

# **TITKELLEM** *bil-Malti?*

**(Anke ftit biss?)**

**MELA GHIDHA FEJN TGHODD:  
FIČ-ĊENSIMENT**

**TUESDAY  
10 August 2021**

**Census  
Australian Bureau  
of Statistics**



**BAJTAR  
TAX-XEWK**

**Prickly Pears in  
MALTA**



**Maltese e-Newsletter**  
**Journal of Maltese Living Abroad**

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**SWIMMERS  
Andrew  
Chetcuti  
and  
Sasha Gatt**



**DOCUMENTARY ON  
MALTA'S CAT  
CULTURE**



**pages 5 and 6**

**Cats of  
MALTA**



**10 August 2021****Census**  
[abs.gov.au/census](https://abs.gov.au/census)**For a brighter future**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is ready to deliver a COVID safe and responsive 2021 Census. Most people will complete the Census online with no contact from the ABS and all Census staff will operate under a COVID safe plan. The plan follows guidelines from federal, state and territory governments to keep the community safe.

## **THE MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCILS - IMPORTANT APPEAL**



The state peak bodies of the Maltese community across Australia have joined together in a campaign to encourage people to recognise their Maltese ancestry and language in the upcoming Census.

The Census, this year being on 10 August, has several questions that relate to people's country of birth, ancestry and language use. The organisations are encouraging everyone of Maltese descent to respond to these questions by stating that they have Maltese ancestry and that, if they speak even only a bit of Maltese, to say they do so too.

Maltese Australians are proud of their culture but

unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, this isn't always shown in places where it really counts, like the Census. It's really important that people properly acknowledge their culture and language in the Census because this information is used to make important decisions about the health, welfare and social services and programs our community needs and deserves.

Governments, councils and other organisations all use Census data to decide how they will fund their services. If the Census doesn't truly reflect the size and breadth of our Maltese-Australian community, many services and programs may be under threat or may not be provided.

So it's up to every one of us to say we're Maltese where it counts: in the Census!

**This is a joint initiative of the Maltese Association of Western Australia; Maltese Community Council of NSW; Maltese Community Council of South Australia; and Maltese Community Council of Victoria.**

## **Olympic Fun Fact – the Most Difficult of Gymnastics Positions**



The image of the Maltese Cross at an Olympics games goes beyond the symbols displayed on the athletes' uniforms. It is also the name of the most difficult move in men's gymnastics. The position is an extremely difficult strength-oriented skill performed by the best gymnasts seeking an advantage over their rivals.

Of all the cross positions performed on the rings discipline, the Maltese Cross is one of the hardest of the gymnastic skills. In a Maltese Cross position, the gymnast's body hangs parallel to the floor with arms by the side of the body and legs extended straight backward. The position can be adapted for use on floor exercises.

The official name is the "Hirondelle", which is French for "swallow" (the bird). However, the common name for this most difficult position is the Maltese Cross. For a small country Malta has a large influence.

**Sean Richardson**

## **An Olympic Monument inaugurated in Gharb, Gozo**

On the occasion of the Olympic Day which was on Wednesday, 23 June 2021, an Olympic Monument was inaugurated in the area where the sports facilities are located, in Tumas Cassar Street, in Gharb, Gozo.

This all happened on a personal initiative of the Secretary-General of the Maltese Olympic Committee Joe Cassar where he contacted Joe Bajada, and in his letter on behalf of the Olympic Committee, he described the same Bajada as a very experienced sportsman, and a sports administrator and representing Malta in very prestigious positions on the European and International Sports scene. For the Maltese Olympic Committee, Bajada was the person who could transmit the importance of a Sports Monument in Gozo where he was



immediately entrusted with finding a suitable, prominent, and permanent site where the Olympic Rings will be exhibited, as well as coordinating this. the first Olympic monument on the island of Gozo. Here, despite being a few days away, Bajada began to analyze some suitable places and in this work he spoke to the Mayor of Gharb, David Apap not only accepted his proposal but in



a few days together with his colleagues the Councilors realized not only the monument with the Five Olympic Rings, but also that they made the bust of Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the International Olympic Committee, and its second president and who is also known as the father of the modern Olympic Games. To further complete this Monument, an Olympic Urn was also held.

The inauguration of this Monument was carried out by the Minister for Gozo, Clint Camilleri, who through Eco Gozo was given financial assistance to make this monument possible. In a short but symbolic and significant ceremony that took place on Wednesday, June 23, 2021, the Olympic Urn was lit by the athlete Stefan Azzopardi from Gharb, assisted by Ġuzeppina Galea, a Special Olympics athlete. After the Olympic Anthem was played, short speeches were given by Joe Cassar, Secretary-General of the Maltese Olympic Committee, Mayor David Apap, and Minister Clint Camilleri.

Joe Cassar mentioned the Olympic values, as well as the process so that this Monument could be made with the coordination of Joe Bajada who is also a member of the Council of the Maltese Olympic Committee, apart from other International administration sports posts. He thanked the Mayor of Gharb who, despite the very limited days, accepted the proposals submitted to him so that now the island of Gozo is also decorated with this Monument and therefore this place can be considered as an Olympic site with a lot of symbolism. Mayor David Apap for his part said that despite being given only a few days, he felt that an Olympic Monument in their locality would be a We will continue to monitor health and government advice and actively adjust our approach to the circumstances in any given location to deliver the Census in a COVID safe way.

Field Officers play a vital role in delivering the Census and can be identified by their official

sporting attraction and hoped that this place would be an incentive for more young people to start practicing sport and will also help to have Gozitan athletes participating abroad. He thanked the Ministry of Gozo for making this project possible through Eco Gozo and promised to keep this monument as it should be. On the part of Clint Camilleri, Minister for Gozo, he said that it is very appropriate that this inauguration is taking place on such an important day when the Olympics are being commemorated. In today's world with the diverse interests of all countries, sport is that thing that manages to bring many countries closer together and the concept that sport is indispensable for life and our society. He thanked all those who gave their input so that now even in Gharb we have another sports attraction that continues to beautify this characteristic village of Gharb.

At the end of the ceremony, plaques were presented by the Maltese Olympic Committee to athletes Stefan Azzopardi and Guzeppina Galea, sports coordinator Joe Bajada, Mayor David Apap and Minister Clint Camilleri.

Thus, Gozo has now been decorated with this Olympic Monument, something that was not only missing, but to a certain extent surprising, when we have Gozitans who are not only fully engaged in positions as officials of European Sports Associations and even International, but in the past, we also find some Gozitans who had taken part in the Olympic Games representing Malta as Tommy Cauchi did at the Los Angeles and Seoul Olympics as the coach of the National Archery Team

identification passes, bright yellow satchels and official ABS documentation detailing the work they're doing. For more information, visit [www.census.abs.gov.au](http://www.census.abs.gov.au).



1940s, 50s  
60s and 70s

**How can we  
ever  
forget the day  
when we left  
Malta  
to emigrate  
to an unknown  
country  
for a better  
future?**



Celebrating Malta's cat culture while discovering how through art, folklore & unconditional love, the magical stray felines connect the island & bewitch the human population



**Sarah Jayne Portelli**  
Director/Producer - Cats of Malta

**"CATS OF MALTA"**

## A FELINE FOCUSED DOCUMENTARY

Cats of Malta is a feature-length documentary set to be completed in 2021 that celebrates Malta's stray cats and the people who – through volunteering, art and folklore – show the cats unconditional love and support.

Ivan and Sarah Jayne of Nexus Production Group relocated to Malta from Australia in the middle of the 2017 European Summer and it didn't take them long to notice the large stray cat population in Malta. Already being cat lovers, their curiosity about the strays grew, and eventually the idea to make a documentary about the Maltese cat culture hit. The duo visited popular colonies, cat cafes and sanctuaries, talked to artists, and sourced stories from locals and business owners about their favourite felines.

Ivan and Sarah Jayne compiled all the heartfelt stories into a poignant but fun family-friendly documentary which they can't wait to share with the world. However, they are currently running a crowdfunding campaign to raise funds to finish post production on the film. Check out the Kickstarter campaign video below and click [www.CatsofMaltaFilm.com](http://www.CatsofMaltaFilm.com) either by donating or sharing on social media. Anything you can do to help the filmmakers get the film completed is incredibly appreciated.

