

JOURNAL FOR MALTESE AROUND THE WORLD



MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Editor: Frank Scicluna OAM MQR JP



MALTESE SCATTERED ALL OVER THE WORLD

**On Behalf of all Maltese Living Abroad
We Wish the Maltese and Gozitans
a Wonderful New Year**

The Maltese Diaspora around the world



More than eighty percent of Maltese who live in Malta and Gozo have relatives or friends who live overseas.

Malta might be a small country in size, but it has a big family spread all over the world.

Maltese and Gozitans have been emigrating to all corners of the world for centuries. At first, most of our people who had to emigrate because of unemployment and poverty, sought a better life in neighbouring Mediterranean countries.

Then, since the 1800s, they started venturing to faraway countries like Canada, the United States and Australia. Today there are Maltese, Gozitans and their descendants in around 194 countries, practically in every country in the world. Like most other Maltese and Gozitans.

There are around 150,000 first generation and 400,000 second and third generation Maltese living abroad. This means that we have a diaspora of more than 500,000, as many Maltese and Gozitans as we have on our islands. A 2019 World Bank report showed that even today, 24% of all Maltese live outside Malta, putting the rate of emigration for the Maltese population as the highest out of any EU country. The destinations have changed as today we have new diasporas in Brussels and Luxembourg, reflecting our membership of the European Union.

Despite that most of us have relatives abroad, I still feel that on our islands and amongst our population, we are still not aware enough of the reality and history of the emigration of our people over the centuries. We still consider our history and reality of emigration, as parallel to our history and reality on these islands.

We need to address this and move towards becoming more aware and forging more links among the Maltese and Gozitans in the whole wide world, considering ourselves as one. Many scholars like Fr Lawrence Attard, Maurice Cauchi Henry Frendo and several others published books about the Maltese Diaspora dedicated to all those who have felt constrained to leave their home country and settled in faraway places.

We must do more. Communications technology is at least making it more possible to have a closer community and to be more in touch with each other across the continents. We must strive to get even closer.

And these are the aims, objectives and mission of this Journal for Maltese Living Abroad. This journal reaches Maltese who live in 50 different countries around the world with thousands of readers and supporters.. As someone from Australia said – *Australia is my wife but Malta is my mother.*

You may voice your opinion about this subject.

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM OUR DEAR AND FORMER MALTESE CHAPLAIN IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Fr. Gabriel Stephen Micallef OFM

It's over three years now that I had to say 'Good Bye' to my flock, the ones I loved and those who I am sure loved me in return for the twenty-three years + I served as Chaplain to the Maltese Community in South Australia. My heart is still there but my health tells me something else, even though I'm feeling better than what I've been three years ago. I didn't send you a Christmas message, though I did so on the Maltese Community Radio SBS 5EBI, thanks to Ron and Bernadette who keep airing my messages every Sunday and Monday even after all these years when I had to say 'Good-bye'.

Thank you for keeping me in touch with what's happening in South Australia through your Journal. Lately I was deeply distressed to hear of the loss of Horace Cassar and Joe Monsigneur - two of the pioneers of the Maltese Community in South Australia and the Maltese Parish Community at Lockleys. We owe the presence of the Maltese at Lockleys due to the hard work of Horace in the building of the Parish Complex, and Joe who was always there for organizing Church and Parish activities together with Fr Giles Ferriggi and Fr Peter Paul Mejlaq. They were the knowhow of all that was and still is at Lockleys which still brings the stigma of what is of MALTESE taste. Our origin at Lockleys owes it all to them. I miss you all and especially all those of the Maltese Community in S.A. who are not with



us anymore. My prayers and condolences to all their respective families.

May I congratulate all those in the Maltese Community of South Australia who are struggling to keep all the community activities on the go and all those from our community who are achievers and making a name to our community. Congratulations to Melissa Jones (nee Camilleri) as Mayor of Wakerville - I remember her as a small child with her brother and parents Ted and Tina, hard workers in the Maltese Community activities, especially at the Maltese Chaplaincy and the M.Q.V. Band. I also congratulate Kathryn Burgess (nee Chetcuti) as Social Worker in the Multi-Disciplinary Community Geriatric Service, Central Adelaide Local Health Network.

May I wish you, Josie, your family and all the extended family of Maltese readers of your Journal a Happy and a Prosperous New Year filled with all God's and Our Lady of Victories Blessings.

Fr. Gabriel, Yes, the members of the Maltese Community in South Australia loved and respected you during your 23 years as our chaplain and friend. The Parish of Lockleys is not the same since you left and returned to (Gozo) Malta 3 years ago. The community (especially the older generation) is still missing you and it is a great pity that the ecclesiastical authorities did not appoint another chaplain for us. I appeal to any priest and religious in Malta and Gozo to spend even for just a year looking after the Maltese migrants who left Malta decades ago and the second and third generations Maltese. We will welcome you with open arms.
Frank Scicluna - Editor

I HOPE AND PRAY THAT ALL THESE FINE AND SINCERE SEENTIMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED DURING THE BRAND NEW YAER 2023



Prime Minister Robert Abela said in his Christmas message - We look forward to play a key role in maintaining international peace and security on an international level. We will also be prioritising climate change during our tenure. In parallel, we are working steadfast on our local decarbonisation strategy to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.



Bishop of Gozo Anton Teuma used his traditional Christmas message this year to make an appeal to the authorities to “stop and reflect” ahead of the planned introduction of changes to the provisions on abortion in the Criminal Code.



President George Vella appealed to the Maltese to look beyond material concerns as he expressed his hope that 2023 would see the Maltese more willing to help one another and those in need in his annual Christmas message to the nation.



As he celebrated the Christmas Day Pontifical Mass at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Mdina, **Archbishop Charles Scicluna** questioned whether the Maltese would choose to welcome God, or whether they would turn away from him and “choose other values or disvalues.”



In his Christmas message, **opposition leader Bernard Grech** focused on those who may see little reason to celebrate during these times – and insisted that Malta must unite against abortion. Grech then urged people to remember that many people – primarily women – suffered violence in their own homes; violence which could even cause their deaths.



Recalling Jesus’ birth in a stable, **Pope Francis** rebuked those “ravenous” for wealth and power at the expense of the vulnerable, including children, in a Christmas Eve homily decrying war, poverty and greedy consumerism.



I take this opportunity to add my message to you, dear readers of this journal for Maltese living Abroad. May the new year 2023 bring more unity and cohesion between all Maltese scattered all over the world. Together this year 2022 we managed to publish this magazine every week without fail. This is the only Maltese journal produced 100% in Australia and non-political. May God give us health and wisdom to continue our mission – to spread, not Covid, but love and appreciation for the culture of Malta and Gozo.



Maltese Community Council of Victoria

Message from the Chairman of Cultural Events - Joseph Matina

During the year, the executive and the cultural team have been working on various projects and events. The high tea event held at the Center a week before Mother's Day this year was attended by many members of the community from various generations.

The three-film festival was attended by nearly 400 community members at the Bowery Theater earlier this year and the response we received was positive and encouraging.

Independence Day was well attended, and we were honored to have a personal message from the Maltese President His Excellency George Vella. The Maltese language school was a great success this year and we were pleased to recognize the efforts and hard work of some 22 students and their parents. We also filmed some interesting stories of various members, and these will be archived in the Maltese archives.

We are excited about the plans for 2023. We start the year with the play Wenzu and Rozi in February. This proved popular as both scheduled sessions sold out within hours of tickets going on sale.

The Executive, together with the Director Simone E Cremona and the Brimbank City Council are negotiating to produce a third session to accommodate our audience who did not manage to buy tickets. If successful, this third session will take place on Saturday 18 February.

In March we will have the Moomba festival. Last year, we participated in the Moomba Parade and those who participated had a lot of fun. We encourage more people to join our group that day in procession. Not only a pleasant day but an opportunity to meet other Maltese people of various ages.

On the 29th of April, we will have the Mother's Day High tea, and the following week we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the assisted package agreement between Malta and Australia. On May 6, we are pleased to invite you to the National Archives of Australia in North Melbourne and you will have the chance to come and research their family history. During the day, we will have speakers who will talk about immigration.

In February, we will also start our new program "Meet a buddy". The program will introduce activities where various groups mix together in our centre.

