

ROCK TALK

**The new journal of
The Friends of Gibraltar**



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Editorial

Calling all Friends of Gibraltar! We hope you like our new venture Rock Talk. We shall try to include something for everyone, but it is your journal and we want to hear from you. So please let us have your comments, or write to us for publication on any subject connected with Gibraltar – outside party politics.

As you will see inside, the Friends have a lot of events planned for this year. Details are on pages 4 and 5. Our first big day will be Tuesday 12 May, and we are very happy that Gibraltar's Chief Minister, Peter Caruana, has agreed to come to Gibraltar House in London to meet us. Please come along, and bring your family and friends too. Then in the second week of June we hope you will join us in Gibraltar. It will be warm but not yet hot. Our party will be based as usual at the Rock Hotel and see many local people and places – but please book quickly to make sure you get a place.

Later in the year our Annual Luncheon will be at the House of Lords on 16 July, and on 22 September, in our second VIP meeting, the Governor of Gibraltar has most kindly agreed to meet the

Friends at Gibraltar House. On 26 September we have a visit to the famous code and cypher centre at Bletchley Park and then, on 17 October, our annual Heritage Seminar and Dinner – this year in the historic city of Winchester.

If you are not already a member of the Friends, or haven't yet renewed your membership, please fill in the membership and banker's order forms. The more members we have, the more events we can arrange next year and the wider we shall spread our message about the Rock.

Last item here: we are running a prize competition. The search is on for a new Logo for our Society, and we are looking for a recognisable symbol of the link between Gibraltar and Britain. It might include flags, or an outline of the Rock, or some Gibraltar icon, or something we haven't thought of. You might put in some lettering. But the winning design is likely to be simple. Friends are welcome to get their families to help with this competition, and to send small but clear sketches in by 31 May to Logo Search, Rock Talk, The Friends of Gibraltar, 150 Strand, London, WC2R 1JA.

Chairman's Letter



Dear Members,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the first edition of our new format Newsletter. I should like to thank the Editorial Team and all who have helped them produce it – and particularly Albert Poggio and his team at Gibraltar House, without whose encouragement, help and material support it would simply not have happened.

There is a great deal happening in the Society, as those of you who were able to come to the annual reception on 11 February will know. Having promised members a fuller programme, we have been enlisting the extra help we need to make that possible. Our Secretary is already doing more than we can reasonably expect of her, and three Board meetings a year are not enough to keep up the momentum of the planned programme. So Simon Pack, our Vice-Chairman, now heads a new executive committee, which will meet more frequently and take on the extra work. Janet Whiteley is of course a member, and is joined by Richard Wells, Vincent Mifsud, Hilary Wines and David Inker.

At the same time we have expanded the Board slightly, as well as filling two vacancies. At the February Board meeting we elected three new members – Hilary Wines, Colonel

Vincent Mifsud, and Commodore Richard Lord. Richard Lord was Chief of Staff at the Tower when Simon Pack was CBF, and has since then been an active and loyal friend to Gibraltar. Vincent Mifsud is a Gibraltarian, a distinguished engineer and also a senior officer in the Territorial Army. And Hilary Wines will be known to many of you as an enthusiastic and loyal member of the Society who brings long experience of elected local government office. I am delighted to have them all with us.

One of the vacancies was caused by the resignation of Mike Brufal, whose tireless and generous work and hospitality have been mainstays of the Society over many years. I should like to take this opportunity to thank him and Brenda, both of whom of course remain members, on behalf of you all for all that they have done. And I should also like to welcome the new team at the Gibraltar Heritage Trust – Diane Sloma in its Chair, and Claire Valarino as its chief executive. We much look forward to working with them.

Thank you all for your continuing support – for the Society, for Gibraltar and for its heritage.

Francis Richards

Diary of Events for 2009

Tuesday 12 May

(6.00 p.m.)

Extraordinary General Meeting: Please see the notice on pages 22 and 23.

At: **Gibraltar House**

150 Strand

London

WC2R 1JA

Members only.

Tuesday 12 May

(6.45 p.m.)

Meeting with the **Chief Minister of Gibraltar**, the Hon. Peter Caruana QC at:

Gibraltar House

150 Strand

London

WC2R 1JA

Mr Caruana will speak and answer questions. Members are very welcome to bring family and friends.

Price £5 for members and under-25s, £10 for non-members. Includes refreshments after the meeting. Bookings and cheques (payable to: **The Friends of Gibraltar**) by 24 April please to:

c/o William Gomez

Gibraltar House

150 Strand

London

WC2R 1JA

Sunday 7 June to Sunday 14 June

The Friends' annual **Visit to Gibraltar**. Bookings should be made as soon as possible with Jenna Kerins at the travel company Cadogan Holidays: telephone

0845 615 4390 or write to

jenna.kerins@cadoganholidays.com

We expect most Friends will fly from Gatwick by BA 2494 at 13.20 on 7 June, stay at the Rock Hotel, and return by BA 2495, arriving back at Gatwick at 20.00 on 14 June; we understand that Cadogan's price for flights and room and breakfast is then £451 per person in a twin room with sea view and balcony (single supplement £103). For other flights or hotels, please ask Cadogan.

The programme is being arranged in consultation with the Gibraltar Heritage Trust; we shall be invited to visit their office on the Monday morning. Full programme details for the week are not yet available, but we shall visit the COMCEN tunnels (with the Eisenhower Room and the War Control Room), the Museum (to see new work uncovered since last year), the Garrison Library, and the Alameda Botanic Gardens (where we shall hear a talk from the Director, Dr John Cortes MBE). For an extra charge, there will be a day excursion, with lunch, in Spain.