### THE TEAM

In addition to producer/director Sarah Jayne and producer/cinematographer/editor Ivan Malekin, there's a great team of cat fanatics working behind the scenes to raise funds for the documentaries post production.

**Daniela Ercoli Co-Producer** Originally from Italy, Daniela is an emerging producer based in Melbourne. Daniela studied and worked in the Milan Entertainment Industry, collecting experience in short films, newsroom TV, film festivals and music videos.



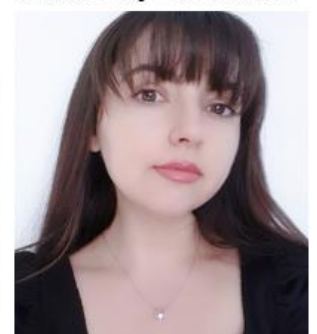
**Daniela Ercoli Co-Producer**



**David Willey Co-Producer**



**Ylenia Kay Camera Operator**



**Maria T.B Associate Producer**



More recently Daniela served as producer, production manager and coordinator for feature films and short films including the feature *How Deep is the Ocean* and the television series *Mega Zoo*, plus *Real Housewives of Melbourne Series 5*.

Daniela's love for cats began at a very young age. After her cat had three little kittens, with her sisters help, they adopted the kittens, making them part of the family.

**David Willey Co-Producer** David is an old friend of Ivan's and Sarah Jayne's from their days of running the Made In Melbourne Film Festival more than a decade ago.

As a freelance consultant & mentor he is privileged to help start-up founders and creative artists harness their passions and networking skills to get their projects off the ground.

David loves music of all flavours, the Mediterranean light and sitting at outdoor cafes in the company of welcoming local cats.

**Ylenia Kay Camera Operator / Associate Producer** Ylenia started her career in the film industry as an actor in 2014 and diverted to the camera department a couple of years later due to her interest and background in photography. Since the bold shift in focus, Ylenia has crewed on some of the most recognised local and international film and TV productions shot in Malta, including *Jurassic World: Dominion*, German TV series *Das Boot* and Hallmark's *To Catch a Spy*.

**Maria T.B Associate Producer** Maria has a Master's degree in Cognitive Science and extensive work experience in diverse areas. Her non-academic work includes acting on TV commercials and part-time modelling. In her free time she enjoys reading about science and technology, tea culture and discovering new cafes in different cities.

**STAY UP TO DATE - SUBSCRIBE TO CATS OF MALTA THE FILM**

Keep up with all the developments for *Cats of Malta* via our [news page](#), and to be part of the Cats of Malta community sign up to our newsletter using the form below to be in the know for festivals, screenings and streaming links in the

future. [www.nexusproductiongroup.com/news/tag/cats+of+malta](http://www.nexusproductiongroup.com/news/tag/cats+of+malta)

and by liking, following and sharing our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) pages for events, behind the scenes images and footage and more.

[www.CatsofMaltaFilm.com](http://www.CatsofMaltaFilm.com)

Nexus Production Group Ltd Soho Office, Savoy Gardens, J Block  
Rue D'Argens, Gzira, GZR 1362, Malta

**LIVE**  
**CATS of**  
**MALTA**

CAMPUS FM FM 103.7

Sarah Jayne & Ivan chat with Colin Fitz

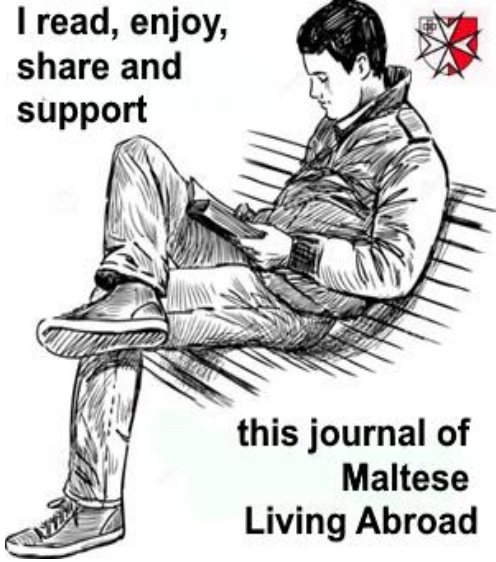


Host COLIN FITZ Director SARAH JAYNE Producer IVAN MALEKIN

JOIN US ON JULY 28TH 10.15AM

[www.CatsofMaltaFilm.com](http://www.CatsofMaltaFilm.com)

I read, enjoy,  
share and  
support



this journal of  
Maltese  
Living Abroad



## **The Maltese Own Band Philharmonic Society welcomes Mrs. Chirelle Ellul Sciberras – the newly appointed Consul General**

The Maltese Own Band Philharmonic Society together with The Maltese Cultural Assoc. of Victoria had the pleasure and honour to welcome the new Maltese Consul General for Victoria, Mrs. Chirelle Ellul Sciberras at The Maltese Cultural Centre in Albion, Melbourne. The event was organised by The



President of the Maltese Cultural Assoc. Peter Paul Portelli and his committee.

Mrs. Ellul Sciberras was well received by all the guests and representatives of the various Associations and groups that use the Centre. Also in attendance was Councilor Mrs. Victoria Borg from The City of Brimbank.

The evening started with the Maltese Own Band performing the Maltese and Australian National Anthems, followed by a welcome

speech from Peter Paul Portelli. Mrs. Chirelle Ellul Sciberras thanked everyone for their warm welcome after which she was presented with some flowers and gifts.

The Maltese Own Band then presented a short concert of traditional Maltese Marches, finishing with The Innu of The Maltese Own Band.

Mrs. Ellul Sciberras was very appreciative of the Band and the committee of the Maltese Cultural Assoc. and seemed to enjoy the chance of meeting with so many of the Maltese Community.

player Shi Yu Q, while Bezzina competes in the 10m Air Pistol Qualifications.

## **MALTESE OWN BAND PHILHARMONICA SOCIETY**



### **ENTERTAINED BY “ELVIS PRESLEY” ANDREW PORTELLI**

The Maltese Own Band Philharmonic Society held a Ladies Night on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July at the newly refurbished Maltese Cultural Centre in Albion, Melbourne.

The event was sold out and was a huge success with all the ladies who attended having a wonderful time. The night started with the ladies being served Champagne and finger food as they entered and were each given a gift bag which included a selection of ladies cosmetics and a large block of chocolate. Each lady was also presented with a hand made iced

rose sugar cookie. Once inside the ladies were able to inspect the variety of stalls that were set up inside the main hall. The stalls included a selection of Ladies Fashion, Homewares, Maltese foods, Physic readings, a Thermomix demo and many other stalls aimed the varied tastes of the ladies attending on the night.

Once the ladies had been seated they were asked to check under their seats for a special gift in a lucky envelope. Each table had one lucky seat, with gifts ranging from Bunnings vouchers to vouchers for manicures. A buffet dinner was then served with a large and varied selection of food to satisfy all tastes and dietary requirements.

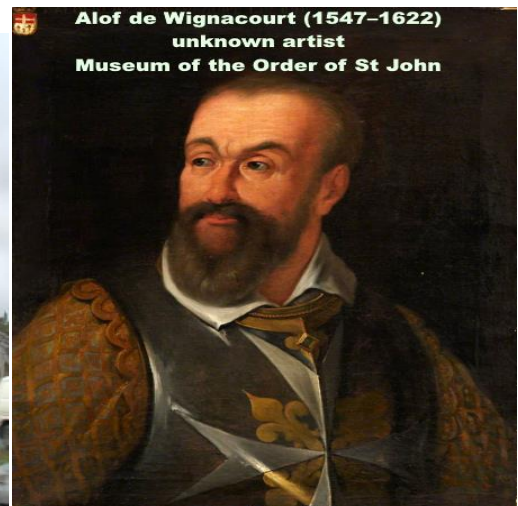


Next the ladies were treated to some special entertainment from the popular entertainer Andrew Portelli, presenting his special Tribute to Elvis Presley. Andrew involved the audience in the songs as he mingled among the tables and serenaded the ladies throughout his fantastic show.

