JOURNAL FOR MALTESE AROUND THE WORLD

MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

11 YEARS

546

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Former Honorary Consul for Malta

IS-SENA T-TAJBA

2025

HAPPY NEW YEAR

ORDER OF MALTA

Over
10 000
readers every week
WE REACHED OVER
500 000 readers
in 2024

Thank you for your support

JUBILEE 2025
PILGRIMS OF HOPE

2025 Jubilee Year 'Holy Year of Hope'

"The Maltese eNewsletter is the one and only voice left of and for Global Malta and Gozo"

Dr. Raymond Xerri

Thank you, Readers. You make the Maltese eNewsletter worthwhile.

from the editor

We have come to the end of 2024 and staring a new year 2025.

Looking at the history of these last ten years of the Maltese eNewsletter I feel proud that I have been the editor of the journal since its inception. It is a free, bilingual and non-political journal and has spread around the world like wildfire. The journal is Australia-based and distributed not only in every state and territory of Australia but also in many countries where other Maltese reside.

Since the demise of The Maltese Herald, the only Maltese Newspaper in Australia, the Maltese Journal has become the only effective digital magazine for all Maltese living abroad. It is keeping the Maltese communities connected with Malta and with its language, history, culture and heritage.

The journal is also printed and distributed to residents of several Aged Care Facilities, schools and to members of Maltese associations in Canada, Australia and USA.

Let me ask you something — how does it feels to write such a newsletter without readers? It is an eternal question — would art exist without spectators? I don't know the answer. But I know that every time I write — I write with my readers in mind.

Readers are the Edtior's mirror — in you, we see the reflection of our words and ideas. You help us to shape them, translate thoughts into sentences and communicate them with you.

Knowing that there are so many people who are genuinely interested in this journal makes it a whole more interesting. It creates a space for conversation - writing is not a monologue. So, I am grateful for all those who contribute to create such an informative, colourful and interesting journal regularly.

It's an indescribable feeling to know that you've touched someone's life, maybe changed it a bit or just gave them a reminder of a thing that they've already known.

Writing makes me friends with the people like you that I have never met and probably never will.

It connects and unites us, as a Global Diaspora, no matter where we are and who we are.

So thank you, dear reader! ***Thank you for taking the time to read our journal. Thank you for being the inspiration. Thank you for your encouragement and kind words.***

Thank you for sharing your points of view and thank you for trusting us.

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Message from Grand Master Fra' John Dunlap

Rome, in joyful anticipation of the birth of our Saviour, I send my best wishes to all for a holy and happy Christmas.

It is as important, as it is difficult, to hold close to our hearts the message of Christmas. That is, the good and joyous news that salvation is at hand, despite all the sadness and heartache that besets our suffering, broken world.

For although there is a Christmas joy that cannot be suppressed, there are men and women in the millions who, weary and hungry, will rest uneasy without homes, health or family come this Christmas Day. My thoughts and prayers go to these forgotten people, cast-aways who are often invisible to us even though they stand clearly before our very eyes.

For members, friends and collaborators of the Order, this is a season to take heart, to pay close attention to your surroundings, to recognize that in poverty and weakness, there are riches and strength and that from the humblest origins can emerge the most salvific event in human history: the birth of the Christ child. This is a time for us to see not the misery of those we serve, but the beauty of their souls, their Christ-like nature. It is a time for us to see the Christ child in the newborn infants in our hospitals and our Blessed Mother in the frightened faces of the young mothers, worried how they will feed their little ones.

As we come to the close of 2024, we watch carefully and hopefully events in the Holy Land where Jesus came to maturity and preached salvation and love, and where our Order was born over 900 years ago. Particularly in Gaza, we contemplate a living nativity scene with thousands of families sleeping without shelter, waiting for food, turned away as unwanted refugees. Our work finds us thrust into the midst of this chaotic, modern "nativity" scene. Yet, with the invaluable help of the Latin Patriarch of Jeruslaem, we manage to deliver food and temporary shelter to the scorned and unwanted people of Gaza.

It is the same in Lebanon, a country that is now facing an unprecedented situation with millions of displaced people. In recent months, the cry of pain of the Lebanese population has not left us indifferent. We also continue to assure our closeness to the tireless work of the staff of our Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, a place in the 'heart' of Christianity that shows all its suffering in yet another delicate historical moment.

I am proud of, and at the same time moved by, the dedication and commitment of our volunteers and supporters around the world.

In Rome, Pope Francis will soon open the Holy Door of the Jubilee of Hope, so that all may experience the certainty of the Jubilee grace. A grace that, as the Holy Father himself stated in the Bill of Induction of the Holy Year, "is a way of discovering the unlimited nature of God's mercy".

I wish you all, in this Holy Year 2025, the grace to become 'pilgrims of hope', illuminating your journey with the light of faith that invites us to continue serving humanity. For your loved ones and your families, I pray that they will experience a holy Christmas of hope.

God bless you and bless your loved ones, the sick, the poor, the suffering and our beloved Order of Malta.

The ONLY Voice left of and for Global Malta

Chev. Dr. Raymond C. XERRI

Former Deputy High Commissioner of Malta to Australia, New Zealand and The Philippines (1995-1998) Former Deputy High Commissioner of Malta to the United Kingdom and Ireland (1999-2001) Former Director of the Directorate for Maltese Living Abroad (2012-2019) Former Consul General of Malta to Canada (2019-2022)

The Maltese eNewsletter is the one and only voice left of and for Global Malta and Global Gozo. I have copies from the very first issue and have kept copies for my personal Maltese and Gozitan Diaspora Library and for the National Library of Gozo in Victoria and printed copies and delivered to places where return Gozitan migrants frequent in Gozo, like bars, clubs, restaurants, complexes and homes for the elderly. It is read by many returns Diaspora and also Gozitans who have never migrated, many times out of curiosity and/or wanting to learn about our heritage locally and internationally. These copies are passed on to one another, from one person to another and from room to another in homes for the elderly. Yes, circulation of the Maltese eNewsletter is very high in Gozo.

