

# ROCK TALK



Journal of the Friends of Gibraltar  
January 2016  
Issue 9

# Contents

---

Editorials	2		
Chairman's Letter	3	Christmas Party	13
Society Grants	4	Membership Secretary Jottings	14
Diary of Society Events 2016	4	Gibraltar: Currency and War	19
New Board Member – Tricia Johnson	5	Fortress Study Group Presentation	15
Friends' Visit to Gibraltar 2015	6	Gibraltar Heritage Trust – 2015 themes	19
London Talk – Sir Adrian Johns	7	Gibraltar Day in London 2015	22
London Talk – Fortress Study Group	8	Spanking Roger and the Great Siege	24
Annual Seminar and Dinner (Winchester)	9	Evacuation of Gibraltar 1940	26
Oasis beneath the Rock	12	Gibraltar and Ballymena - Friendship	28
Summer Event 2015	13	Out and About in Gibraltar	29

## Editorials

---

A belated Happy New Year to our members and readers. Again, apologies for the 'delay', but we are sure you understand. We thank you for your support, and please try to contribute to a future edition!!!

2015 proved to be an interesting year – heritage and future urban developments and renewal projects were very much in the news. Gibraltar's landscape is constantly changing. Historical buildings are being 'altered' tastefully under the watchful eye of the Heritage Society – some better than others. For this we need to be thankful for the important influence of many people who speak up passionately in the defence of Gibraltar's historical inheritance.

The present Government, re-elected in December 2015, is committed to furthering its economic plan and attract foreign investment. Land is, as we all know, at a premium in Gibraltar. We are seeing new developments advertised virtually on a daily basis – Gibraltar is becoming more of a concrete jungle. But, more important, is that it is being done 'tastefully'.....You will notice in the Around Gibraltar section of this edition, how many old buildings have been modernised and in some cases, put to new use. The University of Gibraltar is located in the grounds of the former St. Christopher's School at Europa Point. The current GSLP/Liberal Government's 2015 manifesto clearly outlines future developments.

New buildings are being constructed and the East Side project, the Blue Water Resort ([www.bluewatergibraltar.com](http://www.bluewatergibraltar.com)), is still ongoing. We hope to show all these in Rock Talk 10 - hopefully before the end of 2016.

As Friends, you have an important voice and role. If you visit Gibraltar on a regular basis, you will

have noticed the changes. For those of you returning less often, the changes will be more dramatic!

Hoping to see you in Gib soon...

**- Brian & Elizabeth Gonzalez**

It has been a year of transition within the Society, with Sir Adrian taking over the reins and bringing a new perspective to its activities. We have some changes in the Board (see a later page), but the Editorial team for Rock Talk soldiers on, building on excellent contributions from members to this issue. The Society's Executive Committee continues to manage the core activities, which have followed the format of previous years with continued success.

This issue includes reports on Society activities as well as presentations on topics that we hope will be of interest to members. We have celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Evacuation of Gibraltar during WW2, an event that featured in the Society's recent project on oral history. This project continues to be highly regarded, and has been further developed over the year.

We have been privileged to hear interesting speakers, including the Fortress Study Group on two occasions, and the presentations on their work in researching and recording the military history of the fortifications has led to a joint heritage project that the Friends are supporting. A summary of one of their talks is included in this issue.

I wish you all every happiness in 2016, and thank you for your continued support.

**- Vincent Mifsud**

# Chairman's Letter

---

## Dear Friends of Gibraltar,

First of all, it was a privilege to represent the FOGHS at the National Arboretum in October for the unveiling and commemoration of the Gibraltar Memorial, which pays tribute to those Gibraltarians who have given their lives in the service of their nation. The memorial stone is beautifully presented and great credit must go to Joseph Brugada and Anselmo Torres who have been instrumental in bringing the project to successful fruition. The Arboretum and the Gibraltar Memorial are most certainly worth a visit.

The Friends have been very busy this year, both socially and from a business point of view. We enjoyed two excellent receptions one in the summer at the Inner Temple and the second just before Christmas at the RAF Club in Piccadilly. And, of course, the annual seminar at Winchester was a key event in our annual calendar – many thanks go to all involved for making it once again a most successful event. We enjoyed excellent presentations from John Cartwright of the Fortress Study Group and from Delilah Yeo Smith who brought us up to date with the impressive progress that the Gibraltar Heritage Trust is making. Delilah also presented a most persuasive case for the refurbishment of Witham's Cemetery, which the FOGHS is delighted to support. An outstanding keynote speech was delivered by the Right Honourable the Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, a long-standing and steadfast friend of Gibraltar and its people.

2016 will be an important year for Gibraltar as the bid for World Heritage status at Gorham's Cave reaches culmination and it promises to be another very busy year for the FOGHS as well. We have a number of works in progress, such as: the Defence of Gibraltar project in collaboration with the FSG; the Witham's Cemetery project; the oral history project; and we have agreed to provide an annual bursary to the University of Gibraltar. These are just a few of the projects in hand or under consideration, which are I believe indicators of a very healthy agenda for the FOGHS.

None of the above happens without the hard work of Board and Executive Committee members and other Friends in general and I would like to pay tribute to all those who have made signal contributions over the last year. Whilst many deserve mention I would single out only one here and that is Simon Pack who announced at Winchester his intention to stand down from the Board and the Executive Committee. Simon has been an outstanding member in every sense and whilst I am naturally disappointed to lose his wise counsel at Board level I am delighted that he will remain engaged as a Friend.

So I look forward to another successful year and to the continuing support of all for Gibraltar and its heritage.

*Sir Adrian Johns*



## Society Grants in support of Heritage Projects\_\_\_\_\_

Our stable of projects currently consists of the following:

### **Bursary at the University of Gibraltar for heritage related projects**

Agreement has been reached between the Friends and the newly established University of Gibraltar to set up a small bursary to help post-graduate students working on heritage related projects. It is hoped that the bursary should enable him/her to attend seminars and specialist short courses in the UK. The intention is to present the bursary during the Friends' Annual visit to Gibraltar to cement relations with the University.

### **Defence of Gibraltar Project**

The defence of Gibraltar project commenced late in 2015. It is a collaborative effort between the Friends of Gibraltar and the Fortress Study Group (see article in this issue). The purpose of the project is to create a definitive database of the military landscape in Gibraltar (c.1704 to 1960). The information will be collected from field visits and examination of historic documents. At this stage it is proposed to run the project for two years, subject to annual review. The information collected will be made available to the Government of Gibraltar, and in particular to the Heritage Trust, with a view to the preservation of sites of interest. The newly formed Fortress of Gibraltar group will co-ordinate their research with this project, concentrating on the WW2 landscape.



**Oral History Archive**

The Oral History archive is close to being placed on line, after some sterling work evaluating options. It is hoped that members will have limited access to the repository early in 2016.

**Refurbishment of RGR Ceremonial Drum**

A new project is to refurbish a ceremonial Drum presented to the Gibraltar Regiment by the Royal Anglians in 1969 to mark the close alliance between the two regiments. Over the years the drum has become badly worn and in urgent need of repair. In due course it will be displayed in pride of place in the RGR Museum and Officers' Mess.

**RGR Gun Refurbishment**

The Friends continue to discuss ways in which funds could be used to support the refurbishment of artillery for external display as part of the proposed Royal Gibraltar Regiment museum, but the project is on hold pending clarification of the position in Gibraltar. Both a 25 pounder and Bofors remain under consideration.

## Diary of Society Events for 2016\_\_\_\_\_

The diary of events is maintained on the Society's web site, and in the frequent e-mail updates or correspondence. This year's programme will be based on the successful format developed over the past few years, and will be updated in due course.

**Presentation by Dominique Searle**

18 January 2016 at 6.00pm, to be held at Gibraltar House, 150 The Strand, London WC2R 1JA

Dominique Searle, the Special Representative of HM Government of Gibraltar, is giving a presentation on the history of the Gibraltar Chronicle on 18th January 2016. Dominique has a unique knowledge of this subject as he was for many years a journalist and editor of the Gibraltar Chronicle, as have been a number of members of his family. There will be a reception afterwards. Admission is free but donations will be invited to cover the cost of drinks and light refreshments.

A further talk from a prominent Gibraltarian politician is planned for April; details will be confirmed in the Newsletter.

**AGM**

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 23rd February at Gibraltar House commencing at 5.30pm. Drinks will follow.

**Friends Annual Visit to Gibraltar – 6-10th June 2016**

Dates are now confirmed, however the week's programme is at the early stages of planning. Visits should include – Gibraltar Heritage Trust offices, Lunch at Royal Gibraltar Yacht Club, historic talk and visit to Sacarello's Coffee Shop, Queens Birthday Parade at Casemates. Additional suggestions which have come forward for 2015 include a half day Rock and Cave Tour and a dolphin trip. Other suggestions are welcome at this stage to Janet who organises this annual visit.

Email: [janet.stockbridge@btinternet.com](mailto:janet.stockbridge@btinternet.com) – Tel 01264 811101 or 0780 194 8036

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

**2016 Seminar, AGM and Dinner**

Dates for your diaries - planning date for the 2016 Seminar and Dinner is Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2016; venue to be confirmed. Future AGMs will now be held at this event as attendance is higher, and accounts available.

