



## MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

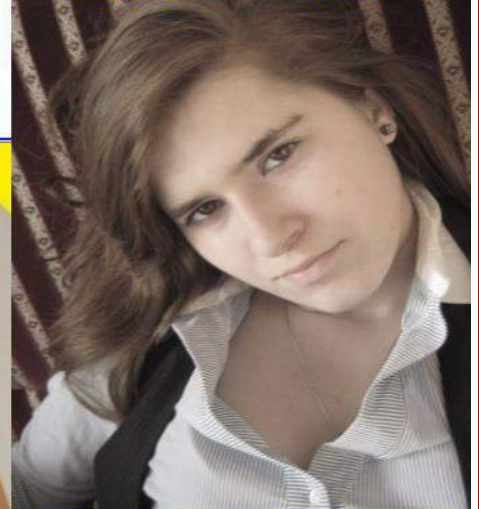
Journal of Maltese Living Abroad

Editor: Frank L Scicluna OAM MQR

**Emma Muscat  
performs at the  
Vatican on  
Christmas  
Eve**



**Paulina Dembska**



**Murdered in Sliema  
at the beginning of  
the NEW YEAR 2022**



**'Ahmed Diriye is another victim  
of dehumanisation due to skin colour'  
Minister**



**Michelle  
I love my  
garden**



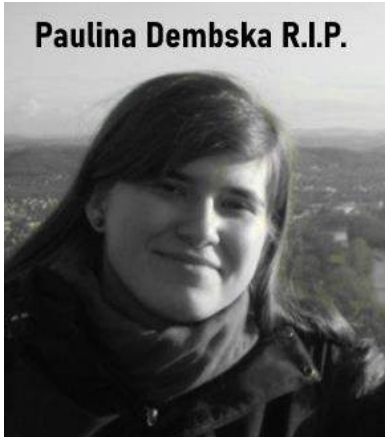
**THE FRIEND OF EVERY  
MALTESE LIVING ABROAD**

## Women's Rights Foundation

3 January 2022

### PRESS RELEASE

Paulina Dembska R.I.P.



### Femicide of Paulina Dembska

When we launched our Malta Observatory on Femicide last month, we would have never expected to have a new case of a woman dying at the hands of a man so soon. Sadly, the latest case just proves the point that the observatory is very much needed.

Details are scant, but we know her name – Paulina Dembska. She suffered one of the most brutal forms of Gender Based Violence against Women. We are adding her name to the long list of names of women whose life was cut short because of misogyny

and relentless male violence caused by it.

There is no way of putting it any other way – the cause of her demise, and those of others before her, is men. We can talk about laws, we can introduce new and tougher punishments, but until we deal with the root cause, we are a far cry from ensuring that women will not be abused and killed on account of their gender. We need to stop dealing with symptoms and deal with the source of this plague. We need to talk about abuse perpetrated by men and inherent inequality and work to eradicate it. Then and only then we can talk about meaningful change.

We call on authorities and policy makers to accept responsibility for failing to prevent femicide and step up their game. We call on our legal and judicial system to once and for all take femicide, gender-based violence & violence against women seriously and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and dissuasive punishments meted out. We call on our political class to take the lives and wellbeing of the women living in this country in a serious and comprehensive manner.

Ultimately, we call on all good people in Malta to see that the solution to violence on women lies in all of us. We call on all of you to ask difficult questions, demand answers and change from authorities and help us all establish Malta as a safe, violence free environment for our mothers, sisters, daughters, aunts, wives, partners. You too have a role to play.

Her name is Paulina, she was a woman and she was killed because she was a woman. We will not forget her name, nor the names of women before her.

A vigil will be held on 4th January 2022 at 6pm at Exiles, Sliema. We ask those attending to bring a candle.

WRF - Malta Observatory on Femicide





## “You’re a strong woman” – Pope Francis

A mother of four confided in Pope Francis about the difficulties her and her children went through because of domestic violence.

Giovanna, spoke openly about her experience in an interview with the

Pope which was broadcast exclusively in Malta on TVMNEWS+ on Christmas day.

Visibly moved, Giovanna spoke of the heart wrenching moments she had raising her children – two 23-year-old men, a 21-year-old, an 11-year-old boy and a three-year-old girl. She said that the violence she suffered within the four walls of her own house changed her life because, among other things, she had to leave home with her children. She added that the Covid-19 pandemic continued to plunge her into poverty as she lost her job.

**The Pope described domestic violence against women as almost satanic** because the aggressor takes advantage of the weakness of the victim who can only hope to dodge the blows. Giovanna was encouraged by the Pope who described her as a strong mother because she was able to get back on her feet. Speaking to the Pope, the mother stated that she felt like a human being because she said that she was often reduced to nothing because of what she had gone through.

During this Mediaset production, the Pope also spoke to the prisoner Pierdonato, to Maria who lives and sleeps outdoors and with the young Maristella who suffered as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown.



Italy-based Maltese singer Emma Muscat gave a truly elegant interpretation of the song “White Christmas” at the Vatican.

22-year-old Muscat was one of the participants given an opportunity to display their artistic skills on Christmas Eve during the Vatican Christmas Concert. The concert was aired on Mediaset’s Canale 5 channel.

During her three-minute interpretation, the Maltese singer managed to charm the audience with her distinctive voice, which was further enhanced with

background piano music and orchestra.

Emma interpreted Bing Crosby’s “White Christmas”, an Irving Berlin composition. This Christmas favourite has sold the biggest ever number of copies worldwide.

The concert was held at the Conciliazione Auditorium, midway between St Peter’s Square and Castel Sant’Angelo in the Italian capital.

The so-called Concerto di Natale in Vaticano was presented by Federica Panicucci, and other participants included Federico Rossi, Francesca Michielin, Rita Pavone and Shaggy.



**39-year-old Somali man  
Ahmed Adawe Diriye**

## A Missing Man Was Identified as a Marsa Workplace Death

By Johnathan Cilia

A shocking case of worker mismanagement and public cruelty has been revealed after Malta's police put out a call for a missing man.

**39-year-old Somali man Ahmed Adawe Diriye, who lived in Birżebbuġa, was installing solar panels from a height in a Marsa factory last week when he fell a storey and a half.**

However, he remained unidentified after being injured. He received medical treatment at Mater Dei Hospital, where nurses reportedly referred to him as "Mr. X" since they didn't have a name for him.

Eventually, after police issued a call for a missing man on Monday, authorities figured out that the missing man had indeed died days earlier after succumbing to his serious injuries. According to MaltaToday, nurses only figured out the man's identity after seeing the police's missing individual report.

"What a disgrace," said one commentator online. "How did he get to the hospital? Where was his employer in all of this? Serious questions need to be asked to the police and the employer to find out what actually happened. What a shambles."

"How sad and disgusting – another death without proper workplace protection," said another.

Diriye's death comes as contractors are being charged in court for a slew of offences in relation to the Jaiteh Lamin case, where another migrant worker fell one storey on a Mellieħa workplace before being discarded on the side of road with his injuries.

**Arguably worse than the systemic failure that led to the injured man dying in a foreign country while anonymous is the fact that when police issued the missing individual call, social media was inundated with heartless and abusive comments celebrating the fact that Diriye was missing.**

"Maybe he caught another boat," said one Maltese man publicly under a TVM article announcing the search for Diriye.

"I have to say that I saw him about 10 times in Marsa today wearing different clothes every time, but they all look the same to me so it's impossible for me to be certain," said another woman publicly.

"-1," some others said simply.

When the article was updated to say the man had died due to injuries sustained while working, people were happy to keep their comments public, leading to others to question the values of the country, especially days after millions were raised in solidarity via L-Istrina.

**"We need to worry about what's inside (or what isn't) our hearts," said one person left disgusted by the cruelty of his fellow countrymen.**

With 2022 around the corner, migrant workers in Malta face more workplace perils in a careless society than ever before.

Though there are constant calls from NGOs, former presidents and community leaders to show empathy with others, some Maltese people still have a long way to go before they'll ever understand how to deal with their fellows humans.

**Whilst hoping you enjoyed a lovely Christmas Day with your loved ones I wish you and your family a happy and healthy 2020.**

**I wish you success with the journal and congratulations on the farewell article you wrote for Denise Demicoli, very well said. She is a hard working person and the two of us had a good rapport during her tour of duty. Take care and keep up the good work. Warm regards Cecilia Borg**



## 'What If Your Child Were Treated Like That?': Minister Blasts Racist Comments About Somali Man's Disappearance

By [Yannick Pace](#) Share:

Inclusivity Minister Julia Farrugia Portelli has condemned racist comments posted online about the disappearance of a Somali individual, insisting that the behaviour shown by some online was shameful.

Earlier this week the police issued an appeal for information about the whereabouts of Ahmed Diriye after he lost contact with his family three days before Christmas.

A few hours later, the appeal was withdrawn after a nurse informed the police that the man was the same one she had treated in hospital some days earlier. Diriye was injured at the workplace and succumbed to his injuries in hospital shortly after.

The news story led to many [racist comments](#) online, many of which were reposted by the minister. "Someone said: -1 (we've rid ourselves of one of them)," wrote Farrugia Portelli.

"These disparaging comments do not reflect the values of the majority of the Maltese people." She said it was truly shameful that Malta still had to deal with racial hatred. "It is even more shameful that we continue to hide behind a keyboard and fire comments that are clearly a criminal offence."

"Imagine it was your child or your sibling who is white who was treated this way when they are abroad in a country where the majority are black? How would you feel?"

