



# Maltese eNewsletter

Editor : Frank L Scicluna OAM MQR JP

Email ; maltesejournal@gmail.com

Maltese language School - Melbourne

our future



END OF THE YEAR 2023 FUNCTION AT THE MALTESE COMMUNITY CENTRE- VICTORIA

**NARGES**  
is an Iranian  
activist who won  
the Nobel  
Peace Prize  
for her efforts  
towards  
women's  
rights and  
democracy.



## NOBEL PEACE PRIZE 2023

Narges Mohammadi



Melbourne  
1970

## THE WEST GATE BRIDGE TRAGEDY

Maltese among the dead

Grand  
Master  
OBSS

Prof  
Leonie  
Baldacchino



# WE BUILD BRIDGES NOT WALLS





### MALTESE TRADITION FESTA EARNED PLACE ON UNESCO LIST OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

#### VALLETTA (MALTA) (ITALPRESS/MNA) – The UNESCO

technical committee unanimously recommended that the tradition of the Maltese festa should be included in the prestigious catalogue of intangible cultural heritage of humanity. The decision was formalised during UNESCO's conference held in Botswana this week.

Described by UNESCO as a community event of religious origin, the Maltese festa is celebrated annually in village parishes across Malta and

Gozo. The main festa season in Malta starts towards the end of April and runs until the beginning of October, with multiple events taking place in different villages.

While its roots lie in Christian tradition, the festa extends its social appeal beyond religious boundaries, uniting individuals from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Despite the increasing secularisation of society, the festa remain a vital part of Malta's cultural heritage, safeguarding a profound sense of identity and continuity throughout the country.

On its website, UNESCO outlined the meaning of the traditional Maltese festa: "Community volunteers prepare the festa throughout the year and the event itself typically lasts a week. On the final day, a statue is carried in a procession led by the clergy and accompanied by members of the parish and marching bands. Festa weeks entail concerts, band marches, firework displays and bell ringing."

UNESCO added: "Typical festa food, such as nougat, is sold from street stalls. The practice is transmitted informally through participation in the preparation and events. For instance, youth learn the stories and songs of the village and its sacred figures and how to participate in the festa by attending community events. Some parishes organise a children's festa in conjunction with the church, and children carry a smaller statue through the town".

In a post on X, Culture Minister Owen Bonnici said: "Big news for Maltà's cultural scene! The Maltese festa is now officially recognized as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. Kudos to the incredible volunteers who bring festas to life across the islands!"

– Photo Department of Information Malta –



**The  
MALTESE  
JOURNAL**  
is as popular  
among the  
Maltese living  
in Malta and  
Gozo as it is  
with all the  
Maltese living  
abroad.

John Gauci  
Malta

## Gharb's Singing Christmas Tree to feature around 100 singers



BY [GOZO NEWS](#)

A singing Christmas tree – a concert with a difference – the first of its kind in the Maltese Islands, will be taking place in Gharb.

Featuring around 100 singers, the singing Christmas tree concert is being held under the auspices of the Gharb Local Council and with the participation of Gozo Community Choir under the direction of Peter Thomas and the Gharb Youth and Kids Parish Choir under the direction of Mrs. Maxine Debrincat.

Taking place on Saturday, the 18th of

December, the concert will be on the parvis in front of the Basilica of the Visitation in Gharb, starting at 8pm. The Gharb Local Council said that the event is designed to be accessible to all, including those with special needs, who are encouraged to RSVP to ensure a place in the front row.

The Council said that it believes in the potential for this event and is committed to creating a memorable and joyful experience for everyone during this festive season.



L-GHAQDA FILANTROPIKA TALENT MOSTI



Wirja ta' presepji u arti natalizja fir-Razzett tal-Markiz il-Mosta mit-13 ta' Dicembru 2023 sas-7 ta' Jannar 2024

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***“Zan Woman – Zendegi Life – Azadi Freedom”***

The Nobel Committee's decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize to imprisoned Iranian human rights activist Narges Mohammadi underscores the “courage and determination” of the women of Iran, the UN human rights office, [OHCHR](#), said on Friday. “I think what is absolutely clear is that the women of Iran have been a source of inspiration for the world. We've seen their courage and determination in the face of reprisals, intimidation, violence and detention,” Spokesperson Liz Throssell told journalists in Geneva.

“This courage, this determination, have been remarkable. They've been harassed for what they do or don't wear, there are increasingly stringent legal, social and economic measures against them.” Welcoming the announcement to award the 2023 Nobel Peace prize to Mohammadi today, UN experts urged the government of Iran to free all those imprisoned for promoting women's human rights and protect the rights of women and girls in the country.

“The awarding of the 2023 Nobel Peace prize to a courageous journalist and woman human rights defender highlights the struggle of women against institutionalised systems of discrimination, segregation, humiliation and the exclusion of women and girls everywhere in the world,” the [UN experts](#) said.

In [a statement](#) on the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Narges Mohammadi, UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) called it “an important reminder that the rights of women and girls are facing a strong pushback, including through the persecution of women human rights defenders, in Iran and elsewhere.”

“This Nobel Peace Prize is a tribute to all those women who are fighting for their rights at the risk of their freedom, their health and even their lives,” said the UN chief.

Ms. Mohammadi is currently serving a 16-year sentence in Tehran's Evin Prison. She has worked for many years as a journalist and is also an author and Vice-Director of the Tehran-based civil society organization Defenders of Human Rights Center (DHRC).

In May she was awarded a prize that celebrates press freedom by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), along with two other imprisoned Iranian women journalists, in the context of the wave of protests surrounding the death of Mahsa Amini in police custody in September 2022.

