



# MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal for Maltese Living Abroad



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Australian Singer  
Delta Goodrem  
Performs  
in Malta

Isle of MTV  
Festival

18 July 2023

Granaries  
Floriana



Bishop of Darwin  
Charles Gauci  
at Jabiru



POPEYE VILLAGE  
IN MALTA!



SIMON BAJADA



## CELEBRATING THE 247<sup>TH</sup> US INDEPENDENCE IN MALTA



The President of Malta together with the US Ambassador celebrated 247<sup>th</sup> Independence Day of the United States of America.

US Ambassador Ms Milstein said "We thank all those who joined us on this very special occasion".

Dr. George Vella, President of Malta, said that the excellent bilateral ties between Malta and USA nurtured throughout the years and have continued to grow from strength to strength. A strong fundamental respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are shared values that define the close nature of the relationship of the two countries. Further reinforcing the

strong links between our two countries is the very active and thriving Maltese diaspora in the USA, the third largest community outside Malta.

### Constance J. Milstein US Ambassador to Malta



Constance J. Milstein presented her credentials to the President of the Republic of Malta on October 27, 2022. She was nominated by President Biden and was confirmed by the Senate on August 6, 2022.

Ambassador Milstein is an attorney, businesswoman, philanthropist, and social entrepreneur. She was a Principal and Co-Founder of Ogden CAP Properties, LLC.

Ambassador Milstein has led international initiatives to address pressing global issues and geopolitical threats. She was a founding board member of Blue Star Families, the nation's largest support organization for military spouses and

children. Ambassador Milstein pioneered the inventive non-profit Dog Tag bakery, dedicated to empowering disabled veterans. During the Obama-Biden administration, Ambassador Milstein served as a Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army. She has played key roles with many non-profits and NGOs focused on international relations, global education, and democracy building, which include Seton Hall University's School of Diplomacy, United Nations Association, Refugees International, and UN Watch.

Ambassador Milstein earned her B.S. from New York University and her J.D. *cum laude* from North Carolina Central University Law School, where she served as comment editor of the North Carolina Central Law Review. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Angel Award, Blue Star Families; Distinguished Service Award, NYU College of Arts & Science; and the Albert Gallatin Medal for outstanding contributions to society, NYU. She speaks French and Italian. Ambassador Milstein is a proud mother and grandmother. She is joined in Malta by her husband, Saïd Abu-Kaud.



The President sees the two "Maltese" "Cippi" exhibited in a museum in Dubai (right) President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan with George Vella, President of Malta, who is on an official visit to the UAE. Liam Carter

**Cippi of Melqart -- Phoenician marble cippi unearthed in Malta. These are votive offerings to Melqart inscribed in both Greek and Phoenician, which played a key role in deciphering the Phoenician language. Considered "a masterpiece of Phoenician epigraphy," it has become a cultural icon of Malta.**

The 50 years of diplomatic relations between Malta and the United Arab Emirates were reflected in long negotiations for two "Cippi" to be exhibited in the Louvre in Abu Dhabi.

The "Cippi" are currently among the attractions in this museum in the Emirates, which were loaned by the Maltese and French authorities so that the visitors of this Abu Dhabi museum can appreciate the history which is behind them.

Talks that lasted a year led to the meeting of the two historical "Cippi" that were found in Malta centuries ago and that ended up being separated 241 years ago.

It is understood that these go back to the Second Century BC and on their lower side there are the same inscriptions. In 1782 the Grandmaster Emmanuele De Rohan presented one of the "Cippi" to France as a recognition for having managed to decipher the Phoenician language thanks also to the inscriptions on the "Cippi". In a visit to the Louvre in Abu Dhabi, President George Vella showed himself satisfied for the fact that these "Cippi" have been reunited.

For the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates, Maria Camilleri Calleja, the "Cippi" are proof that with diplomacy everything is possible. The

significance is important because you have to work for something to be done, two countries have to work to grow their relations, and although they are far from each other, thanks to the good will they find a way to get closer to each other, the same just like these two "Cippi" did. Maria Camilleri Calleja She added that with effort and dialogue we can always find how to approach each other.

The "Cippi" were borrowed from the two museums, namely the National Museum of Archeology and the Louvre Museum of France, for a temporary period until the exhibition is being staged in Abu Dhabi.

This is the first time that Heritage Malta is collaborating with the Abu Dhabi Louvre with the aim of raising the profile of the Maltese Heritage Agency and at the same time the History of Malta attracts more tourists who travel to see cultural and historical attractions. Meanwhile, President Vella's commitments in Abu Dhabi also included a visit to the Sheikh Zayed grand mosque while in Dubai Dr Vella closely followed the technological advances including the use of Artificial Intelligence in the Dubai Future Museum and even donated books to the Dubai National Library.



## Heritage

## WORK STARTS ON RESTORATION OF AUSTRALIAN BUNGALOW



**AUSTRALIAN BUNGALOW - MALTA**



### [Din I-Art Helwa - National Trust of Malta](http://dinlarthelwa.org) [\(\[dinlarthelwa.org\]\(http://dinlarthelwa.org\)\)](http://dinlarthelwa.org)

We were last week thrilled to show **HE** the Australian High Commissioner, Ms Jenny Cartmill, around the Australian Bungalow. This was not her first visit - but it may be her last as she is reaching the end of her term in Malta, so the visit was even more appreciated. She was able to see how much work has already been done: the portico which wrapped around three of the four sides has already been removed and each piece of wood is being painstakingly numbered and matched to a plan of the building. Some are beyond redemption, but others can be restored. The intention is for



the bungalow to be re-assembled in Ta' Qali, just 150m away from the performance arena.

The bungalow - which was sent from Australia in the 1920s to show prospective emigrants what a typical house looked like - is far more spacious than you would think, with a high ceiling, and it had features that Maltese setting off to Australia would never have encountered, like sash windows and a full timber construction. Also in the photo is DLH president Alex Torpiano (with jacket) and Joe Philip Farrugia, who has waited six long years to see this project take off...

*Vanessa Macdonald – PRO - communications for Din I-Art Helwa, a Maltese NGO looking after heritage sites.*



**Australian High Commissioner Jenny Cartmill at the Domus Romana in Rabat, Malta, with archaeologists from all over the world who are currently working on the Melite Civitas Romana Project**





## IMNARJA BUSKETT 2023



### Where religion and paganism meet.

On 28 and 29 June Malta celebrated Saints Peter and Paul with the festival of L-Imnarja, the traditional anniversary that has survived the passing of the centuries.

If you want to discover a bit of Malta and let yourself be enchanted by a mix of religious traditions and absolutely pagan festivals, this is definitely the right excuse!

Let's see together the origins and its meaning, as well as the events scheduled to fully experience this island!

### The origins of the L-Imnarja festival

The L-Imnarja festival has very ancient origins and is an opportunity to make a sort of return to the roots. The first testimonies on the celebrations for this festival date back, in fact, to the period of the Knights of Malta, in the sixteenth century. Saints Peter and Paul have always been much loved by

the Maltese people. In this regard, it is enough to consider that:

**St. Peter** – as well as the first Pope of the Catholic Church – is the protector of fishermen, a profession that has always been widespread on the island; while **St. Paul** is the patron saint of Malta. The link between these two saints and the island is therefore undisputed.

