

A scenic view of a beach in Gibraltar. In the background, a steep, rocky cliff rises above a row of colorful, multi-story buildings. The buildings are painted in various colors like white, yellow, and pink. In the foreground, a sandy beach curves along the water's edge. Several people are visible on the beach, some sitting under umbrellas and others swimming in the clear, greenish-blue water. Large, dark rocks are visible in the lower right corner of the frame.

# **ROCK TALK**

**JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF GIBRALTAR**

**2019 EDITION**

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## Editorials

A belated Happy New year to all members and readers of this edition of Rock Talk.

2019 promises to be an interesting year in so many respects but one in particular sticks out like a 'sore thumb'. As we pen this editorial, the British Parliament is in turmoil and this coming Tuesday will determine the future of the United Kingdom and Gibraltar vis a vis our future relationship with Europe. By the time you read this we will be in a better (or worse) position as to this 'relationship'. We hope that politicians of all political colours unite to deliver what is best for the United Kingdom and Gibraltar.

We are rather concerned here on the Rock – by 'we' meaning the general public and businesses. Our Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister have been doing their best in order to obtain 'assurances' from all concerned – the UK, EU and Spain. We are still not convinced - we have been here before, so many times... So in this Editorial, the Gibraltar based Editors, are pleading for a continuation of all the support Gibraltar has received from the Friends. Your support and encouragement is much appreciated, and much needed in these difficult times. It is important to maintain our Heritage and to develop our culture, but increasing the broader awareness of Gibraltar and its unique circumstances and history is just as important in these challenging days.

The good news is that clearly there are many out there who have a strong confidence in the future status of the Rock, as shown by all the building projects currently taking place (see Out and About Gibraltar, or the various engagements on the Friends' Annual Visit) and the many more which have been approved by the Development and Planning Commission. The report from the Heritage Trust outlines developments in the management of heritage sites and future

developments, and is an interesting read.

We wish you a prosperous 2019, and hope to see you in Gibraltar at some point over the year.

### **Brian & Liz Gonzalez**

Another busy year for the society has come and gone, with the full range of events and support for heritage projects in Gibraltar.

This issue hopes to update the membership on the various activities, and includes summaries of the excellent presentations from the annual seminar. Special thanks to those who arranged another very enjoyable annual visit to Gibraltar, and the seminar, especially given the last minute venue issues which were managed magnificently! I can thoroughly recommend both events, and the talks at Gibraltar House cover a broad range of subjects, and prove to be of great interest.

We hope to update the web site in the near future, and keep it current this coming year, but again it depends on volunteers from within the organisation, and we are always looking for members to step forward and offer their services in all areas. This is an important message, as help is needed in many areas if the Society is to continue to flourish.

I hope that this issue is an interesting read, and I encourage you to attend events whenever you can, as they are great fun and provide a venue to meet other members and discuss developments in what will prove to be an eventful year. The Executive Committee welcomes suggestions for other activities, or for ways in which we can improve the Society.

### **Vincent Mifsud**



# Chairman's Letter

As I write, the Brexit debate approaches its climax and it seems to be anyone's guess as to how it will all turn out. I hope we'll know more when I write this foreword next year, but, in the meantime and notwithstanding the surrounding political turmoil and uncertainty, I'm very pleased to report that the Friends of Gibraltar have provided a strong thread of non-political sanity and have enjoyed another successful year.

In terms of projects, we have brought the Oral History initiative to fruition on the web, delivered a number of minor projects, and continue to work with the Gibraltar Heritage Trust on Witham's Cemetery. In all, we planned for and spent well over £11,600 on worthy heritage projects during the course of the last financial year. Spend for the current year is somewhat less and we need to ensure a steady flow of initiatives and projects in which to invest your subscriptions.

The Friends' social programme is an important element of the way we do our business: lively summer and Christmas parties and a highly successful June visit to Gibraltar were particular highlights. The latter included visits to the Northern Defences and the Tower, where Commander British Forces hosted a reception. We were delighted to see that Commodore Mike Walliker was made a CBE in the New Year's Honours List. The current CBF, Commodore Tim Henry, who is a member of the Society, was also honoured with an OBE. Congratulations, Mike and Tim, from all the Friends.



I think that our annual seminar in October was one of the best I have attended. An excellent venue (albeit changed at very short notice), diverse and fascinating speakers, and a convivial dinner all made for a most successful event. Amongst our guests were Ian Balestrino and Claire Montado – respectively, Chairman and Chief Executive of the Gibraltar Heritage Trust who provided an excellent update on our joint endeavours. Importantly, we also learned that the new Heritage and Antiquities Act will bring much-needed formality, structure and good governance to the heritage effort in Gibraltar. This, and the Memorandum of Understanding that Ian and I jointly signed off earlier in the year, will help give clarity and purpose to the Friends' contribution to heritage projects.

Our membership has declined gradually over the last few years and now sits just below the 500 mark. It would be good to see an upward trend in the coming year so please do coerce, cajole, or whatever you need to do to turn your friends into our Friends.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity once again to express my sincere thanks to those stalwarts on the Board and Executive Committee who do so much to make the Society work and thrive. We say goodbye and special thanks to Janet Whiteley who has stood down from the Board after making a sterling contribution over a number of years. Janet will remain a Friend in every sense.

So, with 2018 safely astern, we look ahead to even greater success in 2019. Thank you all for your continuing support and friendship.

*Sir Adrian Johns*

# Diary of Society Events for 2019

The diary of events is circulated by electronic and physical mail, and is maintained on the Society's web site. This year's programme will be based on the successful format developed over the past few years, and will be updated in due course. Key events are already pencilled in for the membership.

The next Friends event in London is on 4 February, from 18:15 to 20:15 at Gibraltar House, 150 Strand London WC2R 1JA.

It will take the now familiar form of a talk accompanied by a glass of wine and an opportunity to chat.

The Subject will be:

## **"BREXIT: as it will affect Gibraltar"**

The speakers will be Dominique Searle, HMGoG's Representative in London, and we hope to invite Bob Neill MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Gibraltar, to share his views.

RSVP to Tim Lawson-Cruttenden, Events Director (tim.lawsoncruttenden@outlook.com)

There will be a small charge of £9:00 to cover costs and it would be helpful if payment can be made in advance, either by electronic transfer (Lloyds bank Sort Code 30-93-74, Account No. 00310844) or by Cheque payable to the Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society which should be sent to our Treasurer, Peter Hucker at the address published in the announcement e-mail.

## **Upcoming Events for your diary:**

Presentation: TBA

4 March 2019 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Presentation TBA

1 April 2019 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

## **Summer Drinks**

20 June 2019 @ 6:15 pm - @ 8:00 pm

## **Friends Annual Visit to Gibraltar – 10 June 2019 - 14 June 2019**

Dates are now confirmed, however the week's programme is at the early stages of planning. Visits should include some or all of – Gibraltar Heritage Trust offices, visit to the University, Queens Birthday Parade at Casemates. Additional suggestions are welcome at this stage.

All Friends make their own arrangements for travel and accommodation; it is recommended that this is carried out as soon as possible with your airline provider to get the best rates. Most of the group still continue to prefer to stay at the colonial style Rock Hotel, which has been largely refurbished. Other choices include The Sunborn Gibraltar floating hotel at Marina Bay, The O'Callaghan Elliott Hotel, centrally located. The Bristol a 3 star hotel, or The Caleta Hotel located at Catalan Bay. You may wish to check out [MyGibraltar.co.uk](http://MyGibraltar.co.uk) for rates and bookings.

## **2019 Seminar, AGM and Dinner**

Dates for your diaries – planning guideline for the 2019 Seminar and Dinner is for late October, at the Oxford Belfry Hotel or the venue used last year. Accounts will be available at the AGM.

## **Christmas Party**

Probably in late November; details to be confirmed in the near future.

**Other Events** – will be notified to the membership through the bi-monthly electronic newsletter.

# Deceased

The Society notes with regret the death of the following Friends:

Mr	Michael	Brufal	
Captain	Peter	Elvin	RN (Rtd)
Mrs	Lillian	Evenett	
Dr	Andrew B	Clymo	
Mr	Ernie	Reading	

Our condolences are extended to their families and friends on their sad loss. We would like to take this opportunity to recognise the outstanding contribution made by Mike Brufal and Ernie Reading when they were members of the Board of the Friends, and for their advice and help in so many ways over the years.

# Reports of Events

## Friends' Visit to Gibraltar 4-8 June 2018 *by Richard Lord*

(Photos courtesy of those in the visiting team)

The Friends' visit to Gibraltar was again very successful this year. A summary follows.

### Mon 4<sup>th</sup> Jun



A very warm welcome from CEO Mrs Claire Montado and Chairman Ian Balestrino at the Gibraltar Heritage Trust was followed a final update on the programme from Janet Whiteley.

A fascinating viewing of the new galleries in the Museum, which had opened the previous year, was shared by Dr Geraldine Finlayson. Photography was not allowed inside – here Geraldine is giving us an initial overview.

The link below gives access to the Nana and Flint picture in the new gallery. Viewing the link is worthwhile – visiting the gallery is highly recommended. It is most moving and brings history alive:

[www.gibmuseum.gi/world-heritage/neanderthals](http://www.gibmuseum.gi/world-heritage/neanderthals)

In the evening we were treated to welcome drinks and canapés at Poolside, Rock Hotel, courtesy of Mr Charles Danino the General Manager of the Rock Hotel. This gesture was highly appreciated, and the Friends thoroughly enjoyed chatting by the famous pool.

### Tue 5<sup>th</sup> Jun



In Kings Chapel, in the company of the Governor, Lt Gen E Davis CB CBE KStJ, and Commander British Forces, Cdre M Walliker OBE RN, the Friends heard an account of the Bedenham Explosion from historian Tito Vallejo and then personal recollections from Mary Sheppard who spoke about her father Surg Lt JGH Sheppard RN. He received the Military Medal as a result of his actions that day.

