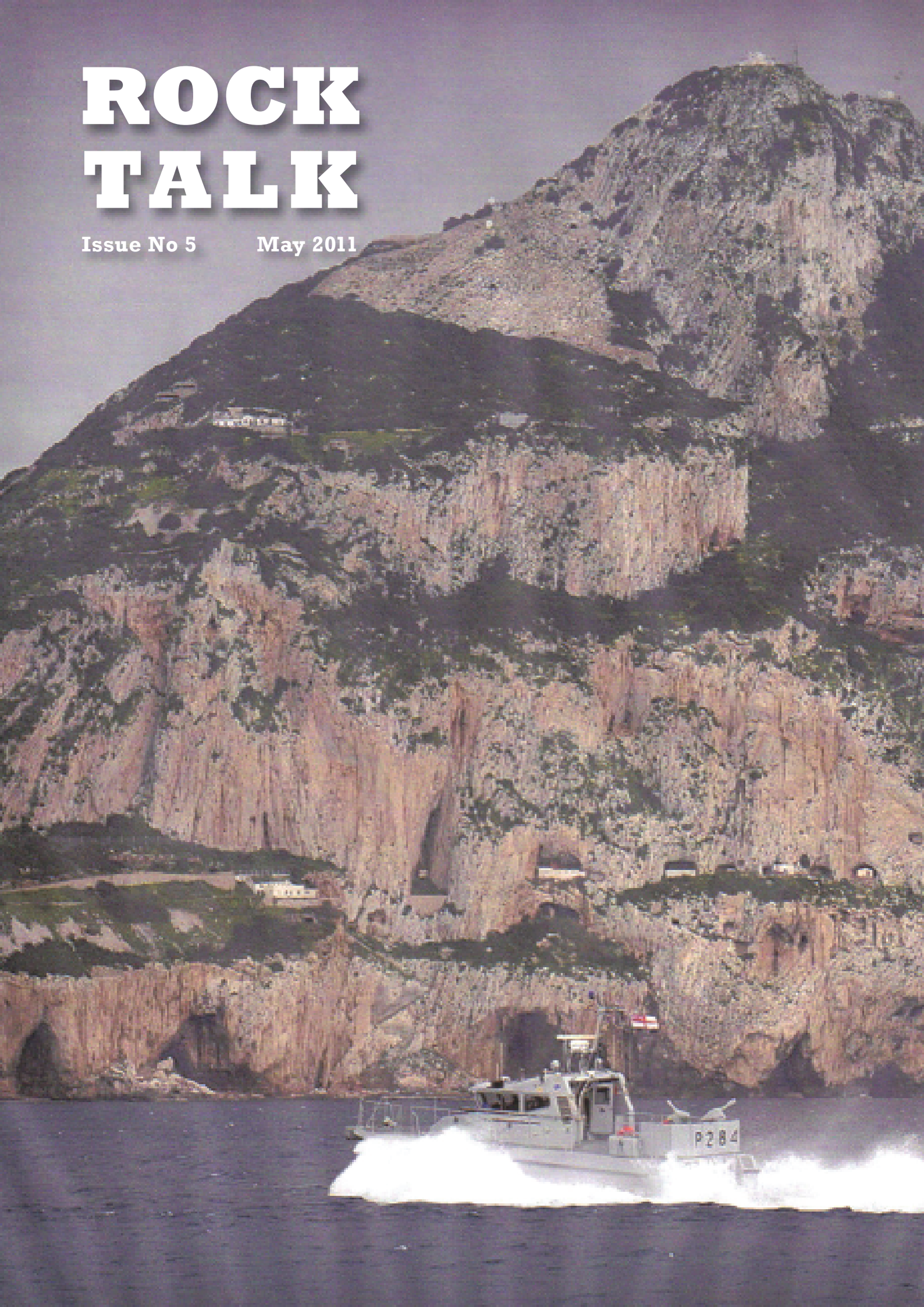


ROCK TALK

Issue No 5

May 2011



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Editorials

We must apologise to you for the long delay between the publication of Issue No. 4 of *Rock Talk* and the present Issue No. 5.

Our much missed Editor Hilary Wines died on 12 August 2010 after a grievous illness. I have tried to write an adequate obituary notice, which you will find on page 4.

It has been far from easy to find worthy successors to Hilary. But thanks to Vincent Mifsud, our webmaster and executive committee member, the search is now over. Brian Gonzalez introduces himself and his wife Elizabeth below. We are very happy to have them with us. — **Richard Wells**

How could we turn our Best Man (of 34 years) down when he asked? Especially when we both had just 'retired' from teaching? Vincent Mifsud can be a very persuasive chap! So, here we are editing for the first time in our lives. It has been an enjoyable task and we have other plans for future editions.

Liz and I met at Aberdeen University in the early 1970s — I went to study Geography and Liz, very much a linguist, was studying German. She changed this to Geography and this is how we came to Gibraltar to teach in the secondary sector

— the same subject, and in the same department for 32 years. She became the Head of the Sixth Form in Bayside School for boys in 1981 and was responsible for writing university confidential reports for many young men who rose to prominent posts in business and politics in Gibraltar. She threatens to publish these — they would make interesting reading. The Official Secrets Act will not allow this — a pity! Her interests are now focussed on the canine world — as a breeder of miniature dachshunds, exhibitor and FCI (*Fédération Cynologique Internationale*) international judge. She has judged in the USA, Luxembourg, Ireland, Scotland, Hungary, Finland, Gibraltar and even Spain. During the rest of this year we are off to Belgium, Sweden, Russia, South Africa and Australia. This is our 'other' commitment! As for myself, I was Head of Geography in both Bayside and Westside Comprehensives. Oh, I am also the driver and baggage carrier on our canine trips!

