

Malta

Europe

Teaching the Bahá'í Faith

Bahá'í Geography - Malta

Malta

The Republic of Malta is an island country in the Mediterranean Sea, 80 km south of Sicily, with an area of 316 km² and a population today of 516,000 on 3 main islands: Malta, Gozo and Comino. It became Christian with the Norman invasion in 1091. Malta became a British colony in 1813 and gained independence in 1964, joining the United Nations. It joined the European Union in 2004. The capital is Valletta but the whole island is urbanised and lives largely from tourism.

Malta in the Mediterranean Sea



Malta





Malta

Malta





Malta

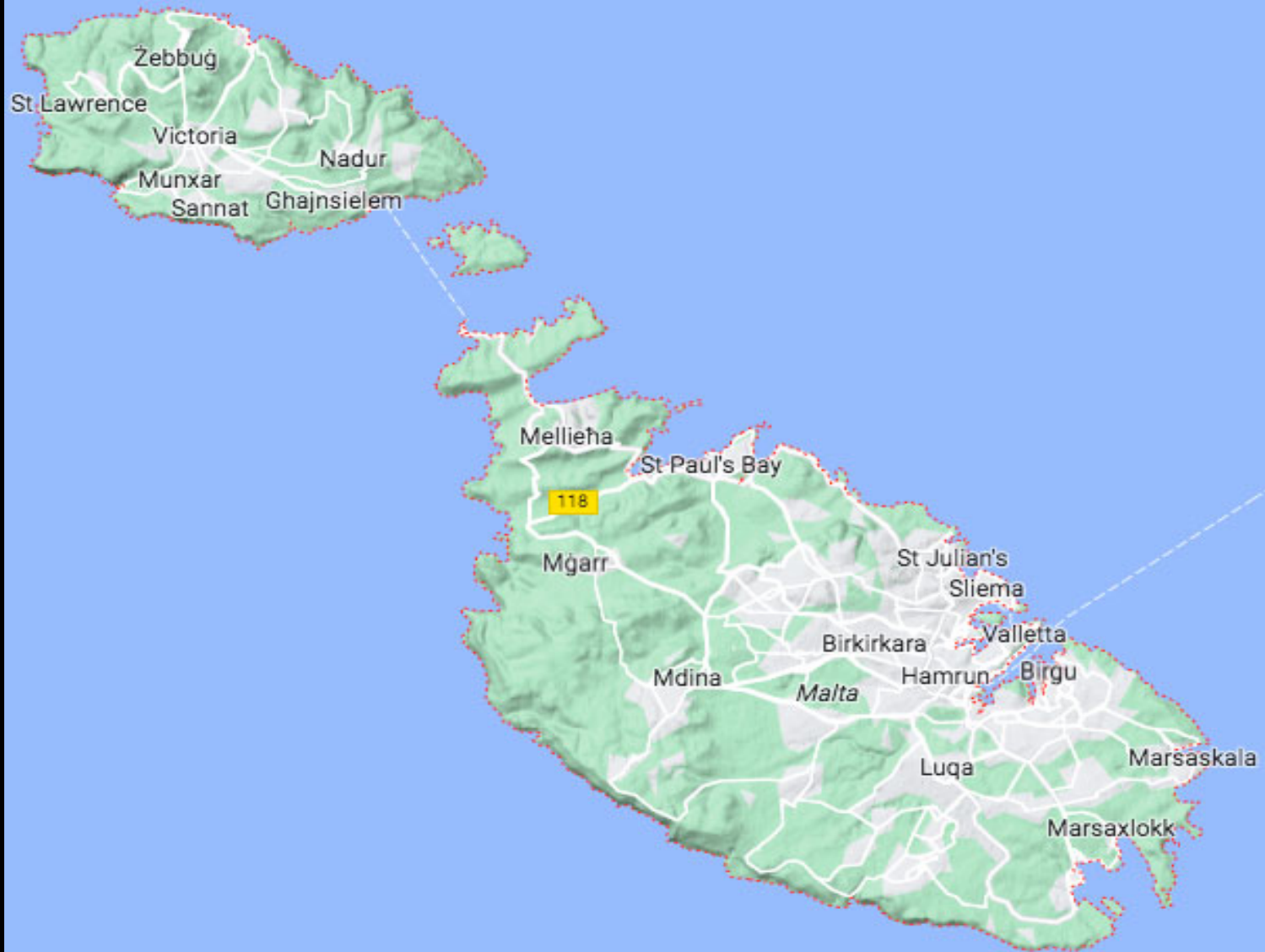
Malta

Malta suffered great damage by bombing during World War II and was still rebuilding in 1953, not an easy place for single women to settle and teach the Bahá'í Faith.

Bomb
damage
in
Malta
during
World War II



Malta



Malta



Malta



Malta



Malta



Knights of Bahá'u'lláh

Three Knights of Bahá'u'lláh participated in the opening of Malta to the Bahá'í Faith:

- Una Townshend
- Olga Mills
- John Mitchell

Una Townshend

Una Townshend (1921-2003), daughter of **Hand of the Cause George Townshend**, became a Bahá'í in 1940, was the first Bahá'í in Dublin, Ireland, and member of its first Local Spiritual Assembly. She pioneered to Malta on 4 October 1953, without her father who was too ill to accompany her, and remained until the end of 1954, when Shoghi Effendi asked her to return home and care for her father as he completed his book "*Christ and Bahá'u'lláh*". He died in 1957.

Una
Townshend



Olga Mills

Mary Olga Katherine Mills (1882-1975) arrived in Malta in November 1953, joining Una. After travelling the world, she became a Bahá'í in 1930 and went on pilgrimage in 1931, then pioneering in the British Isles at the request of the Guardian. Offering to pioneer at the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade at age 71, Shoghi Effendi replied. 'Leave as promptly as possible for either Malta or Cyprus, preferably Malta, and there engage yourself with all your powers in teaching the Faith.'

Olga
Mills



Olga Mills

Despite the difficult location, Shoghi Effendi encouraged Olga to continue. 'He advises you, if the situation should become worse, to try your utmost to remain at your post, which he knows is the deep desire of your heart, also. He greatly appreciates your constancy and your spirit.'

(1956) In March 1957 'He is happy to see that, although your local resources have been depleted... you nevertheless are remaining to "hold the fort", a service to which he attaches the greatest importance...'

Olga Mills

Olga remained steadfastly on Malta, because the Guardian had told her not to leave until she was 'blown off the island'. After 20 years, the first Local Spiritual Assembly was elected in 1973, when Olga was 91. She passed away in May 1974, still at her post.

John Mitchell

John Mitchell (1907-1957) became a Bahá'í in 1950 and served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles 1952-1954. After meeting Shoghi Effendi on pilgrimage in 1953, he pioneered to Malta, arriving in July 1954 to join Olga Mills. He became ill there and returned to London in early 1956 for treatment, but was paralysed and passed away in February 1957.

(based on Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 359-361)

John Mitchell



Prayer from *Tablets of the Divine Plan*

O THOU Incomparable God! O Thou Lord of the Kingdom! These souls are Thy heavenly army. Assist them and, with the cohorts of the Supreme Concourse, make them victorious, so that each one of them may become like unto a regiment and conquer these countries through the love of God and the illumination of divine teachings.

O God! Be Thou their supporter and their helper, and in the wilderness, the mountain, the valley, the forests, the prairies and the seas, be Thou their confidant—so that they may cry out through the power of the Kingdom and the breath of the Holy Spirit.

Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty and the Omnipotent, and Thou art the Wise, the Hearing and the Seeing.