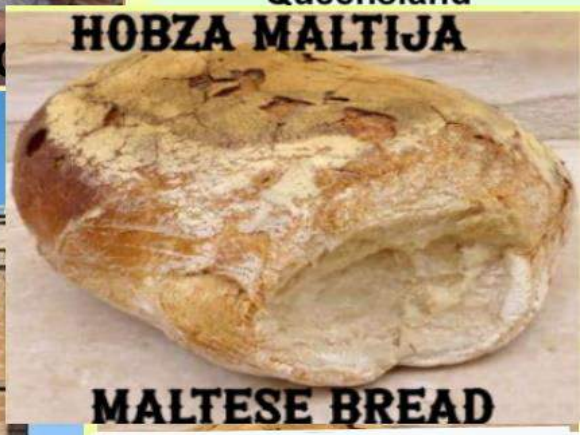
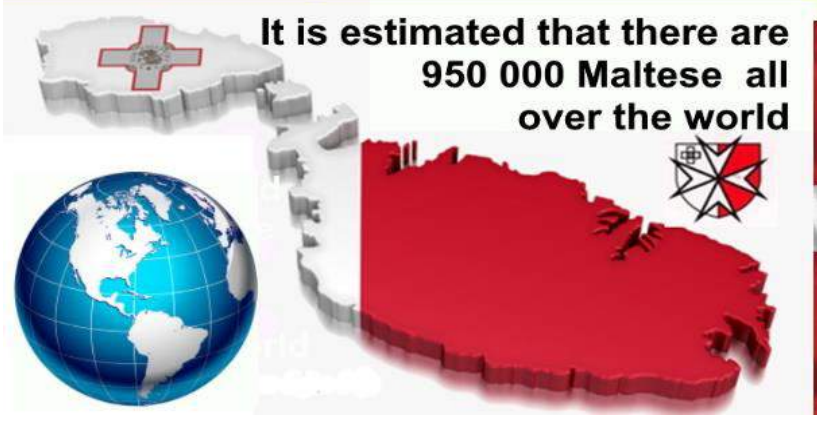
MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER
Journal of Maltese Living Abroad
Editor: Frank L Scicluna OAM MQR

Lenore Borg
50 years of service at Mackay Base Hospital, Queensland



Australian High Commission, Malta et Ambassade d'Australie en Tunisie



## Denise Demicoli
## Former Deputy High Commissioner of Malta in Canberra
## ***Message to the readers of the Maltese e-Newsletter***

The last few years have most certainly not been easy, however, with the unwavering love and support of our loved ones, we manage to pull through challenges we face.

I am immensely grateful that in the last almost five years, I had the opportunity to serve and to get acquainted with our Maltese communities in Australia and New Zealand. During this time I had the pleasure and honour to learn of the incredible stories of reslience of the tens of thousands Maltese and Gozitans who built a new home for them and their loved ones in these two countries, in order to open up a better future for forthcoming generations. The history of emigration, both the mass-scale pre and post WWII and the emerging experiences of newer Maltese living abroad, should be kept alive and current.

Their value and lessons-to-be-learned are priceless. I thank the editors of newsletters such as the Maltese e-Newsletter for helping us all keep in touch with each other, this history, contemporary story and interesting facts from our homeland.

Finally, I would like to whole-heartedly thank High Commissioner H.E. Mr Mario Farrugia Borg, incoming Deputy High Commissioner Ms Gail Demanuele, Consuls-General in Melbourne and in Sydney, Honorary Consuls, CMLA members, Maltese community associations in Australia and New Zealand, as well as the formidable team of colleagues in our three offices there, for their hard work and tireless efforts in advocating for the interests of Maltese living in these distant lands.

I wish you all a prosperous future and hope that our paths will cross again someday

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## Kummissjoni Għolja tar-Repubblika ta' Malta
## High Commission for the Republic of Malta

## Press Release 01/2022 10/01/2022
## Subject: Temporary closure of Consulate-General of Malta in Sydney

The Consulate-General in Sydney will not be open for appointments starting Monday, 10 January 2022, the re-opening of which will be announced as soon as possible. Appointments will be rescheduled to a time when the office re-opens to the public.

Our Consul-General and staff in Sydney will nevertheless be contactable by phone and email at (02) 9262 9500 or maltaconsulate.sydney@gov.mt . The High Commission of Malta in Canberra may also be contacted at 02 6290 1724 or highcommission.canberra@gov.mt. We regret any inconvenience caused, however, tthis closure is in the public health interest of our staff and esteemed members of the public.

CONSULATE GENERAL
OF MALTA
MELBOURNE

## Require to register your Birth/Marriage in Malta?

As from **3rd January 2022,** those in possession of Australian documents requiring to be registered in Malta (Birth, Death or Marriage), must have their public documents Apostilled at the Australian Passport Office prior lodging their application at the Consulate. Appointments for Apostille can be made via the following website:

*https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/consular-services/notarial-services/documents-in-australia*

maltaconsulate.melbourne@gov.mt

# Consulate General of the Republic of Malta to Canada – Dr. Raymon Xerri – Consul General

## MALTESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

More learning Maltese Language educational materials available at three libraries, soon at four locations in the GTA and beyond

The Consulate General of Malta to Canada recently compiled over 200 educational materials from various institutions around the Maltese Islands, and has donated copies of each to the Libraries of the Melita S.C., the Malta Band Club and Consulate General itself.

In the near future, copies of the same publications will be provided to the Library of the Malta United Society of Windsor and of Runnymede Long-Term Care Facility Library.

After being contacted by a number of Maltese Canadian parents and students, it has been decided to inform all of the educational materials donated in accordance to category.

The below educational materials are published by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the past. If you are members of any of these clubs you can request to make use of them.

Further educational materials will be shown in future posts.

*Kummissjoni Għolja tar-Repubblika ta' Malta*
*High Commission for the Republic of Malta*

*Press Release 03/2022*
*11/01/2022*

**Subject:** **Newly assigned Deputy High Commissioner at the High Commission of the Republic of Malta in Canberra, Australia**

As of 1 January 2022, Ms Gail Demanuele assumed the role of Deputy High Commissioner at the High Commission of the Republic of Malta in Canberra, Australia, succeeding Ms Denise Demicoli, who served at the High Commission for the past 5 years.

Prior to this appointment, Ms Demanuele has worked in various roles and fields. Her most recent roles were as Director of Human Resources at Mater Dei Hospital in Malta and Deputy Mayor at the Floriana Local Council. Earlier, she also served as Deputy Antici at the Permanent Representation of Malta in Brussels, as Consultant at the Office of the Prime Minister and Chief of Staff for the Hon Edward Zammit Lewis at the Ministry for Tourism.

Ms Gail Demanuele has recently graduated with a Masters in Entrepreneurship from the University of Malta, while also holds a Master's degree in Occupational Risk Management from the University of Salamanca in Salamanca, Spain and a Bachelor's degree in Communications with Psychology at the University of Malta.

The High Commission of Malta and the team at the High Commission welcomes Ms Gail Demanuele in her new role as Deputy High Commissioner and would like to thank Ms Denise Demicoli for her work and dedication throughout her years of service, wishing her the best of luck for her future endeavors.

The Maltese Newsletter
The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora
It's Free, Non-Political, Bilingual and Addictive
We thank you for your kind support
Keep on sending us your comments, emails, suggestions
news and articles. It's your journal!!!!!

**We PROMOTE the rights of our fellow Maltese living overseas**

# Ambassador Spiteri Visits Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Reference Number: , Press Release Issue Date: Jan 06, 2022

On the 9th of December 2021, His Excellency André Spiteri, Ambassador of the Republic of Malta to Japan, visited the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

The Ambassador met with the President of the University, Professor Hayashi. There were discussions about possible collaborations and academic exchanges between Japanese and Maltese students focusing on language training. The Ambassador was also very grateful that this University was the first one that offered a Maltese language course in Japan. The classes were held online and taught by Professor Nagato. The Ambassador augured well such initiatives with the hope of more awareness and visibility of the Maltese language in Japan.

