



Gallarija, St Paul's Street, Valletta

In the last few years The London Art History Society has joined forces with Real Holidays in order to offer study tours to continental Europe. We continue to develop this relationship, and for the 2018 spring tour we intend taking The London Art History Society to Malta on Monday June 4th and returning on Sunday June 10th 2018. We have prepared an ambitious and interesting tour, including the option of travel on scheduled flights to/from one of the London airports, a delightful small hotel in Valletta on a bed and breakfast basis and dinner at selected restaurants on four evenings.

We have drafted a budget based on 15 travellers in the group. The flight details and costs have yet to be confirmed. To get the information out to the membership with the Summer Mailing, we are therefore taking a slightly different approach in the presentation of the tour package from that which members might expect. The itinerary is merely a flavour of the tour to be enticing and the price is

indicative of the final figure. Our objective as always is to run the tour on a non-profit basis.

Preliminary details including the draft itinerary, booking form and Real Holidays' terms and conditions are enclosed (NB: only enclosed for Postal members – available on web for online members). All applicants and friends who travel with them must be current members of The London Art History Society at the time of the trip.

Finally, we need to confirm room bookings to the hotel in **mid-August** which is likely to include placing a deposit. We would therefore appreciate early applications from members to ensure the success of the arrangements.

The Guide

Our lecturer will be Juliet Rix, award-winning journalist, writer and broadcaster with a particular interest in the history of Malta. She has devised and led many cultural tours in Malta for leading art history travel companies. She is the author of the *Bradt Guide: Malta and Gozo*.

Preliminary Itinerary

Valletta will be hosting the title of European Capital of Culture in 2018 with a partner, the Dutch city of Leeuwarden. The ECoC includes all the Maltese Islands, with an aim of spreading its impact throughout the whole Maltese territory. In preparation for this, there has been a series of substantial conservation and development works. Malta is an island with a remarkably diverse history and now is a moment to see some of this at its best.

Remarkable prehistoric sites in Malta and Gozo include the two Neolithic temples of Mnajdra and Ħaġar Qim near the small village of Qrendi in Southern Malta; in Paola, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the prehistoric underground temple of Hal Saflieni Hypogeum; the Tarxien Temples site, a complex of megaliths dating from 3600 and 2500 BC; and on Gozo the temples of Ggantija.

Mdina, Malta's ancient capital, is an unspoilt citadel of great beauty, centre of the indigenous aristocracy, with medieval walls, grand palazzi and a Baroque cathedral. Nearby is the town of Rabat, with its Early Christian catacombs.

Valletta has the National Museum of Archaeology, home of the unique 'Fat Ladies of Malta'; The Manoel Theatre, a rare survival of the early eighteenth century,

and the Co-Cathedral of St John, one of the most interesting of Baroque buildings, with ceiling paintings by Mattia Preti and two paintings by Caravaggio. Finally we will experience the twenty-first century with a visit to the Valletta City Gate Project, the complete reorganisation of the principal entrance to the Maltese capital by the Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

Once there is an adequate response to this mailing, we shall ask our guide to produce a more detailed itinerary on a day-by-day basis.

The Hotel, Restaurants and Travel

Once in the region we will stay at the Palazzo Consiglia. Full details can be found on its website www.palazzoconsiglia.com/ or www.hotels-charme.uk/palazzo-consiglia. Contact details are 102 St. Ursula Street, Valletta VLT 1234; Phone: +356 2124 4222; Email: info@palazzoconsiglia.com; Skype Name: Palazzo.Consiglia

Palazzo Consiglia is a traditional Maltese townhouse situated at the heart of Valletta with thirteen guest rooms that each have a different character.

Travel will be arranged on scheduled flights with one of the major airlines from either London Gatwick or Heathrow. Ideally we shall book flights with a return journey in the afternoon on the final day of our tour which will leave an adequate amount of time for a reasonable amount of exploration.

There is however an option to make your own travel arrangements and meet the main party at the airport or hotel.

Travel whilst on the islands will be in a suitable air-conditioned coach.