We will have mothers' groups, business people's groups, specific interest groups and an opportunity to chat with new friends. We look forward to organizing these events and hope to see as many people of all ages attending as possible.

We will have more announcements and interviews on SBS radio and we are currently working to produce a weekly Maltese program on Channel 31. This will ensure that our Maltese community is kept informed of events and information. We intend to have a variety of information programs that will be of interest to people of all ages. The Maltese classes will continue during the next year and if the questions received so far are indicative of interest in participation, we can expect an increase in the number of students.

We look forward to seeing as many Maltese and those with a Maltese background in the centre as possible to enjoy these various events. The success of these events depends on your participation.

We take this opportunity to wish you all a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



Maltese Community Council of NSW

On behalf of the Maltese Community Council of NSW, I wish you all a happy and Holy Christmas. May the peace and joy of this Blessed day remain with you and your families forever. May the year ahead be a better one for us all. My colleagues and I look forward to working with our beloved Maltese community in 2023, keeping us all connected and united. [Miriam Friggieri](#)



Maltese Community Council of South Australia

The President and delegates of the Maltese Community Council of South Australia wish the members of the Maltese community, relatives and friends God's blessings, happiness and health during this festive season especially during the coming New Year 2023

New Year's Traditions Around the World



It's time to celebrate another new year! If you're tired of the same old traditions and looking to spice up your New Year's Eve party – or if you simply want to learn about other countries' celebrations – check out this list of New Year's traditions from around the world.

New Year's Food

- **Spain's 12 Grapes** - In Spain, many people eat 12 grapes as the clock strikes midnight. Each grape consumed gives you good luck for one of the months of the

upcoming year.

- **Armenia's Bread** - On New Year's Eve in Armenia, the matriarch of a family will bake bread for the family to eat, hiding a coin in the dough. Whoever gets the slice of bread with the coin in it will have the best year!
- **Austria's Pigs** - Many Austrian people believe that pigs are good luck and will eat some form of pork to celebrate the upcoming year.
- **The American South's Black-Eyed Peas** - If you live in the southern region of the U.S., you probably know that eating black-eyed peas on New Year's Eve is a must to have a great year!
- **Mexico's Tamales** - Many people in Mexico eat tamales to celebrate the beginning of the year. Yum!
- **The Netherland's Oliebollen** - In the Netherlands, people eat oliebollen, a fried ball of dough similar to a donut to ring in the new year.
- **Poland's Pickled Herring** - It may sound a little odd, but pickled herring is a big deal in Poland during New Year's – as it brings a good year ahead.
- **Italy's Lentils** - In Italy, lentils bring a favour on your next year when you eat them on New Year's.
- **Russian Salads** - On New Year's Eve in Russia, no meal is complete without a salad. One of the most popular is an Olivier salad.

Traditions

- **Denmark's Broken Plates** - In Denmark, there's a tradition of breaking a plate on your neighbour's front step to bring them good luck.
- **The Philippines' Circles** - Since circles are a shape that bring good luck, on New Year's you'll find round things everywhere in the Philippines – from food and coins to everyone wearing polka dots.
- **Greece's Onions** - This might be one of our favourites. On New Year's Eve, Greek families will hang an onion by the door and wake children up by putting the onion on their heads! The onion symbolizes growth and rebirth.
- **Brazil's Underwear** - You may not see this tradition, but in Brazil, people wear red underwear to ring in the new year, as it brings good luck.
- **Burma's Water** - In Burma, people throw water on each other as a sign of cleansing for the year to come.
- **Turkey's Salt** - In Turkey, at midnight on New Year's Eve, people sprinkle salt on their doorsteps for good luck.

- **Switzerland's Cream** - The Swiss spend New Year's Eve dropping a spoonful of cream on the floor of their homes! It's known to bring a good year.
- **Colombia's Empty Suitcases** - In Colombia, if you want to travel in the next year, you should carry an empty suitcase down the street on New Year's Eve.
- **Brazil's White Flowers** - In Brazil, people wish on white flowers and throw them into the ocean hoping they'll come true.
- **China's Red Envelopes** - In China, red envelopes full of money are gifts that bring good luck.

Decorations

- **Mexico's Colours** - In Mexico, it's a tradition to decorate your house in a colour symbolizing your hope for the new year. If you want success in love, decorate in red. If you want a successful career, try yellow. If you want money, decorate in green.
- **Scotland's Fire** - In Scotland, you'll see lots of fire on New Year's Eve as people walk through the streets carrying flaming torches for good luck.
- **China's Red Doors** - To celebrate the new year in China, doors are painted red to symbolize prosperity for the next year.
- **Ireland's Mistletoe** - If you want to get married in the next year, do as the Irish do and put some mistletoe underneath your pillow on New Year's Eve.
- **Iceland's Bonfires** - As a sign of purging the past year the landscape of Iceland is decorated with bonfires on New Year's Eve.

However you celebrate, we wish you a Happy New Year!



Romanian Orthodox Children sing in Maltese, English and Romanian

Dr. George Vella, the President of Malta and Mrs Miriam Vella enjoyed listening to Romanian Orthodox children living in Malta creating the Christmas spirit at Sant'Anton Palace by singing traditional Christmas carols in Maltese, English and Romanian. In a few words, I stressed that this is the way we like to see integration happening in our country because these are Romanian children living and integrating in Malta like the Maltese who years ago settled in Australia, Canada and in other countries.

Centenary of the first performance of the National Anthem - New Postage Stamps



in the form of a prayer by Dun Karm Psaila and set to music by Robert Samut," MaltaPost said.

The miniature sheet measures 44 mm x 111mm, with a comb perforation of 13.09 x 4.00 (comb) and bears the Maltese Cross watermark.

The miniature sheet itself measures 120mm x 80mm and was produced in the offset process by Printex Limited. The print run consists of 15,000 miniature sheets with each stamp

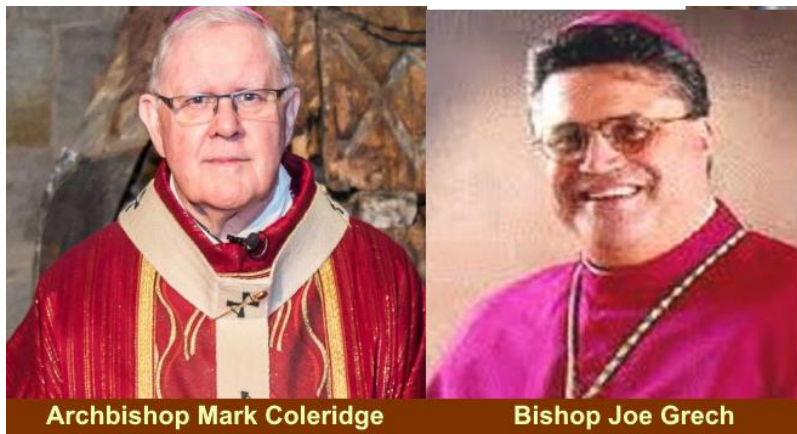
MaltaPost has released a new stamp issue to commemorate the centenary of the first performance of the national anthem of Malta - L-Innu Malti.

"This miniature sheet commemorates an important milestone in our country's history that of the centenary of the first performance of the national anthem of Malta - L-Innu Malti. The hymn, known as the Hymn of Malta, it was written in

bearing a value of €3.00.

This Miniature sheet will be available from all Post Offices in Malta and Gozo from Tuesday 27 December 2022. Orders may be placed online

at www.maltaphilately.com or by mail from the Philatelic Bureau, MaltaPost p.l.c. 305, Qormi Road, Marsa, MTP 1001; Telephone: 2596 1740,



Archbishop Mark Coleridge

Bishop Joe Grech

REMEMBERING BISHOP JOE GRECH MELBOURNE

On this day 12 years ago I was with Bishop Joe Grech (Maltese-Australian) when he passed from this life at the age of 62. I was visiting Melbourne for a few days to catch up with family and friends (as I am now). I heard Joe was in hospital, so I decided to visit him. There were others in the room when I arrived,

and I could see things were serious. I was told Joe was, unbelievably, dying. We sat or stood in intense silence until death came. Then we prayed...as I do today, that Joe will find the fullness of peace in Jesus whom he preached with such power. Say a prayer for him...and ask him (as I do) to say a prayer for us. **ARCHBISHOP MARK COLERIDGE**

Dear Friends, We send you our Best wishes for a Blessed Christmas and a Happy & prosperous New Year Looking forward to Seville!

