



# Maltese eNewsletter



Editor: Frank Scicluna OAM MQR JP

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IL-LUZZU TA' MALTA

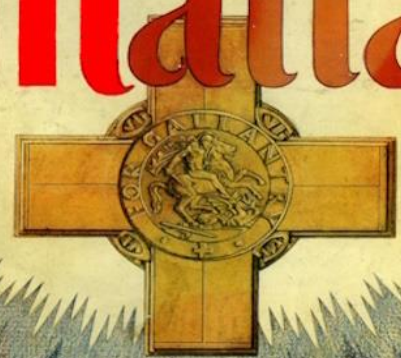
**8 September The Great  
Siege  
1565**



  
**Maltese  
Diaspora Matters**



**UNCONQUERED**  
**Malta**



**WORLD WAR II**

**INVADING  
MALTA**

**and  
Defeated**







Fr. Tarcisio Micallef

## THE FEAST OF OUR LADY QUEEN OF VICTORIES IN SYDNEY NSW

Within the Maltese community in Australia there has been a tradition of celebrating the feast of the Nativity of Mary, also known among as Our Lady of Victories, a feast that is very close to the heart of these migrants.

This feast is celebrated annually on the second Sunday of September at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. This feast is celebrated to commemorate and thank God for the birth of



Our Lady. Celebrating a birthday always brings happiness to the one celebrating and to her family and friends. On 8 September the Maltese also celebrate the end of the Great Siege of 1565, when the Knights defeated the forces of the Ottoman Empire. Every time we commemorate the birthday of Our Lady, we can confidently hope for great peace in our heart.

The Maltese have always turned to Our Lady in difficult times to intercede to her son Jesus on their behalf. The statue of Our Lady, which is taken to the Cathedral each year for this celebration, was blessed by Cardinal Gilroy on 14 July 1963. During the year the statue is housed in our chapel at 19-21 Stanley Street Sydney, in a niche which can be admired both by people who visit the chapel and also by anyone walking past De Piro House. Paulist Missionaries in Australia.

The celebration begins with the procession with the statue of Our Lady. During the procession the Rosary is prayed accompanied by the choir. The Knights of Malta and children dressed in traditional costumes, lead the congregation around the cathedral. At the conclusion of the procession Eucharistic Mass is celebrated. Nowadays, for the benefit of the younger members of our community, most of whom neither understand nor speak Maltese fluently, Mass is celebrated both in Maltese and in English.

The celebration is always attended by a large crowd and many come from distant rural areas by coaches. For many this is also a moment of building the community among these migrants. We are very grateful for the many volunteers who provide light refreshments at the conclusion of the celebration. The senior members of the Maltese community are still grateful that we Paulist Missionaries can accompany them in the daily struggles and express grateful for the pastoral care they receive from their chaplain with whom they can communicate in their native language. The Australian Church and community is grateful for the great contributions of the Maltese migrants over the years.

***This year 2023 the Maltese Fathers joined by the Maltese Community are celebrating the feast of Maria Bambina, IL-VITORJA on Sunday 10 September 2023.***

***At 2.30 pm the procession begins with the reciting of the Rosary and followed by the concelebrated of Holy Mass at St Mary's Cathedral St Mary's Street Sydney, NSW***

***The preacher will be Rev Fr Noel Bianco MSSP. Everyone is welcome to attend to take part in this a celebration that has been held for about 63 years in this Sydney Catholic Cathedral. Come and bring your family and friends. The Maltese associations are invited to bring with them the flags or standards of the association. For more information call Rev Fr Tarcisio Micallef MSSP on: 02 9380 8398. Chaplain for the Maltese Community***

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**Victory Day** is celebrated in Malta on 8 September and recalls the end of three historical sieges made on the Maltese archipelago, namely: the Great Siege of Malta by the Ottoman Empire ending in 1565; the Siege of Valletta by the French Blockade ending in 1800; and, the Siege of Malta during the Second World War by the Axis forces ending in 1943. This day also coincides with the commemoration of the birth of the Virgin Mary, better known as the Nativity of Mary, which is celebrated in the villages of Senglea, Naxxar and Mellieha in Malta, and Xagħra in Gozo. It is locally known as *il-Vitorja* (the Victory) and *il-Bambina* (the Baby). The traditional *regatta* featuring boat races in the Grand Harbour is held on Victory Day.

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## Feast of Our Lady of Victories

COME AND CELEBRATE WITH US THE FEAST  
OF OUR LADY OF VICTORIES  
AND MALTA NATIONAL DAY

Date: Sunday 10th September 2023

Venue: St Francis of Assisi Church  
Flagstaff Road, Warrawong NSW

Time: 2.00pm Procession accompanied by  
Our Lady of Victories statue and band with  
parishioners taking part in praying  
Holy Rosary. Followed by Holy Mass.

Celebrant: Bishop Brian Mascord

After Mass there will be refreshments at  
the George Cross Falcons Community Centre  
25-27 Lakes Avenue, Cringila NSW



**THE STATUE OF  
OUR LADY OF  
VICTORIES  
ARRIVED IN  
WARRAWONG  
NSW  
50 YEARS AGO  
1973-2023**

**OUR LADY OF VICTORIES HORSLEY PARK  
2023 PARISH FEAST  
SUNDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER**

10am Mass • 11am Procession with Statue Of Our Lady • 12 Noon Festival

**SPONSORS**

**ACTIVITIES**

FOOD TRUCKS **CAR SHOW**  
**RIDES** **MARKET STALLS** **FACE PAINTING**  
**CHOCOLATE WHEEL**  
**ENTERTAINMENT** **PONY RIDES**

*Save the date*  
OLQP Festa Greystanes, NSW Australia

**Our Lady Queen  
Of Peace  
Festa**

**24th September 2023**

**8 SEPTEMBER  
MALTESE LIVING  
ABROAD  
CELEBRATE  
MALTA'S NATIONAL  
DAY  
WHEREVER  
THEY ARE**

**FESTA TAL-BAMBINA  
IN MELBOURNE  
VICTORIA  
AUSTRALIA**

**ALL MEMBERS OF THE MALTESE COMMUNITY  
IN MELBOURNE ARE INVITED TO ATTEND  
HOLY MASS IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY  
OF VICTORIES AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH  
WEST MELBOURNE AT 3.00 pm**

