

ATTARD

THE LIFE OF A MALTESE CASALE



Henry Frendo

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Author's Preface

Three main reasons convinced me of the need to write this book, and I am glad that my colleagues on the Attard Local Council were of the same mind and entrusted me with the task.

My first immersion into Attard's history was provoked by the mistaken exclusion of Sant'Anton, the palace and gardens, from its historic confines, when local council boundaries were first drawn out by the central government authorities. That offended every acclimatised resident of Attard, as well as my own childhood memories, when going to Attard from Floriana meant a frolic and a picnic, feeding the swans and watching monkey acrobatics. Another hiccup had been the exclusion of a red quadrant from Attard's traditional coat-of-arms by a heraldic expert not conversant with the simmering strengths of local history. Both these inadvertant errors were later rectified, but not before or without a sustained engagement in battle, armed by the pen of course, not the sword. Another instigation to get started on at least a modest pioneering work of this kind came from the constant quizzing I was having to put up with about Attard from several new colleagues and friends at the Council of Europe as well as professional contacts I was beginning to make in other countries when on mission. Having headed Malta's Delegation to the Strasbourg-based Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe since its inception in 1994, I became much involved in this sphere of activity nationally and internationally. But what the Council of Europe always recognises and emphasises above all is the local provenance and the electoral base of members of the European Congress. In participation lists, speeches and reports I therefore invariably carried behind me, like a tail, the tag: "Mayor of Attard". Those who hardly knew where Malta was knew still less about Attard, but even among those who had come to Malta they would mostly remember the seaside tourist resorts or the casino, Valletta or perhaps Mdina, rather than a place like Attard, unless they happened to have stayed at the Corinthia Palace Hotel or been stopped by their tour coach at Sant'Anton for a walk-about in the gardens. Almost without exception, there was never a profile of the place or its inhabitants in their memories of Malta. While I was often presented with books or booklets by other Mayors or Councillors about their respective municipalities, I was never in a position to reciprocate such a gesture, nor of course could any of my Council colleagues if faced by a similar situation. The third and perhaps gravest reason for this little book however was the difficulty which many residents have had to identify the areas which made up Attard or to know where many of the streets themselves were located or what they were called. Often enough, for example, they would be unaware of the different areas that made up the place, and altogether unfamiliar with the names of the streets. Naturally my own work commitment in the context of the Local Council was itself an enriching experience on a human, operational and indeed an historical level. I too was on a learning curve, so I felt increasingly obliged and propelled to share that growth with fellow residents and citizens, but also to help

Attard get out of its shell and be better known and appreciated, as it well deserved to be.

In compiling data for this book I have relied on the generous assistance of so many people, mostly Attard residents. Too many to mention here, but I must at least list alphabetically all those who have kindly agreed to submit written notes, articles or pamphlets, or respond to queries of one kind or another. These have included, among others, Ms Joyce Abela, Mr. Edward Agius, Mr. Franco Azzopardi, Mr. Nicholas Azzopardi, Fra Andrew Bertie, Mr. Roger Vella Bonavita, Dr. Giovanni Bonello, Mr. Lino Bonnici, Mr. Joe Borg, Ms Mary Doris Borg, Mr. Norman Borg, Dr. Mario Buhagiar, Ms. Maria Carmela Camilleri, Mr. Charlie Camilleri, Dr. Paul Cassar, Prof. J.J. Cremona, Mr. Maurice Degiorgio, Sour Anna M. Demanuele, Mr. Justice Franco Depasquale, Mr. Arthur Dimech, Mr. Carmelo Dingli, Mr. Mario Ellul, Mr. Michael Ellul, Rev. Carmelo Farrugia, Mr. Paul Fenech, Mr. Patrick Galea, Ms Maureen German, Mr. Herman Grech, Mr. Reuben Grima, His Eminence the Apostolic Nuncio Mgr. Jose' Sebastian Laboa, Mr. Carmel Mallia, Mr. John Manduca, His Excellency President Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, Mr. Joseph Muscat, Ms Evelyn Pullicino, Mr. Anton Quintano, Dr. Joseph R. Saliba, Mr. Tony Sammut, Mr. Keith Sciberras, Mr. Michael C. Spiteri, Dr. Donald Sultana, Mr. Tony Terribile, Mr. Gerald de Trafford, Dr. Horatio C.R. Vella, Ms Josianne Vella Bardon, Mr. Abel Zammit, Mr. Frankie Zammit and Mr. Winston Zammit.

I am most grateful to all the elected members of the Attard Local Council for their support, and for agreeing that the Council pay the printing costs. I am specifically grateful, for their local knowledge and contacts, to the Deputy Mayor, Mr. Gerald Borg, and to Councillor Joseph Mifsud, both of whom were born and raised in Attard. In thanking all the Council's members of staff I must reserve a special thank you for another 'native child of the village', our clerk Ms Marica Mifsud, who also typed in many additions and corrections to my draft texts.

I am much indebted to the members of the Editorial Board for their technical advice and constant encouragement, especially Mr. Lionel Cassola, Ms Tanya Muscat and Ms Christine Vella Borda who also did the setting, while the first of these also took most of the photographs appearing here. Others were taken by the photographers Mr. Tony Mangion and Mr. Gino Galea as well as by Mr. Joseph Stellini from the office, and myself.

Finally I wish heartily to thank all those officials of Attard's constituted bodies and their assistants who responded to the call for lists of their respective club presidents so that these could be included as appendices in a comprehensive manner between two covers for the first time. Naturally, I assume full responsibility for any oversights or errors in the text.

Henry Frendo
Attard
10/12/97

ATTARD

The Life of a Maltese Casale

In the centre of the main island of Malta, on the slopes down from the country's old capital of Mdina [Notabile] to the 'new' sixteenth century capital, Valletta, lies the gently slumbering, romantic village of Attard, traditionally famous for its citrus orchards and gardens. Hence its motto: "I perfume the air with my blossoms" (*florigera rosis halo*).¹

As a municipality with its own local government structure since 1994, Attard covers a surface area of about seven square kilometres and has a growing population nearing 10,000. It comprises to its north, on the Mdina and Mosta side, the flat expanse known as Ta' Qali; and below it, in the direction of the village core, the area known as Ta' l-Idward joining with Misrah Kola, across from the valleys of Wied San Martin, Wied Incita and Wied Irmiedi, on the Zebbug side. Down to its West, close to Wied is-Sewda on the Qormi side, is an older part known as Tax-Xarolla and as Taht ir-Rahal; while to its East, up to Tal-Mirakli chapel on the Lija side, is the relatively large zone called Ta' Fgieni, which borders on the village core with its seventeenth century parish church. South of this is the Sant'Anton quarter, deriving its name from the historic palace and botanic gardens of Sant'Antonio, which have long been a symbol of Attard.

Attard is mostly residential now but it comprises a good part which is still agricultural, even rural; another part is recreational parkland with open gardens and national sports facilities. Although not a market town in olden times like Zebbug or Birkirkara, Attard now hosts a thriving 'national' vegetable market known as 'il-Pitkalija' on the edge of Ta' Qali, several crafts shops, and a handful of small factories of recent origin. The Public Transport Authority and the Malta Financial Services Centre are headquartered in the Attard area, which is also serviced by supermarkets, banks, various confectioneries, a leading garage, shops and stores, salons, clinics. In terms of population, Attard used to be the smallest of the 'Three Villages' - the cluster of Attard, Lija and Balzan, in the very centre of the main island - but it is now by far the largest of them.

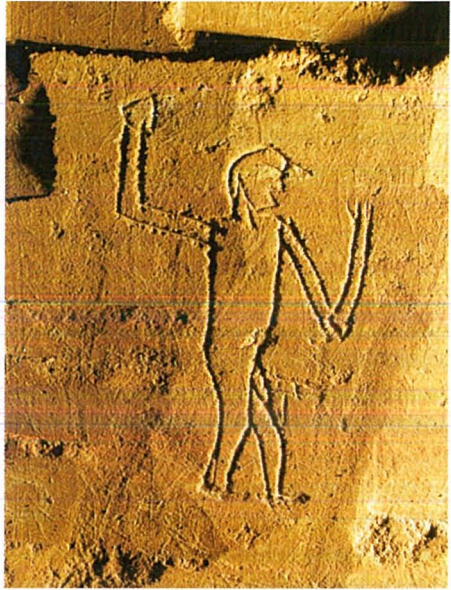
Few realise what an "old" place Attard actually is. Burial sites and remains excavated in Attard date back to prehistoric times, and go as far back as 3,000 years B.C. These are prehistoric, Hellenistic and Roman. A bell-shaped rock tomb discovered in 1910 at the site known as Buqana (west of the Ta' Qali reservoir) has been assigned to the Zebbug, Mgarr and Ggantija phases of the Copper Age. Writing in 1928, the Maltese archaeologist Sir Themistocles Zammit, who supervised the excavation, noted that the deposit in which the burials lay was dark red in colour, due to being soaked in what he called 'iron

ochre'. This was the principal cause of the tomb being reported, since the workmen who found it thought the bones were 'lying in fresh blood'. Red ochre occurred in other burial deposits in the Maltese Islands, for example at the Hypogeum in Tarxien; it was a normal accompaniment of burial in prehistoric times in Malta, as elsewhere. The 'Buqana' rock tomb of Attard however is especially important in Maltese archaeology for two reasons. It had an unusual shape: according to the English archaeologist J.D. Evans in his 1971 work, it is unique among Copper Age tombs. Moreover, apart from the gigantic Hal Saflieni Hypogeum, it was the first prehistoric burial chamber to be recognised in Malta. Sherds of Punic pottery and bones dating to that period were also found in this prehistoric well-tomb, indicating a secondary use of it at a later period. The primary burials consisted of remains of skeletons of several individuals of different ages, including at least three lower jaws; the accompanying pottery consisted of sherds representing fragments of at least twelve vessels. These sherds, illustrated in Zammit's 1928 work, are preserved in the National Museum (now called the National Museum of Archaeology) in Valletta.

A second noteworthy archaeological discovery in Attard whilst digging a trench for the laying of a sewer at Palm Square in Mosta Road in 1946 (at the bottom end of what is now Antonio Schembri Street) was that of a Phoenician rock-tomb. The entrance to the tomb was through a shaft 5 feet deep, 4 feet long and 3 feet wide, with its long axis lying in an East-West direction. Access to the burial chamber was gained through a rectangular opening, 2 feet 7 inches high and 3 feet wide cut on the northern side of the shaft at floor level. As the stone slab sealing the entrance was still in place, this tomb unlike others had not been rifled or damaged, although the burial chamber was almost completely filled with loam carried in by rain water (which has obviously been a persistent menace in this area). According to the National Museum's reports at the time, a hitherto unrecorded feature of interest in this 'Piazza Palma' tomb was the presence of a row of small blocks of stone placed end to end thus forming a low partition wall, 7 feet 8 inches long, 1 foot high and 9 inches wide, running longitudinally across the floor of the burial chamber throughout its entire length. A lamp-hole was cut in a corner of the chamber, quite close to its ceiling. In addition to the fragmentary remains of an adult male human skeleton, funerary earthenware objects recovered from here included a cinerary urn of a globular form, with a flat base, a short neck and two handles, measuring 16 inches in height and a maximum diameter of 11 inches; a lamp with two wicks; and a bowl 6 inches in diameter and 2 inches high.

In the mid-sixties two other finds, both of them Roman sites, were registered in Attard. One was a bell-shaped well in Notary Zarb Street, the bottom of which was cut to a perfect circle on a radius of 1.62 metres. A clayey deposit which covered the floor of the well yielded several sherds of Roman

jars. The other was a tomb, which had been broken into and rifled, at the Department of Agriculture reservoir site near Mount Carmel Hospital. The National Museum's Annual report for 1968 held that the features of this Attard tomb were worthy of note. The oval shaft had a low platform or step on one of its longer sides from which entry was provided into the chamber by an arched opening. Immediately behind this and parallel with it was a draining pit flanked by two shallow hollows, originally for round-based vessels to stand in; further in and beyond a narrow raised ledge, the chamber had a semi-circular plan with a low shelf.



The Hellenistic graffito unique to Malta discovered in a tomb chamber in Old Railway Track some years ago.

A most interesting discovery in Attard was that of some years ago when a Hellenistic tomb was excavated in Old Railway Track (behind the Corinthia Palace Hotel) at the private residence of Mr. Daniel Grima, who had first accidentally pierced the ceiling of a tomb chamber while preparing to plant a tree in his garden in 1989; there were in fact two chambers leading off the same shaft. The entrance to the chamber excavated in 1989 is cut through the northern side of the shaft. In a report on his 1991 excavation, which he further contextualized by detailed references to other archaeological sites in Attard, curator-archaeologist Reuben Grima identified as a particularly interesting feature of the latter chamber a graffito found on its east side, in a place which could have been purposely smoothed for it. Briefly, this depicts a figure of a naked man with raised hands and an erect phallus, probably a protective scare device against evil spirits or intruders. The only such representation ever found in the Maltese Islands, this graffito is now preserved in the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta.

Grima's description deserves recording textually:

Measuring 0.09m in height, the graffito is extremely simple, being made up almost exclusively of bold, straight strokes. It represents a male figure with a frontal torso and a profile head. The arms are shown raised at different angles. On the left hand, four vertical incisions represent individual fingers. A prominent but lightly incised closed curve on the head may be interpreted as an exaggerated frontal eye. Another lightly incised feature is a tumescent phallus. The legs are depicted laterally, the left foot being placed forward.



A late medieval dwelling in Triq il-Mithna, one of Attard's oldest streets.

The pottery found here suggests that the tomb was probably cut during the third century B.C. The scatter of sherds and skeletal remains discovered included two unabraded sherds in the shaft's upper surface, "one of the vessels being carried out was probably damaged in the shaft".² Sadly, our graffito's virile and threatening posture has not satisfied what may have been its desired end: the thieving hands of later years made away with the hidden treasures assigned to its guard in the burial chamber, save the graffito itself, which is now preserved at the National Museum of Archaeology.

As an established human settlement, on a continuing and evolving basis, Attard is at least six hundred years old. The militia list for 1419 shows that a number of residents of Casal Atardu were registered. The most common surname in the short list - that of five militia members - was Atardu. The name of the casale would thus derive from the surname of farmers who had settled there, very probably from Sicily, while its total population at that time would have been of about 125 persons.³ In 1996 a well-preserved building was discovered in one of Attard's oldest streets, Triq il-Mithna, a quite unique Maltese specimen of a largely intact mediaeval private dwelling, possibly dating as far back as the fifteenth century.⁴

Attard became a parish in 1575, breaking off from Birkirkara to which it had previously been connected ecclesiastically, and by 1579 it had its first parish priest.⁵ By this time Attard had 665 residents living in 165 households. In his demographic study prepared for this publication, Anton Quintano rightly noted that the founding of Attard parish is one proof that the village was thriving.



In 1582 there were no less than 52 births giving a rate of 720/00, and seven marriages were celebrated, a rate of 110/00. The mean birth rate for nine select years between 1581 and 1617 was 490/00 and the death rate in the 1610s was 90/00. This natural increase resulted in a total population of 1,249 in 1621. This has been to date the largest population registered at Attard in relation to that of the whole country, i.e. 2.8%. In 1993 this stood at 1.8%.⁶

There were two hamlets, Hal Bordi and Hal Mann, which became part of Lija, and a third, Hal Warda, in the area known as 'tas-Salvatur', which remained in Attard.

Some of Attard's earliest buildings of note were in fact chapels: these included the sixteenth century 'tas-Salvatur' and 'tal-Lunzjata' up the Notabile Road; these two chapels were hit in Nazi raids in 1942



Some of Attard's old chapels dedicated to St. Paul(left), St. Anne(inset) and Our Lady of Victory

and have sadly ceased to exist. There was a smaller still functioning chapel on the Zebbug side of the same route, as well as the Sant'Anna chapel, previously dedicated to Santu Rokku, in a little piazzetta in the heart of the old village. Another chapel, which is being slowly restored, was that in the valley, dedicated to St Paul, Malta's patron saint, which also venerated St Publius. A long time ago Sunday Mass started being said in this little church, which was later rebuilt. Two more chapels, one dedicated to the Madonna 'Tal-Pilar' dating back to the Grand Masters, and another associated with Russian royalty during the British period, well before the Russian refugees from the Bolshevik Revolution early this century, are to be found in Sant'Anton Palace. Mass is still said regularly in the former, while the walls of the latter were in recent years adorned with paintings in the Russian Orthodox style.

