MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal for Maltese Living Abroad

Editor - Frank L Scicluna OAM (Aust) MQR (Malta) Email - maltesejournal@gmail.com

LINA BROCKDORFF DIES - OUR GREAT SUPPORTER

REV. JESMOND SCHEMBRI
Husband, Father, Grandfather and Priest

Jenny Axisa Eriksen making Olympic History for Malta MILANO-CORTINA 2026

75th ANNIVERSARY

GEORGE CROSS FALCON CLUB

1951 - 2026

WOLLONGONG EST 1951

QUEENSLAND MALTESE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY INC.

Celebrating culture, connecting generations

MALTESE PASTIZZI AROUND THE WORLD

MEET THE NEW SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL OF MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

Christopher Muscat

MALTESE LIVING ABROAD
MALTA IN THE WORLD

Christopher Muscat was appointed Secretary to the Council of Maltese Living Abroad in November 2025. He serves as a Bank Manager at one of Malta's leading financial institutions, overseeing branch operations and client relationships. Having graduated in Mechanical Engineering, he transitioned to finance after recognising how his analytical capabilities and interests aligned with opportunities in the banking sector.

Christopher is known for his disciplined, analytical, and ethical approach to complex financial and strategic challenges. He maintains a keen awareness of global financial developments, regularly following international news to inform his analysis and decision making.

The strategic thinking, attention to detail, and commitment to stakeholder engagement that characterise his banking work are equally evident in his role as Secretary for the Council of Maltese Living Abroad. Christopher brings the same professionalism and organisational expertise to coordinating the Council's activities and connecting with Maltese communities worldwide.

His experience in cultivating strong relationships and managing complex stakeholder dynamics proves crucial in both settings. Moreover, Christopher's capacity to manage competing priorities, communicate clearly, and maintain high standards of integrity allows him to excel in both roles, demonstrating a commitment to excellence in serving clients and the Maltese diaspora alike. sec.cmla@gov.mt

OUR AIM - **BOTH THE COUNCIL AND THE JOURNAL strive to enhance connectivity through active interactions as well as promote Maltese identity, culture and heritage, including the Maltese language as goalposts of Maltese opulence in the world.**
We endeavour to further build on the networks of the Maltese living abroad with a view to explore social and other forms of collaboration within the framework of mutual benefit and in the common interests of Malta and Gozo.

THE COUNCIL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD AND THE MALTESE JOURNAL WORK TOGETHER FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE MALTESE DIASPORA

ONE OF OUR GREAT SUPPORTERS

A TALENTED AUTHOR, RADIO BROADCASTER AND TALENTED PLAYWRITER LINA BROCKDORFF DIES AT THE AGE OF 95

Brockdorff was born in Senglea to Patrick and Mary Mahoney in 1930. Her early life was marked by the outbreak of World War II when Brockdorff was nine years old.[4] Her family moved multiple times throughout the war, living in various localities such as Vittoriosa, Sliema, Dingli and Rabat.

Brockdorff's early education was interrupted by the outbreak of the war, but when the war was over she returned to school on her father's insistence.[4] She wanted to pursue a medical career; however, her family could not afford to send her to university and enrolled her in a teacher's training course without informing her. She resumed her education later in life, when she enrolled in a one-year introductory course in theology in 1991, followed by a five-year Bachelor's course. She eventually obtained a master's degree in theology and humanities in 2002 at the age of 72.

Brockdorff's teaching career began at a State primary school; however, she stopped teaching to raise her four children. During this time, she focused on her writing. She later continued her career at St Aloysius College as an English-language teacher. She served as a council member of L-Akkademja tal-Malti between 2004 and 2005 and remained an academy member for the rest of her life. She also served as President of *Għaqda Letterarja Maltija* for eight years and is a member of *Għaqda Poeti Maltin*.

Brockdorff began writing at the age of 17 whilst attending the teachers' training college, where scholar Ġużè Aquilina would encourage his students to write short stories or essays for broadcast on radio.[3] She was highly prolific throughout the subsequent decades, writing and producing several programmes that were aired on Rediffusion throughout the 1950s and 1960s, including *Ħlieqa Bejnietna*, *Quddiem il-Mera*, *Nofs Siegħa Flimkien*, and *Magic in the Kitchen*.

Brockdorff wrote several radio plays, including *Il-Fqajjar t'Assisi*. Some of her works were also broadcast on Australian radio.

Throughout her career, she wrote six anthologies, twelve novels and over 340 novellas.[5] She also wrote an autobiography about her experience of World War II called *Sireni u Serenati* (Serenades Amidst The Sirens), which was awarded a prize as *Best novel - Non Fiction* by the National Book Council of Malta in 2004. It was also subsequently serialised and broadcast on various radio stations. She was awarded the Gold Medal - Ġieħ l-Akkademja tal-Malti

Lina Brockdorff was an avid reader of the Maltese Journal since its inception. She was also a contributor and written several articles for the publication in our journal. When the editor visited Malta in 2018 he met Lina at her residence, and she presented him with some of her books.

Brockdorff's death at the age of 95 was announced on 10 February 2026, the feast of Saint Paul. She is survived by her four children, Noellie, David, Adrianne and Daniel, as well as several grandchildren.

WAHDA MILL-HAFNA 'EMAILS' LI BGHATITLI LINA TUL IS-SNIN

Ghaziz Frank, grazzi hafna u prosit tassew tal- Maltese Journal. Mimli artikoli interessanti li zgur jghogbu lil kull min jaf jaqra bil-Maliti. Dejjem niehu pjaċir naqrah. Jekk joghgbok tista' tibghatli wiehed minn dawk iċ-ċertifikati tal-qarrejja? Kompli miexi f'din il-missjoni tieghek ghax naf zgur li qed taghmel hafna gid fost il-Maltin kemm dawk li jghixu f'Malta u specjalment dawk imferxa madwar id-dinja. Lina Brockdorff - Malta

QUEENSLAND MALTESE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY INC. (QMAC) OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED IN BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND

10 February 2026 we officially launched QMAC Inc. at Brisbane City Hall—hosted by Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner and supported by the International Relations & Multicultural Affairs team—with more than 80 attendees from the Maltese community, fellow European communities, Brisbane City Councillors, and members of the Lord Mayor's Multicultural Roundtable.

We were honoured to welcome Mr Mark Anthony Abela, Deputy High Commissioner of Malta, who travelled from Canberra to share an encouraging message on behalf of the High Commissioner. A highlight was the spellbinding performance by 19-year-old Maltese singer, Gabrielle Mizzi - just incredible!

This milestone reflects a decade of relationship-building and a shared commitment to a community grounded in mutual respect across cultures and generations—thank you to everyone who helped bring this vision to life; join us as we build the next chapter together. **Sandra Alexandra Micallef Hon Consul of Malta**

- .

George Cross Falcons Club
75th Anniversary Dinner

6pm Saturday 27 June 2026
Fraternity Club, Fairy Meadows

All Welcome

3 Course Meal
Live band (Rockin Express)

Book Now
ACCOUNT NAME
GEORGE CROSS FALCONS CLUB
BSB: 732686 ACCOUNT: 583821

Enquiries
Louis Parnis
M: 0420 857 363
E: louie.parnis@gmail.com

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO WORK TOGETHER WITH SO MANY VIBRANT MALTESE COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA AND AROUND THE WORLD. MALTESE HIGH COMMISSIONS, CONSULATES AND EMBASSIES DO ALSO SUPPORT THIS JOURMAL AS WELL AS THE COUNCIL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD (MALTA)

Multicultural Aged Care

CONNECTION, BELONGING, AND CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

February provides an important opportunity for many providers to reset service delivery following the holiday period. As staff return and activities resume, this is a critical time to reinforce culturally safe practice, strengthen engagement with older people, and embed the Strengthened Quality Standards — particularly in relation to dignity and choice, person-centred care, workforce capability, and inclusive service environment, embedding cultural and emotional intelligence in service delivery.

