

## SOLLER FAIR – HISTORY

by Shirley  
Roberts

FROM SOLLERWEB



**T**he story I am going to tell you started in 1561 and is commemorated every year in Soller and Puerto Soller. This is such an important event in the history of the area that the story enlarges each year with new details being added to a true story of pirates, fantasy and the triumph of good over evil.

Now if you are sitting comfortably I will tell the tale.

On 10 May 1561 23 Turkish boats were sailing round Ibiza in preparation for the invasion of many coastal towns of Majorca. The viceroy of Majorca, Guillem De Rocafull, understanding what was about to happen gave the order to all the Captains in the Ports to defend their towns and villages in whatever way they could.

This scenario was not new to the people and their leaders. Invasions by pirates and looting armies were commonplace and a source of acquiring wealth and slave gathering. A series of watch towers were built around the coast of Majorca as strategic lookout points and they were manned regularly so that warnings of invasion could be given.

On Sunday 11 May 1561 pirates from Algeria and Turkey – all 1800 of them – disembarked in Puerto Soller at sunrise. They were spotted by the watchers on the Coll de S'Illa who ran down to Soller blowing their horns to warn the villagers and their makeshift army of the arrival of the pirates.

The Moors army made their way towards Soller but they had been here before and knew that the only way of success was to divide and attack from two points. So the strategic divide happened so that half the pirates would go the country route to get into Soller from the rear and the others would march straight up the road where they would be most expected.

Meanwhile back in the Camp de S'Oca area of Soller over 600 people gathered to listen to their military leader captain Angelats. He gave the order to the priest Antoni Canals to evacuate the children, women and elderly to the mountains. The bells were rung loud and long from all churches and in Puerto Soller fit men took their allocated defensive positions.

The Soller people and their intrepid leaders gathered for the mother of all battles at the Pont D'en Barona. This is the bridge that links the L'horta district of Soller to the City. The people were unaware that another attack was being planned at the back of Soller and when word reached them that they had two fights to win, the local sergeant Antoni Soler gave the order for the fight to begin on the Barona bridge. This was a fierce battle of man against man and boy against boy.

Just up the road, near the Monument,



Above: 12 May Firo. Below: Xeremiers. PHOTOS: RACHEL FOX

## The Story of the Soller Firo

● On Sunday 11 May 1561 pirates from Algeria and Turkey – all 1800 of them – disembarked in Puerto Soller at sunrise.

another battle was taking place and this was led by the women of L'horta who have been known ever since as the Valient Dones.

They attacked the pirate marchers with their slingshots and smeared treacle all over the floor so that their feet got stuck. By subterfuge and guile, they lured two of the leaders into a house in the Tamany district and then promptly tossed them out of the window to their death. The plaque remains on the house of this historic event and the mass is commemorated there on the morning of the Firo.

The battle of Barona was won and the women had frightened the living daylight out of the pirates they met on the road. Many of them ran back to the sea and gave up their fight. The major battle was still to come in Soller but the people marched their prisoners up to Soller and used them as human shields against the Moors who were already in the City centre counting their spoils. In the time they had in the City they had plundered treasures from the church and had broken into

houses and taken jewellery and other treasures. They had also corralled a group of women who they were going to take back with them on their ships.

Captain Angelats was having none of that and he led the final battle. Empowered by their successes down the road, they found the strength to do it all again. This time the victory was Soller's and the

Christians had defeated the Moors who ran for their lives leaving all that they had stolen behind them. Ancient statistics tell us that 211 Moors died on that day and many were injured on both sides, some of them dying a few days later. Most of the looted property and church treasures were finally recovered.

The powers that be of the time were



## SOLLER FAIR – TODAY

honoured for their good work in defending the Soller Valley and the North West corner of Majorca. We are told that the Jury of the Kingdom of Majorca sent a letter praising the acts of the Soller people and of the leadership shown by the viceroy of Majorca.

## The Soller Firo today

**T**he events of the Firo in 2017 last for fourteen days with gallery openings, concerts, sports events and children's entertainment included. The main focus for the traditional element centres around the weekend of the 12 to 15 May when some beautiful ceremonies take place. The full programme is printed in this publication but I would like to talk about some of them separately.

