

THE RED PLAQUES OF GIBRALTAR



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- Gail Francis-Tiron for her help when needed**
- Pepe Rosado for reading this and making his valued comments**
- Claire Montado for giving me some of the older photos to use**
- My parents for their gentle 'reminders' to get this finished and proof reading!**

INTRODUCTION:

These cast iron red plaques were placed around Gibraltar between 1959 and 1975 in possibly the first attempt to present the rocks history to visitors and residents. They were the work of the Gibraltar Museum Committee which at the time was under the chairmanship of the Hon. Mrs Dorothy Ellicott O.B.E., J.P. (see appendix III). Modern information boards will perhaps replace them (see 'Future' section below), but I hope this will not happen. They are their own piece of Gibraltar's history.

When I first noticed and started taking photos of these red plaques I looked for a record of how many there were to find. After speaking to The Heritage Trust and Tourist Board I was told there was not an up to date, completed list.

So, here is mine, consisting of 49 plaques, some in situ, some not. There could be more around the rock, or in storage, as there are details of up to 53 in a document attached, dated October 1977, (see Appendix I). From this list there are 43 that I have found and are on mine, another 10 I did not find (some I know have been removed from site with no details of where they are stored) and there are 4 that I found that are not on it.

Things to note:

1. The red plaques do not seem to be the responsibility today of any one organization
2. They are not all accurate in their information
3. Some are not very 'reader friendly' as they are placed high rather than at eye level or are badly obstructed from view

PAST:

A lot more investigation needs to be done on the history of these plaques. The suggestion from local historians that I have spoken to is that they were produced between the years 1959 and 1975. They started out red, were changed to blue possibly in 1975 and then back to red around 2005, with funding from the tourist board.

The plaques would have been very expensive at the time and it is said that Dorothy Ellicott (see Appendix III), who was City Councillor at the time, may have used her influence to get the idea passed. Comments made to me about her included “the first lady City Councillor, ahead of her time” and “the first historian of Gibraltar”.






FUTURE:






Who knows, but first, if it is not the case already, one group has to take full responsibility for the upkeep of these plaques. This is a picture of a new ‘board’ that took its place at the south end of Main Street, by the tax office, February 2014, replacing plaque no. 28. It would be a shame if they were all replaced like this, as, to me, it does not seem to have a visual link to the archway, far too modern and possibly in the wrong position.





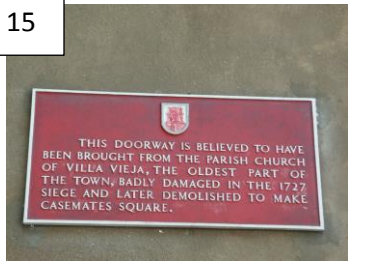


The new board does have a lot more information but some visitors just want a snippet of a history ‘story’ to take home with them, which is what the red plaques do very well.

I think that these red plaques could be used as part of a walk, with their locations marked on a detailed map or just ‘suggested’ to make the finding of them more of a challenge. There are a number of words used on the plaques that could be explained at the same time (see Appendix II).






PLAQUE PICTURE	LOCATION	REF NO (1977 LIST)	COMMENTS
<p>1</p> 	Walk from Casemates through the tunnel behind Nelsons, the plaque is at the entrance of the tunnel.	List 'A' No. 15	Details may not be correct
<p>2</p> 	In Casemates, to the left of the entrance into the glassworks.	List 'A' No. 20	
<p>3</p> 	On the side of Kings Bastion near to the British War Memorial, Line Wall Road. Next to plaque no 4.	List 'A' No. 18	The words on the plaque differ from the suggested words shown on the 1977 list. Same words as plaque no. 9
<p>4</p> 	On the side of Kings Bastion near to the British War Memorial, Line Wall Road. Next to plaque no 3.	'Kings Bastion' <i>(handwritten at end of list)</i>	
<p>5</p> 	Set back from Line Wall Road, near to steps leading up to Catholic Community Centre and British War Memorial.	'Boulevard by Community Centre' <i>(handwritten at end of list)</i>	