Please sit back and enjoy this edition, and if you need to get in contact with us please do not hesitate. If you want to contribute to future editions email us on gonbeor@gibtelecom.net

— **Brian Gonzalez**

Chairman's Letter

Dear Friends of Gibraltar,

I am so sorry that, for the reasons explained in Richard Wells's editorial on the opposite page, you have had to wait so long for this fifth issue of *Rock Talk*. Our late editor and membership secretary Hilary Wines was devoted to Gibraltar, and is greatly missed in our Society. You will find an obituary on another page.

Now we are most grateful to Brian and Elizabeth Gonzalez for volunteering to edit the present issue. Our Society celebrates the link between Gibraltar and Britain, and so it is fitting that Brian is a Gibraltarian and Elizabeth a Scot. Their home is on the Rock, and I hope you will like the local touches which they have been able to give to *Rock Talk*.

Since I last wrote to you record numbers of members have attended the Annual Seminar and Dinner at Winchester in October and the Annual General Meeting of Members in London in February. For this sign of the health of the Society thanks are due to you, to our speakers at Winchester, and to the organisers on our committee. The strong participation may also be due to our increasing use of e-mail, enabling our organisers to deal quickly with members' questions and comments. Those of you who missed the meeting in February will find a link to the minutes of it on the Society's website at: <http://friendsofgibraltar.org.uk/page.php?id=3>. There too is the very full report on the Society's affairs which Simon Pack, our Vice-Chairman, presented to the meeting.

In this issue of *Rock Talk* we report that Albert Poggio has retired, after twenty-four years, as Director of Gibraltar House and Gibraltar Government representative in the UK. He is succeeded by Peter Canessa, whom I knew as Director of Tourism in Gibraltar and with whom we shall very much look forward to working. Albert has been and remains a stalwart supporter of our Society, giving us a lot of help — the Friends' best friend, I have heard him called. I am very glad that he will continue to be a member of our committee.



This summer the Society will pass a major milestone in our history — our twenty-fifth anniversary. The Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society was inaugurated on 22 July 1986 by four founding fathers. Three of them are now sadly deceased. The fourth was Tito Benady, who has just retired from our committee after twenty-five years of distinguished service on it, and on reaching a distinguished age. We have owed a great deal to his wise advice and good company, and we look forward to continuing to benefit for many years to come from his deep knowledge of Gibraltar and its heritage.

We plan to celebrate the Society's Silver Jubilee in a special way. I am very happy to be able to tell you that our Royal Patron, H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester, has honoured us by agreeing to be present at a Society function early in 2012. I know that you will want to join in making this a memorable occasion, and another record gathering of Friends of Gibraltar. And next year will of course also see the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen. I should like the Friends to mark this event in some way on the ground in Gibraltar, and should much welcome your suggestions for how we should do so.

Meanwhile I send all Friends my best wishes, and my thanks for your support for the Society and for Gibraltar.

Francis Richards



Hilary Wines 1944 - 2010

Hilary Wines was a Londoner, born in Purley and living the second half of her life in the district in Southwark which Londoners call the Borough. But as a

child, when her father was posted to Gibraltar by the civil service, she spent several years on the Rock. She adored it.

Hilary was a woman of many parts. She was both an air hostess and a nun — though not at the same time. She was a passionate political campaigner, but she also enjoyed occupations which demanded her keen eye for detail.

She was only a few years flying from Gatwick with Caledonian Airways, and then not many more cloistered in her convent. But though she left her religious order, she remained a deeply devout Roman Catholic to the end of her life. She took a degree in theology at London University, and when she moved to Southwark she was always a stalwart of St. George's Cathedral, where she became an assiduous Reader.

She had several special political interests. From an early age, she bitterly opposed capital punishment. She had a strong sympathy for the poor and the vulnerable of London. She played a prominent part in the successful campaign to save Guy's Hospital. She felt a deep attachment to Gibraltar, and was a dedicated champion of Gibraltarian self-determination.

Hilary enjoyed good company and good food, including also cake and chocolate. She liked sunshine. Her fondness for owls sometimes puzzled her friends, but it absorbed her. She was clear in her opinions, often direct, and not infrequently funny. But she also liked quieter occupations. She scored for Southwark cricket teams; she enjoyed crosswords; and she turned an honest penny as a proof reader. She was especially gifted as a needlewoman, and in her Cathedral took conscientious charge of the care of the vestments.

She joined the Social Democratic Party on its foundation, and in 1986 she was elected to Southwark Council. Her Thames-side ward, Cathedral, soon became a Liberal Democrat stronghold. Hilary served as a councillor for

sixteen years, becoming leader of the Liberal Democrat group, and in 2001 Mayor of Southwark. After her mayoral year she did not stand in the 2002 election, which made her party for the first time the largest on the Council; and so she missed the excitement of government. But she is warmly remembered locally as a councillor active in many local organisations but particularly good and helpful to the ill and the elderly.

She lived modestly, dividing her time between two small flats. One was in a Peabody Trust block in the Marshalsea Road in Southwark, where hers was the only balcony which sported a flower box. The other was in King's Yard Lane in Gibraltar.

As a former Mayor she began to give illustrated talks about the Rock in local schools. She naturally became an active member of The Friends, and in February 2009 was elected to the board of the Society. She was immediately co-opted onto the executive committee, and at once volunteered as both membership secretary and editor of *Rock Talk*. At this time she even began to think of moving to live permanently in Gibraltar.

But less than a year passed before the onset of her final illness, which proved to be a lung cancer. She died on 12 August 2010.

A large congregation attended Hilary's Funeral Mass at St. George's Cathedral on 4 September, where the Society was represented by three members of the executive committee. On 26 February 2011 part of her ashes were scattered in a ceremony at Western Beach in Gibraltar.

— **Richard Wells**

Michael Wood

It is with sadness that we report the passing of Michael Wood. Michael was one of the first members of the board of the Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society. He was present at the first meeting of the steering committee in April 1986 at the National Army Museum. He was membership secretary for many years and managed to swell our numbers considerably. He organised the Society's first trip to Gibraltar, which has now become an annual event. He instigated the very first Seminar, which was held at Minley Manor in April 1991, and followed this with various very successful Seminars in Warwick. He resigned from the Board in July 1997 due to the problems of travelling to and from London. Our thoughts are with his family.