Cari amici, Vi inviamo i nostri migliori auguri per un Natale pieno di Gioia e Pace del Signore ed un felice e prospero anno nuovo. In attesa di Siviglia!

Queridos amigos, Les enviamos nuestros mejores deseos de una Bendita Navidad y un Feliz y Próspero Año Nuevo.

¡Qué ganas de Sevilla!

Liebe Freunde, Wir senden Ihnen unsere besten Wünsche für ein gesegnetes Weihnachtsfest und ein glückliches und erfolgreiches neues Jahr.

Ich freue mich auf Sevilla! Charles & Connie Bellia Malta.



**FEDERATION OF MALTESE
LANGUAGE SCHOOLS INC**

FEDERAZZJONI TA' L-ISKEJJEL TAL- MALTI
<http://federationofmalteselanguageschoolsaustralia.com/>

FMLS Newsletter 2022- 9

**Executive Committee: President – Edwidge Borg (VIC). Secretary Annemarie Thind (NSW),
Treasurer - Alfred Flask (ACT). Vice President Miriam Friggieri (NSW),**

All Correspondence to be addressed to:

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& cc to: The President: malteselanguageschools@yahoo.com

The FMLS wishes all Principals, teachers, Coordinators and supporters of the Maltese Language Classes in Australia, a happy Festive season and best wishes for the New Year 2023. This year has been a dynamic year for all schools. All involved in schools have looked forward to a holiday overseas or in Australia after our travel lockdowns were lifted. Despite all adversities schools managed and students are still registering to learn the Maltese.

Whilst in Malta for the CMLA meeting, I had several meetings with dignitaries and Maltese Officials to investigate and discuss how we can continue with disseminating and maintain Maltese Language teaching in Australia. Such meetings on behalf of the schools included: L-Universita ta' Malta tal-Qroqq, Head of the Maltese Language Department Michael Spangol; Education Department : David Muscat CEO, National Literacy Agency St Venera and Antonella Gatt Director International Relations & Programme Implementation Education Head Office Floriana. We hope to hear more from these departments in the future

I also visited several bookshops to see what could be of help to our schools. Thanks to the introduction by the Consul General of Sydney Lawrence Buhagiar, I was introduced to Michael Piscopo.

Michael Piscopo is the writer/composer of various songs in Maltese, mostly for children and youths, as well as adults. You may be already familiar with some of them, such as the highly popular 'Fonzu l-Fenek' and the seasonal hit 'Gej il-Milied'. Some songs have a social theme, such as safeguarding the environment (Għalkemm Żgħira), becoming a slave to the mobile phone (Messagġ), remembering a loved one (Għażiż Papa'), blood donation (Nagħtu d-Demm, Nagħtu l-Ħajja), handwashing during Covid (Inħobb Naħsel Idejja), etc. These can be tied to a topic discussed on the programme or an event/celebration such as Father's Day or Christmas.

Books are also available <https://www.fonzulfenek.org/kotba> (sample covers attachment 1 or contact Michael directly mvanpisc@yahoo.com)

Other books and resources I came across are *Kellimini* (Let's talk), *L'eħhiet l-alfabett* flash cards, *ifli bir-reqqa* (memory game).

Tislijiet u Xewqat sbieh għas-sena 2023

Edwidge Borg PRESIDENT - FEDERATION OF MALTESE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS AUSTRALIA

The Journal for Maltese Living Abroad supports the teaching of Maltese Language and Culture and supports also the Federation of Maltese Language Schools - Australia. We are proud of our schools which are serving the Maltese communities in Australia in keeping the Maltese language and culture alive. The Maltese schools cater for students of all ages. The editor of this journal was one of the founders and the first president of the Federation

South Australian Police help Maltese family check on long-lost relative living in Port Augusta



Stacey Pestrin ABCNEWS

Port Augusta patrol officers Jasmine and Glen with Freddy (centre). (Supplied: SA Police)

Lillian Chetcuti Riolo enjoys helping Maltese families reconnect with long-lost loved ones living abroad.

Key points:

- An Australian-born woman living in Malta emailed SA Police hoping to find a long-lost relative
- Two officers immediately conducted a welfare check and found the man safe and well
- They sent a smiling selfie of the trio back to the woman in Malta

But when it came to her own family, she hit a snag and sought the assistance of police officers nearly 15,000 kilometres away. Ms Riolo was born in Sydney but has lived in Malta for 30 years, where she runs social media pages sharing life on the Mediterranean island.

She also has a page dedicated to helping Maltese residents find long-lost family and friends and has been able to reunite numerous families. So when one of her uncles died, she was asked by her Australian relatives "to check on the last living brother in Malta".

"This is how I got involved to care for the brother Alessio in Malta," she said.

Alessio told her about a long-lost brother in South Australia that no-one had heard from in 20 years.

"Before they would correspond by letters but the letters stopped," she said.

Lillian Chetcuti Riolo helps families find long-lost relatives. (Supplied: Lillian Chetcuti Riolo)

Ms Riolo used her vast social media contacts to see if anyone lived in Port Augusta or knew of the brother, named Freddy.

"But no-one did," she said. Experienced in helping other Maltese families reconnect with their loved ones, Ms Riolo turned her amateur detective skills on her own family.



"I did my research like I do when I help many around the world [and] volunteer finding missing or biological parents," she said.

After finding her uncle's home address, Ms

Riolo emailed the local council and police station in Port Augusta hoping for assistance. An hour later she received a response from SA Police, complete with a photo of two smiling officers and her long-lost uncle. "I was so happy and over the moon with excitement that I cried all day," Ms Riolo said. She said she was "amazed" that the two officers involved "went out of their way" for her family.

Officers praised for quick response

SA Police confirmed two officers were called to a Port Augusta house on November 18, to check on the welfare of a man. "The gentleman was found to be safe and well, and the trio posed for a photo to send back to his relatives overseas," a spokesperson said. "On some occasions, police are tasked to contact family members by interstate or overseas relatives who need to contact them.

"Members of the public outside of South Australia can call 131 444 — the Police Assistance Line — to arrange a patrol to check the welfare of family members." Social media users praised the quick actions of the SA officers after Ms Chetcuti Riolo posted the photo online. "Also how awesome are the police to follow up so promptly on your concern of a family member," wrote one user.

"Oh my god! That is absolutely incredible," wrote another.

THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER CONNECTS
MALTESE LIVING ABROAD WITH THEIR HOMELAND





REMEMBERING OUR DEAR FRIEND ALFRED FENECH N.S W. MIGRANTS' CHAMPION A STALWART ADVOCATE FOR THE MALTESE IN NSW

Alfred was born in Sliema, Malta in 18 July 1937 and migrated to Sydney, Australia in 1955 as an 18 year-old lad. He graduated Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Sydney graduate in 1966. Alfred initially occupied a number of positions in the private sector. In 1958, he joined the Federal Public Service in the then Repatriation Department, which looked after the health and pension entitlements of ex-servicemen. In 1963, Alfred joined the then Dept of Labour & National Service to carry out labour market research. He also worked in the Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) for over 30 years as an export consultant. Alfred retired in 1998 and started his own consultancy business under the name of *Ausetno Export and Business Services*. He also carried out special consultancy work to immigration lawyers. Between 1998 and 2003 Alfred served as Honorary Consul (Commercial) for Malta in NSW and from 1997 to 2004 as Executive Officer of the Australian Maltese Chamber of Commerce after being one of its foundation members. He arranged for the first ever trade mission from Malta to come to Australia and accompanied three trade missions from Australia to Malta. Alfred is a foundation member of several organisations. His active and tireless involvement in the Maltese community is illustrated by his long list of achievements which include:

- Secretary of the Maltese Community Council of NSW Inc. uninterruptedly from 1974 to 1996. More recently as President, a position he held until his passing away. Life Member.
- Secretary of the Maltese Guild from 1971 to 1978, then President from 1979 to 1995.
- Secretary of the Phoenician Club from 1982 to 1989.
- Co-founder of the Salesian Old Boys in 1972, currently the Maltese Past Pupils & Friends of Don Bosco NSW Association
- Started the Maltese Community Council of NSW radio program on station 2SER FM in 1982 and was its coordinator till 2004.
- Founded the Maltese-Australian Society whose main aim was to work with university students of Maltese origin.
- Member of Addison Road Community Centre for seven years. Vice chairperson for twelve months. Life member.

