



Maltese eNewsletter

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FLORIANA - MALTA 300th Anniversary

1724 - 2024



LET'S SAVE THE
THE ONLY JOURNAL
FOR MALTESE
LIVING ABROAD
BEFORE IT'S
TOO LATE

Olympic Games



PARIS 2024



Begins
Friday 26 July
Ends
Sunday
11 August



HEROES OF THE
50s, 60s and 70s

WE PAY TRIBUTE TO THE
MALTESE MIGRANTS
WHO PASSED
AWAY

WE ARE
PROUD OF YOU

DONINU MALTA



welcome to our family
website - www.doninu.eu
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WHO IS
DONINU?

DONINU
COULD
BE YOU,

IF YOU
HELP
OTHERS

READ, LOVE, SUPPORT AND SHARE YOUR JOURNAL



Hello - Kif inti? Hope this finds you well. I know you will enjoy reading the only surviving Maltese e-newspaper we emigrants have left ie **The Maltese Journal from South Australia 'SA' which goes all over Australia and worldwide.**

The Maltese Herald of NSW also was delivered Australia and worldwide for many years, but sadly stopped printing few years ago. I received the Herald since 1964 when I first arrived in Australia and that helped us emigrants a lot getting acquainted with the Australian way of life etc. I started contributing articles gratis in it firstly by typing then on my typewriter. We miss our NSW news which stopped publishing.

So send your thoughts, news and advertisements and articles for us emigrants to enjoy ie News about Malta and wherever you live globally, anyone doing good deeds, hobbies, family or friends careers, achievements, business, church festa, local suburb and community news, your children or grandchildren's involvement in Australian and Malta or globally, plays instruments ie like Didgeridoo in Malta, Radio announcer, charitable acts by friends and neighbours, any news we emigrants enjoy reading to make us feel closer to our beloved families in Australia, Malta, Canada, USA, UK, South Afrika, New Zealand, etc. etc

I am sure The Editor Mr Frank Scicluna will be very happy to receive from you directly. Please feel free to send the above to your family and friend.

God bless from Nancy Borg NSW – AUSTRALIA

I would like to join the thousands of Maltese around the world to congratulate you for the excellent journal you publish regularly for the Maltese living abroad. Personally, I read every page of the journal and I keep a collection of the magazines for future reference. We, in Adelaide, are fortunate that the Multicultural Aged Care prints the journal weekly and distribute it free of charge to all those who attend the luncheon every Friday at the Community Hall, Le Hunte Street, Kilburn SA. I hope you keep on producing this journal because it is the last and only link we have with our homeland -Malta- and with all the Maltese in Australia and around the world. As you always say that if we work together, we succeed. I beg everyone to support this journal. **John Mangion – Adelaide, Australia**



Thanks, Frank, for the "fix" as your publication is addictive, and I look forward to the wealth of information I derive from its contents. Please keep feeding my "addiction".

Fred Aquilina, Vacaville, CANADA

Who else is keeping the Maltese living oversea together and informed and connected but THE MALTESE JOURNAL. We don't want this last bastion of Maltese emigrants to finish up like all the other publications. Maltese clubs, schools, libraries, nursing homes and many others are well-served by this journal and it is imperative that we give 100% support to the editor and staff to continue their mission, The Maltese authorities ought to support our journal if they really seek to protect and promote the rights and interests of the **Maltese living outside Malta.** **Albert Gauci – Detroit Michigan USA**

Can we survive? We lost thousands of first-generation Maltese in Australia, Canada, UK and USA. Clubs are closing, journals and eNewsletters are folding down. Unite to survive!!!



This Mother's Day weekend, the Valletta Cultural Agency extends a heartfelt invitation to you and your family. Join us in experiencing the beauty of nature at our lush garden during the 10th edition of the Valletta Green Festival. The Valletta Green Festival runs from the 10th - 19th May 2024, in St George's Square, Valletta.

This green oasis boasts a spectacular array of flora, including 62 majestic trees, 5,000 shrubs and bushes, 13,000 flowering potted plants, and two serene ponds. Towering trees, some reaching heights of up to three meters, offer a glimpse into the Mediterranean landscape with varieties such as Carob, Cypress, Canfora, Oleander, and Olive trees, many of which have stood tall for 60 to 80 years. Spanning an impressive area of 42.82 meters by 27.53 meters, there's ample space for you and your loved ones to wander and discover the wonders of spring.

What to do at the Valletta Green Festival:

EcoMarket: Explore sustainable treasures including thrift finds, jewelry, art, beauty products, and more! Plus, enjoy free kids' face painting during the weekends. Spreading along Old Theatre Street, the EcoMarket is open daily, 10:00 - 18:00.

Educational Workshops: The EcoMarket is organising gardening fun and nature-inspired crafts between 15:00 and 18:00 on Saturdays and Sundays.

Live Performances: Join in musical performances by Trakadum on the 11th May, 10:30-12:00 and Ta' Verna Folk Band on the 12th May, 14:00-16:00. Experience the excitement of a flash mob on the 18th May, 11:00-12:00!

Learn and Play at the Derek Garden Centre Stand: Engage in a planting experience, try your hand at the compost balls game, strike a pose at the photobooth, and discover delightful facts about plants daily from 10:00 - 18:00.

Sustainability Education at the ERA Stand: Explore ways to contribute to a greener planet through informative discussions and activities every day from 10:00 - 18:00.

Come together with your family to celebrate nature, community, and the spirit of Mother's Day at Valletta Green Festival. Let's make memories amidst the beauty of our green oasis!



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facebook

www.facebook.com/frank.scicluna.3/

WE THANK ALL
THOSE WHO
SUPPORT
OUR JOURNAL



Language wars

Alfred Sant

It's already been some time since the red lights went on and the warning bells tolled: the Maltese language is losing impetus and its usage is declining in Malta itself. Less and less people read in Maltese. Less and less children are speaking in their own language. Increasingly the language is becoming weakened and undermined by foreign expressions that get rammed into it and are converting it into a pidgin.

If the competition about the extent to which a language is going to be spoken by the society and about how this is done, resembles a war, then it is being lost by the Maltese language. Many indicators confirm this. As when children who do not come from high society families feel lost when they have to write something in Maltese. Or like when the translations of foreign news is done so literally that it is next to impossible to understand precisely what is being reported.

Can the rot be reversed? Sure, it can. But it won't be enough for people of goodwill to go on repeating the claim made by I forget who, that without a national language, there can hardly be a national identity. This is true. But so what?