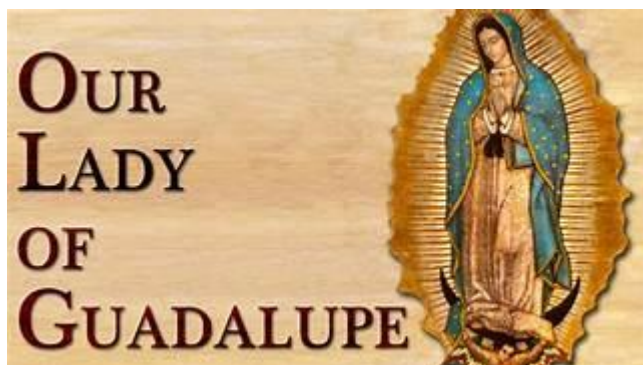
The motto adopted by the demonstrators – “Woman – Life – Freedom” – suitably expresses the dedication and work of Narges Mohammadi.

**Woman.-** She fights for women against systematic discrimination and oppression

**Life.** - She supports women's struggle for the right to live full and dignified lives. This struggle across Iran has been met with persecution, imprisonment, torture and even death.

**Freedom** - She fights for freedom of expression and the right of independence, and against rules requiring women to remain out of sight and to cover their bodies. The freedom demands expressed by demonstrators apply not only to women, but to the entire population.

**NO RECOGNITION ON  
MALTA REPUBLIC DAY  
FOR MANY MALTESE  
WORKING SO HARD TO  
MAINTAIN OUR  
CULTURE AROUND THE  
WORLD. THE LOST  
GENERATION.**  
Louis Parnis NSW Australia



### Fr Manuel Adami - reflection

On 12th December is the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. When I was in Peru I loved to celebrate this feast with the South Americans or Latinos as they are called. Since She appeared to San Diego - a local poor campesino, the Aztecs stopped sacrificing humans to their Gods and Mexico became a Christian country. Mexico became pro-life.

Patricia Sandoval a North American lady was invited to Malta. She delivered a very passionate and very moving

speech. She lamented about how she was deceived to have three abortions and now is suffering the consequences of it all. She called Malta a tiny pro-life island a light for Europe. My dream and so many others is that Australia will become a big pro-life island - a light for the whole world. This is possible.

Abortion was invented by the devil but God is much more powerful than the devil. For God there is nothing that's impossible. So Helpers keep going. God and Mary are with you. Victory one day will be proclaimed while abortion will be history.

You, Helpers, are a tiny group of people in Melbourne are a light and example to all the states of Australia. Benefactors, Friends this little orphanage in Arequipa is also shedding like you.

Helpers a beam of light throughout all Peru and beyond its shores. The birth of baby Jesus is a pro-life day and celebration. Victory over evil. The Immaculate Conception is also a victory over evil and death. What great mysteries. Why was Jesus born God and Human like us? It is for us to live like Him. He is the supreme example of a saintly life. Rejoice for being pro-life.

Christmas is a time of peace. Our God wants us to live in peace while the devil wants to steal our peace. You see wars are raging and abortion goes on. We have lost the sense of sin and the sense of God.

On Christmas Day put baby Jesus on your lap and surround Him with your hands, at least for a few minutes and meditate on Him. Tell Him all that you love Him and that you want to be with Him for all eternity.

Immaculate Conception...."Mother Mary we are sinners, but we are your children." May I remind you to tell Mary to tell Jesus that She loves you. Do not forget, please. If you hesitate, tell Her that Her son Padre Manuel told me to tell You.



### Another Reflection by Mgr. Charles Gauci Bishop of Darwin and Northern Territory Australia

I was at a gathering in Washington, DC, in September this year. It is coming together of First Nations people from Canada, the USA, New Zealand, and Australia, with bishops from those countries. I learned how significant the First Nations people of the Americas are in the apparition of Our Lady to Juan Diego in 1531. Mary spoke to him in the local indigenous language and not in Spanish, the language of the conquering Spaniards.

Jesus came for all people, and all are equally important to Him.

If the church is to be truly Catholic, it needs to be truly embracing of all cultures.

So many times, fear of the different has hindered this inculcating. However, it has also been something that has happened since the beginning of the church.

Inculturation does not mean that we compromise on our core beliefs. It does mean that no culture has supremacy over others. It is about respect for others and a clear statement that God's love is for all. All are favourites.

## GRANDMASTER OF THE BYZANTYNE ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULHER

**Leonie Baldacchino is an Associate Professor at The Edward de Bono Institute, University of Malta and Associate Professor at The Edward de Bono Institute, University of Malta**

"I was honoured and humbled to be installed as Grand Master of the Byzantine Order of the Holy Sepulchre – OBSS, which is an international Order of Chivalry founded in AD 325. Among the aims of OBSS are the promotion of humanitarian and philanthropic activities, and the development of scientific and cultural pursuits, all of which are very close to my heart. I am excited to bring new ideas into this Order so as to blend centuries-old traditions with modern-day social innovations and look forward to working with our many members to help make our world a better place." Leonie's LinkedIn



Photo Credits: Yasmin Dingli and Daniel Bonell

Leonie Baldacchino holds a Ph.D. in Entrepreneurship from Warwick Business School (UK), an M.A. in Creativity and Innovation and a B.Psy.(Hons.) from the University of Malta. She is an Associate Professor at The Edward de Bono Institute for Creative Thinking and Innovation at the University of Malta, where she held the post of Director from 2013 to 2022. She coordinates various entrepreneurship-related incentives at the University of Malta, including the Global Entrepreneurship Week events hosted locally by The Edward de Bono Institute, and she sits on various Boards and Committees at / for the University of Malta, including the Edward de Bono Institute, the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation, the Foundation for the Promotion of Entrepreneurial Initiatives, the Institute of Earth Systems, the University Research Ethics Committee, and the SEA-EU (European University of the Seas) Quality and Ethics Committee. Professor Baldacchino is also an Associate Editor at the Journal of Enterprising Communities (Emerald), an Editorial Board Member of the Journal of Strategic Change (Wiley), a Fellow of the International Society for the Study of Creativity and Innovation (ISSCI), and the OECD's country (Malta) expert on inclusive entrepreneurship. She has lectured on entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation at Warwick Business School (UK) and at Teesside Business School (UK), and has delivered numerous presentations and workshops in Malta and overseas.

