



CONSULATE OF MALTA IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2014 FRANK L SCICLUNA - LINKING MALTA AND AUSTRALIA

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RUSSIAN REFUGEES IN MALTA IN 1919



I The Romanovs. From left to right: Olga, Maria, Nicholas II, Alexandra, Anastasia, Alexei, and Tatiana. Pictured at Livadia Palace in 1913

The Russian Imperial Romanov family (**Tsar Nicholas II**, his wife Tsarina Alexandra and their five children Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, and Alexei) and all those who chose to accompany them into exile – notably Eugene Botkin, Anna Demidova, Alexei Trupp and Ivan Kharitonov – were shot in Yekaterinburg on 17 July 1918.

The murder of the Tsar was carried out by the Ural Soviet which was led by Yakov Yurovsky. In the opinion of historians, the murder had been ordered in Moscow by Vladimir Lenin and Yakov Sverdlov to prevent the rescue of the Imperial Family by approaching White forces during the ongoing Russian Civil War. With the overthrow of the Romanov Dynasty in the Spring of 1917, Russia was plunged into civil war. The Bolsheviks were

gaining more and more territory and power, so the aristocracy and their anti-Bolshevik White Army and supporters were pushed further and further to the south.

Russia was still involved in the war (World War I) against Germany, but a Bolshevik Delegation signed a Peace Treaty on 3rd March 1918 at Brest-Litovsk. Tsar Nicholas II and his family were taken to Ekaterinburg in April 1918, where they were brutally murdered on the night of 16th July 1918. In January 1919 the White Army captured Ekaterinburg, and the fate of the Tsar and his family was established beyond doubt.



It became clear that the Bolsheviks would eventually take over the whole country, and concern was expressed for the lives of the other members of the Royal Family, especially in England, and plans for their evacuation were put in hand. HMS *Marlborough* commanded by Captain C.D. Johnson, arrived at Sebastopol via Constantinople in the first week of April 1919. The mission was to present a letter to the Dowager Empress Marie Feodorovna, the mother of Tsar Nicholas II, from her sister Queen Alexandra of England, urging her to leave Russia by this Royal Navy ship which would carry her and her suite to England via Malta.

She had already refused to similar offer from Captain B.S. Thesiger of HMS *Calypso*, about four weeks previously. She was reluctant to leave Russia in spite of the fact that the Bolsheviks were gaining control of the country and their front line was nearing the Crimea. Captain Johnson and

Captain Thesiger set out for Yalta a few miles east of Sebastopol, where the Empress was living and this time she was persuaded that the moment had come to leave. On the 7th April the ship docked at Yalta ready for embarkation. It was originally thought that the total number would be ten or twelve persons, but it soon became clear that a much larger number would board.

About thirty-five officer's cabins were vacated and additional bunks installed where possible. Captain Johnson moved into his sea-cabin under the bridge so that the Empress could have his cabin. Embarkation of persons and luggage continued over the next few days and on the 11th April HMS *Marlborough* finally departed from Yalta with 44 members of the Royal Family and Nobility, with a number of governesses, nurses, maids and manservants, plus several hundred cases of luggage.

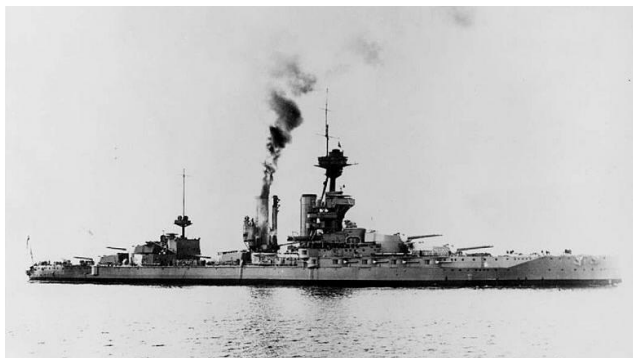
The following morning the ship anchored off Halki Island, about twelve miles from Constantinople, where a delay occurred due to some uncertainty over the final destination for the Russian Royal family. It was resolved on Wednesday 16th when the Grand Duke Nicholas Nickolaievitch and his wife the Grand Duchess Anastasia, the Grand Duke Peter Nicholaievitch and his wife Grand Duchess Militsa, Princess Marina, Prince Roman, Count and Countess Tyszkiewich, Baron and Baroness Staal, Mr Boldyreff and Dr Malama with their respective servants left HMS *Marlborough* and boarded HMS *Lord Nelson* destined for Genoa.

They were replaced by Count Dimitri and Countess Sophia Mengden, Count George and Countess Irina Mengden, Countess Vera Mengden, Count Nicholas Mengden, Madame Helena Erchoff and two maids. On Good Friday morning the ship sailed from Halki Island for the voyage to Malta.

Although rumours were circulating in Malta about the arrival of the Russian party, Lord and Lady Methuen together with their A-D-C Robert Ingram went to the opera on Saturday night, the 12th, to make everything appear normal. At a break in the performance Ingram was called to take a telephone call from the Military Secretary Major Denham, who told him that a decoded secret telegram was being delivered to the theatre by motorcyclist. It duly arrived and was shown to His Excellency.