**mssp Chaplains**





## IL-BORZA – MALTA STOCK EXCHANGE

Construction on the Garrison Chapel currently housing the premises of the Malta Stock Exchange began in 1855 and was completed two years later in 1857. The construction of the Garrison Chapel came about as a result of the confluence of a number of factors. During this period the British Imperial Government embarked on a programme of building a number of schools throughout the British Empire aimed at the education

not only of the children of military and naval personnel but also for the instruction of soldiers and sailors themselves, who, at that time, were largely uneducated. Similar buildings were in fact built throughout the British Empire including the Indian sub-continent. In the mid-1850s Malta was already under British rule and its strategic position particularly as a naval base, had already been recognised. Around this time, Queen Adelaide, consort to King William IV and a very devout lady, during a visit to Malta, expressed her concern that the troops in Malta did not have a place of worship of their own and encouraged the building of a Church for this use. Indeed, while military and naval activity on the Island during that time was considerable, there was no multi-denominational or Anglican Church in Malta. Numerous military and naval personnel were stationed on the Island or passed through as the British navy and military crossed the Empire. The outbreak of the Crimean War in 1853 resulted in significantly more troop traffic through the Grand Harbour and its surrounding areas further increasing the number of troops and their families needing to be educated. Interestingly, therefore, the Garrison Chapel was planned and built to be used for a dual purpose. During the week it was used as a school, while on Sunday's it was used as a multi-denominational place of worship.

Designed and built by the Royal Engineers, the new building was sited to the left of Auberge de Castille, then the Headquarters of the Commander General of the military and navy in Malta, an area which also housed a large garrison. The building was constructed on a classic, simple, single floor, rectangular plan able to seat a congregation of 800 with a typical pitched slate cover roof supported by a magnificent oak and red deal structure. Plans show that the slate was intended to be clad with copper but for some reason the cladding was not added. It was only added in 2000 during the refurbishment undertaken by the Exchange. A few years after the building was completed the timber truss was hidden by an oak soffit adorned with bronze Maltese Crosses – this was removed during the refurbishment of the building by the Exchange to again expose the impressive timber truss which forms an integral part of the new design. In 1923, the original cross and bell tower that adorned the façade were demolished after being severely damaged in an earthquake earlier the same year.

During the years that it was used as a church, the building was further embellished through the laying of a new tile floor, the addition of a beautiful altar front and later still, the addition of a pulpit and marble font. Several paintings by Giuseppe Cali' [1846-1930], one of Malta's foremost artists, well-known for his religious-themed paintings, hung within the Garrison Chapel. These life-size paintings, all considered to be masterpieces, depicting Old Testament Prophets and the Apostles, were commissioned by the various regiments on the Island. Today, these paintings are to be found in the Russian Chapel at San Anton's Palace, the residence of the President of Malta.

No records have been found that can confirm when the Garrison Chapel ceased to be used as a school, however, as a purpose-built Garrison School started to function in 1868, it is likely that it was at this time the Garrison Chapel ceased to provide educational facilities and became solely a place of worship.

Following the Second World War, the decreasing military and naval presence on the island could not support two Anglican Churches in Valletta. In 1950, therefore, after almost a century of being in continuous use as a Church, the Garrison Chapel finally closed its doors and was never used for religious purposes again. In 1953 the Chapel was handed over to the civil authorities when it became part of the Vernon United Services Club intended for use by all ranks of the Navy, Army and Air Force as a place for entertainment such as film shows and dances.

Eventually, the building was taken over by the General Post Office to serve as the Central Mailing Room, a function that it continued to serve until 1999 when the Garrison Chapel was taken over the Exchange and refurbishment work started.

Central to the design of the new premises was the need to preserve and restore all the original features of the existing site including the outer shell of the building itself, the parapet wall forming part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century bastion wall traversing the main axis of the building as well as the beautiful timber truss supporting the pitched roof. The open-plan layout of the building throughout its six floors and the substantial use of glass instead of solid walls coupled with large louvered windows and with a natural air ventilation and cooling system has resulted in a landmark building which is not only stunning to look at but which is also an eco-friendly, light and airy working space extending from deep within Valletta's bastion walls with interventions that are sympathetic to and enhance the historical fabric of the building.

**REFLECTION  
BY  
CHARLES GAUCI  
BISHOP OF DARWIN**



On Wednesday this week, I attended St Joseph's Flexi Learning Center at Alice Springs.

I joined the 'circle' where the young people shared information.

I was invited to speak in the circle.

My message was centred on the fact that we are good within us. It is good to be who we are. We do not need to try to be anyone else.

Certainly, we are not perfect, no one is, but that does not stop us from being good within ourselves. The biggest mistake that we can make is to make mistakes and stop trying to do better.

I shared with the young people most of whom were Aboriginal that I grew up speaking three languages as a boy and that I

still speak to them today. I encouraged them to be proud of their culture. To know and learn and be proud of their culture. I shared that we are never alone, and that God is always with us. Nothing will ever stop God from loving us. The response from the young people was positive and they were engaged. I also felt energised!

## THE VOICE OF OUR READERS

Frank, Many thanks for the journal. I was born in Malta and went to school in Malta. Like other Maltese, my Dad was associated with the Royal Navy. Due to some specific issues, my Dad, and others emigrated to South Africa. The Maltese community in S A is shrinking, and later family generations are losing touch with Malta. Keeping in touch with the various people is getting difficult. I look forward immensely to your Journal and would kindly ask to keep me on your mailing list. I do not seem to have received issue 486. Many thanks again for the good work. Regards Ronal Andrews South Africa

*Sir, If there never existed a story behind the saying 'a pot calling the kettle black' the Prime Minister's of Malta's recent article on the August issue of Maltese. e-Newsletter. entitled "The P. M. talks about excessive Buildings" will surely fill the space. The common belief in a democratic system is that a Prime minister and his government are in power and all the other committees are sub-committees, created and their members specially chosen by the government to assist in the governance of the land. To have a Prime Minister blaming one of his own committees .in this case the National Planning Authority while he and his predecessor had the power to double the population of Malta, is surely midsummer madness.. Even more so when most probably the setting up or selecting the members of the Authority would have followed the patriotic/partisan /Maltese pattern: choose your cronies. An explanation like that of the P.M. putting the blame on this authority for the devastation not of the back yards and gardens but of valleys and plains when he himself was/is Prime Minister can only be accepted by gullible supporters. A 'mea culpa' would have been more appropriate.*

*Victor Vella. Sydney Australia.*

Dear Editor, please continue to email to me. I enjoy reading it and I make sure it is forwarded to the members of the Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco. Take care Mary USA





## Inauguration of the Gozo Delegation of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem

Press Release - Valentina Lupo

A Delegation of Gozo within the Maltese Lieutenancy of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, was inaugurated in a brief but meaningful ceremony. The Lieutenant for Malta, Roberto Buontempo, presented the decree with which the delegation was established, together with letters of

appointment to the first officials, Comm. Euchar Mizzi and Rev Can John Muscat as Delegate and Prior respectively. The decrees were approved by the Order's Grand Master, Cardinal Fernando Filoni. The Delegation's standard was then passed on from the Lieutenant to the Delegate, to signify the creation of this Delegation.