Alfred strove to develop a united community under the umbrella of the Maltese Community Council of NSW, which greatly enhanced the name of the Maltese community in the greater Australian society. He developed various services for the Community including a welfare service funded by grants from the Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW (now Community Relations Commission).

In the 1970s, he started the campaign for Maltese Dual Citizenship which was eventually granted by the Malta parliament in 1990. Alfred actively promoted Maltese culture and social activities. In 1975 he held a variety concert at Bankstown Town Hall using local talent, giving rise to various performers and performing groups. In 1976 started the Maltese Carnival which continued till 1995. In 2004 Alfred organised the staging of the first ever Maltese opera in Australia – *I Martiri* by Maestro Carmelo Pace – at the Riverside Theatre in Parramatta, NSW. Alfred acted as the main community coordinator in NSW for the visits of VIPs from Malta including the President, the Prime Minister, the Archbishop and various ministers. In 1991, Alfred started a Malta Youth Day to encourage the young people of Maltese origin to appreciate their Maltese heritage. With the assistance of Mr. Paul Zammit, MP, then Minister Assisting the Premier on Ethnic Affairs, Alfred opened the first respite care centre in Leichhardt. Alfred was responsible for many submissions to governments on various issues affecting the Maltese community including immigration reviews, the Reciprocal Social

Security Agreement, the teaching of the Maltese Language in government schools, Maltese programs on SBS radio and SBS TV and many other issues. Alfred was a Foundation Member of the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW. He was a member of the subcommittee that drew up the constitution of the Council. He served as Executive Member of the Council for eight years

and as Member of the Media sub-committee for many years. In 1993 Alfred Fenech was a recipient of the prestigious award, the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for his services to the community. His contributions have been many and varied in a number of fields, both within the Maltese community and mainstream Australian

HISTORY OF MALTESE EMIGRATION - 1970 AUSTRALIA'S FIRST MALTESE MAYOR - LORETO YORK (MEILAK)



Loreto Meilak - 1923



Barry York - ACT, Australia

Members of the Maltese communities around Australia like elsewhere no doubt, are always keen to establish what I call "Maltese firsts". There has been discussion, for example, about the first Maltese in Australia. Who was the first to step foot on Australian soil? Rumours and wishful thinking abound in such debates.

The search for the first Maltese Mayor of an Australian city, however, was not so controversial. It happened to be my father, Loreto John York.

He was the first Maltese-born person in Australia to become the Mayor of a municipality. He was Mayor of the industrial suburb of Brunswick, Melbourne, from 1972 to 1973, and again in 1976/77.

Brunswick was, and is, one of the most multicultural Australian cities. It has a rich history, mainly based on the experiences of Irish-Australian working-class residents who had worked in the quarries and manufacturing industries located in the suburb since the 1920s. Today, the quarries have shut down, as

have most of the factories, and there is a high unemployment rate.

Brunswick had a reputation as a rather tough working-class city but having grown up there, I came to love my suburb and appreciated the solidarity of its residents. During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, every new wave of immigration was apparent in Brunswick and I grew up with friends and neighbours whose parents were Italian, Latvian, Greek, Dutch and Lebanese, to name a few.

It is ironic, I suppose, that the Australian city with the first Maltese mayor was a city with very few Maltese residents. The Maltese tended to live in the western suburbs of Melbourne, such as Sunshine, Altona and St. Albans. These places have, in more recent times, elected Maltese councillors and mayors but the first was in the inner northern suburb of Brunswick.

There were a few hundred Maltese in Brunswick but thousands had settled in the western suburbs. Brunswick was known, at various times, as a Greek city, or a Sicilian city, or a Turkish city. I feel privileged to have grown in such an environment and learnt from life experiences that bigotry and monoculturalism do more to create disunity than multiculturalism. The latter actually promotes unity through the recognition of diversity.

Born Loreto Meilak, at Sliema in 1918, my father's parents - Salvu Meilak and Loretta Meilak (nee Mercieca) were from Ghajnsielem, Gozo. All his brothers and sisters were born in Gozo too. However the family moved to Sliema during the First World War, so that Salvu could work on the minesweepers with the Royal Navy.

Loreto - or 'Larry' as he is known left Malta in July 1940, wearing the uniform of the Royal Air Force. Having volunteered in Malta at the earliest opportunity, he was posted to Egypt. During the four-day journey, Italian bombers continually - day and night - attacked the convoy, including the "Royal Sovereign" on which my father sailed.

Loreto remembers well the hardship of his early life in Malta. Even when his father was working he recalls there were "too many mouths to feed". These were days before the advent of compulsory education in Malta, and Loreto left school after four years. He worked at a number of places in Tower Road, Sliema, that will be remembered fondly by

readers of the Maltese Journal who are of his another factory in North Melbourne. This was a non-un generation.

On leaving school, he became a general hand at their .. n factory, but slowly and surely my father transformed it into a 100% union shop. By 1968, he had become a Sliema Wanderers Club, working with his brother member of the Storeman and Packers Union Branch Carmelo. Later, he worked for a Mr. Cini, who ran a

flower kiosk. Later again, he took up an apprenticeship as a ladies' hairdresser with Merola. During the 1920s, another of his brothers - Joe - had emigrated to Australia. However, Loreto was not interested in emigration. He persisted with his work at Merola's well into the late 1930s. And then came the Second World War which disrupted his - and innumerable other - lives.

Little did my father know that the War would sever his connection with Malta; to this day he has never returned.

Stationed in the Middle East, he was eventually sent to the United Kingdom after the War. With the Royal Air Force in London, his main link with Malta was through one of his sisters, Nina, who had married an English serviceman and settled in England.

An interesting incident in his life in England was his appearance in the chorus that backed Vera Lynn's recording of "We'll Meet Again". The recording company required an authentic -sounding chorus of servicemen, and my father was a member of the group chosen.

Undoubtedly the highlight of his London experiences, however, was meeting my mother, a London-born photographic assistant, Olive Turner. They married in London in 1947 - by which time my father had changed his name from Meilak to York. I was born four years later in 1951.

In 1952, London was struck by terrible smog, a toxic mix of industrial pollution and coal-fired domestic heaters that killed thousands, especially elderly people and babies. My father was particularly horrified by this smog and no doubt contrasted it to the fresh air and sunny esplanade of his youth in Sliema. He made the decision then and there to emigrate to Australia. I have often wondered how many other "environmental refugees" made their way to -Australia from England in those days.

My father and mother emigrated with me (aged three) to Melbourne in 1954. We had been nominated by my father's brother Joe who was well and truly settled in Melbourne, married to an Australian woman, Daisy, and working on the wharves.

We arrived in Melbourne on June 30, 1954 -Census day! The Census recorded 19,988 Malta-born persons in Australia. 1954 was a record year for Maltese emigration, with 8,470 disembarking at Australian ports that year. By 1966, the number of Malta-born persons in Australia had reached 55,104.

As a firm believer in trade unionism, Loreto lost no time at all in joining the Storeman and Packers Union, once he obtained a job at a South Melbourne cosmetics factory. Around 1960, he became a shop steward at

During this time, he had also joined the Australian Labor Party. In 1970, he became the first non-Anglo Saxon to be elected to the Brunswick City Council. It was here, two years later, that he became the first Maltese Mayor of an Australian City, representing a municipality of more than 50,000 people.

As Mayor of Brunswick my father was ably supported by my mother. Indeed, without her support, his term of office would not have been successful. Together they attended a record number of Mayoral and civic functions, sometimes as many as five per day!

Among my father's greatest achievements for Brunswick was his establishment of a Family Planning Clinic. In its first three months, even though it only operated for two hours a week, the Clinic attracted 173 people.

Loreto also pushed for improved street lighting in Brunswick and he voted for rate rebates for pensioners. He co-founded the Brunswick Poetry Workshop and also became Chairman of the District Scout Association; a position he held until 1986.

