

Why Malta?

John and Evelyn Anderson

**American Association of
University Women**

January 21, 2019

What do you know about Malta?
This?



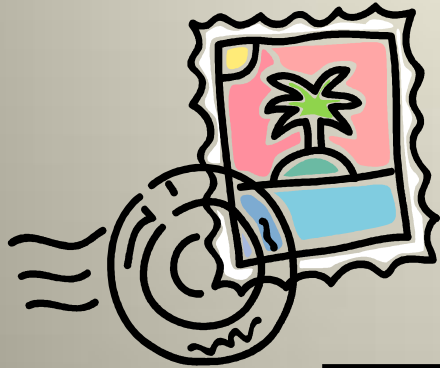
Or this?



Or maybe this ...

- **Acts 28**
- New International Version (NIV)
- **Paul Ashore on Malta**
- 28 Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. ² The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. ³ Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. ⁴ When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, “This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live.” ⁵ But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. ⁶ The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.
- ⁷ There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. ⁸ His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. ⁹ When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. ¹⁰ They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

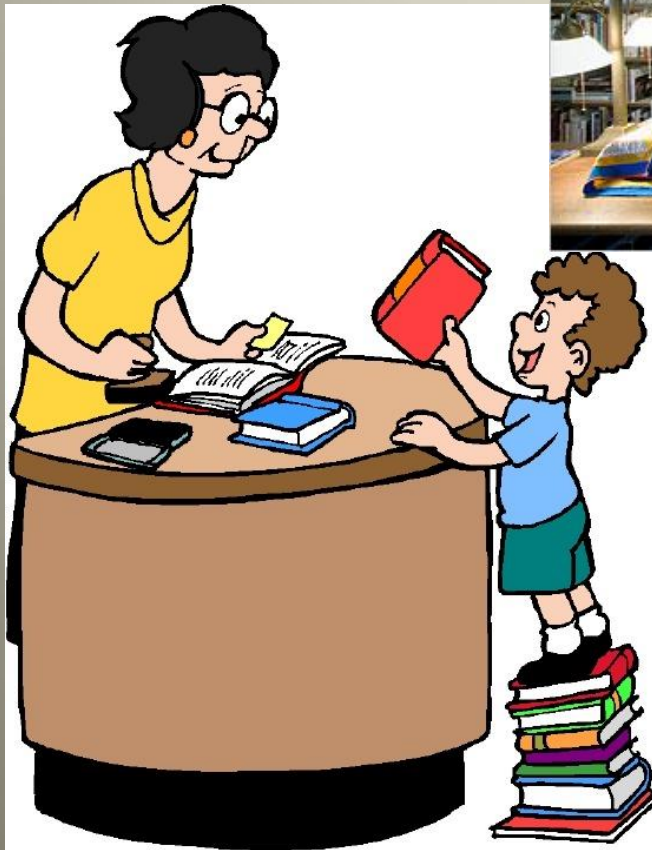
How I got interested in Malta



Verdala Palace & King George VI

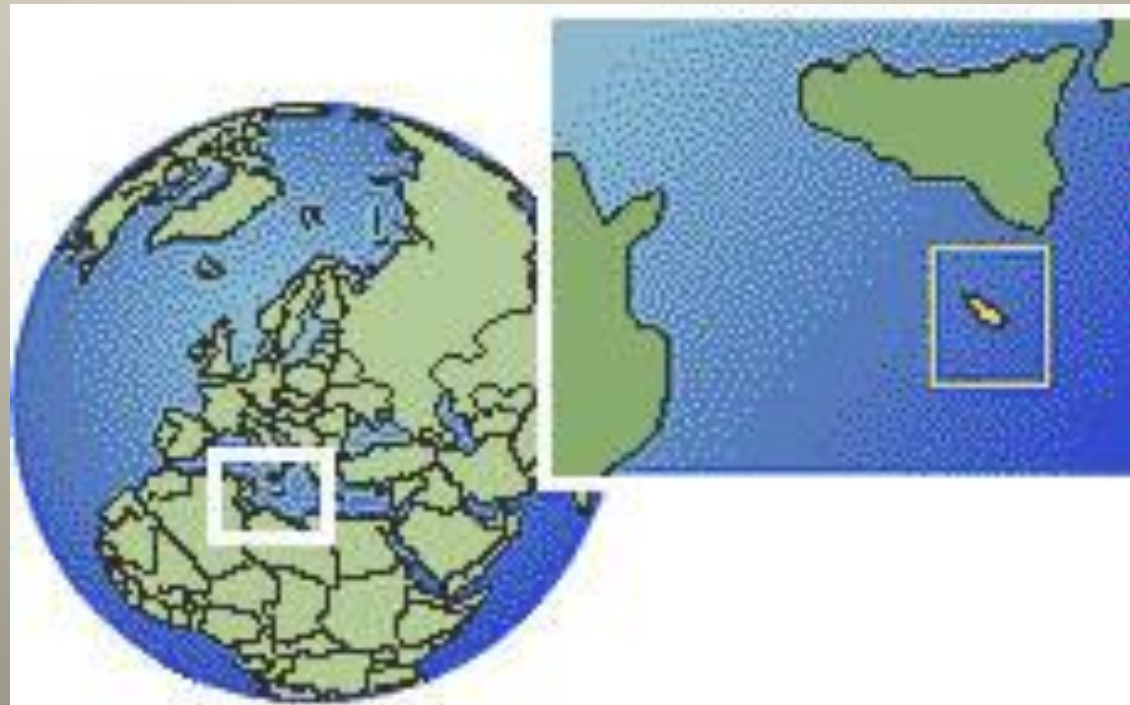


Libraries: All About Malta



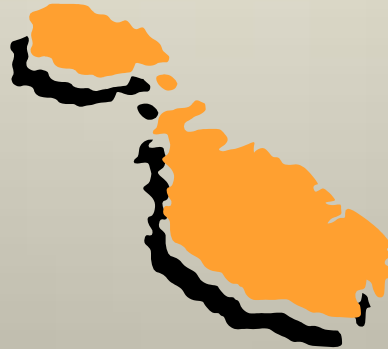
Where is Malta?

- Crossroads of the Mediterranean, near Sicily
- strategic and historic



Three islands = Malta

- Malta, Gozo, Comino



Numerous Invaders...

but always the same language

- Phoenicians
 - Normans
 - Greeks
 - Romans
 - Turks
 - Arabs
 - British
 - French
 - Spanish
- **Independent!**