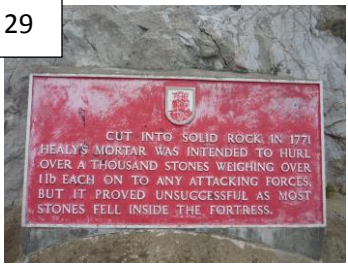

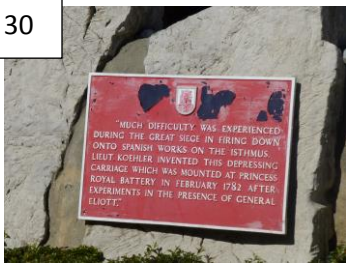
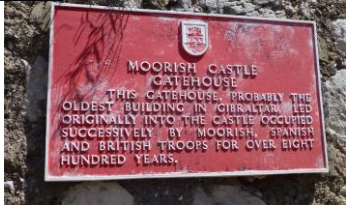

PLAQUE PICTURE	LOCATION	REF NO (1977 LIST)	COMMENTS
<p>6</p> 	Outside the Court House, south end of Main Street.	List 'B' No. 8	
<p>7</p> 	On the outside wall of the museum (Bomb House Lane)	List 'A' No. 9	
<p>8</p> 	On Duke of Kent House, Line Wall Road.	List 'C' No. 2	For the words 'until recently' to be included on this plaque, a date really should have been mentioned.
<p>9</p> 	On wall of Kings Bastion on Queensway.	List 'A' No. 18	<p>The words on the plaque differ from the suggested words shown on the 1977 list.</p> <p>Same words as plaque no. 3</p>
<p>10</p> 	On Charles V Wall, near TOC H, down from Southport Gate, Line Wall Road, side of Ince Theatre	List 'B' No. 11	

PLAQUE PICTURE	LOCATION	REF NO (1977 LIST)	COMMENTS
<p>11</p> 	On Queens Way, over the road from the entrance into Queens Way Quay, close to Ragged Staff Gate.	List 'A' No. 28	Same words as plaque no 12
<p>12</p> 	On Queensway, near to Waterport Gates which lead into Casemates.	List 'A' No. 28	Same words as plaque no 11
<p>13</p> 	On bridge, Smith Dorrien Avenue.	List 'A' No. 7	Details may not be correct.
<p>14</p> 	On wall of The Convent, Main Street, to the right of main entrance.	List 'A' No. 26	Incorrect details. The Franciscan Friars were expelled by the Governor when he took it over in 1711. The friary dates from 1528 and its chapel 1532.
<p>15</p> 	NO LONGER IN SITU	List 'A' No. 1	Incorrect words. Was on wall of the tax office, opposite Ince Theatre. Removed when doorway renovated (Feb '14). Replaced by modern signage.






PLAQUE PICTURE	LOCATION	REF NO (1977 LIST)	COMMENTS
<p>16</p>	On the wall of Ragged Staff Gates, near to roundabout which leads into Dockyard Road.	List 'A' No. 19	
<p>17</p>	On the fence of the cemetery, on Trafalgar Road, near to Referendum Gates (south end of Main Street).	List 'A' No. 10	
<p>18</p>	At the end of Europa Road, drive through Prince Edwards Gate and plaque is on the right.	List 'C' No. 3	
<p>19</p>	At the end of Europa Road, on the high wall to the right, just before you go through Prince Edwards Road.	List 'B' No. 1	
<p>20</p>	Just before you drive through Prince Edwards Gate to head on to Prince Edwards Road, plaque is on your left.	List 'A' No. 2	

PLAQUE PICTURE	LOCATION	REF NO (1977 LIST)	COMMENTS
<p>21</p> 	In the Alameda Gardens, near to the open air gardens	List 'B' No. 4	
<p>22</p> 	On Rosia Road, heading south, it is on your left, on the roadside in front of the Alameda Estate and opposite the Italian restaurant '4 Stagioni'.	List 'A' No. 13	Placed on another side of the structure would have been better, very close to the road as it is now.
<p>23</p> 	On Rosia Road, going south, past the entrance to the 100 tonne gun, on your right, in a carpark.	List 'A' No. 12	Not easy to see as obstructed by a bus stop, a shame with its reference to Nelson
<p>24</p> 	On Town Range near to Hargraves Parade. On wall of the Hargraves Court Sports Facility.	List 'B' No. 10	Not easy to see as obstructed by a road sign.
<p>25</p> 	On Waterport Road. Near to the Rooke statue.	Not on list	A little obscured from the road by a kiosk.