Ernest Reading RIP's article on the subject was read out. He was nearby when the explosion occurred.

This was followed by the personal experiences from SS Uganda in Gibraltar and the Falklands – from Lt Cdr Mark Trasler. Mark gave considerable credit to the way that Uganda had been prepared for her role as a hospital ship in Gibraltar. This



had been achieved in a very short time.

Medical Staff from the Princess Royal Medical Centre at Devil's Tower Camp were highly impressed by the way that those injured in the Falklands Campaign had been treated with so much success in what today would be seen as very difficult conditions.

The lectures were warmly received by all those who attended.

Buffet lunch in Kings Chapel followed, and this was much appreciated. Jean Penney and her team were strongly thanked. The Friends also thanked Rev Mike Wagstaff for making Kings Chapel available and made a donation to Kings Chapel from the balance of monies received for the lunch.



In the afternoon a wreath was laid by Mary at the Bedenham Memorial in Queensway Quay. Rev Mike conducted a short service with Friends present. Albert Poggio and Mary Sheppard are joined here by the Medical Staff.

### Wed 6<sup>th</sup> Jun



In the afternoon Friends visited the new MoD family accommodation and community facilities at Four Corners. They were given a most informative tour and were most impressed by what they saw.



This was followed by time afloat with the Gibraltar Defence Police. A better appreciation was obtained of the work of all the authorities afloat. A high-speed dash was followed by checking out Gorham's Cave from the sea.







Later CBF addressed the Friends. This was most appreciated as it augmented the experience gained from being at sea earlier.

Next there was an excellent cocktail party attended by guests and members of the Garrison. To the delight of attendees, CBF arranged an illustration of what Splicing the Main Brace would be like. In the tradition of the Royal Navy the tot had to be downed in one!

A spectacular Beating the Retreat by the band of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment

followed. Nimrod, Highland Cathedral and Ceremonial Sunset left hardly a dry eye in the place. The picture shows nearly the end of the Ceremonial Sunset.

The friends are most grateful for the effort and support given by the MoD. It was an afternoon and evening to remember.

#### **Thu 7<sup>th</sup> Jun**

In the morning the University Bursary Award was presented to Mr Rob Chandler. This is reported on in the Donations and Projects article.



In the afternoon there was a tour of the Lower Northern Defences by Pete Jackson. Friends who had visited the site over the years saw first-hand the massive clearing up that had taken place. Now a much better appreciation can be obtained on how cross fire defences helped protect Gibraltar.



#### **Fri 8<sup>th</sup> Jun**

In the morning the History Awards were presented at Westside Girls and Bayside Boys Schools. This is reported on in the Friends' 2018 June visit article.

Lunchtime saw the ever-popular lunch at the Royal Gibraltar Yacht Club where Members said farewell to each other.

Thanks for the visit go to the overall coordinator Janet Whiteley, those who organised individual events and all those who made the Friends so very welcome.

# GIBRALTAR HOUSE NEWS

## The Staff at Gibraltar House

On the back of a busy Summer in Gibraltar, the Winter season started well with both increased air services and a new hotel. EasyJet launched its London, Luton to Gibraltar service, once again offering customers in north London and the Birmingham catchment area direct access to the Rock which was lost with the demise of Monarch Airlines.

British Airways has also increased its LHR services for Winter adding an additional 1344 seats weekly. The Heathrow route opens up connection possibilities all around the world with British Airways and airline partners through its Heathrow hub.

The Holiday Inn Express launched in late summer. The 120-room hotel offers 4\* service together with an in-house restaurant, bar and meeting facilities. Gibraltar also looks forward to the opening of a further 120 property, the Indigo Hotel which will also be operated by the IHG Hotel Group and is due to open later this year.

Gibraltar Vault, hailed as one of the most prestigious and exclusive wine storage facilities in the world, is now accepting account applications from collectors. Clients wishing to store their private cellars, can now do so, in the state-of-the-art facility located inside the Rock.

Gibraltar Vault is a natural storage facility, where fine wine collectors storing their cellars in bond will be able to take advantage of financial upsides such as no capital gains tax, no value added and nominal excise duty.

A warren of military tunnels inside the Rock of Gibraltar are being converted into what will become the world's largest natural storage facility for investment grade wines.

The tunnels, part of some 32 miles of tunnels and caverns carved into the Rock by the Royal Engineers shortly before WWII in the event of an attack on Gibraltar, have been lying empty for decades.

Scientific testing of the limestone hulk revealed the perfect natural conditions for wine storage. The project is being conducted with the help of the Heritage Trust and local historians and will feature an interpretation and tasting centre.

It is hoped that the facility will attract interest from the wine tourism industry and bring a new economic activity for Gibraltar, with a capacity of over 1.2 million cases of fine wine for private clients. Gibraltar Vault will be the world's largest, natural underground wine cellar.

The Gibraltar Experience, a stunning multi-media tourist attraction, will open to the general public in May 2019 within the vaults and is expected to be Gibraltar's premier tourist offering. The attraction tells the story of the wine trade in Gibraltar, which has led to the creation of the incredible storage facility.

Visitors will be invited to sample historically traded wines and spirits after exploring the wine vault and the rocks labyrinth of tunnels.

The wine vault and heritage tour which is equipped for corporate groups will take 2 hours with 5 separate tour slots available per day from 0900 – 1700 and will cost £20. The attraction tells the story of the wine trade in Gibraltar and the history of the tunnels themselves

This summer Gibraltar welcomes the world as it hosts the Nat West International Island



Wine Vaults



Games XVIII, 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> July.

Born in the Isle of Man, the games provide athletes from the different Islands to compete internationally while bringing the island nations together.

2,500 participants are expected from 24 Islands competing across 14 disciplines.

[www.gibraltar2019.com](http://www.gibraltar2019.com)

For the full calendar of events go to [www.visitgibraltar.gi](http://www.visitgibraltar.gi) website or follow social media links.

[Facebook.com/visitgibraltar](https://www.facebook.com/visitgibraltar)

[Twitter.com/visit\\_gibraltar](https://twitter.com/visit_gibraltar)

## London Talks

Albert Poggio (26<sup>th</sup> February 2018) - The Gibraltar Group in London

Sir Adrian Johns (9<sup>th</sup> April 2018) - The Clue of the Missing Ape

Albert Poggio delivered a very interesting talk based around the Gibraltarian community in the United Kingdom during the period of the closed frontier with Spain, and the birth of the Gibraltar Group in London. This was a difficult period in the history of Gibraltar, and a personal view of this period was very relevant, given the current circumstances and potential threat. The talk generated many questions, and permitted other members to share their own memories and views. He provided an interesting insight into the history behind the Referendum which was held because Spain and the United Kingdom started formal talks about Gibraltar in 1966. Gibraltarians voted overwhelming for retaining the link with Britain and the Crown, 99.64% in the Referendum.

However, life became difficult for Gibraltarians in 1969 when Spain closed border with Gibraltar. There were resultant problems with supplies and with the workforce because many workers were Spaniards who crossed the border each day to work. The border remained closed until 1985. During this time planes were not allowed to fly into Gibraltar using Spanish Air Space, extra water was transported across from Morocco and workers came across from Morocco using the ferry, the Mons Calpe.

Albert spoke about the resilience that Gibraltarians showed during this difficult time, a sense of remaining strong and overcoming the problems. Referendum Day is now celebrated each year on 10th September, as it has been since 1992, Gibraltar National Day.

The second event was the showing of the film, 'The Clue of the Missing Ape' which was introduced by our Chair, Sir Adrian Johns and very much enjoyed by everyone present. The film was first produced in 1953, as a children's film. The majority of the film was set in Gibraltar, it involved the Navy, Dockyard staff, two young children, a group of crooks who were planning to blow up the British Fleet off Gibraltar and, of course, the apes. The film was much enjoyed by the audience, and reminded us of a Gibraltar that has now changed greatly.

Or thanks go to the staff of Gibraltar House for their assistance in running these events, and to the representative of the Gibraltar Government in London, Dominique Searle, for facilitating the use of the rooms.

A very successful Summer Party was also held in Gibraltar House in July. Indeed it was so enjoyable that no-one present remembered to take photographs for Rock Talk, unfortunately. Attendance at the Party planned for 2019 is highly recommended!

# Annual Seminar and Dinner – Oxford

## 20<sup>th</sup> October 2018 *by Tricia Johnson*

The AGM, Seminar and Dinner proved to be a very successful event this year despite the trauma of a last-minute change of venue to the Oxfordshire Golf Hotel. The Oxford Belfry Hotel, that had last minute delays with refurbishment work, liaised with the nearby Oxfordshire Golf Club resulting in very few hitches. The event, generally, ran very smoothly on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Forty- three members and guests attended the AGM and Seminar during the afternoon and thirty-nine members and guests enjoyed the dinner in the evening.

Sir Adrian Johns welcomed everyone to the event and to the AGM. Reports from the Board were presented, starting with the Treasurer who reassured members that the accounts remain in a very healthy state. Further reports covered membership, projects, events and communication. Members were also requested to think about events and projects that may be of interest to the Friends of Gibraltar. Denise Lord asked about the two statues of soldiers that stand at South Port Gate, who they belonged to and if they could be refurbished. Claire Montado answered stating that they belong to the Gibraltar Tourist Board.



**Nick Rankin presenting his most interesting talk on his book (see separate article)**

The Seminar commenced after a very short break with the journalist and author Mr Nicholas Rankin (Nick), who admitted that he had left his presentation and notes at home. He thought that no power point meant he was experiencing liberation from the same old story! Despite this hiccough he gave an extremely interesting and amusing insight into some of his work as a journalist and his diversification into writing. His main focus was his

research and visits to Gibraltar that had informed his book, 'Defending the Rock', published in 2017. During his research, interviewing and meeting Gibraltarians Nick found that, as he wrote, many smaller stories emerged. Thus, his book not only covers big National and International stories but the smaller human stories (social history).

