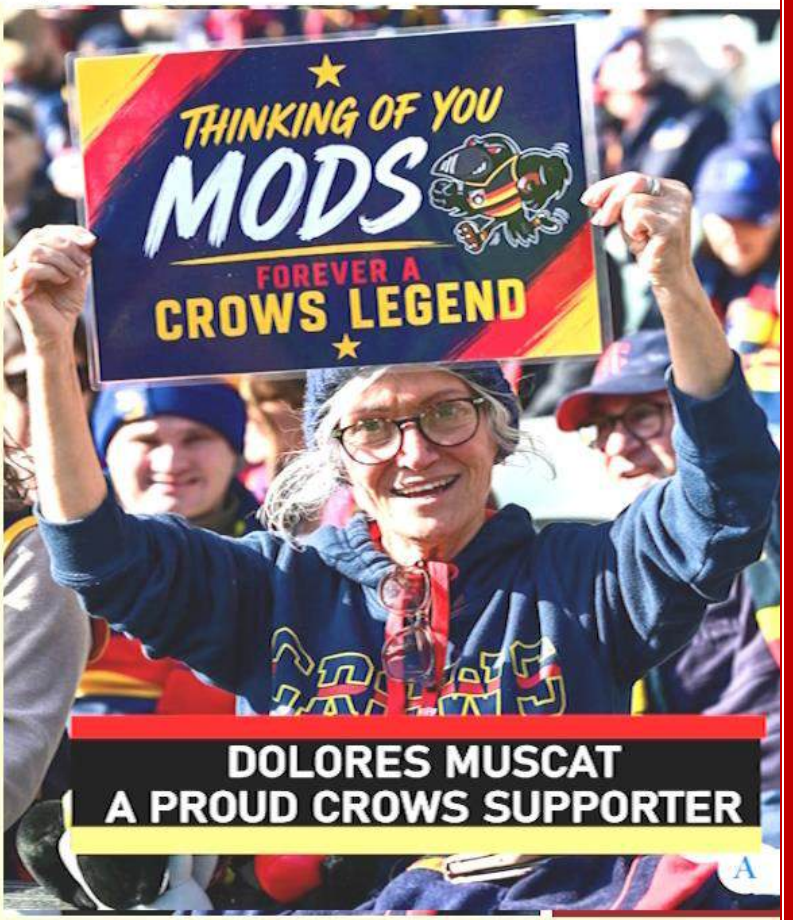
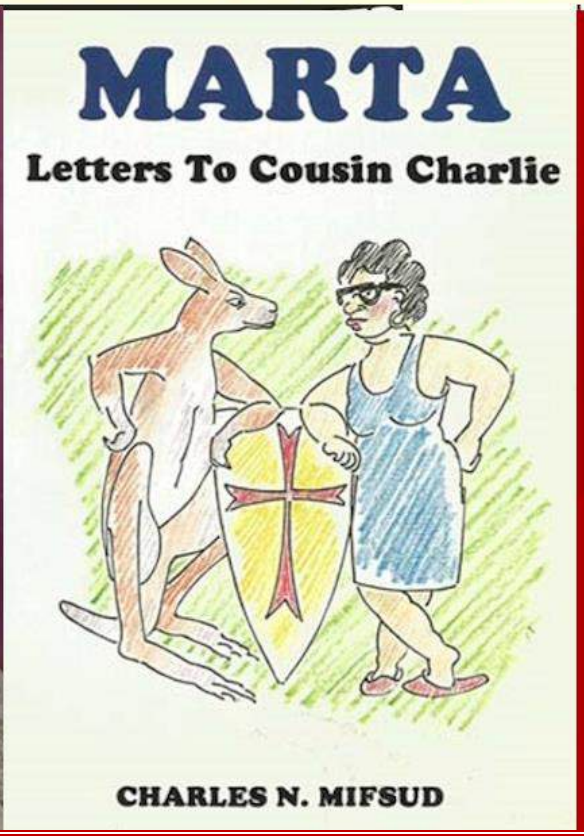
THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal for Maltese Living Abroad

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





MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

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"MALTA STILL NEEDS YOU"

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marie louise coleiro preca

The Maltese Community Council of South Australia

Frank L Scicluns – Editor

I wish to extend my heartfelt greetings and commend the Maltese Community Councils of New South Wales and Victoria for their exemplary contributions to their respective communities. Here in Adelaide, South Australia, we have our own Maltese Community Council, which functions as an umbrella organization encompassing representatives from various Maltese societies that have been established and are actively operating in South Australia. These associations were established with the objective of benefiting their members and organise social, educational and cultural functions

The Council meets monthly to address the needs of its members and to coordinate the activities and events of its affiliated societies. In 1992, the Council organized a commemoration to mark the 50th anniversary of the George Cross being awarded to the Maltese Islands. In partnership with the Maltese RSL and the Honorary Consul for Malta, a memorial was erected at Prospect Reserve to honour the fallen servicemen, servicewomen, and civilians during World Wars I and II. In 1993, the Council hosted a National Conference for the Federation of Maltese Community Councils of Australia, which was attended by delegates from various states. The MCC has previously organized events on a regular basis and, at one time, acknowledged the contributions of over 200 Maltese volunteers with a certificate and a gold medal.

Furthermore, our council was instrumental in the establishment of the Federation of Maltese Community Councils of Australia, which held its inaugural meeting in Adelaide.

As the former consul for Malta, I proudly participated in Council meetings for over 17 years to maintain a connection between the council, the community, and the government of Malta. I also had the honour of being elected president of the Council for three terms, totalling nine years.

Now, when the Maltese community in Adelaide is shrinking rapidly the Council has an important part to play in keeping all the associations together. It will appropriate if the Council keeps the community informed of its activities and work cooperatively with the Maltese Journal and with other entities INSTEAD OF IGNORING US.

Past Presidents - Mr. Frans X Falzon, Harry Bugeja, Frank L Scicluna, Robert Debono. Emmanuel Falzon John Farrugia and Edgar Agius (Current).

IS THE MALTESE LANGUAGE FACING EXTINCTION

Is the Maltese language facing extinction, or is this notion overstated? Malta serves as a case study where the indigenous language has not nearly vanished in favor of a more dominant language, such as English, unlike other English-speaking nations like New Zealand and Ireland, where Maori and Irish have nearly disappeared.

Nevertheless, I have encountered individuals claiming that Maltese is on the verge of extinction, as the younger population seems to rarely use it, and staff in shops and restaurants typically do not communicate in it. However, this perspective strikes me as peculiar, given that the educational system still primarily employs Maltese, leading me to question how it is possible for residents of Malta, particularly teenagers who have undergone formal education, to lack proficiency in their native language.

