MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal for Maltese Living Abroad

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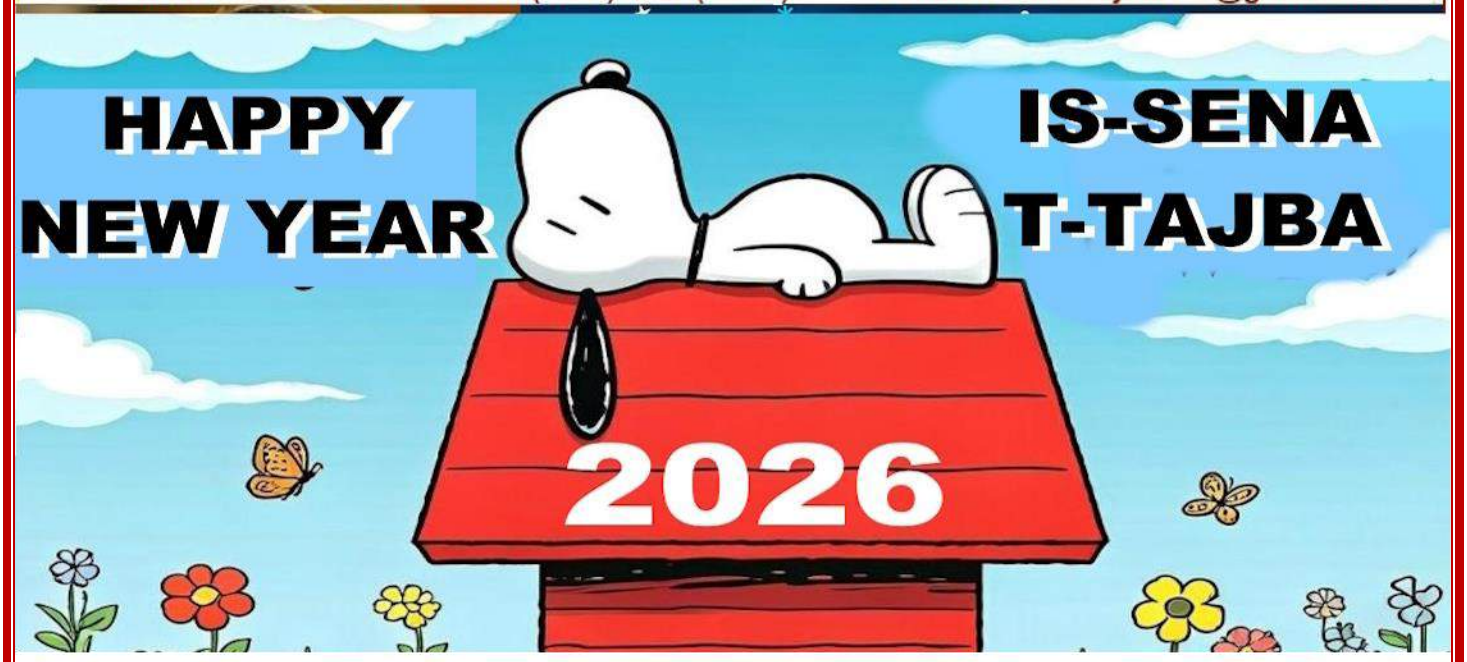


THE XERRI FAMILY FROM GOZO

The Maltese e-Newsletter is the last International Voice of Global Malta and Global Gozo

Dr. Raymond Xerri

JOSEPH HOWARD
Malta's First Prime Minister

Metsola named among Corriere della Sera's women of the year

In 2025, Malta saw its capital, Valletta, crowned the world's best city by *Condé Nast Traveller*, alongside strong tourism growth, new esports initiatives like a dedicated visa, and significant national discussions on voluntary assisted dying, while economically focusing on innovation and sustainability despite some deficit concerns, and politically recognizing the State of Palestine. Key events included a new Eurovision Song Contest format, a major Book Festival, and ongoing infrastructure projects, all contributing to a vibrant Mediterranean destination

In 2026, Malta will host several major events, including the **WTTC Global Summit**, the second edition of the **maltabiennale.art**, and a variety of music and cultural festivals. The government has also presented its national budget with specific economic and social measures for the year.

Major Events and Festivals

Malta's 2026 calendar is packed with cultural events and music festivals:

- **Malta Carnival:** The carnival celebrations are scheduled to take place from February 13 to February 17, 2026.
- **maltabiennale.art:** The second edition of this international contemporary art festival will be held between March and May 2026, using various historical sites and museums as venues.
- **EuRA International Relocation Congress:** This conference will be held in St. Julians from April 27 to April 30, 2026.
- **Zamna Festival Malta:** A two-day electronic music festival at Gianpula Village is scheduled for May 15 and 16, 2026.
- **Earth Garden:** Malta's open-air eco-music gathering is expected around June 4–7, 2026.
- **Malta International Arts Festival:** This festival runs from June 12 to June 21, 2026.
- **Glitch Festival:** A high-energy electronic music festival is planned for August 12–15, 2026.
- **WTTC Global Summit:** Malta will host the prestigious World Travel & Tourism Council Global Summit in Valletta in 2026.