It may be possible on the Wednesday for a limited number of the Friends to attend HM The Queen's Birthday Parade at Casemates and HE The Governor's Garden Party at the Convent. Enquiries about tickets for these events should be made not later than 23 April to Janet Whiteley at:

janet.stockbridge@btinternet.com or

Telephone: 012 6481 1101

Thursday 16 July

(11.45 a.m. for 12.00 noon)

The Friends' **Annual Luncheon** will be held in the Attlee Room at the House of Lords. Our President, the Baroness Hooper CMG, will preside.

Diary of Events for 2009

Price £50 per person. Bookings and cheques (payable to: **The Friends of Gibraltar**) by 1 June please to:

Janet Whiteley
Overstock House
Houghton Road
Stockbridge
SO20 6LE

Tuesday 22 September

(6.30 p.m.)

Meeting with the **Governor of Gibraltar**,
Lieutenant General Sir Robert Fulton KBE at:

Gibraltar House
150 Strand
London
WC2R 1JA

Sir Robert will speak and answer questions. Members are very welcome to bring family and friends.

Price £5 for members and under-25s, £10 for non-members. Includes refreshments after the meeting. Bookings and cheques (payable to The Friends of Gibraltar) by 28 August please to:

c/o William Gomez
Gibraltar House
150 Strand
London
WC2R 1JA

Saturday 26 September

(11.30 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.)

The Friends have arranged a private guided group visit to the **National Codes Centre** at **Bletchley Park**, close to Milton Keynes. This is the wartime home of the Government Code and Cypher School, famous for breaking the Enigma and for Colossus, the world's first programmable computer. The Director of the Centre will

speak to us about Operation Goldeneye, a real-life story of Ian Fleming and the Rock of Gibraltar.

Price £22 for members and under-25s, £25 for non-members. Includes coffee, hot lunch, tea and biscuits. Provisional bookings (no money yet) by 16 May please to:

Richard Wells
7 Tollgate Drive
London
SE21 7LS
Email: rhswells@yahoo.co.uk

Saturday 17 October

(from 1.00 - 5.00 p.m. and
7.30 to 10.00 p.m.)

The Friends' **Heritage Seminar and Dinner** will this year be held at:

The Winchester Royal Hotel
St. Peter Street
Winchester

This annual event, previously held at Warwick, is a fine opportunity to meet others with a genuine enthusiasm and interest in Gibraltar. Speakers come from Gibraltar as well as the UK, and this year will include leading members of the Gibraltar Heritage Trust. Both members and their family and friends are welcome. City sightseeing in Winchester may be arranged on Sunday 18 October.

The cost of the seminar is £18 per person. The hotel price, for a three-course dinner including wine, accommodation on the Saturday night and full English breakfast, is £70 per person (single supplement £15).

Please complete the booking form on the enclosed sheet and return it as soon as possible. The programme and hotel reservation will be sent to you nearer the date.

Colin White: Admiral Nelson's "representative on earth"

Dr Colin White was the Director of the Royal Naval Museum at Portsmouth and almost certainly the nation's leading authority on Nelson. He was a particular friend to Gibraltar, and visited the Rock on a number of occasions to maintain and develop his close interest in the wealth of Gibraltar's maritime heritage.



In 1996 he was invited by the then Commander British Forces Gibraltar to "map" this maritime heritage and to make recommendations as to how it might be best preserved for the benefit of the people of Gibraltar and visitors to the Rock. He produced a fascinating report which went on to recommend how this heritage, once preserved, might be developed as a tourist attraction.

Colin was known with great affection by many people in Gibraltar, particularly those with a heritage and historical connection. He passed away on Christmas night 2008 at the untimely age of 57 and will be greatly missed by his wide circle of colleagues and very good friends.

Colin Saunders White was born on 28 August 1951 at Bromley in Kent and educated at Culford School, Bury St. Edmunds. His passion for Nelson was kindled by a visit to the flagship HMS Victory in Portsmouth; young Colin named his first dinghy on the Walton backwaters "Pickle" after a small schooner in Nelson's fleet, and thereafter pursued his subject single-mindedly. He read history at Southampton, and then war studies at King's College, London, where he wrote a thesis on the Victorian navy.

He joined the Royal Naval Museum in 1975 as a research assistant, and rose through every level of curatorship. He played a central part in the planning and project management of the very ambitious development plan for the Museum which has now been successfully completed. Although he spent most of his working life at the Royal

Naval Museum, he was temporarily lent in 2000 to the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, which he described as "this great national institution". His time at Greenwich prepared him well to become director of the Royal Naval Museum in 2006.

From 2001 to 2006 he was chairman of the Official Nelson Commemorations Committee: responsible

for successfully coordinating the national and international celebrations marking the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar. Such were his reputation as an academic, and his love of his subject, that he was once called the Admiral's "representative on earth". He did much to broaden the public understanding of Nelson's life, and will be remembered particularly for his after dinner speeches, which were delivered without notes, but with such passion that the audience was always captivated by his mastery of detail and atmosphere.

Colin was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and of the Royal Historical Society, and vice-president of the 1805 Club. He was thrilled to be recognised for his scholarship by the University of Portsmouth, first with an honorary doctorate, and then, in 2007, by his appointment as Visiting Professor in maritime history. He was further delighted, the following year, to be appointed an honorary Captain in the Royal Naval Reserve.

