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**malta**

**conservation of sites  
and monuments in  
the development of tourism**

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## INTRODUCTION

The terms of reference of the mission, which lasted from 15 to 23 December 1966, were to examine the principal pre-historic and historical monuments, to establish as far as possible the degrees of priority and modes of financing the operations to be undertaken, and finally to project the main lines of a programme for the conservation of the monuments related to the development of tourism in Malta.

In practice, the way the problems were approached was as follows:

- (1) Ascertainment of the terms and objectives of the general tourist development policy pursued by the Government of Malta;
- (2) Analysis of the resources engaged, of the operations completed or proceeding at the date of the mission, and of the projects for the coming years;
- (3) Study of the contribution to the promotion of tourism which could be made by developing the possibilities of the artistic and cultural heritage.

The plan of the present report was determined by the above considerations. A point was made of seeking the suggestions and getting the opinions of the maximum possible number of representatives of the various sectors of activity with an interest in the development of tourism.

This inquiry has made it possible - or so it is hoped - to disclose the principles on which the promotion of tourism is conducted in Malta, and to draw the inferences from them for the specific domain assigned to this first mission. However, it very soon became evident that while the terms of the problem of maximizing the island's artistic wealth in relation to tourist development were relatively easy to discover, a much more thorough survey than any that could be carried out in the time allocated for the mission would be required before a sufficiently detailed plan could be prepared to be of use to the authorities concerned. The Consultant has therefore confined himself to the most important points which could be the subjects of subsequent Unesco missions.

In this connexion an acknowledgement is required of the unfailing helpfulness of Mr. Pollaco, Head of the Tourist Board, and the perceptive erudition of Mr. Zammit, Director of the National Museum which, with the cordial efficiency of Mr. Yates, UN representative in Malta, enabled the Consultant to make all useful contacts and obtain his information from the different services of the administration with a minimum of difficulty.

### First possibility: Mass Tourism

With varying degrees of bluntness and spontaneity according to the person consulted, there is general opposition to launching any sort of "popular" or "mass" tourism.

### Second possibility:

To draw the attention of organizers of tours of a cultural nature to the interest of the treasures offered by Malta to visitors; and to procure the inclusion in programmes of this nature a two or three day stopover in the island.

So far this type of tourism is virtually non-existent or, more accurately, is confined to the brief stops of a few hours made by cruise liners at the Port of Valletta which is of no real interest for the general economy of the country.

Third possibility:

To promote Malta as a centre of science and art congresses. This type of activity is not in fact altogether unknown and a number of small meetings, both confessional and other, have been held in the past, with the accommodation required made available to the Congress either by an hotel or by the Catholic Institute.

II

In the past few years a certain number of measures have been put into effect by the Government of Malta to promote tourism along the general lines indicated above. Strictly speaking they do not amount to a plan, logically thought out and systematically executed, but rather a series of disconnected projects each calculated to create the conditions conducive to the development of tourism.

Substantial sums have been invested in all-over installation of infrastructural works, an operation which will encourage tourist developments of every type anywhere in the Maltese islands. Despite the enormous difficulties of water supply the distribution of potable water is now satisfactory almost everywhere. Moreover, the State plans to continue its effort in this field for some years to come with future increases in demand to be met entirely by the desalinization of sea water.

It is not too difficult to cater for tourists by providing comfortable accommodation and practical and frequent connexions with the outside world; this is a matter of spending the necessary money. The hardest thing is attracting and above all holding visitors. In this respect Malta has some exceptional advantages:

its climate;

the warmth of the welcome from a people whose traditions of hospitality are still very much alive;

priceless art treasures accumulated over the centuries but whose preservation, and in some cases, restoration, poses delicate problems.

This final point will now be considered in more detail in the context of the tourist development objectives laid down by the Government of Malta and of what it has done towards attaining them.

III

In the present report, all considerations of an archaeological and scientific nature have deliberately been disregarded and attention directed solely to the potentialities of the sites and monuments as tourist attractions.

1. The sites and monuments

As far as can be gathered from a necessarily superficial visit, the list of monuments for preservation and restoration submitted by the Government of Malta

in its memorandum of October 1966 covers only operations of more or less direct relevance to the development of tourism (cf. Annex 7). As it has not been possible to study the financial proposals, the figures advanced in the memorandum will also be taken as correct.

