



George Beurling: Canadian Fighter Ace known as "The Falcon of Malta"



Mary Saliba Adelaide

# Maltese eNewsletter



Editor: Frank Scicluna OAM MQR  
maltesejournal@g.ail.com

JOURNAL OF  
MALTESE LIVING  
ABROAD

## OPERATION PEDESTAL

SANTA MARIJA  
CONVOY

79th ANNIVERSARY

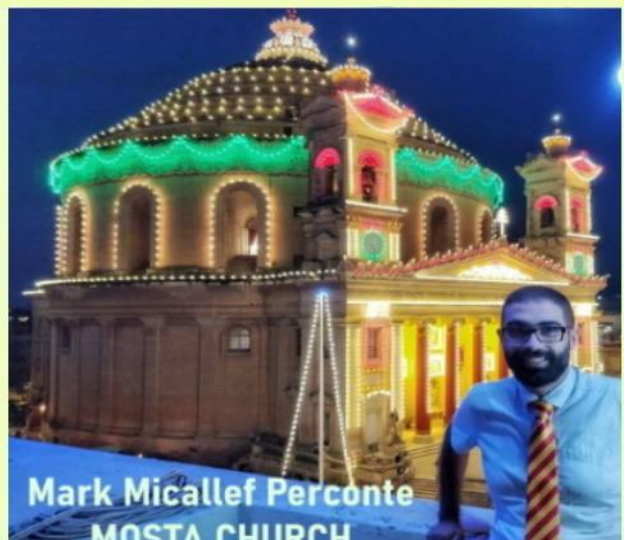
THE  
AUSTRALIAN  
BUSINESS EXECUTIVE

presents:

**B** Basetec  
Services  
Environmental Engineering Services

Charles Figallo

Maltese- Australian  
Businessman

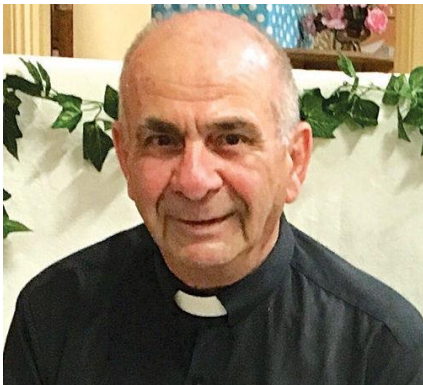


Mark Micallef Perconte  
MOSTA CHURCH



## **PATRI GABRIEL JIKTBILNA MINN GHAWDEX**

**Lill-Komunita' Maltija t'Adelaide**



Ftit jiemi ilu  
kellimt lis-  
sorijiet  
Frangiskani  
għax kelli  
bżonn  
koppja tal-  
Innijiet lil  
Madonna  
tagħna – ta' l-

Isqof Galea u Bennie Cortis. Hallelj kollox warajja. Irċevejthom u niringrazzjahom.

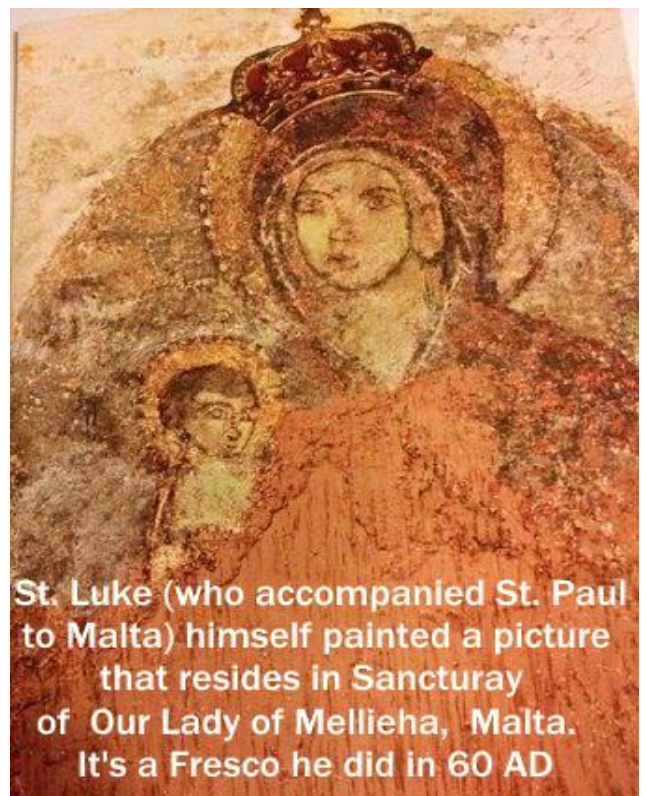
Hadt gost meta ċempluli Horace u Joe u tawni l-aħbar li din is-sena il-Festa ser terġa ssir. Hija Festa devozzjonali u xejn minn dik il-bluha li jkun hawn fil-festi f'Malta u Għawdex. Ilkoll kemm aħna għandna l-bżonn tal-protezzjoni ta' Marija. Miegħi għamlet miraklu ċar. Meta wasalt hawn sentejn ilu, kulhadd kien mistagħġeb bl-istat li kont fih u kulhadd jistaqsini: "XI ġralek f'daqqa waħda", għax ftit xhur qabel kont hawn għal-Festa tal-Ħamsin Sena Saċerdot. Iva nħossni li rkuprajt mhux ħażin u qiegħed naqdi dmiri fil-Komunità bl-aħjar mod possibbli. Il-Provinċjal u l-Gwardjan kienu obbligawni li ma nagħmel xejn, jgħiduli li ħdimt biżżejjed u issa hemm bżonn li nistrieħ. Għandi l-isbaħ kamra fil-Kunvent tagħna t'Għawdex u ninzel għall-Atti Komuni regolarment. Bdejt immur inqaddes fid-Dar tal-Anzjani ta' San Lawrenz, fejn hemm rikoverat ħija. Minn kemm ilhom li fetħulhom u qiegħed immur nqaddsilhom, ħadu r-ruħ. Kienu qegħdin qishom ġo ħabs, bi ftit żjarat mill-familjari tagħhom għal ftit minuti, darba f'gimgha. Nizzik ħajr l-affarijiet issa nbidlu xi ftit, imma għadhom isibu numru kbir ta' infettati kuljum bil-Covid 19. Għalmenu issa ergajna nżilna xi ftit u m'għadniex bil-mijiet kuljum.

Sħana kbira – illum kellha titla' f'xi postijiet mal-45 degree u f'din is-sħana kollha qiegħed noqgħod ġewwa, peress li jien vulnerabbli u nsofri minn edima pulnari. Nifs m'għandi xejn u kif appena niħharrek nisfa bla nifs. Imma ferm aħjar minn qabel. Il-kamra hija airconditioned u nippreferi noqgħod ġewwa għall-frisk. Għandi karozza żgħira li biha mmur kullimkien hawn Għawdex, ta' spiss mmur sarraħal.

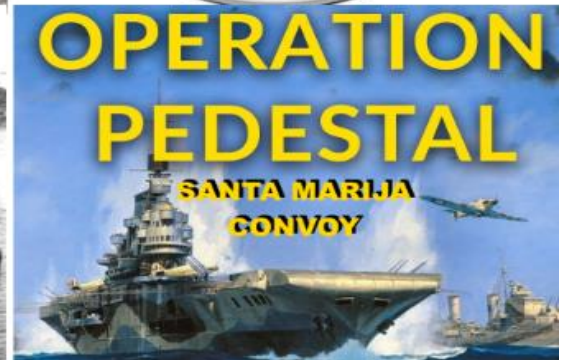
Qegħdin Komunità ta' ħamsa. Għandna koka li ssajrilna ikel Malti, u anke Għawdxi. Alavolja bir-restrizzjonijiet li għandna minħabba il-pandemija, nies jattendu mhux ħażin għal-funzjonijiet u speċjalment is-Sibt fil-għaxija u l-Ħadd. U kieku taf kemm huma ġenerużi magħna. Ma jonqosna xejn; dnub li ma tantx nista' niekol ħafna ħlewriet.

Inselli għalikom ilkoll. Nitolbu li Marija Ommna tgħinna.

