Maltese Newsletter

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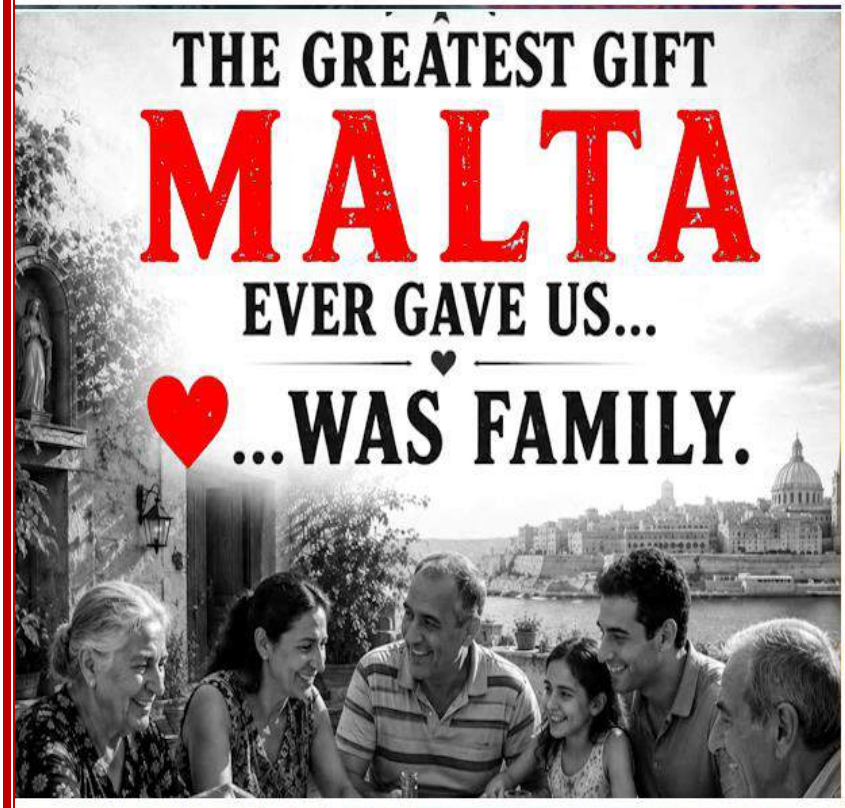
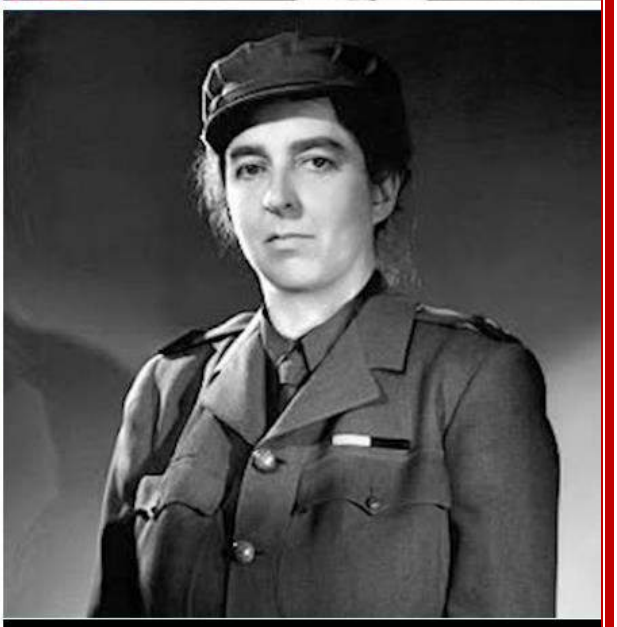




MABEL STRICKLAND
Maltese Journalist
and Politician

United Nations International

Youth Day 2026

Young people across the world are a positive force in our society, working towards a better future not just for themselves, but for the communities and people that surround them. United Nations International Youth Day 2026 is an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the resilience and capabilities of our young citizens as they navigate, and in many cases, lead change in an increasingly complex and ever-changing world.

This year, we honour the International Youth Day theme, *Different Contexts, Common Aspirations*, reinforcing that no matter their cultural background, faith or standing, young people around the world are united by many shared aspirations: a quality education, decent work, access to good healthcare, a voice in the decisions that affect their lives, and an opportunity to build a better future.

Young people around the world are coming together to lead climate action, build social enterprises, develop digital solutions, and strengthen their communities. Their work is shaped by the different environments in which they live, learn, and grow. Young people have the creativity, knowledge, and skills to use technology to foster cooperation across countries and cultures. By working together, they can amplify their voices, build cross-cultural partnerships and help create a more peaceful and inclusive world.

As we mark United Nations International Youth Day 2026, we continue to be inspired by the many young people from our culturally diverse communities who are already building bridges across the oceans and working towards sustainable development for their generation, the next generation and beyond. Let their work be a shining example of how our society benefits when we invest in young people's ideas, skills and leadership.

Happy United Nations International Youth Day.

Peter Malinauskas
PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Nadia Clancy
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

To follow the proceedings of the jury of Yorgan Fenech and the assassination of the Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia read these newspapers

timesofmalta.com, maltatoday.com, independent.com.mt, lovinmalta.com, netnews.com.mt, maltadaily.com, tvmnews.mt or newsbook.com.mt

ORDER OF MALTA
AUSTRALIA

Remembering
Operation Pedestal

84 Years On

Members of the Order of Malta in Melbourne joined members of the Maltese-Australian community over the weekend to commemorate the **84th anniversary of Operation Pedestal**, one of the most significant events in Malta's history during the Second World War.

Organised by the **Maltese Australian Association's Shelter of Peace Committee**, the commemoration included a service of remembrance and wreath-laying ceremony, honouring the courage and sacrifice of those who defended Malta and those who risked their lives to keep the island supplied during the war.

Representing the Order of Malta at the ceremony was **Cons Tanya Murphy**, who read the **Prayer of St Francis** as part of the commemorative service.

