



MerHbA

Maltese Historical Association (Aust) Inc
(Għaqda Storika Maltija (Awstralija) Inkorporata)

No 6/2012

JULY Newsletter

This Month's Program:

(Presentation by Jonathan Hili)

"Ambivalence:

Malta And The French Revolution"

During the 18th century Malta not only shared a close diplomatic relationship with France but was inextricably associated with this kingdom economically, culturally and politically. Many people on the island spoke a French Langue, wore French fashions or depended on France for the wealth they enjoyed. So when the earthquake of the French



Bastille Day celebrated in Valletta on 14th July 1798

Revolution broke out in 1789 we should not be surprised to find that Malta was not left unshaken. Some viewed the dramatic changes as signs of hope, while others remained wary. How did the relationship between Malta and the Revolution develop during those early days, when events in France offered so much promise? What reaction did the Maltese have to the execution of the Louis XVI and the radicalisation of the Revolution after 1792, when the very economic life of the island was seriously threatened by the new regime? Why did the French Government, after rejecting a number of

proposals, eventually agree to Napoleon's invasion and conquest of Malta in 1797, and what consequence did this have for the Maltese people?

About Jonathan Hili

Jonathan is a 31 year-old secondary school teacher. Although born and raised in Melbourne, Jonathan has been to Malta several times. His parents migrated to Australia in the early 1970's. His father Mario came from Hamrun and travelled to Australia with the rest of his family. His mother Rita hails from Nadur and immigrated to Australia independently.

Jonathan is currently completing a Bachelor's Degree in Theology and Philosophy at the Australian Catholic University. His previous education experience includes studies in History and Sociology at La Trobe University and secondary school education at Melbourne Uni. Jonathan's main areas of historical interest are 18th Century French History; Han Chinese History and general Church History. He is also the secretary of the San Gaetan Association in Melbourne, which his grandfather, Tony Hili co-founded with three other friends in 1978.

Venue: **Maltese Community Centre**

477 Royal Parade, Parkville

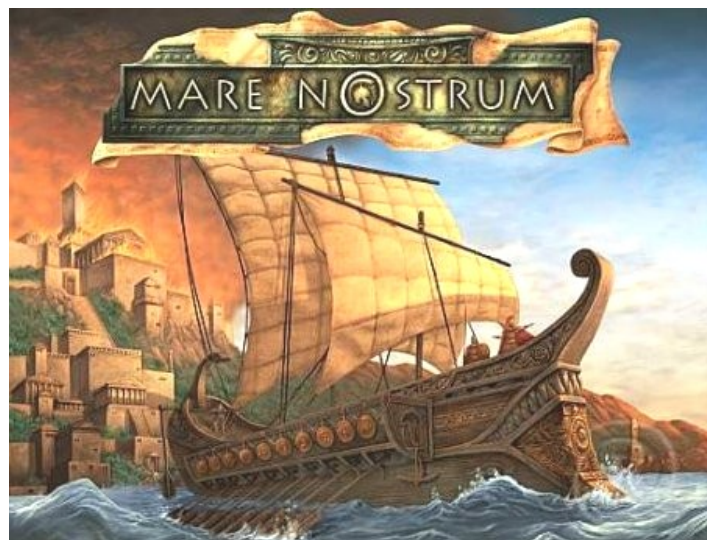
Time: 7.30pm

Date: Tuesday 17th July, 2012.

Retrospective

“Mare Nostrum: Our Sea”

(Prepared By: Agnes Cauchi)



In his talk, Prof Maurice Cauchi emphasized the role of the Mediterranean Sea on the history of Malta. Ancient civilisations followed wind and sea currents to travel to and fro every part of the Mediterranean. He started by expressing surprise that out of the thousands of islands in the Mediterranean, no one has had such an illustrious history as Malta. Most prominently is the presence of prehistoric temples which are the oldest above-ground buildings in the world. The significance of these mammoth efforts, from a population which could hardly number more than 10,000 persons, is still difficult to explain. He also touched on Phoenician/Carthaginian business which criss-crossed the Mediterranean, and involved Malta. Again this could be explained by its position half-way between Rome and Carthage, which made it mandatory of the victorious city to control this lynchpin island. He touched on the difficulties of travel in those days when one had to depend on wind and current to get anywhere, explaining that what took a few days with a good wind might take several weeks in a bad one. The living conditions of the slaves who rowed the ships, as well as the sailors who manned them, could not have been very salubrious. Particularly so when the sea became infested with slave traders who considered piracy on land or sea to be a legitimate way of earning a crust. He touched on the role that quarantine – always a problem of high priority in an island depending on

commerce with all countries around the world. The Lazarett played a very significant role in reducing the risk of plagues being imported into the island.

Finally, he recalled the role that Malta played throughout history, starting with the several sea-battles that occurred around Malta in the middle ages, and ending with the last battle of all, that took place in World War 2. He took the original approach of describing the thinking of the enemy, as has become clear through the diary of Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini's Foreign Secretary (and son-in-law who he eventually had killed). It would appear that by June 1942 it was all but decided that the Axis were to invade Malta: but for a lack of fuel this would have been the case.

