



# Maltese eNewsletter

Editor: Frank L Scicluna OAM MQR



We hope and pray  
that the arrival  
of a Covid-19 vaccine  
can flatten  
the pandemic curve  
and break  
the virus transmission  
chain in the World  
in 2021



The President  
receiving vaccine

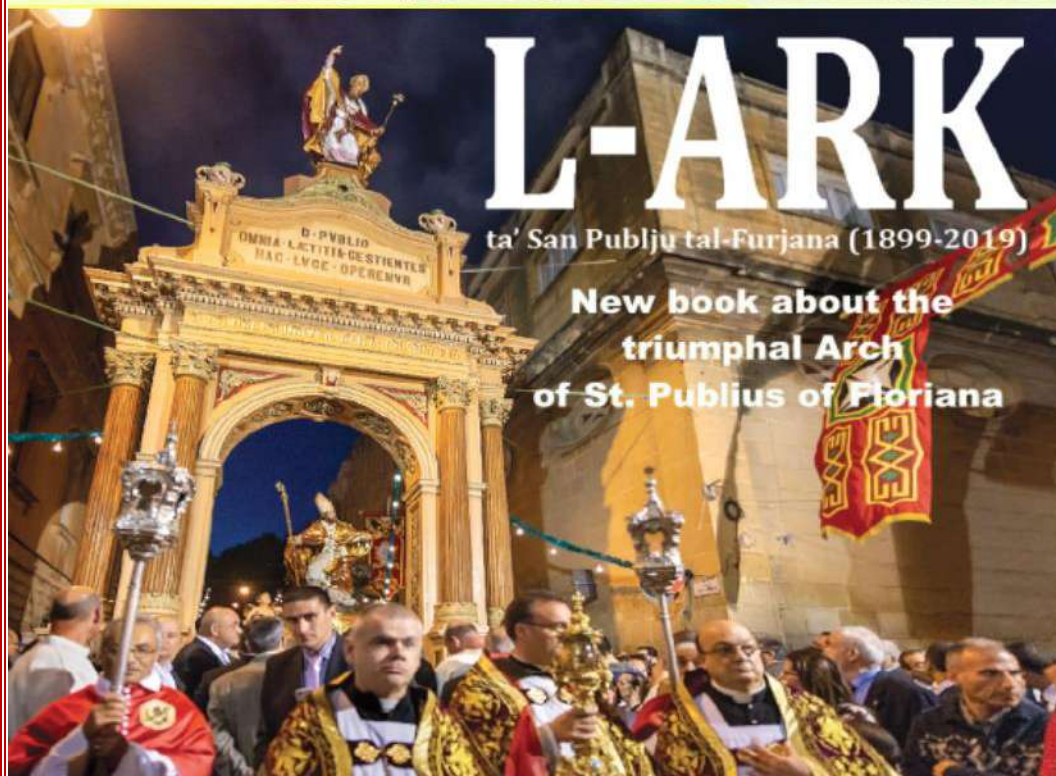
Covid-19

## MESSAGE



Minister  
Evarist Bartolo

## Il-Festa Maltija



# L-ARK

ta' San Publiju tal-Furjana (1899-2019)

New book about the  
triumphal Arch  
of St. Publius of Floriana



Malta  
Band Clubs  
and  
Band Marches



# Journal of Maltese Living Abroad





## Evarist Bartolo

### Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

#### **Writes To The Readers Of The Maltese Journal**

#### **Maltese and Gozitans in the world**

I was born and brought up in a village, Mellieha, where every family has someone who has emigrated to somewhere else in the world. In the village primary school we were often asked to imagine writing to our relatives in Australia.

I still remember vividly around 60 years ago, two of my uncles in my nanna's very modest sitting room embracing their brother and sisters, with a lot of tears shed, before they left for Melbourne.

I remember as a child feeling very worried about the fate of my uncles as I was told that their voyage by sea would take more than a month. I had no idea where Australia was but I thought a month was an awfully long time to spend on a boat and what would happen to them if the sea got stormy, especially at night?

Even though they arrived safely I still remember having my fears confirmed when I was told at the age of six, in 1958, how a number of Maltese emigrants were on a Norwegian ship that caught fire on its way to Australia. Although they were all saved it still filled me with anxiety about others who were leaving their family to go to Australia.

So as a child for me emigration meant tears, separation and danger. Till the first parcel arrived for us nephews and nieces for the first Christmas after our uncles left. Then emigration meant also very nice small toys that we could not find in Malta. Eventually as I grew up I started realising that emigration was necessary for thousands of Maltese and Gozitans to have a job and bring up their families decently as there were not enough jobs were being created in Malta and Gozo, a colony that had no say in its own economic development and relations with other countries as were forced to be a military, naval and air base for Great Britain and nothing else.

So the Maltese and Gozitans were told to cross the watery desert and look for the Promised Land. They were even paid to be able to leave. I also got to know that it was not the first time that emigrants used to write back home saying that they lived very comfortably in grand houses when in fact they lived in poor housing conditions without even basic sanitary facilities. After taking the painful decision to leave Malta, how could they admit that when they arrived, the place they lived in was much worse than the one they had left in Malta? Malta and Gozo have always been islands of emigration.

The first settlers emigrated to Malta around 8,000 years ago. We are told that the first Neolithic people probably arrived from Sicily but they originated from different parts of the Mediterranean, including both Europe and Africa. Since then Maltese have been emigrating to all corners of the world. We can find Maltese and Gozitans in around 194 countries in the world today. There are about 120,000 first generation and 300,000 second and their generation Maltese living in other countries which means that we have a diaspora of about 420,000, as many Maltese and Gozitans we have in our islands.

A world Bank report published last year shows that 24 per cent of all Maltese live outside Malta, putting the rate of emigration for the Maltese population as the highest out of any EU country.

Despite all this I still believe that we are not aware enough of the reality and history of emigration. I still feel that emigration is apart from our history rather than a part of our history. One scholar who has really worked hard for many years to change this shortcoming is Professor Henry Frendo. I am grateful to him for this new latest book about Maltese and Gozitan migrants overseas which is full of interesting information and analysis about our diaspora.



# Heritage Malta

## Did you know?

We upload exclusive content on our Youtube Channel on a weekly basis!

### If you are not a subscriber, you are missing out on:

Short informative features about each museum and site, both in Maltese and English

The series on Neolithic Malta

Continuous updates on ongoing restoration works

Past webinars and masterclasses

and much more

If this interests you, and would be on your *watch list*, here is what you need to do:

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/user/HeritageMalta/featured>

Click on Subscribe (as seen below)



## The President and Mrs Vella with members of the Romanian and Moldavian community.

The children's choir of the Romanian Orthodox parish in Malta on Monday, December 21, visited San Anton Palace, Attard,

and sang carols in Romanian to President George Vella and Mrs Vella to announce the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This was followed by the presentation to the President of an icon - a traditional Christian Orthodox work of art.

The Romanian Orthodox community in Malta is based at the Parish of the Birth of St John the Baptist at St Roque's church, in St Ursula Street, Valletta. In his address during the event, Fr George-Alexandru

Popescu, who is responsible for the parish, said there are around 2,200 Romanians and around 500 Moldavians in Malta.

"It is a blessing to be the priest of the Romanian Orthodox Church here. We are working side to side in the spiritual plan along our Orthodox brothers from Greece, Serbia, Russia, Bulgaria and Macedonia. In St Rocco's church, with the blessing of the Archbishop of Malta, Charles Scicluna, we can serve the Holy Liturgy weekly, and the church can be a ray of light for all the Romanian, Moldavian and other Orthodox Christians on the island," said Fr Popescu.

He drew a parallel between the welcoming of the Romanian and Moldavian community in Malta and the welcome given to St Paul in Malta 2,000 years ago, as recorded in Acts, chapter 28:

"We want to thank you, that here in Malta, which is our adoptive country, we have received a warm welcome, and we can always see that the words of the Holy Apostle Paul, the protector of your country, spoken in Apostolic times, still apply now: 'Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold.'

Fr Popescu explained that he wanted the children to be dressed in traditional Romanian costumes and sing carols in Romanian to demonstrate with the greatest authenticity that the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ has no language or cultural barriers because we share the same Christian faith.

"Just as your ancestors built a fire and sheltered St Paul from rain and cold, so do we, Romanians and Moldavians, feel that your country has given us shelter from rain and cold. May our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who was born in a cold stable, always fill your souls with His eternal fire, full of love, hope and faith," he said.

"Have a blessed Christmas and hopefully we will have a New Year, filled with faith and hope in the Lord."

**The President's New Year's goals: unity, environment, language and mental health**

## Hello Fellow Maltese Canadians,

### To All Maltese Canadians; Lets come together in business

I remain committed to bringing Maltese together in business, conversation, experience and consumerism.

For this I have created a Facebook group platform for business owners and operators to interact and engage with potential clients as well as fellow entrepreneurs. This group is intended to be open to all matters benefitting and affecting business, trade and commerce in our community.

I invite you not only to join, but to extend and forward this invitation by email, Facebook and voice to your family, friends, colleagues and other peers so they too can be in receipt of trusted, loyal and reliable Maltese Canadian benefits, service and information. Lets unite and grow together. Click here to join: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/173758397211743> without reservation or restriction.

In your participation, I urge you to share a link to your website upon entry and share your services regularly. Tags are available for news, products, services and a few others. Should you need guidance, I am so happy to help you with your initial entrance and navigation.

Thank you so much for your time I look forward to seeing you in the Maltese Canadian Business Group and working together to grow the benefits of Maltese Canadians.

