



# Maltese eNewsletter

JOURNAL OF MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

Editor: Frank L Scicluna



**Fr. Alfred Vella**  
Champion of Maltese  
Living Abroad



**IL-QUCCIJA**  
Maltese  
Folklore



**Consulate General of the Republic of Malta to Canada**



**We wish a Happy New year 2021 to all  
Maltese-Canadians and Maltese everywhere**



## Dr. Robert Abela to Maltese Living Abroad

Qed nibgħat dan il-messaġġ għall-ewwel darba f'bħala Prim Ministru tal-Maltin u Għawdxin. Ninsabu kemm ninsabu 'l bogħod minn xulxin, nibqa' dejjem imsaħħar bil-valuri sbieħ li jgħaqqduna u li sawru l-identita' tagħna bħala Maltin matul il-milja tas-snin. Dawn il-valuri ta' poplu biežel u reżiljenti ħarġu fid-deher matul is-sena li waslet biex tintemm. Sena li matulha d-dinja kollha, inkluż pajjiżna għex żmien ta' sfida kbira minħabba l-pandemija tal-COVID-19. L-imxija ħarbitilna l-ħajja tagħna ta' kuljum u l-istil ta' ħajjita kien jinħtieġ li jinbidel radikalment.

Nistqarr li ma kinetx faċli. Ftit ġimgħat wara li assumejt l-irwol ta' Prim Ministru, pajjiżna kellu jaffronta din l-isfida bla precedent.

Iżda meta nħares lura nħossni kburi bil-ħidma li rnexxielna nagħmlu bħala pajjiż magħqud u flimkien. Għalkemm ma kellna l-ebda manwal li jiggwidana, xorta bħala pajjiż, rnexxielna nibqgħu għaddejnin. Għamilna dan għax imxejna b'għaqal u għax għandna sistema ta' saħħa b'saħħitha, bi professjonisti u bi frontliners f'diversi oqsma li ħadmu fuq li ħadmu biex taw dak kollu li jistgħu għal pajjiżna. Fuq kollox il-poplu Malti u Għawdxin li kien magħna u kkopera biex żammejna s-sitwazzjoni taħt kontroll.

Tul is-sena ħdimna kemm flaħna sabiex żammejna l-bilanċ bejn is-saħħa u l-għajxien tal-familji tagħna. Bil-miżuri li ħadna fil-Pjan ta' Riġenerazzjoni Ekonomika, pajjiżna żamm fost l-inqas rati ta' qgħad fl-Unjoni Ewropea. Konna ta' spalla għal eluf ta' negozji u familji. Il-wage supplement u l-iskema tal-vouchers taw nifs qawwi lill-ħaddiema f'pajjiżna.

Issa aktar minn qatt qabel irridu nħarsu 'l quddiem. L-avanz f'dak li huwa vaċċin se jagħti nifs kbir lid-dinja, mhux l-inqas lilna sabiex immorru lura għan-normalita li konna drajna biha.

Hemm bżonn li nitilqu niġru u bil-miżuri li ħadna għandna l-opportunita li nagħmlu dan f'qasir żmien.

Fil-ġimgħat u x-xhur li ġejjin se nissoktaw bir-riformi li jeħtieġ jagħmel pajjiżna. Din is-sena



wettaqna riformi storiċi biex saħħaħna l-istituzzjonijiet ta' pajjiżna u s-Saltna tad-Dritt. Riformi li mhux biss intlaqgħu u ġew imfaħħra mill-istituzzjonijiet Ewropew iżda li tqiesu mudell għal pajjiżi oħrajn.

Il-missjoni ewlenija tal-Gvern immexxi minni tibqa' dik li nwieżnu lil dawk l-aktar li għandhom bżonn u nippremjaw il-bżulija tal-familji u n-negozji tagħna. Dan se nagħmluh bil-miżuri soċjali li ħabbarna fil-Budget għas-sena d-dieħla fosthom żieda oħra fil-pensjonijiet, titjib fiċ-children's allowance u l-In-Work Benefits, żieda fir-rata tal-Carer at Home u assistenza akbar għal persuni b'diżabbilita severa.

Bħala parti mill-viżjoni tagħna għal pajjiżna se nkomplu nimmodernizzaw l-infrastruttura ta' pajjiżna u nibnu infrastruttura industrijali ġdida li se toħloq eluf ta' impjiegi ġodda u ta' kwalita'.

Fl-istess waqt se ninvestu bis-saħħa fl-ambjent biex sal-2050 pajjiżna jkun ħieles mill-karbonju. Ma' dawn se ninvestu f'aktar spazji miftuħa u żoni ta' rikreazzjoni biex inkomplu ntejbu l-kwalita tal-ħajja tal-familji tagħna.

Se naraw li l-oqsma vitali tas-saħħa u tal-edukazzjoni jibqgħu jkun ta' prijorita'.

Fuq kollox se nibqgħu ngibu lil Malta tagħna, l-ewwel u qabel kollox għax persważ li l-Maltin u l-Għawdxin magħquda se jimxu 'l quddiem.

Minn qalbi f'ismi, f'isem marti Lydia u binti Giorgia Mae u f'isem il-Gvern, nawguralkom Milied ħieni u Sena Ġdida mimlija paċi u mħabba.

**Ahna lkoll, il-Maltin li nghixu barra, nixtiequ lill-Prim Ministru u l-Maltin kollha sena gdida mimlija hena, gid u barka**



## MESSAGG MINGHAND L-HABIB TAL-EMIGRANTI MALTIN

### MONS ALFRED VELLA

Għażiż  
Frank,  
Qiegħed  
nikteb din  
l-email  
għall-  
aħħar

darba minn

Dar l-Emigrant. Qiegħed nieħu din l-okkażżjoni biex nixtieqilkom l-isbaħ xewqat għal dan iż-żmien qaddis, tal-Milied u l-Ewwel tas-sena kif ukoll biex insellmilkom għaliex jiena, minn Jannar li ġej, m'inhix ser ikun aktar Direttur tal-Kummissjoni Emigranti imma ser immur il-Kurja, bħala Kapp uffiċċju żwiġijiet. Dan kien uffiċċju li fiż-żmien kien ukoll immexxi minn Mons. Philip Calleja. Jidher li d-destinn irid li inkun fejn kien Mons. Philip.

Kien ili Direttur tal-Kummissjoni Emigranti għal aktar minn sbagħatx il-sena u ngħid il-verita' kien żmien sabiħ ta' opportunitajiet kbar kif ukoll ta' sfidi kbar. Qatt ma ddejjaq f'din il-ħidma tal-migrazzjoni imma dan l-aħħar il-piż kont qiegħed inħossu iebes. Għalhekk meta Mons. Arcisqof bagħat għaliha biex nieħu l-uffiċċju taż-żwiġijiet, fil-Kurja, aċċettajt. Hu nnoimna bħala suċċessur tiegħi lil Dun Anton Damato. Dan hu saċerdot żagħżuġh, li qaddes tlett snin ilu. Hu qabel ġie ordnat saċerdot kien igradwa bħala avukat u ppartika għal sitt snin. Għalhekk hu bniedem tal-liġi u għandu kwalifiki tajbin biex ikompli x-xogħol tant siewi li beda Mons. Philip Calleja u komplejt, mill-aħjar li stajt jiena, warajh. Nara li issa ser ikolli sfidi ġodda u opportunitajiet oħra. L-ħajja għalhekk sabiħa għax dejjem nippruvaw nagħmlu dak li jrid Alla minna. Il-migrazzjoni hu qasam importanti u llum aktar minn qabel sar importanti imħabba dawk li jaslu fuq xtutna jitolbu kenn, refuġju. Din il-ħidma tfakkarna f'dak il-kliem ta' Ġesu' meta qalilna, 'Kont barrani u l-qajtuni', kif ukoll 'Dak li tagħmlu ma l-iżgħar

fost dawn ħuti tkunu qegħdin tagħmluh miegħi'. Il-moviment migratorju minn żmien għal żmien jieħu xejriet differenti. Intom ikoll għaddejtu mill-esperjenza tal-emigrazzjoni tant li kelkom titilqu l-art twelidkom biex tibdedw ħajja f'art oħra. Kulhadd jara kif iffittex future aħjar.

Din is-sena wkoll kienet sena li ikoll kemm aħna għaddejna mill-esperjenza kiefra tal-pandemija tal-Covit 19. Aħna baqjna nagħtu s-servizz tagħna kemm nistgħu u mill-aħjar li nistgħu imma ma kienx faċli. Ridna naraw li kemm il-ħaddiema u l-voluntiera tagħna jkun protetti kif ukoll dawk li jibbenefikaw mis-servizz tagħna ma jkun jonqoshom xejn. Biex issib dan il-bilanċ kien diffiċli u għadna għaddejjin b'din is-sitwazzjoni. Aħna peress li qegħdin fix-xitwa għadna fi żmien kritiku ta' din il-pandemija. Nitolbu l-Mulej li tfittex tgħaddi ħalli kemm jista' jkun is-sitwazzjoni tiġi għan-normal. Intom hemm, fl-Awstralja, jidher li s-sitwazzjoni ġiet taħt kontroll. J'Alla tibqgħu hekk. Issa li ħareġ il-vaċċin għandu jkollna tama qawwija li nirbħu fuq din il-mewġa qalila.

