



# Maltese eNewsletter

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**2024 - The year of anniversaries for Malta**



**INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**JUM L-INDIPENDENZA**

**September 21, 1964**



**REPUBLIC DAY**  
Jum ir-Repubblika

**December 13, 1974**



**MALTA JOINED THE EU**

**May 1, 2004**

**Mary Gauci**



**HAPPY PARENTING  
MALTA**



**Bethlehem's Holy Family  
Maternity Hospital:  
a birthplace of hope**



ORDER OF MALTA



**GAZA WAR**



(1564-1642)  
An Italian mathematician, physicist,  
astronomer, and natural philosopher.

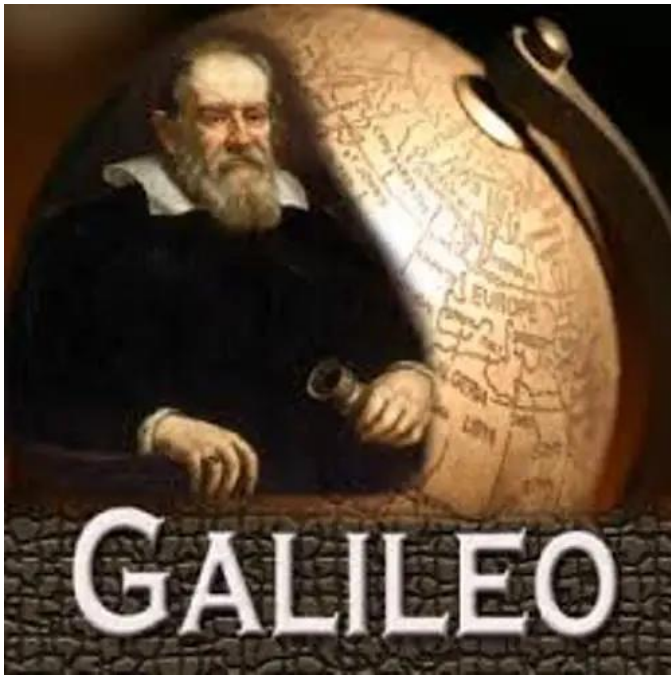
# Galileo Galilei

and his conflict with the Catholic Church



**Nour Zaqout  
from Gaza**

**A Palestinian  
student studying  
in Malta**



Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) is considered the father of modern science and made major contributions to the fields of physics, astronomy, cosmology, mathematics and philosophy. Galileo invented an improved telescope that let him observe and describe the moons of Jupiter, the

rings of Saturn, the phases of Venus, sunspots and the rugged lunar surface. His flair for self-promotion earned him powerful friends among Italy's ruling elite and enemies among the Catholic Church's leaders. Galileo's advocacy of a heliocentric universe brought him before religious authorities in 1616 and again in 1633, when he was forced to recant and placed under house arrest for the rest of his life.

#### **Galileo's Early Life, Education and Experiments**

Galileo Galilei was born in Pisa in 1564, the first of six children of Vincenzo Galilei, a musician and

scholar. In 1581 he entered the University of Pisa at age 16 to study medicine, but was soon sidetracked by mathematics. He left without finishing his degree. In 1583 he made his first important discovery, describing the rules that govern the motion of pendulums.

Did you know? After being forced during his trial to admit that the Earth was the stationary center of the universe, Galileo allegedly muttered, "Eppur si muove!" ("Yet it moves!"). The first direct attribution of the quote to Galileo dates to 125 years after the trial, though it appears on a wall behind him in a 1634 Spanish painting commissioned by one of Galileo's friends.

From 1589 to 1610, Galileo was chair of mathematics at the universities of Pisa and then Padua. During those years he performed the experiments with falling bodies that made his most significant contribution to physics.

Galileo had three children with Marina Gamba, whom he never married: Two daughters, Virginia (Later "Sister Maria Celeste") and Livia Galilei, and a son, Vincenzo Gamba. Despite his own later troubles with the Catholic Church, both of Galileo's daughters became nuns in a convent near Florence.

#### **Galileo, Telescopes and the Medici Court**

In 1609 Galileo built his first telescope, improving upon a Dutch design. In January of 1610 he discovered four new "stars" orbiting Jupiter—the planet's four largest moons. He quickly published a short treatise outlining his discoveries, "Siderius Nuncius" ("The Starry Messenger"), which also contained observations of the moon's surface and descriptions of a multitude of new stars in the Milky Way. In an attempt to gain favor with the powerful grand duke of Tuscany, Cosimo II de Medici, he suggested Jupiter's moons be called the "Medician Stars."

"The Starry Messenger" made Galileo a celebrity in Italy. Cosimo II appointed him mathematician and philosopher to the Medicis, offering him a platform for proclaiming his theories and ridiculing his opponents.

Galileo's observations contradicted the Aristotelian view of the universe, then widely accepted by both scientists and theologians. The moon's rugged surface went against the idea of heavenly perfection, and the orbits of the Medician stars violated the geocentric notion that the heavens revolved around Earth.

#### **Galileo Galilei's Trial**

In 1616 the Catholic Church placed Nicholas Copernicus's "De Revolutionibus," the first modern scientific argument for a heliocentric (sun-centered) universe, on its index of banned books. Pope Paul V summoned Galileo to Rome and told him he could no longer support Copernicus publicly.

In 1632 Galileo published his “Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems,” which supposedly presented arguments for both sides of the heliocentrism debate. His attempt at balance fooled no



one, and it especially didn't help that his advocate for geocentrism was named “Simplicius.”

Galileo was summoned before the Roman Inquisition in 1633. At first he denied that he had advocated heliocentrism, but later he said he had only done so unintentionally. Galileo was convicted of “vehement suspicion of heresy” and under threat of torture forced to express sorrow and curse his errors.

Nearly 70 at the time of his trial, Galileo

lived his last nine years under comfortable house arrest, writing a summary of his early motion experiments that became his final great scientific work. He died in Arcetri near Florence, Italy on January 8, 1642 at age 77 after suffering from heart palpitations and a fever.

#### **When Galileo Stood Trial for Defending Science**

The Italian astronomer argued that Earth and other planets revolve around the sun. Then he paid a price.