The mayor in his address to the Firo reminds us that this is a very important local event that has defined the people of Soller and is in their collective psychology. The 'Island within and Island' mentality is still strong here with a Sollerian's natural reaction being to look outwards towards the sea. This defined them in bad times when the migration ships left with the young men of the Valley on them when the harvests failed. Their prosperous factory years also saw the goods being shipped to France and beyond from Puerto Soller. The Sollerian has all he needs right here and as long as the sea is there to carry goods to trade or people to safety and economic prosperity all is well with their world. The fact that in 1561 this was challenged and the Sollerian's won against all the odds has never been forgotten.

The traditional costumes of the area are highly visible during the Firo and local people and their children delight in dressing the part. In fact, in the main shopping street of the Lluna there is an established shop dedicated to making these costumes in the time honoured tradition.

Everyone dresses up for these important ceremonies that I would really recommend you see. It will put the whole occasion into true perspective and enlarge your whole experience of the Soller Firo.

**On Thursday 11 May 2017 – The Investiture**

The Investiture of the Valient Women takes place in St Bartholomew Church at 8pm.

All the historical figures both adults and children parade the church and take their place to hear the annual call to defend Soller and celebrate victory again in 2017.

This great occasion is celebrated in speeches, music and dancing and finishes with 'Vive Soller'.

To be in the square of Soller to see the arrival of the people or join them in the Church for the ceremony is a great start to the true meaning of this Firo.

**On Saturday 13 May 2017 – The Offerina**

The Flower Offering takes place in Soller at 5pm.

This is a beautiful ceremony and involves transferring the statue of the Mother of God from the Victory Church of the Hospice to St Bartholomew in the centre of Soller. The statue is followed by all the significant Moors and Christians



Battle between the Moors and Christians. PHOTO: MDB

groups plus all the music of the area.

The traditional costumes are worn by all and flowers are carried to create the flower sculpture. The flower offerings are woven into the sculpture and remain for all to see in the Atrium of the Church.

Tradition, music, dancing and celebration is the delight of this ceremony which everyone is invited to enjoy.

**Monday 15 May 2017 – Monument Offerina**

All the historical figures meet at the water side of the Monument on the road between Soller and the Port. This is the site

where the Valiant Women made their stand for Soller and the Women. It is at this point that wreaths are laid on the water in memory and gratitude to those who died on 11 May 1561.

The people then process to the house in Tamany where the Valient Women killed the marauders.

An outdoor Mass is said at this revered place and there is more music, dancing and traditional costumes on offer.

The events of the afternoon and evening of 15 May is the actual re-enactment of the battles on the beaches, the Bridge

of Barona, the Monument and Soller City Centre. This starts at 3pm and finishes around 9pm.

Everyone is very welcome to come and watch and pick up the day wherever they want.

The only restriction is on the final battle site in Soller Square. For health and safety reasons the numbers there are restricted to 8500 and access is by 'wristbands only'. No wristband – no entry.

The last day to obtain these from the town hall is 10 May 2017.

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE

## The story ends – or does it?

●●● The Soller Firo combines historical re-enactment plus a full programme of daily events over a two week period. Every organization in the Soller Valley puts on an event for this Firo. The Museum of Soller has an annual flower show and the results are spectacular. Look out for the dates and times in the programme. The rose displays are of particular note.

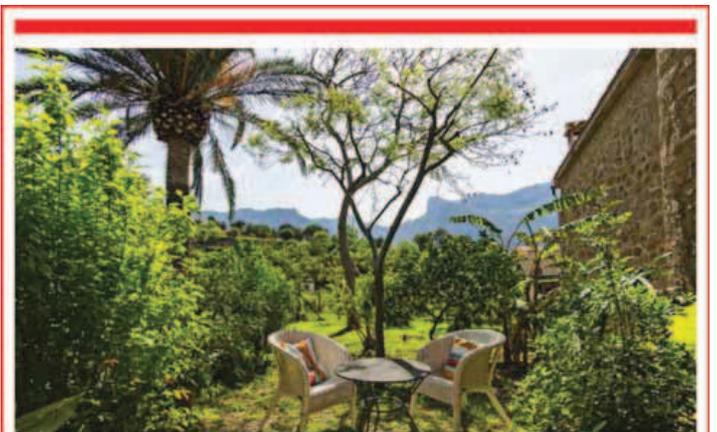
The Car Park at the Bus Station is cleared for the events on Sunday when the place becomes a farm. Animals are brought in and Soller's rural past is given reverence.