Operation Pedestal – the Malta Convoy

Operation Pedestal was a major Allied convoy operation undertaken in August 1942 to deliver urgently needed food, fuel, ammunition and other supplies to the besieged island of Malta.

During the Second World War, Malta's strategic position in the central Mediterranean made it vital to the Allied war effort. The island provided an important base from which Allied forces could disrupt Axis supply lines to North Africa. As a result, Malta came under sustained bombing and blockade, and by 1942 its population and defenders faced severe shortages of food and fuel.

The convoy, which sailed from Gibraltar, came under repeated attacks from German and Italian aircraft and naval forces. The losses were devastating: of the merchant ships that departed, only a small number reached Malta. Yet the supplies that did arrive were critical to the survival of the island.

Among the ships that reached Malta was the tanker **Ohio**, carrying vital fuel. Despite being repeatedly damaged by torpedoes and bombs, Ohio was eventually brought into Grand Harbour on **15 August 1942**, coinciding with the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady.

The Maltese came to know Operation Pedestal as the **Santa Marija Convoy**, and its arrival became a symbol of hope and resilience. The supplies delivered helped Malta continue to resist and prevented the island from being forced into surrender. The operation is widely regarded as a turning point in the siege of Malta.

The commemoration in Melbourne provides an opportunity not only to remember those who served and sacrificed during the Malta Convoys, but also to recognise the extraordinary resilience of the Maltese people during the Second World War.

The Order of Malta is proud to join the Maltese-Australian community in keeping this important history alive and honouring all those whose courage and sacrifice helped sustain Malta in its hour of greatest need

Valletta has polarised locals and observers, with many arguing the capital has changed for the worse because of intense over-commercialisation, a shrinking residential community, and over-tourism turning the historic city into a bustling, loud night spot rather than a lived-in neighbourhood.

Loss of Residential Community

Shrinking population: Valletta's permanent resident count dropped from nearly 10,000 in 1985 to around 5,000 residents.

Exodus of locals: High property prices, heavy maintenance for old palazzi, and conversion of homes into short-term rentals push locals out.

Loss of local soul: The traditional family-run shops, bookshops, and neighbourhood grocers have closed down.

Over-Commercialisation and Public Space

Street takeover: Pavements and pedestrian zones (like Merchant Street) are increasingly choked with restaurant tables, chairs, and outdoor canopies.

Blocked access: Outdoor dining and commercial structures crowd public spaces, restricting pedestrian movement and emergency vehicle access.

Open-air museum risk: Elected officials and advocates warn the capital risks losing its authentic community identity to become a pure commercial and tourist playground.

A warm congratulations to Ambassador **Marco Micallef** for his appointment as the Ambassador for Malta in the United States.

The team at the embassy as well as the Maltese community look forward to working hand-in-hand with the new Ambassador, a longtime close aide of the previous Foreign Affairs Minister Ian Borg. Parliament's Public Accounts Committee unanimously approved Mr Micallef for the key role, with his nomination receiving cross-party support. He succeeded Godfrey Xuereb, who has been serving in the role since 2023. "I look forward to turning the trust placed in me into positive work for our country, as I serve Malta in this ambassadorial role," Mr Micallef said

Mr Micallef worked as an Advisor to Minister Borg, having previously served as his Chief of Staff for over four years, first at the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects and then at the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade.

He played a key political and coordinating role during Malta's tenure as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (2023-2024) and Malta's 2024 Chairmanship of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

He previously served as the Minister's Private Secretary, and as Secretariat Coordinator when Dr Borg was Parliamentary Secretary for the EU Presidency 2017 and EU Funds.

Prior to that, he spent three years in Brussels working at the Permanent Representation of Malta to the European Union as Deputy Mertens.

MALTESE WOMEN IN HISTORY

The Hon. Mabel Edeline Strickland, O.B.E. (8 January 1899 - 29 November 1988) was an Anglo-Maltese journalist, newspaper proprietor and politician, and was the daughter of Sir Gerald Strickland (later Lord Strickland), the former Prime Minister of Malta (1927-1932). Gerald Strickland, 1st Baron Strickland, 6th Count Della Catena, GCMG, also served as Governor of the Leeward Islands, Governor of Tasmania, Governor of Western Australia and Governor of New South Wales.

A lifetime of service in politics and journalism.

The Hon. Mabel Edeline Strickland, O.B.E. (8 January 1899 - 29 November 1988) was an Anglo-Maltese journalist, newspaper proprietor and politician, and was the daughter of Sir Gerald Strickland (later Lord Strickland), the former Prime Minister of Malta (1927-1932). Gerald Strickland, 1st Baron Strickland, 6th Count Della Catena, GCMG, also served as Governor of the Leeward Islands, Governor of Tasmania, Governor of Western Australia and Governor of New South Wales.

Mabel Strickland was one of Malta's most distinguished and colourful personalities of her time. Like her father, Lord Strickland, she had a deep passion for politics, but she made her mark as editor of two English language newspapers that are today considered as an institution in Malta.

Mabel Strickland, then editor of The Times of Malta, taking the first public call.

She was elected three times to parliament, but it was mainly for her role as editor of the Times of Malta and The Sunday Times of Malta in the Second World War that she was admired most.

Through her courage and work in publishing and editing her newspapers, even during the worst times of the war, she helped in no small measure to keep the island's morale high throughout the siege. The press building in St Paul Street, Valletta, received two direct hits during the war, but her newspapers never missed an issue.

As the London Typographical Journal said in March 1944: 'Under the management of its proprietor and editor-in-chief, Miss Strickland, the Times of Malta was cut off from normal means of news gathering and had to rely upon its own devices. Mabel Strickland maintained a 24-hour radio watch on the premises, and in this she had the assistance of the Royal Navy.'

For her contribution to the war effort, Miss Strickland, Malta's press baroness, was appointed a member of the Order of the British Empire.

Miss Strickland was ushered into politics and journalism in 1921 when her father, Lord Strickland, published his first newspaper, Progress, and set up his political party, Anglo-Maltese Party, four years after his return from his last governorship post in 1917. Within a short time, his party merged with the Maltese Constitutional Party.