In 1974, he was re-elected to the Council, again becoming Mayor in 1976. During this period, my parents attended 209 official functions in 9 months. It should be noted that he was still a factory worker throughout his service in local government. The transformation he undertook from factory overalls by day to Mayoral robes by night is one I'll never forget! In 1977, Loreto received the Queen's Jubilee Medal, but the following year he retired from Council politics. In 1982 he retired from his job at a Preston cosmetics factory. The Storemen and Packers Union recognized him for his union work especially his personal role in instigating equal pay for women in the, manufacturing chemist division' of the industry in Victoria.

By the time of his retirement in 1982, my father had been a Brunswick resident for 26 years. Nor surprisingly then, he retained an interest in community affairs and was Chairman of the City of Brunswick's committee for Victoria's 150th Anniversary Celebration from 1984 to 1985.





**MULTICULTURAL
AUSTRALIA**
it's who we are

**THE EUROPEAN ETHNIC
ASSOCIATIONS ARE
GRADUALLY
DISAPPEARING IN
AUSTRALIA - MALTESE
CLUBS INCLUDED**

You feel more comfortable when you are surrounded with your culture.

Social organisations and clubs established by migrant groups have been a mainstay of Australian life for over a century, but many do not exist anymore or are now having to reinvent themselves in order to survive.

What are 'ethnic clubs'?

Older Australians are feeling increasingly lonely due to the closure of RSL and social ethnic clubs, especially the one from Europe.

Clubs Australia says there are more than 6,500 registered clubs in Australia. These include RSL clubs, sporting clubs, leisure venues and others.

But there is no national census to estimate how many of these are what might be referred to as an 'ethnic club' or one founded by migrants to Australia. Not all clubs are licensed venues either, some are simply a hall, or a house owned by a community organisation, while others have evolved to become aged care or education providers.

In 1968, research by former government policy advisor James Houston estimated there were more than 1,000 ethnic clubs, organisations and associations, but it's unknown how many still exist. What is known though, is that many venues are struggling to stay open. In New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia alone, Clubs Australia estimates 33 per cent of smaller clubs are showing signs of distress or imminent closure.

You feel more comfortable when you are surrounded with your culture.

Paramatta Eagles (Melita), Club Marconi, Hakoah White City, Polish and Greek soccer clubs and the King Tomislav Croatian Club have always been strongly linked to football, while others morphed into support services for migrants when such services didn't exist.

Former Deakin University academic and sport historian Roy Hay says the clubs played a key role in helping new migrants settle in Australia. Within a few months or so most Maltese new arrivals joined an Maltese group or a club of their own culture and language. they joined because that was where they could meet people who spoke the same language and had many similar interests. And often it was the association that got [them] the job, the house, and sometimes even the family as well.

They enjoyed each other's company, they talked the same language about the past, sometimes with good stories, sometimes sad stories. They felt more comfortable when they were surrounded with their own culture.

The Maltese associations and clubs are not immune of the situation. Like others, several European ethnic clubs they are experiencing a downturn in numbers due to the ageing membership base, its location, and the area's changing demographic. The COVID-19 pandemic also saw many smaller clubs struggle. In the last few years we witnessed the closure of several clubs which existed since the 50s and the 60s.

The early migrants, either for political or social reasons, left their birth place and their homes to migrant to Australia, Canada or USA. They left behind their relatives and friends. For many Maltese clubs provided them with a connection to people who understand their past and helped them to assimilate.. Most of all they enjoy each other's company.

HISTORY OF MALTESE EMIGRATION - 1920

The Maltese: 'hard workers', but 'No Giuseppis' Cigarettes untouched by "Chinamen or Maltese"

When in the late 1920s Charles (changed from Carmelo) Farrugia came across a job vacancy poster that read 'No Giuseppis wanted' he changed his surname to Ferguson. Since Ferguson sounds nothing like a Maltese or Italian surname, he managed to secure a job at the Sydney wharf.

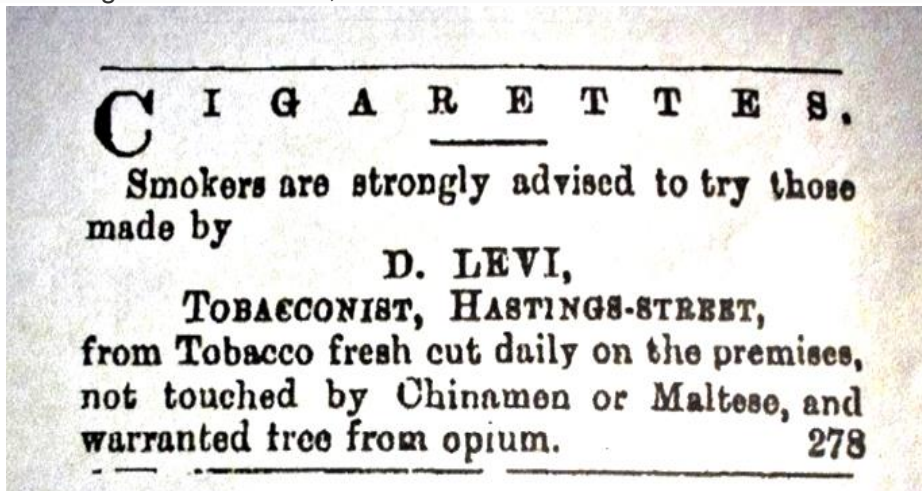
Charles was not the only migrant to change his name to fit in a society where prejudice against non-locals was rife. And the darker the skin, the harsher the derogatory labels, such as 'wog' and 'dago'. The Maltese who travelled to Australia at the beginning of the century stood out – they spoke an unintelligible language, walked in groups with other Maltese, wore working-class clothes and walked barefoot.

It was pre-World War when two migrants recalled making sure they wore a hat and carried at least one pound in their pockets when travelling to the city. Otherwise, they risked being stopped by a police officer and charged with vagrancy or homelessness.

But despite being perceived by some Australians as an undesirable migrant who might steal the locals' jobs, the Maltese were also known as hard workers and union loyalists. Most found jobs outside the city – tilling land, cutting cane or working in the mine and railway construction industries.

They carried out work that not many Australians wanted to. One migrant recalled how the doctor's test, carried out on migrants before landing in Australia, consisted of an assessment of their hands. If they looked tough and able to deal with hard work, they passed the test with flying colours. Malta seems to be experiencing similar migration patterns right now, with most street-cleaning and construction work being carried out by economic migrants.

Sociologist Shaun Grech, the artist behind the exhibition *Dehumaneation* said: "We have a profound



The advert published on the Hawke's Bay Herald, of Oct 18, 1883, on page 4. Provided by Leonard Callus, from the National Archives of Malta

lack of knowledge of our own emigration history - the fact that the Maltese emigrated legally does not mean that the Maltese were wanted."

Grech said he included the guidebook and tobacco advert in the exhibition as they contradict "our very erroneous notion of our identity and some or other ridiculous idea of racial purity".

"What happened to the Maltese migrants back then is happening to migrants in Malta today. The juxtaposition of these

experiences, a century apart, is indicative of patterns witnessed historically where the exploited eventually become the exploiters, the oppressed become the oppressors and the colonised become the colonisers." 'Untouched by Chinaman or Maltese'

One stark example of prejudice is an 1883 advert "strongly" urging people to try cigarettes by D Levi, on Hastings Street, as they are made from tobacco that is freshly cut on the premises and is untouched by "Chinamen or Maltese".

The advert, which also features in Shaun Grech's *Dehumaneation* exhibition, must have been issued some weeks after the very first organised group of Maltese migrants moved to Australia in 1883.

The group consisted of 79 Maltese people, supported by a Capuchin friar, who migrated on a five-year contract to harvest cane in North Queensland.

Comedy Knights celebrate with 10th anniversary show

Trademark satire and wit on show



December 15, 2022 | [Press Release](#)

The Comedy Knights

The Comedy Knights are celebrating their tenth anniversary this Christmas with a brand-new live theatre show.

Comedy Knights: Ten Years of Funny will run at Sir Temi Zammit Hall at the University of Malta, Msida from December 26, and will feature all the usual audience favourites, plus some very silly, very recognisable new characters.

