

## 'CAPTAIN MUSAFIR' IN SLOVENIA IN 1863

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## ABSTRACT

A journey through Slovenia from Trieste to Graz was made in May 1863 by an English army officer on leave from India. He published a description of it under a pseudonym, 'Captain Musafir', but he has now been identified as George Malleon. His account of visiting Sežana, Lipica and the cave at Postojna is reprinted here with some further information about Postojnska jama in 1863. In his love of Slovenia, his love of fishing and his interest in the Karst, Malleon resembles his famous predecessor Sir Humphry Davy.

**Key words:** Slovenia, travellers, Postojnska jama, G. B. Malleon, 1863

## IL 'CAPITANO MUSAFIR' IN SLOVENIA NEL 1863

## SINTESI

Nel maggio 1863, un ufficiale dell'esercito inglese in congedo dall'India fece un viaggio attraverso la Slovenia, da Trieste a Graz. Costui divulgò una descrizione del viaggio con lo pseudonimo 'Capitano Musafir', ma ora è stato identificato come George Malleon. Il suo resoconto della visita a Sežana (Sežana), Lipizza (Lipica) e alle Grotte di Postumia (Postojna) è riportato nell'articolo, con ulteriori informazioni sulle Grotte di Postumia nel 1863. Nel suo amore per la Slovenia e per la pesca e nel suo interesse per il Carso, Malleon assomiglia al suo famoso predecessore Sir Humphry Davy.

**Parole chiave:** Slovenia, viaggiatori, Grotte di Postumia, G. B. Malleon, 1863

## INTRODUCTION

Captain Musafir visited Postojnska jama and Lipica in 1863. His signature is reproduced in figure 4. But he did not exist; the name is a pseudonym.

This article identifies who the man really was and describes his visit to Postojna (called Adelsberg at that time) and its cave, and through other parts of Slovenia as part of a longer tour in Austria and Bavaria.

## 'THE CALCUTTA REVIEW'

The visit of 'Captain Musafir' first came to notice in this way.

An anonymous magazine article published in 1886 (Russell, 1886, 54-71), now known to have been written

by Charles Russell, explains how he was first attracted to the caves of Slovenia. Serving as a doctor in India in the 1870s, he was setting out for two months' leave in Europe:

One of the first things I did after arriving at the hotel in Bombay was to lay in a stock of literature for the voyage, and among some dozen volumes which I purchased from an itinerant vendor of second-hand books were two odd volumes of the 'Calcutta Review', which, I saw, contained, along with much heavier matter, a series of pleasant, chatty articles, entitled 'The Unpublished Journal of Captain Musafir.' Especially was I struck with his description of the wonderful grotto at Adelsberg, a few hours' journey from Trieste.

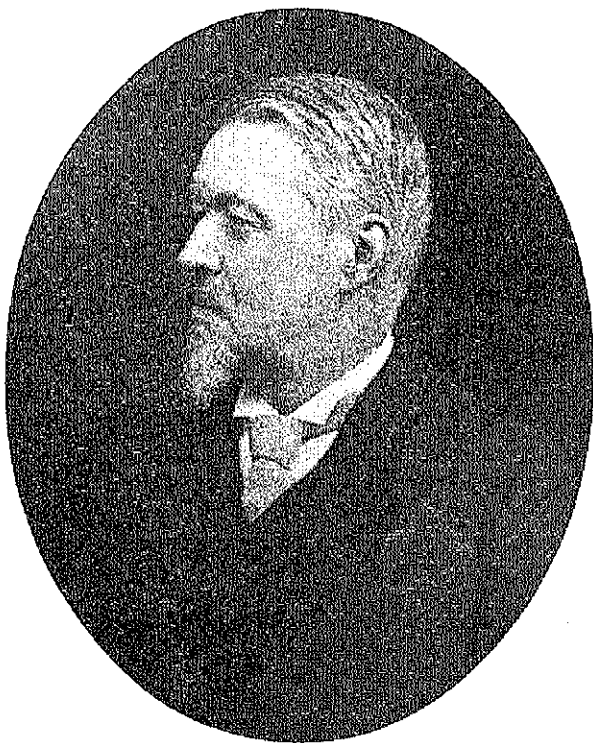
There was no indication when 'Musafir' had been at the cave, nor of which volume of *The Calcutta Review* contained his description. The index to the first fifty volumes (1848-1870) revealed a likely series of three articles (Russell, 1866, 54-55) and one of these (Malleeson, 1866-1867, in 1866, did indeed include the visit concerned:

On the 18<sup>th</sup> May our travellers left Trieste by railway for Adelsberg, famous for its caves (Malleeson, 1866, 191).