Dessert was then served and door prizes were drawn with many individual prizes. Andrew Portelli then began his second set and had the ladies dancing with a selection of Rock 'N' Roll classics. All of the ladies were letting their hair down and singing along as they danced the night away.

The night finished with the drawing of the raffle with a large variety of prizes for winners to select from. We would like to thank all the businesses that donated prizes including Bunnings, Chemist Warehouse, Officeworks and many more as well as the stallholders who also donated prizes.

Everyone went away happy with many saying they are looking forward to attending our next Ladies Night!

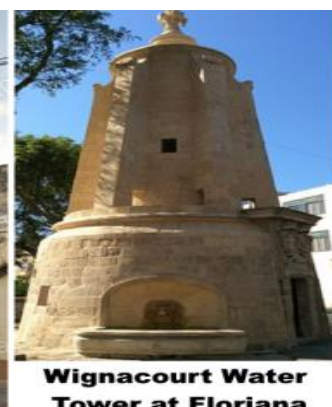
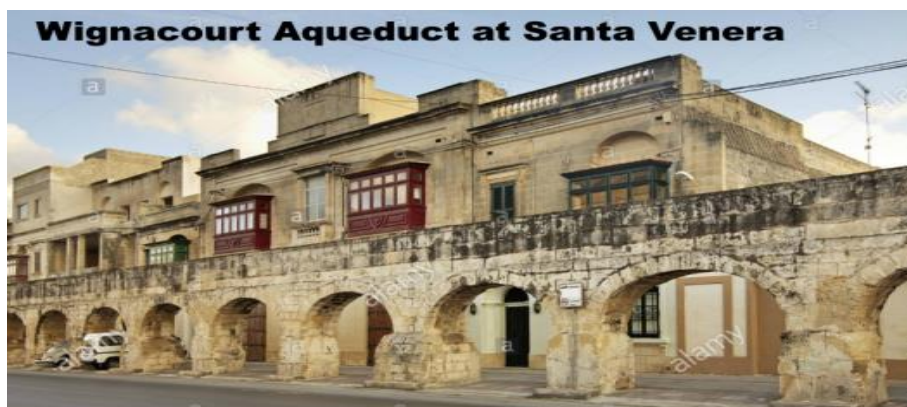


## Wignacourt Aqueduct

The Wignacourt Aqueduct (Maltese: L-Akwedott ta' Wignacourt) is a 17th-century aqueduct in Malta, which was built by the Order of Saint John to carry water from springs in Dingli and Rabat to the newly-built capital city Valletta. The aqueduct was carried through underground pipes and over arched viaducts across depressions in the ground.

The first attempts to build the aqueduct were made by Grand Master Martin Garzez in 1596, but construction was suspended before being continued in 1610. The watercourse was inaugurated five years later on 21 April 1615. Several engineers took part in the project, including Bontadino de Bontadini, Giovanni Attard and Natale Tomasucci. The aqueduct was named after Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt, who partially financed its construction.

The aqueduct remained in use until the 20th century. Most of its arches still survive today, and can still be seen in the localities of Attard, Balzan, Birkirkara, Fleur-de-Lys and Santa Venera. Other remains of the aqueduct include water towers at Santa Venera, Hamrun and Floriana, and several fountains in Floriana and Valletta.





## **NEW LIGHTING SYSTEM FOR THE ARCHBISHOP'S CURIA FAÇADE**

**Posted as a Press Release  
from the Archdiocese of  
Malta**



Following the rehabilitation works of the main façade of the Archbishop's Curia in Floriana, a new lighting system was inaugurated. This coincided with the feast of St Calcedonius, which is being celebrated today (24th July), whose remains are found in the Curia chapel.

The restoration of the side façade on Triq Oliver Friggieri (formerly Triq l-Argotti) was also inaugurated. Overlooking St Calcedonius Square, the building with a wide main frontage, formerly known as Casa della Madonna di Manresa, was originally a one-storey retreat house with a height limit of 24 palmi, as decreed by the Order of the Knights in 1744. This included a semi-basement floor underneath the entire building complex. The building was eventually extended at first-floor level, comprising two large halls. The major structural intervention, and the addition of the first floor, commenced in the 1860s. The building complex suffered extensive damage during the Second World War.

The Archbishop's Curia has an imposing main entrance flanked by a pair of columns on either side of an external flight of stairs. An intricate sculptural group of Our Lady holding the child Jesus, flanked by St John the Baptist and St Paul the Apostle, sits atop of the main door. The other detailing of the imposing façade was never completed.

There are only two windows at ground floor level complete with sculpted sills and lintels. Michael Pace Ross, the Administrative Secretary of the Archbishop's Curia, said that the next phase will entail the restoration of a house situated in Triq l-Iljun corner with Triq Vincenzo Bugeja, which is linked to the Curia, and which will eventually be transformed into an evangelisation hub. Mr Pace Ross said that the Curia's façade lighting was done meticulously and according to the highest standards of lighting historical buildings.

He thanked Melloncelli s.r.l., based in the province of Mantova in Italy, who were entrusted with the lighting system. The project was financed by the Archdiocese of Malta who in recent years has stepped up its efforts in various parishes to ensure that Catholic heritage is restored for present and future generations

## **Maltese and Italian**

Wikipedia,

Map showing in light blue the areas where Italian was historically officially spoken, like Malta (and Corsica, Albania, Istria, etc..)

**Maltese Italian** is the Italian language spoken in Malta. It has received some influences from the Maltese language.



Enrico Mizzi (Prime Minister of Malta in 1950) was jailed in 1940 also for his pro-Italian language opinions

For many centuries since the Middle Ages and until 1934, Italian was the official language of Malta. Indeed, it was considered the language of culture in Malta since the Italian Renaissance.

In the 19th century Italian irredentists and Italian. Maltese wanted to promote its use throughout Malta for plans to re-unify it to Italy as Malta was part of the Kingdom of Sicily up to 13th century. In the first decades of the 20th century there was even a struggle within Maltese society and politics over the "language problem", which came to a head before World



War II.

Although only the rich could speak Italian, it was however understood by nearly all the population, and with Maltese being generally spoken by those less well-off, Italian was used as the official language in Malta until 1934.

But in 1933 the Constitution was withdrawn over the Government's budgetary vote for the teaching of Italian in elementary schools, and furthermore the Italian was dropped by the British authorities from official language status in Malta in 1934, its place being taken by Maltese. In 1935 there were manifestations against all these decisions, promoted by the Maltese fascists: the Nationalist Party of Enrico Mizzi declared that most of the Maltese population was supporting directly or indirectly the Italian Maltese's struggle.

One of the most fanatical supporters of the Italian language in Malta was Carmelo Borg Pisani. The greatest Italian-speaking Maltese of

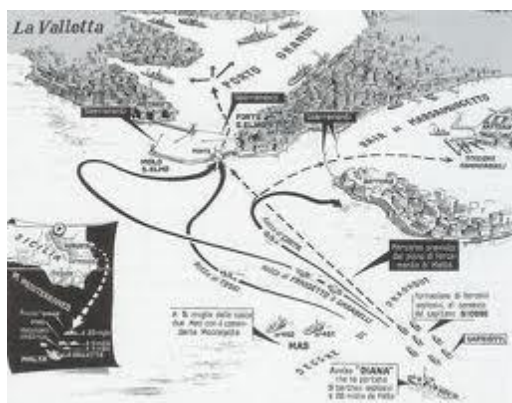
the second half of the 20th century is Vincenzo Maria Pellegrini (1911-1997), who wrote most of his works in Italian and composed a poem in Maltese Italian in honor of Garibaldi in 1982, a hundred years after the death of 'Hero of the two worlds'.

Since the 1950s there has been a huge increase of Maltese people who are able to speak/understand the Italian language, thanks mainly to the broadcasts of the Italian television: from 15% (nearly 40,000) in 1950 to 36% (145,000) in 2002 and to 86% (360,000) in 2010.