— **Maggie Galliano**

— Diary of Society Events for 2011 —

Wednesday 23 February 2011

The Annual General Meeting of Members and Buffet Reception

Thursday 14 April 2011

Meeting with Lieutenant Colonel Colin Risso, MC, Commanding Officer of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment

Tuesday 24 May 2011

Meeting with the Hon. Lindsay Hoyle, MP, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons

Sunday 5 to Sunday 12 June 2011

The Friends' Annual Visit to Gibraltar

Bookings for both flights and accommodation at the Rock Hotel should be made with Steve Bowley at Cadogan Holidays at Gatwick, tel. 084 4560 0500. Ask him for his very best "Essential Gibraltar" price for the Friends of Gibraltar group. Cadogan tell us that specially discounted prices will be offered to our party.

There will be a full programme of local visits and tours. When you have booked, please contact our Hon. Secretary Janet Whiteley at: janet.stockbridge@btinternet.com or by post at 150 Strand, London, WC2R 1JA so that you can hear how the draft programme stands and give her any proposals of your own for it.

Friday 16 September 2011

Visit to Portsmouth, including The Friends' Annual Luncheon

Our party will visit H.M.S. *Victory* and the Royal Naval Museum, and tour Portsmouth Harbour by boat. The visit will end with cream tea.

Family and friends will be welcome, but numbers will be limited by the space on *Victory* and by the capacity of the Old Customs House restaurant. Send no money yet, but advance bookings can be made at: rhswells@yahoo.co.uk, or by post to Richard Wells at 7 Tollgate Drive, London, SE21 7LS. Details will be given later to members who have made advance bookings.

Saturday 15 October 2011

Annual Seminar and Dinner, at Winchester

We shall be at the Winchester Royal Hotel, as before. Booking and other details will follow later.

Thank you!

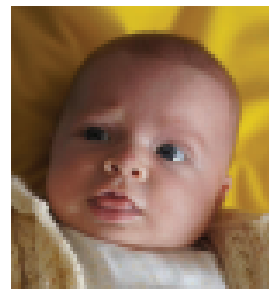
The Society acknowledges with gratitude generous donations which it has received from two members, Mr Peter Hale and Mr Allan Page.

Greetings!

... to our sister Society the Friends of St. Helena, whose advertisement appears on page 9.

Congratulations!

... to Claire Montado, Chief Executive of the Gibraltar Heritage Trust, and her husband Richard, on the birth of their daughter Lauren Marie at St. Bernard's Hospital on 25 February 2011. Claire (*née* Valarino) is a good friend of our Society. *Rock Talk* readers know her as a frequent contributor, and members joining our annual visits to the Rock know her as organiser of our programme in Gibraltar.



Richard is the son of Ernest Montado, who was for many years Chief Secretary to the Government. Richard and Claire's wedding, in June 2009, coincided with that year's Friends' visit to Gibraltar.

E-mail addresses please

Society news now goes out to most members by e-mail. This reaches you quicker; for us it is cheaper and labour-saving. But there are still about 100 members for whom we have no e-mail addresses. A few of you, we know, have none. But if you have one we do not know (so that you have had no e-mails from us) do please allow us to add your e-address to our records. Just e-mail us at: rhswells@yahoo.co.uk so we learn it.

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Chairman: Sir Francis Richards KCMG CVO

Hon. Secretary: Janet Whiteley

Membership Secretary: Richard Lord CBE

Webmasters: John Borda and Vincent Mifsud

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Hon. Treasurer: Timothy Lawson-Cruttenden

Executive Committee Secretary: Richard Wells CBE

Rock Talk Editors: Brian and Elizabeth Gonzalez

The front cover photograph, of HMS *Scimitar* of the Gibraltar Squadron passing Gorham's Cave, is reproduced by permission.

The back cover photograph, of the Mediterranean Steps, is by the Gibraltar Tourist Board.

Reports of Events

Reports of Society Events

by Richard Wells

Shortage of space, following the interruption to publication since the last issue of *Rock Talk*, unfortunately allows us to record only very briefly, below, three excellent events in 2010. We have fuller reports of the first two events in 2011, the Annual General Meeting of Members and Buffet Reception on 23 February (on page 9) and the meeting with Lieutenant Colonel Risso on 14 April (opposite).

Visit to Gibraltar, 6-13 June 2010

This annual visit was once again a great success. We were most grateful for the generous hospitality of His Excellency the Governor, of Commander British Forces, of Society Vice-President Joseph Gaggero, and of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment Association. Many thanks are due also to the hard work of our organisers Janet Whiteley at the UK end, and in Gibraltar George Russo and Claire Montado of the Gibraltar Heritage Trust.

Denis King gave us a historical tour of John Mackintosh Square, including especially the City Hall, where the Mayor, Mrs. Olga Zammitt, was good enough to receive us. Another day we climbed through the Second World War tunnel from Hay's Level up to Princess Caroline's Battery: a tunnel so well concealed that our taxi driver could not find the entrance to it. (It's at the first hairpin bend above the Moorish Castle.)

The splendid finale was a boat trip from Marina Bay round to Gorham's Cave, the world's last known resort, perhaps not much more than 20,000 years ago, of *Homo neanderthalensis*. We were most fortunate to be guided by Professor Clive Finlayson, director of the Gibraltar Museum, who has conducted excavations in the cave since 1995 and has become a substantial expert on the Neanderthal people. It should be better known that Gibraltar was the site of the first ever adult Neanderthal skull find, in 1848. More familiar now, perhaps, is the recent DNA evidence that *Homo sapiens* and *neanderthalensis* seem to have interbred (though not in Gibraltar).

Visit to Apsley House and Annual Luncheon, 22 June 2010

Thanks to the arrangement of committee member Andrew Lavarello, our party was privileged to be

conducted on a private tour of Apsley House, the London home of the Duke of Wellington, by the Curator, Susan Jenkins. Her deep knowledge of the treasures of the house — culminating in Goya's equestrian portrait of Wellington himself — made an unforgettable impression.

