Half of the Nation

Millennium Gibraltar

2000

Introduction

The advent of the Millennium has prompted many of us to consider wider, deeper issues than usual: who are we, where are we going, even: is there life on other planets?

This feeling of being very small in the greater order of things will affect even the most cynical. No doubt there will be few people who will not feel just a little excited when they wake up on the morning of the Year 2000.

The energy being felt around us has caused many to reflect on the vastness of the universe and our place in it. We search for a personal message, for explanations, for a life more in touch with the natural world. We are concerned about threats to the environment, global warming. We search for alternative lifestyles and philosophies to replace the tired certainties of the old century. The old-established order is disregarded as we reach the fin de sickle.

We cannot wait to turn over the page.

Our search for the satisfaction of deeper human needs also makes us reflect. We venerate the icons of a bygone age and profess a renewed interest in memoirs.

How frightening it would be to start the new millennium with nothing left from the last to start us off.

There has also been a thread that links the generations and connects the old and the new, overlapping and repeating the patterns of before – it is how we progress, learning from past mistakes and successes.

How sad it would be to lose the recollections of the twentieth century that are ours for the taking but not yet set down, not necessarily the grand historic events, though these have punctuated the lives of many, but the minutiae of daily life experienced by countless women.

We decided to celebrate the Millennium by attempting to tap into this mine of information and compile some of the stories, recollections, or even life histories, of a diverse cross-section of women living in Gibraltar at the end of the 20th century. The final choice of which stories to include was somewhat random due to the wealth of material available and this small volume could well be the first of many.

Gibraltar is, and always has been, a melting pot and a crossroads, a microcosm of life in the 20th century in all its diversity. Many have been the races, colours, and creeds that have passed through on their life's journey and some have stopped and stayed, married, produced families.

Those whom we count today as Gibraltarians are, no doubt, a nation, a distinctive ethnic group. The charm and allure of this place is that people of other nations are constantly coming and going and leaving their stamp, however small, upon the Rock beneath their feet. This ethnic and cultural diversity is precious and, as we have

discovered in reasserting the book, it turns up in the most unexpected places and in most delightful ways.

We judge too readily on hearing a voice or seeing a face but behind the voices and faces of people here on the Rock is an almost limitless combination of ethnic and cultural origins.

There are significant strains however: the Genoese, the Maltese, the British and the Spanish, and these are reflected in the book. What is more significant is the wealth of material that, for lack of space, we have, unfortunately, not been able to include.

Special thanks are due to Dian Sloma whose encouragement and eagle-eyed appraisal is of such merit. I would also like to mention Vin Mifsud whose artistry helped provide the cover and Dominique Martinez-Lopez who arranged for some photographs.
Marilyn Morris lent her excellent organisation skills and was a valuable and dependable source of assistance from inception to print.

Conchita Anes

Conchita Anes is a very unassuming lady who has spent a great deal of her time in local politics – when the days when a woman's voice in politics was rare and unwelcome primarily by the mean but also by the public in general, especially in a small community like Gibraltar.

She is a petite woman, with a nice smile and strong convictions. She was born in Gibraltar in 1933 and spent her student years in Secretarial College here as well.

Coming from a male dominated family – she has two brothers Charles and Norbert – she learned very quickly to defend her corner. Her idol was her father who encouraged her determination to speak her mind. Conchita had to argue to be allowed to travel with friends, like her brothers did. As a woman it was not the done thing, needless to say she won the argument.

Her father, Carlos, saw her perseverance and took her side and convinced her mother that she could really take care of herself. Her father's influence is very prevalent as he encouraged her in all her undertakings, respecting her independence.

Conchita left Secretarial College in 1951 and went on to join the local firm of Guerret Imossi, later the Cory Brothers. Thereafter she spent seventeen and a half years in the accounts department and general office, and late, as Secretary to the Company Secretary, Mr Pip Porral, with Saccone and Speed. She stresses her enjoyment of the work environment.

Politics came later by mere coincidence.

Conchita relates how a Govern met Housing dispute- during her family's offer of comfortable accommodation in Laguna Estate from living in Glacis – brought her face to face with local bureaucracies of the time – the years from 1967 to 1969. She was

asked to air her concern on local T.V. exposing the arduous task of going from one public service department to another without anyone becoming able to attempt to resolve the problem her family and others in their position encountered in their new home. In took her many hours of lobbying before something was finally done.

Conchita decided that not only was she prepared to defend her family's position but that she was ready to voice her concern on what she termed the "unfairness to others" and the need for change. The then manipulative media had informed her prior to the programme going on air that she should tone down her complaint as it was too controversial. She reluctantly agreed, although once on air her forcefulness took over and she informed them that if she was not allowed to explain the extent of the problems, which affected many people, she would leave.

She then joined the Integration with Britain Party, being the first woman in the House of Assembly, as Minister for Housing and Public Works Department two very tough jobs. She speaks passionately of the days of the hustlings of 1969, and how the supporters of the other party the AACR heckled her when her turn came to speak. Conchita refused to leave the podium and informed the crowd that she would stand there until her time was up.

Conchita was a Government Minister from 1962-1972, a founder member of the European Movement Committee in 1973, a movement instigated by Sir Bob Peliza.

She has served on the Consumer Protection Committee and defended women's issues, amongst many others. An issue that she fought vigorously for was the building of a Health Centre in Gibraltar. The building stands today, although it has become too small for our ever-growing community and has been transferred to the International Commercial Centre.

The closure of the frontier at this time brought about many hardships to the community. The Government had to organise the many Gibraltar citizens who wished to return from Spain once the frontier closed. A "transit centre" was set up for this purpose, but soon the Government realised that during the ongoing months there was a constant abuse of electricity and water on the part of those accommodated there. They were put under pressure by some of the people, that the community should not bear the burden of the cost of those who had comfortably lived in Spain by their own choice. Soon they had to supply meters at the "transit centre" to regularise the services.

The scenario was difficult and Gibraltar's housing stock came under great strain. The economy was severely affected.

During most of her time in politics she felt threatened my some members of the public. Intimidation of her and her family, coupled with the low salary earned by Ministers and Opposition Members made her rethink her future as the salary did not compensate her when having to take time off to serve in the House of Assembly and deal with other matters. These were difficult and challenging years for her, her family "and Gibraltar" as she puts it.

Her father became ill with cancer and she realised that this was her prime concern and promised him that she would retire from politics. She talks of her father with enormous, having always supported her throughout, always trusting her decisions and discussing many issues with him.

Many times she had to persuade her parents that what she was doing was the right thing in which she fervently believed.

Laju Aswani

Laju Aswani arrived in Gibraltar in 1964 at the age of two with her mother. Her parents had been living in Nairobi, Kenya where they had a shop but had become very unhappy with the lifestyle there and the generally unsafe environment in which to bring up a young family. It had become necessary for a member of the family to sleep in the shop overnight in case someone attempted to break in.

Laju's father first came to Gibraltar on his own to Gibraltar looking for a job and for accommodation for the family, which was very difficult to find at the time.

Laju's brother was sent to India to stay with relatives until the family got settled. Laju's father found a house in La Linea and travelled over to Gibraltar daily to work but after a short period of time, the Spanish began to make life difficult for daily commuters and it became necessary to find accommodation in Gibraltar.

At first, this had to be little more than one room shared with another family but Laju's mother prayed for the family to find something better which would allow them to bring her son over from India.

The border problems had some benefit for the family, however, because as Spaniards left their homes and businesses on the Rock so the Aidasani's were able to find themselves a nice three bedroomed house in Irish Town and a shop.