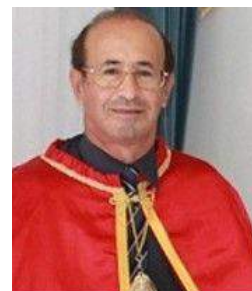
"Is it acceptable for you that a white man is insulted simply because he is white? No. This is a basic principle in our Constitution."

The minister insisted that hate crimes could never be acceptable adding that this was the reason for the recent legislation to broaden the definition of a hate crime in Malta.



## Confraternity of the Knights of St. Peter & St. Paul

Seat of the Confraternity: 49 Botanic Drive, Hillside 3037.  
Melbourne. Victoria. Australia.



Greetings one and all,

This year that is coming to an end like the one before it, was mainly about the pandemic, the restrictions that we had to follow to stay safe and keep others safe too. This year we had the opportunity to celebrate the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul but we missed out on celebrating with a Lunch and Dance by just three days before another strict lockdown.

This year we lost four members of the Confraternity, the Deputy Grand Master Chevalier Professor José Ferreira Coelho of Portugal, Dame Marlene Muscat of Malta, Dame Maria Colombo of Melbourne and Chevalier Shalimo Nikolay Petrovich of Belarus. We keep them in our prayers. May they rest in peace.

We pray that the new year brings an end to the pandemic so we can continue with our mission to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves. God bless you all.

God bless the Confraternity of the Knights of St. Peter & St. Paul.

Chevalier Peter Paul Portelli Grand Master





## Residence for student-priests welcomes first student

**Rev. Mark Chitamaluka from Zambia is first student at Casa Fratelli Tutti**

By Jurgen Balzan

Rev. Mark Chitamaluka (Faculty of Theology/Facebook)

The residence for student-priests from developing countries at the Archbishop's Seminary in Tal-Virtù, Rabat has welcomed its first student. On Monday, Rev. Mark Chitamaluka from Zambia became the first student reading for a Licentiate in Pastoral Theology at the Faculty of Theology to reside at Casa Fratelli Tutti, the newly refurbished house. This came following the agreement signed between the Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta and the Archdiocese of Malta.

The refurbishment of the property was carried out by the Faculty itself, which will also cover expenses for the maintenance and the running of the house, such as those related to food, water, electricity, and internet consumption.

### Agreement between Faculty of Theology and Archdiocese of Malta

The agreement was signed on 11 March 2021 by Professor Alfred Vella, Rector of the University of Malta and Rev. Dr John Berry, Dean of the Faculty of Theology, on behalf of the University of Malta, and by Mr Roberto Buontempo, Head of Non-Moveable Assets of the Archbishop's Curia, and Rev. Fr Albert Buhagiar, Rector of the Seminary, on behalf of the Archdiocese of Malta.

"The house shall be named *Casa Fratelli Tutti*," said Rev. Dr Berry, recalling the name of the recent encyclical on fraternity and social friendship issued by Pope Francis last October. "It will be a sign – and hopefully not just a sign, but also an instrument – of fraternity in today's fragmented and individualistic world."



## Russian Exiles and Murdered Mystics: Malta's Forgotten History with The Man Who Killed Rasputin (the Malta Connection)

By Julian Bonnici

Malta has been home to some of the world's most famous figures throughout its history, whether that's the Queen, Lord Byron, or Toto Rina, but few would have known that Prince Felix Yusupov, the man who murdered the enigmatic Grigori Rasputin, also found shelter on our shores.

A photo, taken at the Tigne Barracks, published by Oliver Gatt, may show Yusupov, darkened by shade, among a group of Russian refugees. Meanwhile, the second photo shows Yusupov's signature on a photo of the HMS Marlborough, the ship which brought him to Malta.

**The story kicks off on a cold December evening in St Petersburg when five men killed Grigori Rasputin, the influential mystic who acquired immense control over Tsar Nicholas II and Imperial Russia.** Prince Felix Yusupov, leader of the murder plot, shot Rasputin in distress after the man first survived a poison attempt at Yusupovs' Moika Palace.

After the Tsars abdicated the throne and lost their lives, Yusupov fled to Crimea along with his family. After Malta, Yusupov travelled to Italy and then to Paris, before settling in London. Not much is known of his time here, but there's more about Russian refugees.

Following the Russian revolution of 1917, many Russian refugees (including Princess Nathalie Poutiatine) came to Malta. Several of them ended being housing in at St. Ignatius Villa, which still stands today on Old College Street but is subject to developers' interests.

**According to rumour, the Russians often swam beneath the Sliema Tower. The area eventually came to be known as "ta l-Exiles", as it still is known today.**



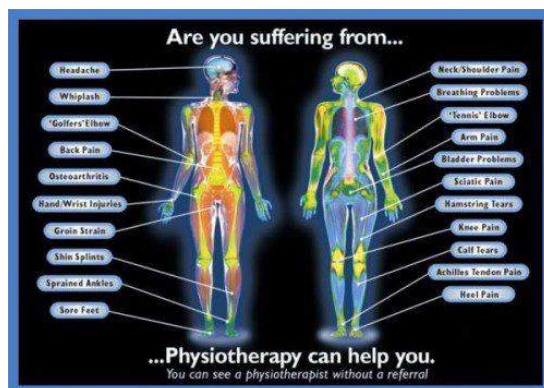
**Body Mind Wellness Physiocare**  
**Western Specialist Centre**  
**Suite 1, 63 Cudmore Terrace**  
**HENLEY BEACH,**  
**SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5022**  
**Australia Tel: (08) 8353 6233**



**www.bmwphysio.com.au**

## **WHAT IS PHYSIOTHERAPY?**

Many of you would know the value of physiotherapy and how physiotherapy can help through the highs and lows of injury and management of our musculoskeletal health. However, for those who have never been to see a physiotherapist before, there can be a question mark over exactly what it is that physiotherapists do and what conditions can we help with.



### **What is it that physiotherapists do?**

The answer is tricky because physiotherapists do so much. We might be described as pain management experts, as we work to reduce the pain of our patients, from those who have suffered a new injury, to those who have had pain for several years. We first identify the cause of the pain and then provide manual therapy techniques, education and management strategies to help our patients understand, manage and reduce their pain.

While pain is usually the first thing that brings patients to see a physiotherapist, this pain has often caused patients to give up activities that they love and can even be getting

in the way of everyday tasks. By identifying the cause of your symptoms, we can help to get you back to full function. Physiotherapists are able to do this for people at all activity levels, including elite athletes and those dealing with serious disabilities.

In fact, physiotherapists have a role to play at practically every stage of life. We can assess infants to monitor their motor skills development and as they grow, we help them deal with the pains and vulnerabilities of a growing body. Among other things, we can help to prevent injuries, improve pelvic floor dysfunction and work to prevent falls in the elderly.

### **Not just exercises and massage.**

Physiotherapists offer a range of treatments, from self-management strategies, stretches, manual therapies, dry needling/acupuncture, exercises & massage.

A huge part of recovering from pain and injury comes from understanding what is happening and how to best manage these issues. We aim to empower our patients to improve their health independently, as much as possible.

A physiotherapist's primary goal is to improve your quality of life and remove any barriers to full participation, whether these barriers are due to pain, weakness or stiffness. **None of the information in this article is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for advice on your condition.**

**We are reopening on January 12th, 2022, and will recommence Pilates Classes on Mondays at 6pm and 7pm from January 31st 2022.**

**Wishing you a safe and happy January!**

**Yours in health - Marika Scicluna Director & Physiotherapist**





## Meet Rita Zammit, The Maltese Woman Who Served In The Royal Air Force After World War 2

By **Sasha Vella**

[www.lovinmalta.com](http://www.lovinmalta.com)

Rita Zammit, nee Vella, was one of the legendary Maltese women who served in the Royal Air Force in Malta shortly after the Second World War.

Although she, unfortunately, died a few weeks back, her incredible story lives on in Malta's history, where she had served for four years employed as a plotter in the R.A.F Fighter Control Room at Lascaris War Rooms in Valletta.

**Lovin Malta got in contact with her family to hear more about her story and keep it alive as a wonderful commemoration of her experiences, and her servitude for the islands.**

**So, who was Rita Zammit?** Rita was born in 1924 in Valletta and soon after moved with her family to Rabat. She was the eldest of five siblings, four brothers and a sister. At the tender age of nine, she had no choice but to take a

leading role in caring for her siblings along with her mother, due to losing her own father when he was just 35 years old.

On 17th September 1952, Rita joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve of Malta, as a leading aircraftwoman, also known as L.A.C.W. Upon enrollment, she was appointed as a telephone operator at the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (N.A.A.F.I) building headquarters in Marsa.

**Rita had joined the first-ever intake of Maltese R.A.F women reservists with the Royal Air Force. Following her training, she was then employed as a plotter in the R.A.F Fighter Control Room.**

She enrolled in the programme twice to serve her duties between the years 1952 to 1956, when she had then decided to resign in order to get married and have a family.

After all the years that passed following her servitude, Rita had one last wish, to visit her workplace once more. **Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, her wish became true when at the impressive age of 96, Rita visited the Lascaris War Rooms in 2020.**



Together with the Chairman and CEO of Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna, she shared her stories and knowledge from her incredible experiences. Rita rejoiced in revisiting the plotter rooms and reminiscing her days working as a volunteer in the Royal Air Force.

A few months later, in 2021, she was honoured with a permanent exhibit containing all the information and photos that she provided to the War Rooms, which she gladly visited to witness herself. Rita was an inspiration to all those who had the pleasure to meet her. She was self-sufficient, strong and determined to keep taking care of herself while living as a widow at her home till her last days, always carrying

herself with grace.

