

# MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

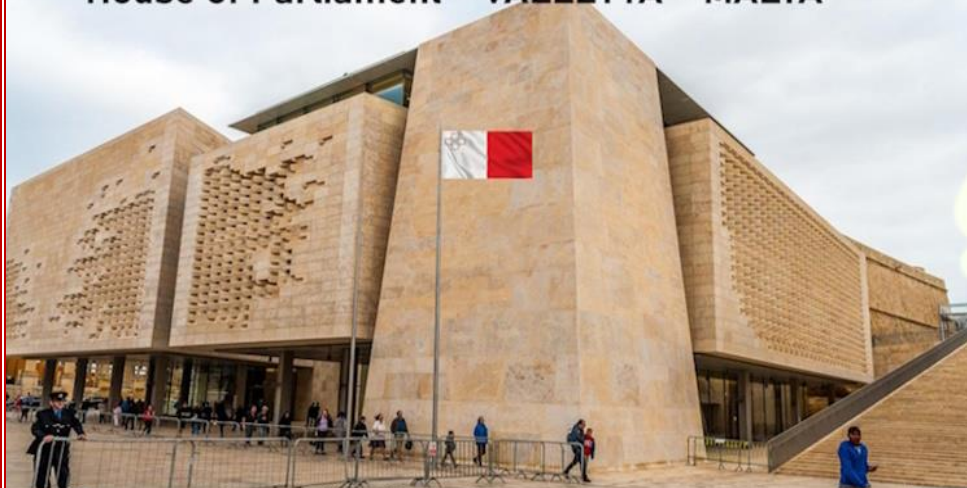
maltesejournal@gmail.com



Journal for Maltese Living Abroad

Editor: Frank Scicluna OAM MQR JP

House of Parliament - VALLETTA - MALTA



Outstanding  
Community  
Contribution  
OCTOBER  
2023

LOUIS  
PARNIS

George  
Cross Falcons  
Community  
Centre

Multicultural Communities  
Council of Illawarra NSW

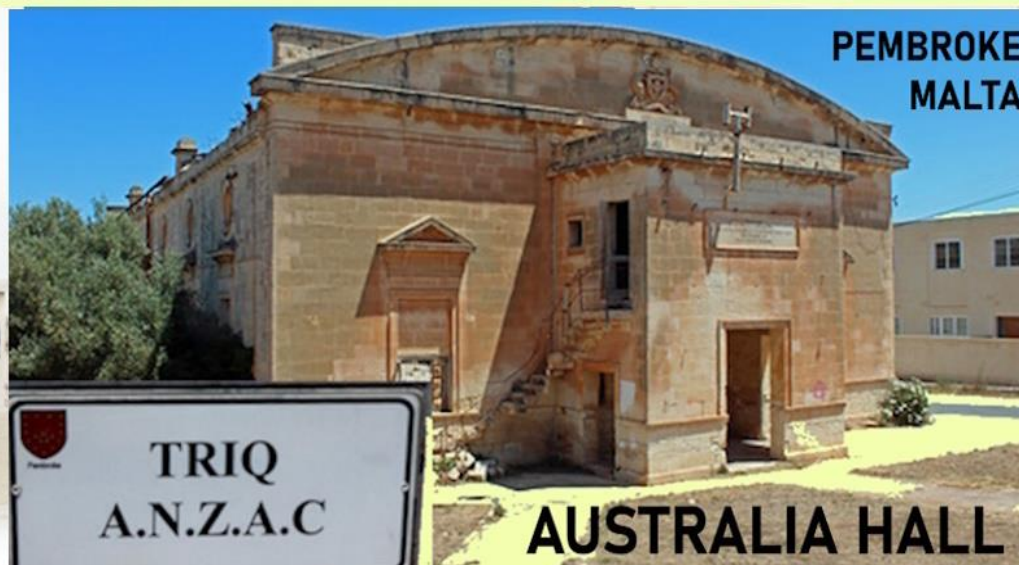
## POMEGRANATES • RUMMIEN



**MALTA**  
A Childhood Under Siege



LINDA PEEK



PEMBROKE  
MALTA

TRIQ  
A.N.Z.A.C

AUSTRALIA HALL



# Planning Authority Executive Council advised to refuse Australia Hall

Michaela Pia Camilleri

The Planning Authority's executive council has been recommended not to issue a permit that would allow the construction of three apartment blocks around Australia Hall in Pembroke – a historical building embroiled in political controversy during the past years. The case officer for application PC/142/18 insisted that the plans of the applicants, Fino Group, were not acceptable, since they would see a massive development on a zone listed as a garden in local plans, despite the fact that the garden forms part of the development zone. Applications of the kind serve to confirm the kind of development that is permissible on the site. A separate application is needed for the site to be developed.

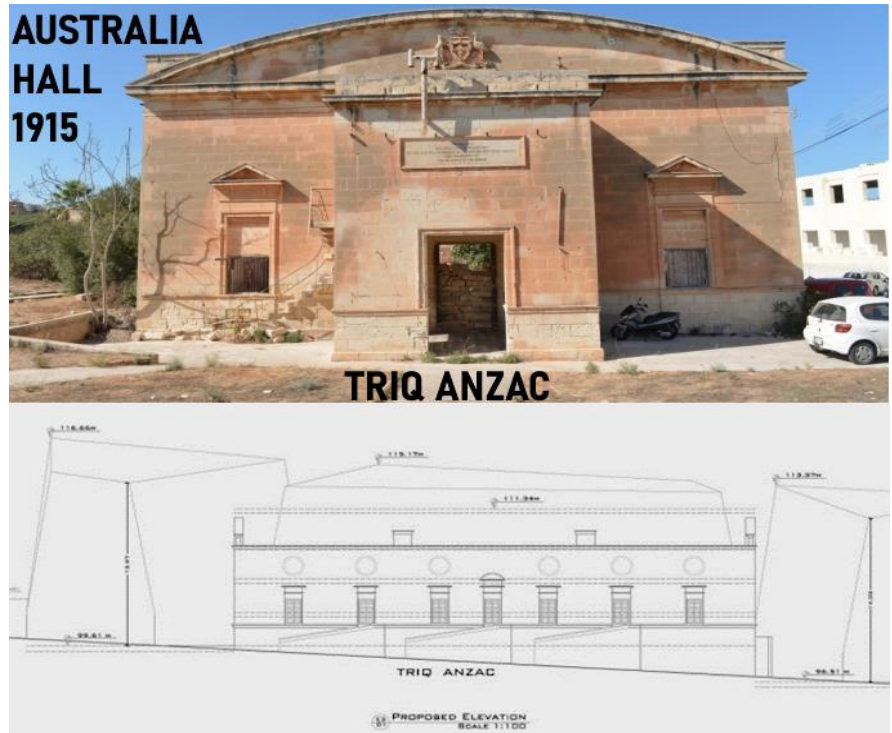
## A site embroiled in political controversy

Australia Hall, a former entertainment hall built by the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society in 1915, has been the subject of political controversy for the past decades, starting when an exchange was made between the Labour Government and the Labour Party in 1979.

While the Labour Party gave up its Freedom Press quarters in Marsa in order to make way for the extension of the Malta Shipbuilding site, it was instead given a massive site in Pembroke which includes Australia Hall and the Junior Ranks' Club, best known as the former disco "Raffles".

Not only was the Pembroke site double in size of that of the former Freedom Press site, but the party was also given an old factory in Marsa – a site which is still in use by the party's media until today, as well as the rental of the Maċina in Senglea, which served as the party's headquarters until the one in Ħamrun

**Fino's plans and objections to them** The planning control application submitted by AH developments, belonging to Fino Group, originally sought the



was built. An additional amount of money was also given as further compensation.

Raffles and Australia Hall were originally Grade 1 buildings – the highest protection possible. However, the Labour Government reduced Australia Hall's protection to Grade 2 in 1997 – a decision which allowed further interventions to be made to the site.

Unfortunately, Australia Hall caught fire in 1998 – an incident which was suspected to be voluntary. However, the case was never solved. As a result, the hall's roof caved in and the inside of the hall was greatly damaged.

Incidentally, Raffles, which had closed down in 1989, also caught fire a few years later.

The damages were never addressed by the Labour Party, however, in 2010 the Lands Commissioner filed a lawsuit against the party because the conditions under which the site was granted were not being respected. The conditions included keeping the properties in good condition.

A few days later, the party made a planning application to restore Australia Hall, but did not continue to follow the application, so much so that it was withdrawn by the PA.

The case dragged on the Labour Government was elected in 2013, and the suspicion was confirmed a few months later, when the government dropped the case against the party leading it: a decision that had naturally led to a huge controversy.

application of "Floor Area Ratio" – an application which permits the construction of a high-rise tower in the area.

However, the plans have changed, and instead of a tower, the company is seeking to build three five-storey blocks around Australia Hall. They also intend to dig up two underground floors. The blocks have been described as “mixed-use:” a description that generally indicates a mix of apartments, offices and shops.

According to plans, the blocks have an area of 601, 529 and 346 square metres.

However, the footprint of these blocks replaces a structure which is scheduled as Grade III: a lavatory which like Australia Hall formed part of St Andrews Barracks.

The plans do not confirm what the plans are for this structure, however the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage insisted that it be preserved, even if it accepted the possibility of moving to another part of the site.

