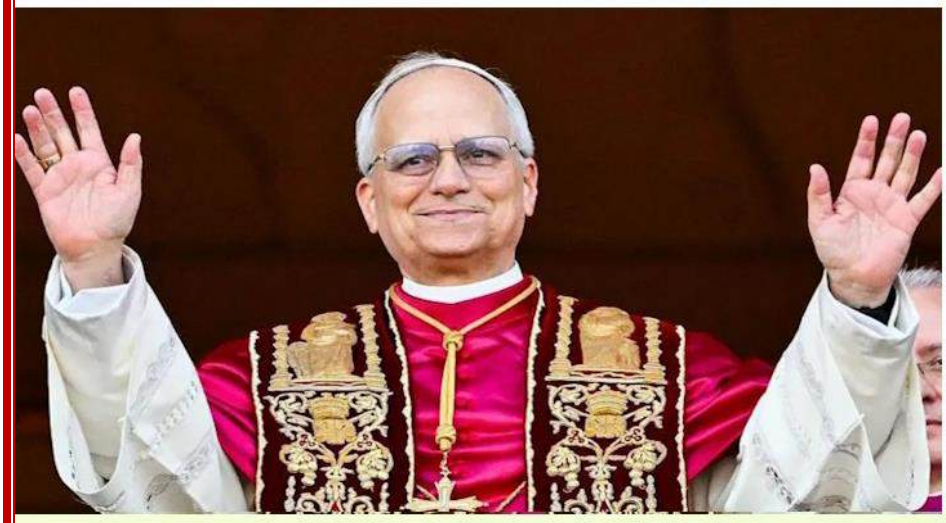
THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal for Maltese Living Abroad

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



POPE LEO XIV visits Algeria, Cameroon, Angola, and Equatorial Guinea in April 2026 and Spain in June.

BAJTAR TAX-XEWK - A farmer picking prickly pears to sell

WE PRAY FOR PEACE

Multicultural Aged Care (SA)

John Mangion

THE MALTESE SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA members are grateful to the Multicultural Aged Care of South Australia (MACSA) for supplying a free printed copy of the **MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER – THE JOURNAL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD** each week. This vibrant and insightful journal is published by Mr. Frank Scicluna, the previous honorary consul for Malta in South Australia and the Auditor and Trustee of our organization. He receives assistance from multiple correspondents not just in Australia but from across the globe. This journal, which has a readership exceeding 12,000, is preserved in libraries, schools, clubs, and museums in Malta, Gozo, as well as in Australia, Canada, the USA, and the UK. The initial edition came out in 2013, and by 2026, the total number of editions had approached almost 600.

On behalf of the society's committee and the members I would like to thank MACSA for supporting us and also Mr Frank Scicluna for providing us with this unique Maltese Journal.

FROM MAC SA NEWSLETTER - April is a meaningful time across many cultures and faiths, marked by renewal, reflection, and connection. From Easter and Orthodox Easter, to Songkran and Vaisakhi, this month brings together diverse traditions that celebrate new beginnings, gratitude, and community. These occasions provide a valuable opportunity for the aged care sector to deepen cultural understanding and create inclusive environments where older people feel respected, heard, and connected to their cultural identity. At the same time, ANZAC Day invites us to reflect on service, sacrifice, and shared history. It is also a moment to recognise the diverse backgrounds and contributions of those who have served, and to honour the many cultural perspectives on remembrance and respect.

Across our communities, older people carry rich cultural stories, traditions, and lived experiences. By embracing these, we not only enhance wellbeing but also strengthen connection, belonging, and dignity in care. MAC remains committed to supporting the sector with culturally informed guidance, practical resources, and opportunities for learning and reflection. Together, we continue to build a more inclusive, responsive, and compassionate aged care system.

This April, we encourage you to take time to:

- Celebrate cultural diversity
- Listen and share stories
- Create meaningful moments of connection

Together, let us continue to support older people to live with dignity, respect, and a strong sense of belonging.

AASH SHARMA

Multicultural Aged Care (MAC), PICAC SA

Communication and Media Officer

Aash is a dedicated social worker with specialised expertise in mental health and aged care. His private practice focuses on providing essential support and therapy for individuals facing mental health challenges, including clients under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Aash's passion lies in helping individuals navigate and overcome these challenges, making a meaningful impact in their lives.

Beyond social work, Aash brings a wealth of experience in IT support, online media development, and e-resource creation. Collaborating with the team at MAC, he plays a crucial role in designing culturally appropriate e-resources for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) clients and service providers in aged care. Additionally, Aash provides online tech support for national activities of the PICAC Alliance, leveraging his deep understanding of the sector's digital transformation. Aash's multifaceted expertise, combined with his commitment to creating social impact, positions him as an invaluable team member at MAC. By leveraging current marketing trends and expanding the organisation's online presence, he consistently drives progress and fosters positive change in the aged care sector.

Originally from Nepal and having served as the School Captain/Head Boy at the British International School, Aash has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills. He successfully led community service projects aimed at creating positive change for underprivileged children in Nepal. Aash's dedication extended beyond project completion as he worked closely with local community leaders to ensure the long-term sustainability of initiatives, fostering self-reliance within underfunded organisations.

With his specialised social work expertise, technological proficiency, and demonstrated leadership, Aash continues to make a significant impact in the field of mental health and aged care. His support to the Maltese community is greatly appreciated.

Aash is a friend and avid supporter of the Maltese community in Adelaide.

PARTNERS IN CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CARE (PICAC) ALLIANCE

Funded by the Commonwealth Government since 1997, they lead the way when it comes to unpacking and understanding cultural perspectives, diversity, care, and competency in the field of aged and community services.

The national one-stop shop for culturally appropriate care training and resources.

PICAC unites centres of excellence in every state and territory, they foster a network sensitive to cultural preferences throughout the nation. This allows them to provide the information, training, and resources you need about culturally appropriate care

How to contact the Multicultural Aged Care (PICAC SA)
Vandana Rathore - Manager, Programs
94 Henley Beach Rd
Mile End SA 5031
08 8241 9900 vandana@mac.org.au
website: www.mac.org.au

PICAC alliance
Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care

H.E. John Aquilina AM

Was born 12 March 1950, in Malta. He is an Australian former politician and a former member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly representing the electorate of Blacktown between 1981 and 1991 and the electorate of Riverstone between 1991 and 2011 for the Labor Party.

Between 1986 and 1988 and again between 1995 and 2003, he served in a range of ministerial portfolios including Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Youth and Community Services in the Wran and Unsworth Labor governments and Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Fair Trading, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation in the Carr Labor government.

From 2003 to 2007, he was Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly, and was Leader of the House from 2007 until his retirement in 2011. Aquilina re-acquired citizenship of Malta[1] and has served as Malta's Ambassador for various countries post his retirement from Australian politics.