Mill-ġdid nwassal l-awguri tiegħi u tal-membri kollha tal-Kummissjoni Emigranti l-isbaħ xewqat. Nitolbu l-Mulej li jagħtina l-barka tiegħu u jkollna sena oħra b'inqas taqtiiegħ ta' qalb u sena mimlija ħidma b'risq ħutna kollha. Saħħa u barka,

Mons. Fr. Alfred Vella Director

**---- 7 YEARS ----**

**The Maltese Journal has been  
rendering beneficial service to the  
Maltese communities in Malta  
and all over the World**



## Consulate General of the Republic of Malta to Canada

December 26 at 3:20 PM ·

### MALTESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

The Consulate General of Malta to Canada will be closed for appointments for the duration to the Provincial Lockdown.

The Consulate General of the Republic of Malta to Canada would like to inform of the cancelation of all appointments during the Provincial COVID19 Lockdown. The lockdown is for 14 days and is subject for review on January 11, 2021 all appointments will be lined up again once this second lockdown is over.

The staff of the Consulate General of Malta would be answering your calls from home, so please use email and avoid unnecessary calls.

Thank you for your understanding and please stay safe.



## THE OLD PRISON OF GOZO

THE NATION OF MALTA IS an archipelago of 2 islands, the second largest being Gozo, home to the Citadel, an ancient fortified city within a city. Inside the walls you'll find the Old Prison, where you can get a glimpse into some pretty grim prison-digs from centuries gone by. Covering the walls and floors is centuries of graffiti, etched-in proof that carving your initials and crude drawings go back long before "Kilroy was here."

Known simply as "The Old Prison," it was an active jail beginning in the mid-16th century, originally run by the Crusades-era Knights of St. John. At the time it was

used for knights who were a little rowdier than the others, and their 5x10-foot block cells gave them some time to cool their heels, and apparently let off a little artistic steam.

Much of the graffiti relates to the knights and their symbols, including crosses, medallions known as the "Malta Cross," and lots of plain old handprints, names, and dates. There are also some intricate carvings of ships, some with multiple planks on the hulls. One theory is that the planks were used as a kind of calendar system for the prisoners, as a tally of their time served. The Old prison was later controlled by the British after the Knights were kicked out of Malta, and it was in some use up until 1962 when it closed completely, eventually being meticulously restored for visitors to see. Notable prisoners included Jean Parisot de La Valette, the founder of Malta's capital city of Valletta, who spent four months there in 1538. He was convicted of attacking a man, and he later went on to become the Grand Master of the Order of St. John. Not bad for an ex-convict.

My family and I await anxiously to receive this weekly journal and we read it from cover to cover like so many Maltese all around the world. Please, keep on doing this sterling work to unite all Maltese living abroad. Giovanna Bartolo – NSW, Australia



# Here's Why Hamrun Is Malta's Unsung Urban Hub

By Benjamin Abela

We've all driven through Hamrun at some point in our lives – but how many times have we actually stopped and looked into what this town has to offer?

From global cuisines to some of the country's best Christian architecture, Hamrun is *hands down* one of Malta's major cultural hubs – although you might not know that yet. That's why we've taken it upon ourselves to list some of the best sights, eateries, and historical spots that Hamrun has to offer. Here we go!



**The Gem** Hamrun's Parish Church of St Cajetan of Thiene, better known as *Il-Knisja ta' San Gejtanu*, is easily one of the most recognisable works of fine architecture in Malta.

The church was built over a span of six years – from 1869 to 1875 – but its dome and adjacent oratory were added later on, in the 1950s and 1890s respectively.

But whilst *this* church is easily Hamrun's best-known place of worship, it isn't its first.

Prior to the construction of St Cajetan's church, Hamrun's Christian community prayed at two smaller churches; one dedicated to Our Lady of Atocia and another dedicated to Our Lady of Porto Salvo.

As Hamrun's population grew however, authorities sought to accommodate the growing Christian community by constructing a newer *and* bigger church – the one dedicated to the well-loved *San Gejtanu*.

**The church's idiosyncratic style of architecture has become synonymous with Hamrun's skyline, and with good reason.**

Its two bell towers are the *highest* in the country, and its dome is highly regarded as one of the finest in Malta. The church itself exhibits a harmonious mix of architectural styles – taking inspiration from both French Gothic and Baroque styles – and bears some resemblance to the iconic Notre Dame Cathedral.

As to its interior, Hamrun's *San Gejtanu* church boasts a plethora of local artistic gems.

The parish's titular statue was sculpted over a span of three years, from 1885 to 1888 by Karlu Darmanin. Its pedestal was made by Giovanni Farrugia and its detachable platform by well-renowned sculptor Antonio Sciortino.

The church's altarpiece, painted by the 19th-century Italian artist Pietro Gagliardi shows *San Gejtanu* receiving the baby Jesus from Mary.

Housing so much culture in a single place, this church is not dissimilar to a high-brow art museum.

**The History** Originally known as *Casale San Giuseppe* Hamrun started off as a widely-fragmented village back in the 16th century. At the time, the area that is now Hamrun was divided between a plethora of nearby parishes – Birkirkara, Qormi, and Furjana.

**As the 19th century dawned on Malta however, Hamrun underwent a huge transformation.**

Credit: Bay Retro

This period saw an influx of harbour project employees and a big number of citizens looking for cheaper accommodation outside of Valletta. These demands gave way to the start of Ħamrun's massive growth.

This continued well into the 20th century, as Malta introduced the railway system. Despite being one of the last railway systems to be introduced in Western Europe, Malta's system was one of the more advanced.

One of Ħamrun's key roads, *Triq il-Kbira San Ġużepp*, was located along the train's route and housed a major station that enjoyed its own schedules.

The next considerable influx in Ħamrun's population went down after World War 2. Nowadays however, the town retains a relatively stable population of around 10,000 inhabitants.

Nowadays, Ħamrun can easily be considered to be Malta's political hub – housing the headquarters of the country's two major political parties. The Labour Party's headquarters are situated at Triq Mile End, and the Nationalist Party's *Dar Ċentrali* is a stone throw's away, at Triq Mountbatten.

**The Feast** Ħamrun's patron saint is *San Ġejtanu* but *San Ġużepp* still continues to be celebrated with the parish's band club dating back to 1889.

The feast of the first is celebrated on the first Sunday after 7th August, the second on the first Sunday of May. An intense rivalry between the two continues on today.

**Having said that, the feast of *San Ġejtanu* is undoubtedly the biggest feast of the three, if not of the entire island. A good portion of the feast's credit can be attributed to its 'signature' event – *Il-Marċ tal-Brijju*.**

This celebration is held on the day of the feast, starting in mid-morning and ending in the afternoon. The celebrations are further fuelled by the rivalry between the town's two major band clubs – the San Ġejtanu band club, also known as Tat-Tamal, and the San Ġużepp band club, also known as Tal-Miskina.

The third band club appertains to the Immaculate Conception Parish and is known by the parish's same name.

Both of the major band clubs are over a century old, however the St Joseph band club was the first to be founded, having opened its doors back in 1889. St Cajetan's band club was formed shortly after, in 1907.

**The Food** If there's *one* thing that Ħamrun certainly doesn't fall short in, it's food.

**At first glance, you might not think of this underrated town as a culinary hub, but a short walk through its busiest streets will convince you otherwise.**

If you feel like some class, Neapolitan style pizza, check out *Pulcinella Pizzeria* on St Joseph High Street. This place easily has some of the best-tasting and most authentic pizza in Malta – and it's all very fairly priced!

And if you're looking for that little bit of tradition, head over to the iconic Elia Cafe. A family-run empire that is the go-to place for a coffee or tasty snack if you're in Ħamrun.

Their home-made specialities not only taste good; they look delicious too – with traditional, mouthwatering products such as *qassatella ice-cream*, *kannoli siciliani*, and *pasti tal-karamella*. Lovers of international food will feel right at home in Ħamrun, thanks to some locally-renowned eateries. It doesn't get much tastier than that.

If you're an adventurous meat lover, then you *need* to check out *The Journey*. This place makes burgers with some of the whackiest meat available – we're talking crocodile, deer, kangaroo, *and* boar.

This next restaurant is quite literally a definition of Ħamrun. *The Boiling Pot* brings together an array of international cuisines under one roof. Offering anything from oriental beef soup to

traditional Italian lasagne, *The Boiling Pot* also has a healthy variety of both vegan and vegetarian dishes.

**The Trails** Now you might not get to see any nature trails in this iconic town – but there are plenty of other reasons why you should take a stroll through the streets of Hamrun... **All throughout the Christmas season, Hamrun's streets are beautifully decorated with thousands of lights, bringing some much-needed festive spirit to this international hub.**

This town's also home to a wide range of shops as well as its very own shopping complex – *Daniels Mall*.

This urban gem houses a huge variety of brands – from George and Marks and Spencer, all the way to Interspar and Promod. So whether you want to set off on some Christmas shopping or get through your weekly grocery run, Hamrun's shops have got you covered. There's plenty of other shops along St Joseph High Street, we're talking charity shops, homeware stores, and a whole lot of clothing outlets.



## Spitfires Daring Mission To Save Malta in World War II- Operation Bowery

**As Malta was crucial for Britain in World War II, Churchill sent RAF Spitfires to Malta in a peculiar transport.** [Karthick Nambi](#) Spitfire in Malta.Source-Historynet

An aircraft carrier floated towards the tiny island of Malta in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea.

The island was of strategic importance to Britain for its operations in North Africa, and it safeguarded the Suez channel. Off the aircraft carrier came out Spitfire aircraft of the RAF (Royal Air Force).