Furthermore, since 1970 the Maltese Italian is being considered for possible reinstatement as official language in Malta. In 1981, the government of Malta began to publish the monthly magazine *Lo Stivale* in Maltese Italian. The Malta Constitution allows 3 languages to be official in Malta and this rule is favorable to the reinstatement of the Italian language.



## 26 July 1941: Italian Torpedo Boats Attack Malta Harbours



## RAIDING BOATS WIPED OUT IN MINUTES BY HARBOUR GUNNERS

A flotilla of Italian boats launched a daring attack at dawn this morning on Malta's main harbours. It is believed the attack was aimed at the convoy ships in Grand Harbour and the submarine base at Manoel Island. But within a matter of minutes all the enemy vessels had been destroyed or disabled by Harbour defences.

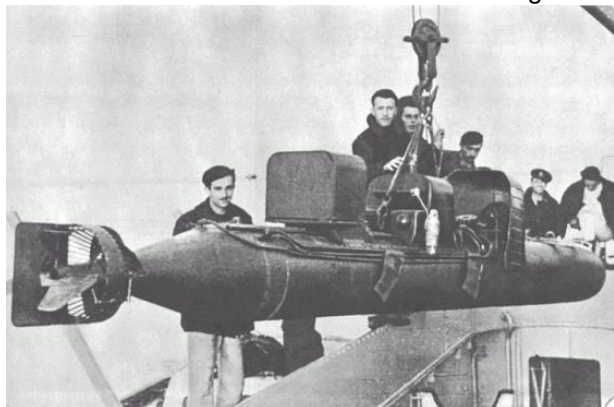
The Harbour gunners had been at their posts since before midnight last night, when enemy shipping was detected off the north coast of the Island. In anticipation of a naval bombardment, all coastal defence posts were ordered to 'stand to' and Swordfish aircraft were sent out to attack but the vessels were reported to have turned away. However, the incident placed the Harbour Fire Command on

high alert; gunners were not sent to barracks but ordered to sleep at their gun positions.

Just before dawn this morning the air raid alert sounded for a small group of enemy fighters approaching the Island. No attack was made but as All Clear siren died down, the sound of motor boat engines was heard off Grand Harbour. A minute later came the first intimation of the attack on the Harbour, with a heavy explosion under the St Elmo Viaduct. The order was given for all searchlights to be switched on and the sea outside Grand Harbour was lit up across a wide area, exposing the flotilla of enemy E-boats close to the shore. The gunners at St Elmo and Ricasoli and along the coastline opened fire. The first enemy boat was blown up within 10 seconds, followed at short intervals by several others.



Already woken by the air raid alert, many civilians watched: “the resulting fireworks display, as [the tracer bullets] ricocheted off the surface of the sea and formed interweaving patterns of dark red, green and light red, was a sight witnessed by the crowds, which surprisingly enough for the hour of the morning had gathered along Valletta bastions and Sliema front...” As it became lighter more E-boats were sighted and engaged with great success by



the twin 6 pounders of the Harbour Fire Command, the Bofors positions at Dragut Point, Fort St Elmo and Ricasoli, and also from a coastal defence post.

Corporal L G Ferris of 1<sup>st</sup> Bn Cheshire Regiment was manning a gun at the defence post:

*Italian MTB “I heard loud explosions in the mouth of the Grand Harbour. I went outside and saw two Motor Torpedo Boats. I watched them for approximately ten minutes and decided that they were hostile craft, and so I engaged them with a Vickers Machine Gun... We continued to fire until both boats were sunk and all firing ceased at approximately 0530 hrs. Daylight showed the wreckage of two boats with survivors clinging to them, and these survivors were picked up by a naval boat...”*

*At about 0550 hrs we saw three other craft on the horizon and this was reported to Company Headquarters.”*

Meanwhile the RAF reported enemy aircraft approaching the Island. Hurricanes fighters were sent to intercept and engaged the raiders. While most concentrated on the Macchi fighters, two Hurricanes dived on enemy motor boats and opened fire, damaging at least two.

P/O Winton was surprised by a Macchi fighter: *“and received such damage to his machine that his fan stopped. Using his speed to gain height, he was able to reach 700 feet and then baled out, both his parachute and dinghy doing all the things that a kind-hearted MO likes them to do... then he spotted a stationary torpedo boat. He paddled the dinghy with his hands and, finding progress slow, towed it and swam towards the boat. By climbing up the side he was able to peer into it and was confronted by eight very much dead Italians.*

*Taking possession of the boat was thus quite easy and as he couldn’t start it he waited, flying the flag at half-mast, since he didn’t know which side would rescue him. An Army rescue boat did a circuit round him – almost six hours after he had baled out on an empty stomach – and thinking he was an Italian, also that there was a machine-gun on the boat, left him to cool his heels for a time. Before they could return a Swordfish with floats dropped in to pay him a visit and gave him a lift home...”*

The attacking force is believed to have consisted of one fast tender vessel carrying the strike flotilla, one two-man and nine one-man motor torpedo boats, one motor boat carrying two two-man submarines and two large rescue boats. The rescue boats and carrier apparently escorted the MTBs and submarines to within a couple of miles of Grand Harbour before turning out to sea. Six MTBs, one two-man motor torpedo boat and a large motor boat were destroyed by coastal defences, three MTBs and two rescue launches were destroyed by the RAF.

One two-man submarine exploded on attacking the St Elmo breakwater; the second, probably intended for an attack on Marsamxett Harbour, ran aground and was abandoned by its crew. The outer span of the breakwater was brought down, effectively blocking access to Grand Harbour for the following attack vessels. No other damage was caused.

Malta rescue boats and aircraft searched throughout the day for survivors. The enemy also carried out air searches and an Italian hospital ship remained 12 miles offshore for most of the day; the RAF did not mount any attacks. In all, 15 dead bodies were recovered; 18 Italians were rescued alive and taken prisoner. One MTB was recovered and brought in to Grand Harbour. A one-man MTB was also recovered intact, and it is hoped to salvage other craft.

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Maltese-Canadian Museum - Toronto, several schools and libraries  
websites; ozmalta.com., Maltese Community Council of Victoria  
Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, Maltese Clubs in Australia, NZ, UK and USA  
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**Our huge readership and positive responses encourage us to keep going**



## The first passport photos

*One hundred years since photos were first included in Maltese passports Leonard Callus sifts through the yellowing documents at the National Archives of Malta to get a snapshot of life a century ago.*

Wearing an ill-fitted waistcoat over a shabby shirt, Salvatore Portelli looks suspiciously at the camera as he poses for the very first passport photo on January 13, 1915.

The 25-year-old general labourer from Għarb had his application signed by the archpriest and Mr Portelli's signature is an unsteady cross, indicating the man's illiteracy and background.

Inexplicably, six months had to pass for the next photo to be included in a passport application in Malta. By June 1915 photos became a compulsory component of this travelling document.

Although the first Maltese passport was issued on Independence



Day in 1964, the National Archives of Malta in Rabat hold hundreds of thousands of passport applications dating back to 1870.

The oldest surviving passport application at the archives is dated April 23, 1870, and was issued to Giovanni Mifsud from Valletta who was travelling to Benghazi.

But passports are much older. The concept of being under one ruler's protection, while in the land of another, existed, at least, since biblical times.

*Politician and Times of Malta owner Mabel Strickland's passport.*

Since the early 19th century the Maltese used the British passport. The Privy Council granted passports up to 1794 when the Office of the Secretary of State took over issuing passports; a function still retained by the Home Office. In 1858 the passport acquired its role as a British identity document and since then the language switched from French to English.

While other countries, including France and the US, were increasingly adding holders' physical descriptions on passports, such as height and eye colour, the British government resisted developments described by then Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston as "degrading and offensive".

He "didn't want British people being perused by foreigners," according to Martin Lloyd, author of *The Passport: The History of Man's Most Travelled Document*.



This situation prevailed until the beginning of World War I when security considerations gained the upper hand.

In the early weeks of the war, German naval reserve officer Carl Hans Lody was arrested on suspicion of spying for Germany using a fake US passport. He was found guilty and executed at the Tower of London on November 6, 1914.