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

*The Editors would like to thank the membership for their support in contributing to this issue of Rock Talk, and for the feedback on previous issues.*

## New Board Member – Tricia Johnson



Tricia Johnson has a MA in Early Childhood Education with Care. Prior to her retirement she was a Senior Lecturer in Early Years and continues to work as an Adviser and External Examiner. She joined the Board of the Friends of Gibraltar (FOGs) in April 2014 as Secretary, appointed as a Director in November 2015.

Her connections to Gibraltar span many decades in that her Father served with the Royal Air Force (RAF) during Operation Torch. In August 1976 Tricia and her very young daughter joined her husband, who had been posted to Gibraltar with the RAF in June 1976. They lived in a mobile home for four months until a quarter became available at Four Corners. It was here that they spent three extremely happy years in Gibraltar, despite the Border with Spain being closed. This was a very safe place to live, they made lifelong friendships, learnt to sail,

attended evening classes and enjoyed the beautiful warm climate. Several years after returning home, Tricia and Harvey joined the local branch of the ABF – The Soldiers Charity, when the opportunity to join the Friends of Gibraltar was presented. They accompanied the group visiting Gibraltar in June 2000, enjoyed it so much and rekindled their affection for Gibraltar which resulted in them becoming members of FOGs.

Tricia was invited to join the Board in February 2014 as the Secretary. She thought this would be a way to give something back to Gibraltar, to help, in a very small way, to maintain and support the very rich heritage. This role is proving to be very interesting and rewarding.

## Reports of Events

---

### Friends' Visit to Gibraltar 2015 *by Janet Whiteley*

This year there were 45 Friends who joined in the full programme from Monday until the Friday afternoon.

Monday, Welcome, Coffee and introductions by The Chairman Mrs Delilah Yeo Smith at Gibraltar Heritage Trust. A particularly interesting programme for the week was covered by Richard Labrador and George Russo, both former Trustees of GHT and members of the Friends. This was then followed by a visit to the City Hall and the new refurbished Art Museum, and a brief visit into the Mayor's Parlour. In the afternoon a very convivial private lunch, at the Royal Gibraltar Yacht Club, this was kindly facilitated by Judge John Tanzer a great supporter of the Friends.

In the evening the Friends were welcomed to a very social cocktail party at the pool side of the Rock Hotel by Mr Charles Danino, the new General Manager. Friends were generally impressed by the refurbishment of the hotel which had taken place during the previous year. As is our custom a toast was made to



*Delilah Yeo-Smith, Chairman GHT*

the memory of our late President Mr Joe Gaggero, always a great supporter of the Friends.

Tuesday morning the Friends enjoyed the visit to the Convent with Pepe Rosado. Friends were particularly impressed with the ballroom and it was greatly appreciated having the opportunity to visit the Governor's residence and the splendid dining hall. This was followed at 1pm by a Service in the Kings Chapel which included readings by Richard Lord and Richard Labrador during the Consecration of the Hatchment of the Order. For those Friends and other guests who attended, refreshments were served in the Convent quadrangle following the Service. Later in the afternoon Professor Clive Finlayson and his team from the Gibraltar Museum updated our group on the UNESCO world Heritage bid, and the exciting plans for the future, in the Gorham's Cave area.

Wednesday was the eagerly awaited visit to the Port and Cruise liner Queen Elizabeth. The Friends were met by the Captain of the port, Commodore Bob Sanguinetti. This was a unique opportunity to visit the liner, grateful thanks to Commodore Sanguinetti for facilitating this wonderful visit through the Captain of the Queen Elizabeth ship. In the afternoon the Friends enjoyed a visit to the Royal Gibraltar Police Marine division which included the Maritime operations centre, including a trip on the latest craft around the Rock on a stunning day. We disembarked by the Tower and were met by military and MOD staff. In the Tower, Friends were introduced to the new CBF Commodore Ian McGhie who gave an update and informative presentation on security in the Strait, the British Forces in Gibraltar and their priorities. This was followed by an excellent reception prior to the conclusion of an entertaining day.

Thursday the group visited the new University site at Europa, work seem to be going on at quite a rapid pace to complete it on the scheduled deadline date which was September 2015. Safety vests and helmets were provided during the visit as a safety precaution. The Friends walked onwards to the Shrine of our Lady of Europa where Dennis Hook gave interesting talk since we last visited several years previously. Later in the afternoon the Queen's Birthday Parade took place at Casemate Square. This is always a spectacle and a pleasure to attend; seated tickets were courtesy of Commodore Richard Lord and we extend our thanks to him as always. The precision drill was exemplary; it



*The Friends meet on the Sunday evening at the pool*



*An introduction to the City Hall from Gino Sanguinetti*



*The Friends visiting the Convent*

was also rather poignant as this would be the last occasion the current Governor Sir James Dutton would officiate on behalf of HM the Queen.

Friday morning included a visit to the recently renovated Jews Gate cemetery, Mesod Belilo welcomed our group. This visit was of particular interest as elevated walkways had been considerably constructed to accommodate visitors



with mobility difficulties and requiring wheelchair access. Following this we continued up to the Upper Rock by coach, with breath-taking and stunning views over the Straits, the Airport and Spain.

The week concluded with a farewell lunch at the Waterfront restaurant at Queensway Quays.

Post script – Next year's visit to Gibraltar is planned for 6 – 10th June 2016; contact Janet Whiteley for visit details ([janet.stockbridge@btinternet.com](mailto:janet.stockbridge@btinternet.com)) Please speak with your travel agent soon to avoid disappointment, as hotels book up quickly.



*On board the Queen Elizabeth*



*At the Queen's Birthday Parade*



*Visiting the new University of Gibraltar*

## London Talk by Sir Adrian Johns – 26<sup>th</sup> November *by the Editors*

He retired from the Navy in 2008 and just a few months later was invited to attend an interview in the FCO. This came as something of a surprise for him as although he had expressed a willingness to be considered for a Governor's appointment no hint had been given that Gibraltar was on the cards. Nevertheless, he was offered the appointment and, whilst he and his wife, Suzie, had planned to settle back into their home in south London they took no time at all in deciding that Gibraltar was where they wanted to be.

Sir Adrian explained that the Governor's role in Gibraltar is not merely ceremonial and representational in nature. The Governor is not, as some would like to think, the FCO's agent in Gibraltar but is the Queen's representative and constitutionally the senior officer of HM Government of Gibraltar. So Sir Adrian was quite clear that he represented Her Majesty and not Her Majesty's UK Government.

The Governor's role is clearly defined by the constitution, which among other matters charges the



*Sir Adrian and Nora Hodge at the event*  
external affairs, and internal security. So the Governor's main interlocutors in the UK are the FCO and the MoD, the UK Departments of State where foreign and defence policy is formulated. The essence of the Governor's day job is to communicate

Governor with special responsibility for defence, these policies to HM Government of Gibraltar and on the other hand to influence the formulation of UK policy by representing the views and the interests of Gibraltar to the UK. Sir Adrian was quite clear that this was a key element of his role as developing policy in a London office some 1000 miles from Gibraltar needed a constant dose of reality, analysis, and independent judgement from the coal face.

Sir Adrian observed that Gibraltar's relationship with the UK is of fundamental importance and he described it as generally open and strong during his tenure. He felt that UK Ministers were alive to the diplomatic and political sensitivities surrounding Gibraltar but that officials were more inclined to steer the safe middle course of diplomatic compromise. In addition, whilst the FCO and MoD were dealing with Gibraltar issues on a daily basis, other UK government departments were less familiar with the nuances and the Convent was constantly engaged in ensuring that the Gibraltar angle was not missed.

From a personal point of view, Sir Adrian and Lady Suzie enjoyed every moment of their 4 years in Gibraltar. It was a wonderful experience to have been so warmly welcomed on the Rock and they made friends for life. They realised quite quickly that there was very little chance of personal privacy but nevertheless tried to live as normal a life as the appointment would allow. Perambulating up and down Main Street on a Saturday morning, doing a little shopping and talking and listening to people were vitally important elements both in understanding what



*Magda Rizzo and Maurice Xiberas at the event  
(photos by Mike Brufal)*

made Gibraltar tick and in keeping their own feet firmly on the ground.

Sir Adrian rounded off his talk by recalling again his early naval visits to the Rock and rueing the fact that the naval presence and influence in Gibraltar had diminished over the years. Finally, he re-emphasised the importance in his view of having a former naval or military senior officer as Governor and is personally delighted with appointment of Lieutenant General Ed Davies. He hopes that he and his wife Lorraine will enjoy Gibraltar as much as he and Suzie have done and continue to do.

## London Talk – 22<sup>nd</sup> June

The Society organised a well-attended meeting in Gibraltar House on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June to receive a briefing on the work of the Fortress Study Group in relation to the Gibraltar fortifications. David Page and John Cartwright made a joint presentation on the Group's objectives, their interest in Gibraltar, and to discuss possible options for future collaboration between the two organisations. This was well received, and many questions arose from the floor, as the information presented was both interesting and challenging. The need for urgent action to record and preserve some of the military architectural history was made clear, and discussed further around the informal refreshments that were served after the talk.