A cineaste and keen thespian, who acted and directed productions for the Southsea Shakespeare Players, he brought his love of the theatrical to the re-creation of Victory's gundeck at the entrance to the Nelson Gallery of the Royal Naval Museum. His books include *The End of the Sailing Navy* (1981), *The Nelson Companion* (1995), *1797: Nelson's Year of Destiny* (1998), *The Nelson Encyclopaedia* (2002), *Nelson the Admiral* (2005) and *Nelson, the New Letters* (2006).

Gibraltar has lost a most distinguished friend.

Membership of **THE FRIENDS OF GIBRALTAR**

To: **The Membership Secretary**
The Friends of Gibraltar
c/o Gibraltar House, 150 Strand, London WC2R 1JA

From:

Telephone: E-mail:

Address:

.....

..... Postcode:

Gift Aid declaration *[N.B. You must in each tax year pay an amount of UK income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax which The Friends of Gibraltar will claim from H. M. Revenue & Customs on your Gift Aid donation(s).]*

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all gifts of money to The Friends of Gibraltar that I have made in the past six years and all gifts of money that I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise.

Signature: Date:

Either: **Banker's order**

To (name and address of your bank)

.....

Please pay Lloyds TSB, 147 High Street, Guildford, GU1 3AG (sorting code 30-93-74) for the credit of The Friends of Gibraltar (account no. 0310844) the sum of £15 (fifteen pounds) immediately and on 1 April 2010 and thereafter on each 1 April until further notice from me in writing and debit my account accordingly. This instruction cancels any previous order in favour of The Friends of Gibraltar or The Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society.

Account to be debited:

Name: Number:

Signature: Date:

or: **Cheque payment**

I enclose my cheque for £15 (fifteen pounds) payable to The Friends of Gibraltar as subscription for the twelve months from 1 April 2009.



*Chairman, Pepe Forbes
and Gibraltar House Staff*



*Paul Baker, Brian Longworth, Janet Whiteley
and John Borda*



*Albert Poggio, Vivian Azzopardi
and Robert Gomez*



Richard Wells and Peter Abraham



*Freda Stuart, Geoff Taylor
and Neil MacLachlan*



Pepe Forbes talking to the Chairman

Annual Meeting of Members

On 11 February almost fifty Friends of Gibraltar attended the Annual Meeting of Members at Gibraltar House, the Government of Gibraltar's splendid new headquarters in the Strand in London. The President and Chairman of the Friends and the Representative of the Government – the Baroness Hooper, Sir Francis Richards and Albert Poggio – spoke to members, and a Reception was held. The organiser was Ernest Reading. Here are some photographs of the Reception, taken by our Honorary Secretary and Society Photographer Janet Whiteley.



President, Pepe Forbes and Sara McFadyen

Albert Poggio, Gibraltar's Man In London_____

Article courtesy of Insight Magazine, Gibraltar.

Albert Poggio talks to Insight about how he ended up as an expatriate Gibraltarian in the UK and became 'our man in London'.

"We lived in Scud Hill, but my sister and I used to spend a great deal of time at our grandparents, who lived in George's Lane. One of my earliest memories is some time in the 1950s, when I was a small child, walking along 'La Bateria' along Red Sands Road, on our way to visit our grandparents, and seeing the people who lived in the Nissan huts. I also have these vivid images of people in the patios at Humphries Buildings celebrating the very popular 'verbenas'.

There was lots of laughter and people enjoying themselves and having fun. It seems to me that people lived much simpler lives then, but somehow they seemed so much happier than nowadays. "I also remember, as a young boy, in 1951, the occasion when HMS Bedenham exploded whilst unloading ammunition at the naval dockyard. My father worked at the Glen Rocky plant near Europa Point, and my uncle was a dockyard policeman. I vividly remember the sequence of events as they occurred on that day. The first I knew that a disastrous explosion had occurred was when the glass window above me in St. Joseph's primary school fell on me. That's when the panic started. Our carer, Ms Triay, took me outside as I had some cuts and bruises, but I refused to leave until I could find my sister, who was at the same school - my mother ran over to the school and picked us up to take us home. She then ran to my father's workplace to see if he was alright. In fact, he'd been working inside one of the tunnels and hadn't even noticed the explosion! She then ran all the way down to the dockyard to find my uncle. Luckily, she found he had survived as, when he and some of the other workers heard the explosion, they had immediately jumped underneath some steel workbenches for protection. Next, she ran to my grandparents' house to ensure they were alright. I remember seeing my mother returning home and collapsing from the exhaustion and anxiety. A policeman, Sergeant Warwick (the father of Walter Warwick, who would later become very popular in the UK with his Golden Eagle Hotel), told us that for several hours afterwards there had been the possibility of a second explosion!"

Albert's move to the United Kingdom was a somewhat traumatic experience, as he puts it



"The function of this new Gibraltar Government Office, 'Gibraltar House', has to be viewed from a number of different perspectives. Firstly, it has to be seen as a testament to the importance that the UK has in Gibraltar's economy. It is a splendid showcase, a window as it were, for Gibraltar, and very much reflects the modern image of Gibraltar that we want to portray in the UK."

bluntly. "On my eleventh birthday I was hoodwinked by my parents!" He exclaimed. "They tricked me and my sister, saying that we were going to 'visit' our grandparents in the UK for a holiday, but the real intention was for our mum and the two of us to go and settle in London and for my father to follow us there shortly - I was trapped in London!"

When his grandparents had retired they had moved over to London to be with their other daughter, who had stayed on in London after the war and was running a retirement home. They were living in a cottage within the grounds of the home. Albert says that life in the capital couldn't have been more different to Gibraltar in the 1960s

"After the cosiness of Gibraltar, London seemed like a very daunting place to me. I was eleven years old and still wore short trousers, just like all the other kids in Gibraltar, but at my first day at school in London I noticed that all the other boys were wearing long trousers. I remember walking into the classroom for the very first time and the whole class seemed unanimously to taunt me all day about my short trousers – I cried all day till I got home. I told my mother I would never go back to school again until I was given long trousers, which I got!" Eventually, Albert became a 'Prefect' at that same school and managed to get his own back on his earlier tormentors.

