



# MELITA



## NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF VALLETTA

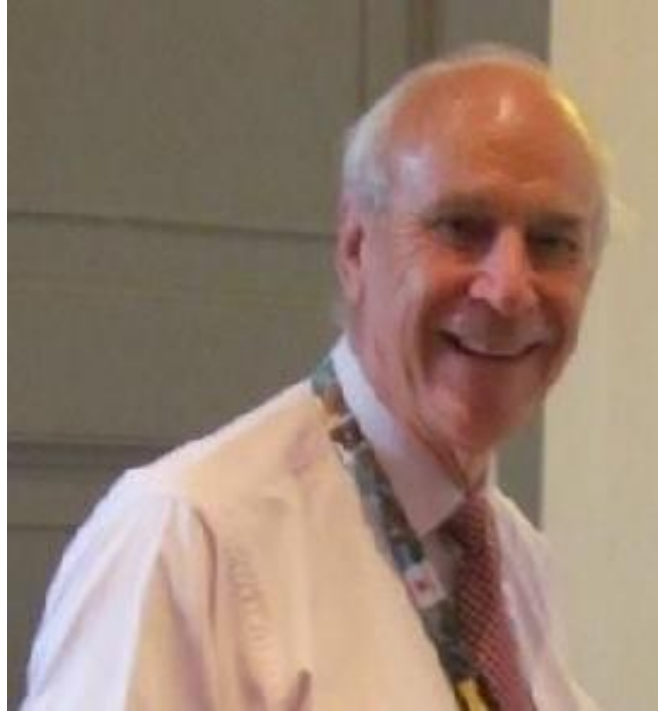
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Number 38

March 2024



*View of Pieta showing the Garden of the Villa Frere*



***A Message from Chairman Graham***

Firstly, please accept our apologies for the late issue of Melita. Apart from having a very busy few weeks, Anne has had some difficulty in getting enough news and interesting pieces together to make up a newsletter worth reading!

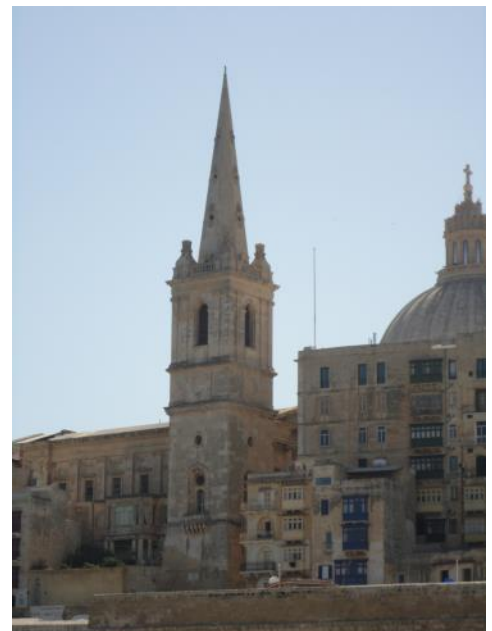


Following an excellent and most interesting talk in January on Goodwood House and the history of the family of the Dukes of Richmond, which was given by our Secretary, Brenda Gay (who is a tour guide at Goodwood), we have not found it easy to bring talks to you for February or March, as everyone seems so busy. However, we are hoping to arrange some interesting ones for the coming months. So watch out for (hopefully) talks on the latest renovations of the Garden of the Villa Frere, on the history of St. Paul's Pro Cathedral in Valletta, on Tangmere Aviation Museum, and on schools in Valletta, among other

topics. We will let you know about these nearer to the times when they will take place.

If you have any ideas of talks in which you would be interested, please let us know, and we will try to find some good speakers. Also, if you know of any speakers who would be willing to talk to the association, either live or by Zoom, please put us in touch with them.

We hope that, later in the year, we might arrange another group visit to Valletta, so if you think you may be interested, please let us know.



## **Letters from Malta—Graham Pound writes of his hobby**

One of my hobbies involves collecting stamps and postal history of Malta and you might like to see a few of my favourite early letters.

A letter from Malta of 1812 to Lady Charlotte Lindsay, Brook Street, London, one of the most prestigious addresses in the city, from her sister Lady Ann who is currently on the Grand Tour in Greece. They have just arrived at the Isthmus of Corinth where they see the statues from Elgin being packed up.