So, is this phenomenon genuinely occurring? Is Maltese indeed declining? Or is this more of an exaggeration? Is the actual decline less severe than commonly asserted? Is the government taking any measures to address this issue?

PRESIDENT EMERITUS MARIE LOUISE COLEIRO PRECA LOVES ALL THE MALTESE AND GOZITANS LIVING IN MALTA, GOZO AND OVERSEAS

AND WE LOVE YOU TOO

Malta still benefited from the contribution of the Maltese diaspora, President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca maintained as she opened a Convention for Maltese Living Abroad in 2015

The convention was the fourth being organised by the government for the Maltese diaspora - the others took place in 1969, 2000 and 2010 - and was held in the backdrop of the centenary celebrations commemorating the Gallipoli campaign and ANZAC Day. Many Australian and New Zealand casualties in the Gallipoli campaign had been evacuated to Malta for medical treatment.

Over 100 diaspora Maltese reside in various countries - including Australia, Belgium, Canada, Egypt, France, Italy, Jordan, Luxembourg, the United Arab Emirates, the UK and the USA..

In her address, Ms Coleiro Preca said that the delegates' presence was clear evidence of how the Maltese managed to succeeded wherever they may be. She said that while Maltese people have ended up living in every corner of the globe, they remained united by culture and by common values.

She insisted that Malta and the Maltese diaspora could contribute to each other's benefit and pledged that the Presidency would remain close to Maltese people living overseas. **"You are a part of us, and we want to help you foster your Maltese identity. Malta still needs you,"** she said. **She concluded by stating that she was proud to be the President of every Maltese person, including those living overseas, and encouraged the diaspora to continue to give visibility to their country of origin.**

Ms Coleiro Preca also augured that the Maltese living abroad would continue visiting Malta, stating that they will always find people ready to welcome them on their arrival.

MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF VICTORIA AND THE MATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

The **National Archives of Australia**, in partnership with the **Maltese Community Council of Victoria (MCCV) Incorporated**, celebrated the successful completion of the project to digitise the paper records of Maltese immigrants.

To mark this significant milestone, the event was attended by His Excellency Clifford Borg-Marks, High Commissioner of Malta; Dr Gioconda Schembri, Consul General of Malta; Madam Antonia Camilleri, President of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria; Mr Patrick Ferry, National Archives Collection Manager; MCCV Executive Members Joseph Matina and Rosemary Attard; as well as the dedicated Maltese volunteers who contributed to this project.

During the visit, His Excellency reviewed several historical documents on display and commended all those involved, noting that the preservation of these records represents a valuable legacy for future generations.

Madam Antonia Camilleri and Mr Patrick Ferry also extended their congratulations to the volunteers. Mrs Camilleri expressed her pride in contributing to a project of such historical importance.

MALTESE CONCERT BAND NSW INC

On **Monday 22nd June 2026, the Maltese Concert Band of NSW, held their Annual General Meeting and the following members were elected as follows:**

President: Robert Cutajar
Vice President: Charles Simiana
Secretary: Paul Rizzo
Treasurer: Stephanie Attard
Committee Assistant: Rosemary Barbara.

We congratulate them all. Thank you goes to the outgoing committee members: Rod Pirotta, Adrian McCann, Charles Cauchi and Karen Attard.

HAPPY PARENTING MALTA
Maria Gauci

Big Classic Concerts in Aide of Happy Parenting.

Outreach and Fund Raising for Therapy for parents going through difficult situations in their family.

While in Australia, Anthony Cauchi and I went to Rockin Xpress concerts in Sydney. Rockin Xpress are Maltese Musicians who are doing a big hit in Australia.

This is why we invited Rockin Xpress so that through their concerts in Malta and Gozo, we reach more and more families to create more awareness on the therapy and other services we offer. At the same time we do fundraising as most of the services we offer are free of charge or very low in price.

Join us for these 2 big concerts by Rockin Xpress, who are specifically coming over from Australia.

At SEASIDE Nightclub Birzebbuga
23 rd July at 7.30pm. Guest singer Josuel Elvis Booking 79834750
and another one in Gozo at Villa Fiorita Marsalforn
30 th July 7.30pm Guest singer Marisa Damato Booking 99565730
These concerts are being supported by Festivals Malta, Rockin Malta 26, Visit Malta, Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights, and Ministry for Gozo.

These matters have been addressed and advocated in the Journal for Maltese Living Abroad for numerous years. • The restoration of the Australia Hall, constructed in Pembroke in 1915
• The refurbishment of the Australian Bungalow
• The inclusion of Maltese Emigration in educational curricula
• The simplification of the process for Maltese citizens abroad to obtain citizenship and passports
• The provision of Identity Cards, Kartanzjan, and similar documents to all Maltese citizens visiting Malta
• The acknowledgment and documentation of the numerous Maltese individuals who have brought honor to Malta in their respective fields
• The safeguarding of the history of Maltese Migration
• The influence of planning regulations on Maltese citizens living abroad Strategies to strengthen the connection between the Council for Maltese Living Abroad and Maltese citizens, associations, and clubs operating in the community

Don't fall for it. Falls can be prevented!

Medication. Know how medicine affects you and discuss side-effects with your pharmacist or doctor.

Keep Active. Exercise regularly to maintain balance, muscle strength and flexibility.

Eyesight. Have your eyes checked once a year and keep glasses clean. Wear separate glasses for reading and moving around.

Lighting. Increase the level of light in your home. Eliminate glare. Use lights when getting up at night.

Footwear. Wear well fitting, flat shoes with non-slip soles.

Slipping hazards. Use non-slip mats or floor treatments. Have handrails installed in areas like bathroom, toilet and at the front and back door.

Tripping hazards. Remove tripping hazards around your home and garden.

Take care. Ask for help when you are having difficulty and don't put yourself at risk.

Getting help. Keep in daily contact with someone who can organise help if you need it, especially in an emergency.

Take action now.

This poster was developed by Stay On Your Feet – Adelaide West, a project funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care as part of the National Falls Prevention for Older People Initiative. The content is used with the kind permission of the Australian Department of Health.

sahealth.sa.gov.au/falls

Government of South Australia
SA Health

Aash Sharma ***Communications and Media Officer/Social Worker - MACSA***

Ernest Ferrante

The French Footprint on the Maltese Language

Maltese holds a unique position in the linguistic world as the only Semitic language written in the Latin alphabet and the only one that holds official status within the European Union. While its grammatical foundation is firmly rooted in Siculo-Arabic, centuries of foreign rule have transformed its vocabulary into a rich tapestry of borrowed words. Among these influences, the French contribution is one of the most intriguing, accounting for an estimated 5% to 10% of the modern Maltese lexicon.