The existing concerns about the lack of a photograph and physical description on passports increased following Lody's capture and execution. This led to the enactment of the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1914, which came into force on January 1, 1915 making it compulsory to have a photo and a personal description on passports.

The passport application form for the Maltese, as British subjects, was redesigned and from June 1, 1915 a photo had to start being included, together with the reason for travel; and information about the applicant's particular features, such as height, colour of eyes and hair, shape of forehead, nose, mouth, chin, face, complexion of skin and any special features.

The application form had to include the maiden name and place of birth of married women (wife or widow) travelling on their own. Provision was also made for those born abroad, who derived their status as a British subject, from their father or paternal grandfather's place of birth (Malta).

All of this led to the first modern British passport, which was also used in Malta, consisting of a single page, folded into eight, and held in cardboard cover.

The passport, valid for two years, included the holder's photograph, signature, and personal description. At times it even included fingerprints.

Several changes and developments marked these years.

The Maltese changed their travel dynamics, destinations and motivations. Travel to certain former Mediterranean littoral destinations such as Corfu and Gibraltar, went down while trips to Tunis and Egypt continued.

After a botched attempt by 214 Maltese to settle in Australia in September 1916, no passports were issued for travel to this country between 1917 and 1920. There was a rush to the US between 1919 and 1921, until America introduced emigration quotas in the early 1920s.

Not all those seeking a passport were migrants. The reason for travel had to be indicated on the passport application, and besides emigration these included travelling to undergo an operation and for health reasons.

Some obtained a passport to study abroad, others sought to leave the island for business, other had their servants flown over, wives wanted to join their husbands or visit relatives, while others travelled to claim inheritance.

Travel as a holiday and for pleasure started to emerge around 1924. The main destinations were Italy and "the Continent".

However, quite often applicants who enjoyed a higher standard of education refused to disclose their travel reasons adding the phrase "for private affairs". (Source: Times of Malta)



**Thank you**

**Maltese  
e-Newsletter**



**Journal of Maltese  
Living Abroad**

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## INDEPENDENT MALTA

**With Tears in Their Eyes 100,000 Share In Dramatic Moment**

Kinship seized an estimated hundred thousand crowd at the climax of the simple but beautifully timed ceremonial last night — when Malta moved into the state of absolute sovereignty. Men and women had tears in their eyes as the tricolour built up, as the Union Flag descended and the Maltese Flag was hoisted. The Navy's Guard of Honour comprised of U.K. personnel, unashamedly wept.

Under the full September moon the great arena erupted into a massive roar of handclapping and cheering as the white-and-red flag with the scarlet-edged George Cross was caught in the spotlight.

There was a hush as the opening bars of the Hymn of Malta was being reached up to the velvet sky. A moment of silence followed as the first Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Mamo, was sworn in as the first President of the Republic.



## THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA

**Sir Anthony Mamo sworn in as President**

By Our Staff Reporters

The Republic of Malta was born yesterday evening in a solemn ceremony in the historic hall of St. Michael and St. George at the Palace, Valletta.

**MEMBER OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

The Department of Information yesterday issued the following press release by Mr. Anthony Mamo, the President of the Republic and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

His Excellency Sir Anthony Mamo, 55, was sworn in as the first President of the Republic amid the cheers of the Members of the House, gathered in the Hall.

Outside on the Palace Square, a crowd which increased as the evening wore on, huddled together in the cold wind and frequent rain for nearly two hours. They heard Ministers and Members of the House solemnly promise to bear true faith and allegiance to the People, the Republic and the Constitution. They cheered as Labour Member, Sir Anthony Mamo, was sworn in as the first President of the Republic.



The Queen's message to Sir Anthony Mamo, the first President of the Republic of Malta, was read by the Queen's representative, the Governor-General, Sir John D'Amico.

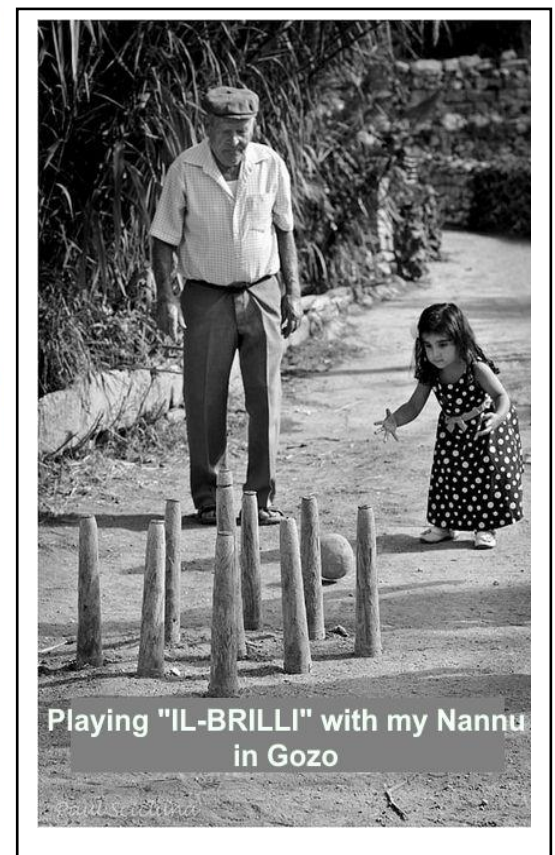
"On the image of the Republic of Malta, I send you good wishes for your health, and for the peace and prosperity of Malta."

"It is a source of pride to me to try to make the Commonwealth a better place than the one that the Queen's representative, the Governor-General, Sir John D'Amico, has left behind."

**MALTESE CENTER**  
Malta Square  
27-20 Hoyt Ave South  
ASTORIA - NEW YORK  
(718) 728 9883



Photos on passports only started being introduced in 1915: Robert Biasini Stagno from Sliema and Liliana Darmanin, born in Crete and residing in Bormla.



Playing "IL-BRILLI" with my Nannu in Gozo





## MELLIEHA

**Mellieħa** is one of the northernmost villages of [main island Malta](#) and overlooks Malta's largest sandy beach called [Mellieħa Bay](#), also referred to as **Ghadira (pron. a-deera)**. The village has a lovely character and picturesque scenes that provide you with a view of life in Malta as well as offering you all amenities for a comfortable holiday. Mellieħa is situated on top of a hill, surrounded by fertile valleys providing beautiful panoramas and village scenes not seen frequently in the Maltese islands. The village is a 5- to 10-minute drive away from Ċirkewwa, where you can easily hop on the ferries to [Gozo](#) and [Comino](#).

**History of Mellieħa - Mellieħa's history** goes back quite a while. Evidence of Neolithic activity has surfaced many times in the area. A number of megalithic remains, rock-cut tombs, pottery fragments and primitive tools were all found around the Mellieħa hill. There are also many naturally formed caves around the base of the village which according to experts have been inhabited by troglodytes since 213 B.C. These caves seem to have been used not only as dwellings but also as a place for burial.

Like many other remote parts of the island, Mellieħa was abandoned during the late 15th century due to fear of corsair attacks. Mellieħa was repopulated in the 17th century when the Knights of Malta built several fortifications to protect the area. Its inhabitants settled in the area mainly for agriculture, taking benefit of the fertile valleys around Mellieħa as well as "tunny net" fishing.



In 1844, Mellieħa was established again as a parish and developed into a more modern town. Most of the buildings and streets in the Centre of current-day Mellieħa date from that period.

**Parish Church of Mellieħa** - The Mellieħa parish church is a 19th-century baroque style building built in traditional Maltese stone. It is dedicated to the birth of The Nativity Of Our Lady with a feast celebrated annually on the 8th of September. The church boasts five bells that were brought over from Milan. The major attraction within this church are the five paintings by the famous Maltese artist Giuseppe Cali.

