



MerĦbA

Maltese Historical Association (Aust) Inc
(Għaqda Storika Maltija (Awstralija) Inkorporata)

MHA Newsletter No. 5/2015

www.mha.org.au

June 2015

MerĦba! Welcome to all our members and friends.

Apologies for the brevity of this newsletter. I have returned to teaching on a 6 week contract after being retired for three years and had forgotten how busy teachers are, doing homework every night and on weekends. I can barely keep on top of things and, unlike the other teachers, I don't even have to write any midyear reports! Spare a thought and a kind word for those hardworking people, struggling to educate the next generation, often in the face of great opposition.

This newsletter would not have happened without our many contributors. One of our new members, John Bonnice, sent us an article and lots of photos of the newly renovated Fort St Elmo, Nino Xerri has contributed his *Through the Lens* page; Joseph Borg summarised his last lecture on the situation in Europe and the Middle East, leading up to the Great Siege of 1565, and supplied an introduction to his next lecture on the Great Siege. A tribute to the late Professor Wettinger, coming events, and a number of links and photos are included in this issue of MerĦba.

If you would like to share photos, stories, snippets of information, feature articles, whatever, please contact me by phone or text on 0425 708 830 or by email at secretary@mha.org.au

Looking forward to seeing you at our next lecture on 16 June; all are welcome; bring family and friends;

Charlie

Charles Gatt (MHA Secretary)

MHA June Lecture

The Great Siege of Malta 1565

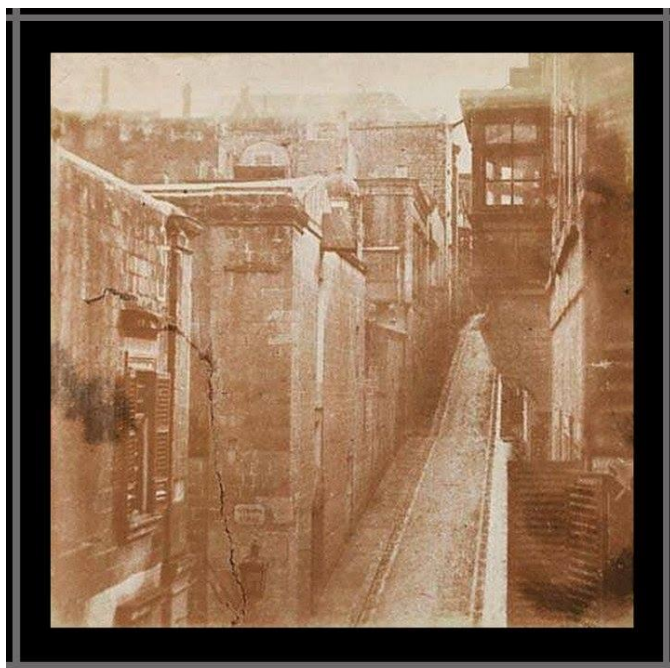
by

Joseph Borg

7.30 pm Tuesday 16 June
Maltese Community Centre
467 – 477 Royal Parade Parkville
(Enter from levers St)

Last month we reviewed the reasons leading to the Great Siege of Malta of 1565, starting from the time of the Islamic/Arab expansion through to the Turkish Invasion of the Byzantine Empire. We also looked at the results of the *reconquista* of Spain and the birth of the Barbary Corsairs and their eventual alliance with the Turks and the involvement of the Knights.

This month we shall be looking at the siege itself, not so much from the daily events that took place, though we shall visit the major events themselves, but more from the perspective of the resources of each protagonist. Apart from the numbers of soldiers involved and the munitions and weaponry at their disposal, we shall have a look at the qualities of the leadership of each side. Part of this analysis will be a look at the decision-making during the battles from both sides.



Sixteenth Century Image

This is believed to be the first photo ever taken in Malta, dating back to the 1840s!

PROF. GODFREY WETTINGER

The renowned historian, Professor Godfrey Wettinger, died on 22 May 2015, aged 85. Born in Mosta on 22 December 1929, Prof. Wettinger was a founding member and past editor of *Melita Historica* and past president of the Malta Historical Society.