A Brief but Intense Historical Window The presence of French words in Malta is the direct result of two distinct historical periods. The first, and most prolonged, came through the rule of the Order of St John between 1530 and 1798. A significant number of the Grand Masters and knights belonged to the French administrative divisions of the Order, namely France, Provence, and Auvergne. As the ruling elite, these knights introduced French terminology to the islands, particularly in areas concerning administration, military affairs, and high society.

The second wave occurred during the brief but turbulent French occupation of Malta under Napoleon Bonaparte from 1798 to 1800. Although the occupation lasted a mere two years before the British intervened, the radical restructuring of Maltese legal, educational, and political institutions left a lasting impression on the vocabulary of the local population.

Everyday French Loanwords When French words entered the Maltese vernacular, they underwent a process of phonetic adaptation to align with local pronunciation. Over time, they were integrated into the standard Maltese orthography. Today, many words used in daily conversation reveal their distinct Gallic roots:

Bonġu - Good morning or hello (from the French bonjour)
Bonswa – Good evening (from the French bonsoir)
Xufier – Driver (from the French chauffeur)
Garaxx – Garage (from the French garage)
Il-ġugarell – The toy (linked to the French jouet or the colloquial joujou)
Kaxxa – Box or cash register (from the French caisse)
Famuż – Famous (from the French fameux)
Alwetta – Skylark (from the French alouette)

Seamless Grammatical Assimilation

What makes the French influence particularly remarkable is how these borrowed words were fully adopted into the complex grammar of the Maltese language. Rather than remaining foreign insertions, French nouns and adjectives conform entirely to Maltese grammatical structures.

For instance, the plural form of the borrowed word garaxx becomes garaxxijiet (garages), utilising a standard Maltese plural suffix. Through this systematic integration, the language successfully absorbed elements of French culture and speech, transforming them into a permanent feature of Malta's linguistic heritage.

Ernest Ferrante

Admin All-star contributor

Malta's Traditional Wedding Donkeys

Long before modern tourism reshaped the Maltese Islands, the guest of honour at an 18th- or 19th-century wedding wasn't a celebrity or a musician—it was a beautifully groomed donkey.

These animals were the absolute backbone of rural Malta, hauling everything from fresh water and crops to heavy building stone. Because they were so vital to survival, a family donkey was considered a prized possession, often surpassed in value only by the family home.

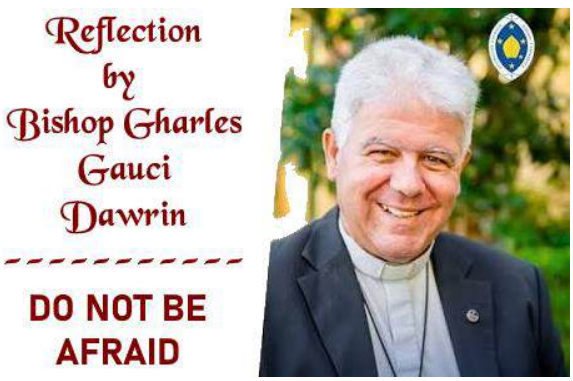
This deep reliance naturally wove the animals into the fabric of local wedding customs:

The Dowry Procession: A bride's dowry was proudly loaded onto a donkey or donkey cart to be transported to her new home.

Symbols of Prosperity: Families draped the animal in their finest white lace, intricate embroidery, vibrant ribbons, and fresh flowers to show respect for the bride and wish the newlyweds a happy life.

A Good Omen: Local lore dictated that a meticulously decorated donkey guaranteed a wealthier, more successful future for the couple.

While these traditional processions have vanished from modern weddings, the festive donkey remains a beloved symbol of old Malta. It serves as a reminder of an era when wealth was defined by hard work and close-knit family values rather than luxury. Today, you can still see this heritage alive in Malta through brightly painted folk-art donkeys, whose vivid patterns preserve the craftsmanship and rural memories of centuries past.



In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us not to be afraid.

In many ways, fear is the opposite of love. It hinders our freedom to act reflectively.

There is a place for fear. If a car is driving towards you, fear and the instinct of self-preservation come into effect, and you get out of the way!

However, living constantly in fear can be very unhealthy.

Jesus reminds us that, ultimately, God is in charge and knows all our needs. God loves us with an incredible love, and God is on our side. Ultimately, nothing can come between us and the love of God.

Prayer and reflection keep reminding us to trust that God is always with us.

God is bigger than our conscience, bigger than our fears, and bigger than anything.

God has also promised to turn everything to good for us.

Love overcomes our insecurities and our lack of self-appreciation. Love overcomes all. God is love

RUĠĠATA TAL-LEWZ MORR
ALMOND CORDIAL Malta Links

Now that the summer is starting to make it's mark, I always like to have a bit of Ruġġata tal-Lewz in my refrigerator, diluted with water and ready to pour and enjoy. It's the perfect thirst quencher and goes down like honey on those hot hot days when it feels like you're being cooked from the inside out.

Back in the 70's, my mum would take my sister, brother and me to Valletta on those well known hot Maltese summer days, and after a morning at the market, we would always look forward to going to Zachary Street in Valletta for that chilled ruġġata that would cool our senses or rather induce instant brain freeze. I believe that shop no longer sells ruġġata there as Valletta's changed a lot since the 70's.

There would always be a crowd huddled at that little corner window shop with everybody shouting *"Hey, boy, it's my turn"* while waving their liras about to get "the boy's" attention.

And with great patience he would serve everyone with a smile, knowing that in that heat, everyone's hot temper would be just about ready to explode.

This is the home made version of our delectable almond cordial...

It might seem like it has a lot of sugar, but don't forget that you have to dilute this and you only use about a quarter cup to about eight ounces of water and ice!

Ingredients
5 cups water
600gr sugar
lemon rind
12 cloves
1-2 sticks cinnamon
2 tsp almond essence (or more to taste)
1 tsp vanilla essence
evaporated milk (about a quarter cup)

Method
Place the water, sugar, lemon rind, cloves and cinnamon in a pot and let it boil.
Reduce the heat and let simmer for 15 minutes.
Remove from heat.
When the mixture cools, pass it through a sieve to remove rind and cloves.
Add essences and a little bit of evaporated milk.
Pour in clean bottles and place them in the fridge.
Dilute with water to taste.