Mrs Claire Montado, the CEO of Gibraltar Heritage Trust (GHT) and Mr Ian Balestrino, the Chair of GHT provided a very interesting update on the work and achievements of the GHT over the past year. One of the main achievements that Claire focused on, was the passing of the new Heritage and Antiquities Act by the Gibraltar Government, which GHT was very much involved with. This will have a positive impact on maintaining records, the listing of buildings and future planning.

Ian Balestrino thanked the FOGHS for their generous donation towards the preservation work in Witham's Cemetery. The project has moved on very quickly over the last few months after a slow start. Throughout the project a team of enthusiastic volunteers led by Keith Farrell (Vice Chair of GHT) have worked extremely hard to clear intrusive vegetation, identify graves, track down parts of graves that had been broken through neglect over the years. Since the Seminar further excavation work and removal of excess soil from the site has resulted in graves being uncovered that had not previously been known to exist.



**The GHT team presenting on heritage projects in Gibraltar**

Mr Robert Vasquez QC provided a very interesting, entertaining and, at times, moving account of his life and experiences that have made him who he is today. Despite having been born in Gibraltar, he said that he has not always felt Gibraltarian. This is partly due to attending boarding school from a very young age, attending university and working in the UK. He returned to Gibraltar in 1976 when the border was closed, worked in law firms and then set up his own firm from which he has now retired. However, Robert is still very much involved in the life of Gibraltar.



Sir Adrian Johns thanked each of the speakers, in turn, for their contribution to a very interesting, stimulating and enlightening afternoon. He commented that the news from GHT shows how it is really moving projects forward, it has transformed itself.

Richard Lord drew aspects of the afternoon together and again asked members to come forward with ideas for projects and events.

Raffle tickets had been sold during the afternoon for the raffle very ably organised by Denise Lord. Tickets were drawn at the end of the Seminar.

Sir Adrian Johns thanked all present for attending whilst he reinforced the requirement for members to suggest, and possibly lead, future events (especially the June Visit) and projects. He also said that it had been an outstanding afternoon with such interesting speakers.

During the break between the Seminar and dinner many members continued to socialise before preparing for the dinner. Members of FOGHS who attended the evening dinner enjoyed an excellent meal. A bottle each of red and white wine was provided for each table by the Oxford Belfry Hotel by way of some compensation for having to change the venue for the event. Conversation flowed freely, accompanied by much laughter. Sir Adrian Johns gave a very short speech, again thanking everyone for attending and reinforcing the fact that it had been a very successful event.



**An excellent dinner was enjoyed by all**

Those who stayed the night at the Oxfordshire Golf Hotel were able to enjoy the familiar surroundings of the Seminar room the following morning as the venue for breakfast. This was much appreciated and resulted in further cohesion and discussions within the group.

Please see the related articles within this issue of Rock Talk.

# Christmas Party – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018

by Tricia Johnson

The 2018 FOGHS Christmas Party was again held at the RAF Club on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November. Everyone was welcomed by the Reception Staff and well looked after by the Conferencing and Banqueting staff throughout the evening, despite being very busy with many events taking place on the same evening. Our glasses never fully emptied and the canapés, as usual, were excellent.

Members who attended have commented that they enjoyed the evening very much, again supported by the noise level, the conversations and laughter. Sadly, there were a few last - minute cancellations due to ill health. It is hope that those members are now well on the way to recovery. The events secretary, Tim Lawson-Cruttenden had again ensured that many members of his family were in attendance. Harvey and Tricia Johnson's two daughters have been persuaded by the Treasurer, Peter Hucker, to become members!!

Our Chair Sir Adrian Johns gave a very short speech thanking everyone, including our President, Baroness Gloria Hooper for attending the party. He highlighted the successful projects that have been completed over the year and thanked members of the Board for their hard work, Harvey and Tricia Johnson for facilitating and organising the party and all members for their continuing support. He concluded by wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

Baroness Hooper also said a few words about the strength of FOGHS, how sad she was to have missed the AGM and Seminar and how pleased she was to be able to be with us for the Christmas Party.



*The Deputy Chairman circulating...*



*Some of our ladies relaxing at the Party*



*A group of Friends, including one of the authors...*



*Discussing the excellent drinks and canapés*

# FRIENDS' DONATIONS AND PROJECTS

**By Richard Lord** (Photos courtesy of Friends)

**Frescoes** Now well complete and we are delighted to report that the tours organised by the Gibraltar Heritage Trust are very popular.

**Oral History** The technical difficulties mentioned last year have now been overcome and the site is fully operational. The site is at [www.fogoh.org.uk/](http://www.fogoh.org.uk/) Please take a look and listen. We would be delighted to have feedback.

**Awards to Schools** The Awards Ceremony was attended by the Friends during the annual visit on in June 2018. It gave the Friends there a chance to meet the winners and other schoolchildren. It also gave us a chance to say who we were!



Here Charles Ramirez is presenting the Award at Bayside.

"Prominent Gibraltarians" was the project this year and Johann Gilbert and Michael Alecio were the joint winners. The Friends very much appreciated the display of imaginative models made by the students as part of the project.

Shown here are the Westside Winners with the Friends. The Shield was presented to Rosie Warne.



The students performed an expressively choreographed and impressively athletic dance presentation on the subject for the Award – "The Evacuation of Gibraltarians during WW11".

**University Bursary** The latest award has now been made and this was also presented during the Friends' visit in June 2018. It was presented to Mr Rob Chandler. He gave a most informative presentation on novel apparatus to track the movements of bats and aid in Gibraltar's understanding of these seriously threatened creatures. This is an important component of local natural heritage.

**Scanner for the GoG Archives** We are pleased to report that the scanner we donated to the Gibraltar National Archives was fully utilised for the impressive WW1 Exhibition in October 2018. Shown here the opening session introduced by the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia. The opportunity was taken to meet the new Friends' Members - CBF, Commodore Tim Henry and his wife Victoria.



## Book

A donation was made to the Gibraltar Heritage Trust towards the publishing of a book 'Of Monks & Nuns' - by Manolo Galliano. Copies of the book were kindly made available for

the raffle at the Seminar.



## Withams Cemetery

Major progress is now being made on the site and the Friends recently transferred £5,000 to the Gibraltar Heritage Trust to fund commencement of the restoration of selected graves (see separate article). Friends have been visiting Withams Cemetery during the June visit for many years and are delighted with the recent progress. There is no doubt that that work by volunteers, led by Keith Farrell, has made a massive difference. Friends are always welcome to join his team if they are in Gibraltar on a Monday.

Ideas for donations/projects from Members are always welcome. Please contact the Membership Secretary, Richard Lord, if you have any.



## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S JOTTINGS

I do hope that you had a very Happy Christmas and New Year, and enjoyed all your celebrations. We were very sorry to miss the Christmas Party at the RAF Club on 30<sup>th</sup> November which was by all accounts an excellent evening.

Our numbers have now come down to about 490. A comfortable number for me to manage but sadly we lose members each year and if you know of any interested in joining please let me know. We need about 15-20 new members a year to match the outflow.

We offer the following in our New Year Sales!

Membership for £15 until Mar 20 as a New Years' gift for a relative or friend. I will write them a welcoming e mail saying that it is from you.

Free Package and Postage for a Friends' Tie for yourself or a relative/friend if ordered by end Feb 19. Only £21.

I would like to remind to remind you of ongoing benefits and offers:



- A wide-ranging set of events during the year. (Ideas always welcome). A chance to hear interesting presentations and meet friends with Gibraltar in common.
- Free membership for those over 80. (Please be sure to let me know – some of you have not so far!). Having informed me please cancel your Bankers Order. I cannot do this.
- 5 for the price of 4 Family Membership (4x£15). To be paid by Bankers Order.
- For those with an appropriate award, a supported application for Membership of the Gibraltar OBE Association.
- More recently, there is now a special discount from the Gibraltar Heritage Trust. They have generously allowed a 30% discount off of all their Membership Fees for Members of the Friends. Should you wish to take advantage of this offer which will be available through an on-line purchase, by cheque or in person at the Trust, then please contact me for a discount code to use,
- and, of course, your excellent magazine – Rock Talk!

### Change to Subscriptions

Chasing late payment from those who do not pay by Bankers Order consumes time which could be better spent, for example, on recruiting.

May I remind you please that Membership Subscriptions are due in April each year and those who do not pay by a regular Standing Order will be asked to pay £17.50. HOWEVER, if payment is made by end April 19 then a discount of £2.50 will be applied. The payment can be posted to me or by electronic transfer.

### Updated Information

Please don't forget to contact me if your Gift Aid situation has changed and you no longer qualify or have moved. The next claim will be in May 19 for the period Apr 18 to Mar 19. Last year our claim raised a most useful £1,269.

Also, could I ask if you would let me know if you hear of Members who have not heard from us recently. Members change their e-mail and home addresses and we are not always informed. Sometimes e-mails and letters are returned to us but not in all cases.

### Lost Contact

A few Members have taken advantage of me forwarding e-mails to those they have lost contact with.

### Feedback

We are always grateful for feedback on any issue affecting our Society. If you send one to me as your Membership Secretary, then I can assure you that your Executive Committee will consider it. This is your Society.

### Contact Details:

Commodore Richard Lord CBE RN (Rtd)  
Church Cottage, 4 Kingsbury Square WILTON SP2 0BA  
richard.lord2@btinternet.com  
01722 743173 (Please leave a message if there is no reply)

## MY ROCK BOOK *by Nicholas Rankin*

**Nicholas Rankin** talked to the 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Gibraltar in Oxfordshire about writing *Defending the Rock* (Faber, 2017).