Early years and background

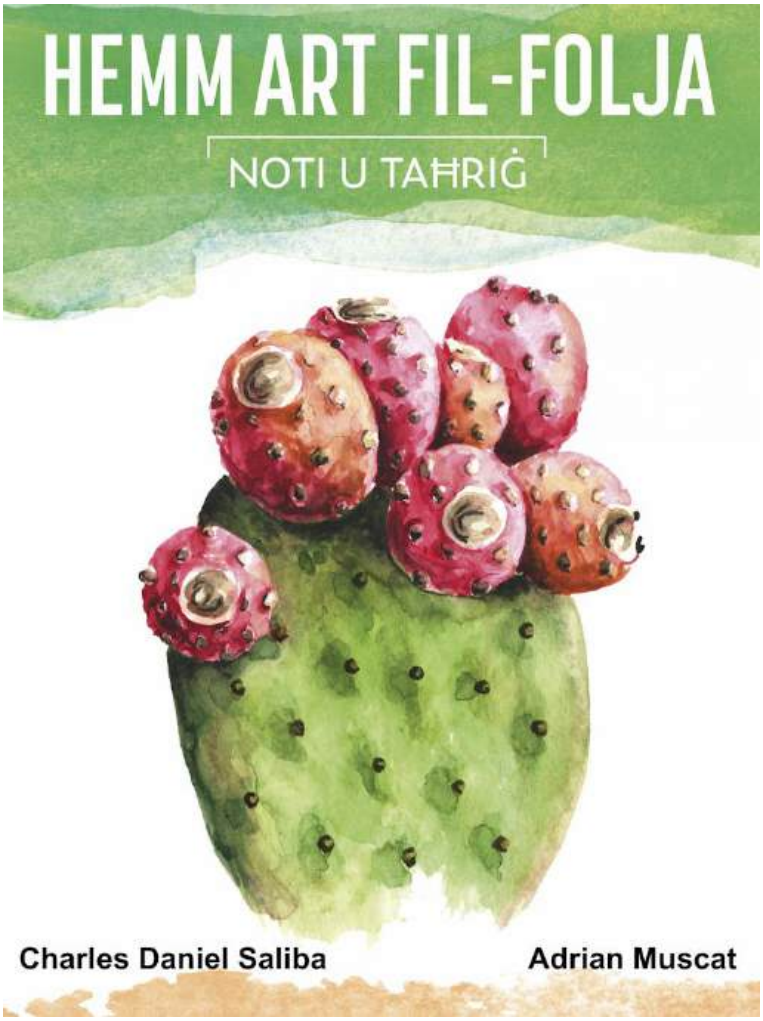
In 1956, aged 6 years, Aquilina migrated from Malta to Australia with his parents and younger brother. Studying at the University of Sydney, Aquilina completed a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma of Education in 1971 and was a member of the University of Sydney Regiment between 1968 and 1970, although did not see active duty. He commenced teaching at Oaklands Central School as a high school teacher, before returning to Sydney. Whilst at university in 1970, Aquilina joined the Blacktown Branch of the Australian Labor Party. In 1974, he became an Australian citizen.

In 1977, John was elected as an alderman to Blacktown City Council representing the Labor Party up until 1983; and went on to become Mayor of the Council between 1977 and 1981. In 1979, he was appointed a member of the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales (now the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural New South Wales)[5] and at various times has held positions with the State Records Authority (2003–2006); Sydney Grammar School Board of Trustees; appointed a Fellow of the Senate of the University of Sydney; an Honorary Associate of the University of Sydney Graduate School of Government; a member of the advisory board of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music; a Life Member of the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children and a member of Blacktown City Lions Club.

Diplomatic career with the Government of the Republic of Malta

As a diplomat he served as representative of the Maltese Government John Aquilina s
Malta's High Commissioner to India and Bangladesh and as Ambassador to Nepal 2013-2015
December 2015 to 2023, Malta's Ambassador to China 2015 - 2023
And currently Malta's Ambassador to Brazil (2022 -)

We express our gratitude to the Maltese Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates for their support of my journal, which helps keep our readers informed and connected.



EDIZZJONI ĠDIDA TA' GWIDA TA' STUDJU GĦALL-KOMPONENT TAL-LETTERATURA TAL-LIVELL ORDINARJU

BDL Publishing għadhom kif ippubblikaw l-edizzjoni ġdida ta' Hemm Art fil-Folja – Noti u Taħriġ, miktuba minn Adrian Muscat u Charles Daniel Saliba. Dan il-ktieb jikkumplimenta l- antoloġija tal-MATSEC, Hemm Art fil-Folja, li tintuża għall-komponent letterarju tas-sillabu tal-Malti fil-livell ordinarju taċ-ĊES. Dan il-ktieb huwa ideali għall-istudenti li qed jippreparaw għall-eżami tal-2026 u s-sessjonijiet ta' wara.

Il-ktieb fih: noti u eżerċizzji livellati dwar it-testi letterarji fis-sillabu; gwida għall-kitba ta' komponimenti letterarji, titli ta' komponimenti letterarji u tweġibiet mudell; definizzjonijiet ta' termini letterarji u eżerċizzji relatati; u eżerċizzji livellati fuq siltiet mhux magħrufa. Ippreżentat b'mod ċar u konċiż, dan il-ktieb huwa adattat għal studenti, għalliema u ġenituri li qegħdin jippreparaw għall-eżami tal-Malti. Jikkumplimenta dan il-ktieb hemm ktieb ta' tweġibiet bl-isem Hemm Art fil-Folja – Tweġibiet. Iż-żewġ kotba huma disponibbli fil-ħwienet tal-kotba jew jistgħu jinxtraw direttament minn www.bdlbooks.com

English Version

NEW EDITION STUDY GUIDE FOR ORDINARY-LEVEL LITERATURE COMPONENT

BDL Publishing recently published the new edition of Hemm Art fil-Folja – Noti u Taħriġ by Adrian Muscat and Charles Daniel Saliba. This single comprehensive coursebook complements MATSEC's anthology, Hemm Art fil-Folja, which is used for the literature component of the SEC Maltese ordinary level syllabus. This coursebook is ideal for students preparing for the 2026 examination and subsequent sessions.

This coursebook contains the following: notes and levelled exercises on the literary texts in the syllabus; literature essay-writing guidance, essay titles and model answers; definitions of literary terms and related exercises; and levelled exercises on unseen passages. Presented in a clear, concise style, this book is suitable for students, teachers and parents seeking effective exam preparation. Complementing this book is an answer book titled Hemm Art fil-Folja – Tweġibiet.

These two books are available at local bookstores or can be purchased directly from www.bdlbooks.com

DR CHARLES DANIEL SALIBA

B.Ed. (Hons.) Maltese, Dip. Arabic (Distinction), BA Arabic (Summa Cum Laude), MA Arabic Language and Linguistics, MA in Mediterranean Historical Studies, PhD (Sheffield University) UK, specialising in teaching Maltese as a foreign language (MFL).

Charles Daniel Saliba is a full-time academic serving in the grade of Senior Lecturer II at the Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology, Gozo Campus, where he lectures in Maltese language courses and on the pedagogy of Maltese related to the primary and secondary sector. He is also a dissertation supervisor in the BA courses and MA by research course, with regards to dissertations related to the Maltese language.

