JOURNAL FOR MALTESE AROUND THE WORLD

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Editor: Frank Scicluna OAM MQR JP

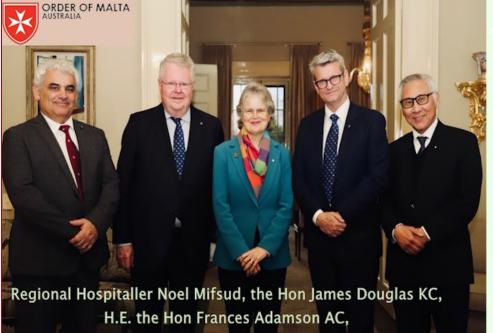
Email: maltesejournal@gmail.com





WE WELCOME THE NEW HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR MALTA TO AUSTRALIA Clifford **Borg-Marks**







Mr. & Mrs Schembri

H.E. John Murphy, Assoc. Vice President Daniel Kwok.







Kummissjoni i Gholja tar-Republika ta' Malta High Commission for the Republic of Malta

Press Release 4/2025 22/07/2025

Subject: Completion of Tour of Duty and Appointment of new High Commissioner of Malta to Australia

The High Commission of the Republic of Malta in Australia has the honour to inform the Maltese Community in Australia that H.E. Mr. Mario Farrugia Borg will complete his tenure as High Commissioner of Malta to Australia and New Zealand on 31 July 2025 after over 4 years of exemplary service to the Maltese Community in Australia. His colleagues at the High Commission warmly bid farewell to His Excellency, proud to have served alongside him, and extend their very best wishes for success in all his future endeavours.

The Government of Australia has recently approved the Government of Malta's nomination of Mr. Clifford Borg-Marks as Malta's incoming High Commissioner to Australia.

Between 2013-2015, Mr. Borg Marks served as Ambassador of Malta to China, with concurrent accreditation to Mongolia and the Philippines. Since then, he has served as non-resident Ambassador of Malta to Thailand and non-resident High Commissioner to Malaysia and Singapore. We look forward to warmly welcoming the incoming High Commissioner and to supporting him fully in his new role, serving Malta and the Maltese community in Australia.



FAREWELL, MARIO

The tenure of Mario Farrugia Borg as the High Commissioner of Malta to Australia and New Zealand is coming to an end on the 31 July 2025. Mario Farrugia Borg was born on July 11, 1970, in Birkirkara, Malta. Mario completed tertiary education and started his professional career in the financial sector in 1990, working in foreign exchange and fund management until 2012.^[1]

Farrugia Borg was also active in the political scene in Malta for several years, having been elected and serving on the Qormi Local Council in 1997. In 2013, following the election of the Labour Party in Malta,

Farrugia Borg was appointed as a member of the Prime Minister's Private Secretariat. He was assigned responsibilities related to the Prime Minister's relations with minorities and foreign communities in Malta, as well as customer care. In 2014, he contested the European Parliament elections in Malta on a Labour Party ticket.

In 2019, Farrugia Borg was appointed the consul general of Malta to Victoria, Australia. ^[5] During his tenure, he worked with Maltese communities in Victoria. He served in this role from January 2019 to January 2021. In January 2021, Farrugia Borg was appointed the high commissioner of Malta to Australia and New Zealand. Mario was well-loved and respected by the Maltese communities of Australia and New Zealand. He was an avid reader and supporter of the Journal for Maltese Living Abroad – THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER. We say a big THANK YOU for assisting us and for all you have done for the Maltese communities in Australia and New Zealand.



COUNCIL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

Malta in the World

UPDATE INFORMATION

The Council for Maltese Living Abroad (CMLA) which was established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Malta in 2012, have the function of protecting and promoting the rights and interests of Maltese living outside Malta, and to provide for matters connected therewith, or incidental thereto. There are currently 20 members in the Council (excluding the President and Secretary).

5 members from Australia, 2 members from USA, 2 members from Canada
1 member from the UK, 2 members from the EU (not resident in Malta)
1 member from Asia, 1 member from North Africa, 1 member from UAE
5 additional members (from various parts of the world) appointed by the Prime Minister in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition

For Australia, the 5 CMLA members and the corresponding Regional Committee members are:

Name	Surname	Region	CMLA	Email	
Miriam	Friggieri	AUS-NSW	CMLA	miriam-m.friggieri@gov.mt	
Antoine	Mangion	AUS-NSW	CMLA	antoine.mangion@gov.mt	
Sydney	Borg	AUS-NSW	Regional	syd@pcsa.com.au	
Lawrence	Gatt	AUS-NSW	Regional	laugatt@tpg.com.au	
Sandra	Grech	AUS-NSW	Regional	sandra.grech2010@gmail.com	
Louis	Parnis	AUS-NSW	Regional	louie.parnis@gmail.com	
Frank	Testa	AUS-NSW	Regional	frankietesta@bigpond.com	
Annemarie	Thind	AUS-NSW	Regional	annemarie.thind@gmail.com	
Sandra	Micallef	AUS-Rest of Aust	CMLA	sandra-alexandra.micallef@gov.mt	
John	Calleja	AUS-Rest of Aust	Regional	callejajohn@tpg.com.au	
Joe	Vella	AUS-Rest of Aust	Regional	joe.g.vella@gmail.com	
Martin	Debono	AUS-Rest of Aust	Regional	martin.debono@hotmail.com	
Edgar	Agius	AUS-Rest of Aust	Regional	eagius@charlessturt.sa.gov.au	
Amie	Cardona	AUS-VIC	CMLA	amie-rose.cardona@gov.mt	
Judith	Buhagiar	AUS-VIC	CMLA	judith-renata.buhagiar@gov.mt	
Elton	Cutajar	AUS-VIC	Regional	eltcut@hotmail.com	
Andrew	Gatt	AUS-VIC	Regional	dadgatt46@gmail.com	
Ryan	Axiak	AUS-VIC	Regional	ryanaxiak@hotmail.com	
Declan	Mentzing	AUS-VIC	Regional	declanmentzing@gmail.com	

The CMLA members meet online once a month to discuss ongoing issues being relayed to them from the community. Hence the function of the Regional Committees is to assist them with any community matters they identify in the regional areas, which they may not be aware of. Each Regional Committee reports to the CMLA members covering their jurisdiction. The next CMLA meeting in Malta will be held in October, and the 5 Council members are preparing a list of topics to be added to the meeting agenda, so they can be addressed at the meeting.

If you have any suggestions, propositions or comments please contact one of the members/delegates.