Across cultures, February often highlights themes of connection, relationships, care, and community. Love and belonging extend beyond romantic relationships to include family, friendship, elders, and community ties. For older people, a strong sense of belonging is essential to wellbeing, while for staff, feeling connected and respected strengthens morale, teamwork, and retention. February reminds us that belonging is built through everyday actions, not just special events.

MAC has developed a range of practical tools and resources to assist with workforce planning and culturally responsive care.***Cultural Intelligence in Aged Care*** **newslette**r will now be published **monthly**, offering ongoing guidance, practical tools, and cultural insights to support your work.

In this newsletter:

Why Cultural Celebrations Matter to Older People

CQ checklist for Working with Older People

A Snapshot of Cultural Celebration

Lunar New Year - Year of the Horse - Meaning & Cultural Significance

Dishes for Lunar New Year

Understanding Islam: A Cultural and Religious Resource

Resource Spotlight - Library

Resource Spotlight - Micro-Learning Sessions

Resource Spotlight - Multicultural calendar 2026

Your voice matters - More information!

We invite you to **subscribe** to receive future editions directly in your inbox. We hope this becomes a valuable source of information and inspiration for you and your team. Please feel free to share your story, experiences, or ideas—your contributions help shape the content for upcoming issues and ensure it reflects the needs of our diverse aged care community.

www.mac.org.au

Malta will be represented by a, cross-country skier Jenny Axisa Eriksen, at the forthcoming Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games, marking Malta's fourth participation at the Winter Olympic Games.

19-year old Axisa Eriksen has already made histo the first cross-country skier to represent Malta a Winter Olympic Games. Born to a Norwegian fathe a Maltese mother, Axisa Eriksen discovered her pa for skiing at an early age and has dedicated her effo competing at top-level events, including the Norw Cup, Junior National Championships and the Championships in Trondheim. It was at the 2025 Championships in Trondheim that she secure qualification for the Milano Cortina Winter Oly Games.

Since then she has further intensified her tr programme in preparation for the Games. This s also marks her first year competing as a senior athlete. She has been based in Lillehammer, trainin Team Hedmark Sjusjøen under the guidance of coach Henrik Pedersen. Her season has inc participation in several high-level competitions, including the Norwegian Season Opening, the Norw Cup, the Scandinavian Cup in Östersund, Sweden, and the German Cup in Hohenzollern-Abersee.

Jenny Axisa Eriksen will carry the Maltese flag during the Opening Ceremony of the Predazzo Cluster, Team Malta will be based, which will take place on 6 February at the Ski Jumping Stadium.

The Chef de Mission for the Milano Cortina Winter Olympic Games is Maria Vella-Galea, Director of and PR of the Maltese Olympic Committee. She will be joined by Charlene Attard, Director of Spo Coach Henrik Skjervold Pedersen. Maltese Olympic Committee President Julian Pace Bonell Secretary General Kevin Azzopardi will attend the Games as guests of the International Oly Committee.

Malta's participation in Milano Cortina 2026 marks the fourth time the nation has competed at the W Olympic Games. Previous Maltese Olympians include Elise Pellegrin (Alpine Skiing) at Sochi 201 PyeongChang 2018, and Jenise Spiteri (Snowboarding) at Beijing 2022.

THIS SPACE COULD BE YOURS.
OUR READERS ARE EAGER TO READ YOUR STORY.
OUR CONTRIBUTIONS COME FROM
SUPPORTERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.
I WILL BE GRATEFUL IF THE LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS
TAKE MORE PARTICIPATION.

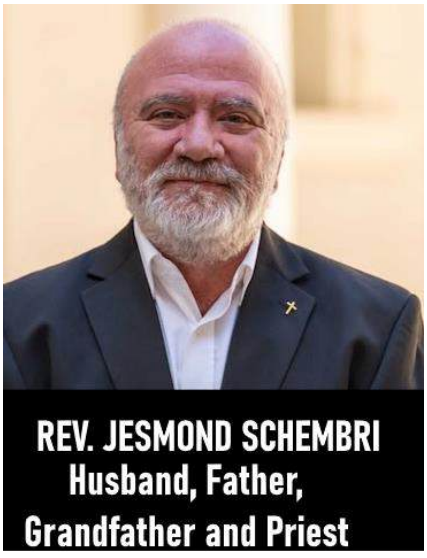
MALTESE PRIESTS PARTICIPATE IN THE EUROPEAN FUTSAL CHAMPIONSHIP FOR THE FIRST TIME

A group of priests is ON THE WAY to compete in the European Futsal Championship for Priests in Poland, marking their inaugural participation. The team comprises Fr Matthew Pulis, Fr Daniel Cardona, Fr Marco Portelli, Fr Josef Mifsud, Fr Sergio Fenech, who serves as the Chaplain of the Armed Forces of Malta, Fr Peter Tembo, Fr Kenneth Tochukwu Anona, and Fr Fidelis Sopuruchi Iroka. The latter three are priests, with two hailing from Zambia and one from Nigeria, currently residin at the Dar Fratelli Tutti Seminary and pursuing studies at the University of Malta.

The team's captain is Fr Bernard Micallef.

This marks the first occasion that a Maltese team of prieests will participate in these championships. This year, 18 European nations will compete, making it the 18th edition of the event. It promises to be a remarkable week filled with matches typically held over two days, alongside opportunities for prayer and social interaction with other teams.

Fr Peter Tembo mentioned that he played football in Zambia and is filled with excitement. He echoed the sentiment of eagerness to connect with fellow priests and aims to win trophies to bring back home! The team has been convening for training sessions at the AFM gym once a week, and occasionally at Savio College in the evenings. In the initial phase, the Maltese team will face off against Portugal, Croatia, and Slovenia. We extend our best wishes to the Maltese team for tremendous success, hoping they bring honour to our nation on a global stage and that this experience enhances their faith!



Husband, father and grandfather and now a Catholic priest

The Church in Malta celebrated the ordination of a new priest on Sunday, 8th February 2026. The Apostolic Exarch to the Greek Byzantine Catholic Church, Mgr Manuel Nin O.S.B., in the presence of Archbishop Charles Scicluna, ordained Rev. Jesmond Schembri, deacon of the Greek Catholic Parish of Our Lady of Damascus, Valletta, to the priesthood. The ordination mass was celebrated at the Church of St Nicholas of Myra (Tal-Erwieħ) in Valletta at 9:30am.

Rev. Jesmond Schembri is 59 years old, originally from Siġġiewi, currently living in Mosta. He is presently the Director of the Migrants Commission of the Archdiocese of Malta. He holds a degree in social work and has spent most of his life working in this field. Between 2012 and 2022 he studied Theology at the University of Malta, where he obtained a Licentiate in Pastoral Theology. As a priest, he hopes to bring God's mercy to others, especially through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Congratulations, Father Schembri.

Many thanks for your continuous gift of you excellent Maltese Journal. I'm a retired fitter and turner I've been out here in Australia for 75 years (ship Asturias) I've been to Malta several times in my younger years , yet I'm still interested in my country of birth , Cheers, and wish you good health . Charles Zammit - Australia.