The talk covered the Northern Defences on the Rock, which have been the subject of much restoration work, and that now have much improved access. This work has been led by the Gibraltar Heritage Trust (see article), and is yielding fruit. John went through the history of these fortifications, and explained the context for their design and implementation. The talk covered improvements made in the second world war, and noted many interesting aspects in the detail that emerged from his studies, and illustrated his presentation with some fascinating photographs and historical material.

In the broader discussion, it was made clear to the membership how important it was to record and

*by the Editors*



*David Page, Chairman of the FSG, introducing the talk*





preserve some of these defences. Since this talk, further discussions, led by Jerry Robinson, have led to a joint project that has been

*Mr John Cartwright sharing his enthusiasm*

approved by the board. This will be reported in future issues of Rock Talk.



*Jerry Robinson pondering future options for collaboration*



*Tim Lawson-Cruttenden and other members enjoying a glass of wine*



*Much to ponder...*

## Annual Seminar and Dinner – Winchester 17<sup>th</sup> October *by Janet Whiteley and Vincent Mifsud*

Following a Board meeting, a joint meeting of the Friends of Gibraltar and Gibraltar Heritage Trust was held at the Wessex Mercure Hotel in Winchester. Information was exchanged on activities of the two organisations, and Delilah Yeo Smith briefed the Board on a variety of heritage related Acts that were planned in Gibraltar. Potential joint projects were discussed, including the refurbishment of Witham's Cemetery, which was well received. Further information will be made available for consideration by the Friends, but agreement in principle was made to support this through a grant of up to £10,000, provided that certain safeguards were in place. A short report on other projects is included elsewhere in this issue.

The Annual Seminar took place in the afternoon, with members attending enjoying a varied and interesting programme of speakers and discussions. Following a welcome and introduction from the Chairman of the Friends, Sir Adrian Johns, presentations were given on:

- Windmill Hill and its military architecture, by Mr John Cartwright of the Fortress study Group
- Mrs Delilah Yeo Smith briefed on the past year at the Gibraltar Heritage Trust
- The Right Honourable Baroness Butler-Sloss



*Some of our Board Members at the event*

- A membership update from Commodore Richard Lord CBE, membership Secretary
- A presentation on the Friends' visit to Gibraltar 2015, by Janet Whiteley

GBE, PC presented views on recent Gibraltar history

This was followed by the presentation of a Commemorative Picture, kindly donated by Major General Simon Pack, in acknowledgement of the thanks and gratitude to the Gibraltar Government.

The Society is building strong links with the Fortress Study Group, and a joint research and archival project has been approved. The Study Group has visited Gibraltar several times, and Mr Cartwright's presentation reflected the level of enthusiasm and knowledge that is present in this organisation. Gibraltar is both an important and very interesting fortress, and much more should be made of its history and military architecture. Members were treated to a fascinating talk, full of interesting facts and anecdotes, and we all left with a deeper appreciation of the military history of this part of Gibraltar. His presentation is summarised in a separate article in this issue.

Mrs Yeo Smith covered a broad range of topics in her presentation, and succeeded in bringing the audience up to speed on proposed developments in heritage legislation and actions on the Rock. It is hoped that these will be taken forward now that the election in Gibraltar has been held. Areas of concern in the drafting of this legislation were discussed, and further discussions are to be held with the minister responsible for these acts. Mrs Yeo Smith briefed the membership on activities within the Trust itself, and the extended use of the Main Guard to become an information centre in the middle of town. Planned activities included assisting in the opening up of the Northern Defences, a successful painting competition, and a variety of visits and projects to focus on improving the condition of particular areas of the town and upper Rock. The key points that she raised are covered in an article later in this issue.

Baroness Butler-Sloss gave a very insightful and entertaining presentation, relying on her memory of important events and her clear legal mind. She continues to visit friends in Gibraltar and the hinterland regularly. As guest editor of the last issue of the BBS's Today Programme for 2014, she had managed to raise Gibraltar's profile, a task she very much enjoyed as it included a visit to the Rock that allowed her to walk down Main Street with the catchphrase "I'm from the BBC" as she met acquaintances and the general public. She shared a view that a military governor generally found it easier to understand the position in Gibraltar, which is complex and not often fully understood by officials in the FCO. She expressed her enjoyment of the Gibraltar Day event in the Guildhall, and felt that she detected a hardening of the ministerial position on Spanish incursions into Gibraltarian territorial waters. She considers this a key area, as invasion of territorial waters is not acceptable under any circumstances. The capabilities of the current RN vessels were of great concern to her, and the need to replace them in 2017 was also significant and worth watching. Baroness Butler-Sloss felt that the



*Baroness Butler-Sloss with  
Field Marshall and Lady Annabel Chapple*



*A rapt audience...*



*Our Chairman and guest speaker*

UK government had done well with the EU over the border, as the second intervention had been quite tough on Spain, but she accepted that delays coming out of Gibraltar were still often unacceptable. She assured the membership that there were many discussions behind the scenes in support of Gibraltar, and that she herself was very active in briefing and ensuring that ministers were kept appropriately informed. She then discussed the risks associated with the forthcoming UK vote on membership of the EU, and that a British exit presented a very real threat to Gibraltar's wellbeing. Spain would almost certainly close the border again, and Gibraltar's weak position in the UN would then be a significant vulnerability. On the positive side, Spain giving Russia bunkering rights in Ceuta made Gibraltar strategically yet more important, which might influence other European countries. She agreed that Spain was in breach of her obligations on the airport (Cordoba agreement), but she was not confident that this would change in the near future. She awaited the result of the Spanish elections with interest.

Commodore Lord presented an encouraging update on membership of the Society, and felt that numbers had increased encouragingly, but were now reaching levels that demanded significant administrative effort. His report is detailed elsewhere in this issue.

A report on the Friends' visit to Gibraltar is a standing item in Rock Talk, so the reader is referred to that update for details of the successful week spent on the Rock.

After the seminar, the Friends met for drinks at 19:00, and then proceeded to the Annual Dinner in good heart.

*All involved in the administration of this very successful event are thanked for their outstanding contribution, led by the organiser Janet Whiteley*



*A short tea break allowed informal discussion of the interesting presentations...*



*The raffle proved very popular*



*The Membership Secretary and Peter Abraham  
(Photo courtesy of Mike Brufal)*



*Delilah and Janet discussing the GHT presentation*



## OASIS BENEATH THE ROCK *by David Courtney*

If you were to stroll through the Alameda Botanical Gardens in winter, you could hardly fail to notice that the kaleidoscope of floral colour and diversity has all but disappeared once more. In its place, a green cloak has been unfurled, acting as nature's caretaker. Gone are the delicate flowers and perfumed scents for a few short months as the gardens repose for the winter. It is hard to imagine that this soporific state will soon end as plants and trees yawn and stretch, encouraged by the lengthening days and the warming sun once more. But when, in 2016, this happens, it will be a very special occurrence, indeed.

For precisely two centuries ago, there was no winter sleep. Instead, the gardens were a hive of great activity as contractors and Royal Engineers' sappers were busy. Very busy. It was their task to prepare the gardens for their inauguration by Lt. Governor, General Sir George Don on 14th April 1816. It was he who was the inspiration and driving force behind their creation, which were part of his vision to improve public health and life for all Gibraltarians. His legacy is visible throughout, but arguably the greatest of all was the 'new Alameda'.

Coming as it did just a few short years after French forces had been driven from the region by Wellington during the Peninsula Wars, no public funds were available for such an undertaking and thus Don had to appeal to Gibraltar residents for their financial support. Many will know that this was enthusiastically received and was financed by a series of lotteries and public performances of enormous diversity organised by the broadest possible cross-section of the population at the time. In fact, this is one of the most enduring facets of the gardens. They were and still are universally loved. They transcend cultural and religious dispositions and are truly free of prejudice of any kind. Indeed, the fabric of the gardens is woven from the threads of the diversity of Gibraltarians, each bringing its own colour, texture and patina.

The gardens are also a magical place which quite imperceptibly intoxicates their visitors. The quiet and the soft verdant landscape paint a bucolic picture unlike any other place in Gibraltar.

Shaded from the summer sun, enticed by walks and paths, mesmerised by the floral cornucopia, it really doesn't take long before visitors are seduced by what they see and hear. Very soon they are lost in the gardens, transported to a new world, oblivious of the fact that they are even in Gibraltar any longer.

But the magic doesn't by any means end there. For the Alameda Gardens accompany Gibraltarians throughout their lives, like nowhere else. They form memories which repeat generation after generation, beacons of life's most precious moments. For this is the place where babies look up and out of their prams and



*David Courtney's book 'Oasis beneath the Rock' published by PanAgora Books explores the history of the Alameda Gardens and is priced at £16.99.*



*Whalebone ladies*

It could be the scent of the blooms in full summer, or the sound of music that entertains at the open-air theatre or band stand. It may be the beauty of The Dell, the tranquillity of the Lions Pond, the magnificence of the memorials to Elliott or Wellington or the residents of the conservation nature reserve.