HMS *Marlborough* arrived during the evening of 20th April. The Governor went on board to pay his respects to Empress Marie Fedorovna and inform her that arrangements had been made for her to reside at San Anton Palace until HMS *Lord Nelson* arrived from Genoa to take her and her suite to England. +-

The next morning the Royal Marines Guard was drawn up on parade as Captain Johnson escorted the Empress along the deck to the gangway and into the barge waiting alongside. To salute her, the band played the Imperial National Anthem of Russia. All the Russian passengers disembarked that day and by mid afternoon all their luggage totalling more than seven hundred items had also left the ship. Two days later HMS *Marlborough* was on her way back to Constantinople.



HMS Marlborough

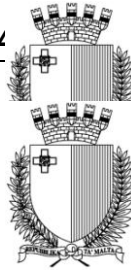
Although the Empress and her immediate family were accommodated at San Anton Palace, and later planted an oak tree in the gardens to commemorate her nine-day stay, the other nobility were spread around various hotels.

When the Canadian registered ship s.s. *Bermudian* arrived later the same week, on 25th April 1919, carrying 220 men, 345 women and 133 children, reported as English and Russian refugees it was necessary to find lodgings for them, so rooms were found in St. George's, St. Andrew's and Tigne Barracks and at St. Ignatius College. No passenger list was kept on board the *Bermudian*, the only list which existed was held by the military

authorities.

At midnight on 31st December 1919 a special service was held in St. Luke's Church, Tigne Barracks for the Russian refugees. The Reverend T. Coldman, Chaplain to the Forces, gave a warm-hearted sermon, which was translated into Russian, to comfort the refugees. At the end of the service the organist played 'God Save the Tsar' The precise number of Russian refugees will never be known due to lack of documentation, but it seems that a total of around 800 is a fair estimate. Only a handful stayed and made Malta their home.





Media Release 10-2014

ZJARA UFFICJALI TAL-KUMISSARJU GHOLI GEWWA WOLLONGONG, NEW SOUTH WALES

His Excellency Mr. Charles Muscat made an official visit to the George Cross Falcons Club in Wollongong on Monday, 12 May 2014.

The function was a special event to celebrate Mother's Day and to meet and greet the High Commissioner.

The High Commissioner was welcomed by the President of the Centre, Mr. Louis Parnis and committee; the Franciscan Sisters; Mr. Ken Habek OAM, Chairperson, Multicultural Community Council of Llawara and Mr. George Bartolo, Senior Vice Chairperson, Multicultural Community Council of Llawara.

The event attracted a large Maltese-Australian audience from surrounding regions, including members from the Sutherland and St. George Maltese Group, Sydney, led by Mr. Charles Mifsud.

High Commissioner Mr. Muscat was given a tour of the Centre including the workshop set-up, with fine



wooden machinery that members operate to produce wooden products i.e. toys and etc. The products are distributed into different institutions.

During lunch, the High Commissioner and Mr. Habek addressed the crowd. High Commissioner thanked those present and addressed the crowd in Maltese and English. He elaborated on the work carried at the High Commission and the Consulates. The address was well received.

The High Commission of the Republic of Malta would like to identify that these interstate visits by His Excellency Mr. Muscat is an indication that the official visits to different states are being carried out as part of an official programme to reach as many Maltese communities as possible. The High Commissioner intends to continue to reach out to other

communities around Australia.

(Photo courtesy: Mr. Tony Fenech)

From left to right: Mr. George Bartolo; Mr. Ken Habek; H.E. Muscat; Mr. Louis Parnis

INVASION OF GOZO (1551)

The Invasion of Gozo, the sister island of Malta, took place in July 1551, and was accomplished by the Ottoman Empire against the island of Gozo, following an unsuccessful attempt to conquer Malta on 18 July 1551. It was followed by a victorious campaign with the Siege of Tripoli (1551).



The Commander of the Ottoman fleet were Sinan Pasha, accompanied by Sala Reis and Dragut Reis. The Ottomans initially landed on Malta, at Marsamxett, and a force of 10000 men marched upon Birgu and Fort St Angelo, but they realised that these were too well fortified to be conquered easily. Therefore the Ottomans turned their attention to Mdina, looting and burning the villages on the way. Meanwhile, the Knights in Mdina, under the command of Fra Villeganion, asked the people living in the villages to seek refuge in the city and to help defend it. When the Ottomans arrived they discovered a large garrison defending the city so they decided against the plan of attacking the city since they did not want to fight a long siege. Meanwhile, a relief fleet attacked the Ottoman ships anchored at Marsamxett.



The Ottomans then decided to attack nearby Gozo island which was cruelly ravaged. The Governor, Gelatian de Sessa, made some feeble attempts to defend the castle, but soon abandoned his post, and left the Gozitans to fence the breach, which the enemy's cannon had effected.

The inhabitants seeing the dastardly conduct of their commander, would have deserted their post, had not an English knight taken the command, and with his own hand fired off the cannon which defended the breach. A cannon ball from the Turkish batteries speedily terminated the career of this good soldier, and no one being found to supply his place, the Governor dispatched messenger to

the Turkish General with an offer of capitulation; but as he demanded the most honourable conditions, Sinam Pasha contemptuously rejected it, and demanded that the place should be immediately surrendered at discretion.