The evening came to a close after several members of the audience expressed their views about issues raised by the talk

Interesting Websites

Check these out:

- 1] www.malteseabroad.org - the website of the Federation of Maltese Living Abroad, formed following the Convention of Maltese Living Abroad held in Malta in 2010.
- 2] <http://www.maltain360.com/#110001632> - this Heritage Malta website takes you on a virtual tour of a number of historically significant sites (courtesy of Joe Borg).
- 3] www.maltagc.net.au - This website dedicated to the people of the Maltese Islands to whom the British monarch, King George VI, awarded the George Cross seventy years ago on 15 April 1942.
- 4] <http://www.maltain360.com/#110001632> - this Heritage Malta website takes you on a virtual tour of a number of historically significant sites (courtesy of Joe Borg).
- 5] <http://www.maltamigration.com> - The aim of the Malta Migration Museum website is to collect information relating to issues of interest to migrants and migration. It will continue to grow to provide the most comprehensive collection of such information.
- 6] www.mha.org.au - The official Maltese Historical Association website to be launched this month
- 7] <http://www.maltahistory.info> - This site is dedicated to the fascinating history of the islands of **Malta, Gozo and Comino**. It provides a lawyer's perspective of the history of Malta describing the conditions of the Maltese people throughout the ages

Hondoq ir-Rummien Bay, Gozo

Hondoq ir-Rummien, the coastline below the village of Qala is dotted with traditional salt pans, some of which are still actively used to harvest salt throughout the summer months. On this coast is a small cove, Hondoq ir-Rummien (which in English means, Pomegranate Moat), which is popular with snorkelers because of its deep and clear water and the small caves at water level. Access to the sea is from bathing ladders. The cove has good views over Comino. There is also a small white sand beach sheltered by a small promontory on the south/west side.



Hondoq ir-Rummien, is a beautiful coastal area and bay in Qala Gozo, and is one of the few remaining tracts of open countryside left in the Maltese Islands. The sea in this area boasts some of the cleanest, clearest water in all of Malta and Gozo, attracting locals and divers alike. An area of outstanding scenic beauty, it is also a vital habitat for dwindling communities of rare plants.



Hondoq ir-Rummien, is in the area stretching from the depth of the quarry and eastwards along the rocky cliff side. At Hondoq ir-Rummien there still is the sea-water distillation plant, which was constructed there in the 1960's against the will of Gozitans and at an astronomical expense by the then Government. The plant was never finished due to a change in Government in 1971, and has remained in total disuse ever since.

Apart from an ideal swimming zone, the bay is also renowned for diving, especially for beginners. During summer evenings it is very common for local families to stay late in Hondoq to relax and enjoy the cool summer breezes.

The main part of the bay is not sandy but a mixture of medium to fine pebbles. The best bit is a beautiful little inlet that can be found just round the corner on the side of the natural rocks. called "ta' Bamberejn" by Locals. This area is sandwiched between a natural rocky beach on the right and a rather ugly man made concrete jetty on the left. Apart from the clear waters that one usually finds in the bay, perhaps another attraction this bay has to offer is the view of Comino island & the Blue Lagoon when driving down towards the bay and from the bay itself.



GENERAL NOTICE

1. MHA membership fees for 2012/2013 are now due. Please see Mario Bonnici at the next event or mail cheque to The Treasurer 59 Binnak Drive, Watsonia, Vic 3087. These fees are important to the MHA as membership fees are our main source of funds. Donations are accepted as well.
2. The MHA is organising a group for the 11:00 am guided session of Napoleon: Revolution to Empire on Friday 31st August. The excursion's viability depends on numbers. We expect the cost for entry and guide to be about \$30. The price will be worked out as soon as we firm up the numbers. If you would like to join us please ring Lewis Zammit ASAP on 0438 091 147.
3. The MCCV Executive Committee are organising a luncheon on Sunday 22nd July at the Parkville Centre as a fundraiser for the Bishop Joe Grech Fund. Joan Drago will be the guest singer. For more details please ring the centre.
4. The Home Visits Group of Volunteers of the MCCV requires both male and female volunteers to visit elderly Maltese. This group is also making up a list of those people who would wish to be visited at home by members of this group. Please ring the centre on 9387 8922 for more information.
5. John Gordon Kirby painted a picture of the Grand Harbour while he was in Malta in the 1950's. Please visit the MCCV website to have a look.
6. Maurice Blackburn Solicitors encourage all those members of the Maltese community who had contact with asbestos in the past to contact them. These solicitors are keeping a register of people who have come in contact with asbestos.



A big Merhba


To our new members:

Daryl Harrison
Laurence (Dr) Galea
Matthew Borg

Prospective members:

All Welcome

You are always welcome to attend any of our lectures and obtain a hard copy of the membership form from Mario Bonnici. Or go to our website www.mha.org.au & download application form.



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**Open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9.00am to 1.00pm
and 2.00pm to 5.00pm**

Uffiċċju Rappreżentattiv
L-Ewwel Bank Rappreżentattiv Malti fl-Awstralja

WANTED

The Maltese Historical Association is looking for sponsors from within and outside the Maltese Community. The role of a sponsor is to offer some financial assistance in support of our activities. In return the Sponsor will be given an advertising space in our Newsletter and given mention at all our events throughout the year. It is a worthwhile cause in helping the MHA to continue the good work within the Maltese Community. For more details about the MHA please e-mail Frances Bonnici (President) at [mfbonnici@bigpond.com]

Thanking you in advance.

