



NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2022

LIONS DISTRICTS

Lions Clubs all over the world are listed in districts. In countries where there are various Lions Clubs each district has its particular regional number. Just to give an idea, Lions Clubs in the British Isles are in Multiple District MD105 while the Italian District is MD108, Turkish clubs are in District MD118, Greek and Cypriot clubs (excluding the Lions Clubs in Northern Cyprus) are in MD117.

In countries like Malta, which is not a Multiple District, and where there are three or more clubs which are in a recognised geographical area, the Clubs are listed as being in a Zone having a Zone Chairman elected for a year. Once there are less than three clubs, the area will cease to be recognised as a Zone.

In most countries which are multiple districts each district either has a number or a name, for example London and Home counties. In Italy Lions Clubs are listed as Multiple Districts with a letter and number. Moreover, Italy adopted an ingenious way to identify the various districts by using each letter of

I.T.A.L.Y. starting with "I" from the northern regions. Hence Aosta is listed as MDIA1. Piemonte and Lombardia (which are big geographical areas) are listed as MDIA2, MDI3 and MDIB1 to MDIB4. The sequence continues with "TA1" for Trentino and

Sud Tyrol, "TA2" for Friuli Venezia Giulia" and "TA3" for Veneto. "TB" stands for the district of Emilia Romagna.

"A" is for the regions of Marche, Abruzzo and Molise.

Puglia is assigned the letters "AB". Lazio and Sardinia are known as "L", while Toscana is "LA". "YA" is assigned to Campania, Basilicata and Calabria while Sicily is assigned "YB".



CHARLES DICKENS AND THE INVENTION OF CHRISTMAS

Charles Dickens and the Invention of Christmas was the title of a talk given by Stella Borg Barthet, who is professor of English Literature at the University of Malta. The presentation explored how far the popular image of Christmas emerges from the writings Charles Dickens. Starting from the 2017 film, *The Man Who Invented Christmas*, directed by Bharat Nalluri, the presentation followed the claims made in the film, and in the book on which it is based, written by the American Les Sandiford. *The Man Who Invented Christmas* tells the story of the writing of *A Christmas Carol*, quite early in Dickens's career, in a period of about six weeks in the Autumn of 1843. According to the claim made in the subtitle of Sandiford's book, *A Christmas Carol* rescued Dicken's career and revived 'our' holiday spirits.

Prof Borg Barthet showed that according to Charles Dickens's biographers, the Victorian writer's career did not need saving. He had published six successful novels in as many years. However, his hopes of salvaging his finances were frustrated by his own failure to calculate the cost of producing the book, a publication for which Dickens spared no expense with the result that his profits were whittled away.

The presentation also showed that Charles Dickens was not the man who made the Christmas tree tradition popular in England – Victoria's Prince Albert did. He did not introduce the custom of sending cards, although illustrations from his stories came to be used on Christmas cards. Nevertheless, the modern conception of Christmas as a season of benevolence, moral idealism and revelling is owed in a major way to the Christmas stories that began with the publication of "*A Christmas Carol*" in 1843.

Prof Borg Barthet went on to show that Charles Dickens sympathised deeply with poor and aimed, in his writings, to counteract a dominant business ethos inspired by Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarian creed, which denied the validity of love and pity for others. The talk finished with the observation that the world today is dominated by mercenary values and this is why Charles Dickens still has the power to raise, to use Sandiford's phrase, 'our Christmas spirits'.

Ed. Note: Prof. Stella Borg Barthet is the wife of our Second Vice President Lion Victor Borg Barthet.

LEADERS don't force people to follow. They invite them to the journey.

FLASHBACK TO DECEMBER 1993 – CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Following is an article from the Club's "SLIEMA ROAR" of December 1993 reporting on the Christmas Concert at St. John's Co-Cathedral. The article is being reproduced 29 years later to enlighten club members of the activities undertaken by the Club to raise funds and promote Lions Clubs.

