550th Edition

11 YEARS OF SERVING THE MALTESE DIASPORA 2025

THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal for Maltese Living Abroad

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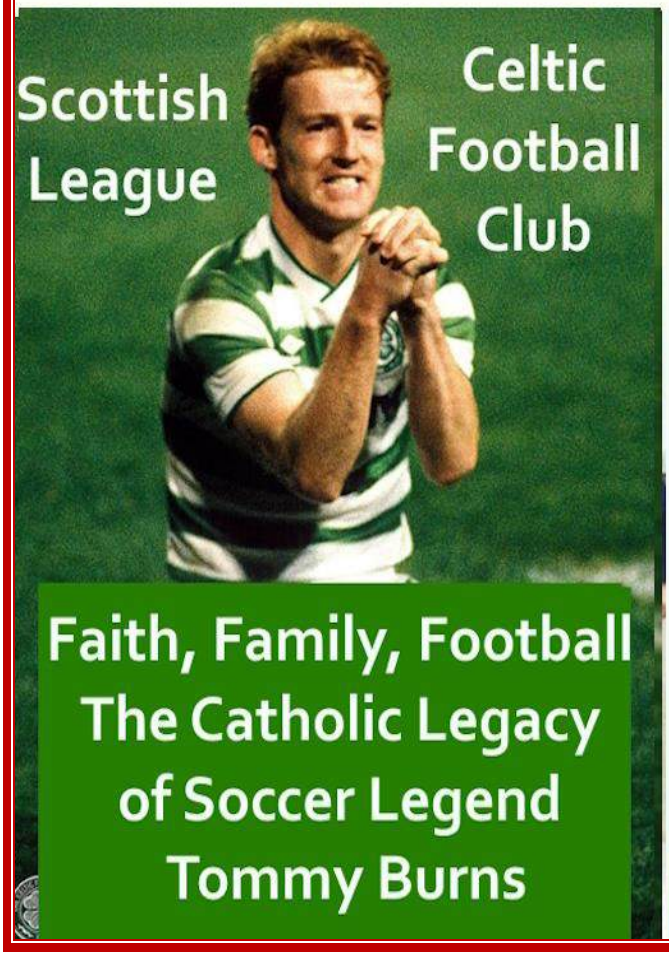
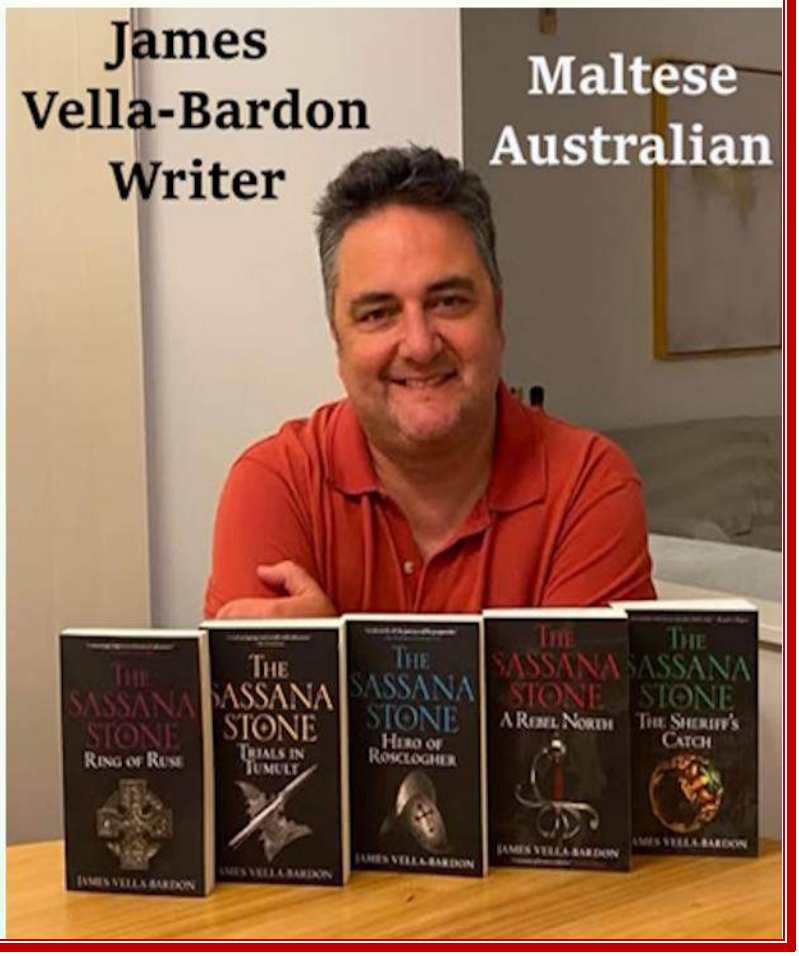
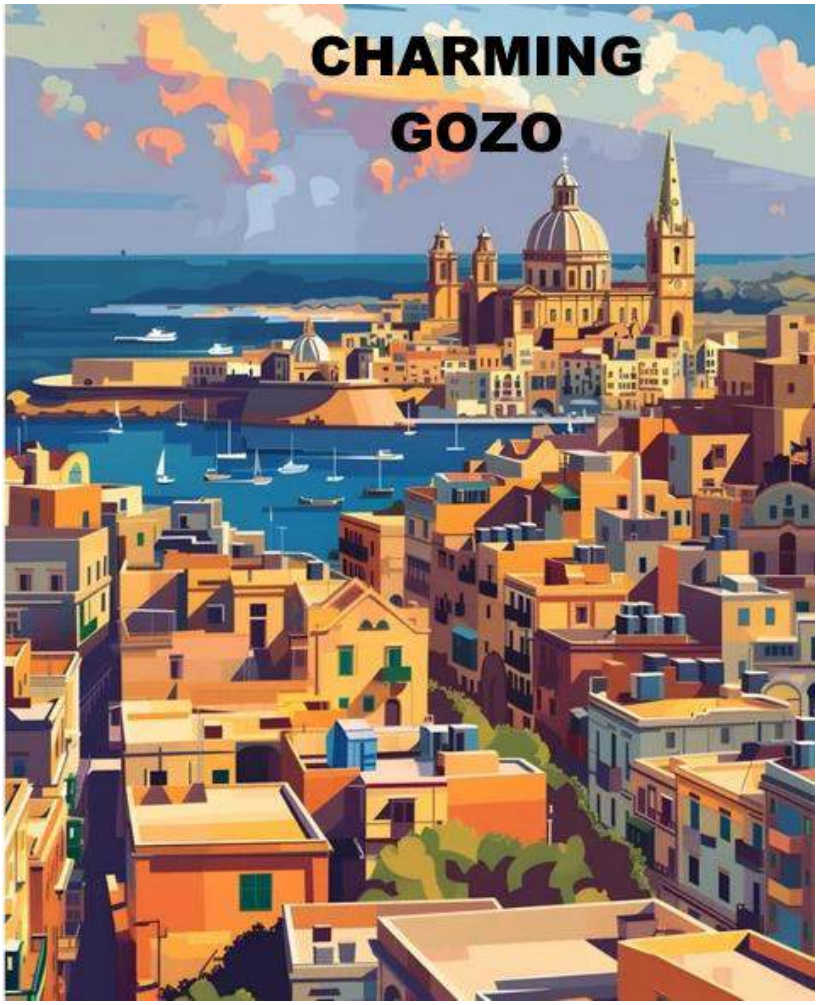




Empowering Gozo: A Call for True Autonomy New movement set up



by Gozo News

A new movement has been set up to call for Gozo "to be given what it truly deserves. Autonomous democratic leadership. To encourage both parties to consider this important step." The name of the movement is – Empowering Gozo: A Call for True Autonomy.

It stressed that Gozo's geographical separation from Malta and its history of self-governance demonstrate a strong case for autonomy. "From the island's brief independence from French control in 1798 to the establishment of the Gozo Civic Council in 1961 and later the Ministry for Gozo, Gozitans have shown resilience and a capacity for self-leadership."

The movement said that while recent efforts by the Maltese government, including the creation of the Standing Committee for Gozo Affairs, have acknowledged Gozo's unique needs, "these steps are seen as symbolic rather than substantive."