Malti



Sandwich Sandwiċ

Sugar Zokkor

Tea Tè

Tomatoes Tadam

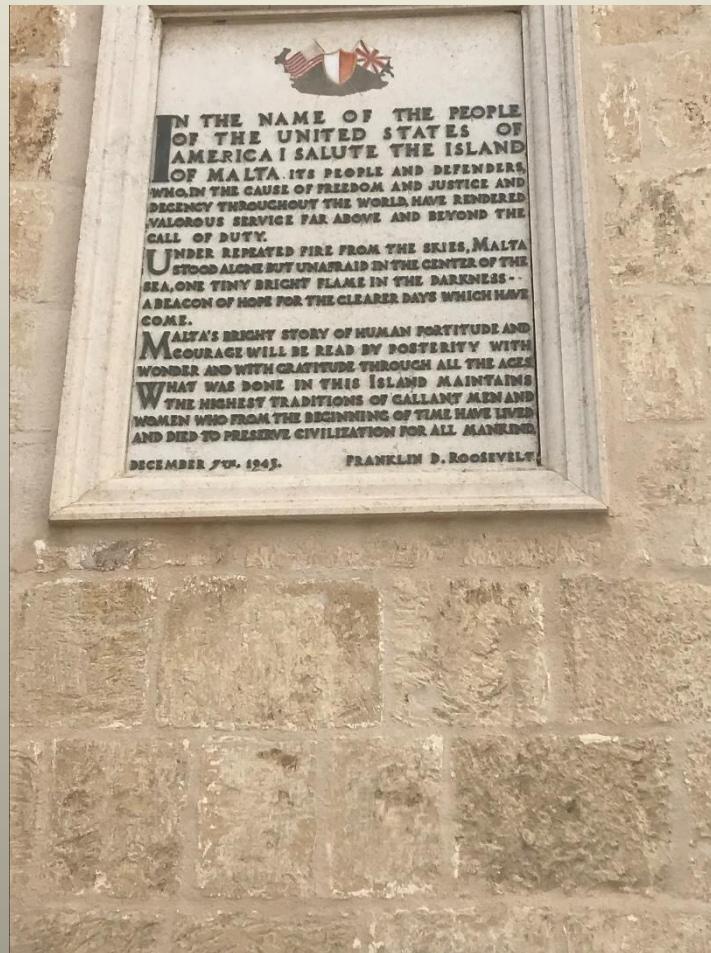
Vegetables Il-ħaxix

Water Ilma

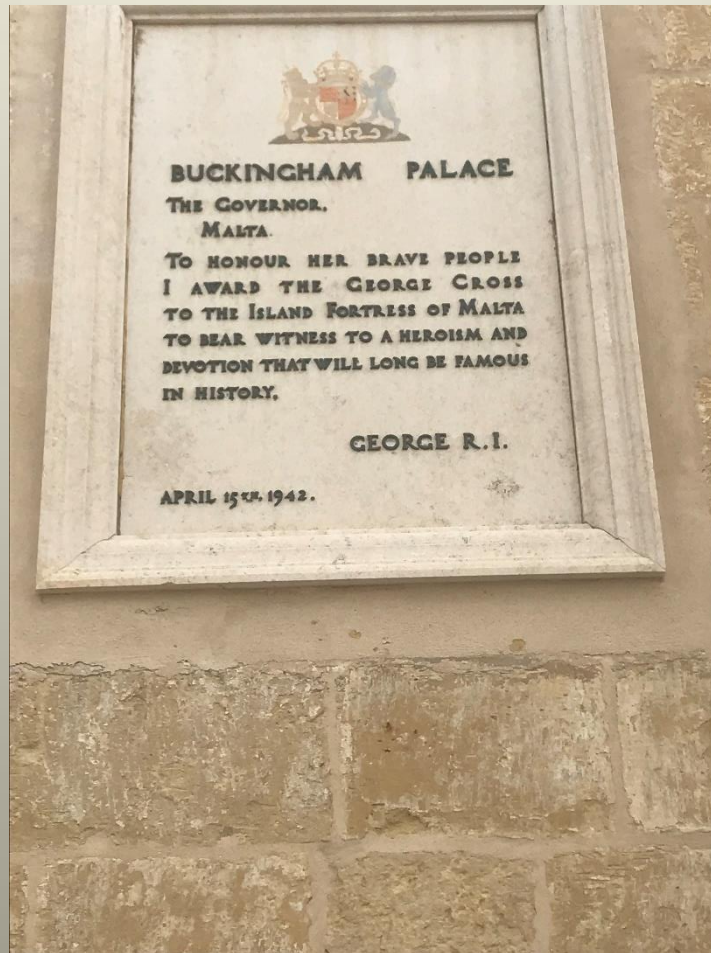
Malta in the World Wars



An honor from FDR



And from King George VI



Cellini, the rascal's, autobiography



The Salari



The Salari

- A Salt and pepper dispenser
- Made by Cellini for King Francis of France
- Stolen from Vienna Museum in 2003 (shortly before *The Cellini Masterpiece* was published)
- Ransom demand: 65 million Euros
- Culprits caught when they used traceable cellphone

A masterpiece by Cellini?

A story set on Malta?

Hmmm ... That sounds like the makings for a great mystery novel to me

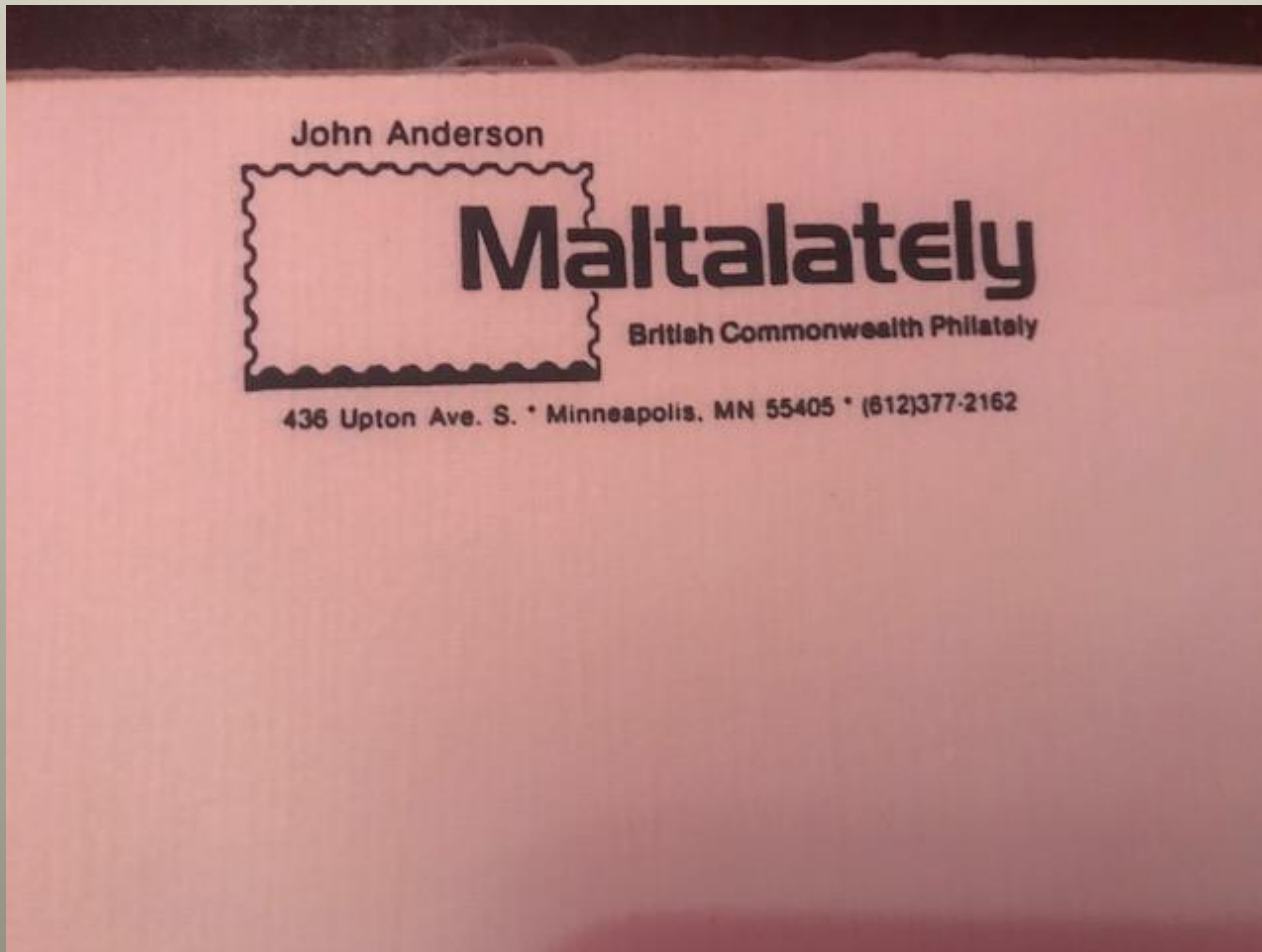
Well ... Maybe not right away



Then these came along....



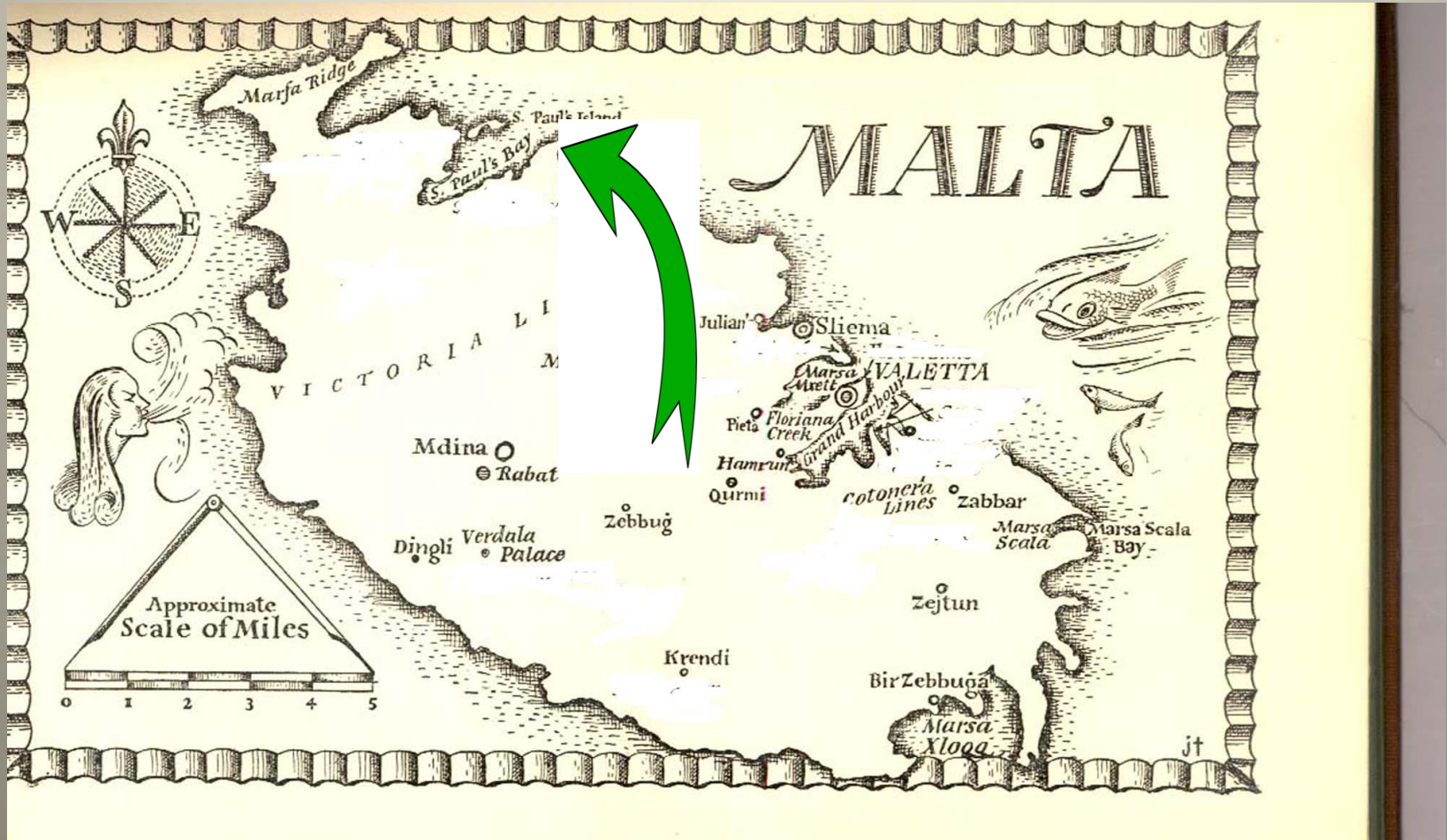
And then this ...



At last, after 40 years! Our first Malta destination, 1994



From airport to Ouwra:
less than 15 miles



You really want to drive in Malta?

- Late night
- Standard transmission
- Drive on the left
- No signs
- And ... St. Julians

Young people's paradise; not ours!



