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# Maltese e-Newsletter



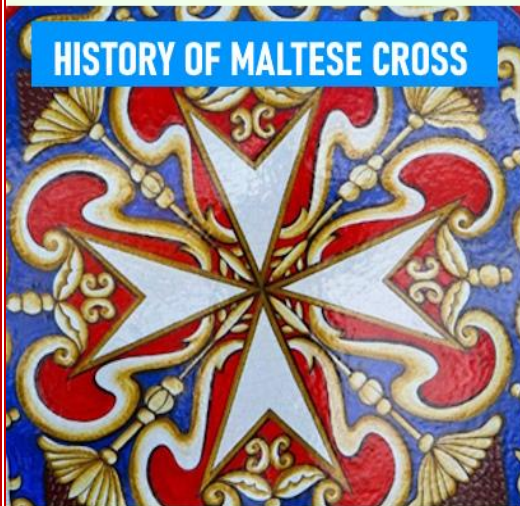
## The current development proposal for Villa Rosa



Franciscan Sisters  
of the  
Heart of Jesus

**70 YEAR  
CELEBRATIONS  
OF FRANCIS  
Of ASSISI  
HOME  
MACKAY - QLD**

### HISTORY OF MALTESE CROSS



Gianni Schicchi

Suor Angelica

Il Tabarro

**IL TRITTICO at the Aurora in Gozo**



Ludwig  
van  
Beethoven  
German  
composer



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





The Maltese Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus pictured with the Bishop of Rockhampton, Mgr. Michael McCarthy at the 70th Eucharistic Celebration Holy Mass, 4th October 2024 at Francis of Assisi Home Mackay Queensland  
Photo by Deanne Woods Photography

***Contributed by Carmel Baretta***

On Friday 4 October 2024, the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Francis of Assisi Home (previously St Vincent de Paul Home for the Aged) in Mackay, Queensland. Chief celebrant of the Thanksgiving Mass, Bishop Michael McCarthy of Rockhampton Diocese, was supported by local and visiting priests. Robyn Sheedy, on piano, led a choir whose angelic voices complimented the evening's proceedings.

Ten Sisters from the Home were joined by four Sisters from NSW. Other members of the Order sent their apologies. The younger generation began the evening celebrations with a delightful Filipino dance.

The Dining Room was beautifully decorated by the staff and over 50 historical charts pertaining to the Home were on display including photographs of most of the 142 staff currently employed there. An alcove dedicated to St Francis added to the ambience in the room. A second photographic display in a nearby corridor proved very popular with residents, staff and guests alike. After Mass and a delicious supper, staff and some of the Sisters entertained guests with a play on the life of St Francis of Assisi. Sister Pauline Bonavia portrayed Francis and stole the show with her acting skills.

A 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cake was cut by Sisters Firmina and Ottavia (who had arrived in Mackay with a second group in 1955) and Mrs Mary Deguara who was a member of the first Women's Auxiliary Committee and is now a resident of the Home.

This has been a truly memorable event which was attended by about 250 people. Congratulations to the Sisters, staff and volunteers who ensured that the evening was an outstanding success. A Commemorative booklet beautifully written and illustrated, was distributed to guests at the end of the evening's celebrations.

**WE ARE PROUD OF OUR ACHIEVERS**



### **SEVENTY YEAR CELEBRATIONS OF FRANCIS OS ASSISI HOME (previously known as St Vincent de Paul Home for the Aged) – by CM BARETTA**

The opening on 19 September 1954 of the St Vincent de Paul Home, Dupuy Street, West Mackay, was a culmination of the dreams and aspirations of many but particularly Rev Andrew P Helion, then parish priest of St Francis Xavier's Church.

Prior to 1954, the elderly who had no family to care for them and were unable to live independently, remained in hospital as they had nowhere else to go.

Land was purchased from the Crowley and Vigliante families. The St Vincent de Paul Society donated substantial funds to enable the purchase and relocation of a large home situated at the corner of Victoria and Peel Streets, Mackay. The building was originally the home of Mackay's softdrink-making Vestergaard family who built it in the 1980's.

Voluntary workers of all trades and professions completed the reconditioned building in time for the arrival of six Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus of Malta on 6 June 1954. A second party of three Sisters arrived on 25 November 1955. Two of these, Sisters Ottavia and Firmina, are still here at the Home. Their working days are over but their immense contribution to the elderly of Mackay is a lasting testament of their devotion and commitment over the past 69 years.

A new convent opened 19 August 1955, fulfilled a promise to the Sisters and was named Our Lady of Victories.

A second wing was added to the Home during 1958/59 and then the 'Infirmary Wing' was opened 30 August 1965. In 1972, Fr Kevin Johnson organised volunteers to transfer the old chapel and the Vestergaard building was demolished to make way for extra residential units, a new chapel, kitchen, dining room and laundry. These were blessed by Bishop Wallace and opened by Senator Chaney on 3 October that year. The opening coincided with the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of St Francis of Assisi.

In 1988 the Sisters purchased a piece of land for the building of a new 50 bed Hostel. This project was partly subsidised by the government. On Sunday 2 December 1990, the Hostel units were blessed by Father Joe Carroll and opened by Hon P Staples.



The old building was demolished and on 3 November 2005, 24 high care rooms, a 15 bed Memory Support unit as well as a new kitchen were blessed by Bishop Heenan, Bishop of Rockhampton and officially opened by Mother Anselmina Mifsud, Superior General.

In 2015, Sections C and D were demolished and new rooms, dining rooms and activity areas, were built. The building was blessed on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2016 by Bishop Michael McCarthy and officially opened by Sister Vittoriana De Battista.

Extensions and renovations over the years have ensured that residents enjoy a comfortable, peaceful and happy environment in their twilight years. Initially, 30 people took up residence in the Home; today there are 148 residents, 10 Sisters and 142 staff. Currently two Sisters are teaching religion to the Indian Community at Sunday School.

The Home, which is interdenominational, ensures that loving care, tenderness and concern is lavished on the residents irrespective of who they are or what their condition.

This year the Sisters are also commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Fr Joseph Diacono – founder of the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus.

The Sisters live by the vision of the Home which is *“Serving with Compassionate and generous love those we care for.”*-----



## IL TABARRO SUOR ANGELICA GIANNI SCHICCHI 12 OCTOBER 2024

A triptych of one-act operas, **Il Trittico** is

one of the most expansive undertakings for any opera company, and to celebrate the centenary from the death of the composer, the Teatru tal-Opra Aurora is proud and excited to present this ambitious project in 2024 – **Il Tabarro**, **Suor Angelica** and **Gianni Schicchi**.