The ceremony was presided by Cardinal Mario Grech. In his message, Cardinal Grech emphasized the mission of the members of the Order: that of sustaining the Christian presence in the Holy Land, where members strive to do all they can so that Christians do not disappear from this land, a land fraught with problems, where the only solution for peace can only be through forgiveness.



## ANDREW GATT

**Secretary of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria**

Behind any successful business, there are people behind the scenes that makes it happen. For those who do not know Andrew Gatt, he is the Secretary of the MCCV. Andrew joined the MCCV in 2013 and in 2015 he became the Secretary.

Apart from being the Secretary, Andrew sits on the Finance Committee and is also involved in the day-to-day operations of the centre. He is a great team contributor, and his work is invaluable. On behalf of the Executive, we thank Andrew for his contributions and the volunteer hours he dedicated to the Maltese Centre. I am sure you would agree that without such volunteers, we will struggle to offer our services to the Community.

Andrew's initial connection with the Maltese Community Council of Victoria Inc was in 2013 when the late Dr. Victor Borg was the President at that time. Andrew was asked to represent the council in the Anti-Gambling campaign and later was asked to join the Council as Secretary for the Executive in 2015. He has held the position to current date, it is a challenging task ensuring compliance with state and federal governments but also rewarding with providing services to the community. Andrew's connection to the Parkville Community Centre goes a long way, He was involved in soccer and played with the George Cross team in the early 60s when they used to play at Parkville and change in the back shed of the MSSP

## Maltese program aired in Australia and followed worldwide



The Maltese language is being given more prominence on SBS Australia's radio and digital platforms by means of new productions by the Department of Maltese which have been aired

during the past months.

The three productions, which revolved around Malta's emigration history, Maltese legends treated from an analytical and cultural aspect, as well as ghost stories tied to Malta, have raised the interest of listeners around the world.

Everyone enjoys a ghost story, even if reason dictates that it is not real. The Department of Maltese's podcast called "L-Ihirsra f'Malta" (Ghosts in Malta) aired by SBS Australia, has attracted an audience of Maltese emigrants from around the world, with many following it on digital platforms.

This podcast is one of three prepared by Ramon Mizzi, a Maltese producer who conducts work for the Special Broadcasting Service from Sydney.

The listeners are the Maltese in Australia. The programmes are produced for them. However, through the SBS digital platform, we have managed to reach more people from around the world...Maltese living in Panama, Los Angeles. Ramon Mizzi

Other podcasts by Ramon Mizzi include one on Maltese legends, and other one entitled 'It-Tfal ta' Billy Hughes' (Billy Hughes's Children) which recounts the experience of tens of Maltese emigrants in 1916, in the height of a referendum campaign, who were denied entry in Australia as they were considered different and too dark. In order to deny them access, they were given a language test in Dutch. The podcasts are helping the Maltese language stay alive among Maltese migrants of the second and third generation.

The problem is that we Maltese do not like teaching Maltese to children. We come over here and use English, an official language, and we do not find a reason to teach Maltese, which is wrong in my opinion. Ramon Mizzi

This experimental broadcasting, with fresh ideas in Maltese, on SBS digital platform, attempts to fill this void.

Take me, for instance. My wife is Australian, I use English more. Even my kids, who are interested in learning Maltese, it feels like an extra chore after work. I am trying to change this. Ramon Mizzi

Maltese is one of around 70 languages aired by SBS. The Maltese language has a weekly two hour slot on the radio, with a programme produced by Joe Axiaq, who has been in broadcasting for years, aided by Ramon Mizzi, with content creation.

PBS also contributes a service to Maltese people in Australia by providing the daily 8pm news bulletin in Maltese to be aired on SBS World Watch.

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**LISTEN - SBS RADIO MALTESE PROGRAM - on Tuesdays and Fridays at 12 noon**

**WATCH - The Maltese News bulletins from Television Malta (TVM) broadcast every day at 4.30pm on SBS WorldWatch on channel 35 and is also available on SBS On Demand.**





## Caroline Springs George Cross FC seal championship Melbourne - 2023

Caroline Springs George Cross celebrate the championship (Mark Avellino)

Tara Murray Three seasons of hard work has resulted in a second championship in as many years for Caroline Springs George Cross. The Georgies were the dominant side in the FV state league 1 north-west competition before COVID-19 ended the season early in 2021,

They backed it up last year claiming the title and promotion into the National Premier League 3 competition for this season.

On Saturday, having already secured promotion into NPL2 for next year, the Georgies claimed the title with one round remaining. Coach Eric Vasiliadis said it had been a remarkable feat for the club.

"It is pretty cool," he said. "Obviously it is pretty special.

"I was reliving it the other day.. You had the COVID season, so it's been almost three seasons in a row that we have been winning games of footy of bringing happiness to the community. "It has been a wonderful journey." The Georgies secured the championship in stunning fashion on the road against Ballarat City on Saturday afternoon. The Georgies led 1-0 at half time after Josh Whiteley scored to put his side ahead.

Ballarat, which is seeking survival in the competition, was able to level the scores.

The game was headed for a draw with neither team able to find a second goal in regular time. Enter Whiteley again to be the hero. "It was immense circumstances," Vasiliadis said. "We were missing four or five guys that have played a lot of football for us.

"To win in the 93rd minute is truly special. We try to think positive and control what you can control. "The last five to 10 minutes we took into account the ladder and the risk-reward factor and we rolled the dice with five minutes to go.

"We only had three defenders on the field... Josh Whiteley capped it off with a goal in the last minute."

The win was the Georgies 14th in a row and their 16th for the season, to have them on 49 points heading into the final round. Vasiliadis said they couldn't have imagined this type of season at the start of the year.

"We controlled the controllables and we are so happy," he said. "Every team comes out and tries and wants to achieve this "We were able to shrug off challenge after challenge and stay disciplined and stay together and we went on a roll. "We will enjoy it, but I wouldn't mind going back-to-back-to-back, that sounds pretty cool, but we'll worry about it later on."

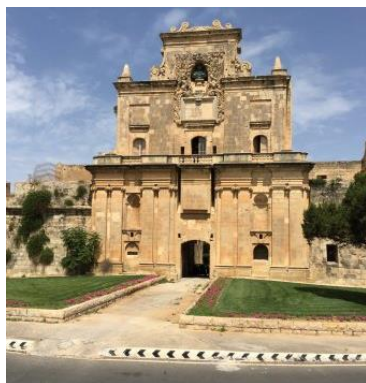
The Georgies finish off their season on Saturday at home against Essendon Royals. The Royals, who were also promoted with the Georgies this season, have done enough to stay in NPL3 for next season.