Public Holidays

There are 14 public holidays in Malta in 2026, with three falling on a weekend, which means an entitlement of 27 total annual leave days for employees:

Feast of Saint Paul's Shipwreck: Tuesday, February 10
Feast of Saint Joseph: Thursday, March 19
Freedom Day: Tuesday, March 31
Good Friday: Friday, April 3 **Workers' Day:** Friday, May 1
Sette Giugno: Sunday, June 7 **Feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul:** Monday, June 29
Feast of the Assumption: Friday, August 15
Feast of Our Lady of Victories: Tuesday, September 8
Independence Day: Thursday, September 21
Feast of the Immaculate Conception: Tuesday, December 8
Republic Day: Sunday, December 13 **Christmas Day:** Friday, December 25

THE MALTESE ENEWSLETTER

THE LAST INTERNATIONAL VOICE OF GLOBAL MALTA AND GLOBAL GOZO

Chev. Dr. Raymond C. XERRI
K.H.S., Ph.D. (Australia), M.A.(Dip.St.)(Malta), D.D.S., E.U.Sch.(E.U.Law)(F.R.G.), B.A.(Hons.)(U.S.A.)
President of European Throughout The World (E.T.T.W.)
Former Deputy High Commissioner of Malta to Australia, New Zealand and The Philippines (1995-1998)
Former Deputy High Commissioner of Malta to the United Kingdom and Ireland (1999-2001)
Former Director of the Directorate for Maltese Living Abroad (2012-2019)
Former Consul General of Malta to Canada (2019-2022)

Maltese and especially Gozitans migrated more in 2025 mainly to Ireland, Germany and other European Union countries, return migrated increased in 2025 and remigration was less throughout 2025. A negligible amount migrated to the traditional countries - Australia, Canada, the United States, France and the United Kingdom.

Yes, migration of Maltese and Gozitans from Malta and Gozo has increased and never really halted. I experience these phenomena myself in my everyday work at the first and so far only 'Welcome Back Home Centre' in the Maltese Islands, called Gozo Diaspora & International Office (GD&IO) situated at the Ministry for Gozo & Planning (MGP) in Victoria, Gozo.

Most are primarily very worried with the lowering of the quality of life of our country, the large quantity of wasted time in traffic, the impossibility of buying and owning their own home due to the extremely property prices, the too fast pace of life and work with no time for family and loved ones, we are loosing our precious identity and centuries-old values by the day especially our Maltese way of life and our unique millennia-old language and 65 dialects. Maltese and Gozitan children only speak English because they are taught all subjects no longer in the Maltese language but in English to accommodate the thousands of foreigners attending our schools at all level.

Migration, return migration and re-migration is not caused by a lack of work as was in the past, on the contrary but the gradual unlivable situation which is causing this phenomena.

2025 saw my re-election as President of the Europe's largest Organisation, Europeans Throughout The World (E.T.T.W.), a return to the European scene after Malta between 2013 and 2019 had proved to be a very good interlock-er of countries and manage exceptionally such a large organisation as E.T.T.W. It is an organisation which represent all European Diasporas around the world with 60 million Europeans living abroad and 490 million persons of European origin living in 195 countries and territories around the world.

What a great honour and privilege for Malta!

All the above information leads to one sure conclusion.

The Maltese eNewsletter is the last international voice of Global Malta and Global Gozo. The Maltese eNewsletter is more relevant and needed more than ever before to inform and continue to unite Maltese and Gozitans around the globe.

I whole heartedly thank Frank Scicluna and his great team for their sterling work in putting together the eNewsletter consistently. As I bind the 2025 copies into a volume for my library and other libraries, I look forward for the 2026 editions.

Hundreds of copies of the Maltese eNewsletter are printed purposely and delivered to places where return Gozitan migrants frequent in Gozo, like bars, clubs, restaurants, complexes and homes for the elderly. It is read by many returns Diaspora and also Gozitans who have never migrated, many times out of curiosity and/or wanting to learn about our heritage locally and internationally. These copies are passed on to one another, from one person to another and from room to another in homes for the elderly. Yes, circulation of the Maltese eNewsletter is very high in Gozo.

"Let us be a proud nation, proud of our people wherever they may live on this planet, every person is an ambassador of our Global Malta and Global Gozo."

Thank you, frank for uniting global Malta and global Gozo into one.

WE THANK Dr. Xerri for his comments and for his continuous support for the Maltese Journal.

The Editor – Frank Scicluna

As the year 2025 nears the end

We would like to take the opportunity to say

Thank You for Each greeting, Each well wish

Each prayer, support, kindness, laughter and love

It means so much to us. Thank you for being in our life

Wishing you and your loved ones a year filled with health, happiness, love, and endless blessings, full of joy, laughter, new adventures, and cherished memories as we step into 2026 together

Wishing all of you the very best

NOW and ALWAYS ROM OUR HOUSE TO YOURS

HARRY AND MARY BUGEJA & FAMILY

MY DAUGHTER HAS BEEN INVITED TO MEET THE PRESIDENT OF MALTA AFTER HER KIND ACT

Nine-year-old Ria and act of kindness is making waves across two countries. After donating her hair to The Little Princess Trust in the UK, her story inspired a children's book in Malta and now she's been invited to meet the President of Malta.

