

## CONSULATE OF MALTA IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER

July 2013

**FRANK L SCICLUNA - HON CONSUL - FULL OF HISTORY AND CULTURE OF MALTA**

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### COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT

#### INVITATION TO ALL MALTESE SOCIETIES

Please send reports and future activities to be included in the newsletter

Our email address is [honconsul@live.com.au](mailto:honconsul@live.com.au)

## 1. Pushbacks suspended as European Court demands explanation from Malta

Government has until 30 July to inform European Court whether it considered all claims for protection from migrants.



In a temporary measure taken by the Strasbourg court, the government was stopped in its tracks from flying two plane loads of Somali asylum seekers to Mitiga airport, Libya after they had been rescued and brought to shore by the Armed Forces of Malta (MFA).

The court, which has already declared pushbacks of asylum seekers to be illegal, gave Malta until the end of the month to state whether the government considered each applicant's claim that they will be exposed to inhuman treatment if returned to Libya, and what measures it will be taking to ensure each applicant's assessment and access to proceedings before the European

Court.

The European Court's stop to the controversial pushback, which prime minister Joseph Muscat stood by in an address to the House of Representatives, came on an application by two lawyers who filed an application under Article 34 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In response, the Court accepted the request, under Rule 39 of the Rules of the Court, to stop the expulsion of the asylum seekers to Libya for the duration of the proceedings before the Court.

102 persons were intercepted by an AFM patrol boat at 3:08am on 9 July, but around 49 single men were held at the police general headquarters where they were scheduled for deportation on two Air Malta flights to Mitiga. NGOs were refused access to the police depot to give the migrants information about their rights.

Due to the fact that none of the migrants were being given any legal assistance, the Jesuit Refugee Service and the People for Change Foundation requested interim measures against the government, as a contracting state to the European Convention of Human Rights.

## **2. Migrant children being held in detention – Commissioner for Children**



Maltese Commissioner for Children Helen D'Amato has expressed concern over irregular migrant children who are granted the right to seek asylum in Malta but which were kept at detention centres.

Although Malta has a policy of non-detention of migrant children or migrant families with children, the reality is that children are kept in detention pending the outcome or completion of administrative procedures and medical clearances, which can take several days.

In a letter sent to Health Minister Godfrey Farrugia, D'Amato said at present there were four families in detention with the children's age varying between 3 months and 7 years as well as a number of unaccompanied minors.

"While Detention Services are doing their best in the circumstances, detention is intrinsically harmful to children and so the Office requested that the required health checks are speeded up in the best interest of children," the Office for the Commissioner said.

The families with children and the unaccompanied minors cannot be

released until health clearance is obtained.

Another issue of concern is that regarding the statelessness of migrant children who are born at sea due to the fact that the sea vessel on which they are born is unregistered. Together with the Office of the Ombudsman, the Commissioner's Office had already made representations to the Ministry for Justice for an amendment to the law that would allow such children to be registered at the first port of call. During the latest arrivals, at least one baby was born at sea.



## **3. Pope Francis receives Fra' Matthew Festing – Grandmaster of the Order of St John of Malta**

Rome, 25/06/2013

### **The meeting in the Vatican on the feast of St. John the Baptist**

Pope Francis received the Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Fra' Matthew Festing, accompanied by members of the Order's Government. The audience took place in the Pontiff's private study in the Vatican. The economic and financial crisis and the

humanitarian emergencies linked to ongoing conflicts, starting with the disturbing situation in Syria, were the main topics of the meeting with the Pope. The Grand Master illustrated the Order of Malta's multiple



#### **4. Prickly Pear Season in Malta – BAJTAR TAX-XEWK**



Named for its pearlike shape and size, this fruit comes from any of several varieties of cactus. Its prickly skin can range in color from green to purplish-red; its soft, porous flesh (scattered with black seeds) from light yellow-green to deep golden. Also called cactus pear, the prickly pear has a melonlike aroma and a sweet but rather bland flavor. It's extremely popular in Central and South America, the Mediterranean countries and southern Africa, and is slowly gaining favor in the United States and England.

