MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

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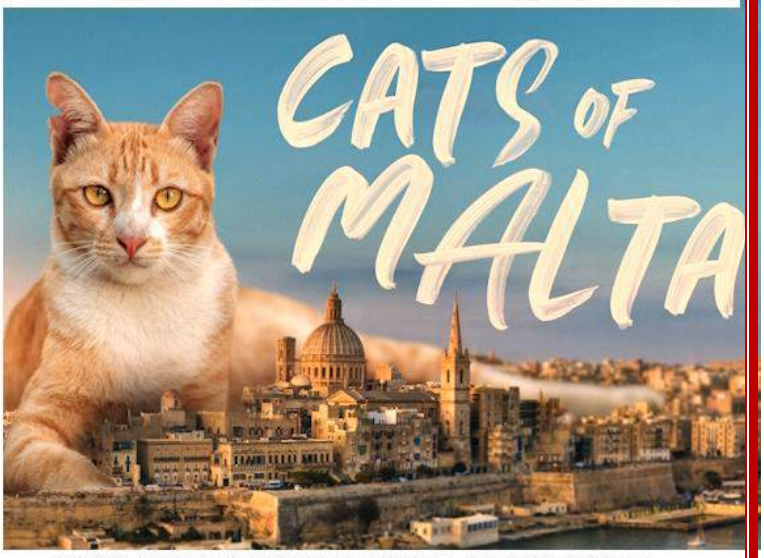
THE JOURNAL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

Paul Debono - one of the first casualties in WW II - 1940



DOCUMENTARY WORLDWIDE ON YOUTUBE

Cardinal Peter Erdo

Cardinal Pietro Parolin

Cardinal Peter Turkson

Cardinal Luis Targe

Cardinal Mario Grech

Cardinal Matteo Zuppi

Who could be the next Pope?

Chev. Dr. Raymond Xerri
GOZITAN HISTORIAN

JOHN CALLEJA WITH AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND STUDENTS AT THE PIETA CEMETERY MALTA

GEORGE CROSS FALCONS COMMUNITY CENTRE

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

On the 110th Anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign, Australian High Commissioner H.E. Matt Skelly and New Zealand Deputy High Commissioner Mr Blake Van Velden were honoured to be joined by Acting President of Malta, the Hon Mr Anglu Farrugia; Acting Speaker of the House, the Hon Michael Farrugia MP; and members of the Diplomatic Corps, Maltese and Australian communities, to commemorate Anzac Day at a ceremony at Pieta Military cemetery **Commonwealth War Graves Commission**.

This year, H.E. Matt Skelly presented the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) with a commemorative bugle on behalf of the Australian High Commission and **Australian Army Band** Corps in recognition of their continued support of Anzac Day.

Anzac Day is one of Australia's most significant days of national commemoration —a time for all Australians to recognise the more than 1.5 million service men and women who have served our country in all conflicts, wars and peacekeeping operations. It's also a time to remember the over 103,000 Australians who sacrificed their lives in our country's name. On this day, we also acknowledge the role of Malta, the 'Nurse of the Mediterranean, in the care of our sick and wounded Anzacs in 1915. Lest We Forget

THANK YOU, MALTA

The second Malta ANZAC Sports organised by John Calleja [South Australia] was again a huge success during the 2 weeks in Malta.

John Calleja with Australian and New Zealand students at the Pieta Cemetery in Malta

Australia High Commission Matt Skully with the Australian Team

Some of the highlights included:

- **Australia Hall – laying down 4 metres of green artificial turf alongside 58 planted pots of rosemary to represent 58000 wounded ANZACs nursed in Malta plus added NZ and Australia flag banners.**
- **Australia Hall Working Bee**
- **Visiting a number of cemeteries included buried ANZACs..RIP**
- **Group attendance at the ANZAC Service held at Pieta Military Cemetery – Two wreaths presented at the memorial, one wreath was on behalf the people of Australia and NZ and after the service, laying rosemary on graves. [Thankyou Malta].**
- **ANZAC U18 Sprint Beach regatta held at Pretty Bay reunited the 3 countries, this time enjoying a friendly competitive 2.5 hrs of sport. [Thankyou Malta].**

The ANZAC Sport in Malta highlights Malta's huge contribution during WWI, one amazing stats 99.5% of the wounded ANZACs [57,991] treated in Malta returned home or went back to battle. We also remember the 0.5% [272] buried in Malta...not to forget all those involved in Malta during WWI.

2027 will be the next ANZACs U18 Beach Sprint Rowing Regatta and all will have the opportunity for Maltese Living Abroad as well General public to be involved for a small fee to cover costs having your names/business printed on the flag banners used to form the starting point sprint to reach the boat.

Your names and business on banners may be kept if you wish for future regatta races at no cost ...for details email John on malta.anzacs@gmail.com.

ANZAC CASUALTIES AND MALTA

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

This year marks 110 years since the Gallipoli Campaign. During this period, we will be sharing short series of ANZAC stories that highlight the shared historical military connections between Malta and Australia.

Did you know during the First World War, Malta received many casualties from the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign in 1915. One of the many Australians treated in Malta was **Private Richard Roberts.**

After nearly drowning whilst stepping off the landing boat during the Gallipoli landings on 25 April 1915, Roberts was wounded in the thigh during the advance and evacuated to the hospital ship Clan MacGillivray which was the first hospital transport vessel to arrive in Malta with wounded and sick servicemen from Gallipoli.

After a brief recuperation in Malta, Private Roberts returned to the 3rd Battalion at Gallipoli. Roberts again is wounded in battle, this time in the right shoulder and is again sent to Malta where he commented fondly on his time spent convalescing.

Private Roberts was one of many thousands of Anzacs who received medical treatment in Malta during the First World War and an example of the many historical military connections between Malta and Australia.

To learn more about Private Robert's experience of the First World War, his typescript memoir is available from the Australian War Memorial website.

Did you know that **Private Charles Emanuel Bonavia** was one of the Maltese soldiers who served with front line Australian units at Gallipoli?

From Sliema, Private Bonavia emigrated to Australia shortly before outbreak of the First World War.

In 1914, Bonavia enlisted for service in the 11th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force (AIF).

Bonavia's Arabic language skills proved useful to his battalion commanders as he often assisted as an interpreter during training in Egypt.