"Advocates argue that only a democratically elected regional government could enable Gozo to address its challenges in tourism, infrastructure, and sustainability, allowing it to fully realise its potential," the movement said.

It added that "as Gozitans celebrate their history and look to the future, there is a call for political leaders to commit to a governance model that truly empowers the island's residents."

Empowering Gozo appealed for the public to "please **join this movement** so that we can make a united effort to press authorities toward achieving true autonomy for Gozo."

11 years of issuing the MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER around the globe. You certainly put MALTA on the map.

G. Stagno Navarra

The history of the Maltese Community in Adelaide dates back to the 1800s. Many Maltese chose to live in Adelaide instead of Melbourne and Sydney either because they had relatives already residing here or because they there were a lot of opportunities to find employment. Progressively, the community became stronger and very active especial after the influx of Maltese migrants from the 1940 to 1970. We are proud to state that we had many enthusiastic and hard-working leaders and members in the community. But unfortunately, these last few years we lost so many Malta-born migrants that several associations are struggling to survive. We witnessed the end of several clubs including the Maltese Language and Folk-dancing School, RSL Maltese Branch, Soccer Club and a Maltese program on local radio stations. But, let's be positive. We still have with us many members who are eager to keep the Maltese culture alive. I would like to give a special mention to the Maltese Guild of SA, the Maltese Community Council, the St. Catherine Society, the Maltese Senior Citizens Association, the Maltese Queen of Victories Band, the Maltese Aged Care Ass., the Chaplaincy Committee and the Maltese Radio Program on EBIfm.

UNITE AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER IF YOU WANT TO SURVIVE.

MEET OUR SPECIAL PERSONALITY - DORIS

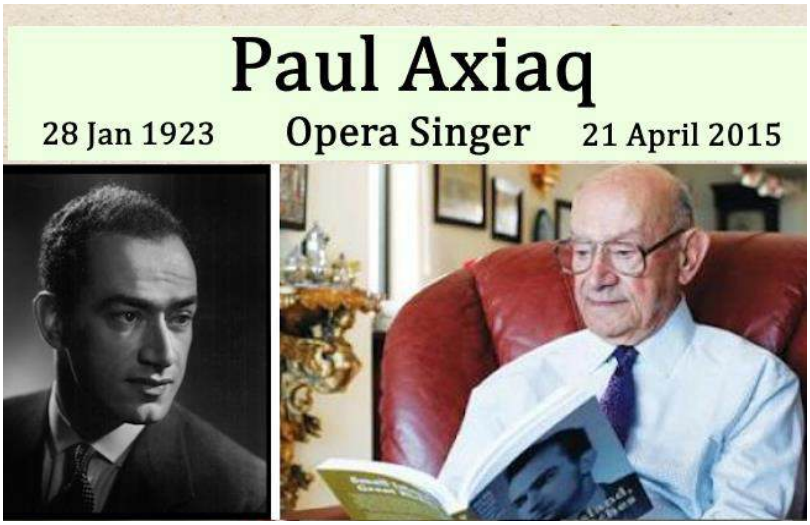
Today we have a happy story, and we would like to share it with you. It is about a lovely lady who has been involved within the Maltese community in South Australia for decades.

Doris Saliba (now Mangion) was born in 1936 in Hamrun, Malta. Doris loves the Maltese culture especially the TEATRIN. In her teenage years she used to attend theatrical performances nearly every weekend at the St. Joseph Band Club which is situated opposite the Hamren Parish Church in the main street of the town. The ***teatrin***, especially in the 50s and 60s, was very popular among the Maltese. In those days the TV, computers, ipads and mobiles did not exist. So, Doris, like the rest of the Maltese, used to play outdoors, go to church, read books and listen to the Rediffusion regularly. Doris' main hobby was singing although she used to help her mother in domestic chores as well.

Doris on the stage in Malta in the 50s

At 15 Doris joined the theatrical company called The ***Giuzeppini***. She was very talented on the stage in theatrical plays and especially she was very eager to sing because she had a very melodious voice. She sang songs in Maltese, English and Italian. Each village in Malta holds a feast of the patron saint(s). In Hamrun Doris together with her family and friends used to take part in the festivities of St. Gaetano, the patron saint of Hamrun.

Her main enjoyment was to go the beach and listen to the local radio station called ***Rediffusion*** and joined in the songs they used to broadcast very frequently. Then Doris together with her family migrated to Australia in 1957. They settled in Adelaide and soon after her arrival she joined the other Maltese migrants in Adelaide and became a member of several associations. Although she is advanced in age, she still attends functions organised by the clubs Now she is surrounded by her dear family, and she adores her children and grandchildren. She is also an avid reader of the Maltese e-Newsletter which she collects from the Maltese Senior Citizens Club at Kilburn every Friday. The editor, Frank Scicluna and the readers of the Maltese Journal wish Doris good health, happiness and God's blessings for the future. *Source: J. Mangion*



Paul Asciak was born in Valletta, Malta on January 28, 1923. His talent showed early enough and he spent years of singing in the famed St James Choir, Valletta. He started taking his first singing lessons with Maltese tenor Nicolò Baldacchino. He made his first operatic debut as Turiddu in Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Radio City Opera House in Malta on December 8, 1946.

In January 1950 after being coached by Mro Luigi Cantoni, Paul Asciak took the role of Radamés in Verdi's *Aida* with the visiting Italian Opera Company "Impresa Cantoni" at The Radio City Opera House in Malta. In the same year Asciak was invited to sing with the visiting famous Italian tenor Tito Schipa and with the renowned Italian soprano Maria Caniglia in March and May respectively.

He was encouraged to further his studies by the latter and he went to Rome in March 1950.Asciak made his debut at the Radio City Opera House in Malta in 1946, playing 'Turiddu' in Mascagni's 'Cavalleria Rusticana'. He went on to study in Rome's Teatro dell'Opera. He trained under Mro Luigi Ricci and Riccardo Picozzi in Rome and in 1951, played 'Radames' in the theatre's Spoleto production of 'Aida'.

Asciak performed alongside a number of celebrated singers, including Anita Cerquetti, Peter Glossop, Benvenuto Franci and Maria Callas, as well as a number of acclaimed conductors, throughout his career. He retired in 1961.

He joined the Education Department in 1961 and retired as Head of Department of Music in 1984. In the meantime he was also Director of Music at St Edward's College between 1967 and 1973. Between 1965 and 1988, he was also Honorary Representative of Trinity College of Music, London, for Malta and Gozo. He went on to 'discover' Joseph Calleja, training him in the tradition of fine singing and honing Calleja's unique style and voice.

EIGHT MALTESE COULD BE DEPORTED BY TRUMP'S EXECUTIVE ORDER

8 Maltese citizens could be deported from the United States after finding themselves on the list of people who could be deported. This comes after US President Donald Trump is issuing tough orders that will affect all those who do not have permission to live in the United States. According to a list published by a website in Nigeria, there are people from 150 countries who could be affected – including Maltese citizens. In total, this order by Trump is expected to affect 1.4 million people. The most affected nationalities are Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

MONS. VICTOR GRECH

The death of Mons. Victor Grech, who through his work changed the way Maltese society viewed and dealt with issues such as drugs, alcoholism, poverty and social injustice, has been announced. Mons.

Grech died on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 9:58am at Mater Dei Hospital, at the age of 95. On behalf of the Church in Malta, Archbishop Charles Scicluna paid tribute to the memory of Mons. Grech as “a priest and benefactor of the nation who dedicated his life to Caritas Malta and shaped its mission and vision for decades”.

Biography of Mons. Victor Grech Mons.

Victor Grech was born on 19 October 1929 in Cospicua and was ordained a priest on 17 March 1956. He served as Vice-Rector of the Seminary (1956-1962) and Rector of the Seminary (1962-1977), and was also National Director for Vocations.

During his time as Rector of the Seminary, Mons. Grech helped to establish the community of Maltese Priests in Brazil, and worked closely with Mons. Dellaport to open the European Seminary in Maastricht. For many years he taught Homiletics in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta and gave lectures on social themes to students at Mater Admirabilis Training College in Tal-Virtù.

In 1977 he was appointed Archbishop’s Delegate in the Secretariat for Social and Charity Work of the Church. In 1985 he founded Caritas Malta, of which he was Director until 2014, and the first therapeutic community in Malta for drug abusers. He made every effort to promote educational programs on drug awareness and prevention in State, private and Church schools. Mons.