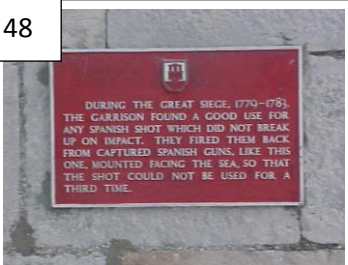
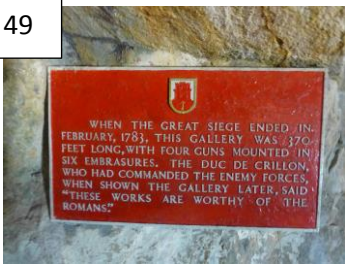
PLAQUE PICTURE	LOCATION	REF NO (1977 LIST)	COMMENTS
<div>26</div> 	At the top of the rock, by entrance to the café behind the cable car station.	'Summit Restaurant' under <i>Proposed Plaques</i>	The 2 nd picture of this plaque is an old one showing it painted blue (or black?).
			
<div>27</div> 	At the top of the rock, walking south, away from the cable car towards Douglas Path, it is on the left.	List 'C' No. 6	The second picture of this plaque shows it newly painted, as it is now, it is desperately in need of a fresh coat.
			
<div>28</div> 	On Referendum Gate, on southern side of the arches, near to Trafalgar Cemetery.	List 'A' No. 6	

PLAQUE PICTURE	LOCATION	REF NO (1977 LIST)	COMMENTS
<p>29</p> 	Up the rock on Old Queens Road, walking north, it is past the Apes Den on your right, just past Queens Gate.	List 'A' No. 17	<p>The second picture of this plaque shows it as it was blue.</p> <p>It has been suggested that the details on this plaque may be incorrect.</p>
			
<p>30</p> 	In Casemates, near to fish & chips cafes.	Not on list	<p>A little obscured by chairs, umbrellas and potted plants depending on the time of day.</p> <p>Why not put reference to more info in the Great Siege Tunnels.</p>
<p>31</p> 	On Tankerville Road, going up the hill it is just past Tarik Passage on your right, in a carpark on the left. On the wall of the Moorish Castle.	List 'A' No. 27	Because the area is a carpark, if a high van/car is parked by the wall then the plaque is hidden.
<p>32</p> 	On Tankerville Road, going up the hill it is just past Tarik Passage on your right, past the carpark and on the castle walls on your left.	List 'B' No. 5	

PLAQUE PICTURE	LOCATION	REF NO (1977 LIST)	COMMENTS
<div>33</div>	On outside wall of Parliament Building on Main Street. Walk into Mackintosh Square and you will see it through the gates.	'House of Assembly' under <i>Proposed Plaques</i>	Not easy to read if the gate is closed. The second picture of this plaque shows it when it was red.
<div>34</div>	On Catalan Bay Road. Driving from Devils Tower Road it is on your left near to the entrance in to Eastern Beach and the MOT centre.	Not on list	
<div>35</div>	On Catalan Bay Road. To the left of the entrance down to the carpark for Catalan Beach. Near to a bus stop.	List 'C' No. 1	
<div>36</div>	In the Great Siege Tunnels.	List 'A' No. 22	

