



GIBRALTAR HERITAGE TRUST

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2000

FOREWORD BY CHAIRMAN

MR JOE DESOISA

May I introduce myself as the new Chairman of the Trust. I was born and went to school in Gibraltar, where I have now returned after an absence of 45 years. I would like to pay tribute to the work of the retiring Chairman, Alexis Almeda, who happily continues as a Trustee of the Board. I am also fortunate that Paco Galliano, whose knowledge and experience are proving invaluable, is the new Vice Chairman. I thank retiring Trustees Pepe Rosado and Jenny Whiteland for the dedicated service that they have given to the Trust over the years, and welcome Dr Keith Farrell, Mark Dellipiani and Dr. Diane Sloma as new members of the Board.

The forthcoming year promises to be one of interest and challenge for the Trust and the cause of Gibraltar's Heritage in general. The work of refurbishment and restoration of the Mayor's Parlour in the City Hall, which was initiated by the Trust over a year ago, is nearing completion and an official opening is planned for the 7th March. It's newly restored paintings present an aspect of Gibraltar's rich heritage that is very different from its more usual military connotations. We are fortunate indeed that these murals were rescued from the irreversible deterioration that imminently threatened, and must marvel at the art and skill of Senor Paco Trujillo and his son Pablo who have so splendidly accomplished their restoration.

The project has been an expensive undertaking and the Trust gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance provided by the Minister of Heritage, the Hon Keith Azopardi, the Friends of Gibraltar Heritage, the Gibraltar Tourist Board and GB Airways. The Parlour will not normally be open to the public but, by kind permission of the Mayor, dates are included in the programme of events on which members of the Trust will have the opportunity of inspecting the work carried out. A copy of the brochure that has been produced to mark the official opening of the restored interior is enclosed with this newsletter.



Members will be aware that Gibraltar has been included in the UK nominated list of sites seeking UNESCO World Heritage designation. This is a Government-led initiative in which the Trust will involve itself with determination and enthusiasm. The Trust is well represented on the Heritage Commission that will oversee Gibraltar's application for World Heritage Site status. The Trust also forms part of the Heritage Action Committee that will meet more frequently to review sites and works which have a heritage impact. It further contributes to the Working Group that will assemble the data and evidence in support of our application. Let us, however, be under no illusions as to the magnitude of the task that faces us. Usually, only two sites are so designated worldwide, and even in the tentative UK list we shall be vying for recognition with places of such world renown as Kew Gardens and the Chatham Naval Base. There is no doubting the authenticity and even uniqueness of our Heritage, which extends far beyond its more obvious manifestations and which we are so often inclined to take for granted. We must now determine to resist any further erosion and fragmentation of the structures that remain and restore those that have been allowed to fall into neglect and decay.

It is in this respect that the news that it has not yet been finally decided to demolish the old Generating Station, which continues to besmirch the King's Bastion, must be viewed with particular concern. Restoration of the City Walls is but one of the aims to be achieved in preparation for the UNESCO bid. It would be idle to pretend, however, that this can be achieved without rescuing the King's Bastion, which once played such a crucial role in our history, from its present state of dereliction. The proposed new Leisure Centre could conceivably be situated within the boundaries of the Battery without jeopardising its integrity. The Centre could thus initiate and later sustain the restoration of the Battery. The retention of the hulk of the old Generating Station on the other hand must be viewed as an insult to civic pride.

On the last occasion that the members of the Trust were consulted on this issue an overwhelming preference in favour of demolition was expressed. Your opinions, however, were only counted as a single vote on the grounds that they were lodged with the Government by the Board and not by individuals. In order to avoid a repetition of this tactic



a simple form, which will give members the opportunity of recording their views directly, is enclosed with this newsletter. I strongly urge all members to complete the form in full and send it to the Chief Minister.

HERITAGE SITES:

Parson's Lodge is still open to the public, thanks to the dedicated hard work of Alan Lieb. The site is to be included in the Holt's Battlefield Tours visit to Gibraltar in early Spring. It is hoped that the Tourist Board will soon be able to fund the installation of much-needed public facilities.

The City Hall has had its exterior rendered pigeon proof in order to protect the extensive restoration carried out in past years. This work was made possible through the financial assistance given by Government.

Nun's Well is unfortunately, still in a dilapidated condition. However, it is planned that during the course of the year Government and EU funds will be devoted to its restoration and the addition of services that will make it attractive to visitors.

The Old Guardroom in John Mackintosh Square, and one of the oldest buildings in Gibraltar, is being restored using traditional materials. When complete it will serve as the offices of the Trust.

Trafalgar Cemetery, which is so often subjected to mindless vandalism, will soon be protected by iron railings.