The present parish church dedicated to Maria Assunta was completed in the first quarter of the seventeenth century and became operational. The design of this parish church, regarded as an architectural and artistic gem, which has been left largely untouched, has been commonly attributed to a very talented





The two chapels in Sant'Anton Palace, one dedicated to the Madonna tal- Pilar, to which various Grand Masters contributed, and the nineteenth century one known as the Russian Chapel, which was recently decorated in Russian Orthodox fashion.

native of Attard, the master-craftsman or scalpellino Tumas Dingli, who certainly worked on it; it may also be indebted to the inspiration of an elder master, Vittorio Cassar, son of the famous architect Girolamo Cassar.⁷

In addition to the finesse of its Renaissance baroque elements, the Attard parish church has been continually enriched by artistic additions, including paintings by well-known masters, such as Francesco Zahra, with others attributed to Stefano Erardi. Some fine paintings and objets d'art now form part of the parish museum which was originally set up in 1987 and is housed in one of the larger older buildings just across from the church and similarly dates back over four hundred years. For some years this "museum" was caringly attended to and kept going by brothers Alessio, Abel and Guzeppi Zammit; more recently it was professionally and selectively reorganised by art historians Mario Buhagiar and Keith Sciberras, whose work in this domain will have served as a pilot project for the



Vault in Russian Chapel



H.E. the President of Malta Dr. Ugo Mifsud Bonnici is here seen receiving an icon of St. George from Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman cosmonaut in space, for the Russian chapel .



Artefacts and works of art in the Attard ecclesiastical museum - early 17th century holy water stoops



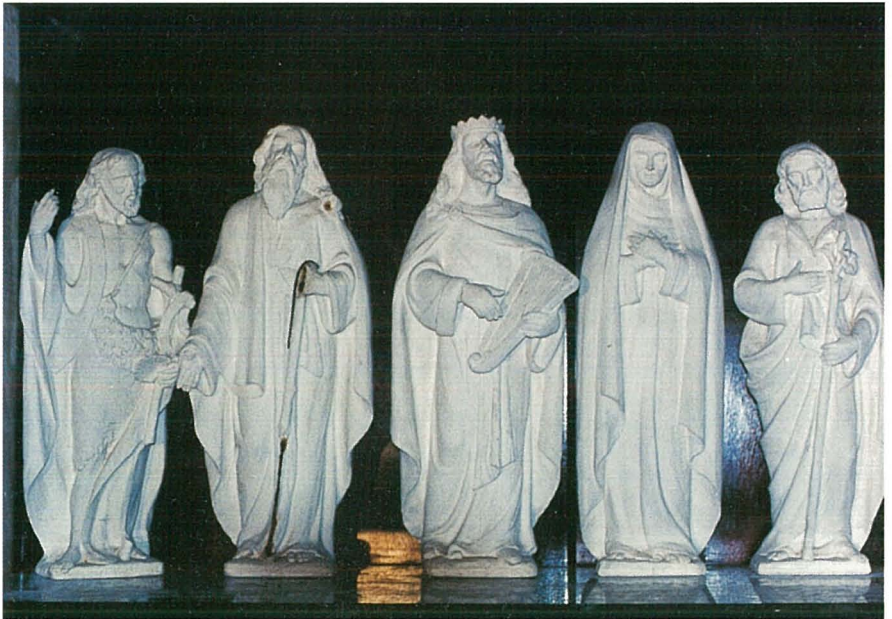
18th century limestone inscription recording the grant of a landed property



One of Francesco Zahra's paintings in very good condition, done in 1745



A portrait of Anna Cousin in 1783



Plaster casts of the limestone statues by Francesco Sciortino in 1945, intended for the west front of the parish church.





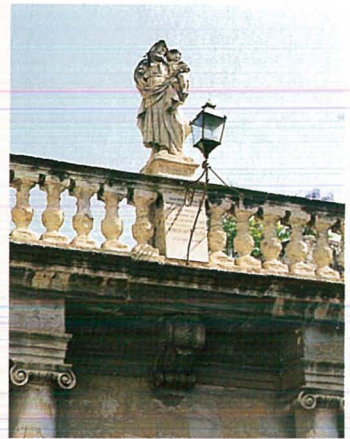
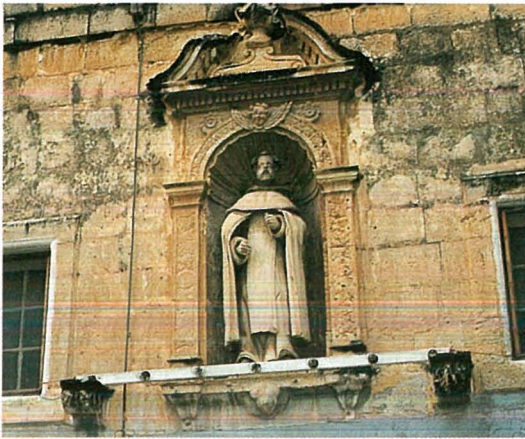
On the 15th of August, Attard celebrates the feast of Santa Maria Assunta.

reorganisation of various other parish museums in Malta on the Attard model. The museum now occupies six rooms on the first floor of the building complex with its architecturally interesting granulated rooftop and Romanesque entrance doorway motifs on the main landing. Its

collection consists mainly of works of art that previously decorated the parish church and smaller churches in Attard; there are also a number of private donations.

The highly regarded statue of the titular saint, representing the Madonna's assumption into heaven, was made of fine bone China (kina) in Paris in 1874. In the 1920s and 1930s a local master craftsman and decorator Carmelo Debono (known as "Mastru Karm") designed, carried out and supervised several embellishment works inside and outside the church itself. As demonstrated during the village's festa of Santa Marija on 15 August each year, the parochial devotion to Maria Assunta inspired many forms of popular activity over the years including church treasures, street decorations, colour fireworks, brass bands, hymns and marches.⁸

As was typical of a Southern European community, that parishioners'



The St. Dominic and St. Joseph niches in the village core.

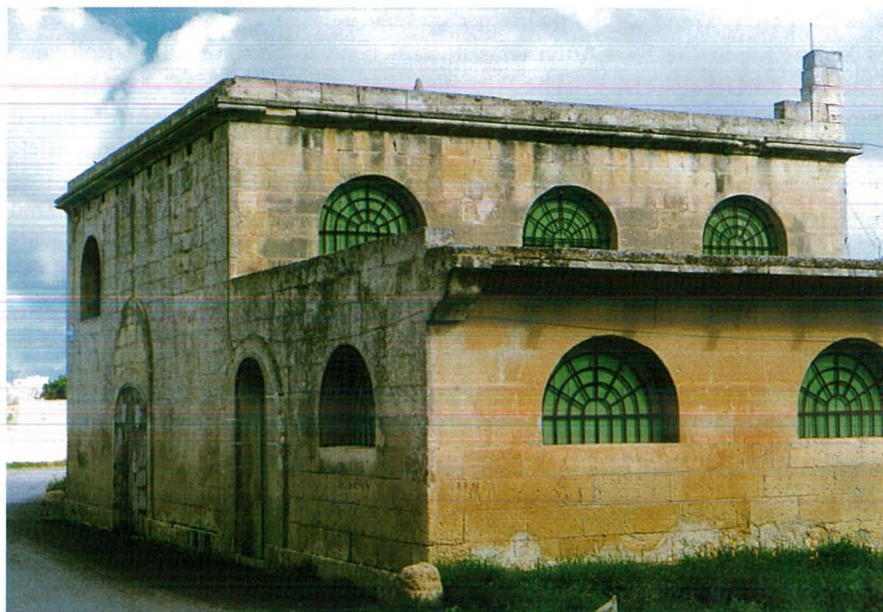
religiosity over the year's accounted for various other forms of socializing. The oldest Marian confraternity [fratellanza] in Malta originated in Attard as early as 1499 in honour of Maria Assunta; another, "il-fratellanza tas-Sagrament", dated from 1575 when Attard became a parish. Two other confraternities were set up, one in 1630 dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, and another "tal-Madonna tac-Cintura" in 1720. None of these have survived.⁹ Several holy niches and small statues of varying dates adorn houses and street corners especially in the older parts of Attard. Documented by Tony Terribile, among others, these include representations of the Madonna, St Peter and St Paul, St Dominic, St Joseph and St Paul.¹⁰

In 1676 Attard was badly hit by the plague epidemic, hence the veneration of St Rocque at the Sant'Anna chapel [now used by the Society of Religious Doctrine M.U.S.E.U.M.].¹¹ The bubonic plague killed off 22% of the Maltese population in the 1670s, mostly in the towns. In the countryside the death toll was around 7% but Attard, together with Tarxien and Qrendi, was the hardest hit of the villages. Out of a population of some 1,000, 104 persons - or more than one in ten - died of the plague, mostly in 1676.¹² The need for burial grounds increased dramatically, hence for example the cemetery known as 'tal-pesta' adjoining the above-mentioned chapel. Another cemetery before the Second World War was that in the upper part of Birkirkara Road known as "ta' l-Erwieh". Attard's only operational cemetery nowadays is so far the "tal-Providenza" one in Valletta Road [the Notabile Road]; this used to be on the outskirts but is no longer so.

Near this spot is to be found the only fresh water spring in Attard which, before buildings gradually took over from the land, used to serve the fertile fields around it. Much of the occupational activity in and around Attard would have been taken up by farming, sowing and the harvest of different crops. There would have been goat herds and flocks of sheep, horses, mules, asses and also some cattle. According to the agricultural census for 1958/59, Attard still had 31 full-time farmers and twice as many part-time farmers. Moreover Attard had over one thousand tomna¹³ of agricultural lands, some of it naturally



Grezzju, one of Attard's last surviving farmers, traditionally threshing corn in his fields at Tax-Xarolla in the early 1980's.



Il-Biċċerija l-Qadima: the old abattoir in Triq il-Gradilja, now in need of restoration.

irrigated soil [*saqwi*]. Attard horticulturalist Joseph Borg, who for several years directed the important nursery for plants, trees and bushes at Wied Incita founded in 1968,¹⁴ has noted that the crops grown were mainly vegetables of all kinds, potatoes, tomatoes, water melons; there were many vines and olive trees, as well as several large citrus orchards - oranges, lemons and tangerines - especially in the gardens of private mansions. He remembers shepherds and goatherds; many also kept poultry, rabbits and pigeons, especially in the areas closest to the valleys. There was plenty of grazing, including the Ta' Qali flatlands, used also for hunting and trapping, which the British then partly converted into a military airfield [hence the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and other regiments stationed in Misra' Kola in the 1940's]. Only few Attard farmers kept cows and bulls, or bred pigs, although Borg remembers a large farm up from the Tas-Salvatur chapel which fattened imported bulls for the kill. The Vella family, nicknamed "tal-Belbulin", had a farm on the Mosta Road: they imported and reared bulls. Relatives of theirs worked in the (still thriving) butcher's shop just off the Main Street, which they provided with meat. Another was Salvu Dingli "is-Surmast" who kept cattle on two farms, one of them in Main Street.¹⁵

Hunting and trapping, mainly for birds of passage, were very popular, the latter even among children, as was the hunting for rabbits and hares in the whole terrain stretching from Rabat to Ūebbug to Qormi and across Attard to

Mosta, where up to forty years ago the population was still quite small.¹⁶

–Carmelo Mallia, an elderly local researcher of the village’s life whose father had lived to be the oldest man in Attard, recalls one farmer, Ganni Dingli “it-trux”, who owned a Maltese ox [*baqra ta’ Malta*], now practically extinct, with which he ploughed his fields. There were a few such oxen, according to Carmelo Dingli.¹⁷ Wenzu Agius traded in sheep and goats, while the family nicknamed “tan-Nabukku” grew wheat and other cereals. One Mintoff “ix-xi” bred pigs at the old abattoir in Tal-Fuklar, while another family (Peppi and his wife Mudest “tal-Qaddis”) specialized in the production of lettuce, using the fresh water spring by the cemetery.

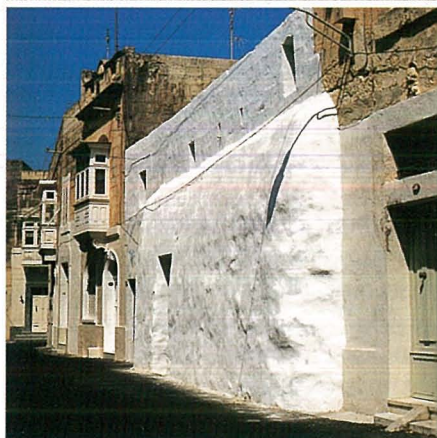
These were ancestors of one of the still active Attard farmers, Lippu “ta’ Vestru” who still uses this spring.

Although cultivated land has decreased due to housing and road development, some of the available land has been more intensely cared for than ever, a case in point being the Nursery at Wied Incita since its establishment in 1968. Today this produces some 60,000 plants, bushes and trees annually, as well as honey, and is the largest such nursery in the Maltese Islands. Before their conversion to horticulture, these lands were used as experimental goat and chicken farms, in the former instance also serving to assist Sir Themistocles Zammit and David Bruce in their work on brucellosis [*deni rqiġ*].¹⁸ In addition to the Wied Incita nursery, Attard now also has two established and flourishing privately-owned nurseries specialising in different types of flowers and trees, one of which occupies fairly extensive grounds in the locality itself.

Before Attard had an electricity supply, one cleric Pawlu “tal-Belbulin” would every day light the lantern in front of the cemetery “ta’ l-Erwieh”, while another, Dun Guzepp Dingli (an uncle of the medical doctor Frans Dingli who in 1966 became Attard’s first constituency MP) would light with oil, every evening, the devotional lamp in front of the “tal-Providenza” cemetery. Others, with ladder and rod, were employed to light up these traditional lanterns, which were white - the only blue one being that at the Attard police station, in the corner of Main Street with Valletta Road. But there were various other



The horticultural nursery at Wied Incita



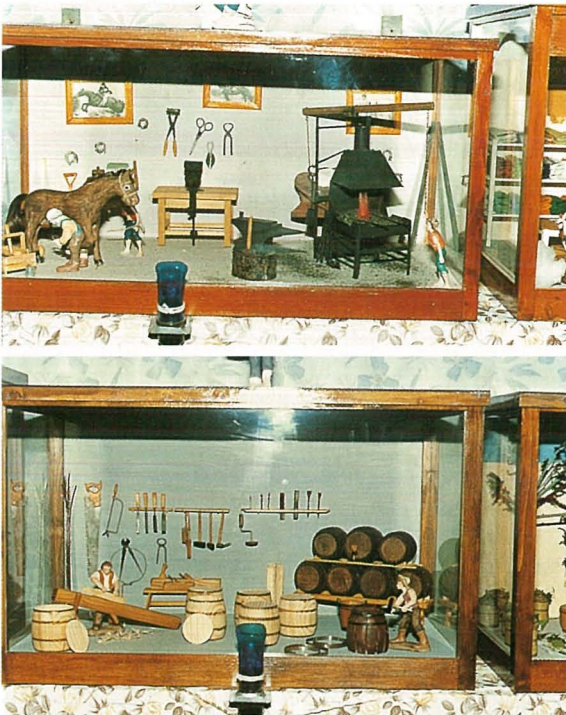
One of buildings once used as a bakery, still called “il-Forn”, in St. Dominic Street, and houses in Mill Street still recalling the time when beasts of burden figured in daily life.

occupations, skills and past times to colour this eminently pastoral, almost mediaeval scene: potters, such as Castelletti at “ta’ Vnezja” (and Kola Zerafa “ta’ l-ghasfurin”) a farmer at “ta’ Vnezja”, blacksmiths, cart-wheel makers, cabmen...¹⁹

Although Attard was far removed from the sea, there are records of some locals who sailed mainly in the Order’s navy or corso, and also on French men-of-war which carried out much trade with the Levant at that time. Joseph Muscat has identified a handful of these types in the eighteenth century, not all of whom appear to have been professional sailors. Some graffiti on the Attard parish church and to a lesser extent in the chapel “Tal-Pilar” at Sant’Anton, and possibly elsewhere, show motifs mainly depicting galleys.²⁰ Only one *ex voto* painting has survived, however, and there could not have been too many of these, as seafaring was clearly a marginal occupational activity here.