Private Bonavia was in the first wave of ANZAC landings at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. Sadly, Private Bonavia failed to muster for a company reorganization five days later with reports later informing he was killed in action by gun fire. Private Bonavia is commemorated on Lone Pine Memorial in Türkiye. Photo courtesy of 'Gallipoli: The Malta Connection' by John A. Mizzi. Dec. 1990.

Theodore Charles Kleeberger was born in September of 1893 in Corryong, Victoria Two weeks after the First World War had been declared, Theo departed Port Melbourne for two months of initial training. The 6th Battalion landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 as part of the second wave. On the 6th of August the battalion were issued orders to destroy Sniper's Trench. The fighting was chaotic. During the battle Private Kleeberger was wounded in his hands by a bomb blast. He was evacuated from Gallipoli and admitted to St. Elmo hospital in Malta. By this time his wounds had become septic. Hdied on the 18 August 1915. Private Kleeberger was buried at the Pietà Military Cemetery.To learn more about Private Kleeberger and other similar stories
vISIT**https://placesofpride.awm.gov.au/stories/**

Photo courtesy of Places of Pride, Australian War Memorial

Of the many wounded ANZACs (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) that received medical treatment in Malta during the First World War, one was **Gordon Charles Naley,** an Indigenous Australian from the Mandra Balae Station (now Mundrabilla) in Western Australia.

Private Naley joined the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) soon after the outbreak of war, where he was assigned to 16th Infantry Battalion.

On the afternoon of 25 April 1915, the first party from the 16th Battalion stepped ashore at Gallipoli. The eight days following saw many lives lost.

Late in May, Gordon contracted enteric fever and was evacuated from Gaba Tepe, Gallipoli, on board the hospital ship HS Soudan, along with 314 wounded ANZACs, to the Cottonera Military Hospital (now St Edward's College) in Malta on 24 May 1915, where he remained for two months.

To discover more about Indigenous ANZACs during the First World War or Western Australian Aboriginal servicemen at Gallipoli, please follow the below links:
https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/.../$file/tp-2833.pdf
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGaXtU-DKPw
Photos: Courtesy of Army Museum of West Australia

MORE ABOUT THE ANZAC DAY 2025

Our story is about John Chetcuti who works for Downer in South Australia on the gas maintenance.
John said Anzac Day holds a very special place in his heart, as it does for many Australians. It's a time to remember and honour all those who have given their lives for our country, it's been wonderful to see the number of attendees grow over the years, especially the increasing presence of young people, which gives me great hope for the future.
For over 30 years, John has had the privilege of participating in Anzac Day Dawn Services as a member of the West Torrens Concert Band here in South Australia, performing at the local council's service
John mentioned The Dawn Service is a truly surreal and moving experience, He believes every Australian should experience at least once in their lifetime. Each year he has had the honour of performing the Last Post on the bugle at his local parish church's Anzac Day service. Last Friday John was up at 4.30am, ready to stand with his bandmates and community to pay respects.

**The Maltese RSL sub-Branch NSW.
Members get together for the annual ANZAC Day march
on the 25th April each year 2025**

789,894 MALTESE AND GOZITANS AROUND THE WORLD IN JANUARY 2024

By Chev. Dr. Raymond Xerri

Source: Perspettivi - A Gozo review is distributed without charge to interested readers, upon request. Perspettivi is also available online at grda.mt.

According to the October 2023 Electoral Register there are only 16,100183 'actual' Gozitans left living on Gozo. For such a tiny island having 410,000 diaspora worldwide and some 60,000 Gozitans who moved to Malta184, the influence of such large scale mobility and effects on Gozo's identity are an integral part and overwhelming, to say the least on Gozo and the Gozitans. Gozitans in Gozo have always viewed their diaspora as part of a larger family - (1) Gozitans who left the island since they either were not capable of finding employment in Gozo; (2) not capable of creating employment; and, (3) ruled out completely the possibility 183 Which includes Gozitans from birth to the age of sixteen.

The rest of the population are Maltese residents and foreign nationals living in Gozo. 184 Since the end of World War II. The number is far larger when taking into account the thousands of Gozitans who moved to Malta permanently prior to this period. 26 of daily commuting for work in Malta or (4) the other option to move permanently to Malta to be close to their employment and avoid the hassle of wasting two to three hours daily in traffic back and forth from Gozo. In other words, thousands of Gozitans preferred to migrate thousands of kilometres away from their islands rather than choosing their only other option which is to commute or move permanently to Malta. On the other hand, since time immemorial Gozitan return migrants185 were for the Gozo's economic engine, being the biggest investor, transferring remittances and funds from diaspora countries to Gozo and generate wealth by spending their savings and wealth in constructing their relatively larger than average house, purchase or import one or several motor vehicles, pleasure craft(s), all the new gadgets which remind them of where they spent their prosperous years, etc.

This strong economic momentum not only transformed Gozo's economy but also created a culture which created an admiration for these returnees, their newly acquired wealth and lifestyle.

Furthermore, the acceptance of the values of the western world were cemented into Gozitan culture and the Gozitan way of life.

Returnees also bring with them tremendous know-how and talents which the Gozitan and Maltese economies so desperately needed and benefited. Ensuring the progressive evolution and updating with the rest of the marketplace and in the same time keep up with or exceed certain standards in Malta. Many of the high tech, specialised, precision engineering jobs created in the early 1990s and throughout the 2000s were filled by the many Gozitan returnees from Canada and the United States of America. 185 As early as 14th century notarial deeds in Gozo indicate remittances and wealth transfer from abroad. 27 Gozo's Diaspora is an untapped goldmine Whilst the overwhelming majority of the Gozitan diaspora are hard working blue collar workers who carried their excellent work ethic to the country(ies) they settled in and became successful, a growing number excelled beyond our wildest imagination, once they found fertile ground for risk taking and larger economies. There are Gozitans around the world who own ten and twenty times larger land than the size of the Maltese and Gozitan islands186, whilst there are no known Gozitan billionaires yet there are nearly two dozen Gozitan millionaires worldwide. Moreover, there are Gozitan CEOs who run businesses that have a budget ten, twenty times and even more then the entire budget of the economies of Malta and Gozo. This is just the tip of the iceberg of the Gozitan diaspora success story. Countless Gozitans throughout the diaspora countries have been part of this success story. Gozitans who have made their islands and people proud There are countless Gozitans in many parts of the world that have made a name for themselves and have made the Islands of Gozo and its people proud. The below tables are a small representative sample of just a few of the thousands of Gozitans worldwide who have left or are still carving their mark, with achievements in the respective diaspora countries they lived or live in.

