MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

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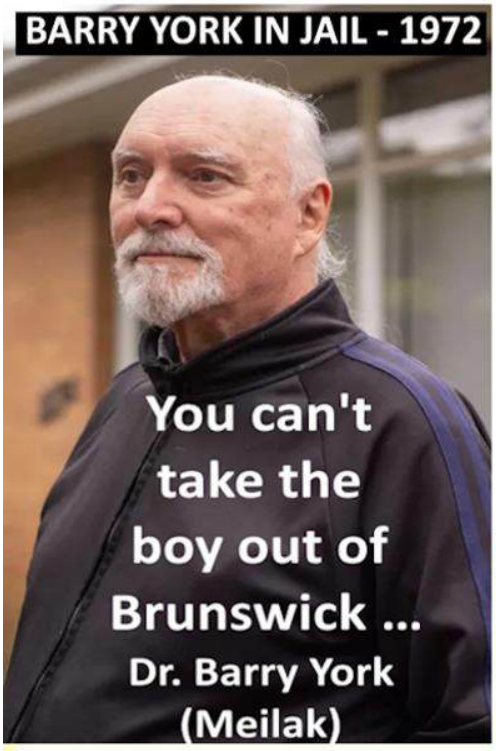
FR TARCISIO MICALLEF mssp

A lifetime of service to the Maltese Community of Australia



COURAGE OF A MALTESE MIGRANT

By Rena Xuereb

AUGUST 11, 2026

Australian Bureau of Statistics

CENSUS EVERY ANSWER MATTERS

WHY IS THE MALTESE CROSS INCLUDED IN QUEENSLAND'S EMBLEM?

I trust this email finds you well.

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Every Answer Matters

2026 Census Tuesday 11 August 2026

As you will already be aware, the Australian Census 2026 will take place on 11 August 2026.

Please help spread the word within your local Maltese communities and networks in relation to the importance of reporting Maltese descent on the Census form.

The data collected through the Census plays an important role in ensuring that the size, geographical distribution and contribution of the Maltese community in Australia are properly recognised.

It also assists governments, service providers and community organisations in understanding the needs of the community and in supporting ongoing and new initiatives that benefit Australians of Maltese descent, including cultural, language, broadcasting and community services.

As such, Australians of Maltese descent, including those who may identify with more than one ancestry, should be encouraged to indicate their Maltese ancestry when completing the Census.

Thank you for your continued support of the interests of the Maltese community in Australia.

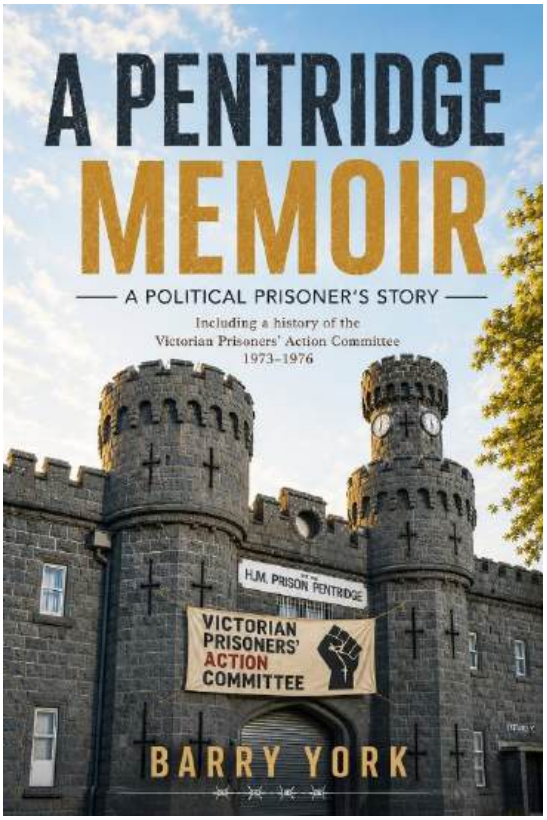
Kind regards,

Mark Anthony Abela Counsellor Deputy High Commissioner and Consul ACT - AUSTRALIA

MAKE YOUR
MALTESE
HERITAGE
COUNT
Australian Census 2026
Your voice. Your heritage. Our future.
The Australian Census helps build a stronger, more inclusive Australia.
Let's make sure the Maltese community is seen, recognised and represented.
CENSUS DAY
TUESDAY
11
AUGUST
2026
1. LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME
If you or members of your household speak Maltese—even occasionally—or are learning and using Maltese at home, ensure that Maltese is recorded in the Census.
Kelimna Malti!
2. ANCESTRY / HERITAGE
If you have Maltese ancestry or heritage, please remember to record Maltese (and/or Malta, where appropriate) in the ancestry question.
Every response counts.
Your participation helps recognise the contribution of the Maltese community to Australia's multicultural society and supports future planning for community services, language programs and cultural initiatives.
Together, let's keep our heritage alive and strong for generations to come.
BE COUNTED. BE PROUD. MAKE YOUR MALTESE HERITAGE COUNT.

GO TO JAIL

Barry York



Barry York remembers laying on the bed in his tiny cell at Melbourne's Pentridge prison and hearing prisoners being beaten by guards.

"You would hear the thuds, the kicks, the screams; men screaming out 'stop'," he tells ABC RN's The History Listen.

It was 1972 and Mr York was 21 years old.

The 'memoir' of my time in Pentridge as a political prisoner in 1972. It's actually more than that as it includes an autobiographical section about growing up in Brunswick. And a section about my involvement in prison reform after my release.

Also, an 'affair of the heart' that made my prison time much harder.

Reviewers (Ray Mooney, ex-prisoner) -

"I've read probably every book written about Pentridge and this is among the best... Pentridge is described not as an abstract symbol of punishment but as a living, breathing institution, ruled by rigid routine, isolation, fear and the ever-present threat of violence.

