

# MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER 411

February 2022

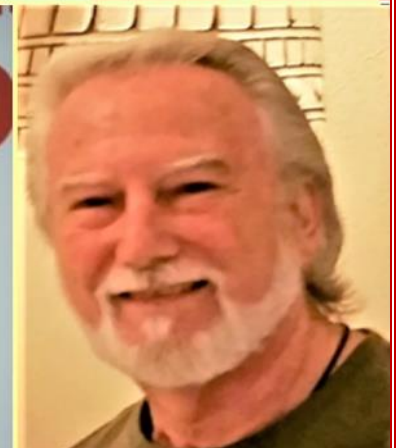


## MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal of Maltese Living Abroad

Editor: Frank L Scicluna OAM MQR

THE ONLY DIGITAL  
AND PRINTED  
JOURNAL FOR  
THE MALTESE  
DIASPORA



**JOE DEBATTISTA**  
The Maltese Gold Coast  
Drummer



**HARRY ZAMMIT CORDINA**  
The Maltese Journal and the Maltese living abroad  
lost a friend, a supporter and a true  
gentleman - May he rest in peace 07/02/2022



**Josephine and Harry Zammit Cordina**



Left:  
**Christine Gauci**  
Pianist  
Right:  
**Ritienne  
Azzopardi**  
Soprano



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THE MALTESE  
E-NEWSLETTER





## MOC chief wants 2023 Games to be a festival of sport as GSSE launched

SPORTSDESK.COM.MT

On his part, Mark Cutajar, the chief executive officer of SportMalta, said that his organisation is working in perfect synergy with the MOC and the Ministry of Education and Sport to ensure the Games will be a success.

“The Maltese Olympic Committee, SportMalta and the Ministry of Education and Sport are working in perfect synergy towards this event,” Cutajar, who is serving as the GSSE Organising Committee chairperson, said. “A local organising committee was chosen and besides sport specialists, there are experts in various fields that will ensure that the Games will be a success.

“In the coming months, we will engage with the general public so that the Games will not only will be for athletes and officials taking part but for the society at large.”

On his part, Clifton Grima, the Minister for Education and Sport, said that the government has forked out millions of euros to invest not only in the sports infrastructure but also on the technical preparation of the Maltese athletes to ensure Team Malta can get the best possible result.

“The government is really proud to support the Maltese Olympic Committee in these Games,” Dr Grima said.

“We invested both in infrastructure to increase the number of high-level venues, but for the first time we also invested in human resources.

We passed on €5 million to SportMalta to facilitate the training of athletes, engaging professional coaches and their sport entourage.

“In the build up to the Games and during the week-long festival I look forward to enter in discussions with our sports counterparts in the other eight small countries to strengthen our relationships and provide more opportunities.”

The Maltese Olympic Committee also announced that it will shortly be launching a Games Mascot and Logo Design competition. The competition calls for the design of a logo and mascot that will be used as part of the Games of the Small States of Europe branding.

The 2023 Games of the Small States of Europe were launched on Monday during a news conference at the Cottonera Sports Complex as the countdown for the biennial Games got started.

This is the third time that Malta is hosting the sports festival for small European countries.

The previous time the Games were on our islands were in 1993 – when the Malta contingent finished with a then record haul of 32 medals – four gold, seven silver and 21 bronze – and ten years later when Team Malta finished with a medal tally of 44 medals – 11 gold, 18 silver and 15 bronze.

Video: Matthew Mirabelli

The launch took place in a hybrid format and welcomed several Maltese medallists from the 1993 and 2003 editions such as tennis players Chris Gatt and Carol Asciak, sailors Jean Paul Fleri Soler, and Mario Aquilina, and judoka Jackie Xuereb. The 2023 Games of the Small States of Europe will take place between May 28 and June 3.

The sports programme that will be featured in the 2023 edition includes athletics, basketball, judo, rugby sevens, sailing, shooting, squash, swimming, table tennis and tennis.

Julian Pace Bonello, the president of the Maltese Olympic Committee, said that preparations for this sports bonanza are already under way.

“The Maltese Olympic Committee has been working even more closely with involved federations, ensuring the required support is given and that preparations proceed as smoothly as possible,” Pace Bonello said.

“We hope that these Games will make the country proud, in both the way they will be organised as well as the results achieved. We hope they also serve as a catalyst to inspire young athletes to keep working hard for their dreams.”





## **James Morris named new Malta Rugby 7s Development Coach**

gained his first Malta cap on April 28, 2012 against Croatia.

From there, Morris went on to win 20 international caps with the national team and was also a part of the successful 7s team which won the European 7s Conference 2 tournament in Hungary.

“Morris acquired a vast international experience,” the MRFU said.

“He played for the Joondalup Brothers in Perth, Australia. James also earned an illustrious semi-professional rugby contract with Amstelveense Rugby club in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, after impressing in the Amsterdam 7s.

“James remained at the club for one season, playing and coaching the senior backs, before coaching the youth and junior section, and the senior 7s side the following year.

“At this stage in his career James is focused on coaching and teaching. He is a World Rugby Level 2 coach, and he is also a Level 2 football coach. He has recently graduated from the University of the West of England, studying a PGCE in Secondary Physical Education.

“This investment in our coaching staff would not have been possible without the assistance of the Maltese Olympic Committee and Sports Malta. This serves our goals of further investment in our 7s Rugby Programme.”

The Malta Rugby Football Union announced that James Morris has been appointed as the new 7s Development and Skills Coach, the local governing body announced.

Morris will be specialising in the 7’s version of the game in preparation for the first ever competition at the 2023 Games of the Small States of Europe in 2023.

“The Malta Rugby Football Union is happy to announce that, following a rigorous selection process, Mr James Morris has been selected as the 7s Development and Skills Coach, under Technical Director Damian Neill,” the local governing body said in a statement.

“He will be specialising in the 7’s version of the game in preparation for the first ever 7’s rugby competition at the GSSE games in 2023.”

The MRFU said that Morris started off playing rugby in Cardiff, playing for Rhiwbina RFC junior section, through the years he captained St Davids College in the Welsh colleges league.

At representative level, Morris played for the prestigious Cardiff Blues U16 academy, and also represented Wales A U16s playing.

Morris, who obtained a BSc in Sports Coaching at Cardiff Metropolitan University,

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### PREHISTORIC ARTEFACTS ON MALTA STAMPS



### Prehistoric Philately on exhibition at Il-Hagar Museum in Victoria

BY GOZO NEWS · new exhibit -Prehistoric Philately – has been set up by the Gozo Philatelic Society in its showcase at Il-Hagar museum in Victoria, Gozo.

The exhibit shows a cross section of Malta stamps featuring Prehistoric Artefacts issued over the last century.

This initiative was designed to be in conjunction with a section of the wide exhibition created by Victor Agius around all levels of this cultural centre and which runs until the 8th of March with the support of the Malta Tourism Authority and the

Gozo Ministry's Cultural Directorate. The museum is located in St George's Square, Victoria. Visiting hours remain 9am – 5pm seven days a week, there is no entrance fee.

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### €150,000 for groups promoting science in the community



[www.tvmnews.com.mt](http://www.tvmnews.com.mt)

Voluntary groups with new ideas may now apply for Government funds to help realise their proposals and from paper plans become a reality. Under this scheme for scientific development a fund of €150,000 is open to NGOs to apply with particular reference to children and youths.

For the second successive year organisations including band clubs and parishes may apply for

this new community scheme that is allocated for €150,000. and administered by the Ministry for Innovation enabling a group to benefit up to .€10,000.

The Director for Strategy and Support Alistair Borg, said that through this scheme last year 17 NGOs had benefitted in the interest of science and arts, among others.

As an example of decorative lights and churches Borg said there will be musical recordings and will include bowling clubs and others.



**MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER**  
The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora



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Regarding the workings of the scheme, the Minister for Innovations, Owen Bonnici, said the scheme will help promote the work of students that are the new economic niches the country looks forward to and who will spread their work throughout the country..





On 18 May 1571 the Franciscan Friars Minor, at the time known as the Friars Minor of the Regular Observance, received a plot of land from Grand Master Pietro Del Monte close to Porta del Monte (today's Victoria Gate) in Valletta, on which they were to build their second church and friary after the church and friary of Santa Maria di Gesù in Rabat, where they settled in 1500 after lengthy preparations going back to 1482. All Mendicant Orders received plots of land in Valletta on which to build their respective conventual churches and friaries.

The Franciscans had presented their request to Grand Master Del Monte some time before 19 April 1571. On that same day the Grand Master accepted their request and published the decree by which he donated to them, free of charge like he did to all other religious, a plot of land in the area between Via Del Monte (St John Street), Via San Pietro (St Ursola Street) and Via Santa Maria della Vittoria (St Lucia Street).