## Monument dedicated to Oliver Friggieri unveiled in Floriana

A monument dedicated to literary giant Oliver Friggieri was unveiled in his hometown, Floriana, on Monday. The monument is based on a design by artist John Grima, following a call for applications from Heritage Malta under the auspices of the Office of the Prime Minister.

In his address, Prime Minister Robert Abela said that Friggieri was not only an author, a professor of Maltese and a great teacher, but one of the greatest thinkers Malta ever had.

He said that Friggieri shared his thoughts in different eras of the nation which, like any other, has its own challenges. Malta is not perfect and had its good and bad moments. But Professor Friggieri never belittled the Maltese people or lost hope.

Friggieri wanted to touch the Maltese conscience because he believed in the country's future. "He never rested... He was sure that there was a better future for the Maltese... his words were listened to, whether you agreed with them or not... whatever the circumstances, Friggieri spoke his mind on the way he saw things," Abela said. There were times when his writings exposed his anger, but he always wanted to build on what is good. He was a harsh critic of Malta because he loved the Maltese and believed in them, Abela said.

The monument, placed opposite that dedicated to national poet Dun Karm Psaila, includes verses of one of Friggieri's poem "Jekk".



## EARLY MEMORIES OF THE GALLOWS IN MALTA



*Procession after the execution of Giuseppe Tabone, March 26, 1923.*



*A marble slab at Corradino prison commemorating those executed on the gallows. Photo: Heritage Malta*



*A Rosariante in full garment, collecting alms on the occasion of an execution.*

Over 50 years ago on the 4th October 1971, the Maltese Parliament unanimously abolished the death penalty from the Criminal Code for serious crimes such as murder and treason. Since 1800, the death sentence in Malta was given 175 times – 57 inmates had this sentence changed to life in prison. This means that the state executed 118 persons, all men. The youngest was an 18-year old from Tas-Sliema who, together with another youth, had killed a prostitute. Researcher Eddie Attard said that in the majority of cases the gallows was used, at first in public in places such as the Saqqajja and Pjazza Forok in Rabat or near the Sarria church and the place where there is the War Memorial in Floriana. When the Paola prison was built in the middle of the 19 Century, executions were held in the prison.

Gallows executions were last held in 1943 to two brothers found guilty of murder. Then, the Criminal Court had sentenced six other persons to death, however their sentence was changed to life in prison.

The vote taken in Parliament on the 4th October 1971 was unanimous with Governor Sir Anthony Mamo immediately approving the amendments. The death penalty remained only in the Armed Forces law when a member assists the enemy during the war and the only possibility of a death penalty was altogether abolished in 2002 when Malta signed the convention protocol for the protection of human rights.

Stories of humiliation and torture for the condemned, on their way to the gallows and even after death, will also be recounted, describing how some were beheaded and even quartered and burnt after being hanged. Others were not buried in a cemetery but in a pit near the gallows, while others still were left dangling on the gallows to rot for days or even months.



*Maltese artist and Italian Fascist Carmelo Borg Pisani*



Delving in detail into the whole process preceding judicial hanging as well as the execution itself and the burial afterwards, the webinar will also provide insight into the executioner's role and narrate various spine-chilling stories about some of the men who made a living out of this unpleasant occupation and who were largely despised because of it.

One such story recounts a strange twist of fate where a hangman lost his own life minutes after ending that of the

condemned.

Some well-known names are bound to crop up during the webinar. Among them is Carmelo Borg Pisani, the only person during British rule in Malta who was hanged for espionage against his motherland. His was also the only case in Malta in the 20th century where someone was sent to the gallows for a crime that was not murder.

Poignant tales of people who reiterated their innocence until their last breath on the gallows will be recounted as well. Ġużeppi Zammit, for example, was hanged with his brother in 1943 after being found guilty of murdering Spiru Grech. However, Ġużeppi always proclaimed his innocence, insisting that his only role in the crime was to hide the corpse.

There was even one instance in 1908 where the burial of one of the condemned caused an uproar as rumours spread that he had been buried while still alive. Following this case, death certification was assigned to the best surgeons in the country and the time between.

Procession was an important part of the execution process; in a detailed report on the parade of Greek and Turkish pirates sheds light on this ritual.

Three men out of a group of 12 Greek Pirates, who had committed mutiny and were thusly sentenced to death, were first led out of a side door (in today's St John Street). The procession was led by a crucifix and included 12 knights dressed in black and a parish priest. Money was collected during this procession. The procession then went along St Paul's Street to Ordinance Street (where the market stands today) then along Merchants Street, down St John's and towards City Gate along Republic Street.

Slaves got the worst treatment by far. For instance a report of a case dated on 12 March 1673 when fourteen slaves attempted to escape by boarding a Genoese boat and sailing out of the Grand Harbour. Unfortunately, The Grand Master happened to be in a house near the harbour and saw the conflict and the boat with the slaves on board making good its escape. He ordered that the vessel be chased and many knights around him immediately embarked on a brigantine in hot pursuit. The following morning the ship with the slaves on board was escorted back to harbour.

The slaves were placed in chains and subjected to four sessions of corda torture. The corda strappado, also known as strappado, is a form of torture wherein the victim's hands are tied behind his or her back and suspended by a rope attached to the wrists, typically resulting in dislocated shoulders.

On 1 May 1673, the fourteen slaves who attempted to escape by taking over the boat had their noses and ears cut off.