Paceville, St Julians Malta



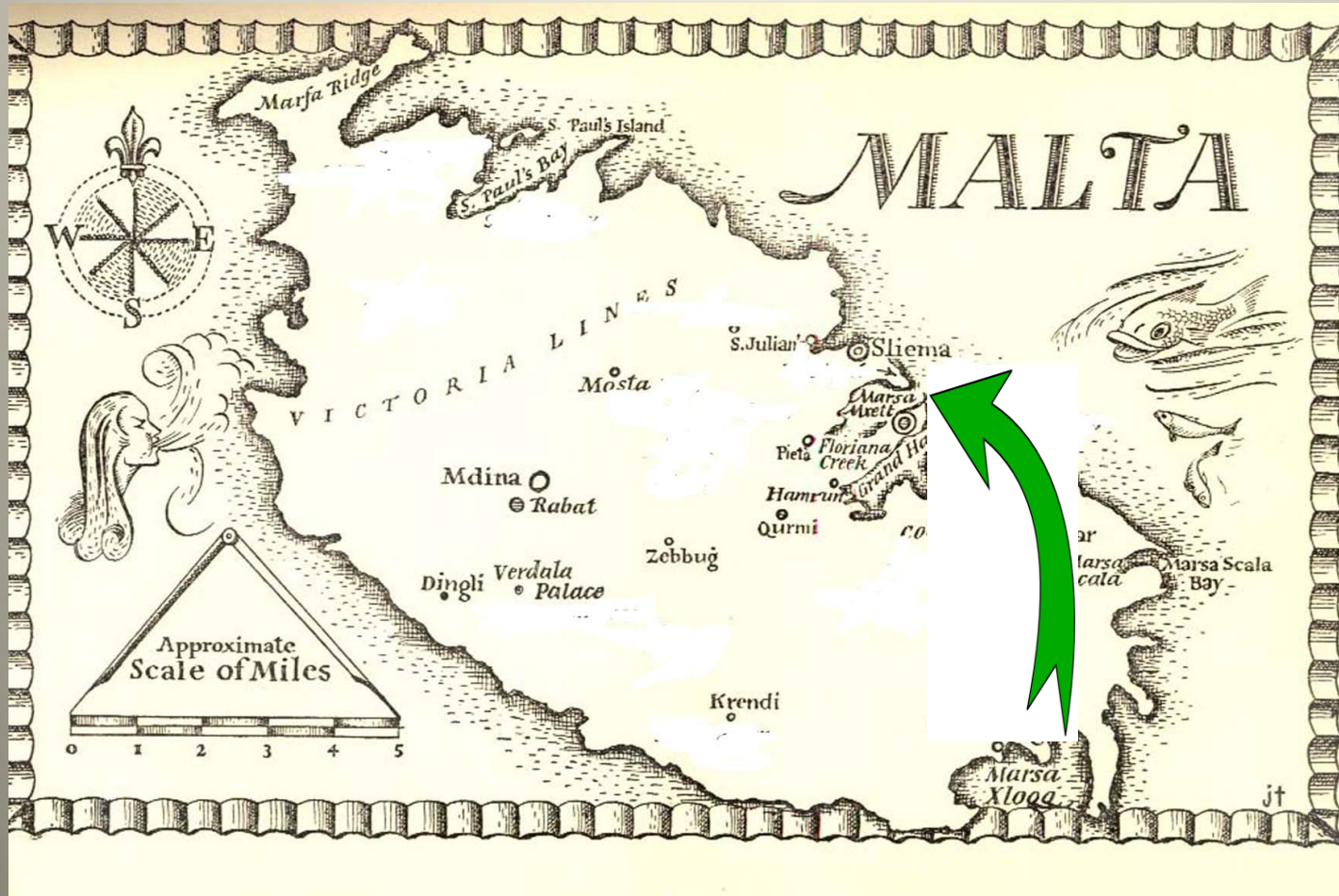
Finally ... help is on the way!
Our police escort



We made it!



Sliema



Finding an uh-um more economical place to stay in Sliema



Wow!

- Not only a less expensive place to stay, it's the perfect setting for our great Maltese Adventure novel!!!

- We have our setting,
let's add some characters

Here's one!

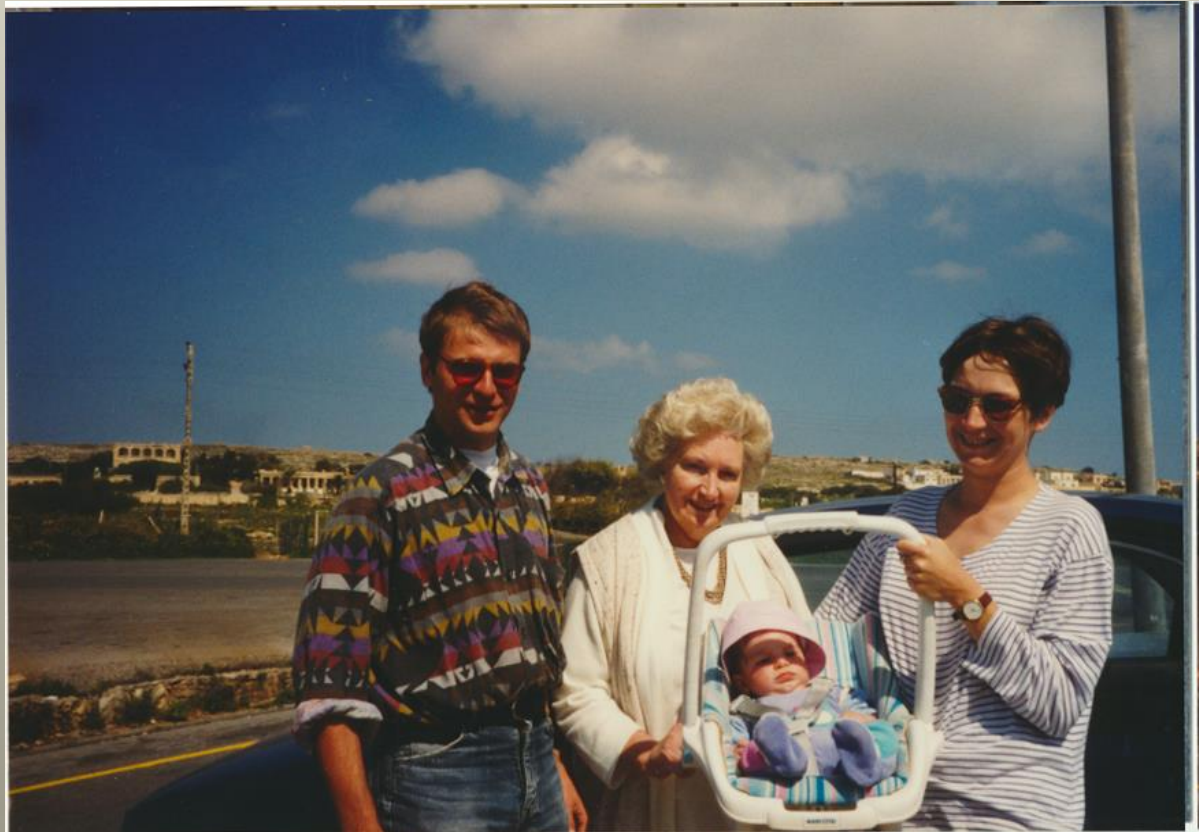
Joe Bugeja Manager of the Soleado Guest House and our host since 1994



Sorry Joe...

- We need a female to run the guest house
- Her name? Josefina!
- Her niece: Caterina Borg, heroine
 - The All-Knowing Cab Driver and
 - Philanthropist Extraordinaire

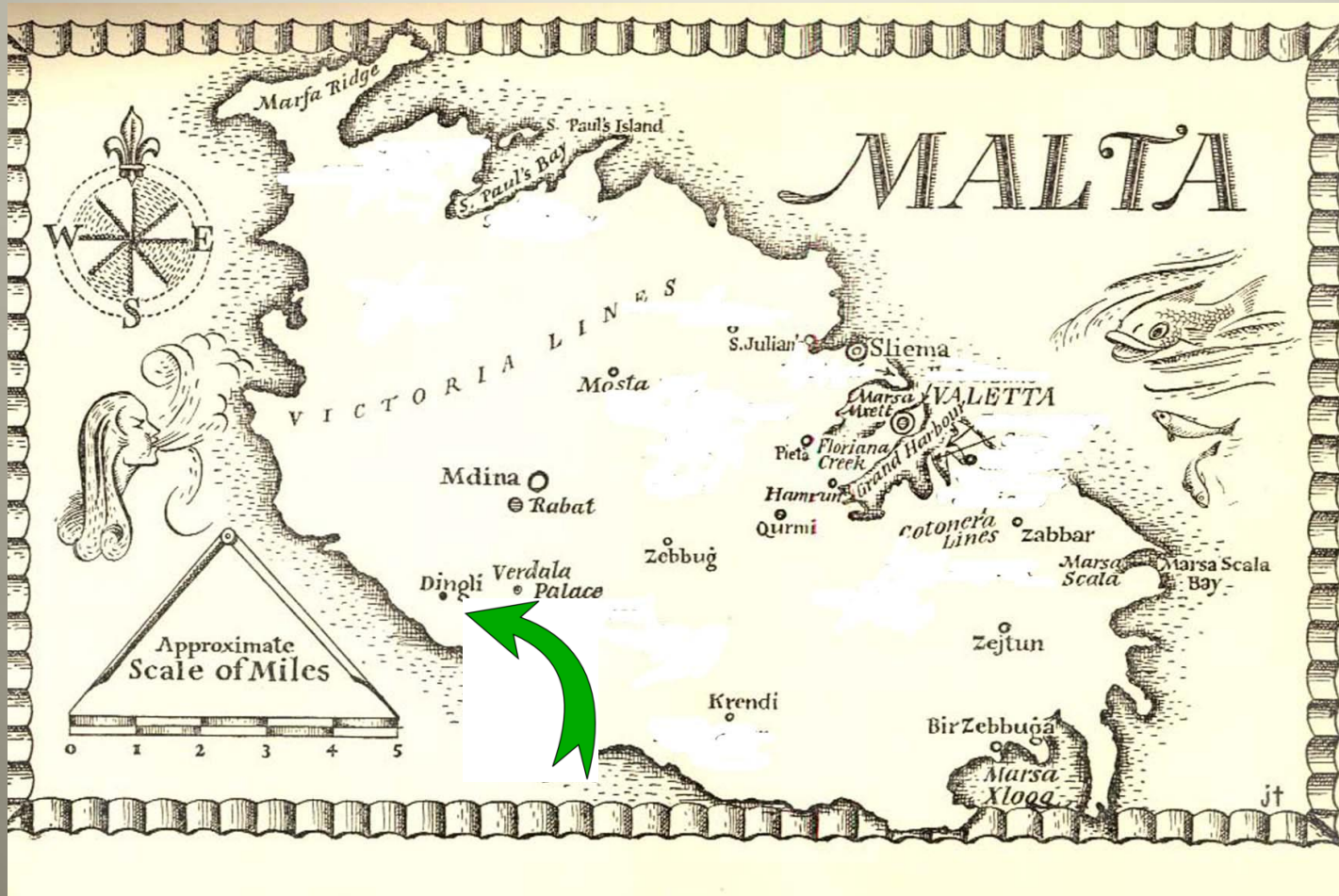
Dora (Center)... Josefina's alter ego



Sir Anthony Abela-Medici,
Retired Medical Examiner of Malta,
becomes our Police Inspector