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MALTESE ASSOCIATION NORTHERN SUBURBS VICTORIA

Despite the cold and wet Melbourne weather on Saturday evening, 20 June, members, friends and supporters of the Maltese Association Northern Suburbs gathered for another successful and enjoyable Bingo and Dinner Night.

Congratulations and sincere thanks go to President Giancunto Cassar, Vice President and Treasurer Mrs Rita Pullicino, the committee, and all the volunteers and helpers whose dedication ensured the evening ran smoothly from beginning to end.

One of the most pleasing aspects of the night was once again seeing members of our community willingly step forward whenever extra assistance was needed. This spirit of volunteerism is something that makes our Association special and helps create the warm and welcoming atmosphere that everyone enjoys.

Long before guests arrived, the committee and volunteers were already hard at work setting up the hall, preparing the kitchen and ensuring everything was ready. Throughout the evening, the kitchen was buzzing with activity while committee members and helpers worked tirelessly behind the scenes to look after everyone's needs.

Guests were treated to a traditional Maltese starter of Ħobż biż-Żejt, followed by a delicious dinner of chicken, vegetables and roast potatoes. Special dietary requirements were carefully catered for, with fish meals prepared and served where required. The committee also ensured that refreshments, tea and coffee were readily available during dinner and afterwards, together with dessert for all to enjoy.

Events such as these do not happen without many hours of preparation before the doors open and continued work after everyone has gone home. While every committee member contributes in their own way, special recognition should also be given to Mrs Rita Pullicino, whose responsibilities extend well beyond the event itself through her administrative, financial and editorial work for the Association. Her dedication, together with the efforts of the entire committee and volunteers, plays an important role in the ongoing success of our organisation.

As expected, the raffle ticket sales during the Bingo breaks generated plenty of excitement, and later in the evening the lucky winners went home with some wonderful prizes.

My role on the night was once again to capture the occasion through photographs. Additional photographs will also appear in the next edition of the Association's newsletter, edited by Mrs Rita Pullicino.

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to another memorable evening of friendship, community spirit and Maltese hospitality. We now look forward to the Association's next gathering.

Emmanuel Brincat – Melbourne, Australia

THE CHURCH THAT THE MALTESE BUILT IN LOCKLEYS SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Parish of Lockleys and the Maltese Community Chaplaincy in South Australia trace their origins to a single individual, Fr. Giles Ferriggi. This journey began in the years immediately following World War II, as Maltese individuals began to emigrate worldwide in search of better opportunities, given the scarcity of jobs in their homeland. Fr. Giles, along with other Maltese Franciscans, extended their support to these emigrants, arriving in Adelaide in 1948.

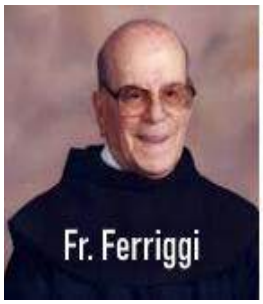
The then Archbishop of Adelaide, His Grace Matthew Beovich, provided him with accommodation at Archbishop's House in the city and appointed him as the Chaplain for the Maltese Community. A year later, Fr. Sebastian Camilleri joined him, and both were granted a parcel of land featuring a large house in Lockleys. The chapel within this Franciscan residence became a place of worship for the local community, serving both residents and numerous Maltese migrants. The aspirations and vision of the initial Franciscans began to materialize.

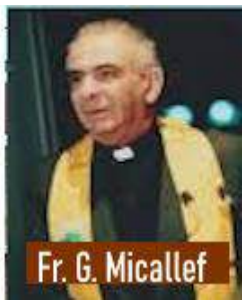
Their pastoral efforts expanded significantly, leading to the arrival of another priest from Malta, Fr. Peter Paul Mejlaq, in November 1950. A Nissen Hut was constructed adjacent to the house to function as a church, which was blessed by Archbishop Matthew Beovich on August 3, 1952, marking the establishment of the New Parish. Malta continued to send Friars to assist in the parish's operations, totaling fifteen to date. In 1960, the construction of a larger church dedicated to Christ the King commenced, and it was officially blessed on September 3, 1961, while the Nissen Hut transitioned to serve as a Parish Community Hall.

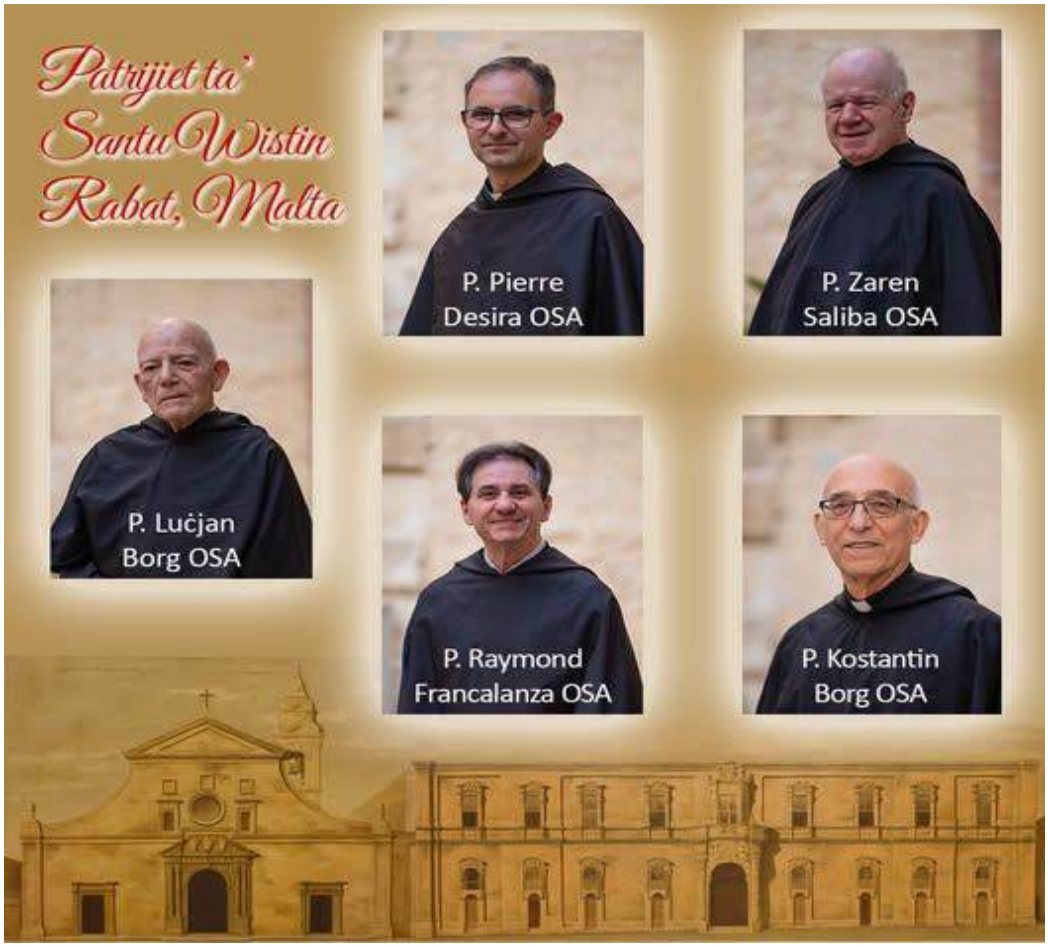
To complete the vision, St. Francis Primary School was established and officially opened in 1966, followed by the construction of a new hall to replace the Nissen Hut in 1980. Additionally, in 1987, the Maltese Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus began operating St. Raphael's Home for the Aged on the same grounds adjacent to the Friary, and in 1990, they relocated to the old Friary House, establishing it as their Regional House, where the Friars also resided.

