



70

**CONSULATE OF MALTA IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER**  
**FRANK L SCICLUNA - LINKING THE MALTESE DIASPORA**

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*On Australia Day we come together as a nation to celebrate what's great about Australia and being Australian. It's the day to reflect on what we have achieved and what we can be proud of in our great nation. It's the day for us to re-commit to making Australia an even better place for the future.*

*Australia Day, 26 January, is the anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet of 11 convict ships from Great Britain, and the raising of the Union Jack at Sydney Cove*

*by its commander Captain Arthur Phillip, in 1788.*

*Though 26 January marks this specific event, today Australia Day celebrations reflect contemporary Australia: our diverse society and landscape, our remarkable achievements and our bright future. It also is an opportunity to reflect on our nation's history, and to consider how we can make Australia an even better place in future.*

*On Australia Day, over half of the nation's population of 23 million attend either an organised community event, or get together with family and friends with the intention of celebrating our national day. Many more spend the public holiday relaxing with family and friends. Yet Australia Day is much more than barbeques and fireworks. It is more than another public holiday. It is more than the pride and excitement of new citizens who call themselves Australian for the first time on 26 January after being conferred citizenship.*

*At its core, Australia Day is a day driven by communities, and the celebrations held in each town, suburb or city – unified by the celebration of what's great about Australia and being Australian – are the foundation of its ongoing success.*



26 JANUARY 2015

## FOOTBALL AND FEASTS: WORLD WAR I CHRISTMAS TRUCE



**Christmas truce:**  
*Soldiers of the 1/5th City of London Rgt (London Rifle Brigade) fraternising with Saxons of the 104th and 106th Infantry Rgts at Ploegsteert, Belgium, on December 25, 1914*

**The plan was to repair trenches and bury fallen soldiers. But the 1914 Christmas truce stirred human feelings, leading to jovial gatherings of wartime enemies**

December 1914 witnessed one of the most famous events of the **First World**

**War.** The Christmas Truce, as it became known, involved large numbers of British, French and German soldiers on the Western Front. Along the 30 miles of line held by the British Expeditionary Force south of Ypres, impetus for the truce came from the need to repair trenches and bury the dead.

As both sides struggled to improve living conditions, the intensity of fighting died down. As the weather worsened, both sides risked sending out working parties in daylight to repair trenches. On Christmas Eve, the weather changed with the arrival of a sharp frost, causing the ground to harden.

That evening, British soldiers noticed strange activity along sectors of the German line. Major Henriques (1/16th London) recalled how, as darkness fell, firing slackened and the Germans began putting up lanterns along their trenches. Soon afterwards the singing of carols and patriotic German songs was heard, which the British applauded. Men began shouting remarks across no-man's land and then night passed without a shot being fired.

With friendly relations established, more adventurous souls on each side moved the truce to another level on Christmas Day. Private Jack Chappell (1/5th London) wrote home that in the morning his battalion and the Germans opposite agreed not to fire. Men on both sides began showing themselves above the trenches and waved to each other. When no shots were fired, German and British soldiers climbed out of their trenches and walked into no-man's land.

In a scene repeated at many places on the front line, men met and exchanged food, drink, cigarettes, sweets and souvenirs. In some places photographs were taken and at others soldiers from both sides came together and took part in impromptu kickabouts with footballs.

## EXHIBITION OF WORLD WAR 1



Postcard of the Maltese Centre for St. John Ambulance Association

On June 28, 1914, two shots fired by a 19-year old Serbian student, Gavrilo Princip, in Bosnia, killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife Sophie. The assassination triggered the First World War of 1914-1918.

To mark the 90th anniversary of the war, the Malta Philatelic Society will show an award-winning display entitled "Malta - Nurse of the Mediterranean" and a talk will be given by George Dougall.

The event will be held at 6 p.m. on April 7 in St Publius Hall, 50, St Publius Street, Floriana.

Although much has been written about Malta's heroic part in World War II, relatively few know of the island's contribution during the 1914-18 war.

In February 1915, a British-French fleet of 16 major battleships and numerous other auxiliary craft assembled to attack the narrow waters of the Dardanelles. The Turks knew all about the expedition and were waiting with big guns. The result was a slaughter, with British, Australian and New Zealand troops being mowed down.

Meanwhile, in Malta, plans were made to receive the sick and wounded. The island was turned into a veritable hospital; so much so that it earned the title of Nurse of the Mediterranean.

The display shows covers, postcards and other philatelic items. Mr Dougall is a past chairman of London's Malta Study Circle. He is best known for his daily BBC commentary in Maltese for over 30 years.

### **MALTA AND THE ANZACS – THE NURSE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN**

**This commemorative book is sent to the printers. Those who wrote to me to reserve a copy will be notified when it's ready to be delivered.**

**Since this is going to be a limited edition to coincide with  
ANZCAS CENTENARY 2015 reserve your copy NOW**

**For further information contact: [honconsul@live.com.au](mailto:honconsul@live.com.au)**



## ĊENSU TABONE MONUMENT UNVEILED IN ST JULIAN'S



The monument at St Julian's, Malta [Photo: [www.timesofmalta.com](http://www.timesofmalta.com)]

The monument of former President of Malta Dr Ċensu Tabone was unveiled at Balluta Square, St Julians. Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muscat, Leader of the Opposition Dr Simon Busuttil, former presidents of Malta and members of the parliament were present for the ceremony.

During the ceremony, interviews that Dr Tabone had given were broadcast. "Political polarisation in this country needs to

be abolished. We need to shoulder our fair share of responsibility, and compromise on what is best for Malta," the former president had said, shortly before he turned 81.

"Malta hija taghna lkoll", he said in an interview on TVM when he became president. Ironically, the same phrase was used as the Labour Party's campaign in 2013. When the then new President made that statement, it did not go down well with the Labour Party leader of the time – Dr Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici – who called for a boycott of the President, saying he did not represent all of Malta.

During the unveiling of a monument, PM Joseph Muscat apologised for the social boycott that had been imposed on Dr Tabone's presidency by then Opposition leader Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici.

Ċensu Tabone's nephew, Dr Paul Cauchi, also an ophthalmologist, noted the important work carried out by his uncle when he served as a military doctor. Dr Tabone's work took him across the globe, including the Far East and Iran, and his efforts were acknowledged by the World Health Organisation.