Victor Grech also founded a foundation for residential rehabilitation, and opened four residential centres and an outreach centre. He was a member of the Executive of Caritas Europa and served for many years on the Board of Caritas Internationalis.

In 2012, he was awarded the European Citizen Award by the European Parliament for his long work in the social field and for sowing the real significance of the European spirit of solidarity and volunteerism both in Malta and in Europe

For 40 years, Mons. Grech presented and broadcast radio programmes on youth and family issues. In 2021 he was awarded the Active Elderly Award and in 2023 he was recognised with the National Worker of the Year Award. The last honour given to Mons. Grech was in December 2024 when he received the Special National Award for Voluntary Work.

Simon Salafia gives fascinating talk on Catalan personal names in Gozitan dialects

by Gozo News ·

Wirt Ghawdex has held its first event in this year's programme, when guest speaker, Simon Salafia, gave a fascinating talk about , which left the audience enthralled.

During the event, held at the Santa Cecilia Chapel in Xewkija, Slafia described how one may decipher some names with a very plausible Catalan import, expounding on how this could have come about, and highlighted which surnames of Catalan origin are mostly evident in the Gozitan toponomic landscape.

From his two publications about Gozitan toponyms, Simon Salafia is able to decipher some names with a very plausible Catalan import.

Simon Salafia studied at the University of Malta graduating in Electrical Engineering. Following his interest in the Spanish Language, he studied this language up to its highest level – gaining the Proficiency Level of the Diploma of Spanish as a Foreign Language, D.E.L.E. (Superior), from the University of Salamanca.

He taught Spanish at the Spanish-Maltese Centre (CCHM), Government Schools, Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) and as a visiting lecturer at the University of Malta.

His main interests include Maltese History and Culture, with special reference to the Medieval Period. He is a licensed tourist guide and a professional interpreter (in Spanish, English and Maltese,with Italian as a passive language). In 2020, he published the first volume of The Place-Names of Gozo. This was followed by the second volume in 2022.

Simon is currently focusing his research on three different fields: collecting place names of Malta and Gozo; collecting historical Maltese first names, with the intention to publish a Dictionary of Maltese Names; and investigating the possibility of words of Catalan origin in the Maltese Language.

Wirt Ghawdex expressed thanks to Simon Salafia, all those who attended, and sponsors, APS Bank and Delicata.

THE PRESIDENT MEETS CHEV. ATTARD

The President of Malta Her Excellency Myriam Spiteri Debono during her official visit to Gozo conveys her condolences to Chev Joe M Attard, our correspond, for the loss of his dear wife Marija who died recently.

Joe is a prolific writer, poet and radio broadcaster and a very well know personality in Gozo, the sister island of Malta.

FUNERAL MHUX TAS-SOLTU

Kav Joe M Attard
Ghawdex-Malta

Għadni kemm għalaqt 79 imma ma niftakar qatt li rajt funeral li fih ħadu sehem f'salt erba' kadavri minn Malta wara li ħadd ma ndenja li jagħtihom funeral deċenti u modest. Jidher li ħadd minn nieshom ma resaq 'il quddiem biex jieħu ħsiebhom wara mewthom jew inkella forsi ma kellhomx nieshom jew forsi ħadd minn qrabathom ma kien se jmissu xejn għax ma kellhomx x'wirt x'joffru. Fl-erbgħinijiet nismagħhom jgħidu li kien sar funeral kbir meta luzzu għereq bejn Malta u Għawdex lejn l-aħħar ta' Otubru u minn 27 ruħ, salvaw biss tlieta min-nies, imma il-vittmi kellhom qrabathom, ħuthom, il-ġenituri tagħhom u l-familjari li ħadu ħsieb tawhom difna kif kien xieraq. Mhux biss imma d-Dipartiment tal-Kultura fi ħdan il-Ministeru għal Għawdex għadu sallum ta' kull sena ifakkar din it-tifkira b'quddiesa fuq il-vapuri tal-Gozo Channel u anke ħoloq Monument fl-Imġarr biex ma jintesewx. Hekk xieraq u sewwa.

Intant minn tant parroċċi f'Malta u Għawdex kellha tkun il-Parroċċa ta'San Gorġ martri Victoria li għażlet li tidhol għal din l-ispisa u toffri li ġġib il-mejtin minn Malta, tagħmlilhom quddiesa 'presente cadavere' fil-Bażilika u tidfinhom fl-oqbra tagħha fiċ-Ċimiterju ta' Santa Marija limiti tax-Xewkija. Verament il-Parroċċa qed tonora waħda mill-pitturi li nsibu fil-Bażilika tagħha, xogħol il-pittur żagħżugħ Rabti Manwel Farrugia. Din hi waħda mill-opri tal-Ħniena li wieħed jista' jammira meta jirfes 'il ġewwa mill-għatba ta' din il-Knisja parrokkjali fil-qalba tal-Belt Victoria.

Għawdxin minn kull rokna ta' ġżiritna imlew il-Knisja Gorġjana għal din l-okkażjoni li fiha ħadu sehem għadd sabiħ ta saċerdoti mmexxija mill-Arċipriet tal-Parroċċa Dun Joseph Curmi bis-sehem tal-Kor Laudate Pueri. F'kelmtejn li niseġ l-Arċipriet huwa qal li ma kienx faċli li tasal biex tagħmel din l-okkażjoni mhix komuni u radd ħajr lill-għadd ta' entitajiet fosthom il-Ministeru tas-Saħħa kif ukoll lill-Parroċċa li ħadmu id f'id u li issa li sar dan il-pass it-triq hija miftuħa għall-parroċċi oħra li jiddeċiedu li jagħmlu l-istess jekk qatt tinqala' l-ħtieġa. Huwa żied jgħid li l-pitturi li hemm f'din il-knisja li juru l-Opri tal-Ħniena ma humiex qegħdin hemm biex nammirawhom biss imma biex jekk ikun hemm bżonn inqiegħduhom fil-prattika bħalma ġara. Fit-tmiem din il-lejla, tqassmu kopji tal-pubblikazzjoni li ppubblikat il-Parroċċa, ta' dawn il-Pitturi tal-Ħniena lil kull min kien preżenti.

Il-kadavri ta' Raymond Balzan, Anthony Borg, Valerie Jean Austin u Albert Tanti qalgħu applaws qawwi meta ħallew il-presbiterju tal-Bażilika u qabdu triqthom biex jindifnu fl-oqra tal-parroċċa li hemm fiċ-Ċimiterju ta' Santa Marija. Jalla l-Mulej ma jdumx ma jdaħħalhom 'il ġewwa mill-għatba tal-Genna fejn nifhem li kull maħluq jixtieq imur!

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If you want to send a donation to continue publishing this journal here are my bank details

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New project, Digitization of Maltese-Canadian migrants' memories

Toronto's Maltese-Canadian Museum joins forces with Magna Żmien to preserve 'forgotten' stories

NationalMigrationCultureHistory

Kartolini Mill-Kanada's sharing session which will involve a talk and presentation on the project. Photo: Magna Zmien Foundation

The Magna Żmien Foundation and the Maltese-Canadian Museum in Toronto are launching a new initiative to preserve the memories of Maltese migrants.

Through the collaborative project, the foundation encourages the public to digitise and safeguard their personal and family collections of photographs and other analogue media.

The Kartolini Mill-Kanada project aims to save Maltese-Canadian memories from being lost while fostering a deeper appreciation of their legacy.

Magna Żmien is inviting the public to a Sharing Session on Saturday at 11 a.m. at the Valletta Design Cluster, where they will provide updates on the project following the team's visit to Canada late last year.

"The story of Maltese migrants is often forgotten, and these people gave a valid contribution to their host countries," said Andrew Alamango, artistic director of Magna Żmien.

He highlighted how some Maltese Canadians became parliamentary secretaries, worked for Google, and served as key figures in their communities.

Andrew Alamango at the entrance of the Museum, which is situated right near the St Paul The Apostle Church. Photo:Magna Żmien Foundation

Alamango emphasised that these stories are more relevant than ever. Noting that after World War II, Maltese migrants moved to host countries like the UK, Australia, and Canada.

