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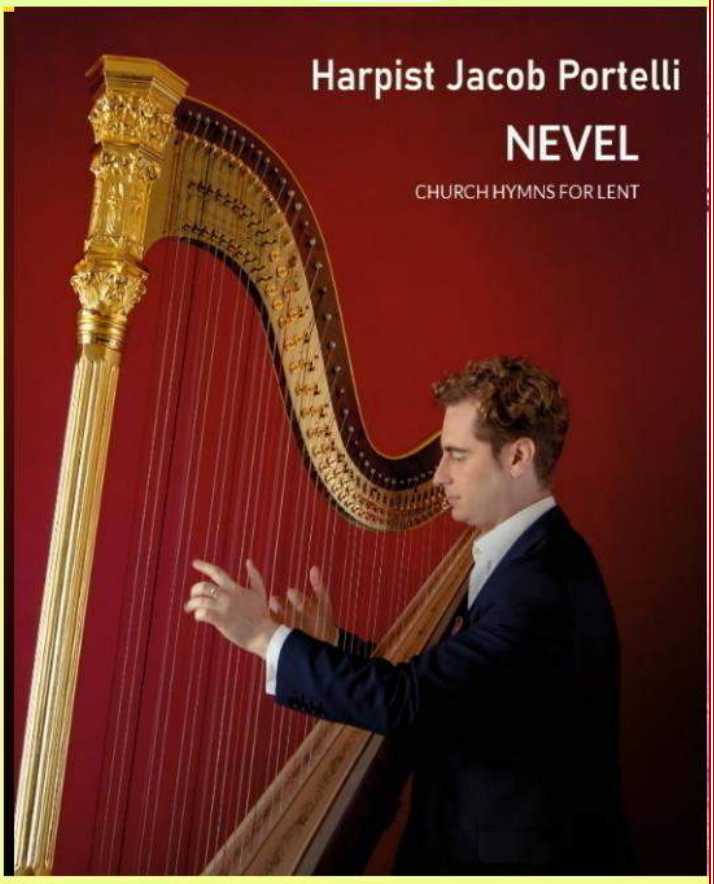
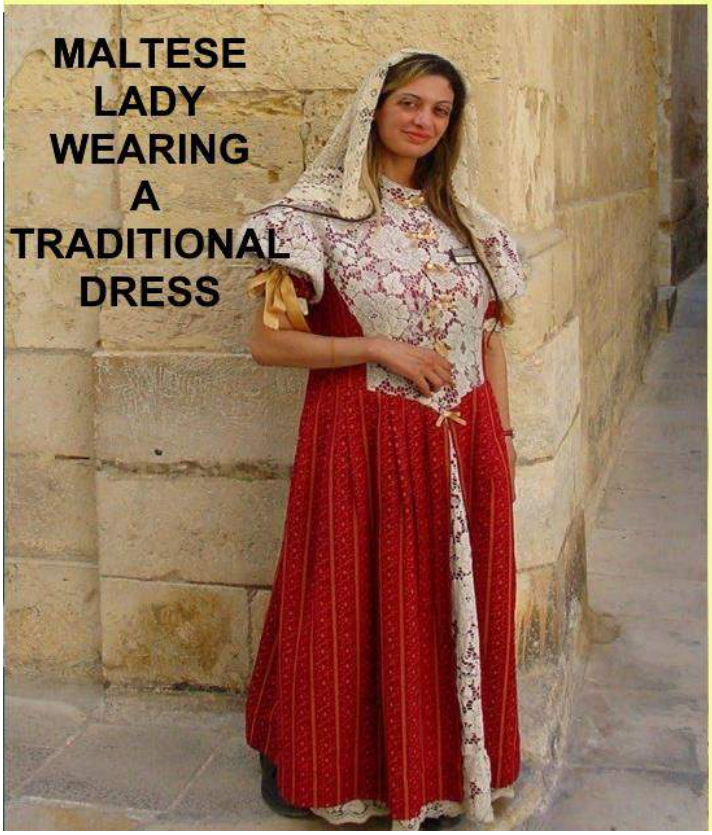
Dr. Robert Abela re-elected Prime Minister of Malta





Roberta Metsola gives powerful speech at EP about Ukrainian invasion

European Parliament President Roberta Metsola addressed the meeting of world leaders in regards to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Metsola explained how Europe cannot remain reliant on Kremlin gas.

'We need to re-double our efforts to diversify our energy systems towards a Europe that is no longer at the behest of autocrats. This will put our energy security on stronger footing' she said. This measure must be accompanied by the rejection of Kremlin cash and pretending there are no strings attached. Metsola said that Putin's oligarchs and those who bankroll him should no longer be able to use their purchasing power to hide 'behind a veneer of respectability'.

This applies to cities, communities and even sports clubs. 'And we can no longer sell passports to Putin's friends allowing them to circumvent our security. No more' she said. This does pose somewhat of a problem for the Maltese government which has not yet accepted to impose a suspension or ban on the sale of citizenship to Russian nationals. Metsola went on to state that the EU must fight the Kremlin's disinformation campaign.

She went on to call on social media and tech conglomerates to take responsibility and understand there is no being neutral 'between the fire and the fire brigade.' She said Europe will stand up and will not look away from those fighting in the streets.' Metsola thanked Ukrainian President Vlodymyr Zelenskyy for 'showing the world what it means to stand up. Thank you for reminding us about the dangers of complacency.' She highlighted the everyday acts of extraordinary heroism by Ukrainians as inspiring.

'This must be our Whatever It Takes moment' she said. 'We recognise Ukraine's European perspective. As our Resolution clearly states we welcome, Mr President, Ukraine's application for candidate status and, we will work towards that goal. We will and we must face the future together.'

#MaltaDaily Photo Source: Roberta Metsola FB

The Labour Party has won the 2022 general election securing a hat-trick of victories and returning Robert Abela to power AS Prime Minister.

According to estimates, Labour won 55.1% of the vote, PN 41.7% and the smaller parties 3.2%, which means PL won by a majority of 39,474 votes over the Nationalist Party.

Labour won a total of eight of the 13 districts, securing all districts apart from 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

The results mean the party is expected to secure an 11-seat majority over the Nationalist Party. An official result is expected later.

Abela declared victory and Bernard Grech conceded defeat shortly before 11am on Sunday morning, sparking wild celebrations inside the Naxxar counting hall.

"The people have decided that Malta should keep the present Government for another 5 Years.

Pope Francis to lead prayers on the parvis of Ta' Pinu Sanctuary in GOZO

During the visit of Pope Francis to Gozo as part of his 36th Apostolic Journey, he will be leading a Prayer Meeting on the Parvis of the National Sanctuary of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu, starting at 5.30pm.

Before the Prayer Meeting begins outside, the Pope will pray in silence in front of the Chapel of Our Lady and say the three Hail Marys that our Lady of Ta' Pinu recommended to Karmni Grima when she was called to him in 1883, for the sake of the three days that His holy body lasted in the tomb before the Ascension. Afterwards, the Pope will pay homage to Our Lady of the Golden Rose.

The Pope leaves the Grand Harbour for Gozo at 3.50pm on the Maria Dolores catamaran which will arrive at Mgarr Harbour at 5.00pm. He leaves Gozo by ship at 6.45pm and arrives at Cirkewwa Harbour at 7.30pm.

The route from Mgarr to Gharb by car and popemobile passes along the main road to Victoria.

Pope Francis' visit to the Maltese islands and particularly to Gozo is expected, after it was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic two years ago. Pope Francis will be following in the footsteps of his two predecessors and worship Our Lady of Ta' Pinu. Mother of the Maltese and Gozitan people.

There are three main symbols that determine the significance of this visit for the people of Gozo: Three blue waves, an essential part of the Gozo Coat of Arms; The Cross, designed with four additional corners depicting the four Evangelists, whose writings are broadcast to the four corners of the earth: and an image of the Madonna Ta' Pinu, detailed from the piece painted by Bartholomeo Amadeo Perugino and commissioned by Pinu Gauci in 1619.

A welcome for the Pope will begin at 5.30pm, and he will then lead the Prayer Celebration, on Saturday, the 2nd of April, under the tribune that is being specially constructed by a local company from Xewkija, designed by Mr John Xerri.

Pope Francis will be seated during the Celebration and it will be on the same seat that Pope John Paul used when he celebrated Mass there in 1990.

Another tiny chair has also been made for the Pope use during his short time in the Chapel of Our Lady, made in wood by carpenters Anthony Galea and Paul Piscopo.

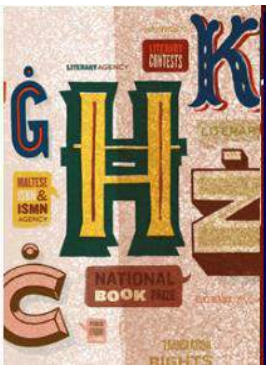
The stole that Pope Francis will wear during the celebration is hand-woven in traditional style and made of cotton. It was designed by Fr Roberto Gauci of Eikon Centre of Liturgical Arts, in consultation with Gozitan weaver Mrs Alda Bugeja, who completed the weave work in her own hand.