Following the meeting, the Ambassador visited Japanese Language Centre for International Students accompanied by Professor Komatsu. The Ambassador himself was a former student in this University where he underwent a Japanese language course in 2007 before starting his post graduate degree at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. 'Language is very important in understanding a particular country and culture, and this University has helped me appreciate and understand more Japan', he stated when visiting the halls and classrooms of the Centre

## AFTER ITS BEAUTY SLEEP, GOZO WILL SOON BE READY TO WELCOME YOU AGAIN AND AGAIN

***GOZO meaning "joy" in Castilian, is the second largest Island of the Maltese archipelago. Though separated from mainland Malta by a mere 5km stretch of sea, Gozo is distinctly different from Malta, more rural and tranquil, its culture and way of life are rooted in tradition and yet open to the present. "The Maltese archipelago has more to offer than just the island from which it takes its name. A mere 25 minutes by ferry from Malta, tiny Gozo is a destination in its own right, boasting a distinct history, culture and character. The Maltese flock here to enjoy the verdant scenery, superior food and relaxed pace of life. And it isn't just the locals that love it: none other than Brangelina chose it as their honeymoon destination. Most roads in Gozo lead to the capital, Victoria, an attractive jumble of markets, restaurants, quaint British gardens and diverting museums. Its high point – quite literally – is the ancient fortified Cittadella, with its magnificent 360-degree view of the island. Spread out below you are the island's chief sights: the scenic beach resort of Marsalforn, the world-famous Neolithic temples of Ggantija, and the legendary Calypso's Cave, where Odysseus may or may not have taken a break during his travels. Believe us: come to Gozo, and you'll want to stay for more than just a pit stop." By Time Out Malta and Gozo***

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Malta in the World

## MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

**It is estimated that 950 000 Maltese are living overseas**

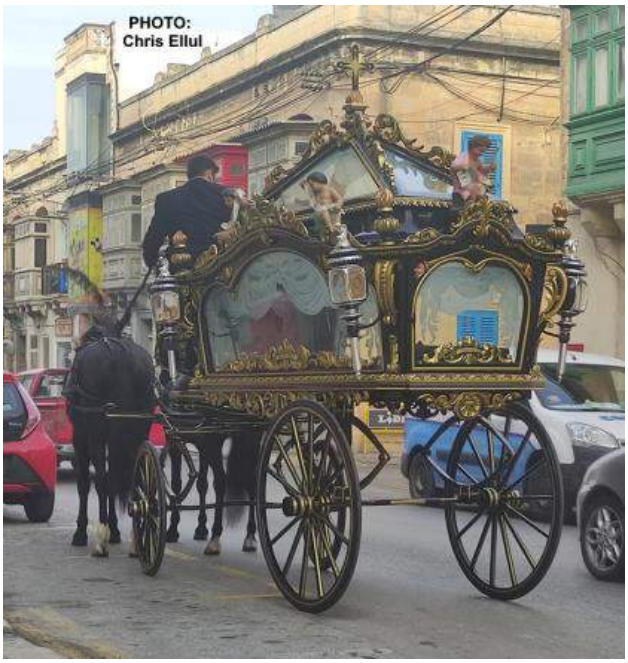
It was reported that the estimated number of Maltese living overseas is over 950 000. This number is according to statistics held by TVM and includes Maltese up to the fifth generation residing abroad around the world, which is about double the population living in Malta.

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

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

Malta's membership of the European Union appears to have led to a substantial increase in the number of Maltese living in Belgium now numbering about 668. In continental Europe the Maltese presence includes 900 in Italy, 23 in the Vatican, 600 in France and 276 in the Netherlands, not to mention Sweden, Finland, Swizteralnd, Spain and South Africa.

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




# ARA X'TERRAQ FIT-TOROQ TAL-ĦAMRUN

**Frederick Zammit**

**Xena partikolari ġibdet l-attenzjoni ta' dawk li kienu l-Ħamrun hekk kif intlemħet għaddejja karozzella tal-mejtin. Filfatt din il-karrozzella kien qed jintuża għal funeral.**

**Bosta stagħġbu malli raw din il-karozzella tterraq fit-toroq ta' Santa Venera u l-Ħamrun u minn tfittix li għamilna sibna li din il-karozzella huwa ta' Jimmy Buhagiar tal-Bidnija Horse Riding.**

**Jimmy Buhagiar, is-sid ta' din il-karozzella, qalilna li ilu jużah għal dawn l-aħħar erba' snin wara li kien xtrah mingħand ħaddieħor. Meta tkellem ma' newsbook.com.mt Buhagiar qal li din il-karozzella tintuża madwar 20 darba fis-sena. Jixtieq li kieku tintuża aktar. Qalilna li għandu wkoll il-karozzella tal-qassis, li però tintuża ferm inqas minn dik tal-mejtin.Interessanti ngħidu wkoll li l-karozzella li ntlemħet lbieraħ fil-Ħamrun u Santa Venera, hija l-istess waħda li kienet intużat fil-film The Promise tal-2016 bi Christian Bale u Charlotte Le Bon fil-partijiet ewlenin.**

# SAVE OUR HIDDEN HISORY

# FORT SAN SALVATORE

**Fort San Salvatore** (Maltese: *Il-Forti San Salvatur*) is a retrenched fort in Birgu, Malta. It was built in 1724 on one of the bastions of the Cottonera Lines. It was used as a prisoner-of-war camp during the Greek War of Independence and World War I, and as an internment camp and kerosene depot in World War II.

Construction of the Cottonera Lines began in 1670, but work was suspended ten years later due to a lack of funds. By this time, the bastioned enceinte was complete, but other crucial parts such as cavaliers, ravelins, the ditch, the glacis and the covertway had not yet been built. In the early 18th century, some efforts were made to complete the lines, although they still lacked some crucial elements.

In 1724, San Salvatore Bastion, the northernmost bastion of the Cottonera Lines and the closest to the city of Birgu, was converted into a retrenched fort by French military engineers.[1] The fort has two demi-bastions linked by a curtain wall, all of which are surrounded by a ditch. A parade ground is located in the centre of the fort.

The fort remained in use by the British in the 19th and 20th centuries. From 1824, it was used as a prisoner-of-war camp for Turkish prisoners during the Greek War of Independence. It became a POW camp once more when it housed German prisoners in World War I.[2]

Between May and July 1940, some Maltese who were believed to be supporters of Italian irridentism, including future Prime Minister Enrico Mizzi, were interred within the fort. 43 of the internees were later exiled to Uganda, but were allowed to return in 1945.[3]

During World War II, the fort became a kerosene depot. The depot exploded when the fort was bombed by Italian aircraft on 25 October 1941.[2]

Like most of the Cottonera Lines, today the fort still exists but is in a rather dilapidated state.[4]

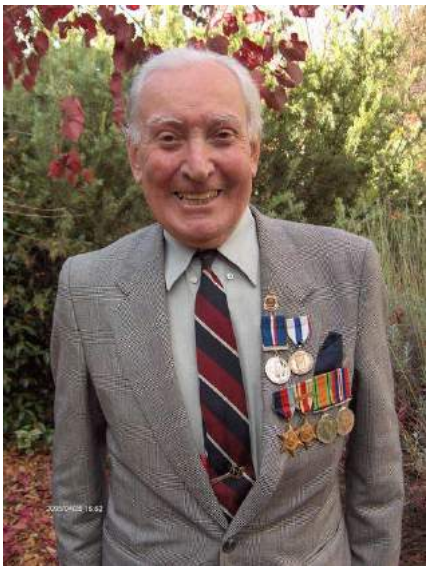
Fort San Salvatore is one of the few fortifications in Malta which are private property. In 1958, Prime Minister Dom Mintoff leased the fort to Prestressed Concrete Limited, a company owned by his brother Raymond Mintoff, for £100 every six months. In 1982, the fort's emphyteusis was redeemed for Lm2000 (equivalent of €4650), and the fort became private property.[5]

In April 2015, the fort's owners asked €3.2 million to sell it to private investors.[6] In May of the same year, several NGOs suggested that the campus of the proposed American University of Malta should be split up between Fort San Salvatore and the nearby Fort Ricasoli and Fort Saint Rocco.[7] This proposal will not be implemented, as the campus is to be split up between Dock No. 1 in Cospicua and Żonqor Point in Marsaskala.

In 2019, the Times of Malta had reported that the site had been sold off yet again, this time for €2 million, over 400 times its purchase price.

But the fort remains in a dire state, and the Assoċjazzjoni Wirt il-Kalkara insisted that the time was long overdue for the site to be restored. The fort should then be reutilised appropriately, it added, suggesting that it could reinforce the area's touristic value

The Assoċjazzjoni Wirt il-Kalkara appeals for immediate action to be taken on Fort San Salvatore, including the Salvatore Gate, before



# A MAN OF HONOUR

My father, Loreto York (Meilak) and I were walking down a street one day and an Asian-looking bloke was walking in our direction. My dad went up to him, embraced him, looked him in the eyes and said to him: "You are welcome here".

I've never forgotten that. It was my dad at his best.

On the 14th December, was the 103rd anniversary of my father's birth in Sliema, Malta, in 1918.

His parents and siblings were all from Ghajnsielem, Gozo, but he was born after the Meilak family moved from Gozo to Malta.

My dad, Loreto, known to many as 'Larry', died in Canberra in October 2009, aged 90. He had remarkably good health all his life but declined rapidly that year.

As with millions of others, World War Two changed his life forever. He volunteered for military service with the Royal Air Force (RAF) in Malta and served there, at one point refueling aqua-planes by hand pump in the Grand Harbour - a sitting target for the Italian bombardment.

