MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

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THE JOURNAL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

CHARLES FIGALLO OAM

NOVAFAST
A NOVAFAST HOLDINGS COMPANY

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PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY INC.
VICTORIA

MALTA
THE COUNCIL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD (CMLA) COLLABORATES WITH THE EDITOR OF THE MALTESE JOURNAL MR FRANK SCICLUNA AND THE E-NEWSLETTER

WORKING TOGETHER

During the Ambassador's Meeting for Malta's Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Permanent Representatives, the President of the Republic of Malta Her Excellency Myriam Spiteri Debono, spoke about the work being done by the Maltese representatives in bilateral and multilateral Missions, and how this work impacts Malta's reputation.

The Government of Malta has 45 missions overseas, spread across 6 continents and 34 countries. There are 6 types of missions, which can be sub-divided mainly into bilateral, multilateral and consular missions, and others being a mixture between them.

The traditional type of mission is an Embassy which is located in the capital city of the host country. Another type of mission is a High Commission, which is like an Embassy but located in a country of the Commonwealth. Embassies and High Commissions are bilateral missions, which are focused in particular on the political, commercial, cultural and economic relations amongst others, between Malta and the host country.

Multilateral Missions are called Permanent Missions or Permanent Representative and are accredited to an international organization in the host country, such as the United Nations in New York, the OSCE in Vienna, or to the European Union in Brussels.

Consulates or Consulates General are primarily focused on consular matters such as the provision of passports or the registration of foreign life events of Maltese residents or the visa process to enable third country nations to travel to Malta. Consular work is also performed by the consular section in our bilateral missions.

When is the Right Time to Let Your Kids Use Tech?

By Vicky Gardner

Technology can have both positive and negative effects on children.

Your average twelve-year-old doesn't have the self-control and maturity to use technology safely and wisely.

Some parenting experts urge parents to "trust" their children when it comes to using smartphones and other technology. Here's why that advice is, frankly, crazy.

When do you trust them to drive your car?

Would you trust your six-year-old to drive? What about your ten-year-old? Your twelve-year-old? No way! When it comes to driving, we recognise that the child needs to earn our trust, and we don't give them more than they can handle. Your average ten-year-old doesn't have legs long enough to reach the brake pedal.

Likewise, your average twelve-year-old doesn't have the self-control and maturity to use technology safely and wisely. However, we also don't lock up our kids and keep them away from cars for life. That's also not responsible parenting! When our children are teens, OF COURSE we will start teaching them how to drive, expecting that they will be competent and safe drivers when they are adults. In the same way, we have come to recognise that we need to train our children in their teen years to use technology safely and competently because we want them to be adults who can use technology wisely and effectively.

Just as driving a car requires your child to take on the responsibility for your life and the lives of others, so accessing technology gives your child the ability to potentially damage relationships, your and others' reputations, and their own souls. So our duty as parents is not to keep our kids away from ever using technology any more than it's our job to keep them from ever driving cars! Our job as parents is to introduce technology to them when they are ready and to train them in the safe, moderate, and productive use of it.

And just as our teens need to prove to us and to the state that they are competent and reliable drivers before they get a license, our teens need to earn our trust when using technology. Our job is to train them and to show them the way to earn your trust. Trust must be earned. Do NOT trust your children with tech until they have proven themselves trustworthy. Otherwise, it's not real trust. It's good for kids to earn your trust and to prove themselves, just as proving to the state that they are good drivers is good for them!

To begin with, we need to build our own virtue muscles. If you have a problem with too much time on social media or with viewing inappropriate content, start building up your own muscles so that you can train your own child in virtue-building.

Want more?

Source: The Messy Family Project

CHARLES FIGALLO - SELF-MADE MR. FIXIT IN A CLASS OF IMAGINATION

The key is to design, manufacture and install but you control technology. If you can do that, you can expand worldwide – Charles Figallo

Charles Figallo, a self-taught engineer, took his extensive knowledge of the composite materials and corrosion protection industry overseas through family South Australian companies Basetec Services and NovaFast.

Main image courtesy Austraian Business Executive

Charles Figallo, founder of two South Australian complementary family mechanical engineering companies, Basetec Services and NovaFast, received an Order of Australia medal for services to business and community in 2017.

Figallo also was made a knight (chevalier) of the sovereign hospitaller order of St John of Jerusalem, the knights of Malta, grand priory of Australia, Adelaide commandery, in 2015, for services to its community causes.

Of Maltese background, Figallo built up extensive knowledge of the composite materials and corrosion protection industry, working in it from his teenage years. Primarily self taught in this area of expertise, Figallo's business started from a chance encounter with some engineers who were facing a problem that he was able to confidently fix. That led to other approaches from other companies facing similar problems, and more opportunities for work, ultimately working with major company such as BHP on the Olympic Dam project in northern South Australia and BP in Brisbane.

When the New Guinea government sought Figallo's help with on a failing water plant that was tainting townwater in West New Britain, the large contract saw the birth of the Basetec business. Figallo's industry knowledge was taken elsewhere overseas to Iraq, Abu Dhabi and Jordan, and he became a member of the Australian-Arab Chamber of Commerce. He also began to receive offers from countries in Africa for new projects.

Figallo's sons Paul and David joined the Basetec business and were heavily involved in the Middle East connections. From a peak of around 75 employees and several contractors, Basetec scaled down with mining and energy work but embraced a different model by setting up technical arm of the business, NovaFast, to developed its own products and technologies.

NovaFast worked closely with Australia's universities, providing equipment for students and forming valuable working partnerships. The Basetec arm of the business continued to oversee the mechanical engineering and civil work, putting together plants and pipes, trenching, digging, laying and assembly work, before commissioning and handing over to the client. NovaFast handled the design and high-pressure work, building and designing some of the highest-pressure pipes in the world.

Novafast Holdings is a South Australian family-owned equity business, with its global investment subsidiaries focusing on advanced engineering and construction in these sectors:

- Oil & Gas
- Mining & Industrial
- Water & Wastewater
- Infrastructure & Utilities
- Defence & Marine

Our subsidiaries specialise in composite solutions for heavy industries.