**Rita with her family in November 2021**

**She is remembered for her tender smile, always being polite towards her customers, family and friends, never complaining or gossiping about other people's lives.**

Regrettably, Rita passed away peacefully soon after on 11th December 2021 but her legacy continues to be inspired by locals and tourists alike upon visiting her poster situated in the Lascaris War Rooms.





If you ask people how Malta fought against French occupation, most will talk about how the British helped the Maltese out. Few know that the Portuguese navy played the decisive part in this battle.

This article sets the record straight.

### Context

The Knights of Malta had ruled the islands since the 16th century. By the end of the 18th century, the Knights' nemesis – the Ottoman Empire – was no longer a threat. The Knights became complacent and their administration of the islands was poor. Faced with higher taxes and an unpopular governing class, the islanders were happy to help the French take over the islands. The French exploited the islands for their own needs. They forced men to join French battleships heading for Egypt. The army forced the upper classes to lend them money. They also stole from churches and raped women<sup>1</sup>.

As a result, in less than two years, the Maltese wanted the French out. The local population was neither armed nor familiar with guerilla techniques. Despite this, the Maltese grouped together as best they could. **On 2 September 1798, Vincenzo Borg** led a rag-tag crew of people from the Mosta and Birkirkara areas. They fought the 5 000-strong French forces who were auctioning church property to pay for war efforts. Many write **about Vincenzo Borg**. His farmhouse, from which he commanded the Maltese against the French, still exists today.

**Borg wrote to Sir Alexander Ball** of the British forces stating that the majority 'of us would like to see the islands under British jurisdiction.'

### British support via Portugal

As well as Borg's letter to Sir Alexander, the Maltese made contact with the King of Two Sicilies for help<sup>1</sup>. Lord Nelson couldn't make it to Malta

## How Portugal helped Malta

because most of his fleet needed urgent repairs following the Battle of Abukir Bay in Egypt. He sent word to Rear Admiral Marquis de Niza of the Portuguese navy, asking if Portugal could help Malta<sup>1</sup>.



*The Principe Real, flagship of Admiral Marquis de Niza  
Painting by Manuel A Branco, courtesy of the Lisbon Maritime*

De Niza headed for the islands on his flagship *Principe Real*<sup>1</sup>. He managed to gain control of the harbours with ease because most of the French navy was in Egypt<sup>1</sup>. The remaining 2 French battleships were no match for De Niza's 2 frigates and 7 ships of war. The Portuguese also put 3 000 men on the islands to besiege Valletta.

Once the Maltese heard the Portuguese had arrived, they raised 3 flags on the roof of the tower in Mdina: the Maltese, Napolitan and Portuguese flags.

Together with the motley crew of Maltese insurgents, De Niza blockaded the French in Valletta. Malta was in such a dire state that thousands died of malnutrition<sup>1</sup>. Seeing this De Niza wrote to Lord Nelson describing the situation. On 4 October 1798, Nelson wrote to the Marquis to congratulate him on his blockade and efforts. He also sent reinforcements in the form of HMS Alexander.

On 24 October 1798 Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton about this.

*'Not a house of bastion [...] is in possession of the islanders, and the Marquis de Niza tells me, they want arms, victuals, and support.'*<sup>2</sup> *The Dispatches and Letters of Vice Admiral Lord*

*Viscount Nelson: January 1798 to August 1799*  
De Niza's men gave 500 muskets to the Maltese. They also provided training, and taught the Maltese how to build trenches, and where best to do so.

**After the French** Two weeks later, British ships made port bringing supplies and armaments<sup>1</sup>. The British took over the islands on the understanding that they would end up back in the Knights' hands. The Treaty of Paris governed this, but Napoleon soon broke his side of the deal.

The [Treaty of Amiens](#) ensured the islands would remain under British rule.

The Portuguese fleet left Malta on 13 December 1799, when two British regiments arrived to relieve them<sup>1</sup>. De Niza ended up as Portuguese ambassador to Russia where he died in Konigsburg in 1802.

This little-known chapter in Maltese history is not well-known and isn't taught in schools, which is a shame. The Maltese have commemorated the event and the Marquis with a commemorative plaque in Valletta's Upper Barrakka gardens. Do you know when the Union Jack first flew over Malta?



Maltese history is a rich tapestry of events, influences and wars.

The Maltese are proud of British heritage, but few

seem to know where the British flag was first flown over the islands.

In the 18th century, the threat of invasion from the Ottoman Empire had receded. The Maltese started to build in land outside the fortified cities, now that pirate attacks were also a distant memory. In the central town of Birkirkara (now part of the town of San Gwann), they built farmhouses around agricultural land. One such farmhouse is

Ta' Xindi farmhouse which is now on the road between San Gwann and the new hospital.

The building is modest and not too large. Today the road is busy with traffic leading to the hospital. Constant urbanisation means that the vast fields it once controlled no longer exist. The building looks like any other and one wouldn't think it has any special significance unless one sees the plaque on the wall.

Records don't show who built it but by 1798 it was owned by 21-year old cotton merchant Vincenzo Borg. This was the year when the French occupied the islands. The French soon offended the Catholic Maltese by looting churches to pay for the French war effort against the British. On 2 September 1798, the Maltese revolted against the French during an auction of church property. 10,000 Maltese surrounded Valletta, baying for blood.

Vincenzo Borg was one of the leaders of the campaign against the French. The people of Birkirkara and neighbouring Mosta chose him as their leader. Together with two other Maltese, he was one of the main figureheads in the uprising. He led one of the largest battalions in the 10-000 strong irregular military that was set up. While arms were scarce at first, the British and Portuguese navies supplied the insurgents with arms.

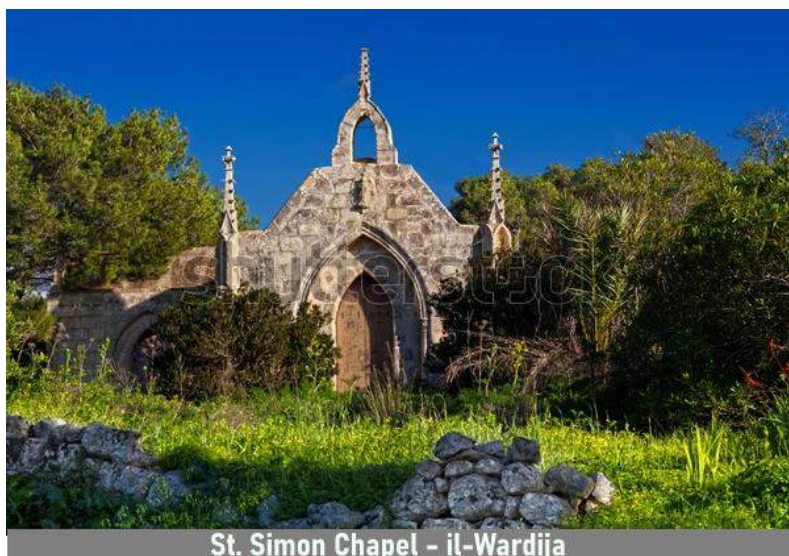
Borg used his home as his field headquarters. Under his command insurgents built batteries around Valletta harbour but the fortified city was strong enough to repel attacks. Borg spoke to British Admiral Alexander Ball to see if the United Kingdom was interested in taking the islands. Ball was already well-loved in Malta but he was suspicious of Borg's intents. Despite this, Borg wrote to Ball explaining 'the majority of us [Maltese] wish to see the islands under British jurisdiction'. It was clear that the Maltese expected Britain to act.

On 9 February 1799, Borg hoisted the British Union Jack over his farmhouse showing his commitment to the cause. This was the first time the British flag flew over Malta.

Nelson could not reach Malta fast enough so he asked [Portugal's navy](#) to lend a helping hand.

The French surrendered and left Malta by 1800, ending a 2-year occupation. The British kept the islands under the treaties of Amiens and Paris and ruled until independence in 1964.





St. Simon Chapel - il-Wardija

**Wardija** is a [hamlet](#) in [St. Paul's Bay](#).

Malta, about 363 feet above sea level.<sup>[2]</sup> Its name is corrupted from the Sicilian or Italian word *guardia*, meaning *to watch*). Although the name of the hamlet has Arabic lexicons, it was probably named later when Maltese, then an Arabic dialect, remained a dominant language.<sup>[4]</sup> The hamlet is bordered with [Bidnija](#), [Buġibba](#), [SanMartin](#) and [Pwales](#).

Several archeological remains are found in the whereabouts, proving that it was inhabited in pre-history and the Roman period,<sup>[5]</sup> and it has always been mainly a rural village. From the 16th till the 18th-centuries it saw a shift into a hunting zone with the construction of several hunting lodges and chapels.

A number of knights and noble families built their country residences, originally to be used for hunting and retreats. A number of 19th and 20th century structures were also erected in the area. Some houses are still owned by the descendants of the original builders, while

## TREASURES OF MALTA

### IL-WARDIJA

others are now used for multiple purposes such as private homes, commercial accommodation, events and weddings receptions. There are two schools, one for local students and one for foreign students.

There are a number of public and private chapels dating from the rule of the [Order of St. John](#) till the 20th

century.<sup>[6]</sup> Some houses have buttressed walls, possibly for defense purposes or general support, while other have defense features exclusively for decorative intent. A [World War I battery](#) was constructed in the whereabouts of Wardija, and its gun emplacements are still on site.<sup>[7]</sup> A rental complex, known as the *Wardija Hilltop Village*, and the Headquarters of the Ecumenical Order, known as [Castello Dei Baroni](#), are located at the inner part of Wardija. Wardija consist of a low and high land, its hill is a plateau, and Qannotta Valley is located within its boundaries.<sup>[9]</sup> Rain water in Wardija is vital for agriculture, as a primary source of production, while it also flows into areas around such as to the now defunct Xemxija Aqueduct.<sup>[10]</sup> Some lands in Wardija enjoy a conservation status from the [Environment and Resources Authority](#), while there are also pre-historic cart-ruts enjoying conservation from the Planning Authority.



