

**THE ONLY DIGITAL  
AND PRINTED  
JOURNAL FOR  
THE MALTESE  
DIASPORA**

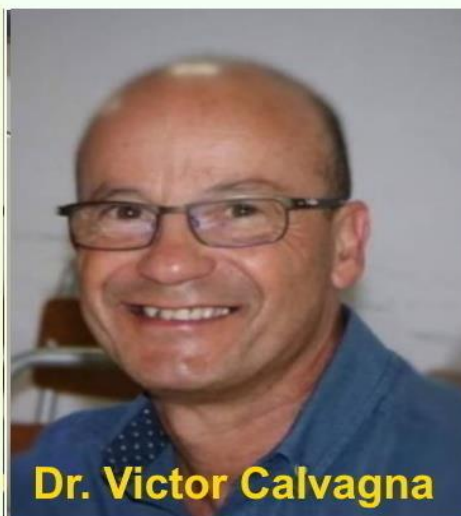


***The Maltese  
living abroad  
congratulate  
ROBERTA  
METSOLA  
for her  
election to  
such a high  
office***



**LINO  
VELLA**

**The Maltese Community  
of Australia lost a friend**



**Dr. Victor Calvagna**

**“Yöü’ll live on in  
the children you saved”**



**Rear Admiral  
Gregory Sammut**



**Miss Antoinette Spiteri,  
100,000th Maltese  
migrant, - Australia  
1965**



**FUTSAL  
VICTORIA** **ANTHONY  
GRIMA**



**NATALIE  
GAUCI**

## **Roberta Metsola elected president of the European Parliament**



### **ROBERTA METSOLA WINS ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN FIRST ROUND OF VOTING**

**MEP Roberta Metsola became the first Maltese person to serve as president of an European Parliament institution.**

*Photo: AFP*

**The European Parliament elected a new president on Tuesday 18 January 2022 with Maltese MEP Roberta Metsola the clear favourite.**

**President Roberta Metsola is the first Maltese politician to become an EU president and the third woman to lead the European Parliament. The Maltese Diaspora is proud of her outstanding achievement.**

**Former EU Council president Donald Tusk is among the first to congratulate Metsola, describing her as “a woman of values & a devoted European.” “I believe in Europe & I believe in you, Roberta,” the Polish politician writes.**

**EU Commission vice-president Věra Jourová is also quick off the mark. “We have had a great cooperation together which I believe will continue,” she writes on Twitter.**



## **Former editor of The Maltese Herald and Ex-President of Parramatta Melita Eagles dies at the age of 85**



We have lost a very important part of our club, as we are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of our club co-founder, Lino Vella, who entered the Lord's presence last night, at the age of 85 years.

Born in Casal Paula, Malta, on September 22, 1936, Lino shifted with his family to St. Julians at the age of 9, where he started his soccer career with the district Under 12's. It didn't take him too long to appear in public soccer because in 1948 he represented his college, St. Albert the Great, & the District Champions, Arsenal, in the Under 16's & Under 18's. Because of good publicity in the local press, Birkirkara S.F.C. signed him for 3 years to play for their 1st & 2nd teams.

Lino migrated to Australia on the liner "Sydney" in November 1954.

As soon as he arrived in Australia, he had an immediate involvement with our association. Lino began playing for the newly formed Malta Eagles (Established 1952), & was President when the club amalgamated with Melita Football Club (Established 1953) in 1956 to establish Melita Eagles United Soccer Football Club.

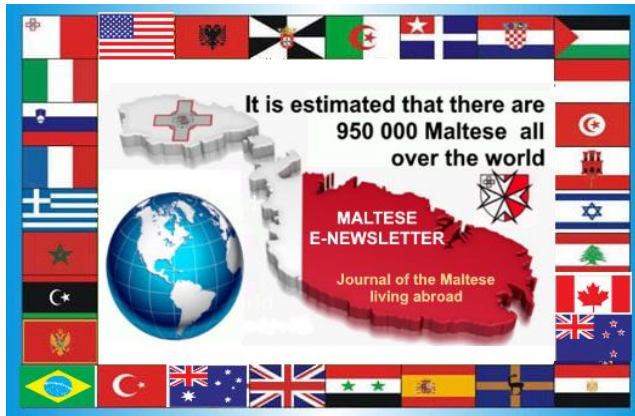
Playing with the Malta Eagles, who under his coaching won the 1955 Cup tie & finished runners-up in 1954 & 1955, was chosen several times to represent the Eastern Suburbs. He was even selected to play with the Federation European Colts against New South Wales, together with his teammates Eddie Hamer & Fred Scerri.

A lifelong devotee to football, Lino had been involved with the Eagles for six decades, serving as a player (Goalkeeper), coach, secretary, & President, making him a life member. His love of football led him into the world of journalism, & in 1957, he helped then Melita Eagles Assistant Secretary, Lawrence Dimech, produce a short-lived magazine called "Soccer Light", the club's official programme. His journalism took a further step in the late 1950's when he was Sports Editor for the Sydney-based Malta News. In 1961, when the national newspaper, The Maltese Herald, commenced publication, Lino had his own column, "On Target", and sports section. In 1971, when its first full-time editor, Lawrence Dimech, was appointed Consul for Malta in New South Wales, Lino took over as editor, & became the sole owner of the newspaper from 1983 until 2013, when sadly publication of The Maltese Herald ceased. Lino published weekly reports with photos of the Eagles' matches to keep the Maltese Community informed of the club's news. In 1999, Lino was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his services to the Maltese Community.

Lino continued to be involved in the game and support the Eagles avidly until his last days. We were honoured to invite him as one of our guests for the 2015 & 2016 Heritage Round celebrations held at Melita Stadium, which included Melita Legends from all different eras. It was great to catch up with Lino again. Parramatta Melita Eagles Sports Club sends its sincerest and deepest condolences to the Vella family. Our thoughts and prayers are with them at this difficult time.

MAY HE REST IN ETERNAL PEACE.

***I was saddened when I received the sad new that Mr Lino Vella passed away after a short illness. He was loved and respected by all who knew him. I, and all our readers, salute our dear friend who was a keen reader, supporter and contributor of the Maltese Journal. Most of all he was a very humble person. The Maltese community in Australia lost a great friend and a fine gentleman. He was the editor of The Maltese Herald, the only Maltese newspaper in Australia and he managed to keep alive the history, culture, language and heritage of the Maltese Islands. Frank Scicluna - Editor***



## **Islands of a few kilometres by a few kilometres but the Maltese Diaspora is spread throughout world**

Albert Fenech  
On the Greek island

of Corfu a fortified castle built from Maltese stone by Maltese builders. The surface area size of the Maltese Islands is 261 square kilometres, a miniscule crag in the Mediterranean when compared to all the other countries in the world. Yet, and yet, it has a Diaspora that spreads from New Zealand to Greece, from Algeria to Scandinavia, from Lebanon to Australia, from Gibraltar to Canada, from South Africa to Brazil, from Tunisia to the United States and of course from Malta to the United Kingdom.



### *Malta links to Britain*

It is estimated there are sizeable Maltese communities and fourth and fifth generation Maltese in Australia, Canada, Belgium, Brazil, Egypt, Gibraltar, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States.

### *Maltese community resident in Tripoli Libya at the end of the 19th Century*

The word 'Diaspora' originates from the Greek 'diaspeirein' meaning across+scatter.

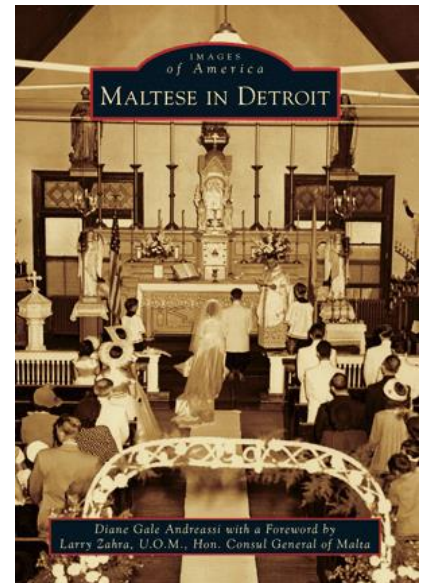
Early Maltese migrants arriving in Australia at the beginning of the 20th Century

In Malta's case the dispersion was triggered by two major factors – myriads of intermarriages and forced economic reasons, particularly at a time when a typical Maltese family 100 years ago would be composed of a mother, father and



of a group of Maltese sailors who entered a port in north-east Russia and disembarked to walk around the small port area.

MalDia Many Maltese went to Detroit in the US to work in the motor industry and later moved on to Canada



anything up to 17 children!

On the way to Australia

One particular story that has remained embedded in my mind after reading it in a journal many years ago was that



They came across a somewhat grotty restaurant and decided it was time for a meal. They entered and seated themselves and naturally, blabbed away in Maltese.



Retaining old links Moments later a gnarled old lady wearing an apron came out of the kitchen, her eyes bleared as tears streaked down her cheeks. She had not heard her mother national tongue for many decades – she was Maltese and did the cooking for the



restaurant owned by her Russian husband who had taken her as a young bride and had taken her back to his homeland.

A glance through a Maltese telephone directory will reveal surnames from all over the world, not the thousands of foreigners currently in Malta, but generations of Maltese resulting from intermarriages and settlement in Malta – and these particularly around the port regions of Cospicua, Senglea, Vittoriosa and Valletta.



*Malta President George Vella meets Corfu residents of Maltese descent*

The Diaspora spread came initially from substantial emigration to nearby countries like Greece, The Lebanon, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Italy of course and Gibraltar where a substantial percentage of today's population are of Maltese descent. This happened at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

*Maltese Americans*

Throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there was a steady emigrant outflow to Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada, South Africa and Great Britain.



