



# The Voice of the Maltese

*(We are for the Greater Malta)*

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## The *GIRGENTI* PALACE

*The Palace, in the limits of Siggiewi was built in 1625 as the summer residence of the Inquisitor. It is currently serving as official residence of the Prime Minister of Malta.*

FRITZ



# Raġġ ta' dawl u doża ta' tama

**F**limkien ma' 26 stat imsieheb fl-Unjoni Ewropeja u hafna pajjiżi oħra madwar id-dinja, fosthom l-Istati Uniti u l-Inghilterra li bdew xi jiem qabel, fis-27 ta' Diċembru li għadda Malta wkoll tat bidu għat-tilqim bil-vaċċin kontra l-COVID-19. Kien mument li hafna qed iqisuh bhala raġġ ta' dawl u doża ta' tama, li forsi mhux tant il-boghod li jingheleb il-virus u l-varjant li fegġ wara.

Meta fil-preżenza tal-Prim Ministru Robert Abela u d-Deputat Prim Ministru u Ministru għas-Saħħa Chris Fearne, 24 siegħa wara li l-vaċċin wasal f'Malta l-infermiera Rachel Grech mit-taqsim tal-mard infettiv fl-isptar f'Mater Dei saret l-ewwel persuna f'Malta li nġhatat it-tilqima tal-vaċċin, il-mument ġie mfišser bhala wiehed storiku.

Hawn il-Maltin ġew insé li donnu li bdiet tfigġ bis-serjetá t-tama li hafna minna konna ġejna mwieghda li se jasal. Inġhata bidu halli nibdew it-triq li tista' twassal għan-normalità u għall-irkupru wara disa' xhur ta' twerwir u bidla f'hajjitna kontra għadu li nafu li qieghed hemm imma ma stajniex narawh.

Wara Rachel ġew imlaqqma bil-vaċċin tal-Pfizer-Biontech 54 haddiema oħra fost l-hekk imsejja *frontliners* li kienu fost l-eqreb lejn il-periklu fil-Mater Dei.

Jumejn wara, Felicienne Cini, Senior Staff Nurse fit-taqsim tal-kura intensiva fl-isptar ta' Ghawdex saret l-ewwel fil-gżira ġirien li nġhatat it-tilqima. Fil-jiem ta' wara bdew jitleqqmu sezzjonijiet oħra tal-popolazzjoni, fosthom tobba u dawk fid-djar tal-anzjani u l-aktar vulnerabbli.

Il-gvern, flimkien mat-tobba, l-infermiera u oħrajn wassluna li nibdew nittamaw li fl-aħħar tal-mina hemm id-dawl. Stajna nibdew nahsbu bis-serjetá li forsi l-battalja kontra l-virus li bidel hajjet il-popli kollha tad-dinja, jinsab fil-qrib li jiġi meġħlub.

Hu stmat li sas-sajf, ikunu tlaqqmu mill-inqas żewġ terzi tal-popolazzjoni, biex b'hekk jintlaħaq l-ammont mehtieg ta' 70% u aktar ta' immunitá fost il-poplu Malti biex it-tilqima tkun effettiva kontra l-Covid, u fi kliem il-Prim Ministru, "nibdew il-hajja lura lejn in-normalità".

Fl-Awstralja l-vaċċin se jibda jiġi amminstat fil-bidu ta' Marzu.

Hajjet il-popli fid-dinja kważi nqalbet ta' taht fuq, imma li kieku s-sena 2020 kienet storja, kienet tkun wahda li tista' tirrakkontaha bla ma tghid kelma, għax imqar li tara n-nies bil-maskri kienet tghid hafna.

Kienet sena li ġiet iddominata mill-Koronavirus, imsejjah Covid-19. Kien hemm



L-infermiera Rachel Grech tingħata t-tilqima fil-preżenza tal-Prim Ministru Robert Abela (*fin-nofs*) u d-Deputat PM Chris Fearne

waqtiet madwar id-dinja li għal xi mument serqu x-xena, bħall-*bushfires* fl-Awstralja u f'xi stati fl-Amerka, ir-razziżmu li qabad jerga' jerga' rasu, is-solidarjetá li nweriet mal-imġarrab, il-protesti, l-elezzjoni Presidenzjali fl-Istati Uniti u l-imġieba xejn presidenzjali ta' Donald Trump li ried jibqa' mwahhal mas-siġġu tal-poter minkejja li ġie rreġettat min-niesu.

Sar hafna taqlib f'hajjitna u forsi mietu qrabatna kaġun tal-infezzjoni. Imma fl-ists waqt nistghu nġhidu li tghallimna wkoll kif nġixu u x'inhuma tassew dawk l-affarijiet l-aktar importanti f'hajjitna.

It-teknoloġija ntuzaat ferm aktar u sirna hafna aktar dipendenti fuq il-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni. Indunajna li kien hemm min uża l-mezzi soċjali biex ikompli johloq l-inkwiet fit-tixrid ta' aħbarijiet foloz.

Hafna laqghat importanti saru virtwali, fil-waqt li l-ispettakli fit-teatri bħal sparixxew, imma għall-inqas kien hemm min ha inizjattivi godda kif jista' jwassal il-messaġġ u wkoll iferrah lill-pubbliku. Kien hemm min seta' beda jahdem mid-dar, fil-waqt li fost min tilef xoghlu, kemm jekk b'mod permanenti u/jew temporanju, sab il-hin jivvinta x'jista' jagħmel ta' ġid, għalih jew għal haddiehor. Uħud anke rnexxielhom jisko-

pru li għandhom hiliel oħra.

Spicċa l-mod kif insellmu lil xulxin permezz ta' xi tghannieqa jew li niehdu b'idejn xulxin, u s-sliem kien biss b'mod vizwali. Sa ftit xhur oħra hemm it-tama li nerġghu nibdew noqorbu aktar fizikament lejn l-gheżiež tagħna. Allura prova oħra li tassew li kienu l-maskri fuq wiċċna u mhux qalbna li rrakkontaw l-istorja.

Nghiduha, kemm il-maskri, kif ukoll metodi oħra ta' mitigazzjoni, bħall-hasil tal-idejn, u li ma ningabru f'folol, mhux se jispicċaw f'hakka t'ghajn. Jinhtieg nibqghu attenti. Imma għat-tajeb jew għall-hażin, l-2020 qatt m'ahna se ninsewha.

In-naħa forsi minn xi daqqiet umoristika ġiet mill-fatt li ma kienx hemm għalfejn jiġi l-Karnival biex jintlibsu l-maskri, u ċerti esperessjonijiet jew kliem li maż-żmien twarrbu, reġġu hađu l-hajja.

Jekk inqis l-ilsien Malti, issa kulhadd sar jifhem it-tifsir ta' swobbing, li tahdem mid-dar (*ir-remote working*), il-*contact tracing* (ma' min kien meta wiehed forsi ttiehed), pandemija u mxija (tal-mard jew virus), mitigazzjoni, protokoll, eċċ.

Tassew li mill-hażin ġieli jaf ukoll johroġ it-tajeb, fosthom li għarafna nġhożzu lil xulxin, u skopri hiliel godda.

## Tispikka l-ġenerożità tal-Maltin

**F**il-jiem li kabruna, il-poplu Malti reġa' wera l-ġenerożità tiegħu kemm b'atti tajbin li b'xi mod jghin lil haddiehor, u aktar tangibbli bl-ghoti tal-flus fi għbir ta' fondi organizzati ta' kull sena, fost kollox l-hekk imsejja *L-Istrina* organizzata mill-Fondazzjoni

*Community Chest Fund* (MCCF) taht il-patroċinju tal-President ta' Malta l-ET George Vella u martu Miriam.

Minn donazzjonijiet tal-pubbliku u xi kumpanniji waqt Teleton ta' 12-il

siegħa l-ghada tal-Milied, fis-26 ta' Diċembru nġabret is-somma ta' €6,583,542.

Hi somma li ssorprendiet lill-President li wkoll esprima sodisfazzjon li fil-mument tal-prova l-poplu Malti u Ghawdex qam għall-okkażjoni bit-turija ta' ġenerożità u solidarjetá li wassal għas-somma li b'hekk l-MFCC se tkun tista' tghin, b'mod speċjali lil pazjenti morda bil-kanċer.

Emozzjonat għall-aħħar, il-President George Vella ippropona li l-jum tas-26 ta' Diċembru jibda jkun magħruf bhala Jum l-Għaqda Nazzjonali.

Imbagħad fl-Ewwel tas-Sena, f'teleton oħra fl-hekk magħrufa bhala *Festa ta' Ġenerożità, għad-Dar tal-Providenza*, nġabret is-somma rekord ta' €2,531,540.

(Ara wkoll paġna 14)



Il-President ta' Malta George Vella u martu Miriam juru l-ferh tagħhom fil-gabra tal-Istrina

## Recollections of a Maltese octogenarian

# My Forties: Experiences of a wartime Malta



Joseph Lanzon

**M**y Forties! They were terrible years for all Maltese but most especially for us who lived in the Cottonera area that because of the nearby dockyard was a prime target for bombing by the German and Italian air forces.

Families in our area were strongly advised to evacuate to safer towns and villages in the northern part of the Island. Most families of the Cottonera area hurried out of their homes amid confusion and chaos, taking with them bundles of necessary possessions.

Hired buses, trucks, karozzini, carts, wheelbarrows or prams were used, but many made the long journey on foot. We evacuated to Rabat staying with a distant relative of the family.

My father and our neighbour had a hard task digging out an underground shelter in their backyard. There we would be safe from the continuous bombing raids. Our small private shelter had a connection with the public shelter that, I believe, was a requirement for safety reasons in case of the small shelter becoming blocked by falling stones and rubble.

I went to the primary school in Rabat but at first the local children did not like us evacuees. They thought that we would disrupt their tranquil life. They ridiculed our way of speaking and made fun of us. They called us names and sometimes ganged on us to beat us. But eventually they accepted us and we became friends.

The authorities warned us not to pick up suspicious objects from the streets. I remember that enemy warplanes used to drop small explosives looking like pens, balls, thermoses and other attractive objects. Obviously they were meant for children.

They also dropped other small bomb devices called 'anti-personnel' bombs that would explode as they hit the ground scattering shrapnel and splinters all around. I also recall that, ignoring the official warnings, we children used to drop horseshoe shaped magnets dangling on a string inside the 'spralli' narrow air holes on the iron grid

covering cellars at certain houses in our street lifting up small shrapnel for collection. We never realised the danger we were in.

On January 16, 1941 the battered and heavily damaged aircraft carrier 'Illustrious' limped into the Grand Harbour heading urgently to the dockyard to carry out emergency repair work following heavy bombing from German Junkers in the straits of Sicily.

They were determined not to let it enter Malta. But it did!

The Germans followed it to the island and recommenced their heavy onslaught of bombing and dive-bombing. As a result many houses in Cottonera were destroyed. I remember my father returning from work at the dockyard telling us "our house in Bormla is no more!" We lost all the possessions that we had left there. For the first time in my life I saw my mum cry along with her two aunts who lived with us.

### World War II left destruction and desperation among the Maltese community

I received my first Holy Communion at St. Paul's Church in Rabat on July 19, 1942, just after coming out of the shelter following a siren warning of an approaching air raid. There were mostly local children but there were also a small community of evacuees from the Cottonera and Harbour areas.

I remember our parents presented my brother and me to 'Our Lady of the Grotto'. My father promised 'Our Lady' that if we survived the war, the whole family would make a pilgrimage on foot from Bormla to the grotto in Rabat.

After the war we had second thoughts on this. How could we walk all that way? My father sought advice from a priest who told him he could not make a promise binding his family without telling them beforehand. Consequently he was advised to change the promise to a more practical one! We did go the 'Our Lady of the Grotto', but by bus!

How appropriate the words, of the wartime song 'The White Cliffs of Dover' by the British Forces sweetheart Vera Lynn instilling hope of peace and confidence for a better future!



Children playing among the wreckage of a WW2 plane

*"There will be bluebirds  
Over the white cliffs of Dover,  
Tomorrow, just you wait and see.  
There would be love and laughter,  
And peace ever after.  
Tomorrow, when the world is free.*

At the end of the war we returned to war-torn Bormla staying in a family house until ours was reconstructed. My city, which was a thriving commercial centre and a beehive of activity before the war, was now a devastated place. My friends and I played among the debris, rubble and semi-standing houses.

We - the children and youths of Bormla - pulled down the houses left semi-demolished, by tying a rope around the walls and then pulled with all our might until they came crumbling down. The refugees were now retuning to rebuild their homes to continue their lives as best they could. The terrible war had ended and the future was beckoning. A new life was to begin.

The fear of the war had ended but for us children other fears, more terrifying, remained. I remember the fear of 'Il-Hares' (ghosts) said to be lurking in old houses; of the 'Bellija' that supposedly lived at the bottom of wells ready to swallow up kids if they fell in, and of the 'Kaw Kaw' and the 'Baw Baw' who kidnapped children if they are found outside their house at night.

To cap it all, over-zealous priests oft repeated in us the fear of hell after death "where sinners are roasted forever, and of the ugly devil with a tail and a large fork-like weapon".

I recall with dread my daily experience at school when I had to queue with other children to take a spoonful of cod Liver oil known in Maltese as 'Żejt tal-Huta'. It made my stomach lurch so much that I always carried a sweet to pop it into my mouth immediately I swallowed the oil.