**The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Mellieħa** - Once a small Augustinian monastery, the sanctuary dates back to the 16th century. The crypt within, originally one of the many natural caves found in this area, was excavated by Mario de Vasi, a Sicilian wine merchant who contributed to the erection of the statue of Our Lady

of the Grotto. According to local legend, the cave was visited by St Luke and St Paul when they were shipwrecked on the island – two splendid marble sculptures of the two apostles are among the many items within the sanctuary. Other religious items include letters from devoted visitors asking for a miracle, icons, frescoes, oil paintings dating as far back as the 17th century, as well as a small museum dedicated to Pope John Paul II, who visited this sanctuary in 1990. An impressive collection of votive prayers line the walls. The sanctuary opens every day from 08.00 to 12.00 and from 16.00 to 18.00. On Saturday's, a mass in English is held at 1000 hrs.



**The Red Tower - St. Agatha's Tower** - or as its most commonly known, the Red Tower stands guard over **Mellieħa Bay**. Like all other **watch towers along the coastline**, it was built as a signaling post for communication, in this case with towers in Gozo. It was capable of housing 30 soldiers. From the top of **St Agatha's Tower**, the view is absolutely stunning. You can see right up to Gozo on one side and down past Mosta on the other. For a small entrance fee, visitors can climb to the top of the tower and also visit a small section with the history of the tower and the restoration process.



**The White Tower** - Built in 1658, **the White Tower (Maltese: Torri l-Abjad)** is a small watchtower overlooking Armier Bay. It is one of 13 watchtowers, built under the rule of Grand Master Martin de Redin to defend the Maltese coast. In 2009, it was passed on to the local council as part of the area's cultural heritage.

**Ghajn Tuffieħa Tower** -The tower that guards **Ghajn Tuffieħa (Riviera bay)** and **Il-Mixquqa (Golden Bay)** was built in 1637. It's very similar to **Lippija Tower**, its close counterpart

overlooking **Gnejna bay**. **The Ghajn Tuffieħa Tower** is longish in shape and the ground floor room is larger than the second floor one. It was armed with ½-pdr cannon and manned by four men, a captain and three men, who were paid by the University of Mdina.

**Għadira Nature Reserve** -**The Għadira Nature Reserve**, with its rare habitat, is the only place in Malta where you can go bird watching. Located inland from Mellieħa Bay, it has been in operation since 1978. Various species of migrating birds visit the wetland and the salt marsh each year and nature lovers can observe them from two hides opposite each other. The reserve is open from 7 November to May on Saturdays and Sundays from 10am to 4pm. Entry is free, but donations help the volunteers maintain this unusual attraction in Malta.



**Il-Majjistral Nature and History Park** -The recently opened **Il-Majjistral Nature and History Park** offers miles of coastal walks across rocky paths with superb views of the cliffs and the sea. The wild habitat in the park offers a look at the typical arid Maltese countryside, with its variety of wild plants and fauna, like the common lizards and the not so common local snakes. They generally scuttle off in hiding when they hear you coming. Parking is available at several points, such as at Golden Bay. Sturdy footwear recommended.

**Mellieħa Air Raid Shelter** -The Mellieħa air raid shelter is the largest of 46 shelters dug in Mellieħa during World War Two, reaching a length of over 500 meters. It was recently opened to the public by the Maria Bambina Choral and Orchestral Society of Mellieħa. The shelter includes waxwork characters in various rooms, showing how the Maltese took shelter during the bombing. Admission price is €2.80. You are left to your own devices to explore the

tunnels in your own time.



**Popeye Village** -**Popeye Village** is an entertainment park based on the real film set used in Paramount Pictures 1980's Popeye movie starring Robin Williams is a great place for families with children. It offers great views of the bay and the on-site restaurant is quite popular. Within the set itself, one can enjoy various reenactments by actors. Visitors can also use the beach facilities to swim in Anchor Bay or just lie down by the beach. Entrance is at a fee, but the package includes a number of offerings, such as boat trips, entrance to the cinema on location, a drink and use of facilities.





**Tunnara Museum - X. Popeye Village** - A little interesting fishing museum with various exhibits and history. Originally a fort, the place was later used in the second world war as a defensive position. It has since been restored and converted into a museum by a number of local volunteers to explain the complex job of tuna fishing by Mellieha fishermen.

One of the major benefits of holidaying in Mellieha is that you'll be close some of the most gorgeous beaches of Malta within an area of a few square kilometers. If you choose to stay in this village, beaches like Golden Bay and Għajn Tuffieħa are within easy reach by bus as well.

**Mellieha Bay** -The most popular is Mellieha Bay (or Għadira), also Malta's largest sandy beach. Its crystal-clear waters are very shallow which makes it ideal for families with little children. Public toilets and several snack bars can be found on the beach and for a couple of Euros, you can rent an umbrella and sunbeds for the day.



**Paradise Bay** -The **Paradise Bay** is a small sandy beach surrounded by high cliffs and a view of Gozo in the distance. It lies over the hill beyond **Mellieha Bay**, on the road towards the Gozo ferry which departs at **Cirkewwa**. It is easier to reach if you're renting a car. Public toilets, as well as a large snack bar, are available on location.



**MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

**MALTA NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION**

**Date Sunday 12th September 2021**  
**Venue Maltese Guild of SA Inc. 6 Jeanes Street, Beverley**  
**Time 12pm till 4:00pm (doors open at 11:45 am)**  
**Includes**  
**3 course lunch (pasta, main & dessert)**  
**Drinks are available for purchase at the bar. No BYO**  
**Featuring DJ Jesmond Mallia, Singer Stacey Saliba**  
**Maltese Queen of Victories Band**  
**Tickets Adults \$30 pp /Children \$18 pp (12 years and under)**  
**Organise a table of 6 and pre-purchase tickets by contacting your MCC Delegate.**  
**\*\*Please advise of any special dietary requirements when purchasing your tickets so the caterer can be notified in advance.**  
**Bernadette Buhagiar-0420 944 205 Carmen Spiteri - 0401 136 673**  
**Nina Abela - 83400345 Jesse Borg - 82667859 Frank Grima-0431 068 642**  
**Marthese Kehoe-0404 094 170**  
**Raffle Prizes to be won !**

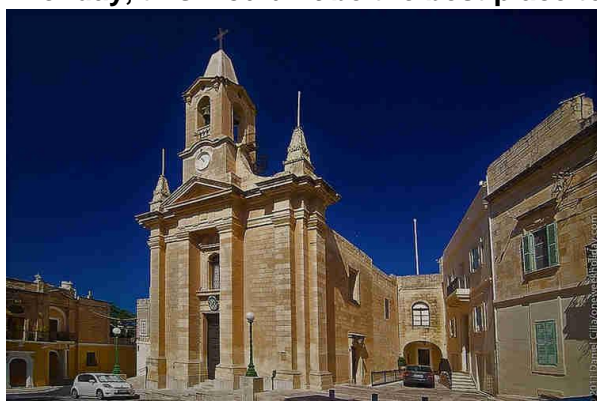


## PACEVILLE – ST.JULIAN'S

The village of St. Julian's is located alongside the Northern coastline of Malta, adjacent to Sliema and a few miles to the West of the capital city Valletta. Paceville is an area at the core of St. Julian's which is known as Malta's Centre of nightlife and clubbing, offering a variety of bars and nightclubs for a great night out.

The area is also a popular place for dining out and for some of its entertainment venues. In Paceville you can find Malta's largest cinema complex, a bowling arena, a shopping complex, a number of hotels and a small man-made beach at St. George's Bay.

St. Julian's is a modern town that developed rapidly after the 1960s. Before that, it was mainly agricultural land used as hunting grounds by the Knights and later by the British. So, in contrast with other areas in Malta that are overly rich in interesting places to visit, in St. Julian's you will only find a handful. Though, in any case, if culture and exploration are very important on your holiday, this wouldn't be the best place to stay for you anyway.



**Lapsi Church** - started as a small chapel originally built by the Knights of St. John in circa 1560. It was demolished and rebuilt several times. The building seen today dates to around 1716.

### Spinola Palace

- was built in 1688 by Fra Paolo Raffaele Spinola, a knight of the



Order of St. John and Grand Prior of Lombardy. The palace was enlarged in 1733 by the nephew of the original owner, Fra Giovanni Battista Spinola. French troops occupied the palace in 1798, damaging the Order's emblem atop the clock on the façade. This was reconstructed in recent years. The palace was also used as a military hospital between 1860 and the early 20th century and was known as Forrest Hospital. Nowadays, the

palace is not open for public, but its architecture can be admired from the gate in front of the gardens.