Vasiliadis said this match was a really good opportunity to pay tribute to their supporters and the local community for their support. "We just want to enjoy it," he said. "You're not often in these situations. "You have to celebrate the good times."

Club Consitution 1 (vi) the Club is established to represent persons who were born in Malta, or who were former residents of Malta, or who are descendants of, or married to, such persons born in Malta or persons who were former residents of Malta.







## The Notre Dame Gate at Cottonera

known as or *Bieb is-Sultan* (Maltese for "King's Gate"), is the main gate of the Cottonera Lines, located in Cottonera, Malta. The gate was built in 1675 in the Baroque style, and it is currently used as the headquarters of the heritage organization Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna.

Construction of the Cottonera Lines began in August 1670, when there were fears of an Ottoman attack after the fall of Candia. The Notre Dame Gate was built in 1675 as the lines' main gate, and its design is attributed to Romano Carapecchia or Mederico Blondel. The gate is located within

the Notre Dame Curtain, between Notre Dame and St. James Bastions, facing the town of Żabbar. It is situated at the highest point of the Cottonera area, and its roof was used to relay signals between Valletta and the coastal defences on the eastern part of Malta.<sup>[1]</sup> The gate was originally protected by a drop ditch and a tenaille.

The gate remained in use throughout the years of Hospitaller, French and British rule. The gate gradually served as an adjunct to the Cottonera Military Hospital (now St. Edward's College) following its construction in 1870. Many wounded soldiers were accommodated within the gate during World War I.

The gate's ditch was filled in and the drawbridge removed sometime after the 1930s,<sup>[6]</sup> while the tenaille was demolished.<sup>[3]</sup> The gate was damaged by aerial bombardment during World War II, when one of the adjacent barrack blocks received a direct hit.

In the early 21st century, the Notre Dame Gate was passed to the Malta Heritage Trust, Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna, who moved their main offices into the upper part of the gate in late 2005. The foundation has since carried out a number of restoration works to parts of the gate, which is now open to the public once every week. The gate was included on the Antiquities List of 1925, together with the rest of the Cottonera Lines.<sup>[1]</sup> It is now scheduled as a Grade 1 national monument, and it is also listed on the National Inventory of the Cultural Property of the Maltese Islands.

The Notre Dame Gate is built in the Baroque style, and it has five levels, and it includes underground chambers, two barrack blocks, and a superstructure consisting of a gatehouse built on two levels, a veranda and a signalling top. The monumental façade is decorated with Corinthian pilasters, and it has a panel with a trophy of arms surrounding a bronze bust of Grand Master Nicolas Cotoner and a marble plaque with a Latin inscription.

The bust was cast by Pietro Sances of Messina in the 1670s, and it is regarded as one of the most important works of art in bronze in Malta. During the French occupation of Malta, the bust was taken by the French as spoils of war, but it was returned to Malta by the British. There were some failed attempts to steal the bust in the 1960s, and it was restored between 2004 and 2008.



*Captain of the Ohio,  
Dudley Mason, awarded the  
George Cross for bringing the  
tanker SS OHIO into Malta on  
the 15th August 1942.*





## It wasn't just St Paul – Malta has had its share of shipwrecks

Report: Mario Xuereb

Mr Wickman points to fires, storms, on-board damage and bad navigation as the main reasons for the 14 shipwrecks around the Maltese coast in the past 160 years.

Just as the vessel carrying St Paul in 60 AD hit a reef, the

The vessel which ran aground in Qawra may recall the shipwreck of St Paul in 60 AD, an event which is commemorated today by the Church in Malta.

That shipwreck will always be remembered as the biggest ever tragedy in Maltese waters, as its story is even recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Fourteen other tragedies have occurred over the past 160 years, however, in which scores of sailors and passengers lost their lives, including many Maltese.

The tragedy which goes back to November 1908, nearly 110 years ago, in the seas close to Malta, is still considered the worst maritime tragedy. The 'Sardinia' had just left the Port of Malta, when fire spread throughout the ship.

"By the time it was sailing in the vicinity of Xghajra, the vessel was one huge fireball. It was a major disaster. No one could understand why the fire had spread so quickly. The Captain was the first person to lose his life, when an explosion occurred on board the 'Sardinia'. There was a rumour that the vessel could have been carrying explosives, but the owners always denied this," maritime historian Victor Wickman points out.

There were some 150 Muslim pilgrims on board, on their way to Mecca. Over half of them perished in the tragedy, as well as 16 members of the crew, Europeans and Indians.

"It was stated in the inquiry that followed that there were serious shortcomings. Muslim pilgrims were left on deck together, and some were even cooking their food. There were no fire precautions. The cooking fires could have led to the eventual conflagration," Wickman adds.

same fate overtook the battleship HMS Sultan, when it was manoeuvring with torpedoes close to Comino in 1889. The battleship's Captain ended up being blamed. Although the reef was not marked on any navigation chart, he was still held responsible.

More recently, in the mid-50s, the 'Star of Malta', carrying passengers, merchandise and mail from Sicily, ran into problems close to Dragonara Point. "It was a morning when the weather was not so good. There was some navigational error. The vessel was kept close to Dragonara and ended up on the rocks. The vessel was nearly a total loss. A ship's cook and a female passenger had lost their lives."

Conscious of the fact that one doesn't take risks with the all-powerful sea, Maltese mariners are used to praying to St Andrew and other patron saints of seamen to protect them from the dangers they might encounter in the course of their work.







## Maltese American Social Club of San Francisco USA

By Abraham Vella and Mona Vella-Nicholas

Towards the end of November 1929, thirty-five Maltese residents of San Francisco met to discuss the

establishment of a Colonial Club. A committee was given the task of finding suitable premises for a meeting place. In January 1930, they rented the ground floor of a house at 1648 Oakdale Avenue, San Francisco. That same month, a committee selected the first officers of the club: F. Grech, President; C. Fenech, Vice-President; E. Micallef, Secretary; J. Azzopardi, Treasurer; C. Scicluna, Assistant Secretary; and R. Deguara, Assistant Treasurer. Hence, the "Maltese Club of San Francisco" was given birth.

Very soon after, the "Melita Soccer Football Team" decided to join the Maltese Club, doubling the Club's membership. In 1932, the "Sons of Malta Soccer Team", as the Club's team was now called, won the Redmen Convention trophy in Santa Cruz. Other Club members who were musically talented organized a jazz band which played at dances and picnics and even gave concerts. This "San Francisco Maltese Band" even played for the welcome of Archbishop Edward Hanna at his dedication of the St. Paul of the Shipwreck Church auditorium. A dramatic company was also formed under Club auspices. This group put on plays in Maltese for the entertainment of the Club's members and their families.