#### **What Was Galileo Famous For?**

Galileo's laws of motion, made from his measurements that all bodies accelerate at the same rate regardless of their mass or size, paved the way for the codification of classical mechanics by Isaac Newton. Galileo's heliocentrism (with modifications by Kepler) soon became accepted scientific fact. His inventions, from compasses and balances to improved telescopes and microscopes, revolutionized astronomy and biology. Galileo discovered craters and mountains on the moon, the phases of Venus, Jupiter's moons and the stars of the Milky Way. His penchant for thoughtful and inventive experimentation pushed the scientific method toward its modern form.

In his conflict with the Church, Galileo was also largely vindicated. Enlightenment thinkers like Voltaire used tales of his trial (often in simplified and exaggerated form) to portray Galileo as a martyr for objectivity. Recent scholarship suggests Galileo's actual trial and punishment were as much a matter of courtly intrigue and philosophical minutiae as of inherent tension between religion and science.

In 1744 Galileo's “Dialogue” was removed from the Church's list of banned books, and in the 20th century Popes Pius XII and John Paul II made official statements of regret for how the Church had treated Galileo.

**Heritage Malta**  
<https://heritagemalta.mt/>

**At Heritage Malta we proudly manage over 90 museums and landmarks, national monuments and underwater sites**

**<http://heritagemalta.mt/>**

DEC 2023 - In the traditional Christmas Eve Mass, Pope Francis reiterated his call for peace. "Our hearts are in Bethlehem" he cried out while cautioning against the pursuit of worldly success and power. In the city of Bethlehem, each December, Manger Square hosts a life-size nativity scene, illuminated by stars and a three-story Christmas tree. Liturgical choirs perform most nights, and the Christmas market draws visitors -Christian and Muslim alike- from all over the region and around the world. This year is different. "Bethlehem is locked down behind the Israeli separation wall and many additional manned checkpoints. Most of the workforce has no salaries or work because of

the closure and the absence of pilgrimages. While the war is over 40 miles away, Bethlehem suffers not from fighting or bombing, but from the halted economy" says Michèle Bowe, Ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta to Palestine.

Despite the cancellation of nearly all Christmas festivities by authorities, Catholics gathered at the Church of the Nativity last Sunday for Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.

"This year Christmas is very much like that first Christmas 2,000 years ago. No gifts, no celebrations, no fireworks, or festivities- just a baby born on a deep winter night under a bright star. The families of Bethlehem will celebrate Christmas with Mass, prayer and sacrifice as requested by the Patriarchs. Christmas will be sombre, reflecting on the recent events in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank. But Christmas will not be without hope" explains Ambassador Bowe.

Only a few steps away, the Holy Family Hospital is taking care of babies and mothers as it has done for the past 34 years delivering over 4,600 babies each year. Two 12-hour shifts are being implemented to limit staff travel. Nurses and doctors who live far out of the city have housing provided. Every measure is taken to ensure that the hospital's personnel remain safe. The number of births has slightly decreased in



### **Holy Family Hospital stands ready to care for newborns and mothers despite the war**

**As it has done for the past 34 years delivering over 4,600 babies each year**

the past two months, with nearly 4,000 babies born in 2023. Likewise, there has been a fall in the number of consultations due to the difficulty of the patients living outside the urban area of Bethlehem to access the hospital.

"The midwives, nurses and doctors stand ready to care for the most complicated deliveries and the mothers know to expect the very best care delivered without regard to need or creed. Some mothers, because of travel restrictions, are not able to reach the Hospital to deliver their babies as travel is dangerous at night. They will deliver at home, without medical care" says Michèle Bowe, highlighting the risk associated with home births and lack of medical assistance, one of the many consequences of the war.

Over 70% of the Bethlehem population was born at Holy Family Hospital, today the largest employer and trainer of medical professionals of the whole region. It is the only hospital in the region medically equipped to deliver babies born before 32 weeks. Holy Family Hospital is often asked to accept the Bethlehem region's most challenging medical cases. As a result, approximately 9% of all newborns delivered at the Hospital require neonatal intensive care.

## THE YEAR OF ANNIVERSARIES FOR MALTA



September 21, 1964



December 13, 1974



May 1, 2004

Sean Richardson

As the clocks ticked over to midnight to move our calendars from 2023 to 2024, we welcomed the new year with our hopes and dreams for the coming year. It also brings into focus significant anniversaries for Malta to acknowledge the past dreams of Maltese people, with important milestone dates to be recognised and celebrated later in the year.

If you turn 60 in 2024, your year of birth will coincide with the year Malta was granted independence, as a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as the head of state. On September 21, 1964, Malta became a sovereign nation.

Turning 50? Your own milestone birthday will be shared with the year of Malta becoming a republic. On December 13, 1974, Malta became a republic within the Commonwealth, and the role of the British monarch was replaced by a Maltese president. The first President of Malta was Sir Anthony Mamo.

Malta became a member of the European Union in the same year a current member of the Gen Z cohort was born. Twenty years ago, after a fractious debate and referendum which caused divisions in the nation, Malta joined the EU on the 1st of May 2004.

These constitutional changes in 1964 and 1974 were pivotal moments in Malta's history, marking its journey from a British colony to an independent nation and later to a republic.



**Sean Richardson** is a writer who lives on the central coast of NSW, an hour north of Sydney Australia. Sean's focus is to write stories for readers to enjoy, that reflects his deep interest in and affection for Malta, and his local coastal home.

Sean's ambition is to produce financial thriller novels set in Malta. This focus combines his twenty years' of experience working in Australian banking, a deep affection for Malta and a curiosity about life in Malta. Sean and his family have visited Malta multiple times and spent a family gap year living in the town of Swieqi in Malta.

Sean's aim in his writing is to tell intriguing stories through the banking industry's "*behind the scenes*" characters and situations that usually go unnoticed, until something goes awry with devastating consequences. Through telling the stories of these unseen characters, set in an amazing country, Sean's intent is to impart the affection he has developed for Malta's physical beauty and the vibe of its people, and culture.



## THE HISTORICAL VITTORIOSA (BIRGU) WATCH TOWER

The Birgu Clock Tower (Maltese: *It-Torri tal-Arloġġ tal-Birgu*), also called the *Vittoriosa Clock Tower* and originally the Civic Clock Tower, was a clock tower in Birgu, Malta. It was located in Victory Square, the city's main square, and it was a prominent landmark in Birgu and the rest of the Three Cities. The tower was probably built in the Middle Ages, although some sources state that it was constructed in 1549. It served as a watchtower since it had views over the Grand Harbour and the surrounding countryside, and it saw use during the Great Siege of Malta in 1565. A clock was installed in the tower in the 17th century.