The name of the festival of **L-Imnarja** comes from the Latin "**luminary**", which means to ignite. This is because in the past the population participated in the celebrations by lighting torches and candles in honour of the two Christian martyrs.

### Celebrations

Nowadays the festival has combined the historically religious character of the event, a more profane touch. Bonfires are lit all over the island, traditional Maltese dishes are tasted and songs, dances and fireworks are organized.



Some simply decide to celebrate the day with relatives and friends by organizing barbecues on the beach or on the terrace. It has therefore also become an opportunity to celebrate the beginning of the summer season. In the past, the festivities took place in the medieval city of Mdina, the City of Silence. Today they are celebrated in a two-day event between **Buskett Garden** and **Rabat**.

#### **Buskett Garden**

Buskett Garden is an area of gardens created by the Knights of St. John for their hunting activities, and is located a few kilometres from Rabat, near Verdala Palace.

Food stands are set up here for the occasion and an agricultural exhibition will be held that has origins dating back to 1854. In addition, on the evening of the 28th there is the traditional picnic that has as its main course the **fried rabbit**, accompanied by excellent local wine and homemade desserts.

#### **Agricultural Exhibition**

Mnarja event is the biggest agricultural event of the year which will be organized in the Buskett Gardens on 28th and 29th of June. Farmers, animal breeders, animal lovers and gardeners would be exhibiting their products on show and on the competition stands. Thursday evening one can enjoy traditional Maltese folklore music and enjoy delicacies of the Maltese food and other information stalls. On the other hand on Friday 29th June as from early morning till around noon there would be the competition of the various farm animals.

#### **The festival of I-imnarja Mdina and Rabat**

In the Cathedral of Mdina the traditional liturgical mass for the commemoration of the two saints is

celebrated both on 28 and 29 June, with the presence of the Archbishop of Malta.

Throughout the day of the 29th, already from the first light of the morning, Rabat turns into a stage and open-air theatre: musical performances, dances, storyteller shows and much more will cheer and entertain tourists and not. Do not miss the performance of the Mdina and Rabat Band (Għaqda Muzikali L'Isle Adam A.D. 1860 Rabat tal-Imdina), which celebrated its 160th anniversary in 2020.

**Fun fact:** during the late afternoon of the 29th in Rabat is generally held the **Palju**, a particular race of donkeys and horses through the country roads surrounding the town. According to tradition, the Grand Master of the Order of the Knights of Malta watched the race from his villa on the hill "Saqqajja Hill" and conferred the trophy on the winner.

#### **Dingli**

Also in Dingli is celebrated the Feast of St. Marija – Ħad-Dingli. Holy Mass will be celebrated in the Chapel of St. *Mary Magdalene* on June 28 at 17:30 and 20:00.

In addition, at the price of € 5.50 it will be possible to buy a **ftira**, a drink and the traditional Maltese dessert "**mqaret**".

#### **The party in Gozo**

Celebrations of a completely different nature take place in **Nadur**, Gozo.

Here you can still perceive the strong religious tradition that has, instead, been somewhat lost in Malta.

The streets are festively decorated, processions are organized in honor of St. Paul and performances of songs and dances, as well as stands with local gastronomy products.



## **ANDRÉ RIEU LIVE IN CONCERT MALTA**

Known as the 'King of Waltz', André Rieu is a Dutch violinist and conductor, best known for creating the Johann Strauss Orchestra will perform in Malta in September. The 60-piece ensemble performs popular classical and crossover works, with an emphasis on waltzes, often featuring elaborate sets and costumes. André Rieu has announced two live concerts in Malta on September 1st and 2nd, 2023. The concerts will be held at the Floriana Granaries, a 15-minute walk from Valletta.



Fr. March Cauchi osa

## AD MULTOS ANNOS FR. MARK

On July 5, 2023 Rev. Father Mark Caruana osa will turn 95.. Fr. Cauchi was born in Cospicua on

July 5, 1928, the son of Mark and Mary Carbonaro. He had his primary education at Cospicua and his secondary one at St Aloysius in Birkirkara. He joined the Austin Friars on January 20, 1946 at St Augustine's in Victoria.

He took simple vows on January 26 and solemn vows on February 5, 1950. He was ordained priest at St John's Co-Cathedral, Valletta on December 20, 1952. He had his philosophical and theological

studies at St Mark's College, studied literature and methodology at Grenoble University, France and served the Maltese Augustinian province in Malta, Africa, Switzerland and Italy. Besides pastoral duties he also worked in the Aueducational field at St Augustine's College, Pieta' as a teacher as well as on the college board. He wrote on all the local papers in English and Maltese as well as in the Italian ones of Rome, Naples, Catania and Valverde. He is the author of history books, with his last publication Vetustior Glorior about the Church and monastery of St Mark in Rabat.

The editor, Frank Scicluna, and readers of the journal of the Maltese Diaspora wish Fr. Mark their best regards and God's blessings to Fr. March Cauchi.



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**Il-Monument  
f'Gieh  
il-Haddiema  
fl-Imnsida**

**The workers memorial  
in Msida Malta by  
local sculptor  
Anton Agius**

The Workers' Memorial in Msida is dedicated to the suffering and hard work of all the workers on the Maltese Islands..

The monument was erected by the General Workers' Union in 1980. Established on 5th October 1943, the union is the largest of its kind in Malta. The GWU celebrates its foundation day annually at the memorial, which is also the focus on International Workers Day on 1st May, a national holiday. It was designed by celebrated Maltese sculptor Anton Agius.

The monument symbolises a Maltese worker's family carved in bronze, standing on top of a stone carved plinth featuring figurines of workers busy working, as if they are in the process of cutting, chipping and carving the very stone on which the monument rests. The attention to detail is remarkable. On the monument you can see all manner of tools represented and the hard labour is evident on the workers' pained faces.





## Australian Singer Delta Goodrem Joins Isle Of Mtv Malta Line Up

ohmymalta.com.mt/2023/06/30/australian-singer-delta-goodrem-joins-isle-of-mtv-malta-line-up/

at major local events and international gigs under their belt, these last few years has seen the group score a Best Album of the Year win, plus two number one singles with their latest EP 'X' on home turf in Malta, plus represent the island on Eurovision's international stage

**Australian singer Delta Goodrem as well as Maltese stars The Busker and Kevin Paul will perform on the iconic Il-Fosos Square stage as part of the Isle of MTV Malta festival on Tuesday 18 July 2023**

Co-headlined by

OneRepublic and Alesso, The Busker and Kevin Paul join Tom Grennan, Mimi Webb and award-winning Australian singer-songwriter Delta Goodrem for the one-night-only event. "I'm so excited to be performing on the Isle of MTV. The island of Malta is very dear to me and I can't wait to hit the stage and perform for you all!" said Delta Goodrem.

Delta Goodrem is an award-winning singer-songwriter and musician. An artist in the truest sense, Delta has five number one albums – including one of the best-selling debut albums in Australian History with 'Innocent Eyes' – nine number one singles, seventeen top ten hits and three World Music Awards to her name. Her iconic chart-toppers, include "Born To Try", "Lost Without You", "Innocent Eyes", "Believe Again", "In This Life" and "Not Me, Not I" that topped the chart in Malta, making Goodrem the first Australian artist to have a number one record in the country, whilst her duets with Tony Bennet, LeAnn Rimes and Olivia Newton John, have seen Goodrem capture the attention of fans around the world. Goodrem is embarking on her Hearts on the Run Tour across the UK and Europe this August, but first, she is set to take the stage at Isle of MTV Malta!