Sandra	ΔΙρν	andra	Mica	llef
Sanua	ALEX	anula	THILE	ıucı

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN VISIT BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE ORDER OF MALTA





On July 8 and 9, 2025, the Order of Malta's Australian President H.E. John Murphy, Past President the Hon. James Douglas KC, and Vice President Daniel Kwok visited Adelaide providing an opportunity for national leadership to engage with the works of the Order in

South Australia, connect with members and candidates, and meet key stakeholders to support and further the Order's mission.

The visit commenced with a meeting of the Directors of the newly established Malteser International Asia Pacific (MIAP) interim Board. MIAP marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the Order's humanitarian outreach in the region, expanding our current projects (including the Order's clinic in Timor Leste) and hands-on service throughout Southeast Asia.

A highlight of the visit was the delegation's tour of our outreach programs for the homeless, including the Hutt Street Centre, Catherine House for homeless women, and the Adelaide Day Centre. These visits offered firsthand insight into the Order's active engagement in supporting vulnerable communities through soup van, coat distribution, and other responsive initiatives. On the morning of our visit, Hutt Street Centre was sheltering over 180 individuals during a Code Blue activation—a critical winter response that ensures safety and warmth for those exposed to harsh conditions when temperatures fall below 6°C.

Meeting our Lords the sick and the poor face-to-face was a powerful reminder of our mission *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum*—to defend the faith and serve the poor. This mission is not merely a duty, but a living reflection of Christ's presence in those we serve.

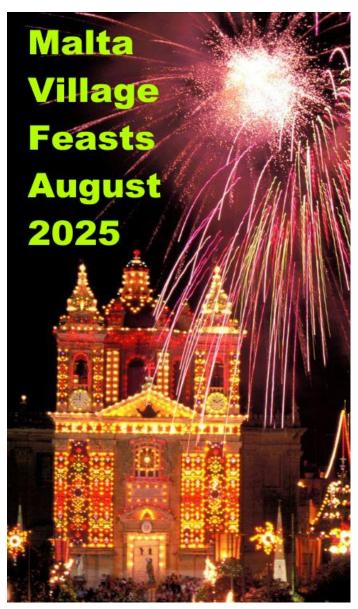
The delegation also met with His Grace, Archbishop Patrick O'Regan of Adelaide, to discuss chaplaincy and the ongoing works of the Order in South Australia. Later, members and aspirants joined our guests for a reception at Government House. Following an introduction by President Murphy, Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC spoke affirmingly about the Order's vital role in serving the poor, marginalised and sick—locally and globally.

Another highlight of the visit was Mass at St Francis Xavier Cathedral. SA Chaplain, Fr Allan Winter, shared a powerful reflection on the work of the Order, drawing from the Gospel of the day in Matthew 10:1–7, where Jesus summoned his Twelve disciples.

The final event was a dinner at the Naval and Military Club for members and partners of the Order to give thanks for the many blessings we share. It was also a fitting opportunity to thank our past President James Douglas for his dedicated service. James and Margaret Douglas have been active supporters of the Order's

THE MALTESE JOURNAL JUST HIT 12 000 READERS +

Thank you



If you live or visiting Malta for a holiday and love Maltese culture, this is something you must not miss. Here is the list of the feasts during the month of August in Malta to help you plan your holiday around your favourite feast.

The days of the feasts below are the actual day of the feast of the parish or village.
Usually, celebrations of a feast are spread along a whole week up until the final feast day.

List of Malta and Gozo Feasts for August

- o **3rd -** Our Lady of Pompei, Marsaxlokk
- o 3rd St. Peter in Chains, Birżebbuga
- o **3rd -** St. Joseph, Qala, Gozo
- 3rd Our Lady of Lourdes, San Gwann
- o 3rd St. Dominic, Valletta
- o 6th Christ Our Saviour, Lija
- 10th St. Laurence, Birgu (Vittoriosa)
- o 10th San Cajetan, Hamrun
- o **10th -** St Maximilian Kolbe, Qawra
- o 10th St. Laurence, San Lawrenz, Gozo
- o 15th Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

Mary (Santa Marija Feast):

Mqabba | Qrendi | Mosta | Gudja | Attard | Għaxaq | Victoria (Rabat),

Gozo | Birkirkara | Hal-Muxi Zebbug

- 17th Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Dingli
- o 21st St. Pius X, Santa Lucija
- o 24th St. Helen, Birkirkara
- 24th Our Lady Star of the Sea, Stella Maris Parish, Sliema
- 24th Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mgarr, Malta
- **24th -** St. Bartholomew, Gharghur
- 24th Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Żebbug, Gozo
- **24th -** Assumption of the Blessed Virgin
 - Mary, Bubagra, Żurrieg
- 24th Our Lady of Lourdes, Paola
- **31st -** Our Lady of Loreto, Għajnsielem, Gozo
- **31st -** St. Dominic, Birgu (Vittoriosa)
- **31st -** Maria Regina, Marsa
- **31st -** St. Joseph, Manikata
- 31st The Conversion of St. Paul, Safi
- **31st -** St. Julian, St. Julian's







Thousands of Maltese and tourists attended the 17th edition of Isle of MTV which as in previous years took place on the Fosos in Floriana.

The main artists were Brazilian DJ ALOK; Damiano David, known to many as the singer Maneskin, and the English singer Ella Handerson.

Local artists also took part including the singers Miriana Conte and Sarah Bonnici as well as DJs DODZ, Wyne, Gabii, Denzel Jo Armani, Koroma, Keane, Miggy and Debrii u Blush Malta.

The concert will be transmitted on MTV on 13th September as well as Paramount+ on a date

which will be announced.

The festival will be transmitted by Isle of MTV Malta Music Week, a series of parties which began yesterday and will continue until 20th July.



MALTESE AUSTRALIAN FROM MELBOURNE LOST HIS LIFE WHILE SWIMMING IN MALTA

Man who died in Hondoq Bay drowning incident was Maltese-Australian on holiday

The man was pulled ashore by other swimmers on

Monday evening

Salvu Vella died after getting into difficulties while swimming. Photo: Facebook

A man who died after getting into difficulties at Ħondoq Bay in Gozo was a Maltese-Australian returning to the country on holiday.

Salvu Vella, 73, was pulled from the water by other swimmers after the alarm was raised at 6.30pm on Monday.