What is our approach?

Novafast Holdings grows its financial investments within the group of companies by offering end-users turnkey direct value. We aim to be a global leader in growing innovative businesses for the advanced engineering and construction sector.

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2. **We value stakeholder relationships and aim for fairness in all of our dealings.**
3. **We partner, seeking to build long term, commercially sustainable relationships, where all stakeholders benefit.**
4. **Paul and David Figallo have become key leaders in the Novafast Holdings operating structure, and have driven change in the business direction and market positioning. Paul has 15 years' experience with Basetec, and David has 12. Together, they bring a wealth of construction and contract execution knowledge to the company.**

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PROVIDENCE HOUSE FUNCTION AND FAEWELL TO JIM BORG – THE COODINATOR OF FOPH

On Sunday 23 February, the Friends of Providence House NSW (FOPH), the official representatives in Australia of Id-Dar tal-Providenza in Malta, held Il-Festa ta' Generozita - *Feast of Generosity* at the La Vallette Centre in Blacktown NSW

The MC of the evening and Treasurer of the Association, Ms. Miriam Friggieri welcomed those present in a packed hall, and invited them to be generous and give their donations in the envelopes that were placed on each table.

The Concert began with the Maltese and Australian anthems sung by Ms. Katelyn Vella, an Australian girl of Maltese descent.

Mr Jim Borg, the Co-ordinator of the Friends of Providence House NSW welcomed the Consul General of Malta in NSW, Ms. Anneliese Sammut and thanked the main sponsors of the evening: the La Valette Social Centre, Breakaway Travel of Blacktown, Messrs Sistu and Maryanne Zammit and all the other sponsors. Jim also thanked the committee, Secretary Rita O'Dwyer and Treasurer Miriam Friggieri, as well as former secretary and co-founder, Marisa Previtera for their work. Mr Borg announced with sadness that unfortunately this event would be his last, after 60 years of work in the Maltese Community. He thanked everyone who attended, the generous sponsors as well as the performers who year after year gave their voluntary participation in this Feast of Generosity. He appealed for another person to take his place as co-ordinator of this association, otherwise the Friends of Providence House NSW will have to cease operations.

The Consul General of Malta in NSW, who attended the event, thanked Jim Borg for the important work he has done over the past 60 years and stressed the importance of providing financial assistance to Id-Dar tal-Providenza in Malta. Ms. Sammut also mentioned that Jim Borg will be awarded the honour of Gieh is-Siggiewi on the 8th of March.

Afterwards, a video message was shown by the Director of Dar tal-Providenza Fr.Martin Micallef who expressed the significance and impact of the donations that are given so that this organization can continue to provide the necessary assistance to those with disabilities in Malta. The Siggiewi home is home to 115 residents. Fr. Martin thanked the committee especially Mr. Jim Borg who announced that unfortunately this would be his last event after 60 years of work in the Maltese Community and in this association for the last 14 years.

The singers of the evening were Mr. Joe Apap and his three nephews, Mr. Charlie Muscat, Mr. James Cassar, Ms. Katelyn Vella and Ms. Natasha Tatarinoff who delighted and entertained those present with songs in Maltese and English. Mr. Ivan Cauchi took care of the sound and lighting for this evening.

During the interval, in order to raise more funds for Dar tal-Providenza, tickets were sold for a raffle with prizes donated by various sponsors. Afterwards, Mr. Jim Borg presented certificates of appreciation to various sponsors, and trophies to Breakaway Travel Blacktown for their generosity over the years, and to performers who for the past 9 years have always been willing to give their time for this fundraising event for Dar tal-Providenza.

As a result of the generosity shown by the Maltese-Australian community of NSW at this event, this Feast of Generosity was once again a success. All donations sent to Dar tal-Providenza help this organisation to continue its important mission in Malta. Donations are sent in a cheque which is presented during the Marathon which takes place every year in July at Dar tal-Providenza in Siggiewi.

'MOGĦDIJIET'

HUWA KTIEB ĠDID MIKTUB MILL-ĠURNALISTA JOHN INGUANEZ

Submitted by Joe Bajada

Mogħdijiet' huwa ktieb ġdid miktub mill-ġurnalista John Inguanez u li jitratta l-ħajja, it-taqlib, l-inkwiet u l-ferħ ta' żagħżugħ minn raħal tipikament Malti li javvanza bil-ħidma tiegħu lejn karigi għolja fil-qasam radjufoniku u televiżiv Malti. Il-ktieb fih l-esperjenzi u fehmiet tal-awtur bi stil mexxej u konċiż ta' ġurnalist prattiku u mimli esperjenza. Dan il-ktieb mill-iktar interessanti jiġbor perjodi u ġrajjiet li għex l-awtur, persuna mimlija b'esperjenza vasta. Is- sempliċità ta' kif jirrakkonta din l-esperjenza tieghu, taf toffri żvog lil qarrej. Charles Flores kiteb hekk fuq dan il-Ktieb: "Din il-kitba tkopri perjodi u ġrajjiet li għex l-awtur imħaddma bi stil mexxej u konċiż mill-pinna ta' ġurnalist prattiku u mimli esperjenza li ma jafx jaħdem mod ieħor. Hemm sempliċità mħallta ma' battuti li joffru żvog daqs kemm sfida għal qarrej. Fil-kitba tispikka l-memorja inkredibbli tal-awtur. Jibqa' uman anke f'waqtiet fejn irid juri ċerta rabja u wġigħ. Il-personalizzazzjoni tal-awtur tagħti bixra sabiħa ta' awtobijografija, iżda ma ttellifx mir-rakkont tal-istorja mill-perspettiva tal-kittieb. Ma jistax jonqos, il-memorji tal-istess storja/esperjenza jvarjaw minn persuna għal oħra, imma dan huwa l-ġmiel u l-privileġġ ta' xogħol bħal dan."