In April 2013 I flew to Gibraltar for the very first time. I was astonished by the size of the North Front, rearing beyond the airstrip. With my backpack, I turned right rather than left out of the airport and went to stay in La Linea. I wanted to approach Gibraltar on foot, from the outside in, taking notes in my black book. The frontier procedures, the different policemen, the red phone-box, the smugglers stuffing cigarettes in their underclothes, the walk across the airfield, the view of Moorish Castle on the shoulder. At the border, a tourist official gave me a leaflet with some guides' names. And so it happened that the first person I phoned in Gibraltar was Tito Vallejo Smith. I got my shoes soaked on his tour of Lower St Michael's Cave, but who better to meet for an oral history of Gibraltar and an introduction to Yanito?

Yet my book had germinated nearly two years before that first physical visit. Books begin with an idea or a feeling. Robert Louis Stevenson recalled the first 'bite' at the heart, Vladimir Nabokov the initial 'throb' of a story, but my books all seem to spring out of something written but not fully explored in the one before. All of them are interlinked in this way, right back to the first play I wrote in 1980. In *Ian Fleming's Commandos*, published in autumn 2011, I had looked at Gibraltar's 'Stay-Behind-Cave' and the Italian frogmen saboteurs swimming out from under the ship *Olterra* moored in Algeciras harbour. My editor at Faber, Julian Loose, agreed with me that wartime Gibraltar would make a good subject.

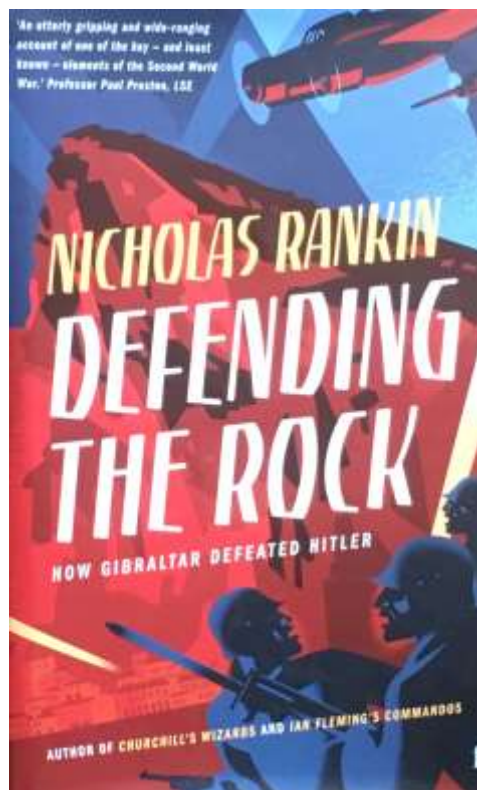
First I wrote a proposal. That's what has to happen before a publisher will commission a book and give you some money, an advance on future royalties. A proposal always takes months. From the stasis of sheer ignorance you have to get up to a plausible speed, and my way of doing that is by buying books and gutting them for information, as well as trawling the internet. Then I drew a time-line on A3 paper, with major events in chronological order, and listed the principal characters and subjects, before trying to divide them into chapters. (This is not easy when lots of things are happening at the same time, and the order of the eventual 36 chapters would frequently undergo revision.)

The principal period to focus on, I thought, was the decade from 1935 to 1945, from the Italo-Ethiopian War, through the Spanish Civil War, to the end of the Second World War. Emperor Haile Selassie's brief stay at the Rock Hotel could throw light on imperial power politics, General Franco's rebellion against the Spanish Republic might illuminate the rising totalitarian threat from Nazis and Fascists as well as revealing the class divisions inside Gibraltar. But the violent cataclysm of WW2 and how it affected the Rock had to be the main course of the book. The Second World War mattered because the evacuation of civilians and the struggle for civil rights in a military fortress led to the emergence of what we can now call the Gibraltarian nation.

I then went to Gibraltar House in the Strand and talked to Peter Canessa.

Was there any governmental objection to such a book? Were there archives? Could I use the Garrison Library? He was charm personified and said there was no problem to all three. The very first interviews I did for the book took place in Gibraltar House itself. I talked there to Jennifer Scherr and Susan Préfol, the daughters of David Scherr, late of M.I.5, whose 2-volume report on Security Intelligence in wartime Gibraltar is well-written, entertaining and informative. I also wrote to the International Anthony Burgess Foundation in Manchester because I knew the writer had been stationed on the Rock in the war and wrote his first novel about the place, *A Vision of Battlements*.

On my own first trip I explored Gibraltar alone and on foot. I walked east around the white limestone cliff. At the cemetery Alfred Ryan showed me the names of the German dead from the *Deutschland*. Along Devil's Tower Road I found the Black Watch and Sikorski memorials. I stared up at the old water-catchment area, once covered in lime-slaked corrugated-iron sheets nailed to teak. In Catalan Bay I ate octopus under an awning and picked up orange Mediterranean sea-shells from the beach. On the west of the Rock I walked the town, high and low. I saw Casemates Square and remembered what Jeremy Clarkson once wrote of Gibraltar: 'It's like being inside Nigel



**The book in question**

Farage's brain: all Union Jacks and fish-and-chips.' But the surface is not the only reality. With time I realised that the true Gibraltar is mysterious, private, hidden behind walls. The Rock itself is a shape-shifting dragon, different from whichever angle you look at it. And of course there are more roads and passages inside its bulk than on the outside.

Knowledge accumulated over time. I came back to Gibraltar regularly over four years, often with my writer wife, Maggie Gee. She completed her 12th novel, *Virginia Woolf in Manhattan*, in our room in the Rock Hotel. After my own legwork or labours in the archives I would often find her, sitting with pen and notebook, in the dappled lemon-geranium shade by the statue of Molly Bloom in the paradisaical Alameda Botanical Gardens. Slowly I was assembling the little bits and pieces for a larger historical mosaic, which contained this three-square-mile peninsula at the western mouth of the Mediterranean.

That was the aim: to fit a very small place into the strategic big picture. I was very happy to find a 1930 map of the British Empire for the book's end-papers because it clearly displayed Gibraltar as a key node on the north-south, east-west axes of the British adventure in history, driven by sea-power. And then I sometimes thought of the Rock not just as a dot on the world map but as the pin stuck in the chart where all the threads of the book and every character came together. Gib as connecting point, like the old Peruvian *inti watana*, or hitching-post of the sun, a rock which was the centre of the Incas' sacred radii.

Music producers say you have under ten seconds to attract the listener; speech radio people think 20-30 seconds is the limit, and both believe that a 'grabby top' (an attention-seeking opening sequence) is desirable. Books follow the same pattern. I chose the air-raid of 18 July 1940 as the first scene of *Defending the Rock*, because that hostile bomber could have come from any one of the four enemies confronting Gibraltar: Vichy France, Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy or Falangist Spain.

Incidents illustrate trains of thought; a book presents arguments or propositions for the reader. The subtitle of the hardback, *How Gibraltar Defeated Hitler*, was disputed by some. In what clash of arms? they wondered. But a conundrum or a chess-problem can defeat someone as much as a battle. My book suggests that Adolf Hitler's failure to seize Gibraltar in 1940 or early 1941 may have cost him the war, and traces how his complicated relationships with General Franco, Marshal Pétain and *Duce* Mussolini entrapped and paralysed him. Whereas Winston Churchill had commanded the British Admiralty and understood sea-power, the former Corporal Hitler believed in *Lebensraum* on land. So, ignoring his admirals' advice, in June 1941 Hitler launched the invasion of Russia instead, making the same mistake as Napoleon Bonaparte had in June 1812. Meanwhile, the



**The author recording for a BBC programme**

Royal Navy's Force H kept Gibraltar safe and protected the sea convoys on their way to Malta. Had Gibraltar fallen to the Axis, the Americans would never have been able to land in Morocco and Algeria in Operation TORCH in November 1942, and the whole course of the war would have been quite different. I still think these arguments are valid, but for the paperback edition of the book, due in April 2019, I have changed the subtitle to *Gibraltar and the Second World War*.

The big picture of a book is peopled by individuals of all kinds and sizes. The waste and wickedness of war affects the young and the old, women and children, as much as the fighting men. So I chose to tell the stories of two different Gibraltarian children: Krishna Khubchand and Lourdes Galliano, née Pitaluga, because their travails were symptomatic of what happened to evacuees. I was lucky to have the chance to read aloud to them what I had written and garner extra details. As wartime Gibraltar was largely masculine, I was also delighted to track down the papers of Helen Hiett, the only woman journalist to visit the Rock during the war, at Smith College in the USA.

Many hours, days, weeks are spent at a desk. Writing is rewriting, over and over again. It took six years from the first bite or throb to holding the first copy of the printed book, which weighed one kilo. Along the way I kept records. Forty pages of Source Notes indicate nearly all of what I begged, borrowed or stole. And 156 individuals and institutions are thanked in the Acknowledgements. Many of their names are Gibraltarian and I am grateful to all who helped. No one can write a 660-page book like this on their own.



# A Varied Career in Law in Gibraltar

## – Anecdotes and Conjecture

### Robert Vasquez QC

I had the pleasure of sharing some thoughts on my background and career, and about being a Gibraltarian educated privately in England, at the Friends of Gibraltar Annual Meeting in October 2018.

#### *Born but not raised Gibraltarian*

I am born Gibraltarian and proud of that, through no fault of my own, I am not raised as a Gibraltarian. I am an independent and single minded individual within a society in Gibraltar in which individualism is often sacrificed to collectivism. I believe this is due to wanting to remain popular and to be accepted in a closed community. These observation puts the anecdotes that I shared in context, and those anecdotes arise because of that distinction. I would re-emphasise that, in this talk, I expressed exclusively my personal views. To understand my independence and individualism (that some describe as my being controversial but that I like to label as catalytic, leading to innovative advances and change) I start with a short autobiography.

