THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal for Maltese Living Abroad

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

Happy Mother's Day

Jum l-Omm it-Tajjeb

Mel Gibson is developing a television series based on the Great Siege of Malta of 1565

WE KEEP THE MALTESE LIVING ABROAD ON THE MAP

In a genuine democracy, it is only reasonable that every citizen possesses the right to vote; however, this is not entirely applicable to the Maltese state. Maltese citizens residing abroad, who are eligible to vote, still cannot cast their votes from outside the country despite numerous years of appeals for modifications to electoral legislation. Although various alternative voting methods are available worldwide—methods that could enhance accessibility for Maltese expatriates. Malta, along with three other European Union member states, specifically Slovakia, Ireland, and Czechia, continues to lack alternative voting options, necessitating that its citizens living abroad be physically present to vote. Rather than implementing reforms in electoral legislation, the Maltese government has persistently depended on an outdated and unsustainable approach, squandering public resources to transport nationals from abroad.

The government has subsidized flights with the national airline, incurring a total expenditure of €815,000 and €1.9 million in 2019 and 2022 respectively, funded by taxpayers. While this has served as a moderately adequate short-term solution, the government is obligated to innovate, reform, and devise a long-term strategy. Given the numerous challenges individuals encounter when it comes to investing time and money to travel and vote—particularly in light of the restrictions imposed during the pandemic—one would anticipate that valuable lessons have been learned. It seems only rational, therefore, that we should prioritize the elimination of barriers that obstruct the fundamental right to vote.

Nevertheless, while both the Labour Party and the Nationalist Party in Malta have contemplated the possibility of permitting voting from abroad, this has, to date, remained an unfulfilled commitment. It is unfortunate that the government did not enact legislation to enable eligible Maltese citizens living abroad to utilize such methods as voting from an embassy, by proxy, or by mail—methods that are commonplace in several democratic nations. Every voice and vote is significant, and it is the right of Maltese citizens overseas, regardless of their location, to have their voices heard.

UNITED STATES WELCOMES MALTA'S SIGNING OF THE ARTEMIS ACCORD May 4, 2026

The Department of State congratulates the Republic of Malta on joining the Artemis Accords. Malta is the 65th country to sign the Accords to date, pledging its commitment to peaceful space exploration and use.

Malta's Minister for Education, Sport, Youth, Research, and Innovation Clifton Grima signed the Accords on behalf of the Republic of Malta on May 4. U.S. Ambassador to Malta Somers W. Farkas and NASA Europe Representative Gregory Mann witnessed and celebrated the signing together with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism Ian Borg at a ceremony hosted by Xjenza Malta at Villa Bighi in Kalkara, Malta. The United States and Malta maintain strong academic, science, and technology partnerships; Malta's signing of the Accords extends that close partnership into outer space.

The United States and seven other countries established the Artemis Accords in 2020 to serve as a set of practical principles to guide responsible space exploration. Malta joins the United States and 63 other nations in affirming the Accords' principles for sustainable civil space activity. The Department of State and NASA lead the United States' outreach and implementation of the Accords.

MALTA – 22 YEARS MEMBER OF EU

Malta has been a member state of the European Union since May 1, 2004, and is part of the eurozone (since 2008) and the Schengen Area (since 2007). As the smallest EU country by both population (approx. 574,250) and size (\(316\text{ km}^2\)), it is located in the Mediterranean, with Maltese and English as official languages. Currently, the president of the European Parliament is a Maltese – Dr. Roberta Metsola.

Key Aspects of Malta in the EU:

- Maltese businesses have unhindered access to a market of over 440 million people
- Access to various funds for bettering crucial infrastructure, especially with regard to health, environment and wellbeing: examples include the Oncology Centre at Mater Dei Hospital, and the National Flood Relief Project, amongst many others.
- Maltese citizens have the right to move, work and reside freely within the territory of other member states Maltese views and interests are reflected in the policies of the EU towards the rest of the world.
- The Maltese language is an official language in the EU, which helps to protect the country's native mother tongue for future generations.
- Maltese students and workers have access to traineeships and educational and vocational opportunities due to Erasmus+, the EU's training programme for adult education, vocational education and training, and school education.

Malta's integration into the EU has connected the historically and geographically isolated nation closely with the European mainland, influencing its modern political and economic landscapes.

FROM THE EMBASSY OF MALTA IN THE UNITED STATES

Ambassador Xuereb and Dr Xuereb attended the graduation ceremony for the International Maritime Officers Course - 75, held at the United States Coast Guard Training Centre in Yorktown. LTJG Tristan Fenech from the Armed Forces of Malta was one of 24 international students who graduated.

The ceremony was led by Rear Admiral Zeita Merchant, the East District Commander of the US Coast Guard. Ambassador Xuereb thanked the Rear Admiral and Captain Scott A. Rae, Commanding Officer of the Training Centre Yorktown, for their continued support to the Armed Forces of Malta.

The Commanding Officer highlighted that the Maltese students have always performed at a very high standard and were a credit to the Maltese Armed Forces. Rear Admiral Merchant also commended the Maltese students and highlighted that students from this course have gone on to progress in their career in the Malta Armed Forces.

F'Jum l-Omm

Fost il-jiem kollha tas-sena
għandna wieħed għażiż wisq;
dan hu ddedikat lil ommna –
għelm ta' barka, hena w risq.

Meta Beniamino Gigli
kien instema' jkanta l-*"Mamma"*
ma' dal-globu kompla kebbes
ta' l-imħabba din il-fjamma.

Għax l-omm l-akbar kreatura
li teżisti fil-ħolqien;
jekk idduru d-dinja kollha
bħalha żgur ma ssibu mkien!

Bla ma trid meta tinħasad
inti tgħajjat: "Ajma, Ma!".
U għalkemm daqsha essenzjali,
ma ssejjaħx int lill-papa!

Żgur li hemm xi ħaġa fina
li bil-wisq torbotna magħha
bħalma l-qroqqa l-ħin kollu
tgħożż ma' djulha l-ulied tagħha.