"But now, Malta has become a host country for many people. However, we have forgotten that in times of trouble, we migrated. We move because we have to, not because we want to."

During their visit to Canada, the Magna Żmien team toured the Maltese-Canadian Museum in Toronto, a partner in this initiative.

The museum, curated by Richard Cumbo, opened to the public in 2017 and houses thousands of Maltese-related artefacts, ranging from Neolithic figurines to a large exhibit on the "Miss Malta Pageant," which was organised by the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto from 1922 to 2019.

"In the early 1900s, life for the small Toronto Maltese community was very difficult. Prejudice and discrimination were rampant among the mainly English population. However, with the huge influx of Maltese after World War II, the attitude towards the Maltese (and other minor ethnic groups) changed for the better, and life became easier," Cumbo explained.

Richard Cumbo – Museum Director- Canada

Richard Cumbo, curator of the Maltese Canadian Museum Photo: Magna Żmien Foundation

The museum operates without funding and relies on volunteers, all of whom are over 75 years old. Despite these challenges, it is enthusiastic about collaborating with Magna Żmien to ensure the continuity of its work.

Cumbo hopes the museum can eventually serve as a digitisation hub but, for now, it will act as a point of contact for Maltese-Canadian families who wish to contribute their photos, videos, or audio. These materials will be digitised either in Malta or at York University in Toronto.

A CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN LAUNCHED IN AN ATTEMPT TO HAVE A CELTIC LEGEND SOCCER PLAYER CANONISED BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

It would see him become the first footballer to ever be made a saint and just the second Scot since the Reformation, following the martyr, St John Ogilvie.

The campaign is for Celtic legend Tommy Burns

Credit: Kenny Ramsay - The Sun Glasgow

Burns playing for CelticCredit: Allsport - Getty

Celtic icon Tommy Burns is the man a group are campaigning to be canonised.

Chris McLaughlin, Philip Church and Robert Docherty have teamed up to present a case to the Bishop of Paisley, Bishop John Keenan.

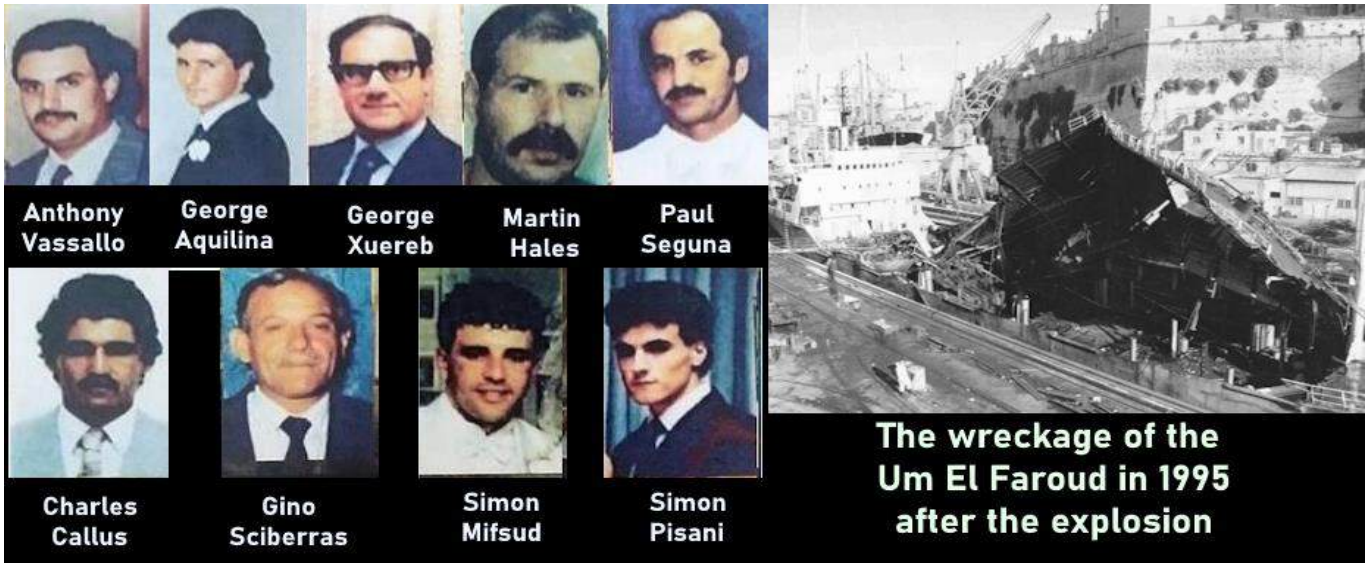
The Burns family have already given them their blessing, prior to the Hoops legend's wife Rosemary's unexpected passing last year. It was a close friend of Burns, Father Robert Farrell, who came up with the idea to present a case to the Catholic Church.

He has consistently said that Burns deserves to be sainted ever since his death in 2008.

Speaking on the Diocese of Paisley podcast, McLaughlin said: “He signed for Celtic at the age of 17 in 1973 and debuted in the first team a couple of years later and had a successful career in football and then in coaching and management.

“None of that, in itself, makes you a saint. What he’s also known for is a life of extraordinary sanctity and holiness which basically anybody who knew him seems to be able to talk about at some length.

"He was a daily mass goer, he prayed a great deal, his religion meant a great deal to him and he put it into action in a concrete way.



Nine died after Um El Faroud tanker explodes at Malta Drydocks in 1995

On this day**, 3rd February 1995**, nine dockyard workers were killed in an explosion on board a small Libyan tanker **Um el Faroud** in the Malta Drydocks.

The blast is believed to have been caused by an accumulation of gas which ignited at about 10.30 p.m., devastating the mid and bow sections of the 115-metre long vessel.

The 3,148-tonne Libyan tanker Um el Faroud exploded in Dock 3.

On that day, the Malta Financial Services Centre building at Mriehel was being inaugurated, but all of a sudden the top authorities were hurriedly called out and rushed to the Dockyard.

The victims were all working on the Libyan state-owned Um El Faroud tanker when, at around 10:15pm, an explosion on board ripped the tanker's central section.

The victims were Carmelo Callus, 47, of Valletta, George Aquilina, 25, of Qormi, Simon Pisani, 22, of Msida, Simon Mifsud, 27, of Vittoriosa, Mario Hales, 40, of Mqabba, Angelo Sciberras, 52, of Żabbar, George Xuereb, 58, of Qormi, Paul Seguna, 37, of Żebbuġ, and Anthony Vassallo, 30, of Dingli. Seven of the workers died instantly. The other two suffered grievous injuries, and later died at St Luke's Hospital. While in the ambulance, Xuereb reportedly asked the medical staff what had happened to his co-workers.

The explosion was of such scale that it shook houses in nearby towns – one house in Senglea even reported windows breaking – and ripped the ship open like a sardine can. In 1998, after the inquiry was concluded, the ship was scuttled off Wied iz-Zurrieq for usage as an artificial shipwreck and a diving attraction. A brass plaque was stuck to the ship as a memorial to the nine workers.

Based on reports from the Malta Independent.

THE MALTA DOCKYARD was an important naval base in the Grand Harbour in Malta in the Mediterranean Sea. The infrastructure which is still in operation is now operated by Palumbo Shipyards.

Pre-1800 the Knights of Malta established dockyard facilities within the Grand Harbour to maintain their fleet of galleys. These were spread between the cities of Senglea, Cospicua and Vittoriosa. When Malta became a British protectorate in 1800, these facilities were inherited, and gradually consolidated, by the Royal Navy. With the loss of Menorca, Malta swiftly became the Navy's principal Mediterranean base.

IL-LUNZJATA VALLEY, GOZO.

As you leave the Agostinian church and convent in Victoria,Gozo , leaving behind you the Oratory of Don Bosco too, you immediately reach the downhill road between the rubble walls that leads to Lunzjata Valley, located right under the village of Ta' Kerċem. In this valley peace is the order of the day and the hand of the creator is visible on the beauty of the nature, at its best here. The valley is essentially the start of a much bigger valley that flows all the way down to the popular Xlendi Bay. Entrance to the valley is through an archway known as Bieb is-Sultan close to which is a statue of St. Joseph. This valley took its name from the old, semi-troglodytic church that dominates the place, dedicated to the Annunciation of Our Lady, hence 'Annunzjata' which over time became 'Lunzjata'. Records of a chapel date back to 1370 but the building underwent several changes since then. This church is very well kept and its preservation is of utmost importance as it is only one of two churches on the islands that is partially built into a natural cave. Further down from the church we find an old fountain that was built by Ercole Martino Testaferrata, one of the rectors of the church at the time of Grand Master Ramon Perellos in 1698.This valley was very sought after by Grand Masters for hunting during the Order's time in **Malta**.