Tony Lives in Dingli



Dingli Cliffs



WW-II bomb shelter under Abela-Medici home



Wine bottles in shelter



St. Joseph's Festa, 1994



Tony and Mary Anne, at 2007 Festa



2018: Return Visit!



The villainous duke and a sculpture: actually John Pace, noted Maltese artist



- Duke Alessandro Cornacchia was the last person Stef saw before he disappeared

And here's a lovely Caterina look-alike



Father John Azzopardi at St. Paul's Cathedral, Rabat

He reminds me of Father
Santorini, Historian of the Cornacchia Family



- **Other new friends**

Musicians Benny and Tonia



An amazing contact ...

- Linda, a coworker, has a cousin who lives in Valletta, Malta
- Jerry White is the founder of the International Landmine Survivors Network
- Linda: “You’ve got to meet him!”

Cousin Jerry says:

“I won’t be in Malta, but ...would you
like to use
my flat?”

Neville, Jerry's friend.
The man with the key!



Jerry in his “flat”



View from the flat



Dream library



Dream kitchen



Dream bedroom, leading to ...



A visit to Peter the optometrist!



Jerry White (right) with Princess Diana



Finally, we meet Jerry and Kelly in Cambridge, England



Mystery basket leads to lasting friendship



Victoria all grown up



Another connection

- I spoke at the Maltese-American Society in Dearborn, MI
- Paul Borg, president of society, said, “When you are in Malta, call my brother Ray.
- We did, and got the royal treatment.

Ray Borg and his fireworks factory, Rabat



The disciples preparing for the St. Paul festa parade



And ...

Simone Mizzi, director of Din L-Art Helwa



Not everyone we met became a friend

- We were taken for a ride in a Carrozin. The gold-toothed driver got his comeuppance in my novel.



Our imaginary friend: Rick Olsen

- Single Minnesota prairie restorer (Norwegian of course)
- Renaissance man; “infomaniac”
- Goes to Malta to help brother find a lost treasure

- Stef has been kidnapped!
- Rick to the rescue!
- Finds himself tangled in terrorist plot!
- His only ally is Caterina, Malta's only female cab driver

Rick and Caterina's balloon ride over the Duke's residence in Mdina



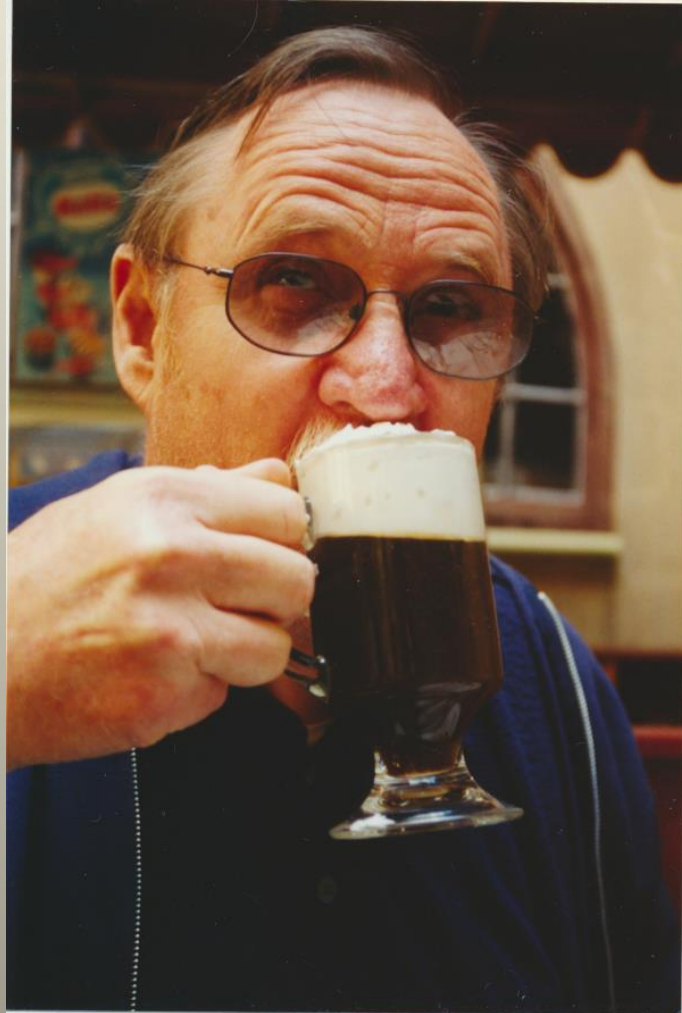
Mdina, home of Duke Cornacchia



His palazzo?

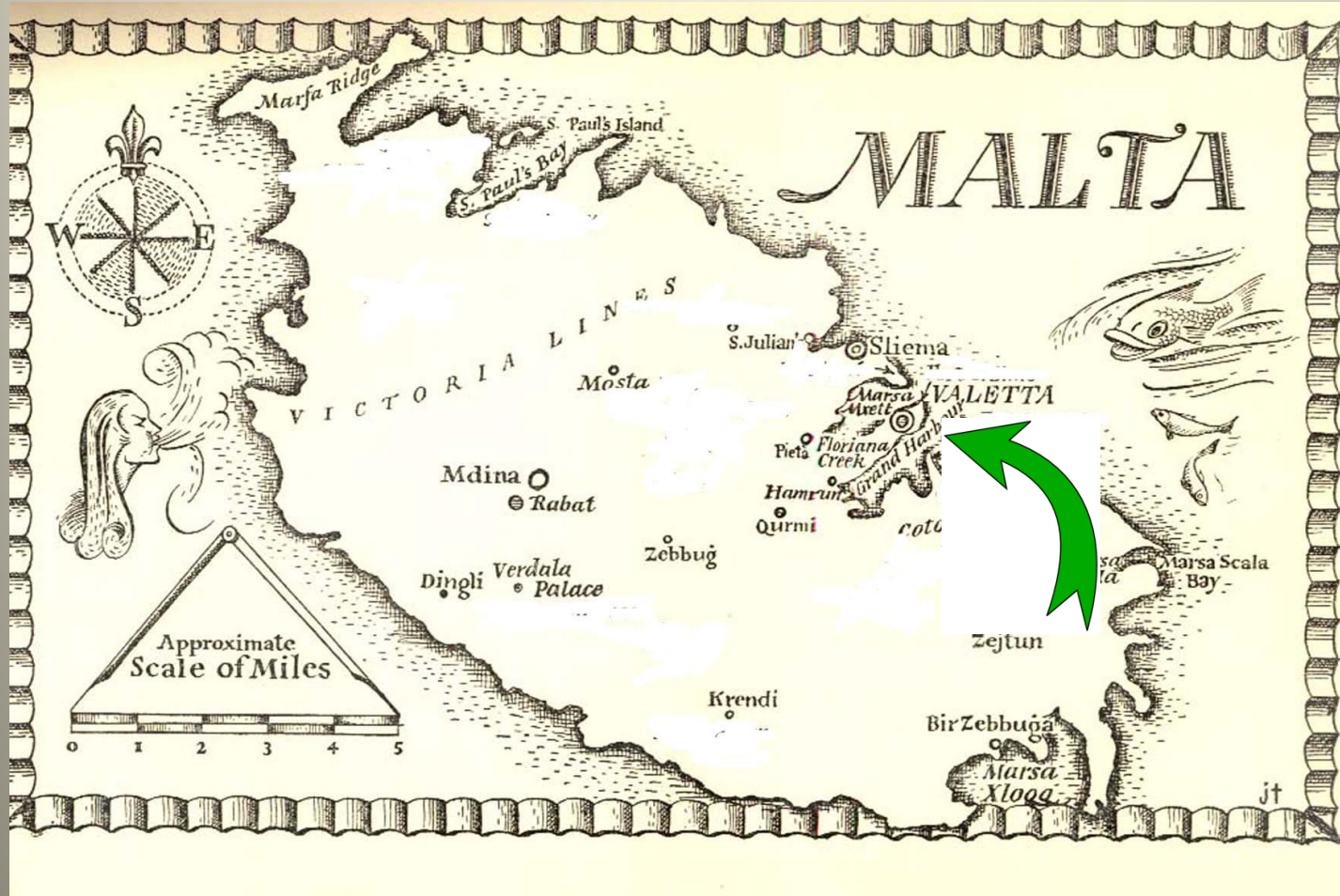


Following Rick's footsteps,
we stop for Maltese coffee in Mdina



Other scenes of the action ...