The building was destroyed by aerial bombardment during World War II. Some of its foundations still exist, and plans have been made for rebuilding the structure.

**History** The Birgu Clock Tower is believed to have been built in the medieval period. It was built as

a watchtower, and it had views of the Grand Harbour and the surrounding countryside. An alarm bell was installed in the tower in 1504. Following the arrival of the Order of St. John in Malta, their coat of arms and the date 1549 were inscribed on the façade.<sup>[1]</sup> According to some sources, the tower was rebuilt at this point. According to Francisco Balbi di Correggio, Grand Master Jean Parisot de Valette used the tower for surveillance during the Great Siege of Malta in 1565.<sup>[1][3]</sup> Following the transfer of the capital city from Birgu to Valletta, in 1572 the Order sold part of the tower to a family from Għaxaq, who used it as a private residence. The upper parts of the tower remained public property. A clock was placed on the tower's top floor in 1629 that was built to the designs of Antonio Garsin,<sup>[5]</sup> during the magistracy of Antoine de Paule, and this was commemorated by a Latin inscription on the tower which read; *Evantunellu Carbuni me fecit nobili civitati Messanæ MCCCCIII* (Meaning: *alarm bell - requested [paid] by city nobles - [manufactured in] Messina - 1504*)

In 1921, a marble tablet commemorating Malta's new constitution was affixed to the tower. The tower was included on the Antiquities List of 1925.

During World War II, Birgu was heavily bombed by Italian and German bombers due to its proximity to the Malta Dockyard. On 4 April 1942, a bomb fell close to the tower. Part of the structure collapsed on the night between 11 and 12 April due to the damage sustained. The remaining part of the tower was hit again two weeks later, causing further damage. The ruins were completely demolished in October 1944.<sup>[4][7]</sup>

Most of the mechanism of the clock still exist, and it is in storage at the local council premises.<sup>[8]</sup> The clock's hands are displayed at the Church Museum in Birgu and Palazzo Falson in Mdina.

**Plans for reconstruction** Victory Square today, with the patch of lighter tarmac showing where the clock tower stood. The debate as to whether or not to rebuild the tower began soon after its destruction.<sup>[9]</sup> The Historical and Cultural Society of Vittoriosa organized a meeting requesting the rebuilding of the tower on 19 December 1954.

In 2004, part of the tower's foundations consisting of original cut rock on site was uncovered during an archaeological excavation by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage.<sup>[10][11]</sup> This find caused a dispute among Birgu residents as to whether the tower should be rebuilt or not. Some argued that it is a historical site which deserves to be rebuilt, while others said that it would not be the same as the original, and it would take up scarce parking spaces.



In the budget of 2006, the Government of Malta voted funds for rebuilding the tower.<sup>[12]</sup> The Birgu Local Council agreed on rebuilding it during a council meeting on 26 April 2007,<sup>[13]</sup> and submitted a development permit to construct the replica.<sup>[14]</sup> In January 2015, The Alfred Mizzi Foundation announced that it will finance the reconstruction of the tower, to coincide with the 450th anniversary of the 1565 siege. The replica is estimated to cost around €300,000. This move was welcomed by the Birgu Local Council and the Ministry of Infrastructure.

In July 2015, Birgu mayor John Boxall announced that a referendum might be held among Birgu residents in order to decide whether or not to rebuild the tower.

Now it seems that the government has settled on the decision that the tower will not be rebuilt, but will instead be commemorated

within the confines of the newly designed square.

The new design includes plans for the landscaping of certain areas within the square – which was previously all tarmacked over – for the creation of a pedestrian area, including seating, while still maintaining the flow of traffic through the city.

The number of parking spaces which used to be in the square is also set to decrease, while the existing outdoor catering areas covered by planning permits will be maintained.

The plans presented in the tender give the possibility of the existing outside catering area being expanded by 88.45 square metres along the edge of the square as long as this expansion does not include the construction of platforms and is built up to the same level of the other approved catering areas, using the same material and paving finish and with planters as a barrier to the road. Although six soil areas – designated as ‘planters’ – are set out in the plans, the tender document makes no mention of any trees being planted in them.

The tender plans also specify that the traditional Saint Lawrence Feast Umbrella would be situated in the middle of the square anyway, incidentally right next to the footprint of the clock tower.

The estimated procurement value of the tender as a whole is of just under €1 million and tenders must be submitted by 1 February 2024.

**Architecture** The tower had a quadrilateral plan, and it was around 40 m (130 ft) high. It had five floors of different heights, with a balcony supported on corbels surrounding the fourth floor. A small turret was located on one corner of the tower.

***CM Mifsud asked - Can I apply for a Maltese ID Card from a Consulate General Office?***

**No. Maltese ID cards can only be applied for in person at the Identita` Malta offices in Malta & Gozo.**

However, if you or anyone you know has a Maltese ID Card, it is important that you check the validity on it. The new version of the electronic ID cards issued from 2014 will start expiring in 2024.

<https://www.identitymalta.com/unit/e-id-cards-unit/>



The English version of the book "China in Maltese Eyes" was launched in Valletta in October 2023 by Heritage Malta and the China Cultural Centre, which began collaborating on the project two years ago.

The book features contributions from over 20 Maltese people of diverse backgrounds, who have shared their experiences of Chinese culture, history, and contemporary development.

Albert Marshall, executive chairman of Arts Council Malta and one of the contributors to the book, was inspired to write the poetry collection "Six Chinese Lanterns" after being invited by the China Cultural Centre to visit the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in southwest China in 2019. Marshall highlighted that the collaboration between Arts Council Malta and the Cultural Centre has promoted cultural exchange and cooperation, and deepened understanding between Malta and China.

"China in Maltese Eyes" demonstrates the ways in which international relations can be fortified through culture, Marshall said.

It provides a glimpse of China's exquisite natural landscapes, its rich and profound culture, and the evolving social landscape of modernization in the country.

"Their narratives not only shed light on the profound cultural heritage and beauty of China, but also offer unique and valuable perspectives," said Peng Yijun, charge d'affaires at the Chinese Embassy in Malta, at the book launch event.

## **PUBLICATION**

# **"China in Maltese Eyes"**

"China in Maltese Eyes" is "a testament to the collective wisdom of all its contributors and serves as a significant milestone in the enduring friendship between China and Malta," Peng added.

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Mario Cutajar, chairman of Heritage Malta, after his return from his latest visit to China, which he said had strengthened his understanding of China's ancient history and culture.