The Garrison Library is the subject of discussions aimed at sharing its ownership between the officers of the Garrison and the people of Gibraltar. A Board of Trustees will ensure the integrity of the building and the retention of its contents in Gibraltar. The Government will be asked to underwrite the financial viability of these aims.



Casemates Square has now been pedestrianized and the former Barracks are being prepared for occupation by local organisations and will provide new premises for the Gibraltar Museum. It was only the prompt action by our former Chairman that prevented the character of the wooden gates from being sandblasted out of existence. Sadly, the damage that was done is irreversible. This incident illustrates how vigilant we must all be in defence of every detail of our heritage.

Grand Battery is next in line for restoration, and it is proposed to clear Landport Ditch of all obstructing buildings in order to display this fortification to maximum effect. If such clearance were to be continued all the way up the Northern Defences to Moorish Castle we would present an approach view of the City commensurate with its historical uniqueness.

The restoration of the **Theatre Royal** is the Government's Millennium Project and we look forward to the resumption of the important role in the cultural life of Gibraltar that this long neglected building once enjoyed. The **Evacuation Memorial**, which has also been commissioned by the Government, will provide a tangible expression of a traumatic yet formative experience in the history of the people of Gibraltar.

The **Gibraltar Heritage (Protection) Ordinance**, soon to be enacted in the House of Assembly, gives the Trust defined powers and responsibilities 'to promote and foster the preservation and enhancement of Gibraltar's heritage'. The Trust also has a seat on the **Development and Planning Commission** where its purpose is to ensure that the character of our city survives along with the modernization that is equally essential. Things are looking up, and I sense that the Trust is no longer a lone voice crying in the wilderness!



Engineer Battery has been obliterated in order to allow the construction of a mere six luxury dwellings. It is sincerely hoped that this is the last time that such wanton destruction will be officially sanctioned.

Town Range will soon become the centre of building activity. The first scheme on which the Trust has been consulted appears to fulfil the twin aims of providing more residential units without the demolition of buildings of historical value. We hope that such a sensitive approach will be maintained throughout this major redevelopment.

The Old Naval Hospital is also to be converted into residential units and the Trust has held initial discussions with the developer. The Trust's aim will be to ensure, at the very least, that the rooflines and external appearance of this historic building complex are not violated.

King's Bastion, the fate of which still hangs in the balance, deserves to become the centre piece of a promenade that could in time stretch along the **City Walls** from the American War Memorial to the South Jumpers Bastion. The Casino Calpe, just across the road, must be congratulated and emulated on the manner in which the old St George's School has been restored. The work done there presents but a glimpse of how such a promenade would enhance the appearance of the City.

The Moorish Castle, the restoration of which the Trust has chosen as its Millennium Project, continues to decay before our very eyes. However, a contract for the feasibility study that must precede this ambitious project will be awarded very shortly. We are grateful to Government for meeting the costs of this study. Currently the project is being progressed by the Trust, representatives from Government and the Gibraltar Museum. The restoration of this ancient monument, which will also involve experts from abroad, could form the cornerstone of our bid for World Heritage status.

I close on a practical note by requesting members, who have not already done so, to renew their subscriptions as soon as possible so that the Trust can continue our joint endeavours. Membership fees are due on the 1st January every year and a renewal form is enclosed for this purpose.



BOOK REVIEWS

by Dr S.G. Benady

The first three books reviewed below were obviously written with the Millennium very much in mind.

Impressions of Gibraltar. Text by Peter Bond, Photography by Gry Iverslein. Peter Bond, 1999. £25.

This book must be the ultimate "coffee-table" book on Gibraltar, but it is much more than that. The photographs of the different and often very unusual aspects of Gibraltar with which it is filled are enchanting, and show off Gibraltar in a light which many will find it difficult to recognise.

All those of us who live here should possess a copy of this wonderful book. Not so that we can look at it and kid ourselves that our home really looks like this all the time, because it doesn't, but so that we can use it as a bench-mark and say "Gibraltar could look like this; let's make it so!"

Half of the Nation. Ed. Barbara Sellors. Gibraltar Business Network, 1999. Paperback, £6.50

"We see this small volume as the first of many", says the editor in her introduction, and this gives us something to look forward to. It tells the stories of many of the women living in Gibraltar today, of a cross-section of them, at least; not just the rich and the famous, although many 'high achievers' feature in these pages. As such, it is an important social document, as well as being fascinating to read. I would encourage the editor to continue with her project, and to include women from Gibraltar's past. That so little is known about them reflects the male sexist attitudes of the past, and have no place in the new millennium (which starts on January 1, 2001, by the way!)

Gibraltar at the End of the Millennium. Clive and Geraldine Finlayson. Aquila 1999. Hardback £17.50, Paperback 12.50.