I cannot commend enough Frank Scicluna and his team for all the work all these years keeping our diaspora connected, linked and one in such a vast world. You have not only flown the Maltese flag around the world by means of this eNewsletter, but you have enticed many foreigners of many nationalities to read and learn about and also visit the Maltese and Gozitan Islands.

This year 2024 our country - Malta – has celebrated many national anniversaries: - 60 years since Malta became an independent country; 50 years since its became a republic; 45 years since the last British troops left Malta and 20 years since we became a member of the European Union. However, we did not honour our Diaspora by have the IV Convention for the Maltese Living Abroad and finally recognise that we are a Global Nation. We were no longer confined to the 246 km^2 of territorial land we are members of the European Union with 4.233 km^2 of land.

"Our country cannot reach true maturity until it realises this reality and embraces its 700,000 Diaspora as part and parcel of our Global Malta and Global Gozo."

Frank, you are greatly assisting in achieving this difficult change of culture. From, '*Oh they migrants left Malta and Gozo…they are no longer here (in Malta and Gozo) they are no longer part of us,*' to '*We must unleash the tremendous potential our Diaspora has to develop our islands to a more Global Nation*'.

"Malta and Gozo with its worldwide diaspora can advance to truly become a first world nation; wealthy, prosperous and be better capable to leave a mark internationally far greater than its physical and/or demographic size."

Frank you are on the forefront of endorsing, embracing and pushing the concept of Global Malta and Global Gozo. Keep up the sterling work.

IL-ĠURNAL MALTI TAL-EMIGRANTI

Kav Joe M Attard Rabat - Għawdex

Dal-ġurnal ħabib ta' bosta
Qed imiss il-ħames mija
Mindu ra d-dawl tad-dinja -
Lil djarna mela bid-dija

Billi min-naħat tal-globu
Iġibilna kull aħbar
Li bla dubju tinteressa
Kemm lil kbar u kemm liż-żgħar!

L-editur dlonk jagħmel ħiltu
Magħna jkun ta' kull ħmistax
B'ġurnal mimli w attraenti
Mhux sa jonqsok, ma tarax!

Ħafna huma s-suġġetti
Illi tista' taqra dwarhom –
Storja, Folklor, Sports, u Kċina
Ma tistax tgħaddi mingħajrhom!

Naħseb illi din-Newsletter
Saret parti mill-familja
Tal-Maltin u l-Għawdxin kollha
Ta' kulħadd il-ferħ, il-milja!

Inħeġġiġkom biex taqrawha
Mhux biss, imma iktbu fiha,
Kulħad jaqbel meta ngħidu
Li tal-għerf saret nixxiegħa!

Nawgurawlha għomor ħelu
Tkompli tferraħ lil kuħadd
U li tibqa' dlonk tgħallimna
Ma titlaqna qatt u qatt!

I sincerely thank all those who sent a donation
WE NEED HELP TO CONTINUE PRODUCING THE MALTESE JOURNAL
My bank details are Bank Commonwealth (Australia)
BSB - 065106 ACC - 00502597
Name - Frank Scicluna

NEW COMMITTEE FOR THE LA VALETTE SOCIAL CENTRE – BLACKTOWN NSW

From our correspondent

La Valette Social Centre held its Annual General Meeting. The election of the committee for 2024-2025 has seen several changes and new faces join (and rejoin) the committee. We wish the group well in building upon the work and efforts of previous committees to strengthen and grow the club and maintain its place as a central part of the Maltese community. The new committee is

President: Antoine Mangion
Vice President: Stephen Micallef
Secretary: Antoinette Mangion
Assistant Secretary: Sandra Grech
Treasurer: Stephen Micallef
Assistant Treasurer: Cassandra Vassallo
Ordinary Committee Members: Sam Axiak; Angelo Borg; Mark Caruana; Lawrence Falzon; Stephen Mifsud; Jimmy Zammit; John Zarb

Following the election of the new committee, Antoine Mangion thanked the outgoing committee members for their work supporting the club, notably former President Godfrey Sultana; Joe Abela and Joyce Micallef, who both had resigned from the committee earlier in the year; Michael Spiteri, who over the last couple of years kept our kitchen going week in, week out; and Antoinette Caruana, who had been on the La Valette committee for some 45 years and served several as President. We thank them all for their service to La Valette and the community.

LEARN MALTESE IN 2025

Join Our 2025 Maltese Language Classes! Learn to speak, read, write and understand Maltese while exploring the rich cultural heritage of Malta. Whether you're a beginner or looking to improve your skills, our classes are tailored to meet your needs. Classes delivered to the comfort of your home via ZOOM.

Registrations for Maltese language classes for both adults and children are open.

Visit our website https://mccv.org.au/services/language/ to register and for more information.

Edwidge Borg

TKELLEM BIL-MALTI!

Federation of Maltese Language Schools

We promote and support the teaching of the Maltese Language, History and Heritage

SPECIAL TALK TO LIONS CLUB SLIEMA ON THE HISTORY OF OPERA AND MUSIC IN MALTA AND GOZO

Tonio Portughese Member, Lions Club Sliema
Musicologist
and Opera Researcher

I had the honour to address a well attended event by members of Lions Club Sliema.

