mackay. We have a small but very active club here. We have monthly meetings and dinners every two months and we celebrate Our Lady Of Victories with a procession and mass in September and a dinner as well. It is a lovely weekend and we are always open for visitors to come to Mackay.

Kind Regards Joan Bezzina  
President of the Mackay Maltese Club



### **History**

#### **About the Mackay Region:**

Mackay is a provincial city in North Queensland with a diverse and developing community. The region surrounding Mackay boasts Australia's largest sugar cane producing area with six sugar mills, one of Australia's four sugar refineries and the largest bulk sugar terminal in the world. Other major industries in the area include coal, tourism and beef. The region includes more than 70 islands in the Whitsunday group, a section of the Great Barrier Reef. The beauty of the region, from the sandy beaches and Whitsunday islands, to the tropical rainforests and National parks, make Mackay a popular tourist destination.

#### **History of Maltese Settlement in Mackay and surrounding districts:**

In 1883, a shipload of Maltese migrants were indentured to work in the cane fields of North Queensland and as a result, the first Maltese immigrants settled in the Mackay area. In the early 1900's Maltese people along with other European countries, were urged by migration campaigns to try your luck in Australia. With the prospect of a new life and work, many young Maltese men and women went through exhaustive medical examinations and boarded ships like the Ocean Triumph and Castel Felici bound for Australia.

The ships usually stopped in Fremantle, Western Australia; Adelaide, South Australia; Melbourne, Victoria, Sydney, New South Wales and Brisbane, Queensland. Many Maltese immigrants have settled in these cities, while others with a thirst for adventure, headed further north. They found work in the sugarcane fields in the surrounding districts of Mackay in places like Habana and Farleigh.

The work was hard labour, clearing hilly, rocky ground, planting sugarcane and, in the harvesting season, cutting the cane by hand. At first they worked for others, but before long, some earned enough money, often by going into partnership with their fellow countrymen, which enabled them to buy their own piece of land and became farmers themselves. They also diversified into all types of business and so adopted and supported the local community already established.

In Mackay today it is estimated that 25% of the Mackay and region's population are of Maltese descent. The Mackay region has an estimated population of 125,000 permanent residents.



## **MACKAY IDENTITY -MARY VASSALLO**

Mary, the daughter of Carmnu and Angela Muscat was raised in San-Martin, Malta. The family (parents, six sons and four daughters) migrated to Australia on the 'Toscana' in 1954 and settled in Mackay.

Mary, a well-known Maltese identity, has written two recipe books. Together with her husband Victor they raised a family of four and now make time to enjoy their grandchildren.

Although life in Malta was never easy, memories are treasured of their life there, but equally cherish their life in Australia.

**Information provided by Mary Vassallo and Laraine Schembri.**



North Eton cane farmer Joe Deguara loves the farming lifestyle and after a five-year stint as a diesel fitter at Hastings Deering has returned to full-time farming. WITH all the 'young fellas' being lured to the mines for higher pay packets, who will be left to farm in Mackay?

The average age of an Australian cane farmer is 60 and many Mackay farmers have already reached, or passed, the age of retirement.

But due to difficult financial situations or a lack of interest from the younger generation, they are being forced to continue working or sell the family farm.

Farleigh cane farmer Bill Benson will celebrate his 78th birthday this year and is beginning to make plans for his retirement.

He has 60 years of farming experience and is still working on his 30 hectare cane property.

"I have three kids but none of them are interested in farming," he said.

"They are all educated and have other jobs."

Canegrowers Mackay chairman Paul Schembri acknowledged the ageing population of cane farmers was a serious issue for the sugar industry but said the Mackay area had a 'trickle' of younger people retuning to the industry.

"I don't want to downplay the issue but we have seen younger people come back...we have seen a trickle back, not a flood."

Joe Deguara is one of these farmers. The 27-year-old said he has been driving tractors 'since his feet could reach the pedals' and loved the farming lifestyle.

Despite his love of farming, he still chose to undertake a five-year stint at mining service company Hastings Deering.

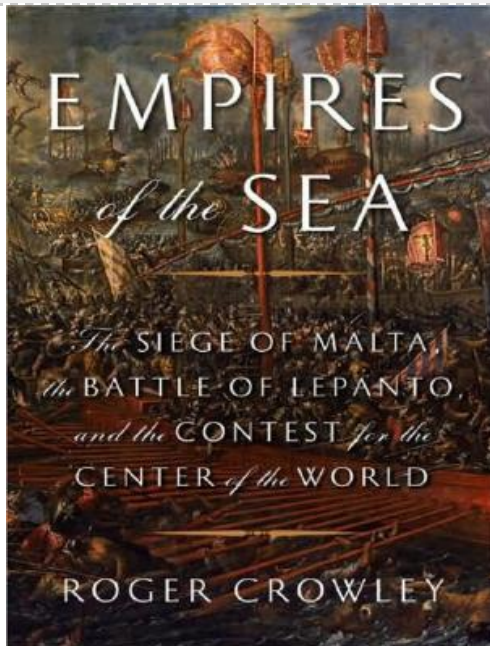
"Growing up on the farm I already had knowledge of engines and machinery, so I did a diesel fitting trade," he said.