But these are but a few, for at every turn there is a new vista or secluded seat to enjoy serenaded by the indigenous and migratory birds which make the gardens their permanent or temporary homes. Individually, these features focus our minds, but collectively, they create an indelible collage, never to be forgotten.

There are comparatively few gardens in the world which have the ability to connect with their visitors in this way, but the Alameda is unquestionably one of them. So much so, that they perform a function far beyond the visible. Rather more, they unite and bind, entertain and excite. They are a place of rest, of escape – a paradise – a veritable oasis beneath the Rock. They have become

strollers confronted by the beauty of nature for the first time. It is the place where toddlers take their first tentative steps amid the safety of the sanctuary and under the watch of admiring parents and grand-parents. It is here that adolescents meet and woo one another, trysts which lead to the first walks hand-in-hand and the place of that first tentative kiss. It is in this place that love may be cemented and celebrated in matrimonial splendour, presided over by congregation and nature alike. And as the older members of the community return to the gardens to relax and reminisce, they are joined by those newly-weds who can be seen slowly strolling through the gardens, pushing the next generation of Gibraltarians as they go. Indeed, everyone has his or her memories of the gardens – residents and visitors alike. And each has a special favourite.

as important to Gibraltar and Gibraltarians as anything, forming a near umbilical relationship between them. Dare it be said that neither can live without the other.

And so, as the bicentenary of the Alameda Botanical Gardens is about to be celebrated, we should all reflect on the great work of Sir George Don and feel a debt of enormous gratitude that he and countless generations since have cared for them so devotedly for so long. Re-awaken yourself to what the gardens have to offer and tell your children. Bring them along to see, explore and enjoy the gardens themselves. After all, it is they who will be looking after them for many years to come.

*"Oasis beneath the Rock" is now available in Gibraltar and through Gibraltar House in London.*

## Summer Event 2015 by Tim Lawson-Cruttenden

The Friends held a very enjoyable drinks reception on the terrace of Inner Temple at the beginning of July 2015. It is located in the wider Temple area of the capital, near the Royal Courts of Justice, and within the City of London. The Temple takes its name from the Knights Templar, who originally leased the land to the Temple's inhabitants (Templars) until their abolition in 1312. The Inner Temple was a distinct society from at least 1388, although as with all the Inns of Court its precise date of founding is not known. After a disruptive early period (during which the Temple was almost entirely destroyed in the Peasants' Revolt) it flourished, becoming the second largest Inn during the Elizabethan period (after Gray's Inn). About 80 members and guests attended the event, although it is a shame that booking constraints meant that the evening clashed with the annual visit to the Rock.

The Inner Temple is one of the four Inns of Court and it is located in the centre of legal London with gardens overlooking the River Thames. It has a rich history and is well worth a visit when the opportunity arises.

We were blessed with fine weather which meant the entire event was held outside. The wet weather programme involved our use of the Parliament room which is dripping with paintings and full of legal history - perhaps for a winter reception in the not too distant future. Many of the Friends took the opportunity to tour the room during the event and to enjoy its rich history.

The Executive Committee proposes to offer Summer drinks as an annual event but hopefully slightly earlier this year so that it does not clash with the visit to Gibraltar, as it is recognised that this creates an undesirable conflict. We hope that you will attend this year's event, which will be advertised in the electronic newsletter and on the web site.

## Christmas Party, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015 by Tricia Johnson

This was held for the second year running at the Royal Air Force (RAF) Club in Piccadilly. The Champagne Reception was attended by FOGs Members, including our President Baroness Hooper, their friends and families, and, was enjoyed by everyone present. The members of staff at the RAF Club were very welcoming and attentive ensuring that our glasses were kept full and that the canapés were served throughout the evening.

Sir Adrian Johns thanked everyone for attending and stated that 'unfortunately Albert Poggio was absent due to the clash with the elections in Gibraltar'. Albert and members of staff from Gibraltar House were, therefore, in Gibraltar. He announced that there would be two AGMs in 2016 because the decision had been taken by the Board to include the AGM with the Annual Seminar in October/November. Sir Adrian also said that this was his first visit to the RAF Club and that he had felt most welcome.

The apparent enjoyment of the evening could, perhaps, be judged by the noise level, the many conversations and laughter were maintained throughout the evening. Persons who had not attended the setting before were impressed by the décor, the numerous wonderful paintings and the architecture. Sadly not many photographs were taken this year; however, enjoyment and fun is depicted in the photograph below.



*A happy group of members at the RAF Club*

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S JOTTINGS

I do hope that you had a very happy Christmas and New Year, and enjoyed all your celebrations. The excellent Friends' Christmas Party at the RAF Club started it off so well for us.

Our numbers have consolidated at about 520 with 27 new members since April 2015. You are our best recruiter – if you know anyone interested in joining then please let me know.

We offer the following in our New Year Sales!

Membership for £15 until Mar 17 as a New Years' gift for a relative or friend. I will write them a welcoming e mail saying that it from you.

Free Package and Postage for a Friends' Tie for yourself or a relative/friend if ordered by 15 Feb 16. Only £21. (We are currently looking at a proposal to provide woolen scarves for which a donation would be made to the Friends).

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



Free membership for those over 80. (Please be sure to let me know – some of you have not so far!)

5 for the price of 4 Family Membership (4x£15). To be paid by Bankers Order.

Membership of the Gibraltar Heritage Trust during any visit to Gibraltar with free access to the Upper Rock Tourist Board Sites and the Museum. Also, attendance at any Trust activities which coincide with your visit.

For those with an appropriate award, a supported application for Membership of the Gibraltar OBE Association. More details below.

### Updated Information

Please don't forget to contact me if your Gift Aid situation has changed and you no longer qualify. The next claim will be in May 16 for the period Apr 15 to Mar 16. Last year our claim raised a most useful £1,713.17.

Also, could I ask if you would let me know if you hear of Members who have not heard from us recently. Members change e-mail and their home address and we are not always informed. Sometimes

e-mails and letters are returned to us but in all cases. We have been trying hard to contact 7 members who fall into this category via their banks but with little success.

### Membership List

I keep an overall Membership List with just Members names on. If you would like a copy, then I would be pleased to forward you one. A few Members have taken advantage of me forwarding e-mails to those they have lost contact with. Don't forget that if your entry is not as you would wish then please let me know.

### New Year Quiz.

Answer the following questions correctly by 15 Feb 16 and your name will go into a draw for a copy of "Oasis beneath the Rock, The History of Alameda Gardens Gibraltar" by David Courtney.

"When were Alameda Gardens established, by whom and who paid for them? How was the money raised?"

### Presentation to Gibraltar House

As those who attended the Seminar in Winchester will be aware a picture donated by Maj Gen Simon Pack will be presented by Sir Adrian Johns to Albert Poggio at the forthcoming AGM in Feb in recognition of the outstanding support that the Gibraltar House team have given to the Friends of Gibraltar over many years. We have a small group to find out more about the map and its origin. If a Member can help in any way, then please let me know. We would particularly be interested in the date (1780?) and the painter. A copy of the picture is below and a translation of the title block (centre left) follows.





Sketch map of the town of GIBRALTAR and the fortifications therein, together with the Bay of Algeciras.

Explanation of the map of GIBRALTAR.

The numbers show the depth in the bay as well as the Cannons and Mortar Batteries together with the firepower all around the coast which can be trained on the ships which bring supplies to the town. An attack drawn up from the land side, namely from the camp of St Roch as far as the covered path. Five batteries erected on flat skiffs to bombard the town and the ships in the bay.

#### Gibraltar OBE Association

In Gibraltar there is a new association called the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire Gibraltar. The Governor is the Patron of the Association and The Hon Adolfo Canepa OBE MP is the Hon President. The Chairman is Friends of Gibraltar Member, Richard Labrador MBE, and there are some 140 members.

Friends of Gibraltar may not be aware that membership of the association is open to members of the Order at all levels, and also includes those awarded the British Empire Medal, who reside in Gibraltar or have a close association with Gibraltar (which we have). There is no entrance fee nor annual fee.

Friends who attended the Jun 15 visit to Gibraltar were invited to a dedication ceremony in Kings Chapel for the hatchment of the Order which has been painted on the ceiling. The Association's roll of honour is on permanent display in a glass cabinet at the Chapel. There are regular events. Please contact me if you would like to join.