The aircraft will not return to the aircraft carrier. It will land in Malta amid heavy Luftwaffe attack and participate in the island's defence against Luftwaffe and help Britain win World War II.

Malta has been a point of strategic importance for centuries. Malta was the fortress of the Knight Templar, and its proximity to Europe and Africa was important for trade.

Malta became part of the British colony, and in World War II was one of the most bombed sites by Axis powers. Malta was crucial for resupplying Allied troops in North Africa.

As Spain and Portugal were neutral British supplied its forces in North Africa via its colony of Gibraltar in Spain. From Gibraltar, the supplies reached Malta and then to North African ports. Also, Malta safeguarded the Suez canal as it was the vital lifeline between Britain and its colonies in Asia.

This vital link for the allied war supply line was a constant annoyance to the Axis powers. Instead of a full-scale invasion, Axis powers thought to bomb and siege Malta and force it into a surrender.



Malta was bombarded by Italian and German air forces day and night. Though the island had anti-aircraft artillery, it was of minimal effect. The defense was so insignificant that Luftwaffe conducted daytime bombings on Malta. What Malta needed was air power, especially Spitfire fighter planes from the RAF.

#### **USS Wasp. Source-Pinterest**

Sensing the importance of Malta, Winston S. Churchill, the prime minister of Britain, decided to sent Spitfires to Malta.

The Spitfire was the state of the art fighter aircraft in the RAF and a perfect match to any Luftwaffe fighters. The problem was that spitfires could not fly from Britain to Malta due to the distance.

A cargo ship carrying the Spitfires if attacked by Luftwaffe cannot defend itself as warships cannot escort the cargo ship in the Mediterranean. A novel idea to fit the Spitfires with an extra fuel tank that would increase its range was proposed.

The Spitfires would launch from an aircraft carrier in Mediterranean and fight Luftwaffe aircraft on the way to Malta. The mission was code-named Operation Calendar.

#### **Operation Calendar:**

The first ship for the mission the American aircraft carrier *USS Wasp* set sail from Glasgow on 14th April 1942 with 601 and 603 Squadrons of RAF onboard.

After a brief halt in Gibraltar, the *USS Wasp* was joined by with Royal Navy destroyers and continued her journey into the Mediterranean. Forty-eight spitfires took off from the deck of the ship towards Malta.

The Luftwaffe knew of the arrival of the Spitfires in advance and bombarded the Ta'Qali airfield where the Spitfires were parked. All the Spitfires burned into ashes within 48 hours of their landing in Malta. The lessons learned in Operation Calendar helped in the planning for Operation Bowery.

#### **Operation Bowery:**

On 29th April 1942, 47 Spitfires rested on *USS Wasp* destined for Malta. The leaky tank issue in the Spitfire got rectified.

Also, the *HMS Eagle* transported 17 Spitfires in this mission. An exciting incident during the operation was *HMS Welshman* disguise.

The *HMS Welshman*, a Royal Navy cargo ship, also traveled from Gibraltar to Malta. *HMS Welshman* was disguised to look like a neutral French destroyer, the *Leopard*.

Axis pilots fell for the camouflage and thought it was a Vichy French ship and didn't attack it. The *HMS Welshman* made it to Malta with the essential supplies needed for the survival of Malta's population.

The Spitfires which landed in Malta were immediately refueled and took off to fight the Luftwaffe in six minutes. The aircraft that burned in the airfield was a valuable lesson learned from Operation Calendar.

The RAF shouldn't park its Spitfir's until the Luftwaffe threat is over. The battle that day cost Luftwaffe 47 aircraft and effectively ended the daytime bombing on Malta. Further fighters that arrived in May and June strengthened the defenses of Malta.

One exciting event in defense of Malta was the German efforts to jam the radar stations.

Malta's radar station was able to track axis aircraft movements in the Mediterranean and deployed spitfires to counter it. The German jammed Malta's radar signals from Sicily, Italy. Radar operators in Malta contacted RV Jones, the man in charge of the Battle of Beams in Britain.

RV Jones knew it would take some time to counteract German jamming techniques. RV Jones instructed the Malta operators to continue their business as usual as if the jamming did not affect them. As Malta defenses operated normally, Germans thought that their jamming operations were ineffective and switched it off. Malta, a tiny island in Mediterranean, stood until the last moment, thereby effectively helping Britain win World War II.







## Julia's Perfect Tropical Summer Pavlova

Julia Busuttil Nishimura

Nothing smells like summer quite like pavlova. And

who better than the reigning queen of deliciousness to teach us how to make the perfect pav?

[Julia Busuttil Nishimura](#) takes out the year the only way she knows how – with a killer recipe for one drop dead gorgeous dessert. Topped with fragrant mangoes, tart passionfruit and coconut shards – this takes the classic Christmas pav to new dizzy new heights!

Pavlova is a quintessential summer dessert and perfect for Christmas, which lucky for us in Australia, happily coincides with a bounty of tropical and stone fruits and berries. Marshmallowy on the inside and light and crisp on the outside, a good pavlova is a thing of beauty. I like to keep mine really simple with two, maybe three different fruits. Here I've gone with a tropical mix of mango and passionfruit but also scattered over some coconut flakes and lime zest to brighten it up.

While whipped cream is traditional, I like a combination of cream and crème fraîche which cuts through the sweetness. Just be sure to begin this recipe the day before, or at the very least 3 -4 hours before you want to eat it. Top your pavlova shell just before serving.

The toppings are up to the whims and fancies of the chef, but Julia's is decked out with sliced mango, passionfruit, lime zest and coconut flakes. Photo – [Julia Busuttil Nishimura](#).

### INGREDIENTS

(Serves 10)

#### Pavlova shell

7 egg whites

Pinch of salt

460g caster sugar

2 tsp cornflour

1 1/2 tsp white vinegar

Zest of a lime

#### Topping

250ml pure cream

200ml crème fraîche

1 mango, sliced into wedges

The pulp from two passionfruit

2tbsp coconut flakes

Zest of a lime

### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 150C. Line a baking tray with baking paper.

In a very clean bowl, place the egg whites with the pinch of salt in a bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment. Whisk on a low speed until the whites begin to break up. Increase the speed to low-medium and continue to whisk until soft peaks form. Slowly add the sugar, one teaspoon at a time. This will take around 10 minutes. Increase the speed to high and beat for two minutes. You should have a stiff and glossy meringue.

Fold in the corn flour, vinegar and lime zest by hand. Spoon the mixture onto the prepared baking tray and use a palette knife or spatula to form a circle around 23cm in diameter. Create a dome shape by smoothing the edges towards the centre and then create a slight dip in the centre, making the edges slightly higher than the centre.

Reduce the oven to 120C and bake the pavlova for approximately 1 hour or until the exterior has formed a crust. Turn off the oven and leave the pavlova shell to cool in the oven completely for at least 3 hours.

Just before serving, whip the cream and crème fraîche to soft pillowy peaks. Spoon onto the pavlova shell and top with the mango and passionfruit. Scatter over the coconut flakes and the lime zest.





## FIRST COVID-19 JAB IN MALTA

by **Matthew Vella** [www.maltatoday.com.mt](http://www.maltatoday.com.mt)

*A Mater Dei nurse is the first to get vaccinated against COVID-19 on 27 December, 2020*

Doctors' union MAM said it wants to see all healthcare professionals vaccinated within the next five weeks.

In a statement, the Medical Association of Malta said the "very slow pace" of 50 COVID-10 vaccinations a day was only acceptable for the first couple of days until routines and correct procedures are put into place.

"We expect the health ministry to ramp up the vaccination rates significantly to exceed 300 daily. This would have to be escalated to thousands per day once the general population starts to be vaccinated," MAM president Martin Balzan said. "MAM expects that all health care professionals wishing to be vaccinated receive their first dose within the next two weeks, and the second dose within the first five weeks. MAM encourages all its members to take the vaccine, however urges the government to be efficient to keep up with the demand."

The MAM welcomed the licensing and distribution all across Europe of the COVID-19 vaccine as a clear demonstration of European solidarity at political level. Surveys indicate that at least 70% of Maltese residents are willing to vaccinate. "This is encouraging when considering that half a million in the United Kingdom and over a million doses the United States have been administered in without any major problems," Balzan said.

## A number of Maltese cribs on exhibit at Bible Museum in Washington

One of the many Christmas traditions in Malta is definitely the nativity scene, or crib. Many set up a small crib in their homes while there are others whose hobby is to build very large, lovely nativity scenes.



'Popolin' spoke with Alexander Powell, the President of *L-Għaqda Hbieb tal-Preseppi* known mostly for the exhibit in Valletta. Powell has been a member of this organisation for the last 30 years, and in fact this exhibit has been held since 1986 showcasing some of the most beautiful cribs in the country. For the first time since the organisation was set up this year unfortunately the exhibit was not held. Powell explained that it usually includes work by some of the most talented crib makers in our country as well as by those who have just picked up this hobby: "today the standard has gone up very much". The aim of this organisation is to continue promoting the passion towards crib-making.

These days, those who make cribs are also leaving their mark abroad. Recently we heard of a Bible museum in the US which has a Maltese crib on display, but this is not the only initiative in this field. This year the Department of Arts and Local Government launched a competition so that ten cribs can be sent to the Bible museum in Washington. The competition was a race against time because the cribs had to be ready in less than three months. Powell added that Americans were impressed by the work of Maltese crib makers.

