



MerHbA

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

MHA Newsletter No. 10/2015

www.mha.org.au

December 2015

Merhba! The MHA extends a warm welcome to all our members and friends.

At the MHA event held on 20 October we watched a BBC documentary on Malta's role in WWII and discussed it afterwards. (Page 3)

No newsletter was published in November, due to the AGM notices being sent out instead. The AGM was held on Tuesday 17 November. Despite the light attendance, it was a pleasant evening. The existing committee was re-elected with the welcome addition of Robert Blythe. (page2)

Our next MHA event will be a Trivia night to be held on 15 December. (page 3)

As you may know, I have recently returned from a lightning trip to Malta. Expect to see a number of photographs and articles about Malta's rich and varied history over the next few months. There are so many interesting places and stories, everywhere one goes!

Wishing you all a Happy, Holy and Safe Christmas. May you share many joyous occasions with family and friends. As they say in Maltese, "*Il-Milied it-tajjeb*".



Hoping to see you on the fifteenth,
Charlie

Charles Gatt
(MHA Secretary)
secretary@mha.org.au

MHA December Event:

Trivia Night

Very popular in the past and along the lines of "What is it? Where is it?" our next event will be a lot of fun.

Bring family and friends; share your expertise in a team, answer questions about Malta's history, culture and people, and win Prizes.

7.30 pm Tuesday 15 December

Maltese Community Centre, Royal Parade,
Parkville, Victoria
(enter from Ievers St)

COMING EVENTS

Sunday 6th December: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Service: 10:30 am Shrine of Remembrance – Sanctuary - Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne.

Dress: Business attire with medals.

Sunday, 6th December: MCCV Children's Christmas Party 2015: 2.00 pm to 4.30pm at the Maltese Community Centre, 477 Royal Parade, Parkville.

Bookings: Carmen Mamo 9387 8922 by 23rd November.

Saturday 12th December: Opening of the Door of Mercy by Archbishop Denis Hart "**Mass of the Blessed Virgin in Advent**" 2pm at Our Lady Ta' Pinu Shrine, 15 Flanagans Drv, Bacchus Marsh, VIC 3340

Contact: Office (03) 5367 7006

Email: infotapinu@optusnet.com.au (Page 5)

Sunday, 13th December 2015: MCCV Malta Republic Day: 6.00 pm till 8.00 pm Maltese Community Centre, Parkville \$22.00 per person Dress: After five.

Bookings: Carmen Mamo 9387 8922 by 7th December 2015 (Page 8)

Tuesday 15th December: MHA Event: Trivia Night: 7:30 pm Maltese Community Centre, Parkville. All welcome. Free (page 3)

27 February 2016: Maltese Festival: 10 am - 6 pm. Kernot Hall, Morwell (Page 7)

18th May – 5th June 2016: Pilgrimage To Lourdes: **Contact:** Carmen Mamo on 9387 8922. (Page 3)

Maltese Historical Association Annual General Meeting

Our AGM was held on Tuesday 17 November, with 13 members in attendance and 6 apologies.

The minutes of the last AGM of 18 November 2014 were tabled and read. In Business Arising it was noted that the spitroast function scheduled for the end of last year had to be cancelled due to insufficient interest but our deposit was returned.

In the President's report, Joseph Borg outlined the range of talks this year. He thanked all those who had helped the MHA, and paid tribute to those who had passed away, especially Emmanuel (Laurie) Spiteri, a member since the inception of the MHA. Joe encouraged members to give a talk to the group and to invite family and friends.

The Treasurer's report was tabled. Mario Bonnici explained that in the last financial year, we had Income of \$810.22 and Expenditure of \$1,771.56, giving a deficit of \$961.34 for the year, but we still have a balance of \$6,056.57 in the bank.

Office bearers and Committee members were then elected. The Committee remains the same, with the welcome addition of Robert Blythe.

In General Business a \$500 donation to the MCCV was approved, as well as a \$50 donation to the 3ZZZ Radiothon appeal.

Robert Blythe suggested we make greater use of social media, such as Facebook, and Angela Portelli suggested networking with GAM. We can leave membership forms and flyers at the Maltese Community centre and prepare talks of greater interest to younger people, such as traditions, customs and folklore, as well as tapping into student interest through the Maltese language classes.

The meeting closed at 8:15 p.m.

The full minutes of the AGM will be made available on the MHA website.