The publication of "China in Maltese Eyes" marks a new beginning for cultural exchange and cooperation between the two countries, Cutajar said.

During the book launch, Yuan Yuan, director of the China Cultural Centre in Malta, highlighted the Centre's two-decades-long commitment to introducing Chinese culture to Maltese people through a wide range of events and programs.

"We've been working consistently to build a bridge that spans the geographical distance between our nations and bring our two peoples together to celebrate rich history, diverse traditions, and common humanity," Yuan said.

## WHO IS ALBERT MARSHALL?

Albert Marshall was born in Attard, Malta on Decxeember 29, 1947. He is the eldest of the six children of John and Mary Marshall. He attended the Archbishops' Seminary of Virtue for his secondary education and studied at the University of Malta and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

He obtained an MA in Communication Studies from the University of Victoria, in Melbourne, Australia. Marshall emigrated to Australia in 1981. He earned a Masters in Communication Studies from Melbourne's Victoria University.

Albert Marshall was particularly active in the Maltese-Australian community, and he stood up for the promotion of the Maltese Language in Australia.

Marshall who emigrated to Australia in 1981 was the first Maltese to direct dramatic productions for the Victoria College of the Arts in Melbourne. He was also the first Maltese to direct at the Sydney Opera House when he directed Mary Spiteri in concert.

Marshall founded Harmonic 65 to promote cultural co-operation and the Maltese Language. One of its main activities is the Manoel de Vilhena Awards, an annual event in which Maltese-Australians who have promoted Maltese culture in Australia are given recognition. Marshall was also named chairman of the panel responsible for the Australian national examination in Maltese language.

In 1993 Marshall received a Graduate Diploma in Communication Studies from Victoria University (Melbourne). In 1995 the same institution awarded him an MA in Communication. In 1995 he was appointed lecturer in Communication Studies at Victoria University. He is affiliated to the Writers Guild (Australia) and the Australia and New Zealand Communication Association. In 1995 Marshall returned to Malta to take up the position of Head of Programmes of Radju ta' l-Universita' and Lecturer in Communication Studies at the University of Malta. In 1996 he was appointed general manager of the Public Broadcasting Services Ltd. And in the following years he was appointed Chief Executive of One Productions Limited.

In 2004, Marshall went to Luxembourg to work as a translator and Language Administrator with the European Commission. In 2009 Albert Marshall came back to Malta.

To this day Albert also holds position on the PBS board and he is the Executive Chair of the Malta Arts Council. Apart from his part in the television and cultural field, Albert Marshall is also the author of many books. Albert is married to Jane Micallef. They have two children, .

**Albert Marshall**  
Executive Chair, Arts Council Malta



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

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## WE ARE PROUD OF OUR MALTESE ACHIEVERS



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**WOMEN'S GROUP**



**WEEKLY LUNCH**



**WITH THE PRESIDENT**



**VARIOUS CONCERTS DURING THE YEAR**



**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**After a tremendous 2023 successful year  
the Community Centre opens on Jan 29, 2024  
Everyone is welcome to join us**

***Keeping Maltese Communities Connected***

## Alda's Traditional Hand Weaving



Alda Bugeja is the prime weaver on the Maltese islands. Weaving is one of the oldest crafts in the Maltese Archipelago. For many centuries weaving remained an important industry in these Islands. Every family had its loom and every member of the family gave his share of work in this craft, men planted and harvested cotton, children helped in washing the local sheep's wool and women worked on the looms. The Maltese national costume is entirely made from hand woven material. Presently very few weavers still operate and produce unique pieces of woven crafts.

Alda has opted to continue using traditional equipment and methods while spinning the sheep's wool, preparing the warp and weaving. She has diversified her products' design, using different types of yarn, colours and weaving techniques.



- Since time immemorial, Gozitans have nurtured a very strong spirit of survival. Very often they had to depend on the skills of their own island artisans to be able to live on an island that was isolated from the rest of the known world. The Arabs introduced cotton into Malta, from around 870, and along with it, expertise in weaving and dyeing. During the period of the Knights, Gozitan cotton linen was very highly sought after in Europe. Another century old craft is stone sculpting. A look at Gozo's churches and houses reveals a craft that has produced highly appreciated architectural artwork.

- Despite the mass emigration of the fifties and the

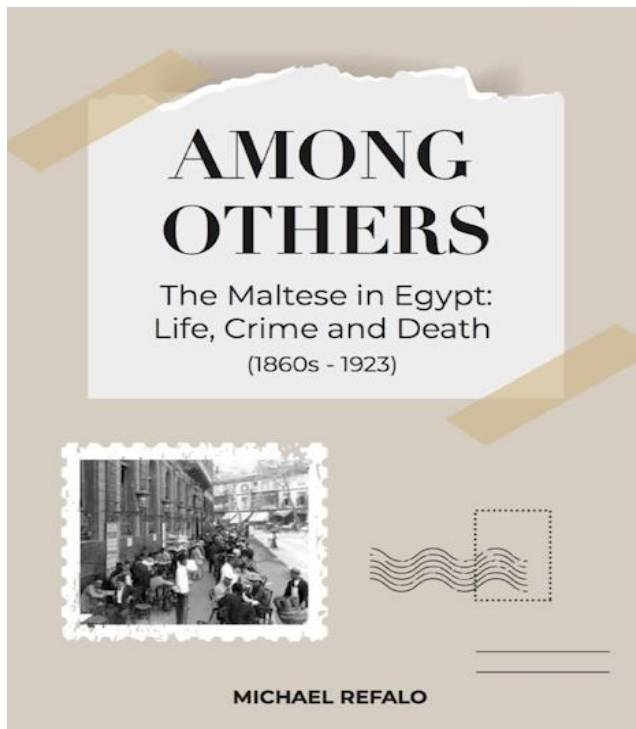
sixties as well as the introduction of modern trends and accessibilities that we today are accustomed to, many traditional crafts have survived. These skills were passed on from one generation to another. Artisan products which half a century ago had a practical use in daily life, gradually started to adapt to a new reality in the tourism sector which appreciated hand made goods manufactured in Gozo. These products – ideal gifts and souvenirs of Gozo- are now looked upon as objects d'art.