The tradition of crib-making has increased substantially, not only in number but even quality, however Powell pointed out that "the most important crib is that in Maltese homes and that every family should have their own crib."



# Fostering Russian-Maltese cultural ties

The Russian Cultural Centre in Valletta marked its 30th anniversary this year      Maksim Ryzhakov



*Members of the Bolshoi Theatre performing in the ballet 'Crystal Palace' at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta in 2018. The event was supported by the European Foundation for Support of Culture.*

While Russian-Maltese diplomatic and cultural exchanges have existed for centuries, it was only 30 years ago that the Russian Cultural Centre opened on November 8, 1990, in Valletta. Maltese newspapers reported

this event as an “important step” in the building of a “common European home”.

***Russian emigrée Princess Nathalie Poutiatine was instrumental in the popularisation of ballet in Malta. Photo: Courtesy of Tanya Bayona***

The first Russian cultural festival in Malta, held in November 1990, created a sensation among local arts and music lovers. The original works of Russian masters Malevich, Kandinsky, Petrov-Vodkin and other paintings from the State Russian Museum collection were brought to Malta along with rare books and archive documents.

The main attraction of the festival was the exhibition of Antoine de Favray's painting Interior View of the Church of St John of Jerusalem from the State Hermitage collection. Fr Marius Zerafa, a former director of the Malta Fine Arts Museum and a co-founder of the Maltese-Soviet Friendship Society, recalls in his memoir: “I think it was the most important Russian art exhibition ever held in Malta.”

Nowadays, Malta has a number of dance studios where ballet is being taught. It is all thanks to Princess Nathalie Poutiatine, a Russian emigrée who settled in Malta in the 1920s, married Maltese businessman Edgar Tabone and founded the first ever Russian ballet academy of the island. Her legacy is still flourishing today.

In an article by Paul Naudi, who was involved in the opening of the Russian Embassy in Malta, there is an interesting detail. At the first Maltese open-air festival at San Anton Gardens in the 1970s, a group of dancers from the Bolshoi Theatre performed parts of Tchaikovsky's world-famous ballet Swan Lake. The stage for them was built under the supervision of Princess Poutiatine herself – a wonderful example of the maxima that art unites everyone.

This was not the only time Russian ballet dancers performed for a Maltese audience. Russian cultural entrepreneurs living in Malta brought Crown of Russian Ballet Moscow Theatre, who performed excerpts from Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty and the Nutcracker in 2015.

The 50th anniversary of Russian-Maltese diplomatic relations was marked last year by a grandiose multi-genre performance Crystal Palace with Bolshoi soloists Ivan Vasiliev, Maria Vinogradova and Maria Allash. The ice show Jester's Wedding followed in December. These performances were organised by the European Foundation for Support of Culture and will be remembered as being among the most spectacular and successful Russian-Maltese productions ever.

During the last decade, Malta's cultural calendar was embellished with numerous music festivals and concerts featuring Russian musicians and orchestras, symphony, chamber and even military, organised in collaboration with leading Maltese culture entities at the most prestigious venues.

*We are inspired to build on and expand our friendly and mutually beneficial cultural relations*



One of the most appealing performances took place last year during the open-air festival Notte Bianca, where the audience was captivated by the virtuosity and musicality of Igor Butman Jazz Band.

The Russian Cultural Centre in Merchants Street, Valletta.

Other important forms of art include literature and poetry. Yana Psaila, an award-winning member of the Malta Poets Society, who is of Russian origin, is well-versed in both Russian and Maltese poetry and prose. She made a name in Malta through her successful collaboration with prominent Maltese writer Trevor Zahra, translating two of his books, *Il-Ħajja Sigrieta* and *Nanna Ġenoveffa* and *Sfidi*, in Russian. Her latest book, published earlier this year, is *Antoloġija tal-Poeżija Russa* (Anthology of Russian Poems), for which she translated 30 works by the 15 greatest Russian authors, from classical to modern times.

Other projects that lie in between literature and historical research, explore Russian-Maltese cross-cultural connections. The most well-known is, undoubtedly, a book by the former director of the Russian

Cultural Centre, Elizaveta Zolina – *Malta and Russia: Journey Through the Centuries, Historical Discoveries in Russo-Maltese Relations*.



Another detailed research on an 18th-century multipage travel diary by Russian writer and translator Grigory Kraevsky was a result of a fruitful Russian-Maltese collaboration by Joseph Schirò of the Malta Map Society and Elena Yasnetskaya Sultana. This publication contains a map of Malta in the 18th-century Russian language which is of a particular interest, even for modern Russian readers.

***Igor Butman Jazz Band performing during Notte Bianca in 2019.***

Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space, donated an icon of St George, one of the most venerated saints both in Russia and Malta, to the Russian chapel at San Anton Palace. Since 1999, the representatives of the diplomatic corps, Maltese high-ranking officials and members of the Russian community celebrate Orthodox Christmas in this chapel, under the auspices of the President of Malta. This event is renowned for a concert where many prominent Russian musicians perform Russian music.

Such projects inspire other initiatives with the aim to popularise Russian-Maltese cross-cultural ties, showing that Russia and Malta are indeed close even though geographically distant.

The upcoming book *Russian Valletta* by Svetlana Vella, a Russian journalist and former editor-in-chief of Russian language magazines published in Malta, is focusing on historical episodes, artefacts and Russian personalities connected to Malta's capital city. This book will be published in two languages,

Russian and English, thus satisfying a wider circle of potential readers. Another project by Russian compatriots Valentina Sammut and Nadezhda Yarkova dedicated to Russian business in Malta is also in the pipeline.



***Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space, during the presentation of a book by Elizaveta Zolina, the former director of the Russian Cultural Centre.***

All the above-mentioned projects serve as a bridge between the Russian diaspora, one of the biggest expat communities in Malta,

and the Maltese. Now the community, which includes many Russian-Maltese families with multilingual children, is led by the voluntary Coordinating Committee of Russian Compatriots who organise popular events. The Russian Orthodox parish of St Paul the Apostle is working to meet the spiritual needs and is planning to launch regular religious services for the Russian Orthodox in Malta.

These all, of course, are an addition to the Russian Cultural Centre's everyday activities which are based on a cultural Russian-Maltese exchange in fields such as art, sports, literature, music, science and beyond. These all remain very relevant today and we are inspired to build on and expand our friendly and mutually beneficial cultural relations.

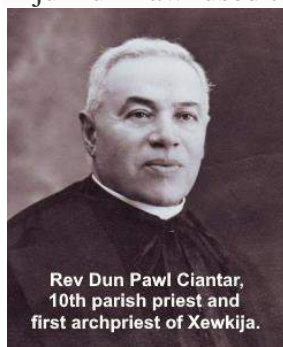
Joe Zammit Ciantar



# L-ISTRINA

**L-ISTRINA IN MY CHILDHOOD** We used to enjoy such money gifts during our childhood years in Gozo. From the very early hours of the morning of New Year's Day, I would dress as smart as I could and go out in the neighbourhood, trying to be seen by, and meet, neighbours and then visit aunts and grandparents later on in the day. Neighbours would donate a penny or two, some relatives three or six pence, grandparents a shilling or something more.

Theresa, wife of Wigi and mother of my friend Toni – who were next-door neighbours – used to give me a penny. Nona, a widow, used to give me a penny too. But my aunts used to give me more. However, nobody would give me half a crown as Ziju Dun Pawl used to.



## REV DUN PAWL CIANTAR

Rev Dun Pawl Ciantar was the brother of my paternal grandmother, Francesca (we called her Ċikka). He was the brother of Ġużepp, Ġanni, Salvu, Marjanna – all of the Ciantar family,

who lived in Xewkija; none of them were married. We used to call them uncles and aunt, even though they were actually my father's uncles and aunt.

Rev Dun Pawl Ciantar was the 10th parish priest and first archpriest of Xewkija, which was proclaimed a parish on November 27, 1678.

**ORIGIN OF L-ISTRINA** The Maltese word 'strina' derives from the Italian 'strenna', meaning 'a gift' usually given in Italy at Christmastime. The word comes from the Latin 'strena', meaning 'gift of good luck'. The word was used in Malta for 'money given as a present on New Year's Day'. This custom originated from a tradition in ancient Rome which involved the exchange of gifts of good wishes during the 'Saturnalia' – a series of festivities that took place each year between December 17 and 23 in honour of Saturn.

Locally, the word is today associated with the annual fundraising event for the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation – a commendable activity

which is aired on all local TV stations on the morrow of Christmas Day I loved uncle Dun Pawl. And he must have loved me too. He was my godfather for my Holy Confirmation in St George's [then] church, in Rabat [we never called it Victoria], on June 9, 1949.

On New Year's Day he used to come and visit my family at our home in Sannat Road. He would bring with him large honey rings which he would give to my mother, together with some money [I never learnt how much]. He used to sit on a chair, against an old chest of drawers we had in a room on the first floor, and talk to my parents. Before leaving, he would give my brothers and sisters some money as 'strina', too. "And for you, this", I remember him saying one day, while handing me a tmintax irbiegħi [half a crown].

I do not remember how much I used to be given in all on L-Istrina. But as children, we used to compare the sums of money collected.

At some point, while growing up, however, I stopped receiving money on New Year's Day.