A RICH VALLEY FULL OF HERITAGE

Because of this abundance of water, this valley is one of the few places supporting the rare Fresh Water Crab (Il-Qabru). Fields are still cultivated without the use of machinery.

GOZO'S GREEN GATE: BIEB IS-SULTAN

The thick-walled archway is the entrance to Lunzjata valley. Known as Bieb is-Sultan (the Sultan's Gate), the gate is built in limestone, faces north and is slightly sloped downwards.

DAMAGE NOT REPAIRED

The top part of the gate, which is accessible through a flight of stairs at the rear, was in the past years used by NGOs and as government offices, but since several large stones collapsed from the gate, everything was abandoned and cordoned off. Since then, nothing has been repaired.

THE FOUNTAIN

The fountain, also known as Għajn il-Kbir, is located in one of Gozo's most picturesque valleys where water flows down throughout the whole year. It is said that all the streams from the surrounding hills meet below the fountain and the sound of running water can be heard all year round. The fountain was used by the many Gozitans who came to obtain precious water from this side of the valley.

The inscription on the fountain commemorates the intervention of Ercole Martino Testaferrata who was barely 14 years old in 1698, the year when the fountain was installed. There are also two coat-of-arms, replicas of the originals which deteriorated beyond repair, the one on top belonging to Ercole Testaferrata and the other to Grand Master Perellos.

FOUNTAIN RESTORATION

The fountain was restored in 2008 by Din l'Art Ħelwa in collaboration with the Ta' Kerċem Local Council and the work was entrusted to master mason Leli Saliba known as Leli l-Bufajra. The work was sponsored by The Alfred Mizzi Foundation. The coats of arms were extensively deteriorated and unrecognisable and so had to be replaced by faithful replicas. Water was still flowing into the fountain all throughout the year but some of the stones around the sides and rear required

replacement. The rest of the fountain was cleaned and pointed. The water basins found along the side and in front of the fountain required conservation work.

THE STATUE OF ST. JOSEPH

On the right of the Lunzjata Valley gate is a statue depicting St. Joseph adorning the wall. In the past, the old arch was vandalized. It was later widened.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Further down the lane next to the fountain, carob and olive trees adorn the slopes rising around it. There are terraced fields supported by traditional stone rubble walls (Maltese: ħitan tas-sejjieħ). Fig trees are numerous in the valley and cane is abundant. An old windmill is still standing.

Lunzjata Valley is a Natura 2000 site and hence protected under EU regulations due to the diversity of species found within it that flourish from the water continuously running from its springs. Among these is the rare endemic Maltese fresh water crab (Potamon fluviatile lanfrancoi).

This site is also ideal for bird watching as it is one of the most attractive sites for spring and autumn migrant bird species. These include egrets, herons , honey buzzards and flycatchers that are attracted to the dense vegetation.

Other important fauna found in this valley include the predatory leech Haemopis sanguisuga that is found only in Lunzjata, as well as snail populations such as Planorbis moquini and Physa acuta. Moreover, the valley system provide the adequate breeding site for the endemic, protected, Maltese painted frog, the Discoglossus pictus.

MALTA'S OLDEST LIVING PERSON CELEBRATES 109TH BIRTHDAY

Born in 1916, Grace is the granddaughter of Malta's first Prime Minister Joseph Howard.

A birthday party was held in her honour at the Imperial retirement home in Sliema, where she has been residing for a while.

Grace Gatt, the oldest living resident of Malta, celebrates her 109th birthday today, 30 January, according to the *Times of Malta*.

Gatt was born on 30 January 1916. She grew up in a large house in Valletta with her parents and paternal grandparents. Her grandfather, Joseph Howard (1862–1925), became the first prime minister of Malta when she was five and he passed away when she was nine.

In 1940, she married Alfred Gatt, whom she had met through friends who invited her to join a carnival company. A year into their marriage, they were forced to evacuate Valletta when it became too dangerous and relocated to Mosta. Later, they settled in Sliema, In 1942, Gracie gave birth to her son Edgar in a war shelter and her second son John was born less than two years later. She was widowed at 61. Grace loves classical music and is an opera enthusiast. She also has a deep interest in Russian history and culture because was a good friend of with Russian princess Nathalie Poutiatine, who fled to Malta as a refugee after the Bolshevik Revolution and established the country's first ballet school..

According to her son, her cautious nature may have contributed to her longevity, as she believes in moderation and avoiding unnecessary risks and also of her daily habit – a grog of whisky followed by a light dinner of salad and a boiled egg.

Gatt is only the third person in Malta confirmed to have reached the age of 109.

We congratulate Gracie for this great achievement.

Dr Saliba presenting Dr Borg with a copy of European Proverbs

GOZITAN AUTHOR MEETS THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, HON IAN BORG

Gozitan author and MCAST academic Dr Charles Daniel Saliba recently paid a courtesy call on Dr Ian Borg, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism.

During the meeting, Dr Saliba spoke about the importance that diplomats and staff in overseas missions place on Maltese language resources because they help the missions promote Maltese language and culture abroad. Dr Saliba explained how he himself benefited from this. "Fourteen years ago, the President of the International Association of Paremiology, Professor Rui João Baptista Soares, worked with the then honorary Consul of Malta in Tavira, Dr Josè Lisboa, and the Maltese Embassy in Portugal, then led by HE Simon Pullicino, so that Malta would be represented for the first time in the Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs in Tavira, Portugal, the 'City of Proverbs'. This diplomatic kickstart resulted in my twice representing Malta at this international conference, the publication of two research papers and the publication of *Provérbios Europeus/European Proverbs/Proverbji Ewropej* in 2022, coauthored with Professor Soares himself and published by the association. This trilingual book (Portuguese, English and Maltese) was launched under the patronage of then Ambassador of Malta in Portugal, Mr John Camilleri, and his then deputy Mr Mario Buttigieg".

Dr Saliba praised the initiatives taken by the Directorate of Consular Services and Maltese Living Abroad (DCSMLA) within the MFT to promote literacy in the Maltese language outside the Maltese Islands. He stated that they are a step in the right direction and that he has therefore donated complete sets of the first level of the *Maltese for Foreigners* series, which contains *My First 750 Words in Maltese*, *Maltese Grammar Essentials in Context 1* and *Speaking Maltese 1* as well as the Maltese/Italian versions of these books: *Le mie prime 750 parole in maltese*, *Grammatica maltese essenziale e contestuale 1* and *Parlo maltese 1,* and the Maltese/German versions: *Meine ersten 750 Wörter auf Maltesisch*, *Grundlagen der maltesischen Grammatik im Kontext 1* and *Maltesisch sprechen 1*. The books will support the initiatives of the DCSMLA in collaboration with the Centre for the Maltese Language.

At the meeting, Dr Saliba presented the Deputy Prime Minister with the *Maltese for Foreigners series*, a collection of 22 books to teach Maltese as a foreign language to adults as well as the new children's series entitled *Maltese as a Foreign Language for Juniors*, consisting of *Learning Maltese 1* and *Learning Maltese 2*. Dr Saliba said, "the new series was very well received, and later this year, I have plans to publish *Learning Maltese 3* and *Learning Maltese 4*".
For more information about these publications, please visit: www.charlesdanielsaliba.com or watch this video.

CRINGILA COMMUNITY CENTRE - NSW

SUCCESS STORY

Consul General Ms Anneliese Sammut at Cringila on Monday

Bringing Communities Together for Over many decades

Nestled in the heart of New South Wales, the George Cross Falcons Community Centre Inc., affectionately known as Cringila Centre, stands as a beacon of unity and support for the Maltese community and beyond. This cherished institution has become a hub for cultural exchange, community support, and mutual respect, embodying the true spirit of togetherness and philanthropy.