A nine-year-old girl from Blackpool is set to meet the President of Malta after her act of kindness inspired a children's book and is helping charities across two countries.

Ria donated 20 inches of her hair to The Little Princess Trust, a UK charity that provides wigs to children experiencing hair loss due to illness.

Her mother, Harley Booth-Isherwood, said she first became aware of the charity through social media.

Harley said: "I showed Ria a video about The Little Princess Trust and she said, 'I want to do that.' I explained that once you cut your hair, you can't get it back, but she was determined to help."

While on holiday in Malta, Ria's aunt, a hairdresser, offered to cut her hair. A family friend, Patricia Bondin, who is also a teacher and author, witnessed the donation and turned Ria's story into a children's book. The book has been distributed in schools across Malta, raising awareness and funds for The Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation.

Harley said: "Originally, Ria did it to help The Little Princess Trust in the UK, but with the book being Maltese, she's now helping another charity too."

Ria has been invited to meet the president of Malta after her kind act. | Third party

Ria is scheduled to travel to Malta in January to receive a copy of the book, which will be translated into English. The President of Malta has also invited her to meet in person.

Harley said: "Any donations or profits from the book will go to the Maltese charity, and the President of Malta has heard about it and invited Ria and me to meet her.

"Because of that, we're just beyond proud of what's happened."

From a hair donation to a book and a presidential invitation, Ria's story demonstrates how one small act of kindness can have a lasting impact.

PEOPLE WHO ARE MAKING GREAT NAME FOR MALTA.

Malta's own Roberta Metsola, the youngest President of the European Parliament has once again earned international recognition, after being named among Corriere della Sera's 'Women of the Year' for 2025 – a prestigious list curated by one of Italy's most read newspapers.

It's called "TIME100 Next" and it was launched in 2019 by the famous American magazine "Time" to reveal the faces of the 100 emerging leaders who are shaping the future in various sectors such as politics, health, business, sport and so on. In the ranking, this year also included that of the Maltese Roberta Metsola, who made history by becoming the youngest President of the European Parliament ever, one of the few women to have filled the role.

At the centre of her presidency is a mission: to bring the European Union closer to its citizens. In the note that accompanies the name of Metsola, the President of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, praised the "colleague" of the European Popular Party declaring: «Every time she goes to one of the 27 member states of the bloc, whatever the question on the agenda, she always finds time to meet the local population.

Reacting to the news, Metsola has thus responded: «I am honoured to have been chosen among the leaders of "Time100Next" who have had an impact worldwide», adding «We will continue to work to bridge the gap between the European decision-making process and the people we represent. And we will continue to do what is possible to insert Malta and Gozo on the map for the right reasons».

NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

The exciting countdown, the pop of the champagne cork, the many resolutions and the massive family lunch are all things traditionally associated with New Year celebrations the world over, but many countries follow particular traditions and customs.

This day, which marks the transition between the old year and the one about to start, is marked by different customs. In Germany people drop molten lead into cold water, so as to predict the future from the shape it hardens into.

They also customarily leave a piece of the food eaten on New Year's Eve on their plate until after midnight, as a way of guaranteeing a well stocked larder in the coming year.

In Australia, people tend to celebrate with picnics and camping on the beach. They start their parties on December 31, and at midnight they begin to make noise with any available instrument, to ring in the New Year.

In Belgium the feast is known as Saint Sylvester Eve, parties are thrown and, at midnight, kisses and good luck greetings are exchanged. On New Year's Day children write letters to their parents and godparents on decorated paper, and read these to them.

Between 3 and 4am on New Year's morning in Wales, the boys of the village go from house to house, sprinkling an evergreen twig on the people and the rooms of the house, to bring good luck. On New Year's Day the children travel around the neighbourhood singing songs, and are rewarded with coins and sweets.

Austrians call the event Sylvesterabend, that is, the Eve of Saint Sylvester. A spiced punch is prepared in honour of the saint, and decorations and champagne form part of the celebrations. The idea of chasing away all evil spirits of the old year is finalised by the firing of moroars, called boller. As in Malta, people attend midnight mass, and trumpets are blown from the church towers at midnight.

In Scotland it is known as the Night of the Candle and people prepare for it by cleaning their home and purifying it with a ritual, carrying burning juniper branches through the home.

The custom of the First Footer, which holds that the first person to set foot into a home on New Year's Day will bring good fortune for the coming year, is also practised. Traditionally, the first-foot is a tall, dark-haired male, as a female or fair-haired male are regarded as unlucky in some places. Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly Circus are habitually teeming with crowds of people, waiting to hear the chimes of London's Big Ben, announcing the arrival of the New Year.

Malta has plenty of its own celebrations to mark this major event, including spectacular fireworks, numerous parties, champagne and gatherings with family and friends. However, a number of more traditional habits have been lost over the years.

The sprinkling of white lime is one such tradition; common folk used to go out into the village streets on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day sprinkling lime on thresholds, as a symbol of purity.