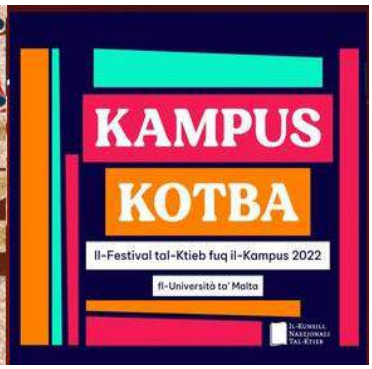
The stole contains two golden crosses on a red background, the liturgical hue of each stole the Pope wears in similar celebrations. The red colour in the Liturgy recalls the Passion of Christ, which the Church celebrates in less than a fortnight after the Pope's visit.

A small olive tree will also be placed under the image of Our Lady in the tribune, as a sign of the commitment and prayer of the local Christian community in unity with the whole Church for peace, as Pope Francis is strongly urging in the face of the war crisis in Ukraine and so many other places in the world affected by conflict.

Even the floral arrangements in Our Lady's Chapel will be made up of, among others, olive branches.

We are pleased to announce that the National Book Council (NBC) has finalized its preparations for the participation in the 2022 London Book Fair, taking place between Tuesday 5 and Thursday 7 April, after a two year hiatus caused by the COVID19 pandemic. The NBC's stand, 6A30, will host Gutenberg Press, who have been partnering with us and participating in the Fair for many editions. This is part of the NBC's foreign export activities aimed at promoting and publishing Maltese literature abroad.





The London international book fair is held annually at Olympia, Kensington, and brings together an impressive amount of small and big publishers, agents, industry professionals and negotiators of publishing rights, as well as the general public, under one roof. The NBC staff has a tight agenda of back-to-back meetings with international partners, editors, publishers, foreign institutes and literary agents to promote Maltese literature and exhibit a number of books – including winners of the National Book Prize – both in their original language and their translated editions.

The Council will be organizing four activities in different sections of the fair. Three sessions will take place in the Poets' Corner, which will include readings of Maltese poetry and prose translated into English. The seminar at the English PEN Literary Salon will focus Maltese literature published for the English market by micro-publisher Praspar Press and Peter Owen. Among other things, the seminar will look at the challenges of introducing Maltese literature to the English market, and the experiences of authors, translators and publishers on this journey beyond Malta.

On 4 April, at the prestigious Mosaic Rooms on Cromwell Road, Peter Owen Publishers will be launching *Exodus of the Storks*, the much anticipated English edition of Walid Nabhan's *L-Eżodu taċ-Ċikonji.*

We issued over 5000 Certificates of Appreciation to our readers. Don't miss out. There is still time to obtain one. Just sent us an email

IL-LEHEN TAL-MALTIN LI JGHIXU BARRA

Malta International Airport receives 'Best Airport in Europe' award

Emma Galea

The Malta International Airport (MIA) has proudly announced that it was awarded the prestigious 'Best Airport in Europe' title by the Airports Council International (ACI).

The award was given based on passenger feedback received in 2021.

ACI is an organisation that represents the collective interests of airports around the world to promote excellence in the aviation industry.

Every year since 2006, said organisation hands out prestigious awards to the airports that have been best reviewed by customers.

MIA proudly occupies a spot in the '5 to 15 million passengers per year - Europe' section, together with Milan Bergamo Airport, Porto Airport, and Keflavik International Airport, amongst others. "A big thank you goes out to passengers who gave us their vote of confidence last year, and the airport team for their dedication to delivering services that are worthy of five stars", MIA wrote on Facebook.

"The past two years have been extremely difficult, but our people have come through with flying colours", it continued. The Maltese airport was also given 'The 2021 Voice of the Customer Recognition' by the same organisation. This title recognises airports that have demonstrated significant efforts to gather passenger feedback during the pandemic.

Other European airports that made this list include Aeroporto di Roma – Fiumicino, Aéroport de Paris – Orly, and Madeira Airport, amongst others.

Evarist Bartolo, to negon 'new season' in life after election disappointment

Foreign Minister Evarist Bartolo eyed a new season in his life on Monday after failing to be re-elected to parliament, despite winning two districts in 2017.

Bartolo was the most senior politician to fail re-election, followed by culture minister Jose' Herrera, who has announced he will retire from politics.

In a Facebook post on Monday under a picture of a new sunrise, Bartolo congratulated all those elected to the House.

The country, he said, like the rest of the world, was facing major challenges stemming from the pandemic, climate change and war in Ukraine. It needed a good government, a good opposition and the participation of the various sectors of the economy in order to move forward. He thanked all those who had supported him in his 30 years in parliament in which, he said, he had tried to serve the people.

Now that he had not been re-elected, a new season dawned in his life, he said. And all seasons had their own beauty. Bartolo was first elected to parliament in 1992. In 2017, he was elected from the 10th and 12th districts.

A university lecturer and journalist, he served as minister under Alfred Sant, Joseph Muscat and Robert Abela, initially responsible for education and later foreign affairs.

THE EDITOR OF THE MALTESE JOURNAL AND THE MALTESE LIVING ABROAD WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVARIST BARTOLO FOR HIS GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS AS MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL MALTESE AROUND THE WORLD.

Places around the world named MALTA

Interesting Facts

Wherever you go in the world, you're more than likely to bump into someone from Malta. For example, there are more people with Maltese heritage living in Australia as there are living in Malta. And with millions of people located around the globe with an affinity to Malta, it's likely you'll find some places that sound very familiar.

Probably the most obvious example is the town of Malta in New York State.

But did you know there was a Lake Malta in Poland and a street named after Malta in London? In fact, there are loads of places around the world called Malta. Take a look!

1. LAKE MALTA, POLAND Lake Malta is an artificial lake in Poznań, Poland. It was formed in 1952 as a result of the damming of the Cybina River.

2. MALTA TERRACE, EDINBURGH Malta Terrace is a Georgian lane in the posh suburb of Stockbridge in the Scottish capital

3. VALLETTA LANE, MELBOURNE Valletta Lane is a busy street near Altona Beach in the Altona district of Melbourne

4. LITTLE MALTA, TORONTO Did you know Toronto has a neighbourhood called Little Malta? Thousands of Maltese ex-pats settled in Canada in the years after the Second World War.

5. MALTA INN, KENT The Malta Inn in Maidstone is one of the most popular Beefeater restaurants in the south-east of England.

6. THE MALTA BAR, HERTFORDSHIRE UK The Malta Bar in Harpenden features a map of Malta as its logo.

7. MALTA SQUARE, QUEEN'S, NEW YORK CITY Malta Square is located in Astoria in Queen's where thousands of Maltese and Gozitan families live and work.

8. MALTA STREET, LONDON Malta Street is situated in Islington in north London – Jeremy Corbyn's constituency!

9. MALTA, NEW YORK Malta is a town in Saratoga County, New York. The town's population is 13,000.

10. MALTA, AUSTRIA Malta is a municipality in the district of Spittal an der Drau, in the Austrian state of Carinthia.

11. MALTA TERRACE, GLASGOW Malta Terrace is a smart residential street in the Gorbals area of the city, near the River Clyde, Scotland.

12. MALTA, LATVIA Malta is a small village in Latvia's hilly province of Latgale – a picturesque region full of lakes, forests and hills

13. MALTA, IDAHO Malta is a village in Cassia County, Idaho, United States. The population was 193 in the 2010 census.

14. CORTO MALTESE, CROATIA The Corto Maltese is one of the most popular bars in Rijeka, the third-largest city in Croatia. It is located next to the city's harbour on Kvarner Bay.

15. MALTA PARK, TORONTO Malta Park is a small park with a playground in the heart of the Junction district of Toronto in Ontario.

16. GALERIA MALTA, POLAND Galeria Malta is one of Poland's largest shopping centres and features more than 150 stores as well as a cinema complex and a sports stadium.

17. MALTA MILL, GREATER MANCHESTER Malta Mill is a former cotton spinning mill in Chadderton and lies alongside the Rochdale Canal

18. MALTA, SIBERIA Malta is a tiny village in the stunning Irkutsk Oblast region of southeastern Siberia

19. MALTA ROAD, PORTSMOUTH, HAMPSHIRE Malta Road is in the Portsea Island area of the English city, near the Royal Naval Dockyard

20. VIA MALTA, MARINA DI RAGUSA Via Malta is a street near the seafront in the beautiful southern Italian town of Marina di Ragusa

21. GOZO ROAD at Pendle Hill, NSW in this road there used to be many families from Goza and they were famous for their poultry farms

So, Where Is real Malta?