Prickly pears are available in during the summer season and the locals can buy them at the markets or from the fruit and vegetables shops. Choose fruit that gives slightly to palm pressure. It should have a deep, even color. Ripen firm prickly pears at room temperature until soft. Store ripe fruit in the refrigerator for up to a week. Prickly pears are usually served

cold, peeled and sectioned with the seeds removed.

The prickly pear is a very hardy plant that is also very resistant to fire. It grows and spreads quickly and with a vengeance, destroying whatever domestic vegetation is in its' path. In areas of Australia, India and South Africa, the prickly pear is a large threat to the ecological balance. The governments of these countries spend millions of dollars a year to control this "thorny" problem.

The best way to enjoy the prickly pear though, is to hold the fruit down with a fork. Using a sharp knife, cut off both ends of the fruit and make incisions lengthwise down the fruit thus making it easy to peel the fruit with your fingers. (See pictures below)

The aromatic, colorful fruit of the prickly pear is full of small seeds which can be eaten without any problem. The prickly pear is low in calories, is fairly high in proteins and is high in vitamin C. It is usually served with other fruit (banana, cantaloupe, kiwi) or eaten plain with a little lemon juice squeezed on it (and served very cold).

In some very high classed Parisian restaurants the fruit of the prickly pear is mixed in the blender with sugar and lemon, then strained to filter out the pits and frozen. It is served as a dessert with a little rum or vodka to customers with refined palates who seek out rare tastes

#### **5. Organ donors - 12,531 registered organ donors in Malta and Gozo**



**According to Transplant Support Group Malta, there were 12,531 registered organ donors in Malta and Gozo until the end of June 2013. The data has come to light in the wake of Wales's new legislation, which will presume consent for organ donors. In Wales one person each week dies while waiting for an organ.**

Interviewed by KullHadd newspaper, Transplant Support Group Malta Founder and President Alfred Debattista said that there are 12,531 registered organ donors in Malta and Gozo, and that our country has amongst the highest rates of registered organ donors in Europe.

Debattista said that the Group therefore feels that Malta does not need the legislation adopted by Wales. The Group favours the Informed Consent system, which it has been using in its awareness campaigns since it was set up thirteen years ago.

Asked how this system can be improved, Debattista said that in the past years the Group has been campaigning for Organ Donors to have their consent clearly outlined on their ID cards. This would be a practical system for two reasons. Firstly, in the case of accidents, the victim's ID card is always used for identification purposes, and therefore their wish to donate their organs is made clear from the outset. Secondly, if the appropriate legislation is in place, the victim's family members would not be able to stop organ donation, and therefore go against the wishes of the deceased. At present, family members of registered donors can still refuse to donate the organs of the deceased, as the donor card is not legally binding. Debattista, who is himself an organ recipient, concedes that to this day he has not come across such a case, although this does not mean that it will not happen in future.

WHATEVER YOU DECIDE TO DO DURING YOUR NEXT VISIT TO MALTA MAKE SURE YOU  
VISIT THE NEW ANZAC WAR MEMORIAL  
AT THE ARGOTTI BOTANICAL GARDENS IN FLORIANA AND BE SURE TO RETURN

## 6. NOSTALGIA





## 7. The Maltese dghajsa - like a ballerina dancing on the water

Until a short time ago our justifiably famous Valletta Grand Harbour, so often the scene of the madness of war and the courage of men, was almost crowded with hundreds of boats and water taxis, which plied the harbour creeks on both sides of Valletta. These were largely used to ferry passengers, especially sailors, from their ships to land, and vice versa. These colourful Maltese boats are referred to as **Dghajsa** (pronounced Die-Sa) or **Luzzu** (pronounced Loo-tsoo) and are also used for fishing, these days often fitted with an inboard engine.