His publications include *The Jews of Malta in the late Middle Ages*, *Slavery in the Maltese Islands*, *Lost Villages of Malta*, *Placenames of the Maltese Islands* and *The Arabs in Malta*.

A major publication was the transcription of the University 11 manuscripts at the National Library which was published as *Acta Juratorum et Consilii Civitatis et Insulae Maltae*.

Together with Fr Mikiel Fsadni he discovered, in September 1966, *Il-Kantilena*, the oldest piece of literature written in Maltese, dating to the 15th Century. They agreed never to share the details of how they discovered it.

As a teacher he liked to shock people. His most controversial assertion, backed by considerable evidence, was that after the Arab invasion from Tunisia around 870 AD, in which their leader died, another Arab army was sent, probably from Sicily. They left Malta in utter desolation, unpopulated for about 100 years, except for wild donkeys, sheep and goats. Some Maltese, including academics, however, have never accepted this version, preferring to believe there was an unbroken line from St Paul and beyond.

The university website described the loss of Prof. Wettinger, a senior fellow and former Professor of Medieval History, who dedicated his entire life to scholarship: "He was a formidable intellectual and exemplary academic, responsible for many seminal publications, and tutor to many generations of students." The government also issued a statement expressing its condolences.

In line with his wish for a secular funeral, a farewell service was held praesente cadavere at the University, the first ceremony of its kind to be held there. Family and friends joined the academic community in paying their last respects.

References:

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20150522/local/historian-godfrey-wettinger-passes-away.569222>

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20150523/local/godfrey-wettinger-dies-at85.569328>

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20150527/local/last-respects-to-godfrey-wettinger-paid-in-secular-service-at.569954>

<http://bishtawi.com/professor-godfrey-wettinger-ive-done-it-almost-risking-my-life/>

Videos:

The Farewell Service for Professor Godfrey Wettinger:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHcKcPYKnnE>

A tribute to Professor Wettinger in Maltese:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIH328mVgNU>

FOURTH OF JULY

The Australian American Association
invite you to join us in celebrating
America's Independence Day
at
CQ Bar, 113 Queen St, Melbourne
on
Friday 3rd July 2015
6.00 pm to 10.30 pm

Cost:
Members: Adult: \$50 per person
Children: \$25 (12 and under)
Non-Members: Adult: \$57 per person
Children: \$28 (12 and under)
(Children under 5 are free)

RSVP: Erin Muscat-Slatery at eventschair@gmail.com
or on 0408 830 997 by 24 June 2015

Cost includes:
Hot and Cold Canapes and Grazing dishes, plus two free drinks!
Free drinks include Red & White Wine, Heavy & Light Beer
Soft Drinks, Tea/Coffee



Mdina 2015

Photo: Fred Erick

The Events that led to the Great Siege of Malta 1565

Summary of May Lecture by Joseph Borg

The reasons for the Great Siege of Malta of 1565 have their roots going back to the rise of Islam in 630. With the expansion of Islam, the Holy lands fell under their influence. This affected the Eastern Roman Empire as well. Later, the spread of the Mongolian hordes impacted on the eastern end of this empire.

The crusades started when the emperor in Byzantium asked the Pope to help him fight these invaders. The message of the crusades was to reclaim the holy land to Christianity as it was before Islam took over. The result of this was the formation of the various orders of Knights, amongst which were the Knights Hospitallers. The fourth crusade was to diminish the power of the Byzantines and the formation of the Outremers.



Saladin organised his forces and after some 200 years of European presence the whole area was once again under Arab rule. Meanwhile, the Turks started their move westwards and within another 150 years they had conquered Constantinople and parts of the Balkans. The Order of St John (Hospitallers) had by this time moved to Rhodes.

Over in the West, Spain was reunited by Ferdinand and Isabella, and the Moors were ordered out of the country. The New World was also discovered and trade was flourishing in both directions, i.e. from East to West and vice-versa, with some of the Italian kingdoms having a great say in the matter (Venice, Genoa, Pisa).

