

**READING: Read the text about Gibraltar. Then, answer the questions:**

## A Brief History Of Gibraltar

(Taken from the Gibraltar Museum)

The following is an **overview** of the **history of Gibraltar**, from its geological origins to recent time, and **is not intended** to be exhaustive. From time to time however, we will continue to enrich this website adding articles which focus on particular aspects of Gibraltar's past.

### In the beginning...



The **Rock of Gibraltar** is a Jurassic **limestone** promontory, formed from the **shells** of **tiny** sea creatures which compacted **layer** upon layer on the seabed some 200 million years ago. Between 60 and 20 million years ago movement of the Earth's **tectonic plates uplifted** these layers of rock to their present position, where they have been **shaped** by the sea and weather to give the Rock of Gibraltar

\***Overview:** perspectiva general.

\* **Is not intended:** no pretende.

\***Limestone:** piedra caliza.

\***Shell:** concha.

\***Tiny:** minúsculo.

\***Layer:** capa, estrato.

\***tectonic plates:** placas tectónicas.

\***Uplift:** elevar.

\***Shape:** dar forma.

\***Yield:** revelar / ceder.  
\***Inhabitant:** habitante.  
\***Fossil**

\***Skull:** cráneo.

\***Finding:** descubrimiento.  
\***Stone:** piedra.  
\***Tool:** herramienta.  
\***Butcher:** matar, matar.  
\***Bone:** hueso.  
\***Char:** carbonizar.  
\***Engraving:** grabado.  
\***Cave:** cueva.  
\***At least:** al menos.  
\***Die out:** extinguirse.  
\***Occupy:** ocupar.

\***Bury:** enterrar.  
\***Burial site:** lugar de enterramiento, cementerio.

the iconic form we all recognise today.

Various caves including [Gorham's and Vanguard Caves](#) on the east side of the Rock are **yielding** rich archaeological and palaeontological evidence of Gibraltar's earliest **inhabitants**. Three **Neanderthal fossils** have been discovered in Gibraltar to date. The first, *Gibraltar 1*, was the cranium of an adult female discovered in 1848 by Captain Edmund Flint at Forbes' Quarry. The second, *Gibraltar 2*, was the fragmented **skull** of a child discovered in 1926 by Dorothy Garrod and the third was a child's upper right canine milk tooth [discovered by at Vanguard Cave in 2017](#) during the Gibraltar Museum's annual summer archaeological excavations. These **findings** together with **stone tools**, **butchered animal bones**, **charred** seashells and **engravings** on the **cave** floor show that Neanderthals lived here during the Middle Palaeolithic from **at least** 127,000 years ago until 32,000 years ago, long after they **died out** in the rest of Europe. Humans continued to **occupy** these caves during the Upper Palaeolithic, 22,000 to 13,000 years ago and into the Neolithic ( $\approx$  5,400 BC) and later on the Bronze Age ( $\approx$  1,800 BC). A number of caves on the Rock were used as **burial sites** during the Neolithic and Bronze Ages.



\***Trade:** comercio.  
\***Sea-trader:** comerciante de mar.  
\***Worship:** rendir culto.  
\***Offering:** ofrenda.  
\***God:** dios.

\***Beetle:** escarabajo.

\***Succeed:** suceder.  
\***Strait:** estrecho (geog.)

\***Berber tropas:** tropas bereberes.  
\***Land:** desembarcar; aterrizar.  
\***At the foot of:** al pie de.  
\***Set:** preparar; establecer.  
\***Muslim:** musulmán.  
\***Conquest:** conquista,

\***Brief:** breve.  
\***Oust:** expulsar.  
\***Monarch:** monarca.  
\***Siege:** cerco.  
\***Reconquest:** reconquista.  
\***Moorish:** árabe.  
\***Castle:** castillo.  
\***Bath:** baño.  
\***Building:** edificio.

## Ancient history

**Phoenician** and later **Carthaginian sea-traders** then made use of these caves as places of **worship**. Between around 800 BC and 200 BC they regularly left **offerings** to their **gods**. Among their most prized offerings were scarabs. These were small, thumbnail sized, representations of scarab **beetles** in paste or glass. On the underside was usually a representation of an animal, person or a god. Their trade routes expanded out of the Mediterranean Sea and into the Atlantic Ocean. They were later **succeeded** by the Romans. They called the Rock 'Mons Calpe' which together with 'Mons Abyla' across the **Strait** of Gibraltar on the North African coast, formed the two legendary **Pillars of Hercules**.

## Medieval history

In 711 AD, **Berber troops** from North Africa, under their leader **Tarik ibn-Ziyad**, **landed at the foot of** the Rock **setting** the **Muslim conquest** of Iberia into action. The modern name Gibraltar is a derivation of the older name 'Jebel Tarik', meaning Tarik's Mountain. Apart from a **brief** period 1309-1333, the Muslims occupied Gibraltar for over 750 years, until finally **ousted** by the Catholic **Monarchs** in 1462 during the eighth **siege** of Gibraltar which formed part of the Reconquest. Surviving structures from this period include parts of the Line Wall, **Moorish Castle** and the Moorish **Baths** located within the Gibraltar Museum **building**.