He soon went to Egypt with the RAF on a decoy ship, and then spent the rest of the War in Africa, Middle East, Palestine and finally France. He never flew, though, and most of the time served as a mechanics' assistant.

He ended up in London after the War and demobilized from the RAF in 1953. He married my mum, Olive - a Londoner - in 1947 and I was born in 1951. We migrated to Melbourne in 1954. He had changed his name from Meilak to York in London in 1947.

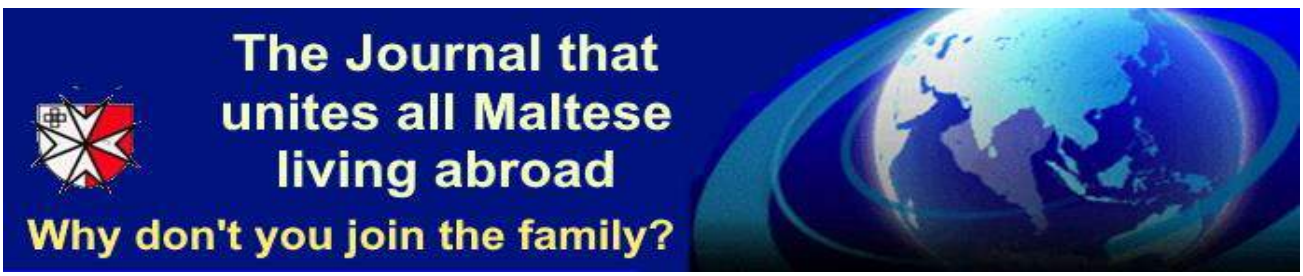
The War left my dad with 'demons' that sometimes haunted him badly, and could be very ugly. But among his many good points was his belief that people should stand up to injustice. He was far from 'politically correct', as he had an irreverent sense of humour, but he had no time for the privileged, be they popes, princes or capitalists.

He was shop steward in the factory in which he worked in Melbourne and he became active in local government politics in Brunswick, where we settled as a family.

He was the first Maltese to be elected Mayor of an Australian city when, in 1972, he was elected Mayor of Brunswick. It was a battle for him back then, even in his own party - Labor. One of the Labor councillors said: "If we let Larry be Mayor, the wogs will take over Brunswick!".

My dad had no time for that kind of reactionary thinking.

There is not a day when I do not think of him, the complex character that he was... and, of course, my sweet, gentle, stoic mum too. DR. BARRY YORK - Maltese Historical Association of Australia .



# THE CAPTAIN'S TOWER - NAXXAR

Naxxar was the first locality outside the Harbour area to receive a fortified structure, and it was this one. Called Torri tal-Kaptan, the Captain's Tower, the structure was erected just opposite where the church of St. Paul (San Pawl tat-Tarġa) is today. It was built to house the Captain of the Naxxar Militia - a position always held by a Knight of the Order appointed by the Grand Master. Captain's Tower was built sometime after 1548 after the Knights unsuccessfully tried to requisition the nearby Gauci Tower in that same year (more on this later).

The Knights at the time were under the magistracy of Jean Parisot de Valette (1557-1568), who famously also ordered the building of the city of Valletta which he named after himself.

**ONE OF THE EARLIEST HOSPITALLER FORTIFICATIONS IN MALTA** The Captain's Tower is one of the earliest Hospitaller fortifications in Malta. It was also the first form of inland fortification, as it was not built close to the sea or port and the neighbouring area. Its strategic position meant the tower ensured a continual check on the northern shores against pirate attacks.

**NAXXAR'S HUGE DEFENCE RESPONSIBILITY** But before we continue on the Captain's Tower, it is important to speak about the importance Naxxar had in defending the islands.

The town of Naxxar is an old settlement, dating from the 9th or 10th century. It was established as a parish in 1436 and had jurisdiction over Ħal Għargħur, Mosta, St. Paul's Bay, Mellieħa and Marfa - practically all of that part of the island north of the Great Fault, the 'parte disabitata' of Malta, which was roughly a third of the whole island. This was a huge responsibility and clearly shows Naxxar's status and importance as a defence nucleus for the northern regions during the middle ages.

Prof. Godfrey Wettinger has shown in his work on the militia list of 1419-1420 that Naxxar and its associate villages contributed one-eight (262 men) of the island's militia force, and one-fifth of those who owned a horse (20 out of 108).

**NAXXAR'S IMPORTANCE INCREASED UNDER THE KNIGHTS** Under the Knights the importance of Naxxar not only increased but the village itself became the main staging post for the Birkirkara-Naxxar-Qormi regiment of country militia charged with the defence of the northern parts of the island.

**MALTA'S MILITIA FORCES** In the Middle Ages, the island's militia force consisted of the Għassa or Maħras (a maritime watch), and the Dejma - an inland garrison which kept watch day and night at a number of strategic places. These watch duties were called 'Guardia' and for this reason many of those places which served as lookout posts retained the name Wardija.

**THE CAPTAIN OF NAXXAR'S MILITIA** By 1628, the Captain of the Naxxar Militia, who lived in the Captain's Tower, was responsible for nineteen watch posts including those of Lippija, della Capra and Nadur. The latter were then considered too remote and were passed onto the responsibility of the Capitano della Verga.

The militia posts occupied natural vantage points and were generally unfortified. Nonetheless, a few towers do seem to have existed even in antiquity.

A clear reference to the presence of early fortified structures in the locality point to the existence of a tower in the area of Burmarrad overlooking the old port of Salina. This was an important harbour in antiquity because it was the closest port leading to the old Capital of Mdina. This structure appears to have been still standing by 1565.

It was only with the coming of the Knights that militia posts began to receive defensive structures. Indeed, one of the Knights' major contribution to the security of the island was actually the erection of a network of coastal towers during the first half of the 17th century.

## THE CAPTAIN'S TOWER ARCHITECTURE AND DEFENCE FEATURES

The tower has a square shape and vertical walls. It consists of three floors, the rooms spanned by stone arches. The tower's design is similar to the Gauci Tower nearby (scroll down this article for a link to view it and read all about it), as well as other earlier Hospitaller towers in Rhodes. Its fine mouldings frame the escutcheons bearing the coat of arms of Grand Master de Valette.

Its primary defensive features are four piombatoie, or box-machicolations, supported by stone corbels and similar to small balconies without a floor. From them, stones or projectiles, and other offensive materials like boiling water would be dropped onto assailants at the foot of the tower. In Maltese these box-machicolations are known as 'galleriji tal-misħun', a term which clearly indicates their intended purposes - that of dropping boiling water on assailants.

These piombatoie were actually medieval defensive features that had by then disappeared from the bastioned fortifications and other new military structures of the period. That they were still being incorporated into 16th century towers should not be so surprising for the towers were designed only to resist small scale attacks by raiders unequipped with cannon.

Various other openings from which the soldiers could shoot are also present in the tower.

**A RARE DOVE COTE** A unique and interesting feature appertaining to the tower is a columbaria or dove cote ('barumbara' in Maltese), set within the four-foot high parapet on the roof of the tower. Pigeons were then an important means for relaying messages and this tower would have served a critical role, given its position, in relaying messages from Gozo r.

This dove cote housed carrier pigeons for relaying messages from Gozo, to Mdina, and Valletta to the Grand Harbour.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT DEFENSIVE STRUCTURES FOR NORTHERN MALTA

Between them, Gauci Tower and the Captain's Tower, together with Torre Falcha on the Dwejra heights below Mdina, comprised Malta's most important northern-most defensive structures for the duration of the 16th century.

That they were important landmarks is attested by one of D'Aleccio's frescos that shows a map of Malta where they are distinctly illustrated.

These are again depicted in the panel showing the final battle between the Gran Soccorso and the Turkish troops disembarked at St. Paul's Bay - a battle which was fought around the plains of Burmarrad.

D'Aleccio's map also reveals the existence of two other towers in the nearby Casal Gregor (Għargħur), another two small ones down near Salina and a third at Monte Aliba, south of the Lunzjata chapel overlooking Fomm-ir-Riħ. None of these towers have actually survived.

**USED AS A HOSPITAL** The Captain's Tower and adjoining Captain's House were used as a temporary hospital during the plague epidemic of 1675-6.

**PUT IN THE SHADE BY NEWER FORTIFICATIONS** The construction of the church of St. Paul (San Pawl tat-Tarġa) in 1696, immediately in front of Gauci Tower, signifies that the latter, together with the Captain's Tower, had by then lost their defensive value. The Captain's Tower had assumed the semblance of a residence rather than a military structure, for during this period - the 17th century - the burden of the coastal watch and the defence of the northern parts of Malta had fallen on a totally new set of dedicated defensive structures - the coastal towers built by Grand Masters Wignacourt, Lascaris and De Redin.