The Club's activities encouraged many other Maltese to enroll, so bigger premises became an indispensable necessity. In June 1931, the committee rented the large building at 1789 Oakdale Avenue, a former church. The Club eventually bought the property, which remained its headquarters until 1995, when the Oakdale building was sold and the Club's present premises at 924 El Camino Real in South San Francisco became the Club's new home. Although the soccer team and dramatic group no longer exist, the Club continues to be a source of entertainment and community to new generations of Maltese-Americans. Dinner-dances, casino trips, children's Christmas parties, and other events draw members and guests from all over the Bay Area to the Club. With the addition of women as full-fledged members in the 1990's, mystery trips, bingo nights, pot-luck dinners, and knitting groups have been added to the list of the Club activities. In addition, a Melitensia library has been added, providing books, music, and films on a variety of aspects of Maltese history and culture.

The Club celebrated its 50th anniversary at its Oakdale premises in San Francisco in May 1979. Joseph Grech, Jr. was president at the time. San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein was the guest of honor. Twenty-five years later, led by President Joseph Tanti, the Club celebrated the biggest event it has ever had. This 75th anniversary celebration was held on October 2, 2004 at the South San Francisco Convention Center and featured the Nicolo Isouard Band of Mosta. One can only guess how a new generation of Maltese-Americans will celebrate the Club's 100th anniversary in 2029!

### Club Committees

For more information on Club Committees, please email us at [contact-us@Maltese-AmericanSCSF.org](mailto:contact-us@Maltese-AmericanSCSF.org).

**WOMEN'S SOCIAL COMMITTEE** - Ninfa Pace, Chairperson

Meetings are held on the **2nd Tuesday** every month @ **6:30p.m (except in August)**. Functions may be held on different days (members will be contacted if there are changes to date and/or time for the meeting).

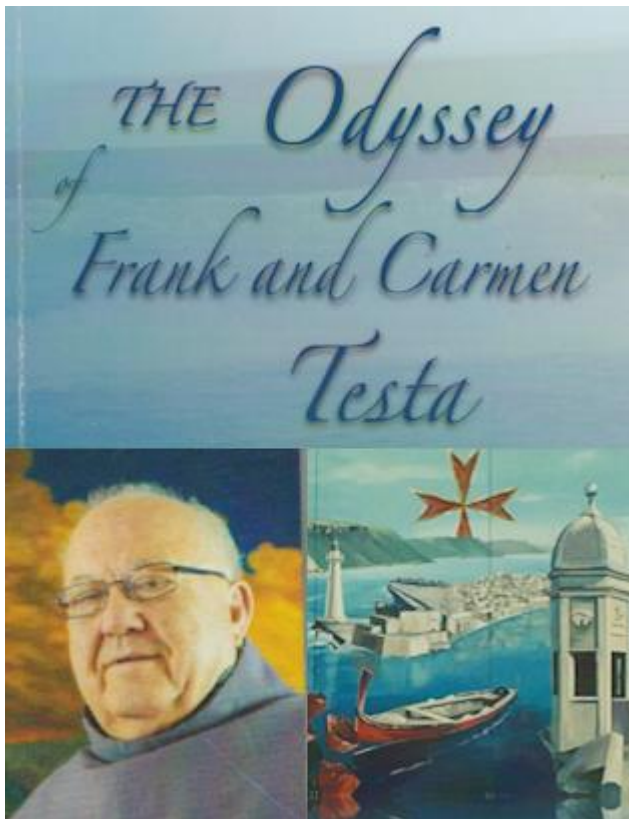
**ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE** The 2023 Entertainment Committee consists of the following volunteers: Rita Borg (Chair), Sina Borg, Brian Ciappara, Pauline Henderson, Richard Henderson, Carmen Micallef, Emma Magarrell and Ninfa Pace. Anyone who is interested in joining, please contact Rita Borg.

**GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE** The 2023 volunteer members are Mary Ann Fassler (Chairperson), Charlie Catania, Barbara Fenech, Paula Moffitt and Peter Abela.

**Club Headquarters** Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco 924 El Camino Real South San Francisco, CA 94080-3202 Email: [contact-us@Maltese-AmericanSCSF.org](mailto:contact-us@Maltese-AmericanSCSF.org)

***NB: Please continue to email to me the Maltese eNewsletter. We enjoy reading it and we make sure it is forwarded to the members of the Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco. Mary Vella***

## FRANCISCAN FRIAR WHO DEDICTAED HIS LIFE FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

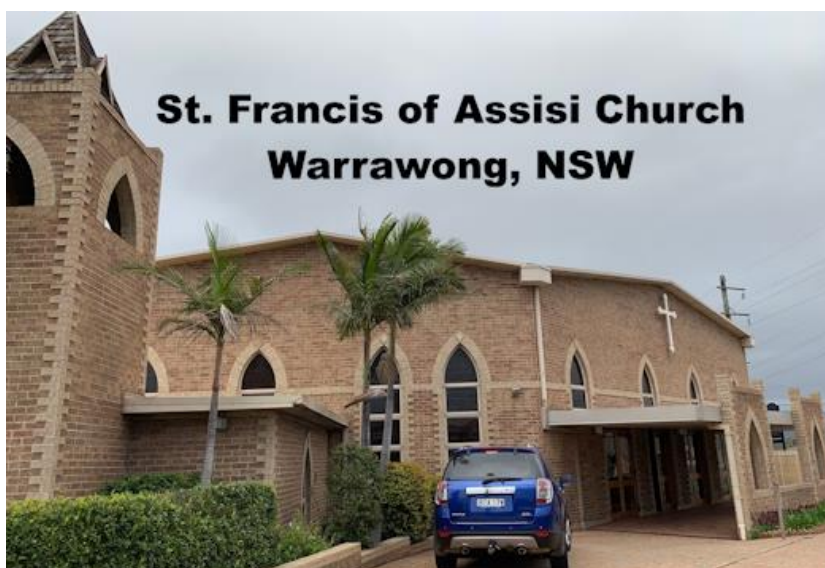


Father Leonard Testa is a member of the Conventual Franciscans (Greyfriars). He dedicated the short history to his parents – a publication entitled 'The Odyssey of Frank and Carmen Testa'. His mother often reminded him of his date of birth in Malta during the war an event she would refer to as collateral war damage, namely that *"as he was coming out the Germans were coming in"* notwithstanding, they wanted a large family but *only* had thirteen children. He is the third born and given the name of Carmel after our Lady of Mount Carmel.

In 1951 the Testa family migrated to Australia and lived till 1994 in Cringila, NSW.