I hasten to add this was permitted and approved emigration and not just people packing and boarding boats to land anywhere and state “we are here to stay”.

*Maintaining old religious traditions in Australia*

Australia developed as the major host although early emigration ran into many difficulties. The first arrivals were promptly arrested and confined to detention camps or their ships as “aliens” until British military authorities hastily explained that Malta was a part of the British Empire and its citizens entitled to the protection of the British Crown and were not “aliens” but theoretically British citizens!

Thousands packed on boats to start a new life in a new world

left his world mark for his pioneering work in curbing glaucoma – among many



others who also left their mark like politician Dom Mintoff, Hollywood film stars Oreste Chircop and Joseph Calleja as well as international tenor Joseph Calleja.

A couple of weeks ago Malta's President Dr George Vella paid an official visit to Greece and went to the island of Corfu to meet a number of persons of Maltese descent. It was explained to him that the magnificent castle in Corfu had been built by Maltese builders with Maltese stone and Maltese builders had also had a hand in the building of what today is the Greek Parliament in Athens.

When the President or Malta's Prime Ministers regularly visit Maltese communities in Britain, Australia, the United States or Canada they attend social occasions where they are met by scores of Maltese and those of Maltese descent and are given a rousing welcome.

Impressive too, that despite some being third and fourth generation and others having left Malta decades ago, they have retained the Maltese tongue, the customs and of course – most importantly – the food!

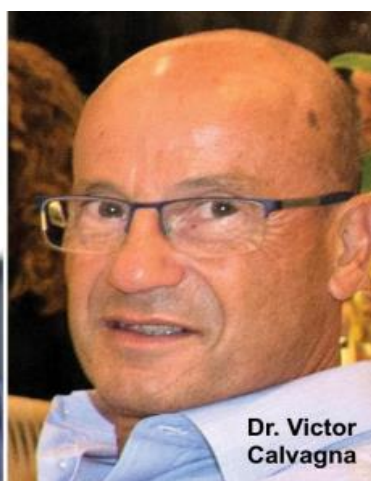
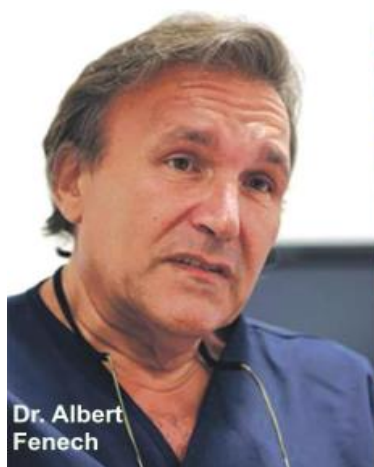
Indeed, in Australia, the Maltese established their own soccer clubs – among the first to be founded in Oz. One was in Melbourne and originally named George Cross FC, later changed to Sunshine George Cross FC and now Caroline Springs George Cross FC in compliance with Aussie FA rules that teams must have an Australian name. Another is the Sydney based team originally Melita Eagles but now Paramatta Melita Eagles FC.

While visiting Australia in 1989 I chanced to attend a “derby” match between George Cross and Melita Eagles. The rivalry was fierce and thousands of Maltese fans attended. It was like being in Malta – and Maltese pastizzi were available too (puff pastry sleeves filled with peas and anchovies or ricotta cheese).

When I lived in London in the late 50s in the Brixton area there were so many Maltese living there we even had our own cafes and restaurants and of course the Maltese earned paramount notoriety in the 1950s with their running of striptease clubs, prostitution and porno joints in Soho. Some of the major henchmen in the Kray brothers' band of villains were ... Maltese.

Maltese and of Maltese descent Professor Edward Debono initiated and pioneered Lateral Thinking; Professor Arvid Pardo represented Malta in the United Nations and pioneered the first Law of the Seas; Sculptor Antonio Sciortino rose to world fame with his creations; and the specialist optician and former Malta President Vincent (Censu) Tabone

Not bad for an island of a few kilometres by a few kilometres. LB Galea



## **Malta lost two top doctors** **You'll live on in the children you saved'**

**Malta pays last respects to Victor Calvagna** Jurgen Balzan

Parish priest Anton Briffa led the function attended by a hundreds of people, including Calvagna's family and president George Vella.

Calvagna, 63, died on 4 January after succumbing to serious head injuries sustained when he was run over by a car in Qawra a week earlier.

“You'll live on in the children you saved,” Father Anton Briffa, said of Calvagna.

The much-loved Victor Calvagna was laid to rest this afternoon in an poignant funeral Mass held at the Mosta basilica.

Dubbed as a ‘celebration of life’, the mass was broadcast live as children and teenagers who were treated by a cancer doctor with a “heart of gold” laying flowers at the altar as a final sign of gratitude.



A paediatric oncologist, Calvagna founded the Puttinu Cares charity, which assists sick children and their families when they need treatment abroad. "Victor was a man sent by God, to bring children suffering from terminal illnesses back to life. Victor was born with a heart of gold and it wasn't school that turned him into such a man but he was born that way."

During his homily, Father Anton Briffa, said the most important thing is not the house but the foundations built on the solid ground.

He said that Calvagna left behind him great foundations, and "gave hope to hundreds of children who did not have any."

Father Anton Briffa cited an anecdote which illustrated Calvagna's generosity and kindness.

He said that years ago a family needed to send a newborn child to England for treatment and after finding accommodation at a residence run by nuns they unexpectedly had to leave and had no choice

but to book a hotel where they were paying £100 a day.

Father Anton Briffa recounted how Calvagna rang the baby's father to check on them and after being told that they had to relocate to a hotel, he immediately collected money from doctors attending an event he was at to help the family.

Calvagna, a paediatric cancer specialist and president of Puttinu Cares, lost 95% of his brain function last week after an MRI procedure which determined the extent of the brain injuries he sustained.

His death led to an outpouring of grief, with many recalling his kindness, good deeds, and honesty.

Last week, Puttinu Cares announced his death saying Calvagna "was a humble man who dedicated his whole life to sick children and their parents he loved so much. He taught us how to be of service to others without expecting anything in return. Thank you for the beautiful example you set and values you have nurtured in us. We will never forget you."

## **Top cardiologist Albert Fenech dies at 70**

Albert Fenech, who served as an MP between 2013 and 2016, passed away in his home last month at the age of 70.

The son of a Gozitan father and a Portuguese mother, Fenech had moved to the UK in 1975, working as a cardiologist in London. Starting in 1988, he became one of just four visiting interventional cardiologists in Malta, a state of affairs which meant that people with heart disease could only avail themselves of this service for 8 weeks a year. The rest of the year, patients would need to travel to the UK – if their health permitted.

Fearne recalled that starting from his days as a medical student in the 1980s, he was well aware that the mortality among people with heart conditions in Malta was startlingly high.

"But now, with interventional cardiology, deaths have become rare, and this is thanks to the work done by Dr Fenech," the minister said. Fenech had ultimately returned to Malta permanently in 1995 – taking a drastic salary cut in the process – to set up and head a cardiology department.

This department, the minister said, was now one of the best in the world, again crediting Fenech's efforts to train specialists around him to build on what he had done.

Key figures in medical fields to be commemorated

Fearne said that the past few weeks have been a sad time for Malta's medical community, which was also mourning the loss of paediatric oncologist and Puttinu Cares president Victor Calvagna.

But he also took the opportunity to announce that Malta's health system will start commemorating its leading figures, installing plaques in their memory where appropriate.

Anglu Psaila, who specialised in clinical cardiology and paediatrics but was also active in public health education, is to be commemorated in the district clinic of his hometown Żabbar. Orthopaedic surgeon Charles Grixti will be commemorated in Mater Dei's orthopaedics unit.

The same honour is also to be extended to Calvagna and Fenech, Fearne said, with the former commemorated in the paediatrics department, while Fenech would be commemorated in the unit he set up. "He will not just live in our memory, but in the collective memory of our country," he said.

## **Shedding light on the family history of a missionary of Maltese descent beatified by Pope Francis**

Giulia Magri

On 8 December, 2018, a group of 19 missionaries, including a nun of Maltese descent, who were killed in Algeria two decades ago, were beatified by Pope Francis.



Sister Angele-Marie Littlejohn was murdered on 3 September 1995 in Algeria, where she was

stationed at an orphanage and boarding school for girls which was run by the Sisters. Through means of National and Church archives, the details of Jeanne Littlejohn's father, William (Guillaume) Littlejohn, who was born in Għargħur on 13 August 1900 and his travels to Tunis in 1921 were brought to light.

At the Malta Emigrants' Commission, Archpriest of St Bartholomew Parish, Fr Christopher Galea said that through the Parish's records they found the baptism records of William (Guillaume) Littlejohn. He said he was extremely happy to have found out that the father of Sister Angele-Maire Littlejohn was born and raised in Għargħur. The parish had found the birth record of William (Guillaume) Littlejohn, who was born on 13 August 1900 and was baptized on 19 August of the same year. The same register also shows that Littlejohn married twice, first in 1924 and then on 22 December 1932 to Marie Viola. A year later on 22 November 1933 Jeanne Littlejohn was born in Carthage, Tunis.

Alongside the Church's records, William Littlejohn's passport application to travel to Tunisia was found within the National Archives' vast collection of passport applications. Mr Joe Xerri, the manager of the National Archives of Malta explained that as part of the British Colony from 1850 onwards, Maltese nationals needed a

passport to travel. He said William Littlejohn was one of many who travelled to Tunis in the 1920's. The application shows that he applied for issuance of Maltese passport on February 5 1921, and that he migrated to Tunis that same year. The application also gives light to the recommender who signed Littlejohn's application, which was the priest of Hamrun, at the time Giuseppe Mamo, as Littlejohn was no longer living in Għargħur but in Hamrun. Both documents highlight how such artefacts shed a light on the family history of Sister Angele-Marie and also Maltese migration.