IN MY OPINION Victor Vella BA MA - Sydney

We have heard enough about the dying state of the Maltese language, family and cultural connections between Malta and the new countries of settlement such as Canada, USA and Australia. As far as I am aware nothing practical has cropped up whether in the press or in the Conventions. Here is one suggestion which, in my opinion, is practical and which if implemented would help to keep the link alive. I have already sent this suggestion to two of the Maltese Community Councils in Australia one has not yet replied and according to the response from

the other, it is being discussed.

It involves setting up a Foundation whereby money is provided for a 'prominent' Maltese Migrant first/second or third generation who has been successful in some field maybe scholastic, business, artistic field etc to visit Malta once a year or depending on the money available to give a series of talks for a week or so at various venues say at the University of Malta or business centres, and the media to talk about various topics depending on the background / expertise of the chosen one. The foundation would cover expenses of flight and accommodation. That is the basic for discussion.

If it is accepted, I envisage the involvement of say the MCC of Victoria and other States that maybe interested. I realise there is the practical side of it if implemented. Say the setting up of a small board, representing the various councils and associations involved, there is the publicity, the selection process and other details which would be worked out.

I hope you got the gist of it all and enough to discuss the whole idea. I feel it would keep the 'connection' or the 'bridge' going for now and for the future. it could bring councils together and it would offer a chance to give something back.

Any way, see what you think and I would be happy to discuss this further with you or the council or associations if interested. victorvella39@gmail.com

Regards. Victor. Vella. BA MA. (Syd. Univ)

FLORIANA IS 300 YEARS OLD

Floriana was founded on the 9th of May in 1724.

Lyndsey Grima

Today marks [Floriana](#)'s 300th anniversary, a celebration of its founding on the 9th of May in



1724, by Portuguese Grand Master Manoel De Vilhena. Initially designated for residential purposes, Floriana's establishment amid a time prioritising defense was a bold decision.

Named after Pietro Paola Floriani, an Italian military engineer and the man behind the design of the Floriana Lines. The town's original official name was Borgo Vilhena after the Grandmaster.

However, the name fell out of use in favour of Floriana or il-Furjana in Maltese.

In the aftermath of the Great Siege of 1565, the construction of Valletta, a formidable fortress, was crucial. However, concerns lingered regarding potential breaches in its defenses. To address this, military engineer Pietro Paolo Floriani proposed the creation of Floriana Lines, a secondary defense outside Valletta's walls. Although initially met with scepticism, Grand Master Gregorio Carafa later commissioned their construction between 1680 and 1690.

By 1640, the fortifications were partially defensible, but construction and modifications continued throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. They were fully complete in the 1720s. The area between the Valletta land front and the Floriana Lines started to be built in 1742 when Grand Master Antonion Manoel de Vilhena founded the suburb Borgo Vilhena.

Over time, Floriana grew, alleviating overpopulation in Valletta. De Vilhena, recognising the need for residential expansion, authorised Floriana's development while safeguarding its defensive integrity. His decree, signed on the 9th of May 9 in 1724, dictated strict conditions for construction, ensuring the area's defensibility during a siege. De Vilhena's foresight extended beyond urban planning; he championed social welfare, founding institutions like the Ospizio and Conservatorio.

Beyond its football association, Floriana embodies a rich history worth exploring—a tapestry woven with stories of resilience and foresight.

Thanks for your donation
A PRINTED COPY OF THE JOURNAL IS SENT TO ALL DONORS

My bank details are Bank Commonwealth (Australia)
BSB - 065106 ACC - 00502597
Name - Frank Scicluna

A Magnificent and Commemorative Book about the 300 years of Floriana

300th years ago on 9 May 2024 Malta witnessed the foundation of the beautiful suburban town of Floriana.

For this historical landmark the local gazette, *Il-Furjana* published a stunning book about the locality. This impressive publication is of interest not only to the Florianites but also to *Melitensia* collectors in Malta and overseas.

Editor: Stephen Tonna,

Secretary: Freddie Tonna,

Co-ordinator: Charles Zammit Moore, **Artistic Direction:** Joseph Scerri and Charles Zammit Moore

