

The Kalkara Heritage Trail | visitkalkara.com



The village of Kalkara, situated in the South Eastern Region of Malta, has a population of around 3,000. The name is derived from the Latin word for lime due to the presence of a lime kiln since Roman times, hence its motto *A Calce Nomen* and the emblem represented by a green scutcheon divided in two parts: half being blue representing the sea, and the other being gold with a burning flame.

Kalkara’s history is buried in its glorious past: the presence of archeological cart-ruts near it-Turretta, Egyptian stelae brought by the Phoenicians found in Bighi, and the construction of the Palaeochristian hypogea in the zone of Xaghra ta’ Santa Duminka. Moreover, the first church of Our Saviour built before 1487 implies the presence of a community in the area, sustained through fishing and agriculture.

Development of Kalkara surged during the periods of the Knights and British, especially with the construction of fortifications and Bighi Naval Hospital. It became an independent parish in 1897.

Kalkara bore the brunt of World War II, with a number of casualties and destroyed edifices. Reconstruction after the war proved the strength of a community to start afresh: transforming Kalkara into a gem of the Maltese islands.

1 Xewkija Area

From ancient times it has been used as a storage for small boats, especially since Kalkara Creek was known for fishermen and oarsmen. The same area is also known for the construction and repairs of traditional seacrafts.

2 The Parish Church

In 1944 Archbishop Mons. Michael Gonzi bought a plot of land to build the new Parish Church dedicated to Saint Joseph. The design was made by Chev. Vincenzo Bonello aided by engineer Ġużè Damato. The first stone was blessed in 1946, and the Church was inaugurated in 1952. It possesses many works of art.



Kalkara Creek

Kalkara Creek is a well-known sheltered inlet for various fishermen’s and oarsman’s boats, exposed to the Northeast wind. The shore, sheltered and with remarkable views, was enlarged several times.

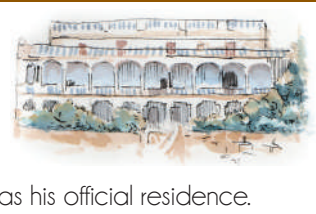
3 The Jewish Cemetery

This cemetery is the oldest Jewish burial ground in Malta. The establishment of this site is cited by a Latin inscription above the door, indicating that it was officially opened in 1784. It was financed by a Livorno fund with the aim of ransoming Jewish slaves and their eventual burial, following an application made by Agostino Formosa de Fremeaux.



4 Villa Portelli

Early during the 19th century Sir Agostino Portelli decided to build his villa in Kalkara, after the French blockade of 1798. During the Second World War the villa became the residence of the Malta Flag Officer, while in 1961 it was taken over by Admiral Sir Douglas Eric Holland-Martin as his official residence.



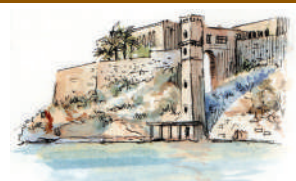
5 Villa Bighi

Villa Bighi was designed by Maltese architect Lorenzo Gafà. It was built in 1675 by Fra Giovanni Bichi the grandson of Pope Alexander VII. In 1827 King George IV decreed that the Admiralty transform the building into a naval hospital, with the foundation stone being laid in 1830.



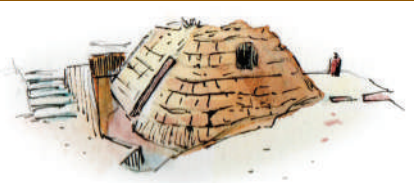
Bighi Cot-Lift

Built in a Victorian architectural style in 1903, it was used to transfer injured sailors from naval ships to the wards of the Royal Naval Hospital Bighi. Situated 25 metres above sea level, it was damaged during the Second World War.



Bighi Baths

Built on the coast beneath the Bighi complex, these thermal baths were used for thalassotherapy. Each bath was assigned to specific categories of British service-men.



