



GIBRALTAR HERITAGE TRUST

Newsletter 2002

Foreword by Chairman

Joe Desoisa

The venue chosen for last year's Painting Competition was the John Mackintosh Square in celebration of the Trust's move into its new offices at the Main Guard. The Trust is grateful to the Government for making these premises available to it and to the Staff of Community Projects for the effort and time spent in the essential repairs and decoration of these rooms necessary before the Trust could move in. The building is, however, still in urgent need of more fundamental structural repairs and the Trust is hopeful that this coming year will see a more sustained effort to preserve what is in fact an important heritage asset.

The prize-giving and official opening of the exhibition of entries for the Painting Competition were combined with the annual Heritage Awards. These were deservedly won by Bayside Comprehensive School for its imaginative recreation of the evacuation experience - "Living History: Memories of the Evacuation" and by Freddie Gomez for the work carried out over many years in the restoration and preservation of Flat Bastion Magazine.

Both events generated great public interest and received widespread media coverage which, aside from rewarding the hard work put into projects of this nature, furthered the objective of the Trust which is to heighten public awareness of Gibraltar's heritage. An encouraging innovation in the Painting Competition, which bodes well for the future, was the staging of a special prior competition on the same theme by pupils from St Mary's School who were supervised by their teachers. The Trust extends its thanks to His Excellency, the Hon David Durie, and to Hon. Keith Azopardi, the Minister for Heritage, whose presence at the prize-giving ceremony enhanced its public profile.

Despite recurring production problems, the Trust also managed to get its 2002 Heritage Calendar out in December. The theme for the Calendar is a collection of watercolours painted by Major General Thomas Staunton St Clair whilst serving in Gibraltar in the 1820s. The Calendar provides an interesting record of the Rock's landscape when it was relatively sparsely populated and should prove attractive to collectors of Gibraltar memorabilia. The Heritage Trust wishes to express its thanks to the Gibraltar Museum, Isola and Isola and Mr Lionel Culatto for permission to reproduce these paintings.

The programme of tours and site visits, organized by Tito Vallejo and Keith Farrell, and which for the first time included a Bay cruise and a visit to the World War II Spanish bunkers, enjoyed its usual success and now boasts a committed band of enthusiastic followers.

The Gibraltar Heritage Journal Number 8 is now on sale at £3 for members and £5 for non-members. Since its first appearance in 1993, the Journal has provided a convenient vehicle in which to record personal memoirs, anecdotes and articles relating to all aspects of Gibraltar's history and I gratefully acknowledge the continuing sponsorship of Gibraltar Telecommunications Ltd for its publication.

The Trust now has its own website, <http://www.gibraltar.gi/heritage>, and can also be contacted via the Internet at address, heritage@gibnet.gi. We acknowledge, with thanks, the generosity of GibNet Ltd for this extension to our facilities.

During the course of the year the Heritage Trust completed two important projects. The first of these was the erection of a memorial, on the fiftieth anniversary of the disaster, to those who died as a result of the Bedenham explosion. The memorial, sited a short distance from the actual point of that devastating explosion, was unveiled by the Chief Minister in the presence of His Excellency the Governor and other distinguished guests.

Thirteen men lost their lives as a result of the accident and no less than eleven gallantry awards, two of them posthumous, as well as many commendations were earned on that day. The unveiling ceremony provided a unique occasion for the families of those who died to meet the families of others who had been involved and survived. Seven medals for bravery and three commendations were on display and

the ceremony was attended by surviving award winners, Malcolm Hughes, then a leading sick-berth attendant, and Joseph Baglietto, then a police constable.

The Trust is grateful to Taylor Woodrow for the support it provided during all stages of this project. Not only did the company meet all the costs of the project; it also saw to all the necessary technical requirements for the erection of the memorial.