While at Primary school I awaited eagerly for Friday afternoons when, every fortnight, we bought the 'Children's Own' - a small children's paper with very few pages, having comic like strips, stories and other interesting information.



Cottonera after the raid on HMS Illustrious



HMS Illustrious after entering Grand Harbour on January 16, 1941



**Q.** In a couple of months' I will be age-pension age and will be applying for the age pension. We have a small investment property worth around \$400,000 with an outstanding mortgage of \$180,000. Will Centrelink calculate the full \$400,000 towards the asset test or will they deduct the outstanding mortgage?

**A.** When coming to calculate your age pension Centrelink will deduct the outstanding mortgage as this mortgage is on an investment property. Had it been on your own home the mortgage would not have been deducted.

**Q.** I am 50 years of age and have just discovered that I had some lost super. The amount is only around \$22,000 but there is a Life and TPD insurance cover of \$250,000. The premium is not very high so I would like to continue to hold onto this super fund. Is there anything I should be looking at?

**A.** You should first of all see how much the premium would cost if you had the same cover in your current super fund. If the premium is not much higher than what is being paid through the super you found, you should include this cover in your current super and rollover the remaining funds to it and close the found super.

If the existing premiums are much lower, than you could decide to hold onto this found super but you would need to make a small contribution annually to make sure that the insurance is maintained. It is important to compare the insurance cover and seek advice.

**Q.** I have a term deposit of \$50,000 and I was planning to invest this in some di-

rect shares as term deposits are not earning much interest and I feel that this money is not working hard for me. Will I be doing the right thing?

**A.** You are right in saying that term deposits are not earning much interest these days. However, direct shares are very aggressive and could be very volatile. If you have never invested in direct shares you may find them to be a stressful investment.

You should approach a share broker who will explain to you how direct shares operate. While term deposits are earning very little, the actual capital is stable. In the case of direct shares, if you needed to cash some of them in because you needed the money, the share price could be both above what you bought them for as well as below. You need personal advice prior to investing in direct shares.

**Q.** My mother is in her 80s and living in an aged care facility. She is on a small part age pension. Her total assets are about \$550,000 sitting in her bank account.

*This is a monthly service offered by The Voice of the Maltese in which Marie Louise Muscat from the Fiducian Financial Services helps our readers understand the complexities associated with financial planning. If you need more advice send an email to Marie Louise via: malte-voice@gmail.com.*



Her needs are not much and her main expense is her daily basic fee and means tested fee to the facility. She wishes to gift my sister and I \$50,000 each this year. Will this affect her small part age pension?

**A.** As the money in her bank account is already being treated as her asset it will not affect her part age pension at all. It will increase her age pension by a small amount as she is only allowed to gift \$10,000 per annum, so the remaining \$90,000 will continue to be treated as her asset for the next five years.

However, it would probably reduce her means tested fee seeing as this will be calculated on \$450,000 rather than \$550,000. So, if she wants to gift you and your sister this amount, all that you need to make sure of is that the funds she has left will be sufficient to continue to cover her ongoing costs to the aged care facility for the rest of her life.

**Q.** Our son is going through a divorce. He runs his own business but the property where the business operates from is in joint names with his wife. He needs to buy out his wife completely and has asked us to either lend him \$250,000 or go guarantor for him. Should we do this?

**A.** By going guarantor, you are agreeing to cover any costs that your son will not be able to cover himself on this \$250,000 loan. If you are happy to do this, you should make sure that you have all this in writing and well documented. This will protect both your son and yourselves.

If you decide to lend him the money you should also document this in a way that if he has not paid you back on your demise, this will be deducted from his share of the inheritance so that your other children will not be disadvantaged.

This document contains factual information only and is not intended to provide any recommendation or opinion in relation to the topic/s discussed.

Fiducian recommends that you seek advice from a professional to address any issues that may be raised by this article. Fiducian accepts no liability for any loss suffered by anyone who has acted on any information in this document

## Investing or Retiring?

Understand your options. Talk to Fiducian.



Marie-Louise Muscat is fluent in Maltese and English and can assist you in:

- Wealth Creation
- Pre Retirement and Retirement Advice
- Maximising Centrelink Benefits
- Tax effective strategies in retirement e.g. sale of property
- Rearranging finances to minimise ongoing fees prior to entering Aged Care facilities



Marie-Louise Muscat  
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ABN 46 094 765 134 AFSL and Australian Credit Licence 231103

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# Il-festa religjuża Maltija fl-imghoddi

## Hafna mid-drawwiet ghadhom maghna

Fl-irhula Maltin, aktar milli fl-ibliet, tigi ċelebrata bil-kbir il-festa tradizzjonali, b'rabta mal-qaddisin patrni tal-lokal, li t-tnejn għaliha ssir sa minn jiem jew gimghat qabel. M'iniex nirreferi għal dawk li jaħdmu n-nar (għax dawn jib-dew ferm aktar kmieni), jew għal dawk tal-armar (għax dawn ukoll jib-dew ir-restawr u jaħsbu għal armar minn aktar kmieni), imma għall-familji Maltin, u l-aktar għal żminijiet fl-imghoddi.

Sa minn gimghat qabel kienu jib-dew jizbghu l-faccata tad-dar, izejnu mill-aħjar li jistgħu darhom, jaħsbu għal xi libsa jew żarbun gdid, filwaqt li l-irgħiel jaraw li jkollhom qatgħa xagħar tajba.

Fl-aħħar jiem ta' qabel il-festa l-parrukkiera kienu jkunu mimlija daqs bajda u jibqgħu jkarkru sa tard filgħaxija. Din kienet id-dehra ġenerali tal-festi Maltin.

Sa minn gimgha qabel, il-mara tad-dar kienet taħseb x'għandha tneji bħala ikla speċjali għal jum il-festa. Xi daqsxejn ta' hlewwa ma tonqosx lanqas għal xi grokk maskta tal-festa. Ix-xbejba kienet tishaq ma' ommha li tiksbilha xi biċċa drapp għal libsa għdida, il-waqt dik il-hajta deheb lanqas ma kienet tonqos.

L-irgħiel lanqas ma kienu jonqsu li jilbsu mill-aħjar f'jum il-festa tar-raħal. Hafna minnhom, nodfa xummiema, kien ikollhom il-beritta jew kappell għall-okkażjoni, jiddandnu b'xi sidirja għdida u qmis irrigata, u bil-glekk tal-festa. Il-polka żgur li kienet tkun parti mill-libsa sewda tagħhom.

Il-festa tar-raħal kienet (u sa ċertu punt għadha) haġa mix-tieqa hafna. Anke għall-bidwi tal-imghoddi, għall-aħħar jiem tal-festa tar-raħal tiegħu kien jistrieħ xi ftit u jqatta' aktar hin fil-knisja u l-pjazza tar-raħal igawdi l-atmosfera tal-festa.

Quddiem iz-zuntier kulhadd dahkan u ferhan, jisma' l-banda tar-raħal bil-marċi sbieħ tal-festa u jiggosta u japprezza l-armar, l-aktar dak imżanzan għal dik s-sena, mat-toroq, l-aktar jekk ikollu xi sehem mill-hidma tiegħu.

Naturalment, dik it-titwila lejn is-sema biex jara u jisma' l-



Armar ta' barra tpikament Malti waqt festa f'wieħed mill-irhula

zghazagh fuq tagħhom kienu jiżfnu u jgħannu.

Naturalment, f'jum il-festa kulhadd johroġ minn daru biex jara l-purċissjoni hierġa. Il-qofol ikun xhin fil-bieb ewlieni tal-knisja jaraw l-istatwa, forsi wkoll imzejna b'xi gojjellerija li ngħatat lilha b'devozzjoni jew wegħda.

Ir-reffigħa, magħżula mill-kappellan jew l-arċipriet minn fost dawk l-aktar akkaniti tal-festa, l-aktar dawk fuq quddiem, kienu jkunu stirati bil-konfratija llatmata jilqgħu l-applaws ta' dawk preżenti. Xi qatra dmugħ, l-aktar min-nisa anzjani, u l-innijiet ma jonqsux, lanqas it-tgemgim minn taħt l-ilsien ta' talb.

Dan il-mument sabiħ ta' darba fis-sena hi okkażjoni biex wieħed jiltaqa' mal-ieħor, gieli jkunu ilhom ma jaraw lil xulxin, u jikkumentaw dwar is-sbuhija tal-festa, filwaqt li n-nisa aktar ikun fehsiebhom li jiddandnu b'xi libsa għdida tal-festa. Wara lura għal djarhom biex isegwu l-festa mit-triq ta' fejn joqogħdu jekk minn minn quddiemhom tghaddi l-purċissjoni. Fl-imghoddi t-triq tal-purċissjoni f'xi rhula kienet tkun itwal minn tal-lum.

Fl-imghoddi il-familja Maltija kienet tingabar flimkien l-aktar f'jum il-festa, u dawk li joqogħdu barra r-raħal, dak-inhar jiġu bil-familja għall-festa.

L-ghors u l-pjaċir kbir tal-omm kienu jkunu fl-aqwa tagħhom għax migħura u u magħquda biex jiċcelebraw il-festa u ma jnsewx jixtru dik il-biċċa qubbajt biex jehduha lejn darhom.

Il-qniepen tal-knisja għadhom sallum iwasslu l-messaġġ ta' ferħ tal-festa filwaqt li l-qassisin, u l-abbatini b'dik l-ispezz-lizza llatmata, deħlin b'għirja l-knisja għall-aħħar jiem tal-festa. Naturalment, il-knisja tkun bl-aħjar armar possibbli bl-istatwa tal-qaddis jew qaddisa fin-nofs mogħtija l-isbah innijiet ta' gieħ u glorja.

Din kienet id-dehra tal-festa tradizzjonali u tipikament Maltija tal-irhula fl-imghoddi. Hafna minn dawn id-drawwiet għadhom jinħassu għax il-festi f'Malta għandhom għeruq fondi u qawwija grazzi għal missirijietna li bnewhom fuq sisien sodi.



Purċissjoni tal-imghoddi fil-Munxar, Għawdex

# Messaġġ minn Mons Alfred Vella



Mons Alfred Vella

## *Jispiċċa minn Direttur tal-Kummissjoni Emigranti u jithabbar is-suċċessur tiegħu*

**F**il-messaġġ tiegħu li jibgħatilna kull sena, din id-darba Mons Alfred Vella qalilna li se jispiċċa minn Direttur tal-Kummissjoni Emigranti u fisser it-tluq tiegħu b'dan il-mod:

F'Settembru, Mons. Arċisqof Charles Scicluna bagħat għaliha biex jgħidli li jix-tieqni nibdel il-hidma tiegħi fid-djoċesi. Ta-

labni biex immur il-Kurja u nmexxi l-uffiċċju żwīgijiet.

Haġa tal-ghageb, dan ukoll kien uffiċċju li fiż-żmien kien immexxi minn Mons. Philip. Donnu li d-destin irid li nibqa' nimxi wara l-passi ta' Mons. Philip!!

Mons. Arċisqof qalli wkoll li kien se jahtar lil Dun Anton Damato, qassis żagħżuġh,

miż-Żurriq, biex ikun is-suċċessur tiegħi. Qabel gie ordant saċerdot, dan il-qassis iġgradwa fil-liġi ċivili, sar avukat, u għalhekk hu qassis imzejjien b'diversi kwalitajiet biex ikompli jmexxi din il-Kummissjoni.

Il-Covit 19 wasslitna biex nagħalqu għall-erba' xhur l-uffiċċji tagħna fil-belt Valletta imma bqajna nagħtu s-servizz kemm jista' jkun b'effiċjenza u interess. Rajna li hutna r-refuġjati kemm jista' jkun ikunu protetti, u għandhom x'jieklu, għax hafna minnhom tilfu x-xogħol ukoll.

Imma l-akbar daqqa ta' harta l-Kummissjoni Emigranti haditha meta sirna nafu li Joseph Calleja, in-neputi ta' Mons. Philip, kien marid serjament tant li fid-19 ta' Lulju tilfnieh.

M'għandniex xi ngħidu Mons. Philip Calleja ma setax jibqa' jattendi bħal qabel, bejn l-età venerabili tiegħu kif ukoll ir-restrizzjonijiet impost mid-Dar tal-Kleru, fejn joqgħod. Tilfna wkoll l-okkazjoni li niltaqgħu għall-Konvenzjoni tal-Maltin ta' Barra li qed issir kull hames snin. Nittamaw li l-konvenzjoni tkun tista' tiġi organizzata din is-sena u hekk nittamaw li nerġghu niltaqgħu.

Dawn il-bidliet kollha ma jnaqqsu xejn mill-hegga u l-entuzjażmu biexi l-Kummissjoni Emigranti tkompli tagħti s-servizzi b'risq hutna fil-vjaġġ tal-hajja. Jista' jkun hemm differenzi bil-mod kif issir din il-hidma imma mhux tieqaf.

Għalhekk fil-klima ta' dawn il-bidliet kollha, nawguraw sena għdida mimlija risq, barka u prosperità. Nibqgħu f'kuntatt halli nibqgħu familja waħda kemm il-Maltin li jgħixu f'Malta kif ukoll l-Maltin ta' barra u hekk tibqa' l-familja Maltija kollha flimkien.

Sahha u barka, għall-aħħar darba minn naha tiegħi bhala Direttur tal-Kummissjoni Emigranti.