Wara disa' xhur ta' tqala
d-dinja tifraħ b'twelid ġdid;
forsi mhux l-omm responsabbli
minn dil-benna, minn dal-ġid!

Meta nħossuna morda
jew imtaqqla minn xi hemm
dlonk tarana sejrin għandha
biex infittxu ftit tal-kenn.

Bl-ebda dubju ġewwa s-sema
għandna Omm bil-wisq setgħana;
toqogħdux, immela, lura –
nersqu lejha lkoll ħerqana.

F'kelma waħda xejn ma jisboq
dan l-isem sabiħ ta' omm –
dawn il-versi minn qiegħ qalbi,
għażiż'omm, lilek indomm.

Kav Joe M Attard
Mejju 2026

DELEGATES OF THE COUNCIL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

MGR. REV. VINCENT COSTA- BRAZIL

Born on New Years Day in 1947, Rev. Mons. Vincent Costa is the Emeritus Bishop of Jundiaí in Brazil, after living in the South American country since 1969. After completing his studies at the Royal University of Malta, graduating with a Licentiate in Philosophy in 1968, he continued his studies in Brazil and Rome. He eventually graduated with a Doctorate in Fundamental Theology. During his education, he was ordained as a deacon and a priest in 1972 in Malta. In 1998, he was nominated as a bishop, eventually becoming the Nominated Diocesan Bishop of Jundiai by 2010. Rev. Mons. Costa held his position as a bishop of that region for 12 years, as in 2022, he became an Emeritus Bishop.

Throughout his lifetime, he has served the local community in various ways. For the majority of the 1990s, before being appointed as a nominated bishop in 1998, Rev. Mons. Vincent Costa was a lecturer. He initially started teaching at the Theological Institute, Londrina, and later, at the CINTEC (Interdiocesan Centre of Theology, Cascavel, in which, the two are in Paraná, Brazil.

It is no doubt that Rev. Mons. Vincent Costa is a hard worker, considering that he is now an Emeritus Bishop, after working in the Brazilian Church for 5 decades and still counting. His inclusion as a member of the CMLA will be a massive benefit to not only the Maltese diaspora in Brazil, but also the various small Maltese communities scattered all around South America.

DEBBIE GATT GHIGLIERI -USA

Born and raised in San Francisco, I've built a career defined by versatility, leadership, and a passion for helping people and organizations thrive. With over two decades of experience in operations, project management, marketing, and professional organizing, I've contributed to top-tier companies including Genentech, Yahoo!, BlackRock, Autodesk, and Acxiom Digital.

At Genentech, I supported major domestic and international projects, managing vendor coordination, expediting equipment deliveries, and streamlining purchasing operations. I also helped develop a company-wide onboarding resource, COMPASS. At Yahoo!, I co-led the Creative Resources Project, achieving significant cost savings through supplier negotiation and contract consolidation. I created Tchotchke Central, an internal merchandise system that improved purchasing efficiency, and led cross-departmental trainings.

At Acxiom Digital, I standardized operations, improved billing accuracy, and implemented enterprise-level tools. I created project management systems, introduced billing audits, and transformed the company's SharePoint into a centralized knowledge hub. At BlackRock and Autodesk, I directed global marketing and brand communication projects, negotiated with creative vendors, and ensured brand consistency across hundreds of product launches.

In 2012, I stepped out of the corporate world to launch Get Organized by Deb, LLC, a business dedicated to helping clients increase productivity, reduce stress, and create order in their lives. I work with individuals, families, and small businesses to design customized systems tailored to their unique needs. My approach blends practical, hands-on solutions with coaching to help clients sustain long-term results. I've been told that my non-judgmental, supportive style creates

a safe space for transformation. I take pride in guiding clients toward greater efficiency, focus, and peace of mind.

I serve as Board Member and President of the Maltese Heritage Association (MHA), supporting cultural preservation through events, education, and outreach. I worked with a team member to secure 501(c)(3) recognition, enabling us to promote Maltese traditions, educate the public, and give back to non-profits supporting children, families, and veterans in need.

I'm honored to be a nominated member of the Council of Maltese Living Abroad (CMLA), representing the global Maltese community and strengthening ties between Malta and the United States. This role allows me to advocate for diaspora concerns, foster cultural connections, and influence positive change within the Maltese government.

Proudly married with three children and two grandchildren, my family—including my half Maltese-American husband and daughter-in-law—holds dual citizenship with Malta. I visit Malta often to connect with cousins, research my ancestry, and deepen my bond with the country I consider my home away from home.

COUNCIL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

MR. JOSEPH M. FASI II

REGIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ATTORNEY

Joseph M. Fasi II is a first generation Maltese American. His Father, Joseph M. Fasi, immigrated to the United States from Malta in the 1920s. He started the Maltese American Benevolent Society 82 years ago in Detroit. Carmelina Aquilina Fasi came to the United States in 1948. Mr. Fasi is a founding attorney of the Miami firm of Fasi & DiBello PA He has been a trial attorney throughout the United States for over 40 years defending many large corporations and medical professionals.Mr. Fasi is very proud of his Maltese Heritage and fluently speaks Maltese. He travels to Malta each year to visit family living on the Island. He currently divides his time living in Bonita Springs, Florida and Dandridge, Tennessee.

Mr.Fasi is very eager to serve the Maltese community in the Florida area in his new role as a member in the Regional Committee which falls under the remit of the Council of the Maltese Living Abroad.

MR. CHUCK VELLA

REGIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER

Carmel J. "Chuck" Vella, born in 1944 in Mellieħa, Malta, emigrated to the U.S. in 1957 and lives in Livonia, Michigan. He is married to Christina "Chrissy" for 46 years and has three children and seven grandchildren. Chuck studied at St. Aloysius College in Malta, Detroit College of Business, and Henry Ford College, with fluency in English and Maltese, and knowledge of several other languages. His career includes work in the OEM automotive supply industry and owning a printing business. Committed to community service, Chuck served as President of the North American Maltese Associations, taught Maltese, and worked as an interpreter. He coached youth hockey for 31 years, served on the Maltese Parish Council, and was in the Michigan Army National Guard. His accolades include MACC Lifetime Member and coaching two USA Hockey state championship teams.