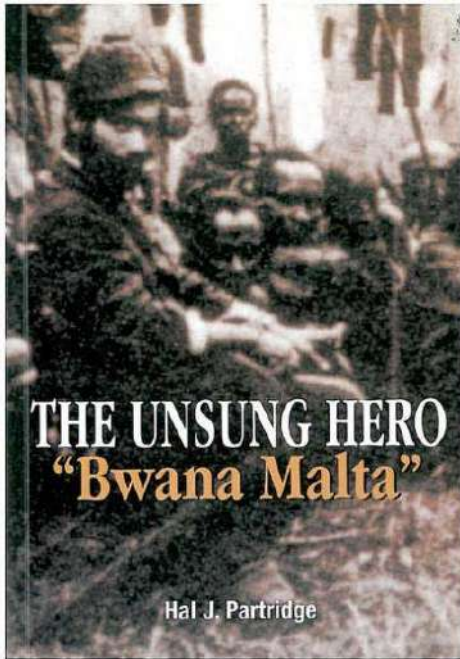
*This is fantastic! Kind regards,*

*Mel Hamelin*

Mel Hamelin The Personal Professional







## The Unsung Hero “Bwana Malta”

Antonio Martini, born 1857 in Porto Nuovo (Marsa), as a child of Malta who grew up to be a man of great credit to the land of his birth.

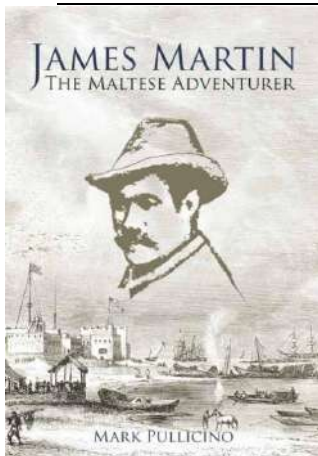
The Maltese adventurer, James Martin's utterly fascinating life began in Malta, in the mid 1800's, when there was little education and the social structures hampered his development. In spite of his dyslexia and illiteracy he was gifted with the genius of languages and a sharp memory.

Mesmerised by sailing ships he found adventure on the high seas, eventually landing by accident in Zanzibar,

soon after Livingstone had died. During the First World War he served as an intelligence officer in the British Army.

, he was appointed as second-in-command of the Sultan of Zanzibar's Army. He was a member of the original team of builders of the 'Lunatic Express', the railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria.

Widely known as the “The illiterate Maltese”, he later became a collector of taxes and then a District Commissioner in what is now Kenya and Uganda in East Africa.



His many exploits pushed the early development of East Africa, discovering Obama's tribe, founding Nairobi, being the first 'white' wild game hunter and administering vast areas of the country. His life brings insight into the issues of Africa today, among them slavery, tribal conflict and consequences of colonialism.

Martin's personal conflicts and shortcomings portray him as a truly human and touching character, showing how his Maltese DNA succeeded in another world. Perhaps the greatest of Maltese adventurers.

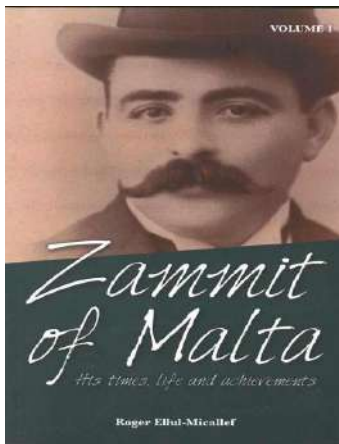
How is it that he is unheard of in his native land? Probably because after the shipwreck, he was handed over to the missionaries in

Mombasa, who changed his name from Antonio Martini to James Martin, the name he was known by, until his death in Portugal in 1924.

## Keeping Maltese Communities Connected



**Read, Enjoy, Support and Share Your Journal**



## *Distinguished Maltese personalities series -Sir Temi Zammit (1864-1935)*

Temi Zammit was born in 1864 at a time when Malta was an important British naval base. During his time, incredible poverty alternated with period of economic prosperity that were often brought about by war. The social, economic and religious conditions which he experienced were later to serve as the setting of many of the short stories which he wrote in Maltese.

He came from a very humble family background, one that was then not at all associated with tertiary education. Zammit matriculated in 1882 and first qualified as an apothecary in 1887, a profession which he only practised briefly. Two years later he graduated from the University's Faculty of Medicine and Surgery. He soon gave up the practice of clinical medicine and in 1891 was appointed as Analytical Chemist to the Sanitary Branch of the Police Department. Zammit was sent to complete his postgraduate studies in chemistry at the École Supérieure de Pharmacie in Paris and later went to London to study bacteriology at King's College.

Soon after returning to Malta, in 1904, he was appointed member of the Mediterranean Fever Commission as the representative of the Maltese Government. His seminal discovery, in collaboration with others, of the way Undulant Fever (Brucellosis) is transmitted secured for him an international reputation. A year later, in 1905 he was appointed to the Chair of Chemistry at our University, a Chair which he filled until his appointment as Rector in 1920.

During all this time his interest in Malta's ancient past never waned. Zammit burst on the island's archaeological scene at the beginning of the twentieth century and continued to dominate it right up to his death in 1935. He completed the excavation of the Ħal Saflieni hypogeum by 1910, excavated a number of archaeological sites and tombs, and, between 1915 and 1919, methodically unearthed the Tarxien neolithic temples. In the meantime, as Director of a new Museum, inaugurated in 1905, he began to organize and enrich the Museum's collections. He maintained his Directorship until the very end.

Sir Temi Zammit was perhaps Malta's most distinguished scholar who wore his deep scholarship, immense erudition and intellectual brilliance disarmingly lightly

## **L-esperjenza tat-tim mediku fi żmien il-COVID-19 – written by Dr. Abigail Attard**

*Dr Abigail Attard MD, MRCP(UK), imwielda x-Xagħra, ilha taħdem bħala tabiba għal dawn l-aħħar ħames snin. Hi se tiddekrivi l-esperjenza tagħha mill-perspettiva tat-tim mediku f'dan iż-żmien tal-COVID-19. Matul dan il-perjodu, kienet qed taħdem kemm fl-Isptar Generali t'Għawdex kif ukoll fl-Isptar Mater Dei.*

Bhalissa l-COVID-19 qiegħed fuq fomm kulhadd. U bir-raġun! Bħala Maltin u Għawdxin, flimkien mal-kumplement tad-dinja, qed niġu affettwati minn din il-pandemija. Bla ma ħsibna wisq, il-ħajja ta' kulhadd kellha tinbidel xi ftit u ridna nadattaw rwieħna għal realtà ġdida. Il-mod ta' kif naħsbu u naġixxu ha dimensjoni oħra u l-pjanijiet li stajna għamilna ridna nikkancellawhom jew inbidlulhom.



Bla dubju, din il-pandemija affettwat l-isptarijiet tagħna, kif ukoll lill-professjonisti tas-saħħa u 'l dawk kollha li b'xi mod jew iehor jaħdmu viċin tal-pazjent. Għaddew ftit iktar minn tmien xhur minn mindu ġie rreġistrat l-

ewwel każ ta' COVID-19 f'Malta. Nammetti li dak kien żmien ta' tensjoni u anki ta' xi ftit biża'. Konna nafu li dan huwa virus ġdid li ffit konna nafu dwaru, li kien għadu qed jiġi studjat u li ma kienx bħal kwalunkwe virus ieħor. Biss biss, tara l-fatalitajiet li kienu diġà seħħew f'pajjiżi oħra, ukoll tithasseb. L-effetti akuti u kroniċi tal-virus ma konniex nafuhom.

Kien żmien fejn saru tibdiliet kbar fl-isptarjiet biex ikunu jistgħu jiġu kkurati aktar pazjenti bl-aħjar mod possibbli. Kellhom jinholqu swali ġodda u anki kmamar b'attrezzament partikolari. Peress li l-COVID-19 jaffettwa primarjament in-nifs, ingiebu ventilators ġodda u ġiet anki estiża t-taqsimha tal-Kura Intensiva (ITU). Kien mitlub ukoll li jintlibes ilbies protettiv. Speċjalment meta jintlibes għal żmien twil, dan jaf ikun skomdu, però hu ferm importanti biex titnaqqas it-trasmissjoni tal-virus. Bida jsir ukoll taħriġ għall-haddiema kollha tal-isptar biex kulhadd ikun ippreparat bl-aħjar mod. Ċertu ħidma fl-isptar bdiet issir b'mod differenti. Pereżempju, ċertu sessjonijiet tal-Out-Patients bdew isiru permezz tat-telefown, fejn kien jippermetti.

Iktar minn qatt qabel, bdejna nħossu t-tbatija kbira li jkun għaddejnin minnha l-pazjenti fl-isptar. Mhux faċli tkun rikoverat l-isptar waħdek, mingħajr ma jkun permess li jiġu jżuruk il-familjari u l-ħbieb. Kemm ħsibijiet ta' min jaf x'se jiġri! U kemm forsi kien hemm min ħass l-istigma għax laqqat il-virus! Min jaf x'hassew daww li mietu wehldhom mingħajr ma kellhom ċans isellmu 'l-għeżiež tagħhom jew jgħannquhom magħhom? Tibda tirrealizza kemm tbissima, li issa moħbija wara maskra u visor, u xi kultant għafsa tal-id, li issa kemxejn projbita, jafu jkun ta' sostenn għal pazjent, filwaqt li jgħawwulu qalbu. Huwa wkoll dulur għall-qraba, li għalkemm tipprova tispjega fuq it-telefown dwar il-kundizzjoni tal-pazjent, xorta jkun inkwetati u diffiċli jiehdu stampa ċara ta' dak li verament qed jiġri.