**NEW WEBSITE: [www.hamrunclub.com.au](http://www.hamrunclub.com.au)**

**The Hamrun Club was established in 1979 and is located in Marsden Park. It has been servicing the Maltese community for 44 years with Live shows, Dinner Balls, Functions ect.**

**The club also celebrates the feast of San Gejtanu in August each year with a Mass Procession and a Brass Band following the Statue and the people following the statue**



When Britain assumed its 'veiled protectorate', Egypt became more attractive to the Maltese who, themselves, were British subjects in virtue of the earlier colonization of their island by Britain. Based upon the records of the British Consular Courts in Egypt, this book delves into the relationships, the lives and deaths, the successes and the failures of this community which made Egyptian centres their home. In this book Refalo looks at the world of the Maltese in Egypt between 1860 and 1923 "from below". He analyses the Maltese living among others in Egypt, not by focussing solely on famous individuals who made a name for themselves, but on the daily lives of the many 'ordinary and anonymous' men, women and children who are usually reduced to silence in traditional historical accounts given "from above".

Through painstaking and pioneering research on primary sources, Refalo brings to life the Maltese who lived mostly in Cairo and Alexandria, but also in Port Said and Suez. They lived among fellow British subjects (as Malta was then a British colony and Egypt a British protectorate) but also among migrants coming from Greece, Italy and other Arab countries, Armenians and others.

The rich tapestry that emerges from Refalo's research has neither sentimentalism nor triumphalism. Using the historical method of Antonio Gramsci, himself a Sardinian migrant in Genoa and Turin, Refalo locates the Maltese migrants as 'subalterns', concentrating on their

## **Among Others, The Maltese in Egypt: Life, Crime and Death (1860s-1923), Michael Refalo**

coping and survival strategies to provide a living for themselves and their families.

Gramsci's subaltern perspective tries to understand society through conditions of subordination of people belonging to the different caste, class, age, gender, race etc. It seeks to present an alternate image of society through the viewpoint of the masses who are usually unrepresented.

Refalo shows us how a number of Maltese managed to emerge from their low status and were successful in commercial and professional fields. While trying to recreate, in Egypt, a home away from home, the Maltese still felt uprooted and had to struggle not only at the bottom of the social and economic pyramid, but also compete with other migrants who had also left their countries because they could not find employment and build a decent life where they were born.

Although the Maltese were British subjects, the British still looked down on them. Refalo also recounts how the Maltese related to other migrants, entered into business with them, quarrelled, married, fought, pimped, formed criminal gangs with Italians, Greeks and other migrants as well as with Egyptians. As expected, looking at life 'from the underside', reveals the "family skeletons" within the closets of the Maltese in Egypt.

Refalo also compiles an impressive statistical account of how many Maltese emigrated to Egypt, from which towns and villages they came, their professions and trades, ages and marital status. He narrates the daily lives of the Maltese in Egypt, where they lived, their homes and relations with their neighbours and involvement in the community at large. He describes their family lives: their marriage and remarriage and children at work.

Refalo gives us an account of the wealth creation and business and professional success of those who made it, but also the difficult lives of those who remained poor and marginalised. He tells us about the crimes they committed and how both the rich and the poor died, including their accidental death and suicide and shares with us their testaments.

## Palazzo De Piro Through the Years

'Palazzo de Piro is a 17th Century Palazzo nestled in the bastion walls of the medieval city of Mdina, Malta's Silent City.

What we know as Palazzo de Piro as an existing structure now, was originally three separate houses. The oldest parts date back to the second half of the 16th century. The emblem indicates that they were built by Malta's most famous architect Girolamo Cassar, or his equally renowned son Vittorio.

Over the last two centuries, Palazzo de Piro has been extensively remodelled a number of times. The internal floor levels were changed and windows

ordered blocked up by Alexander de Piro himself. The monumental stone and marble staircase were constructed in Victorian times. In the 1950's, extensive structural changes were made to accommodate the school that was run by the Dorothean nuns after the house was sold on by Orsola's heirs."

— [PalazzoDePiro.com](http://PalazzoDePiro.com) —



**Origins** Originally, part of the building was the residence of the Falca family (also known as Falco), a Noble family of a Catalanian origin. Several documents we researched indicated that the Falca family was already extinct by 1647. There is hardly any evidence and story behind this Noble family. The earliest Falca member we managed to find in Malta was Marciano Falca. The latter served as a Juror in 1429, 1433 and 1438. Also, another interesting fact is that Marciano Falca, together with another nobleman Francesco Gatto, donated 400 Uncie to help pay part of the debt the Maltese citizens owed Gonsalvo Monroy to buy back the Maltese islands.

**19<sup>th</sup> Century** By the 19<sup>th</sup> century the palazzo had come into the possession of Cavaliere Giovanni Parisio Muscati. Later on, Alexander De Piro D'Amico Inguanez and his new wife Orsola took up the residence soon after their marriage in 1868. Here they brought up a family of seven boys and two girls, one of which was the renowned Monsignor Giuseppe De Piro, founder of the 'Missionary Society of St.Paul'.

Alexander extensively remodelled the Palazzo during the Victorian era.

Internal floor levels were altered and windows were blocked up. A monumental stone and a marble staircase with dolphin figures were also constructed.

Orsola was an heiress with several properties including a palace and a small church in the heart of Florence. As a Maltese matriarch, she managed to keep up with both her family and considerable charity works. Orsola pursued her beneficiary work after the death of her devoted husband Alexander. Alessandro and Ursola De Piro, together with their children. Most prominent Giuseppe De Piro seated in the middle.

**20<sup>th</sup> Century** After World War II, Palazzo De Piro, which then still known as 'Casa Fortunata' was sold on by Orsola's heirs. The new owners, the Dorothean nuns, made extensive structural changes to convert the property into a school.

**21<sup>st</sup> Century** The Metropolitan Cathedral Chapter acquired the Palazzo, in 2005. They took the opportunity to substantially invest in restoring and renovating this historical gem to its former glory. Monsignor Victor Grech together with Architects Martin Xuereb & Associates were responsible in the magnificent transformation which took three years of hard work to bring the Palazzo back to life.

Today, Palazzo De Piro, operated by the Xara Palace Relais & Chateaux is a fully functional venue for private functions, conferences and banquets, and is also one of Malta's premier hubs for artists and cultural events.

