

JOURNAL FOR MALTESE AROUND THE WORLD



MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER



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**Robbie Williams is set to return to Malta
on 17 September 2025
for a brand-new Aftersun Festival**



**JULIA
ANN
CLUETT**



Malta's stolen Caravaggio - ST JEROME



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MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

DEFENDS FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Safeguarding the interests, rights
and aspirations of the Maltese living abroad



THE JOURNAL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD
REACHES READERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD
Malta in the world and the world in Malta



THE MALTESE DIASPORA

INFORMATION AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does CMLA stand for? – Council for Maltese Living Abroad

When was the Council established? Act of Parliament XX 22nd July, 2012 www.legislation.mt/eli/cap/515/eng/pdf

Who is the Chairman of the Council? The Minister for foreign affairs is ex officio the chairman of the Council

When do the delegates meet? The Council hold an annual meeting in Malta for all delegates and occasionally online

What is the mission of the Council? The Council for Maltese Living Abroad is a Maltese government body established to protect and promote the rights and interests of Maltese citizens and individuals of Maltese descent living outside Malta. It serves as a representative body for Maltese communities abroad, facilitating communication and collaboration with the Maltese government. Its objectives are

- To promote and encourage studies and research work relating to subjects concerning Maltese living abroad
- to assist cultural centres, libraries, archives, museums, theatres, musical ensembles and creative edifices of overseas Maltese communities by facilitating contacts with the pertinent national entities
- to provide correct information when requested to overseas Maltese communities living abroad about policies of the government of Malta, as well as about the economic, social, and cultural life in the country

Contact Information

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Recently, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism the Hon Ian Borg officially appointed members of a new regional committee to assist and work harmoniously with the delegates of CMLA. An online meeting was held earlier this month. Since then we mentioned this activity in our journal and many readers wrote to us to show interest to know more about this regional committee. So, we request that either the secretary of CMLA or a spokesperson to inform our readers what this regional committee is all about, who are the committee members and how they can be contacted. – THE EDITOR

Theft of stolen Caravaggio painting of St Jerome 40 years ago inspires new Maltese film



July 8, 2025

It happened over 40 years ago but remains etched in history as one of the biggest thefts in local history. Now, the theft of Caravaggio's painting of St. Jerome from St. John's Co-Cathedral has inspired a new local movie shot entirely on film.

It is a film inspired by the true story of the theft that took place more than 40 years ago when a gang of thieves stole the painting of St. Jerome by Caravaggio. Eventually the painting was returned to the Co-Cathedral, mainly thanks to the

intervention of the Dominican Father Marius Zerafa who, at great risk, negotiated with the thieves until the Police managed to reach the three men who were operating from a small shoe factory in Marsa. As a result of the theft, this work of art suffered major damage and therefore had to be sent to Rome for restoration.

Assisting in this restoration operation was the grandfather of the film director's wife, Joshua Cassar Gasper, who in an interview with TVMNEWS stated that the stories he often told them about this event inspired him for his new film, 'The Theft of Caravaggio (2025).'

When we used to go to Rome to see him, because he is no longer with us, he would always tell us about this event and he planted the seed on which we built this story. We didn't want to create a biography or something dramatic that really happened. We went fiction; that is, we built our characters on this story, you have a world event and we were able to build the characters, the drama, the depth of the characters.

Joshua Cassar Gasper

Against the trend of the cinematic world, the film's director together with the director of photography Dan Cawthorne chose to shoot this movie on film, which is a delicate and unforgiving process.

We wanted from the beginning, me as director and cinematographer, to work on film, 'old school' there's something interesting about how it works. Today if you go to digital you keep going, you took the scene that didn't come out right, 'take another one'. We had to be focused on rehearsals with the actors, rehearsals on the cameras because we were shooting on film... everyone was excited. But there's something beautiful about shooting with film.

Joshua Cassar Gasper

The film includes actors Paul Kissaun, Robert Grose, Elektra Anastasi, Stephen Mintoff, Narcy Calamatta and Peter Galea among others. The film's director said that after being shown at the Mediterranean Film Festival, where it was part of the official selections, the film will now continue to be shown at a number of foreign festivals.

The Knights Templars in Cyprus



The Knights Templars formed one of the three great military orders of knighthood, founded in the twelfth century to protect the pilgrims who flocked to Jerusalem after the First Crusade. At the head of the order was the Master of the Temple at Jerusalem until 1291, when, on the fall of the Latin kingdom, the headquarters of the order moved to Cyprus.

In 1128 the rule of the order was sanctioned by the Council of Troyes. In a few years, the order was established in almost every kingdom of Latin Christendom, each establishment being richly endowed with lands by kings and princes and with the gifts of grateful pilgrims. Spiritual privileges were granted by the Popes. As defenders of the Church, the Templars were exempted from payment of tithes and gradually became free from the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishops, owning spiritual allegiance to the Pope alone. The result was that scarce twenty-five years after its foundation the order was at open feud with the bishops and clergy. But, protected by the Pope and endowed with great wealth, the Position of the Templars was secure so long as the crusading spirit lasted in Europe.



It was with the support of the Templars that, on the death of Baldwin V, Sybilla and Guy de Lusignan were crowned at Jerusalem, without the knowledge or consent of the barons of the realm. The rule of the Templars in Cyprus was marked by great severity and they quickly incurred the hatred of the Cypriots by their harsh exactions. At

length, in despair at their treatment and seeing that Templars were few in number, the islanders determined to attempt a general massacre of the knights on Easter Day, 1192. The Templars became aware of the plot and took refuge in their stronghold at Nicosia, since they were too few to meet the insurgents in the open. They offered to leave the island if their lives were spared, but as this offer was rejected, they determined to fight rather than to be starved into submission.