The presentation covered 500 years of musical evolution with focus on the great Maltese composers: Giuseppe Balzano, Benigno Zerafa, Francesco Azopardi, Girolamo Abos (1715-1760, composer of "Stabat mater" in 1750); Nicolo' Isouard, a Maltese born French composer,known as Nicolo' de Malte,considered as Malta's outstanding national composer and musician with his operas Cendrillon, Jeannot et Colin, opera comiche, and Michel-Ange (1802).

Special references were made to key publications: "L-Istorja tal-Opra f'Malta" covering 1631-1866 by Alfred G Miceli; "Il-Muzika ta' Malta sa L-Ahhar tas-Seklu Tmintax" - Malta's music development up to the end of the eighteenth century by musicologist Joseph Vella Bondin, author as well of the volume "The Great Composers of Malta".

I explained the historical role of the Royal Opera House, Teatru Rjal,until it was razed to the ground in 1942, a unique loss for Malta's opera and culture. It was designed by the English architect Edward Middleton Barry,the same famous architect of Covent Garden Theatre in London.

Subsequently the Manoel Theatre served as our main performing arts venue,named after the Grand Master Fra Antonio Manoel de Vilhena. It is reputed to be Europe's third-oldest working theatre.

This great vacuum was eventually filled by the Aurora (first opera Puccini's Madame Butterfly in January 1977,conducted by the late Joseph Sammut, and Astra Opera Theatre (Verdi's Rigoletto in 1978)in Gozo.

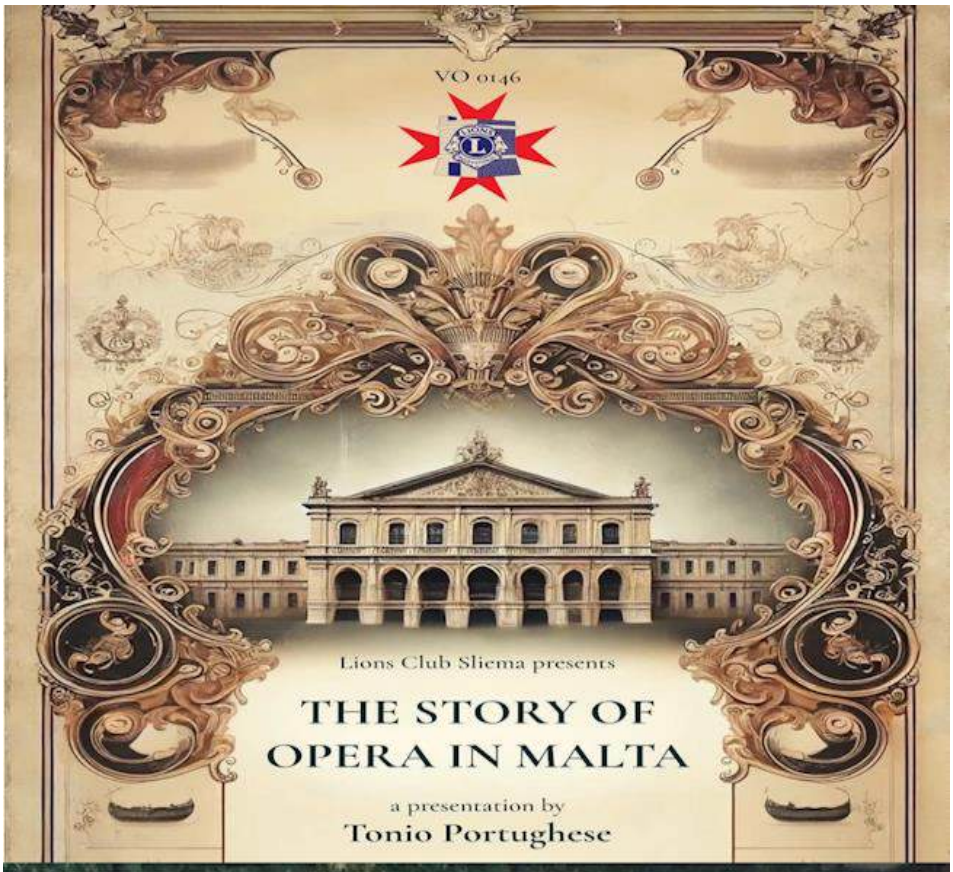
I referred to other leading Maltese composers including Carlo Diacono(3acts opera L'Alpino); Paolino Vassallo (two act opera "Amor fatale", 1898), the Nani family (Antonio Nani - I Cavalieri di Malta, 1877, performed at the Teatru Rjal 16th January 1880) up to Carmelo Pace, Charles Camilleri, the first opera in Maltese - Il -Weghda, another opera The Maltese Cross, performed in Paris in 2003, and Joseph Vella (premiere of the new opera Valeriana, The Titan's Rock, libretto by Vincent Vella, 2024).

I highlighted in particular Carmelo Pace's four major operas - Caterina Desguanez, I Martiri, Angelica and Ipogeana.

I referred as well to outstanding Maltese opera singers: Oreste Chircop, famous as well as an actor with the Paramount Pictures contract and his leading role in the 1956 film version of the Vagabond King, tenors Paul Axiaq (outstanding performer in Verdi's Otello)and Joseph Calleja, world renowned soprano Miriam Gauci and her famous performance in Verdi's Missa da Requiem with the Teatro alla Scala Orchestra conducted by Riccardo Muti in its tour in Japan.

Nearer to our times I mentioned some upcoming young performers that have embarked on an international career and challenging opportunities - sopranos Nicola Said now professionally engaged in the UK, Marvic Baldacchino, Christine Dalli; Baritone Charles Buttigieg, mezzo soprano Marvic Monreal (performed in Puccini's Madame Butterfly in the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino), Tenor Alan Sciberras (sang in Puccini's Messa di Gloria in Brussels)

and several others that are embarking on international careers in opera. A goldmine for Malta's opera evolution on the world stage.
The talk highlighted Malta's constantly evolving and dynamic process of cultural enhancement and artistic Excellence.
A Q and A session brought the interactive event to an end.
President Victor Borg Barthet presented me with a 50th anniversary banner and an official Lions Club pi .
Heartfelt thanks to Lions Club Sliema for this focus on Malta's cultural heritage.