Graphic Design and Illustrations: Joseph Scerri

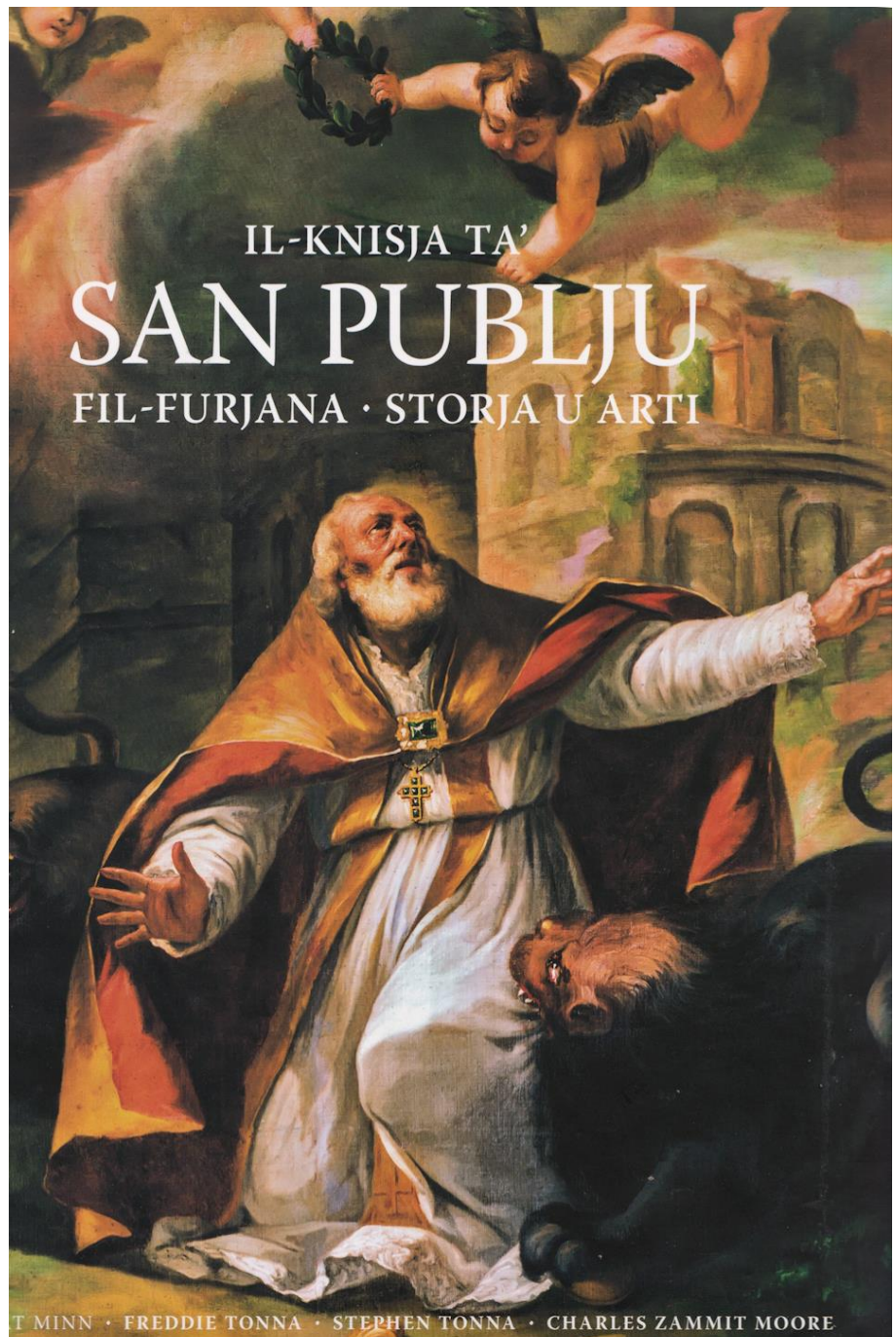
Renowned academics and writers who participated in this venture include: Dr Joan Abela, Eddie Attard, Judge Emeritus Giovanni Bonello, Dr Andre P. DeBattista, Dr Sandro Debono, Rev. Dr Nicholas Doublet, Prof. Henry Frendo, Dr Albert Ganado, Joseph Schiro, Prof. Raymond Mangion, Rev. Dr Martin Micallef, Prof. Charles Savona Ventura, Dr Giannantonio Scaglione, Dr Stephen C. Spiteri, Prof. Conrad Thake, Rev. Dr David Torpiano, Dr Theresa Vella, Prof. William Zammit, Dr Julian Zarb, Tony Terribile and Mario Xuereb.

The book is full with hundreds of historical photos many of which have never been published, contains 400 pages. It also includes specialised historical articles about various aspects of Floriana.

The publication price is €75 + postage.

Payments by cheque are to be made payable to "Il-Furjana" and addressed to Il-Furjana, 44, Capuchins Street, Floriana FRN 1053

For further information phone on 7933 9649 or send an email to: sanpublju@gmail.com



Migrants share joys, sorrows, and hopes of living in Malta are with Archbishop Charles Scicluna

Press Release - The prohibitive increase in housing costs and the conflicting emotions of joy and anxiety that came with living in Malta were the issues working migrants raised with Archbishop Charles Scicluna on 30th April 2024, eve of the feast of St Joseph the Worker.

Several migrants from Sub-Saharan and West Africa, as well as South and Southeast Asia who gathered at the Archbishop's Curia in Floriana, thanked the Archbishop for welcoming them as a father, while acknowledging the Church's role as a defender of workers' dignity.

During the meeting — organised by the Migrants Commission in collaboration with the Justice and Peace Commission — the migrants shared their joys and hopes, grief and anxieties of living and working in Malta and spoke about the life trajectories that brought them here.

Malta, they said, had become home for them; a place where they experienced a sense of belonging and engaged in meaningful friendships with the Maltese. The island is safe and offers them protection and various opportunities. On the flip side, they shared their concerns about abuse and exploitation at the workplace, struggles with securing work contracts, as well as experiences of xenophobia and bureaucratic delays.

Those present reported experiences of deep suffering when facing asylum procedures, or when attempting to obtain or renew the single



work permit. One issue that deeply impacted all workers' quality of life — of whatever nationality — was the exorbitant increase in housing costs witnessed over the last few years.

The migrants also raised the importance of offering stability and security to children born in Malta. Moreover, despite having lived and worked in Malta for several years, migrants still lacked proper and secure documentation and lived in constant fear of being deported. The need for transparent pathways to obtain long-term residence permits and citizenship was discussed.

Archbishop Charles Scicluna emphasised the importance of human dignity and stated it must be honoured in all spheres of life: “We need to listen to one another and we need to be able to give hope to each and every one of us.”

Those who attended the meeting left feeling grateful to the Archbishop for having listened to their concerns and for offering them a safe space to speak out.



gov.mt

government services

MAKE LIFE EASIER

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Gov.mt is the website for the Maltese Government. It is an information source about government services and information.

What's on Gov.mt?

On Gov.mt you can find:

- information about services for citizens (life events)
- information on government
- information material issued by the government

How can I find the services I'm looking for?

Click on the 'Life Events' option from the main menu (located at the top right of the home page). From here, you can access a list of services. Once you click on the service you need, an information webpage will be displayed.

You can also refer to the [Navigation Guide](#) for easy familiarisation with the portal's structure.

What is the 'life events' area?

The 'life events' area on the portal provides you with introductory information on a number of different services offered by government. The description can include procedures, provide information on access, requirements, and on how to submit applications.

Each service information page contains links to the relevant service provider.

How can I apply for a service?

Gov.mt is an information source about services, which guides you by providing information of what is required to apply for a service. When you are ready to apply for a service, you will access [servizz.gov](#) - the agency bringing all government services together and acting as a point of entry, making government services more accessible.

Through [servizz.gov](#) citizens can:

- Request information on Government services
- Raise an application or request a service
- Schedule appointments with [servizz.gov](#) experts
- Report problems and make complaints
- Make suggestions about Government services

How can I give feedback on Gov.mt?

If you have any questions, feedback or suggestions regarding the website, please submit them using the contact us form. You can click on the "Contact Us" option which you find in the footer of each webpage.



Maltese-Canadian pioneer **ALFRED FENECH**

A great loss for his family and the Maltese Community of Toronto - Canada

We remember Alfred Fenech who passed away unexpectedly on May 7, 2024 at 86-years-young. Alfred was the devoted husband of Doris Fenech

for over sixty years. Beloved father of Louis, Carmen, David, Stephen, and Marthese. Dear father-in-law of Christine, Steve, and Brad. Doting grandfather of Michael, Catherine, Christopher, Hanno, and Agatha. He is remembered also by his surviving siblings, Margaret and Rita, as well his many nephews and nieces, cousins, in-laws, and many, many friends.