**During 2021  
we had 1500  
new readers**



## Exploring the area of Wied il-Bassasa in Zurrieq

By Martina Posted in Nature, Walks & Treks

[www.maltatina.com/](http://www.maltatina.com/)

I love exploring. It's like my personal challenge to find places in Malta that I've never been before. This time I checked out the area of Wied il-Bassasa located

in the outskirts of Zurrieq. Have you been to Zurrieq before? Did you know that the [Xarolla Windmill in Zurrieq](#) is the only windmill on the Maltese Islands that is functioning until today? It's actually a very interesting attraction to visit.

Now let's go and explore the outskirts of Zurrieq. This time I didn't go alone, but with my friend Elena. We parked the car at the end of the street of 'Wied Ganu', just before the quarries. I never realised how many quarries are actually located in this area. I'm not a big fan of these places, but in a way they really fascinate me. The depth of the quarries, the size of the machinery used and the 'architecture' of the control buildings. There is something intriguing about them.

This natural or artificial but still beautiful arch connects two quarries. We left the car in front of them and decided to walk through a small path rather than taking the dusty road, which you can see in the top left corner of the above photo. We actually used this road to get back to our car as it was far more comfortable. The trek we chose turned out to be perfect for mountain goats! Very steep.

This was our beautiful view of Wied il-Bassasa from above. It doesn't look as steep as it was. We didn't find a better path so we were just 'jumping' from one stone / rock to another, avoiding the grass as that can be tricky and you could easily end up stuck in between stones. Now thinking about it, we should have walked along side the dry stone wall as that would have been probably more comfortable.

The weather wasn't the best. It was cold, cloudy and windy, but that didn't stop us from having a great time. And while walking down the hill we came across this cool cave. First it didn't look big, but when we got closer it was actually a decent size. Can you spot me in the photo?

There was also a fire ring, which suggests that someone made a fire in that cave not long ago or even spent a night! I consider myself to be adventurous, but the days when I used to sleep outside without the tent are long gone.

Vincent Van Gogh once said 'If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere.' I couldn't have said it better. He expressed exactly how I feel each time I go trekking.

I mean look at these photos. Sometimes when I get lost in places like this I can hardly believe that I'm still in Malta. It's beautiful, refreshing and recharging. It also gives me hope, that despite the over-development in some areas, Malta still have a chance of surviving this crazy boom.

Some say that 'freedom is a state of mind' and I truly believe it. And as Mark Aurelius once said 'Our life is what our thoughts make it.' Free your mind, free yourself.

This is the perfect place. Let the sea take away all your worries and for a moment don't think of anything and just enjoy this pure, simple moment. Only you and the elements. Feel the sea spray on your skin. The breeze in your hair. And just let go.



Continuing our little trekking adventure and taking this narrow path to discover even more beautiful natural creations. For me, this is the best time of year to go trekking or simply enjoy the greenery and blooming flowers. As winter in Malta is like another spring.

How cool is this limestone window? I love it! Really wonderful creation. We couldn't resist to stop for a while and take numerous photos. Very photogenic area. And if you look behind me you can see Blue Grotto in the distance.

I'm sure that you can tell from our smile that we had absolutely amazing time hiking! Me and Elena are very similar and we love the simple things in life. Trekking for couple of hours fills us with this pleasant feeling lasting for couple of days. Do you feel the same?

I had to stop and take a picture of this quarry. The depth of it is mind-blowing and the cars and heavy machinery look like toys from up here! Really impressive! I just couldn't figure out how the vehicles get in and get out. Didn't have an obvious entrance. Does anyone know?

## Maltatina launches 2022 diary



'Everyone can follow in my footsteps and see the beauty of the islands'

*Popular online blog also celebrating fifth anniversary of inspiring fans to explore the best of Malta in February 2022.*

Local travel blogger Martina Brtnická has launched the first Maltese Islands-themed travel diary for 2022. The diary

includes 52 travel tips, one for each weekend, to inspire people to explore beautiful and often little-known spots on the islands.

"I hear complaints that there is nothing to do in Malta and that you can see it all in a week, but that's simply not true," stresses the photographer and entrepreneur. "The Maltese Islands have so much to offer and I want to remind locals, expats and tourists alike about places that they may have forgotten or don't even know exist."



In 2017, after 10 years living in Malta, Brtnická set herself a personal challenge to visit a new spot in Malta or Gozo every weekend. Five years later she is still discovering hidden corners, and she shares her experiences with readers on her blog, Maltatina. "That way everyone can follow in my footsteps and see the beauty of the islands for themselves," she says.

"I know what it's like not knowing what to do or where to go at the weekends, and feeling like my time off is being wasted." This is why Maltatina decided to create a diary filled with ideas on what to do each weekend, depending on the month or season.

### ADVERTISING

There is a travel tip for each week, be it a trek, a cultural experience, or a visit to a museum. Moreover, readers can find detailed information on how to reach the place, what to keep in mind, as well as some curious facts.

"The diary was my biggest project of 2021, or of the past five years, actually. It took me years to gather the knowledge, and months to put everything together. I'm super excited to be able to offer this product to my followers as well as the general public. I believe it can really make a difference and inspire people to spend more time outdoors exploring and being active, with a suggestion for every weekend."

*Now is the season to spend more time outdoors discovering beautiful hidden gems- Travel blogger Martina Brtnická*

Brtnická's products are available at her one-stop shop for local inspiration and gifts, [www.shopmaltatina.com](http://www.shopmaltatina.com). The retail website currently features the Maltatina Memory Game Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, the special edition Door Knockers Memory Game, Door Knockers Posters, the 2022 Diary, plus Wall Planners and Desk Calendars featuring Malta and Malta Door Knockers.

"Now is the season to spend more time outdoors discovering beautiful hidden gems, appreciating nature and relishing Malta's stunning countryside. If my 2022 diary and games inspire people to go out and explore, stay physically active and treasure this little island in the Mediterranean a bit more, it will have been worth it," she adds.

To purchase the 2022 Diary and other products or learn more about upcoming Maltatina projects, visit [www.shopmaltatina.com](http://www.shopmaltatina.com) or [www.maltatina.com](http://www.maltatina.com).



## Harsa Lura mal-Kav Joe M Attard minn Ghawdex

Għalkemm għadna qegħdin nsofru n-niket u d-direttivi li gābet magħha din il-Pandemija li daret id-dinja kollha, nistgħu ngħidu li l-Għaqda Hbieb tal-Presepu

Ghawdex-Malta 1985 għamlet li setgħet biex tferrāh lill-membri tagħha u żżommhom aġġornati mal-festa tant għażiża tal-Milied u allura b'attenżjoni u b'għaqal għamlet xorta s-Seminar Annwali tal-Milied li ḥadna fil-parroċċa tan-Nadur fejn l-Arċipriet Dun Jimmy Xerri tana l-għajnuna kollha tiegħu biex stajna norganizzaw dan l-avveniment annwali tagħna. Wara l-quddiesa tas-soltu fil-knisja parrokkjali ddedikata lill-Appostli San Pietru u San Pawl, iltqajna f'numru sabiḥ, inklużi wkoll xi membri li ġew minn Malta, fis-sala parrokkjali u attendejna għal żewġ taḥdidiet ferm interessanti l-ewwel waḥda minn Charles Xuereb u l-oħra minn Charles Camilleri dwar il-bini tal-Presepu, żewġ artisti fil-veru sens tal-kelma. Wara bqajna flimkien għall-ikla tal-Milied u bla dubju żammejt it-tradizzjoni li naqra l-poeżija tiegħi li ktibt għal dal-Milied, *Milied Speċjali* u kif konna hemm żorna wkoll il-Mużew marittimu li jinsab biswit. Bla ma nsejna l-pandemija, irnexxielna wkoll iktar kmieni matul is-sena niltaqgħu għal Barbique u f'okkajjoni oħra għal Pizza Party fil-Ġnien sabiḥ tal-Kunvent ta' Sant Wistin fejn kellimna qabel Patri Marcello Ghirlando. Ma xtaqtx nagħlaq din in-nota bla ma nuri wkoll l-apprezzament tagħna lejn il-Kumitat tas-Sezzjoni tal-Għaqda tal-Presepi tan-Nadur u fl-aḥḥar iżda mhux linqas lil Carmen Camilleri

u l-familja tagħha tas-servizz u l-għajnuna li dejjem sibna fihom.

