

Journal for Maltese around the world

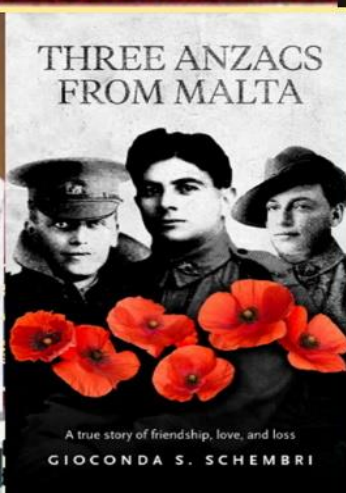


# MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

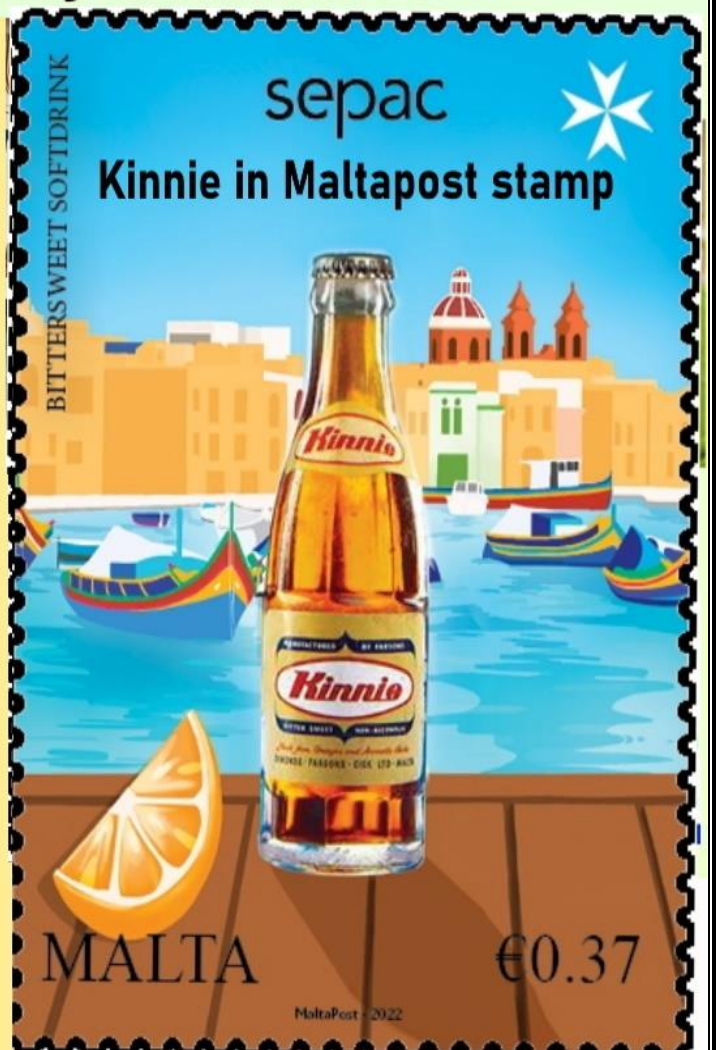
Editor: Frank Scicluna OAM MQR JP



Linwood Manuel created this beautiful piece of art for the Malta United Society of Windsor/Essex



**We promote our Achievers**





## Presidents accept invitation of President Vella

The so-called Arraiolos Group held its 17th meeting



**A family photo of the Arraiolos Group which met in Malta on Thursday.**

**Photo: DOI.**

Heads of state from eleven different countries along with President George Vella held

talks in Malta on Thursday, discussing issues ranging from global injustice, war, the economy and development, to migration.

The presidents invited to attend were from Bulgaria, Germany,

Italy, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Croatia, Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, and Slovenia and for the first time, they will be joined by the President of Slovakia.

This so-called Arraiolos Group first met in 2003 in the town of Arraiolos in Portugal with the participation of six presidents who discussed the preparations for the enlargement of the EU and the discussions related to the EU's Constitutional Treaty.

Since then they have held regular meetings on a variety of topics.

On Thursday a conference was held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre marking the 17th meeting of this group.

## CONSUL ON THE MOVE PROGRAM

The following is the updated list of the provisional scheduled visits for July – December 2022:

**EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA IN WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES** - to be announced

**CONSULATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA IN TORONTO, CANADA VANCOUVER AND EDMONTON**

December - Venue to be announced

**HIGH COMMISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA IN LONDON, United Kingdom** Manchester (including Sheffield, Liverpool, Yorkshire) October (tbc) Venue to be announced | Glasgow (Highlands, Scotland, Isle of Skye) December 2022/January 2023 (tbc) Venue to be announced Cardiff (Wales, Bristol) February 2023 (tbc) Venue to be announced

**HIGH COMMISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA IN CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA**

**Cairns** 2nd – 3rd December 2022 (2 days) Joe Vella Insurance Brokers, 108 Mulgrave Rd, Cairns City QLD 4870,

**Mackay** 28th – 30th November 2022 (3 days) Lanai Riverside Apartments Mackay, 20 River St, Mackay QLD

**Brisbane** 21st – 25th November 2022 (5 days) Greek Honorary Consulate, Level 7, 10 Eagle St, Brisbane City QLD

**Perth** 6th to 10th October 2022 (5 days) Maltese Association of Western Australia, 1, May Holman Way, Bassendean, W.A. 6054

It is worth noting that the service is available by confirmed appointment only. For further information, one may wish to contact the respective location focal point as follows:

<b>Australia/New Zealand</b>	<a href="mailto:consul.canberra@gov.mt">consul.canberra@gov.mt</a>	+61 (02) 6290 1724
<b>Canada</b>	<a href="mailto:consul.toronto@gov.mt">consul.toronto@gov.mt</a>	+1 (416) 207 0922/0989
<b>USA</b>	<a href="mailto:consul.washington@gov.mt">consul.washington@gov.mt</a>	+1 (202) 530 9750/1/2
<b>UK</b>	<a href="mailto:consul.london@gov.mt">consul.london@gov.mt</a>	+44 (0) 207 292 48002

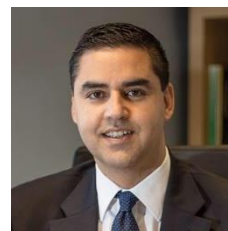
It is highly recommended that closer to the scheduled date/s of the visits, one consults the relevant Mission/s coordinating the visits to ensure that there are no changes in dates and venues.



## THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT

Malta remains committed to continue working in favour of more humanitarian aid to children affected by armed conflict

**Press Release Issue Date: Sep 22, 2022**



“Malta remains committed to continue working to see that all the necessary humanitarian aid continues to be provided so that the rights of children affected by Armed Conflict remain protected and safeguarded.” This was claimed by the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade Ian Borg during a conference he addressed in the margins of the 77th edition of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

During this conference, Minister Ian Borg reiterated that the subject of Children and Armed Conflict will be one of

the main priorities for the two-year term that Malta will be serving on the United Nations Security Council which starts in January 2023. He said that Malta will continue to push for peace and in favour of humanitarian aid. In recent weeks, the Government of Malta worked with the Office of SRS-CAAC in collaboration with the University of Malta on a virtual summer school in Child Protection in Armed Conflict. This pilot project held recently over two weeks, brought together a range of important actors from Government

officials to civil society, military, and child protection officers.

With a positive message in favour of unity and peace, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Ian Borg claimed that the international community cannot fail countless children in conflict-zones world-wide including children with disability, children who require urgent medical care, as well as displaced and refugee children. Minister Borg emphasised the need for communities to join efforts and forces to ensure that children and their rights are protected and safeguarded

## PAINTING BY ARTIST JOHN BORG MANDUCA – VALLETTA HARBOUR C.1972 DONATED TO THE HIGH COMMISSION IN CANBERRA



Mrs and Mr Beiers donated the picture to the High Commission of Malta in Canberra by Artist John Borg Manduca of the Valletta Harbour, which belonged to their friends, Mr & Mrs Fletcher. They were Australian citizens who mostly resided in the United Kingdom, and her husband Paul, spent 5-6 months annually in Gozo. The High Commissioner of Malta for Australia and New Zealand H.E. Mario Farrugia Borg and DHC

Gail Demanuele welcomed Mr & Mrs Beiers at the High Commission to thank



## The birth of Floriana - Joe Bugeja

Joe Bugeja Photo: Matthew Mirabelli

It came to my knowledge (Il-Furjana, April 2018, by Martin Camilleri) that a contention raised doubts about the relationship between Valletta and Floriana. As I shall prove from historical data, Floriana is a completely detached conurbation.