LET'S HELP BRADLEY RTK103 - MALTA

I hope this email finds you well. First and foremost, I would like to thank you for the impeccable work you are doing with the *Maltese Journal*. It is an invaluable resource for keeping the Maltese community connected across the world. My name is Bradley Cachia and I present *Top il-Full*, a radio programme on RTK103 dedicated to discussing the Maltese language in contemporary society.

I am currently preparing an episode on the Maltese language in the diaspora and am looking for Maltese emigrants or people of Maltese descent who have spent most or all of their lives outside Malta and are visiting the island this May or June. I would be very grateful if you could share this call with your readership and encourage anyone with a story to tell about their relationship with the Maltese language to get in touch by emailing topilfull.mt@gmail.com. On a separate note, I would also be grateful if you could add my personal email address to your mailing list: bradley.p.d.cachia@gmail.com. Thank you very much for your time and support. Kind regards, Bradley Cachia - Malta

ABOUT BRADLEY

Bradley is pursuing a master's degree in Maltese and is engaged in various fields including theatre, television, radio, social media, writing, research, and community initiatives. He also collaborates with children, young individuals, and a variety of voluntary and non-governmental organizations. Throughout his journey, he has seized every opportunity presented to him, cultivating a blend of creative and organizational skills that enable him to tackle a wide range of projects. Three words encapsulate his work: culture, creativity, community.

GOZO PHILATELIC SOCIETY

First Gozo Chapels Personalized Cover

The Gozo Philatelic Society is pleased to advise of the issue of the first in the major project of personalized stamps on illustrated covers featuring Gozo's Chapels and small churches. Each card will show the front of the building, with an internal shot on the stamp. The information on the back includes a further detail. This first cover has the chapel dedicated to St Anne at Dwejra. Since this is within the limits of the village of San Lawrenz, the postal cancellation was given at the San Lawrenz sub-post office. Subscribers will be receiving their copy later but those interested in a subscription for the whole collection (designed by GPS President Anthony "Toni" Grech) are invited to write to stamps.gozo@gmail.com.

THE WEJTER TOWER IN BIRKIRKARA – MALTA

Built by the Knights hundreds of years ago, this tower was once the landmark of this area of Birkirkara, a highly populated town in the Central Region of #Malta, with open spaces all around it. Today, Wejter Tower is engulfed by modern buildings. The first thing one notices from these photos is the complete lack of respect given to adequate buffer zones to protect the visual landscape of this historic building.

It is said that in Birkirkara alone there once were thirteen towers similar to this one in the 17th century.

The Wejter Tower dates back to 1710 when Grand Master Ramon Perellos y Roccaful commissioned its construction on the advice of Chevalier d'Argens. The project took place on the recommendations by Captain Foulet and Commander D'Argens, who were French Knights of the Order of St. John. Up until one hundred years ago it stood alone in the fields and although it is not big or high, it guarded the road from Msida towards Birkirkara, which back then was not lined with trees as it is today, with the trees having been planted when the new road was built in 1962. So the tower had a guarding function, a guard tower which we call "torri tal-għassa" in Maltese. Hence why the area where the tower is found was known as Għassiewi, meaning 'a guarded place'

With the tower having been built to watch over the inland areas in the surrounding region of Birkirkara and to bridge the site of the Birkirkara Tower and Floriana, from atop this tower, any approaching danger could be spotted at enough distance to sound the alarm of the village. Till the late 20th century the community of this area of B'kara was known as Tal-Wejter after this tower, and the valley nearby was known as the Tal-Wejter Valley.

WHY WERE THESE TOWERS BUILT?

Not all of them were necessarily built to serve a military function, although guarding was probably why most of these towers were built. Most would be built as part of a fortified house back then, like Gauci Tower in Naxxar, the tower in Qrendi and Vincenti Tower in Mqabba. The same is true for the Għar il-Ġobon tower and twelve others that no longer exist and that could have been within the area of Birkirkara. It is interesting to note that similar buildings are found along the coast of Dalmatia, today's Croatia. But this was not the case with the Wejter Tower, which seems to have served primarily as a guard/watch tower, just like the coastal towers.

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MALTA; WAR DIARY

MBE FOR JOSEPH BUTTIGIEG

A Special Supplement to Fortress Order 1/25 today announces the following award to an officer of 1st Battalion Kings Own Malta Regiment: ***The King has been graciously pleased to approve of the undermentioned honours and awards recommended by His Excellency, the Acting Governor and Commander in Chief:*** **MBE Lieutenant now Captain (Quartermaster) Joseph Buttigieg, Kings Own Malta Regiment.**

TROOPS WARNED NOT TO DAMAGE CROPS A notice has been issued to all troops in Malta today reminding them that valuable crops such as peas and beans as well as fruit are now coming into season and that any damage caused to them results in expensive claims for compensation from farmers. Troops are also warned not to interfere with crops and fruits either within or outside barbed wire areas, unless they know that such places are actually hired by the War Department. The plucking of fruit from farmers' trees without permission is a criminal offence and heavily punishable. The notice points out that farmers are usually very willing to sell fruit for a few pence. Disciplinary action will be taken against any individual found stealing or causing damage.
LOOTING FROM BOMBED HOUSES STRICTLY PROHIBITED Concerns have been raised that stone and building material from demolished houses has been removed without permission. A notice has been issued today to all troops warning that in no circumstances are such materials to be taken from buildings without express orders from their Headquarters. AIR RAIDS DAWN 25 APRIL TO DAWN 26 APRIL 1941 ***Weather*** Rough.***0757-0820 hrs*** Air raid alert for a single JU 88 bomber which crosses the Island at 20000 feet on reconnaissance from Tigne to Zurrieq and Luqa, turning away over Grand Harbour. Anti-aircraft guns engage; no claims. ***0924-0940 hrs*** Air raid alert for a single JU 88 bomber on reconnaissance escorted by four ME 109 fighters. Anti-aircraft guns engage the bomber while Malta fighters engage the ME 109s; no claims.
OPERATIONS REPORTS FRIDAY 25 APRIL 1941 ***AIR HQ*** Hurricane photo-reconnaissance Comiso, Gela, Syracuse. Photos of Comiso reveal a new runway built on south east part of aerodrome; 48 aircraft of which 17 twin-engined and 12 fighters. *69 Squadron* Maryland reconnaissance northern sector Tunisian coast. ***NORTHERN INFANTRY BRIGADE*** A surprise exercise to test anti-tank defences: at 0445 hrs tanks were reported to have landed at Msida and operated in the Pembroke and Ta Qali areas; full precautions for local protection were taken at Brigade HQ.***FORTRESS ROYAL ENGINEERS Bomb Disposal UXB*** reported 3; dealt with 7 (all 7 50kg). ***All written content © maltagc70 unless otherwise ttributed. For conditions of use contact*** bdmalta@btinternet.com