This is an absorbing journey in time though our history, with a definite accent on palaeontology, archaeology and ecology which reflects the authors' interests, and this, as well as the fact that it is therefore based on original research, makes it refreshingly different to other histories. It is copiously illustrated with black and white photographs, and one cannot help feeling that better reproduction of some of these would have added much to the book.



Something about Gibraltar. E.F.E Ryan. Reprinted edition, Gibraltar Heritage Publications Committee, 1999. £3.50 (3.00 to GHT members). This little book was first published in 1943 by the late author, who was for many years Editor of the "Gibraltar Chronicle" and Librarian of the Garrison Library. It tells many anecdotes from the Rock's chequered story, and is an entertaining introduction to the history of our city.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2000

Saturday 25th March at 10.30am.

Visit to the City Hall to view restoration of the Mayor's Parlour. This will be strictly limited to paid up members who should register with the office of the Heritage Trust beforehand. Number attending will be limited to 100 persons.

Sunday 30th April starting at 10.30am until about 12.30pm.

A walk in the South District led by Mr Richard Garcia. This is the first time we are having an event on a Sunday the reason being that a number of our Hebrew members have pointed out to us that they are unable to take advantage of our Saturday events and we wish to try and cater of all our members.

Saturday 6th May - The Annual Painting Competition.

The subject this year will be the Moorish Castle. On this occasion registration will be at the Heritage Trust Office from 9.30am with painting commencing at 10am. Pictures to be handed in at the Heritage Office after painting ends at 5p.m. Prize giving will be on Tuesday 9th May at John Mackintosh Hall followed by exhibition of paintings until 18th May. This event is always a great favourite and the number of participants grows annually. The press and radio will carry a reminder nearer the date and rules of the competition can be obtained from our office at Wellington Front.

Saturday 24th June at 10.30am.

A walk in the Rosia Area led by Dr.Keith Farrell - another first.

Thursday 14th September at 8pm.

At the Charles Hunt Room in the John Mackintosh Hall, a talk by Mr Lionel Culatto. Lionel is intending to visit Crete in June and it is hoped that he will talk on the subject of that visit.



Sunday 19th September at 10.30am.

Second visit to the City Hall to view restoration of the Mayor's Parlour. Here again the visit will be limited to 100 paid up members who should register beforehand with our office at Wellington Front.

Thursday 28th September - The Annual General Meeting.

This will be held, as usual, at the Garrison Library and pre-meeting drinks will be served as from 6.30pm.

Thursday 19th October at 8p.m.

Talk by Mr Pepe Rosado. His subject is the King's Chapel and will be held in the Chapel itself.

Thursday 9th November at 8pm at the Charles Hunt Room in the John Mackintosh Hall. Talk by Mr Paco Galliano with Egypt as his subject.

I hope that you will enjoy our programme of events as laid out and if any of you have any ideas or suggestions for the future please feel free to bring them to us.

OTHER HERITAGE MATTERS OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS ARE:

The Heritage Journal No.6 will be available shortly and, as usual, members will be able to obtain their copies at a special price from our office.

Calendar.

Perhaps we should not dwell on the subject of the calendar for the current year but what we can say is that for the year 2001, the true Millennium, we shall be bringing you a calendar to be proud of.



"All Great Buildings Are Rooted In The Past....."

(Pevsner)

Now that all the razzmatazz is over, and as Gibraltar enters the new millennium keen to be recognised as a world heritage site, perhaps this is an opportune moment to take stock and decide not to repeat those past mistakes which have taken such a toll of our architectural heritage.

The fact that such notable 18th and 19th-century buildings as Arengo's Palace (circa 1816), The Assembly Rooms (1885) and Engineer House were so prematurely consigned to the history books speaks volumes about those who were responsible for their destruction at the time. In more recent years we have accepted with apparent equanimity the loss of other buildings whose original styles and interesting backgrounds added considerable lustre to our architectural assets. Brympton is just one such example. We have condoned the violation of others, like the former Officers' Mess at Buena Vista and the 1871 Racquets Court, one of the few remaining courts of its kind. In fact, the visual decline of the South District must surely be regarded as yet another indictment of our aesthetic sensibilities in an area once respected for its elegance and beauty. What, for instance, is now happening to the fenestration on the east face of that classical 18th century building, the South Pavilion at South Barracks? And what will be the fate of South Barracks House itself, and others of its kind?

The desecration of Rosia Parade in 1988 was an unmitigated disaster, another blow to our historical past. Today, ten years later, we are witnessing the mutilation of Engineer Battery and its related fortifications Brain-child of Sir William Green, appointed Senior Military Engineer in 1761, these West Side Batteries are not only associated with events during the Great Siege (1779-1783) but also with the manning of the Battery by the Gibraltar Defence Force during the Second World War. How can we possibly justify their destruction when two vacant sites exist nearby, both crying out for sympathetic development? After all, the demolition of Tower and Cumberland Buildings left nothing but eyesores in their wake and these remain still to corrode a neighbourhood once noted for the diversity and quality of its English architecture. Now, it seems, Gibraltar is turning away from this, plastering its walls with highly decorated Spanish tiles, wrought-iron grilles, and even the occasional incongruous heavy studded door, all proclaiming their Andalusian origins. Elegant Victorian iron railings are also disappearing,



giving way in some instances to imported, pale, bulbous-looking balustrades suffering, it would appear, from advanced stages of elephantiasis.