The rustic and all too necessary crafts and skills of the residents of Attard in the recent past were portrayed, in miniature, by another capable locally-based carpenter, Mastru Censu Buttigieg. Born in 1910 in Santa Venera, Buttigieg married Rosanna Debono of Attard and took up residence there in

1935, where he lived and died sixty years later. He became famous for his mechanised crib and terracotta figures, which went on show every Christmas in one of the three old bakeries of the village, that in Strada San Duminku.²¹ But it was in the miniatures of the craftsmen, which no doubt he would have observed around him, that he immortalised in considerable detail what these did, the instruments they used and how they earned their living. We thus find the cloth-maker and tailor, the carpenters and horse-cart manufacturers, the blacksmith and horse-



Shoe-horns for the horses and wine casks for the men: the blacksmith and the barrel-maker.

GHANJA LIL H'ATTARD

Meta titla' x-xemx u ddawwal
djar u gonna kollha ward,
l-isbah dija, l-ohla fwieja
jimlew l-arja ta' H'Attard.

Dak ikun il-hin mistenni,
hin ta' ghaxqa, ta' qawmien,
ta' bhulija u ta' hidma
f'dan ir-rahal qisu gnien.

Qalb l-eghlieqi jhaddru, l-bidwi
jiftah qalbu f'ghanjiet sbieh;
f'nofs it-toroq tisma' l-ghajta
jew taqbila tal-bejjiegħ.

Gewwa d-djar, in-nisa twajba
f'xogħol ta' gid mat-tfal jedhew:
sa ma jasal filghaxija,
fl-ghana 'l żwieghom jistennew

U fil-gholi, l-awrikarji
u l-kampnari ferrehin
jaqtghu 'l fuq, fis-sema sbejjah,
kenn l-ghasafar imsahhrin.

F'dan ir-rahal kollu fwieħa,
xemx u ghana u hlewriet,
qalbek thoss il-ferħ, l-imħabba,
l-hena tagħha qalb is-skiet.

Imma l-isbah ta' dan l-ghana
thossu l-qalb kull filghaxija,
meta l-qniepen, b'tokki helwa,
isellmulha lil Marija.

4/VII/1951

Dun Frans Camilleri

A 1951 poem evoking Attard's still rural and rustic characteristic.

shoe maker, a model farmhouse with all the implements and artefacts to be found therein, and the occupants as well, not excluding the hens, rabbits and ducks. We also find in this repertoire, ideal for a future municipal folk museum, the potter's shop, with craftsmen making earthenware jars, cups and dishes; there is the grape-crushing and wine-making by foot - no machines yet; and the maker of wine barrels [*il-buttar*] in his workshop replete with the instruments of the trade. We had the baker and his oven, the makers of baskets from reeds of straw, the man who went about on his horse or donkey to spray sea-water on dusty streets in the summer months [*tal-Bexxiexa*] - no asphalt or tarmac then. *Mastru Censu* even tried a dry rubble model [*il-girna*] and a stone quarry [*il-barriera tal-gebel*].²²



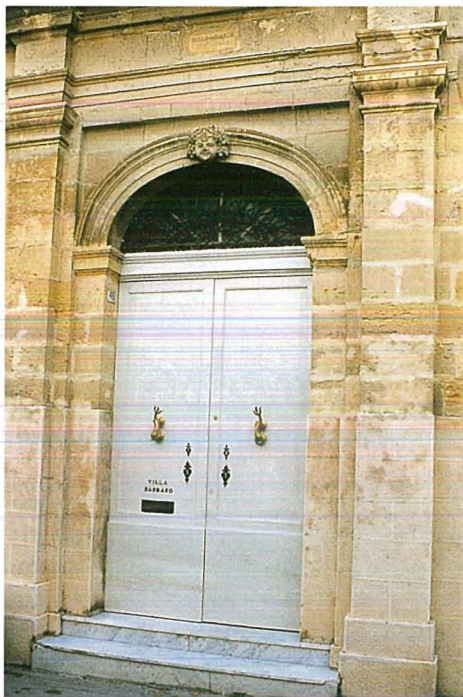
Already central because of its geographical location, Attard since the first quarter of the seventeenth century, was increasingly so because of Sant'Anton Palace, where first the Grand Master and subsequently the Governor resided. In 1928 Sant'Anton replaced Valletta as the British Governor's permanent residence until in 1974



Sant'Anton

it became the official residence of the President of Malta.

From the earliest times, several Attard residents came to work there in a variety of occupations - as gardeners, caretakers and coachmen. Grand Master de Paule himself kept a vast retinue of attendants - from personal physicians to a wig-maker and from the *seneschal* (or Master steward) to the clock-winder. There were, in addition, maitres d'hotel, valets, pages, grooms, game keepers and other members of the princely household with such quaint and picturesque appointments as falconer and grammar tutor for the pages, as well as various bakers.²³ Censu Fenech "ta' l-Infern" who passed away in 1996 at the age of 90, started off as Governor Methuen's coachman, before he



The front door of Villa Barbaro "Bello Sguardo"

went off to the Dardanelles as a waiter in the Great War. He later became a cabman of which Attard also had a few, ferrying visitors to and from the mental asylum at Ta' Frankuni or indeed Sant'Anton, as well as other travellers and cargo, including agricultural produce to and from the neighbouring market towns, and Valletta.²⁴

It was on his way to Valletta from Notabile that the Apostolic Visitor, Mgr Pietro Duzina, stopped in Attard in 1575 where villagers petitioned him successfully for a separate parish.²⁵ It was in Attard, on his way to his investiture ceremony in the Citta' Notabile, that Grand Master De Rohan was fêted. In front of Villa Barbaro Bellosguardo, just across the street from the police station and what are now the municipal offices, but which at the time had an unobstructed view stretching as far as Valletta,

Marquis Carlo Antonio Barbaro erected in 1776 a magnificent triumphal arch 'di vaghissima architettura' with figures and Latin inscriptions on the occasion of Grand Master de Rohan's solemn Ingresso into Mdina on his election to the Grand Mastership. It is recorded that it was under this arch that the Maltese nobility assembled to greet the new Grand Master on his way to the old city from his palace in Sant'Anton. He drove under this arch to the sound of drums and trumpets.²⁶



A re-enactment of scenes from Sant'Anton's history during Attard Day 1997 showing Grand Master De Paule, Captain Alexander Ball with Maltese representatives, and insurgents in the anti-French uprising of 1798.

Apart from the traditional occupations and pursuits characteristic of the Maltese countryside, Attard, because of its central location and its rural lure, had begun attracting some rather distinguished residents who would build a country house (*casa suburbana*) there. It was clearly an important stop-over on the Valletta-Notabile road and could be rather a strategic staging post for communication purposes.

In 1798-1800, during the Maltese popular insurrection against Bonapartism, Attard served as a veritable headquarters for the leaders of the insurgents. In the gardens of Villa Barbaro itself, military operations are said to have been planned, while it was in Sant'Anton Palace, residence of Captain

Alexander Ball, who was made head of the Maltese *Congresso Nazionale*, that the representatives of casale met several times between February 1799 and September 1800. As the Maltese insurgents quickly took control of the whole countryside including Notabile [and all of Gozo island] the munitions depot at Sant'Anton was one of the first to be raided. Ball would head several of his letters simply "Attard", and give the date, as may be seen from the accompanying reproduction of one such document.²⁷ Attard's delegate in the Congresso at that time was Notary Francesco Saverio Zarb [in whose memory is Notary Zarb Street, on the Valletta-Mdina road, now named].²⁸

Attard also paid the price in lives lost during the popular insurrection, particularly in the crucial year 1799:

The loss of life through famine and war was very considerable. Eighty people from Attard died that year [in 1797 only 22 had died, and in 1801, 19]. This caused a death rate of about 940/100 and a natural decrease of about 650/100. In 1797 there were 849 persons in Attard. By 1805 there were only 731²⁹

Attard was also home to at least one leading Maltese 'Jacobin', however. His country residence, Casa Bonavita, was only a few doors down from the Villa Barbaro. Casa Bonavita in St Anthony Street is, like Villa Barbaro, one of the loveliest residences in Attard, with large laid-out gardens. Built in the mid-eighteenth century by the Secretary of the Consolato del Mare, Domenico Girolamo Bonavita, it passed on to Judge Vincenzo Bonavita who, like some other middle class families disaffected by the rule of the Order of St John, became involved in the French plot to remove the Order. Vincenzo Bonavita joined the delegation of leading Maltese which badgered Grand Master Hompesch to surrender Malta to Napoleon in June 1798. Vincenzo's son, Antonio, was probably a French agent, while another Bonavita later died at the Battle of the Pyramids after the Maltese taken to fight in Egypt rose against their French commanders. Vincenzo himself was confirmed as Judge by Napoleon and, like "the father of the Maltese language" Mikiel Anton Vassalli, was in Valletta when the Maltese rose in rebellion. The Bonavitas and others on the French side were declared enemies of the people by the insurgents and their property

Attard 4 Fev. 1802

Monsieur

Le conseil supérieur
Les Députés de votre officement
à M^{rs} Lord Hobart Secrétaire
d'état pour annoncer leur
arrivée à Londres

J'ai l'honneur d'être
Mess^{rs} le Marquis avec la
plus haute considération
Vost^{re} très humble serviteur

Alexandre Ball
à Mess^{rs} le Marquis de Testaferrata

Capt. Alexander Ball's note to the Marquis Testaferrata datelined "Attard 4 Fevrier 1802"

outside the area held by the French was systematically looted and confiscated. There is no doubt to which side the Attard populace rallied. In the words of a direct descendant, himself an historian who lived in Casa Bonavita for many years, Casa Bonavita was sacked; the trees in the garden were cut down for firewood and for the entrenchments, attempts were made to crack the water cisterns and to demolish the main staircase. The opra morta on the roof was thrown down. This damage Vincenzo was apparently able to assess by means of a telescope from St Michael's Bastion. The mansion's hall was 'turned into a butcher's shop.'³⁰

We thus have in Attard, seat of the alternative government, a scenario reminiscent more perhaps of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* than of Guareschi's *Don Camillo*: two famous houses, a few doors away from each other, the Barbaros and the Bonavitas: in one, the leaders of the insurrection secretly meet to plot and plan; in the other, local dignitaries collaborating with the occupying power, held in scorn and made to pay for it. Like Vassalli, however, who remained in Valletta until he was brought, a prisoner, to Sant'Anton, Bonavita was gradually rehabilitated under British rule. He even made it back to his house in Attard where, above the hall to the garden, he had painted on the wall a quotation from the Book of Job: *Cum te consumptum putaveris orieris ut Lucifer* [When you think you are finished you will rise like the morning star].³¹

There are several other grand old houses of note in Attard. Casa De Piro in Mosta Road is now the private residence of the Grand Master of the Order of St John, Fra' Andrew Bertie, and it was since 1966 that of both his late parents. 'When we first came here', Fra' Andrew recalls, 'behind the wall of the garden which may be reached by the bridge across St Dominic Street, there were open fields from which the fireworks for the Santa Maria festa were let off.'³²

Villa Apap Bologna, in St Anthony Street corner with Triq il-Linja, with its extensive gardens, now the residence of the American



The bridge linking Casa de Piro, private residence of the Grand Master, to its garden and orchard.

Ambassador, was lived in for some years by the anthropologist Desmond Morris (at the time that his best-selling books, *The Naked Ape*, and later *The Human Zoo*, were being prepared).³³ Across from it in the same street - a leafy street lined with magnificent pre-war villas³⁴ - is the Villa Bologna, formerly the residence of Lord Strickland, who was prime minister of Malta from 1927 to 1930, with probably the largest private gardens and rain water reservoirs in the islands, a venue for parties, fairs and weddings.

Built by the Uditore Fabrizio Grech (a noted lawyer and adviser to Grand Master Pinto), for his daughter and heiress Maria Theresa who married a Bologna, Count Della Catena, Villa Bologna is situated conveniently close to the Palazzo Sant'Antonio - a short stroll or sedan chair ride if the Grand Master were to visit or if the Uditore's son-in-law needed an audience. Its interior plan, according to one account, was inspired by a seventeenth century Maltese castle: 'Villa Bologna may be the finest eighteenth century country house ever



Villa Bologna



Wrought iron gate of Villa Bologna

built for a Maltese family³⁵. Adjoining it is a ceramics factory and shop, started by the heirs after the war and still open for business; this was the first of the ceramics establishments to open in Attard, of which we now have four [three are in the Ta' Qali area].³⁶

Another interesting mansion, also with a large garden, is Villa dei Marchesi in Qormi Road, behind the parish church; yet another is Casa Vella, in the corner between Mosta Road and Triq Hal Warda³⁷. Among the more distinguished families who built or lived in such houses, often indicated by their very names, have been the De Piros, the Apap Bolognas, the Stricklands, the Caruana Gattos, the Gollchers and Craigs, the Barbaros and Bonavitas.

The Tunisian Ambassador and the New Zealand Consul General also live in Attard, while the EU resident representative lived in the near vicinity at Tal-Mirakli on its border with Lija. When Pope John Paul II visited Malta in 1990 he stayed in Attard - at the residence of the Papal Nuncio, then Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. Increasingly a number of Maltese Ambassadors past and present, members of the judiciary and of academia, leading businessmen,

journalists and other personalities also live or have kept permanent residence in Attard. There are few noteworthy farmhouses left, such as the one known as “ta’ Wenzu” at the end of Triq il-Mithna corner with what used to be the upper part of the same street (now named after the ornithologist Antonio Schembri).³⁸

Two others notable houses, one that belonged to a knight in St Anthony’s Street, and the other to the Caruana Gatto family in Valletta Road, served as primary schools for Attard’s children, before the government primary school in Triq Hal Warda was built. Attard’s primary school, now named after the famous local ‘scalpellino’ Tumas Dingli, has grown considerably since the early sixties. It now includes a kindergarten with a total school population of over 400 pupils. For some years it has had an autonomous School Council, with a President nominated since 1994 on the advice of the Local Council, a Parent-Teachers’ Association and, most recently, an adventure playground. Among its annual fares we find the Sports Day, held in the adjoining football pitch belonging to it, and the Prize Day, which usually comprises a play or talent show put up by some of its own teacher-directed pupils. This was the first building purposely designed and constructed for Attard’s children as a school, earlier ‘schools’ in St. Anthony Street, Valletta Road and Main Street having been large private residences converted into makeshift teaching establishments for want of a school proper with adequate grounds for sport, assembly and recreation. Tumas Dingli School is due soon to have an up-to-date and much-needed Assembly Hall,



Pope John Paul II, accompanied by the Apostolic Nuncio, greets children during his stay in Attard.