This symbolised a new beginning. After this they would ask the senior family member for a donation. This tradition was still practised in the 1930's.
L-istrina was another tradition observed on New Year's Day, and this lasted into the 1950's. Customarily people would not receive gifts on Christmas Day, but would instead go out on New Year's Day asking for gifts and little treats.
These traditions may have unfortunately died out, although some people still serve imbuljuta, a traditional Maltese drink made using cocoa, chestnuts, cloves and citrus zest. Nevertheless, there is no shortage of spectacular fireworks, merrymaking, exchange of good wishes and parties in the Maltese New Year celebrations.

Some Maltese traditions

Quirky customs live on in Malta in everything from festive food to hand gestures.

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

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

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

CREAM CAKE CELEBRATIONS

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

BOATS WITH EYES

You never know what might be in a Maltese harbour.... Hungry fish, mooring buoys, evil spirits? Yes, that's why you'll often see a pair of eyes painted onto a traditional Maltese fishing boat or luzzu.

Depicted on her bows, these are to ward off any evil spirits that might be lurking in a harbour or inlet.

FESTIVE HOT 'CHOCOLATE'

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

A HEALTHY TRADITION OF RIVALRY

Nothing to do with Pokemon, pika, strictly speaking, is a trait rather than a tradition... signifying a distinctly Maltese competitive spirit and thirst for rivalry.

You can see it in the Maltese villages vying to hold the best festa. And some claim that the rebuilt dome of the Carmelite Basilica was designed deliberately to dwarf its Anglican rival.

Greece and Malta – Unusual Historical Connections

Ask anyone in Malta to direct you to the Mosta Dome and you'll get immediate directions. Not all churches on the island are as well-known as this one is. Not many people are aware of the connections between this church and Ancient Egypt.

The church as it is now is not as old as you may think. It was finished in the 1860s based on a design by Maltese architect Giorgio Grognet de Vassé. Grognet had studied in Italy to become a priest before joining French revolutionary forces in Egypt. He was sure Malta was the lost city of Atlantis. A colourful character, in other words. This starts to explain why the local bishop opposed his proposal to rebuild the old church in a neo-classical design.

The parish church at the time was on the same site. It was almost 200 years old. Population growth meant that the town needed a larger place of worship. Grognet's idea for a neo-classical design was to mimic the Pantheon in Rome. Neo-classicism was still in its infancy at the time. The conservative bishop can therefore be forgiven his opposition to this design.

There was one other neo-classical building in Malta at the time which had also been recently built – **Capua Palace, so named because the Prince of Capua** lived in exile here.

Yet, one of his main arguments was that a Roman Catholic church should not use the Pantheon – a Roman pagan temple, to boot – as a model[1]. I can understand this point of view, even if it was a little narrow-minded.

The main facade of the new church has six Ionic columns and a portico. The Parthenon has eight Corinthian columns and a portico.

Grognet used his inspiration wisely, it seems. This links the Mosta Dome to Rome, but what about the connection to Egypt?

The Pantheon as we know it is not the first temple on that site. Like the Mosta Dome, it was built on the site of a previous temple. The Corinthian columns were mined from Mons Claudianus, the Roman quarry in Egypt, near Luxor. They were cut on site – 11.9 metres tall and 1.5 metres in diameter. The Romans floated the 60 ton behemoths up the Nile, across the Mediterranean and then up the Tiber river. The original plans called for columns 14 metres high. The facade of the structure had to be redone to cater for this[3]. The Romans could not have cut taller columns since they could not transport anything larger. In other words, the Pantheon's height was restricted by technological limitations. This was because the quarry was Egyptian (i.e., so far away).

Technological restrictions in the Egyptian quarry influenced the Pantheon's design, which in turn was the inspiration for the Mosta Dome. *Have you heard of any unusual connections between countries?*

References

Le chiese di Malta (con.); Gauci. D., 1918

The historical guide to the island of Malta and its dependencies; Giuseppe Pericciuoli

JOSEPH HOWARD THE FIRST PRIME MINISTER OF MALTA

Joseph Howard was born in Valletta, on the 4 December 1862. He was a Maltese politician, the first Prime Minister of Malta during the colonial period, serving from 26 October 1921 to 13 October 1923. Howard studied at the Maltese Lyceum and abroad, also serving at the French Military Academy. Upon his return to Malta, he pursued a business career in the tobacco sector, eventually becoming director of Cousis Cigarettes. From 1914 to 1925 he served as Japan's consul in Malta and as president of the Chamber of Commerce. He also chaired the Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce and the La Valette Philharmonic Society.

In 1912, the Maltese Patriotic Committee appointed him a member of the Government Council. He chaired the government committee on emigration and, in 1919, led the delegation that discussed the employment of Maltese emigrants with the French authorities.

At the 1921 elections, Howard joined the Maltese Political Union (Unjoni Politika Maltija, UPM) led by Monsignor Ignazio Panzavecchia and was elected senator in the first Maltese parliament. With 14 seats, the UPM emerged as the largest party, though without an absolute majority. British Governor Lord Plumer offered him the premiership, as Panzavecchia, being a clergyman, could not accept it. Howard led Malta's first self-governing administration from 1921 to 1923 with the support of the Labour Party, which held seven seats. According to Rudolf, Howard's appointment was considered unusual, as his personal views were closer to those of the opposition Maltese Constitutional Party, which also held seven seats. As his first act in office, Howard proclaimed Catholicism as the official religion of the country (Religion of Malta Declaration Act).