Tagħmel kull jum  
l-aħjar li jista' jkun

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## New Year's message from Hon. Alex Hawke MP

(Australia's Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs)

I send my best wishes to the Maltese Community for the New Year 2021.

It is a great privilege to be appointed Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, particularly as the child of a migrant family that arrived in Australia seeking the safety, freedom and opportunities this country affords.

Australia's great migration story will always be an essential part of our nation's ongoing prosperity and success.

Last year has been no ordinary one. Drought, bushfires, floods and a global pandemic have combined to disrupt our normal way of life and to test our resilience. COVID-19 separated many of us from our loved ones – sometimes for months

– and sadly, in some cases forever.

While there were many heart-breaking stories of sacrifice, care and compassion, there were also many stories of Australians coming together to help one another.

Australia is one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world. Our social cohesion has never been more important than it is at this challenging time.

Our strength and resilience in the face of adversity comes from our unity as Australians, regardless of faith or cultural background. Our unity is based on our commitment to a set of core values that underpin our society, including freedom of religion, mutual respect and equality of opportunity.

I wish you a safe and happy New Year.



*Alex Hawke*



Victor Borg's portrait, and (on right): Mrs Terry Borg, the wife (left), with Victor Borg's twin sister Janette Oggi unveiling the portrait

## Portrait of Victor Borg late MCCV President unveiled

A good-sized gathering as allowed by the current Covid-19 restrictions recently attended the Chapel of St Paul's, Parkville, for the unveiling and blessing of a portrait of the late Victor Borg, former President of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria (MCCV).

Victor's wife, Terry Borg, and his twin sister, Janette Oggi, made the unveiling. Fathers Lonnie Borg, and Edwin Agius, mssp blessed the portrait. Victor's son Ben Janette's daughter, Tanya, Sister Doris from Rosary Home and members of a number of Maltese associations were also present.

In his opening address Mr Joe Stafrace, who along with 10 other persons who helped financially and otherwise organised the event, said that for many years, Victor had worked hard for the MCCV and the Maltese Community.

He recalled that when Victor wasn't in the best of health and on many occasions he used to drive him to the centre, he would tell him that there was a lot of work to be done. He went on to say that his family used to miss him when he gave so much time to the Maltese Community.

A Holy Mass followed the unveiling.

The acrylic portrait is the work of artist Alex Toyne, the daughter of Peter Toyne, the artist who created the mural at the Victor Borg Hall, at the Maltese Centre, Parkville.

Paul Vella (Melbourne)

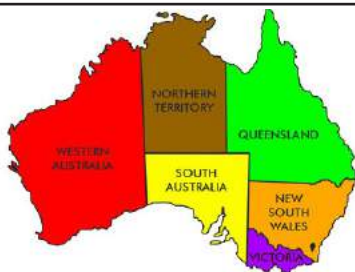
Are there seniors in your community who need help at home?



Our local Home Care team help seniors to live independently at home.

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# Have your say/ Xi trid tgħid?



## The Voice of the Maltese

### fortnightly magazine

This is a bi-lingual (in English and Maltese) fortnightly magazine that specifically targets all Maltese living abroad with emphasis on the Australian and Maltese scenes.

The magazine can be read in flip-book or PDF format online. A pdf copy is sent via email on request.

Hard copy subscription is also available at a cost.

#### Editors:

**Malta:** Joseph Cutajar

**Australia:**

Lawrence Dimech: MOM,  
OAM, JP

email address:

maltesevoice@gmail.com

Letters for publication in *The Voice* magazine, either in Maltese or English should include name, e-mail address and residence of the writer, and be e-mailed to: maltesevoice@gmail.com.



Now you can also  
join us on facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/thevoice-ofthemalese>

## Your letters/ L-ittri tagħkom ...

## The Voice's commitment to high-quality journalism

Joe Debono from Dhurruk NSW writes:

Do more people read the fine print? They definitely do, and *The Voice of the Maltese* magazine is proof of that.

I am a subscriber to the printed copy of the magazine and I am happy to say that I am satisfied as I always get my printed copy efficiently delivered to me by post, and on time.

When I attend Maltese centres and meet and talk to elderly groups, they all ask for

the printed edition. I put this down to the stellar results and *The Voice* magazine's commitment to high-quality journalism at a time when factual news has never been more important.

After sixty years in Australia, one would expect the community to be treated with the respect it deserves by some quarters.

People are fed up with recycled articles and copy and past repetitions by other media.

## Malta be brave and follow the Aussies

Toni Bajada from Bundaberg Qld writes:

Even thou it was a belated, decision, the Australian Federal Government took a huge and courageous step forward by re-wording the national anthem to reflect the true history of the indigenous people that were living in this country before the whites colonised the land. (read the report on page 16).

We are now no longer a NEW continent but a ONE continent. In my view, this change was appropriate.

When will our Malta be brave enough to do likewise about *L-Innu Malti*? Is the term "hakkiem" still relevant to contemporary Malta, that attained independence over 56 years ago and its complete freedom from colonialism 41 years ago?

In my view, this "lil min jahkima" carries explicit colonial connotations. After all, Dun Karm penned the *Innu Malti* in 1922 and it was adopted as Malta's national anthem in 1941 when it was under colonial rule.

## There's always two sides of the coin

Joseph Buttigieg from Toongabbie NSW writes:

Reading the final series of 'Busting the Myth' in the last issue of *The Voice of the Maltese* (No. 243), I can't help thinking that a politician is always a target for criticism, Churchill is no exception and depending on which side of the fence you are on, there's always two sides of the coin to choose from.

Looking back at history, Malta has often been a political football to a foreign power. When The Knights took over the island, the Maltese had no choice and when the Knights surrendered it to the French, again they had no choice.

However, when they blockaded the French, they chose to be 'subject' to England and that was the right choice at the time. I remember when I was a kid growing up in Malta, my father blamed Churchill for the war in Malta, but what choice did Malta have? England or the two dictators, Mussolini and Hitler? Malta was a jewel in the Mediterranean, and it could not remain neutral.

At the beginning of the war, the British Empire raised a total of 8,586,000 men for military service from the British Isles, India, Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and more than 134,000 from British colonies.....like Malta.

I believe Churchill can be excused for omitting Malta from any decision-making process at that time. However, in his busy schedule as Prime Minister during the war, he found time to visit the island in November 1943 and January 1945, where he was mobbed by the crowd both times.

When the war was over Churchill intervened in decisions to insist Malta receives proper reconstruction funds.



## Dr Hugh McDermott MP State Member for Prospect

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## 100 years of Qantas Airways



With the 100th anniversary of Qantas' founding in late 2020, a new Boeing 787-9 was painted in a commemorative livery, with all of the historical logos of Qantas on the aft fuselage, as well the text "Qantas time capsule to 2120."

# Overcoming the tyranny of distances

Three knockabout men founded Qantas Airways the flag carrier of Australia, in Central Queensland last century. They were, Paul McGinness a Warrnambool boy, Wilmot Hudson Fysh from Tasmania, and Fergus McMaster, from Queensland. Initially it was called Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services Limited.

Paul McGinness went on to fly in WWI and is credited with shooting down seven enemy aircraft; Wilmot Hudson Fysh was an observer and gunner to Paul McGinness in the Australian Flying Corps in WWI, later picking up a DFC for his efforts, while Fergus McMaster, came from a family that made their money in the grazing business. Fergus McMaster was the bank, and because of that, he became Qantas' first Chairman.

Qantas was founded 100 years ago (in 1920) in the wake of a world war and a devastating pandemic. It is the third-oldest airline in the world, after KLM and Avianca. It grew as Australia grew. They had important support roles during wars, national disasters, and celebrations. The founders talked about overcoming the tyranny of distance, and through the years from bi-planes to single wing, to jets to help bring things closer.

The Qantas name comes from "QANTAS", an acronym for its original name, Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services, as it originally served Queensland and the Northern Territory, and it is nicknamed "The Flying Kangaroo".

Its first plane was an Avro 504. It was a biplane from WWI that could carry three people, including the pilot. The first paying customer in 1922 was an 84-year-old gentleman who flew from Longreach to Cloncurry in central Queensland, a distance of

just over 500 kilometres. Even now, it's a long dusty drive through nothing much at all. Back then, it would have been a mammoth journey, whether by vehicle or horseback.

The airline that began international passenger flights in May 1935, is based in the Sydney suburb of Mascot, adjacent to its main hub at Sydney Airport.

Alan Joyce, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Qantas Airways Limited wrote, "The story of Qantas is the story of modern Australia – past, present and fu-

vation – from a 31-stop, 12-day flight to London, to operating the world's first non-stop flights between Australia and Europe.

"But most of all, it's a story shared by all Australians. Thanks for joining us in Qantas' Centenary year as we celebrate that story and look towards creating new stories for future generations to tell."

On March 31, 2013, Qantas formed a joint venture with Emirates, which has been wildly successful for both airlines. At the time Qantas flew from both Melbourne and Sydney to London via Singapore. When the joint venture was formed, Qantas began operating their London flights via Dubai instead.

On 20 October 2019, Qantas Airways completed the longest commercial flight to date between New York and Sydney using Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner in 19hr 20mins.

While Qantas has its critics, it has proved a hardy and resilient airline that has served its home country well over the past one hundred years. None of us will be around to see it, but it would be great to watch the airline rack up a double century in 100 years' time.

The original QANTAS office in Longreach, Queensland (c. 1921)



ture. It's a remarkable and unlikely tale of how a humble air mail operation in outback Queensland became a national carrier flying over 50 million passengers a year.

"It's a story of service – through peace, war, natural disaster and national celebration. It's a story of inno-

Qantas Headquarters in Mascot, Sydney





# Perspettiva

A version of this series in English may be found in the author's blog at:  
<https://ivancauchi.blogspot.com>

kitba ta'  
**IVAN  
 CAUCHI**



## Il-Gżira tal-Milied u riflessjonijiet ta' umanità

Is-sugġett huwa probabbilment inkomprensibbli, għax l-ewwel parti hija traduzzjoni tal-isem Christmas Island, li peress li huwa nom proprju m'għandux isir traduzzjoni tiegħu skont l-aħhar regolamenti tal-Akkademja tal-Malti. Madankollu, peress li għadna kif għaddejna mill-aħhar tas-sena, ma stajtx nirreżisti!

Din il-gżira Awstraljana tinsab fl-Oċean Indjan madwar 1,500 kilometri fuq il-Majjistral tal-kontinent. Hija ftit inqas min-nofs tal-kobor ta' Malta u fl-2016 kellha popolazzjoni ta' inqas minn 2,000. Għandha fawna impressjonanti, b'hafna speċje endemiċi, per eżempju diversi speċje ta' granċ bl-iktar famuż ikun il-granċ l-aħmar, għasafar bhall-*frigatebird*, friefet u oħrajn.

Madankollu, fl-Awstralja din il-gżira hija iktar magħrufa għall-post ta' detenzjoni li għandha. Meta inbena bejn l-2002 u l-2003, dan beda jintuża biex jinżammu persuni li kienu qed ifittxu l-ażil, li hafna minnhom kienu jaqsmu bil-baħar mill-Indoneżja sa' Christmas Island, sakemm għalaq fl-2018.

Sadattant, ġew trasferiti hafna mid-detenu ti lejn facilitajiet simili f'Nauru u Manus Island f'Papua New Guinea. L-ċ-ċentru ta' detenzjoni ta' Manus Island ingħalaq fl-2017, wara li l-Qorti Suprema fil-PNG sabet li kien qed jopera b'mod illegali. Dak ta' Nauru ngħalaq fl-2019.

Fl-2019 il-facilità ta' Christmas Island reġġet infetħet, u fis-6 ta' Jannar 2021, harġet l-aħbar ta' rvell li sar fiċ-ċentru b'rapporti ta' nirien f'partijiet minnu u nuqqas ta' ubbidjenza. F'din il-facilità qed jinżammu residenti temporanji li tilfu l-visa tagħhom minhabba xi att kriminali lli ġew misjuba hatja tagħhom fuq il-kontinent Awstraljan.

Dan mhux l-ewwel irvell li sar matul is-snin f'dan il-post, u r-raġunijiet ikunu pjuttost simili. Din id-darba ssemmev s'issa l-egħluq ta' detenu ti għal 22 siegħa kuljum, nuqqas ta' kuntatt ma' familjari u vizitaturi u ż-żmien indeterminat ta' detenzjoni.<sup>1,2</sup>

Fi snin oħra, protesti u rvelli oħrajn sehhew minhabba l-kundizzjonijiet tal-post, u solidarjetà mal-qtil tar-rifuġjat Reza Barati, fost l-oħrajn.

Il-problema li nara jien, apparti mill-affarijiet li semmejt, hi li l-popolazzjoni ġenerali tisma' fuq dawn il-facilitajiet meta jkun hemm xi rvell, xi protesta, jew ikun hemm xi vjolenza.

Hafna drabi r-raġunijiet li jissemmew u jingħataw ikunu xotti hafna, u għalkemm jinftehm, ma nistax nimmaġina li min jaqrahom fil-fatt jifhem xi jfissru l-kundizzjonijiet li jkun r-raġuni għall-inkwiet, u x'frustrazzjoni li joħolqu, meta l-kundizzjonijiet ikunu barra mill-kontroll tad-detenu ti u l-esperjenza ta' kuljum għal ġimghat, xhur, snin.