After leaving school, Albert's first job was as a trainee electrical engineer, as a student sponsored by one of the big public companies. "Once I had qualified I soon realized that it was not in my blood to be an electrical engineer. I was 22 years old and I relished the thought of starting my own business." Albert went into partnership with a relative and started up in business as a book wholesaler, enjoying some limited success selling popular books. "We decided to take on a couple of a sales representative to increase business, but that didn't quite work out – by the time we realized that they were helping themselves to the money coming in, it was too late and the company had to fold, and a valuable lesson was learnt." Albert went back to work for a while for a large electrical supply company and soon after, at the age of 25, was promoted to Export Manager. This role allowed him to make many business contacts in Gibraltar.

Around 1966, Albert says he became involved in Gibraltar politics by taking it upon himself to organize a demonstration outside the Spanish Embassy in London and writing in the UK press, especially for the Daily Mirror, in protest against the Spanish Government's implementation of border restrictions against Gibraltar. For his efforts, Albert became one of several Gibraltarians to be banned by General Franco from entering Spain. "It was at this early age," Albert explains, "that, together with other expatriate Gibraltarians in the UK, I started up the Association of Gibraltar in the United Kingdom, known popularly as 'the Gibraltar Group'."

The Gibraltar Group would go on to become extremely popular amongst Gibraltarians, with its social events and the introduction of the cheap charter flights it organized to and from the UK.

Moving swiftly forward some forty years from those events, Albert is talking to me in one of the elegantly appointed rooms in the recently opened new Gibraltar Government Office at 150 The Strand in London, just a couple of hundred metres down the road from the previous Gibraltar office

at 179, which is to be demolished to make way for a new shopping complex. "The function of this new Gibraltar Government Office, 'Gibraltar House', has to be viewed from a number of different perspectives. Firstly, it has to be seen as a testament to the importance that the UK has in Gibraltar's economy. It is a splendid showcase, a window as it were, for Gibraltar and very much reflects the modern image of Gibraltar that we want to portray in the UK. I feel very proud and am very grateful to the Chief Minister, Peter Caruana, for the total support that he has always given to the London office and to me personally, as well as for how he involved himself in choosing and purchasing the furniture for this new building and advising me on the finer details. We currently have a staff of eight full timers, and approval has now been granted to increase this to ten."

The Gibraltar Office in London carries out many daily, consular-type duties and disseminates tourism-related information such as brochures (around 50,000 brochures are distributed annually), and also answers more than 8,000 queries of many different types. The office is usually the first port of call for many persons requiring specialized information on Gibraltar, such as visa and work permit requirements, property purchase and financial information. Staff in the office also liaise with all UK government departments and ministries, answering their requests for specialised information on Gibraltar. The office also deals with the requirements of sponsored patients sent over by the Gibraltar Health Authority for specialized medical treatment in the UK, and with Calpe House matters – Albert is one of its Trustees.

The new building also affords the opportunity of expanding the number and type of events that Gibraltar can host in London. "One of the new innovations, which we will be promoting with a new brochure, is the opportunity to use the third floor of the premises as a Business Centre, where representatives of Gibraltar-based businesses can meet UK clients, rather than paying for the privilege elsewhere. What better place for them to meet than in this comfortable environment, where the London office can offer a five-star service to businesses, which includes the hire of meeting rooms, the use of office facilities, and the opportunity to host business lunches and dinners, with the Office providing the catering service as well as full secretarial support, in a totally Gibraltar-orientated environment?"

"It will now also be possible to hold special events such as seminars, exhibitions and receptions on the fourth floor of Gibraltar House. This floor has been designed so that these types of events can be held there. It can also be utilized

as a showcase in the UK for Gibraltar culture, for events such as book launches and art and philatelic exhibitions. These facilities can accommodate up to seventy persons sitting in theatre-type surroundings. I also want to organize other events here throughout the year; for example, talks on Gibraltar's historical past, the military presence, philately and culture, for people in the UK with interest in these subjects. Other events that previously, due to lack of space, had to be held at expensive outside venues will now be held here as well. Last December, for example, I hosted our annual Christmas lunch for 25 MPs from the Gibraltar Parliamentary Group. Two other forthcoming events are a reception for the Representatives of the British Overseas Territories and a reception for ANTOR (Association of National Tourist Office Representatives), of which Gibraltar currently holds the Chair."

Albert is also kept busy by his vice-presidency of the Med Cruise organization, attending, and sometimes addressing conferences world-wide. Major events organized in the UK by Albert Poggio and his staff at the Gibraltar Office include the World Travel Market, The Boat Show and various travel trade 'roadshows' held throughout

the UK during the course of the year. There is also the important parliamentary work and the design and preparation work, in conjunction with the Gibraltar Tourist Office, for the tourism brochures and advertising media buying. The highest profile event organized and introduced by the Gibraltar Office, at least as seen from a local perspective, has to be the annual 'Gibraltar Day' in London, the latest one having been held in late October. The day's events include a Finance Centre lunch at the RAC Club, with a keynote speech by the Chief Minister to Gibraltar-based finance centre professionals and their UK counterparts, a reception hosted by the Minister of Tourism for tourism industry representatives, and the highlight of the day – the Chief Minister's Reception for 1,200 people at the Guildhall in the City, with guests including ex-Gibraltar Governors and senior UK establishment figures from both the military and from Parliament, including Cabinet Ministers, along with business personalities and Friends of Gibraltar. The logistics involved in organizing the day's events must be pretty incredible!