During a meeting at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Tourism attended by the Secretary-General of the Ministry, the Director of Museums and the Director of the Tourist Board, and after a conversation with the Minister, agreement was reached on the following propositions:

There are two main foci of interest for tourists:

the remains of the pre-Phoenician neolithic and aeneolithic civilizations in Malta, of a richness unique in the Mediterranean basin;

the architectural and artistic legacy of the Knights of St. John, all over the Maltese islands.

Dealing with all the antiquities forthwith is out of the question; it is therefore essential to lay down an order of priorities in terms of the objectives sought based on the October 1966 proposals of the Government of Malta.

Only those monuments to be dealt with first have been particularized; as far as the rest were concerned, it turned out that there was insufficient data for a reasoned choice. The following is the list which has been prepared:

Neolithic and Aeneolithic period:

	£
Tarxien temples	9,500
Hagar Qim and Mnadjra temples	48,100
Hal Saflieni Hypogeum	32,000
Ggantija temples in Gozo	12,000

Period of the Hospitallers

Fortifications	140,000
Vilhena Palace, Mdina	70,000
"Gran Castello", Victoria, Gozo	85,000
Wignacourt Tower and Battery, Comino	300
Façade of the Auberge de Provence	20,000

(The "Sacra Infermeria" represents a special case and is dealt with below.)

As regards the conduct of the operations, two general points need to be made forthwith.

It is not enough merely to restore the monuments; existing legislation aimed at preserving the sites surrounding the monuments must be enforced at the same time. No cleaning, restorations, or embellishments will be acceptable without the approval of a commission made up of civil servants, representatives of the cultural societies and individuals of proven archaeological or artistic competence. In that way it may be possible to avoid the recurrence of disasters even more enduring than those caused by the bombing during the last war.

Special attention should be given to the restoration and preservation of Mdina; for which there should be a special programme which could be drawn up and, no doubt, developed by a team consisting of one international expert and two or three Maltese members.

The same applies to the Gozo "Castello", where the work of consolidation and of preparing it for visiting by the public should be in qualified hands to preserve the possibility of excavations and further restoration in the future.

## 2. Museums and National Library

At this writing there are several museums, but their main feature is their dispersion and their physical inability to make the full range of the State's extremely interesting collections accessible to the public.

Again, a substantial feature of the art treasures of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries is in the hands of the Church, although the State contributes substantially to their preservation and display.

It is probably as an element in a programme for the reorganization and re-grouping of the State collections that the question of the restoration work on the Sacra Infermeria should be tackled. This immense hall - it is some 200 yards long - is in the process of partial restoration by the government and is used as an examination hall, although only temporarily. Once the building and its annexes are completely restored, they will probably provide a large enough architectural group to house and exhibit part of the archives plus a specialized museum (war, pre-history archaeology or folklore).

A point to note as regards the museums generally, whether in Valletta or on the archaeological sites, though probably due in part at least to the fact that the arrangement of the collections has not yet reached its final form, is the lack of guides and catalogues for visitors. At the same time a number of publications have already been prepared by the Directorate of Museums but have not yet been issued because of lack of funds. This gap is therefore one that can be filled relatively easily.

## 3. The preservation of sites and monuments

The first thing to be done is to draw up an inventory and classify all the sites and monuments. This should be done under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture by a "Commission on Sites and Monuments" appointed by the Minister and consisting of representatives of all the parties with interests in the matter, in particular the university and the cultural societies, followed by a regulating ordinance making the classification official. A perimeter would be determined for every site and monument (in the case of monuments, normally

of half-mile radius) within which no erection, development or modification of buildings either by private persons or by the administration would be permissible without the consent of the Minister of Education and Culture acting on the advice of the "Commission on Sites and Monuments". The importance of this aspect of the conservation of Malta's national heritage cannot be too strongly emphasized; already grave errors have been made and it would be regrettable to allow them to continue and cause irreparable harm.

Public opinion, or at least its most enlightened section, is alive to the danger and in that connexion, the creation of a society like the "Din l'Art Helwa", with its determined and intelligent approach, can render great service to the administration.