Joanna and Louis

THE ORIGINS OF CRINGILA CENTRE

Founded over fifty years ago, Cringila Centre was born out of a desire to create a safe and welcoming space for people of Maltese descent and other nationalities to come together, share experiences, and support one another. The centre's philosophy is rooted in the principle of giving back to the community rather than seeking profit, a notion that sets it apart from many other community kitchens and centres.

A HUB OF ACTIVITY The kitchen serves as the heart of Cringila Centre, where individuals from over ten different nationalities gather to enjoy a meal, share stories, and build lasting relationships. This inclusive approach has fostered a sense of belonging and camaraderie among the centre's members and visitors.

ADAPTING TO CHANGE Despite the challenges posed by the modern world, Cringila Centre has continuously evolved to meet the needs of its community. The yearly six-week break during the festive Christmas season allows the centre to make necessary changes to its premises, ensuring the safety and comfort of its visitors. Recent upgrades have included the introduction of a new drink bar, electronic bingo, and additional space for members to enjoy.

Jasmine and Janvil from Malta to Cringila in April

CELEBRATING MILESTONES The commencement of the new program year is always a cause for celebration at Cringila Centre. This year, the centre had the pleasure of welcoming Ms. Anneliese Sammut, the newly appointed Consulate for NSW, on their first day back. The positive feedback from members, particularly those on the first bus tour organized by Mary Caruana, highlighted the success of the recent changes and improvements.

CRINGILA COMMUNITY CENTRE – THE PLACE TO BE

A COMMUNITY UNITED One of the most remarkable aspects of Cringila Centre is its commitment to supporting those in need. Unlike many other community kitchens that operate with a professional staff, Cringila relies on the dedication of volunteers who are driven by a genuine desire to help others. This unique approach has garnered admiration and respect from various community leaders and members.

LOOKING AHEAD As Cringila Centre looks to the future, it remains steadfast in its mission to bring people together and foster a sense of unity and support. The centre's success serves as an inspiring example of what can be achieved when a community comes together with a common purpose.

A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE Louis Parnis, a prominent figure within the Maltese community, extends his heartfelt wishes for a productive 2025 to Cringila Centre and all other associations supporting the broader Maltese community. His message underscores the importance of adapting and evolving to meet the needs of the community while staying true to the values that have made Cringila Centre a success.

CONCLUSION The story of Cringila Community Centre is one of resilience, adaptation, and unwavering commitment to the community it serves. For over two decades, it has provided a space where people from diverse backgrounds can come together, share their cultures, and support one another. As it continues to grow and evolve, Cringila Centre remains a testament to the power of community and the enduring impact of generosity and solidarity.

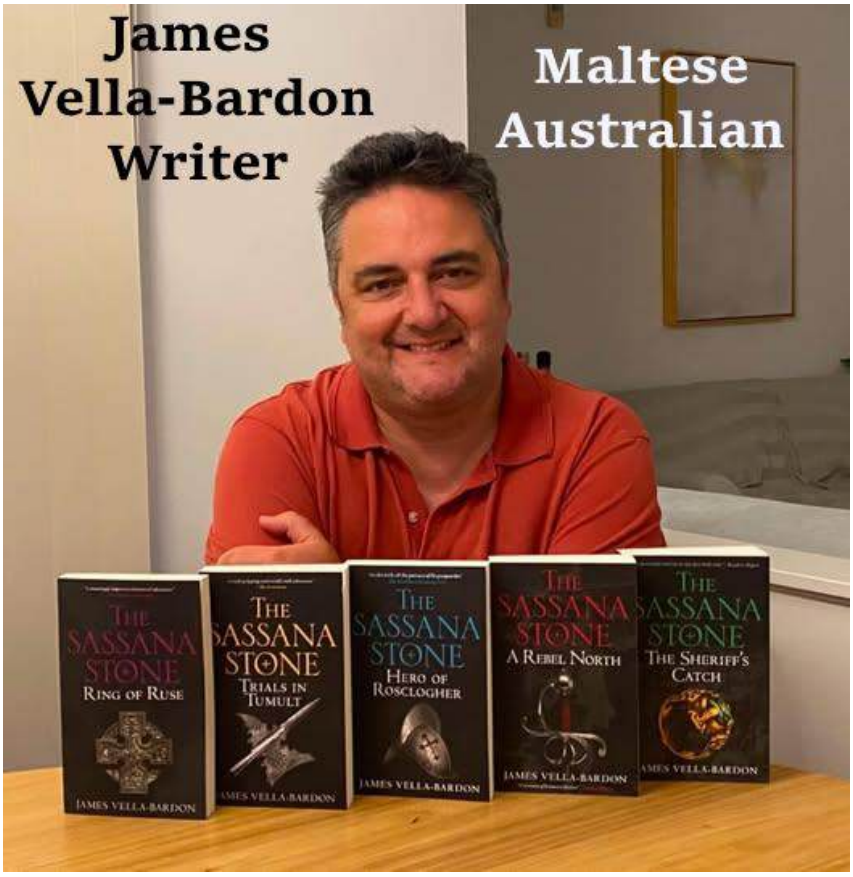
The George Cross Falcons Community Centre Inc., also known as Cringila Centre, would like to congratulate Frank Scicluna for producing such a lovely journal and thank him for the support he always gives to our Centre.

Adelia Farrugia

Born – 1931 – Italy
Died – 2025 – Australia

Adelia was born in Italy and although
she was proud of her Italian heritage
she managed to become an
honorary member within the
Maltese Community of Adelaide.
Adelia was married to Charlie
And together they supported the members of the
community for several decades.
Adelia was well-loved by all those
Who knew her.
She embraced and loved the
Maltese culture and customs
Especially the Maltese cuisine.
We miss you.

May she rest in peace



AMES ON FACEBOOK - Today I received the fifth and final part of the great epic which I started working on 15 years ago.

Some of you might see a set of five books in this pic. But The Sassana Stone is in fact a single story, written in one hit (or thereabouts) & released in five parts.

Throughout the creation of this work, there was never ever a mad scramble to write a half-baked sequel. You have my word. I left no stone unturned to secure a quality production from start to end.

As a boy, my dream was to one day have a book published. And here we are. It feels like I finally got there today.

I'm not sure what I'll do next. Perhaps water the plants, which are almost dead.

A few minutes ago I placed book five alongside the other four parts and it felt surreal. What's been achieved is still sinking in. Many have told me that my payoff is coming; as far as I'm concerned, my payoff arrived today.

'Thank you' to all those big-hearted people who played a part in helping me get here. I'll never forget the role you played, no matter how large or small.

And I'd also like to thank all those who cut through the noise, picked up the book and had a read of it - or even shared feedback. I hope that others will also enjoy the great and glorious misadventure of the first Maltese-born and bred anti-hero in English fiction.

May you also draw strength and inspiration from this saga that is now truly completed in my mind. –

"If you see a book with James Vella-Bardon's name upon the cover then you are guaranteed a brilliant read"

– The London Economic

About the author

A Sydney-based, award-winning was author born but raised in Malta.

After reading law and history at the Universities of both Malta and Sydney, James qualified as a lawyer and also completed a doctoral thesis on the rights and freedoms of peoples at international law. Upon emigrating to Sydney in 2007, he also studied creative writing.

His debut novel **THE SHERIFF'S CATCH** is a highly acclaimed thriller, which recounts the adventures of a Spanish Armada castaway in Tudor Ireland, who joins in the great struggle to liberate western Ireland from brutal suppression.

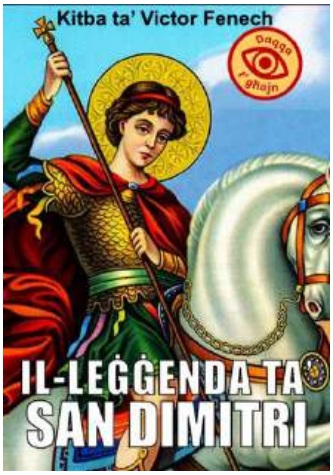
Following its UK release in 2018, the novel was recommended as a 'must-read of the week' by leading British newspaper The Scotsman, with Reader's Digest also describing it as 'a remarkably confident literary debut' and 'the spectacular start to an epic five-book story. **www.jamesvellabardon.com**

THE **CHAPEL OF ST. DEMETRIUS**, MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS **SAN DIMITRI CHAPEL**,

is a small rural Roman Catholic church located in Għarb, Gozo, Malta. This is the only church in Malta dedicated to this Greek saint.