Lord Strickland, 6th Count Della Catena, was chief secretary to the government for 13 years before he served in four governorship posts in the service of the Crown. He first served in the Leeward Islands, and then, successively, in Tasmania, Western Australia, and New South Wales.

Lord Gerald Strickland: 4th Prime Minister of Malta

He was Prime Minister between 1927 and 1930 and for a time sat in two parliaments, that in Malta, and in the House of Commons as an MP for Lancaster. He was raised to the peerage in 1928. Miss Strickland loved her father and worked with him closely until his death in 1940.

The Stricklands come from the Sizergh branch of the Stricklands in Westmorland, "a line of honourable ancestry", and can trace their link with the House of Commons to as early as 1290. A Strickland had the distinction of carrying the banner of St George in the battle of Agincourt in 1415. The Stricklands established roots in Malta in 1858 when Mabel Strickland's grandfather, Walter, a commander in the Royal Navy, married Donna Louisa, daughter of a Maltese nobleman.

Miss Strickland played a leading role in the building up of Strickland House newspapers, particularly in the running, mainly as editor, of the Times of Malta and The Sunday Times of Malta, two newspapers that have been playing an active part in the island's social and political life right from the time they were established in the mid-1930s. They are still Malta's leading national newspapers.

She was editor of the Times of Malta from the time it was set up in 1935 up to 1950, when she decided to go into active politics, and of The Sunday Times of Malta, up to 1956.

Deeply involved in her father's work in politics (she was assistant secretary of the Constitutional Party from 1921, when Malta was given its first self-government Constitution, to 1945) and in newspaper publishing, Miss Strickland sought to follow in his footsteps when she contested the 1950 elections under the reconstituted Constitutional Party, of which she was vice-chairman.

She felt it was a "genuine sacrifice" to give up being a working editor to go into politics but she believed she had to do it because it had become a public and national duty, "which one's conscience could not ignore".

Paul Boffa with Mabel Strickland at the time she was leader of the Progressive Constitutional Party.

In 1953, she set up her own political party, Progressive Constitutional Party and took part in the Malta Round Table Conference of 1955, the constitutional talks in 1958, and the Malta Independence Conference in 1963.

Miss Strickland was a firm believer in the British Commonwealth and, as honorary corresponding secretary of the Royal Commonwealth Society for many years, worked hard to promote the Commonwealth ideals. She was also a life member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and a council member of the Commonwealth Press Union.

Considered as one of the island's most colourful personalities of her time, "Miss Mabel", as she was more popularly known, had a sympathetic ear to all who called on her for assistance or word of advice. She was also very generous.

Miss Strickland considered the time she edited the Times of Malta and The Sunday Times of Malta as the best years of her life. She may have been conservative in her politics, but she was never afraid of facing up to the challenges that the new printing technologies presented. Indeed, she herself supervised the first phase of the new generation of phototype setting at her press. Were she alive today, she would stare in wonder at the giant steps the enterprise she had piloted with so much care has taken in modern printing techniques. And what would she have made of the development of the social media today? In all probability, she would have loved the new media as well.

News of Malta

One of Malta's last surviving traditional 'firilli' has been restored after more than two years of work, thanks to a collaboration between Marsaxlokk Heritage, Heritage Malta and the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA). The historic vessel, named Lion and believed to be over a century old, will now be used for educational, tourism and research purposes.

The restoration project began in 2021 as an initiative by Marsaxlokk Heritage before developing into a national collaboration aimed at preserving Malta's maritime heritage. Restoration works were carried out at the Kalkara Boatyard using traditional techniques and materials, while the boat's original tarkija rig (sprit sail) was also reconstructed, reviving a feature that had almost disappeared from Maltese waters.

During the winter months, the Lion will be exhibited along the Marsaxlokk waterfront, while the project has also included public workshops to help preserve traditional boatbuilding skills.

Tourism Minister described the restoration as "a clear example of how tourism can be a positive force in protecting our identity and cultural heritage," adding that it strengthens Malta's tourism offering while safeguarding the country's unique character.

Arts and Culture Minister Malcolm Paul Agius Galea said that "every traditional boat we save is not merely a relic of our past, but a living testament to the craftsmanship, skill and way of life that shaped the Maltese people." Heritage Malta CEO Noel Zammit also reflected on the sea's role in shaping Malta, saying it "has made us who we are today.

GOZO FILM FESTIVAL SHOWCASING STORYTELLING, VOICES AND TALENT FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Later this month the 9th edition of the Gozo Film Festival will get underway in Victoria.

The organisers said that the festival programme is carefully curated to showcase diverse storytelling, creative voices and emerging talent from around the world.

The Festival opens on Friday, the 21st, of August, with a line up of short films for 75 minutes followed by three Maltese shorts titled 'Wild Lands,' 'Island of Oblivion' and 'Unur, Fama u Glorja,' starting at 10pm It closes on Sunday, the 23rd, with the animated film 'Fantastic Mr Fox.'

Cinema lovers and filmmakers from near and far will be able to gather at the Gozo Citadel, in the heart of the island's capital, for an unforgettable three-day cinematic journey. Filmmaking and cinema take centre stage with open-air, under-the-stairs screenings of local and international features and short films, with workshops for adults, children and teenager and loads of quality cinema.

The Gozo Film Festival said that it proudly promotes and showcases local (Gozitan and Maltese) and international productions.

Admission to all screenings and events is free of charge – Gozo News

CELEBRATING A LOCAL MALTESE FESTIVAL

Festas are a massive part of Malteste culture and tradition. Held across both Malta and Gozo, festas are religious celebrations organized by the local parish and are an iconic part of the Maltese summer with massive fireworks, marching bands, parades and happy celebrations.

They are such an important event to the locals of the village and they are just *epic* celebrations that everyone visiting Malta needs to experience at least once.

Our trip to Malta was planned around visiting for the festa of St. Peter and St. Paul of Nadur church. As I mentioned in an earlier post, we had made a similar trip to when I was 13 years old, so this wasn't my first festa. But I appreciated and enjoyed it even more this time.