Sallying into the streets at dawn, they took the Cypriots unawares and slaughtered great numbers, sparing neither age nor sex. The rebellion was crushed, but the Templars felt unable to hold Cyprus by force and they therefore asked Richard to take back their purchase. This he agreed to do, and the Templars retired to Syria, retaining, however, some of their possessions in Cyprus.

Meanwhile Sybilla, the hereditary queen of Jerusalem, had died and the opposition to the rule of Guy, her husband, increased. The crusaders determined to elect a new king, and their choice fell on Richard's nephew, Henri, count of Champagne, who with the consent of his uncle, was elected king of Jerusalem. Guy de Lusignan thus lost the crown of Jerusalem, but as he had originally come from Richard's duchy of Aquitaine and had long been a vassal of the English king, Richard offered him the sovereignty of Cyprus in compensation for the loss of his kingdom. It is uncertain, however, whether Cyprus was transferred to him as a free gift or on the same terms as the island had been sold to the Templars. It is probable that Guy undertook the debt, but it is unlikely that he ever PAID IT.

RUSSELL CROWE AT THE MEDITERRANEAN FILM FESTIVAL'S FESTIVE AWARDS CEREMONY

By [Pat Saperstein](#)

[Russell Crowe](#) made a surprise appearance at the [Mediterranean Film Festival](#)'s Golden Bee Awards on Sunday night, returning to Malta where he shot "Gladiator" more than two decades ago.



"If you want to know what I love about Malta, it's everything," said Crowe, who was given the Malta Film Legend Award. "26 years ago, in a funny way, I became a man in Malta," he said, "For whatever films I had done before then, nothing had the majesty, ambition and budget and ultimately reach of 'Gladiator.' It wasn't an easy production. I had to fight every day for the integrity of the character I was playing — just like the journey of the character himself in the movie. And sometimes, you get lucky enough to make something that resonates with people."

Crowe told a story about a young man who asked him for a photo last week while he was traveling in Italy. "I shook his hand and he started to cry. His friends told me later he's the head lifeguard of the local beach, he's got muscles on muscles...and they'd never seen him like that. I ended up hugging him. When he got himself together, he said, 'You don't understand, when I was 8 years old, my mother sat me in front of a TV and put on a videocassette of "Gladiator" and told me, 'If you are ever wondering what type of man your mother expects you to be, it's this type of man.' The honor, the integrity, the faith — a man made in Malta."

Earlier in the evening, "Euphoria" star Barbie Ferreira was honored with the Rising Star award, and said she has been exploring the country's islands "in every way possible."

"I did so much research before I got here," she said, "It's rich with history." Ferreira's upcoming projects include "Mile End Kicks," which is premiering at TIFF, and she said she enjoyed playing a music journalist who is "an insufferable girl, which is always the best part."

"The Last Emperor" producer Jeremy Thomas received the Lifetime Achievement award, while Pierre Agius and Joseph Formosa Randon were honored with the Career Achievement awards for their extensive location work on films shot in Malta.

The festival's top Golden Bee award for best feature film went to Tunisia's "Where the Wind Comes From," with the film's star Eya Bellaga winning best performance. Julio Medem won best screenwriting for his film "8," which also received the Jury's Choice award. The Mare Nostrum award went to "Miyazaki: Spirit of Nature." "Where the Wind Comes From" won the Mediterranean Film Festival's best feature and best performance awards.

Special guests arrived at the 18th century Fort Manoel, near the capital of Valletta, by boat for the evening's lavish awards ceremony, which included dance numbers, multiple singers, at least three fireworks displays and a compilation film of the films shot in the country over the past 100 years. Malta has been on a big upswing as a popular shooting location with recent shoots including "Enola Holmes 3" and "Jurassic World: Rebirth" utilizing the islands' historic backdrops and generous rebates. "What a century it has been," said Film Commissioner Johann Grech. "Malta may be a small country, but Malta is an ambitious nation."

The competition jury included director Catherine Hardwicke, who previewed her upcoming film "Street Smart" during a festival masterclass, and production designer Rick Carter, whose masterclass covered his career working on films such as "Jurassic Park," "Lincoln" and "Avatar."

While the festival welcomed numerous industry guests to network, screen their recent work and check out famous film locations on land and by boat, locals and industry members alike turned out for outdoor screenings of several films shot in Malta, from "Popeye" and "Troy" to "Gladiator II," "Clash of the Titans" and the classic "Malta Story." All week long, the small nation demonstrated it has big hopes for growing the festival and maximizing the region's filming capabilities in the years to come.



The Mackay Maltese Club

Our club aims to foster Maltese cultural awareness among the descendants of Maltese immigrants in Mackay & District.

*President - Doris Gauci, Vice President - Peter Zahra - Treasurer - Lyn Zahra
Secretary - Veronica Gauci*

Please see the upcoming events for the Mackay Maltese Club

MMC SARINA BUS TRIP - SATURDAY 9TH AUG. 8:30AM.

Travel on a mini bus to Sarina Shopping Centre, Sarina Sugar Shed Tasting Session, Field of Dreams Parkland, Buy your own lunch at The Palms Restaurant, Coral Point Park Lookout. \$85 per person. RSVP by Friday 25th July to Doris Gauci 0419 027 554.