With their current line up of lead vocalist and guitarist, David "Dav.Jr" Meilak, drummer Jean Paul Borg and saxophonist Sean Meachen, dynamic 3-piece band The Busker have become familiar faces on Malta's music scene over the past ten years, wowing audiences with their unique sounds of new retro, soul pop and funk. With several headline spots

after winning their local final with their massive track "Dance (Our Own Party)".

Also headed to the Isle of MTV stage is one of the island's favourite singer-songwriters and X Factor Malta alum, Kevin Paul. A talented musician with unmistakably soulful vocals, Kevin Paul's latest collaboration with Kurt Calleja, "Kieku Nista", is a Maltese spin on Ed Sheeran's "Visiting Hours". With other hits including "Hurt" and "One", Kevin Paul is no stranger to a festival gig, having performed to fans around Europe throughout his career. In an exclusive treat for the audience, Kevin Paul will be unveiling one of his unreleased tracks at Isle of MTV. "We are thrilled to perform at this year's Isle of MTV Malta, where we'll be debuting our brand new song, "Thinking About You". See you there!" said The Busker.

"Six year old me would've never imagined this moment; performing on the Isle of MTV stage before One Republic, Tom Grennan, Mimi Webb & Alesso is a dream come true! I'm truly humbled and grateful." said Kevin Paul.

Europe's largest free festival, Isle of MTV Malta has brought tens of thousands of music fans to Il-Fosos Square every year, in partnership with the Malta Tourism Authority, to enjoy show-stopping performances from some of the world's biggest stars, including Lady Gaga, Snoop Dogg, David Guetta and Martin Garrix.

The event will broadcast on MTV internationally on 15 September 2023 in more than 150 countries, showcasing the festival and Malta to millions of music fans around the world.

The festival will be followed by Isle of MTV Malta Music Week, a series of club nights and parties across the hottest venues on the island, from July 18 – 23 July.

**To secure free tickets, and keep up with the latest Isle of MTV news, head to [www.isleofmtv.com](http://www.isleofmtv.com)**



## Archaeologists find new remains during excavations at Domus Romana

Over 40 archaeologists from different countries are working on fresh excavations in various areas around the Domus Romana in Rabat.

The project, which builds upon excavations carried out a hundred years ago, has already yielded important findings, including houses' remains, pottery and metals.

The archaeologists hope that these findings can shed more light on the Roman city Melite, since information surrounding it is yet scarce.

The excavations at the Domus Romana are being carried out thanks to collaboration between Heritage Malta, the University of South Florida, and the group called Intercontinental Archeologists, consisting of two Australians and one Briton, who also conducted a lot of work in Pompei, Italy.

The ongoing Domus Romana project has been named Melite Civitas Romana.



Speaking to TVMnews, David Cardona, a Heritage Malta official, explained that these excavations have now entered their second year. The excavations' main aim is to uncover once again the trenches which had been uncovered by Sir Temi Zammit 100 years ago, and better understand the structures which had been unearthed at the time.

David Cardona explained that the project is going a step further, and is also carrying out excavations in areas which have never been excavated in order to obtain new information, not only on the Roman villa and the houses surrounding it, but also on the Roman city Melite, which we know little about, and how these houses operated in this particular area of the city.

"A number of important remains have already been unearthed, such as parts of houses, walls, one of which is four courses thick. Four Roman courses were half a metre each, so we have an almost 2 metre elevation.

There are also what we call special finds, small items that are being unearthed, such as pottery and metals. David Cardona

On Friday morning the public was been given the opportunity to watch the ongoing excavations at close range. The first Domus Romana remains were uncovered on the 3rd of February 1881, when workers were digging to plant trees around Mdina. On that day, the mosaic floor was uncovered.

Excavations followed, and were led by Annetto Antonio Caruana, who continued to uncover the beauty of the Roman villa dating back to the first century BC.

In September 1920, Sir Temi Zammit commenced excavations in the north part of the Domus Romana, with the remains uncovered during this project which are now kept at the museum, as well as in fields on the east of the road which used to lead to the train station at Mtarfa. Others were uncovered here, which dated to the third century AD.

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**The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora**

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The **2023 FIFA Women's World Cup** will be the ninth edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup, the quadrennial international football (soccer) championship contested by women's national teams and organised by FIFA. The tournament will be jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand, and is scheduled to take place from 20 July to 20 August 2023.<sup>[1][2]</sup> It will be the first FIFA Women's World Cup to have more than one host nation, and also the first senior World Cup to be held across multiple confederations, as Australia is in the Asian Confederation, while New Zealand is in the Oceanian Confederation. In addition, this tournament will be the first to feature the expanded format of 32 teams from the previous 24, replicating the same format used for the men's World Cup from 1998 to 2022.

The opening match will be contested between New Zealand and Norway at Eden Park, Auckland, on 20 July 2023. The final will take place on 20 August 2023 at Sydney Olympic Stadium in Australia.<sup>[3]</sup> The United States are the defending champions, having won the previous two (2015 and 2019) tournaments.

The FIFA Women's World Cup is a professional association football tournament contested by senior

women's national football teams, organised by FIFA.<sup>[5]</sup> The tournament, held every four years and one year after the men's World Cup, was first played in 1991 in China, and has since been expanded to 32 teams following the 2023 edition. The tournament is contested with eight round-robin groups followed by a knockout round for 16 teams. The defending champions are the United States, who defeated the Netherlands 2–0 in the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup Final.<sup>[6][7]</sup> The event is scheduled to take place over a period of a month, from 20 July to 20 August in Australia and New Zealand. This Women's World Cup will be the first co-hosted tournament, and also the first seniors World Cup to be held across multiple confederations. In addition, it will be the first seniors tournament to be held in Oceania, the first Women's World Cup in the Southern Hemisphere, and the third to be held in the Asia-Pacific region.

The group stage fixtures for each group will be allocated to the following host country:

Groups A, C, E, G: New Zealand  
(Auckland, Dunedin, Hamilton, Wellington)

Groups B, D, F, H: Australia  
(Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney)

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**THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER**

**Building Bridges not Walls**



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**MALTESE ENCYCLOPEDIA**

If you have a poem, essay,  
review or any other article  
send it to us and we gladly  
publish it in this Journal  
for Maltese Living Abroad



## Maltese conservator discovers fragment of 'oldest-known book in the world' Jessica Arena

*Therese Zammit Lupi, photo, discovered that this papyrus fragment could actually be part of the world's oldest-known book, dating back to the third century BC. Photo: University of Graz/Kernasenko/Facebook*

A Maltese book conservator has made a sensational discovery with the potential of rewriting history after finding what is claimed to be the oldest fragment of a book known to mankind.

The papyrus fragment is part of the special collection of the University of Graz in Austria, where Zammit Lupi works.

In a press conference on Thursday, the university said that the fragment dates to the 3rd century BC. The earliest codices with evidence of stitching in book form have been dated to 150-250 AD, the university said. "The Graz Mummy Book was created 400 years earlier, making it the oldest surviving form of a book we know of to date," said Erich Renhart and Thomas Csanády, heads of the Special Collections at Graz University Library.

"However, it is not unlikely that more such codex fragments exist in other collections that have just not been systematically searched for so far. After all, papyrus was a relatively cheap writing material, and large quantities of fragments have survived," Renhart said.