The other of the Trust's main projects was the restoration of the Marshman Murals situated in the Patio of the Convent. These Murals, one depicting the Sortie during the Great Siege and the other showing the Storming of Badajoz during the Peninsular War, were drawn in 1870 and had deteriorated almost to the point of being beyond repair. That they have been saved and restored, hopefully for at least another 130 years, is without question due to the consummate artistry and technical expertise of Señor Francisco Fernandez-Trujillo and his son Pablo.

This was a project undertaken in co-operation with the Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society. We thank His Excellency the Governor and Mrs Durie for their patience and assistance whilst the work, which lasted from May until September, was in progress. We are pleased to acknowledge the financial support we received from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and from the Government of Gibraltar and also for the professional assistance and advice that was provided by the University of Cadiz.

We were unable to fulfil our original objective of restoring the stained glass windows in the Sacred Heart School Chapel, but we are hopeful that this project will be completed during the course of the coming year. This year's programme will also include, in March, a week-long exhibition at the John Mackintosh Hall of old maps of Gibraltar and the Straits. We would welcome the assistance of members who are willing to take turns at supervising the exhibition whilst it is open to the public. Anyone wishing to participate in this task is invited to get in touch with the Trust Offices either in person or by telephone on Tel No 42844.

Of course, all the major heritage projects currently in progress are government-led. After the successful completion of the Casemates renovation, the Trust welcomes plans to extend pedestrianisation of the Main Street as far as the Convent. It is a relief to see that a start has been made on clearing the ditch in front of Grand Battery and, of course, the vision behind the restoration of the Theatre Royal is to be

applauded. The demolition of the old Linares building is an important first step in the declared policy of clearing the City Walls. All the more reason, therefore, to lament the lack of consistency in that policy that allows the Kings Bastion Generating Station to remain. This hulk of a building is not only an affront to the dignity of our City; it also masks what is, perhaps, the most important Bastion in the history of Gibraltar.

During the past year, Trust Board members have co-operated closely with the Heritage and Planning Division. Trust representatives have attended the regular meetings of the Development and Planning Commission, the UNESCO Commission and its Working Group and the Heritage Action Committee. The Trust has tabled proposals at the Heritage Action Committee to carry out a replanting scheme for Trafalgar Cemetery and erect a bust or statue of Nelson in the vicinity of Southport Gate as a way of marking the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar. These ideas are currently in the process of discussion.

At last year's AGM, we welcomed two new members, David Eveson and Eddie Davies, on the Board of Trustees. Dr Keith Farrell and Mark Dellipiani stepped down from the Board and I thank them for their valuable contribution to the work of the Trust. Soon, it will be time to request the Heritage Minister to select the government appointees to the Trust. May I ask any member wishing to serve as a Trustee to get in touch with Brenda, our secretary, at the Trust Offices. In particular, I would be delighted to hear from any hardy member who is willing to serve as Chairman of the Trust in the future.

OLD NAVAL HOSPITAL

For over 250 years the Old Naval Hospital has remained in safe hands - an example of a perfect 18th-century English colonial complex. As such, it served first as a hospital and then as a home for British Service personnel and their families. Now, for the first time in its remarkable history, it is being altered to attract 'high net worth' individuals, and goodness only knows what effect this will have on its overall appearance.

The date 1733 appears on the central keystone above the archway leading to the quadrangle, but the records state that ONH was only completed in 1746. It stands on the site of the Chapel of Nuestra Senhora de los Remedios which was surrounded by a wall with an arched entrance on the north side, and the Devil's Tooth rising above it outside the south-east corner of the wall. When the Chapel and buildings were abandoned they were used on various occasions by the military. It is known, for instance, that a regiment was encamped there during the Siege of 1729.

Early in the 18th century plans were submitted for the construction of a hospital to replace the collection of huts, sheds and tents in the area, but it wasn't until war with Spain was imminent that a proposal to build a 1,000-bed hospital was authorized. It was started in March 1741 and completed some five years later. The hospital consists of a simple two-storey quadrangle, 350 feet long by 150 feet wide overall. Projecting from the centre of its west front is a five-bay, three-storey block which originally contained offices and staff quarters; additional accommodation for the staff was also provided by small three-storey corner towers. Inside, the central courtyard is 150 feet by 75 feet, and behind the main east-west ranges are two further ones containing more wards and ancillary facilities.