The MHA Committee for 2016 Photo: Lewis Zammit
Back: Robert Blythe, Charlie Portelli (Committee members)
Front: Charles Gatt (Secretary), Joseph Borg (President), Mario Bonnici (Treasurer), George Portelli (Vice President).

2015 CHRISTMAS GIFT PACKS

are available from the MALTA EMIGRANTS' COMMISSION, Dar L- Emigrant, Castille Place, Valletta, VLT 1062 Malta Tel:- (+356) 21 232545, 21 222644, 21 240255 Fax(+356) 21 240022

Email: sales.mectravel@go.net.mt
or joe.mectravel@go.net.mt

MALTESE NEWS on SBS 2 TV

Every Thursday, 8 am
Every Sunday, 8 am

These are two different programs.

Weekly news bulletins are prepared by the PBS (Malta) and are presented on
SBS 2 TV

Sam Muscat would like to invite you to become a member of the
Australian American Association.

Contact: Sam Muscat
Telephone: 9363 7502
Email: samcjm@bigpond.com
Mobile: +61 3 0419 381 479

MHA October Event

The Battle for Malta

DVD and Discussion

At our event on 20th October we watched a documentary called *Battle for Malta*. Produced by the BBC and presented by James Holland, it described one of the most violent episodes of World War 2. Between 1940 and 1942 more bombs fell on tiny Malta than fell on Britain during the entire Blitz. Not only was Malta the most bombed place on earth but the lack of food, fuel, ammunition and even water added to the inhabitants' suffering.

Many of the well known stories were omitted. Holland focused on the importance of Malta as a strategic base and its offensive role in preventing supplies reaching Rommel, thereby turning the tide of the war.

He visited the Lazaretto submarine base and spoke with characters one does not normally meet to give fresh insight into those difficult times.

A brief discussion followed, where members shared their memories and stories.

Watch 1940-42 The Battle for Malta in colour (In 3 parts, about 6 minutes each):

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeiVHg8TpXk>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmbW4ITUf4>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVTjtmA7l2A>

MHA December Event

TRIVIA NIGHT

7.30pm Tuesday, 15th December
Maltese Community Centre
Royal Parade, Parkville, Victoria
(enter from Ievers St)

This last MHA event of the year should be a lot of fun. It will consist of a Trivia Quiz on Maltese History, Culture and People. Some pictures may also be shown to generate interest and discussion.

The quiz will consist of 12 sections as follows:

- i) Early Malta
- ii) Punic-Roman times
- iii) Medieval Malta
- iv) The Knights of St John
- v) Malta after the Knights
- vi) World War II
- vii) Malta Buses
- viii) Governors of Malta
- ix) General I
- x) General II
- xi) Riddles (Haġa Mohgaga)
- xii) Proverbs

It will consist of a series of questions about the history and culture of our mother country.

Six teams will be formed. Each team is to cooperate to answer the questions. Prizes will be awarded to the winning tables.

Come along and bring your friends. It should be a lively and educational evening.

BYO drinks and nibbles.

PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES

18th May – 5th June 2016

Spiritual Leader Fr. KEVIN DAVINE OMI

Visiting Barcelona, Montserrat, Manresa, Lourdes, Toulouse, Rocamadour, Paray Le Monial, Taize, Nevers, Tours, Chateaux de la Loire, Chartres, Mont St Michel, Lisieux, Monet Gardens, Paris.

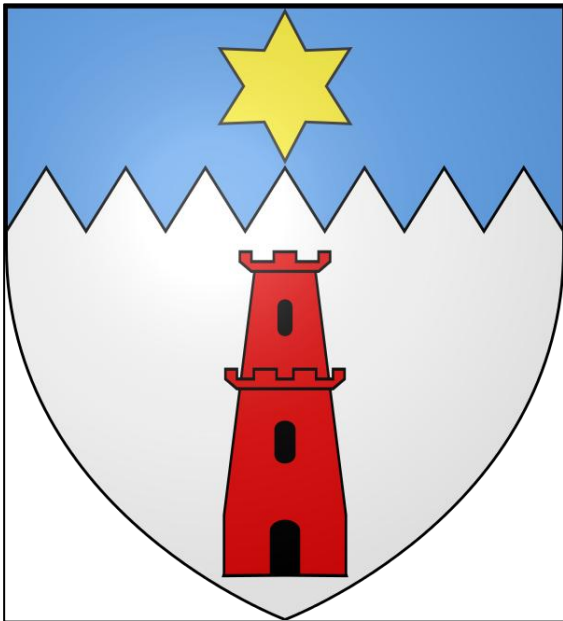
Escorted by Edwina Mallia

For more information, itinerary and booking contact Carmen Mamo on 9387 8922.