Earlier this afternoon, I called my dad while I was out walking the dog. It had been a few weeks since we had talked because of our recent trip. He had lots of questions.

"So you were in Italy and then Malta, right? Wait, *where IS Malta*?"

I've answered this question a lot over the last few weeks, so I figured it was a good place to start in sharing my experience. Lots of people aren't familiar with this small country–I couldn't have placed it on a map with 100% certainty up until a few months ago. (*"Um, somewhere near Greece?"*)

Malta is a European island nation in the Mediterranean Sea, lying between Sicily, Italy (50 miles north) and Tunisia (175 miles west). At only 122 square miles, Malta is one of the smallest countries in the the world, which partly explains the lack of name recognition.

Malta is technically an archipelago of seven islands, but only three are inhabited: Malta (where the urban capital and most of the country's 423,000 people reside), Gozo (a smaller, rural island–that's where I stayed), and Comino (or *Kemmuna*, in Maltese–see map below). Comino is a small, rocky island between the two–there are no cars on the island, no public services, and it's mostly uninhabited, but it is a popular day trip destination due to one very popular beach. Comino has either 3 or 4 residents, depending on who you ask (these people seem to be a local urban legend–we kept asking about this family and everyone gave us a different count).

The Maltese islands were considered a strategic location between Europe and North Africa, so throughout history they had a frequent succession of rulers. The Phoenicians, the Romans, the Moors, Normans, the Sicilians, the Knights of St. John, the French, and the British all fought for and controlled these islands. After centuries of conflict, walled cities and medieval fortifications still remain wherever you go.

The islands have two official languages: The homegrown language, Malti, and also English, after more than a century of British colonial rule. Malti is related to, and sounds a lot like, Arabic but the script (with pointed accent marks and dashes through letters) looks like no written language I've ever seen. Though most locals spoke Malti among themselves, they would switch to English immediately when they noticed I was a traveller. I found this somewhat comforting after having been in Italy right before, where language is a bit more difficult. I was traveling with an Italian woman and we noticed that most people also speak flawless Italian. I was told this was because they grew up watching Italian television.

The cities are sand-coloured. The sprawling and densely populated communities around Malta's capital, Valletta, were particularly faded, though there were occasional bursts of color on windows and doors.

We stayed on the island of Gozo. The peaceful island is a growing eco-tourism destination with rugged rocky cliffs, small sandy bays, tiny and scenic coastal hiking trails that circle the island. Gozo is a popular weekend travel destination for Maltese city-dwellers, and it makes a great base for exploring the country.

Maltese or English? Which language do you speak and why?

In Malta, raising a child can also come with decisions about mother tongues

Maureen Saguna

Maltese and English no longer form part of the entry requirements at Junior College. What does this say about students' grasp of these two official languages? The state of the Maltese language is a perennially hot topic in Malta. People get pigeonholed according to whether they favour English over Maltese, whether they mix the two languages and, perhaps most controversially, which language they use with their children. Maureen Saguna reports.

For a country that bemoans the deterioration of the Maltese language, the number of those who claim it is their first language is staggering. According to a recent survey carried out by the National Statistics Office, 97% of Maltese citizens between the ages of 18 and 80 consider Maltese to be their first language. Another surprising result is that 75% claim to speak to their children only in Maltese, while only 5% use exclusively English to communicate with them.

Desiree'Ann Bonello is one of the 75%. She has two daughters aged 11 and 14, whom she raised speaking Maltese, relying on their schools to teach them English. Her children are now fluent in both languages and never had issues with either language. "I don't mind people preferring to use English, but it bothers me when a Maltese person cannot speak Maltese," she admits.

"Nowadays, a lot of children cannot speak our language because they are only spoken to in English, and I feel that it is leading to the deterioration of the Maltese language."Her children's homework had also caused Desiree'Ann to raise an eyebrow at times. "It's very frustrating to see words like nisslajsja instead of inqatta', for example," she says.

"English is important to know, but not at the expense of Maltese. We should be proud that such a small island has its own language and we need to teach our children to love it from a young age. "Although parents like Desriee'Ann might come across as purists, their concern is genuine. However, Dr Michael Spagnol, senior lecturer and Head of the Maltese Department at the University of Malta, is not that worried.

"As linguists, we often come across these concerns, and not just with Maltese. We have even come across manuscripts from the 18th century where the writer complains about the state of the Maltese language.

The reality is that borrowing words does not weaken a language," he explains, adding that Maltese has always been influenced by other languages. "These days, it is mostly influenced by English, but Maltese is full of words, like *furketta, sikkina*, and *mejda*, which were adopted from Italian, Sicilian, and Arabic."

For some, using English at home is a deliberate decision. Julia*, who has two children aged three and

four, grew up speaking both languages while her husband grew up speaking Maltese. "We chose English as the children's first language because it is more important for their future," she says.

"If they choose to live abroad as adults, English will take them further than Maltese would. While we want them to know both languages, we know that they will pick up Maltese from school, from reading, and from their extended family.

"Much like Julia, Ylenia, mum to a three-year-old boy and a one-year-old girl, speaks to her children mostly in English. While Ylenia's son attends a private school where English is the predominant language, her daughter goes to a nursery where English and Maltese are given equal importance. At the tender age of 22 months, she knows the numbers in Maltese, something Ylenia did not teach her.

"I am very happy that they are teaching her Maltese alongside English," shares Ylenia. "It's very important

to me that my children also know how to speak the Maltese language well. I believe it is valuable, not only for whichever profession they will take up, but also as a way to integrate in the community.

"Some parents, however, don't have the luxury — or added stress — of choosing between languages. Laura Bonnici, who grew up in England, is mum to five-year-old Adam.

"Speaking Maltese at home is the best way to ensure they grow up knowing the language well."

She moved to Malta to learn Maltese, her own mother's first language and, over a decade later, is still struggling with it. "It's still proving to be the trickiest language I've ever tried to learn," she confesses.

"However, my husband's first language is Maltese, and Adam attends the local state primary school, which means that he is at least getting exposed to fluent Maltese there. Apart from the fact that being bilingual is a valuable skill in itself, for us it is very important that he can communicate comfortably with both sides of his family.

"When asked about parents using only English with their children, trusting that they will learn Maltese at school, Dr Spagnol expresses some concern. "It's a very complex matter," he says. "Speaking Maltese at home is the best way to ensure they grow up knowing the language well.

Although not impossible, the likelihood of children learning Maltese fluently outside the family home is slim. Nowadays, children are bombarded with English through things like films and video games, and many students they mix with at school are foreign, so they get little opportunity to hear or speak Maltese outside the home.

"Dr Spagnol's words struck a chord with me. I raised all three of my children, aged 16, 10, and 6, speaking English. They all understand Maltese, with the eldest being fluent and the younger ones getting more comfortable with it as they grow.

My motivations were the same as Julia's, even though I grew up speaking Maltese myself. I want all of them to be fluent in both languages but, much like other parents, left the teaching of Maltese to their schools. While things are, more or less, working out as I thought they would, I now realise that my decision can sometimes complicate my children's lives. My eldest is now old enough to offer some hindsight.

"I have been teased since I was in primary school," she shares, assuring me it does not bother her anymore. When I ask her if she regrets being English-speaking, she confesses to feeling self-conscious when speaking Maltese to others who are much more fluent than her. "I don't regret it because being fluent in English helps a lot, but I sometimes find it hard to understand some Maltese expressions, and other times I jumble up my words if I feel self-conscious.

"Nobody seems to have a clear answer as to which language should be given more importance at home. However, what is clear is that we are lucky to be bilingual, a fact we should not take for granted. As Dr Spagnol says, "these languages are gifts, and it would be a pity if we restricted ourselves to just one language, especially with our children."

This story was first published in Sunday Circle, a Times of Malta publication. Read full online edition here: http://sundaycircle.tom-mag.com/41/index.html#issue/19

MMG CONCERT BAND OF VICTORIA

We would like to congratulate the newly elected committee members to the MMG Committee for 2022! We look forward to another great year working together, celebrating and building our culture through music.