Authors' Bio-Note:

Chev. Dr Raymond Christian Xerri, a father of two teens, a career diplomat for 30 years serving in seven countries, the local, national and European expert of Gozitan and Maltese Diaspora and elected as Malta's Diaspora representative within Europe's largest organisation, European Throughout the World (E.T.T.W.) based in Brussels. Today, he heads the Gozo Diaspora & International Office (GD&IO) within the Ministry for Gozo and Planning (MGP). He has sat for a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and International Relations (U.S.A.), European Community Scholarship in European law (Germany); certificate, diploma and Masters of Arts (Malta) and a Doctorate in Philosophy (Australia).

As an international academic guest lecturer and pioneer in local and regional civic education in the Maltese Islands. Chev. Dr Xerri is the founder and co-founder of a number of associations and organisations in Gozo, Malta and in diaspora countries. A Roman Catholic catechist in diaspora countries for 25 years; donated 132 bags of blood, an artist, edited and authored the production series, "Gozo and the Gozitan".

He is a Catenian, a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and a volunteer of the Order of Malta Association in Gozo. Chev. Dr Xerri has received numerous awards in Gozo, Malta and internationally, he recently was honoured with the Gozo Rotary Club's Pride of Gozo - Community Service Award 202

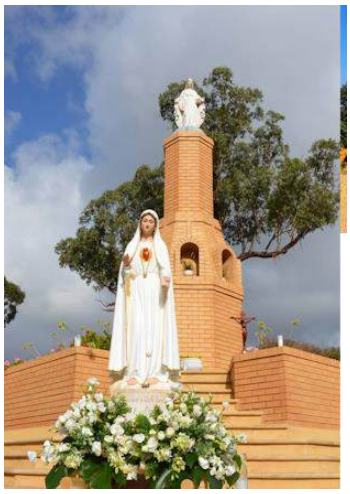
MGR BEDEDICT OF TA PINU SHRINE DIES

Mgr Benedict Camilleri, from the Parish of Gharb, has passed away at the age of 95. Mgr Camilleri died 1 May at 1.30am (9.30am Australian time), in Melbourne Australia, where for the 30+ last years he served as Rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu at Bacchus Marsh, Victoria, Australia.

Mgr Benedict held various significant roles in the Diocese of Gozo in the past, namely as the first Secretary to Bishop Cauchi, Chancellor of the Bishop's Curia, and Rector of the Ta' Pinu National Shrine - Gozo, MALTA.

May Our Lady of Ta' Pinu welcome him in her loving arms and his soul rests in peace. Here is a brief history of the Shrine.

After Our Lady's Call to Carmela Grima, the first foreign country that received an Icon of Our Lady Ta' Pinu was Tunisia, where some Gozitan people emigrated in the early years of the 20th century.



These immigrants, besides personal devotion in their hearts, had carried to that country, an Icon of Our Lady Ta' Pinu and installed it in one of the local Churches. To date, devotions to Our Lady Ta' Pinu has spread all around the world, namely India, Guatemala, Toronto, Albania, Brazil, Rome, and the latest oratory was installed at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington D.C in 2006.

In 1957, for some reasons, this Icon from La Goulette, Tunisia was removed from Tunisia and was brought to a Church in Kensington, Melbourne.

After remaining for some years in that Church, it was transferred again to St. Bernadette Church, in Sunshine Victoria. In 1989, a group of devotees of Our Lady decided to have some celebrations in honour of Our Lady Ta' Pinu at St. Bernadette Church. In 1990, this group, wishing to have an icon of Our Lady for processions, commissioned a new Icon to artist, Chev. Paul Camilleri Cauchi. The painting was finished early 1991 and Msgr Benedict Camilleri, then Rector of Ta Pinu Shrine in Gozo, Malta was invited to come to Australia and conduct a few Marian Celebrations.

Devotions to Our Lady Ta' Pinu were introduced in Horsley Park and Blacktown (Sydney) and She is also venerated in the Marian Centre of Berrima(NSW)

While Msgr Benedict Camilleri was in Sydney, some friends suggested that he could build a church here in Australia dedicated to Our Lady Ta' Pinu. On his return to Melbourne, meeting the group that had invited him, he revealed this idea which they were ready to support. He then made the necessary requests to both Ecclesiastical Authorities, in Malta and in Melbourne, and began looking for a suitable place for such a devotion. After consultations, the Hill overlooking the Western Highway was selected, a loan to support the project was obtained and an application for a planning permit was lodged.

In 1992, a Low Mass was celebrated on the land. The first official Mass in the presence of a beautiful number of Pilgrims was celebrated on **27rd March 1993.**

His Lordship, Archbishop Francis Thomas Little also gave permission for Mass to be said each first Saturday of the month. This began on the 26 March 1994 and Each month hundreds of people gather in front o the statue of the blessed Virgin Mary, duly built on the hillside and blessed by Bishop Nicholas Cauchi of Gozo, to pray the Rosary and attend Holy Mass.

The majestic concrete Cross overlooking the Western Freeway was erected, marking the site of the proposed church. was blessed by His Lordship Dr. Francis Thomas Little, Archbishop of Melbourne on Saturday, 24th February 1996. He also placed a solid brass cross which had been previously blessed by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, at the foot of the cross.

The growing number of pilgrims, as in earlier times, demands that a suitable church to accommodate them be built. Accordingly, it has been decided to commence construction, by building a replica of the ancient chapel. This too will be surrounded by fields, but one day, with God's help, a beautiful church will also stand out, a sign of the Australian People's wish to honour the Mother of God.

Our prayer is that she will grant peace and harmony to all the peoples of this great land. And that she will draw us in all into communion with Jesus, her Son and our Saviour.

The foundation stone for this chapel was cut from the same stone in which the old chapel was built. It was blessed by the Holy Father in Rome on 18 June 1997 and presented to His Grace Archbishop George Pell of Melbourne during his visit to Ta' Pinu on 10th July of that year.In accepting this cornerstone Archbishop Pell expressed his delight that the devotion the Maltese have for the blessed Virgin will have a new home in Melbourne. He looked forward to the day when the Church at Bacchus Marsh will be completed. May Our Lady guide those who are undertaking this challenging task. **Maria Gauci**

Paul Debono

1917-1940

Paul Debono was born on the 3rd of January 1917 in Msida, Malta to Paul Debono and Rosa née Bajada. Paul was the second youngest of seven children, his other siblings were Joseph, Angelo, Saveria, Mananni, Carmelo, and Annunziato. He married Maria Rosaria (Lucy) Tanti, daughter of Emmanuel Tanti and Maria Angelica née Micallef on the 11th of November 1939 at the Parish church of St. Joseph's in Msida.

