

# SOME PUBLIC MONUMENTS OF VALLETTA

1800-1955

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## The Upper Barracca (cont.)

A similar tablet is on the next upright:

TO THE  
MEMORY OF  
LT COMDR F.E. WALTERS  
AND CHIEF ENGR. A. BAKER  
OF HER MAJESTY T.B.D.  
ARDENT  
WHO WERE DROWNED  
IN SALONIKI HARBOUR  
ON THE NIGHT OF THE  
8TH OCTOBER 1899  
ERECTED  
BY THEIR MESSMATES

An old photograph shows another tablet of similar design on the next upright, but this is now missing and cannot be traced (44).

In the corner of the outer arcades is a pedestal surmounted by an urn, to the memory of Vice Admiral Sir Thomas Fremantle (1765-1819). He had a distinguished naval career and was closely associated with Nelson, notably in the action off Cadiz when Nelson's barge was attacked by a Spanish gun-boat. He was wounded at Teneriffe, the battle at which Nelson lost his right arm, and the first writing the Admiral attempted with his left hand was a note to Mrs. Fremantle. They again shared in the battle of Copenhagen, and at Trafalgar Fremantle commanded the *Neptune*. Later he undertook several special missions on the Balkan coast, for which he was created a Baron of the Austrian Empire, and made several disciplinary innovations in his ships. He was made G.C.B. and Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, in 1818, and died in this post on December 19th, 1819 (45). The inscription on the monument is:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
SIR THOMAS FRANCIS FREMANTLE

\* The author regrets a number of inaccuracies in the footnotes in the previously published portion of this article and will supply a list of corrections on request to him at the Royal Commonwealth Society, London.

(44) This appears clearly in a photograph of 1910 in the author's possession, and in 1943 the upright showed marks that could indicate that a memorial had been attached.

(45) Fremantle, Admiral Sir Sydney. *Nelson and his Friends* ("Sunday Express" October 17th, 1943). This has a picture of H.M.S. *Rochfort* "hanging Judas" in mourning for Sir Thomas, also reproduced in Vol III of *The Wynne Diaries*, O.U.P. 1940: *Dictionary of National Biography* Vol. VII pp. 688-689: *Burke's Peerage* 1953 pp. 502-503.

KNIGHT GRAND CROSS  
OF THE  
BATH, GUELPH, SAINT FERDINAND AND MERIT  
SAINT MICHAEL AND SAINT GEORGE  
KNIGHT COMMANDER OF MARIA THERESA  
BARON OF THE AUSTRIAN EMPIRE  
AND VICE ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE  
WHO DIED AT NAPLES IN THE CHIEF COMMAND  
OF HIS MAJESTY'S NAVAL FORCES  
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN  
ON THE 19 DECR 1819 IN THE 54TH YEAR OF HIS AGE  
THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED BY CAPTAIN A.P. GREEN  
AND THE OFFICERS OF HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP ROCHFORT  
IN WHICH HE HAD HIS FLAG  
AS A TESTIMONY OF THEIR RESPECT  
FOR HIS CHARACTER AND TALENTS

The Fremantle family have been distinguished as sailors since that time, amongst them being Admiral Sir Charles Howe Fremantle (1800-1876) after whom the Australian port is named; Admiral Sir Edmund Robert Fremantle (1836-1929) and Admiral Sir Sydney Robert Fremantle (1867-1958). A reminder of military distinction, however, is given by an inscription on the right side of the pedestal:

RESTORED  
BY  
HIS GRANDNEPHEW  
H.E. GENL. SIR ARTHUR FREMANTLE, K.C.M.G., C.B.  
GOVERNOR OF MALTA  
1895

On the opposite side appears:

RESTORED  
BY  
HIS GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN  
1938

During the war the urn was shattered in the bombing, but the strong family feeling of the Fremantles for their distinguished ancestor has resulted in its repair (46).

Beyond this arcade is a railed gallery which, together with several of the arches, suffered very severely from bombing, though this has now been repaired. It commands a remarkable view, described in "Grand Harbour": "Leaning against the railings guarding the ramparts they looked down upon the Grand Harbour far below. It seemed wider, and curiously bare without battleships or cruisers at their moorings in the stream and up the creeks. Only scattered *dghajjes* and a Gozo boat with graceful wing-like sails floated on the vividly blue water. From their dizzy look-out they had an oblique view along the Valletta ramparts from Victoria Gate to the Lower Barracca Gardens, silhouetted against the horizon, and of the closely packed square yellow houses and red cupolas climbing the steep contour of the peninsula.