Ix-xogħol fl-isptarijiet żdied ħafna. Dan beda jinħass iktar ma bdiet diehla x-xitwa u bdew jizdiedu l-infezzjonijiet li tipikament huma assoċjati ma' dan iż-żmien. In-numru ta' pazjenti żdied; in-numru ta' swali miftuħa żdied; it-tip ta' kura li kellhom bżonn il-pazjenti milquta mill-COVID-19, speċjalment daww fil-Kura Intensiva, intensifika. Minkejja dan, in-numru ta' professjonisti fl-isptar baqa' prattikament l-istess. Safrattant dan-numru ġieli jonqos xi ffit, meta haddiema tas-saħħa jkun mitluba joħorġu mix-xogħol għal numru ta' jiem biex isegwu l-kwarantana mandatorja. Dan kollu joħloq ċertu piż fuq il-kumplement tal-istaff. Mhux darba jew tnejn, li kellu jithassar il-vacation leave personali jew kellna nidhlu għal shifts żejda biex naqdu d-domanda li kien hemm fl-isptar. Wara numru ta' ġimghat, l-gheja tibda tagħmel tagħha.

Il-marda tal-COVID-19 taf tkun serja, speċjalment fl-anzjani u f'daww li jkollhom kundizzjonijiet kroniċi. Però, hemm ukoll mard ieħor tas-saħħa li jaf ikun serju. Bdejna ninkwetaw meta ċerti pazjenti kienu qegħdin jiġu tard wisq l-isptar minħabba l-biża' tal-COVID-19. Mhix sitwazzjoni faċli.

Meta tkun taħdem fl-isptar qalb il-morda, is-sens ta' responsabbiltà u dover f'isem il-ġid komuni jikber. Kemm jista' jkun tipprova tevita milli toħroġ f'postijiet fejn hemm possibbiltà li tiltaqa' man-nies sabiex b'hekk tipprotegi lil daww l-iktar vulnerabbli. Kien hemm ħafna professjonisti tas-saħħa li għamlu ħafna saġrifċji biex jibqgħu joffru s-servizzi tagħhom mal-morda filwaqt li jipprotegu l-familjari tagħhom. Infatti, kienu bosta daww li fittxew akkomodazzjoni alternattiva għal matul dan iż-żmien. Kien hemm haddiema tas-saħħa oħrajn li kellhom jibdli t-tip ta' xogħol li jagħmlu peress li huma stess kienu vulnerabbli.

Iż-żmien itir u l-Milied qed joqrob. Se jkun Milied differenti f'kull sfera tal-ħajja. Il-ħidma fl-isptarijiet tkompli. Se jkun Milied naqra iktar impenjattiv minn daww ta' qablu minħabba ż-żieda fil-każijiet tal-COVID-19. Minkejja d-diversi sfidi li qed tipprezentalna din il-pandemija, inħoss li tgħallimna ħafna u ħareġ ħafna pożittiv. Inħoss li bdejna napprezzaw iktar l-ħajja umana, filwaqt li bdejna ngħożzu iktar il-familja u l-ħbieb u l-ħin li nqattgħu flimkien. Is-sens ta' dover biex niehdu ħsieb lil xulxin jispikka tassew u għandna għax inkunu kburi bis-solidarjetà li qed nuru ma' xulxin.

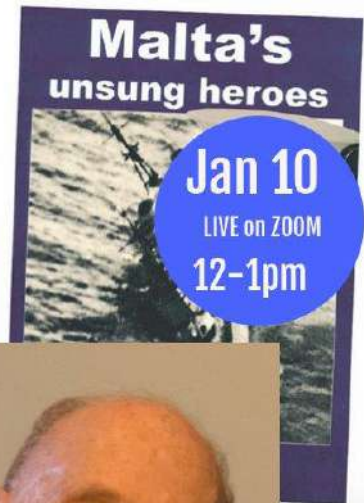
Nixtieq nagħmel appell biex inkomplu nsegu l-istruzzjonijiet maħruġa mid-Dipartiment tas-Saħħa Pubblika. Minn qalbi, nixtieq nawgura l-Milied it-tajjeb lil kulhadd u ħafna saħħa għas-sena l-ġdida.



## MALTESE CENTER - NY

IL-MALTIN TAGHNA with guest  
Alfred Conti Borda

One of the most pivotal times in Maltese history is World War II. Alfred Conti Borda the author of "**Malta's Unsung Heroes Vol I and II**" - the two World War II books he wrote based on his encounters with wartime heroes of Maltese and British personnel, including civilians. Stories of warships sinking, a POW in Japan, a Jesuit running from Nazis, and more. The stories are intriguing and written with such detail. Conti's writing immerses the reader in the tense moments these heroes



experienced and lets us truly understand the sacrifices they made. Alfred will discuss how he captured the riveting stories of the brave people who fought and survived the war. A journey that took 16 years. Alfred's stories are also featured as articles in the Sunday Times of Malta.



**MALTESE CENTER**  
27-20 Hoyt Avenue South, Astoria, NY, USA



## Did you know the Maltese Center:

Operates through a budget from membership dues and event attendance.  
Runs entirely by volunteers who donate their time and skills.  
There are no employees.  
It is the only Maltese community center in the US Northeast and US Southeast  
A yearly membership is equivalent to \$10 a month

<https://www.themaltesecenter.com/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/MalteseCenterNYC/>







## The wreck of the 'Angel Gabriel' at Marsascala

In the year 1905 the population of Marsaskala was just 53. The population today is in the region of 9,200. Since the area is so accessible by sea, successive conquering armies came ashore here and set about taking the land, and slaves. Marsaskala was once a Roman Port. Roman remains lie scattered at 'tar-Rumi', where pre-Roman cart ruts have been noticed. Though the area is partly ringed by tall white cliffs, the smooth inlets offered easy access to 16th and 17th century invaders.

The defences of the area was late in coming and Vendome Battery dates from about 1715. Vendome was a French Knight. Some of the residents built their own towers, and fortified farmhouses are quite frequent. Even after the area was finally fortified residents still remained few and Sicilian fishermen were more familiar with the area than the Maltese were.

The name Marsaskala confirms the Sicilian connection as apparently the word 'marsa' means 'port' and 'sqalli' means 'Sicilian'.

One probable reason for the lack of settlements in the area was the fear of pirates, who roamed the sea looking for treasure, and slaves. The local population felt safer in the walled cities of Cottonera and Valletta and also in the inland villages. Another reason may well have had something to do with the geography. The well sheltered harbour could not by itself discouraged people from settling here.

The harbour extended into the Fawwara district until the 19th century, which provided even more shelter. A spring is known to have existed here and 'Wied il-Għajn' means "watercourse by the fountain", but there is no trace of it today. The rugged coastline around Marsaskala is indeed a delight to see, but it has been the site of several ship wrecks. The most recent one being of the "Angel Gabriel" which was a Greek Tanker that split in half on September 23rd 1969.

Marsaskala remained a tiny fishing port until the advent of the 2nd World War. The people living in Cottonera started to build summer houses in Marsaskala. Then later they decided to become all year round residents, which has slowly transformed the small sleepy fishing port of Marsaskala into the resort that it is today.

Established a parish since 1949, the population is just about doubling every ten years or so. There are modern hotels, restaurants, cafes, a duck pond and a cinema. The atmosphere is akin to an upbeat seaside resort.

The mood is so relaxed here that the favourite pastime is walking along the promenade that stretches all the way around the bay from Żonqor Point around to the Jerma Palace Hotel, with stops on the way for drinks and snacks. These walks usually take place in the evenings as its a lot cooler than during the day when its just too warm to contemplate walking, and the day is usually spent in and around the cafes and restaurants.



## Angelo & Friends – Christmas Concert.....u iktar!

**Kav. Joe M Attard – Ghawdex** (ritratt mehud minn Corazon Mizzi)

Matul dawn il-ġranet tal-Milied, it-Tenur żagħżuġh Ghawdxi Angelo Muscat minn Ghajnsielem ippreżenta programm ta' kant fil-Knisja Katidrali fic-Cittadella li kien maqsum fi tliet partijiet: Mużika Klassika, Miżika Sagra u Kant tal-Milied. Waqt li kulhadd żamm id-distanza soċjali, kien hemm attendenza sabiha li kienet tinkludi fost l-oħrajn lill-Ministru għal Ghawdex u s-Sinjura tiegħu, l-Onor Justyne Caruana Ministru tal-Edukazzjoni, is-Sindku tal-belt Victoria, membri Parlamentari u mistednin oħra li kollk kellhom kliem ta' tifhir għal dan il-kunċert bis-sehem tal-Omnia Quartet li l-membri tiegħu kienu ġejjin mill-Ungerija, l-Italja u l-Polonja flimkien mas-solisti t-tenur Angelo Muscat, il-Mezzo Sopran Christine Dalli u s-Sopran Mardy Farrugia. Kull min kien preżenti seta' jammira l-vuċi soda tat-tenur żagħżuġh Ghawdxi jinterpretat fost l-oħrajn 'Per la Gloria', 'Una furtiva Lacrima', 'Questo e Quella', 'Pieta' Signore', 'Silent Night'. Mill-vuċi ħelwa tal-Mezzo Sopran smajna 'L-Ave Maria' ta' Mascagni waqt li s-Sopran tatna 'O Holy Night'. 'Il-Panis Angelicus' harġet mill-fomm ta' Christine Dalli u Angelo Muscat waqt li l-'White Christmas' tkantat minn Mardy Farrugia u Angelo Muscat. L-Omnia Quartet kien ferm tajjeb fl-esekuzzjoni tal-'Winter Adagio' mill-'Four Seasons' ta' Hayden u 'Jesus Man's Desire' ta' Bach u l-'Hallelujah' mill-Messiah. Inqat ukoll il-poeżija tal-Kav Joe M Attard **Ejja Fostna Gesu'**.

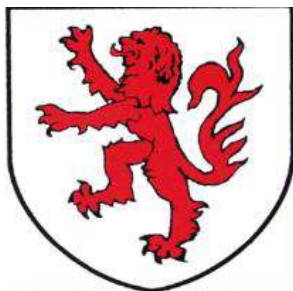
Is-serata għalqet bis-sehem tal-Kwartet u t-tliet solisti bl-Adeste Fidelis.