Former EU Commissioner Dr Tonio Borg recalled his first meeting with Ċensu Tabone, back when alongside other students; he founded Studenti Demokratiki Maltin (SDM). "Immediately, I realised he was a man of principles, persuasive, and charismatic. Back in the days, he was one of the few members of parliament who confronted Dom Mintoff in an assertive manner." Dr Borg also recalled how the former president always stressed that candidates should not be listed alphabetically on the ballot sheet, as some would be disadvantaged.

Prime Minister Joseph Muscat lauded Dr Tabone for his work both as a politician and ophthalmologist. Dr Tabone's medical findings resulted in less occurrences of eye trachoma. "He led a colourful life, with astounding achievements. He was shaped by the historical events he lived in."



From left: Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, Dr Tabone's widow Mrs Maria Tabone and daughter Mrs Helen Farrugia Randon [Photo: [www.independent.com.mt](http://www.independent.com.mt)]

"My father has left behind him a beautiful legacy," said his daughter Mrs Helen Farrugia Randon, in comments to the Malta Independent newspaper. "He was always discussing, debating – he stuck to his guns, but was ready to compromise."

"Most of all I always remember him being in love with my mother, holding her hand. Despite his strong sense of independence, he consulted her about all important decisions." In November 2011, only four months before Dr Tabone passed away, he celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with his wife Maria.

"He was ready to provide help to whoever needed it, irrelevant of political beliefs. He always instructed us not to get into any arguments about politics, he was very strict about it," she said. "Not once did he miss daily mass, communion and rosary, despite how busy he was."

Nationalist MP Dr Francis Zammit Dimech describes Censu Tabone as 'a man of many dimensions'. "Censu Tabone is a family man, highly dedicated, who doesn't give up easily. He had a sense of flair, and he was particularly talented in foreign affairs politics." Dr Zammit Dimech recalled a large set of loudspeakers which the former president owned and used during district meetings around St Julians. The former president was also obsessed with clocks, and made it a point to maintain all clocks at the President's palace. "Despite a boycott against him before he became president, at the end he was a man highly respected by all politicians."

## **Profs Henry Frendo**

## **Save Maltese... and English**

The recently-published Matsec results for Maltese and English are a cause for great worry – to parents, teachers, writers and the schoolchildren themselves.

The news in the papers concentrated more on the bad results in English. This is perfectly understandable because English, as a means of communication throughout the world, is a great resource for Malta. When less than four per cent obtain grade 1 out of over 5,000 students, after 10 years of schooling, it means the vast majority of school-leavers aged 16 or so have no command of the language.

Constitutionally, English has been a second official language in Malta since 1964 and so should it remain. But its continued existence needs protection badly as we are losing it. There is a limit to how many 'remedial classes' we can fund even at university level!

However, still more students are failing in Maltese than in English. This is a statement about the inability even to express oneself, in a written form, in one's own language. That in spite of the life-works of great contributors to the language, such as the late Ġużé Aquilina whose engaging commitment and legacy moulded three generations, who held him in the highest respect. His priceless six-volume dictionary became a foundation stone of legitimacy and stability for our language after a turbulent history.

In recent years, Maltese had stabilised and been accepted, even being used for disciplines such as history and philosophy.

What caused this degeneration? I don't think this outcome is monocausal. Rather, it is as contextual as it is pedagogical, technological and circumstantial.

Education Minister Evarist Bartolo quite rightly remarked how ironic it was that "in a country with a strong reputation for its English language schools" we were struggling to maintain standards in our own educational system. Remedies are urgently called for.

In its analysis, the Matsec board highlighted, among other things, "rampant misspelling of words"; the use of "slang American diction" and "the persistent use of direct translation from Maltese to English".

A lack of reading may well be a cause but another very pertinent question is: what is being read and with what spelling?

If the spelling is of a lazy pidgin variety, even 'proofreading courses' in the same vein only serve to worsen the situation. Some such words, for which Maltese had no equivalent, have been internalised in the language over time and became currency. Others, however, remained and remain demonstrably foreign.

This nonsense should be discouraged and prevented by all means if we wish to save both Maltese and English. No amount of attempting to write them phonetically will make them 'Maltese' at the batting of an eyelid.

Fiddling around unnecessarily with a language, particularly a very small and very vulnerable one such as Maltese has been and is now more than ever, can cause serious and lasting harm, which will impact negatively on Maltese, as is clearly happening.

If the language has two long-accepted words in current usage conveying different meanings, such as skond (according to) and skont (a discount), to roll them into one is at best confusing and at worst an impoverishment. People are not interested in how many angels can sit on the pin of some theoretical needle. But they wince when what has always been customary and legitimate is suddenly forcibly rendered 'wrong'.

However, some Church manuals have even adopted in print the skont version, thereby relegating evangelists to the flea market.

What on earth is the value added in starting to write per eżempju as one word? In which European language to which Maltese had been exposed has such a term been joined into one word?

What is worse must be the negative effect that a misguidedly proposed so-called 'phoneticisation' is having on English.

If a student reads spiker in a five-column newspaper spread, s/he may be excused for assuming this were some local version of spiderman. In fact, if and when you digest it, it would be a supposedly 'Maltese' rendering of a term used in England for the chairman of the House of Commons. That word is a noun, Speaker, derived from the verb to speak, no spikes attached.

Anyone who listened to the Budget debate on TVM would have noticed MPs generally referring to "Sur President" and not "Sur Spiker".

If a child reads bajsikil (for rota in Maltese), how are they still to know how to spell the word in English (bicycle, a vehicle with two wheels)? Bajsikil is neither English nor Maltese. It is a pidgin: Maltingliż. Ruinous. Reprehensible. A recipe for illiteracy.

Two practically unintelligible gems I came across in a recent book on Dom Mintoff are bulits (in pidgin) for balal (in Maltese) and bejniti (pidgin) for bajunetta (Maltese).

Nobody occupying any position of responsibility should formally countenance niffollowja rather than insegwi or bejbi instead of tarbija. For the sake of both languages, this travesty must stop.

*Henry Frendo is director of the Institute for Maltese Studies.*

## **Opinion: Mr George Portelli, Melbourne, Australia.**

Among other very important issues your editorial raised (The Sunday Times, January 29) it has put into perspective the ongoing debate about the spelling of the Maltese word for 'euro'. As you pointed out, the crux of the matter lies with the apparent lack of direction in the manner the Maltese language should continue to evolve. It is inevitable that a language has to import loan-words to survive.