In 1956 barely sixteen, he returned to Malta to join the Franciscans (Greyfriars) the first from Australia. He had his religious formation in Assisi-Italy, at the Shrine of St Francis, and continued with his formation in Rome at the Order's international college, the Seraphicum. He was ordained in Rome in 1966, returning to Warrawong fraternity in Australia a year later.

He did his pastoral year at St Benedict's Sydney, under Monsignor William Murray, later Bishop of Wollongong. In 1969 he was appointed parish priest of the newly established parish at Kellyville NSW. Then chosen as Custodian of the Greyfriars followed as Parish Priest at Springvale Vic. to be appointed to Assisi for four years, followed by nine years in Turkey, and back in Australia in 1990 where he worked since then in St Francis of Assisi parish at Warrawong NSW. He is now living in retirement after 60 years as a Franciscan and 54 as a priest.



**St. Francis of Assisi Church  
Warrawong, NSW**

**Many Maltese migrants in the 1950S who opted to go and work in the industrial Wollongong region New South Wales chose to buy houses in Cringila, Warrawong and Port Kembla. Most of them found a job at the steelworks**



## THE AREA OF KORDIN

### with more than 5000 years of history

Kordin's name is today mostly associated with the civil prison that was built in 1850. This indicates that the land known as 'Kordin' was a very wide land, because although the back part of the prison overlooks the Kordin hill, the prison is entered through the entrance there from Valletta Road in Raħal Gdid. According to Godfrey Wettinger, the name Kordin comes from Corradin, which may have been the name of someone who had a piece of land there that was named for him, or a farmer who worked the land in those areas.

Wettinger also says that this land was also known as Tax-Xagħra ta' Ġħajn Rabib. Here it is worth bearing in mind that the Maltese word, 'qortin' which is similar to the word Kordin, means a hill that on the one hand falls straight down and on the other hand it rolls up sweetly. Meanwhile, Louis de Boisgelin, an English Knight of the Order who wrote about Malta in 1805 makes a distinction between 'Kortin', the hill further towards the Marsa under which some Roman baths were found in 1729, and Corradin, the place where the stables of the Order were. Prehistory Human history in the area of Kordin goes back more than five thousand years. We know this because three megalithic temples were found in these areas, known by archaeologists as temples number I, II and III, respectively. Of these, only some stones remain from temple number III, which is very close to the Capuchin church

One should consider these temples in the context of the Neolithic period and the building of the temples, including those of Ғal Tarxien as well as the prehistoric subterranean of the Hypogeum in Paħol New which are not more than a kilometer away. Over the centuries The water bodies of Kordin could also have been used for hunting as well as for farming by the inhabitants of Cottonera and Tarxien. Under Kordin the Order had some warehouses where they hid explosives and armaments. The environment on the hill was also used many times as a position of great importance for the purposes of wars. This is what we see according to what appears on the fresco by Mattia Perez d'Aleccio that is painted in the Throne room in the Palace of the Grand Masters (today of the President), a scene from the Great Siege, which shows t -Turks positioned on the Kordin hill ready to attack Isla and Birgu.

At a time when the French were besieged in the City and in the Cottonera forts, the Maltese dug trenches on Cordin to aim their cannons at the Three Cities and Valletta. With these trenches, another group of Maltese soldiers were stationed on the hill known as

Tal-Borġ, in Raħal Gdid. Time of the British In the nineteenth century, the British recognized the strategic value of these areas and immediately began to make use of them. Under the hill of Kordin, they took the warehouses that were built in 1756 by the Order of St. John and used them to keep the armaments and explosives much needed by the Royal Navy.

In 1830, at the end of Kordin hill, an obelisk was erected as a memorial in honour of Robert Cavendish Spencer, the Captain of the Madagascar Frigate, who died in Alexandria, and whose body was brought to Malta to be buried here. (His grave is on the ramparts near Hastings Garden overlooking Marsamxett). The obelisk remained on the Kordin hill until 1893, because in that year it was dismantled and Blata l'Bajda was erected instead where it is still there today. This move was made because where it was, the obelisk was right on top of the main arsenal depot and therefore, there was a danger that the obelisk could serve as a marker that with the new cannons on the ships of the enemy one could aim at him even from outside the Great Port. In 1867, the British built a Naval prison, known as the Detention Centre. This after a few years (1870) was taken over by the British Military for a wider purpose and became known as the Corradino Military Prisons.

During the nineteenth century the British continued to develop the pier below Kordin. This was divided into three parts: Parlatorio Wharf, facing Isla, and Magazine Wharf and Laboratory Wharf, facing Floriana. In 1897, close to these wharves, the British also built the Royal Navy Canteen where sailors and officers could spend some of their free time, drinking and entertaining themselves with dancing or playing games.

In 1901, a large part of the Kordin area was taken over by the Admiralty to be used both for military reasons and for other purposes. Among these, before the first World War, fuel tanks were built because in the first decades of the twentieth century, the British Navy began to switch from coal to oil. Sports facilities were also built for the services in Malta. On the side facing Isla, since the beginning of the twentieth century, the British had built a football field, and many of the matches between the regiments were played here. It was also here where other games popular with the British began to be played, such as hockey, cricket, rugby and tennis. All of them later thanked the Maltese for uniting their teams which are still up to date



## MALTESE FOLKLORE

The Pioneers of Maltese folklore

Manwel Magri

At the turn of the twentieth century, various folklorists, most of them foreigners, collected oral folk-tales by interviewing people all over the Maltese islands. One of them was the Italian Luigi Bonelli. Two others were the Germans, Bertha Ilg and Hans Stumme. Then there was the Maltese Jesuit priest, Manwel Magri, (1851 – 1907). Between them they recorded 102 local anecdotes, tales that may have included a few legends and variants of them. Father Magri recorded 62 folk tales that also included variants. It is interesting to note that of these, about eight recount tales related to intimidating giants and menacing monstrous creatures. Sixteen other

tales involve an imaginary king, or as the Maltese called him, *is-Sultan*, an authority to be feared as he was often threatening to his subjects by his irrational wishes and edicts. The Sultan held power over life and death over one and all.

Since time immemorial, there have been many great story-tellers, the world over. In Greek times there was Aesop with his fables, who entertained while providing moral lessons, and Homer with his epic tales that extolled the prowess of the Greek gods. In the Indian, Persian and Arab world too, one finds a collection of fantastic tales in 'One Thousand and One Nights'. In Europe, famous writers, such as the German Grimm Brothers, and the Danish Hans Christian Anderson, created characters that still enthral millions. Some of these tales, do have parallels in distant countries, as they were spread by word of mouth to be adopted by other cultures. Maltese tales were not excluded from such influences. On the contrary some local folk tales seem to connect with similar ones in North Africa, in nearby Sicily as well as certain countries in Europe and the Middle East.