Alfred touched countless lives with his soulful presence. Reputed as an honest, hard-working, passionate, and very generous person, he came to Canada from Malta in 1958. He met Doris at St Paul the Apostle Church, where he served as the parish organist for over six decades. Until his passing, he continued to play at St Paul's Saturday mass.

A member of the Boy Scouts as a child in Malta, Alfred went on to work at a fireworks factory, followed by a two-year stint as a mail handler for Canada Post. He then joined the Canadian Armed Forces, where he took a course that focused on how to survive a nuclear war. He began working for the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) in the 1960s as a cleaner but moved quickly up to serviceman, then mechanical serviceman and electrician, roles in which he excelled.

His Maltese heritage and love of media came together when he began bringing news and information to the Maltese-Canadian community as a broadcaster. In the many years he anchored the show, he sat across many highly esteemed guests, including former Maltese Prime Minister Dom Mintoff. Another such guest was the director of *id-Dar tal Providenza*, a home for adults with special needs. Viewers immediately called the studio to donate money to the home. In a single evening, he raised seven thousand dollars. This gave Alfred the idea to host an annual Telethon, which he took on once a year for many years. During his time producing the Telethon, he helped to raise over half a million dollars for *id-Dar tal-*

Providenza.

On top of the rigors of preparing for the Telethon, he balanced his growing family and duties with the choirs at both St Paul the Apostle and St Ambrose. He worked nights for the TTC, often forgoing sleep in order to stay on top of the many demands. For a time, he stepped into the role of President of the Maltese Canadian Society.

Alfred had since retired from the TTC and his many broadcast endeavours. He travelled extensively across the globe and had a keen sense of curiosity about the world around him. He was also a skilled baker and cook – making some of the best *pastizzi*, *torta*, and tea biscuits imaginable.

His connection to the Maltese community was a source of tremendous pride, which he passed on to his children. And in March 2006, the Knights of St John anointed Alfred Fenech for his remarkable contributions to the Maltese community. May we find comfort in knowing he has reunited with his late parents and siblings, Mary, Joe, Tony, Charlie, and Victor, and brothers-in-law, Jimmy and Nick. Alfred's sudden passing is deeply felt by all who loved him, but in that grief, we find the inspiration to live as he did: with compassion, strength, respect, and love.

All are invited to gather in remembrance and celebration of our cherished Alfred at the Lynett Funeral Home (3299 Dundas Street West) on Thursday May 16, 2024 from 4:00 pm – 9:00 pm. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated in St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church (3224 Dundas St W, Toronto) on Friday May 17, 2024 at 11:00 am. Interment in Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery (7300 Highway 27, Woodbridge) to follow. In loving memory of Alfred, donations to the House of Providence in Malta / *Id-Dar tal-Providenza* would be appreciated by the family and can be made using the "Donations" tab above.

On behalf of the Fenech family, we deeply appreciate your support and memories during this painful time.

David Fenech

WE ARE PROUD OF OUR MALTESE ACHIEVERS

Why were 2,000 Maltese civilians interned in Italian Concentration Camps during WW2? By Norma Saliba



A TVM investigation has uncovered the harrowing story of 2,000 Maltese individuals who during the Second World War were removed for internment in Italy.

This fate was shared by all members of the Maltese community in Tripoli, a good number of whom were born in Malta or Gozo. The vast majority of them survived the war years in concentration camps alongside internees from Slovenia and Croatia, Italian political prisoners and Jews.

Researched and written by TVM journalist Mario Xuereb, the documentary “Maltin Internati fl-Italja – Storja Vera” (Maltese Internees in Italy – a True Story) reveals the hitherto unknown ordeal hundreds of families passed through during the war away from their place of birth.

Evidence of the forgotten plight of the Maltese Tripolini is found in the historical documents held in several archives all over Italy. The documents caught TVM’s attention as Italian researchers were conducting research on concentration camps built by the Italian Fascist Regime for the confinement of war internees.

The documents include lists with scores of Maltese names of individuals who between 1940 and 1945 were interned in Italy. The documents also include references to single anecdotes and to the sufferings experienced by the Maltese during their time in Italy: hunger, imprisonment, beatings, rape and death.

The majority of the internees returned home at the end of the war in 1945 only to find that they had lost everything and had to start afresh.

In the course of its investigation TVM identified and interviewed a number of Maltese who survived the concentration camps and the internment in various Italian comuni.

Most of the interviews were conducted in Melbourne in Australia where a good number



of former internees re-built their lives. Others shared their stories from Canada and Malta. A TVM crew carried out interviews and filmed on site at two major Fascist Concentration Camps, set up by the Italian Regime during the Second World War, the remains of which are still standing.

A group of Maltese internees at Fossoli concentration camp in 1944

The former internees themselves have spoken to TVM about the painful memories and the brutalities themselves and their peers had to endure. They also confirmed the contents of the documents as recorded by the Italian Fascist bureaucracy and prison guards.

An interview with former internee Jane Zammit neé Cassar

The stories of the Maltese who lived in the concentration camp

Concetta Ellul tells of the day when her father was mortally wounded in the concentration camp at Le Fraschette and also of how her sister was raped by German soldiers.

Rita Meilak, at the time Camilleri, recalls how all the Italians at Fiuggi were fascists who viewed the Maltese with contempt. Jane Zammit neé Cassar speaks about how Italians in central Italy looked down upon the Maltese because of their roots and taunted them about the outcome of the war. On the other hand, Piero Grech praises the citizens of Modena and Carpi for showing mercy and for lending a helping hand to the Maltese held at Campo Fossoli. In 1943 there were 800 Maltese internees at Le Fraschette concentration camp