To celebrate this special occasion, the comedy troupe will be joined by none other than legendary MADC panto funnyman Alan Montanaro, local TikTok star James Ryder and musical theatre impresario Francesca Scerri.

Expect the Comedy Knights' trademark satire and wit, poking good-natured fun at

the Maltese way of life. Sketches, songs and speeches that somehow manage to be ridiculously funny and truthful at the same time.

"We're extremely glad to be back in the theatre, like the good old days, filling the place with laughter and fun," said Wesley Ellul, who directs this year's show. "It's our tenth year and we really want to give our audiences our very best, to show how much this means to us."

The Comedy Knights: then and now

"Comedy Knights started as a bunch of friends putting on a show for five performances," explained Chris Dingli. "We never suspected that we'd still be performing shows a decade later. So much in Malta has changed since then, and yet in many way, so much is still the same!"

Over the past decade, the Comedy Knights have become a staple in local Christmas entertainment for adults, with tickets selling almost as quickly as young people can leave the island! The daily news might be full of depressing stories and traffic might make your work commute a nightmare, but the Comedy Knights will have you rocking in your seat with belly-laughs in no time.

As Wesley puts it, "We're in a celebratory mood. That means we're really focussing on the funny. We want people to leave the show laughing harder than they've laughed at any of our other shows."

That's a Christmas show worth watching!

Comedy Knights: Ten Years of Funny opens on December 26 and runs until January 8 at Sir Temi Zammit Hall, Msida, with plenty of parking. The show stars Jo Caruana, Marc Cabourdin, Thomas Camilleri, Chris Dingli, Colin Fitz, Steve Hili, Chantelle Micallef Grimaud and Pia Zammit as well as guest stars Alan Montanaro, James Ryder and Francesca Scerri. Written by Chris Dingli and Steve Hili. Directed by Wesley Ellul. Tickets from www.ticketline.com.mt.

THANKS TO ALL OUR READERS AND CONTRIBUTORS





Congratulations to The Malta Band - Community Concert Band in Mississauga on a wonderful 2022 Christmas Concert held at St. Paul the Apostle Church. The Malta Band was formed 56 years ago and currently is directed by Mro. Nick Arrigo. This year's concert was very well attended & featured S t Cecilia Children's Choir & other talented musicians.

80,000 Jobs Available
Malta Free Work Visa 2022

- No Experience
- No Agent
- Age 18 to 55
- 5th Pass Can Apply

How To Apply? Best Website?

Job Hiring in Malta for Foreigners in 2022

www.jobshouses.com/job-hiring-in-malta-for-foreigners-in-2022/

The employment in Malta in 2022 is expected to be mainly related to the tourism industry and services. The country has half a million residents and a 5% unemployment rate. The country allows foreigners to apply for a job

directly with an employer. This way, they can avoid any intermediaries and gain employment directly from the employer. Nevertheless, foreigners should make sure that they understand the local laws and regulations to avoid scams.

JOBS IN HIGH-TECH PROFESSIONS

The job market for jobs in Malta is thriving, particularly in the financial services industry. Malta has a low unemployment rate and a population of approximately 500,000, so there are plenty of opportunities for people with the necessary skills. Financial services are also an excellent way to make a great living and contribute to the local economy. A career in this sector is rewarding and can lead to international projects and a good salary. Financial experts have excellent transferable skills and plenty of scope for career growth. IT professionals in Malta are highly sought after, as online services are increasing in popularity. These professionals are required to engage with online customers, manage data responsibly, and provide efficient payment solutions. A strong IT talent base in Malta is crucial for the development of a successful business. There are many IT companies in Malta that offer job opportunities to foreigners, whether they are skilled in web development or other fields.

IGAMING INDUSTRY

The iGaming industry in Malta has an incredible amount of potential for career advancement. This industry is one of the fastest growing sectors and provides a range of opportunities for diverse talent. Software developer positions are particularly popular and require individuals with technical expertise and a knack for language. Soft skills such as communication are also very in-demand in the iGaming industry. Interested candidates should keep in mind that this sector is very volatile and requires a variety of skills and experience.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

The financial services industry in Malta is growing rapidly. It covers a wide range of roles in insurance, investment funding, and corporate services. This industry makes up 11% of Malta's GDP and provides a great deal of support for other booming industries in the country. Financial services jobs are fulfilling and can involve working on global projects while earning a good salary. Many financial services experts have transferable skills and plenty of room for growth.

Another growing area is tourism. Malta is one of the few countries to have regulated and organized cryptocurrency and blockchain technology. The government encourages the development and testing of this emerging technology. Blockchain development positions in Malta are some of the most sought after in the country, so if you have an interest in blockchain, this could be a good option for you. This sector is expected to continue to grow in Malta, a region with a strong economic foundation.

FACTORY WORKER POSITIONS

The average salary for a factory worker in Malta is 3,160 EUR per month, with salaries ranging from 1,170 EUR to 7,910 EUR. This salary includes benefits such as housing and transportation, but it varies widely across different career fields. For more details, see the salary statistics below for each job title. The average salary for a factory worker in Malta is EUR26,000 per year. Applicants should have at least six months' experience in a related industry and a good understanding of Maltese and English.

The salary of a factory worker in Malta is relatively high. It averages EUR3,220 per month, which is lower than the EUR31,824 monthly wage for those with bachelor's degrees. However, this salary does not reflect the differences in education and experience. For example, a factory worker with a Master's degree would earn EUR31,824 a month. In addition to salary, Malta offers many benefits to its workers, including health insurance, holidays, and the ability to visit the country.



Queen of Victories Community Council (later was changed to Maltese Community Council of South Australia Inc (Oct.1980)

(From left) Emmanuel Grima, Leli Monsigneur, Les Borg, Joe Chetcuti, Joe Monsigneur, Fr. Edward Zammit, Gaetano Borg, Frank Brincat, Joe Borg, Charles Baldacchino, Laura Baldacchino, Carmen Chetcuti, N. Zammit and Carmen Zammit

The Maltese priests, appointed by their superiors to the chaplaincy among Maltese migrants in Australia, always with a burning desire to fulfil their missionary work, were instrumental in forming many societies and clubs in Maltese communities.

Their aim, always spiritual, cultural and social, assisted migrants in keeping the high moral and religious standards acquired since childhood.

It has helped us to settle down happily and peacefully in our adopted country – Australia.

The activities of Maltese organisations, (always with a spiritual director as is the custom in Malta) have remained active and effective in keeping together as many Maltese as possible and helped with their needs as the situation arose.

The valuable experience gained over the years has rewarded the Maltese community in Australia.

*By secretary,
F.L. BRINCAT*

Their work has received the admiration, cooperation and support of the Australian authorities – Ecclesiastical, Federal and State Governments.

In South Australia, the Maltese community is experiencing a revival of its religious and cultural heritage.

The Franciscan Fathers of Lockleys, who celebrated the 30th anniversary of their Franciscan Foundation and the Maltese Chaplaincy last year, have been honored for their hard work by the Maltese community, with a statue of Mary, Queen of Victories – Special Patroness of Malta.

To mark this event, they organised a pastoral council for the Maltese community to share with them in the administration and mission of the Maltese chaplaincy.

It's significant

In February 1980 we saw the emergence of this Council called "Queen of Victories" Maltese Community Council.

The name has a more significant meaning to a Maltese, whose love and devotion for the Mother of God is like life itself.

The Council's 'representation' consists of the Maltese Guild of SA Inc., Maltese R.S.L. Sub-Branch, Salisbury Park Sports Angling Club and a number of dedicated workers to assist the chaplaincy in the pastoral and community work.

While most Council members are old hands in community affairs and realise too well the hard task ahead, they are optimistic about their goals.

Reflecting on our past, it was no easy matter to pack a suit case and start afresh in a far distant land.

Migrants had a determination and perseverance to establish themselves.

Although small in number (in South Australia) our contribution is well registered by doc-

tors, lawyers, accountants, architects, trade and business people.