After a few days of bombardment, the Citadel of Gozo capitulated. As soon as the Turks had taken possession of the Castle, they immediately commenced plundering the inhabitants, and committed every species of cruelty among the people. De Sessa himself was taken captive together with about 6,000 Christians and ended up in slavery, being sailed to Tripoli on 30 July.

Since only about 40 Christians remained on Gozo, families from Malta were encouraged by the Order of Saint John to repopulate the island. However it took about 150 years for the population to reach pre-1551 levels.

Following the attack the Order set up a commission made up of Leone Strozzi and Pietro Pardo, who were engineers, to examine the Maltese Islands' fortifications and make suggestions for further improvements. The Grandmaster, Juan d'Omedes, increased taxation and strengthened the coastal guards, the Dejma. Following Strozzi and Pardo's commission, Fort Saint Michael and Fort Saint Elmo were built to better defend the Grand Harbour. Bastions at Mdina and Birgu were strengthened, and the fortifications of Senglea were built.

The failure to take all of the Maltese Islands was also one of the causes of the Great Siege of Malta in 1565. Two other attacks were made on the island, unsuccessfully that time, in 1613 and 1709.

We recommend to our readers the History Blog, a project run by VASSALLOMALTA.COM which is designed to provide an insight on Maltese History and Heritage.

HOUSE OF COMMONS TO DISCUSS HUNTING IN MALTA

Chris Packham



The House of Commons will this week hold a debate “UK policy on protection of migratory birds in Malta.” Popular television personality Chris Packham will be among those invited to participate in the debate which will be held upon the initiative of British Conservative MP Sir John Randall. Packham, the presenter of BBC's *Springwatch*, was in Malta to document the widespread nature of illegal hunting last month, however he was held by the police for hours following one of his outings in the countryside.

During one of his expeditions in Mizieb, Packham was confronted by hunters who claimed that their privacy was being breached and the BBC presenter was asked to report at the Administrative Law Enforcement headquarters where he was held for questioning.

Packham urged his followers on Twitter and other social media sites to “rally as many MPs as possible” to attend the briefing and speak at the debate.

Sir John Randall, MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip said “This deplorable slaughter of migratory birds in Malta must stop. Chris Packham has performed a service to the public and a service to nature by bringing it to light. I believe that most of the people of Malta and the British public share his outrage at the illegal hunting of birds on spring migration. I have called this debate to ask the Government what it will do to help put an end to this pointless killing.” In an article penned by the Packham on yesterday's The Observer, the presenter noted that during his stay in Malta he and his crew were “shouted at, jostled, threatened, harassed by the police, but who cares: the results have been astonishing.”

THE BOND STILL EXISTS



Maltese Migrants leaving Malta in 1950

When former Foreign Affairs Minister Tonio Borg visited Australia, an elderly lady, a grandmother, approached him with tears in her eyes and begged him: “When you go back to Malta, do please tell them that we love Malta.

Tell them that we never stopped loving our country and that we can't come back because our children are here.”



Photo - DOI - Clodagh Farrugia O'Neill



Photo left: The Hon Consul for Malta in the United States, Mr Louis Vella paid a courtesy visit to HE the President of Malta this year. Mr Vella is an active member of the Council of Maltese Living Abroad.

Photo right: This monument was erected by the R.S.L. Maltese Sub-branch of South Australia and the Maltese community in 1992 at the prospect memorial gardens, Wilcox Avenue, Prospect and unveiled by the Malta High Commissioner G. Busuttil to commemorate the 50 anniversary of the awarding of the George Cross to the island of Malta in April 1942..



Il-Vara ta San Gorg Preca : Ghall Centru Malti ta La Valette , Blacktown , NSW. Mahduma mil I-istatwarju zaghzugh Mosti Shawn Saliba

Din kienet fuq l-ahbarijiet ta MTV ta qabel il-bierah , u hemm possibilta li tkun fuq l-ahbarijiet li nircievu minn Malta fuq SBS nhar ta Hamis u nhar ta Hadd

Mill-kummenti li smajt minn Malta din l-imbierka statwa giet imfahhra ferm minn membri anzjani tal-musew ghax-xebh ta' wicc Dun Gorg .

‘INFIORATA’ AT ST.GEORGES SQUARE, VALLETTA

Photo: Darrin Zammit Lupi



These potted flowers, arranged in the pattern of a Maltese tile in St George's Square for the largest infiorata in Malta, would stretch from the square to Siggiewi if placed in a straight line. The carpet of flowers, to remain in place for the weekend, was installed as part of the first edition of the three-day Valletta Green Festival, which is intended to raise environmental consciousness as the

city heads towards becoming the European Capital of Culture in 2018. It took 100 people 12 weeks, 14 trucks, 80,000 pots and a dose of good teamwork to create Malta's largest carpet of flowers in St George's Square, Valletta. The potted flowers of colourful petunias and pansies, arranged overnight in the shape of a Maltese tile, were planted three months ago, timed to bloom together over an area of 400 square metres.