#### 4. Maintenance of sites and monuments

A concomitant of the restoration and consolidation of monuments by the Maltese State, with or without foreign aid, is the need to make provision now for the annual cost of guard services and maintenance for the antiquities thus put into good condition.

In this connexion, it should be noted that certain restoration work which is necessary today could have been avoided if money had been spent on maintenance soon enough.

Apparently the Ministry of Finance intends to include the expenditure under this head in the budget but the question nevertheless arises whether it would not be wiser to provide for special extra-budgetary resources on which the maintenance and "presentation" of these art treasures would be a priority charge.

The introduction of a "visitors' tax" naturally suggests itself and thought has obviously been given to it, but ideas on the use to which it should be put differ between branch and branch of the public service; some of them think that it should simply constitute a supplementary budgetary reserve; others think that it could be used to subsidize activities (theatre, sports, etc.) which seem to be stunted; others again think it should go to a fund earmarked for the maintenance of sites and monuments. However, that may be, this question of maintenance and guard services is one worth fixing at once and examining with the Ministries concerned (Finance, Education and Culture).

#### 5. Flood-lighting of monuments

The Government Tourist Board rightly considers that the flood-lighting of monuments is a far from negligible attraction for foreign tourists. The success of displays of this nature in several countries - the Acropolis in Greece, or Chenonceaux or Versailles in France - warrant the expectation that it should be the same in Malta, though then, initially at least, it would not be a matter of full-scale "son et lumière" but simply of flood-lighting. A memorandum of the initial appreciations in this connexion was drafted in consultation with the Government Tourist Board and is attached as Annex VIII.

#### 6. Execution of the works

The execution of the restorations and reconstructions decided on is the responsibility of the Public Works Department; it has already been mentioned that this Department is short of qualified personnel.

An architect to prepare specifications and costings of the operations in consultation with the appropriate government services, particularly the Public Works Department. Estimated length of stay - three weeks.

An expert on the preservation of monuments, to lay down operating procedures for the works, with particular reference to Mdina and the "Castello" of Gozo. He should be able to work with the Directorate of Museums and of Public Works (Mr. Ellul). Estimated duration of stay - six weeks.

It would be most desirable for a museum expert, either to be included in this mission or at least to proceed to Malta at the same time.

ANNEX I

PROGRAMME AND ITINERARY

Friday, 16 December

- a.m. Meeting with Mr. Castillo, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and with Mr. Pollacco, Director of the Government Tourist Board. Description of the aims of the mission and preparation of the programme.
- p.m. (1) Meeting with the Director of National Museums, Mr. Zamit.
- (2) Visited the Tarxien temples and the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum (Parola) with Mr. Zammit.
- (3) Visited Mr. Gilbert Yates, United Nations Representative in Malta.

Saturday, 17 December

- a.m. (1) Visited the collections of the National Museum with Mrs. Mallia and Dr. Cauchi, respectively in charge of the "Antiquities" and "Fine Arts" sections.
- (2) Visited St. John's Cathedral and Museum.
- (3) Visited the Governor's Palace.
- p.m. (1) Conducted tour of present yacht harbour and new works with Mr. Pollacco and the Director of the "Yacht Marina".
- (2) Visited Mdina (the old capital) and Rabat.

Sunday, 18 December

- a.m. (1) Sliema-Marfa round trip with visits to the building developments in progress in St. Paul's Bay, Mellieha Bay and Marfa.
- (2) Tour of the Ggantija temples, the "Gran Castello" (Victoria) and the village of Marsalforn, conducted by Mr. Antoine Taboue, member of the Civic Council of Gozo.
- (3) Conference with a number of members of the Civic Council with Mr. Antoine Taboue Sr., in the chair.
- (4) Return to Marfa with visits to Mgarr and the Fort Chambrai ramparts and to Comino in passing.



- p.m.
- (1) Lunch and visit to St. Paul's Bay.
  - (2) Visited Ghajn Tuffieha and hotel development.
  - (3) Visited Mistra.

