



The Voice of the Maltese

We are for the Greater Malta



An online newspaper, with fortnightly print and digital editions



These ancient beehives can be found in a rock-hewn chamber at the cliffs of Qammieħ, close to the Red Tower in Mellieħa. They are thought to date back to Roman times, and are well known in beekeeping circles even in Australia. Photo Copyright © Kappa Vision / Jean-Paul Borg.

Roundup of Maltese News

Son-in-law of late mafia boss 'Toto' Riina arrested in Malta

By Brian Decelis
February 9, 2024

A 50-year-old man who was wanted by the Italian authorities in order to serve a prison sentence was arrested in Mosta following weeks of investigations.

Antonino Ciavarello was arrested on the strength of a European Arrest Warrant issued by the Italian authorities, police said.



The scene of the arrest photo by The Malta Police Force via Facebook

He is wanted by the Brindisi Public Prosecutor's Office to serve a prison sentence over a fraud conviction and for breaching police bail.

Palermo-born Ciavarello, who worked as a driver with a local company, will be extradited.

He is married to the daughter of the infamous Godfather Salvatore 'Toto' Riina who was one of Italy's feared mobsters believed to have killed more than 150 men including anti-mafia judge Giovanni Falcone.

Poland becomes fastest-growing source market for tourism in Malta

By Joseph Cutajar
February 8, 2024

Addressing a joint event by MTA, ITAKA Poland and Alpine Sterling DMC at a hotel at Golden Sands, Malta to celebrate the growing success of Malta amongst Polish travellers, the Chairman of the MTA, Dr Gavin Gulia, gave a warm welcome to ITAKA's President, Mr Piotr Henicz, the company's top management, sales managers, and agents, and thanked them for their commitment in selling Malta, for choosing to visit and experience the Maltese Islands, and for hosting the ITAKA Lider conference in Malta.

A few months ago, the VisitMalta Regional Office in Warsaw joined



MTA Chairman Gavin Gulia (2nd left) with guests at the MTA-ITAKA event in Malta. Photo: VisitMalta

ITAKA Poland and established a collaborative agreement. This partnership actively promotes and markets the Maltese Islands, particularly emphasising the winter months.

Through this agreement, ITAKA is also promoting and selling package holidays to travellers based in Poland wanting to visit Malta all year round. It is an agreement that whilst increasing the brand visibility of the Maltese Islands in the Polish market, it also continues to strengthen and evolve the hugely encouraging numbers of the Polish market in the local tourism industry.

In recent years, Malta has broadened its range of source markets, and as a result, it has become less dependent on the core markets of the UK, Germany, Italy, and France. Consequently, in 2019, growth from secondary markets, such as Eastern Europe, was recorded, with Poland attracting almost 105,000 visitors.

The MTA identified the potential in the Polish market and started working hard to attract more Polish tourists to the Maltese Islands. In November 2022, VisitMalta inaugurated a new office in Warsaw, the first regional office in Eastern Europe, to serve as a hub to cater for the rising demand of the Polish market and as a point of reference for Eastern Europe and the Baltic region. It proved to be a highly strategic choice, as between January and November 2023, the Polish market increased rapidly, reaching a total of 149,000 inbound tourists.

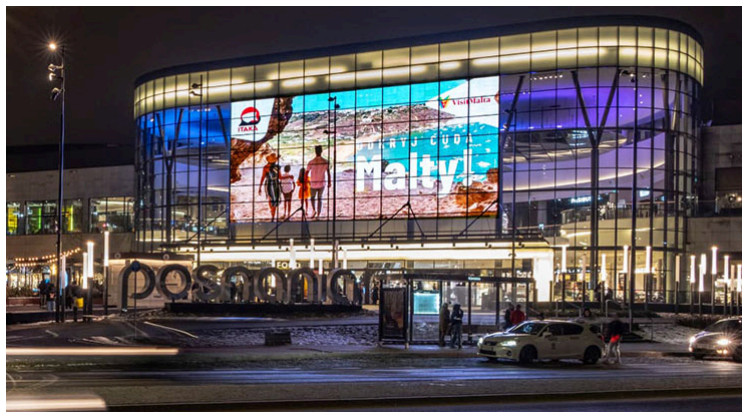
This positive outcome resulted from MTA's enhanced marketing efforts in Poland, which included online and digital campaigns, print advertising, social media exposure, radio and other outdoor advertising campaigns, and promoting the Maltese Islands on popular Polish TV stations. It also included connectivity and partnerships with several tour operators and airlines, resulting in the Polish market's pivotal role in contributing towards tourism recovery and encouraging results in 2023.

Poland stands as the fastest-growing source market for inbound tourism in Malta. The agreement with ITAKA continues to amplify Malta's significant potential in the Polish market. Polish people visit Malta year-round for short breaks, family holidays, English language learning and active holidays.

Malta has become more prevalent in Poland not only for the Islands' pleasant climate and the hospitality of the Maltese people but, more importantly, for the overall exceptional holiday experience promised and delivered to visitors achieved through a rich heritage and a diverse tourism product that caters to all ages and interests, and the constantly growing number of connections and seat capacity between Malta and Poland.

Dr Gulia stated that the MTA is celebrating the remarkable tourism performance in 2023, which led to a successful recovery of the tourism sector in Malta. He thanked ITAKA and their commitment to selling Malta, Alpine Sterling for their excellent collaboration as the local DMC for ITAKA, the President of MHRA, Mr Tony Zahra, MTA's Regional office in Warsaw, the staff within the MTA, and the continued excellent connectivity between the two countries.

Tourism Minister Clayton Bartolo maintained that thanks to the sterling work carried out by the Malta Tourism Authority to ensure that the Maltese Islands continue to be an attractive destination all



Promoting the Maltese islands in the Polish capital, Warsaw. Photo: VisitMalta

year round, the Polish market is proving to be one of Malta’s most emerging source markets in recent years. “We are looking forward to seeing more Polish tourists visit the splendour of the Maltese Islands for the months and years to come,” Minister Bartolo said.

Controversies over popular singing contests

By Brian Decelis

February 8, 2024

Malta is never lacking in controversies whether political or otherwise and we actually witnessed two over popular singing contests taking place within 24 hours of each other.

The Malta Eurovision Song Contest final organized by Public Broadcasting Services was strongly criticized for its format adopted this year where instead of being held in front of a live audience, this was broadcast from a studio. It was felt that both the singers who participated and the fans of this contest were short changed by the decision.

The winner of this contest – 25-year-old Gozitan singer Sarah Bonnici with her high-energy dance anthem *Loop* – will represent Malta at the Eurovision Song Contest in Malmo, Sweden in May 2024. Voting was split between a professional jury and nationwide televoting.



The 12 finalists for the Malta Eurovision Song Contest in this TVM handout photo

Second placed Matt Blxck was the audience favourite with his song *Banana*. Ryan Hili’s *Karma* placed third – he had been an X-Factor winner in 2022.

It was this year’s X-Factor edition that provided the second controversy of the weekend when two non-Maltese nationals were eliminated from the popular show now running in its fourth season.

Rose Marielle Mamaclay, a Filipino singer together with Namibian Sean Kamati have been kicked out of the competition after what seems to have been a campaign on social media to oust them out in favour of a Maltese national.



Facebook Photo of Rose Marielle Mamaclay and Sean Kamati, eliminated from the X Factor show

But one of the judges on the same show was among the first to deplore these eliminations of what were considered two top potential winners and called the action as “hypocrisy and nothing to be proud of”.

Both singers had been approached by the producers to participate in the show and this is not unusual as local singers have participated in foreign competitions in the past.

Maybe singer Ludwig Galea summed up the whole controversy when he asked on Facebook: “What The Fluff is happening Malta?”

Bill establishing Climate Action Authority presented in Parliament

By Brian Decelis

February 7, 2024

Malta is establishing a Climate Action Authority to evaluate policies related to climate change to ensure the optimal coordination and effectiveness of the country’s mitigation and adaptation actions.

Minister for the Environment Miriam Dalli said that “For the first time, Malta will have an authority focused on climate, and the collective actions that we, as a country, need to pursue. The Government is determined to promote a more sustainable life, and this is why we need decisive climate action,” the Minister explained.

The Minister explained that the country must work to turn the challenges of climate change into rewarding mitigation opportunities.

“Climate change is exerting increased pressures on several sectors, such as tourism, agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing and industry. More importantly, it has an impact on our wellbeing. However, these threats come with opportunities, including new green economy careers, green finance that encourage the ecological transition and the development of new sustainable technologies,” Minister Miriam Dalli said.

She also explained that the way forward is for all sectors to engage



Photo: Department of Information



Photo: Department of Information

in positive climate action, ultimately contributing to the Government's objective to decarbonise the country's economy by 2050.

The bill that will be discussed in Parliament proposes several functions for the new authority, including:

- Increasing awareness on climate change and climate action.
- Implementing mechanisms to formulate and adopt legal instruments that meet national and international requirements.
- Establishing a long-term national strategy.
- Establishing a climate adaptation national strategy.
- Updating the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP).
- Collating the necessary data related to climate action.

Maltese farmers follow EU counterparts in protest

By Brian Decelis

February 4, 2024

Maltese farmers followed their EU counterparts in protest for the first time in decades against existing EU policies they say will threaten their livelihoods.



Photo: Terry Muscat via Facebook

Farmers met in Ta' Qali with their tractors and drove to Floriana. It follows protests by hundreds of farmers in front of the European Parliament in Brussels and other protests across Europe in recent weeks.

Angry farmers have protested in Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland and Romania.

As happens when such demonstrations take place, many of Malta's roads were brought to a standstill, but many were supportive of the farmers' stance.

"No farmer, eat synthetic", "EU kills its own farmers" and "Green deal? No deal" were some of the placards attached to the farm vehicles.

The protest was organised by the Għaqda Bdiegħa Attivi with the support of stakeholders in the agricultural sector and others.

One such organisation was Friends of the Earth Malta which recognised the frustrations of farmers who grapple with low incomes, a lack of prospects, and consequences of decades of

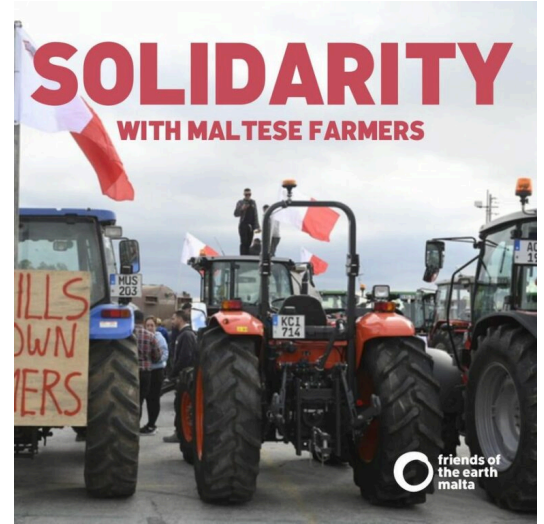
unsustainable policies, coupled with the prohibitive costs of the ever shrinking agricultural land in Malta. "We share their fight for a fairer agriculture system," they said.

While the anger of many farmers is legitimate, the organisation said that after years of it being ignored by political leaders, it is now dangerously being exploited by populist parties and agro-industrial lobbies trying to shatter green objectives and commitments.

It said that environmental legislation is not the enemy – denying the realities of the climate and biodiversity crises will only intensify the challenges farmers face, from heatwaves to floods and droughts.

Friends of the Earth Malta called on the next European Commission to steer the transition of our agricultural and food systems in a fair, just, climate-friendly way.

A claim that agriculture ministry officials had pressured farmers not to participate in the protest was denied.



Poster by Friends of the Earth in support of Maltese farmers. Source: Friends of the Earth via Facebook

Chalet bid rejected but Evans Building to be presented to parliament for approval

By Brian Decelis

February 3, 2024

Malta Strategic Partnership Projects (MSPP) – a government agency – announced that the evaluation process for two projects presented to the government, seeking private-sector investment, had been concluded.

These were for the rehabilitation of the Chalet site in Sliema and the use of the Evans Building in Valletta.

In the case of the Chalet only one bid had been submitted and it was not being recommended for award. The request for proposals had invited bidders to submit proposals for the regeneration of the ex-chalet site as a Superior Quality Catering and Entertainment Establishment that would enhance the popular appeal of the Għar id-Dud Promenade.

The Chalet, completed in 1926 designed in the contemporary Neo Liberty/Art Deco architectural style, was a very popular entertainment venue in the second quarter of the last century. Every Thursday the premises were open for dancing with live music being played by the top local performers and during the weekend, the dance halls were also hired out for private functions and wedding parties.

This site is highly exposed to the sea and prevailing winds being



The Chalet site. Photo: Malta Strategic Partnership Projects/Facebook



The Evans Building site. Photo: Malta Strategic Partnership Project via Facebook



Figure 1 The Chapel of the Bones

Image of the Nibbia Chapel (Chapel of Bones) as it was before being destroyed in WW2. Image: MSPP RFP Document for Evans Building site

particularly vulnerable to South-Easterly *grigal* storms with heavy sea spray reaching up and engulfing even the promenade level sometimes. In fact it was declared structurally unsafe in 1959 and was closed down in 1963. Ever since its closure the platform structure support on concrete columns has suffered even further deterioration due to its highly vulnerable location exposed as it is to the elements.

