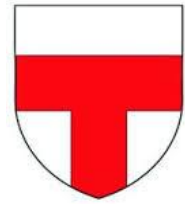


HAL KIRKOP



History:

Hal Kirkop, a small village towards the south of Malta, is inhabited by approximately 2600 people. Its name believed to have originated from the surname Percopo, belonging to a courtly Sicilian family that resided in or had a connection to then "hamlet" of Kirkop. The name is also thought to have originated from a member from the court of the King of Sicily who visited Malta at some point and had a summer residence in Kirkop. The name has been written in different ways: Percop, Corcop, Chircop and finally Hal Kirkop. The village's motto is "*Parva non Iners*", which means 'small but not empty'.

Up to the sixteenth century Hal Kirkop was administratively entrusted to the neighbouring parish of Our Lady of Bir Miftuħ. Spiritually it was also served by a number of churches including the still existent churches of the Annunciation, that of St Nicholas and a church for St Leonard which was later absorbed by the present parish church. On the 29th May 1592, Bishop Mons Tomasso Gargallo declared Hal Kirkop a parish in its own right dedicated to St Leonard and administratively serving the needs of the residents of the neighbouring villages of Mqabba and Hal Safi. The parish church had then absorbed two Medieval abutting churches and subsequently underwent numerous interventions including a new west facade in 1706 and two bell towers, built by the locals on Sundays and holidays.

For centuries agriculture was the main bread-winning activity for most of the local families. Testifying to this is an esteemed reputation in the production of the traditional soft cheese – *irkotta* and *ġbejniet*. With the advent of the 20th century came the exploitation of the good quality globigerina limestone to field a post-War building boom. Thus the development of quarries towards the perimeter of the village and corresponding employment to residents. Nowadays, life has moved on, most quarries are reclaimed and used for agricultural purposes despite the fact that most of the farming community in on a part time basis. Although growing thinner as a result of extensions to the airport runway and increased housing needs, the village managed to secure a traditional village core and a remarkable green belt along its perimeter. In keeping up with local culinary traditions and produce, the local council has organised an *irkotta* festival for four consecutive years. Held in May each year, the festival aims to show traditional methods of *irkotta* production

in contrast with the modern production.

Parrochial religious feasts are very much at the heart of Kirkop's life and identity. During the feast days of Saint Leonard and Saint Joseph, the village is transformed by artistic decorations and festive dress rich in traditional fireworks and band marches. The feast of St. Joseph is celebrated on the second Sunday in July, the feast of St. Leonard on the first Sunday following St. Mary's feast, which is celebrated on the 15th August.

Attractions:

1.  **St. Nicholas Church and Cemetery**  

The cemetery, as part of St. Nicholas' church was rebuilt in the 17th century. In the cemetery one finds a lot of graves of those who died in the great plague in 1592.

Address: Triq San Nikola, Ғal Kirkop

Opening hours: Every Sunday and holidays

2.  **St. Leonard Church** 

The church is dedicated to St. Leonard and has more than 400 years of history inside it. It was first built around 1500 and then enlarged in 1706 and then vastly improved in the 19th century. The Church is home to a number of 17th and 18th century artworks and several wall-paintings by Ġuzè Briffa.

Address: Pjazza San Leonardu, Ғal Kirkop

Opening Hours: Daily: 6am – 9am and 4pm – 6.30pm

3.  **The Annunciation Chapel** 

This chapel is very old. It was constructed in 1460 and then rebuilt in 1658. This chapel can be found in Misraħ Ғal Kirkop and is still being used for special sermons.

Address: Misraħ Ғal Kirkop, Ғal Kirkop

Opening hours: Open daily in the mornings

4.  **Ruins of chapel of St. James Apostle** 

The entrance arch of the old Chapel of St. James Apostle still remains here.

Address: Triq Dun Ġużepp Barbara, Ғal Kirkop

5. **Paleochristian Catacombs** 

The Paleochristian era tombs and small catacombs were found in several parts of the village in 1962. It was calculated that these were dug in the 4th or 5th century AD. Many were destroyed or buried again, and now only two can be visited.

Address: Triq Taż-Żebbiegħ, Ғal Kirkop

6. **Menhir** 

The Menhir is an erect stone slab that stands about 3 metres high. This is one of the three which are still in good shape in Malta. It was erected during ancient times, although it is still a mystery as to why it was erected. Experts agree that it was used as a place where the rulers of the time used to meet. It has since become the symbol of Ғal Kirkop.

Address: Triq Valletta c/w Triq San Pietru, Ғal Kirkop

Opening Hours: Daily: 8am – 1pm

Notes: Very near to the Menhir, in Triq ir-Ramlija one can find many quarries. Mr Michael Attard of '*La Pietra Stone*', Triq ir-Ramlija, would be more than willing to show how stone is carved and handmade stone souvenirs can be bought.

Places of refreshment: 

- St Joseph Band Club – Parish Street, Ғal Kirkop
- St Leonard Band Club – Misrah Ғal Kirkop, Ғal Kirkop

Please note that both band clubs open daily in the evenings and full days on weekends.