Shortly after, Laju's brother arrived from India and the family was united once more just as the border was finally closing.

Laju's mother helped her husband as much as she could in their business which was quite unusual for an Indian woman at the time.

The good example she set must have imbued in her daughter the same sense duty and satisfaction about work, so that she grew up to be a dedicated career woman.

When Laju and her brother were in their teens their father did think of moving the family to UK and bought a shop in Ruislip, Middlesex but this venture was not successful: there was a lot of discrimination towards Indians in the community there and this only served to reinforce the family's views that Gibraltar was the best place to live. Fortunately, Laju's father had not sold the business here and was able to return.

After studying for O'Levels and a commercial course, Laju began working as an Accounts Clerk in the Police Department and then transferred to the Government Audit Department where she worked for the next ten years.

She met her husband, Prakash, the same year she started work. Although it is normal to have an arranged marriage in the Indian community this relationship came about without such arrangement, and her parents were very happy and supportive.

In 1983 they got married. They both worked hard, and in 1985 their first son was born. Unusually for the time, and more so in the Indian Community, Laju decided to take only the minimal maternity leave and return to her job.

In July 1987 she and her husband were able to buy their home and later that year they had a second son.

Laju's determination to continue working resulted in her having to have a highly organised day while her children were still small: rising early to prepare the evening meal and all the clothes and other paraphernalia to take to the nanny's home where the children were cared for, retuning later to race through the evening schedule before her children fell asleep.

The expression "quality time" was never so appropriate though: to Laju here family is very important and she believes in proper home cooked meals and time spent together at the end of the day. She also believes that it is not fair to lean on the assistance of family for such child-minding, considering it right to pay for her children's nanny out of her wages.

At this time she received a promotion at work and became an Executive Officer. By 1990 Laju was feeling that it was time to move on: she had been in the Audit Department for nearly ten years and asked if there might be a vacancy in the Income Tax Department. This duly happened later in that year and Laju rose through the ranks to achieve Higher Executive Officer status in 1997.

This had been relatively unusual for a woman but over the last few years more women in the Civil Service were achieving this grade. Having started in the Pay as You Earn section she moved to the Corporate Taxation services.

Some years later Laju began to feel the need to find some way of relieving the stress in her life and started attending mediation and yoga classes at the Hindu Temple. These now take place at the Integral Yoga Centre. This changed her life radically and she became involved in the fund raising for the new Yoga Centre and was for some time its treasurer. She is also a member of the Radhasoami Group, and Indian prayer group.

She travelled specially, on her own, to India in 1996 for her initiation in Bias, Punjab in the presence of Maharaj Gurinder Singh Ji. The spiritual master gives the initiates a mantra on which to meditate. In order to more completely involve herself in this she has adopted lacto-vegetarianism and takes no alcohol. This has also helped her to feel fitter and improve her sense of well-being.

People go to Bias from all over the world and from all walks of life for this ceremony. Attending the ceremony was major highlight of Laju's life and has provided her with the strength and courage necessary to take whatever life confronts her with.

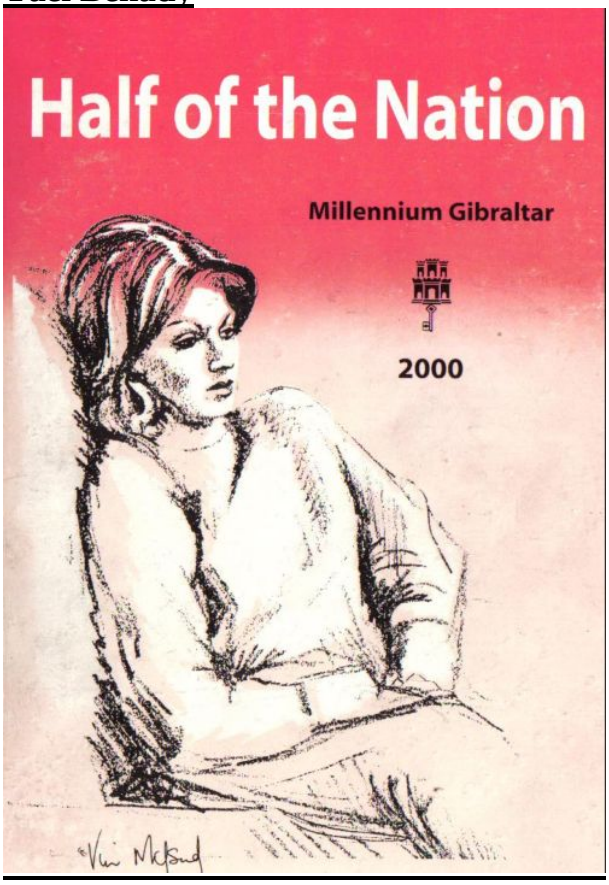
Much of her spare time has been devoted to caring for her parents, who have both been in poor health, and her parents-in-law, but she has also found time to be involved in the Hindu Merchants Association.

During her son's GCSE year Laju made sure that she gave him the encouragement and help he needed at this crucial time in his school career.

Laju manages to combine a sense of true professionalism in her work with a refreshingly honest and sanguine attitude to life. She combines an enjoyment of the simple pleasure of family life and cooking for friends with the spiritual aspects of her religion and yet also manages to discuss corporate tax issues with clients and colleagues, moving effortlessly from one role to another.

If you ask for the secret she immediately attributes this to wonderful upbringing she has had from her parents and the support she has received from her parents-in-law and, by no means least, the love of her husband and sons.

Yael Benady



I was born in Bristol, England on 17th December 1967. My parents were living there while my dad was completing his paediatric speciality training.

The only memory I can possibly associate with my brief year in Bristol is that my sister, Ilana, then aged four, tells me that when she was informed that she had a baby sister called Yael, she replied, "what a strange name and anyway I wanted a brother." Not as bad a start to our relationship as it sounds.

We returned to Gibraltar for two years, but the most significant move was to Israel in 1971. My parents decided to emigrate to Israel, where my dad had a post in the Hadassah Hospital. I don't know whether my parents intended to settle there forever, but I assumed that this would be our home for the rest of my life.

We spent eight years in Jerusalem; this took me from pre-school up to the final year of the Israeli equivalent of Primary and Middle School. In 1973, when I was five, the Yom Kippur War broke out. I remember the sirens and the overnight stay in the shelter below our apartment block.

I suppose most people would expect me to tell tales of horrors of war, but it all seemed rather exciting at the time: the older children organised games in the shelter, and all the neighbours ate and spent the night together there. It was only when I went back to school and heard that one of my classmates had lost her father that the sadness of the situation hit me.

In spite of the general perception of Israel being a war zone, in reality I remember Jerusalem as a place where, even as children, we were able to wander around freely in complete safety.

Before we returned to Gibraltar in 1979, I thought of it only as the home of my grandparents and the destination for my summer holidays.

Retuning to live here was different.

My sister and I started school here, and I found it particularly daunting as I spoke fluent English but could hardly read or write it, as I had only ever been to school in Israel where all classes were Hebrew.

From a social point of view, it was difficult to be accepted because neither of us spoke Spanish and this, as anyone who lives in Gibraltar knows, is a great disadvantage in the playground.

Although I appeared to settle down and I certainly made good friends during this period, I did not feel at home until I started A' Level course at Westside Comprehensive School. This probably has more to do with the frontier opening fully and the general relief from claustrophobia.