Afterwards, and thanks to the recommendation of another committee member, our former Hon. Secretary Maggie Galliano, we enjoyed a long and ample lunch, at which Dr Jenkins joined us, at El Pirata Restaurant nearby. Our picture shows Dr Jenkins and Mr Joseph Gaggero, a Vice-President of the Society.



Annual Seminar and Dinner, 16 October 2010

The Seminar and Dinner, held for the second time at the Royal Hotel at Winchester, was attended by a record number of members and guests. Talks were given by Guy Stagnetto, Q.C., on Aspects of the Treaty of Utrecht; by Tito Vallejo on the Caves and Tunnels, and in particular Lower St. Michael's Cave; by Jennifer Scherr on the wartime Defence Security Office in Gibraltar; and by Mario Mosquera, Chairman of the Gibraltar Heritage Trust, on the recent work of the Trust.

Jennifer Scherr, a member of the Society, has most kindly contributed on page 8 a short summary of her talk. The speakers and many members stayed overnight after the seminar and enjoyed a convivial dinner.

Meeting with Lieutenant Colonel Colin Risso, M.C.

by Timothy Lawson-Cruttenden, T.D.



*Field Marshal Sir John Chapple and Lieutenant Colonel Colin Risso
with (far left) the Honorary Secretary and (far right) the Membership Secretary*

On 14 April 2011 Lieutenant Colonel Colin Risso, M.C., Commanding Officer of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, addressed The Friends and delivered an extremely interesting history of the Regiment from its origins to date. If a measure of a good talk is the number of questions subsequently raised, then this talk was most successful as time precluded the continuation of floor questioning. Colonel Risso was accompanied by his RSM, both being present in the UK having taking part in the Regiment's annual training exercises in Brecon.

We heard about the Regimental training teams sent to the Gambia and Nigeria, as well as about the members of the Regiment who have served actively in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Regiment's current role in Gibraltar appears to be both varied and challenging.

Two hundred years ago Major General William Beresford was busy training the Portuguese army to fight Napoleon. It was therefore pleasing to learn that the Regiment continues this tradition of training (albeit at the southern and British tip of the Iberian Peninsula), in this case to assist African Union forces in peace-keeping operations in Darfur.

Surprisingly Colonel Risso did not seem to know much about the decommissioning of O'Hara's Battery. This gave me an opportunity of talking about my teenage military experiences on the Rock and to reminisce about the number of broken windows caused by the live firing-off of all the old ammunition, I think in about 1968 or 1969.

Present at the talk were, among others, Field Marshal Sir John Chapple, former Commander-in-Chief; Ernest Reading, former member of the Regiment; and Samantha Peliza, granddaughter of Major (now Sir) Robert Peliza, who served with distinction in the Gibraltar Defence Force, the Regiment's forerunner, during the Second World War and for many years after.

This evening gave The Friends an opportunity not only to learn about the Regiment and its important role in Gibraltar society, but also to contribute to the military history of the Rock by sharing memories of Fortress Gibraltar perhaps forgotten now that Garrison Gibraltar is perhaps a shadow of its former self.

The Friends will continue to support the exciting work of this important Regiment and particularly the way in which it represents and embodies the highest traditions of the British military and acts as an exemplary ambassador for Gibraltar.

My Father's War Work in Gibraltar

by Jennifer Scherr

On 16 October 2010, at the Friends of Gibraltar weekend in Winchester, I gave a short illustrated talk about my father's work in Gibraltar during WW2. This was based on family papers and photographs, along with his official history of the Security Intelligence Department of the Defence Security Office during the War, which is held in the National Archives at Kew (TNA KV4/259-260). The history itself is written in a unique style and illustrated with personal as well as official photographs. It has already been used as the basis of a chapter in *Spooks: the unofficial history of MI5* (by T. Hennessey and C. Thomas, 2009).

David Scherr, a Spanish-speaking schoolmaster, joined up in 1940 and was immediately sent to Gibraltar. He was at first in the 54th Field Security Section of the Intelligence Corps, and later promoted, with the rank of Captain, to work for the War Office Room 055 (present-day MI5) in the Defence Security Office, specifically in the areas of counter-espionage and counter-sabotage.

He and colleagues roamed the Rock (and the Campo), watching for smuggled bombs and listening out for "loose talk" in Spanish or English, well aware of German eyes watching from Algeciras, and of the thousands of workers coming in and out across the Frontier each day, any one of whom could be a potential spy or saboteur. David (by then Major) was eventually awarded



Mollie Spencer and David Scherr 1945

the MBE for his success in leading the team of agents and double agents. 61 separate acts of sabotage were instigated by the Abwehr during 1940 to 1944. 55 were complete failures; and of these failures, 46 were directly brought about by the organisation under the DSO's control.

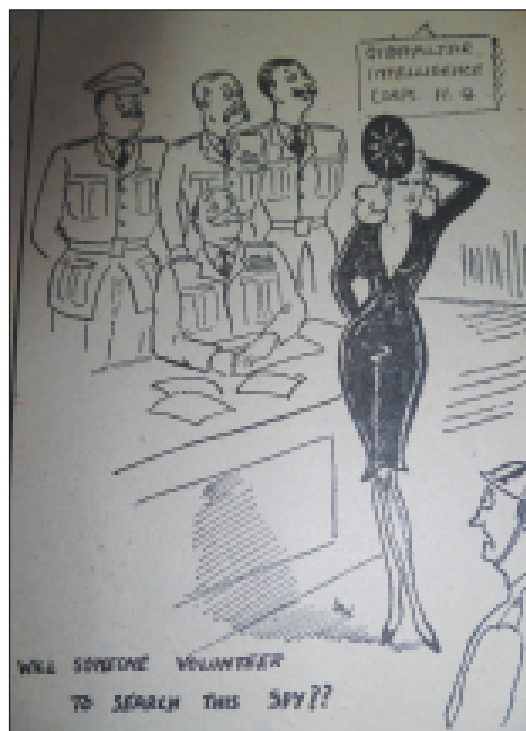
During his "spare" time, David's activities

partly mirrored his work interests: he was involved in the formation of a Rover Scout crew, and he wrote regular columns (*Nosey Parker roaming about Town*) for the magazine *The Rock*, in which this cartoon also appeared. *The Rock* was edited by Reginald Cudlipp (later Editor of the *News of the World*).