#### Feedback

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

#### Contact Details:

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



## The Fortress Study Group

Patron His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO



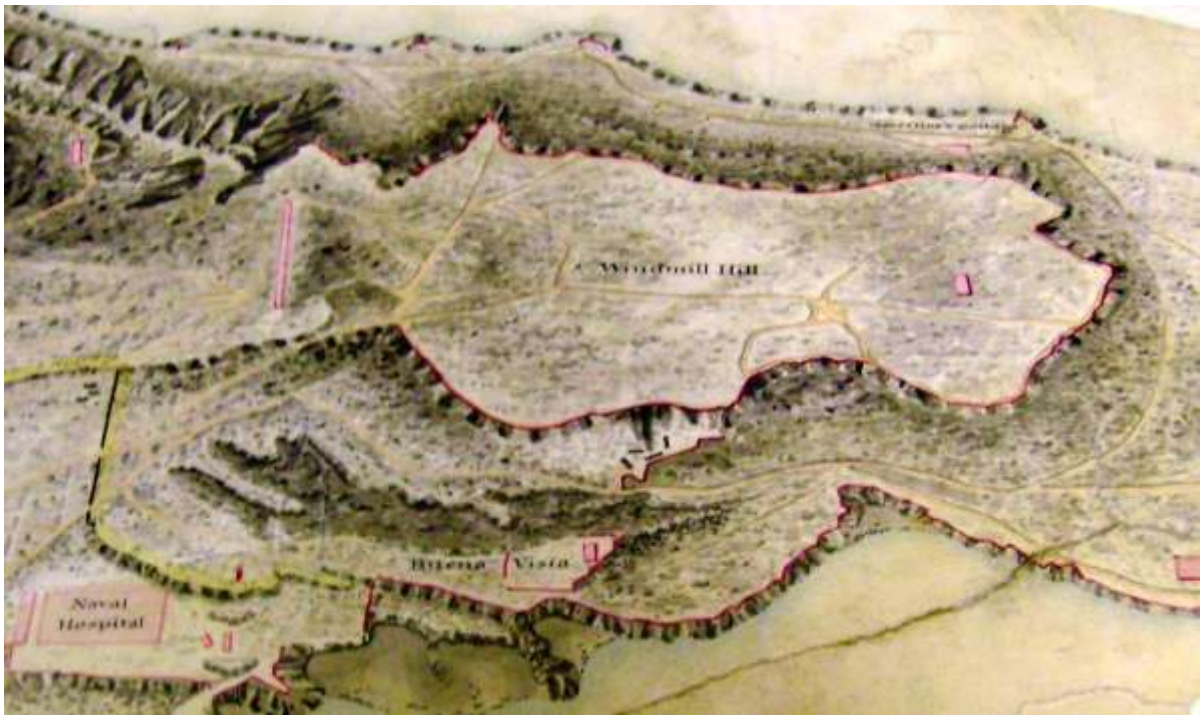
Article based on the presentation given at the Winchester Seminar by David Page & John Cartwright

The Fortress Study Group is an international society concerned with the study of all aspects of military architecture and fortifications and their armaments, especially works constructed to mount and resist artillery. It has around 500 members, roughly evenly split between academic, professional and general interest. It is a founder member of the International Fortress Council.

## Windmill Hill 1840 to 1956

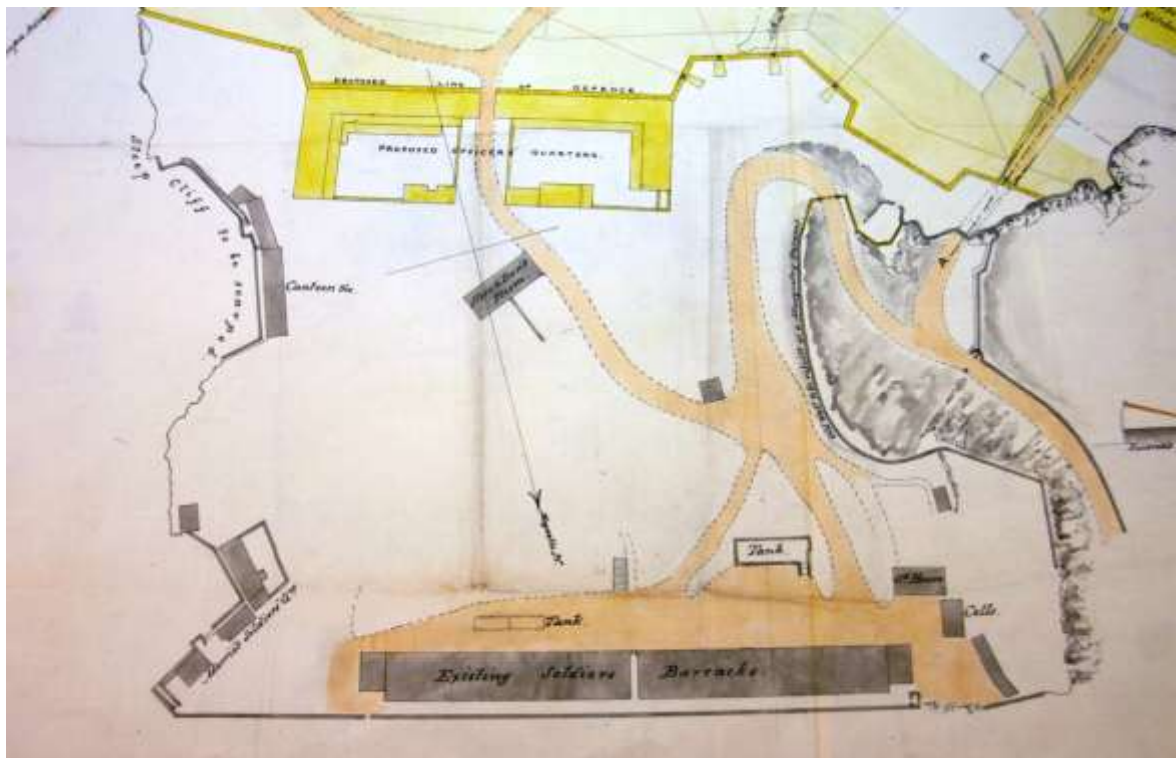
The Windmill Hill plateau is roughly 400m by 650m, with a 50m high cliff surrounding it. Within this small area, a vast variety of military remains can be found. Many of the sites are in need of care and attention, and they have not been properly researched and recorded. There are some five gun batteries, fifteen gun positions, a heavy AA battery and several pillboxes, making it unique as a

location. There are also extensive tunnels beneath Windmill Hill, but these will not be covered in this article. The earliest map of reasonable quality dates back to 1823, and indicates that barracks, magazine and perimeter walls already existed. The Jones report of 1841 was a serious examination of the defences after 25 years of inactivity, and led to 60 years of constant and dynamic change.



*Windmill Hill 1823 (© TNA MPH 1/207)*

A first step was the creation of the Devil's Bellows entrance and general improvement of tracks.



**1846 Line of Defence, showing Devil's Bellows completed (© TNA MFQ 1/319)**

A modern photograph of the defensive line is included in the 'Out and About' section. By 1855 the first artillery had been mounted on the plateau. These were 68 pounder guns and howitzers. To



complement this armament, Fuze House, laundry houses and drying areas were built, as well as a prison and general hutments, as can be seen in the photograph below:



***General view over the plateau – third quarter 19<sup>th</sup> century***

By 1901 most of the main batteries had been established and big guns mounted. Photographs of the guns in the main battery (Edward VII [2 9.2"] (© Gibraltar Archives), Genista [6"]) form an interesting historical record (© TNA 192/174).





The plateau's anti-ship and ground defences were now very strong. Work over the next decades focused on creating effective anti-aircraft defences, including both location systems (initially sound locating, but later early radar) and batteries of both guns and rocket projectiles. Camouflage was introduced, and additional command and radio posts established (© TNA WO 78/5224).



*South end of Windmill Hill, showing South, HAA and West batteries, WW2 command post & positions*



*Sound Locator on Spyglass*



*Rocket projector – mounts found on site*

An unexpected find was the mounts of rocket projectors (Z-guns: see photograph on right), which have been recorded as deployed in Gibraltar, but the exact locations are not all known. These were often mounted on battleships, and they projected a barrage of rockets with trailing wires to entangle low-flying aircraft (© Imperial War Museum).



Signage and graffiti form important records and need to be recorded and protected where possible. There are many examples; as a minimum the content and position of the signs and notes should be registered. The Group will play its part in this task, supported by the GHT & the Friends of Gibraltar.

Members are encouraged to visit the web site, [www.defenceofgibraltar.com](http://www.defenceofgibraltar.com), and to contribute if they can do so. This is an exciting joint project, and is generating high levels of interest.



Let us hope that the British military, despite shortages, will be able to preserve some of these architectural artefacts and assist in recording the history of these unique and important fortifications.

## Highlights of 2015 – Gibraltar Heritage Trust

Based on the presentation by Delilah Smith at the Winchester Seminar

The Board of the Gibraltar Heritage Trust has seen some changes over the year, with Delilah Smith taking over as Chairman, and Ian Balestrino as Vice-Chair. Victor Hermida and John Navas have been co-opted on to the Board to replace Richard Labrador and Pete Jackson, who resigned over the year.

The appointment of the first City Archaeologist, Dr Kevin Lane, took place in November 2014, after many years of campaigning by the Trust. Kevin has the professional skills to advise Government, particularly when new developments are taking place, and has already established an excellent working relationship with the Minister. This has been particularly important in considering options for the St Bernard's hospital site, the development of the Northern Defences, and Casemates.