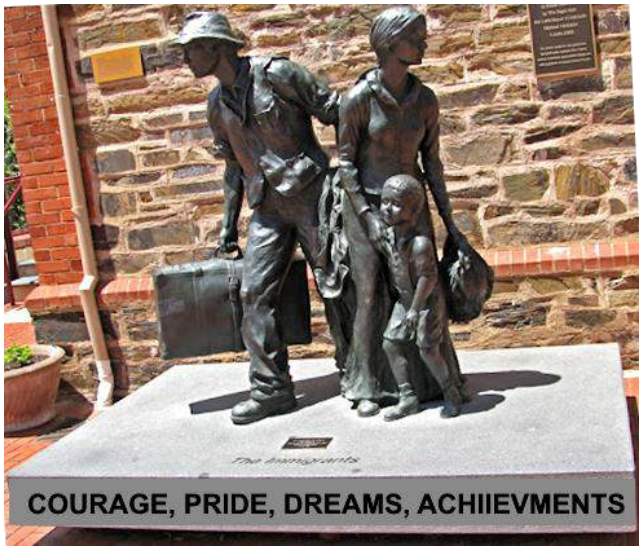
Hello Frank, I am very much obliged for yet another Newsletter full of interesting reading material. I very much liked the writing you have presented as editor of this publication.
MAY I THROUGH THIS SHORT MESSAGE EXPRESS MY DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO GEORGE CARUANA ON THE RECENT LOSS OF HIS SISTER MARY CARUANA. MAY SHE REST IN PEACE AMEN. Best regards George Stagno Navarra

Hello Frank, I want to reply to your comment in this issue "A word from the Editor".
Although I might not send you any comments, I want you to know that I always look forward to your Newsletter. I check all the details especially if Nadur is mentioned. Thank you and please continue your much appreciated work. Best Regards George Sammut

Għażiż Sur Scicluna, Nirringrazzjak talli għoġbok tinkludi referenza għar-rivista letterarja virtwali IL-PONT fir-rivista tiegħek. Apprezzata bil-bosta. Sliem, saħħa u tislijiet minn Malta, Dr. PATRICK SAMMUT

H.E. Gavin Gulia, Ambassador of Malta to Poland, hosting members of the Maltese diaspora in Poland

As Ambassador of Malta to Poland, I was delighted to host members of the Maltese diaspora in Poland at my official residence in Wilanów, Warsaw. The gathering was also attended by Malta's Honorary Consuls from across the country, making the occasion particularly meaningful.
The event brought together Maltese citizens living and working in Poland alongside Polish friends with strong ties to Malta, providing a warm opportunity to celebrate our shared connections, strengthen community bonds, and reaffirm the close and enduring friendship between Malta and Poland.
I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the dedicated staff of the Embassy, DHOM Rebecca Galea, Linda Moczkowska and Anna Gregorowicz, who worked tirelessly to make this event possible, and to all those who attended for their presence and support, which made the evening truly special.
Make no mistake the traditional Maltese Timpana, exquisitely prepared by Maltese top Chef Chris Gherxi, and the famous "is-Serkin" pastizzi, courtesy of Trevor Ciangura, worked overtime.
The Maltese community in Poland is small but growing, primarily consisting of expatriates, professionals, and students. The Embassy of Malta in Warsaw actively supports this community through cultural events, national day celebrations, and fostering business ties. While not a large diaspora, the community maintains strong links through bilateral, academic, and tourism connections.



BUILDING A MONUMENT TO HONOUR THE PAST AND PRESENT MALTESE MIGRANTS WHO LEFT MALTA TO SETTLE IN FAR AWAY COUNTRIES

Building a memorial to honour the Maltese living abroad involves celebrating the "Malta in the World" concept—recognizing the strength, culture, and contribution of the diaspora worldwide. Efforts to honour these communities have historically involved international competitions, and specific commemorative sculptures.

Here is a framework for building such a memorial, based on existing initiatives:

CONCEPT AND DESIGN

Theme: The monument should epitomize the spirit of the Maltese Diaspora and the "Malta in the World" concept.

Symbolism: Incorporate themes of hard work, sacrifices, adaptation, and maintaining Maltese identity while integrating into new societies.

Materials: Utilize durable, traditional materials such as Maltese limestone, sandstone, granite, marble or bronze.

Structure: Create a free-standing, original design (e.g., sculptural representation of pioneer families).

LOCATION AND PLACEMENT

Location: The memorial should be placed in a significant location, such as a prominent site in Malta or in cities with high concentrations of Maltese diaspora (e.g., Australia), Canada and USA.

Context: Potential sites include areas near the Valletta Waterfront or public gardens that honour historical connections.

IMPLEMENTATION AND COLLABORATION

Competition: Launch an international design competition open to Maltese nationals living abroad, inviting submissions of models.

Partnerships: Collaborate with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Office of the Prime Minister, and local councils in host countries.

EXISTING EXAMPLES FOR INSPIRATION

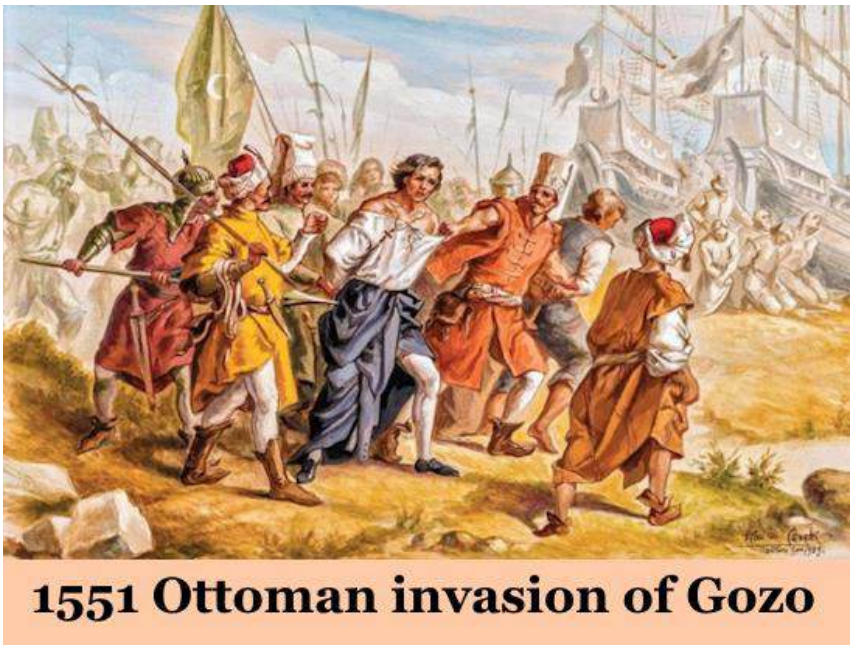
National Monument to Migration (Sydney, Australia): Features the "Welcome Wall" with thousands of names of Maltese migrants.

Child Migrants Memorial (Fremantle, Australia): Honors the memory of Maltese children who migrated between 1947 and 1953.

Maltese War Memorial (Melbourne, Australia): A "Shelter of Peace" designed to honor those who served in WWII.

ANZAC Memorial (Floriana, Malta): A tribute to Australians and New Zealanders, showcasing the deep, enduring ties between the nations.

By following these steps, a meaningful monument can be established to ensure the contributions of the Maltese Diaspora are never forgotten. We invite your opinion!!!



The **Invasion of Gozo** took place in July 1551, and was accomplished by the Ottoman Empire against the island of Gozo, following an unsuccessful attempt to conquer nearby Malta on 18 July 1551. It was followed by a victorious campaign with the Siege of Tripoli.

The Commander of the Ottoman fleet were Sinan Pasha, accompanied by Sala Reis and Dragut Reis.

The Ottomans initially landed on Malta, at Marsamxett, and a force of 10000 men marched upon Birgu and Fort St Angelo, but they realised that these were too well fortified to be conquered easily. Therefore the Ottomans turned their attention to Mdina, looting and burning the villages on the way. Meanwhile, the Knights in Mdina, under the command of Fra Villeganion, asked the people living in the villages to seek refuge in the city and to help defend it. When the Ottomans arrived they discovered a large garrison defending the city so they decided against the plan of attacking the city since they did not want to fight a long siege. Meanwhile, a relief fleet attacked the Ottoman ships anchored at Marsamxett.

The Ottoman then decided to attack nearby Gozo, which was under the command of Governor Gelatian de Sessa. After a few days of bombardment, de Sessa attempted to negotiate with Sinan Pasha, however the latter rejected the terms. A few days later the Citadel capitulated. About 300 people escaped from the Citadel by climbing down its walls and hid from the Ottomans. The other 6000 people, including Governor de Sessa and the Knights, were taken captive and ended up in slavery, being sailed to Tripoli on 30 July. The Ottomans only spared a monk and forty elderly Gozitans.