The capital city, Valletta



Triton Fountain ...



...buses to everywhere



Valletta street scene



City on a hill



Balcony, Valletta



St. John's Co-Cathedral





Caravaggio – Beheading of St. John the Baptist



Burial crypt of a Knight

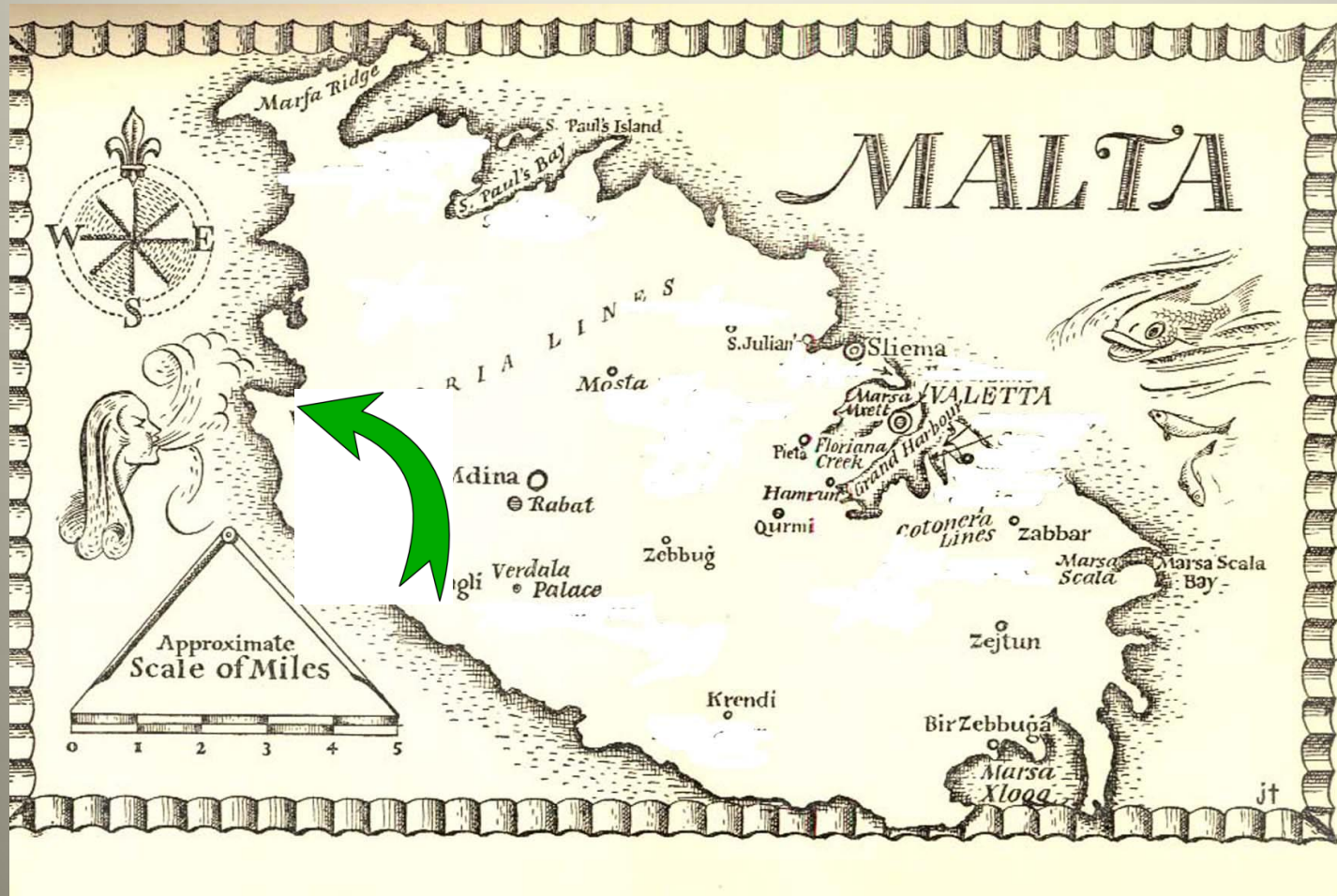


... SEPHO. BATHOLO
... ECHIDACORO. MELI
... PO. TIANAE. REEVE
... TORITATE. MANSVETU
... PRESTANTE. OLIM. VICARIO. E
... CAPITULARI. OVI. PHILOSOPHIAE. THEOLOGIAE. T
... N. EXCISO. NELLENSI. FLVRES. ANNOS. PROFE
... RNSVLENDS. PVANDO. LITES. DISSIDIA
... TACANDI. VITA. IMPENSA. ASSIDA. MENTIS. CO
... NINFECTVS. OCCV. VIT. IMMENSIVE. HONORIFIC
... MIBIFICVM. EVI. DESIDERIVM. INDICENS. AN
... VIBO. OPTIMO. INCOMPARABILIA. AD. PERPET
... VVM. EIVS. SVIQVE. ANIMI. BENEVOLEN
... THOMAS. MAITLAND. PAE
... M

The granary, where the Knights of St. John stored their grain to keep it from spoiling



Il-Karraba



A natural peninsula:

Location of the Fougasse in the novel



Just being tourists

Mqluba



Mqluba ... between heaven and hell



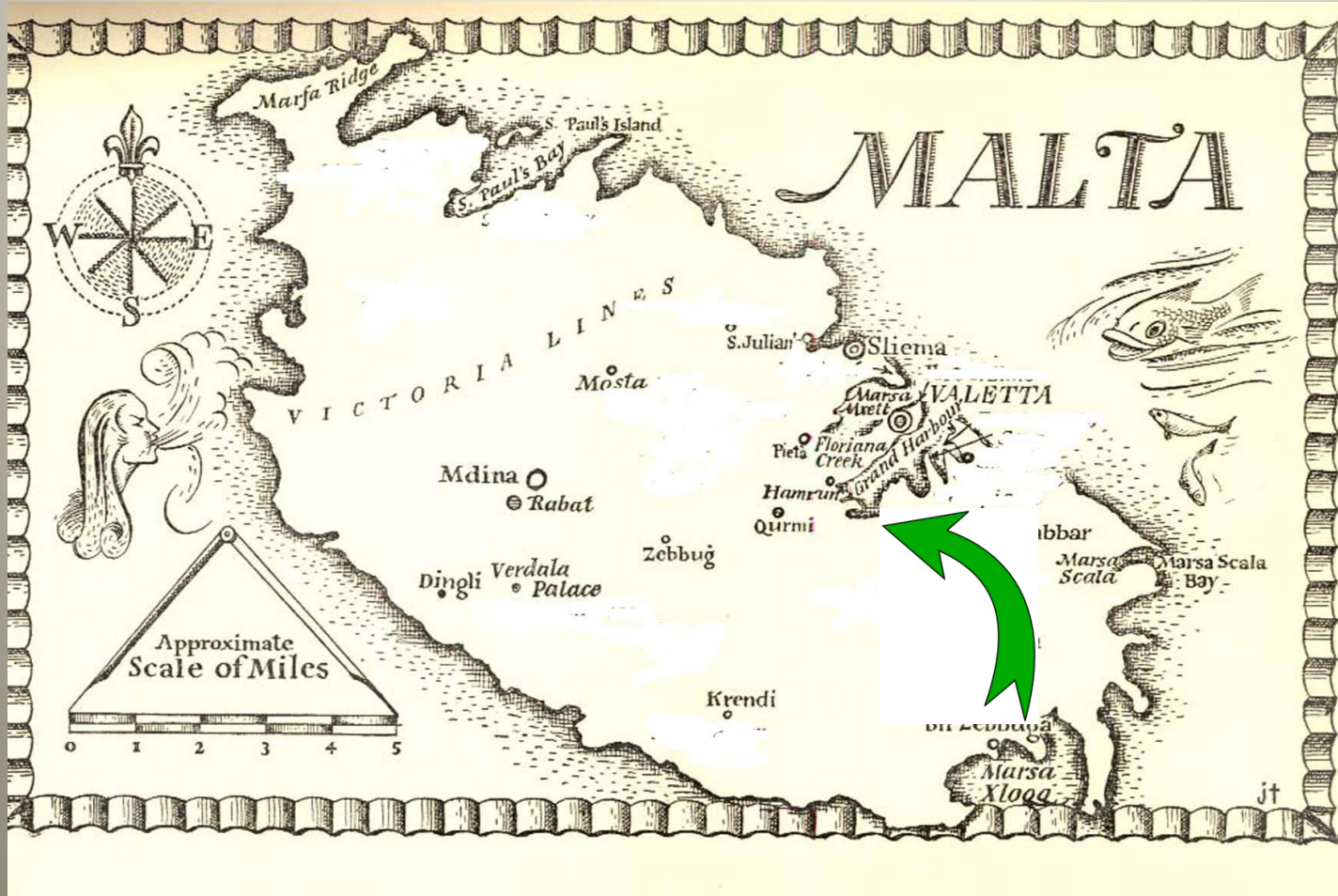
The sink hole



Gigantija, Neolithic city built by giants



Hypogeum: Paola



This mausoleum predates the Pyramids



Ghar Dalam caves:
fossils, prehistoric tiny elephants



Acting rich in Phoenicia Hotel





Maltese fishing boats everywhere



Eel at Marsaxlokk fish market



1 1 1

A closeup!