Story-telling is a pastime that may be performed to the enjoyment of children and adults alike. There still exists in the English vernacular an idiomatic expression that goes, 'to spin a yarn'. This idiom could very well fit in a practical way, the Maltese way of life, of some 200 years ago, during the time when the cotton industry thrived. Hundreds of workers, mostly made up of the farmer's own families gathered in rooms or courtyards of their own cottage, to gin and spin cotton into yarn. This time-consuming process was often done by the womenfolk accompanied by their young children. One may imagine that in order to cheer themselves up during the laborious and tedious hours, the matriarchal figure of the family, most of often the oldest women of the group, recounted anecdotes and tales to entertain those working or idling nearby. This may have been one way how oral tradition filtered down from one generation to the next.



### MALTESE FOLK TALES

#### IL-MAQLUBA SINKHOLE, QRENDI

In Malta we come across a variety of folktales. Some of these accounts served to explain the peculiar phenomena of nature, such as astronomical observations, weather conditions, geological occurrences and even the origin of place-names. One may cite the case of the legendary sinkhole that exists near the village of Qrendi, known as *Il-Maqluba*, (M. the overturned). Legend has it that at that location there was once a village whose inhabitants lacked moral rectitude. To punish them, God destroyed the village and made it disappear from the face of the earth, thus leaving behind

a deep pit in which today lush vegetation grows.



### GIANTS AND MEGALITHS

A couple of tales may be classified as legends, as they explain how the mysterious Maltese prehistoric megalithic temples were built by giants. In Gozo, several tales recount how a giantess transported from the small village of Sannat a large boulder on her shoulder to set up a menhir at Qala, where it is still to be found today. This she did with ease, obtaining her energy by nourishing herself with broad beans. The megalithic temples of Ġgantija at Xagħra, as the name implies, were





supposedly built by giants. Even Gian Frangisk Abela, Malta's most ancient historian, wrote in his *Della Descrittione di Malta* (1647), that he believed that the Maltese temples were built by a race of giants that inhabited the islands in Pre-Deluvian times. This belief was corroborated by the occasional finds of large-sized skeletal bones in quarries and rock fissures. These remains, in reality, belonged to extinct animal species such as elephants and hippopotami, dating to the glacial and inter-glacial periods Malta. Such fossils are not unique to Malta. Similar finds occur elsewhere in the Mediterranean. It was because of such oversized bones that the Greeks believed in a giant race, known as the Cyclops. These one eyed creatures, made famous in the Odyssey, were indeed created out of fantasy as people believed that the central large cavity in the fossilised elephant skull which to which the elephant's proboscis is attached, was surely the socket in which the eye of this fantastic creature was held.

## Planning Authority is turning 15sq.m room into 200sq.m villa



The Planning Authority has approved a 199sq.m villa built over two floors and a 75sq.m pool and deck area instead of a 15sq.m room between San Gwann and Msida. The site is found along the narrow rural road known as Triq San Ġwann Tal-Għargħar, which links to the University of Malta. The area is not only outside the development zone but lies within a Natura 2000 site which includes the Wied Għolliet valley.

Wied Għolliet is situated right in between Kappara and the University of Malta. Green oasis surrounded by highly urbanised area. It hasn't been studied much in the past and its first reference by Briffa & Lanfranco is from 1986.

In the 1990s there was a development proposal to expand the University of Malta into Wied Għolliet. Unfortunately despite many opposing environmental groups and residents living closed by, the proposed car park was built and many old trees were uprooted and fertile soiled carted away or dumped. Luckily the further plans to develop the engineering department and science park were shelved and on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1994 Wied Għolliet was declared a Bird Sanctuary. In 1997, parts of Wied Għolliet were also declared as a Level 2 Area of Ecological Importance (AEI) and a Level 1 Site of Scientific Importance. In 2001, Wied Għolliet was designated as a Tree Reserve/Nature Reserve and in 2003 as a Special Area of Conservation.



**The Journal of all Maltese Living Abroad**





## THE DEJMA CROSS IN MĠARR, MALTA – kappa vision blog

You might have seen them around the #Maltese islands, but did you ever wonder why these stone columns with a cross on top were built many centuries ago? This stone cross is found next to the parish church

of the village of Mġarr in #Malta. It was once located elsewhere, in front of the old Mġarr church that today no longer exists. When the new parish church of Mġarr was constructed, the cross was moved here, on the left-rear area outside the church. The cross was restored by Grezzju Camilleri and his son Paul. Some parts of it were rebuilt. Expenses were paid for by Louis Vella.

### THE DEJMA CROSS - IS-SALIB TAD-DEJMA

The Dejma cross is a typical feature present in several villages across the archipelago. The stone column is typically surmounted by a cross on a square pedestal that is usually raised on three circular stone steps.

The one in Mġarr, though, differs from the others in that it has no steps and its base is hexagonal in shape. The Dejma Crosses had several different uses in the past, which we will look into in this article.

### HISTORY OF THE DEJMA CROSS

Many centuries ago, it is said that Militia soldiers used to gather around these crosses prior to being assigned to duties. From here, they would read out important edicts to the village community. These soldiers were known as the Dejma soldiers, hence the name of the crosses.

**DEJMA CROSSES FOR DEVOTION** But we also find Dejma crosses that were erected as a form of devotion, like the one in front of the Mqabba parish church that was built to remember Dun Angelo Mallia (1667-1690), the church chaplain who had strived for the building of the parish church.

**THE FGURA DEJMA CROSS** A similar yet at the same time different cross is in Fgura, erected some years ago in a main road. This cross rests on four columns symbolizing two things: 1) a chapel dedicated to Our

Lady that was once present nearby, and 2) its four columns symbolize the four areas where most of Fgura's inhabitants came from: Cottonera, Żabbar, Raħal Ġdid and Tarxien.

**ONE OF THE OLDEST DEJMA CROSSES** One of the oldest Dejma crosses is found in Howard Gardens near the main entrance to Mdina. Today, these stone crosses are usually surrounded by quaint village squares. A perfect spot for a siesta!

**MĠARR, MALTA** Mġarr is a typical rural village in the Northern Region of Malta surrounded with rich farmland and vineyards. Many of its over 3,500 inhabitants are farmers or are engaged in some sort of agricultural activity. Formely known as Mġiarro, Mġarr's rustic environs embrace several picturesque spots like Bingemma, Wardija, Fomm ir-Riħ, Ġhajn Tuffieħa and Ġnejna Bay.