MMC FESTA LUNCHEON - SUNDAY 14TH SEPT. 11:30AM.

The Surf Club, Lot 67 East Point Road, Mackay Harbour
Buffet Lunch, \$45 per person



Members Draw, Raffle & Lucky Door

RSVP by Mon 1st Sep to Doris Gauci 0419 027 554

GLOBAL GROOVES MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL - SATURDAY

25th OCTOBER 3pm - 8pm

MELBOURNE CUP LUNCHEON - TUESDAY 4TH NOVEMBER

11AM Details to be confirmed.

MACKAY MALTESE CLUB MEET & GREET.

All welcome, come for a coffee & a chat.

Thursday 17th July 9:30 - Laffo's Canelands

Thursday 21st August 9:30 - Harrup Park

Thursday 18th September 9:30 - Stellarossa Mount Pleasant

Thursday 16th October 9:30 - Magpies Sporting Club

Thursday 20th November 9:30 - Harrup Park

Kind Regards

Veronica Gauci

MMC Secretary

**All Maltese associations, businesses and readers are invited
to participate in the publishing of this journal**



MALTESE AUSTRALIAN STUNTMAN

recalls 'dream job' on the set of *Gladiator 2* 'Pedro Pascal deserves his reputation as a great guy.' NationalFilm

[Matthew Bonanno](#)

Chris Pace on film sets: he learned to become a stuntman after an accident as a jockey.

A Maltese-Australian stuntman has described the 'surreal' experience of working alongside stars like Pedro Pascal and Paul Mescal on the set of *Gladiator 2*.

Chris Pace, whose parents emigrated from Malta to Australia in the 1950s, told *Times of Malta* that working on the set of the 2024 blockbuster was a dream come true.

"The first *Gladiator* is my favourite film of all time, and to be in a film that was shot in the country where my parents are from was an incredible achievement for myself," said Pace, who was born and raised in Melbourne. Pace appears as a warrior in several battles and fight scenes in the film.

"It was surreal being in the Coliseum set. The huge water tank at Malta Film Studios is also really impressive." Pace (centre) during the filming of *Gladiator 3* in Malta: "It was surreal being in the Coliseum set."

The stuntman had particular praise for Pedro Pascal, who played Roman general Acacius. One scene that stands out in Pace's mind is the Battle of Numidia, which takes place at the start of the film.

"I was amazed at how much control he had using the swords. Even though he had a stunt double, he insisted on doing the fight himself." Pace also reaffirmed Pascal's reputation as one of the nice guys of the film industry.

"He was so humble and kind, happy to say hello and talk to us in between takes. Not only is he a great actor but a nice human being as well." *He was watching a John Wayne film when it "clicked" that he could use his skills as a jockey to be a stuntman in Hollywood*

Pace spent six months in Malta. His career as a stuntman literally started by accident, after he sustained a serious injury while working as a horse jockey.

"I got knocked down, knocked out unconscious, and smashed my shoulder. This ultimately ended my career on the track." After months of rehabilitation, pilates, yoga, and mobility training, Pace says he was watching a John Wayne film when it "clicked" that he could use his skills as a jockey to be a stuntman in Hollywood.

"So I dedicated my time to stunt training, including martial arts, gymnastics, parkour, stunt driving and horse stunts. It's not for the faint-hearted, although the hardest part is getting work and recognition in the field, which can take a long time."

Pace (centre) on the set of *Furiosa*, the sequel to *Mad Max: Fury Road*.

Pace's first major role was as one of the main stunt horse-riding doubles in the 2017 Disney film *Pirates of the Caribbean 5*, starring Johnny Depp.

"After that, I thought it would be great if I could work overseas, and Malta specifically because of my heritage." Following his work on *Gladiator* in 2023, the film's local stunt coordinator, Morgan Chetcuti, invited Pace to return to Malta a few months later to serve as his assistant on the TV adaptation of *The Count Of Monte Cristo*. "It was nice to get that experience as I haven't done a lot of that in Australia." Pace has also appeared in *Furiosa*, the sequel to *Mad Max: Fury Road*, and in the soon-to-be-released Mark Wahlberg film *Play Dirty*. He is also hoping to secure a role in the upcoming TV adaptation of the Harry Potter series.



HIGH COMMISSION OF MALTA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Very privileged that together with members and interns of the Malta High Commission – Prof Stephen Montfort was invited by Kevin Bonavia MP for Stevenage for a tour of the Houses of Parliament and the opportunity to observe Prime Minister's Questions. Kevin Bonavia

MP, who is of Maltese heritage, welcomed the students who are currently at the Malta High Commission for work placement, shared his parliamentary journey to them and answered any questions they put forward.



Kevin Bonavia MP

Member of Parliament for Stevenage, Knebworth, Codicote, Datchworth and Aston

Kevin Bonavia (born 1977/1978) is a British Labour Party politician and lawyer serving as a Member of Parliament (MP) for Stevenage since 2024. Bonavia was born to a Maltese father and a Scottish mother. He spent his early childhood in Rabat, Malta before moving to England at age eight.^[3] He attended the private Eltham College on a bursary. He graduated from the University of Birmingham with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in History and completed a postgraduate diploma at the University of Law.

Before entering politics, he worked as a litigator^[5] and at Steel & Shamash, where he acted for the Labour Party, MPs and councillors on a range of matters, including advising candidates on electoral law issues during the 2005 General Election campaign. He was a youth officer in Birmingham Edgbaston, Greenwich & Woolwich and Lewisham East Constituency Labour Parties. In 2004-05, Bonavia was Chair of the Young Fabians, a socialist society that is affiliated with the Labour Party (UK).