Saliba has taught Maltese language, linguistics, literature, and MFL at secondary schools, post-secondary schools, and tertiary institutions for more than 24 years. He has taught MFL and medical Maltese at Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry (QMUL), Gozo Campus. Additionally, through the Malta Further & Higher Education Authority (MFHEA), Saliba designed and facilitated the accreditation of three courses—Award in MFL Malta Qualification Framework (MQF) 1 (5 ECTS), Award in Medical Maltese MQF 1 (5 ECTS), and Award in Medical Maltese MQF 2 (5 ECTS)—for QMUL. In 2019, through the Accreditation Unit of the Ministry of Education, Saliba designed and facilitated the accreditation of two courses—Academic Award in MFL, MQF Levels 1 and 2 (6 ECTS)—to introduce MFL to the Sir M. A. Refalo Sixth Form for the first time.

In June 2018, the then Minister of Education and Employment, the Hon. Evarist Bartolo, appointed Saliba a member of the Working Group for the Teaching of MFL, and in 2020, the Hon. Owen Bonnici, the then Minister of Education and Employment, reappointed him. Saliba is also an independent external evaluator at the MFHEA, where he evaluates the national qualifications being accredited against the MQF. He is also a reviewer for two international linguistics journals and a practicum visitor at the Institute for Education. Saliba has published/co-published more than 65 books, including the *Maltese for Foreigners series* (three syllabi and 22 textbooks with audio files), the first level of which was published in e-book format. A hard copy of this level was also translated into an Italian version titled *Maltese per Stranieri* and a German version titled *Maltesisch für Ausländer*. He also published another textbook series, *Maltese as a Foreign Language for Juniors,* specifically designed for children aged 6 to 12.

At the National Book Awards in 2007, Saliba won a prize for his book, *Realtà,* in the Prose for Adolescents category. For his continuous efforts to promote the Maltese language and culture, he received the Għarb Gozitan Cultural Award from the Għarb Local Council in 2024. Saliba is a member of the L-Akkademja tal-Malti and the International Association of Paremiology. Finally, he has presented his research at several international conferences where he has been a keynote speaker on a number of occasions. Charles is married to Dr Vanessa Saliba (PhD), a senior lecturer specialising in inclusion. Together they have three children.

Вітаємо Вас на сторінці єдиної юридично зареєстрованої української ВО в Республіці Мальта! (Welcome to the page of the only legally registered Ukrainian association in the Republic of Malta!)
www.facebook.com/ukrainiancommunity.in.malta/
As of February 28, 2026, Malta is hosting 2,560 non-EU citizens who fled Ukraine and have been granted temporary protection status. The community is supported by initiatives like the Foundation for the Ukrainian Community of Malta, which provides humanitarian aid and solidarity, recently recognized by various foreign diplomatic missions in Ta' Xbiex.

Key Details for Ukrainian People in Malta:

- **Protection Status:** Malta continues to offer temporary protection for those fleeing the war, part of the broader EU response.
- **Support & Community:** The Foundation for the Ukrainian Community of Malta is a key local resource.
- **Long-term Residence:** While visa-free travel allows short-term stays, long-term residence or work requires obtaining a Maltese national visa or residence permit.
- **Diplomatic Representation:** Ukraine is represented in Malta through its embassy in Rome, Italy.
- **Context:** The number of displaced people in Malta is part of the 4.39 million people under temporary protection across the EU.

For specific updates on assistance and community events, the Foundation for the Ukrainian Community of Malta's Facebook page serves as a primary hub for information and support.

Foreign communities in Malta are substantial, with non-Maltese residents forming the majority in localities like Msida, St Paul's Bay, Gżira, St Julian's, Pietà, and Sliema. Major communities include Italians, British, Serbians, Filipinos, Jewish, Chinese, Romanian, Spanish, German, Indian, Bulgarians, and Libyans, along with growing numbers of digital nomads and EU workers attracted by the warm climate and English-speaking environment.

CHILDREN'S THERAPY ROOM INAUGURATED AT FONDAZZJONI SEBĦ A STRONG AND ENDURING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SEBĦ AND THE CHILDREN IN NEED FOUNDATION

Fondazzjoni Sebħ inaugurated a newly refurbished children's therapy room, on Tuesday 7 April 2026, marking an important milestone in the development of a comprehensive, trauma-informed system of care. What began in 2023 as a dream has since evolved into a model now recognised as a benchmark of excellence within residential services.

Through the Mindful@Home project, the Children in Need Foundation (CiN) joined forces with Sebħ to create a therapeutic care service within Sebħ's residential homes. This service is built by a shared vision: to ensure that children in care receive timely, consistent, and professional therapeutic support in a space where they feel safe.

The therapy room has been thoughtfully designed with children in-care in mind. Soft, large curtains allow the space to be adapted during each session, giving children the freedom to shape their surroundings in a way that makes them feel most comfortable; making it become their space, where they can begin to feel at ease and open up.

The CiN Foundation funds all therapy sessions for children in the care of Fondazzjoni Sebħ, including the employment of three multidisciplinary psychotherapists and the provision of specialised therapeutic services, through this initiative.

"This early intervention model has enabled professionals to better understand and respond to the complex needs of each child," said Ms Alexia Baldacchino, Sebħ Children's Services Senior Manager, who manages this service. She added that through close collaboration, a multidisciplinary approach placing trauma-informed care at the heart of everyday practice has been established. "Children who had previously resisted therapy began to engage, building trust through familiarity with therapists and gradually overcoming the stigma often associated with seeking help. This holistic framework has proven highly effective in supporting emotional healing and long-term well-being."

Episcopal Vicar for Diaconia Fr Martin Micallef commended the strong collaboration between the two entities, which has significantly enhanced the quality of life of the children in care. What was once an ordinary room has been transformed into a nurturing therapeutic hub – a space that reflects care, dignity, and hope.

"Recognising that healing extends beyond the service itself, CiN deepened its commitment by investing in the environment where therapy takes place," stated Mr Daniel Abela, Founder and Chairperson of CiN Foundation. He added, "Understanding the profound influence of space on emotional safety and openness, CiN undertook an ambitious refurbishment project within Sebħ's premises created by professionals. This was made possible thanks to the support of organisations such as Regine Sixt Children's Aid Foundation, Sixt Malta, Malta Enterprise, and many others who contributed financially or through goods and services. This space is a sanctuary where children feel safe to express themselves and begin their journey toward healing."

Ms Kimberly Barbara, representing the Regine Sixt Children's Aid Foundation, remarked: "The work of the CiN Foundation and Sebħ has moved me profoundly. What they have built through the Mindful@Home programme – placing psychotherapists and family therapists directly into the daily lives of children in care, offering them consistency, presence, and professional support – is exactly the kind of thoughtful approach I believe in wholeheartedly."

Mr George Gregory, Malta Enterprise CEO, mentioned that "at Malta Enterprise, we believe that sustainable economic development goes hand in hand with social responsibility. Our contribution

to CiN Foundation in 2024 reflects our commitment to supporting initiatives that create meaningful, long-term impact within our communities. The inauguration of this therapy room is a powerful example of how collaboration can help transform lives. This will provide children with a safe and supportive environment where they can heal, grow, and build a brighter future."

Ms Yvonne Mallia, Director of Fondazzjoni Sebħ, concluded: "This project would not have been possible without the unwavering dedication and generosity of CiN, who mobilised support from benefactors and brought our vision to life. Special thanks also go to EbejerBonnici Architects, who managed the project and contributed through sponsorships. Words cannot fully capture the depth of our gratitude. Through everyone's efforts, Fondazzjoni Sebħ continues to enhance its services, creating opportunities for healing and brighter, more hopeful futures for the children who need them most."