Bla dubju matul Diċembru l-Għaqda tagħna din id-darba, flok Wirja waḥda tal-Presepi għamilna tnejn, waḥda bħas-soltu fis-Sala ewlenija tal-Ministeru għal Ghawdex li kienet tikkonsisti fi grotti u presepi maḥduma mit-tfal tal-iskejjel tal-Gvern u tal-Privat u li tant ḥadem biex jaraha wieqfa John Cassar, wiehed mill-membri assidwi tal-Għaqda, u oħra magħmula minn Presepi u Diorami maḥduma b'ċerta sengħa u teknika - ḥafna minnhom waqt lezzjonijiet li taw imgħallmin kbar tal-presepu - fil-kurituri tal-Kunvent tal-Patrijiet ta' Sant Wistin Victoria u li t-tnejn intlaqgħu tajjeb mill-pubbliku, sinjal li l-Presepu għadu fil-qalb tal-parti l-kbira tal-Maltin u l-Ghawdxin. Il-wirja fil-kurituri ta' Sant Wistin nistgħu ngħidu li kienet fuq ideja u inizjattiva tas-Sinjura Carmen Camilleri u żewġha li ḥa ḥsieb anke l-kostruzzjoni tal-armar. Il-Wirja nfethet mill-Ministru għal Ghawdex il-Perit Clint Camilleri li fisser is-sodisfazzjon għal-livell tajjeb tal-presepi maḥduma mill-membri tal-Għaqda Maltin u Ghawdxin u wiegħed li ser jara kif jagħmel biex l-Għaqda jkollha ċentru fejn tkun tista' tiltaqa' u tagħmel ukoll Wirja permanenti tal-Presepu kif kellha fl-imgħoddi. Tkelllem ukoll il-President tal-għaqda Hbieb tal-Presepu Joe Galea u wara għamlet ukoll kelmtejn is-segretarja tal-Għaqda mondjali tal-Presepu Carmen Camilleri li tkellmet dwar kif twieldet l-ideja li ssir t-tieni wirja fil-kjostru ta' Sant Wistin u x-xewqa tal-Kumitat li jkollu 'premises' tiegħu mnejn ikun jista' jiffunzjona. Carmen kellha ċ-ċans ukoll



tagħmel intervent tajjeb fuq l-Għaqda Hbieb tal-Presepu Għawdex-Malta waqt programm televisiv fuq Xejk Television. Is-serata kollha tas-Sibt fil-għaxija fethet b'quddiesa f'Sant Wistin mill-Pirjol Patri Adeodato Schembru u wara l-Junior section tal-Chorus Urbanus taht it-tmexxija ta' Mauren Zerafa kantaw għadd sabih ta' Christmas Carols. Ma rridx ninsa ngħid 'grazzi' u Prosit lil David Xuereb li offra Presepu biex l-Għaqda setgħet tagħmlu lotterija; sa kemm qed nikteb ma nafx min hu r-rebbieh! Matul is-sena l-Għaqda tagħna tohrog regularment erba' darbiet il-perjodiku 'Hbieb il-Presepu' li illum il-għurnata lahaq livell tassew għoli anke minhabba l-fatt li huwa kollu stampat bil-kulur. Fih jiktbu hafna kittieba tajbin kemm prozaturi kif ukoll poeti u issa lhaqna l-142 hargha. Prosit b'mod speċjali lil sehibna Anton Galea li ta' kull tliet xhur għal għadd sabih ta' snin, izomm dan l-appuntament.

Apparti din l-attività kollha tal-Għaqda, sibt hin matul il-jiem tal-Milied inzur xi presepi mferrxa ma' Għawdex għalkemm hafna minnhom ma fethux għall-pubbliku bil-biża ta' din l-imxija li tant qed tnikkita u allura hafna xogħol tal-presepisti bravi Għawdxin intilef u ma tgawdiex. Imma żort xi erba presepi miġburin taht il-Knisja tan-Nazzarenu fix-Xagħra u qrib hafna, Presepu Haj. Fix-Xagħra wkoll fejn kien hemm hafna presepi għal wiri, mort għand Tonio Caruana fejn rajt presepu tassew sabih u mhux 'l bogħod, fi Triq Parisot tliet presepi taht saqaf wiehed; mhux 'l bogħod ukoll presepu mekkaniku li sirt naf li iż-żagħżuġh li jibnih jibdi l-għada tal-Vitorja. Fix-Xagħra wkoll mort nara l-Presepu li jinbena fil-każin tal-banda 'Victory' kif ukoll għadd ta' presepi esebiti fuq l-altari

tal-Knisja parrokkjali. Ta' Raymond Bonello fix-Xagħra, ix-xogħol esebiti trid tneħħilu l-kappell.

F'Għanjsielem taht il-Knisja parrokkjali fejn insbu wkoll l-istazzjon tar-Radju tal-Kommunita Pawlu Stellini wrieni xi diorami tassew sbieħ; bħal dawn rajt numru sabih ukoll f'waħda mis-swali qrib l-istamperija Gozo press tal-Knisja. Fil-bini tal-Museum Qasam Subien tan-Nadur inbena presepu ħelu u artistiku li tista' ddr miegħu dawra mejt. U fil-knisja parrokkjali taż-Żebbuġ, l-Arcipriet iżejjen l-altari tal-Knisja Parrokkjali b'għadd sabih ta' Presepi wħud minnhom li jkaxkar minn daru stess. Fil-Knisja tal-patrijet Kapuċċini fejn ipprezentajt kunċert tal-Milied, wiehed mill-parruċċani, John Cassar, bena presepu tassew sabih li kompli sebbaħ l-atmosfera fil-knisja li ħoloq Patri Gwardjan Alfred Xerri. Ċertament li nbnew presepi oħra fi gżiriti li jew sibthom magħluqa inkella ma sibtx fejn huma. Imma nemmen li l-Presepu f'Għawdex qed jerga' jsib postu fid-djar tal-Għawdxin u jien inkun minn tal-ewwel li sa qabel il-Kunċizzjoni jkun armat fis-salott tad-dar modesta tiegħi.



## The Chapel of Our Lady of Divine Grace

Malta is peppered with churches and chapels. The old adage claims there are 356 chapels and churches on the islands, 1 for every day of the year! One tiny often neglected chapel is dedicated to Our Lady of Divine Grace in Sliema. This article details its history and its significance to this sprawling metropolis. I used to work in Sliema and must have dashed past this chapel a thousand times, searching an elusive parking spot. My offices were down the road from where this chapel is.

**The tradition and the name** Sliema today is part of Malta's large urbanised east coast. Up till the late 18th century it was a rural agricultural area<sup>1,2</sup>. At the time, the Knights had a small fort on the peninsula of Tigne<sup>1,2</sup>. The rest of present-day Sliema was not protected – and therefore open to a naval attack. There was a small church in this fort dedicated to Our Lady of Good Health or, in Maltese, "il-Madonna tas-Sliem"<sup>2</sup>. It was visible from the entrance to Valletta's Grand Harbour and was a landmark of sorts<sup>2</sup>. Sailors on Knights' galleys would pay their respects to Our Lady as they set sail. In a similar manner, local fishermen would pray for a safe return – a return 'bis-sliem'. These two traditions gave the town the



name of Sliema—Today's traffic and constant noise means the name *Sliema* is an oxymoron; but those were different times!

**History** French troops destroyed the chapel in the fort when Napoleon took over the islands<sup>1 3</sup>. The locality needed a new church. While it formed part of the parish of the central locality of Birkirkara, that was too far away for people to walk to on a regular basis.

*Ms Giovanna Salvaloco donated land to build the Chapel.*

A benefactor by the name of Miss Giovanna Salvaloco donated the land for a new chapel in Sliema<sup>1 3</sup>. The Church records this donation on 28 April 1801<sup>1 4</sup>. In 1803, locals started collecting funds to build a new church. This is a stone's throw away **from Selma Hall, or Capua Palace**. It gets its name from the Prince of Capua who lived in exile here. The government helped fund the construction of the church. This coincided with the arrival of the British and Sir Alexander Ball had an interest in keeping the peace.

I've written about how Ball funded the development of the Sa Maison-Sliema road so Sliema was important to the British. The British are Protestant and this is a Roman Catholic chapel. I know Ball was concerned for the locals and their welfare so this could explain how religion wasn't part of the decision. We don't know when they finished building the chapel but sources mention it in operation in May 1804<sup>1</sup>.

[unexpectedtraveller.com/divine-grace/](http://unexpectedtraveller.com/divine-grace/)

## TALES, LEGENDS AND FOLKLORE OF MALTA

Sitting at a crossroads in the Mediterranean, Malta lies both between Italy and Africa, but also the Middle East and the Atlantic. This means, the island has often featured among other cultures' stories. Aside from that, there's also plenty of local folklore of Malta regarding its history and people. During my [time on Malta](#), these are just a few of the stories and tales of local folklore that I learned about.

**The Megalithic Giantess** Scattered throughout the islands of Malta are stone structures that date all the way back to the 3600-2500 BC. These 5000 year old structures are historically known as **megalithic**, due to the large stones used to construct them. Thanks to their age, these millennia old temples are recognised as [UNESCO World Heritage Sites](#) and interwoven into the local folklore of Malta.

According to local legend the ruins were remains of temples built by giants who once resided there. One such place with several ruins is the area known as **Ggantija** or the *Giant's Tower* in English, in the heart of Gozo. This large temple complex still stands to this day and are the earliest of all the megalithic temples in Malta.



**The order is born** The birth of the Order dates back to around 1048. Merchants from the ancient Marine Republic of Amalfi were authorised by the Caliph of Egypt to build a church, convent and hospital in Jerusalem to care for pilgrims of any race or religion. The Order of St. John of Jerusalem – the monastic society that ran the hospital for the pilgrims in the Holy Land – became independent under the guidance of its founder, Blessed Gérard. On 15th February 1113, Pope Paschal II formally recognised the independence of the Knights

with a Papal bull, the original of which is still held in Malta's National Archives. This meant that the Hospital became an Order exempt from the local Church. All the Knights were religious, bound by the three monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.



The constitution of the Kingdom of Jerusalem regarding the crusades obliged the Order to take on the military defence of the sick, the pilgrims, and the territories that the crusaders had captured from the Muslims. The Order therefore had the responsibility to defend the faith as well as its hospitaller



mission. Eventually the Order adopted the white, eight-pointed Cross, also known as the Maltese Cross, that is still its symbol today. The eight points represent the eight "beatitudes" that Jesus referred to in his Sermon on the Mount.