## **Kunċert Mużikali mill-Istudenti ta'** **Mro Franco Cefai**



### **Mill-korrispondent tagħna l-Kav. Joe M Attard minn Ghawdex**

Fl-Awla Monsinjur Giuseppe Farrugia fi ħdan il-kumplex tal-Bażilika ta' San Gorg Victoria, nhar il-Ħamis filgħaxija, 4 ta' Jannar 2024, għadd sabiħ ta' tfal li jitgħallmu l-mużika taħt id-direzzjoni ta' Mro Franco Cefai, ipprezentaw programm varjat ta' siltiet mużikali, wħud minnhom dwar il-Milied. Il-kunċert ta' madwar siegħa kien jismu 'Sounds of the Season – Winter Concert' u matulu xi tfal daqqew ukoll il-flawt, il-klarinet, il-pjanu u t-trumphet. Is-serata fetħet biċ-ċekjkna Amea Jo Refalo li daqqet fuq il-pjanu 'Old German Dance' ta' M Praetorius u 'Boogie' ta' Daxbok kif ukoll kantat ilna 'Libsa bil-barnuż' akkumpanjata fuq il-pjanu mill-għalliem tagħha. Kien imiss imbagħad li nisimgħu 'Rain on the Roof' ta' J. Thompson u 'Air – from Surprise Symphony' ta' Hayden minn Kurt Saliba u dritt wara, 'Hedwig's theme' minn Harry Potter fuq il-pjanu minn Estelle Spiteri. Luca Jan Mercieca daqq għalina mbagħad 'Joy to the World' ta' L. Mason u 'The Song of Twilight' kompożizzjoni tal-Gappuniż Y. Nakada. Fuq it-trumphet,

Noah Xerri daqqilna 'Hark the herald Angels Sing' ta' Mendlesshon waqt li fuq il-pjanu tana 'Baby Elephant Walk', mużika ta' Henry Mancini magħruf għal mużika li kiteb għal films, waqt li Annamarie Amatulli daqqet fuq il-pjanu 'Waltz No 2' ta' Shostakovich. Fuq il-flawt Keira Mae Adak Demicoli daqqet bi ħlewwa 'The Dolly Suite Op 56. No 1' ta' Faure u 'Suite Antique' tal-kompożitur Ingliż J. Rutter. Tal-Kav Joe M Attard, li pprezenta wkoll dan il-kunċert tat-tfal, li għalih attendew bi għarhom il-ġenituri, inqrat il-poeżija tal-Milied, 'Puer Natus est Nobis' u wara, fuq il-pjanu, Chris Attard daqqilna 'Lights are on' ta' Rosenthal u 'Bohemian Rhapsody' tal-grupp leggendardju Queen. David Hariton Grima daqq 'Interstellar – Main Theme' ta' Zimmer kif ukoll 'And now let's Handel' ta' M. Proksh. Fuq il-pjanu Anthony Spiteri interpreta 'Grande Valse Brillante Op 18 ta' Chopin u l-kunċert gie fi tmiemu b'Colette Attard fuq il-klarinet u akkumpanjata minn Mro Cefai tatna 'Meditation for Solo Clarinet' u 'Allegro Moderato – 1st Movement from Sonata No1' tal-kompożitur Franciż J. Lefevre.



## World War 2

### THE VICTORY KITCHEN

As the siege of Malta intensified supplies became precariously low and in January 1942 the Government decided that it made sense to cook the food for the community in one go to eliminate wastage and it decided to tackle the situation by setting up community kitchens, known as Victory Kitchens,

throughout the island. The first of these community kitchens opened in Lija in January 1942 and by June 1942 there were 42 Victory Kitchens. In January 1943 more than 175,536 people were receiving a cooked meal from these kitchens, where the food would be collected to be eaten at home. Penalties for being caught stealing food at this time were very harsh and stealing a couple of slices of bread could land you in prison for four months!

Those who registered with Victory Kitchens were required to surrender part of their family ration of fats, preserved meat and tinned fish rations in return for a cooked meal that consisted partly of the surrender portion and partly of un-rationed commodities. Authentic meals served at the Victory Kitchens included hot pot meals, e.g. pork and goat stews

Gozo however had sufficient food to sustain itself and the Maltese Government deployed a member of the armed forces to confiscate food from Gozitan families in order to relieve the drastic food shortage in Malta.

As besieged Malta edged towards starvation and was on the brink of surrender the Operation Pedestal convoy – a total of 59 warships and 14 merchant ships made up the convoy, including the Texaco oil tanker, Ohio – set out with 85,000 tons of supplies, 53,000 tons of which ended up at the bottom of the Mediterranean, but the remaining 32,000 tons of supplies changed the fate of Malta. The cargo included amongst other items: aviation fuel, petrol and kerosene, medical supplies, corned beef, mutton, tinned fish, dehydrated vegetables, tins of Cheddar cheese, tins of butter, dehydrated potatoes, powdered milk, hard tack biscuits, wheat flour, maize, cotton bales, whisky, cigarettes and tobacco, guns, shells, aircraft consignments and cars.

**The Victory Kitchen song (translated into English)...tune not known!**

*Baked pasta in trays and people in array  
At the Victory Kitchens  
Minestra and sardines, pasta and beans  
At the Victory Kitchens  
What a treat on New Years Day! They made us eat sardines  
At the Victory Kitchens  
Their legs are so fat, they eat so much grub  
The girls at the Victory Kitchens  
Their hair set all wavy to flirt with the boys in the Navy  
The girls at the Victory Kitchens  
The kitchen staff were not slow to retaliate  
By saying we served you goats meat that you had to eat  
From the Victory Kitchens*



If you are in Valletta, look out for the only remaining Victory Kitchen sign in Malta that was discovered around ten years ago during renovation works to the façade of shop, that was previously a retail clothing outlet known as Krishna. The sign has been fully restored to its original red, white and dark blue colours.

<https://www.ilovefood.com.mt/>



As in years past, the JP2 Cultural Foundation will be again organizing this year's 5th edition of the Epiphany Concert. This year the concert will host one of Malta's leading singers, Mrs. Debbie Scerri, accompanied by her daughter, Nicole.

The concert will be the last concert for the season. The event is having the coordination of the Gozo Cultural Council and the Ghajnsielem Local Council. The evening will take place on Sunday, 7 January 2024 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Ghajnsielem, starting at 7.00pm.

You are invited to attend. Please help us promote this event by sending their email to your family and friends. Thank you in advanced.



0418108464.

#### MACKAY MALTESE CLUB INC. QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA

Skola Maltija Mackay - Maltese Language Classes will begin Wednesday 7th February 2024, 5:30pm at Ooralea. If you are interested in learning Maltese and want to give it a go please contact me for more information. [veronica.gauci@bigpond.com](mailto:veronica.gauci@bigpond.com) or

## Dr. BOFFA'S SURGERY

(VIA TARXIEN, C. PAULA)  
(Cantuniera ma Dockyard Street).