## 450 years since the story of Ta' Giezu church in Valletta began

Noel Muscat OFM

The contract was drawn on 18 May 1571 in front of notary Placido Abela. Present at the drawing up of the contract were, on the part of the Commissaries entrusted by the Grand Master and Council, the knights Fra' Raimondo Fortuyn and Fra' Giorgio Cacherano, and the Maltese engineer and architect Girolamo Cassar, who was to be the architect of the new church. On the part of the Franciscan religious community, who came from Rabat, the contract mentions Fra' Nicola di Calabria as vicar of the Sicilian Provincial, Fra' Baptista di Malta, Fra' Michele di Malta, Fra' Domenico di Malta, Fra' Benedetto di Malta, Fra' Antonio di Tapani and Fra' Salvo di Malta (Archives Franciscan Friars, Valletta, *Atti Originali*, VII, docs. 3 and 4).

Although the contract was finalised on 18 May 1571 the actual official laying of the foundation stone took place four years later, on 21 September 1575, even though the building must have already been progressing. That is why the year 1575 is normally indicated as the year of the building of Ta' Ġiezu Church. The title given by the common people to the church and friary, namely Ta' Ġiezu, already existed in the case of the older Rabat church and friary, dedicated to Santa Maria di Gesù (abbreviated to *di Giesu* in Sicilian), a title common to many of the churches of the Franciscan Observants in Sicily.

This initial date in the long history of this popular church, known especially for the Crucifix by Fra' Innocenzo da Petralia Sottana and for the devotion to the Addolorata (*Duluri*), is commemorated within the context of the plans for restoration on the church and the friary, which are one of the architectural gems of Valletta.

*This historical information is taken from the late P. Ġorġ Aquilina OFM, 'Il-Frangiskani Maltin (Ta' Ġiezu) 1482c-1965c', Malta 2011, pp. 307-311).as requested by Edwin Schembri*



## **Birżebbuġa's Bat Cave might soon reopen to the public**

J

bats, small organisms live in the cave, which is why it was decided not to leave them open to the public.

These organisms are important because they are only found in these caves. Some of them may only be in this cave. Access is therefore controlled so that the ERA can monitor the human impact on these populations

Stephen Saliba – ERA official

The cave is enclosed by a gate between two residences. As you descend you will notice the natural beauty of the cave that was formed thousands of years ago, as well as interventions made in recent years to keep the cave from collapsing due to nearby development

The Mayor of Birżebbuġa, Scott Camilleri, said that the Council would continue to strive to protect the history of the locality.

Let us continue to emphasize the importance of this cave, inter alia, by paying attention to the development that takes place in the vicinity. The Council has already submitted its submissions on various applications to the Planning Authority, on behalf of Triq Burlemak, Triq Għar Dalam and Triq Herakles. We will continue to demand that development be kept to a minimum which will cause the least inconvenience to the geological aspect of this cave.

Scott Camilleri – Mayor of Birżebbuġa

12 years ago, the Planning Authority declared Għar il-Friefet (Bat Cave) a site of archaeological and scientific importance.

In recent days, the Building and Construction Authority has stopped work on building a number of residences near the cave. A spokesman for the Authority said the works had been stopped because they had started without following procedures as set out by the Building and Construction Authority

Bats in Malta have declined drastically, so much so that they have become a rarity today. In Birżebbuġa there are caves that derive their name from bats because there were colonies of them, but they have also disappeared. As part of an effort to preserve the cave in its natural state, the Authorities had closed the cave due to very small creatures that are difficult to see and could only live here in Malta.

Birżebbuġa Local Council opened the cave for a TVMnews crew, and would like the site to be refurbished in the future and eventually open to the public. The Council is also keeping an eye on nearby developments to prevent damage to the cave.

There are many natural caves in Birżebbuġa. Among the least known is Għar il-Friefet, which is hidden in the heart of a number of dwellings in front of Għar Dalam. The cave got its name from the large number of bats, which have not been seen there for a long time, as the former Mayor of Birżebbuġa, Joseph Farrugia, told us.

***There was a huge quantity of bats hanging here, bundles and bundles. And we would coax them and hit them with a rod. Today they have all disappeared due to the environment, the noise. The road, before would see carts, today the traffic and the lights have seen a decline in bats, and you barely see any in Birżebbuġa.***

Joseph Farrugia – Former mayor of Birżebbuġa

Stephen Saliba, an official of the Environment and Resources Authority, said that this does not mean that bats will not re-establish themselves in the cave and therefore the Authority must preserve the place. He added that in addition to





"We then learned that the island was called Malta." (Acts 28:1)  
10 February is the feast of the Shipwreck of St. Paul,  
the day Malta became Christian.

## **SAN PAWL IMFAKKAR F'MARSALFORN**

Matul dan ix-xahar aħna niċcelebraw ġrajja importanti fl-istorja ta' pajjiżna meta fuq ix-xtut ta' Malta, waqt tempesta qalila, wasal fostna l-Appostlu San Pawl. Żgur li kienet il-providenza ta' Alla li ppermettiet li dan kollu jiġri. Waqt li Pawlu kien hawnhekk, huwa thallat magħna l-Maltin hekk li bil-predikazzjoni tiegħu imma wisq iktar bl-imġiba tiegħu, wassal messaġġ qawwi ta' x'jiġifieri tkun nisrani! Hekk daħlet il-Fidi f'Malta tagħna, u din

twaħħdet mal-poplu tagħna matul iż-żmien sal-ġurnata tallum.

Fl-okkażjoni tal-elf, disa' mija u tnejn u sittin sena miż-żjara ta' San Pawl Appostlu f'Malta, il-Fondazzjoni Papa Gwanni Pawlu t-tieni f'kollaborazzjoni mal-Kunsill Lokali taż-Żebbuġ u l-Kommunita' ta' Marsalforn tellgħu Serata ta' Mużika u Poeżija bis-sehem tas-sopran brava Maltija Ritienne Azzopardi akkumpanjata mill-pjanista brava

Christine Gauci. Is-serata kienet possibbli għall-għajnuna li ta l-Kunsill Lokali taż-Żebbuġ kif ukoll għall-koperazzjoni tar-Rettur tal-Knisja ta' San Pawl f'Marsalforn. Is-serata, li kienet ipprezentata mill-Kav. Joe M Attard fethet bil-vuċi tas-Sopran mistiedna li interpretat 'The Power of love' u 'Hallelujah' ta' Cohen. Matul is-serata inqraw ħames poeżiji dwar in-Nawfragju ta' San Pawl li l-poeta Nazzjonali Dun Karm Psaila kiteb matul is-snin l-1915 u l-1945; minn dawn kien kiteb mal-għoxrin waħda u l-qarrejja kienu Sandro Grech, il-Kan Dun Mikiel Borg, Cettina Gatt, Francesco Debono, Darren Saliba, Joe Zammit u M' Louise Attard. Kif għidna l-kunċert kien imżewwaq mis-Sopran Ritienne Azzopardi akkumpanjata fuq il-pjanu minn Christine Gauci li interpretaw bejniethom 'Amazing Grace', 'Panis Angelicus', 'Malta', 'Memory', 'Nella Fantasia'. A Time for Us', You Raise me Up', Ave Verum', 'Somewhere over the Rainbow', 'Pie Jesu', 'Ave Maria' u l-Innu Malti li għab fi tmiem din is-serata f'għieħ il-festa Nazzjonali tan-Nawfragju ta' San Pawl fl-10 ta' Frar li seħħet fis-60 W.K.

**Kav Joe M Attard**

**MALTESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWS 🍁 Melita S.C. Event**



**Come and watch the Superbowl**

**With your friends at the  
Melita Soccer Club**

**Sunday February 13**



**Melita Soccer Club is a Maltese Canadian Culture Club  
located at 3336 Dundas Street West  
(just east of Runnymede Road) in Toronto, Ontario. 416 763 5317.**

### Ta' Pinu protagonists anniversaries



[Times of Malta](#) | 02 min read

The bronze statues of Karmni Grima and Frangisk Portelli at Ta' Pinu sanctuary parvis. Photos: Charles Spiteri

Ta' Pinu national shrine will be marking two anniversaries this week – the birth of Karmni Grima and the death of Frangisk Portelli.

Both personalities were instrumental in spreading the devotion of Our Lady Ta' Pinu. The two protagonists will be commemorated with Mass at Ta' Pinu sanctuary, at 6.30pm, on both occasions.

Karmni Grima, born on February 2, 1838, was a peasant spinster whose mystical religious experience led her to be an apostle of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu. Up to the year 1883, it was only a handful of devotees living in the neighbourhood of Ta' Ghammar who paid homage to the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Ta' Pinu. In mid-morning of June 22, 1883, Grima was returning home

from the fields in the proximity of Ta' Pinu chapel. All of a sudden, as she approached the footpath which forked from the lane to the chapel, she heard a voice coming apparently from within: 'Come! Come!'