In order to accommodate three tiers of these pretentious intruders, plus a large swimming-pool, the 19th-century garden of a former 'tied' Admiralty Quarter built in 1815 was recently denuded of all its mature trees, flowers, shrubbery and pergola. No doubt those who over the decades cherished and nurtured this beautiful and historic place are now turning in their graves. Vandalism comes in many guises and because our attempts to prevent it are so feeble our heritage has been considerably impoverished. The theft of period fireplaces and the loss of door-furniture, Victorian fanlights and sash windows all testify to this only too well. Now even the ubiquitous wooden shutter has entered the realm of 'endangered species'. Rodgers Road and upper Scud Hill are the latest victims.

Further afield the old village of Catalan Bay, which once provided a unique opportunity for imaginative and genuine restoration, instead has lost its character. Only one house on the waterfront kept its Genoese features and ochre complexion. On the other hand, its Italian counterpart, Portofino retained all of its traditional features, including shutters, to become one of the most attractive resorts on the Italian Riviera. Happily, the refurbishment of Sir Herbert Miles Road, behind Catalan Bay Village, is a credit to all concerned and Gibraltar can also be justly proud of the other innovative developments which have enhanced those areas where historic buildings are not at risk, i.e. the North Mole, Waterport and the charming esplanade at Westside. The restoration of Casemates, the Grand Battery and the Moorish Castle represents a cataclysmic leap forward and a great deal of hard work. Hopefully enough money and expertise will also be forthcoming for that other national monument: The King's Bastion. Understandably, all efforts are currently focused on the Northern end of the Rock and its main points of entry, but we neglect the South and what remains of its distinctive architecture at our peril.

The restoration of Parson's Lodge, the former St. George's School in Line Wall Road and the City Hall are but three splendid examples of what can be achieved when there is the will. But what fate awaits two of the most precious gems in our architectural collection the 18th century Old Naval Hospital and its contemporary The Mount, with its Gate House, cottages and No.17 Europa Road, now being systematically vandalized?

Let us hope that when decisions have to be taken about their future use more than just commercial considerations will be taken into account. Every jewel deserves a flawless setting and where these estates are concerned their worth in cultural, historical, horticultural and aesthetic terms is inestimable. Surely, as the guardians of our heritage, it is our collective responsibility to protect these legacies and all they represent?

Let us do nothing more then to upset the delicate balance between what is left of our natural and man-made heritage, or harm what remains of Gibraltar's noble buildings and fortifications. Let us also desist from the temptation to interfere with the natural outlines of Gibraltar's legendary silhouette, so that together, Mons Calpe and Mons Abyla, the two Pillars of Hercules, can remain throughout the millennia to come what they have always been - objects of wonder to mankind.

Marjorie Hoare
14th February, 2000.



<u>List of Trustees</u>		Tel
ALMEDA	Mr Alexis 37 Irish Town	75705
BENADY	Dr Sam Woodlands, Buena Vista Road	74433
CANESSA	Mr Eric 501 Trafalgar House, Rosia Road	72172
CORTES	Dr John JP 8/8 Buena Vista Road	76818
DESOISA (Chairman)	Mr Joe 4B Victoria Tower Brympton	78766
DELLIPIANI	Mr Mark 12 Marina Court, Glacis Road	71239
FARRELL	Dr Keith 3 Rosia Parade	76733
GALLIANO (Vice-Chairman)	Mr Paco OBE (Hon LifeTrustee) 8 Bishop Rapallo Ramp	74907
GUERRERO	Lt Col Eddie OBE JP (Co-opted Trustee) 'E' Devil's Gap, Upper Rock	72509
HOARE	Miss Marjorie MBE 1 Sunnyside House	75847
LANGDON	Mr John (Co-opted Trustee) 17a St Bernard's Road	73890
SHAW	Mr Eric FGS FRGS 18 Gavino's Dwellings	70094
SLOMA	Dr Diane 10.31 Block 5 Eurotowers Europort Road	79385
TORRES	Mrs Doris 4D Malvasia, Vineyards	70716
VALLEJO	Mr Tito FRGS 24 Rosia Dale	71871
<hr/>		
HERMIDA	Mr Stephen (Hon Treasurer) 4/4 Jumpers Block	79053
SOIZA	Mrs Brenda (Secretary) 6 Chusan House	42844