Ernest Ferrante

The Thorny Legacy:
A History of the Prickly Pear in Malta
Written and photo by Ernest Ferrant

The prickly pear, known in Maltese as bajtra tax-xewk (literally "the thorny fig"), is as synonymous with the Maltese landscape as limestone walls and blue shutters. While it looks like a native fixture of the Mediterranean, its history is one of colonial travel and botanical endurance.

Origins and Arrival Despite its deep roots in Maltese culture, the prickly pear (Opuntia ficus-indica) is not indigenous to Europe. It originated in Mexico, where it was a staple for the Aztecs.

The 16th Century Pipeline: The plant was brought to the Old World by Spanish explorers returning from the Americas.

Introduction to Malta: It is widely believed that the Knights of St. John introduced the plant to the Maltese islands in the late 15th or early 16th century.

Climate Match: Malta's arid climate, poor soil, and intense sunshine provided the perfect environment for the cactus to thrive without any human intervention.

A Multipurpose Tool Historically, the prickly pear was much more than just a source of fruit for the Maltese; it was a strategic agricultural asset.

1. **Natural Fortification** The Knights and local farmers realised that the dense, thorny pads made for impenetrable hedges. They were planted around fields and coastal towers to act as a deterrent against invaders and to protect livestock from wandering.
2. **Windbreaks and Soil Retention** In a landscape prone to heavy winds and soil erosion, the sturdy root systems and heavy pads of the Opuntia served as effective windbreaks, shielding more delicate crops like grapes and tomatoes.
3. **Fodder and Dye** During periods of drought when grass was scarce, farmers would carefully peel the pads to feed their cattle and goats. Additionally, the plant was a host for the cochineal insect, which was historically used to produce valuable crimson dye.

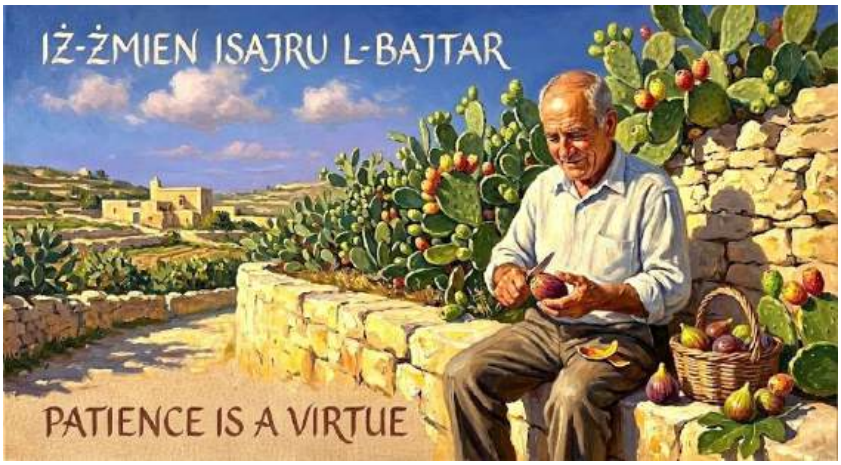
The Fruit: "The Poor Man's Food" For centuries, the fruit was a vital source of nutrition for the rural population. Because it grew wild and required no water, it was often dubbed "the food of the poor."

The Varieties: Malta hosts three main colours of the fruit:

L-Abjad: (White/Green) Often considered the sweetest.

Is-Safar: (Yellow/Orange) The most common variety.

L-Aħmar: (Red/Purple) Valued for its striking colour and antioxidant properties.
Harvesting Traditions: Traditionally, the fruit is harvested at dawn when the tiny, hair-like thorns (glochlids) are dampened by dew, making them less likely to fly off and irritate the skin.
Modern Significance
Today, the prickly pear has moved from a survival food to a gourmet ingredient. It is a primary component in Bajtra, a popular traditional Maltese liqueur. You will also find it used in jams, artisanal soaps, and even skincare products due to the high Vitamin E content in its seeds.
While it is no longer the primary defensive line for the island, it remains a protected feature of the Maltese countryside, symbolising resilience and the ability to find sweetness in a harsh environment.



"Iż-żmien isajru l-bajtar"
This literally translates to: *"Time ripens the figs."*
English Equivalent to: All in good time / Patience is a virtue
This is one of the most beloved and frequently used proverbs in Malta, reflecting a Mediterranean patience rooted in the natural cycles of agriculture.
1. **The Core Meaning**
It means that patience is a virtue and that things will happen when the time is right. It is a reminder that some processes cannot be rushed, and trying to force an outcome before its time will only lead to disappointment.
Natural Progression: Just as a prickly pear or a fig needs the summer sun to become sweet, life's problems often need time to resolve themselves.
Maturity: It can also refer to people, suggesting that wisdom and character develop only with age and experience.
2. **Usage and Nuance**
This phrase is typically used to comfort someone who is feeling anxious or impatient:
To someone waiting for news: "Don't worry about the results yet; is-żmien isajru l-bajtar."
Regarding a difficult situation: "The conflict will settle down eventually. Give it time; is-żmien isajru l-bajtar."
About a young person: "He's a bit reckless now, but he'll grow up. Is-żmien isajru l-bajtar."
3. **Cultural Context**
Figs and prickly pears (bajtar tax-xewk) are iconic symbols of the Maltese summer. They are famous for being hard or sour until they reach that perfect moment of ripeness under the intense July and August heat. The proverb draws on the lived experience of every Maltese person waiting for the harvest—you cannot force a fig to be sweet today if it is meant to be sweet tomorrow.

Donate - Please, help us to keep this Journal alive
Bank - Commonwealth (Australia) BSB - 065106
Account No. - 00502597 Name - Frank Scicluna
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F'GĦELUQ IL-25 SENA MILL-PROGRAMM
MARĊI U BANDALORI FUQ NET FM

Ġejt minn Għawdex biex ngħannilek
L-Għanja tal-Ħamsa w għoxrin -
Dal-programm illi qed tagħmel
Ma jagħmlulu xejn is-snin.

Iżda bħal inbid it-tajjeb
Jkompli jżid fil-kwalita
Żgur illi kiser ir-rekord
Ta' kull popolarita'!

Minn kull klassi tan-nies tagħna
Jagħżlu dan il-programm tiegħek
Nhar ta' Ħadd iħallu kolllox -
Intunati jkunu miegħek.

Anki l-kap li jkun qed jiekol
Ma' Sarah l-maħbuba tiegħu;
L-ikel tant jinżillu tajjeb
Illi lilha jgħannaq miegħu!

Kwart ta' seklu tar, sparixxa -
Kif jitgerbu b'ħeffa s-snin!
Daqshekk issa ilu magħna
Semmiegħa Maltin w Għawdxin.

Għax 'Marċi u Bandalori'
Hu programm hekk popolari
Illi daħal fid-djar tagħna
Żgur li ħafna jaħsbu bħali!

Dan il-Mosti Joe Chetcuti
Issa rabba l-esperjenza
Bil-mikrofnu quddiem fommu
B'daqshekk snin ta'eżistenza!

Kien f'April li beda jxandar
NET FM dan il-programm
Illi tant intlaqa' tajjeb
Għax bena fuq il-blat samm.