Sptar gdid privat ghan-nisa u rgjel. Isiru cull xorta ta operazionijet bl'oppju u minghair oppju. Dieta, indafa, cura u comodità speciali. Strumenti giodda. Tonsilli specialità.

Billi li Sptar hua mad-dar tat-tabib Boffa, il marid isib it-tabib cull hin tant bi nhar chemm bil-lejl.

Prezzijet imchien irhas—Kluh ta snien minghair ugieh.

Visiti tat-tabib Boffa fli Sptar culljum filghodu u uara nofs inhar; lil fkar b'xein nhar ta Tnein u il Gimgha mid-9 sal 11 a.m.

Min irid xi informazzjoni ohra, jirricorri direttament ghand it-tabib Boffa.

Il-Hmara - 1929

### NOSTALGIA - 1929

**THE MALTESE SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION  
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
WEEKLY LUNCH AND SOCIAL GATHERING  
NEXT FRIDAY 12 JAN 2024  
AT LEHUNTE STREET KILBURN  
EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO ATTEND**

contact@mccnsw.org.au'."/&gt;



## Happy Parenting Malta (For Happier Children)

Happy Parenting - Malta (For Happier Children) is a community-based organization that has as its main goal the well-being of those children who find themselves being alienated from one of their parents and the improvement of the parent-child relationships. The organisation aims to achieve its goal through collective activities towards the benefit of both the children and their parents, amongst others, by focusing on family-orientated measures benefiting the community as a whole.

**Mission** - To strengthen and promote the family bond as the basic building block of society as a whole, by recognising the vital role that both parents play in the life and upbringing of their children.

Children need the love, affection and involvement of both their parents and no one parent should be allowed to alienate, arbitrarily, the other parent from the life of their child. In this sense the Organisation will strive to create a level playing field between parents and to foster a culture of mutual respect between parents. Where a child is being alienated from their parent, the Organisation pledges to take all the necessary measures within the parameters of the law, to protect, uphold and safeguard the rights of any alienated parent.

The Organisation also acknowledges the important role that grandparents play in the lives of their grandchildren. Children should thus have access to their grandparents and vice-versa, thereby affirming, once again, the paramount importance of strengthening, upholding and protecting, the family bond of every child.

SUBMITTED BY MARY GAUCI

Happy Parenting — Malta  
(For Happier Children)  
happyparentingmalta.com



### GHADNA FIL-BIDU 5 KELMIET IMPORTANTI

Jien inħobb insegwi t-tagħlim tal-awtur Robin Sharma. Dan l-aħħar laqtuni dawn il-ħames kelmiet.

1 Kjarezza Inkun ċar fi ħsibijiet. X'irrid nagħmel u fejn irrid nasal. Inżomm saqajja mal-art. Ma nkunx ambizzjuż iż-żejjed li jien stess naf li ma nwassalx jew li se nidhol fi stress kbir. Irrid nirrevedi kuljum

il-passi tiegħi.

2 Strategija Kif se nasal għal dak li nixtieq? Liema rutina hemm bżonn indaħħal? Hawn min isib xi ħadd għaref u jiltaqa' miegħu kull ġimgħa, biex jispirah aħjar x'jista' jsir, u kif se jsir, jiddiskuti l-pjan u l-andament.

3 Komunità Il-

bniedem mhux qiegħed biex jgħix waħdu. Għandi nkun prudenti u nuri gratitudni, apprezzament u għożża lill-familjari u lil nies li jgħinuni matul is-sena nilhaq il-milja tiegħi u nsib l-ferħ u s-sabiħ tal-ħajja.

4 Ambjent Organizzat u Nadif

Innaqqas mill-istorbju ta' madwari. Kultant inbatu biex narmu. Ċertu affarijiet li m'għandhom użu ta' xejn, nehilsu minnhom ILLUM. Nevita nies negattivi. Nagħmilha ma' nies pożittivi w aħjar minni.

5 Integrità Magħna Nfusna Għandi inkun il-'Best Friend' tiegħi nnifsi. Għandi nwettaq il-wegħdiet li nagħmel jien stess. Nevita aljenazzjonijiet, azzjonijiet u dak kollu li ma jhallinix nimxi 'l quddiem fil-prospertà u l-paċi interna





## The Secret Behind Traditional Maltese Tiles

By Martina

I'm sure you've already had a chance to admire some of the traditional Maltese tiled floors. But have you ever wondered how are these traditional patterned tiles made?

In April Halmann Vella Ltd. hosted an open week in their factory. I was lucky enough, to be one of the few, who had a chance to join their factory tour. Are you excited to see the magic behind every tile, that's still until today, handmade by professional artisans? Yes? Here you can see some examples of their moulds. Every artisan has a sheet with the colour scheme he has to follow. Filling each section with the right colours. However everything is customizable to the clients liking. You can choose the colour code. You can even provide your own mould if you have!

There are only 4 (5 at times) skilled artisans making these traditional handmade patterned tiles. It is unfortunately a dying trade. And how long does it take to make one tile? It takes somewhere in between 7 to 10 minutes depending on the pattern. As some are more complicated than others. However, that's not the end, that's just the beginning.

After that the tiles have to be cured for about 3 weeks. So if you would order your tiles today and there would be no other orders it would take about a month to receive. But realistically speaking, if you would walk in today, you would receive them somewhere in between 2 to 3 months depending on the factory's workload and the size of your order.

And what's the method? How are these tiles made? Well, it's done in 3 stages. They are made face down, so the very first layer made is the side you see. The patterned side. The mix for this layer consists of marble dust, cement and pigment.

After all the sections of the mould are filled in, the artisans shake the form a little bit to make sure the colours settle and remove the mould. Surprisingly the colours don't mix! I know it's some sort of physical magic, but still impressive.

The second layer consists of cement and sand. The sand was dried and cured before being used. This layer is very absorbent soaking up all the water from the first layer. The third and last layer, which

gives the tile its strength, is made from cement, sand and hard stone chippings.

As already mentioned, these tiles are handmade. Therefore they are not perfect. But the imperfections makes them unique and gives them their character. Surprisingly or not, the traditional Maltese patterned tiles are still high in demand.

What I also think is worth mentioning, is the fact, that most of these artisans are deaf. Halmann Vella Ltd. is working with the Deaf People Association. They wanted to teach someone a trade, give them a safe environment to work and keep the tradition alive. Not so many people like to work manually



these days. This way, people with such disability have a chance to work and at the same time play the crucial part in keeping the trade going.