A trio of one-act operas of love and loss, **Il Trittico** runs the gamut from high drama and heartbreaking tragedy to devilish black comedy and farce. Trapped is the recurring theme, as **Il Tabarro** (The Cloak) sees a wife trapped in a marriage she yearns to escape, **Suor Angelica** is trapped into a life for which she has no vocation, while Buoso Donati's dysfunctional family is funnily enough caught in the snare of a shameless conman, Gianni Schicchi.

### **Celebrating Puccini's 100th, with a gala premiere!**

The three single-act operas are often performed separately, but Puccini conceived them as one unified path from the darker to the lighter. In Malta, **Il Tabarro**'s only performance can be traced to 1924, a whooping hundred years ago, while **Suor Angelica** and **Gianni Schicchi** were performed together on the main island in 1928. Since then, this will be the first time ever the three works of art shall come together in this new production of the Aurora Opera House. **Colin Attard** conducts the **Malta Philharmonic Orchestra**, the **Aurora Opera Chorus** and an international cast of opera artists which appears in the links above.

In celebrating the 100 years of Giacomo Puccini's demise, the Aurora is specifically celebrating 1924. Thus, this year's aesthetics have been entrusted to **Riccardo Buscarini** (stage

direction), **Luke Azzopardi** (costume design), **Mike Zerafa** (set design), and **Moritz Savan Stoeckle** (lights design) in what promises to be a thrilling feast for the eyes, apart from music for everyone's ears, as opera in Gozo has been ever since.

**In celebrating the 100 years of Giacomo Puccini's demise, the Aurora is specifically celebrating 1924 with a very significant premiere!**

**Il Tabarro** get its name from the cloak in which the tragic murder of an adulterous man takes place on the banks of the Seine. It runs on a libretto by Giuseppe Adami, taken from Didier Gold's *La houppelande*. Puccini's admittedly favourite, **Suor Angelica** is a lyric opera with a libretto by Giovacchino Forzano. It's one of the few all-female operas, where male voices, as well as a children's chorus only sing at the end, from off stage.

The third piece, **Gianni Schicchi** is a comic opera, again with a libretto by Giovacchino Forzano based on an episode of Canto XXX from Dante's Divine Comedy.

**Seats** are now running dry and selling quite fast at €90, €75 and €55 with a few remaining **Premium Boxes** that come with the luxury of a butler service, champagne and nibbles in the comfort of your exclusive box. They are easily obtainable online, (see link above) or via our tickets helpline +356 79045779 (calls/sms).

**ANTHONY GRIMA**

**Chief Operating  
Officer (COO)  
The AllStars Academy  
(TAA)**



Having been voted #8 in the Top 30 Franchise Executives in 2023, Anthony has been employed in various senior executive roles including Chief Operating Officer, franchising, and Sports Business roles including in commercial and sponsorship, media, events management, sales, talented player development, elite team management and Futsal (Indoor 5-a-side football).

Currently Chief Operating Officer at The AllStars Academy (TAA), Anthony was formerly employed as Head of Commercial at Football Victoria (FV) and was responsible for the strategic management of FV's sustainability activities and oversees sponsor, licensing and partner activation at all relevant FV events/programs including FV's Community in Business network and formerly also the Melbourne Victory W-League program.

Anthony was also intrinsically responsible for maximising the profile of FV and ensuring the implementation of a master brand and marketing strategy and overseeing the delivery of all FV media and communications. Anthony also played a key advocacy role to help secure state and federal government funding for the Home of The Matildas at La Trobe University, Bundoora. Anthony was previously Team Manager of the Melbourne Victory National Youth League program and has been FV's representative for major football events held in Victoria including the 2015 AFC Asian Cup Australia, 2015 & 2016 International Championship Cup tournaments, the Real Madrid World of Football Premiere, the FIFA Ferenc Puskas Award Tour and Statue unveiling and Socceroos and Matildas matches held in Victoria. In 2018, Anthony represented Australia as a journalist at the Football For Friendship international children's social program in Moscow, Russia, ahead of the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia.



Following a successful roadshow throughout Queensland in early September, we've just completed a productive three days in [hashtag#Sydney](#), visiting 72 schools across New South Wales as part of our efforts to strengthen relationships for [The AllStars Academy \(TAA\)](#). The positive responses we received reaffirmed the strong and growing demand for our [Sport Star Academy \(SSA\)](#) programs including football (soccer), basketball, cricket, badminton, AFL and rugby. We're pleased to confirm that we've secured new program launches for Term 1, 2025, and we're excited to continue supporting young people.

## Thomas Pirotta

### Maltese Surgeon [MRCS, FRCS, MBBS, FRCS, FACS<sup>1</sup>] 1933 – 1975



*Thomas Pirotta with Maltese Passport in hand leaving Malta for Australia 1949 aged 16*

*Thomas in graduation gown taken on the feast of Christ the King 24 November in 1948 aged 15*

*Thomas with family, wife Patricia, Marie, Michael and Julie 1973*

*Thomas and Patricia wedding day*



On 3 March 1975, Dr (Mr) Thomas Pirotta and his four passengers were tragically killed when the twin engine Beech D55 Baron, VH- TYM, which Tom was attempting to land, crashed at Parafield Airport, Adelaide, South Australia.

This sad and tragic accident cut short the life of a Maltese post war migrant who forged a successful life and career in Australia, as many other Maltese have done. Tom, born in Valletta on 1 April - April Fool's Day - was no fool. During the war he for a period, lived in Żebbuġ, where his mother Mary Gatt was born and raised. He studied at the

Lyceum and the Royal University of Malta, while still very young.

born into a humble family. His father, Saviour (Sam), joined the army and rose to the rank of Sergeant Major, while Mary, as tradition required, raised the family. Sam was also an army cook. His family in Australia all enjoyed Nannu's timpana, pastizzi and ravjul, which were truly memorable. Mary married Sam at 16 after he proposed to her in the Upper Barrakka Gardens, Valletta. By age 19, Mary had had all her children.



Thomas was the eldest son and second in the family to his older sister Anne, and older brother to twin boys Charles and Edward. We remember Nanna saying of her early married years, "I cried, they cried, we all cried"! Mary received almost no formal education. Her grandchildren remember she had one book in Maltese she would try to read in the sunroom of her Pascoe Vale home in Melbourne. She was the second youngest of about 16 children. When Her mother died while she was young, her responsibility from that time was to look after her younger brother, Joesph. Thus, she learnt her domestic skills, becoming an excellent housekeeper, although she never enjoyed the cooking! As the family had few resources, Tom was billeted to Sam's sister, Mary, who helped raise him. She was unmarried and had an adopted son of her own, another Thomas. She was a businesswoman who owned the well-known and long-established Maltese Lace Shop, near the Upper Barrakka Gardens. Her adopted son, Thomas, ran the business until his death about 7 years ago.