The building, which was subsequently used as married quarters for naval officers, was originally planned with long wards, running the full width of the ranges and connected to each other by internal doors. Covered verandahs round the courtyard gave protection to the patients and served as corridors, allowing wards to be isolated if required. The hospital was completed by a boundary wall, porter's lodge and entrance gates which were added during the reign of Edward VII (1901 - 1910). Next to these were further staff houses.

Captain John Spilsbury illustrates the hospital in his "Journal of the Siege of Gibraltar 1779 - 1783", and Colonel John Drinkwater refers to it in his "History of the Siege of Gibraltar" describing it as "a capacious pile, well adapted to the purpose for which it was intended: it has an area in the centre with piazzas and a gallery above, by which the sick may enjoy the sun, or shade, as they think proper: there are apartments for 1,000 men, with pavilions at each wing for the accommodation and convenience of the surgeons and their attendants. The hospital was originally erected for the navy, in case a British fleet should be stationed in the Mediterranean; but, on the Spaniards bombarding the town in 1781, the Governor removed into it the sick of the Garrison."

During the Seven Years War the ground floor was used to house the French prisoners of war, and on the 3rd January 1891 the Admiralty took back that portion of the main hospital which had been allocated to the Army. Between 1905 and 1907 alterations were carried out and the accommodation increased. An interesting engineering feat was the lifting up bodily of the entire roof of a building known as the lunacy block and replacing it at a greater height. Several hundred tons of rock had to be removed by blasting the site for the zymotic or infectious blocks which are situated at the eastern end of the complex and which were ultimately occupied by the military. The east and west blocks were identical, containing one large ward with six beds, and two side wards with one bed each. There was also an Orderly Room, plus other facilities like a kitchen, bathroom, w.c., corridor and verandahs. These blocks were eventually turned into self-sufficient flats.

In November 1922 ONH ceased to function as a hospital although the Army still retained the use of the two zymotic blocks, eventually turning them into married quarters for soldiers. In 1924 the rest of the buildings were converted into Married Naval Officers' Quarters. According to a plan of 1891 the gardens were already there, the flowerbeds laid out and the tennis court in place. The upper floors around the quadrangle were reached by external cast-iron staircases and the quadrangle itself was planted with orange trees. Brown tiled roofing and cast-iron balconies on both the inside and the outside of the buildings supplied the final touch. During the 1939-45 war the WRNS were billeted in the ONH earning it the nickname of the "wrenry". Nissen huts also replaced the flowerbeds in the centre of the quadrangle, but these have since been removed.

Over the years alterations and additions have taken place, but the plan of the hospital and elevations are still substantially the same as those completed in 1746. It would be a tragedy if, in this 21st century, no one questioned the loss of its integrity. Surely the Gibraltarians can recognize this quality in the same way that historians have done down the ages? We simply cannot allow the appearance of this historic site to be sacrificed in order to appeal to the whims of the developer with an eye on profit alone.

Marjorie Hoare
19th October 2001

Bibliography

- "The Royal Dockyards 1690 – 1850" Jonathan G. Coad
- "The History of the Old Naval Hospital, Gibraltar 1741 – 1922" Christine Lawrance
- "Journal of the Siege of Gibraltar, 1779 – 1783" Captain John Spilsbury
- "History of the Siege of Gibraltar" Colonel John Drinkwater

BOOK REVIEWS

By Sam Benady

Gil Podesta. **Sketches of Old Gibraltar**. Gibraltar, 2001.

It is said that one picture is worth a thousand words. In this attractive volume we have over sixty pictures which charmingly evoke the Gibraltar of the last century. If you are old enough to remember, these sketches will send you on a trip down Memory Lane, and even if you are not, you are still bound to be fascinated by the pictures of the Gibraltar of your parents and grandparents, before it was defaced by soulless office buildings and tasteless blocks of flats.