Ix-xandir minn dejjem saltan
F'qalb dan il-preżentatur
Illi żgur jista' iħares
Bil-kuraġġ lejn il-futur!

Il-Maltin u l-Għawdxin kollha
Iħobbu l-marċi Maltin
Li tisma' fil-festi tagħna
Matul il-ġranet sajfin.

Kif ifeġġ ir-Randan fuqna
Tisma' mbagħad il-marċi funebri
Ġewwa l-knisja bil-gandlieri
U mżejna bil-kandilabri!

Fil-programm Chetcuti jtina
Għadd sabiħ ta' marċijiet
B'tagħrif siewi, interessanti
Dwar ħafna surmastrijiet.

Illi mas-snin l-imgħoddija
Tawna ħafna xogħlijiet
Illi jinżlu mas-semmiegħa
Matul dawn iż-żmenijiet.

Għażiż Joe jien nawguralek
Aktar snin sbieħ ta' xandir;
Bi tbissima kompli tina
Biex nibqgħu mexjin ħarir.

Jalla 'Marċi u Bandalori'
Jibqa' magħna tul is-snin;
Għaliex issa fil-qalb daħal
Tal-Maltin u tal-Għawdxin!

L-Assunta w żewġha Ġużeppi
Illi int tant tħobb mill-qalb
Żommhom jgħammru ġewwa darek
U toħroġhom qatt mit-talb!

Ilqa' mela dawn l-awguri
Dan ngħidulek b'mod sinċier –
Dawn il-vrus ħerġin minn qalbi –
Qalb kbira ta' Kavallier!

Kav Joe M Attard
Rabat – Għawdex
Marzu 2026

ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATION
GEORGE CROSS FALCONS COMMUNITY CENTRE CRINGILA, NSW

25-27 LAKE AVE CRINGILA 2502

Welcome and Reflection. Official Representative Mr Louis Parnis

This year the Anzac Day ceremony will be held on **Saturday 18 of April from 10.30am at the George Cross Falcons, Cringila NSW.** We will stop to remember the Anzac Australian/Maltese soldiers who fought and died at Gallipoli Turkey between 1914-1918'.

In attendance will be the state minister for planning Mr Paul Scully State Minister, Alison Byrnes Federal Member, Lord Mayor Tania Brown, Admiral Bruce Kafer, Wollongong RSL President Mr John Sperring, Mr Andrew Magro. Ms Rosette Cuschieri and the Maltese Ex-Servicemen's Association RSL sub-Branch and the Illawarra Bag Pipes. Everyone is welcome to attend arriving around 10am. Morning tea will be provided and a light lunch after the ceremony. The President will lay a wreath on behalf of the High Commissioner H.E. Clifford Borg Marks and the Consul-General for Malta in NSW Anneliese Sammut.

The memorial at the community centre is an aluminium plaque, attached to a limestone-block pillar. The plaque is inscribed with an honour roll of servicemen from the First World War, who were of Maltese descent. The plaque also contains three photographs of veterans, one of which includes a name. It is of Private Waldemar Beck, service number 6969, and is dated 23 December 1916.

The mentioned stands on a paved area, under a covered awning, in the garden of the George Cross Falcons Community Centre in Cringila, NSW near Wollongong. The memorial was dedicated on 17 April 2021, by the President of the Wollongong RSL sub-Branch. Members from the Maltese Ex-Servicemen's Association RSL sub-Branch also attended the ceremony.

President G.C.F.C.C. CRINGILA NSW AUSTRALIA

Prof Stephen Montefort with Jeremy Azzopardi

JEREMY AZZOPARDI

It has been an honour to serve as an intern at the High Commission of Malta in the United Kingdom over the past month!

I am very grateful to High Commissioner, HE Prof Stephen Montefort, and Senior Public Affairs Lead, Nerissa Sultana, for this incredible experience at Malta House. This was a unique opportunity to help advance Malta's foreign policy work and to explore the world of diplomacy. Alongside colleague Laura Couvet, I contributed to the Public Affairs, Commonwealth, Culture, Events Management, and Social Media briefs. From welcoming guests at weekly courtesy calls, to attending high-level diplomatic meetings, some highlights of my experience include

Shadowing for Malta at high-level The Commonwealth meetings, including at the 'Commonwealth Forum on Sustainable Sovereign Debt'

Meeting senior Maltese officials including Vanessa Frazier, the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, and Paul Zahra, Permanent Secretary at Malta's Ministry for Finance Formulating the High Commission's social media strategy, creating multimedia content, and increasing engagement. Contributing to the organisation of diaspora events and panel discussions through photography, speechwriting, and logistics coordination. Malta was a British Crown Colony until independence in 1964. The United Kingdom is one of Malta's most important historical, political, cultural, and economic relationships and both countries continue to enjoy a constructive partnership.

H.E. Hon John Aquilina UOM, AM, BA, DipEd, Hon DLitt, Ambassador of Malta to Brazil,

CHILDREN – VICTIMS OF WAR

The exact number of children killed in Malta during World War II is difficult to pinpoint with absolute certainty, as historical records often group civilian casualties. However, research into the casualty lists of the Siege of Malta provides a clear picture of the scale of the tragedy.

Total Civilian Context: Between 1940 and 1943, Malta was one of the most heavily bombed places on Earth.

Total Civilian Deaths: Approximately 1,581 people.

Total Civilian Injuries: Approximately 3,780 people.

Estimated Child Fatalities: While there is no single official "child-only" tally from the colonial administration of the time, historians and memorial researchers (such as those documenting the Malta Civilian Casualty List) have identified hundreds of minors among the dead.

Documented Child Deaths: **Historical analysis suggests that roughly 400 to 500 children were killed.**

Notable Incidents: Many of these deaths occurred during "direct hits" on civilian shelters. For example, the bombing of the Ħal Safi shelter in April 1942 and the tragedy at the Birgu (Vittoriosa) ditch shelter resulted in the deaths of entire families, including many infants and school-aged children.

Factors Affecting the Numbers: Age Categorisation: In the 1940s, "child" was often defined as anyone under 16, though some records used different age brackets.

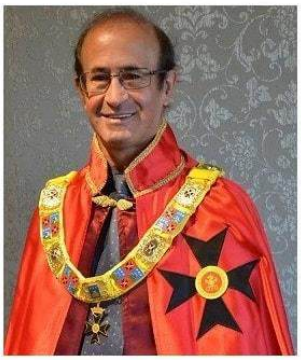
Indirect Deaths: The figures above generally count deaths from direct enemy action (bombing). They often exclude children who died from malnutrition (due to the "Black Famine" of 1942) or diseases like typhoid and infantile paralysis, which spiked due to the unsanitary conditions in overcrowded rock shelters.

The names of these children are today commemorated at the War Memorial in Floriana and within the National War Museum in Valletta, which serves as a sobering reminder of the heavy price paid by the Maltese civilian population.

Maltese History, Culture and Traditions

Explore the rich and lavish History, Culture and Traditions of Malta and the Maltese Islands, from its religious temples to its picturesque beaches Malta is a mixing pot of excitement and variety.