The circular fortifications that Pietro Floriani designed after his arrival from Macerata in 1634 sealed the confines of Floriana like a cocoon. Floriana even boasted of six massive gates that established a keen security. Moreover, St James Ditch, deep and wide, ran across the promontory from north to south isolating Floriana from Valetta. Therefore, any contention is banal and harmful.

It might be the brainchild of some diminutive mind that lacked historical knowledge and educational achievements. Perhaps it was intended to cause dissent and conflict: worst of all if it was meant to gain political mileage. This argument should be enough to put any enemies of Floriana to shame. What follows is a lesson in history. It is aimed to teach and instruct as I did for 48 years.

In 1634, Pietro Paolo Floriani arrived in Malta during the magistracy of Antoine de Paule (1622-1636). He was commissioned to build the defensive fortifications of Valletta. Presumably, Valletta does not appreciate this service. Floriani planned an impenetrable line of bastions that protected Valletta's bastions. These were crumbling from neglect on the land side. The Floriana fortifications

were an architectural masterpiece. They were the means of protecting the land

front of Valletta. These massive bastions were reinforced by ravelins, cavaliers, counter guards and curtains. The works on the fortifications extended over four kilometres. They were named after Floriani.

Floriani's plans were highly criticised: they were too ambitious and excessively costly. Offended by the strong criticism, Floriani left the island in 1638. Eventually the Council of the Order sanctioned the original design in May 1638. Unfortunately, Floriana suffered the incompetence of British military architects. They built barracks and other establishments haphazardly. They spoiled the panoramic spacious beauty of Floriana on both the north and south. The Lintorn Barracks obliterated the scenes of Marsamxett and Grand Harbour. These military installations were permanent eyesores.

Of course, the British made these changes with impunity, in the name of military exigencies. Their obsessed blindness with defence deprived Malta of many cultural gems. The British alterations were detrimental to the design of the fortifications. In the 1970s, parts of the glacis were destroyed to make way for large storage tanks.

British military architects had no vision for culture preservation. Their needs swept away all obstructions. The complete demolition of all the gates was unpardonable.

Nevertheless Floriana still breathes an individual character and a unique atmosphere. Undoubtedly, a number of historical buildings date back to

the era of the Knights. It is most unfortunate that its priceless heritage had been subject to vandalism and to carelessness in the name of progress.

The Knights made Floriana a very secure place. They built six massive gates as part of its fortifications. All are extinct except in name. They were St Anne's Gate, Crucifix Hill Gate, Notre Dame Gate, Polverista Gate and Quarantine Sally Port Gate.

*The British made these changes with impunity, in the name of military exigencies*

Portes des Bombes consisted of one arch when it was built by Grand Master Perellos in 1721. The second arch was added in 1868. The area leading to the Bombi underwent more changes. The arches were enlarged to accommodate the tramway on February 25, 1905.

It was Brig. René Jacob de Tigné who in 1716 took up the continuation of the fortifications. He pushed for the construction of the Floriana main gate, St Anne's Gate. This entrance was designed as a main gateway.

Officially it was the principal gate of Floriana. Indeed, it was the first focal point leading people into Piazza Sant' Anna with its Vilhena fountain. Then, with arches on both sides, Strada Sant' Anna ran towards Valletta. The public space of the piazza, the fountain and loggias established the unique character of Floriana.

In 1897, Porta Sant' Anna was demolished, once again. In time the gap in the curtain wall was widened further, depriving Floriana of St Anne's Gate, its main entrance.

As with most Maltese military entrances, a religious shrine crowned the inner side of Porta Sant' Anna. It portrayed the infant Virgin Mary in her mother's arms. The Order of St John held a



particular devotion to St Anne. Two chapels, one at Fort Elmo and one at Fort St Angelo, were dedicated to St Anne.

On February 7, 1673, the Council of the Order decided to build residential accommodation in the open area encircled by Floriani's fortifications but far from the Valetta fortifications. Hence the Floriana isolation enhanced the characteristic spaciousness. Including the Triton square, the open space stretched to the Biskuttin, the Mall, the granaries, the parade ground and the Argotti Botanic Gardens. Together they created the monumental piazza for Malta. Portuguese Grand Master Manoel de Vilhena (1722-

1736) was another benefactor. He left untouched the open space. He determined that the blocks in between wide roads should follow the grid-iron pattern; that enormous space should mark the bare distance between the Valletta entrance and the nearest line of buildings in Floriana.

By 1766 this area of 20 blocks had already been built. Within these blocks were included 14 tenements called kerrejja. The Ospizio has served as a geriatric home, as a hospital, as an asylum and as an orphanage even as a prison among other institutions, throughout its long history. The Ospizio, or La Casa di Carità, performed such charitable works.

In 1732, Vilhena turned the Polverista into a welfare institution. He established Floriana as a welfare centre. Towards the middle of the 19th century, the Ospizio was converted into a hospice.

The building was known as Casa D'Industria. In 1850 it was converted into a central hospital. By 1872 the Central Hospital was overcrowded. In 1885 plans were made to build a new hospital to house 354 beds. The project was shelved. The hospital was extensively damaged in May 1941.

*Joe Bugeja is a former lecturer at University.*

## Petition for Fr Mario Micallef MSSP



Fr Mario Micallef provides unique and essential services to the Maltese community in Ontario: pastoral services and weekly mass in the Maltese language. In view of the fact that his temporary residence permit has not been renewed, the Maltese Canadian Federation, with the assistance of the Maltese Canadian BusinessNetwork Association, and supported by Malta Consulate office, has set up an online petition. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has refused the application to renew the temporary visa for Fr Mario Micallef MSSP. Fr. Mario Micallef is a Catholic priest who

offers unique religious and pastoral services to the Maltese- Canadian community in the Maltese language at St Paul the Apostle Church at 3224 Dundas St. W. Toronto ON.

The reasons provided for this refusal by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada are not relevant to the circumstance of Fr. Mario Micallef. Moreover, the said decision will have a deeply detrimental effect on the rights and freedoms of the Maltese - Canadian community in Ontario and beyond, bearing in mind Section 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which states, "This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians."

The members of the Maltese Canadian community of Ontario are going to present a petition as a plea to the esteemed Hon. Minister to intervene in this matter and reverse the decision of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada in refusing Fr. Mario Micallef's application for renewal of his temporary visa and for the Hon. Minister to exercise discretion in offering Fr. Mario Micallef a renewal of his temporary visa.

Carl Azzopardi - CANADA -

<https://chnng.it/LPTjTPNG>

We signed the petition. What about you????

## Do you remember the Royal Naval Hospital in Bighi?

Get in touch with researchers looking into the place's social, cultural reference



Do you have any stories or memories to share about the Royal Naval Hospital, Bighi?

### Press Release

The current research phase will lead to the publication of a research report.

An artistic project is shining a light on the former Royal Naval Hospital (RNH) Bighi, in Kalkara, and, throughout the months of October and November, community members are being urged to contribute to the research phase.

*RNH Bighi through Communities' Stories* is an artistic-research project that is looking into the historical and architectural function of the former RNH Bighi, but, moreover, is interested in looking into the place's social and cultural

relevance for the communities who have experienced the place.

The site of the former hospital, which in the late 1970s also served as a school, currently houses Esplora – Malta's Interactive Science Centre, among other organisations.

The compounds of RNH Bighi, together with the outdoor areas, other than being a hub where Science Engagement takes place, are more than a mere container hosting a series of exhibits, shows, workshops, conferences, weddings, public and private functions.

Bighi provides a space, and, moreover, a place with a rich and long history of day-to-day living, including personal stories and collective memory.

The current research phase will lead to the publication of a research report, a series of short video clips and a public talk by mid-2023. All this will be then used as groundwork for a creative production in the coming years.

The research team – led by community artist Kristina Borg, in collaboration with Esplora, heritage consultant Christian Mifsud, and

filmmaker Matthew Calleja from Videocafe – is inviting community members to share their story or memory of RNH Bighi through a one-hour encounter.

The team is specifically interested in meeting people who have memories based on their personal or their relatives' experience of Bighi, as former service staff, service wives who attended maternity classes in the post-war years, patients and/or visitors of the hospital, and former students who spent their school years in Bighi during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

All encounters will take place throughout the months of October and November, at Esplora in Kalkara. If an in-person encounter is not possible, alternative means such as video or telephone calls are being offered.