The Maltese language has been doing this since time immemorial. Take, for instance, the number of Italian words that are now part and parcel of the Maltese language. This process would appear to have been relatively painless given that both languages have similar phonetic orthographies. However when it comes to importing or adopting Anglo-Saxon words the problem takes a different dimension. What is plaguing the Maltese language is the lack of consensus between interested parties on how it should develop, as well as the absence of a central authority which is regarded as the ultimate body in matters of the Maltese language in the manner that the BBC was to the English language.

One question that should be asked is: should foreign words be adopted in their original, undiluted form or should they be primarily subjected to Maltese phonetic orthography? This latter will, of course, give rise not only to dissonance to the language but also bastardise it. This will ultimately have the potential of reducing the Maltese language to the status of 'pidgin' vernacular. Importing words in their original form, however discordant to the Maltese language they may be, would facilitate the process of transition considerably, leaving no room for debate. However if the loan-word is to be "Maltesised" then one has to ensure, at least, that consistent and appropriate rules are strictly applied. For instance, I have some reservations with the adoption of the word "ewro". No doubt 'euro' is a derivative of 'Europe' - I hardly think that it is intended to be the Aboriginal Australian word, of identical spelling and pronunciation, for a large reddish kangaroo.

To the extent that the Maltese "ewro" is a derivative of "Ewropa" I concur with the Kunsill Nazzjonali ta' l-Ilsien Malti that it is logical to spell 'euro' "ewro". However, given the English pronunciation of 'euro' Maltese language morphology would dictate that a literal transition into Maltese would be "juro".



The oldest record of the Belli Family is an article found in the Encyclopedia Britannica about Pierino Belli born. March 20, 1502, Alba, Montferrat [Italy] and died on December 31, 1575, Turin, Savoy

1. Pierino was a Piedmontese soldier, jurist, and an authority on the law of war and who is considered to be the founders of modern international law. After serving as commander in chief of the army of the Holy Roman Empire in Piedmont, **[Turin, Italy]**. Pierino Belli was appointed (1560) a councilor of state by Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. His book *De re militari et de bello* (1563) [**Treatise on Military Matters & Warfare**] was for its time an unusually thorough treatment of military law and the rules for conducting war.

2. According to the research and study by Dr. Giovanni Bonello LLD, ANDREA BELLI was Malta's most prominent Baroque Architect, Industrialist, Traveler, Impresario and also Slave Dealer. He was regularly been commissioned by the Knights of Malta to build palaces, churches and other buildings. He was credited to own the first sawmill in Msida, Malta. On March 26, 1760 the almighty Uditore (right-hand man) of Grand Master Pinto, who happen to be his own brother Gabrielle Belli, granted Andrea the export monopoly. He started to export the Maltese building stone and other stone products to other European countries. He is credited to be the architect of many fine buildings in Valletta and other towns.

Andrea was the son of the surgeon Dr. Giuseppe Batta Belli and Francesca Romano. He was born in Valletta, Malta on October 13, 1703, died on October 19, 1772 and buried in the Carmelite Church, Valletta. After WW1 a number of the Belli families from Malta have migrated to England, the US, Canada and Australia. All of these including those living in Malta seem to be direct descendants to Andrea Belli or to his father Giuseppe Batta Belli. The surname BELLI is presently found extensively throughout all of Italy, Germany, the United States while the family has also settled in Britain, Canada, Australia and South America.

## COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

Count your blessings instead of your crosses;

Count your gains instead of your losses.

Count your joys instead of your woes;

Count your friends instead of your foes.

Count your smiles instead of your tears;

Count your courage instead of your fears.

Count your full years instead of your lean;

Count your kind deeds instead of your mean.

Count your health instead of your wealth;

Count on God instead of yourself. Author Unknown





**Yana Mintoff** (aka Joan Bland Mintoff) is a political activist, economist and educator. Mintoff was born on 21 August 1951, the daughter of the former Prime Minister of Malta, Dom Mintoff and Moyra De Vere Bentinck, by whom she is descended from both Dutch and British nobility.

In 1968, at the age of 17, Mintoff travelled to Czechoslovakia on her own, outraged by the Soviet occupation of that country and its harsh repression. She worked at Olomouc as

a youth volunteer and opposed the Soviet military presence.

Between 1973 and 1974, while working as a teacher in Greece, she participated in the student protests against the military Junta that had taken power. She was amongst the students who were attacked by the army outside the Athens Polytechnic. Many students were killed and she was shot at three times before managing to escape.

In 1974 she contributed to the Granada television documentary series *World in Action*. The subject was a scandal involving British architect John Poulson and the building of a "white elephant" hospital in Gozo. Her research into the bribery and corruption of local officials led the trail to the British Home Secretary Reginald Maudling. He resigned after this documentary was broadcast. As a teacher and an activist in Britain, she worked for workers' and women's rights, and was an activist for Irish and Palestinian causes.

On 6 July 1978 Mintoff took part in a demonstration in the House of Commons in London. To protest against Britain's military presence in Northern Ireland, three bags of horse manure were hurled from the public gallery during a debate on Scottish devolution. Mintoff and a John Mcsherry were arrested and she was later fined.

On her return to Malta, she helped establish the *Association of Women of the Mediterranean Region*, an organization to unite women in nineteen Mediterranean countries in the causes of justice, equality and peace. Mintoff helped compile four books of collected works: An economist by training, her publications include an article published in the *International Journal of Health Services*, Johns Hopkins University, MD, USA.

In Texas, Mintoff worked with the *Foundation for a Compassionate Society* and was invited to speak at the UN Alternative Forum in Beijing in 1995 on the subject of women and peace. She also worked on a study of the health effects of military pollution at Kelly Air Force Base, San Antonio Texas, where she won two Environmental Justice awards. In addition to being an activist in the cause of peace, Mintoff has been a teacher, administrator and the founder of two schools during the past thirty years.