His political effectiveness was linked to his administrative experience and his sense of tolerance, and he was regarded as a true gentleman. Howard was also appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE). He died at the age of 63 in 1925.

The green areas separating Mdina from Rabat are known as the Howard Gardens.

IL-QOFFA MALTIJA – WICKER BASKET OF MALTA

This traditional product is an important part of Maltese heritage.

The Maltese *qoffa* (wicker basket) is a traditional craft that has been around for many years and used in a number of different ways. But could this be the last we're seeing of it? Like other traditional artisanal products, this wicker basket will cease to exist if the craftmanship isn't picked up by the younger generations of the island.

The Maltese *qoffa* is distinguishable from most due to the yellowish cane used to make it. We remember a time when the wicker basket was a very popular accessory. Apart from it serving as a shopping bag, there were special baskets to carry delicate fruits like strawberries, for bingo, and those to keep ferrets for rabbit hunting.

The *qoffa* took a strong blow when plastic shopping bags took over and when cheaper versions made in China were made available. Wicker baskets would cost €20, while the Chinese imports are sold for just €3.

Sadly, those who appreciate the Maltese *qoffa* are a dying breed, and mainly consist of the older generation who haven't changed their ways. But it doesn't have to be that way! By investing in a *qoffa*, we are not only conserving our history and PRESERVING tradition, but also helping the environment (instead of plastic bags!)

The act of lowering a shopping basket from a balcony is a **traditional Maltese practice** primarily used for receiving deliveries from street vendors, such as the bread man. This ingenious method, which is deeply rooted in local culture and history, saves residents the trouble of using the stairs.

"Since my legs are starting to fail me I need to take care of them. So whenever I can I try to avoid coming up and down the stairs. Maria is my neighbour and friend. She is going shopping and stopped by to check whether I needed anything.

Here we think of our neighbours and look out for each other, even though things have changed and there are a large number of new people whom I barely know. We are two Marias, that's how we are called." Said one of the local residents.

The fascinating story of Villa Frere came into being when the Rt. Hon. John Hookham Frere, a renowned English scholar, politician, poet and diplomat, retired in Malta accompanied by his ailing wife, Lady Elizabeth dowager countess of Errol and his sister Susanna in 1821. They first resided in Valletta but a year later Frere took out a 99-year lease from the nuns of St. Catherine of a property on the Pieta waterfront which later became Villa Frere and its grand gardens.

Following the end of the lease the government embarked on plans to construct the new St. Luke's general hospital. Works were postponed for the duration of the Second World War, during which time the gardens suffered some bombing damage. In 1952 Villa Frere was leased to third parties but the extensive gardens were radically downsized due to encroachment of the hospital as well as a new primary school built onto the Japanese garden and Wilderness. Thirty years later it was reduced even further when a helipad was laid out instead of the upper part of the gardens.

In June 2013 a dedicated group of volunteers got together to form the Friends of Villa Frere charity, with the sole intention of saving and restoring what remains of this grand estate. With just a mere third surviving, including the house, our mission is rendered even more critical. However, thanks to increasing media exposure, such as the President of Malta's official visit in 2018, and a joint management agreement with Heritage Malta, 2020 saw the scheduling of Villa Frere and its gardens as a Grade 1 national monument by the Planning Authority and the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, thus continuing to raise awareness about the beauty and historical and cultural importance of Villa Frere.

Entrance through St Luke's Hospital, Pieta'. Parking inside St Luke's hospital grounds behind Karen Grech hospital. Please follow the signs from the gates of St. Lukes.

WE SUPPORT OUR CLUBS, ASSOCIATIONS AND GROUPS

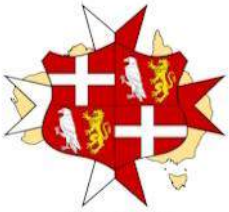
EMBLEMS OF MALTESE ASSOCIATION AND COMMITTEES

Maltese Concert Band of NSW

Maltese Center New York

Maltese Senior Citizens SA

Maltese Community Council of NSW



LaValette Social Centre NSW

Maltese Queen of Victirues Band SA

MMG Concert Band of Victoria

Naltese Community Council of Vic.

Maltese Guild Of South Australia

Maltese Welfare Association NSW

Maltese American Society - USA

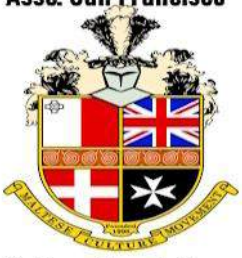
Knights of Malta

Maltese Heritage Assc. San Francisco

Maltese Association Canberra ACT

Maltese Own Band Philharmonic Soc.

Maltese Cultural Assc. of Victoria



Maltese Association United Kingdom

George Cross Association

Maltese Historical Assx. Vict

Maltese Ex Services Association of Victoria

EMBLEMS OF MALTESE ASSOCIATIONS AND COMMITTEES

Maltese Association of Western Australia

Maltese Journal Australia

Maltese Association Scotland UK

Maltese Chaplaincy Festivities Group

Chamber of Commerce NSW

Maltese Sub-branch RSL NSW

Maltese Assoc. Northern Suburbs

Western Suburbs Maltese Assc.