Various attempts at the development of the site failed over the years.

The Evans Laboratories were inaugurated in 1959 to house the Faculty of Science/Medical School within the University of Malta up to 1968 when they were relocated to a building adjacent to St. Luke's Hospital. The Evans building itself is strategically located near the tip of the Valletta peninsula with a number of cultural heritage remains, including the ruins of the Nibbia Chapel (a.k.a. the Chapel of Bones) and the remains of the Anatomical Theatre. The latter two are currently buried.

The chapel was severely damaged by aerial bombardment during World War II and the remaining structures were demolished in the late 1970s, leaving the ruins which continue to be part of the site.

The agency said various offers for the Evans Building site were evaluated and the agency has recommended the award of the 65-year concession to Valletta Luxury Projects who had made a bid of €1.2 million annually, thus reaching €78 million over the concession period.

The project, which the Government estimates will generate a turnover of €300 million to the concessionaire, will be presented to Parliament for approval. The site shall be used by the Concessionaire as a superior quality tourism accommodation establishment that would enhance touristic appeal towards the lower part of Valletta.

This proposed development has attracted some controversy. The lawyer and former Nationalist MP Jason Azzopardi has written to the Auditor General asking him to open an investigation into the Evans Building concession for the "ridiculous price" it is being given

for instead of the tens of millions that this unique Valletta building has been estimated for.

Maltese families the second wealthiest in Europe

By TVOTM NewsDesk

February 2, 2024

An article on Bloomberg by columnist Chris Bryant and duplicated on thejournal.mt affirms that Maltese and Gozitan families are the second wealthiest in Europe, on average, if one takes into consideration how many own their home and what is its value, alongside their usual assets. This value is diminished by the value of financial obligations and other commitments that families have.

The source of this data are Distributional Wealth Accounts, experimental statistics produced by the European System of Central Banks, and based on a study of family finances held over the Euro region by the European Central Bank in collaboration with central banks of the different nations and by data from Eurostat.

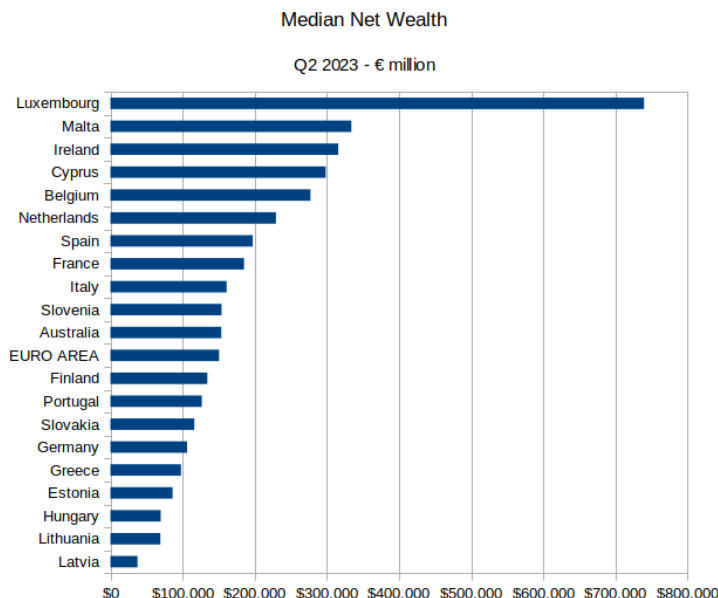
Maltese and Gozitan families are likelier than those in numerous other nations to own their own home, and not to have related debts. They also have deposited funds higher than the European average.

This system of statistics produces some eye-opening results. For example, it turns out that while the German economy is among the most advanced globally, German families are not exceptionally wealthy in terms of what they own, and few own their own homes. Inequality is also high: those on high earnings tending to possess the lion's share of resources within the nation. The 10% wealthiest German families have normal net resources of €725,000, whereas the 40% lowest well-off have resources have 16 times less.

The Bloomberg columnist continues that this results in a normal German family having about the same level of assets as a Greek one, despite Germany being economically much more advanced.

European Central Bank figures show that Maltese households' net resources that are twice the value of German ones. Luxembourg families have the largest net asset values, just above twice that of Malta, whereas those with the smallest are families in Latvia, having ten times lower total assets than the normal Maltese and Gozitan family.

These insights from the European Central Bank are however another affirmation of how numerous families in Malta have profited from the country's flourishing economy in recent times.

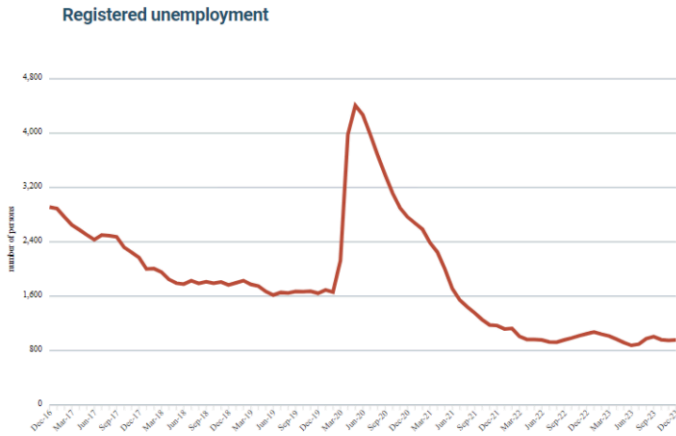


Source data: ECB Distributional Wealth Accounts. Graphic: Ivan Cauchi

Unemployment remains under 1,000

By Brian Decelis
February 1, 2024

Data published by the National Statistics Office shows that in December 2023, the number of persons registering for work stood at 955 decreasing by 91 persons when compared to the same month the previous year.



Graphic: National Statistics Office Malta

Unemployed decreased across all age groups with men accounting for 67.2 per cent of the total. The largest shares of persons were seeking employment as clerical support workers, at 40.9 per cent and 23.8 per cent of males and females respectively.

The lowest number of people registering for work was recorded in June at 875, with the figure having remained hovered at or below the 1,000 mark throughout 2022 and 2023. It had spiked to more than 4,000 at the peak of the COVID-19 crisis in the second quarter of 2020.

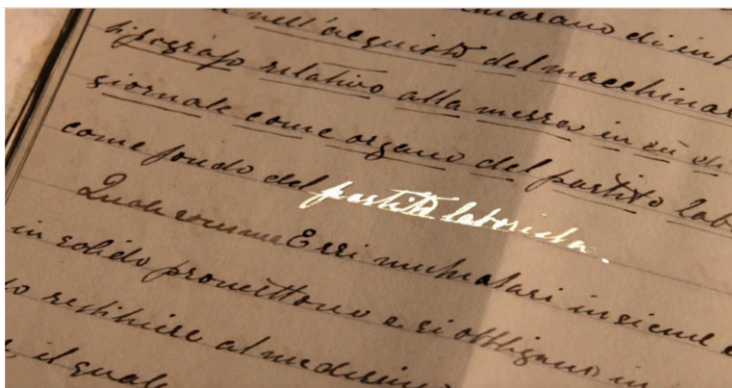
Malta Labour Party foundation date revised

By Brian Decelis
January 31, 2024

The long held date of the foundation of the Partito Laborista – the modern-day Labour Party – was recently revised by three days thanks to a document found in the Notarial Archives – it was previously held to be the 15th October 1920.

According to a deed in the acts of Notary Paolo Carbonaro, it was on the 12th October 1920 that a loan of £300 was granted to three persons with a view of establishing the Labour Party – a political party founded on leftist socialist principles and Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891).

Initially, the loan was intended to set up the party's printing press. The Labour Party has now sponsored the professional conservation of the volume in which the notarial act was registered together with three other volumes related to this deed.



A screen shot of a video on the PL Facebook page



The volume prior to conservation. Photo: National Archives

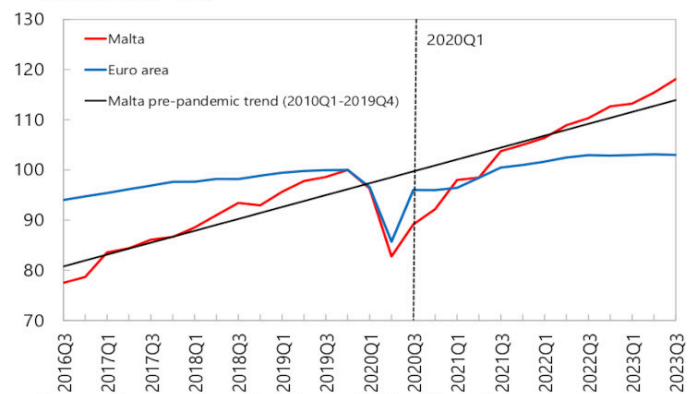
It was thanks to meticulous research by Michael Buhagiar, a researcher with the Notarial Archives Foundation (NAF) that these documents were found, resulting in the revision of the date of the Labour Party's foundation.

The volumes needed extensive interventions including surface cleaning of all volumes, various paper and binding repairs, ink consolidation and cover repairs. Subsequently, all volumes are individually stored in protective boxes to preserve them for many years to come.

IMF: Malta's recovery impressive but must remain vigilant

By Brian Decelis
January 31, 2024

Real GDP
(Index, 2019Q4=100)



Sources: Eurostat, Haver Analytics, and IMF staff calculations.

The International Monetary Fund has praised Malta for its post pandemic recovery but called on the country to remain vigilant especially concerning the financial sector and needed structural reforms.

Although with weaker growth in Europe it was expected for growth to slow down, it was still expected that Malta's economy will continue to expand by 6.25 percent in 2023 and 5 percent in 2025, among the highest in Europe.

Key priorities identified by the IMF include containing demand pressures by accelerating fiscal consolidation, exiting gradually from the current fixed energy price policy while protecting vulnerable groups, maintaining financial stability, and boosting structural reform efforts.

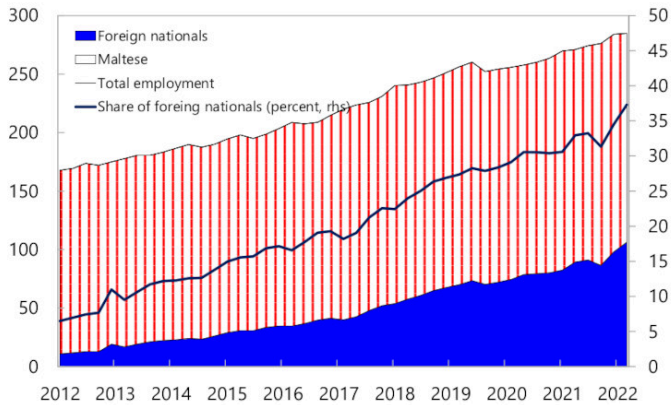
In a reaction to the report publication, Prime Minister Robert Abela acknowledged the IMF's positive comments and noted that the energy subsidies – which he described as crucial – will not impede other investments.

He singled out the recent initiative of stabilizing the prices of 400 food products.

The IMF has once again called for the current generous energy subsidy policy to be phased out and for the implementation of the corporate income tax reform – which has been delayed due to its impact on some 660 multinational companies based in Malta.

Employment by Nationality

(*'000, unless otherwise indicated)



Sources: Eurostat.

IMF called on Malta to remain vigilant in monitoring risks in the financial sector, especially how developments in inflation affect the vulnerable as well as in the areas of cyber security and money laundering.

There is a need to refocus Malta’s economic development strategy by taking account of capacity constraints, infrastructure needs, and immigrants’ complementary role in filling domestic labour’s skill shortages, it said.

While acknowledging that the large inflows of foreign workers allowed rapid labour force growth with a significant economic impact, the provision of both physical infrastructure (such as roads) and public services (for example health) have not caught up with the population growth, IMF said.

VisitMalta launches high-end travel guide for the Maltese Islands

By Joseph Cutajar

January 31, 2024

VisitMalta has launched its first comprehensive guide for high-end travel to the Maltese Islands in collaboration with Greydoor Publishing. This exclusive, informative, and fun publication covers anything from general destination information to tips for family travel, sailing, adventure, wellness, itinerary ideas, gastronomy, and much more.

The guidebook aims to inspire readers and inform prospective travellers about the best places to visit in Malta and Gozo. The publication will be distributed at various touchpoints in print and digital versions. It will be available at high-end hotels around Malta, Gozo, and other important venues around the Islands, at international fairs attended by the Malta Tourism Authority and online.

This guidebook is part of VisitMalta’s efforts to promote luxury niche tourism in the Maltese Islands. Other initiatives include support to MTA-licensed Destination Management Companies organising specific familiarisation trips to the Islands and participation at international luxury tourism fairs.