Mintoff was the Superintendent of the Katherine Anne Porter School, a charter school, in Wimberley, Texas, before returning to Malta due to her father's illness. She married David P. Bland in 1991. Her children are Cetta S. Mainwaring and Daniel X. Mainwaring. Having returned to Malta to tend to her ailing father, Mintoff addressed the Maltese Labour Party's General Conference of 2012. Mintoff was a candidate in the 2013 Maltese General Election, but she failed to get elected to the House of Representatives. more from Wikipedia



# Protecting the most significant buildings, monuments and features of Pembroke

## Australia Hall, St Andrew's military complex



During the First World War (1914-18), Malta was dubbed as The Nurse of the Mediterranean as it was the largest British military outpost hosting thousands of allied wounded soldiers from the Gallipoli and Salonika warfronts. Numerous convalescent camps were erected and large buildings were transformed into hospitals. Most of these soldiers belonged to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZACS), some of

whom died while in Malta.

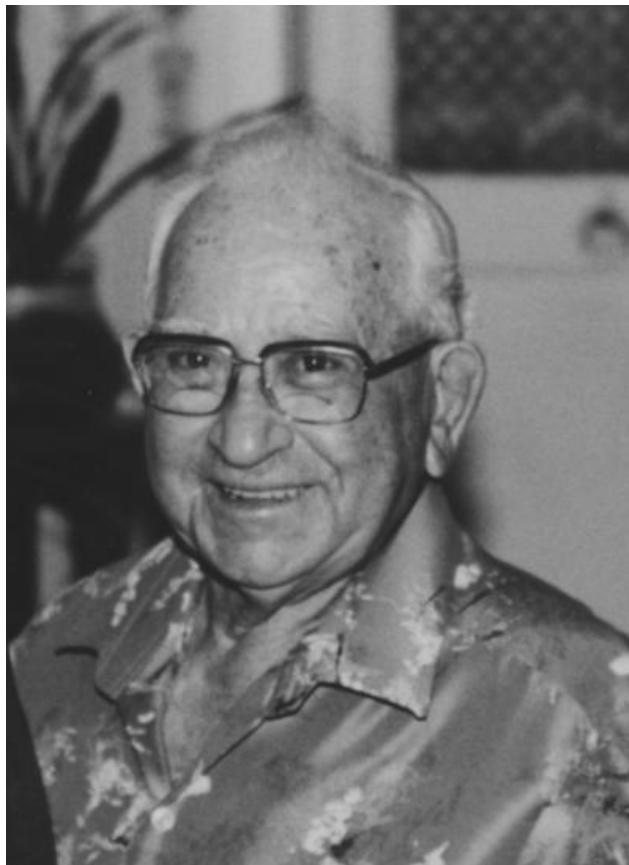
In 1915, the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross collected funds for the building of Australia Hall at Pembroke, a recreation centre/theatre and annexes, to stand as a monument to the wounded ANZAC troops that were nursed in Malta. This large hall could cater for some 2000 men, in which stage productions, bingo, dances and other forms of entertainment were held. A library and reading room were later included and it was the building where the Navy, Army and Air Force Institute (NAAFI), was first established in 1921. About this time, a projection room was added for the hall to double as a cinema.

With the closure of the British military facilities in St Andrew's Barracks in 1978, the hall became the property of the Maltese government and later allocated to third parties. Unfortunately, the ceiling of trusses and sheeting was gutted by fire in December 1998 but its sturdy four walls still remain standing and will be subject to a restoration project.

In 1996 Malta Planning Authority scheduled Australia Hall as Grade 2 building of historic, architectural and contextual value as it forms part of a larger scheduled military complex and its protection status was retained and republished following a revision as per Government Notice number 880/09 dated October 30, 2009.

## **JOE CASSAR –** **“BY HORSE AND CART TO PORT KEMBLA NSW”**

(Early Maltese to the Illawarra region, NSW)



An early pioneer in Wollongong was Joe Cassar. He migrated to Australia in 1924 from the town of Hal Qormi, Malta.

He went to Lithgow first west of the Blue Mountains to work at the steelworks and stayed for 7 years. He lived in primitive accommodation with earth floors and had to endure rain coming into the house.

Joe left Lithgow as work was not steady to the new steelworks in Port Kembla south of Wollongong city NSW that had just opened by the Hoskins family. In the Xmas of 1931, by horse and cart he came to Port Kembla with Joe Gatt and Michael Spiteri.

In the beginning of 1932, he started work at the steelworks as a leading hand having experience from his time in Lithgow. It was all hard manual work at this stage as machines were not in use until much later.

After ten years Joe left the steelworks and a few years later he opened his own fruit and vegetable shop with a milk bar in Cowper Street in Warrawong which he had for nineteen years. The last ten years

of his working life he worked at Metal Manufacturers in Port Kembla.

Joe and his wife helped to establish the Warrawong Catholic church St Francis of Assisi, where there were a lot of post WWII Maltese migrants. Joe was active and supportive in helping many migrants settle into the new country.

Joe was a friendly, honest and humble man. It was after 50 years later that Joe finally had the opportunity to go back to Malta in the mid-1970s and he spent a year long holiday. It was his very first time that he met with his younger siblings in Hal Qormi as they had been born after he had left Malta. Joe Cassar died in 1995, aged 90 years of age.

Article, written by Lawrence Scerri

Source: Joe Cassar Interview, by Barry York (1984) Warrawong, NSW 2502.

Joe Cassar in 1984





## FLORIANA FOOTBALL CLUB – MALTA

I have found these photos that my late father had and I thought you might be interested in them and maybe include them in your newsletter. I think they were from the late 50's or early 60's. They feature action shots from a game between Floriana and Sliema Wanderers, Team photos of Floriana & Hibernians and some cup or trophy that Floriana won. Maybe the readers can identify them.

George Brimmer from Melbourne



## Andrew Bartolo (Id-Dindu) passes away

On Christmas Day 25th  
December 2015

Andrew was from Floriana and played for his home town football team Floriana FC between the years 1943 and 1947. During his spell with Floriana FC the club was going through great difficulties due to high debts and in seasons 1944-45 and 1945-46 had to compete with a new name of Floriana Athletics in order for the

committee to exempt the debts made by the previous Club committee. For the Malta Football Association Floriana Athletics were still recognized as the continuation of Floriana Football Club. Andrew Bartolo also played with another popular team in the Suborn of Floriana, the amateur club Floriana Tigers FC.