The entire description is reprinted later but at this stage the intention is to seek clues to the identity of 'Captain Musafir' and the year of his visit. 'Musafir' could not be his true name; it is the Persian word for traveller. Besides, Russell always put the name within quotation marks, thus: 'Captain Musafir'.

#### THE EVIDENCE FOR AUTHOR AND DATE

Charles Russell, who drew attention to Musafir's writing in his own article of 1866, provides some information about him:



**Fig. 1:** Colonel George Bruce Malleeson (Malleeson, 1894).

**Sl. 1:** Polkovnik George Bruce Malleeson (Malleeson, 1894).

The articles in question, which, as I subsequently ascertained, were from the pen of an officer of the Bengal Army, who was then known to fame as the author of the 'Red Pamphlet,' and has since acquired a considerable reputation as an historian, contained a charming account of a holiday tour in some of the most picturesque parts of Austria (Russell, 1866, 55).

The writer of the Musafir articles himself, introducing the 'diaries' on which the articles are supposed to be based, writes:

Captain Musafir would appear to be an officer of the Bombay [sic] army, who left India with his wife some four or five years ago on twenty months' sick leave to Europe. ... His journal was handed over to us with the most satisfactory proofs as to its authenticity. ... We gather from a few prefatory remarks affixed to it that Musafir was a fair German scholar, a great lover of the picturesque, an adventurous traveller, and an ardent devotee of "the gentle art [of fishing]." ... His taste for the picturesque and his love of travelling would seem to have been shared by his wife, for it is evident from the journal that she accompanied him everywhere ...

We gather from the journal that after the ordinary incidents of an overland voyage, our two travellers arrived at Trieste at 11 o'clock on the 15<sup>th</sup> May (Malleeson, 1866, 187-188).

With regard to dates, there is this sentence, given as a footnote:

The date of the year is not given in any part of the journal, but from the state of completion of the railways, it could not have been more than five or six years ago, possibly less (Malleeson, 1866, 187-188).

The article having been written an unknown time before its publication in November 1866, this suggests 1860 or 1861 or 'possibly' later. Or a few years earlier, if there was a long delay before publication; the railway in question, from Trieste to Postojna, was completed in 1857 when the first train ran on 20 June.

When Musafir and his wife got to Postojna, they met 'some American gentlemen who were staying at the inn, and who permitted them to join their party'.

Thus the visit to the cave was made, with some Americans, by an officer of the Army in India, who later became known as a historian. It took place on 18 May, not earlier than 1858 nor later than 1866, and most probably in the early years of the 1860s.

#### FALSE TRAILS

Before 'Captain Musafir' was finally identified, several leads were followed without success.