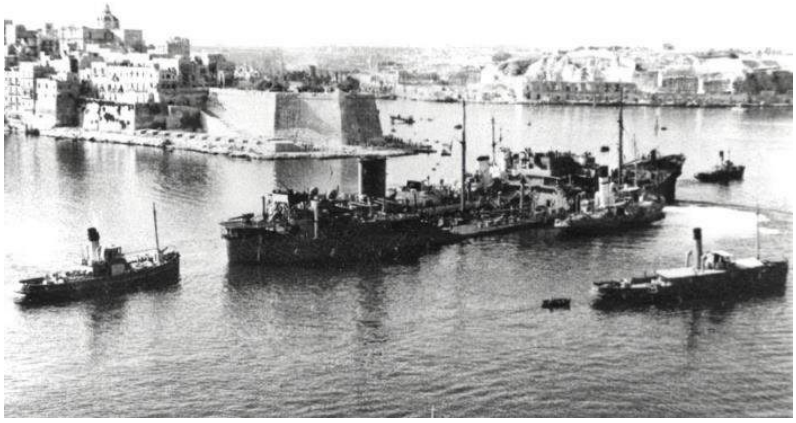
DEAR FRIEND
IF YOU HAVE AN INTERESTING STORY TO TELL SHARE IT WITH YOUR MALTESE FRIENDS ALL OVER THE WORLD. WE WOULD LIKE TO READ IT ON THIS JOURNAL.

ww2

Malta and the Convoys

There aren't many places in Europe that can be considered "off-the-beaten path," but Malta (and more so, Gozo) are as close as it gets. I was on the islands for only four days, and I took close to 1,000 photos that I'm currently wading through, so I can use them in future posts. Cassie Kifer

Citation: C N Trueman "Malta And Convoys"



Convoys were vital to the survival of Malta during World War Two. Malta needed supplies brought in by convoys on a regular basis if it was to survive and provide the Royal Navy with the base it needed in the mid-Mediterranean. There were two convoy routes to Malta. One was from the British base at the port of Alexandria in Egypt. The second was from Gibraltar. Both were very dangerous routes as U-boats patrolled the Mediterranean Sea as did Axis aircraft. The fall of Crete in 1941 had provided the Germans were another place to set up airfields. The sea route between Crete and Alexandria was nicknamed 'Bomb Alley' by those who sailed there. When Axis forces retook Libya, the airfields there could also be brought back into play.

On February 12th 1942, a convoy of three freighters left Alexandria bound for Malta. Two cruisers, eight destroyers and one anti-aircraft ship, the 'Carlisle', guarded the three freighters 'Clan Campbell', 'Rowallan Castle' and 'Clan Chattan'. These eleven ships provided a great amount of anti-aircraft fire between them. However, none of the three freighters made it to Malta. The damage to 'Clan Chattan' and 'Rowallan Castle' was such that both were scuttled while 'Clan Campbell' limped into Tobruk harbour. The Axis aerial attacks occurred when the convoys were too far from Malta for the island's small Hurricane force to give help – and aerial support was just what the convoys needed. On March 20th another convoy of three freighters left Alexandria bound for Malta. This time Beaufighters escorted the freighters. They got through 'Bomb Alley' by the following day. However, the Beaufighters only had a limited range. Once the convoy had got through 'Bomb Alley', it had to face an Italian fleet based around the battleship 'Littorio', three cruisers and four destroyers. The convoy's naval escort blanketed the freighters with a smokescreen and were assisted in this by an unexpected gale that made the smokescreen more effective. The Italians were also wary of the torpedoes carried by the British destroyers. However, in the confusion, the Italians did succeed in splitting the convoy. The four freighters were separated but each had a destroyer escort. They were ordered to make to Malta at full speed so that they would arrive at night and under the cover of darkness. However, they arrived at first light on March 23rd just as an air attack on the island was starting. Two of the freighters were sunk – the newly repaired 'Clan Campbell' and 'Breconshire' – but two did make it into harbour (the 'Talabot' and 'Pampas') and the crews were given a delirious welcome by the people of Valetta who were in desperate need of the supplies being carried.

Convoys to Malta from Gibraltar were equally as dangerous as they had to face the might of Field Marshal's Kesselring's Fliegerkorps II based in Italy as well as U-boats.

However, by June 1942, Malta was desperately short of food and fuel. A decision was taken to send two convoys to Malta – one from Gibraltar and one from Alexandria – at the same time so that Axis forces would be split when they attacked. Five freighters and a tanker sailed from Gibraltar on June 11th in 'Operation Harpoon'. At the same time eleven freighters sailed from Port Said in 'Operation Vigorous'. The Royal Navy heavily escorted both freighter convoys. However, facing both were Axis aircraft, U-boats, Italian submarines, MTB's and in the eastern Mediterranean, the Italian fleet based around the

battleship 'Littorio'. An unexpected complication for 'Harpoon' was a report – that proved to be correct – that two Italian cruisers and five Italian destroyers were in the western Mediterranean.

'Operation Harpoon' never had the air cover that it needed and had to face almost incessant attacks by German and Italian aircraft. The Stuka's were especially effective. By the time the convoy got to Malta, only two freighters had survived but they brought with them 15,000 tons of desperately needed supplies.

'Operation Vigorous' fared much worse. None of the freighters got to Malta and the Royal Navy lost or had damaged a number of ships such as the cruisers 'Birmingham' and 'Newcastle'. The real damage was done in 'Bomb Alley' where once again the Stuka proved very effective.

Out of a total of seventeen freighters that set out for Malta, only two arrived. The loss rate was huge both in terms of freighters and manpower. However, the tide of events was turning in the Mediterranean. The arrival of Mark V Spitfires gave the RAF and Fleet Air Arm a much-needed boost. While these fighters had a limited time in the air and could not help in 'Bomb Alley', they could give vital air cover to convoys as they approached Malta. The arrival of Beaufighters, which had a greater range, was also a great boost.

One convoy named 'Operation Pedestal' (August 1942) ended with the fuel tanker 'Ohio' reaching the Grand Harbour. However, losses on this convoy were also high as the aircraft carrier 'Eagle' was lost along with two cruisers and one destroyer. Nine merchant ships were also destroyed or sufficiently damaged that they could not continue the journey. 400 men lost their lives. However, the fuel that 'Ohio' carried allowed the island to continue for another three months and in that time Rommel's power in North Africa declined due to lack of supplies and fuel.

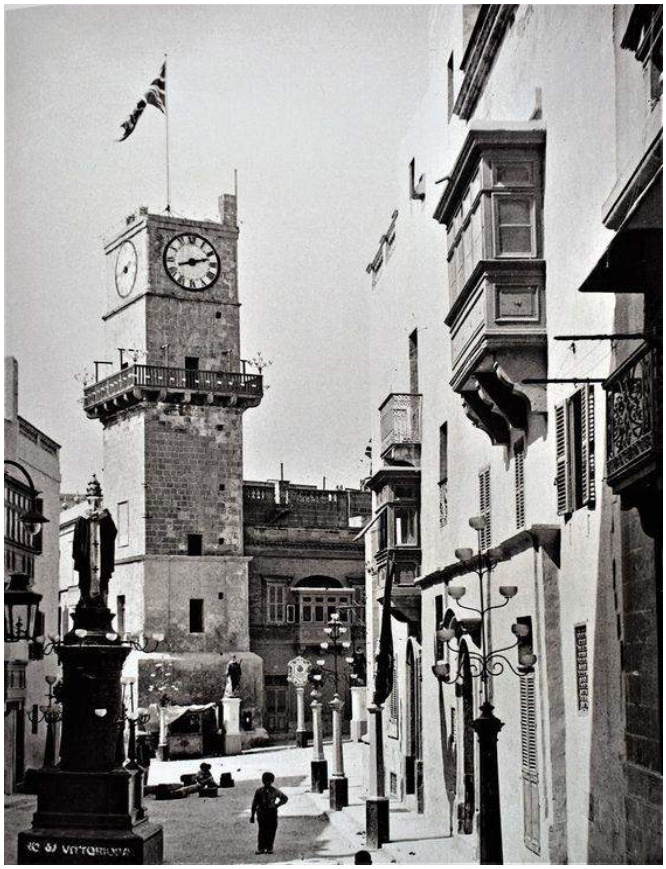
Sweet Honey by Lucy Grech is at Central Coast, NSW. (Facebook)

We have connected with so many Maltese ancestry families like our own who want to keep the culture and tradition alive and running through our children but struggle to find ways to make this happen. Sweet Honey and SAGE Marketing Services have recently come together to make flashcards for our children so they are able to learn basic numbers in Maltese and due to such a high demand we are going to get them properly designed and made. The process is already underway and Britt will have them completed over roughly the next 2 weeks and ready for purchase.

They will no longer be laminated and will be a proper card stock as a travel pack, on a colourful plastic ring holder so they can be taken anywhere anytime and won't get lost or misplaced. Extra convenient and safe for our young children. We are working very hard on all different projects and materials to help our children learn their heritage such as Maltese cook books for kids, Maltese colouring in books and all different types of flashcards. Our first products will be launching in 1-2 weeks! We are taking orders now so if you would like to preorder please message us. Maltese Flash Cards: Numbers 1-20 $20 - Maltese Flash Cards: Colours and Shapes $15

Flash Card Duo Pack: Both Packs $30 Thank you all so much for all your support and we look forward taking our business on this new venture with you all.