The restoration of the Red Plaques that were the brainchild of Mrs Dorothy Ellicott, the first woman councillor (1947) pre self-determination. Twenty have been restored so far, and the next thirty or so will be tackled over the next two years, as funds become available. Despite the odd spelling or grammatical error, the plaques provide useful context and have become almost iconic on the Rock. It is hoped that the GOG will take over routine maintenance of the plaques in the near future, as part of the refurbishment to areas of the Upper Rock.

In March, the Government invited 'expressions of interest' for the development of the The Mount. The Trust and the GOHNS issued a joint



*City Archaeologist, Dr Kevin Lane, in his element*



statement outlining their views on the development of the site, including clear guidelines. No further structures beyond those already on existing areas of hardstanding were recommended, and protection and preservation of existing structures, including the gatehouse, were requested. None of the proposed schemes have been shared by government so far, but the Trust web site will keep members up to date, and provides further detail of the recommendations. Any firm proposals will have to be reviewed by the Development and Planning Committee.

The Trust continues to reach out to youth in Gibraltar. An example is the work with the Dolphin Youth Club to clear and improve areas near their Club house, and to extend this to an area opposite the Anchorage which has been unattended for some time. This initiative has been very successful and will be extended in the future.

The annual painting competition was held at North Front Cemetery this year, and proved popular, with entrants ranging from school children to established artists. This year, for the first time, the prize-giving and exhibition of entries took place at the Main Guard. Sir James Dutton kindly agreed to present the prizes after a very successful and enjoyable day of painting.

In collaboration with the Tourist Board, the Trust has welcomed a Tourist Information Counter into the Main Guard, under a licence to use the premises. The associated charge helps the Trust to cover running costs of this facility. This counter is now the main Town Centre information hub for the tourist board. Encouragingly, the footfall into the shop has steadily increased over the summer, and sales are increasing, permitting a broadening of the scope of the stock.

Ongoing collaboration with the Department for Education has resulted in the publication of the first in a planned series of Gibraltar History text books. This covers the Great Siege, and is authored by GHT trustee and teacher Mr Keith Sheriff. It will help to encourage interest in Gibraltar's unique history, and will be built into history courses on the Rock.

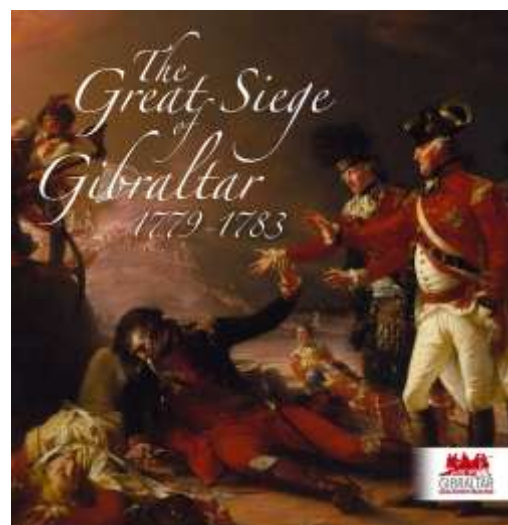
The Trust continues to run a series of local visits to sites of heritage or historical interest. A recent visit was to AquaGib's facilities at Hesse's Demi Bastion, covering the current pumping facility and the recently decommissioned salt water pumping station, which was once coal fired. AquaGib is to be congratulated on their recent developments of the site, which have included re-routing a number of main pipes to a less conspicuous position, and removal of large numbers of pipes and fittings which have defaced the bastion for many years. Working in consultation with the Trust and Ministry for Heritage, the company has also removed damage-causing woody plants, and



*Artist at work... Vin Mifsud sheltering from the sun*



*Refurbished plaque on Upper Rock*



*The first in a series of Gibraltar History text books*



repainted the bastion sign.

Significant progress has been made on the phased refurbishment of the Northern Defences, which are now open for tours guided by the GHT and our Focus Groups. This area is of great military historical interest, and members are recommended to join a tour on their next visit to Gibraltar.

The Trust's Heritage awards for 2015 went to the Gibraltar International Bank for their work around Inca's Hall, the Gibraltar University for their new campus site near Europa Point, to the Jews Gate Cemetery team, primatologist Mr Brian Gomilla for 'Monkey Talk', and to Dr Sam Benady and Mrs Mary Chiappe for 'The Bresciano Mysteries'. Members might like to refer to the 'Out and About' section for recent photographs of the sites, and to obtain copies of the publications.

The GHT plays a very active part in the Development and Planning Commission (DPC), reviewing some 30-40 applications at the monthly meetings. Government projects now go through the planning process, and many applications require site visits and on-going scrutiny of the work. This onerous task is time-consuming, but vital. Current issues include an on-going debate on the pace of development and criteria for urban renewal, particularly in the Old Town. The Urban Renewal Committee, chaired by the Deputy Chief Minister, includes the GHT CEO and Chairman among its membership, and is very influential.

The Command Paper for the new Heritage and Antiquities Act 2015 has been published, after many years of lobbying, as the old Heritage Trust Act of 1989 is not a sustainable model. The paper has many positives, including binding the GOG and MOD. Statutory posts in government service and the GHT are established, as is a Heritage and Antiquities Council (HAAC). There are concerns in some technical oversights that will be corrected, and the listing process is unclear at present.

The ongoing role of the trust remains to be a watchdog, disseminator of heritage information, to assist in education, and to be at the heart of local development in the DPC and HAAC. The current campaign list is on the Trust web site.



*Hesse's Demi Bastion before refurbishment*



*...and afterwards*



*I am pleased to report that handmade scarfs in the colours used in our ties are now available from Member Neil Wildman-Whitten's company [JustWoolTextiles.co.uk](http://JustWoolTextiles.co.uk).*

*A donation of £5 will be made to the Friends for each scarf sold.*



*Refurbishment work on the Northern Defences*



*Refurbished entrance steps*

## Gibraltar Day in London 2015

London's Guildhall once again welcomed over 1000 guests on behalf of HM Government of Gibraltar to commemorate the 16th Gibraltar Day in London. The event was established in recognition of Gibraltar's business links with the corporation of London, and has evolved into a series of events around the main evening reception.



*Albert Poggio GMH OBE, UK Representative for HM Government of Gibraltar; Rt Hon David Lidington MP, Minister of State for Europe; Penny Mordaunt MP, Minister of State for Armed Forces; and The Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, Chief Minister of Gibraltar*

A religious service on the eve Sunday of Gibraltar Day, was conducted at the Our Lady of Dolours Church in Fulham, a place of solace for many Gibraltarians during the evacuation almost 75 years ago (separate article). Preceding the Gibraltar Day evening reception the Gibraltar Finance Centre hosted an exclusive lunch for the London financial sector in the Guildhall Old Library. A keynote address was given by Chief Minister Fabian



Picardo.



To the main event held in the evening, where guests mingled to the sounds of the Corps of Royal Engineers. The Guildhall Great Hall was filled with Gibraltarians, friends of Gibraltar, UK and local parliamentarians such as David Lidington, Minister of State for Europe and Penny Mordaunt, Minister of State for the Armed Services, military men, former Governors, Alderman, Sheriff's and industry leaders all networking to a common interest. The evening closed with the traditional Royal Gibraltar Regiment Band and corps of Drums.

After a successful evening of collaboration, the Ministry for Tourism held the final chapter of this year's Gibraltar Day, hosting a breakfast for Tourism partners at the Royal Automobile Club. At the end of a successful few days of events Gibraltar's relationships with the business community in London continue to strengthen and Gibraltar's looks forward to next year's even; a busy time for all the staff at Gibraltar House.



*The band of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and Royal Engineers at the Sunset Ceremony*



# Spanking Roger and the Great Siege *By Peter Ferrary*

Who was Spanking Roger?

This was a question posed by Stephen Fry during a QI programme shown on BBC in early 2015. What caught my attention was the response that Spanking Roger, otherwise one Roger Aytoun, a colourful, larger than life military gentleman, had been "a hero of the Great Siege of Gibraltar". Though fairly familiar with the Great Siege and some of the key personalities associated with it I had never heard of Aytoun. I decided to try and find out more about him.

The BBC did not reply to my enquiry concerning Aytoun but the internet/Wikipedia, their probable source, had plenty to say some extracts of which are given below:

- '....There is Manchester pub called The Spanking Roger named after a local hero, Roger Aytoun, who raised his own regiment, later the 72nd Manchester Volunteers, which took part in the Siege of Gibraltar (1779-1783) .....
- '.....a tall, raw-boned Scot'; 6'4" tall with a physique to match.... who liked a bare-knuckle fight..... His recruitment process was simple. He would walk the streets of Manchester fighting people; if he won, the loser was recruited whether he wanted to or not. This inclination to fight earned him the nickname of Spanking Roger.'
- '..... He married a rich, 65-year old widow called Barbara Minshull, 45 years his elder.'

Whilst some of this information is colourful and in parts correct some is clearly anecdotal. Certainly, Aytoun did not raise the 72nd Regiment of Foot, Royal Manchester Volunteers (RMV). Captain (later Colonel) Drinkwater<sup>i</sup>, who served in the RMV and who wrote the detailed and well known 'A History of The Siege of Gibraltar' quotes in his book: "...the 72nd Regiment or RMV, a corps of 1000 men, was raised, in 3 months, at the sole expense of the Town of that name in support of the Government during the American War".