At the General Election in July 2024, he was elected as the MP for the home town. After 14 years of failure, Kevin promised to **put his community first again**.

He is proud to call Stevenage my home, **living off the High Street in Old Town**. Growing up, his mum and dad instilled in him that if you see a problem, your roll up your sleeves, and you fix it. Ever since, he tried to **give back in the best way that I could**. "I became a solicitor and went on to represent victims of the phone-hacking scandal. I became a councillor, serving as an armed forces champion. In every step of my life, **public service ran through my DNA**. But I kept encountering problems that a lawyer or a councillor simply couldn't solve. So, I stood to **be the MP for the town I love** - Stevenage, and its vibrant villages of Knebworth, Codicote, Datchworth and Aston. Since then, I've never looked back" he said.



TRIBUTE TO ABBA AT PJAZZA TEATRU RJAL - valletta

The fourth concert by the Malta Concert Orchestra at Pjazz Teatru Rjal for this summer will be held on Friday 25 July 2025 at 830pm. In this concert, the Malta Concert Orchestra will pay tribute to the legendary Swedish pop group ABBA who had shot to fame in 1974 when they won the Eurovision Song Contest with their song Waterloo.

For this concert, the Malta Concert Orchestra, under the direction of

Maestro Matthew Bugeja, will be joined on stage by singers Martina Galea Lofreda, Amelia Kalabic, Jessica Magro, and Ludwig Galea. Together, they will be performing live some of the all-time ABBA favourites such as Dancing Queen, Mamma Mia, Money Money Money, Super Trouper, and The Winner Takes It All.

Following great successes with the first part of the season that saw the Malta Concert Orchestra performing Malta Eurovision Highlights on 6 June, Noche Latina on 20 June, and Baroque Fantasy will be on 11 July, the MCO's varied season for 2025 will continue with Notte Napoletana (8 August), 80s Night (12 September), and Music from the Movies (26 September). As expected, tickets are selling fast for this year's highlight: Notte Italiana con Pupo (21, 22, 23 August) that would be the start of the Italian pop icon's world tour to mark his golden jubilee.

Concerts start at 20:30hrs. For tickets and more information about Pjazz Teatru Rjal events visit www.pjazzateatrurjal.mt or follow Pjazz Teatru Rjal's social media.



Healing is part of being human. We are all wounded in some way. Sometimes we make unwise choices. We hold certain ideals, yet we do not always live up to them. Things happen in our lives — often beyond our control — that leave us wounded.

Married life, family life, friendships, and so many other relationships all need forgiveness and healing at times.

All living relationships need healing from time to time. All love needs forgiveness. Jesus helped so many people make fresh starts in their lives.

He forgave sin, he asked us to forgive each other as God forgives us, and he spoke about being born again. Part of healing is being able to name, when possible, the areas that need healing. Recognising the need for healing is already part of the process.

We can deny responsibility or pretend that we are not hurt, but when we are able to name the area in need of healing, we can then bring it to God.

Sometimes, we cannot name exactly what needs healing. Even the desire for healing is itself part of the process. A healthy, regular openness to healing is liberating. St Ignatius of Loyola encouraged daily reflection on our lives. The first person we need to forgive is ourselves. We all need to be born again, every day.



Global pop sensation Robbie Williams is set to return to Malta on September 17 as the main headliner for the brand-new Aftersun Festival, a large-scale music event taking place at the iconic Granaries in Floriana.

The festival promises to be a high-energy celebration to wrap up the summer season, combining international stars with local favourites in one of Malta's most iconic open-air venues. The legendary British singer, known for his dynamic stage presence and timeless hits, will be joined by

Italian electronic music pioneer Gigi D'Agostino and Maltese chart-topping artist Aidan.

This marks Williams' return to the island following his acclaimed 2023 performance, which drew tens of thousands and was hailed as one of the standout live shows of the year. Now touring across Europe as part of his Britpop 2025 series, Williams is expected to deliver an unforgettable set featuring classics like Let Me Entertain You, Feel, and Angels.

With a diverse line-up and a lively Mediterranean setting, Aftersun Festival is poised to become a key date on Malta's cultural calendar, perfect for music lovers, festival-goers, and travellers looking to experience the island's events scene.

Plan your trip to Malta this September and be part of an unforgettable night under the stars.

ROAD TO MISS UNIVERSE 2025

Miss Universe Malta 2025 is the stunning [JULIA CLUETT](#) from Floriana!!

She will represent THE ISLAND OF MALTA at the 74th Miss Universe competition on November 21, 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand

CONGRATULATIONS!!!





WHEN HARRY MET MARY

Harry Bugeja was born in Hamrun and Mary was born in Fleur-de-Lys, about 15 kilometers from Valletta. Harry comes from a family of 11 boys and two girls, the eldest and youngest being 20 years apart.

After primary school Harry attended St Albert the Great College before transferring to a technical college where he gained a certificate in maritime engineering.

Instead of going to sea he worked as a fitter and turner with the Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers. After her school years, Mary graduated as a primary school teacher. She taught at the Qormi Primary School until they married. Mary and Harry met when they were both 17 while they were in their final year at their schools when Harry's father bought a house in Fleur-de-Lys which was just across the road from Mary's family. One Sunday morning Harry was walking with his girlfriend at the time who was a friend of Mary's and introduced them. "It was love at first sight", Harry said.