Learning to love Kinnie



Reenactment of The Great Siege – and a granary bin



“A cold front from Egypt”



Grand Harbour



WWI re-enactment at Saluting Battery



The Gunnery officer



Authentic WW I grub

SOLDIER MENU

Food Ration

Sandwiches

BULLY SANDWICH (corned beef + cucumber)..... €3.00
SPAM SANDWICH (luncheonmeat + cheese + lettuce)..... €3.00

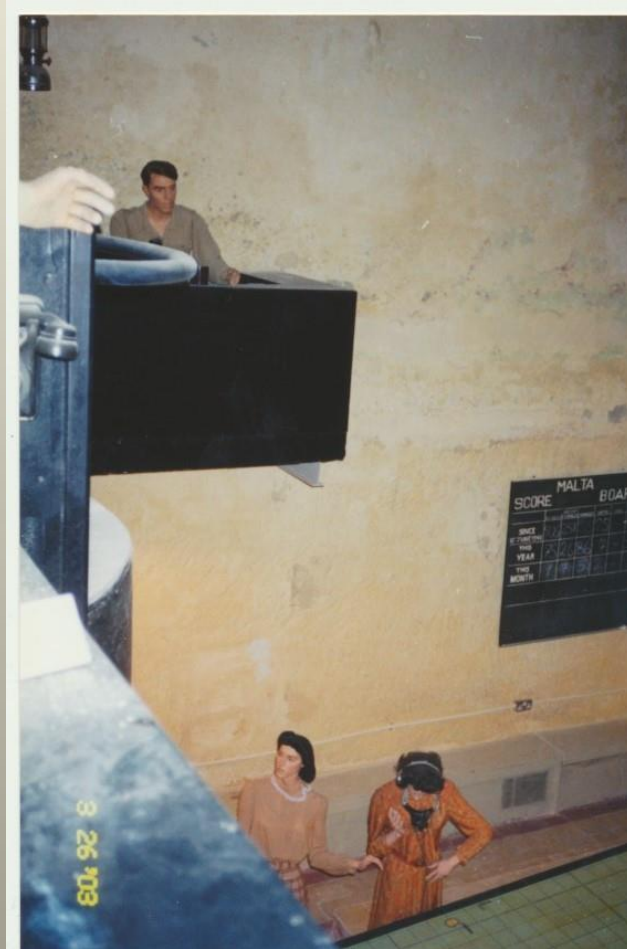
Military Meal

CORNED BEEF HASH (corned beef + potato + onions + garlic + peas) ..€6.00

Cake

CHEESE / PEA CAKE..... €0.50
TRENCH CAKE (cocoa + currants + ginger + nutmeg)..... €3.00
ANZAC BISCUITS (oats + coconut) €2.00
GUNPOWDER TEA (tea + rum) €2.50

War Room reconstruction



A Maltese menu



1. Dragon..... €12.50

Stuffed beef olives stewed in their own juice, root vegetables and tomato sauce served with lightly seasoned French fries and a side salad



2. Fenek bit-Tewm {Rabbit}..... €14.50

Braised rabbit served with a garlic, onion and white wine reduction, finished off with a game jus served with lightly seasoned French fries and a side salad



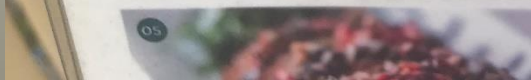
3. Ftira Maltija {Traditional Maltese Bread}..... €7.50

Traditional Maltese ftira with filling of tuna, olives, capers, sundried tomatoes, onions, garlic, tomato paste and a hint of mint oil served with lightly seasoned French fries and coleslaw



4. Ravjul tal-Irkotta (v)..... €9.95

Ricotta filled ravioli served with a rich traditional tomato, garlic and parsley sauce



5. Hobż Malti Mixwi {Bruschetta} (v)..... €5.95

Toasted Maltese bread topped with a mixture of tomatoes, capers, olives, onions, basil and a hint of garlic

Wine in Coke bottle?



Best French fries anywhere!



Sidewalk café by Valletta library
Queen Victoria (Center) is not amused by the pigeon
resting on her head



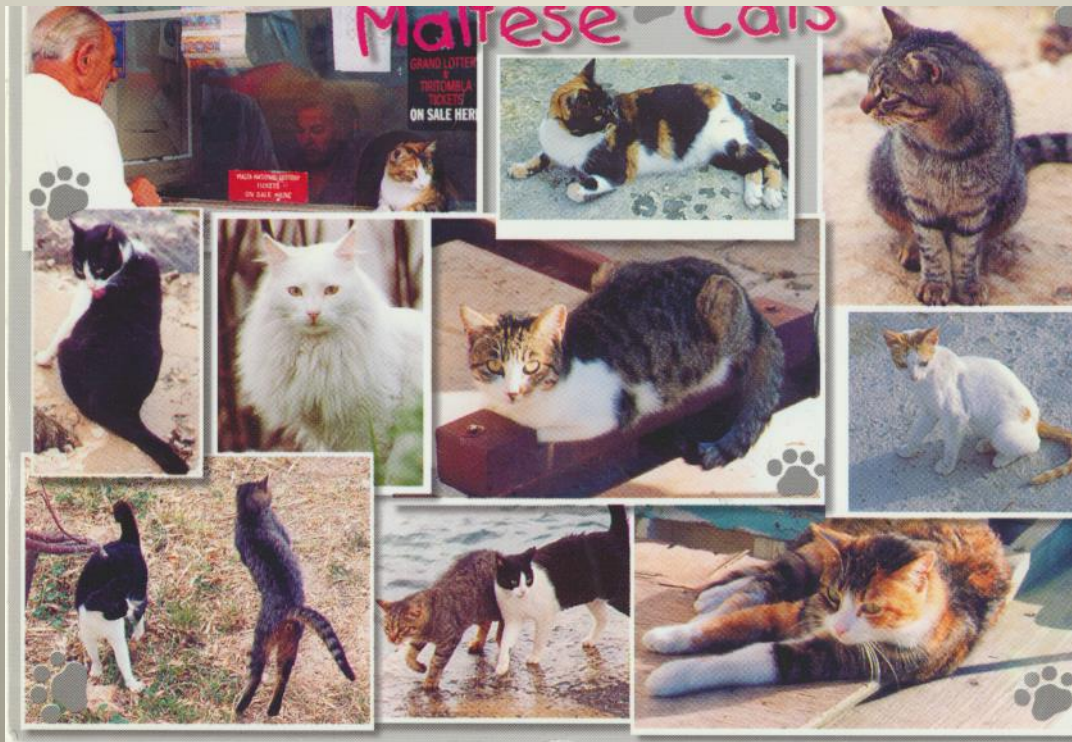
Princess Elizabeth's Morris



Grotto gate near Mellieha



Cats everywhere



Cat hotel



Pursuing The Cat Man of Malta



• And now ... TA-DA!!!

**The greatest adventure
of all!!**

Meeting Malta PM Lawrence Gonzi at Maltese-American Club in San Francisco



And a special meeting in Malta!!