School children, teachers and councillors during the inauguration of ġnien il-Palma's upgrading

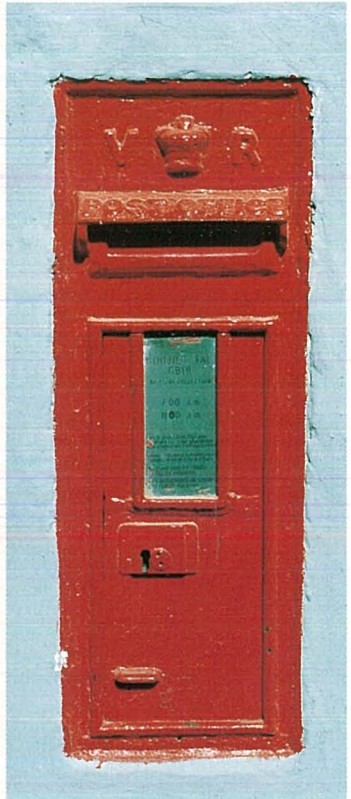


Two Attard houses (one in Triq Sani'Anton, the other in Triq il-Belt Valletta) which served as schools before the opening of a primary school proper in Triq Hal Warda in the 1960's.

which will also be useful for local community purposes, such as theatre, music, song, dance, arts and crafts, soirées, evening classes, as well as social, cultural and civic-inspired get-togethers of various kinds. In the absence so far of a civic centre or at least of communal hall facilities in the municipality, that may lessen some of the pressures on the Centru Parrokkjali with its indispensable, multi-purpose Sala Parrokkjali.

Attard's police station, sharing the same building now occupied by the Local Council, is quite a landmark: the red mail box affixed to its wall, dating back to Queen Victoria, is one of the very few if not the only such mail box still extant in Malta; various other historic ones around the islands belong to the later era of the Georges.

In the past century Attard's role as a pivotal communications centre was probably best demonstrated by the stops of the Malta Railway between 1883 and 1931; it was the only place in Malta having no less than three railway stations or stops: one near Sant'Anton close to what is now Balzan, another up



A rare specimen of a Queen Victoria post box just below the Council's office in Triq il-Kbira.

MALTA.
MINISTRY OF LABOUR.
WORKMEN'S REGISTRATION CARD.

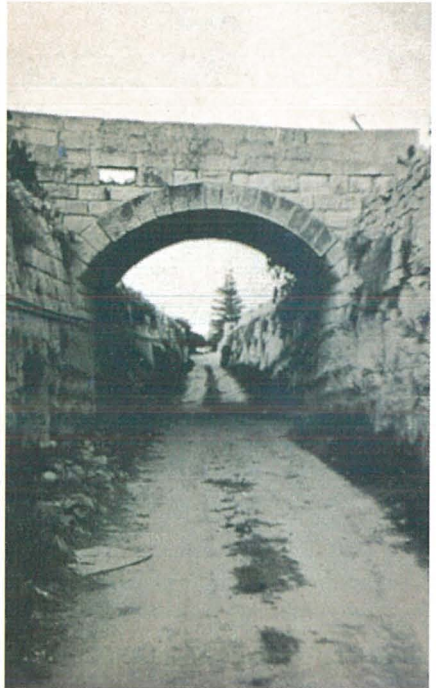
Regist. No. 4237

Surname: CINI EDUCATION: _____
 Christian Name: Albert What knowledge have you of other languages besides Maltese? _____
 Address: _____ Reply: Nil
Attard Which do you prefer to speak? _____
 Reply: _____
 Particulars about previous employment: _____
 Father's Name: _____ If bearer is an ex-serviceman enter hereunder particulars as shown on documents to be seen by employer.
 Date of Birth: _____ If bearer is in receipt of a pension enter particulars in which bearer has served. Length of service: _____

Place of birth of: Attard Malta
 Mat. G.F. _____
 TRADE: Signalman
 Assessment of trade ability: _____

Initials under 1 mean more than 6 years experience; under 2 less than 6 and more than 3 years; under 3 less than 3 years experience.

Signature of _____
 Issuing Officer P. B. Bugeja



Impressions of the railway train, bridge and station in Attard. Mario Cini, who resided at 9, Strada San Domenico, Casal Attard in the 1930's, was employed as a signal man.





Old Railway Track

the road in what is now the Gniei l-iStazzjon, and further up, in Tas-Salvatur, on the way to Rabat, Mdina and Mtarfa. From about the same time that the railway began, Sant'Anton's gardens were opened to the public by Governor Borton, so people went there for leisurely walks (*passiġġata*), to picnic and, later, for the children to see the swans and monkeys, the parrots and peacocks. There were also the employees of - and the regular visitors to - "Ta' Frankuni", the mental hospital on the Notabile Road. Nikol Azzopardi, a long-time resident, has documented these railway activities - the trains, the bridges, the entrenchments, the wagons, the stops, the ticket-collectors, the flag-waving warden known as 'tal-katina' who closed the road to man and beast as the train approached; he has exhibited an impressive photographic collection on railway history.³⁹

The "Ta' Frankuni" hospital was opened in 1861 when 248 patients were transferred there from Villa Franconi Asylum in Floriana. It was officially referred to as the Lunatic Asylum, Attard. The building was enlarged in subsequent years especially between 1894 and 1930. The latest addition, in 1962, was planned in such a way as to minimise the feeling of confinement as much as possible within the requirements of security.

At the beginning many of the attendants, or Gwardjani as they were then called, were illiterate. It was only in 1950 that it was educationally possible to teach them the elements of mental nursing when Dr. Paul Cassar, then on the psychiatric staff of the hospital gave them a series of lectures in Maltese

which he later published as *“Tagħlim fuq il-mard mentali għall-infermieri”*. Occupational therapy was established by the last decades of the nineteenth century in the form of agricultural pursuits for men and weaving and lace-making for women. The hospital's official title of Lunatic Asylum was changed to that of Hospital for Mental Diseases in 1928, which was replaced by that of the present one of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Hospital in 1967, as the opening of the hospital on the 16th July 1861 had coincided with the religious feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. For the last forty years the treatment of mental illness has been conducted on the same progressive therapies and standards of nursing-care in developed countries.⁴⁰ The hospital has an active social centre set up by the

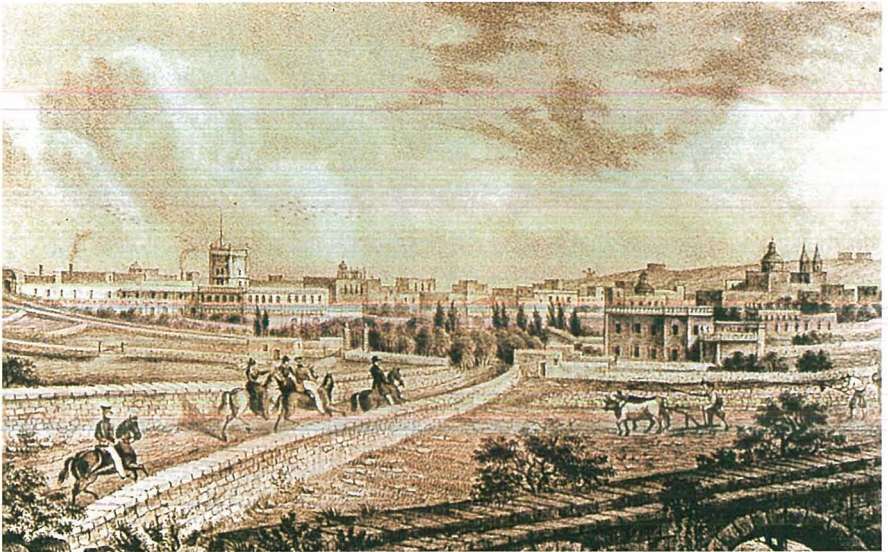


Mt. Carmel Hospital

Friends of Attard Hospital, (founded in 1964); the Friends of Attard Hospital also ran a Summer House and organize parties for the inmates and their families, for example at Christmas. Some of the patients are taken on outings or to watch a game of football at the nearby stadium.⁴¹

The seventeenth century Wignacourt aqueduct, constructed for supplying Valletta with water from the higher ground around Rabat and Mdina, runs through Attard. The best preserved section of it in Malta so far is probably this one in Attard, in what is now P. P. Reubens Street.

Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt (1601 - 1622) engaged the services of a Jesuit priest and water engineer, Natale Tomasucci of Messina, to take charge of the construction of the proposed aqueduct. Wignacourt diverted the profits accruing from the sale of wheat and from the Order's bakeries towards the project, and promised to make up for any shortfall from his own private income. Tomasucci arrived in Malta in January 1610, and about 600 workmen were engaged on the digging of an underground channel from three sources: Djar Handul, in the Dingli district, Ghajn Qajjed in the neighbourhood of Mtarfa, and from Ghajn Tewzien. The three channels met at Ġnien is-Sultan, and from there a main channel was made to run in the direction of Attard. Here, the ground dipped suddenly, and Tomasucci faced with a technical problem which he was not able to surmount, returned disappointed to Messina in January of 1612.



The Aqueduct in the foreground and Sant' Anton palace in the background in a 14th century engraving by Brockdorf & Sons

In the words of resident architect-historian Michael Ellul:

Two capomastri, one from Trapani and the other from Palermo, together with Giovanni Attard (d. 1636), reputed to have been the tutor of the renowned architect Tommaso Dingli, were commissioned by the Grand Master to redesign the aqueduct and continue the work. They devised a series of stone arches, on top of which a water channel was made to run at an inclination which would make the water flow by gravity.

For the first time in local building construction, pozzolana, a type of clay from Pozzuoli near Naples, was used to seal the joints both in masonry and in the earthenware pipes, on the advice of Bontadino de Bontadini, a water engineer from Bologna who came to Malta at the request of the Grand Master. Bontadini approved the plan of Giovanni Attard and the Sicilian capomastri, and the work was brought to a successful conclusion after five years of hard work and many headaches. On April 21, 1615, water from the aqueduct reached Valletta and began to flow through the newly erected fountain in the square opposite the Grand Master's palace, to the great relief and satisfaction of the Order and the unbounded delight of the inhabitants of Valletta.⁴²

Beyond Attard, water flowed in stone water channels and earthenware pipes on top of the stone arches. At certain points where the ground rises, the arches disappear below the ground, only to become again visible where the terrain drops again. The aqueduct is 15,635m long, almost $9\frac{3}{4}$ miles, and was constructed at a total cost of 435,000 scudi, of which 40,000 scudi were obtained from the economies effected in the Order's bakeries. The rest came from



Remains of the Aqueduct

Wignacour's private income. Maintenance and regular upkeep of the aqueduct were acquired from funds derived from the sale of agricultural produce of Comino.

While Ellul confirms that the Attard part of the aqueduct is in reasonably good shape, he cautions about maintenance and restoration needs, which the Attard Local Council in fact had brought to the attention of the Planning Authority's Heritage Commission.⁴³

The masonry arches of the aqueduct in the stretch nearest to Attard are 3.20m to 3.76m wide and are all practically equal in height. The lower masonry courses vary from 1'8" to 2'2" high, while the upper courses are of normal height. The arches are three-centred or elliptical in shape, and vary in thickness from 1.02m to 1.42m. The arches and the intervening pillars are in a good to fair state of repair, and have withstood reasonably well the rigours of time and the elements for almost four hundred years. The side facing north, the one looking away from the road, is, generally, in a better condition than the south face. The masonry joints, being, as already mentioned, in hard pozzolana, have stood up the weathering much better than the stone itself. The joints at the lower levels, where stone deterioration due to rising damp is considerable, have, however, partially disintegrated, and would require attention in any future restoration. Builders' marks, in the shape of triangles, crosses and short parallel lines, the only ones on masonry in a public building known in Malta, at least to this writer, appear frequently on both faces of the arches and pillars, and bear the 'signatures' of individual workmen who were paid their weekly wages by piecework.⁴⁴

Other parts of the aqueduct, in Pitkali and Mosta roads, unfortunately fell victim to post-war building developments and the changing street levels.⁴⁵

To the life, needs and serenity of the village network and parish pump, local personages were of the utmost importance and are recalled with a sense of nostalgia from pre-war days by those who remember them or remember hearing of them. One whose name recurs in oral history is Frans Pace “l-Oħxon”, the leading village comedian who starred in many a pochade before the War: he specialized in imitating Oliver Hardy.⁴⁶ Of such types, varied and typical, many are remembered still, nickname and all. The farmers and peasants, who worked the land or bred sheep and cattle, and the many families who kept poultry in their backyards and gardens, brought about the need for - as well as provided - subsidiary and complementary occupations, services and products. Thus Attard had a weigher for merchandise (*pizatur*); it had buyers and sellers of animal fodder (*tal-ġwierz*); it also had fresh meat, milk, cheeses including *ġbejniet*, locally-produced sweets, ice-creams, *pastizzi*, *qassatat* and *torti* of various kinds; it even had a little tavern where a hot meal would be cooked for you. The first dealer to sell milk in bottles, not directly from the goat, was Captain Herbert Micallef, who raised cattle on his farm in Żebbug Road.⁴⁷

One window on the social life of the village have been the bars, or wine-shops and tea-rooms, where mostly the men would meet after a day's work, but which were often enough run by women; so too were a number of shops: groceries and bazaars, their main clients being also women. Some of these were



Mario's cellars

frequented by soldiers, engineers and other servicemen who were stationed in Attard especially in the nineteen forties, as may be gauged from certain names reminiscent of both time and place. Thus the Half-Way Bar, just opposite the police station, was run by Mananni Ciantar, who lived with her father Kalanc. The Friend to All Bar, near Casa Bonavita, was run by Pawlu Camilleri (*Tal-Qaddis*) who doubled up as a tailor, but his wife Rozanna, or Rozi, looked after the bar, transforming it into a tavern, and prepared a hot meal at lunchtime for about thirty men from outside the village, policemen and several employed at Villa Bologna (handymen, gardeners, stable boys). Rozi was well known for her delicacies - *qagħaq*, *pastizzi* and *qassatat* - which many from Valletta and Floriana would buy on Sundays before going for walks to Sant'Anton. Rozi's pastries were made from fresh *ġbejniet* provided locally from sheep's milk by Manann (Is-Soru) and Randa (Ta' Karkar). School children bought sweets and pencils from her on the way to the government primary school when that was on the Lija side of Attard. Among the general service shops (*tal-merċa*) we would find one in St. Dominic Street (originally *Ta' Ruzar*) next to the water fountain (*il-ġhajr*), from where many who did not have running water at home daily filled up their buckets. Others were in St. Anthony Street, one belonging to the sisters Giuseppa, Dolor and Virginia Mangion; another a greengrocer (*tal-baxix*) run by Carmela Both these outlets were demolished when the street was widened. In the same street, however, there was another food store, run by Vitor Mizzi, while a corner shop in Triq il-Mithna was managed by Nina Debono, the sister of Mananni who ran the Half Way Bar, while Nena ta' Lippu ran a greengrocer business there which later moved to Qormi Road. A Valletta merchant who came to Attard in wartime as a refugee, Toni Farrugia, set up a shop in the uppermost part of Main Street; that died with him, but Main Street did not become one of the main shopping streets until after the war when new bars and shops came into being.⁴⁸

Electric light only came to Attard in the early 1930's, and that began to permit greater mechanisation, for example in the carpenter's shop. At the time there was no stationery - *Il-Berqa* would be hand-delivered by bicycle; nor, as might be expected, was there a fishmonger, fish-sellers came from outside the village. The first residents to own a motor-car, which came to Malta in the first decade of the twentieth century, were John Bonavita, of Casa Bonavita, the lawyer Josie Vella (of Casa Vella in Mosta Road corner with Hal Warda Street), and of course Sir Gerald Strickland, who even kept a resident chauffeur in Villa Bologna, one Guzeppi Gatt. A fourth was Salvu Dingli (Is-Surmast) who raised cattle in two separate farms; he owned a 1922 Bean car as well as a Chevrolet truck.⁴⁹ Attard had a resident photographer, Karmenu Pisani, who is reputed to have taken innumerable photographs of goings-on in Attard. Some activities were seasonal or periodic, such being the street vendors with roly-poly or lacumia and dates, fly-swats, straw hats and figurines, or the music-box player (*tat-*

terramaxka) with his puppets, mazurkas and polkas, all for a collection of a few farthings and pennies. Knives and scissors would be sharpened occasionally by a visiting machine-operator (*tas-sann*) on a donkey cart, pots and face-basins mended by a tinsmith (*il-landier*) with his “primus” on the pavement - a scene still common all over the Maltese islands until the 1950’s; as was that of “it-Tork” with his habbaziez. The vendors of kerosene similarly came from other neighbourhoods as “far away” as Rabat or Birkirkara. Attard however had its resident barbers, stone-masons, white-washers and painters, bakers, a shoemaker or two, it had tailors and seamstresses, some of whom had been trained by the foreign Franciscan nuns at their crafts school in Villa Bologna; and there was no want of gardeners, with several having had their apprenticeship at Sant’Anton.⁵⁰ Fewer and fewer people today would identify with them as the times have changed, but also because the population of Attard itself has grown and changed so radically: suffice it to say that in the one year 1985 Attard’s population literally doubled, increasing by 100% through internal migration, from 2,874 to 5,681;⁵¹ and it is well on its way to doubling again within the next few years. The ‘hard core’ oldtimers associated with the inward-looking parochial village life are on the wane; it can be a struggle to have newcomers from different places and backgrounds, spread out anonymously in the outskirts which started creating their own ‘centres’, identify with ‘mainstream’ parochial or indeed with municipal activity.