MALTA IN THE OLD DAYS This week a friend of mine forwarded me some beautiful photos of Malta in the past. Were it not for these photos our generation and future ones would not be able to appreciate how Malta was before we started demolishing the lovely buildings and replacing them with modern ones...



Photos from left to right: An old Maltese bus, Floriana Church bombed in 1942, The Chalet at Sliema in 1950

WORLD WAR II – 1939-1945

During April and May 1942, the attacks from the Axis went on and the situation in Malta was made more critical, with food shortage, the Maltese Island's 300,000 population was menaced with starvation and



countless families were homeless. The invasion of Malta by the Nazi Germany and the Fascist Italy, after their armies success in North Africa, was now a matter of course. The eyes of the world were now upon Malta.

On 29–30 April 1942, a plan for the invasion of Malta was approved by Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. It envisioned an airborne assault with one German and one Italian paratroop division, under the command of German General Kurt Student. This would have been followed by a seaborne landing of two or three divisions protected by the Regia Marina. However, while the invasion was supported by Rommel wholeheartedly, Hermann Göring was against it. In the end, the operation was repeatedly delayed and later cancelled

Photos:

(left) People queuing up to receive milk in 1941

(right) The Royal Opera House destroyed on 7th. April 1942

MALTA – AUSTRALIAN CONNECTION

Despite being separated by over 12000 km, the connections between a tiny Mediterranean island and it's huge antipodean cousin run deep. Australia and Malta share a history rich in the blood sweat and tears of their peoples. Each now provides a mutual home for the other's expats, keen to build a new future for them and their families. Today however, it is increasingly the Aussies who are heading for Malta, rather than the other way around.

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The modern links began during World War 1. There are 204 war graves of Australian men on Malta from that war, cared for by the Commonwealth War Graves commission – and a building reflecting that period is at the heart of an unseemly local political row on the island.

Pieta Military ceremony near the Malta capital of Valletta hosts an annual remembrance service on 25th April each year to the young men of Australia and New Zealand who gave their lives in the unsuccessful allied campaign in Gallipoli – in

eastern Turkey. 8 months after the landings in 1915, it is estimated that Australian casualties had reached 8.700 dead with over 19,400 wounded and they were taken to Malta which had been a British colony since 1800.

Australia Hall was officially opened in January 1916 by the Red Cross as an entertainment centre for the Australian and New Zealand survivors of this horrific period – and remained in use until 1979 when British troops withdrew from the islands. In late 1998, it was badly damaged by fire and has remained an unloved and derelict shell ever since. It is situated on the St Andrews Barracks site and adjoining Fort Pembroke near St Julians.

In August 1979, the property was transferred to Malta's Labour Party in exchange for property that the Party owned in the docks area and in 2010 – some 31 years later, the Nationalist Government of Malta demanded its return.

This very public wrangle remains unresolved and Australia Hall still languishes as an empty hulk, echoing only with the twin memories of bloody conflict and comradeship – which were resumed when Malta resumed its military role as the guardian of the Mediterranean once again during the Second World War facing the combined air and sea power of the German and Italian forces”|

The first Maltese to arrive in Australia around 1810, were convicts. In 1881, 61 Maltese labourers and 9 stowaways attempted to settle in Queensland, but the extreme conditions proved too much and the plan failed.

By 1911, there were 248 Maltese in Australia. Today, it is reported that nearly every family in Malta has an immediate relative living in Australia. Despite having British passports however, the Maltese were treated as non-white and excluded from Australia for over 30 years – and it was only in 1948 in the aftermath of another war that the conditions were relaxed and economic emigration from Malta to Australia took off on a large scale.

Malta is also at the cross roads, between Africa, Europe and the southern Mediterranean. Its membership of the EU led to a mini property boom several years ago and the economy generally remains in good shape compared to many of its European neighbours, both large and small.”•

Increased air travel links to Malta have transformed it from a British colony beloved of the ex-forces personnel to a more forward looking and cosmopolitan playground enjoying glorious weather that would be familiar in Australia – but lacking in the extremes of bush fires and drought! For many, English speaking Malta provides a place of rest and recreation for groups of professionals who make their living around the globe – encouraged by a generous tax regime and business incentives.

Today, more than a dozen international airlines fly into Malta each week including Emirates. The growth of the financial services sector has been one of Malta's notable successes.

Record levels of investment are flowing into Malta as the international business community discovers the advantages of doing business there. Proof of this are the major accomplishments of winning much coveted investments from Dubai Internet City's Tecom and Lufthansa Technik, puts Malta at the top of its class.

Malta offers a highly competitive investment location for niche manufacturing as well as the services sectors, particularly in Bio-technology, Pharmaceutical & Healthcare, Automotive, Maritime Activities – Transport & Logistics, Call Centres, ICT and Electronics, Financial services, the Furniture Industry and Real Estate. The island is the main centre of manufacturing for the highly successful Playmobil range and has a strong local food and drink manufacturing sector.