The Times of Malta was informed he was Maltese-Australian and living in Melbourne and visiting Gozo on holiday. He was given first aid on shore, and a defibrillator was used before he was taken to Gozo General Hospital in an ambulance. However, he died shortly after, police said on Tuesday. Magistrate Simone Grech opened a magisterial inquiry, as police investigations continue.





The Lieutenant Grand Master's Visit to Australia 2025

The Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitallers in Australia have an exciting year ahead. Each year all the Priories in Australia, hold an investiture for the new Knights and Dames joining the Order. This is a special occasion for each new Knight and Dame, which they remember for rest of their lives. This year is significant as His Excellency the Lieutenant Grand Master Paul Borg OSJ is visiting Australia, in August, and will attend all our investitures.

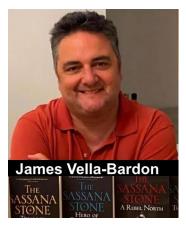
His Excellency the Lieutenant Grand Master Paul Borg OSJ was born in Malta, of Maltese parents and is fluent in Maltese, English and Italian and some knowledge of Latin. He trained as a teacher and graduated from Malta University with a MSc and a PhD. He was invested as a Knight in the Order of St John of Jerusalem, in 1968. He rose through the ranks of the Order and was appointed Lieutenant Grand Master, in 1919.

During his visit His Excellency will first arrive in Adelaide where apart from the commitments to the South Australian Priory's investiture he will be taken on a two-day tour to explore the wonderful features that South Australia has to offer. He will also meet Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, the Governor of South Australia.

His Excellency will then move on to Victoria where he will attend the Victorian Priory Investiture in Melbourne. It is also planned for him to be taken to Mornington and meet members of the Commandery and go to Queenscliff by ferry for lunch and local sightseeing. He will then depart Victoria and go on to the Tasmanian Priory in Hobart for the Tasmanian Investiture. He will meet several dignitaries, including the Governor, Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, The Archbishop of Hobart, The Most Reverend Julian Porteous and a representative of the Tasmanian Parliament.

Finally, His Excellency will leave Sydney where several exciting visits to the highlights of Sydney and surrounding areas are planned, including a visit to the Blue Mountains and a harbour cruise. Then in his last two days he will attend the New south Wales Investiture and meetings before flying home to Malta. In all, Our Lieutenant Grand Master will have invested a record number of 33 Aspirants this year, who have made the noble Christian choice of joining the Order. We thank the Lieutenant Grand master for taking the time to visit and officiate in our Investitures.

Dame Annette Summers AO RFD DGSJ



Maltese Australian writer

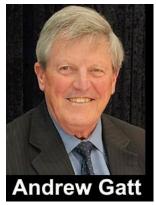
James Vella-Bardon is a Sydney based, award-winning author born and raised in Malta.

After reading law and history at the Universities of both Malta and Sydney, James qualified as a lawyer and also completed a doctoral thesis on the rights and freedoms of peoples at international law. Upon emigrating to Sydney in 2007, he also studied creative writing.

His debut novel THE SHERIFF'S CATCH is a highly acclaimed thriller,

which recounts the adventures of a Spanish Armada castaway in Tudor Ireland, who joins in the great struggle to liberate western Ireland from brutal suppression.

Following its UK release in 2018, the novel was recommended as a 'must-read of the week' by leading British newspaper The Scotsman, with Reader's Digest also describing it as 'a remarkably confident literary debut' and 'the spectacular start to an epic five-book story.



Maltese Living Abroad Regional Committee member

The Hon. Ian Borg—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, and President of the Council has established a new regional committee to strengthen collaboration between Maltese living Abroad and the Maltese Government.

We are pleased to be informed that Andrew Gatt, Vice President of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria, has been appointed as one of the regional members of the Council for Maltese Living Abroad (CMLA) for Victoria. Andrew has been involved in the Maltese community for many years having served as Committee Member, Secretary, and Vice President of MCCV. His experience and commitment will ensure the interests of Maltese living in Melbourne are well represented. For more information or to connect with Andrew, please contact him at:

Email: andrew.gatt@mccv.org.au

WE THANK ALL THOSE WHO SENT A DONATION

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DONATE AND KEEP THE JOURNAL ALIVE

Planning Authority grants protection to nine 19th century bridges

he Planning Authority has officially granted Grade 2 and Grade 3 protection to nine historic bridges across Malta and Gozo, the PA said Thursday.









This decision, coordinated by the Heritage Planning Unit in collaboration with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (SCH), marks continued commitment to safeguarding Malta's unique civil engineering legacy, the the authority said. Spanning over a century of development, these bridges are far more

than functional structures, the PA said in its statement, giving details on the nine bridges that have been offered its protection.

The nine scheduled bridges are:

Constitution Road Bridge, Valletta. A triple-arched limestone viaduct built in 1929, featuring ornamental round openings and spanning Wied il-G?asel.

Civil Defence Road Bridge, Mosta. Originally a metal span completed in 1871, later reconstructed in limestone and concrete, demonstrating adaptive reuse of earlier military infrastructure.

Dwejra Old and New Bridges, Gozo. Situated in a protected ecological and archaeological zone, these bridges combine natural landscape with historic utility.

Ghemmieri Bridge, Rabat. A two-arch limestone viaduct likely dating to the late 1800s, associated with the movement of troops along the Victoria Lines.

Wied id-Dis Bridge, Madliena. A striking seven-arch limestone bridge constructed in 1880 by British military engineers for strategic transport.

Tal-Isperanza Bridge, Mosta. A charming single-arch bridge dated 1905, gracefully spanning the serene Speranza Valley.

Tas-Salib Bridge, near Mtarfa. A late 19th-century single-arch bridge, historically connected to the Victoria Lines and the Wignacourt aqueduct via a large metal water pipe still visible today.

Wied il-Qlejgha Bridges. Two bridges overlooking each other, probably late 19th century. The Old Bridge leading to the church of San Pawl tal-Qlejgha and the New Bridge forming part of a very important road in Malta.



Lourdes Pilgrimage on the 14 – 19 July 2025

UMTAL is a non-profit voluntary organisation under the patronage of HE the Archbishop of Malta.

UMTAL is an acronym of the name given to the Society set up in 1931 by HE Archbishop Mauro Caruana. Italian was the main language in the Maltese Islands at the time, hence the name "Unione Maltese Trasporto Amalati a Lourdes",

which was later translated to Maltese as "Ghaqda Maltija Trasport għal-Morda f'Lourdes."

UMTAL celebrated its 90th anniversary during the annual pilgrimage in July 2022. His Excellency Archbishop Charles J Scicluna led this pilgrimage of 180 pilgrims, volunteers and sick persons together with UMTAL's Chaplain the V. Rev. Canon Joseph Mizzi.