Ernest Ferrante - Facebook



THE INTERNATIONAL CONFRATERNITY OF THE KNIGHTS OF SAINT PETER AND SAINT PAUL

The Confraternity of the Knights of St. Peter & St. Paul is a Roman Catholic philanthropic association founded by HE Chevalier Peter Paul Portelli in Melbourne, Australia, in June 1997. Based in Melbourne, Australia, its Knights and Dames support the poor, needy, and church missions, notably holding feasts and supporting the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal.

Key Details of the Confraternity in Melbourne

- **Purpose:** A Catholic charitable organization dedicated to aiding the needy, supporting church communities, and honouring members for community service.
- **Founder/Grand Master:** Established by Chevalier Peter Paul Portelli, who emigrated to Melbourne from Nadur, Gozo.
- **Activities:** The Confraternity holds a major annual Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, usually held in June in Melbourne, featuring masses and investitures.
- **Philanthropy:** They have donated to local Melbourne causes like the VincentCare homelessness services, Royal Children's Hospital, and international missions in Vietnam and Africa.
- **Locations:** While founded in Melbourne, it has grown to include chapters nationally and internationally.
- **Structure:** It is a lay organization of Knights and Dames authorized by local church authorities.

The organization often collaborates with local parishes, such as St. Martin De Porres in Avondale Heights, for charitable events.

MALTESE CULTURE

The Maltese History

The History, Culture and Traditions of Malta and the Maltese islands is rich and extensive, dating back to the dawn of man, with early stone age farmers believed to have inhabited the islands from 5200BC. Malta has been invaded and changed rule many times in its history with each new wave of settlers leaving their mark on the island. Is has been under the rule of the Arabs, The Romans, the Knights of St John, The Normans, the French and most recently British. One of the most significant events in Malta took place during the Normal rule, when St Paul shipwrecked on the island, he subsequently brought Christianity to the Island which is still prevalent in the country with nearly 90% of the population being Christian in some denomination. In 1964 Malta regained its independence from British rule and joined the European union as an independent county in 2004.

NATIONAL IDENTITY

The Maltese Islands have been invaded and inhabited by so many nationalities that the islanders themselves now have vary varied heritage. Cultural Influences are evident from Phoenicians, Romans, Greeks, Normans, Sicilians, Swabians, Aragonese, Castilian, the Knights, and the British. Northern Africans also contributed strongly to the development to Malta's history and official language. Most Maltese identify as being European and although they have strong ties with Europe and the European Union there is a strong sense of National Identity and pride in their new-found independence.

CULTURE

Malta offers a lot more than Sun, Sea and Sand, although there is plenty of that to enjoy. The museums, exhibits and religious temples coupled with the beautiful scenery makes Malta a unique travel destination even for the most seasoned of explorers. Once you have had your fill of the tourist attractions you can move on to a more authentic side of Malta by walking down the narrow side streets of Mdina, join in with the locals and follow the bands in the village fiesta, and if music is your things there are plenty of traditional Ghana bands for your to watch in the café's as well as contemporary artists.

TRADITIONS

Malta is a highly traditional and religious country and these beliefs are imparted on the young from birth. Babies are usually baptised soon after birth, in most cases as Roman Catholics or other Christian. The Christening ceremony is one that is celebrated with friends, and family and lots of food, not dissimilar to the size of a wedding party, the Maltese take their Christenings seriously and they are not quiet affairs. On a child's first Birthday they take part in a tradition known as il-quċċija, during this time the child is encouraged to crawl or toddle towards a selection of objects and pick one.

Each object is a symbol of a potential future career and they will usually include Rosery Beads to symbolise a religious calling, a hardboiled egg predicts the child will have a life of prosperity, calculator for a financial career, stethoscope for a career in medicine and so on. Obviously, some of these items have been added since the tradition started in the 18th century, also traditionally boys and girls would be presented with stereotypical gender "appropriate" items but nowadays they would be both have the same options. As a child ages more religious ceremonies are celebrated, one of the most notable is the first Holy communion similarly to the Baptism the child will be dressed in angel-like robes, next comes the confirmation which is usually followed by a big party.

Weddings are also a huge deal in Malta with most people opting for a lavish do, being a Roman Catholic country, most people have strong feelings on only being married once so if you should get it right the first time and celebrate accordingly. Although Maltese Weddings are usually lavish they still follow the traditional format, the ceremony is held in a church followed by a party/ dinner in a hall or garden/ The bride and groom give small tokens of appreciation to the guests, usually including sugar coated almond sweets (Perlini) and food is one of the most important part of the day.

IL-QUĊĊIJA

A Tradition that Continues to Delight Maltese Families

The 'Quċċija' is one of the few Maltese traditions that has stood the test of time. Previously, the term referred to a somber tradition where Maltese families would donate food to the needy in memory of a deceased relative. This practice dates to the 18th century it takes place at a child's first birthday party, in an attempt to predict the child's future profession by incorporaitng objects symbolising various professions, trades or lifestyles on a tray or basket for a child to crawl towards. The first object the child selects is believed to foretell their future.

Boys used to be given distinct items in comparison to their female counterparts, which reflected more archaic views on gender and occupation. For instance, boys were given conventional tools, whereas girls were handed kitchenware or crochet hooks. Modern versions of the 'Quċċija' incorporate many of the same items for both boys and girls. Family members are allowed to verbally encourage the child to crawl towards the tray and make their choice. The items used in the Quċċija have changed over time, with more modern objects representing contemporary occupations.

For instance, if a child picks an academic book, parents are congratulated on their unborn child's future college degree. A football represents the child's potential for athletic success, while the Artist Coloring Book encourages the child's creative expression. The Comb represents a potential career in hairstyling, while Cash represents the child's potential for asset management. The Musical Instrument suggests a career in music, while the Aircraft suggests a potential career in aviation. A Chef's pots represent a love of cooking and culinary skills, while the Rosary Bead represents a potential career in religious service. The Toothbrush represents a future career as a dentist, while the Equipment represents potential knowledge and skills in various mechanical systems. Fortunately, this tradition does not have any rigid guidelines. One can anticipate seeing family members make several last-minute adjustments to the tray, causing the other party guests to fall into hilarity at the calculated repositioning.

The Maltese tradition of the 'Quċċija' is a unique and entertaining custom that has been celebrated for generations. Although similar traditions are observed in some far-flung areas of Italy, Greece, and Sicily, it is not as prevalent there as it is in Malta. The locals take great pride in preserving the history and values of their ancestors by passing down customs and rituals from generation to generation. Thus, by embracing their traditions, the Maltese continue to create meaningful connections with their past and present, shaping the future for generations to come. If you mention the tradition of the 'Quċċija' to any of the locals, they will surely have plenty of stories to share about the items picked by their child or a close relative during the celebratory event.