A feature of recent high profile investments in real estate on Malta is the mixing of commercial and residential developments to provide balanced communities. SmartCity a planned technology park on the models of Dubai Internet City and Dubai Media City, will cost at least 275 million euro, create over 5,600 jobs and eventually cover an area of 360,000 m2. It is expected to be fully completed by 2021. It will, when completed, feature a state-of-the-art ICT and Media Business Park, tourism accommodation, entertainment areas, shops and a recreational area taking up around one-third of the area

Malta is of course tiny compared to Australia, but many value the fact that you can get from one of the island to the other in 45 minutes – and be in Sicily in 90 minutes by high speed ferry. The North African coast is only 150 miles or with many cruise liners calling in at Malta, the travel possibilities are endless.”•

MALTA – AUSTRALIA - HEALTH INFORMATION

Malta and Australia have a bilateral/reciprocal health care agreement which provides, free of charge, immediately necessary medical and public hospital care for Australian residents during their first six months in Malta. If the treatment of Australian resident falls under the provisions of the reciprocal health care agreement between Malta and Australia, then the treatment is free.

****However, please note that not all procedures are covered by the reciprocal agreement and currently not all procedures are able to be done in Malta due to expertise/equipment. Therefore, an Australian resident should not rely solely on the reciprocal agreement between Australia and Malta, and we strongly recommend that you take out suitable travel insurance.*

If you require medical attention while visiting Malta, contact or visit a polyclinic and consult the doctor on duty. **You should indicate that you wish to be treated under the reciprocal health care agreement.** Note that as an Australian resident visiting Malta you will only be entitled to health care for a period of up to six months from the date of your arrival.

No charge services

- Medical attention at a polyclinic provided by a doctor in Government service;
- Nursing care (injections, dressings etc) provided by a nurse in Government service on the advice of a doctor;
- In-patient care including operations, medicine, nursing care, accommodation and meals as a public patient in a Government hospital;
- Hospital outpatient consultations provided by specialists in Government service;
- Ambulance travel from site to hospital in the case of accidents and emergencies;
- Urgent dental care provided in a Government hospital (urgent dental care does not include fillings, dental prostheses, or appliances).

In order to be eligible you will need to provide: a current Australian passport, or a passport of another country which shows you are a permanent Australian resident, as well as a valid Medicare card.

What is not covered under the reciprocal agreement

- Hospital accommodation and treatment as a private patient or pre-arranged treatment;
- Items such as glasses, contact lenses, dental work, and chiropractic services;
- Medical evacuation to Australia;

Medicines

If you use medicines on a regular basis for an ongoing condition (e.g. blood pressure, asthma, etc.) take a sufficient amount with you for the trip. Routine medicines are generally not subsidised under the agreement, so you may have to pay for the total costs of your medicine. You may also find the dose or brand you use is not available.

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION – MALTA: Ta' Xbiex Terrace, Ta' Xbiex - Telephone: 2133 8201 - Fax: 2134 4059

NOSTALGIA FROM HABANA, MACKAY QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA

Habana pioneers found time for soccer



THE Maltese men of Mackay took another pioneering step when in 1926 they formed their own soccer team — believed to have been the first all-Maltese soccer team in Australia. Most of the members lived and worked in the Habana district so they played under that name, wearing jerseys presented to them as a sign of goodwill by Jim Love of the Imperial Hotel in Victoria Street. Pictured are, from back row left, Paul Bartolo, P. Calleja, A.F. Vella, Tony Saliba, S. Portelli, Tony Borg; second row: Jim Camilleri, Andy Frendo, P. Camilleri, J. Deguara, C. Deguara; front row: J. Fenech, Paul Camilleri and Jim Camilleri.

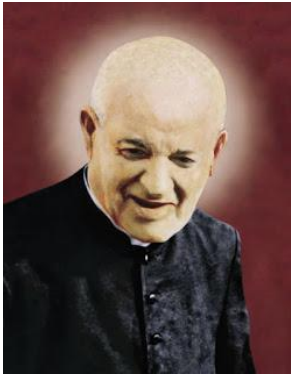


THE INTERIOR OF ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL CHURCHES IN MALTA



EVERY PICTURE SPEAKS A THOUSAND WORDS

RACING IN MALTA – CELEBRATING THE FEAST AT THE VILLAGE PIAZZA



FEAST OF MALTA'S FIRST SAINT

FATHER GEORGE PRECA

9 May happens to be the liturgical feast of Saint George Preca, the first and only Saint from Malta who has been canonized back in 2009 on June 3rd. We are all proud of his presence in our lives, and even more special is the fact that many people who are still in their 50s and over remember him alive. When one considers that the USA has only 2 Saints so far (St Elizabeth Ann Seton and St Katharine Drexel) with 2 more to be canonized later this year in October (St Kateri Tekakwitha and St Marianne Cope,) the Maltese are more than honored to claim him as their first native Saint, being such a small country.

St George was born on February 12, 1880 and he founded in the early years of the 20th century the Society of Christian Doctrine, a society of lay catechists. In Malta, he is affectionately known as "Dun Ġorġ" and is popularly referred to as the "Second Apostle of Malta", after St Paul, who brought the Christian faith to the shores of Malta when he was shipwrecked in 60 AD.