As Grima paused in awe, the voice proceeded: 'Come today, for you will not be able to come back for a whole year'. That call is at the root of today's sanctuary.

February 4 is the 96th anniversary of the passing away of the Portelli.

It was to Portelli, some three years later, that Grima confided the secret of her mysterious call.

At that time his mother, Vincenza, was very ill. Karmni and Frangisk beseeched the Blessed Virgin Mary of Ta' Pinu to restore her health. In no mean time, Vincenza's extraordinary recovery became known far and wide.

Portelli passed away on February 4, 1926. Since then, hordes of pilgrims flocked to Ta' Pinu shrine seeking the Blessed Virgin's heavenly help.

To remember these two great protagonists, life-size bronze statues of Karmni Grima and Frangisk Portelli were set up at the sanctuary's parvis.

### **COVID-19 - DINNER IN SYDNEY**

Is this what to expect in future?

We walked into a restaurant last night to have dinner...

"Hello, table for two, please." "Of course, and your name?" "Rod"

"Great - and do you and your partner have your vaccination cards or can you show me your Digital AusGov VaXCertificates"

"Yes, We do...However, Can you tell us who our waiter will be tonight?

"It looks like Brad will be your waiter."

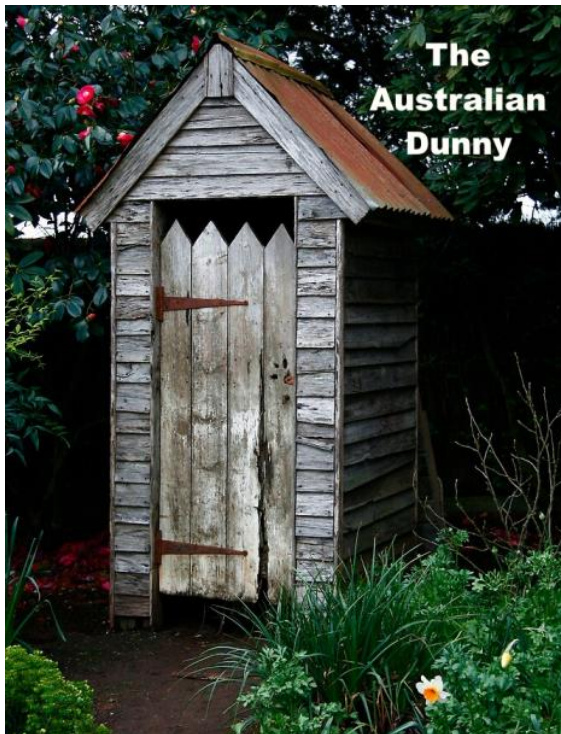
"Great, so can you show me Brad's vaccination card?"

"Um..."And can you also provide me with proof that Brad is not a carrier of HIV Hepatitis A or B, or any other communicable disease?"

"Also, we would prefer not to be served by someone who is on, or uses, recreational drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, meth, fentanyl, etc., so if you could provide us with Brad's most recent 'tox screen,' that would be great."

"Um, let me get the manager for you"





## ***THE AUSTRALIAN DUNNY***

They were funny looking buildings, that were once a way of life,  
If you couldn't sprint the distance, then you really were in strife.  
They were nailed, they were wired, but were mostly falling down,  
There was one in every yard, in every house, in every town.

They were given many names, some were even funny,  
But to most of us, we knew them as the outhouse or the dunny.  
I've seen some of them all gussied up, with painted doors and all,  
But it really made no difference, they were just a port of call.

Now my old man would take a bet, he'd lay an even pound,  
That you wouldn't make the dunny with them turkeys hangin' round.  
They had so many uses, these buildings out the back,"  
You could even hide from mother, so you wouldn't get the strap.

That's why we had good cricketers, never mind the bumps,  
We used the pathway for the wicket and the dunny door for stumps.  
Now my old man would sit for hours, the smell would rot your socks,  
He read the daily back to front in that good old thunderbox.

And if by chance that nature called sometime through the night,  
You always sent the dog in first, for there was no flamin' light.  
And the dunny seemed to be the place where crawlies liked to hide,  
But never ever showed themselves until you sat inside.

There was no such thing as Sorbent, no tissues there at all,  
Just squares of well-read newspaper, a hangin' on the wall.  
If you had some friendly neighbours, as neighbours sometimes are,  
You could sit and chat to them, if you left the door ajar..

When suddenly you got the urge, and down the track you fled,  
Then of course the magpies were there to peck you on your head.  
Then the time there was a wet, the rain it never stopped,  
If you had an urgent call, you ran between the drops.

The dunny man came once a week, to these buildings out the back,  
And he would leave an extra can, if you left for him a zac.  
For those of you who've no idea what I mean by a zac,  
Then you're too young to have ever had, a dunny out the back.





**The Old Time Rock 'n' Roll Band**

Martin (lead guitar & vocals)

Joe (drums & vocals)

Tony (keyboards & vocals)

Dave (bass guitar & vocals)

## JOE DEBATTISTA THE MALTESE GOLD COAST DRUMMER

I can vaguely remember that it was a cold day in February 1953 when, in company with my dear parents and two brothers, we boarded a passenger ship in my birth country of Malta – bound for Sydney Australia. I was just 6 years old.

My life in Sydney was as much “normal” as any youngster would expect. I started my early education under the guidance of the Scalabrini Sisters at St Francis Prep School, Surry Hills and later progressed to the Marist Brothers Primary School, again in Surry Hills. I was fortunate enough to be taught by the austere methods at the Marist Brothers Secondary College in Darlinghurst and obtained what was then called *The Leaving Certificate*. I had a reasonable head for numbers, so I signed up for a four-year course of Accountancy at Sydney Technical

College, Harris Street, Ultimo. I was 16 of age.

However, for some 2 or 3 years prior, I had developed an ear for the music of that time, At every opportunity I would find myself humming songs in my head and constantly tapping my fingers on tables, plates and whatever other objects were within reach – much to the annoyance to my parents and whoever else was around. This shortly developed into an obsession with my wanting to express a strong feeling of rhythm in the field of music – to become a drummer !

Much to my Mum's reluctance, I managed to convince my Dad to buy me a secondhand drum kit and almost immediately I started taking music lessons at a famous musicians' outlet called Palings in George Street, Sydney. That was the beginning of my secondary career in the field of music. I say “secondary” because my primary occupation was in administration as a banker, serving my years at the *Rural Bank of NSW* and the French Banking Organisation *Societe Generale*, both in the CBD of Sydney.



**Joe DeBattista**

I soon became competent enough to play professionally and joined a dance band playing a mix of some jazz, rock and Latin. These guys were a lot older than me and some were actually of Maltese nationality. I was now 18 years of age and was playing at the Paddington Town Hall for a “Maltese Ball” when a young, beautiful girl approached me to chat during a break. It was love at first sight and by age 20, I married my Sonia. To cut a long story short, we have today been married for 55 years, we have 2 children – 4 grandchildren – and 2 great-grandchildren !! During this time, Sonia and I decided to move our family to the Sunshine State of Queensland and set-up home on the Gold Coast in 1998.

Although for family reasons I broke away from the music scene for some 18 years (partly in the 70s, 80s & 90s), my urge to play music never faded. So, in 2011, after a visit to Billy Hyde's Music Shop in Southport, I bought a *Premier* drum kit and decided to get back into it again. Initially I searched for a group that would suit my likings – but not as a band to which I could establish permanency. I decided to try my hand at country rock with a group called *The Don Allen Band*... a very polished and skilled group. But after about 6 months, two members decided to join a cruise ship and the band fell apart.