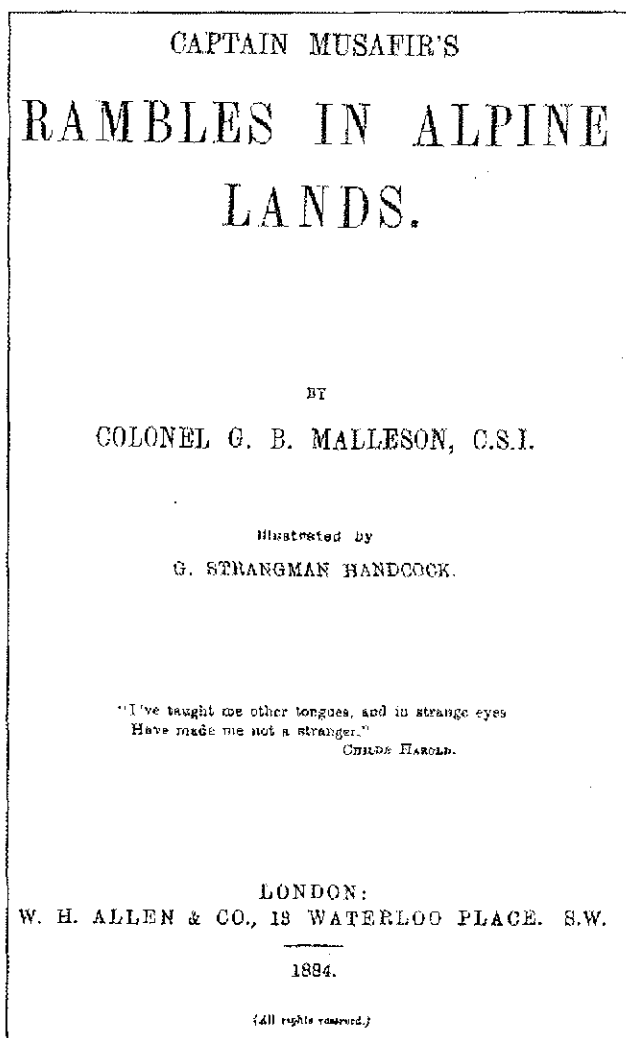


Fig. 3: The title page of the book (Malleison, 1884) in which Malleison reprinted his anonymous articles of 1866-1867.

Sl. 3: Naslovnica knjige (Malleison, 1884), v kateri so bili ponatisnjeni Malleisonovi anonimni članki iz obdobja 1866-1867.

wrote frequently for *The Calcutta Review* from 1857, and after he retired as a colonel in 1877 he wrote much on military history. He was a keen fisherman, a good cricketer and a member of the Alpine Club. He died on 1 March 1898 in London and was buried at Brompton cemetery on 5 March.

Indian Army records (The Indian Army and Civil Service, 1863) confirm that he was on leave in Europe in 1863 and 1864. Despite his own statement that 'Musafir' had left India 'on twenty months' sick leave to Europe' (Malleison, 1884, 8), this was almost certainly the normal long leave to which he was entitled after every ten years' service (Thacher's Post Office, 1864).

## THE BOOK

The book *Captain Musafir's Rambles in Alpine Lands* (Malleison, 1884), in which Colonel Malleison reprinted his *Calcutta Review* articles of 1866 and 1867 (Malleison, 1866, 1867) under his own name, was published in 1884 (Fig. 3) with a second edition in the following year unaltered apart from typographical corrections. The original magazine text was unchanged except for the addition of some new footnotes. There is also in the book a ten-page preface recalling some later visits to Slovenia and other parts of Europe.

Both editions have a printed dedication to M.A.H., a young woman who was 'the life of our party in 1863'. M.A.H. has not been identified but she must have been one of the two sisters of Malleison's unnamed friend from India, the 'charming, high-spirited girls' with whom they travelled from Luzern (Malleison, 1884, 73, 83, 84, 87). M.A.H. is of particular interest because a copy of the second edition is known with an ink inscription to her (Fig. 4) written by Malleison using his old pseudonym of 'Cap[tain] Musafir', twenty-two years after they had journeyed together. Alas, she was not present for the Slovene part of the journey.

The handwriting of 'Musafir' in 1885 (Fig. 4) and of Malleison in 1867 (Fig. 2) is clearly the same. So too is that of the 'G. Morrison' in the Postojnska jama visitors' book entry of 19 May 1863 (Fig. 5). The capital M is especially diagnostic. So we have Major G.B. Malleison, alias 'Captain Musafir', disguising his identity at the cave, perhaps an indication that he already intended to write up his journey for publication under a pseudonym. The absence of any entry for his wife is not surprising, for often only the head of the family would sign. The discrepancy of date was probably not deliberate. Such errors were often made in visitors' book entries, as they are today. Indeed two corrections of date can be seen in the six entries in figure 5. So there is no reason to disbelieve the 18 May date given in Malleison's printed text.

## THE JOURNEYS THROUGH AUSTRIA AND INTO BAVARIA

The three *Calcutta Review* articles reprinted in Malleison's book describe a long journey in 1863, including his Slovenia visit, and a shorter one in the following year. The Slovene visit forms only a very small part of his 1863 travels which lasted for about four months in all. His account of it is reprinted separately below.

The journey started in Trieste (then in Austria) on 15 May 1863, where Malleison and his wife arrived 'after the ordinary incidents of an overland voyage', so they had not come by sea (Malleison, 1884, 7-9). Probably they had landed at Ancona and done the 430 km journey to Trieste by train.

They put up at the Hotel de la Ville [Fig. 6], which they describe as being one of the best and most luxurious hotels on the Continent, being furnished with hot and cold baths, and every possible convenience. It is, however, dear in comparison with hotels in other parts of the continent. This arises from the fact that Trieste itself is a very expensive city (Malleeson, 1884, 7-9).