Quirky customs live on in Malta in everything from festive food to hand gestures. Here are seven to spot:

1 TWO CLOCKS ON THE BELFRY

There are more than 360 churches across Malta's islands. Look closer at their bell towers and you may find more than one clock. And the truly vigilant will notice that only the clock on the right shows the correct time. This horological quirk is meant to confuse evil spirits from knowing when it's time for mass, thereby keeping worshippers safe.

2 GIVE BAD LUCK THE QRUN!

Cattle horns mounted above the entrance of an old Maltese building are there to keep evil spirits at bay. The modern equivalent is using your fore- and little fingers to make the sign of the qrun (which translates as 'bull's horn'). Maltese will do this when talking about something good – as you might cross your fingers or knock on wood.

3 PARTY LIKE A LOCAL

Maltese villages know how to party. Every village in Malta has a patron saint, and because every saint has a special day, there lies cause for celebration. A statue of said saint is paraded through decorated streets, soundtracked by live music. Expect good food, bad dancing and plentiful fireworks, with each village flaunting its pyrotechnic prowess.

4 Cream cake celebrations

What happens when you make trifle with sponge, booze, cream and garish glacé fruit? Prinjolata carnival cakes are the treat of choice when it's festa time in Malta. They take their name from the pine nuts they're made with and are crowned with a mountain of Dream Topping. Look out for them on café counters days before the floats and musicians arrive.

Which is your favourite Maltese food?

5 BOATS WITH EYES

You never know what might be in a Maltese harbour.... Hungry fish, mooring buoys, evil spirits? Yes, that's why you'll often see a pair of eyes painted onto a traditional Maltese fishing boat or luzzu. Depicted on her bows, these are to ward off any evil spirits that might be lurking in a harbour or inlet.

6 FESTIVE HOT 'CHOCOLATE'

Christmas in a cup, when in Malta, is a warming chocolatey chestnut drink called imbuljuta. Soaked chestnuts and their water are simmered with cloves, cinnamon, tangerine rind and chocolate to give this hot drink a wonderfully seasonal flavour. For extra festive points, drink it after midnight mass on Christmas Eve. It's sometimes served on New Year's Eve, too.

7 A HEALTHY TRADITION OF RIVALRY

Nothing to do with Pokemon, pika, strictly speaking, is a trait rather than a tradition... signifying a distinctly Maltese competitive spirit and thirst for rivalry. You can see it in the Maltese villages vying to hold the best festa. And some claim that the rebuilt dome of the Carmelite Basilica was designed deliberately to dwarf its Anglican rival.

New Year's traditions in Malta amid fireworks

Fireworks are one of **Malta**'s oldest traditions, the most spectacular of one can be seen in **Valletta** on New Year's Eve, accompanied by small street concerts. However, every town organises street parties and events, with the city of **Floriana** being another popular point for the Maltese to meet and celebrate.

For the countdown, people usually meet in **St George's Square**, on the **Valletta waterfront** and on **St Anne's Street in Floriana**. Many celebrate in clubs and discos; **St Julian's** and **Paceville** have the best nightclubs, where entertainment is guaranteed all night long. However, on the night of New Year's Eve it is expected to be a full house, so it is best to make a reservation to avoid being left out of the party scene!

New Year is celebrated in Malta with a **big family lunch**. If you're on holiday in Malta, you're sure to find several restaurants offering menus for the occasion but remember to book one well in advance! If the weather is nice, take trips outdoors, for example to **Buskett**, **Dingli**, **Mellieħa**, or **Mdina** like the Maltese do and then head back to the bars and clubs of Paceville to continue the celebrations.

2024 - The Premier of NSW & Minister Paul Scully Awarded Cringila Centre the Most Progressive Multicultural Centre in the Illawarra. Proud Times for Regional NSW.
Louis Parnis President - Elizabeth Walker Secretary

IF YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL, SHARE IT WITH OTHERS. WE ARE INTERESTED TO READ IT

Today is my last day as Consul-General of Malta in Sydney. I thank you for your support and assistance throughout the past 6 years 8 months and hope I was of valuable service to you all and the Maltese Community in NSW.
I am happy that I am leaving you in very good hands. My successor is Ms Anneliese Sammut, a career diplomat and a true friend of mine and my family. I encourage you to welcome her and work with her so that she excels in her work and provide the required services as the New Consul-General of Malta in Sydney with jurisdiction over all of NSW.
I take this occasion to wishing you a Blessed Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

Lawrence Buhagiar 27/12/2024

We celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family: Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Like all families, they faced their share of challenges.

Family life is the cornerstone of our society. We thrive best within the loving support of a family. We inherit so much from our families – values, traditions, and the very fabric of who we are.

While the ideal family often consists of a wife, husband, and children, this is not always the reality. For many reasons, many parents courageously raise children as single parents. I deeply admire their dedication and resilience.

I was blessed to have a strong extended family who loved me dearly and whom I love in return. Technology has made it significantly easier to stay connected with loved ones, even when living far apart. Mutual respect is paramount for a happy and fulfilling family life. The Holy Family serves as a powerful role model for us all, demonstrating love, support, and unwavering faith in the face of adversity.

Mackay's historic Maltese meeting corner set to see statues commemorating the Maltese Community

This is one of the statues - Kay Paton Bronzes

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

For years, the Rockman's Corner in the Mackay CBD was the meeting place for the region's Maltese community, where despite not being able to read or write they did deals to help fellow immigrants buy their own farms.