The new Discover Malta magazine designed to help one make the most of his memorable Malta vacation

Christophe Berger, Director of VisitMalta Incentives & Meetings, said: “We are thrilled to launch this publication, aimed towards the high-end and luxury traveller. It comes when tourism in our islands grows from strength to strength, surpassing 2019 figures in arrivals and expenditures. We have also just announced joining Serandipians as a Preferred Destination Partner. “

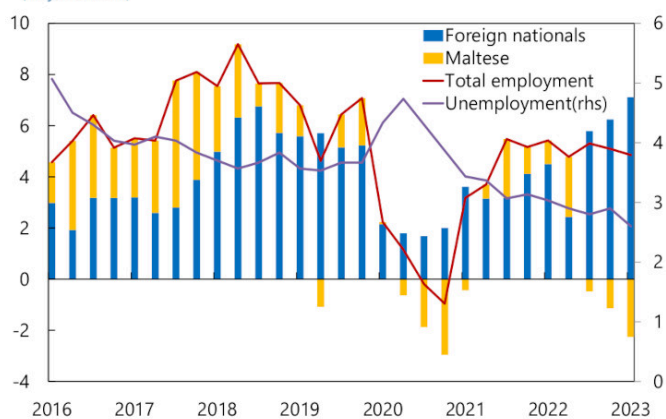
Mr Berger added that it was exciting to see the Maltese Islands being acknowledged as a quality destination and getting the attention they deserve.

VisitMalta is the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) brand name, the primary regulator and motivator for Malta’s tourism industry. It is also the industry’s motivator, its business partner, and Malta’s brand promoter. It ensures meaningful partnerships with all the tourism stakeholders are formed, maintained, and managed.

Link to publication: <https://publications.greydoorpublishing.com/Malta-Tourism-Authority-Discover-Magazine-ED1/index.html>

Employment Growth by Maltese and Foreign Workers

(Yoy, Percent)



Sources: Haver Analytics, Eurostat and IMF staff calculations.

It also observed that the elderly population seem to be increasingly impacted by income equality especially since the pandemic with the gap between high and low earners above the EU average.

While acknowledging that progress has been made in strengthening Malta’s anti-corruption framework, IMF indicated a number of areas where more efforts are needed.

*IMF: 2023 ARTICLE IV CONSULTATION—PRESS RELEASE; STAFF REPORT; AND STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR MALTA is available at <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/CR/2024/English/1MLTEA2024001.ashx>

Mix-xena tal-ħajja Maltija

migbura minn Ġużè Camilleri

Tirranka l-kampanja elettorali

Bdiet tirranka sew il-kampanja elettorali għall-elezzjonijiet li ser

ikollna f’Ġunju li ġej.

Attwalment ser ikollna żewġ elezzjonijiet fl-istess ġurnata: dik għall-Kunsilli Lokali u dik għall-Parlament tal-Unjoni Ewropeja.

Għalkemm il-partiti politiċi lokali qed jaħdmu fuq iż-żewġ elezzjonijiet, il-*media* lokali l-aktar li qed tiffoka fuq l-elezzjoni għall-Parlament Ewropew.



Norma Camilleri, waħda mill-kandidati tal-PN. Ritratt: Norma Camilleri via Facebook

Jidher li l-partiti politiċi qed isibuha diffiċli biex isibu kandidati biżżejjed biex jikkontestaw għall-Kunsilli Lokali, imma fil-każ tal-Parlament Ewropew jidher li l-Partit Nazzjonalista diġà għażel il-kandidat tiegħu, filwaqt li fil-każ tal-Partit Laburisti dan, filwaqt li diġà kkonferma xi kandidati, għad għandu l-bieb miftuħ għal aktar kandidati.

Fost il-kandidati Nazzjonalisti ma jistax jonqos li jkun hemm Roberta Metsola, li mistennija li tmur tajjeb fl-elezzjoni minħabba l-pożizzjoni tagħha bħala President tal-istess

Parlament li qed tikkontesta għalih. Magħha hemm koll, David Caas li ilu għal snin twal membru ta' dan il-Parlament.

Ma dawn hemm kandidati oħra: Peter Agius u l-membri Parlamentari David Agius kif ukoll Miriana Calleja Testaferrata de Noto, Norma Camilleri u LouiseAnne Pulis, kollha kandidati godda, li wħud minnhom huma pjuttost żagħżagħ.

It-tim tal-Partit Laburist jidher li għadu mhux komplut u żgur li ser ikollu diversi uċuħ godda. Dan billi mill-erbgha MEPs li ġew eletti fl-aħħar elezzjoni, s'issa wiehed biss Alex Agius Saliba kkonferma li ser jikkontesta mill-ġdid. It-tlieta l-oħra mhux ser jikkontestaw għax Miriam Dalli kienet irriżenjat minn MEP biex giet maftura Ministru, filwaqt li Alfred Sant kien ilu li ħabbar li mhux ser jikkontesta.

B'sorpriza, l-unika MEP Għawdxija u l-iżgħar waħda fl-età, Josianne Cutajar, li għall-ewwel kien jidher li kienet ser tikkontesta, issa ħabbret li mhix ser tikkontesta.

Sadanittant, Cyrus Engerer, li kien ġie elett minflok Miriam Dalli, għadu ma kkonfermax jekk hux ser jikkontesta jew le.

F'din is-sitwazzjoni l-Partit Laburista fittex numru ta' wċuħ pjuttost godda u s'issa ħabbar li flimkien ma' Agius Saliba ser iressaq lil Daniel Attard, Marija Sarah Vella Gafà, Clint Flores, u Jesmond Bonello.

Qed jingħad wkoll li biex ikollu kandidat minn Għawdex, il-Partit Laburista kien qed iħajjar 'l-eks Ministru, Justine Caruana biex tikkontesta l-elezzjoni wkoll. Anzi kien



L-eks Prim Ministru Joseph Muscat mal-Prim Ministru tal-lum Robert Abela. Ritratt: Jason Micallef via Facebook

hemm min allega li l-MEP Cutajar intalbet biex ma tikkontestax biex tidhol Caruana.

U propju ftit qabel lestijiet dan l-artiklu l-*media* lokali hija mimlija bi stejjer u kummenti dwar il-probabbiltà li l-ex-Prim Ministru, Joseph Muscat, ser jikkontesta wkoll. Dan billi meta mistoqsi dwar din il-possibbiltà huwa wieġeb li hu ma jeskludi xejn u saħansitra l-għada li qal dan, wara erba' snin, deher f'avveniment uffċjali tal-Partit Laburista, fiċ-Ċentru Nazzjonalisti Laburista l-Ħamrun, fejn deher jieħu b'idejn il-Prim Ministru.

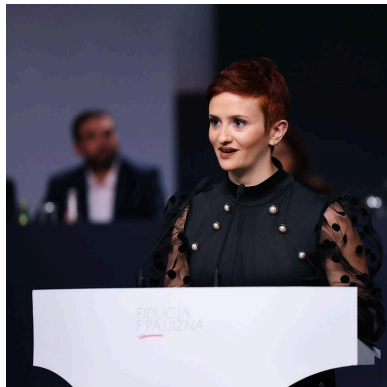
Kieku wiehed kellu jagħmel xi previżjonijiet dwar ir-riżultat tal-elezzjoni, aktarx kien jasal għall-konklużjoni li f'din l-elezzjoni, fil-kamp tal-Partit Nazzjonalista, kien ser jikkonfermaw ruħhom iż-żewġ MEPs preżenti Roberta Metsola u David Casa, b'Metsola mistennija ġgib ħafna voti minħabba l-kariga tagħha bħala President tal-Parlament Ewropew. Għalhekk l-kontestanti l-oħra tal-PN ser ikollhom iċ-ċans li jikkontestaw għat-tielet post, dejjem jekk il-Partit Nazzjonalista din id-darba jirbaħ tliet siggijiet flok tnejn.

Fil-qasam tal-Partit Laburista, ser ikun hemm tellieqa tajba. Dan billi kif ktibt aktar 'il fuq l-uniku MEP preżenti li ser jikkontesta huwa Agius Saliba. Dan mistenni jerga' jiġi elett. U allura jibqa' tal-inqas żewġ siggijiet x'jimtlew... u dawn jafu jkunu tlieta jekk il-Partit Laburista jirnexxilu mill-ġdid jirbaħ erba' siggijiet.

Hawn ta' min jgħid li Miriam Dalli u Alfred Sant, li t-tnejn mhux ser jikkontestaw fl-aħħar elezzjoni ġabu aktar minn 90,000 vot. U dan ir-riżultat jista' jkun effettwat sewwa jekk Muscat jikkonferma li ser jikkontesta, għax bla dubju ta' xejn dan għad għandu ħafna eletturi li jappoġġjawh.

Biss ir-rebħ tat-tielet siggu għall-Partit Nazzjonalista hija possibbiltà kbira, dan meta wiehed jieħu f'konsiderazzjoni li fl-aħħar elezzjoni, il-Partit Nazzjonalista kien qrib li jieħu r-raba' siggu anke jekk il-Partit Laburista kien ġab maġġoranza ta' aktar minn 40,000 vot.

U r-rebħ tat-tielet siggu jfisser ħafna għall-Partit Nazzjonalista, għax dan jfisser li dan il-Partit jkun qed jirkupra mit-telfiet kbar li kellu fl-aħħar snin. U jfisser aktar u aktar u aktar għall-Kap tal-Partit Nazzjonalista, Bernard Grech, billi dan jidher li qed jorbot it-tama li jibqa' jmexxi ma' li l-PN jirbaħ it-tielet siggu.



Marija Sarah Vella Gafà, waħda mill-kandidati tal-PL. Ritratt: Marija Sarah Vella Gafà via Facebook

Mill-gżira Għawdxija

migbura minn Charles Spiteri

Il-proġett The Mathracy Project goes Rhythmic

Il-Kulleġġ ta' Għawdex għal sena oħra reġa' tella' l-proġett The Mathracy Project goes Rhythmic, din is-sena b'kollaborazzjoni mat-Teatru Astra. Dan il-proġett huwa fergħa żgħira mill-proġett The Mathracy Project li l-għan tiegħu hu li jwaħħad elementi differenti ta' tagħlim f'esperjenza li tmur lil hinn mill-erba' hitan tal-klassi.

Dan il-proġett, maħsub għall-istudenti tat-tieni sena, jgħaqqad

flimkien elementi ta' drama, mużika, litteriżmu u matematika. L-istudenti hadu sehem f'sessjonijiet prattiċi marbuta ma' dawn l-elementi li jingħaqdu flimkien permezz tad-dinja tat-teatru.

Dawn l-attivitatijiet huma maħsuba u mmexxija mill-għalliema tad-drama, l-għalliema tal-mużika, l-għalliema tal-matematika u l-għalliema tal-litteriżmu. Għal din l-attività ġew mistiedna wkoll il-ġenituri biex huma wkoll ikunu parti minn din l-esperjenza ta' tagħlim. B'kollox, fuq medda ta' ġimgħa pparteċipaw 'il fuq minn mitejn student.

Permezz ta' dan il-proġett, li kull ma jmur qiegħed jikber u jevolvi



Alison Hili qed tixpruna lill-istudenti biex jabbinaw l-mużika li qed jisingħu ma' strumenti speċifiċi. Ritratt: Charles Spiteri



Elaine Ciantar qed tmexxi sessjoni ta' qari għall-gost bl-istorja Lejl fit-Teatru. Ritratt: Charles Spiteri



Antoinette Grech qed tgħin lit-tfal jesploraw kif il-mużika tamalgama b'mod naturali mal-Matematika. Ritratt: Charles Spiteri

tagħlim tiegħu lil hinn mill-Kulleġġ, lejn komunità li l-istess studenti huma parti minnha.

Elaine Ciantar, Kap tad-Dipartiment tal-Litteriżmu Kulleġġ ta' Għawdex u Koordinatriċi tal-Proġett Mathracy, qaltilla illi permezz ta' din l-attività partikolari studenti tat-tieni sena fehmu aħjar kif suġġetti varji li jitgħallmu l-iskola jistgħu jingħaqdu flimkien f'esperjenza reali u fl-istess hin daħlu fid-dinja tant sabiha tat-teatru biex japprezzaw b'mod dirett dan il-wirt kulturali intanġibbli.

f'esperjenzi aktar wiesgħa, il-Kulleġġ ta' Għawdex qed jistendi t-

Dr Hugh McDermott MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General
State Member for Prospect

For help on NSW Government issues concerning:

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- Crime
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Labor

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Aspetti negattivi tal-istorja soċjali

Dott. Michael Refalo ta taħdita interessanti fil-mużew u ċentru kulturali Il-Ħaġar, nhar is-Sibt 3 ta' Frar 2024 filgħodu, b'riferenza għall-aħħar ktieb tiegħu bl-Ingliż *At the Margins*, jikkonċentra fuq aspetti mhux tas-soltu tal-istorja soċjali tas-seklu dsatax.

Ikkonferma kemm hemm x'tiskopri f'manuskritti geneoloġiċi, hekk li jintefa' dawl fuq il-passat tagħna – u t'Għawdex. Wara li telaq il-professjoni legali, Dott. Refalo għamel riċerka lokali u barra – u identifika bosta dettalji, ħafna ta' natura tragika u negattiva.