Din I-Art Helwa expressed serious concern about the project, saying that it would have a very bad impact on the surrounding area and erode the context of a historic scheduled building. It noted that according to policies, development within a historical site should be carried out in a manner that respects the context and profile (skyline) of the site. According to the NGO, this respect would be broken by the planned three blocks whose height would exceed

that of Australia Hall. On behalf of the local Council, Mayor Dean Hili similarly emphasised that there should be a buffer area that does not suffocate Australia Hall.

Moviment Graffiti made similar arguments against the project, saying that the permit would “lead to the degradation of a cultural and historical area, as well as the urban landscape surrounding it.” The organisation also said that, if approved, this case would establish a dangerous precedent for similar applications in the future. Ultimately, however, the case officer appears not to have taken into consideration the reasons for the objection mentioned by the local council and NGOs, but rather the fact that a side of the site – an area of 786 square metres – is scheduled as a garden.

The three blocks planned by Fino would cover part of this area, leaving only 350 square metres – between one block and another – undeveloped. Only then did the case officer request that the application be rejected.

The decision is now in the hands of the Planning Executive Council, which is expected to decide on the application on 10 October. The Council is not bound to stick to the recommendation but would have to give an explanation if it decides otherwise.

*Source- Times of Malta*



doing bad things.

Both heard John the Baptist. The Pharisees did not change as a result of his preaching. The others did. We are constantly invited to be converted by God. This is a constant call... lifelong.

The amazing mystery of Grace invites us into constant growth. Grace stops us from getting stuck ... invites us to embrace conversion and growth .. even when it is not easy ...

it is important to have good intentions.

It is even more important to actually put these intentions into action.

In today's gospel reading at mass Jesus brings the example of two sons. One said that he would do something his father had asked him to do and then did not do it.

Another had said that he would not do his father's will but then changed his mind and did.

The Pharisees were the 'good people' who considered themselves wanting to do God's will.

The prostitutes and sinners knew that they were

<p>Maltese Diaspora</p>  <p>Matters</p>	<p><b>MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER</b></p> <p><b>Journal for Maltese Living Abroad</b></p> <p><b>READ, ENJOY, SUPPORT AND SHARE YOUR JOURNAL</b></p>	
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## ARCHBISHOP SCICLUNA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BISHOPS' SYNOD AT THE VATICAN



Archbishop Charles Scicluna has left Malta this morning to participate in the Bishops' Synod dedicated to Synodality, which is taking place at the Vatican from the 4th to the 29th October 2023.

Cardinals, bishops, priests, religious and lay people, totaling 464 individuals, will be participating in this Synod, during which the essence of life and the Church's mission will be discussed. This Synod is being considered an important step for the Catholic Church because lay men and women will be able to participate fully for the first time.

As a preparation for the Synod, thousands of pilgrims, including Maltese youths, are expected to gather in St Peter's Square for the ecumenical prayer vigil. Pope Francis and representatives of different Churches will also be present, so that together they can entrust the work of the Synod to the Holy Spirit. Following Pope Francis' wishes, participants in the Synod will begin this experience with a three-day retreat outside of Rome, starting from tomorrow, Sunday, until next Tuesday. The Synod will begin with a Mass led by Pope Francis in St Peter's Square on 4<sup>th</sup> October.

Archbishop Charles Scicluna said, "We do not celebrate the Synod for only one month, as it is a process we need to continue and live in our dioceses." He appealed to Christians to keep all the Synod's participants in their prayers, especially by praying the Rosary and the prayers distributed in the parishes, so that this will truly be an occasion to come together, listen, and reflect for the good of the pastoral work of the Church.

In Pope Francis' words, the aim of the Synod is not to write documents, but as a Church, "to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope and learn from one another."

A pilgrimage for the participants on 12<sup>th</sup> October is one of the activities to be held during the Synod. On Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> October, in the evening, Pope Francis will lead a time of prayer in St Peter's Square for migrants and refugees. On Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> October, the Pope will pray the Rosary in the Vatican Gardens. Further information about the Synod may be obtained from [synod.va](https://synod.va). Uffiċċju Komunikazzjoni

**We Salute the Past and Present Leaders of Maltese living Abroad**





"Air raid warning, air raid warning. Shut your doors and windows."

The Rediffusion blared out in English and then in Maltese, at 6:55am on the morning of 11 June 1940.

This was the first of many times we would hear that warning. The day our lives changed.

Margaret Staples was nine years old at the beginning of 1939 when her father was posted to the British colony of Malta with the Royal Engineers. Swimming every day, with blue skies and balmy weather; Margaret and her siblings thought they were in paradise.

Everything changed when the Second World War broke out. Hitler wanted to take control of Malta for its strategic position, right in the middle of the Mediterranean. To this end, the Axis powers dropped more bombs on this tiny island than anywhere else on the planet. When that didn't work, they decided to sink all the supply ships going to the island and force capitulation through starvation.

**This is Margaret's story of survival, told by her daughter Linda.**

*Gripping, endearing, moving, enlightening, this is a story that should be read by anyone with an interest in Malta, or indeed in the pieces of the mosaic of the Second World War.*

– Noah Charney, Best-Selling Author and Pulitzer Finalist

*Take this lovely, haunting story of war and family as a nudge to preserve the story of your own family, before it disappears into the ether.*

– Remar Sutton, Washington Post syndicated columnist and author

# MALTA

## A Childhood Under Siege



LINDA PEEK



***It was nice to have the support of the Maltese High Commissioner in Canberra ACT, Mario Farrugia Borg, in promoting my book.***

### Malta A Childhood Under Siege Paperback – 29 August 2023

by Linda Peek (Author), Noah Charney (Editor), James Peek (Cover Art) - \$29.99

Margaret Staples was nine years old at the beginning of 1939 when her father was posted from England to the British colony of Malta with the Royal Engineers. Margaret and her four siblings thought they were in paradise, but everything changed when the Second World War broke out in September of that year. Hitler wanted to take control of Malta for its strategic position, right in the middle of the Mediterranean. To fulfil this desire, the Axis dropped more bombs on this tiny island than anywhere else on the planet. When that didn't work, they sank the ships taking supplies to the island, hoping to force capitulation through starvation.

This is Margaret's story of survival, told by her daughter Linda.

The paperback book and e-version will be available online from platforms which sell books such as Amazon, Thrift Books and Barnes and Noble. An audio version will be available in a couple of weeks.

Kind regards Linda Peek - *A most inspiring book for your library – F. Scicluna*

## Guze' Aquilina

### All for the love of the Maltese Language



## IL-PROFESSUR GUZE' AQUILINA SE JITFAKKAR F'GĦAWDEX

L-Akkademja tal-Malti bl-  
għajjnuna sħiħa li sabet fiż-  
żewġ membri tagħha  
Għawdxin I-Poeta  
Charles Bezzina u I-Kav Joe

M Attard se tfakkar lill-Professur Guze' Aquilina fl-okkażjoni tal-25 sena minn mewtu . Il-Professur kien twieled fir-raħal tal-Munxar lura fis-sena 1991. imma ta' eta żgħira kien diġa telaq Malta biex ikompli japrofondixxi l-istudji tiegħu u ta' etażgħira nsibuh Avukat fejn serva għal madwar 17-il sena sekemm iddeċieda li jidhol fil-fondtal-Ilsien Malti u fi żmien qasir insibuh jirbaħ konkors ta' rumanzi mniedi mill-Gvern bir- rumanz tiegħu 'Taħt Tliet Saltiniet' li għadu mfittex sallum.

Bla dubju spicċa fuq il-Katedra tal-Malti u studja bir-reqqa diversi friegħi ta' Ilsienna u ħallielna bosta tagħlim siewi fil-kotba tiegħu. Ngħid għalija niftakru jaħdem fuq id-Dizzjunarju tiegħu Malti-Ingliż-Malti stampat mill-Klabb Kotba Maltin. Is-serata f'għieħu sa ssir il-Gimgha fl-għaxija 20 t'Ottubru fis-7pm fil-Knisja Parrokkjali tal-Munxar fejn kien ġie mgħammed. Se jieħdu sehem diversi qarrejja Għawdxin li se jaqraw diversi siltiet mix-xogħlijiet tiegħu, fosthom drammi (jien niftakarni nieħu sehem f'wieħed mid-drammi tiegħu 'Arbli fuq il-bjut' fuq il-Palk tal-Liceo), ir-rumanz, poeziji, 'Madwar il-Ħajja', 'Papers in Maltese Linguistics' u oħrajn.

Is-serata tkun imżewqa wkoll minn għadd ta' interventi mużikali mis-Sopran Għawdxija Rosabell Pavia kif ukoll diskors mill-Kappillan tal-Parroċċa u intervent ieħor qasir mill-President tal-Akkademja tal-Malti, Dr George Vella. Kulhadd huwa mistieden.

### Lill-Professur Guze' Aquilina (1911 – 1997)

Kont għadni tifel ċkejken fil-Primarja  
Meta l-għalliem ħabbibni sewwa miegħek,  
Urieni dlonk imħabbtek lejn ilsienna  
Biex tara l-Malti le fit-tajn jitmiegħek!

Żammejtek għalhekk dejjem jien b'kolonna  
Illi ħabrikt w għożżejt ilsienna sħiħ;  
Lil raħlek il-Munxar ħallejt minn kmieni  
Biex f'Malta tkompli taħdem bla mistrieħ!

Matul is-snin mill-pinna għarfa tiegħek  
Ħarġu studji w kitbiet ta' mitt elf sura  
Għax int dejjem emmint illi b'lsienna  
Bla tlaqliq xejn, naqtgħu l-aqwa figura.