We don't know how Tom's academic interests were sparked, both Tom and Anne attended University with Anne becoming a teacher. Perhaps he was inspired by teachers along the way. We know his mother was intensely ambitious for her eldest son. Maybe receiving no education herself and seeing promise in Tom, she was determined for him to do well. It was Nanna's drive for her family's education and specifically for Tom to study medicine that was behind their migration to Australia, leading to Tom's eventual success family still has numerous books awarded to Tom for educational excellence, both in humanities and the sciences. Thomas was also a keen artist, with pen sketches, water colours and oil paintings testament to his skills. We each have some of Tom's art works in our homes. Tom won two swimming trophies for 55- and 110-yard freestyle races and he played for one of Valletta's top water polo teams. Thomas was a bright student, skipping several school years, completing his high school and initial year of university at the Royal University of Malta by the age of 16. Mary, ambitious for Thomas and for a better life than was available in post war Malta, sent Anne to Australia with her own younger brother, Joseph Gatt and his family. Anne took with her Tom's references and grades to find him a university place to study medicine.

Thomas arrived in Australia aboard the SS Columbia on 23 December 1949, aged 16, having successfully obtained a place at the University of Adelaide, Australia. Little is known of his years at university, except that he and one Indian woman were the only two non-Anglo students in the cohort., He gained his qualifications as a doctor (MBBS) in 1955. Tom also undertook his compulsory Australian national service, appearing in a front-page photo of the Adelaide paper "The News" on 2 January 1952, on the day he was inducted into the Australian army.

Thomas met Patricia Flaherty from West Croydon, Adelaide, at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, where Patricia worked and was training to be a nurse. Thomas and Patricia were married at St Margeret Mary's in West Croydon in 1957. Shortly afterwards they sailed to the UK where Thomas continued to gain experience working as a doctor in various hospitals and positions, while he extended his education to gain surgical qualifications in both the Edinburgh and London Colleges of Surgery (1961-1962). While in the UK, Marie 1959 and Michael 1961 were born, with Michael celebrating his first birthday on the ship home. The rest of Thomas's Maltese family had migrated to Melbourne in 1950.

Thomas's practice was successful with demand not only in Melbourne, but also Sydney and Adelaide. In addition, he was a volunteer chief surgeon in the St John's Ambulance in his local branch.

He was a leader in the Melbourne Maltese community, being an active member of a large Maltese social club and serving on the Board, which eventually established the Maltese Community Centre, which remains an important hub of the Maltese community in Melbourne to this day. Tom was a handy man at home, was interested in modern technologies and alternative medical techniques such as acupuncture. The family remembers him coming home one day with a small calculator that could do basic maths functions! He and his brother Charles had a love for traditional Maltese music. Tom in his last years commenced martial arts training. He also loved British cars owing a number including several Jaguars which were his most loved.

A close family friend of Tom's, Hugie Azzopardi, fondly remembers Tom's excitement at watching wrestling matches, "He was transformed for a reserved quiet man, to something completely different", Hughie recalls.

One of Tom's colleagues, Dr Gordon Cheyne noted at the time of his death, "Dr Pirotta was a painstaking, hardworking man. He built up a lucrative practice mainly because he had an obsession with detail". At the time he was only one of two full time hair – transplant practitioners in Australia. Tom was able to combine his professional pursuits with his flying passion.

Sadly, it was flying that ended his life on 3 March 1975, aged 41.

Thomas left behind his wife Patricia, 37, Marie 16, Michael 13 and Julie 10. Marie followed in her father's footsteps, graduating from The University of Melbourne with a Medical Degree in 1983, followed by specialisation in general practice (FRACGP) and later a PhD. Michael graduated with a Bachelor of Business from Swinburne University in 1982 majoring in Accounting and Julie gained a psychology degree with Honours at The University of Melbourne in 1985 and a Masters Degree in Psychology at Curtin University. Michael's eldest daughter, Katie is a pilot flying business jets throughout Europe and the US and lives in Malta with her Maltese husband. We were all inspired by our father's passion for academic pursuits.

Thomas rests with his grandson, James Pirota (1 July 1985 to 31 October 2009) in Faulkner Cemetery, in Melbourne Australia.

On March 3, 2025 - 50 years on - the family will commemorate this tragedy by unveiling a plaque at the Parafield Airport heritage centre in Adelaide. **Patricia, Marie, Michael and Julie Pirota March 2025**

## The Addolorata Cemetery, PAOLA, MALTA



In common with Christian cultures all over the world, most Maltese mark the month of November with a visit to the graves of their departed loved ones. There are several village cemeteries scattered all over the Island, mostly humble, quiet and somber places usually adorned by a small central chapel. Malta also has a large national cemetery which merits an off the beaten track visit for its architectural and aesthetic values. The Santa Maria Addolorata Cemetery, on the outskirts of Paola, was designed by local architect

Emanuele Luigi Galizia and opened in 1869, initially as a burial ground for the towns and villages of the vicinity. Galizia was a gifted architect who not only introduced the Gothic revival in Malta - best exemplified here - but also experimented with a number of styles, most notably in the construction of the Turkish cemetery in Marsa as well as a number of Moorish themed houses in Sliema.

At the Addolorata, Galizia made exceptionally good use of the site's topography, placing the cemetery's main chapel at the top of a hill from which a number of tree-lined lanes meander down to the cemetery's main entrance which is adorned by a gatehouse and a beautiful curved portico. The Addolorata easily compares with the finest of Europe's monumental cemeteries, having a good number of richly carved private mausoleums in its older parts and a good representation of funerary sculptures.

Most noteworthy of the latter is a poignant bronze put up by a travelling businessman who, upon his unexpected return to the Island, so surprised his ageing mother that the excitement apparently helped to quicken her demise. Like most other places in Malta, the Second World War left its mark on the cemetery and this fine sculpture still bears the unmistakable scars of bomb shrapnel in its lower part. Another notable monument is the one dedicated to the memory of the Sette Giugno victims. On 7th June 1919 a number of Maltese were killed while rioting against the colonial forces. The unfortunate deaths are widely perceived as the catalyst that eventually led to Malta being granted its first Constitution by the British in 1921. A visit to the Addolorata may not be everyone's favourite excursion but this extensive burial ground certainly represents another aspect of Malta's rich cultural and historical heritage.



*The Santa Maria Addolorata Cemetery is open every day of the year from 7am to 4.00pm*

### **SECRETS FROM THE ADDOLORATA CEMETERY**

Malta's biggest cemetery holds some surprising stories

The Santa Maria Addolorata Cemetery was inaugurated in 1869 following a seven-year construction period that cost 33,000 British pounds.