Refalo spjega l-kriterji biex jirreferi għal persuni jew setturi bħala fit-trufijiet tas-soċjetà, billi kkwota dokumenti u speċjalment billi ppreżenta stejjer partikulari. Bada bil-każ li baqa' mhux solvut ta' kwanità ta' dehebijiet minn ċrieket sa ġizirani misruqa bl-iżgassar mill-knisja Għawdxija ta' San Ġorġ fejn kienu b'wegħda.



Dott. Refalo jagħti t-taħdita tiegħu. Ritratt: Charles Spiteri



Parti mill-udjenta tisma' b'attenzjoni. Ritratt: Charles Spiteri

Irrefera għal raġel li tah lista interminabli ta' ismijiet fil-magħmudija, li ppermettilu jikkummenta li l-isem registrat mhux bilfors kien ikun dak li bih jintuża fil-ħajja ta' kuljum. Innota anki li, għalkemm il-prefiss "de" fil-bidu ta' kunjom noħduhom bħala prova ta' origini nobbli, dan jista' jfisser xi ħaġa totalment differenti. Infatti dokumenti tal-magħmudijiet juru li s-sidien tal-iskjavi kienu jżidu dawn iż-żewġ ittri ma' kunjomhom biex jagħtuhom.

Il-kelliem irrefera anki għal tliet biċċiet korrispondenza li donnhom inqabżu fil-bijografiji ta' Manwel Dimech. Ikkummenta ukoll li t-fal donnhom kienu jew injorati jew trattati bħala adulti. B'mod iktar generali, issemmev każi ta' mgjeba illeċita, serq u attentati.

L-udjenza li dehret apprezzat ferm l-okkażjoni, komplet tistaqsi u tikkummenta.



Parti oħra tal-udjenza, u fin-nofs fl-ewwel fillieri jidher l-eks Ministru għal Għawdex Anton Tabone. Ritratt: Charles Spiteri

Michelle Rowland MP
Minister for Communications
Federal Member for Greenway

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tagħna tghin lill-
familja tiegħek

"A child says he can walk when he only can coddle." – Aphorism 15 by Manuel Dimech. From *Aphorisms – Wisdom of a Philosopher in Exile*, SKS 2012. Edited by Mark Montebello & Francis Galea

Il-Maltin tal-Eġittu

The story so far....

By TVOTM Community Desk

February 10, 2024

This story, an extract of which we are reproducing here, was just published (February 2024) in the newsletter of The Friends of Malta GC, formerly the Nile Association and, before that, the Association of Maltese Communities of Egypt. It was founded in Alexandria in Egypt, way back in 1854 and transferred to London in 1956. The story was penned by Herbert Magri-Overend and provides his personal recollection of, and reflections on, events in Egypt before and after the expulsion of all British and French subjects, in 1956 during the Nile crisis. Maltese immigrants to Egypt were caught up in this, being then British subjects. The delight I had with encountering this story was tempered with the realisation that it also leads to the imminent demise of this association of our fellow members of the Maltese diaspora, doubly dispersed from our mother country.

I have a lovely story to tell. I believe you know most of it already. It concerns the formation of our Association. There may be one or two people, however, who aren't aware of where it started, who by, what it did, and how. Some of the

story is extra-ordinary, but most it is just about normal life.

What I do know is that the group were Maltese, that they were all

from the same local Church in Alexandria, Egypt, that they formed La Konfraternita tal Madonna tal Karmnu, and that the year was 1854. This Konfraternita became so popular that through the years its activities included Mutual Help, Benevolent Societies, Clubs, Philodramatic & Philharmonic Groups, Ladies Unions, Scouts, Guides, Football teams, etc. The Maltese in Cairo, Port Said and Suez, followed suit, and I remember, as a little boy, some of the functions I was allowed to take part in.

I remember my Nonna Lina – Dad's Mother – getting my brother, Randolph, and I dressed in Maltese garb and wearing earrings. She had taught us some Maltese songs whose meanings we did not know, and there we were standing on a rostrum, with a microphone in front of us, singing the songs without expression whilst the crowd listened and laughed in places. In later years, Nonna told me that the songs were a little bit saucy!

I believe Nannu Giuzi and Nannu Durante – Dad's father – were Presidents of the Club at some stage, but I can't be sure of that. We lived on the second floor of a four-storey residence, in Abdin – Shariah Toubgiah – and I could see Cairo burning from my bedroom window.

The Club was on what would have been the second (and top) floor, and every time a function was held the veranda would be covered throughout. Alas! The Club was burnt down during the terrible riots of 26 and 27 January 1952.

THE FRIENDS OF MALTA GC (1992)

(Founded Alexandria 1854)

(formerly Association of Maltese Communities of Egypt)

(Transferred London 1956)

Issue No 123
February 2024

NEWSLETTER

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THE STORY SO FAR

I have a lovely story to tell. I believe you know most of it already. It concerns the formation of our Association. There may be one or two people, however, who aren't aware of where it started, who by, what it did, and how. Some of the story is extra-ordinary, but most it is just about normal life.

The story begins with a group of people getting together and deciding to meet one another more often. Like several others with similar ideas, their main purpose was probably to relieve their loneliness. They differed from other groups, however, as the group came from Malta. This is as far as I allow my imagination to go! The remaining part of the story is based on fact.

What I do know is that the group were Maltese, that they were all from the same local Church in



Alexandria, Egypt, that they formed La Konfraternita tal Madonna tal Karmnu, and that the year was 1854. This Konfraternita became so popular that through the years its activities included Mutual

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1

Front page of The Friends of Malta GC newsletter, penultimate edition 123, February 2024

We were in the school bus, returning home, and there were several riots in the centre of Cairo. We didn't take much notice, as there were nearly always riots in Cairo. This one, however, became serious. Any building that was British or Jewish was burnt down, and our Club was above a Jewish firm. The luxurious Sheppard Hotel was razed to the ground. I don't think any Cinema was spared, either. Also, the Turf Club – a British Club – was burnt down and anybody trying to escape was shot, despite its Egyptian porter trying to get the mob to stop. We didn't go to school for a month. Abdu, our porter, who had an apartment on the ground floor, locked the entrance to our building and wouldn't allow anyone in. Only Cairo had the riots. I think that the centre of Cairo was the only one affected. I don't think that the suburbs of Shoubra, Heliopolis, Saptieh, and Zamalek, were affected.

We lived on the second floor of a four-storey residence, in Abdin – Shariah Toubgijah – and I could see Cairo burning from my bedroom window.

The Maltese Club in Cairo never reopened again, and all its records were destroyed in the fire. I believe the Committee continued meeting using the Crypt in our Parish Church of St Joseph.

Going back to the beginning, I am guessing that in the mid-nineteenth century Malta was over-populated and that work was hard to come by. So much so that many Maltese sought work overseas.

I expect they came over to Egypt in response to a call from Mohammed Ali for Europeans to modernise the administration in Egypt. A few years later in the early 20th century, maybe 50 years later, my two Grandfathers, Giuseppe Bonello and Durante Magri-Overend, came over. Perhaps, some of your ancestors also came over, and it would be interesting to share your recollections in the next newsletter.

In the 1930s the four Associations grouped themselves together and came under the umbrella of the Central Council of the Maltese Communities of Egypt.

The membership started to dwindle. Many went to Australia, with others going to Canada, the UK, the USA, South Africa, and I know one family went to Argentina. From what used to be a membership of 20,000 (according to my Dad) in the 1920s, the numbers decreased to about 5,000 by the 1950s.

Then came Col Nasser. He nationalised the Suez Canal, and after the retaliation by the French and British troops, in 1956, all their subjects were expelled from Egypt. Their assets were stripped and people were allowed one suitcase per person and a certain amount of money to take with them. Most Maltese went to Britain, where they were accommodated by the British Government.

Meanwhile, Dad and other Maltese who were already in Britain, contacted the Home Office and one or two Ministers, asking them to assist in claiming the return of the seized assets of the Clubs, also those belonging to the people that were expelled.

I believe the Government gave every family £500 and a certain amount of money for each child.

The Association was regrouped and called itself the Nile Association.

Before the ink dried on the STATUTES of The Nile Association, on 25th April 1959, which later became The Association of the Maltese Communities of Egypt, its dissolution became predictable. Article III sub-para (1) stated that membership was open to "British nationals of either sex formerly established residents of Egypt (particularly of Maltese descent), who must be proposed and seconded by Members of the Association and his or her admission approved by the Council."

Sub-para (2) allowed Membership to their descendants under the age of 21 but did not permit them to vote or be on the Council. The remaining sub-paras referred to Maltese of other origins who had no votes.

These clauses were amended in later AGMs but remained the same in essence. In other words, persons not the descendants of Maltese from Egypt, could not be Members, also as the original members left the country, or ceased their memberships, and their descendants didn't wish to continue the membership, the fate of the Association had been decreed.

The final Article of the Statutes – ARTICLE IX – stated: "The Association can only be dissolved if 75% of the members decide to do so, and the funds shall then be disposed of as the members shall decide."

At the AGM, held on-line in October 2023, the unanimous vote was to dissolve the Association.

The disposal of our Assets now has to be decided. The co-Trustees, Messrs Lawrence Bugeya and Herbert Wirth, are responsible for the release of the Government Bonds, and the Members will need to put their minds into deciding which Charities will be sent the Association's assets. Furthermore, the Council will have to decide the amount to be kept in reserve for future administrative purposes. All of this has to be completed by October 2024.

Thinking caps on now, Members. Please, please, remember that the recipients have to be Charities that are recognisable by the Council. They have to be registered with the Charities Commission, and you will need to quote the registration number.

Straightaway, I will recommend the Charities that we've been donating to over the past few years; the question now is to decide on how much to donate. That too is the Council's decision.

The £10 Subscription for 2024 is needed to pay for the cost of printing and distributing the two Newsletters. I ask you now to concentrate. and inform me, of where to distribute our Assets.

End of Lovely Story.

*Written by Herbert Magri-Overend. Published at Newsletter of The Friends of Malta GC, Issue No 123, February 2024. Original piece not subject to copyright, only a request for an acknowledgement. Our entire republication of the article herein follows the same principle as a sign of respect.

**The Voice of the Maltese extends its invitation to all remaining members of The Friends of Malta GC, and the remnants of the Maltese diaspora of Egypt wherever they may now be, to utilise our newspaper, which aspires to be the voice of the Maltese diaspora everywhere, to keep in touch and tell their stories here, after the forthcoming demise of their beloved association.

Personality of the Month

What you see is what you get a Sydney-made top actor

By TVOTM Community Desk

February 12, 2024

The Voice of the Maltese has chosen, as the February Personality of the Month one of the best-known Maltese actors/entertainers amongst the Maltese community in Australia. She made her name acting in Maltese theatre (it-teatrin Malti) which plays an important part in enhancing the intricate way our language is spoken. Even after so many years, it-teatrin Malti is still very popular and by popular demand requested in all states of Australia, especially NSW.

MONICA LEDGER

... was born in Gżira, the daughter of Anthony and Doris Pisani and arrived in Sydney in 1963 on the m/v Sydney as a sixteen-year-old. Like most teenagers of her time she had a very strict family upbringing both in Malta and in Australia.

On arrival in Sydney, she soon became involved in the Maltese community around the Leichhardt area. She recalls that her early settlement involvement within the community was necessary to ease her separation from her roots.

The sixties were a time when many Maltese in the inner city area needed many social support structures to assist them in adjusting to the new environment.



with her mother Doris Pisani

Many religious activities took place around Leichhardt at the initiative of Capuchin Friars, Fathers Publius Cassar and Leonard Busuttill. Social activities were organized by the late Manwel Agius. She belonged to a dancing group that performed the Malta National dance — It -Maltija — in various localities including Canberra.

"I like dancing very much but my parents only allowed me to go to the cinema and not on my own but with a brother as a chaperone. I was not the quiet type so I used to sneak out to the Phoenician Hotel, leaving my brother to finish the film on his own" Monica recalls.

In Australia, little had changed for Monica. From Gżira, Malta to Surry Hills or Annandale where her parents had found accommodation, her mother continued to enforce a disciplinary code.

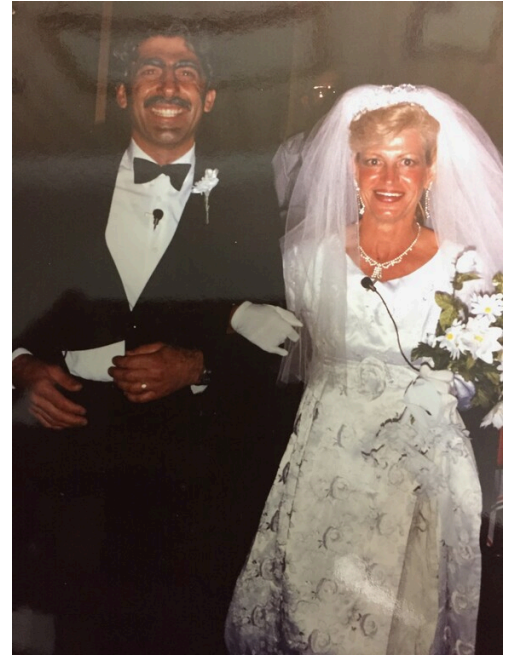
"Then when I wanted to go out my mother started sending with me, not one chaperone but my twin siblings. You can work out for yourself how restricted I have felt. I had imagined that I came to a free country but to my Mum and her parental discipline with our big move, Malta and Sydney made no difference to her", said Monica.