MEPA scheduled the Captain's Tower as a Grade 1 protected building as per Government Notice No. 729 dated 1995. Nowadays, the tower is in good condition. It is privately owned and is not open to the public.

| Gozitan | Maltese | English |
|---|---|---|
| Għawdix | Għawdex | Gozo |
| Smontor | Fidda | Silver foil |
| Ċombini | Labar tal-inxir | Clothes pegs |
| Trampi | Kummiedji | Being silly |
| Fettul | Biskuttel | Biscuit |
| Bankoncin | Biskuttin tal-lewz | Almond biscuit |
| Gejxa | Band tax-Xagħar | Hair-band |
| Ħafsa | Ponta | Pimple |
| Ħaxxem | Għalaq / Qares | Pinched |
| Werqa ta' Dindja | Pal tal-bajtar | Pricly-pear leaf |
| Mejdina | Tavolina | Small table |
| Nemusiera | Xibka tan-nemus | Mosquito curtain |
| Pastizz tal-Ġobon | Pastizz tal-irkotta | Cheese cake |
| Perċa | Ħabel tal-inxir | Clothes line |
| Pinuri | Pilloli | Pills |
| Regħex | Staħa | Shy |
| Xenxul | Għanqud | Bunch of |
| Mejt | Sturdament | Dizzy |
| Mitrah | Saqqu | Mattress |
| Boxxla | Antiporta | Internal hall door |
| Ħajm | Fsied | Spoil someone |

# A Glimpse Into The Fading World of Gozitan Dialects

By Sasha Vella

Dialects can be easily described as the variety of the same language within a particular location.

**They are often dependant on a number of factors, such as, demographic changes, youths, and immigrants that return back to Malta.**

While many tend to confuse dialects with accents, they are not the same.

**In the Gozitan dialect, there are many phrases and words which are different from those used in Malta. Differences in dialects are found not just in the vowels, but also in the consonants of the word.**

For example, many residents in Xewkija tend to pronounce the q as k, so for example instead of saying 'qattus' (cat) they would say 'kattus'.

In the dialect of Għarb and some other Gozitan dialects, the Maltese silent għ (referred to as għajn,) is also pronounced as r, for example dgħajsa (boat), is pronounced as drajsa.

In the dialect of Żebbug and San Lawrenz, the Maltese h (akka) is still pronounced as ħ, for example, instead of dahru (his house), they pronounce it as daħru.

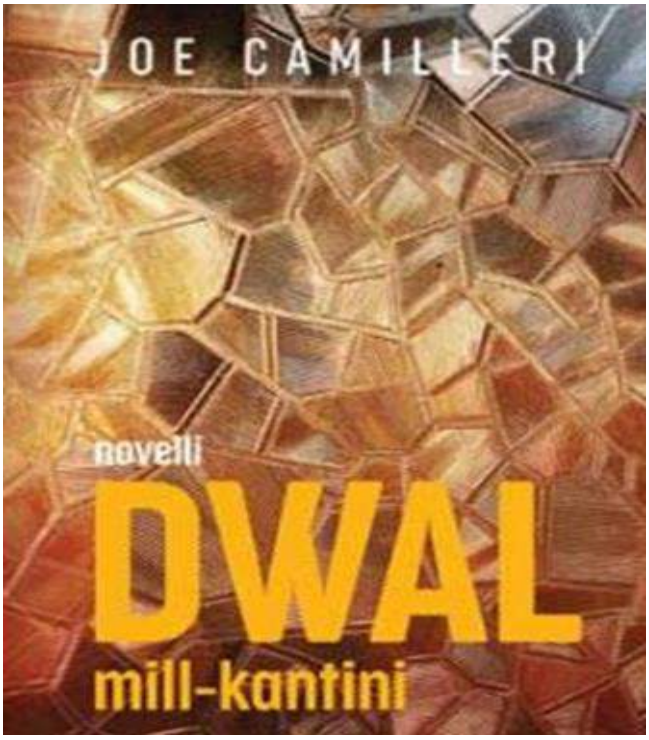
Gozitans also make use of the interjection 'ħajz', which has the same meaning of disgust as 'jaqq', which is 'yuck' in English.

**Author Joe Camilleri also spoke about these different phrases and sayings where he explained their meaning while used in a Gozitan context, in an interview with Newsbook.**

"Traditional dialects nowadays have their own threats as well, with failing to keep up with the current times," he said. Camilleri also brought the example of Gozitan's pronunciation of the word 'bath', which they pronounce as 'baff' due to the differences in speech.

A phrase such as 'qisek ix-xuxana' also originally came from Gozitan dialects, and it is used when someone's hair is unruly or out of place.

**Speaking about the present situation of the Gozitan dialect, Camilleri said that a language that is alive, and a dialect that is alive, will be constantly susceptible to change.**




# The Kappillan and the Pandemic

**Noel Grima**

**'Dwal mill-kantini'. Author: Joe Camilleri. Publisher: Horizons / 2021. Pages: 223pp**

The village parish priest *(kappillan)* had entered his mission with the best of intentions. Then Covid arrived and all he had learned and prepared was swept overboard.

Anxious like everyone else he obeyed dutifully the orders of the health authorities but at the same time he was sensitive to the sufferings of many of his flock - some had lost jobs, many were finding it difficult to cope with daily life, especially those with debts or loans to repay

When the direst months of the pandemic had passed, human nature raised its head again. The villagers wanted to prepare for the coming festas. They urged the *kappillan* to start fund-raising so that the village is prepared.

The *kappillan* tried to head them off. What about organising groups to offer help to those in need, he asked, not forgetting the children of the village whose education had been disrupted by the pandemic. The villagers heard but did not volunteer. Then the very Maltese fixation with the titular saint took over. The first suggestion was to hold a procession, albeit a votive one. That was vetoed by the health authorities. Next they suggested bringing the statue out of the niche and putting it next to the main altar. The *kappillan* could not get out of that. On this basis the suggestion was made to dress up the church as for the festa and hold all indoor celebrations. Again, this carried the day.

But inexplicably this was where things turned ugly. A whispering campaign targeted the hapless *kappillan* who was accused of tampering with the Church funds for purposes not thought of by the donors. That was when ugly anonymous letters started arriving.

Not having succeeded in organising relief for parishioners affected by the pandemic and seeing the leading lights of the parish still fixated on the festa and the titular saint, and even realising that the person nearest to him, the Vici, was more aligned with the festa aficionados, the *kappillan* gives up and moves to a parish in Peru whose poor he can help.

This is a terrible indictment of the village mentality and, for those who know what's going on, is not far from what happened in many close-knit parish communities across Malta and Gozo.

This is not the first book of short stories by the author and in fact a previous collection had been reviewed on these pages. This collection is centred more or less on the pandemic and maybe its tone is darker than usual. The title of this book derives from some mostly old villages in our country where houses have a basement underneath and where light from the *kantina* shows there are people living where one would not imagine. The first short story tells of what happens when a Covid-infected person is picked up from home prior to hospitalisation and death.

The rest of the stories - there are 15 in all - deal with, among others, various aspects of the pandemic as it hit our country, from the isolation and loneliness of the vulnerable elderly, to how the pandemic affected a nation passing through various processes of change, marriages breaking up, family homes becoming empty relics of a past age, the pandemic as it affects people with incipient dementia and people whose lives had already been ruined by the politico-religious feuds of the past.

# Laundry supervisor awash with smiles after 50 years

Lenore Borg was awash with smiles when she received her recognition for 50 years of service at Mackay Base Hospital.

The supervisor of linen services still remembers her first day on 25 August 1971. She was just out of school and only 15 years old.

“My uncle worked here, and they were looking for staff, so I decided to apply for an operational role. In those days we were cleaners, kitchen workers and relieved in the laundry. “When I first started in the laundry, we would just service the Base now that has grown to servicing Sarina Hospital, North Mackay Private Hospital, Icon Cancer Centre and home renal at Mackay Community Health, QAS Mackay.

“With the expansion of services over the years, such as COVID-19 clinics and more beds, we have also grown to support them.”

Throughout the past five decades Lenore has experienced a lot of change. Three redevelopments has seen the equipment she works with become high tech, faster and more efficient.

“In the laundry the machines used to be like a giant eggbeater,” she said. “You would load the linen in for it to be washed, pull it out still wet and then hang out on the clothesline to dry. If it rained you just had to bear with it. Then we would bring the laundry in, fold it all up by hand ready for delivery onto the wards.

“Now bags of linen are tipped onto a conveyor belt for a trip to the washing machine where it is thoroughly cleaned. An automated stacker lifts the clean laundry into the dryers. After drying it is folded by a machine, stacked onto trolleys, and taken to the storeroom ready for delivery. We also have a tracker that counts the amount of laundry we do for each area. Much easier than counting by hand like we did in the old days.” Looking back on her career Lenore says Cyclone Debbie has been the most memorable experience.