Let us not forget that it was mainly from Malta's shores that the invasion was launched that brought Italy to its knees in World War II. Indeed, the Second World War, unlike the First, was largely fought out in the Mediterranean basin. The battle for the control of the Mediterranean lasted for almost three years – from Italy's entry into the war in June 1940 to the final surrender of Axis forces in Tunisia in May 1943. Never has our Grand Harbour been so busy as in those days of war. Malta had achieved an importance in world affairs, as it had done in 1565, quite out of proportion to its size. And the Grand Harbour was littered with Maltese luzzu boats in those days of war.

But the heyday of the dghajsa is well and truly over and the number of these boats in Grand Harbour has dwindled considerably. This is due to several factors but certainly the death blow came with the rundown programme of the British Forces in Malta in the late fifties and the diminishing size of the British Mediterranean Fleet.

But the colourful dghajsa has an equally colourful companion which is of considerably bigger dimensions: the luzzu. Like the Maltese cross this is one of the symbols of Malta and is featured on the reverse of the older series of Maltese lira coins. The Mediterranean sea, which is ever present has, throughout the ages, made men excellent mariners and this ubiquitous sea has always attracted men to fish.

Like the dghajsa, the luzzu is also a uniquely Maltese boat. Painted in the traditional colours of red, blue and yellow, it is a sturdy and reliable sea craft and can be put to sea in almost every kind of weather. Primarily, the luzzu is a fishing boat but it has other uses such as ferrying locals and tourists across the Grand Harbour.

## 8. Bugibba and Qawra, Malta



Bugibba and Qawra are small towns on the North coast of Malta, adjacent to the town of St. Paul's Bay. Bugibba and Qawra are popular locations for tourists and are busiest in the high season while relatively quiet during the winter months. Although the shoreline is mostly rocky, a few locations are suitable for swimming.

Bugibba's main square, located along the seaside promenade, is the center of activity in the area with a few pubs, nightclubs and restaurants attracting people of all ages to enjoy summer nights. Besides pubs and nightclubs, Bugibba and Qawra also offer a bingo hall, a cinema and a casino. For those who prefer a quiet night out, the location's seaside promenade is ideal for a leisurely stroll.

Bugibba and Qawra are known mostly to form one of the busier tourism resorts during the summer months, when the area comes to life with the buzz of

nightlife and numerous tourists enjoying a drink and entertainment provided by the various hotels in the area. The area doesn't offer much more than that, however. No genuine Maltese feel, no specific activities other than sunbathing and only few shops lining the seaside promenade.

Having said that, Bugibba and Qawra are great locations as a home base for a holiday of exploring the rest of Malta. Accommodation is good and relatively cheap and the rest of the island is easily reached by public transport. From the Bugibba bus terminus you can find routes to various places in Malta, and also get to Cirkewwa to catch a ferry up to sister-island of Gozo. So if you'd like to add a little culture to your holiday, or spend time at the beach rather than the swimming pool, it's easy to catch a bus or take your hired car out for a short drive to wherever you fancy.

Bugibba and Qawra were virtually uninhabited until the 1960's, when only a few watchtowers had been erected by the Knights of Malta back in the 17th century. The area consisted mostly of open fields with crumbling rubble walls when in the 1960's a few entrepreneurs opened a few hotels in an attempt to attract tourists. When these ventures proved to be successful, Bugibba and Qawra developed at an astonishing rate in a virtual gold rush of investment. High-rise buildings were developed, with little attention being given to aesthetics or architectural consistency and design was simply an afterthought. During the 1990's the appearance of Bugibba and Qawra was hugely improved with the development of the seaside promenade, the Bugibba square and neatly constructed pavements.

## **9. 12 companies express interest in Gozo cruiseliner development**



Twelve local and international companies have expressed interest until now to develop a yacht marina and cruise liner terminal in Gozo following the government's call of expression of interest issued on 28 June.