Quddiem kulhadd nistqarr u bla ftaħir  
Li fit-tiswir tal-Malti, sehmek kbir.



**GUZE' AQUILINA**  
**Fl-okkażjoni**  
**tal-25 sena minn mewtu**  
**1911 - 1997**  
**Munxar - Gozo**

Kav Joe M Attard    Rabat - Għawdex



## Darwin Bishop reflects on “Spring and New Begins”



**Bishop Charles Gauci**  
**Conventual Chaplain**  
**Ad Honorem**  
**Order of Malta**  
**Australia**



On 30 September 2023, Maltese-born Darwin Bishop Charles Gauci, Conventual Chaplain Ad Honorem Order of Malta, led over 20 members and friends in an online reflection upon “Spring and New Begins”. Embracing the hope and renewal of Spring,

Bishop Charles encourages us to nurture our clarity of purpose.

Our Order’s daily prayer reminds us to be “forgetful of myself”, to be compassionate in our service of the sick and poor and defence of the faith.

Like Jesus, we need to make time to reflect and be in touch with where we are in each season of our life.

Peaceful retreat in a Church or nature helps us to differentiate the soul’s whisper from the ego.

Unbridled ego creates myopic tension, envy, abuse, violence, war, and decay in our world.

Authentic prayer guides us to be spiritually centred, to become truly humble and humane.

We need to trust that despite our human frailty, we are unconditionally loved and replenished by God.

St Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:10, “For when I am weak, then I am strong”, if I open myself to Christ’s mercy and love. The Eucharist provides a sacramental touchstone to remind us of what really matters.

All the wisdom of Scripture and experience is a finger pointing to God as Creator. To understand that God is love. Bishop Charles shared a mantra he often repeats when visiting local parishes, schools, hospitals, prisons, detention centres and international conferences, “You are good”.

Bishop Charles commended St Charles de Foucauld’s “Prayer of Abandonment”:

***“I abandon myself into Your hands; do with me what You will. Whatever You may do, I thank You...”***

As we say the daily prayer of “Yes” to Christ, we are not enslaved but liberated.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit helps us to translate ancient truths into modern action.

If we meditate upon being loved into existence, our spirit is renewed to welcome all on the outer into our community of God. Through Christ, we become a source of Spring and hope to serve the homeless, the sick and people in need.

For Christ reminds in Revelations 21:5, “Behold I make all things new”.

Confraternal thanks to the Randazzo family for hosting Bishop Charles in their home to present this online reflection.

All Members, Candidates, volunteers, family, and friends are welcome to share the monthly formation series, “An Hour of Reflection with a Chaplain” of the Order of Malta.

Steve Ellul The project will also include an underground parking which can take up to 240 cars.

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more stories**

**Malta**  
Tourism Authority

**Traditions, Richness, & Colour!**  
 The sheer magnetism of Maltese culture is apparent everywhere you go, making it almost impossible not to be drawn in.  
<https://www.visitmalta.com/>

**VisitMalta**

**VisitMalta**

## Maltese Historical Association of Australia

This month's MHA presentation will be held on Zoom on **Tuesday 17 October 2023**, starting at 7.20pm (Australian Eastern Daylight Time).

Our presenter this month will be **Dr Anna Borg Cardona**, who has a lifelong passion for music and art. She holds a B.A. in Humanities, English, French and Mediterranean History, diplomas in piano performance and music teaching, and a PhD in Music. She is the author of three books and several articles about music in Maltese and foreign journals. Her topics of interest are: Maltese musical instruments, music and traditional song and dance, and musical culture in seventeenth century Malta. The link below is to join the meeting. Further details are noted on the attached flyer. Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84052454295?pwd=9Tbp60k8xXYL7DWGTDlvPAPcyDLrPx.1>

Meeting ID: 840 5245 4295

Passcode: 989501 We look forward to seeing you there. Mario Bonnici Treasurer





**VIRTUAL YOUTH FORUM**

The Virtual Youth Forum for Maltese Living Abroad is back for the second time.

Join us on Friday 27 October at 6pm CET for a unique opportunity for Maltese youths both in Malta and beyond to connect and discuss issues of common concern to youth all across the globe.

Save the date! More information and registration details to come in the coming weeks

*Save the Date*

DATE: 27 OCTOBER 2023  
TIME: 6PM ONWARDS





	<b>Melbourne, Australia *</b> AEDT (UTC +11)	Sat, 28 Oct 2023	3:00 am
	<b>Adelaide, Australia *</b> ACDT (UTC +10:30) 0:30 hour(s) behind	Sat, 28 Oct 2023	2:30 am
	<b>Vancouver, Canada *</b> PDT (UTC -7) 18 hour(s) behind	Fri, 27 Oct 2023	9:00 am
	<b>Toronto, Canada *</b> EDT (UTC -4) 15 hour(s) behind	Fri, 27 Oct 2023	12:00 noon
	<b>San Francisco, CA, USA *</b> PDT (UTC -7) 18 hour(s) behind	Fri, 27 Oct 2023	9:00 am
	<b>Washington DC, DC, USA *</b> EDT (UTC -4) 15 hour(s) behind	Fri, 27 Oct 2023	12:00 noon
	<b>Valletta, Malta *</b> CEST (UTC +2) 9 hour(s) behind	Fri, 27 Oct 2023	6:00 pm
	<b>London, United Kingdom *</b> BST (UTC +1) 10 hour(s) behind	Fri, 27 Oct 2023	5:00 pm

Submitted by Edwidge Borg from Victoria, Delegate of the Council of Maltese Living Abroad





The cathedral was commissioned by the Dowager Queen Adelaide during a visit to Malta in the 19th century when she found out that there was no place of Anglican worship on the island. Prior to this Anglican services were held in a room in the Grand Master's Palace. Built on the site of the Auberge d'Allemagne (the conventual home of the German Knights Hospitaller), the cathedral was designed by William Scamp and was built between 1839 and 1844. Queen Adelaide laid the foundation stone on 20 March 1839 and her banner hangs above the choir stalls. The original plans were designed by Richard Lankasheer; however, the building proved unstable, thus work had to resume on plans by Scamp in 1841. Scamp's designs located the altar on the west side of the church, but the Bishop of Gibraltar had a more conservative view, thus the designs were altered and Scamp designed an apse inside the great doors to hold the sanctuary on the east side.

War period and repairs[edit] During World War II the cathedral received minor damage and the roof collapsed, but most of the structure remained intact. During restoration works the original designs by Scamp started to take shape. A quire and rood screen were built on the west side of the cathedral. A pulpit was also incorporated with the screen dedicated to Sir Winston Churchill. The new chancery was dedicated by the Archbishop of Canterbury Geoffrey Fisher on 2 December 1949 in the presence of Princess Elizabeth. The east side of the cathedral was then transformed into a baptistery. The under-croft, constructed from remains of the basement of the Auberge d'Allemagne was never used. In 1928, the

## The Pro-Cathedral of Saint Paul

Bishop of Gibraltar Nugent Hicks opened the under-croft as the new parish hall. In 1938, it was transformed into a gas-proof air raid shelter, which in the early days of the conflict was used by the chaplain, his wife and scores of Maltese citizens. In 2005 it was restored and upgraded.<sup>[4]</sup>

Interior[edit] A Valletta landmark due to its spire rising over 60 metres, it is constructed with Maltese limestone in a neo-classical style.<sup>[1]</sup> The cathedral has columns with capitals of the Corinthian order while the capitals of the six columns of the portico are of the Ionic order.<sup>[5]</sup> The internal dimensions of the building are 33.5 metres x 20.4 metres. Behind the main altar is a painting titled *Ecce Homo*, the work of A E Chalon, donated in 2014.

Steeple[edit] Landmark tower The cathedral's steeple is a landmark on its own being notably visible in the Marsamxett Harbour. The church building is listed on the National Inventory of the Cultural Property of the Maltese Islands.<sup>[7]</sup> On 9 February 2017, the church council launched a project to restore the building and steeple with the aim of raising €3,000,000 to cover the costs.

Above the entrance to the cathedral is located the organ that originated in Chester Cathedral in northwest England. The one-manual instrument was built in 1684 by Bernard Smith. There is a long-held tradition that it was played by George Frederick Handel when on his way to Dublin for the first public performance of the "Messiah". It is believed he carried out some final rehearsals to fine-tune some of the choruses at Chester Cathedral in 1742 when the organ was housed in the cathedral. However, it has been changed and rebuilt several times, most recently by Kenneth Jones of Dublin.

The oak panels around the high altar are a memorial to the Allied units which took part in the defence of Malta between 1940 and 1943. Twelve flags hang in the aisles representing amongst others the Royal Air Force, the British Merchant Navy, and the Royal Navy.

## Thousands of stories of notable Maltese

**Researcher has compiled the biographies of over 4,800 Maltese personalities and Times of Malta is about to start publishing them online**

Jessica Arena

Michael Schiavone has amassed biographies for 30 years, among them those of the poet Dwardu Cachia and the composer Carmelo Pace.

To Michael Schiavone, a veteran journalist and a lifelong record keeper, mapping out the biographies of notable people is not just a matter of personal satisfaction but something of a public service. To date, Schiavone has compiled the biographies of over 4,800 Maltese personalities.

And from July 1, the biographies of some of these personalities will be published online for the first time by Times of Malta on the date that corresponds with the subject's birthdays.

*Without realising it, I had amassed this collection of information about distinct personalities-* Michael Schiavone. Amassing a sprawling library of biographies over the span of 30 years, Schiavone said his passion for collecting them started in his youth when his father used to bring home copies of publications from the Department of Information.