The Non-profit organisation The Aid to the Church in Need (Malta) was also present at the conference, and the National Director Steven Axisa explained the role of the NGO. Aid to the Church in Need is an international pastoral aid organization of the Catholic Church, which offers financial support to more than 5,000 projects worldwide. He said that Sister Yvonne Gera, a Franciscan Missionary of Mary had an interview with CAN (Malta) and said that "They all worked with people; helping the poor, the sick, the children and despite the war, they did not leave. They continued taking care of people."

Bishop Pierre Claverie O.P: seven Trappist Monks, four White Fathers, one Marist Brother and six Nuns, including Sister Jean Littlejohn of Maltese descent were murdered during the Algerian Civil War between 1994 and 1996. Littlejohn was sent to Algeria in 1959 and was teaching embroidery to young children at the Algiers School of Arts in Belcourt. Jeanne Littlejohn was dedicated to her students, to the people of Algeria and their mission. Leaving Mass on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1995, just 100 meters from the House, Sister Littlejohn was killed with Sister Bibiane, her companion.



## **Swedish woman, Jessica Schultz, speaks fluent Maltese**

**Jessica Schulz is researching bilingualism in Malta**

Sarah Carabott Time Of Malta



Jessica Schulz speaks six languages – Swedish, German, Spanish, French, Maltese and English.

A Swedish woman who learnt fluent Maltese in just 16 months is looking into how bilingual islanders use the two official languages in different contexts and how this links to their memory, attention and decision-making.

Jessica Schulz, a Swedish national, moved to Malta with her family in 2008, aged just 14. Throughout the four years she spent here, she did not pick up the language and only managed to learn it properly once she moved to the UK to further her studies.

After completing a masters in bilingualism and attention in children in the UK, the University of Edinburgh student decided to focus her doctorate on the links between language, cognition and decision-making by collecting evidence from Maltese-English bilingual adults.

The research will be the first of the sort and Jessica is also planning a future study that looks at the way language relates to attention. She is looking for

research participants aged over 18 who live in Malta and who speak both Maltese and English.

Jessica Schulz was fluent in Maltese in just 16 months of learning

Jessica, who speaks six languages – Swedish, German, Spanish, French, Maltese and English – is intrigued by the spoken Maltese language and although the pronunciation could be quite challenging, especially for those opting to learn it in their adulthood, she refers to it as a “beautiful language”.

*Jessica is intrigued by the spoken Maltese language*

She herself started learning the language in her free time in September 2020 by listening to the radio and TV while carrying out house chores and also by signing up for online lessons. She feels that knowledge of the Maltese language brings her closer to the place she calls home.

Jessica’s research is a cooperation between the University of Edinburgh and the University of Malta, and her supervisors are Dr Thomas Bak and Dr Sarah Grech.

If you would like to take part in her research, you can reach out on [s1937179@ed.ac.uk](mailto:s1937179@ed.ac.uk). Research will be conducted online for now.

**Do you want to learn Maltese?**

If you are not a native speaker and would like to learn the language, you have until the end of January to sign up for an online course – whether at survival, basic or pre-intermediate level – being offered by the University of Malta.

Head of the Department of Maltese Michael Spagnol told Times of Malta that two cycles of courses are offered each scholastic year. Interest in the course, which kicked off in 2005 has been on the increase, with 2,500 completing it successfully. More recently, the department has seen an increase in foreign workers, including doctors and medical professionals, who enrol for the course to be able to converse and engage with their patients better



## PROGRAMME 2022

Due to the increasing number of cases, the Valletta Baroque Festival will be abridged to include only local ensembles.

A full refund will be issued to all patrons for the cancelled events.

### **HANDEL'S MESSIAH**

Valletta Baroque Ensemble And Kor Malta

Tuesday 18th January 2022

1930hrs

St John's Co Cathedral, Valletta

Gillian Zammit, soprano; Marvic Monreal, alto; Cliff Zammit Stevens, tenor; Albert Buttigieg, bass.

Directed by Christian Curnyn

### **THE LEIPZIG CIRCLE**

Rebecca Hall

Friday 21st January 2022

1200hrs

St Catherine of Italy Church, Valletta

Midday Concert featuring works by GP Telemann, JS and CPE Bach and Sigfried Karg. Performed by Rebecca Hall, flute.

### **EUROPEAN BAROQUE ORGAN MUSIC**

John Aquilina

Monday 24th January 2022

1200hrs

Our Lady of Victory Church, Valletta

Midday Concert featuring works by Attainhnant, Cabanilles, Sweelinck and Frescobaldi, among others. Performed by John Aquilina, organ.

### **INSPIRED BY BAROQUE**

Malta Philharmonic Orchestra

Wednesday 26th January 2022

1930hrs

Hilton Malta, St Julian's

Featuring a commissioned work by Ruben Zahra, Bach/Schoenberg, Warlock and Ravel. Conducted by Philip Walsh

### **MORE THAN JUST RIPIENO – BAROQUE SONATAS FOR VIOLA**

Sarah Spiteri and Ramona Zammit Formosa

Thursday 20th January 2022

1200hrs

Archaeology Museum, Valletta

Midday Concert featuring works by JS Bach, Jean-Baptiste Loeillet (of London), Felice De' Giardini and Gaetano Brunetti. Performed by Sarah Spiteri, viola and Ramona Zammit Formosa, harpsicord.

### **BAROCK**

The Rock Troupers

Saturday 22nd January 2022

1930hrs

Teatru Manoel, Valletta

The Rock Troupers join forces with five classical musicians to present re-works of Rock and Baroque classics. The program will feature music from Bach, Vivaldi, Pachelbel, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Deep Purple, Metallica and more.

### **THE REDISCOVERED MADRIGALS OF THE MDINA ARCHIVES**

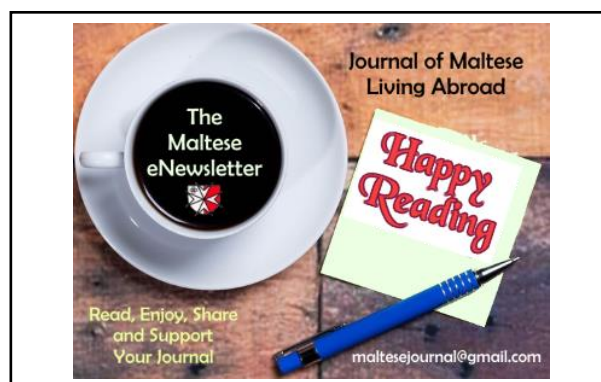
The Monteverdi Project

Tuesday 25th January 2022

1930hrs

Jesuits Church, Valletta

Premier performance of madrigals by Tozzi and Turini. Directed by Marco Mencoboni







Maltese-Serbian Community is a voluntary organization, a self-funded and it is not entitled by law to attain any income for its executive members. The activities that the organization will carry out are better understanding and closer cooperation between the two nations through a variety of cultural, economic, artistic, social and religious activities. One of the main activities of the association will be to help our members in dealing with health and legal problems, as well as assistance in establishing business contacts.

Members of the founding executive committee are:

**President: Dr. Predrag Andrejević**

**Vice President: Mr. Martin Mangion**

**General Secretary: Ms. Georgina “Gina” Fićur**

**Treasurer: Mr. Milos Radaković**

**Public Affairs Secretary: Mr. Alain Mangion**

All subsequent Executive Committees shall be elected every two years by all members of the Maltese-Serbian Community who paid their membership for that year.

The long-term strategy of the MSC is to promote economic, cultural and social cooperation between Malta and Serbia.

Short-term goals that we want to achieve are finding premises for the Community, setting up classes for teaching the Serbian Language and creating a partnership with the Maltese Ministry of Education to teach English and Maltese to our members.

The MSC members currently enjoy a number of discounts at legal and medical practitioners, as well as in online and offline marketing and business startups.

The MSC invites all interested people to join the community and help it grow. The contribution of all people of good will is essential in order to help the community in becoming an influential factor in Maltese-Serbian relations. If you are interested in joining the community and assisting it, please fill out an [application for membership](#) which can be found on this website. [MSC Malta - Maltese-Serbian Community \(msc-malta.org\)](#)

## **SICILIAN EARTHQUAKES, THE ROYAL NAVY AND MALTA**

### **I had no doubt, nor hesitation what I would do!**

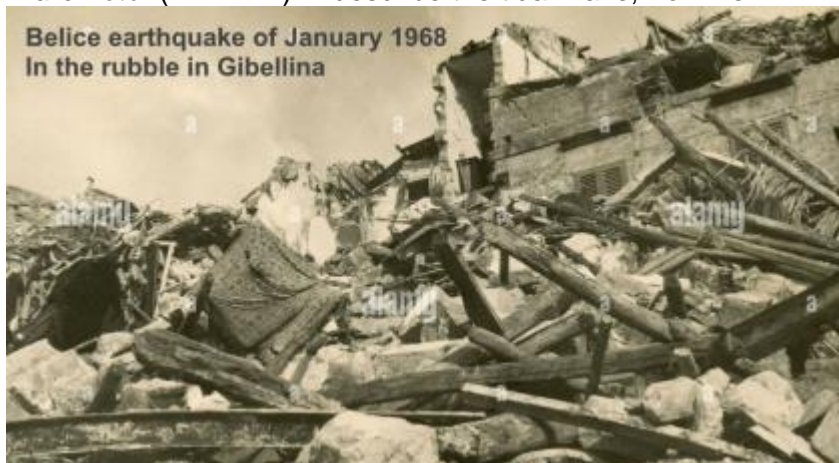
**Dr. George Boffa (NSW)**

It was quite early on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 1968. At the ferry quay in Marfa, on my way to Victoria Hospital for my new job after years in London and Copenhagen, I learnt of the earthquake in Belice in Western Sicily.