He also played with the capital city team Valletta Prestons FC and was captain of the team who obtained promotion to the 1st Division 1939-40 which replaced the other capital club Valletta St.Pauls who in season 1939-40 finished last in the table of the 1st Division where they were relegated. Due to the fact that Malta was involved in the World War 2, football competitions had to stop. Later on when football competitions resumed in 1943, Valletta Prestons FC and Valletta St.Paul's FC amalgamated in one club known today as Valletta FC. Due to this amalgamation Andrew Bartolo had to leave Valletta Prestons FC in 1943 and joined his home town club Floriana FC.

Floriana FC would like to send the condolences to all his family. His funeral was held on Saturday 27th December at the Parish church of St.Publius in Floriana.



## MALTA – THE BEAUTIFUL



time of the Knights of Malta Order.

Before Malta Order ... by jemaflor

<http://www.trekearth.com/gallery/Europe/Malta/South/Malta/Zurrieq/photo649329.htm>

Hagar Qim : one of the megalithic temples of Malta archipelago. This name means "the drawn up stones". One of the blocks of stone which constitutes it reached 7 m length and its weight is estimated at nearly 20 tons! This temple dates from the period Tarxien (3200-2500 B.C.) and testifies that the history of Malta is not summarized with the rich person inheritance of the



uprights, with their pitted decoration, are original.

Gateway to Infinity by staines03

Mnajdra lies tucked in a hollow in the cliffs on Malta's southern coast. The site is probably the most atmospheric of all Malta's temples. It lies in an isolated position on a rugged stretch of coast overlooking the isle of Ffilla and just 500m from another principle temple site, Hagar Qim. The surrounding area is designated a Heritage Park and is typical of rugged Mediterranean garigue landscape. Barren in summer, the landscape is transformed in spring by flowering herbs and shrubs. Mnajdra is a complex site consisting of three temples overlooking an oval forecourt. The first and oldest temple is a simple three-apsed building and dates to the Ggantija phase (3600-3200 BC). The small rubble walls are a modern reconstruction but the small



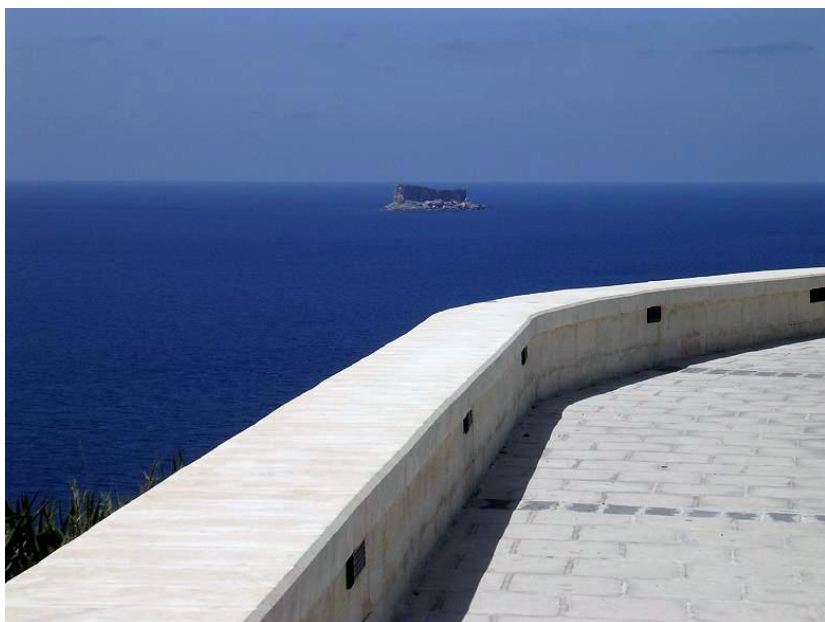
"Down By The Waters" by maltagirl

The title of my photo is a song by one of Malta's leading rock bands Ray & The Characters. In my opinion it goes well with the theme of my shot. This photo was taken at Wied iz-Zurrieq, Malta, which is a little fishing village on the south coast, reached by a spectacular drive along the cliff tops.

Wied iz-Zurrieq harbour consists of no more than a cluster of houses, shops and cafés, an exhibition of sea shells, a small shrine giving heavenly protection to fishermen and a watch-tower erected by the Knights of St John to warn of enemy ships. A slipway lined with fishing boats leads down to the minuscule harbour. This is popular spot for swimmers



and scuba-divers



## View to Filfla Island by miumiu

Filfla is a small, barren, uninhabited islet 5 km south of Malta, and is the most southerly point of the Maltese Archipelago. It belongs to the town of Żurrieq. The name is believed to come from filfel, the Arabic for a peppercorn.

It has an area of just 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> and is a crumbling flat-topped limestone plateau surrounded by 60 metre high cliffs. The only known permanent structure on it was a chapel built inside a cave in 1343, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1856 that also sank part of the island. Until 1971 the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force used the island for target practice. It became a bird reserve in 1980. The Filfla Natural Reserve Act, enacted in 1988, provided for further restrictions on access and use, including a prohibition on fishing within a nautical mile (1.9 km) around due to the possibility of unexploded ordnance. Three species of sea birds breed on the islet: the European Storm Petrel (c.5,000 pairs), Cory's Shearwater (c.200 pairs) and Yellow-legged Gull (c.130pairs). A type of wall lizard (*Podarcis filfolensis* ssp. *filfolensis*) and door snail (*Lampedusa imitatrix gattoi*) are endemic to Filfla. A large wild leek, growing up to 2m high, also occurs. Access to Filfla is only possible for educational or scientific purposes and visitors must get prior permission from the Ministry responsible for the environment.



## ST MARY'S CHURCH, DINGLI sunset by lilushani

This is St. Mary's church in Dingli, a small village in Malta. This is one of the several hundred Catholic churches. It takes almost all the space of the square so I always say that there is no village square in Dingli. This is the view from our roof-top terrace.

I have done some "red" saturation for a bit more "wicked" effect contrasting it with the church silhouette. Also did some extra darkening of the shadows for a bit more drama. I don't know how well it came out.

Dingli cliffs are located off the village of [Dingli](#), on Malta's Western coast. They stage the **highest point** of the Maltese Islands at around 253 metres above sea-level.