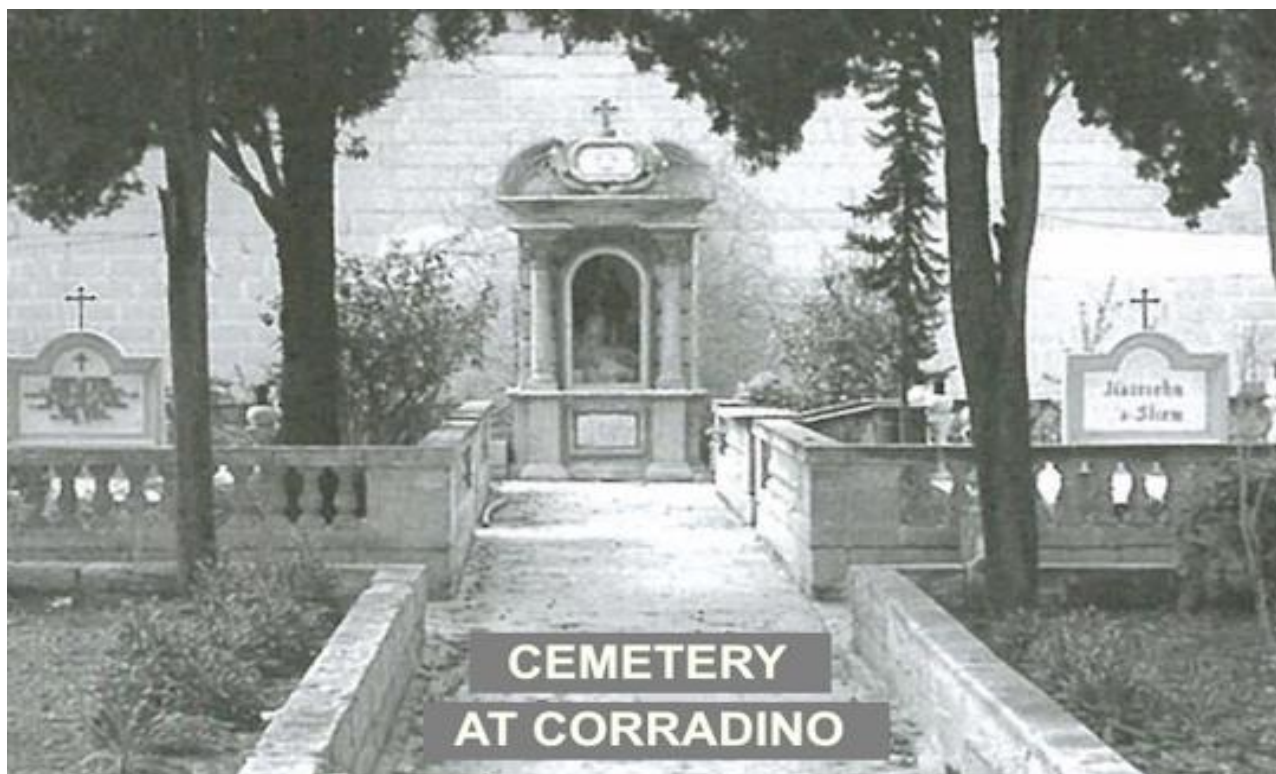
## CHRISTMAS FUNCTIONS IN ADELAIDE

**Maltese Senior Citizens Association Friday 15 Dec at LeHunte Street Kilburn**

**St Catherine Society of SA Sunday 17 Dec at LeHunte Street, Kilburn**

**Maltese Guild of SA Tuesday 19 December at the Maltese Cultural Centre, Beverley**





## Antonio Azzopardi (Ninu Xkora)



Foreman of coal heavers Born in 1863, died on October 27, 1908

Antonio Azzopardi was born in Valletta. Azzopardi murdered Giuseppe Camenzuli, known as *Żabbatu*, outside his own shop 'Omdorman' at Broad Street corner

with Saint Joseph High Road, in Hamrun on 6 December 1907.

Azzopardi was tried for his crime on 19 October 1908. After a period of observation at the lunatic asylum, he was found of sound mind. Found guilty, he was condemned to death and executed at Corradino Prison on 27 October 1908.

He was buried in the cemetery of the Civil Prisons at the same Corradino, Paola.

Azzopardi petitioned to the Governor to have his sentence converted into life imprisonment, but his request proved futile.

The following year Dr Fredrick Bernard, one of those who assisted at the execution, reported to Dr P.P. Agius, editor of *Risorgimento*, that the execution had been bungled, that the CGMO, Dr Caruana Scicluna, had signed the death certificate without performing a proper post-mortem examination, and that Azzopardi was probably buried alive.

In the event, Agostino Levanzin went on to query "Was Xkora buried alive?" while Dr Giuseppe Mizzi LLD further infuriated the issue by an article in *In-Naħla*. The CGMO sued Dr Agius and Levanzin for libel who were acquitted thanks to a formidable defence by Dr (later Sir) Arturo Mercieca who was able to show, corroborated by another expert witness Dr Giuseppe Galizia, that a person could still breathe and be alive after his *atlas vertebrae* was broken by a fall.

The publication of this story made Azzopardi a popular martyr and miracles of grace were attributed to him. His grave at Corradino cemetery became the venue of many pilgrimages.


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From 5th January 2024 **ACIS** together with **Doninu Malta** will be launching **GOGAZA** Campaign and initiate a series of events to help fundraising in aid of the children in Gaza. When the time is right, we will accompany Sanaa El Nahhal to Gaza to deliver to these people whatever the generosity of the Maltese and Gozitans provide. We need your help, please help us help the children in Gaza!! Please contact us for more info.


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Originally intended as a war machine, the fort was built in a strategic location at the tip of the Sceberras peninsula to face and hold back the wrath of the Ottoman armada. Offering unobstructed panoramic views of the harbours and the surrounding towns and villages, this key position was already recognised and exploited during the Medieval period. Reference to a permanent watch-post at Santo Eramo can in fact, be found in the Militia Roster of 1417. Following a harsh Ottoman razzia in 1551, and various reports indicating a looming Ottoman siege, Grand Master De Homedes issued an order for the immediate erection of a fort.

A star-shaped fort was constructed in 1552, by military engineer Pietro Prato, under the supervision of Knight Fra Leone Strozzi. By 1565 the fort had acquired a cavalier, a covertway, a terraille, and a ravelin which was hastily built in a few months.