Melita Eagles Soccer Club

Caroline Springs George Cross FC

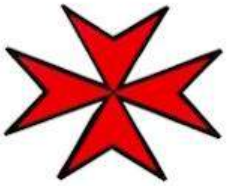
George Cross Falcons Comm -Cringila

Maltese Australian Chamber of Commerce

Australian Maltese Association

Cairns (QLD) Maltese Association

Gold Coast Maltese Club



Mackay Maltese Clun Inc.

Maltese Youths Association

Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre

Multicultural Aged Care

The Association of Lyceum Past Students -ALPS

extends to all its members and friends this end of year message.,
As we bid farewell to this year 2025,
Lets take a moment to reflect on our journeys
and embrace the possibilities ahead.
Every ending is a new beginning. Surround yourself with positivity
Carry your dreams into the New Year. Believe in yourself
Share your light with others. Step boldly into the New year,
It's yours to shape and create as you wish
We augur to you all and your loved ones
good health and happiness
in the New Year 2026
AWGURI W'XEWQAT SBIEH
LILL-KULLHADD - S-SENA T-TAJBA

POPULATION, EMIGRATION AND LIVING STANDARDS 1800 - 1957

DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH The population was about 100,000 in 1800, it surpassed the 250,000 mark after World War II and rose to over 300,000 by 1960. A quarter of the population lived in the harbour towns by 1921. This increase in the population caused the fast growth of harbour suburbs and the rural villages. The British were in constant need of skilled labourers for the Dockyard. From 1871 onwards, the younger generation migrated from the villages in search of employment with the Colonial Government. Employment with the British Services reached a peak in the inter-war period (1919-39) and started to decline after World War II. In the 1950s and 1960s the British started a gradual rundown of military personnel in their overseas colonies, including Malta. Before the beginning of the first rundown in 1957, the British Government still employed 27% of the Maltese work force.

MALTESE EMIGRATION The Maltese first became attracted to emigration in the early 19th century. The first organised attempt to establish a Maltese colony of migrants in Corfu took place in 1826. Other successful colonies of Maltese migrants were established in North African and Mediterranean ports in Algiers, Tunis, Bona, Tripoli, Alexandria, Port Said, Cairo, Smyrna, Constantinople, Marseilles and Gibraltar. By 1842 there were 20,000 Maltese emigrants in Mediterranean countries (15% of the population). But most of these returned to Malta sometime or another. Emigration to Mediterranean areas declined rapidly after World War II. This decline was mainly caused by the birth of Arab nationalism. Arab nationalists fought for the independence of their countries from the European colonial powers. Most of the Maltese

migrants left these countries with the other Europeans slightly before or after independence. After World War II the Maltese preferred to emigrate to English-speaking countries (UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand). In these countries there was a great demand for unskilled jobs. The introduction of a system of general education in Malta in 1924 and 1946 led to a better knowledge of the English language among the Maltese. Post-war emigration to these countries reached an annual average peak of 5,000 between the years 1948-1966. Mass emigration declined in the 1970s with the fast industrialisation of Malta and with the tightening of emigration laws by the host countries.

3. **THE MIXING OF THE MALTESE WITH THE BRITISH** The Maltese maintained a cool relationship with the British, mixing very little at least until the 1930s. The Sliema area was the first part of the island to adapt an anglicized style of sub-culture. This attitude was fostered by the dominant position of the Church. The islanders, notably the country folk, depended directly on the local priests. Religion was entrenched in the life of the people, a situation that persisted up to the 1930s. Then the Second World War brought about a change in the mentality of the population. The war bonded the British and the Maltese closer together because they had fought a common enemy. The war brought villagers and town people closer together. But it also undermined the traditional respect for authority. The younger generation discarded old principles and a more general indifference towards the clergy.

4. STANDARD OF LIVING DURING THE 1800-1850 period, the fast increase in the population led to a general decline in the standard of living of the working classes. These years coincided with a long period of economic stagnation. The misery of the Maltese was generally attributed by the Government to the lack of initiative and reckless birth-rate among the Maltese. In the 1880s An English resident in Malta remarked that: Maltese incomes are so small that the attempt to keep up the appearance which the English think only decent becomes a ruinous expense. The standard of living increased after the 1850s as a consequence of the Crimean War and to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. It was only after World War II that it began to compare favourably with other South European Mediterranean regions. Their low standard of living was reflected in their food, their clothes, their houses, the quality of leisure and to the great number of beggars in the streets of Valletta. Bread was the staple food for the lower classes. Living conditions improved after World War I, and more rapidly after World War II with the introduction of social legislation, setting up of the GWU (in 1943) and the Labour Party which aimed at improving the standard of living of the working class. Poor housing conditions were to a large extent the result of large families. Overcrowding and slumps were mainly found in the suburban areas. To mention just one example, the 1891 census calculated that an average of five persons in Floriana lived in a single room.