We arrived about five days before the main feast day, so we were there to experience the whole thing. We spent every evening in the village square soaking up the atmosphere and loved every minute of it. During the summer months there is a festa somewhere around Malta or Gozo practically every weekend, with a total of 60 held around the villages each year.

What to expect at a Maltese Festival

Each festa typically has the same structure. It's a total of five days of festivities including the lead up, the eve of the feast and the feast day itself. The celebrations revolve around the patron saint of each parish and his place in the village church.

Besides the special church services there are also outdoor festivities with marching bands, food and drink trucks all around the main village square and the most spectacular fireworks displays I have ever seen.

These festivals are big enough to rival the vibe of a music festival. It's so easy to get caught up in the atmosphere and with all the young people in their festival t-shirts and the dancing and drinking it can be so easy to forget that this is actually a religious festival.

The Maltese specialise in manufacturing fireworks and fireworks often constitute the benchmark for comparing the success of the various festas in the local inter-village rivalry.

Explore all of the adventures and experiences you can have around Malta

In Malta and Gozo, the village church is the pride of each villager. In preparation for the festa all the treasures of the church, including their massive crystal chandeliers, are put on display, creating a stunning setting for the parades honouring the statue of the saint. The streets are covered in decorations and fairy lights, flags are flown from rooftops and statues are placed all around the village. It is really the most beautiful time to visit a village, when everything comes alive with celebrations.

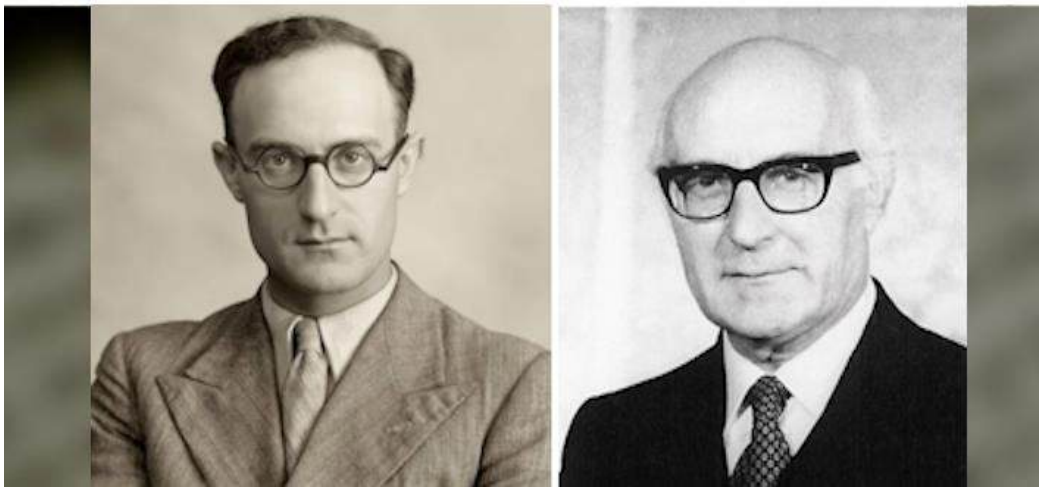
Check out the best places to stay in Gozo

I would definitely recommend that everyone who visits Malta or Gozo during the summer gets themselves to at least one festa. It is a great way to spend the evenings in these quiet villages, still leaving you the day time to explore the rest of the islands. It's such a unique culture to experience and it's so much fun to experience. If you're not very religious that's still okay, just be respectful of the locals and their beliefs and enjoy yourself. It will be hard not to!

For those of you who are interested, the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul is celebrated on the 29th of June in both Nadur on Gozo and also Mdina on Malta.

SIR ANTHONY JOSEPH MAMO

Chief Justice, Governor-General and first President of the Republic of Malta



When Malta made its historical transition from a constitutional monarchy to a republic on 13 December 1974, Sir Anthony Mamo stood at the absolute focal point of the nation's political evolution. A deeply respected legal scholar, senior judge, and constitutional expert, Mamo embodied political neutrality and legal integrity during an era of major national change.

Early Life and Legal Foundations

Born in the bustling town of Birkirkara on 9 January 1909, Anthony Joseph Mamo was the son of Joseph Mamo and Carla Brincat. He received his early education at the Archbishop's Seminary in Rabat before attending the Royal University of Malta, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in 1931 and a Doctor of Laws in 1934.

After a brief period in private legal practice, Mamo chose a career in public service. In 1936, he was appointed to a statutory commission tasked with revising and consolidating the entire body of Maltese law, a six-year undertaking carried out alongside his relief work for war refugees during the height of World War II.

Legal Expertise and Judicial Service

In 1942, Mamo joined the Attorney General's office as Crown Counsel, progressively advancing through the ranks until he is appointed Attorney General in 1955. During this era, he served as chief legal adviser to four successive Prime Ministers—Sir Paul Boffa, Dr Enrico Mizzi, Dr Giorgio Borg Olivier, and Dom Mintoff. His even-handed counsel proved essential during complex constitutional talks and high-level negotiations with the British government.

Alongside his government duties, Mamo served as Professor of Criminal Law at the Royal University of Malta from 1943 to 1957. His detailed lecture material, known colloquially among generations of law students as the "Mamo Notes," remained an authoritative legal reference for decades.

In 1957, Mamo was appointed Chief Justice of Malta and President of the Court of Appeal. He went on to become the first President of the newly established Constitutional Court in 1964 and President of the Court of Criminal Appeal in 1967. His knighthood was conferred in 1959 in recognition of his distinguished public service.

From Governor-General to the Presidency

Following the return of Dom Mintoff's Labour government in 1971, Mamo was chosen to succeed Sir Maurice Dorman as Governor-General of Malta on 3 July 1971. This made him the first Maltese citizen ever to hold the office, serving as Queen Elizabeth II's official representative on the island.

