



GIBRALTAR HERITAGE TRUST

NEWSLETTER

Spring 1996

FAREWELL ADDRESS BY THE RETIRING CHAIRMAN:

Lt.-Col. (Retd) E. Guerrero, OBE

On the 1st January I handed over the Chairmanship of the Board of Trustees to Mr. Alexis Almeda. Mr. Almeda needs very little introduction as he is one of our prominent citizens. He had a very successful career in the service of Government in the Environment and Health Department. He has also been very active in undergoing charitable work for the community, and was until recently a leading light in the Rotary Club. I am therefore happy that I am handing over the reins to someone who fully understands the running of a charitable organisation, and the importance of preserving our rich and unique heritage. I am certain that he will quickly establish himself as a true champion and leader of our cause.

During my three and a half years as Chairman I have learnt two fundamental things. Firstly, the importance of our unique and rich heritage and secondly, Gibraltar's lack of vision in not preserving and exploiting that heritage for the economic well-being of its society.

Much has been done to improve some of our most important historical sites within the recognised tourist circuit, but frankly those improvements carried out have been somewhat cosmetic and not enough to preserve our heritage and improve our tourist product. The Government has succeeded in reaping maximum benefit from the sites visited by the tourists but sadly not enough money has been ploughed back to substantially improve the existing sites and to embark on the restoration of other prominent historical sites.



Just consider some of the historical sites waiting to be restored and exploited as prime tourist sites, and in considering the sites bear in mind that the use of a site is as important as its restoration. The following are just some examples:

- a. ***The King's Bastion** - a unique military bastion which could become Gibraltar's answer to Convent Garden in London.*
- b. ***The Northern Defences including Grand Casemates Square** - could be developed into Europe's most important military historical defence works.*
- c. ***The Tunnels' System** - 36 miles of tunnels - unique in the world and with an enormous potential. 'The underground Disney World'.*

The above are just a few examples of the many historical sites in Gibraltar that could be developed. But the point is that Gibraltar could become one of the most important historical cities in Europe. Admittedly enormous amounts of money would be needed to realize such a dream, but Rome was not built in a day, we must make a start NOW. The first thing that should happen is to classify Gibraltar as a World Heritage Site.

Such a status has been advocated by the Trust for many years but unfortunately our suggestion has fallen on deaf ears. Once Gibraltar is internationally recognised as a World Heritage Site, money from international organisations and institutions could be sought to assist us in restoring our heritage.

This lack of vision or apathy is what led the Trust during the last couple of years to embark on the serious business of restoration. The restoration of Parson's Lodge Battery and the exterior of the City Hall thus became a reality. This was a very difficult enterprise for the Trust. Enormous amounts of money had to be raised and many organisations and individuals had to be cajoled to offer their services at no cost to assist in the restoration.



The restoration of Parson's Lodge in particular, was a mammoth task which required an abundance of enthusiasm, determination and commitment as true Gibraltarians. That doggedness which the Gibraltarian has acquired as a result of 292 years of siege from our neighbours really came to the fore in the restoration work. It really demonstrated the desire of the majority of Gibraltarians who are prepared to work freely and for no ulterior motive other than to do good for their fellow Gibraltarians.

In praising all those who assisted in the restoration of Parson's Lodge Battery, I must also include the Services Units and the Community who have wholeheartedly supported all our projects both financially and with volunteer labour.

The restoration work so far carried out by the Trust has greatly assisted in promoting the need to restore our heritage. Most Gibraltarians are now more aware of this and have sought to become members of the Trust. More and more people are now contacting the Trust to report minor and major desecrations of our heritage. I hope that this awareness and community spirit will continue and grow.

ADDRESS BY THE NEW CHAIRMAN: Mr. Alexis Almeda

As the Trust starts 1996 in its important work of protecting our valuable heritage and I take over from its outgoing Chairman, Lt. Col., (Retd) E. Guerrero, OBE., one cannot but look back with admiration and gratitude at what have been our Trust's truly marvellous achievements over the last three years under Eddie's able Chairmanship.

I am, of course, referring to the restoration of two unique examples of our heritage, on the military side the bringing back into use (in a more peaceful role) of Parson's Lodge Battery, and on the civilian side the restoration of the City Hall, a building which has played such an important role in our history and development as a people.

Both are prime examples of the hard work, dedication and team spirit of your Board which I have been given the honour to chair for this year. Efforts which have been made possible, not only by the



support given by you, our members, and the generosity of friends, but also by the hard work and expertise of visiting Service Units who have helped so much in the protection of this heritage.