The exiled moors were bent on revenge and, through the agency of two famous brothers, Kheir-ed-Din and Aruj Barbarossa, the Barbary pirates came to the fore. They preyed mainly on Spanish shipping but they also raided the coasts of lands facing the North African coast, from Morocco all the way to Tunis. Apart from pillaging, they also dragged a lot of innocent people to their lairs as slaves. Malta was in the thick of this.

Meantime, the Knights were expelled from Rhodes where they took part in attacking and looting Turkish vessels (Corso). They transferred to Rome from where the Grand Master, De L'Isle Adam managed to talk

Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, into ceding Malta and Tripoli to them. Charles' reason for this was obvious: he wanted someone to guard the south-western flank of his empire.

Charles started a series of offensives against the corsairs and this often required the knights to join in, much to the anger of the corsairs, among whom we now meet Dragut. He formed an alliance with Suleiman in Constantinople, so the influence of the Turkish navy spread into the Western Mediterranean. Unfortunately, Charles V and Francis I of France did not see eye to eye because of heritage issues and were frequently at war with each other. In fact, Francis even had an alliance with Suleiman against the Spaniards. Thus there was no united European force against the spread of the Ottoman Empire. Only Charles faced this problem because he was after all a Hapsburg, and it was central Europe that was being invaded by the Turks. The Reformation also split alliances because of religion. This also led to a weakening of the strength of the Order as both the English and some German Knights left the Order



The knights in Malta resumed the Corso into the Eastern Mediterranean, since they always dreamed that one day they would re-conquer Rhodes. Accordingly they were not very happy with the idea of protecting Malta and Tripoli. However, since no other place was made available for them as a base, they reluctantly started to fortify the areas around the Borgo and Senglea, and they even built a fort (St Elmo) at the tip of the Sciberras peninsula and another (Fort St Michael) on the landward side of Senglea.

Internal squabbles in the Order were also present, mainly because of the feuds between Charles V and Francis I. The Spanish and French langues of the Order were frequently antagonistic to each other.

The Corsos were bringing in a lot of loot to Malta. The best known commander of the Corso was none other than Romegas, one of the heroes of the siege that was to follow. On one of his expeditions he attacked and captured several large merchantmen, amongst which was one that belonged to the chief eunuch of the court of Suleiman. He also captured many notable people including the nurse of one of Suleiman's daughters.

Agitation in Suleiman's court against these piratical acts led him to issue an edict, calling for the building of a great fleet with sufficient numbers of men, weapons and supplies in order to remove the Knights from Malta.

Powerpoint and recording of lecture:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ovsvcl1cqegzav9/AADLLUsONYo5Z9BIVWeLwbiMa?dl=0>

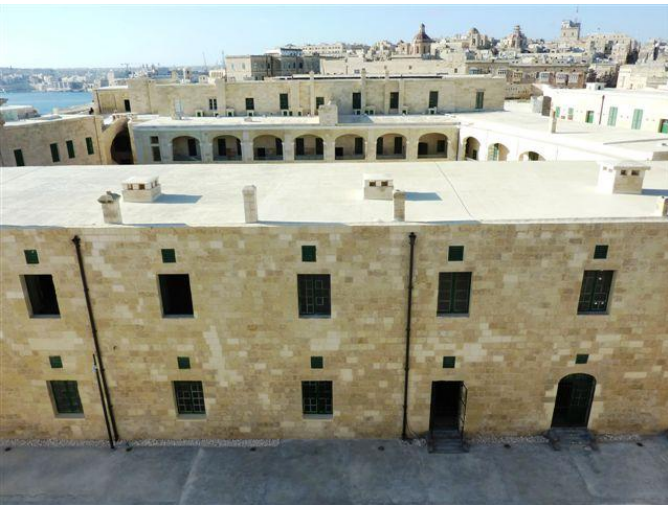
Fort St Elmo by John Bonnice



Fort St Elmo Entrance



Fort St Elmo



Fort St Elmo internal buildings



Inside Fort St Elmo

On a trip to Malta in October 2014, I participated in a Great Siege tour organised by Heritage Malta.