In a featurette published by the university, Zammit Lupi said the find has made her feel like rogue fictional archaeologist Indiana Jones.

"I never imagined something like this could happen to me in my career and it really is a once-in-a-lifetime chance," she said. "I consider myself extremely lucky that my eyes just fell on this fragment and I feel as though I'm the Indiana Jones of the University of Graz."

But rather than dashing through the corridors of crumbling temples or engaging in thrilling battles of whips, it was Zammit Lupi's sharp eye during a routine assessment of a group of papyri fragments that landed the discovery, noticing an errant piece of thread peeking from the papyrus.



"This discovery was totally serendipitous. First I saw a piece of thread, only then did I notice the format of a book. I saw a central fold, the stitching holes and the written text within clearly defined margins on the papyrus," Zammit Lupi said.

"As a conservator, it feels very special to contribute to the history of the book. At the same time, you think it's surreal. It's like watching a movie." The fragment was originally found in 1902 on a dig at the archaeological site of El Hibba, south of Fayoum in Egypt.

The necropolis was excavated by the British Egyptologists Grenfell and Hunt. Their dig had been partially financed by the city of Graz and in 1904 the university was gifted the fragments in recognition of their financial contribution to the dig.

According to Zammit Lupi, the fragment's first use was that of a notebook, with legible Greek text on the page describing the taxation of beer and oil. The fragment was later recycled to be used as cartonnage and was used to cover a mummy.

Zammit Lupi went on to say that the discovery could shake the way conservators study books in the future.

"I think this is going to create more awareness now, when we look at fragments and books, we not only look at the text and the decoration but also the structure, this is what matters now," she said.

"When we look at papyri fragments, what matters is also the layout, the positioning of the text and how the fragment is laid out, whether it is a scroll or whether it has a book format, a codex format. So this really does change things for book conservation."



**Centuries-old nun's  
monastery in Mdina  
opens its doors to the public  
for the first time**

A wing of Malta's oldest female monastery has been transformed into a museum displaying its special heritage.

For the first time in over five centuries, part of Mdina's Monastery of St Peter has opened its doors to the public to "keep it alive", as a trend to make religious homes more accessible takes root.

A wing of Malta's oldest female monastery, accessible through a side door on Triq Villegaignon, has been transformed into a museum displaying its special heritage, showcasing what has, to date, been hidden from view. "In my vast experience as a religious nun, coming and going to Rome for reunions and retreats, I saw that all monasteries, male and female, have museums displaying wonderful works of art. It is time we wake up," said the Mother Abbess Sr Maria Adeodata dei Marchesi Testaferrata De Noto.

"We are lucky because we have a wing and so we are not violating the cloister, which is sacred," she said.

Three years ago, the Mother Abbess of the Benedictine cloister decided it was time to open up part of the monastery, so people could "appreciate the beautiful things that occurred in the past".

Domestic items – including tools for making shoes – that were once used by the nuns in their everyday lives are now on show, as well as artefacts of ecclesiastical, cultural, spiritual and artistic significance.

Since 2020, the nuns have been taking these old items out of storage, cleaning and putting them on display.

Mdina's Monastery of St Peter is accessible through a side door on Triq Villegaignon.

According to the rules of St Benedict, the Catholic monastery had to be self-sufficient, and everything

## BENEDICTINE NUNS AT MDINA – MALTA

Fiona Galea Debono

produced inhouse by the cloistered nuns to sustain their day-to-day lives, the Mother Abbess explained. This included anything from shoes to carpets and tapestry, orange-blossom water, carob syrup, marmalade, as well as a typical Benedictine drink made with almond essence and Benedictine sweets.

Visitors will now also be able to enjoy biskuttini made by the nuns, after Sr Maria Adeodata found the old recipes – even for biscuits for diabetics. "I have tried making them, and they are wonderful," she said about plans to sell them to visitors in her quest to revive old traditions.

The project that lasted three years has served to showcase paintings, as well as a one-of-a-kind organ in Malta.

Many of the Benedictine cloistered nuns of Mdina, of noble origin, are buried in the crypt of the monastery that was bought with their dowries and belongs to them.

Visitors also have access to the rooms of the Blessed Maria Adeodata Pisani, who lived in the holy place for 27 years and died in 1855 at 48. She was beatified by Pope John Paul II in May 2001 and the Benedictine nuns are now "waiting for a miracle for her to be canonised".

"The Beata was granting many graces," she said, encouraging visitors to pray in her cell.

*We have enough angels to keep this holy place going with prayers-* Sr Maria Adeodata, Mother Abbess of the Benedictine cloister

"We too are praying for a miracle so that the Church may proclaim her saint," she said.

A Maltese translation of the litany dictated by Our Lady on November 6, 1700, when she is said to have appeared to one of the nuns in the choir while praying, is also now on display.

The original Latin version is held in the monastery's "precious" archives and has been recited by the nuns every Wednesday and Saturday.

Prof. Petra Caruana Dingli, who is currently researching and writing about the little-known history of St Peter's Monastery, said the doors to secluded monastic life would now be opened.



Visitors also have access to the rooms of the Blessed Maria Adeodata Pisani, who lived in the place for 27 years and died in 1855 aged 48.

The Augustinian St Catherine's Monastery in Valletta has also gone down the same route, while other initiatives were being taken to show life inside monasteries, their history and hidden art, the academic said about the trend. "People can get to know the importance of these religious homes, with a focus on their cultural, and not just artistic, significance."

St Peter's Monastery still functions on the same site where it was founded in 1455 by Pope Callixtus III. "For more than five centuries, devout women have dedicated their lives to work and pray as cloistered

nuns within the walls of this special place in Malta's ancient citadel," Caruana Dingli said.

By the 18th century, the nuns had bought the adjacent gardens and houses, and rebuilt the monastery, adapting and converting it within the large site that it now occupies.

Asked whether the cloistered community had shrunk in number with time, Sr Maria Adeodata simply said: "We have enough angels to keep this holy place going with prayers, with work and most of all with the love of God and our neighbour".

The monastery museum, now no longer secluded from the outside world, is open from Monday to Saturday between 9am and 5pm.

## Maltese share the same 100 surnames

Source – Time of Malta

Any Sherlock can detect a number of things from my surname. Chetcuti is a clear indication that my ancestors bred cackles of baby chicks or that they used to laugh gently – like giggling chickens apparently – or that they used to be masters of the...

Any Sherlock can detect a number of things from my surname. Chetcuti is a clear indication that my ancestors bred cackles of baby chicks or that they used to laugh gently – like giggling chickens apparently – or that they used to be masters of the house.

*The most racist people have a surname that takes them back to the roots of the culture they are racist about*

Of course, not everything is passed on over the generations. I have never seen a chick come out of a shell, my laughter is more bear-like than a tinkle, but I like to pretend that I am master of the house. Like my age-old Arabic one, each surname has its own tale, and given that there are about 20,000 of them in Malta there are lots of stories to go about. What is certain is that our surnames are very indicative of our country's multicultural history.

"There is no surname more Maltese than any other," said linguist Mario Cassar.

"It really jars sometimes that the most racist of people have a surname that would take them back to the roots of the culture they are racist about," Dr Cassar said.