Interested parties hail from Sweden, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Malta and Gozo.

Addressing the press this morning at the Grand Hotel in Mgarr, Gozo Minister Anton Refalo said that the closing date for applications is September 30.

He pointed out that the Mgarr harbour is small and cruiseliners carrying up to 300 passengers still had a problem to berth in the harbour and therefore were having to berth outside the harbour.

The minister said that last year, 320 cruiseliners entered Malta and 14 in Gozo. He said that a total 608,786 cruiser passengers visited Malta compared to 3,556 that visited Gozo.

Mr Refalo said that Marsalforn is being considered as an option to host the terminal however emphasised that the government is leaving all its options open.



## 10. MNARJA 2013 CELEBRATED IN CANADA

The Maltese Canadian Federation of Toronto, Ontario, Canada once more organised the Mnarja Festival at the Runnymede Park. The Consul General for Malta, Ruth Farrugia was asked to open the festivities and the children and adult classes of the Maltese Heritage Programme recited poems in Maltese and led the people in the singing of the Maltese and Canadian National Anthems. This year the weather held and it was a beautiful sunny day but with a

wonderful breeze that made even the Canuck footballers enjoy their game of soccer.

All the entertainment was provided by talented Maltese-Canadians and of course the Maltese songs such as *Lanca Gejja*; *Il-Vapur ta' l-Art*; *L-Aħħar Bidwi*, *Viva Malta*, *Il-Karozzin* and others went down very well with the crowd.

The Melita Folk Dancers entertained the crowd with a selection of Maltese folk dancing and the Malta Band played a number of *Marci Brijuzi*. The night wrapped up with a typical Mnarja rendition of *Għana*.

Mnarja is also renowned for food and this too was abundantly present with people buying a plate of the following delicacies: *rabbit*, including the traditional



spaghetti starter with the *zalsa tal-fenek*, *imqarrun il-forn*, *pastizzi*, *timpana* and of course sweets such as *qagħaq ta' l-ghasel*.

## 11. Malta Police Force



The Malta Police Force is one of the oldest in Europe, dating back to 1814 when Sir Thomas Maitland was Governor of Malta. The Maltese Government took over the Force in 1921, following the grant of self-government.

The Malta Police Force holds mixed responsibilities in investigative and national security issues. It is always in search of the truth within the parameters of its investigative powers, combined with those afforded by the judicial authority.

The role of a police officer is multifaceted. It includes the preservation of public order and peace; the prevention, detection and investigation of offences; and the collection of evidence against offenders.

The current Police Commissioner is Mr Peter Paul Zammit. There are presently around 1,900 members of the Force, including district police who are generally assigned community policing duties. The Force operates the following specialised branches:

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) The Drug Squad The Vice Squad and Economic Crimes Unit

The Protective Services The Special Branch and Administrative Law Enforcement Unit

For more information on the Malta Police Force and its history, click on this website

<http://mhas.gov.mt/> Alternatively, you may send an email to [cmru.police@gov.mt](mailto:cmru.police@gov.mt) Malta Police Force

Police General Headquarters, Pjazza San Kalcidonju, Floriana. FRN 1530 MALTA

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[www.pulizija.gov.mt](http://www.pulizija.gov.mt) / [cmru.police@gov.mt](mailto:cmru.police@gov.mt)



## 12. Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani schoolgirl shot by Taliban, addresses United Nations

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The Pakistani teenager who was shot in the head by the Taliban last year has addressed the United Nations on her 16th birthday, vowing not to be silenced by terrorists. Nine months after a gunman shot her on a bus in Pakistan's Swat Valley for demanding education for girls, Malala Yousafzai received multiple standing ovations at the United Nations Youth Assembly in New York.



She addressed nearly 1,000 students from around the world and her speech was immediately hailed for its power.

Ms Yousafzai showed the attack on her had done nothing to dim her passion for girls' education.