The tour was the first of its kind that was able to include a tour inside Fort St Elmo. The Fort was in the final stages of restoration prior to being opened to the public. The tour guide from Heritage Malta brought alive the Great Siege and the remarkable story behind this epic event in Maltese history.

The tour also included a visit to the Grandmaster's Palace to see the wall paintings of the Great Siege by Matteo Perez d'Aleccio located in the Supreme Council Hall and a boat trip in the Grand Harbour to see significant locations of the Great Siege in Senglea and Birgu.

The visit to Fort St Elmo was a real highlight of the tour. The Fort has been extensively restored and the quality of the restoration work is outstanding. Of particular interest were elements of the original Fort that the tour guide was able to point out, given that very little remains of the Fort that existed at the time of the Great Siege. Following the Great Siege the Fort was rebuilt and there were significant alterations and renovations undertaken between the 17th and 19th centuries. Between 1988 and 2013 the Police Academy was located within the precincts of the Fort.

The restored Fort St Elmo was officially re-opened on May 8th 2015 with the first Public Open day being held on May 10th 2015.



Looking from Fort St Elmo to Fort St Angelo

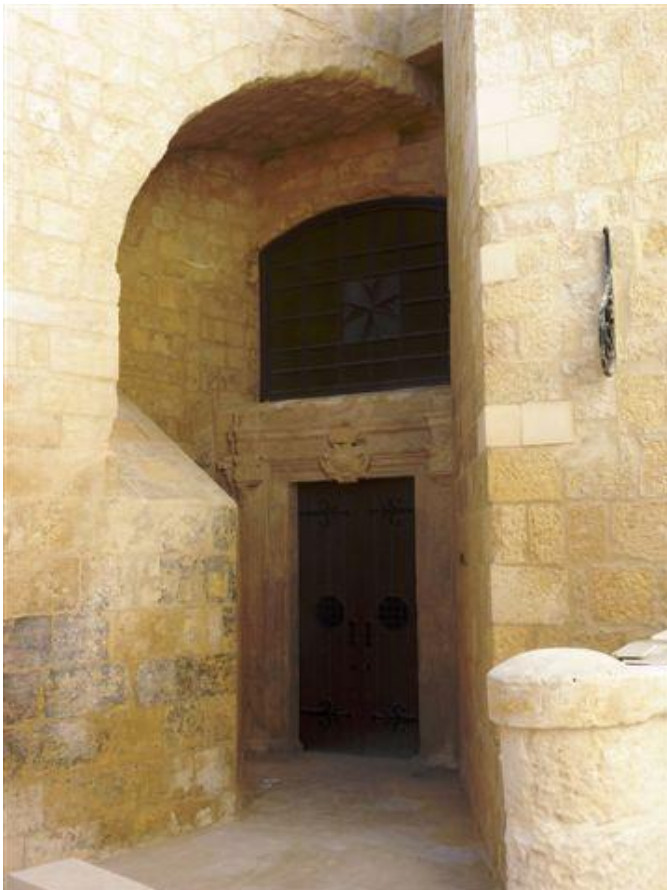
Fort St Elmo (Cont'd)



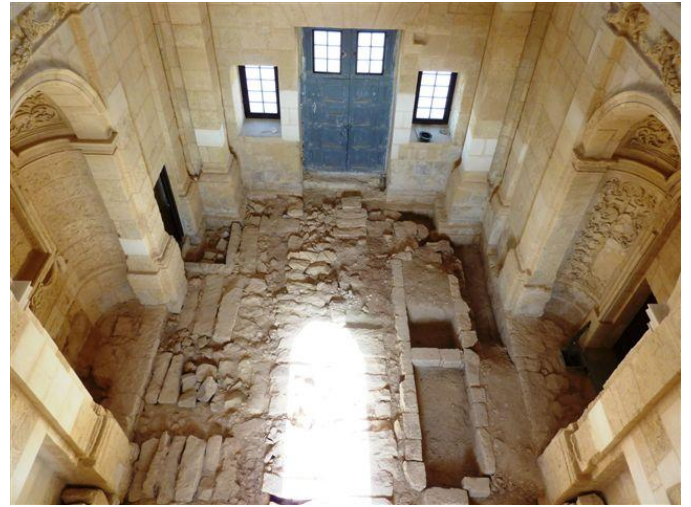
External Walls of Fort St Elmo



External Walls of Fort St Elmo



Original doorway of Fort St Elmo as at the time of the Great Siege.