Monica Ledger started to realise how her new life was unfolding for her gradually in this big city of Sydney. Luckily she did not face major difficulties, her English was good, and at work, she did not experience discrimination and felt accepted by her workmates.

But strict parental control started to increasingly test her vitality. She felt that her only outlet was for her to marry. In 1966 at age nineteen she did marry and now has two daughters Allison and Kim and four grandchildren, Jessica, Allana, Jake and Lara.

She left the inner city and moved to Fairfield. But for the last 50 years, her home was in Greystanes. In 1998 she met Doris Borg, the better half of the late popular Maltese comedian Joe Borg, being as well the daughter of the late Manwel Agius better known as "Arloġġi".

Monica gradually rekindled her interest in the stage and today undoubtedly is one of the top actors that the Maltese theatrical company Iċ-Ċittadini can be proud of. Monica can play both sombre and comical roles but readily conceded that it is the comedy she really enjoys.



with Joe Bajada during the play *It-Tieġ ta' Karmena Abdilla*

All who have seen her act on stage tend to agree that she has an innate talent, a quiet repartee and dexterous hand movements.

"What you see is what you get" she told *The Voice* with a smile and suggestive look.

In NSW, Monica played in a number of historical plays as in Gensna, Manwel Manwel, 1919 and Din it-Triq il-Verità u l-Flajja. She maintains that her best role was in the well-known Maltese comedy *It-Tieġ ta' Karmena Abdilla* (see photo).



with late comedian Joe Borg

She has a strong sense of satisfaction in having been given a role with Maltese well-known comedians visiting Sydney like Joe "id-Dulli" and Veronica Farrugia, Toni "il-Majsi" Vella, Gemma Portelli and Johnny Catania.

"My greatest delight on stage is when I see the audience laugh and smile. The sacrifices I had to make in order to find the right balance between the love for my family and the theatre, make it all worthwhile" concludes Monica.



with her family today

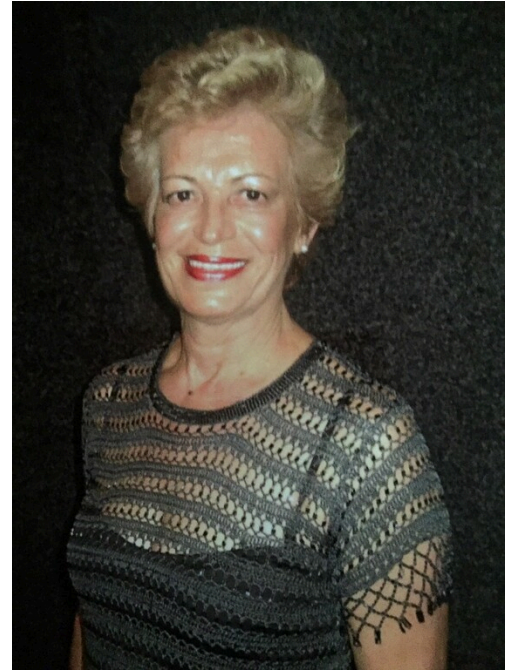
Currently, she is the President and the social organiser for the Maltese theatrical organisation Iċ-Cittadini and for a number of years has been on the committee of the Maltese Culture Association of NSW and very active in the organisation of concerts, dinner dances and the like.

After working for 33 years for TipTop Bread as a merchandising representative she retired but still remained active within the community training the younger generation to gain a better understanding of *it-teatrin Malti*.

Monica's contribution to the Maltese community in NSW was acknowledged when on Malta National Day 8th September during an activity organized by the Maltese Cultural Association of NSW, she was acknowledged for her solid

contribution by the prestigious annual Maltese Cultural Award 2009.

**all photos supplied*



Monica Ledger

Paul Sant

Another service offered by The Voice of the Maltese providing legal information to our readers

Asset Protection – Gifts from Parents in Family Law Matters

By Paul Sant

February 5, 2024

Loving parents often give property to their children as expressions of love. However, these properties may be considered part of their children's asset pool and subject to division in family law matters. Some people are concerned about protecting their assets in accordance with the law while still being able to freely give gifts to their adult children.

In practice, funds provided by parents in separation settlements may be treated as a gift, a loan, or merely the parents' asset managed by the child through a trust. If a payment to one of the spouses is classified as a loan, it leads to a decrease in the property pool, thereby reducing the total net amount available to be distributed between the parties. On the other hand, if it is considered a gift, it becomes part of the money spent during the relationship and is then regarded as a contribution, potentially resulting in the other spouse receiving a portion of it. Additionally, assets held by trusts or on trust may be found to be subject to division.

Parents may consider giving money to their children or lending it for asset protection purposes. A prevalent scenario involves parents entering into a loan agreement with their child while granting a monetary gift, such as for the deposit on the adult child's first home.

The situation is generally not contentious even during a relationship, where a child acquires properties prior to entering a de facto relationship or marriage, but becomes a central aspect of a dispute if the parties separate.

Gifts from parents are typically assumed to be intended for the child alone, unless evidence suggests otherwise. This evidence may include monetary gifts deposited into a joint account or real property transferred to the child and their spouse as joint tenants. Whether the gift is directed to one party or both parties can influence how the Court assesses contributions in the future if the parties initiate family law proceedings. Case law provides examples of how the Court will deal with such decisions.

In *Kessey & Kessey* (1994) FLC 92-495, the wife's mother provided the parties with \$75,000, which was utilised for renovating the marital home. The Full Court held that this constituted a contribution on behalf of the wife to the marital assets, explaining a contribution from a party's parent is presumed to be a contribution "made by or on behalf of the party who is the child of the parent unless there is evidence establishing it was not the intention of the parent to benefit only his or her child." This principle is commonly referred to as the presumption of advancement.

In the case of *Gosper & Gosper* (1987) FLC 91-818, the wife's



"House and keys" by MarkMoz12 is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

father transferred a gift of land into the joint names of the parties. The Court acknowledged that while evidence often suggests such gifts are “made only because of the relationship and in reality as a means of benefiting that relative in that marriage” the gift was considered a contribution on behalf of the wife. Additionally, the Court emphasised that “where a gift is made solely to the donor’s relative (for example a gift by parents to their married daughter) and that spouse applies that property to the marriage, that is a direct financial contribution solely by that party and will be assessed in the ordinary way alongside other contributions made by each party to the marriage.”

LOANS

In many family law cases, a party may assert that a debt must be repaid to a family member when, in fact, it was either intended as a gift or does not require repayment. Unless the arrangement shows typical loan features, such as required repayments and charged interest, it is unlikely to be recognised as a loan. In recent years, Courts have become increasingly stringent regarding money alleged to have been ‘loaned’ rather than gifted.

The Malta Journalism Awards 2023 was awarded to The Voice of the Maltese for their long journalistic contribution to the Maltese living outside Malta

The email address for our newspaper has changed to editor@thevoiceofthemaltese.org. Could you make sure to use this new email ONLY if you wish to communicate with the newspaper by email.

Are you part of the Maltese diaspora? Are you a first or subsequent generation Maltese emigrant in the first wave (north Africa), second wave (English speaking nations) or contemporary (Europe/elsewhere), and have stories that would interest the Maltese wherever they are? We would like to hear from you!

A loan agreement is usually required to prove the existence of a loan. Evidence as to the party’s intentions at the time of advancing funds is also relevant, especially in cases where there is no documentary evidence. Factors considered in determining whether a loan exists include but are not limited to the formality of the loan; terms of repayment; demands for repayment from the lender; actual repayments made; capacity for repayment of the ‘loaned’ amount; and whether a mortgage has been registered (in the case of real property).

In essence, to be binding, loan agreements should be documented correctly, suitably secured with appropriate registration of security, and repaid (or varied) in accordance with the terms.

We recommend obtaining legal advice prior to advancing funds to a family member, and engaging a lawyer to draft any loan agreements. We can assist you with these matters and invite you to contact us for advice specific to your situation.



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Culture

Wirja ta' Arti Sagra minn Paolo Camilleri Cauchi

By Charles Spiteri

February 10, 2024

It-tielet edizzjoni tal-Gozo Arts Weekend, li saret mis-26 sat-28 ta' Jannar 2024, kienet tinkludi xogħlijiet ta' Paolo Camilleri Cauchi, artist mir-Rabat Għawdex.

Ix-xogħlijiet tiegħu jinsabu f'diversi knejjes, fosthom fil-knisja parrokkjali tal-Fontana, fil-knisja ta' Sant'Antnin ta' Padova f'Għajnsielem, fil-Bażilika tal-Għarb, fis-santwarju tal-Immakulata Kuncizzjoni fil-Qala, fil-knisja parrokkjali ta' San Lawrenz, fil-Katidral u fil-knisja ta' San Frangisk fir-Rabat Għawdex u fir-Rotunda tax-Xewkija.



Rose Anne Xerri mill-Qala (l-ewwel mil-lemin) li għandha qrabatha fl-Awstralja flimkien ma' Melrose Borg, Maltija li toqgħod il-Qala, jammiraw ix-xogħlijiet ta' Paolo Camilleri Cauchi, fil-Kjostru tal-Patrijiet Frangiskani Konventwali fir-Rabat, Għawdex. Ritratt: Charles Spiteri



Bust ta' Paolo Camilleri Cauchi, xogħol Adonai Camilleri Cauchi. Ritratt: Charles Spiteri

Camilleri Cauchi, imwieled fl-1940, huwa iben l-iskultur magħruf Agostino Camilleri u Francesca Cauchi. Wara li kiber fl-istudjo ta' missieru, Paolo kien dejjem involut fix-xena tal-arti. Hekk kif kiber, kien iggwidat minn artisti rinomati kemm f'Malta kif ukoll barra. Il-passjoni vera tiegħu, madankollu, kienet l-arti reliġjuża, li kien kapaci segwi wara li ġie kkommissjonat biex ižejjen diversi knejjes.

Maz-żmien, Camilleri Cauchi beda jirċievi aktar kummissjonijiet, u wassal lill-artist biex isir pittur magħruf tal-arti sagra. Huwa rċieva diversi unuri matul is-sinjura, inkluż mingħand l-ordni tal-kavallieri Ordine della Real Corona Balearica, kif ukoll Gieħ ir-Repubblika.

It-tielet Gozo Arts Weekend ġie inawgurat bi spettaklu mis-sopran Marouska Attard fil-knisja konventwali ta' San Frangisk fir-Rabat Għawdex, segwit minn diskors ta' Camilleri Cauchi.

Il-programm ta' attivitajiet ra wkoll lill-artist jingħaqad mal-Iskola Gozo Visual and Performing Arts School waqt sessjoni ta' pittura *en plein air* fil-Pjazza tal-Katidral fir-Rabat Għawdex.

Ġie ppubblikat ukoll sett ta' kartolini li juru pitturi esebiti fit-tmien knejjes imsemmija hawn fuq.

L-ideja tal-Gozo Arts Weekend harġet eżattament minn wirja ta' presepji u diorami ta' l-Imghallem Taljan Claudio Mattei li 'Ghimmanu-Ei' Għaqda Presepisti Għajnsielem Għawdex Malta tellgħet gewwa l-Knisja l-Qadima t'Għajnsielem fis-sena 2019. Il-pubbliku li attenda għal din il-wirja kien baqa' meraviljat bil-kwadri tal-pittura li jzejn din il-knisja ckejkna fil-qalba tar-raħal. Kwadri li tipitru mill-artist magħruf Guzeppi Cali u li b'kollox hemm 8 kwadri tiegħu.

Ħafna minn nies tal-lokal kif ukoll il-maġġoranza tal-poplu f'it li xejn ikunu jafu dwar l-artisti u l-arti tagħhom li tinsab fill-knejjes. Għalhekk l-Għaqda ħadet l-inizzjativa li tidda torganizza l-Gozo Arts Weekend sabiex toħloq għarfen dwar l-arti sagra rikka li wieħed isib fill-knejjes



Koppja Maltija, Guido u s-Sinjura Gauci jitkellmu ma' Tiziana Castillo (xellug), waħda minn ulied il-pittur Camilleri Cauchi, li barra li tagħthom spjegazzjoni sħiħa ta' dawk li kienu qed jaraw, tagħthom ukoll xi kartolini konnessi ma' dawn ix-xogħlijiet artistici. Ritratt: Charles Spiteri

Għawdxin.

L-ewwel edizzjoni kienet iddedikata lil Ġuzeppi Cali filwaqt li t-tieni kienet iddedikata lil Ġuzeppi Briffa. Mingħajr dubju fit-tielet edizzjoni l-għazla kienet l-arti ta' Paolo Camilleri Cauchi. Id-differenza f'din l-edizzjoni kienet illi fiż-żewġ edizzjoniet preċedenti l-artisti kienu mejta, din d-darba l-artist kien għadu ħaj.