Fl-istess dan iż-żmien sabiħ u għażiż tas-sena, f'Misrah Indipendenza Victoria, il-'Gozo Youth

Wind Band' ippreżentat 'A Christmas Festive Concert' taht id-direzzjoni ta' Mro Dr Joseph Grech bis-sehem tal-kantanti Corazon Mizzi, Neville Refalo, Ludwig Galea u Ruth Portelli fil-preżenza ta' għadd sabiħ ta' Ghawdxi fosthom il-Ministru għal Ghawdex u Mrs Camilleri. Kienu bosta l-arrangamenti tal-Milied li ġew esegwiti fosthom Fanfare for Christmas, Christmas Overture, Have yourself a Merry Little Christmas, Instant Christmas Concert, Christmas Favourites, Christmas Swings, A Christmas Fantasia, All I want for Christmas is You, A Contemporary Christmas, Happy Christmas (war is over), Christmas Classics, Feliz Navid u Selections from the Polar Express. Hajr lill-Ministeru għal Ghawdex, lid-Direttorat tal-Wirt Kulturali, lill-Banda Mnarja tan-Nadur, l-MTA, il-Kunsill Loali tal-belt Victoria, lill-ERRC u lill-Korp tal-Pulizija. Bit-tama li din l-imxija thallina ma ddumx, il-Preżentatur l-Kav Joe M Attard ħabbar il-'commitments' tal-Gozo Youth Wind Band and orchestra li jinkludu 'Opera vs Pop Under the Stars' (it-13-il edizzjoni) fit-2 ta' Awwissu, 'Stage and Proms on the Sea' (is-6 edizzjoni) fit-13 ta' Settembru, 'From the Beatles to U2' fit-tejtru tal-Opra Aurora fl-20 ta' Novembru u Christmas Rocks the Astra' fit-30 ta' Diċembru.

Jalla kulhadd jagħmel hiltu biex jobdi d-direttivi tal-Awtoritajiet tas-Saħħa u jondi d-distanzi soċjali biex b'hekk Ghawdex jissokta jgawdi divertiment għall-familja kollha matul din is-sena li għadna kemm nibdew. Nawguralkom Sena Ġdida b'dak kollu li tixtieq qalbkom





Floriana - Il-Furjana

## PRESS RELEASE

## New book about the triumphal Arch of St. Publius of Floriana

The administrative board of the local gazette 'IL-FURJANA', has published a new volume about the triumphal Arch of St. Publius of Floriana. Such volume has been published with the intent of generating more funds towards the building of a replica of the original Arch which after 120 years, was burned in an arson attack in the early hours of Saturday 27th April 2019.

This crass act of vandalism which had left many Florianites and others, in shock and dismay, prompted former member of the editorial board of 'IL-FURJANA', Charles Zammit Moore, to come up with the idea of creating such a book. Alas, destiny decreed otherwise as Charles did not live to see his dream come to fruition as he died on the 29th of October 2019.

Despite this great loss, the gazette's administration strived even harder, and with the help of many Florianites and others, the book has now been published. After the much acclaimed and successful book, 'Il-Knisja ta' San Publju fil-Furjana: Storja u Arti', published in 2015, this is the second publishing venture which the gazette's administration is presenting to the Maltese readers.

The book 'L-Ark ta' San Publju tal-Furjana (1899-2019)' contains 224 full colour pages in a hard bound cover including a colour dust jacket. Its pages are replete with some 260 photos taken by different photographers, amongst whom, the well known professional Gozitan photographer, Daniel Cilia. It is worth mentioning that the photo on the front jacket was taken by Mr Cilia, whilst the watercolor painting of the Arch found on the back of the book, was painted by the Florianite graphic designer and painter, Joseph Scerri.

This volume has been enhanced with various articles and contributions by, amongst others, His Honor Judge Emeritus Giovanni Bonello, Dutch renowned Anthropologist Professor Adrianus Koster, the Rev. Archpriest of Floriana Rev. Canon Charles Cini, Ms Davina Sammut Hili Mayor of Floriana, and the late Professor Oliver Friggieri, who till the end of his life, had continued to support all the gazette's endeavors, as well as doing the last proof-reading of this publication.

Included also in this publication, are messages by His Excellency the President of Malta Dr George Vella, His Grace the Archbishop Mons. Charles J. Scicluna, former Minister of Finance Professor Edward Scicluna and the Minister for National Heritage, Arts and Local Government Dr Jose' Herrera.

'L-Ark ta' San Publju tal-Furjana (1899-2019)' has been produced under the artistic direction of Joseph A. Cachia and was printed at Print It Press of Kordin, Paola.

The book does not only appeal to all those people hailing from Floriana – either living in the locality or elsewhere on the island and abroad – but should be of interest to all those who appreciate the diverse aspects of the typical Maltese festa, including the strong cultural elements which form part of such feasts.

This book also includes a wide historical aspect that goes way beyond the pure essence of parrochialism. In fact the article by Judge Emeritus Giovanni Bonello gives an insight on ceremonial arches in Malta over a span of hundreds of years. This article is further enhanced by historical photos of which, some of them are being published for the very first time in this book.

This publication arguably contains the largest collection of information, and photos of extinct arches and those still in existence, rigged up during the feast days in Malta and Gozo.

The book is selling at the price of €30 which include also the postage. To acquire a copy one can pay either through the Revolut system on 99110647 or by sending a cheque payable to Gazzetta 'IL FURJANA' and addressed:

**Gazzetta il-Furjana , 44 Capuchins Street, Floriana FRN 1053 Malta.**

IT'S NICE TO BE IMPORTANT, BUT IT MORE IMPORTANT TO BE NICE



**The motto of our Maltese Journal**



## Yummy Hobz Biz-Zejt - "Bread with oil"



No bread compares to the traditional Maltese loaf and I'm sure that many out there agree with me. It's so wholesome and tasty and yet so plain! As in many other places, what was poor man's fare is now rich man's favour. Not that one has to be rich to acquire such food. Many Maltese still eat it as a snack or as part of their supper. Both the stonecutter in the quarry and the farmer in the field, as well the family relaxing by the seaside on a delicious Summer evening, all love to dig their

teeth into this tasty meal. It satisfies the taste buds and fills the stomach in the simplest and most complete way. It is inexpensive and easy to prepare, but it is true that richer foods and faster food have replaced most of what today can be considered as traditional food.

In the past, the manual workers used to take lunch which consisted of half a loaf of our excellent bread, hollowed out and filled with tomatoes, oil, olives, anchovies and accompanied by a glass of wine. They then wrapped it up in a cloth for freshness and then sliced it up with a penknife at the time of eating. It was very filling and practical especially for outdoor workers. This tradition is unfortunately giving way to the more regular sandwich.



When one sometimes pass in front of a bakery the heavenly smell of baking bread evokes memories of when dad used to come from work carrying with him a freshly baked bread still crackling hot. Children used to make a feast with a simple loaf of bread. Mum sliced the bread and we siblings were left free to prepare our **Hobz biz-Zejt** the way we wanted. I was usually allowed

to have the round crusty part (il-genba) from which I dug out the middle and filled it up with all the stuff that I could get hold of. The term 'Hobz tal-Malti' makes me conjure up images of this delicious snack eaten at the beach, watching the sun set, with the salty sea smell lingering on one's skin. So what exactly is this hobz biz-zejt? If I had to translate this term it would literally mean "Bread with oil" which up to a certain extent is true because drizzled oil is one of the basic ingredients but it has more than just that. And what goes on in this Hobz biz-Zejt??

The first thing you have to do is to get hold of a fresh Maltese loaf (hobza). The crust should be cracked and crunchy and the middle soft and white. Cut thick slices of bread. Halve a couple of ripe summer tomatoes and rub the cut side over the bread until it gets a reddish hue. If using tomato paste, (kunserva) just spread over the bread. Next dip one side of the bread into a plate of good olive oil. Or else you can drizzle the oil onto the bread. Sprinkle with salt and freshly cracked black pepper. That's the basic recipe. What follows is up to you. You can either have it as it is or else add some of the following ingredients. The other ingredients vary widely, although capers and olives are almost universally included. Here is the list of ingredients I compiled: Butter beans marinated in garlic and oil, olives, marinated vegetables, lettuce, anchovies, tuna, onion slices, peppered cheeselets (gbejniet), capers, marjoram, mint, basil, pickled onions, bigilla, sundried tomatoes, cucumber slices, artichoke hearts and even ham. Yes!! I was told that the Qormi people like having their hobz biz-zejt with ham!





## IL-MADONNA TAL-GEBLA IL-GZIRA

Back in 1902, in the locality of Gzira, a miracle is said to have happened. During one summer night on the 10th of July, three English sailors from the who were drunk wanted to get into a bar which was located on the waterfront near Manoel Island.

However, the bar was closed and its owner refused to let them in. Feeling angry, the sailors started throwing rocks at the shop. Outside of the shop, there was a glass frame of the Madonna tal-Karmnu.

The miracle happened when one of the rocks that the sailors were throwing hit the frame. It is said that although the rock hit the frame and it was very windy, the rock did not break the frame, but instead remained stuck in the middle of it. By morning, word had spread to Sliema as people were in awe of this mysterious event. Gzira was still under the parish of Sliema at the time.

Dun Anton Manche, the brother of the parish priest in Sliema, put the frame in a chapel which had been built. When Gzira established a parish church of its own in 1921, Dun Anton Manche became its priest and the new church was dedicated to the Madonna Tal-Karmnu in respect of the miracle.