The Fair comes to town and dodgems and bumper cars are found amongst the whirling dervishes of the fast rides.

Music dominates the nights of the main weekend and it is true to say that the last act of the night doesn't finish till 4am. The nights are truly filled with music and the orange blossom smells of spring.

Football, road racing, chess, sling shot competitions are all represented in the many events. There is much to see and do and many thousands join Soller for all or part of the Firo. Many visitors have holiday homes here and always return at this time of year. The collective mindset of Sollerians – even those who no longer live in Soller still registers the importance of Firo to their family memory box.

The people of Soller welcome you to their world and hope that in reading their Firo story today you can understand and share their pride in being Sollerian.



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**ENGEL & VÖLKERS**

## SOLLER FAIR – PROGRAMME

## TODAY 7 MAY

## MUSIC

● **9h**, Soller Square. The race is on... XVIII Cursa de Muntanya Vall de Soller

● **11am**, at the Residencia Bell Entorn home for the elderly. Show dancing by d'Estol de Tramuntana.

## WEDNESDAY, 10 MAY

● **16:30**, at Residencia Bell Entorn Concert by the Third Age Soller.

● **19h**, at Calabruixa Book Shop (Cristofol Piza, 2) Exhibition opening of d'Ana Darder.

## THURSDAY, 11 MAY

● **20h**, at St. Bartholomew Church Soller INVESTITURE of the "brave women"

## VALENTES DONES 2017

● Sra. Catalina Arbona Corte's

● Sra. Lluïa Bibiloni Trias

● Dura la barra: Lluïa's Corte's Rullan

## HISTORICAL FIGURES

● Capita Angelats: Bernat Reyne's Trias Sergeant Soler: Juan Far Lo'pez

● Virrei de Rocafull: Toni Bernat Sastre

● Capita de Santa Maria: Joan Oliver Ramon

● Capita de Bunyola: Bartomeu Bernat Sastre

● Capita d'Alaro: Javier Martí nez Nu'n-ez

Accompanists per Magdalena Deya Miro, flabiol, i Guillem Serrano Gual, xeremia.

## VALENTES DONES – CHILDREN 2017

● Mireia Oliver Vila

● Xisca Castanyer Servera

## HISTORICAL FIGURES – CHILDREN 2017

● Virrei: Toni Muntaner Soler

● Capita Angelats: Francesc Hauf Servera Sergeant Soler: Albert Hauf Alberti

● Batle: Miquel Crespi Trias

● Capella: Joan Merce Grimalt

● Frare: Alejandro Andreo Piñeiro

● Trabucaire: Andreu Marco Martí

● Ajuntament: Sergi Vidal Forteza, Lluç Darfuelle Portillo, Manel Darfuelle Portillo, Toni Marques Ripoll, Tomeu Garcia Bernat

● **Afterwards:** PRAYER OF SA FIRA 2017 by Sr. Tofol Castanyer Bernat. Dance by d'Estol de Tramuntana. Presentation by d'Elena Estarellas Dols

● **22h**, at l'Alameda – Fountain Square in Soller Concert with "The Mother Folkers".

## FRIDAY, 12 MAY

● **15:30h**, at the Residencia Bell Entorn home for the Elderly. Opening of the exhibition "Som actius", handicrafts made by the residents of the Bell Entorn. Opening times daily from 10 to 19 h. Until 26 May.

● **From 17 to 19h**, Market Square Soller All about bikes, Road Safety, Circuit skills and tuning workshop for helmets. Must bring your own bike and helmet. (For kids and teens from 8 – 16 years). Grand opening by the Valentès Dones Infantis.

● **17h**, Ground floor of the l'Hospici. Opening of the exhibition "Els recursos hídrics: Mallorca i Soller". Exhibition by students of the 2n de Batxillerat of the IES Guillem Colom Casasnovas. Opening hours from 10 to 13h and from 17 to 19h.