#### CAREER

I have been a lawyer for 43 years, having obtained a law degree at Bristol University in 1973 and called to the Bar in 1976. I joined the practice of my late father Sir Alfred, Vasquez & Vasquez. I soon found that I needed to grow the firm to provide me with the income needed by a newly married lawyer. The practice grew organically (with effort), and its growth mirrored Gibraltar's own growth as a finance centre. Growth came about, also, through merger. First with Benady & Benady, followed in January 1991 by a merger with Triay & Triay. Part of the process of gaining my independence, following my retirement in 2017 as a partner and my becoming a consultant, has included an MA in Newspaper Journalism at City, University of London. It was a break between my past career and my intended new involvement in the law, namely doing what I choose to do, rather than what I must do to meet my budget!

#### EARLY BEGINNINGS

##### *Los del pish*

I was born into a family that is known in Gibraltar as 'los del pish pi', in short one of the privileged families of Gibraltar. Invariably these few families were members of the Royal Gibraltar Yacht Club. The RGYC in the 1950's, 1960's and early 1970's was exclusive. It was, probably, the main venue for socialising between UK Services Officers and these select few families. Many of you will remember the large numbers of servicemen stationed in Gibraltar, who were in large measure kept separate in their quarters, barracks and messes.

##### *Schooling*

'Los del pish' went to private schools, in those days for boys and girls the Loreto Nuns Convent, followed, for boys at the age of 7, by the Christian Brothers Line Wall School and for girls the Loreto Nuns Convent. The separation and differentiation from "Gibraltarianism" begun at an early age - colonialism and emulation of the 'English' way at work? I believe so. At the age of 9, in 1961, never having travelled further than the Spanish hinterland and having been brought up in a Latin household, I found myself on a plane travelling to London to begin an English private education. I had the best 10 days of my life, visiting the London tourist sites, then, suddenly, I was being rushed to Victoria Station, onto a school train and then an overpowering feeling of 'aloneness' took over. I was on my way, separated from my parents for the first time ever, to Ladycross, Prep School. I joined the "zoo", like an animal. A miserable night of homesickness followed. The next morning queues for a shower in communal showers. Well, I thought, at least a nice warm shower to start the day. I soon discovered that it was a cold shower. Four years followed of cold showers, harsh discipline imposed by ex-services officers from the war, including being beaten on one's backside with a walking stick, so hard as to cause bruising and bleeding. I was referred to as a "dago". All were subjected to the bullying of 'Chief', so named because he was a retired naval Chief Petty Officer. His cruelty was more directed at Gibraltarians, yes there were several of us there, because he had visited the Rock and spent a night in police cells! Thereafter, public school, Worth Abbey, where treatment improved, and thence to university.

##### *Transformation complete*



In full flow at the Annual Conference

I remained a Gibraltarian by birth, but no longer by upbringing and schooling. I was a colonised Englishman, broadly alienated, not by choice, from fellow Gibraltarians who formed their cliques, friendships and groupings during their schooling. Those like me who went through the English private schooling mills and were members of the RGYC, missed out on this bonding. I and some others of us have tried to reintegrate but nothing can overcome the effect of removal from Gibraltar, whilst all others grew up there together.

#### UNIVERSITY

Bristol University was an eye opener: freedom, wine (actually, beer and cheap scrumpy) women and song. I went slightly wild and became a hippy. My salvation (in part) was student politics: my next education in individualism and independence. These were the heady early seventies, when revolution was in the air, Paris and the Sorbonne had just happened. I joined the Bristol University Student Union Council with my then flatmate Hugh Bayley (now Sir Hugh, having been MP for York Central) and best friend Alastair Stewart OBE, the ITN newscaster. I helped in campaigns and demonstrations. I attended and learned to work National Union of Students conferences. My interest in radical politics was born.

#### SCHOLARSHIPS

That radicalism came through in Gibraltar early on. Around December 1972, my father mentioned that he had spent the morning chairing the committee that awarded the Commonwealth Scholarship to pay for someone's university studies, there were several applicants for the one scholarship. He told me that all applicants had places in UK universities. He confirmed that those who were unsuccessful and could not fund their own studies simply did not take up their place. Coming from the UK, where needy university students got grants and universities were free, I found this unbelievable. I wrote to the Chronicle voicing my objections and asking how Gibraltar would progress, if our more able citizens could not pursue further education. I got a severe telling off from my father because he was the Speaker, so had to remain independent. I pointed out that he and I were different individuals, so his independence remained untouched. That is not how Gibraltar works is the retort I received. This was one of the first examples I experienced that showed me the great difficulty of being individualistic and independent minded in Gibraltar. Grants to university were not introduced until 1989.

#### CHAIRMAN OF THE BAR COUNCIL

##### *Quiet progress in career*

For years my career progressed without great events, perhaps, the occasional flare up but, in fairness, the growth of the legal profession meant that the profession developed well. Additionally, Gibraltar's constitutional position was evolving through custom and practice. It was in 2006 that the new Constitution encompassed those advances, albeit that, as I will explain, I led the campaign to oppose its acceptance in the referendum.

##### *Election to Chairman*

Just prior to 1999, I raised an issue concerning the election to Chairman of the Bar Council. At that time the Bar Council Constitution allowed only Queens Counsel to be Chairman. I saw this as limiting and controlling. I set about requisitioning a General Meeting with a view to amending the rules to permit a lawyer of 15 plus years standing to be elected as Chairman. I succeeded, and the rule was changed, after which I successfully sought election as the first Chairman not to hold the rank of Queens Counsel.

##### *Constitutional debate*

There was one clash whilst I was Chairman. In or around 2000, a Parliamentary Commission was established to look into reforms to the Gibraltar Constitution. The then Chief Justice, Derek Schofield, involved himself in public pronouncements that could be political and so undermine judicial independence.

Prior to the Opening of the Legal Year in 2002, I circulated my intended speech. It had references to the controversy involving the Chief Justice. I was asked by the Bar Council not to make this speech. I did as I was told, I stood up and said, "My Lord, I move the Opening of the Legal Year" and sat down to stunned silence. In 2007 the Chief Justice was suspended And, subsequently, he was removed from office.

#### CONSTITUTIONAL CONCERNS

##### *Cross-party constitutional commission*

Following an invitation in 1999 by the UK, the Gibraltar House of Assembly set up a cross-party committee to consult with and take evidence on constitutional reforms. It reported in January 2002. A new draft Constitution was agreed with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2006. This was followed by a referendum on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2006. The question, to which the available answers were 'yes' or 'no' was:

*"In exercise of your right of self-determination, do you approve and accept the proposed new Constitution for Gibraltar?"*

I took objection to the question. I was fervently of the view that the new Constitution was not advancing Gibraltar's self-determination. Formulating the question in that manner was restrictive of future generations.

The Constitution was advancing self-government but not in manner that could be described as self-determination. I



**The Law Courts in Gibraltar**

was of the view that the question was disingenuous. I do not like disingenuity on fundamental issues, irrespective of my agreement or disagreement with any advancements in self-government that were being achieved.

#### *Parliamentary and electoral reform*

I believe Gibraltar needs parliamentary and electoral reform. Parliamentary reform is required in order to achieve an element of separation between the legislature and the executive. Currently the Government benches in Parliament are made up of the executive arm of Government. This makes a defeat of any Government virtually impossible and so the democratic oversight of executive acts by Parliament is virtually extinguished: especially, when one considers the differential in annual salary between that earned by a Minister and that of an MP. Consequently, there is no separation of powers.

#### *Proportional Representation*

The electoral system also militates towards a single party forming Government, which worsens the lack of separation of powers. In turn, this leads essentially to Government by one person, the Chief Minister. Introducing a system of proportional representation would change this. Additionally, it would attract more people to stand for election. I have unsuccessfully campaigned for this for decades, despite succeeding in having the issue included in the manifestos of both the GSD and the GSLP at differing times, there has been no reform. I continue my efforts.

#### **BREXIT**

Brexit cannot be ignored. This challenge was unforeseen. The EU has managed very adequately the historically fraught attitude of Spain towards Gibraltar in its quest for sovereignty for the benefit of Gibraltar's economy and public finances.

The need for a differentiated deal for Gibraltar at Brexit seems palpable, not least for practical on the ground reasons, like ensuring no adverse economic or social consequences.

Much of what I said at the presentation, has been overtaken by events and, at time of writing this article, there is just uncertainty. What remains unknown is whether the agreement concerning Gibraltar will proceed in the eventuality of a hard Brexit for the UK and what the consequences of Brexit generally might be.

#### **CONCLUDING WORDS**

##### *Change for border fluidity not to dilute fundamentals*

I believe in Gibraltar's resilience and adaptability but I am a realist also. Gibraltar needs fluidity at its border with Spain. Change will be needed to achieve this, but that change cannot be allowed to dilute fundamentals engaging British sovereignty. We must remain vigilant and resistant to any possibility That British sovereignty is watered down. Whilst retaining our British status, Gibraltar must and does remain aware of its identity and its distinctiveness both from the UK and from Spain.

##### *What British sovereignty provides*

I sum up what British sovereignty brings in this way: the confidence and trust that is needed for Gibraltar to function with the level of self-government that it has achieved and, within the parameters of its democratic government having the powers it has, to promote and grow its economy and maintain its financial strength and its distinct identity

##### *What the Friends of Gibraltar can do to help*

It is in these issues that you, as Friends of Gibraltar, matter. You provide the support and encouragement that is needed to ensure Gibraltar's continued connection with Great Britain. This does not come with complacency. It comes with your active participation in our defence in what over the next few months may prove to be difficult. Please remain vigilant and be ready to lobby for Gibraltar in whatever manner possible that will safeguard the wishes and desires of Gibraltar as represented by its elected Government.

## **News from The Gibraltar Heritage Trust (GHT)**

### **By Claire Montado**

I was delighted to be able to update the Friends in a presentation at the Annual Seminar, held in Oxford in October 2018. This article summarises the key points made in that presentation, and emphasises the excellent progress and significant changes seen in the operation of the Gibraltar Heritage Trust and its interaction with the Government over the year.

