

Sliema – lost city (part one)



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This pictorial series aims at documenting the development of Sliema since the affirmation of photography in Malta, namely, after 1840. It seems that the more consistent first colonisers of that area were the British, and in fact a special 'colonial' type of architecture prevailed in the early urbanisation.

Sliema, after Mount Xebberas, was probably the geographical area in Malta that underwent the most spectacular changes in the shortest time.

Under the rule of the Knights, and until the mid-Victorian era, the unbuilt countryside looked no different than the most secluded rural areas of the island: uninterrupted expanses of fields, some *razzett*, the rare, and diminutive, country church, and the very sparse villas of some rich notable for whom privacy had more urgent priority than comfort.

Not surprisingly, many Maltese started aping their imperial owners – if the British sought new havens far from crowded cities, so would the colonised.

At first, to the locals, Sliema proved more attractive as a summer getaway – *villeggiatura*, but eventually, in parallel with the development of means of transport and communication, the permanent residents prevailed.

All images are from the author's collection.

(To be continued)



Feast day in Church Street, Sliema, c. 1900.

CHURCH STREET SUEMA MALTA



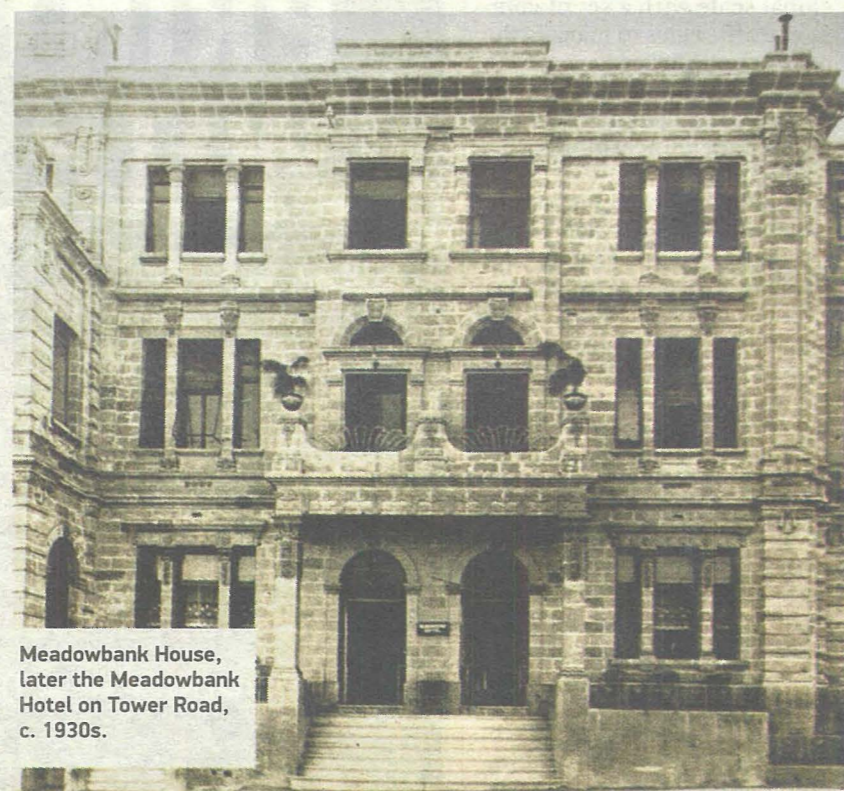
An aerial view of parts of Sliema just after World War II.



An 1870s view of Sliema from Marsamxetto Harbour, by Horatio Agius.



The first incarnation of Qui-si-Sana waterfront houses, by Richard Ellis.



Meadowbank House, later the Meadowbank Hotel on Tower Road, c. 1930s.