The guidebooks support this view of its expensiveness:

Trieste ...Inns, all dear: Hotel de la Ville, on the quay, in a good situation (Murray, 1863)

Trieste ...Hotel de la Ville, well fitted up (Baedeker, 1868).

While in Trieste they saw Miramare, the former home of the Austrian archduke who became Emperor Maximilian of Mexico. The lodge-keeper who admitted them to the grounds was a former soldier who had fought against the Austrians in Hungary. The Malleeson's visits from Trieste to Sežana and to Lipica are reprinted later. So too is their stop at Postojna where they saw the cave on 18 May and from which they left by train the next morning for Graz.

From Graz they went to Wien, Linz (with a steamer journey up the Danube to Passau and back) and thence to Gmunden at the northern end of Traunsee, and to Ebensee and Langbath at its southern end. After eight days there they drove to Ischl for five days, continuing eastwards to Grundlsee where they spent another ten days. On from there to Hallstadt and Golling (30 km south of Salzburg), then to Berchtesgaden and to Unterstein near Königs See for some ten days' walking, fishing and shooting. From Salzburg they travelled west to spend eight days at Traunstein and Chiem See in Bavaria. Several of these places, including Traunsee, Ischl and Grundlsee, had been visited by Malleeson's more illustrious fishing predecessor and lover of Slovenia, Sir Humphry Davy, in 1828.

From there they covered greater distances, usually by train, spending nearly a fortnight at München and then stopping at Augsburg and Schaffhausen *en route* to Luzern where they joined M.A.H. and her family. Travelling south together they went to Engelberg, Brienz and Grindelwald before going north again to Strasbourg and a month's rambling in the Schwarzwald.

The third of the *Calcutta Review* articles (Malleeson, 1867), also reprinted in the book, describes a tour made largely on foot by Malleeson and an unnamed friend in August of the following year. Having come via Bamberg and Nürnberg (where he mentions having seen 'fossil[iferous] caves' in Franconia nine years before) to München, they set out by train to Salzburg on 4 August. They went on to Mond See, Schafberg, Langbath, Gmun-

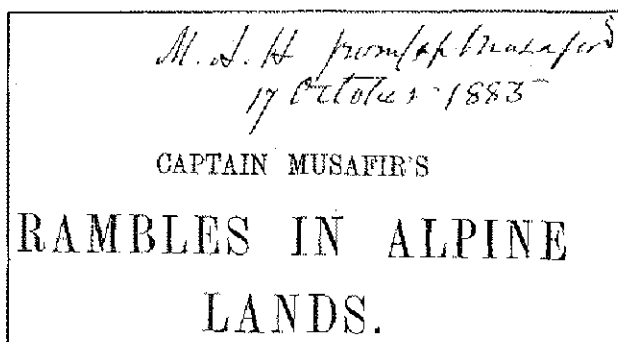


Fig. 4: A copy of the second edition inscribed in Malleeson's handwriting as a gift to his friend "M.A.H. from Captain Musafir".

Sl. 4: *Kopija druge izdaje Malleesonovega rokopisa kot darila prijateljici "M.A.H. od stotnika Musafirja".*

den, Ischl, Obertraun, Hallstadt and Golling before continuing to Königs See, Hallein, Lend, Wildbad Gastein and Innsbruck. From there they went over the highest pass to Italy, via Landeck, Pfunds, the Finztermhuz Pass (1483 m), Mals, and over the Stelvio Pass (2757 m) to Bormio and Tirano. Thence they crossed into Switzerland and over the Bernina Pass (2330 m) to Samedan near St. Moritz in the Engadin, and then by train from Chur through Bad Ragaz and Zürich to Basel. Malleeson had to return to India six weeks later and it was this that limited their 1864 excursion to just under a month.

#### IN SLOVENIA

Malleeson's text on Slovenia (Malleeson, 1884, 12-16) is reprinted here in full. At that stage of the journey he was accompanied only by his wife.