Commented [TR1]:

As part of the fund-raising activities to raise funds for the Malta project of "SIGHTFIRST", Lions Club Sliema organised a Christmas Concert at St. John's Co-Cathedral on Tuesday December 21. The concert consisted of excerpts of Georg Friedrich Handel's MESSIAH. Various excerpt from the famous oratorio were sung by soloists Tanya Parlato Trigona (soprano), Marie Therese Vassallo (mezzo soprano), Brian Cefai (tenor) and Tony Montebello (bass). They were accompanied on the organ by senior students of the Music Department of the University of Malta and Dr David Hyatt, an English organist. Maestro Don Buhagiar was Director of the University vocal Ensemble and the Collegium Aureum. The concert was filmed by the Public Broadcasting Services and was broadcast the following Thursday.

Various people attended the concert amongst whom Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, Minister of Education and Human Resources. A large audience was present in the magnificent setting of St. John's. From the musical and cultural aspects, the concert was an outstanding success but partially successful as a fundraiser. Pity that permission was not given to make a collection during the concert. Nonetheless money received from sponsorship of the concert and from the sale of programmes helped to make a reasonable profit which will go towards the SightFirst project.

Besides the aim to raise funds, the concert was also held to promote public awareness of SightFirst. With this aim in mind, the programme had a short description of what Lions Clubs in Malta together with the Department of Health and the World Health Organisation have done. The aim to promote SightFirst was also reached as several of the hundreds who attended the concert became aware for the first time about the SightFirst Glaucoma project.

Much work was involved in holding this concert. The perseverance of Lion President Ian Lochhead and his helpers made the concert possible as in the weeks and days prior to the concert there were various difficulties which Lion President with tact and persuasion managed to overcome. It was thus

somewhat of a disappointment to see that only a few fellow Lions attended the concert. However, those who attended all gave a helping hand and were also instrumental in raising a handsome sum from the sale of programmes, albeit this had to be done outside the cathedral so as to abide with the directives of the Cathedral Chapter.

Special thanks go to the various sponsors especially Lion Ian Lochhead and his wife Elizabeth who together with an anonymous benefactor were the main sponsors. Thanks, are also due to the Public Broadcasting Services, Mr Michael Ellul and Mrs Cecilia Xuereb for their contributions on St. John's Co Cathedral and the Ministry of Youth and Culture, Messrs Galdes and Mamo and Repro for sponsoring adverts in the press. Thanks, are also due to the various members who attended the concert and who also made a contribution towards SightFirst. These members realised that without their financial help, it will be difficult to fully realise the ambitious SightFirst Project in Malta.

CHRISTMAS GET-TOGETHER

The Christmas Get-Together held on December 15 at Palazzo Capua, Sliema, was a great success. Besides the good fare provided by the caterers, the festive atmosphere was enjoyed by the several Lions present and their guests.

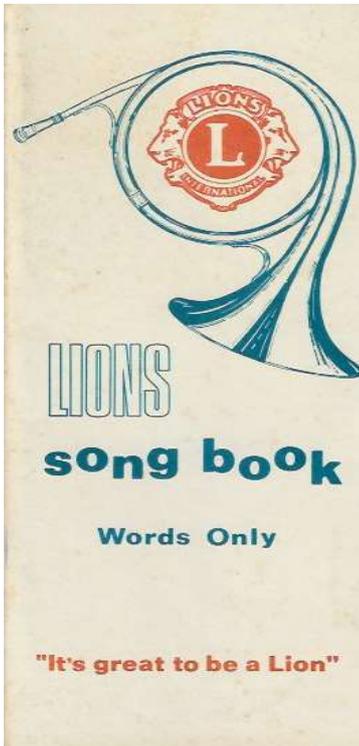


Special thanks go to Lion Joe Messina who was responsible to organise the event. Club members and guests at the evening, several of whom were invited by Lion Yvonne McElhatton, enjoyed the evening and praised our

Club not only for organising the event, but also for its philanthropic work. With the one man band playing music which brought back memories of our younger years, several of the members and guests present took to the dance floor to make the evening more enjoyable.

During the evening the draw for the "In House Raffle" prizes was made with four of the prizes going to guests of club members. The goal to raise 500 Euros from the raffle was reached thanks to all those who bought tickets and to an anonymous person who topped up the sum to reach the desired amount.