Their romance continued for two years under strict supervision with brothers and sisters accompanying them when they went to Sunday film matinees and family members in the room when they met at their parents' homes. After those two years Harry plucked up courage to ask Mary's parents for her hand in marriage.

They then endured a two-year engagement under the same strictness as Mary was not allowed to marry until she was 21. Finding it difficult to obtain the type of accommodation they wanted, one day Harry asked Mary: "How about we migrate to Australia?", where four of Harry's brothers and an uncle had already migrated before them. Mary promptly replied: "Wherever you go I'll go".

They planned to migrate while still single. They were married on the morning of 15 September 1957 in a ceremony at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Fleur-de-Lys followed by an elaborate reception at a big villa surrounded by gardens attended by about 1000 guests including business friends of Mary's father. Harry said it was like a cocktail party with guests mingling while waiters served drinks and food on silver trays. It was about 3pm when Harry's father tapped him on the shoulder and said it was time for them to change in readiness to leave for their honeymoon on Gozo Island.

They only had a week on the island as they needed to return home to reorganise their migration application following their marriage. They left for Australia 15 days after their wedding on October 1 on the MV Aurelia via Port Said, Aden and Fremantle to Melbourne - a somewhat interesting experience. The migration authorities separated the men and women into four berth cabins so newlyweds Mary and Harry could not sleep in the same cabin.

However, although each cabin had a toilet, the showers were shared between two cabins. The shower became Mary and Harry's almost secret rendezvous or one of the two cabins while the rest were away. On board Mary was able to make good use of her teaching skill by teaching English to the migrants, who came from about 11 nationalities. They travelled from Melbourne to Adelaide by train, The Overland, which Harry described as "dogboxes, wooden carriages, like a Western movie." They lived with Harry's uncle until they built their own house in Beverley. Harry worked as a toolmaker at General Motors Holden's Woodville for 17 years. Mary worked as a primary school teacher at Port Adelaide.

It lasted five years. Harry became general manager of the plastic injection moulding company Toly Products. Mary cared for their children, Grace, Josette, Adrian and Veronica.

Harry started work at Simpson Pope as a part of a engineering team which coordinated changes to the company's products, including washing machine, dryers and dishwashers. He retired in 1995.

Involvement with the Maltese community in South Australia occupied much of Harry's time away from work. He was appointed president, secretary and treasurer of several community clubs and was president of Enfield Soccer Club from 1973 to 1978 and a committee member of the South Australian Soccer Federation 2nd Division Management Committee.

For five years he was president of the Maltese Community Council of South Australia, the umbrella body for all the Maltese Community Clubs which represent the Maltese Community of SA. Harry was also treasurer of the Multicultural Communities Council of SA, which represented all the ethnic groups of SA. The work of the council included discussion about the future and needs of each community. Harry said he had the opportunity to meet many people who supported the work including Prime Ministers, premiers, politicians and mayors.

Their dancing days started in Malta when they were both 19. Dances were held for school teachers, of which Mary was one. When Mary and Harry went they didn't know how to dance and had to sit out until it was time to leave as Mary had to be home by a certain time. Harry got hold of a dance book, cut out feet shapes in paper which he placed on the floor and instructed Mary and her sister where to place their feet. "One, two, clutch'er" he would say. Now Mary and Harry are enjoying their retirement with their children and grandchildren and still attend functions organised by the Maltese associations of South Australia. AD MULTOS ANNOS



The total population of Malta and Gozo reached an estimated 574,250 by the end of 2024, marking a 1.9% increase compared to the previous year.

Malta is facing increasing concerns about its rising population, which is putting a strain on resources, infrastructure, and the overall quality of life. The island's population has grown significantly in recent years, primarily due to immigration, and this growth is projected to continue, further exacerbating existing issues.

Limited Space: Malta is a small island nation with a high population density. The increasing population is leading to overcrowded conditions, impacting living spaces and recreational areas.

Infrastructure Pressure: The rapid population growth is putting a strain on essential services like healthcare, transportation, and waste management, as well as public utilities like water and electricity.

Traffic Congestion: Increased population contributes to more vehicles on the road, resulting in traffic jams and longer travel times, impacting daily commutes and overall quality of life.

Despite the overall growth, natural population increase dropped sharply by 55.3%, falling from 432 in 2023 to just 193 in 2024. This decline was driven by a 2% decrease in resident live births and a 3.7% rise in resident deaths. Most deaths (71.1%) occurred among those aged 75 and over.

Males made up 53.1% of the population, especially dominating the working-age bracket (15-64). In contrast, females outnumbered males nearly two to one among residents aged 85 and over. Population density remained highest in urban areas such as Sliema (17,539 persons/km²), Pietà, and Isla, while Għasri, San Lawrenz, and Mdina recorded the lowest densities, all under 230 persons/km².

Manny's story: kidnapped, trafficked to Australia at 14

The Courier Mail – Queensland Australia July 4, 2015

TEN YEARS AGO - MANNY Ellul's life story contains more drama, heartache, courage and elation than most



people would experience in a thousand lifetimes.

GREAT TEAM: Manny Ellul with wife Lyn who helped him find his lost son after 47 years and who has been by his side as he fights the Congregation of Christian Brothers over allegations of human trafficking and child slave labour. Picture: Rob Williams [Ipswich](#)

IT IS NO wonder that Paramount Pictures are interested in making a film on the life of Manny Ellul.

The Brassall resident's life story contains more drama, heartache, courage and elation than most people would experience in a thousand lifetimes. His tale involves

allegations of being kidnapped from Malta by the Catholic Church as a 14-year-old, then trafficked to Australia where he worked for the Congregation of Christian Brothers in Western Australia under child slave labour conditions, and where he was sexually and physically abused.