Paul enlisted in the Royal Malta Artillery on the 25th of September 1939 at the age of 22 years and 294 days, it is mentioned that he was a stone cutter on his enlistment documents. He was in the 1st Heavy Regiment in the Royal Malta Artillery and his rank was a gunner, Paul's army number was 10127.

Paul was stationed at Fort St. Elmo on the 11th of June 1940 when at about 6:55 am, Italian bombers launched their first assault on Malta and directly hit Fort St. Elmo in Valletta. Paul, along with five others were instantly killed, becoming Malta's first military casualties in WWII. The others who lost their lives were: Carmel Cordina (10069), Joseph Galea (3570), Richard Micallef (4345), Michael Saliba (3084), and Philip Busuttil (10109). Paul and four of the five other casualties were laid to rest at Santa Maria Addolorata Cemetery in Paola, Malta. The inscription on his grave says *'In memory of a beloved son. Killed in action in defence of Malta and the Empire'*.

Paul was awarded four medals for his service in the military after his death, they include the 1939-1945 medal, The Africa Star, Defence Medal, and the War Medal. He had served a total of 261 days in the Royal Malta Artillery until his death at the age of 23.

Paul's wife Lucy was pregnant at the time of his death and gave birth to a son, Paul, on the 13th of November 1940. Unfortunately, Paul passed away five minutes after birth which is stated on his death certificate. Lucy never remarried or had any more children, in the 1980's she moved to Australia and settled in Morwell in Victoria, to be with the rest of her family who also lived there. She passed away on the 17th of November 2014 at the age of 96 and was buried in the Yallourn Cemetery.

Supplied by Martin Debono – Paul's nephew

St. Gregory's Feast

is a cherished Maltese celebration that blends deep religious roots with vibrant social traditions. It remains a highly anticipated event, not only for the residents of Żejtun and the southern region (Xlukkajri), but also for thousands of Maltese, Gozitans, and tourists who flock to the Church of St. Gregory and Marsaxlokk to take part in the festivities.

The social heart of the St. Gregory feast comes alive in Marsaxlokk, where crowds of locals and tourists gather to enjoy the vibrant atmosphere. The day is marked by traditional Maltese food and drink, local games, and għana—a beloved form of Maltese folk singing.

"Some people come to play tombola, others go boating—there's something for everyone."

"There's a beautiful market, food and drink, tombola... there's a bit of everything," another added. "I enjoy it when people are here—it brings the place to life."

A unique tradition tied to this feast is the belief that St. Gregory's Day marks the start of the swimming season. For many Maltese and Gozitans, it's the first dip of the year.

While the social side brings people together in celebration, the religious element remains at the core of the feast, drawing pilgrims to the Church of St. Gregory in Żejtun. A centuries-old tradition, the pilgrimage and religious ceremonies serve as a reminder of the spiritual origins of this beloved feast.

The traditional pilgrimage begins at the Church of Our Lady of Mercy, proceeds to the Archpriestly Church of St. Catherine, and concludes with a solemn Mass at the Church of St. Gregory in Żejtun. Among those taking part, feelings of sadness over the passing of Pope Francis were strongly felt.

"He was a Pope who did a lot of good," said another. "We've lost someone special."

As the Catholic world now turns its eyes toward the upcoming Conclave, the conversation among Maltese faithful has also shifted to hope and pride—with a sense of possibility in the air.

"For Malta, it's a beautiful moment," said one man. "We have a Maltese cardinal. Could we have a Maltese pope? Now it's up to them to decide."

"If he becomes pope," another added with a smile, "just imagine how proud we'll be!"

The origins of the St. Gregory feast, which in the past was also a public holiday, date back to the 16th century. In 1781, Bishop Vincenzo Labini issued a decree establishing that the feast would always be celebrated on the first Wednesday following Easter Sunday.

This year, the Directorate for Culture and Local Councils organised a vibrant programme of events, featuring traditional għana (folk singing) and a series of performances by the Sbandieratori di Faenza in St. Gregory's Square.

An infjorata—a decorative floral display—was also created on the parvis of St. Gregory's Church with the participation of the public. Children enjoyed several educational visits, while various stalls showcased aspects of Malta's intangible heritage, including salt plates, traditional spinning, and lace-making.

Minister for National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government, Owen Bonnici, expressed his pride in seeing the feast of St. Gregory being celebrated through cultural events, music, għana, and educational activities. He highlighted how such occasions serve to bring Malta's rich intangible heritage closer to the people.

GOZITAN ACADEMIC DELIVERS LECTURE AT PRESTIGIOUS LINGUIST TALKS SERIES IN TUNISIA

Dr Charles Daniel Saliba, senior lecturer at the Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology, Gozo Campus, was recently invited to speak at the inaugural edition of *Linguist Talks*, a distinguished lecture series hosted by École Normale Supérieure de Tunis (ENS), Université de Tunis (Tunisia).

In his presentation, titled 'The Semitic Element of the Maltese Language', Dr Saliba explored the historical development of the Maltese language, with particular emphasis on its Semitic element. His lecture examined the language's lexicon and morphology and highlighted notable similarities between Maltese and Tunisian Arabic.

Linguist Talks is a new academic initiative that aims to examine the intricate connections between language, culture, and cognition. Organised by Professor Lilia Ben Mansour of the Department of English Language, Literature, and Civilization and hosted by ENS – one of Tunisia's foremost academic institutions known for training future educators and scholars – it brought together renowned linguists from across the globe.

Reflecting on the experience, Dr Saliba commented:

'It was a privilege to participate in the launch of this intellectually vibrant series. Engaging with students, educators, and researchers in such a dynamic setting was truly inspiring. It was especially meaningful to discuss the Maltese language in Tunisia, where the local dialect shares many linguistic features with our own.'