LIONS SONG BOOK



in the United States most of the Lions Clubs start their meetings by singing a song of praise. A few years ago, I obtain a book "A Lions Song Book" which is full of songs which are sang prior to a Lions Club meeting. The foreword of the book explains:

WHO IS A LION?

It states: *"He who achieves success live well, laughs often loves all human kind, gains the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; he fills his niche, does well his work, and makes God's word a better place than it was by just a brighter flower, a perfect poem, a human soul awake to its own loveliness; he feels the glow of beauty in all life, and never fails to voice his praise of it; he sees the best there is in fellow men and gives to them the best there is in him; his live is one vast inspiration. THAT MAN IS A LION!"*

The book contains songs with a Lions theme and other popular American songs, like:

America the Beautiful, The Mariners Hymn, Dixie, Joy to the World, The First Noel, Silent Night, Jingle Bells, Home Sweet Home, Home on the Range, Vive L'Amour, The Yellow Rose of Texas, My Bonnie, Give my Regards to Broadway, Ah Marie, God of Our Fathers and The Prayer of Thanksgiving which is reproduced hereunder:

"We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing. He chastens and hastens His will to make known. The wicked oppressing cease them from distressing. Sing praises in His name; He forgets not His own. Besides to guide us, our God with us joining. Ordaining, maintaining His Kingdom divine. So, from the beginning the light we were winning. Thou, Lord, was at our side, the glory be Thine. We all do extol Thee. Thou Leader in battle. And pray that Thou still our Defender wilt be. Let thy congregation escape tribulation; Thy name be ever praised. O Lord, make us free!"

Ed. Note: The book I have was printed in 1966 before female members of Lions Club national were named Lions. Hence the above prayer says is in a masculine format.

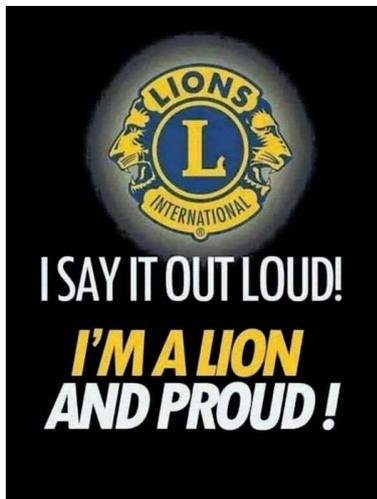
CLUB NEWS

CLUB MEETINGS: Club meetings for January 2023 are scheduled for Wednesday 4 and Wednesday 18 commencing at 1830 at "THE IMPERIAL", Sliema. Further details will be promulgated nearer to the date of each meeting by Lion Secretary Lorna Farrugia.

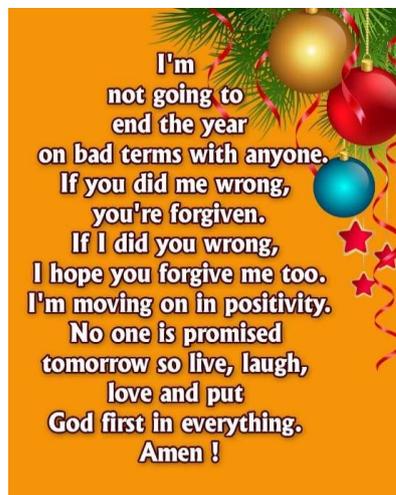
FUND RAISING EVENTS: A Sixties (60) Night is scheduled to be held on Saturday January 21. Further details regarding venue etc. will be promulgated in due course. Other fund-raising events are also planned for February and March, details of which will be announced in due course.

IN HOUSE RAFFLE: It is envisaged to hold another "In House Raffle" prior to Easter 2023. Any member who wishes to donate a suitable raffle prize is welcome. He can contact Lion President Norman Wilson and pass on details of the prize.

CONGRATULATIONS to Lion Tonio Portuguese who has been appointed Chairman of the Maltese Council for Science and Technology. The appointment was made by the Prime Minister Dr Robert Abela earlier this month.



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The photo at right was copied from an article in a foreign magazine.

I thought it appropriate to reproduce it in our monthly newsletter as it exactly shows what I feel.