*Community members can register their interest by filling in [the online form](#). For further information, please contact Esplora on +356 2360 2300 or send an e-mail to [rnhbighi@gmail.com](mailto:rnhbighi@gmail.com). This project is supported by Arts Council Malta and APS Bank.*



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**MMG Concert Band of Victoria  
Australia**

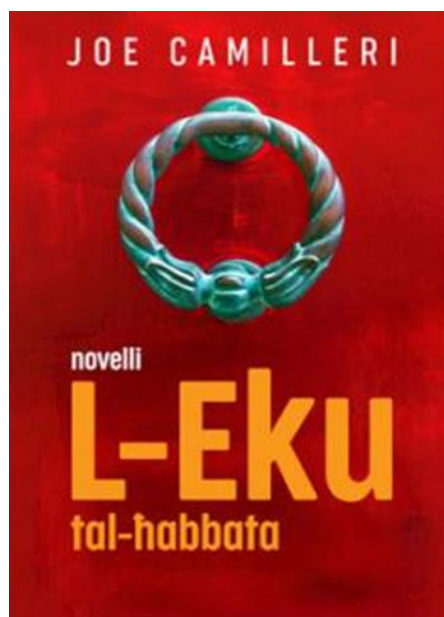


**I DON'T RECEIVE  
ANY MONEY  
FOR PRODUCING  
THIS JOURNAL  
BUT A  
'THANK YOU'  
FROM YOU  
IS WORTH  
MORE THAN  
A THOUSAND  
DOLLARS TO ME**



# The echo of the door knocker

Noel Grima



'L-eku tal-habbata'.

Author: Joe Camilleri.

Publisher: Horizons /

2022. Pages: 252pp

The door knocker is a staple feature of the old houses in Malta, especially in rural areas, although some, or many of them today, have electric bells.

The knockers, however, are kept on, not just for their traditional look and sound but also for their practical use. Their sound is more peremptory than many electric bells - they force anyone who is in the house to go and see who it is. They may welcome but they may also repel.

The author has already published two novels and six collections of short stories, some of which have been reviewed on these pages. So, this is the seventh collection - a reputable record.

As usual, the setting is more or less Gozo, specifically Victoria. But the stories vary.

The last story in the collection has as its title, The Door Knocker. It tells of an old

decrepit building in one of Gozo's lost alleys, barely passable by cars. The house, like so many old houses, has a knocker, the same as in the past. The house too has a past, long buried in so many years. But soon it will be pulled down in the current craze of development.

The story, *Fula Maqsuma*, takes off from a consideration and appreciation of an erotic painting by Gustave Courbet, dated 1886, showing two naked lesbian women entwined together, and then moves on to Lucien Freud's parallel painting of two men. All this to introduce a story about one man whose mother for a reason that will come clear only at the end, always gave him things by two. The Saint George of Victoria background is a rather confused introduction to the story *Is-siegħa tad-dragun* based on a small boy's fascination and terror with the figure of the dragon that enhances every statue of San Gorg. During childhood the dragon terrorised all those boys with guilty consciences. Today, however, the fiery dragon is something in one's body for which he is being treated.

One delightful story is *Girien* about a hairstylist, Giulia, (unfortunately misspelled throughout the story) who fills her mind with all sorts of misconceptions when she gets to know that the old and shuttered house next door has a new resident and that he is a rich Swede who does not believe in God. But that was before she meets him and he becomes her client. And again, that was before she glimpsed him in a bar. *Stqarrija* is a strong story

about a son who gets up enough courage to admit to his parents that he is gay, as a result of which his father kicks him out of the house. But then his father dies and something from the past uncovers another side to the upholder of morality.

Other stories decry the blight of construction that is gobbling up what remains of the countryside. Or the reality about the elderly forced to stay indoors by the pandemic and then taken to places that remind them of the past, and of their sins in the past.



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## George Cross exhibition: 'Was it worth it?'

### Marsa event to explore the siege of Malta and relevance of George Cross

Times of Malta



A photo of anti-aircraft gunners during World War II with illustrations of the George Cross and the Maltese cross and the wording: 'Was it worth it?'

'For gallantry' is etched onto the George Cross.

Given "to bear witness to a heroism and devotion that will long be famous in history", the cross was awarded to the people and "fortress of Malta" in 1942. Eighty years on, the cross still flies on the red and white national flag.

The George Cross was born in 1940 under George VI to replace the empire gallantry medal.

Although it was awarded to several individuals for distinguished service, Malta was the first to receive the award as a people. In 1999, it was also awarded to the Royal Ulster Constabulary in Northern Ireland. Most recently, the

British National Health service also received the cross.

A letter sits next to the medal, handwritten by the king and dated April 15, 1942. That month alone, Malta received more bombs than the total for the previous year. Malta

was to suffer more than ever before under the Axis air raids and the constant threat of invasion. The cross itself would reach Malta in May of the same year.

After the official award-giving ceremony in Valletta, the cross toured towns and villages across Malta.

Although there has been some criticism as to the relevance of the George Cross, most are very proud of the award displayed on the national flag.

*What could the George Cross signify in the present day and the future?*

Malta is no longer a colonial outpost, a 'fortress', or under British rule.

Perhaps the cross is a means through which to pin a memory against the ebb of time. If so, what war does the cross represent? What could the

George Cross signify in the present day and the future? And, as the anti-aircraft gunners during the World War II put it, was it worth it?

The Battlefront Living History Group will explore this theme through a curated exhibition of authentic artefacts from the conflict at the Marsa local council premises on October 16 from 9am till 6pm. There will be uniforms, firearms, documents and other material from local private collections never before exhibited in public.

Several activities are also planned throughout the day under the title 'Il-Wasla tal-George Cross fil-Marsa'. Families and children will be able to participate in re-enactments from wartime Malta, parades, performances and take a historical tour on vintage buses around Marsa.

For history and military enthusiasts, there will be military convoys and a guard of honour during the full-scale reconstruction from 1942 of the exhibition of the George Cross at Marsa (see the full programme below).

*This article was provided by the Battlefront Living History Group.*





## AUSTRALIA BORN MAGGIE BAJADA A GOZITAN PHOTOGRAPHER

Gabriele Spiller



Reaching out to Maggie Bajada on her favourite things: Preparing trips and researching photo locations. "Next week, we are going to Morocco"; she says. In Victoria, Gozo, she not only packs light clothes for the expected 25 degrees Celsius, but as always, her photo equipment has the most essential place in her luggage. "I keep on upgrading my equipment, buying new lenses."

To those who see her pictures, it's hard to believe that she's only been photographing for a few years and taught herself. "A friend of mine said, you have a good eye, you

should start taking photos. So, I bought myself a small digital camera and began after my retirement."; That was before the Australian relocated to Gozo in 2015. Although she was born in Melbourne, her Gozitan parents seem to have given her the Mediterranean gene.

She simply fell in love with the island. Of course, she can also realize her favourite photographic subject – landscape – particularly well there. "I want to capture the beauty of the scenery," she says. More than 70 of her best photos are gathered in the book "50

REASONS TO LOVE GOZO". She has been featured in the Gozo Photography Association exhibitions at the Cittadella as well as in "The Essence of Gozo" presentation in Brussels, Belgium. A "Visit Gozo" booklet and various online media paid tribute to her photos.

"In November, my photo of the St. Margaret's Feast Fireworks is coming to the Blank Wall Gallery in Athens" she enthuses.

Maggie pursues her continuing education via subscriptions on Youtube, always learning something new. Sometimes the mother and grandmother of two can't believe how far she has come artistically. Although she has now become the 'family photographer,' she still often searches Google for the optimal location for a new place she wants to photograph. Then she considers the time for the best lighting conditions. "I plan well ahead", she says, "It keeps me busy during my retirement and I do lots of travelling."

You can follow Maggie on: [instagram.com/mags11photography/](https://www.instagram.com/mags11photography/) All photos are taken from "50 Reasons to Love Gozo", available via Amazon (Gabriele Spiller/Maggie Bajada).



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THE MALTESE JOURNAL  
DON'T DELETED IT  
IF I WERE YOU, I SAVE IT ON  
AN USB OR SHARE IT WITH  
YOUR FAMILY, RELATIVES AND  
FRIENDS (AND ENEMIES, IF  
YOU HAVE ANY)**

## THE THREE ANZACS FROM MALTA [Gioconda S. Schembri](#)



time, they decided to chase a brighter future, on the other side of the world, settling in Perth. After the initial teething problems encountered by any new migrant, they managed to settle down, securing good jobs, making friends and even finding love.

