The 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 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, 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 slinghots 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 daylights 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...
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 vice-roy of Majorca.

The Soller Firo today

The 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 concerns 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 Solleric’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 Soller 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 Solleric’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 events and children’s entries – or does it?

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 meet at the waterfall in the centre. This starts at 3pm and finishes by 4am.

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.

SUNDAY, MAY 7, 2017

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE
Today 7 May

Music

9h. Soller Square. The races on... XVIII Cursa de Muntanya Vall de Soller

11h. At the Residencia Bell Entorn home for the elderly. Opening of the exhibition of d'Estal de Tramuntana.

Wednesday, 10 May

16:30h. At the Residencia Bell Entorn concert by the Third Age Silver.

19h. At Calabús Book Shop (Cristóbal Pizà). Exhibition opening of Ana Darder.

Thursday, 11 May

20h. At St. Bartholomew Church Soller Investiture of the “brave women”

Valenties Dones 2017

Sra. Catalina Arbó Corte's, Sra. Lluïca Bibiáns Tito, Dura la barrisa Lluís Corte's Rullan.

Historical Figures


Virrei de Rocafull: Toni Bernat Sastre.

Capità de Banyalbufar: Bortumeu Bernat Sastre.

Capità d’Alaro: Javier Martín Nez Nuñez.

Accompanists for Magdalena Deya Miro, Xitxà i Guillem Serrano Guix, Xeremias.

Valenties Dones—Children 2017

Mireia Olivera Vila.

Xisca Castanyer Servera

Historical Figures—Children 2017

Vinet, Toni Muntaner Soller.


Batle: Miquel Crespi Trias.

Capità de Bunyola: Bartomeu Bernat Sastre.

Historical Figures

Magnet—town hall.

Graffiti—S’Horta and Solleren se B—Madre Alberta At. Residencia Sollerense B—Madre Alberta At.


Organised by: Ajuntament de Sóller.

Saturday, 13 May

10h. At Camp d’en Maiol. Football: Benjamí Solerense—Rotlet Molinar Solerense B—Mother Alberta At.

12h. At La Balanguera. Football: Ensenyat.

12:30h. At Carrer del Vent (C/Joan Baptista). Chess morning.

19:30h. At the Residencia Bell Entorn. Exhibition and sales of ceramics and marmalades by Residencia.

19:30h. At the Square. Festival of the BATUCADA. Xeremias, street parade of bagpipes and drums and batucada.

Music and dance with d’Aires Solerense—Elegant.

Sunday, 14 May

From 9 to 14h. At Can Dúltz. Expo K Nex. Exhibition and workshop with K Nex. Organiser: Jordi Fernández Fontes.

From 10h to 14h In Gran Via. Art exhibition Organised by Ajuntament de Soller.

From 10h to 14h, Carrer del Céret. Car exhibition.

From 10h to 14h, Carrer del Céret car park. Animal Fair.

From 10h. At Camp d’en Maiol. Kids football.

13h. At Can Dúltz. Football Solerense—Elegant.

13h. At Carrer del Vent (C Joan Baptista). Chess morning.

19h. At St. Bartholomew Church Soller. High Mass, with the Valenties Dones and other historical figures and the participants of Es Firo.

12h. Soller Square. Concert of the Municipal Band.

12:30h. Gran Via (In front of Ametller Cures). Charity Contest—pastries made with oranges with prize giving.

13h. At Can Dúltz. Culture Museum of Soller. Prize giving for the flower and plant contest.

Times to be confirmed: Camp d’en Maiol Football C.F. Soller—visitor C.F. Port de Soller—visitor.


20h. At Can Dúltz. (Gran Via, 15). Reconocimiento de meÍts.

22h. Soller Square. Concert with live music and DJs.

22:30h, at the market square. CALL TD ARMS. “Crema de roques”, music and entertainment by d’Estal de Tramuntana & Xeremias de Soller.

Monday, 15 May

10h. At the Church of Soller. On the main road between Soller and the Port.

Opening of wreaths to the Monument to theHeroes of 11 May and “Sons de la justícia de Can Tamayo.” Afterward 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 Place and the Church.

15h30h, at the Plaça. Capitan Angelats enthrusts the troops of Soller to “13 de Mare de Déu de la Victoria”—Our Lady of Victory. He encourages the Solerenses: “A la llària, solerenses!” Bandits arrive from the mountains to help defend the town of Soller. They receive Royal Pardon.

17h. Generosa 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 on the beach and this time luck is on their side.

19:15h. Es Pont d’en Banara. Third battle. Sollerens fight an hard battle at the bridge trying to defend their town.

20h. At Sòller. 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 Ulutxa Ali believes himself the winner. He uses to take possession of the houses of the village and to proclaim his victory.

2h. 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 strongly until they finally overcome the enemy and take back their towns.

21.30h. Capitan Angelats claims victory, giving thanks to Our Lady of Victory and all Sollerens and pardoned bandits celebrate their joint victory with the singing of “La Balangoora”.

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


From 16h to 18h. At the Alameda—Foot Soller Square. Games for kids. From 6 to 14 years. Inscriptions: 14.55h Price per inscription: 20 plastic battle caps.


Sunday, 21 May

18h. Soller Square. Music and dance with the Balladors del Ragaier and Estal de Tramuntana.

Saturday, 27 May


For more information visit www.sollerweb.com