According to legend, one of the defenders named Bernardo Dupuo (also known as Bernardo da Fonte or de Opuo) fought bravely when Ottomans breached the city walls, and killed his own wife and two daughters preferring death over slavery before he himself was killed by the invading forces. A street in the Citadel is named after him, and outside his house lies a plaque commemorating his death. Since few Christians remained on Gozo, families from Malta were encouraged by the Order of Saint John to repopulate the island. However it took about 150 years for the population to reach pre-1551 levels.

Following the attack the Order set up a commission made up of Leone Strozzi and Pietro Pardo, who were engineers, to examine the Maltese Islands' fortifications and make suggestions for further improvements. The Grandmaster, Juan d'Omedes, increased taxation and strengthened the coastal guards, the *Dejma*. Following Strozzi and Pardo's commission, Fort Saint Michael and Fort Saint Elmo were built to better defend the Grand Harbour. Bastions at Mdina and Birgu were strengthened, and the fortifications of Senglea were built.

The failure to take all of the Maltese Islands was also one of the causes of the Great Siege of Malta in 1565. Two other unsuccessful attacks were made on Gozo in 1613 and 1709.

In 2013 a memorial to the siege was set up at the gardens of Villa Rundle in Victoria, Gozo.

THIS REALLY HAPPENED IN MELBOURNE – AUSTRALIA

FIVE CONTENDERS. ONE THRONE. NO REGRETS (YET).

In a world where your mum still asks, "That's all you're eating?" one challenge rises to honour true Maltese upbringing. A challenge not for the faint hearted, or for the lactose or gluten intolerant. 🌾🧀

Welcome to the First Annual Portarlington Family Day Pastizzi Eating Competition — where portion control was never an option and quitting is not in our vocabulary.

This isn't a snack.

This is what your nanna warned you about. This is years of training at band clubs, bakeries and family functions finally paying off.

THE CHALLENGE:

Eat 2 dozen golden, flaky ricotta filled pastizzi from The Original Maltese Pastizzi Company as fast as possible. No complaining. No asking for Kinnie halfway through. No stopping to say, "I think I'm full." (If you survive without throwing up, you're already a winner.)

WHAT'S AT STAKE:

Lifetime bragging rights. The ability to say, "I could've kept going," even if you clearly couldn't. And permanent respect from every Maltese uncle within earshot.

DATE: Sunday, January 25, 2026

LOCATION: Main Stage, Portarlington Family Day

HOW IT WORKS (YES, THIS IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING):

- Put your name down on the day (your family will probably volunteer you anyway)
- 5 names drawn live on stage
- Perform in front of a crowd both in person and online that will both cheer you on and judge your technique Do you have the stomach of someone raised on pastizzi and bad advice? Or will you stand there arms crossed saying,

"U ajja! I used to eat more than that."

Register on the day. Face the pastizz. Explain it to your doctor later.

This event is proudly sponsored by our amazing friends at **The Original Maltese Pastizzi Co.** Please make them very, very proud

MALTESE COMMUNITY IN TURKEY

The Maltese community in Turkey, historically concentrated in Izmir (Smyrna) and Istanbul, is a small, dwindling diaspora descended from 19th-century migrants. Once numbering thousands, the community now consists of only a few dozen individuals in Izmir. These descendants are often referred to as Maltese-Levantines, with strong ties to the region dating back to the Crimean War era.

Historical Background and Presence

- **Migration Waves:** Starting in the late 19th century, many Maltese families migrated to the Ottoman Empire, specifically Izmir and Constantinople, seeking employment, often working as dockers or in trades.
- **Cultural Fusion:** Over decades, they became part of the local social fabric, with a significant number of Levantine, merchant, and professional families establishing themselves in the region.
- **Decline:** The community decreased significantly over the past century, particularly following the 1922 Greco-Turkish war and subsequent migration to other countries like Australia or Canada.

Community Life and Identity

- **Current Status:** Today, only a small, aging population of Maltese descent remains in Izmir and Istanbul.
- **Identity:** Descendants often describe a mixed identity, feeling Maltese in Turkey but identifying with Turkey when abroad.
- **Cultural Connection:** The Embassy of Malta in Turkey hosts events to engage this diaspora, such as gatherings for Malta's independence anniversary in Izmir.
- **Notable Figures:** Historical figures like Maltese artist Amedeo Preziosi lived and worked in Istanbul during the 19th century.

Relations and Support

- **Diplomatic Links:** The Maltese consulate in Istanbul and the embassy in Ankara actively support the remaining community, facilitating connections and helping with citizenship applications.
- **Documentary Focus:** The documentary "Maltin f'Izmir" (Maltese in Izmir) highlights the stories and history of this community, co-produced by Maltese and Turkish national broadcasters.
- **Business Relations:** A modern Maltese-Turkish business community has developed, distinct from the historical Levantine community, driven by increased economic ties.

THE MALTESE DIASPORA IN THE UNITED STATES

The movement of people from the Maltese islands to the United States of America represents a significant chapter in the history of Mediterranean migration. Although the Maltese population within the American borders has always remained relatively small in comparison to other European groups, their influence in specific urban centres has been profound. This migration was primarily driven by economic necessity, particularly during periods when the islands faced overpopulation and limited industrial opportunities.

The earliest records of Maltese presence in America date back to the eighteenth century. A notable number of individuals settled in the southern regions, particularly in New Orleans, where they established themselves in the agricultural sector. These early settlers often worked as market gardeners, supplying the local population with fresh produce. During this period, the Maltese identity was frequently overshadowed by larger Mediterranean groups, and many were recorded as Italian or Spanish in official census documents.

The most substantial wave of migration occurred after the First World War. The reduction of the workforce at the British Royal Dockyards in Malta led to widespread unemployment. Attracted by the promise of the burgeoning automobile industry, thousands of Maltese men travelled to Michigan. Detroit became the focal point of the community, specifically the neighbourhood of Corktown. The lure of consistent wages offered by the Ford Motor Company provided a stable foundation for these families to put down roots and establish social clubs that remain active to this day.

Another significant community formed in New York City, particularly in the borough of Queens. The neighbourhood of Astoria became a hub for Maltese families who found employment in the construction and maritime industries. These communities were characterised by a fierce commitment to their heritage, maintaining their unique language and religious traditions. The Maltese Center in Astoria became a vital institution for new arrivals, offering support and a sense of belonging in a vast and unfamiliar city.

Following the Second World War, the Maltese government actively encouraged emigration to alleviate the pressures on the islands' infrastructure. This period saw a final significant influx of migrants into the United States, with many joining relatives in established hubs or moving further west to San Francisco. Today, the descendants of these pioneers continue to celebrate their dual heritage, ensuring that the story of the Maltese in America remains a vibrant part of the broader immigrant narrative.