Inkellimkom fuq il-Big Screen fil-Knisja nhar il-Ġimgħa fil-għaxija, li fiha konna nagħmlu it-Tribut lil-Marija. Saħħa u Barka.



**St. Luke (who accompanied St. Paul to Malta) himself painted a picture that resides in Sancturay of Our Lady of Mellieha, Malta. It's a Fresco he did in 60 AD**



Patri Gabriel.S Micallef OFM

## History of Malta – The Santa Marija Convoy 1942

During World War II, the Maltese population was saved from starvation and provided with enough supplies to sustain the islands thanks to a food convoy that arrived during the week of the feast day. This convoy's arrival is seen by many to have been a big turning point of the war in the Mediterranean as otherwise the Maltese would have had no alternative but to surrender.

In August 1942, Operation Pedestal was mounted from the United Kingdom with the aim to relieve Malta. The convoy was intercepted by the Axis who deployed 20 submarines, 19 motor torpedo boats and over 850 aircraft. Hence they faced a gruelling five-day ordeal which saw nine out of fourteen merchant ships succumbing to the relentless round-the-clock attacks.

Four of the ships that survived reached Malta on the 13th and 14th of August. However there was no sign of the sturdy tanker Ohio, which was loaded with vital oil, fuel and kerosene supplies without which Malta could not hope to survive. The tanker had been singled out from the start

and faced ferocious attacks and was lying crippled some kilometres off Malta. The ship had been torpedoed and holed, a series of fires were started and controlled, her boilers blew up and her engines failed; twice abandoned and twice rebounded- the tanker would not sink- as if aware that Malta's survival depended on her!

On August 15th 1942 on the feast of Santa Marija, the Ohio – towed by two destroyers, Ledbury and Penn, and one minesweeper, Rye- entered the Grand Harbour. She discharged her cargo and no sooner were the 10,000 tons of precious fuel oil and kerosene extracted from her mangled hull, the Ohio sank and rested on the bottom. This epic convoy is recorded in Malta's National War Museum where many items are on display, which include photographs of the fourteen ships; a graphic plan showing the route by the convoy and the locations of where the ships were sunk; the helm and nameboard of 'Ohio' amongst many other fascinating historical artefacts



## Your ultimate guide to surviving Malta's Summer Heat



Summers in Malta tend to be irresistibly hot. Read our guide to find out how to best handle this and how not to let the summer heat ruin your holiday vibes!

If you are thinking FLYING TO MALTA this summer, you might need to do a bit of research on the temperatures. The Maltese islands enjoy a typically Mediterranean climate with short, mild winters and long, hot summers. Rain during the summer months is rare and with temperatures often peaking above 35°C, making the best out of the heat, but knowing how to handle it, is key to enjoying these months to the full. Here are the best tips to surviving Malta's summer heat.

**What to wear?** The answer is, not much. Stick to natural fabrics such as cotton and linen and try to avoid clothing that is too tight or restrictive. Clothing that is flowy and cool helps the air to circulate as you soak up the summer sun. Try to keep covered as much as you can when you are out and about as the midday sun can be brutal and can result in sunburn for those that are not used to it.

**What to drink?** Water, water, and even more water. As temperatures rise, keeping yourself hydrated is extremely important. Even if you are not thirsty, you should be regularly supping on Stay safe and enjoy the sun! (AIRMALTA.COM)

water to make up for the fluids that you are sweating out in abundance.

**What to do?**

When the temperatures are in the 30s, the best place to be is at the beach. With sea temperatures averaging 24 degrees, it is the perfect temperature for you to cool off in. Other activities include visiting the catacombs (they are

underground), or checking out some of Malta's museums (with air-conditioning inside) if you are someone that isn't a big fan of the heat.

**What not to leave the house without?** Don't leave the house without sun cream with an SPF of at least 20. You should also take a hat to shield your head from the sun, sunglasses to protect your eyes from any dangerous sun-rays, and consider taking a cover-up shawl or scarf to cover your shoulders if you get burnt. Don't forget to put a bottle of water in your bag so you don't get dehydrated or stuck without anything to drink!

**What not to do!** Try and avoid alcohol during the hottest hours- the drink will further dehydrate you and it will also hit you a lot faster meaning you could end up feeling rather drunk after just one or two drinks. Don't stay in the sun for too long at one time, always make sure you have shade to seek refuge in, and try to refrain from strenuous exercise during the hottest parts of the day.

It is true, summer [holidays in Malta](#) can get irresistibly hot but the various picturesque beaches Malta is home to, will surely save your day. Whilst you cool off with the sun shining warmly upon your cheeks, you will forget all about the stifling temperatures!

## THE MALTESE JOURNAL THAT IS READ AROUND THE WORLD



**FROM SPAIN -** Hi Frank, hope you're well during these difficult times. Once again through the newsletter I can remember my childhood days as I was brought up in Birgu. As a little boy I remember going to the Inquisitor's palace to hear mass, as St Dominics church was being restored after the war. In those days it was either St Dominic or St Lawrence, I remember the street fights between the fanatics every time during the feast days, sometimes even to the extent that people had to be hospitalized I also remember being told about the atrocities that took place during the inquisition days in Malta, which occurred at the same place where I used to go to church. Amazing how times have changed. Once again congratulations for publishing such an interesting and informative newsletter. Best regards Godfrey Vella Spain



**FROM SOUTH AFRICA -** I always await your mail with great interest. Unfortunately the Maltese emigres in South Africa have reduced in numbers through age, as the bulk arrived in South Africa straight after the war up to 1950. Their dependants, which are now third generation, particularly through marriage, have lost interest in Malta. It is sad scenario and it has become an issue of concern

to me when these dependants want to go back to Malta, not knowing what to expect. The lifestyles are so different that eventually most move onto England. Keep up your good work. Many thanks again, and God Bless. Regards Ronald Andrews



**FROM MALTA -** Thanks Frank for another interesting **Maltese E-Newsletter**. Always nice to read about Maltese customs and places that we may have forgotten over the years. Keeping up with the local traditions is comforting to remember days of old from our childhood. Sincere best regards George Stagno Navarra



**FROM AUSTRALIA -** I want to let you know that this newsletter has brought a ray of sunshine into my life and I just love reading everything in there. Thank you so much for including me in your list of recipients and I will so love to keep on receiving it.



**FROM CANADA -** Frank I thank you for your electronic great newsletter. I read it from cover to cover and I always find a lot of interesting things to read. It's one of a kind. Please, do not stop publishing it as there are thousands of Maltese living abroad anxious to know not only the history and culture of Malta but what is happening among the Maltese societies around the world. You are

keeping us united and connected. I thank especially for including news from the Maltese community in Canada.



**FROM THE UNITED STATES -** We the Maltese in USA are always interested to receive and read the Maltese Journal. Although we live miles away from our homeland, we still love Malta and its culture. I thank you for printing news about the Maltese clubs in US. It is encouraging to know that most of the Maltese living away from the island are still proud to proud of the herigate of

Malta, it's culture, art, music, food and literature. God bless you. Joseph Aquilina



**FROM GOZO -** It is truly a magnificent journal and I am sure it is well read by many Gozitans. I receive the Maltese e-Newsletter religiously every week and I open it as soon as I receive it. To be honest I am addicted to it. It is always the highlight of the week. . Please, Frank, don't stop and keep on sending me your journal. I live it and Grazzi. F. Cassar

## I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU, TOO !!!





## ONE OF THE ABANDONED, FORGOTTEN & LITTLE KNOWN AIRFIELDS IN EUROPE

RAF Ta Kali station crest Airfield Ta'Qali (also known as RAF Ta'qali, Taqali, Takali) was a military airfield on the island of Malta.

The airfield was constructed just before the outbreak of World War II on the bed of an ancient lake situated on the flat cultivated plain which stretches between Rabat and Valletta. Pre-war it had been used by civil airlines, but its grassy surface, like

Hal Far, deteriorated quickly in bad weather, making it unusable. Its Maltese name Ta'Qali was soon changed by the RAF to Taqali and then Takali, although it is now usually known by its original Maltese name.