"The first Gibraltar Office in London was opened in the early 1970s in Northumberland Avenue, just off Trafalgar Square; it was a very

Chief Minister Peter Caruana showing the Gibraltar press some of the display facilities on the ground floor of the new Gibraltar House



small office, run by Helen Gordon, who worked for Gordon McNally's travel firm, Exchange Travel, which was a force to be reckoned with in the travel industry. Gordon was also famous for having chained himself to the frontier gate during the closed border period. A slightly bigger Gibraltar Tourist Office was later opened on the second floor of Grand Buildings in Trafalgar Square, and this was run by the late John Joe Gomez and a small staff complement, displaying brochures and other Gibraltar-related tourism literature for the first time. Some time later, a much bigger office was inaugurated at 179 The Strand, with Joseph Rosado at the helm for many years, followed by Richard Garcia. The London Office's responsibilities continued to increase over the years, eventually evolving to the Gibraltar Government office and the latest premises inaugurated earlier this year.

"I remember discussing with the then Chief Minister, Sir Joshua Hassan, when I was chairman of the Gibraltar Group, the possibility of opening a Gibraltar House in London. Many years later, Joe Bossano, as the then Chief Minister, appointed me, giving me a much wider brief. I think a lot has been achieved during all those years. I remember one Saturday, in the early 70s, when I organized,

as chairman of the Gibraltar Group, an apolitical event for Miss Gibraltar at the office, run by John Joe Gomez at the time, where both Gibraltar Government's Tourism Minister, William Serfaty, gave a welcome speech and the Leader of the Opposition, Peter Isola, as a matter of courtesy, was also invited to address the invited guests, all very good natured. The following Monday, I received a phone call from the Chief Minister, Sir Joshua Hassan, telling me that he had just received a telephone call from the Foreign Office, suggesting that I was using the Gibraltar Office for political purposes! That demonstrates the strict restrictions that were in place at that time on the use of the Gibraltar Office! I feel very proud and privileged to have been running the Gibraltar Office for almost 20 years now and, in one way or another, have had the honour of having served all of Gibraltar's Chief Ministers, either as Chairman of the Gibraltar Group or now as Government Representative. I have lived through many interesting times, not least the joint sovereignty attempt during the Blair era. It has also been a great experience working with our current Chief Minister, Peter Caruana. I still have many new ideas and, being a pro-active person, feel that I still have a great deal to contribute."

Albert Poggio and Gibraltar Government Media Director Francis Cantos at a briefing for the Rock's media during Gibraltar Day in London



Rural Adventure – The Trails of the Upper Ro

The Upper Rock brings walkers from all over the world to enjoy the natural beauty and the historical sites. Birdwatchers can spot more than 230 species, and there are clearly marked nature trails that you can follow to discover Gibraltar's flora and fauna.

The Upper Rock Nature Reserve has a number of paths and tracks which are accessible only by walkers.

Gibraltar's most noteworthy mountain path is the Mediterranean Steps. This walk takes in breathtaking views almost vertically down over the sea cliffs into the Mediterranean, and is unquestionably one of the best nature walks in Gibraltar.

The most convenient place to start the walk is from Jews' Gate, the main entrance to the Upper Rock. From here, facing the building opposite you, take the steps on the left hand side, and at the top of the Steps you turn to the right. Following the track crossing two pipes which cross the path prior to rounding the corner, you will come to the east side of the Rock.

You then follow this path up and down along the sea cliffs till you come to a post pointing up the slope. If you miss this post and continue along the path, you will come to a dead end at St. Martin's Cave. But climb the slope, passing on your left hand side the two twin Goats Caves. After this, continue up the Steps, leading to a double story brick building known as Berchtesgaden, used during the Second World War as a billet and more latterly as a climbers' hut. This building is not accessible.

Here you turn to the right and take a short tunnel, following the path to a magnificent lookout position overlooking the Eastern side of the Rock, from where you will be able to see the Caleta Hotel and the Spanish





coastline. After this, you need to backtrack about 20 yards and follow a path on the right hand side which zigzags right to the top of the Rock, with Smilax, Pipe Vine and Honeysuckle, Asphodel, Lavender, Sage, Stonecrops, Rue, Paperwhite Narcissus, Butcher's Broom, Fan Palms, the beautiful blue Giant Squill, Gibraltar's Candytuft, Pitch Trefoil, Friar's Cowl, wild Clematis, Scrubby Scorpion Vetch (best in February), yellow scrubby Jasmine, Rock Rose Shrubs, Orchids and even Daisies, among other plants.

You will see from this area most of the birds resident in Gibraltar, as well as some migrants, according to season. Notable in the rocky areas are Blue Rock Thrush throughout the year, and the rare Alpine Accentor in winter. Barbary Partridges are regularly encountered, as are the common Sardinian Warblers and Blackbirds. In winter, Crag Martins are abundant flying about the Steps, especially in the morning and evening as they leave or arrive at their nests in caves below the area. In spring in particular, there are spectacular views of hunting Peregrine Falcons, which breed in the cliff above the Mediterranean Steps. During migration time, birds of prey often overfly the area.

On crossing the top of the Rock, you follow the path to the left for a few yards. This will provide access to the road, which is clearly visible. Follow this road down, and at the first junction take the left fork downwards to St. Michael's Cabin, a useful place for refreshments and rest.