Every year, a team of doctors, nurses, carers and lay volunteers give up their free time and, at their own expense, enrol to look after patients to ensure a safe and comfortable experience for all. A number of relatives also accompany patients. Pilgrims are also welcome to join our group. Preparation and organization starts early in the months leading up to the pilgrimage. Patients are examined and their medical and nursing requirements are assessed and provided for. Reservations for suitable accommodation, as well as dietary requirements and mobility aids are ordered well in advance.

Spiritual preparation for the pilgrimage also takes prominence. The Chaplain leads sessions of prayer and celebration of Mass for the organising committee, helpers and pilgrims.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life and because not all of them come from the caring or medical profession, UMTAL takes care to offer the training needed to be able to help during the pilgrimage. We encourage all those interested in joining our pilgrimage to make contact and we will be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

During the pilgrimage we will include the following:

Maltese Mass at the Grotto

Way of the Cross - Penitential Rites - International Mass - Eucharistic Procession

Baths / Water Gesture - Aux Flambeaux Procession - Maltese Mass with Anointing of the Sick Sacrament

Hi Frank Thanks for receipt of your much awaited issue of "THE MALTESE JOURNAL 568" So much research and information being provided in each issue of the journal" One of my contacts who was born in Cyprus and came to Australia at the age of 6 years was so thankful when she read about "THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS IN CYPRUS" She was so thankful and on her behalf "thank you for such information of which i was never aware" Thank you and I looking forward for the next issue. Jacky

Now it's my turn for the write-up " WHEN HARRY MET MARY". So much truth so much history. Where have the years gone??? Warm regards from Harry & Mary Bugeja – Adelaide

MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER 569

IL-KWADRU TITULARI TAL-ASSUNTA

HAMSIN SENA NKURUNATA U HAMSA U SEBGHIN SENA MID-DOMMA TAGHHA

Kav. Joe M Attard- Ghawdex

Ġrajja kbira din is-sena Qed infakkru f'Għawdex tagħna Meta l-Kwadru tal-Assunta F'dan il-Misraħ ġibnih magħna

Sabiex l-Eminenza Tiegħu Jieħu ħsieb jinkurunah; Tgerbu issa *ħamsin* se*na* Mindu dan il-ġieh kien tah!

Franco Seper ħalla Ruma U ġie fi Pjazza Savina Biex lill-Kwadru jkompli jsebbaħ U ferħ kbir lilna jagħtina.

Busuttil Michele ħaseb Biex jimla lill-Katidral B'dil-Pittura daqshekk ċelebri – L-għors tal-kbar u kemm taż-żgħar!

Matul dawn il-ħamsin sena Min jaf kemm ġew iżuruh, Minn kull rokna ta' dal-globu Imħabbithom ġew juruh!

U kif jista' jkun mod ieħor Meta hawnhekk Omm il-bnedmin Minn ġol-kwadru ħarstha titfa' Tieħu ħsiebna dlonk kull ħin!

Għaliex din it-teżoriera Li l-Missier ħalla f'idejha Biex tindokra lil uliedha U ma titlaghomx minn ħdejha.

Int Marija l-Avukata Li kull ħin tiddefendina Quddiem l-Iben għażiż tiegħek Biex il-maħfra fis jagħtina. Minn dal-kwadru kompli ixħet Kotra kbira ta' barkiet La tiqafx issaltan fuqna Mal-medda taż-żmenijiet.

Meta fil-ħmistax t'Awwissu Toħroġ iddur ma' treqatna Fuq fommna reġġa' t-tbissima Biex henjin mill-ġdid tarana.

Ferħanin irridu nilqgħu Għawdxi bħalna l-Kardinal Illi l-Papa ried jibagħtu Ħa jmexxi dal-festi kbar!

O Marija jixirqulek Dawn il-festi tal-Ħamsin Niesna lilek dejjem għażlet Sabiex tkun Omm il-bnedmin.

U ma rridx inħalli barra Id-Domma minn tal-Assunta Illi żmienha wkoll qed tagħlaq Għadd ta snin issa tammonta.

Hamsa w sebgħin sena tgerbu Minn din l-għażiża proklama Illi ttajret lejn is-Sema -It-tama w il-faraġ tagħna!

Meta l-vjaġġ iebes intemmu Li nterrqu f'dal-Wied tad-Dmugħ Berrħilna l-bieb tal-Ġenna Fejn hemmhekk tistrieħ ir-ruħ.





www.ghanjatalpoplu.org

Il-kantanti finalisti flimkien mal-Malta Concert Orchestra qed jagħmlu l-aħħar tħejjijiet għad-49 edizzjoni ta' *L-Għanja tal-Poplu*, festival ta' kanzunetti oriġinali bil-Malti.

Is-serata finali tal-festival se ssir nhar is-Sibt, 2 ta' Awwissu 2025, ġewwa l-ambjent storiku u spettakolari ta' Pjazza Teatru Rjal, fil-Belt Valletta. Din is-sena, ġew sottomessi 124 kanzunetta oriġinali, u wara process ta' selezzjoni, intgħażlu 16-

il finalista li se jippreżentaw xogholijiet godda u varjati, mill-Maltin ghall-Maltin.

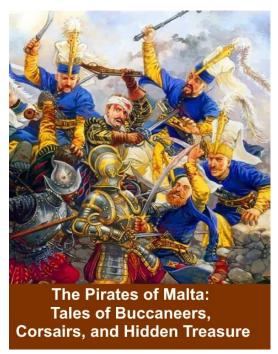


Front - Kayley Cuschieri, Danica Muscat, Graziella Mifsud Schembri Vella, Jessica Micallef, Anna Azzopardi, Haley, Rita Pace

Middle - Cherylis, Francesca Zammit, Mark Cachia, Ishmael Grech, Martina Fenech, Avenue Sky Back - Mark Spiteri Lucas, Mark Micallef Costa, Lon Kirkop, Daryl Jaymes, Mark Tonna

Il-festival se jkun ipprezentat minn **Debbie Scerri u George Cremona**, żewġ figuri magħrufa fix-xena kulturali Maltija. Mistieden speċjali tas-serata se jkun **Joe Demicoli** u qabel jitħabbru rrebbieħa **Laura Bruno** se tinterpreta il-kanzunetta "*Għażiża*" rebbieħa ta' L-Għanja tal-Poplu 2024.