“We’ve always been prepared for a cyclone but living in Mackay they normally go elsewhere. We had to keep going with a handful of people. Everyone chipped in and did whatever needed to be done to keep things going. “Staff were working in the laundry and then helping out in the kitchen feeding patients, staff and their families.

“The rain and wind were so strong we had to store the linen in the hospital and not in the laundry, so we didn’t have to go outside as much, and the trolleys didn’t wet the floors.” Lenore doesn’t yet have plans to retire and wants to continue making her contribution to the care of patients.

“I’ve been in this particular job for about 25 years and I still really enjoy it,” she said.

# Caroline Springs George Cross FC

## 2021 Annual General Meeting Update

**THE CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS AND FOR ANOTHER 3 YEARS**.

**President -** Mark Sultana, **Vice President -** Darren Farrugia **Treasurer -** Leanne Jones **Secretary -** Liza Djuric **Director -** Lewis Cassar

**Life membership was also granted to Frans Bonavia, Helen Bonavia and Mario Axiak for their services rendered to the club over the years.**

George Cross Football Club was established on March 12th, 1947. In the early 1980's after settling in Sunshine, the club merged with Sunshine City which resulted in a name change and Sunshine George Cross was born.

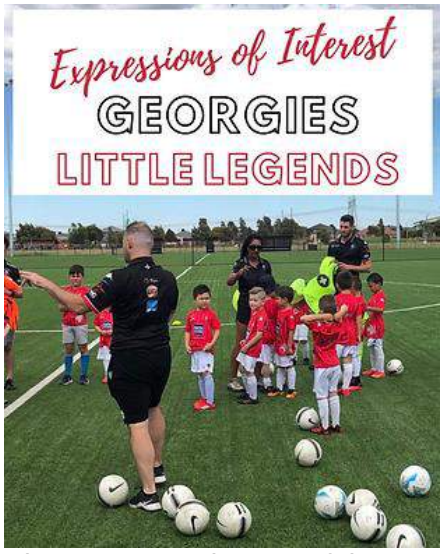
In 1984, Sunshine George Cross competed in the NSL, this continued on for eight seasons until 1991; the club then joined the Premier League until 2013. During this time, the club hosted a successful junior program at Dobson Reserve in Sunshine.

In 2019, the club will play in the Victorian State League Division 1, this will be a great opportunity for the club to re-establish itself in an exciting new facility amongst an ever-growing community.

**EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**

**GEORGIES LITTLE LEGENDS**

46 City Vista Ct, Fraser Rise VIC 3336, Australia




**Caroline Springs George Cross Academy Presents Little Legends.** Now in its third year our Little Legends program is returning in 2022.

Designed for children aged 4 – 6 with an emphasis on FUN the program introduces children to the basic skills of Football. Kids become comfortable with the ball at their feet and are safe to explore the game in a no pressure environment.

The Little Legends is a genuine pathway into our MiniRoos U7s squads and provides the foundation skills to give them a step up when beginning the game. Of the 24 players joining our Under 7 squads in 2022, 21 of them have come directly from the Little Legends program as have 8 of the 9 U7 girls.

The program is overseen by our MiniRoos Technical Director and gives your child access to high quality professional coaching.

The next program will begin on 19th March, 2022 and run for 20 weeks.

Expressions of interest can be made via the form www.georgecrossfc.com.au/little-legends

*To be eligible to participate players must be born in 2016, 2017 or 2018*

**Positions are Limited so get in early. We look forward to seeing you at Georgies in 2022.**

**i remember the corned beef of my childhood**
**And the bread that we cut ith a knife**
**When children helped with housework**
**And the men went to work not the wife.**

**The cheese never needed a fridge**
**And the bread was so crusty and hot,**
**The Children were seldom unhappy**
**And the wife was content with her lot.**

**I remember the milk from the bottle**
**With the yummy cream on the top**
**Our dinner came from the oven**
**And not from a freezer or shop.**

**The kids were more contented,**
**They didn't need money for kicks,**
**Just a game with their friends in the road**
**And sometimes the Saturday flicks.**

**I remember the slap on my backside**
**And the taste of soap if I swore,**
**Anorexia and diets weren't heard of,**
**And we hadn't much choice what we wore.**

**Do you think that bruised our ego?**
**Or our initiative was destroyed?**
**We ate what was put on the table**
**And I think life was better enjoyed.**

**WE ARE A GENERATION THAT WILL NEVER COME BACK.** A generation that went to school and walked back with our best friend or alone safely.

A generation that did their homework alone to get out asap to play in the street.

A generation that spent all their free time on the street.

A generation that played hide and seek when dark. A generation that made mud cakes. A generation that collected matchboxes and stickers. A generation that sold empty coke bottles to the local grocery store for a few pennies. A generation that made paper toys with their bare hands.

A generation that could enjoy personality behaviour without being labelled ADHD, autistic, bipolar and many more names under the stars.

A generation who bought vinyl albums to play on record players. A generation that collected photos and albums of clippings. A generation that played board games and cards on rainy days. A generation whose TV went off at midnight after playing the National Anthem.

A generation that had parents who were there. A generation that laughed under the covers in bed so parents didn't know we were still awake.

A generation that went to discos and nightclubs, smooched, kissed and slow danced till the early hours of the morning without the fear of catching a deadly virus .

A generation that is passing and unfortunately will never return!!...

## Baby Mahmoud, one of the many preterm babies taken care of at the Order of Malta Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem

Mahmoud is a tiny baby who was born premature at the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem last August. His mother, Saja, had already had three baby boys all delivered at the Order of Malta's maternity hospital.

Her pregnancy had been smooth and up to the sixth month she had reported no discomfort. But on 26 August she woke up feeling in pain. Her husband decided to drive to the Hospital their hometown in south east of Bethlehem to have her wife checked. Once she was visited, the doctors decided there was no time to waste: the baby was delivered at only 25 weeks, weighing less than one kilogram. Mahmoud needed ventilation and intensive care, and today – 4 months later – he is still in the NICU (neonatal intensive care unit) of the hospital. is not yet formally out of danger, but life expectancy is increasing day by day. Mahmoud is not yet formally out of danger, but his life expectancy is increasing day by day.

"It was a very scary experience especially because we didn't know what was going to happen or what the outcome would be, but the staff of Holy Family Hospital is providing my baby the best medical care they may give", said Saja.

Since 1990, the Holy Family Hospital has delivered more than 90,000 babies and cared for many thousand more either born prematurely or with congenital pathologies. The Hospital is the only facility in the region with a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and offers regular check-ups bringing pre and post-natal assistance to women in the nearby villages.

**MALTESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY TRADITIONAL TALENTS -**
**Maltese Canadian Craftsman Frank Attard**
**The Maltese Canadian Community is blessed with successful and very talented individuals. Frank Attard a retired Gozitan Canadian, originally from il-Qala, Gozo, spends most of his free time in his basement workshop reproducing typical Maltese, Gozitan and Canadian objects, images and places.**

# " From Rome with Love

An avant-garde spirit and early exponent of modern art, Giorgio Preca was born in Malta in 1909 but lived a great deal of his life in Rome, where he established a name for himself as an artist. His reputation as a pioneer of modernism in the local art scene was demonstrated in his trailblazing 1948 exhibition held at the Hotel Phoenicia in Floriana and cemented by another seminal exhibition held at the Hostel Verdelin, Valletta, in 1955. One year later, Preca had packed his bags for good and set off for Rome, where he married and settled down until his death in 1984.

Painting of Giorgio Preca

His long time away from these shores accounts for the fact that despite exhibiting in Malta on fifteen occasions between 1933 and 1960, Preca is not a local household name. Heritage Malta's exhibition 'Giorgio Preca ta' Malta,' which will run between the 3rd of December and 27th of February at MUŻA in Valletta, the town where the artist was born, is set to change all that.

The interactive exhibition is the result of years of close collaboration and goodwill between Preca's family and Heritage Malta. Some twenty-one paintings, four drawings, and six ceramic objects that Preca used for some of his still lifes, the majority of which have never been exhibited in Malta before, have been restored by Heritage Malta's expert team of conservators and restorers prior to going on public display. The collaboration reflects a shared interest in acknowledging and honouring Giorgio Preca's artistic legacy whilst providing accessibility to a new generation who might not be familiar with his oeuvre.