The frame remains there to this day. In fact, this story is even mentioned in the chorus of the anthem of the parish church, which translates to 'if a foreigner profaned your reputation/when he threw a rock at you/we only have arrows of love/to throw at you'

References: <https://www.tvm.com.mt/.../tafu-fejn-hi-l-madonna-tal-gebla/>

### MADONNA TAL-ĠEBLA (GZIRA)

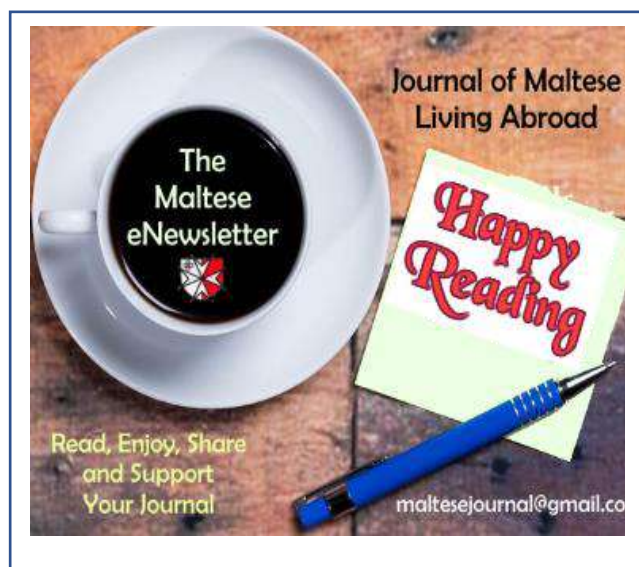
Ġewwa l-Gzira kien hemm niċċa,  
Kellha kwadru wisq sabiħ,  
Bil-Madonna minn tal-Karmnu  
Qiegħda ssabbar lill-erwieħ

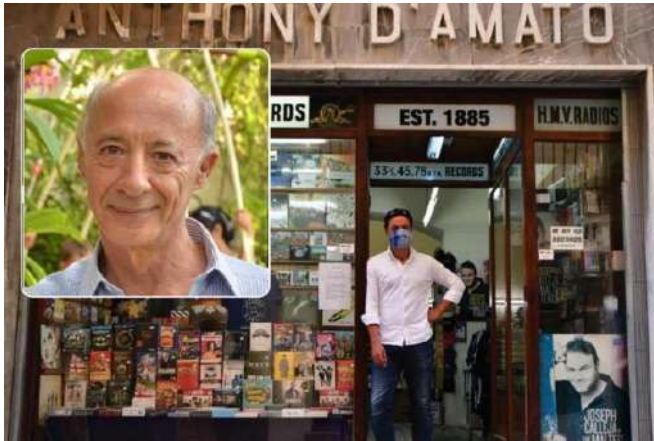
Dan l-inkwatu nżamm bil-ghozza  
In-nies kollha jagħtu gieh  
Sakemm bnew 'Knisja tal-Gebel'  
Biex ipattu għaż-żebliħ

Hdejn in-niċċa kien hemm taverna  
Fejn jixorbu il-baħrin,  
Kif ukoll suldati Nglizi  
Kont issibhom hemm kull ħin.

Darba tard ġew is-suldati  
Magħluq sew il-ħanut kien.  
Irrabjati waddbu ġebła  
Mal-ħanut u kullimkien

Ġebła minnhom baqgħet sejra  
U fin-niċċa dahlet dritt,  
Imma weħlet ġewwa l-ħġieġa  
Baqgħet xhieda tad-delitt.





## Anthony D'Amato, co-owner of world's 'oldest' record store, dies aged 75

**Tributes paid to 'soft-spoken and gentle' character**

Fiona Galea Debono Times of Malta

Anthony D'Amato, inset, has died, passing the baton of the oldest record shop to his son, also called Anthony.

The man who dedicated over 60 years of his life to ensuring people's musical tastes were catered for has died – passing on the enduring baton of D'Amato Records, dubbed the world's oldest record store.

Described as a “pillar of the family business”, his son with the same name, said Anthony D'Amato was “taken away from us too fast, too soon”. Not even three weeks had passed since he was lending a hand at the Valletta shop that dates back to 1885.

Born in 1945, D'Amato died on Sunday, following the shock diagnosis of an aggressive illness. He had just turned 75. He leaves behind a “legacy of kindness, love and respect to anyone who crossed his path” his son said – and these do not only include family and friends, but also the many customers who associate the record store they regularly frequented with the low-key man by the same name.

Fond memories abounded among clients reacting to D'Amato's death on Facebook, with recollections of the excitement of turning up, money in hand, to buy a tape.

They hark back to the Bisazza Street days, where the “soft-spoken and gentle character would always put aside any Genesis material” for a client at the Sliema outlet.

D'Amato had been working at the shop after school since around the age of 14, his elderly father having been taken ill. He was semi-retired but would continue to visit every other day and still held certain administrative roles, his son said of the calm and meticulous man, who was ruled by precision.

He was more service-oriented than business-minded, and his job was his hobby, the third-generation owner said. “It was his life.”

If he had to associate any specific music with his father, it would have to be The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, he said, recalling the music playing from a tape in the car in his childhood.

D'Amato is also known to have supported the local music scene in the 1970s, producing many records by Maltese artists, including the likes of Freddie Portelli in his early days.. In fact, all the seven-inch singles bear his name.

He was recently quoted as saying he could not recall a single instance when the 135-year-old record store closed – come recession and four decades of rampant piracy – until COVID-19 forced it to temporarily pull down its shutters last year.

In the [Times of Malta article](#), it was noted that the shop did not stop trading when Malta was blitzed during World War II, and also survived the Spanish flu. Surviving war and pestilence, its owners said it had probably been hardest hit by the outbreak of the MP3.

Even then, not for a second did D'Amato think it was game over for what has been described as the “holy grail of record shops” on the international scene.

Financially, it would probably have been more feasible to rent out the shop and stay home, but this is a labour of love and D'Amato Records is part of their DNA, his son had said.

“We could not kill it off because we would be killing off a member of our family. “There are three speeds in records – 78s, 45s and 33s. I was born in 1978, my dad in 1945 and the difference between the two is 33. We were meant to be in this line of work,” his son had added.



at exhibitions.

## Maltese e-Newsletter



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Living Abroad

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# Australian Lamingtons

There is no cake more Australian than Lamingtons! A moist butter sponge dipped in chocolate then coated with coconut, this is **The** Cake sold at every suburban bakery and weekend fundraisers. You'll get coconut everywhere making them and eating them. But that's all part of the Aussie experience. It's how we do it Down Under! Lamingtons are a classic Australian sweet treat that is loved as much today as it was when it was first created decades ago. Now you can whip up a batch of finger-licking good lamingtons to share with your kids.

### Ingredients

- 6 eggs
- 1 cup caster sugar
- 1 1/2 cups self-raising flour
- 1/2 cup cornflour
- 30 g butter
- 6 tbs hot water

### ICING

- 3 cups coconut (shredded)
- 2 cups icing sugar
- 1/3 cup cocoa powder
- 15 g butter
- 1/2 cup milk
- 

### Method

Preheat oven to 180°C. Line two lamington tins 18cm x 28cm (7in x 11in) with baking paper.

Beat eggs until thick and creamy. Gradually add sugar. Continue beating until sugar completely dissolved.

Fold in sifted self-raising flour and cornflour, then combined water and butter.

Divide the mixture evenly between the prepared lamington tins.

Bake in moderate oven approximately 30 mins. Let cake stand in pan for 5 minutes before turning out onto wire rack.

After the sponge has cooled, sift the icing sugar and cocoa into heatproof bowl.

Stir in butter and milk. Stir over a pan of hot water until icing is smooth and glossy.

Trim brown top and sides from cake. Cut into 16 even pieces.

Holding each piece on a fork, dip each cake into the icing. Hold over bowl a few minutes to drain off excess chocolate.

Toss in coconut or sprinkle to coat. Place on oven tray to set.





## Under a Maltese Sky: Novel by Irish author set in World War II

Therese Bonnici Saturday,

*Under a Maltese Sky* is the name of a novel which was recently launched in Ireland. The book, by Irish author Nicola Kearns, encompasses romance and adventure within the context of the WWII Siege of Malta.

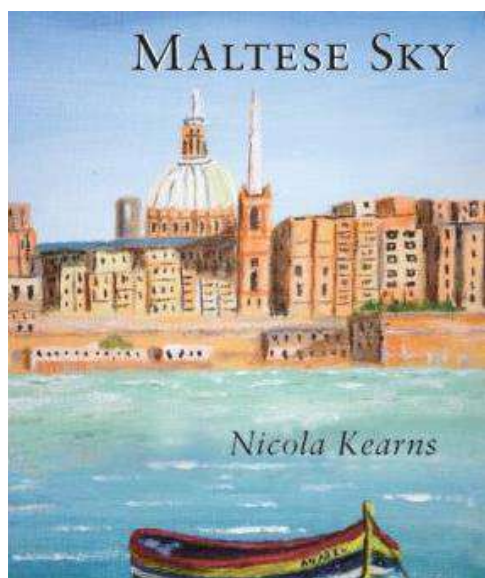
In comments to *The Malta Independent*, Ms Kearns explains

that she was inspired by her great uncle, a member of the Royal Air Force who served in Malta during World War II.

The story makes references to episodes which occurred during the Great Siege of Malta. To write the book, Ms Kearns spent almost a year carrying out research, with assistance from Malta Historical WWII group as well as the National War Museum.

As part of research, Ms Kearns visited Malta in November 2013, visiting Sliema, Valletta and Gozo. "One driver, Michael Sultana, showed me all around Gozo and was so helpful with information about the war in Malta. He spoke with great pride about his country and he is even mentioned in my book," she says.

Much of the rest of the story is fictitious; however there are parallels to events in the life of the author herself or lives of people she knows. "In some way, each character in the book is based on a real person, some who have passed on," she says.