(46) Letter to D.H.S. from Admiral Sir Sydney Fremantle.

Across the harbour the ancient city of Senglea crowned Isola. To the left, on another promontory, the grim escarpments of Fort St. Angelo protected the flat roofs and red domes of Vittoriosa. Beyond again, were the sheer yellow cliffs of Bighi surmounted by the colonnades and pillared pavilions of the Naval Hospital, and finally the fortified promontory of Ricasoli" (47).

This splendid setting was the scene of one of the most impressive events of the International Eucharistic Congress held in Malta in April 1918. On 26th Cardinal Dominic Ferrata, the Papal Legate, blessed the sea from a tribune erected on the edge of this platform, and a tablet on the seaward side of the arcades commemorates this:

TITULUS LOCI INDEX  
EX QUO VI KAL MAIAS MCMXIII  
DOMINICUS FERRATA CARD.  
IN EUCHAR. NATIONUM CONVENTU  
LEGATUS PONT. MAX.  
AEQUORI ILLUDQUE PERERRANTIBUS  
SACRAMENTO AUGUSTO  
SOLEMNI RITU BENE PRECATUS EST (48)

On one of the arches near the centre is a tablet (49) erected by the Dorsetshire Regiment:

IN  
MEMORY OF THOSE  
COMRADES WHO HAVE  
FALLEN DURING THE  
SIEGE OF MALTA  
1940-1948

(Here follow 27 names)

ERECTED 29. 1. 1950

Another tablet on this arcade, which survived the bombing which destroyed the arch on which it was placed but has apparently now been lost, commemorated Lieutenant Bourne, Mr Fallon, and other accidentally drowned persons (50).

At the end of the arcade is a large memorial in the form of a pillar surmounted by an urn, with four inscribed tablets round the base.

Front:

CLEMENTE MARTINO EDWARDS  
HOC MONUMENTUM  
SINGULARIS AMICITIAE ET PROBATAE FIDE  
TESTIMONIUM POSUIT  
THOMAS MAITLAND

Right:

TO THE MEMORY OF

(47) Field 81.

(48) J.C.P.: Macmillan, *A. Malta and Gibraltar Illustrated*. London, 1915 p. 267: Farrugia pp. 205-206, with illustration.

(49) J.C.P.: N.B. There are interesting references to the Regiment's work in Gilchrist R.T. *Malta strikes back*. Aldershot, 1946.

(50) This was on the outer line of arches, facing towards the gardens; it can be seen in the illustration in Macmillan, p. 115. It was complete after the bombing (See photograph on the lower half of page 50 of *The Epic of Malta*. London, 1948). It was lying on the saluting battery in 1943.

**CLEMENT MARTIN EDWARDS  
LIEUT. COL. OF HIS MAJESTY'S FIRST CEYLON REG.  
WHO DIED AT VALLETTA  
AFTER A PROTRACTED AND SEVERE ILLNESS  
ON THE 17TH MARCH 1816  
AGED 86 YEARS**

**Rear: HE WAS MILITARY SECRETARY  
TO HIS EXCELLENCY SIR THOMAS MAITLAND  
WHILE GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER OF THE FORCES IN CEYLON  
SUBSEQUENTLY ASSISTANT MILITARY SECRETARY  
TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF  
AND FINALLY FIRST COMMISSIONER  
OF THE BOARD HE HAD ORIGINALLY PROJECTED  
FOR AUDITING COLONIAL ACCOUNTS**

**Left: FEW COULD VIE WITH HIM IN USEFULNESS OF TALENTS  
FEWER STILL POSSESSED A HEART MORE BENEVOLENT  
OR DISPOSITION MORE SOCIAL  
HE DIED IN THE PRIME OF LIFE  
BUT LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW  
HOW FULLY HE HAD SECURED THE RESPECT  
AND ESTEEM OF ALL GOOD MEN**

It is remarkable that this man, whose career is so fully recorded on his monument, is not mentioned in either of the biographies of Sir Thomas Maitland, who obviously esteemed him so highly. The column is mentioned in "Grand Harbour", where Agatha stands in its shelter "and pretended to be absorbed in the antics of a green lizard darting in and out of the cracks" (51).