The Clock Tower of Birgu Vittoriosa



Researched by Greg Caruana NSW AUSTRALIA

On April 4, 1942, the clock tower, was partially damaged when a bomb exploded in its vicinity. On the 11th of the same month another part of the tower collapsed. The coup de grace came on April 27 when during another air raid, what remained of the tower was blasted down almost completely. After the war, in October of 1944, instead of endeavouring to reconstruct the tower to its former glory, the remaining structure was dismantled completely. This unique landmark served as a watch-out post where from warnings were sounded for the people of Birgu to flee from enemy incursions. There are conflicting claims as to the tower's date of origin. Some maintain that it goes back to 1549. This would place the origin of the tower to the early decades of the Order of St John's stay in Malta, when the knights were then residing in Birgu. However, there is also mention of an alarm bell dated to 1504 that was placed on the turret of this edifice. It goes to follow that if the bell was manufactured purposely for this tower, then the tower must date to 1504 or even earlier. The tower was built to a height of some 40 metres and was composed of five storeys. On the fourth floor, the tower had a balustrade that ran on all four sides of the building. This was supported by a series of corbels, each spaced from one another at a certain distance. Another smaller balcony was added on the second floor. It is intriguing to discover why such a tall tower, was required to be built inthe heart of Birgu. Nowhere else on the Maltese islands did such a tower exist. Of course, in the case of Mdina, such a high standing tower would have been superfluous, as Mdina itself is located on high grounds that hold a commanding view of the surrounding landscape. One will therefore conclude that the watchtower, positioned as it was on a low lying part of the town, may have best been employed to relay communication from St Angelo to the town folk, whenever an emergency dictated. Hence the alarm bell on the turret of the tower. This would have been useful as a signal to inform the inhabitants of Birgu and those of the vicinity to quickly seek shelter inside the fort. The Order's chronicler, Francesco Balbi da Coreggio (1505 - 1589) informs us that the alarm bell was used during the Great Siege of 1565. He claims that the bell was nicknamed in-Newwieħa, implying that the pealing of this bell was such that sounded a sorrowful tone, (newwaħ in Maltese means to weep as in lamentation). When in 1571 the Order moved away from Birgu to take up residence in Valletta, the tower was handed overto a family from Għaxaq to live in. However, it is also believed that the top storeys of the tower, including the balcony and roof remained public property. In 1629, a mechanised clock that included also a pendulum was installed. The mechanism supported two dials, located on two sides of the fifth floor, one facing West and the other facing South. The clock's dials displayed Roman numerals. The need for such a mechanised clock in Birgu must have been considered as important, given that the town served as a maritime hub. This might explain why there were two dials, one facing the marina and one facing the town square. The clock continued to function regularly, well into the 19th century and into the 20th, up to that fateful month of April 1942. Early in the 20th century, the ground floor and first floor were used as a shop, as well as a place of habitation.

Jacob Portelli – Qualified Harpist in Malta

Proficient on both the Celtic and the Concert Grand Pedal Harp, Jacob is a highly sought-after harpist in Malta.

Jacob was personally invited to perform with Cordia Quartet to perform for H.M the Queen of England.

In high demand for both Church and Civil Wedding Ceremonies and Receptions, Jacob Portelli is renowned for creating just the right romantic touch for the couple's special day. His harp-playing has also brought comfort to those bereaved, during funerals and memorial services for their loved-ones.

He is regularly engaged to perform in prestigious events such as State Dinners and national gala events presided by the President of Malta and Prime Minister, at Verdala Palace, San Anton Residence and the Grand Master's Palace. In 2016, he was personally invited to perform to H.M the Queen of England, Elizabeth II during a Commonwealth event at Malborough House, London. Other high-profile events have included performances during **CHOGM 2015** meetings, performances for Presidents of EU Heads of State during **Arraiolos 2017** and dinners for **EU Maltese Presidency 2017**.

Other prestigious concerts have included collaborations with **Fra Alessandro and The Priests**. He has also performed in productions of Phantom of the Opera, Faure's Requiem and Britten's A Ceremony of Carols. Furthermore, Jacob regularly performs for company dinners, commemorative ceremonies and corporate events.

Jacob holds Diplomas in Harp Performance with Distinction from both the **Malta School of Music** as well as from the **Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music**.

Jacob owns two high quality instruments manufactured in Piasco Italy from the world-renowned Harp Manufacturers – Salvi.

A gifted musician, Jacob is also proficient in all the other string instruments – violin, viola, cello and double bass – with Performing Diplomas to his name. His fascination with music has also led him to explore a somewhat unusual instrument – the psalter-bowed and plucked. Jacob performs with major ensembles in Malta such as ProMuzika Ensemble, the St James Consort, the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra and various other orchestras and chamber music formations throughout the concert season.

Cordia String Quartet

Jacob is a founder member of **Cordia String Quartet**. Together they have been invited to perform in numerous prestigious concerts both locally and abroad, including the Victoria International Arts Festival in Gozo, the August Moon Ball, for Austria's National Day, in New Delhi and Calcutta under the auspices of Maltese Ambassador for India, at Marlborough House in London for her Majesty the Queen as part of the Commonwealth Celebrations.

He is also a member of the **Valletta International Baroque Ensemble** (VIBE – the resident ensemble of the prestigious Valletta International Baroque Festival), with whom he plays the harp continuo and baroque cello

Soulscapes: a Journey in Colour

The Light of an Island: Exhibition by Gozitan artist Catherine Emma Gauci

Born in 1969 in Shrewsbury, England, she began painting at 16, large and abstract. As a child her love of the countryside where she grew up was hugely important in instilling in her a strong sensitivity to nature and place. As a teenager her artist brother's contemporary artworks had a huge influence and opened her mind to what art could be. She travelled around America at this time, visiting many of the modern art galleries and this was a major influence which would stay with her. Returning to the U.K to complete a B.A. degree in Art with Art History and Psychology, her time in the studio was paralleled by her choice to study American modern art, particularly the Abstract Expressionists and Colourfield artists. Later, time living in East Africa and also on an Art Therapy diploma course gave her the time to continue to develop her work as a painter. She had her first solo exhibition in her home town in 2001 and later also in Malta in 2007, shortly after moving to live there. She decided to commit full time to painting in 2017 and works from her studio in her home village on the island of Gozo.

This is a new, solo exhibition by Gozitan painter Catherine Emma Gauci and is open Wednesday to Sunday 10am – 1pm, and 5pm – 8pm. There will be an Artist's "Meet & Greet" on the 16th of April, at 11am. Rudy Buhler Art – The Colour Project, Contemporary Modern Art Gallery, Quayside Court, 58 Triq Is-Salini, Marsaskala.

The St Sebastian Seniors Association Victoria Australia

The association was set up in 1990 and is still going strong.

The committee and club members are predominantly of Maltese descent yet welcome anyone and everyone from various cultures and ages to take part in the monthly events. Events include family social nights, bus day trips and weekends away. We start the year off with our Liturgical Mass and we celebrate special occasions throughout the year including Mother's Day, Father's Day and Christmas. To keep with our Maltese tradition, we host our two-day festivities mid-year. Our committee is dedicated in supporting its members

Email: st.sebastian@outlook.com.au

TREASURES OF MALTA LUNZJATA CHAPEL GOZO

The chapel dedicated to the Annunciation of Our Lady in Lunzjata valley, Gozo. Photo: Charles Spiteri

On Friday, March 25, the Church celebrated the feast of the Annunciation of the Incarnation of the Lord to the Blessed Virgin.

This feast has a long-standing tradition in Gozo and it was first recorded in a cave chapel at *Is-Saqqaja*, an area that eventually became known as Il-Lunzjata after the chapel. Wied il-Lunzjata, as it is now known, is one of Gozo's most fertile valleys on the Rabat-Kerċem road.

There is evidence that a chapel was built in one of the caves overlooking the valley as early as 1347. In 1370, the chapel became part of a royal benefice, appointments to which were initially made by the kings of Sicily, from where Aragonese Malta was ruled. After 1530, this right passed on to the Grand Master of the Knights of St John, the new rulers of Malta. The benefice rendered the then sumptuous income of 30 scudi annually.

Rebuilt early in the 16th century, the chapel was visited regularly by devotees. On its feast day, until two years ago, crowds of people from all parts of Gozo used to walk or drive in pilgrimage to the chapel.

The elegant altarpiece is by the knight painter Fra Lucas Garnier (mid-17th century), showing the Virgin Mary kneeling in prayer in colloquy with the Archangel Gabriel. The power of the Holy Spirit is covering her with its shadow, while with her right hand resting on her bosom she accepts to become the Mother of God. Towards the middle of the 18th century, devotees placed a diadem of 12 stars and a silver crown on her head.

Devotion never waned. A statue of the Annunciation by Wistin Camilleri (1885-1979) was donated to the chapel by Joseph Formosa (1954).