"Let us pick up our books and pens, they are our most powerful weapons," she said. "One child, one teacher ... can change the world."

Wearing a pink headscarf and a shawl belonging to the assassinated Pakistani leader Benazir Bhutto, Ms Yousafzai insisted she did not want "personal revenge" against the man who shot her.

"I want education for the sons and daughters of the Taliban and all the terrorists and extremists," she said.

"Education is the only solution. They shot my friends too. They thought that the bullets would silence us. But they failed and out of that silence came thousands of voices."

## 13. MALTESE CITIZENSHIP

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: I have run into difficulty while abroad and need the assistance of Malta's diplomatic mission. Where can I find contact details for the nearest diplomatic mission?**

**A:** See Malta's Diplomatic & Consular Representation. Alternatively you can go to any Embassy or Consulate of an EU Member State for consular assistance.

**Q: Do I need an Identity Card or Passport to enter another EU Member State?**

**A:** As a citizen of the European Union, all you need is your valid National Identity Card. It is advisable, however, that is also best to have your Passport available should you be required to prove your identity, should the former be misplaced. If public order or national security so require, checks at internal borders may be carried out for limited periods.

**Q: I am a Maltese citizen residing abroad; where can I renew my Passport?**

**A:** You can renew your Passport through your nearest Maltese Embassy or High Commission. For details of your nearest diplomatic mission, please see Malta's Diplomatic & Consular Representation.

**Q: I am a Maltese citizen wishing to work/study/travel in another EU country. Where can I find information about how to do it?**

**A:** Please visit the Citizens First website; run by Europa, the European Union's portal. The site contains information about living, working, jobseeking, studying, training, doing research, buying goods and services, travelling and equal opportunities.

**Q: How can I register a birth, death or marriage in Malta whilst abroad?**

**A:** You should register a birth, death or marriage at your nearest Maltese Embassy or High Commission.

Confirmation that a person is A CITIZEN OF MALTA by birth.

All those who were born in Malta and their children are automatically citizens of Malta Acquisition of Maltese citizenship Entitled for Maltese REGISTRATION.

- Wife/husband of a citizen of Malta after four and a half years of marriage
- Widow/widower of a citizen of Malta.
- Former citizen of Malta
- Child over 18 years of age born abroad between 21/9/64 - 31/7/89 of a Maltese mother



- Person born outside Malta of Maltese descent

#### Acquisition of Maltese citizenship by NATURALIZATION

Persons would be eligible to apply after having resided in Malta for 5 years. Maltese Citizens or the parents, who have authority over a minor child may, at any time, apply for a certificate of naturalization, on behalf of the said child, to be naturalized as a citizen of Malta. Applications are considered in the light of current citizenship guidelines and except in the case of minors citizenship is granted mainly to persons who have been residing in Malta for a considerable number of years.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to inform the public that Citizenship and Residency services are now under the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security remit and the relevant information can be found on the following link: <http://mhas.gov.mt/en/MHAS-Information/Services/Pages/Citizenship.aspx>

## 14. Welcome to MaltaPost Philately



The islands of Malta, which include sister islands Gozo and Comino, are situated in the Mediterranean Sea, 60 miles south of Sicily. With a history spanning over 7000 years, and at the crossroads of strategic maritime routes, Malta has been a home, stronghold, trading post and refuge to many civilizations.

The Islands have been described as a melting pot of cultures: Neolithic temple builders, seafaring Phoenicians, the traveller Apostle Paul, the Knights of St. John, Napoleon and the British royalty – all have left their indelible mark. Malta is now an independent sovereign nation and a member of both the EU and the Commonwealth.

Malta's philatelic history goes back to 1860 and, with access to such a rich source of material, Maltese stamps are renowned around the world for their unique depiction of a wide variety of popular themes: history, architecture, art, maritime, flora and fauna to name but a few. Many Maltese stamps are mini reproductions of artwork produced by local artists, and are much sought after by collectors and philatelists, both locally and internationally.