However, their lives were unfortunately turned upside down by global events beyond their control. Their story captured my heart and I wanted to know more about them. The first world war's victims amounted to 16 million dead and

I first came across the names of Charles Bonavia, Waldemar Beck and Anthony Xuereb, the three gentlemen featured in 'Three Anzacs from Malta', when one day as part of my duties at work, I had to draw up an inventory of books that formed part of the office's collection. While I was carrying out this rather mundane task, I stumbled upon a book that literally stopped me in my tracks. The author was the late Times of Malta journalist John Mizzi and the book was called 'Gallipoli: the Malta connection'. Since my parents had lived through the Second World War, my bedtime stories included accounts of air raids, piercing sirens and mad dashes to underground shelters. So I was quite familiar with the pivotal role that my country of birth, Malta, played in that conflict when at one time it was the most heavily bombed place on earth!. However I knew little about its

contribution to the 1914-1918 war. Therefore I was really surprised to find a whole book dedicated to the subject! Little did I know at the time what a long lasting impact this book would have on my life and that it would take me on a fascinating journey of discovery, which introduced me to these three remarkable young men.

Mizzi's book also mentioned a number of Maltese that had migrated to Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand, and who at the outbreak of war, enlisted with the expeditionary forces of their country of adoption. Among these, the names of Charles, Anthony and Waldemar leapt out at me from the pages. They had met at school and after graduating as architects from the Royal University of Malta, due to the heavy unemployment at the



**FEBRUARY 1912**

Waldemar and Anthony join Charles in Perth. The three friends do all they can to encourage Maltese settlement in Western Australia, acting as mentors to newly arrived migrants and between them, they employ seven Maltese.

21 million wounded, these were people like you and me, real people, husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, ..... all with their hopes, dreams and plans for their future. Wars tend to reduce people to statistics and I wanted to give these young men a voice. This amazing story is now available for your convenience from AMAZON!! Great gift idea ... check out the Facebook page [Three Anzacs from Malta](#) and read the great reviews and comments !

Gift wrapping and postage available ... just send us a message or call on 93647527!!





Following an SBS Urdu investigation, a Pakistani lawyer has made contact with the long-lost descendants of his grand-uncle who came to Australia 'accidentally' in 1895. By Afnan Malik Source: SBS

Mumtaz Malik, a septuagenarian lawyer now living in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, had spent decades trying to track down what became of his grand-uncle and his family. In 1895, Mr Malik says, Ally Bahadur Khan left the family village of Tatta Paani and boarded a ship from Karachi which he thought was headed to Britain.

*Ally Bahadur Khan with her daughter Lillian Ezeem Khan. Source: Supplied / Lana Ali*



Instead, several months later, he began a new life in Brisbane, Australia. Mr Khan and his descendants remained in sporadic contact with

their extended family in Pakistan until the 1940s, when all communication was lost. But now, after more than 70 years, SBS Urdu has uncovered several branches of Mr Khan's family tree in Brisbane and helped facilitate an unlikely reunion.

*Ally Bahadur Khan (centre with hat) with his friends and family. Source: Supplied / Christine Evers*

**'It was just a blank'**

Lana Ali, born in 1947, has spent much of her life wondering about her family history. "I was born in Brisbane, Australia. My twin sister died when we were quite young. I was left in foster care and adopted in 1958. I never knew about my parents," Ms Ali tells SBS Urdu.

By the 1980s, she had traced her lineage back to a man named Ally Bahadur Khan – her great

grandfather. But until SBS Urdu's article, she had no idea about the extent of his fascinating past. Ms Ali's own journey is filled with many twists and turns. In 1976, she married a Pakistani man while living in The



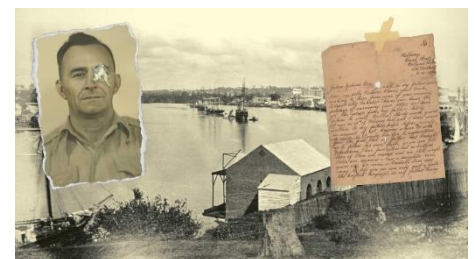
Netherlands.

For a period after this, she also lived in Lahore, Pakistan, not knowing that her great-grandfather's roots laid just a couple of hundred kilometres away.

*Lana Ali while narrating her story to SBS. Source: SBS / Afnan Malik*

"I didn't know anything about my family back then. I was quite blank about it. I just knew I had an Indian father," she says.

After returning to Australia, Ms Ali started searching for her ancestors. She wrote letters to everyone who had the same



surname as her. She contacted the Births, Marriages and Deaths Registry and eventually, in 1985, had some success. "I was able to find my family. I was able to speak to my brother who asked me where I had been all his life," she said.

Still seeking answers, Ms Ali says she was delighted to learn about her extended family in Pakistan. "I would

love to meet the family. As long as they forgive me, I would love to meet them," she says.

### 'The missing piece'



Christine Evers is another great-granddaughter of Ally Bahadur Khan who reached out to SBS Urdu. She says she knew that Ally hailed from what is today Pakistan Administered Kashmir. "I was told by one of my friends from where Ally came from, but I didn't know why he came to Australia," Ms Evers tells SBS Urdu.

She recalls meeting one of Ally Bahadur Khan's daughters many years ago, but was surprised to learn about the extended correspondence between the Pakistani and Australian sides of the family. *Christine Evers, a great-granddaughter of Ally Bahadur Khan, sharing her story with SBS Urdu. Source: SBS / Afnan Malik*

As Mr Malik previously explained, members of the family exchanged letters and other items - like an Elgin watch which Ally Bahadur Khan sent his nephew - until at least the 1940s before all contact ceased. "The letters written to his cousins by Ayoub [Ayoub Ally Bahadur Khan, son of Ally Bahadur Khan] were a revelation for me and the watch was also a revelation for me," Ms Evers says. She says her grandmother, Lilian, also made attempts to reach the Pakistan-based side of the family in the years that followed. Mr Malik previously recounted to SBS Urdu how his uncle had been in touch with the police commissioner of Queensland in the 1950s seeking a contact address for Mr Khan's family.

This dovetails with a story Ms Evers says she had been told. "knocked on the door," she says. "However, when my grandmother told AB [Ally Bahadur] Khan that his family was looking for him, he refused to come to the door." According to my grandmother, the policeman's last comment was, 'If that was my family, I would want to be found'." Ms Evers, who was born and raised in Brisbane, lives in a house close to where her great-grandfather himself lived.

She expresses her relief at uncovering this part of her family history: "It's hard to put into words. I got teary at times and it helps me understand ...what my mother, my aunt and my grandmother went through." Ms Evers describes the SBS Urdu article on her great-grandfather as the "missing piece of the puzzle". "I got an unusual call from a fairly distant cousin. And she said that an SBS journalist is assisting a gentleman in Islamabad that is looking for his lost family," she says.

'I talked it over with my husband and he said he saw something on a Facebook post. He showed it to me, and I was absolutely blown away by the photo. As soon as I

saw it, I thought that's my granduncle Abe [Ayoub].' Christine Evers "Then I read the article and I was just completely amazed. I was quite shaken. Actually, it was wonderful. I would like to thank SBS for doing such an investigative story and bringing families together."

### 'Bits and pieces'



Mark McDiarmid is the grandson of Ayoub Ally Bahadur Khan, Ally Bahadur Khan's son, who he remembers as 'Hubie'. Mr McDiarmid, who learned of SBS Urdu's previous story through his wife, says his grandfather rarely spoke of his background. "He didn't really say much about his past or his family and things like

that," Mr McDiarmid says. "He would only talk to me about what he was doing at the time, like what was happening with the birds and the yard."

*Ayoub Bahadur Khan in his military uniform. Mumtaz described the same picture they received from Ayoub which they lost years ago. Source: Supplied / Mark McDiarmid*

"I didn't get much information about the family from him. I got a little bit from my mother and that was just bits and pieces. There's a lot of things I didn't actually know." Mr McDiarmid's mother, Freda, was mentioned in a letter written by Ayoub Ally Bahadur Khan to Mr Malik's cousins in 1934 which is currently in the Pakistani lawyer's possession. He says that because his father used to work on ships, the family didn't socialise with many others and this restricted what he knew about his heritage. He knew that his grandad was from Kashmir, but didn't know much more than that. "We were a family that really didn't mix much because my father was a ship worker and he would either be working or sleeping in. So, we didn't go out much for Christmas and things like that," Mr McDiarmid says. The SBS Urdu story came as a surprise to him.