Ma niskantax li hafna nies, wara li jaqraw dan kollu, jispiċċaw biex jahsbu, "X'reġa' nqalalhom din id-darba? Jekk m'għogħomx il-post, għax ma' qagħdux fejn kienu u ma ġew xejn 'l hawn", jew "Hadd ma qabbadhom jidhlu l-habs! Tort tagħhom li spiċċaw f'din is-sitwazzjoni".

B'kumbinazzjoni għadni kif spiċċajt naqra l-ktieb *No Friend but the Mountains* miktub minn Behrouz Boochani,<sup>3</sup> Kurd li harab il-persekużżjoni etnika u politika mill-awtoritajiet Iranjani, u mill-Indoneżja pprova darbtejn biex jaqsm lejn l-Awstralja fuq dgħajsa, u fl-ewwel vjaġġ bil-baħar kważi spiċċat b'tragedja ta' għarqa għalih u r-rifuġjati l-oħra, storja li l-Maltin semgħu bħalha kemm 'il darba.

Fit-tieni vjaġġ, fl-2013, Boochani u l-oħrajn li ta' miegħu, wara li ngħabru minn vapur navali Awstraljan, fil-bidu nżamm fi Christmas Island, u wara xahar ittiehed f'post ta' ddetenzjoni ta' Manus Island fejn baqa' sal-għeluq tiegħu fl-2017 minhabba l-politika tal-gvern Awstraljan li applikanti għall-ażil jiġu pproċessati barra mit-territorju Awstraljan.

Li mhux soltu jinstema', imma dettaljat fil-ktieb, kienu l-kundizzjonijiet umani li għadda minnhom - bħal terror, tensjoni, nuqqas ta' ikel, rassa, nuqqas ta' attivitajiet, hmieġ, nuqqas ta' facilitajiet anki sanitarji u l-bqija.

Immaġina li trid tagħmel il-kju biex tiekol, u li meta jmissek issib li l-ikel ikun spiċċa. Immaġina li trid tghaddi minn dan il-proċess tliet darbiet kuljum. Immaġina x'kompetizzjoni tinholq bejn id-detenu ti.

Immaġina li trid tagħmel il-kju biex tmur għal-loki. Immaġina li ssib li jkun bil-hsara, mhux illum jew għada biss, imma spiss. Immaġina li jkollok tfittex post daqsxejn barra mill-ghajn imma fil-miftuh biex tbattal, anke n-numru tnejn, darba wara l-oħra.

Immaġina li ma jista' jiġi jara hadd, għax tinsab fuq gżira żgħira 'l bogħod minn kullimkien. Immaġina li jkollok iċ-ċans li ċċempel lil qrabatek biss darba kull jumejn. Immaġina li meta jmissek, tidhol f'kamra ma' grupp żgħir ta' nies li kollha jmisshom telefon wiehed, li jista' jsibuh jaħdem jew le, u jekk le trid tistenna jumejn oħra biex terġa' ttipprova.

Immaġina li tkun trid tilgħab xi logħba biex tghaddi ż-żmien, għax m'hemm xejn x'tagħmel. Immaġina li tpingi mejda tad-drafts b'idejk biex forst tilgħab logħba drafts, għax logħob m'hemm, u jiġi kkunfiskat mill-gwardjani, għax logħob mhux permess.

Nista' nibqa' sejjer, imma nahseb aħjar li taqraw intom stess dan il-ktieb.

Diffiċli ma tasalx għall-konklużjoni li r-raġuni li ftit informazzjoni tingħata fuq il-kundizzjonijiet ta' postijiet ta' detenzjoni dejjem tkun biex il-popolazzjoni ma tifhimx l-umanità ta' min qiegħed miżmum - kieku l-kundizzjonijiet ikunu magħrufa sew, il-gvernijiet sempliċement ma jithallewx joperaw facilitajiet b'dan il-mod.

Nista' ngħidilkom jien li l-kundizzjonijiet ta' twerriċ li qrajt f'dan il-ktieb huma aghar mill-kundizzjonijiet ta' habs ta' sigurtà massima fi NSW li għamilt sitt snin inżur.

Int kieku kemm tiflaħ tghix f'dawn il-kundizzjonijiet? Tissaporti gurnata? Tnejn? Xi tghidli għal sitt snin? X'tahseb li tagħmel wara dak iż-żmien kollu? Tghid li haqqhom, jew tirvilla int ukoll?

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**..... Will be back soon.....watch this space**

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## 1860 – 2020 anniversary

On Christmas Day 2020, Malta remembered the 160th Anniversary of the birth of Manwel Dimech who was born in Malta's capital, Valletta on December 25, 1860. This is a tribute to the man who has left an indelible mark in Malta's fight for freedom. The man was brought up in extreme poverty and illiteracy, but eventually became a major figure in the public life of Malta.

# Manwel Dimech, a visionary not destined for oblivion

**M**anwel Dimech is not only an associate of every Maltese whatever their political inclination. He is much more than that. In his book about Dimech, Dr. Mark Montebello OP says that he was also a citizen of the entire human race eager for its genuine liberty, political or social.

For 17 years before his exile by the British in 1914, Dimech had almost single-handedly championed in Malta the cause of the dispossessed and the impoverished in order that they could live in dignity and happiness. He advocated Malta's independence more than 50 years before it was attained.

During his public life, he made two powerful enemies who brought him ruin he encouraged women to attain equal rights in education and employment, and enlightened dockyard workers to unionise.

The former is the domain of the Church-dominated Malta with an iron fist, and the latter, the ruthless British colonial government. Dimech made a mortal enemy of both.

His name was not honoured until the late fifties, mainly due to the social impact of the local Church and close political allies. From the early 1960s onward, his name continued to grow in moral stature and acclaim.

Today, he is collectively hailed as a national hero worthy of respect, study and heed. His monument inaugurated on May 1, 1976, was erected opposite Castile Palace, the Prime Minister's office in Malta's capital, Valletta. Streets were named after him in Għaxaq, Qormi, and Rabat in Gozo, and in San Ġiljan, with the Manwel Dimech Bridge.

spoke about the social issues facing the populace of Malta, earning him great support and popular approval.

When the Governor of Malta at the time grew frustrated by Dimech's growing support among the Maltese populace, and urged on by the dominant Catholic Church, he permanently exiled him to Sicily, Italy.

### Manwel Dimech ... he died in exile

Dimech later moved to Egypt, as it was the closest territory controlled by Britain at the time. Despite pleas from high-ranking British officials Dimech was refused permission to return to Malta, and he died in Egypt on 17 April 1921.

It was basically because of this lethal double-pointed spike that Dimech died in exile, broken and humiliated... though not vanquished, for he was not destined to oblivion.

The well researched and expertly written biography of Manwel Dimech, the social reformer, philosopher, journalist, author and poet is exposed in volumes written by Dr. Mark Montebello of the Order of the Preachers (id-Dumnikani). The first volume 1860 – 1921 was published in 2013.

Geraldu Azzopardi, now deceased, also wrote extensively about Dimech and in 1975 published a book about him. Others, like Prof Henry Frendo have also prominently mentioned him in their writings.



Manuel Dimech's statue at Castille



Manwel Dimech was born in Valletta on 25th December 1860. He was brought up in extreme poverty and illiteracy. He spent significant portions of his early life in the Maltese prison system, on charges of petty theft.

At the age of seventeen, he was arrested for the crime of involuntary murder, and sentenced to seventeen years in gaol. In prison Dimech started to educate himself and eventually became a literary figure.

Upon his release from prison Dimech became a teacher and publisher. He became a major figure in Malta's public life. Dimech freely



A young Manwel Dimech

Manwel Dimech's first residence was in 128, St John's Street Valletta ►







## Roundup of News About Malta



*Prime Minister Robert Abela believes ...*

# Malta first country to recover economically from COVID-19

In an interview shortly after the first COVID-19 vaccination was administered in Malta, Prime Minister Robert Abela said he believes that Malta would be the first country to recover economically from the COVID-19 pandemic.

He added that while the people's health is being safeguarded, the first vaccinations signified the start of the road back to recovery and normality and that the vaccine would help Malta become among the first countries to recover economically.

The Prime Minister recalled that because of the pandemic the government had to take some major decisions to safeguard both the health and living conditions of the people.

The decisions included the closing down of the airport, which meant shutting down one-third of the Maltese economy.

He also referred to how the wages supplement had helped avoid the loss of thousands of jobs and the closure of businesses, and also noted the difference between the restrictions in place in Malta and the much stricter ones taken by European countries.

He reiterated the Government's position to continue to provide support for Maltese and Gozitan families and businesses.

Simultaneously, he appealed for prudence and for the people to continue to follow the advice of the health authorities.

Then in his New Year's message, Prime Minister Robert Abela described 2020 as a challenging year in which "we had to confront the biggest challenge since the Second World War, if not the greatest challenge of all time".



Prime Minister Robert Abela (left) and Deputy PM Chris Fearné welcoming the arrival of the first vaccine

He said that whilst other countries and their people were devastated during this period, in Malta, the best qualities of its people emerged.

"Solidarity. Love towards one another. National unity. These qualities must remain, even after the pandemic is over," he said.

## DBRS confirms Malta's A credit rating

Malta keeps enjoying the best ratings ever given by the International agency DBRS that in its latest report confirmed Malta's rating at A (high) level with stable outlook.

In his reaction, Prime Minister Robert Abela said that the report by these international experts highlights that "the new administration has provided a new impetus to efforts to strengthen the rule of law".

In fact, DBRS noted the positive comments by the Venice Commission for the six laws passed recently aimed at delivering further separation of powers, and improving the system of checks and balances in the governance of the country.

In its report, DBRS states that Malta has a "stable policy environment" and, that when considering the governance measures taken

by the World Bank, Malta is in the European average.



The report also commends the government's economic work to counter the effects of the pandemic, noting that the unemployment rate has remained at the same low level as before the coronavirus outbreak. According to DBRS, the wage supplement scheme proved essential in saving jobs.

While pointing out that the support from government was strong, impacting the national debt, it said there was confidence about the prospects for Malta.

DBRS said in its report, that "the fiscal prudence exhibited by Malta in the past", has given it confidence in foreign institutions.

## WHO European chief impressed

Following the arrival of the first consignment of the Covid-19 vaccine, the World Health Organisation (WHO) Chief in Europe Hans Kluge congratulated Malta for the way in which the country had managed to be accorded the same treatment enjoyed by major European countries.

In his message to the Deputy Prime Minister and Health Minister Chris Fearné, Kluge said he had been impressed with the number of vaccines that Malta had managed to obtain, as well as with the speed at which delivery of consignments of the Covid-19 vaccine would be carried out.

While further stating that that this is evidence of the prudent leadership of the Maltese Government, Hans Kluge recalled that it had been Chris Fearné himself who had paved the way for the joint European purchase of medicines when he kick-started the discussion during the Maltese Presidency of the European Union back in 2017.





## Roundup of News About Malta



# New wage supplement scheme to keep consistently protecting jobs



Minister  
Miriam Dalli

To keep supporting companies that are most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has launched a new wage supplement scheme for 2021 leading to an investment of €40 million per month, that is planned to reach the largest range of companies and employees.

Announcing the new scheme, Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Sustainable Development Miriam Dalli said that the new scheme resulted from discussions with business owners and social partners who had ex-

pressed their concerns, and considers what has worked for businesses in recent months.

The new scheme will also support businesses that had to engage new employees to replace those who voluntarily resigned, to continue operating.

"We are increasing investment to save jobs with 60% of applicants maintaining the same wage supplement level, or even receiving more, Minister Dalli said.

The new scheme comes into effect as of this month, with payments being issued monthly. In addition, with stakeholders, the ministry is

also working on a post-March strategy to continue helping companies to move forward and grow.

Maltese and Gozitan businesses were receiving additional support through other schemes covering electricity and rent costs.

With the new scheme, approximately 40% of companies would see an increase in the wage supplement, while 20% would continue to receive the same amount.

Those who fared even better than the previous year and had a good turnover, or suffered a minimum loss of less than 9%, would not be eligible for the supplement.

## Govt. committed to continue supporting the aviation sector

One of the worst hit economic sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic has been the aviation industry. However, the government is committed to give it the support it requires as it tries finding a way out of the challenges brought about by the global pandemic.

Lufthansa Technik Malta that focuses on the maintenance, repair and overhaul of aircrafts employs 550 workers, is among several companies in Malta that have benefitted from the COVID Wage Supplement scheme during 2020.

During a visit the Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Sustainable Development Miriam Dalli made to the facility at Luqa, she pointed out to the company's CEO John Mahon that it would continue to benefit from the revised Wage Supplement Scheme aimed at helping the different sectors retain their workforce.

On his part, Mr Mahon welcomed the continued support from the government and Malta Enterprise. He said that with the commitment of Lufthansa and the ongoing flexibility of its dedicated workforce, they are on the cornerstones required to allow them to navigate their way through the crisis.

## Prof. JJ Cremona dies at 102

Five days before the end of 2020, Malta mourned the death of one Chief Justice Emeritus Prof. John Joseph Cremona who was the Attorney General of Malta during independence talks in 1964 and drafted Malta's Independence Constitution. He died aged 102.

On several occasions between 1971-1981 he assumed the functions of Head of State in an acting capacity several times, as Governor-General and President.

Until his death, he was still considered a great mentor to law students and to persons working in the legal field.

Born in Xagħra, Gozo on 6 January 1918, Cremona held four doctorates: a Dr. jur. from the University of Trieste, an LL.D from the University of Malta, a PhD in law from the University of London, and a DLitt from Sapienza University of Rome.