Fort St Elmo received the brunt of the Ottomans' forces, who besieged Malta in **1565**. Against all odds, the small fort resisted for a month, surrendering on 23 June. The 17th and 18th centuries witnessed several additions, including barracks, church and a lighthouse. The whole fort was included within **Valletta's fortifications in 1689**. Under British

rule Fort St Elmo was extensively upgraded for new artillery and even played an important role in the defence of Malta during the Second World War. On 11 June 1940, Fort St Elmo suffered the first **aerial bombardment** on the islands. Its active role in sieges and battles made it ideal for the hosting of a National War Museum.

Visitors at Fort St Elmo can experience the impressive grounds of the fort, including the splendid architecture of the two chapels dedicated to St Anne.

The National War Museum, is divided into seven sections and covers 7,000 years of Maltese Military History from the Bronze Age until Malta's accession in the EU. Notable artefacts include **military armour** of the Order of St John and the Ottoman Turks. However, the Second World War is the most represented conflict in the museum. Highlights include the Gloster Sea Gladiator **N5520 FAITH**, **Roosevelt's Jeep 'Husky'**, and Malta's award for gallantry, the **George Cross**. Within the museum, a separate **War Memorial** contains a repository of the many medals bestowed in recognition of bravery and merit during the war effort.

Museum, Fortification

Mon to Sun (Closed on Good Friday, Christmas Eve & Day, New Year's Eve & Day): 10.00 am - 18.00 pm

In Guardia - Sundays - As per Schedule: 11.00 am - 12.00 pm

[22481305](tel:22481305) Fort St Elmo And National War Museum, Valletta, Malta Last admission is at 17.30 pm

Adults (18+): €10.00 Senior Citizens (60+): €7.50

Youths (12-17): €7.50 Concessions &

Students: €7.50

Children (6-11): €5.50 Infants (1-5): Free



**The one and only  
Journal for Maltese Living Abroad**



The winter 2023 issue of our *Bird's Eye View* magazine will be mailed out to our members before Christmas.

Issue 78 (December 2023) - the last issue for this year - carries a picture by nature photographer Aron Tanti of the Eurasian Siskin on the front cover. This finch is an irregular autumn migrant, which is unfortunately prized with finch trappers in Malta. More details can be found in the bird profile page, penned by bird ringer Mario V Gauci.

The news pages compiled by Communication Assistant Antoine Monnier, cover the news of the past three months, including the symbolic action we held in front of the Office of the Prime Minister in October on illegal hunting, and updates about the ongoing hunting and trapping seasons. Needless to say, it also covers the story that made the headlines in the past weeks: the uprooting of the Ficus trees in Mosta Square that served as a White Wagtail roost, and which were saved at the last minute thanks to a national public outcry and action by environmental activists.

This issue's nature reserves spread by Victor Falzon focuses on Ghadira Nature Reserve, whilst on pages 8-9 we bring you the second part of the special feature spread authored by our Head of Land Management Mark Gauci on nature restoration, focusing on the wetland restoration project at Salina.

The research page in this issue is dedicated to the publication of the first annual Malta Bird Report and is penned by the report's author Stefano Miceli, whilst in the Explore spread, we suggest a wintry walk in nature and

history in the north-east, following the route from Selmun to Mġiebaħ and back.

As usual, on the last two-page spread, you'll find a photo album of the events we had in the past months, and also a calendar of upcoming events. Finally, on the back page we summarise this year's Dinja Waħda Awards ceremony which was held in November to celebrate the outstanding achievements of 77 schools over the past scholastic year.

[Submitted by Emanuel Camilleri JP]







## One of the most beautiful architectural palaces in Malta

San Anton Palace is one of the most beautiful heritage monument in the country.

The Palace, which currently serves as the official residence of the President of Malta, was built at around 1620 by Grand Master de Paule and throughout its history saw various alterations that changed it from a villa into a palace.

The works included a majestic tower, a stone balustrade parapet while during the years the

two upper floors of the building were demolished after they were heavily damaged during thunderstorms.

Grand Master de Paule had named the San Anton palace after his patron saint, St Anthony of Padova. The palace also has surrounding beautiful gardens which were opened for the public in 1882. Today, the palace boasts of precious works of art of great cultural value that decorate many of its rooms which hosted various foreign dignitaries and leaders throughout the years.

The magnificent characteristics and history of this palace are being featured every Sunday on TVM, before the 8pm news, on the programme 'Mill-Palazz'.

## Birkirkara museum hosting exhibition of antique 'bambini'

Exhibits include works from Malta, Sicily, Italy, Spain and Northern Europe

A 300-year-old Maltese wax statuette of Baby Jesus, that will be on display at the museum. Photo: Daniel Cardona

An exhibition featuring about 27 antique *bambini* (statuettes of Baby Jesus) is being held at the Birkirkara Collegiate Museum from December 10 to January 5.

*The Word Made Flesh* aims to help visitors rediscover the beauty of the image of Baby Jesus as the main focal point of the Christmas season.

Around 10 antique collectors came together to share their hidden treasures which include a 300-year-old Maltese wax *bambino* and works from Sicily, Italy, Spain and Northern Europe.

Besides the temporary exhibition, visitors will be able to view other items displayed at the museum all year round. These include silverware by the famous Cannataci brothers, brocades, vestments, altar antependiums, sculptures and various paintings, among others.

One can also visit the basilica, currently adorned for Christmas.

Entrance to the museum is through the basilica's sacristy. It will be open from Monday to Friday from 6.30 to 8.30pm and on Sundays and December 13 from 9am to noon. It will be closed on December 25, 26, January 1, 2 and on Saturdays.

