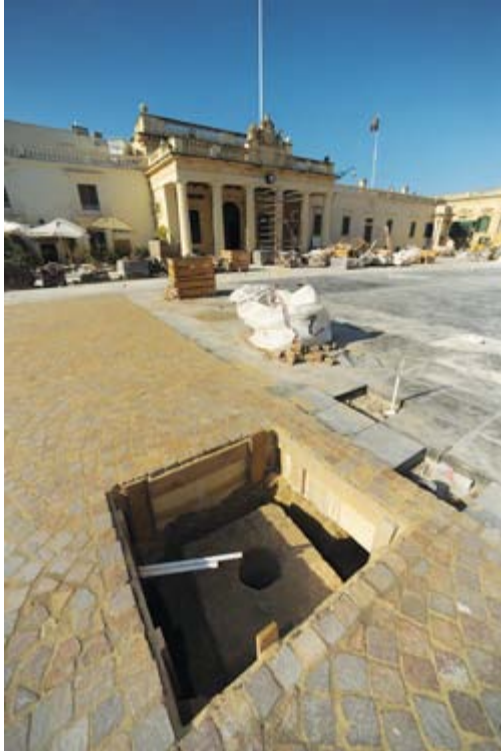


The Maypole at St George's Square



The hole in the stone slab is believed to have been used to secure the kukkanja pole.

Remnants of a popular game dating back to the era of the Knights of St John are believed to have been unearthed in St George's Square, Valletta.

A stone slab with a hole in the middle was discovered in the centre of the square during excavations as part of its overhaul.

Claude Borg, the executive coordinator of the Valletta Rehabilitation Project, said the hole would be covered with a thick glass pane, sturdy enough for people to walk on.

It is believed the stone slab was used to secure a pole used for the annual carnival game

kukkanja (the maypole). This game, introduced by Grand Master Marc Antonio Zondadari in 1721, involved a pole with a number of obstacles, including branches but also baskets full of eggs, fowl, puddings, rabbits, hams and sausages. Anyone who managed to climb the pole and reach any of the items could take them. At the top of the pole was a globe made of hoops covered with linen cloth, with a flag sporting the Grand Master's coat of arms.

Whoever managed to grab the flag and give it to the Grand Master was awarded a cash prize.

Comments

Franco Buttigieg (1 week, 5 days ago)

The photo shows the maypole stone slab approx 50 cm below the existing street level, does this mean that the original street level in 1721 during the time of Grand Master Marc Antonio Zondadari was 50cm lower? If this is the case now wonder most of Valletta's buildings suffer from rising damp problems. Would it not have been better to excavate down to the original street level and uncover it then to place a concrete slab covered with imported lava slabs above? I thought restoration and preservation of Valletta was a prime issue.

Well done for covering this part of our history with a thick glass pane, sturdy enough for people to walk on, does this mean that the square will only be a total pedestrian area at all times?

Anthony A. Mifsud (1 week, 5 days ago)

That reminds me of today's situation, who ever get to the top get's it all.

Viva Malta

Tony

D. Zahra (1 week, 6 days ago)

they should make a glass tile so people can see it whenever they want to . Amazing work ! congrats

Franco Farrugia (1 week, 6 days ago)

Well done to Claude Borg for the decision to keep the hole partially uncovered. The same thing should have taken place in Mdina during paving works!!!!