Forgione ta' Foggia – L-Appostlu tal-Konfessjonarju

By TVOTM Community Desk

February 7, 2024

Naħseb mill-ewwel indunajtu għal min qed nirreferi; il-Kapuċċin Patri Piju tal-Pjagi!

Dan huwa l-isem tal-ktieb li għadu kemm ippubblika s-sacerdot u għalliem l-Kan Dun Geoffrey George Attard mill-Belt Victoria dwar dan il-patri qaddis li kien ġej minn familja fqira, tant li missieru ħass il-ħtieġa li jemigra lejn l-Istati Uniti tal-Amerika biex seta' jgħajjex lill-familja tiegħu.

Kulhadd jaf li dan il-patri marradi kien ta' spiss ikun ittantat mix-xitan u li kien irċieva l-Pjagi mingħand Gesù bħalma kien għalu l-istess il-fqajjar ta' Assisi San Frangisk.

Il-ktieb jirrakonta bosta episodji mill-ħajja ta' dan ir-raħeb u kif il-fama qaddisa tiegħu malajr xterdet 'l barra minn Foggia fl-Italja fejn kien jgħix. Il-ktieb huwa ddedikat lis-sinjorina Maria Pia Pace mill-Belt Victoria li mietet qasir il-għomor (1967-2022) li kienet ħabiba tal-familja, lil fu r-Reverendu, Francesco Pio u lil dawk kollha li jgħorru l-isem il-Qaddis ta' Pietralcina.

Meta wieħed iqalleb il-paġni tal-ktieb isib li don tal-bilokazzjoni, fwejjaħ, ipotermja (deni għoli ta' 48 grad celsius; 118-il grad Fahrenheit), profeziji, fejqan, l-abbiltà li jaqra l-qlub, il-ħila li jissaporti saħriet u sawm fit-tul lil hinn minn kull kapacità umana – dawn huma l-koll paralleli mal-ħidmiet prodigjużi li seħħew fil-ħajjiet ta' San Frangisk t'Assisi, Sant'Anton ta' Padova, Santa Tereza ta' Gesù u

San Guzepp ta' Kopertino. Ghadd kbir ta' fidili li resqu lejn Patri Piju rcevev beneficcji spiritwali permezz ta' dawn id-doni. Papa Benedittu XV meta sar jaf b'dawn il-karizmi stqarr: "Patri Pio huwa wiehed minn dawk il-bnedmin straordinari li Alla jibgħat minn žmien għall-ieħor fid-dinja sabiex jikkonverti l-qlub."

Fatt kurjuż huwa dak ta' meta dan il-Patri, kien l-20 ta' Jannar 1936, laqa' għandu fiċ-ċella xi viżitaturi u f'hin minnhom talabhom jinżlu għarkubbejhom biex jitolbu "għal ruħ li dalwaqt kienet se tidher quddiem it-tribunal ta' Alla". Svelalhom li kienu talbu għar-Re tal-Ingilterra meta fuq il-ġurnali kien hemm biss li dan ir-Re kellu biss xi fit tal-influwenza. Għall-ħabta ta' nofs il-lejl il-Patri qaddis kien mar fiċ-ċella ta' sieħbu biex jitolbu għar-Re għax kien qed joqrob il-mument tal-ġudizzju tiegħu. L-għada l-ġurnali Taljani ħabbru l-mewt tar-Re Gorg.

Min jixtieq ikun jaf iktar dwar dan il-Patri qaddis jista' jaqbad f'idejha dan il-ktieb u jaqra paġni 77 – 89: *Patri Piju ta' Pietralcina; xi dettalji importanti.*

*Wiehed jista' jakkwista l-ktieb billi jikkuntattja lill-awtur fuq (+356) 79240878/21551325 jew geoffreygattard@gmail.com.



Il-faċċata tal-ktieb. Ritratt ipprovdut

social media after his visit.

He was shown around Ta' Qali by the Project Leader and volunteer Joseph Philip Farrugia, DLH Executive President Alex Torpiano, and the head of the main contractor Chillis Chill, Alan Debattista. They also visited one of the subcontractors entrusted by Chillis Chill with part of the restoration.



The piece of timber that attracted the interest of the Maltese High Commissioner to Australia. Photo: DLH

Maltese High Commissioner to Australia visits Din L-Art Helwa project

By TVOTM Community Desk
February 3, 2024

H.E. the Maltese High Commissioner to Australia Mario Farrugia Borg used his current trip to Malta to schedule a visit to the ongoing Din L-Art Helwa project to restore the Australian Bungalow.

This century-old structure was sent to various Commonwealth countries to help familiarise emigrants with the way of life in Australia – as well as with building methods used.

"I was delighted yesterday to be invited by Din L-Art Helwa to visit the Australian Bungalow project in Ta' Qali. The bungalow was sent from Australia in the 1920s to give prospective migrants the opportunity to familiarise themselves with their future environment in Australia and to learn about timber construction methods.

"Over time, it was unfortunately left to deteriorate but it is now thankfully being meticulously restored, ensuring we do not lose such an important artefact of Malta and Australia's common heritage. Looking forward to visit again in the future, hopefully a completed project by my next visit home!" the High Commissioner posted on



H.E. the Maltese High Commissioner to Australia was shown around Ta' Qali by (from left) the Din L-Art Helwa project leader and volunteer Joseph Philip Farrugia, DLH executive president Alex Torpiano, and (far right) the head of the main contractor Chillis Chill, Alan Debattista. Photo: DLH

While there, the High Commissioner pointed out a piece of wood crowning the roof, which raised considerable interest: "His comment about the traditional carved straight wooden staff over the centre of the pitched roof was valuable. We'll look into it further for future reference in our literature about the building," Mr Farrugia promised.

The High Commissioner's interest will no doubt help the NGO to spread the word about the project in Australia. Mr Torpiano commented: "The work on the restoration of the Australian Bungalow is but the physical part of Din L-Art Helwa's ambition for this artefact. The other is to collate and present the story of the emigration of Maltese and Gozitans to Australia, and we are grateful for the offer of assistance of the High Commission of Malta in Australia to bring us into contact with our community over there."

The project is being sponsored by the Melita Foundation and involved a thorough analysis of the structure – which was at the time in Għammieri. Although some parts could be saved, others required restoration or replacement.

The Bungalow will shortly be re-assembled at Ta' Qali, where it will be more accessible to the public. Completion of this project is expected in just a few weeks. It will be used to raise awareness about this important part of the islands' history, and to pay tribute to the Maltese community in Australia.

Want to help with this project? We are crowdfunding! Visit <https://simplygiving.mt/projects/>.

*Information supplied by Vanessa Macdonald, council member, Din L-Art Helwa

Envelops u bolol li jfakkru l-ewwel titjiriet

By Charles Spiteri
February 2, 2024

Peress li l-linja nazzjonali tal-ajru Air Malta qiegħda tersaq lejha, il-*Gozo Philatelic Society* iddeċidiet li tuża l-vevtrina li għandha fil-mużew Il-*Haġar* biex turi assortiment sabiħ ta' envelops mibgħuta fuq l-ewwel titjira f'destinazzjoni ġdida. Sintendi twaħħlulhom bolli b'timbru ta' dik id-data partikulari.

Fil-fatt il-biċċa l-kbira jirreferu għal rotot tal-Air Malta mill-1972. Dawn jinkludu Amburgu, Amsterdam, Barċellona, Birmingham, Brussels, Cologne, Frankfurt, il-Kajr, il-Kuwajt, Londra, Lyons, Madrid, Manchester, Munich, Nantes, Reggio Calabria, Ruma, Tripli, Tuneż, Vjenna, u Zurich. Żiedu ukoll titjiriet tal-Lufthansa u Austrian Airlines.



Ritratt: Charles Spiteri

Din l-esibizzjoni hi parti żgħira mill-kollezzjoni impressjonanti ta' filatelija Maltija mogħtija mill-koppja Wolfgang u Krista Juncker. Hemm l-intenzjoni li jiġu murija partijiet oħra minn żmien għall-ieħor. Iżda meta dil-wirja tagħlaq fit-28 ta' Frar 2024, tinbidel minhabba l-kalendarju b'Randan sal-Għid.

Dawk li jżuru jistgħu jakkwistaw dejjem kopji b'xejn tal-perjodiku tas-Socjetà mimlijin b'artikli varjati bil-kulur.

Il-*Haġar* fi Pjazza San Ġorġ ikun miftuħ bla ħlas mid-9am sal-5pm sebat ijiem fil-ġimgħa.



Antoine Vassallo, is-segretarju tas-Socjetà Filatelika t'Għawdex, jispjega aspetti tal-esibiti lil Monica Borg Debrincat u Gina Farrugia. Ritratt: Charles Spiteri

Conservation order for Palazzo Marnisi

By Brian Decelis
February 1, 2024

A historic property that used to belong to the man best known as the lateral thinking guru, Edward de Bono, has been issued a Conservation and Protection Order by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (SCH).

Palazzo Marnisi in Marsaxlokk – considered to have been originally build in the seventeenth century – is now a shadow of its former glory having suffered extensive vandalism, damage, squatting and abandonment.



Photo: SCH via Facebook



Photo: SCH via Facebook

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, which issued the order, said that artefacts of clear heritage value have also been found to be broken and possibly stolen.

The order obliges the owners to carry out works to safeguard and secure the property. It specifically mentioned the restoration of an ancient column and base.

Palazzo Marnisi served as de Bono's registered address in Malta. It was mainly considered as his summer residence even though he mainly lived overseas, having returned to Malta in his final years residing in Rabat. He died in 2021.

The palazzo – which is surrounded by a large expanse of agricultural land – is currently listed for sale at different agents with different prices, between €8-10 million.



Photo: SCH via Facebook



High Commission & Consulates of Malta in Australia

High Commission of Malta - Canberra

H.E. Mr. Mario Farrugia Borg
 High Commissioner for Malta to Australia
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Mill-Bir ta' Qalbi – antoloġija ta' poeżiji ta' Frank Zammit

By Ivan Cauchi
 February 1, 2024

Fl-aħħar xahar tas-sena 2023, giet imnedija antoloġija ta' poeżiji tal-awtur u poeta magħruf sew fid-dijaspora Maltija fl-Awstralja, Frank Zammit. Poeżiji ma fihix xi tużżana jew tnejn tafux, imma xi erba' mija mifruxa fuq kważi erba' mitt paġna!



L-awtur u poeta Frank Zammit

Dr George Boffa OAM jaġmhel id-diskors ta' tnedija tal-pubblikazzjoni

Għalhekk kien hemm avveniment ħelu organizzat fiċ-Centru Malti tal-punent ta' Sydney, La Valette Social Centre nhar l-Erbgħa, 6 ta' Diċembru 2023. Kienet serata mimlija daqs bajda, bil-programm jinkludi diversi taħdidiet u qari ta' siltiet mill-antoloġija, kif ukoll interventi mużikali.



Bernice Musù bid-daqq sabiħ tal-vjolin

Godfrey Sultana u Antoinette Caruana jaqraw messaġġi ta' awguri li rċevew għat-tnedija

Wara l-introduzzjoni tal-President taċ-Ċentru, Godfrey Sultana u intervent mill-poeta nnifsu, kien imiss id-diskors prinċipali minn Dr Gorg Boffa OAM, anestetista magħruf li ħadem fl-Awstralja, Malta, l-Ingilterra, id-Danimarka u l-Afrika, li nieda l-pubblikazzjoni. Kien hemm numru sabiħ ta' messaġġi li ġew irċevuti, u numru żgħir minnhom inqraw minn Godfrey Sultana u Antoinette Caruana.

Il-ġabra ta' versi kellha studju mill-aqwa minn Dr Patrick Sammut, Kap tad-Dipartiment tal-Malti u Taljan fil-Kulleġġ De La Salle fil-Kottonera u editur tal-gurnal letterarju *Il-Pont*. Siltiet minn dan l-istudju

nqraw minn Eddie Busutti.

Ivan Cauchi ddiskuta aspetti ambjentali fil-poeżiji ta' Zammit, filwaqt li Mark Caruana tkellem fuq il-fattur storiku.

Bernice Musù li hija immigranta riċenti ħafna f'Sydney, għamlet numru ta' interventi mużikali waħedha fuq il-vjolin tagħha, u f'hin minnhom qrat waħda mill-poeżiji imsejġha *Vjolin Sieket*.

Lawra Boffa, mart Dr Boffa, tkellmet fuq it-timrih tal-familja f'dawn il-poeżiji.



L-udjenza tisma' lill-kitarristi jdoqqu l-prejjem

Kien hemm ukoll numru ta' prejjem Maltin li ndaqqu mill-kitarristi Joe Gauci, Victor Mifsud u Jimmy Mercieca, u f'waħda minnhom kien hemm esperiment ħelu fejn id-daqq kien akkumpanjat minn Frank Zammit jaqra xi versi.

L-udjenza ta' din is-serata ma kinetx kbira ħafna, imma kien ċar li dawk preżenti apprezzaw immens dan il-programm u l-poeżiji ta' din



Mill-Bir ta' Qalbi – Poeżiji ta' Stili Varji, minn Frank Zammit, editur Godfrey Sultana, stampat Print Right Ltd, Qormi, Malta

I-antoloġija.