SURVIVED THE TITANIC AND DIED IN MALTA

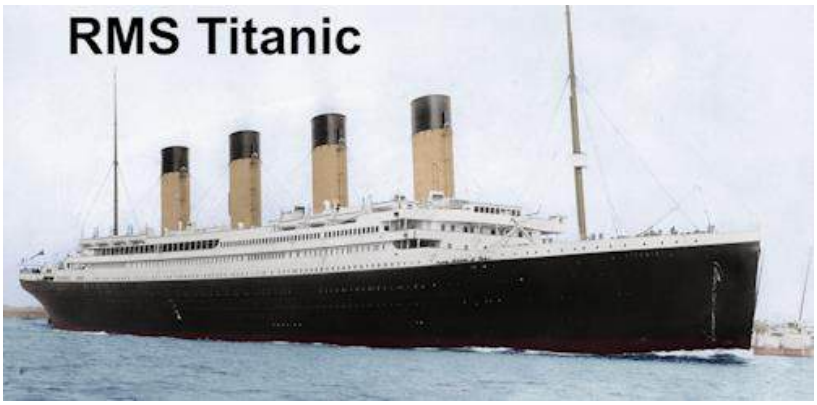
ALLEN MARDEN BAGGOTT

Allen Mardon Baggott was born in Stepney, Middlesex, England on 13 April 1884. He was the son of William Baggott (1847-1908) and Susan Lake (1844-1914). At the time of his baptism on 12 June 1884 in St Thomas' Church, Stepney, his parents were resident at 41 Johnson Street, Stepney and his father was a dock labourer. His father hailed from Suffolk and his mother from Devon and he had two known siblings: Elizabeth Ann (b. 1874), William Henry (b. 1880).

Allen first shows up on the 1901 census and at that time the family were living at 2 New Basin, Shadwell, London. His father passed away in 1908 and his mother went to live with her married daughter Elizabeth Tibbenham. She passed away in Essex in 1914.

Allen was married in Stepney in late 1905 to Hannah Buck (b. 11 November 1883 in Sunderland, Durham).

On the 1911 census Allen is absent but his wife is resident at 38 St Mary's Place, Southampton. The record indicates that they have had six children in total, with four living past infancy: Nancy Eileen (b. 1905), Robert Allen (1906-1994), William Mardon (1907-1968) and Irene Nancy (b. 1910). A further two children would be born later George (b. 1911) and Bessie (1913-1999).



When he signed-on to the *Titanic*, on 4 April 1912, Allen gave his address at 106 Park Road, Itchen (Southampton). He had previously worked as a Chief Steward but on the *Titanic* he was employed as a first-class steward. As such he received £3.15s monthly wages. His last ship had been the *Oceanic*. He came aboard the *Titanic* on 10 April.

Baggott was rescued in lifeboat 9. Allen returned to Southampton and resumed a career at sea, later serving in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in the early 1920s on the RFA *Perthshire* as chief steward. It was during this time that his alcoholism became apparent, and he appears on the ship's log on numerous occasions for drunkenness and disorderly conduct. On one such occasion in Constantinople in November 1920 he reported for duty at a British Naval Base whilst inebriated. The base Captain ordered his detention on HMS *Heliptope* and he was released three days later and returned to the *Perthshire*.

Arriving in Grand Harbour, Malta several weeks later, Allen Baggott suddenly took ill following a seizure. He died 15 February 1921 whilst *en route* to the Royal Naval Hospital ashore, and was buried on 21 February 1921 and was buried in Ta' Braxia cemetery, Malta in an unmarked

Sarah Spiteri, Senior Youth Worker at Aġenzija Żgħażagħ, has been recognised for the second time by the Commonwealth with the "Outstanding Contributions" award for her work with young people in the European Region of the Commonwealth.

This recognition rewards Sarah Spiteri's dedication and commitment to children and young people, and her ongoing contribution to strengthening professional standards and ethical leadership in the field, both at a local and European level.

"Youth Workers play a vital role in national development by supporting children and young people at different stages of their lives," said Sarah.

"Through mentoring and community involvement, Youth Workers help children and young people build confidence, develop different skills and actively participate in society. Our work directly contributes to the development of resilient citizens in the future."

The Commonwealth Youth Worker Awards recognise the outstanding contributions of those working in this sector and their impact on the positive development of children and young people across the Commonwealth.

Speaking about this recognition, Spiteri stressed the importance of investment in this youth sector.

Aġenzija Żgħażagħ, as the National Youth Agency, supports the personal, social and educational development of young people, supports workers and organisations, and ensures that their voices are heard in the local, national and international decision-making process.

Meanwhile, this honour recognises the individual excellence and demonstrates the collective contribution of workers working with young people in Malta and across the Commonwealth, and confirms their work as essential professionals for sustainable social development

LOGO AND MOTTO RELEASED FOR POPE LEO'S VISIT TO SPAIN

The Holy See Press Office has released the logo and motto for Pope Leo XIV's Apostolic Journey to Spain, which will take place from 6-12 June.

The logo

The logo is designed as an open circle in motion, formed by human figures joined together and oriented upward.

The emblem expresses community, encounter and mutual support.

This does not mean only being together, but also walking together toward a common purpose.

The Virgin Mary, placed at the center, represents the heart of the movement - a maternal presence that welcomes and directs every gaze toward God, as a sign of unity and hope for all people.

The motto

The chosen motto, "Lift up your eyes" (*Jn* 4:35), is an invitation to look beyond our daily concerns and rediscover the presence of God while opening ourselves to others.

It is a call to hope and contemplation, encouraging people to go beyond themselves and to rediscover unity, beauty and charity as concrete expressions of a shared life.

This gesture of "lifting up our eyes" also expresses the attitude with which the Church in Spain welcomes the Holy Father's visit: with open hearts, ready to walk forward together

Animals have been slaughtered for meat in the Maltese islands since time immemorial. Medieval Archives document the existence of legislation on the slaughtering of animals, including on standards on how these should be presented for sale, who is authorised to slaughter animals, where it can be sold and so on and so forth.

During the Hospitaller Period, Grand Master Jean Lascaris Castellar (1636-1657) mandated that all butchering should be done in Valletta, in the area around what was then known as the 'Gran Fontana' (this was a fountain built on the site where the Hospitallers had, way back in May 1566 discovered by chance a natural spring in what is now St Christopher Street facing Old Mint Street). The same grandmaster also built eight magazines in Saint Christopher's Street, four on each side of the road leading to Jews Sally Port, for use as part of the slaughterhouse. By 1667, the eight magazines were divided into two chambers each to form a total of 16. The said Gran Fontana changed its name to 'Fontana della Bucieria' (biċċerija), from the old slaughterhouse building still standing to the rear of the fountain.

An abattoir has been established and functioning in Albert Town Marsa since 1897 – actually on the site there were both civil and military abattoirs. Over the years, the Abattoir has however undergone major renovations. Parts of this abattoir had been demolished and reconstructed again in 1974, other parts of the building have been recognised as industrial archaeological heritage and hence they have been restored, and recently added to the list of Scheduled properties. Further upgrades were made in the 1980s as well as in the period leading to the accession of Malta to the European Union, when the Abattoir was upgraded to EU standards. In 2008, a €1 million cutting and deboning plant financed by the Italian Fifth Framework Protocol was inaugurated to enable further cutting and packaging of meat from carcasses slaughtered at the Public Abattoir.

Over the last few years, the Government has embarked on a multi-year project which saw the investment of more than EUR 11 million to renovate the slaughterlines and processing equipment, improving levels of hygiene, launch new cutting and deboning facilities for swine and beef, and increasing digitization of the different processes.