Ms Kearns is already busy writing the sequel to the first book. "Many of the same characters will be in it, and there will also be flashbacks to the war in Malta with more detail, although it is mainly set in 2003 and onwards. Some events mentioned in the first novel will be explained, but it is hard to state exactly what, without giving away the story..." Ms Kearns says.

### Synopsis:

Young Anabel Mellor leaves England to join her father, a RAF Wing Commander based in Malta. She volunteers as a nurse in the famous Mtarfa Military Hospital before the outbreak of WWII. Ernie McGuill is an Irishman. Disillusioned by his country's fight for freedom he leaves Ireland and eventually becomes a renowned reconnaissance pilot in the RAF. While stationed in Malta his homosexuality is revealed when he falls in love with a fellow male officer.

Unaware of Ernie's relationship, Wing Commander Mellor's plans for the pilot and his daughter to marry are thwarted when she falls for a Maltese fisherman, Franco. However, his daughter's pregnancy is unknown to him when he sets events in motion for Franco, due to his Italian origins, to be extradited as an enemy alien.



He finds the solution to his problem when he catches Ernie with his lover, an offence punishable by instant dismissal. Ernie agrees to marry Ana to keep his position. When Ana gives birth in an air-raid shelter not long after the death of her father, Ernie cruelly tells her the baby has died. When a friend discovers the lie Ernie quickly leaves Malta, taking a bereft Ana with him.

Eventually they settle back in his native Ireland where Ernie becomes an alcoholic and Ana has a lonely and miserable life. Her marriage is never consummated and she is shunned by the village due to her being English. Her only consolation is correspondence with Billy, the husband of her best friend Katie, who was killed during the war. Ana and Billy meet once again, a reunion which results in the birth of her daughter, Maria.

Many years later an unexpected gift from her grand-daughter Jessy brings about Ana's return to Malta, albeit in some trepidation. In Malta, Jessy falls for a local man named Salvatore. It becomes apparent later in the book that he is the son of Franco, Ana's former lover. Franco had returned from his exile to the Orkney Islands after the war. He was devastated to find out from Ana's friend Jeany that Ana had married Ernie and gone to England.

Franco learned that his baby hadn't died but had been left at the convent where Jeany was living at the time. His later marriage enables Franco to adopt the baby. When Ana and Franco eventually meet the past is revisited and Ana meets her child.

When Ana and Franco eventually meet the past is revisited and Ana gets to meet her daughter.

The novel gives much detail on the Siege of Malta, the air battles and horrifying conditions of a people living close to starvation amongst almost daily bombardment. There are also references to the Civil War in Ireland in the 1920s and the extradition of Italian POWs to the Orkney Islands.

The book concludes with Ana's pilgrimage throughout the island of Malta, visiting the graves of her father and her dear friends. Her relationship with Franco is rekindled and he proposes once again in a place very dear to their hearts.

Ana ends her days on the island, surrounded by those who love her in a country where she has always felt at home – under a Maltese sky.

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## **VALLETTA MARKET IS-SUQ TAL-BELT**

### **A STATE OF THE ART DESTINATION**

Is-Suq tal-Belt has seen quite the transformation in these last couple of years. From a derelict structure to an ambitious culinary dream to the go-to food market on the island, Is-Suq tal-Belt has become a national landmark both for locals and



tourists.

Down the escalators to our -1 Food Market, you'll find stalls offering fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, fish, delicatessen, bread, herbs and spices, oils, gourmet foods, wines and fresh delicacies, it's all here!

All of the above is complemented with a unique ambience, that makes is-Suq tal-Belt the perfect setting for catching up with friends, taking a quick lunch break from work or watching live sporting events on our indoor big screen. We truly have it all.

**HISTORY** One can truly understand the beauty of this restored building, if you appreciate its humble beginnings. Is-Suq tal-Belt had originally been an open space known as 'Piazza del Malcantone' in the time of the Knights of St John. Here is where the farmers would take their daily produce and sell it. The Knights then decided that there needed to be more of an organised structure – hence the introduction of 'stalls'.

In 1784, the building came to life in its original baroque form. In the 1860s under the British rule, the building became much bigger and took on a new form, similar to what you see today. The covered market in Valletta is a gem of British Colonial construction, an extremely successful project in its pre-war years. Unfortunately, it suffered through war damage, post-war reconstruction varying from the original and modifications and accretions which were unsympathetic and utterly foreign to the original Victorian iron structure. The market was also largely neglected for a long time. The availability of cheap cast iron after 1820 introduced new structural possibilities to Europe and these new engineering developments were displayed in London's Crystal Palace (1850-1851) and Les Halles Centrales in Paris (1853). It was at the height of popularity of iron in structures that the Valletta Market was designed and built between 1859 and 1861.

Its historic importance is related to the British colonial era, the uniqueness and innovation of its design and its rarity as a survivor of its type. Unfortunately, the market suffered considerable damage during World War II after receiving a direct hit on 7th April 1942 in one of the worst air raids over the city. About a third of the whole building, including the façade, on the side of Merchant Street was demolished as well as an area closer to the back on Old Theatre Street while the central area of the market was also badly damaged. The market was repaired and its size reduced after the creation of a small square at the Merchant Street end. In 1962 rainwater was seeping from the roof and in 1965 work started to remove unusually thick heavy 'torba' or stone chippings supported on timber purlins to repair the leak. The repair works did pay off and in the mid-70's the place was a bee-hive of activity. In 1982, the food market was relocated to Floriana and is-Suq tal-Belt was internally remodelled and inaugurated as 'Ixtri Malti' with new, heavy structures in stone masonry walling and reinforced concrete staircases and roofing were built inside the elegant cast iron structure.

In October 21, 1989, the food market returned to Valletta and although no longer quite as busy as it used to be it started to re-attract customers. Unfortunately, people had become used to shopping elsewhere, coupled with the dwindling and ageing population of Valletta, ensured that its death-knell had been rung.

Arkadia Group was granted a 65-year lease of the property by Parliament's unanimous approval on 13 January 2016 to restore the neglected place, and return it to its original concept: that of selling and celebrating food. The current regeneration took into account the historical character of the site, so as to respect Valletta's credentials as a World Heritage Site and also recognition of being a European Capital of Culture. Is-Suq tal-Belt literally translated to 'The Market of the City' has been a valuable piece of Malta's history and heritage and upon taking your first few steps inside, it really becomes quite evident just what a true jewel this place really is. Having it brought back to life, and serving as a beating heart of Valletta, the Capital City.

The new and restored is-Suq tal-Belt brings to life a site which was neglected for years and was in danger of collapsing, returning this masterpiece to the public to enjoy while preserving the iconic Suq tal-Belt for future generations.





## A Maltese Hospital brings hope to the poor in Ghana

The HopeXchange Medical Center – or as it is better known, the Maltese hospital in Ghana, has just opened a clinic to treat and give support to children who were victims of sexual abuse.

Apart from medical services, the clinic also provides information and education in the fight against sexual abuse on minors, which is a common problem in many African countries. The clinic, which complements the hospital, was financed by funds sent from Malta through the Ghana Mission Foundation.

Along with medical treatment, the HopeXchange Medical Center which is in the poorest part of Ghana, seeks to educate those who are most vulnerable about their behaviour in the light of the challenges which they are facing in life.

With this aim in mind, the hospital administration worked hard to not only provide high level treatment for TB, malaria and Covid-19, but has opened a clinic for children who have been sexually abused. The Development Director of the Ghana Mission Foundation, Nikol Baldacchino, said that with the theme, “Breaking the Silence; child sexual abuse in the COVID-19 era” the Maltese hospital is offering a service to parents on how they can protect their children to avoid them ending up as victims of sexual abuse.

“We have seen this problem become even worse during Covid, when you had people

spending more time together more because they could not travel. So we opened this clinic to help victims as well as to provide education in Kumasi, the second largest city in Ghana.”

He added that many of the cases, especially among children, are not reported because of the fear of stigma and a lack of awareness among the police and the judiciary. He said that the Maltese hospital is giving a voice and being of service to minors and their parents, who often do not know where to turn or are offered compensation to keep quiet. The clinic will also be helping them from the legal aspect.

“We know of a lot of cases of people who were caught, but they pay off the parents so that they will not report them and for the case not to go ahead. The clinic was therefore opened so that these things are mitigated. Secondly, it will help those who suffer from this illness because they feel they can abuse their own children in their own family.”

The clinic has the support of the Ghana’s Health Ministry and the Catholic Church. During the inauguration, the head of the region of Ashanti in Kumasi thanked the people and Government of Malta for their constant support and the work they have carried out to help the poor and the vulnerable. **(Source: [tvm.com.mt](http://tvm.com.mt))**

Nikol Baldacchino Development Director  
Ghana Mission Foundation

# UNESCO's intangible heritage – Maltese Feasts

## National bands festival to be organised



A national bands festival is planned for May. Photo: Reuben Piscopo, DOI

Work is currently under way by the Department of Culture to enlist the Maltese feast in the list of intangible cultural heritage under UNESCO, Arts Minister José Herrera said on Wednesday. The minister was speaking during the launch of a national bands festival, to be held for the first time in May, should the health situation permit.

The festival will be open to all band clubs in Malta and Gozo.

Four clubs will be selected to hold a programme in Cottonera in the second and third week of May, subject to public health regulations. Should it not be held in May, it will be moved to a later date.

It will be directed by Ray Sciberras and organised by the Cottonera Foundation and the National Band Club Association.

Herrera emphasised that such an initiative will stimulate more enthusiasm and interest in Maltese band clubs, which are an integral part of the Maltese identity. Cottonera Foundation chairman Glenn Bedingfield stated €20 million were being invested in a number of projects and initiatives.