He served as the country's first representative judge on the European Court of Human Rights and conducted research in constitutional law at the London School of Economics and the Institute for Advanced Legal Studies of the University of London.

He was also a published poet. Both Cecil Day-Lewis and Queen Elizabeth II read his poems at public ceremonies.

In a statement, the Government paid tribute to Cremona, who was considered as one of the best legal brains in the country.

The Government stated that Cremona left an invaluable heritage in the legal field, particularly in constitutional and administrative matters.



## Malta bans single-use plastic products

Following the completion of the public consultation and publication of legal notices, as of the start of 2021, Malta has banned the importation of single-use plastic products, such as plastic bags, cutlery, straws, plates, cotton buds, food containers, and stirrers.

The Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Planning Aaron Farrugia said that the implementation of the measure is ongoing. This year will be transitory for the single-use plastic products already on the market, until the sale and distribution

of these items would be legally prohibited in 2022.

He confirmed that Malta would continue to work to decrease pollution, launch its climate change strategy, and improve its health and that of its ecosystems with tangible results.

Single use plastics are difficult to recycle using traditional methods. They are only used once and then must be disposed of.



Only around 10% of plastic worldwide is recycled with the rest simply being dumped in landfills or even worse finding its way into our oceans which has a significantly detrimental effect on marine life.



# Mix-xena tal-ħajja Maltija

minn Ġużè Camilleri

## Minkejja l-COVID-19 – l-għotjiet JIŻDIEDU

**I**x-xahar ta' Diċembru u l-ewwel jiem ta' Jannar f'dawn l-aħħar snin saru magħrufa għall-maratoni ta' għir ta' fondi għal diversi għaqdiet u organizzazzjoni, b'fors l-eqdem waħda tkun dik magħrufa bħala L-Istrina. Kienet inbdiel fuq skala żgħira fi żmien il-Gvernatur In-ġliżi u min okkupa l-kariga ta' President/a ta' Malta wara żied ikabbarha.

Minhabba l-kriżi tal-COVID-19 fejn il-bwiet ta' ħafna ditti u ndividwi ntlawt sewwa, kien hemm il-biża' li l-konkorrenza għal dawn il-maratoni kienet se tonqos ħafna.

Iżda l-poplu Malti u Għawdx ta twegiba u wera li anke meta jkun għaddej minn sit-

wazzjoni xejn feliċi xorta lest li jdahhal idejh fil-but u jipprova jgħin li min ikun fil-bżonn.

Infatti flimkien mad-ditti u organizzazzjonijiet Maltin, l-poplu wera l-appoġġ għall-Istrina, organizzata mill-fondazzjoni Malta Community Chest Fund, billi kkontribwixxa s-somma ta' aktar minn €6.5 miljun, li hi €360,000 akbar mis-sena l-oħra.

Din id-darba wkoll fil-gabra annwali għad-Dar tal-Providenza ngabret is-somma rekord ta' €2.5 miljun, li kienet €1.166

miljun aktar mis-sena l-oħra.

Imma l-għir mhux limitat għal skopijiet filantropiċi biss, għax bhas-soltu, iż-żewġ partiti politiċi l-kbar jiehdu l-okkażjoni li jorganizzaw il-maratoni ta' għir ta' fondi tagħhom.

Anke hawnhekk il-poplu fetaħ idejh. Għalkemm il-miżien xaqleb lejn il-Partit Laburista li rnexxielu jiġbor €737,690 – zieda ta' '1 fuq minn mitejn elf fuq is-sena l-oħra, il-Partit Nazzjonalista ġabar €324,450, jew €80,000 inqas minn ta' Diċembru 2019.

Kollox ma kollox f'dawn l-erba' maratona li semmejna, u li saru, bejn is-6 ta' Diċembru u l-1 ta' Jannar, ingabru kwazi €10.2 miljun, somma ta' €1.67 miljun aktar milli kienu ngabru fl-istess kampanji s-sena l-oħra.

Globalment, is-somma miġbura f'dan il-perjodu hi l-ogħla li qatt ingabret f'Malta f'dan iż-żmien tas-sena u qabżet bi €300,000 ir-rekord ta' sentejn ilu.

Ifisser ukoll li ras għal ras, il-Maltin taw €22.50, zieda ta' €3.50 fuq is-sena l-oħra.

Din is-somma ma tinkludix għabriet oħra ta' matul l-istess żmien minn għaqdiet oħra kif ukoll donazzjonijiet oħra privati li jingħataw f'dan iż-żmien lil istituzzjonijiet differenti.

### Jum is-Soliderjeta'?

Il-gabra wasslet lill-President ta' Malta, l-ET Dr George Vella jipproponi li l-għada tal-Milied, il-jum li fih issir l-istrina jibda jissejjah "Jum l-Għaqda Nazzjonali" jew

*\*Ikompili f'pagna 15*



## New Year's message from Hon. Mark Buttigieg

(Opposition Whip in the NSW Legislative Council)

To my entire fellow Maltese in NSW, I want to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Happy 2021!

For those of you who may not know me I want to introduce myself and the rest of my family, Anna and Gerard.

I was elected to the NSW Parliament at the March 2019 election as a member of the Legislative Council.

I am also the Labor Party Whip for the Legislative Council.

Of course, you will recognise the name Buttigieg as Maltese! I was born in Sydney in 1966, my parents Carmen and Victor were both born in Malta and immigrated in the early 50's.

My father is originally from Hamrun and my mother from Naxxar. My Grandfather Gelardo was the Secretary of the Labor Club in Naxxar.

I am very proud of my Maltese heritage and how it has informed my politics – if you want to know more about what I stand for you can read my inaugural speech here:

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/member/files/2253/Hon%20Mark%20Buttigieg%20-%20First%20Speech.pdf>

The reason I am in parliament is to represent working people because I believe that it is only when people have decent opportunities in life that society improves for everyone – not a few.

That is why I am a Labor Party member and why I want to



advance the cause of fairness in society.

If you want to know what I have been doing in parliament for the last 18 months, please visit my website:

<https://www.markbuttigieg.com.au/>

You will hear from me again but in the meantime enjoy the break with your families.

Authorised by Mark Buttigieg MLC, funded using Parliamentary entitlements



# Mix-xena tal-ħajja Maltija

minn Ġużè Camilleri



## L-ghotjiet jizdiedu

\*Ikompili minn paġna 14

‘Jum is-Solidarjetà Nazzjonali’ jew ‘Jum l-Għaqda Nazzjonali’ għax, matul ix-xandira ta’ L-Istrina, kull sena l-Maltin u l-Għawdxin jinsew id-differenzi li jista’ jkun hemm bejniethom – politiċi u ta’ xorta oħra – u jagħrfu kemm kapaċi jkunu b’saħħithom meta jkunu magħqudin.

Il-President Vella qal, “Matul is-snin, kemm kien hemm inkwiet u diviżjonijiet, f’l-Istrina kulhadd jingħaqad biex jikkontribwixxi għall-istess kawża. Jidher ċar li din hija kawża li tgħaqqad lill-poplu kollu.

“Din għandha tkun ġurnata ta’ għaqda nazzjonali; l-għaqda li xbajt nitkellem fuqha u li se nkompli nitkellem fuqha. Dan huwa jum meta, bil-fatti, il-poplu Malti kollu jneħhi d-differenzi u jikkontribwixxi. Inharsu lejn din il-ġurnata, lejn xulxin, u ngħidu li aħna parti minn pajjiż ċivilizzat li għandu qalbu ma tispicċa qatt.”

Proposta tassew ta’ min jistudjaha sewwa.

## Ma tonqosx il-polemika

**D**onnu li f’Malta ma jistax ikollna xi okkażjoni li b’xi mod jew iehor ma tispicċax b’xi polemika. Hekk sehħ f’okkażjoni li kif qal il-President ta’ Malta, il-Maltin kollha jingħaqdu u jinsew id-differenzi.

L-eks-kap tal-Partit Nazzjonalista, Adrian Delia, l-ewwel deher jippreżenta €27,000 f’isem t-tim tiegħu, u wara ftit ippreżentazzjoni nofs miljun Euro f’isem il-kumpanija barranija bbażata fit-Tuneżija, ‘Catco Group Capital Investment’. Din f’Malta tisponsorja t-tim tal-Kampjonat tal-futbol tal-*Premier Sliema Wanderers*.

Kien hemm min interpreta l-ewwel għotja bħala sinjal ta’ firda fi f’dan il-PN, billi min-flok ma ngħaqad mal-partit biex issir l-ghotja f’isem il-partit, Delia għabar għal rasu.

Biex taqgħad, waqt li Delia tela’ jagħmel il-preżentazzjoni tiegħu, l-istazzjon televiżiv tal-PN, Net TV, li kien qed ixandar il-maratona, deher li ċensurax meta waqqaf ix-xandira u hareġ il-messaġġ tal-kap Bernard Grech. Il-PN ċaħad l-allegazzjoni li ried jaqta’ barra l-ghotja ta’ Delia.

L-akbar polemika qamet dwar l-ghotja tan-nofs miljun Euro, li kien hemm minn qajjem dubji dwarha, wara li d-Dar ta’ Providenza harġet stqarrija li, kif isir f’każ ta’ meta għotjiet kbar, kienu se jsiru l-verifiki biex ikun żgurat li l-ghotja hi skont l-obbligi regolatorji.

Min-naha tiegħu, Delia qal li qabel aċċetta li jgħaddi s-somma kien qabba kumpanija tal-awditjar twettaq proċess ta’ *due diligence* fuq il-chairman tal-kumpanija.

Imma l-istorja ma waqfex hemm, għax kien hemm min staqsa kif Delia gie nvolut f’din id-donazzjoni li skont hu, kisibha wara li l-president tal-Wanderers introduċi mal-president ta’ Cacto Group Capital Investment, Faisal Abdullah Alokla.

Wara kuntatti li għamlet *The Times*, gie żvelat li Alokla kien għadda ċ-ċekk lil Delia għax haseb li kien hu li jmessi d-Dar tal-Providenza.

L-aħbar kompiet issaħhan il-qiegħa, fejn

il-kap tal-PN Bernard Grech stqarr li hu ma kienx gie mgharraf minn qabel bl-ghotjiet li kellu jagħmel Delia u sar jaf biss minn fuq il-midja. Issokta jghid li talab kjarifika dwar l-ghotjiet mingħand Delia, li wieġeb li hu kien diġà għamel dan fil-pubbliku.

## Gżira b’popolazzjoni ta’ tnejn

**I**l-Gżira ta’ Kemmuna tattira hafna Maltin u barranin, l-aktar fix-xhur tas-sajf... imma fil-fatt meta niġu għar-residenti permanenti x’aktarx li l-inqas Gżira popolata fil-Mediterran... tnejn min-nies, wara li wiehed mill-aħwa Vella, Anġlu, miet u halla warajh li hu Salvu u oħtu Veggie.

U propju f’dawn il-jiem, Kemmuna tilfet persunaġġ iehor li għalkemm ma kienx residenti fuqha kellu rabta qawwija magħha, Dun Karm Xerri mill-Qala, Għawdex (*fl-istampa lemin*).

Għall-aħħar 54 sena Xerri kien jaqsam minn Għawdex għal Kemmuna ta’ sikwit biex iqaddes fil-Kappella t’hemmhekk li hija dedikata lill-Wasla tal-Familja Mqaddsa mill-Egittu.



### Maltese Funerals

In conjunction with Hills Family Funerals.



**Richard Spiteri**  
0407 202 167  
(02) 9659 0900

**Castle Hill  
Seven Hills  
Windsor and  
all suburbs**

**“Let Our Family  
Help You Through”**

**—  
Halli l-familja  
tagħna tgħin lill-  
familja tiegħek**





A quick glimpse at Australia

# No longer “Young” but ONE nation

**A**ustralia's national anthem, Advance Australia Fair, has been changed to better reflect Australia's Indigenous and multicultural history, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said.

The second half of the opening line "For we are young and free" will be changed and the word "young" replaced with "one". Governor-General David Hurley approved the federal government's recommendation to amend the anthem for the first time since 1984.

Mr Morrison said the change is appropriate on a number of different levels, capturing the spirit of Australians whilst also paying tribute to Aboriginal and migrant stories.

The change to replace the word "young" with "one" was one of the ideas initially proposed by a committee of Australians seeking to change the lyrics of the anthem, Recognition in Anthem, which includes Peter Vickery, the writer of the new second and third verses of Advance Australia Fair II.

In a year marked by bushfires and a pandemic, Mr Morrison said the response of Australians has been remarkable. "During the past year, we have showed once again the indomitable spirit of Australians and the united effort that has always enabled us to prevail as a nation. It is time to ensure this great unity is reflected more fully in our national anthem."

He said the change to the anthem also reflects Australia's Indigenous heritage, a culture dating back 65,000 years and considered possibly the world's oldest continuous living culture. Almost half of Australians were either born overseas or had one or both parents born overseas, according to the 2016 Census.

"It recognises the distance we have travelled as a nation. It recognises that our national story is drawn from more than 300 national ancestries and language groups



Olivia Fox sings in Eora language during Tri Nation Rugby tournament in Sydney

and we are the most successful multicultural nation on earth."

Advance Australia Fair replaced God Save the Queen as Australia's national anthem in 1984 after a referendum. Prior to the latest change, the words of Advance Australia Fair have been changed three times since it was written in 1878 by Scottish Anglophile Peter Dodds McCormick.

Mr McCormick changed the lyrics twice in his lifetime: in 1901, the year of Federation; and then again in 1914 during World War One. The revised phrases were "Australia's sons let us rejoice" and "Britannia rules the wave".

The anthem was subject to a drastic re-

## The “new” anthem

*Australians all let us rejoice,  
For we are one and free;  
We've golden soil and wealth for toil;  
Our home is girt by sea;*

*Our land abounds in nature's gifts Of beauty rich and rare;  
In history's page, let every stage Advance Australia Fair.  
In joyful strains then let us sing, Advance Australia Fair.*

*Beneath our radiant Southern Cross We'll toil with hearts and hands;  
To make this Commonwealth of ours Renowned of all the lands;  
For those who've come across the seas We've boundless plains to share;  
With courage let us all combine To Advance Australia Fair.  
In joyful strains then let us sing, Advance Australia Fair.*

write before the new version was adopted in 1984.

## Australia's bushfires and climate change

**I**n 2020 the ten costliest weather disasters worldwide saw insured damages worth \$150bn, topping the 2019 figure and reflecting a long-term impact of global warming, according to a new report.

The same disasters claimed at least 3,500 lives and displaced more than 13.5 million people. From Australia's out-of-control wildfires in January 2020 to a record number of Atlantic hurricanes through November, the true cost of the year's climate-enhanced calamities was in fact far higher because most losses were uninsured.

Not surprisingly, the burden fell disproportionately on poor nations, according to the annual tally from global NGO Christian Aid.

Extreme weather disasters have plagued humanity long before man-made global warming began to mess with the planet's climate system. More than a century of temperature and precipitation data, and decades of satellite data on hurricanes and sea-level rise, have shown that Earth's warming surface temperature is amplifying their impact.



**Michelle Rowland MP**

Shadow Minister for Communications  
Federal Member for Greenway



Level 1. Suite 101C, 130 Main Street, Blacktown  
PO Box 8525, Blacktown NSW 2148  
(02) 9671 4780 Michelle.Rowland.MP@aph.gov.au  
MRowlandMP www.michellerowland.com.au



## A quick glimpse at Australia

# No vaccine for Australia until March

**W**hile the European Union and America had been vaccinating their people for months, Australia is to wait until March 2021. Australians were set to receive their first COVID-19 vaccines in March, but Scott Morrison said the rollout could start ahead of schedule.

"We think a bit earlier (than March), but, that's the current timetable, we've put our effort

into a number of different vaccines. There is no expectation that all of those will come off, and that's why you cover yourself off across a number of them.

"But the AstraZeneca vaccine, in particular, and the Pfizer vaccine are going very well."

Mr Morrison said the dire situation meant the UK had "no choice" but to expedite its rollout, but downplayed fears

Australia would face similar hiccups. "Australia will have a front-row seat to how that goes, and we'll learn from that," he said.

"But the health side of this is paramount. The Therapeutic Goods Administration must give its tick-off, so there are no shortcuts there."

As reported in the December 3 2020 issue of The Voice of the Maltese, the Australian

Government has scrapped a deal to buy more than 50 million doses of potential coronavirus vaccine being developed by the University of Queensland and CSL.

The National Security Committee, based on scientific advice, made the decision to terminate the deal and remove the vaccine from the Australian government's plans going forward.



## To mask or not to mask?

**W**e do not normally publicise matters regarding the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on the Australian community because it is a subject that is evolving each day and therefore not appropriate for a periodical magazine like ours.

However, the use of masks has been a subject of serious debate since the beginning of the pandemic. Do we wear them, occasionally, in special places or all the time?

Finally the State of NSW, the most populous state in Australia has made the use of masks mandatory in the Greater

Sydney inside public spaces.

Sydneysiders who flout new mandatory mask rules risk a \$200 fine as the public health order comes into effect. But Health Minister Brad Hazzard has asked NSW police to exercise discretion in handing out fines to those who ignore the new rules.

Masks are mandatory in shopping centres, on public transport, in places of worship, hair and beauty premises, entertainment venues such as cinemas and other indoor venues like post offices and banks.

## Masks to become the new norm

**T**op health officials in Australia are now saying that people should get used to wearing masks in public indoor spaces because it is likely to be the norm even after vaccines are rolled out. It's probably prudent that we get used to it as it is unlikely that vaccinations alone will eliminate covid-19 and therefore mask-wearing will become the norm.

In Sydney, people marched through the city chanting anti-mask messages and declaring making them compulsory is against the freedom of an individual.

## Paul Zammit joins wife Rita as OAM

**P**aul Zammit with his wife Rita at his Investiture of the Order of Australia by the Governor of NSW, HE the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC (on the right).

Paul's order of chivalry was announced in the Queen's birthday 2020 Honours List and approved by the Governor-General in his capacity as Chancellor of the Order of Australia, on the 25th of November 2020 at Government House, Sydney, with effect from the 8th of June 2020.

It was an important moment for the Zammit couple as Rita is also an OAM following the honour that she received in 2014. It is quite rare for both husband and wife to receive such awards.





## Tagħrif dwar il-kitba Maltija u dawk li matul is-sekli ħadmu għall-iżvilupp tal-ilsien Malti

Ilum qed niffukaw fuq persuna, George Mifsud Chircop, li minbarra li kien kittieb, jibqa' wkoll magħruf bħala studjuż tal-folklor Malti u l-etnografija (sezzjoni tal-

antropoloġija li għandha x'taqsam mat-tifsir xjentifiku tal-kultri individwali fil-pajjż, f'dan il-każ, f'Malta. Hu speċjalizza fost l-oħrajn dwar l-ghana Malti.

# ĠORĠ MIFSUD CHIRCOP

## – kittieb u studjuż dwar il-ġens Malti

**Ġ**orġ Mifsud Chircop twieled f'Hal Qormi fit-28 ta' Ġunju 1951. Kienet telfa kbira għall-folklor Malti meta l-Mulej sejjahlu għal miegħu nhar id-19 ta' Diċembru 2007 fl-età ta' 56 sena f'mument meta ċertament li kien għad kellu tant x'joffri.

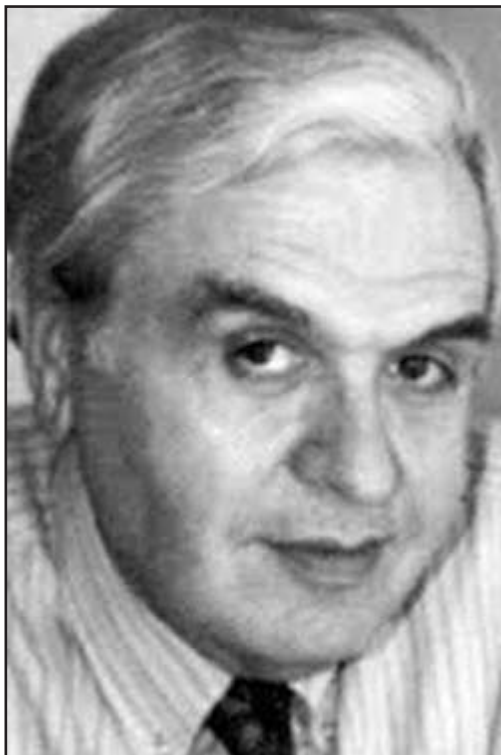
Eloġju li tassew jixraq lu wara mewtu kien dak tal-Kunsill Nazzjonali Malti tal-Ktieb li qal, "Dr Gorg Mifsud Chircop definittivament serva lil-pajjiżu u jixraq lu kull tifhir minn pajjiżu."

Ġorġ studja fil-Kulleġġ ta' San Alwiġi u wara fl-Università minn fejn iġġradwa BA bl-Unuri. L-ispeċjalizzazzjoni tiegħu kien-et it-teorija u l-prattika tal-folklor. Hu speċjalizza fost l-oħrajn dwar l-ghana.

Huwa mexxa hafna fuq l-istħarriġ li kien beda qablu Gużè Cassar Pullicino, imma mar aktar minn hekk u ta dimensjoni ġdida lill-istudju mibdi minn dawk ta' qablu. Ta l-interpretazzjoni tiegħu biex juri li s-sugġett seta' jtwessa u jinkludi wkoll il-prattiċi ta' kuljum tal-poplu, li forsi ġew injorati mill-folkloristi ta' qablu li kienu aktar ifukati dwar dak li kien.

Fost kollox, permezz tal-festivals li kien jorganizza, li fihom poġġa l-ghannejja Maltin ma' kantanti oħra barranin, Mifsud Chircop ta d-dimensjoni Mediteranja, lil dan il-qasam. Fost dawn ma nistax ma nsemmix li matul is-snin kellu sehem kbir fl-organizzar ta' avvenimenti kulturali bħall-Ghana Folkloristiku Nazzjonali fli-ġonna tal-Argotti.

Huwa kien ukoll jorganizza laqgħat li



fihom ifakkar lill-miġemgħa fl-għeruf tal-poplu Malti. Kien jishaq li għandu jkun hemm għarfien bis-serjetà tal-peronalitajiet folkloristiċi li llum m'għadhomx magħna.

L-aktar bħala lettur f-Università ta' Malta, huwa mexxa għadd ta' korsijiet fuq il-folklor Malti, għal diversi studenti. Kien jinkoraġġihom biex jagħtu ċ-ċans lin-nies li jtkellmu permezz tal-kitba biex setgħu jispjegaw hsibiethom.

Minbarra l-hafna li offra fl-oqsma li speċjalizza fihom, kemm b'kitbietu u wkoll bl-istħarriġ li għamel tul hajtu fejn jidhol il-ġens Malti, Ġorġ Mifsud Chircop, ta hafna lil-letteratura Maltija. Huwa poġġa

fuq quddiem użanzi Maltin, li forsi mingħajru ma kienux jiksbu l-għarfien li għadhom ihaddnu magħna l-Maltin.

Ir-riċerka tiegħu wasslet biex l-1978, *Type Index of the Maltese Folklore within the Mediterranean Tradition Area* jirbah il-Premju ta' Karmen Mikallef Buhaġiar għall-aħjar tezi tal-MA.

Fl-2001 huwa kiseb dottorati iehor mill-Università ta' Malta b'tezi oħra dwar il-hrejef Maltin, *The Maltese Heroic Fairytale*. Kull ma kien jagħmel, Mifsud-Chircop kien jagħmlu b'passjoni. L-imħabba tiegħu lejn il-folklor Malti kienet infinita.

Huwa għalliem fil-Junior College u wkoll fl-Università ta' Malta. Kien ukoll xandar u pproduċa għadd ta' programmi b'raba mal-ilsien Malti u l-folklor. Jibqa' mfakkar ukoll għall-hidma bla heda tiegħu biex l-ghana u l-hrejef isiru aktar popolari fil-pajjiż, anke mat-tfal.

Huwa ippubblika u editja għadd kbir ta' kotba. Fost l-aktar popolari nsibu, *Il-Legġendi ta' Gużè Delia* (1978), *Il-Qawl Iqul* (1989), *Il-Praspar Miktuba minn Dun Xand Cortis* (1991), *Manwel Magri – Hrejef Missirijietna* (1994), *L-Ghana Malti – Bibliografija u Materjal iehor għar-Riċerka* (1999), u ż-żewġ volumi fil-Kullana Kulturali tal-PIN, *Il-Folklor Malti* (2003).

Ġorġ, raġel pjuttost misthi u ġentlom, kien ukoll koeditur ta' żewġ rivisti importanti għall-istudenti tal-Matrikola tal-Malti, *Mis-Sillabu* (1984-86) u *Analizi* (1987-1995). Bosta studji oħra minn tiegħu jinsabu fil-*Journal of Maltese Studies*, f'*Lehen il-Malti u Il-Malti*.

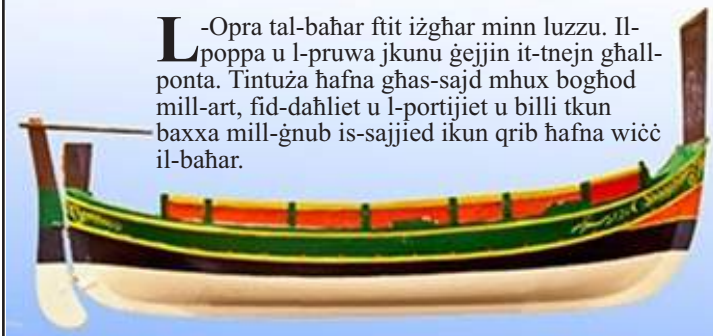
Fl-1999 huwa nħatar President tal-Għaqda tal-Għalliema tal-Malti u matul dal-perjodu kiteb *Il-Kultura Maltija – Il-Perspettiva Hajja u Kontemporanja* (2001).

Wara mewtu Ġorġ Mifsud Chircop halla hafna tagħrif li jista' jintuża minn dawk ta' warajh fix-xena kulturali. In-nuqqas tiegħu inhass hafna, mhux biss minn dawk li kienu qrib tiegħu, l-aktar familtu, imma wkoll minn dawk li tinteressahom il-kultura Maltija, u wkoll il-kantanti tal-ghanjiet folkloristiċi li tant kienu għal qalbhom.

Biex il-memorja tiegħu tibqa' miftakra, martu u wliedha waqqfu fond biex minn żmien għal żmien fl-Università ta' Malta ssir taħdita pubblika dwar il-folklor Malti.

### Xinhi l-Firilla?

**L**-Opra tal-baħar f'it izghar minn luzzu. Il-poppa u l-pruwa jkunu ġejjin it-tnejn għall-ponta. Tintuża hafna għas-sajd mhux bogħod mill-art, fid-dahliet u l-portijiet u billi tkun baxxa mill-ġnub is-sajjied ikun qrib hafna wiċċ il-baħar.







Il-Ministru għal Għawdex, Clint Camilleri jinawgura l-ktieb tal-Għawdxij Gorg Pisani

## Inawguat il-ktieb ta' Gorg Pisani "Triqat il-Holm"

**I**l-mużew Il-Haġar li hemm fi Pjazza San Gorg, Victoria, dan l-aħhar ospita l-introduzzjoni ta' publikazzjoni ġdida, "Triqat il-Holm", li hija kollezzjoni f'żewġ volumi tal-Legġendi Għawdxin tal-kittieb u poeta magħruf Għawdxij, Gorg Pisani, li illum m'għadux magħna.

Iben l-awtur, in-nutar Paul Pisani, li ikkoordinat l-attività spjega li l-idea ta' legġenda bil-Malti għandha t-tendenza li tkun pjuttost wiesgħa kif jidher mill-ghazla ta' stejjer inkluzi fil-paġni tal-ktieb.

Marija Schembri u Joe Psaila qraw biċċiet mill-ktieb, filwaqt li l-eks Ministru għal Għawdex u l-eks-Speaker Anton Tabone indirizza aspetti tal-hajja ta' Pisani, u filwaqt li saħaq dwar il-fatt li l-lingwa tagħna hija essenzjali għall-identità tagħna, semma personalitajiet oħra li għamlu sforzi f'dan ir-rigward. Sostna wkoll li ma

nistghux ninsew il-htieġa li Għawdex jiġi rikonoxxut kompletament bħala reġjun.

Il-Ministru attwali ta' Għawdex Clint Camilleri esprima l-pjaċir tiegħu li nġhata l-unur li jinawgura ktieb mill-awtur ewlieni Pisani (1909-1999).

Fit-tmiem Dr Pisani għal darb'ohra ta' hajr lil daww kollha li għenu u b'mod speċjali lill-editur Jason Aloisio li pprezenta sett lill-Ministru Camilleri.

Joseph Borg, irrefera għall-problemi attwali li qed jiltaqqu magħhom u għall-appoġġ li rċieva mill-ministeru.

Pisani jibqa' magħruf l-aktar għall-importanza li ta lil Għawdex, tant li Gużè Chetcuti kien sejjahlu "Il-poeta tal-istorja".

Wara, il-mistednin daru l-wirja ta' illustrazzjonijiet imhejjija għal din il-pubblikazzjoni minn Kenneth Zammit Tabona.

## L-edizzjoni *Feel the Magic of Christmas* 2020 mill-Chorus Urbanus

**L**-effett devastanti li l-pandemija tal-Covid-19 halliet fil-qasam kulturali hu fatt magħruf. Il-Kor Għawdxij *Chorus Urbanus* ma kienx xi eċċezzjoni u din il-pandemija harbtet il-programm ta' kunċerti li l-kor kien hejja fl-edizzjoni ta' *Feel the Magic of Christmas* li kien skedat għall-2020.

Barra minhekk, biex jiġu osservati l-miżuri ta' prekawzjoni mhabbra mill-Awtoritajiet tas-Saħħa, ġew imhassra wkoll is-servizzi kollha tal-kor kif ukoll l-għadd kbir ta' provi li normalment isiru mill-kor.

Din ir-realtà ġdida gabet magħha modi ġodda ta' kif wiehed jista' jipprezenta attivitajiet kulturali b'ideat innovattivi u kreattivi. Il-kunċert ta' distanza soċjali mpost bil-hsieb li jwaqqaf l-imxija tal-virus sar fundamentali fl-ippjanar ta' inizjattivi kulturali li bdew isiru minghajr il-preżenza ta' udjenza.

Chorus Urbanus hareġ bl-idea li l-edizzjoni ta' "Il-Kunċert tal-Milied" li għaddiet jiġi ffilmjata u mxandra fuq TVM, b'hekk is-sensjela tal-kunċerti natalizji ma tiġix interrotta.

It-23 edizzjoni ta' dan il-kunċert, bil-kor u s-solisti taħt id-direzzjoni tas-is-surmast tal-kor Mro Dr John Galea, ġie ffilmjata fil-Bażilika ta' San Gorg tar-Rabat Għawdex bil-bibien magħluqa. Għall-okkażjoni nużat orkestra ristretta kif ukoll kien evidenti li biex il-miżuri ta' prekawzjoni jiġu osservati sar l-użu tal-maskri kemm mill-koristi, kif ukoll mill-orkestra.

Il-kunċert ġie ffilmjat minn CVC Productions u ntwerja fuq l-istazzjon Nazzjonali lejlet il-Milied, propju f-għeluq il-45 sena mit-twaqqif tal-kor, b'repetizzjoni nhar il-Milied filghodu.

Minbarra l-Chorus Urbanus u s-solisti tiegħu, f'dan il-kunċert hadet sehem ukoll is-sezzjoni Juniors tal-istess kor immxija minn Maureen Zerafa. Ġew preżentati diversi ghanjiet popolari kemm kompożizzjonijiet lokali kif ukoll ghanjiet oħra sinonimi ma' dan iż-żmien magħku tas-sena.

Dan il-kunċert sar bil-kollaborazzjoni tal-isponsors, il-Ministeru għal Għawdex u l-Malta Arts Council.

Wiehed jista' jara l-kunċert fl-intier tiegħu fuq il-YouTube Channel tal-Chorus Urbanus bil-link: [https://youtu.be/Q3SLoypt\\_sQ](https://youtu.be/Q3SLoypt_sQ)

Mill-Gżira  
Għawdxija  
Charles Spiteri





# Two Gozitans in NY build ‘The Crèche in the right place at the right time’

The festive season, Christmas 2020 and the New Year 2021 celebrations may already be archived as we delve into the New Year and we start facing the new challenges. However, we at *The Voice of the Maltese* keep receiving reports about members of Maltese communities all over, who have been featured in media outlets in their respective part of the world for keeping the Maltese traditions during Christmas time.

One such is a large scale “*presepju*” (Maltese word for crèche) at Corpus Christi Vhurch in Woodside, Queens, NY, the work of two Gozitans, crèche artist Alexander Lateo, and Loreto Debono who grew up in the same village of Ghajnsielem. They reconnected when they built the original *presepju* 12 years ago at a church they were both part of, Our Lady of Peace in NYC which no longer exists.

After 12 years in storage, Alexander has revived and redesigned it with Loreto's assistance at the Corpus Christi in Woodside in New York, the US where it was on show during the festive season until January 11.

The project was featured, both on NET Catholic news, and in an article penned by Msgr. Jonas C. Achacoso, JCD titled, *The Crèche in the Right Place at the Right Time* on the **THE TABLET**, the award-winning newspaper of the Roman Catholic Diocese in Brooklyn and Queens. The newspaper also published a number of views of the wondrous Nativity scene.

In the feature that was brought to our notice by Carmen Debono, the secretary of the Maltese Centre in South Astoria, New York, Alexander was described as, “one of those who received ten talents and passionately invested them in being a successful designer of crèches, a cartoonist, musician, and a long list of whatnot.”

Msgr. Jonas wrote that the parish of Corpus Christi was so grateful for his passion and artistry, which are simply impressive. “The parish, most importantly, is so grateful for this generous donation. When God wills something to happen, everything will fall into place perfectly, in the right place at the right time,” he said.

He said that the project originated from a catch-up conversation he had with Alex back in October. Alex had some materials from a Nativity scene from a previous proj-



ect at Our Lady of Peace in Manhattan that closed in 2014. These materials were in storage at Most Precious Blood in Astoria, where Alex is volunteering and in charge of setting up their crèche. The parish was so generous for this accommodation but could not use the materials because they have their own nativity setup.

“These are artistic treasures hidden in the dark but needing the right place to be displayed. I bet Corpus Christi Church is that right place at the right time,” Msgr. Jonas said describing the crèche as looking spectacular and splendid.

Parishioners who have had the chance to behold this masterpiece find it so timely a gift. One parishioner was so grateful that during the pandemic's gloom and monotony, she has something good that can boost sagging morale. Looking at the setup that looks so real, another parishioner, said, “Is this property handicapped accessible? I want to move in, especially if they have maid service!”

At that time, when the structure was all there, another replied, “Yes, renters are welcome, but the garage is reserved for special guests.” Those special guests are Jesus, Mary, and Joseph of the Holy Family. The set is



now the home for the Fontaninis.

Msgr. Jonas said that the crèche is inspired by the ambiance of a small and quaint Mediterranean town. “Indeed, you would feel like you are really in such a town of winding cobblestone streets, courtyard water fountains, stone brick houses, etc.”

He added that Alex, who is originally from Malta, has a special love for these features as he grew up in such an environment before coming to New York. He was ably assisted by a number of helpers, including a long time member of the Maltese Centre, Loreto Debono to set up the Nativity display.

He pointed out that the parish is just fascinated and elated with the project and invited everyone to visit and contemplate the great mystery of the Nativity in Corpus Christi Church in Woodside, “where we have a crèche in the right place at the right time”.

## 10 “Maltese preseppi” in Washington

Constructing handmade nativity scenes set in elaborate landscapes *preseppi* (cribs) is a centuries-old tradition that carries strong significance in Maltese culture. Ten of these cribs by Maltese Artists are currently being exhibited in the Museum of the Bible in Washington DC and will remain on display until March this year.

They were chosen following a competition in partnership with the museum, and Malta's Ministry for the National Heritage, Arts.

The exhibition is also being used to promote religious tourism in an important market such as that of the United States of America.



# Keeping up the Maltese traditions of Christmas

**A**mong the Maltese people's hearts, Christmas time holds a special place in Malta. It is a time for festive cheer, gift giving and celebrations. Being a largely Roman Catholic nation, the religious influence and tradition is obvious in the Maltese Islands during the holiday season. Christmas is celebrated with festive activities, events, a large number of decorations, and more spiritual practices and rituals all over Malta and Gozo.

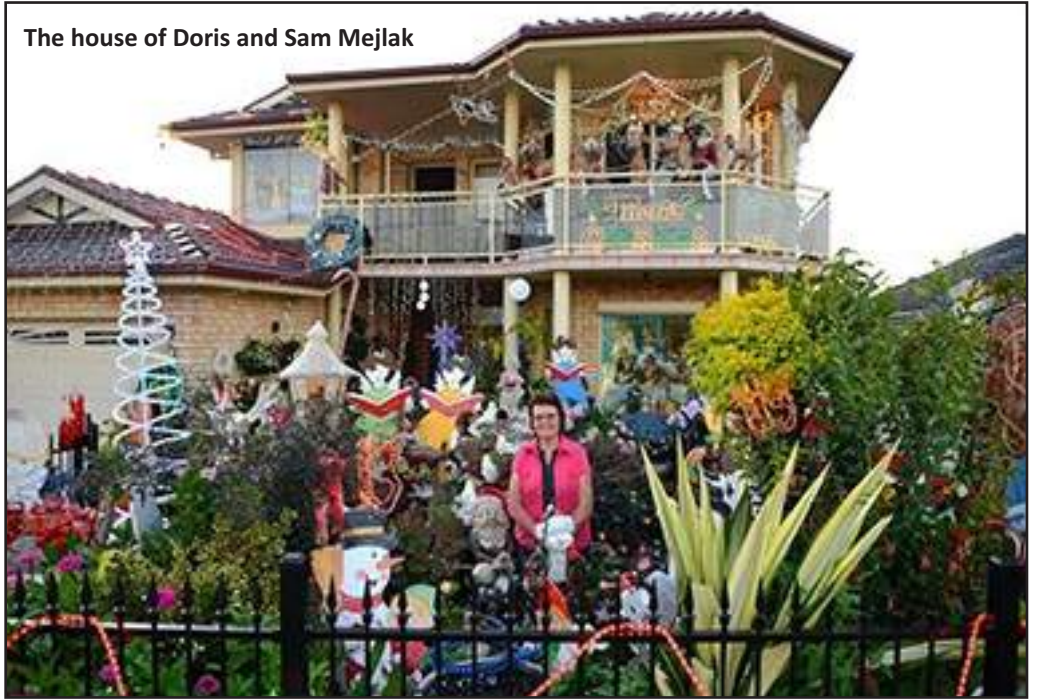
Most Maltese houses are decorated with traditional cribs/nativity scenes with *pasturi* representing nativity figures. Statues of the baby Jesus are placed behind windows or in balconies and lit at night. Houses are also decorated with the usual Christmas wreaths, and all sorts of other festive lights and decorations.

Maltese living abroad, particularly those living in Australia, the United States, and Canada have kept up the traditions they experienced during their upbringing in their beloved home country. They never shy away from demonstrating them or to express their beliefs in special holy days, in particular the Good Friday week culminating in the Easter time, and the Christmas and New Year season.

In every state in Australia, without exception, members of the Maltese community excel by the way they decorate the facades of their houses during the Christmas period.

In the last issue, we featured the Christmas decorations by Vera and Charlie Sacco in the Melbourne suburb of Glenroy, in the

The house of Doris and Sam Mejlak



state of Victoria, but did not have enough space to feature others' efforts to keep alive the Christmas spirit in their particular

streets with their decorations.

Although the yuletide period is over for some weeks, we at *The Voice* has decided to bring to the fore the Christmas decorations of three households in the Greystanes' area of NSW.

The house of Doris and Sam Mejlak on Cumberland Road is an attraction for thousands of people on a street that is well known for its Christmas light displays.

Doris, is a renown Maltese garden guru, therefore it is no surprise that the decorations she uses at her house are based mainly on garden furniture and nature, though lights are what liven up the site at night. Doris is

pictured in the midst of her front garden.

For Doris and Joe Caruana who also live on Cumberland Road, Christmas time is an annual event during which they decorate their house with spectacular lights to prop up the Christmas spirit in their street.

The Christmas atmosphere this year was slightly diminished as because of COVID-19, they had to relinquish the singing of the Christmas Carols normally organised in front of their house, which was another great attraction

Another decorated house that attracts plenty of attention in the same suburb is the one belonging to Vicky Rubnik-Borg in Kootingal Street.

The colourful front of Doris and Joe Caruana's house at Greystanes



The decorations on the facade of Vicky Rubnik-Borg's house





# DIASPORA: Maltese Overseas Settlement

Malta's Minister for foreign affairs, **Evarist Bartolo**'s introduction to Henry Frendo's book: *DIASPORA*

I was born and brought up in a village, Mellicha, 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?

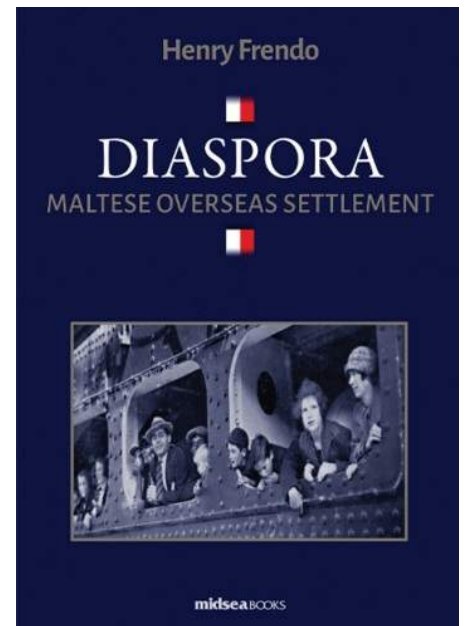
Malta and Gozo have always been islands of emigration. The first settlers emigrated to Malta around 8,000 years ago. We are told that the first Neolithic people probably arrived from Sicily but they originated from different parts of the Mediterranean, including both Europe and Africa.

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 that is full of interesting information and analysis about our diaspora.



Henry Frendo's: *'DIASPORA: Maltese Overseas Settlement'* explores the migratory experience with special reference to the Maltese diaspora that includes Maltese communities in North Africa, UK, Australia and North America.

## MMG Concert Band with another virtual performance

The MMG Concert Band of Victoria's first virtual performance was a huge success so it decided to do another!

Their culture and the Maltese community in Australia is at the centre of everything they do, so they decided to invite their friends from other Maltese Bands around Australia to join them in the performance.

Year 2020 has been hard for everyone and even though the bands haven't been able to perform, the one thing they all have in common is their love for music.

View and enjoy their virtual performance of 'Agrigento' on <https://youtu.be/Tnj-OIp0tVI> with guest musicians from around Australia and the Maltese Own Band Philharmonic Society Inc, Our Lady Queen of Peace



Maltese Band NSW Inc and Maltese Queen of Victories Band SA. Harrison

Merrifield and Lanicah Dabu arranged the virtual performance.

# Community News

## Tune in to Radio and Television

**MELBOURNE:** on 3ZZZ 92.3FM or on [www.3zzz.com.au](http://www.3zzz.com.au). Mondays 5-6 pm, Fridays 5-6 pm and Saturdays 10-11am.

**MELBOURNE:** on 98.9 North West FM, every Friday 6.00 - 7.00p.m. and Mondays 7.00 to 8.00pm. Presenter: Emmanuel Brincat.

### On SBS Radio

Day Time Analogue and Digital Tuesdays and Fridays: 12:00-13:00 97.7fm SBS 2.

To tune into digital radio you need a receiver or device with a DAB+ chip.

Tuning in is by station name not frequency. Digital radio can also be heard via digital TV.

**SYDNEY:** listen to the MCC radio programmes on 2GLF FM 89.3.

Isma' l-programm tar-radju bil-Malti mill-Kunsill Malti ta' NSW minn fuq l-istazzjon 2GLF 89.3FM. Also On De-



mand on I-Internet: [www.893fm.com.au](http://www.893fm.com.au)

On Demand: Ethnic Maltese Council 11am) Il-Ħadd 11.00 am: l-aħħar aħbarijiet minn Malta, mużika, tagħrif, kultura, avvizi u suġġetti ta' interess.

**SBS Radio 2 on Channel 38.** Programmes can be accessed online (live/catch up) at: [sbs.com.au/maltese](http://sbs.com.au/maltese) (mobile), using the SBS Radio app.

For television news from Malta - **SBS2 TV 32** (Viceland) on Thursdays and Sundays at 8am.

**VIVA MALTA** on COAST FM 96.3 Community Radio in Gosford Central Coast NSW. Aired on Thursdays every fortnight from 6 pm - 7 pm. Presenter: Nathalie Gatt.

Web streaming:

[www.coastfm.org.au](http://www.coastfm.org.au)

**SBS MALTESE NEWS:** L-Aħbarijiet are now on SBSTV Viceland HD Channel 32 every Sunday at 8.00 a.m. and on Thursday at 8.00 a.m.

**BRISBANE** listen to the Maltese Programme on 4EB on Tuesdays 6.00 - 8.15am; Sundays 4.15pm to 5.15pm.

**Maltese Community Radio Adelaide:** Maltese Programmes on 5EBI 103.1fm: **Sunday:** 7.30am; **Monday:** 8.00 am; **Monday:** 6.00pm.

Contact: Bernadette Buhagiar: 0420 944 205. Email [bernadettebuhagiar@gmail.com](mailto:bernadettebuhagiar@gmail.com) Ron Borg: 0418 843 850. Email [ronborg@mac.com](mailto:ronborg@mac.com)

**97.9 FM Melton** Tuesday Maltese Programme: 6.00 To 8.00 pm Presenter Miriam Vella

### Programmes on 89.3 Fm 2GLF

**A Solid Gold:** music programme with English and Italian timeless favourites Fridays 11.00am to 1.00 pm.

**Maltese voices:** One hour of Maltese talent, songs from Maltese artists. Sundays @ 12.00 pm to 1.00 pm

Also listen on "Tune in" by downloading app and search for the station 2GLF ~ 89.3 Fm - by Marthese Caruana

## MALTESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL OF NSW



A division of the Maltese Community Council of NSW Inc.  
Established in 1999



### Can you speak Maltese?

**THE MALTESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL OF NSW** is inviting applications from people to assist in language teaching. Support and training will be provided for these paid positions.

**Classes for juniors and adults are held at Horsley Park Public School**  
**Saturday mornings during school terms.**

**If you can assist with teaching or administration in 2021 and would like more information please contact:**

**Maria 0416 119 100 or Miriam 0419 476 924**

Email: [malteselanguageschoolnsw@hotmail.com](mailto:malteselanguageschoolnsw@hotmail.com)



We offer legal services in Melbourne  
(Lt Collins Street) and Werribee.

Family law is our specialty.

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- manage deceased estates, and provide
- purchase and sell property
- purchase and sell businesses.
- divorce, children, property,
- child support, intervention orders.
- Maltese Wills, Powers of Attorney
- Maltese Property matters.

*Marlene Ebejer (speaks Maltese) is an accredited family law specialist*

Phone: 03 9741 1722

[www.ebejerlawyers.com.au](http://www.ebejerlawyers.com.au)

email [reception@ebejerlawyers.com.au](mailto:reception@ebejerlawyers.com.au)

**We get to the point, provide the right advice and get the work done at a reasonable price.**

## La Valette Social Centre

**La Valette Social Centre Inc.** 175 Walters Road, Blacktown Tel. 96225847

**The Centre is now open again two days a week, Thursdays, Saturdays**

The Centre is a registered Covid-Safe Venue and all special requirements are in force including social distancing, restricted numbers, temperature taking, patron register and Covid-Marshall.

**Flexible Respite** is operating normally but Centre-Based Respite is restricted due to low numbers that can be transported.

**Charlie's Family Restaurant** is open Thursdays and Saturdays for lunch and dinner.

**Bocci pitches** are operating again with some restrictions.

**Bingo:** Saturdays only at 8.00pm preceded by short Maltese movie at 7.30pm.

**MASS:** Thursday: 10.15am; Saturday: 5.30 p.m. (subject to availability of a priest.)

## L-aħbarijiet tal-PBS (Malta)

Il-PBS ta' Malta tforni lill-SBS fl-Awstralja bis-servizz tal-aħbarijiettagħha, imma l-qarrejja xorta huma mhegga biex jidhlu fil-website tal-istazzjon Malti: [www.tvn.com.mt](http://www.tvn.com.mt). għall-aħbarijiet kemm bil-Malti u bl-Ingliż.





## Malta Premier League 2020/21

# Hamrun come from behind to beat Mosta and claim leadership

**H**amrun Spartans claimed the top of the Premier League ladder on Sunday when they came from a goal down to beat ever-improving Mosta in the weekend's top match by 3-1.

At the end of their successful outing in the weekend's top match, Hamrun ousted Hibernians from the position after the Paolites had occupied it the previous day after their 3-0 win over Senglea.

This season's campaign is proving to be the closest competition for years, both at the top and the lower reaches of the table.

In the higher reaches, at least six teams stand a good chance of being there at the end of the reckoning with only six points separating them.

They include teams that few if any have thought of them being in the hunt, particularly after their per-

formances in the years leading to the so-called COVID-19 Championship".

They include Sliema Wanderers and especially Mosta, while after a slow start, Birkirkara are becoming strong contenders following a run of eight positive results that included five wins and three draws.

Some teams have been hit with the COVID-19 virus and had to quarantine resulting in their scheduled fixtures being postponed. They included teams such as Valletta, Gzira, Sirens and Lija. Such matches included three from last weekend's programme.

Therefore not all the teams have played the same number of matches and the MFA now has to find other days to accommodate the missing fixtures.

**PREMIER Results**

Hibernians v Senglea	3-0
Hamrun S v Mosta	3-1
Floriana v Zejtun C	0-0
Balzan v Sirens	1-0
Birkirkara v Sta Lucia	0-0
Tarxien R v Lija A.	pp
Gzira U v Gudja U	pp
Valletta v Sliema W	pp

**Standings**

	P	Pts
Hamrun S.	14	31
Hibernians	14	29
Sliema w.	14	28
Mosta	15	26
Gzira Utd	14	25
Birkirkara	15	25
Sta Lucia	15	23
Gudja Utd	13	20
Valletta	13	20
Floriana	13	17
Zejtun C	15	16
Balzan	15	16
Sirens	14	16
Tarxien R	13	8
Lija Ath.	13	6
Senglea A.	14	2

## Floriana, Valletta replace head coaches midstream

**M**eanwhile, midway through this strange season, at least six of the 16 Premier League teams changed their coaches in midstream.

They include last season's table-toppers, champions Floriana and runners-up Valletta.

Both are going through disappointing campaigns.

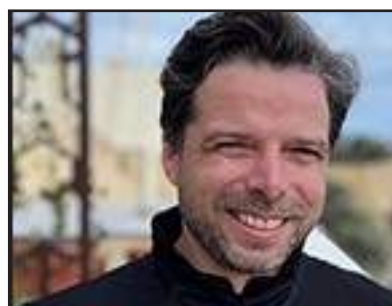
Floriana replaced Enzo Potenza with John Buttigieg their former player for 213 matches during their golden 1990s era, and where he won several trophies.

Buttigieg kicked off his coaching career with Birkirkara FC in the 2007/08 season and for two years after that, in 2009 he occupied the post of Malta's National team coach.

John Buttigieg also had coaching spells with Sliema Wanderers. His last job was again with Birkirkara in 2019.



Floriana coach John Buttigieg



Valletta coach Jose Cardoso Mendes

Valletta have now entrusted their fortunes in the hands of their new Head Coach, Antonio Jose Cardoso Mendes 'Toze'.

He had previously held similar jobs with Al Wehda FC, and was head coach of the

U/23s, U'19s and U/17 teams at Al Nassr, Liaoning and Vitória de Guimarães SC.



Thomas Aquilina

## Thomas Aquilina: player of Maltese descent on scholarship with Western Sydney Wanderers

**A**-League football club Western Sydney Wanderers FC have confirmed the promotion of 19-year-old defender Thomas Aquilina on a two-year scholarship deal.

Thomas, who father is Maltese and his mother Jamaican, has been part of the Wanderers Academy since its inception, starting

off in the club's U15s squad before working his way up over the last five years to the first team. He has regularly been named in Young Socceroos squads and has featured in the Red & Black's pre-season campaign.

Reacting to the decision, Thomas said he was excited to take the opportunity and con-

tinue his progression with the club. "It's very humbling, it's a great opportunity for myself and the club means a lot to me. I came here when the Academy started, when I was 15 and I worked my way up," he said.

The 2020-21 A-League season kicked off on December 28 to conclude by June 31.