The chapel dedicated to the Annunciation of Our Lady in Lunzjata valley, Gozo. Photo: Charles Spiteri

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The Buskett Forest and the Maltese Falcon

Antoine P Borg

When the Knights were given the Maltese islands they were asked to pay tribute of a Maltese Falcon every year to the monarch of Sicily. It's a strange request, and there are colourful stories around this tribute.

Technically, the Emperor Charles V granted "Tripoli, Malta and Gozo" to the Knights. We like to think it was just the islands but there was a fair amount of land in northern Africa included in this deal.

And, if we're being picky, there were several conditions to this grant including a non-aggression pact with the Kingdom of Sicily. The token price of one Maltese Falcon is the only unusual request in the list. The Knights had to pay one falcon every year on the 1 November (All Saints' Day) to "the viceroy or president of Sicily."

Unlike the situation today, Malta was covered in

woodland at the time. People cut trees for ship building or for agricultural purposes decimating the lush scenery which our ancestors knew. The Knights realised something needed to be done[1]. They planted trees in an area now known as 'Buskett', derived from the Italian word 'Boschetto' meaning 'forest'.

This is not far from the site of the **mysterious cart ruts**.

The area had been used for pagan rituals around the summer solstice. In the post-Roman period, locals held orgies in Buskett. The Roman Catholic Church incorporated these rituals into their own. The feast of St Peter and St Paul is now celebrated in the area on 29 June. The orgies are no longer part of the festivities though!

Apart from planting Aleppo pines, carob trees and Italian cypresses, the Knights embellished this zone in many ways. They imported soil from Sicily for their terraced gardens, planted groves of fruit trees and ensured fresh water stream to irrigate the place. Here they trained falcons which were then used as tribute to the King of Sicily[2].

But why did the King ask for a falcon before the Knights trained falcons there?

The Maltese had practised falconry since the thirteenth century, right in this area. Falcons used to migrate from Morocco and stop here which is how the Maltese encountered these majestic animals. This was when they were ruled by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III, King of Sicily. He was an avid hunter and even wrote treatises about the sport[2].

Such was the high regard for falcons trained in Buskett that a special Knight would travel with the bird by sea on its way to Sicily. On occasions when the bird died in transit, the news caused international horror[2].

Over the foliage - Maltese falcons were legendary long before the Knights arrived in Malta and were used by the Knights during their stay. Today you'd be hard pressed to see birds of prey flocking to the area – and most people would think of Bogart's 1941 film before they'd mention Buskett.

We are proud of our Maltese Achievers
Promoting the Maltese culture, history and heritage

ABOUT MY BELLY DANCE STUDIO

JoanneCamilleri Canadian-Maltese

JOanne is an accomplished freelance performer, choreographer and instructor with over 20 years of experience in performing arts. Joanne is known as a pioneer of the fusion belly dance style. She is recognized for her unique style, charisma, and magnetic stage presence and signature technique.

Her passion for dance has been a lifelong physical and internal journey. Her extensive dance training started a young age in ballet, jazz, tap, and various modern dance techniques with Doreen Hayes School of Dance and the George College for the Performing Arts, and the brief opportunity with the National Ballet of Canada. And in her later years she studied at Ryerson College, Toronto.

In her earlier years she left Canada to continued her studies and explore the vast cultures of India and Pakistan, where she had the opportunity to witness, first-hand the spiritual depth, and subtle nuances of Kathak and Bharatanatyam with renowned teachers and illuminaires, Naheed Sadeeki, Partap Pawar, and Sheema Karmani. And continued her studies back home in Canada with Rina Singha, and Joanne Das.

JOanne then traveled through the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jeddah, North West Africa and Egypt) and delved into the historical mysteries, and vast unexplored potential of the art of "Raqs Sharqi' (dance of the stomach), while widening her scope and understanding of the delicate intricacies of modern and tribal fusion belly dance with world renowned and notable teachers and influencers, Jillina, Suhaila Salimpour, Rachel Brice, Ansuya Rathor, Bozanka Arencibia in San Francisco California, Magdy El Leisy, Germany, Badia Star, and the Arabesque Dance Company, Toronto.

In her growing years, JOanne's interest also included music, she studied reed interments and played the clarinet and bass clarinet, as a member and musician of several Mississauga and Toronto Bands including the Maltese Band Club. JOanne also had the opportunity to widened her musicality abilities with well renowned teacher George Dimitri Sawa, from Eqypt, and has contributed to his book of Music Performance Practice in the early Abbasid Era 132-320 AH / 750-932 AD Second Edition.

Today JOanne is a Toronto based performer, producer, instructor and choreographer in Middle Eastern Arts and Performance Arts in various dance realms. She has been a volunteer, performer for yearly festival events, for the Maltese International Day, and the Maltese Pavilion Carrassaga, and a volunteer at community Festivals in the GTA.

In 2006 JOanne founded her dance school "Vivace studios" in Toronto. She produced her own Belly Dance Instructional DVD, produced in Malta Europe and TO, Canada.

Since the year 2000 entertaining as a regular day and evening performer, and other venues across Canada, US and Malta and Italy in Europe. With highlights that include:

Falls View Casino, Niagara Falls, Maltese International Day San Francisco, Women's Health Matters Expo, and for Corporate Events like Toyota, Sun Media, Ministry of Gov. Services, Weston Hotel in Malta Europe, Doctors without borders , numerous Fashion Shows and more...Joanne has been cast in film and performed in many television shows including: A perfect Christmas, The Listener, Alliance Atlantis History Launch, Much Music, Breakfast TV, and Famous Peoples Players. She has made appearances' in Reality TV shows like Rich Bride, Poor Bride, I Do , Let's eat, So Chic, City TV, Dinner at the Sultan's Tent-The Makeover. Joanne has performed in Live Theatre at The Living Arts Centre, The Rose Theatre and Canadian Stage.

In 2015 JOanne started another one of her passions Circus Arts adding to her repertoire and conditioning as a performer. Joanne instructs Middle Eastern Arts regularly at the University of Toronto, Hart House, and the Living Arts Centre, Mississauga and including, privates, corporate classes, workshops. She has organized dance Troupes all across Ontario and continues to create solo performances and original Middle Eastern inspired fusion dance pieces with select troupes of dedicated students, and creative partner Matina Harpanditis.

Drawing on her varied and well-rounded performance background JOanne's unique technique and expression, style and grace has captured audiences from all around the world. www.joannedancer.com

Tal-Imghobbi

Ħija Gorġ kien iħobb jerfa'
mill-Vari tal-Gimgħa l-Kbira;
Tal-Imgħobbi Kristu mżeblaħ
tiegħu kien dejjem il-mira.

Għal daż-żmien kien jibda jhejji
sa mill-bidu tar-Randan,
fost il-jiem kollha tas-sena
ma kienx jara isbaħ minn dan!

In-nies tagħna għandha d-drawwa
tieħu sehem fil-purċissjoni;
O kemm hi ħaġa sabiħa
tara lil kulħadd unjoni!

Min bħal ħija taħt xi statwa,
oħrajn ikaxkru l-ktajjen,
min jerfa' xi bandalora,
min iterraq ħafi, sajjem!

Anke l-Knisja xxidd l-iswed
tar-Randan tul l-erbgħin jum
u t-Triq tas-Salib timxi
sakemm dan iż-żmien idum.

Illum daħlet sewwa d-drawwa
illi jagħmlu l-Wirjiet
li juruna t-tbatija
sakemm Kristu ssallab, miet.

Dil-Passjoni Huwa beda
hekk kif rifes ġewwa l-Ġnien;
sal-istess dixxipli tiegħu
Lilu telqu bla dewmien!

Quddiem Kajfa u Erodi
w iċ-ċorma tal-Qassisin
tawh bil-ħarta u beżqulu
u għaddewh ta' assassin.
Ma' kolonna lilu rabtu,
għal ħin twil ifflaġellawh;
ma baqax sura ta' bniedem –
l-Imgħallem ittorturawh.

U fit-triq lejn il-Qorriegħa
waqa' fl-art għal tliet darbiet
u tal-qiegħa t-trab mesaħ
waqt karba tal-uġigħ dwiet

Li dlonk nifdet il-qalb t'Ommu
li man-nisa mxiet warajh
sakemm fuq salib lemħitu
b'dawk l-imsiemer ġo saqajh.

L-aħħar qtar tal-ilma ħareġ
mat-tmiem tat-Testment divin
li Gesu' ried iħallilna
għal kemm għad itulu s-snin.

Dana kollu li għidtilkom
Ta' spiss tarawh esebit
f'dal-Wirjiet illi jsiru
b'sagrifiċċju u taħbit.

Jalla jissuktaw u jinbtu
iktar minn dawn il-wirjiet
sabiex nifhmu minn xiex għadda
l-Iben t'Alla sakemm miet.

Ejjew ħbieb iflu l-istatwi,
Ġorru t-toqol tas-Salib
La tistħux tistqarru illi
Kristu hu l-aqwa ħabib!