Ironically, like every other A/Level student in Gibraltar, my sole goal was to get a place at a British university and see more of the world. It was not so easy in those days and the need to get good enough results made the whole exam process worse. I did survive the nerve-wracking test and in 1986 I packed my bags to go to Leeds

University, thinking that I would never return to Gibraltar apart for visiting my parents during the holidays.

I read Spanish and French at Leeds. My choice was based on preference rather than vocation. I enjoyed my time there and enjoyed choice of university and course.

I also got to know England by travelling and visiting other Gibraltarians who were studying in colleges around the country, and made new friends at the university with who I am still in touch today.

Until the moment I graduated my whole life had bee planned for me, but on returning to Gibraltar for my final summer holiday I knew that for the first time in my life I had to decide what to do with the rest of it.

1990 saw the beginning if the recession in the UK, which soon affected Gibraltar. I sat on the bench with my friends who were all planning conversion courses to law or teaching courses, and thought about my future. The thought of staring a life in London was too daunting and going back to education was not appealing each other.

That summer I met Chris who had decided to return to Gibraltar and we both set out to find jobs here. I took a job with a local property developer, initially as the officer junior, but I was attracted to the job because the firm was about to develop a large plot of land in nearby Spain, and the opportunity of using and developing my business Spanish was appealing.

In nine years, my responsibilities have changed dramatically, and the business has moved in new directions, which have created new opportunities and challenges. I suppose I could have returned to the UK or used my language skills in other places once the recession was over, and people sometimes ask me why I don’t seek “fresh woods and pastures new”.

The fact is that Gibraltar and its surroundings have plenty to offer if you are prepared to make the effort.

Andalusia has more to offer than fried fish and sandy beaches.

I am grateful to Chris for helping me overcome my natural inertia and introducing me to outdoor activities such as trekking, diving and skiing.

Gibraltar itself caters for all the tastes: sporting organisations and clubs are abundant. I cannot help noticing that there are more and more musical events taking place every day. We make every effort to attend and support these activities and not to let any of the events, which have developed over the years disappear.

I hope that as I write these words plans are being made to revive the Gibraltar Drama Festival, which did not take place in 1998 after more than 50 years.

I have always been able to tell my good friends in London that I have see more good plays in Gibraltar that they ever get to see there, and I feel strongly hat our talent should not go to waste.

I am writing this in the midst of preparations for my marriage to Chris in ten days' time – a good time to reflect on the past and future. Having done this, I can't think of a place I'd rather be in 1999 and the years to come.

In Gibraltar we have managed to steer clear of moist of the ugly aspects of the 20th Century.

We should treasure what we have, both our way of life and our historical heritage, all of which make us what we are.

Mary Lou Benson

Some of my earliest recollections are of trains, boats and football. I was the product of a father who wanted a son. My biggest thrill was on a Saturday when I was taken to watch football. I was a great fan of ht local team Britannia FC and knew the names of all the players and even suggested the names of players for matches.

Later memories are of my daily visits by horse-drawn jeep to a deserted Eastern Beach and going to horse races with my aunt.

There were two things which spoiled my life, one was shooting practice as we could not have access to the beach and a cruise liner as this meant that the transport would not arrive.

Anther great love was to watch the Royal Marines marching on the racecourse.

July 1936 was one of my saddest summers – I was told we were going to San Roque for the holidays. I hated the ideal of not being able to join my friends at the beach. Luckily for me it was short lived as the Spanish Civil War came along.

Before Franco's troops entered San Roque the streets were full of men not in uniform but carrying arms, these were known as reds. Our house was in the main street of San Roque and we had to close all the shutters. At mid-day Franco's troops with a band and what seemed a lot of Moorish troops entered and occupied the town peacefully.

We did not have a car in those days and it was not easy to leave. My father had to arrange "a safe conduct pass" and eventually my uncle came from Gibraltar with a taxi bearing a white peace handkerchief.

On passing La Linea we were told to lie on the floor of the taxi, I just had to get a peep and saw all sorts of destruction. The most incredible sight was when we reached the frontier; it was packed with thousands of Spaniards escaping from the war. During this time both the reds and Franco were supported by many, however I took it in turn to support both, depending on my moods.

During the summer of 1939 the only thing our parents seemed to be talking about was war, the whole thing seem quite exciting to me and when we were told to be evacuated to Casablanca I was delighted. The day we took a flat in Casablanca was

the day Italy had declared war and the husband of the couple who were our neighbours, being Italian, was take to a concentration camp.

We remained friends and when eventually France turned Vichy and we were given 24 hours to leave Casablanca, our neighbour helped us to dispose of all of our furniture and put us up for the night. That night her husband returned from concentration camp – sp much for war?

We came back to Gibraltar on a cargo boa and then after a few air-raids, which scared the living daylights out of me, we went to Madeira and really that was the end of the war for us.

I attended the British school and did my exams in triplicate in case the ships were sunk. There being no biros in those days we had to use indelible pencils.

We left Madeira in November 1943 via Lisbon to Tangier.
Both of these places were full of every nationality one can imagine. I had by this time passed my school certificate and my mother thought it would be best if I found employment which I did with the British Consulate. The job was exciting and good fun and when my family eventually returned to Gibraltar I was left behind as they felt my job was important.

Upon my return to Gibraltar aged 18, I found it was certainly not the place I had left; there were lots of parties and dances and to help with the war effort I used to visit servicemen in hospital – I expect this is what changed my life. I used to visit a 26-year-old ex-Harvard graduate whose ship had been torpedoed the last day of the war. Needless to say he was an intellectual and I spent many hours talking to him. He suggested that I go to the U.K., as Gibraltar was too small for my ambitions, and I feel I owe a great deal of what I did with my life to him.

I went to London when there was still rationing and coupons etc.
I attended Kensington Secretarial College for "ladies." After completing this course and because I spoke fluent Portuguese and Spanish I was taken on by Air Vice Marshall Benner who started the British South American Airline to South America. I requested a transfer to Lisbon as I had a boyfriend there and my boss agreed.

I arrived with a transit visa and no work permit, this was unheard of in those days as these visas were only given for official positions. As 19 year old female, alone and knowing the right people I was the first person with unofficial position to receive both a work and residence permit.

I was eventually head hunted by Scandinavian Airlines and remained with them until I left Lisbon, when I realised that I had been thoroughly split in Lisbon and had no idea of what was realistically happening in the world. At this point I applied for a job as an air hostess and went to London.

I was flying until I got married in 1951 and after that I took on what I considered to be a normal married life. At a certain stage I rebelled and looked for more exciting things to do but it was not until my first son was born that my husband left the RAF and we

came to live in Gibraltar and started our own business. I was never meant to run the business, but money was short and my husband had to return to the U.K. and flying.

I ended up taking over the business, for which I was managing director for many years, finally running a large cold store and many employees.

I was asked by Louis Stagnetto who was president of the Chamber of Commerce to stand for election, which I did and was elected the first woman on the Board. I served with the Chamber for 19 years and was elected President in 1992-1994.

I was also president of Gibraltar Squash Rackets Club and was instrumental with my committee in acquiring the new squash premises.

During all my working years I have had the support of the male members of the community and never felt any antipathy towards my progress.

Maria Luisa Bertuchi

A hundred years young is the true description for this amazing lady who celebrated her birthday on 22nd June 1999. A sense of hour, endless energy and an incredible memory are the attributes that best describe Maria Luisa.

She lives on her own, by choice, as she wishes to be independent.
She is an expert pianist and she proudly displays the certificates and awards she has attained through the years.