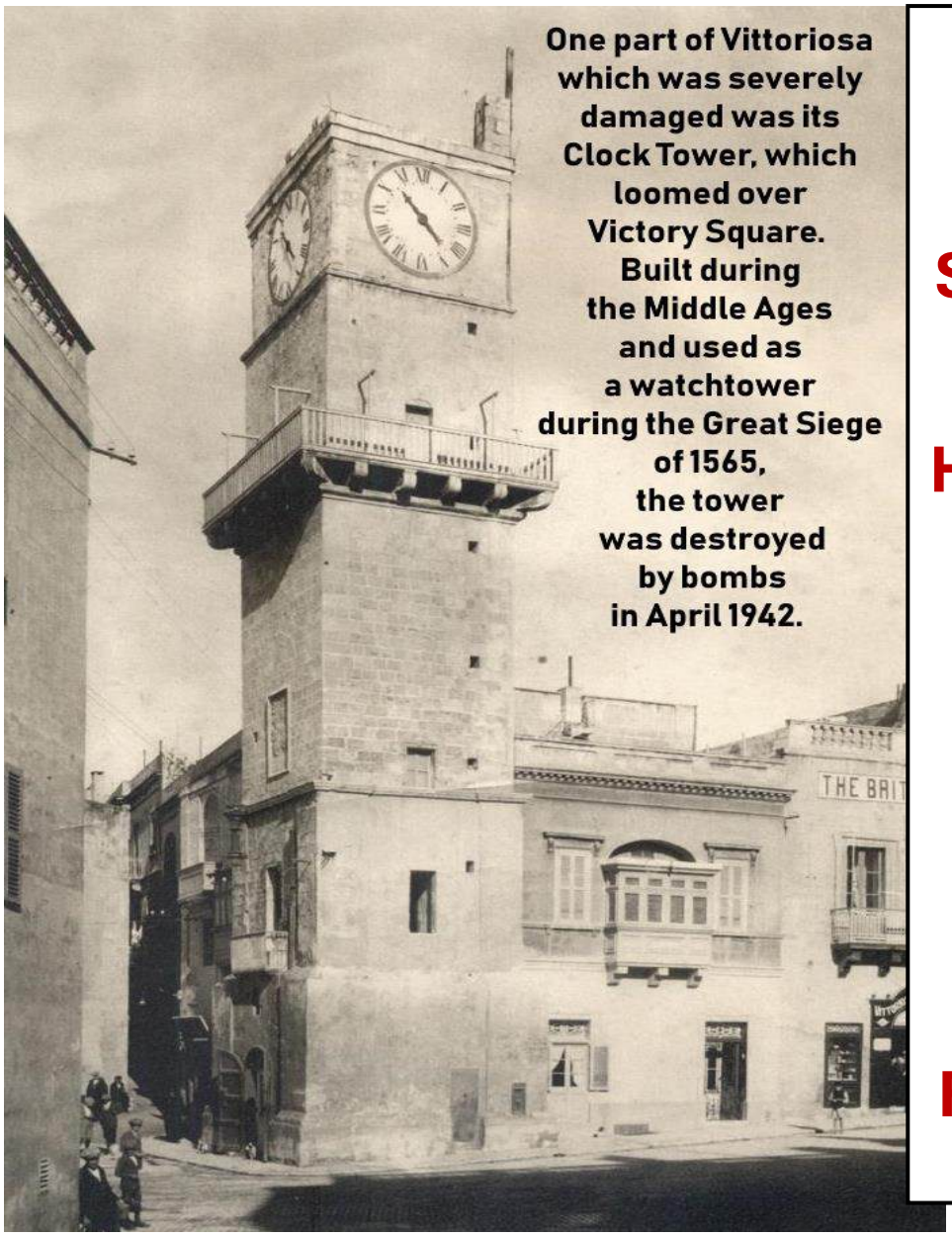
IMPROVEMENTS IN COMMUNICATIONS The British period coincided with a revolution in transport and communication that had a profound effect upon the life of all classes of Maltese. Until the 1850s the main means of transport was the carriage (kaless). In 1856 the horse-drawn omnibus functioned from Lija, Sliema, Mdina and Zebbug. It stopped functioning in 1890 because of competition by the railway. The private railway company started operating in 1883 from Valletta to Mdina. A private tram company was set up in 1903. The tram and the railway closed down by 1931 because of competition by the scheduled buses. In the 1930s new bus routes were set up to the remoter villages. Private cars started becoming popular in the late 1920s in the harbour suburbs. A scheduled private ferry service between Malta and Gozo got organised after World War I. In the 1920s roads and streets in the harbour towns and the major

villages started being asphalted. This made travel easier and helped to bring people closer together. Street lighting in the harbour suburbs was introduced in 1857, first by gas lamps, in the late 1890s by electric lamps. A power-station at Valletta started functioning in 1894 but electricity reached the villages in the 1920s. The one at Marsa was opened in 1957. In 1910 a private telephone company was set up to provide the telephone service. But in 1957 there were only 5000 private telephone lines.

Christian Doctrine Society (tal-Muzew) Sunday afternoon walk?