I asked another traveller for a penny to make up the fourpence needed to use the public phone. I regret that my call woke up the Minister at his home. Thus, I was able to give him the news and to suggest to him, with some insistence to organise a team to go and help our neighbours, mentioning that he already had one volunteer.

In my very young days I had been told of the Messina Earthquake of 1908 by Granny Gulietta. Of how, as she described it, “the top of the higher buildings seemed to dance”! Whilst terror was all round.

More was to come with the descriptions from the site of abject tragedy. I first heard the word “*maremoto*” (Tsunami) to describe the tidal wave, from her.



How they were terrified and went to sleep in the open of the “piazza” at Marsascala”. There they were, together with others from Vittoriosa, in the hamlet, for that is what Marsascala was at the time., a tiny place with just a few dozen inhabitants. She and Grandpa George took their three children (Edgar, Georgina Hilda) and slept rough even though it was winter time! I have also read Axel Munthe’s description of his experiences at the time in his

classic “The Story of San Michele”.

And, in our history class, of other earthquakes in Sicily to which the Order of Malta had sent substantial help,

and in which, without doubt, Maltese would have been involved! One was in 1693 when the City of Augusta was destroyed. And another in 1783 when Messina and Reggio with the entire coast of Calabria suffered a similar fate the Order’s galleys were quickly on the spot laden with every article needed for the relief of the survivors

Although, in 1693, considerable damage was also caused in Malta by the earthquake, the Order had immediately dispatched five galleys to succour the inhabitants of the Sicilian town.

Such episodes are well worth recording because they are evidence that the knights never forgot their original vocation or charisma, which is the care of the sick and the needy.

Also, very important is to reflect on a crucial fact. The knights, as had been the situation in the siege of 1565, were few in number and relied much on the hardy local community, that is the Maltese who lived in Malta for centuries before the Knights arrived to rule. In all the forays of the Knights and in their exploits of arms, the unsung Maltese played crucial parts.

When in 1783 an earthquake hit Sicily, the southern provinces of Europe were filled with dread and consternation. Whole towns were prostrated and many inhabitants engulfed in the ruins

John Pullicino, in his “A lawyer at large” referring to the participation of Maltese in the struggles of the “Empire”, stresses that that there could not have been a significant conflict of the Royal Navy in which Maltese

personnel were not involved; not rarely paying the ultimate sacrifice. Their contribution to the campaigns of the Knights would have been even more significant. The Knights were few. Very few! As had happened in the

Great Siege of 1565, the bulk of the active cohort was made up of the Maltese, native to the Islands of Malta and inured by centuries of resistance to the oppressors.

It is now 1978. Malta gained independence in 1964. The Royal Navy still operates from Malta even though the “English Episode” in the Mediterranean is over with Britain now no longer a super power, With much of the

Empire now independent. India is no longer an interest of the English. With India’s independence from Britain the importance of possessions in the Mediterranean decreases dramatically. But the Navy is still present in the Mediterranean, albeit with a very minor role. Enough, however, for the tragically hit Sicilians to benefit as another bit of the spectacular tapestry of the Middle Sea is added.

In 1693, a focus point in this note, the Navy of the Order was called into action because of an earthquake which destroyed the city of Augusta in Sicily.

Although considerable damage was also caused in Malta by the earthquake, the Order immediately dispatched five galleys to succour the inhabitants of the Sicilian town.

A century later, when in 1783, Messina and Reggio with the entire coast of Calabria suffered a similar fate, the Order’s galleys were quickly on the spot laden with every article needed for the survivors.



The best surgeons of the Holy Infirmary embarked on the galleys taking with them twenty chests filled with medicines, two hundred beds and a great number of tents. While the Knights distributed food to some 1200 to 1500 persons on the verge of famine, the medical teams toiled with the sick and the wounded. The Knights never forgot their original vocation.

These episodes are evidence of the prosperity of our small archipelago which could afford to send relief ships, supplies and medicine to our much larger neighbours, Sicily and Italy.

At 5.22 am on the 28<sup>th</sup> December 1908 Sicily and Calabria were struck by a 7.5 magnitude earthquake. The Italians had a major disaster on their hands with an estimated death toll of between 70,000 to 100,000. Messina was the worst affected. Thereafter it was referred to as the Messina Earthquake. Malta was hit and many Maltese lived in great alarm. As already noted!

Several nations came to the aid of Italy. A number of Royal and British Merchant Navy vessels landed men to assist, from digging survivors out from collapsed buildings to assisting with the evacuation of the injured and the homeless.

In the aftermath of this tragedy in Messina, the Italian Royal Family awarded a "Merit Medal" to those who distinguished themselves "whether by rendering assistance and medical treatment, or by donating help and administrative services and meeting the material and spiritual needs of the sufferers of the disaster". Two sizes of the medal were struck. Both institutions and individuals were eligible. About three hundred of these "merit medals" were awarded. It was indeed a significant tragedy for the Italian People.

Besides the "Merit Medal", in another royal decree issued on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1910 it was announced that a "commemorative medal was to be awarded to everyone who came to the aid of the Italian People in the disaster.

This second medal the "commemorative medal" turns up in British Naval medal groups. The commemorative medal was generally awarded to those who landed to help in the relief operations.

The medals bore the bust of the King of Italy with the inscription "VITTORIO EMANUELE III Re D'ITALIA... MEDAGLIA COMMEMORATIVA ...TERREMOTO CALABRO-SICULO 28 Dicembre 1908.

At least eight Royal Navy major warships are mentioned. Four of them, Duncan, Euryalus, Exmouth, Lancaster had a total complement of 2878 men of whom 2405 were awarded this medal. It seems that most of the men were involved at some time or other. Five other smaller Royal Navy ships participated in the mission of mercy. And eight from the Merchant Navy, many of whose crews won medals.

Three other medals were awarded to men from "Malta Yard".

The "Duncan" also has a place in Maltese Football History. They were the Champions of the Navy Competition and were also great rivals of St George's F.C. the pioneer Maltese civilian club. St George's once beat the Duncan 4-0 and still have the silver cup which went with that sporting exploit.

Maltese Servicemen were among the complement of these ships and would have sailed, participated, and been recipients of the award!

The years go by and we are in 1968. Another earthquake in Sicily. Malta is independent. Nothing is done. The Royal Navy is still in Malta. But the big ships in Malta have gone years before. The little ships go to the rescue. Their action is illustrated by a photo of a sailor, AB Hartley, from the Royal Navy ships which gave aid. He stands on the ruins of destroyed buildings in Sicily. The picture appears in the "Navy News".

The Royal Navy lost no time in giving aid to the victims of the Italian earthquake which devastated a large area and caused many casualties. The series of earth tremors struck the western tip of Sicily. On the morning of January 15. The minesweepers Walkerton, Ashton, Stubbington and Crofton, and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Sea Salvor, left Malta with medical supplies, 1000 blankets and 25 tons of stores on their way to Trapani. Each Minesweeper had a crew of 36. The complement was about 160 besides the crew of the Salvor and Army personnel. On arrival the medical team started inoculating people against Typhoid. They inoculated 2500 villagers.

Sailors from the ships and soldiers of the Royal Anglian Regiment demonstrated to Italian troops how to pitch British Army tents. They worked together as one to relieve the stricken. The mission was based at Trapani about 105 kilometres from earthquake area, the main area of relief activity.

The number of Sicilians under canvas was 5000 and increased steadily. The ships' companies of the minesweepers and the Sea Salvor worked hard distributing food and erecting tents, earning the thanks

of the villagers and the Italian Government. The risk to one and all was always there. One member of the rescue team said: " We felt several earth tremors which sounded as if there was a thunderstorm underground and claps of thunder".

There were no medals from the King of Italy this time, sixty years after the Messina tragedy. There was not even a King of Italy. The Royal Navy was much diminished in size and power. The navy went to the stricken victims of the hills of western Sicily. It was cold there and it was dangerous. No doubt.

No medals and far fewer Jack Tars in this mission than had gone to Messina in 1908. After the mission returned home (Malta) Rear Admiral D.L. Davenport, Flag Officer, Malta received a touching telegram from the Italian Ministry of Defence. It read:

**"In the name of the Italian Government I send you my most grateful thanks for the generous help which you so touchingly and so promptly provided for the Sicilian people victims of the earthquake."**

**What a beautiful difference and welcome emotions from the days of the Battaglia del Canale di Sicilia, of Operation Pedestal, and Il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija**

Malta had yet again, played her part. A message sent "IN TRIBUTE"! And in response to the action of the Royal Navy which 28 years after the Altmark Incident of World War II in the cold of a Norwegian Fjord, repeated the message, the encouraging call:

**"THE NAVY'S HERE!"** Indeed, the Navy was there. Not in conflict, but in ultimate human action.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Withworth Porter, an English General stationed in Malta, wrote how the commitment of the Knights in Malta had been assumed by the British.

He wrote: " English hearts and English swords now protect these ramparts which previously glistened with the ensigns of the Order of St John...should occasion ever demand the sacrifice, the world will find that British blood will be poured like water in defence of that rock. The "defence of that rock" was immortalised in 1942, when Operation Pedestal, "il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija" came to pass. This was a quarter of a century before the Belice earthquake of 1968.

1968 was another episode in the Twentieth Century when the commitment of the Royal Navy twice took British ships to earthquake disasters in Sicily. The first was the Messina tragedy of 1908 when, as already detailed, the Royal Navy could afford and was able to give massive help.