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COAT OF ARMS
MSIDA

MSIDA, a town near the Grand Harbour in Malta, was subjected to intense bombing during World War II, particularly during the peak of the Siege of Malta in 1941 and 1942, as Axis powers (Germany and Italy) targeted the area's strategic proximity to the dockyards.

- **Targeting of Military Quarters:** Reports from late April 1942 indicate that Msida Quarters, Lintorn Barracks, and surrounding areas such as North Square and the dockyards were frequently targeted by German JU 88 bombers.

- **Significant Destruction (April 1942):** During the intense April 1942 blitz, Msida experienced heavy damage as part of a concentrated effort to destroy infrastructure and civilian morale. For instance, on April 26, 1942, bombs targeted both Sliema and Msida, resulting in the destruction of barracks, a cookhouse, and a ration store.
- **Strategic Context:** Malta was the most bombed place on earth during this period (3,343 air raids between 1940 and 1944), and Msida's location made it a frequent casualty of attacks aimed at disrupting British submarine and air forces based at nearby Manoel Island and Ta' Xbiex.
- **Enduring Conditions:** The population in areas like Msida spent significant time in underground shelters to avoid the Luftwaffe raids, which often aimed to destroy civilian housing and infrastructure.

  Despite these heavy raids, which included 154 consecutive days of bombing, the island did not surrender.

Hello Frank. jew inkella Merhba!
I usually go through the Maltese periodical when I find a quiet moment. I look forward to it because of the diligence and sustained effort that I see in you and others who have kept this journal for so many years.I have had the pleasure of meeting you personally some years back, an occasion involving my need of a Passport. That issue was attended to by my getting an eventual Identity Card.
On the last issue I noticed a tendency for Nostalgia(as always) regarding the many people who had left and made an IMPRINT in their chosen new land. As I perused these thought I thought I would love to suggest some form or format of getting some of these success stories being interviewed by yourself or others regarding their origins and eventual successes in their endevours. The Maltese programme would be a good starting point, I presume.
May I again congratulate your undying and ever welcome efforts in keeping heritage alive.
Joseph M. Scerri.(Retired)

Titanic survivor buried in Malta gets headstone after 100 years

Researcher Mario Cacciottolo leads effort to mark long-unmarked grave at Ta' Braxia cemetery

Emma Borg

A Titanic survivor who died in Malta has finally been given a marked grave, more than 105 years after he was buried without one. A headstone was installed on Saturday at Ta' Braxia Cemetery in Gwardamangia for British sailor Allen Marden Baggott, who survived the 1912 disaster but died nine years later while en route to a naval hospital in Malta. The idea came from Cacciottolo two months ago when he visited the cemetery. "As I stood on the patch of grass where he was buried, I saw how he didn't have a headstone and immediately thought 'Well, I'll just get him one.'"

"I thought it is a poor state of affairs not to have a proper grave. And I knew how easy it is to get a headstone, so why not try?" Allen Marden Baggott's headstone at Ta Braxia Cemetery Photo: Chris Sant Fournier His decision was also shaped by personal experience. Cacciottolo's father, who was also a sailor, did not have a headstone when he died. He later arranged for one to be placed on a family grave.

"Given that my dad was also a sailor, there is a bit of symmetry in play. Ultimately, I just believe everyone should be given a dignified place to rest."

Before proceeding, Cacciottolo contacted Baggott's family, who gave their consent for the headstone. He also shared Baggott's story on his social media page, Dark Malta Tours, drawing attention to the unmarked grave and prompting wider interest.

Baggott, a first-class steward on board the Titanic, survived the ship's sinking in 1912 after escaping on lifeboat number nine, which is believed not to have been filled to capacity.

He would have witnessed the chaos in the freezing Atlantic waters before being rescued by the RMS Carpathia.

However, his later life appears to have been marked by hardship. As Cacciottolo noted, the White Star Line, the company that owned the Titanic, stopped paying its employees as soon as the ship sank, leaving him to resume his maritime career without support.

"He definitely had no support or sympathy professionally for the trauma he went through."

Records from the RFA Perthshire, on which he later served, describe repeated incidents of drunken and disorderly behaviour. Some have speculated that he struggled with the psychological aftermath of the disaster.

"The survivors always speak about the horrendous screams of people in the water... furthermore, as a man he would have been shamed for surviving and he would have had to live with that," Cacciottolo said.

In 1921, while serving aboard the Perthshire, Baggott suffered a seizure while the ship was docked in Grand Harbour. He collapsed and died while being taken to hospital.

When Malta came under the protection of the British Crown in 1800, cemeteries were needed for the burials of British soldiers and sailors of the Royal Navy. Also as Malta grew as a trading centre in the Mediterranean, the island became "home" for many British and European civilians. Merchants, shop keepers bankers, shipping agents, notaries, clergymen, hoteliers, etc.

Previously there had not been any need for Protestant cemeteries, since all the Maltese were Roman Catholics. Land inside the Floriana bastions was appropriated. Today the New Excelsior Hotel stands on the site of the large Quarantine Bastion Cemetery and the much smaller Greek Orthodox Cemetery. The Msida Bastion cemetery is the only one which has survived from those carly days. It did suffer from neglect, vandalism and damage during the Second World War but has been restored by Din L'Art Helwa, and is now open to the public as a "Garden of Repose

By 1857 a new cemetery was needed and a site in the Ta Braxia area close to the Porte des Bombes was selected.