The excitement generated in 2017 has continued, and the statistics speak of the work done by the Trust:

- 1078 members
- Input provided on over 850 DPC applications
- Over 3800 hours of voluntary work delivered
- 4 GHT books published
- 4 Heritage Awards made
- 2 editions of the Gibraltar Heritage Journal
- 36 events and outings

Delivered by five members of staff and twelve trustees.



A new Heritage Act has been under development for some time, with the following aims (which align well with the aims of the Friends). It was tabled at the Gibraltar Parliament on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018, and was passed unanimously with some minor amendments. It came into effect on the 16<sup>th</sup> August, and the first meeting of the Heritage and Antiquities Advisory Council took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> October.

The statutory duties and aims of the Trust remain as follows:

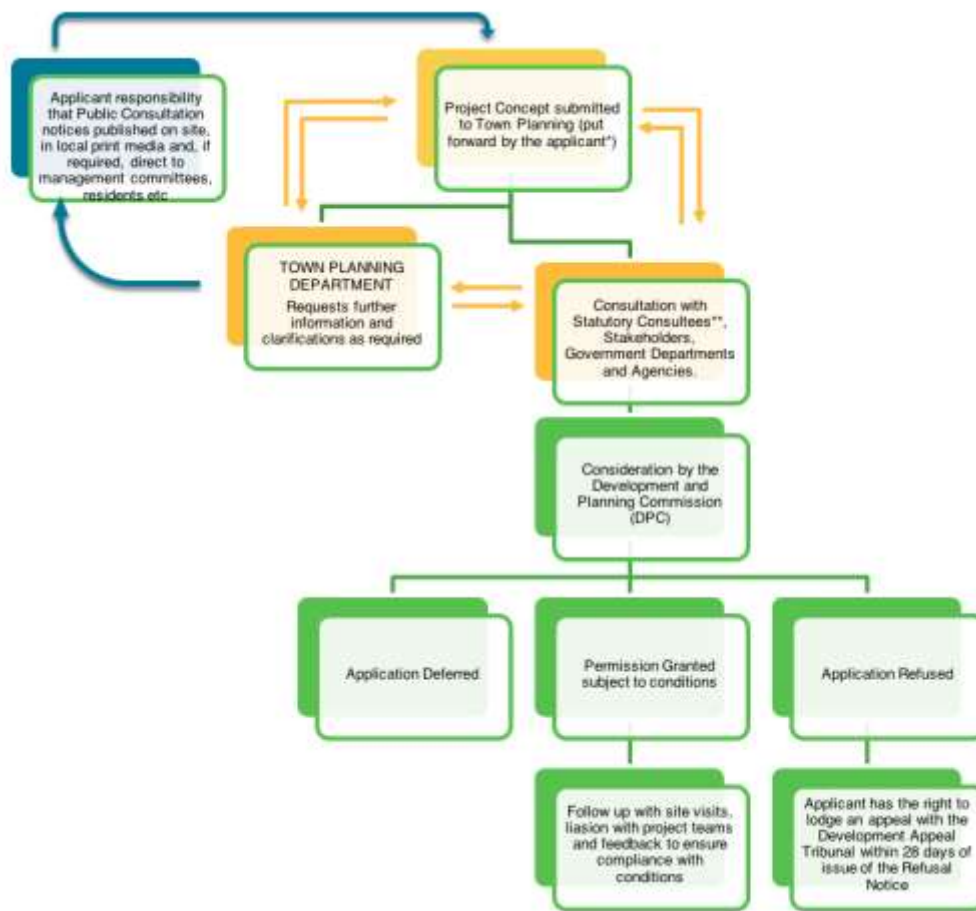
- To PROMOTE and SECURE the preservation and enhancement of Gibraltar's Heritage
- To promote the PUBLIC'S enjoyment of and advance their knowledge of Gibraltar's Heritage
- At the request of the Minister, or otherwise, to ADVISE Government at an early stage on any planning or other proposals affecting any building, structure, site or land
- To promote RESEARCH into and PUBLICATIONS on Gibraltar's heritage and on the history of Gibraltar including its social, cultural and political evolution
- (so far as practicable) provide EDUCATIONAL facilities and services, instruction and information to the public in relation to Gibraltar's Heritage

The act has several provisions, including protection of monuments and buildings, conservation areas, and archaeological areas. It covers the provision and operation of the Gibraltar National Museum, the National Archives and the GHT itself. Of key importance to the GHT is the provision of stability for the future, with an annual subvention covering salaries and basic administration costs now becoming statutory. The Heritage and Antiquities Advisory Council is now established, with GHT representation:



Aside from seeing the Act come into force, the Trust has also been active in other areas, and has a clear campaign list (available on the Trust's website). Participation in the Development and Planning Commission open forum is important, as well as its role in monitoring various authorised development and building works. Liaison with architects, developers and property owners is a busy and involved area of our work. Involvement in consultation procedures on the new Town Planning Act has also been a feature of the past year with the new Act having been passed through Parliament but as yet without a commencement date.

The Trust's role in the Planning process works at various levels. The current planning process is somewhat complex, and the GHT attempts to influence at various levels when necessary:



Liaison with stakeholders is important, and works both ways. The work of the dedicated team at the Town Planning Department is crucial in ensuring all points of view are communicated and taken into consideration to give as balanced an outcome as possible.

## WITHAM'S CEMETERY

By Ian Balestrino and Richard Lord

The Gibraltar Heritage Trust has been working on the refurbishment and regeneration of Witham's Cemetery for several years, this year supported by the Friends with the first half of a £10,000 donation. Progress this past year has been excellent, and is very noticeable.

October 2018 marked the end of the first two years on this project. Initial slow progress was due to:

- Removal of invasive vegetation was proving difficult, and initial attempts were not effective
- Strimming sessions and application of herbicides was time consuming, and required the passage of time for the effect to be seen
- Permanent clearing of the designated pathways was complicated by clarification of the adjacent development
- Encouraging volunteers to join the project was slow



Overgrown area before clearance

Over the past year, much has been achieved:

- Mason employed under our supervision
- Repairs & restoration work on graves
- Structural consolidation of the above ground tombs
- More than 30 tombs completed to date by the mason with another 20 by our volunteers
- Average cost per tomb £40
- Regular volunteer work parties focusing on specific areas of the cemetery
- Marble/stone inscription restoration in abeyance for the moment

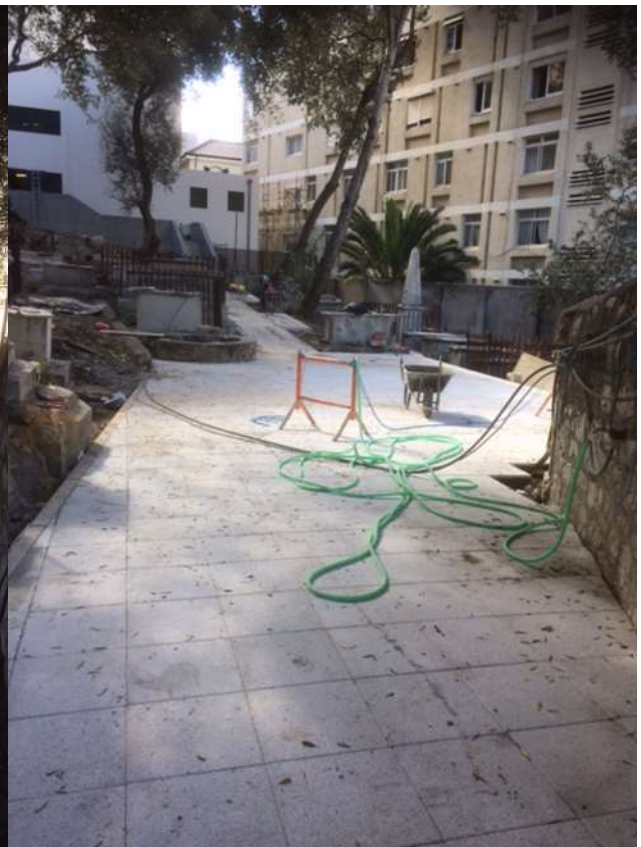
Members of the Friends of Gibraltar visited on their Annual Visit to the Rock, and were very pleased by the progress that had been made. Financial contribution has been released in support of the GHT initiatives, and it is hoped that this area will provide an attractive area of peace for the local community, as well as being attractive to visitors.



A restored memorial



The path area undergoing improvement



The area nearly complete





Before the restoration work



After the restoration activities

Recent activities have focused on:

- Piecing together the many fragments following years of neglect/vandalism
- Extensive research by GHT to identify individual graves

This work has generated many interesting revelations, which will be documented and recorded.

The painting shows the area in days gone by (dated 1825), by artist John Varley. Interestingly, it is part of the UK Dept for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport collection and currently hangs in the British Embassy in Rabat!



## DEVON TO GIBRALTAR AND BACK

**By Christopher Lunn**

I realised there might be something afoot when Richard Lord plied me with gin during the Friends' visit to Gibraltar last year. Having spent a career in the Army, I was well aware of the trickery of Royal Navy officers! I was right to be wary; no sooner had I started to feel mellow than he suggested that I should write an article for Rock Talk about my journey down to Gibraltar. My plea that I would not find anything of general interest fell on deaf ears. And so I now find myself in front of the keyboard....

Although I served in Gibraltar 30 years ago when I was the Military Assistant to the Governor, I did not join the Friends until much more recently. Since then, my wife Valerie and myself have enthusiastically joined the annual June pilgrimage to the Rock. The visit in June 2018 coincided with Valerie's retirement and so we decided to drive out to Gibraltar from Devon. Of course we are by no means the first to have done this, but our trip might be of interest to some Rock Talk readers.