Designed by architect Emmanuele Luigi Galizia and built entirely out of limestone, the cemetery is currently undergoing the first major inauguration in its 150-year-old history. Years of neglect have taken their toll on the site, but there is still much to see.

Here are facts you probably did not know about Malta's biggest cemetery.

#### **Other religions were not welcome**

At the time it was built, the Addolorata was reserved for Roman Catholics from Valletta, Floriana and Cottonera. In the early 1960s, Prime Minister Dom Mintoff opened up the cemetery to burials of anyone, of any religion, in what became known as the Six Points of Mintoff to reduce the Church's influence and privileges in Malta.

#### **Nobody wanted to use it**

At the time it was built, bodies were buried in churches – except for cases of contagious illnesses like cholera and the plague when they were buried in outdoor designated burial grounds.

But initially, people were reluctant to bury their loved ones outside a church. Although inaugurated in 1869, the first burial was made in January 1872.

#### **The first burial was technically ineligible**

The first person to be buried there, in common grave number 1, was Anna Magro, a pauper and a widow with no relatives. Ms Magro lived in Mosta and was originally from Naxxar.

At the time, the cemetery was only for people from Floriana, Valletta and Cottonera. Ms Magro's burial was authorised by the cemetery on the grounds that she had died in the Floriana Hospital.

The following day, a six-month old baby boy who died from meningitis was also buried there.

Grave number 1, where the first burials - including Anna Magro's - happened.

#### **Where do remains end up?**

Ever wondered what happens to remain once the common graves are cleaned? They are put into ossuaries: large underground rooms within the cemetery itself. Also, a grave cannot be opened before a year after a burial if it carries no slabs from the inside. This means that, if a family member dies within a year of another member of that family, they have to be buried temporarily elsewhere and then moved to the respective grave after two years – which is the minimum time period when exhumations are allowed.

#### **Until 45 years ago, the 'profane' were buried separately**

Until 1972, people considered to have lived an immoral life – like those who had extramarital affairs, committed suicide or babies who died before being baptised – were buried in an area known as the Profane Section. With an entrance of its own, the section happened to flank a rubbish dump. People soon started calling it “*Il-Miżbla*”. Burials there could only take place in the darkness of night and family members and priests were banned from attending. Restored this year, the area still has bitter hints of a painful past with fresh flowers and soft toys laid on the graves of babies buried there.

#### **Look out for some haunting graves**

A walk throughout the cemetery will reveal some interesting, even haunting, monuments and graves. Like the grave of Giuseppe Gouder, an 18-year-old who died in a tram accident in Għajn Dwieli on September 30, 1905. A weeping angel tells the story of 19-year-old Giulio Mifsud, born Benghazi, who died on February 15, 1942 – during WWII - “to save the life of his friends”.

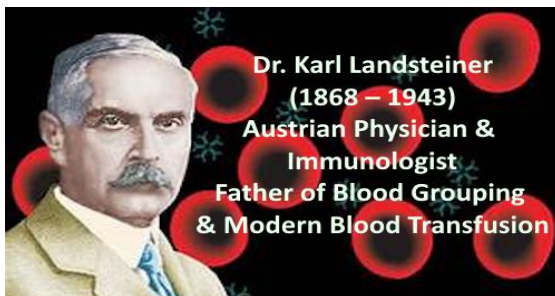
The grave of Giuseppe Gouder (left) and Giulio Mifsud (right).

Famous among visitors are the graves of eight-year-old murder victim Twanny Aquilina who was partly beheaded with a breadknife in Valletta on August 23, 1960. His mother Giga was accused of the murder but always denied killing her son. The child wears his Holy Communion outfit in the commemorating monument.

Another famous grave is that of Fr Alfred Gatt – a most sought confessor and counselor believed to have the ability of healing and knowing the unknown – who died on March 26, 1937, aged 64. Also interesting is the life-size elegant statue of Italian born Maria Paleri, who died on in December 1889, aged 33.

#### **Friars ran the cemetery until recently**

The current main office was actually a convent of the Franciscan Capuchin Friars who ran the place and lived there until 1979. That year, they moved out of the convent for health reasons since living in a valley came with a range of health issues but continued administering the cemetery until 2010 when they gave up the role due to dwindling numbers.



Dr. Karl Landsteiner was born in a suburb of Vienna in a middle-class family. He studied medicine at the **University of Vienna** and graduated in the year 1891. He envisioned that the future of medicine was in research. Hence he interacted with many European scientists and got trained. Then he returned to Vienna University in 1897 and started his research in the emerging field of Immunology.

At the **Institute of Pathological Anatomy** in Vienna, he performed nearly four thousand post-mortem examinations and published over seventy-five articles. Out of 75 articles, 55 are serological studies. He also studied the interactions between red blood cells and serum in different healthy individuals.

After an extensive research, he announced his discoveries of three major blood group **A, B, C (C was later called as O)** in 1901. Subsequently, one of his students discovered the fourth blood group – **AB** – in 1902. He was the first to describe that the human blood contains **different antigens and immune properties** and also confirmed that blood clumping was an immunological reaction. Further, he had made another scientific breakthrough by discovering the **Rh-factor in blood**, which he named after Rhesus monkeys that he used for research.

His ABO blood group system was quickly adopted and saved many injured soldiers of the First World War by blood transfusions. In addition, he extended his support in identifying the pathological organism causing Poliomyelitis by conducting an autopsy of a patient who died of polio and discovered that virus is responsible for the disease, not the bacteria. He also introduced dark-field microscope to identify the **causative organism of Syphilis**.

In 1920s, he became the Emeritus Professor at the **Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research** in New York City, where he continued his research in immunity.

In 1930, he was honoured with **Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology** for his great discovery of major Blood groups and creating the ABO blood group system.

He compiled his contributions in medicine and published a book, “**The Specificity of Serological Reactions**” in 1936, which was a classic textbook that helped to establish the field of Immunochemistry.

His birthday (June 14) was declared as **World Blood Donor Day**. The theme of 2022 is “**Donating blood is an act of solidarity. Join the effort and save lives.**”



## Helwa tat-Tork (Halva – Turkish Sweet)



This imported sweet probably arrived in our islands when Malta was under Arab rule. It has since then become part of the Maltese cuisine and is a common sweet on the islands, especially served at the end of big meals, weddings and during feast celebrations.

### Ingredients:

100g white sugar  
130g light tahini (sesami paste)  
6 Tbls. water  
Vanilla and whole roasted

almonds

### Method:

On a low heat dissolve the sugar in the water in a thick-bottomed pan. Stir to dissolve but stop once it starts boiling.

Boil until sugar thermometer shows 140 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile in a heat proof bowl mix the tahini, vanilla and almonds.

As soon as the temperature of the sugar and water reaches 140 degrees Celsius, pour this on the tahini mix.