Key points:

- Mackay's Maltese community began working on the region's cane farms, before over time owning many of the farms
- Men would meet at Rockman's Corner to discuss which farms were for sale and to help others buy them
- Now, the Mackay Regional Council has voted to allow a statue commemorating the men to be place on Rockman's Corner

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

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

"Most of these men couldn't read or write, but they could calculate the daily interest rate in their head. Quick as a flick."

The men would discuss the interest rates and help any community members who needed it through the banking system. "They'd go to the bank manager and say my cousin here wants to buy a farm, can you lend him the money," she said.

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

Maltese men gathered at Rockman's Corner to help each other with business and just generally catch up. *(ABC Tropical North: Tegan Philpott)*

"Once those older farmers became established, they would loan their money at a lower rate than what the bank would give." Some of the farmers ended up forming their own bank which over years transformed into the Pioneer Permanent Building Society.

The society was purchased by the Bank of Queensland in 2007.

"The idea of it was to help migrants who came in to Australia," Mrs Baretta said.

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

"He was telling me that all of these people say 'oh if it wasn't for your father or any of those other men, I would never have bought my farm'.

"As [the men] got older and didn't do that sort of thing anymore, they still met there anyway. It was a meeting place."

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

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

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

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

While most emigrated to Victoria and New South Wales, a small number moved to Queensland and Mackay.They would come to Mackay to work on the cane farms, but over time the Maltese families started to buy those farms. Now, the city boasts one of the largest populations of Maltese immigrants and descendants outside of a capital city.

Honouring Maltese history

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

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

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

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

The statues when built will replicate the scene seen in this photograph, except with just three of the men. *(Supplied: Carmel Baretta)*

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

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

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

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

THE HISTORY OF THE MALTESE EMIGRATION IS AN IMPORTANT SECTION OF THE HISTORY OF MALTA

MALTA POPULATION - One in four is non-Maltese

According to the National Statistics Office, 542,051 people lived in Malta at the end of 2022, with 137,376 – or just over 25% – being foreign nationals.

Based on this new data, the number of foreigners living in Malta since then has jumped by 8,534 people, a rise of 6.2%.

The data also revealed differences in where different people choose to live.

St Paul's Bay remains Malta's most highly populated locality with over 36,000 residents. Of those 36,013 people, 14,311 are Maltese and the remaining 21,702 – 60% – are foreign nationals. The localities with the highest concentration of Maltese people are Birkirkara with 18,146, and Mosta with 17,766 people. A high number of Maltese also live in Żabbar and Qormi, with each home to around 14,000 Maltese people.

Meanwhile, European nationals in Malta seemed to prefer making a home in the northern harbour district. Barring St Paul's Bay, with 5,581, Sliema has the highest number of EU residents living in it with 5,702 people, followed by St. Julian's with 3,164 people and Gżira with 2,714. Msida and Swieqi were also popular with EU residents, with both housing just under 2,500 people.

ZEJTUN Dialect

One of the dialects of the Maltese language is the **Żejtun dialect** (Standard Maltese: *Djalett taż-Żejtun*). This dialect is used by many of the inhabitants of Żejtun and in other settlements around this city such as Marsaxlokk, and spoken by about 12,000 people.

The following three words are examples; there are many more that make it into the list of vocabulary found in this dialect.

- For 'kite' the Standard Maltese word is *tajra*, but in this dialect it is found as *manuċċa*.
- For 'foggy weather' the Standard Maltese word is *ċpar*, but in this dialect it is found as *ċlambu*.
- For 'slingshot' the Standard Maltese word is *żbandola*, but in this dialect it is found as *steringa*.

All the vocal letters in this dialect possess a liquid versatility which allows the position, emphasis and tone of the vowels to change without any distinct rule; in some words the consonant letters are found to change as well. Such variations in the dialect are innate to native speakers.

The vowel A

The vowel *a* in the Żejtun dialect changes into /u/ or /e/.

When the last vowel of the word is *u*, it changes into the diphthong /ow/. Sometimes the *u* is changed into *ew*. Examples:

English	Maltese	Żejtun dialect	English	Maltese	Żejtun dialect
newspaper	gazzetta	gezzette	ship	vapur	vapowr
meat	laħam	leħem	Mr.	sinjur	sinjowr
fat	xaħam	xeħem	stick	bastun	bastown
coal	faħam	feħem	vase	vażun	vażown
water	ilma	ilme	money	flus	flews
burner	spiritiera	spiritiere	fish	ħut	ħewt
home	dar	dur	shop	ħanut	ħenewt

The vowel E

The vowel *e* changes into the vowels /a/ or also /i/.
The vowel *o* in this dialect changes into *u*, however it demands an element of phonetical emphasis to differentiate this changed *u* from the previous one. In philology such emphasis requires an accent, hence it is notated as *ù*. Example:
For examples:

English	Maltese	Żejtun dialect	English	Maltese	Żejtun dialect
wild	selvaġġ	salvaġġ	school	skola	skùla
seriousness	serjetà	sirjitu	wheel	rota	rùta
seminary	seminarju	siminurju	pan	borma	bùrma
when	meta	mite	sack	xkora	xkùra
			corner	rokna	rùkna
			roll	romblu	rùmblu

Baked Stuffed Marrows/Zucchini (Qarabagħli mimli fil-forn)

Lisa Buttigieg-LiGreci

I love this time of the year when home gardens and farmer's markets are filled with the bounty of summer. Recently I visited a farmer's market in Port Sanilac, MI and came across a gigantic zucchini that inspired this month's recipe. One of my favorite varieties of squash is zucchini. Normally you would not use a zucchini this large, but I just couldn't help myself and had to take it home with me to stuff for this recipe.