David met his future wife, Mollie Spencer, when she was sent, in January 1944 (as one of only three ATS at the time) to be his secretary. She had been

brought up in Jerez de la Frontera, and knew Gibraltar very well. On her way to join the army, she had worked for a while for the Navy in the Contraband Control Office on the Rock. Their boss, the Defence Security Officer, Colonel Philip Kirby-Green, gave Mollie away at their wedding in the Cathedral in August 1945.

David and family returned to the Rock during 1950 to 1955. He was Defence Security Officer during this time, and had charge of the arrangements for the visit of Queen Elizabeth II (and Prince Philip and the two royal children) in 1954. For this he was awarded the MVO.



Reports of Events

The Annual General Meeting of Members

by Maggie Galliano

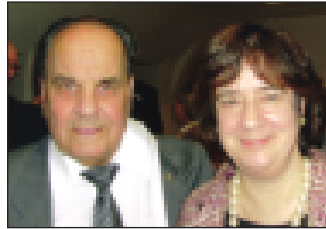
The Annual General Meeting of Members was held on 23 February 2011 at Gibraltar House. About seventy members and friends attended. It was standing room only!

Due to the resignation of Tito Benady and Hilary Wines's untimely death, the Society is now looking for more members to join the Board. It was pointed out that anyone could be nominated for consideration by the Board. Tribute was paid to both Tito and Hilary for all their hard work.

Mr Joe Gaggero, recently elected Vice President, spoke briefly and was clearly delighted.

Members were given a résumé of the Society's activities during the past year, which included the annual visit to Gibraltar and the Seminar in Winchester.

The Society's finances are looking particularly healthy at the moment and it has therefore been agreed to contribute towards the refurbishment of



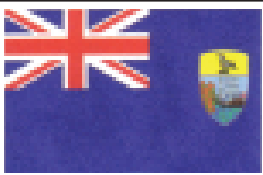
Ernie Reading and
Maggie Galliano

the Main Guard, which is the headquarters of the Gibraltar Heritage Trust, to a tune of £10,000. The Society hopes also to make a contribution towards the restoration and repair of three regimental Colours hanging in King's Chapel, once quotes have been received.

It was suggested that our Patron, the Duke of Gloucester, might be able to attend our Annual Meeting next year, which might be held at the Imperial War Museum, where there would be plenty of room for everyone to attend. [*Please see the Chairman's Letter on page 3. The venue has not yet been settled. — Ed.*]

After the meeting, members were able to socialise and meet old friends while enjoying a drink (or two!) and some delicious food.

We would like to thank both Ernie Reading and Albert Poggio and his staff for all their hard work in making it a memorable evening.



FRIENDS OF ST HELENA



Friends of St Helena is a charity formed in 1988. It provides information about the island's history, culture, environment and current affairs and offers practical support to the island.

- We host meetings twice a year, usually in London. The meetings offer the chance to meet members knowledgeable about the island, buy old and new books and to attend talks. Recent subjects have included Napoleon's captivity, the excavation of the liberated African slave graveyards in Rupert's Valley and the migration of St. Helenians from the island during the course of the twentieth century.
- Our most recent meeting was at Kenwood House, Hampstead Lane, London NW3 7JR on the 21st May 2011 at 12 Noon. This is a residence of our President Lord Iveagh. The meeting included talks on the ending of slavery and the archaeological excavations at the c19 quarantine station at Lemon Valley.
- We publish *The St Helena Connection* in May and November which is a full-colour news magazine covering a mix of current affairs, historical, environmental, social and cultural matters relating to the island.
- We also publish *Wirebird* each year, usually containing longer articles with an historical theme.
- Our web site www.fosh.org.uk carries full information about the society. The site has recently been updated to include a wide range of information of interest to members.

Annual subscriptions are £20 for members living in the UK, £10 at St. Helena and £25 elsewhere. The subscription period runs from the beginning of June to the end of May the following year. For further details please go to our website or contact the Membership Secretary Ian Bruce, The Old Exchange, Lower Green, Walgrave, Northants NN6 9QF, UK, email subscriptions@fosh.org.uk.

St. Andrew's Church of Scotland, Gibraltar_____



The Kirk of St. Andrew's in Gibraltar celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2004. The foundation stone was laid in October 1853 and the church was opened for worship in May 1854. It is located in what could well be considered the old military heart of the historical Garrison town of Gibraltar. Surrounded by the Garrison Library, the Officers' Quarters of Town Range, what is now the Department of Social Security and a short walking distance from the Convent and King's Chapel and the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Governor's Parade to the immediate north would have witnessed many ceremonial activities — today, it is a tree-lined square used for parking. In the mid 1800s there was a large military presence on the Rock, which included a substantial number of Scottish regiments, and the church was built by the efforts of Presbyterians who wished their own place of worship.

St. Andrew's is part of the Presbytery of Europe, which is composed of thirteen congregations in cities across mainland Europe. The past twenty-five years have seen many changes. The British military population decreased considerably. The border with Spain closed then reopened. Building and development have attracted many to come and make Gibraltar their main or holiday home. Today the small but dedicated congregation is composed mainly of expatriates, some of whom have come to

Gibraltar with the British military, some on work assignments within the fast developing financial services industry. Some have come to settle in Gibraltar or to retire. The age range covers a full spectrum. Some members come from a variety of denominational backgrounds and some live in Spain.