National Band Club Association president Noel Camilleri said that, through this initiative, Maltese band clubs are being given a national platform to showcase the musical talents of Maltese musicians. He said he looked forward to listen to the original compositions that will be submitted. [Times of Malta]



## Malta band clubs and band marches

Band clubs in Malta are part and parcel of the social and cultural history of the Maltese islands and have, over the years, established themselves as an institution in the core of every town and village, aimed at spreading Maltese culture and teaching of music.

Many musicians who have gone on to

make a name for themselves, locally or abroad, owe their success, in part, to the encouragement and teaching of the local band club.

The idea of forming philharmonic societies or band clubs was already brewing in the minds of a few dilettantes back in the second part of the 19th century. Small bands were formed by individuals – most of whom could not afford to buy a musical instrument of their own. Businessmen dug deep into their pockets to help those individuals who possessed the talent to learn how to play an instrument. The first band clubs were formed and the primary aim was that the musicians would perform in their village feast. The number of clubs flourished and a sense of professionalism prevailed. After turbulent and then conciliatory circumstances, the Band Clubs Association was formed. This year the Association is celebrating its 60th anniversary, endorsing a membership of 84 band clubs across the island. According



to the latest survey by the local National Statistics Office, the total number of bandsmen/women (*bandisti*) amount to over 4000, both residents and trainees, more than a quarter of whom are women.

**What's behind the band clubs** Every town and village in Malta and Gozo has its own band club, some even have two, as there are certain villages which celebrate two feasts – one dedicated to the patron saint and the other celebrating the so-called 'secondary' feast of another saint. In the past, unfortunately, an intense rivalry developed when a village had more than one club and this rivalry at times became violent as each struggled to better the other when it came to the celebration of their saint. Nowadays, however, this competitiveness is channelled in a more positive way, with rival band clubs leaving no stone unturned as they strive to decorate the façade of the club's premises in the most colourful and vivid way, launch new musical numbers, and create the most merry-making atmosphere possible. Marching in rows of six, wearing uniforms and proudly showing off the badge of their club, a band is normally composed of between 60 and 70 bands- men/women playing a variety of instruments.

**What's their place in society?** The premises of most of the clubs are attractions in themselves, places to show off musical memorabilia as well as souvenirs of major achievements over the years. They offer a meeting place for members and a teaching place where young musicians are encouraged to join their colleagues in the next [village festa festivities](#). Musical programmes along the main streets of the village herald a week of festivities and celebrations and, in most instances, end with the popular "*mar ta' filghodu*" – the morning march. Feasts are practically held every Sunday between June and September and usually, more than one is celebrated during the weekends.

If you happen to be flying in, go to one of the village feasts, mingle with the locals and enjoy the merrymaking provided by the band marches. Don't forget to taste the traditional Maltese nougat from one of the many stalls!



Il-Festa Maltija hija waħda mill-pilastri ewlenin tal-kalendarju kulturali Malti. Fl-2019 il-Festa giet rikonoxxuta bħala Wirt Kulturali Intanġibbli Nazzjonali. Biex inkomplu nżidu l-gieħ u nsaħħu t-tkattir tal-festa minn ġenerazzjoni għall-oħra, l-għaqdiet tal-festi bl-għajnuna tad-Direttorat tal-Kultura qed iniedi proċess ta' konsultazzjoni biex jipproponi li l-Festa Maltija tiġi rikonoxxuta bħala Wirt Kulturali Intanġibbli fil-Lista Rappreżentattiva tal-Umanità tal-UNESCO. Il-Festa Maltija għandha tiġi mressqa biex tkun meqjusa bħala Wirt Kulturali Intanġibbli tal-UNESCO.

Inkomplu inħarsu l-Festa Maltija biex tibqa' tintiret minn ġenerazzjoni għall-oħra.



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**We do not need a degree to volunteer. All it requires is a heart to serve.** (Shashidhar Sa)

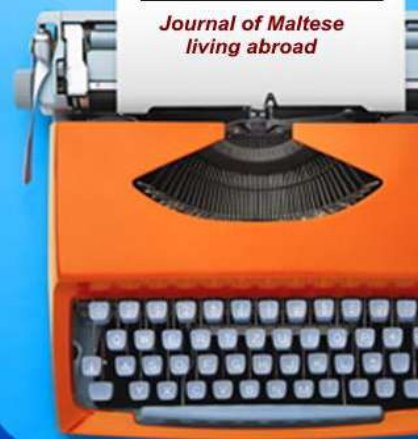
**M'ghandikx b'zonn kwalifiċi biex tkun voluntier. Kulma teħtieġ hija l-qalb biex taqdi.** (Shashidhar Sa)

The aim of Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector is to support the development of a more effective and efficient voluntary and community sector in Malta and Gozo.

<https://www.facebook.com/MaltaCouncilVoluntarySector/>

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*Journal of Maltese living abroad*



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**Maltese-Canadian Museum**



**3 little models of traditional Maltese buildings of Malta and Gozo. They are a part of our large collection of artifacts on display in the upper hall of St. Paul the Apostle Church in the West Toronto Junction.**







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It's fig season -- time to sprint to the greengrocer and snap up these small, soft-skinned, pear-shaped fruits. We're talking about fresh figs, of course. Most of Australia are far more familiar with figs in the form of gooey, chewy cookie fillings, or the brown, sticky-sweet dried figs you see packed tightly in boxes or laced together with twine.

But fresh and dried figs are as different as grapes and raisins. Cut open, fresh figs look positively exotic -- juicy crimson or yellow flesh packed with minuscule edible seeds.

When the fruit is fresh, the seeds are almost indistinct in texture and flavor from the flesh. When figs are dried, the skin thickens and the seeds become grainy and almost crunchy. There's really nothing exotic about figs. They've been around practically forever and are one of the oldest fruits mentioned in literature.

Cleopatra hid the poisonous asp she used to end her life in a basket of fresh figs. The Bible says Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together to cover their bodies after the apple incident in Eden. Other Old and New Testament references to this delicacy abound. If you've never eaten a fresh fig, you're not alone. A lickety-split season -- late June through mid-August and sporadically through the fall -- plus difficulty in transporting figs made this delicate, highly perishable fruit hard to find in our neck of the woods. Improved shipping techniques, however, and a changing ethnic climate are transforming fresh figs into a sought-after commodity.

Figs are native to Asia Minor and specifically to Turkey and the tiny Mediterranean island of Malta. The dark-skinned Smyrna fig was introduced into Mexico by the Spanish in the mid-16th Century. Franciscan monks brought figs to San Diego area missions in the late 1700s. The crop spread to various missions along

## FIGS, FIGS AND MORE FIGS

California's coast and produced the famous dark-purple Mission or black Mission fig. Most figs consumed in the United States still come from California. There are hundreds of fig varieties spread all over the world, especially in countries with warm weather.

Figs don't ripen once picked, so it's important that they be at their peak when harvested. Depending on availability, figs can sell for as much as \$1 a fruit. In season, the price should drop considerably. All depends on the harvest, which this summer is expected to be down because of weather problems in California, local distributors say.

The fruits are extremely fragile, and the skin bruises and tears easily. Choose figs when they're plump and soft to the touch. Eat them within a day or two of purchase. Since the fruit is shipped ripe, it's common, and acceptable, for the base of the fig to tear slightly or become moist and skin around the stem to be slightly shriveled.

Fresh figs are almost always best served simply. Like kiwi, their most interesting and stunning feature is how they look when cut. Figs are seldom chopped or sliced. It's the beauty of the halved or quartered fig that's most appealing. And while some recipes insist figs be peeled, most don't require it because the skin is quite thin. Europeans serve fresh figs at room temperature or warm, never chilled. Traditional accompaniments include cheese, nuts or smoked meats as a first course. When eaten as part of a dessert, a natural partner is cream, whipped, sweetened and sometimes spiked with a fruity liqueur.

You'll find recipes for fresh figs mostly in Mediterranean cookbooks. Since their mild flavor is compatible with so many foods, recipes run the gamut from figs served alone with a fresh custard to figs served with spicy lamb or chicken. Any way you eat them, you'll be participating in a food custom of biblical proportions.

<https://www.olivemagazine.com/guides/best-ever/best-ever-fig-recipes/>

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## **MILIED MHUX** **TAS-SOLTU** **Mill-Korrispondent taghna** **Kav Joe Attard**

Nahseb taqblu mieghi jekk nistqarr magħkom li l-Milied li għadu kemm halliena ma kienx bħal ta' snin oħra u dan kollu tort tal-pandemija li ħakmet lid-dinja shiha inklużi l-gżejjer ċekjnin tagħna ta' Malta u Għawdex. Is-soltu l-Milied niftakruh b'ħafna presepji, ġiri għar-rigali, knejjes mimlija nies, tiżjin tat-toroq, kunċerti u attivitajiet kulturali, concerts fl-iskejjel u tiżjin fil-klassijiet, ikliet u parties u ferħ kbir ma' kullimkien.

Dal-Milied iżda kien nieqes sew minn dan kollu għaliex niesna qagħdet ftit lura u bosta kienu daww li obdew l-appelli tal-Awtoritajiet tas-Saħħa u qagħdu miġbura d-dar biex kemm jista' jkun ma jithalltux u jagħtu lok għall-imxija li sfortunatament ħasdet ħafna ħajjiet u tefgħet fl-isptar jew kwarantana mijiet ta' nies. B'xorti ħażina dejjem issib daww il-ftit li jiġu jaqgħu u jqumu mid-direttivi mogħtija mill-Istat għall-ġid ta' saħħitna u għalhekk rajna ħafna fuq ix-xtajtiet w oħrajn ma' mejda jieklu u jixxalaw jekk mhux ukoll għal xi saġhtejn Tombra waqt li oħrajn qasmu l-Fliegu bil-karozza u għaddew jiem shāh jiddevertu fil-farm houses imxerrda ma' gżiritna.