Here is the list of Franciscan priests who served at the Christ the King Parish, Lockleys SA

Fr. Giles Ferriggi 1948 – 2000,
Fr. Sebastian Camilleri 1949-53 and 1992-2003,
Fr. PeterPaul Meilaq 1950-60 and 1976-1078,
Fr. Vittorin Alessandro 1952-54,
Fr. Benedict Ellul Mercer 1957-1958,
Fr. Leopold Farrugia 1962-75, Fr. Philip Briffa 1962-68,
Fr. Marcellinus Mejlaq 1967-75,
Fr. Edward Zammit 1972-75, 1978-83 and 1994-2003,
Fr. Emidius Cremona 1977-78,
Fr. Felix Mansueto 1979-1991,
Fr. Richard Grech 1983-84,
Fr. Godfrey Micallef 1987-93,
Fr. Anthony Vella 1992-95 and
Fr. Gabriel Micallef 1996- 2019

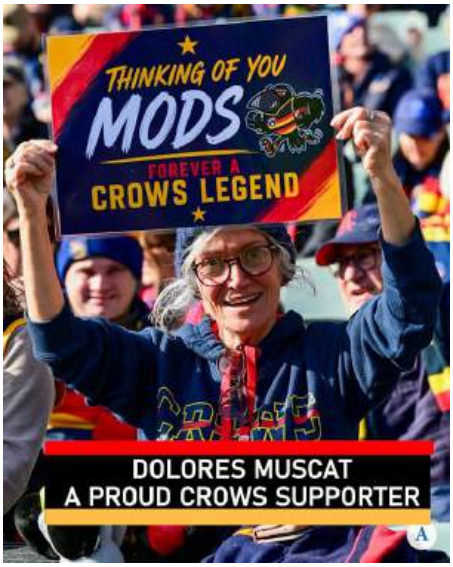






AUGUSTINIAN CHURCH – RABAT

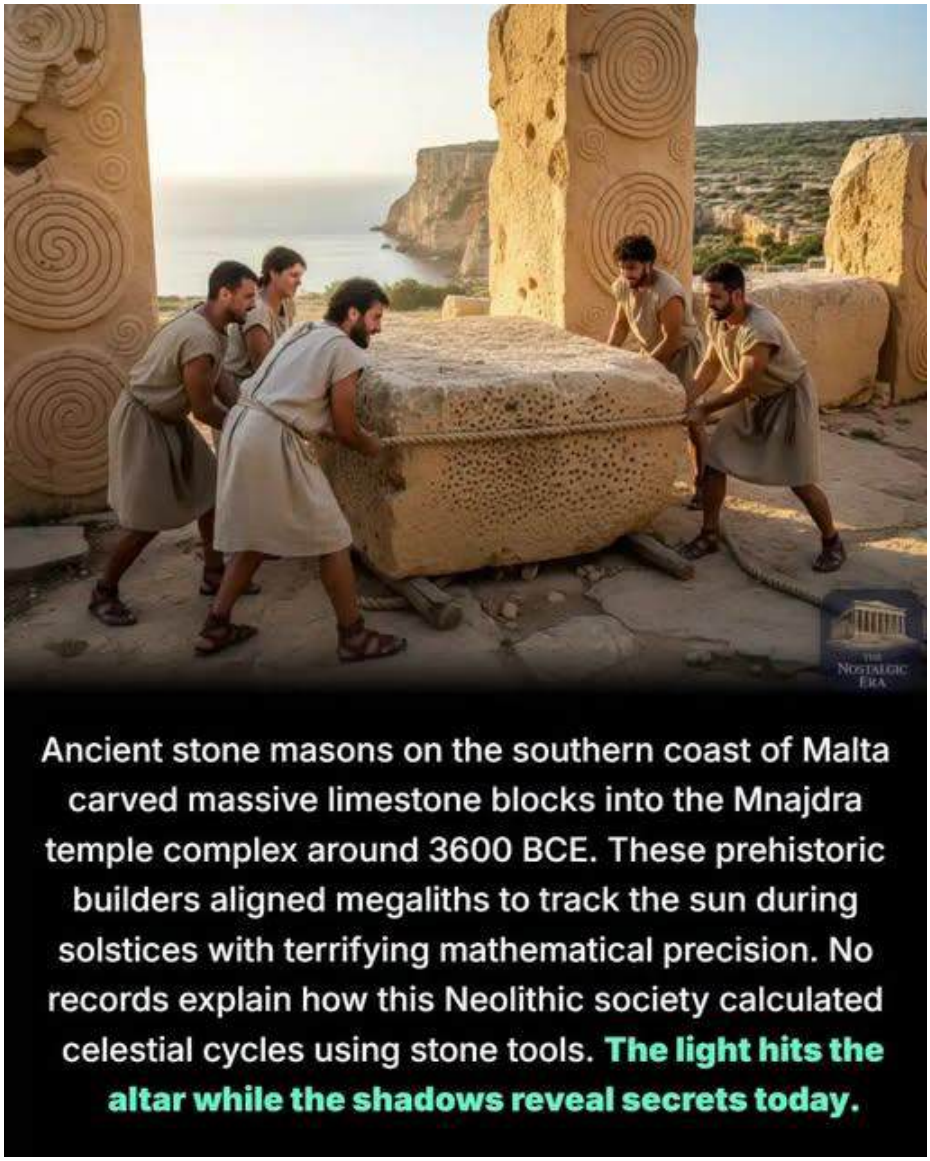
A new COMMUNITY within the convent of the Augustinian Friars in Rabat Malta. As the 2026 Provincial Chapter of the Augustinian Friars in Malta has closed, the distribution of the convents has just been officially announced. We welcome among us Fr. Pierre Desira, Prior of the community, Fr. Żaren Saliba, Fr. Luċjan Borġ and Fr. Raymond Francalanza, Rector of the Church of St. Martin in Bahrija. Also joining our community, Fr. Konstantin Borg who is in the retirement home at Villa Messina due to health reasons. We congratulate these friars on their presence among us here in Rabat. We also greet Fr. Raphael Abdilla who after fourteen years among us, was asked to join the community of the Augustinian friars in Rabat Gozo. While we thank Fr. Raphael we continue to pray for him.



AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE ADELAIDE CROWS

Thousands of Adelaide fans, including Maltese Australian Dolores Muscat (pictured left), applauded at the six-minute mark of the game against the Demons to acknowledge Tony Modra, who wore that number during most of his 165-game, 588-goal career at the Crows and Fremantle.

AFL legend Tony Modra is recovering in stable condition at the Flinders Medical Centre after a near-fatal truck crash near Victor Harbor. The family released a statement on June 22 confirming he has undergone multiple surgeries and is making encouraging progress, although there is still a long road to recovery.



Ancient History & Knowledge ·

MEGALITHIC TEMPLES OF Mlt

The southern cliffs of Malta hide a mathematical anomaly that predates the Egyptian pyramids by a millennium. This is Mnajdra, a complex of three temples built from colossal limestone slabs starting around 3600 BCE.

These structures are not merely religious houses, they function as a giant, prehistoric clock, built to capture the exact movement of the stars and the sun.

On the morning of the equinox, the sun passes directly through the main doorway, illuminating the central axis with a golden beam. This alignment is perfect, leaving no room for measurement error.

Builders utilized hard coralline limestone for the exterior walls to withstand the salty Mediterranean winds. For the intricate interior decorations, they chose softer globigerina limestone, which allowed for delicate pitted patterns.

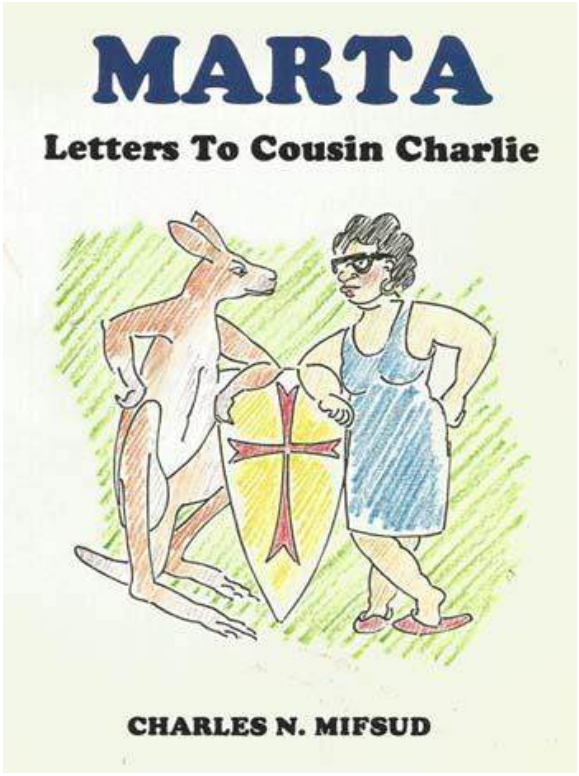
This choice of materials reveals a deep understanding of geology and durability that seems out of place for a society without metal tools. They moved stones weighing several tons across rugged terrain.

Scholars still debate the specific purpose of the pitted designs found on the interior slabs. Some believe they represent early calendars, while others see them as purely decorative elements from a lost ritual.

The culture that created these wonders vanished from the Maltese islands without a clear explanation. They left behind their megaliths but took their history with them into the soil.

Modern architects struggle to explain how the curved rooms were roofed without the use of the arch. The structural engineering required for such spans is rarely seen in other Neolithic sites.

We walk through these corridors today and witness the same sunbeams that greeted the original inhabitants five thousand years ago. The stone remains, but the voice of the architect is silenced by time.



A BIT OF HUMOUR
EXTRACT FROM THE BOOKLET OF CHRALES N. MIFSUD (NSW) - 1996

Gem From Mackay - Cousin Marta loves keeping in touch - sharing her experiences and wisdom - her letters to me are real gems. This is the first of ten gems from Mackay.

My dear Charlie, today is Holy day, *Friday the Big* (Il-Gimgha l-Kbira). It's me, Marta. How are you and where *is your head* (Fejnha rasek?). We are all right. Since we came back to Mackay from your place in Sydney, Toni, my Toni has been very busy. He throw himself into the work *with his soul and body* (intefa ghax-xoghol B'ruhu u b'gismu). Not like his brother Pawlu, he does not want to work; *he just turns with the clothes (idur bil-hwejjeg).*

Toni get very cranky, he complain all the time for his brother, I tell you *he takes my head* (johodli rasi). His friend Salvu, you know him, he went back to Malta, ticket one way because he said *he is going for everything*(ser jmur ghal kollox). You know Gamri il-Ginger - the one who *comes from us* (li jigi minna), miskin, he is very sick in hospital. I go to see him and I tell him - "Gamri *don 't cut your heart* (taqtax qalbek)" and he say to me allura "as *we went - we went*" (kif morna, morna).

Our son Peppi, he is 34 now, I wish he marry, I always pray he find a nice girl then I can *rest my brain* (inserrah mohhi) before Toni and *me close our eyes* (qabel nghalqu ghajnejna), because you know we only have two children, Peppi and Nina, and Toni and me *love them as much as the light of our eyes* (inhobbuhom daqs id-dawkl t'ghajnejna).

Our daughter Nina still the same you know, she cannot stop eating, *her eyes are bigger than her belly* (ghajneha ikbar minn zaqqha). She is going to get engaged to a fellow, a Maltese chap, his name is Victor *Garlick* (Theuma). He is a very nice boy. He is a big fella too *he brought his soul a lot* (gab ruhhu sewwa), and he has his own business, you know, *he works for his head* (jahdem ghar-rasu).