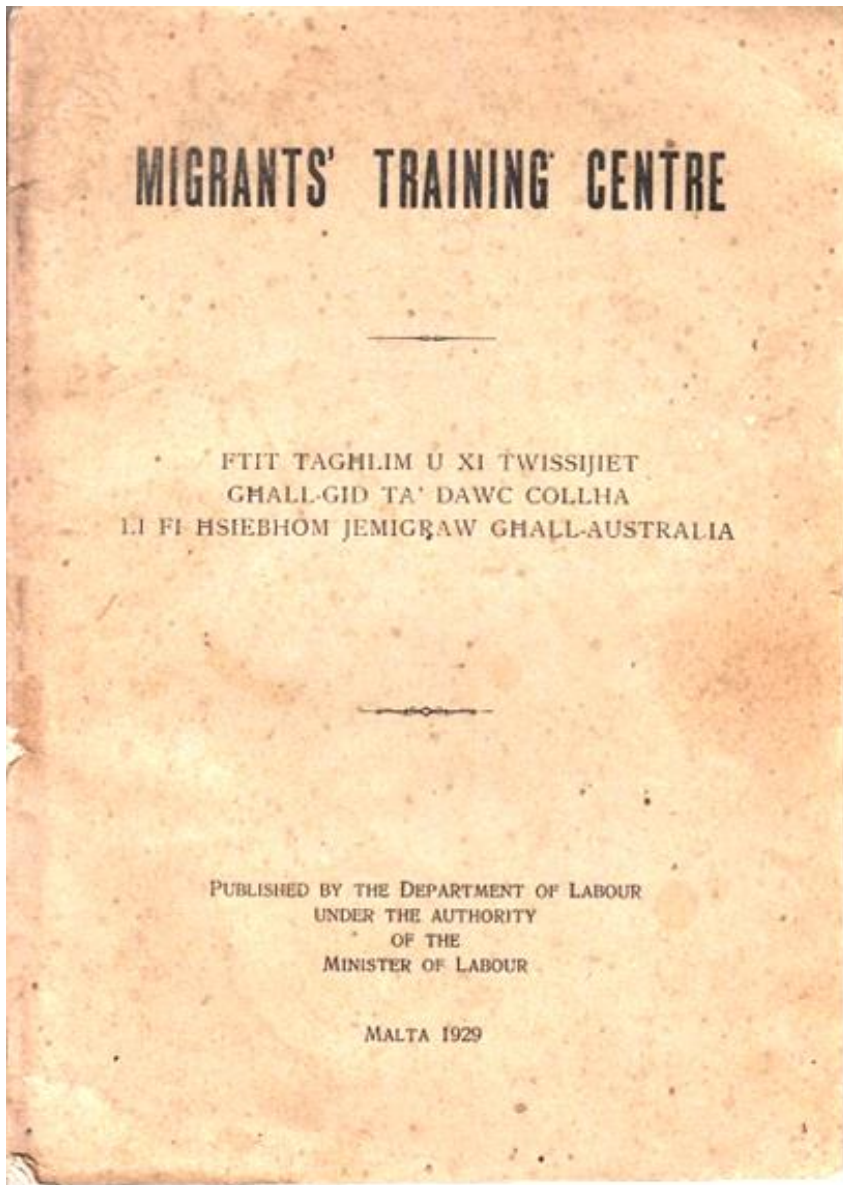
No matter how small or large one's contribution is, we are part of the making of a nation, proud of our history and heritage and our adopted country.

As members of our community are sparse around Adelaide and integrated with other communities, support is slow, but surely coming.

However, with the help of the Ethnic Broadcasting Inc. (Maltese Broadcasts, twice a week – Thursday 7 p.m. – 8 p.m. and Sunday 7.30 a.m. – 8.30 a.m.), it is hoped that the efforts of the Queen of Victories Maltese Community Council and its sub-committees, with other activities organised by Maltese organisations, will bring the Maltese even closer.

The aim is to encourage frequent gatherings at functions, through which morale, financial support and ideas will emerge to help build a united and stronger community.

HISTORY OF MALTESE EMIGRATION - The booklet which advice the Maltese to wash frequently and use cutlery – 1920



A 1920s guidebook reveals the tips given to Australia-bound Maltese migrants

Sarah Carabott

Wash frequently, use cutlery in restaurants, avoid speaking with your mouth full, do not haggle in shops... and do not walk barefoot.

The guidebook- Migrants 'Training Centre. Provided by Leonard Callus from the National Archives of Malta.

This is some of the advice provided by Malta's Department of Labour to those who planned on migrating to Australia in 1929.

The tips, listed in a booklet issued by the Migrants' Training Centre, came to light in an exhibition run at Spazju Kreattiv

titled [Dehumaneation](#).

Back then, organised migration was an encouraged practice, or, as superintendent of emigration Henry Casolani put it, "a breath of life for Malta". *"Without it, the greatest national calamity is within sight... without a smooth, continuous, scientific and carefully organised drain of our congested population, a catastrophe, which will be a landmark in the history of the Maltese Islands, sooner or later*

awaits us," he wrote in 1930.



Pre-World War Two Maltese migrants usually settled down in places where their own relatives or friends would had settled down before them. Their aim was to overcome poverty, send money to their relatives in Malta and eventually help their own family members join them in Australia.

Some of the early migrants before setting off for Australia. Before setting off for Australia, some migrants were trained in farm work at Għammieri, where a replica of a timber bungalow was used until the 1950s to familiarise them with

Australian culture and construction.

Lessons for Maltese

But farm work and construction were not the only things the Maltese needed a lesson in.

In the guidebook, they are warned that employees in Australia go to work in a suit and wear shoes. “No one – not even beggars – go around barefoot or wearing sandals, while caps are only worn for sport events. No one wears hats made from straw, but rather felt, just as people wear belts, rather than sashes (triefi) to hold up their pants.”

Maltese migrants were also urged to avoid haggling over shop prices as these were fixed and each item carried a price tag. This way you can compare prices and check who has the most competitive fees, the booklet notes.

Maltese migrants were urged to avoid haggling over shop prices as they were fixed

A whole page is dedicated to hygiene. “Dirt is the most disgusting thing, and dirty people will be ridiculed and ignored,” the guidebook reads, urging migrants to keep their hair short, shave as frequently as possible and keep their nails short and clean.



Emotional scenes at the harbour..

Most importantly, they should remember to wash their hands once they are done with work, especially before eating.

Apparently, some Maltese factory workers in America were fired because they used to skip washing their hands before lunch.

One last word of advice is printed in capital letters: “Old and clean clothing is better than new and dirty clothes”.

Migrants also needed guidance how to behave outdoors: it is illegal in Australia and elsewhere to loiter at corners, on pavements or in the middle of the streets, the booklet reads.

“Everyone should keep walking and continue minding their own business” and if one wanted to hang out with friends, one could do so at the park.

The booklet also warns against eating with one’s hands, speaking with one’s mouth full, sprinkling salt and pepper with one’s fingers, drinking straight from bottles or pitchers, or sipping tea or coffee from saucers.

“Cutlery is laid out on the table not for decorative purposes – use

it, and drink from cups.”

And while you can break a piece of bread with your hands, do not wipe the plate clean with it, the Maltese were warned. One overarching advice that lingers throughout is to observe Australian nationals and act in a similar fashion.

BETHLEHEM IN GHAJNSIELEM



‘omewhere, on a tiny island in the middle of the Mediterranean, several local volunteers are in the final-touches stage for the TENTH EDITION of Bethlehem f’Għajnsielem, the event that has enchanted thousands of visitors over the past two years. The nativity village is situated adjacent to the Għajnsielem main square, on the island of Gozo, just 5 minutes by walk from Mgarr Harbour. Appropriately called “Bethlehem f’Għajnsielem”, this life-size crib, constructed on 20,000 square metre (sqm) of fields on a stretch of land known as Ta’ Passi, comes to life during the month of December with about 150 actors taking visitors back in time to Judea of 2000 years ago. The atmosphere will simply be unique... horses turn mills, villagers go about their jobs, shepherds inhabit caves, animals roam in enclosed spaces and a poor unknown couple tend their newly-born in a grotto...

It has been a long journey with every edition offering new attractions to strengthen the reproduction of the greatest story ever told – The Story of Nativity. – Open till the 8 January

For more information call Għajnsielem Local Council on 21561515 or visit ghajnsielem.com/bethlehem.