From St. Michael's Cabin, go to the lower level parking area and proceed to your left (as you face the Bay) for about 50 yards. Then take the right hand unmetalled road downwards. It quickly changes to narrow path. Follow this path down, and it will bring you to Jews' Gate, where you started the walk.

Our Lady of Europe

This article is a shortened version of an account written by Bishop Charles Caruana



When King Ferdinand IV of Castile conquered Gibraltar from the Moslems in 1309 he gave thanks to the Almighty and placed the Continent of Europe under the protection of the Mother of Christ, naming her “Our Lady of Europe”. A statue of Our Lady of Europe was sculptured in stone and was venerated there.

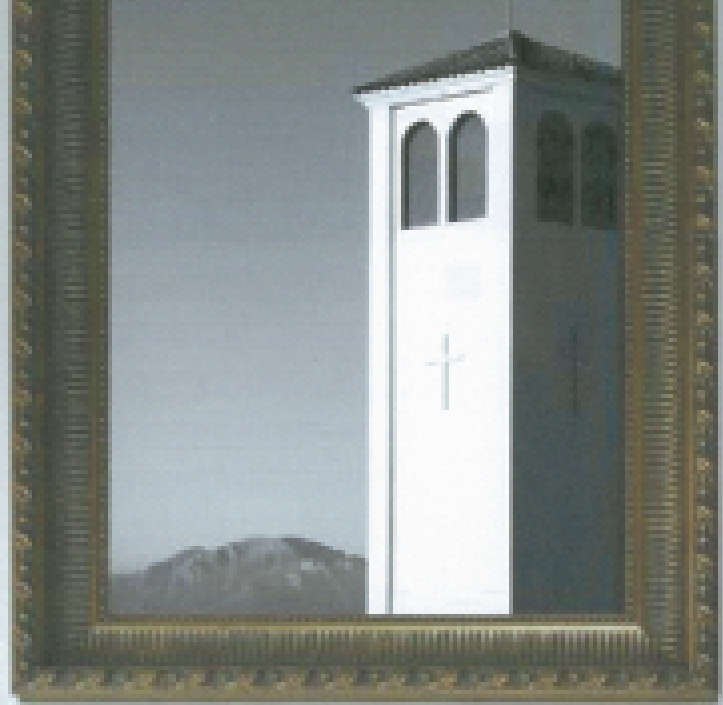
This statue was lost when the Christians left Gibraltar hurriedly on the return of the Moslem troops in 1333. The Moors took possession of Gibraltar once again, and occupied it for another 129 years. It was in 1462 that Henry IV, grandson of King Ferdinand, reconquered the Rock for Christianity once and for all.

King Henry IV, fearing the Rock would be invaded again by the Moors, tried to populate Gibraltar quickly. He repeated measures taken by his grandfather. He first endeavoured to create a climate of spirituality and peace by introducing a Collegiate Abbey. When this failed, he offered tax-free privileges to people who decided to reside on

the Rock, and freedom to runaway wives and refugee lawbreakers. In addition he annexed to Gibraltar the territory of Algeciras and other territories, offering plots of land there to whoever came to live on the Rock. Still unsuccessful in populating Gibraltar quickly, as a third venture the King himself, with his cortège, came to live on the Rock.

During his short sojourn he invited to Gibraltar the King of Portugal, whose own grandfather had conquered Ceuta in North Africa and instituted the devotion of Our Lady of Africa there. King Henry revived the devotion to Our Lady of Europe which his grandfather had initiated in 1309, converting again the mosque into a Shrine. Since the original statue was not found, he had a new one carved. King Henry returned to Madrid leaving his entourage behind on the Rock as commoners, so as not to frighten ordinary newcomers.

The wooden statue carved for Henry IV was barely 80 cm high, polychrome in royal blue, red



and gold. The Virgin is seated on a simple chair, holding the Child Jesus sitting on her lap in her left arm, while she holds a sceptre with three flowers in her right hand. The three flowers, in bloom, signify Truth, Justice and Love. Both the Mother and the Child wear crowns. The statue was venerated in the Shrine.

The Shrine prospered in fame and popularity throughout the Mediterranean Sea. Ships sailing past the Rock of Gibraltar saluted Our Lady in the Shrine by firing salvoes. The hermit at the Shrine responded in kind. There are records that Italians like Prince Giovanni Andrea Doria and General Fabrizio Colonna came to the Shrine to pray, and left solid silver lamps with provision of oil to be burnt before Our Lady. It is also known that, from Spain, the Count of Santa Gadea and General of the Spanish Fleet, Martín de Padilla, and again the Duke of Fernandina and Marquis of Villafranca, Don Pedro de Toledo, visited the Shrine, leaving very rich donations and silver lamps with oil. Ancient French prints mark the Shrine of Our Lady of Europe as "Notre-Dame de Bon Voyage". The glow of the lamps served as a beacon to passing ships and kept them away from the reefs.

In 1540 Turkish troops sent by the Ottoman admiral Barbarossa raided the Shrine. Led by an Italian renegade, Captain Caramani, they deceived the hermit at the Shrine and broke into it, pillaging all its valuables. The statue of Our Lady was stripped of its jewels and broken into pieces. The invaders marched into the City, vandalising chapels and taking captives. The Turks were about to set sail with all the treasures and captives when Admiral Bernardino Mendoza, in command of the Spanish fleet, intercepted and defeated them.

The faithful immediately took measures to repair the statue. Plans were made to send it to Seville, but various attempts made to set sail with it were hindered by heavy stormy weather. People interpreted these unsuccessful attempts as a sign that the Almighty wanted the statue to be repaired in Gibraltar itself, and so the craftsman came from Seville and repaired it locally.