Although most of her school friends are no longer living Maria Luisa still plays bridge every Wednesday with a group of ladies. She also enjoys playing chess with her grandson.

Another of her accomplishments is cross-stitch and she opened this year's Cross-Stitch Exhibition held at the John Macintosh Hall in May. This is a hobby she has been doing since she was nine years old.

Born in Gibraltar in 1899, Maria Luisa recalls attending Mrs Evans' English School, a private school situated in City Mill Lane. She was 14 years old when the First World War broke out.

Gibraltarians were not evacuated during that war and Maria Luisa recalls an incident that took place then. She lived with her family in Morello's Ramp in a four-bedroom house with a garden, facing the sea. Always full of boundless energy, she would tire her sisters and so visit them near bedtime one by one. She took turns to enter the different bedrooms to play or converse with her sisters. The lights were on and off periodically, therefore, as she moved from one room to another. The result of this activity provoked the visit to her house of a Security Officer, because they suspected that somebody in the house was signalling the ships entering the bay.

During the Second World War she was evacuated to Casablanca and Madeira. She spent eight months in Tangier before the war ended. Maria Luisa recalls that in 1915

an examiner came from the United Kingdom to test her skill at piano. This resulted in the Governor presenting her with a certificate that still hangs in her hall. She also won a medal for the highest “Diabolo” had ever been thrown in competition she to part in at the Piazza, then know as “El Martillo.”

She enjoyed herself years ago at the Operas and Zarzuelas that took place in the majesty Theatre Royal. Her father bought season tickets so they attended all performances. These she describes as great events; all the ladies used to dress up very elegantly and wore long capes. They met in the square, now Governor’s Parade, and walked around this area before going up the stapes leading into the Theatre. Maria Luisa would love to see the Theatre Royal restored to its former glory.

Anther of Maria Luisa’s passions is dancing. Recalling her youth she tells how much she enjoyed going to the Assembly Rooms dances, The Yacht Club, The Rock Hotel and Calpe and Mediterranean Rowing Clubs.

She also enjoyed walking.

Maria Luisa married for the first time when she was 25 years old. She spent her honeymoon in Venice; she was able to stay there for three months because one of her brothers worked for the Telegraph Company. Another brother was the Managing Director of the Telegraph Office in Haifa during the war. She also learnt how to use it herself; she remembers the “Tic a Tac tapes.”

In fact most of her family has worked in the Telegraph Company and this is where she met her first husband, Aurelio Selis Montegriffo. She was still at school and her father did not want her to go out with him. They courted for nine years and she told me how they went to the Alameda Gardens, Lovers Lane and the Victoria Gardens Racecourses, which was situated where the airfield is now, s her father could not see them!

They finally married and had three children Marylou, Louis, Maurice all involved in business and excellent tennis players. Maria Luisa has 8 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Her first husband ran a Restaurant beside the Theatre Royal, called “Monty’s Restaurant”. Most of the waiters employed at the restaurant were Spanish. In house days the gates of Casemates were closed at 10pm so they had to leave before then as nobody could enter or depart Gibraltar after that time.

She remembers the ponds with plenty of ducks where Laguna Estate stands today and an Isolation Hospital in the same area, surrounded by water, where all the smallpox cases were kept in those days.

Unfortunately, her husband died from a heart attack at the age of 54 n 1951.

Never afraid of a challenge, Maria Luisa proved to be a lady ahead of time. She managed the restaurant herself for quite a number of years. Little did she know that this was where she would meet her second husband. He was a regular customer, he finally proposed and Maria Luisa married him when she was 61 years old.

She sold the Restaurant and they were happily marries for thirteen year. Maria Luisa still has several of the original plates used in her restaurant.

During her younger years she remembers that there was no electricity, so they had stoves that worked with coal and oil. These had to be fanned in order to cook. All the laundry was done by hand with soap and water that was obtained either by existing pumps in the patios or brought from the water carriers in Governor's Street. Drinking water was purchased by the barrel for the equivalent of one and a half pence and kept in a "Tinaja." If Maria Luisa wanted to have a bath, water was heated on a coal fire. When a meal of "callos" was cooked it was kept boiling all night!

Maria Luisa enjoyed going to the cinema. In those days the cinemas were "Salon Venus", in Irish Town and "Salon Ideal in Engineer's Lane. The films were in black and white and with her sense of humour it is no surprise Maria Luisa's favourite actor was Charlie Chaplin.

When she was 90 years old she flew to UK on her own. Agile, Maria Luisa still enjoys dancing, walking and swimming. Although she watches sports on television she admits not being a sporty person. She was overjoyed that Manchester United won the European Cup.

She cannot understand why Spain wants Gibraltar when they have so much land, especially when we get the Levanter, which she doesn't like!

Her memory is fantastic; she knows all her friends and family's telephone numbers by heart. Her health is excellent; she dose not suffer from the usual aliments relevant to her age, such as high blood pressure or diabetes. When asked for the secret of keeping her skin and curly hair in such a good condition, she said that she has never used soap on her face, only water, and that she has hair done once a month.

She bakes all the family's birthday cakes, enjoy reading newspapers and aromatic novels and paintings. Her secret for a long and healthy life is eating "potaje", pasta and no fried food, but, above all, she attributes her longevity to a good sense of hour.

Despite her years, Maria Luisa still has ambitions. Once of them is to go up in a hot air balloon.

Nalanie Chellaram

Nalaine's father left India for China when he was a boy, the family seeking better fortunes, and eventually arriving in Hong Kong.

The old Indian say "As you live so you will become" guided him and his family then, as it does still.

The family shared everything, making their hard work and ingenuity benefit every family member.

They were tailors and during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong, sing their considerable talents of charms, skill and hard work, won a converted contract to make soldiers' uniforms, and later those for the US Navy, later moving from uniform making into general retailing.

The family remained very close, moving from bad times to good, pooling their resources and even sharing their living quarters.

The majority of Nalanie's family still live in one very big house in Hong Kong and her memories of her childhood they are very happy and full of laughter.

By the time Nalanie was thirteen, the family had moved into the hotel business and a new family home was built, like a hotel in itself, with 52 rooms and providing for the daily needs of its 100+ residents. By now Nalanie's father is and presiding over his family kingdom but never forgetting his humble beginnings.

He still begins each day by kissing the ground in recognition of his gratitude that he still has work to do.

A very spiritual man, he always had a Hindu temple in his home.
Any holy man or spiritual leader who was passing through Hong Kong was always welcomed into the family home and these gurus became an important element in Nalanie's life. She met one in particular at he age of seven, who, with that special Hindu patience, waited for her to need his ministry, appearing at her wedding and then again in the 1980s.

Devoted though she is to her family, Nalanie still did her fair share of rebelling, finding, at her Hong Kong convent school, that lessons in modern jazz dancing and drama may have given her great joy, but were not to her parents' liking!

Then in the early 70s Nalaine followed three of her brothers over to the United States and entered university there majoring in Fine Arts and Child Psychology. Her aim was to work as an art therapist with disturbed teenagers. Her studies were cut dramatically short just eight months before the end of her course. She returned to Hong Kong on a routine visit and fell unexpectedly and hopelessly in love with Shanky and within 2 months she was married. Her parents were very happy.

At the start of her married life, Nalanie taught are but her new husband's business connections with Gibraltar suddenly required his attention and from busy, bustling Hong Kong the young couple were soon on their way to a very different life in Gibraltar with a closed border to Spain.