**“They are the most curious as well as the most perfectly preserved marbles I ever saw and I am inclined to think they are finely executed. The heads are almost all perfect and some of the noses. In short the whole school of Elgin is in this one collection. I desire you will make the people of England buy them at any price for I look upon it as a national concern of the most importance”.**

Subsequent investigation shows that Lady Charlotte & Lady Ann are the daughters of Lord North, the Prime Minister, and Charlotte is also Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Caroline, wife of King George IV.

**Now I know why we have the Elgin Marbles!!**

A letter from Malta, December 1816 to his mother in Russell Square, London, from her son who is on the Grand Tour.

**“I arrived here from Corfu on 5<sup>th</sup> of the month and Adellina was delivered of a little girl on the following morning, to be named Adele. I intend that she should be a Protestant, that is of the Church of England. You of course will be the God Mother. We will shortly go on to Naples or Leghorn and return in the spring.”**

**Any mother must have wanted to know “how much did she weigh?, what colour are her eyes?, did she have any hair?, how frustrating having to wait until the spring.....**

A letter from Pliny Fisk in Malta to his sister in Massachusetts, Boston, USA

**“I often think of your spiritual concerns & I was disappointed that in your last letter you said nothing about the state of your mind. I had hoped to hear that you found in your own feelings some evidence that your peace was made with God. Is it so or not? Have you seen the Glory of God? Have you felt the love of Christ? Has your heart yielded? Is it broken & contrite? Do you know what communion with God means? Have you given yourself to Christ in a covenant never to be forgotten or dissolved? Do you love the bible? Do you love to pray? Do you truly love the Sabbath, public worship & the children of God? Do you hate sin & long to be free from it? Is it more hateful and burdensome to you than anything else? Have you seen the vanity of the world and renounced it? Do you prefer the love of Christ above all the world can give? These questions dear sister are worthy of your most serious attention. Do you pass them by lightly? Examine them as in the fear of God. Why do not my sisters Taggart & Furbush write to me? “**

**I think we might guess the answer to that question.....**

**In case you have forgotten to pay your annual subscription, here is a reminder from Membership Secretary, David Ross. If you have paid or are an honorary member, please ignore this request.**

I would like to remind you that membership fees for 2024 were due on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2024, I would be grateful if you could now pay them. If you have not already done so.

They are:

\*Single £10, Family £15, Life Single £100, Life Family £150

### **Payment methods**

1. Cheque made payable to **Friends of Valletta** and posted to me at 70 Worcester Road, Chichester PO19 5EB
2. BACS to the account:

**Friends of Valletta**

**Sort code 60-03-08 (NatWest)**

**Account Number 81138695**

Please use a reference: **Your surname Memfee 24** eg RossMemfee24.

\*Please email me to let me know you have paid.

[davidlesross@hotmail.com](mailto:davidlesross@hotmail.com)

**NB This is our new bank account. The old one is now CLOSED. Please do not send money to the old account.**

**If you previously paid by standing order to the old HSBC account please cancel your standing order.**

**Life and Honorary Life members need take no action their membership will be automatically updated as will a few members who paid for 2024 in advance.**

**\*Please let me know by email or phone if you have paid into our account by BACS. This will allow me to update my records.**

**If you do not wish to continue membership please inform me.**

Thank you. David Ross

**Malta revisited—David and Janet Ross remember and compare**

We returned to Malta after a break of three years. We were interested in what changes had occurred in the time we had been absent and of course how our friends were faring post Covid. These notes are a brief attempt to give our impressions of the changes we saw.

**Arrival and departure**

We had an easy flight - 2 hours 40 minutes. Possibly the fastest we have made it from Gatwick to Luqa. Of course, post Brexit, we couldn't use the passport queue for EU nationals and had to have our passports stamped with date of entry. Once through this, the route to the baggage collection had altered, missing out the view of awaiting greeters. We had many times when we lived in Malta watched visitors descending to collect their baggage, and this had been our first confirmation that family or friends had actually arrived.



*Photograph Alessandro Crusco*

Once through baggage collection we went to pick up our hire car. The hire car parking place had changed into a more elaborate multi-storey, but we didn't get to see this, as our hirer had elected not to use this new facility because of cost! Instead the paperwork and handover were done very speedily in a parking bay in the main car park, thus costing only the price of a short stay park.