Almost in imitation, wearing the mantle, and on the example of the Order of St John, the Navy gave help towards our stricken Sicilian neighbours in previous centuries.

It is hardly likely that the Royal Navy will have significant involvement in the Mediterranean in the future.

The Belice mission ends the presence of what was a mighty force which was an important contributor and guarantor to a century of peace in these historic but frequently troubled waters.

The relieving sailors would, almost without doubt, have enjoyed Sicilian Citrus, oranges and lemons, as they went through the stress of the situation, even as rumbles of seismic movement continued underfoot.

Axel Munthe describes such an experience as he helped in the Messina earthquake in 1908. He said that he stole oranges. Hardly, because the destruction of the Messina Earthquake would have left gardens open to one and all!

Like many of the Royal Navy and others, he also received the medal! At that time he would not have had a thought of a significant historical "accident"; that is the Royal Navy's reliance, over many decades, on Sicilian lemons to prevent scurvy and maintain the health of its crews and the power of the Royal Navy.

The Belice Earthquake happened only a quarter century after the Convoy of Santa Marija in 1942. By this time of tragedy in Sicily, caused not by war which is not rare in the history of this Sea, the world had changed.

Italy was no longer a Kingdom and the British Empire had seen its height of power and influence. The "Middle Sea" was now the haunt of the American 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet holding unofficial sway in the West, and the Russian Navy in the East. Many Sicilians from the Belice area of Sicily emigrated. Three years ago on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the earthquake, they commemorated the tragic event. The rehabilitation of the area was accompanied with much frustration and disquiet and rumours of mismanagement!



## The Wildlife of Malta

Today we are exploring the incredibly diverse and beautiful species of wildlife of the Maltese Islands. Before Covid-19 millions of visitors flock to Malta. All of which visit the archipelago to enjoy the sunshine, the crystal blue waters, the fascinating history, and the incredible food. However, very few people know about the incredibly diverse, wonderful and beautiful species of wildlife that call Malta home.



### RIZZI

Rizzi, known as sea urchins in English, are incredibly intriguing and beautiful creatures. These small, spiny, spherical creatures have an army of protruding spines emanating from their bodies. Make sure you keep your distance as it's very easy to get ones of these spines stuck in your skin.

They lurk in nooks and crannies around underwater rocks and move slowly feeding off the bottom of the ocean floor. They also make for a very tasty treat and you can even try eating them. In fact, they're a very popular delicacy in Maltese cuisine. Traditionally cooked with pasta, the insides are used to make a delicious sauce! These fascinating creatures are protected

species in the wild so it's best to leave the preparation of the sauce to the restaurants.



### CHAMELEONS AND LIZARDS

If you walk down any street on the Maltese Islands, you're in with a chance of spotting lizards scuttling across your path and up the walls. If you are extremely lucky, you could even chance across a chameleon or two.

The local lizards are small in size and move as fast as the speed of light. Chameleons, on the other hand, are much slower and tend to favour darker spots where they can sit and watch the world go by. A real treat to behold!

### CATS

Whilst not exactly a wild animal as such, Malta is full of feral cats. Most keep to themselves but you will most likely come across a few friendly ones looking for a belly rub and a tickle behind the ears.

The Maltese street cats have even developed their own kind of markings and these mottled mixed breeds are known as "Tal-Madonna" cats and there are several blogs and Instagram pages set up in their honour!



### DOLPHINS

You might not immediately think of dolphins when you think of Malta, if you are lucky you could be in for a sighting during your stay. Dolphins are sometimes spotted during the summer months off the coast of Cirkewwa and in St Thomas Bay in Marsaskala in the South.

If you decide to take a boat trip off shore, you might stand more chance of spotting some. They are quite rare so if you do spot some, consider yourself very lucky!

These are just a few of the species that you might encounter when you visit Malta. Also, keep an eye out for (non-venomous) snakes, shrews, freshwater crabs, geckos, moths, birds and even the occasional migrating flamingo!





A dramatic interpretation of the 1908 earthquake disaster at Messina

The headlines have been dominated lately by the massive tsunami that devastated parts of Asia. But anyone who thinks that such danger is limited to that part of the world or that the death toll was an absolute record is way off the mark.

Here's an extract from a news item which appeared in The Daily Malta Chronicle of December 29, 1908. "At about a quarter to eight (yesterday) the sea became strangely agitated. Thinking of the earthquake which had occurred some three hours before, one was inclined to conclude that the convulsion of the earth had been submarine and not far distant from us.

"The seabed appeared to be casting violently off the superincumbent mass of water and driving it to the shore. The Grand Harbour is protected by the breakwater; the tidal wave rushed unchecked into the Marsamuscetto harbour.

"In the creeks the agitation was great. In Misida creek the waters dashed right over the confining barriers and rushed up to, and into, the houses and shops by the shores.

"From the early morning it continued until after 4 p.m. People trembled at first to witness that which was taking place. After rising over the land, the waters receded and left the seabed bare near the

## **When a tsunami hit Malta in 1908**

George Cini

shore, fish was picked up wriggling in the sand seeking to get back to their own element".

This tsunami was caused by the earthquake that hit the Straits of Messina on December 28 and that levelled Messina and Reggio di Calabria. Because of the seismic activity in the area, Sicily and Calabria are referred to as la terra ballerina - the dancing land.

The death toll was high reaching close to 200,000 because of two main factors: the extent of the quake - 7.5 according to today's Richter scale and the fact that it happened at about 5.20 a.m. when most people were indoors. The resulting tsunami triggered 40-foot waves.

The intensity of the earthquake was felt in Malta. This is how The Daily Malta Chronicle reported that massive jolt.

"The seismograph at the university (of Malta) was thrown out of gear by the violence of its (the earthquake's) own action. The trouble of the earth lasted an hour-and-a-half".

Maltese doctors, nurses and priests went to the stricken area with the assistance of the Royal Navy. The Chronicle reported also that besides the Ambulance Corps, a section of a field bakery for the baking of bread on the spot was despatched by sea together with 5,000 bags of flour.

For those who believe that one's destiny is already written in the stars, here's a twist to the story.

About 850 survivors had left Italy to start a new life in America on board the cargo ship Florida. Sailing through thick fog, the Florida collided with the luxury passenger liner Republic and three of the earthquake survivors were killed instantly.

The Japanese term tsunami means harbour wave. Tsunamis are not tidal waves and are not connected with tides. They result from a sudden vertical offset in the ocean floor sparked by earthquakes, underwater landslides and volcanic deformation

Maltese Living Abroad deserve the best

**Maltese eNewsletter**

THE ONLY MALTESE ELECTRONIC AND PRINTED JOURNAL OF THE MALTESE DIASPORA

maltesejournal@gmail.com

**Do you have a story to tell? Share it with other readers Send it to us**





## **The Pope goes to buy a CD – shop owner refuses to take any money**

Photos: Javier Martínez-Broca

Pope Francis drew the attention of several passersby as he was leaving a CD shop a stone's throw away from the Pantheon, in the heart of the Italian capital.

Jorge Bergoglio was spotted in Via della Minerva by the director of the newsroom *Rome Reports*, Javier Martínez-Brocal last night. He published the video of the Pope coming out of the shop on his social media.

In comments to those present at the time, the shop owner, Letizia, said the Pope has been her client since he was a cardinal in Rome. However, she explained that every time the Pope steps through her doors her eyes well up with emotion. She said she refused to take any money from the Pope and the CD he chose is one featuring classical music.

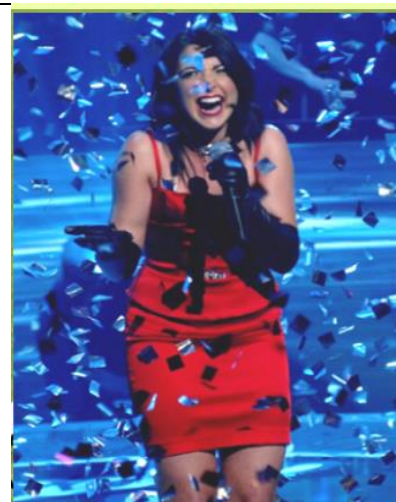
In his first interview to the magazine *Civiltà Cattolica* as the Leader of the Catholic Church on 19 September 2013, the Pope said that his passion is listening to classical music. Among his favourite composers are Mozart, Beethoven, Bach and Wagner.



## **Australian Idol winner Natalie Gauci auditions for The Voice in 2020**

By [Jessamy Tredinnick](#) For [Daily Mail Australia](#)

Natalie Gauci (born 26 November 1981) is an



Australian singer of Italian and Maltese descent. Natalie, who won Australian Idol in 2007, knows all eyes will be on her when she auditions for [The Voice](#) in 2020.

The 38-year-old singer told [9Now](#) there's a lot of pressure to turn all four judges' chairs during her blind audition, otherwise she'll feel like she has 'failed as a singer'.

'I have everything to lose, in a way, because I've already done it once. And now I have to do it again. I really want to do it again and I want to do it better this time,' she said.

'I'm hoping that all four chairs turn around. If I don't do that, to me, I've failed as a singer,' she added.

Natalie also spoke about her previous struggles with the spotlight, after turning to drugs and [alcohol](#) to cope with her sudden rise to fame 13 years ago.

She said that winning Australian Idol had been 'life changing', but she was overwhelmed by the fame and ended up 'burning the candle at both ends'. **Expectations: Natalie told 9Now there's a lot**

of pressure to turn all four judges' chairs during her audition, otherwise she'll feel like she has 'failed as a singer'. Pictured on Australian Idol

'I wasn't prepared for the outside world and all that fame so quickly. I didn't know who I was anymore, so I turned to drugs and alcohol,' Natalie admitted.



Her debut single was the first in Australian Idol history to not reach number one in the ARIA charts.