The event featured several eminent speakers:

- Professor Jean-Marc Dewaele, Birkbeck, University of London, United Kingdom – 'Emotion in Intercultural Communication';
- Dr Seyyed Hatam Tamimi Sa'd, Indo-American Center, Chicago, USA – 'Theories of Language Origins and Evolution';
- Dr Zhongfeng Tian, Rutgers University–Newark, USA – 'Cultivating Sustainable Translanguaging Pedagogy in Chinese Immersion Classrooms';
- Dr Natalia V. Parker, University College London (UCL), United Kingdom – 'Cognitive Processing in a Language Classroom and How to Make Language Instruction More Processable'; and
- Dr Anna Dillon, Emirates College for Advanced Education, United Arab Emirates – 'Reading with Young Children in Multilingual Families: Community, Collaboration and Cosiness'.

For more information, visit https://sites.google.com/view/linguisttalks/home

Photo: Dr Charles Daniel Saliba together with Professor Lilia Ben Mansour.

THE WIGNACOURT MUSEUM - RABAT- MALTA

The Wignacourt Collegiate Museum at Rabat Malta was formerly the baroque residence of the Chaplains of the Knights of St. John. Originally inaugurated by Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt (1601-1622), it has reopened after a thorough refurbishment of the whole building together with the restoration of most of the artworks which it presently hosts.

Initially located outside the former Roman City of Melite, the Wignacourt Museum forms part of a Pauline complex as it is materially linked to St Paul's Grotto, Rabat, the cradle of Christianity in Malta. This is the place where St Paul the Apostle, in A.D. 60, is believed to have founded the first Christian Community on the island.

The building, fully completed in 1749, is on three levels: the underground level consists of a labyrinth of Punic, Roman and Christian Hypogea with interesting architectural features as well as a complex of World War II shelters with two main corridors and about fifty rooms. The ground floor level consists of a corridor with a number of rooms used as offices and minor collections whilst on the other side is a spacious garden with a built area which once included the refectory of the Chaplains of the Order and an oven which during World War II provided daily more than 2000 loaves for the population of Rabat.

The first floor is the main exhibition space, as it has an impressive picture gallery with works by Mattia Preti, Antoine Favray, Francesco Zahra and other Maltese as well as European Artists. It also comprises a collection of 17th- 19th century Spanish, Italian and Maltese silver; a unique wooden altar used for the celebration of Mass on the galleys of the Order of the Knights of Malta; a collection of old relics and reliquaries, sculptures in wood, alabaster and bronze, including a medallion by Alessandro Algardi; maps, coins, prints and rare books among which is King Henry VIII's 'Septem Sacramants" written to confute Martin Luther and above all a baroque chapel for the private devotions of the residing chaplains.

Well done and thank you Frank, a very informative newsletter, thank you for also bringing the MQVB article taken from the band's newsletter. Keep up the excellent work in producing this high standard publication for our community.
Raymond Grima –Adelaide, South Australia

What a wonderful tribute to our heroes. My grandfather, Capt. JE Agius, was in Gallipoli... not with the ANZACs but with the Sherwood Foresters Artillery as a 'surgeon' (medical student) on secondment from the KOMR from Malta. He survived the experience and went on to become Director of Prisons, Corradino Heights (Rahal Gdid) and Superintendent of Police in Malta.
Thanks, Frank, for keeping the fires burning bright.
Prof. Steve Gatt – New South Wales. Australia

MALTAPOST TO ISSUE SPECIAL STAMP DEDICATED TO POPE FRANCIS ON SATURDAY

MaltaPost on Saturday will be issuing a stamp in memory of Pope Francis.

Pope Francis 1936-2025 Pope Francis, born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires, Argentina, was elected pope on 13 March 2013 following the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI.

He chose "Francis" as his papal name in honour of Saint Francis of Assisi. Pope Francis had a close relationship with the Maltese following his visit to Malta and Gozo in 2022, followed by his appointment of Bishop Mario Grech to the rank of cardinal on 28 November of that same year. Pope Francis passed away on Easter Monday, April 21, 2025, at the age of 88 at his residence in the Vatican's Casa Santa Marta. His final resting place will be in the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

In memory of this humble pope, MaltaPost will issue a new stamp on Saturday 26 April 2025. This stamp will be issued in a sheet of 10, each measuring 31mm x 44mm, with a comb perforation of 14.1 x 14.2 and containing the Maltese Cross watermark. The sheets measure 182mm x 115mm and were produced by Printex Limited in the offset process. The issue consists of 25,000 stamps, each bearing a denomination of €1.50. The new stamp will be available from all Post Offices in Malta and Gozo as from Saturday 26 April 2025. Orders may be placed online at www.maltaphilately.com or by mail from the Philatelic Bureau, MaltaPost p.l.c., 305, Qormi Road, Marsa, MTP 1001; by telephone 2596 1740 or via e-mail info@maltaphilately.com

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OUR LADY QUEEN OF VICTORIES PARISH HORSLEY PARK, NEW SOUTH WALES

The name Horsley first appears on the map of the Western Suburbs of Sydney, in 1833. In 1806, Governor Philip Gidley King awarded a grant of land to Colonel George Johnston, for his part in quelling the Irish convict's rebellion of 1804. Johnston did not live on the grant, but his daughter, Blanche, and her husband Major George Weston, of the East India Army, decided to build their residence on the property. They built an Indian-styled homestead, which they named Horsley, after Weston's birthplace in Surrey, England. The Horsley Homestead, which still stands, gave its name to the town which grew up in the area.

The first school in Horsley Park was opened by John Morrissey, in 1931, to educate the children of people settling down in the area. Horsley Park was mainly inhabited by market gardeners. Italian and Maltese emigrants made a living looking after their crops. *(Details about the history of Horsley Park taken from George Vance: Fairfield – a history of the District, second edition, The Council of the City of Fairfield, NSW, 1991)*

In the early 1950's no Masses were celebrated at Horsley Park. The locals had to travel to Rooty Hill, Bossley Park or Liverpool parishes for Mass. Car pooling was not a new idea then. Friends and neighbours who had vehicles took with them those who had none.

From time to time a priest used to come to celebrate Mass in the tiny Community Hall (opposite the Post Office). Then in July 1952 a priest started to visit Horsley Park and celebrate Mass every two weeks and a month later Fr Marrow introduced weekly Mass. The late Fathers Camilleri and Baron used to celebrate Mass in Maltese language once a month – this was very much appreciated by the Maltese migrants in the community.