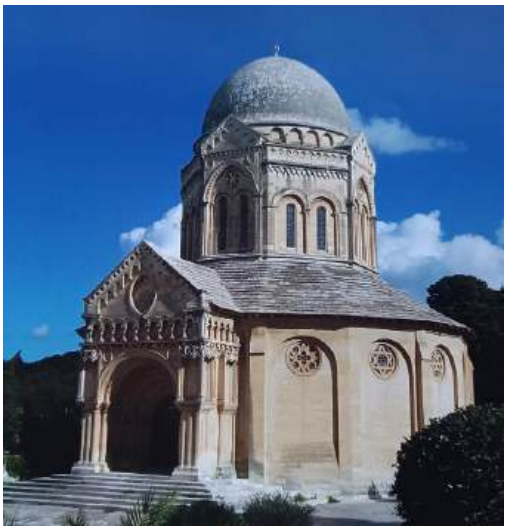
The cemetery was designed by Emanuele Luigi Galizia (1830-1906) of the Public Works Department who was only 25 years old at the time. Later on in his architectural career he was responsible for the much larger Santa Maria Addolorata cemetery. The official announcement was promulgated on 9th October 1857. The Cemetery Regulations stated:

The Cemetery of Ta Brazia is open to all religions for the purpose of interment. Their recognized ministers may officiate at funerals, and when within the cemetery employ the ceremonies and wear the vestments enjoined by their religion. Portions of the ground may be assigned to persuasions, divided by pathways."

A Management Committee was appointed. They drew up the Rules and Regulations which included a table of charges covering the cost of preparing graves and vaults, the erection of headstones and monuments, the installation of railings around a grave, and the issuing of certificates.

Nowadays it is under the supervision of the Department of Health, and the official records of interments are kept in the main office at the Addolorata Cemetery.

Bombing during World War II disturbed the ground in two areas and damaged several of the larger ornamental monuments both near the Caretaker's quarters, and at the lower end of the cemetery in the area used for burials by the Greek community. The blast flattened several of the vertical headstones,and many of the gravestones still standing show the scars of being struck by flying metal fragments. Normal weathering of the soft local stone over time has also taken its toll.



THE CHAPEL AT BRAXIA CEMETERY

The Cemetery Chapel is of particular interest. Rachel Emily Hamilton Gordon was on her voyage home to England from Ceylon when she became critically ill, so she was landed in Malta. She was taken to the Imperial Hotel, Sliema, where she died on the 26th of January 1889, aged 60 years.

Her husband was Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon K.C.M.G., also known as Lord Stanmore, who had been the Governor of New Brunswick, Trinidad, Mauritius, Fiji, New Zealand, and Ceylon. In her memory, he decided to have a Chapel built at the cemetery which would incorporate her grave in the exterior rear wall and was prepared to meet the total cost of the project. John Loughborough Pearson, the well-known London architect designed the chapel. The cemetery was designed by the Maltese architect Emanuele Luigi Galizia

Maltese Corner unveiled as lasting tribute to Mackay's Maltese heritage

Pictured are two of the monument's champions, Leo and Carmel Baretta, with Mayor Greg Williamson, and we couldn't help but chuckle at Leo incidentally striking a pose that fits right in

Mackay's rich multicultural history was celebrated last month with the official unveiling of Maltese Corner, a permanent public artwork honouring the pioneering Maltese community that helped shape the region. The unveiling took place on Saturday, April 18 at the intersection of Wood and Victoria streets, a site long known locally as Maltese Corner.

Mackay Mayor Greg Williamson said the project recognised the immense contribution of Maltese migrants to the city's social, cultural and economic development.

"Maltese Corner is more than a monument – it is a living reminder of the people who helped build Mackay through hard work, cooperation and strong family values," Mayor Williamson said.

"For decades, this corner was a meeting place where Maltese migrants gathered to talk business and share stories, ideas and friendship," he said.

"Today, we are bringing that history into the streetscape in a way that invites everyone to stop, sit and reflect."

The installation features three life-sized silicon bronze statues depicting Emmanuel Camilleri, John Vassallo and Sam Bezzina, based on an iconic photograph taken at the site in 1994.

The interactive design invites visitors to sit alongside the figures and imagine the conversations that once took place there.

Mackay is regarded as the historical heart of Maltese settlement in Australia, with the region home to the largest population of people of Maltese descent outside Melbourne and Sydney.

Maltese migrants played a vital role in the early sugar industry and continue to contribute strongly across agriculture, business, sport and community life.

Mayor Williamson said the artwork also strengthened Mackay's identity and sense of place.

"Understanding our shared history helps strengthen community bonds," he said.
"This tremendous installation promotes understanding, empathy and unity – not just for the Maltese community, but for all migrant groups who have helped make Mackay what it is today."
The project was delivered by the Maltese Corner Fundraising Group Inc, which formed in 2021 to drive the initiative.
Mackay Regional Council supported the project through a $15,000 Activate My Place grant and a $30,000 Community Grants Program Infrastructure and Assets grant.
Historian and Maltese Corner Fundraising Group Inc spokesperson Carmel Baretta said in addition to the three bronze statues, two plaques would be unveiled.
"One plaque will tell the story of the Maltese Corner and the other a brief history of the Mosta Permanent Building Society, which evolved as a consequence of the Corner," Mrs Baretta said.
"It was registered on September 28, 1966, and was situated on the corner of Victoria and Macalister streets, Mackay," she said.
"The original directors were Joseph Camilleri, Paul Camilleri, Antonio Camilleri and George Formosa.
"After serving the community for 14 years, a meeting was called on April 27, 1980 and a motion passed to merge with the Pioneer Permanent Building Society.
"It is believed that this may have been the first Maltese Building Society in Australia and it is worthy of acknowledgment as part of Mackay's history."
The bronze artwork for the corner was created by respected Nebo-based artist Kay Paton, whose work features across rural northern Australia.
cialized in church buildings, produced the design.