Such success augurs well for the future, even if it makes the task of maintaining the present momentum that much more daunting. It is, therefore, in this light that one looks to the preservation and restoration of our past, despite the need for development aimed at our community's future economic survival and progress. In a small community such as ours, the answer must surely lie in a happy balance between essential progress and the retention of our past which clearly also has such a high cultural and economic value in attracting visitors to our homeland, thus developing tourism and trade in a diversifying economy.

It is a harsh reality that protecting our heritage is expensive, that the cost has to be met from our Trust's funds, through the proper administration of our finances, and on the generosity and support of our many friends, both locally and in the United Kingdom, not only in terms of donations such as that of the Manifold Trust, which made such valuable contribution towards the City Hall's restoration, but also in kind, such as the visiting Servicemens' invaluable community work.

There is still much to do in this and in coming years. We are actively looking into the creation of a Maritime Museum which would cement our long connections with the Royal Navy and its traditions, of reutilizing the magnificent old Victualling Yard to enhance the facilities at Parson's Lodge Battery. Exciting projects which will require a continued effort in fund-raising to plough back into our heritage. This can be done in a variety of ways: by increasing our membership, making use of the covenant scheme, attracting sponsorship from interested firms etc. making everyone in our community aware of our rich heritage, enlisting their active support in order to protect our monuments from wanton damage or destruction by vandalism, or uninspired development. After all, it makes more economic sense to invest our hard earned funds in preserving or enhancing our heritage than in trying to make good the damage done by the unthinking or uncaring few.



PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Thursday, 7th March

"THE HISTORY OF THE SUPREME COURT"

A talk by Richard Garcia which will take place in the actual courtroom. Meet at the Town Range entrance 9.00pm

Saturday, 9th March

"AN EXPLORATION OF LOWER ST. MICHAEL'S CAVE"

Led by Tito Vallejo and his son Dale. Reduced rates for Trust members £3.00. Minimum age 10 years. This expedition involves climbing and scrambling and lasts for three hours. It is not suitable for members who are unfit, or who suffer from vertigo or claustrophobia. Sensible shoes and clothing are recommended. The event is restricted to a maximum of twenty members only. Those interested should phone the Secretary at the GHT Office. Tel: 42844. Meet at the car park outside St. Michael's Cave at 3.00pm.

Saturday, 30th March

"A TOUR OF THE NORTHERN DEFENCES"

Led by Lionel Culatto. Meet at the bottom of Crutchett's Ramp at 10.30am.

Saturday, 13th April

"A TOUR OF THE LIGHTHOUSE"

Mr Terry Jesty has kindly offered to take a maximum of 20 members on a tour of the lighthouse. Minimum age 8 years. Members are reminded that there are a lot of steps to climb in an enclosed space. Sensible footwear and slacks for ladies are recommended. Meet outside the lighthouse at 10.30am.

Saturday, 4th May

"ART COMPETITION"

Subject: The Loreto Convent (which recently celebrated it's 150th Anniversary), and it's environs. Duration: 10am-5pm. Registration in the school hall at the Convent. Age Groups: Adults 17 and over. Juniors 11-16. Children any age up to 10. Rules are obtainable from the Secretary, GHT at Wellington Front.

Saturday, 23rd May

"TOUR OF THE ROYAL NAVAL HOSPITAL"

By kind permission of the OIC - Cdr. Derek Shone RN. Meet at the entrance to the hospital 10.30am.

Saturday, 22nd June

"TOUR OF PARSON'S LODGE"

Guide: Christopher Terry. Meet outside the gates at 10.30am.

Members are reminded that the opening hours of the GHT Office at Wellington Front have now been extended from 09.00 - 12.30 and from 2 - 5pm Mondays to Fridays.



NEW BOOKS
Reviewed by Sam Benady

**"THE HISTORY OF THE OLD NAVAL HOSPITAL,
GIBRALTAR - 1741-1922" by Christine Lawrence**

This well-written and readable book chronicles the story of one of Gibraltar's most interesting 18th Century buildings, from its construction until it finally ceased to be used as a hospital. More than a simple history book, the book contains much that is of interest about Service life in Gibraltar over almost two centuries. It is profusely illustrated and is a must for those interested in Gibraltar history.

"FROM FORTRESS TO DEMOCRACY"
by Sir William Jackson and Francis Cantos

Subtitled 'The Political Biography of Sir Joshua Hassan', this book is in fact also a political history of Gibraltar in the last fifty years, seen from the perspective of the man who was politics in Gibraltar for nearly all that time, and it thus makes much more compelling reading than if it were a simple history.