About 7½ years ago, I was invited to join a rock and roll band whose drummer had left. I discovered that the limited repertoire of that group at that time was basically early rock and I immediately fitted in. This was my niche!! I immediately upgraded my kit to a 5-piece Mapex setup. I can say without



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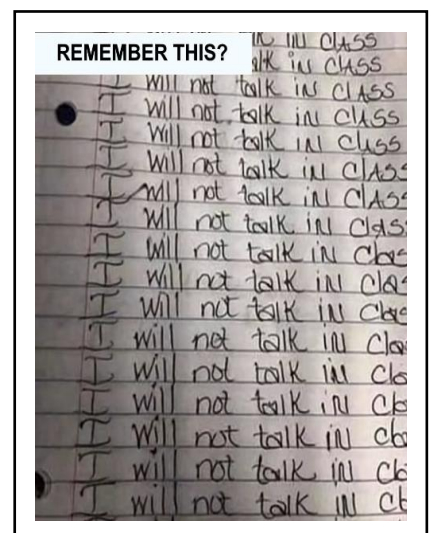
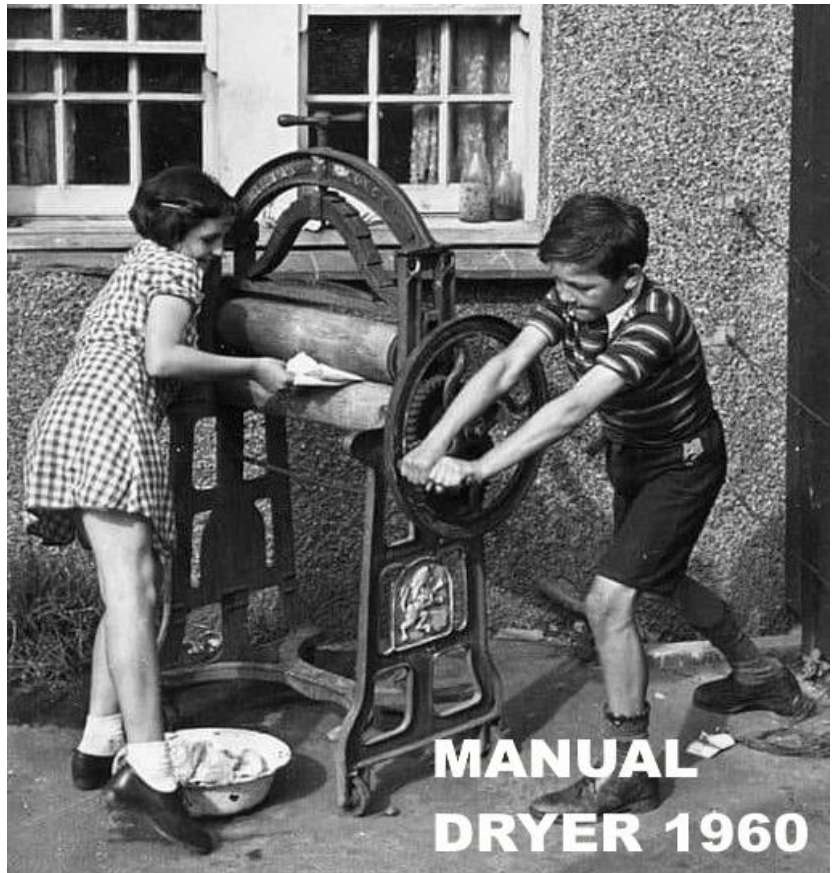
hesitation that since then, we have progressed to a repertoire of over 100 songs, we are extremely well organised and perform our Classic Hits of the 50s, 60s and 70s in primarily "Over-50s" resorts from the southern end of the Gold Coast to The Sunshine Coast. We are professionally known by the name of **"The Old Time Rock 'n' Roll Band"**. We are four seasoned male musicians, who have been in the industry for the greater part of their lives and comprising Martin (*lead guitar & vocals*) – Joe (*yours truly, drums & vocals*) – Tony (*keyboards & vocals*) – Dave (*bass guitar & vocals*).

The successful approach to our music is accomplished by precision, passion and love of music. Our popularity at Residential Resorts is amazing and we continue to receive return bookings – some 12 months in advance.

So, now I enjoy our gigs, I appreciate the company of my fellow rockers and I love my life and family.



During the 60s and 70s George Farrugia was a popular comedian in Malta as he perfectly resembled British comedian Charlie Chaplin.



### Grand Concert 2022

Kav Joe M Attard Victoria Gozo



Bħala għeluq tal-festa ta' San Gwann Bosco fil-Belt Victoria, nhar il-Ħadd 30 ta' Jannar 2022 fil-għaxija, il-'Gozo Youth Wind Band' taħt id-direzzjoni ta' Mro Dr Joseph Grech ippreżentat id-'Don Bosco Grand Concert 2022' fuq il-palk tal-Oratorju Don Bosco li kien ippreżentat mill-Kav Joe M Attard. Kif jaf kulhadd, din is-sena kienet sena partikulari minħabba l-pandemija, iżda 'The Gozo Youth Wind Band & Orchestra' rnexxielha xorta ttella' erba' kunċerti, jiġifieri 'The Christmas Festive Concert' u d-'Don Bosco Grand Concert' f'Jannar 2021, 'Opera vs Pop under the Stars' f'Awwissu 2021, u 'Stage and Proms on the Sea' f'Settembru 2021. Kien hemm aktar attivitajiet preparati imma minħabba r-restrizzjonijiet kellhom jiġu mħassra. Din is-sena qed nittamaw li tkun sena ferm aħjar, qalilna s-Surmast Direttur tal-Orkestra, aktar u aktar meta din l-Orkestra qed tiċċelebra l-20 anniversarju mit-twaqqif tagħha. Hemm numru ta' inizjattivi oħra mfassla għal din is-sena fosthom li jiġu stabilti 'The Gozo Junior Orchestra' u 'The Gozo Junior Wind Band' għal mużiċisti żgħar li 'l quddiem isibu posthom fil-'Gozo Youth Wind Band & Orchestra'. Il-pubbliku huwa mhegġeġ sabiex iħajjar lil uliedu li għadhom f'livell inizjali ta' tagħlim mużikali sabiex jingħaqdu ma' dawn iż-żewġ gruppi kif diġa qed jagħmlu numru sabiħ ta' tfal oħra.

Intant il-programm ta' fuq il-palk fetaħ bl-Overture 'The Thievish Magpie' (La Gazza Ladra) ta' Gioacchino Rossini u wara, l-orkestra għaddiet biex iddoqq medley 'Film Festival' fuq arrangament ta' Hans Kolditz. Eżatt wara l-pubbliku numeruż li attenda seta' jgawdi l-Main Theme 'Hymn to the Fallen' meħuda mid-'Dream Works Motion Picture' – Saving Private Ryan tal-kompożitur John Williams, arrangament ta' Paul Lavender. Wara smajna s-selection 'Bel Canto' fuq arrangament ta' Norbert Studnitzky

segwita mill-medley 'Benny Goodman – The King of Swing' fuq arrangament ta' Paul Murtha. L-Orkestra mbagħad esegwiet is-selection 'Queen – A Tribute to Freddie Mercury' fuq arrangament mill-ġdid ta' Norbert Studnitzky u dritt wara medley mill-Musical 'Ms Saigon' ta' Claude-Michel Shoneberg. Qabel daqqet l-Innu 'Ulited Għawdex', tislma lil San Gwann Bosco, il-'Gozo Youth Wind Band' daqqet il-Movie Selection, 'Indiana Jones'. Bla dubju dan il-kunċert ma kienx ikun possibbli mingħajr l-għajnuna siewja tad-Direttorat tal-Wirt Kulturali fi hdan il-Ministeru għal Għawdex kif ukoll mingħajr l-appoġġ sħiħ tal-Kunsill Malti għall-Arti permezz tal-Programme Support Fund. Bla dubju apparti dan il-kunċert f'ġieħ il-Qaddis taż-Żgħażaġħ San Giovanni Bosco, il-'Gozo Youth Wind Band & Orchestra' qed thejji biex matul is-sena tagħti lill-pubbliku għadd sabiħ ta' kunċerti fosthom l-14-il edizzjoni tal-ispettaklu 'Opera vs Pop Under the Stars' fl-1 ta' Awwissu, is-7 edizzjoni tal-ispettaklu 'Stage and Proms on the Sea' fit-12 ta' Settembru, 'A Night with Andrew Lloyd Weber' fit-Tejatr Aurora fit-28 ta' Ottubru, 'From the Beatles to U2', l-ispettaklu 'Classic Rock of the 60's and 70's' fit-tijatr Aurora wkoll, kif ukoll 'Christmas Rocks the Astra' fit-tejatr Astra Victoria.



## **A Blast from the Past**



### **Prof Stephen Gatt – NSW**

Recently, I was sent, by GozoTV, a couple of segments, recorded at my home, St. Dominic's Home for the Elderly, 'my'

hospitals (Prince of Wales, Royal Hospital for Women, Sydney Children's) in Sydney, Australia in 2013, mostly about the status of the Maltese in Sydney. They were aired on MTV on the programme 'Malta u Lil Hinn Minnha'.

This was at the time of the resurgence of CMLA and FOMA in the minds of Maltese in Malta and especially when the current President of Malta, HE Dr. George Vella, was Minister for Foreign Affairs. The previous decade was a period of great benefit to Maltese overseas, since unsurpassed - dual citizenship for our successors in perpetuity, EU passports for Maltese-Australians and their progeny, citizenship for the Maltin tal-Egittu, renewal of the Health and Social Security Dual Agreements, stabilisation of the Pensions arrangements, formal recognition by Govt depts of the diaspora contributions in the arts, sport and business, vote in the European Parliament for dual MA citizens and increased involvement by Enterprise Malta, Social Security and Identity Malta in our welfare. These were times of upheaval as well.