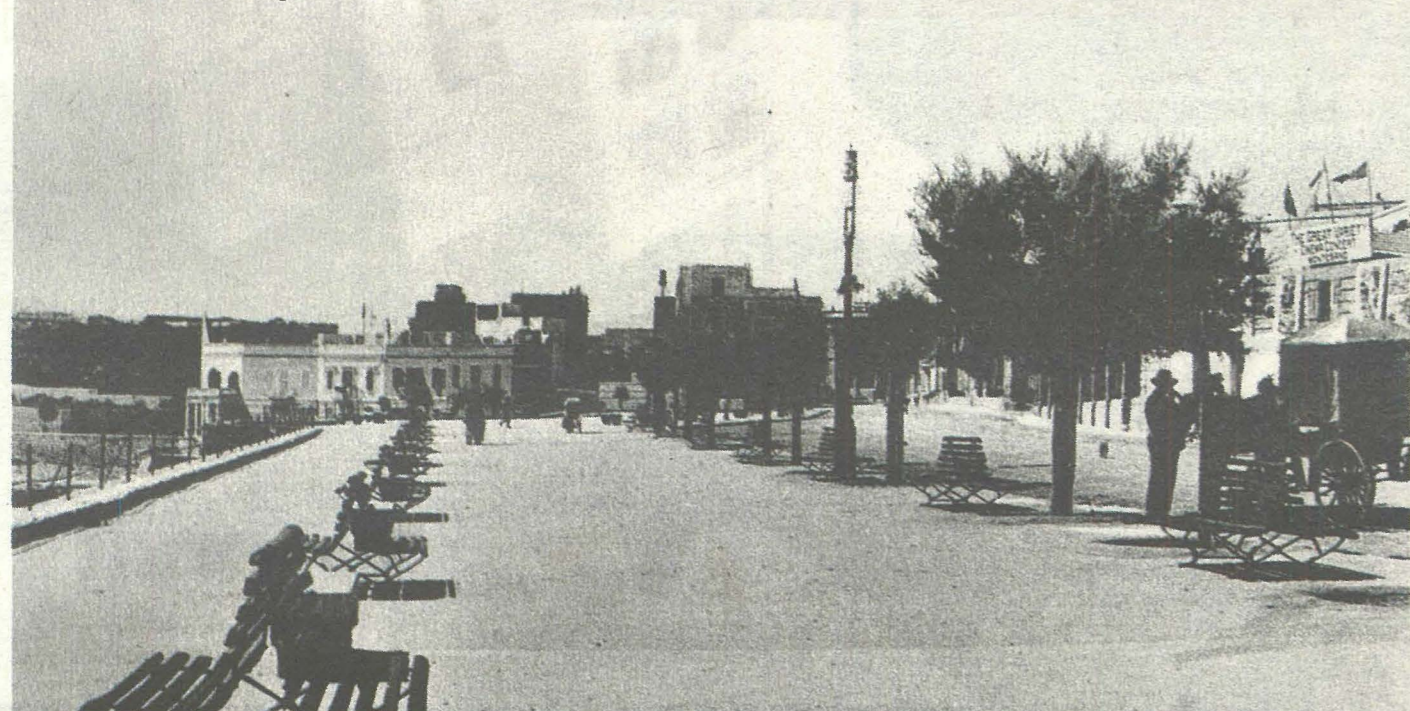


Barclays Bank in Sliema, severely damaged by enemy action during WWII.

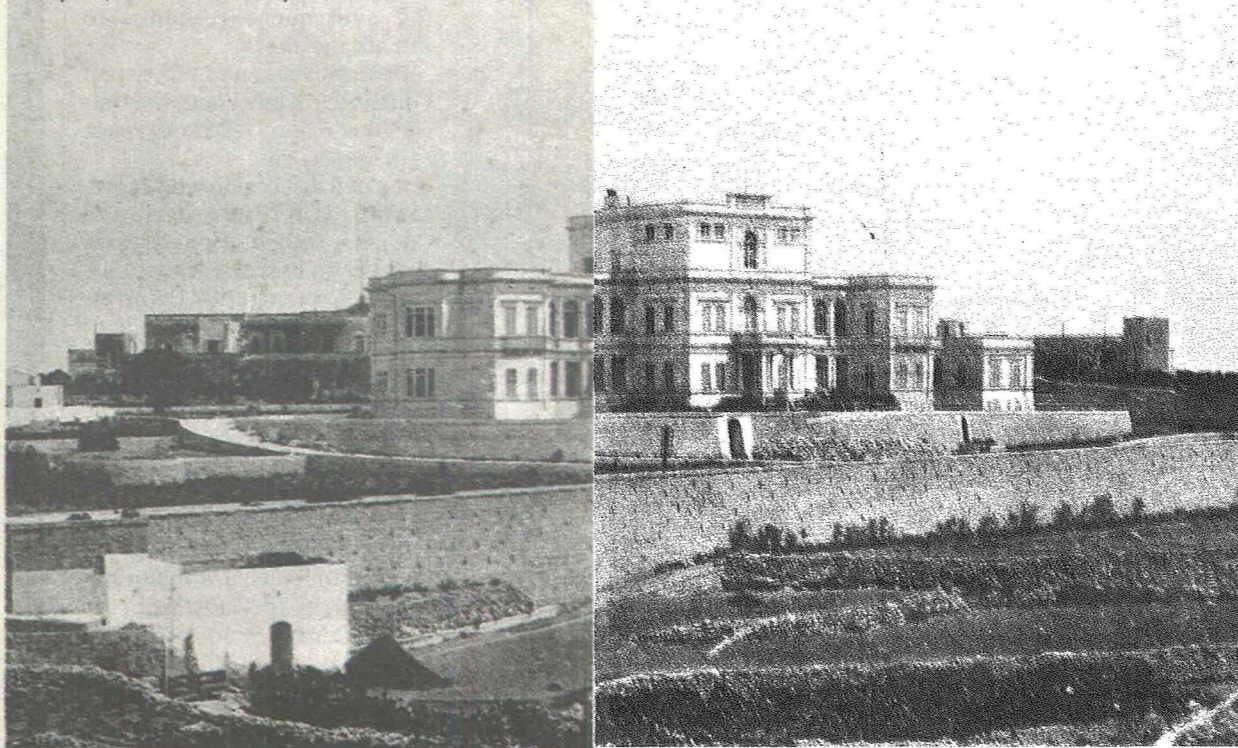


Part of the Stella Maris external festivities, c. 1920.

Tower Road, Sliema, no fronts exceeding two floors. Note the Great Variety Cinema on the extreme right.



The Zammit-Clapp Blue Sisters Hospital, still isolated in open fields.



A political meeting in Qui-si-Sana held on June 1, 1932.