Photos of St George Preca in the 50s

Preca first came to the attention of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints which examined the scientifically unexplainable healing of Charles Zammit Endrich in 1964. Zammit Endrich had suffered from a detached retina of the left eye. The healing was declared as miraculous, and was attributed to the intercession of Dun Gorg Preca after Zammit Endrich prayed to him and placed one of the

priest's belongings under his pillow. The healing took place outside of a hospital, overseen by the personal doctor of Zammit Endrich, the ophthalmologist Censu Tabone, who was later to be appointed President of Malta.

On 24 June 1975, Archbishop Michael Gonzi issued a decree initiating the process of Preca's canonization. He was declared "venerable" on 28 June 1999, and on January 27, 2000, Pope John Paul II signed the decree which officially confirmed the Zammit Endrich healing. In a ceremony in Floriana, Malta on 9 May 2001, Dun Gorg was beatified by the same Pope along with two other Maltese blessed, Nazju Falzon, a cleric, and Adeodata Pisani, a nun.

In its early years, the Society of Christian Doctrine was silenced for a while, but its identity was recognized as Dun Gorg continued to teach students and form young unmarried men (and eventually women) so that they will eventually teach others. Today, almost every parish in Malta has a group of dedicated young men teaching catechism to the children, in preparation for their First Holy Communion, Confirmation and beyond. The Society of Christian Doctrine is commonly referred to by the acronym "MUSEUM", which stands for the Latin "*Magister Utinam Sequatur Evangelium Universus Mundus!*", translating to "*Master, that the whole world would follow the Gospel!*"

St. George died on July 26, 1962, and thousands attended his funeral. His body was recently exhumed and re-buried in the head-quarters of the MUSEUM society. The work he started continues on, even in foreign countries like London, Kenya, Peru, Poland, Albania, Cuba and Australia.

IR-RAMLA L-HAMRA – THE BAY OF RED SAND – GOZO, MALTA

As its Maltese name denotes, *ir-Ramla* is a 'sandy' beach ... but not just any kind of sand. Its sand is of a coarse grain and a rich, reddish hue. While this is not Gozo's only sandy beach, it is certainly its largest and most popular.

Ramla bay lies at the end of a valley, between two steep faces. To one side we find *Irdum tal-Fiddien*, also known as *tal-Gakbin*. In the past this cliffy ridge was known by the name *Ta' Kaliebes* and this is where Calypso's Cave may be found.

Here, we also find *Il-Mixta* (pron: ill-Mishta), otherwise known as *il-Kortin tan-Nadur* (pron: ill-korteen tan-Nad'uur), another location known for its caves. Aside from the Calypso myth, as told in Homer's *Illiad*, this bay may also boast its own part in the history of the Maltese Islands. Indeed, we should start our account from prehistoric times; the period known as the Għar Dalam phase. Pottery from this period had been found at the *Il-Mixta* caves, suggesting that the first human landings (from Sicily) occurred here at Ramla Bay in around 5200-4500 BC.

More recently, speaking in *historical terms*, the Romans built their baths. These were discovered here in 1911. It is also believed that St. Rossinian founded an Augustinian Monastery here after having been driven out of Africa.

According to De Soldanis' account, in 1729, Grand Master Manoel de Vilhena had vines planted in the area rendering an annual income of some 600 scudi. Later, in 1733, De Vilhena commissioned the Belincourt fortification. As this beach was a potential landing ground for pirates as well as the enemy of the Order, in 1715, a wall was built – submerged under water – for the purpose of thwarting such landings.

In fact, it is reported that on the morning of July 7th, 1733, two Turkish galleys landed 75 men and captured Ġanni Mercieca's family of eight. The enslaved Gozitan family was redeemed after two years from funds raised by their compatriots. In June 1798, the French, under the leadership of Reynier, also landed their invasion force at Ramla.



What a marvelous journal. My family and I like it because there is no politics in it. It is a mine of information about the Maltese culture and especially the history of Maltese emigration to so many parts of the world. This newsletter should be sent to all the schools in Malta so that our children will learn about the Maltese pioneers who left the island to seek a better life, when the times were tough. I agree with other readers that all the newsletters should be compiled into a book for future generations.

J and E .Borg (Malta)

FRENC' MERECIECA – TA' L-GĦARB

Frenc' ta' l-Għarb (pron. French ta l'Aarb), as he is affectionately known, was born on December 3rd, 1892, in the village that was to become his namesake. Having lost his father when he was still young, Frenc' had to give up his dream of joining the priesthood in favour of working the fields in order to provide for his family.

Owing to his life of piety, he was considered a holy person even during his lifetime, and was sought after for his healing powers, although he always declared that it was not his ointments but the person's faith in God that healed afflictions. In 1938, he was arraigned in court on account of his medical practices, but was acquitted on the basis that what he administered were not medicines at all. People came to him from all over Malta and Gozo; any proceeds received being contributed towards the building of *Ta' Pinu* Sanctuary, of which he was a prime benefactor.

Refer to the bronze statue (picture to the right) raised in his honour at *Ta' Pinu* Church.



The sacristy at *Ta' Pinu* Sanctuary is full of *votive gifts and notes* by people who claimed to have been healed or helped through the holy intervention of this holy man, who passed away on May 19th, 1967.