She left Sony a year after the series ended and faded into obscurity. She later resurfaced in electro act Tune In Tokyo, performing under the pseudonym Nellie Bell. In 2016, Natalie spoke to [New Idea](#) about her battles with substance abuse, telling the magazine: 'I took a lot of drugs and became paranoid.'

**Struggles:** She also spoke about her struggles with the spotlight, after turning to drugs and alcohol to cope with her sudden rise to fame 13 years ago. Pictured with her son, Jedidiah

'After that whirlwind I felt really detached... I wasn't being heard... I

felt so alone,' she added.

Embracing spiritually helped Natalie get back on track, and she also benefited from meditation and therapy.

## Way to go! Maltese swimmer Neil Agius nominated for open water swimming award



**The World Open Water Swimming Association has nominated 12 swimmers. Jillian Mallia**

Last June, **THE AWARD** The World Open Water Swimming local swimmer Association (WOWSA) announced the Neil Agius not Performance of the Year Nominees, which includes only attempted 12 athletes who completed some kind of open water a great feat but swim around the world. Malta's Neil is among them, also broke a currently ranking in second place with 429 votes (at record when the time of writing) following Mayank Vaid who he completed completed an insane HK360Xtreme Challenge in his 100km Hong Kong. Vaid currently has 496 votes.

Sicily to Malta **GET VOTING!** "Choose a nominee whose crossing. And performance best embodies the spirit of open water now, he's been swimming: tenacity, perseverance, and a sense of nominated for adventure," WOWSA shared on Facebook. How an award! can you vote for Neil, you ask? Easy! Head to

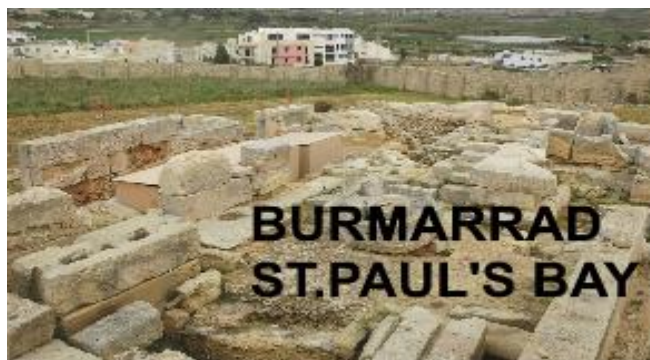
**A LITTLE BIT** this [link](#)

### ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

Neil kicked off his 33-hour-long swim challenge at the-year/and hit the 'Vote Now' button. All you have 5.15am from Pozzallo in what was part of an [anti-pollution campaign](#). Not only did he complete the you'll be sent via email and paste in the box under entire thing, but the 2004 Olympian also broke an your email. And done! *Best of luck, Neil!* existing record clocking in at 28 hours and 17 minutes.

**WE ARE PROUD OF OUR MALTESE ACHIEVERS**





## **WELCOMING SAINT PAUL**

**San Pawl Milqi** is the ruin of a Roman-period agricultural villa and a pagan temple, the most extensive to have ever been unearthed in Malta. A christian church was built on site based on the pseudo-history and religious doctrine that the site has biblical connections. On site of a present chapel was a temple dedicated to the Greek God Apollo and a Roman villa. According to religious tradition the villa is where St. Publius, the governor and first bishop of Malta, welcomed St. Paul after his shipwreck.

Apart from a copied and translated scripture attributed to Saint Luke, of which original source is now lost and has been translated from languages to languages, there are no periodic authors that wrote about the shipwreck at the time and no temporary authors supplement the tradition. Since the myth was founded, authors were careful in their writings to suit the Christian scripture which says Melite (not Malta).

There is no archaeological evidence in support of Christian claims, and it is considered a word of mouth and misnomer by name dating to the middle ages. Evidence of Christian worship on the site only dates back to the building of the first chapel in the fourteenth century.<sup>[5][6]</sup> According to Anthony Bonanno, archeological research in the entire area of St Paul's Bay found no evidence of the Christian tradition related to the supposed shipwreck in the area.

The site has been in use since prehistoric times; a couple of tombs date back to the Zebbug and possibly the Borg in-Nadur phases of the Maltese Bronze Age.

The first building on the site was probably built in the Phoenician-Punic period, when the site was used intermittently for agriculture. A small number of structures remain from this period and one burial bears a neo-Punic inscription.

In the Roman period, the site's position on the slopes of a fertile valley and vicinity to the Roman harbour at Salina meant that it was ideally suited to the production of olive oil. The establishment was expanded; the original central courtyard was transformed into an industrial area. The trapetum (a rotating mill used to separate pips from olive fruit), anchor points and at least two presses can still be seen, as well as a set of settling vats used to purify oil.

Although large enough to have been the property of a rich aristocrat, the villa does not contain any residential quarters of any particular richness. The four rooms which can be identified as serving residential needs were, in fact, only decorated with painted wall plasters and common cocciopesto flooring. The site was eventually reduced in size and surrounded by a thick fortification wall. This wall was erected circa the third century A.D. by the Romans as a mean for defence from invaders.<sup>[9]</sup> Its fortified walls, constant water supply and good position meant that it was ideally located to control the nearby port and valleys.

During the Arab period the site was majorly destroyed due to sea invasions and attacks. The Arabs decided to use the remains to fortify the site with limited construction techniques.

A church was built on part of the site in the fourteenth century, but after more than a century it fell into disuse and in 1616 was replaced by a church dedicated to the welcoming of St. Paul. This church, which still stands today, is the oldest record connecting the site to the traditional event. Excavation Although the remains of the villa have long been well known, scientific excavations, led by the Missione Archeologica Italiana a Malta, did not commence until 1963. The final report on these excavations is yet to be published. The site was included on the Antiquities List of 1925. Today, the site is managed by Heritage Malta and closed to the public except for annual occasions.



## **Kappelli u Knejjes bil-laqam**

### **Il-Knisja tal-Herba – Birkirkara**

**Minn Greg Caruana NSW 2022**

Hawn ha nibdew b'leggenda li hi marbuta mal-knisja tal-Herba, li tinsab f'Birkirkara.

Tissejjah hekk ghax skont kif jghidu, l-knisja nbiet f'ambjent imharbat. Din il-knisja tinsab tefgha ta gebla l-bogħod mill-bazilika/knisja parrokkjali ta Santa Liena. Din inbniet fl-1644. Ma din il-knisja nsibu din il-leggenda li tghid hekk. Kien hemm ragel li kellu dizabilita' serja, tant li ma kienx jimxi sew fuq saqajh. Dan bilfors kellu jigi mghejjun bil-

krozzi. Jum fost l-ohrajn kien għaddej minn hdejn il-Knisja tal-Herba, li tinsab gewwa Birkirkara u sema l-qanpiena tal-Knisja jdoqq. F'dak il-hin għaddielu hsieb minn mohhu biex jidhol gewwa u jagħmel vista quddien it-titular.

Meta għamel hekk, huwa nduna li kien qieghed izomm fuq saqajh bla ma kien jiza l-krozzi.



The High Commission of Malta in Canberra

**BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**

Contact the High Commission by email on:  
highcommission.canberra@gov.mt or on consul.canberra@gov.mt  
or by telephone on: 02 6290 1847

**TO ENSURE YOUR & OUR SAFETY COVID-19 MEASURES  
ARE IN PLACE**

Only 2 people at one time will be allowed in for consular appointments due to space restrictions. Visitors may scan the CBR Check-in QR code or sign in manually. Hand sanitiser is available for use.

Dan malajr beda jimxi normali u bil-ferh, beda jghajjat kemm jiflah li kien sar miraklu. Ma din il-leggenda nsibu leggenda ohra fejn tghid li wiehed ragel matul il-lejl kien dahal fil-Knisja tal-Madonna tal-Herba sabiex jagħmel serqa mid-deheb li kellha l-istatwa. Hekk kif mess l-ewwel gojjel b'idejh, idejh wahlulu mal-gojjel, tant li ma setax jiccaqlaq minn fejn kien.

F'daqqa wahda bdiet idoqq wahedha l-qanpiena tal-Knisja, matul il-lejl. Ma dan l-alarm, diversi nies malli jaraw x'kien gara, għaliex ma kinitx haga normali li ddoqq il-qanpiena matul il-lejl. Hekk kif dahlu l-knisja, sabu lil dan il-halliel imwahhal max-xbieha tal-Madonna





## Maltese named one of Canada's top lawyers under 40

David Cuschieri, a 37-year-old lawyer living in Calgary, Canada, was chosen as one of the top lawyers under the

age of 40 from across Canada. The 2017 awards were presented at a reception held at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto.

The prestigious event, called the Rising Stars Award, is hosted by Lexpert, the leading source of news and information about the legal profession in Canada.

David was born in Calgary in 1980, the youngest of three children, son of the late Vincent Cuschieri (known as iċ-Ċens among his many friends in Sliema and St Aloysius College) and Angela, née Orr. His two elder sisters, Suzanne and Lisa, were born in Malta.

In 1978 the family left Malta for Canada where Vincent was senior geophysicist in the oil industry for almost 30 years. David studied law in

Edmonton at the University of Alberta, and graduated in 2004, being called to the Bar in 2005. After spending some years with a Canadian law firm, Macleod Dixon – initially as an associate and later as a senior associate – he joined another Canadian law firm, Torsys, in 2011. He was made partner in 2015.

David practises corporate and commercial law with an emphasis on both Canadian and international energy, oil and gas, power and related transactions including acquisitions, joint ventures, partnerships and project development. He is a participating member of the Association of International Petroleum Negotiators, the Calgary Bar Association, and the Law Society of Alberta.