Qabel nagħlaq nixteqilkom
Randan mimli paċi w ġid –
wara Kristu ibqgħu miexja
b'rieda soda tal-ħadid!

Kav Joe M Attard
Victoria Għawdex

Maltese-Canadian Community News

It is with great pleasure I write in recommendation of Dr. Raymond Xerri, Consul General of the Republic of Malta to Canada, who has represented the Maltese Canadian diaspora with a view to building relationships and encouraging participation in all aspects of national development. In a targeted effort to establish contact with members of the Maltese community in the Province of Ontario.

In spite of the pandemic COVID-19, Dr. Xerri continued to reach out to the Maltese Community on various aspects, such as attending seminars and gatherings, particularly in the area of diaspora studies.

One of the projects, that impressed me the most, Dr. Xerri established a specialized Maltese Canadian Library with the aim of assisting Maltese Canadian academics and students studying Maltese Canadian diaspora history and their ancestors. With his public appeal to the Maltese Community, many came forward with donations of publications to the library.

His creativity and perseverance were an important contribution to the success of all the projects and events that he worked on and thereby helped to raise morale and foster new diplomatic ties between Canada and Malta.

Dr. Xerri's biography speaks volumes of him, many are sad to hear of his departure, he is an intelligent gentleman of great integrity and will be immensely missed by all of the Maltese Community in Canada.

Wishing him continued success in his endeavours along with good health to him and his family. Sincerely,

Ivy Bowman - Member of the Malta Band Club, Mississauga, Ontario.

Maltese Community Council of Victoria, Inc.

Did you know we have a fantastic library at Parkville filled with adult, children, history, art books, newspapers and much more. In Maltese and English. You are welcome to visit and borrow. 477 Royal Pde Parkville. We just started a children's mobile library lending service at Caroline Springs George Cross Saturday mornings. https://www.mccv.org.au/ (03) 9387 8922

Maltese eNewsletter
The Journal of Maltese Living Abroad
connecting communities
around the world

LORD MAKE US TURN TO YOU
a Lenten song
in and out of season
(Tune: "Exaudi Domine ...")

In your Father's love
From nothing you create us
Your love's seed you sow
In your love to make us grow
That your love's fullness
You then come to all of us show. x2

Ref. x 2 Lord make us turn to You
Turned so towards us
In your own Son the Lord Jesus!

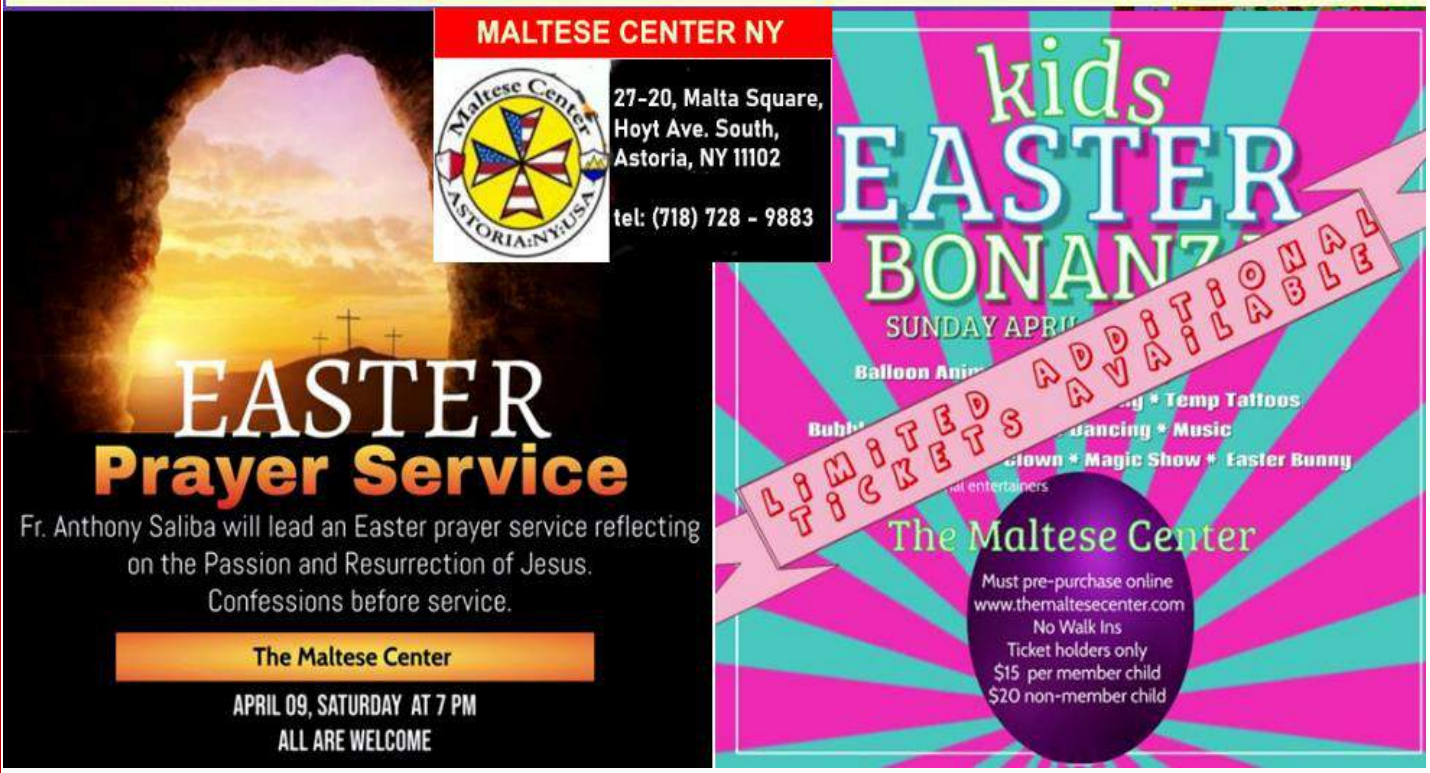
Jesus whom you sent
To bear all our burden
All our sorrow
In himself He came to know
That the world's bad news
His Good News will sure overthrow x2

As they hated him
Our Liberator
We who Him follow
With our neighbours' love aglow
Shall be so hated
As we walk with his Cross here below x2

Jesus helps us bear
Other people's burden
As with Him we share
All the toil they cannot bear
That our hope in Him
They will with us share without fear. x 2

Suffering with him
Toiling with him sweating
Our hearts will be glad
Overcoming all that's sad
In Jesus' glory
We'll sit sharing his life's whole bread.X2

Fr. Bernard Mallia, sj - March 2022



This is a Polish Order of Malta volunteer medical team They have been at the Polish-Ukrainian border for weeks providing vital health assistance to arriving refugees from Ukraine.

FROM AN AVID ADELAIDE READER

Thanks once again for your dedication to our beloved Community spread around the four corners of the world Your journal has so much information and facts that most of us either heard by word of mouth or heard about them in our younger years. It's interesting too to read about how our brothers and sisters how are they fairing in their country of choice. Wishing you good health. Your friend and avid reader of "The Maltese Journal" Harry Bugeja ADELAIDE 25/03/2022

Gozo is just a few minutes away from Malta

Gozo means joy and a visit to this relaxed little sister island of Malta should bring exactly that.

Though separated from mainland Malta by a mere 5km stretch of sea (25 minutes by ferry) Gozo is distinctly different. The Island is a third the size of Malta, more rural and much more tranquil. Gozo is known for its picturesque scenery, pristine coastline and untouched country trails. Baroque churches rise from the heart of small villages, and traditional farmhouses dot the rural landscape. Its culture and way of life are rooted in tradition and yet open to the present.

Developed just enough but not too much, Gozo is a masterpiece wrought by nature and shaped by 7000 years of culture. Myth and reality meet here on what is believed to have been the Isle of Calypso in Homer's Odyssey, where the sea nymph held Odysseus (Ulysses) in her thrall for seven years.

The people of Gozo, numbering at 31,592, have nurtured Calypso's Island into the beautiful place we know today. Based on the values of sustainability and the need to protect the natural environment, the Government of Malta has embarked on an ambitious yet achievable vision of Gozo as an eco-island. The Eco-Gozo project, with a defined strategy to be implemented until 2020, aims to encourage development in ways that protect the environment and social cohesion and retain Gozo's distinct cultural identity. Specific programmes include new ways of collecting and preserving rainwater in this relatively dry environment, schemes for keeping Gozo clean on land and at sea, and support for the drive towards renewable energy and energy-saving infrastructure.

Progress cannot be stopped, nor should it be, but it can be directed in ways that keep Gozo authentic and protect what is best. The emphasis is not on 'not doing' but on 'doing well'. The Eco-Gozo project exists to enhance the experience of all Gozo's people – residents and visitors. It aims for sustainable economic development, the creation of quality jobs and expansion into low-impact areas of tourism such as health tourism, sport tourism, cultural tourism and eco- and agri-tourism.