Votive Gifts and Notes abound in the sacristy of *Ta' Pinu* Church. Walls are covered in all sorts of memorabilia. This frame (PHOTO LEFT) states in the second paragraph:

"I came to Gozo in 2006. In the month of May I went to the Frenc tal-Għarb museum and there I prayed to him wholeheartedly for his intercession [with God]. Frenc heard my prayer and I was granted my prayer."



PORTRAIT OF A COMPOSER- CHARLES CAMILLERI

born 7 September 1931; died 3 January 2009



Malta can boast a few fine classical composers whose work is known abroad, including the classical-era Francesco Azopardi and Nicolò Isouard, and, in recent years, Ruben Zahra. However, Charles Camilleri, who has died aged 77, stands out in this company, because his music, comprising more than 300 compositions written over 65 years, is known around the world. In the UK, it has been played on Radio 3 and Classic FM, and a 1968 concert at the Royal Festival Hall, London, was devoted to his output. He should also be remembered for helping to revive traditional Maltese and Mediterranean folk styles.

A self-taught pianist and accordionist, Camilleri, who was born in Hamrun, came from a musically talented family. At 11, he composed his first work, a band march. By the age of 15, he had finished a series of compositions, including the much-loved *Malta Suite*, which were inspired by Maltese folk singing, known as *ghana*. He developed an interest in Stravinsky and Stockhausen (both of whom he later met), Bach, Chopin and north African music.

When he was 18, his family emigrated to Australia, but Camilleri did not take to it and left for London, where the impresario Harold Fielding snapped him up. Soon, he was touring with top names such as Hoagy Carmichael, Frank Sinatra, Tommy Steele and Frankie Laine. His abilities were also recognised by Malcolm Arnold, whom he helped with the score for the soundtrack of the 1957 film *The Bridge On the River Kwai*.

Camilleri left London for Canada, to study composition at the University of Toronto. He viewed the ensuing years as the most exciting of his life. "To be in New York in the 1960s was electrifying," he said. "In the United States and Canada I did everything. I conducted, I wrote film scores, I was published and then I was appointed conductor with CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation). Naturally I loved the money: however, around 1965, I decided to quit and dedicate the rest of my life to composition." He flew back to London and became a full-time composer.

Camilleri's fascination with Maltese and Mediterranean music can be felt in his Piano Concerto No 1, the Mediterranean, which he wrote aged 16 and revised in 1978. He also wrote the first-ever opera in Maltese, *Il-Weghda* (1984), and the language's first oratorio, *Pawlu ta' Malta* (1985), in honour of the island's patron saint. His second oratorio, *Dun Gorg* (2001), celebrated the life of a 20th-century Maltese saint. Jimmy Page approached him with the idea of commissioning a guitar concerto in 1981, but the project never came about.



From 1977 to 1983, Camilleri was professor of composition at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, and from 1992 to 1996 professor of music at the University of Malta. He also co-wrote two books: *Mediterranean Music* (1988) and *The Folk Music of Malta*. Between 2003 and 2006, Camilleri was a member of the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts. In 2003, his opera *Maltese Cross* was performed in Paris; his last work, the *New Idea Symphony* - commissioned by his compatriot, the author Edward de Bono - was premiered in Brussels on 13 January this year. He is survived by his wife, Doris, a writer, and their daughter Anja and son Charles. *A photo taken during the war – circa 1943-44. Camilleri – playing the accordion (12 years old). He already had marches played by the local bands. One march found its way later in the popular "malta Suite". Third from left is Anthony Chircop (brother of Oreste Chircop) Next to*

Camilleri is Carmelo Sciberras, father of concert pianist, Brian Sciberras.



**A MALTESE PEASANTS' BAND KNOWN AS 'ID-DUDI'
LONG TIME AGO**

ANZAC BISCUITS



An **Anzac biscuit** is a sweet biscuit popular in Australia and New Zealand made using rolled oats, flour, desiccated coconut, sugar, butter, golden syrup, baking soda and boiling water. Anzac biscuits have long been associated with the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) established in World War I.

It has been claimed the biscuits were sent by wives to soldiers abroad because the ingredients do not spoil easily and the biscuits kept well during naval transportation. Today, Anzac biscuits are manufactured commercially for retail sale.

Biscuits issued to soldiers by the Army, referred to as "Anzac tiles" or "Anzac wafers", differ from the popular Anzac biscuit. Anzac tiles and wafers were hard tack, a bread substitute, which had a long shelf life and was very hard.

ANZAC BISCUITS RECIPE

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups plain flour, sifted
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup caster sugar
- 3/4 cup desiccated coconut
- 2 tablespoons golden syrup or treacle
- 150g unsalted butter, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon bicarb soda

Method

Preheat oven to 170°C. Place the flour, oats, sugar and coconut in a large bowl and stir to combine. In a small saucepan place the golden syrup and butter and stir over low heat until the butter has fully melted. Mix the bicarb soda with 1 1/2 tablespoons water and add to the golden syrup mixture. It will bubble whilst you are stirring together so remove from the heat.