By Paola Perina Malta, with its sun-kissed beaches and ancient fortifications, may seem like a serene Mediterranean paradise today, but centuries ago, it was a hotbed of pirate activity and high-seas adventure. Beneath its calm surface lies a swashbuckling history of buccaneers, corsairs, and treasure hunts—a story full of daring raids, buried loot, and secret hideaways.

Malta: A Pirate's Paradise

In the 16th to 18th centuries, Malta wasn't just a fortress island—it was a key player in the world of piracy. The island's strategic position between Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East placed it along crucial trade routes, making it a prime target for pirate raids. Malta was both a refuge and a launchpad for buccaneers plundering ships laden with riches. Hidden coves and natural harbors along the Maltese coast provided perfect hideouts where pirates could lay low, repair their ships, and divide their spoils.

Malta became a melting pot for adventurers, renegades,

and fortune-seekers from across the Mediterranean. The most notorious of these sea raiders were corsairs—licensed pirates who roamed the seas under the protection of their governments. Governed by the Knights of St. John, Malta was one of the biggest players in the corsair game.

The Pirate Knights: Malta's Corsairs

The Knights of St. John, a military and religious order, ruled Malta for centuries. But they didn't just defend the island—they took to the seas as corsairs, engaging in piracy under the guise of a "holy war" against the Ottomans and Muslim corsairs. Armed with letters of marque, these knights-turned-pirates had permission to attack enemy ships, seize their cargo, and sell it for profit. The line between defender and pirate was often blurry.

One of the most infamous corsairs in Maltese history was Romano della Scala, a name that struck fear into sailors across the Mediterranean. Della Scala was no ordinary privateer—he was known for his cunning, ruthless efficiency, and flamboyant personality. Legend has it that during one raid, he captured an Ottoman ship so laden with gold and jewels that the weight nearly sank his own vessel as he sailed back to Malta. It's said he buried some of his loot in Malta's hidden coves, though none has ever been found. Whispers of this lost treasure still send thrill-seekers on wild hunts along the rocky coastline.

Della Scala's daring was matched only by his flair for the dramatic. After seizing a particularly valuable prize, he once returned to Valletta in a grand parade, his men tossing gold coins into the streets as they marched through the city's gates. The wealth generated by these corsair raids helped fund Malta's defenses, but it also made the Knights and their pirate allies extremely rich.

The Barbary Connection: Malta and the Pirates of North Africa

It wasn't just Maltese corsairs wreaking havoc on the high seas. Barbary pirates, based in North Africa, were notorious for raiding ships and coastal towns, including those in Malta. These pirates captured both wealth and people, often selling prisoners into slavery. Malta, with its defensive walls and fierce corsairs, was one of the few places that managed to push back against the Barbary raiders. Despite the constant threat of attack, the Barbary pirates had an uneasy alliance with Malta's corsairs. On more than one occasion, Maltese corsairs and Barbary pirates crossed paths, negotiating over loot, prisoners, or even forming temporary truces. The Mediterranean was a chaotic world where enemies one day could become allies the next, depending on the winds of fortune.

Hidden Treasure and Pirate Myths

Perhaps the most enduring aspect of Malta's pirate history is the legend of hidden treasure. Across the island, stories abound of buccaneers and corsairs who buried their loot in secret caves and coves, hoping to return for it later. Some believe that Malta's southern cliffs hide vast riches, while others say the treasure is lost forever beneath the ruins of ancient fortresses.

One particularly tantalizing story is that of Xrobb I-Ghagin, a remote and rugged part of Malta's coastline. According to legend, pirates frequently used this secluded spot to stash their treasure after raids. Over the centuries, treasure hunters have scoured the area, but the gold, jewels, and silver supposedly buried there remain undiscovered. Some claim that ghosts of long-dead pirates still guard the loot, haunting the cliffs at night and scaring off would-be treasure hunters.

Even today, these stories inspire adventurers to explore Malta's coastline, metal detectors in hand, hoping to stumble upon an ancient hoard left behind by some long-forgotten buccaneer.

The Legacy of Malta's Pirates

While Malta's pirate past may seem far removed from the modern island known for its tourism and historic landmarks, the legacy of these buccaneers and corsairs still lingers. The legends of lost treasure, the daring exploits of Maltese corsairs, and the fierce clashes with Barbary pirates have become part of Malta's rich cultural tapestry.

Today, visitors to Malta can explore this pirate history by wandering through the ancient streets of Valletta, where corsairs once paraded their spoils, or venturing out to the secluded coves and cliffs that still whisper stories of hidden treasure. Whether you're drawn to the thrill of the hunt or the romance of pirate lore, Malta's pirate history is as captivating as the tales of the buccaneers themselves. So next time you find yourself on Malta's sun-drenched shores, remember—there's more to this island than meets the eye. Somewhere, hidden beneath the waves or buried in a forgotten cave, Malta's pirate treasures may still be waiting to be found.

Data released by the National Statistics Office today shows that during the second quarter of this year, a total of 11,462 trips were carried out between Malta and Gozo, carrying a total of 1,927.590 passengers.

During the same period sea the total number of trips, vehicles and passengers increased by 2.8, 3.9 and 7.7%, when compared to the corresponding quarter in 2024, the NSO said.

The NSO noted that June was the busiest month recording a total of 3,964 trips or 34.1% of total trips for the quarter.

A total of 1,591,820 passengers travelled **between Mgarr and Cirkewwa** during the second quarter, this was an increase of 3.5% when compared to the corresponding quarter of 2024.

The highest number of passengers was recorded in April – 549,469 or 34.5% of the total for the quarter. When compared to the corresponding quarter of the previous year, the number of vehicles increased by 3.9%, totalling 584,423.

There were 8,925 trips in the second quarter, a decrease of 0.4% over the same period in 2024. June registered the highest number of trips – 3,017 or 33.8% of total trips for the quarter.

During January-June, passenger traffic originating from Mgarr terminal was busiest on Sundays and Mondays, vehicle traffic was busiest on Sundays and Mondays

The NSO said that from the Cirkewwa terminal, passenger and vehicle traffic was busiest on Fridays and Saturdays.

During the second quarter of 2025, a total of 2,717 trips were carried out **between Mgarr and Valletta** carrying a total of 335,770 passengers.



MORE LEGENDS FROM MALTA

Ghar Hasan

One of the more popular legends about the subject does not mention a pirate attack as such, but the main character is a Muslim slave, who presumably would have been captured in one of the many sea battles between Maltese and Barbary corsairs.