Arabic Maltese

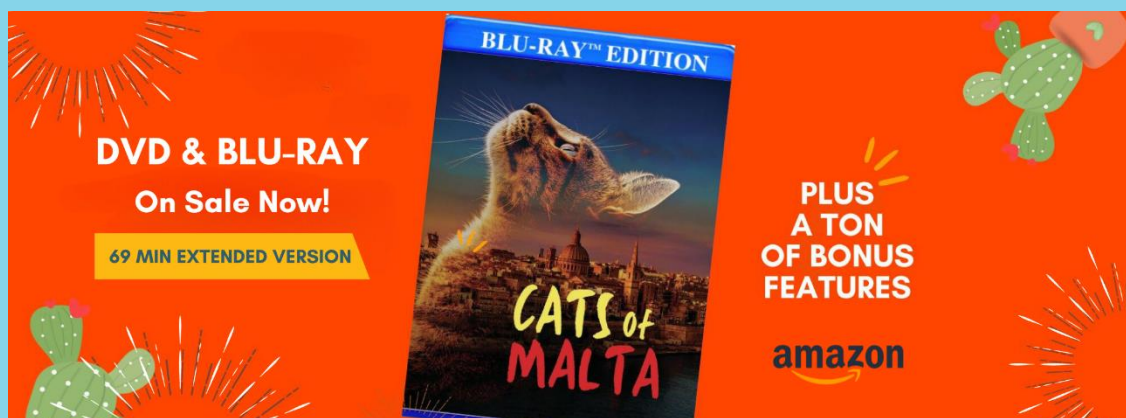
Quite similar, almost all of our basic words are Arabic, they make up more than 1/3 of all our words but they are the most used since they make up our main conversational words, it was probably close to being a dialect if it weren't for lots of colonisers' influence. Even as close as 200 years ago we still had some arab letters left in the language.

This is a Maltese poem written in 1791

I've heard European foreigners think we sound like Arabs with Italian influence. I think Arab speakers understand us more than we understand you, although we easily pick up certain words, especially numbers, fruit, animals, days of the week etc. Our grammar and nouns are also like Arabic. We also use the article "il-" for example, il-kelb, in-nar, it-tifel etc. In fact I understand a lot of Tunisian, it sounds like an older version of Maltese.

Unfortunately, some people in Malta and Gozo think speaking Maltese is somehow "low-class" and since English is also an official language, they prefer to speak it, mostly with broken and mixed sentences. I'm very proud of my language and its Arab roots, with Italian, and a little French and English, being the only semitic language in EU.

I wanted to ask, how come Arab dialects are still dialects despite being so different from each other, yet my language isn't? Alfred Bugeja



Hello friends, Team NPG / Cats of Malta hope your week is going smoothly.

We have great news (which you may have seen on social).

Earlier this year, our Media On Demand distributor handling the production of the Cats of Malta DVD and Blu-rays found an issue with the file, causing the sales to pause.

Good news is all has been resolved and both the **DVD and Blu-ray are back on sale via Amazon, Barnes & Noble (US) and other retailers (US).**

Even better news, both are now **available as 'all regions'!**

Get your collectors edition of Cats of Malta today, including a **69 minute version (the full film!)**, **bonus features, a director's commentary and more:**

Buy the [DVD](#) or buy the [Blu-Ray](#)

Also available at Barnes & Noble and other retailers.

If you have purchased a copy, please **email us a creative picture to be featured on our social media accounts**, bonus points if one or more cats are involved: sj@catsofmaltafilm.com

****Remember that Cats of Malta can be watched many ways around the globe

Watch on Cats of Malta worldwide:

[Stream Cats of Malta](#)

IF YOU HAVE WATCHED CATS OF MALTA, we kindly remind you to please leave a Rotten Tomatoes, IMDB or LetterBoxd review (even just a few stars helps too).

Verified reviews on Amazon, make a huge difference.

Leaving a review assists us in getting *Cats of Malta* seen by more people, and to rise in the rankings so more people know the film exists. You may need to sign up for an account before reviewing on these platforms.

Review on Rotten Tomatoes:

<https://bit.ly/48ETqX4>

Review on IMDB:

<https://imdb.to/3LMQJJw>

Review on Letterboxd:

<https://letterboxd.com/film/cats-of-malta/>

Until the next news update, take care, keep patting pet cats and stay humble,

Sarah Jayne Portelli - director & producer Cats of Malta

Nexus Production Group

SUPPORT THIS JOURNAL BY SENDING ARTICLES, ADVERTISEMENTS AND NEWS FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION, YOUR STORY OR YOUR FAVOURITE HISTORICAL EVENT

THERE ARE VERY FEW OF US LEFT – UNITE AND GIVE GOOD EXAMPLE TO THE YOUNG ONES – FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE



Flames on the Skaubryn

The story of the Maltese bound for Australia on board the Norweviann ship Skaubryn occupies a unique place since it was the only occasion when a number of emigrants were for a time in great danger.

This ship was built in 1951 and made six between Malta and Australia from 1952 to her journey in 1958. On that fateful journey the ship carried 169 passengers from Malta while in all she had on her 1,082 passengers with 208 members of the crew. Among the passengers were 200 children and 40 babies. The Maltese had their own chaplain with them, Fr S. Tabone from Kalkara. He was going to visit his two brothers who had left Malta eight years before. The Skaubryn left Grand Harbour on March 22, 1958, and after a short stop at Port Said the ship passed Aden to enter the vastness of the Indian Ocean. That ocean was incredibly calm and the ship continued on her way in a very relaxed atmosphere.

On Monday, March 31, captain Alf Haakon Feste ordered his crew and passengers to meet on deck at 2.30 pm for an emergency drill. Some of the people on board complained at this interference as they preferred their siesta at that time. Once the drill was over some of the passengers went to the hall where a band was playing with a few dancers on the floor. It was very calm and very hot. As darkness fell many went to their cabins for the night's sleep. All one could hear was the regular humming of the ship's engines.

Fr Tabone decided that he too needed a good sleep because he had to be up by 5.00 am. But suddenly the lights in his cabin dimmed and then there was complete darkness. The priest could hear people moving excitedly. His first thought was that some passengers had decided to go on deck to watch the Soviet satellite

Sputnik as they had been told that there was a good chance of seeing the satellite from their position in the ocean.



The reason for the commotion was that the engine room was on fire. According to the report given by Captain Feste the fire was caused by a misunderstanding between two members of the crew when they caused oil from an open line in the engine room to spurt on hot exhaust pipes. In a very short time all passengers on board were told which lifeboats they had to take. This efficiency saved the lives of all

concerned except for an elderly German who died of a heart attack. The ocean remained mercifully calm. Luckily the merchant ship City of Sydney happened to be nearby and she picked all the passengers. From her decks the migrants could watch with awe their own Skaubryn being devoured by the flames. It was April 1. The City of Sydney had accommodation for only thirty passengers. Messages for help were sent to any possible vessel that happened to be near area. The luxury liner Roma under captain Nimira, picked the messages and was soon near the City of Sydney. The Roma was on her return journey from Australia to Italy.