He had a son in 1968, Christopher, who was put up for adoption while he was away on a crayfish boat and who he was reunited with weeks ago after 47 years, thanks to a program on adoption on Channel Seven. Manny also has been reunited with his late mother after 35 years, and with his brothers.

Take a deep breath and strap yourself in for an extraordinary story.

Manny was born in 1946 in Malta. His parents had been married before and had six children between them, but both their partners had died. They married and had eight more children, with Manny one of them.

"So there were 14 of us, but the other six were grown up and had moved on," Manny recalls.

"Around about 1956 the Catholic Church was taking children from parents and putting them in institutions, saying they were helping the kids. "But what they were doing was trafficking children and sending them to Australia. "Myself and my three other brothers were taken and put in an institution."

Manny says he would run away from the institution in Malta regularly during the week before seeing his parents on weekends.

One day in 1960 he was grabbed from his aunt's house by a priest and along with his brothers Ray, 10, Michael, 11, and Peter, 16, placed on a ship called the Flaminia bound for Australia.

"Before they took us, three police officers handcuffed my father and took him away. My mother came to the dockyard and I could see her crying from the top of the ship," Manny says.

"We didn't even get to say goodbye.

"We did about 28 days on the boat and we were escorted by a priest and another guy.

"When we got to Australia we were taken to Fremantle and they put us in a big shed where a man and a woman took us to Castledare, an institution run by the Catholics.

"Next day they transferred us to Tardun, about a six-hour drive away, which is an agricultural farm where they had 200,000 acres. "My youngest brother stayed in Castledare for eight weeks before they transferred him to Tardun, Western Australia

HARD LIFE: The character lines in Manny Ellul's face speak of his trials and tribulations. Now Paramount Pictures want to make a film on him.

"My real name in Malta is Leli and my dad said to me before I left to look after my brothers because I was the most aggressive of them all and they were very quiet. "My father cared about his family, so he put the job onto me. "I did about three weeks of schooling and was put to work in Tardun with around 60 others.

"They introduced me to the dairy and I'd go and milk the cows by hand.

"Then they brought the machines in... and we had to put the milk in 10 gallon urns. Two of us had to lift them and put them in the back of a ute.

"We had to crush oats to feed the cows with.

"Then they introduced me to the piggery. I chopped wood, did boiler work and all kinds of farm work.

"We were told what to do by the Congregation of Christian Brothers and we did it.

"Not one working boy got paid. It was slave labour."

Manny was at Tardun until he was 17 and copped floggings and says he was "sexually abused by the Brothers and the older kids".

He told the QT of one instance of being abused by a notorious sexual abuser along with two other children. "We couldn't speak English and I did confess to a Maltese priest about what happened, and he told the Brother that abused me and I copped a flogging," he says.

When he left the Tardun institution Manny said the Brothers got him a job on a farm where he worked for 12 months without pay.

He then left when he was 18 and moved to Geraldton where he secured a job on a 40 foot crayfish boat. He met a girl named Ivy Wood and lived with her parents for 18 months where he continued in the crayfish trade and was away for months on end. His partner fell pregnant and the couple had a pact that if it was a boy they would call him Christopher John.

"I went away on the boat and when I came back she had disappeared," Manny says.

"She had the baby at a nunnery in Subiaco, six and a half hours drive away. Someone took her there, and in those days the Catholics would take the children off unmarried mothers.

"The baby was taken and put up for adoption and his name was changed. I never saw Ivy again but I looked for her and wanted answers."

Manny worked on a farm, in the mines and abattoirs, and for the electricity board. He married and had four children, divorced, and had five more children with his second wife.

Manny then met current wife Lyn and they married in 2006.

He always thought about his lost son, but the chances of ever finding him became more remote as the years ticked by.

LOST SON FOUND: Manny Ellul discovered his son Christopher (with beard) after 47 years of searching. Christopher, who lives in Perth, is pictured with his two sons and grandson.

Then came the breakthrough.

"My wife and I were sitting on the couch watching Sunday Night on Channel Seven and they had a program on adoption," he beams. "They put an adoption site up and I said to my wife, 'Why don't we have a look and see if we can find Chris'. "It only took her a couple of seconds and he was on the site under the name of Christopher John Wood, looking for his mum. "He'd left his number so I phoned him and said, 'I know your mother', because he had mentioned on the site that she was in Geraldton and the year he was born was 1968."

Christopher sent Manny his photo by text and when he saw it he was gobsmacked.

"I said, 'Oh...my...God. It is me all over'. "I was speechless. I went numb."

Lyn was also emotional due to her own involvement in helping Manny with his search.

"Chris is the splitting image of Manny, with a beard. Manny cried and I cried," she says.

"I've been looking for years for him. I've even applied overseas to look for him on sites."

Manny's son had been told he was adopted when he was 10.

"He told me that he ran wild and got himself in a bit of trouble," Manny says.

"But now he has three children and two grandkids."

Christopher is trying to get some funds together to fly to Brisbane from Perth to meet Manny for the first time. He only lives a few kilometres from Manny's brother Ray.

Manny and Lyn are also both now trying to contact Ivy for Christopher's sake.

Manny incredibly reunited with his mother 20 years ago after buying a book on the Ellul family.

He didn't think she was still alive.

"I was told my mother and my father were dead, and they were told the ship went down and we all drowned," Manny says.