Fi kliem l-awtur John Inguanez huwa qal li dan huwa xogħol umli imma li jemmen li kulħadd għandu storja u l-mogħdijiet li għadda minnhom. Fil-każ tiegħu dawn huma mogħdijiet fil-ġurnaliżmu u Malta li baqgħet tinbidel. Tista tixtri dan il-ktieb mill-hwienet tal-kotba f'Malta jew inkellna minghand awtur jinguanez1@gmail.com.

Minn naħa tagħna, grazzi w awguri John tal-kontribut tiegħek għall-ilsien Malti.

Malta's Ħajt Tas-Sejjieħ (Rubble Wall)

Rubble is broken stone, of irregular size, shape and texture; undressed especially as a filling-in. Rubble walls are found all over the islands of Malta and Gozo.
The Maltese farmer found that the technique of these walls was very useful especially during an era where resources were limited.
Rubble walls are used to serve as borders between the property of one farm from the other. An advantage that rubble walls offered is that when heavy rain falls, their structure would allow excessive water to pass through and therefore, excess water will not ruin the products.
Soil erosion is minimised as the wall structure allows the water to pass through but it traps the soil and prevents it from being carried away from the field
Given the similarities of the *ħajt tas-sejjieħ* and similar specimens in Sicily, it is thought that the Maltese rubble wall as we know it today originated around the time of Arab Dynastic rule, dating as far back as the 9th century AD, when both the Maltese islands and Sicily were part of the Arab Dynasty.
Also known as dry-stone walling, the *ħajt tas-sejjieħ* at its most basic level relies solely on the the irregular but careful layering of different-sized rocks over each other, allowing gravity to do its job and keep the wall up without the need for any concrete. Of course, more modern versions of the *ħajt tas-sejjieħ* employ the use of concrete for more aesthetic purposes.
There's an art to building a proper *ħajt tas-sejjieħ* and this is clearly seen in the different stones that are used to build the wall. Larger rubble stones constitute the peripheries of the rubble wall and are what most of us have come to associate with the traditional *ħajt tas-sejjieħ*, but the interior of the wall is filled with smaller stones called *maskan* that help give the wall substance as well as serve a number of functions listed below.
Part of the irregular structure of the *ħajt tas-sejjieħ* means that there are several air pockets and channels within the wall, helping it act as a reservoir for soil, preventing severe farmland erosion during heavy rainstorms.
In taller versions of the *ħajt tas-sejjieħ*, you can appreciate the thought that went behind building these walls in the first place. The walls are never built perpendicularly but instead taper upwards, with a wider base and a narrower top. This is to prevent a wall collapse as lighter and smaller rocks are used as you go higher up the wall.
The rubble walls serve as their own microbiome being home to everything from lizards and skinks to beetles and hedgehogs.
They're protected by law since 1991

If you have an interesting story to tell send it to us and share it with other Maltese living abroad

EMBASSY OF MALTA IN BRAZIL

Ambassador – John Aquilina

A proud, historic moment! The signing of the Lease Agreement by Ambassador John Aquilina and Landlord Alvaro Soares for the establishment of the Permanent Chancery of the Embassy of Malta in Brazil was a huge step forward. It is fitting that this is happening in the year that Malta and Brazil celebrate 50 Years of Bilateral Relations. Construction work for the remodelling and refitting of the New Chancery will commence immediately. Featured in the photos besides the Ambassador and Landlord are the new Deputy Bernard Vella and Office Administrator Yana Fernandez Sousa. Also present are the Embassy's legal representative Caroline Floriani Bruhn de Lima, Architect Larissa Sudbrack and Agent Nicole Vilela Menali. Regrets that former Deputy Stephen Cachia, who worked so hard over the past three years to achieve this goal.

EMBASSY OF MALTA IN UAE

Maria Camilleri Calleja

Ambassador of Malta to the UAE, Permanent Representative of Malta to IRENA

Deputy Head of Mission Ms Lina Al Nafouri attended today the Dubai International Boat Show and visited the Malta Pavilion presenting Yachting Malta and Malta Ship Registry. It was a very interesting conversation with representatives from Yachting Malta and the Malta Ship Registry with Malta boasting the 9th largest ship register in the world.

The Embassy is also honoured to welcome Hon. Chris Bonett, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Public Works in Dubai UAE for the 31st edition of this renowned exhibition bringing together over 1,000 exhibitors and over 33,000 visitors from all around the world.

Awguri minn qalbi!

Sebgħa w sittin sena ħarbu
li fil-Qala twieldet stilla
u li matul dawn is-snin kollha
ma waqfitx milli tibbrilla!

U mas-sellum baqgħet tiela'
kważi laħqet il-quċċata
tarġa waħda biss għad jonqos -
fil-ħajt jonqos biss filata!

Delikata issa l-biċċa,
it-tiġrija sal-barkun
jiġri x'jiġri aħna kuntenti
il-futur ikun xi jkun.

Nafdaw issa f'dak l-Ispirtu
illi jdawwal lill-imħuħ
illi jħuf ġewwa l-Konklavi
kollu dehen u qatt mirbuħ!

Għażiż ħabib, Għawdxi bħali
la qatt tinsa bank l-iskola;
minn qiegħ qalbi nawguralek
fil-pjan t'Alla tibqa' togħla!

żommni b'ħabib
modest u sinċier
Kave. Joe M Attard
Ghawdex
2025

Gozitan Cardinal Mario Grech

Pope Francis is 'critical but stable' and still being treated for double pneumonia, the Vatican confirms

VATICAN CITY (AP) — While the Vatican has detailed laws and rituals to ensure the transfer of power when a pope dies or resigns, they do not apply if he is sick or even unconscious. And there are no specific norms outlining what happens to the leadership of the Catholic Church if a pope becomes totally incapacitated.

As a result, even though Pope Francis remains hospitalized in critical condition with a complex lung infection, he is still pope and very much in charge.