PLAQUE PICTURE	LOCATION	REF NO (1977 LIST)	COMMENTS
<p>37</p> 	In the Great Siege Tunnels, St Georges Hall.	List 'A' No. 24	
<p>38</p> 	In the Great Siege Tunnels, St Georges Hall.	Not on list	
<p>39</p> 	Over the main entrance leading in to the Moorish Castle.	List 'A' No. 14	
<p>40</p> 	In an area being used as a carpark behind Range Rover/Jaguar, on the wall of Prince Alberts Front. The best way to access the area is by walking into it from the Catholic Community Centre end.	'Prince Alberts Front' under <i>Proposed Plaques</i>	This is hidden by both cars and the building in front. Do NOT drive in as you will have to reverse back out, which is not easy.
<p>41</p> 	In an area being used as a carpark behind Range Rover/Jaguar, on the wall of Prince Alberts Front. The best way to access the area is by walking into it from the Catholic Community Centre end.	'Prince Alberts Front' under <i>Proposed Plaques</i>	This is hidden by both cars and the building in front. Do NOT drive in as you will have to reverse back out, which is not easy.

PLAQUE PICTURE	LOCATION	REF NO (1977 LIST)	COMMENTS
<p>42</p> 	Up the rock at the end of Old Queens Road by Princess Carolines Battery.	List 'A' No. 8	Same words as plaque 43.
<p>43</p> 	On Queens Road near to the turning for St Michaels Cave and the Queens Balcony View Point.	List 'A' No. 8	Same words as plaque 42. This was repainted for the Queens Diamond Jubilee in 2012.
<p>44</p> 	By the entrance into St Michaels Cave, opposite the entrance into the shop.	List 'A' No 16	Refurbished end of 2013.
<p>45</p> 	Old Queens Road. On Queens Gate cut into Charles V Wall, near to the Apes Den.	List 'A' No. 4	
<p>46</p> 	** NO LONGER IN SITU **	'Piazza' under <i>Proposed Plaques</i>	This was in the Mackintosh Square area. At the end of 2013 this plaque was being stored in the Gibraltar Heritage building.

PLAQUE PHOTO	LOCATION	REF NO (1977 LIST)	COMMENTS
<p>47</p> 	Old Queens Road. At the bottom of the steps, by electricity box, which lead up to the entrance of Ince's Farm.	List 'B' No. 9	
<p>48</p> 	** NO LONGER IN SITU **	'By American War Memorial' (Handwritten at end of list)	Removed and stored, where?
<p>49</p> 	Great Seige Tunnels	list 'A' No. 23	

Appendix II

Why not further the plaques involvement in tourism? These are a list of words used in the plaques that, if explained, would bring more meaning to the 'story'.

WORD	PLAQUE(S) IT IS USED IN
Bastion	3 & 19
Soldier artificers	4
Officers mess	8
Wharf	16
Victualling/Victualled	16 & 23
Line Wall	11 & 16
Red sands	5, 21 & 22
Alameda	21
Mole	25
Levant cloud	26
Galleries	47
Isthmus	30
Caledonian Canal	34
Tank trap	34
Embrasure	36
Battery	37
Banquettes	41
Emplacement	34

Appendix III

Dorothy Ellicott's story & photograph - taken from Wikipedia



Dorothy was born in Havant, England in 1901. She moved to Gibraltar when she was aged 5 where her father worked at the Gibraltar Dockyard. There, she received her education from the Sisters of Loreto. As a young woman she worked for the Gibraltar Chronicle and was also a Reuters correspondent. At the start of World War II, she was a member of the St. John Ambulance Nurses and took part in some of the first journeys to French Morocco, in the initial stages of the evacuation of the Gibraltar civilian population (May/June 1940), later returning to "the Rock". When the Gibraltarian evacuees were later expelled from the French Morocco and a wider scale evacuation schema was being implemented, Ellicott had to leave Gibraltar by September 1940 and relocated to the United Kingdom, where she remained for four years. She did not return to Gibraltar until August 1944.

After the war she became involved in politics. In December 1947 she was the first woman to become a member of the City Council, and remained an elected member for nine years. In 1959, she also became the first woman to be elected to the Legislative Council, this time as an independent, remaining there for five years. She was also Chair of the Gibraltar Museum Committee (later to become Gibraltar Heritage Trust).

In 1970, Dorothy Ellicott was appointed first female Justice of Peace of Gibraltar. In 1972, she was awarded the OBE. In 2008, the recently created Gibraltar Medallion of Honour was bestowed, posthumously, upon Dorothy Ellicott for public service and service to heritage.