Monday, 19 December

- a.m.
- (1) Conducted tour of the Hagar Qia and Mnajdra temples, with Mr. Mallia.
  - (2) Conference with Messrs. Yates, Pollacco and Castillo, with Mr. Borg-Olivier, Minister of Education, in the chair.
  - (3) Conference with Messrs. Mangion (Director of Public Works) and Pollacco.

p.m. Tour of principal hotels now building. Talks with Mr. Matysik, Manager of the Hilton, and then with Mr. Loach, clerk of the works for the Sheraton.

Tuesday, 20 December

- a.m.
- (1) Tour of the ramparts, forts and churches of Valletta.
  - (2) Conference at the Government Tourist Board with Mr. Pollacco, Messrs. Schranz and Calleja of the Water Works, and Mr. Xantar, Power Production Engineer.

- p.m.
- (1) Tour of the rest of Valletta and Floriana.
  - (2) Conference with Mr. Pollacco and Mr. Ferro, Director of Civil Aviation, at the Luga aerodrome.
  - (3) Courtesy call on Mr. Georges Desmeures, chargé d'affaires at the French Embassy, with Mr. Gronier, Cultural Counsellor of the Embassy in attendance.
  - (4) Conference with Mr. Pollacco, and Messrs. von Brockdorff (American Express in Malta) and Norman Mifsud and Sons Travel Bureau).

Wednesday, 21 December

- a.m.
- (1) Meeting with Messrs. Castillo, Zammit and Pollacco. Establishment of the order of priority for the works in prospect.
  - (2) Discussion with Mr. Felice, Minister of Finance, with Mr. Pollacco in attendance.
  - (3) Conversation with Mr. Caruana-Curran, President of the "Din l'Art Helwa" Society, and a member, Mr. Randon, Advocate.

- p.m. (1) Conducted tour with Mr. Zammit of the Roman Villa at Rabat and the museum, to St. Paul's Catacombs and the Inquisitor's Palace, Vittoriosa.
- (2) Conference with Mr. Chalmers, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Finance, and Mr. Pollacco.

Thursday, 21 December

- a.m. (1) Collation of documents and information at the Government Tourist Board.
- p.m. (2) Meeting with Mr. Yates.
- (3) Conference with Mr. Pollacco.

ANNEX II

TOURIST ARRIVALS

Month	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
January	506	639	951	872	3,013	1,494	1,721	3,426
February	634	766	1,085	1,053	1,447	1,763	2,111	3,091
March	829	986	1,592	1,377	1,851	2,876	2,719	4,374
April	834	1,901	1,836	2,174	2,751	3,108	4,699	7,124
May	1,169	1,743	1,993	1,988	2,993	3,588	4,190	6,577
June	1,018	1,851	2,221	2,215	2,775	3,175	4,012	5,931
July	1,547	3,490	3,185	3,026	3,780	5,052	6,186	8,436
August	1,940	2,450	3,156	3,366	4,304	5,201	6,290	10,260
September	1,554	2,073	2,396	2,586	3,560	4,522	5,525	8,437
October	998	1,312	1,612	1,837	2,399	3,368	4,710	7,333
November	729	1,052	1,138	1,192	1,578	1,946	2,681	-
December	816	1,426	1,446	1,648	1,848	2,287	2,960	-
Total	12,583	19,689	22,611	23,334	32,299	38,380	47,804	70,000 (approx.)

ANNEX III

PERCENTAGE OF BRITISH TOURISTS

1959	64%
1960	63%
1961	68%
1962	70%
1963	70%
1964	67%
1965	67%
1966	73%

ANNEX IV

PERCENTAGE OF ARRIVALS BY AIR

1959	85%
1960	86%
1961	91%
1962	92%
1963	87%
1964	84%
1965	92%
1966	91%

ANNEX V

EXPENDITURE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF MALTA ON CAPITAL PROJECTS  
CONNECTED WITH TOURISM, PRESERVATION OF MONUMENTS, ETC.  
FOR THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD 1964-69