Jekk xi qarrej jixtieq jakkwista kopja ta' din il-gabra ta' poeziji, jista' jikkuntattja lill-awtur fuq frankzammit11@gmail.com

*ritratti: Ivan Cauchi

Notice Board

Maltese Cultural Association of NSW

3 March 2024: Malta's Freedom Day commemoration – concert by Ludwig Galea & Jasmine Abela, 2 of Malta's most popular vocalists. Includes stage play by Cittadini Cultural & Theatrical Group. At Wenty Leagues Club, Wentworthville NSW from 1pm.

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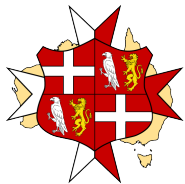
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WE ARE BACK!!! Melita Eagles Football Club are now officially part of the Churches Football Association Sydney Competition which will commence in the first week of April. Registrations can be done online at <https://nswcfamel.myclubmate.com.au/myDetails/> or by contacting the club President Mark Tanti on 0457446965.

So join the "High Flying Eagles" today, & we look forward to hearing from you soon.

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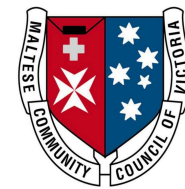
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- Sunday 7 July 2024 – Imnarja
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Authorised by Chris Bowen MP, ALP, Fairfield West

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Online 24/7 and a fortnightly print edition

"A conscribed man is changed into a stick intended either to break or to be broken on somebody's head."

Aphorism 16 by Manuel Dimech, from Aphorisms – Wisdom of a Philosopher in Exile, SKS 2012, edited by Mark Montebello & Francis Galea

VICTORIA

3ZZZ 92.3FM: Mondays 5-6pm, Fridays 5-6pm and Saturdays 10-11am. Presenters: Paul Vella, Mario Sammut, Liz Phillips. Listen live on www.3zzz.com.au.

98.9 North West FM: Mondays 7-8pm and Fridays 6-7pm. Maltese Program. Presenter: Emmanuel Brincat. Listen live on www.northwestfm.org/ethnic-radio/.

97.9 FM Melton: Tuesday 6.00pm to 8.00pm Maltese Program. Presenter: Miriam Vella. Live streaming on www.979fm.com.au.

NSW

VOX FM 106.9: Mondays 5pm to 6pm. Voice of Valletta – Illawarra Maltese programme presented by Louis Parnis. Live streaming on www.voxfm.org.au.

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2GLF FM 89.3 Maltese Community Council programme: Every Sunday is now two whole hours, from 10 to 12 noon. The first hour is Maltese Voices, dedicated to the best of Maltese talent. This is followed by News from Malta, the latest information, culture, interviews, community notices and topics of interest. Listen live on www.893fm.com.au/on-demand.

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SOUTH AUSTRALIA

5EBI FM 103.1: Maltese Community Radio Program from Adelaide. Sunday: 7.00am; Monday: 8.00am; Monday: 6.00pm. Presenters: Bernadette Buhagiar and Ron Borg. Listen live or On Demand on www.5ebi.com.au.



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Maltese Seniors Social Welfare Day Groups

Llandilo Maltese Seniors: meets on the first Wednesday of each month at the Llandilo Community Hall, 257 Seventh Avenue, Llandilo

11am to 1.00 pm. Group holds regular Information Sessions/ Workshops & Bus Trips. Group Leader: Helen Azzopardi.

Fairfield Active Maltese Seniors: meets on the last Tuesday of the month. Group meets in the Parish Hall of Our Lady of the Rosary Church, 18 Vine Street, Fairfield from 10 am to 12 noon. Group Leader Dorothy Gatt mobile 0422757829

Maltese of Bankstown Group: meets third Wednesday of the month from 10am at the Lewis Bowling Club, 14A Waterloo Rd, Greenacre. Every other Wednesday, an outing is organised. For enquiries, call Sam Galea on 0410269519. This Group is sponsored by the Bankstown Resource Centre.

Daceyville Maltese Seniors: meets the last Wednesday of the month in Meeting Room One, No. 3 General Bridges Crescent, Daceyville. Note: the group also arranges regular bus trips. Join us and make new friends. Group Leader: Connie c/- 0434093446. Sponsored by Sydney Multicultural Services.

The Sutherland & St George Maltese Group: meets every first Wednesday of the month, from 10:00am to 12noon at the Miranda Community Centre, 93 Karimbla Rd cnr. Kiaora Dd, Miranda. The meetings are interesting and informative. We have guest speakers. Sometimes we also show films. Monthly outings as well, travelling in modern, safe & comfortable minibuses. Membership is Free. Everyone is welcome. For more info please contact Charles N. Mifsud, coordinator, on 0421662298.

Merrylands Social Maltese Seniors: has now combined with the Greystanes Group. Group Leader: Salvina Falzon c/- Marisa on 0414863123

Greystanes Maltese Seniors: meets on the second Monday of each month at the George Preca Parish Centre Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP) Church, 198 Old Prospect Road, Greystanes from 10.30 am to 12.30 noon. Group holds regular Information Sessions/ Workshops & Bus Trips. Group Leader: Frances Montesin.

Men's Group: meets every last Tuesday of the month at the MCC Centre at 59b Franklin Str, Parramatta WEST (next to the Primary School) from 10 to 12 noon. Discussion, information and renew friendship. Pastizzi, Kinnie etc. available. Contact Fred on 98632550

**All groups are supported by the Maltese Community Council of NSW, with a sponsorship from Multicultural NSW. Contact the MCC Welfare Officer: Marisa Privitera JP on 0414863123. The MCC offices are at 59b Franklin St cnr. Young St, Parramatta West, NSW*

Letters to the Editor

Cannot believe what he is reading....

I could not believe what I was reading. So much is happening in Malta, most of it of top priority, yet The Voice prioritises an unimportant controversy (for us, the Maltese community living abroad) resulting from two singing contests. I watched the final of the Malta Eurovision Song Contest, which was streamed on Malta's Television station, TVM, and was impressed with the talent of the Maltese singers.

As your reporter correctly claimed, Malta never lacks controversy, and one would also have expected it this time. But to give this item so much importance and prominence over nationwide decisions taken of late is beyond me. I am sure that none of us outside of Malta cared about it.

Paul Zammit

With thanks to The Voice of the Maltese

We the undersigned form an unattached group of veterans from the old country seeking friendship and camaraderie in a very simple but effective way, meeting every day at the Greystanes Shopping Centre, Merrylands Road, Greystanes NSW.

We discuss everyday issues, exchange opinions and reminisce about old times in our country of birth Malta. These moments together are important in our lives as we struggle with nostalgia at times for the

country that gave us birth.

The Voice of the Maltese has become very important to us as it keeps us well informed. Lawrence Dimech is an important part of our group as apart from delivering The Voice of the Maltese each issue, he assists us with help and information as required.

We thank him and wish him well in his retirement.

**Bill Grima,
Frank Hill, Arthur
Abela, Marchello
Micallef, Joe
Micallef, Lorry
Micallef, Joe
Vella, Fred
Caruana, Sam
Sultana, Charlie
Frendo, Charlie
Cilia, Reno
Attard, Marcello
Azzopardi, Paul
Farrugia, Sam
Power, John
Fenech, Charlie
Xerri, Joe
Tabone, Fred
Magri, Victor Portelli, Joe Camilleri and Fred Carabott.**



Some of the Maltese elders that congregate daily at the Greystanes Shopping Centre. Photo: Lawrence Dimech

Sports

compiled by Joseph Cutajar

Albania, Belarus and the Faroe Islands join Malta in 2024 VisitMalta Women's International Football Friendlies

Between the 22nd and the 25th of February 2024, women's football will again be in the spotlight in Malta when the national teams of Albania, Belarus and the Faroe Islands, together with Malta, will participate in the 4th annual VisitMalta Women's International Friendlies across two matchdays at the Tony Bezzina Stadium.

Fresh from their successful UEFA Women's Nations League participation that culminated in their promotion to League B, Malta's girls will kick off the event on the 22nd with a match against the Faroe Islands. Then, three days later, on the 25th, they face Belarus.

At a press conference on Friday, Clayton Bartolo, the Minister for Tourism and Public Cleanliness, said that the VisitMalta Women's International Friendlies are a testament to the Government's strategy to boost sports tourism, particularly during the winter months.

He pointed out that Sports tourism has socio-economic benefits. "We are happy that we are also supporting our women's national team through the organisation of these friendlies," he said.

Carlo Micallef, Chief Executive Officer of the Malta Tourism Authority, highlighted Malta's appeal as a sports destination and the



Malta Tourism Minister Clayton Bartolo (centre) at the news conference flanked by Helmut Amhof (left) and MTA CEO Carlo Micallef. *Ritratt: VisitMalta*

associated benefits underlined by the events held over the past two months.

"This is the fourth year that we are hosting these matches, which also reflects our commitment to supporting women's football as well as facilitating opportunities for the women's national team to play in international friendlies," Mr Micallef said.

Manuela Tesse, the Malta National Women's Coach, who was present at the news conference, expressed gratitude to the Ministry for Tourism and VisitMalta for their support and stressed the significance of these friendlies in preparation for the UEFA Women's EURO 2025. She expressed the Malta team's importance in facing more vigorous opponents to foster growth.

She said that such an event continues to provide positive experiences for fans and helps to increase the interest in women's football domestically.

Helmut Amhof, representing Qmedia, which provides a variety of services in the sports sector that include the organisation of training camps for local and foreign teams, both in Malta and abroad, emphasised the crucial role of the Malta Tourism Authority in organising sports events, generating bed nights, and promoting Malta globally.

He thanked the Malta FA for its collaboration, which is essential for the success of such initiatives.

Premier League football: No change at the top, but the relegation struggle hots up

As anticipated, Hamrun Spartans retained the top place in the Premier League with an easy victory over Naxxar Lions at the end of match day 15. At the same time, Floriana stayed on their shoulder after their narrow win over Birkirkara. In the lower reaches, the struggle for survival hots on with five teams in the thick of it and Gudja almost already doomed to lose their status.

Hamrun Spartans 4 Naxxar Lions 1

Hamrun Spartans found the going much more accessible than they might have envisaged, and their 4-1 victory over Naxxar Lions that helped them to retain their three-point lead over Floriana was no surprise.

The Spartans made their intentions clear from the word go, and it only took them two minutes to pave the way for their win when Jonny Torres scored from a Uros Duranovic pass. However, the Lions roared back in the 18th minute with the equaliser scored by Pablo Augusto Servo de Carvalho, who found himself in the right spot from a Da Silva pass to beat Henry Bonello in Hamrun's goal.

The goal put more fire in the Hamrun players, and they regained the upper hand and pushed their opponents back. They brought out the best from Naxxar goalkeeper Matthias Debono with a Torres header in the 25th minute and, on 40 minutes, regained the lead with a terrific shot from Uros Duranovic.

Hamrun continued to hold on to the initiative and kept up the pressure in the second half. After some near misses, in the 72nd minute, they added to their advantage with a goal by Luke Montebello and then wrapped it all up a minute from time with a fourth goal by Emerson Marcelina.

Floriana 2 Birkirkara 1

Floriana overcame another challenging obstacle in Birkirkara on the way to keeping up with Hamrun Spartans at the top reaches of the

League ladder when they edged their way past their opponents in a 2-1 win, leaving their opponents still searching for victory in their last three outings.

It wasn't easy for Floriana, but they managed to get all three points at the end of a well-deserved success. The win was paved with a 22nd-minute goal by Mattia Veselji, who rounded up two defenders before slotting the ball past Birkirkara custodian Marcel Zapytowski.



The Greens had a chance to double their lead three minutes later when they were awarded a penalty for a foul by Enrico Pepe on Matheus Souza, but the Birkirkara goalkeeper saved Mattia Veselji's effort from the spot to keep his side's hopes alive come the second half.

Zapytowski's feat must have given Birkirkara the flip they needed as they improved on the change-over and, 22 minutes inside the session, were rewarded for their efforts when they drew level from a penalty awarded for an Oualid El Hasni handling infringement in the Greens' penalty area. It was converted by Andrei Ciolacu.

For the remaining minutes, the match was evenly balanced, but in the 82nd minute, Kemar Reid headed home their winning tally after a Dunstan Vella from an Alejandro Garzia move in front of goal.

Sliema Wanderers 1 Valletta 1

Sliema Wanderers figured in their second draw on the trot when they were held to 1-1 by their eternal rivals Valletta, who must have savoured the sharing of points more than their opponents, who, however, managed to extend their unbeaten run to eight matches and stay as the team closest to the top two teams.

The match was evenly balanced throughout, and in the end, the draw proved to be the fairest of outcomes. Sliema had more of the play in the initial stages, but shots at goal were very few and far between.

After a scoreless first half, the Wanderers opened the scoring in the 55th minute through Samuel Gomes da Mata, who found the opposing net with a shot from close in after receiving a pass from Geoffrey Acheampong.

Valletta's reaction was immediate, and Sliema goalkeeper Rashed Al Tumi had to be very alert to save Diego Cardoso's shot. However, in the 68th minute, Valletta levelled matters when Shaun Dimech's goalwards-bound shot was deflected into the Sliema goal and past his own goalkeeper by Jean Borg.