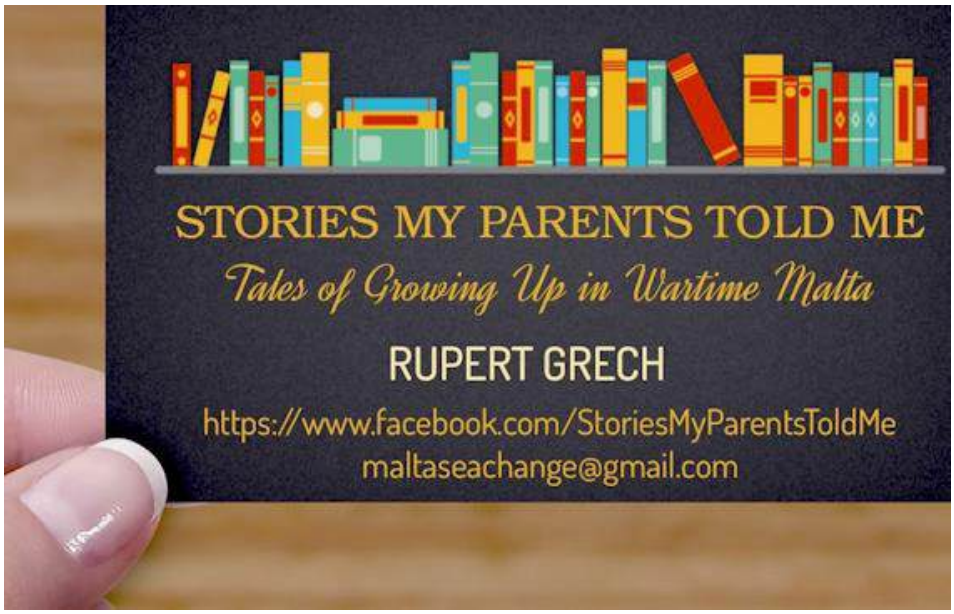
When 70-year-old Fred Bickley of Peterborough was stationed at Hal Far Airfield between 1955 and 1959 he took this photo of Maltese children in the area. Mr Bickley, who was holidaying in Malta recently, said he must have taken the photograph on a Sunday as the children were wearing their Sunday best. The children, Mr Bickley said, must now be in their 60s at least and he felt the publication of the picture may enable them to enjoy memories of the past.

The first Big Bell of Birkirkara 1942



AHNA NIXTIEQU SENA GDIDA MIMLIJA HENA U PACI LILL-QARREJJA TAGHNA KOLLHA F'MALTA U F'GHAWDEX

STORIES MY PARENTS TOLD ME: TALES OF GROWING UP IN WARTIME MALTA



The introduction to Chapter 11, The First Christmas, from the book BEGINNINGS- The First few Years:

Christmas was a bittersweet time for the young migrants. There was an undeniable feeling of celebration and joyfulness in the air. Still, at the same time, feelings of isolation and loneliness stemming from being in a foreign country and away from friends and family were exacerbated. It was the first Christmas that each member of the group, except for the orphaned Sam, had spent away from their parents and siblings. Fortunately, they had each other to celebrate with, but it wasn't the same as being with extended family in familiar surroundings. Feelings of loss were strong, but they tried to make the best of it.

The three couples visited the city centre at night and enjoyed the spectacular kinetic window displays of the large department stores. They took evening strolls together along city streets lined with shops resplendent with multicoloured Christmas lights, and went window shopping. However, it was all low-key compared to the pageantry in Malta at Christmas they were used to. There were no religious processions or marching bands in Sydney. There were no village gatherings or communal singing and praying in public places, no religious statues lining the streets or presepju (nativity cribs) in the town piazzas. It was very different in Australia, with a less religious and more commercial atmosphere. Traditional sweets like puddina (bread and butter pudding flavoured with cocoa), lewz (sugar-coated almonds), imqaret (deep-fried date pastries) and the Christmas treat, qaghaq tal-ghasel (treacle and pastry rings), were absent.

Clotilde, Jessie, and Georgette decided to prepare a Maltese-style Christmas celebration at the house in Pyrmont. The women were enthusiastic to prepare their first Christmas lunch for their husbands. Clotilde summed up the situation.

"It will be just like Il-Milied (Christmas) at home; our first Christmas in Australia."

MARKU THE MALTESE FROM GOZO·TO CANADA

Ok Toronto Canada details below : Sat 31st Jan MALTA TO MEMPHIS !
Malta Band Club 5745 Coopers Ave , Mississauga ON
Dinner and show $45 members $50 non members
Roast beef dinner potatoes and veg desert and coffee or tea..
Doors open at 6pm, dinner at 7pm
Music for dinner and after show for your dancing pleasure
Call to book Tony at 365 288 2177 Or Virginia 416 873 6013

THE EPIPHANY CONCERT will take place on Sunday 4th January 2026, being the last event for this Festive Season and the first event for the new year 2026.

This year the concert will hold the

FATHER'S ANGELS CHILDREN'S CHOIR

hailing from the Sacro Cuore Parish Church in Sliema. The Choir is a youth music group led by Rev. Fr. Joe Caruana OFM. They perform hymns and festive music, contributing to community events like in this case the Christmas celebrations, bringing joy to local audiences and residents.

The event will also host Malta's Celebrity Singer MARY SPITERI. She has participated in various national and international music festivals. She is well known for her third placing in representing Malta in the 1992 Eurovision Song Contest held in Malmö, Sweden, with the song "Little Child"

The concert will take place at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Għajnsielem Gozo starting at 7.00pm. The Ministry for Gozo ~ Cultural Heritage Directorate together with the Għajnsielem Local Council are supporting this event. The public is invited to attend.