## Kingdom of Castile



This period coincided with the emergence of the **cannon** as a main **weapon** of **war**, which meant that fortifications had to be **updated** and **strengthened**. **Defensive walls** were **thickened** and **large** bastions **added**. Some of these can still be seen today. Also during this period, Queen Isabella I of **Castile** **granted** Gibraltar its **coat of arms** by a Royal **Warrant passed** in Toledo in 1502. The '**Castle and Key**' is still in official use today.

## British Gibraltar

British and **Dutch** forces, under **Admiral Sir George Rooke** and **Prince George of Hesse-Darmstadt** respectively, **captured** Gibraltar in 1704, during the War of the Spanish Succession. A Spanish **attempt** to re-capture the Rock between 1704 and 1705 (twelfth siege of Gibraltar) **failed** and the Spanish **Crown ceded** Gibraltar to the Crown of Great Britain 'in perpetuity' under the **Treaty** of Utrecht in 1713. Despite the **truce**, they **laid siege** to Gibraltar again in 1727 (thirteenth siege of Gibraltar). The British continued to **improve** and strengthen the defences, with the large white limestone blocks which make up most of the city walls, bastions and batteries seen today having being placed during the nineteenth century.

- \***Cannon:** cañón.
- \***Weapon:** arma.
- \***War:** guerra.
- \***Update:** actualizar.
- \***Strengthen:** fortalecer.
- \***Defensive walls:** muros defensivos.
- \***Thicken:** engrosar, espesar.
- \***Large = big.**
- \***Add:** añadir.
- \***Castile:** Castilla.
- \***Grant:** conceder.
- \***Coat of arms:** escudo de armas.
- \***Warrant:** orden.
- \***Pass:** aprobar.
  
- \***Dutch:** holandés.
- \***Capture:** capturar.
- \***Attempt:** intento.
- \***Fail:** fracasar.
- \***Crown:** corona.
- \***Cede:** ceder.
- \***Treaty:** tratado.
  
- \***Despite:** a pesar de.
- \***Truce:** tregua.
- \***Lie siege:** asediar.
- \***Improve:** mejorar.

## Great Siege (1779-83)



- \***Artillery:** artillería.
- \***Relief convoy:** convoy de socorro.
- \***Shortage:** escasez.
- \***Defender:** defensor.
- \***Die:** morir.
- \***Sickness = disease:** enfermedad.

- \***Heavily outnumbered:** muy superado en número.
- \***Achieve:** lograr.
- \***Raid:** asaltar.
- \***kill:** matar.
- \***Blow up:** explotar.
- \***Ammunition:** munición.
- \***Boost:** incentivo.
- \***Approach:** aproximarse.
- \* **Gunner:** artillero ... **gun:** rifle, pistola.
- \***Heat:** calor; calentar.
- \* **Cannonball:** bala de cañón

- \***Achieve:** lograr.
- \***Achievement:** logro.
- \***Dig – dug:** excavar.
- \***Tunnel:** túnel.

The last siege, known as the **Great Siege (1779-83)**, saw large-scale destruction of the city by Spanish and French **artillery**. Despite three **relief** convoys getting through, the **shortages** of fresh food and inadequate sanitary arrangements meant that more **defenders died** of **sickness** and **disease** than of enemy action. Despite being **heavily outnumbered**, however, the British troops did **achieve** two notable successes. On the evening of 26 November 1781 a sortie of 2,500 men **raided** the advanced Spanish lines, **killing** troops, destroying artillery and **blowing up** an **ammunition magazine** which was a massive **boost** to British morale. The grand attack of 13 September, 1782, saw ten specially converted Spanish Floating Battery ships **approach** the Rock. **Gunners** on the newly constructed King's Bastion **heated cannonballs** until they were red hot and fired these destroying the supposedly indestructible ships.

This siege period also saw two significant engineering **achievements**. Soldier artificers under Sergeant-Major Henry Ince **dug** the first **tunnels**



\***Allow:** permitir.  
\***Fire:** disparar.  
\***Tunnel:** túnel.

\***Support:** apoyo; apoyar.  
\***Defeat:** derrota.  
\***Fleet:** flota.  
\***Battle:** batalla.

\***Mastery:** dominio.  
\***Ensure:** asegurar.  
\***Peace:** paz.

\***Harbour:** puerto.  
\***Torpedo-proof harbour:**  
puerto a prueba de torpedos.  
\***Dry dock:** dique seco.  
\***Battleship:** barco de  
combate.

\***Invaluable:** inestimable.