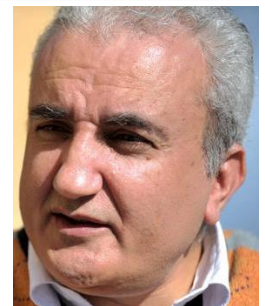
The 2011 census collected a total of 19,104 surnames. The top 10 are: Borg, Camilleri, Vella, Farrugia, Zammit, Galea, Micallef, Grech, Attard, Spiteri and Azzopardi. And 25 per cent of the population – 99,516 – own just these 10 surnames. A total of 178,018 people – 44 per cent – have surnames which make it to the top 25 list. But here is the stunning news: 76 per cent of the population – 307,886 people – share the same 100 surnames.

"This means that three-quarters of the whole population carry the top 100 surnames, while the remaining 23.98 per cent – 97,076 people – share the remaining 12,210 surnames," Dr Cassar said. This, he said, probably shows a degree of inbreeding. "That is why we suffer from a lot of chronic illnesses – such as diabetes."

Gozo – due to its smaller size – gives a clearer picture of this idiosyncrasy. One typical Gozitan surname seems to be Rapa but the surname Xuereb is predominate in Ġhajnsielem, Mintoff in Għasri, Debrincat in Munxar, Grima in San Lawrenz, Sultana in Xagħra and Cini in Żebbuġ. "If you meet a Gozitan with Buttigieg as a surname you can almost be certain that he'd be from Qala," Dr Cassar said.

*If you meet a Gozitan called Buttigieg you can almost be certain that he's from Qala*

There are also some peculiar trends in Malta, such as the strong showings of Abela in Żejtun, Aquilina in Għargħur, Bugeja in Marsaxlokk, Magro in Qrendi, Dalli in Gudja, and Busuttil in Safi. Other less marked, but equally clear concentrations are manifest in the cases of Carabott in Marsaxlokk, Sacco in Kirkop, Bezzina in Għargħur, Abdilla in Safi, and Manduca in Mdina. Penza, for example, is an overwhelmingly Luqa surname.



Dr Cassar explained that Maltese surnames may easily be divided into three surname groups: Semitic (Arabic and Hebrew), Romance (mainly Italian, Sicilian, Spanish and French), and English (as well as Scottish, Irish and Welsh). Today one also has to factor in other European and international family names which accumulated through recent ethnic intermarriages. The number of Semitic surnames is only around 50, but despite this low number, most of us have an Arabic surname. "Each one of these Semitic surnames is borne by a significant aggregate of families, whereas many of the more modern Romance and European surnames are less numerous," he said.

Surnames have reached the island over many centuries in complicated historical and linguistic conditions, and because Malta has always been a place for coexistence of various ethnic groups. And they always developed in parallel with the language.

After the Norman invasion, the indigenous Muslim population, although subjected to Christian rule, still kept its cultural and linguistic heritage.

The expulsion of the Muslims in the 13th century, and that of the Jews in the 15th century, however, brought about the final rupture of the powerful cultural ties which had bound Malta to the North African Arabo-Berber world. "Since then, barring latter-day English influence, the dominant cultural driving force in Malta has come from Sicily, Italy and other European, mainly Mediterranean, countries," Dr Cassar said.

By the late middle ages, the majority of typical Maltese surnames were already well established – not only such obviously Semitic ones such as Abdilla, Agius, Asciak, Bajada, Bugeja, Buhagiar, Borg, Busuttill, Buttigieg, Caruana, Cassar, Chetcuti, Ebejer, Farrugia, Fenech, Micallef, Mifsud, Saliba, Zerafa and Zammit, but many others which are clearly of European extraction (mainly Sicilian, Italian, Spanish, and Greek) like Azzopardi, Baldacchino, Portelli, Brincat, Bonnici, Cachia, Cardona, Cilia, Dalli, Darmanin, Debono, Formosa, Gatt, Galea, Grima, Aquilina, Mallia, Pace, Falzon and Vella.

Probably, the oldest documented surnames in Malta are Grech, Calleja, Falzon, Attard, and Lentini. Grech and Calleja go back to the 13th century Angevin times.

Internationally-renowned tenor Joseph Calleja probably got his surname from a Greek derivation and not from Spain – as is most commonly believed.

"The names Martinus and Leo Calleya appear locally in 1277, before the Spanish ruled Malta, so that is why it is more plausible for Calleja to have originated in Greece," Dr Cassar said.

Surnames are conventionally divided into four broad categories according to their original source: those derived from personal names, those from place names, those from occupational names, and those from nicknames. Behind each one there is particular significance.

Muscat – is Italian or French and dates back to the late middle ages. Its origin may refer to a grower of muscat grapes, or a producer or merchant of muscatel, a strong sweet wine made from the muscat grape grown in the Loire Valley. But it can also mean 'fly' from the Italian *mosca* or the Jewish 'nutmeg'.

Busuttill, the surname of the Opposition leader, is probably a derivative of the medieval Maltese surname Busittin – meaning master of 60 men.

"He could have been the leader of 60 militiamen assigned to guard the local coasts against piratical attacks," said Dr Cassar. The custom of surname-giving, even in Malta, was mainly motivated by the emergence of new administrative practices inherent in the medieval feudal system. As societies became more complex, and taxes started being collected, a more refined system of names developed to distinguish one individual from another reliably and unambiguously.

But if you have a coat of arms, beware: it does not necessarily depict the true meaning of the surname. "There is no strong heraldic tradition in Malta. It was fashionable in the 19th century to commission someone to make you one – most of them were devised in an arbitrary fashion," Dr Cassar warned.



## **The most common: Borg** *Could a Knight have brought the surname to Malta?*

Borg is literally the most common surname on the mainland (but not in Gozo, where the surname Vella wins that prize), and you are likely to see it all over the place – from shop names to newspaper articles. Borg is said to be a Sicilian semantic name, and it can be traced back to the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean. The word itself means 'a pile of rocks', and it links to the Arabic word *burjd*, meaning a rocky tower, so some argue that those with the surname Borg would have originally been part of the building trade. An alternative history, though, could come from the French history books in the Middle Ages that state that the name Borg is a derivative of the word 'bolle' for 'bowl'. A well-respected ancient family in Languedoc in the south was known as Bourg, and – interestingly – one of their members was made a Knight of Malta. Perhaps all of today's Borgs are actually his descendants (so could technically be considered knights too, right?!)



## THE BEAUTY OF GOZO THE VILLAGE OF NADUR



### THE BASILICA OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL

Considered one of the gems on the island, the Nadur parish church is a basilica that dates back to the 18th century, and the elegant looks and embellishments that adorn the church are a more recent addition. In 1907, the church underwent a significant facelift through Maltese architect Francesco Saverio Sciortino's opulent refurbishment in the Italian Renaissance style, including Italian marble and French glass window. Magnificent ceiling paintings depicting scenes from the lives of the patron saints St. Peter and St. Paul are the works of Lazzaro Pisani.

### MIXTA CAVE

Thousands have visited Mixta Cave. The primordial call of the place overlooking the dreamy bay of Ramla is challenging to describe in words. The spot takes a different character according to the season, weather and time of day. Serene and dreamy in the sunshine, the place becomes magical at sunset and resonates with the spectacular vibe in the evening. Arriving at the spot involves following a long, winding country road, but it is all worth it. If you're wondering on how to get to Mixta cave, start by following the road that from Nadur leads to Ramla, and be on the lookout for a right turning into a road called Triq I-Għassa tal-Maħraġ. You will get to Mixta Cave right at the very end of this road.