Not surprisingly, Ħasan, as he was called, had for many years longed to be able to return to his homeland, even though while in Malta he

had become infatuated with his master's daughter.

Hasan is usually described as a hateful and evil person, perhaps reflecting the stereotypical image that most Maltese had of people like him at the time.

Despite being treated well by his master, he ended up trying to flee from Malta with the aforementioned girl, Marija. While some versions claim that she went willingly, others insist that she was abducted.

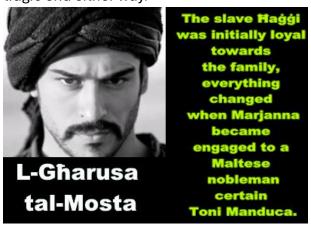
Hasan took Marija to a cave in the vicinity of Birżebbuġa, known to this day as Għar Hasan (Hasan's Cave), from where he intended to make his escape by sea.

He promised Marija that if she went with him and converted to Islam, he would provide for her and make her a very happy woman.

When Marija informed him that she had no intention of abandoning her country and her Christian faith, Ħasan was enraged.

At the same time, soldiers led by Marija's father approached the cave, having finally tracked them

Afraid of being caught, and angered by Marija's refusal to escape with him, the vengeful Hasan leaped out of the cave, whilst grabbing hold of the girl and dragging her with him to their deaths, dashed to pieces on the rocks below, or, according to another version, drowned in the raging sea: a tragic end either way.



L-Għarusa tal-Mosta

A somewhat similar story is that associated with Cumbo Tower in Mosta, which belonged to the Cumbo family.

They also had a slave, called Ħaġġi, as well as a daughter, Marjanna, to whom inevitably Ħaġġi became attracted.

It seems that although Haġġi was initially loyal towards the family, everything changed when Marjanna became engaged to a Maltese nobleman, a certain Toni Manduca. Consumed with jealousy, Haġġi soon deserted, boarding a ship and finding his way

back to his home in Turkey. Yet, less than a year later he was back, this time as part of a pirate raid targeting Mosta. Together with some accomplices, Ħaġġi showed up at Cumbo Tower, where preparations were underway for Marjanna's impending wedding to Toni.

Unaware of what was happening, Marjanna's father opened the door, at which point Ħaġġi rushed into the house and abducted the young woman.

She was bundled onto a ship and carried away.

Upon hearing the news, the distraught Toni took it upon himself to rescue his fiancee.

He set sail for Turkey, where he disguised himself in an effort to discover her whereabouts.

One day, whilst near the Sultan's palace, he was stunned to hear Marjanna singing, revealing that she was being kept there. Marjanna was overjoyed to hear him singing back, realising that he had come to rescue her.

With the help of the Sultan's daughter, a kindly woman it seems, she was able to exit the palace in disguise, before making her getaway to Malta with her beloved Toni.

This story does seem to have been inspired by real events. In 1526, Barbary corsairs raided Mosta and it is said that among those enslaved there were a number of people who were guests at a wedding, as well as the bride herself.

Although many of them eventually returned to Malta having paid their ransom, such was the expense involved that for many years after, Mosta was known for the misery and poverty of its inhabitants.



MALTA REWRITES PRE-HISTORY

by our correspondent Sean Richardson A groundbreaking discovery has revealed that Malta's human history is at least 1,000 years older than previously thought, and that the first people to descend on the islands were Mesolithic era hunter-gatherers and not Neolithic era farmers, as previous

research long believed. Like so many happenings on the small island, it tells a big story about prehistoric life across the Mediterranean. For decades, Għar Dalam was considered the earliest evidence of human settlement on Malta, dating back 7,400 years. But new excavations at the Għar tal-Latnija (Għar Tuta) in Mellieħa, by a team from the University of Malta and Max Planck Institute, unearthed remains that push this date back by 1,000 years.

A team of archaeologists, led by Maltese professors Eleanor Scerri and Nicholas Vella, published their discovery in the journal *Nature*. The discovery included stone tools, animal and seafood remains and the bones of other wild animals which included deer, reptiles and tortoises, as well as the hearths where they cooked these meals. The research project to uncover further evidence is ongoing.

"So far, scientists agreed the first humans descended on Malta around 7,500 years ago, and that they were farmers," said principal investigator Professor Eleanor Scerri, in an interview with the *Times of Malta*. "This discovery confirms there were humans on the island at least 8,500 years ago, maybe even 9,000 years ago, and they were among the last surviving hunter-gatherers of the final European Ice Age. We never knew this before. It completely opens a new chapter on Mediterranean history and changes the way we view these people."

The team noted that when the Neolithic people had choices, and the people of Malta could cultivate the edible plants and animals they wished, indicating an adaptation to both land and sea resources, the evidence suggests they almost entirely stopped eating seafood.

Nature, reported that the discovery challenges the assumption that small islands like Malta couldn't have supported whole populations of hunter-gatherers who didn't know how to grow food. It also challenges the global scientific community's belief that hunter-gatherers did not reach small and remote islands, and reshapes the understanding of what these primitive communities were capable of achieving, especially considering their limited resources and long-distance seafaring.

At the time of settlement, sea levels and Malta's geography were similar to today, although Malta, Gozo, and Comino formed a single landmass. Still, the journey from Sicily involved crossing at least 100 kilometres of open water which was well beyond the visible horizon. Malta is one of the most remote islands in the Mediterranean and, unlike regions such as Southeast Asia – known for early seafaring between densely clustered islands – Malta's relative isolation required more complex navigation.

One of the co-researchers, Professor Huw Groucutt noted, "In contrast, islands off Africa were not reached until the recent past. In the Mediterranean, the current idea is that hunter gatherers reached only islands that were large and relatively close to the coast. Malta is tiny and remote."

And given Malta's isolation, the people would have arrived in dugout canoes. They would have required advanced seafaring skills including navigation skills, planning, as well as boat-building skills. The people who braved at least 100 kilometres of open sea to reach Malta weren't farmers.

Professor Scerri believes Għar tal-Latnija deserves global recognition. "I believe this cave is a future World Heritage site, as it is preserving a piece of European history that we didn't know about."

You can listen to a detailed discussion, in Maltese and English, of the findings in *Times Talk, the podcast from The Times of Malta* (episode 10 April 2025 - The First Maltese).

Sean loves writing about Malta and sharing stories with readers. You can read more of his stories about Malta at seanrichardson.com.au or find him on Facebook at Sean Richardson Writer.

8,500 years ago after the Neolithic revolution began and farming started in the Fertile Crescent, seemingly close by.