*Photograph Rash Rahman*

Once outside the airport the extent of roadworks was immediate. The whole approach to the airport was being altered. We fortunately had a good idea of where we were heading, so managed to navigate our way to Qormi and then head to the north of the island. The return to the airport was a different matter, and presented a much more difficult problem. Having taken advice from friends we elected to return our hire car at the hotel and use a

taxi. This proved to be a good decision. The approach to Luqa takes a diversion away from the airport and then turns to approach through Gudja. Here an easily missed left could send you around the detour again. Stressful when you are trying to catch a flight. The taxi drivers of course are well aware of the route, so despite heavy traffic we made the airport in good time.

**Taxis**

Competition is now rife amongst taxi firms. When we lived in Malta it was served by local firms based in each town. In addition the notorious airport taxis were based ready at the arrivals entrance and were controlled by a kiosk which issued you a voucher whose cost was determined by your destination town. The tariffs were regulated and fair. However we were caught on our first independent visit by a driver who intercepted us before the kiosk

and we naively got in and paid through the nose at our destination! Never again.

Now National companies have set up covering all of the island. We were familiar with eCabs which had been set up a few years ago, but they now had competition in the form of Bolt and Uber. They work on apps which when downloaded to your phone know where you are. You select your destination and a price and time of arrival are given, you then confirm if you want the taxi. We only ever had to wait a few minutes for a taxi to arrive and the licence plate number and driver's name is sent to you along with the time the taxi will arrive. We used Bolt throughout our stay with only one minor hiccup. The tip for the driver is at your discretion.

### **The doctor**

Unfortunately David was unwell with an irritating cough during our stay. In post COVID times this can prove embarrassing when out or visiting friends. Having found which pharmacy was open on a Sunday morning we bought a COVID testing kit. The test proved negative. On contacting a recommended doctor she couldn't see him, being ill herself. Doctors are usually based at pharmacies so the next step on the Monday was to contact a nearby pharmacy and we were able to get an appointment in a couple of hours' time. Wow!

The doctor listened to what David had to say and then thanked us for taking a COVID test before visiting. His diagnosis was that David was allergic to building dust. Apparently this is a common complaint in Autumn and Spring. As we know Malta is a huge building site. We were a little sceptical over this diagnosis as we had lived for seven years in Malta eleven years previously without this problem. However after taking the prescribed antihistamine medication and lo and behold the cough departed.

Up to this point the medical services were as we used to but we then got the bill. We were used to 10 euro for a consultation, it was now 25 euro! We regarded this as a small price to pay to see a doctor almost immediately and have the problem solved.

These are just three of the many changes we encountered on our post COVID return to Malta.





**FRIENDS OF VALLETTA**  
City of Chichester - Valletta Capital of Malta



Invite you to a talk On

## **Exciting Updates on the Garden of the Villa Frere**

by

**Jo Tyndale Biscoe**

At

**Chichester City Council  
House**

On

**Saturday 20th April  
2.30pm British Time**



**A voluntary donation of £5  
or 5 Euros is requested and this will be donated to the project.**

**We hope to record this talk so that members in Malta and those not able  
to get to Chichester can hear it.**

**After hearing Jo, we will partake of light refreshments.**



## Possible Future Events

We are actively pursuing some possible talks for the next few months. These possibilities include :

**Schools in Valletta**

**Tangmere Aviation Museum**

**Valletta's Defences**

**History of the Anglican Cathedral in Valletta**

## ***Help Needed***

Sadly, our present website manager has become far too busy with all the other responsibilities that he has. We thank him for all that he's done over the past few years.

We are in great need of a new website manager who can keep our website updated and also put recorded talks onto it. We have a backlog of recorded talks which members want to hear—maybe for the first time or to hear again. However, the committee does not have anyone who can do this. Anyone willing and able to volunteer can either be co-opted to the committee if they wish to, or need not be a committee member if they prefer not to. Please come forward and help.

### Committee Members

#### President

The Right Worshipful The Mayor of Chichester  
Councillor Craig Gershater

Chairman           Graham Pound

Vice Chairman    Anne Scicluna

Hon. Secretary    Brenda Gay

Hon. Treasurer    Richard New

Membership Sec. David Ross

Committee         Rhys Chant

David Moore

Lindy Purchase

David Vassallo

Melita Editor     Anne Scicluna

### ***Articles Wanted***

If you have an article which could go into a future edition of Melita, please send them to the Editor (details below). Recipes, nostalgia, experiences, funny stories, interesting facts, etc. Pictures and photographs also welcome as they make articles even more interesting. Please let fellow members share your enjoyment of Malta—and help continue the newsletter.