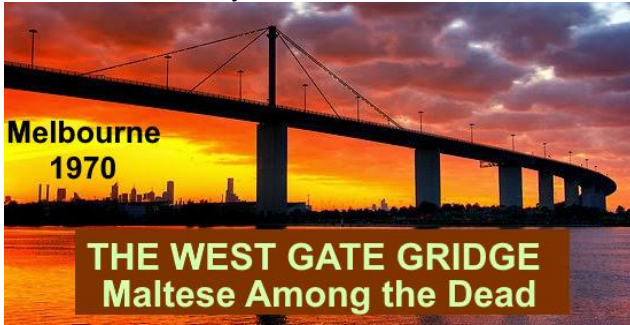
A catalogue of the exhibited works will be available at the door.



## REMEMBERING THE WEST GATE TRAGEDY MALTESE AMONG THE DEAD MELBOURNE — AUSTRALIA

### The Age – Australia 17 years ago

Just before midday on 15 October 1970, a 120 metre span of the half-built West Gate Bridge collapsed into the Yarra, Melbourne, killing 35 workers. A royal commission to investigate the cause of the collapse attributed the failure to a litany of errors in the structural design and method of erection of the bridge. The commission's findings paved the way for the strengthening of occupational health and safety laws in Australian workplaces.



*Victor Gerada left behind four children when he was killed in the collapse.*



The workers were killed when a section of the West Gate Bridge collapsed during construction. What is not so well known is that the surviving workers were sacked four days later and offered no assistance or support. When they returned to work almost two years later, the builder refused to re-hire the union shop stewards so their workmates went on strike for seven weeks. Health and safety have come a long way since 1970 but only after too many lives were lost and thanks to the role of unions.

It was the morning the world fell from under their feet as they worked atop the West Gate Bridge. Workers, from the supervisors to the riggers and the welders, heard bolts pop from their sockets like exploding light globes. Steel groaned in a futile effort to resist and maintain its integrity as gravity pulled hard. The section of bridge span in question was 128 metres of concrete and steel. The steel changed colour as it tried to hold on. The concrete cracked and exploded. The bridge's skeleton shook and trembled. Then, in the blink of an eye, span 10-11 of the construction phase, weighing in at 2000 tons, broke away and dropped 50 metres.



**Widow remembers the darkest day**

**The two Maltese workers were two of the unfortunate victims - Tony Falzon, 32, also a carpenter, who had emigrated from Malta seven before and Victor Gerada – ironworker.**



In those interminable seconds before the huge span plummeted 45 metres (150 feet) into the mud and waters of Melbourne's River Yarra, a young Maltese migrant, boilermaker's assistant, **Charlie Sant**, had the presence of mind to sit down on a box and await the worst and he was of the survivors.



It had been a windy day and when Victor Gerada, a Maltese steel rigger, came home from work, he told his wife he had felt the bridge "moving about in the wind". His wife, Doris, was dismissive: "How could it move with all that concrete on it?"

***The younger Victor now works as a truck driver in the construction industry***

That was two nights before part of the West Gate Bridge collapsed, killing 35 workers, including Mr Gerada, 32. With four young children to support, Mr Gerada, an ironworker, had left a job at ICI for better pay working on the bridge. The last day he went to work, Mrs Gerada was sitting at home in Altona breastfeeding her four-month-old baby when news was flashed on the television that the bridge had collapsed. The life she had built with her husband of 11 years was also wrecked.

Mrs Gerada said she knew immediately that her husband was dead, even though a neighbour took her to the site to check. She remembers the moment she saw his sleeve hanging down from a stretcher: "I couldn't move. I wanted to go and see his face but I couldn't walk."

The months following his death were hard: "I lost my memory for a while. I didn't know what was going on. I was like a zombie."

A friend cared for her baby until she could cope again. She did not remarry and for the last 33 years, as she will today, she has visited the bridge to mourn.

The couple, both Maltese-born, met in Malta when she was 18 and working in a cigarette factory and she said no one could replace him. "He was a saint. He never went out, never went for a beer. All he had was his family. They don't do husbands like that anymore." For 19 years, she refused to cross the West Gate Bridge because it made her think of her husband and ask: "How could such a thing happen?" She kept faith with her husband in other ways, staying in the house they built together until her four children - Joe, Charlie, Rita and Stephen, renamed Victor - were married. Danny Gardiner said he and three other former West Gate Bridge workers organised the annual memorial ceremony "so that people don't forget that

**1970s: The West Gate Bridge disaster, 1970**

One of Australia's worst industrial disasters occurs when a section of West Gate Bridge collapsed during its construction, killing 35 men on the 15 October 1970. *Port Melbourne, West Gate Bridge. September 1970,*



## Maltese Historical Society of San Francisco USA

The Maltese Historical Society is planning on writing a book on the immigration experiences of the Maltese community in the San Francisco Bay Area. A major part of the book will be the stories told by the immigrants themselves or by their children or descendants.

If you are interested in writing a story to be included in the book, we are now accepting submissions. Your name will be credited as the author of your submission. Your completed story can be sent by email to charlesvella@comcast.net or as a paper copy to Mona Vella Nicholas at 2565 Trenton Drive, San Bruno, CA 94066. We look forward to reading your immigration stories. Below you will find some prompts which may help you with writing your story. Please choose only one of these prompts to write about. Each story should be 1-2 pages in length. Give as many details as possible. Do not limit yourself to the questions suggested in each prompt.

**PROMPTS FOR IMMIGRATION STORIES**

- 1) Describe your immigration voyage. Include dates of departure from Malta and arrival in the U.S.; types of transportation (ship, airplane, train); point of entry in the U.S.; experiences en route.
- 2) Culture shock: What differences did you encounter between life in Malta and life in the U.S. (food, language, people, holidays, lifestyle, etc.)?
- 3) Becoming an American citizen: What reasons did you have for wanting to become a citizen? What did you have to do to prepare for citizenship? What was the citizenship ceremony like?
- 4) Living Conditions: Where did you live when you first came to the Bay Area? Did you live in San Francisco? What part of the city? Did you live with another family? A relative? Did you live in an apartment? A house? What was

your living arrangement like? How did it compare to your living arrangement in Malta (stairs, hot water, bathing facilities, cooking facilities, sleeping arrangements, etc.)? How did your living arrangements change over the years (renting a house for just your family, buying a home, moving to a different neighborhood, etc.)?