Għalkemm issa waslet fostna l-injection li tista' tfejjaqna minn dan il-virus, xorta jeħtieġ li nobdu għal dak kollu li jgħidulna l-awtoritajiet tas-Saħħa li għamlu minn kollox biex pajjiżna ma jbatix bla bżonn u hawn ta' min jgħid grazzi kbira lil tant

'front liners', infermiera, tobbi, professuri li ħarġu għonqhom biex pajjiżna ma jegħreqx.

Naturalment ma nistgħux ngħidu li l-ispirtu tal-Milied ma nħassx; altru li iva! Wara kollox il-veru ferħ tal-Milied ma jeżistix fil-ġiri u x-xalar imma fil-ġabra fil-familja miġbura madwar xi grotta jew presepju flimkien ma' xi ftit ħelu tajjeb u tiżjin fid-dar. U nahseb li riedet tkun dil-pandemija li ħafna għaddew Milied sabiħ u għaziż mal-familja jisimgħu il-Christmas Carols, jaraw xi film ta' Charles Dickens bħal Scrooge, igawdu iktar il-Presepju tal-gagazza jew ġebel jew kartapesta u ddwal jixgħlu u jintfew tas-Siġra tal-Milied. Imma hej immissjajt dik iż-żjara lil Betlem f'Għajnsielem, lill-presepju ta' Herman fil-pjazza ta' dar-raħal kif ukoll il-wirja tal-Presepji ta' Pawlu Stellini taħt il-bini tal-knisja parrokkjali fost l-oħrajn. Siġra sabiha imdawla u mdaqqs tal-inqas quddiem il-Knisja Parrokkjali pattiet xi ftit għal dan id-dwejjaq tiegħi

Fiz-Żebbuġ talinqas stajt ingawdi il-wirja tal-presepji tal-Arċipriet li ma jhallihomx id-dar mistura imma jkaxkarhom lejn il-knisja parrokkjali biex il-parruċċani u daww barra mir-raħal ikunu jistgħu jgawduhom flimkien ma' presepju kbir ieħor f'wahda mill-kappelluni li niftakru jibni l-Arċipriet ta' qabel il-Kan Dun Reuben Micallef. Sibta imma imbarrat il-bieb tal-Presepju ta' Bastjan iż-Żebbuġi u l-bieb ta' David Xuereb li jibni iktar minn presepju wieħed.

Fix-Xagħra imnaxxieli nara presepju qabel ma tilhaq l-inħawi tan-Nazzarenu u ħadt gost narah jagħmel għadd ta' movimenti bħal dak ta' Joseph Attard ta' Triq Sagħtar li wkoll laqagħni f'daru. Fil-Qala rajt żewġ presepji imdaqqs u artistiċi fis-sala taċ-Ċentru Parrokkjali waqt li fix-Xagħra, tant magħrufa għall-presepji, dis-sena ma stajt nara xejn għax jew sibthom magħluqa inkella ma fethux għall-pubbliku dejjem ħtija ta' dil-pandemija għajr daww fil-knisja parrokkjali ta' artisti differenti li ġibdu l-għajn. Jien nagħmel parti mill-Għaqda Hbieb tal-Presepju Għawdex-Malta 1985 imma dis-sena b'xorti ħażina l-Għaqda la setgħet tagħmel is-Seminar Annwali tal-Presepju u lanqas il-Wirja tal-Presepji u Grotti li n-nies tant tagħmel għalija. Paċenza!



Prosit imma lill- iSchola Cantorum Jubilate li harget b'inizjattiva mhux tas-soltu meta fuq il-faċċata enormi tal-Knisja u Kunvent ta' Sant Wistin, mill-kumdita tal-karozza tiegħu, hekk kif raxx id-dlam wiehed seta jgawdi spetaklu ta' kant u mużika tal-Milied – **Reborn** – taht id-direzzjoni għaqlija tas-Sinjura Marouska Attard. Dejjem b'doża tal-Milied, jien ipprezentajt kunċert mużikali mill-Banda Viżitazzjoni tal-Għarb fil-lukanda Kempinsky taht id-direzzjoni tal-Assistent Surmast Marvic Grech u iehor fi pjazza Indipendenza Victoria mill-Gozo Youth Wind Band taht id-direzzjoni ta' Mro Dr Joseph Grech bis-sehem ta' erba kantanti tassew bravi, Corazon Mizzi, Neville Refalo, Ludwig Galea u Ruth Portelli. Naf ukoll li t-tenur żagħżuġ minn Għajnsielem Angelo Muscat flimkien ma' żewġ solisti oħra tella' kunċert mużikali fil-Knisja Katidrali tagħna li ntlaqa' ferm tajjeb. Il-Chorus Urbanus taht id-direzzjoni ta' Mro Dr John Galea ukoll tana kunċert tal-Milied li stajna narawh biss fuq l-iskrin tat-Television tal-Istat. Fil-Knisja Parrokkjali ta' San Lawrenz saret ukoll serata tal-Milied kif ukoll xi 'projection' fuq il-faċċata tal-knisja.

Jista' jkun li saru xi attivitajiet oħra inkella kien hemm xi presepju iehor għall-wiri; jien tkellimt mill-esperjenza personali; wara kollox qgħadt hafna attent biex ma nitperriċx iżżejjed biex nibża' għalija u għal familti. Nittama li aktar ma jgħaddu l-gimghat l-istampa tiċċara iktar biex inkunu nistgħu nohorgu bil-liberta, ingawdu iktar il-knejjes tagħna u l-ħajja terġa' lura għan-normal. Dan jista' jiġri biss jekk nikkoperaw mal-Awtoritajiet u nafdaw iktar f'Sid il-Ħolqien li kultant jaf jgħaddina mill-għarbiel fin tiegħu.

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Dear confreres and consœurs, dear volunteers and supporters of the Order of Malta around the world,

We have experienced a Christmas very different from all the others. It is usually a time of sharing and of being close to our loved ones, especially the elderly and the sick. Christmas this year was instead a time that called for renunciation and a sense of responsibility. Let us allow ourselves to be enlightened by the ray of light coming from Bethlehem.

The year we have left behind has forced us to face unimaginable challenges. The pandemic caused by Covid-19 has changed our behaviour, our way of life, forcing each of us to deprive ourselves of the joy of sharing moments of life with our loved ones.

The situation in which we live requires an individual effort. Never before has it been so clear that the good of all depends on the actions of each one of us. It is our duty to protect the most fragile, the sick, the disabled, the elderly: those who suffer most in this health emergency. Our thoughts are therefore with them, as Pope Francis has asked several times in recent months. "Let us pray today for the elderly, especially for those who are isolated or in nursing homes. They are afraid, afraid of dying alone. They are our roots, our history. They have given us the faith, traditions, the sense of belonging to a homeland."

Let us pray to our Lord that the New Year may represent rebirth and hope for us all, especially for those who have been most affected by the consequences of this virus and the consequent economic crisis.

Fra' Marco Luzzago

**The Lieutenant of the Grand Master**



## Meet Twanny & his miniature models of traditional Maltese fishing boats

Twanny is an ex-fisherman from Marsaxlokk who builds miniature models of Maltese fishing boats; his collection includes replicas of modern fishing vessels as well as the traditional Maltese 'luzzu' and 'kajjik', complete with the bright colours and eyes on the bow. Also known as 'taċ-Ċajna' by

fellow locals in Marsaxlokk, Twanny regularly takes on requests and commissions. His clients, he tells us, are varied, from local homeowners who want to add a touch of Maltese character and flair into their homes, units and living rooms; owners of commercial stores and restaurants who would like to define and differentiate their spaces; to fishermen who are now retired, but want their homes to possess a connection to the sea and their trade.

Twanny learned the craft from his father and grandfather back in his youth; during this time, he explains to us, he would often prefer going on fishing trips with his grandfather than attending school (despite his father's protests). While he learned the craft of manipulating timber and building models at a very young age, he abandoned this hobby once he started working full-time to support his family. Between working in the oil rigs in Libya, and then returning to Malta to work as a full-time fisherman, Twanny had little time for building models and miniatures – a practice he considered as playtime.

Twanny only returned to the craft after he retired as a fisherman just a few years ago. With newly-found time on his hands, and a desire to maintain some connection to his seafaring past, Twanny started building miniature models of fishing boats. His first creation, an original modern fishing boat, quickly attracted the attention of friends and fellow fishermen, and soon after, commissions for replicas and originals poured in. With timber he acquired from friends and neighbours, inventive use of rope, paper and plastic, and a host of ornaments from lego and playmobil collections belonging to his grandsons, Twanny's model making took off.

Here's our favourite facts about the 'Luzzu', Malta's

- Like the Maltese balcony, the Antiporta, our old busses, and the Maltese lira, the luzzu is often considered as a symbol of Malta.
- This type of boat developed in the early 20th century, although it is very similar to much older traditional Maltese boats such as the *ferilla*.
- Early *luzzijiet* were mainly used as transport vessels, but after they were motorised they became popular as fishing boats. Modern versions of the boats have a deck and some have a cabin.
- Today, no new *luzzijiet* are built, but a few hundred boats are still in operation, particularly at Marsaxlokk.
- The boats are brightly painted in shades of yellow, red, green and blue, and the bow is normally painted with a pair of eyes. These eyes may be the modern survival of an ancient Phoenician custom (also practiced by the ancient Greeks and Egyptians); they are referred to as the Eye of Horus or of Osiris. They are said to protect the fishermen while at sea.

**Would you like a miniature of a traditional fishing boat inside your home, office or commercial space?** If you speak Maltese, Twanny welcomes calls to his phone number at 99887431. If you prefer to speak in English, it's easier to send a message to his Facebook page to get in touch with his family, who manage the page.