**I didn't ever think that anyone over there would be looking for a part of the family that had disappeared. We are a small family and there's not many others here.**

*Mark McDiarmid talking to SBS Urdu about his grandfather and his family.*



Mark McDiarmid, great grandson of Ally Bahadur Khan and grandson of Ayoub Ally Bahadur Khan Mr McDiarmid, who was born in Brisbane, says



he hasn't travelled much. "I was born here. I have never travelled overseas. I haven't got a passport," he says. "I've only ever been in a plane once, so I'm not really a travelling type person. Even around Queensland, I've only travelled very short distances." Looking back, he describes his mum as a "typical Australian" but says there were some hints of his grandad's past. "I know my grandfather did like these little chillies he used to grow in the backyard and pickle," Mr McDiarmid says. "When I used to go there, you'd sit down at the table and he'd be eating these little chillies out of this jar. He pickled them himself." Mr McDiarmid says it was "nice" to learn someone out there was looking for them. "It's nice to find out some of your past, as I had rough ideas, but not a great deal of information," he says. "Being from a family that didn't really talk much about things that way, you just didn't know a lot of stuff."

#### The reunion

For Mr Malik, the discovery of his grand-uncle's descendants in Australia brings a close to decades of

fruitless searching. Separated by more than 10,000km, Mr Malik and Ms Evers spoke for the first time during an emotional video call arranged by SBS Urdu. A tearful Ms Evers lauded Mr Malik for his efforts in reuniting the family, while Mr Malik also struggled to contain his emotions.

These families in Australia and Pakistan were united by 120-year-old mystery Both extended offers to visit their respective countries and stay at each other's homes.

**We know that a lot of time has passed, and a lot of cultural differences are there but still you people are our own people. You are our blood.** Mumtaz Malik to Christine Evers

Ms Evers said that since she was 16, she's encountered various incidents that have provided clues to her past. "Someone's tapping on my shoulder again to say 'come and look for me'. It's the sixth time it's happened to me, and I'm glad," she says. Mr Malik added that he wanted to thank all those who had made an effort to connect the families.

## JOSPH CAMILLERI Maltese/Canadian marathon runner places third on the world stage

Joseph Camilleri who is 72 years old, lives in Victoria, British Columbia. He participated in the London Marathon on October 2. This race was also a part of the Age Group World Championships, for which Joseph represented Canada and his club the Prairie Inn Harriers, placing third in a time of 3:24:43, out of 160 in his age group world wide. Overall there were over 40,000 participants. Originally Mr. Camilleri hails from Hamrun, Malta but has been living in Canada since 1972, where he re-



started running in 2010 at sixty years of age, and after over a 40 years absence from any running. Joseph, who is more commonly known as Joe Crazy Legs, has also completed the Boston Marathon 2018 as part of the Six Major Star Marathons, which are composed of Boston, Tokyo, London, Berlin, Chicago and New York City.

Joe Crazy Legs is now qualified to do the Chicago Marathon 2023, which will also simultaneously host the Age Group World Championships, giving Mr. Camilleri another opportunity to shine on the world stage. Joe's favourite quote, from none other than his hero Terry Fox, is "If you dream it, you can achieve it".

**THANKS TO ALL OUR READERS AND CONTRIBUTORS**





See the pictures and videos of our week at Chagrin Documentary Film Festival as it happens on our social media

pages, [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#).

Also, don't forget you can purchase your ticket to watch Cats of Malta virtually from Nov 2nd - 9th through this link: <https://watch.showandtell.film/watch/catsofmalta>

For now, we hope you are well and have a wonderful rest of the week!

Meow from Chagrin, Cleveland.

Sarah Jayne and Ivan Malekin

The air is noticeably cooler in Cleveland Ohio in comparison to sunny California, where we undertook our Cat Con

meet-and-greet. Our hearts were also stolen by a sweetheart named Ashley, which we almost adopted.



**Worldwide mission** over the weekend. Safe to say, the first leg of our business trip in the USA has been successful. Now we can relax a bit, take a breath and enjoy some small town simplicities. **Cat Con was phenomenal** – the atmosphere was not only fun and electrifying, **overall the experience was educational and eye opening for our business minds.** As

intended, **valuable connections were made** and we met a ton of cat enthusiasts. Leo the adventure cat and the Siberian cat (which we unsettled with our catnip bags – two of the biggest felines on social media were there – so naturally we got amongst the

As a bonus, we unintentionally got interviewed for a German news channel and stumbled upon another cat film selling posters and merchandise. Next year we plan to be back before the PBS broadcast airs.

Chagrin Falls is our home for the next five days and the Chagrin Documentary Film Festival is really taking care of the filmmakers. We have been given a place to live and work while in Chagrin Falls and our hosts Carole and John have welcomed us into their lovely home. Our location is a handy six min walk to Riverside Park, where the Cats of Malta US premiere takes place on Saturday 8th, 1pm.

**We hope you enjoy the bonus Cat Con video Ivan put together while in transit between**

states: <https://youtu.be/NxaAM OzFRbM>





**MALTA****An Island of Spies**  
**By Sean Richardson**

The dark hair, swept over one shoulder, transcended her girl next door appearance. The beguiling tilt of her head and the smile that lit up her face, made it easy for Maria to start a conversation over drinks, turning a seemingly chance meeting into a friendship.

Maria would travel from her base in Malta to Rome for her gemmology studies. Maria Rivera, from Peru, would enjoy the climate of Malta, including the summer heat for the two years she lived on the island with her boyfriend. Staying in Malta would help the Peruvian to assimilate into the Mediterranean conditions and more readily adapt to its lifestyle, than could Olga Kolobova, her real-life identity. Kolobova was secretly an agent for GRU, the Russian military intelligence service, who would use the Latin persona in Malta to launch her espionage assignments.

As Maria Adela Rivera, she used Malta as an entry point into European society before she set up base in Italy as a jewellery designer. Under the cover of a complicated back story as Maria Adela, Olga Kolobova would proceed to become close to officers of the US Navy and attaches from several countries, who worked at the NATO base in Naples, Italy.

An investigation by Bellingcat, and its newspaper partners, has identified “Maria Adela Rivera”

as the Russian spy who was active in Europe until 2018. The Bellingcat investigation revealed her true identity during investigations into the two GRU agents who had been involved in the poisoning of Russian dissident Sergey Skripal and his daughter, in Salisbury, the UK in 2018.

Social media posts show Maria Adela living in Malta with her boyfriend, in the period between 2009 and 2011. Having befriended people in Malta, including gaining the confidence of a former editor of the UK edition of Cosmopolitan magazine, she was able to integrate into European society. Travelling between Malta and Rome, the agent would eventually set up a jewellery store, Serein, in Naples and become a fixture on the social scene hosting large parties and becoming a member of the local Lions Club. Using a complicated back story of a Peruvian child abandoned in Moscow during the 1980 Olympics, Maria Adela Rivera went onto charm and befriend several people close to military and strategic operations, before her secretive exit to Moscow.

Maria Adela is not the first spy to use Malta from which to conduct their secret operations.

Malta’s location in the centre of the Mediterranean makes it an ideal place from which spies and espionage forays can be conducted. Malta, with its

alliances and strategic positioning, is the perfect place to discreetly conduct operations or be a communications point. For such a small island, the size of some embassies raises a suspicion that much more could be taking place behind their closed gates.

The French did not even need an embassy, instead agents used an ordinary looking terraced house in residential Balzan. Around 2016, French secret service agents used Malta as a base to monitor the delivery of weapons to Libya. The secret operation came to light following the mysterious crash of a plane in Malta, when the crash victims were identified as members of the DGSE, France’s external intelligence agency. The flight was passed off as an accident involving French Customs, but later details dismissed this as a ruse. An investigation by Maltese authorities identified that the Balzan house was the base for a covert operation. During the inquiry into the crash, the magistrate described the operation as being like a classic spy film, of agents sitting behind their computers in a darkened room in the house, who would receive “live footage” from the aircraft and process the information to the French secret service. The investigation raised the possibility that the French had been conducting surveillance missions for some time.