● **19h**, at Can Dulce (Gran Via, 15). Opening of exhibition of paintings by Catalina Bauza' Bisbal. Flowers and Landscapes in oil. Opening hours: 13 Saturday and 14 Sunday, from 10 to 14h and from 16 to 21h; 15 Monday, from 10 to 14h.

● **19h**, at restaurant La Casona (Soller Square) Opening of exhibition of watercolours by Laura Pasan.

● **19:30h**, at Can Dulce (Gran Via, 15). Opening of exhibition by adult students

of Can Dulce, painting and drawing. Professor Natalia Spitale. Open: 13 Saturday and 14 Sunday from 11 to 13h and from 18 to 20h.

● **19:30h**, at the Rectoria (Gran Via, 1). Exhibition and sales of ceramics and marmalades by d'Estel Nou – ASANIDESO. Open: 13 and 14 May, from 10:30 to 14h and from 16:30 to 20:30h. 15 May from 11 to 13h.

● **20h**, From Calle Born to the Square. Festival of the BATUCADA: Xerecada, street parade of bagpipes, drums and batucada. Participants: Xeremiers of Soller, Xeremiers of Fornalutx, Batu al-món, drummers of the moors.

● **20h**, Chapel of Escolapias. Opening of exhibition "Bosc" by Natàlia Martí Rosselló. Open until 18 May. Open: 13 & 14 May, from 11 to 13h and from 18 to 20h. Monday closed. 16 to 18 May from 18 to 20h.

● **20h**, Can Prunera – Museu Modernista Opening of exhibition "Pablo Picasso & Joan Miró: History of a friendship".

● **23h**, Soller Square YOUTH NIGHT

● **23:00**, La Rumba que Sopa

● **01:00**, La Cancio'n del Verano

● **03:00**, TOITO DJ

## SATURDAY, 13 MAY

● **10h**, at Camp d'en Maiol. Futbol Benjami Sollerense – Rotlet Molinar Sollerense B – Madre Alberta At.

● **From 10h**, Soller Square. Sale of dolls "Brave Women in solidarity", by Fundació Vicenc, Ferrer- Projecte in aid of Indian widows.

● **11h**, Square and surroundings. Street parade with the Caparrots de la Vila, with the Valentès Dones and others.

● **12h**, Sala Magna – town hall. Official act of twinning with the French town of Port-Vendres.

● **12:15h**, al Camp d'en Maiol. Futbol Alevi Sollerense B – S'Horta

● **16h**, Camp d'en Maiol. Futbol Cadet Sollerense A – Vall-

de

demossa At.

● **17h**, Soller Square. Solemn procession Transfer of Our Lady from Victoria Church to St. Bartholomew. Flower offering to the Virgin of the Victory in the atrium of the Parish of St. Bartholomew. Gathering: C/Victòria 11 de maig. Route: Victoria 11 de maig – Lluna – Plac, a Constitució. The offering of the flowers ends with the Penjada de la Bandera del Col·lectiu de Pagesos Sant Ponç, 1561. Music by d'Aires Sollerics.

● **19:30h**, Casal de Cultura – Museu de Soller Opening of exhibition of Plants and Flowers. Opening hours: Saturday from 19:30 – 21:30h. Sunday from 10 to 14h and from 17 to 21:30h. Monday from 10:30 h to 13:30 and from 17 to 19h.

● **22h**, a l'Alameda – fountain Square of Soller

● **22h**, Banda Municipal de Música

● **00h**, l'pop's

● **02h**, Discovers

● **04h**, DJ

## SUNDAY, 14 MAY

● **From 9 to 14h**, at Can Dulce. II Expo K'NEX. Exhibition and workshop with K'nex. Organiser: Jordi Fernàndez Forteza

● **From 10 to 14h**, in Gran Via. Art exhibition Organised by: Ajuntament de Soller

● **From 10 to 14h**, at Carrer de Cetre. Car exhibition.

● **From 10 a 14h**, Carrer de Cetre car park. Animal Fair.

● **10:30h**, at Camp d'en Maiol. Kids football. Sollerense – Llevant

● **10:30h**, at Carrer del Vent (C/Joan Baptista Ensenyat). Chess morning

● **11h**, at St. Bartholomew Church Soller High Mass, with the Valentès Dones and other historic figures. Dance with offerings by d'Aires Sollerics.