The Malta Banks - BoV and HSBC - were withdrawing services from Australia, religious orders were reducing services with a view to disappearing from Australia altogether and our 'old' leaders were ageing and, sadly, dying off. Reverse migration had stopped and a new breed of professional and technical migrant was arriving from Malta. The 'clubs' were contracting and social media was the way of the 'new Maltese'. Visits to Malta, especially in the off-season, by ex-pats and 2nd and 3rd generation MAs were at an unprecedented high and were becoming a sizeable proportion of 'tourists'; Tourism Malta was showing great interest.

The two segments I contributed to almost 10 years ago are still worth watching because the time has come to review our situation as we emerge from COVID and we re-establish our Malta links. We need Malta to produce a couple of similar Sydney-specific segments with our current leaders in control of our needs and the outlook for Maltese Australians.

The Three 'M's... your thoughts? The CCs (especially those who are non-Maltese-speaking)... hold fire for the time being...

I reckon that it is time to get our act together once gain.... and to get behind the CMLA (Council for Maltese Living Abroad) to try to reengage Malta. Much has already been achieved but all has been quiescent, because of COVID travel and social restrictions for almost two years. Travel, trade and commerce are at a standstill... but everyone is ready to 'fly'. Plenty of plans, dreams and projects are in the pipeline and there is much enthusiastic expectancy. Time for a fresh start....

**IF YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL AND WANT IT TO  
BE PRESERVED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS  
SEND IT TO US [maltesejournal@gmail.com](mailto:maltesejournal@gmail.com)**

### **Underwater Wonders: *Um el Faroud* wreck** **27 years ago - Malta Drydocks' worst tragedy**

*Malta's most famous wreck dive is also a memorial to nine men who lost their lives while carrying out repair work on the vessel.*



*Adriana Bishop*

It was a tragedy that shook the island to the core, and is still remembered to this day. At 10:15pm on 3rd February 1995, a gas explosion ripped through the Libyan tanker *Um el Faroud*, killing nine shipyard workers. At the time, the tanker was undergoing maintenance work in Dock No.3 at the Malta Drydocks in Grand Harbour.

The explosion caused extensive structural

damage and the vessel was considered a total write-off. But for the next three years, *Um el Faroud* remained stuck at Dock No. 3 until an inquest was carried out and a decision was taken to give the vessel a new lease of life as an artificial reef.

In September 1998, hundreds of people lined the coast off Wied iz-Zurrieq outside the village of Qrendi on Malta's southwestern shore to bid the *Um el Faroud* an emotional farewell as it was towed out to sea. It took four hours for the vessel to sink as the crowds, including relatives of the deceased, watched, many with tears in their eyes.

Within eight months of being scuttled, *Um el Faroud* was already teeming with flora and fauna. Today,



it is considered one of the best and certainly the most popular wreck dives of the Maltese Islands. It is now home to countless fish species including shoals of squid, tuna, jacks and barracuda, while the deck is swarming with thousands of bogues and a variety of sponges cover the wreck.

Originally built in England in 1969 and operating for 26 years between Italy and Libya carrying refined fuel, today *Um el Faroud* sits upright on a sandy bed in two parts, after a bad storm during the winter of 2006 broke the vessel in two. The wreck is just 200m from shore and can be reached after a gentle 10-minute swim across the reefs. It lies at depths of between 18m and 36m.

Experienced wreck divers can explore inside the vessel through several passages with relatively easy exits. Look out for the brass plaque commemorating the men who lost their lives on the vessel: George Aquilina, 24, from Qormi; Charles Callus, 46, from Valletta, Mario Hales, 39, from Mqabba, Simon Pisani, 22, from Msida, Angelo Sciberras, 51, from Zabbar, Anthony Vassallo, 29, from Dingli, Paul Seguna, 37, from Zebbug and George Xuereb, 58, from Qormi.





### **The Lapa del Ditirammu rubbers on the roads of Malta: twinning with Palermo**

A large group of Palermitans made up of artists, entrepreneurs,

journalists and associations, led by the municipal councillor Giulio Cusumano, made a stop in the two Maltese islands bringing a breath of Sicilianity

Music, colors, traditions, folklore and Sicilian culture land in Malta. By virtue of the twinning between Palermo, the Italian capital of culture and Malta, the European capital of culture in 2018, a large group of Palermo people made up of artists, entrepreneurs, journalists and associations, led by the municipal councillor Giulio Cusumano and the president of Federteatri Francesco Giacalone, from 13 to 16 April, made a stop in Malta and Gozo bringing a breath of Sicilianity to the two islands. With their "Lapa", arrived by sea at the port of Gozo, also the boys of the Ditirammu theatre with Elisa Parrinello. With songs and dances of popular tradition, the young people of Ditirammu have enchanted and conquered the Maltese.

The girls with wide colored skirts and long loose hair and the boys with vests and caps on their heads, inside a theater mounted in the square, complete with a curtain, sang the Sicilian music and involved the spectators. Italians, Maltese and tourists from all over the world have thus joined in a big embrace dancing and having fun together. The show was also attended by the singer-songwriter, writer and poet Sara Favarò. Moments full of emotions that brought cultures from all over the world closer together.

"Dad's dream was to take our boys around the world and therefore our music and our traditions – explained Elisa Parrinello remembering her late father -. It is a dream to see Lapa here in Malta and to be able to continue the dream of Grandfather Vito". Salvo D'Agati and Gianni Corroero, respectively president and vice-president of the Club Amici Italia-Malta, Antonella Messina, regional president of Fita (Italian Federation of Amateur Theatre), and associations operating in the Palermo area such as "Tutti insieme" chaired by Rossella Valenza, also arrived in Malta.

The twinning between Malta and Palermo was born from an idea of the councilor Giulio Cusumano together with Vanessa Frazier ambassador of the Republic of Malta in Italy. "Proud to have brought our culture to Malta – say Cusumano and Giacalone – this is just the beginning. We are laying the foundations for a fruitful and synergistic collaboration". The Palermo delegation was also received by the parliamentary secretary for consumer protection of Valletta, Deo Debbatista who will visit the city of Palermo next month. At the premiere of the show that was held instead on the island of Gozo to welcome there was the minister Justyne Caruana who, applauded the Sicilian artists, then took them around the island showing them the architectural and cultural beauties of Gozo such as the Citadel and the Multimedia Museum created with European structural funds, because since 2004 Malta and Gozo are also part of the European Union.

"Every corner of Gozo is history – said Minister of Gozo – we are working on tourism promotion campaigns to make our island known. We have carried out a massive maintenance of the infrastructure to improve transport and we are working on the reorganization of the port. We are open to collaborations with other countries to make our beauties known". A good road network connects the capital Valletta with the main centers of the island, regular air and sea services ensure communications with Italy and other European countries and the Maltese economy is well integrated with that of other states. History, art, traditions and much more in Malta and not only casinos, discos and trendy wine bars. An island for young people and for everyone. Maltese and Sicilians, proud of their history and culture, discover that they have much in common as the deep traces left on the islands by the Arab-Norman domination.

Proof of this is the Maltese language where words of English, Italian and French origin are found, as well as Arabic. As well as the Australian trees and vegetative forms present at Villa Bologna, garden of the residence of the President of the Maltese Republic, in the village Oġta. Every single detail tells a story, like the villages Balzan and Lia and Mdina, the ancient capital of Malta, also known as the "Old Town" or the "Silent City" that welcomes the approximately 300 blue-blooded aristocrats left in Malta. That of the enhancement of its artistic heritage is the objective that has pushed Malta, an independent state since 1974, today a parliamentary republic, to tighten the twinning with Palermo. And also the Sicilian capital is carrying out cultural exchanges, such as the one with Malta, to try to promote tourism, develop the economy and honor the traditions of the city, eternal and timeless.