<u>Vote 45</u>	<u>Details of Expenditure</u>	<u>Plan Estimate</u> <u>1964-69</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Tourism</u>		£	£
	1. Grants to new hotels	1,532,564	
	2. Beach development	100,000	
	3. Advertising, publicity and promotion	150,000	
	4. Technical assistance	7,500	
	5. Establishment of a Yacht Centre Phase I (development of Lazaretto and Msida creeks)	250,000	
	6. Improving traffic roads	50,000	
	7. Loans to new hotels	407,800	
	8. Loans to old hotels	100,000	
	9. Land acquisition and compensation	4,146	
	10. Loans to beach establishments	50,000	
	11. Assistance to major catering projects	18,750	
	<u>Servicing of resort sites</u>	801,800	
	12. Water works		
	13. Telephones		
	14. Roads and sewers		
	15. Electricity and gas (assistance to sea passenger service)	33,000	3,505,560
<u>Vote 50</u>	1. Natural History and Folk Museum, Malta	31,650	
	2. History and Folk Museum, Gozo	2,635	
<u>Antiquities</u>	3. War Museum	2,740	
	4. Hagar Qim and Mnajdra	18,460	
	5. The Armoury, Magisterial Palace, Valletta	1,600	
	6. St. Paul's Catacombs, Rabat	500	
	7. Inquisitor's Palace, Vittoriosa	2,800	
	8. Roman Towers, Gawhar and Wilga	2,140	
	9. Ta' Marziena pre-historic remains, Gozo	1,200	
	10. Borg in-Nadur pre-historic remains, Birzebbuga	1,000	
		<u>64,725</u>	

ANNEX VI

MALTA GOVERNMENT TOURIST BOARD  
STATEMENT GIVING DETAILS OF HOTEL PROJECTS  
APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT  
AS ON 27/10/66

Name of Company	Site	Grant	Capacity (beds)	Total Capital Expenditure
		£		£
‡ 1. Comino Development Co. Ltd. (Comino Hotel)	Comino	10,000	200	500,000
¶ 2. Preluna Limited	Sliema Loan	174,000 (59,300)	300	700,000
3. The Malta Hotels Co. Ltd. (Extension)	Valletta	20,000	80	100,000
+ 4. Cote D'Or and Golden Sands Hotels	Golden Bay	34,540	214	172,700
§ 5. The Kursaal Co. Ltd.	Dragenara St. Julians	100,000	400	700,000
+ 6. C.G.V. Halsted (Paradise Bay Hotel)	Marfa Point	6,900	75	34,500
§ 7. Denette Limited (Selman Palace Hotel)	Selman Palace	nil	40	50,000
§ 8. Spinola Development Co. (Wyncorr-Hilton)	Spinola Sliema	450,000 80,000	400	1,300,000
9. The Beauport Investment Trust Ltd. (Mellieha Bay Hotel)	Mellieha Bay	200,000	420	600,000
§ 10. Malta & Europe Hotels Co. Ltd. (Excelsior Hotel)	Floriana	290,000	500	1,050,000
11. Shaw's (Malta) Ltd.	Ras-il-Qawra	278,334	493	847,600
§ 12. Gozo Hotels Co. Ltd. (Calypse Hotel)	Marsalforn Gozo	12,092	84	80,435
13. S.B. Yentis (Dolphin Hotel)	Paceville St. Julians	12,000	80	60,000
14. Hubbalit Developments (Malta) Ltd.	Ghadira Mellieha	nil	1,200	800,000
§ 15. Touristic Estates Ltd. (Fortina Hotel)	Tigne Sea Front	14,600	800	96,000

Name of Company	Site	Grant	Capacity (beds)	Total Capital Expenditure
		£		£
§ 16. Holden Development Co. Ltd. (Ramla Bay Hotel)	Marfa	20,200	84	50,000
17. Paul Pisani Enterprises (Corinthia Hotel)	San Anton	173,333	310	520,000
§ 18. Dolmen Development Co. Ltd. (Miramar Hotel)	Bugibba (St. Paul's Bay)	11,400	152	152,100
§ 19. Farsons Investment Ltd.	Rabat, Malta	187,920	324	660,000
20. John & Alex Saliba (Salina Bay Hotel)	Salina	11,400	100	85,000
21. Vendome Development Co. Ltd.	Marfa	129,300	400	360,932
22. Mifsud Bros. (Estates) Ltd. (Hotel Cavalieri)	Spinola	18,000	122	130,000
23. Hotel & Tourist Enterprises Ltd. (New Metropole)	Shima	11,860	135	130,000
	Totals	2,301,899	6,193	9,142,117
<u>Villa Project</u>				
Central Mediterranean Development co-operation	Zejtun (Mellieha)	nil	400	1,400,000