Can you help?

We have had a request from Karen Greenwood, hoping we can interpret the symbolism behind the Għarb flag and Coat of Arms.



She believes that the red tower could be the Dwejra Tower. However, she can't find any meaning behind the six pointed yellow star and the blue and white jagged line.

Her grandfather (Frank Formosa), his brothers and one of their wives migrated to Australia in the 1920's from Għarb. Their cousin was Frenċ tal Għarb. She is trying to find out as much as she can about their village at that time.

If you can share any information, please let me know and I will pass it on.

Charles Gatt:

Phone 0425 708 830

Secretary@mha.org.au

I saw this beautiful photo of the Mellicha Church on facebook and asked whether we could use it in the MHA newsletter. Thank you, Lawrence Gauci!



INTERESTING SITES:

Underneath Valletta

Noel Grima dispels myths and states the actual facts about the network of tunnels underneath Valletta. It is a fascinating read. Thank you to our member, Rosemary Attard, for bringing this to our attention.

<http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2007-01-28/news/underneath-valletta-168234/>

Welcome to the Archdiocese of Malta Archives Archivium Archiepiscopale Melitense (A.A.M.)

One could spend many hours browsing through this! Thanks to Cousin Ros for the link.

<http://archives.maltadiocese.org/Home.aspx>

The Economist Explains: Where the Maltese Language comes from:

A modern take on an old topic. Interesting and very readable.

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2015/11/economist-explains-16?fsrc=scn%2Ftw%2Fte%2Fbl%2Fed%2Fwheret%2Fhemalteselanguagecomesfrom>

They called her unsinkable...

The Texaco tanker, S.S. Ohio, was built in America in 1940. Large, solid and luxurious for the time, she was further strengthened for wartime attack by the British.

In 1942, she took part in Operation Pedestal, later known as the Santa Marija Convoy. She survived a Mediterranean crossing that saw 9 of 14 merchant ships sunk and 500 lives lost. Heavily bombed and almost sinking, the Ohio was virtually carried by two destroyers, then by Maltese tugboats, through the minefield into the Grand Harbour.

Desperately short of supplies, Malta was only two weeks away from surrender. The Ohio brought much needed fuel. She floated long enough to be unloaded, before breaking in half and sinking. This episode was a turning point for Malta, not only in terms of desperately needed supplies but also in morale.

Raphael Vassallo tells the fascinating story of this amazing ship:

http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/56154/they_called_her_unsinkable?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook#.VmErNdIrJND

The Maltese, Toy Dog of Myth and Legend: An interesting and entertaining article by Bud Boccone about this ancient and highly regarded breed.

<http://www.akc.org/akc-dog-lovers/maltese-toy-dog-myth-legend/>

JUBILEE OF MERCY

MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER

"A CALL TO PRAYER - COME"

To experience "A True Moment of Encounter with the Mercy of God."
and join our multicultural Marian Family of Faithful as we celebrate

The Mass of the Blessed Virgin in Advent

AND THE OPENING OF THE

"HOLY DOOR OF MERCY"

at

Our Lady Ta' Pinu Shrine

All Nations Marian Centre

15 Flanagans Drv, Bacchus Marsh, 3340

on

Saturday 12th Dec 2015

2.00 p.m. Eucharistic Celebrations

Rosary Procession, Confession, Holy Mass presided by

His Grace Archbishop Denis J Hart DD

assisted by

Very Rev Fr Ciril Bozic, Episcopal Vicar of Migrants and Refugees,
Msgr Benedict Camilleri and other members of the Clergy.

Followed by

Procession with the Blessed Sacrament to the Chapel of Mercy
Ritual Blessing of the "Holy Door of Mercy" & Benediction

For more information please contact the office on 03 53677006 or 0412 360 231

Light refreshments to be served during fellowship.

Web: <http://www.tapinu-australia.org/> and
www.facebook.com/TaPinuShrineAustralia



When I first saw this photo, I thought it was the discovery of an ancient artefact! It is in fact, Kristu tal-Baħħara, a modern copy of a bronze statue, *Christ of the Abyss*, at San Fruttuoso, Italy.

Maltese sculptor Alfred Camilleri Cauchi was commissioned to create this work by a committee of divers led by Raniero Borg to honour the visit of St Pope John Paul II to Malta in 1990.