Fr Tabone remembered everything in detail. "All of us were taken on board the Italian luxury vessel. The crew fed us and gave us new clothes. Some of the passengers gave their own cabins to those of us who were in need of rest. The Roma took us to Aden where we disembarked on Good Friday. We stayed in Aden for three days and the local authorities treated us very kindly. We were given 10 pounds as pocket money. In Aden we knew that our relatives in Malta and in Australia had been told what had happened to us.

A Maltese bride, Evellina Vassallo, was going to Australia to get married. She lost everything including her cherished wedding dress. After three days we were taken by the Orsova to continue our journey to Australia. When we

arrived at Freemantle we were met by the local authorities and by the Maltese Commissioner who stayed with us until we reached Melbourne. The Commissioner offered us 50 each in the name of the Government of Malta. Those who were in the age group between fourteen to twenty were given 25 pounds each and 10 pounds were given to all youngsters under the age of fourteen years". (17) While on the Orsova the survivors received a telegram from Mr A.R. Downer, Minister for Immigration in Canberra. It said:

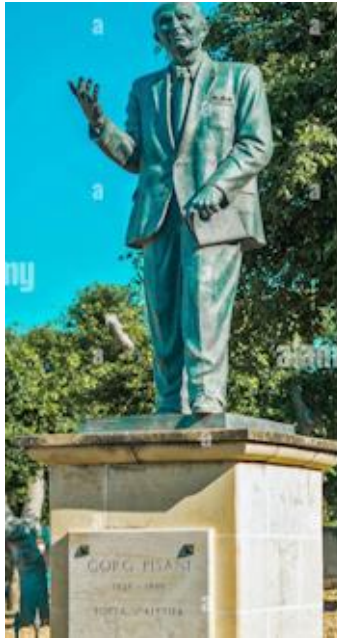
"On behalf of the Government and the People, I welcome you to Australia. We sympathise with you in your loss and congratulate you on your safe deliverance. In Australia you will find friends anxious to help you settle happily. I look forward personally to greet you on your arrival in Melbourne. 17th April 1958."



Survivors of the Skaubryn, Maltese immigrants Zaren and Georgina Camenzuli and their daughters (L-R) Lina, Lucy, Joyce and Mary in 1996
CREDIT: BEN RUSHTON

More financial backing was forthcoming. The Australian Government gave \$20,000 in compensation, while philanthropic bodies such as the Australia Red Cross and the St Vincent de Paule Society donated months and clothes. Echoes of the Skaubryn Saga were heard thirty-six years later when another passenger ship met the same fate as the Skaubryn in the Indian Ocean. The Achille Lauro had carried hundreds of Maltese emigrants to Australia in the twenty-five trips she had done in a period of five years between April 1966 and November 1971. In later years the Achille Lauro and became a popular luxury liner On October 7, 1985, she was on the international news when she was hijacked by four Palestinian guerrillas. Nine years later, on November 30, 1994, the same liner was on a cruise on the Indian Ocean when a disastrous fire broke out and was soon out of any control. On board were a thousand tourists. All were saved except three. She burned for two days when she finally went down in an area not far from where the Skaubryn had sank in 1958. (19)

Source: *The Safety Valve* (1997), author Fr Lawrence E. Attard,



GORG PISANI
Poeta u Kittieb
1909-1999

SERATA F'ĠIEĦ IL-POETA ĠORG PISANI F'ĠHAWDEX

Kav. Joe M Attard

Nhar il-Ġimgħa, 10 ta' Mejju 2024, l-Akkademja tal-Malti fakkret għeluq il-25 sena mill-mewt tal-Poeta Ġorg Pisani b'serata muziko-letterarja bis-sehem ta' għadd sabiħ ta' membri Għawdxin u msieħba oħra li kienu prezenti għal din il-kommemorazzjoni speċjali.

Il-programm inkluda għażla ta' qari mill-poeziji ta' Ġorg Pisani, kif ukoll siltiet ta' proza misluta mix-xogħlijiet magħrufa tiegħu. Fetaħ is-serata Dr George Farrugia, President tal-Akkademja u saru diskorsi mill-Arċipriet Mons. Joseph Curmi u minn iben il-Poeta, in-Nutar Dr Paul G. Pisani. Pisani miss bosta ferġat tal-letteratura: kiteb

poeziji li gabar f' *Il-Ġhid taż-Żgħożija*, *Il-Waltz tad-Dellijiet*, *Melodiji u Kuluri u It-Trijonf tal-Paċi*; drammi bħal *Is-Sengħa tal-Imħabba*, *Apoteosi u Is-Sigriet ta' Swor Kristina*; novelli miġbura fil-ktieb *Għoxrin Novella*, esejs miġbura fil-ktieb *Evviva l-Ħajja*, ir-rumanzi *Beraq u Qawsalli* u *Żerniq fuq l-Għoljiet* u kiteb ukoll l-istudji folkloristiċi *Għawdex joħlom fil-Leġġendi*.

Ġorg Pisani jibqa' magħruf l-aktar għall-importanza li jagħti lil Għawdex bħala post sabiħ u mimli sliem. Waqt li jitkellem dwar bosta problemi soċjali u umani, l-aħjar xogħlijiet tiegħu huma mnebbħa mill-imqades u mill-imkejjen tal-qedem. Aktarx għalhekk li Ġuzè Chetcuti jsejjaħlu "l-poeta tal-istorja" għax għadd gmielu ta' poeziji li kiteb għandhom tema preistorika bħal *Haġar Qim*, *Il-Ġgantija t'Għawdex* u *Għar Dalam*.

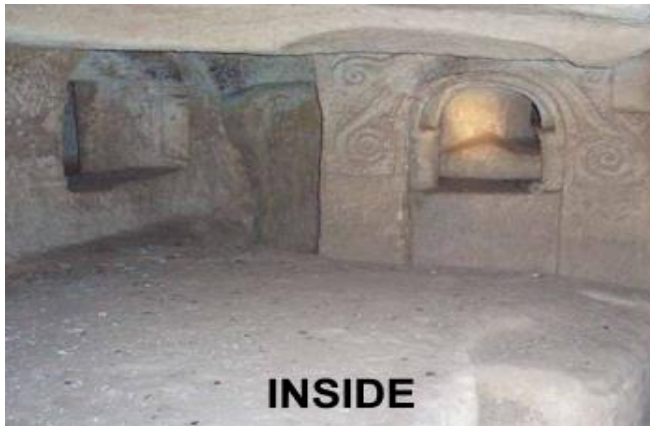
Il-programm tfassal minn sottokomitat magħmul minn Charles Bezzina, Joe Borg, Dr Manwel Schembri u Doris Zammit u kien imzewwaq bi tliet waqtiet muzikali bil-kant ta' Ruth Portelli u l-pjanista Jennifer Grech. Il-kommemorazzjoni għalqet b'filmat qasir fuq il-Poeta meħud minn Alvin Scicluna. Is-serata saret fiċ-Ċentru Parrokkjali tal-Bażilika ta' San Ġorg, fir-Rabat Għawdex.