Noah Gordon. **The Last Jew**. Warner Books, 2000.

Naomi Ragen. **The Ghost of Hannah Mendes**. Simon and Schuster, 1998.

These two novels both have a Jewish historical theme, and each of them has a section which is set in Gibraltar. **The Last Jew** is set in the Spain of the Inquisition at the time of the expulsion of the Jews. The hero, in the course of his wanderings, finds himself in Gibraltar, where he becomes apprenticed to an armourer, but there is no feel for the place - it could be anywhere in Spain - and while I am no geologist, I'm pretty sure that you can't get iron ore out of St Michael's Cave! This apart, the story is an interesting account of a bloody period in the history of Spain.

The Ghost of Hannah Mendes tells the story of two American Jewish girls and their search for their origins in Europe. Interwoven in the narrative is the tale of their ancestress, Hannah Mendes - or Doña Gracia Nasí, as she is usually known - one of the most fascinating women of the period. One chapter is set in contemporary Gibraltar, but again, it doesn't ring particularly true.

Three books which have been published in Gibraltar in the past year are particularly welcome - two because they add to the increasing corpus of works on the social history of the Gibraltarians, and the third because it demonstrates that Gibraltar is at the cutting edge of at least one field of scientific research.

Gibraltar Calling, by Malcolm Beanland. Gibraltar, 2001.

This is a history of Gibraltar's telephone service from its initiation as a tiny private enterprise in 1886. The author has a deep knowledge of the subject, having worked

in the field for many years, and he writes about it with enthusiasm and love. He links the progress of the telephone in Gibraltar with the history of the people by frequent references to events. The book is very well illustrated with black and white photographs, and there are several appendices giving statistics of the service, as well as one linking the progress of telephony in Gibraltar with events overseas.

Gibraltar during the Quaternary. Clive Finlayson, Geraldine Finlayson and Darren Fa (eds.) Gibraltar Government Heritage Publications. Monographs 1. Gibraltar, 2000.

In spite of the date, this book was launched late in 2001. It consists of articles on the geology, ecology and palaeontology of Gibraltar and its environment during the Quaternary written by experts in their fields. As such, many of the articles are so technical that the lay reader will find them heavy going. For the latter, to whom the book is presumably addressed, it would have been enhanced if the editors had summarised the main points of each article in non-technical terms.

Having said this, the book is a valuable addition to the history of Gibraltar, and is attractive and well-produced. In particular, the article by Chris Stringer, "Gibraltar and the Neanderthals", gives a valuable summary of the progress of research over the last 170 years. Gibraltar was at the forefront of the Neanderthal story initially, and now is there again.

Deadly Visitations in Dark Times, by Professor Larry Sawchuk, is the second of the Gibraltar Government Heritage Publications monographs. It tells the grim story of how Gibraltar suffered during the nineteenth century from a series of cholera outbreaks, and relates them to the social history of the Gibraltarians. It is packed with fascinating material, and will remain an essential source-book for any historian looking into the history of the Gibraltarians at the time. In a way, it is almost too rich - one feels that there are two books here, one a history of the epidemics, and the other a wide-ranging analysis of the way of life of the Gibraltarian of the 19th Century. The two themes are intertwined in this book, but sometimes the seams show.

Again, this is a well-produced book with many illustrations, both photographs and line drawings. The publishers, of these two volumes, however, would do well to look into the care taken over proof-reading. Typographical errors occur in both books, but a particularly glaring gaffe in this second monograph is the mistake made - in the title! - on the cover and the spine.

