



HM Government of Gibraltar

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

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‘City Under Siege’ restoration works complete

As part of an on-going programme of works aimed at improvements to the Upper Rock and restoring Gibraltar’s Heritage, the Ministry for Heritage, the Department for the Environment and the Gibraltar National Museum have completed restoration works at the ‘Gibraltar: A City Under Siege Exhibition’, located at Willis’ Road on the Upper Rock.

The exhibition is of particular importance as it focuses on the Gibraltarian struggle and contribution towards the war effort throughout the Great Siege of 1779-1783. In fact, the buildings in which the exhibition is housed are probably amongst the first buildings ever constructed by the British in Gibraltar, thus dating back to the beginning of the 18th century.

One of the most striking features of the exhibit are the graffiti markings that are abundant in all the exterior walls around the centre courtyard. The majority of the surviving graffiti date from the 1730s to the 1760s, with the oldest dated to 1726, a period in which the Garrison saw no military action and Gibraltar became a relatively easy but tedious posting for regiments serving overseas. A particular striking graffiti is that of a two-decker ship-of-the-line sketched as she sailed majestically into the bay, etched to the left of the entrance to the main yard.

Eleven new interpretation panels have been placed, with new content, designs and illustrations, bringing a new vibrancy to the exhibition. The panels portray how our ancestors coped during immense stress and offer insights into how the first British settlers of Gibraltar managed living in a Mediterranean fortress. The themes found in the panels range from Law and Order, Food, Death and Disease and the Gibraltarian Exodus amongst many others.

Visitors will also notice that the mannequins in period clothing have been restored and enhanced providing an additional improvement to the site.

A replica period cannon and ancillary military objects have also been placed on site in order to improve the experience.

Minister for Heritage, the Hon John Cortes, commented: “It’s important to continue enhancing our heritage sites and the interest value of the Upper Rock. This improved exhibition highlights our



commitment, interest and investment in our cultural heritage. I am certain that Gibraltarians and visitors alike will enjoy the information provided and learn about the difficulties our ancestors faced during the Great Siege”.

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