THE MVMT'S WORLD OF DANCE VICTORY

Speaking to Malta Daily, The Maltese dance group Concept Of Movement (MVMT) founder Cheryl Lofreda shared that she is extremely happy and proud of what the team managed to pull. Lofreda revealed that it's incredible how the group have returned to the competition in 2024 after first making waves at World of Dance in 2019. The beloved local dancer and choreographer praise the competitors for an incredibly high level, reiterating her sense of pride in the team.

The group clinched their second victory at the World of Dance in Berlin, winning the Team Division title. The group, which first made waves at WOD in 2019, impressed again with their teamwork and skill. This win highlights The MVMT's dedication and adds to the growing recognition of Malta's dance community.



IS-SALINI – ST. PAUL'S BAY

Salina is a village in Malta. Salina borders Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq, Magħtab, Naxxar and St. Paul's Bay. Salina is mostly known for its salt pans and the Salina Catacombs. The word *salini* means *salt pans* in Maltese.

The **Salina Catacombs** are a cluster of small catacombs located near the Church of the Annunciation in Salina, Naxxar, in Malta. Although small when compared to the catacombs of St. Paul and St. Agatha in Rabat, they are an important record of the sizeable community that must have lived in the area in around the last half of the first millennium AD. The catacombs open on to a low ridge facing a now lost Roman harbour, making the small site archaeologically important. The site is managed by Heritage Malta and is closed to the public for conservation.

The site comprises five hypogea cut into the vertical surface of a small quarry. A number of other openings can be seen in rocky outcrops around the site and at least one hypogeum has been damaged by further quarrying, resulting in the destruction of a number of burials.

The most impressive hypogeum is adorned with two decorated pillars, an agape table and two baldacchino tombs, rarely found outside the catacombs of Rabat. The window tombs that surround the agape table suggest that it was an important feature of the catacomb. At least two of the window tombs are lavishly decorated with reliefs depicting palm fronds and other spiraled patterns. The palm fronds



Salina is open for visits on all days. Visitors may walk through the reserve freely from **Mon to Sun, 7am-8pm (April to September) & 7am-6pm (October to March)**. Entrance to the reserve is free of charge but donations are welcome.

Visitors who wish to learn more about the Park may visit when the Visitors' Reception Centre is open, as per schedule below. Many educational and informative games are available for children. On most times, staff may be able to assist visitors and answer any questions.

Summer schedule (1st June-30th September) Mon to Fri 8am-11am Sat & Sun closed

Salina Nature Park Salina Coast Road, Naxxar Contact No: 2143 3265

The reserve is located on the Coast Road, and parking is available.

Originally a harbour, the Salina site consists of 154,000 square metres of saline marshland and a number of salt pans built on a reclaimed island of clay surrounded by garrigue.

The site has been rehabilitated through a €7 million project partially financed with EU funds under the Agricultural Fund for Rural Development 2007-2013. The site's potential to attract a number of species has been proven repeatedly by birds alighting in the salt pans to rest during migration, among which the most spectacular; the flamingo – a bird synonymous with salt pans, especially in the Mediterranean. Salina is a protected area forming part of the Natura 2000 network and also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) because of the endemic flora and fauna which can be found in the area.



HISTORY OF THE SALT PANS

The Salina Salt Pans were constructed by the Knights of St John in the 16th century. The complex is home to three timber huts which were reconstructed on the same style of the original ones built by the British in the 18th century for salt production, one of which serves as the visitors' centre. It also includes the Ximenes Redoubt which was originally developed in 1715/16 during the reign of Grand Master Perellos as part of the Knights' strategy of defending the Maltese Islands against invasion with a network of coastal fortifications. During the course of the 18th century, the redoubt

was partially converted into a salt magazine. Grand Master Ximenes added a second warehouse to the complex to increase its storage capacity.

For whom the bells toll – interpreting the secret messages of Gozo's church bells – www.visitgozo.com



Gozo is an island celebrated for its ornately decorated churches, religious celebrations and devoted people. Like many of us who have read and watched *The Da Vinci Code*, we know sacred art is loaded with subliminal meaning which can be decoded and interpreted. But did you know our church bell chimes convey important messages to our islanders too?

Nowadays, our lives are saturated by a constant stream of information relayed via our smart-tech devices keeping us connected with the outside world. To appreciate the significance of Gozo's church bell rings we must look back to when island life was simpler, when many Gozitans worked the land to survive and existed without Internet, TV, radio or telephones.

The conventions and traditions of Gozo bell-ringing originate from our close connection with Sicily and Southern Italy. It's no surprise then that many of the churches in Gozo have sets of bells from the Italian

foundries Prospero Barigozzii and Bianchi.

The Bishop of Nola, St. Paulinus first introduced bells to churches way back in the 5th century, using them to alert monks to times of worship. But it wasn't until the era of the Knights of the Order of St John that bell-founding was introduced to the Maltese islands. This trade was taught by Knights, but had a cloak of secrecy around it because the metal alloy formula used for constructing the bells was kept a guarded secret even from many of the foundry workers. Not surprisingly, the trade very soon died out and the formula died alongside the foundry owners.

Churches are logistically and spiritually the centre of community life, often dominating the parish square where tolls from their bell-towers can be heard in even the remotest corners of the village. Historically, bell-ringing was an effective system for communicating the time of day – as well as news of births, deaths, and important events. During these bygone days, clocks and watches were often considered for the wealthy and Gozo's one public clock was situated inside the Cittadella. So, these bell chimes which ring on the hour and then at regular 15 minute intervals were used by villagers for time-keeping. This helps us understand why poor villagers pledged money to support the purchasing of church bells, as the bell rings actively punctuated and regulated their day to day lives. For example, at 4am every morning Gozitans hear the 12 pealings of the Pater Noster, this announces a new day and was used as a signal to countryfolk to get up and start working the land; to devout churchgoers it signified the first mass in Latin was shortly to begin. In some churches, Pater Noster is characterised by 33 strikes representing the number of years Jesus Christ spent on earth. This same peal is repeated much later in the day at dusk and then 1 hour afterwards which signals the arrival of night, known as 'Siegħa Lejl' (the night hour) or 'Tal-lmwiet' (the hour of the dead).