### Breathtaking views of the Mediterranean Sea

The cliffs propose a majestic sight, particularly if viewed from a boat while cruising, but also from the top - the **views are breathtaking**, overlooking the small terraced fields below, the open sea, and **Filfla**, the small uninhabited island just across. The cliffs can be seen as **natural forts**, since no attacker can approach the island from the West given their impressive height.

WHEN ARE THE BIOMETRIC PASSPORTS  
EQUIPMENT GOING TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO  
COUNTRIES WHERE MALTESE CITIZENS LIVE SO  
THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE TO TRAVEL THOUSANDS  
OF KILOMETRES?  
*JBB - MELBOURNE*

WHY DO I HAVE TO WAIT A YEAR AND A HALF TO  
RECEIVE MY MALTESE CITIZENSHIP  
CERTIFICATE FROM MALTA?  
*FAS - CANADA*

### REQUESTS 2015

THE CONVENTION FOR THE MALTESE WHO  
LIVE ABROAD IS GOING TO BE HELD IN  
APRIL 2015.  
WHERE CAN I OBTAIN MORE  
INFORMATION? *LLB- NSW*

I HEARD THAT A MALTESE CULTURAL INSTITUTE IS  
GOING TO BE ESTABLISHED TO PROMOTE THE  
MALTESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE. MAY I HAVE  
MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE?  
*CHARLES - SOUTH AUSTRALIA*

## MALTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY The Sacra Infermeria

The Malta Historical Society is holding its first Public Lecture in the Series 2014 – 2015. Entitled: 'The Sacra Infermeria, An Unbroken Commitment to Ospitalitas: The Quality of Care provided by the Order of St. John in their last decades on Malta, and will be delivered by Louis Bellizzi.



"The Order of St John viewed every patient as Christ and as such the sick and poor were treated in the best and most luxurious way possible, this being the staple of Hospitaller Care" (J. Riley Smith).

Was this assertion still valid in the last decades of the Order on Malta? John Howard, the British legendary pioneer of prison reform visited the Sacra Infermeria in 1786. He reports finding dusty pictures, dirty kettles, a dark and offensive kitchen and "proof of inattention to cleanliness and airiness."

The patients, he wrote "were served by the most dirty, ragged, unfeeling and inhuman persons I ever saw.'

Possibly his worst indictment is that the Grand Master's stables were far better kept than the hospital, implying a heinous betrayal of their vows, long traditions and the very reason for which they existed.

After a brief description of what the Order's accounting records disclosed about conditions in the hospital, Howard's report will be examined closely and interpreted within the context of what the accounts reveal.

Louis Bellizzi is a retired chartered accountant and businessman. In 2010, he began reading for an M.A. in Hospitaller Studies at the University of Malta. His researched thesis focused on life in the Sacra Infermeria in the latter part of the eighteenth century based on the details disclosed by what he was to discover to be a very accomplished accounting system used to manage the Order's finances. The lecture will be held on Tuesday, the 20th of January, starting at 6.00pm, in Europa House, 254 St Paul Street, Valletta.

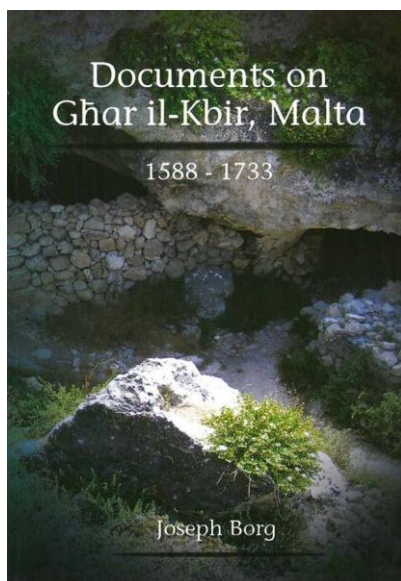
The Sacra Infermeria, or the 'Holy Infirmary', was a state-of-the-art hospital at the time of its establishment by the Order of the Knights of Malta in 1574. It had a capacity of over 600 beds, and a non-discriminatory criteria for admission - unusually for the period, women, slaves and non-Catholics were all treated at the hospital.

The Knights of St John originated as a 'Hospitaller' order, charged with a holy mission to aid and protect pilgrims en route to Jerusalem, as well as tend for the sick. Their skills in the field of medicine were amongst the most advanced in Europe, even to the extent of complex surgical techniques. Contrary to the norms and practices of their time, the Knights were also diligently hygienic in their ministrations; the silver cutlery which the hospital used was not an extravagance but rather among the Order's many concessions to hygiene.

The Sacra Infermeria is now a conference centre, and is partially accessible to the public with a visit to a permanent exhibition entitled 'The Knights Hospitaller' in the underground halls and corridors of the former hospital.

ADDRESS: Mediterranean Conference Centre, Triq l-Isptar, Valletta, Malta.

## **Ghar il-Kbir, Malta.     Marriage documents 1588-1733**



Discovered by Joseph Borg, transcribed and translated by Prof. Horatio Vella of the University of Malta. This book contains eighteen transcribed and translated Latin documents, falling into the period from 1588 (Doc. 1) till 1733 (Doc. 18).

These documents are only a sample of a larger number that have been discovered and collected by Mr Joseph Borg over the years, and do not show, by any means, an exhaustive picture of the Great Cave. But they certainly reflect a lot on a habitation covering a century and a half (1588-1733). Out of his own resources, Joseph Borg commissioned Prof. Horatio Vella of the University of Malta to transcribe and translate them.

These documents are notarial deeds of couples going into marriage, promising and declaring what goods they were bringing into the marriage. The very fact that the inhabitants of the Great Cave (Ghar il-Kbir) went to a Notary before marriage shows how these people were not completely cut off from the legal and religious practices of the rest of the island.

These documents refer to who represented whom in the notarial deeds; what fields or other goods, including clothes and animals, were being pledged, and what conditions were imposed should the marriage have failed and so on. As such they are also invaluable to those doing genealogical research in this period.

The book (248 pages) can be purchased from Book Distributors Ltd (BDL) on the following link:

<http://www.bdlbooks.com/social-aspects/4584-documents-on-ghar-il-kbir-malta.html>

## Malta Toy Museum

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The Malta Toy Museum displays a large collection of toys that have been collected over several decades

**The Toy Museum** is located in the capital of Malta, Valletta, opposite Casa Rocca Piccola and spreads over three floors.