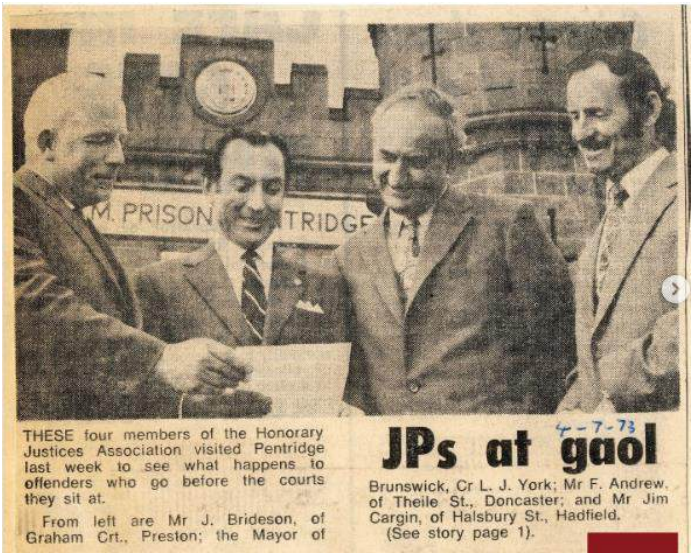
Barry captures the monotony of endless hours locked alone in a cell, the dehumanising rituals of prison life, the sounds of men being beaten beyond the walls, and the quiet resilience of prisoners who struggled to retain their dignity...

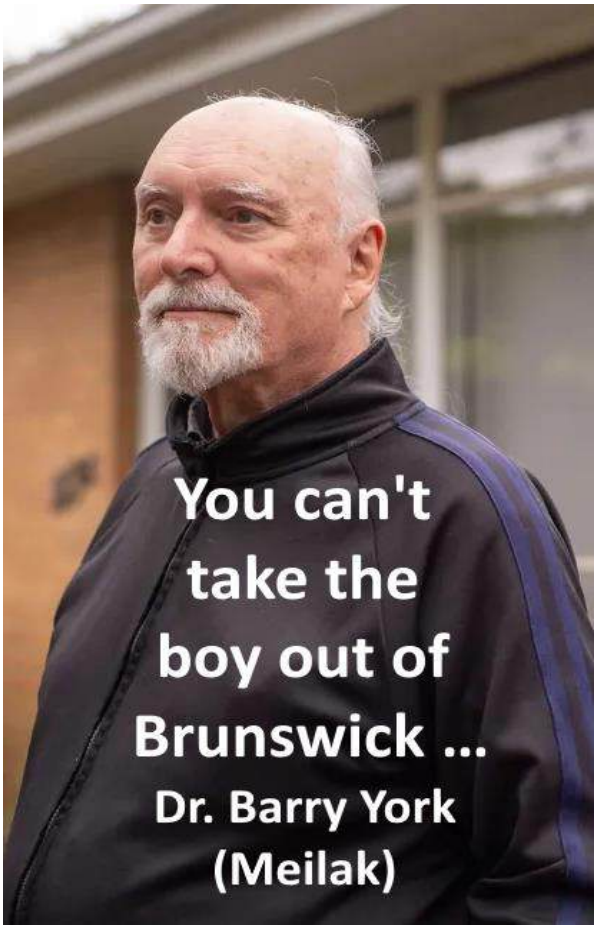
His account is neither sensational nor self-pitying. Few books offer such an intimate window into Pentridge, making Barry's account an invaluable historical record as well as a compelling personal memoir". (Peter Cochrane, La Trobe activist, early 1970s) -

"This is no ordinary prison memoir. It is a deeply personal reminiscence - self-castigating at times and searingly honest throughout; reflecting on the innocence of youth, of love and loss at La Trobe, on the cost of growing up with domestic violence in the home, and on the emotional burden of these unresolved traumas on his time 'inside'".For enquiries and orders:

Barry York, PO Box 6170, O'Connor, ACT, 2602 email: barryyork554@gmail.com

MALTESE/AUSTRALIAN ACTIVIST BARRY YORK IN PRISON





Thanks Barry York for sharing your story!

Melbourne's Pentridge Gaol cast a long shadow in Brunswick as well as Coburg. In 1972, I did six weeks there for contempt of court, with two comrades who were also rebelling against authority on the campus of La Trobe University. On our release in August 1972, the 'La Trobe Three' became active in prison reform, based on our experiences on the inside. Cr. LJ York is Barry's father.

In 1973, my father was Mayor of Brunswick and a Justice of the Peace. He organised for a deputation of the Honorary Justices Association to visit Pentridge. Needless to say, he was influenced by me, as an activist in the Prisoners Action Committee. I had forewarned him that the prison officials would show them the 'better' parts of the gaol and suggested that, during the tour, he ask to see 'C' Division and 'H' (Hell) Division. I also told him that they would be shown the lifers' cells in 'A' Division, where men doing life had certain privileges, including televisions in their cells. I suggested he ask to see my old cell - 108 - in 'A' Division. He told me after the visit to the gaol how the officials did indeed show the deputation the cells with television sets etc, with the implication that these were the norm. He said they were surprised when he asked to see cell 108.

They asked him why cell 108, and were even more surprised when he replied 'Because that was my son's cell'. The report of the JPs' visit to the gaol appeared in the Brunswick Sentinel, or perhaps the Coburg Courier, on 4 July 1973. I was in remand for five days and concur with my father's observations about that section. I met men there who were innocent until proven guilty yet had spent months in the filthy conditions. I used to pass by 'C' Division each morning, en route to the gaol kitchen to collect breakfast for 'A' Division, and saw the 'C' Division men lined up with their 'shit buckets' to be emptied into a 'vat' in the 'C' yard. They were mostly in for victimless crimes, vagrancy, that sort of thing.