Marsaxlokk 2 Gudja United 1

After their disappointment of only earning just three points from their last four matches, Marsaxlokk returned to winning ways by beating Gudja United 2-1 to strengthen their hold on fourth spot in the league table, three points behind Sliema.

Gudja's loss could be taken as possibly another nail in their coffin. They are still in search of their first victory from fifteen matches and are anchored at the foot of the league ladder, ten points away from safety.

The difference between the two sides in the first half was minimal, but Marsaxlokk still managed to go ahead after 25 minutes through Nikolai Muscat, who beat James Pisani in the Gudja goal with a low shot.

Marsaxlokk retained the upper hand in the second half and, after failing to add to their tally with several scoring opportunities in the 63rd minute, finally found a way through, and Weder Soares extended the lead from a header.

The winners wasted other scoring opportunities and, in the end, paid dearly for that when Gudja pulled a goal back in the 90th minute for a consolation goal scored by substitute Luca Gatt.

Hibernians 2 Santa Lucia 0

Despite their improvement in recent outings, Santa Lucia only looked capable of getting something out of their clash with neighbours Hibernians and, in the end, suffered two goals in the first half that led to their downfall.

Hibernians showed they meant business from the outset and by the 11th minute had already tested the Saints' goalkeeper, Francisco da Paz, with a Robert Bairam effort, and then in the 24th minute, missed another scoring opportunity when Kurt Shaw failed to connect from a Giannis Bastianos corner.

What the Paolites failed to do, their opponents did it for them in the 26th minute when, in his effort to clear the danger, the Saints' Jurgen Pisani deflected into his net Jurgen Degabriele's effort at goal.

Right on half time, Hibernians doubled their lead through Lucas Caruana, who volleyed in off a defender to give his side a 2-0 lead.

In the second half, Santa Lucia tried hard to get back into the game, but without causing much concern for Hibernians except for three occasions that goalkeeper Hugo Sacco dealt with comfortably with saves off Santiago Moracci, Jurgen Pisani and Alessandro Piazza.

Balzan 1 Gżira United 1

Balzan and Gżira United shared these spoils in a one-all draw that did not serve much for the United, who are in the throes of a fierce struggle with four other teams to avoid relegation. The point won by Balzan helped them establish a firm mid-table position.

With the Maroons in desperate need of points, they threw themselves forward to get the goals they needed, but though dictating matters, they found it hard to penetrate the Balzan defence. When they did in the 28th minute, the referee disallowed their goal from a header by Lucas Macula.

However, Gżira could not be denied and deservedly took the lead in the 39th minute from Lucas Macula's effort to end the first half a goal up. They also went near on a couple more occasions early in the second half, which was more evenly balanced.

But as luck would have it, Balzan scored in the 64th minute when Olivier Rommens beat goalkeeper Darijan Zarkov for the leveller, which disappointed Gżira greatly.

Mosta 0 Sirens 0

The sharing of the spoils in this scoreless draw did not satisfy any of the respective supporters. For Sirens, who are almost doomed, a point means very little. It just improved their placing a point above the bottom team. Mosta had the chance to widen their gap from fellow strugglers but failed. They stay involved in the relegation struggle.

Mosta created enough chances in the first half to make it their day. But in the end, they failed to turn their superiority into goals and, in the second half, allowed Sirens to make an improvement and even come back to share proceedings, although they, too, were never a threat.

Premier League standings at end of Match day 15

Team	Pts
Hamrun Spartans	38
Floriana	35
Sliema Wanderers	30
Marsaxlokk	25
Hibernians	24
Birkirkara	21
Naxxar Lions	21
Balzan	19
Valletta	18
Mosta	16
Gżira United	15
Santa Lucia	12
Sirens	07
Gudja United	06

Socceroos goalkeeper with Malta roots joins English Premier side Aston Villa

Socceroos goalkeeper Joe Anthony Gauci, 23, who is currently with the Australian national team at the Asian Cup, and has been keeping goal for Adelaide United, has joined English Premier League club, Aston Villa for an undisclosed fee, but is reputed to be a record fee for an A-League player.

The 6'5" keeper was initially born in Adelaide but had roots in Malta through his father. Therefore, he was also eligible to play for Malta before deciding to play for the Socceroos.

He started his footballing career with West Torrens Birkalia before receiving a scholarship deal with Central Coast Mariners. He subsequently joined Adelaide City and Melbourne City before signing

a scholarship contract with Adelaide United in 2020. He made his A-League debut in 2021.

Internationally, Joe Gauci received his first call-up to the Australian national team in 2022 as a train-on player and debuted in a friendly match in 2023 against Ecuador.

He was most recently with the Socceroos squad at the 2023 Asian Cup and will link up with Villa upon his return from the tournament. Australia eventually were eliminated from the Asia Cup by losing 1-2 in extra time in the semi-final played in Doha.



Socceroo goalkeeper and new Aston Villa signing Joe Gauci. Photo: Joe Gauci via Facebook

At Aston Villa Park, Gauci will be an understudy to Argentina's Emiliano Martinez, who won the Golden Glove award as the best goalkeeper at the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

The transfer is subject to international clearance and obtaining a visa.

Round 2 starts: Hamrun Spartans put seven past Balzan to retain top of table

Table toppers Hamrun Spartans started the second round of the Premier League with a bang as they put seven goals past Balzan to retain the top position three points ahead of their closest, and as it is turning out also to be their only challengers Floriana. At the same time, most of the teams below them dropped points.

Hamrun Spartans 7 Balzan 1

Hamrun Spartans breezed through their opening match in Round 2 of the Premier League with an easy 7-1 victory over Balzan, who must have dreamed of offering a much stricter challenge after it was them that opened the scoring in the 11th minute. However, the defending champions then rose to the occasion to register their biggest win of the campaign in humiliating Balzan. It helped them retain the top of the League ladder.

Balzan gave a debut to their new signing from Floriana, Jan Busuttill. But in the end, the player must have wondered if he had made the right decision in changing clubs. The result was highly disappointing for him and his colleagues in the Balzan team.

The Spartans, who are awaiting the outcome of the decision of the MFA's Protests Board following the protest lodged by Hibernians over the eligibility of Christian Rutjens, were in a class of their own for most of this game, but not before being the first to concede, when Aleksandar Katanic gave Balzan the lead from an Olivier Rommens assist.

However, Hamrun managed to level the score nine minutes later from a penalty converted by Luke Montebello penalty and awarded for a foul on Ryan Camenzuli by Triston Caruana, and then also scored a second goal by Uros Djuranovic to end the first half in the lead.

A minute into the second half, Uros Djuranovic obtained his second goal when he lobbed the ball over Balzan's goalkeeper, Golovic, to make it 3-1. From then on, it was all Hamrun who scored four more goals, three of them by Luke Montebello, the first after 57 minutes.

In the 72nd minute, Roko Prsa potted the rebound after Seth Paintsil's shot slammed against the crossbar, and Luke Montebello got the other two to add to his tally in two minutes at the start of stoppage time. He first converted another penalty for this hat-trick and scored a fourth a minute later from a Roko Prsa country after a Golovic blunder.

Floriana 2 Santa Lucia 0

Floriana somewhat recovered from the back-to-back defeats that cost them the leadership of the Premier League by opening the second round with an easy 2-0 win over relegation-threatened Santa Lucia that keeps them within reach of the league leaders, three points behind Hamrun and ahead of third-placed Sliema Wanderers.

After obtaining maximum points from their last two fixtures that enabled them to open a six-point gap over the two bottom-placed teams, Santa Lucia entered the game hoping to add to their positive run. Despite the defeat, they gave a good account of themselves, but in the end, they were firmly beaten by a superior side.

Floriana were determined to make up for their recent poor performances and took the reins in hand from the sound of the referee's first whistle. But after going so near to open the scoring in the 11th minute, they had to wait until the 28th minute to find a way through to the Saints' defence to score their first goal through Mattia Veselji from a Dunstan Vella through pass.

Floriana stayed on top for most of the first session, and a shot by Mattia Veselji was deflected to corner by the losers' defence, and from the resulting corner, goalkeeper Da Paz saved a humdinger from Carlo Zammit Lonardelli.

Floriana's insistence on the Saints' goal became even more pressing in the second half, and efforts by Mastias Nicolas Garcia were either blocked or foiled by goalkeeper Da Paz, who rose to the occasion to save on shots by Maksim Valadzko and Mattia Vesslji.

Santa Lucia's only reaction arrived in the 77th minute when Jack Grech's long-range shot sailed over the bar.

Although the Greens kept the initiative throughout the match, they had to wait till three minutes into stoppage time to make sure of all three points when they scored a second goal by substitute Lorenzo De Grazia.

Sliema Wanderers..... 0 Birkirkara..... 0

At the end of a highly balanced match against Birkirkara, Sliema Wanderers missed the chance to keep up within reach of runners-up Floriana when they could only figure in a scoreless draw. They are now three points behind the Greens in third place. They also ended up with one consolation: lengthening their sequence of unbeaten matches to six.



Sliema Wanderers vs Birkirkara (yellow shirts). Photo: Walter Sargent

On the other hand, Birkirkara made no headway as they remain in fifth place, a position they now share with Hibernians and Naxxar in fifth place, a point behind Marsaxlokk.

For most of the time, Sliema seemed to have a slight edge,

particularly in midfield but attempts at goal by both teams were very few and far between. The closest any team went to scoring in the first half was in the 20th minute when Geoffrey Edwin Archamepong's effort was deflected to corner by the Birkirkara defence.

Birkirkara's best chance fell at the feet of Andrea Zammit, whose father, Paul, manages the opposing team, Sliema. When well placed, his effort was much too soft to trouble goalkeeper Rashed Al Tumi in the Wanderers' goal.

In the second half, the same player created Birkirkara's best scoring opportunity for team-mate Andrei Cioalcu, but Al Tumi saved the latter's shot with some difficulty.

Marsaxlokk..... 0 Naxxar Lions 0

Marsaxlokk had enough scoring chances against Naxxar Lions to win all three points and improve their standing in the league table even further. But in the end, although Naxxar played second fiddle for most of the game, they still managed to share the points in a goalless draw.

Marsaxlokk threatened from the word go and should have ended the first half well ahead. Still, Nigerian player Sunday Akinbule missed three scoring opportunities, the first after less than a minute when the Naxxar goalkeeper, Matthias Debono, blocked his shot. After 35 minutes, his header was turned to corner by the Naxxar keeper, and before the end of the session, Debono also smothered his shot from close in.

In the second half, the best scoring opportunity fell at the feet of Naxxar's Mark Fenech from an Edson Cerqueira Farias corner, but Marsaxlokk's goalkeeper Marko Drobnyak saved his attempt to deny Naxxar from taking an undeserved three points.

Hibernians..... 3 Gżira United..... 2

Hibernians found it hard to make any headway against Gżira United, but in the end, they came from behind to earn the points in a win by the odd goal in five that helped them to share fifth position with two other teams, but well behind the table toppers.

The Paolites' victory was dramatic. They came from behind to clinch it in stoppage time. It arrived when Gżira looked good enough to finish the match at least evenly, which would have put them in a much safer position than they are currently occupying.

Gżira went ahead after 26 minutes with a goal by Thiago Espindola, who finished off a good move with an unstoppable shot that beat goalkeeper Hugo Sacco.

However, Hibernians quickly reacted, and three minutes later, they levelled matters with a goal by Bjorn Kristensen, who scored from near in following a corner kick. But Gżira would not be undone and, in the 33rd minute, retained the lead with a headed goal by Brooklyn Borg from Lucas Macula's pass.

At this stage, the match was providing a ding-dong battle between the two sides, and three minutes later, Hibernians again equalised through Jurgen Degabriele, who beat goalkeeper Zarkov with a low shot.

The second half was void of threatening moves, but for one by Gżira after 75 minutes, when Lucas Macula tried a shot from an angled position that the Hibernians' goalkeeper brilliantly saved.

Valletta 3 Sirens 0

Valletta registered their second victory on the trot with their second 3-0 victory in succession, this time against Sirens, whose life in the Premier League looks life-threatening with only six points and not a win in sight after fourteen outings.

The day promised well for Valletta as they forged ahead after 26 minutes with a goal from a Diego Cardoso Nogueira header. They added a second through the same player 12 minutes into the second session when he dribbled past a Sirens defender before lobbing the ball over the opposing goalkeeper.

Shaun Dimech wrapped it all up with a third goal in the 82nd minute.

Mosta 1 Gudja United 0

Mosta again tasted victory after three months with a slender goal victory over Gudja United that earned them all three points and somewhat improved their position in the lower half of the league table. Meanwhile, Gudja's hopes for survival keep diminishing as they remain anchored with Sirens at the bottom of the table with just six points.

Mosta scored the all-important goal after ten minutes, following a penalty action awarded for a foul by goalkeeper Justin Spiteri on the Mosta captain Zachary Brincat. The captain came up to take the spot-kick, but the goalkeeper saved his effort. Team-mate Armen Hovhannisyanyan was quickest on the rebound to score.