Still, Francis' hospital stay is raising obvious questions about what happens if he loses consciousness for a prolonged period, or whether he might follow in Pope Benedict XVI's footsteps and resign if he becomes unable to lead. On Monday, Francis' hospital stay will hit the 10-day mark, equaling the length of his 2021 hospital stay for surgery to remove 33 centimeters (13 inches) of his colon.

The Order of Malta prays for Pope Francis

24/02/2025
During this time of suffering, the Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Fra' John Dunlap, has sent a private message of affection and closeness to the Holy Father.
The Grand Master invites all members, volunteers and friends of the Order of Malta to join the entire Church in prayer, entrusting Pope Francis to the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin of Philermos and that of St John the Baptist, to support him with hope in this stressful situation for his health.

High Commissioner for Australia in Malta visits Nature Trust - FEE Malta
Nature Trust (Malta) is one of the oldest non-governmental organisations dealing with the natural environment in the Maltese Islands. Our focus is on site management, environmental education and lobbying for effective environmental legislation.
High Commissioner Matt Skelly was pleased to visit Nature Trust - FEE Malta with Ambassador Lelong-Motta, Ambassade de France à Malte, to learn about how the centre rehabilitates wildlife including and . Useful to explore potential areas of collaboration between and on working to protect the marine environment.

Il-Qarċilla 2025

27th February 2025 Friday 28th February 2025, 8pm

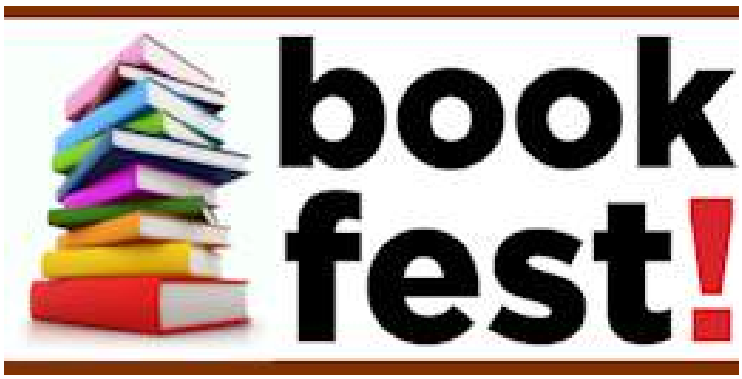
Il-Qarċilla is a "street theatre" performed during Carnival time. It is a play about a marriage contract in which everyone declares whatever comes to mind: what gifts the bride and groom will receive from their parents, witnesses, friends, and certain prominent persons and entities, all in the form of rhymed verses. The notary must document everything to make the piece legally binding. Of course, all this delivers a satire about the political and social situation of the country.

Probably the first Qarċilla was written by Dun Felič Demarco for the Carnival of 1760. Apart from the political and social satire, il-Qarċilla contains references to sex and vulgar words.

In 2014, il-Qarċilla started to come alive again on the streets of Valletta, and in 2022 it was held for the first time in Spazju Kreattiv.

Creative team **Author** Michael Spagnol

Director Joseph Galea **Music director** Etienne Spiteri



AN. APPEAL FOR

BOOFEST. 25

BOOK FEST 25 is being planned for the middle of July at La Valette Social Centre in Blackktown. N.S.W. Australia. The main purpose of the FEST is to give a chance to Maltese/Australian writers. to 'download ' some of their books, magazines they have published in the past and to make them available to the Maltese /English people in general.

Books in Maltese or in English about Malta by any writer will be accepted to be offered for sale on the basis of buy one and get one free. The money 'donated' will be offered to a worthy cause in Australia or in Malta. The new consul-general for Malta in NSW Annalese Sammut has agreed to attend. This is an appeal to those who may have any 'resources which they want to get rid of and offer them to second and third generation Maltese and anybody interested in Malta and its culture, history and language . Details of the event, date etc. are still being planned and they will be in the Maltese Journal.

For more information contact me on <victorvella39@gmail.com.>

VICTOR V. VELLA M.A. (Sydney Univ.)

MALTA PREPARES FOR ITS FOURTH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE IN MAY

February 20, 2025

The fourth Presidency of Malta of the Council of Europe will focus on the rights of youths, child protection, as well as the safeguarding of human rights while also supporting the Organisation seeking justice and responsibility for Ukraine.

This morning, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism Ian Borg, addressed a media conference together with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Alain Berset who is in Malta for his first official visit before Malta's Presidency from May to November. The visit gave Malta the opportunity to enter into discussions with Berset while preparing for its six-month Presidency which will also coincide with the 60th anniversary of Malta's Membership in the Council of Europe.

Deputy PM Borg said this role, as was that between 2023 and 2024 as Members of the UN Security Council and the Chairmanship of OSCE in2024, and will bring its own challenges but will also give the opportunity to strengthen multilateralism at a time when it is under attack.

He added Malta needs to be involved in proactive dialogue with stakeholders and to promote synergy and cooperation between Members.

Minister Borg continued that by focussing on the encouragement of youths in a democratic life the building of successful practice is built upon such as for example voting at the age of 16 and enabling them to be Mayors and Deputy Mayors with the adequate training.

He said their participation in these spheres is necessary for youths to be cohesive in the taking of crucial decisions to develop sustainable policies on a long-term basis as well as providing democratic resilience.

While commenting on other priorities during Malta's Council of Europe Presidency he noticed the necessities of the rights of children especially in light of the constant risks of abuse and online exploitation.

Malta will also work on protecting the rights of those suffering from domestic violence and violence based on gender by focussing on the prevention of these.

On his part, Council Secretary General Alain Berset said Malta will be assuming the Presidency at a crucial time for Europe and global governance.

He said, "We are navigating in an international environment which always seems more uncertain. Europe is on the point of change. Our fundamental values such as human rights, democracy and the state of right are all under threat".

He continued explaining that nothing should be taken as an obvious fact and attention must be given at all times with determination and coherence while emphasising once more that our democracy is under continual threat and therefore Europe must be united and cognisant of the highest principles.