Restoration of Room inside Fort St Elmo



Looking from Fort St Elmo to Grand Harbour Entrance



Restored walls of Fort St Elmo.



1. Spinola Bay: Originally a Fishing Bay for St. Julian's, it is now more or less the centre of St. Julian's, with numerous bars & restaurants. It also forms part of the very popular Promenade "Ghar Id-Dud" (Literally "Cave of worms")



4. Malta Chinese Garden of Serenity: Il-Ġnien tas-Serenità in Santa Luċija was opened in 1997. A beautiful and peaceful garden, it is composed of several smaller gardens. Rocks and water represent the yin and yang. The garden symbolises the journey of life from birth to death.

Through the lens of Nino Xerri



2. Bowl of Prickly Pear: Cannot get more Maltese than this!



5. Dancing Waters and Reflections, St George Square: also known as Palace Square (Misraħ il-Palazz), outside the Grandmasters' Palace and the Main Guard building in the heart of Valletta. A host of Ceremonial Events take place here. In recent times "Dancing Fountains" have been installed as an added attraction for locals and tourists.



3. Qolla il-Bajda: Qbajjar Gozo: Following on from last month's image, it is also known as Xwejni battery, built between 1715-1716. It is the last vestige of a chain of fortifications around Marsalforn Bay. The only other surviving battery on Gozo is Saint Anthony's Battery in Qala.



6. Grand Masters Palace: Built in 1571, it has been the Administration Centre for over 3½ centuries. It was the seat of the Grand Master of The Knights of St. John and later, during the British period, was the seat of the Governor. Until last month it also served as the location for the Maltese House of Parliament. The Office of the President of Malta is still housed in the Palace.

History Around the World

Gold Artifacts Tell Tale of Drug-Fueled Rituals and "Bastard Wars".

2400 year old solid gold artefacts, with detailed decorations, were discovered in a Scythian burial mound in southern Russia. They contained traces of opium and marijuana, confirming the claim of the ancient historian, Herodotus. The Scythians were a fierce race who returned home after a 28 year war against the Persians, to find bastard children of their lonely wives and their slaves. Slaughter ensued.

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/05/150522-scythians-marijuana-bastard-wars-kurgan-archaeology/>

Flash Mob in Valletta Marking Europe Day on 9 May
<https://www.facebook.com/BayEasyDAB/videos/958181447525744/?fref=nf>

My cousin Ros in Glasgow shared this link to readings of the 4-volume series *Rajt Malta Tinbidel* (I saw Malta Change), a very well-written autobiography by Herbert Ganado (it was available in both Maltese and English). The readings are in Maltese (useful for learners):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBuCb3Pe20&list=P_LgjmK8eAUYYrX2exPK8AZ9U4xVwvllakX

PASTIZZI

No history of Malta would be complete without a tribute to Pastizzi! Learn how to make them with GAM's masterclass but book in fast: places will fill up quickly!



GAM's... 'The Art of Making Pastizzi' Masterclass!



Pastizzi! Pastizzi! Pastizzi!

They're flaky, golden and delicious...
They're as Maltese as you can get...
Once you start eating them, it's hard to stop...
We all love them - now it's time to learn how to make them!

GAM invites you to join its next Masterclass, where we teach you the culinary art of making Pastizzi! Learn from our experienced teacher Peter, who will show you the full ins and outs - from the pastry to the filling! This is one class you don't want to miss...

Book now!