### MAXOKK & MEKREK BAKERIES – HOME OF THE GOZO FTIRA

Suppose words are difficult to describe the ethereal scene from Mixta Cave. In that case, it is somewhat equally tricky to describe the smell of freshly baked bread, pizzas and traditional ftiras that wafts into the street from the bakeries that are so much known in Nadur. These bakeries have become household names in Malta and Gozo and are synonymous with the best ftira in Malta. Their fares which are not limited to the Gozo ftira but also include pizza, are highly sought after and ideal as a quick snack to share with friends and the perfect picnic lunch. A swim at Ramla, Daħlet Qorrot or San Blas beach cannot be complete without picking some good grub from the bakery on the way home. Beyond the bakeries, you might want to check out some seriously popular Nadur restaurants.

### NADUR BEACHES - SAN BLAS BEACH, ST FILEP'S HIDDEN BAY AND DAĦLET QORROT

Nadur extends from the eastern tip of Ramla Bay to Daħlet Qorrot. This means that while in Nadur, one can easily take a slight detour to one of the breathtakingly beautiful beaches. San Blas beach lies at the bottom of a steep valley. Getting to the bay can be awkward, especially for those who shy away from precipitous descents, but once at the beach, the red sand and the quiet of the beach will make up for the effort. San Filep, considered one of Gozo's secret beaches, is only reached via a footpath. Swimming and snorkelling in the crystalline transparent emerald waters is a joy. On the other hand, Daħlet Qorrot is a quaint bay fully accessible by car, and thus it should be on the list of things to do for families with little kids or elderly members.

### TA' KENUNA TOWER, TA' ISOPU TOWER AND THE MALTA NATIONAL ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY

As a lookout post, towers are part of the Nadur's landscape. The Isopu Tower standing on the promontory between San Blas and Daħlet Qorrot dates back to 1667 when it was built by Grandmaster Nicholas Cottoner. One interesting quip about this tower is that its guns fired at the French fleet that had sailed from Toulon under General Napoleon Bonaparte.

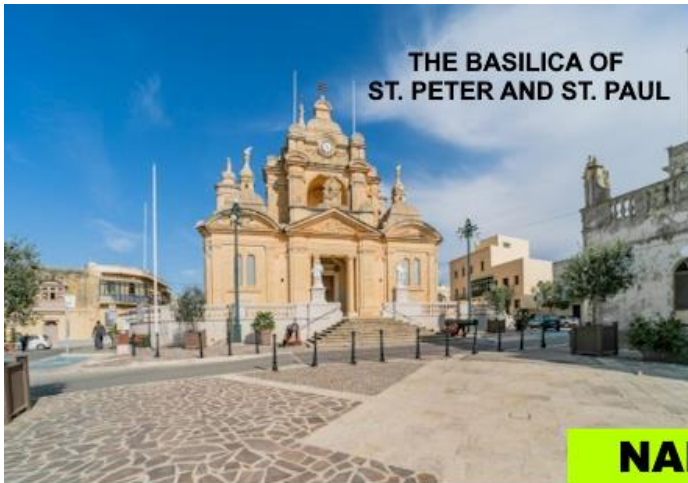
The area around Ta' Isopu Tower is also one which is favoured by astronomers. The zone is adequately dark and ideal for star observation. While the recently inaugurated observatory is a professional one and is not open to the public, public outreach events are in the pipeline.

Highly visible from different areas of Gozo, the British built Ta' Kenuna Tower, which served as a telegraph tower. Today the tower is surrounded by a botanical garden that is part of a belvedere overlooking the views of Comino and the Gozo Malta channel.

**KELINU GALEA MARITIME MUSEUM**

The call of the sea in the village of Nadur is real. Not only is the sea one of the main items on the heraldic coat of Arms, but Nadur has a private maritime museum. This private collection is a treasure trove of memorabilia collected over 65 years. A must-see for anyone after maritime lore!

The charm of Nadur lies in the concoction of all that is Nadur. From the opulence and elegance of the basilica to the raw and primal vibe of Ghar Mixta, the scrumptious taste of the Gozitan ftira and the captivating views from a village, there is no doubt that a visit to Naur has to be one of the things to do while in Gozo!



**THE BASILICA OF  
ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL**



**MIXTA CAVE**

**NADUR  
VILLAGE**



**MAXOKK & MEKREK  
BAKERIES –  
HOME OF THE  
GOZO FTIRA**



**TA' KENUNA TOWER**



**KELINU GALEA  
MARITIME MUSEUM**



**NADUR BEACHES**



## Glorious Food

## Food with love from Malta: the 'caper' of the Mediterranean

**Simon Bajada** is an Australian-born food and travel photographer and writer with Maltese heritage living in Sweden.

**Malta: Flavours of the Mediterranean** is a richly photographed cookbook which takes you to the captivating archipelago between Sicily and the North African coast, with 70 recipes showcasing the country's vibrant Mediterranean cuisine.

Many empires have influenced the Maltese kitchen over the centuries, leaving a seductive blend of Arab, French, Italian and English flavours. The result is a balance of raw agrarian produce, fruits of the sea, and well-honed technique against a

backdrop of breathtaking rocky outcrops and spectacular blue water.

In this beautiful ode to Maltese cooking, author Simon Bajada (Baltic, The New Nordic) captures the everyday food of Malta for the home cook, including dishes such as Fтира, a



flattened sourdough bread loaf drenched in tomato with tuna capers and olives; Aljotta, a hearty fish stew; and Bigilla, a broad bean paste used as a delicious dip.

Malta is a one-way ticket into the heart of one of Europe's most captivating hidden gems.

Lampuki pie is no humble fish pie, writes Bajada. "It's the result of centuries of diversity on a plate and a certified Maltese classic." (Photo by Simon Bajada/Hardie Grant Books)

"I feel proud to have created this cookbook," author Simon Bajada tells SBS. "I just want it to provide



people of Maltese heritage with a little spark, so they can also feel really proud of Maltese food."

By Yasmin Noone

For as long as the Australian-born cookbook author, Simon Bajada can remember, there was always something 'different' about the Mediterranean dishes he ate growing up.

As the son of an Australian mother and Egyptian-born father with mixed Middle Eastern and Mediterranean heritage, Bajada recalls family meals featuring pasta pies, pasta bakes, hearty soups and stuffed vegetables.

"There was always something different about the food that everyone in the family cooked for big feasts," says Bajada, who now lives in Sweden. "My aunties would put certain spices in pasta bakes and my uncle always insisted that mint should be in everything. We would get into arguments as to why we thought there were certain twists in the food. It's actually quite funny."

It wasn't until Bajada visited Malta - a set of Mediterranean islands between Italy and the North African coast - five years ago that he was able to finally define the 'difference' in his family's culinary repertoire.

"I grew up in Perth knowing I had Maltese heritage that went way back - my surname is Maltese. My grandmother also used to make traditional Maltese dishes like timpana (pasta pie), rabbit and date-filled pastries (imqaret). But, at the time, we just generalised them as being 'southern European' dishes.