We mean canoe or raft. But the extraordinary thing is that Malta can't be seen from any land mass, including the closest one - Sicily which is over 85 kilometres distant.

Did these ancient people know from previous oral accounts that there was a luscious green island over the horizon? Were they lost at sea? Did their canoe get blown off course from hugging some comfortable familiar shoreline, and did they get lucky? The team suspects - they knew where they were going.

There has been long debate about origins of seafaring. People got to places like Japan, Australia et cetera quite early, over long sea crossings, probably island hopping of around 100 kilometres," Groucutt says. "But in those cases, it is about movements between large islands which are highly intervisible, and southeast Asia seems to have been something of a cradle of early seafaring probably because it has lots of islands, maybe good materials for making seacraft, and things like tsunamis happen," he adds.

A tsunami is a good scenario for washing people (and animals) out to sea, clinging to floating vegetation and winding up somewhere new.

But skipping from one intervisible Greek island to another is one thing., the team stresses. It is true that in deeper prehistory, when sea levels were lower due to water being locked up in massive glaciers, there may have been a land bridge connecting little Malta to Sicily. But that isn't how the people got there. The land bridge would have sunk beneath the seas about 13,000 years ago.

Open gallery view Remains found at the Maltese site during excavations. Credit: Eleanor Scerri

. Catching a seal would have been done by a hunting party and there were abundant sea urchins.

All this began at least 8,500 years ago, and by that time, the sea level was roughly where it is now. Which means Malta was still about 100 kilometres from Sicily, if that's where they came from.

Apropos the stone tools, though Mesolithic – very late in the story of human evolution – they were not state of the art. That could simply be because the locals were using the lousy local limestone, which wasn't up to much, or were just not that good at knapping. Not a big population. Not a big group from which to extract the master craftsman.

Actually as the vulture flies, Malta is "only" 85 km from Sicily but given winds, currents and acts of deity, the actual route would have been more like 100 km, the authors explain. So, Growcott sums up: under the circumstances, meant that hunter-gatherers were either unable or unwilling to make these journeys. Here we describe chronological, archaeological, faunal and botanical data that support the presence of Holocene hunter-gatherers on the Maltese islands.

according to of the Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology, Prof. Nicholas Vella of the University of Malta, Prof. Huw Groucutt and colleagues.



IN MALTA 99% HAVE INTERNET ACCESS, UP FROM 95% IN 2023 – MCA SURVEY

Friday, 18 July 2025, 12:25Last update: about 20 hours ago

The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) has published the results of its latest survey examining the experiences of residential internet users across Malta. The findings point to an encouraging trend in digital inclusion, with nearly all respondents (99%) reporting having access to the internet in their

homes - up from 95% in 2022.

Respondents are becoming more digitally aware, with 57% having tested their broadband speed in 2025, compared to 44% in 2022. Encouragingly, 82% of all residential internet users consider their current broadband speed as adequate for their daily needs.

The rise in over-the-top (OTT) service usage is a standout development, with 99% of respondents now using such services over the internet, up from 87% in 2022. Content streaming and chat are the most popular activities, and daily usage is widespread. The survey also highlights a maturing consumer landscape, with respondents placing increased importance on pricing, download speed, customer service and flexibility when choosing broadband packages.

While the MCA remains aware of areas for further improvement, these findings confirm continued progress in enhancing digital access and user empowerment in Malta.



Xlendi Tower: Step back in time and dive beneath the surface – virtually

by Gozo News

public are being invited to step back in time and dive beneath the surface – virtually – during an event taking place at the Xlendi Tower in Gozo. Organised by the Munxar Local Council, in collaboration with Heritage Malta's Underwater

Cultural Heritage Unit, the historical Xlendi Tower will once again open its doors to the public

for a special open weekend – 16th and 17th of August – on Gozo's scenic south-west coast.

Visitors will have the opportunity to explore the tower's rich cultural history and enjoy panoramic views of Xlendi Bay, before discovering a hidden underwater world.

This year's event features an immersive Virtual Reality experience, offering a virtual dive into the Xlendi Underwater Archaeological Park and the Phoenician Shipwreck. Inside the tower, there will also be a display of underwater artefacts, offering insight into centuries of maritime history that lie beneath Gozo's clear waters.

The seabed of Xlendi is a testament to the millennia of human activity around the Maltese Islands. Hidden beneath the azure waves off Ras il-Wardija is a remarkable archaeological site- the Phoenician shipwreck, dating back to the 7th century BC.

Just beneath the Xlendi Tower lies the world's first Deep water underwater archaeological park, opened to the diving public in 2023. Heritage Malta said that the Xlendi Underwater Archaeological Park is proudly sponsored by the Malta Airport Foundation.

The Xlendi Tower will be open between 09:00-12:00 and then 13:30-16:00 on both days. Entrance is free for all visitors and no pre-booking is required. *File photo: Gozo News/Alain Salvary*





Boċċi, the Maltese version of bocce, is a traditional sport deeply ingrained in Maltese culture,

particularly among older generations and in working-class towns. It's a ball sport similar to bowls or pétanque, where players roll large, heavy balls to get closest to a smaller target ball, the "boċċiċċ" or jack. Even the emigrants to Canada, Australia, and The United States have taken the game with them and now forms an important part of their social scene.

History and Evolution:

Italian Influence:

Bocce was introduced to Malta in the 18th-19th centuries, likely through Italian Knights of St. John and Sicilian workers and traders.

Local Adaptation:

Maltese dockworkers, masons, and village elders adapted the game, leading to the unique Maltese version known as boċċi.

Modern Play:

Boċċi is played on a rectangular sand or soil court, typically 2.5-4 meters wide and 20-27 meters long.

Social Significance:

Boċċi is more than just a game; it's a social tradition, often enjoyed with refreshments in the lively atmosphere of local clubs.

Key Features of Boċċi:

Teams: Boċċi matches are usually played in teams of three.

Balls: Teams use colored balls (usually red and blue) that are spherical and can fit in the palm of a hand.

Objective: The goal is to get your team's balls as close as possible to the jack.



- **Roles:** Players may have designated roles, such as setters (aiming for proximity to the jack) and knockers (displacing opponents' balls).
- **Scoring:** The team closest to the jack scores points, and the first team to reach 21 points wins.
- Where to Experience Boċċi:
 - Local Clubs: Boċċi clubs are common in Malta, often accompanied by coffee shops or

bars.

Community Events: Boċċi is played at various community events and festivals.