\***Garrison:** guarnición.  
\***Military rule:** mando  
militar.  
\***Appoint:** designar.  
\***Step towards:** paso hacia...  
\***City Council:** ayuntamiento

Into the solid north face of the Rock to site cannon. Lieutenant Koehler then developed a 'depression carriage' which **allowed** cannon to easily **fire** downwards from these **tunnels** onto the enemy below.

## Royal Navy Base

Gibraltar has been a major port of **support** the Royal Navy. After its **defeat** of a larger combined French and Spanish **fleet** at the **Battle** of Trafalgar in 1805, the body of Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson was brought to Gibraltar aboard his flagship, the HMS Victory. The Royal Navy maintained **mastery** of the seas for the next 100 years, **ensuring** a period of **peace** and stability.

With advances in naval technology, the turn of the last century (1893-1906) saw the construction of Gibraltar's **torpedo-proof harbour** and three **dry docks**, one of which was extended to take HMS Dreadnought, the biggest **battleship** in the world in 1906. These facilities proved **invaluable** in **supporting** naval operations in the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean during World War I (1914-18).

As a **garrison** town, British Gibraltar had always been under **military rule**, but in 1865 a group of local Sanitary Commissioners were **appointed** to improve conditions for the civilian population – the first **step towards** self-governance. A further step towards self-governance was achieved in 1921 with the election of the first civilian **City Council**.

## World War II and the Evacuation



- \***Upheaval:** convulsión.
- \***Civilian population:** población civil.
- \***Huge /tiny:** enorme / minúsculo.

- \***Spoil:** botín.
- \***Push into:** empujar hacia.
- \***Runway:** pista de aterrizaje.

- \***Carry out:** llevar a cabo.

- \***Remain:** permanecer.
- \***Ongoing:** en marcha.

World War II (1939-45) saw major **upheaval**. Apart from men of working age, the entire **civilian population** of Gibraltar, mostly made up of women, children and the elderly, was evacuated in 1940 to places as diverse as Jamaica, Madeira and Northern Ireland. The Rock's already extensive defences were once again strengthened and expanded with a **huge** tunnel system constructed to house a garrison of 17,000 troops inside the Rock itself. The **spoil** from these tunnels was then **pushed into** the sea to build the **runway** which is still jointly in use by RAF Gibraltar and Gibraltar International Airport. Early in the war Vichy French and Italian planes **carried out** air-raids on the Rock and Italian frogmen attacked shipping with small two-man submarines. In November 1942, United States General Dwight Eisenhower used Gibraltar as his base to support Operation Torch, the allied invasion of North Africa. Following the success of this operation, Gibraltar was never attacked again, but **remains** an active naval base supporting **ongoing** operations in the Mediterranean region.

## Political development

\***Housing:** alojamiento.

\***Overwhelming:** abrumador.

\***Power:** poder.

\***Strain:** tensionar.

\***Border = frontier:** frontera.

\***Sever:** cortar.

\***Fully:** completamente.

The post-war years saw a large programme to build **housing** for the returning evacuees, the last of whom did not return until 1951, eleven years after they were made to leave their homes. In 1955 a Legislative Council was created and in 1967 Gibraltarians voted in their first sovereignty referendum with the **overwhelming** result to remain British. In the 1969 Constitution Order, the Governor's **powers** were limited and the Legislative and City Councils merged to form the House of Assembly (which would become known as the Gibraltar Parliament by the 2006 Constitution Order). These political advances **strained** relations with Spain and in 1969 General Francisco Franco closed the **border** with Gibraltar and **severed** all communications. The border did not **fully** re-open until 1985.

## Answer the questions:

### 1. In the beginning...

- Explain in your own words how the Rock of Gibraltar was formed and shaped.
- Make a list of things discovered in the caves:

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |



- What is the highlight of Neanderthals in Gibraltar compared to the rest of Europe?

## **2. Ancient history.**

- What was the main economic activity of the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians?
- What offerings to their gods have been found in the caves?
- Which other remains from Phoenician and Carthaginian cultures have been found in the caves?
- Who occupied the Rock after the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians? What did they call the Rock?

## **3. Medieval history.**

- Where does the name "Gibraltar" come from?
- When were the Muslim people expelled from Gibraltar?

## **4. Kingdom of Castile.**

- What new weapon of war was discovered during the kingdom of Castile?
- How did this discovery affect the defensive strategy of the Rock?

## **5. British Gibraltar.**

- When was Gibraltar taken by British and Dutch forces?
- What was agreed by the Treaty of Utrecht?
- How did the British defend Gibraltar of Spanish attempt to recover the Rock?

## **6. Great Siege (1779-83).**

- How long was the Great Siege and what were its consequences?
- What new defensive constructions were built under the siege?

## **7. Royal Navy Base.**

- How were the advances in Naval technology used during World War I?