In Malta, qarabagħli mimli is traditionally made with marrows. Marrows are round in shape like small pumpkins as opposed to the long slender shape of the zucchini. Unless you grow your own, marrows are not available in most North American markets. Zucchini is readily available year-round and makes an excellent substitute.

Ingredients:

- 8 zucchini/marrows or 1 very large zucchini
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 lb. ground pork
- 2 large onions, finely diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 4 dry bay leaves
- 6 large tomatoes, diced
- 4 Tbs. tomato paste
- 4 eggs
- 8 Tbs. of grated parmesan cheese
- 4 Tbs. vegetable oil
- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 cup bread crumbs as needed (not pictured)
- salt and pepper for seasoning
- Cooking spray

Directions:

1. Heat the vegetable oil in a large pot. Cook the onion, garlic and bay leaves on medium high heat until soft.
2. Add the tomato paste and cook for a few minutes to get rid of the raw taste.
3. Add the chopped tomatoes, salt, and pepper. Simmer for 5 minutes.
4. Add the beef and pork to the onion and tomato mix and cook on medium high until the liquid is completely reduced and all moisture is gone. This will take some time, so stir often to avoid scorching the bottom of the pot.
5. While the meat is cooking, cut the zucchini lengthwise in half and scoop out the seeds with a spoon and discard.
6. Now scoop out about half of the flesh leaving some flesh around the edge.
7. Roughly chop the zucchini flesh, place in a clean cheesecloth or tea towel and twist tightly to remove the moisture.
8. Taste the meat mixture for seasoning. Add more salt and pepper if needed.
9. Stir in the chopped zucchini flesh with the meat mixture.
10. Immediately remove from the heat and allow to cool. The zucchini will be cooked in the oven.
11. Beat together the eggs and cheese.
12. Once cool, add the eggs and cheese to the mixture. Stir to combine.
13. Season the mixture with salt and pepper to taste if needed.
14. If the mixture is too loose, add up to 1 cup of breadcrumbs to firm it up.
15. Preheat the oven to 350° F
16. Rub the zucchini shells with olive oil and season with salt and pepper.
17. Fill the zucchini halves with the mixture.
18. Place in a baking sheet prepared with cooking spray.
19. Add about ½ inch of water in the baking dish. This will help cook the zucchini and prevent it from burning.
20. Bake on the middle rack for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until the meat mixture is golden and crisp. Depending on the size, you may need more or less time. My giant zucchini took over 1 ½ hours.
21. Serve with your favorite marinara sauce and top with more grated cheese.
22. COOKS NOTE: Many Maltese cooks make a one pot dish by adding potatoes. (Qarabagħli mimli fil forn bil patata) Simply layer the bottom of the baking dish with peeled & sliced potatoes and onions that have been tossed in olive oil. Season with salt, pepper, garlic powder, fennel seeds, and a little tomato paste. I would still add some water to the baking dish to aid in the cooking process. Place the stuffed zucchini on top and bake.

MALTESE VIOLINIST IAN ELLUL

Ian Ellul started playing the violin at the age of eight. He was tutored by Ms. Lydia Micallef Sanchez for 8 years at the Johann Strauss School of Music. Afterwards, he continued his studies under the tuition of Mr. Mario Bisazza were with his guidance, Ian obtained the Violin Dip. ABRSM.

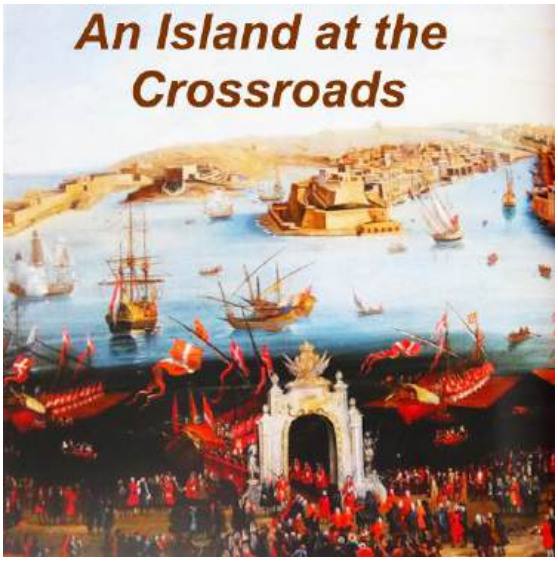
Maltese violinist Ian Ellul studied at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels from September 2019 until September 2024.

There, he obtained both his Bachelor's and Master's degree. Before his studies abroad, Ellul interned with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra for two orchestral seasons.

During his internship he toured with the MPO in 2018 in the USA & Russia Tour.

While studying in Brussels he continued his collaboration with the MPO and toured with them in January 2024 in Italy.

Ian is currently a freelance musician based in Lörrach, Germany. He is a recipient of the Arts Scholarship, financed by the Government of Malta.

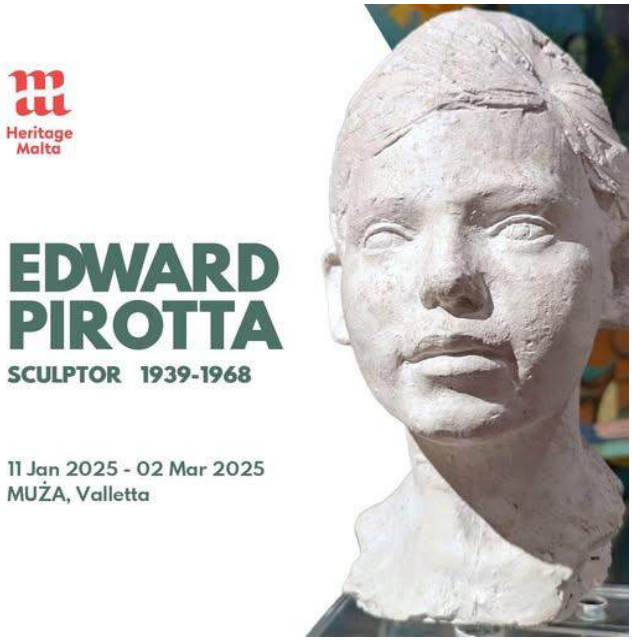


Marking the completion of the first phase of the the Malta Maritime Museum project in Birgu, partly financed through the EEA Norway Grants 2014-2021, Heritage Malta has set up an impressive, one-of-a-kind temporary exhibition for a whole year inside the museum.