When the Maltese Parliament amended the constitution to establish Malta as a republic on 13 December 1974, the office of Governor-General was formally abolished. Sir Anthony Mamo took the oath of office as the country's first President, assuming a role designed as a unifying, non-partisan head of state.

Mamo served in the presidency until 27 December 1976, helping establish the precedents, constitutional traditions, and diplomatic stature of the new republican head of state before being succeeded by Anton Buttigieg.

Later Years and Legacy

After completing his term, Sir Anthony retired from active public life, remaining a widely revered figure across the political spectrum. In 1993, he was created a Companion of Honour of the National Order of Merit (Sieħeb il-Ġieħ).

Sir Anthony Mamo passed away on 1 May 2008 at the age of 99. His legacy endures as a pillar of Malta's legal heritage and a crucial figure who guided the island smoothly through its defining shift from British colonial territory to an independent republic.

JANVIL RELEASES NEW SINGLE "MARY" A HEARTWARMING TRIBUTE TO FAMILY

Maltese singer **JANVIL** has released his new single, **MARY**, a joyful and nostalgic song inspired by a treasured family memory. Dedicated to his beloved parents, the song celebrates the love, humour, and unique spirit found in Maltese families.

The inspiration comes from a phrase Janvil's father would often jokingly say to his mother: "It's no wonder they named you Mary... because you're always arguing." (meri in Maltese which rhymes with Mary, it's a saying)

The song was written, composed, and produced by acclaimed composer and producer **Philip Vella**, with mastering by **Sean Vella**. The concept and story behind the song were created by Janvil, turning a cherished personal memory into a heartfelt musical tribute.

Adding an even more personal touch, the official music video was directed by Janvil's son, **Craig Roy Vella**, as his final bachelor's degree project at the MCAST Institute for the Creative Arts, with the support of **Nest Creative Lab** and **Mad About Video**.

Blending an uplifting melody with heartfelt lyrics and a distinctly Maltese identity, MARY is a celebration of family, memories, and the bonds that connect generations.

Janvil shares:

"MARY is more than just a song. It's a tribute to my parents and the simple moments of love and laughter that shaped my life. I'm especially proud that my son Craig brought this story to life through the official music video, making this project a true family collaboration."

DOI Kian Bugeja

Marsaxlokk Welcomes Lampuki Season with Traditional Blessing of Fishing Boats

Marsaxlokk came alive on THE FIRST August of Sunday morning as fishermen gathered for the traditional blessing of their boats and vessels ahead of the start of Malta's much-loved lampuki season.

The ceremony, led by Canon Fr Roderick Baldacchino, included Mass and the blessing of the fishing boats, continuing a tradition deeply rooted in the local fishing community. The occasion brought together fishermen, their families and members of the Marsaxlokk community as they prepared for another important season at sea.

Among those attending were Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Supply Anton Refalo, as well as representatives from the fishing sector and members of the local community.

The lampuki season officially begins on 15 August and runs until the end of the year, marking the return of one of Malta's most distinctive traditional fishing practices.

In recent weeks, fishermen have been busy preparing their kannizzati, using palm leaves to create floating structures that provide shade and attract lampuki close to the surface of the sea. The traditional technique, developed by Maltese and Gozitan fishermen, remains an important part of the islands' fishing heritage. With the boats prepared and the traditional blessing complete, fishermen are now ready to head out to sea as the season gets underway.

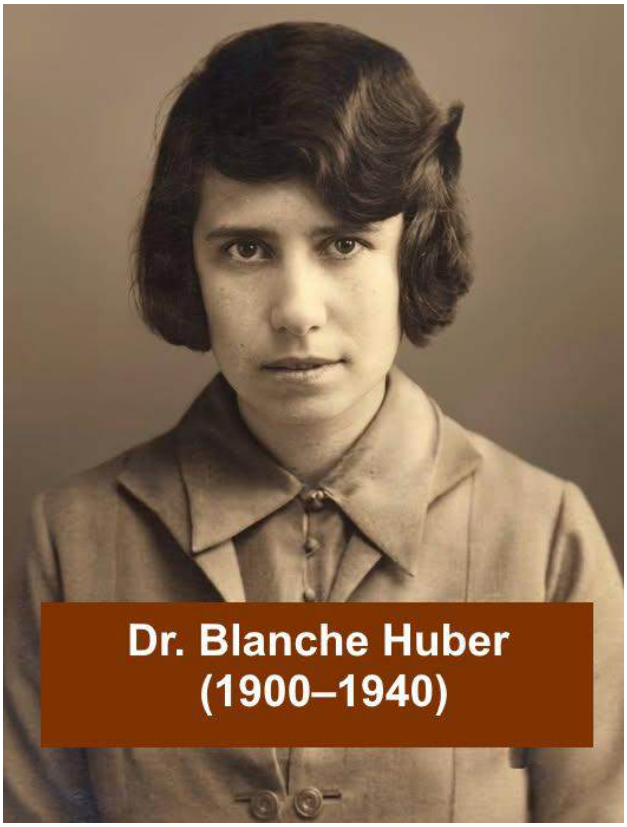
For many Maltese and Gozitan families, the arrival of lampuki season is more than simply the start of another fishing period. It is a familiar sign of summer and a tradition closely connected to Malta's food, culture and maritime identity.

It is my greatest pleasure and privilege to advise you that Alan Zammit AM has been award the Papal Knighthood of Saint Gregory.

Next to the many contributions he made to our Diocese, Alan was also the chair of our parish finance overseeing the construction of the current church at St Michael's in 1980. Congratulations to Alan and his family *Knight of the Order of Saint Gregory the Great, Mr Alan Zammit OAM and Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv.*

Mr Zammit has been a volunteer member of several diocesan committees for more than 30 years. He has been a member of the Diocesan Property Committee since 1994 and currently serves as its chair. During this time, he oversaw several key property projects such as the rebuilding of St Patrick's Cathedral and as a member of the Kemps Creek Taskforce. In addition, Mr Zammit has been a member of the Diocesan Finance Council since 2016. He was a member of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Council, chair of the World Youth Day 2016 Steering Committee and was a member of the Diocesan Synod Assembly in 2023. In 2009, he was made a Member of the Order of Australia for contributions to infrastructure development and to a range of charitable organisations.