Brought to you by:
Generation AusMalts (GAM)



Proudly supported by:
Catholic Regional College Sydenham
Maltese Community Council of Victoria Inc



Masterclass Dates

Sunday, 28th June
Class 1: 9am - 12noon
Class 2: 1pm - 4pm

Sunday, 12th July
Class 1: 9am - 12noon
Class 2: 1pm - 4pm

Sunday, 19th July
Class 1: 9am - 12noon
Class 2: 1pm - 4pm

Class Prices

Adult GAM-MERS: \$25
Junior GAM-MERS (5 - 12 years): \$15

Class fees include:

Cooking Class
Recipe Cards - English & Maltese
Ingredients
1 x dozen Pastizzi that you make in class to take home and cook.
Door prize for every class!

Venue

The CRC Bakery Patisserie
Catholic Regional College - Sydenham
380 Sydenham Road, Sydenham 3037
Onsite parking and access to bakery via Pecks Road.

Bookings

Online only at:
<http://www.trybooking.com/HZOD>

Important to know!

Class dates strictly limited.
Maximum of 20 students per class.
2 students per work space.



Federation of Australian Historical Societies

e-BULLETIN No. 137 - 14 May 2015

- 1) [National Cultural Heritage Account - funding for acquisitions of Australian protected objects](#)
- 2) [FAIR partners](#)
- 3) [Discovery of 1620 book ordered to be burnt](#)
- 4) [National Conference of Oral History Australia](#)
- 5) [Hazel de Berg Award for Excellence in Oral History](#)
- 6) [Black Australia: entangled histories on Queensland's cane fields](#)

COMING EVENTS

13th June: Fun Night - Newport Maltese Seniors Group at Maltese Community Centre. Contact Carmen Casa 03 9436 8196

16th June: 7:30 pm MHA Free Lecture - The Great Siege of 1565 by Joseph Borg at Maltese Community Centre in Parkville. All welcome.

19th June: Maltese day for Memory Lane Café. MCCV is providing entertainment and food.

20th June: Get Together at Albion - St Helena Maltese Australian SC

21st June: Members' meeting and luncheon - St Gaetan's Society Inc. at St Martin De Porres. Contact Jimmy and Angela Chircop and Rita Hili 03 9747 3970 & 03 9331 4130

29th June: Festa Tal Imnarja at Rosary Home. Contact Carmen Mamo at the Maltese centre.

4th - 5th July: Weekend trip - Newport Maltese Association. Contact Carmen Casa 03 9436 8196

11th July: Christmas in July - Newport Maltese Seniors Group at Melrose Reception Centre. Contact Carmen Casa 03 9436 8196

21st July: 7:30pm MHA Free Lecture at Maltese Community Centre in Parkville. All welcome.

16th August: Nisga 2015 Maltese Cook Off

Brunswick Community History Group Inc

The BCHG meets on the first Saturday of the month at Bridie O'Reilly's Irish Pub from 1:30 to 4:30 pm. Their meeting schedule follows:

June 6: Gen, Sir John Monash - WW1 Commander
Dr. Marlene Ryzman

July 4: Radar in the Northern Suburbs in WW2
Kevin Patterson

Aug 1: Margaret's Story: Brunswick connection
Dr. Ken Eckersall

Sept 5: Empowering the Homeless
Tony Keenan

Oct 3: AGM BCHG financial members

Contact: Francesca 9387 1194

Meet at 12:00 for a \$10 light lunch and soft drink and a chat

MCCV Newsletter (March – May)

The latest newsletter can be found on the MCCV website or here: <http://www.mccv.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/MCCV-Newsletter-130-Mar-May-2015.pdf>

A brief outline follows:

Unveiling of vibrant, flowing mural depicting Malta transforms community centre hall: Mentioned in our last newsletter, this is a more detailed article on the unveiling of the mural at the Community Centre in Parkville. The Consul General, Mr Victor Grech, presented a Certificate of Appreciation awarded by the MCCV to Emmanuel Spiteri for his long service to the Maltese Ex-Services Association of Victoria and his Presidency of the Association over the last 15 years. **Victorian Minister for Multiculturalism launches Maltese Cultural & Resource directory:** (See below)

President's perspective: The human tragedy of refugees; the refurbishment of the Community Centre, and the need for Maltese interpreters were covered.