Men regularly seen on Rockman's Corner, also known as the Maltese Corner in Mackay, Queensland, Australia *(Supplied: Carmel Baretta)*

Garden of Life at Xagħra cemetery Gozo

A new area, called *Ġnien il-Ħajja* (Garden of Life), has been created at Xagħra cemetery, following the completion of the new extension of the burial ground and the restoration of the old part of the cemetery, including 'the garden of reflection' last year.

The idea to create Ġnien il-Ħajja came to fruition after several Xagħra families who emigrated to other places and had to be buried abroad, will be remembered by affixing their photos and inscriptions on large rocks scattered around the garden.

Xagħra archpriest Carmelo Refalo said it was sad that after these people, who loved and dedicated their lives to their village, but had to leave Gozo for a better living, were to be forgotten.

"Today we find Xagħra parishioners who are buried in other cemeteries in Malta, Gozo and abroad and whose memories are not recorded in the village," he said.

"With this new novel idea, families and friends can now pay their respects to these people who are not buried in this cemetery."

Along the path of *Ġnien il-Ħajja*, one finds natural vegetation which embellishes the surroundings.

During the excavation of the place an antique rubble wall pertaining to the old cemetery was unearthed. Soon the Way of the Cross will be affixed to the wall.(Source: Times of Malta)

NEWPORT MALTESE ASSOCIATION AND SENIORS GROUP VVICTORIA - AUSTRALIA

Mother's Day Luncheon
Sunday 3 May 2026
By Emmanuel Brincat

President - Mrs. Toni Scicluna

The Newport Maltese Association & Seniors Group is proud to be one of the founding members of the "Centru Malti" in Parkville. I recall very well the early meetings in the late 1970s, when the concept of the Centru was beginning to take shape. This is my personal recollection of how I first came to know and appreciate the work of this Association. As the vision developed, the then Superior General of the Melbourne-based Missionary Society of St Paul, Rev. Fr Tomlin MSSP, together with Dr Victor Borg, held extensive discussions regarding the establishment of such a centre.

Following consultations within the Society, Fr Tomlin presented an offer to allocate part of their land—where their residence was located—for the development of the Centru Malti.

Around 1979, the Newport Association, along with several other active Maltese associations at the time, showed great enthusiasm and commitment towards fundraising efforts to bring this vision to life. The Newport Association's financial contribution was particularly significant, exceeding $300,000—raised through tireless community efforts.

A key figure who continues to be part of this Association and its proud history is Mr George Saliba OAM, a past President who served with dedication for many years.

There is much more that could be shared about this important chapter in our community's history, but for today, I will pause here.

Turning to the present, the Mother's Day Luncheon held on Sunday 3 May at Ferraro Receptions in Campbellfield was a great success. Guests enjoyed an excellent menu, with thoughtful attention given to those with special dietary requirements.

Entertainment was provided by DJ Dominic, who kept the dance floor lively throughout the afternoon.

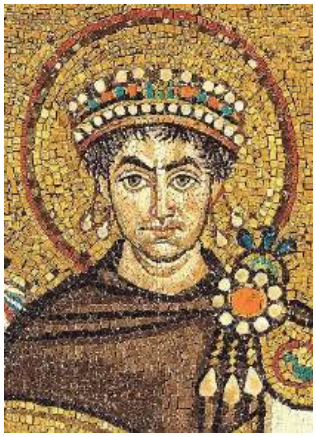
The service from the Ferraro staff was, as always, outstanding, with every effort made to ensure guests were well looked after.

The President, Mrs Toni Scicluna, warmly welcomed all attendees, thanked Mrs Carmen Casa, the Association's Social Secretary, her committee, and her husband Alfred for their continued dedication and support. She acknowledged the ongoing commitment that ensures the Newport Maltese Association & Seniors Group continues to thrive and grow.

The program also included the traditional raffle, adding to the enjoyment of the day. It was truly a wonderful luncheon and afternoon, enjoyed by all in attendance.

98.9 NORTH WEST FM
Community Radio - Melbourne, Australia
THE HEART OF OUR MALTESE COMMUNITY
Emmanuel Brincat – Producer / Presenter
Programs Mondays / 7pm – 8pm Fridays / 6pm – 7pm
https://www.northwestfm.org/

HISTORY OF ARAB INFLUENCE IN MALTA



The Arabs ruled Malta for approximately 220 years, beginning with their conquest in 870 AD and lasting until the Norman invasion in 1091 AD. While political control ended in 1091, Arab influence and a Muslim population persisted until they were expelled by the Hohenstaufen ruler Frederick II in 1249 AD.

The Arab presence in Malta dates to the 9th century and has had a lasting impact on the island's culture and heritage. The first Arab settlers in Malta were the Aghlabids, a Muslim dynasty from present-day Tunisia. They conquered the island in 870 and established a base there, bringing with them their language, religion, and culture. The Aghlabids ruled Malta for over a century. During this time, they built many impressive structures, including palaces, mosques, and fortifications.

The lasting impact of the Arab dynasties

Today, there are numerous reminders of Malta's Arabic roots scattered throughout the island. One of the most obvious is the names of villages and towns, many of which have Arabic origins. For example, Mdina (formerly known as Medina) gets its name from the Arabic word for city, while the village of Qrendi (formerly known as Qrendis) derives from the Arabic word for grapevine.

There are also many Maltese surnames with Arabic origins. Some of the most common ones include Said, Farrugia, and Attard, all of which can be traced back to Arabic roots. Most importantly, Malta's own language has Arabic and Semitic origins. Despite these influences, however, the Maltese language remains primarily Semitic in nature and shares a number of characteristics with other Semitic languages such as Arabic and Hebrew.

Maltese is a direct descendant of the Arabic language, which can be traced back to the Arab conquerors of the 9th century. Over the centuries, the Maltese language has evolved and absorbed many other influences, including Italian, Sicilian, and English. Words such as "qamar" (moon), "qaws" (rainbow), "habib" (friend) and "kelb" (dog) are direct descendants of Arabic equivalents.