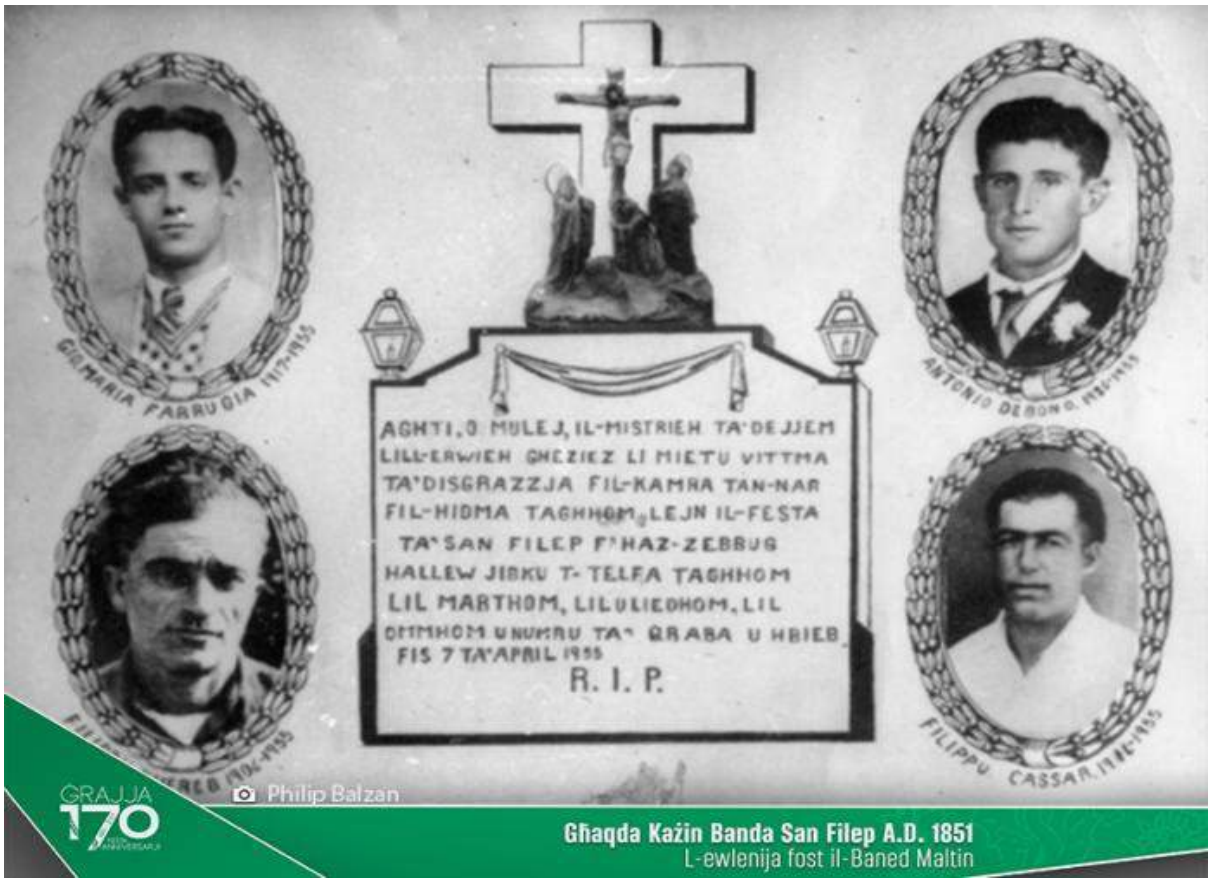
MALTESE IN CANADA

With an estimated 40,000+ people of Maltese descent in Canada, the community is highly concentrated in Toronto—particularly in "Little Malta" on Dundas Street West—with notable groups in Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. Active since the early 20th century, the community holds strong cultural ties, hosting annual festivals (Caravan), traditional feasts, and operating social clubs like the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto.

Key Aspects of the Maltese-Canadian Community

- **Concentration & "Little Malta":** Over 50% of the population lives in Toronto, where the area of Dundas Street West near Gilmour Avenue is known as "Little Malta," featuring Maltese businesses, social clubs, and a dedicated church (St. Paul the Apostle).
- **Active Cultural Life:** The community is kept alive through organizations like the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto (MCST) and the Maltese Canadian Federation, which promote music, food, language lessons, and religious festivals.
- **History:** Early immigration started around 1910-1920, but the largest waves settled after World War II, bringing young families and laborers seeking better opportunities.
- **Current Efforts:** There is a strong focus on engaging younger generations to maintain the culture, with support from organizations like the Maltese-Canadian Club of London and community initiatives.

Maltese immigrants have generally integrated well into Canadian society while preserving their distinctive traditions and tight-knit social networks. AI



Facebook - Għaqda Każin Banda San Filep

O***n Maundy Thursday 71 years ago, on 7 April 1955, an explosion occurred in the San Filep Fire Hall in the Kandlora area, Zebbuġ in the afternoon.***

The victims were Philip Cassar (Ta Simillu), 37 years old), Anthony Debono (Tal-Paradajs), 29 years old), John Mary Farrugia (il-Bibillu), 37 years old), and Philip Xuereb (ta Lilel), 52 years old), four fire craftsmen members of the Musical Society, Banda San Philep Club. While Farrugia and Debono died immediately and were taken out from under the crash barely recognizable, Cassar and Xuereb died the next day in San Luqa hospital.

Two days after this tragedy, on Easter Saturday, April 9, 1955, their funeral took place. The Banda San Philep accompanied them to the grave in the cemetery of the Sacred Heart, Zebbuġ. As a sign of respect that year the feast of Saint Philip had no fireworks, no scaffolding and no band. Several societies from other villages accompanied with the standards.

In 2005 there was also a procession to their grave in the cemetery of the Heart of Jesus.

The relatives and neighbours of the victims took part in it together with many members and officials of the Association Kazin Banda San Filep. The memory of this tragedy is still alive among the people of Zebbug to this day!

MALTESE COMMUNITY OF VICTORIA

The President of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria, Antonia Camilleri attended the commemorative service at the Shrine of Remembrance to mark the 84th Anniversary of the George Cross award to Malta, where she also laid a wreath.

MALTESE COMMUNITY OF NEW YORK
Maltese Center
New York City USA
April 5 2026·

Good Friday Traditional Procession in Astoria New York. Maltese Center's volunteers gather to carry the Crucifix statue and participate in the annual event.

8 APRIL 1941: MINE EXPLOSION KILLS 28 MALTESE DOCKYARD MEN

ONLY ONE SURVIVOR AS DOCKYARD VESSEL MOOR BLOWS UP

A working dockyard vessel was blown up today at the entrance to Grand Harbour. 28 of the 29 man crew were killed. The Admiralty Mooring Vessel ***Moor*** was carrying out maintenance work on the boom-defence nets protecting the harbour entrance. Shortly after 5.00pm, as the vessel started its engine to return to the dockyard, a deafening explosion shook buildings across the harbour area. People rushed to the Bastions, only to watch as the vessel turned over on her side and rapidly sank.

A ferry boat, several Naval Dockyard and Air Force pinnaces and many dghajsas raced to the scene. Only one survivor, diver/rigger Anthony Mercieca, was plucked from the water by a Naval vessel and taken to Bighi Royal Naval Hospital.

Mr Mercieca later described his escape. He was blown into the air inside the ship's cabin, before plunging about twenty feet under water. He struggled to force open the jammed cabin door and managed to surface, while debris from the vessel was still flying about.

NEXT EDITION SPECIAL ANZAC DAY ISSUE