Pour into the dry ingredients and mix together until fully combined. Roll tablespoonfuls of mixture into balls and place on baking trays lined with non stick baking paper, pressing down on the tops to flatten slightly. Bake for 12 minutes or until golden brown.





MALTESE LOVE FLAGS AND DECORATING THE STREETS FOR THE 'FESTA'

A WORLD WAR 1 WELSH SOLDIER BURIED IN MALTA



leslie vella July 12, 2013

In Malta there are final resting places of soldiers of a wide variety of nationalities including English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish, Maltese, Australian and New Zealander, Canadian, Japanese, French, Indian and German. This wide range of nationalities is impressive when considering that Malta was not on the front-line during the First World War. The Island did play an important role however by receiving thousands of wounded in its hospitals, especially from the horrendous battles that took place in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign in Turkey in 1915, when thousands of young lives were sacrificed, estimated at 70,000 Allies and

60,000 Turks, due to the exposed terrain, the bad weather and the proximity of the front-lines.

Malta was a distant 850 miles away from the battlefield and the evacuation of wounded by sea usually took five to six days. Before the war started, peacetime Malta had less than 500 hospital beds. By March 1915 when the Gallipoli campaign was being formulated it was decided to increase the island's hospital bed-stock to 3,000; however at the peak of hostilities the number escalated to over 20,000 beds. Malta delivered medical treatment to 2,550 officers and 55,400 other ranks during the Gallipoli campaign with the first 600 patients arriving on 4 May 1915. A number of those seeking treatment succumbed to their injuries and were buried on the island.

Most of the graves in the well-groomed and maintained cemeteries merely supply name, nationality, rank, regiment and age of the fallen. However a few tombstones go into some more detail, shedding additional light on the person whose remains they commemorate. One such case is the tomb of Private David Luther Isaac at the Pieta Military Cemetery.

Private Isaac's tomb stands out not only due to its architectural features, with the marble cross emerging from a rendering of the sand bags so commonly associated with the trenches in which the men fought, but also due



to the information the tombstone provides. It tells us that he was the son of John and Mary Isaac who lived in 29, Glenalla Road, Llanelli, South Wales. It also tells us that he fought in the 1/4 Welsh Regiment. Born in November 1891, he lost his life in Tigne Hospital, Malta in September 1915, two months and one day short of his 24th birthday.

Intrigued by this information I decided to search for more and found some additional information in a website called <http://www.laugharnewarmemorial.co.uk>. The most precious detail I found was the photo below. Suddenly the name and details on the tombstone had a face. The face of a young 23 year old soldier who looks much older in full uniform.

The site provides some additional information to what is gleaned from the tombstone. It tells that Private Isaac enlisted in the 1/4th Battalion of the Welsh Regiment in Llanelli itself. This was the local Territorial Battalion, a volunteer reserve force. He was attached to the 159 Brigade of the 53rd Welsh Division. The young volunteer soldier very quickly found himself very far away from home, arriving at Cape Helles, the rocky headland at the south-westernmost tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula on 9 August 1915.

The young soldier was thrown into thick action almost immediately upon arrival, defending his post against a massive Turkish counter-attack during the battle of Sari Bair. It was here that he received a severe leg wound and was evacuated to Malta for treatment.

In Malta, the young David Luther Isaac was transferred to Tigne Hospital at the tip of Marsamxett Harbour where he underwent surgery to have his wounded leg amputated. The surgery was not enough to save his life and he sadly died of his wounds on 22 September 1915 at the tender age of 23 and barely six weeks after his arrival on the battlefield. He was buried in the Pieta Military Cemetery just outside Valletta.

A short story about a young man who, within a few short weeks in 1915, found himself caught in the horrors of war by being detached from his small Welsh community, thrown into the nightmare of a Turkish battlefield which claimed 130,000 lives in eight short months, only to be evacuated to die in Malta where he has rested in peace for the past 98 years.

OUR LADY OF VICTORY CHURCH VALLETTA, MALTA



This small church was the first to be built in Valletta by the Order of St John. Initially it was a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Victory. The name was appropriately chosen to commemorate Malta's triumph over a Turkish invading force during the Great Siege of 1565. Works began in 1567, and traditionally it is considered to be the site where the first stone of the new city of Valletta was laid with unprecedented pomp and the unbounded joy of the population on 28 March 1566.

"Our Lady of Victory church served as the first church of the Order in Valletta until 1577, when the Conventual Church of St John was completed. Grand Master La Vallette was initially buried in the former church. Upon completion of St. John's, his remains were moved to their final resting place within the Co-Cathedral. "The church underwent modifications towards the end of the seventeenth century and was remodelled once again in the mid eighteenth century." "In the late 1690s Grand Master Ramon Perellos ...commissioned the placement of a bust of Pope Innocent XI above the central window, while in 1752 Fra Gerolamo Ribas Montelieu, Bali of Majorca, enlarged the church, which has a plain rectangular nave with a ribbed barrel vault and a semicircular apse." (From information posted at the church.)

THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY, MY FRIEND – SEE YOU AGAIN SOON
DAK KOLLU GHALISSA, HABIB/A – NERGA NARAK DALWAQT