It is well produced and readable, and is obviously the result of years of careful research. It should be required reading for aspiring politicians, as well as all those who are interested in Gibraltar affairs. Schools should use it as a textbook.

The appendices include one which gives the text of the Brussels Agreement; here's your chance to read it and see what they're all going on about!

"REPENT AT LEISURE"

If we find them depressing, imagine what the tourist must think of those scenes of dereliction that characterize some sections of the eastern and southern approaches to the Rock. Many of the eyesores that signpost the routes along which the tourist must travel call into question the validity of our concern for the environment. An environment crying out for attention, and a little judicious landscaping.

Yes, the wartime Nissen huts above Catalan Bay have now been dismantled only to be replaced by an accumulation of rubbish. Yes, the sea views beyond Blackstrap Cove are still there, but mostly visible through a network of brick designed, it would seem, to block them out. Scrap yards, rubbish dumps, hoardings, broken pavements

and potholes all contribute to the general air of neglect. Incomprehensible at a time when Gibraltar is struggling to upgrade its tourist image.

Even more problematic are those buildings at the southern end of the Rock which still stand empty. When they were vacated by the MOD many of these properties (which add significantly to our architectural heritage) were left to decay or to become a prey to vandalism. One such example is the former Officers' Mess at Buena Vista. Has anyone yet objected to the desecration of this building? An establishment steeped in military history which embraced not only the Gibraltar Regiment but many other famous regiments of the British Army as well. In 1883 it was used by the 2nd Bn The Durham Light Infantry, in 1915 by the 1st Garrison Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Officers of the 2nd Bn The Suffolk Regiment messed there in 1926, the 2nd Bn The Gordon Highlanders in 1935, the 2nd Bn The Cameronians in 1947 - the list, of course, is endless. Let us hope that, unlike those other lost inheritances Arengo's Palace and Engineer House, it is still not too late to rescue what remains of this once notable building and the garden and trees that embellish it.

Take a stroll out to Europa Point, through an area once noted for its orderliness and the immaculate appearance of its 19th century buildings: the neat little bungalows, the army quarters and barracks with their verandahs and arcades. Fortunately, St. Bernard's Church, 1898, is still intact and well used. The same can be said of the adjacent married quarters erected in 1899, but a third block, dated 1911, is clearly destined for destruction or redevelopment, whilst 'A' and 'B' Blocks, together with 'Bleak House', the jewel in the architectural crown, are all boarded up. The latter, a Georgian building of some distinction, dating from the governorship of Sir George Don, was considered especially meritorious by the SAVE Team in their 1982 Report. Used for many years by the Royal Artillery as their Officers' Mess it was scheduled for demolition in the 1960s, but thanks to the intervention of an eminent local historian, it was not only saved but extensively restored, and in 1966 was handed over to the RAEC as 76 Army Education Centre and 21 Command Library.

These few examples alone serve to illustrate a variety of architectural styles which greatly enhance our stock of period buildings. We should be doing our utmost to protect them. After all, if 'Bleak House' owes its existence today to the determined efforts of one lady -Dorothy Ellicott- it wouldn't hurt to follow in her footsteps.

Marjorie Hoare



LIST OF TRUSTEES

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VALLEJO	Mr. Tito 24 Rosia Dale	Tel: 71871





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FOREWORD BY CHAIRMAN

As the Trust's first Newsletter for 1997 goes to press, I feel that all our Members should be aware of what was achieved by the Board through 1996. In an effort to inform those Members who were unable to attend the Annual General Meeting and, perhaps to refresh the memory of those who did, an abridged version of my first Annual Report might not be amiss.

1. Administration and Finances:- The sheer volume of Heritage work required the engagement of our part-time Secretary on a full time basis. The benefits achieved by this important move more than compensate for the inevitable increase in administration costs.

Our Finances showed a welcome increased income of £105,386, but our expenses also increased to £34,003. The resultant excess of income over expenditure of £71,383 included the £50,000 donation received towards the restoration of the exterior of the City Hall. The net excess of income over expenditure was £21,383, a credit to the Board's efforts and the generosity of our supporters, but not sufficient to allow us to embark of any major project on our own.

2. Major Projects-

(i) PARSON'S LODGE BATTERY: 1996 saw the completion of Phase I of the Battery's restoration with the opening of the WW2 tunnels and gun emplacements under this complex. We have not, however, been as successful with the management arrangements for this Heritage site, as the contract to put this in place has not been finalized.