6 The Church of Our Saviour

Prior to 1487 a Church dedicated to Our Saviour was built on the Rinella peninsula which was demolished during the Great Siege of 1565. In 1580 the Church was rebuilt and in 1676 Bailiff Fra Giovanni Bichi, victim of the plague, was buried inside it. In 1680 his nephew Fra Mario Bichi rebuilt again this Church on Lorenzo Gafà’s design.



7 The Cross of the Great Siege

A popular legend recounts that at the end of the Great Siege, the Knights and the Maltese advanced to the hill of Our Saviour and the Commander grabbed his sword and stuck it in the ground, thus taking the shape of a cross. Later, a cross was erected to commemorate this event, unfortunately destroyed several years ago, and recently reconstructed again.



Holy Family Square Belvedere

The view includes Kalkara Creek and the bastions surrounding it.

8 The old Parish Church

In 1884 Fortunato Gulia donated a plot of land for the building of a new Church in Kalkara. Can. Rev. Joseph Azzopardi administered this project and architect Guglielmo Attard designed the Church. The first stone was blessed in 1890 and Kalkara became a Parish in 1897. It was completely destroyed during the Second World War on 10th April 1942.



Rinella Bay

Rinella bay is the only bay located in the harbour area. It takes it’s name from the Italian word ‘arenella’, a small arena due to its shape of this bay and the gallows which used to be located in the furthest point of the peninsula.

9 Fort Ricasoli

In 1669 Grand Master Nicolás Cotoner commissioned engineer Antonio Maurizio Valperga to design a large fortress while Chev. Giovanni Francesco Ricasoli donated 20,000 scudi for its construction. The first stone was laid in 1670 and was fully completed and armed by May 1698.



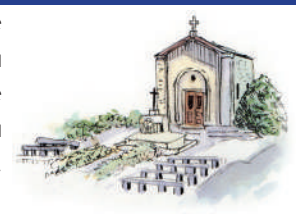
The Church of Saint Nicholas

The building of the Church in Fort Ricasoli commenced in 1696 and was concluded in 1698. It was dedicated to Saint Nicholas in memory of Grand Master Nicolás Cotoner. There is a high altar and two side altars in the Church, apart from those found in the crypt. In 1743 the first written sermon in Maltese language was held here.



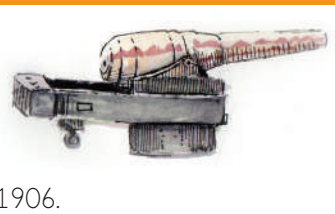
10 Wied Ghammieg Cemetery

In 1837 all the hospitalized elderly in Floriana were evacuated into Fort Ricasoli due to the cholera plague. 855 of these elderly succumbed to the illness and they were buried in a mass grave in a field next to the fort. Due to substantial devotion, this cemetery became a place of pilgrimage.



11 Fort Rinella

Fort Rinella was built by the British in 1886 to guard the naval base and dockyard in Malta, in response to two Italian warships. It is equipped with a 100-ton cannon built by Sir George William Armstrong. The fortress was completed in 1886 and remained in use until 1906.



Malta Film Studios

In 1963 Jim Hole and Paul Avellino established filming facilities in the area including a shallow-water tank 300 feet wide and immune from tides and stormy weather. Today there is one indoor and two large exterior water tanks.

Fort Saint Rocco

Construction started in 1872/3 as part of a fortification improvement programme. Built on the land which served as the battery of Saint Rocco during the French blockade, this structure was the first polygonal fort of its kind to be built by the British in Malta.



SmartCity Malta

SmartCity is a technology park under development. The project unveiled in 2007 covers an area of 360,000m², hosts commercial outlets and a dancing water fountain which forms part of the lagoon.

Red House

The Red House is an old private villa built in the year 1803 in the hamlet of Saint Rocco, on the eastern part of Kalkara. It is well known for its red apertures and the majestic door. During the years, the surrounding houses took also names associated with other colours, thus painting their apertures respectively.