Local Information: 

Hal Kirkop Local Council

Address: 31, Triq San Benedittu, Hal Kirkop

Telephone: +356 21680099

Fax: +356 21683777

E-mail: kirkop.lc@gov.mt

Opening hours: Winter – Monday - Friday: 7:30am - 4pm, Saturday 8am – 11.30am

Summer – Monday - Friday: 7:30am - 1.30pm, Saturday 8am – 11.30am

Accessibility: 

Arriva Bus

From Valletta to Kirkop: Bus 71

Bus Stop: Hal Kirkop

Customer care: +356 2122 2000

E-mail: enquiries@arriva.com.mt

Website: www.arriva.com.mt

Google Maps

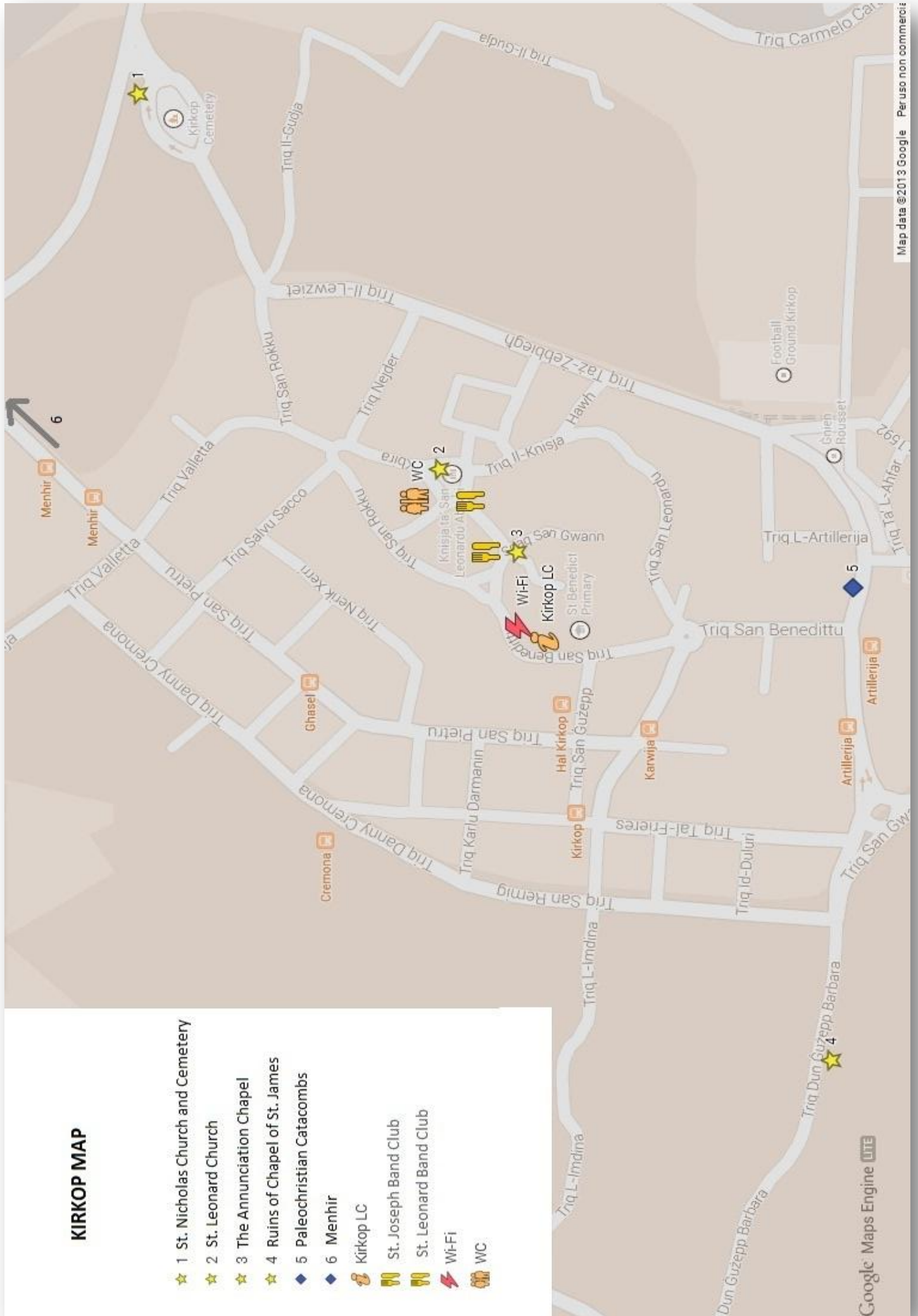
Bus routes according to the bus stops

Timing:

- Timing for the transportation(check the bus timetable on <http://www.arriva.com.mt>):
35 minutes to get there from Valletta
35 minutes to come back to Valletta
- ★ Timing for the itinerary of the must-see sites:
40 min
- Timing for the full itinerary:
55 min

KIRKOP MAP

- ★ 1 St. Nicholas Church and Cemetery
- ★ 2 St. Leonard Church
- ★ 3 The Annunciation Chapel
- ★ 4 Ruins of Chapel of St. James
- ◆ 5 Paleochristian Catacombs
- ◆ 6 Menhir
- 👤 Kirkop LC
- 🎺 St. Joseph Band Club
- 🎺 St. Leonard Band Club
- 📶 Wi-Fi
- 🚻 WC



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