Restaurants will be chosen by recommendation, particularly for their food and surroundings.

Practical Details and Booking Arrangements

The total cost including travel is estimated to be **£2,050** per person (**£1,760** if making your own travel arrangements), which includes flights, hotel accommodation, breakfasts, admission charges, dinner on four occasions including wine, water and coffee, tips for drivers and restaurant staff, and the services of the lecturer. It is calculated on the basis of shared twin rooms, and does not include lunches or dinner on two evenings. There are a few single rooms available; however the net additional prices quoted by the hotels give rise to a supplement of **£355**.



Intarsio marble floor, Chapel of the Most Holy Crucifix, Metropolitan Cathedral, Mdina

The Tour has been planned on the basis of 15 participants and the prices have been calculated on a non-profit basis in accordance with the Society's normal policy for foreign tours. This does enable us to provide an extremely attractive package with the best of hotels and guides. If there is sufficient interest, a few additional participants may be considered but this will be dependent upon the availability of hotel rooms. If only 12 participants expressed interest, we would consult those who have applied but, if the tour were to go ahead, there would need to be a supplement of about **£135 per person** to ensure that the Society does not incur a loss - the tour would still be terrific value and have the bonus of being a very personal few days.

NB To avoid fixing the cost at too discouraging a level no allowance has been made for a deterioration in the value of sterling against the euro. We therefore reserve the right to make a surcharge of not more than **£100**, to cover up to 10% of extra costs caused by a fall in the exchange rate. Any costs above that will be borne by The London Art History Society. The exchange rate used for these costings was £1 = 1.10 euros.

The above costs also include the services of a travel agent – **Real Holidays** – who provide professional booking services and ABTA cover. All travel and accommodation (flights and hotels) have been arranged by Real Holidays, who will accordingly handle the financial side of the trip.

Bookings can only be accepted if accompanied by a deposit of **£375** per person, made payable to **Real Holidays**. All applicants and friends who travel with them must be current members of The London Art History Society at the time of the trip.

Booking forms are included with this posting, so if you do intend joining us, please complete the form and send it, along with a cheque made payable to Real Holidays, to Michael Pearson at the address below.

The London Art History Society, c/o Tudor Cottage, Stoke Prior, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0LG

Your attention is drawn to the booking conditions issued by Real Holidays and available for inspection on its website www.realholidays.co.uk/about-us/about-real-holidays/travel-agency-booking-conditions. It is essential that you take out travel insurance cover, and you should also obtain the European Health Insurance Card (which replaced the form E111) from a Post Office. **Note** that the EHC is only valid for five years; please ensure that your card will be valid during the period of our tour.

The itinerary and locations are subject to unpredictable circumstances. We are visiting churches where funerals and weddings are held and choir practice and enthusiastic organists can disrupt our day. We shall try to work around these little problems but ask for your understanding should they occur. We would like to emphasise the fact that these cultural tours are organised for the benefit of members by an enthusiastic volunteer; they are not commercial operations and we will **not** be accompanied by a tour manager for the duration of our tour. We rely on participants to be self-reliant and independent. Participants who feel that they may need help should make arrangements for a companion to accompany them who is prepared to give them assistance. All tours involve a significant amount of standing around

in museums or walking, often over uneven cobbled streets. Participants on all tours should be able to walk at a reasonable pace and/or stand for at least thirty minutes without aid or requiring a rest. If you or any member of your party has any medical condition you are expected to know the limit of your abilities and be sensible. Where appropriate, you should consider using taxis or other independent transport.



Valletta City Gate Project, by the Renzo Piano Building Workshop

Bookings and any initial enquiries will be dealt with by Michael Pearson, The London Art History Society Study Tour Organiser, who may be contacted by email tours@londonarthistorysociety.org.uk or telephone 01799 521290.

To conclude, we need to emphasise the earlier comment that we need to confirm room bookings to the hotel in mid-August 2017 which is likely to include placing a deposit. We would therefore appreciate early applications from members to ensure the success of the arrangements.

NB : Applicants are requested to email Michael Pearson to confirm that they have posted a booking form and cheque.