If you're not familiar with Halmann Vella Ltd., the company is the leading supplier of marble, granite, travertine and other natural stone, as well as patterned tiles and quartz. They are also proud to still practice the traditional tile making method until today.



**TELL US YOUR STORY  
WE LOVE TO HEAR  
FROM YOU  
SHARE AND  
CONNECT WITH  
OTHERS**

## Palestinian student in Malta crowdfunds to evacuate her family from Gaza Fiona Galea Debono Times of Malta

Nour Zaqout left Gaza to study in Malta last September.

Had Nour Zaqout known that a “genocide” would start in Palestine, she would not have left her country to study in Malta last September, preferring “to die together” with the rest of her family.

But, now that the 27-year-old Palestinian student has been separated from them, the only thing she can do to ensure their survival is to try to raise funds to get them out of the war-torn Gaza Strip across the border into Egypt.

“I do not want to be the only survivor,” Zaqout said, as she hears of entire families of friends being wiped out in her neighbourhood and knows it is a miracle hers is still alive.

The place where Zaqout’s family lives has been razed to the ground.

Feeling helpless as she watches the news on TV from Malta and only able to get through to her relatives now and again, she set up a [gofundme campaign](#), ‘Escaping Genocide: Gaza Evacuation for My Family’, a few days ago as a last resort and her only hope of saving them.

So far, Zaqout has raised around \$4,600 of her \$70,000 goal – it is an “open secret” that evacuees need between \$7,000 to \$10,000 to get into Egypt and the cost at the border keeps rising, she said.

“My family is facing an unimaginable choice: to evacuate Gaza and seek safety. However, the evacuation travel fees through the Rafah, the only border crossing from Gaza to Egypt, amount to the substantial sum of \$7,000 to \$10,000 for each person.

“Knowing that I have 10 family members, including my parents, siblings and grandmother, the financial burden is overwhelming,” she said. “The funds raised will only cover the evacuation costs and this is all I want. Your support will not only help ensure the physical safety of my family but will also provide them with a chance to rebuild their lives in a more secure and stable

environment,” Zaqout implored in her campaign message.

She left home to pursue her scholarship studies in Malta just two weeks before the “aggression on Gaza” broke out on October 7 and she has not seen her family since.

“Little did I know that my decision to continue my education abroad would coincide with a devastating war that would threaten the lives of my beloved family,” she wrote in her campaign that is “reaching out to you in a time of great urgency and desperation”.

Now, she is finding it hard to attend classes for a master’s degree in humanitarian action,

where she is studying genocide “while nothing is happening in the world...” Zaqout said it was frustrating and distressing.

“I do not sleep at night. I cannot ignore the news. I cannot just watch my family die. I have lost everyone else. This is the least I can do...”

“The pain and grief I feel for my family back in Gaza are indescribable. The relentless bombardments, the constant fear and the uncertainty have taken a toll on their well-being.”

To ensure their safety, Zaqout’s family, like many others, recently had to make the “heartbreaking” decision to evacuate their “dangerous” neighbourhood in the middle of the country, which she preferred not to disclose, and which was under imminent threat.

It has already been targeted and most of her neighbours and friends have been killed. Most of her family has fled to Rafah city, in the southern part of Gaza, hoping to find refuge, but, even there, the situation is dire and unsafe, she said. Her father has stayed home, along with her uncles, she continued, explaining that there is nowhere to go. With winter and heavy rain, no water, food and electricity, people prefer to stay in their houses, even if these are in grave danger of being bombed and the whole area she lives is under threat.



**The Journal of all Maltese Living Abroad**





The Maltese Ex Servicemens Association of NSW is a sub Branch of the RSL of Australia .We have been a sub Branch of the RSL since the 1960"s and have marched in every Anzac Day march since then . Maltese immigrants that have come to Australia have proudly served in the Australian Defence Forces since pre-Federation till now in all conflicts and wars with some paying the supreme sacrifice. We hold our meetings currently every quarter at the Wentworthville Leagues Club, Sydney. If you or anyone that you know has served in the Australian Defence Forces are quite welcome to join our Association





THE MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF NSW

# Maltese Heritage Day

**SUNDAY 21 JANUARY 2024**  
**10:30AM - 4:00PM**  
**HAMRUN CLUB**  
**100 JACKSON RD, MARSDEN PARK**

MALTESE FOOD  
 EXHIBITORS OF MALTESE TRADITIONAL ARTS,  
 CRAFTS AND DISPLAYS  
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 JUMPING CASTLE | FACE PAINTING

**ENTERTAINMENT BY**  
**MALTESE CONCERT BAND**  
**CHARLIE CAMILLERI & CHARLIE MUSCAT**



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Australia Hall in Malta. Erected in 1916 to entertain sick and wounded Anzacs from the Gallipoli campaign.



## From Gallipoli to Malta: A Medical, Social and Cultural History of the Anzacs

Was your Anzac ancestor evacuated to Malta from Gallipoli in 1915?  
 Or, did your ancestor work at a hospital in Malta treating Anzacs?

I am completing research for a PhD thesis on the Anzac experience in Malta during the First World War.

There were thousands of Anzacs evacuated to Malta from Gallipoli and hundreds of nurses, doctors and hospital staff who treated them.

If your ancestor had experience of the hospital base in Malta and you are interested in sharing his/her story, please contact:

Diana Sillato  
 PhD Student  
 University of Newcastle, NSW 2308

Phone: +61 0408 240 769

Email: [diana.sillato@uon.edu.au](mailto:diana.sillato@uon.edu.au)

## MALTESE DIASPORA IN THE WORLD

More than three quarters of Maltese and Gozitans who live on these islands have relatives who live abroad. We might be a small country in size, but we have a big family spread all over the world. Maltese and Gozitans have been emigrating to all corners of the world for centuries.

At first, most of our people who had to emigrate because of unemployment, poverty and overpopulation, sought a better life in neighbouring Mediterranean countries. Then, since the 1800s, they started venturing to faraway countries like Argentina, the United States and Australia.

Today there are Maltese, Gozitans and their descendants in around 194 countries, practically in every country in the world.

There are around 150,000 first generation and 400,000 second and third generation Maltese living abroad. This means that we have a diaspora of over half a million, as many Maltese and Gozitans as we have on the islands.

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*Let's make 2024 a Year of Love, Friendship and Peace*

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