Near the memorial is the entrance to the lift that conveys passengers to and from the Marina, and somewhat incongruously placed over the entrance is the tablet which records the erection of the arcades:

**FRACTIS BELLO, REPULSISQUE TRACIBUS  
URBE VALLETTA DELINEATA  
LOCUM HUNC ITALIS MILITIBUS  
PROPUGNANDUM DELECTUM  
FR. FLAMINIUS BALBIANUS  
MAGNUS PRIOR MESSANAE  
NON MINUS SACRARUM AEDIUM PIO ORNATU  
QUAM UTRIUSQUE MILITIAE, SUIQUE ORDINIS  
CLASSIS PRAEFECTURA, CONSPICUUS,  
A COELI INCLEMENTIAE NOBILIORI FORMA SUO  
AERE, CONTEXTIT. ANN. DOM. MDCLXI**

"After the defeat of the Turks and the planning of the city of Valletta, the site entrusted to the care of the Italian Knights was, in 1661, embellished and roofed over, against the inclemency of the weather, at the expense of Fra. F. Balbiano, the Great Prior of Messina, who distinguished himself not only

(51) Field p. 88. There is no mention in Lord or Dixon, W. *The Colonial Administrations of Sir Thomas Maitland*. London, 1989.

for his piety in the decoration of churches, but also for his generalship both in the army and navy of the Order" (52).

There was also a more elaborate inscription in praise of Fr. Balbiano, but this has now vanished completely, as have some other memorials (53).

The only other memorial on this part of the fortifications is not on the Barracca itself, but on the saluting battery below, reached by a staircase (near Lord Strickland's statue) which passes under the outer portion of the arcades. At the right hand end of this platform is a large sarcophagus inscribed:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF  
HENRY ANDERSON MORSHEAD OF WIDEY-COURT  
IN THE COUNTY OF DEVON, ESQUIRE  
WHOSE ENDEARING QUALITIES IN PRIVATE LIFE  
WILL LONG BE REMEMBERED  
BY HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS; FOR ONE WHO  
ENDEAVOURED MORE TO DISCHARGE  
THE DUTIES OF EVERY RELATIONSHIP NEVER EXISTED  
HE WAS MERCIFUL, HUMANE, GENEROUS AND HOSPITABLE;  
GRATEFUL FOR KINDNESS AND ENTIRELY FORGETFUL  
OF INJURIES  
AS A CHRISTIAN HUMBLE, AND RELYING ONLY  
ON THE MERCY OF HIS GOD  
THE WIDOW OF THIS EXCELLENT MAN ERECTS  
THIS MONUMENT TO HIS BELOVED MEMORY:  
AND RECORDS HIS VIRTUES FOR THE SAKE  
OF ELEVEN CHILDREN  
WHO MOURN THEIR IRREPARABLE LOSS.

HIC SITUS EST  
HENRICUS ANDERSON MORSHEAD  
REGALIS ARCHITECTURAE MILITARIS TRIBUNUS  
MUNITIONIBUS IN HIS INSULIS PER BIENNIUM PRAEPOSITUS  
CUIUS IN OMNI FERE ORBIS TERRARUM PARTE  
VIRTUS MULTIS IN PAELUS PRUDENTIA IN MUNERIBUS  
PUBLICIS ENTUIT  
VIXIT ANNOS 41[?] MILITAVIT XL  
ABSENTE HOC F.C. PONSONBY INSULARUM GUBERNATORE  
REM MILITAREM ET CIVILEM ADMINISTRAVIT  
ET IN MAGISTRATU MORTE IMMATURA PRAEREPTUS  
XI ID NOV: MDCCCXXXI  
FUNERE PUBLICO ELATUS EST (54)

Henry Anderson Morshead (1774-1831) served as an officer, first of the Royal Artillery and later of the Royal Engineers, in many parts of the world;

(52) Zammit, *Valletta* pp. 57-58; J.C.P.

(53) This is described by Zammit (*Valletta*, pp. 58-60) as "on the northern wall of the arcades... under a stone bust". Was this the bust of Grand Master Gessan moved for the Zammit Memorial (see above) or are there two memorials missing?