Living near Plymouth, an overnight hop to Roscoff on Brittany Ferries was straightforward. This then took us on a meandering drive through France, across into Spain near San Sebastian, down to Gibraltar

for the Friends' week, up to the north of Spain for a week's walking in the Picos de Europe, a sharp left turn along to Galicia and finally a 24 hour 'cruise' back to Plymouth from Santander. Just under 5 weeks and 4,000 miles in all. Most remarkable of all was the efficiency of the sat nav and the fact that not a single fiery word was said about one or other of our navigational inadequacies.

Because we were visiting a succession of friends in France and had to dovetail in with their plans, we were a long way from taking the most direct route. Our first stop was an overnight visit to Bourges to see the 94 year old daughter of Valerie's father's governess. Madeleine's mother had come over to England in 1918 on a lively troop train bringing soldiers back from the War. She stayed for 2 years and the two families have remained in touch ever since. Valerie had not seen Madeleine for 20 years and so it was an emotional evening of reminiscences and fading photograph albums. Apart from meeting the family again, I was particularly interested to hear about life in Bourges during the German occupation in the Second World War. Madeleine and her mother were alone in their house because all the men were either in the French Army or the Resistance. One night the Germans knocked on the door and requisitioned the large house, giving them just 24 hours to move out with all of their belongings and every stick of furniture. Quite a challenge but one that could not be refused. Most surprisingly I also learned that the German Army paid



San Sebastian from Monte Igeldo

rent for the requisitioned house – a pittance but rent nonetheless. It was returned to the family at the end of the War with surprisingly little damage. The family still live in it.

After this fascinating stopover, it was my turn to reminisce as we headed down to the Aveyron Département to stay with an old Army chum of mine. We had served together in Germany in the 1970s but I had not seen Vernon for 20 years and Valerie had not seen him for 40. As you can imagine, much alcohol was consumed over that 3 days. It may have been my imagination, but I think our voices were very much hoarser by the time we left. Apart from the chatter and gossip, a real highlight was the opportunity to see Sir Norman Foster's astonishing viaduct at Millau. Without a doubt, worthy of a visit in its own right.

From Nauviale we headed to the Atlantic coast via another 3 day stop at Poudenas in Lot-et Garonne with some Devon friends who have a holiday home there. Our next target was Arcachon. Because we had been dawdling and enjoying too much hospitality en route, we were in danger of arriving late at our next destinations so we only had one night there. But enough time to visit the largest sand dune in Europe, the Dune du Pilat. It is 500 metres wide and 3 km long, and remarkably is marching inland at about 3 metres a year, driven by the prevailing winds off the Bay of Biscay. It has already consumed a campsite or two. It is most impressive, particularly if you are fascinated by a large pile of sand.

It was now time to leave France and so we headed for another 3 day stay at San Sebastian. Although we have lived near Plymouth for 20 years or more, it came as a complete surprise to learn that San Sebastian is twinned with Plymouth. I have never seen a single mention of that at home. San Sebastian was a revelation. It is a wonderful location and the town is full of interesting places to eat. Lots of pintxos bars (Basque-style tapas). Unfortunately we could not take full advantage of its seafront location because we encountered our first heavy rain. But that was not a problem as Bilbao was just over an hour away and so we could go to the Guggenheim Museum. In fact it was a problem. It was a Monday and when we got there we discovered the museum is closed on a Monday. Valerie remarked that her tour guide had not done his homework.



A longish drive then took us down to Toledo. When we arrived, we were met with fearsome traffic congestion which was most disappointing until we discovered that it was because it was Corpus Christi the following day and so a public holiday. We could not have been more fortunate because the centrepiece of the day was a 2 or 3 hour procession through the streets which were all decked out beautifully. The entire route was covered in sprigs of rosemary and every type of ecclesiastical or ceremonial garb was on show. The procession ended with the Monstrance which dates from 1515. As it passed, everyone threw rose petals from their balconies. It was a remarkable day. Fortunately, this time the tour guide got credit for managing to arrange our stay to coincide, but I think Valerie knew that it was chance.



**Salamanca Cathedral from the Roman Bridge**

After a night at an old haunt in Jimena, we then made it to Gibraltar for the Friends' week. Because it will probably be reported elsewhere, I will say no more about that except to report that it was another



**The Picos de Europa**

terrific few days. A huge amount of work goes into planning all the activities for the week and it is highly recommended for those who have either never taken part or not done so for some time.

After that busy but nonetheless relaxing week, we began our journey home. First stop was a few days in the beautiful, historic university city of Salamanca. Another wonderful place to visit but one

which deserves much more time than we were able to give it. We will return.

The reason we were in a rush was that we were meeting up with my cousins and their wives for a few days walking in the Picos. This was another first for us and yet another highlight. Of course, I had read up on the Picos but did not appreciate just how stunning they are. And very challenging when you get 3 competitive cousins in one place!

The final part of our trip was a few days in Galicia, essentially passing the time before our return sail from Santander. But in saying that, I am ignoring just how enchanting parts of Galicia are. Of course, Santiago de Compostela is a must but we did find it a bit too full of proud pilgrims only too keen to recount the stories from the journeys that they had completed. For a city which attracts many people who may be seeking solitude, Santiago was surprisingly crowded. Cape



**Sir John Moore's grave at Corunna**



Finisterre with its small piles of burnt trainers and walking clothes was also intriguing. If I had ever completed the full pilgrimage – which I have not and never will – I certainly would not burn my shoes. They would be prominently mounted on a wall somewhere at home!

Our final city stop was Corunna, specifically to see the famous Roman lighthouse, but more importantly for a soldier, to visit the tomb of General Sir John Moore. Although I was aware of his great exploits in the Peninsular War and his death in 1809 at the Battle of Corunna, I had not appreciated his heroic status to the Spanish. The quiet garden in which his tomb lies is beautifully maintained by the Spanish authorities because of the very high regard in which he is still kept. It would be a credit to any similar memorial garden in England.

And so to Santander and one last visit. Fortunately the ferry to Plymouth sails late on a Tuesday and so we were able to revisit the Guggenheim on a day when it was open.

As I type away, I can almost hear you asking "That's all quite interesting, but why is it relevant to Gibraltar?" The answer is simple. During the 5 weeks we were away, we met a lot of French and Spanish people, almost all of whom asked us where we were driving to. When we explained that we were heading for Gibraltar, the ensuing conversation allowed us to explain that "No, Gibraltar is certainly not part of Spain." So, in a very modest way, our trip has enabled us to enlighten just a few of our Continental neighbours about what Gibraltar is all about.

## NELSON'S TABLE: FACT OR FICTION?

**By Mrs Denise Lord (Photos by D I Lord)**

In early April 1995 Richard, myself and our little terrier, Lucy, arrived in Gibraltar for what turned out to be a wonderful three years, for me and Richard. For Richard it was rewarding work as a Captain RN where he had three roles: his first job being Chief Staff Officer Support, but this was later added to as Deputy CBF and then, towards the end of the tour, he became the first Commanding Officer of RN Gibraltar.

The residence we lived in was called Rock Cottage and it was gorgeous. It had a sweeping drive leading up to a beautiful colonial house with a view of the Bay of Gibraltar. From our bedroom a large veranda surrounded the house where I would sit in the mornings with my early cup of tea watching Africa appear through the early morning mist.

Now, my article really concerns the very large dining room table which ended up in Rock Cottage where, at one time or another, stayed George V, the King of Belgium (see footnote), Lord Mountbatten, and many other senior figures.

It wasn't long into our tour when an RAF officer and a keen historian told me the story of what was known as Nelson's table situated in our dining room. Over the years I have tried to discover what was truth and what was fiction regarding this table. In support of its esteemed heritage, many

military people and Gibraltarians believe that Lord Nelson's body was brought ashore in the middle of the night to what was then the Old Naval Hospital. A sort of lift was assembled, and his body was hoisted up from Rosia Bay where HMS *Victory* was berthed. Lord Nelson's body was placed in the Apothecary Surgery and laid on the large mahogany table, where a death mask was made of his face.



Nelson's table...

Afterwards, again in the secrecy of the night, his body was returned to HMS *Victory* to make the long journey home to Britain where he received a hero's homecoming.

In the 19th and 20th centuries the Naval Captain's home was in Rosia Parade. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the table was moved from the Old Naval Hospital to there. Sue Quorn, who eventually became the Matron of the Naval Hospital at Europa, told us that, as a young naval nurse, she used to babysit for the Captain's children. On one occasion she heard what she considered to be ghostly noises coming from the dining room and when she went to investigate, she was convinced that she saw a ghostly figure in the room. She thought this to be Lord Nelson. Sue would never babysit for the family again.

After the residence in Rosia Parade was sold, Rock Cottage became the home of the Naval Captain and the table was then taken there.

Now even after a few drinks neither Richard nor I ever saw any ghostly figures, but there always seemed an unusual presence surrounding the table. Many a night I would creep down stairs and stare at it hoping that indeed something might happen or even the wonderful Lord Nelson himself might appear.

The story of the table over the years had travelled around the world and received many visitors who wanted to be photographed standing by it, including members of the Nelson Society based in London.

So, what is truth or what is fiction? For ever the story of the table will always be remembered by the members of the Garrison as Nelson's table. It was a major topic at our dinner parties - and still is!



Rock Cottage

As a footnote I thought that readers might be interested to hear more of the Belgian connection during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During this period Rock Cottage was the home of the Belgian Consul in Gibraltar. One day a taxi arrived outside our front door and a young man jumped out. He was so polite, was on a whistle-stop tour of Gibraltar and Spain, and apologised profusely about arriving unannounced. He was a very distant relation of the Belgian royal family and he so wanted to see Rock Cottage. He had heard many stories regarding the Belgian royal connections with Rock Cottage and of the

many visits there, probably some in secret. He was a charming young man and after showing him round he then wrote to us from Belgium with a whole list of those from Belgian society who had stayed there. We did correspond with each other for a while and then as things happen, once we left Gibraltar for sunny Scotland, our friendship came to a natural end.