The Knights have had a long history of displacement around the Mediterranean. Saladin evicted them from Jerusalem after the last Christian stronghold in the Holy Land fell in 1291. Subsequently, they established a new headquarters in

Cyprus, and later on the island of Rhodes where they created an independent state. From its beginning, independence from other nations granted by pontifical charter and the universally recognised right to maintain and deploy armed forces constituted grounds for the international sovereignty of the Order, which minted its own coins and maintained diplomatic relations with other States.

The Knights realised that defence of the Christian world required the establishment of a naval force and they built one of the most powerful fleets of the time, sailing through the Mediterranean and fighting many important crusades. During the Middle Ages they were more warriors than hospitallers. After enduring six months of siege and ferocious battles against the army of Suleiman the Magnificent, the Knights were forced to leave Rhodes with military honours in 1523. This led to their most famous period as the Knights of Malta.

**The legacy they left** The Knights have left an indelible imprint on the island of Malta and their



histories are almost symbiotically linked. The order ruled Malta for 250 years and from their daily lives to their valiant battles, everything is recorded in the archives, architecture, archaeology and folklore of the Maltese Islands. Track the Knights by starting in the places they made home which are the Three Cities, Fort St. Angelo and of course Valletta, the ornate, fortified city they built after the Great Siege of 1565. And the story of the Great Siege is so incredible and bloody that a movie director would have dreamed it up had it not

happened; Voltaire was quoted as saying "nothing is as well known as the siege of Malta". The cities of Vittoriosa, St Angelo and Valletta are three of the most important archaeological sites that detail the history of this momentous period in Maltese history and certainly of the Knights themselves, cementing their place in folklore.

Across the Maltese Islands, you'll see evidence of their stay in their military engineering and architecture; forts, bastions, watch towers, aqueducts, churches and cathedrals. Then there is the abundant patrimony they bequeathed the Islands with works of art, furniture, silverware and sculpture. Not so apparent, but equally important, is the place they gave the Islands in the history of medicine. The Sacra Infermeria in Valletta was the foremost hospital of Europe in its day.

Today the Knights are a unique sovereign entity - they have diplomatic relations with 104 countries - in that they rule over no territory except a palace in one of Rome's smartest shopping districts, a church and an elegant villa overlooking the city. They have observer status at the United Nations, just like the Vatican, and the current Pope is a member of the monastic order.

## Remember these nursery rhymes?

Johnny, Johnny ġonta  
f'imniehru ghandu pontā;  
pontā mhux musmar  
naqqarhielu d-dundjan.

Katerin ġibtlek lampuka.  
Katerin kebbes in-nar.  
Katerin iftaħ it-tieqa  
ħalli jġhaddi d-duħħan.

Pizzi pizzi kanna,  
Dolores ta' Sant'Anna;  
Sant'Anna tal-morina  
ħabba biċċa pellegrina.

Mġħaref tal-fidda,  
bandiera tal-ħarir.  
Noli kannoli,  
Insara qaddisin.

MALTESE CHILDREN'S  
TRADITIONAL RHYMESPosted by [Melisande Aquilina](#)

The first nursery rhymes (taqbiliel), and songs are sung to the children while they are still in the cradle, then later, as they rock on their parents' knees, playing with a baby rattle (ċekċieka), or clapping their hands. Children's rhymes are evocative, conjuring up recollections of our earliest existence and childhood activities, of games and emotions long since forgotten.

Apart from being humorous, containing amusing tongue twisters, perhaps counting formulas, riddles, prayers and singing games, nursery rhymes are also of historical value, since their content reflects beliefs, priorities and practices which used to be at the centre of daily life in and even before, the Middle Ages. Nursery rhymes everywhere also serve to measure a child's progress with regards to the ability to talk, memorise, and repeat what the child hears.

**Banni bannożzi, ġej it-tata ġej** – Clap, clap your hands

**Bil-pastizzi u bil-ħabbtej** – Daddy's coming bringing food and money

**Kollox għal (child's name)** – Everything for (child's name)

**W għal (second child's name) xej** – Nothing for (second child's name)

Some lullabies also highlight the importance of the Catholic religion on our islands, identifying the motif of the Madonna and child with that of motherhood.

**Orqod ibni orqod** – Sleep, sleep my child

**Fil-benniena tal-ħarir** – In a cradle made of silk

**Dik ommok il-Madonna** – The Holy Virgin is your Mother

**Missierek Ġesù Bambin** – Jesus Christ is your Father

Other rhymes are more serious in tone, portraying daily struggles and problems, such as, for example, a preoccupation with lack of rain for the crops.

**Għamel, xita, għamel** – Rain, rain, rain

**ħalli jinbet il-ħaxix** – So that grass may grow

**Il-ħaxix intuh lill-moġħża** – We shall give grass to the goat

**U l' moġħża ttina l-ħalib** – The goat will give us milk

Rhymes and songs were also often cautionary tales, with the aim of teaching children a lesson, that is, that certain actions have unpleasant consequences.

**Ajma żaqqi kemm tuġġħani** – I've got a tummy ache

**Għax kilt l-għeneb mhux misjur** – Because I ate unripe grapes

**Iddendilt mal-kannizzata** – I climbed up the vine trellis

**Qisni kelb tal-kaċċatur** – Like a hunter's dog

Rhymes often accompany certain games as well, and although some meanings did reflect daily life and modes of living, others were purely fanciful and even nonsensical. Still, nursery rhymes are valuable in that they provide not only a link to Malta's past, but also a link to our own childhood, and as such they should be cherished and preserved.

**Pizzi pizza kanna** – Pizzi pizza kanna

**Duluri ta' Sant' Anna** – Dolores of Saint Anne

**Sant' Anna tal-Murina** – Saint Anne of the Marina

**ħabba biċċa pellegrina** – Because of a piece of Pellegrina

**Mġħaref tal-fidda** – Spoons made of silver

**Bandiera tal-ħarir** – A flag made of silk

**Noli kannoli** – Noli Kannoli

**Insara Qaddisin** – Christians and Saints







## The Temple of Proserpina

Antoine P Borg

There are few Roman remains on the island of Malta. The most famous one – intact – is the Roman villa outside the old capital of Mdina. Not far from here, in the village of Mtarfa, the Romans had built the Temple of Proserpina. This article examines what happened to it and where you can see remains of it today.

### Greek and Roman mythology

Persephone is the daughter of Zeus and Demeter in Greek mythology. She was kidnapped by Hades, god of the underworld, who tricks her into staying with him during the winter time. She personifies vegetation which withdraws at the end of autumn, only to reappear in spring.

Greek priestesses in Sicily tended to temples dedicated to her. As the Roman Empire expanded, they set up in Rome too. They merged the cult of

Persephone with the Roman goddess Libera. The Romans didn't call her Persephone; the nature of the Sicilian dialect meant her name was pronounced as Proserpine. The Romans connected this with the word *prosper* (to prosper) and referred to their new goddess as Proserpina. So what's the connection with Malta?

### The temple of Proserpina

The Temple of Proserpina is a Maltese Roman temple mentioned by a contemporary source. Historian Gian Francesco Abela found an inscription about it in Mtarfa in 1613 and concluded the temple was here. A Latin inscription celebrates a freedman who lived during the time of Emperor Augustus. His name was Chrestion, and he was the procurator of Malta and Gozo. He financed the restoration of the temple of Proserpina in Mtarfa<sup>1</sup>. It appears that the walls of the temple were about to collapse in the first century BCE, which means the temple must have been around for some time by then.

Mtarfa may sound remote but it is a logical place for such a temple. It is close enough to the city of Mdina, which was the capital city in those days. It also would have been visible from a large part of the islands as the Mtarfa hill is almost as prominent as the Mdina hill.



The **chapel in Tal-Virtu** is on top of a Roman-era crypt. This is on the other side of Mdina from Mtarfa.

### Where is it today?

Count Gian Antonio Ciantar, an 18th century historian, claims that the Knights used marble from this temple for the facade of the Auberge d'Italie in Valletta. It was Grandmaster Carafa who built the second storey for this Auberge, which must be when it was finished.

This makes it sound like the Italian knights desecrated the temple for their own construction needs. This isn't out of character; humanity only recently learned to prize its history.

This desecration is why we have so **few barbicans** today.

Borzesi's guide to the Maltese islands from 1830 describes the temple ruins as being visible. He adds that "every antiquarian does not omit visiting"<sup>5</sup> the temple. This suggests the temple wasn't destroyed till after the 1830s. As a result, one of the few – if not the only – Greco-Roman remains on Malta was re-used as the marble on another historical site. We may never know how many other Greco-Roman temples there were on Malta.

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## MALTESE CENTER NY



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**tel: (718) 728 - 9883**

Dear Members, Family, and Friends of the Maltese Center,

As year 2021 comes to an end, for a moment, we reflect on the year that is almost over. This time last year, we were all wishing for a Happy, Healthy and a Prosperous New Year. We wished for a better year and with the thoughts that the pandemic will be over soon. We find ourselves in the same predicament as last year. A lot of uncertainties and unknowns. We hope this world of COVID and its variants will fade in 2022.

We, at the Maltese Center had our challenges in 2021. It was a huge task, as we had to do another re-opening in February 2021, maintain social distancing, sanitizing the Center, mask protocols, and implement other guidelines recommended by the CDC. Over time restrictions eased and more members returned to the Center. Slowly, we started to organize some gatherings. We were also able to host Minister Hon. Evarist Bartolo and Minister Hon. Dr. Jose Herrera from Malta.