"What caught my eye was a series of biographies written by Robert Mifsud Bonnici. I waited for them eagerly and collected all of them, eventually getting them bound as a book," he said.

"It interested me greatly, and from then on, I just started doing it myself."

He started keeping newspapers and collecting important information about people in the news, a task facilitated when he began working as a reporter.

"Without realising it, I had amassed this collection of information about distinct personalities and since then I have always done my best to keep abreast of current events and new people who happen to make a name for themselves," he said.

Born in Senglea in 1946, Schiavone was educated at St Augustine College and the Archbishop's Seminary, later graduating from the University of Malta in 1990. In 1968, he joined Allied Newspapers as a features journalist but just over a year later went to work for the National Press, today known as the PN's Media Link Communications. He served as editor of *in-Nazzjon* between 1970 and 1980 and editor of *il-Mument* between 1980 and 1989. Following that, he was appointed director of the PN's publishing house *Pubblikazzjonijiet Indipendenza*, during which time he oversaw the production of 325 publications.

These include 82 volumes of *Il-Kullana Kulturali*, 12 volumes of *Kullana Għat-Tfal* and 18 volumes of *Teżori fil-Knejjes Maltin*, a religious-cultural series by Toni Terribile.

Schiavone is the author of *Maltese Biographies of the Twentieth Century*, co-edited with Louis J. Scerri in 1997, as well as the *Dictionary of Maltese Biographies*, which was published in two volumes in 2009.

He has also authored books about history, statistics and the results of Maltese general elections since 1849. Schiavone said he gains satisfaction from researching people who lived long ago and about whom very little is documented, establishing their history primarily through parish records.

**Duty to tell the story of the Maltese**

He even managed to put together a biography of Antonio Azzopardi, better known as Ninu Xkora, a man who in 1907 was sentenced to death for the murder of 30-year-old Ġużeppi Camenzuli, who was romantically involved with Azzopardi's 15-year-old daughter Stella.

Local legends allege that Azzopardi's ghost still haunts the prison cemetery to this day.

*New generations must keep remembering their past-* Michael Schiavone

"They say that before he died he became a reformed man and allegedly blesses those who pray for the repose of his soul, but I can't really confirm that last bit," Schiavone says with a chuckle.

Apart from the personal satisfaction he gains from diving deep into research at some of Malta's greatest libraries, Schiavone feels a sense of duty to tell the story of Maltese people about whom very little is known.

"New generations must keep remembering their past, from the average man in the street to the notable personalities of today," he said. "It's important not only to document Maltese citizens who have made a name for themselves but to also share that information."





## Discover Valletta's flavours this October

While embracing the beautiful autumn season here in Valletta, get ready for a culinary extravaganza like no other! The Valletta Local Food Festival is back for its 2023 edition, and will be happening from the 5<sup>th</sup> until the 7<sup>th</sup> October with the last evening coinciding with Notte Bianca. The Valletta Local Food Festival promises to be an unforgettable celebration of Maltese flavours, traditions, and artistic expression.



### Valletta Local Food Festival: A Culinary Delight

Join us for the Valletta Local Food Festival 2023, where tradition meets innovation, at the [Valletta Design Cluster](#), from 6pm - 11pm. Discover the unique and mouth-watering dishes that define Maltese cuisine, from traditional ravioli and local pies to pork rotisserie and delectable pastries including honey rings, cannoli and imqaret.

Renowned guest chef Renato Briffa will offer live cooking demonstrations, providing valuable insights into the preparation of signature dishes like kwareżimal, Vallettani, Biskuttini tar-Raħal, and other sweet pastries, all crafted with fresh, locally sourced ingredients. The Festival will also have a selection of Maltese craft beer, artisanal cheeses, olive oils, nougats, chutneys and more in the Valletta Design Cluster's Courtyard, Roof Garden and the nearby St Charles Street. This event is organised by the Valletta Cultural Agency (VCA) and supported by [Visit Malta](#). For more information visit the VCA [Facebook page](#).



## Simpożju Internazzjonali – Il-Presepju Bejn passat u future

**Kav Joe M Attard - Gozo**

Fil-Grand Hotel l-Imġarr Ghawdex, nhar is-Sibt 30 ta' Settembru 2023, l-'Ghimmanuel, l-Ghaqda Presepisti

Għanjisielem' organizzat b'suċċess dan s-Simpożju fl-okkażjoni tal-10 Anniversarju mit-twaqqif ta' din l-Ghaqda tal-Presepju f'Għanjisielem, il-post fejn ta' kull sena tiġi organizzata l-ikbar Rapreżentazzjoni tat-twelid ta' ħajja f'pajjiżna. Bla dubju dan is-Seminar kellu l-iskop li jiġi diskussi temi fosthom ir-Rwol tal-Ghaqdiet Volontarji biex tixtered l-Imħabba lejn il-Presepju. Jien b'xorti ħażina ma stajt nattendu billi kont id-dar ma niflaħx imma qed nirraporta x'għara minn dak li qalli ibni biex b'hekk okkażjoni unika bħal din ma tibqax sejra bla ma tkun imfakkra. Dan is-Simpożju kien qed jitratta wkoll bil-partecipazzjoni ta' kelliema internazzjonali l-Presepju fi żmienna u l-futur tiegħu. Dan huwa mument ta' riflessjoni importanti hekk kif din is-sena qed jiġi ċċelebrat it-800 sena minn meta San Frangisk fi Greccio, kien iċċelebra l-Ewkaristija fuq il-maxtura hdejn baqra u ħmara, u fejn deher Kristu fl-umanità kollha tiegħu. Wara dan il-miraklu kienu hafna dawk li ddecidew li jergħu jiċċelebraw dak li għara fil-Grotta ta' Betlehem permezz ta' raffigurazzjoni f'forma ta' Presepju. Għalhekk dan is-Simpożju Internazzjonali għandu jservi bħala punt ta' Riflessjoni u jwassalna biex naghmlu ċerti domandi: Il-Presepju huwa biss forma

artistika jew huwa wkoll mezz biex iwassalna nagħrfu ċ-ċentralita' ta' Kristu f'ħajjtna? X'qed jirraffigura l-Presepu? Nafu sew il-graġja fuq dak li qed naħdmu fuqu.

Il-Presepu mhux xi haġa statika; u għalhekk gie diskuss wkoll l-Evoluzzjoni tal-Presepu. Hekk kif il-Presepu sar parti integrali mill-Kultura tagħna, kellu jiġi diskuss ukoll l-patt li għandu jew jista' jkollu fuq it-Turiżmu Reliġjuż f'pajjiżna. X'inhu l-kontribut tiegħu? Jista' l-Presepu jkun parti minn proposta iktar wiesa ta' Turiżmu Kulturali għal gżira Għawdxija?

U allura s-Simpożju fetaħ b'kelmtejn ta' Introduzzjoni mill-artist u Presepista magħruf Paul Stellini, li huwa l-President 'Ghimmanu-el Għaqda Hbieb Presepisti Ghajnsielem' li fil-fehma tiegħi haqqu kliem ta' tifhir għal din l-inizjattiva li ha u li kienet tindkludi għadd ta kelliema fosthom xi Taljani. In-nofs ta' nhar imbagħad kompli bl-intervent tal-Ministru għal Għawdex Clint Camilleri li tkellem dwar il-Viżjoni tal-Gvern rigward l-Għaqdiet Volontarji bi sfond Reliġjuż u wara sar diskors ferm interessanti mill-istoriku presepista Taljan, Pier Luigi Bombelli dwar il-'Lectio Magistralis', l-Istorja tal-Presepu minn San Frangisk sallum. Mistieden Taljan iehor kien l-Imghallem Claudio Mattei li huwa l-President tal-Għaqda AIAP Bergamo, li kelle lill-migemgħa preżenti dwar L-Evoluzzjoni tal-Presepu. L-Arċipriet tar-raħal il-Kan Dun Frankie Bajada jagħti ħafna support lil din l-Għaqda u allura ma setax ma jkunx wiehed mill-kelliema li tkellem dwar 'Xi tisser Għaqd presepistika fir-raħal!' l-Arċipriet tal-Kaidral t'Għawdex Mons Joseph Sultana għażel li jtkellem dwar l-'Art Imqaddsa fi żmien Gesu' filwaqt li 'Il-Presepu Malti Wirt Tangibbli u Intangibbli' kien is-suġġett li għażel li jtkellem dwaru John Xuereb li fil-Ministeru t'Għawdex jikkupa l-kariga ta' Direttur Wirt Kulturali. Mill-Assoċjazzjoni Għawdxija tat-Turiżmu Joe Muscat ha l-ispunt dwar it-'Turiżmu Reliġjuż f'Għawdex' waqt li l-Kap Esekuttiv tal-Kamra tan-Negożju għal Għawdex Daniel Borġ tkellem dwar il-Wirt Kulturali fil-Gżira Għawdxija. L-Ex Arċipriet tax-Xagħra hađna lura fis-snin u għamel aċċenn għal Presepu fi tfulitna waqt li s-Sindku tar-Raħal Kevin Cauchi reġa' fakkar kif raħlu jixgħel u jfur bl-attività fi żmien il-Milied.

Dan is-Simpożju hekk importanti gie fi tmiemu bil-Kelma tal-Isqof Djoċesan Mons Anton Tewma, magħruf għall-imħabba kbira li sa minn dejjem kellu għal Presepu u li għalaq dan il-jum b'kelmtejn dwar 'Il-Presepu mill-att Reliġjuż.