Such French spying on the island had not been so brazen since when Napoleon inserted spies into Malta to surveil the Knights of St John! Over much of its history many nations used Malta as a base for their own purposes. The British used Malta during the Cold War as a place to train spies, away from the gaze of the Communists, or so they thought. The parents of popular British/Irish singer Chris de Burgh, singer of Lady in Red fame, trained British spies in Malta. Charles and Maeve Davidson moved to Malta in 1951 settling in the township of Rabat. The couple, on behalf of the British intelligence services, trained spies, ahead of a deployment in Albania, as part of 'Operation Valuable'. The operation was an early Cold War

attempt to overthrow the communist regime in Albania. The mission ultimately ended in tragedy when the agents they trained were discovered by the Albanian authorities and executed. Suspicions were, the famous double spy Kim Philby, was leaking information. Philby was the Davidsons' controller in the Mediterranean. Far from only hosting foreign spies, Malta has its own spying history. During the second world war, Carmelo Borg Pisani, a Maltese national, developed strong pro-Italian sentiment and had been studying art in Rome when war broke out. Borg Pisani wrote to Mussolini and eventually joined the 'black shirts' - the fascist militia before joining the Italian intelligence unit. He volunteered for an espionage mission to Malta, to

check British defences and help prepare for the planned invasion by Axis forces. Crossing from Italy in rough seas, he landed at the planned landing position at Dingli cliffs. Pisani was captured after the rations he had stored in a cave, that he had explored in his youth, were washed out by the inclement weather. Unable to climb the steep cliffs he was taken into custody and eventually tried. Pisani was executed for treason in 1942 at Corradino Prison. Mussolini named Pisani as the "Maltese Martyr".

Pisani was not the first and Maria Adela Rivera will not be the last spy, to use the small Mediterranean island as a convenient base for covert operations. Home to 25 embassies who knows how many spies are on the island right now.

## Kinnie featured in Maltapost stamp issue



-Photo : WOPA + Stamps & Coins Facebook

Kinnie, the Mediterranean Classic since 1952, has been featured on a stamp set issued by Maltapost earlier this month.

As a member of SEPAC (Small European Postal Administration Cooperation) and in keeping with its annual tradition of a joint stamp issue, MaltaPost issued a set of four stamps titled Local Beverages. **One of the stamps features a retro Kinnie bottle taking centre stage against a flatly rendered, yet colourful, local backdrop. The stamp set was designed by Daniel Spiteri.**

Photo : Kinnie stamp

designed by Daniel Spiteri

Ms Mary Grace Simpson, Head Philately at Maltapost said, "As soon as the SEPAC stamp theme *Local Beverages* was chosen, we immediately envisaged depicting a retro Kinnie bottle since it is one of the most popular beverages on the Maltese Island."

"We are honoured that Kinnie has been represented on a stamp set issue, more so in the year that Kinnie is celebrating 70 years since its launch," commented Mr Karl Bondin, Marketing Manager at Simonds Farsons Cisk plc. **The set is available from all Post Offices in Malta and Gozo. Orders may also be placed online at [www.maltaphilately.com](http://www.maltaphilately.com).** .content supplied by Simonds Farsons Cisk plc



## SULFARINI TA' MALTA Greg Caruana



*Sulfarina mara ckejkna...ghanda tfal tnejn u hamsin,, hija zzommhom gewwa kaxxa...dejjem hemm dejjem reqdin..* Din kienet kantalierna poplarisma mat-tfal zgħar li kuljum kienu jhobbu xi taqbila jew storja qasira qabel ma jorqdu..Madana kollu,,fiz-zminijiet l-imghoddija , kienu jkun tabilhaqq 52 is-sulfarini tal-kaxxa..Maz-zmien izda kellhomk jtnaqqsu sa ma s-sulfarina Maltija ghebet għal kollox mis-swieq Maltin....F'Malta nistghu nfakkru li kellna wkoll fabrika tas-sulfarini , li kienet tipproduci l-iktar għas-suq lokali għalkemm lejn l-aħhar snin tas-60 kienet tesporta lejn xi pajjizi għarab u anke xi ewropew bħal Greċja u l-Lebanon. L-ewwel bniedem li gietu l-ideja li jipproduci s-sulfarini lokalment kien certu Sur Bugeja ,li rnexxielu jikseb permiss b'monopolju għal 20 sena mingħand il-gvern. Wara xi zmien dan bieh kollox lis-sur Gorg Zerafa ,li wara dahhal lil shabu mieghu Paul u Emanuel Pisani ,dawn kellhom 50 fill-mija tal-ishma Fis-sena 1950 inhass il-bzonn li tinbena fabrika , li tinbena fabrika għall produzzjoni tas-sulfarini u l-post magħzul kien il-Marsa peress li qrib ix-xatt u malajr ikun milhuq, għall merkanzija li jipproduci jew li jkun iridu jimpurtaw u sena wara il-fabrika l-gdida kienet fl'gheqqel tal-produzzjoni tagħna,,u hawn ta min isemmi li f'Malta barra il-fabrika tas-sulfarini ,kien hemm din taq- Tqiq ,u Spass Mayers li tagħmel il-kalzetti tan-nisa ,din bħall fabriki ohra bdiet għaddejja bil-produzzjoni gmiela u kull delegazzjoni li kienet tigi Malta kienu jmorru jzuruh. Għall kemm "Moden Matches factory" għax hekk kienet mgharufa din il-fabrika tas-sulfarini li fethet f'1951 Imma jahasra din kella ddum tistenna sentejn biex tinhela l-hazna ta' sulfarini mpurtati ,u fuq kollox is-sulfarini li kien hemm f'Malta ma kienx ta livell mixtieq ,,iz-zkuk kienu jaslu Malta friski mill-Belġju. Ma setghux ikunu mnixxfen, għax inkella ma jinhadmux, ..Għall hekk kienu jaslu Malta tista tghid għadhom imxarrbin u hekk kif ikunu għadhom, kif inqatghu ....Imbagħad il-haddiema f'Malta kienu jaqtghu dawn iz-zkuk f'tul fa' metro u nofs u idahhluhom bicca bicca f;makna tat-tqaxxir.. fejn iz-zokk tas-sigra jibda jdurt-tul kollu ta qisu metro u taqta f'folja shiha.. fejn iz-zokk tas-sigra. Naturament, il-wisa ta din il-folja kienet tkun il-wisa taz-zokk tas-sulfarina....il-folji ta' l-injam miz-zokk kienu jitziedu mifruxin hdejn xulxin u permezz ta' magna ohra..jinqatghu fit-tul u wisa' tas-sulfarini.. Meta titlesta din il-hidma, iz-zkuk kienu jaqghu f'dak magħruf bħala l-impjant ta' impregnazzjoni, li jkun ilma mħallat bill-fosfat *diammonium*, ( li jkun qisu melh) u li kien jinxxtara mill-Ingilterra.

Għall-bidu li bdiet tahdem il-fabrika,il-kaxxi kienu jesghu 52 sulfarina..izda b'dan l-ammunt ta'zkuk il-kaxxi kienu xi ftit goffi għall bwiet ta'l-irġiel u hadd ma ried dak il-kobor fill-bwiet ..allura biex il-kaxxa issir iktar izgħar u

pulita il-kwantita nislet għall 50 sulfarina.... Aktar tard

għall habta tas-snin 70 id-deretturi tal-fabrika xtaqu li

jgħollu ftit il-prezz, għax il-pagi bdew jplgħew..Minflok, bi ftehim mal-Gvern ,thallew inaqqsu tmien sulfariniet ohra minn kull kaxxa u il-prezz ta' kaxxa jibqa l-istess, Madana kollu,meta nitkellmu fuq is-sulfarini ma rridux ninsew li sinomini magħhom kien hemm ukoll il-kaxxi li jridu jingabru fiha biex johorgu għall-bejgh, Dawn kienu jsiru wkoll fil-fabrika tal-Marsa ..Id-diretturi tal-kumpanija kienu jimpurtaw il-kartun f'rizmi ta kwart ta' tunnellata kull wahda.....Meta l-kartun jinqata' għad-daqs tal-kaxxi ta' barra, kien isir l-istampar fuqha ..Fuq parti kien ikun hemm ir-riklam tal-fabrika u fuq in-naha l-ohra,riklam ta' xi prodott jew ditta ohra..Dawn ir-rikلامي kienu jsiru bi hlas,,biex ipattu għal parti ckelkna hafna mill-ispejjes tal-produzzjoni tas-sulfarini ..Imbagħad , fuq il-gnieb tal-kaxxa kien jingħata l-fosfru biex is-sulfarini jixgħelu.....is-Sur Zerafa qalilna li wiehed jista facilmenet jghid li jekk kien hawn prodott f'Malta li kien ultra ewropew, din kienet s-sulfarina Maltija..Dan minhabba li z-zkuk tas-sigar kienu jigu impurtati mill-Belġju,,il-kartun tal-kaxxa kien jigi minn Cipru ,u l-kimika li biha isir għal fosfru kienet tigi mill-Awstralja.. Għall-bidu tal-produzzjoni,fill-fabrika tas-sulfarini kienu jahdmu madwar 50 ruh; nofshom nisa..