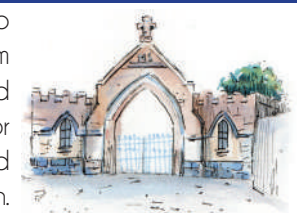


Santu Rokku Hamlet

The hamlet takes its name from the chapel of Saint Rocco which was once present near the coast, together with a redoubt and a battery. Dwellings developed in the hamlet in the proximity of the Capuchins’ convent and church.

12 Commonwealth Cemetery

Kalkara Naval Cemetery was established due to fewer hospital ships being sent to Malta as from 1917, while there was an increase of wounded patients. The Cemetery was substantially utilised for those who lost their lives during the Second World War. It is today under Commonwealth administration.



13 The Church of Saint Barbara

Giuseppe Valerio Abela donated a plot of land to the Capuchin Friars to build a Church and Convent designed by Fra Giuseppe. In 1736 the first stone was blessed and both buildings were inaugurated in 1743. The Church is dedicated to Saint Barbara.



The Pedestal of Saint Peter and Saint Paul

The pedestal standing today dates back to 1850. Together with another pedestal, they were located at the entrance of the old pathway to the convent. On the pedestals there were two statues of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, sculptured in 1855 by Vincenzo Sammut and Alessandro Farrugia respectively.



14 Our Saviour Fort

In 1724 part of Our Saviour Bastion was converted into a fort by French military engineers. The main purpose was to defend the area around Kalkara Creek and Our Saviour hill. The fort consists of two demi-bastions, a curtain wall and a parade ground. The British Empire continued to utilise this fort as a reformatory and camp.



Our Saviour Garden

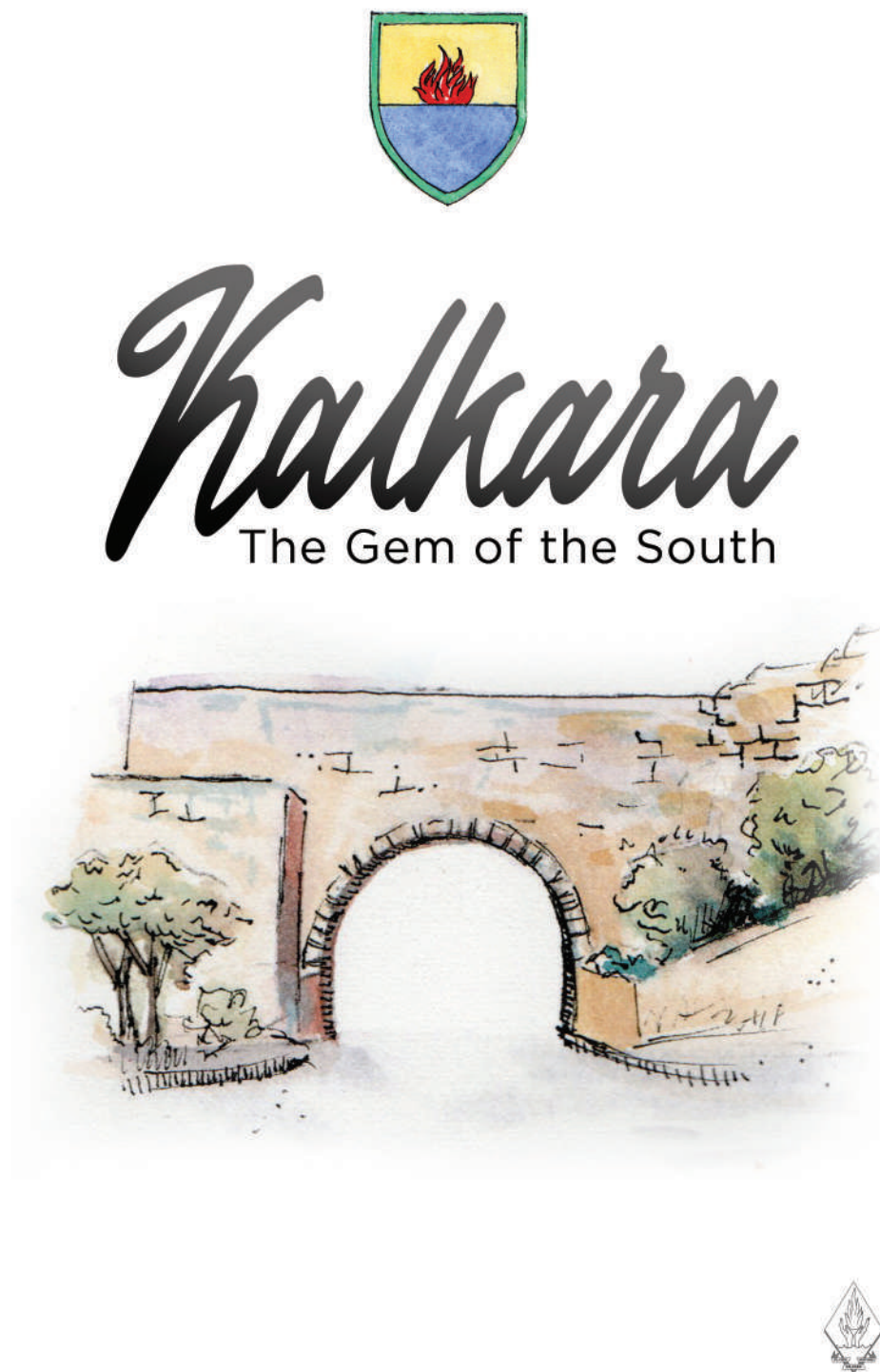
Our Saviour Garden takes its name from Our Saviour Gate found nearby. The garden is situated next to the main entrance of Kalkara and hosts several mature trees and a miniature Malta model.