Horsley Park became a Parish, dedicated to Our Lady of Victories, in 1960, with the arrival of Fr Ernest G. Paine as Parish Priest. At first all baptisms were celebrated in homes. The community started to work hard to raise funds to build a parish church – door to door knocking, asking for help, was a common event. Hand made doilies, fruits from the market garden, and other items were raffled. Fetes were also organised. A committee was formed to introduce the Planned Giving Envelope system. All meetings took place in the old shop – the centre of the village.

The hard work of the locals and their motivation generated a strong community spirit. Tony and Paula Cini donated some land on The Horsley Drive, on which the parish church was to be built. This motivated the community even further. Fr Paine's mother also donated a small brass crucifix for the

altar. The new parish church was blessed and opened by Cardinal Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney, on November 26, 1961.

Fr Paine also started visiting the community at Kemps Creek. He celebrated Mass there in the Kemps Creek Community Hall (where Saturday night dancing was also held!). In 1975 Mr Hugo Perau donated three acres of land at 215 Western Road, Kemps Creek, to the Missionary Society of Saint Paul, who was then looking after the Horsley Park Parish. On this land a chapel was built dedicated to Our Lady Queen of Peace.

In 1965, the Parish was put under the pastoral care of the Paulist Missionaries, a community of priests and brothers, established in Malta in 1910, with the aim of going to mission lands and of helping Maltese emigrants. The first member of this congregation to become Parish Priest at Horsley Park was Fr Claude Borg MSSP.

The coming of Fr Borg brought a new motivation to the young parish community and a revival of the faith. Fr Claude recalls: "I was a young priest when I was in Horsley Park. I used to go out to visit families, Catholics or not. There is one remark I will never forget, said to me by an older Catholic: 'this is the first time a priest has come to visit us!' "

In 1963, the feast of Our Lady of Victories was organised for the first time. The first year a small statue of Our Lady was used for the procession. Later on the statue of Our Lady of Victories, which is used in St Mary's Cathedral for the Maltese feast, was brought over for the Horsley Park procession. In September of 1967 a new statue of Our Lady of Victories was ordered for Horsley Park Parish. The statue, bought from Pio Anastasi and Co. Ltd., Valletta Malta, cost Sterling Pound 539, 10 shillings (AU $1,159 approx). The Feast of Our Lady of Victories became a cultural event and many people from far and wide used to attend. In the first years, the procession with the statue of Our Lady of Victories used to leave the church, turn left onto Wallgrove Road, left onto Redmayne Road and back along Walworth Road.

Fr Claude's encouragement and influence on the young people in the parish was great to see. Great numbers used to attend any functions that were organised. Sunday April 19, 1970 saw the opening of the Marion Peace Memorial Hall by Bishop Muldoon, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney. This was another sign of the hard work by the parish community to raise the necessary funds. The hall was named in memory of Fr Claude's sister who had died before the completion of the hall, and Fr Claude's mother, who died during World War II.

Fr Claude left the parish in 1971, followed by Fr Emanuel Adami (1971 0 74), Fr Charles Borg (1974 – 77), Fr Benedict Sant (1977 – 80) and Fr Phillip Gambin (1980 – 94). Fr Philip was the driving force behind the building of the Catholic Primary school and a new Parish Church.

Marion Primary School was officially opened by the Hon Ron J Murlock, Minister for Education, and blessed by Bishop David Cremin, on January 31, 1982. The school started in small classes and offices under the Marion Peace Memorial Hall. Sister Catherine O'Brien RSC was the founding principal and remained with the school til 1987. During this time, architect Mr Michael Milosovic prepared drawings and plans for the construction of a school. The first stage of the school building was opened by Dr Richard E. Klugman, Federal Member for Prospect, and blessed by Cardinal Clancy, Archbishop of Sydney, on Sunday November 2, 1986.

The second stage was opened by the Hon. Janice Crosio, Federal Member for Prospect, and blessed by Cardinal Clancy on Sunday December 9, 1990. By this time plans were being drawn up for a new and bigger church to be built on the hill, behind the old church building. Cardinal Clancy opened and dedicated the new church on Friday September 3, 1993.

Mr Jim Borg NSW AUSTRALIA
Gieh Is-Siggiewi Award

The Maltese Journal in Australia.

I have known Jim Borg for the past few years and today I can say that there is a very good friendship exists between us. I met Jim when he was in Malta for the past two years during the summer months, where he usually joins us to celebrate the Feast of our Patron Saint, St. Nicholas, and during these visits to Malta, we had the opportunity to meet several times where we got to know each other better. In these meetings that we had between us, I could understand that even though Jim has been absent from Malta for more than sixty years now, living in Sydney, Australia, he still loves his country very much and above all his hometown of Siġġiewi, particularly Fawwara which is the jewel of his heart.

He worked tirelessly for many years in philanthropy, especially through the Friends of Dar tal-Providenza Organisation, which is a non- governmental organisation founded in Sydney, Australia. Throughout the last decades, Jim worked tirelessly in order to raise the much- necessary funds in aid to Dar tal-Providenza, an invaluable legacy left to us by Monsignor Michael Azzopardi, the Founder of Dar tal-Providenza, which until today, more than fifty years after its proper foundation, continues to offer on a daily basis, 24/7, shelter to persons with disabilities, through various fundraising activities organised by this volunteer organisation in Australia. Meanwhile, in the last two summers I had the opportunity to meet Mr Borg up close, when he presented the sum of money, he had raised for Dar tal-Providenza during that year. The enthusiasm and joy I saw on Jim in those days was one of great joy and satisfaction.

Meanwhile, apart from his philanthropic work, Jim, even though he has been absent from Malta for many years, has always worked to ensure that the name of Malta and Siġġiewi is praised in Australia, where he is deeply involved within the Maltese immigrant communities in Australia, and very active, where in the past he has hosted several distinguished Maltese guests who visited Australia and the Maltese Communities, such as former Maltese Prime Ministers Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici, Eddie Fenech Adami and former Maltese Foreign Minister Dr Alex Sceberras Trigona.

Jim has worked and continues to work to this day, aiming to keep Maltese traditions alive in Australia, such as the feast of Our Lady of Victory, which is the national feast of Malta, and which is also celebrated with great enthusiasm during the month of September, where Jim is involved in activities and preparations, such as setting up for the Feast.