The Pastizzi Bakehouse
8h ·
🚐Goulburn to Canberra... we're on our way!📣
The Pastizzi Bakehouse is hitting the road for home deliveries on Wednesday, July 29! If you've been craving authentic Maltese pastizzi, now's your chance to stock up without leaving home.
📍Delivering to suburbs between Goulburn and Canberra
📲Order through our ONLINE APP (link in our profile)

🚚FREE delivery on orders $60+ (otherwise $15 delivery fee)
⏳Bookings are limited, so don't leave it until the last minute!
Place your order and we'll bring Malta straight to your doorstep. Tag your friends and families in these regions

REMEMBERING THE MALTESE MARINERS LOST THEIR LIVES DURING WORLD WAR II

During World War II, Maltese seamen and naval personnel once again suffered heavy casualties at sea while serving in the Royal Navy, the Royal Naval Reserve, and the Merchant Navy.
Hundreds of Maltese sailors, stewards, cooks, and mariners perished in maritime action across the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and along dangerous convoy routes. Because Malta was a primary naval base for the Mediterranean Fleet, Maltese crew members were stationed aboard major warships, auxiliary vessels, and merchant ships.
Key losses involving Maltese mariners during WWII included:

HMS Glorious (June 1940), an aircraft carrier sunk by German battleships off Norway, where several Maltese crew members were among those killed.
HMS Neptune (December 1941), a cruiser that ran into an enemy minefield off Tripoli, resulting in the loss of over 700 men, including a significant Maltese contingent.
HMS Penelope and other Royal Navy cruisers and destroyers active in the Mediterranean, which carried local Maltese sailors in various roles and suffered severe losses during surface actions and air strikes.

Supply Convoys and Merchantmen, where Maltese merchant mariners served aboard cargo ships attempting to break Axis blockades. Dozens of merchant ships were torpedoed or bombed, claiming the lives of many local sailors.

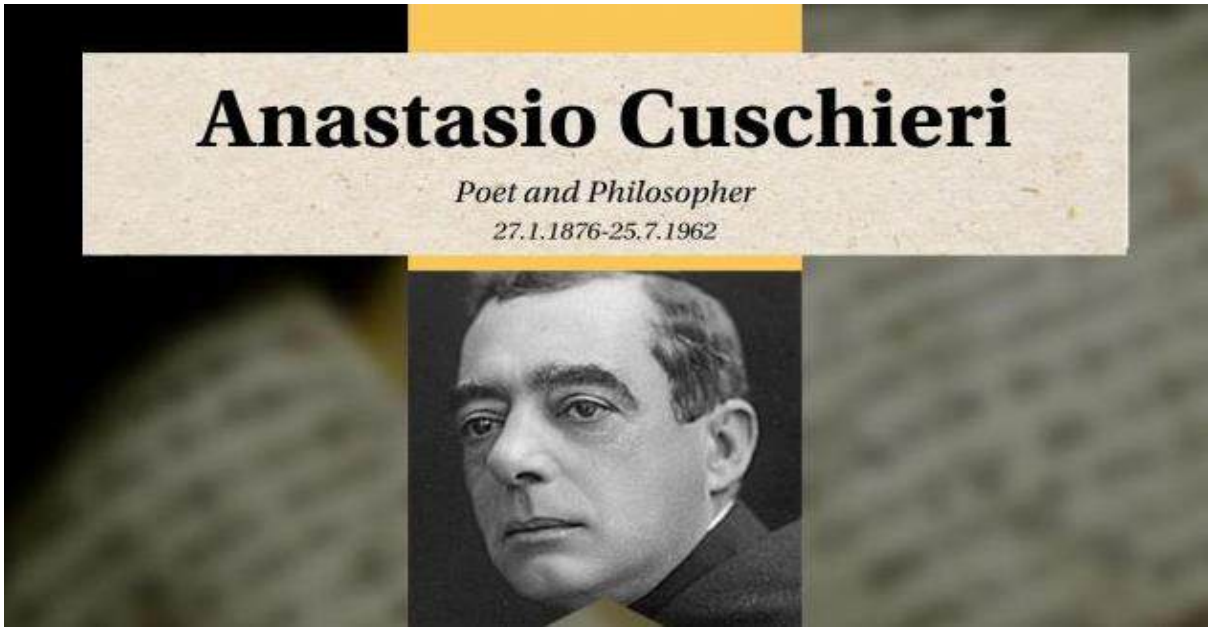
The names of many of these fallen seamen are inscribed on naval memorials such as the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Chatham Naval Memorial, and the Malta Memorial at Floriana, which honours Commonwealth servicemen lost at sea or in the air with no known grave.

Reflection by Bishop Gharles Gauci Dawrin

IT IS NOT ABOUT HAVING MORE

I hear a lot on the radio and television, and in other places, about the need to spend money.

I realise that spending needs to happen in a healthy society so that all can benefit.
However, there are a number of traps that we can fall into regarding having more things.
We live in a consumer culture.
Also, individualism affects so much of what we do.
We tend to worship the ego.
There is so much about 'me' in our Western culture.
We grow up in a capitalistic and individualistic worldview.
There is much about being in control, about self-determination, about having more, about being important.
These values are often in stark contrast to what the Gospel sees as important.
In Philippians 2: 5-8, Jesus, by a free choice, empties Himself and makes Himself a servant of all.
He also tells us that foxes have holes, birds have nests, and the 'Son of Man' has nowhere to lay his head.
He tells his disciples to leave everything and to follow Him.
He tells the rich young man, "If you want to be perfect, go sell everything and give your money to the poor, then come follow Me".
It doesn't mean that we all have to live like St. Francis and give everything away.
Of course, if we have families to support and children to educate, we need to act responsibly. We cannot be St. Francis, but we can surely learn from him and his prophetic witness! Still, we are all called not to be attached to power, possessions, control, not to be over-attached to .....
Letting go is part of the spiritual life.
Christian mystics, like St. John of the Cross, Meister Eckhart, and so many other spiritual authors, remind us that emptying ourselves is what helps us to see and know God. We get so encumbered by excess baggage.
One can say that less is more. A cautionary word from St. Paul:
"If I give everything away but have not love it is useless".