There is a strong legal tradition in David's family. His great-grandfather, Albert Bonello, a legal procurator, was the uncle of Sir Luigi Camilleri, Chief Justice of Malta between 1952 and 1957. A family tree published in a biography of Sir Luigi (Sir Luigi Camilleri – His Life and Times, by André Zammit, 2010) shows that there must be well over 30 lawyers, notaries or legal procurators who are descendants of Sir Luigi. David's sister Suzanne is a barrister practising in Calgary and five of his cousins living in Malta are also lawyers.



## *Illawarra* *Maltese Australians* **KEEPING CONNECTED**

**2 PM SATURDAY 29 JANUARY 2022  
ON ZOOM**

*Join us for our first event for 2022 on Saturday  
the 29th of January at 2pm. Have a chat, practice your  
Maltese and meet other Maltese Australians! MTAU*

*Register for your Zoom link via  
<https://imachat.eventbrite.com.au>*

*Or email [illawarramalteseaustralians@gmail.com](mailto:illawarramalteseaustralians@gmail.com)*



**FOOTBALL  
VICTORIA**

## ***Football Victoria (FV) will host the National Futsal Championships (NFC) in January 2023.***

### ***Anthony Grima | Football Victoria - Head of Commercial and Futsal***

The championships began in 1980 and since then have united Australia's finest talent for five days of fast paced, goal-laden quality Futsal, providing competitors, officials and spectators with memories to last a lifetime. The NFC is the largest of Football Australia's national tournaments, with close to 1,000 participants from over 100 teams being involved from states and territories across Australia and historically representative teams from Solomon Islands and New Zealand have also participated.

The announcement is a major boost for Futsal in Victoria, following FV's reassurance earlier this year to unite and develop the sport.

Victoria was granted hosting rights by Football Australia following a comprehensive nomination process, which also saw Queensland win the opportunity to host the upcoming NFC in 2022.

By granting the hosting rights in two different cities over the next two years, it allows the NFC to be promoted and showcased as a truly national tournament.

FV's Head of Futsal, Anthony Grima, highlighted that hosting a major national tournament will have a considerable impact on Futsal in our state. "This is a huge win for Futsal in Victoria and one for me that should be dedicated to the many amazing individuals who are at the heart of the Futsal community here in Victoria. Hosting the NFC will leave a lasting legacy for Futsal and football in Victoria and inspire and enable more people to take up this amazing sport," Grima said.

"In what will already be an exciting year for our state, as a host city of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023TM, hosting the National Futsal Championships will also allow us to showcase the best that Australian Futsal has to offer and highlight the various pathway opportunities that are available. At the same time locally, we can continue to invest in the resources needed to ensure Victoria's own Futsal community can deliver the best possible experiences for Futsal players, coaches, referees, clubs and centres across the state."

"As the Minister announced back on 16th of May, we will also see the Home of the Matildas facility being built in Bundoora, which will include an

international size Futsal pitch," Grima said. Kimon Taliadoros, Chief Executive Officer of Football Victoria echoed Grima's sentiment, expressing the NFC will not only benefit Victoria's Futsal and football community, but our state as a whole.

"Victoria is the home of sport. Our culture is built around it. It is ingrained in everything we do. The tourism and events industry makes a significant contribution to Victoria through economic growth, employment and exports," he said.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating for the people of Victoria. By hosting the National Futsal Championships, we will further enhance the state's ability to host events and tournaments and support the Victorian economy by bringing interstate visitors back to Melbourne to experience the wide range of products, services and experiences that this great state has to offer."

Futsal has been on the national agenda for some time now, with Football Australia recently having released the 'XI Principles - for the future of Australian football.'

Principle IV calls for the establishment of a national agenda for Futsal and Beach Soccer and to investigate the creation of new products to grow the game. The NFC will feed into this Principle and is expected to become a significant event on the Australian football calendar.

James Johnson, Chief Executive Officer of Football Australia was pleased with the outcome and looks forward to growing the Futsal footprint in Australia.

"As part of our clear strategic agenda, we outlined a vision to create a national program for futsal and beach soccer by working closely with our member Federations in a unified, inclusive and collaborative manner. "With the culmination of this process, we are delighted that Football Queensland and Football Victoria will be hosting the National Futsal Championships in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

"There is a clear appetite throughout Australia for football to increase its imprint through futsal and beach soccer. Queensland and Victoria now have the opportunity to showcase this and bring it to life over the next two years, in a way never seen before, Johnson said

## **Rear Admiral Greg Sammut of Maltese descent makes a name for himself in Australian Army**



Gregory John Sammut, of Maltese descent, has made a

name for himself in the Australian Army.

Born in Sydney in 1966, he fulfilled a long-held ambition to join the Royal Australian Navy and entered the RAN College in 1984. Having completed an honours degree in electrical engineering in 1987, he subsequently completed seaman officer training before qualifying as a submariner in 1991 and then obtaining his submarine command qualification in 1996.

Greg Sammut served as the commanding officer of the *Collins* class submarine, HMAS *Farncomb* for which he was awarded a Conspicuous Service Cross (CSC) in 2001. He has also commanded the *Anzac* class frigates HMA Ships *Ballarat* and *Toowoomba*. From June to November 2006, he was Commander Task Group 158.1, directly responsible to the Commander of Coalition Forces in the Northern Arabian Gulf. For this service he was awarded a Commendation for Distinguished Service in 2008.

More recently he was Commander Combined Task Force 150 from October 2010 to April 2011, during which he

commanded operations of the maritime counter-terrorism task force of Combined Maritime Forces in the Middle East Area of Operations.

His shore duties have included Commander Submarine Sea Training, Chief Staff Officer—Operations in Fleet Command, Director Submarine and Specialist Ship Development within Capability Development Group, Chief of Staff to Chief of Navy, and Director General Submarine Capability within Navy Strategic Command. Promoted to rear admiral in September 2013, Greg Sammut assumed duties as Head Future Submarine Program.

He was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in January 2016 for *exceptional performance of duty as the Head Future Submarine program, the Director General Submarine Capability and the Director Submarine and Specialist Ship Development.*

He is a graduate of both the Royal Australian Navy Staff College and the US Naval Command College in Rhode Island. Rear Admiral Sammut also holds a masters degree in business administration. Following retirement from the RAN in 2020 he assumed duties as a member of the Australian Public Service as General Manager Submarines.

**This Maltese Journal is archived at the MALTA MIGRATION MUSEUM - Valletta  
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  
Aged Care Facilities and FACEBOOK. Subscribe now- [maltesejournal@gmail.com](mailto:maltesejournal@gmail.com)**

# **Pastizzi & Penalties**

## **A FAN'S EYE OF MALTESE FOOTBALL (SOCCER)**

### **Maltese Football's Australian Connection**

It may surprise many to know that Maltese football has long had a strong connection to Australia. Stop raising those eye-brows! It's simply matter of history, despite Melbourne (arguably the home of Australia's large Maltese community) being some 9,721 miles (15,644 km) from Valletta.

As I mentioned in my article on Maltese football here, it is said that as many Maltese live outside of the country as in it. After World War II, many Maltese moved to the UK, Canada and the USA, but a great number moved Down Under to Australia, where they settled and formed a strong community. Much of this community was formed around football clubs which also acted as social clubs for the expanding number of expats and their Australian-born children.

Whilst Melbourne became the centre of the Maltese-Australian community, Sydney was also a popular choice for migrants and, today, one can see established Maltese community-based clubs such as Sydney's Parramatta FC and also Sunshine George Cross and Green Gully Cavaliers in Melbourne. The Clubs



Parramatta play at the aptly named Melita Stadium in the western Sydney suburb and also host the national Maltese Rugby League side. The club was formed in 1956 when two local Maltese clubs – Malta Eagles and Melita Soccer Club – merged to form what was known as Melita Eagles. The club was a mainstay in the New South Wales state leagues and even managed promotion to the fledgling National Soccer League (formed in 1977) in 1983. Following relegation in 1984, the club returned to the National Soccer League in 1989 and remained there until 1995 when they were relegated.

The club was also forced to change its name and identity by the old Soccer Australia administration, as ethnic names and badges were banished. The club has since been competing in the New South Wales state leagues and is now a member of the NSW Super League, the highest level in the state under the nationwide Hyundai A-League.

By contrast, the two Melbourne-based clubs have remained a focus for the Maltese community in their cities. Green Gully Cavaliers were actually formed in 1955 as Ajax Soccer Club by Maltese immigrants. They adopted the green and white stripes of their favoured Floriana club back in Malta and still play in green and white today, although no longer stripes. In 1966, the club was renamed Green Gully to mirror their new home suburb. Ajax was dropped from the name in 1982 and the club competed in the National Soccer League from 1984 to 1986 inclusive. The club has since been competing in the Victoria State League.



In addition to Green Gully, Melbourne also has Sunshine George Cross which is a sister club of Green Gully. The suburb of Sunshine is the hub of Australia's Maltese community and even lays claim to being home of the only Bank of Valletta branch in the Oceania region.

The club was formed in 1947 as George Cross Football Club by Maltese immigrants in the area. It was renamed Sunshine George Cross when it merged with Sunshine City in 1983 and competed in the National Soccer League from 1984 to 1991 inclusive. As of 1992, the club was relegated to the Victoria State League and suffered further relegation to Victoria State League Division One for the 2000 season. The club has since fluctuated between the Premier and First Divisions since then and currently sits in the latter. Despite this, the club is still well-supported and at the centre of Melbourne's Maltese community, producing many



players of Maltese descent. Such players to have represented the club include former Socceroo, Crystal Palace and Glasgow Rangers defender, Kevin Muscat, as well as Malta international, Manny Muscat, who grew up in Melbourne and played for both the Georgies and Green Gully.