- SCENES FROM GOZO

Gozo Malta's breadbasket



Outdoor restaurant, Marsalforn, Gozo



The Azure Window



Calypso's Cave



Ramala Bay with helicopter



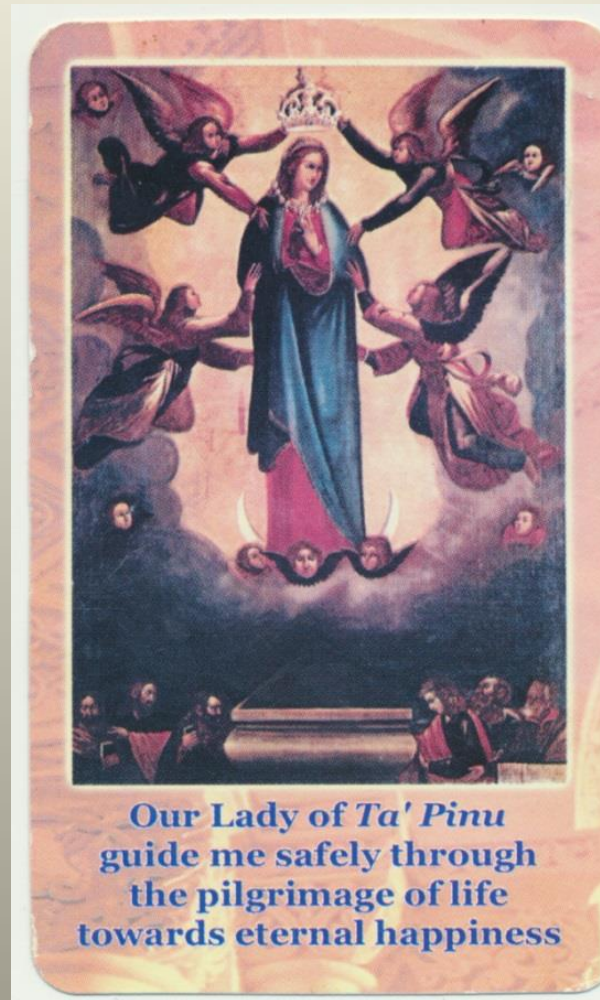
Ta Pinu Cathedral, Gozo



Wall of miracles



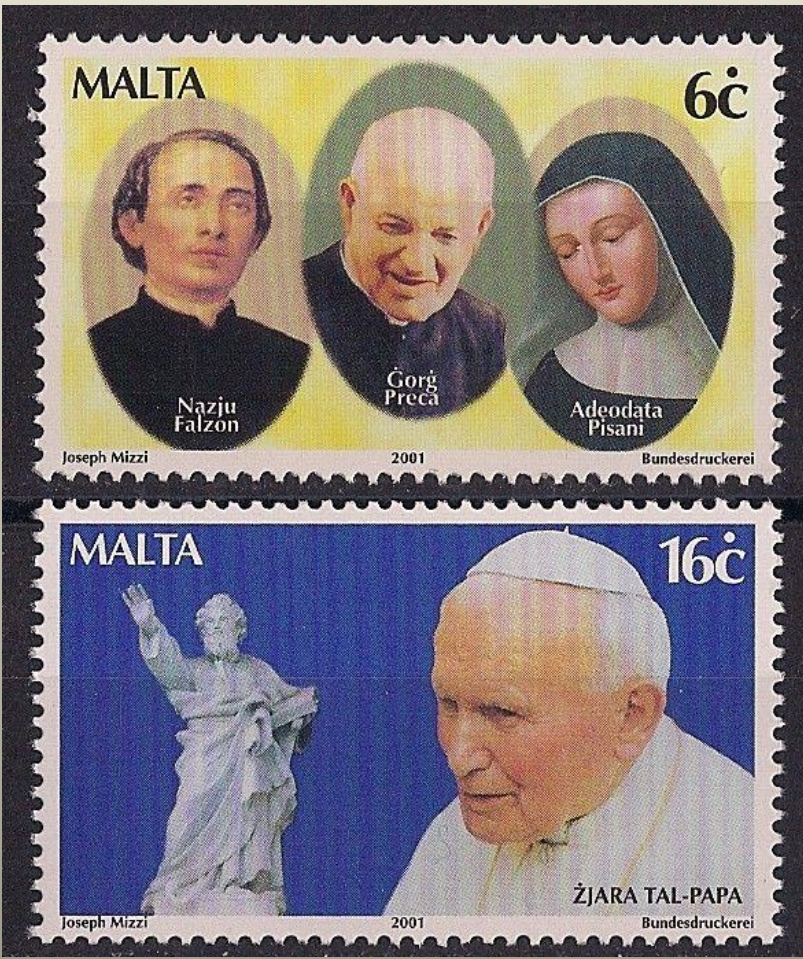
Our lady and a Minnesota miracle



Our friend the medical examiner has a Ta Pinu connection



Pope John Paul and Maltese saints

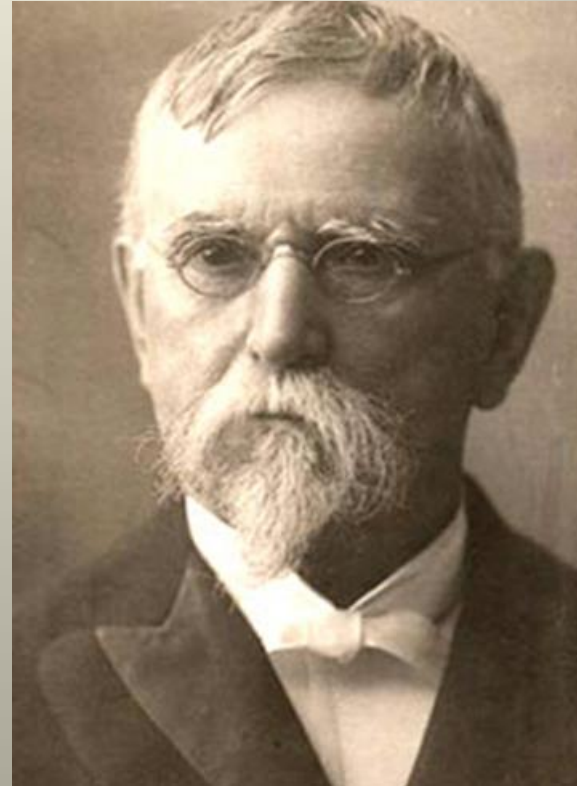


**2005 Promotion tour:
The Cellini Masterpiece**

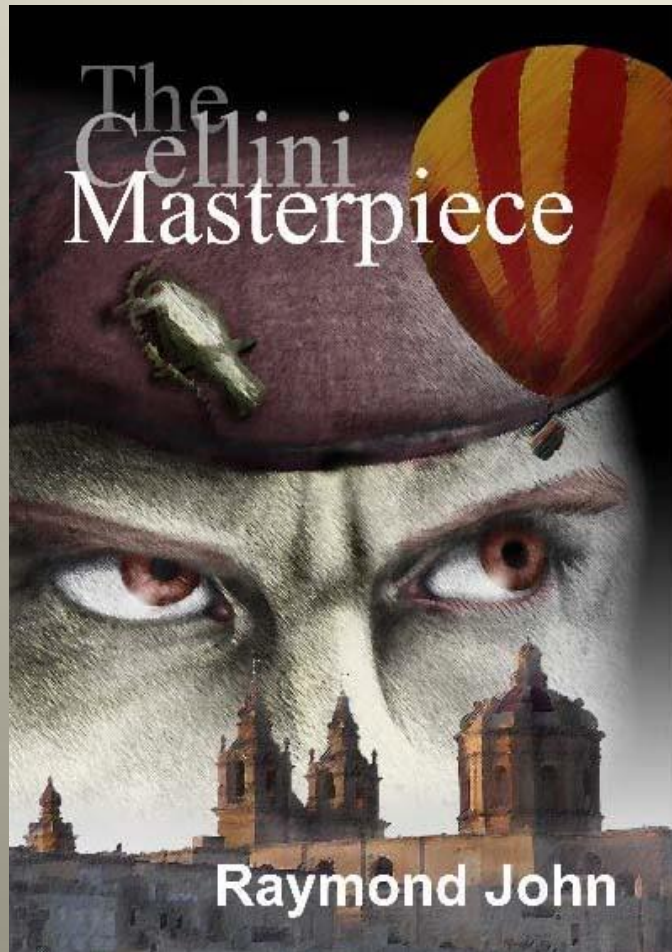
Somerset Maugham wrote:

- There are three rules for writing the novel.
Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.

Maybe if I channel Lew Wallace?



It took 40 years, but ...



At last, the novel gets reviewed in Malta

56 ■ 15 May 2005 ■ The Malta Independent on Sunday

Malta as Ground Zero in new book

Noel Grima

Malta as the Ground Zero of the Mediterranean. Fanciful? In this day of international terrorism nothing is too fanciful or impossible at all.

The Cellini Masterpiece is the title of a new thriller by Raymond John.

As should be done with all good thrillers, any undue revelation of details or conclusions will mar the excitement of reading it.

But a Maltese reviewer can be pardoned for noticing the details: in this international intrigue there is international terrorism focused on Malta, but there is also a convoluted political scene with the prime minister, Antony Farrugia, who is taken as hostage by the terrorists, the head of the armed forces, Brigadier Borg-Olivier, Cardinal Vella the Bishop of Malta, and scheming nobleman Lorenzo Cornacchia who lives in Borgiswed Palace in Mdina with dungeons and secret passages leading outside the bastions.

There is more, but only this much can be said. Come November a huge part of Mr John's finale will come alive, hopefully with equally positive outcomes.

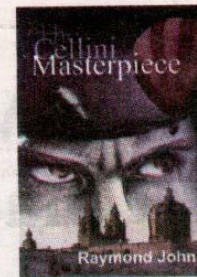
Raymond John is a historian and a dealer in

collectibles. As a retired military intelligence specialist, he is familiar with the strategies and weapons used in the story.

His life-long love for Malta grew from a childhood stamp collection and led to research, visits and friendships with many Maltese both in America and in Malta.

This has paid off handsomely in the book. The early chapters show a keen ear and eye for what is very normal for us Maltese but completely strange and foreign for foreigners here: the atmosphere in the sleazy one star hotel in Sliema and the strange life specimens that inhabit the environs. Fortunately for the book's hero, Rick Olsen, and for us Maltese, however, the taxi drivers are not portrayed in a bad light, even if a girl taxi driver (an impossibility in Malta) is the heroine. At the other end of the spectrum, Arabs are everywhere in Malta and no one really knows what they are doing, the book seems to say.

The Cellini Masterpiece is available from Agius & Agius in Valletta



Great reviews ...

lifestyle

Times of Malta timesofmalta.com

home n features n style n health n motoring n culture n travel n theatre n music n books n films

May 27, 2007



search □ Mestyle

The island that refuses to be small

THE CELLINI MASTERPIECE

by Raymond John

North Star, St Cloud, Minnesota, pp461, ISBN: 0-87839-233-5

by Charles Flores

Many people marvel at the overwhelming occurrence of Malta and its people in the annals of European history. They maintain that, according to sound per size ratio, the place is too small to merit all this attention. But writers and artists of different nationalities have, over the centuries, been intrigued by the enthralling East-Meets-West ambience of these islands, and we have rightly and only too gleefully accepted it.

Books with a Malta setting abound, many one of them easily forgettable and certainly not all of them complimentary, but some are popular and continue to attract interest for the historical and cultural richness of the Maltese islands. There have also been works making the most of our innate political prowess. David Niven in his reminiscences *The Moon's a Balloon* and *Bring on the Empty Horses* did not particularly like it, Jan Morris in her *Pax Britannica* trilogy beautifully acknowledged it and Frederic Mullally in his *The Malta Conspiracy* fully exploited it. **The Cellini Masterpiece**, written by Raymond John (pen name of John Anderson) fuels this fascination with Malta in a most entertaining way. It leaves you in no doubt the author is highly familiar with the island.

In this work, he masterfully combines the quest for a good story with the need to plant it in the fertile depths of international intrigue and major terrorism. The result is an absorbing thriller that would have been as good minus the Malta connection. That it has it is more proof of the enduring attractions we so often tend to take for granted. The main character in the story, Rick Olsen, a former Renaissance scholar and "infomaniac" who now restores prairie in Minnesota, rushes to Malta to help his brother Stef but finds himself entangled in a web of international intrigue with terrorists, gangsters and ancient conspiracies.

Raymond John skillfully spins out a fast-moving story that highlights various other characters, foremost among them Caterina Borg, a beautiful young Maltese philanthropist and taxi driver who becomes Rick's guide, translator and invaluable liaison to the Maltese underworld. For the uninitiated, by the way, there is a Maltese underworld and there will always be one.

Then there are Josefina Grech, Caterina's great aunt, and Bartolomeo Cornacchia, who was the powerful but shady 16th century noble and scion of the Cornacchia Shipping Empire. Alchemist, cryptographer and foresworn heretic, Bartolomeo was also a world traveller and a patron of the renowned goldsmith, Benvenuto Cellini. And hey presto, you have a great mystery going over an unknown **Cellini masterpiece**, the Aegis Dei, and the possibility of it containing some forbidden knowledge.