Imiss issa s-Seminar Annwali tal-Presepu li tagħmel regolarment l-Għaqda Hbieb tal-Presepu Għawdex Malta 1985 u li dis-sena se jsir Malta fi ftit tal-granet oħra ġewwa l-Għargħur.



## THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE (3).

**Our correspondent Victor V. Vella M.A. (NSW)**

In the early sixties, remaining contention was, what type of constitution could both parties attain. from the U.K.

Independence was in the air. Division raised its ugly head again and the 'old ' question of the power of the Church again took centre. stage. While the Nationalists in power had catching the mood of the 'religio et patria ' on their banner, Mintoff was after curbing the influence of the ecclesiastic authorities. This situation brought about turmoil and divisions, which luckily enough did not become violent. It took the form of protests and crowds at meetings. This gave a boost to the lay Catholic organisations on the Island such as Catholic Action, Young Christian Workers and the Legion of Mary.

colonies as they where not of much use to the mother country. With the loss of India and Pakistan and the faster air travel Malta naval importance faded away. with the failure of Labour's dream proposal of integrating the Islands disappeared from the political scene. Independence took centre stage of Maltese politics. The Labour party strangely enough did the summersault and from Integration came the policy of the complete cutting of the umbilical cord from the mother country. The only

When the Constitution was finalised it did not incorporate any of Mintoff's demands which amounted in fact to annulment of the much disputed privileges. of the Maltese Church ..

In 1963 an Independence conference was held in London. A constitution was drafted and presented to the people and a referendum was held. The



electorate was asked to approve the new Constitution Malta would get at independence. The results of the referendum presented another dilemma. Of those voting 51.5 per cent voted for the new constitution.; 43 per cent were against. However, the turn-out for the referendum was low: only 74 per cent of the electorate. If the 'no' votes were added to the spoiled votes and non-voters, it would show that 60 per cent. of the electorate had not indicated a support for independence under the new constitution. (It would be appropriate to add that voting was not compulsory in Malta. at that time ).

The Constitution included anti-discriminatory clauses, which ensures equal treatment of citizens of other religions and guaranteed the exercise of human rights as formulated by the U.N. The celebrations were marred by abortive Labour protests but the transition to independence was very smooth and the first year hardly brought any noticeable changes in the day-to-day life of the people. The government of Borg Olivier steered very well the political line between the anti-clerical and the clerical.

At the independence ceremony on the 21st September 1964 the Duke of Edinburgh transferred the constitutional instruments and the Islands became an independent state. On the occasion the Prime Minister Borg Olivier chose to speak in Maltese the language of the Islanders. Ties with Britain and the Commonwealth were not severed. The queen was still head of state. On Independence Day, Malta entered into an agreement, on mutual defence and assistance with the U.K. Under the agreement Britain would provide Malta the sum of 50 million pounds sterling in return for the use of military facilities. The British Govt. also agreed to provide monies for the restoration of historic buildings used by the British Forces.

The fight for political independence was over: economic independence and survival became the urgent issues though it was virtually ignored during the whole fight for independence. The main source of employment, was the Naval Dockyard.... whose life was now in the balance. The other source was the Government. This raised the question of how many people who may find themselves unemployed could be absorbed by the government departments and from where the money will come. Tourism offered a solution especially from the U.K. which was boosted in 1966 when Britain imposed a 50 pound limit on holiday spending, outside the sterling area, making resorts like Malta and Gibraltar more attractive to holiday makers.

Before and after independence the demographic problem was serious and urgent. The population of Malta at that time was 319,000, with 2,721 persons per square mile, with the Island of Malta itself, considered to be one of the most thickly populated island of the globe. One of the solutions to ease the situation was emigration. It was basically planned and expected that one in every 40 Maltese would have to emigrate soon. Some 80,000 emigrants had already left the Island for Australia, Canada, the UK, and other parts of the world between 1948 and 1962. It was envisaged that 7,500 Maltese would have to emigrate every year.

The story of independence is one of the most memorable stories of the history of Malta. After long years of colonialism under so many different regimes, starting with the Romans and ending with the French before the British, the history of Malta could be taken as a long 'struggle' for independence. That is not quite correct: yes there was a struggle but

the practical struggle was more against despotic rule especially the one against the French which ended up by leaders of Malta asking for the protection of Malta and be rid of the French and of the long protection by the Knights. During its history one can well notice the slow political development of an Island coming up to breath independence and establish itself as a state, to take its place in the United Nations. The outstanding feature of its domination by foreign powers, is that the Maltese were able to provide leaders and political parties not to mention the people in general who were ready to take part in the road to independence and then able to conduct themselves in a way to make independence possible and workable for the benefit of Malta.

*Naqbel miegħek li jkollna din it-tentazzjoni li nieħdu l-affarijiet "for granted". Irid ikun is-sens ta' apprezzament tagħna biex naslu nifhmu kemm xogħol u saġrificcju jeħtieġ li nagħmlu biex jinkisbu l-għanijiet tagħna. Xi minn daqqiet, il-memorja kollettiva tan-nazzjon twassalna biex nagħrfu dan kollu. Jien nishaq li dak li għandna illum hu frott ta' ħidma biżla u mimlija dehen u taġlim ta' dawk li ġew qabilna. Għalhekk, nagħmlu tajjeb jekk ilkoll nibnu fuq it-tajjeb ta' missirijietna u ommijietna. Jekk nonqsu milli nagħmlu dan, inkunu qed niżbaljaw. L-Għerf jisfidana biex nagħmlu tant tajbin u sbieħ. Fl-istess waqt, jeħtieġ inkunu umli biżżejjed li nirrikonoxxu li fit-tajjeb tagħna hemm sehem importanti ta' dawk li ġew qabilna. Din hija ħolqa sabiħa li l-imghoddi nsibuh fil-preżent u dak li qed jiġri illum ser iħalli effett u jolqot il-gejjieni tagħna u ta' ħaddieħor. Insellimlek, Pierre Mallia*

# The mysterious and macabre execution of Lino Cauchi



Lino Cauchi's murder remains unsolved to this very day but 38 years later, his widow Anna and their son Paolo are still pursuing justice. Matthew Xuereb reports. A magisterial

inquiry into Lino Cauchi's murder was ordered three years after the...

*Lino Cauchi's murder remains unsolved to this very day but 38 years later, his widow Anna and their son Paolo are still pursuing justice. Matthew Xuereb reports.*

A magisterial inquiry into Lino Cauchi's murder was ordered three years after the accountant's disappearance, when a man who was about to wash his car in a secluded area of Buskett pulled up black bags containing human remains from a well.

The discovery was made on November 15, 1985, as political tensions in Malta were reaching their peak.

Tests in Malta, the UK and Australia established the body parts belonged to Cauchi, the man who had gone missing three years before. Inside the well, police also found a mallet usually used in the construction industry. Forensic experts had concluded that the 32-year-old had been killed by a violent blow to the back of his head by the same mallet found in the well because the crushed skull and the gaps found in it corresponded in size.

The skull was fractured in 28 places as a result of the blows. A saw was then used to dismember the body before it was dumped into the well. His family is now seeking compensation from the State for what they claim was a murder that was not properly investigated due to lack of will. At the time, the suspicion was that this was a political murder of a victim who knew too much.

According to investigative journalist and author Dione Borg, the murder of Cauchi in the 1980s and the recent murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia bear astounding similarities because they were both killed for knowing too much about the web of corruption they had around them.

Borg believes that Cauchi and Caruana Galizia were both eliminated by criminals who thought the two had trampled on their toes. Both murders along with those of Raymond Caruana, Karin Grech and Wilfred Cardona are five unsolved political murders, Borg says.

He believes that police inaction at the time of his disappearance was one of the main reasons the murder remains a mystery. "There's no doubt at all about this," he stresses.

*Property developers negotiated land deals and used their influence on the political class to secure development permits* Cauchi, 32, was considered to be one of the finest accountants in Malta at the time and worked for Diamantino-Manfré, a well-established accountancy firm, before branching out and opening his own accountancy firm.

Through his profession, he became professionally linked to some high-profile property developers, some of them with political connections to the late Labour minister Lorry Sant, who at the time was responsible for handing out building permits. There was no Planning Authority at the time and corruption was rife, despite the lack of hard evidence.

Borg says the property developers at the time negotiated land deals and then used their influence on the political class to secure development permits and turn into gold the land they would have bought for a pittance.

Most of the land in question were in zones considered to be green areas, where people thought they could not build.

## **.Feared for his life**

The victim's relatives, who insisted on not being named, say that before he disappeared, Cauchi was fearing for his life. The partner of the accountancy firm where he worked, Lino



Manfr , died in mysterious circumstances a few days after he was admitted to hospital for treatment for something which was not believed to be very serious. Relatives say that after Manfr 's death, Cauchi had upped the value of his life insurance because he feared for his life. On February 15, 1982, Cauchi left home to go to work bidding goodbye to his wife, at the time three months pregnant with their first – and only – son.

Borg says that Cauchi had gone home for lunch that day. With almost a sense of premonition, before he left home, he told his wife about the documents inside a briefcase he had at home and warned her not to give them to anyone. That day, he attended a meeting in Old Bakery Street, Valletta close to his office, but never returned home although his car was found parked outside his home.

The day after Cauchi's disappearance, a man claiming to be from the Inland Revenue Department turned up at his residence asking for some documents. Anna Cauchi obliged and

handed them over. Two days after his disappearance, the police found Cauchi's briefcase dumped in a field close to Chadwick Lakes. The briefcase was empty.