As you're doing this stir very well. In a very short while it will harden into a thick confection.

Transfer to an airtight container and leave to cool.

Some sesame oil may ooze out of the helwa but this does not impair in any way the marvelous taste.

<http://www.ilovefood.com.mt/recipes/>



## The Maltese Clock – “Tal-Lira” (pound)

“The origin of the Maltese clock is unclear. What is remarkable is that Malta – a small island country – was able to sustain an indigenous clockmaking trade. They were produced over a period of around one hundred and fifty years solely for the local market at a time when only the aristocracy and the Church could afford them.”

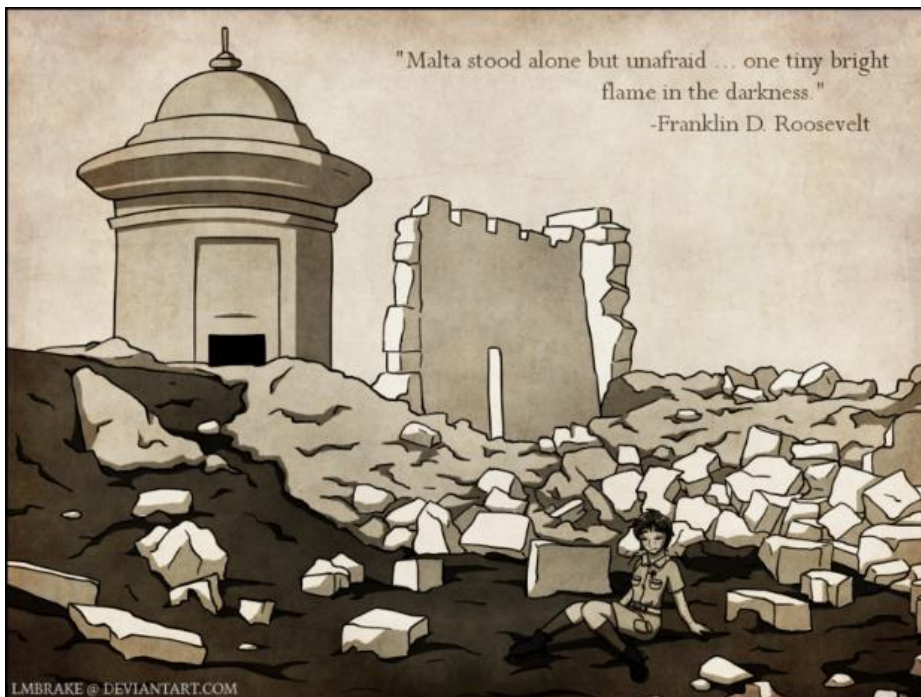
The Maltese Clock's real origin is difficult to trace. However, tradition has it that they adorned houses of the Maltese nobility as far back as the 17th century. The clock was made of wood suitable to take on several layers of gypsum, which was then engraved and decorated with gold. The case had two doors. The inside door incorporated the hand painted dial to which a handmade clock mechanism by Maltese Clock Master Makers was fixed from behind. Further down in the clock face the moving pendulum could be seen through a decorated aperture. On the front there was another door, which was framed with glass to protect the dial and ornate hands.

The clock case was then painted and abundantly decorated with flowers typical of the colourful finish for which the clock is renowned.

These clocks were made either as wall hanging or table clocks. The former were, however, the most popular. Today, the original Maltese clocks are collectors items and very hard to find for acquisition as they fetch very high prices running into thousands of euros.

However, the tradition goes on with the reproduction of these clocks. They are made in the same original manner using the same technique. The only difference is that one cannot find the original hand-made clockwork. Two types of movements are used nowadays: a mechanical movement, which is adapted to be wound from the inside of the clock or a quartz battery movement. The latter is more commonly used being more practical. The Maltese Clock reproductions come in different colours, the most popular being green, black and terracotta (maroon colour). Mass production is not possible!

Malta has a tradition of making some remarkable clocks, in designs unique to the Islands. The industry today is small, but has a fascinating history. These clocks are nicknamed 'Arlogg tal-lira' clocks. The clocks are laboriously made in intricate stages. Their casings are finely painted and gilded.



## MALTA IN WORLD WAR 2

"Malta endured prolonged and heavy battering in World War II--suffering some 6700 tons of bombs in April 1942 alone. The bombing lasted 154 days. U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt said: 'Malta stood alone but unafraid ... one tiny bright flame in the darkness.'" Malta was attacked by Italy and Germany the day after their declaration of war. Like much of Europe, her place was in ruins for quite a while. Along with the **Great Siege**

**of 1565**, the most documented period of Malta's history is the **Second World War**. The Islands' strategic location once again made it centre stage in the theatre of war in the Mediterranean: a key stronghold from which the Allies could sustain their North African campaign and from which they could launch their eventual attack on mainland Italy.

Before that happened though, the Islands were subject to some of the most severe bombardments of the entire war. The Maltese people may have ended the war with the distinction of being the only entire population to be awarded the **George Cross**, Britain's highest civilian honour for bravery. But they also ended the war devastated. Malta holds the record for the heaviest, sustained bombing attack during WW2.

The British were unsure of whether they could adequately retain or protect Malta. While a **perfect strategic location**, it was also a difficult place to defend. First Lord of the Admiralty, then Winston Churchill, decided that Malta was vital to war plans and important for supply lines.





Dear Mr Scicluna,

I hope this email finds you well.

I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for the e-newsletter. It is always a

pleasure reading it. The content is consistently engaging and informative, and I truly appreciate the effort that goes into each edition. Thank you once again for providing such a valuable resource.

Kind regards, **Rosene Campbell Administrator**

**Migrants Commission, Archdiocese of Malta**

[www.migrants.mt](http://www.migrants.mt)

## Helwa tat-Tork (Halva – Turkish Sweet)



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### Ingredients:

- 100g white sugar
- 130g light tahini (sesami paste)
- 6 Tbls. water
- vanilla
- whole roasted almonds

### Method:

On a low heat dissolve the sugar in the water in a thick-bottomed pan. Stir to dissolve but stop once it starts boiling.

Boil until sugar thermometer shows 140 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile in a heat proof bowl mix the tahini, vanilla and almonds.

As soon as the temperature of the sugar and water reaches 140 degrees Celsius, pour this on the tahini mix.

As you're doing this stir very well. In a very short while it will harden into a thick confection.

Transfer to an airtight container and leave to cool.

Some sesame oil may ooze out of the helwa but this does not impair in any way the marvelous taste.

<http://www.ilovefood.com.mt/recipes/>

**HELP US TO SURVIVE**



## History of the Maltese Cross and Its Meaning

### The emblem of St. John's Ambulance



The Maltese Cross is an integral part of Malta's culture and heritage. The cross has four sides that are v-shaped, so it almost looks like a star. Each arm of the cross stands for justice, courage, prudence, and temperance respectively. Today, the cross is commonly used as an emblem for the ambulance and for fire stations and in public service.