Following formative studies at the Malta Government School of Art, Preca's love affair with Rome began where he travelled there with fellow artist Toussaint Busuttil and attended the Regia Accademia di Belle Arti. Preca soon graduated to the position of assistant professor at the British Academy, where he met Antonio Sciortino. At the outbreak of World War Two, Sciortino returned to Malta to take over the post of curator of the museum of fine arts vacated by Vincenzo Bonello, who was interned in Uganda on account of his alleged pro-Italian sympathies. Sciortino and Preca's career trajectories were to overlap again. In 1944 Preca was employed as a restorer under Sciortino with the Museums Department, where he worked upon a few of the masterpieces from the National Collection. This association led indirectly to Preca's second brush with controversy. Previously in a 1939 exhibition, a non-frontal female nude painted by Preca had caused an uproar requiring it to be partially covered with a curtain during the showing.

Having sustained a direct hit in the war, a few paintings, including the notable 16th-century altarpiece within Stella Maris Parish Church in Sliema, were damaged. Sciortino recommended Preca restore them, which resulted in a commission of a crucifixion-scene themed altarpiece a couple of years later by one of its parishioners. Unfortunately, Preca's modern rendering of the subject seemed to affront the Baroque idiom still prevalent on the islands, and upon the patron's passing away, Archbishop Gonzi was petitioned to banish the offending painting to the Bir-id-Deheb church in Żejtun where it remains today.

Giorgio Preca's evolution from academic line and form to expressionism is evident when comparing traditionally executed portraits of Toussaint Busuttil or that of Grandmaster Fra Ludovico Chigi Albani, with the highly abstract oil-on-canvas self-portrait, painted much later in 1953 and acquired by Heritage Malta in 2019. One style brought in commissions and a livelihood, and the other a means of self-experimentation with contemporary themes and identification with artistic movements on the continent. His vibrant and colourful still lifes are defined in bold, black contour lines, and are an expression of his inner vision. A man with his finger always on the pulse of his times, the subject material of Preca's 1952 Rome exhibition 'Inhabitants of the Moon Series' consisted of aliens and dragons, a topical but still relatively avant-garde theme.

In 1958 Preca, was invited by the Italian government to exhibit his works at the Venetian Biennale within the Italian Pavilion dedicated to the foreign artists living in Rome. As his international reputation grew, similar invitations were extended to exhibit at the Commonwealth Centre in London.

Modern art is not just experimental in style but also in technique, which may pose something of a challenge for conservator-restorers. In spite of his academic training and his stint as a restorer, Preca prioritised his artistic expression over technical know-how, layering his canvases in thick impasto application of paint which over time resulted in deformations in the underlying canvas. This necessitated a careful restoration intervention, a precise balancing act that involved respecting the authenticity of the original work of art, the immediacy of its colour and form, whilst repairing the damage caused to the painting over time, and preventing further deterioration.

Most canvases were strip-lined and stabilised using a new auxiliary stretching frame. Similar consolidation measures were also employed to counteract oxidation of the cellulose fibres caused by excessive use of binding materials such as poppy and linseed oil and varnishes, thereby further weakening the canvas.

The state-of-the-art Preca exhibition represents another milestone in Heritage Malta's mission to make art more accessible. It follows fast on the heels of Mattia Preti's 'Boethius and Philosophy' return to Malta and the recent exhibition of 13 loaned masterpieces at MUŻA. The use of the preposition 'of' in the title of the exhibition reclaims Giorgio Preca as a child of Malta and pays homage to his far-reaching often unacknowledged influence on the local art scene.

By Warren Bugeja, Executive Communications, Heritage Malta

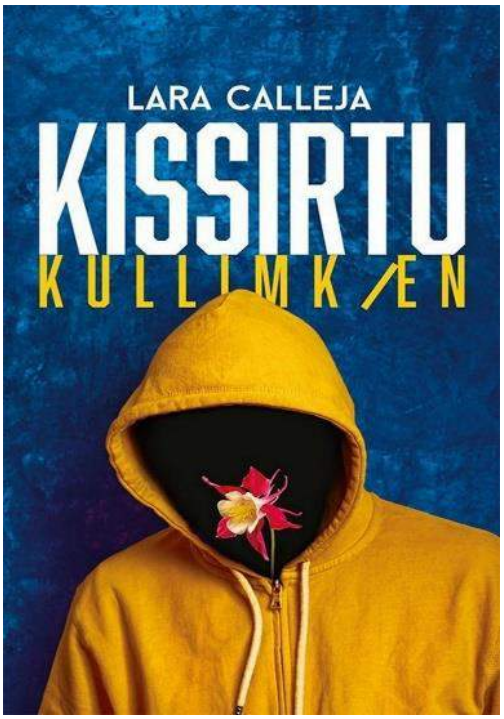
As published in the Times of Malta on December 21, 2021

**29 PLACES IN THE WORLD NAMED MALTA**

**Do not be too quick to answer, "Off course, it's a lttle island smack bang in the middle of the Mediterranian!**

**But did you know that there are 29 places in the world named Malta! These are the places in the world named Malta; 11 places in America, 3 in Portugal, 2 in the Russian Federation, 2 in the Netherlands, 1 in Turkey, Romania, the Phillipines, Montenegro, Latvia, Croatia, Greece, Colombia, Brazil and Bosnia. The places in America named Malta are in Texas, South Carolina, Pensylvania, Ohio, New York, Montana, Iowa, Illonois, Idaho, Colorado and Alabama. As far as I know, there is only one place named Gozo although at Pendle Hill, NSW thre is a Gozo Road.**

# Book Review: Kissirtu Kullimkien




by Ramona Depares

## A poignant collection of stories highlighting Malta's construction plague

Having read Lara Calleja's debut novel, *Lucy Min?* – and thoroughly enjoyed it – I was curious as to what this second book, *Kissirtu Kullimkien*, might bring to Malta's literary landscape. And also somewhat sceptical, truth be told.

Knowing Calleja to be an avid environmental activist, and given the title and the evocative cover illustration by Pierre Portelli, the topic of the book is obvious. But I was curious as to how Calleja had chosen to depict the construction tragedy that has taken hold of Malta. An entire book denouncing construction could turn out to be… well, boring, especially when you're preaching to the converted.

Turns out I couldn't have been more off the mark. In the wrong hands, the theme – as important as it is – might have made for a dry tale. But not with Calleja's flair for storytelling.

KISSIRTU KULLIMKIEN – AN INDICTEMENT FULL OF HUMAN PATHOS

What Calleja does, with *Kissirtu Kullimkien*, is weave real-life stories into a poignant fiction, imbuing Malta's penchant for turning open spaces into *'fletsijiet'* with the human pathos it so desperately needed.

*Kissirtu Kullimkien* presents a series of short stories that introduce us to a caste of characters that tell a lamentably familiar tale. There's *Rożi tax-Xgħajra*, who is forced to swap the green and blue expanses of the seaside village with an elderly home. What happens to Giovanna the cat, after Rożi disappears and her old house is demolished?

*Stejjer bejn bibien magħluqa*, which smacks more than a little autobiographical, though I might be wrong, explores the love that many of us hold for exploring old, abandoned houses. Houses with untold stories and the remains of strangers' lives, all likely to be forgotten forever as soon as the bulldozers come crashing.

All the stories ring a knell of unhappy truths – like *Geġwiġija,* and the matchbox conditions many of us are forced to live in, thanks to decreasing spaces and shoddy construction that doesn't mind driving residents insane – or worse – as long as the profit margins are higher.

*Ix-Xufier u Fransina* is perhaps my favourite of the lot, speaking of a kindness that nowadays is rather rare, and which make the story even more poignant as it moves to its inevitable ending. There are no sermons, no exhortations from atop some high horse. At no point do we feel that the author is trying to make up our mind for us with *Kissirtu Kullimkien*.

But make up our mind we do, because the problem with Malta's 21st-century plague stares us all in the face when we realise that these fictional characters we are reading about are not really fictional at all. That we have met all of them, at some time or another, and that some of them may even be us.

*Kissirtu Kullimkien* is very sobering reading, subtly painting a picture of an island gone made with greed and of where that is taking us. More than an indictement, it is the equivalent of a **Ghost of Christmas Present that is fast racing to a definitely grim Future, unless the people put their foot down now.This book is a very good start in making that first step.**

## THE PEOPLE OF MALTA FACEBOOK
## Thank you, Maria and so say all of us

"I got married in December and spent my honeymoon at one of the swab test centres. Because of the situation we are in we did not think it was wise to travel. As soon as I got married the cases increased dramatically. Etienne, my husband, supported my decision to go back to work immediately after we got married so I could help my colleagues. He said go, they need you. It is good to know that all the people who work in these centres have sacrificed a lot for the Maltese population.

There are people who take everything for granted. Some have no idea what our work involves and are not aware of the dedication there is behind it. We try to make miracles. We spend long hours seeing people. We are afraid too. Just keep in mind that after having come in contact with people who come to swab, and some of them are positive, we have to go back home to our families with the thought that we could have contracted it ourselves. We take all the necessary precautions. In fact we do a swab test every day to make sure that we are not spreading the virus, even out of respect to those who come to test.