"But I did get to see my mother again in 1995. "I bought a book on the family tree of the Elluls and I found the only guy in England with the name Nazzareno (Reni) Ellul in England, and I got my ex-wife to write to him and explain who I was and who my mother and siblings were.

"He sent me a letter back with his number saying, 'I am your brother'. I phoned him and there were lots of tears." Manny, who reunited with Nazzareno in England in a story that was covered by a local newspaper, discovered that his father had passed away in 1989 but his mum was still living in Malta.

"So I went to see my mum in a nursing home in Malta, but I kept it a secret," he says



LOST SON FOUND:
Manny Ellul discovered his son Christopher (with beard) after 47 years of searching. Christopher, who lives in Perth, is pictured with his two sons and grandson.



PROUD PARENTS:
The late Nazzareth and Concetta Ellul thought their son Manny and three of his brothers had died on the way to Australia in 1960. Manny reunited with his mum in Malta in 1995 with tears of joy.

.PROUD PARENTS: The late Nazzareth and Concetta Ellul thought their son Manny and three of his brothers had died on the way to Australia in 1960. Manny reunited with his mum in Malta in 1995 with tears of joy. "My mother is a very religious person and she was with her rosary beads. I walked through this corridor where all the old ladies were sitting in the sun.

"She stood up and said, 'There is my son Leli'. She recognised me straight away and I broke down in tears. "She said to me, 'I used to write to you all the time, then they told us you were dead'. A priest told her. I went to see her again in 1997 and she had diabetic sores on her legs and I put all the ointment on her legs.

"I said 'I will come and see you again soon' but she said 'I won't be here', and she passed away in 1998.

Manny's sister Maria was only six months old when he left Malta and he also got to see her.

The injustice of his life story, and that of many others, has seen Manny fighting a class action case against the Congregation of Christian Brothers in the United States with allegations of human trafficking and child slave labour by the order in Australia.

The case ran from 2009 to December last year and is famous in the US and known as 'the Ellul case'.

But due to a legal precedent in the US it was thrown out recently after a long and bitter battle because the Congregation of Christian Brothers argued that they never existed in Australia or ran institutions, and therefore had never done anything wrong. Manny's lawyer Adrian Joel says the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse knows about this but to date have kept such claims secret.

Getting the Congregation of Christian Brothers to take responsibility for what happened to Manny has hit many brick walls. "I confirm that I lodged a serious formal complaint with the Australian Federal Police about the evidence given by the Congregation of the Christian Brothers and the evidence allegedly suppressed by the Royal Commission," Mr Joel says.

"The AFP informed me that seeing the Congregation of the Christian Brothers appeared to be telling the truth in Australia - even though it was the opposite of what they said in a New York Court - the Royal Commission was only interested in this version of events and would not consider any other."

Manny, whose story has received interest from Paramount Pictures with the view to making a film about it, will continue his fight against the Congregation. "I am angry for myself and angry for thousands of other victims," he says. "What they did stuffed up my family. "I want to see justice for everybody, but I don't think the system has changed."

FTIRA – MALTESE PIZZA

I've been learning a lot about traditional Maltese cooking and was challenged with making a traditional pizza called Ftira. This recipe was lots of fun to create and the toppings can easily be adjustable. You could add whatever toppings are to your liking. Enjoy and have fun with this!

We adore pizza...Here's a crispy, tasty Maltese pizza done in no time! What are your favourite toppings?

Ingredients

▪ BASIC TOMATO PIZZA SAUCE

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small onion finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic crushed
- 425g canned tomatoes
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tbsp oregano

▪ TOPPINGS

- Acqua & Farina Pizza rettangolare
- 1 large potato thinly sliced
- 1 large onion thinly sliced
- 2 large fresh tomatoes thinly sliced
- Fior di Vita shredded mozzarella cheese 150g
- Black Kalamata sliced olives
- 1 can Red Tuna
- 1 small Maltese sausage
- 2 fillets Red anchovies Parsley Olive oil

Instructions

- 1 Heat oil in medium frying pan
- 2 Cook onion, stirring occasionally over low heat until soft and transparent.
- 3 Stir in garlic, undrained crushed tomatoes, paste, sugar, and oregano.
- 4 Simmer, uncovered about 15 minutes or until the texture thickens.
- 5 Add tomato sauce base
- 6 Top with tuna, Maltese sausage, anchovies, olives, tomatoes, mozzarella, potatoes, parsley and olive oil.



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cuisine
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Changing of the Guards

The ceremony takes place on the last Friday of every month in St. George's Square, Valletta.

The Changing of the Guard ceremony in Valletta is a complex ritual that originated during the 17th century, when the Knights of St John ruled over Malta. The ceremony, which symbolises the formal handing-over of responsibility from one guard to another, attracts crowds of spectators in St George's Square every month. If you happen to be in Malta on the **last Friday of the month**, head to Valletta in the morning to witness this centuries-old tradition for yourself.

History of the Changing of the Guard in Valletta

Unlike similar ceremonies in the UK and Monaco, the Changing of the Guard in Valletta is rooted in a ritual initiated by the Order of the Knights of St John, who ruled over Malta between 1530 and 1798. The ceremony has always taken place in front of the Grandmaster's Palace in St George's Square. In 1971, however, the Changing of the Guard ceremony stopped being performed. It was brought back by popular demand by Valletta locals after a 40 year absence. Following its reintroduction in 2010, the Changing of the Guard ceremony has resumed its monthly occurrence in this prominent square in Valletta.