## Gibraltar Street Names

courtesy of Manolo Galliano and the Gibraltar Chronicle.

Over the next few issues of Rock Talk we will be looking at the history behind some street names. Gibraltar's history and mixture of languages has resulted in many interesting street names, and the Gibraltar Chronicle has been running a series of articles, penned by Manolo Galliano, to cover this interesting topic.

## **Town Range**

*(Adapted from Manolo Galliano's article in the Gibraltar Chronicle Of 19/11/2018)*

This street is a continuation of Engineers Lane and runs from St. Andrew's Church and Governor's Parade (to the east of The Elliot's Hotel) to Hargreaves Parade (Leanse House).



A view down Town Range towards the North

Its Spanish name (Calle Cuarteles) indicates the importance of the street to the military – housing a number of 18<sup>th</sup> century military barracks, officers' pavilions and parade grounds at either end. Town Range can be identified as far back as 1627 bird's eye view of Gibraltar town.



Parliament Lane at the bottom of Engineers Lane

The street has seen numerous name changes – New Street, Upper Barrack Street, Prince's Street, New Barrack Street and finally Town Range. Present day uses of the historical barracks and Officers' quarters include schools, private residences (Town Range Barracks Estate) and offices, which include Gibraltar's Law Courts.

## **Parliament Lane**

*(Adapted from Manolo Galliano's article in the Gibraltar Chronicle Of 14/01/2019)*

This is the narrow lane connecting the northern end of Engineers Lane/Main Street with Irish Town. It is a busy thoroughfare, with a number of shops and a café. A small synagogue was set up by a breakaway movement in 1820 in this lane. It had also served as a Freemason's Hall where meetings were held and called parliaments, not to be confused with the Council Chamber of the Municipality (city hall). Parliament Lane has also been known as the Lane of Freemasons. It can also be identified in the 1627 bird's eye view of the town.

It has also been known as Callwell's Lane.



# Gifts to Gibraltar from the Friends



During a visit to the Museum by one of the Friends, an intriguing photograph was discovered, which caused a flurry of correspondence, but we are still not quite sure of the background to this presentation. We then discovered that we do not have accurate records of the various gifts that have been made by the Friends, so this is an appeal for information on both these points. We do have a partial record of gifts recorded on the web site, but we recognise that this is incomplete.

Returning to this specific photograph, it is interesting, as it is of William Walker MVO, who is famous for shoring up the southern and eastern sides of Winchester Cathedral. Members will recall that we held our Annual Seminar at a hotel adjacent to this cathedral for many years... We know that he was foreman in charge of the construction of the new naval docks in Gibraltar before the First World War, so the link must relate to this aspect of his career.

## GGPE 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



The Friends would like to congratulate the Gibraltar Group of Professional Engineers (GGPE) on their sixtieth anniversary in 2018.

This group is affiliated to the major UK Institutions for professional engineering in the civil, mechanical and electrical/electronic fields, and it was encouraging to see the strong support received from these bodies, with eminent members of the various boards visiting for the celebrations. The importance of engineering in Gibraltar's history is clear, be it in civil engineering (tunnels, dockyards...), in marine engineering (ship repair, naval) or in the less obvious electronic areas (surveillance, communications).

The group was inaugurated on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1958, by the then Governor, General Sir Charles Keithley.

## Out and about in Gibraltar by the Editors



*The athlete village for the Island Games nears completion*



*Many new schools are being built in the move to co-education. This is the new Notre Dame School*





*St Anne's school arises by the Laguna Estate*



*The nearly complete mid-town development on the old naval sports grounds*





*The new wine vaults mentioned in the Gibraltar News article*



## Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society

### AGM Minutes

20<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at 2pm

**Oxfordshire Golf Hotel, Rycote Lane, Milton Common, Thame, Oxon OX9 2PU**

#### Present

A total of 43 FOGHS Members and guests attended the AGM and Seminar.

1. **Welcome** - SAJ welcomed everyone present.
2. **Apologies** - Several had been received, many sending their best wishes for the event, including Baroness Gloria Hooper our President, Sir Derek Reffel and Sir John Chapple both previous Chairs of FOGHS.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** These had been published in the last edition of Rock Talk and assumed read.
4. **Matters/Comments arising** There were no matters arising that were not on the agenda. (SAJ to sign the minutes at the next Board Meeting).
5. **Reports from the Board** - These were presented by each of the secretaries.

Membership- Richard Lord (RL) reported that there were now 487 members, this number seems to have plateaued with similar numbers joining and leaving. He made the point that recruitment is best achieved through the current membership and word of mouth. The reasons for leaving are unknown. There are now 41 members who are over 80 year of age and who do not pay a subscription. 16

members have taken family membership. A few members have already taken up the offer of a discount to join the Gibraltar Heritage Trust. RL requested that members should email him if there are questions or needs to assist members.

SAJ thanked RL for his report.

Projects - Richard Lord (RL) reported that the following projects had been funded or partly funded by the Friends in the year 2017 - 2018: -

The Oral History Project which is now available on a website.  
Refurbishment of the organ in the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity  
Publication of GHT book  
HMGOG NA Scanner  
Schools Award  
University Bursary  
Irish Town Map – advert for FOGHS  
2018 there is a planned spend of £7,300.

RL announced that a Memorandum of Understanding between FOGHS and GHT has been written and signed by SAJ and Ian Balestrino (Chair of GHT). This has resulted in there being many benefits once donations from the Friends had been received by GHT. GHT now manage payment of the contractors on our behalf.

The Board would welcome ideas for future projects from the members, especially if persons are able to lead on their suggested project.

On-going projects and costs for 2018 are: -

The annual bursary awarded to a post graduate student at the University of Gibraltar- £1,000.

Witham's Cemetery refurbishment, a donation of £5,000.

Schools Award £520

RL reiterated that if anyone has ideas for future projects, saying, please can they send them to RL in the next six weeks!!!

Paul Blake, with reference to the Oral History Project said that the British Library would be very interested in having a whole copy of the original Oral History Project unedited records. This was concurred by Nicholas Rankin (guest speaker and historian), stating that it would be the ideal place for them.

Denise Lord suggested that the two models of soldiers situated by the South Port Gate in Gibraltar are in need of some tender loving care. One is in a Sentry Box in the wall and the other stands near to the canon. Claire Montado stated that they belong to the Tourist Board. This suggestion will be investigated.

Events - Tim Lawson-Cruttenden (TLC) asked for ideas for speakers and events. We now have an annual rolling programme of events, which includes: three evening talks at Gibraltar House; a spring or summer party and a Christmas Party; a September outing/event; the AGM and Seminar at the end of October; plus, an extra event such as the visit to the CPA room in the Houses of Parliament in February 2018.

There will possibly be a party/talk on 4th February 2019. TLC may announce some events at the Christmas Party.

TLC then spoke about the FOGHS annual visit to Gibraltar, which Janet Whiteley has organised very ably for many years. This is not an easy task. It is usually in the week of the Queen's Birthday Parade, the first full week in June. JW will not be the main point of contact. SAJ states that the week away is for FOGHS members. We now need a leader and point of contact to come forward, please.

6. **Treasurer's Report** - Peter Hucker, the Treasurer presented a verbal report on the accounts. The current balance now stands at £44,000 which shows that we have had £4,000 more going out than coming in. However, this is consistent with our target to gradually reduce our balance. We have a plan for projects, when we agree and monitor the costings. It is our aim to ensure that the outgoings and income 'break even'. Events resulted in a small surplus of £40.00 at end of year 31st March 2018.

SAJ drew the AGM to a close by reiterating that ideas for future projects should be sent to RL now. He also announced that JW had resigned from the Board and from ExCo. She has been the pivotal contact for the June visits. SAJ asked for persons to please come forward if they are willing to co-ordinate this visit.

**Date and Time of Next Meeting** - End of October 2019. Date, time and venue tbc.

The meeting closed at 14.30.

TJ 22.11.18



## MEMBERSHIP DETAILS THE FRIENDS OF GIBRALTAR

To: The Membership Secretary, The Friends of Gibraltar  
Church Cottage, 4 Kingsbury Square, Wilton, SALISBURY, SP2 0BA

From: (Please see Note 1 below):.....

Telephone:..... E-mail: .....

Address:.....

.....Postcode: .....

### 1. General Data Protection Act

The information you provide on this form will be only be used under the terms of Friends of Gibraltar Privacy Policy. I wish to opt in and receive communications from the Friends.

Signature: ..... Date: .....

### 2. Gift Aid Declaration – for past, present & future donations

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made today, in the past 4 years and in the future to the Friends of Gibraltar. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Title: ..... First name: ..... Surname: .....

Address: .....

.....Postcode: .....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

Please notify the Membership Secretary if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address, no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

### 3. Banker's Order

Name and address of your Bank. Please include Post Code

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....Postcode:.....

Please pay Lloyds, 147 High Street, Guildford. GU1 3AG (sorting code 30-93-74) for the Credit of the Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society (account no.00310844) the sum of £15 (fifteen pounds) immediately and thereafter on each 6 April until further notice from me and debit my account accordingly. Account to be debited:

A/C Name: ..... Sort Code: ..... A/C No: .....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

Note 1: For a couple, the Annual Subscription is £30. Please complete two forms.





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[enquiries@bordaline.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bordaline.co.uk)

**Front Cover:**

A scenic Catalan Bay during the Friends' June Visit

## **APPEAL FOR MORE VOLUNTEERS**

*The Society would welcome additional volunteers from the membership to assist with the organisation of events, with the administration of the Society, and in any other way that might be appropriate.*

*Members are encouraged to contact any member of the Executive Committee, or to contact Gibraltar House for a telephone number or e-mail address.*

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*Editors of Rock Talk: Dr Vincent Mifsud OBE TD,  
Brian Gonzalez, Elizabeth Gonzalez*