Undoubtedly, Jim as a proud Siġġiewi citizen, has great devotion to our Patron Saint of Siġġiewi, St. Nicholas of Bari. Apart from coming to Malta several times to spend some time with his family and friends in Malta, Jim has our village feast very close to his heart and always makes sure to come at a time when we are celebrating the Feast of St. Nicholas, which we traditionally celebrate on the last Sunday of June. Furthermore, Jim gets involved in the Feast of St. Nicholas which is celebrated in Sydney and gives his contribution together with other Siggiewi citizens, living in Australia, to make a feast as befits our Patron Saint, in Australia.

Definitely, you can't mention Jim Borg without mentioning Fawwara, one of the most stunning rural areas we found in Malta and above all the Chapel of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Titular Saint of this Chapel, which is tremendously dear to his heart. In recent years Jim has enthusiastically, led a campaign and pressure to carry out the urgent restoration works that are urgently needed in order to fix this Chapel which today unfortunately finds itself in a dilapidated state. Jim has worked and continues to work tirelessly, even from abroad, in constant online meeting in contact with the authorities concerned to exert all possible pressure so that the restoration work on this Chapel can begin. In July 2023, I had the opportunity to visit this Chapel with Jim, where we spent some time wandering around the grounds. I enjoyed watching Jim happily tell stories about their lives when he and his siblings were still young and living with their mother and father in Fawwara. Through these stories, I was able to better understand the love that Jim himself still has for Fawwara, the traditions and the simple but sweet life they lived.

That is why, as a former Mayor of Siġġiewi and now a Local Councillor with the Siġġiewi Local Council, I nominated Mr Jim Borg to receive a recognition honour from the same Local Council on the occasion of Siggiewi Day, which is traditionally celebrated in March of each year, for the work Jim has done in promoting what Siggiewi is and its characteristics.

It was a great honour for me having this opportunity to honour Jim with this much-deserved honour for the great work he has done over the years and continues to do so until today. Siggiewi is grateful for everything Jim has contributed to it during these long years of genuine services towards his beloved native village and its Citizens. **Dominic Grech**

Dominic Grech was the 7th Mayor of Siġġiewi. Currently occupying the post of Local Council within the Siġġiewi Local Council.

CALLING ALL MALTESE - Doug Mizzi is bringing his BIG ELVIS show to La Valette on 3rd May! 50% already sold out - SO DON'T MISS OUT. TICKETS: http://ticketebo.com.au/.../elvis-aloha-from-hawaii-la... To Guarantee you table and seat book online or pickup at the club ASAP

"Elvis - Aloha from Hawaii" – La Valette Social Centre Blacktown
La Valette Social Centre, 175 Walters Rd, Blacktown, NSW
Saturday 3 May 2025 7:00pm - 9.30pm

Get ready for the ultimate Elvis experience! Award-winning Elvis tribute artist Doug Charles is bringing the Aloha from Hawaii show straight to Sydney, and you won't want to miss it! 🌟

We're turning up the tropical vibes and bringing the big theater feel to the La Valette Social Centre! With dual 3-meter screens and exclusive video content of Elvis alongside Doug's live vocals, you'll feel like you're right there with the King himself.

From Elvis's timeless ballads to his high-energy rock 'n' roll hits, this Hawaiian-themed night is packed with glitz, glamour, jumpsuits, lighting and tons of audience participation!

It's interactive – get up and shake it on the dance floor, sing along to your favorite songs, and maybe even grab a scarf or teddy bear from Doug himself (just like Elvis used to do)! And for the guys – Doug might even share one of his rings with you, just like the King! 💍

Let's make it a Hawaiian Party! 🌺 Ladies, grab your grass skirts! Gents, dust off those Hawaiian shirts! If it's tropical, wear it! Doug will even give everyone a lei when you walk in, so you'll feel like you've stepped straight into Hawaii.

It's not just a show, it's an Elvis event! Doug will perform two full sets of Elvis hits, with a 25-minute break to grab a drink and recharge at the full bar 🍹. There's also tasty food available to enjoy while you soak in the vibes! Doug LOVES meeting his fans, so don't forget to grab a photo with him – it's a memory you'll want to keep forever!

Get Your Tickets NOW! Available online or printed tickets from the La Valette Social Centre. This show will sell out fast, so make sure you get your tickets before they're gone! 🎟️ You won't want to miss this Aloha from Hawaii night with Doug Charles as Elvis.

Mark your calendars – May 3rd, 2025 at the La Valette Social Centre in Blacktown. Let's make it a night to remember!

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Keep the Maltese e-Newsletter alive

Relations between France and Malta from 1600 to 1798

By Tony Mamo

This article examines how, after centuries of isolation, poverty and fear of attacks by Barbery pirates, Malta was transformed into a prosperous commercial port servicing the growing commerce between France, the largest sponsor of the Hospitallers (the Knights of Malta) and the Ottoman Empire.

Before the arrival of the Hospitallers, Malta was part of Sicily. Malta, located on the extremity of Christian Europe, was outside the main trading routes and vulnerable to raids by Barbery pirates.

Following the granting of Malta to the Hospitallers by the Emperor Charles V, the Hospitallers established relations with the countries where they had priories (properties) and from which its members came. The strategic importance of Malta grew after the 1565 Great Siege.

The Hospitallers came from eight different countries called langues or languages. In 1530, these langues were: Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon (including Catalonia and Navarre), Germany, Castile (including Leon and Portugal) and England. France was the main supporter of the Hospitallers: (i) the Langues of Provence and Auvergne were part of France so that these three Langues had more knights than any other langue. In 1630 there were 1,000 French knights compared to 600 Italian knights and 400 Spanish knights; (ii) the priories in these three Langues gave more money to the Hospitallers' treasury than any other langue; in 1583, the total revenue of the Hospitallers was about 725,000 scudi of gold (about 2 tons of gold) of which 39% came from France and (iii) 12 of the 28 grandmasters who ruled Malta from 1530 to 1798 were French.

Over the years, Hospitaller Malta and France established commercial links. From 1615 to1675, 425 ships visited Malta of which 326 ships were from the French port of Marseille. In the 1700s, almost 42% of the foreign ships visiting Malta were French and half of the foreign trade of Malta was controlled by French merchants. In 1780, there were 927 Maltese sailors, gunners and helmsmen in the French Navy. The Maltese accounted for 10% of all foreign sailors in the French merchant fleet in the period from 1769 to 1785.