The Knights of St. John of Jerusalem introduced the symbol to Malta in 1530. The symbol is associated with the Knights of Malta (also called Knights Hospitallers).

The Maltese cross is popular among public servants, especially fire fighters. For example, the Novato Fire District personnel currently use this symbol. This is a modern adaption of the original crusader insignia. Malta's national airline, Air Malta, and Maltese Euro coins contain the Maltese Cross.

Background and Meaning of the Maltese Cross

**The Maltese Cross is shaped like a four-pointed star with V-shaped arms. It also looks like four arrowheads converging and pointing inwards to form a cross-like shape.**

For this reason, the Maltese cross is also known as an eight-pointed cross. The cross is symmetrical and drawn in black and white or red and white. The symbol is found in Malta's coat of arms, buildings, jewellery, etc.

Background and History

**The symbol can be traced back to the Middle Ages during the Crusades.** The Knights of St. John of Jerusalem ruled the islands from 1530 to 1798, and they pledged to defend the Holy Land. It soon took a role in militancy as the Knights of Malta fought alongside the Knights Templars.

**However, another variation of the symbol belongs to the 6th century BCE and was rooted in the Byzantine era.** It was minted on coins from Amalfi, in Italy, and was first discovered in the 11th century. Knights Hospitallers formally adopted the Maltese Cross in 1126.

**The cross became the symbol of a Christian Warrior.**

The Maltese Cross (right) is commonly used as an emblem for fire departments (left).

Is Maltese Cross Catholic?

**Yes, the Maltese Cross is Catholic and relates to broader Christianity as well. The Knights are considered one of the oldest warriors who fought for Christianity, and they also had a hospital in Jerusalem to take care of the pilgrims.**

Since battle armor made it hard to distinguish one side from another, the Knights used the Cross of Calvary as their emblem. They considered it a holy battle to defend the Holy Land. When the Knights took over the islands of Malta, the catholic symbol became a part of the country's heritage. The Maltese Cross symbolizes protection (a warrior who protects). That's one reason firefighters in the United States use it.

Why Is it Called a Maltese Cross?

**The religious/military order in the Middle Ages widely used the Catholic cross. Since the Knights governed Malta and the islands for over three centuries, their symbol became associated with the land. The Catholic cross of protection became the Maltese Cross, representing the island of Malta.**

**Over the years, the Maltese Cross appeared on churches, hospitals, palaces, canons, coins, jewelry, silverware, furniture, towers, entrances, and just about everywhere in Malta.** Even the sports teams wear the Maltese Cross on their jerseys. The country and its people are proudly associated with the symbol.

Joseph Mbong, Professional Soccer Player



What Do the 4 Sides of the Maltese Cross Represent?

**The four sides of the Maltese Cross get their significance from Christianity. They stand for justice, courage, prudence, and temperance.** These meanings are attributed to the Catholic cross and began to represent the Maltese Cross as well.

The Maltese Cross also stands for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. This is an international organization for medical aid and humanitarian services.

What Do the 8 Points on a Maltese Cross Mean?

The Maltese Cross has eight points or eight beatitudes, each showing the responsibility of the knights.

**To live in truth    Have faith    Repent one's sins    Give proof of humility    Love justice  
Be merciful    Be sincere and wholehearted    To endure persecution**

Over the years, the Maltese Cross began to represent the eight languages (tongues) of the noblemen. They had a specific order, as listed below:

- 1. Auvergne    2. Provence    3. France    4. Aragon    5. Castille and Portugal    6. Italy**
- 7. Baviere (Germany)    8. England (including Ireland & Scotland)**



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

**The aim of the Confraternity is to help the Poor the Sick and the Needy.**

The Confraternity of the Knights of St. Peter and St. Paul is a philanthropic organisation. Its main objective is to provide humanitarian support for those who are in less fortunate circumstances. The headquarters in Melbourne, Australia and there are Chapters in many countries all over the world.

Recently members of the Supreme Council of the Confraternity of the Knights of St. Peter & St. Paul visited the Peter Mac Cancer Hospital in Melbourne.

The Confraternity made a donation to the Cancer Foundation.

Mr. Michael Moyzes who is of Maltese descent gave the Members of the Supreme Council a brief history of the hospital.

Mr. Michael Moyzes said that the patients at the hospital have treatment second to none. The best that there is. Warm regards.

**Chevalier Peter Paul Portelli**

**Grand Master CKSP    Headquarters in Melbourne.**





**Australia still, the greatest country  
in the world**

**The old Aussie BBQ 🍖**







## AUSTRALIA'S ANZAC CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR 1914-1918

This year marks the 106th year since our nation's involvement in the First World War. The First World War helped define us as a people and as a nation. This year's commemoration aims to encourage all ANZACS and us to reflect upon and learn more about New Zealand's and Australia's military history, its costs and its impacts on our nation. The little island of Malta, just in the middle of the

Mediterranean Sea, although it was never actively involved in the war but still played an important part by serving as a hospital base for the soldiers who were fighting at Gallipoli, so much so that it earned the title of *The Nurse of the Mediterranean*. A strong bond exists between the three countries since then – Australia, New Zealand and Malta.

Among the several Maltese whose names are forever recorded at Helles Memorial overlooking the Dardanelles there is that of Major Herbert Sammut who died when he was in command of Essex Regiment and Lieutenant Herbert Huber. He was a member of the Royal Iniskilling Fusiliers and was killed few hours before the British forces successfully evacuated from the Turkish soil. Unfortunately, his remains were never discovered.

Many other Maltese migrants were among the casualties at Gallipoli. There were 800 Maltese labourers serving under Maltese officers in Gallipoli. A young private, Andrew Camilleri, was 26 years old when he was killed in enemy action.

Indeed, Malta played a significant role in the Gallipoli campaign in 1915, not only as a back up base for the royal navy but also as one of the major hospitals in the Mediterranean. There were also convalescent centres and looked after 58 000 servicemen wounded during the World War I when Malta earned the title "**Nurse of the Mediterranean**". A number of them found their last resting place on Maltese shores.

There are 1500 British, 202 Anzac servicemen from Australia and 72 from New Zealand buried in Malta as well as French, Indians and Egyptians together with 26 Turkish prisoners. This was Malta's greatest contribution to the Allied's efforts during this terrible war.

### LEST WE FORGET – MALTESE INVOLVED IN WORLD WAR 1 1914-18

**Hector Maistre** was engaged as a military interpreter with the French Army and posted to the headquarters of the Fourth Zouaves.