## Traditional Maltese 1st birthday parties Il-Quccija

Of the many Maltese traditions, few have survived as successfully as the 'Quccija'. Before this, the word 'Quccija' referred to a more morbid tradition the Maltese had, that when a family member died they would donate food to the poor to commemorate the deceased. It is not clear how it changed into the joyful tradition that it is today – a celebration of a child's first birthday when relatives and family friends are invited and, besides the usual party fare, a game is played in which the child's future is predicted. It has been practiced in this way since the 18th Century. Objects representing different professions, trades or lifestyles are placed on a tray or in a basket and the child crawls towards them. The first object which the child picks up is said to predict that child's future. In the past the selection for boys was

quite different to that of girls however the more modern 'Quccija' would include many of the same objects.

Boys used to be presented with tools for traditional trades or professions or even a character trait. If he picked up corn, for example, it was a sign of a liberal personality, an inkstand or pen meant his profession would be that of a notary or lawyer, if a carpenter's tool then he would be likely to become a carpenter. There were also usually some coins to indicate wealth. For girls the objects tended to be a needle representing a seamstress, cooking utensils, an egg which represented fertility and also money which in those days would probably have meant making a good marriage.

In both cases there was always a religious article for example rosary beads which would indicate that the child was inclined towards a spiritual vocation.

In a modern Quccija there is no limit to the variety of objects which could be presented to either a boy or a girl. Here are some ideas for what you can put on your child's quccija tray, but do not feel restricted...you can use your imagination:

**Calculator – accountant    Computer mouse – career in I.T.    Credit Card – banker**  
**Musical Instrument – musician    Book – journalist/author    Chalk – teacher    Ballet Shoe – Dancer    Ball (or any other piece of sports equipment) – sportsman    Comb or brush – hairdresser    Lipstick – beautician/makeup artist    Paintbrush – artist**

So for your next child's first birthday party try out this Maltese tradition. You never know it may predict your child's future!



## WEIRD MALTESE EXCLAMATIONS

Posted by [Melisande Aquilina](#)



Each country, and each language, has its own quirks and foibles, its own particular witticisms, metaphors, idioms, and referential exclamatory remarks. Outsiders, tourists, or those who are not born and raised in a particular country, might find certain bywords, sayings or declarations hard to understand. Worse still, they might look for a straightforward translation, which would completely miss the mark in that, more often than not, in these cases a straightforward translation is impossible. One must look into the context, the situation, and sometimes even the connection between speakers, in order to elucidate the whole meaning of such assertions.

The Maltese language contains a wide variety of such expressions. Most of them are commonplace, others are used mostly in a particular area or by a particular strata of society, while others still even belie historical or geographical connotations.

**'hi'** – this is a non-word which is generally used to refer to a person(s) in a conversation. Perhaps it is most similar to "mate", though how well you know the person you're speaking to makes a significant difference. Using it with acquaintances is normal e.g. you could greet someone you are familiar with saying "Aw, hi! Good morning!" and it will mean something like "Hey mate! Good morning!". If you are not good friends though, or have a previous history of dissent, it can be interpreted sarcastically, or to denote impatience e.g. "Inti gejjja hi?" ("Are you coming dear?"). In this case, it all depends on the tone of voice.

**'ta'** – this literally means "of" or "this belongs to" (the possessive form). However, it is also used at



the end of a sentence as an emphasis for a statement that doesn't need an answer. In this way, it can almost be translated as "you know" or "then". E.g. "You aren't supposed to be here, ta!" or "We're meeting up on Tuesday, ta!"

**'ux'** – can be said to be a colloquial contraction of the statement "mhux hekk?" ("isn't that right?"). That being said, "ux" in conversation is much closer to "Right?" or even "Right!". You can use it in answer to a question you agree with wholeheartedly e.g. "This wine is terrible!" "Ux! I agree!", or when asking for agreement e.g. "This wine is terrible, ux?" "I agree!".

**'mela'** – this is a common one. Although it literally means "to fill up", it can be used in multiple ways which have nothing to do with the original meaning. For e.g. "Right! Let me start explaining this." ("Mela! Ha nibda nispjega."). It can also be used as a resounding confirmation e.g. "We're still on for tomorrow, ux?" "Mela! I'll pick you up at 7, ta!". It can also, confusingly

enough, be used in answer to "Please", where it can almost mean something like "You're welcome". E.g. "Mela le!". This roughly means "As if I'd ever say no!"

**'jew'** – This usually means "or" when inserted in the middle of a sentence, however it is sometimes also added at the end of a question. E.g. "Ok, jew?", quite literally meaning "Are you ok, or...?". This is generally an invitation for someone who doesn't look okay to talk about it and expand the conversation. By using "jew" at the end of a sentence in this way, you can most likely appear interested in a person's state, without being overly nosy or overbearing, since you are actually showing the person he is welcome to talk if he wants to, but that, since you are not asking outright but just hinting at the issue, you do not want to invade his privacy. Quite some heavy connotations for such a small word!

These are just a few such Maltese expressions. In reality, there are many more of them

## San Anton Palace citrus fruits to be sold from Kitchen Garden



The annual Citrus Festival will not be held as usual because of COVID-19 restrictions but the fruit will be sold from the President's Kitchen Garden by **Kurt Sansone** [maltatoday.com.mt](http://maltatoday.com.mt)

President George Vella and his wife Miriam visited San Anton Palace workers as they harvested citrus fruits from the palace grounds (Photos: Office of the President) Fresh oranges, lemons, mandarins and grapefruit picked from the San Anton Palace grounds will be sold from the President's Kitchen Garden from Saturday.

The sale of the fruit will replace the annual

Citrus Festival that is usually held on the palace grounds but had to be postponed because of COVID-19 restrictions.

President George Vella and his wife Miriam today visited San Anton Palace staff during the harvest of fruit from the citrus grove. They were accompanied by the Chairperson of the Administrative Board of The Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation Marlene Mizzi.

Instead of being sold at a fair, the products will be available at the President's Kitchen Garden, Attard, from Saturday, 2 January 2021, until stocks last.

All proceeds from this annual initiative will be in aid of The Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation.

Miriam Vella said it would have been a pity if the abundance of citrus at the San Anton Palace's grove was allowed to go to waste due to the pandemic.

"An alternative was found so that the public can still enjoy the exquisite taste of Maltese citrus whilst helping those in need," she said in a statement released by the Office of the President.



## Message from the Leader of the Opposition Bernard Grech.

PN leader Bernard Grech on Thursday paid tribute to the frontliners of the COVID-19 pandemic and expressed solidarity with the victims of the virus.

In his message for the New Year, Grech offered condolences to those who lost loved ones to the virus, those who fell ill because of it and those who had to go in quarantine. The pandemic, he noted, affected everyone in one way or another, the economy, businesses and families, many of whom found themselves struggling to keep up with the cost of living.

He thanked workers in the health sector, educators who had to adapt to new challenges, those working to control the pandemic and journalists.

Grech appealed to everyone to continue to take precautions as indicated by the health authorities and expressed hope that the vaccine would bring a new ray of light.

2020, he recalled, had started with the resignation of a Prime Minister and the appointment of a new one, developments which followed weeks of protests by civil society.

Next year, he said, should be one of renewal for the whole world and for the country.

Everyone should learn from what took place this year. Infrastructure should be strengthened for Maltese children to never again end up at home without schooling, for teleworking to become the norm, for the highest possible standards to be established in care homes, and to ensure the country has a diversified economy, ready to face any challenge that may come up.



## Fr Martin recalls how radio program led to Dar tal-Providenza

"I am moved in no small way with the generosity and solidarity shown by the Maltese people that

notwithstanding everything that is going on handed a beautiful gift of a record €2,531,540 to Dar tal-Providenza." This was stated by Fr Martin Micallef, Director of the Home, who from his office in Siġġiewi followed the proceedings, handled incoming telephone calls and made a number of interventions using Skype. He continued to say that notwithstanding the Covid-19 and the uncertainties that followed, the Maltese population has again did big things with Dar tal-Providenza that in the last few months witnessed a substantial drop in revenue due to cancelled fundraising events such as the volleyball marathon. This was indeed a message of hope in a time of disheartenment by this pandemic. Fr Martin said this at the end of the annual televised marathon to raise funds for the Home so that it can continue to provide the best residential services to a hundred and fifteen persons with disability that live in the Siġġiewi Home or its other

community homes. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic situation the country is in, the whole programme as well as the venue for the activity had to be changed. In order to ensure the wellbeing and the security of the residents, which have been a top priority since last March, nothing happened at the Home's Siġġiewi car park except for a 'drive-through' where persons wanting to make a donation did so without getting out of their car..

Fr Micallef recalled that at the time, people with disabilities would often live in undignified and unsuitable conditions, including in homes for the elderly, and that Mgr Azzopardi found little encouragement from people who thought his dream was too ambitious. Since then, Fr Micallef added, the donations never stopped, and the same spirit of providence and generosity continued to keep the Dar in operation.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made 2020 a particularly challenging year for charities, not least the Dar tal-Providenza, as it has forced the cancellation of countless fundraisers. These include the annual volleyball marathon, which would generally have raised around €500,000 in aid of the residence.



## Over €2.5m raised for Dar tal-Providenza, breaks record



### MALTESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

Maltese Canadians donate €600 to Dar il-Providenza  
**The Consul General of the Republic of Malta to Canada, Dr Raymond Xerri on behalf of a number of Maltese Canadians, presented**

the sum of €600 to help support of Providence House (Id-Dar tal-Providenza) in Malta who cares for people with special needs.