Ground crew of No. 249 Squadron RAF taking a break from maintaining their Supermarine Spitfire Mark VCs at Ta' Qali, to observe the activity on the airfield. Photo: Crown Copyright

The surface of the field had a slight slope from NE-SW and the grass-covered surface becoming baked earth in the summer. Four runways were laid out at the airfield: N-S at 2,550feet, E-W at 3,300feet, NE-SW at 2,550feet and NW-SE at 2,940feet. The NW-SE runway was extended early in 1941 to 3,600feet, but its width remained at a mere 45 feet compared with 90feet for the other directions. A Bellman Hangar and offices were situated at the south-eastern corner and four double aircraft shelters were cut in the hillside on the northern boundary.



George Beurling: Canadian Fighter Ace known as "The Falcon of Malta"

When Italy joined hostilities in June 1940 obstructions were positioned around the airfield to prevent airborne landings. On 30th October instructions were received at Hal Far from HQ Mediterranean Command for Wing Commander J R O'Sullivan to proceed to the airport with a small HQ staff. He was tasked to form a one-squadron fighter station there. On 8th November 1940 the airport became RAF Station Ta'Qali, with 261Sqn moving in from Luqa on 20th November. In May 1941 249Sqn arrived from the UK to replace 261Sqn. 249Sqn was to become the top scoring squadron on Malta and claimed the 1000th enemy aircraft to fall to the Malta defences. Ta'Qali airfield was subjected to heavy bombing during the course of the war.





## Basetec Services Ltd taking South Australia Worldwide



### Maltese Australian Businessman Chev. Charles Figallo OSJ OAM

South Australian Basetec Services, a leading manufacturer of composite pipelines for major projects in Australia, is well known amongst the oil and gas, mining, energy and water industries for producing innovative composite materials which have great corrosion resistance and durability. Basetec has acquired an excellent reputation as a leader in composite technologies due to its commitment to research and development progress, which has resulted in expansion and innovative of its Novafasr product range.

This is not only a credit to the company but also great news for the State of South Australia to have acquired this assignment that guarantees employment prospects to the locals especially during this unprecedented time due to the pandemic of Covid-19

The Maltese Australian Charles Figallo founded the Basetec Services in 1999 and has built the company from the ground up, serving as Chief Executive Officer for 20 years .

The company, Basetec Ltd and Novafast International, is run by Charles as the CEO. and his sons, Paul as General Manager and David as Business and Strategy Manager. .



Paul Figallo



David Figallo

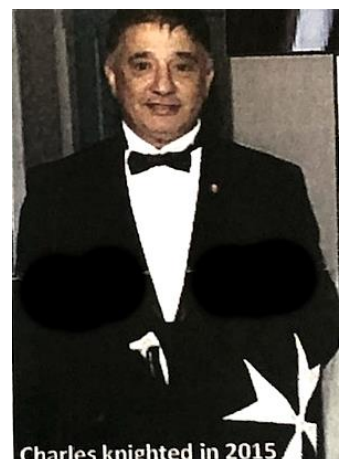
Charles has over 40 years of business operating experience, as well as an extensive knowledge of composite materials and corrosion protection, having worked in the industry since his teenage years. Apart from being a leading businessman in South Australia Charles is also heavily involved in various

business and community organisations in Adelaide, and was notably awarded the Order of Australia Medal for services to business and community in 2017.

On July 1, 2015 Charles Figallo was created a member of the Sovereign Hospitallier Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Grand Priory of Australia, Adelaide Commandery for his charitable contribution to several organisations operating in Adelaide.

Charles is a generous philanthropist. He supports several groups including Make a wish Foundation, the Fred Hollows Foundation, Doctors without Borders and Maltese organisations. He was also the CEO of the Maltese Australian Anzac Monument Committee and assisted in the building of the ANZAC Memorial in Malta.

.Charles has the Maltese community of Adelaide at heart. He always gives moral and financial support to several associations, and he also attends functions organised by the societies. And this is the reason that Charles is loved and well respected by the members of the community







Mr Charles Figallo was instrumental in working with Australia Post to produce IPPE Anzac stamp to recognise the Anzacs who are buried in Malta Pieta cemetery under the care of the Maltese people. The support from Australia Post to recognise the history of the Anzacs from Gallipoli has been overwhelming and our thanks go to Hilary Ericksen and the staff of Australia post who were assisting. The Anzac memorial was erected at the Floriana Botanical Gardens in Malta.



## It's nearly 'Lampuki' Season in Malta!

Fishing in Malta is not only a popular pastime, but a full-time job for many! Being an island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, the Maltese waters provide nourishment both to the locals and to other parts of the world. Indeed, fish and seafood caught in Maltese waters often make their way to different countries, from

Spain all the way to Japan!

Shore fishing and boat fishing are practiced all throughout the year, and visitors can even include a fishing trip on their holiday activities. But, perhaps most tourists would prefer to enjoy the fresh fish at a restaurant instead of at sea. If you're in Malta between the months of August and December, you'll definitely come across one of the local, seasonal delicacies on any menu – we're talking about Lampuki! The demand for Lampuki is so high in the local market, that this fish is not exported to any other country...

### WHAT ARE LAMPUKI?

Lampuki (singular: lampuka) are a type of fish found in abundance in the waters surrounding Malta. It's also called 'Dorado', 'Dolphin fish' and 'Mahi-Mahi' in different parts of the world. The fish migrates through the waters during the autumn – winter season, and is commonly found in many traditional Maltese dishes, such as 'Lampuki Pie', 'Aljotta' (fish soup) or simply seasoned and cooked 'Al Cartoccio'. technique involves fisherman cutting down the lower fronds of palm trees, and weaving them into flattened rafts. The large rafts are put out to sea, and as the sun reaches the highest point of the sky, the lampuki gather underneath the rafts for shade. The fisherman then gather the fish in a net.



*Aljotta ta Lampuki (Soup)*

### HOW DO THEY CATCH IT?

In a technique known as kannizzati, local fishermen cut down the lower fronds from palm trees which they then weave into large, flat rafts. These rafts are then put out to sea, usually accompanied by traditional fishing boats known as 'Luzzu', or more modern fuel powered crafts. As the sun reaches the highest point in the sky, the lampuki all clamber to seek shade



under the rafts, the fishermen wait for a large number of fish to gather before casting a net over them. This is a technique that has not changed since the Roman times and even when the fish is used for commercial purposes, this old method is still used.

### **WHERE CAN I GET IT FROM?**

Well that totally depends on whether you want to try it out in a restaurant, or have a go at cooking it for yourself! Some of the best restaurants to try lampuki are situated in the south of Malta- e.g. Marsaskala, Birgu, and Marsaxlokk. Here, the fish you eat has often been caught that lunchtime and is as fresh as you can imagine. You also have the bonus of getting to enjoy your meal in a picturesque seaside village. Alternatively, you can pick some up from one of the fishmongers, or keep your ears out for the fish van that roams the streets every morning selling a range of fresh seafood- you can pick up quite a bargain here.



### **HOW SHOULD I EAT IT?**

This is a matter of great debate- some like their lampuki in a pie, some like it with a thick, garlic infused sauce, and some prefer it grilled in tinfoil with just a smattering of seasoning to taste. Alternatively, you can try it in a delicious fish stew called alijotta, all soaked up with some delicious, fresh, Maltese bread, or “hobz” as it is known locally.

One thing is for sure, if you are visiting Malta this Autumn- be sure not to miss out on sampling the delicious delights of the lampuki.

*Lampuki Pie*

### **WHERE TO TRY LAMPUKI?**

When in Malta, tasting the local, freshly prepared seafood dishes is a must. There are a number of restaurants where you can find fresh fish in [Sliema](#). The town was originally a quiet fishing village, and several hotels and restaurants go out of their way to provide their guests with the best flavours from the nearby waters.