The Armed Forces of Malta

Since its return, this ceremony has become an increasingly grand and complex spectacle, lasting approximately 45 minutes. It is performed by soldiers from the Armed Forces of Malta, accompanied by a military band. Kicking off at around 10:00hrs, the ceremony begins with the military band and the new guard marching down Republic Street towards St George's Square in Valletta. The new guard marches out of the Main Guard building, originally named Guardia della Piazza, which was built by the Knights in 1603. Simultaneously, the old guard marches out of the Grandmaster's Palace, located in the same square. Then, facing each other, the two guards present arms and perform the exchange of duties.

What a brilliant exhibition by the Soldiers and the Band of the Armed Forces of Malta!



King Henry VIII and Malta

It seems little is known in Maltese history of the fact that the deed of donation of Malta to the Knights in 1530, at present on display at an exhibition on Charles V of Spain at the National Library in Valletta (May 30), would not have been published, and the Knights would not have settled in Malta, had it not been for the intervention of King Henry III of England.

When the Knights of St John were defeated at Rhodes in 1522 they travelled to Rome to seek the help of Pope Adrian VI. Knowing that his predecessor Pope Leo X had bestowed the title "Defender of the Faith" on King Henry VIII, Henry's assistance was sought and he was asked to use his influence with Charles V of Spain in finding a new country for the Knights to live in.

Charles V was then in alliance with Henry VIII against the French and Henry's first wife at that time was Catherine of Aragon, the aunt of Charles V.

Henry VIII, wishing to please Pope Adrian, sent a letter dated January 8, 1523 to Grand Master L'Isle Adam in which he expressed his interest in the welfare of the Order, and saying that he had written to Charles V to persuade him to give the "Island of Malta" to the Order of St John.

It would seem this was the first time Malta was mentioned during negotiations when trying to find a country for the Order. Correspondence continued between Grand Master L'Isle Adam and Henry VII as, by another letter dated January 10, 1526, Henry referred to the Order's property in England.

At this time Pope Clement VII was facing difficulties and in fact Charles's mutinous troops marched into Rome and plundered the city which went down in history as the Sacking of Rome.



During this period of unrest between Charles V and Pope Clement VII, Grand Master L'Isle Adam decided to visit England to discuss further with Henry VIII about Malta becoming the new home for the Order.

The talks were not, however, completed until peace was restored with Pope Clement VII, which came about in February 1530. It was only then that Charles V granted Malta to the Order, on March 24, 1530. The treaty was confirmed on July 21, 1530.

After L'Isle Adam arrived in Malta on October 26, 1530, Henry VIII, no doubt happy and satisfied with the outcome, by a letter dated November 22, 1530, congratulated the Grand Master and the Order. Henry's congratulations were short lived, however, as he suppressed the Order of St John in England in 1540 though the formal confiscation of its possessions followed under Elizabeth in 1559. This does show, however, that without King Henry VIII's intervention, it is unlikely the Knights of St John would have set foot in Malta. Brian N. Tarpey.



Tislima lin-Nanniet

Illum jiena xtaqt insellem
Lin-Nanniet tagħna l-Maltin
U ngħidilhom sabiex jimxu
Fuq Sant'Anna w San Ġwakkin!

Illi kienu n-nanniet hienja
Ta' Gesu' helu bambin
Li binthom il-Vergni mbierka
Welldet għalina l-bnedmin!

Jiena ċert dil-koppja helwa
Kienet l-iktar ixxurtjata
Żgur li f'Anna, il-Patrijarka
Sab maż-żmien l-aqwa kunjata.

Li flimkien ma' Ġwakkin tagħha
Hadet hsieb lill-bambin ċkejken
Biex Gużeppi l-hobża jaqla'
Mill-ħanut tiegħu msejken!

Li flimkien ma' Ġwakkin tagħha
Hadet hsieb lill-bambin ċkejken
Biex Gużeppi l-hobża jaqla'
Mill-ħanut tiegħu msejken!

Mill-Kav JM Attard – Rabat, Ghawdex

In-nanniet ta' Malta w Ghawdex
Bħal Sant' Anna w San Ġwakkin
Min jaf kemm paċenzja jieħdu
Bit-tfal t'uliedhom ċkejknin!
Wara li fis-snin mghoddija
Rabbew qabel lil uliedhom
U min jaf x'tbatija ġarrbu
U fis-skiet x'għamlu għalihom!

Issa illi kibru sewwa
Jieħdu hsieb it-tfal tat-tfal
U bl-akbar paċenzja jgħaddu
Bl-akbar għozża sigħat twal.

Biex ulied dawn it-tfal tagħhom
Johorġu għax-xogħol tal-jum
U bil-għaraq minn ta' gbinhom
L-għaxja jgibu ta' kuljum!

Nitolbuk Mulej Missierna
Bierek lil dawn in-nanniet
U żejjinhom b'għomor hieni
Biex fihom jafdaw l-ulied

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(AT THE BACK) JOE MICALLEF

(From L to R) Sylvia Sammut, Susan Gauci, Caramen Bongalis, Mary-Anne Azzopardi, Frances Dimech, Gina Portelli, Doreen Schembri, Mary-Anne Bongalis, TerriAnne Farrugia and Susan Borg

This photo is displayed at the George Cross Falcons Community Centre, Gringila NSW



MNARJA FESTA IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Fantastic day at The Feast of Saint Peter and Paul, Festa ta L-Imnarja held at Good Shepherd Parish Hall organised by St Nicholas Festa Committee. Congratulations to all involved, a great enjoyable day.

June 2025