### Friends of Providence House (NSW) Australia

The Group was founded in October 2011 with the aim of raising funds for Id-Dar tal-Providenza, Malta. The current structure is as follows:

Jim Borg, Co-ordinator      Marisa Previtera, Seretary      Treasurer Miriam Friggeri

The Friends of Providence House NSW is the official Ambassador to

Id-Dar tal-Providenza Malta. Donations can be made directly to the official bank details for donations are: Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Name of Account: Friends of Providence House (NSW)

Ac No: 1019 9448 BSB: 062 416



## Maltese Center NYC USA

December 29th, 2020

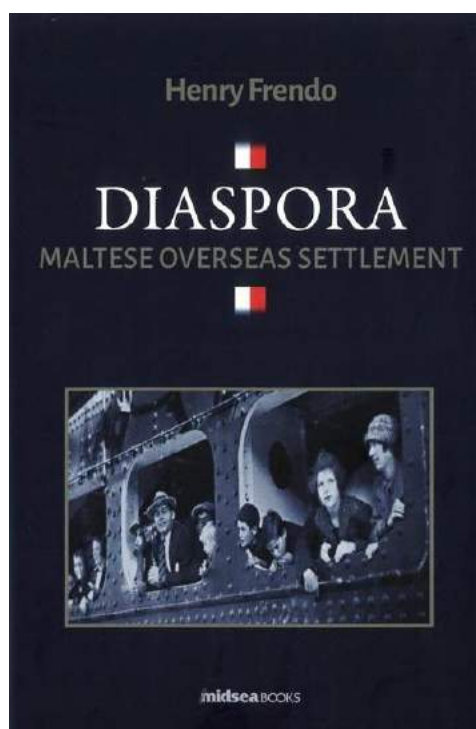
Greetings to our Maltese Center Members, families, friends and the Maltese Community. Hope you are having a well-deserved nice and safe festive season



under these very difficult and uncertain times.

Who could have predicted that we will be in so many predicaments and sacrifice so many things and way of life? When we rang in the New Year of 2020 at the Astoria Manor and wished for a Happy, Healthy and a Prosperous New Year, little we knew what was ahead ... Is-sena t-tajba lil kulhadd! Happy New Year. A year end message from the President and the

Committee of the Maltese Center Astoria NEW YORK CITY, USA



## Diaspora: Maltese Overseas Settlement

Hardback | English

In this volume Henry Frendo explores the migratory experience with special reference to the Maltese diaspora. On a per capita basis, from a small island in the

central Mediterranean, this has been quite astounding, especially from the 18th century onwards. Although thousands of Maltese islanders left for North Africa and the UK, the focus here is on the Mediterranean region and Australia, where the author himself was a migrant. One of his recurring concerns is the retention or loss of identity in the

different countries of settlement. The book has an introduction by the honourable minister for foreign affairs, Evarist Bartolo. €55.00 Year: 2020 Format: Hardback Language: English

<https://midseabooks.com/shop/history/contemporary-history/diaspora-maltese-overseas-settlement/>



## L-ewwel dibattitu politiku fuq it-Televizjoni. 40 Sena Ilu

40 sena ilu fl-1981 sar l-ewwel dibattitu politiku fuq it-televizjoni fl-istoria tax-xandir bejn il-prim Ministru Dom Mintoff u l-kap tal-Opposizzjoni Eddie Fenech Adami, immexxi minni fuq talba tal-Awtorita' tax-Xandir bil-fiducja tal-Partit Laburista u l-Partit Nazzjonalista.

It-televizjoni kien ghadu iswed u abjad, u huwa

dibattitu li jibqa' meqjus bhala "landmark" fl-istorja tax-xandir nazzjonali f'pajizna. Iz-zewg partiti kienu rringrazzjawni ghall-mod bilancjat li kont mexxejt dan id-dibattitu ftit jiem qabel l-elezzjoni generali tal-1981. Naqsam maghkom dawn ir-ritratti storici u memorabbli.





"I never thought I would make it to reach the age of 100 in a few months time, but I always trusted in God. I had a normal life, with its ups and downs, just like anyone else. But in general I lived a good life. The highlight of my life was my marriage to my husband Pawlu and that I have all my family with me.

I never imagined I would have to go through anything like this pandemic in my old age. For me COVID is worse than the war because I cannot be close to my family. It is true that during the war we were afraid of the bombings, but with a simple piece of bread we were united and happy together at home or inside a shelter. Now with Covid I feel lonely, far from the people I love and we have to follow the authorities to see what needs to be done. A piece of bread has a lot of value to me. It used to unite us. That piece of bread was the core of our daily dinner

## NANNA MARY DALLI

and sometimes it used to be the only thing the family had to eat. Now I am really happy that I served as an inspiration and a beer was dedicated to me. I know I am loved by my family and this gesture has continued to show me how important I am to them." Nanna Mary Dalli".

Maltese barley and wheat, Gozitan sea salt and a 99-year-old nanna – welcome to the world of modern Maltese stubbornly crafted beer.

Those simple yet iconic ingredients have been brought together to create a new beer that's about to launch in a big way.

**Oh My Grandma is a collaboration between two passionate entities: Alveria Brewery in Sicily and DM Crafted Imports in Malta.** "We heard many stories about how Maltese wheat and barley are now not being utilised except as animal feed."

"So for OMG we decided to use a dose of genuine old Maltese wheat and barley that has been grown in Malta by our farmers in the areas of Mosta and Żejtun for many years, together with grains of sea salt hand cultivated by Xwejni Salt from Gozo which has been produced by the Cini family for many decades."

**Maltese nanna Mary Dalli kicked off the team's creative process.** "We were inspired by our 99-year-old grandmother who has survived wars, famine and now also a pandemic, and in such times she always put her mind at rest if her family has a piece of Maltese bread to eat and the end of the day, cause as she puts it in words: 'x'hawn aqwa minn biċċa ħobz tal-Malti'."

**Oh My Grandma is a Rustic Saison beer, allowing the brewer to use both malted and non-malted wheat and barley.** "What better way to show the Maltese characteristics, if not the flavours of the local fields and the scent and aromas of the Mediterranean Sea and sun." We also make deliveries to whoever requires them – <http://www.dmimports.eu/>



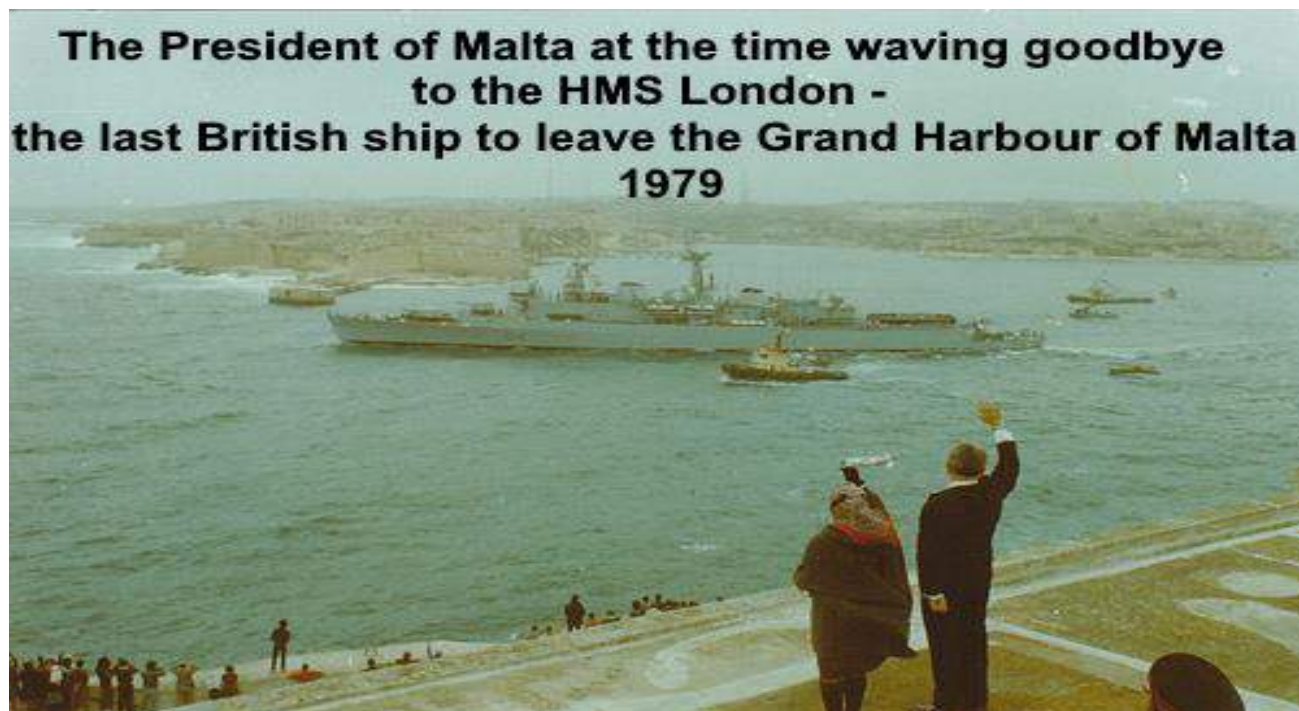
**THE JOURNAL THAT IS CONNECTING MALTESE  
IN MALTA, GOZO AND THE REST OF THE WORLD**

**2013 - 2020 - SEVEN YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITIES  
BUILDING BRIDGES**

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### THREE SIGNIFICANT DAYS IN THE RECENT HISTORY OF MALTA

**INDEPENDENCE DAY** (September 21) - Independence Day celebrates the day in 1964 that Malta achieved independence from Britain. Malta had been a British colony since the Napoleonic Wars, which brought an end to the reign of the Knights of St. John. There was a great deal of debate after WWII about whether Malta should pursue full integration into the British political system or rather opt for full independence. In a constitutional referendum, about 55% of the Maltese people voted for full independence, and Malta became a fully independent member of the British Commonwealth, retaining the Queen as Head of State, much like Canada today. (The process was actually quite complicated, and Malta came very close to fully joining the United Kingdom, with full representation in the House of Commons.)