5) Making a living: What was your occupation in Malta? What was your occupation in the U.S.? How were they alike/different? What in Malta prepared you for the job you found in the U.S.? Did you have to learn any new skills to help you get a job in the U.S.? Were they on-the-job skills or did they require outside training? How did income here compare to Malta? How well did your income provide for your family here compared to your income in Malta (cost of living)? Were certain things in America a necessity which were not a necessity in Malta (a car, for example)? Why? What about opportunities for advancement or for starting your own business? What were the differences for women working outside the home in Malta and America? If you are female, did you work outside the home once you arrived In America?

6) Religious differences: What were religious practices like in Malta? How important was religion in the daily life of the Maltese society in general? Did any of these practices transfer into your new life in America? What was the same? What was different?

7) Education: If you started school in Malta but came to America before you were able to finish your education there, compare the two experiences. What was the same? What was different? How well were you able to blend in with American students? Was language a barrier? Was there any difference between how far you went in your education here and how far you think you would have gone had you stayed in Malta? How did your education affect your choice of career? Did you have a specific school experience which would make a good story?

8) If you were born here, what was it like being the child of immigrant Maltese parents? Did your parents speak Maltese at home? Did your family practice any customs which your parents had practiced in Malta? Did your family socialize with other Maltese families? How (visits, religious events, social activities, etc.)? Did your family socialize with American families? What about you? Were your friends mostly Maltese, American, or a mixture of both?

9) Do you have an interesting little anecdote which has nothing to do with any of the above suggestions but which may be of interest to a reader and which are associated in some way with being an immigrant or the child of an immigrant? The incident may be funny, sad, surprising, educational, etc.



## Invitation

The Ta' Sannat Local Council in full collaboration with the JP2 Cultural Foundation will be hosting the University of Malta - Ġ.F. Abela Junior College Orchestra, under the music direction of Mro. Emanuel Pirota. The event will take place on Monday 18th December 2023 at St Margaret Parish Church, Ta' Sannat, starting at 7pm. The Local Councils of Ġhajnsielem and San Lawrenz are supporting this event. The public is invited to attend.

Please do keep me on your mailing list. From copy No.1 up to this issue I haven't missed one single issue at ALL. So all my contacts being Maltese and other Nationals who are spread all over the world wait anxiously for your journal. There is nothing but praise for your dedication and time spent to present such a Journal. Keep up the good work.

May this Christmas bring you much joy and happiness, and may your New Year be merry and bright. Thanks for being such a great friend! Wishing you and your loved ones good health.

Harry and Mary Bugeja – ADELAIDE - AUSTRALIA





Is-17 ta' Diċembru 2023 hu l-aħħar Jum tar-raba' Kampanja Nazzjonali Annwali ta' Happy Parenting – Malta (For Happier Children). Kampanja dwar li t-Tfal Għandhom Bżonn iż-Żewġ Ġenituri.

Fost ir-rakkommandazzjonijiet għal titjib fil-Qorti tal-Familja Happy Parenting tinsisti li: Titwaqqaf aġenzija li tindirizza problemi tal-familja l-barra mill-Qorti

In-notifiċi għandhom isiru b'mod eletroniku biex jiġi evitat dewmien esagerat.

Titneħħa 338LL dwar l-aċċess u 338Z dwar il-manteniment.

Il-Qorti tal-Familja tkun magħmula minn ġudikant trenjat għal dan ix-xogħol mgħejjun minn 2 professjonisti u ssegwi u tinforza

F'din il-konklużjoni tal-kampanja l-Ħadd 17 ta' Diċembru se jittella' seminar fiċ-Ċentru Parrokkjali ta' H'Attard li se jkun jirrifletti l-missjoni tal-istess għaqda Prevenzjoni, Appoġġ u Terapija.

Fl-ewwel parti 5pm-6.30pm se jiġu mistiedna tfal u żgħażaġh li jattendu l-lezzjonijiet tal-arti,

## Seminar minn Happy Parenting – Malta (For Happier Children) f'Egħluq il-Kampanja 2023 għal Familja Aktar f'Saħħitha minn Mary Gauci President Happy Parenting – Malta (For Happier Children)

drama u l-mużika, flimkien ma' oħrajn li ħadu sehem fil-kompetizzjonijiet akkumpanjati mill-ġenituri tagħhom. Janimaw din is-serata se jkun hemm il-BrassBand ta' Roderick Attard. Fid-daħla tas-sala se jkun hemm esebizzjoni ta' xogħolijiet tal-arti li għamlu dawn l-istess tfal.

Fit-tieni parti professjonisti mill-Happy Parenting u oħrajn se jgħidli djar x'hemm bżonn għal Familja aktar f'Saħħitha, fosthom: Il-Psikoterapista Karl Wright u l-Kummissarju għas-Saħħa Mentali. Dħul mingħajr ħlas imma booking hu meħtieġ. Dawk interessati li jattendu, jistgħu jibgħatu email lil [admin@happyparentingmalta.com](mailto:admin@happyparentingmalta.com) jew jikkuntattjawna fuq 99565730 / 77603330



Nixtieq lilek u l-familja tiegħek

*Il-Milied Hieni*

**COUNCIL OF  
MALTESE LIVING  
ABROAD****Susan Schembri  
(Canada)**

Susan is honoured to be a member of the Council for Maltese Living Abroad since 2018. She holds

dual Canadian and Maltese citizenship.

Susan migrated to Canada in her late teen years. She met her husband Saviour in Vancouver British Columbia (BC) Canada. They have 2 daughters and 2 grandchildren. Susan graduated from UBC with the Fellowship of the Institute of Canadian Bankers and retired as a Senior Risk Manager from one of Canada's largest Banks.