Malta is an island nation, its destiny dictated by the waves that have battered its shores for centuries. Its people have ventured beyond those shores to the ends of the world, turning their biggest natural barrier into a bridge. A bridge that has brought them into contact with the whole world. A world that has delivered to the island war, famine, riches and prosperity: creating in the process 'An Island at the Crossroads.' The result of curators past and curators present, 'An Island at the Crossroads' is our attempt to read between the lines and uncover the identity of this island nation.

'An Island at the Crossroads' delves into Malta's strategic location in the Mediterranean, revealing a tapestry of tales shaped by the sea's impact on the island nation and its identity. The artefacts on exhibit, tell a compelling story about love, conflict, and the difficulties experienced by those who crossed the sea for a fresh start. They range from ex-voto paintings to antique seafaring instruments.

This year-long immersive and state-of-the-art exhibition, opens on the 9th of February 2024. Admission fee is at €8 for adults, €6 for seniors/students/concession and €4 for children. The exhibition will open daily (except on Tuesdays) from 9 am to 5 pm throughout February, and from March to December 2024, it will be open every day from 10 am to 6 pm.



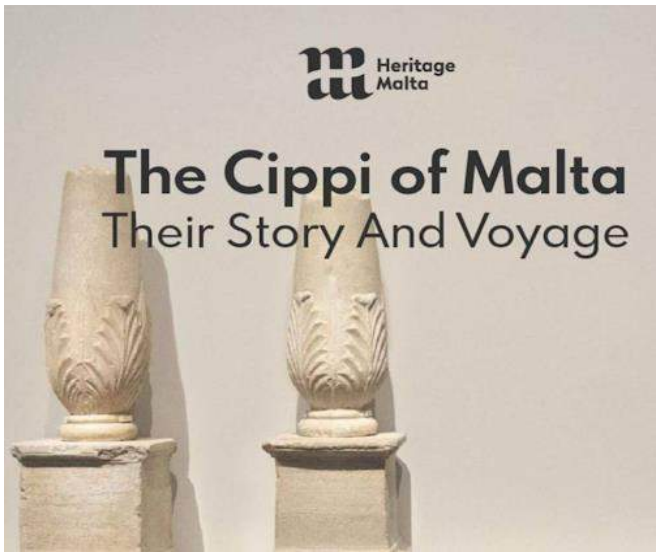
HERITAGE MALTA

Edward Pirotta (1939-1968) was a modern Maltese sculptor, considered by many as a remarkable artist.

For the first time in 59 years, the sculptures of this artist are reunited in an exhibition at MUŻA. His sculptural works focus on the human form, capturing timeless beauty and emotion. This exhibition celebrates the legacy of a prodigy, shining a well-deserved spotlight on his artistic contributions.

Accompanying this exhibition is a publication about his works, giving a fitting tribute to this Maltese artist.

Prof. Joseph Paul Cassar is the author of the publication and curator of this exhibition.



For the first time since their celebrated display at the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the Cippi of Malta are reunited once again, this time at the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta. This exhibition runs until 31st March 2025.

The Cippi, two marble pillars from the 2nd century BC, hold immense historical significance due to the bilingual Phoenician and Greek inscriptions they bear. These inscriptions were pivotal in the decipherment of the Phoenician script by French scholar Jean-Jacques Barthélemy in 1758.

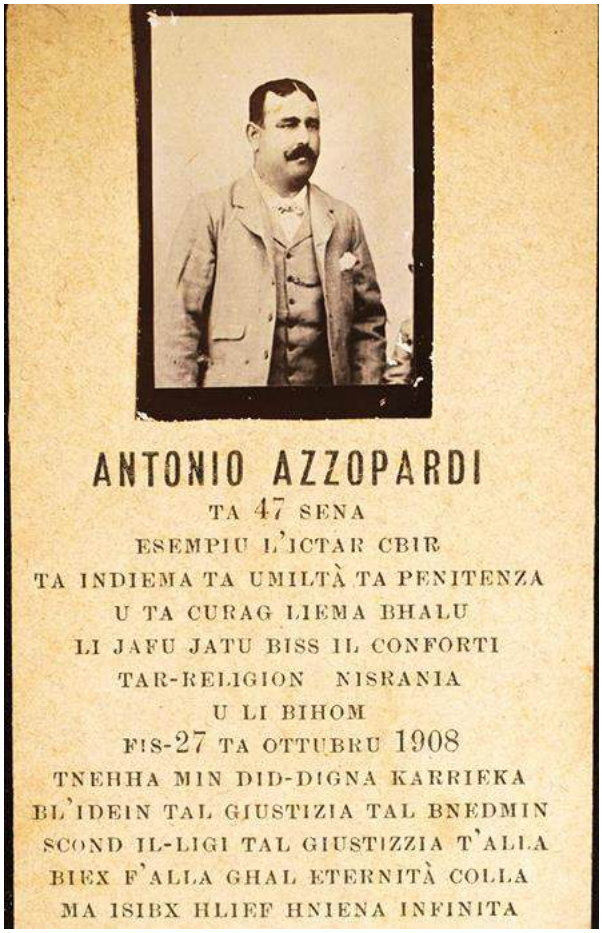
In 1782, one of the Cippi was gifted to France by Grand Master de Rohan as a gesture of scholarly and diplomatic exchange. Since then, it has resided at the Louvre Museum in Paris, while its twin remained in Valletta. Their temporary reunion at the Louvre Abu Dhabi last year marked a historic cultural partnership between Malta and the United Arab Emirates. Now, thanks to a collaboration with the Louvre, the Cippi are once again on Maltese soil, enabling further public engagement with these iconic relics.