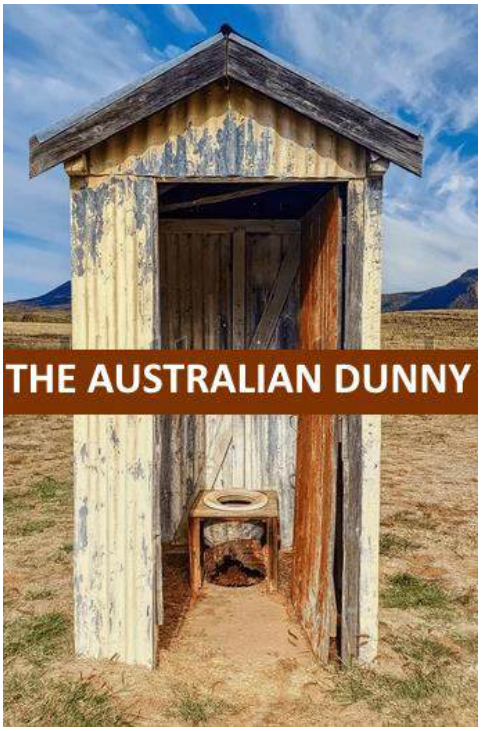
MALTESE CELEBRATE 150 YEARS OF ANASTASJU CUSCHIERI O.CARM[i]

On July 27, 2026, the Maltese Carmelite Province in conjunction with the Akkademja tal-Malti (Academy of the Maltese Language) commemorated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Carmelite priest, Anastasio Cuschieri (1876-1962). July 27 also marked the 64th anniversary of his death and funeral.

Fr. Cuschieri studied philosophy and theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and resided at St Albert's International College (CISA). He was a close friend of Hubertus Driessen, O. Carm. and acquainted also through him with St Titus Brandsma. As a philosopher, he held the Chair of Logic, Aesthetics and Ethics at the Royal University of Malta (1902-1939). He also served as a Senator, elected to Parliament, pitching him against the Protestant British colonial government of Malta. His political commitment had a pronounced social edge. Cuschieri was instrumental in the promotion of the Maltese Language during the local language question, defending the Maltese language both with persuasive arguments and the writing of fine poetry in the Maltese language. This gained him the title of "*Il-Poeta tal-Kelma Maltija*" (The Poet of the Maltese Language). His poetry also is marked by Marian lyricism gaining him the title of "*Il-Poeta tal-Madonna*" (Our Lady's Poet).

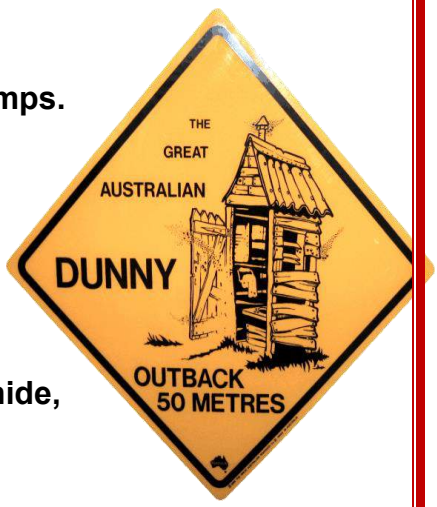
The commemoration opened with a speech by the president of the Akkademja, Dr. Sergio Grech. The speech focused on "Communication: A Powerful tool in Anastasju Cuschieri." Daniel Attard and Rita Saliba, members of the Council of the Akkademja, recited some of his celebrated poems, while violinist Elena Muscat graced the evening with classic musical pieces.

Fr. Charlò Camilleri, O. Carm., associate professor at the Faculty of Theology, Deputy Dean and Senator within the University of Malta, as Member of the Akkademja tal-Malti, serving also on its council, delivered the main speech: "The Spirit, Duty, and the Rights of the Weak: The Dream of Anastasio Cuschieri for a Strong Democracy in the Light of Christian Civilization." Finally, the Carmelite provincial, Fr. Charles Mallia, and Grech, the president of the Akkademja, placed floral wreaths on Cuschieri's grave, in the cloister of the Carmelite Church in Mdina.



THE AUSTRALIAN DUNNY

They were funny looking buildings, that were once a way of life,
If you couldn't sprint the distance, then you really were in strife.
They were nailed, they were wired, but were mostly falling down,
There was one in every yard, in every house, in every town.
They were given many names, some were even funny,
But to most of us, we knew them as the outhouse or the dunny.
I've seen some of them all gussied up, with painted doors and all,
But it really made no difference, they were just a port of call.
Now my old man would take a bet, he'd lay an even pound,
That you wouldn't make the dunny with them turkeys hangin' round.
They had so many uses, these buildings out the back,"
You could even hide from mother, so you wouldn't get the strap.



That's why we had good cricketers, never mind the bumps,
We used the pathway for the wicket and the dunny door for stumps.
Now my old man would sit for hours, the smell would rot your socks,
He read the daily back to front in that good old thunderbox.

And if by chance that nature called sometime through the night,
You always sent the dog in first, for there was no flamin' light.
And the dunny seemed to be the place where crawlies liked to hide,
But never ever showed themselves until you sat inside.

There was no such thing as Sorbent, no tissues there at all,
Just squares of well-read newspaper, a hangin' on the wall.
If you had some friendly neighbours, as neighbours sometimes are,
You could sit and chat to them, if you left the door ajar..

When suddenly you got the urge, and down the track you fled,
Then of course the magpies were there to peck you on your head.
Then the time there was a wet, the rain it never stopped,
If you had an urgent call, you ran between the drops.

The dunny man came once a week, to these buildings out the back,
And he would leave an extra can, if you left for him a zac.
For those of you who've no idea what I mean by a zac,
Then you're too young to have ever had, a dunny out the back.

archives - The Story of a Maltese Migrant Charles Bonello (Maltese - Canadian)

My journey began on the island of Malta on Monday, April 16th, 1951 aboard the Greek ship Nea Hellas. I was only 18 years old and barely looked 13 as my passport picture shows. Leaving my parents, five brothers and five sisters to start a new life in Canada was very difficult. I watched them disappear from view as the ship left the harbour thinking I might never see them again. However, I knew that Canada held a very great future for me. In the years following the war, the huge reconstruction of Malta had created a lot of jobs, but when the rebuilding was done, unemployment became a problem. I had seen in movies and photos that Canada was a beautiful country. I also heard that it had great opportunity and I would later find out for myself that it was all true.