Beyond language

But the influence of the Arab world in Malta extends beyond just names and words. The island is home to many fascinating cultural and architectural treasures that are a testament to its rich history and close ties with the Arab world.

One of the most notable examples of Arab architecture in Malta is the Mdina Cathedral. This impressive cathedral was built on the site of an old Arab mosque, and its unique blend of Gothic and Arab styles reflects the island's rich history. The Grandmaster's Palace in Valletta is another excellent example of Arab architecture in Malta. This famous palace was built on the site of an old Arab palace, and its ornate decoration and design show the influence of Arab culture.

Modern day Malta and the Arab world

So what does all this mean for Malta today? The Arab presence in Malta has had a profound impact on the island's culture, and it is still evident in many aspects of Maltese life.

In addition, Malta's ties to the Arab world remain as strong as ever, with the island nation maintaining close political, economic, and cultural relations with a number of Arab countries. From tourism and trade to cultural exchange, Malta employs its history to create a connecting bridge between the Arab world and Europe and create a deeper understanding between these two cultural models.

From Limestone Chapels to Grand Palazzos: The Evolution of the Maltese Wedding

The Maltese wedding is a vibrant tapestry woven from centuries of tradition, Mediterranean warmth, and a deep-seated respect for family. To understand how the modern Maltese couple celebrates today, one must look back at a history shaped by knights, world wars, and the rugged beauty of the archipelago.

The Medieval Era: Contracts and Courtyards

During the Middle Ages, weddings in Malta were more about communal stability than individual romance. Life was centred around rural villages, and marriages were often pragmatic arrangements between families.

Even in the 14th and 15th centuries, the notary played a pivotal role. Before any vows were exchanged, a legal document detailed the dowry, which often included livestock, silver, or plots of land. An early tradition involved the groom sending a fish with a gold ring in its mouth to his prospective bride—a symbol of prosperity and a "catch" well-made.

Celebrations were held in the internal courtyards of stone houses. Food was simple but plentiful, featuring unleavened bread and local wine.

The Baroque Influence: The Knights and the Sugar

When the Order of St John arrived in 1530, the islands saw a surge in opulence. This filtered down into wedding customs, particularly among the merchant classes and nobility in Valletta and Mdina. Weddings became more theatrical. The bride would wear her finest Sunday dress—often in dark colours like black or deep blue, which were seen as marks of high status because the dyes were expensive. This era birthed the famous Maltese wedding sweets. Sugar-coated almonds became a staple, alongside carob sweets and honey-based treats.

The World War Era: Love Under Fire

The 20th century, particularly the Second World War, brought a stark shift. As Malta became the most bombed place on earth, the grandeur of weddings was replaced by utility and urgency.

During the Siege of Malta (1940–1942), weddings were often conducted in underground shelters or damaged parish churches. Silk and lace were impossible to find. Many brides fashioned dresses out of parachute silk or repurposed old curtains.

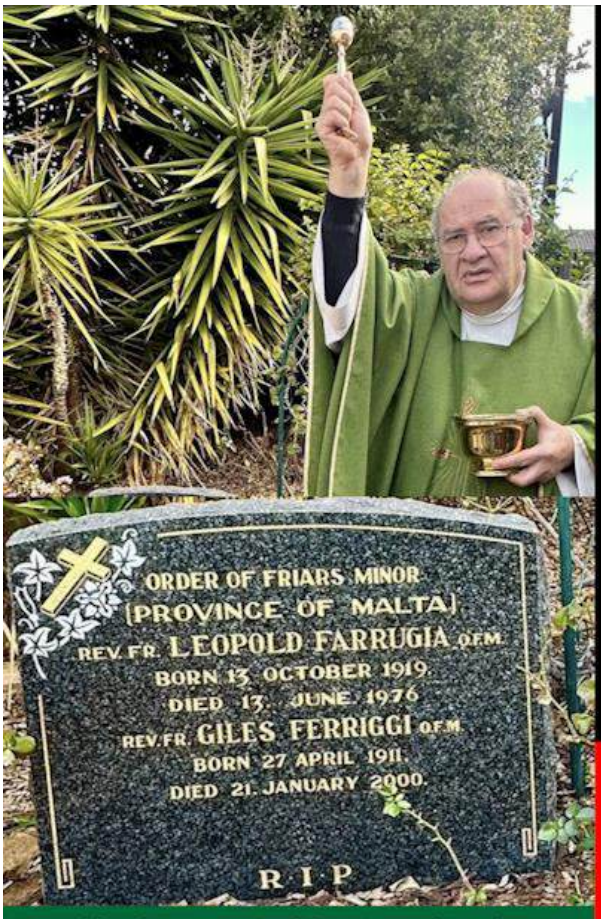
The traditional lavish buffet was replaced by whatever could be scrounged from the Victory Kitchens. Instead of a multi-tiered cake, couples often shared a simple loaf of bread or a small honey ring.

Post-War to the Late 20th Century: The Golden Age of the Procession

As the islands rebuilt, weddings returned with a vengeance. This period saw the rise of the iconic "traditional" Maltese wedding that many older generations remember fondly.

Procession: The bride walked under a canopy held by four men, accompanied by musicians, through the village streets.
Attire: Following Western trends, white became the standard, often paired with the traditional stiffened hood for the trek to church.
The Buffet: This was the era of the standing buffet. Unlike British sit-down meals, Maltese guests expected a constant flow of pastries, sandwiches, and sweets.
Modern Malta: Fusion and Grandeur Today, a Maltese wedding is a massive production, often involving hundreds of guests. While it has embraced global trends, the core remains uniquely Mediterranean. While the church ceremony remains a cornerstone for many, the reception has moved to historic palazzos, seaside villas, or wedding halls designed specifically for large crowds.
Modern weddings often feature a late-night snack (usually local pastizzi or burgers) and a DJ set that lasts until the early hours of the morning. In a nod to the past, guests are still given sugar-coated almonds, though they are now often accompanied by elaborate personalised gifts.
From the humble exchange of a fish in a medieval courtyard to the fireworks and five-tier cakes of the 21st century, the Maltese wedding remains a testament to the island's ability to honour its past while throwing one of the most spirited celebrations in the world