The 'Angelus' and the 'Ave Maria' are heard at midday.

Gozo's church bells convey much more than time and announcing prayers; they tell parishioners when a local is gravely ill or has died. Locals became adept at quickly de-coding these differing peals and tolls.

When people are close to death, the church bells toll in duple time (2 beats to the bar) to mark *Viaticum* (the Eucharist or Communion given to a person who is dying or in danger of death). Then, as the priest walks the Blessed Sacrament from church to the dying persons' home, it was



customary for locals who'd heard the tolling to follow behind speaking the rosary.

The bell tolls announcing the death of a local differ according to whether the deceased is a child, male or female or a member of the clergy. Each will have their own unique toll. The death of an older parishioner is illustrated by a slow, doleful peal known as *ta' l-Agunija*. Whereas the *tal-Glorja* is much faster and indicates a child's death this is much quicker in pace and is said to herald the youngster into heaven as they become an angel. When a clergyman dies the salute is known as '*Libra*'.

Many churches in Gozo dominate the landscape from their imposing positions, so the bells were also a useful way to relay messages between parishes – acting like ecclesiastical smoke signals. During the Second World War church bells served as a warning to people, sounding out to inform them of forthcoming enemy air attacks.

Because of their height, church bells can attract lightning and so to reduce potential church damage

a magnet is attached to the cross at the very pinnacle of each church's dome and the rim of the church bells are lined with copper. So, if lightning does strike, the voltage gets absorbed by the lining and travels down to be discharged in a well.



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Saturday June 17th | 7pm

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Brazilian Single Mother Reconnected with Her Son After Years Apart - 'Malta Is A Blessing'



By [Tim Diacono](#)

A Brazilian single mother has shared her story about moving to Malta and spending almost three years apart from her son before finally bringing him over.

Charlene's story was posted by The Expatriates of Malta, a Facebook page started by Barbara Lipovsek to create bridges of compassion and understanding between Maltese locals and expats. She first moved to

Malta in 2013 to study English, a decision she said she took due to limited opportunities in her home country.

"My son was five-years-old at the time and I had no choice but to leave him at my parents' house so I could go and try to create a better future for me and him," she recounted.

My original plan was to stay in Malta for only two months but ended up staying the entire year as my English learning wasn't progressing fast enough and I simply couldn't leave before my trip was worthwhile."

Charlene left Malta but returned to work at a hotel in 2019, leaving her son with her parents in Brazil as she paid for his schooling and the rent of her parents' apartment, all while sorting out the necessary documents to bring him over.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020 and Malta closed its borders, Charlene – like many people – assumed it would only be a matter of weeks before life returns to normal. However, it dragged out and the lack of tourists meant no work for her.

However, she found a blessing in the form of her Maltese landlord, who let her go four months without paying her rent.

"He was a blessing sent from God," she said. "If not for him, I don't know how I could survive."

Charlene found other jobs to pay her bills and provide for her son, and soon found that she had spent almost three years apart from him.

"Arranging for him to move to Malta required a lot of documents – and that required a lot of money as well – and here I was, barely getting back on my feet financially after Covid, and I still had to wait."

When election protests broke out in Brazil, Charlene realised she had to bring her son over.

"I flew to Brazil to surprise him on his 15th birthday. Only my brother knew I was coming so it was a huge shock for my parents as well," she said.

"I arrived at my parents' apartment when my son was still at his soccer practice so I had to wait another two hours to see him. Those two hours took forever to go by, but soon enough he arrived home to his surprise birthday party, and when our eyes locked we just burst into tears and hugged as a whole lifetime was between us."

"I could not believe the man he grew into. My baby. My heart was finally full. I had it all once again, in my arms. Nothing mattered anymore."

"After two weeks, I arranged everything for my son to come with me to Malta and now we are home. Now my heart can rest because I'm not scared for my son's safety anymore, and he is here with me. Everyday." www.lovinmalta.com



A NEW EDITION OF A NOVEL WRITTEN IN 1937

Born in Senglea, John Francis was the son of Daniel Marks, a Jewish; born in Warsaw, Poland and Concetta née Chetcuti. Marks was educated at the Lyceum and the Dockyard College. In 1907 he joined the Dockyard as engine-fitter apprentice and was later appointed draughtsman and leading draughtsman, M.E. Department.

Marks was a dedicated trade unionist and staunch defender of the working classes. He worked hard for the promotion of the Maltese language. To achieve this aim, in 1930, he set up the 'Kamra ta' Qari Malti' in the Labour Party club in Senglea, where he was also the Club's promoter and president.

Last week a new edition of the novel "Tejbilhom Hajjithom" by John Francis Marks was released. Marks worked hard for the working class and for the Maltese language. He is the grandfather of Professor Arnold Cassola, and he described him as a man who

"was so dedicated to politics and dedicated to the Labor Party that the family came after".

This was written in the introduction to the new edition of the novel which was originally published in 1937, in a social context full of social problems such as illiteracy, and crime. The writing of Marks testifies to the political commitment in literature especially for the emancipation of the working class, with the pages that raise social awareness, and the different stories that in their totality want to instigate learning and pave the way for socio-moral reform.

This sentiment is also felt in other novels of his time, such as *Uljed in-Nanna Venut fl Amerka* by Ġwann Mamo, *Leli ta' Haz Zghir* by Đuzè Ellul Mercer and *L'Ibleh* by Đuzè Orlando.

Cassola, who was the mastermind for the book to be reprinted, said that his grandfather was "always in mind to implement a true socialist policy, to emancipate the people".

During the launch of the book which took place on April 26, the former Vice-President of the Maltese Association and the editor of the novel, Anthea Enriquez said that the printing of such publications is "a duty to enrich our culture, educate future generations and preserve the intellectual heritage".

The novel also includes two critical studies, one by the late Oliver Friggieri called "Ir-rakkontatur li jgħallem" "The narrator who teaches" and the critical comment by Mark Vella, "Dak li ma jingħadx – Is-Silenzji ta' Tejbilhom Hajjithom". The project was in the hands of the Maltese Association - University in collaboration with Klabb Kotba Maltin.