His family are very nice people, you know - they *are people of their things* (nies tal-affari taghhom). But not his brother Guzi, he never works, just gets money from his father - oh yes, he knows how *to eat the head of the fish* (jaf jiekol ir-ras tal-huta). Last week he came here and I told him - "why don't you find a job?" Anyway, I made for him and I told his father, I said "everyone *should think of his head* (kulhadd jahseb ghal rasu)." I did this because these people , when Nina an Victor marry are going to be *people from the inside* (isiru ta' gewwa).

Yesterday Victor took Nina and me into town to look at a wedding dress, I was so afraid, he drives like a lunatic and *my bowels went down in my feet* (imsarni nizlu f'saqaja). I said to him, "Proset hey, there isn't any for you" (mhemmx ghalik) and he just laughed. I was mad so I made for him also. But Nina she *jumps for Victor* (Nina taqbes ghal Victor) so I told her "Nina, don 't take for you (tiehux ghalik)" but I take a taxi back home.

Charlie, I tell you all this because you are my cousin and *you come from me* (tigi minni). Insomma, better enough today. Sahha and *leave your head where you find it* (halli rasek fejn issibha). -

Your cousin Marta FROM Mackay Queensland Australia

OLD MMALTESE FOLKLORE

Maltese old traditions are a testament to the island's rich cultural heritage. These traditions are deeply rooted in the Maltese way of life and are celebrated through various cus toms and practices. here are a tradition that is not observed anymore:

In old Maltese tradition, dressing children as Franciscan friars was a deeply rooted custom built around a vow, called a *wegħda*.

When a child fell seriously ill, parents would pray to a saint (Saint Anthony being a common choice) and make a promise: if the child recovered, they'd dress them in a miniature replica of the friar's habit.

That's the heart of it. The *wegħda* was a sacred promise, not just a gesture. Once the child got better, they wore the habit for a set period of time, honoring the deal that had been struck. The outfit itself was pretty specific.

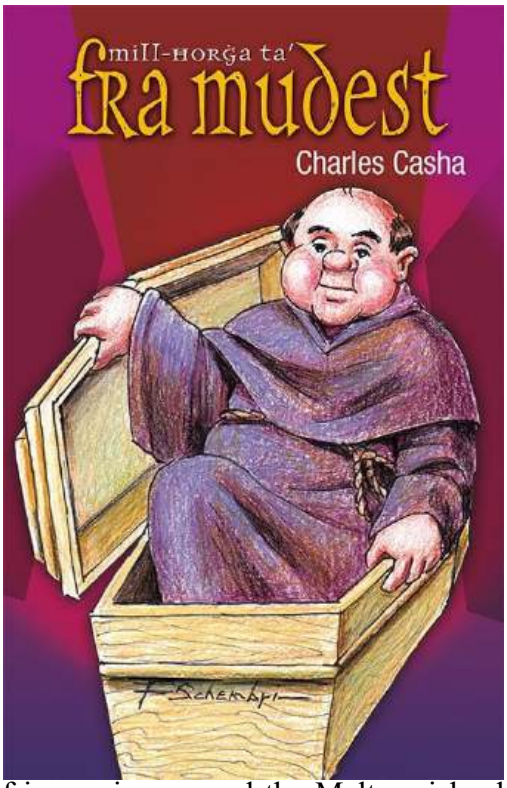
A brown or grey tunic, with a rope tied around the waist (called a *cinturin*), mirroring the actual look of the Franciscan order. Small children walking around in these little habits must have been quite a sight.

But this wasn't costume play. It was a public expression of gratitude, a way of showing the whole community that your child had been healed through divine intervention. Catholic faith ran deep in Maltese daily life, and this custom made that visible in one of the most personal ways imaginable: through your own kid.

The *wegħda* sat right at the intersection of desperation, devotion, and relief, the kind of thing parents do when medicine runs out and prayer is all that's left.

The Beloved literary friar Fra Mudest

The bumbling monk Fra Mudest – whom many will remember from Charles Casha's children's stories is nearly 60 years old and his creator remains proud of his contribution to Maltese children's literature.



Charles Casha - who first gave birth to the Fra Mudest character in a 1967 edition of the magazine Children's Own - flags up the genteel element of the Fra Mudest stories as one of the reasons why the character has remained a cross-generational favourite amongst Maltese readers.

"According to what many readers have told me, the simplicity and humour found in the stories appeals to all: young and old. But principally, it's the character himself who seems to have struck a chord in people's hearts," Casha said.

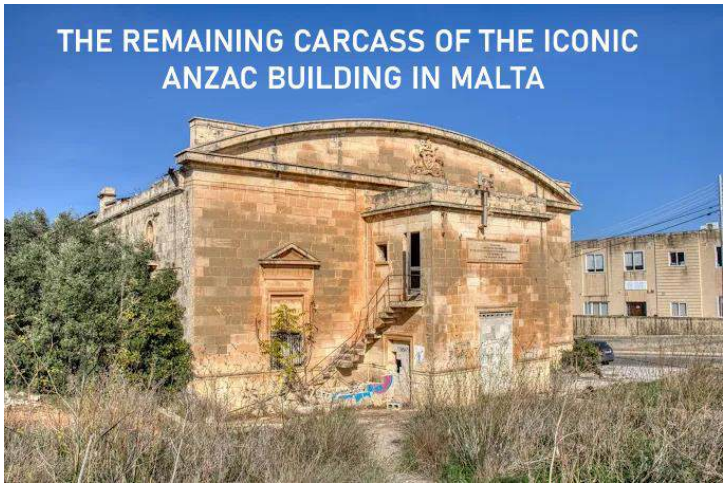
The genesis of the character was both personal, and accidental. Drawing on his own experience of witnessing friars going around the Maltese islands - "quite a few years back, these friars were a common sight in Malta and Gozo, going around the village asking of alms" - Casha dreamt up the character after the editor of Children's Own tasked him with creating a story based on the name 'Fra Mudest'.

"It was a one-story commission, originally, and the name was supplied by the editor. I was given carte blanche as to how the character and the story were to develop. Instinctively, since I was born and raised in Marsa - where there was a community of monks - I based the characters on what was familiar to me." Casha's Fra endeared himself to readers thanks to his humble and well-meaning - though often accident-prone - manner.

Most of the stories hinge on harmless incidents and misunderstandings. In one story, for example, Fra Mudest gets into a panic because he misunderstands an Irish visitor to the convent when he says that 'the cock is dead' - understanding the accented speech to mean 'the cook is dead'. In another, the Fra accidentally drops some food on the Pirjol's new habit, and promises to wash it by the evening.

But matters are only made worse when Fra Mudest burns the habit as he's ironing it - and his solution only leads to more trouble after he tries to replace the damaged outfit with another that was left behind by another monk, but that proves to be too short.