MALTESE COMMUNITY OF ADELAIDE

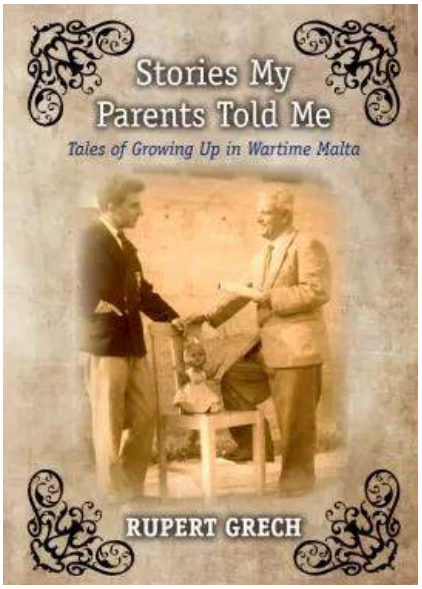


Fr. Alfred Farrugia blessing the plaque of Fr. Giles Ferriggi and Fr Leopold Farrugia at Lockleys South Australia 2026

DEAR FRIENDS OF DONINU (MALTA) INTERNATIONAL,

Today we speak from the heart.
In a world where many chase money and momentary happiness,
we must not forget those who are silently suffering...
families who are struggling, children who go to sleep
without food, elderly people who feel alone.
This is our reminder: don't lose your heart.
Money may come and go...
but love, kindness, and compassion — these remain forever.
If you have a little, you can share a little.
If you have more, you can do more.
Even the smallest act of kindness can change someone's life.
We are calling on all our friends, and all people of goodwill:
Help a family in need
Share food with those who are hungry
Support those who are struggling
Stand with the vulnerable
DONINU (MALTA) INTERNATIONAL does not collect money —
but together, we can give what truly matters:
food, care, dignity, and hope.
Because one day, we will all stand before God...
and what will matter is not what we kept —
but what we gave.
"Whatever you did for one of the least of these... you did for Me."
Let us be the light. Let us be the difference.
With love and respect,
Pierre Calleja
Leader / Founder
DONINU (MALTA) INTERNATIONAL

DONINU (MALTA) INTERNATIONAL
HelpLine: +356 79793332 - Email: doninumalta@gmail.com



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

"Rupert C. Grech's *Stories My Parents Told Me* is a lovely collection, based on stories his parents handed down of Malta during the period of World War II. Rupert has conveyed the stories with skill and charm. They make for a very engaging read and one learns about Malta in the process. Through tales about dolls, grapes, a 'house without rent' and four others, the reader feels immersed in Malta – its folklore, its history and culture. Through these stories, told with enormous affection, we experience the backdrop of war and suffering but also the foreground of the human spirit, family life and the unexpected. Religion, social divisions, 'Empire Day,' memorable individual characters (including a 'Quasimodo type'),*lampuki,* prickly pears, Gozo, local music bands, Dun Ġorġ and *tal-Mużew*, ghosts . . . and, of course, emigration, all feature in the tapestry that has been so finely woven by the author. Like Rupert Grech, I was very fortunate to have parents who told stories from their past, in my Maltese father's case, stories of Malta and of the war. I highly recommend Rupert's book to the Maltese in Malta and those who settled overseas – as well as the many visitors to Malta who wish to learn about its people, history and culture" – ***BarryYork, PhD, OAM, Author of The Maltese in Australia and Historian, Museum of Australian Democracy*, Canberra, Australia.**

This book, and sequel to Stories My Parents Told Me, is now available as an audiobook from Apple Books (it is also available as an eBook and paperback from various online booksellers). The link provides access to a free sample and allows purchase of the audiobook. Nice voice. Some of the Maltese words are a little challenging

https://www.facebook.com/share/1AN6tKRPCK/?mibextid=wwXIfr

RUPERT GRECH is a first generation Maltese-Australian writer and equities trader, born of post-war immigrants to New South Wales (NSW), Australia, from the small Mediterranean island of Malta. During childhood, he lived in the low rent suburbs of inner Sydney, eventually moving to the west of the city. Grech graduated with both a Bachelor's degree in Economics and a Diploma in Education from the University of Sydney, during which time he also played in the A-grade Rugby League and was selected to try out for one of the professional clubs. However, instead of pursuing rugby league, he preferred to teach in the country region of NSW. Grech returned to school and completed an Honors degree in Human Geography at the University of New England - Armidale, with his thesis addressing the issue of chain migration between Malta and Australia.

After teaching Business Studies, Legal Studies, and Geography in schools for five years, Grech visited Malta for the first time, learning about his heritage first-hand. He returned to Australia where he owned and managed a lunchtime cafe in the Blue Mountains. Teaching being at heart, Grech went back to the profession and became a highly acclaimed principal of two regional schools in low socioeconomic areas. His leadership, along with the implementation of educational innovations together with his staff team in one school, resulted in a greater than 50% reduction of the student discipline suspension rate and over 30% increase in student enrollment in three years. Grech also started farming a 114-acre beef cattle property, during which time he

repeatedly attained the highest prices for his cattle at regional sales. He later developed the farm and subdivided it into smaller acreages and building residences. He also performed as lead vocalist and played the guitar or bass in various bands. In addition, he served as radio announcer on a commercial radio station. Rupert Grech is the author of the book Stories My Parents Told Me: Tales of Growing Up in Wartime Malta, a collection of short stories based on actual events that happened during World War II. At present, Grech spends his time living alternately in Valletta, Malta and the Blue Mountains, NSW, while trading equities on the Australian Stock Exchange, developing property, and writing.

Norman Mifsud from Malta is a collector of Malta cigarette packets and Malta cigarette cards. He is looking for Malta Trade Football Cards and Malta Cigarette Cards. Contact him on his email address - vnmifsud@gmail.com

Saying "THANK YOU" is a powerful way to express appreciation and strengthen connections, creating a positive, feel-good interaction that honours kindness