Why did Hospitaller Malta develop strong commercial links with France? The main reason was that commerce between France and the Ottoman Empire increased after the signing of an agreement (**Capitulation of 1569)** that provided legal protection to the French subjects in the Ottoman lands. France and the Ottoman Empire had drawn closer together because they faced common enemies - Austria and Russia. Despite some tensions, trade between France and the Ottoman Empire expanded rapidly in the 1600s and 1700s.

French exports to the Ottoman Empire included manufactured goods, foodstuffs and dyestuffs, while imports included manufactured goods, textile materials, and dyestuffs. Textile materials included cotton (the main import), wool, mohair, camel hair, beeswax, and hides. France also appointed consuls in every part of the Ottoman Empire to facilitate the trade between the two countries.

Malta was right in the middle of the commercial route linking Marseille to Istanbul and the Levant (eastern) ports and became "*a convenient clearing house for France*". Malta benefitted enormously

from the increased trade between France and the Ottoman Empire even though Malta was technically at war with the latter.

The highly competent French minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683), transformed Marseille (see painting on the left) into a free port with warehouses, shipyard facilities, and incentives to attract foreign and local merchants. He also re-organised the French national company for trading in the Levant.

Malta also had its forward-looking grandmasters who developed sound commercial policies: (i) merchants ships were free to enter the grand harbour to trade and to procure food and water on their way to the Levant ports; (ii) in 1723, import taxes were reduced from 6.3% to 1% provided the imports were sold or re-exported within a year in Malta. This low tax encouraged merchants to keep their cargo in bonded stores and "to await the best price in Italy or France"; (iii) cargo in bonded stores attracted an annual tax of 1% which was lower than that of Marseille; and (iv) after 1750, Malta began to supply Marseille with wheat that came from northern Europe, north Africa, the Levant and from captured merchant ships.

Valletta (see painting on the left), built on the narrow high Sceberras peninsula, did not have the facilities to support the growing mercantile trade. In 1642 Grandmaster Jean Paul Lascaris Castellar built some stores and wharves on the Valletta side of the grand harbour and the Lascaris tunnel to improve access from Porta Del Monte (one of the gates of Valletta) to the foreshore. He also built the Lazzaretto or Quarantine Hospital in Marsamxetto harbour. The grandmasters, Nicolás Cotoner, Gregorio Carafa, Ramon Perellos, António Manoel de Vilhena and Manuel Pinto da Fonseca, continued to extend these harbour facilities. In 1697, Grandmaster Ramon Perellos established the *Consulato del Mare,* a court to deal with commercial disputes. Finally in 1776, Grandmaster Emmanuel de Rohan-Polduc built a customs house (still in use) at his own expense just under the Lascaris Bastion.

The Hospitallers had very strict quarantine rules. French ships sailing from ports in north Africa or the Levant (where epidemic outbreaks were more common) were required to berth in Marsamxetto Harbour, next to the Lazzaretto. At the end of the quarantine period of 40 days, the authorities issued the shipmaster with a clean bill of health (pratique) which allowed his ship to sail to any European port. These restrictions reduced the spread of diseases. In 1780, 207 ships used the Lazaretto facility of which 132 ships were French. A fee of 1% was charged on the value of cargo on ships held in quarantine.

The close commercial relations between France and Malta attracted many French subjects to settle in the harbour towns and cities. In Malta, the French community was large; at the end of the 16th century, foreign marriages involving French subjects accounted for 20% of all foreign marriages, and this percentage increased to 41% in the second half of the 17th century. The French subjects in Malta worked as merchants, corsairs, fishermen, sailors and shopkeepers. By 1728, France "*was already making almost exclusive use of Malta's commercial facilities. Malta held an important place in the Mediterranean trade itinerary of French vessels"*. By 1791, two years after the French Revolution, the French were considered "*as the proprietors of the Island*".

The transformation of Maltese harbours into commercial and quarantine ports created thousands of jobs, including merchants, clerks, book-keepers, sailors, shipyard workers, labourers, storekeepers, boatmen, cargo handlers, shopkeepers, and tavern and innkeepers. The French Revolution (1789) and the ensuing wars destroyed the maritime commerce between Marseille-Valletta-Constantinople which had been built with so much money and human endeavour. It was therefore plausible, that thousands of Maltese who worked in this trade, favoured French control of Malta rather than control by England, Russia or Naples.

POPULAR MALTESE DOCUMENTARY *CATS OF MALTA* RELEASED WORLDWIDE ON YOUTUBE

Maltese film production company Nexus Production Group's family friendly documentary *Cats of Malta* was released on streaming platforms in 2023, firstly in selected territories in Europe, then in the US. The world premiere was held in Ohio, in the US and included a Felines on Parade event where locals brought their cats out for the screening.

The film highlights not only Malta as a sunny cat-filled island, but also tells the stories of locals who have taken on the big responsibility to look after Malta's many stray cats. Successfully, Cats of Malta has been a hit in major cities worldwide when it was shown publicly in Australia, Canada, Seoul, Japan and the US.

Cats of Malta was the film which represented Malta twice at two major European Festivals – The AFI European Union Film Showcase in Silver Spring, Maryland in 2023 and the European Union Film Festival which held public cinema screenings in Toronto, Otowa, Vancouver late 2024. Also in 2024, Cats of Malta was listed as the 2nd most watched documentary on library platform Kanopy's popular list.

The film is also being broadcast across the US though PBS.

In January this year the film was released across Japanese cinemas and was seen in thirteen cities. Prior to the release in Japan, in early December the film's director Sarah Jayne Portelli and producer/cinematographer Ivan Malekin attended the advance cinema screening for promotion.

Their appearance was sponsored by the Arts Council Malta and Visit Malta Japan and was used as a way to promote Malta to Japanese people. At the event they were met with a Japanese audience eager to learn about Malta, its people and the many cats who live there. In attendance was H.E. André J. Spiteri, the Ambassador of the Republic of Malta to Japan.

Now, audiences all over the world, including Malta (excluding Japan) can watch Cats of Malta on Youtube, as the film has been released on the Studio Dome Channel through this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0r7rDlXFZrk&t=4s

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The first generation of MALTESE LIVING ABROAD is diminidhing very fast and many are passing away. So let's encourage our younger generations to continue with the sterling snd hard work we have achived over these last several decades. LIFE IS SO SHORT.