A sister congregation on the Costa del Sol, at Fuengirola, was until recently linked with the Gibraltar one and ministers commuted between the two. The link was dissolved a few years ago and the Kirk Session, encouraged by the congregation, formulated plans to develop its own ministry in line with the affordable resources. Following these changes, St. Andrew's Gibraltar now enjoys a semi-autonomous relation to the central church administration in Edinburgh through the Europe Committee.

In charge of St. Andrew's is the Rev. Ewen Maclean. Being originally from the far-flung Western Isles of Scotland he moved to Glasgow to study for a BA in Social Sciences, followed by a BD at Glasgow University. The Rev. Ewen Maclean also holds a PG Diploma in Biblical Preaching and hopes to get his MTh in the near future. Having moved to Gibraltar with his wife Audrey and two sons in June 2009, they now feel very settled in Gibraltar. Audrey works as an Occupational Health Nurse with the MoD and the boys attend a local Middle School.

– Liz Gonzalez

The Cathedral of the Holy Trinity



by Brian Gonzalez, Cathedral Church Warden

Following the Society's donation in 2008 to the Cathedral's Rock of Ages appeal, Rock Talk readers may like to have news of the renovation work to which it has contributed.

The Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, the Mother Church of the Anglican Diocese in Europe, held a Special Thanksgiving Service Evensong on Sunday 27 February 2011. The Special Service consisted of prayers, readings and hymns by the Choir and special invited guest soloist Mr Phillip Borge, who sang in the Gibraltar Day celebrations in London in 2010.

The Right Reverend Dr Geoffrey Rowell, Bishop of the Diocese in Europe, and the Reverend Dr John Paddock, Dean of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, led the congregation and distinguished guests in a Service to give thanks for the completion of the first phase of the renovation of the Cathedral's roof and decoration of the exterior walls. The Cathedral of the Holy Trinity was awarded the prestigious Gibraltar Heritage Award in 2010.

The Cathedral's renovation is part of the Rock of Ages Campaign, which was officially launched in November 2006. The Campaign was

set up in order to replace the roof, maintain and renovate the exterior and interior of the building, build an enhanced entrance onto the Cathedral Square and improve access for churchgoers, visitors and tourists. The goal of £850,000 has been partially reached — thanks to generous donations by many individuals, both in Gibraltar and in the UK, businesses and the Government of Gibraltar.

A total of £350,000 has been raised, including £2500 from The Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society. This has been used for the first phase. The Rock of Ages Campaign is still ongoing and donations are still very welcome — further information and updates can be accessed on the Cathedral's official website: www.gibconnect.com/~holytrinity

Work has been approved and will start shortly on the north entrance to the Cathedral, thanks to a generous contribution from a number of lawyers.

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Defence Minister visits Gibraltar

On 3 February 2011 the UK Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Mr Nick Harvey, visited Gibraltar. Members of The Friends, particularly those with a background in the Services, may be interested to read the following statement issued jointly by Mr Harvey and Mr Caruana, the Chief Minister:

Last year's Strategic Defence and Security Review confirmed the commitment of Her Majesty's Government to the defence of Gibraltar and to the continued maintenance of a permanent joint operating base by the MoD in Gibraltar including amongst other things, the airfield, from which a range of operational deployments could be made in future. This is welcome news for Gibraltar.

As part of the Review, a number of studies were conducted in Gibraltar by the Ministry of Defence to determine the facilities, forces and readiness levels required by it to support this and other Ministry of Defence objectives. The Ministry of Defence is now able to announce the outcome of those studies.

The Royal Gibraltar Regiment remains at its current size and strength, and will assume additional roles and functions. There will be a reduction in the number of UK based uniformed and civilian personnel deployed to Gibraltar in future.

The Royal Navy will continue to provide maritime presence in Gibraltar to protect British sovereignty and control of British Gibraltar Territorial Waters.

The MoD will also further reduce its land and estate holdings. We envisage and intend that a further Lands Agreement will be entered into to enable the transfer of further elements of the MoD's estate to the Government. By concentrating its operation in the Naval Base and at Devil's Tower, the Airfield and Four Corners, the MoD will be able to give up its occupancy of Europa, Buena Vista and Rooke and other sites. The Buffadero Training Area, Windmill Hill and the Ammunition Depot will remain part of the MoD held estate.

The 2007 Global Agreement remains in place and the MoD's continuing commitment to Gibraltar reflects and includes the existing programme of service transfers agreed with the Government under the 2007 Global Agreement. This will allow the MoD to reduce its estate footprint and non core military activities in Gibraltar. We envisage that electricity generation will transfer to the Government later this year. The transfer of the defence fire and rescue services continues under negotiation and the Service school at Europa, St. Christopher's, is to close in 2012 with first and

middle school age children of MoD personnel living in Gibraltar attending local schools thereafter as has been the case with secondary school children for many years. The MoD's water distribution network is also expected to transfer to the GoG. The Kings Lines Oil Fuel Depot will be decommissioned and then transferred to the Government. The envisaged transfer of the Gibraltar Defence Police to the Royal Gibraltar Police will not proceed at this time.

The detail of these changes needs to be worked through between the MoD and the GoG. We will work closely with the Trades Unions. Our further mutual commitments and responsibilities to each other will be set out in appropriate and explicit agreements.

This has been a productive and helpful meeting which we have both welcomed. Our discussions have been aimed at mutual goals, namely, the effective defence of Gibraltar and the continuation of the mutually valuable MoD presence in Gibraltar, while seeking to protect as much as possible the interests of MoD employees.

We look forward to further meetings and to taking forward the principles we have agreed today into a productive agreement and implementation phase.