## **RECIPE - Lampuki Pie (Torta tal-Lampuki)**

### **INGREDIENTS:**

1Kg lampuki    3 onions    400g tomatoes    2kg spinach (previously boiled)  
100g tomato paste    100 Chopped black olives    50g capers    Mint    Seasoning  
500g puff pastry    Flour

### **METHOD:**

1. Clean the fish, cut it into slices and roll in the seasoned flour
2. Fry the fish in hot oil until golden brown, allow to cool and remove bones.
3. Fry the chopped onions in same oil used to fry the fish, add tomatoes and simmer for around 15 mins on low heat.
4. Add all the remaining ingredients and cook over low heat for another 30 minutes.  
Add the fish to the mixture and mix well.
5. Line a greased baking dish with the pastry and fill in with mixture, covering the top once filled.
6. Pierce the top with a fork and bake until golden brown.
7. Eat and enjoy



## **12 July 1941: Malta Air Raid Victims Get Help From Down Under**

ISLE OF TASMANIA LAUNCHES FUNDRAISING APPEAL

*From The Mercury, Hobart, Tasmania, 12 July 1941*

An appeal for funds to assist air raid victims in Malta has been commended by the Governor of Tasmania. His Excellency states:

"As you know I have received from the Australian

Commissioner for Malta an appeal that Tasmania should assist a relief fund started in Australia to aid the air raid victims in Malta, where more than 750 air raids have been made and tremendous damage done. There have been heavy casualties of men, women and children, and at least 30000 persons are homeless. Though the Island has an area of only 123 sq miles, there are 270000 persons there, leading the life of a beleaguered city and bravely fighting the battle of the Empire.

The appeal for funds has already received a grant of £2500 in Sydney and it is hoped that at least £10000 will be subscribed in that city. In Melbourne a first grant of £3275 has been made from the British Bombing Victims Fund. I feel certain that the people of Tasmania who have so generously aided the various patriotic appeals will give their aid to a stricken people whose terrible fate might easily have been our own had the war happened to be fought in another area.

I venture to suggest that we in this island should aim at the sum of at least £1000, feeling confident that those whose hearts are already touched by the sufferings of their fellow British citizens will increase their donations to your fund, and that those who have not already realised what it means to be wounded or rendered homeless may be induced to help."

It has been decided to widen the constitution of the Air Raid Relief Fund in Tasmania to allow contributions from it to be made for the relief of sufferers outside Britain. The change will take effect from August 1.



## **2 July 1941: Long Nights in Air Raid Shelters Affect Civilian Morale**

Long nights spent in often uncomfortable air raid shelters are disrupting the lives of civilians. The enemy raiders' tactic of extending the period under alert up to several hours is taking its toll. Charles Grech later recalled the effect on his boyhood community of nights under alert which:

"tired out people and lowered their morale, creating physical and mental exhaustion. Sometimes, air raid warning signals

were given at 7pm and would remain in effect throughout the whole night, till 8am the following morning. Women, children and older people took cover in the shelters and spent the entire night there. Some men, especially those who had a day's work ahead of them, only go down to the shelter when they heard gunfire. It was not unusual to see men racing to the shelter in their underpants or pyjamas...and only realised this when they got down there and stood in front of a gaggle of wide-eyed women.

Sometimes, one or two women would also pluck up courage to leave the shelter and come back with some hot coffee and something to eat for their children or parents or some warm milk for baby. [My] mother was quite organised for this eventuality and the first thing she did in the evening was prepare a thermos flask full of coffee and pack some food in her basket in case of emergency.



## Revisiting Cultural Traditions With Open Eyes

*Nicholas Gambin analyses Maltese cultural traditions that have stopped, remained, rebirthed, or changed in some way in today's society.*

Cultural changes do not happen in the blink of an eye; they happen gradually. World wars, globalisation, and advancements in technology have continued to push societies forward and cause irreversible changes. Old traditions have either stopped, continued, adapted, or been replaced by new ones.

Throughout our lifetime, we frequently consume our culture passively and without even knowing. When we walk through the cobbled streets, we hardly spare a thought for the culture hidden beneath our feet. However, Malta's rich culture and traditions surround us in unexpected ways.

Guido Lanfranco's book *Drawwiet u Tradizzjonijiet Maltin* acts as an excellent starting point to delve into some of Malta's cultural traditions. This, paired with the insights of [Dr Michael Spagnol](#) (Head of Department, Department of Maltese, University of Malta), offers us a glimpse into what this Mediterranean island has to offer.

### Food – Żeppoli



*Dr Michael Spagnol*  
Phpto James Moffett

If the way to a person's heart is through their stomach, it comes as no surprise that food is such a core part of Maltese culture. If you have never tried *żeppoli* (like our poor THINK editor), they are fried soft pastries filled with cream or sweetened cottage cheese. These sweet treats are linked to the feast of Saint Joseph on the 19th March. In fact, the first part of the word, *Żepp*, is a common Maltese pet name for someone named *Ġużeppi* (in Maltese) or Joseph (in English).

Lanfranco writes that sweet shops have been making this dessert since the 19th Century. In terms of origin, Spagnol explains that this food is typical of South Italy, who refer to it as *zeppole* in places like Naples, Catanzaro, Reggio Calabria, and Sicily. Malta has had a long cultural relationship with Italy. The link is not surprising.

Although *żeppoli* were usually eaten exclusively on the 19th March, nowadays, you can buy them from pastry shops in the weeks leading up to St. Joseph's Day. Spagnol comments that 'because Maltese people seem to have such a connection with traditional dishes, they continue adapting these traditions and sometimes create new ones altogether.' Another example of this is the *qagħaq tal-għasel*, which are sweet pastry rings filled with treacle (not honey, even though *għasel* in Maltese means honey). These were originally made around Christmas time but are now produced all year round. More recently, *figolli*, the Easter pastry filled with almond meal, has been transformed into smaller bite-sized versions called *figollini*. If you are a foodie, then you can definitely explore the culture of Malta through its food.

## Activities – Il-Ġostra

Imagine a time before the Internet, when people had to actually go outside and invent



ways to pass the time. One such activity is *Il-Ġostra*, which you might have seen photos of shared all over social media. The game is believed to be derived from the Neapolitan game of the Cockaigne pole. It involves someone crawling along a greased pole fixed at an angle while trying to grab flags; entertainingly, most participants fall into the sea. This used to be a popular activity for men during village feasts. The flags also hold religious meaning, with a blue and white one dedicated to St Mary, a yellow and white one for the Vatican, and the Belgian tricolour for St Julian, who is believed to have been born in the Belgian town of Ath in 7AD.

*Il-Ġostra* was organised in summer, when falling into the water is refreshing rather than shocking. Now, it's organised in villages close to the water, like Msida, Balluta, and St Julians. The game wasn't always played over water. Spagnol mentions a similar event, the *kukkanja*, which used to take place during Carnival. The pole was vertical instead of sloping horizontally, with people trying to climb up the greased pole to reach the prizes hanging from the top. These prizes included cured meats and wine. The pole laying horizontally makes the game slightly easier (and safer), so one can imagine why this alteration was made. Images of this activity have made their way onto [Reuters' Images of the Day](#), snapped by Maltese photojournalist Darrin Zammit Lupi.

## Superstition – The Eye of The Luzzu

Tradition and superstition often come hand in hand. From breaking a mirror giving you seven years of bad luck, to Ancient Greeks fearing that a storm was caused by angry gods. When human beings cannot understand something, they create myths and superstitions to give it meaning. Whether these are based on truth or fact is a discussion for another article.

Maltese seaside villages, such as Marsaxlokk, Marsaskala, or St Paul's Bay, are dotted with brightly coloured fishing boats called *luzzu*.



This type of boat can be traced back to the ancient Phoenicians, and their stable, sturdy, and reliable nature meant that they could be

used in both good and bad weather. However, one of the most striking features of the *luzzu* is the two painted or carved-out eyes that stare directly into your soul.

The concept of the 'evil eye' is widespread across Mediterranean cultures, such as the Turkish Nazar eye-shaped amulet, the Italian *cornicello* (designed to ward off the evil eye), and the hand-shaped Hamsa talisman found in West Asia. The eyes on the *luzzu* are probably linked to the Eye of Horus or Osiris, which was the Phoenicians' god of protection from evil. For the Phoenicians, the eye was a symbol of protection and good health, so the eyes were painted onto their boats to protect the fishermen from any harm while at sea. With no modern weather reporting technology, fishermen turned to superstition to give them hope and protect them on their journeys.