Mediaeval chapel The original chapel was built by Reverend Franġisk Depena sometime in the 15th century. The chapel was mentioned in inquisitor Pietro Dusina's 1575 report of his visit to the chapel. However, during the pastoral visit of Bishop Balaguer in on May 24, 1657, the church was deconsecrated due to its dilapidated state.[1]

Early modern chapel In 1736 the chapel was rebuilt by the initiative of Reverend Mario Vella.[2] The new chapel was blessed on the 11th of April, 1809 by the Archpriest of Għarb the Reverend Publio Refalo who represented the Bishop of Malta Ferdinando Mattei. A mass in the Byzantine rite was celebrated in the chapel by the parish priest of the Greek community of Malta Papas Schirò at the start of WWII by the initiative of the rector Reverend Paul Formosa. The chapel was fully restored in 2012 and inaugurated on February 3, 2013. A feast in honor of St Demetrius is celebrated every year on the Sundays closest to October 8.[3]



The main painting depicting St Demetrius dressed as a soldier on a horse with an old woman pleading with him on one side while a young man in chains is depicted on the other side. This painting represents a local legend which is narrated further below. The painting dates from 1810 and the painter is unknown. It was restored in 1937 by Wistin Camilleri. There are 2 other paintings on each side of the main altar, one representing St Aristarchus and the other the Assumption of Mary. Other paintings depicts the martyrdom of St Demetrius and another of St Paul.

LEGEND - ZGUGINA

An old woman named Żgugina lived with her son in an old house in the village of Għarb in Gozo. They lived close to the chapel of San Dimitri and Żgugina would go there praying everyday for San Dimitri to offer protection to her son. It was a time when pirates would often attack the Maltese Islands. One day a ship full of pirates landed near Għarb.

These pirates attacked the village and also took Żgugina's son in chains as a slave. Żgugina went into the chapel and prayed in front of the painting of San Dimitri; she made a vow that if he would save her son she would light a votive lamp everyday in the chapel.

The story says that at this point Żgugina saw the painting moving, and out of it came San Dimitri on his white horse. The Saint went on the sea chasing the pirates' ship. Żgugina continued praying and some time later Dimitri returned with Żgugina's son in his arms, and the Saint went back in the painting. Żgugina continued to light the votive lamp each day of her life. Many years passed, and an earthquake shocked the land and the chapel fell into the sea where it lay undamaged on the seabed. The legend says that fishermen still see the light from Żgugina's candle from underwater.

Source: ioi.research.um.edu.mt

KOTBA FIL-BUT

www. kotbafilbut.net/

norman@kotbafilbut.net

F'waħda mis-sezzjonijiet tal-proġett Kotba fil-But qiegħed inxandar siltiet qosra minn kitba lokali għat-tfal tal-etajiet bejn l-għaxar snin u l-erbatax-il sena, bl-iskop li nħajjarhom jaqraw il-kumplament tal-ktieb billi jixtruh mill-ħwienet jew isibuh fil-libreriji pubbliċi jew tal-iskejjel. Għaldaqstant, nistieden lill-awturi ta' kitba għal dawn l-etajiet joffru siltiet mix-xogħol tagħhom.

Xi pubblikaturi lokali diġà offrew siltiet minn pubblikazzjonijiet tagħhom, kif tistgħu taraw fis-sezzjoni Daqqa t'għajn tas-sit. Bħala awtur, inti tista' toffri siltiet qosra jew kapitli ta' xogħlijiet mhux biss li jkunu fil-ħwienet bħalissa, iżda anki dawk li huma out of print. Għalkemm dawn il-kotba m'għadekx issibhom għall-bejgħ, xorta waħda jinsabu fil-libreriji pubbliċi, u m'għandhomx jintnesew. B'dan il-mod, qarrejja tas-sit ikollhom l-opportunità jibdew jaqraw is-siltiet bit-tama li jitħajru jfittxu l-ktieb fil-libreriji pubbliċi jew jixtruh.

Jekk inti interessat li tmexxi xi xogħlijiet tiegħek fuq is-sit, kurrenti jew qodma, tista' tikkuntattjani b'wieħed minn dawn il-metodi:

• Ikkuntattjani permezz ta' messaġġ fuq Facebook; JEW
• Iktibli direttament f'dan l-indirizz elettroniku: mailto:norman@kotbafilbut.net

B'dan il-mod inkun nista' nispjegalek x'ikolli bżonn biex intella' s-silta/siltiet.

Tista' tagħżel tibgħat iktar minn xogħol wieħed, li jistgħu jkunu:

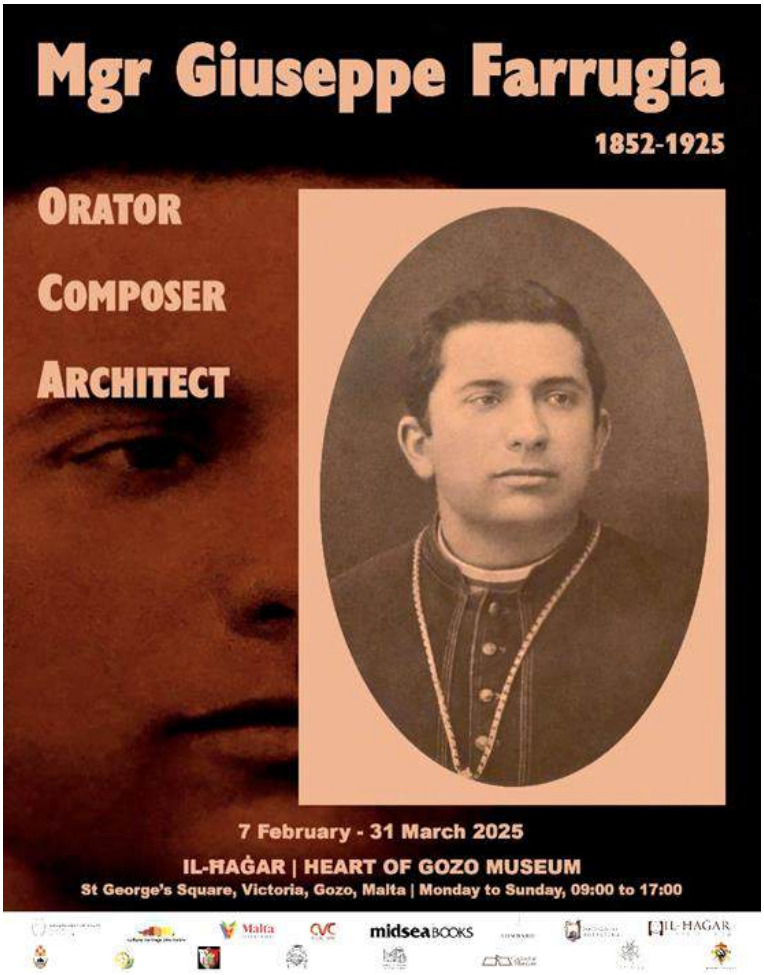
• Stejjer qosra kompluti;
• Siltiet jew kapitli minn kotba;
• Poeżiji.

Infakkarkom li x-xogħol għandu jkun immirat lejn qarrejja ta' bejn l-għaxar snin u l-erbatax-il sena.

Il-kontribut tiegħek:

• se jgħinek ixxandar fost il-qarrejja żgħar il-pubblikazzjonijiet kurrenti tiegħek;
• se jgħinek ixxandar pubblikazzjonijiet tiegħek li m'għandhomx jinsabu fil-ħwienet;
• se jgħin lil-Librerija ta' Kotba fil-But tilħaq l-għan tagħha li tipprovdi aktar materjal ta' qari bil-Malti fuq l-Internet.