He said the Council of Europe will remain as the lead guardian of all these principles and Malta's Presidency will be a valued opportunity to strengthen Europe to remain loyal to its values by meeting challenges and taking necessary actions.

NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS

SIR TEMI ZAMMIT AUDITORIUM, UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
SATURDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2025
THE MALTA POLICE PHILHARMONIC BAND
CONDUCTOR MRO ANTHONY CASSAR

Review by Chev Tonio Portughese

The Malta Police Band reached extraordinary performance standards with a highly versatile concert appropriately called: A JOURNEY FROM BROADWAY TO THE WEST END

A full house appreciated this singular thematic concert, and the hundreds of patrons got engaged in the various lively and boisterous renditions.

I underline the Conductor's injected discipline and versatility reflected in a well-rehearsed performance by all musicians.

The Voyage took us in a wonderful world of musicals that included landmark selections to the delight of the audience: The Phantom of the Opera, Fiddler on the Roof, Annie, Chicago

Moulin Rouge, Cabaret and Mamma Mia Culminating with extraordinary rendition of Les Miserables, indeed a testimony of the evolution from opera to operetta to the MUSICAL.

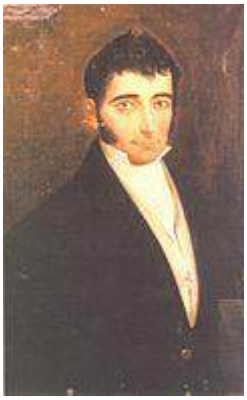
The Police Band reached new heights and set unique standards in this Concert of Musical Enchantment!

Several local singers gave their very best, showing their artistic talents in this platform promoting upcoming performers. It is incredible how these local artists interfaced excellently with the Police Band in a variety of challenging selections, all highly energetic - Victorio Gauci, Kristy Spiteri, Lawrence Gray, Francesca Sciberras, Nicole Hammett, David Joseph Sammut, Yuri Charyguine.

Since my passion is first and foremost for Opera, I was impressed by the two sopranos: Claire Caruana and Ruth Casingena with their lively renditions of the beautiful selections from the Sound of Music, Mary Poppins, Cabaret. They brought the house down!

From a presentation and technical viewpoint, the performances were positively complemented by film excerpts on the big screen. Special mention is due to the artistic Choreography/dancers, costumes and lights settings creating a supporting environment. And to the fresh presentations by Joseph Chetcuti. Hats off, congratulations. Looking forward to the next manifestations of Musical Excellence.

Greeks in Malta

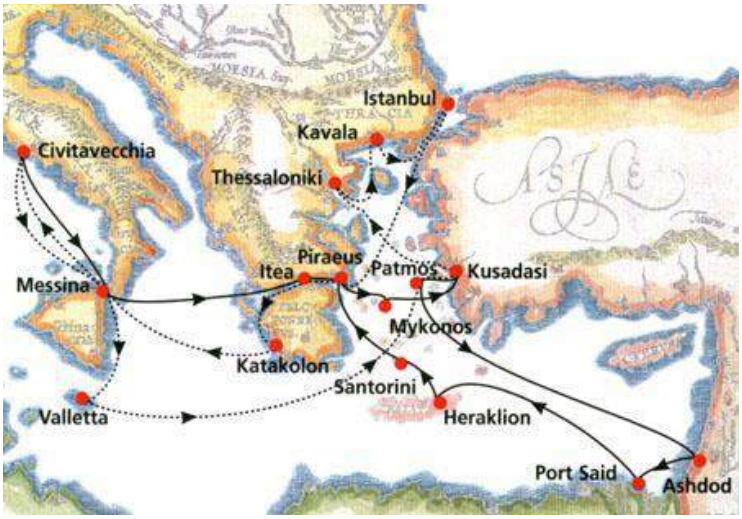


From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Ioannis Papafis from Thessaloniki, established his fortuitous enterprise working as a broker in Malta

The Greek people have a long presence in Malta, since ancient times. The Greeks used the islands for commerce and it is assumed that the location was a place of competition against the Phoenicians. It is not very clear if the Greeks made any colonies here, but we know that the island was known in Greece under the name **Melite** (*Μελίτη*) a derivative of the Greek word for honey (*μέλι*), and the Romans later transcribed the name to *Melita*, which evolved into the modern *Malta*.

Later, the Eastern Roman Empire which evolved into the Greek-speaking Byzantine Empire, held Malta for almost five centuries, from 395 to 870 AD, until they lost it to the Arabs.



During the 18th and 19th centuries a number of Greeks moved to Malta, coming from the Ottoman held areas in Greece. A number of Greeks from Rhodes island migrated in Malta after 1523, due to the capture of that Greek island by the troops of Suleiman the Magnificent in 1522 after the Siege of Rhodes.

In 1192, Margaritus of Brindisi, a Greek admiral of the Kingdom of Sicily, became the first count of Malta. During the 19th century, the Greek minority built one (Church of St George, Valletta)[8][9] of the two extant Greek orthodox churches in Valletta. There is also a catholic greek community on the island.

The Greek Catholic Church of Our Lady of Damascus that houses an icon of the same name, was built in 1571 by Giánnis Kalamia, a wealthy Greek, one of 500 Greek Catholics who arrived with the knights in 1530. The Church was destroyed during an air raid on March 24th 1942 but was rebuilt in 1951 from funds collected by the great efforts of Fr. George Schirò, a descendant of one of the original 500. The last surviving descendant carrying the Kalamia name was a discalced Carmelite nun living in the 18th Century.

One of the most important Greeks of Malta, was the national benefactor Ioannis Papafis, who was originally from Thessaloniki, and moved to Malta in the beginning of 19th century, and lived there - Valletta and Rabat - until the end of his life at 1886, contributing significantly to the local society as well as supporting financially the Greek War of Independence, and later the newly formed Greek state. The current Greek community of Malta is defined as being small by the Greek embassy in Malta

Legends & Myths in Malta

Malta is surrounded with legends and myths. Religious stories and ghostly tales have been told on the island for centuries. Some of these stories are truly fascinating and eerie, others slightly farfetched, each as interesting as the last.