**Dr Henry Parnis**, eldest son of Judge Dr A. Parnis, living in London, volunteered his services on the outbreak of hostilities; he was gazetted Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps and served in France. William Parnis, son of Judge Parnis, enlisted in England and was given a commission in the Fourth East Kent Regiment. Being the son of a lawyer, he underwent his training with the Inns of Court Officers Training Corps.

Frederick Samut, son of Prof. Dr C. Samut, received a commission in the Worcestershire Regiment.

**Arthur Samut**, eldest son of Lieutenant Col. A. Samut, Chief Press Censor, proceeded to the front after joining the Artillery Company.

**Capt. B. H. Dunbar Vella**, Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC), was wounded in northern France.

**Richard Agius** received a commission with the army for service at the front. Lieutenant Edgar Agius, brother of **Richard Agius**, was injured in the face in France and had a narrow escape inasmuch as he was struck by splinters of a shell that killed two men of his platoon immediately behind him..

**Capt. A. dei Baroni Sciberras Trigona** was wounded in France and received medical treatment in England.



**Malta and the ANZACS  
'The Nurse of the  
Mediterranean'**

**Lieutenant P.A. Micallef Eynaud**, King's Own Malta Regiment (KOMR), and Lieutenant W.R. Gatt were brought to Malta from the Dardanelles suffering from wounds and from dysentery respectively.

**Dr Alfred Vella** was given a commission in the Royal Medical Corps. He held several important hospital appointments and his medical skill earned for him flattering testimonials.

**Dr Giudo dei Marchesi De Piro d'Amico** of the University of Louvain was given a commission in the RAMC.

**Lieut. Col. Alfred Vella**, Royal Malta Artillery (RMA), joined the regiment in 1883, was made captain in 1892 and obtained field rank in 1897; he was active in Egypt during the Sudan Expedition in 1885; for his services he received the medal with clasp and Bronze Star. He commanded the RMA contingent at the Coronation festivities in London in 1911.

**Second Lieutenant A.H. Vella Bernard**, 1st Battalion, KOMR, joined the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. He later arrived from the eastern theatre of war suffering from frostbite. He saw active service during operations in Serbia. He was treated at the Manoel Hospital.

**Captain R.A. Montanaro**, son of Col. Alfred Montanaro, who served with distinction in the Indian army, was the first Maltese to be decorated with the Military Cross for gallantry in the field. He was one of the youngest officers of that rank in the British army.

**Capt. F.M. Stivala** served with the Mounted Infantry in the Transvaal and received the medal with four clasps.

Lieutenant A.G. Dandria, Second Lieutenant J.E. Agius, and Second Lieutenant C.A. Muscat all volunteered for active service.

**Lieutenant H.W. Huber**, KOMR, was attached to the 1st Inniskilling Fusiliers; he was wounded in the trenches at Gallipoli, and was transferred to the base hospital at Alexandria, and later to Malta.



## Mvintage Woman of the Year Awards 2024

Maruska Vella named Mvintage Woman of the Year 2024

This year's four nominees for the Woman of the Year Award exemplify resilience, compassion, and a commitment to uplift their communities.

Mvintage has announced that Maruska Vella has been named Mvintage Woman of the Year 2024 during a special event, held on

October 7 at Villa Mdina in Naxxar.

Maruska Vella was named Mvintage Woman of the Year 2024 during a special event at Villa Mdina in Naxxar.

Maruska, the mother of Jake Vella, has shown immense courage and strength through incredibly difficult times. After recently losing Jake, who battled the rare condition ROHHAD, Maruska continues to be a beacon of love and support in the Maltese community. Her unwavering commitment to raising awareness and helping others while coping with her personal loss is a testament to her extraordinary resilience. Maruska's story is one of profound strength, and her dedication to making a difference in the community is truly inspiring.

Now in its third year, this prestigious event was created in 2022 to recognise and honour exceptional women who have made a significant impact in their communities, embodying the spirit of female empowerment that lies at the heart of the Mvintage brand.



Born from a vision to leave a legacy for her daughter, Krystle Penza founded Mvintage to combine her love for art and fashion with her commitment to empower women. From a small kiosk at Tigné Point, Mvintage has evolved into a household name, with six stores across Malta and a global online presence. Over the past decade, Mvintage has consistently championed female empowerment through its jewellery, inspiring women to embrace their inner strength and believe in themselves.

The Mvintage Woman of the Year Awards 2024 took place on October 7 at Villa Mdina, Naxxar.

This year's four nominees for the Woman of the Year Award exemplify resilience, compassion, and a commitment to uplift their communities. Apart from Maruska, the other three nominees were Maja Theuma, Nicky Sansone and Christa Cilia.

Maja is an incredible athlete who represented Malta in the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, where she achieved impressive results. As a dedicated Paralympic swimmer, Maja has been competing internationally for over five years, with notable appearances at the 2019 and 2021 WPS World Championships. Her determination and passion have made her a role model for aspiring athletes and a symbol of resilience in the face of adversity. Maja's strength as an athlete is not only her personal achievement but also a source of inspiration for the entire community.

Although Nicky is no longer with us, her legacy and message continue to resonate deeply within the Maltese community. Nicky courageously documented her battle with cancer on TikTok, spreading a message of positivity and love with her mantra, "Live, love... and smile!" A pioneer in Malta's LGBTIQ+ history and a passionate advocate for animal welfare, Nicky's kindness and spirit touched the lives of many. Her enduring legacy continues to inspire,

Christa is a devoted animal activist who, alongside her husband, has dedicated her life to caring for abandoned and traumatized animals.

L-Arkivji Nazzjonali ta' Malta



L-Arkivji Nazzjonali ta' Malta



### **JCamilleri** · ·

Another question about Maltese women in the mid-20th century. It seems realistic to me to assume that not every woman married, and that they weren't all nuns, but spinsters, perhaps living alone or with a parent. Does anyone have any stories about female relatives in Malta in the 1940s-1960s who chose not to marry, or didn't marry for whatever reason? I'm interested in knowing what attitudes were like in those days towards women who remained single. My mother, for example, was still single in the early 1960s at the age of 32 and people used to gossip, saying things like she wants to be a nun. She also used to dress well and drew a lot of male attention. But she eventually married at 34. I'm really interested in women who consciously chose not to marry and how they coped and survived, what work they did, did they live alone, and what locals might have thought of such women.

## Feast of St Publius during Ġenna ta' Ġonna



The Saint Publius Martyr Chapel - Like past years, the Floriana Local Council is organizing the annual activity 'Ġenna ta' Ġonna'. During this activity, a number of organizations that give direct contribution in various ways in Floriana, take part by organizing an activity to fill this day in the best way.