ANNEX VII

MALTA	£
Tarxien temples	9,560
Hagar Qim and Mnajdra temples	48,166
Misqa cisterns	1,700
Hal Saflieni Hypogeum	32,000
Skarba temples and villages	9,375
Borg in-Nadur temple, village and fortifications	2,000
Tal-Qadi temple	1,200
Kordin temples	2,620
Xemkija tombs	1,000
Mgarr temples	295
Dolmens	3,300
Cart-ruts	6,300
Ta' Cacciatura Roman site	4,000
Late Roman towers	5,150
Catacombs	6,250
Columbarium, Fawwara	700
Hal Millieri Church, Zurrieq	25,000
St. Rocco Chapel, Valletta	18,000
Old Parish Church, Birkirkara	60,000
Old Parish Church, Siggiewi	12,000
St. John, the Almoner's, Cospicua	45,000
Auberge de Provence, Valletta	20,000
Fortifications	140,000
Sacra Infermeria', Valletta	145,000

	£
St. Anthony's, Manoel Island	50,000
Fleur-de-Lys Arch	5,000
Mdina bastions	50,000
Vilhena Palace, Mdina	20,000
Inquisiter's Palace, Vittoriosa	5,000
Watch-towers and minor fortifications	30,000

GOZO

Ggantija temples	12,000
Santa Verna and minor pre-historic sites	5,100
Calypso cave, Xaghra	<u>2,300</u>

c.f. 779,016

b.f. 779,016

Roman villa, Ramla Bay	3,500
Ramla Bay battery	1,000
"Gran Castello", Victoria	85,000
Fort Chambrai, Mgarr	35,000
Watch-towers and minor fortifications	8,000

COMINO

Wignacourt Tower	3,000
Eighteenth century battery	3,000

GENERAL

Flood-lighting	<u>41,000</u>
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Total: 958,516

ANNEX VIII

The question of flood-lighting the most interesting Maltese monuments was studied by a committee presided over by Mr. Pollacco, Director of the Government Tourist Board.

This committee has prepared a plan to be executed in two phases:

Phase I:

The committee considers that all the operations should be carried out simultaneously and not successively, as, in its view, this will make more impression on the public and increase tourist drawing-power.

As a preliminary financial estimate, the committee thought that an investment of £3,000 would be required, to be divided among the following monuments which it thought would merit such attention:

- (a) Mdina (including the bastions)
- (b) "Cavaliers" of St. James and St. John
- (c) Porte des Bombes
- (d) Auberge de Castille
- (e) Auberge d'Italie
- (f) Commemorative tablet on the façade on the Magisterial Palace.

The time required for installing the necessary equipment has been estimated at approximately eight months; the work will present no technical difficulties.

Phase II:

This is a longer-term project which, unlike Phase I, could be carried out in stages. It was originally conceived for the commemoration, in 1965, of the four hundredth anniversary of the Great Siege and of the foundations of Valletta; it could not be got ready for that occasion, but might be, perhaps, for 1970 when the great exhibition of the "Knights of St. John in Malta" is to be held.

In the committee's view, the following are the public monuments and buildings worth flood-lighting:

	£
(a) St. Angelo	7,350
(b) Verdala Palace	950
(c) Fort Manoel	4,500
(d) Buskett	3,000

	£
(e) The Ta'xbiex bastions	7,500
(f) The bastions of the Grand Harbour	7,500
(g) The gardens of St. Anthony	3,000
(h) St. Catherine of Italy	250
(i) The Parish Churches	250 to 350 each
(j) The outwork of the ramparts of Valletta	3,500
(k) The "Gran Castello" and Fort Chambrai, Gozo	950
(l) Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Mgarr	<u>550</u>

As far as estimates of costs are concerned, this is only a first approximation which will require reconsideration. The monuments have been selected so as to constitute a coherent "tout ensemble", giving a general idea of Malta's architectural wealth, in addition to showing off the individual monuments.

Most of the monuments, with the exception of those recently reconstructed or restored following war damage have not been cleaned or repainted for many years; the necessary cleaning operations will have to be carried out if the flood-lighting is to be a success.