On 17 May:

...our travellers drove to a village called Sessana [Sežana], on the line of the Vienna railway. Sessana is nothing in itself, but the drive to it is most lovely. The road winds up a gradual ascent of 1,800 feet, and commands, during its course, after the first half-hour, a splendid view of Trieste, the Adriatic, and of the picturesque town of Pirano on the Illyrian coast. On a very clear day, free from haze, Venice may be seen. At Sessana, our travellers met an Austrian officer, a native of the province of Moravia, who had served in the Italian campaign of 1859, regarding which he conversed freely. He did ample justice to the French soldiers and their emperor. Of the latter indeed he said that if he had been at the head of the Austrian army and if Giulay had commanded the French, he was confident victory would have been with the Austrians. Their defeat at Magenta he attributed to the utter incompetence of Giulay, and their ill-success in the campaign to the

treachery and disaffection of the Hungarian and Italian regiments. He appeared most anxious for a fresh trial. "Let the Emperor," he said, "send to Italy only Moravians, Bohemians, Croats and Austrians, and let him place Benedek at their head, and, I'll answer for it, we'll win back Italy." It appears from various entries in the journal that this feeling was shared by almost all the Austrian officers and privates our travellers met with.

On their return to Trieste the travellers followed another and more circuitous road, in order to visit the Imperial breeding stud at Lipizza [Lipica] - a place famous for its grass lands. The sight here was well worth seeing. At Lipizza there are horses of all nations, amongst them many English thoroughbreds. But those that most attracted notice were the Arabs - far more perfect in shape than any Musafir had seen in India. Many of them must have been of the purest Arabian blood, so absolutely faultless was their conformation. The care bestowed on these horses, as well as on the mares and foals, cannot be exceeded. It is a pretty sight to see them loose in their large, well-built houses, all herded together, living in the most perfect amity. They are treated with affection and gentleness by their attendants. No other mode of treatment indeed could have produced the sweet temper and docility displayed by all the animals in this vast establishment.

Next comes their visit to Postojnska jama. The journey time given as 'little more than an hour' from Trieste to Postojna is interesting, for only two years earlier an American traveller (Comfort, 1863) had stated that the journey took four hours for 72 km (84 km, in fact) (Murray, 1876). Even in 1880 it was said to take three hours (Aubertin, 1880).

On the 18<sup>th</sup> May our travellers left Trieste by railway for Adelsberg, famous for its caves. The line of rail lay among the hills, and the many bends it made, and their sharpness, - sometimes almost at right angles, - appeared to have completely astonished the two Anglo-Indians. The journey itself takes little more than an hour. Adelsberg lies about 1,800 feet above Trieste, and is proportionately cooler. It is in itself but a small village, deriving all its importance from the wonderful caves in its vicinity. To inspect these was the object not only of Musafir and his wife, but of all the travellers who stop at Adelsberg. In order to see the caves in perfection, it is necessary that they should be thoroughly well lighted-up with torches and candles. Our travellers were fortunate enough on their arrival to find that orders for an extraordinary illumination had been issued by some American gentlemen who were staying at the inn, and who permitted them to join their party. Snatching a hasty meal, the whole party left the inn about 11, and arrived at the entrance of the caves a quarter of an hour later. They did not emerge till 3

o'clock. To describe accurately what they saw in that interval would require a paper by itself. Transported suddenly from the fresh, balmy, sunny air of the outside world into the very heart of the earth, - a gloomy cavern with no light save that afforded by the torches of the guides, - the travellers found themselves entering, now vast halls vaulted by rocks and supported seemingly by pillars of alabaster, - now narrow passages the flinty sides of which sparkled like diamonds. Again, they entered the nave of a glorious cathedral, at the other end of which, in the place where the altar should be, was a visible representation of the crucifixion, not carved, but formed naturally by the rock. The grandeur and dread peculiarity of the sight impressed itself on all the members of the party. They could scarcely resist the conviction that they were in another world. Sometimes depressing them by its gloominess, at others exalting them into enthusiasm by the glorious shapes formed by the alabaster-like stalactites, the effect was to make them utterly forgetful of the sun and the trees, the light and the air, the green meads and the running streams they had left outside, and to induce the idea that they were really passing through the valley of the shadow of death, to the vale that led down to the Styx. The apparition of Charon and his boat would not, in those moments, have surprised any of the party. As if to complete the illusion, there was, below them, a river dark as Erebus, flowing onwards through the depths of the earth, and seeming to indicate that there was a point yet to be reached, at which its stream would widen, and interpose a barrier between the visitors and the world beyond. Until the travellers approached the very last of the caves the spell was complete, nor did it leave them till, at a sudden turn, a flood of light reminded them that -

The earth hath wonders, as the water hath,  
And these are of them!