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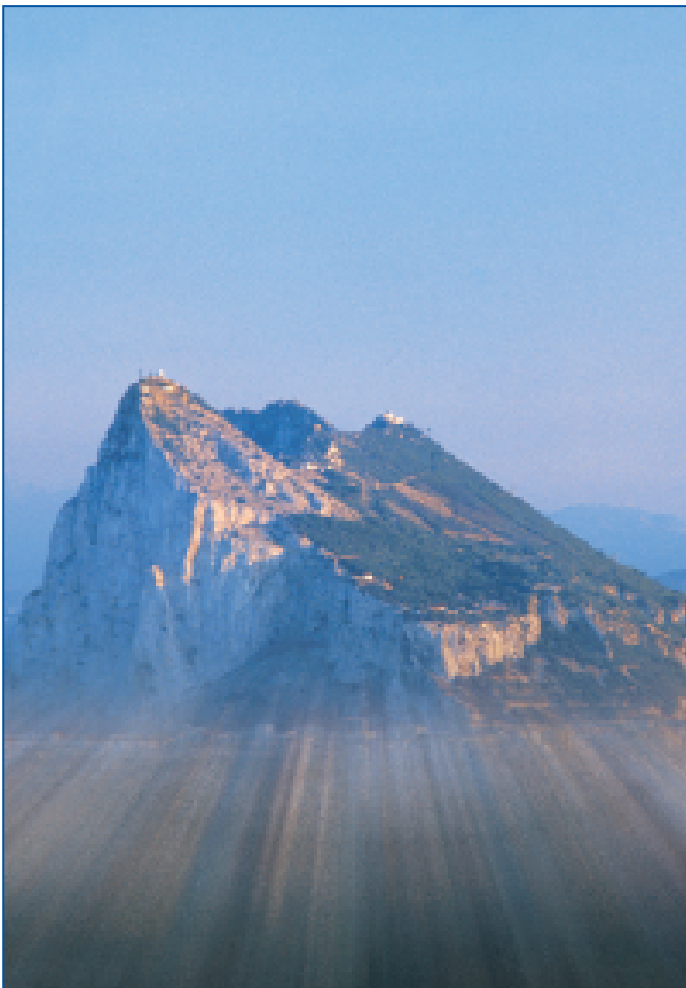
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LAWYERS



After twenty-four years in the post Albert Poggio retired as Gibraltar Government Representative in the UK on 1 April 2011. His successor is Peter Canessa.



Albert has been appointed a part-time Consultant to the Government, and will continue to work at Gibraltar House. He also remains an active member of the board and executive committee of The Friends. He has always

been generous to the Society with his time, and now hopes to be able to give us more of it.

Albert is very well known to members of The Friends but not everyone has appreciated that he and his staff have not been civil servants, but under contract to the Government.

The news was announced in Gibraltar on 29 March 2011:

"As part of its ongoing programme of reform and modernisation of the public service, the Government to-day announces changes in the running of Gibraltar House in London that come into effect on 1 April 2011. The staff of Gibraltar House, comprising seven persons, will become employees of a Gibraltar Government owned company. Until now they have been employees of a privately owned company.

"By mutual agreement Albert Poggio stands down as Director of Gibraltar House and thus as the Gibraltar Government's UK Representative. He is replaced by Civil Servant Peter Canessa, who is joined in London by another Civil Service Officer. Total staff will therefore consist of nine persons.

"Albert Poggio has been appointed, on Consultancy terms, to continue with his political lobbying role for the Gibraltar Government. In this political consultancy capacity he will continue to play a leading role in relations with Parliament, UK MPs, local authorities and political parties."

Peter Caruana, Chief Minister, paid tribute:

"As the Gibraltar House operation has got bigger and more significant, it has become necessary and desirable to bring it more under Government Civil Service administration and control. ... Albert has done a tremendous job over many decades, culminating in the successful implementation of the project to establish a new Gibraltar House at 150 Strand of which we can all be justifiably proud. Some of his most important work has been on the political lobby front, and I am therefore delighted that he will continue in this role."

Albert Poggio told Rock Talk:

"I feel very honoured to have served Gibraltar and my fellow Gibraltarians for 24 years. I am extremely grateful to the Chief Minister for offering me the opportunity to continue to serve in my capacity as Political representative. I also wish to thank him for his total support which has allowed me to achieve so much on behalf of Gibraltar. My thanks also go to Joe Bossano who first appointed me. I look forward to perhaps having more time to dedicate to the continued success of the Friends."



Peter Canessa, after a career in local broadcasting, joined the public service as marketing and public relations manager of the Gibraltar Tourist Board in 1997. He became chief executive officer of the Board in 2000.

In 2006 he was appointed principal private secretary to Joe Holliday, the Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Enterprise, Development, Technology and Transport. He has been in London, as director of Gibraltar House and the Government of Gibraltar's representative in the UK, since 1 April 2011.

– Richard Wells

Gibraltar's Big Bang:

The Story of the *Bedenham* Explosion *by Paul Baker*

[As he explains in his last paragraph the author, then aged 18, was a close witness of the explosion. More recently he has for many years been a member of The Friends' main committee. — Ed.]

27 April 1951 will go down in the history of Gibraltar as "The Day of the Explosion". Sixty years ago on 24 April the Royal Armaments Vessel (RAV)* *Bedenham* arrived in Gibraltar. She was berthed, as usual, at the Gun Wharf. The 1488*-ton ship was carrying some 500 tons of ammunition including depth charges and torpedoes for the Naval Magazine in the dockyard.

On the morning of 27 April she began to discharge her cargo into lighters which were moored alongside. Around 10 o'clock in the morning, smoke was seen to be issuing from the lighter. The alarm was raised and the officers gave orders for everyone to leave the ship. The Dockyard Fire Service was there within minutes. Efforts were made to stop the fire spreading to the *Bedenham* but were futile and a tremendous explosion followed blowing the Captain and the Naval Armaments Supply Officer into the sea, luckily both survived. Fire and smoke rose high in the air, wreckage was everywhere. The pressure wave swept across the water in every direction, causing damage wherever it went. The ship was rent asunder. A mushroom of smoke rose into the still air. An eerie silence followed.