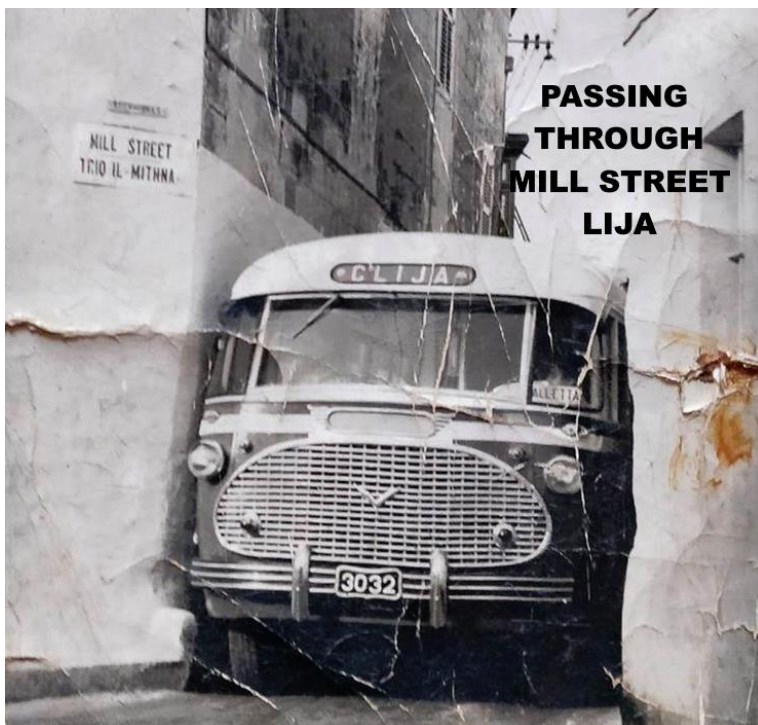
### **Saviour Mangion Maltese Serial Killer**

Saviour Mangion is considered to be the only Maltese serial killer. He was first charged with killing Maria Stella Magrin,

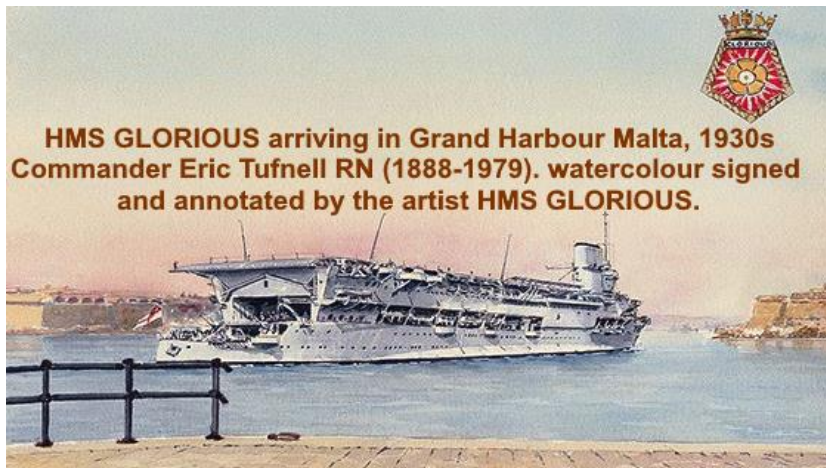
68, from Cospicua in 1986 whom he stabbed 13 times. He was also convicted of two other murders; the one of Rożina Żammit, 54 of Safi who was stabbed 37 times in 1984, and that of Francesco Saverio Cassar, 75 of Żejtun.

Mangion originally intended to kill Saverio Cassar's sister, but when Cassar went to the rescue he was killed by Mangion, leaving the sister unharmed. The murder of Maria Stella remained unsolved for 20 years until Mangion started boasting about committing a murder he was never caught for.

The apparent motive behind these senseless killings was money, as Mangion reportedly broke into his victims' homes to rob them.







HMS GLORIOUS arriving in Grand Harbour Malta, 1930s  
Commander Eric Tufnell RN (1888-1979). watercolour signed  
and annotated by the artist HMS GLORIOUS.



Cyril Butters was 33  
from Żabbar.



Carmelo Zahra, 29,  
assistant officers cook.



Giovanni Brincat  
20 years old



Francis Polidano, 20,  
from Floriana.



Giuseppe Zahra 27  
with his wife Polly,  
daughter Mary and baby.

On the afternoon of June 8, 1940, the German battleships Sharnhorst and Gneisenau sighted HMS Glorious, and after a two-hour battle, the aircraft carrier, along with its escorts HMS Ardent and HMS Acasta, were sunk, 1531 lives lost

*You lie buried in the stillness and the darkness of the deep*

*That has snatched you...*

*And here I alone in my sorrow,*

*Satisfied only because I know*

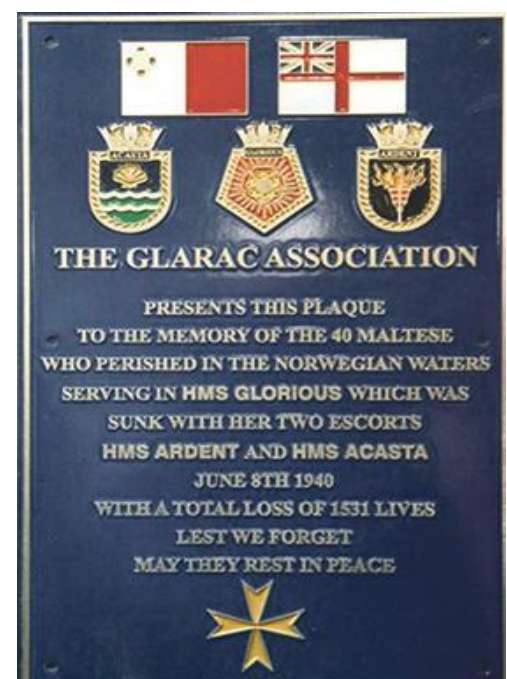
*That you are in your element!*

Every year, relatives of the Maltese seamen who died on board HMS Glorious as well as other Glarac members from the UK, attend a memorial service at the Maritime Museum, Vittoriosa

## The sinking of HMS Glorious and the Maltese men who lost their lives while serving on it

When his father died in 1939, Francis Polidano, 20, joined the Royal Navy, only to perish a year later, together with 50 other Maltese serving on the aircraft carrier HMS Glorious. This poem is recited at the association's annual service by Edward's daughter Cyra and one can feel the emotions in her voice as she expresses her father's love for his father.

*How are you, my father?  
Flowers and portraits I cannot  
place for you  
Although I want to do so,  
But still you have my love  
That has continued to deepen.  
How are you my father?*





### olives and oils in Malta

Olive trees have been present in Malta for millennia. Carbonised remains of *Olea Europaea* L. - the olive - were discovered during excavations at Skorba Temples (4500–4100 BC). Perhaps even more impressive, in Bidnija, carbon dating revealed 2,000-year-old 'Bidni' olive trees that are still bearing fruit suitable both for consumption and the making of oil.

The olive tree (*Olea europaea* L.) is indeed one of the oldest species of domesticated trees. It is the second most important oil fruit crop cultivated worldwide, with 97 per cent of cultivation concentrated in the Mediterranean basin. The wild olive (*Oleaster*) and the cultivated olive (*Sativa*) subspecies each have several cultivars based on taste, size, disease resistance and other qualities. The olive thrives in Maltese soils. Apart from the 'Bidni' cultivar, other olive cultivars in Malta include *Il-Maltija* - the Maltese Olive; *Il-Bajda* - the white olive, *Il-Helwa ta' Sqallija* - the sweet Sicilian olive, and *L-Imrajja ta' Marsala* - the Marsala olive. In 2018, the area covered by olive trees in Malta amounted to 138 hectares.

The native Bidnija and Maltija stand out for their genetic uniqueness. The *Maltija* cultivar is probably the most popular due to its high productivity. However, the older *Bidnija* produces high quality oil and is very tolerant to environmental stress. The *Bajda* displays a characteristic white drupe (shown above).

Besides the native cultivars, Maltese wild olives are present as well as non-native cultivars, which are sometimes favoured by Maltese farmers, thus placing Malta's unique olives at risk of extinction.

Phoenician traders (700 BC) are likely responsible for the widespread cultivation of olive trees in Malta. This was capitalised on by the Romans (218 BC-533 AD). At San Pawl Milqi, an excavated Roman villa that was in use until the end of the Byzantine Period (600-870 AD) still contains several *trapetum* - huge stone mills that were used to crush olives to an oily paste.

Several Maltese towns and villages that were named during the Arab period (870-1090 AD) indicate that, by then, the cultivation of olive trees and olive oil production was widespread. *Zaytun* is Sicilian-Arabic for 'olive' and we find place names such as *Iz-Zejtun* meaning 'where olives are cultivated for oil production,' and *Ghajn Zejtuna* meaning 'spring of olive oil,' as well as *Bir id-Deheb* meaning 'well of gold' (olive oil was referred to as liquid gold), *Birzebbuga* meaning 'well of olives,' and *Haz-Zebbug* meaning 'village of olives.'

September is picking and pressing season. [Zejt iz-Zejtun](#), an annual event held in the city of Zejtun, celebrates the olive picking season, and olive pressing for oil will be held in Zejtun on 28 to 29 September.

During the Roman rule of Malta one of the main characteristics of the Maltese landscape was the relatively large number of villas which included an area set aside for the processing of olive oil and for other agricultural activities.