Bartolomeo's present-day descendant, Lorenzo, a gifted artist but a somewhat loony politician, and Marija, his glamorous and scheming wife, both zoom straight into the whole adventure with much colour and thunder. But it's Rick, the American, of course, who is the hero. He has to contend with the question of the forbidden knowledge hidden in the Cellini work that, wonder of wonders, has been lost for more than half a century, while trying to save his kidnapped brother. What begins as a rescue mission soon turns into a harrowing adventure and a world-threatening battle of wits with an international terrorist in, yes, you've guessed it, the ancient streets of Malta. Needless to say, the cool Rick also finds time for an unexpected romance.

Mr John's captivating style of writing and the balanced mixture of fact with fiction firmly put Malta on the growing list of books that have become known as "sons of The Da Vinci Code". It is, no doubt, yet another over-sized advert for the island that refuses to be small.

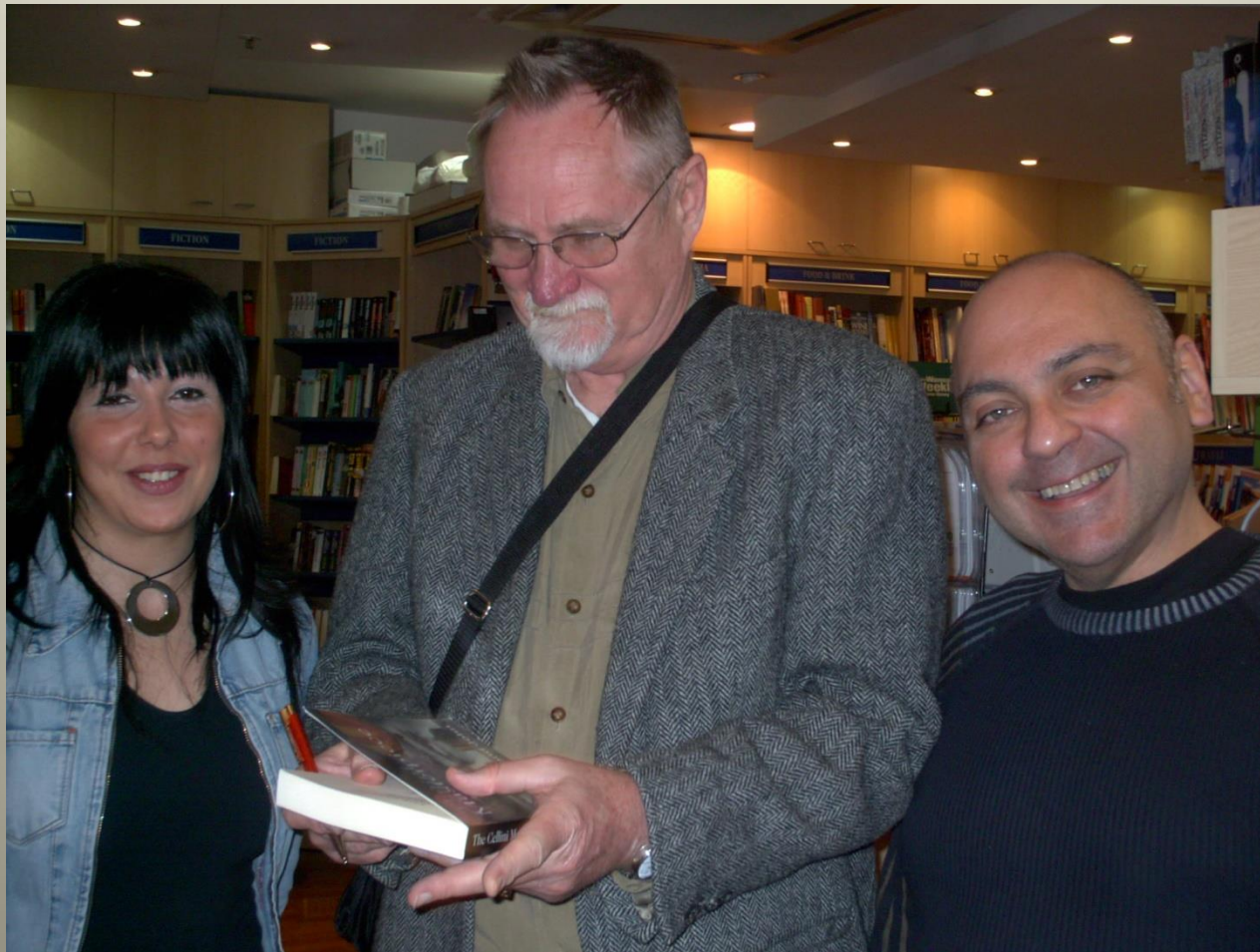
• Mr Flores is a writer, journalist and broadcaster. His poetry has appeared in Arabic, Italian and Serbo-Croat. In 1996 he won the Commonwealth Short Story Competition for the Europe/Canada region.

• A review copy of this title was supplied by Agenda Bookshop.

▶ No comic relief



Promotion tour ... book signing at Valletta book store



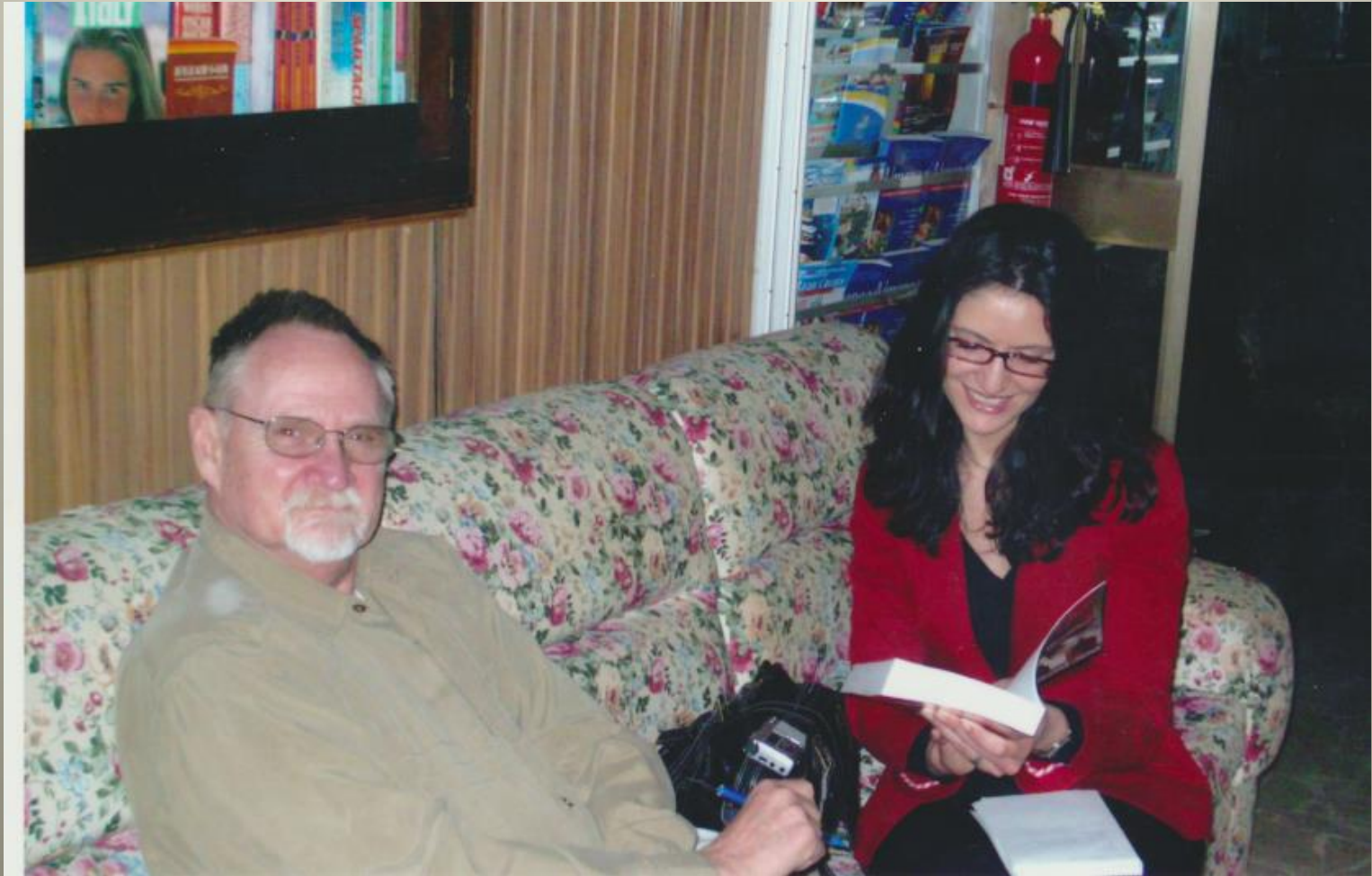
John appears on TV with the book



And is interviewed by glamorous radio reporter!



And newspaper reporter!



So ...

Why Malta?

Somerset Maugham said it best:

- **Sometimes men have a nostalgia for a home they know not. They are strangers at their birthplace** They may spend their whole lives aliens among their kindred and remain aloof among the only scenes they have ever known.

- Perhaps it is this sense of strangeness that sends men far and wide in the search for something permanent, to which they may attach themselves. Perhaps some deep-rooted atavism urges the wanderer back to lands which his ancestors left in the dim beginnings of history.

**Sometimes a man hits upon a place to which he mysteriously feels that he belongs. Here is the home he sought, and he will settle amid scenes that he has never seen before, among men he has never known, as though they were familiar to him from his birth.
Here at last he finds rest.**

Want to meet us in Malta?

John and Evelyn Anderson

mnjanco@yahoo.com

612-377-2162



And now ...

The Shameless Commerce Division

- **The Cellini Masterpiece**
- **Mix, Match & Murder**
- **Who Done Houdini?**

- ***Autographed, \$15 each***

Have stories, will travel

612-377-2162

Book club appearances



How I remember my Malta



Dani Cassar