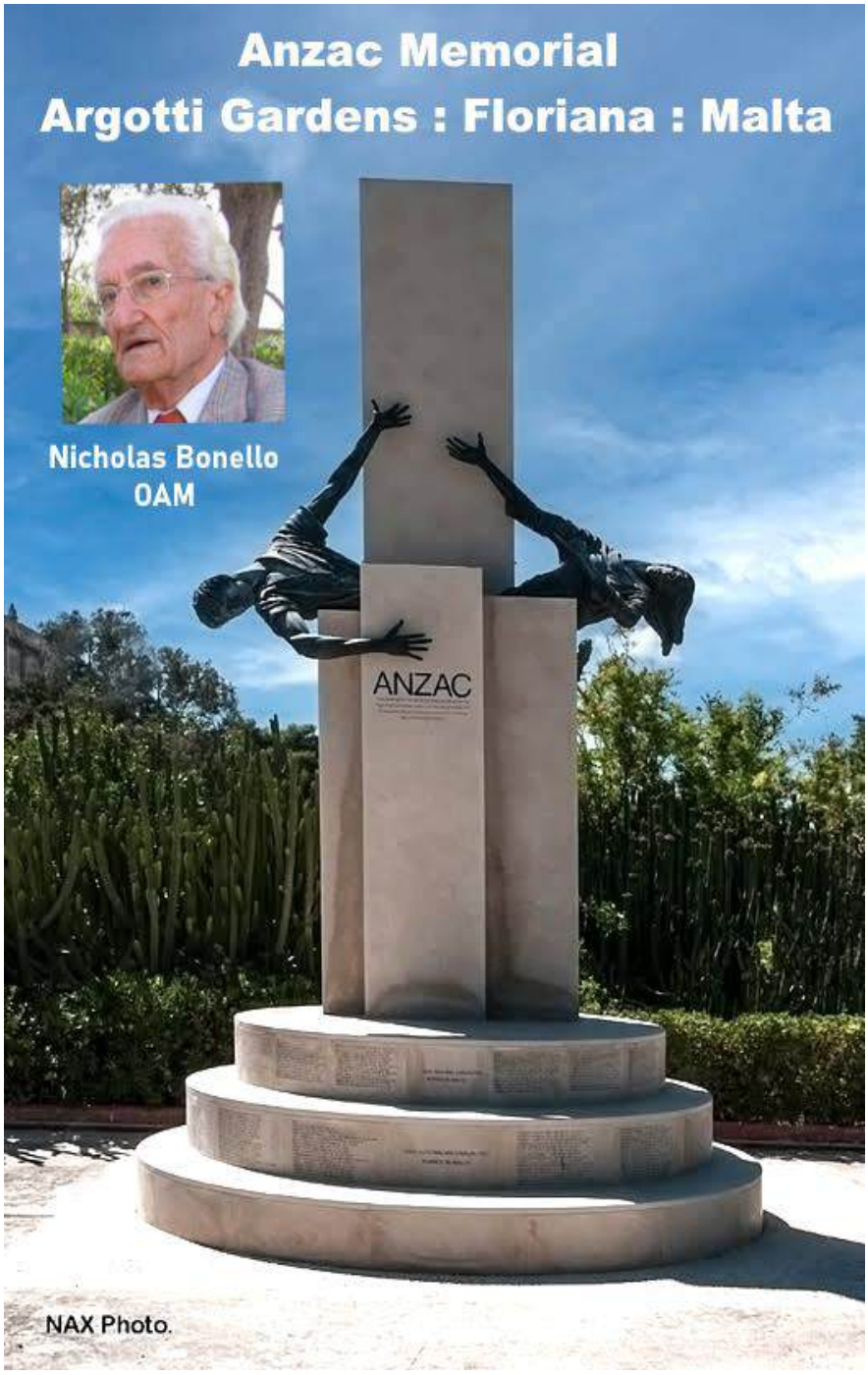
The Maltese Presence in Astoria - The historical records of the Maltese community in Astoria reveal a narrative of resilience and cultural preservation. During the twentieth century, this pocket of Queens became a vital sanctuary for migrants seeking a new life while clinging firmly to their Mediterranean roots. While the neighbourhood is now frequently associated with other demographics, the legacy of "Little Malta" is etched into the very streets and social structures of the area.

Pioneers of the Community Early archival data highlights the role of entrepreneurial individuals who laid the groundwork for future arrivals. Records mention figures like Carmelo Caruana, whose early success in New Orleans and New York served as a blueprint for the Maltese immigrant dream. By the 1920s, local contractors such as Alphonse Bonavia were instrumental in providing employment to new arrivals, ensuring that the community had the financial means to establish a permanent presence in Astoria.Joseph Edward Doublet is perhaps one of the most significant figures found in these records. Arriving in 1920, he dedicated his life to the welfare of his compatriots. Historical accounts suggest that during the hardships of the Great Depression, he personally assisted hundreds of Maltese migrants in securing work and navigating the bureaucratic hurdles of their adopted country. His work ensured that the community did not just survive but remained cohesive during America's most difficult economic era.

Cultural Landmarks and Institutions The social life of the community was, and remains, anchored by specific institutions. The Maltese Centre, which moved to its prominent location near the RFK Bridge in the late 1970s, acts as the primary custodian of Maltese tradition. It serves as a venue for religious feasts and communal meals, where traditional dishes such as rabbit stew are prepared using methods passed down through generations.

In recognition of these contributions, the city officially designated the intersection outside the centre as Malta Square in 2008. This serves as a permanent marker of the community's historical significance. Furthermore, businesses like Leli’s Bakery continue to provide the neighbourhood with traditional pastries, maintaining a culinary link to the islands that has persisted for decades.

Post-War Expansion and Success The most significant growth in the Astoria enclave occurred in the 1950s. Detailed immigration logs show a surge of arrivals facilitated by government-assisted passage schemes designed to manage overpopulation in Malta. These migrants were drawn to Astoria’s residential nature, which offered the prospect of home ownership and a stable environment for raising families.The success of this community is reflected in the prominence of its figures who share these roots. From Hollywood actors like Joseph Calleia, who maintained strong ties to his heritage, to contemporary legal professionals, the descendants of Astoria's Maltese pioneers have achieved significant professional standing. This trajectory from industrial workers and artisans to influential professionals underscores the successful integration and enduring spirit of the Maltese diaspora in New York.



The main ANZAC memorial in Malta is located in the Argotti Botanic Gardens in Floriana, inaugurated in 2013 to honour Australian and New Zealand troops from WWI and WWII. An annual Anzac Day service is held at the Pieta Military Cemetery, where over 230 ANZACs are buried, marking *Malta's crucial* role as the ***"Nurse of the Mediterranean***".

Key ANZAC Sites in Malta:

Argotti Gardens

Memorial:

A limestone-block pillar featuring an aluminium plaque designed by sculptor Ganni Bonnici, honouring ANZACs who died in both World Wars. The president of the Anzav Memorial Committee was the late Nicholas Bonello OAM.

Pietà Military Cemetery:

Located near Valletta, this site holds the highest concentration of ANZAC graves in Malta. An annual wreath-laying ceremony takes place here on April 25th.

Australia Hall:

Located in Pembroke, this building was constructed in 1915 by the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross for wounded soldiers.