The fields adjoining the Shooting Range today

Attard has seen considerable enterprise in spheres other than business. It has had a number of clubs offering commitment, conviviality and colour, each with its own story to tell.

Since 1908, when the Malta Shooting Club was founded in Valletta, Attard had Malta's first enclosed shooting club and range, where live-bird



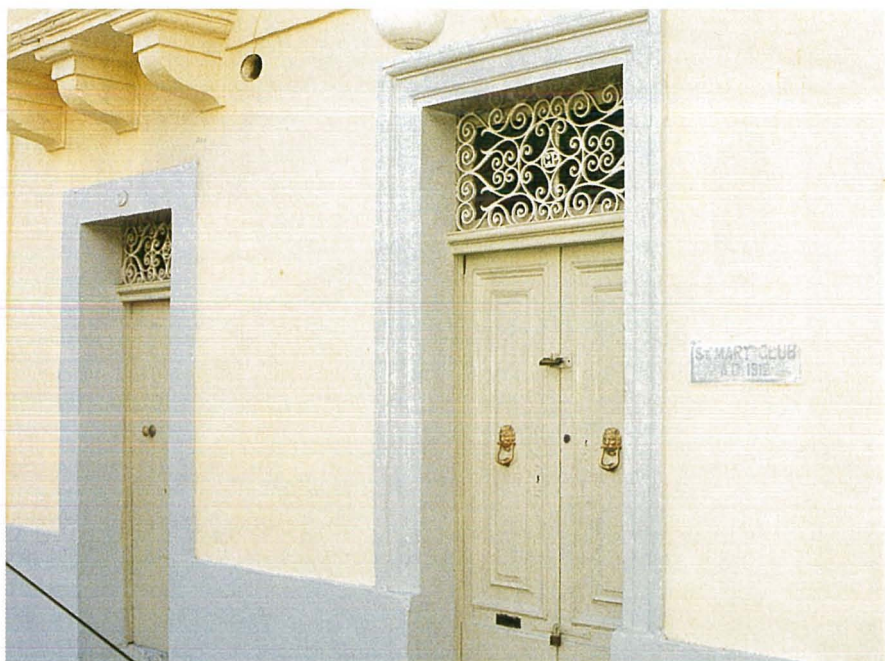
Maltese and American hunters at the Attard Shooting Range in the 1940's



The abandoned Shooting Range today

shooting was substituted by clay-pigeon shooting between the 1940s and the 1970s. In the Attard range the Malta Shooting Club organised regular competitions and, after the Spring migration of turtle-doves, members used to take part in turtle-dove competitions, the birds being bought by the club. They also held competitions with foreign officers then stationed in the Mediterranean region, especially members of the U.S. Air Force.⁵² This 'shooting range', now long disused, had been built originally in the nineteenth century for senior British military personnel to have a ready supply of fresh fruits and vegetables.⁵³

There have been two 'band clubs', one known as 'tas-sei' because of a six pointed star in its emblem, the other as 'tac-cinku', because of its five-pointed star. The elder of these is the 'kazin' La Stella Levantina, founded in 1894, which has taken a keen interest in external aspects of religious and semi-religious celebrations and festivals, including church and street embellishments and decorations, festa and fireworks. La Stella Levantina has also had the nature of a social club, more recently offering bar and sports facilities - or organising a children's carnival party - in its historic and centrally-placed club, a stone's throw away from the parish church. In 1994 the club held its first centenary celebrations in style, and in 1997 it commemorated the tenth anniversary since it also activated a locally-based brass band, whose first band masters have been Archibald and later Abel Mizzi, the former's father. The first president of the




Santa Maria club

La Stella Levantina club, formed with the encouragement of the then parish priest, was up to 1929 and for thirty-five years Mastru Karm Debono.⁵⁴ A history of the club was published in 1994.⁵⁵ Another similar club, which started in 1912, is the 'kazin' Santa Maria located in a small piazzetta off Mosta Road and named after Attard's patron saint. With its own bar and meeting rooms, the Santa Maria club has also participated in some of the festa decorations, band marches and other activities.⁵⁶ Although these clubs may have somewhat different profiles and connotations neither one is exclusive or partisan: there is bonhomie, even cooperation, with an occasional twang of rivalry or competition.

Excess has been absent, too, from Attard's two political party clubs, the 'Kazin Nazzjonalista', at the start of Main Street off the Notabile Road, close to the old horse trough, and what is now known as the 'Centru Laburista' in the relatively new Triq Tumas Dingli, which the Local Council has been developing into a state-of-the-art pedestrianised main square. Even in times when partisan fanaticism went to the head in other localities, Attard was always one of the least to suffer from its worst excesses.⁵⁷ These clubs came to life in the sixties: both have been re-decorated in recent years and offer bar and meeting room facilities. Lists of their respective presidents have been compiled for this publication and are included as appendices, together with those of Attard's parish priests and the presidents of the other main clubs.



The facades of the political Party Clubs


 Attard Boys Brigade.

NAME	QUALIFY	ADDRESS
1. Don Lammalo	Warden	44, St. Dominic Street, Attard
2. Andrew John	S.B.	47, St. Dominic St. Do.
3. Debono Helder	S.B.	46, St. Dominic St. Do.
4. Debono Alfred	Squad Leader	28, St. Dominic St. Do.
5. Debono Antonio	S.B.	Do. St. Dominic St. Do.
6. Debono Lela	S.B.	Do. Do. Do.
7. Joseph Simon	Warden	14, Do. Do.
8. Joseph Salvo	Warden	14, St. Dominic St. Do.
9. Joseph Joe	Warden	Do. Do. Do.
10. Avola Joe	R.P.	Do. Do. Do.
11. Nello Harry	Squad R.P.	71, St. Anne St. Do.
12. Pace Guido	S.B.	19, Villous St. Do.
13. Vincent Kenneth	Warden	32, Do. Do.
14. Schirchop John	S.B.	19, St. Dominic St. Do.
15. Schirchop Benjamin	S.B.	Do. Do. Do.
16. Bonino Joseph	Warden	14, Do. Do.
17. Zammit George	Warden	23, Kingsway Do.
18. Sammut Felix	S.B.	5, St. Michael St. Do.
19. James Murray	Warden	53, St. Michael St. Do.
20. Joseph Murray	Warden	28, St. Michael St. Do.
21. John Joseph	Warden	26, St. Dominic St. Do.
22. Carmello Savoca	Warden	24, St. Dominic St. Do.
23. Pace Giovanni	Warden	19, St. Michael St. Do.
24. Cecilia Sammanuele	Warden	15, St. Michael St. Do.
25. Marco Sammut	Warden	23, Kingsway Do.
26. Thomas Sammut	Warden	16, Kingsway Do.
27. Andrew Wignall	Warden	18, High Street Do.
28. Andrew Wignall	Warden	23, Kingsway Do.
29. Thomas Wignall	Warden	18, High Street Do.
30. Andrew Wignall	Warden	23, Kingsway Do.
31. Andrew Wignall	Warden	18, High Street Do.
32. Andrew Wignall	Warden	23, Kingsway Do.
33. Andrew Wignall	Warden	18, High Street Do.
34. Andrew Wignall	Warden	23, Kingsway Do.

A. Strickland
 J. Boden-Powell
 M.D. 1917
 Warden
 S. B.

Attard was among the first localities, together with Balzan and Lija, to have a Scout troupe (the very first to rally having been Valletta and Sliema). This was started in June 1917, less than a decade after Lord Baden-Powell, who was to visit Malta a number of times, had established the movement in Britain. The group was known initially as A.B.L. (Attard - Balzan - Lija). Assemblies were sometimes held in Attard, since the Governor's official residence after 1928 was at Sant'Anton; moreover in the nineteen thirties the Chief Scout, Colonel Percy Worrall, also lived in Attard, just across the street from Sant'Anton Gardens. One such occasion was a rally called by Lord Plumer in October 1919, at which the A.B.L. gave a



Strickland and Boden - Powell during a meeting in Perth when the former was governor of Western Australia, and (top left) an inspection in 1917 in the courtyard of Sant' Anton Palace, and at the Empire Day parade on the palace square, Valletta in 1918.

demonstration of ambulance work. The A.B.L. Group were quite active in camps, jamborees, coronations, Empire Day, the governors' birthdays; their colours changed, with Attard getting new ones in a formal ceremony held in the Palace Square, Valletta. In 1951 we find that these were blue with a green border and today's colours are turquoise with a violet border, but these were due to be changed again by the end of 1997 to blue with a red and white border. Cubs as well as Girl Guides and Brownies were organised, with the old Attard railway station rooms, now Gnien l-Istazzjon, serving as their meeting place.⁵⁸ Immediately after the war the Attard scouts re-emerged as a troupe from the so-called Attard Boys Brigade, of which a rare hand-written membership list dating from 1946 has been discovered by this writer. Attard's scouts and guides in the different age-groups, led by their respective GSLs and other ranks, now number well over one hundred in all. They have dutifully marched, drilled and otherwise participated, donning their colours, in several municipal activities - for instance in the inauguration of the monument to Attard's war victims on the fiftieth anniversary of VE Day, and activities commemorating Attard Day on 8 June - and it is hoped that soon enough they will have their own buglers and band. Since 1996 the Attard Scout Group have been making use of the onetime 'war rooms' in Birkirkara Road, which the Local Council acquired on lease from the Armed Forces mainly for them, but plans are in hand to have more spacious quarters for them in due course.

There is the Attard Football Club situated in Hal Warda Gardens next to the football pitch belonging to the primary school. It was only set up officially in 1974 but playing football in teams in the locality goes back half-a-century. Both La Stella Levantina and the Santa Maria Club were involved in the organisation and sponsorship of such activities in the past. It was the latter club in fact which in the early seventies started the Attard Five Pointed Stars team,



The Attard Under 18 teams in Hungary in 1996

which re-joined the Malta Amateur Football Association. In 1988, on the initiative of the then parish priest, a 'nursery' was established and affiliated to the Youth Football Association, with teams of players under the ages of fourteen, sixteen

and eighteen. The Attard team, serviced in recent years by a number of coaches, under the auspices of Attard F.C., has been battling with some success for promotion to the second division, while participating in several competitions and international tournaments.⁵⁹

Other clubs include the Attard Ladies Cultural Circle, well-known locally since the 1970s for its flower arrangement competitions, cookery and keep-fit classes, lectures, hobbies and cultural excursions⁶⁰; the Attard-based radio amateurs club which keeps an international profile; the Friends of Attard [Mount

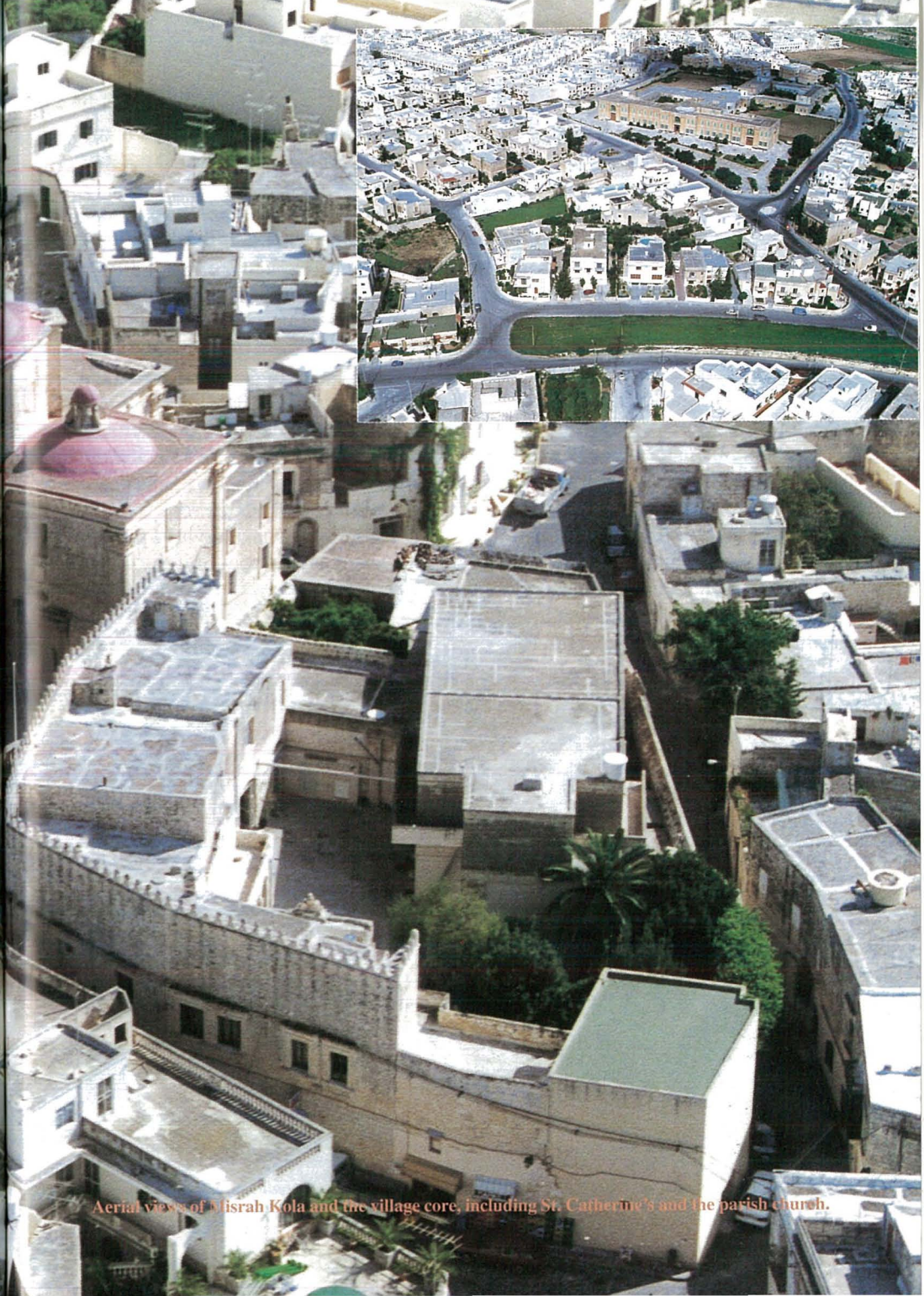


The 1996/97 Third Division squad.

Carmel] Hospital; and several other active philanthropic and religious mainly parish-based circles and committees, whose indispensable venue for the last 35 years has been the 'Centru Parrokjali' and the 'Sala Parrokjali', courtesy of the serving parish priest.⁶¹ Among the oldest-established of the Catholic religious associations have been the already mentioned M.U.S.E.U.M., since 1919 (males) and 1921 (females), and the Legion of Mary since 1940.⁶²

In the 1970s, when the space known as Misrah Kola started to be developed, there sprouted the Misrah Kola Residents' Association, to which the later Lija-Attard-Balzan Residents' Association may be regarded in some respects as a sequel. Maureen German, who well remembers both, has vividly described Attard's rapid growth, with the attendant, familiar infrastructural problems crying out for solutions:

There was nothing here at the time. Unmade roads, no shops, no amenities to serve a fast growing community. We used to go to Rabat, B'Kara or Mosta. Our area here used to be referred to as Misrah Kola. And when anyone tried to find somebody's residence, it was a nightmare - a maze of streets without a name, muddy patches of road, and yet there was a plan that anyone who bought land up here - a place of quick development - had to finish the building within a specific seven years... Hence the residents' need to get together to fight for our rights.⁶³



Aerial views of Misrah Kola and the village core, including St. Catherine's and the parish church.