It was initially meant to be a temporary move but the place started to grow on them. Gradually Nalanie grew to love Gibraltar and her involvement in the family business helped to soak up some of her energy. She started to teach dance too, and did a lot of work for charity. Soon she had 300 students and became very involved in choreography and staging productions.

She had offers to work abroad but to Nalanie a proper balance of work, play and family was essential and she turned them all down. She became more interested in the

fashion business as problems with her knees made dancing painful. With seeming effortlessness, she transferred her energies to dress designing.

The border finally reopened and she recognised an opportunity to cater for the new Costa del Sol customers. Family connections in Hong Kong helped and she got the designs, with these customers in mind. She and her husband Shanky staged fashion shows in Marbella and the rich and famous or simply those who wanted to look like it, came flocking to the Chelleram shops. Their success led the manufacturer in Hong Kong to abscond with the second collection, which made things a little difficult.

With the children in the UK at boarding school Nalanie seemed to have more time than ever to devote her pleasures and business interests but some niggling doubts started to set in. She began to wonder if she was really leading such a satisfying life.

The teachings and philosophy of life of those spiritual leaders and gurus who had often been welcomed into the family home were never far from her mind. She found herself on a not unexpected journey. It was a search for truth, enlightenment, fulfilment – call it what you will – but it was a journey she remembered she had been told about from an early age.

Her chosen guru had always said that when the student is ready, the teacher will come and she found herself making ready. He mysteriously reappeared in her life at this time and become her true spiritual master, but hers was not an easy journey: there was the confidence in her views but because of her own difficulties in achieving solution that we think will lead to an immediate sense of well-being.

She was fortunate, that with the guidance of her spiritual maser, H.H. Swami Satchidananda, she knew how to seek alternatives and not to give up too easily. She restored to meditation and study. She sought the counsel of her spiritual leaders and resolved to devote the rest of her life to the more meaningful pursuits of mediation, painting and learning.

She had always been a sever asthmatic and, as she cleared her mind and found some of the answers, so her health also improved; she had a general gelling of well-being and felt more alive. People began to notice and ask questions and for advice.

She went to retreats and on Yoga courses and other devotees encouraged her to become a teacher. Always responsive to dreams, Nalanie was not surprised that a dream caused her to seek a place in which to teach and soon she had embarked on a whole new life as a teacher and guide.

She found, and still finds, that there are a very many people who are searching for something, and the Science of Yoga and meditation supplies a great deal of solace. She became in demand on an individual level, too. People who were depressed or felt lost or just wanted more spiritually in their lives, started seeing her for counselling or just simple advice.

Soon premises were being sought and were found and the Integral Yoga Centre was born, part of a process that Nalanie began but which she is very ready to attribute to a momentum that is propelled by the very people who originally sought her guidance.

Nalanie's charisma is combined with humility and lots of energy both spiritual and physical, a powerful fusion that gives her the drive to meet the challenges she sets herself. She will never rest on her laurels, in fact she would deny she deserves them, and continues to seek ways to serve the community of which she is now such an integral part.

Susan Clifton-Tucker

I was born at the Royal Naval Hospital in the early hours of the morning on 18th November 1955. My father was in the RAF in Sri Lanka the time and so missed my precipitate entry in the world. Early photographs reveal a rather odd looking baby with intense eyes, although mum insists I was the epitome of charm and beauty. As a mother myself now, I can understand how overwhelming love conquers all.

A year later my sister Christine was born and our family was complete. Although we lived in London for several years, it was always my parents' intention for us all to eventually return to the Rock. The catalyst was the setting up of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation in 1962, or GTV as it was in the beginning.

By this time dad had left the RAF and retrained as an engineer specialising in broadcasting. His decision was to have a huge impact in my life and that of my sister. The broadcasting studios were located in Wellington Front.

I was seven years old when I first set foot inside and was totally captivated. The array of sets, people dashing all over the place deadlines to meet, news to write, reports to film and edit and the sheer urgency of the task in hand, set a surge of adrenalin pumping through the body.

I liked what I saw and knew that one day, I wanted to be part of this frenzied activity. Nine years later whilst still at school I auditioned for a part-time continuity announcers job and was delighted but daunted at being accepted.

I can still vividly remember my first continuity link, under the guidance of Christine Dobinson who was head announcer. My heart was pumping furiously and my mouth was so dry. Christine sat in the continuity studio with me – out of the camera shot – to lend moral support. Amazingly though, once the camera lights turned red and I was on live, fear was replaced by sheer concentration.

We had no tele-prompt from which to read, so anything delivered to the camera would have to be either memorised or read from a continuity script that we would write; basically we were learning on the job.

As I was still a school I use to take my homework down to the studios and between links and reading out commercials would prepare work for the following day and then study for my GCE exams.

I was paid the grand sum of one pound and a shilling for the evening shift, from seven until midnight.

Working for GBC in the 70s was a dream come true.

I was totally untrained but anxious to learn. Everything was new and exciting and many of us were learning at the same time. Programmes were often cobbled together with more enthusiasm than expertise, although GBC had some very fin members of staff who were truly innovative. Transmissions in the early days was filled with live quiz shows, game shows and magazine and community programmes.

We were to only English language television station in Gibraltar and had a captive audience. Favourite programmes that were bought in included Dr Kildare, Payton Place and Bonanza, to name just a few.

Directly after O'levels, I was taken on as a full time radio presenter and felt I was the luckiest girl alive. I thought I had arrived and the prospect of further study held no appeal.

I did, however, complete a typing and short-hand course, without knowing how useful both would be in later life when I would fall into journalism.

Many of my contemporaries similarly underwent secretarial training. I remember we practised on cumbersome old Olivetti typewriters and corrected our mistakes with slips of Tippex. Little did we realise how computers would revolutionise our lives.

I was to spend two years on the radio whilst continuing my television career. From continuity announcing I was given the opportunity to branch out into programming, all of which went live – warts and all.

Every mistake and hiccup, to put it politely, was aired.

I still think some of our best television had been the bits no one ever sees, except perhaps Christmas when we air some of or out-takes. Unfortunately, some of them are too outrageous to be broadcast and will never see the light of day.

Throughout the 70s and 80s my good friend and colleague Peter Canessa and I were often asked to front charity functions. I have lost count of the many dance, fashion and other shows we presented together, both in Gibraltar and, once the border reopened, in Spain. We also teamed up as resident comperes of the Miss Gibraltar pageant for many years.

No life is complete for most of us without some form of tragedy and I was shaken to the core at the beginning of 1980 when my seven year marriage broke up. I had married John Cardona, a student accountant, at the age of 18. Of course, I realise now that we were both far too young and the odds were stacked against us. We basically grew apart and grew into different people.

Luckily we had put off having children and our divorce was as civilised as they come. Although we remain friends to this day, it was a turbulent and very sad time for us

both. I decided then that I would never re-marry but things rarely turned out exactly the way we planned them.

When the frontier re-opened I decided to move up the coast for a while and it turned out to be an excellent decision. Within a short time I found myself being invited to all sorts of functions and meeting lots of interesting and famous people who have homes in Marbella and the surroundings area. I put this to good use and sold the Chronicle the idea of starting up a celebrity column.

The next step was to propose a celebrity chat show on GBC. The result was "Midweek with Susan" a one hour live show which boosted our ratings and incomes. Of course, it wasn't all glamour, there was a substantial amount of leg work involved, approaching potential guests, researching their lives and co-ordinating their travel to Gibraltar for the show etc.