The challenges were always present. As the expenses for the Center were still there we had to be creative to be able to pay the bills. Thanks to the Committee Members, benefactors and volunteers, we were able to cover our operating

expenses. Our website, e-newsletter, Instagram and Facebook pages were of great help to reach out to our members and community. We had volunteers who prepared amazing dishes for events. Those who created stunning and creative set ups. We were fortunate to organize very successful BBQ's, Game Days, Bingo's, Memorial Mass, Ftira Friday, Halloween, Members / Children Christmas Parties and for the first time a Lionel train exhibit followed by Lighting of the Christmas Tree. We were able to have some impromptu events on Fridays. And we had benefactors contributing towards our appeal for funds. Thanks to all. We are also grateful to the Members who always support the Center. The Malta Mission of New York and Washington were also of great help to the Maltese Community, especially during the summer travel time.

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.So, once again, Happy, Healthy and a Prosperous New Year. Let's hope for a better year. Please keep supporting the Center, as the Members and the Community are the pillars of the Center. We are humbled, grateful and thank you all. Looking forward to welcoming you to the Center to our upcoming events in 2022.

Eddie Debono – President and the Committee members



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

**OUR MOTTO: To promote the history, culture, heritage and language of the Maltese Islands**





Michelle Parnis in her garden



## **How a concrete jungle was changed to a garden of Oasis**

When Michelle and Louis PARNIS moved from their house in Dapto NSW to a unit on Corrimal Street Wollongong Michelle was devastated at the thought she would not be able to

continue the love of gardening.

With a little of ingenuity however, she found a way to make the empty land behind their unit block overflow with life.

"When they put shrubs in the new developments they have no meaning, this garden has meaning," Louis said. It wasn't easy going, but Michelle said, "it's possible for everyone to create a garden oasis, wherever they live".

"There was a lot of work that needed to be done," she said.

"Not everything will grow, something might be unhappy in the spot where you put it, so I tried moving them around until I found the right place where they flourished. It was a lot of hard work but I'm happy with the outcome" Michelle said.

Because you live in a unit it doesn't mean you can't get out there and keep your mind active and mobility going with gardening. [ Photos: ILLAWARRA MERCURY]

## **Rose-Mary Curmi - Merħba!**

We meet over Skype once a week. Students are very proactive - completing revision and homework in the Student Study Group set up for them. Many students catch up in between lessons to practise as well, forming wonderful across-the-globe relationships.

Creating friendships and connecting the Maltese community around the world through language.

~FREQUENTLY Asked QUESTIONS~

Q2. Can I do the lessons in small groups?

A. Yes, lessons are available in groups of up to 4 students. In my experience from teaching online, pairs, groups of 3s and 4s work the best in learning and extending the language. You can practise together and support one another in between each

🇲🇹 **Update** 🇲🇹

**Maltese 6 week course**

An opening has become available  
for USA/Canada evenings,  
Aust/NZ daytime.

Level: Beginners Level  
Start: End of January, 2022. Term 1



lesson. For more FAQ go to:

<https://facebook.com/groups/2501992203175109?view=permalink&id=2561366963904299>

**I KEEP ALL THE JOURNALS ON MY USB - IT IS A SPECIAL AND WONDERFUL COLLECTION OF MELITENSIA THAT I WILL TREASURE ALL MY LIFE**



### About Us

Australian born and bred, Maltese at heart, speaking, reading and writing Maltese fluently. Malta is my second home. Previously conducting tours in Malta, trading under the banner of ESCAPE TO MALTA. That was, until the pandemic hit.

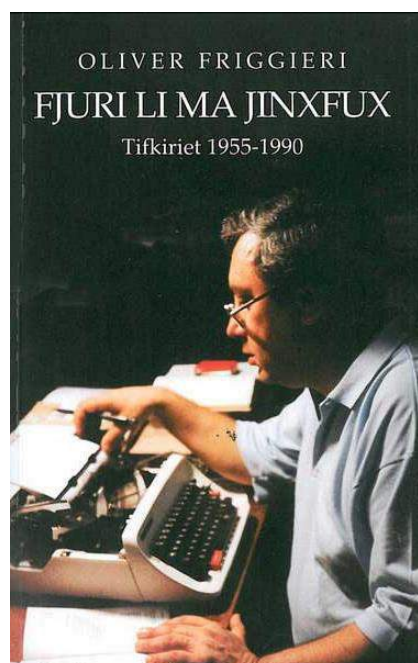
I am a Pastry chef by trade. In March 2020, I successfully registered a home-based business, complete with a kitchen and storage facilities. You see, I wanted to combine my love of Malta with my passion for baking. It was then that ESCAPE TO MALTA EATS was born.

We are anxiously waiting for international travel to reopen, so we can once again resume our tours, but in the meantime, we endeavour to bring a little of our beautiful island in the Mediterranean, to you.

**Contact Us Email:**  
[info@escapetomalta.com](mailto:info@escapetomalta.com)

**Phone: 0404 463 777**

**Address: 34 Braidwood Drive PRESTONS NSW 2170**



## **FJURI LI MA JINXFUX** **Tifkiriet 1955-1990**

**Oliver Friggieri died on 21 November 2020. *Fjuri li Ma Jixfux* is a memoir of his life from 1955-1990. This is an extract from his book with comments by Oliver Friggieri himself.**

Oliver Friggieri, Klabb Kotba Maltin Publication, 712 Pages, Pb €33, Hb €45

This is a book of reminiscences covering the years between 1955 and 1990, a book of personal experiences, social customs, and the political parties' feuds. It is a narrative of people's lives, events, locations, especially those of Balzunetta, one of Floriana's quarters, the Grand Harbour, and its surroundings. Streets without traffic, children playing everywhere, women still wearing the ghonnella, houses without television, beggars sleeping outdoors, Malta an English colony...

Oliver Friggieri depicts interesting episodes from his childhood up to a very turbulent time in the history of Malta. He describes the dispute between the Catholic Church and the Labour Party, and how he experienced it, as a boy in the MUSEUM, and then as a Seminarist, during the Interdict period. He gives detailed descriptions of life in Malta in the 1950s and 60s, and intertwines personal episodes with dramatic events during the leadership of Gorg Borg Olivier, Dom Mintoff, Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici and



Eddie Fenech Adami. After so many years he had the opportunity to discuss these events with Dom Mintoff, who with his famous statement in Parliament – Those who are idle should write a book! – instigated him to write the novel *Fil-Parlament ma jikbrux fjuri* (1986).

*Fjuri li ma jinxfix* includes the author's revelations of his encounters with Gorg Borg Olivier, Eddie Fenech Adami, Censu Tabone, Guido de Marco, Ugo Mifsud Bonnici and Alfred Sant. There are descriptions of popular local characters and traditions. Everything within the background of political agitation that in other colonies resulted in civil war. Why were the Maltese people capable of preventing a national tragedy before and after Independence? How did the conflict erupt between Mintoff and the University academic staff? Why did Malta become divided into two? Which direction did Malta take after all this? The publishing house, Klabb Kotba Maltin, is finally proud to present this voluminous work full of reflections by one of Malta's most distinguished thinkers.

In Oliver Friggieri's own words: "This piece of work was written between 1995 and 2008. If it were not for Klabb Kotba Maltin, I would never have finished it... Something prevented me from saying the last word about a time where people fought harshly between themselves, like brothers full of anger because of their mother. I was always there like many others! I wrote with nostalgia, with respect for tradition, with a modern spirit, and with the desire to understand and interpret. Thanks to memory!"



It used to take 5 minutes for the TV to warm up



Nearly everyone's Mum was home when the kids got home from school



All male teachers wore ties and female teachers had their hair done every day



You got your windscreen cleaned, oil checked and petrol served, without asking, all for free, every time..



Home milk delivery in glass bottles with tinfoil tops



## MMG Concert Band of Victoria – Australia

On the 20 December 2021 we have the honour to perform at the [Maltese Community Council of Victoria, Inc.](#) Welcome Reception for the Consul General of the Republic of Malta Ms Chirelle Ellul Sciberras and a welcome back to Melbourne, our High Commissioner of Malta in Canberra, His Excellency Mario Farrugia Borg and last but not least our local and great community representative Councillor for Brimbank City Council Dr Victoria Borg. We are excited to see your visions for the Maltese communities around Victoria and Australia come to life. Thank you to Maltese Community Council of Victoria for an amazing evening bringing the Maltese Community together for this wonderful event.

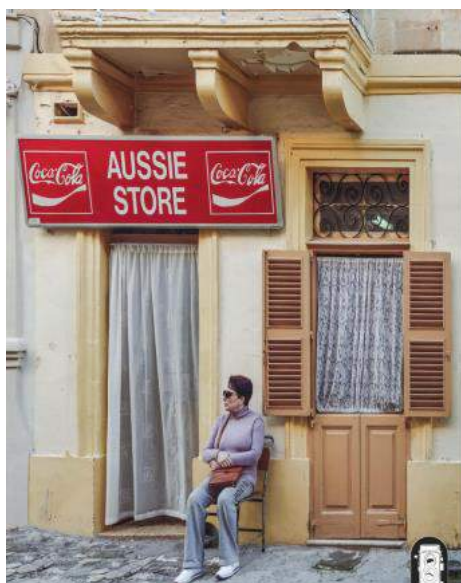


## MALTESE CENTER – NEW YORK CITY

Presepju 10 - The winners Adrian Gatt and Raymond Zammit, with figures by Jesmond Micallef, set this Nativity in a Maltese house partly demolished during the Second World War. Around the scene, musicians play traditional Maltese

instruments, while a woman in traditional dress (għonella) walks with her daughter. Constructing handmade Nativity scenes set in elaborate landscapes called "cribs" is a centuries-old tradition that carries strong significance in Maltese culture. Last year, in partnership with the Museum of the Bible in Washington DC, the nation of Malta sponsored a crib-decorating contest. The top 10 entries were displayed, and guests voted for their favorites. All on view from NOVEMBER 13, 2021–FEBRUARY 6, 2022





### Kappa Vision Facebook

Bormla down under!