Visitors may encounter farmers working their land, and meet 'cottage' entrepreneurs turning traditional activities into small businesses. Life on Gozo is tranquil and soft-paced and everyone has time for a chat. The pace picks up a little in the Capital, ir-Rabat which has all the amenities of a modern town, but even here Gozo is relaxed. The island brings great peace but is no barrier to connectivity; there is excellent internet access across the island, with free WIFI in the villages main squares.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Ġgantija Temples includes some of the oldest sophisticated stone buildings on earth dating back over 5500 years. And the fortified town of the Citadel that towers over ir-Rabat (Victoria), combines Medieval layout with the buildings of the Knights of St John on a site inhabited since the Bronze Age.

There is something for everyone on the sun-drenched, warm-hearted eco-island of Gozo. If Odysseus arrived today, he would find it even harder to leave.

I THANK THOSE WHO SENT A DONATION
TOWARD THE PRODUCTION OF THIS JOURNAL WHICH
I HAVE BEEN PUBLISHING FOR 8 YEARS VOLUNTARILY.
If you wish to send a donation here are the details
Commonwealth Bank (Aust) BSB:065106 ACC. NO.: 0050 2597
NAME: Frank Scicluna

IF YOU HAVE A STORY OR PHOTOS ABOUT YOURSELF, YOUR ASSOCIATION OR ABOUT MALTA SHARE IT SEND IT TO US

ALBERT AND JANE MARSHALL

Albert and Jane Marshall Nee Micallef are celebrating their fiftieth anniversary of their wedding. They were married in the Grace Chapel Sliema, the same church where her parents Vincent and Tonina Micallef were married. Albert and Jane were married on Palm Sunday.

PHOTO: ELISA VON BROCKDORFF

A few Mondays ago, as the Gozo Channel re-opened its doors we ventured to Xewkija on a cloudy afternoon to check in on the ever lovely Albert & Jane Marshall who got held up in Gozo right before lockdown.

There in a quaint alleyway we spotted their striking red door. Both asked if we had any trouble finding them but with a pretty door like that (and google maps on our side) we found their house in no time. Albert wondered why we were late but Jane was quick to remind him that we were in fact not late but on time, as we had sent another email which he must have just overlooked.

But such oversights are to be expected when you're busy spending your days running the Arts Council over Zoom. Jane then shared her concerns about her unwatered plants over at their Malta home right before making sure they wouldn't end up locked out of their house as they posed for this photo and shared their thoughts with us about life in COVID-19 times, as part of Teatru Malta's series **#BEZZJONI**, a series of door to door encounters with Maltese theatre icons

JANE MARSHALL is a veteran actress whose theatre and television career started in the 1960s. She remains known for her controversial and moving interpretation of Rita, the rebellious girl of the much celebrated Il-Madonna taċ-Ċoqqa.

People love Jane also for her roles in such popular television series as Ipokriti, F'Baħar Wieħed, Vaganzi f'Ħal Bla Ras, and others. Jane spent 15 years abroad in Australia where she was loved by the Maltese-Australian community for her work in the field of Maltese theatre in Maltese, especially in Sydney and Melbourne. Her most recent appearance on Maltese television was in the series Strada Stretta. Her Husband ALBERT MARSHALL is a writer, stage and television director, educator and broadcaster. Albert is considered as an artist responsible for various innovative 'new waves' in the domains of Maltese literature, theatre and television. Nowadays he holds high positions in the cultural and broadcasting sectors of this country. Jane explains how her and her husband Albert's life has been turned upside down – perhaps for the better…

"We got caught in Gozo when the first Covid-19 cases started emerging. We could have gone back to Malta but the medical advice was that we should stay here because both Albert and myself fall in the "vulnerable" category, or as Albert calls it, the "venerable".

At first I was quite shaken and extremely anxious, especially when my thoughts would turn to my children and grandchildren who live so far away in Australia – they were supposed to come for a visit soon – in June… But everything's been cancelled now and I don't know when we'll meet them again.

We're lucky because the place where we got caught during lockdown is actually our house in Xewkija: Albert had and still has a great challenge to keep his complex work of the Arts Council and other duties going on online – endless telephone calls and countless virtual conferences. But at least he doesn't have to dress smartly for work and I therefore don't have to prepare his shirts every day!

Cleaning the house has taken on a new dimension because now I'm so preoccupied with cleaning and disinfecting the shopping that is so graciously delivered to our front door, rather than dusting and doing other general everyday chores.

Like everybody I'm dedicating a lot of time to cooking, and I've started trying to do a little bit of exercise every day and sometimes we go somewhere far and take a walk where we do not see or meet anybody.

But I still need to keep reminding Albert to wash his hands well; to do this and not do that – I'm driving him crazy!

With the arrival of Spring weather I started feeling much better: I accepted the situation and as a form of therapy I began to propagate plants and flowers and give them a great deal of attention.

I am also spending much time listening to music and drawing – long hours drawing – thanks to Mark, our son who lives in Australia, I'm working on a project. It's been a long time since I did any drawing – from my school days in fact. And I'm also keeping a diary! This diary doesn't contain any appointments with the hairdresser, or rehearsal times, or concert dates and a million other invitations to public cultural activities where one has to get all dolled up! I'm really loving this simple life.

But the thought of my children and grandchildren being so far away in Australia and the fact of not knowing when I will see them again makes me very sad."

Albert adds his bit:

"Jane hinted at what my narrative is in these bizarre and extraordinary circumstances. I will only add that along with the hurt of missing my children and my children's children (that for some reason I'm feeling more acute during these times) there's another hurt – the fact that i'm separated from my beloved books. I do have some books in Gozo but it's not my 'library'. Without my books, the pain of isolation feels twice as strong. Even though, as Jane said, I am in constant contact with my colleagues and other people on my work benches, I still feel isolated (in a golden cage, if you will). Those who know me know that physical contact with my friends is an intrinsic characteristic of my behaviour – I just hug and kiss everyone with genuine affection. That's how I am. On television I hear them say that we are never ever going to be able to be like that again: verboten… away… Margaret Atwood… I'm getting tired of staring at an inanimate screen, conducting virtual meetings and anaemic conversations. But at least I'm finding time to finish off some writing projects that were in different degrees of completion. I'm drafting some theatre work… and I'm thinking a great deal about how I'm going to spend my life now that this experience has forced me to face my inner thoughts and discuss what's really essential and what isn't. I feel like a novice priest on the eve of his entry into monastic life…

But deep in my heart I know that, because that's how man is made, that when this obstacle is over, all the proposals and fantasies will blow away in an instant and we'll be back to our routine and the norms that made us:

They're calling it "the new normal" … if you'll allow me, I'd like to add a word: "the new imagined normality". Source: wwwteatrumalta.org.mt/bezzjoni-albert-u-jane-marshall/

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 Pastrychef 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 awaiting 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.

0404 463 777
Address: 34 Braidwood Drive
PRESTONS NSW 2170

N&N Cultural Crafts is at Hamrun Maltese Club.
1 Jackson Street, Marsden Park, NSW, Australia

La Valette Social Centre Blacktown NSW

Mr. Lawrence Buhagiar, Consul General for NSW will be visiting the Centre on Thursday 7 April to assist our members on all matters relating to Malta, including passports, Power of Attorney (Prokura), Malta Pensions and other consular matters. Appointments are essential. Ring the Consulate on 9262 9500 to book your appointment.

On May 18, 1565, the Great Siege begins...marches ashore. The vast, formidable Ottoman fleet lands. An army, fifty-thousand strong, marches ashore. The desperately outnumbered Maltese garrison braces for the incoming storm. On May 18, 1565, the Great Siege begins...

Fate meets fire. Watch the world ignite.

On May 18, 2022, *Ash Fall: a Novel of the Knights of Malta* will be available for pre-order. Pre-sale information and a proper update coming soon.

In gratitude, MARTHESE FENECH - CANADA

www. marthesefenech.com

Maltese Ex- Services Association of Victoria

NOTICE TO ALL MALTESE EX-SERVICE MEMBERS AND MEMBERS OF THE MALTESE COMMUNITY

ANZAC DAY 25TH APRIL 2022

To all Maltese Ex-Services Members and members of the Maltese Community who are interested in participating in the **ANZAC DAY 2022** march, you will need to register your name by call the President/Secretary on 0466 589 53

At this stage we have been allocated 25-30 spots on the day, so it is importa those who are interested contact us ASAP.

The last time we marched was in 2019 so don't miss out

LEST WE FORGET

Joe Stafrace – President

NEXT WEEK WE WILL HAVE A SPECIAL EDITION DEDICATED TO THE VISIT OF POPE FRANCIS TO MALTA AND GOZO – DON'T MISS IT