SAINT PAUL AND THE VENOMOUS VIPER

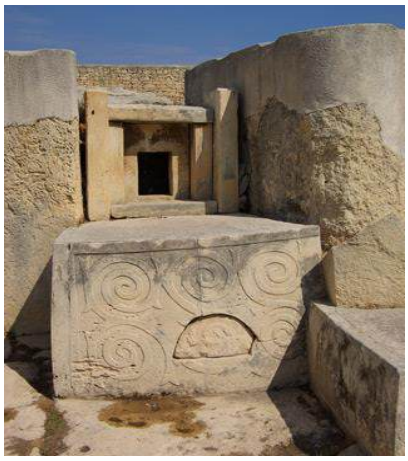
Perhaps the best-known legend on the island is that of Saint Paul and the Venomous Viper. This legend can be found in the Bible. Legend has it that when St Paul was gathering wood to make a fire for himself and some other shipwrecked people, a venomous viper sprang out of the sticks and bit him. The Maltese, who were very superstitious at the time, expected St Paul to die of poisoning, however no harm came to him. It is said that from that day all snakes and scorpions in Malta became harmless and non-poisonous.

THE LEGEND OF TAL-MAQLUBA

Another interesting legend in Malta which I was recently told is that of tal-Maqluba. The legend states that once the area of tal-Maqluba, just south of the Maltese village of Qrendi, there once was an evil village. The people were so bad that God punished them by opening the ground and the whole village was swallowed by the Earth. The opening in the ground stopped exactly in front of a chapel, which is still present just by the edge of this enormous hole. The crater is 50 meters in circumference and around 40 meters deep.

IL-GAWGAW

In the past, December 24th was considered a most unfavorable day for birth. According to a superstitious belief that lingered among the Maltese up until the end of the 19th Century. Any person born on Christmas Eve was transformed into a ghost called "il-GawGaw". On that specific night, in the form of a "Gawgaw", they wandered about frightening people. Children were told that if they misbehaved, the "Gawgaw" would kidnap them and take them far far away to a distant land, where they would die of hunger and loneliness.



Towards dawn the persons transformed in a "Gawgaw" returned home exhausted. By the time they woke up in the morning they would have resumed their human form, quite unaware of their nocturnal peregrinations. The remedy against this transformation consisted of inducing the sufferer to sit up all night and to count the holes of a sieve from eleven o' clock at night to the following Christmas morning.

LOST CITY OF ATLANTIS

However my favourite legend is the one that states how Malta may just be the true location for Atlantis. Malta has incredible ancient structures that are now dated as over 9000 years old and are said by orthodox archaeologists to potentially be the oldest stone ruins in the world.

Malta once had huge animals like elephants. This shows evidence of having been destroyed in a huge cataclysmic wave. Author Joseph Ellul and others have proposed that Malta was part of a great civilization of the past, possibly Atlantis. Malta was probably connected to other parts of the Mediterranean when a huge wave from the Atlantic filled the Mediterranean.

The island is far too small now to have been Atlantis, but it shows that the Mediterranean was a very different place 12,000 years ago. I don't typically conclude my articles in this manner but I have been inspired by some of the legends and myths I have read and would love to hear some more. Please feel free to comment with your own myths, legends and stories.

Maltese Own Band's Family Day 2025: A Celebration of community and culture

By Anthony Grima

The Maltese community in Victoria came together in spectacular fashion for the annual Maltese Own Band Family Day recently– a vibrant celebration of Maltese heritage, music, and togetherness. Held in the picturesque coastal town of Portarlington, this year's event was a true testament to the strength of our community spirit, bringing families, friends, and Maltese culture lovers together for a day of entertainment, delicious food, and heartfelt connections.

The success of the Family Day would not have been possible without the unwavering support of local businesses, performers, volunteers, and, most importantly, the attendees who made the event truly special.

The Maltese Own Band, under the passionate direction of Musical Director Wayne Bowden OAM, delivered terrific performances for all to enjoy, filling the air with music that resonated with Maltese pride and tradition.

A special thank you goes out to Ashfords Automotive Repairs, whose generous sponsorship played a crucial role in making this event a reality. Their support reflects the strong community values that continue to drive and uplift Maltese cultural events in Victoria.

No Maltese celebration is complete without pastizzi, ftira, and Kinnie, and thanks to The Original Maltese Pastizzi Co., attendees were able to enjoy a true taste of home. The onsite canteen and bar, along with a diverse array of stallholders and food vans, ensured that everyone had something to savour throughout the day.

The atmosphere was fantastic, thanks to the incredible live performances by Sean Luke Spiteri and Genesis Entertainment, who had the crowd dancing and singing along. MC Charlie Attard kept spirits high with his engaging hosting, while special guests Josuel Grech, direct from Malta, and Anthony Fenech delivered a surprise performance that left everyone in awe.

A special mention also goes to the Maltese Lace Group from the Maltese Cultural Association of Victoria Inc. 1992, who showcased their delicate and intricate craftsmanship in a lace-making demonstration – a beautiful tribute to Malta's artistic traditions.

Adding an extra touch of excitement to the event was the Knights of Melbourne & Sydney Custom Car Club, who once again chose Family Day as the destination for their annual Portarlington car cruise. Their display of classic and custom cars is always a highlight for enthusiasts and families alike.

Children were treated to a range of activities, with Grubby Gumboots Farm Visits, Bellarine Party Shop, and Action Events Amusements ensuring there was plenty of fun to be had. Thanks to Protocol Security Services, everyone enjoyed the day in a safe and well-organised environment.

A heartfelt thanks goes to the Portarlington Cricket Club, whose collaboration as co-hosts was instrumental in the success of the event. Their hospitality and dedication to the local community were truly commendable.

Equally deserving of recognition is the Maltese Own Band Committee and the Portarlington Sub-Committee, whose tireless work behind the scenes ensured every detail was meticulously planned and executed. From securing sponsors to coordinating logistics, their efforts did not go unnoticed.