(54) Brocktorff.

in 1798 he was attached to the staff of Sir Thomas Maitland in the West Indies. In 1829 he was appointed Commanding Royal Engineer at Malta, and at the time of his death on November 11th, 1831, was acting Governor. There is a bust of him in the Royal Engineers' Office at Malta (55).

The many monuments of the Upper Barracca combine with the very structure of the gardens to epitomise the history of Malta since the foundation of Valletta. Built as part of the fortifications, they were adopted for recreational use as the Order of St. John grew more luxurious and less military. They were the scene of historic events in 1775, and the monuments commemorate many, British and Maltese, who played a significant part in the affairs of the island during the past 150 years. Several memorials speak of Malta's tradition as a naval base, and finally the honourable scars of the air raids will remind those who visit these pleasant gardens of the ordeal that the island survived so gallantly.

### Hastings Gardens

Farther round the fortifications, and overlooking Floriana, is the Bastion of St. John, which contains Hastings Gardens. This pleasant spot, commanding a fine panorama inland and across Marsamxett Harbour, takes its name from the distinguished Governor of Malta who was buried here.

Francis Rawdon, Marquess of Hastings, was born on December 7th 1754 and had a long career in public service. As a soldier, he fought in the American War of Independence, and rose to the rank of General. His political career in the House of Commons and subsequently in the Lords, led to the post of Master-General of the Ordnance. In 1812 he was made Governor-General of British India, and in the ten years of his rule he did particularly effective work in the Mahratta War. After his retirement, he returned to public life as Governor of Malta owing to financial difficulties. He took up his post in 1824, and for two years, in spite of advanced years, discharged his duties punctiliously, with a courtesy and gravity in great contrast to his predecessor. He made efforts to improve the distressed conditions resulting from the stagnation of trade, and widespread poverty. In 1826 a fall from his horse aggravated the hernia from which he suffered, and though he was taken on board the *Revenge* to recuperate, he died in Baia Bay on November 28th (56).

He was buried on the ramparts of Valletta after his right hand had, at his request, been cut off for burial with his widow. The tomb was a narrow vault, covered by a large monumental slab and surrounded by a circular curb sixty feet in circumference, surmounted by an iron railing. There was, however, no inscription. For six months after his burial the country people, bringing their produce into market at dawn, covered the tomb with flowers, and in due course trees were planted about the spot, chiefly evergreens such as cypresses and American white pines (57).

(55) *Dictionary of National Biography* Vol. XIII pp. 1012-3.

(56) Laferla Vol. I pp. 125-126; *Dictionary of National Biography* Vol. IX pp. 117-122; *Gentleman's Magazine* Vol. XCVII 1827 pp. 85-90.

(57) *Gentleman's Magazine* Vol. XCVII 1827 p. 90; MacGill pp. 46-47; Bigelow, A. *Travels in Malta and Sicily...* Boston, 1831, p. 163. Brocktorff: Slade Vol. I, p. 64.

Eventually Lord Hastings was given a worthier memorial of somewhat unusual design. A solid base is surmounted by four pillars which support a canopy, under which sits the half-reclining robed figure of the Governor. His back is supported by the tablet which bears the inscription:

IN THIS PLACE WAS BURIED  
FRANCIS  
1ST MARQUESS OF HASTINGS K.G.  
BORN DECEMBER 7TH 1754 DIED NOVEMBER 28TH 1826  
SOME OF THOSE SURVIVING FRIENDS  
WHO WITNESSED HIS BRILLIANT AND BENEFICENT CAREER  
AS GOVERNOR-GENERAL AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF  
OF BRITISH INDIA  
AND REGARD HIS MEMORY WITH ADMIRATION  
AFFECTION AND RESPECT  
ERECTED THIS MONUMENT TO MARK HIS GRAVE WITH HONOUR

The monument was slightly damaged by bombing, which had the unfortunate result of removing some of the fingers of the upraised right hand and damaging the face.