Charles Bonello with friends on board TSS Nea Hellas

On the boat I soon made friends with some other Maltese men. One of them would some day become my brother-in-law. Our first stop was Naples, Italy, on April 17th where we took on Italian passengers immigrating to Canada and the United States. The Maltese and the Greeks had a lot of resentment towards the Italians who had been the enemy during the war. It was not easy to travel with people who had just a few years earlier destroyed our country. Things got out offhand a few times in the following weeks. After stopping in Lisbon, Portugal, to receive more immigrant passengers, we started on the long trip across the Atlantic. En route we hit a large storm which lasted almost a week and most of us spent the whole time in bed sea sick. After two weeks, we finally arrived at Halifax, Nova Scotia in Canada. I got off at Pier 21 and my friends continued on to New York, USA. The photo shows my friends and me on the Nea Hellas.

I was in Canada and I couldn't speak a word of English. I had hoped that my roommate would be traveling with me because he could speak it well, but we were separated and I had no idea where he was. I would have been lost if it were not for the Immigration Department and the Salvation Army. They were extremely supportive and helpful. Soon I was on a train bound for Ajax, Ontario, where I would finalize my immigration paperwork. The three day trip was very difficult. I had no money to buy food and all I had was a tin of hard cookies that my mother had made for me before I left Malta. I also remember having to change my shirt once or twice a day because of the black smoke from the engine. We first arrived in Whitby, Ontario, where we were transferred onto a bus for the short ride to Ajax. Ajax was a small town that had been built during the war. It was mainly made up of barracks that housed the people who worked in the bomb factories. There I stayed, in the barracks while I looked for a job. I was surprised to find that my roommate from the boat was staying in the same place. We reunited and went job hunting together. He was a big help considering he could speak the language. We soon found that what we had heard was true. Jobs were easy to find. It didn't take us long to find jobs in Toronto. At the time, the Young Street subway was being built and I was hired as a construction worker but I had to quit after a few days so I could get paid right away. I had to pay some food and pay rent. But again jobs were very easy to find and I soon took a job in a large bakery called Christie's Bread where I would stay for 20 years. I took some night school courses to improve my education and learn to speak English. This proved to be beneficial when I eventually gained a position of foreman.

After 6 years living in Canada, I had saved enough money to go back to Malta to visit my family. While I was there I met Vivienne and we dated for three weeks. Before I left to come back to Canada we were engaged and I promised to arrange to have her come over so we could be married. With financial assistance from the Immigration Department, she came over by airplane and we were married in July, 1958. In May 1959 our first Canadian baby boy was born. Later we had another son and later on a daughter.

In 1966 we bought our first house in Etobicoke, a suburb of Toronto. Now that my family and I were settled, the rest of my family in Malta began to see how well we were doing and how wonderful Canada was. Eventually, they all ended up coming over including my parents. The photo below shows my siblings and me at a wedding. This was the first time we had all been together in the almost 30 years since I left Malta. My parents and one of my brothers later went back to spend their final years there. After 20 years of working at Christie's Bread, the plant went out of business. I started a job as a mail delivery postal worker. I worked there for 20 years until I took early retirement at the age of 57 for health reasons. I live in a small rural community after 47 years of marriage with my wonderful wife. We have 4 grandchildren and a family which is very close. Vivienne and I have done a great deal of traveling all over the world together and we have always felt that people treat us kindly when they find that we are from Canada. Whether I am at home with my family or traveling through this magnificent country or traveling abroad, I can gladly say that I am proud to be a Canadian.

THE TRADITIONAL MALTESE GALLARIJA

Ta' Qali Artisan Village: promoting the locally crafted

The view of glass blowers working in synergy to produce colourful artefacts is among the sights mostly associated with the Ta' Qali Artisan Village. A number of companies excel at this craft, with their artisans each being responsible for a part of the process, from the first gathering of glass, to applying coloured glass, creating patterns within the colours, shaping, and finishing.

When Mdina Glass fired up its furnace and opened its doors in 1968 in what was an ex-RAF hangar, the company became Malta's first glassmaker and, in doing so, introduced a craft to our shores that we have now become renowned for around the world. In the early days, Mdina Glass relied on a couple of knowledgeable artisans from overseas, complemented by a team of inexperienced but enthusiastic trainees, some of whom remained with the company for decades. One particular apprentice, Joseph Said, joined a few months after the company opened and worked his way up to production manager before taking over the company in 1985.

MDINA GLASS has established itself as one of the local market leaders in its field. The glassmakers have thrived thanks to a dedication towards attention to detail and, in later years, constant desire to innovate. In the early years, the main products were small decorative items like vases, bowls and figurines – all small enough for tourists to take back home in their luggage. However, the new millennium saw the drive for innovation take hold. Remaining true to traditional handcrafted glassmaking, Mdina Glass began creating glassware that was more 'interior décor'. This saw the introduction of various new offerings: larger vases and bowls, lighting, lanterns, sculptures and practical items like pouring jugs, tumblers, and oil and vinegar bottles. Yet the base techniques and tools – blow pipes, calipers and paddles – remain the same.

VALLETTA GLASS has been operating from its premises at the Ta' Qali Artisan Village including a workshop and a retail shop since 1979. Thousands of tourists and locals visit each year and assist live glassblowing demonstrations where custom designed glassware is produced. Visitors can observe the craftsmen's ability to combine and exploit the glass aesthetic qualities of transparency, translucence, fluid form and texture with its inherent structural strength and architectural qualities. Valletta Glass has evolved throughout the past decades and has grown and diversified by continuously providing quality artistic works that exceed one's expectations.