Susan has a passion for keeping the Maltese living abroad connected to their birth country. She was President of the Canadian Maltese Association of BC and is presently the Treasurer for the Federation of Maltese Living Abroad. She is the sole distributor of Maltese goods in BC, she plans regular events and since 1986 she continues to be a major contact through which the Maltese Community in BC stays connected.

One of Susan's latest endeavors have been the success of having the Maltese program "Lehen Malti" aired in BC. Susan is the glue of the Maltese Community in BC.

Through her representation on the CMLA she hopes to further support open connection between Malta and Maltese abroad for generations to come.

The Council has representatives from around the globe, mainly Australia, Canada, USA, UK and parts of Europe. The main objectives of the Council are to promote and protect the rights and interests of the Maltese living abroad while inviting those interested to be part of the Maltese culture and identity. The Council members are responsible for being the main connection for providing information and keeping their respective Maltese communities current on any events of interest to them, relating of course to the Maltese diaspora.

Council members usually meet in Malta once a year; however, during Covid we had Zoom meetings. This year the meeting was held in Malta at Palazzo Spinola, St Julian's on September 11th and 12th. The Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade Commission was in attendance for the first part of the meeting. They welcomed two new councillors, one from Vienna and one from Budapest. Most of the other councillors have been on the Council for five years and the maximum term one can serve is six. They discussed many important topics, such as how we can have more open communication with the Ministry in Malta and the Consuls in different locations around the world. We discussed how we can make the application for dual citizenship less complicated, especially when it is a matter of renewing one's Maltese passport. The "Consul on the Move" programme is expected to be in full swing in 2024.

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

**If you would like to contribute these are the details**

**Bank: Commonwealth (Australia)**

**BSB: 065-106**

**Account: 0050 2507**





**La Valette Social Centre Inc**  
**175, Walters Road, Blacktown NSW**  
**New Year's Eve Dinner Dance**

Sunday 31 December 2023  
 from 7.30pm



Tickets: Members \$70 - Non-members \$75

4 Course Meal by: **DOLCI & CANNOLI**  
 2 bottles of Wine per table - Drinks Extra



Entertainment by: **PAUL FALZON & THE MARIMBA BAND**  
 & Guest appearance by **Emanuel Grech DJ**

For tickets and further information please ring  
 Antoinette on 9671 2992 or Godfrey on 0402 090 339

Proudly sponsored by: **Maltese Funerals**  
 In conjunction with Hills Family Funerals



**MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
**OF VICTORIA**

**PART TIME MALTESE LANGUAGE TUTOR**  
**(JOB SHARE OPPORTUNITY)**

MCCV Maltese Language Classes is accepting applications for the position Maltese Language Tutor on a part-time basis, with the option for a job share arrangement in the western suburbs of Victoria, (once a week, Saturday morning school terms).

Applicants must have a good knowledge of Maltese both written and spoken. Resources for teaching are provided. This is a paid position.

Send your resume to:

[edwidborgatt@gmail.com](mailto:edwidborgatt@gmail.com).

For any other information, call 0466 079 814, leave your phone number and we will call you back.



## **THE MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF VICTORIA - CHRISTMAS 2023**

Celebrating Christmas with students of the Maltese Language School and the Maltese Senior citizens at the Maltese Community Centre - Parkville, Victoria  
 Fr. Lonnie Borg mssp and the Consul General Dr. Gioconda Schembri attended the functions



The Malta Band Club invites everyone to this year's

## Candlelight Concert

**Saturday November 25 at 5:00 PM**


**5745 Coopers Avenue, Mississauga**

**Concert & Dinner: \$25.00 per person**  
(Dinner menu will be roast beef, potatoes and vegetables)

**Concert Only: \$10.00 per person**

**Please join us as the Malta Band presents a festive concert to help us welcome the Christmas season at the club.**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

**Malta Band Club**  
Mississauga - CANADA

*The Malta Band Club*  
*invites you to attend our*

## *Member's Christmas Dinner & Dance*

*to be held on*  
**Saturday December 16, 2023 at 6:00PM**  
*(5745 Coopers Avenue, Mississauga)*

**MENU**

*Maltese style bread with tuna mixture*  
*Cannelloni with red sauce*  
*Vent mussels with potatoes and vegetables*  
*Dessert, coffee and tea*

**Members: \$40.00 per person**  
**Non-Members: \$45.00 per person**

*After dinner music for your dancing please!*

Please contact Tony at (905) 450-5885,  
Virginia at (416) 873-6013 or the club directly  
at (905) 890-8507 for reservations to this  
great event.




I would like to thank for all the hard work you do delivering such good news and





information to hundreds of people around the world. I'm sure the people that read your Maltese Journal enjoy reading it like I do.

On behalf of the Monash Maltese Seniors Social Group of Wheelers Hill in Victoria, I wish you and your family a Blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year 2024. Jane Galea – Melbourne

I refer to your comments in the above newsletter.

Kindly ensure that the newsletter will be continually forwarded to me. We are a small Maltese community, and like Australia distance is part of our lives.

I thank you once again for your services to us.

Regards Ronald Andrews Hon. Consul for Malta

PS I was born and educated in Malta.



Peter Borg lives in Adelaide, South Australia.

He is the manager of the Facebook page - Knights of Malta Merchandise

[www.facebook.com/knightsofmaltamerchandise](https://www.facebook.com/knightsofmaltamerchandise)

Peter is easy to communicate with and is genuinely passionate and proud of his products and also proud of his heritage as a Maltese.

**Malta's very own Haley Bugeja shortlisted for the prestigious Women's World Best Youth Player U-20 Well done Haley!**



**Maltese football sensation Haley Bugeja was just shortlisted in the Women's World Best Youth Player Under 20 nominees for 2023 by the International Federation of Football History and Statistics (IFFHS). And now, the 19-year-old is being even more recognised for her talents through this incredible nomination. The winner of this award will be announced in January.**





**Nostalgia**



**Pictures like this one are PRICELESS**



**Malta tal-imghoddi**