Midweek was followed by a profile series, which was a one-to-one with celebrities in their holiday homes or in a hotel in Spain. Deborah Kerr remains my favourite celeb. The star of the original film version of the King and I with Yul Brynner, and a friend of legends such as Clarke Gable and Cary Grant, she is without doubt opine of the kindest and most humane people I have ever had the privilege to interview. Deborah was worried that we should not reveal exactly where she lived or film her Oscar, trophies or other memorabilia because she had been robbed in Switzerland and naturally wanted to avoid a repetition.

Another wonderful man, who became a freoind, was Count Jaime de Mora y de Aragon, brother of Queen Fabiola of Belgium. He was flamboyant, charismatic and generous to a fault.

I once admired a rare book in his home, which he insisted I must have. It takes pride of place in my own library case now. Jaime de Mora's social life was widely chronicled, but he spent infinitely more time helping others in the implicit understanding that there should be no publicity. Don Jaime's home was a veritable treasure trove. He took almost childish pleasure in his photograph collection, which included him alongside kings and princes and princesses from around the world. Pride of place was reserved for Adnan Khashoggi the Saudi Arabian Mr Fixit, for whom he worked in Marbella.

It was just after I had finished the profile series that I was introduced to Andrew Tucker. The minute we met I was smitten.

He had arrived in Gibraltar from Guernsey to set up a local branch of their tryst company. A year later we were married and soon after our lovely daughter Sophie was born. She has bathed our lives in sunshine and changed us irrevocably.

My life took a severe knock in 1994 when GBC carried out a cost cutting exercise and decided not to renew any part-time contracts.

After Sophie was born I worked part-time for GBC and was caught in the net. I was a reporter and newscaster and felt flabbergasted that the corporation would do such a thing after an association of over two decades. Once over the shock and after

discussing it with Andrew, he suggested that I try for broadcasting post in the Channel Islands.

Before leaving GBC, I edited a show reel of my work, which I posted to Channel Television together with my CV. By this time I had obtained the London School of Journalism's Diploma. The next thing I knew they were on the line offering to fly me over for an audition.

Everything happened very quickly after that and we eventually went to live in Gibraltar for two very memorable years. When we returned to Gibraltar, GBC had embarked on an expansion programme and this time I re-joined as a senior full-time member of staff. I am the duty news editor and senior reporter, in addition to taking special responsibility for financial stories.

Mindful gaps in my CV, I obtained and English and Spanish A'Level at the College of Further Education two years ago and I am now in my second year as an undergraduate reading English and Spanish.

Johanna Cortes

I can't remember a time when I wasn't singing, often being told to shut up in church because I was singing on my own, and that was before the age of 5. I took part in the usual school plays when I was I primary school, but it wasn't until I entered Comprehensive School that I sand more serious music.

The Music Department, which was run by my future husband, put on an English adaptation of Rossini's Barber of Seville, in which I sang the leading female role at the age of 14.
From that followed a full adult production of Man of La Mancha, with top local singers and actors, in which, again, I played the leading role of Aldonza/Dulcinea.

The Gibraltar Girls' Choir visited London, where we sang all over the City, the main concert being at London's famous Wigmore Hall, where I sang as soloist. I remember being rather overawed at the pictures and names of the legends that had sung there, Melba, Caruso, Gigli. Things happened very quickly then. We had a group of girls originally called Tone Cluster, with a backing group and this eventually became the group Gibby, which was to sign a recording contract with Polydor/Fongram in Madrid for a double LP.

In the meantime, still aged between 15-16, I was thrilled to be asked sing two songs by Vaughan Williams in a concert celebrating the Silver Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth, held in London, worth the Royal Westminster Philharmonic, conducted by Hector Cortes. It was a concert of all-English music, and it was there that I first heard the incredibly beautiful Enigma Variations by Elgar, the composer in whom my husband specialises. Things then got rather complicated.

I recorded a single as a trial, in Madrid, with the Group backing me – a beautiful song called Adelante. The Producers were two of Spain's top names, and I remember we

went into the studio at 10am and didn't come out until 1:30am the following morning. The backing group came out at 3:30am that morning. They were really perfectionists, insisting on everything being just right. Funnily enough, though, they let me sing the song as I felt it, with no interference whatsoever. We didn't know we had been entered in the competition for a song to represent Spain in the Eurovision Song Contest. We only found out when our producers told us we'd come second, beating a lot of top singers in Spain. We were rather relieved not to win. It wouldn't have made us very popular at home to see us not to represent Spain. We worked on and off for abut 8 months in Madrid, also going on tour. The group broke up and the LP wasn't released.

I had also, at age 16, sung locally the title role in Lusia Fernanda, the zarzuela by Moreno Torroba, who was delighted it had been staged in Gibraltar, we heard. My co-star in this was a soprano Hector had to bring in at the last minute, because there was no local soprano available. She had just finished recording with Von Karajan, had a glittering career behind her, but in the end she was charm, itself, helped us in everything she could, was very complimentary abut my voice, and we became great friends.

Also during that time I sang in the Paris Song Contest, at the Theatre de Champs Elysees in Paris, and since then, even though I was told by a top voice coach in London that I had a star quality in my voice, and that he would take me to the top, I came home and married Hector, and since we were constantly travelling with the group, had an unusual working honeymoon between London and freezing Newcastle.

We decided that we both preferred family life to life we were leading then and have both turned down several very tempting appointments such with no regrets whatsoever. Since then I have sung in Spain many times, in recitals and concerts, and in Italy, France etc., and enjoy my music as a member of the Calpe Singers.

My daughter Daniella also sings, my son Richard is an excellent guitarist, and my youngest, Nicholas, is a great keyboard player and footballer!

I enjoy singing for pleasure, because singing means a lot to me, but not at the expense of having to sacrifice a family life, which means everything to me.

The critics in Spain and elsewhere have always been very kind to me, and that is all I want.

I was made a Dame of the Order of the Temple of Jerusalem in 1985 by the Regent of the Order, Count De Sousa Fontes, of Portugal, for cultural services to my community, for which I am very grateful, and I am looking forward to taking part in many more recitals and concerts in the future.

Yvette Del Agua

I came into this world on the 21st day of October 1957, the third offspring of Joseph and Lourdes Montegriffo. I was born in Gibraltar, have lived here all my life and am therefore proud to say I am British Gibraltarian.

I began my education at St Mary's School and later attended the Loreto Convent School. After taking my SCE Exams, I furthered my studies at the Commercial Department in Town Range, where I was taught secretarial skills, commercial studies and general office-reacted duties.

I was given my first job at the age of 17 in a prominent insurance company, where I started off as cleric assistant.

In 1976 I married my husband, Clive Del Agua, and we have three children, Zillah aged 21, Danielle who's 18 and nine-year-old Gail. I wanted to be a full-time mum, so I took several years off work to be with my children during the first years of their lives and I resumed my employment in 1983 when I started working GBC as a News Room/Production Secretary.

After ten years, I moved on to greener pastures and began my career as a legal secretary employed with Marrache & Co Barristers and Solicitors. I currently work for the Managing Partner of the firm, a role which I thoroughly enjoy.

For the past four years, I have been studying at the College of Further Education and last year I qualified as a Legal Executive, becoming a member of the Institute of Legal Executives.

I have always been interested in politics and have closely followed any developments relating to Gibraltar's internal and external affairs, especially its European status.

In 1996, my husband, together with other individuals, founded the Voice of Gibraltar Group, and became actively involved from the word go, becoming the group's chairperson. At the time, the frontier queues were particularly bad, and the sense of frustration and anger felt by many citizens in Gibraltar was palpable.