PHOENICIAN GLASS BLOWERS was established later in 1986, originally having its base at Manoel Island and eventually moving to the Ta' Qali Artisan Village in 2000. Two of the company's glass blowing signature features are the unique red colour which has proven to be timeless, as well as the use of 22ct gold leaf and foils of silver leaf. Today, Phoenician Glass has evolved two other techniques: fused glass and glass jewellery.As part of its fused glass collection, the company has in more recent years added personalised gifts and trophies as well as corporate mementos, house names, and house numbers. It has also been entrusted with the production of customised glass wall art whereby clients have come up with unique designs which resident craftsmen have replicated in glass.

The French Occupation 1798-1800

On the 9 June 1798, a French fleet sailing to Egypt with over 30,000 men under Napoleon Bonaparte arrived off heavily fortified Valletta, ruled by the Knights of St John. A French Knight in Malta recorded the event in these terms: “the Maltese people saw from vantage points, the forest of masts which covered a vast expanse of sea….the sight petrified us.”
Grand Master Ferdinand von Hompesch refused Bonaparte’s demand that his convoy would be allowed to enter Valletta and take on supplies, upon which Bonaparte immediately ordered his fleet to bombard Valletta and landed several thousand soldiers at seven strategic sites around the island.
Most French knights commanding various strategic localities and forts deserted the Order. However, many Maltese regiments resisted bravely in spite of the confusion. At Fort Tigne, the Maltese Cacciatori regiment threw back three times the attacking French forces. At Fort San Lucian at Marsaxlokk, the Maltese garrison fought fiercely for 36 hours and the 165 men only gave up when they ran out of water and ammunition. Although Valletta was strong enough to hold out against a lengthy siege, the weakened Order failed to mount a strong resistance and once the city of Mdina fell to Bonaparte, Hompesch surrendered Malta to the French on the 12th June 1798, in exchange for estates and pensions in France for himself and his knights.
Napoleon stayed in Malta for a few days establishing a French administration, dismantling the Knights’ institutions, limiting the Bishop’s influence to purely religious matters, expelling all foreign clergy, seizing church property, protecting family rights in a Civil Code of Laws, granting free education for all and establishing freedom of press. The French abolished nobility, slavery, the **feudal system** and the inquisition. Slavery was abolished and all Turkish slaves were freed. All aristocratic rights and privileges were abolished.

Napoleon then sailed for Egypt, leaving a garrison of 3,053 soldiers under General Vaubois, but the Maltese turned against the French due to lack of employment after the departure of the Knights, French failure to pay salaries and pensions that were due to their Maltese sailors and others, while monies intendfor food supplies were stolen to fund the Egyptian campaign.

General Napoleon Bonaparte, 1769-1821 seized Malta as a good stepping-stone to Egypt, strengthening his control of the Mediterranean.

The Mdina Nobles and Church leaders encouraged insurrection when the French began meddling with Maltese churches and looting them of their silver. The last straw came when on September 2nd, the French ordered the auctioning of the damask of the Carmelite Church at Mdina. This was opposed by an angry crowd and rioting broke out. Colonel Masson was attacked and thrown from a balcony in nearby Rabat, dying along with some of his men while Col. Masson’s wife was only spared because she was expecting a child. The French troops took refuge behind the walls of Malta’s fortified cities, where they were blockaded by the Maltese militia. French control of Malta had lasted less than three months! Valletta was surrounded by approximately 10,000 irregular Maltese soldiers led by Emmanuele Vitale and Canon Saverio Caruana. The Maltese were armed with 23 cannon and a small squadron of coastal gunboats. Although there were some skirmishes between the garrison and the Maltese, the fortress was too strong for the irregulars to attack.
When the French Mediterranean Fleet was destroyed at the **Battle of the Nile** on 1 August 1798, the British Royal Navy was able to start a blockade of Malta, assisting the Maltese rebellion against French rule. The French troops eventually ran out of food and had to eat cats and rats. Although small quantities of supplies arrived in early 1799, starvation and disease had a disastrous effect on the health and morale of the French troops. Portugal, Great Britain and belatedly, the King of Naples and Sicily, sent ammunition and aid to the Maltese stopping French convoys to and from Malta, forcing them to surrender to larger British squadrons in hard-fought battles. These defeats and lack of regular supplies weakened the French position in Valletta and on the 4th of September 1800 after a two-year siege, General Belgrand de Vaubois surrendered his garrison, exhausted by malnutrition and typhus disease.
On the 15th of June 1802, the National Congress of the people of Malta and Gozo placed the Maltese Islands under the sovereignty of the British Crown, drawing up a Declaration of Rights in which they agreed to come

"under the protection and sovereignty of the King of the free people, His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland". The Declaration also stated that "his Majesty has no right to cede these Islands to any power…if he chooses to withdraw his protection, and abandon his sovereignty, the right of electing another sovereign, or of the governing of these Islands, belongs to us, the Maltese alone, and without control".

By the terms of the **Treaty of Amiens** of 1801 Britain was to return Malta to the Order of St. John. the Napoleonic Wars with France began soon afterwards, partly due Britain's refusal to do so. The island subsequently remained in British hands until its independence in 1964.

When the Union Jack first flew over Malta?

Do you know when the Union Jack first flew over Malta? The answer will surprise you. Maltese history is a rich tapestry of events, influences and war. The Maltese are proud of British heritage, but few seem to know where the British flag was first flown over the islands.

By the 18th century the threat of invasion from the Ottoman Empire had receded so the Maltese started to build on land outside the fortified cities, now that pirate attacks were also a distant memory. In the central town of Birkirkara, they built farmhouses around agricultural land including on the hill overlooking Valletta which is now part of San Gwann. One farmhouse built there is Ta' Xindi farmhouse on the road between San Gwann and Mater Dei hospital.

The building is modest and not too large. Today the road is busy with traffic leading to the hospital, while constant urbanisation has meant that the vast fields it once controlled no longer exist. The building looks like any other and one wouldn't think it has any special significance unless one spots the plaque on the wall.