A special mention to Anthony Grima from Grima Group, who beautifully captured the essence of the day in photos and video, providing the community with cherished memories to look back on.

For those who missed out this year, the good news is that the date for the 2026 Family Day has already been set! Mark your calendars for Sunday, January 25, 2026, as the Maltese Own Band promises another incredible day of music, culture, and fun.

Maltese Olive Oil History

The olive is a fruit central to all Mediterranean cultures. When you think of olives, you think of olive oil. Maltese olive oil dates back as far as the Roman era, where areas were set aside in the many villas built across the island specifically for agricultural activities, particularly the pressing and processing of olive oil. Here, the wooden structures of the olive-presses would be mounted on large rectangular blocks of stone for the pressing to take place. Historically, olive oil is a cultural feat visible in many aspects of our culture from the trees across our landscape to the names of towns like Zebbug in Gozo, Haz-Zebbug in Malta and iz-Zejtun in Malta.

At this time, much of Malta's economy was based on the selling of olive oil. However, the product later died a natural economic death when the Maltese began to eat olives from Spain,Greece,Italy andNorth Africa. Yet a man named Sam Cremona decided that he would dedicate his life to maintaining the tradition of Maltese olive oil, starting his own olive garden and being the first man to buy a functional olive press. He attracted people who wanted to make oil from their own olive trees and continued to work hard to keep the tradition alive. Consequently, Sam Cremona's name is familiar across the whole island.

It goes without saying that olives come from the olive tree, an evergreen tree or shrub native to the Mediterranean, Asia and Africa. The tree, which is sometimes (though rarely) capable of reaching a height of 8 to 15 metres, is short and squat with a broad crown and a twisted or crooked trunk. The tree's leaves are dark green and have a leathery feel. The creamy white flowers are small and found in branched inflorescences. Malta's olive tree is a rare kind that slightly differs from the standard, as it has smaller leaves and fruits. Yet this tree remains an inherent part of the Maltese landscape and some of the olive trees found on the island are almost a thousand years old, or perhaps even older.

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How the Maltese Cross helped refugees in WWII

J-P Mauro

Citizens of Malta painted the crosses on the front of their homes as a show of support and a pledge of service to refugees.

There are many World War II era photos in circulation that show Crosses of Malta emblazoned on the front of houses on the island of Malta. The Maltese Cross has long been associated with the Knights of Malta, as it was used as far back as the 16th century by the Knights Hospitallers during the Crusades, and the symbol held strong when they became known as the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. But what led people to inscribe the image on their street-facing facades?

The Maltese Cross is as steeped in symbolism as it is in history. The figure is recognizable by the way each point of the cross is angled outward, to make eight points. Malta Uncovered points out that these eight points are symbolic of three things: Firstly, as part of a symbol of a "Christian Warrior," they represent the eight obligations or aspirations of the knights, which are:

"To live in truth, have faith, repent one's sins, give proof of humility, love justice, be merciful, be sincere and wholehearted, and to endure persecution."

The eight points are also representative of the eight nations whose countrymen were admitted into the order. Malta Uncovered explains that these include "Auvergne, Provence, France, Aragon, Castile and Portugal, Italy, Baviere (Germany), and England (with Scotland and Ireland)." The site notes that modern teaching holds that the points are also symbolic of the eight "beatitudes" or "blessings" of the order. According to the site:

"A good first aider in service of the Order of St. John [aka. Knights of Malta] is Observant, Tactful, Resourceful, Dexterous, Explicit, Discriminating, Persevering and Sympathetic."

Now that we know the symbolism behind the Maltese Cross, it seems safe to assume that Maltese citizens were painting crosses on their houses as a sign of solidarity with their protectors. After all, the Maltese Cross is the guiding symbol of their warriors, entrenched in their culture for hundreds of years. While this practice was an obvious show of support, however, it was also a bit of a code.

The painting of Maltese Crosses on the front of one's house was a way to announce to the community that the household had room to accommodate refugees. The practice started in 1940, when bombs began to fall on Malta. As the attacks targeted their three most populated cities, Vittoriosa, Senglea and Cospicua, there were estimated to be a third of their 85,000 people displaced. In order to protect the citizenry — and keep the fleeing refugees out of the way of the military — the displaced were sent to the more rural towns and villages inland, which were safer from attack. With far too few shelters, however, the people of these small towns took in families to stay through the hardest time of the war.

These private homes that welcomed refugees began to paint Maltese Crosses on their houses to show how many people they were sheltering. The crosses also made it easier for government officials to see where there may be enough space for another refugee family. They simultaneously showed off the generosity of each homestead, while showing that they had more to give, if there was anyone else in need.

(L to R) Andrew Magro, Antionette Mascari, Miriam Friggieri, Cecilia Borg, Anneliese Sammut (Consul-General), Victor Fenech, Xharles Mifsud, Louis Parnis, Marisa Previtera and Paul Zammit

. Maltese Community Council of Victoria, Inc.

FIGOLLI CLASSES AT THE MALTESE COMMUNITY CENTRE, PARKVILLE, VICTORIA

Figoli Classes - coming soon to the Maltese Centre. Stayed tuned for more information. Keep Saturday the 22 March free if you want to attend.

Figolli are a traditional Maltese Easter treat with a rich history. They are soft biscuits filled with marzipan (an almond mixture) and often decorated with icing or chocolate1. The name "figolli" is derived from the Italian word "figura," meaning "figure," which ties into the various shapes they are made into.

The origins of figolli date back to pagan times and are believed to have originated in Sicily. In the past, figolli were made of sweet pastry and decorated with dyed eggs, which were symbols of fertility. The eggs were colored using natural dyes made from onion skins, vegetables, and fruits. Over time, the recipe evolved to include almond paste and icing or chocolate coating.