**REPUBLIC DAY** (December 13) - Ten years after its independence, in 1974, Malta revised its constitution and declared itself a republic. This meant that the country severed more of its ties with Britain, replacing the British Monarch as its Head of State with the newly created position of President. The first president was Anthony Mamo and the president today is Goerge Vella to hold the office. The President is chosen by the Maltese Parliament and serves a five-year term.

**FREEDOM DAY** (March 31) - In 1979, the final British troops left Malta. Malta had been the location of an important British naval base and had housed British troops for 180 years. The decision to end the British lease was apparently quite controversial. (The Prime Minister at the time, Dom Mintoff, is still either loved or hated by most Maltese. He was a fairly radical leftist with strong anti-Church views. It's always interesting to ask people their opinion of the Mintoff years). The loss of British money was addressed by increasing ties to Muammar Ghaddafi's new government in Libya - one of the many reasons why Mintoff is controversial. My impression is that some view Freedom Day as a dark point in Maltese history, while others see it as the culmination of Malta's independence process. They claim that it wasn't until British troops left that Malta was truly and fully independent. So today is celebrated as a third independence day.

**MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER**

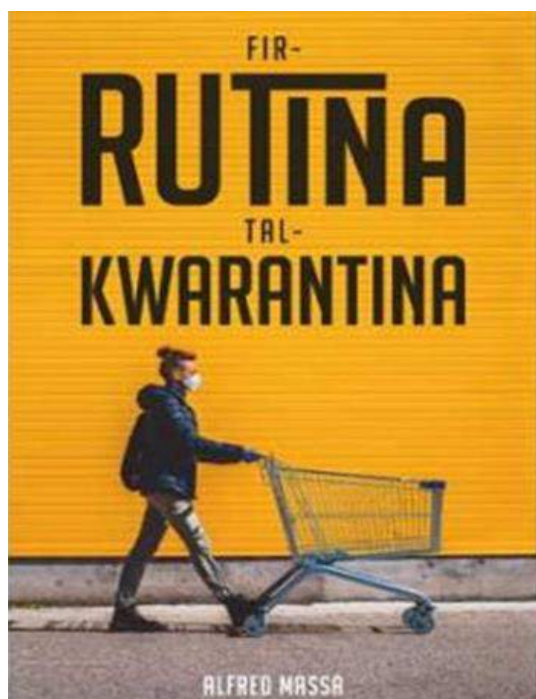
Journal of Maltese Living Abroad

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***We are proud of our Maltese Achievers***



**'Fir-rutina tal-kwarantina'. Author: Alfred Massa.**  
**Distributor: Book Distributors Limited / 2020.**  
**Pages: 159pp**

It was inevitable, and there will surely be others. The Coronavirus pandemic, now in its third phase and wiping out Christmas, will surely feature as a backdrop to so many novels and movies. There are rumours of these appearing all over the world but none, as far as I am aware, so far in Malta. This is the first one I am aware of.

The author is a veteran author, though this book does not tell us. Facebook, however, tells us that this former teacher of Maltese at a girls' grammar school is the author of 10 novels, two books of poetry and a book of short stories.

Some time ago I had reviewed *L-istar tal-imghoddi* about the Czech velvet revolution while another book is *Il-hajja mqallba taz-Zija Rhoda*. Another book I had reviewed is *Vaganzi Sajfin*.

This last book resembles the book under review

## A normal family in Covid time

Noel Grima <https://www.independent.com.mt/>

persons coming from absolutely normal families. In this case, the novel highlights how the pandemic has turned upside down the lives of ordinary persons and families.

The novel is centred around a family whose head, now dead, used to be a sacristan. Of his three children, one left Malta and settled in Sheffield where he got married to a Maltese girl. The story begins when this couple comes to Malta to celebrate the mother's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. This was last March when the virus came to Malta. From this point onwards the storyline of the sacristan's family becomes entwined with the story of how the lives of ordinary Maltese became affected by the virus.

It's a story we have lived through - the insistence on social distancing, the deaths, the closing of society life, the huge uncertainty and the restrictions. We are still living in these circumstances but maybe we have become more used to the restrictions. And we are not out of the pandemic. If anything, the numbers the book mentions are puny compared to the numbers of these days.

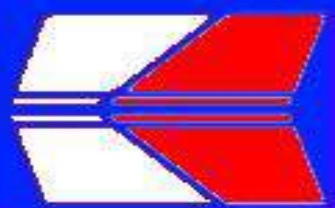
Apart from the story of the sacristan's family, other persons come in view, all trying to live their already complicated lives under the shadow of the pandemic.

There are no extraordinary events taking place but the pandemic is extraordinary in itself.

Undoubtedly, those who lost loved ones and the victims themselves have far more tragic tales to tell. As we head into Christmas with no end in sight to the pandemic, this slim book records for future generations what our people passed through in the year of grace 2020.



**MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER**  
**The Journal of the**  
**Maltese Living Abroad**





## Anna Calleja – an Emerging artist



**Anna Calleja (b.1997) is a Maltese multi-disciplinary artist working in paint, print, and sculpture. Her current body of work explores the dualities of home, using the process of painting and printmaking to create quiet moments of introspection.**

Calleja has exhibited in Malta and abroad at the Wignacourt Museum in Malta and at Tate St.Ives, Porthmeor Studios in Cornwall, and at the Mall Galleries in London. Her painting,

“Alone in Quarantine” has recently been awarded a Winsor and Newton Young Artist Award at the Royal Institute of Oil Painters Annual Exhibition.

### Upcoming Exhibitions:

March 2021 ‘Launch exhibition’, group show. Morgans, Falmouth, UK.

4th - 25th March 2021 Homebound, a solo exhibition at the Malta Society of Arts, Palazzo De La Salle, Valletta, Malta. 6th - 20th July 2021 Exhibition: Anna Calleja and [Will Calver](#) at Porthmeor Studios, St. Ives, UK. To keep updated on her journey towards her first solo show in March 2021, follow her on Instagram @annacallejapaints or visit her website [www.annacalleja.co.uk](http://www.annacalleja.co.uk).



## Do you want me to tell you where to go? MALTA

*(photo) Mdina, the Silent City*

Don't get fooled by **Malta's** diminutive size as it combines a mixture of sceneries turning your experience into a most memorable one.

**Malta** is a captivating country with a wealth of history, culture and arts that have made it an appealing travel destination in Europe. Spending your vacation in Malta can be an astonishing experience. Whether you are looking for a thriving nightlife, the beach or a cultural discovery, then the Maltese Islands have all that and so much more to offer.

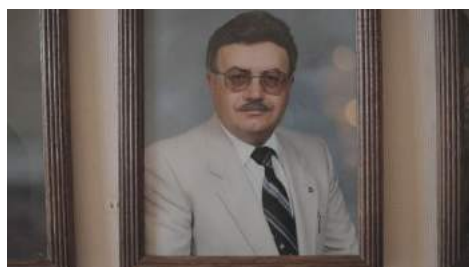
With a plethora of gems to discover, the Maltese Archipelago presents you with a new sense of discovery and experience. Don't miss out on visiting some of Malta's charming gems such as **Valletta, Mdina and Rabat** as

**well as Victoria in Malta's sister island Gozo.**

With every locality a historic monument in its own right, you won't be short of ideas of what to do while you're visiting the islands. From the eerie quietness of **Mdina and Rabat** to the picturesque views of **Senglea, Vittoriosa and Cospicua** and the narrow streets of **Victoria, Gozo**, you will be spoiled for choice and the city built by the Knights – **Valletta**.



## MALTESE LIVING ABROAD – DETROIT AND DEARBORN

CHARLIE CAUCHI**FROM MALTA TO MOTOR CITY**

This observational Documentary short captures the Maltese migrant experience in Michigan, USA. Spending time at two Maltese clubs in Michigan in 2017, I created a portrait of emigre

life for this minority community.

The film is seen through the eyes of the many volunteers and members of the two Maltese clubs that still remain in the Michigan area: The Maltese American Benevolent Society (MABS) in Corktown, Detroit and the Maltese American Community Club (MACC) in Dearborn. Eleno 'Leno' Sammut, affiliated to the former, is one of the MABS's volunteers. He is also our guide, taking us on a historic and cultural journey of Detroit's Maltese diaspora. In his mid-70s, the first time we encounter Lino is behind the bar on a Sunday afternoon.

Offerings of traditional Maltese goods adorn the club walls, along with a myriad of old soccer trophies, sun-bleached rocky vistas and former club presidents – most dead, some still with us. Even though the Maltese are now truly a minority, this community is still resilient.

**About the Film**

Ford, Cadillac, General Motors – the Big Three as they are so often referred to – are an industrial and cultural beacon for the city of Detroit, Michigan. They are also the underlying reason that many of the now-well-established migrant communities dominate the area.