Asked whether he believes the Fra Mudest stories remain relevant both to children nowadays, and in light of recent developments in the publishing industry, Casha - who has won five awards during his five-decade career - suggested that perhaps, it is the nostalgic nature of the stories that helps them survive throughout changing cultural attitudes and literary trends.



AUSTRALIA HALL – A SAD CARCASS OF A HISTORICAL BUILDING IN MALTA

The former Australia Hall in Pembroke is today a sad carcass of a once dignified public building, with its interior totally gutted out and left in a state of utter dilapidation. During World War I (1914-1918), Malta had a special role to play as a nursing station within the Mediterranean where several hospitals and convalescent camps were set up to tend to the casualties of the war. Australia Hall was built in 1915 by the Australian Branch of the Red Cross who raised funds to finance a combined recreation centre/theatre building that would serve to entertain wounded soldiers belonging to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC).

In its heyday the hall could accommodate up to two thousand men as stage productions, dances, and other forms of recreation were regularly held there. Later a library and reading room were introduced and around 1921 a projection room was added to the structure so that the hall could also be used as a cinema. When the British military facilities in St Andrew's Barracks were closed down in 1978, it was returned to the Maltese government and transferred to the Labour Party in exchange for other property. In December 1998, a fire gutted the hall's entire roofing system of metal trusses and sheeting. Only the external masonry shell has survived.

Today the roofless shell of a building is vulnerable to the natural elements and vandals have left their marks on what remains of the building. Public consciousness and awareness of the need to safeguard our historic architectural heritage has increased notably in recent times. However, I suspect that our appreciation for buildings and structures dating to the time of the Order of St John is distinctly greater than that of British colonial architecture, this being even more so in the case of military architecture. British military buildings and complexes have explicit political associations loaded with the trappings of colonial rule. In asserting our identity as an independent island state we seem to have unconsciously rejected the legacy of our former colonial masters.

This is the sad predicament of an important part of our architectural heritage. Australia Hall is one of the few remaining buildings reminding us of our British and Commonwealth heritage. Information received from the Australian High Commission confirms that in 1915 the Australian Red Cross donated 2000 pounds for a hall to be built in the village of Pembroke intended to be used as a rest and recreational facility for the thousands of war convalescents. The facility was also used for shows between the wars and during WW2. In the 1970s after the departure of the British forces, the Malta Labour Party took over the building and used it as their office. The building was subsequently abandoned. On the 18th April 1997 the building was scheduled as grade 2 in terms of Structure Plan Policy UCO 7. On the 23rd May 2005 an application was submitted to MEPA by Perit Joe Cassar on behalf of its owner Lawrence Fino for a supermarket. I believe the restoration of the building will be a good project to be completed FOR THE SAKE OF Malta being called NURSE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.

The Voice of Malta

LEADER'S WORD

THIS BRAVE LITTLE PAPER

EDITORIAL

GREETINGS

ALL MALTESE PATRIOTS WISH THE VOICE OF MALTA A HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND MANY OTHER RETURNS OF THE DAY. FOR ALTHOUGH ONLY ONE YEAR OLD THE VOICE IS ALREADY A VETERAN IN OUR STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE.

THE VOICE OF MALTA 1960

(historically known in Maltese as It-Leħen ta' Malta) carries a unique legacy in twentieth-century publishing, functioning both as a political weapon on the island and an intermittent cultural link for the Maltese diaspora.

Political Roots and Legal Battles Established during the tense post-colonial landscape of the late 1950s, the paper served as an influential weekly publication for the Malta Labour Party (MLP). From 1959 to 1970, it was edited by the prominent political figure Dr. Patrick Holland, who later served as a government minister and President of the MLP.arkivji.org.mt

During the intense socio-political conflict between the Labour Party and the Maltese Church in the 1960s, the paper was a central battleground for free speech. A famous constitutional dispute arose when a government circular prohibited employees from bringing The Voice of Malta into public hospitals. The case eventually climbed to the Privy Council, which famously ruled that the ban unlawfully infringed upon freedom of expression and the right to distribute information.

Beyond the shores of the archipelago, The Voice of Malta found a second life among migrant communities, particularly in Australia.

Published intermittently from 1956 onward, it catered to the immense wave of Maltese families settling in suburbs like western Sydney.

It routinely combined hard-hitting political reviews from the home front with a dedicated literary supplement that kept traditional Maltese prose, poetry, and cultural history alive for readers living thousands of miles away.

Run largely by self-made, volunteer journalists from the community, the paper remains an important archive of post-war Maltese identity, reflecting both the fierce political polarisation of its era and a deep-seated pride in Maltese heritage.

MALTESE QUEEN OF VICTORIES BAND OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.- 1997

FRONT ROW (SEATED) LEFT TO RIGHT: J. Chetcuti, C. Caviuolo, C. Chircop, M. Axisa, M. Camilleri, A Mifsud, A Borg, S. Pace, O. Farrugia, R. Saliba, M. Chetcuti
SECOND ROW: R. Borg, J. Axisa, C. Borg, C. Baldacchino, R. Grima, M. Mifsud, T. Borg, C. Chetcuti, R. Saliba, M. Carabott, R. Saliba, P. Cremona, A Caruana, J. Vella, S. Carabott, E. Camilleri, T. Cassar, R. Borg, M. Mifsud, M. Follet, J. Camilleri, A Borg, S. Carabott
THIRD ROW: M. Camilleri, P. Camilleri, C. Bezzina, J. Mallia J. Borg, J. Fenech, J. Chetcuti, O. Farrugia, C. Caruana, L. Mifsud, C. Borg, M. Farrugia, A Chetcuti,
FOURTH ROW: S Axisa, G. Pace, R. Saliba, R. DeBono, R. Spiteri, D. Debono, A Margheritte, R. Farrugia, G. Bugeja, P. Cortis, J. Chetcuti

The Maltese Community of SA organised this function to help Malta during the destruction of WW2

The photo above shows the main participants in this unique occasion:
Standing from left to right: ConnieVella, Eris Vella, Jane Sciberras, Doris Camilleri, Jeane Camilleri, Rita Schembri, Mary Camilleri, Doris Sciberrras and Mary Grima.
Sitting: Amy ?, Clare ? and Rita Grima.
[The information and photo supplied by Mrs. Rita Muscat nee Schembri and Mr. Daniel Caruana]

Repeat performanceat Maltafest L-Imnarja 2026, La Valette Social Centre BLACKTOWN NSW

I AM SURE YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL
SEND IT TO US AND SHARE IT WITH OTHERS