Public Spaces: You can often find boċċi being played in public spaces, especially in towns and villages.



Tagliaferro.

SERGIO GRECH - THE NEW PRESIDENT OF L-AKKADEMJA TAL-MALTI

The prolific writer Sergio Grech has been officially appointed President of the Maltese Academy. Grech was born in Żejtun in 1975 and studied History at the University of Malta. He obtained his doctorate in Maltese Studies in 2022 and in 2004, published the biography of Father Felicjan Bilocca 'Ħajtu u Żminijiete 1914-1987'. Meanwhile, in 2010, the novel 'Il-Lejl tal-Irġulija' was published. Sergio Grech is also the editor of the series 'Bejn Storja u Miti' with books on, among others, Dom Mintoff, Herbert Ganado, Trevor Żahra, Mabel Strickland, Giovanni Bonello, Anton Buttigieg, Eddie Fenech Adami and Fr Hilary





Photos: Joe Chetcuti - Adelaide

PRICELESS MEMORIES

These two interesting photos depicts the family Schembri from Adelaide who migrated to Australia in the 60s. The family lived in Fuller Street, Walkerville, South Australia.

The photo on the left shows (from right to left) the Schembri family - Judy, Georgina, Iris, Joe, Mary, Frank, Alice, Fred, Violet and John Fabri being the ring-in, the photo was taken in November 1955 in Adelaide. You can see their father in the shadows on the right-hand side.

We have also included the wedding photo of their parents, Mr & Mrs. Gerald and Carmela Schembri. Carmela's maiden surname was Cassar.

OUR READERS LOVE TO HEAR YOUR STORY SEND IT TO US

PEAS, TUNA, SPINACH AND ANCHOVIES PIES

Warm spinach and tuna pies are the ideal meal for when you need comfort food. A Maltese classic which never goes out of taste. Buttery dough filled with an abundant tangy mixture that is well known all over the islands.

Ii you are really craving for some MALTESE QASSATAT you are in luck. These are the fast food of Malta, along with the pastizzi, square pizza, sausage rolls and various pies. In almost every

village you will find that small shop selling these tasty snacks.

Ingredients for 7 large ones.

For the pastry:
500 g flour '00' sifted,
1 teaspoon fine salt,
50 ml extra virgin olive oil,
50 ml vegetable or sunflower oil,
2 beaten eggs,

Water as necessary,

1 extra beaten egg to brush the top



For the filling

200 g frozen and thawed spinach,

100 g chopped green olives,

25 g chopped anchovies,

1 large can of tuna,

Spring onions, and spring garlic finely chopped, as much as you desire,

100 g frozen peas,

Black pepper to taste

Add salt to the sifted flour, and add oils

Use the rub in method

Add eggs and water as necessary to make a smooth dough

Wrap in clingfilm and put in the fridge for at least 2 hours

Open the tuna and the anchovy cans and pour their oil in a pan

Add garlic and onion and fry a bit

Add all other ingredients and fry well together until mixture becomes dry

Turn off the heat and leave to cool

Roll out the pastry using some flour, and cut seven 24 cm rounds

Add 2 tablespoons of the mixture in the middle of the pastry, and close like a pouch, overlapping the sides

Place on a lined dish

Cut some 6 cm round pastry and cover the middle opening

Brush with egg and bake in an oven of 200c until pastry is done, golden and crispy

Can be served hot or cold





MALTESE CENTER

Malta Square 27-20 Hoyt Ave South ASTORIA - NEW YORK (718) 728 9883

YOUTH MIDSUMMER BBQ Saturday August 2, 2025 at 7pm

Katherine and Shannon are hosting a midsummer BBQ at the Maltese Center Saturday August 2nd at 7pm for the youth, we would love for you to join us. The Center has always been a place for coming together, this would be a great chance to support the center and the Maltese culture. Ticket sales go directly to supporting the Center's operating costs



MEN'S SHED MEETING IN GRINGILA NSW

During the week, the Cringila Men's Shed was honoured in holding a cluster meeting of all Sheds i the zone, around thirteen sheds.

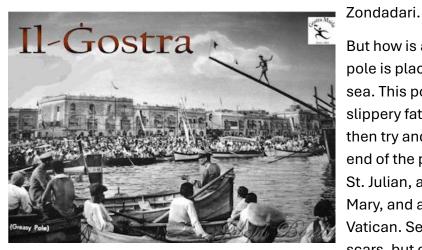
The Centre's ability to hold large meetings is not new to the association, and the men attending wer very grateful to the kitchen crew for providing a three-course meal.

Most of the leaders of each shed spoke about the ongoing concerns happening at their shed, an some proudly spoke about growth in their area.

Our Cringila Shed is part of the Australian Men's Shed Association, and the organisers, Ms Beth Go and Matthew Southworth, informed us of positive changes happening as part of the AMSA initiative The day concluded with Ms Beth Gow providing free of charge boxes of screws and other thing needed in running the Sheds. **Louis Parnis President**



IL-GOSTRA is one of oldest traditional sport in Malta. The contestants try to climb a greasy pole to retrieve a flag before falling into the water below. This customary competition is a part of many small feasts around the island of Malta and the most best-known ones occur at the feast of St. Joseph, Msida and the one that takes places in St. Julian's. The game stretches back to the Middle Ages. However, the actual 'Il-Ġostra' was first played along the beach during national feasts in 1721. It was created and brought to Malta by Grand Master of the Order of Malta Marcantonio



But how is all of this done? A 10 or 16-meter pole is placed at an angle from the bay to the sea. This pole is then coated with litres of slippery fat and grease. Competitors need to then try and strive to grasp three flags at the end of the pole: a Belgian tricolour honouring St. Julian, a blue and white flag honouring St. Mary, and a yellow and white flag honouring the Vatican. Several men suffer a few bumps and scars, but only a select few bring home the

medals or flags. So, if you want to try your luck against this slippery beast, simply concentrate on your target and pray for success!



256 Moray Str , South Melbourne, VIC, Australia, Victoria

NANNA'S PLACE MEDITERRANEAN RESTAURANT

Nanna's Place is an exciting and authentic Mediterranean restaurant in

South Melbourne. This shop prides itself on serving up the best of Maltese, Greek, Spanish, and Italian cuisine, bringing the vibrant flavours and traditions of the Mediterranean to our community. Nanna's Place is the perfect meeting spot for celebrations with friends and family, where delicious food and great company come together. At Nanna's Place, you're always home. Find us on Facebook.

DON'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE