

# Maltese eNewsletter

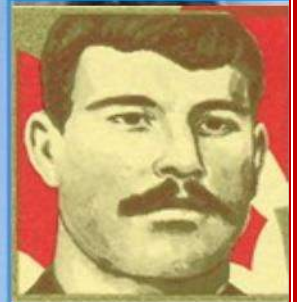
The Journal of Maltese  
Living Abroad

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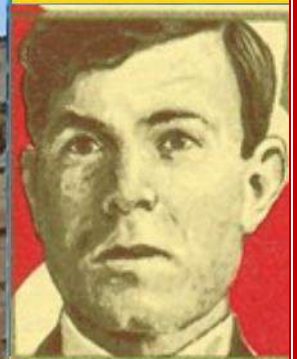


## sette giugno

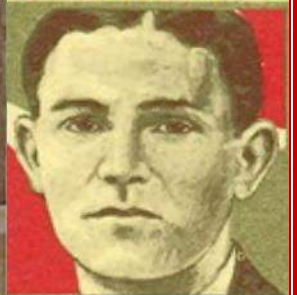
### The Victims



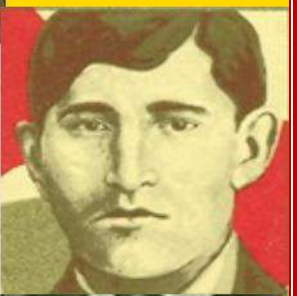
Karmenu Abela



Guzeppi Bajada



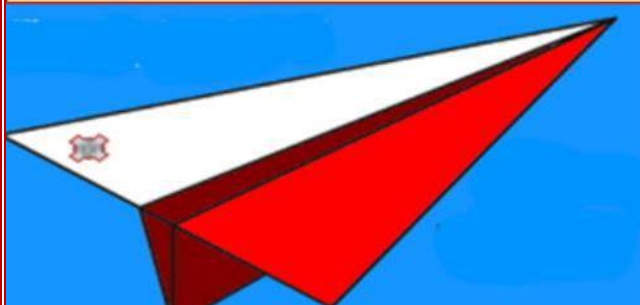
Manwel Attard



Lorenzo Dyer



**British troops fired into the crowd, killing four and injuring 50.**



### HISTORY OF MALTESE EMIGRATION TO FAR AWAY PLACES

The Maltese spirit has been taken  
by the Maltese to foreign lands  
and it lives on in them today





## **WELCOME TO THE NEW CONSUL-GENERAL FOR MALTA IN VICTORIA**

The High Commission in Canberra is pleased to inform that the newly appointed Consul-General for Malta in Melbourne, Ms. Chirelle Ellul Sciberras, has taken up office on 24 May 2021. Congratulations to Ms. Ellul Sciberras on her appointment and her commencement of work from the Consulate-General, after successfully clearing the mandatory period of quarantine upon arrival in Melbourne.

We would also like to remind clients and applicants that, in line with guidance of the Health Authorities in the State of Victoria, wearing of face masks and face coverings inside our Consulate-General in Melbourne will be mandatory. Members of the public calling in at our office in Melbourne will still be attended to by appointment only.

## **Virtual Youth Forum - I WANT TO CONNECT**

The survey will take approximately 4 minutes to complete.

Do you want to connect with Youth of Maltese Descent around the world?

If you are a first, second, third or fourth generation Maltese Youth not living in Malta, we welcome your input to hold a Virtual Youth Forum on the future national strategy for the Maltese diaspora taking into account the changing times and the importance of connectivity with other youths of Maltese descent.

Who can participate?: Youths of Maltese descent living abroad are being invited to fill in the attached questionnaire.

Your preferences should reach the Directorate for Consular Services and Maltese Living Abroad (DCSMLA) by not later than Friday 18th June 2020 (1200hrs CET) (tbc). For any further information, the DCSMLA can be reached by mail on [malteselivingabroad@mfea.gov.mt](mailto:malteselivingabroad@mfea.gov.mt)



## **COUNCIL OF MALTESE LIVING ABROAD**

At this momentous time, speaking about globalisation and the eradication of borders is merely a rapidly evolving reality which is affecting each and every one of us. In this regard, the significance of being Maltese takes a universal dimension, not only because it is supposed to be so, but more

so because it has always been like that and what we are doing now is the result of past decisions which we need to understand, appreciate, and use to move forward.

Being Maltese is foremost because we are citizens of the world, and are citizens of the world because we happen to be connected to a cultural reality which in our case is Malta. The Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs is inviting you to fill in the following questionnaire ahead of the 1<sup>st</sup> Virtual Youth Forum, which aims to connect by sharing of ideas to be able to build a better future together. Here's the link to the form "**Virtual Youth Forum - I WANT TO CONNECT**": <https://forms.office.com/r/k1jmmnMwD6>



25 ta' Mejju 2021  
55/2021

## DIRETTIVI DWAR IĊ-ĊELEBRAZZJONI TAL-FESTI 2021

Il-Knisja f'Malta qed tippublika [direttivi rigward iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-festi](#) għal din is-sena, skont [l-istqarrija maħruġa fl-14 ta' Mejju 2021](#) fejn intqal li l-festi parrokkjali u festi oħra reliġjużi li jsiru għewwa l-bini tal-Knisja jsiru fil-granet li soltu jiġu ċelebrati, b'rispett sħiħ lejn il-miżuri għall-ħarsien tas-saħħa indikati mill-awtoritajiet tas-saħħa.

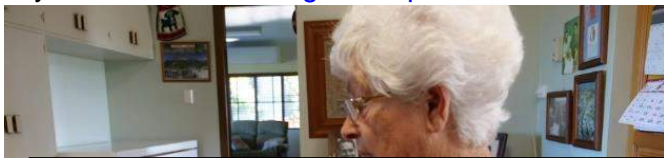
Dawn id-direttivi jistipulaw li l-quddies u ċelebrazzjonijiet liturġiċi oħra relatati mal-festa jkunu konformi mad-direttivi maħruġa mill-awtoritajiet ekkleżjastiċi u/jew ċiviċi li jkunu fis-seħħ f'dak iż-żmien, li l-istatwa għandha tinħareġ u tiddaħhal lura fin-niċċa b'mod privat, u li l-armar jista' jsir bħalma ssoltu jsir.

Id-direttivi li jidhru fis-seħħ illum huma msejsa fuq żewġ prinċipji: dik li l-festa hija okkażjoni li tfakkar u ssejjaħ lill-Insara jimxu fuq l-eżempju tal-qaddisin, u li hija okkażjoni fejn tintwera solidarjetà ma' daww l-aktar fil-bżonn fil-komunità parrokkjali, b'mod speċjali f'dawn iż-żminijiet li fihom il-familji għaddejjin minn diversi sfidi.

Dwar iċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet ta' barra l-bini tal-knisja li normalment jiġu organizzati mill-Knisja, kif diġà ntqal fl-istqarrija tal-14 ta' Mejju, dawn isiru biss jekk, fejn u meta l-awtoritajiet tas-saħħa jawtorizzawhom bħala attivitajiet permessi.

## Mackay's historic Maltese meeting corner set to see statues commemorating community constructed

By [Tobi Loftus](#) and [Tegan Philpott](#)



**Carmel Baretta** has been working with her fellow Maltese residents for years to get statues commemorating the community installed in the CBD. (ABC Tropical North: Tegan Philpott)

### DID YOU KNOW?

**THIS JOURNAL IS READ, ENJOYED AND SHARED BY READERS IN THE 5 CONTINENTS**



write they did deals to help fellow immigrants buy their own farms.

#### Key points:

- Mackay's Maltese community began working

on the region's cane farms, before over time owning many of the farms

Men would meet at Rockman's Corner to discuss which farms were for sale and to help others buy them

Now, the Mackay Regional Council has voted to allow a statue commemorating the men to be placed on Rockman's Corner

Former president of the Mackay Maltese Club and local historian Carmel Baretta said the meeting place on the corner of Wood and Victoria Street was also known as the Maltese Corner.

"Maltese men gathered there a number of times a week [from the mid-20th century] and the idea of it was they met there before the banks opened and they had discussions on who had what farm for sale, who wanted to buy a farm," Mrs Baretta said.

"Most of these men couldn't read or write, but they could calculate the daily interest rate in their head. Quick as a flick." The men would discuss the interest rates and help any community members who needed it through the banking system.

"They'd go to the bank manager and say my cousin here wants to buy a farm, can you lend him the money," she said.

"If the manager turned and asked they'd say we're taking out money out of here and are going to the other bank. "It was a bit of blackmail, but it worked.

Maltese men gathered at Rockman's Corner to help each other with business and just generally catch up. "Once those older farmers became established, they would loan their money at a lower rate than what the bank would give."

Some of the farmers ended up forming their own bank which over years transformed into the Pioneer Permanent Building Society.

The society was purchased by the Bank of Queensland in 2007. "The idea of it was to help migrants who came in to Australia," Mrs Baretta said.

"I was with my elder brother last weekend and he used to go with dad to that corner.

"He was telling me that all of these people say 'oh if it wasn't for your father or any of those other men, I would never have bought my farm'. "As [the men] got older and didn't do that sort of thing anymore, they still met there anyway. It was a meeting place."

### Immigration history to Australia

Maltese immigration to North Queensland dates back to the 1880s, but began to increase rapidly around 1944, when the Maltese were classified as 'white British subjects' under Australia's immigration policies at the time.

According to the Department of Home Affairs, most of the Maltese migrants who came to Australia were semi-skilled or unskilled workers and many were poorly educated.

Percy Zammit, Sam Bezzina and John Vassallo were three people regularly seen on Rockman's Corner, also known as the Maltese Corner. *(Supplied: Carmel Baretta)*



They emigrated to leave behind poor socio-economic conditions or in response to government schemes to decrease Malta's population.

While most emigrated to Victoria and New South Wales, a small number moved to Queensland and Mackay.

They would come to Mackay to work on the cane farms, but over time the Maltese families started to buy those farms.

Now, the city boasts one of the largest populations of Maltese immigrants and descendants outside of a capital city.

### Honouring Maltese history

Last week the Mackay Regional Council voted to allow Mrs Baretta and the Maltese Club to place statues at Rockman's Corner. "It will be bronze statues of two men sitting side by side, with a man on the other side facing them," Mrs Baretta said.

"There will be enough room on the seats for people to sit beside them and have their photo taken.



"These statues will be life size and identical to the people in our photographs."

The statues when built will replicate the scene seen in this photograph, except with just three of the men. (

*Supplied: Carmel Baretta)*

Mackay Mayor Greg Williamson said he remembered passing by that corner when he was younger.

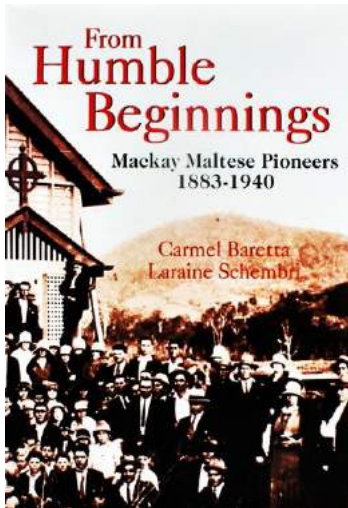
"They were all just sitting there, these very wealthy men in terms of our cane farming community," he said. "Holding on to history, and heritage is critical for any community.

"It's that old story of how can you know where you're going to if you don't know where you've come from.

"Mrs Baretta is also part of the Mackay Italian Association and is working with the council on a plan to commemorate a similar impact that community had on the city.

Posted 16 May 2021





### **Mackay Maltese Pioneers 1883-1940 by Carmel Baretta and Laraine Schembri.**

520 pages includes families Abela, Agius, Attard, Axiak, Azzopardi, Bartolo, Bezzina, Bonnanno, Bugeja, Borg, Busuttil, Buttigieg, Camilleri, Caruana, Cassar, Chetcuti, Ciantar, Cini, Danastas, De Brincat, Deguara, Dimech, Ellul, Falzon, Fenech, Formosa, Frendo, Galea, Gatt, Gauci, Grech, Grima, Haber, Micallef, Mifsud, Muscat, Pace, Portelli, Quattromani, Refalo, Saliba, Sammut, Sant, Scherih, Schembri, Sciberras, Scriha, Sherry, Spiteri, Vassallo, Vella, Xuereb, Zammit, Zarb.

The days, months and years spent in the research and production of this book have enabled us to walk in the footsteps of our Maltese pioneers; to see, through their eyes, the conditions in which they lived, the ache of separation from loved ones; the overwhelming joy at their family's reunion, and conversely, the anguish and suffering the woman experienced on their arrival. The aim in publishing this book is to give due credit to our pioneers regardless of creed, wealth, public status (or lack thereof), character or personality and to those who have helped along the way. Our Australian history is impregnated with untold stories of quiet achievers. Sadly though, many history books often fail to give credit to such as these, and the 'little man' is forgotten. From Humble Beginnings, will ensure their achievements and contributions are forever acknowledged. Article in Times of Malta - Sunday, July 24, 2011, 00:00 by Roderick Bovingdon <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20110724/books/From-humble-beginnings.37723>

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**Artillery Cannon Is Hauled Along St Joseph High Road In Hamrun  
By A Steam Tractor During WW1 - 1918**



## MEMORIES NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN MIGRANTS' JOURNEY FROM MALTA TO AUSTRALIA IN THE 1940-60

Regular shipping for migrants to Australia really began in April 1948 when the **Asturias** left Malta, on April 23. In fact she had made a previous trip, on November 20, 1947, when

one hundred emigrants had left on her, but many of them were returning emigrants who had paid anything from 58 to 80 pounds to get as far as Melbourne. However from April 1948 to August 1952 the **Asturias** made fifteen trips to Australia thus earning for herself the sixth place among those ships which made most trips from Malta to Australia. The undisputed primacy goes to the aptly named **Sydney** which between December 15, 1951, and February 13, 1966, made thirty-nine trips between Malta and Australia. When the **Columbia** carried on her 1,075 migrants, that was considered then as the largest group ever carried to Australia in one voyage. **The Columbia** left on November 21, 1949. On that day Mr Cole expressed his obvious satisfaction at practically solving the problem of providing a reliable shipping service for emigrants.

This is not to say that Mr Cole had solved the shipping problem to the satisfaction of everybody. While it was true that the Maltese Government had successfully obtained enough ships to carry those who wished to emigrate, there were complaints about some ships and about their sea worthiness and the kind of accommodation provided on board. Complaints appeared in the Maltese press about the **Columbia**. Although during question time in the Legislative Assembly Mr Cole had stated that the **Columbia's** trip was normal he did admit that during her journey three babies, only a few months old, had died at sea.

On April 26, 1949, the ship called **Misir** took to Australia seven hundred Maltese *The*

passengers. The ship had been built in the U.S.A. only six years before and was now owned by the



Soc. **Misir de Navigation Maritime** of Alexandria, Egypt. In 1947 the **Misir** had embarked on her first voyage to Australia carrying on board a number of passengers who had originated from the Middle East. When the Maltese arrived on the **Misir** and disembarked first in Melbourne then in Sydney, some sections of the Australian Press had taken them for Levantines. Once on dry land the Maltese themselves complained about the accommodation they had been given in common dormitories. Complaints reached Malta about the ship **Ocean Victory** which had left on February 26, 1950. On her were 1,024 emigrants and these included forty-two babies, one hundred and sixty children between the ages of one and five years,

and one hundred and eighteen between five and eleven years. Three qualified nurses were in charge of the children. Labour representatives in the Legislative Assembly asked for a discussion on the accommodation provided on some of the ships being chartered by Mr Cole's department.

Labour politician, Mr N. Laiviera, claimed that he had received letters from emigrants he knew who had bitterly complained about conditions on board the **Ocean Victory**. Mr Laiviera did admit that better accommodation meant more expensive fares.

His colleague, Mr D. Mintoff, wanted to know if there was any truth in the rumour that a child had died. Mr Mintoff quoted from the Australian newspaper, *The Daily Telegraph* of April 3, 1950, which said that customs officials had described the **Ocean Victory** as a hell-ship. The captain himself admitted that a baby boy of ten months had died and so did another of sixteen months. Many of the passengers claimed



they had suffered from dysentery while their linen was changed only once. Mr Anthony Cassar said that rain seeped into their sleeping quarters and Mrs Mary Grech, a mother with three girls and a boy, said that they lived on boiled potatoes and spaghetti



### ***The final adieu, November 1950***

Complaints were also raised about the ship **Florentia** which made three trips from Malta to Australia between December 15, 1950, and August 21, 1951. She had been built in Dunbarton, Scotland, in 1914. Some of those who travelled on the ship felt that the ship was not fit to cross the Indian Ocean, especially between May and September when the monsoons were likely to occur. One particular trip created quite a stir. The Florentia was expected in Grand

Harbour, Valletta, on April. She was to carry 1,039 passengers but these were kept waiting for a number of days until she finally made port eleven days later.

The trip to Australia was uneventful, but chaos was let loose when she finally berthed at North Wharf, Melbourne, on May 31. Many relatives had been anxiously waiting for a very long time and tempers were short. On disembarking, one immigrant decided to run towards his relatives while his luggage was still being inspected by immigration officials. He was soon caught, but other waiting relatives and friends joined the fray. In the fracas that ensued three immigration officials were hurt and so were two Maltese. Five were arrested. One was accused of causing bodily harm to an immigration official while the other cases were deferred.

An official comment from the Maltese Department of Emigration said about the incident "The man in question was only trying to kiss his mother before customs formalities had been finished. He had been already warned to wait, but he insisted on rushing to his mother. The other Maltese were all waiting on the quay. None of the arriving immigrants were involved".

It was obvious that the Maltese Government could not ignore the criticism in Malta and abroad about some of the chartered ships, particularly the Ocean Victory and the Ocean Triumph.. that if the decision to hire both ships had been solely on his own he would have never decided in favour of were made to him during the voyage. He had sent a telegram to Malta expressing his favourable impression about the behaviour of the Maltese and that he thought that they would make good settlers. Lawrence E. Attard, Publishers Enterprises Group



## DO YOU REMEMBER THESE?

**BANJU** -The Medieval bath tub in Malta was made from steel and came in many sizes. The large oval one (Banju) was used for bathing while the enamel painted or ceramic smaller version (**Friskatur**) was used as a hand basin. There was also a cylindrical version (**Kardarun**) which was used for washing and boiling clothes.

**KENUR** - The Kenur The Stone Cooker was a cooking implement made from a Maltese stone and worked very effectively for many years, The cooker or firebox had a hole in the bottom where the firewood is placed. On the top, a grate was cut from the stone itself allowing the heat to rise and heat the pots or pans. The Kenur used the same cooking method as the modern day firewood Barbecue.



**IL-FUKLAR** - A large stone stove fixed to the walls in the corner of the kitchen, with a flat top used also as a working bench. It had holes on its side from where the logs and other timber were fed when building a fire. On the top were other holes on which the pots were placed while cooking. Some had hoods connected to stone chimneys which enabled the smoke to be extracted outside the house.

## Malta as seen through the eyes of three German visitors in 1892 by Michael Galea

'There was an English dispensary and a police station in every village'



**Strada Reale (Republic Street) Valletta**



**St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral**



**Women wearing "Ghonnella"**



**St. John's Co-Cathedral**

*Michael Galea takes a look at life in Malta in 1892, as narrated by German teachers in a book published almost 130 years ago.*

Julius Rodenberg, together with Justine and Alice Rodenberg, set forth on a trip to Malta in the late 1890s. They sailed with the Italian steam ship Asia (Capt. G. B. Ruffo) from Genoa.

Julius described the highlights of that journey in a book entitled *Eine Fruehlingsfahrt nach Malta mit Ausfluegen in Sicilien* (A trip to Malta in spring with excursions in Sicily), which was published in Berlin in 1893. Following the route to Naples, and making 12-hour stops in Calabria, Messina and Syracuse, the Rodenbergs disembarked in Malta on April 25, 1892. All three of them were teachers by profession.

Under a glorious spring sky, they made their way to Valletta. They saw a woman wearing a long, wide cloak of black silk. "We thought she was a nun but we soon saw a second, a third, and then in the main street, more of them," Julius wrote in the book.

The coachman explained that they were wearing a woman's traditional costume, called faldetta.

They stayed at the Imperial Hotel (134, Strada Santa Lucia). Here they came across three languages: the name of the street was in Italian, while the hotel's name was in English, and the hotel owner was a certain Ellul, which in Hebrew means the calendar month of September.

The main street of Valletta was Strada Reale with its shops, clubs, casinos and government offices. Strada Mercanti was the street of the businessmen.

Valletta reminded the visitors of the cities in southern Italy but here, the palaces of the Order lent more splendour to the city. English was the language of the establishment, Italian of the courts, business and society. But Maltese was generally spoken at home by people of rank, children and lower class folk. Preaching and church service was conducted in Maltese. It is wrong to think that Maltese literature did not exist back then; weekly and monthly magazines in Maltese were in circulation, while folksongs and proverbs were not wanting.

Performances of Maltese drama were given every Sunday at the Teatro Manoel.



During the Rodenbergs' stay, the amateur company Società Filodrammatica Maltese presented the Recita straordinaria in vernacolo (play in the vernacular), the Zimina, an original comedy by the excellent Maltese buffo Carmelo Camilleri. The reading of cultured people was Italian, both for newspapers and books.

As teachers, the Rodenbergs noted with interest that there were 230 government primary schools in Malta, with 70 male and female teachers, an inspector and a director of public instruction.

Notwithstanding busy sea traffic, except for businessmen and those in transit, few were the visitors to the island. A great nuisance and vexation to the Rodenbergs, perhaps greater than in any Italian city, was begging. "No doubt, the upper circles of society of the island have the best European education, indeed, relatively better than elsewhere, when one takes into consideration the many languages: Italian, English, French, besides the local Maltese."

There were several private and international institutes, colleges and schools, foremost among which were the Lyceum and the University.

The Maltese passionately loved music. There were 22 philharmonic societies. Valletta itself had its Grosse Oper koenigliches Opernhaus (great royal opera house).

The governor was also commander of the troops and was the highest authority. His title was 'His Excellency' and his office was in the former Palace of the Grandmasters.

#### St Paul's Anglican Cathedral

The Rodenbergs were deeply impressed with a visit to the Order's church (duomo) of St John and its flooring, consisting of spectacular mosaic tombstones.

Julius recalled the Auberge d'Allemagne, seat of the Grand Bailiff, prince of the Holy Roman Empire, which once stood in Piazza Celsi (now Independence Square). The auberge was, some 50 years before, demolished to give place to a protestant church, which reminded the Rodenbergs of home with its high and elegant steeple.

Julius also wrote that one got a clear idea of the city when one walked along its bastions from the Barracca Superiore or Upper Barracca in English.

One day, the visitors made their way along a rough road to the medieval fortress city of Città Vecchia (Mdina). Julius noted that one of its Aragonese-Sicilian rulers called it "das bemerkenswerthe Juwel seiner Krone" – il gioiello notabile della sua Corona (the remarkable jewel of his crown), so that it was called Città Vecchia or Notabile.

Julius described the empty streets, the baroque cathedral, the palaces of prelates, a 'Seminarium in Convicte' ... it was a small city which equals a distinctive habitus of an archbishop.

Julius noted that Das Naufragio di S.Paolo Apostolo (St Paul Shipwrecked) was a national feast and that the Maltese bishops dated back to the year of the shipwreck in AD 58 (AD 60).

There was an English dispensary and a police station in every village.

The Rodenbergs went to Krendi – a name derived from Arabic or the Maltese word 'tekred' meaning to destroy – traces of a terrible earthquake that must have happened centuries before their visit still survived.

A man from the village who accompanied the Rodenbergs took them to a place called Makluba from the word 'takleb' (das Unterste zu oberstkehren). Legend has it that on this site once stood a city but the people, like those of Sodom and Gomorrah, were punished for their sins. However, Julius believed that it was the ground that gave in. Near the deep ravine stood a small church dedicated to St Matthew which survived unscathed and in memory of which every year a volkfeast (people's festival) was celebrated.

Then suddenly, as if from nowhere, came a second man, muscular, bearing a thick beard, in shirt sleeves carrying two large keys in his hand. He greeted them with the words: "Big stones, big stones".

Both men had by now mentioned the Saracenes but, in fact, the big stones dated back to the Phoenicians. The megaliths were the ruins of Ġebel Kim (Ħaġar Qim), i.e. Sacred Stones ("Steine der Anbetung"). It seemed the man with the keys was the owner of those prehistoric ruins. Some 40 years before, Dr Cesare Vassallo, a well known antiquary in Malta, had unearthed that temple of Ġebel Kim.

On April 27, the Rodenbergs boarded the small steam ship Gleneagles (Master E. Tagliaferro), which used to ply regularly once a week to Syracuse to bring English mail.

As the Rodenbergs were early on board, and no food was provided, they asked the ship's boy to fetch them a lunch from ashore, which they consumed "mit gutem appetit" (with a good appetite). They bade farewell to the terraced houses and fortifications of Valletta. As the ship sailed out of harbour, it started rolling incessantly ("Unaufhoerlich rollte das Schiff"). Their visit to Malta was over.

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***TO SUCCEED WE MUST WORKED TOGETHER  
BUILD BRIDGES – NOT WALLS BETWEEN US***

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## Are you in for a Coffee?

Coffee started to gain popularity in

Europe around the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, Malta's connection to it seems to go back around a century earlier.

In fact, some believe that Malta was the very first European country where coffee was introduced, most probably through Turkish slaves, who prepared their traditional beverage in the prisons where they were kept. A statement from a German traveller in the mid-1600s talks of this strange concoction of a powder resembling snuff tobacco, which the Turks mixed with water and sugar, and which they could sell to earn some extra money.

Soon the Knights themselves became very fond of this drink and would visit the *Bagno degli Schiavi* (Slaves' Prison) because this was where the best quality coffee could be found.

This theory is of course quite plausible considering that the Ottomans at this time had full control over the coffee trade, and later introduced it to the rest of Europe through Venice, with whom they enjoyed very strong trade relations, but this does not totally exclude other possible ways how this product could have found its way into Malta at such an early stage.

Piracy cannot be excluded, as Maltese corsairs would have undoubtedly confiscated coffee grains, along with other cargo, during their continuous raids against Ottoman shipping, while it could also have first been offered to a Grand Master as a gift from some North African prince or bey, or it could have entered through other European merchants, most likely French, who traded with the Orient.

The Knights' fondness for coffee soon led to its introduction in Maltese high society. Coffee started to be imported regularly, and its popularity was such that soon numerous coffee shops sprouted all around Valletta, making it easily available to people from all levels of society, and proving testament to the high demand for it.

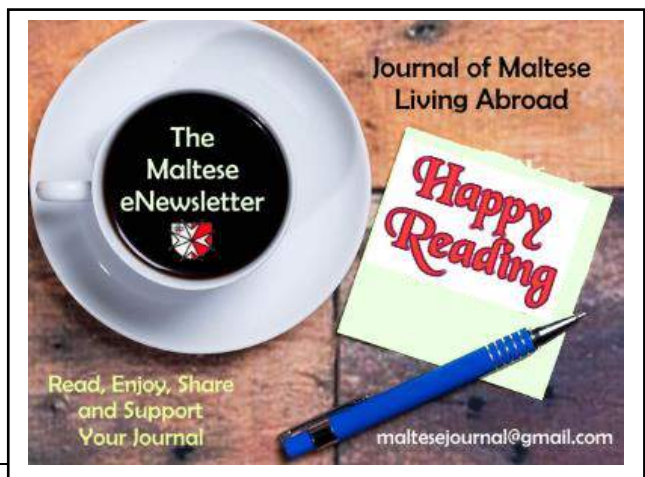


The Grand Master even had a waiter employed as part of his magisterial household at the palace, known as the *Garzone del Caffè*, whose sole job was to prepare and serve him coffee!

According to a 17<sup>th</sup> century document found at the National Archives, for the perfect cup of coffee one needed coffee beans, a special coffee pot made of copper, and to know how to recite the Apostles' Creed. Coffee, it was recommended, should be left to brew for as long as it took to recite this prayer.

Like today, coffee was normally served at the end of a meal, together with the dessert, often a piece of cake or other pastry. Interestingly though, coffee was also believed to be a remedy for many ills.

A 17<sup>th</sup> century treatise about coffee, written in Malta by a certain Domenico Magri, claims that coffee was good for the lungs, the liver and the stomach amongst others, while, according to him, the Turks, who consumed copious amounts of this substance, never seemed to suffer from toothache, gout and other infirmities. (Matthew Camilleri)





## Archaeological Discovery at Qrendi



The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage has recently concluded the first phase of an archaeological investigation within the *Knisja tal-Madonna Tal-Ħniena*, in Qrendi. The works were carried out in conjunction with the Restoration Directorate.

The removal of the existing floor tiles and the underlying preparation layers led to the uncovering of walls defining an older structure, which had survived within the enclosed space of the new baroque church. The preliminary information indicates that the new baroque church had in fact been built above an older and

smaller chapel (pre-1500s/Late Medieval). This investigation also provided important data on the potential use of the area pre-dating the construction of the Late Medieval chapel, as suggested by archaeological deposits underlying its foundations.

In the coming months, the Superintendence will be embarking on the post-excavation phase of this investigation which will include the study of the evidence, which will aid in understanding the dating of the older chapel and the earlier use of the site before the chapel was built.

## Prehistoric Malta

The Maltese archipelago lies about 90km to the south of the south-eastern tip of Sicily to which it is thought it may originally have been linked until about 5 million years ago. Then, tectonic activity resulted in a re-opening of the Gibraltar Straits filling up the Mediterranean and isolating the Maltese Islands area from the mainland. Even today, the sea between the Maltese Islands and Sicily is mostly less than 90m in depth.

*A map of when Malta and Sicily may have been joined. (Image courtesy of Lenie Reedijk / [Ancient Origins](#))*

So, Sicily may have been the land of origin of Malta's first colonizers, millions of years ago. It may then, arguably, have been home to peoples who lived there and created a temple culture in Paleolithic times, a period spanning 40,000 to 10,000 years before our time. The evidence for this dating comes from teeth found near Ghar Dalam in 1918 (Keith, 1918 and 1924; Mifsud and Mifsud, 1997) as well as a temple system aligned to the constellation of [Sirius](#), whose movements can be accurately documented (Reedijk, 2018). Despite this, official history of Malta is focused on a temple culture beginning in at least 5,000 years later, in 4,000-3,000 BC.

One of the people said to be responsible for the later dating of Malta was the British archaeologist, Sir Arthur Evans, the archaeologist of Knossos. According to a recent account of Maltese prehistory (Reedijk, 2018), Evans maintained that Knossos was the [Bronze Age](#) cradle of European civilization and this thinking not only marginalized the considerable evidence of [Neolithic](#) inhabitation but also skewed the thinking of generations of archaeologists. You might say that vested interests were at work since Evans had purchased the land at Knossos and created huge reconstructions of Bronze Age palaces. This investment paid off since the site is the second most popular tourist attraction in all of Greece after the Acropolis but the ethics of combining the roles of archaeologist and business owner role must be considered problematic,



particularly in view of descriptions of the reconstructions as 'inaccurate' and 'damaging' (German, <https://tinyurl.com/vmn7dc2>).

Sir Arthur Evans. (Unknown / [CC BY 4.0](#))

How did Evans achieve his influence? Whilst a modern history undergraduate at Oxford, he showed himself unable in his finals to answer a single question about the twelfth century or beyond, and it was just the intervention of an examiner, Edward Augustus Freeman, that produced a first class degree classification. Then, four years later, in 1878, Arthur married Freeman's eldest daughter and six years later, he was appointed Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, with no apparently relevant experience. It was in the same year, 1884, that he used family money to buy the site of Knossos, branding it as the Bronze Age cradle of European civilization.



Malta at this time was a British colony and no sensible archaeologist would suggest an earlier date for Malta's monuments than those given to Knossos by Evans (Reedjik, *ibid*). There were two people who argued for a Paleolithic past for Malta. One was the respected archaeologist, Themistocles Zammit but he died in 1935, and the other, a talented Italian archaeologist, Ugolini but he died in 1936 at the young age of 41. So, with these two influential archaeologists out of the way, "no independent, non-British archaeologist was ever allowed to take the lead in excavating or interpreting a Maltese prehistoric temple site" (Reedjik, p.49).

**DID GIANTS EXISTS?** If discussion of a Paleolithic has become the kiss of death to an aspiring archaeologist, so too is discussion of giants. This is despite the somewhat abundant evidence of their earlier existence on the islands.

What form does this evidence take? In terms of documentary evidence, a printed account of the Maltese Islands published in Lyon in 1536, written by Jean Quintin d'Autun (auditor to Grandmaster Philippe Vilier de L'Isle Adam) spoke of an antediluvian race of giants who lived there. Then, in 1647, we have an account from Abela of the ancient habitation of the Cyclops in Malta, citing burial places "often of enormous size" (e.g. between Madonna della Gratia and the Tower of Blata el Baidha, and another near Zurricco) and the "gigantic bones found in Malta" (one used as a cross-bar for a door) as well as teeth "the thickness of a finger."

In terms of the temples, Gozo's Ggantija, a site meaning 'Giant's Place/ Lair' in Maltese, or 'belonging to the giant' reflects the popular connotations these sites possessed. Since some of the stones weighed more than 50 tons, it is not unreasonable to assume the involvement of giant in the construction of this temple.

Gozo's Ggantija Temple. ( [robnaw](#) / Adobe stock)



Beyond this evidence, there are statues with six fingers or six toes, features identified in the Old Testament with giants or sons of giants (see 2 Samuel 21:20 and I Chronicles XX:4). Then, there is the evidence of the elongated skulls, with 44 investigated by Professor Anton Mifsud and 95.5% declared to be longheaded. He also stated that a local workman in Gozo shared how he had found a giant while excavating the foundations of a building complex. The laborer had hidden the bones so that he would not be stopped by the authorities from continuing his work and from the

evidence he showed Mifsud, it seems that between 4000 and 6000 years ago a man, 2.64 meters tall, was buried upright in the soil.



What is more, in the mid 1930s, a lady working for the British Embassy in Malta, Lois Jessop, wrote of how she saw creatures "of giant stature," about twenty to twenty-five feet high, in the lower level of the Hypogeum in Malta.

Despite this abundance of evidence, Nicholas Vella, currently a Professor at the University of Malta has alluded to the fact that "new paleontological discoveries poured cold water on the evidence for giants" but the nature of this evidence is ignored. We do know that much of the evidence for giants has been removed from the Smithsonian Museum under the influence of Major John Wesley Powell, the Director of the Smithsonian Bureau of Ethnology from 1879 to 1902 and propounder of Evolution theory - and the removal of the elongated skulls from the Valletta archaeological museum, together with orders to clean away a six-digit hand print from an ancient monument in Malta, are perhaps parallel occurrences.

In the same way, we read that orders were given for the handprint to be effaced from the cave wall. If you read Gary Wayne's book, *The Genesis 6 Conspiracy*, you will see the view that a [Biblical](#) race of giants spawned a giant/human hybrid race, the Nephilim, who still rule over us today. Could removal of all reference to giants be an attempt to divert attention from the role played by this group in society today? [www.ancient-origins.net](http://www.ancient-origins.net)

## NEWS FROM THE MALTESE COMMUNITY IN NEW YORK



What a memorable night! It felt so good to see so many familiar faces and excited to see so many new faces who came out Saturday night to our 1st BBQ of the season! It was enjoyed in our new reimagined backyard oasis "It-Tina" (The Fig). Why this



name? The story is of the Fig Tree that has kept root for many, many years on the property. Over those many years the Fig Tree has gone through quite a bit. It has been covered, trimmed, chopped, covered with scaffold... void of sun, weathering the harsh winters and heavy winds and more. But the one thing this Fig Tree did was never die. It kept flourishing and bearing fruit. So when we returned this year for our second reopening in February and all the hardships we faced we were inspired to renew our spirits. The backyard was transformed into "It-Tina" just like the resilient Fig Tree, we as a Maltese community continue to flourish. We are ever so grateful to our members who made this happen for all of us here at the Center to enjoy.

In honor of the name of our backyard "It-Tina" have your go at this famous Maltese tongue twister:-

**Toni Taghna Tani Tina, Talli Tajtu Tuta Tajba  
Talli Tajtu Tuta Tajba, Toni Taghna Tani Tina**



## The Unexplained in Maltese

The Maltese version of the best-selling collection of ghost stories, *The Unexplained*, has finally been published, thanks to an encounter at a murder site. Author Vanessa Macdonald – who is also a journalist – had gone to Hal Far in June 2010 after reports that a murder victim had been found in a field there. While waiting for more details to emerge, one of the police officers sauntered over to introduce himself, saying that he was a keen fan of her original book, which had been published almost a decade earlier, as well as the sequel: *The Unexplained Plus*.



The reason for his interest became clear when Charles Zarb admitted that he had written a book of ghost stories himself. The two authors spent a short time comparing notes before he was called away – but not before the two of them lamented how eager they were to get their books to a different audience: an English-speaking one in the case of Mr Zarb, and a Maltese one in the case of Ms Macdonald.

This dream had always remained out of reach because of the prohibitive cost of getting a translator.

It was only a few days later that it occurred to Ms Macdonald that there might be a solution: they could translate each other's books. Contact was eventually made, the manuscripts were exchanged and the work commenced.

"It took much longer than we thought, with a considerable number of e-mails to make sure that we captured the right nuances of each paragraph. Mr Zarb roped in his wife Sylvia to help – and slowly but surely, the books took shape. Rather more slowly than we thought!" she said.

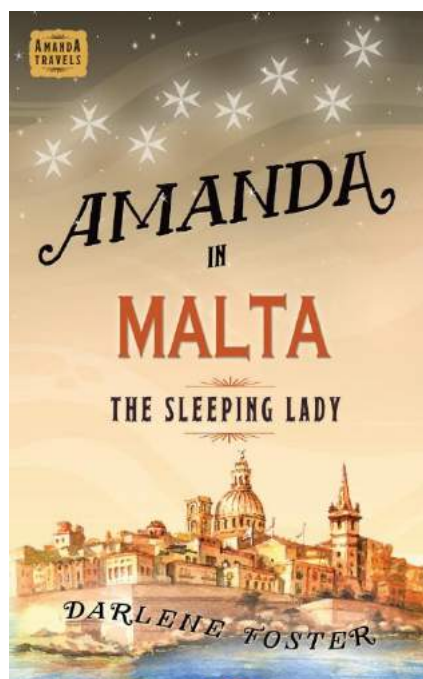
Mr Zarb's book was published some time ago but Ms Macdonald's was put on hold for some years. *Ta' Barra Minn Hawn* has now been published by Midsea Books Ltd and will be on sale at the Malta Book Festival being held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre.

*Ta' Barra Minn Hawn* is a collection of first-hand stories told to the author during interviews carried out over a number of years in Malta and overseas.

Her fascination with ghost stories was prompted by Ms Macdonald's own experience sailing across the Atlantic on a boat haunted by its previous owner.

However, the author thought that it would be more interesting to approach the subject as a journalist, trying to get as close to the original version of the truth – unembellished by re-telling across generations – by doing interviews with the persons who had actually gone through the unexplained experience themselves.

The result is a collection of over 50 stories, some spine-chilling, some poignant and some simply bizarre.



With a unique blend of adventure, friendship, history and travel Darlene Foster has hit upon a winning and inspirational combination for her children's books *Amanda Travels*.

The series is aimed at middle grade (aged 9-12) children, although from reading her latest book I feel it would also be suited for adept readers of a younger age as well as reluctant readers.

Darlene Foster's latest in the series, Book 8, takes the reader to Malta after Amanda receives a letter from her best friend Leah. To receive a letter alone sends concern to Amanda in the modern digital age of emails. Leah hints that something is wrong, but gives no detail and wants Amanda to join her.

Amanda would love to leave the cold wintry weather of Canada behind her for the warmth and sun of the Mediterranean island but would it even be possible?

As with all children's books, a resolution is quickly found and Amanda joins her class mate and his parents on their holiday on the beautiful island.

Immediately the author captures the heavenly warmth of the landscape, limestone buildings and the history perfectly. In snippets, the reader is enveloped in the amazing historical elements of the island, some of

which become central to the story whilst others act as a stunning backdrop to the action.



Any reservation I had that the historical might slow down the pace of the story proved unfounded as the plot is quickly propelled along. Although there are dramatic events such as a brief kidnapping, ominous warnings, chases and unexplained killings of protected birds these are all pitched gently and safely for the younger reader.

Initially, Amanda cannot even find Leah and when she finds her it turns out that Leah's aunt has become mixed up with crooks. Two criminals want Leah's aunt, who is an archaeologist, to steal the 4000-year-old Sleeping Lady statue from the museum otherwise there will be consequences. Could Leah even be involved? Luckily Amanda and Leah are not alone on their mission. Max is a helpful and able go-between and Caleb, the son of the family friend, provides many comic moments throughout the book, particularly with his strange phobia of fish and love of all things Popeye. When finally they visit the famous Popeye Village he is ecstatic and his courage shines through as he has to rescue Leah!

I like how all the main characters are slightly flawed with their fears and how through working together they find courage, helping each other. The warmth and kindness is a beacon of hope!

*Amanda in Malta* is a hugely enjoyable book, the writing flows with ease and the plot had me eagerly turning the pages. The book took me back to my addictive reading of the Nancy Drew mysteries as young and I can see how readers will long to read and collect the whole series of *Amanda Travels*.

Although I have unfortunately not read any previous books within the series this is no way hampered my enjoyment or understanding of *The Sleeping Lady*. The author slips in enough backstory to ensure this book is an exciting and stand-alone book.



**ABOUT DARLENE:** Darlene is a writer of children's stories, a retired employment counsellor, and ESL tutor, a wife, mother and grandmother. I love travelling, reading, shoes, cooking, sewing, music, chocolate, walking on the beach and making new friends.

My grandson once called me "super-mega-woman-supreme". I was brought up on a ranch near Medicine Hat, Alberta, where I dreamt of travelling the world and meeting interesting people. I currently divide my time between Orihuela Costa in Spain and the west coast of British Columbia, Canada. My husband, Paul, and I enjoy spending time with our adorable dog, Dot.



## GERMAN-MALTESE CIRCLE The DEUTSCH-MALTESISCHER ZIRKEL

**German-Maltese Circle**  
was founded on the 18th October 1962 with the aim of  
"promoting closer understanding between Germany and Malta in all  
appropriate fields of activity and relationship, excluding political  
activities".

From a modest beginning with a membership of about 60 persons and with no fixed premises of its own, the German-Maltese Circle grew through the years into a leading national adult education and cultural centre housed in Messina Palace, a beautiful



Chev Elias Zammit, Founder and first President of the German-Maltese Circle

400-year old palace in Valletta. The German-Maltese Circle is an independent, non-profit making organisation which is administered by dedicated persons who freely oblige themselves to promote the Circle's ideals.

To this end, the German-Maltese Circle has been organising various activities such as exhibitions, film shows, cultural tours, forums, lectures, seminars, concerts, choral performances by visiting German choirs, *liederabend*, social and sports events – in fact, anything which helps to make especially the Maltese public more conscious of German culture and the German way of life.

The German-Maltese Circle regularly organises German language courses to adults and to schoolchildren. The Circle is the only centre in Malta which offers the highly prestigious Goethe Institut Certificates under licence by the same Goethe Institut. Facilities offered include a well-equipped book, DVD and CD library along with research and reference facilities, an in-house coffee shop and restaurant, along with exhibition and conference rooms. Full cooperation is maintained by the Circle with the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Malta, the Goethe Institute and with numerous other German and local institutions.

It is impossible to mention the many personalities who have honoured by their presence the German-Maltese Circle, but perhaps one could mention Professor Ralph Dahrendorf, then Under-Secretary of State who having recognised the potential of our Association in the field of bi-lateral relations between the two countries, in 1971 approved the granting of regular financial assistance from the Government of the Federal Republic, Dr. Richard von Weizsäcker who visited Messina Palace in 1990 as the first Federal President of a united Germany and President Prof. Dr. Horst Köhler in 2007.

For more information Visit - <http://www.germanmaltesecircle.org/>

## **2,000-YEAR-OLD PUNIC TOMB DISCOVERED IN ZEJTUN**

Jurgen Balzan



Ritratt: Korporazzjoni għas-Servizzi tal-Ilma  
A Punic tomb dating back over two thousand years was discovered during works carried out by the Water Services Corporation (WSC) in Żejtun.

The tomb, which was still sealed, was opened, revealing a number of urns containing the cremated remains of human bones.

Given the site's archaeological sensitivity, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage requested that an archaeologist accompany the WSC crew in case any ancient remains are discovered.

In a statement, WSC said the first indications show that the burial site includes the remains of an adult and a child. Moreover, an amphora, two

urns, an oil lamp, a glass perfume bottle and other pottery vessels typical of the Punic period were also found.

The burial rite was altered through the Punic and Roman times. Sometimes the bodies were burnt, and other times they were buried intact in the grave. Cremation necessitated a variety of resources, including wood to burn the body and the presence of a person throughout the whole process of cremation which took several hours.

Currently, the material is being removed from the tomb and transported to a laboratory, where the pottery and bones are being consolidated, cleaned, and analyzed. **WWW.NEWSBOOK.COM.MT**

**DEAR FRIEND**  
**IF YOU HAVE AN INTERESTING STORY TO TELL SHARE IT WITH YOUR**  
**MALTESE FRIENDS ALL OVER THE WORLD. WE WOULD LIKE**  
**TO READ IT ON THIS JOURNAL.**





## **EDWARD ZAMMIT OFM**

### **A Maltese priest left a mark in the George Town Parish -Tasmania**

After 15 years as a much-loved pastor in northern Tasmania, Fr Edward Zammit OFM has retired. Fr Edward, 77, who celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination in 2017, said he loved George Town and described it as 'heaven on earth'.

Parishioners spoke warmly of his care and compassion as he was farewelled with a Mass of Thanksgiving and a barbecue lunch at George Town on December 15; a celebratory assembly with Star of the Sea College staff, students and families on December 17; and Mass at Lilydale on December 22.



At the George Town Mass, Archbishop Julian thanked Fr Edward for his years of service and his selfless contribution to the parish. "I know you love him very much and you are deeply appreciative of the wonderful service he has rendered you,"

Archbishop Julian told parishioners.

"Fr Edward is a man of few words about himself, but we know what is in his heart, what has inspired his service here in the parish. He does carry with him the spirit of St Francis of Assisi – that humility, that simplicity, that deep sense of quiet service. He will miss George Town, and George Town will miss him."

Fr Edward lived in Malta until his late 20s. His family was part of a mission project that supported Third World seminarians. Growing up, he heard about these seminarians in far-off lands and it inspired his desire to become a priest.

"My interest about mission seminarians became a desire to become a priest. As years

passed by, God made it His Calling and as I matured spiritually, His Calling became God's Will for me. With the help of my family and many others I answered Yes to God's call," he said. Fr Edward is from the Order of Friars Minor, founded by St Francis of Assisi.

Ordained in Malta in 1967, he has served as a priest in Malta, in Italy, Canada, and Australia. In Australia, he has served as assistant priest in the Parish of Lockleys, Adelaide; as a chaplain for the Australian regular army for six years in Wagga Wagga and Sydney; and then parish priest at Lockleys, and chaplain to the Maltese Community. In Tasmania, he served in Riverside before his appointment to George Town. Fr Ed said he would miss George Town Parish.

"I would like to thank everybody, especially my doctor. He kept me alive," he said as laughter rang out in the church on the banks of the Tamar River.

"I thank God for the friendship and for the hospitality that you have shown to me, and also the co-operation, help and support in the parish and in the school [Star of the Sea College] and that has given me encouragement to serve always; to follow Jesus to serve the people. So thank you."

George Town Parish Pastoral Council chairman Greg Selmes thanked Fr Edward for giving great comfort, care and devotion to his parishioners.

"He has also led us with great humbleness, humility and without any complaint," Mr Selmes said. "It is now both a joyous and sad occasion that he has chosen to retire: sadness for us that we are losing him; joyous that we know his retirement is well-earned for the service he has given to both us and the other communities in which he has served over many years."

At the time of his parish farewell, Fr Edward said he was unsure if his retirement would be spent in Malta or in Australia.

## THE SUNSHINE COAST – QUEENSLAND – Lewis Formosa



**56 Countries | 45 Faiths | 96 Languages 1 Community** The Sunshine Coast is a dynamic and diverse society with many cultures, languages and religions. Our people and their diversity contribute to the colourful social fabric of the Coast.

Lewis Formosa, formerly from Malta, has been living in Australia for 28 years. Lewis grew up in a family with an established retail reputation spearheaded by his grandmother. He could have easily worked in the family business but at the young age of 12 he managed to secure a job at a diamond cutting company run by the British government.

He worked with them for two years and started an apprenticeship. Lewis immigrated to London aged 15 to continue his apprenticeship and in a matter of days found himself working in the diamond trade where he became quite successful. In the UK he built a company which employed in excess of 45 people and had his own successful factory with many corporate and prestigious clients. Through his diamond business Lewis would fly into Brisbane as a stop over to his clients in Tahiti.

He would make the most of his time in Queensland often paying a taxi to drive him from Brisbane to Noosa. He always felt the Sunshine Coast had the potential of the South of France with regards to the vegetation and climate.

A small baked goods market in Eumundi, run by two elderly ladies who were basically taking advantage of the traffic between Brisbane to Noosa Heads, caught his eye, and the rest is history. Lewis permanently relocated to Australia on a business migration program during the Bob Hawke era. With his wife and three daughters they headed to Eumundi in a campervan to set up a new life. Lewis purchased a small macadamia farm located on a picturesque mountain in Eumundi which now produces about 15-16 tonnes of macadamias per year. He realised when you grow macadamias you need somewhere to sell them.

That is where the Eumundi markets came in. With a vision and a desire to follow in his grandmother's entrepreneurial footsteps Lewis now operates the successful Eumundi Square Business Incubator Precinct, which has added a new dimension to shopping for visitors AND LOCALS.



### Historical Maps of Malta to feature on latest set of stamps

Historical Maps of Malta – will feature on a set of four stamps being issued by MaltaPost. They are reproducing historical maps of the Maltese Islands by different cartographers. The design was set by

MaltaPost and images were provided by the Malta Map Society. This set of stamps from MaltaPost is for in a forthcoming philatelic stamp issue by the Small European Postal Administration Cooperation (SEPAC), themed – Historical Maps.

The stamps are printed in sheets of 10 stamps, with each stamp measuring 42mm x 31mm, with a comb perforation of 13.8 x 13.7 and bearing the Maltese Cross watermark.

The sheets measure 107mm x 177.5mm and were produced by Printex Ltd in the offset process. The issue consists of 80,000 of the €0.20 stamp, 70,000 of the €0.50 stamp, 20,000 of the €0.63 stamp and 40,000 of the €1.25 stamp.

This philatelic issue will be available from all Post Offices in Malta and Gozo as from Friday, the 28th of May. Orders may be placed online at [www.maltaphilately.com](http://www.maltaphilately.com) or by mail from the Philatelic Bureau, MaltaPost p.l.c. 305, Qormi Road, Marsa, MTP 1001; Telephone: 2596 1740, e-mail: [info@maltaphilately.com](mailto:info@maltaphilately.com) **GOZO.NEWS**



## Shrine built 300 years ago in Gozo risks being dwarfed by development



A Xagħra shrine could be engulfed by what has been called 'facadism'

Jessica Arena TIMESOFMALTA.COM

Plans for the building include two additional floors and a swimming pool.

One of the oldest religious niches in Gozo is set to become engulfed by a modern development, if a planning application is given the go-ahead.

The Xagħra shrine is said to have been built over 300 years ago by a grateful farmer whose entire family-of-six was captured by pirates but released after a ransom was paid.

Conservationists fear it will become the latest victim of 'facadism', after a developer proposed ([PA 3170/21](#)) the alteration of the building to include two additional floors and a swimming pool, as well as the restoration of the frontage. "The new building with two additional floors is going to dwarf this gorgeous niche," photographer and heritage activist Daniel Cilia said.

"The niche was built to be enjoyed as it is, free-standing and unencumbered by development in front of it. Raising the height of the building would completely destroy the context in which it is meant to be viewed." The area is characterised by low-lying vernacular-style buildings.

Concerns were compounded by the fact that in drawings originally filed to the Planning authority by architect Alexander Bigeni, on behalf of Tarcisio Cremona, the niche was incorrectly scaled to its surroundings, making the development appear much larger than the adjacent building.

**According to historian Fr Joseph Bezzina, the niche is one of the oldest recorded in Gozo**

Bigeni blamed a "surveying error" and said that the discrepancy was addressed "the instant it was brought to my attention. "The proposed structures will be as high as the adjacent building on the left hand side and this was the idea in the first place."

He added that the application includes the restoration of the niche and that the extensions in the development are being proposed "to render the building habitable". According to historian Fr Joseph Bezzina, the niche is known as Tal-Madonna ta' l-Anġli or Ta' l-Indju and is one of the oldest recorded in Gozo.



*A typical scene you see in Malta especially during the hot summer season*

According to Bezzina's book about the locality, commissioned by the Xagħra local council, a farmer named Ġanni Mercieca, as well as his wife and six children, were ambushed by pirates and taken captive to the North African coast. The family vowed to the Blessed Virgin that they would build a shrine in her name should they return to Gozo alive, and after a ransom was paid for their safe return, the Mercieca family returned to Xagħra to fulfil their promise, Bezzina writes. Since the incident is dated back to 1733, the shrine is probably 288 years old. The application has yet to receive formal recommendation from the Planning Authority. It is just the latest development in the Gozo village to

raise concerns. In March, Times of Malta revealed plans to demolish a dwelling 200 metres from the megalithic Ġgantija Temples and replace it with a block of apartments.



## THE FIGHT AMONG FLOWERS

**POEZIJA - IL-Ġlieda Tal-Ward ta Gorg Pisani**

Ġewwa l-mixtla tal-ward, filgnejna tiegħi,  
Il-ward iġġieldu, ġew jgħiduli mbissma L-għasafar mistoħbija  
qalb il-friegħi.

Ġara li l-Qronfla gemgmet għall-Verbena.

Li qed tfuħ wisq, sabiex fuq sħabha tilma.

'Tliffli,' qalti!ha, 'tar-rebbiegħa l-hena.'

Qabżet hawnhekk il-Warda ta' Mitt Werqa

U stqarret li għalkemm m'għandhiex wisq fwieħa,

Hi biss u huha l-Ġilju fihom serqa.

Regħ'x il-Pensjer għal kelma hekk bla qima.

U biex jaraw min minnhom hi sabiħa

Talbu lill-Vjola taqta' dit-tilwima 'Ma s-Sultana tas-Skiet  
kemm kemm mistħija Wegbithom li hi tibza' mis-sbuhija.

A free translation

**Poem - The Fight among Flowers**

Inside the flower nursery, in my little garden,

The flowers fought, came to tell me smiling

The birds hidden among the branches.

It happened that the Carnation grumbled at the Verbena.

She was scenting too much, to overcome her peers.

'You took away,' she said, 'my spring's happiness.'

Here interjected the Centifolia Rose

And stated that although she doesn't scent much,

Only she and her brother the Lily steal in beauty.

The Pansy felt humiliated for such a nasty statement.

And to decide which of them is beautiful

They asked the Violet to determine this dispute.

But the Queen of Silence, a little abashed,

Replied that she was afraid of beauty.

[Thanks are due to both of Sandro Lanfranco and Edwin Lanfranco  
for their help with the scientific names of the flowers] NATURE 4 |

SENIOR TIMES – MAY 2021 **JOE ZAMMIT CIANTAR**



## Maltese eNewsletter

**Journal of Maltese Living Abroad**

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*Read, Enjoyed, Trusted, Shared and Support by many*



## Public survey results on roofing of Royal Opera House 'in coming weeks'

Bettina Borg



*The Malta Royal Opera House before it was bombed in WW2*

A public survey into whether Valletta's Royal Opera House should be roofed is expected to yield results in a few weeks' time, Minister for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government told *The Malta Independent*. Back in 2019, ex-Finance Minister Edward Scicluna announced that [a public consultation](#) on the roofing of the opera house would be launched, as part of the 2020 Budget. The exercise appears never to have been publicly launched, but the government has carried on with the idea.

This newsroom asked Minister José Herrera where the consultation currently stands, to which he replied that a contract on the roofing of the opera house was written up, however it "did not take a survey of the population".

Herrera said he read the report in October or November and, while it proved to be helpful, the fact that it did not consider the public's wishes was unsatisfactory. Another company, he said, was hired to devise a survey that would take the public's needs into account.

"The survey is currently underway and hopefully in a few weeks' time, I will have the results, which I will then proceed to take up before cabinet," he said.

The survey, he said, is considering three different options which reflect the various wishes of the public.



Firstly is the roofing of the theatre, and restoring it to its former aesthetic.

Secondly is the idea of temporary roofing, which will provide shelter in winter and an open sky in summer.

Lastly, there is the option of leaving the opera house as it is now, with its Renzo Piano styled open space. People who favour the last option, however, "would like to see an improvement in acoustics", Herrera noted.

"Hopefully in a couple of weeks we will know where we stand," he added.

This newsroom also asked Herrera about Deputy Prime Minister and Health Minister Chris Fearne's [recent announcement](#) that the vaccine certificates will be used this July for cultural activities.

"As a culture ministry, we're pushing for the certificates, but we still have to use caution," he said. "The fact that we have certificates alone will not suffice to start opening up everything."

He said that Malta's control of the pandemic is encouraging and that the Ministry is holding internal discussions on a weekly basis to assess the situation.

Nevertheless, he said it is vital to keep health in mind when discussing the reopening of cultural events.

"Gradually, but with great prudence and obviously prioritizing health, things are looking good and gradually thing will start opening up," he noted.

## 81 years on: Remembering the 51 Maltese crew members who died on the HMS Glorious



*The battleship was involved in a tragic WWII conflict in the Fjords.*

*Caroline Curmi9th*

Today marks the 80th anniversary from a tragic WWII conflict in the Fjords which claimed the lives of 1519 crew members and Navy personnel - among them 51 Maltese -

during the worst months of the Second World War.

The people on board

Among the Maltese who lost their lives on board one of the three ships was Alfred Gory Jones, whose grandson is today commemorating his grandfather's passing on public Facebook group Nostalgia Malta: "My grandfather drowned after being left for three days in the icy waters near Norway after they were attacked by German warships while protecting the Norwegian Crown," he wrote.

Alfred's grandson, Simon, included several pictures of his grandfather, medals he won along the years as well as the letter the family received informing them of his passing:

"These are some of the memories we have of him," Simon explains, adding that his grandmother was in possession of a ring with his picture in it, while Alfred had one of hers: "...it is now buried at the bottom of the sea."

One local woman also recalled her uncle Emm Bartolo, who also passed away during the conflict: "I have never seen a photo of him my dad always told us about him," she wrote.

Another woman commented on the post explaining that the battle had been ongoing since April 1940 and that a relative had passed away on board another battleship involved in the conflict: "My grandfather was



aboard the HMS Hardy and there were five more Maltese people in the crew," she wrote. Referring to it as a "living hell," she continued to explain that her grandfather had survived the swim from their sunken ship to land in the icy Fjord water: "There were many people who died or were injured but somehow they survived."

Reports reveal that locals had been kind to both HMS Hardy and HMS Glorious survivors: "They offered them help but they were scared they would be found out by German soldiers and would be taken as prisoners of war," she said.

What happened in the battle?

The battleship HMS Glorious, alongside two destroyers Acosta and Ardent, were heading to Scapa Flow in Scotland through the Norwegian Sea, when they were spotted by enemy ships and a heavy bombardment ensued. The Ardent was the first to sink, and the HMS Glorious became the target. The first shell that hit the ship tore through the flight deck, preventing the dispatch of aircrafts thus crippling the ship's defense system.

In the ensuing battle, HMS Glorious sank next, followed by the Acosta barely 10 minutes later. The entire battle was over in less than two hours. There were only 40 survivors from the three ships, who managed to swim through the icy waters to reach land.

*Simon Jones via Nostalgia Malta / Facebook*

RIP to all the souls that lost their lives in this conflict.







### Mosta Youths Dramatic Company - mid to late 50s

From left to right Standing - Victor B. Caruana (ic-cicra), Freddie Magri, Alessio Fenech, Carm Gatt (tal-kumpanija), Charlie Muscat, John Muscat, Joe Quattromani.  
Crouching - Karmnu Azzopardi, Emidio Scicluna, Jimmy Mifsud, Sammut (ic-ciku), Tony Camilleri. Seated - F Falzon. Absent - Gori Caruana, John Mamo.



**HOUSE OF CALLEJA** From Left > Right: son: Joseph Calleja, daughter: Maria Calleja, Mother: Theresa Bugeja Calleja, son: Carmello Calleja, Father : Lonzu Calleja, daughter: Zarena Calleja, son: Pacifico Calleja

*The House of Calleja is the Calleja Family Tree and Blog full of family photos and stories of the Calleja, Caruana, Bugeja, Mercieca, Dimech, Gauci Roots*  
[www.facebook.com/houseofcalleja](http://www.facebook.com/houseofcalleja)



## Society of Christian Doctrine - Adelaide

The Preca ministry in Adelaide has evolved from the traditional youth ministry to a more inclusive approach where all are welcomed in a vibrant faith community. At the heart of the **Preca Community** are young people, youth and young families from all cultural backgrounds. As a community we strive to be holy so as to inspire others to be holy, to learn so as to make Jesus better known and loved and to be community builders so as to increase Preca.

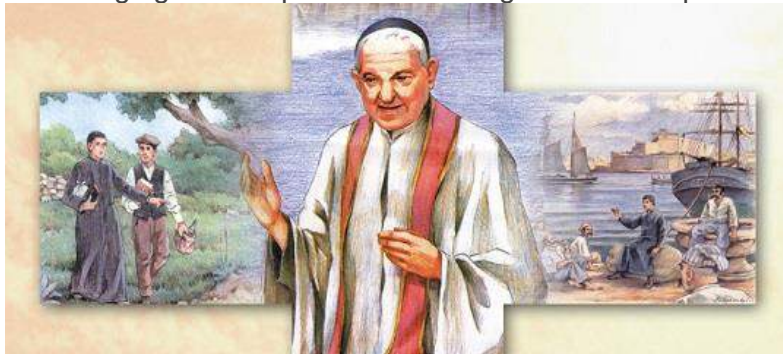
Preca provides a weekly opportunity for all to come together on Friday nights at the **Nazareth Senior Catholic College Campus** between 7-10pm. It is a time to celebrate our faith and family life. There is time for a variety of activities: recreational sport, community prayer, learning groups, weekly birthday and anniversary celebrations and just hanging out with friends in a relaxed and safe atmosphere. Our style is simple, genuine and gentle.



Youth aged between 12 and 22 who are interested in nourishing and discovering more about their faith can join the **Come & See Youth (CAS Youth)** which also meets on Friday nights. There are several age specific groups and activities including monthly Sunday afternoon excursions and an annual three day camp. Youth take leadership roles to lead groups and larger activities. In 2018 CAS Youth presented an enactment of the Stations

of the Cross to all the parish on Palm Sunday. A Parents' Night was also organised as a sign of gratitude towards parents and grandparents.

An emerging trend is parents are taking on leadership roles in the Preca Community. A case in point is



the monthly Family and Youth Mass which evolved from the Third Sunday Mass which Preca pioneered in 2006 and now is run by parents with the support of the Preca Members. Parents also lead adoration on Wednesday night at **Our Lady of the Manger Chapel**, the Children's Choir and help organising the Winter and Summer Family Weekends. Preca Ministry in Adelaide is focused in the inner western suburbs and its

main **Preca Centre is located in Brompton**. Preca also has a centre at Elizabeth where a weekly faith journey and a monthly Taize' prayer meeting are held.

At the Preca Centre in Brompton an organic garden known as 'Preca Community Garden' has been developed in the backyard with the support of the Charles Sturt Council. The garden provides neighbours with the opportunity to organically grow their own vegetables in raised wicking beds.

For more information about the garden see us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/PrecaCommunityGardenAdelaide>

Front view of Preca Centre at Brompton: [https://www.google.com.au/maps/@-34.8982925,138.581205,3a,75y,313.28h,92.98t/data=!3m4!1e1!3m2!1sogY09dLTRfyIN\\_6PreYEUAI2e0](https://www.google.com.au/maps/@-34.8982925,138.581205,3a,75y,313.28h,92.98t/data=!3m4!1e1!3m2!1sogY09dLTRfyIN_6PreYEUAI2e0)



## MEMEORIES OF BRITISH MALTA Joseph Lanzon

Malta formed part of the British Empire just after Admiral Horatio Nelson's '*HMS Victory*' entered Malta in 1799 and from his flagship directed the operation to oust Napoleon's troops from the Island. It has a deep-rooted British culture going deeper than driving on the left and red phone booths; It is an Island where practically everybody speaks English; where most squares and public gardens are adorned with statues of famous British royalties, generals and statesmen; an Island which was awarded the '*George Cross*' by King George VI in 1942 "*for heroism and devotion that will long be famous in history*".



### CHANGING THE GUARD AT THE PALACE.

I loved watching the Forces parades on Saturday mornings in Valletta which used to march down Kingsway with their band playing popular stirring marches and their soldiers, in full regalia, marching in typical British discipline. This was a popular event and many Maltese with their children came

purposely to Valletta to watch and admire the synchronized formation heading for the Main Guard in St. George's Square where the 'changing ceremony' would take place in front of the historic Grandmaster's Palace which was then the residence of the Governor.

### STRAIT STREET- THE SAILORS' PARADISE



Strait Street from the 30's to the 60's was easily the most known street in Malta among sailors, soldiers and airmen of the British Forces. This narrow street running from one end to the other in the Capital was the pinnacle of night life among British and American sailors. Because of its reputation as the seedy underbelly of Valletta, it was known by the frequenters as '*The Gut*'.

It was filled with bars, music halls, bordellos, rooming houses and restaurants. It was Malta's red light district. Prostitutes were part of the entertainment offered and were the main

attraction for drunken sailors and soldiers who searched for company after months at sea or at the front.

Very often brawls among a number of sailors would erupt involving crews of different warships, spilling on to other streets. But the tough, burly military police – or Red Caps as they were called – were ready for them wielding their batons. Sometimes there were injuries on both sides.

Shifty young men would sit on an empty beer crate in the centre of the street with a small make-shift table in front of them, playing with three cards one of which is a joker. He would shift them in front of the audience and then entice them to point over the joker and win. A conniving colleague, jostling among the audience, would shout his luck and win repeatedly. "*Wonder of wonders, this is easy*" he would say. This encouraged the servicemen, one after the other, to start bidding and, wonder of wonders; they would lose all the time. He must have made a lot of money that shifty young man!

How do I know all this? I'll let you into a secret. At one time, when I was working at the Foreign Office, it had its premises at the Main Guard. Some of my colleagues and I had our desks at the back which had a window looking into Strait Street. Sometimes, when we were working overtime in the evenings, I would alight a couple of steps and look out into '*The Gut*'. There I saw everything – drunks, prostitutes, brawls, card players, shouts, music, etc. I was an eye witness!

The street economic success lasted until the Navy left the Island for good forcing the bars and music halls to close down and its various characters disappeared into the shadows. [to be continued next edition]



I am so pleased to announce that I have made contact with our Mercieca Roots. It was through MyHeritage and Facebook that I found our Cousin Lou Mercieca who lives in Australia. He is a direct descendant of our Maternal Great Grandfather Francesco Mercieca son Emmanuel Mercieca. Emmanuel Mercieca is Nanna Vittor's Brother and Lou is Emmanuel Mercieca Grandson. Please join me in welcoming Lou to our family.

[www.facebook.com/houseofcalleja](http://www.facebook.com/houseofcalleja)

Our Journal is preserved at the Malta Migration Museum – Valletta, Maltese Canadian Archives-Toronto.

Website –

[www.ozmalta.com](http://www.ozmalta.com), FACEBOOK, schools, libraries and Nursing Homes. Clubs in Australia, Canada, USA and UK, MCCV webpage and the website of Malta Foreign and European Affairs.

If you have photos or storied that you would like to share it and archived for future generations send it to us



### Francesco [Francis] Mercieca (Mercieca)

Gender: Male  
 Birth: November 20, 1864  
 Valletta, Malta  
 Death: England (United Kingdom)  
 Immediate Family: Son of [Gregorio Mercieca](#) and [Nicolina Mercieca](#)  
 Husband of [Carmela Mercieca](#)  
 Father of [Gregorio Mercieca](#); [Vittoria Caruana](#); [Spiridione \(Spiru\) Mercieca](#); [Emmanuel Mercieca](#); [Joseph Mercieca](#) and 1 other  
 Brother of [Giuseppe Mercieca](#) and [Rozaria Mercieca](#)



They emigrated from Malta to Australia in 1950. The ship the Ocean Triumph was originally called the Mohammadi . We left Malta on the 23rd of March 1950 arriving in Melbourne 28th April 1950. And then on to Adelaide by overland train where we were met by one of dad's relatives and taken to live in Paradise