Records don't show who build it but by 1798 it was owned by 21-year-old cotton merchant Vincenzo Borg. This was the year when the French occupied the islands however the French soon offended the Catholic Maltese by looting churches to fund the French war effort against the British. On the 2th September 1798 the Maltese revolted against the French during an auction of church property, and soon 10,000 Maltese surrounded Valletta, bayng for blood.

19C bust of Borg Brared at St Helen's Basilica Museum, B'kara.

Vincenzo Borg was one of the ringleaders of the campaign against the French, chosen by the people of Birkirkara and neighbouring Mosta as their leader. Together with two other Maltese, he was one of the main figureheads in the uprising, leading one of the largest battalions in the 10,000-strong irregular (volunteer) militia that was set up. Arms were scarce at first however the British and Portuguese navies supplied the insurgents with arms.

Borg used his home as his field headquarters. Under his command insurgents built batteries around Valletta harbour but the fortified city was strong enough to repel attacks. Borg spoke to British Admiral Alexander Ball to see if the United Kingdom was interested in taking the islands. Ball was already well-loved Malta but was suspicious of Borg's intents. Despite this, Borg wrote to Ball explaining "the majority of us (Maltese) wish to see the islands under British jurisdiction". It was clear that the Maltese expected Britain to act.On 9 February 1799, Borg hoisted the British Union Jack over his farmhouse showing his commitment to the cause, the first time the British flag flew over Malta.

The French surrendered and left Malta by 1800, ending a 2-year occupation following which the British held onto the islands under the Treaties of Amiens and Paris, ruling until Malta gained its independence in 1964

Antoine Borg

HISTORY OF MALTESE IN GIBRALTAR

A **Maltese community** has existed in Gibraltar since shortly after its capture by an Anglo-Dutch fleet in 1704. Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus were the three stepping stones whereby Great Britain controlled the Mediterranean and the vital route to the Suez Canal and thence to India. Following the capture of Gibraltar, most of the existing population elected to leave, leaving behind a small population of around seventy (mainly neutral Genoese people). Immigration from neighboring Spanish towns soon followed, giving Gibraltar a very cosmopolitan population. Years of coexistence and intermarriage on the Rock soon led to a coalescence of Maltese, Italian and Andalusian culture, preserving the Mediterranean and Catholic uniqueness of Gibraltar despite the centuries of British rule.

COLONIALISM Gibraltar prospered by the arrival of 19th century trade with North Africa and the presence of the Royal Navy. This prosperity attracted immigrants from neighbouring Mediterranean lands and in 1885 there were about 1,000 Maltese people living in Gibraltar. Early in the 20th century the British undertook vast naval works and improvements to the existing fortifications of Gibraltar to make the rock practically impregnable. The naval base in Gibraltar was to prove its strategic value in the two world wars. It was only to be expected that, given the common cultural bond between Malta and Gibraltar, some Maltese would be lured by the prospect of lucrative employment there.

MALTESE IN GIBRALTAR By 1912 the total number of Maltese living in Gibraltar was not above 700. Many worked in the dockyard and others operated businesses which were usually ancillary to the dockyard. However, the economy of Gibraltar was not capable of absorbing a large number of immigrants from Malta and by 1912 the number of Maltese was already in decline as they returned to the Maltese Islands. Eventually those who stayed in Gibraltar became very much involved in the economic and social life in Gibraltar, most of them also being staunch supporters of links with the UK. The situation in Malta was very different, where, despite an earlier attempt at integration with the UK, rising nationalist sentiment led to independence in 1964 and the establishment of a republic a decade later.

NOTABLE GIBRALTARIANS OF MALTESE DESCENT

- Keith Azopardi QC, leader of the Gibraltar Social Democrats and former leader of the Progressive Democratic Party.
- Davina Barbara, TV presenter of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation.
- Charles Caruana CBE, former Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gibraltar.
- Peter Caruana QC, former Chief Minister of Gibraltar.

- Georgina Cassar, rhythmic gymnast and 2012 Olympian for Team GB.
- Gerard Teuma, Chief Executive of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation.

THE BOY WHO KILLED A GIRL… AND OTHER WOMEN'S MURDERS

Mosta as it might have looked in the mid-to-late 19th century and where Vittorja Vella, 16, was killed by a boy three years her junior.

Kim Dalli *takes another look at a new book about the murder of Maltese women and highlights more of these heinous crimes from history: a teenager shot dead by a child, a prostitute who had her throat slit and a rape victim strangled and thrown down a well.*

It was 1867 and Mosta dome had just been built. Sixteen-year-old Vittorja Vella was playing beads with another girl her age in the streets of the town when an argument erupted over the game.

The incident was witnessed by Ġużeppi Sammut, 13, the brother of Vittorja's playmate.

On seeing his sister being beaten up, Ġużeppi ran as fast as he could to his father's farm, grabbed a shotgun and returned to shoot Vittorja. The girl is the youngest victim in crime historian Eddie Attard's newly published book, Il-Femiċidju: Qtil ta' Nisa f'Malta (from BDL), which documents all the femicides of the last two centuries.

Despite the boy himself being even younger, he underwent a trial by jury, was found guilty and sentenced to 20 years in prison with hard labour.

Thirty-five years earlier, Malta witnessed the first killing of a prostitute that century: Grazzja Grech, known as Zol-in-Zol, was found dead in her Senglea home in April 1832.

Prostitution was not illegal at the time, although over the years certain restrictions had been introduced dictating where prostitutes could live. They were forbidden from occupying the ground floor but allowed to live in maisonettes on the first floor.

Grazzja's absence had aroused the suspicions of her neighbours. After their knocks at her door went unanswered, one of them peeked through a window to see her lying on the floor in a pool of blood that oozed from her slit throat.

Grazzja was known to host a number of men at her home and many hailed from localities outside Senglea. Among these men, there were two youths in particular who were often seen in her company. The night before the victim was found dead, the pair had been spotted buying bread, cheese and a bottle of rum from a Senglea shop.