Meta fis-snin hamsin fethet din il-fabrika u x-xbejbiet Maltin bdew johorgu jfittxu x-xogħol mal-partikular u fuq il-makni,,f'dawk iz-zminijiet xebba jew mara kienet taqla Lira Maltija u erbatax-il-xelin fill-gimgha u ragel kien jaqbad 6 liri Maltin, Hawn ,iridu niftakru li f'dawk iz-zminijiet għal l-istess xogħol ragel kien jithallas aktar minn mara, għax kien meqjus bħala r-rebbieh għall-hobza ta' kuljum tal-familja. Kellu jkun il-moviment tradjoistiku fis-sittinijiet ,li ggied għal dawn id-drittijiet,fejn mara u ragel li kienu jagħmlu l-istess xogħol u jithalsu l-istess pagi ....

Meta fl-1950 miet is-sur is-sur Pawl ,li jigi missier Joseph Pisani, dan, flimkien mas-sur Zerafa, ha t-tmexxiya tal-fabrika sakemm ghaqet fl-1995...sa dik is-sena, il-50 haddiema kienu nizlu għal 12 biss, minhabba li l-makni awtomatiki kienu qed jagħmlu x-xogħol huma flokk il-haddiema....skont s-sur Pisani ,is-sulfarini hadu daqqa ta' harta kbira fis-snin 80, meta dahlu il-*lighters* ..Wiehed jista jghid li s-sulfarini kienu baqghu popolari biss mal-mara tad-dar,,biex tixgħel il-kucuniera tal-pitrolju ,u ma l-irġiel li kienu jpejpu l-pipa, sigaretti u s-sigarri...Imbagħad anki fil-kcejjen bdew deħlin il-cookers tal-gass, li bdew jinxteghlu awtomatikament ...u hawn nistghu nghidu li l-modernizmu bħall kull haga ohra,qered kwazi għal kollox is-sulfarini,għall kemm ,ghadek isib f'xi hwienet. **mill-ktieb**

**"Tifkirijiet tal-Imghoddi"ta' Charles B Spiteri**



## Once upon a time, olive oil was more precious than gold

### ALBERT FENECH

of tree species were found, including the *Olea europaea* (olive).

Very unfortunately there were long stretches over centuries when olive groves were vastly overlooked and classed to be of little importance. Many were cut down

during the time of the Knights to provide wood for their galleys and ship repairs. To add insult to injury for several centuries cotton was seen to be of greater value (Maltese cotton was famous throughout Europe) than olives, and whole groves were demolished to make way for cotton fields – of which today there are none!

However, over the last 35 or so years there has been a great resurgence and olive groves have thankfully returned with a vengeance and oil pressing has become a speciality, one of the foremost experts being one Sam Cremona who has his own olive press. Naturally, the process is now modernised as opposed to the days of manual grinding or making a poor donkey walk around and circulate for days on end to gear-drive the stone grinding presses.

Cold press is known to produce the best oil because the olives are circulated in large cylindrical drums and the centrifugal process divides water in its outer layer, followed by a circle of broken olives debris with the precious oil as an inner layer that is then oozed away by a pipe and goes into large drums to be bottled.

Carrying out a DNA profile study, some years back, Oriana Mazzitelli working in conjunction with the University of Malta, employed

genetic studies and concluded on the different types of Maltese olive cultivars and more importantly, the Maltese wild olive and she then compared these to two Italian and two Tunisian cultivars, that is Carolea and Chemlali. She also managed to identify four cultivars indigenous to the Maltese islands: the Bidni, Malti, White Olive or bajda and the Maltese wild oleaster.

Amazingly enough, a field of magnificent old and gnarled trees can be found in a field in the area known as Bidnija, and its rural village. The trees and olives are known as Bidni. Carbon dating on the trees established there are some that are no less than 2,000 years old.

Very much a part of the Mediterranean Diet, almost every type of typical Maltese food preparation involves the use of olive oil. In days when poverty was widespread a meal often consisted of thick slices of crunchy bread layered generously with olive oil topped with thinly-mashed fresh tomatoes, topped with fresh basil and finally topped off with lashings of black pepper and salt. This in fact is the base for the birth of the Neapolitan pizza, the Pizza Margerita – fresh dough with olive oil topped with fresh tomato spread and basil, a dish pioneered by Queen Margerita of Naples to provide a cheap food source for the poor.

Nowadays the bread and oil have become a favoured snack, varied with fresh crusty bread dipped in a mix of olive oil and balsamic vinegar and then dipped in black pepper and salt.

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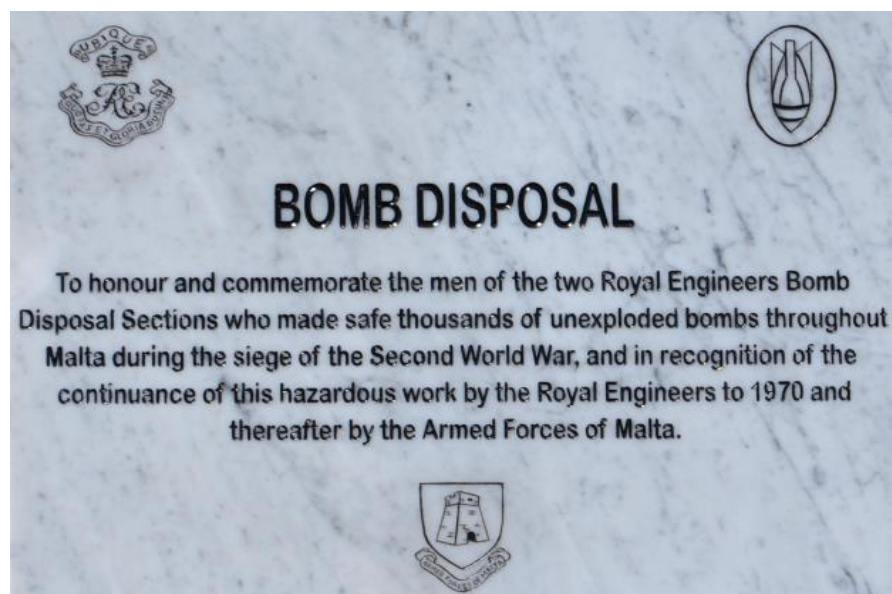
. The Mediterranean Sea, Mediterranean countries, olives and olive oil intermingle, live and thrive off each other – and in Malta, no less.

It is believed the olive tree was first cultivated in Malta by the Phoenicians about 1,500 BC and then further cultivated strongly by the Romans during their lengthy sojourn in Malta. The Romans used the fishing village of Marsaxlokk as a port and this led to the founding of the town today still known as Zejtun for olive cultivation. The name itself Zejtun comes from the Arabic word 'Zejtuna' (olive), the word for oil being 'zejt'. This in turn led to the nearby locality of Bir-id-Deheb (the well of gold as olive oil was regarded as being as precious as gold) and then down to the bay of Birzebbuga, literally meaning a well of olives. Further inland there is the old town of Zebbug, from the word olive because of the extensive cultivation of olive groves.

Zejtun nowadays holds a week-end dedicated to 'Zejt iz-Zejtun' in the latter part of September, a veritable feast of olives and olive products – sadly, postponed this year. Traces of the Malta olive story go back to Neolithic temples in which several carbonised remains



# A Bomb Disposal Memorial for Malta



While all others kept at a safe distance, the job of the Royal Engineers Bomb Disposal men was to approach and deal with bombs which could at any moment explode and kill them. Nowhere was this job more challenging than in Malta; allocated a maximum of two Bomb Disposal Sections (total two officers, 30 other ranks) compared to London, similar in area, which had over 100 Sections.