Further, an extract from the Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research Vol 41 (courtesy National Army Museum) quoting private papers from Drinkwater held in the National Library of Scotland (MSS 1835 F17) records:

"... on receiving news of Saratoga<sup>ii</sup> Manchester offers to raise 1000 men....Grievance they were only allowed to name Majors, Captains and Ensigns. The 73rd Highlanders were allowed to name all officers and even to sell some commissions. Government reserved Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel and Lieutenants. The Government, "to the great injury of the regiment attached to it some 10-12 old officers who had been on half pay, some for upwards of 20 years..... The Major and several of the Captains were officers who happened to be in Manchester on the recruiting service.....

Aytoun the oldest Captain, a well-known local figure, had married the rich widow Menshull, of Ardwick, and by a life of dissipation had embarrassed her estate. Very popular with the lower classes and a great help in raising the Regiment. Captain of the Grenadier Company."

These references are of interest. Aytoun clearly made good use of his recruiting talents<sup>iii</sup> and personality to bring in recruits. The fact he commanded the Grenadier Company, however, is significant.

The long siege of Gibraltar lasting 3 years, 7 months and 12 days, was, to quote Drinkwater and Ancell<sup>iv</sup> 'a long and tedious affair (my italics). The siege was mostly a drawn out artillery duel enlivened by some dashing naval exploits by daring sea captains and blockade running privateers. For the infantry, who formed the bulk of the garrison, there was little fighting to do and (as happened in World War 2) the bulk of the men were employed in providing guards, working parties and medical orderlies. But there was one brief, glorious infantry assault, the Great Sortie of 27 Nov 1781. The bulk of the assaulting troops were drawn from the regimental elites comprising the Grenadier and Light companies of the Garrison's regiments including the Grenadier company of the 72nd. It is, therefore, very likely that Aytoun took part in this raid and though the entire sortie was of short duration and very little fighting took place, there must have been some pride and kudos in having taken part in such a successful raid.

Whilst individual acts of heroism are recorded by Drinkwater these mainly relate to bravery in rescuing people from destroyed buildings or from exploding shells etc. Bravery not in the direct face of the enemy; in today's terms more worthy of the George Medal/Cross than the VC.

In the book 'Fire Over the Rock – the Great Siege of Gibraltar 1779-83' by James Falkner, he writes (Chap 4): '...Long months of siege had passed with brief spurts of danger and excitement, but the chances to display valour and gain advancement were few. Officers fretted at the lack of opportunity to shine....They reflected, with no agreeable sensations, upon the preferment which had been liberally bestowed upon young officers in England, while many subalterns in Gibraltar had 10-12 years of strict duty and service to plead.'

Indeed Aytoun remained a Captain and Drinkwater an Ensign for the entire duration of the siege – as confirmed in the Regiment's carefully written 6 monthly muster rolls preserved in the National Archives in Kew<sup>v</sup>. It was only at the end of the siege on return to England on 6 Aug 1783 that Aytoun is shown as a Major and Drinkwater as a Lieutenant. Whether this was a reward for services rendered or promotion earned by time or paid for<sup>vi</sup> is not known. What is clear is that nearly all of the officers shown on the rolls retained their ranks throughout the siege.



*The Manchester pub "The Spanking Roger"*

*Major General Roger Aytoun and the Duc d'Angouleme  
(John Kay 1797)<sup>viii</sup>*



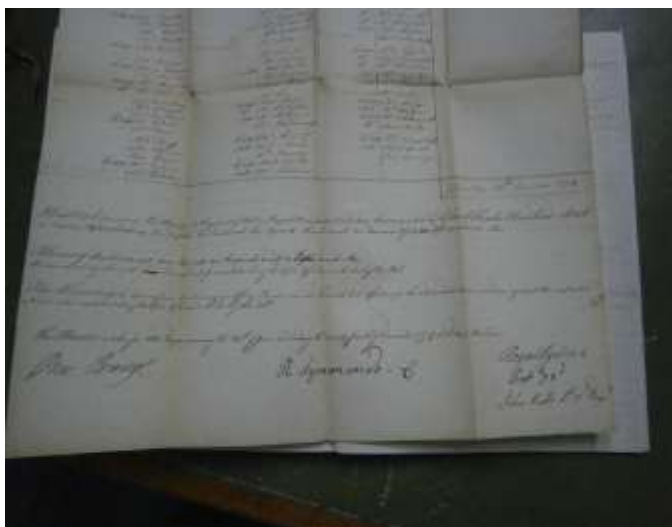
Eventually, all ended well. The long and tedious siege was endured and won; the longest military siege in history and a feat of military ingenuity, endurance and dash. King George 3rd was well pleased and Elliott duly rewarded and in a smaller way the rest of the garrison also got their rewards. Anyone who had served in Gibraltar during the long siege was assured of a hero's welcome on returning home.

The Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research Vol 53 (NAM) quoting from Aris's Birmingham Gazette of Monday 25th August 1783 records: 'Wednesday arrived in the City of Worcester on their way home, after a fatiguing march from Portsmouth, the first division of the 72nd Regiment of Foot or Manchester Volunteers (sic), whose laborious services and undaunted courage during the past 5 years, in the defence of the valuable Fortress of Gibraltar, must endear them to every Friend and Lover of his Country'.

No doubt when the boys finally arrived home in Manchester many an ale house would have opened their doors to welcome home their conquering heroes. And no doubt, Aytoun, who was already well known and a popular man, would have been duly treated as such. In this respect, Aytoun, like many others, was indeed a hero of the Siege of Gibraltar.

Aytoun became a widower on 20th February 1783. He married again, on 29th (or 24th) July 1784, to Jean Sinclair, born 7 August 1757, only daughter and heiress of Sir John Ross Sinclair of Balgownie. Aytoun went on to make a career in the army retiring as Major General in 1805, becoming Laird of Inchdairnie. He died there on 23rd October 1810 aged 61<sup>vii</sup>.

The author met Joanne and Anne Girling on a recent holiday in Scotland – a happy coincidence! They are descendants of Roger Aytoun and provided an update on the family.



*Muster Roll signed by Captain Roger Aytoun*



*And one showing absent personnel*

Notes i. Both Drinkwater (as an Ensign) and Aytoun (as a Captain) served in Gibraltar throughout the siege but no mention is made of Aytoun at any point in Drinkwater's book.

- ii. A British defeat in 1777 during the American War of Independence.
- iii. The nickname Spanking Roger may not necessarily come from Aytoun's boxing talents; the word spanking has other meanings as in spanking new. And there is a piece of music called the Spanking Roger. According to the family (see below), the nickname derived from his height and military bearing.
- iv. Ancell, of the 58th Regiment of Foot (later the Northamptonshire Regiment now part of the Royal Anglian Regiment), who published in 1784: 'A Circumstantial Journal of the long and Tedious Blockade and Siege of Gibraltar 1779-1783'.
- v. National Archives WO 12/7925. The muster rolls of the 72nd in Gibraltar are the only documents pertaining to this regiment at the National Archives. They make interesting reading. Most of the officers retained their ranks throughout and survived the siege. Of particular interest is that nearly half the personnel are shown as absent at any one time. Some officers are occasionally marked down as 'on leave' or General Elliott's leave. This would indicate that throughout the siege there may have been a rotation of personnel (clarification of this by any reader would be welcome). One officer of note who left and returned to Gibraltar twice during the siege was Colonel, later Major General, Ross who at one stage commanded the 72nd. Previously, Ross, as CO of the 39th, was court martialled by Boyd (who was Regimental Colonel) but later re-instated by Elliott who thought highly of him. Ross commanded the sortie and was one of the few officers who was promoted twice during the siege. He left Gibraltar as a Major General.
- vi. The buying of commissions was commonplace in those days. Drinkwater himself records that before the 72nd Regiment was disbanded in 1783, he was able to purchase a company. He was then placed on half pay during which time he wrote the account of the siege. He returned to active service in 1787 returning to Gibraltar.
- vii. As given by Mr Hamish Rollo Aytoun Neilson, a cousin of Joanne Girling.
- viii. John Kay (1742-1826) - Scottish caricaturist, engraver, miniature painter and social commentator.

## The Evacuation of Gibraltar 1940

*By our correspondent in Gibraltar House*

In 1995 Governor Field Marshall Sir John Chapple, was quoted in the Gibraltar Chronicle discussing the sacrifices made by Gibraltarian families during the war effort,

"And it was Gibraltar, alone, of all the territories of the Empire, which endured evacuation and separation of the civilian population. So that every member of the community was personally involved in the war in one way or another."

Gibraltar's military importance as a British overseas territory was never more important than during the Allied campaigns in WWII. The Rock not only functioned as a fortress, but great sacrifice was given by the civilians living there. It is almost 75 years since the evacuation during which many Gibraltarians were separated from their families and loved ones. As the war effort intensified, approximately 70% of Gibraltar's population was evacuated in a matter of weeks to accommodate the military personnel required to safeguard the Rock.