I am one of the swabbing centre co-ordinators. My colleagues and I started out as swabbers and now we are training others. In the morning I work as a speech therapist and after that I continue working in the swab centre. We take everything extremely seriously. We are a good team, and collaborate together, we work well together and we do everything willingly. You find those who do not appreciate our work and it saddens me because here, as professionals we strive to be of service, help and support to all those who come to test. We are all exhausted but proud of what we are doing.

People need to do their share too, get vaccinated, go for the booster, respect social distancing and wear face masks. We have to look forward and better times shall come.

It was a honeymoon that never was but that I shall remember. I am hoping that we can go on honeymoon in Summer, if the situation improves...in the hope that I am no longer needed here." – h Maria Formosa Camilleri.

"I have been a widow for 21 years but my son and I took over my husband's work. He died young, when he was 46 years old. I started working with him when I was dating him at 16 and I am still here today when I am over sixty years old. Can you imagine when he passed away, I still had young children, I had to keep working to support them and at the same time do this work.

I start working before 1am in the morning in the bakery and keep at it till late in the evening. I am already delivering by 5am. We do everything in this bakery, from bread, to ftajjar (flatbread) to honey rings.

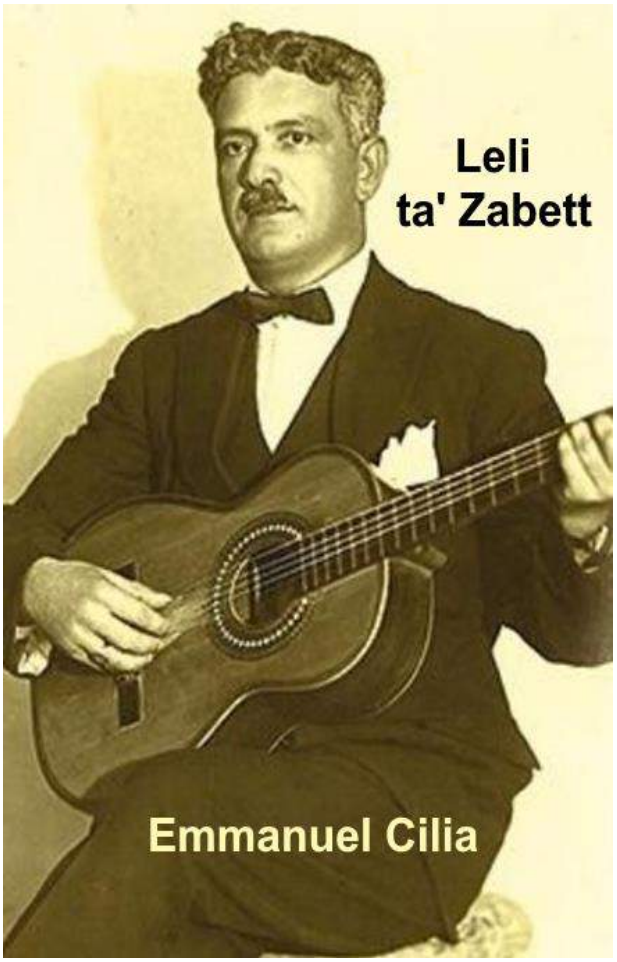
I am used to this and love working, more than enjoying myself. There are very few bakeries that deliver bread with vans and women doing it even less. Today's women do not want to work like this, they are more concerned about their make up and nails." – ANNA FROM HAL GHAXAQ

**JOIN OUR ASSOCIATION AS A MEMBER! The annual membership fee is only Euro12. All you have to do is to go to this**

GERMAN-MALTESE CIRCLE
DEUTSCH-MALTESISCHER ZIRKEL

**link https://www.germanmaltesecircle.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Mem_Appl_Form.pdf from where you can download the Application Form. Fill it and sign and send us a scanned copy via email (gmc@germanmaltesecircle.org). This has to be followed by sending the membership fee preferably via Online Banking. Do NOT send cheques or cash by post. Our IBAN number is MT79VALL22013000000040024006574 In case you need further assistance please contact us**.

# Fantastic compilation of songs by Maltese folklore singer




*Bringing out all the nostalgic feels!*

Jillian Mallia

A compilation titled Emmanuele Cilia – The Complete Studio Recordings (1931-32), was released to mark the 50th anniversary since the passing of the renowned folk singer.

The famous recordings were recorded in June 1931 and August 1932 when he ventured to Milan to pursue his music, together with other singers. The recordings were published by Anthony D'Amato on HMV records. Recently, the full set of recordings were transferred from the original records and vinyl discs to digital format for preservation. This project is a joint initiative by the Friends of the National Archives of Malta and Filfla Records.

Emmanuele Cilia, more popularly known as Leli ta' Zabett, inspired generations of Maltese folk singers (*ghannejja*), and his songs are of historic value, offering a snapshot of Maltese society more than 80 years ago!

Some of the tracks, including '*X'ahna sbieh min jaf jarana*' and '*Xalata ghal San Pawl*,' will surely kindle memories among those of a certain age who would have jammed to them on the Rediffusion service!

The compilation of 38 three-minute songs will now be available on a 12" vinyl long play, double CD and even in downloadable format, nearly 90 years after the launch and half a century from Cilia's death.www.youtube.com/watch?v=xS3hEhbnWYM

# Maltese Australian pop star priest has travelled from hell to heaven

Rob Cullivan | Angelus News

Father Rob Galea, a Catholic pop singer with a global audience, knows a lot of today's young people aren't even sure Jesus Christ actually existed.

"I go to schools where kids equate Jesus with Hercules, a fictional character," he said during a recent interview. A priest of the Diocese of Sandhurst, Australia, Father Galea is one of the best-known Catholic singers on the planet, but he uses his fame not for his own glory but for one purpose alone: to bring Jesus to others.

The friendly, talkative priest said many young Australian Catholics have never been properly taught about the faith; some don't even know how to make the sign of the cross. But using music, he has found a way to catechize not just young people but even people his age and older, noting that schoolteachers have told him they have been deeply moved by his message.

"It's a language they understand," Father Galea said of his young listeners. "I explain the Gospel through pop songs."

It's Jesus and the joy he can bring you that motivates the cleric to take his guitar and voice on the road again and again. "The big difference between happiness and joy is joy is about knowing we will go through the storm, but God will walk with us through it," he said.

This is no abstract belief for Father Galea. He's lived through a few figurative storms himself and believes Jesus guided the ship of his soul to safer waters after many a tempest.

As a teenager growing up in the Mediterranean nation of Malta, he abused intoxicants and drugs, lied, stole and belonged to a gang. He eventually wound up fearing for his life after angering a drug dealer about whom he told a malicious lie. On the brink of suicide, the teenaged Galea found out about a church youth meeting his sister was attending and asked if he could go.

From that moment forward, he began praying to Jesus about his life, and eventually even had a mystical vision of the Lord, according to his 2018 book "Breakthrough: A Journey from Desperation to Hope" (Ave Maria Press, $14).

"It was like the Holy Spirit had chosen that moment to help me get rid of the inner fury, loneliness, and regret that was still left in my heart," he wrote in the book, which he added may become a Hollywood movie.

Around the same time he was letting Christ into his heart, he was also developing a passion for music. He noted that in the Old Testament David soothed troubled King Saul by playing his harp, and that "music is a powerful thing because music soothes the savage beast." His devotion to playing and singing helped him come out of his darkest times, he added.

"Music for me is a way to speak the unspeakable and of expressing the inexpressible," Father Galea said.

Signed to a record label at 19, he entered seminary at 21 and was ordained in 2010. A trip to Australia during his seminary years led him to relocate to the country he today calls home. Now in his late 30s, the priest is probably most famous for having appeared on Australia's "X Factor" show in 2015. He's also performed for two World Youth Days and has released eight albums, including last year's "Coming Home."

A fan of many different musical genres, his style draws on rock, electronic dance music, pop, folk and world beat for inspiration, and he likes artists as diverse as U2 and famed DJ Skrillex to Brit rockers Keane and Irish singer Damien Rice.