Made from concrete covered fibreglass, the statue was originally sunk near St. Paul's Islands. Ten years later the statue was moved to Qawra point, in 35 metres of water two kilometres off the coast, near the wreck of the MV Imperial Eagle, another diving attraction.

Federation of Australian Historical Societies

www.history.org.au

e-BULLETIN No. 146 – 29 November 2015

Compiled by Jodie Boyd

- 1) [Exhibition opening in Melbourne - Executed in Franklin St](#)
- 2) [City of Perth Heritage Grants now open - closing 30 January 2016](#)
- 3) [Ernest Scott Prize – entries now open](#)
- 4) [NSW Heritage Grants 2016-17 closing 16 December 2015](#)
- 5) [Catalyst - Australian Arts and Culture Fund - open for applications on Friday 27 November 2015](#)
- 6) [Concerns raised over Mackay Regional Council's failure to consider local heritage collection in library move](#)
- 7) [Investigation into Historic Places – call for responses to Draft Proposals Paper](#)

Following on from Item 7 above, the MHA has received a copy of the *Historical Places Investigation - Draft Proposals Paper* by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council. You are welcome to have a look at it. It can also be found online at:

<http://veac.vic.gov.au/documents/Historic%20Places%20Report-DPP%20final%20-online2.pdf>

Written comments and submissions are invited by mail or email. Contact details are on page 2.

How Times have changed!



Spinola Bay, St Julian's, 1870. Thanks to Frank Lea-Ellis for the picture. Source: Bay Retro

GUARDAMANGIA

Queen Elizabeth II visited Malta recently to open the CHOGM summit. She was presented with a painting of Guardamangia, the house where she lived as a young bride from 1949 to 1951, when still a princess. It was the only time she enjoyed a relatively ordinary life.



‘Oh look,’ she said. ‘Guardamangia, that's very nice to have.’ The watercolour by local artist Edwin Galea shows the house in its heyday.

The Royal couple celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in Malta in 2007 but they were reputedly refused a visit by the owners of the house as it had fallen into disrepair. They both commented on how the villa had suffered from neglect. ‘It looks rather sad now,’ the Queen said.



It has been estimated that a third of buildings in Malta are abandoned or dilapidated and a tax has been proposed. The cost of purchasing, maintaining and upgrading these antiquated buildings is prohibitive and many are left to deteriorate so they can be knocked down and replaced by apartments.

Should it be the owners’ responsibility to maintain them or should they receive public funding?

MALTESE HAMLETS IN THE FIFTEEN HUNDREDS

In 1514 in Malta there were about sixty small villages, or hamlets, scattered around the island and they lasted till the plague outbreak of 1592, when most of their inhabitants died. By time their names and identity were taken over by bigger or different villages. Hereunder is a list of these hamlets, with their respective number of inhabitants, as it stood in 1514 and where they were situated.

Hal Dwin with 100 dwellings and Hal Muxi with 200, today form part of Zebbug (Malta). Bubaqra with 38 dwellings and Nigret with 200, now form part of Zurrieq. Hal Niklusi with 80 dwellings and Hal Xluq with 37, now are part of Siggiewi. Hal Warda with 15 dwellings and Hal Bordi with 18 have been taken over by Attard. Hal Dghif with 30 dwellings and Musulmett with 35 now form part of Naxxar. Hal Bizbut, Hal Tmin and Hal Gwann today have been integrated with Zejtun.

Hal Mula was to be found between Zebbug and Buskett. Hal Tartani was situated between Dingli and Buskett. Hal Kbir was situated between Qrendi and Siggiewi; Hal Lew between Siggiewi and Mqabba. Hal Millieri was between Mqabba and Zurrieq. Hal Tabuni was to be found between Qrendi and Girgenti, and Hal Manin between Zurrieq and Qrendi.

Hal Qadi and Hal Saftan were next to Gudja. Hal Ferut and Hal Farrug were next to Luqa. Hal Gawhar was next to Kirkop. Has Sajd was next to Zebbug (Malta). Has Sajd (another one) was to be found between Zabbar and Marsascala. Hal Kaprat was situated between Birkirkara and Qormi. Hal Gharrat was between Cospicua and Tarxien (today's Fgura). Hal Far was between Zurrieq and Safi. Hal Dimech, Hal Pessa, Hal Arrig, Hal Militt and Bir Miftuh today all form part of Gudja.

I found this information whilst reading a book called *Is-Sahhar Falzun* (Falzon the Sorcerer) written by Agostino Levanzin, who in turn, as he himself declares in the book, got this information from Castagna, Abela, and Ciantar from a letter that King Ferdinand sent to his ambassador in Rome in 1514.