**YOUR STORY MATTERS**

**IF YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL  
SHARE IT WITH OTHERS. WE LOVE  
TO HEAR FROM YOU. SEND IT TO US**

## The Three Villages: ATTARD, BALZAN and LIJA Explore authentic Malta

In the central part of Malta, Ғ'Attard, Ғal Balzan and Ғal Lija, better known as "The Three Villages", offer you a real escape from the hustle and bustle of the more popular tourist areas. Exploring The Three Villages means experiencing authentic Malta, its History and Culture, in the heart of Malta. To walk through these localities is to discover a quieter and more traditional side of Malta, where in some streets time seems to have stopped.



These three villages share a rich and fascinating history.

The history of the Three Villages dates back to ancient times, with artifacts dating back to Roman times found in the area. However, it was during the medieval period, during the reign of the Knights of the Order of St. John, that these villages began to take shape.

The Order of the Knights of St. John (sovereign in Malta from 1530 to 1798) played a key role in the development of the Three Villages. Many knights built their summer houses in these villages. It was also at this time that important structures were built (example: San

Anton Palace in Attard). These buildings have greatly contributed to the rich architecture of this region and the unique atmosphere of these Three Villages.

**Under British rule, from 1800 to 1964, the Three Villages continued to grow.** They were often chosen by the nobility and the Maltese bourgeoisie to establish palatial residences, country residences.

**After Malta's independence in 1964, the Three Villages experienced rapid development:** construction of new houses and expansion of public services.

Despite this increasingly rapid development in recent years, these localities have managed to preserve their cultural and architectural heritage. **Today, the Three Villages are renowned for their tranquil atmosphere, beautiful architecture and rich history. Whether you are a lover of authenticity, history or a traveller in search of tranquillity, the Three Villages of Malta have a lot to offer.**

The Wignacourt aqueduct (named after the Grand Master of the Order of Malta who had it built; between 1586 and 1615). This aqueduct brought water to Valletta, from a spring near Rabat, in the centre of the island.





# Did You Know There's a 'Popeye' Movie Theme Park in Malta?

By CHRISTOPHER MCPHERSON - COLLIDER



[www.collider.com/popeye-village-theme-park-images-malta/](http://www.collider.com/popeye-village-theme-park-images-malta/)

The tiny island of Malta is home to the world's most bespoke movie-base theme park, and is also doubling up for Ancient Rome in 'Gladiator 2.'

*Image by Sam Coley*

If you feel like doing something a little bit different, open up a can of spinach and take a trip to Malta. Popeye Village, which is also known as Sweethaven Village, was purpose-built film set that, since its original use, has been converted into a theme park. It was originally

constructed in 1979 for the musical film from Disney and Paramount, *Popeye*, which starred Robi Williams as the sailor with the giant forearms and Shelley Duvall as his better half, Olive Oyl. The theme park also includes a tribute to Williams, with posters of the legendary funnyman's storied career dotted around the park.

*Popeye* was met with unfairly harsh reviews when it was released in 1980 although, over time, the film's appraisals have changed, with Robert Altman's direction criticized at the time. In addition to the essential filming requirements, the production went above and beyond by constructing an intricate Sweethaven set which significantly increased both the cost and complexity of the project. Furthermore, they built a recording studio, editing facilities, and various other structures, including living quarters, which further contributed to the overall scope of the production and gave it an unusually large budget of over \$20 million. It did, however, bring in \$60 million worldwide, and was popular with children.

In the following years, the film has been viewed favorably alongside other comic book movies, being seen as more "artistic" than the norm, and director Paul Thomas Anderson is a big fan of the movie, even including a musical number - "He Needs Me" by Duvall - in his film, *Punch Drunk Love*.

Most recently, a site near Popeye World has been reserved for filming Ridley Scott's *Gladiator 2*, doubling up for ancient Rome. Collider's Editor-in-chief Steve Weintraub is currently in Malta attending the first Annual Mediterranean Film Festival and was able to nab exclusive imagery of the elaborate sets being constructed for Scott's historical epic, as well as these shots of Popeye Village, where festival guests were generously taken as part of their visit to the island. The village also serves as a fond legacy of when film sets were done more practically, rather than an over-reliance on CGI, and issues like the weather were obstacles that had to be overcome. That level of authenticity is sadly missed from film in recent years, and locations like Popeye Village should be treasured for these reasons.

## THE MALTESE FILM LEGACY

With its picturesque beaches, coastal beauty, and rocky surroundings, Malta has been a popular destination for filming for decades now. *Gladiator* was famously filmed in part on the Maltese coast, and indeed, it was in Valletta, the Maltese capital, that Oliver Reed passed away while shooting the film.

Classic films shot in Malta also include *Midnight Express*, doubling up for Turkey, and *The Spy Who Love Me* from 1977 which featured an iconic car chase through the streets of Valletta. More recently, Wolfgang Petersen's *Troy*, the epic historical film, starring Brad Pitt, used various locations in Malta to depict ancient Greece and the Trojan War. Pitt returned to Malta to film portions of *World War Z*, while Steve Spielberg included scenes shot on the island in *Munich*, the historical drama about the aftermath of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre.

And while not a film, *Game of Thrones* — whose most famous filming locations were Belfast, Iceland, and Dubrovnik in Croatia — actually utilized Malta for several episodes in locations like Mdina, which doubled for King's Landing, in the first season.

## Maltese boat-people of 1916

### The Children of Billy Hughes

By Ingeborg van Teeseling

A group of Maltese workers arrived in Fremantle on 21 October, 1916. Malta was a poor island back then, and heavily caught up in WWI. It was “the nurse of the Mediterranean”, taking care of 80,000 wounded soldiers, a lot of them Australian. They were shipped in from Gallipoli and other European fronts, where Maltese men were fighting on the side of the British Empire themselves. For a small place, with only a little over 210,000 inhabitants, Malta went above and beyond, and many Australian returned soldiers were grateful.

But that didn't help the Maltese in 1916. When the *Gange* arrived in WA, Australia was in the grip of a referendum on conscription. Labor Prime Minister Billy Hughes, whose enthusiasm for the war had earned him the moniker “the little digger”, had become worried when the zeal to enlist had dropped off after alarming news of tens of thousands of deaths had been published. His solution was to try and see if he could force men to join the military, but for that he needed the permission of the Australian people. On the 28th of October 1916, there was to be a referendum that asked if they were okay with that. In the lead-up, the country had been split down the middle. Very much against conscription were the Irish, whose will to fight on the side of the British had been very much undermined by the 1916 Easter Rising and British reprisals. They had a powerful advocate in their corner, Melbourne archbishop Mannix, who was Irish himself. To Hughes, Mannix was more dangerous than the Kaiser. Also scared of conscription were the unions, who feared that with their members away at the front, their jobs would be taken over by women, or even worse, coloured people. And that, in an Australia that was a firm believer in its right to be white, was simply not on.

***It was clear that this was becoming an issue with distinct racial overtones. But for quite a few people it was also shameful.***

So when the Maltese arrived a week before the referendum, they were regarded with suspicion. Certainly, there had been Maltese migrants before, and usually there was no problem with them. As members of the British Empire they were British subjects and were therefore accepted without trouble. But with everybody on edge, 214 men, on a French ship as well, that was a little suspicious. The Australia Workers' Union said that they knew for certain that thousands of others were sneaking in via Coff Harbour to steal the jobs of their members. They called the Maltese “a black menace” and asked the government to do something. In the meantime, the *Gange* had entered Melbourne, and there the men were subjected to the best tool the White Australia Policy had at its disposal: the Dictation Test. This examination allowed the border officials to ask would-be migrants a set of questions in any European language they wanted. Usually that did the trick: ask Chinese or Malays something in Gaelic or Danish and chances were that they wouldn't be able to answer. This time, for the Maltese, it was Dutch they were confronted with. And surprise, surprise, all of them failed.