The exhibition also illuminates ongoing mysteries about the Cippi's origins, as scholars continue to explore when and how they first arrived in Malta. Visitors are invited to connect with both the distant past and the modern history of these timeless monuments. An illustrated accompanying publication is also available for purchase.

Admission to the exhibition is included with the museum ticket. The museum is open daily from 09:00 to 17:00 until 5th January 2025, after which it will be closed on Tuesdays till the end of February. Further updates about opening hours can be found here Opening Hours – Heritage Malta.

INTERESTING READING

Memories of the gallows in Malta



Trials attracted morbid curiosity and macabre pageantry

Giovanni Bonello

In memoriam holy picture with rare text in Maltese (santa tal-mejtin) for Antonio Azzopardi, hanged on October 27, 1908 for the homicide of Giuseppe Camenzuli.

Malta's parliament formally abolished the death penalty in the year 2000, though, in practice, no person had suffered capital punishment since 1943, when the hangman, Wiġi Cutajar, executed the brothers Giuseppi and Carmelo Zammit for the homicide of Spiridione Grech.

Later, the courts condemned a few others to death but the head of state reprieved them.

A member of the Rosarianti collecting alms in Old Bakery Street, Valletta.

Trials for capital crimes – homicide, treason, etc. – riveted the nation. The proceedings in court attracted morbid curiosity.

The actual execution followed macabre pageantry, not least the three-day presence of the spooky masked *Rosarianti della Misericordia* in the streets of Valletta.

This ancient confraternity, said to date back to 1575, recruited only aristocrats, higher bourgeoisie, professionals and wealthy businessmen.

Procession after the execution of Giuseppe Tabone, March 26, 1923.

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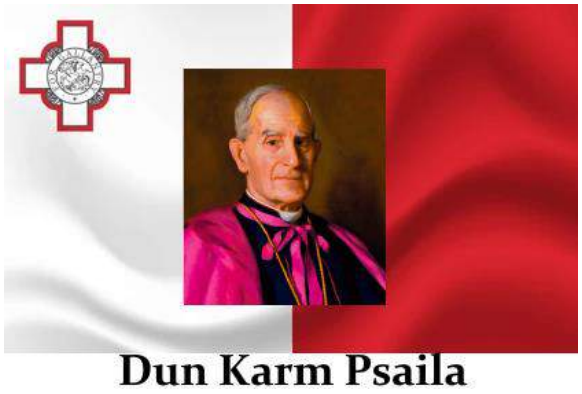
On the days of the execution, they collected alms for the repose of the soul of the ones who paid the ultimate price to justice and to relieve the family of the victim. Many contemporary postcards testify to the irresistible lure of the ghoulish.

I opted not to dabble in criminal law. When my father was imprisoned and exiled in World War II, I grew up with my uncle, the most prominent lawyer in Malta – a criminal jurist of compulsive learning and obsessive integrity. I still recall the tensions, the prayers, the stress in the proximity of capital trials in which he served as defence counsel – there was to be faultless silence at home.

Fascist propaganda portrait of Carmelo Borg Pisani in blackshirt. He was hanged in 1942 for espionage and treachery.

Ziju Bertu's last two gallows trials regarded the art student Carmelo Borg Pisani, hanged in 1942 for espionage and treason, and the Żammit brothers. He then vowed not to take on other death penalty cases and left the field to Ġużè Flores, another brilliant jurist in the criminal field. Unless otherwise stated, all images from the author's collections.



Dun Karm was born in Zebbug, Malta, on 18 October 1871. In 1894 he was ordained priest and he published his first collection of poems in 1896. Dun Karm wrote his early poetry in Italian but started writing in Maltese from 1912 onwards, becoming one of the leading figures in Maltese literary writing and in the promotion of the Maltese language. In 1921 Dun Karm wrote the verses of the Innu Malti, the Maltese national anthem. In 1945 the Royal University of Malta bestowed on him an honorary degree of Doctor of Literature. In 1956 he was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) by Queen Elizabeth II in recognition of his contribution to Maltese literature. Dun Karm died on 13 October 1961, aged 90.His writings are distinguished by the use of the recurring elements in his poems, such as the sea, the skiff ('id-dgħajsa'), and the ash and carob trees, in order to refer to such issues as the passage of time, old age, the loss of a loved one, and the evanescence of life. Like many great Maltese writers, Dun Karm Psaila favored philosophical thematic content achieved through the use of an environmental symbolic structure.

His poetic expression in his solitude, which was eventually accompanied by a high degree of spiritual balance. His poetry reflects a background of village life crowned with an atmosphere of family feelings, and it also portrays the Maltese countryside with a perspective imagination.

MALTA'S NATIONAL ANTHEM

Lil din l-art ħelwa, l-Omm li tatna isimha,
Ħares, Mulej, kif dejjem Int ħarist:
Ftakar li lilha bil-oħla dawl libbist.

Agħti, kbir Alla, id-dehen lil min jaħkimha,
Rodd il-ħniena lis-sid, is-saħħa lill-ħaddiem:
Seddaq il-għaqda fil-Maltin u s-sliem.