The Turkish invasion and desecration of the Shrine induced King Philip II to construct a wall round the Shrine to protect it from further invasions. Previous hermits had complained to King Charles V that the Shrine was too exposed and open to possible invaders, but they were not heeded. When Philip II finally constructed the defence wall at the Shrine, making it larger, he also completed the impressive steep Charles V Wall, which shut off any invaders from the City.

During the War of the Spanish Succession, in 1704, the allied forces invaded the Rock of Gibraltar by the south shores and ambushed the

people sheltered in the Shrine of Our Lady of Europe. A repetition of what happened in 1540 with the Turkish invasion took place. The treasures and valuables were stolen and the statue of Our Lady was mutilated in the process. The vandalised statue was taken away from Gibraltar to Algeciras, where a church was specially constructed and where the faithful could venerate her.

Early in the 1860s the Vicar Apostolic of Gibraltar, Dr John Baptist Scandella, initiated proceedings to retrieve the mutilated statue from Algeciras. He achieved his purpose by having a replica statue of Our Lady of Europe carved in Seville and placed in the church for the faithful in Algeciras. At the same time Dr Scandella had the mutilated statue repaired by the same craftsman.

While the restoration was carried out in Seville, Bishop Scandella mobilised the Catholic community in Gibraltar to build a new Chapel for the statue of Our Lady awaited from Algeciras. Because the Shrine was still in military hands, the new Chapel would house the statue once restored. A beautiful altar was donated by Pope Pius IX, and a white marble canopy was erected for the statue above the altar. At last, the repaired statue arrived in Gibraltar in 1864. A solemn procession was organised from the Cathedral to the new Chapel. The statue was carried shoulder-high on a bier, accompanied by a Military Band, and escorted by a Military Regiment which flanked both sides of Main Street, up Europa Road, up Engineer Road all along to the new Chapel. The strong military participation was purposely organised as an act of reparation for the desecration which took place at the Shrine in 1704.

In 1961 the military authorities manifested that they had no further need of the Shrine. The Bishop immediately accepted the property and since then the Shrine, while reduced in size, has been embellished and turned once again into a house of prayer. The statue returned to its original Shrine on the Feast of the Holy Rosary, 7 October 1967.

On the occasion of his "Ad Limina" visit to Rome in 2002, Bishop Charles Caruana took with him the ancient statue of Our Lady of Europe for the Holy Father, Blessed John Paul II, to crown. A replica of the statue was donated to the Holy Father to use as he pleased. Today that replica statue is to be found at the Casa del Clero in Via della Scrofa in Rome.

Other shrines and churches named after Our Lady of Europe are to be found in Spain at Algeciras, Medina Sidonia, Jimena, Seville, Madrid and Barcelona; in Germany at Beuron, in St. Martin's Benedictine monastery; in Italy in Trent, high up in the Dolomite mountains; in Northern Ireland, in Belfast; in Scotland, at Stirling; in London, in Fulham Road; and in Madeira, at Funchal.

A Special Joint Stamp Issue

To celebrate the 700th anniversary of Our Lady of Europe, the postal authorities of Gibraltar and the Vatican City made a special joint issue of stamps, approved by both the Queen and the Government, and by the Pope and the Bishop.

The stamps were designed by Stephen Perera, making him the first Gibraltarian to design stamps issued by another authority. As can be seen in the illustrations, the Gibraltar stamp sheetlet features St. Peter's Basilica and Square, and the background of the Vatican sheetlet is a view of the Rock of Gibraltar from the Strait.

Joint issues by the Vatican and other authorities are rare, though there was one with Poland to celebrate Pope John Paul II's eightieth birthday in 2000 and there has been one with Germany during the present pontificate.

The official stamp launch in Gibraltar took place at the shrine of Our Lady of Europe on 10 February 2009. The Gibraltar Philatelic Bureau is issuing a limited edition special folder, including both the Gibraltar and the Vatican stamps.



A Euro win for Gibraltar

By Richard Wells

In April 2002 the Gibraltar Government announced a major reform of corporate tax. In place of the tax on profits, with special regimes for “qualifying” and “exempt” companies, the main features of the new system were to be a payroll tax and a property occupation tax.

In August 2002 the UK wrote to the European Commission about the reform, and in March 2004 the Commission ruled that it must not be implemented. It would be “regionally selective”, because corporation taxes would generally be lower than in the UK, and “materially selective” because it would favour offshore companies with no local payroll or property. Such selectivity, the Commission concluded, amounted to state aid which threatened to distort competition, contrary to the EU Treaty.

Ten weeks later the Gibraltar and UK Governments brought before the European Court of Justice actions to annul the Commission’s decision. Spain later intervened in support of the Commission. The case dragged on and on, and meanwhile Gibraltar made various changes in preparation for adopting the new regime in 2010 – lowering corporate tax rates, ending the old “qualifying company” regime and then phasing out the “exempt” companies. In 2006 Gibraltar was encouraged by a European Court ruling on a tax reform in the Azores; although this went against the islands, the judgment defined “regional selectivity” in a way which seemed to permit fiscal autonomy in the different circumstances of Gibraltar.

Eventually, on 18 December 2008, the European Court of First Instance found in favour of Gibraltar and the UK. And this decision is final, as no appeal to the main European Court of Justice has been made within the two months allowed.

So the Court annulled the Commission decision and upheld Gibraltar’s right to set its own taxes. The news was warmly welcomed in Gibraltar, where Peter Caruana,

the Chief Minister, explained how much had been at stake. “Without our ability to devise and implement our own tax regime, Gibraltar’s economy, and thus our social and political model, could not have survived.” Gibraltar would have had to adopt UK company tax, he said. “That would have meant the loss of thousands of jobs throughout our economy, and a very large fall in Government revenue. This in turn would have rendered unsustainable our current level of public services and public sector employment.”