Although it was easy for Mr Deguara to step back into the sugar industry he admitted it could be difficult for young people who were keen for a future in farming to get started. "It is difficult... especially with the price of land." With new blood comes fresh ideas and Mr Deguara has big plans for the future.

"Like any industry the only way to stay competitive is to get bigger," he said. "We want to get in the position where we can expand and buy more cane land."

**Daily Mercury**

## MALTA AND THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO – MALTESE IN MACKAY



The historic European Battle of Lepanto takes a special significance 440 years after the battle itself. Six years before the battle on the island of Malta 600 Knights of St John commanding a force of 8,000 men prepared to defend Malta. The Turkish fleet was desperate to take the island of Malta, but they were repelled. The Knights of Malta would be called on again as part of the Holy League to prevent the Mediterranean becoming an uncontested highway for Ottoman forces. Had the Holy League failed at the Battle of Lepanto, the face of Europe would be very different from what it is today.

At dawn on the morning of the battle, Pope Pius V and a handful of the faithful prayed the rosary and asked Our Lady to intercede for a Catholic victory. Prayers continued in Rome while the battle raged in the Gulf of Lepanto, ending in what some historians regard as the most decisive naval battle anywhere in the world since 31 BC. Pope Pius V created a feast day, Our Lady of Victories, or Our Lady of the Rosary as it is also known, to commemorate that victory. This feast enjoys a special place in the hearts of Maltese people as it is intrinsically bound up with the history of Malta. This feast, Our Lady of Victories, also enjoys a special place in the hearts of those in my electorate of Dawson.

In the late 1800s, a shipload of Maltese migrants were indentured to work in the cane fields of North Queensland. As a result, the North Queensland city of

Mackay has one of the largest Maltese populations in the world. Maltese families were attracted to Australia by migration campaigns urging many Europeans to try their luck in Australia.

But it was not luck that was required to make it in Mackay in those early days. Clearing land and planting cane was hard work. Harvesting cane by hand was very hard work. But the Maltese people are tough, resilient and passionate. Just as they did at the Battle of Lepanto, they rolled up their sleeves and persevered with hard work until the job was done. Most laboured for sugarcane farmers, but they soon earned enough money to buy a farm and start a farm themselves, often in partnership with fellow countrymen. Such partnerships were formed in all kinds of business endeavours and the city of Mackay today is a result of the very strong Maltese influence. An active Mackay Maltese Club ensures continued celebration of the Maltese culture and influence on the region. The club has a new executive now, but I want to acknowledge the work of Carmel Baretta who was the first president of the club, someone who has served in the club for a long time.

I had the very great pleasure of attending the Feast of Our Lady of Victories in Mackay on Friday, 9 September. It featured one of those spectacular processions with a statue of the Virgin Mary, of the kind you would witness somewhere in the Mediterranean, being taken through the streets in the Procession of the Rosary, followed by an open-air mass and a celebration dinner the next night.

For everyday families living in Mackay there are strong reminders of our Maltese heritage. Maltese names are everywhere, from business names and street names to respected community leaders, from the Deputy Mayor of Mackay, Darryl Camilleri, to the head of the Mackay cane growers organisation, Paul Schembri. There are business names like Borg's Real Estate and Zarb Road Transport, and even sporting greats we know like the former North Queensland Cowboy Paul Galea, or 'Galare', as the commentators used to mispronounce it. We are constantly reminded of the hard work and dedication of our early pioneering families. We are also reminded of the unerring faith of the Maltese and the good works that flow from that faith with the presence of the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus at St Francis of Assisi Aged Care Home.

The late Bishop Joseph Grech, who had visited Mackay in years past to celebrate Our Lady of Victories wrote about Our Lady of Victories and the Maltese character: Our ancestors were not afraid to face any difficulty that came their way. They were always ready to adhere to their convictions even if that meant that they had to undergo much suffering and pain.

Today, we might be living in another country, which has provided us with so many blessings and opportunities. However, deep inside us, there is still a heart that is formed and sustained by a history of bravery and faith.

I am proud to report that that strength of character and faith is alive and well in Mackay and North Queensland is all the richer for the Maltese influence over more than a century.



# Nostalgia



## Pictures

*Top Left* - Farmers at Saint Paul's Bay – the islands in the background

*Top right* – Children from Sengelea ( L-Isla) in their school uniform

*Right* – Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and HRH Prince Philip arriving in Malta greeted by Sir Gerald and Lady Creasy, May 3 1954.



## BUILDING VIRTUAL BRIDGES

Maltese all over the World

MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER



**The visit of the Malta High Commissioner to South Australia 27 – 31 March 2014**

Photos clockwise – The reception at the Maltese Cultural Centre, Charles and Victoria Muscat with members of the Maltese citizens, The High commissioner is being interviewed by John and Doris Mangion on the Maltese Community Radio 5EBIFM, Mrs Victoria Muscat shaking hands with Mrs Doris Mangion



**WELL,  
THAT'S ALL FOLKS  
FOR NOW SEE YOU  
AGAIN SOON  
DAK KOLLU  
GHALISSA  
SAHHA U SLIEM  
HBIEB**