## **Burmarrad salt pans once more producing salt after an absence of almost 45 years**

**Report:** Andrea Rossitto

**Photos:** Marco Micallef

**Video:** Adrian Borg Ghigo, Marco Micallef

The Burmarrad salt pans have once more continued to produce salt crystals and volunteers have been

gathering them to be analysed and tested in laboratories outside of Malta. Salt from these pans has been absent since the 1970s and the Burmarrad Valley has once more been given a new lease of life and after 45 years its Salina Natural Reserve has been given a new lease of life.

Work on these pans began in March when they were emptied and cleansed and nature was able to take its course. Salt crystals began to gather in piles and volunteers are gathering them and placing them in warehouses. During the 70s these pans used to produce 700 tons of salt crystals but as explained by the Manager, Manuel Mallia, the production immediately ceased until a solution was achieved to continue the water flow from the sea.

He said water flows freely and there are canals with valves that have been installed to control the water flow and their direction into the canals. The Salina area does not all produce and the formation of underwater pools is a determining factor. Some have a clay bottom and others a salt preservation bottom.

The quality of the salt has yet to be ascertained. Samples have been sent to specialised overseas laboratories to determine the quality.

Not all the salt can be used as table salt. Research has shown there are 14,000 different uses for the salt. The Salina salt is not on sale but small amounts are being kept to create awareness to future generations of the importance of salt production.

### **Barry York**



I know that bird hunting takes place in Malta and is controversial. And I also know that Maltese men, in Malta and elsewhere, often have aviaries and bird cages - at least that was so with my father's generation.

My uncle Joe (Meilak) had a large aviary in the backyard of his home in Hawke Street, West Melbourne, which fascinated me as a kid. He also had a single cage with his 'pet' canary in it. The canary sang a lovely song when uncle Joe would bring the cage into the house.

My dad, Loreto, also liked having birds as pets but never had an aviary. My mum, Olive, liked them too and it was probably her

initiative that led us to have various budgies and cockateils at home over their four decades in Brunswick, Melbourne.

My parents hated cruelty to animals and my dad often fed the birds in our backyard - sparrows included. But it was usually pigeons and doves that turned up, regularly, for a feed.

The photo shows my late father (1918-2009) feeding the pigeons in our small backyard in West Brunswick, Melbourne. Even after leaving Brunswick in 1991, he kept up the habit of feeding the birds. Pigeons were very popular in Brunswick when I was growing up there (over a 30 year period). There was an old guy in Shamrock Street who had scores of them and they were fly around the suburb and then return to his place. He was a former POW from the Pacific War.

I wonder whether gentrification has ended the pigeon-fancying of my hometown?

We also had heaps - I mean hundreds of squawking sea-gulls flying over the suburb when I was a kid, when the Brunswick tip was still in operation. They'd scavenge in the tip and make a terrible racket, always around sun set. **Dr Barry York -FACEBOOK**



## **Mosta field once home to fugitive Ċikku Fenech to become public garden**

A 4,000 square metre field in Mosta where the fugitive murderer Ċikku Fenech ta' Vanġiela once lived, will be turned into a public garden.

The derelict but overgrown field full of trees, known simply as Ċikku

Fenech's, is roughly the size of a football pitch and although uncultivated and abandoned, serves as a green lung with various olive and cypress trees.

Parliamentary secretary for citizenship Alex Muscat announced the project together with WasteServ CEO Richard Bilocca, and environment minister Aaron Farrugia. The €4.5 million project will be financed by the National Development and Social Fund (NDSF), the national passport sale fund, and administered by GreenServ.

The ministry described the urban project as having a discrete design that will complement the current field with trees, natural passageways, and limestone.

Farrugia said the project is part of a series of grey-to-green projects in urban zones, which address climate change and contribute to a better quality of life.

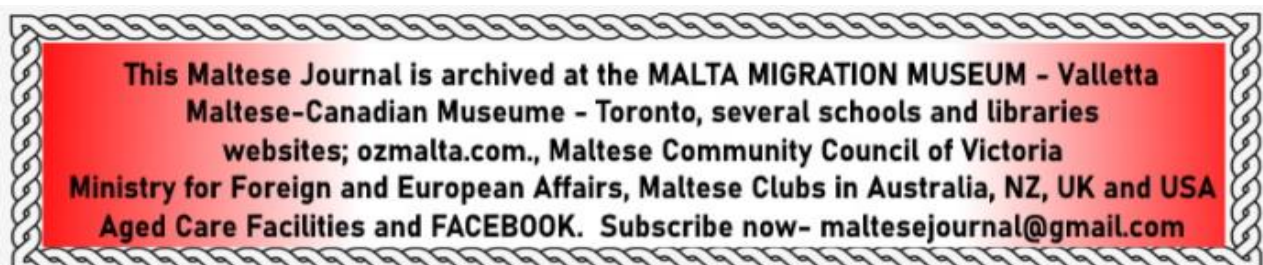
### **Who is Ċikku Fenech**

Notorious tenant Ċikku Fenech had been convicted of murder after infamously spending three months on the run. He rose to notoriety in June 1963, becoming Malta's most wanted man for the murder of farmer Ċikku Vella during a heated argument.

He had hidden in caves in the Tal-Pellegrin in the Ġnejna area until eventually in late September he gave himself up to the police. Found guilty of murder, he was not sentenced to death but given a 15-year prison sentence, of which he served a good deal less.

In March 1976 he was back in the limelight following a shooting at the Mosta housing estate, in which Kalcidon Zammit was grievously wounded. After hiding in a haystack in his mother's house, he was found two days later and eventually sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment for attempted murder.

In 2010 he was again condemned to a nine-month, suspended jail term after firing an illegal firearm in a residential area back in 2003. He died in 2014 at the age of 74.







## jikteb Victor V. Vella (NSW)

Waqt li intom ta Malta qeghdin tixxenqu u tistennu bil-herqa l-ewwel bexxa xita aħna tan-naħha t'isfel tad-dinja bdejna nħossu l-ewwel caqliq tar-Rebbiegha . U filwaqt li intom tibdew tippreparaw biex izzommu għajnejkhom magħluqin iżjed fit-tul ..tlestu għall-iljieli twal tax-xitwa , aħna qeghdin nifthu għajnejna ħalli naraw u nitgħaxxqu bil-kuluri għax bejnieta.....Spring is in the air. U jkollna nifthu wkoll imnifsejna u widnejna ħalli inħaltu ma dak li naraw il-fwejjah u wkoll il-hsejjes tat-twelid tan-natura. Imma hawn l-Awstralja u iżjed fl'istati ta NS.W u ta Victoria... u kif aħna għadna imsakkrin ġewwa, almenu għandna il-backyard u wkoll għandna xi ġardin publiku fil-qrib biex naraw dan il-qawmien. U jekk inħarsu żgur naraw u nħossu li *Spring in the air*, bħal ma qal wieħed lil kummidjant Victor Borge.. u Victor beda jaqbeż... U ħa ngħidilkhom Min irid jaqbeż affarh imma għandna għalfejn. Bħalissa jekk timxi bil-mod u tħares u tiffli u tara x'hemm fil-ġardin, żgur li tara u tinnota li kollox qiegħed iqum min-nagħsa jew ir-raqda tax-xitwa. U bħal l-ors li johrog mill-ghar jiftah għajnejh u kolox jibda ifelles... U tara li l-orkid lesta biex tiftah, u fit- tarf tal-ġardin feġġ il-ward, u l-magnolia mgħobbija bil- ward u l-lumija mimlija biż-żahar, u l-buqari se jtiru u is-sinfonija tal-kuluri bl-isfar tar-ranciż u bil-ħmura tal-ġeranju mħallat mal-bjuda tal-ward tal-piżelli u bil-ward roża tal-klivja ..... kollha imdawrin bil-varjeta tal-ħdura tal-weraq frisk .....kollha idokqu is-sinfonija kkulurita tar-Rebbiegha. Fil-ktieb tal-Malti ta dari... ta l-iskola primarja konna naqraw '...u mil-hamrija hierga kull hajja.' U l-veru jaghtik li taqbez għax 'there is a spring in the air.....' Ix-xitwa tagħna tas-sena kienet twila: ħassejnih itwal mis-soltu. Jista jkun għax is-snin bdejna inhossuhom ukoll!. U jekkk int dilettanta tal-garden tmur tara meta se tibbasta titla il-patata li zrajt xagħrejn ilu, jew il-ful fejn wasal jew iz-żerriegħa tal-basal meta se tfelles.. Donnok taqta qalbek tistenna għax in-natura mhux bħalna... aħna irridu kollox instant...issa jew xejn.... Imma in-natura mhix hekk: għandha il-pacenzja... Tieħu iż-żmien tagħha :

tistenna iż-żmien jgħaddi u tibda taħdem avolja tkun riegħda , u tkun tipprepara għal -dik il-bidla li ġġib dik in-naqra sħana u tibda tfelles u tarmi u twarrad u tikber. U jibda hierg il-weraq u ż-żahar u l-ward . In-naħal hekk iridi ħalli imur joqghod jilgħab inkiss inkiss f'kull warda li jara u jidhol u johrog u jħoss u jtkixxef.. U johrog mgħobbi b'dak it-trab irqieq li jispicca f' għasel.