Nirringrazzjak bil-quddiem tal-interess. **NORMAN C. BORG**



EXHIBITION TO MARK THE FIRST CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF MGR GIUSEPPE FARRUGIA'S

Il-Ħaġar Museum, together with the Diocese of Gozo and Victoria's Saint George's Basilica and La Stella Philharmonic Society, is this year marking the first centenary of the passing of Mgr Giuseppe

Farrugia (1852-1925), one of Gozo's most eminent sons and benefactors, whose brilliance left an indelible mark on so many aspects of the life of the Gozitan community. He is celebrated for his extraordinary intellect, visionary outlook, and unparalleled talents. One of the local papers at the time of his passing had this to say: Few were the Gozitan prelates, after De Soldanis, who brought so much renown to Gozo through their wisdom and writings as Mgr Giuseppe Farrugia, known as Tal-Vers.

To mark this important centenary, Il-Ħaġar Museum, in collaboration with a number of institutions, is presenting this exhibition which focuses on three exceptional facets of Farrugia's genius: his mastery as a sought-after orator, his brilliance as a composer, and his visionary work in design and architecture. This exhibition will be inaugurated on Friday 7 February 2025 at 7.30 pm, and runs until the 31st of March.

Among Mgr Farrugia's most distinguished musical compositions are the Triduum hymn Georgi Miles Inclyte (1878), the antiphon for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception Hodie Egressa Est (1884), and the Vespri per la Solennità di San Giorgio Martire (1900) for soloists, a four-part choir (a 4 voci pari), and orchestra. Other notable works include the antiphon Beatus Georgius (1897) and Tantum Ergo in onore di San Giorgio Martire (1901).

Noteworthy contributions in design and architecture include his involvement in designing the Church of Perpetual Adoration, commonly known as Ta' Savina, the façade of the public library in Vajringa Street, the Bishop's Palace at the Cittadella, the altar of reposition and the chapter hall at the Gozo Cathedral, the concert hall (later named after him) annexed to St George's Basilica, and - among many others - the design of the gold-embroidered red velvet liturgical copes used during the celebrations of the Solemnity of Saint George there. The exhibition can be visited during Il-Ħaġar Museum's opening hours of 09:00 to 17:00, Monday to

Sunday (public holidays included).

Ms Monica Borg Debrincat
c/o Il-Ħaġar - Heart of Gozo Museum

CALENDAR OF ANCIENT CUSTOMS

The first feast of the year with an exclusive custom was precisely January 1, New Year's Day. There was a custom for children to be given a gift of a few pennies by their relatives or friends. This gift, which was known as Strina, was much awaited by children.

This day was also awaited by servants, because on that day their masters were expected to give them that little something extra with their pay. Perhaps because it was enticed by the English, say, a little, this custom changed to Christmas Day. With more money in hand, today, those few pennies have been replaced by gifts that are quite expensive, which are given not only to children but also by adults to each other.

On the 17th of the same month, they celebrate the feast of Sant Antnin Abbot. A custom associated with this saint's day in Malta began in Vittoriosa. Near a church dedicated to this saint in this city, the Knights' horses were blessed. This custom, after the Order moved to Valletta, continued in front of the Church of Ou lady Queen of Victories.

Later, this ceremony was started by the Augustinians in Rabat, on the parvis of the Church of St. Mark. It is worth mentioning that over time, mules and donkeys from that area were added to the horses. Here, too, the giving of a little barley from a stall that was passed from one animal to another was added. This custom or ceremony of blessing animals continued to spread to other villages and cities and today we see all kinds of animals in it, from dogs and cats to pigeons and birds.

Another feast day falls on January 22nd – that of St. Francis de Sales. Recently, the mass held at the Catholic Institute for Journalists and Writers has been associated with it. It is generally celebrated by the Archbishop, with a homily related to the mission of this profession.

The commemoration of the Presentation of Jesus on February 2nd had several customs associated with it. It was better known as the feast of Candlemas. It took this name from the candles, with an image of the Madonna printed on the bottom, which were (and in some areas still are) blessed on that day, and distributed to families. The candle was lit during a storm, and they asked the intercession of Madonna to deliver them from any disaster that could be brought by heavy rain or lightning. The candle was also hung on the neck of babies to protect them from illness or the evil eye. On or near this day, parish priests would present a candle to the Bishop and another to the Governor, as a sign of respect. Someone had told me that in the old days, the one given to the Governor would only be blessed if he was a Catholic.

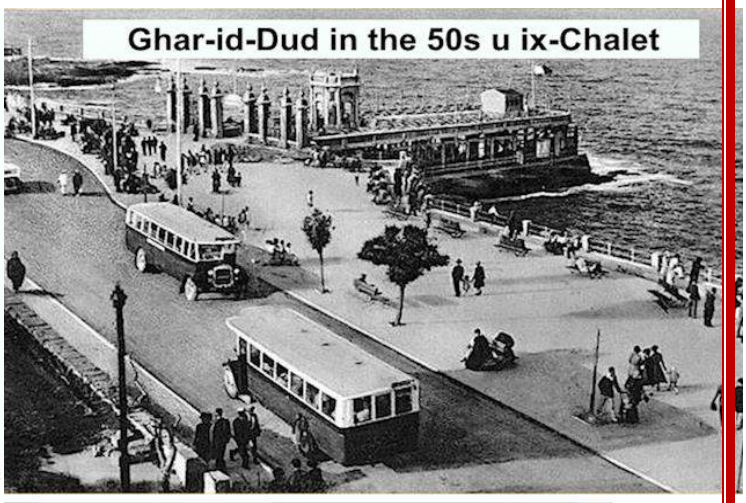
The feast of St. Joseph on March 19, in the past, brought with it much more work for bakers and perhaps, a little more profit than usual as well. On this day, in the old days, much more than today, they would make a kind of sweet pastry, known as zeppoli. Although Carnival is a secular feast, sweets of a different kind were associated with it. These are the perlini and prinjolata which, although not as much as before, we still remember them and find them for sale in various sweet shops in those days.

The Kukkanja was reintroduced some years ago, but those who remember the old one know how much it was expected, especially by the young people. It was their custom that on Carnival Monday, they would gather in Palace Square, Valletta, waiting for the signal to be given so that they could run in one go towards poles that were erected there. Ham, sausages and even animals, such as rabbits and kids, would be hung from the poles, covered with green branches, probably so that whoever was there would not know what they were going to grab. They would all struggle and push to grab as much as they could, amidst the cheers of those who gathered to see them. Children run and drag behind them, with rattling sounds, tied together, all kinds of cans, buckets and bathtubs that have seen their time, These custom have also disappeared from our streets. Source; Il-Miklem Malti.

For those who have never seen one of this type, this is a late 19th century earthenware toilet. In Malta it used to be called **'Loki'** This word means 'my place'. This toilet has been in Malta houses since the sewerage system began to enter Malta as we know it today, in 1875, and was located in the attic. From information that was told to me, they used to be imported from Caltagirone, a town in the south of Sicily, well known for its pottery and ceramics. Between 1875 and 1885 the sewerage system entered Valletta, Floriana and the three towns where 8140 families were served. The houses were not equipped to have toilets, so you would find them built into the wall and closed with a wooden door behind the outer doors, enclosed in balconies, backyards and communal staircases where more than one family lived.

THE VERSITILE SLOW COOKER

Left yo right - Dennis Ghirlando, Nosi Ghirlando, Charles Clews, Victor Galdes, Armando Urso, Johnny Catania, Mike Cassar, Rose Laiviera and Victor Aquilina



NOSTALGIA

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Zoom learning provides numerous benefits for young children learning a second language as part of their extracurricular activities.

This online learning offers the flexibility and convenience which enables children to learn from the comfort of their homes without the need for commuting after school hours.

Children can learn to speak, read and write in Maltese while exploring the rich cultural heritage of Malta. Parents can more easily observe and monitor their child's progress

MALTESE COMMUNITY IN NYC USA

VINCENZA TABONE

1942 - 2025

THE MALTESE CENTER COMMITTEE, ITS MEMBERS, AND THE MALTESE COMMUNITY SEND THEIR DEEPEST CONDOLENCES TO THE TABONE FAMILY AND THEIR EXTENDED FAMILIES.

KEEP THEM IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS
MAY SHE REST IN PEACE

REPOSING - FARENGA FUNERAL HOME

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31ST, 2025 - 4PM TO 9PM

38-08 DITMARS BOULEVARD, ASTORIA NEW YORK 11105

CELEBRATION HONOURING HER LIFE MASS WILL BE HELD AT S. JOSEPH CHURCH, ASTORIA NY SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST, 2025 AT 10:00AM