The Maltese were a part of a wave of economic migration, with over 6,000 in the Corktown region by the 1960s; the Big Three's peak decade. So prevalent were the Maltese, that they managed to conquer Corktown from their Catholic counterparts, the Irish.

This dominance has since been in serious decline, with only a handful of first generation Maltese left in the area. After the riots in 1967, fearful of the instability many of the families and individuals that made up the community started to settle elsewhere, in suburbs like Dearborn and Livonia. Two Maltese clubs still remain in the Michigan area: The Maltese American Benevolent Society in Corktown, Detroit and the Maltese American Community Club in Dearborn.

*From Malta to Motor City* forms part of a larger project called [Latitude 36](#); a project stemming from my upbringing as a Maltese migrant's daughter in the United Kingdom, and brings real-life stories to the forefront to stimulate a more honest and open debate about migration. A project that engages Maltese individuals and community groups located around the world, collecting stories and unearthing both personal and collective narratives.

With the help of the Maltese diaspora, the migratory experience is placed at the core, mapping and examining migratory patterns and narratives through the visual arts.

**Interview By Sarah Chircop****What were your initial questions that led to the conception of this Documentary?**

*"My father always had Maltese friends that we would visit and they would speak Maltese, and my father – once in a while – would maybe take me to a place where we could buy trays of pastizzi (a traditional Maltese savoury snack). My family moved back to Malta when I was 12, but I then decided to move back to the UK in my 20s. So I've grown up in both places but whenever someone asks me where I'm from I don't quite know how to answer – when I'm in Malta I don't feel Maltese and when I'm in London I don't feel English. So it's always this strange negotiation of identity and this was one of my starting*

*points – how do other people like me navigate this? Issues related to Brexit have also made me reflect upon these questions of identity and belonging.”*



**To begin answering this question, you decided to venture out and start documenting those people who can share your experience. What was your experience listening to so many stories?**

*"I went to Michigan for ten days and was fascinated to find out that there are 13,000 Maltese-Michiganders, from first to fourth generations. There are 2 clubs there -The Maltese-American Benevolent Society and The Maltese-American Community Club, and it's very Maltese! I'd walk*

*into one of these clubs and I'd forget where I was. I'd have to step outside and say – oh, hold on, I'm not in Malta anymore. It was fascinating. I interviewed various Maltese people living there – either community groups or individuals of all generations – so they didn't necessarily have to be the ones that had migrated. I wanted to learn about their lives and asked them a lot of questions that had to do with Maltese national identity, and what that even means to them. We also talked about how they ended up where they were, and what their journey was like, as well as if they were the children of Maltese migrants and how being Maltese impacted their lives. We actually have enough for a feature film – we went to New York and Toronto and other parts of Canada and of course there are differences in the Maltese communities of these various places."*

**With the migration debate being so prevalent right now, how did your research and experience further inform the intentions of this documentary?**

*"I looked at stories and reports from the 1970s in London for example, where there was a lot of vice and crime and they (British) refer to us in the exact same way that we refer to migrants today. The Maltese have actually all migrated themselves, so I wanted to hold up a mirror."*

**The documentary-short forms part of a larger project called LATITUDE 36 - could you tell me a bit more about this project?**

*"LATITUDE 36 gave me the possibility to make various pieces of work on the subject of the Maltese diaspora. I've used pre-existing work as well as commissioned new work for this project but I've always brought in the local perspective. Besides this documentary short I have also exhibited material at a solo exhibition, including a series of artworks ranging from photography and soundscapes, to build structures and moving image, which looked at stories of the Diaspora specifically in Australia, Tunisia and London. I have also worked with various experiential performances as well as created a visual installation consisting of a three-screen projection featuring snippets of conversations which I recorded when travelling and which I also mixed with archival material and home footage"*

**Watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXripBmmjPc>**

Credits

Dedicated to all the Maltese-American Michiganders

Directed and produced by Charlie Cauchi Co-producer Rebecca Anastasi

Cinematography Ali Tollervey Editor Claire Nolan Associate Producer Martin Bonnici Starring

Eleno 'Leno' Sammut Assistant Camera Nick Woolgar

Additional Camera Charlie Cauchi; Sebastian Tanti' Burlo'

Sound Recording Nick Woolgar; Charlie Cauchi Researcher Marc Sanko

Colour Correction Martin Bonnici Additional Post production support Shadeena Films

Titles and Design Jon Banthorpe Stills Photography Sebastian Tanti Burlo'; Ali Tollervey

Sound Design/Mixing: Yasmin Kuymizakis Music 'Viva Malta' by Freddie Portelli; 'Mr DJ' by

Malta Bums Legal James Bannister/Finco Group



## GOD CALLS US TO BECOME SAINTS

Fr. Manuel Adami

Dear friends, we have already started moving in 2021. Hoping to finish it. Time which leads us to eternity. Time given to us by God to become saints....and this is very serious. If not it would be a tragedy.

To become a saint is simply to love like Jesus loves. It is to come out of yourself to reach God and people. All "worldly" attractions pass away quickly, wisdom, beauty, riches, health and so on. Even suffering. St George Preca used to repeat frequently "All that is not eternal is not important."

Many saints were convinced that he who does not offend others, i.e. controls his tongue is already a saint. To help us to do this let us daily contemplate and imitate the silence of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in their home in Nazareth, in public life and on the "cross". God speaks to us in silence, He tells you what to do.

I am sharing some spiritual thoughts which I learned from others and through my own experience of suffering. I will continue to write them for you in the following letters. I identify myself with your lives, in your pains, struggles and all your life's encounters. Together we journey in a spiritual companionship amidst the vicissitudes we daily face. Remember that we are spiritual beings in a material body. we are pilgrims moving on but are not alone. I love you and want you to be with me in heaven. Now stop and reflect.

1. Life is not a bus pleasure trip. Still God wants us to live in peace and happy. Popularity, Power, Riches, Achievements, Works to be remembered are temptations to be avoided.
2. Live a simple life. Do not let yourself be alienated with the vain attractions of the world. You will be disappointed. You live in the world but do not belong to it.
- 3 Strive to make your home a domestic love church, a community of love, a love school, a love journey and a love pilgrimage towards heaven where you belong.

Now read Ps 91 for comfort. Finish with listening this beautiful song called On Eagles's Eagle's Wings: Click on: <https://youtu.be/mvpjxfWrjzY>

## Maltese Living Abroad estimated at 1 million



According to statistics held by TVM the number of Maltese up to the fifth generation residing abroad around the world is estimated at about **one million**, which is double the number of Maltese living in Malta and Gozo.

By far the largest number of Maltese descendants up to the fifth generation lives in Australia where, according to the news report, from the census they are estimated at 447,000. The second largest group of Maltese overseas lives in the United States numbering 220,000 and England with 91,000 is the third largest. Several thousands of Maltese live in Canada..

The surprising news was that there are Maltese who reside in places that one does not expect to find them, such as, Macao, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Christmas Island, Vanuatu, Norfolk Island as well as Trinidad and Tobago not to mention South Africa, South America and New Zealand. There are some, if only a few individuals, living in countries such as Iran, Iraq, Japan, China, Botswana and Congo.



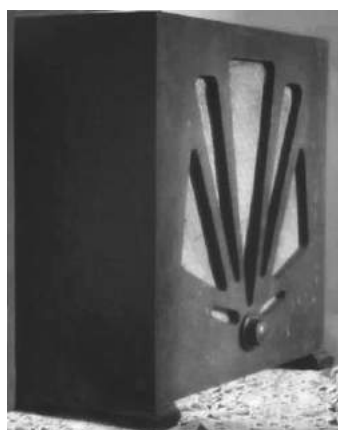
Malta's membership of the European Union appears to have led to a substantial increase in the number of Maltese living in Belgium now numbering about over 700. In continental Europe the Maltese presence includes 1000 in Italy, 23 in the Vatican, 600 in France and 276 in the Netherlands.

There is also a large longstanding Maltese community In Alexandria, Egypt, and on the Mediterranean island of Corfu numbering 7,000. Malta's commercial ties with the Middle East have led to an increase of Maltese presence in those countries including 733 in the United Arab Emirates and 36 in Qatar and Dubai among others.



## Remembering the early days of Rediffusion in Malta

The origins of broadcasting in Malta date back to the first broadcast transmitted from the Naval Wireless Station at Fort Rinella in 1933. In 1934, an agreement was reached between the Maltese government and London-based broadcaster Rediffusion to set up a sound wired radio system in Malta and Gozo.



Rediffusion started its Malta broadcasting service on 11 November 1935. The first radio broadcasts were primitive, yet highly ambitious for the time. Technological constraints meant that almost all of the programmes had to be performed live by musicians and announcers such as Charles Arrigo. He joined Rediffusion in 1947 and had a distinguished career as a broadcaster, best known for his commentaries on state occasions and for dramatised readings of Maltese novels.

On 23 January 1958, Rediffusion House opened on St Luke's Road in Guardamangia in the same building which today houses the PBS Creativity Hub.

Television Malta was launched in 1962 and moved into a newly-built studio


complex two years later.

The company enjoyed an almost absolute monopoly until the 8 January 1973 when Radio Malta was set up and managed by the Malta Broadcasting Authority.


In 1975, the Telemalta corporation was established and became responsible for broadcasting and telephone services in Malta. Known as Xandir Malta, it continued until 1991 when Public Broadcasting Services Limited was set up.

Today, PBS operates three radio stations and two television channels, namely TVM and TVM2.

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The Journal that  
unites all Maltese  
living abroad  
Why don't you join the family?