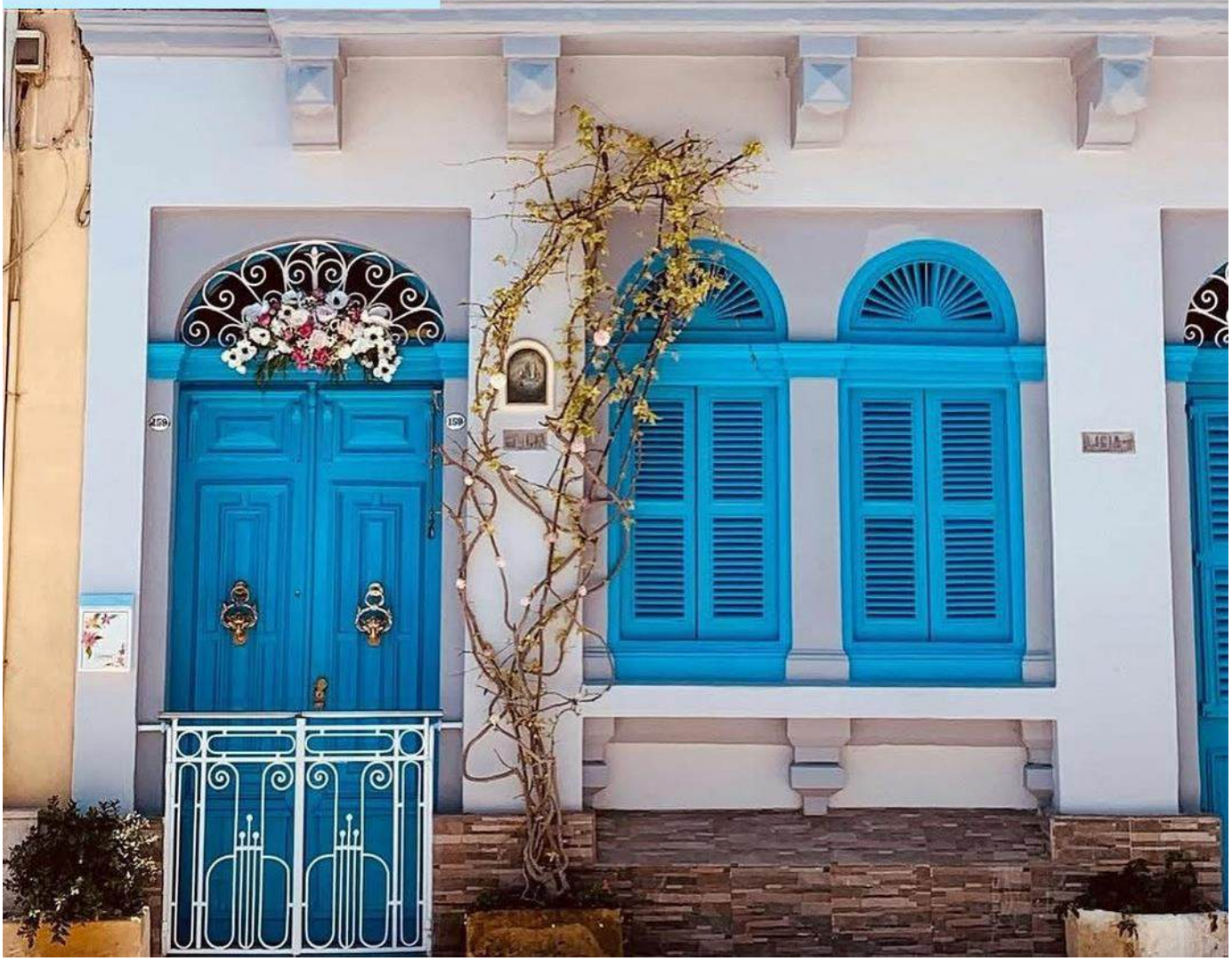
Maltese Anzacs Honour Roll:

A commemorative plaque listing servicemen of Maltese descent who served in the Australian Imperial Force or New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

During the 1915 Gallipoli campaign, 58,000 personnel were evacuated to Malta for medical care. Malta has formally commemorated ANZAC Day since 1916.

Mr. late Nicholas Bonello OAM Chairmen of the ANZAC Memorial Committee said that “It is hoped that the ANZAC Memorial of Malta will be visited not only by Australians, but also by the Australian Maltese paying a visit to their country of birth”. Mr Bonello was also Malta’s High Commissioner in Australia.

THEY DON'T BUILD THEM LIKE THIS ANYMORE



ZEJTUNE - FILM BY ALEX CAMILLERI

Żejtune, the new film by Alex Camilleri, who also directed the film Luzzu, will be released in cinemas across Malta and Gozo on Wednesday 8th April 2026. The film will be shown in three major cinemas, Eden Cinemas in St Julian's, Embassy Cinemas in Valletta and Citadel Cinemas in Gozo.

The film premiered last week at the 49th edition of the Göteborg Film Festival, where it was positively received by the audiences who attended its screenings. Żejtune will have its official premiere in Malta at Eden Cinemas on Wednesday 18 March 2026. Audiences will also have the opportunity to meet the filmmakers and participate in discussions about the film at two special screenings at Citadel Cinemas in Gozo on Monday 30 March 2026, and at Embassy Cinemas in Valletta on Monday 6 April 2026.

Żejtune tells the story of Mar, played by Michela Farrugia, a young woman ready to leave the small island of Malta behind. The death of her mother, with whom she had little contact, offers her an opportunity through the inheritance of three plots of land that she intends to sell. As she embarks on a journey to claim her inheritance, Mar meets Nenu, played by Nenu Borg (a veteran għana singer making his screen debut at the age of 82), whose vibrant folk music draws her to the colourful traditions of an island she so desperately wants to escape.

Commenting on the film's release in Malta, director Alex Camilleri said: "This film was a journey of many years, made together with a team that believed that this story with għana at its centre could reach audiences everywhere. The reception we received in Gothenburg was the first wonderful confirmation of that belief. We are eager to show the film in its home, in Malta and Gozo, where the story, characters and music were born, and where we believe it will strike the deepest chord." The film is produced by Oliver Mallia of Pellikola, Ramin Bahrani of Noruz Films and Alex Camilleri of Solari Productions, with co-producers Fred Burle and Sol Bondy of One Two.

Donate - Please, help us to keep this Journal alive

Bank - Commonwealth (Australia) BSB - 065106
Account No. - 00502597 Name - Frank Scicluna

FOR OVERSEAS DONORS - CommBank's BIC/SWIFT Code: CTBAAU2S

Il-Ħaġar Museum celebrates the 13th anniversary of its inauguration and, commemorates Malta and Gozo's foremost contemporary composer, Joseph Vella

A very hectic month lies ahead for Il-Ħaġar | Heart of Gozo Museum as it celebrates the 13th anniversary of its inauguration and, as has become customary, presents a week of cultural, liturgical and social events to mark this important milestone. The programme also commemorates Malta and Gozo's foremost contemporary composer, Joseph Vella, on the 8th anniversary of his passing. These events will take place during the week starting 16 February and will reach their climax during the weekend of 20, 21 and 22 February.

On **Monday 16th**, the Byron Consort of Harrow School Choir of London, directed by Michael Evans, will present a **vocal recital** of sacred music by Palestrina, Bach, Bruckner and Vella, amongst others. The concert will take place at St George's Basilica and will start **at 19:30**.

On **Thursday 19th, at 20:00**, Francis Camilleri will give a **piano recital** at the Aula Mgr Giuseppe Farrugia, located at the back of St George's Basilica. Camilleri will perform Schubert's *Sonata in G major* D. 894, Vella's *Sonatina* op. 30, and Beethoven's *Sonata in F minor* No. 23, op. 57 (*Appassionata*).

On **Friday 20th**, events will shift to Il-Ħaġar Museum where, **at 19:30**, Dr Alexander Vella Gregory will deliver the **8th Joseph Vella Memorial Lecture**, titled '*Una Consuetudine Anticha': Sacred Music in Dusina's Report of 1575*. The lecture will be followed by the inauguration of a documentary exhibition on the piano concertos of Joseph Vella.

The following day, **Saturday 21st February at 11:00**, we will host a **hands-on workshop** for children and students with Gozitan artist Clara Azzopardi and her DIJA exhibition curator, Sera Galea. In the evening, **at 20:00**, Il-Ħaġar Museum, in collaboration with the Laudate Pueri Choir of St George's Basilica, will present a **recital of art songs by Joseph Vella and Alex Vella Gregory**. The performers will be Miriam Cauchi (soprano), Simon Abdilla Joslin (violoncello), and Maria Frendo and Alex Vella Gregory (pianoforte). This concert will take place at the Aula Mgr Giuseppe Farrugia.

On **Sunday 22nd at 11:00**, we will gather at St George's Basilica to give thanks to Almighty God for the experience Il-Ħaġar Museum offers to the thousands of visitors it welcomes each year. We will pray for the museum's benefactors, both those who have passed away and those who are still with us, to whom we all owe so much. Solemn Mass will be celebrated by the Museum's Founder and Curator, Mgr Dr Joseph Farrugia. St George's Basilica's Laudate Pueri Choir will perform Joseph Vella's Missa Brevis.

Following the celebration of Holy Mass, at 12:30, festivities will continue with a four-course anniversary celebratory luncheon at the award-winning Ta' Frenċ Restaurant. For logistical purposes, reservations for this event will be accepted until Friday 20 February.