Leaving Adelsberg the following morning about 9 o'clock, our travellers left for Gratz,

Malleson's description is mainly of the cave itself as they saw it, rather than the way it was visited in 1863 which is what interests us more today. At that time arrangements for the visit would be made at the office of the Grotten-Cassier (Thomas Pegu) in Adelsberg itself. There the visitors' book would be signed and the necessary fees paid. These varied, depending not only the number of people in the party but also on the quantity of torches and candles ordered (Costa, 1863). Thus on top of the entry price of 70 kroner (0.7 florin) each, a 'great illumination with 10 pounds [4½ kg] of tallow candles' cost an additional 5¼ florins. This was no doubt the 'extraordinary illumination' ordered by the American gentlemen of which Malleson's party had the benefit.

Nro.	Datum Data Date	Namen Nome Nom	Geburtsort Nativo Natif	Charakter Condizione Rang	Wohnort Domicilio Domicile
18	May 1863	G. Morrison	England	—	Postojna
19	May	G. Morrison	England	—	—
		Mr. E. Watt	England		
		Thomas Baskell	England		
20	May	F. Loepfl	Trieste	Postiere	Trieste

Fig. 5: The entry written in the Postojnska jama visitors' book in Malleeson's handwriting on 19 May 1863, giving his name as G. Morrison.

Sl. 5: Tako se je v knjigo gostov v Postojnski jami 19. maja 1863 vpisal Malleeson - kot G. Morrison.

Another tourist attraction available for the cave visitor at that time but not mentioned by Malleeson was the purchase of live *Proteus*. According to Murray's *Handbook ...* (Murray, 1863), 'Specimens may generally be purchased at the inn at Adelsberg' and the book also advised how they could best be taken home in water.

The night they spent in Postojna after their cave visit and before catching the Graz train the next morning would have been at the Hungarische Krone, on the site where Hotel Kras now stands. Murray's *Handbook* says of it in 1863 (Murray, 1863):

...really good and reasonable [in price]; civil people; it is about 20 min[utes] walk from the Stat[ion] (Murray, 1863).

Another guidebook of the time (von Radics, 1861, 11) adds that it had a lovely garden.

Malleeson had clearly grown to love Slovenia, as well

as other parts of Austria, for in his preface to the 1884 book he wrote:

Since that first introduction into the country which may be called the Paradise of the World, I have made many incursions into Austria. There is scarcely a village in Carniola, in Carinthia, in the two Austrias, and but few in Tirol, in the Bavarian Highlands, and in Styria, which I have not visited; hardly a mountain stream which I have not, however slightly, despoiled.

Seven years after the first glimpses of the promised Land recorded in this volume we again visited Europe. This time, also, we landed at Trieste, and proceeded at once, by way of Laibach, into Carniola. The charms, the loveliness, of that beautiful province, it would be impossible to exaggerate. Veldes [Bled], Feistriz [Bohinjska Bistrica], the Wochein See [Bohinjsko jezero], the glorious Terglou [Triglav], and many kindred places hardly less admirable, rise up to give men-

tal evidence in support of this assertion. After a stay at Veldes of more than a fortnight spent in climbing, rambling, and fishing, we proceeded to the scarcely less beautiful Wurzenner Thal [valley of the Sava Dolinka, past Kranjska Gora], the delight of Sir Humphrey [sic] Davy ...

On my final return from India, in 1877, I attacked the country from a new base. Again landing at Trieste, I proceeded with a friend by rail to Görz (Gorizia), and drove thence, by way of Canale [Kanal], to Tolmino [Tolmin], and from Tolmino by way of Podmelec [Podmelec], and Coritenza [Koritnica], to Podberda [Podbrdo], a country abounding in the most magnificent scenery....