In town confusion reigned, no one knew what had happened. Glass was everywhere. Windows from shops and houses, stained glass windows in the churches all lay scattered on the ground. Soon the bells of ambulances could be heard all over the town as the emergency services swung into action, attending to the injured. Most of the wounds were from flying glass. Parts of the ship were seen to arc over the town. One landed in the Garrison Library and another near the Catholic Cathedral in Main Street. Parts were also found on the Upper Rock, including part of the mast; and some debris was

reported to have landed near Catalan Bay on the other side of the Rock, although this may be folklore.

The civil authorities swung into action herding everyone from the south end of town, as there was a fear of further explosions. Fortunately the *Bedenham* sank, which prevented any further disaster.

The bravery of the Dockyard Fire Service, which continued to fight the fire knowing full well the risk they ran, cannot be overstated. The Chief Fire Officer, Alfred Indoe, who was directing the operation from the wharf, and George Henderson, the Sub-Officer, who was on board, were both killed.

Some houses and public buildings received structural damage. Among the worst affected was the Government House, where the roof of the dining room collapsed and the ballroom was in a mess. The wall between the Convent and King's Chapel collapsed. The Grand Stores at the southern end of Main Street were destroyed and extensive damage was inflicted on the Imperial Court (ex-NAAFI) on Ragged Staff Wharf, the roof of the Protestant Cathedral was lifted, the Colonial Secretariat, Bristol Hotel and many other buildings in town were also damaged. The incident also significantly delayed the work on the Humphries Buildings, which were under construction in the Alameda, to cater for the evacuees returning from Northern Ireland following the end of the war. The inhabitants were requested to put out all the rubble and other articles damaged in the blast and this was collected by the local refuse collectors with the assistance of the military.

In the Dockyard, the buildings and stores belonging to the armaments Department were damaged, as well as the Tower, Boathouse and some of the workshops.

A number of other fatalities resulted from the explosion, which had it occurred two hours later would have been an even worse disaster as it would have caught the Dockyard workers on their way to lunch. Nevertheless, apart from the two Fire Officers already mentioned, a further eleven men died. Among these were two Spanish dockyard workers, an assistant storehouseman, a taxi driver who died later as the result of his wounds and a Spanish trader. Three dockyard labourers were killed but of two only remains were found: making a total of thirteen.

The hands of the Dockyard Clock situated on the south wall of the yard by the dry docks stopped at one minute past ten and stayed that way for a number of years.

* There is some controversy over the title of this vessel. In many publications she is referred to as an RFA (Royal Fleet Auxiliary): even in the RFA website. However I am told by Ernest Reading, who worked in the Armament Depot, that she was an NAV (Naval Armaments Vessel). It is interesting that *Jane's Fighting Ships of World War II* does not record the *Bedenham* but does list the *Kinterbury* and *Throsk*, which were constructed later.

** Some records give her displacement as 1191 gross tons.

Gibraltar's Big Bang: *continued*



The Ship...



...The Wreck

Gibraltar's Big Bang: *continued*

The bows



The hold
(with
torpedoes)



Salvage



Gibraltar's Big Bang: *continued*

Many of those involved were later decorated for their bravery during the episode. Sub-Officer George Henderson, one of those killed, was posthumously awarded the George Cross for his bravery in attempting to extinguish the fire.

On the Monday morning the work of clearing the mess began. Live ammunition lying on the Gun Wharf was gathered together and the work started to get rid of the ship's remains. She was lying on her side with half the hull under water, the bow section was on its side on top of the wharf.

A few days later the *RFA Salvor*, a salvage ship, sailed from Malta to assist in raising the wreck with the help of the dockyard floating crane.

The cargo section of the wreck had already been cut away and was towed round to the main wharf and raised onto land using the sheerlegs. This was a fixed tripod heavy lift fixed crane originally designed to lift gun turrets from warships. The remaining ammunition was removed and made safe.

The after portion of the *Bedenham* was made watertight, floated and taken into number three dock where it was made seaworthy prior to being towed away for scrap.

Questions in Parliament raised the probability of sabotage, as there had been an explosion in

Bedenham Shipyard* on 14 July 1950 and aboard the *Indian Enterprise*, in the Indian Ocean; however later investigations refuted this scenario. The inquiry later ascertained that the cause of the explosion was faulty filling of a batch of Amatol in the depth charges and as a result the ammunition that came from the *Bedenham* was taken and put onto flat top lighters and dumped outside the three mile limit into deep water.

Following a survey of claims, the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds was allocated in damages to those who were affected.

Two funeral processions were formed, one from the Military and one from the Colonial Hospital** ending up at North Front Cemetery where the victims were buried according to their religion and accompanied by their families and friends. Wreaths were also laid on the water where the ship exploded.

The writer was an apprentice at the time of the explosion. He was working on a "Bay" class frigate berthed in front of the tower. He had left the ship to get some spare parts from the workshop when the ship went up. He was picked up by the pressure wave and carried 30ft, ending up with his back against the rear of the Nissan hut, a little dazed but without a scratch or a bruise.

The list of dead

ALFRED INDOE
GEORGE HENDERSON, G.C.
JOSEPH MOSS
JOHN LANE
LEOPOLDO PEREZ
JOSEPH ZAMMITT
LORENCIANO ESCRIBA RODRIGUEZ
BARTOLOMEO DELGADO MARIN
FRANCISCO MARTIN AMADOR
CARLOS MUNOZ POSTIGO
FLORENCIO RUIZ
JULIO ABUDARHAM
JOSE MORENO SERRANO

Dockyard Fire Service Chief Officer
Dockyard Fire Service Sub-Officer
Assistant Storehouseman
Dockyard Employee
Dockyard Employee
Dockyard Employee
Dockyard Employee
Dockyard Employee
Dockyard Employee
Dockyard Employee
Dockyard Employee
Dockyard Crane Operator
Taxi Driver
Vegetable Vendor



Acknowledgements:

The Day the Bedenham Blew Up, by Ernest Reading.
The Bedenham Explosion: a short note by Tommy Finlayson in the Government Archives.

Photos from the Gibraltar Museum Collection and Government Archives.

* This has nothing to do with the ship of the same name.
** Renamed St Bernard's but now closed.