Iva tieħu iż-żmien tagħha, in-Natura . Imma imbagħad la tibda tibda. Tant li ma tlaħħaqx magħha..għax il-ful trid tqacctu u it-tagħdam trid torbtu... u l-hass trid tħawwlu u piżelli u l-patata trid issaqqihom . Trid ukoll tibda tbixx bil-galbu għax inkellha ll-għasafar u id-dud u l-friefet .. iduquh qablek il-frott u ma jhallulek xejn. U jigu minn għand il-mniegħem: il-kakatu (pappagall kbir abjad) li qatt ma rajtu fil-qrib jigi jiccekkja il-lumija u jibda jqaxxar sakemm isib il-qalba ifittex iż-żerriegħa u jigi l-'butcher bird' b'dik il-kanta twila tiegħu jiddendel ma fergha tal-laringa u joqghod ixengilha biex iwaqqa il-ġurat li hemm moħbi qalb il-weraq.. u iwaqqgħu fl-art u jtir għalih f'ħakka ta għajn biex jahtfu.

Tqum fil-ghodu ma tlugh ix-xemx ħamra nar u ssib liz-zewg magpies jew bil-Malti cawl abjad .. ikunu tnejn qishom żewg namrati jippassiġġaw fuq il-haxix imniedi ... u jippassiġġaw għodu għodu u jillatikaw u jghidu waħda lil -iehor jekk isibu xi dudu 'ħa jieħdu l-breakfast. flimkien U kultant waħda minnhom tajjagħat għajta għax donna jitlagħla ..eżatt bħal ma nagħmlu aħna waqt xi tpacpica... u wieħed jillarga naqra u jitla jagħmel titjira fis-sema għax donnu jixba fl-art igerger u jerga jinzel ħdejjja jew ħdejh... Ikolli nzid li dan ic-cawl abjad għandu iżjed varjeta fit-tkarwit li jagħmlu..jghidu li għandhom mat-tletin 'tifsira differenti' Mhux bħac-cawl l-iswed li dejjem tahsbu xi tarbija tibki... dejjem izomm l-istess nota... U t-tisfir jew żarżir tal- lorikeets u tal minah bird ...u ifigg ukoll il-galah jippassiġġa qisu xi mudella fuq il-passarella...biex juri rixu.

In-natura.... fil-kapsola ta ġardin zghir. Kwadru komplut bil-kulur , bil-hsejjes u bil- fwieħa . Veru tiftaħlek l-għajnejn u l-widnejn u l-moħħ u wkoll tmisslek il-qalb. Fuq kollox tħoss li inti , u hawn ikolli nuża frazi favorita tal-poeta nazzjonali tagħna, Dun Karm , li int meta tkun imdawwar b'dan kollu fit-twelid tar-Rebbiegha ma tistgħax ma tħossokx , ' iz-zagħzugh ta dejjem'

## Performances – Qarçilla -Maltese Wedding



Lanfranco tells us that the *Qarçilla* tradition dates back to the 18th Century, around the time of the Maltese linguist Giovanni Pietro Francesco Agius de Soldanis, who wrote the first lexicon and systematic grammar of the Maltese language. Since the Catholic Church was so strong throughout Maltese history, people were brought up to be very religious and obedient. Carnival was the one time a year when people could have some fun and disobey.

The *Qarçilla*, sometimes called a Maltese wedding or '*iż-żwieġ la Maltija*', was a farce or popular drama enacted in village streets during Carnival. Two men would dress up as the groom and notary. On his head, the groom would wear a *figolla* in the shape of a woman and decorated to look like a bride. The notary would then recite a fake and comedic marriage contract invented on the spot, which usually included political and social satire, sexual innuendos, and swearing. People would listen and cheer, and once his speech was over, the actors would cut up the *figolla* into pieces and share it with the audience.

One of the best known *Qarçilla* is the one written by Mgr Felic Demarco for Carnival in

1760. What is quite interesting about this tradition is that, although it seemed to have stopped and been lost to history, it actually had a rebirth back in 2014. Over the last few years, Maltese writers like Trevor Zahra, Immanuel Mifsud, and Leanne Ellul have been commissioned to write their own version of a *Qarçilla*, which is then staged and performed by citizens. The tradition is finding a new life in today's society.

For a culture to exist, it needs people. It is people who create traditions, keep them alive, or preserve them, be it through lived experiences, speaking to people like Spagnol, or documenting them as Lanfranco did with his book. To appreciate our culture, we need to learn about it. Written records help us preserve these traditions and allow culture to grow and develop.







Paintings of Malta and the Maltese people during the war by British artist Leslie Cole (11 August 1910 – 1976). What's most poignant about these paintings, which were painted in 1943, is that they depict scenes which the artist himself would have witnessed and, more importantly, scenes that no camera dared to capture. The images are found on the Imperial War Museum website: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/>

- A.** A congregation gather to pray in front of a makeshift altar on the steps of a shelter lined with rows of bunk beds.
- B.** Maltese Women during Air Bombardmen. The low ceiling and colour of the walls and floor clearly indicate a rock-hewn air-raid shelter. Very unusual are the 'elaborate' fittings, including a wooden cabinet, ornamental clock, and ceramic wash stand. Shelters were typically Spartan, so this may indicate a stately home's private shelter. The woman on the left, holding an infant, might be a maid or midwife
- C.** Maltese miners - Excavating Tunnel for RAF Control Rooms.
- D.** The interior of a church crypt where civilians have set up sleeping quarters for the night. There are two statues in the crypt, as well as an altar in the background.
- E.** A view along the street of the Immaculate Conception in Senglea, with Maltese civilians busy removing valuables and possessions from their homes. Men, women and children carry items of furniture and valuables, evidently in a hurry to evacuate the area due to bombardment. The houses themselves are typically Maltese, being made of white stone. There is evidence of some light bomb damage and a horse and cart waits at the end of the street



**MALTA UNITED SOCIETY - WINDSOR  
ONTARIO - CANADA**

Alexander Carbonaro is organizing this fundraiser.

We are the Maltese Club of Windsor, Ontario Canada. Made up of 85 wonderful Maltese members. While we are a small group we are very proud of our culture and everything it represents.

During the last year and a half while Covid 19 took over much of the world, we have struggled a great deal to meet our financial goals. The Maltese club has been a safe place for all of our members to celebrate events or just share a Pastizzi, Kinnie or

Cisk with a friend. It would be a devastation to everyone involved to lose such a place where many great memories were made.

The funds raised through this page will go directly to the bills that have accumulated over the past 2 years. Our main goal is to keep the establishment running to its fullest potential and provide our members with the services they deserve. We know that everyone of Maltese descent has a deep feeling of pride and love for their culture and country, that's why we are asking for any donation to help keep the club alive. Grazzi Ikun Imbierrek Alla Thank you, God bless

## MALTESE IN DETROIT



Hello everyone! There seems to be something a lot of us have in common and that is we don't have many/enough vintage photos of our family from the 40s, 50s and 60s. We surely didn't have the technology then that we have today. And just maybe someone has pictures that are even older that someone here would appreciate.