● **12h**, Soller Square. Concert of the Municipal Band.

● **12:30h**, Gran Via (in front of Ameller Cuines) Charity Contest – pastries made with oranges with prize giving.

● **13h**, at Casal de Cultura – Museu de Soller Prize giving for the flower and plant contest.

● **Times to be confirmed:** Camp d'en Maiol Football: C.F. Soller – visitor

● **13h**, at Casal de Cultura – Museu de Soller Prize giving for the flower and plant contest.

● **De 18:30 a 19:45h**, a l'Alameda – fountain Square of Soller. Music and dance with d'Aires Sollerics.

● **20:30h**, at Can Dulce (Gran Via, 15). Reconeixement de mèrits

● **22h**, Soller Square. Concert with live music and DJs.

● **22:30h**, at the market square.

CALL TO ARMS. "Cre-mada de rom", music and entertainment by d'Estol de Tramuntana & Xeremiers de Soller.

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Offering of wreaths at the Monument to the Heroes of 11 May and "Sonada de la Jota de Can Tamany." Afterwards Mass in Tamany

## ES FIRO – THE BATTLES OF THE MOORS AND CHRISTIANS

● **15h**, Ringing of the Bells. The enemy ships have been sighted. The Farmers gather in the Plaça dels Estiradors to fight.

● **15:30h**, a la Plaça. Capitan Angelats entrusts the troops of Soller to "la Mare de Déu de la Victoria" – our Lady of Victory. He encourages the Sollerics: "A la lluita, sollerics!" Bandits arrive from the mountains to help defend the town of Soller. They receive Royal Pardon.

● **17h**, Generoso Beach. First battle. The moors try to disembark but find themselves up against a ready to fight army of farmers.

● **18:15h**, Repic Beach. Second battle. The Moors try again to disembark onto the beach and this time luck is on their side.

● **19:15h**, Es Pont d'en Barona. Third battle. Sollerics fight a hard battle at the bridge trying to defend their town.

● **20:30h**, Soller Square. Start of the last battle. The King of the Moors arrives at the square, already seeing himself the winner, to take possession of the town. Looting of town houses and the church.

● **20:50h**, King Ulutx Ali, believes himself the winner. He arrives to take possession of the houses of the village and to proclaim his victory.

● **21h**. The returning farmers find their town ransacked and taken by the enemy. They gathered for a last fierce attack on Carrer sa Lluna. Animated by Capitan Angelats, they find their last strength and fight bravely until they finally overcome the enemy and take back their town.

● **21:30h**, Capitan Angelats claims victory, gives thanks to our Lady of Victory and all Sollerics and pardoned bandits celebrate their joint victory with the singing of "La Balanguera". The Lady of Victory returns back to her home in the Hospice Church, accompanied by historical figures and the participants of Es Firo'.

## AFTER THE FESTIVAL... SATURDAY, 20 MAY

● **11h**, Soller Square. II Meeting of the Batucadas (drummers) in Soller. With: Valltukada (Valldemossa), Gorimba, Sandungueros, Realmement Sonats i Batu-al Món quin Rebonbori. Organized by: Batucada Batu-al Món

● **From 16 to 18h**, at l'Alameda – Fountain Square. Games for kids 2017 from 6 to 14 years. Inscriptions: 15:45 h. Price per inscription: 20 plastic bottle caps.

● **18h**, at the Museum Balear de Ciències Naturals. Talk / Workshop "The curious world of the lichens", by Dr. Dessire Sicilia, biologist and specialist in lichenologia. Free entrance.

## SUNDAY, 21 MAY

● **18h**, Soller Square. Music and dance with the Balladors des Raiguer and Estol de Tramuntana.

## SATURDAY, 27 MAY

● **20h**, Fàbrica "La Luna" (Av. Astúries, 4) "Poetry & music with poetry" with Mateu Xuri and the Martorell brothers. Afterwards joint dinner from local products, with Embotits from Aguiló SL, "La Luna" and beer by "Sullerica". Entry 12 €. Ticket sale: "La Luna" (Av. Astúries, 4), "Sullerica" (Es Camp Llarg, 20). For reservations please call: 639 523 068.



For more information visit [www.sollerweb.com](http://www.sollerweb.com)