#### The Players

Over the years, there have been many well-known Maltese-Australian players. Besides the aforementioned Kevin and Manny Muscat (not related), there has also been the likes of striker, Joe Spiteri. Capped by Australia, Spiteri spent a season with Parramatta Eagles in Sydney and also embarked on a career overseas with clubs such as Sturm Graz (Austria), Lierse (Belgium) and IFK Norrköping (Sweden) before returning to Australia.

Kevin Muscat, who I mentioned earlier in this article, is probably the most well-known Maltese-Australian footballer. The tough and uncompromising full-back carved out a very successful career for himself in England and Scotland and also won 46 caps for Australia. He began and ended his playing career with Sunshine George Cross and, besides Crystal Palace and Glasgow Rangers, he also represented Wolverhampton Wanderers (close to 200 appearances) and Millwall, before returning Down Under. He has, since 2013, been in charge of Hyundai A-League outfit, Melbourne Victory,



whom he guided to Premiership and Championship glory in only his second season in charge.

But what about players who have decided to represent the country of their parents and grandparents? Yup, there are a few players who have decided to pass on the Green and Gold and find honour in representing Malta through their family ties. One of the first to do so was Peter Pullicino (left). Born and raised in Sydney, Pullicino was a midfielder who actually played his club football in Australia with Eastern Suburbs, Sutherland Sharks and Fraser Park, before moving over to Malta in 2000 to sign for Hibernians. He spent 5 years with the club and, in his final season there, won his first call-up to the national side in the first of what would be 22 caps. His debut was against Germany, a 7-0 loss for the Maltese. Pullicino also turned out for Msida Saint-Joseph and Marsaxlokk in the Maltese Premier League.

Since retiring from playing, Pullicino has also been the Assistant Coach for both Marsaxlokk and Birkirkara. He currently coaches the Malta national Futsal side.

Current Malta Under-19's and St. Andrews coach, Wayne Attard, is another Australian-born and raised player who has moved to his ancestral homeland. The Melbourne native also had spells with Sunshine George Cross and Green Gully as a player before moving to Malta to play for Rabat Ajax, Hamrun Spartans, Sliema Wanderers, Mosta, Marsa and Birkirkara. Attard is now in his second spell as coach of Premier League side, St. Andrews, and combines his role with the national Under-19's management. For those interested, you can even find a video of some of Wayne Attard's goals in Malta on YouTube. Click [here](#).



#### The Current Breed

So what of today's crop of players that mix the heritage of Malta and Australia? Well, 24-year-old full-back, Jacob Borg (left), arrived in Malta in August 2012. Of Maltese heritage but raised in Wollongong, Borg began his career with Gold Coast United's youth setup.

The moneyed club, owned by billionaire mining magnate, Clive Palmer, were among the glamour sides of the Hyundai A-League when they entered the competition in 2008. However, with poor

crowds and differences between Palmer and Football Federation Australia (FFA), the club ceased operations in 2012. Borg was therefore forced to look elsewhere to play his football and returned home to his native Illawarra region of New South Wales, where he joined up with Illawarra Premier Division side, Dapto Dandaloo United.

Still yearning to play at a higher level, and with opportunities in Australia limited, Borg decided to look to the country of his parents to progress. He took off for Malta and joined Balzan Youths, a club he was put in touch with by an agent in Sydney. He then spent the next season with the Premier League side, during which time he received his first call-up to the Maltese national squad courtesy of current coach, Pietro Ghedin. With dual Maltese-Australian citizenship and, having only been capped at Under-20 level by Australia, Borg jumped at the chance to represent his new homeland. He was duly capped on 14th August 2013 when coming on as a half-time substitute in Malta's 3-0 loss away to Azerbaijan.

After one season with Balzan Youths, Borg joined one of Malta's biggest clubs in Sliema Wanderers. He was later joined at the club by his brother, Daniel, who also arrived in Malta from Australia. However, after a season with Sliema, Jacob Borg moved on again. This time to Żebbuġ Rangers, but his first campaign with the club wasn't to be the stuff of dreams as they finished bottom of the Premier League and have begun their first season back in the First Division this campaign. A pre-season trial with English Conference South side, Gosport Borough, led to positive noises about a contract, but ultimately none was forthcoming. Borg is believed to still be with Żebbuġ at the current time.

30-year-old Emmanuel (Manny) Muscat is another player who grew from the humble surroundings of Melbourne's Maltese State League clubs, Sunshine George Cross and Green Gully, to go onto forge a career for himself in the red and white of Malta's national side.

Although Manny never played in Malta (to date), he has been a mainstay of the Wellington Phoenix defence. The Hyundai A-League club snapped up the full-back in 2008 and he has remained with them ever since.

Born in Melbourne's western suburbs, a hotbed of Australia's Maltese community (also the home to the only branch of Bank of Valletta in the Australasian continent), Manny's parents are Maltese. When the Phoenix were approached by the Maltese Football Association (MFA) in an attempt to find overseas-born Maltese players to strengthen the national side, Muscat says he had no hesitation in joining the cause. He was subsequently to make his debut in a 1-0 friendly defeat in the Czech Republic. He has so far gone on to win a further 7 caps for Malta but has not been involved with the squad since a 3-1 loss to Croatia at Ta'Qali on 2nd September 2011.

Curiously enough, Manny Muscat's debut in the Czech Republic in June 2009 saw him play alongside another Australian-born debutant in John Hutchinson. The Morwell-born central midfielder was drafted into the setup by the MFA by virtue of a Maltese grandmother. He had even been involved in a Socceroo training camp and played for Olyroos (Australia's Olympic side) but was eligible to declare for Malta.

A stalwart for the Hyundai A-League's Central Coast Mariners at the time, Hutchinson went on to win 11 caps in all. This would surely have been more but for logistical problems. Due to Australia's distance from Malta itself, travelling for Hutchinson and Muscat became a lengthy process. Also, because of the difference in continent, the A-League very often were not on an international break when Malta's qualifying games fell. It meant a stark choice between playing for their clubs or country a lot of the time. As a result, Hutchinson's last game in the red and white of Malta was a 2-0 home loss to Israel on the 11th October 2011. He has now since retired from playing and is currently the Assistant Coach with his beloved Central Coast Mariners back in Australia.

But the most recent Maltese-Australian arrival to Maltese shores is another Melbourne-born player. This time it's striker, Adrian Zahra (right), who had a very brief but successful spell in the Maltese capital with Valletta.

Signed at the beginning of the 2014/15 season, Zahra moved to Malta after his contract expired with the Hyundai A-League's Perth Glory. He had also previously turned out for Melbourne Heart and Victoria State League side, Melbourne Knights, before his arrival in Valletta. He managed 2 goals in 6 appearances for the Lillywhites but decided to head home to Melbourne after financial cutbacks were enforced on the Maltese club.





Upon his arrival back in Australia, Zahra stated that he had indeed enjoyed testing himself in the Maltese league but that Valletta's board had deemed cutbacks necessary when it became clear a Champions League place was no longer possible. Zahra is now back in his native Melbourne and playing once again for Port Melbourne in the Victoria State League. But aged just 25, the striker has high hopes of securing a move to a higher level in the future.

#### The Future

It remains to be seen whether Australian-born players will continue to make their way to Malta to play their football. The promise of a place in the Champions League or Europa League certainly acts as a pretty strong pull

for some players, but questions are often raised by some of those players when they arrive to find the BOV Premier League standard weaker than at home. Adrian Zahra was one such player who was not wholly convinced by the standard of play and facilities in the league.

One player who has made the trip currently is Richard Cardozo. The 29-year-old journeyman striker signed for Naxxar Lions this season after turning out for a number of clubs in Australia, New Zealand, Austria and Switzerland. He has represented Australia at Under-17 level but, being of Argentine and Uruguayan descent, is not eligible to represent Malta.

Which leads us onto the national side. Do the MFA see their experiment with capping Australia-born Maltese as a failure? Manny Muscat and John Hutchinson failed to make 20 appearances for Malta between them. Jacob Borg has won a sole cap. As mentioned, the logistics and costs certainly don't help. But with Malta's ageing squad and another qualifying campaign of finishing bottom of the group, as with the European Championship Qualifiers for 2016, a new injection of talent may be necessary. Much of this will depend on which direction the MFA take. Pietro Ghedin may decide his second spell ends here. He has certainly not used Maltese-born players aggressively. But the if the MFA decide to cast their nets Down Under again, they may just find a few players worth taking a chance on with Melita blood flowing their veins...



## The Maltese Falcon

### MACC's Online Newsletter

FROM MALTA TO MOTOWN - DETROIT USA

THERE WILL BE NO DINNER THIS WEEK.  
PLEASE JOIN US NEXT WEEK FOR PIZZA  
NIGHT

**2022 MEMBERSHIP** - Please be advised that there is a form that needs to be filled out regardless if you are renewing your membership, or a new member. We will no longer accept 2021 membership cards for member discounts.

#### Schedule:

Superbowl Party, February 13  
St Paul's Feast/Rabbit Dinner - February 19th  
General Membership - March 13th  
Drag Queen Bingo - March 26th  
Figolli Demonstration - April 3rd  
Sinatra Night - April 30th  
Memorial Day Parade - May 30th  
Annual Car Show - June 11th

FOR LARGE PARTIES PLEASE CALL THE CLUB  
AHEAD OF TIME

Contact the club for more details 313 846 7077

Contact the club for more details  
Phone: 313.846.7077

*This unique journal is not affiliated to any political party and is bilingual and multicultural. It is a non-profit venture and distributed free.*

*The first issue was published in May 2013. The editor is based in Adelaide, Australia and has correspondents in many parts of the world including Malta and Gozo.*

*The aim of the journal is to promote the language, history, culture and heritage of the Maltese Islands and to build bridges between Maltese individuals and communities of the Diaspora*