The curators of the Saint Publius Martyr Chapel, as in previous years, have prepared a special program, not only for the occasion of 'Ġenna ta' Ġonna', but also for the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Chapel.

This Chapel is located in Bishop Mauro Caruana Street in Floriana. In 2004, a group of young altar servers of the parish wished to have a place where they could learn more about the saint and patron of Malta, Saint Publius. Since then, the chapel has always evolved, and while it used to serve as a meeting place for children, today it is taken care of by a group of hardworking young men who make the chapel look immaculate.

In this chapel, one can find various sacred objects, ancient artefacts, documents, sculptures dating back to the Second World War, and many more things related to Floriana and Saint Publius. In fact, this chapel is considered a museum full of history in the heart of Floriana.

On 20 October 2024, on this anniversary, the Chapel will be open from 11am to 4pm. This time, two extensions of the same chapel will also be opened, full of objects that one may be amazed to see. Apart from the fact that the Chapel is celebrating its twenty years, Floriana is commemorating the third centenary of its foundation. Therefore, there will also be some items linked to the history of Floriana.

But the highlight of this activity is reached precisely through the demonstration with the statue of the Chapel sculpted by the sculptor, Mr. Publio Aguis. This is a perfect replica of the titular statue of Saint Publius carved in wood by the sculptor Vincenzo Dimech in 1811.

At 11am a march performed by the local band (Società Filarmonika Vilhena) begins. At around 11.15am, the band welcomes the statue at the door of the Chapel. From there a demonstration will take place that will pass through the following streets: Market Street, Saint Publius Street, Saint Tomas Street, Argotti Street, Lion Street, Conservatory Street, Mall Street, we cross the Mall, Saint Publius Square, Saint Publius Street, Saint Tomas Street, Saint Franscis Street, Gunlayer Street and back to Bishop Mauro Caruana Street. Everyone is encouraged to attend and take part in this demonstration. The curators of the Saint Publius Martyr Chapel thanked a large number of volunteers who over these twenty years worked and strove to shape the Chapel into what it is today. Your attendance at this activity will be greatly appreciated. We must continue to work and strengthen the tradition left by our ancestors so that the Maltese Festa as we know it does not die but continues to be strengthened.



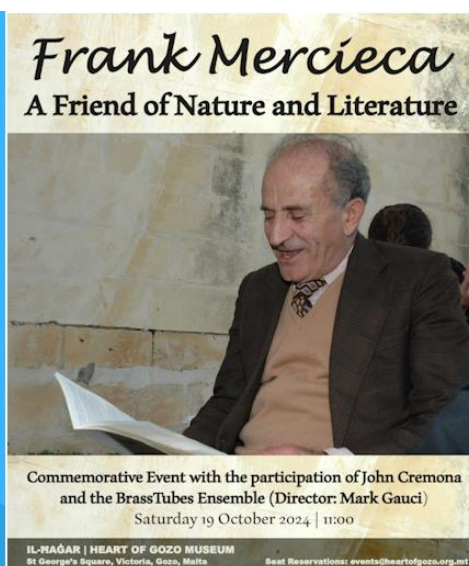


Join us on **Sunday 27th October**, Heritage Malta is inviting you to experience the historical gem of Ta' Mintna Catacombs in Mqabba, **a site not usually open to visitors**. The catacombs were first documented by the esteemed Antonio Annetto Caruana. The three hypogea were originally separate burial complexes that were only joined together in modern history to be used as a well. The catacombs in this complex exhibit very unique features in their structure. The central hypogeum is best known for its extremely well-preserved triclinium, a rock-cut table used for commemorative meals, and the two rows of triangular lamp holes facing it. The two flanking hypogea, on the other hand, are best known for the exquisite decoration with which some of their window tombs are adorned.

One exclusive curator's tour will be available by pre-booking at 9:00am in English. **The cost for the tour is €15 per person, with a maximum of 10 participants** and may be booked at any Heritage Malta Museum or site, or online here <https://heritagemalta.mt/store/e1580/>. On the day, Ta' Mintna Catacombs will also be open to the general public from 10:00am to 12:00pm. Tickets, at **€2 for adults and free of charge for children (up to 11 years old) and Heritage Malta members**, will be available at the door. Please note that the last allowed entry will be at 11:45am.

**In the event of rain, the opening will be cancelled. We recommend wearing comfortable walking shoes during your visit. No high heels will be allowed**

**OUR SISTERS AND BRETHREN IN MALTA ARE KEENLY INTERESTED  
TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE MALTESE LIVING ABROAD**



### Cultural Tribute and Sports Integrity Lecture at Il-Ħaġar Museum

Il-Ħaġar Museum's hectic cultural programme continues this **Saturday, 19 October, at 11:00**, with a commemorative event paying tribute to Gozitan poet and linguist Frank Mercieca.

A dairy foreman by profession, Frank Mercieca was born in Victoria on 30 August 1937. He studied in Malta, Lebanon, Estonia,

Scotland, and Denmark. Later in life, he dedicated himself to agriculture and the study of the Maltese language. He wrote numerous articles in local papers debating recent changes in Maltese orthography and grammar. He also wrote poetry. A key figure in St George's Square, Mercieca was always surrounded by an attentive group of friends debating current affairs, history, and, of course, the Maltese language. He passed away on 9 November 2011. The event will feature an address by John Cremona, Assistant National Archivist for Gozo, and musical interludes by the BrassTubes ensemble (Director: Mark Gauci).

On **Tuesday 22 October at 18:30**, Il-Ħaġar Museum, in collaboration with Victoria Hotspurs Football Club and the Maltese Authority for Integrity in Maltese Sport, is presenting a talk by Andy Grech, Head of Education and Policy at the latter entity. The speaker will delve into the critical issues of anti doping and competition manipulation in sports. Doping involves the use of banned substances or methods to artificially enhance athletic performance, violating the integrity of sport and jeopardising athletes' health. Similarly, competition manipulation refers to any act designed to improperly influence the outcome of a sporting event, often for personal, financial, or political advantage. These practices severely undermine fair competition and the core values of sport. This lecture will explore the impact of these unethical behaviours on the sporting world and discuss strategies to protect the integrity of competitions. Grech is pursuing a career in Sport Policy, Management, and International Development. With a focus on addressing contemporary challenges in sports management, he supports governing bodies in their efforts to shape sporting opportunities and align sport with broader social policy objectives.

Both events are free, but seat reservations are recommended by sending an email to [events@heartofgozo.org.mt](mailto:events@heartofgozo.org.mt). More details about upcoming events at Il-Ħaġar can be found by visiting the museum's recently launched website: <https://heartofgozo.mt/il-hagar-events-booklet-oct-dec-24/>.

Ms Monica Borg Debrincat  
c/o Il-Ħaġar - Heart of Gozo Museum