"I use about 11 different methods," he said about his songwriting approach, adding, "There's no one system I use." Lyrical inspiration has come from a variety of ways, he said.
"Sometimes I have a Bible with me, sometimes I have a broken heart," he said. "Some songs take me months to write, some songs take me minutes to write."
In addition to his music, the priest is a noted speaker, podcaster, and YouTube presenter. Even people who aren't interested in the Catholic faith would likely find many of his videos entertaining. Throughout them, he displays a contagious enthusiasm for his vocation, his beliefs, the power of music and the difficulties people can face in life and how to overcome them.
What's striking about Father Galea is how different he is from so many other Christian commenters online, who are often bemoaning the secular world and its evils or who don't like various directions the Church is taking. The priest seems to be able to sift all the chaff of Catholic spiritual life and focus on the wheat, namely, a relationship with Jesus Christ.
"I am in love with Jesus," he said. "When I think about Jesus, I'm joyful and alive and full of hope."
The priest occasionally visits North America, and has appeared at various conferences and events in the United States. He heads up FRG Ministry, a nonprofit devoted to proclaiming the Gospel. Interestingly, for a singer who has performed for thousands and has been on TV, the cleric admits to being rather shy. While he can handle being on stage, offstage is a different matter. "I'm an extreme introvert," he said. "I'm not interested in the attention, so to speak." What does interest him is connecting with the people he's met through his public life and sharing his own faith journey with them so that they may be inspired to walk with Christ themselves. His latest album, "Coming Home," was inspired by his own "prodigal son" experiences, he added.
"If you're walking with God, you're going to constantly run away, and you're going to constantly want to come back."

## Crystal Palace BAR

**The bar is tucked away at Triq San Pawl (Street Saint Paul), Malta**

**. It's royal blue awning is dwarfed by advertising for Kinnie- a local soft drink flavoured with orange and aromatic herbs. It's the sort of place where local workers come at the end of a shift and taxi drivers park themselves at 2 am. You'll probably come across a few local seniors perched outside, drinking sweet tea, smoking and shooting the breeze. Crystal Palace is one of the few spots in Malta which still has home made pastizzi for sale- many other bars and delis will buy frozen in bulk. Crystal Palace has been in the same family for more than 40 years. The name was crafted to help conjure some familiarity for the English sailors who were frequent visitors after they'd been out carousing. Unlike some Australian Maltese cafes where the stuffing types stretch into scores, in the islands you'll only find two. There are the pastizzi ta' l-irkotta – filled with a fluffy ricotta and pastizzi tal pizelli, which are stuffed with a lightly spiced mushy split pea mix. I'm sure the pea were partly designed to placate the brits.**

# Blue Grotto, Zurrieq Malta: Unique Places around the World

This locale gets its name from the intensely blue colour of its waters, but it is in severe danger today due to climate change.

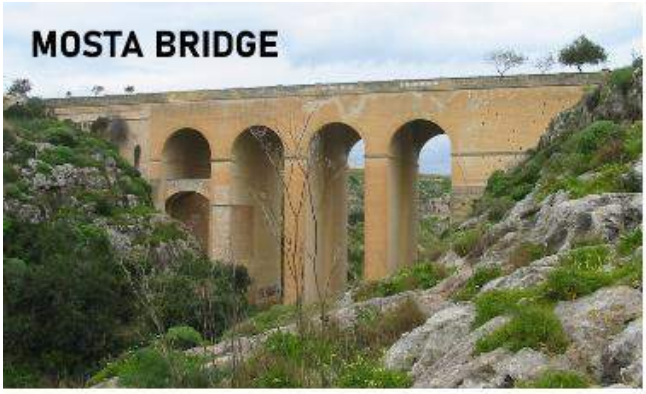
*Il-Hnejja*, the famous natural arch that extends over and into the waters of Malta's Blue Grotto.

The Blue Grotto is a system of seven sea caverns, located on the outskirts of the southern town of Żurrieq, on the small Mediterranean island nation of Malta. The area should not be confused with its namesake, the Blue Grotto in Capri, Italy. The caverns are themselves unique limestone formations, with stunning views of water, flora, and fauna. The largest and most popular cavern is commonly referred to as the 'Blue Grotto' Cavern.

The grotto is popular among visitors to Malta, which is easy to navigate because its area spans only 17 by 9 miles at its extents. Malta is easily accessible by plane, within three hours from many major European cities, and from them connections to the UK, North Africa, and the Middle East. There is ferry access to Sicily, Italy, from the port in Pozzallo. Getting to the grotto from Żurrieq involves travelling around 1.2 miles (2 kilometers) west to the harbor of Wied iż-Żurrieq, and hiring a "dgñajsa", a water taxi, for around €8 ($8.67 USD). In addition to regular boat tours, there are also rock climbing, scuba diving and snorkeling tours for those so inclined.

Blue Grotto features a 140-foot arch, Il-Hnejja. The arch is a unique byproduct of the local coralline limestone, which tends to fracture and erode from the constantly pounding waves. The grotto is also widely recognized for its ultra-clear water, which appears as stunning shades of cobalt blue when sunlight hits the white sand at the bottom of the caves, and reflects against the colors of plants, sea creatures, and minerals in the limestone. Filmmakers favor the area for its inimitable natural aesthetics.

The limestone of the grotto contains marine fossils, because the entire island of Malta was submerged millions of years ago. Plants and animals are visible through the water in the caverns, and divers can see barracudas, jacks, octopus, and morays in the water itself. The caverns also offer a view of Fiflia, an inlet uninhabited by humans, which is home to endemic species, such as the Maltese wall lizard. As one would expect, culinary fish and seafood are available throughout Malta. Local delicacies include sea urchin and octopus, as well as lampuka fish, which is the main ingredient in Maltese lampuki pie. Malta has a good reputation as a very safe destination, and a trip to Blue Grotto can be made safely with the assistance of experienced tour guides. It is not possible to touch the floor of the sea, so access to life jackets is crucial, especially for children and those who are not proficient swimmers. The waves, and their tendency to erode the rocks, can be dangerous, especially in stormy conditions. Even when the weather is calm, boat guides carefully time entrance to the caves in relation to the rhythm of the waves. Unfortunately, the natural infrastructure of the Blue Grotto, and all of Malta, is extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change, particularly to rising sea levels and coastal erosion. Rising temperatures provoke devastating invasions of local ecosystems by non-native wildlife as well. Malta has made climate change a serious priority, in part because its only significant natural resources are said to be its mild climate and limestone. Increasingly, tourists are encouraged to see the Blue Grotto less as an idyllic blue water paradise, and more in terms of its rich heritage and as a hot spot for eco-tourism.




The Mosta bridge
Rebuilt after World War II, the Mosta bridge stands over 'Wied il-Ghasel' and provides passage for vehicles crossing the town.

The original Mosta Bridge over
Wied il-ghasel built by the British in 1896
Louis Cardona Melitensia Collector avatar link
Louis Cardona Melitensia Collector

# CAPTURE THE TASTE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Kinnie's heritage dates back to 1952 when it was first created by Simonds Farsons Cisk in Malta, at the heart of the Mediterranean, as an alternative to the innumerable colas that had proliferated post-war Europe. Its distinctive characteristics have made it Malta's favourite original soft drink and it has been loved ever since by the millions of tourists who visit the Mediterranean every year.

Due to evolving lifestyle trends, Diet and Light versions are also available. While the outer packaging of the product has developed over time, the one element that has not changed is the unmistakable taste of Kinnie that has remained true to its original formula and ice-cold Kinnie is delicious drunk straight, with a taste of orange. Its bitter-sweet chinotto taste also lends itself well to and enhances most alcoholic drinks. It is also ideal as a top-up in a variety of different cocktails.

# Are ethnic Maltese people descended from Arab Muslims that were Christianised by the Normans?

**According the the New Testament the Maltese embraced the Christian religion after the shipwreck of St. Paul on the island of Malta in 60 AD.**

Let me explain what I mean. Maltese are still mainly descended from locals, most similar to Sicilians and South Italians, who were **partially Arabised** by the Muslim Arabs (or in fact, for most of the time, Arabized Muslims from North Africa) during the expansion of Islam, coming to speak the Siculo-Arabic dialect (also spoken in Muslim-rule Sicily, though certainly not by the entire population, given that locally developed Romance and Greek dialects survived until the modern era).

Apparently there wasn't a massive depopulation during that time, mostly just changing the ruling and military elites, but Islamic immigration and eventual mixing into a common melting pot certainly happened. Eventually **the island went back to Christian rule**, and people were successfully Christianised again (though I doubt Christianity had ever gone away from it entirely), but, unlike in Sicily, **the Siculo-Arabic dialect persisted** and eventually became known as the Maltese language.

There was also, for sure, **post-Arabic immigration from Europe, particularly from Sicily and Italy**. After all is said and done, the fact remains that the modern population of Malta is still much closer to Southern Europeans than to North Africans, let alone to Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula. That said, there are **clearly closer genetic affinities with Maghrebis and Levantines** alike, though, given the location of Malta and, some of that may predate the Muslim Arab rule by centuries or even millennia.

The fact that surnames such as 'Muhumud' , 'Habdille' , existed in Medieval Malta could be indicative of descent from Maltese Muslims who converted to Christianity between the years 1224–1249 to avoid expulsion to Lucera , Italy .

*N.B - the surnames mentioned above are most probably local derivitaves of the Muslim Arabic personal names 'Muhammad' and 'Abdallah' . The surname 'Habdille' survives till this day in Malta as the surname 'Abdilla'* .

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