Author unknown

Christmas in Malta

The Maltese islands have developed a number of unique customs to celebrate Christmas. Huge amounts of food, even more than usual, are served at family functions. Traditionally the fattest rooster (hasi) was roasted at the local bakery in a casserole, Dessert of Qagħqa tal-Għasel (Treacle ring) was followed by Imbuljuta tal-Qastan, chestnuts in a chocolate 'soup' of cocoa, cloves and citrus zest. Today the traditional Maltese menu has made way for Christmas Turkey, Christmas Cakes, Christmas Puddings and Mince Pies, inherited during 164 years of British rule. Italian Panettone has also become a Christmas favourite.

Church attendance increases around Christmas and Midnight Mass has retained its popularity. One of the oldest traditions is 'Il-Priedka tat-Tifel' (the Sermon of the Child). A boy or a girl aged between 7 and 10 years old delivers the sermon at Midnight Mass. This tradition is believed to have started in 1883 in the village of Luqa, where George Sapiano was the first altar boy to deliver the sermon. After Midnight Mass, the priest may offer coffee and mqaret (date cakes) to the parishioners.

In almost every town and village, a children's procession follows Midnight Mass. A statue of baby Jesus is carried shoulder high while children walk behind it through the village streets, carrying lamps and lights and singing traditional songs such as 'Ninni la Tibkix izjed' (sleep and cry no more). Saint Dun George Preca is believed to have started this custom in Hamrun in 1921.

The idea of a Nativity Crib originated in Italy with St Francis of Assisi. The first-ever recorded crib in Malta was by the Dominican Friars in Rabat in 1607. The Maltese Presejju has developed distinctive features, such as in the Maltese building style and windmills. They are found in almost every Maltese home, each family giving its personal touch. They used to be built from the abundant stone rubble known as 'gagazza' but now paper mache is lighter and more stable.

Vetches (gulbiena) and grains are sprouted and grown in the dark for about five weeks before being used as Christmas decorations in the cribs, houses and churches. Pasturi (clay statues, now plastic) represent The Holy Family, The Magi, the shepherds and their sheep, the baker, the bag pipe player, folk singers, angels, fishermen, drum players and especially the simple man, who is full of wonder and awe (L-Għageb tal-Presejju), whom the Maltese like to joke about.



MALTESE FESTIVAL

27 FEBRUARY 2016
KERNOT HALL, MORWELL
10 AM - 6 PM

EXPERIENCE MALTESE CULTURE


- **MALTESE MUSIC**
 - * MARK ANDREW - ELVIS TRIBUTE ENTERTAINER
 - * DESTINY BAND
 - * MALTESE BRASS BAND AND CHARLES ATTARD
- **MARKET STALLS**
- **KIDS ENTERTAINMENT**
 - * LUNA MOONIES & KOKO THE CLOWN
 - * JUMPING CASTLE, FACE PAINTING, BALLOON TYING
- **MALTESE FOOD & DRINK**
 - * CISK BEER & KINNIE SOFT DRINK
 - * PASTIZZI & OTHER MALTESE FOOD AVAILABLE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
WWW.LATROBE.VIC.GOV.AU/WHATS_ON

Latrobe City  MALTA 

[http://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Whats_On/Events/Events_Calendar/Events_Calendar/2015_Latrobe Valley Maltese Festival](http://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Whats_On/Events/Events_Calendar/Events_Calendar/2015_Latrobe_Valley_Maltese_Festival)



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Uffiċċju Rappreżentattiv

L-Ewwel Bank Rappreżentattiv Malti fl-Awstralja





The President and Executive Committee
Of the
Maltese Community Council of Victoria Inc
Request the pleasure of your company
To attend a
Function to Celebrate
Malta Republic Day

Date: Sunday, 13th December 2015
Venue: Maltese Community Centre
477 Royal Parade, Parkville
Time: 6.00pm till 8.00pm
Donation: \$22.00 per person
Dress: After five
Reply By: 7th December 2015

(Please detach and complete the form below and return it together with your payment.)

Reply Form for Malta Republic Day Function 13th December 2015

Name: _____ Email Address: _____
Address: _____ Phone: _____
Suburb: _____ Post code: _____ Number of people: _____

Money order/cheque to be made payable to the Maltese Community Council of Victoria Inc.
477 Royal Pde Parkville 3052 Tel: 9387 8922
Please DO NOT send cash in the mail.