**The Toy Museum** houses a very large and impressive collection of toys from the 1950s onward including model planes, boats, Matchbox cars, farmyard animals, trains and dolls.

This museum was opened by Vincent Brown in 1998 after Brown's visited a very similar museum in England and actually displays his personal collection accumulated over 30 years. Vincent Brown strongly believes that toys help to recapture memories of childhood, adventures and fun. The unique collection is mostly displayed in glass cabinets and is more suited to nostalgic adults than children who wish to play with the toys

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## Howard Gardens - Rabat

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Howard gardens provide a quiet spot just outside Mdina, offering beautiful views of the medieval city

**Howard Gardens** is one of the larger gardens in Malta named after the first Prime Minister of Malta, Joseph Howard OBE (1862-1925), and was inaugurated in 1942.

The **Howard Garden** is situated between popular Rabat and Mdina, very close to the Roman Villa, forming a natural border between the two cities. When visiting the gardens you will see an orchard of orange trees, a football ground, a tennis court, trees and shrubs as well as benches and pathways.

Howard Gardens are a popular sightseeing spot and offer nice **views of the Mdina bastions** and a place to relax after a day of sightseeing in Mdina and Rabat

## Sa Maison Garden - Pieta

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Sa Maison Gardens provide a quiet relaxing spot with beautiful views over Marsamxett harbour

The Sa Maison Garden is also known as 'il-Gnien tal-Milorda' (Her Ladyship's Garden) in memory of **Lady Julia Lockwood**, who loved this garden between 1842 and 1856 until her house was demolished and taken over by the military.

After 1903, this **beautiful piece of land** was handed over to the civil government. Even though the Sa Maison Garden is quite small, it is very pretty and nicely decorated, well known for its **military heritage**.

When visiting the gardens you can still see traces of when the garden was maintained by the army such as several **crests of the regiment**, that are engraved in the bastion walls inside the garden.

A small model of a castle made of Maltese stone can be found in the garden as well, dedicated to the 2nd Battalion of the Essex Regiment. For amazing views over Ta' Xbiex Yacht Marina visit the watch tower called Knight's Gardjola. Sa Maison Garden is situated in Pieta it is easily reached on foot from Valletta.





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## ADAM HILLS – AUSTRALIAN/MALTESE TV COMEDIAN/PERSONALITY

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Comedian Adam Hills has often drawn on the themes of prejudice and being different in his comedy to point out “*just how ridiculous they are*”. But he has no idea how deep they run in his own family history. Adam retraces the desperate journeys undertaken by his migrant ancestors, from Central Europe and Malta. With their families torn apart by war and prejudice, both his great-grandfathers risked everything for a new life in Australia. He also discovers a medieval ancestor who made his fortune from a barbaric business.

**Maltese heritage** - ADAM knew only a little about his Maltese heritage before he was invited to feature in an episode of the SBS TV series *Who Do You Think You Are?*. The older of two brothers, he grew up in Australia, went to an all-boys school and, in his words, had “a really warm upbringing”. His father, Robert Hills, married Judith Kluckhenn, so his grandparents on that side of the family were Oscar Kluckhenn and his Scottish wife Vera. Their son Ron married Mary Vassallo (described by Vera as “very dark”). So Adam’s heritage was Scottish, and the Kluckhenn family were Austrian nationals who came from the Bohemian region.

Adam’s grandparents on the other side were Giuseppe “Joseph” Vassallo who was married to Rosina “Rosa” Borg. Joseph took out a loan which enabled him to migrate to Australia in 1912 and Rosa followed him two years later. Their daughter Mary grew up in Woolloomooloo so that Joseph could obtain work on the docks. The men presented every day and the strongest were chosen to work on the wharves. The Maltese-Australian historian Barry York says that the Maltese were classed as “semi-white” and were listed as “Italian” even though they were British citizens. York cited one description of “the dirty diseased Maltese”.

SBS flew Adam to Malta to trace his Maltese forebears, and a medievalist at Siggiewi found that Joseph was from Birkirkara and was able to trace his family history, 11 generations further back from Adam’s great-grandfather, to Matteo Vassallo who was born in 1463. Matteo was a notary public (something like a lawyer in those days) who became a criminal court judge and was a very rich man. But even Matteo had to travel to Mdina once for ditch-digging duties, as all citizens had to contribute to fortifying the capital city. Other records reveal that Matteo was owed money, that he owned one house and part of another, and revealed an impressive list of assets.

Matteo was one of the armatori, that class of citizens who owned boats and their crews (almost certainly slaves), and participated in the legalised trade of slavery. He had a share in a pirate ship which was involved in “corsairing”. Adam was particularly chuffed that Matteo was involved in piracy for the reason that Adam was born without a right foot and wears a prosthesis (which often features as part of his comedy act).

**A Vassallo hey!!** I come from the Balzan family who migrated here in 1956 from Hamrun (nanna) and Birgu or Vitoriosa (the British name). So Hills, you're a Vassallo hey!!! I've ALWAYS loved your work. Not at all surprised to discover you are Maltase mate. I seem to always be attracted to my own heritage people. Mum returned in 2000 after 47 yrs. 'Happy in Malta' she always signs off!! I return

often. You can get a passport if you want and citizenship I believe through your mother's mother.  
**Sahha Rhonda Balzan Bastow Sydney**

**Love the Maltesers!** Really enjoyed your story especially the fact that you have Maltese ancestry! I too am originally from Malta and now call Australia home. **Fiona Budd Belrose NSW**

**Who Do You think you are** Hi Adam, great show, I really enjoyed every surprising minute of it. I am wondering if , since the show, you have investigated your great grandmother Vera's family history ? She had such an impact on the family and we know nothing about her. Perhaps her family history would shed some light on why she was the way she was. **Pauline Sydney**

**Merhba!!** I truly enjoyed the show yesterday especially the part about your ancestors in Malta I had a lump in my throat and tears running down my face as I watched you discover your Family Tree in the middle of that beautiful church of St Nicholas in Siggiewi. Then again when you were at the Upper Barrakka Gardens in Valletta with the Grand Harbour as the backdrop!! What a beautiful island !!! Welcome to Malta Adam Merhba!!! **Candy Vassallo Central Coast**