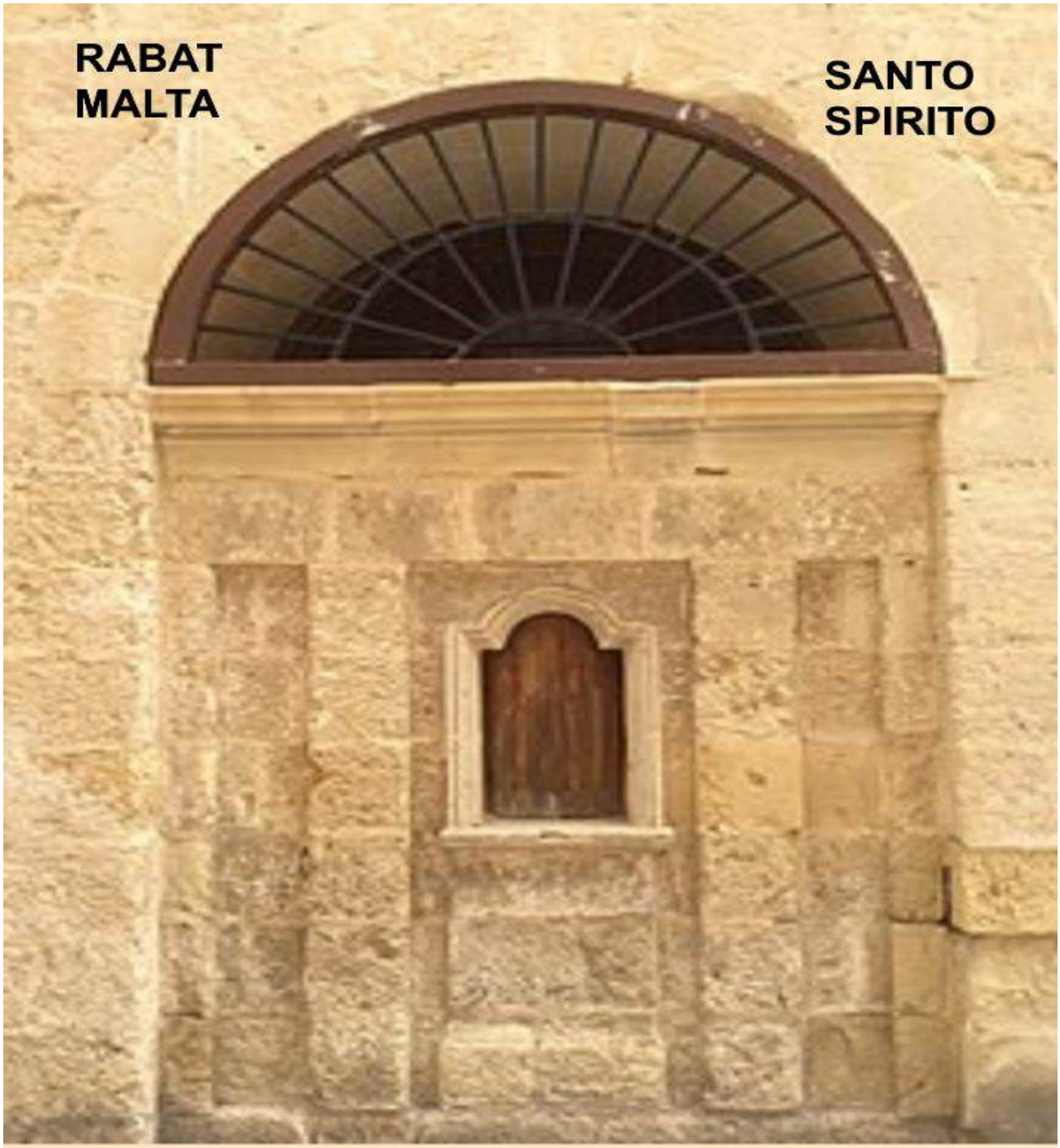
Today, figolli are a beloved Easter tradition in Malta, often shaped into symbols of Christianity like fish, lambs, and crosses, as well as other shapes like hearts, butterflies, and rabbits. They are commonly gifted to family and friends during Easter celebrations.

This year, the Maltese Community Council of Victoria, Inc. is holding figolli Classes at the centre on the 22 March.

The demonstration will be delivered by Sue Volpe. Sue will also be hosting Maltese Cooking Shows on Channel 31 and recordings of the shows will commence soon.

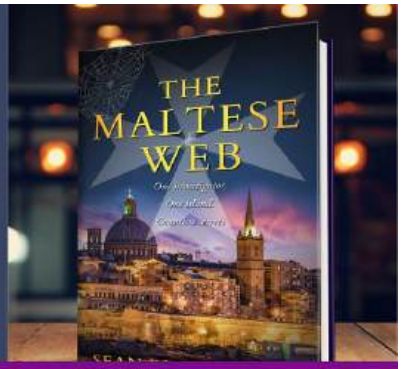
Sue is passionate about Maltese cuisine and if you like to learn more about Maltese cooking, Sue's shows will inspire you.

Stayed tune and be quick to book next week when we start taking bookings by calling the MCCV on 93878922.



This is the Ruota, also known as Foundling Wheel and it was used for discreet depositing of unwanted babies. It consisted of a narrow window which led to a revolving wooden cot in which babies could be safely placed. When turned, it rang a bellin the process. It seems that it was in use from at least 1615 until late nineteenth century. How interesting!

Meet the Author and Book Signings



A thriller set in Malta

Weaving Malta into *The Maltese Web*
Victorian Book Tour

8/3/2025 5pm	Nanna's Place Mediterranean Restaurant. 256 Moray St South Melbourne. *A Taste of Malta* Bookings 03 93799913
12/3/2025 12:10 after Bingo	Maltese Community Council 477 Royal Parade Parkville Vic
13/3/2025 4:15pm	Portarlington Writing Groups The Bayview Rm, Parks Hall, Newcombe St, Portarlington
15/3/2025 7:45pm	St Bernadette's Church 598 Westmoreland Rd Sunshine
16/3/2025 2pm	The Maltese Community Centre Maltese Museum Henry Street Morwell Lunch from noon: Bookings 0412411 719

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