Of particular concern to us was the continued denial of our EU rights, and the campaign of harassment which Spain subjects us to, and agents the background we organised a mass demonstration which was held in May 1996. This was held around the time when the Spanish authorities were questioning the validity of our passports. We received hundreds of calls from very irate citizens, urging us to take some meaningful and visible action in which they could all participate. Around 12,000 people attended this demonstration and it gave us all a chance to release our pent-up frustration by allowing us to publicly express our feelings about the situation.

It was very gratifying to see a united front on this occasion, as the demonstration was attended all political parties, including Government and Opposition, many retired politicians, including the late Sir Joshua Hassan, Bob Peliza, Issac Abecasis to name a few, and nearly all the associations and organisations in Gibraltar. The event received extensive press coverage, within Europe and all over the world, even as far afield as China.

Obviously, Spain was not too happy about being exposed in this manner and as was to be expected, the frontier queues worsened considerably for a couple of days after the demonstration. The object of the exercise, however, was achieved, which was to attract as much international press as possible and to make as many people possible aware of the plight of the Gibraltarians.

My policy as part of the Group is not to criticise, attack or exert pressure on our elected representatives, i.e. Government and Opposition, it is to pressurise, embarrass and expose both the Spanish Administration for its undemocratic and inhumane treatment of our people, and the British Government for its inadequate defence of our rights.

I am always eager and willing to work with other groups in Gibraltar as long as it is for the common good of all.

I have helped the SDGG during the collection of signatures for a Petition asking Britain to reject Matutes proposals, and I was personally invited to go to 10 Downing Street to present the Petition. I was also quite active in the collection of signatures for the Euro-Vote Petition, which was organised by the European Movement.

The correspondence, which we have exchanged to date with the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, covering a wide range of issues affecting Gibraltar, has left me with no doubt that the most that Britain will do for us is to merely reiterate Britain's commitments under the Preamble to the Constitution. Many of the issues raised have been totally ignored or side-stepped.

Unfortunately, the impression I have had from his replies on each and every occasion is that Britain is not willing to sacrifice her national interests for the sake of the people of the of Gibraltar and this has been clearly demonstrated in practice on many occasions.

Without ever giving up hope Britain will one day, sooner rather than later, come out of its hibernation vis-à-vis Gibraltar, my belief is that bringing our plight, persistently and repeatedly, to the attention of those European Institutions whose responsibly is to ensure that the rights of all European citizens be upheld. I believe that these rights should be sacrosanct, over and above the national interests of two member states, and set apart from bilateral issue framework in which Gibraltar is always viewed.

Our Group decided to lobby the European Parliament in Strasbourg and to hand a letter of compliant to the European Commission in Brussels. At first glance, I seemed a very ambitious project due to the fact we wanted to take a larger group of people with us to create maximum impact. Once, we have decided we wanted to proceed and make this trip a reality, we approached Government and put forward our proposals in detail. Government gave its full support and we started the ball rolling in February. We came across all sorts of hurdles along the way.

Michael Llamas's assistance proved invaluable as he is actually based in Brussels, an on the 11 April two coaches with 100 Gibraltarians on board, set ff in the early hours of the morning. I believe the trip proved to be a great success and also an eye-opener

for all of us. I was amazed at the number of people, including British MEP's who were either unaware or completely misinformed of the problems we have in Gibraltar.

All of us had a chance to put forward Gibraltar's case on many occasions and we managed to convey our message to thousands of people, through word of mouth, the handing out of leaflets, and through the explicit wording on the banners of those who were demonstrating outside. We lobbied passers-by on the street on an informal basis, those visiting Parliament on official business, a substantial number of MEP's and other high-ranking officials. We did our utmost to ensure that as many people as possible, both ordinary citizens and influential individuals in positions of power, were fully informed of the problems that Gibraltar faces as a consequence of Spain's campaign of harassment. It was a week of hard work but worth every minute of it.

As a consequence of our lobbying activities, we received press coverage in various TV stations, as well as reports in the European Voice newspaper, The European Magazine, The Independent and other papers. In addition, Tony Venables of the European Citizens Advisory Services is now gathering information to be able to make and official compliant to the European Commissions about the frontier restrictions. The most important thing, which emerged from this trip, is the fact that there are now thousands of people more aware of the Gibraltar situation now than there was a few months ago.

My plans for the future as part of the Voice of Gibraltar Group is to continue with our lobbying campaign both in Europe and abroad.

I feel very strongly that Gibraltar must not adopt a defeatist or apathetic attitude, and we must all strive to achieve all the benefits which we are entailed to as European citizens, in the same manner as we are obliged to meet all the burdens which apply to the territory in the form of directives. We must continue with our fight for self-determination and we must continually expose both Britain and Spain for their failure to allow us to evolve as a people with its own identity, with its own aspirations and with the same rights as any other citizen of Europe.

Lucy Denham

Lucy Denham, who recently celebrated her sixtieth birthday in Gibraltar, was born in the Philippines. Here parents were farmers although her mother was one of the first women on the islands to take a University degree. Following in her mother's footsteps Lucy left home in 1966 to take a degree in nursing education at the Silliman University in Philadelphia. She financed her own studies by work and scholarships and graduated in paediatrics. Training followed under one of the pioneers in coronary care and she gained a further qualification in advanced medical and surgical techniques.

Although homesick, Lucy continued her nursing in the USA working in socially deprived areas in Chicago with premature babies. This in turn led her acceptance in the neurology unit at the National Hospital, Queens Square, London, dealing with child epilepsy and cardiac stroke rehabilitation cases. In the latter area she helped both

British Royalty and African Statesmen. Some of her work in London was done with Doctor Roger Banister.

Whilst nursing one of the Queen's footmen, Lucy had occasion to talk to one of Her Majesty's Equerries. They discussed the state of nursing in the U.K. in comparison with the U.S.A. and disparity f status and remuneration between the two was noted. A few moths later the grading and salaries of nurses in the National Health Service was updated, perhaps the conversation over the footman's be had prompted Her Majesty to raise the position of nurses at one of her sessions with the Prime Minister of the day.

It was at the National Hospital that Lucy made her first connection with Gibraltarian, Dr Lochran. The predecessor of paediatrician Dr Sam Benady had been entrusted to her care after being paralysed by a stroke. Lucy was in charge of the nursing team, she instructed them to turn Dr Lochran every ten minutes to be sure he did not develop bed soars. Fortunately he regained the use of his limbs and invited he head nurse to spend the summer of 197o in Gibraltar.

In order to finance her stay Lucy took a house-keeping job at the then Both Worlds holiday hotel, where, in return she got a room and board. A few days after arrival on the Rock she was introduced to Frank Denham an ex REME army man who had served in Borneo, Aden, and Germany. On his discharge Frank and a colleague had sailed in his small boat Water Witch from England and decided to set up a business in Gibraltar. Frank invited Lucy out on the bat but she felt rather sea sick and did not think she would be asked again, but two weeks later in the 19 December 1970 Frank proposed. The recovered Dr John Lochran gave the bride away at the Gibraltar Registry Office with lunch afterwards at The Mount.

Lucy has one son away at Loughbourgh University taking his Masters in Politics.

She has worked in her husband's business and in tourism, there never having been a place for her nursing in Gibraltar.