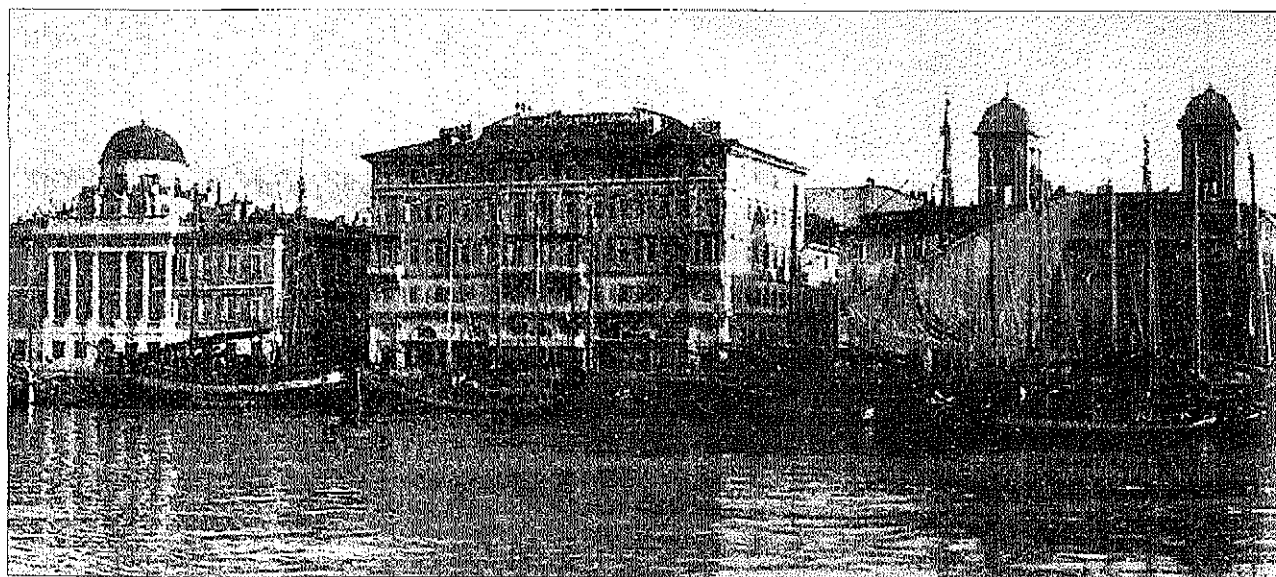
Since that period scarcely a year has passed which has not seen me in one or other of the seven charming provinces - in the two Austrias, or in Tirol, or in Styria, or in Carniola, or in Carinthia, or in the Bavarian Highlands, or in all. The warm-hearted, manly, generous, and kindly people who inhabit them always give me a welcome, and make me feel that they regard me as a friend (Malleison, 1884, xi-xiii).

In his last book too, published the year before he died, he showed that his interest had not waned:

...my acquaintance with those rivers and lakes began in 1863-4. I have spent the greatest part of my holidays since that date in renewing my acquaintance with them; in walking, rucksack on back, and alpenstock and fishing-rod in hand, to every part of Tyrol, of Carinthia, of Carniola, ...

...The country around Laibach and the Julian Alps generally lends itself to the researches of men of science.... From Laibach the traveller can easily visit the marvellous caves of Adelsberg, reached by train. In those caves even the angler will realize that there are many things in the world more wonderful than were ever dreamt of in his philosophy. The underground rivers which will attract his attention, the Unz to the north, the Reka to the south, of Adelsberg; the Pi[v]k[a] at Adelsberg itself, with their living fishy inhabitants, will certainly excite his wonder (Malleison, 1897).

In his love for Slovenia, his love of fishing, and his attention to the karst, Colonel Malleison much resembles Sir Humphry Davy.



**Fig. 6: The Hotel de la Ville in Trieste, at which Malleison stayed in 1863. Reproduced from a sheet of the hotel's writing paper used in 1911 and now in the archives of Postojnska jama at the Karst Research Institute, Postojna.**  
**Sl. 6: Hotel de la Ville v Trstu, v katerem se je leta 1863 nastanil Malleison. Reproducirano z lista hotelskega pisarniškega papirja, ki so ga uporabljali leta 1911 in je zdaj v arhivu Postojnske jame na Inštitutu za raziskovanje kraša v Postojni.**



## 'STOTNIK MUSAFIR' LETA 1863 V SLOVENIJI

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## POVZETEK

Maja 1863 si je Slovenijo med potovanjem med Trstom in Gradcem ogledal dopustujoči angleški vojaški častnik, ki je takrat sicer služboval v Indiji. Svoje vtise je pozneje objavil pod psevdonimom 'Stotnik Musafir', za katerega danes vemo, da se skriva pod imenom George Malleson. V tem prispevku je objavljeno njegovo pričevanje o obisku Sežane, Lipice in posebno Postojnske jame v letu 1863. Sicer pa nas Malleson s svojo ljubeznijo do Slovenije, ribarjenja in krasa močno spominja na sira Humphryja Davyja, svojega predhodnika.

**Ključne besede:** Slovenija, popotniki, Postojnska jama, G. B. Malleson, 1863

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