Cauchi was treated as a missing person. The police had picked up his wife, believing they could have had some trouble that led him to flee the country. According to sources, the police "dumped her into a filthy cell and wasn't properly questioned". Cauchi was never found until the body parts were discovered in a well in 1985.

Forensic expert Anthony Abela Medici, at the time head of the police lab, had told an investigative programme on Net TV conducted by Borg, that according to evidence he found, Cauchi may have been dismembered within 30 minutes of his death. Abela Medici said the fact that the brain was found intact shows that the body was dumped into the well – a cold spot – shortly after the killing.

## Confraternity of the Knights of St . Peter & St . Paul

Seat of the Confraternity: Melbourne, Victoria Australia.

Website: <http://www.knightsofstpeterandstpaul.com/>

Email: / Email: [grandmaster.knightssstpeterpaul@gmail.com](mailto:grandmaster.knightssstpeterpaul@gmail.com)

**Confraternity News Issue 130 – September, 2023**



### Grand Master's Message

Fraternal greetings one and all. I trust you are all well. The month of September was a quiet one, although work was still going on in Melbourne to organize our next fundraising luncheon in October, which is now sold out. In Malta, the Grand Chapter is working to collect goods from the main doors of the Basilica of St. Peter and St. Paul to give to the needy at Christmas time.

I encourage everyone to do the same to give something even small to a person in need at Christmas time. Giving something small to a person in need with a smile at Christmas time is a gift that is treasured. Keep up the faith of a knight: St. Paul said before his

death. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith". This is one of the better-known and mostquoted passages of the apostle Paul. These words written just before Paul's death are a powerful affirmation of his unyielding love and undying faith in Jesus and the gospel message (Galatians 1:4; 2:20; Philippians 1:21).

Keeping up the faith of a knight means that you are always a knight, and it is our duty to help others even if we are only one Member in a state or a country.

God bless you in St. Peter and St. Paul

Chevalier Peter Paul Portelli Grand Master





## After 150 years, Corradino's longest prison term surpassed

*Governor Sir Patrick Grant, who granted a pardon to John Naylor.*

Until recently, the longest term of an inmate in Maltese prisons since 1800 was that of John Naylor of the 88th Regiment of Foot, The Connought Rangers, who was imprisoned for 26 years and 360 days. On March 6, 1843, William Martin, a doctor and inspector general of the Royal Navy hospital, was killed when he was boarding a boat in Dockyard Creek. Martin had just left Sir John Lewis when a rifle shot penetrated his torso and tore his right lung and part of his intestine. Fatally wounded, he fell into the sea, and although he was brought to shore soon afterwards, he died about 40 minutes later.

The shot had been fired by Irish private Naylor, who was 30 at the time. Earlier that morning, during the routine inspection, Naylor was reported by a sergeant of the same regiment for insubordination.

The sergeant's reprimand had hurt Naylor's feelings and deeply disturbed him. Indeed he was also heard telling some soldiers he had been humiliated by the sergeant and that he wanted to kill him.

This strange behaviour continued in the barrack's mess, and when he left he carried a rifle with him and proceeded to the quay. When Naylor spotted Martin, the red mist descended and he shot him, but there was no doubt he intended to shoot the sergeant not the doctor.

When Naylor was arrested, he offered no resistance and he was later charged with wilful homicide. During his detention prior to the trial, the accused was examined by medical experts appointed by the prosecution who certified that the accused was responsible for the act.

However, during the trial on April 3, 1843, the defence counsel brought a medical expert who testified that Naylor was a psychopath. It was also said that Naylor did not know whom he had shot until his arrest. In his address to the jury, Sir Ignazio Gavino Bonavia, the presiding judge, reminded the jurors that they ought to know that a man is presumed to be sane, until the contrary be proved to the satisfaction of the court.

Naylor was found guilty with a six to one verdict (at that time the jury consisted of seven jurors) and he was sentenced to life imprisonment and chained with leg irons. He was released and allowed to return to Ireland by a warrant of the Governor of Malta, Sir Patrick Grant, on March 1, 1870, after spending 27 years in Valletta Great Prison and later at Corradino prison.

*The offender, who already committed four murders, is a serious menace to Maltese society and this surely necessitates that he be given a substantially long jail term- Mr Justice Joseph Galea Debono*

Naylor's term in prison was lately surpassed by that of Mohsen Mosbah Bin Brahim and Ben Ali Wahid Ben Hassine, two Tunisians who have been imprisoned since February 20, 1988. After about four years in preventive custody the two Tunisians were each given a life sentence after pleading guilty to killing four men, namely, Peter James Rhead at Ta' Xbiex on February 12, 1988, George Cucciardi on the same night, Alfred Darmanin and Frenchman Levarlet Guillaume Andr  Michel. The last two murders were committed on February 18, 1988.

On March 29, 2000, Mosbah escaped from prison and after stealing a car in Paola he broke into an apartment. On May 22, 2006, he pleaded guilty in the criminal court to the crime, to the possession of a weapon and resisting arrest when he was being taken in police custody.

Originally, Mosbah had also been charged with escaping from prison but this charge was dropped after a Constitutional Court ruled that his fundamental rights had been breached because he had already been tried and punished for the escape by the prison's disciplinary board.

Before passing a six-year prison sentence, Mr Justice Joseph Galea Debono said: "This is a manifest case where the offender, who already committed four murders apart from other serious offences, and



who already escaped from jail three times, is a serious menace to Maltese society and this surely necessitates that he be given a substantially long jail term.”

Mosbah is not the only prisoner with a life sentence and a concurrent prison sentence. In 2010, Silvio Mangion was jailed for life after a jury found him guilty of the murder of Rożina Zammit, 54, who was stabbed in her home in Safi in 1984.

Prior to this sentence, Mangion had received a 21-year imprisonment for the murder of Frenċ Cassar and the attempted murder of the victim's sister on August 18, 1998. Moreover, Mangion has been accused of stabbing to death Maria Stella Magrin at her home in Cospicua on October 30, 1986, and the case is still sub-judice.

Andy Calleja is another inmate sentenced to life imprisonment with a concurrent prison sentence. In June 2004 Calleja was jailed for life after admitting in the Criminal Court to murdering Police Constable Roger Debattista. In October 2014 and November 2014, Calleja received further prison sentences after admitting in court to being in possession of drugs.

In 1971, Parliament voted to abolish the death penalty from the Criminal Code. Before the promulgation of the Criminal Code in 1854, the death penalty or life sentences were also given for those found guilty of grievous bodily harm or theft aggravated by violence.

After the 1971 Criminal Code amendments, imprisonment for life became the maximum sentence that can be imposed by the Criminal Court on anyone who, after a trial, is found guilty of wilful homicide irrespective of the number of victims mentioned in the bill of indictment.

In some countries two or more consecutive life sentences may be given in one trial for multiple murders. The 1971 reform also included the court's recommendation on passing the sentence of imprisonment for life. Section 493 of the Criminal Code states: “After sentencing any person to imprisonment for life, the court may recommend in writing to the Prime Minister within 24 hours the minimum period which in its view should elapse before the prisoner is released from prison. Such recommendation shall be made available to the person sentenced, and a copy thereof shall be kept by the registrar.”

Moreover, “it shall be lawful for any judge, who sat in a trial, to recommend to the President of Malta, for pardon or mitigation of punishment any person sentenced by making for this purpose a report in writing stating the reason for such recommendation”.

*Since the abolition of the death penalty, 18 men and one woman were given a life sentence after found guilty by a jury or pleaded guilty to wilful homicide*



Furthermore, “where at any time before the constitution of the jury the accused declares himself guilty and for the fact admitted by the accused there is established the punishment of imprisonment for life, the court may, instead of the said punishment, impose the punishment of imprisonment for a term from 18 to 30 years. It shall be lawful for the court to award a sentence of imprisonment for a term of not less than 12 years in lieu of the punishment of imprisonment for life if, in establishing a fact involving the latter punishment, the jury shall not have been unanimous”.

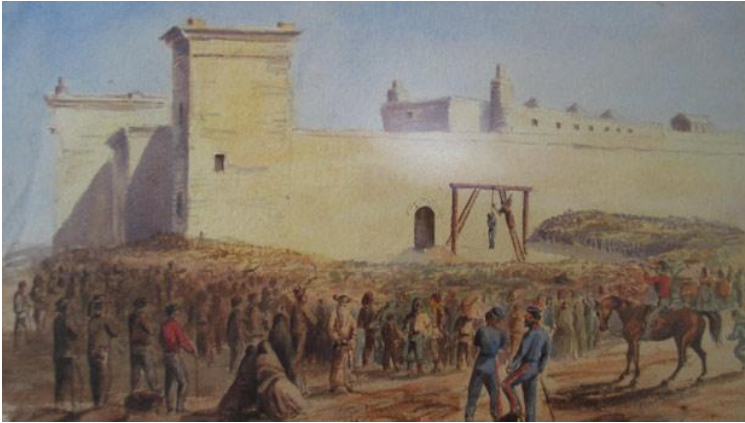
#### *One of the divisions of the prison*

Since the abolition of the death penalty, 18 men and one woman were given a life sentence after found guilty by a jury or pleaded guilty to wilful homicide. However, the Court of Criminal Appeal has changed the life sentence in three cases.

