



HM Government of Gibraltar

Ministry of the Environment,
Sustainability, Climate Change,
Heritage, Education and Culture

PRESS RELEASE

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Transfer of 9.2-inch gun to Europa Point Eco Park

The Ministry for Heritage wishes to inform the public that it will commence the removal and transportation of the 9.2-inch gun barrel, carriage and pedestal currently at the Metalrok Eco Park in Flint Road to a holding and restoration area at Brewery Crusher. They will later be erected for display at Europa Point near Harding's Battery once planning permission has been obtained.

The move will be carried out in two phases:

The first phase of the operation will involve Metalrok clearing the area around the gun pieces in order to allow Monteverde's service vehicles access to the pound. Monteverde service vehicles will then lift and transport the gun carriage and pedestal pieces from their present location to a temporary holding location at the Brewery Crusher eco site. This part of the operation will be carried out today Monday 31st January.

Phase two of the operation, scheduled for Tuesday 15th February, involves lifting and transporting the much longer and heavier gun barrel. This is a much more complicated operation as it will probably require much larger lifting and transport vehicles having to gain access to such a restricted site and parking restrictions along the access roads to will necessarily need to be enforced.

The BL 9.2-inch Mk IX guns first entered service in 1899, used both as naval, and coast defence guns. They had possibly the longest, most varied and successful service history of any British heavy ordnance.

The 9.2-inch guns were 'counter-bombardment' weapons designed to defeat ships up to heavy cruisers armed with 8-inch guns. They were deployed in the fixed defences of major defended ports throughout the British Empire until the 1950's. Up to fourteen such guns were deployed for the defence of Gibraltar during WWI of which eight were still in use during WWII.

These guns were finally decommissioned during the 1950's. In 1972, the Levant Battery gun pieces were removed by the Royal Engineers to be sold as scrap. A few years later, the entire gun and mounting at Spur Battery was also dismantled but this time transferred to the Imperial War Museum Duxford in Cambridgeshire, England in a military operation referred to as Project Vitello.



50 years have now passed since these several gun pieces were dismantled from Levant Battery and deposited at the scrapyard. During the last twenty years, numerous groups and individuals have campaigned for the restoration of this iconic artillery piece but with little success until now. The Ministry for Heritage, supported by the Gibraltar Heritage Trust and in collaboration with Metalrok Ltd and Montverde & Sons Ltd will finally make what was once considered a pipe dream into a much-awaited reality.

The Minister for Heritage would like to express his deep gratitude to the managing director of Metalrok Ltd, Mr. Elias Tapiero for his generosity in bestowing this unique heritage asset upon the people of Gibraltar free of charge. He has dedicated this gift in memory of his late father, Mr. Elias Tapiero Sr. who had always expressed a wish of returning the gun to its rightful place one day.

The Minister is also once again deeply indebted to Mr. Giovanni Monteverde, Managing Director of Monteverde & Sons for his unlimited generosity in providing the Ministry with all the resources at his disposal in the execution of such a highly complex operation.

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