That meant that they were now “prohibited immigrants”. If they went on shore they risked six months' gaol and deportation. Anybody who helped them would be subject to a fine of 100 pounds, which was a lot of money. The master of the ship, who had not foreseen this (seeing that his charges were British subjects coming into a harbour that was part of the British Empire), then set sail to Sydney, where he was, again, not allowed in and the Maltese not allowed off. In the newspapers, people were starting to ask questions, but PM Hughes put the men under a military guard and made sure the populace knew this “batch” would be sent back as soon as possible. The men, in the meantime, were stuck on board, and on the 10th of November a few of them made a run for it. Most of them were caught again, and as a precaution the ship was told to leave Circular Quay and dock at Neutral Bay instead. The men were hauled in front of the Water Police Court and given a slap on the wrist. A few days later the ship was



PM Billy Hughes





sent to Noumea, the capital of French territory New Caledonia, where the Australian government tried desperately to have them sent back. The problem was that they had done nothing wrong, and by this time the Australian public was getting angry. The referendum had failed anyway, so there was now no danger in letting them in. So on the 25th of November, a member of the RSL wrote a letter to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, telling him that he was appalled at what was happening to the Maltese: *About 250 Maltese are kept on the Gange, not allowed to land in Australia. But why? Are they not British Subjects? Are they not white? ... We seem to prefer the Hun and Austrian in our midst, not the mention the Greek, Turk, Bulgar and Syrian. No, clear Australia of those black-hearted individuals first, before we refuse our own brothers the right to live and work in any part of the Empire.*

It was clear that this was becoming an issue with distinct racial overtones. But for quite a few people it was also shameful. On December 30, with the Maltese still in Noumea, there was another letter to the editor of the *SMH*. George Brown from Gordon wrote:

*During this Christmas-tide, I have been feeling keenly that the exclusion and threatened repatriation of the Maltese ... is not only opposed to the principles and precepts of the Christian religion ... but that it is also inimical to the best interests of the Empire to which we belong.*

Brown thought it "a great injustice" that left a "very undesirable impression in the homeland and among the Allies", especially while "many others who are as dark in colour are admitted."

In early January 1917, Hobart's *Mercury* added fuel to the fire by revealing that 63 of the men had fought "alongside our boys at Gallipoli" and that half of the 241 were married, leaving their families at home who had been counting on money sent back, in desperate poverty. A few days later, there was another letter by "a Malteao" who was wondering who were the "scientific gentlemen who think that the Maltese are a coloured race". On the contrary he, somewhat puzzlingly, posed his countrymen were "men of good physique, possessed of great energy, and had everything to recommend them as desirable settlers."

It would have been smarter of this man to make his case by pointing at the NSW Governor, Sir Gerald Strickland, born and bred in Malta, who was now King George's highest representative in NSW. He was, by the way, lobbying behind the scenes on behalf of the Maltese on the Gange. In fact, doing that had annoyed the NSW Premier William Holman so much that he made sure Strickland was recalled a few months later. Not deterred, the man then became Prime Minister of Malta. But that was still in the future. In the present, the 214 were still in Noumea, but when the government failed to have them sent back to Malta, they had to let them into Sydney again on February 27, 1917. That did not mean they were allowed off the ship, though. Hughes, who hated losing anything, let alone a battle this public, made sure the Maltese were decanted into a hastily renovated hulk, ironically called the *Anglican*. There, in squalid conditions, they were visited by a priest, Father William Bonett, who was allowed to bring fresh food, and by Arthur Rickard, a real estate developer and founder of what was called the Millions Club. Rickard was an early believer in "populate or perish" and a big advocate for as much British migration as possible. He wrote to the paper that it was "an outstanding example of man's inhumanity to man" that the Maltese were treated as "lepers". It was, he thought, bad for Australia's reputation, and he called on Billy Hughes to finally do the right thing.

In early March, the case had made it to the Federal and State Parliaments, who were getting more and more upset with the Prime Minister. Hughes promised that "earnest consideration" would be given to the proposal, but did nothing. Five days later, four Maltese escaped again, and the *SMH* had a field day. They had been "diving overboard while fully dressed," swimming to Ball's Head, where they dried out their clothes in the scrub. When police arrived, there had been an "exciting chase", with the men "scampering over the rocks ... policemen could not get near them. They dodged backward and forward and gave their pursuers an exceedingly lively tune." Finally, Hughes had enough. The next day, he told Father Bonett that if he could find the men jobs and made sure they would join the unions, "the government would do all possible to help them."

On the 21st of March, the *Adelaide Advertiser* finished the whole sorry saga by telling its readers that the Maltese had been "allowed to land and are now at work." In fact, they had, the paper said, "prove themselves good workmen." In the next few years, a large portion of the 214 helped construct Burrinjuck Dam near Yass. Others built rail extensions in northern NSW or worked in the Mt Lyell mines in Tasmania.



## CHARLES GAUCI - BISHOP OF DAWRIN NORTHERN TERRITORY - AUSTRALIA

This week I had the privilege of attending 'Break Away'. It was a three-day retreat for young people organised by our diocesan youth ministry team.

A bus load of young people travelled all the way from Alice Springs. Others came from a variety of parishes across the diocese. A group of young adults lead most of the sessions.

The music and singing were great.

There was much energy and the atmosphere was charged with spirituality and love.

I was reminded that intentionality, generosity, planning and love are important ingredients for ministry.

The openness of young people was also evident as they allowed themselves to grow and change.

What a responsibility we have as a church to provide suitable opportunities for our young people to meet Christ. This can only happen if we move out of our comfort zone and reach out to them with respect and love.

## BIG NEWS!

We have signed with our **second distributor** for Cats of Malta, Under the Milky Way, who will be handling European distribution as well as South America and Asia.

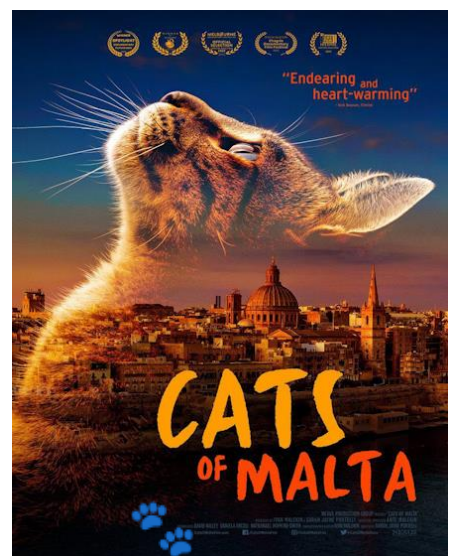
Cats of Malta was selected to be part of UMW's European Originals series, which qualifies for direct support from the European Commission for technical and marketing expenses.

UMW will also be creating Spanish and French subtitles for the documentary and encoding has already begun. **Expect more news about a Cats of Malta release date in very soon.**

North American release date also to be announced, but expect that later in the year. *Until we have more news, take care out there..*

Sarah Jayne & Ivan Malekin

Nexus Production Group







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