Joseph Lam PhD STD Parish Priest of Baulkham Hills Parish NSW



#MaltaDaily

BLANCHE HUBER MD

A PIONEER IN MALTESE MEDICAL HISTORY

Blanche Huber was the first woman in Malta to train as a doctor. She graduated as a doctor from the University of Malta in 1925, having entered it in 1919. However, Huber never worked as a doctor, instead she always practiced as a pharmacist in Żejtun.

Blanche Huber (1900–1940) holds a landmark position in the historical development of tertiary education and medicine in Malta. As the first woman to enrol in and complete a medical degree in the country, her career represents a significant milestone in the integration of women into traditionally male-dominated professional spheres during the early twentieth century.

Born in Birkirkara to Joseph Huber, she matriculated in June 1919. In October of that same year, Huber and Tessie Camilleri made history by becoming the first female students admitted to the University of Malta. While Camilleri pursued humanities, Huber registered for the Doctor of Medicine course, a rigorous six-year program. She completed her studies and graduated in 1925, becoming Malta's first female medical doctor.

Despite achieving full medical qualification, historical records indicate that Huber did not practice clinical medicine. Instead, she chose to operate as a pharmacist in the town of Żejtun. This professional trajectory reflects the broader social and institutional barriers that female professionals faced in the interwar period, where opportunities in hospital settings and formal medical practice remained highly constrained for women. Later in life, she married Dr Joseph Caruana, a fellow medical professional.

Huber passed away prematurely on July 19, 1940, at forty years of age. Her legacy, however, remains enduring in Maltese academic and social history. In recognition of her pioneering contribution to higher education and gender inclusion, a major street in Sliema was named Blanche Huber Street. Today, she is widely remembered as an essential figure whose entry into higher education paved the way for future generations of women in medicine across Malta.

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On Sunday 10 of August, the Consul General of Victoria Dr Gioconda Schembri had the honour to attend the commemoration of the 83rd anniversary of Operation Pedestal, il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija, a convoy that was pivotal in saving the Maltese population from starvation and surrender in the Second World War. The event is organized annually by the Maltese Australian Association with the participation of the Consulate of the United Kingdom and the United States of America, representatives from the Australian Army, Navy and Air Force, the Maltese Community Council of Victoria and the Santa Marija Assunta Association.
The commemoration was held at the Shrine of Remembrance and the Shelter of Peace monument. Affarijiet BarraninHigh Commission of Malta in Australia
Photos Credit: The Maltese Community Council of Victoria 2026

Santa Marija Assunta Association Inc.

Festa Santa Marija Assunta
43rd Anniversary 2026
Sunday 16 August

St Peter Chanel, 848 Ballarat Road, Deer Park VICTORIA

Friday 14 August

6.15pm - Confessions In Maltese & English

6.30pm - Reciting Of The Holy Rosary

7.00pm - Presentation Of Flowers By The Faithful To Santa Marija, Followed By A Solemn High Mass by: Rev. Fr. Filemon Libot CMF.P.P. who will deliver the Homily in honour of the Assunta, and accompanied by the "M.W.F. Philippine Choir". After Mass, "The MMG Concert Band of Vic." will be in attendance playing those cherished merry band and Marian Hymnal Marches at the Parish Hall. Everybody is invited, Come and meet each other, while celebrating this Great occasion. Complimentary light refreshments will be served.

Saturday 15 August

6.30-11.59pm - The Santa Marija Assunta Annual Dinner Dance at The Ballroom, LUXOR Function Centre, 503-523 Sydenham Road, Sydenham. Entertainment by DJ Domini and the M.M.G. Concert Band of Victoria playing those famous traditional merry and Marian marches, creating that unique atmosphere of the traditional Santa Marija village festa.

Sunday 16 August - Festa Day

2.00pm - A Solemn Pontifical High Mass by His Lordship, The Most Rev. Rene` Ramirez R.C.J. Bishop of The Sandhurst's Diocese will deliver the Homily in honour of the Assunta, with other concelebrating priests. The accompanying choir is The Philippine Eucharistic Choir.

3.45pm - Weather permitting a procession parade with the artistic and devotional statue of Santa Marija will take place, accompanied by The M.M.G. Concert Band of Victoria Inc for entertainment. After the procession parade, a musical concert will be hosted at the parish hall by the M.M.G Concert Bands, followed by DJ Domenic, and traditional Maltese food and drinks will be available for sale.

To purchase tickets to the Santa Marija Assunta Annual Dinner Dance please contact any of the following:

Frank Galea 9314 4231 / galeafrank@ymail.com Frank Mintoff 0407 816 603 Raymond Theuma 0409 361 271 Joe Attard 9361 1396 Paul Aquilina 0430 780 005 Charlie Spiteri 0402 215 839 Anna Azzopardi 0438 551 372 Carmen Spiteri 0402 215 604 Doris Bonello 0431 459 668

Sannat Gozo bombing survivor remembers the fateful Day - 84 years ago

Toni Xiberras and his older brother Kelinu were flying their kites on the roof of their grandmother Peppa's farmhouse in Sannat on a normal Saturday in 1942. Their sister Margaret had decided to tag along with them that day.

Not being a school day, the children were having the time of their lives on the roof, while their mother Marija could take care of her other six children back home.

"This is what we did every Saturday when we had no school. I have lovely memories of time spent at my grandmother's. It was a huge house, so we could explore every nook and cranny and let our imagination run wild," says Toni, who is now 80.

It was 10am on October 10 – the eve of the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary – when Kelinu, who was eight at the time, caught a glimpse of two warplanes approaching from the direction of Marsalforn in the north. At first, the boys thought they were Allied planes, maybe British ones.

"They're 'our' planes," shouted Kelinu excitedly to his five-year-old brother Toni.

The boys let go of their kites and stared at the planes in bewilderment. Never before had they seen anything so spectacular in the extremely quiet village of Sannat, in the south of Gozo.