Between 1800 and 1837 all those found guilty of wilful homicide were sentenced to death. However, some death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment. The first prisoners who benefited from this prerogative of mercy were Salvu Grech and Ġanni Magri in

1807.

The previous year, Grech and Magri, together with Giovanni Scerri and Ġużeppi Camilleri, murdered a priest during a robbery in Naxxar. Scerri and Camilleri were executed and Grech and Magri were told



they had been reprieved a few minutes before their scheduled execution. Since 1800, 25 convicts had their death sentence commuted to life imprisonment.

In May 1838 Angelo Farrugia was given a life sentence after he was found guilty of killing Joseph Barbara of Żejtun. Farrugia was released in 1858 after a special amnesty; however, he failed to reform himself. In June 1860 Farrugia was hanged for killing a police constable.

*The execution of Anglu Farrugia in 1860*

*outside Corradino Prison, a watercolour painting by Edward Hovell Thurlow. Photo courtesy of Dr Albert Ganado*

The youngest person ever sentenced to life in prison since 1800 was Toni Cutajar. In 1838, at the age of 12, he was caught stealing from the sanctuary of the Immaculate Conception in Qala. When he was released after nine years he went to Turkey, and in 1848 he was extradited to Malta for killing Paolo Stella, a Maltese emigrant. Cutajar received another life sentence for this crime; however, in August 1867 he escaped from Corradino prison and managed to leave the island. To date Cutajar is the only Maltese convict who received two separate life sentences.

Until three decades ago, thanks to the 17 amnesties granted between 1814 and 1987, together with remissions and the several pardons, prisoners with life sentences have obtained early release after a reduction of their prison sentence. The amnesty given after the constitutional changes in January 1987 not only gave a month deduction from each year of the prison sentence, but those imprisoned for life had their sentence reduced to 20 years.

Certain pardons by governors of Malta were more gracious than the amnesties. In June 1937, Governor Sir Charles Bonham-Carter commuted Karmena Abdilla's death penalty to life imprisonment, and four years later she was paroled and released from Corradino prison.

***A prison cell in the 1850 building.***



In March 1937, the woman was found guilty of inciting her 15-year-old son to kill Ġużeppi Debattista in Hamrun. The boy fired at Debattista at point-blank range, and although the bullet was removed during an operation, Debattista died the following day.

The number of prisoners serving life sentence in Corradino prison who died in prison, whether actually in prison or in hospital, is seven. Frangisku Farrugia, aged 37, sentenced for life in 1894, died in 1896 due to nervous exhaustion. His prison term was the shortest one since 1850.

The longest term of such imprisonment was that of Joseph Harrington, who died on September 2, 2014. Harrington was imprisoned for life after he was found guilty of murdering Sylvia King in April 1993. He had been held in preventive custody and later imprisoned at Corradino for 21 years and four months.

Harrington's prison term surpassed that of Salvu Vella, who died while being treated in Mount Carmel Hospital in October 1911, aged

65. Vella was being treated for his psychiatric problems. In 1894 he was sentenced for life for a murder he committed in August 1891.





## A Bunch of Over-Ambitious Slaves Had Tried to Poison Half the Country on L-Imnarja Day

[Chiara Micallef](#)

Maltese people are proud of their island's history, and there's a very good reason for that. We're surrounded by relics from across the millennia, with imposing structures and impressive stories. But even in a country which relishes in passing down these narratives from generation to generation, there are some which still manage to go largely unnoticed.

In the 18th Century, when the Knights of St. John were still in vogue on our island, someone was annoyed at them, and by someone we mean a bunch of local slaves. The Order had a thing for making people uncomfortable — it seemed to be their number one plan on their daily agenda - however this revolt did not really stem from the Order's hobby of stepping on everybody's toes flamboyantly.

Back in 1738, a Muslim ship called the Lupa was carrying Maltese, Georgian and Hungarian slaves across the Mediterranean. These slaves decided that they needed a career change.

They took over the ship, killed a bunch of people and took 150 of them as prisoners. The slaves sailed the captured ship to Malta. One of the prisoners who took was none other than the Pasha of Rhodes — Mustafa.

When they got here, the French themselves were alerted because of the Franco-Ottoman alliance. Upon freeing Mustafa, the French were surprised to find out that he had allegedly converted to Christianity and was actually planning on marrying a Maltese woman and staying here.

Spoiler alert: he only said that because he was plotting revenge.

In June 1749, the Grand Master organised a banquet to celebrate the traditional *Imnarja* in Valletta for everyone to attend, so Mustafa and some other slaves planned to poison all the food present at the banquet and also in all the Auberges and palaces around the island.

From there, some of the slaves would assassinate Grand Master Pinto da Fonseca, some other slaves would overpower the guards, and then they'd attack the prison from where they would free all the other Muslim slaves, attack and take over St. Elmo, take all the weapons from the armouries and send for help from Tunis, Algiers and Tripoli to invade Malta. As bombastically inflated plans go, this one was bound to fail hard. A couple of weeks before *L-Imnarja*, three of the slaves met in a coffee shop to talk about this plot. Of course, the shop owner overheard them and reported them.

Now we're not saying we would've wanted half the country to be poisoned, but we're genuinely disappointed that these guys would be so stupid as to *discuss their mass assassination plans in a coffee shop*.

They were arrested, and of course seeing as this was the 18th century, tortured. Eight of the slaves had their foreheads branded with a cool letter R and sent to work in the galleys, 38 others were baptised *and* executed. 125 were hanged in the Palace Square in Valletta, and Mustafa was sent back to Rhodes in one of Malta's very first examples of "*go back to your country*". So, thanks to Mustafa, laws restricting slaves became harsher.

They couldn't do anything except for, well, slaving — they could no longer sell their trade on the streets, had a curfew, and could not gather in crowds. So, the lesson here is to not be bombastically short-sighted when it comes to planning revenge. And to never, ever, ever try to take over St. Elmo.

## ANTHONY MICALLEF

### Interactive Careers

2 September 2021

Meet Anthony Micallef, Performance Manager at Interactive. He's always there to motivate the sales team and enhance their performance to get the best results possible. But Anthony is not only a coach at Interactive. Outside of work, he's coaching another team; the Malta Rugby League. We sat down with him for 3 quick fire questions.

What is your experience as Rugby League coach?  
"Growing up in Australia where Rugby League is very popular, we were absolutely immersed in the sport. I started coaching from junior-level as a 21-year-old and 5 years later I received an offer to relocate to Malta to coach the Maltese national team."

What skills have you learnt from Rugby League that bring into the workplace environment?

"Many team sports teach skills that are transferable to careers in our professional working lives. Amongst others, Rugby League



specifically - helps to teach teamwork, interpersonal skills, discipline, adaptability, enjoyment and sportsmanship."

How will you help the team succeed?

"After a 6-year absence away from the sport where I got involved as a match official which has seen me officiate around Europe, I was invited to assist the Maltese national team with its preparation and delivery of commitments at this year's European Championship."

"Despite having a predominantly Maltese based squad, together with our pro players from the overseas leagues, I expect us to be able to turn some heads in Europe again this October, and it's just amazing to be charged with such a mission."

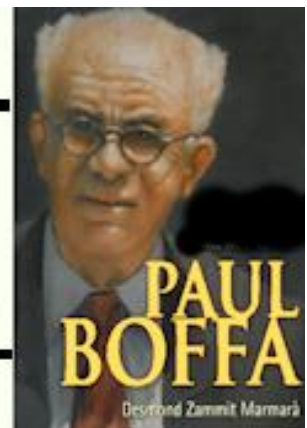
## Sir Paul Boffa

PRIME MINISTER OF MALTA  
(1947 - 1950)

Born in Vittoriosa on the 30 June 1890, Paul Boffa was educated at the Lyceum and at the University of Malta from where he graduated as a Medical Doctor in 1912. During World War I he served with the Royal Medical Corps in Malta, Salonika and on hospital ships. After the war he set up in private practice in Paola.

Paul Boffa entered politics when Malta was granted self government in 1921 and joined the Labour Party in 1923. He was returned to Parliament under the Amery-Milner Constitution in 1924, 1927 and 1932. He was elected Leader of the Labour Party in 1927 and immediately began to instil in the workers the need of rightfully equal representation in government in order to have a say in their own affairs. He was

MALTA'S FIRST  
LABOUR  
PRIME MINISTER



in coalition with Lord Strickland's party in government (1927-32). In 1932 Paul Boffa was the only Labour Party candidate elected to the Legislative Assembly until it was dissolved in 1933. He was nominated as a member of the Executive Council from 1936-1939.

During World War II Paul Boffa served with distinction as district Commissioner and ARP Medical Officer in the Cottonera, Paola, Tarxien and Luqa areas. He was awarded the O.B.E. in 1941.

In the 1945 elections, Dr Boffa was again elected in the Labour Party's interests. Boffa reached the



acme of his political career in November 1947 when, he became the first Labour Prime Minister leading a majority government of 24 Labour members. In 1949, following the Labour Party's ultimatum to Britain concerning financial help, the Labour Party split up but Dr. Boffa continued as Prime Minister and later founded and led the Malta Workers' Party (MWP). The MWP lost the 1950 Elections.

Boffa was re-elected in 1951 and in 1953 and joined a coalition government with the PN led by George Borg Olivier, assuming the portfolio of Minister of Health and Social Services. The MWP did not contest the 1955 elections and in 1955 he resigned for health reasons. He retained an interest in politics and was nominated Honorary President of the Christian Workers' Party (CWP).