GIBRALTAR HERITAGE TRUST

Programme of events 2002

| DATE | TIME | EVENT | MEETING PLACE |
|--|----------------|---|--|
| Saturday 23rd February | 9.30am | Visit to Carteya (Ancient City) - Archaeological site (Maximum: 40 members) | Coach Park, Waterport (Phone 42844 to confirm) |
| <i>See 13th March 7.00pm</i> Thursday 14th March till Thursday 21st March | 4pm - 10pm | Exhibition of ancient maps of Gibraltar and the Strait | John Mackintosh Hall |
| Saturday 16th March | 9.30am | Visit to Bacinete, Los Barrios - Tombs and pre-historic paintings (Maximum: 40 members) | Coach park, Waterport (Phone 42844 to confirm) |
| Saturday 20th April | 9.30am | Visit to San Roque archives (Maximum: 40 members) | Coach park, Waterport (Phone 42844 to confirm) |
| Saturday 4th May | 10am - 5pm | 13th Annual Open Air Painting & Drawing competition. Theme: The Garrison Library | Registration on site as from 9.30am |
| Tuesday 7th May | 6pm | Official Opening of Exhibition of entries and prize giving (for participants and guests only) | John Mackintosh Hall (Upper floor) |
| Wednesday 8th May till Friday 17th May | 10am - 10pm | Exhibition of competition entries | John Mackintosh Hall (Upper floor) |
| Saturday 18th May | 10.30am | Visit to O'Hara's Battery | O'Hara's Battery |
| Saturday 8th June | 9.30am | Bay Cruise | Marina Bay - to be confirmed |
| Thursday 19th September | 7pm | Annual General Meeting | Garrison Library. Pre-meeting drinks as from 6.30pm |
| Saturday 21st September | 10.30am | Visit to Ragged Staff Magazine and Silent Pool | Ragged Staff Gates |
| Saturday 19th October | 10.30am | Visit to Upper Galleries / Great Siege Tunnels | Entrance to Great Siege Tunnels |

LIST OF TRUSTEES

| List of Trustees | | Tel Home | Tel Work |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------|----------|
| ALMEDA | Mr Alexis 37 Irish Town | 75705 | - |
| BALLANTINE (Vice-Chairman) | Commander Joe OBE RD RNR (Rtd) 1 Electra Flats, Scud Hill | 77759 | - |
| BENADY | Dr Sam Woodlands, Buena Vista Road | 74433 | 79700 |
| CANESSA | Mr Eric 501 Trafalgar House, Rosia Road | 72172 | - |
| DAVIES | Mr Eddie 7C Engineer Road | 76555 | 59128 |
| DESOISA (Chairman) | Mr Joe 4 Victoria Tower Brympton | 78766 | - |
| EVESON | Mr David PO Box 289 | 47840 | - |
| GALLIANO | Mr Paco OBE (Hon Life Trustee) 8 Bishop Rapallo Ramp | 74907 | - |
| GUERRERO | Lt Col (Retd) Eddie OBE JP (Co-opted Trustee) 'E' Devil's Gap, Upper Rock | 72509 | 53624 |
| HOARE | Miss Marjorie MBE (Hon Life Trustee) 1 Sunnyside House | 75847 | - |
| KING | Mr Denis 19 Walnut Lodge, Montagu Gardens | 51125 | 75615 |
| LANGDON | Mr John (Co-opted Trustee) 17a St Bernard's Road | 956781010 | 73890 |
| ROMERO | Mr Joseph (Pepe) 5 South Pavilion | 71765 | - |
| SLOMA | Dr Diane 10 Dexterous House, Queensway Quay | 79385 | 79385 |
| TORRES | Mrs Doris 4D Malvasia, Vineyards | 70716 | - |
| VALLEJO | Mr Ernest (Tito) FRGS 24 Rosia Dale | 71871 | 53088 |
| PISANI | Mr Louis (Hon Treasurer) 5 King's Yard Lane | 58144000 | 76077 |
| SOIZA | Mrs Brenda (Secretary) 6 Chusan House | 72132 | 42844 |



GIBRALTAR HERITAGE TRUST

P.O. Box 683
The Main Guard
John Mackintosh Square
Gibraltar

Tel/Fax: (350) 42844
E-mail: heritage@gibnet.gi
Website: www.gibraltar.gi/heritage