"But we quickly came to our senses. Those were not Allied planes but enemy ones," reminisces Toni, who is now a grandfather and soon-to-be great-grandfather.

Toni Xiberras and his wife Antonia, née Refalo, who married in 1966.

The planes dropped two large bombs – one hit the roof the two brothers stood on and another fell in the farmyard (mandra), hitting a large carob tree – leaving 18 people living nearby dead and a trail of devastation.

The roof shook under the brothers' legs as soon as the first bomb touched the ground. The second bomb followed, after which the boys heard a series of explosions and found themselves thrown up in the air, separated and buried under the rubble.

"Huge chunks of my grandmother's two-storey house were razed to the ground, as were some of our neighbours' houses nearby. I could hear people screaming outside. Others frantically called the names of their loved ones, fearing them death. The scene will remain in my mind forever," Toni says.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the bombing, which Toni thinks about every single day, especially on the way to his fields, where he spends quiet moments farming in the open air and contemplating on his life.

Giuzeppi Ciantar

You were born again on that fateful day To mark the bombing's 70th anniversary, retired university lecturer Joe Zammit Ciantar, who lost his 18-month-old sister Lydia on that day, wrote in an article on the Times of Malta: "In 1942 Malta was going through its darkest days of World War II, with air raids killing hundreds and destroying many buildings. In those days the enemy targeted mostly ships in the Grand Harbour or Marsamxett or the aerodromes at Luqa, Hal Far and Ta' Qali, which meant that civilians who suffered most were those who lived in or near those targets.

"In Gozo, which had no military installations and where no large ships could anchor and no planes could fly from or land – there was no reason for bombing raids. Because of this, many Maltese sought refuge there during the war."

The two brothers and their sister Margaret, who only suffered a broken jaw, miraculously survived the bombing. Toni broke both his legs and left arm, while his brother Kelinu – who after the bombing found himself curled up close to a spiral staircase covered by a gate (xatba), which probably saved his life – screamed in agonising pain after badly fracturing his heel. Kelinu passed away four years ago.

During the ordeal, the grandmother had gone to the Victory Kitchen in the Tax-Xelina square to get supplies for the family. After the bombing, she rushed to the house in a panic, thinking of her daughter Klara, whom she left cooking a meal for Margaret and the boys.

"Sadly, our aunt Klara's lifeless body was found in the kitchen next to the stove (spiritiera). She was 39 years old. My dearest mother, Marija, who at the time of the bombing was breastfeeding my baby brother, could not get out of her house. The roof had collapsed and she had to be carried out through a narrow passageway that led to the kitchen downstairs," remembers Toni.

"Preparing for the worst, my mother came to look for us. She was so relieved to find out that the three of us were safe and sound. My father, who worked as a builder in Ghajnsielem, walked all the way to Sannat to embrace us."

Toni, who spent 34 years in the police force and ended his service as a police sergeant, loves to read and watch current news. However, the best part of his day is spent in his fields, where he can look across the vast land in front of him and hear his wise old grandmother's words still echoing in his ears: "You were born again on that fateful day."

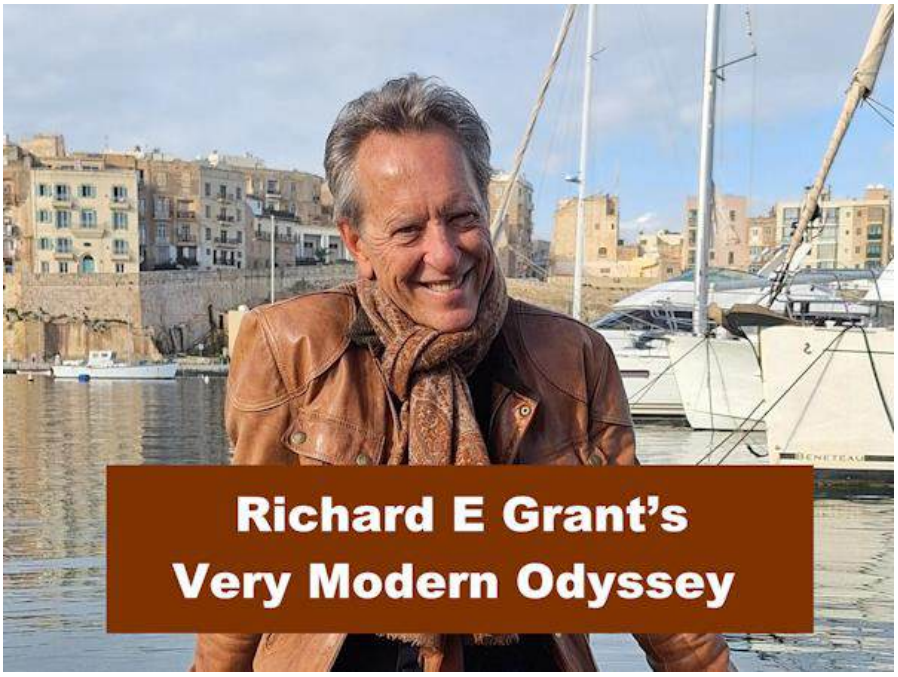
Lampuki is the Maltese name for the dorado or mahi-mahi (dolphinfish), a prized migratory fish that swims past Malta every autumn. The official commercial and traditional fishing season runs from August 15 through December 31, kicked off annually by a fleet blessing ceremony in Marsaxlokk.

The Kannizzati Fishing Method

- **Palm rafts**: Fishermen weave palm fronds into flat floating rafts called *kannizzati*.
- **Shade seeking**: The rafts are anchored at sea; lampuki school underneath them out of preference for shade.
- **Net collection**: Fishermen approach the rafts using traditional *luzzu* boats or modern vessels to scoop up the fish. News updates on the fleet preparations and seasonal blessings are regularly covered by the Times of Malta.