Maltese Olive Oil is cultivated in any soil, but favors the Mediterranean climate, including Malta but not the wind-swept areas. It requires very little care and it is fully exploitable: as wood, leafage, fruit and sub-products.

The poor quality, alkaline soil that we find on the Maltese hillsides and valleys contribute to the extremely low acid content in our soil, which is below 0.5%. Olives coming from older trees are practically devoid of acidity. Gozo Olive Oil is definitively one of the favorites!



## **Id-Diju Balli, il-Mandraġġ and l-Arcipierku three zones in Capital City of Valletta**

**tvm.com.mt**

Every town and village in Malta and Gozo has zones. However, such popular zones are not solely confined to districts which have become popular identification to Valletta.

On 28th March 1565 the foundation stone of the Church of Our Lady of Victories was laid. The Great Siege had caused the ruin of many areas surrounding the Grand Harbour and the place selected to build a new city was Xiberras Hill, a peninsula and therefore had the advantage of projecting into the Grand Harbour as well as being bounded by the sea except on one side. Nowadays the Valletta population has decreased but the magical names of these zones and the entire Valletta story remains popular and handed down from one generation to another.

The three best known are the Arcipierku, the Diju Balli and the Mandraġġ previously known as the Manderaggio where the Knights wanted to build an inland port to shelter their naval fleet, a project which remained unaccomplished.

The area known as the Diju Balli has two attributes as to its origins. One is that it was the locality of two large and ornate cannon balls. The second that is more credible is that in the area the Knights had two Grand Bailiffs when there was normally only one and therefore 'i due balli' later corrupted in the Maltese version became known as the Diju Balli.

Arcipierku originated from the term 'arcipelago', an area adjacent to the Grand Harbour which offers spectacular views of the historic port. Hastings included the garden which was named after Governor-General Hastings and is today still known as that area.

At the entrance to Valletta one finds Putirjal which was corrupted from the words 'Porta Reale' – meaning the regal door to Valletta. This zone stretches from Castille to what today is known as upper Republic Street, formerly known as Kingsway but referred to in Maltese as Putirjal.

The zone known as Il-Kamrata took its name from the Jesuit Jean Baptiste Camarata who oversaw the construction of buildings in this area. There is also the zone known as Il-Biċċerija (slaughter house) and although this is no longer there, the zone name has remained. I-Iljun took its name from the lion statue and the shield of Grandmaster La Valette and is located in the lower part of the Valletta Wharf. This area also has the Liesse zone which is the Victoria Gate area while Strada Stretta (Triq id-Dejqa – Strait Street) gave its name to the surrounding zone.

### *Easter Figolli*

Enjoy a sweet treat this Easter (17th April) and support a local baker.

Orders are taken from the 1st of February and last orders on the 3rd of April.

Pick up is from Caroline Springs and on the following dates and times:

9th April: 10:00am - 1:00pm  
15th April: 10:00am - 1:00pm



Large Sizes

Heart \$17.50 Butterfly \$17.50  
Swan \$16.50 Guitar \$16.50  
Fish \$16.50 Lamb \$16.50

Small Sizes

Heart \$12.50 Lamb \$12.50



Contact Rachel on 0438303450





**Lorraine Batres**  
**St Sebastian Seniors Association Vic. Australi**  
**Maltese figolli for sale.**  
**See flyer and contact Rachel to order** 🐰

## **NOSTALGIA**

### *Memories of*

**Sgt. FRANCIS XERRI**

**By Mark Xerri**



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



### Maltese Australians

Gattaldo - [www.indulgencedivine.com/contact-us](http://www.indulgencedivine.com/contact-us)

They speak Maltranian (a modified Maltese-Australian) and they're keen on keeping traditions alive. I interviewed Maltese Australians on their thoughts about Malta and what sort of itinerary they plan when they visit.

In 1948 an assisted passage agreement was signed between Australia and Malta and a substantial number of Maltese emigrated to Australia in the 1950s. By 1966, the Malta-born population of Victoria was 26,452. According to the 2016 Census, there were 175,563 people of Maltese descent in Australia and 37,614 Malta-born people residing in the country at that precise moment. That's equal to almost half of the population of Malta in 2016.

Most of the people I spoke to were second generation except for Sandie Ayling who moved to Australia in 1974. Sandie is fascinated by the island's rich history so it stands to reason that on her latest visit to Malta 6 years ago, her time was taken with scouring the various museums and temples scattered around the island. Although Malta's sun and sea were an important feature of her stay, Sandie says she also found great satisfaction in revisiting places from her childhood and in sampling Maltese cuisine she'd yearned for. I guess it must have been a lovely trip down memory lane for Sandie.

With our second generation interviewees, I found that Malta's culture and history were also high on their list, as was their personal history - the places their parents had told them stories about and the Mediterranean dishes their family had introduced them to. It seemed that, without exception, they were all keen to trace the steps of their ancestors. I couldn't help feeling it was very much a personal journey of discovery for each of them. Bernardette Vella told me that *St Paul's Bay* and *Xagħra* both had familial significance to her, and were certainly first on her list of places to visit 7 years ago when she travelled to Malta. Bernardette says that despite the fact that she's very much a hotel-by-the-beach-person, her family's history led her to stray beyond the sun and sea. She loves a sea view, and that, she says, explains why she chose to stay by the sea.

Most mentioned wandering around aimlessly as one of the things they'd indulge in when in Malta. It is after all the best way to take in the character of a place without sticking to a guide book which dictates your journey.

Michelle Tyerman was very clear about what she would look out for on her visit. She was last in Malta 10 years ago where she visited the church her grandparents married in, her parents' childhood homes and their local churches in Sliema and Paola. *"We enjoyed using buses,"* she adds *"to expose ourselves to as much of the real Malta as possible."* Michelle says she's fascinated by *"the traditions in past clothing, in particular the għonnella"*, the headdress similar to a Turkish *Çarşaf*, but starched around a curved frame instead of tight around the head.

The 'novelty vs used' dilemma She specifically sought out restaurants and local shops for the authentic tastes of typical/traditional Maltese foods - *"They are never the same here in Australia"*. The thing most special to Michelle however is the Maltese lace (bizzilla) she bought to bring back home and get married in.

I asked Michelle if there was anything unusual about Malta she'd had to work out. *"As a child,"* she told me, *"whenever I heard the Maltese speak, I remember getting the impression that they were angry with each other, but with my first visit, I understood it was just their way. It didn't help that I had little or no grasp of the language."* Michelle says that one of the things she'd like to do on her next visit is to practice speaking the language.

Times have changed and news travels wide and fast, so Maltese Australians can now keep in touch with whatever's happening back in Malta. I asked what was the latest thing they'd heard about the island. I got different answers to this. Some mentioned a soccer win for the Maltese, one mentioned crime, quickly adding *"crime is crime & its everywhere unfortunately"*. A couple mentioned that they had read about the increase in tourism and high-rise buildings and another mentioned October 2017's murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia - *"I saw a story on tv about a journalist that was killed because she uncovered mafia money laundering. That pretty well shocked me."*

# MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER 411

## February 2022

It amazed me how on the whole, even if Malta is so far from Australia, it still is deeply entrenched in the minds and hearts of the *Maltin Awstraljani*. Well, next time you're in Malta, do pass by for a coffee and a chat.



### Aldo Owner

Sharing our holiday home with fellow travellers gives us great satisfaction. We believe it is the people who stay that make a house a home. Hi there. I'm a creative, living in London. Together with my partner, we visit Malta often. We love houses with character and engaging history. Having done up two old houses on the island that need constant love and attention, gave us the perfect opportunity to visit often.

### Josephine Housekeeper

Hello. Although I might not get to meet you in person, I hope that my work in preparing the house transforms your holiday. I take great pride in making Indulgence Divine as welcoming as possible because I know that your holiday is a special time for you. If to some my work might seem mundane and thankless, it is anything but because knowing that it has helped make a difference to someone's holiday makes me smile. May you have a wonderful time and enjoy relaxing in this lovely house.



## Hal Far Fighter Flight – Faith Hope and Charity

*Faith* (serial number N5520), a [Gloster Sea Gladiator](#) Mk I, on the ground

at an airfield in Malta, in about September 1940. N5520 is the only surviving Gladiator from the Hal Far Fighter Flight and was presented to the people of Malta in 1943.