Their appearance was described to the police, who identified the two as 18-year-old Giovanni Fedele from Sliema and 21-year-old Pawlu Laus from Valletta.

Both goldsmiths, they had known the victim for a while. Grazzja was rumoured to have declared the two as her favourite clients, and they had even presented her with a gold ring they had forged themselves.

It was this ring which was found to have sparked the crime of passion, because the youths had got to know that Grazzja had given it to a fishmonger.

It was this ring which was found to have sparked the crime of passion, because the youths had got to know that Grazzja had given it to a fishmonger

On the day of the crime, Giovanni and Pawlu, armed with a penknife, paid a visit to Grazzja. As Pawlu held her down, Giovanni slit her throat.

A month later they were sentenced to death in a trial by jury. Despite a plea by governor Sir Patrick Ponsomby to mitigate the sentence, they were hanged. Giovanni was the youngest man in Malta to receive the death penalty.
Yet the tragedy continued to unfold.
Giovanni's mother, who knew of her son's waywardness, had often warned him that he would one day end up on the gallows. Pawlu's father, who kept hoping until the end that the sentence would be changed, committed suicide.
The final victim in this case appears to have been the fishmonger, who received a savage beating and later died of his injuries.
Another murder involving sex was that of 18-year-old Duminka Galea, dubbed Malta's Maria Goretti, after the 11-year-old saint who was stabbed to death after resisting rape.
Duminka was working in her father's fields in Naxxar in 1869, together with her siblings.
As her brothers and sisters were about to leave, she asked them for a sip of water, but their jug was empty. They suggested she draw some water from the well in the nearby fields belonging to the Schembri family.
That evening, Duminka failed to turn up for dinner. Her frantic family visited the Schembri farm and asked after her but to no avail. Ċikku Schembri, 24, denied having set eyes on her.
The next day, one of the victim's siblings suggested searching the well, fearing his sister might have fallen in. There they ran into Ċikku again, who seemed very evasive and would not answer their questions.
The family filed a police report and a search of the Schembri farm yielded clothes smeared with blood.
Duminka's body was found in a well. An autopsy revealed that she had been raped and then strangled. Although most of the evidence was circumstantial, Ċikku was found guilty by a count of 6-3. As a result he could not be handed the death penalty and was sentenced to life imprisonmenton,

WHY IS THE MALTESE CROSS INCLUDED IN QUEENSLAND'S EMBLEM?

Why is the Maltese Cross included in Queensland's Coat of Arms?

The inclusion of the Maltese Cross in the Queensland Badge and Coat of Arms has an interesting and somewhat inconclusive history.

On 23 August 1873, the Secretary of State for the Colonies advised the various Colonies regarding the adoption of distinctive badges. When this request was received in Queensland, the then Acting Colonial Secretary, Mr. W. Hemmant, wrote to the then Governor, His Excellency Mr. W.W. Cairns, as follows:"Referring to the circular despatch of the Secretary of State for the Colonies upon the subject of distinctive badges proposed for the flags of several Colonies, I have the honour to advise Your Excellency that the difficulty of producing upon bunting a fair representation of the head or bust of Her Majesty has proved so great, and the effect, when produced, so unsatisfactory, as to render it necessary to abandon the idea of using that device for the Queensland Ensign, and I beg therefore to recommend that the accompanying design, within a wreath of laurel, be adopted for the flags of the Colony in lieu of that formerly advised"

The "design" forwarded with the letter was described as "the Maltese Cross with the Crown in the centre". On 16 July 1876, the Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty approved the design submitted and this was subsequently gazetted on 15 November 1876, as follows: "His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has been pleased to direct that in the future the Badge of the Colony be emblazoned in the centre of the Union Flag for use by the Governor and to the employment at the Queensland Government shall as herein after described - ARGENT ON A MALTESE CROSS AZURE A QUEEN'S CROWN PROPER."

Subsequently, the design was incorporated as part of the Queensland Coat of Arms when the Royal Warrant authorising the present design for the Queensland Coat of Arms was issued to the State of Queensland on 29 April 1893.

It is not known for certain why the Maltese Cross with a superimposed crown was chosen. One popular theory is that as the Victoria Cross was first bestowed by Queen Victoria in 1857, at the close of the Crimean War, and as Queensland became a separate Colony in 1859, it would be a natural association of ideas to ally Queensland with the Victoria Cross which is itself a form of the Maltese Cross with Royal Arms and Lion superimposed. Another theory is that there was a connection between the Maltese Cross and the first Governor's wife, Lady Bowen. Given that the Maltese Cross was not put forward until 1876, the former theory appears stronger.Brian Randall, Queensland Places Coordinator - *State Library of Queensland*

Maltese American Benevolent Society, Inc. (Detroit, MI)

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SUMMER PICNIC
CELEBRATING SANTA MARIJA
THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

Hosted by the Michigan Clubs & Windsor

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16
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GAMES & RAFFLE

MEMBERS & GUESTS WELCOME
Don't forget your folding chairs!
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BYO DRINKS

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Please follow rules or you may be ticketed;
Must drink only within 25 feet of Shelter 5; No drinking in parking lot

Join us 16 August 2026 for our first joint club PICNIC at Belle Isle! The Detroit club will be closed on the day of the picnic.

Fuq talba ta' xi whud...
"Ħamiema Bajda"
ta' Ġorġ Pisani
Ħamiema bajda
jisimha Ġidi
tiġi filgħodu
tiekol minn idi.
Tiġi fit-tieqa,
tidħolli ġewwa,
sirna ninħabbu,
sirna ħbieb sewwa.
U tibqa' fejni
għal ħafna żmien,
ma tħobbx tittajjar,
ma tmur imkien.
Fl-aħħar ngħidilha,
"Mur, isa Ġidi"
Il-ġwienaħ tiftaħ,
u tmur minn idi.
Tiftakarha?
la Maltija
ma' Hubert