All events mentioned here, except for the anniversary luncheon, are free of charge. For seat reservations or any queries, please contact: events@heartofgozo.org.mt / +356 7956 1540.

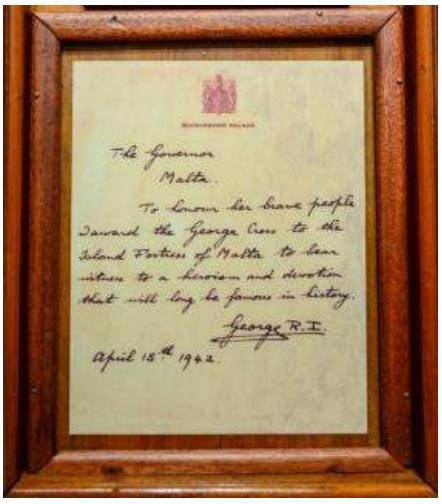
Friends of Valletta

City of Chichester - Valletta Capital of Malta

You are warmly invited to attend our next talk. At Chichester City Council Chamber, also on Zoom, 1900hrs (2000hrs Malta time), Tuesday 24 February 2026 Pat Scott, National Secretary of the GCIA, presents

Malta in World War Two and the George Cross Island Association

The George Cross was awarded to the Island of Malta by King George VI on 15th April 1942, in the worst month of the Luftwaffe blitz of the Island, to honour her brave people for their heroism and devotion during World War Two. Italy had declared war on Britain and France on 10 June 1940 and thereafter Malta endured two and a half years of siege by the Axis Powers. She was only saved from surrender by the arrival of the severely mauled Operation Pedestal Convoy in mid-August 1942, which enabled Malta to go onto the offensive and interrupt vital Axis convoys supplying Rommel's troops in North Africa, materially influencing the outcome of the battle of El Alamein at the end of October. Malta's siege was finally lifted with the safe arrival of a further convoy in November. . The successful invasion of Sicily in July 1943 was co-ordinated from Malta. The tide of w The George Cross Island Association (GCIA) was formed in July 1987 to bring together those involved in defending Malta, to commemorate the Pedestal Convoy, known in Malta as the 'Santa Marija Convoy', and to fund a suitable memorial - the Siege Bell in Valletta. This was unveiled in 1992 by HM The Queen and the President of Malta, for the 50th anniversary of the award of the George Cross on 15 April 1942.



GCIA membership is now open to anyone interested in Malta's wartime history, only £8.50 p.a., everyone is welcome. Major commemorative events for GCIA members are organised annually in Malta in mid-April and in UK on 15 August. Enrol as a member via https://www.georgecrossisland.org.uk/.

Published on behalf of Graham Pound, Chairman, Friends of Valletta
www.friendsofvalletta.org Email: gpound@bigcrouchers.co.uk

7th February 2026

HUMAN TRANSPLANT SYSTEM

University of Malta academics and Mater Dei Hospital clinicians support organ donation law changes with strong ethical safeguards

A group of University of Malta academics and senior clinical staff at Mater Dei Hospital have expressed support for the Government's proposed changes to Malta's organ donation law, provided that ethical safeguards remain fully applicable.

In a position paper responding to the public consultation on proposed amendments to the Human Organs, Tissues and Cell Donation Act, the group is receptive to amendments that would extend Malta's current framework – which allows organ donation only after brain death – to include donation after circulatory death.

However, the authors listed several essential ethical requirements including the voluntary nature of donation, strict adherence to the dead donor rule, and a clear separation between end-of-life decisions and organ procurement. It also maintains that consent must always be obtained from the patient or appropriate next of kin.

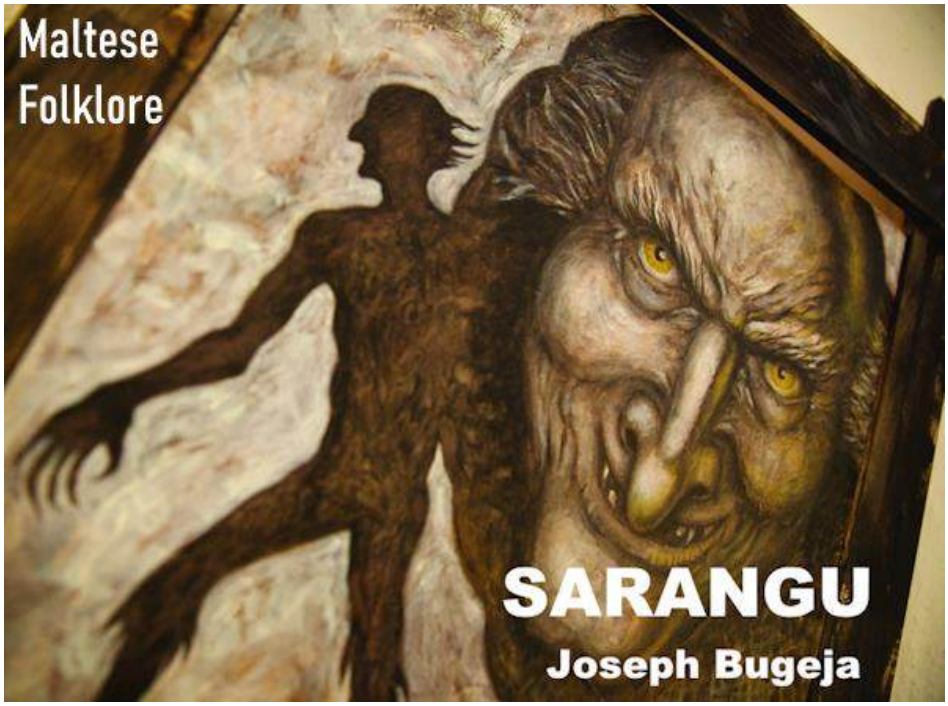
Donation after circulatory death is already practised in a number of countries and has been shown to increase organ donation by as much as 50 per cent. In Malta, where more than 90 patients were waiting for kidney transplants alone by the end of 2025, the groups states that the proposed changes could significantly improve access to life-saving transplantation.

The Position Paper focuses on controlled donation after circulatory death, which applies to critically ill patients who do not meet the criteria for brain death and who die following the withdrawal of medically futile and inappropriate life-sustaining treatment. Death should be declared only after a mandatory 'no-touch' observation period to ensure medical and ethical certainty.

The authors – comprising a multidisciplinary group of academics in philosophy, ethics, and theology and senior clinical specialists in intensive care, nephrology, and neurosciences – also stress that decisions about end-of-life care must always be made solely in the patient's best interests and must never be influenced by the possibility of organ donation.

They insist that clinicians responsible for end-of-life care must remain separate from organ procurement teams, and no donation may proceed without clear and informed consent.

With robust ethical, legal, and procedural safeguards in place, the group believes that the proposed amendments are morally permissible and socially valuable, offering a responsible way to increase organ availability while respecting the donor's dignity and maintaining public confidence in Malta's transplantation system.



MALTESE LEGENDS

IS-SARANGU

While many cultures have a "Sack Man," the Maltese version—Is-Sarangu—is deeply rooted in the islands' history of pirate raids and plague. He is more than just a nursery bogeyman; he is a "slave hunter of the netherworld." Here is what is known about this specific Maltese legend:

The Origins: Corsairs and Saracens

Historians and folklorists, like Stephan D. Mifsud in The Maltese Bestiary, link the name and the myth to Malta's dark medieval history:

The Etymology: The name Sarangu likely stems from the Old Sicilian word Saracuni, meaning a tall, thin, dry miser. It is also linguistically tied to "Saracen," a term used in the Middle Ages for Arab and North African Muslims.

Historical Trauma: During the Middle Ages and the rule of the Knights of St. John, Malta was frequently raided by Barbary corsairs (pirates). These raiders would kidnap locals—especially children—to sell into the slave trade. Is-Sarangu is essentially the folkloric memory of these very real kidnappers.