15 Our Saviour Gate

In 1670 the construction of the Cottonera Lines was initiated, designed by the Italian engineer Antonio Valperga. Our Saviour’s curtain is named after Kalkara’s hill which bears the same name. Our Saviour Gate was built during the reign of Grand Master Ramón Perellós y Rocafull (1715-22).



There are various other places of interest all around Kalkara ranging from quite village lanes to dormant sea inlets. Other important locations include: the neolithic cart-ruts in Triq it-Turretta, various statue niches all around the village and the community clubs including the two band clubs (Banda San Ġużepp in Piazza Arcisqof Gonzi and Banda Sagra Familja in Triq ir-Rnella), the Kalkara Regatta Club in Triq Marina and the Kalkara United Football Club in Triq il-Missjoni Taljana. Visit www.visitkalkara.com for further information.



Kalkara | where past and present converge

Although tranquil and serene throughout all the year, Kalkara and it’s villagers, the *Kalkarizi*, celebrate and participate in a number of events during the year. These may take various forms, but the three major ones are the following:

Third Sunday of July: Feast of Saint Joseph

Indulge in a whole week of activities including solemn masses in the church and band marches by the two competing bands with the colourful participation of the villagers in fully decorated streets and accompanied by aerial and ground fireworks. On Sunday the devotional procession with the statue of Saint Joseph. Not to be missed!

31st March and 8th September: Traditional Regatta

Kalkara still known for its oarsmen participates annually in the traditional regatta races held in the Grand Harbour of Malta. Spot (and support) the *Kalkarizi* in green gear and green traditional wooden boats.

10th December: Kalkara Day

The Kalkara Local Council commemorates the day on which the village became an independent Parish and wreaths are laid to memorialise the victims of the Second World War.

Do not miss visiting two important locations: the Esplora Interactive Science Centre situated in the historic Bighi complex and Fort Rinella where you can see the world’s largest cannon. Moreover, Kalkara offers other endeavours during the year: ranging from hiking in its borders, swimming in Rinella bay, walking around various paths or peacefully strolling along the promenade. Cafés, bars, traditional *kazini* (clubs) and restaurants, among other shops will make a day-trip or two complete. Furthermore, a number of accommodation solutions are present at varied budgets. For more information please visit www.visitkalkara.com. Enjoy your stay!

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Kalkara
The Gem of the South