The **Hal Far Fighter Flight** was a British fighter unit formed during the Siege of Malta in 1940. For several weeks, the island of Malta was protected by a small force of Gloster Sea Gladiator biplane fighters, based at RAF Hal Far, which was also known as the Fleet Air Arm station HMS *Falcon*. The flight is the source of the myth that only three aircraft, named *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity* formed the fighter cover for the island.<sup>[1]</sup> <sup>[2]</sup> In fact, more than three aircraft were operational, though not always at the same time; others were used for spare parts.<sup>[3]</sup> The names *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity* were applied to the aircraft many months later, by a Maltese newspaper.<sup>[4]</sup>

**Background** - Crates containing 18 Sea Gladiators Mark I (serial numbers N5518 – N5535) from 802 Naval Air Squadron, were left at Malta in early 1940 by HMS *Glorious*. Three of the airframes (N5532, N5533 and N5534) were later shipped to Britain to take part in the Norwegian campaign and another three were sent to Egypt.

In March, although Malta was not facing attack, it was decided that six Gladiators would be assembled to form an air defence unit. The Hal Far Fighter Flight was to include both FAA and Royal Air Force personnel. Five airplanes were eventually assembled, including N5525, N5527, N5530 and N5533 but a few days later, they were dismantled again.

In April, it was decided that Malta had a need for fighter protection and although the Gladiators were obsolete, they could hold their own in air combat against *Regia Aeronautica* bombers. N5519, N5520, N5522 and N5531 were assembled and test-flown. Two of these were to be used for normal operations, one was kept for spares and the other was kept in reserve. (Another source states that the aircraft assembled in April were N5519, N5520, N5523, N5524, N5529 and N5531; N5518, N5521, N5522 and N5525-28 and N5530 were to be the spares.) In May, N5524 and N5529, were assembled and other crated aircraft were to be used as spares. On 11 June 1940, when the air battle for Malta began, the air defence consisted of four Gladiator aircraft, two of which maintained a continuous stand-by during daylight hours.<sup>[5]</sup> N5520, better known as *Faith*, was fitted with an engine salvaged from a Bristol Blenheim bomber, which also used the Bristol Mercury engine and a Blenheim three-blade Hamilton propeller, rather than the standard two-blade propeller.



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**Air raids begin** - By June, two of the Gladiators had crashed and two more were assembled. On 10 June, Italy entered the war. That same day 10 Cant Z.1007 bombers of the *Regia Aeronautica* attacked Grand Harbour and Hal Far. In early raids, the Italian crews bombed from around 5,500 m (18,000 ft) and later reduced the bombing altitude to 3,000 m (9,800 ft), to improve their accuracy. A reporter, Mabel Strickland claimed that "the Italians decided they didn't like [the Gladiators and AA guns], so they dropped their bombs [30 km (19 mi)] off Malta and went back."

Four Hawker Hurricanes joined the Sea Gladiators at the end of June and the flight became part of No. 261 Squadron RAF. *Charity* was shot down on 29 July 1940 and its pilot, Flying Officer (F/O) P. W. Hartley, was badly burned. *Hope* was

destroyed in an air raid on 4 February 1941 and *Faith* survived the war. The fate of at least five more Gladiators that saw action over Malta is not as well documented. Sea Gladiators N5513 and N5535 were taken over by No. 33 Squadron RAF, in May 1941 (suggesting that the serial number usually allocated to *Hope* is incorrect).

The fuselage of *Faith* is on display at the National War Museum, Fort St Elmo, Valletta.<sup>[8]</sup> No. 1435 Flight RAF took over the defence of Malta from 4 December 1941, flying the Spitfire from July. Today 1435 Flight garrisons the Falkland Islands. The Phantom aircraft assigned to the defence of the Falklands in 1988 wore a Maltese Cross on their fins and bore the names *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity* with an additional aircraft called *Desperation*.



It is estimated that there are  
950 000 Maltese all  
over the world

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## **Celebratory Events**

**9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Inauguration of  
Il-Haġar | Heart of Gozo Museum and Cultural Centre  
and Joseph Vella's Life and Legacy  
on the 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his passing**

### **Friday 18 February 2022**

19:00 | Il-Haġar Museum

Fourth Joseph Vella Memorial Lecture

Playing Small | Prof. Ivan Callus

Opening of Exhibition | The Vocal Music of Joseph Vella

### **Saturday 19 February 2022**

11:00 | Il-Haġar Museum

Meet the Artist | Victor Agius

Launch of publication Il-Haġar Gems Series No. 16 | In Dialogue

20:00 | Aula Mgr G. Farrugia

Concert | The Vocal Music of Joseph Vella

### **Sunday 20 February 2022**

11:00 | St George's Basilica

High Mass in suffrage of Il-Haġar Museum's benefactors including Mro Joseph Vella, celebrated by Mgr Dr Joseph Farrugia, Museum Founder and Curator, with the participation of the Laudate Pueri Choir

12:30 | Ta' Frenċ

Celebratory Luncheon



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA  
MINISTRY FOR GOZO



Malta  
Tourism Authority



BAZILIKA SAN GORG



FONDAZZJONI BELT VICTORIA



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### Cultural Program 2022

### Valletta Cultural Agency

The Valletta Cultural Agency has announced its Cultural Programme for January – June 2022. The Programme includes new productions and collaborations, with the involvement of several artists, that mark the essence of Valletta's cultural, artistic and social fabric.

The programme features collaborations with the prestigious Italian chorus of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Teatru Malta, the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, the Cappella Sancta Catherinae Choir, the Public Broadcasting Services, the Malta Film Commission and several individual artists, government entities and the business community.

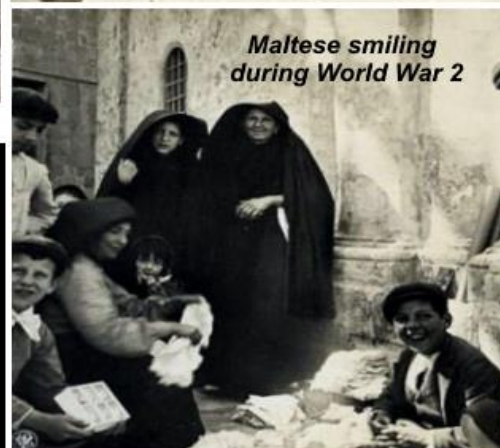
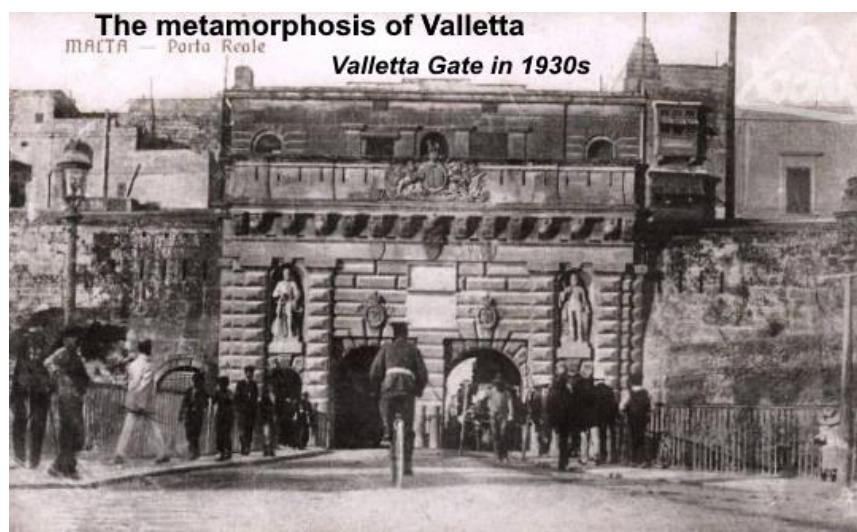
Valletta streets and piazzas will be transformed in cascades of colour, gardens will take a new life and the Grand Harbour will be celebrated as part of the VCA programme.

Visit the Valletta Cultural Agency's [Website](#) or [Facebook](#) page and follow us on [Instagram](#) for the latest updates on our upcoming events.



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### GOZITAN DIALECT

Gozitan	Maltese	English
Ghawdix	Ghawdex	Gozo
Smontor	Fidda	Silver foil
Ċombini	Labar tal-inxir	Clothes pegs
Trampi	Kummiedji	Being silly
Fettul	Biskuttel	Biscuit
Bankoncin	Biskuttin tal-lewz	Almond biscuit
Gejxa	Band tax-Xagħar	Hair-band
Hafsa	Ponta	Pimple
Haxxem	Għalaq / Qares	Pinched
Werqa ta' Dindja	Pal tal-bajtar	Pricly-pear leaf
Mejdina	Tavolina	Small table
Nemusiera	Xibka tan-nemus	Mosquito curtain
Pastizz tal-Ġobon	Pastizz tal-irkotta	Cheese cake
Perċa	Habel tal-inxir	Clothes line
Pinuri	Pilloli	Pills
Regħex	Staħa	Shy
Xenxul	Għanqud	Bunch of
Mejt	Sturdament	Dizzy
Mitrah	Saqqu	Mattress
Boxxla	Antiporta	Internal hall door
Hajm	Fsied	Spoil someone