I decided to create this group as a forum for folks who migrated from Malta to the Detroit area to display their vintage pictures and talk about what life was like in Detroit back in our day. They need to name who is in the photo. Or, if you need to identify someone, maybe we can help you solve a mystery. The "good old days" are gone for us and the Maltese traditions are dissipating from the rich, Maltese culture we once knew within the Detroit area. It was special and precious. Great memories and pictures are all that is left. I'll generate the first post: This is my father, Joseph "Giuseppi" Gomez Blanco. He founded Blanco Canvas Company around 1950. There were many Maltese men that would visit the shop and bring all kinds of Maltese food their wives made with them and a big lunch would be shared quite often at the shop. They drank Pastasso wine and mixed it

with Pepsi, remember? The first shop was located on Scotten and Vernor, then it moved to Michigan Avenue by old Tiger Stadium. I'm looking for any of the pictures of the Maltese friends my dad had who visited the shop. Do you, by chance, have any that were taken at the shop itself? If so, please share.

PLEASE SHARE THIS WITH ALL YOUR MALTESE FRIENDS ON FACEBOOK ! THANK YOU

Visit the very interesting facebook page of [Bernadette Bennie Blanco](#)



## A Thriving Maltese Community in the Heart of Motor City

Two separate clubs that have become a mecca for the local Maltese people are



**The Maltese American Community Club in Dearborn and the Maltese American Benevolent Society in Corktown.**

The history of Detroit's Maltese communities starts with World War II, or shortly after it, when a surge of emigrants left the island in pursuit of better opportunities, the American Dream.

Yet, years after emigrating to the US, and thousands of miles away from home, there's no escaping the island culture. The walls of the clubs are a museum of the community's rich past, decorated with photos of club presidents and the Maltese and US politicians alike.

Even the food is distinctly Maltese, with kitchens manned by first-generation emigrants cooking up rabbit, ftira, pastizzi and ravjul. **And so are the drinks, with Kinnie being served to club members.**

The Maltese community in Detroit thrived throughout the city's automotive heyday and continues to grow now with second and third-generation emigrants equally as enthusiastic about Malta as their predecessors.

"They were able to keep the close-knit community they had in Malta while having space and freedom that a place like the USA can offer," Charlie continued.

"The younger members of the community that we met had such a love and fascination for Malta. Many of them spoke Maltese and even if they didn't, they were trying to learn the language," he said.

From Malta to Motor City also features a heartwarming celebration that hits close to home, a festa. A group of American-Maltese people gathered in a church to celebrate mass, before parading around with a statue of Holy

Mary; pretty similar to what a traditional festa would like here.

They managed to capture the Victoria Festa celebrations, and while the statue and the procession might be on a smaller scale, what they lack in ceremony they demonstrate in heart, passion and dedication.

**The Maltese American Benevolent Society, Inc. (M.A.B.S.I.)** is situated at [1832 Michigan Avenue](#), Detroit. It is a benevolent society in the heart of Corktown, Detroit that's main purpose is to promote the advancement of the Maltese American Community in the Metro Detroit and surrounding areas, as well as educate and welcome any other ethnicity to join and participate in our family oriented club.

2020 was the 80th anniversary of the club, however the club has been situated in its current location since 1963. The club consists of a bar/lounge area, rental hall (large and small) as well as several means of entertainment. We pride ourselves on our gatherings with the largest and most ornate being the Festa Il-Vitorja (Il-Bambina) celebrated on 8 September in Malta, however, our celebration is always the weekend following Labor Day at our club in Detroit. They start our event at Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church. with the annual blessing and procession of statue of Our Lady After mass they move to their club where one can purchase delightful Maltese foods and souvenirs including, but not limited to: Kinnie, Rabbit Stew, Baked Macaroni, traditional sweets, t-shirts, hats and other items.

It just goes to show that, no matter where you are in the world, you're never too far from home!

**If you have a story to tell – share  
it with others  
Send it to us  
[maltesejournal@gmail.com](mailto:maltesejournal@gmail.com)**



**MARY GALEA SANDOVAL**  
originally posted this clipping in November 2020. In communication with Mary and further research, I believe the clipping came from "The Times of Malta" and appeared about July 10, 1949. The "Vulcania" arrived at Halifax, Nova Scotia on July 17th and then proceeded to New York Harbor. I believe the group in the photo boarded the "Vulcania" in

Malta's Grand Harbour rather than taking a vessel to Naples and boarding the "Vulcania" there. (Just a month, earlier, my future mother-in-law and her children, had to take a vessel to Naples in order to board the "Vulcania" for Ellis Island.)

I'm planning to do a write-up on this group for the July issue of "The Maltese Presence in North America." Any information on the people in this photo would be greatly appreciated as the ship passenger lists for those arriving at Ellis Island in 1949 were, for the most part, inadvertently destroyed before they were scanned. This appeal might be the only way of preserving the record of these individuals for posterity. Kindly email me at [dbrock40@worldline.ca](mailto:dbrock40@worldline.ca). I work better with email rather than Messenger.

[Dan Brock](#) - Canada

## From Malta to Motown

*Gathering place for Maltese who migrated from Malta/Goza to Detroit*

Get reacquainted with your Maltese community, post your vintage pics, help each other identify people, and revisit an era in Detroit that was loved and is now gone.

May God bless us to help one another.

**LOCATION & CONTACT INFORMATION**  
1832 Michigan Avenue Detroit, MI 48216

**HOURS OPEN** Temporary Hours Due to COVID-19    Sunday - 12:00 - 6:00 P.M.

**WE WILL OPEN OTHER DAYS FOR SPECIAL EVENTS - PLEASE CALL CARMEN TO INQUIRE**

\*If you are planning to visit club near closing hours, please call first to confirm the club is open.  
We may stay open past the published time. Find us on Facebook  
[maltese\\_american\\_benevolent\\_soc@yahoo.com](mailto:maltese_american_benevolent_soc@yahoo.com)



## **MALTA NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION**



*Date*

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> 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**

**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 8340 0345 Jesse Borg 8266 7859**

**Frank Grima 0431 068 642 Marthese Kehoe 0404 094 170**



**THE MALTESE SHOES  
ARE FAMOUS!!!!**

**and were highlighted  
in the Maltese Presence  
in North America!  
Love, love, love it!**

**Bernadette Bennie Blanco**

## **STILL IN LIMBO**



**A CALL TO ACTION TO PRESERVE  
AN IMPORTANT PART OF  
MALTESE-AUSTRALIAN HISTORY**

**Our Journal is read  
in Government  
Departments.**

**Perhaps one day  
our**

**Appeal will be  
heard.**

**Send us a letter  
Of support**

**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND**



**SAT 28 AUG**

# **VIRTUAL** *Maltese Australian* **PARTY**

**3PM SATURDAY 28 AUGUST**  
**MUSIC . CHAT . GAMES**  
**BYO KINNIE, TEA & PASTIZZI**

**THIS IS AN ALL-AGES EVENT. EVERYONE WELCOME!**

**COME ZOOM WITH US**

**TO REGISTER:**  
- Find the info on  Illawarra Maltese Australians  
- Via email on [illawarramalteseaustralians@gmail.com](mailto:illawarramalteseaustralians@gmail.com)  
- Call us on 0405 126 444

On the 31st of July a Maltese zoom party was held during the current NSW covid 19 lockdown. It was organised by a new group called Illawarra Maltese Australians based in Shellharbour, NSW. The party included trivia questions based on Malta, new Maltese songs, chat rooms, to foster maltese identity and culture.

People from the Illawarra and Sydney joined in to connect and share stories. There was a scavenger hunt for the kids and other ate their pastizzi and drank their tea.

The next zoom party will be on Saturday 28th August 2021, a great way to lift the spirits during.

Email [illawarramalteseaustralians@gmail.com](mailto:illawarramalteseaustralians@gmail.com) for more information or register online via eventbrite. Join the facebook page Illawarra Maltese Australians.