**On being a Vassallo** My husband was delighted with your programme when he collapsed on the sofa after another hard day on the farm....he always said he had an ancestor who was a judge by day and a pirate by night....now we know it's not just a story (-: We also had a good chuckle when Adam asked a female relative, "What do you call a group of Maltese". I've certainly met a few comedians since marrying a Vassallo....we'll do our best to breed another! **David Mitchell Wandin**

**Deaths in ancestors families** A really interesting edition. The heartbreak oozing out of the stories told. It was not only migrants from poor backgrounds that that lost many children. One set of my gg-grandparents lost 10 out of 13 (in Derbyshire, en route to Australia and in Melbourne) ... other families lost several. **Manuel Casha Donvale Vic**

**Adam Hills "Who do you think you are segment"** What a fascinating story of a highly talented person whose shows I followed for a long time but whose background I never realised until this show went to air. I was also moved by the shots of Grand Harbour in Malta from whence I came over 50 years ago. This was an excellent programme. **Kristina Micallef Seattle, USA**

My grandmother, Mary Caruana, was on your show last night. I am her oldest granddaughter who lives in Seattle, USA and I would love to be able to watch her segment. All my family have told me what a lovely job Granny did. I am reaching out to see if there is any way someone could send me a way to view her little segment. I haven't seen her in nearly 2 years, and it would be a wonderful see not only the show, but just seeing her. I fully understand that this may be impossible, but thought it can't hurt to ask. Thanks, Kristina

MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER - LINKING MALTA AND AUSTRALIA

**BUILDING BRIDGES**

**WE BUILD TOO MANY WALLS BUT NOT ENOUGH BRIDGES**





## EU – AUSTRALIA REALTIONS

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### The EU Ambassador's message for 2015 H.E. Sem Fabrizi

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2015 will be another important year for the European Union and Australia partnership. With a new leadership team in the European Union and a number of important upcoming initiatives and events, there will be a continued dynamism in the of EU-Australian relations.

This year we will aim to complete the EU-Australia Framework Agreement. This will be the first legally binding agreement to guide our relationship. The whole spectrum of our foreign, security, economic, trade, climate, and R&I cooperation, as well as people- to- people links, will be covered by a single treaty. We will boost our cooperation in facing international security challenges. The upcoming signing of the EU – Australia crisis management agreement will strengthen our capacity to work together, on the ground, in response to crises around the world.

The implementation of the G20 Brisbane Action Plan for Growth will see the EU and Australia working together to promote economic growth and job creation, particularly through structural reforms and trade opportunities.

2015 is also the European Year for Development. The EU and its Member States is the world's largest development aid donor. The implementation of the EU – Australia agreement on cooperation in Development policy (the Delegated cooperation agreement) that we signed in 2014 will provide concrete examples of our close partnership in the Pacific and other regions where we have shared interests.

We will continue to commemorate WWI 100years after the Gallipoli landings. We will never forget the sacrifices made by Australia to uphold our shared values of freedom and democracy.

In December of this year the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be held in Paris. It will aim to agree an ambitious plan to limit the pace and level of global warming post 2020. Together with Australia we will work for its success.

I wish to all of you a good 2015.





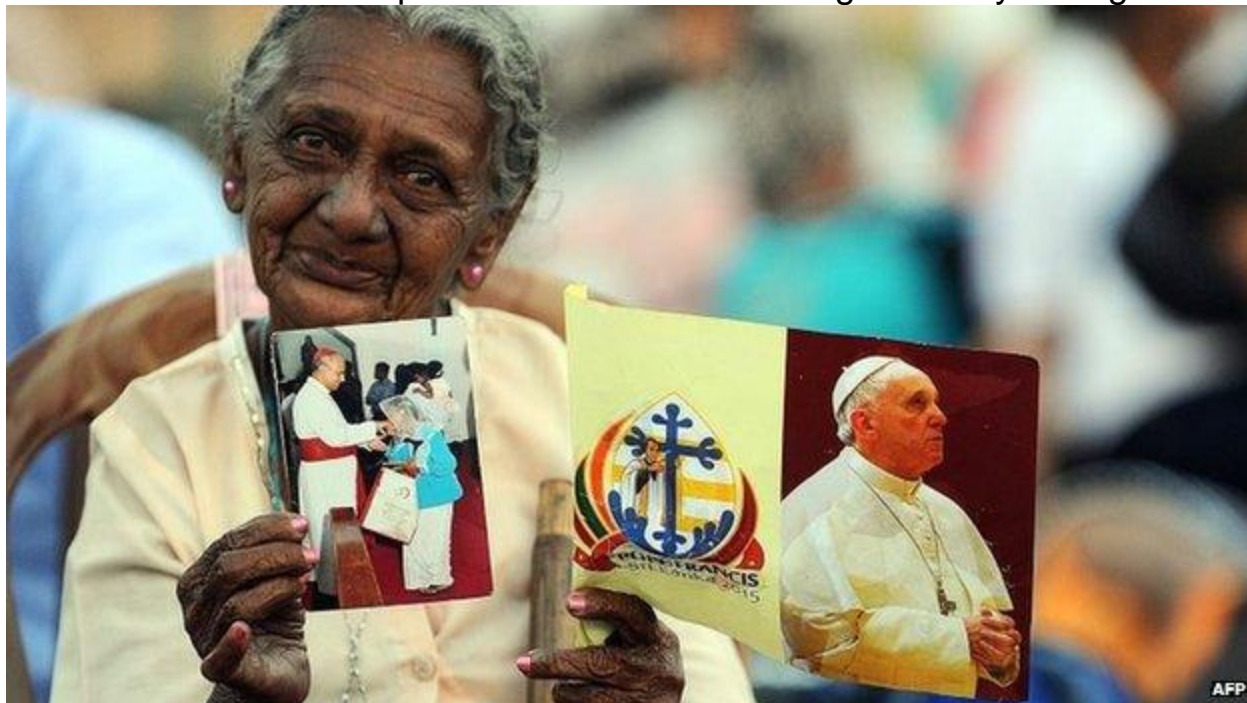
**Sisters members of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish waiting along the route to greet Pope Francis in the Philippines**



**Even McDonalds wanted to be in the act at the Philippines during the Pope's visit**



Sri Lanka aims to show Pope Francis the value of religious unity during his visit



**Crowds started to gather more than 24 hours in advance for the sea-front service**



**Pope Francis met leaders from many religious groups during his visit at Sri Lanka**