**THE PARISH CHURCH** The village of Mġarr originally had a church which dated from the 15th century. In 1579, Paolo Cumbo founded an ecclesiastical living known later as tal-Berqux in the area. Its rector, among other duties, had to celebrate the Marian feasts of the Assumption, the Nativity, the Purification, the Annunciation and the Visitation in this church. It was in front of this church that the stone column with a cross on top, called is-Salib tad-Dejma (pictured) that today is found near the new parish church was originally located.

### THE PRESENT DAY PARISH CHURCH OF MĠARR

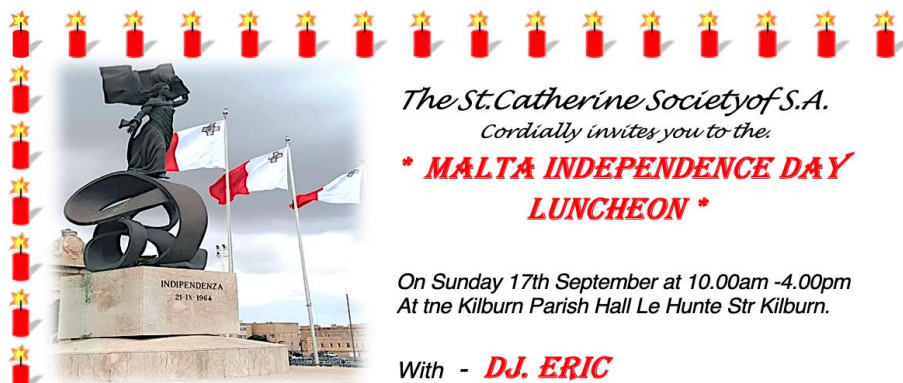
The parish church of Mġarr has an unusual, elliptical, egg-shaped dome that was inspired by that of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Mdina. It is one of the largest of its kind in the world, and due to the complexity of its construction, it and the church took decades - and different architects - to complete.

The church is dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady (Maltese: 'l-Assunta' or 'Santa Marija'). The feast of the locality is one of several Santa Maria feasts held in Malta and Gozo in the peak of summer, on the 15th of August. But in Mġarr, together with Dingli in Malta and Żebbuġ in Gozo, the feast is traditionally celebrated on the Sunday following August 15th.

The feast in Mġarr is famous especially for the traditional auction among groups wishing to carry the statue of Santa Maria in the procession, an auction that always makes the news for the astonishing bids of thousands of Euros that are collected.

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Journal of Maltese Living Abroad

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## ABOUT THE UNIQUE MALTESE 'ANTIORTA'

Homeowners would either put a thin veil over them or opt for opaque glass, obscuring how much an outsider can see of the inside.

Some years ago, an antiporta wouldn't normally be locked.

Like other vehicles for nostalgia, the antiporta revives memories of Malta's more rural, peaceful past. But it's not just that: It reminds us of a time when the private home continuously

interacted with neighbourhoods and the community. Be that for the baker to bring in the bread or for a friend to pop in for a can of salsa. The Antiporta had a role in how we dealt with Malta's climate for more appreciation of so distinct a characteristic within a Maltese home. And it's not just because the antiporta looks 'sweet' or because it is 'typical' but rather because it functioned so very well. Beyond the symbolic and the vernacular, the antiporta was also a terrific way to take advantage of Malta's climate, let the light in, keep the summer's warmth moderate, provide an extra layer against Winter's winds and storms, and more.

Currently, the antiporta has no legal protection. Unlike the balcony, the antiporta is not external to a building, and thus can be demolished by any owner and the regulations that protect the Maltese balcony do not apply to the antiporta. People used to decorate the Antiporta with luxurious fabrics. Lace curtains would be tailor-made to the homeowner's specifications, and making decorations for the door behind the door was a bit of an industry of its own.

There may be a reason why the handles are placed so low. And it may have to do with the ratio of the glass to wood. To increase the amount of the width and height of the glass, handles were placed further down.

To make it easier for kids to rush in and out may be another influence that led to this characteristic. The Antiporta goes by different names around Malta and Gozo

The antiporta used to be called 'Il-Boxxla', which means 'Compass' in English! Vella and Peppu Mizzi informed us that in Gozo the antiporta is called "Boxxla ta' l-intrata" or "Boxxla tat-Triq", in English, we think it would roughly translate to "Compass of the Entrance Hall" or "Compass of the Road". Antiporti come in different shapes and sizes!



## Inspire Foundation's telethon raises €329,210

Inspire Foundation, Malta's leading organisation in the disability sector, held a televised fundraising marathon, "Jien Suċċess," on Sunday, 20th August 2023 from noon to midnight. This 12-hour telethon was hoping to raise essential funds for the construction of the Rehabilitation & Wellness Centre at Inspire's Marsascala facility. The event was shown on TVM, ONE, and NET TV stations, reaching thousands of viewers across the nation. The event called 'Jien Suċċess' collected the sum of nearly €330 000.

The telethon, themed around the belief that every individual, regardless of limitations, conditions, or disability, deserves the opportunity to achieve success and reach their full potential, was met with an overwhelming response from both the public and corporate sectors,

"We are thrilled and deeply grateful for the incredible outpouring of support from individuals, businesses, and communities across Malta and Gozo," Antonello Gauci, CEO of Inspire Foundation said.

"The 'Jien Suċċess' telethon not only showed the strength of unity but also reinforced the shared commitment towards creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for individuals with disabilities and those in need of our services.

"We firmly believe that everyone has the right to equality and full participation in society," said Antonello Gauci, CEO of Inspire Foundation. "Through 'Jien Suċċess,' we aspire to raise funds for our groundbreaking project, the Rehabilitation & Wellness Centre. This initiative will be unique to Malta and will cater to the needs of numerous individuals, including accident survivors, stroke patients, people with fibromyalgia, and the elderly, among others."

The Rehabilitation & Wellness Centre aims to establish a fully accessible facility, equipped with a rehabilitation gym tailored to the specific needs of individuals with neurological injuries or physical limitations. The centre will introduce a range of new services designed to provide emotional support and specialized offerings



aimed at empowering and improving the well-being of hundreds of individuals and their families.

"We have ambitious plans for this project, and the estimated cost for constructing this facility is approximately €400,000," continued Gauci. "With the support of our generous donors, we hope to create a safe and inclusive space that fosters growth, rehabilitation, and success for all. Join us for a heartwarming and empowering experience, as we unite as a community to help those in need. Together, we can make a difference and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for individuals with disabilities."

Inspire Foundation expressed its heartfelt appreciation to all its employees and those who volunteered their time and resources to make the "Jien Suċċess" telethon a triumph. The collective efforts of donors, volunteers, and participants underscore the capacity for positive change when a community comes together.

If you would like to donate towards inspire foundation and missed the telethon go to the website [www. inspire.org.mt/jien-success-2023/](http://www.inspire.org.mt/jien-success-2023/)





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