Maltese artists and writers who have lived in or been associated with Attard in recent times have included Emlin Cremona, who decorated many Maltese churches and frequently exhibited overseas, the highly regarded portrait painter Frank Borg, and younger contemporary artists whose works have sometimes featured in municipal exhibitions and nationally in recent years.⁶⁴ The novelist Gorg Zammit, of *Wenzu u Rozi* fame, lived at Villa Drusilla.⁶⁵ Resident sculptors whose work may be seen in Attard have included John Bonnici and Joe Casha. Among the most distinguished resident scholars and scientists one has been undoubtedly Professor John Borg, the botanist and prolific author, who used to have private access to Sant'Anton Gardens from his residence built across the street (now named after Lord Strickland) for the same purpose.⁶⁶

Some quite renowned individuals of talent reside in Attard, such as the violinist Carmine Lauri who regularly also performs overseas; there are a number of excellent pianists, a few well-known singers, promising artists in different genres, and more lately two or three upcoming models and 'beauty queens' as well. Three or four youth bands came to the fore when in 1995 the rock concert "Id f'Id mar-Refugjati" was organized at Ta' Qali in honour of asylum-seekers in Malta. We had one, led by Claudio Sciberras and Michael Spiteri, doing hard rock and heavy metal; another, led by Robert Tomasuolo, specializing in blues; the singing group led by Claire Baluci, herself a successful organist, and that led by James Deguara on the guitar, among others.⁶⁷ A speciality of Attard



The assembled choirs during a Thanksgiving service at the Attard parish church.

is Malta's only youth accordion band, directed by Marthese Busuttil, who has more than once participated in the playing of carols around the municipality during Christmas home-visits to the elderly started in 1995. The two Attard parish choirs, one formed 135 of children between 7 and 15 years and the other with ages between 19 and 65. These two choirs were formed five years ago and ably led by Amelia Calleja in smaller number. The children's choir now is the responsibility of Christine Farrugia Lauri while the adult choir and the ensemble is led by professional oboist Pierre Grech with Mary Grace Fenech and Paul Sultana as assistants. In 1995 a small orchestra called "Ave Maria" was formed by musicians mainly from Attard or nearby villages with a repertoire of semi classical to light music under the baton of Mro. Pierre Grech. These choirs have often participated successfully in different villages and municipal activities; they were the first on 7 June 1996 to interpret at Sant'Anton the Attard Hymn (*l-Innu ta' H'Attard*) which was commissioned by the Local Council to serve as an official anthem; more recently the Council had this adjusted for brass band orchestration as well, and, it was first played by the La Stella Levantina Band on 8 June 1997 at Sant'Anton, with the choir's participation. The music, by Maestro

Joe Vella, and the lyrics, by Professor Joe Friggieri, are being reproduced here, together with some poems and a popular ballad related to Attard.⁶⁸

Residents recall that it was from the mid-eighties onwards (when as we have seen the population boomed further) that the village became more of a hubub of activity, partly due to the untiring efforts of a new parish priest from 1986 to 1993, which have been carried forward by his successor, and partly, no doubt, because Attard was beginning to suffer from the symptoms of its transformation from a rural village into a bursting town, and had to rise to the



Groups at Ta' Qali in the "Id f'Id mar-Refugjati" festival.

INNU TA' H'ATTARD

MODERATO

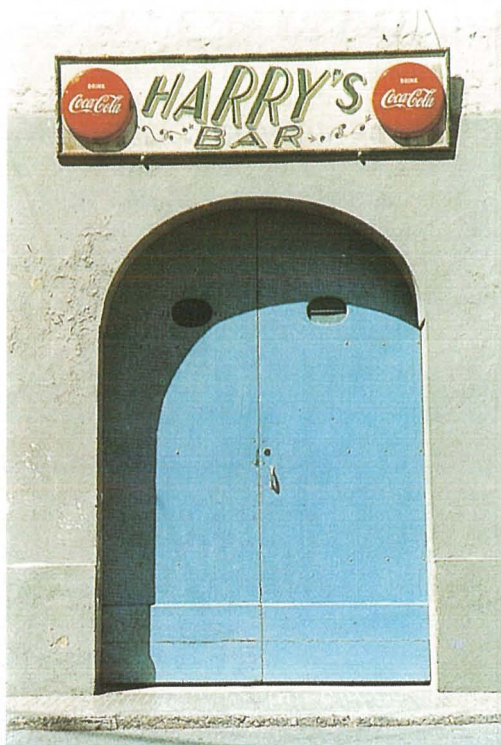
Gonna li jfewhu biz-zahar tal-laring,
 djar fl-isqaqien dellija,
 gawhra ta' tempju, dehra ta' gmiel,
 il-kenn ta' Omm ghal dawk li bkew.
 Dak li writna tul is-snin
 nghaddu 'l ta' warajna,
 xhieda hajja tal-grajjiet
 li taw l-oghla gieh lil Artna.
 Bnadar iperpru ma' l-arbli gholjin,
 twieqi ghad-dawl miftuha,
 qniepen ferrieha, kant taz-żernieq,
 u l-holm sabih taz-żmien li ġej.
 Dak li writna eċċ

challenge to survive as a community. In the words of one resident:

Young people, elderly citizens, mothers and young babies, people interested in culture, musicians, members of religious groups - Charismatics, Legion of Mary, Tal-Muzew, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, band people were all given an incentive to do something for the village and give it life. We all got involved and felt committed. The church was given a face-lift, providing more space inside by removing the pulpit and confessionals to afford more space for the fast-growing community because it was Fr Anton's specific wish to have us in Misrah Kola, in Ta' Fgieni, in Tal-Fuklar and in Ta' l-Idward and all over feel we all belonged to one parish, in one home-town. I think he was a forerunner of what the Council does now - giving us a sense of belonging and making us proud of our area.⁶⁹

However, at the same time, other things were happening too. Three of Attard's cosiest bars, Harry's Bar served by Harry Borg in Mosta Road, the Lucky Bar run by the Cuschieri family in Main Street, as well as the bar run by Gerit Borg (Il-Bawa) a little further down from it near the water trough, all in the village core, closed down, to be replaced mainly by bars in the social and political clubs. Horace Bar in Triq l-Imdina survived and thrives still, in addition to one or two other bars or taverns and some newer confectioneries. In recent years we have had a cafeteria, the Santa Lucia, in Old Railway Track, a pizza place in Oscar Testa Street, and a snack bar up Pitkali Road, in addition to the much older Melita hotel and restaurant and Villa Madama on the border with Balzan.

In 1962, Attard had one of Malta's finest hotels, the Corinthia Palace Hotel, now the flagship of an increasingly impressive national and indeed international hotel consortium with holdings in Turkey, Hungary and elsewhere. Inaugurated by Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, in the



Harry's Bar in Mosta Road corner with Main Street



The official opening of the Corinthia Palace hotel by the Duke of Edinburgh in 1968.

presence of the Maltese prime minister, Dr Borg Olivier, the Corinthia was built around the old Villa Refalo (formerly the residence of the Chief Justice Sir Michel'Angelo Refalo, subsequently of the Chief Scout Col. Percy Worrall, and itself a small hotel), which now serves as its restaurant. The Corinthia provided new facilities locally, from swimming to tennis, it hosted international conferences and attracted foreign visitors to the Attard area. In a general upgrading in the early 1990's the interior and exterior grounds of the complex were redecorated, its surroundings embellished with gardens and water fountains.⁷⁰

Attard itself is well catered for by all kinds of shops, "super" and "mini"



Views of the hotel after its recent refurbishment.

markets, pharmacies and stationeries, from ironmongers to butchers today not only the food store and the bazaar but also a fine gift centre, the beauty salon, the antique shop, even a budding art gallery, to toy shops, producers of trees, flowers and plants; and including established furniture manufactures, swimming

pool specialists, “high tech” outlets. It is mainly serviced by two bank branches, the Bank of Valletta, opened in 1993, and the APS Bank, opened in 1997. There is also a local office of the Royal insurance agency.

Due to the existence of St Catherine’s Hospital run by the Dominican sisters from 1959 onwards, and one of the few general hospitals with gynaecological facilities and maternity wards, many mothers would give birth in Attard. While it is true that most Attard residents today were not born in Attard, it is equally true that many who were born in Attard did not live there. This hospital, however, also serviced the medical needs of the residents. Following the medical dispute of 1977, St Catherine’s ceased to operate as a hospital; it became instead a residential home for the elderly. St. Catherine’s Hospital used to occupy one hundred beds - thirty for maternity wards, seventy for surgical and gynaecological interventions. There are now about seventy elderly residents living permanently in this Residential Home, some of them from Attard; the rest of the complex is used by the Dominican sisters (who have always been responsible for St. Catherine’s) for congregational purposes.⁷¹ Holy Mass is said regularly at St. Catherine’s to complement and supplement religious services at the parish church which has become rather small and is farther away from the new residential areas of Ta’ l-Idward, Misrah Kola and Tal-Fuklar. Private clinics, such as The Blue Cross Clinic run by Dr Frank Portelli, and the Klinika Misrah Kola, run by Dr Lino German, filled the void left by the hospital, and have since been upgraded, while several doctors and specialists attend to the needs of patients in a number of pharmacies and smaller clinics around the locality.

Attard’s Ta’ Qali area and the village that was all too close to it, played an important role in wartime: Air Raid Precautions and the Victory Kitchen, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, the



various regiments stationed here from 'Bufs' to Basutos, the searchlight installation up the Mosta Road corner with Railway Track. As may be seen from the memorial to Attard's war victims, inaugurated in the main square in



1995 on the fiftieth anniversary of 'VE Day', the village's proximity to Ta' Qali had its toll on residents and others at the Monte Carmeli - although Attard was a safe distance away from the harbours where the fiercest fighting took place. Subsequently we have had a metamorphosis of Ta' Qali into a national park and sporting centre, most recently also having a vineyard called 'Meridiana'. Hangars, barracks and nissen huts were transformed into crafts shops manufacturing and selling anything from ceramics to jewellery, the famous glass-blowing skills producing decorative glass, a good



Unveiling the war monument on the 50 th anniversary of VE Day, with the Attard Boy Scouts and girl guides and Bronnies, in attendance.



The jet d'eau at the National Park in Ta' Qali.



An Italy-Malta world cup match at the National Stadium in Attard showing the two team captains, Maldini and Laferla. Italy won 2-1.

souvenir to take away; the national football stadium; an amphitheatre popular for open-air concerts; and even a miniature *jet d'eau* in faint imitation (albeit in sunnier weather) of Geneva or Strasbourg. This part of Attard now hosts an aviation museum - model planes are regularly flown there - and indeed a dinosaur museum.

There are Attard's past and present chapels, their architecture, their art, and the popular devotions associated with them. And what about the flora, fauna and wild life of the valleys, or what's left of that? In addition to the largely unwritten institutional histories of Attard establishments such as the different hospitals and horticultural nurseries; its

mansions, their users and their uses; its aqueduct, mail service and railway; its various social pubs and clubs over the generations; the customary and ritual manifestations of communal sadness and joy, sombre and silent, colourful and boisterous; the produce of the land and the encroaching urbanization; crafts and skills, occupations and professions shifting and changing across the ages; its taverns and bars, hotels and restaurants; and certainly not least, we have the authentic parish church itself, with its adjoining halls, meeting rooms, museum - and the parish-related activities, ecclesiastical, religious, spiritual, philanthropic, even social or cultural, encompassing young and old alike.

There is then Sant'Anton, not only its rich artistic and historical legacies, but as a magnet for hosting, entertainment and celebrations, even as a job-provider and an apprenticeship for Attard residents. That, therefore, not solely or simply for an aristocratic or ruling military elite but, on the contrary, and increasingly, for a Maltese public at large. This palace has greeted royalty too numerous to list - from Queen Marie of Romania to the Russina Empress Marie Feodorovna, from King Edward VII to Queen Elizabeth II in this century alone; it has seen the most distinguished visitors in contrasting personal situations - Napoleon's younger brother Louis Bonaparte as a prisoner, the poet Samuel



Some of the many interesting features in Sant'Anton Palace.

Taylor Coleridge as an admiring recluse. Well before the Malta Amateur Dramatic Company started holding its ongoing Shakespeare festival at Sant'Anton every summer, theatre had come to Attard in other ways: we know of the acting of a French comedy in these precincts as early as September 1776 at the behest of Grand Master de Rohan, to entertain his many guests during a dinner party.⁷² Almost a century before Governor Borton opened its botanic gardens to the public in 1882 for picnics and *passiggati*, Sant'Anton had "headquartered" a national resistance movement. Its shaded open courtyards today may ring with the classical music of an occasional chamber orchestra or string quintet, but the gardens regularly host extremely popular shows, fairs and competitions, which attract thousands of visitors jamming the surrounding squares and streets with their cars. These range thematically in variety from plants and flowers, to pet cats and dogs, to birds, chickens and rabbits. There is thus much more to this venue than the peacocks and parrots, the monkeys and swans that for long characterized it in the minds of innumerable children who spent a day there with their parents; for some years there has even been a resident camel. In fact Sant'Anton gardens have been the closest experience to that of visiting a zoo (which Malta has not had) for succeeding generations of Maltese children.

Truly, a whole Melitensia series



of 'Attardiana' awaits discovery.

Since its inception in June 1994, the Attard Local Council has striven to take stock of needs - from cleaning up streets, cutting weeds and collecting bulky refuse, to tarmac and patching roads, fixing or altogether redoing pavements; upgrading and creating gardens, providing services, even advice - but what it has also sought and pledged to do is to upgrade and uplift the cultural and social life of its residents in a variety of ways - from concerts and festivals to a quarterly magazine hand-distributed to some 3,000 households, and Neighbourhood Watch schemes in a growing number of zones. This little book sketching a general profile of the place and its residents in time, was seen by the Local Council as a further step in that direction. There are plans for a public library; a child care centre; a village green; a civic centre; and much-desired pedestrianisation, rehabilitation and landscaping schemes especially in and around the village core - the central square, the old "ghajn" or trough, and their immediate environs. Attard's primary school is due to have a modern assembly hall soon which will also be at the service of the community, and there are plans for a junior area lyceum which should also provide the municipality with leisure, sports and cultural amenities and facilities for residents



The first Attard Local Council including staff members. From left Miss Marica Mintoff, clerk; Councillors Louis Carabott, Dr. Kirill Micallef Stafrace, Deputy Mayor Gerald Borg, Mayor Prof. Henry Frendo, Councillors Dr. Iris Pace, Ralph Cassar, and Pierre Cauchi, and Norbert Gingell, secretary. Councillor Joe Mifsud (inset) replaced Dr. Micallef Stafrace.