Boffa was created a Knight Bachelor in the 1956 New Year's Honours List in recognition of distinguished public services. He was also awarded the 1914-18 Star, the General Service Medal, the Victory Medal, the Coronation Medal and the Defence Medal.

Boffa was instrumental in obtaining recognition for the Maltese Language in the law courts, and the introduction of compulsory primary education and old-age pensions.

In 1921, he married Genoveffa Cecy and had two sons and two daughters. He died at his residence in Paola and is buried at the All Souls Cemetery in Tarxien.



## St Paul Choral Society marks 25th anniversary with Rome and Vatican tour

Choir presented their varied repertoire in five concerts

Anna Borg Cardona

Choir members performing at the church of San Paolo Entro le Mura in Rome.

The St Paul Choral Society (SPCS) this year marked its 25th anniversary with a tour to Rome and the Vatican between September 6 and 12. This was the sixth tour to be organised by the choir under the artistic direction of Hugo Agius Muscat, following tours to the UK, Austria,

France, Spain, Germany and Luxembourg, where it performed in prestigious cathedrals and churches.

The performances in Rome were held in five churches, with each event featuring very varied styles. Two of the concerts included solo pieces

played by choir organist Elisabeth Conrad and by Agius Muscat.

The choir now boasts a wide repertoire of music and this was amply manifested in the five concerts.

The first performance was held on September 7 at the 19th-century Salesian *Basilica del Sacro Cuore di Gesù*. The programme ranged from William Byrd to Louis Vierne, Jehan Alain and Sergei Rachmaninov.

A composition titled *Nativitas Tua* by Agius Muscat, which was aptly written for the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, and other works by Maltese composers, were also performed.

The following morning, on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, the SPCS animated the Vespertine Mass at St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. Mass was celebrated by Cardinal Mario Grech together with Mgr Francis Bonnici. Agius Muscat's *Nativitas Tua* was sung during the offertory.

The third event on September 9 was held at the church of *San Paolo Entro le Mura*, an episcopal

church on Via Nazionale. This concert included predominantly British compositions by Benjamin Britten, Edward Elgar and John Rutter, among others, as well as the *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* from Joseph Vella's *English Mass*. Three organ solos were performed by Agius Muscat and Conrad.

September 10 started off with mass animated by the SPCS at the basilica of *Santa Sabina all'Aventino*, where the choir sang Vella's *English Mass*, Bach, Palestrina, Elgar and Mozart, as well as a contemporary *Anima Christi* by Marco Frisina, and other liturgical pieces.

The final performance was held on the same day at the basilica of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere. The choir was accompanied by Conrad at the piano, while Cecilia Agius Muscat directed two of the pieces. Handel's *Hallelujah* chorus brought this performance and the whole tour to an end.

Friends of the choir are invited to a thanksgiving mass being held as part of the choir's 25th anniversary celebrations at St John's Co-Cathedral, in Valletta, on October 28, 2023 at 7pm.

## Opinion



As you say 'we do take things for granted' especially when things are going well. And it goes without saying that for the most part Maltese migrants who came to Australia for a better life did find it here, at least to cover physical needs, education, health and economically. And it is true that the family is the centre of many people's lives. But I wonder if we could stretch that care beyond our

immediate family to the wider community in the country that has so far served us so well.

If we try to keep up with what is going on in the world it soon becomes obvious that not everyone

is able to live as comfortably as we do. So can we do anything about it? Can we give something back to Australia which has afforded us so many opportunities? One example that springs to mind is the plight of Australia's First Nations whose history since European settlement 235 years ago has been one of discrimination, massacres, the losing of their own children, their languages, their culture and land thanks to the newcomers. In a sense we have benefitted from these enormous injustices. But there is a small opportunity to do something positive





on October 14th. We can vote "yes" in the referendum which would finally give Aboriginal people a voice, a chance to have an advisory body which can speak to the authorities on their behalf. It is the least we can do, and far from disadvantaging us, will greatly enrich us, not least morally and spiritually.

For many years I have been a keen activist on issues of peace, justice and the environment yet there are very few Maltese faces among those who attend such gatherings. It would be so heartwarming to see members of the Maltese diaspora more visibly, with other Australians of different backgrounds taking part in such events.

With best regards to all, Rita Camilleri Melbourne [camrita44@gmail.com](mailto:camrita44@gmail.com)

## Rediscovering our country's history

<https://www.indulgedivine.com/>

**For those who've spent their first few years on Malta, our childhood memories of the islands are kept close to the heart.**

We've all got recollections of summer evenings on the doorstep chatting with the neighbours while enjoying a pleasant breeze, of being sent by our mothers to the local baker to buy freshly baked bread and of the temptation to dig into the *ħobża's* fragrant soft bosom proving too strong, of outings with our extended families at il-Buskett eating *ħobż biż-żejt* and drinking tea in a glass. To those of us who are second generation, our parents have enthralled us with their own stories, the stories of Malta.

When we get that desire to revisit the culture that made us who we are, Malta provides us with so much more than its tantalising Mediterranean sun and sea. The island measures just 316km<sup>2</sup>, but it is generous with those interested in history and culture. Malta contains some of the greatest structures of prehistory as well as the stunning fortress cities of Valletta, Vittoriosa and Mdina.

To allow the country to whisper its story to you, it's recommended to find a place that has seen history unfold, somewhere where you can still recognise the Maltese way of life. Rather than stay in some bland hotel which could have been located anywhere in the world, stay somewhere immersed in village life.



Indulgence Divine's old house chapel is now a sumptuous bedroom

With a bit of research, you can come across such places to stay, houses that still hold a Maltese soul. **Indulgence Divine** is one such home, a 16th century townhouse situated in Vittoriosa, the city synonymous with the Great Siege. The house once belonged to an eminent sea merchant and came with its own house chapel. It's nestled right behind the Inquisitor's Palace and within the old Collacchio area. It now belongs to an artist and children's author.

*Indulgence Divine* is available to rent for short periods at [www.indulgedivine.com](http://www.indulgedivine.com)

**I thank all those who sent a small donation towards the production of this journal**

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## Malta's king of fruit, Pomegranate

### The Maltese Rummiena



In a world where every kind of fruit and vegetable is available on supermarket shelves at any time of year, we have lost some of the excitement of seasonal fruit. However, a wander around local markets reveal what is truly in season. And as Mother Nature knows best, fresh, local and in season are always the tastiest among fruit and veg.

As the summer heat gives way to cooler temperatures, the sweet and juicy stone fruit that filled the vegetable trucks start to dwindle. The fruit season is almost over, making room for the dark green veggies we're starting to crave. However not before the pomegranate season.

The pomegranate tree (rummiena) is found abundantly in both Maltese countryside and private gardens, with bright red jewels

bursting through the thick skins before they fall to the ground. It was introduced to the Maltese islands in ancient times and has now become an integral part of our flora.

Pomegranates have been cherished for their exquisite beauty, flavour, colour, and health benefits for centuries. From their distinctive crown to their ruby red arils, pomegranates are royalty amongst fruit. They are symbolic of prosperity and abundance in virtually every civilization. Fortunately, this treasure's versatility and possibilities are as abundant as the juicy arils bursting forth from within.

The name pomegranate derives from Middle French, pomme garnete, literally "seeded apple".

The pomegranate is a symbol of abundance and is still used throughout the world, particularly at wedding ceremonies. During a Persian wedding ceremony, a basket of pomegranates is placed on the ceremonial cloth to symbolize a joyous future. In Turkey, after the marriage ceremony, the bride throws a pomegranate on the ground. The number of arils that fall out are believed to indicate how many children she will have. In Crete, when a bride enters her new home, the groom hands her a pomegranate. In China, a picture of a ripe, open pomegranate is a popular wedding present, expressing the wish, "May you have as many children as there are seeds."

Ottolenghi and other celebrity Middle Eastern chefs have shone a light on ingredients commonly used in the Middle East which have been a little neglected here. Though the fruit has always been eaten raw by locals there are no traditional recipes that include the fruit, its juice or its syrup.

Pomegranates have been used around the world in a variety of dishes from appetizers, soups and salads, main courses, preserves, dips, sauces, desserts and drinks.

In the Caucasus, pomegranate is used mainly as juice. In Azerbaijan a sauce from pomegranate juice is usually served with fish or tika kabab. In Turkey, pomegranate sauce, is used as a salad dressing, to marinate meat, or simply to drink straight. Pomegranate seeds are also used in salads and sometimes as garnish for desserts. Pomegranate syrup or molasses is used in muhammara, a roasted red pepper, walnut and garlic spread popular in Syria and Turkey.

In Greece, pomegranate is used in many recipes, including kollivozoumi, a creamy broth made from boiled wheat, pomegranates and raisins, legume salad with wheat and pomegranate, traditional Middle Eastern lamb kebabs with pomegranate glaze, pomegranate eggplant relish, and avocado-pomegranate dip. Pomegranate is also made into a liqueur and popular fruit confectionery used as ice cream topping or mixed with yoghurt or spread as jam on toast. In Cyprus as well as in Greece and among the Greek Orthodox, Diaspora is used to make kolliva, a mixture of wheat, pomegranate seeds, sugar, almonds and other seeds served at memorial services.

Pomegranates are a new super food. They are high in vitamin C and potassium, a great source of fibre, and low in calories. The pomegranate has been cultivated in Caucasus since ancient times and today is widely cultivated throughout Iran, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, China, Burma, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Jordan, and the Mediterranean.

**THIS IS MY WEEKLY GEM WHICH I REALLY TREASURE – J. Ellul**