### St. Julian's Parish Church

- in Lapsi Street, is a modern church built in 1961

overlooking Balluta bay. Built in neo gothic style, the church is dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. It's the parish church of Balluta and belongs to the Carmelite monastery. It is open every day for visits and services.



**The Portomaso Tower** - is the tallest building in Malta. It stems out of the Portomaso complex and marina – a complex including the Hilton Hotel, a number of luxurious apartments, matching marina and many stylish restaurants. The place is good for just walking around and enjoying the view of the boats and the marina.



## **Lost Love by Stephen Cauchi (WA)**



My Mum was born Salina Xuereb on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 1928 on the Island of Gozo, Malta.

During the war my Mum worked at the armed forces mess (a place where military personnel socialize & eat) helping to prepare meals for the allied forces that were stationed in Malta and would take their R&R on the Island of Gozo.

During her time working at the mess Mum met a young Scottish soldier who she liked very much, after a short time a romance blossomed and soon they began to speak of a possible marriage once the war was over.

By the end of the war in 1945 Mum was 17 years old, the time at the time this was an age considered to be appropriate for a young girl to wed.

Before shipping out and going back to Scotland the young soldier declared his love for Mum and vowed to write to her often and asked her to write back with a view to him returning to Malta to take her back to Scotland as his wife.

While waiting for his letters, the days turned into weeks and the weeks turned into months and the months into years, with no word from her wartime Scottish love. As life after the war on Gozo began to return to normal my mother attracted the attention of a local boy named Francis Cauchi and in what seemed no time at all Mum was married with 3 sons, Damien, Angelo and John. She soon found herself on her way to Australia aboard the *Surriento*. The *Surriento* docked in Brisbane

Australia on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1949 and that evening Mum and my brothers were on a train to Mackay in North Queensland (Dad had arrived a few weeks earlier on a separate ship for men).

The early years in Australia were hard with Dad cutting cane for 6 months of the year and then working on a road gang for the other 6 months. Mum was raising 3 young boys and in 1953 she welcomed into the world her daughter, Emily, my only sister.

In 1954 Dad went to visit a cousin in Sydney and never returned to Mackay, instead he purchased a market garden consisting of 7 acres of land and a small modest house, he then sent word to Mum to "pack up the kids" and catch the train to Sydney. Finally Mum was happy as she now had her own home and could set down roots, my Mum was the quintessential home body and she created a happy and comfortable home in the suburb that was then known as Model Farms and is now called Winston Hills.

In March 1958 I "turned up" along with our first television set in December of the same year. 5 years later in 1963 my brother Raymond was born. In 1965 tragedy struck the family when my oldest brother Damien was killed in a car accident whilst my Dad was on his first visit back to Malta since coming to Australia in 1949. Mum didn't take the death of my brother very well, it was left to my Sister Emily who was only 12 years old to keep the family functioning during this sad time.

Fast forward to 1977, my father, now retired, was no longer happy living in Australia and announced he, Mum and my youngest brother Ray, 14 years old at the time were moving back to Malta, I was 19 years old and had only finished high school the year before and still living at home, but not for much longer.

Mum wasn't that happy about leaving the majority of her children and by now a growing number of grandchildren behind in Australia, however as was the case with most marriages of the time Dad made the decisions and the rules. In June 1977 I shed a tear as I said goodbye to my Mum and my younger brother Ray (I was too mad with Dad for taking my family away from me just as I was starting life after

School to care about him), it would be 4 years until I saw my Mother and brother again.

Fast forward again to 1986 and my grandmother (Mum's Mum) was dying and Mum was caring for her and by her side as much as possible. Grandma had been on her own for over 40 years as Grand Dad had died at a very young age in 1944.

On her death bed grandma would tell my mother something that would shock her (and me) to the core. Grandma revealed that the young Scottish soldier that had fallen in love with her all those years ago had indeed written to Mum, in fact he had written 22 times, asking Mum to marry him and to write back with her acceptance, as you can imagine Mum was shocked and bewildered as to grandma's motives for not passing on the letters.

Grandma explained that after the war her children were all leaving her (and remember she had also just lost her husband in 1944). Of her 5 children

one son and a daughter had migrated to Australia, one daughter had become a nun and was sent to France and another Son had become a merchant sailor and had shipped out, leaving my Mum as her last child at home and she didn't want to lose her to Scotland, so she had hid the letters from my mother in a bid to keep her in Gozo.

The irony of Granma's action was that only a few years later Mum married Dad and he whisked her away to Australia leaving Grandma to her greatest fear of being alone.

Mum didn't show too much emotion when she told me this story many years after Grandma's death bed revelation, however I knew by looking at her she was thinking the same thoughts as myself, "what could have been and how all of our lives would have been so different if grandma had given her those letters".



## **Olympic Games 2020 – set of three stamps being issued Friday**

A set of three stamps – Olympic Games 2020, is being issued by MaltaPost to celebrate the start of the games, being held in Tokyo, Japan between the 23rd of July and 8th August 2021. The design of this stamp issue was set by Aidan Cassar.

The Olympic Games is a major event held every four years, when athletes from all over the world compete against each other in different sports.

The Games are intended to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport, practiced without discrimination of any kind, while fostering mutual understanding within a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.

The stamps will be issued in a sheet of 10 stamps, with each stamp measuring 35mm x 35mm, a comb perforation 13.75 x 13.75 and bearing the Maltese Cross watermark.

The sheets measure 204mm x 99mm and were produced by Printex Ltd in the offset process. The issue consists of 80,000 of the €0.59 stamp, 80,000 of the €1.35 stamp and 80,000 of the €2.80 stamp.

This philatelic issue will be available from all Post Offices in Malta and Gozo as from Friday, the 23rd of July.

Orders may be placed online at [www.maltaphilately.com](http://www.maltaphilately.com) or by mail from the Philatelic Bureau, MaltaPost p.l.c. 305, Qormi Road, Marsa, MTP 1001; Telephone: 2596 1740, e-mail: [info@maltaphilately.com](mailto:info@maltaphilately.com)



## Remember when Adam Hills found out he was related to pirates on 'Who do you think you are'?



*Who Do You Think You Are?* is an awesome show, a virtual time-travel through the unknown ancestries of some of Australia's biggest and most beloved names. Seven seasons in there have been some crackers, none more so than Aussie comedian Adam Hills whose episode took him from suburban Melbourne to the docks of Woolloomooloo, across the world to the Czech Republic and finally to the island of Malta where he found out - to his delight - that

he was descended from an **actual** pirate.

But in the meantime, what your palate with Adam Hills' episode, which really does sum up everything wonderful about this show like:

**When they get emotional at coming face to face with the very place their ancestors lived and breathed**

It doesn't matter if the house is no longer standing, the spirit remains, and that's what matters.

**When they discover living relatives they didn't know existed** Adam's Czech great-grandfather was one of nine kids, but one of only TWO who survived past infancy. Imagine Adam's joy at finding German cousins he didn't know he had, even if he can't always understand everything they're saying.

**When it becomes very clear that every single one of us is really lucky to be here** A common thread through *WDYTYA* is "there but for the grace of God go I..." So many celebs find that they ended up where they did purely because of the luck, cunning or good fortune of their ancestors. Adam's story of being able to grow up, safely, in 1970s Australia is no different. "Something as big as a war and something as small as one person's prejudice can have a huge effect on a family's history," he says.

**When they catch up with that cool relo we all loved as a kid** Adam's Maltese relos were clearly the fun ones in his family and his awesome Aunt Mary is no exception. When Adam asks her the collective term for a group of Maltese people she answers "wogs", and when he notes that his grandfather had a lot of kids in quick succession she retorts, "Yes, there wasn't any television in those days." Pure gold.

**When they visit a place they've known their whole life but see it in a different light** Adam heads to Woolloomooloo's famed wharves in central Sydney, now overrun with fancy restaurants, swanky hotels and homes belonging to Russell Crowe and John Laws, only to discover that it was - at one point - referred to as "Little Malta", such were the numbers of Maltese immigrants living and working in the dockyards.