Prime Minister Fenech Adami conferring the Attard insignia on Prof. Frenzo as Mayor of Attard in 1994

of all ages. The Attard Local Council has fought tooth and nail successfully to prevent Sant'Anton from being erroneously removed from its historic confines, just as it has left no stone unturned to save Wied Incita from illegal and polluting manufacturing developments. Other plans include further work in rain water catchment operations; better traffic management and control; orderly and pleasant parking in and around Attard; greater social and entertainment facilities for young and old alike including open air recreation venues. The possibility of exchanges with twinned towns has been increasingly pursued, particularly with Licata in Southern Sicily, which has had a long connection with Malta and to some extent also with Attard.⁷³ Another possibility is that of Castello di Borgo Maggiore in the Republic of San Marino.⁷⁴ Distinguished visitors to the municipal offices since 1994 have included the resident-President, His Excellency Dr. Ugo Mifsud Bonnici and His Eminence the Grand Master of the Order of St. John, Fra Andrew Bertie, as well our two Prime Ministers, Dr. Edward Fenech Adami and Dr. Alfred Sant (the latter when still Leader of the Opposition).⁷⁵ Guests from all over the world, often staying at Sant'Anton Palace or at the Corinthia Palace Hotel, have been legion in recent years. These visitors to Attard have also included now several Mayors from other countries, as well as, in 1996, Dr. Alexander Tchernoff, the first President of the European Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Strasbourg, who merrily joined

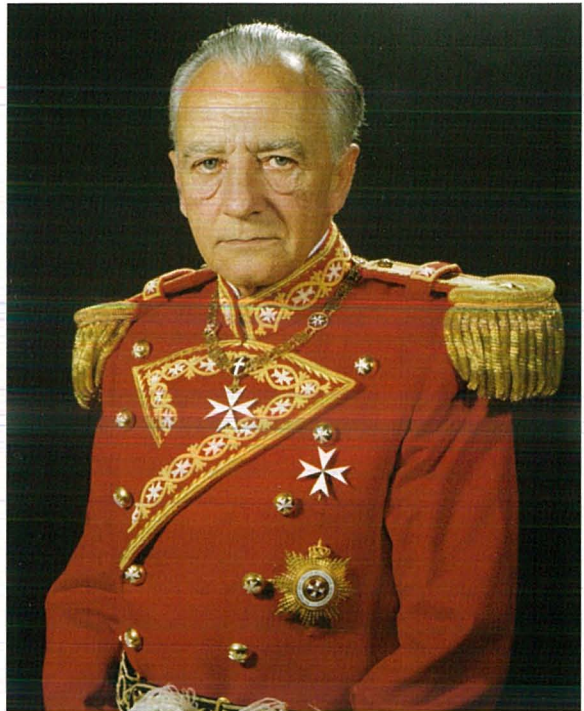
in the Attard Choir Fundraising Dinner in the Parish Hall.⁷⁶

A memorable, symbolic expression of this sense of commitment to communal well-being have been a superlative European Heritage concert held in the parish church in 1995, and another more specifically for local talent held on the occasion of Mother's Day, organized at the Corinthia Palace Hotel in 1996.

Attard continues to be a historic place, and a relatively peaceful one, with flowers in blossom everywhere. Its own

profile has been sharpened, its infrastructure improved, and the secular dimension of social life heightened since the introduction of local government in 1994, but infrastructural needs, including civic ones, have not kept pace with the all too rapid demographic growth and ever-increasing urbanisation. In spite of its growth, the locality has retained a human dimension with open spaces and some leafy streets, the highest buildings being four storey social housing apartment blocks on the edges.

As shown here, for various reasons Attard has acquired a character and an importance which may not be readily grasped by outsiders but which commands some attention. Tucked away from the boisterous seaside resorts and night spots, sloping gently down from the hills above it, with a syncretic socio-cultural dynamism of its own, symbolised by its elegant parish church, centralised by location and circumstance, spurred on in recent years by the municipal newtork no less than the parish pump, and the prospect of 'opening up' through twinings with other towns, Attard has had for years one of the fastest-growing population rates in the Maltese Islands as well as one of the highest levels of social mobility, with a record number of teenagers proceeding to a university education.



His Eminence the Grand Master of the Order of St. John

While in a closely-knit and densely-populated country like Malta a relative anonymity can be precious indeed - and patches of Attard do provide it - nevertheless the place has retained a throbbing communal heart as well as a rather friendly sense of neighbourliness. His Eminence the Grand Master of the Order of St. John, who is based in Rome, has paid tribute to what has been his and his family's experience over the years in these kind words:

Fortunately, one thing which has not changed at all is the friendliness and neighbourliness of the inhabitants. If ever there was a crisis, such as water pouring through the house from the roof, immediate help was offered, and when there was the earthquake some years ago, a neighbour made a point of seeing that my mother was in a place of safety. This is what makes Attard, and long may it continue.⁷⁷

Notes

¹The Latinist Dr. Horatio Vella has suggested the following literal translation of this motto: “infewwah (affarijiet) li jiproducu l-fjuri permezz tal-ward” and less literally, “fjur il-ward infewwah”. See Vella/Frendo, 6 Jan.97.

²On all this see Reuben Grima’s report “Excavation of a Hellenistic tomb in Attard” dated 4 Dec. 1991, and accompanying notes, photocopies and references “Archaeological sites in Attard” compiled from the Museum Annual Report, and from other sources held at the National Museum of Archaeology, enc. in Grima/Frendo, Aug. 1997 (ff.10).

³See G. Wettinger, ‘The Militia List of 1419-20’, *Melita Historica*, V, 2 [1969]. The surname “Attardo” is common in Sicily, especially it seems in the province of Agrigento. For centuries Malta had trade connections with this part of Sicily (grain, etc.); in this, the port of Licata, was one of the most important links. See the study on Malta - Licata relations by Dr. Carmel Cassar commissioned by the Attard Local Council (1996).

⁴See ‘Binja Medjevali fi Triq il-Mithna’, *Rivista Attardjana*, n.11, June 1997, p.15.

⁵On this aspect of parochial history see Carmel Mallia’s *H’Attard 400 Sena Parrocča* (Malta, 1975).

⁶For demographic data relating specifically to Attard see Anton Quintano’s study due to be published in *Rivista Attardjana*, under the title ‘A short history of Attard’s population from the fifteenth century to the present’, enc. in Quintano/Frendo, 14 Mar. 1996; but see a synopsis of it, *Rivista Attardjana*, no. 12, Sept. 1997, p. 15.

⁷Dingli’s young age certainly need not have prevented him from assuming a leading role in the whole enterprise, but see Leonard Mahoney’s *History of Maltese Architecture* (Malta, 1988), and his chapter in Henry Frendo and Oliver Friggieri (eds.): *Malta: Culture and Identity* (Ministry for Justice and the Arts, Valletta, 1995) pp. 125 - 141.

⁸Apart from the parish archives themselves, which date back hundreds of years, and since 1994 the municipality’s quarterly *Rivista Attardjana*, far the best two ongoing sources of information on such aspects in recent years would be the parish pamphlet distributed regularly in homes, and the annual festa magazine published by the La Stella Levantina Band Club in August. On Karm Debono see the article by Carmel Mallia in La Stella Levantina’s festa magazine for 1997, pp. 63-71.

⁹Mallia, *op. cit.*, see ftn. 5

¹⁰For an illustrated collection of notes on this and related parochial subjects, especially niches, see a typed manuscript by photographer Tony Terribile, made available to the author as an aide for this publication, enc. in Terribile/Frendo, 19 Oct. 1995.

¹¹See ‘Il-M.U.S.E.U.M. tal-Bniet - 75 Sena ta’ Hidma’, *Rivista Attardjana*, n.8, Oct. 1996, pp. 14-15.

¹²Quintano, *op. cit.*, see ftn. 6.

¹³The Maltese land measure, tomna, is equivalent to 12,100 sq. feet. The stone quarry in Wied Incita between Attard and Zebbug is now practically exhausted, especially on the Attard side, but for some decades quarrying and the related production of building materials have also been carried out in Attard.

¹⁴See the largest public-funded nursery in Malta. See Joseph Borg’s account “Il-Mixtla tal-Gvern f’Wied Incita”, submitted to the author as a background paper for this book, *Rivista Attardjana*, n.13, Dec. 1997.

¹⁵Much of this is based on an interview the author had in 1997 with Mr. Mallia and his wife, who also hails from Attard; for more detail see Mallia's article in the festa magazine for 1996, published by La Stella Levantina Club, p.p. 71-87; other interviews were with Mr. Joe Borg and Mr. Carmelo Dingli, among others.

¹⁶Some of the descriptions of these parts, the land, its vegetation and its fruits, at one time empathic and nostalgic, idiomatic and technical, are barely transmittable; they constitute authentic recollections from "sons of the soil" and command greater attention in the original Maltese text. In an undated, unsigned manuscript handed to Councillor Joe Mifsud in 1997 for this work, Dwardu Agius, whose mother Zeza used to sew and mend street decorations for the festa time (*pavaljuni u bandalori*), movingly recalled the natural beauty and charm of Wied Incita before the war (i.e. before the quarrying for stone and encroaching housing developments began). As a young man Dwardu used to go there hunting with his uncle: it was the pride of those who frequented it (*il-ghaxxa ta' min kien iduru huwa Wied Incita*). It had many trees: figs (*tat-tin*); pomegranates (*tar-rummi*); prickly pears (*tal-bajtar tax-xewk*); carobs (*tal-harrub*); and even pear trees with unusually large fruits (*langas li l-kobar tieghu fitt rajt bhalu*); it also had peach trees (*anki hawb kien fib*)... Similarly and still more technically are some of the recollections in Joe Borg's narrative; see above fn. 14.

¹⁷Dingli / Frendo 1 Sept. 1997.

¹⁸See fn. 14.

¹⁹See fn. 16.

²⁰See "H'Attard u l-Bahar: graffiti mal-Hitan ta' barra tal-knisja ta' H'Attard", and "Il-Graffiti fil-Palazz ta' Sant'Anton", enc. in Muscat/Frendo, Ta' Vnezja was the area in Ta' Qali in the direction of Mosta.1997

²¹There were at least two others: one, known until the 1960s as "il-forn ta' Stella", near the water trough in Main Street; and another, which is unused but existant, in Sqaq Nru. 3, off Qormi Road, known as "il-forn ta' Angla".

²²On all this see the write-up prepared at the author's request for this publication by Mr Nikol Azzopardi ['Il-Minjaturi ta' Mastru Censu'].

²³See Albert E. Abela, "San Antonio, Beloved House!", *Treasures of Malta*, Vol. 3, Christmas 1996. p.12.

²⁴See Henry Frendo's interview with Censu Fenech held at St. Vincent de Paule Institute two weeks before he passed away, and published posthumously, *Rivista Attardjana*, n. 5, Dec. 1995, p. 7.

²⁵This scene was beautifully re-enacted, with 'Duzina' [actor Joe Quattromani] in a carriage drawn by two horses and mobbed by Attard peasants, during a musico-literary spectacle at Sant'Anton ('Il-Miraklu tal-Blata') marking Jum H'Attard on 7 June 1996. See the reportage in *Rivista Attardjana*, n.7, June 1996, pp. 8-9.

²⁶ See the manuscript by Professor J. J. Cremona, a former Chief Justice who resides in the same villa and whose wife is a Barbaro, submitted as a background research paper for this work, enc. in Cremona/Frendo, Attard, 15 Mar. 1997 and *Rivista Attardjana*, n.13, Dec. 1997; on Villa Barbaro see also the article by Cecilia Xuereb, *Treasures of Malta*, Vol. I, n. 2, Easter 1995, pp. 73-74. Carlo Antonio Barbaro, a Rome trained lawyer, was a member of the Arcadia, he was a linguist, an archaeologist and an agronomist. His book on the Kordin excavations, *Degli Avanzi d'Alcuni Antichissimi Edifizi Scoperte a Malta l'anno 1768*, was published posthumously in 1794. Villa Barbaro Bellosguardo housed the "Cabinet du Marquis Barbaro", a rich and renounced collection of antiquities, as well as a fine library. This villa also served as a

court, probably at the time when Carlo Antonio's son, Romualdo Barbaro (d. 1840) lived in it after his father's death together with his wife Anna De Piro. He was in fact Lord Lieutenant of the district, which included Attard. He loved Attard and donated to the parish church two massive silver candlesticks. See Cremona/Frendo *op. cit.*; and also Winston Zammit, *Rivista Attardjana*, n. 11, June 1997, pp. 10-11.

²⁷I am grateful to Dr. Giovanni Bonello for providing me with a copy of one of Ball's Attard manuscripts from his own archival collection, and also to Mr. Patrick Galea for confirming that he too has similar documents. Ball (then knighted and a Rear Admiral) died in 1809.

²⁸These events were re-enacted in Attard through period tableaux, in full costume, during the spectacle "L-iStorja ta' Sant'Anton" on 8 June 1997, held under the patronage of His Excellency the President of Malta, Dr. Ugo Mifsud Bonnici. See the illustrated reportage in *Rivista Attardjana*, n. 12, Sept. 1997, pp.8-9.

²⁹Quintano, *op.cit.*, see fn. 6

³⁰See the notes on Attard's Casa Bonavita prepared as background for this publication by Roger Vella Bonavita, enc. Vella Bonavita/Frendo, Rossmoyne, W. Australia, 26 Mar. 1997.

³¹Bonavita, *op.cit.*, see fn. 30

³²See the notes on Casa de Piro submitted for this work, enc. in Bertie/Frendo, Attard, 21 Mar. 1997. The previous resident was were Baroness Nicola de Piro, Attard. Bertie/Frendo, 11 Aug. 1997.

³³I owe this information to Mr. Gerald de Trafford, who resides with his family in Villa Bologna.

³⁴Some of these villas were spacious enough to serve as wartime refugee asylums. One of the eight pointed Maltese crosses painted in red, to indicate the number of refugee families who lived there, may still be seen on Villa Navillus in St. Anthony Street, which hosted 14 such families. See also the note to this writer from Mrs Joyce Abela of 17 Aug 1997. There were several such houses in Attard; another was Villa Drusilla, on the Notabile Road, where the novelist Gorg Zammit later lived.

³⁵ See Nicholas De Piro's article on it, *Treasures of Malta*, Vol. I, n. 1, Christmas 1994, pp. 65-67, and also John Attard Montalto: *The Nobels of Malta*. Strickland died here in 1940.

³⁶ "Ceramica Seracina", as de Trafford's shop in Villa Bologna was named, may be the only visible reference to a nickname or folk designation attributed mainly to the 'native' born and bred villagers as 'Saracini' (Saracens), which is still cherished as an in-group identity label, especially by those having or seeking to evoke old-time associations with the place. Unrelated to the place-name of Attard itself, its rather curious and elusive origin seems to be lost in the mist of time, but there is no evidence that Attard was ever a Moorish, Turkish or otherwise Muslim village or encampment. On the contrary, the evidence strongly suggests that the place and its inhabitants were always Latin and Roman Catholic throughout the Christian era, with a centuries-old attachment to venerating the Blessed Virgin and various Roman Catholic saints. All too typically in this part of the world, the narrowly winding streets and alleys in the old village core would have been at least partly a protective device against Saracen incursions and other possible intrusions by foreigners. Some traces of what may perhaps be described as Arabesque architecture, as in the granulated roof-top of the building now housing the Centru Parrokkjali and the Parish Museum, are not altogether unique to Attard in Malta, and are not uncommon in other parts of Southern Europe, including Sicily. Any attempt to link "Saracen" with Phoenician, in view of Lord Strickland's politically motivated and scientifically debunked theory that the Maltese were Phoenicians rather than Latins (hence English and Maltese, not Italian, should be the official

languages of Malta) would be a total mix-up and misunderstanding. Nor has the existing Maltese surname “Serracino” ever had any particular pedigree or resonance in Attard. In her prize-winning essay in the “Attardjani Ckejkni” competition, Ruth Caruana suggested that the appellation “Saracini” might derive historically from the fact that a number of Muslim slaves used to “live in” the country mansions and palaces belonging to Knights and Maltese noble families in Attard (see her essay in *Rivista Attardjana*, no. 6, Apr. 1996, p.10). In the Attard parish archives of 1702 there is the case of one “Maria”, listed as *schiaiva* (on this find see Evelyn Pullicino, “Status Animarum 1700-1716 -Attard” in *Il-Parrocchia Taghna H’Attard*, n. 12, 1987, pp. 52 - 56). A twenty year old girl, our “Maria” would in all probability have been a Muslim slave girl kept in some kind of employment in an Attard household who no doubt would have had to convert to Catholicism in order to integrate or assimilate with the local community. Once again, however, this state of affairs would have been in no way specific to Attard: places like Notabile, Valletta and Vittoriosa would have had many more Moors (and even black Africans) working in their households as slaves up to mid-nineteenth century, if not later on as well. The term “Saracini” may have to be seen simply in the context of the sometimes inconsequential nicknaming tradition in Maltese lore which has applied not only to families but also to clans and communities - Hamrunizi (residents of Hamrun) as ‘Tas-Sikkina’; Beltin (residents of Valletta) as ‘Tal-Palestina’, Slimizi (residents of Sliema) as “Tax-Xelin”, although in practically all such cases the primary and more formal designation would always be linked to the place-name of the locality (thus: Floriana/Furjanizi, Gudja/Gudjani, Zejtun/Zwieten, Senglea/Sengleani, Msida/Misidjani, Balzan/Balzanin, etc.) whereas in the locality of Attard a designation in the standard Maltese genre and form had somehow tended to be lacking in the past, other than to say of course “minn H’Attard” (lit. from Attard). See the letter by Norman Borg, *Rivista Attardjana*, no. 3, June 1995, p. 11

³⁷Villa Marchesi was designed by Giuseppe Isidoro and constructed in the mid-eighteenth century. According to Canon John Azzopardi a canvas at the cathedral Museum, Mдина, painted by Schranz, probably depicts this country house. See the article “Count Saverio Marchese, 1757 - 1833” in *Proceedings of History Week* (Valletta, 1982, f.29, ftn. 7). I am indebted to Dr. Donald Sultana for alerting me to this footnote. See the notes on Casa Vella *et* in Sultana/Frendo, Attard, 10 Aug. 1997

³⁸Antonio Schembri (1811-1872) was a student of agronomy and zoology; an expert in ornithology, he was also much interested in the emigration question and in Maltese literature; he served for many years as President of the Societa’ Economica Agronoma and as the Belgian Consul in Malta. Parts of Schembri’s collection of Maltese dipteri were acquired by the museums of Naples and of Monaco. His works include the *Catalogo Ornitologico del gruppo di Malta* (1843), and the *Vocabolario dei Sinonimi Classici dell’Ornitologia Europea* (1846).