***Well done Mary Saliba from Adelaide for your art award!***

***We are all proud of you***

***Art exhibition open at Port Adelaide***

***Black Diamond Gallery - Port Community Arts Centre.***





**Malta's culture - Funeral Customs** by James Stuart

*An antique horse-drawn funeral carriage near the Addolorata cemetery, Paola. Such carriages were phased out in the 1960s, when they were replaced by motorised hearses*

Malta is a small European country located south of Sicily in the middle of the Mediterranean. Citizens speak the language Malti and share an elaborate culture that reflects Italian, British, French and native traditions. Malta's funeral customs are known for their detailed rites. These customs are rooted in a Catholic tradition and are similar to those of nearby Sicily.

**Celebration** Death is not a taboo subject in Maltese culture. Citizens celebrate death and several daily routines reflect the Maltese respect for death. Every Maltese village has a high concentration of churches, which ring their bells at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. to mark the beginning of funerals. Funeral processions are elaborate, with large flower-covered coffins that shut down traffic in the city regularly. Obituaries are announced over the radio each morning.

**SALT** One of the oldest traditions is the practice of placing salt on the stomach of the deceased, known as being "salted for the pit." In the pre-modern period, families often preserved bodies in a saline solution, but many families simply placed a small amount of salt in a dish and laid it on top of the body, believing this helped preserve it. Many families still follow the practice today as a tradition.

**COVERING MIRRORS** Prior to the funeral, the body is kept in the family's house. According to the Journal of Folklore, Maltese people traditionally cover all mirrors in accordance with the traditional belief that mirrors are supernatural portals for spirits. Some families will remove mirrors from their rooms altogether and extend the practice to paintings in the death chamber where the body lies. Similarly, family members often remove furniture from the room to avoid tainting it with the presence of the dead.

**OTHER TRADITIONS** Maltese citizens follow a number of other traditions that reflect the various cultures that passed through the country at different times. Family members often wash the body of the deceased before covering it with a shroud. They also close the eyes of the deceased if left open and raise the chin with a white kerchief. Finally, family members remove all knobs and knockers from their doors and leave their doors shut for several days, and neighbors follow suit by leaving their doors half-closed.



## RIZZI - SEA URCHINS, UGLY BUT DELICIOUS

MALTA CUISINE;

To celebrate the “Festa Rizzi” which takes place during the month of June at Ta Xbiex Yacht Marina, we want to tell you something about these strange critters. While on the outside they don't seem to be the most appetising of meals, sea urchins are comparable to oysters for delivering a fresh, straight-from-the-sea flavour.

DEPENDING ON HOW THEY ARE SERVED, RAW SEA URCHIN CAN HAVE A SWEET SUBTLE FLAVOUR WITH THAT UNMISTAKEABLE SEA-SALT FRESHNESS THAT ONLY COMES WITH LOCALLY CAUGHT SEAFOOD.

The spiny little critters are also popular in seafood-crazy Japan, where they are imported from many Pacific Ocean countries and served raw as sushi, called *uni*. As well as serving it raw as an appetiser, the Italians like to put it in a simple pasta to bring out a rich roasted quality in the flavour. Find it on menus in good coastal restaurants as *ricci di mare*.

Here are a few tips to help you on your way to a new culinary discovery.

- Most restaurants will serve raw sea urchin already cleaned in the shell. If you want to try preparing freshly-caught urchins yourself, you will have to get physical.
- Firstly, arm yourself against the urchin spines by using a towel or an oven glove to hold the urchin gently in one hand while you open the shell.
- Using a knife or a pair of kitchen scissors, make a small incision in the underside (flatter side) of the urchin and cut carefully in a wide circle around the bottom of the shell.
- After removing the base of the urchin shell, clean out the inside to remove the black internal parts. You might want to rinse it carefully with running water.
- You should be able to see around five bright orange fingers attached to the upper portion of the shell – this is the edible part of the urchin, the ‘roe’ (or strictly speaking the gonads of the urchin that produce roe).
- Carefully scrape out these orange segments and enjoy, either raw like Japanese sushi or cooked with spaghetti, Italian-style.
- Add a squeeze of lemon to the roe to further enhance the flavour.



**Il-Papa' gabilna r-rizzi, -hodor, vjola w hamranin,  
Fuq il-blat malajr qeghdnihom, - trid tarahom kif bdew  
mixjin! Il-Papa', imbaghad, kissirhom,- u qasamhom  
f'zewg bicciet**

**Flieli homor, kbar, mimlija,-'tini, tini zewg rizziet!**

**Fuq il-blat, b'riglejna fl-ilma, -nieklu r-rizzi lkoll flimkien  
Igri nikber bhal missieri, -halli ngib ir-rizzi jien!**

**Nibda jien nistad ghar-rizzi, - halli l-ikla tibda tkun kif qeghdin niklu, il-lejla, - hobz u  
rizzi ta' kuljum!**

**Ghax tar-rizzi waqa l-bahar. - ta' l-imhar qabez ghalieh.**

**Dak tar-rizzi tela' jigri, -u ta' l-imhar baqa fil-qieh!**



## **A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN-AMERICAN SOCIETY (VICTORIA) Sam CJ Muscat JP**



I hope this email finds you and your family safe and well during these ongoing challenging times.

I began writing to you a week ago after the announcement of the one-week extension. I was concerned that my tone would appear negative. I trust you would agree that frustration and negativity are natural and expected emotions, especially given yesterday's announcement of extended home detention and curfews as part of this 6<sup>th</sup> Victorian lockdown.

I suspect you are asking the same questions I am. Will we see the end of this?

What will be the long-term price that we will pay for these? And . I'm not referring to the economy – we know it will take decades to recover – I'm referring to the, emotional impact, the stress, anxiety, pressure that this causes, and its general impact on Australians.

For Victorians Will September 2<sup>nd</sup> provide light at the end of the tunnel, or a longer stressful road ahead? It is beyond concerning to see what is happening again, our freedom put on hold. The confusion and mixed messages, political leaders, unelected bureaucrats and the media continue to share is extremely damaging. I think I best stop here. I have already said too much.

The hardest part, besides from not being able to see my family and friends, is not catching up with you and other members and friends of the Association, it hurts, it deeply hurts.

My true message to you was to simply say, "Hello". To check in, see how you and your family are doing? And, to let you know that, myself, the Executive and Board members truly wish you and your family Well, Good Health and Peace.

Let's pray that our elected Leaders, their advisors and Media do the right thing by us all and that they do not play politics with our lives, freedom and liberty. Let truth and honesty be the dominant and prevail always. On the 1 August 1941 the Victorian branch of the Australian American Association was officially chartered. Our first president was Sir Keith Murdoch. We will however take the opportunity to celebrate our 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in conjunction with the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea in 2022.

In the mean time we have been planning the Commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the Victorian Emergency Services at St Paul's Cathedral, which is planned for September 12<sup>th</sup> at 4pm.

However, we trust you understand that current restrictions prevent us from confirming this event at this point in time. In the event that we cannot be in one another's company, we hope that an online service will be approved. I will keep you posted. Thank you for your continuing support and again on behalf of our Executive and Board members I truthfully wish you and your family Well, Good Health and Peace always.

Also keep in your prayers those in our World that are facing difficult, horrific and terrifying times, especially the peoples of Afghanistan may they find peace and freedom.

Please say safe, keep well and look forward to being able to again enjoy each other's company





These are treasures that you cannot buy. Vicky Schembri was so good to share this beautiful photo of her (only child) with her natural blonde locks and her parents, Anthony & Anna Gauci. Her father served in the military and always smoked a pipe. I love it! Thank you for sharing Vicky!

*Bernadette Bennie Blanco's Facebook Page*

## MALTESE VOICES

WITH MARTHESE CARUANA



SUNDAYS AT 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM  
AN HOUR OF MUSIC FROM MALTESE ARTISTS



LISTEN FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE

[WWW.893FM.COM.AU](http://WWW.893FM.COM.AU)

LISTEN LIVE OR ON DEMAND,  
ALSO AVAILABLE ON TUNEIN



## MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF NSW PROGRAM FOR THE MALTESE



SUNDAYS AT 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
AN HOUR FILLED WITH NEWS AND INFORMATION

**If you love reading this  
journal share it and  
support it to keep it  
going**