*Gibraltar under attack by Italian aircraft – Gibraltar was a fortress under siege in WW2, necessitating the evacuation*  
 French Morocco, at the time an ally and close neighbour, seemed the logical first port of call for Gibraltarian families to take refuge, and so it was when mothers and children waved goodbye to fathers, husbands, brothers and sons from the decks of SS Mohamed Ali El-Kabir. On arrival in Morocco conditions were poor with the majority of citizens lodged in an



assortment of converted halls, partitioned off for families by curtains. The spread of disease was a real threat but generally avoided under the watchful eye of administering councils. 13,500 evacuees crossed the Strait between 22nd May and 24th June 1940 and were spread out across nine towns in French Morocco.

In a twist of fate, as France capitulated to Germany, Morocco was no longer a strong hold. The evacuees were once again on the move. In appalling conditions they were herded to docks to await 15 British freighters before returning to Gibraltar for a temporary disembark, while the ships were repaired.

In the time since they had left Gibraltar was further fortified and ready for action, 16 anti-aircraft guns were shipped for England to bolster defences. Italy had since joined the war and had begun air raids on Gibraltar. The first Gibraltarian casualty of the war came on 18 July 1940 following an Italian bombing raid. The need to evacuate became imperative.

First a small group of evacuees were sent to the Portuguese island of Madeira, but the majority were shipped to London in what was meant to be a temporary measure, until they could travel onto Jamaica. The difficult 18 day journey was made in very difficult conditions. Families squeezed together on ships with poor washing areas and little sanitation facilities. Medical supplies were scarce. There was a shortage of lifeboats sometimes fewer than two per ship offering no protection, should the convoys run up against a German-U-Boat.

While the main convey headed to Britain, on October 27th the SS Nuria departed Gibraltar for Jamaica with 1,093 on board. It undertook a perilous journey across U-Boat infested waters. A second convoy followed on board the SS Thysville arriving on November 16th. A new camp called 'Gibraltar camp' was set up on arrival and those displaced to Jamaica would spend a relatively settled time in their new home for the duration of the war. Those shipped to Madeira also immersed themselves into local life, and which would have been made to endure better had their spouses and partners been banned from visiting, for fear of damaging Portugal's neutrality during the war.

However, it was the 12,000 evacuees sent to London who would endure the worst of the war suffering the harshest realities of the Blitz. Having arrived at ports across the country evacuees were medically examined and de-loused before being transported to London, barely settled in their new home when the Battle of Britain began in earnest. There were many tales of bravery and some proud moments such as the visit by HM Queen Elizabeth.

After the Germans deployed the V1 Doodlebug above London this new menace determined the need to move the Gibraltarians again, this time to Ballymena in northern Ireland where they would wait out the war. Moved now to safer ground the refugees were to endure two of the coldest winters of 1944 and 1945 but the end of their journey was near.

The first evacuees to return home sailed from London on 6 April 1944. By October 1944 roughly 7,000 evacuees had been returned to Gibraltar. It would take a total of 7 years to repatriate all those who had left. The evacuees' first glimpses of home would remain with them forever. An associated event took place at the National Arboretum :

### ***Gibraltar unveils 'Wars Memorial' in UK National Memorial Arboretum***



Our Chairman, Sir Adrian Johns, at the unveiling of the Memorial

Government Minister Neil Costa unveiled the Gibraltar Wars Memorial at a ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum in Lichfield, Staffordshire, on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015. The special ceremony, which served as a reminder of the military heritage

shared by Gibraltar and Britain, saw members of the Royal British Legion and Royal Gibraltar Regiment band march onto the grounds where the monument now stands at the entrance of the Mediterranean section. The unveiling was carried out in the presence of former Governors Sir James Dutton and Sir Adrian Johns. The ceremony also included the laying of wreaths in front of the monument.

## Gibraltar & Ballymena – A Long Held Friendship

*By Rosalind Lowry and Sheena Dent, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council*

There's a strong, long-standing relationship between Gibraltar and the people of Ballymena.

During WWII, Northern Ireland played a vital role with 12 camps constructed to be used by approximately 5,000 refugees from Gibraltar.

In recognition that many families were welcomed to Ballymena and Broughshane area, the Mayor of Gibraltar, Clive Beltran and the then Mayor of Ballymena Borough, Tommy Nicholl, signed a formal Twinning Agreement at an official ceremony in 2006. More recently, in May 2015, the Mayor of the new Mid and East Antrim Borough, Councillor Billy Ashe, Mayoress Beatrice Ashe and Councillor Audrey Wales were invited to Gibraltar by HM Government of Gibraltar to attend the historic celebration that marked the anniversary of the evacuation.

Cllr Ashe said: "We were warmly received in Gibraltar by the Deputy Chief Minister, Joseph Garcia and His Worship the Mayor, Adolpho Canepa. Our visit has further strengthened our links with Gibraltar."

"We attended a special memorial service and a photographic exhibition of the evacuation, representing all those who were evacuated to several locations including London, Madeira, Jamaica and Northern Ireland." "I hope that, moving forward, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will develop this important partnership with Gibraltar."

Today, visitors from Gibraltar can be guided around the former historic camp locations – many of which still exist. They are always welcome as guests at the Mayors Parlour of the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council that formally replaced the legacy Councils of Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne, in April 2015.



*Memorial at site of Aghacully Camp*



*and remnants of buildings at Drummack Refugee Camp*



*Mayor Clive Beltran and Mayor Tommy Nicholl at the signing of the formal Twinning Agreement (2006)*



The Mid and East Antrim Borough visit in 2015 was only the latest development in this special and unique friendship. In May 2013, the Gibraltar Sea Scouts Pipe Band were playing 'When Irish Eyes Are Smiling' as a delegation of Lions Club and Ballymena Borough Council representatives arrived at City Hall, John Macintosh Square, Gibraltar. That event marked another official Twinning Ceremony – and was one of many initiatives and links held between this time between the Gibraltar and Ballymena Lions Clubs Ballymena and Gibraltar over the years. Indeed, a range of visits, exchanges and commemorative programmes have been held between Gibraltar and Ballymena over the years. In 2014 a full anniversary programme marked the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the evacuees to the Ballymena and Broughshane District.



*Mayor Billy Ashe, Mayoress Beatrice Ashe, Cllr Audrey Wales attend the historic celebration marking the anniversary of the war-time evacuation at the invitation of the HM Government of Gibraltar (May 2015)*

## OUT AND ABOUT IN GIBRALTAR

Developments on key sites around the Rock *by the Editors*



*The development around 6 Convent Place that was reported last year has now been completed, and has greatly improved this area of the old town, replacing the old Girl's Grammar School and more recent adapted government offices. The entrance through the old Guard Room in front of the Convent makes good use of the available facilities.*





*The area around Ince's Hall has been redeveloped to house the Gibraltar International Bank. This project has also been completed, and was awarded a prize by the Gibraltar Heritage Trust for its architectural fit and sensitivity. The Bank has made an excellent start, and cash points (appropriately in red and white) are now available at several points in Town.*



*Modern image of Windmill Hill taken from the Naval Signal Station looking East. The strength of the fortifications (reported in a separate article in this issue) remains impressive to this day.*



*The new housing on Eastern Beach is close to completion, and will provide much needed additional accommodation. This site on Devil's Tower Road is close to the location of the old tall communications mast, and is on ex-MOD land by the airport complex. This part of the Rock is being developed extensively, and much of the industrial and commercial sites have been improved, though some work remains to be done to complete this upgrade.*



*The University of Gibraltar site has also won a Heritage Award. It is on the Europa Point plateau, close to the Chapel of Our Lady of Europe, and it has been developed in keeping with the surrounding buildings. The Society is developing links with the new University, and intends to provide a Bursary in the area of Heritage.*



*The site of St Bernard's Hospital is being redeveloped to house a number of offices, an extension to the Mount Alvernia Old Folk's Home, and the new St Bernard's Middle School, as can be seen in the images below. This would seem to be a very sensible use of this site, and the architecture is attractive.*



**Bordaline Web Design**  
Man and Mouse

[www.bordaline.co.uk](http://www.bordaline.co.uk)

- Individually designed web sites
- E-commerce
- Customer updated websites
- Multilingual websites
- Portfolio available online

62 Edinburgh Road,  
Newmarket, Suffolk,  
CB8 0QD, UK  
+44 (0) 1638 602249 or Skype: john.borda  
[enquiries@bordaline.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bordaline.co.uk)

#### Front Cover:

Statue on North Mole commemorating the return to Gibraltar  
after Evacuation during World War II

## **APPEAL FOR MORE VOLUNTEERS**

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

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

*Rock Talk is published by The Friends of  
Gibraltar, 150 Strand, London, WC2R 1JA  
Registered Charity no. 295082  
Company registered in England no. 02047307*

*Patron: HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO  
President: The Baroness Hooper CMG  
Chairman: Sir Adrian Johns KCB CBE  
Vice-Chairman: Albert Poggio OBE GMH  
Secretary: Tricia Johnson  
Membership Secretary: Commodore Richard Lord CBE  
Treasurer: Venetia Lawson-Cruttenden*

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