³⁹See his speech at Gnien l-iStazzjon on the occasion of Attard Day: ‘L-Istorja tal-Ferroviija f’H’Attard’, *Rivista Attardjana*, n.8, Oct. 1996, pp. 10-11. See also the report mentioning his photographic exhibition, ‘Talenti mirquma’, *ibid.*, n. 3, June 1995, p.5. One of Attard’s modern main streets is named in memory of a prominent doctor, Prof. Victor Vassallo, who served at the Monte Carmeli Hospital. Prof. Victor Vassallo (1902-71) was Superintendent of the Attard mental hospital from 1937 to 1962. He was an energetic administrator who inculcated discipline among his staff and urged a humane control by the nurses over refractory patients.

⁴⁰See Dr. Paul Cassar’s note of 11 Oct. 1997 to this author.

⁴¹See Dr. Joseph R. Saliba’s note of 21 Oct. 1997 to this writer.

⁴²See the typescript “The Wignacourt Aqueduct” by Michael Ellul, enc. Ellul/Frendo, 25, Sept. 1997, for the benefit of this publication.

⁴³See the illustrated reports submitted on behalf of the Council to the Heritage Committee by restoration architect Patrick Calleja in 1995, with a request that the Attard aqueduct be adequately maintained and restored in the light of our findings and recommendations .

⁴⁴See “The Wignacourt Aqueduct”, *op.cit.*, ff. 2-3.

⁴⁵See illustrations by Anton Quintano, *Rivista Attardjana*, n. 10. Mar. 1997, p. 13.

⁴⁶See Marcelle Tommasuolo Dandria’s article ‘Rajt H’Attard Jinbidel’, *Rivista Attardjana*, n.7, June 1996, esp. p. 11; but see also Carmel Mallia: ‘It-Teatrin’ in *Grajjiet il-Kazin ‘La Stella Levantina’: Storja ta’ Mitt Sena 1894-1994* [Malta, 1994], pp. 37-47

⁴⁷On this see the article by Marcelle Tommasuolo Dandria, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11, and C. Mallia’s 1996 article.

⁴⁸I am indebted for this information about pre-war bars and shops to Miss Maria Carmela Camilleri, whose parents were Pawlu and Rozi Camilleri, owners of the Friend to All Bar (see her MS of 26 Aug. 1997). The above list may not be fully comprehensive but it is clearly demonstrative of these aspects of Attard’s lifestyle until more recent times.

⁴⁹I owe this information to his son Carmelo Dingli.

⁵⁰See above, ftn. 39 and ftn. 46 on the crafts school at Villa Bologna; see also below, ftn.

⁵¹Quintano, *op.cit.*

⁵²I am grateful to Mr Paul Fenech for these notes on the Malta Shooting Club, as well as for the accompanying illustrations.

⁵³“Marbut mal-kacca kien hemm il-gnien ta’ l-isparar fi Triq Hal Qormi. Dan il-gnien, mibni bhal diversi ohrain ji zmien ir-Re George III ta’ l-Ingilterra fil-bidu tas-Seklu tmintax, kien iforni lill-kmandant Ingliz tar-rahall bi hxejjex u frott frisk. B’hekk titnehha kull possibilita’ ta’ ‘tangenti’ jew, kif jinghad, biex ma jinxtrawx! Niftakar kif dan il-gnien bil-hitan gholjin, kien ghamel zmien iservi bhala ‘Shooting Club’ jew gnien ta’ l-isparar fejn diletanti ta’ l-ixkubetta jew ‘senter’ kienu jisparaw fuq il-plattini fil-hdud. Niftakar, meta kont zghir nara lill-Patri Piet, patri tas-‘Sacro Cuor’ ta’ tas-Sliema, jigi l-gnien u minn taht ic-coqqa johrog ic-cipp tas-senter, waqt li mill-komma johrog il-kanna u jarmahom f’senter quddiemna qabel jikkarga! Kieku kien imur lura l-kunvent bl-ixkubetta tidher, ara kemm kienu jghidu fuqu n-nies ‘tal-belt’ - giegheluna nifhmu. Kemm inbidlu drawwiet f’hamsin sena!”. See Joe Borg, “Il-Biedja f’H’Attard tul iz-zmien”, enc. Borg/Frendo, Feb. 1997

⁵⁴See above ftn. 8.

⁵⁵See Mallia, *op. cit.*, ftn. 46

⁵⁶For its role in connection with the Attard Football club see below ftn. 59

⁵⁷See the commemorative P.N. pamphlet *Tifkira tal-Fruh mill-Gdid tal-Kazin Nazzjonalista Francis X. Dingli, H’Attard, 23 Apr. 1994*, p.7.

⁵⁸For more details, and illustrations being reproduced here, see J.A. Mizzi’s volume on *Scouting in Malta* (1989), *passim*.

⁵⁹See the notes prepared for the author by the club secretary, Mr Norman Borg, in enc. Borg/Frendo, Attard, 1 May 1997.

⁶⁰On socio-cultural work of the Attard Ladies Circle see e.g. the entries in *Rivista Attardjana*, no. 6, Apr. 1996, p. 15, and no. 12, Sept. 1997, p. 15.

⁶¹See the details in the Attard parish pamphlet, and the list of parish priests in Appendix 1.

⁶²See Antoinette Baldacchino: “H’Attard: Pijunier tal-Legjun ta’ Marija f’Malta”, *Rivista Attardjana*, n. 9, Dec. 1996, pp.14-15, and “Il-M.U.S.E.U.M. tal-Bniet - 75 Sena ta’ Hidma”, *ibid.*, n. 8, Oct. 1996, pp.14-15. It is interesting to note that Villa Bologna was sometimes the

venue for such meetings. Between 1911 and 1917, on the suggestion of Mgr Alfredo Mifsud, it also hosted a crafts school run by Franciscan missionary nuns from Russia, Portugal, Lithuania and the U.S.A. On this see Carmel Mallia: "Snajja f'H'Attard: Sorrijiet li għallmu r-Rakkmu u l-Hjata", *ibid.*, n.9, Dec. 1996, pp.10-11.

⁶³See the memories in German/Frendo, 14 Feb. 1997.

⁶⁴One such artist, Joe Farrugia of Dun Gwann Theuma Street, donated a painting of his for the Mayor's office, where it now hangs.

⁶⁵On refugees there see above ftn. 34.

⁶⁶I am grateful to Mr. Justice Franco Depasquale for the biodata on Professor Borg, but see also R. Mifsud's Bonnici's *Dizzjunarju Bijo-Bibljografiku Nazzjonali* for a list of his wide-ranging research publications.

⁶⁷See the reportage in *Rivista Attardjana*, no. 5, Dec. 1995, pp.10-11, and the donation to Mgr. Philip Calleja in the presence of asylum-seekers from different countries on p.11.

⁶⁸See the reports in *Rivista Attardjana*, no. 12, Sept. 1997, pp.8-9

⁶⁹German / Frendo, *op.cit.*, a parish-based youth centre was started in 1986, until in 1993 a premises for these Attard youths in Hal Warda Street was officially inaugurated by Archbishop Mercieca. I am indebted for this information to Attard's Youth Centre Co-ordinator, Mr Frankie Zammit (his notes of 19 Aug. 1997).

⁷⁰See the commemorative leaflet.

⁷¹I am grateful for this information to Suor Anna M.Demanuele, O.P., Administrator of the Dominican Sisters' St. Catherine of Siena Home in Pitkali Road, Attard.

⁷²On such events see A.E. Abela, *op.cit.* on Coleridge see especially the works of the Edinburgh-based scholar Donald Sultana, who keeps residence at Casa Vella (above ftn. 37)

⁷³In his *Descrizione di Malta, Isola nel mare Siciliano*, Gian Francesco Abela referred to an Attard resident who had returned to Licata where he struck it rich.

⁷⁴On these prospects see the editorial "Il-Vantaggi tal-Gemellaggi" in *Rivista Attardjana*, no. 11, June 1997, p. 3

⁷⁵Attard residents have included three Cabinet Ministers: Lino Spiteri, an Oxonian who is a former daily newspaper editor and still a leading columnist, who served as Minister of Finance; Professor Josef Bonnici, also an economist and a newspaper columnist, who did his postgraduate studies in Canada and later taught in Australia before becoming Minister for Economic Planning; and Charles Buhagiar, an architect who in 1996 became Minister of Works: the first Cabinet Minister to be returned from the district while resident in Attard, he visited the municipal offices for a full-scale meeting shortly after his election. Another resident MP, Richard Muscat, was Parliamentary Secretary for Youth and the Arts.

⁷⁶See the illustrated reports in *Rivista Attardjana*, no. 10, Mar. 1997, p.8.

⁷⁷Enc. in Bertie/Frendo, 21 March 1997, f.2 and *Rivista Attardjana*, no. 4, Sept. 1995, p.12.

LISTA TAL-PRESIDENTI TAS-SOCJETA' MUZIKALI LA STELLA LEVANTINA 1894

MASTRU KARM DEBONO	1894 - 1929
GUZEPPI GALEA	1930 - 1932
WIGI AZZOPARDI	1932 - 1932
GUZEPPI GALEA	1932 - 1932
CARMELO BORG	1932 - 1933
ROBERT BENCINI	1933 - 1936
CARMELO PISANI	1936 - 1937
CARMELO BORG	1937 - 1938
SAVER GALEA	1938 - 1944
GIANNI CHETCUTI	1944 - 1945
SALVU MALLIA	1945 - 1946
PAWLU DANDRIA	1946 - 1947
SALVU MALLIA	1948 - 1956
JOSEPH ATTARD FLORES	1956 - 1956
SALVU MALLIA	1956 - 1957
CARMELO BORG	1957 - 1958
JOSEPH ATTARD CASSAR	1958 - 1959
C. BORG AZZOPARDI	1959 - 1960
CARMELO BORG	1960 - 1961
ALFRED WOODHOUSE	1961 - 1962
CARMELO BORG	1962 - 1963
PIETRU PACE	1963 - 1964
CARMELO BORG	1964 - 1974
CARMELO ATTARD	1974 - 1982
SALVU ATTARD	1982 - 1983
ARTURO VALENZIA	1983 - 1984
C. BORG AZZOPARDI	1984 - 1991
CARMELO CAMILLERI	1991 -

LISTA TA' PRESIDENTI TAL-KAZIN STA. MARIJA

EMANUEL AQUILINA	1912 - 1923	EMANUEL AQUILINA	1947 - 1954
GUZEPPI GALEA	1923 - 1924	EMANUEL BUHAGIAR	1954 - 1960
ANGELO BONNICI	1924 - 1926	SUSAN THORNE	1960 - 1969
FRANGESCO VELLA	1926 - 1926	DAMIAN MALLIA	1969 - 1971
ANGELO BONNICI	1926 - 1927	EMANUEL BUHAGIAR	1971 - 1978
GUZEPPE CHETCUTI	1927 - 1938	JOSEPH FENECH	1978 - 1980
GUZEPPE PORTELLI	1938 - 1947	CARMELO DINGLI	1980 -

LISTA TAL-PRESIDENTI TAL-KAZIN LABURISTA

JOSEPH MALLIA	LAWRENCE BILOCCA
MOSES GATT	PERIT CHARLES BUHAGIAR
CARMELO SPITERI	JOE PORTELLI
CARMELO BORG	JOHN BONNICI
FRANCIS SAMMUT	FRANCO M. AZZOPARDI
KARMENU GAUCI	

LISTA TAL-PRESIDENTI TAL-KAZIN NAZZJONALISTA

DR. FRANCIS XAVIER DINGLI
 FRANCIS MAMO
 CHARLES BELLIA

VICTOR AZZOPARDI
 MARK FENECH
 PIERRE CAUCHI

LISTA TA' PRESIDENTI TAL-KLABB TAL-FUTBOL

ANTHONY BONNICI	1974/75
JOHN GRECH	1975/76 - 1977/78
JOE GALEA CAVALAZZI	1978/79
ANTHONY SCHEMBRI	1979/80 - 1984/85
JOE PISANI	1985/86 - 1987/88
DR. GEORGE CUTAJAR	1988/89
DR. TONIO MICALLEF TRIGONA	1989/90 - 1992/93
MICHAEL ATTARD	1993/94 - 1994/95
LAURIE CIAPPARA	1995/96
JOE GALEA CAVALAZZI	1996/97 - 1997/98

LISTA TAL-KAPPILLANI KOLLHA

LEONARDU MICALLEF	1579 - 1594
MARKU TABONE	1594 - 1609
STIEFNU BUTTIGIEG	1609 - 1635
GORG GAUCI	1635 - 1663
PAWLUS BAROLO	1664 - 1681
SILVIO PACE	1684 - 1699
ALESSANDRU FITENI	1699 - 1712
ARK ANGLU DEBONO	1713 - 1759
FRANCESCO FELICE	1759 - 1774
PIETRU DELIKATA	1774 - 1794
GUZEPI ATTARD	1795 - 1799
GEJTAN BUTTIGIEG	1801 - 1802
MARTINU ZERAFA	1803 - 1820
SALVATORE ZAMMIT	1820 - 1834
LWIGI MIZZI	1835 - 1846
ANTONIO VASSALLO	1846 - 1869
GWANN EBEJER	1869 - 1876
GWANN BONNICI	1876 - 1887
CARMELO AZZOPARDI	1887 - 1903
PIER BATTISTA AGIUS	1904 - 1924
GIRGOR BORG	1924 - 1925
CARMELO BONDIN	1925 - 1930
CARMELO SCIBERRAS	1930 - 1932
MIKIEL BALZAN	1932 - 1957
GUZEPI DALMAS	1957 - 1986
ANTON PORTELLI	1986 - 1993
DIONE CUTAJAR	1993 -



“Fjur il-Ward Infewwah”



The Professor of History at the University of Malta and the author of several original works on Maltese History, HENRY FRENDO was elected Mayor of Attard in 1994. He has served as Malta's first Head of Delegation to the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe in Strasbourg, Founder-President of the College of Mayors, and Founder-President of the Local Councils Association. A doctoral graduate of Oxford University, Professor Frendo is a Life Member of Clare Hall, Cambridge, and has taught in various universities in Europe and Australasia, received numerous awards, and headed UN missions in Africa and Asia.