And on Monday 5 January, to celebrate its victory, Gibraltar enjoyed an extra public holiday.

The British Postal Service in Morocco, 1749-1906

By Richard Garcia

This is the first detailed study of the British postal service in Morocco from its origins in the mid 18th century to 31 December 1906, during the period when it came under the control of the Gibraltar Post Office.



The book is based to a very great degree on completely new, hitherto unpublished information gleaned from Gibraltar Post Office documents that have been preserved in the Gibraltar Government Archives. The Archives also contain a Post Office register detailing precisely which stamps and items of postal stationery were supplied to each of the Morocco Agencies between November 1895 and January 1903. Tables in the book, analysing this data, allow conclusions to be drawn on the scarcity of each denomination of stamp and postal stationery used at each of the Morocco Agencies.

The first chapter of the book covers the period to the Battle of Trafalgar, 1805. The next two chapters examine the period of Imperial control of the Morocco postal service to 1885. Chapters four and five cover the period when unoverprinted Gibraltar stamps were used at the Morocco Agencies. Chapter six examines the various buildings which housed the Trafalgar Post Office. Chapter seven deals with the period during which Gibraltar stamps overprinted "Morocco Agencies" were on sale. Chapter eight analyses the safety of the courier mails. The final two chapters examine the usage of stamps and postal stationery at each of the Morocco Agencies from 1886 to 1906, and the postmarks and cancellations used in this period. New drawings of the postmarks and cancellation stamps of the period have been commissioned specially for this book.

The volume is a companion to David Stotter's book, ***The British Post Office Service in Morocco 1907-57***, also published jointly by the Postal History Society and the British Philatelic Trust.

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The Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society

Members of the Society are hereby invited to attend an Extraordinary General Meeting, to be held at 6.00 p.m. on Tuesday 12 May 2009 at Gibraltar House, 150 Strand, London, WC2R 1JA.

Agendum: Special Resolution to amend the Memorandum of Association.

The text of the proposed Resolution is given below.

**Francis Richards, Chairman
Janet Whiteley, Honorary Secretary
March 2009**

After the General Meeting, and also at Gibraltar House, the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, the Hon. Peter Caruana, Q.C., will speak to members and guests.

The Directors propose the following Special Resolution:

That the Memorandum of Association of the Society be amended in the manner following, that is to say:

— By adding at the end of clause 1

‘The Society may also be known informally as “The Friends of Gibraltar”.’

— By deleting the statement of the Society’s objects at the beginning of clause 3 and substituting

‘3. The objects for which the company is established are:

- (a) To advance the knowledge and education of the public in the United Kingdom about Gibraltar, its history, people and structures.**
- (b) To protect, preserve, restore and maintain for the benefit and enjoyment of the public generally lands, buildings, monuments or other structures, ordnance and other artefacts in Gibraltar which are of natural interest or beauty or architectural or historic interest and as regards such lands to secure the protection of their natural aspect and surroundings and the preservation of their natural features and animal and plant life.**
- (c) To protect and conserve or promote the protection, permanent preservation and conservation of the character and heritage of Gibraltar.**
- (d) To promote education in and concerning the conservation of Gibraltar’s heritage and the encouragement of the application of aesthetic standards to its contemporary environment.’**

The present wording of the opening sentences of the Memorandum of Association is given below, followed by an explanatory note.

1. *The name of the company (hereinafter called "the company") is THE FRIENDS OF GIBRALTAR HERITAGE SOCIETY.*

2. *The registered office of the company will be situate in England and Wales.*

3. *The objects for which the company is established are:*

(a) [the same as (b) above].

(b) [the same as (c) above].

(c) To advance public education of and interest in the history of Gibraltar and its people, buildings, monuments and other structures and to promote education in and concerning the conservation of Gibraltar's heritage and the encouragement of the application of aesthetic standards to its contemporary environment.

In furtherance of the above objects but not further or otherwise, the company shall have the following powers:

The following note on this proposal is provided by the Hon. Secretary:

The Society is not only a registered charity but also a private company limited by guarantee (with no share capital). It is therefore subject to both charity law and company law. The Memorandum of Association is one of the Society's governing documents. The Companies Acts require the passage of a Special Resolution to amend it.

For the adoption of a Special Resolution, at least 75% of the votes cast by

members (in person or by proxy) must be in favour. Members unable to attend the meeting may if they wish appoint proxies; forms for this purpose may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary.

The proposed amendments have the effect of adding an informal name for the Society, shorter than the full one, and of broadening its objects to include advancing the knowledge and education of the UK public about Gibraltar generally, as well as about its history, people and structures. The Charity Commission's consent to these proposed amendments was given on 4 December 2008 and 9 February 2009.

The Chairman wrote to members on 9 October 2008 to put to them a plan to expand the Society's activities, in order to attract new members with more general interests in Gibraltar. The Society's traditional activities, and charitable expenditures, relating to heritage, would continue as before; but additional events, devoted to any issue likely to be of interest to friends of Gibraltar, would also be arranged. He wrote too about the risk that the use of the Society's full name might put off potential new members who were primarily interested in non-heritage activities.

Only a handful of members responded to the Chairman's letter, and all but one or two supported the proposals. The others were concerned that the Society's traditional character might be lost with the change; he reassured them that there was no intention of letting that happen. The Government of Gibraltar, whose London office is now giving the Society considerable material assistance, has also welcomed the proposals.