G'DAY MATE

A good thing if you're an Australian tourist in Malta is that no matter where you go, you are bound to find people with relatives living in Australia. As a matter of fact, practically every Maltese family has relatives living in Australia, whether distant or close. Try asking anyone you meet and you'll get immediate confirmation of this. It's a great conversation starter too!

**AS A RESULT OF THE  
COVID-19  
MANY EVENTS  
ORGANISED BY  
MALTESE  
ORGANISATIONS  
ALL OVER THE WORLD  
HAVE BEEN CANCELLED  
OR POSTPONED**

## ĠEDDED L-ABBONAMENT TIEGHEK

GHAS-SENA 2022 FIR-RIVISTA DJOĊESANA

IL - HAJJA

F'GHAWDEX

Ibghat id-dettalji tieghek lil

Rivista "Il-Hajja f'Ghawdex"  
Lumen Christi Media Centre  
Triq Fortunato Mizzi  
Victoria VCT 2579, Ghawdex

flimkien ma' ċekk ta' €21 (abbonament)  
jew €25 (sostenitur).

Tista' tibghat l-envelop bil-posta,  
jew tgħaddih lill-Arċipriet/Kappillan  
tal-parroċċa tieghek, inkella tabbona  
onlajn billi tiktbilna email,  
jew tfittixna fuq Facebook.

Tista' wkoll tagħmel trasferiment bankarju  
fuq il-kont tar-Rivista waqt li tinfurmana  
b'email:

IBAN: MT80APSB77035000693020001017434  
Fergha: APS Gozo  
BIC Code: APSBMTMT

✉ ilhajjafghawdex@gozodiocese.org

f Il-Hajja f'Ghawdex

Dear Frank Scicluna,  
I am bowled over by so much varied information....  
Wish it never ended.  
Will pass this 1st Edition for 2022 to those interested  
and my new DNA contacts around the world.  
This will explain and highlight many customs etc,  
of our beloved islands of Malta.  
Some had no idea of their Maltese connection...  
or even where 'our' Malta was.....  
I explained there are a couple of places  
named Malta in the world, one we drove by in Poland.  
God Bless and look forward to reading the next edition.  
Grazzi hafna for your diligence.  
Nancy Serg nee Borg OAM



CARMELO CAMILLERI spent two years building  
this magnificent model of the Royal Opera House



## MALTESE FOLK INSTRUMENTS

### IT-TAMBUR (TAMBOURINE)

The performance of the *Tanbur* (tambourine) is more than just a musical rendering. The technique is defined by a sequence of postures that create a simple dance routine, usually delivered with great exuberance.

The *Tanbur* player cavorts in a sinuous fashion to the music performing sharp beats with the finger tips, or bending and striking the drum off the head, chin, elbow, knee, foot and other parts of the body.



### IL-KITARRA (GUITAR)

Ethnomusicologist Marcia Herndon suggests that at the beginning of the 20th century, Maltese guitar music was mainly chord accompaniment to *Għana* (Maltese folksong). Eventually several fine guitarists began to improvise melodic phrases between the singers' verses. This practice was taken one step further when the *Prim* (lead guitarist) began to play the melodic phrase normally sung by the *Għannejja* (folk singers). This led to the development of a new form known as *Kitarri Biss* (guitars only) which is essentially an instrumental version of the different styles of Maltese folksong.



### IZ-ZAQQ (BAGPIPE)

The *Żaqq* (bagpipe) used to be a familiar icon within the rural backdrop of Maltese villages and cities, yet by the late 20th century the instrument was on the verge of extinction. In May 1977 the Galpin Society Journal (UK) published an article entitled "The Maltese Zaqq" written by J.K. Partridge and Frank Jeal as an "attempt to retrieve and document information on the Maltese bagpipe from musical, sociological, and ethnological perspectives." More than twenty years later, in 1999, this article motivated folklorist Ġużi Gatt to revive the instrument. Fortunately, at the outset of his research, Gatt established a close liaison with 83 year-old Toni Cachia (known as *Il-Hammarun*) who was the last surviving piper and knew how to craft and assemble the different parts of the instrument.



### IZ-ZAFZAF (FRICTION DRUM)

The *Żafzafa* (friction drum) is an interesting percussion instrument in that the sound is produced through friction rather than by striking the drum. A cane is tied to the centre of the skin so that the vibration, caused by rubbing the stick with wet palms, is transferred from the hollow cane to the head of the drum. This device produces a low-tone 'squeak' that never fails to amuse. It is not difficult to comprehend why the humour derived from the gesticulation and sound binds the *Żafzafa* with the Maltese village carnival.



IF YOU HAVE AN INTERESTING STORY,  
POEM OR AN ESSAY

SHARE IT WITH OTHERS

SEND IT TO US  
FOR  
PUBLICATION

[maltesejournal@gmail.com](mailto:maltesejournal@gmail.com)



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support this journal?  
Contact me for details**



grateful I was for Journal No.404 the special Christmas edition. The opening song "If you don't see Merry Christmas in the window" was so enlightening and powerful for me. Even shed a few tears as it reminded me when my children were still young and my parents still alive. I miss my parents so much as they both loved Christmas and the stories, they were able to relate were priceless. Also, the compilation of the other songs will be wonderful to have for future Christmas gatherings. I hope you and your family have a super New Year and that we all have a peaceful one filled with the laughter of children and good health for us all. Thanks again for your perseverance in putting this wonderful journal together for all of us, keeping us in touch with our heritage and helping us to remember our roots and what being Maltese really means. Yours sincerely, VIVIENNE DARWON (Nee ATTARD) 31/12/2021



## THE MIFSUD FAMILY

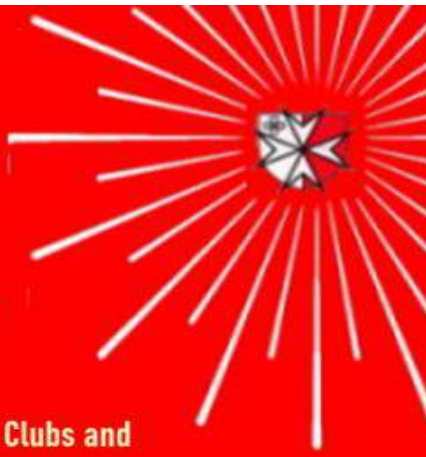
This is a photo of the Mifsud family before we left Malta in 1955, at the time I was the youngest of 11. The twins that were born during the war did not survive the war. Dad and mum sadly have passed away, but the rest are all still alive, with my eldest brother still living in Malta. There are many grandchildren great grandchildren and great great grandchildren, many with the Mifsud name. George Mifsud



If you have nostalgic photos of you, your family or Malta, share them with others



Our journal is preserved for future generations at the  
 Maltese Migration Museum - Valletta  
 Maltese Canadian Museum - Toronto  
 Website: [ozmalta.com](http://ozmalta.com) and FACEBOOK  
 Schools, Libraries, Aged Care Homes, Clubs and  
 Maltese Communities in Australia Canada, USA and United Kingdom



Our e-newsletter is read, loved and shared in over 50 different countries of the world by both Maltese and non-Maltese

# Satirical but pleasant

Noel Grima



## FUQ DIN L-ART HELWA

Poeziji satirici u oħrajn  
skont il-burdani

EMMANUEL ATTARD CASSAR

'Fuq din l-art helwa'. Author: Emmanuel Attard Cassar. Self-published / 2016. Pages: 51pp

The author teaches IT and computer science at Gan Frangisk Abela after specialising at the University of Pisa.

His studies in Italy helped inspire his first book, *Vacanze Romane* (2013).

In this, his second book, he has switched to Maltese (mostly) and has given us a number of short, satirical poems which nevertheless are pleasant to read.

These poems, he tells us, were written between 1992 and 2016. The collection is divided into two parts, before and after, with reference to the death of his brother Godwin in 2015, which had a devastating impact on his life.

I can't say I noted a marked change of emphasis between the two parts. If one were to summarize, one would say that his poems cast a wry look on the foibles of life as we know it.

The following is a taste of his humorous verses:

In-Nannu and his Grand-daughter  
Look how cute the window sill.  
Hekk reduwwa tal-kunsill.

Can we walk a bit this way?  
Mela le aruni ġej.

I'm so young, I am sixteen.  
Jiena qbiżthom is-sittin.

I go crossing from that street.  
Yes of course aġmel li trid.

Look that man with all that soot  
Dok miskin no flus fil-but.

Oh how lovely is the moon.  
Qisu nħosel bis-sopuwn.

Can we sit here on the floor?  
Imxi 'l hemm ħa mmorru d-dor.

Then let's wait here for the bus.  
Nistennieha qisni ċ-ċass.

I love you with all my heart.  
Ejja 'l hawn għax naslu tard  
Nannu come I give you kiss.  
Waħda kbira lili biss!

Or this:

**Sexy**  
*B'qalziet inkaxxat magħha  
u b'top tassew skullat  
b'takkuna tliet pulzieri  
u lipstick lewn skarlat  
xħin qallha sexy baby  
għaliex tant irrabjat?*

And this comment on our political scene

**Partit**  
*Meta partit jirbaħ il-gvern  
isir korrott mimli tbaġħbis.  
Meta partit jitlef il-gvern  
Isir onest, isir qaddis*