Appearance: He is described as a skeletal, shadow-like figure, often dressed in tattered dark clothing. He is "dry" and impossibly thin, which allows him to hide in the narrow crevices of valleys (widien) or behind the stone walls of Maltese villages.

: He waits for the sun to set. If a child is found outside after dark, he stuffs them into his heavy burlap sack (Tal-Ixkora). Unlike some versions where the boogeyman eats children, Is-Sarangu is traditionally a trader.

Legend says he takes his victims to the "netherworld" or a hidden world beneath the islands, where they are sold as slaves.

Connection to the Plague

Recent literary interpretations (such as the graphic novel Sarangu: The Sack Man by Fabrizio Ellul) link the creature to the 1813 Bubonic Plague in Malta. During the plague, "Sack Men" were the workers (often prisoners or those who had already recovered) tasked with clearing corpses from houses. They would carry the dead in large bags to prevent infection, often moving through the streets at night. This image of a silent, hooded man carrying a heavy sack through a dying city reinforced the terror of the legend.

While Is-Sarangu is the most famous "kidnapper," he belongs to a trio of creatures used to keep children indoors:

Il-Belliegħa: Lives in wells and pulls children into the water.

Il-Babaw: A more general, shapeless monster that hides under beds or in dark cupboards.

Is-Sarangu: The one who "gets you" if you are out on the street.

THE LEGEND OF GHAR ĦASAN: THE DIFFERENT VERSION.

There are different versions of the legend as usual. The first one is that Hasan, a 12 century Saracen 'rebel' set his eyes on a fair Maiden and decided to abduct her and hide her in the cave. This raised hell with the locals and they attacked the cave. Instead of taken captive, Hasan flung the girl into the sea below and then committed suicide by jumping off the edge.

Another version is the girl was abducted and Hasan made her promise eternal love to him and she'd be freed. The girl got desperate and jumped off a cliff after which followed Hasan jumping after her.

Either version you want to choose, the fellow Hasan and the girl die so there's no happy ending for them. There is no written evidence to suggest these stories are based on facts. Maybe someone did live and die in those caves and this legend could be a bedside story to tell children.

The Cave itself

The Caves are a wonder, surrounded with beautiful views which makes an ideal spot for a hike on a Sunday afternoon. Hasan Cave is around 387 meters in length and can be found 70 meters above sea level. The entrance of the cave is 5 meters high and 6 meters wide, with a dimension of 20 meters.

In the 1980s, some cave paintings were discovered within the cave. The art has been preserved beneath a stalagmitic layer. The cave had been badly vandalized but some of this art can still be seen. The original art was reproduced in a manuscript form and can be found in the Museum of Archaeology in Valletta.

When you think of visiting make sure you bring a good flashlight, comfortable shoes and make sure you won't go alone not only for safety reasons but for the experience as it is truly precious.

Making **Ġbejniet tal-bżar** (Maltese peppered cheeselets) involves a two-stage process: first, creating fresh, soft cheeselets (ġbejniet friski) from sheep or goat's milk, and then drying and preserving them in vinegar and black pepper to create the hard, pungent *tal-bżar* version.

Ingredients and Equipment

- **Milk:** 2–3 litres of full-fat raw goat or sheep's milk (avoid Ultra-Pasteurized/UHT).
- **Rennet:** 1–1.5 tablespoons of liquid rennet or 4 rennet tablets (junket).
- **Salt:** Coarse sea salt.
- **Pepper:** Roughly cracked black pepper.
- **Preservation:** White vinegar.
- **Equipment:** *Qwieleb* (small plastic cheese baskets), a draining tray/colander, and a large pot.

Phase 1: Making Fresh Ġbejniet (Day 1-2)

1. **Warm the Milk:** Heat the milk in a large pot to 37°C–38°C (blood temperature).
2. **Add Rennet:** Remove from heat. Dissolve the rennet in a small amount of water, then stir it into the warm milk for about 2 minutes.
3. **Coagulate:** Cover the pot and let it sit in a warm, draft-free place for 1–2 hours until a firm curd forms.
4. **Cut and Drain:** Cut the curd into cubes to help release the whey. Ladle the curds into the *qwieleb* (baskets) sitting on a tray.
5. **Salt and Refrigerate:** Sprinkle salt over the top of the baskets. Place in the fridge to drain for 12–24 hours.
6. **Flip:** Remove the cheese from the baskets, flip them over, salt the other side, and return to the fridge for another 12–24 hours.

Phase 2: Drying and Peppered (Days 3-15+)

1. **Drying:** To make *tal-bżar* (dry), place the fresh cheeselets on a rack in a cool, well-ventilated area (or a dehydrator) for 1–2 days, covering with cheesecloth to protect them from bugs.
2. **Vinegar Soak:** Once hardened, soak the cheeselets in white vinegar for 24 hours.
3. **Pepper Coating:** Remove from the vinegar and roll/toss the cheeselets in freshly cracked black pepper.
4. **Storage:** Place in a sterilized jar, fill with vinegar (or a mix of vinegar and olive oil), and seal.

Tips for Success

- **The "Nanna" Method:** If you don't have cheese baskets, you can use cheesecloth to form the cheeselets.
- **Storage:** Store in the refrigerator, flipping the jar every few days to ensure all cheeselets are coated in oil/vinegar.
- **Usage:** These are often eaten with galletti (crackers), in salads, or on top of a pizza.

Maltese Community Council of Victoria,

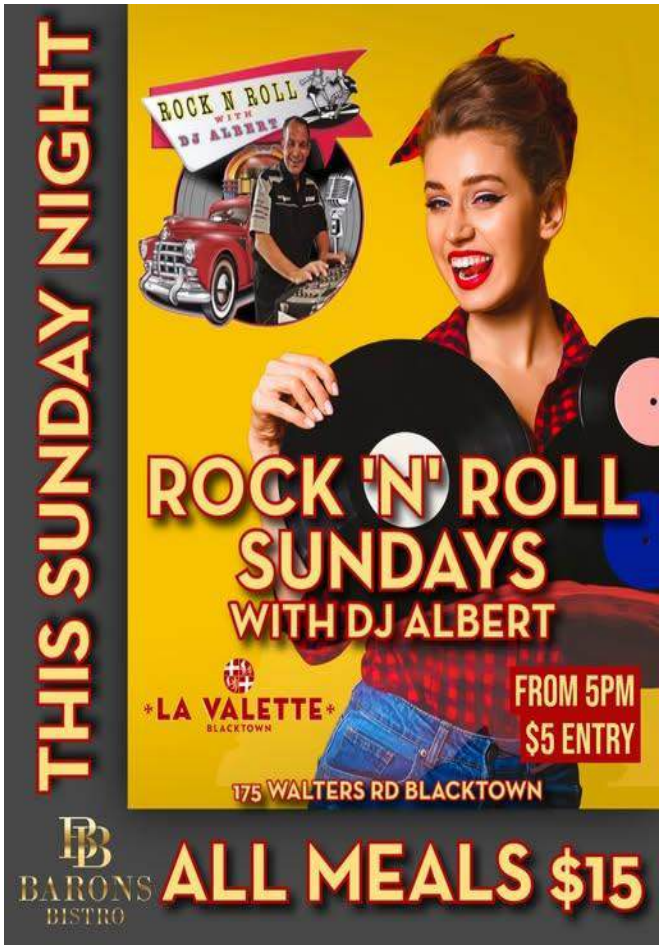
Figoli Classes at the Maltese Centre

Sunday 15 March, 2026

Where: 477 Royal Parade Parkville
Time: from 10am to 2:00pm

Donation $35.00

Includes two figolis to take home



This Memorial was inaugurated in 2008 to commemorate the 310 Maltese children, who travelled to Australia in search of a better life between 1950 and 1965. The monument, in the form of a paper boat, was designed by architects Rune Jacobson and David Drago. It is located at the Valletta Waterfront's marina close to Customs House from where the children had embarked on their sad and life-altering voyage.

LEST WE FORGET