**The moment he discovers he can trace his direct descendants back to the 15th century** Most of us are lucky if we know where our grandparents are from. Beyond that, it's a mystery, but when Adam visits Malta he finds his family name - complete with coat of arms - going back over 500 YEARS.

**When they learn one really cool thing about someone they're a direct descendant of**

... such as the fact that one of his ancestors was a freakin' pirate! Aaaar!

But through all the fun times and pirate discoveries, the show reinforces just how important it is to know where you came from and furthermore, how crucial immigration is - to any society - and how we need to keep embracing other cultures, not push them away.

Both sides of Adam's family - the Czech-German side and the Maltese side - came as penniless immigrants from the other side of the world to Australia to give it a shot. This is the story of most of our immigrants. Most make good and, beyond that, make an enormous contribution to Australian life, and most of us wouldn't be here without them.

## New paintings for St Paul's Bay church



Adonai Camilleri Cauchi working on the new paintings at his studio.

Photo: Charles Spiteri

Four new paintings for the church of St Paul's Bay, original creation of Adonai Camilleri Cauchi, will be inaugurated by parish priest Joseph Mamo during Mass today, eve of the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

The paintings depict the dominating figures of

Aaron, King David, John the Baptist and St Paul representing the priesthood, praise to the Lord, Baptism and the Word of God, respectively.

The wooden frames were made by Charlie Zarb, carvings by Clive Busuttill while gilding is by Jason Farrugia. [Times]

## LUZZU

Director: Alex Camilleri Country: Malta (2020) Europe, International, MIFF

Play | Feature Language: Maltese with English subtitles

Genre: Drama Themes: Conversation Starter, Environmental, Family Stories, Parenthood



A lead turn reminiscent of Marlon Brando anchors this neo-realist look at the Maltese fishing industry.

Jesmark is caught between his devotion to the family trade – and his brightly-painted heirloom *luzzu* fishing vessel – and the worsening economic pressures surrounding it: the iron vice of Brussels' bureaucracy is squeezing the local fishermen's haul, his infant son needs expensive medical treatment, and the boat has sprung a leak. A trip into the murky waters of the seafood black market might hand him a lifeline ... or a final break with tradition.

Maltese-American writer, director and editor Alex Camilleri turns the lens on his ancestral island home in this affecting debut feature – the first Maltese production ever selected for a major film-festival competition. Produced by arthouse mainstay Ramin Bahrani (*99 Homes*, MIFF 2015), and taking cues from the revelatory working-class portraiture of Ken Loach, Andrea Arnold and the Dardenne brothers, *Luzzu* is steered by a powerfully authentic performance from charismatic real-life fisherman Jesmark Scicluna, who won the World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award for Acting at this year's Sundance. "Camilleri profiles little-represented lives with intelligence and integrity ... Altogether bracing with its thorny labor politics and salty sea air." – *Variety*

In Cinema Sat 07 Aug 6:30 pm Luzzu (94 mins) Sun Theatre Yarraville Victoria





## **Prickly Pears - Bajtar tax-Xewk**

The prickly pear tree is often planted around fields in Malta and Gozo as a windbreak and for its fruit.

Like all cacti it is a native of the American continent and did not arrive in Europe before the discovery of this continent. This species is believed to be the earliest species of cactus to be cultivated and nowadays many hybrids and varieties exist. Its exact origins are not known but it probably came from Mexico where similar species can still be found growing wild.

It is nowadays cultivated in many arid and semiarid regions of the world, especially around the southern and eastern coast of the Mediterranean. In Mexico it is also grown for the young leaf-like stems which form part of many traditional Mexican recipes.

Prickly pear is known in Maltese as bajtar tax-xewk. Several varieties can be found in Malta each of which has a distinctive name. The three most common varieties are the 'yellow' variety is known as *isfar* or *Malti*, the 'red' known as *l-aħmar* or *l-ingliż* and the 'white' known as *abjad* or *Franciż*. Other less common varieties include *tax-xitwa* which ripens between October and December, *l-Ispanjol* which has large reddish fruit, and the *langasi* which has pear-shaped fruit.

It is widely believed that prickly pears have medicinal properties. Many chemical compounds have been extracted from it which have been found to be useful against several conditions especially inflammations. In Malta it was used mainly against stomach aches, bone pain, inflammations, and insect stings.

It is nowadays being used in cosmetics and in food supplements. The fruit is also used to make jams, jellies and liqueurs. The local *bajtra* is one while Tungi Spirit which is produced on the island of Saint Helena is another. The Mexicans have been using prickly pears to produce a spirit known as colonche for thousands of years. A species of scale insect thrives on the prickly pear.

This insect produces carminic acid which is used to make cochineal, a red dye used in red food colouring and cosmetics. The dye was used by the Aztec and Mayans in Oaxaca, Mexico, and exported to Europe. In the middle of the 19th century an attempt was made to grow these insects on Maltese prickly pears and start producing cochineal in Malta but the project never took off the ground and was abandoned after some years.

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**IF YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL SHARE IT WITH OUR READERS AND  
SEND IT TO US TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL. OUR JOURNAL  
IS ARCHIVED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

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## WHAT IS A GOZITAN FTIRA?

When in Malta, tasting local cuisine is a must. One thing not to miss is the Gozitan ftira, topped with the most delicious ingredients. Get the recipe here!

Planning on visiting Malta soon? Then prepare yourself for a gastronomical treat during your [holidays in Malta](#) as Maltese cuisine offers some very interesting dishes in a perfect mix between Mediterranean and North African influences.

Gozitan ftira is a traditional dish resembling a pizza, mainly popular in Malta's sister island Gozo. Typically found in bakeries due to the fact a firewood oven is required for the preparation, this "pizza" is topped with fresh, seasonal and quintessentially local products. Although at first glance this dish appears exactly like a pizza, it is referred to as ftira as it is made of sourdough bread. Some of the most classic and delicious toppings on a Gozitan ftira are potatoes, anchovies, capers, tomatoes and ġbejna!

Whilst travelling to Malta, you can easily find this tasty pizza everywhere but if you fancy making it yourself here's a simple recipe.

What do I need?

### **Dough:**

- 400g plain flour
- 100 ml extra virgin olive oil
- Water to bind

### **Toppings:**

- 3-4 thinly sliced large potatoes
- 5 ġbejniet (peppered or non-peppered)
- 1 tbsp drained capers
- 1 tbsp pitted olives
- 3/4 fresh tomatoes (can also opt for sundried tomatoes)
- Oregano (fresh or dried)
- Large can of tuna
- Freshly ground pepper
- Optional for fish enthusiasts: Add anchovies!

### **How do I make it?**

1. Firstly, you need to cook the pastry. Whizz together the flour and oil in a food processor.
2. Add water until the pastry forms a ball. Make sure to keep the food processor on its low settings, then remove the dough and knead it.
3. Leave the dough wrapped in cling film for about one hour whilst you brush a baking tray with olive oil (to avoid the pastry from sticking to the tray).
4. Open the pastry with a rolling pin. Do not cut the extra bits of pastry.
5. In the meantime, you can start thinly slicing the potatoes for the filling. After slicing them, layer them on top of the pastry. Cover the entire baking tray.
6. On top of the first layer, add a layer of sliced tomatoes. Cover the first layer almost entirely.
7. Add the drained tuna, ġbejniet, anchovies, capers and olives.
8. If you opted for sundried tomatoes, add them now too.
9. Top with black pepper and oregano, and drizzle with some olive oil.
10. Fold the edges of the pastry over the ingredients on the sides.
11. Place it into a hot oven for 20-30 minutes and keep an eye for when the pastry begins to turn brown.

Once you have tried this mouth-watering (and cheap!) dish in Malta, you will be keen to recreate it yourself back home. All of the ingredients can be more or less found in most countries, so you can easily cook up a treat and enjoy a taste of the Maltese Islands wherever in the world you might be. Credits to [MaltaToday](#) for the recipe.