At the end of the gardens, on the Bastion of St. Michael, is the base of what was once an impressive memorial to Sir Frederick Cavendish Ponsonby (1788-1837). He was a gallant and judicious officer, and saw much service in the Peninsular War and later in France. At Waterloo he was wounded five times and barely escaped with his life. He reached the rank of Major-General in 1825, and at the end of the next year was appointed Governor of Malta. In this post he earned great popularity by his simple and forthright nature and the impartial benevolence of his administration, so that his retirement through ill-health in 1836 and his death in January of the following year were deeply regretted (58). A tall column was erected by public subscription on the Bastion of St. Andrew, and though at first uninscribed, later bore the words:

FREDERICO CAVENDISH PONSONBY  
MELITAE AN. IX PRAEFECTO  
CIVIVM AMOR  
MDCCCXXXVIII (59)

In 1854 his son, Henry Ponsonby (later General Sir Henry Ponsonby, G.C.B., and Queen Victoria's private Secretary) saw the column while on his way to the Crimean War, but in 1864 it was struck by lightning and demo-

(58) Harrison & Hubbard p. 58 (map): *Dictionary of National Biography* Vol. XVI pp. 80-81: Ponsonby, Sir J. *The Ponsonby Family*. London 1929 pp. 115-125: Ponsonby, Sir J. *Henry Ponsonby*. London, 1942, pp. 1-15.

(59) Brocktorff said it had no inscription. Bartlett's illustration (p. 21) shows the column surmounted by an urn, and Zammit mentioned this (*Valletta*, p. 82) but illustrations in the *Malta Penny Magazine* Vol. I, p. 13, Brocktorff, and an engraving of the laying of the Foundation Stone of St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral in March 1839 (now in the British Museum) show it with a flat top.

lished. It was decided not to re-erect it, but to preserve the base which was accordingly placed on the adjoining bastion to the original one and the words added:

THE COLUMN 70 FEET HIGH ERECTED ON THIS BASE  
TO THE MEMORY OF SIR FREDERICK PONSONBY  
WAS DESTROYED BY LIGHTNING IN JANUARY 1864 (60)

Nearby, on another part of the bastion of St. Michael, now known by royal order as Spencer's bastion, is the grave of a distinguished naval officer. The tablets that formerly bore the inscription have been destroyed, though the main structure and the surrounding railings remain, but the wording was (61):

HERE LIES THE BODY  
OF  
CAPTAIN THE HONORABLE  
SIR ROBERT CAVENDISH SPENCER K.C.H.  
AGED 89 YEARS  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE  
ON BOARD AND IN COMMAND OF  
HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP MADAGASCAR  
AT ALEXANDRIA  
ON THE 4TH DAY OF NOVEMBER  
1830

Sir Robert Cavendish Spencer (1791-1830) was the third son of the second Earl Spencer. He entered the Royal Navy in 1804, and served with distinction and gallantry in European and American waters, during the Napoleonic Wars. He was subsequently stationed in the Mediterranean and took part in the attack on Algiers in 1824. His services as private Secretary to the Duke of Clarence (later King William IV) from 1827 to 1828 were rewarded by a knighthood. While serving in the Mediterranean as Captain of H.M.S. Madagascar he died suddenly from an internal illness, shortly after being appointed Surveyor-General of the Ordnance. He has been described as "a joyous, light-hearted sailor", but he was also a most able one; an accomplished linguist and a first-rate gunnery officer, he was also noted for his just and effective discipline, while the affection of the men under his command was shown by the obelisk they erected to his memory on Coradin Hill (now removed to Floriana) (62).

There are other memorials in Valletta, including the statue of Queen Victoria (1887), the Great Siege Monument (1927) and a number of historical inscriptions, but these lie outside the scope of the present notes (63).

(60) Ponsonby: *Henry Ponsonby*, pp. 13, 21: Zammit, *Valletta*, p. 82.

(61) Brocktorff.

(62) *Dictionary of National Biography* Vol. XVIII pp. 785-786: Le Marchant, Sir D. *Memoir of John Charles Viscount Althorp Third Earl Spencer*. London 1876, pp. 148, 152-154, 219-221, 264, 266. Many references to Captain Spencer appear in Hedderwick, J.B. *The Captain's Clerk*. London, 1957. There is a portrait of him facing page 48.

(63) It is hoped to prepare a similar article on memorials in Floriana and any material likely to assist this, or any corrections or additions to this article, will be gratefully received by the author at the Royal Commonwealth Society, Northumberland Avenue, London, W.C.2.