More than one in five people living in Malta are foreign

Marc Galdes

The Census of Population and Housing 2021 showed a significant increase of non-Maltese residents in Malta. The report showed that there has been a steep incline in the country's population since 2011. In the past 10 years, it grew by nearly a quarter, this is the highest average of growth recorded to this date.

The population has increased by 10,000 persons per year. The National Statistics Office explained that this significant increase in the population has a lot to do with immigration. There are 115,449 non-Maltese living in Malta, which amounts to 22.2% of the population. More than one in five persons.

In 2011, the number of non-Maltese living in the country amounted to 20,289 persons, which

made up only 4.9% of the population.

The most prominent increase in of non-Maltese was mainly found in the Northern Harbour and Northern districts, with an increase of 44,652 and 22,042 people respectively.

St Pauls Bay saw the most significant rise, with 14,000 non-Maltese residents, this was followed by Sliema and Msida. One-third of these non-Maltese can be found in one of these three localities. Overall, St Paul's Bay houses 15% of all non-Maltese, which amounts to over 17,000. These numbers contribute to the significant increase in population St Pauls Bay saw, which is now registered as Malta's most populated locality.

Furthermore, the non-Maltese were predominantly males - 59.3%. Their average age was 34.9 years

which is 9 years younger than the average for Maltese residents. This average age of non-Maltese is also younger than it was in 2011, when it stood at 40.6 years. The country retained its place from 2011 as the most densely populated EU Member State. In 2021 it sat at 1,649 persons per square kilometre, which marks an increase of 324 persons per square kilometre (24.5%) from 2011.

In the EU it was recorded that the average number of persons per square kilometre stood at 109. Whilst, the second most densely populated country was The Netherlands, which was still three times less dense than Malta with 507 persons per square kilometre.



Woman of Maltese Heritage shot in Canada

Pictures of all of the deceased from the Vaughan condo shooting rampage on Dec. 18, 2022. (Supplied)

The five people killed after a 73-year-old man went on a shooting rampage at his Toronto-area condo are being **remembered as kind community members** who were loved by their families. Police have said **Francesco Villi**, who was involved in a lengthy dispute with his condo board, **killed three board members** and two of their partners on Sunday night before he was shot dead by police.

Rita Camilleri, 57

Rita Camilleri of Maltese heritage was a smart and kind member of her community, who had a zest for life, those who knew her said.

She worked for years in the real estate business before retiring and becoming a board member for the Vaughan, Ont., condo building she lived and later died in.

Marilyn lafrate, a Vaughan city councillor, said Camilleri was passionate about her condo community, advocating for upkeep and upgrades on behalf of all residents.

"She was smart, thorough and tough when needed to be, but was also very reasonable and accommodating," she said. "Never once were her undertakings for personal reasons, but always for the greater good."

Fellow condo board member and friend Tony Cutrone said Camilleri had a kind heart and a contagious smile.

She also loved travelling and had a passion for food. Earlier this month, she organized a Christmas party for condo residents and was already planning a summertime barbecue, Cutrone said.

Camilleri was also loving daughter, sister and caring wife who rarely missed suppertime with her husband, who also died in Sunday's shooting.

"I don't know how we are going to go on without her," Cutrone said.

War Heroes Over Malta's Skies

The large house up on the hill stood in Rabat's main square known as '*Is-Saqqajja*'. It had an open-air terrace overlooking the cultivated fields and farmlands below.

The name of the house was '*Point de Vue*' guest house and it was frequented by the young dashing RAF pilots who were stationed at '*Ta Qali*' airfield. These small group of pilots guarded Malta's skies during the frequent bombing raids by large numbers of German and Italian war planes.

I used to be at '*Is-Saqqajja*' practically every late afternoon accompanying my mother and elder brother to wait for my father coming back from the dockyard in the blitz-ridden southern area. I used to sit on the steps of the '*Point de Vue*', playing with marbles or my toy British plane while making combat and victorious sounds with my mouth.

I would watch these young and tired pilots in their RAF uniforms coming and going. Sometimes they would give me a sixpence to buy sweets or, as they told me, '*to fuel the spitfire*'. These were a boisterous lot. Inside the house I would hear their load chatter, their banter, their laughter and their singing.

They were young but their survival rate was extremely low, because I noticed that familiar faces were disappearing and new faces were taking their place. Most of them would not make it back to England. In March 1942 a 1,000 kg German bomb exploded just outside the house. Six pilots were killed. I was only 7 years old but I felt very sad. Perhaps some were those who often gave six pence.

These were the heroes over Malta's skies. I did not know it then, of course, but I must have seen Laddie Lucas, Robert 'Buck' Mc Nair, George 'Buzz' Beurling, Adrian 'Warby' Warburton and Raoul

Daddo-Langlois. They fought ferocious dogfights and destroyed several enemy aircraft despite being overwhelmingly outnumbered.

When I became a teenager after the war, I saw their photos, and read articles and books about their valiant exploits. It was then that I realized who they actually were – the one who gave me sixpences; or the one who always greeted me with “*How are you young chap?*”; or the one who often shook my hands; or the one who sometimes gave a bar of chocolate. Reading about them made me so proud to have known them so many years ago.

In May 1942, the Island’s depleted air force was fortified by 64 new Spitfires who, shortly after arrival, destroyed 65 enemy aircraft in a day-long engagement.

Today, 76 years later, I often revisit my refugee town of Rabat and always make it a point to go to the ‘*Point de Vue*’. It is still a guest house, restaurant and pizzeria where families with children – probably not knowing anything about the house’s historical war background – gather for their lunches. But I close my ears to the children’s shouts, the mothers’ calls, and the men’s chatter. Instead, I feel that I can still hear the brave pilots’ laughter, banter and singing. My mind must be playing tricks on me again! **Joseph Lanzon Bormla, Malta August, 2019**

Customs & Traditions



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With its roots firmly in folklore and religion, the Maltese Islands celebrate a long history of dependence entwined with modernisation.

Over the past half century, this little **Mediterranean** island, freshly self-determining after a long history of colonisation and dependence, achieved a great deal in the way of modernisation. Much of the progress was achieved at break-neck speed, including an advanced infrastructure, well-developed industries like financial services, IT, and others. While much of this may come as a surprise to first time visitors, this transformation has not eliminated the core elements of **Malta’s** cultural identity – **its customs and traditions**.

Largely rooted in rural folklore and religion, Maltese customs are still clearly visible in everyday life, most notably, the **village festa**. This celebration of the local village’s patron saint started over five centuries ago, during the reign of the Knights of St. John, and till today, brings with it a colourful cacophony of Mediterranean boisterousness. Possibly the most well known is the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, or Mnarja. This highlight of the cultural calendar is celebrated in the wooded area of Buskett, and

features animal and agricultural displays, traditionally cooked rabbit, and għana – a traditional type of Maltese music.

Traditional life starts early on in Malta. The vast majority of babies are still baptised into the Roman Catholic faith, and this celebration usually involves a not so intimate gathering with family, friends, and of course, food. Shortly after, usually on a child’s first birthday, the Maltese practise a little-known tradition called the il-quččija, which involves the child crawling towards a collection of objects while family and friends encourage the child to pick something. The tradition dictates that the selected object is representative of the child’s future career. Objects typically include rosary beads, indicating an ecclesiastical calling, a hardboiled egg, symbolising prosperity, as well as more modern inclusions such as a calculator symbolising a career in finance.

Other religious sacraments are celebrated with the same gusto, including the First Holy Communion, which sees the child dressed in flamboyant, angel-like attire and is always followed by a party in the child’s honour. This celebration is closely followed the sacrament of Confirmation, which has a similar celebratory style.

Weddings are a big affair in Malta. In fact, the Island has recently started including wedding tourism as part of its offering to visitors. However, the traditional Maltese wedding is still alive and kicking. Although there have been some modifications throughout the years, the core concepts are still practised: ceremonies are almost always held in a church while celebrations are held afterwards,

usually in wedding halls or one of the Islands' many gardens. The bride and groom distribute small trinkets or presents as a sign of thanks and as a small memento for their guests. Food is a major part of the celebrations, and in particular, sweets. Maltese weddings almost always feature perlini – a candy coated almond sweet of Sicilian origin.

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