MCCV Council News: Care of the aged, the diabetes group, conservation of Australia Hall in Malta, and lobbying to extend the Maltese biometric passport applications beyond Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra were some of the issues dealt with.

MCCV helps raise awareness of gambling adverse effects in the community: and is looking at ways to assist our communities in reducing gambling frequency.

Controversial new parliament building in Malta inaugurated: by Malta's President Mrs Marie-Louise Coleiro-Preca on Monday May 4.

4th convention of Maltese living abroad: Over 100 Maltese living overseas, about half from Australia, participated in this convention.

ANZAC centenary commemorated in Malta: and a moving address by Judge Peter Zahra SC.

Long Friendship with Malta recognised:

Older people in our Community by Prof. Maurice Cauchi. Many older Maltese are disadvantaged.

Il-Pressjoni Gholja: In Maltese, High Blood pressure

Bishop Joe Grech Scholarship 2015: organised by the MCCV to enhance Maltese culture. See below.

Vince Calleja retires after 42 years of service to Newport Maltese Association. Serving as president and vice president, Vince also helped set up the Community Centre in Parkville and organised the Maltese Cultural Festival.

Maltese Salesian past Pupils Association disbanded after 56 years at a final Thanksgiving Mass and Get Together on 15 March 2015 at the Maltese Community Centre in Parkville.

Viva Multicultural Festival by Paul Vella. The Victorian Multicultural Commission once again organized this Festival which was held on Sunday, 22nd March in Federation Square. Nicky Bomba participated and was very well received.

Good Friday Pageant by Paul Vella. In its 31st year and fourth at ta' Pinu, the pageant was well attended with many in costume and the 600 seat chapel overflowing.

11 year old Monique Grima raises \$1600 for this year's Good Friday Appeal: the granddaughter of Reskeon Seniors Group member Rose Sacco, has sold artistic greeting cards for \$3 to raise this substantial sum for the Royal Chilrens Hospital.

Paul Vella lura fuq radio 3ZZ: Fridays at 5pm.

BANK OF VALLETTA PLC

Australia Representative Office:

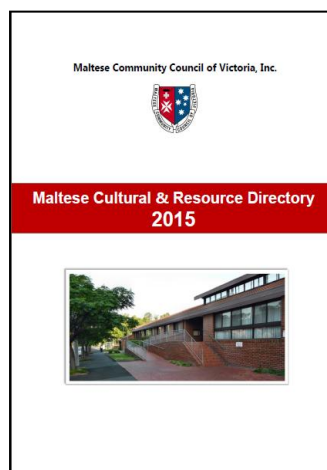
16 Watt Street Sunshine Vic 3020

Tel 9311 3222 Fax 9311 3216

Open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 5.00pm

Uffiċċju Rappreżentattiv

L-Ewwel Bank Rappreżentattiv Malti fl-Awstralja



The MCCV has recently published an 80 page Maltese Cultural and Resource Directory. It is a wealth of information about Malta and the Maltese, its history, migration, contacts and available services, a calendar of major feasts, Maltese language broadcasts, Maltese phrases, and traditional Maltese recipes. Intended to assist the elderly, it is a good read for everyone with an interest in Malta or the Maltese.


Applications invited for Bishop Joseph Grech Scholarship 2015

The Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Scholarship was established by the Maltese Community Council of Victoria to encourage interest and appreciation of Maltese culture in young people of Maltese descent living in the State of Victoria. Applications close Monday 30 June. Further details can be found on the MCCV website:

<http://www.mccv.org.au/applications-invited-for-bishop-joseph-grech-scholarship-2015/>

Frank Scicluna, the Hon Consul for Malta in South Australia, is back from Malta, where he attended the 4th convention of Maltese living abroad. He has already published two e-Newsletters.

<http://www.ozmalta.page4.me/>



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