Culinary Uses

- **Lampuki pie (*Torta tal-Lampuki*)**: A famous baked pastry pie filled with lampuki chunks, tomatoes, capers, olives, mint, and spinach.
- **Aljotta**: A robust traditional Maltese fish soup heavily flavored with garlic, herbs, and tomatoes.
    - **Fried or grilled**: Often lightly fried or cooked *al cartoccio* (en papillote) with fresh Mediterranean herbs and lemon.



Malta and Gozo take centre stage in Richard E. Grant's Very Modern Odyssey

Gozo News

Malta and Gozo have taken centre stage in the opening episode of Richard E. Grant's Very Modern Odyssey, a new four-part travel series inspired by Homer's The Odyssey, bringing Malta's rich history, culture, gastronomy and landscapes to international audiences.

The series follows acclaimed actor and broadcaster Richard E. Grant as he explores locations connected to the epic journey of Odysseus, combining history, culture, food and contemporary experiences.

The first episode aired on Sunday, the 2nd of August, in the UK on Channel 4, Canada on CBC and Australia on SBS, with the Maltese Islands featuring prominently throughout the programme.

The Malta Tourism Authority's Digital Unit, through its Film Tourism and History work, coordinated the Malta episode with the programme's producers, helping facilitate the production and ensuring that the Islands' historical and cultural assets were an integral part of the programme.

The episode begins in Malta's Grand Harbour before taking viewers through Valletta and its extraordinary heritage, including St John's Co-Cathedral, whilst also featuring experiences in Gozo. Malta's gastronomy, architecture, history and Mediterranean character are a central part of Grant's journey, offering international viewers an engaging perspective on the Islands.

The MTA said that the production has also received positive international media attention. In a review of the opening episode, **The Guardian described** Very Modern Odyssey as a "real success of a show", highlighting Grant's evident fascination with Malta and his experiences in Valletta and Gozo.

Malta Tourism Authority CEO Carlo Micallef said, "this collaboration gives the Maltese Islands an important platform to reach discerning international travellers through an engaging and authentic story. By showcasing our history, culture, gastronomy and unique character, the programme demonstrates that Malta offers the depth of experience increasingly sought by quality-conscious visitors that MTA's marketing and PR are specifically targeting in its international promotion of the Maltese Islands"

Malta Tourism Authority Chairman Dr Charles Mangion said, "having the Maltese Islands feature so prominently in the opening episode of Very Modern Odyssey strengthens our international visibility among audiences who value culture, history and authentic experiences. This is the type of exposure that supports our ambition to attract quality tourism throughout the year."

The Malta Tourism Authority said that collaborations such as this form part of its "wider international marketing strategy, using high-quality television and digital productions to introduce the Maltese Islands to new audiences and strengthen their appeal across key tourism segments."

Photo: MTA.

NEWPORT MALTESE ASSOCIATION AND SENIORS GROUP

Toni Scicluna - pRESIENT

ANNUAL DINNER DANCE

·The Annual Dinner Dance of the Newport Maltese Association and Seniors Group will be held on Sunday the 11th of October at 6.00 pm at Ferraro Receptions.
Should , you wish to book please Contact Carmen Casa to arrange your booking.
We will be subsidising the ticket prices . The prices are as follows:.
$50 for members
$70 for non members

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Newport Maltese Association and Seniors group will be held on Sunday the 27th of September at 12 noon.
This year is an election year, so if you are interested in volunteering for the following positions please complete the nomination form which will be available at the club rooms in Parkville and at the Father's Day dinner dance later this month.
Our constitution states that the following position holders must stand down and must be re-elected.
President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary
The current management team are all willing to serve for another two years however, should you be interested you should not be deterred in putting your hand up for any position.
We hope you are able to attend and if you are able to please advise Carmen Casa of your intentions,
We need to know numbers for catering purposes and seating arrangements.
We look forward to seeing you at the meeting and advising you of the current financial position and plans going forward for our club.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Wishing George Saliba a very happy 90th birthday.
For those that are not aware, George is one of the founding members of the Newport Club and has worked hard to make the club what it is today.
Thank you George for your hard work which makes the club the Great club it is today.
Thank you also for your assistance and advice.
Enjoy your day with your family and we look forward to seeing you on Wednesday.
Happy birthday from myself and all the committee members.

Meet Mr. Jonah Vella
our Maltese-American
who is participating in our
'Meet the Maltese in America'
campaign
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MR. JONAH VELLA

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER - DREAM VENTURES

Jonah Vella, originally from Marsascala and now a proud U.S. citizen, serves as Chief Operating Officer of Dream Ventures, a U.S.-based venture capital firm. In his role, he has helped deploy over $150 million into early-stage companies across industries ranging from consumer brands to deep tech ventures advancing U.S. national interests.

A graduate of St Aloysius College, Jonah went on to study law at the University of Malta before relocating to the United States. Though he now calls America home, he carries Malta with him everywhere he goes – returning to the island every summer to reconnect with family, indulge in pastizzi and figolli, and stock up on Maltese honey to bring back across the Atlantic. Jonah is always eager to connect with fellow Maltese living in the U.S., as well as anyone back home looking to do business stateside or explore making the move themselves.

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.

On his recent visit to Brisbane, High Commissioner Clifford Borg-Marks was pleased to meet committee members of Queensland Maltese Australian Community Inc. (QMAC). The High Commissioner thanked QMAC President Sandra Alexandra Micallef and her team for their clear commitment to the promotion of Malta's heritage, culture and traditions

CONGRATULATIONS

Jacob Micallef, young Maltese racing driver, made history at the home of British motorsport, Silverstone Circuit, as he took an impressive victory after a last corner move in one of the most competitive championships in the world – the GB3 Championship.

His outstanding achievement and determination are a source of inspiration for the next generation of young Maltese racing drivers.

MALTESE
YOUNG TALENTS
FOOTBALL PLATFORM
FORZA MALTA:
DAVID BEATS GOLIATH
UNDER 16 WATERPOLO
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
CHINA
11-12
MALTA
BELIEF. COURAGE. UNITY. VICTORY.
SMALL ISLAND. BIG HEART. LIMITLESS SPIRIT.
#FORZAMALTA