Under siege from late 1940 to December 1942, the Island became **'the most bombed place on earth'**. Facing a task significantly (by some ten times) greater than their counterparts across other theatres of war (and in 1942 often working under actual bombardment) RE Bomb Disposal Malta dealt with over 7300 unexploded bombs (UXB) in two years. The Royal Engineers

## BOMB DISPOSAL PLAQUE UNVEILED

After seven-months of work, the plaque was unveiled on 13 September 2017, the date which also marks 75th anniversary of the presentation of the George Cross to the people of Malta. The plaque was formally unveiled by the Prime Minister of Malta, Dr Joseph Muscat, at a ceremony attended by the British High Commissioner, Malta's Minister of Culture, representatives of the Royal Engineers Corps and Armed Forces of Malta, as well as relatives and veterans of bomb disposal in Malta, many of whom had travelled to Malta from the UK and Canada for the event. ([click here](#) for pictures of the unveiling)



The Bomb Disposal Plaque is on display in the Upper Barrakka Gardens, Valletta – one of Malta's most visited locations. Now thousands every year can be reminded of the achievements and bravery of the Royal Engineers Bomb Disposal Section in World War 2 – when the Island became the most bombed place on earth. The plaque also recognises

the work of Royal Engineers 1945-79 and Armed Forces of Malta to the present day. The project has been funded entirely from donations and thanks must go to all those who contributed as well as the Government of Malta for approving the Plaque.

## THE STORY OF THE BOMB DISPOSAL PLAQUE

Lt G D Carroll

(I) and members of Malta's RE Bomb Disposal Section, 1941  
In World War 2, aerial bombardment presented a massive threat to life and property but with the provision of adequate shelters most of the population could survive the raids. However, becoming aware of this, the Germans introduced bombs which did not explode on landing but lay ready to destroy and kill for many hours after the all-clear — terrorising communities or blocking a railway, road or factory site, disrupting communications and the war effort.



continued to clear wartime UXBs until the British Army left Malta in 1979; the work continues under Armed Forces Malta.

However, post-war while the notable service of the Island's RAF defenders and Royal Navy convoys has received formal recognition in Malta, there is as yet no permanent public commemoration of RE Bomb Disposal.

In February 2017 the Prime Minister of Malta confirmed that the Maltese Government had approved a proposal to install a permanent memorial to recognise this work.

*L-Arkivji Nazzjonali ta' Malta*

1919 Passport Photo

Francesco and Vittoria Azzopardi,  
together with their children;  
Carmela, Michel'Angelo,  
Giuseppe, Antonio and Annibale.  
A family from Mellieħa.  
Destination: Australia.



**ABELA BROTHERS**

**Half-Maltese brothers to perform on The Voice UK this weekend!**

**MALTESE COMUNITY COUNCIL  
OF VICTORIA INC.**

**447 Royal Parade Parkville,  
Victoria Australia**

MCCV qed jilqa' applikazzjonijiet għall-pożizzjoni ta' għalliem/a part-time tal-lingwa Maltija, (darba fil-gimgha, ONLINE filgħaxija).

Applikanti għandhom ikollhom għarfien sewwa tal-Malti kemm miktub u mitkellem. Dan huwa xogħol imħallas.

Ibghat l-applikazzjoni bid-dettalji akkademiċi lill:

**edwidgeborgatt@gmail.com**

Għal kull tagħrif ieħor, ċempel fuq **0412 115 919**

ħalli n-numru tat-telefon u aħna n-ċemplulek lura.



## 5 types of guests you'll find at every Maltese wedding

[MaltaDaily](#) -

finding like there's no tomorrow,  
this person would leave

the shadows to ask the happy couple for a cardboard box or doggy bag of chicken skewers and spring rolls to take home for tomorrow morning. *Who has time to cook, anyways?*



With Malta's wedding peak season coming to a considerable close after what has been a jam-packed summer of events, everyone will remember these special events for the celebration of love they are. But what we **really** remember is the characters in attendance and we can honestly say that Malta is brimming with these iconic individuals. Here are **5 types of guests you'll find at every single Maltese wedding**.

### 1. The drunk ziju

An all-time classic; whether he's bringing back the dance moves of yesteryear alongside your cousins or slurring rock song request to an otherwise unimpressed DJ, the drunk ziju is a classic at every single wedding. Likely downing one glass of JB Coke after the other before making his way to the cheese wheel, these uncles can be quite a handful at weddings but we still love them no matter what.

### 2. The wedding critic

*"It was good ta' but there weren't any pastizzi..."* No matter how jaw-droppingly good a wedding is, you'll always find a handful of people who will nit-pick on trivial items as if they were Malta's premier wedding critics. Fault-

Cinderella's Midnight Ball and still find something to say about the *hors d'oeuvres*.

### 3. The groomsman on the hunt

While the groom is indeed celebrating their special day alongside their partner for life, you better bet that a number of groomsman will be on the hunt on such a special night. As well-groomed (*pun intended*) as they'll ever be, this special kind of groomsman will start to chug one cocktail after the other before they muster the courage to chat up some unsuspecting guest at the reception.

### 4. The proud Nanniet

While the bride and groom are the stars of the wedding *and rightfully so*, no one is quite as cute as the grandparents. As Nannu sips his glass of red wine while *Nanna* rocks her bright turquoise fascinator like the style icon she is, they'll slowly start looking for the youngest cousins to tell then *"you're next."* We'll see about that, *Nanna*.

### 5. The take-away guy

Whether the catering is top-of-the-line or simply satisfactory, wedding food just hits different sometimes and after a night of chowing down, one person typically emerges from

## Niftakar Meta...

kont nidhol taht  
il-magna tal-ħjata  
u nibda' ndawwar  
r-rota taparsi  
kont qed insuq  
xi karożza,  
bin-Nanna tgħajjat  
miegħi li ser nispiċċa  
nkissirha jew  
ngħaqqad il-ħajt  
kollu!

[facebook.com/niftakarmeta/](https://facebook.com/niftakarmeta/)

## Niftakar Meta...

in-Nanniet kienu  
spiss jirrakuntaw  
kif meta kienu tfal  
marru ma' tal-iskola  
bil-bnadar ta' Malta  
u tar-Renju Unit,  
sabiex isellmu  
lir-Reġina hi u  
għaddejja minn  
Strada Rjali!

[facebook.com/niftakarmeta/](https://facebook.com/niftakarmeta/)

## Launch of Valletta Local Food Festival – a celebration of local cuisine

20th till the 22nd October 2022

Minister for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government Owen Bonnici launched the first edition of The Valletta Local Food Festival organised by the Valletta Cultural Agency.

Minister Owen Bonnici said that this festival centers around a variety of local products and also celebrates its beauty.

“We will continue to work to make this festival a success. The main goal remains to foster in people’s lives the awareness and appreciation for Maltese identity and culture, and to embrace the aspects which make us what we are”, stated Minister Owen Bonnici.

The Artistic Director of this Festival said that in collaboration with various other professional chefs, a multi-faceted menu with local products was created. Charles Bone also said that all those who attend will be given a

surprise as soon as they enter the building.

Valletta Cultural Agency Chairman Jason Micallef

said that this festival will be another part of the Valletta 2018 legacy and invited the Maltese and Gozitan people and tourists to attend this festival and celebrate local cuisine.

This festival which will last for three days, from the 20th till the 22nd October from 7:30pm onwards, aims to celebrate local cuisine. The Valletta Local Food Festival will be held at the Valletta Design Cluster, which from a shabby building today has become a state-of-the-art building that can be enjoyed by all those who visit the capital city.

All those attending the festival will have the opportunity to taste top-level food cooked by professional chefs as well as

local wine, beer and liquors, to music by established local singers.

Some of the different food items which will be available during the festival are roasted pork, herbal chicken roulade, butternut squash roulade, as well as many other food items which are associated with Malta such as dates, pies, krustini, honey, honey rings and cheeselets. High quality local wine and draft beer will also be available.

The Valletta Local Food Festival is supported by the Malta Tourism Authority. For more information about The Valletta Local Food Festival visit the Valletta Cultural Agency website or Facebook page





## Aurora International Folk Festival at the Cathedral Square, Victoria

[GOZO NEWS](#)



Later this month the 3rd edition of the [Aurora International Folk Festival](#) will be returning to the Cathedral Square in Victoria. The Aurora International Folk Festival celebrates the traditional aspects of the Maltese islands and European

countries. It showcases traditional and folkloristic dance, music and celebrations which were commonplace in the past.

Folk groups taking part this year include; Grotte Folk from Sicily, two children's folkdance groups – Dalderiši and T'gadiš from Latvia, the Leone Music Ensemble, Chludwianie from Poland and of course the Aurora Folk Group.

This festival organised by Socjetà Filarmonika Leone AD 1863 and its Aurora Folk Group first took place in the 1980s.

After a long hiatus it returned in 2018 in collaboration with the Cathedral Parish as part of the celebrations in honour of St. Ursula, patron saint of Gozo.

The Festival is taking place on Friday the 21st of October from 6pm and Saturday, the 22nd from midday, at Cathedral Square, the Citadel, Victoria, Gozo.



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