Over the years Frank Denham helped design and build the power station and the Casino Bridge. The latter was prefabricated to the design of Architect Barry Brindle and craned into place during one nigh, much to the amazement of local residents, who woke up to a seemingly instantaneous new bridge and Lucy and the workmen toasting its safe installation with champagne.

One day in Sacarello's coffee shop Lucy met an old pensioner, who told her of the lack of facilities for entrainment for the elderly and of he and his wife dreaded up in Mount Alvernia. This prompted Lucy to create the job of bringing some sunshine into Senior Citizens lives. Her weekly afternoon tea dances at the community centre have been going on now for six years. Lucy has been overwhelmed by the help in being given use of the premises free, the provision of tea, milk, biscuits and money, which always seem to arrive, and the appreciation for a light-hearted afternoon that is experienced by the OAPs. Lucy's main concern now is providing standards care and stimulation to elderly people, who can rapidly become institutionalised as the result of a stay in hospital after an accident or illness.

She regards Gibraltar as her home and in spirit of having had a heart attack and suffering from arthritis herself is still giving heart and mind in the service of others.

Mary Georgina Dolding, MBE

I was born in 1935, and grew up in Southwick, Sussex. I was the third daughter of seven children and had a very happy childhood. My father was a saw doctor and when war started in 1939 his job was considered to be of importance to the war effort so he remained at home joining the National Fire Service.

When it was thought that Germany might bomb Shoreham harbour it was decided that the 3 eldest girls should be evacuated to Yorkshire for 18 months. I saw this as a very exciting adventure, which is how I have viewed my life all along.

As nothing seemed to be happening father came and collected us and our family moved to the village of Steyning near Shoreham. We lived in a row of houses just outside the village.

Father grew vegetables in a very long garden and kept some livestock. As well as this he went out every evening on the National Fire Service Boat of which he was a member. For this and going to work he travelled 6 miles every way. I remember he mended all our shoes and always cooked meal and washed up on Sunday. I often wonder how my father ever managed to fit so much in, I can even remember him with a piece of cloth on our dining room table cutting out a coat for my brother. Most days he caught fish when he was out on the boat and would deliver these gifts to the neighbours as well as doing all of their home repairs whilst their men were away serving.

With such a large family we couldn't afford to use all of our ration coupons such as butter, sugar etc, and so use to also give these away. Highlights of our daily life were going to church, as a family twice on Sundays, and wonderful outings on our bicycles to a field with a swing. We would play cricket and have picnics. They were such wonderful happy days that have resulted in very special memories.

In a strange sort of way another memory was of times spent in the air raid shelter, which farther built. He had made it like a little doll's house and we loved it when the sirens went off and we were carried one by one down to the shelter. It was fitted with shelf-like bunks, with a special little one in the corner for baby.

Oh what a calamity the morning we awoke and could not find the baby. We looked everywhere and thought a German had come in the night and taken the baby away. It wasn't until the baby cried upon walking that we discovered baby had rolled out of the little bunk and was hidden under the shelf.

The local village school had just two classes, one for small girls and one for the bigger ones. I remember then thinking how enormous the playground was but after having gone back years later it was as small as a postage stamp.

At 13 we moved back to Shoreham where I attended the Secondary Modern School for Girls. I enjoyed school very much and although I was never any good at sports I was secretary of the Bee Club. Members would go in on Saturdays and holidays and after the hives removing the honey etc. I embroidered badges for all members. I was a member of the drama group, and except sports, would be involved in everything; I suppose upon reflection I was like my father.

At 15 I left school and wanted to become a nurse and attend pre-nurse classes. However training was not available until I would have attained the age of 18. My father said that with a large family it was necessary to work and as my uncle was the manager in a bookbinding establishment he managed to get me a position there. Father told me if I really wanted to be a nurse then one day I would be.

If I my taken you back slightly to when I was 11 years old, I made what was to be the biggest and most important decision in my life. It was in one of my Sunday School meetings when I decided to live my life as Jesus wanted me to and that I would walk with him in life. I went home and told my mother that I had given my life to Jesus that day. My mother told me that as I lived in the same house they would see.

At 13 my Sunday School was closing through lack of teachers and thereby pupils. I insisted that it couldn't and was invited to run it. Within a year I had 100 children attending.

At 16 I joined the Congregational Youth and a lay preaching team. I attended classes on Saturday s in Brighton. We would be given a text to discuss then be sent for a walk and upon returning for tea our minister would preach a sermon from the discussions we had participated earlier.

My teenage years were spent rushing around Sussex taking part in youth activities. I went on a youth camp and met my life partner and wonderful husband David. When David was up a ladder putting a pane of glass in a little wooden church, I was below scraping paint of the door.

The next thing I knew David had dropped a mallet on my head. He ran down the ladder to support me – as he had down in most things I had done throughout my life- however as soon as he looked n my face and saw I was alright he ran back up. The following Sunday I was taken a service in Andover and had no transport, as David did, he offered to take me. We courted for over a year, married and had three children.

Whilst we were at a family missionary conference we heard about ordinary people joining and woe king with the community in another country through the local church. On reading through The Times one Sunday David spotted an advertisement for people to work in Zimbabwe. He applied but heard nothing, then one day just before Christmas 1970, and out of the blue, we received a telephone call from the Crown Agents saying they urgently needed men in Gibraltar to build Glacis Estate as housing for locals was badly needed.

We arrived in Gibraltar on 9th January 1971 for a stay f 18 months. We were in the Methodist church on the first Sunday morning. The border was closed. David worked for the project and when that finished he joined a local company and we are still here.

Whilst the family were young and with the border closed we thoroughly enjoyed life. We were members if the United Services Sailing Club and never had to worry where to go on Bank Holidays as there was nowhere to go. We all of us did our bit in amateur dramatics and local choirs.

I met someone at a cocktail party who said I had the face of a Guider and started with the Brownies in 1971. I spent 7 years as Assistant Commissioner taking charge f first Brownies then Rangers followed by 7 years as the Commissioner. When I was 40 I kept hearing this reminder in my ears telling me that life begins at 40 also the words my father had said on day I would nurse. I applied and was accepted into the local School of Nursing and in 3 years had gained my SRN. I thoroughly enjoyed this time having the opportunity to speak to the local people and learn more about the culture of Gibraltar.

I spent from 1976 to 1979 at St. Bernard's Hospital doing my nursing training and in 1982 went into District Nursing from where I started my McMillan Nursing and was the first train McMillan Nurse in Gibraltar. In 1984 I went to England and trained as a Chiropodist because many people visited had their feet in a bad condition. I continue to do this work within the Health Service for sick and elderly people.

Through my position as a Guiding Commissioner and McMillan Nurse and with the backing of the committee of the Gibraltar Society for Cancer Relief, I was instrumental in negotiating for the building of the Girl Guides Headquarters and Day Centre thus the construction of the Lady Williams Centre in Devil's Tower Road. During this period f my life I was on the one hand looking after terminally ill patients and on the other helping to build the lives of these vibrant young people and finding that one situation helped the other.

Through my work I have found it a privilege to be able to get to know the Gibraltarians and their families in depth and I am greatly appreciative of this, especially as most English people only have the opportunity to know them on the fringes.

When going down Main Street I get a hug a minute.

I am now running regular bereavement meetings and with the sharing of conversation and good listening we are gradually seeing development whereby lives are put back on curse.

I continue to lay preach and am Chairman of the Carpenter's Arms Committee which is our link between the church and the community.

As a sedate grandmother with seven grandchildren like to call myself a Gibraltarian by adoption!

Barbara Dunn

I spent the first five years of my life eighteen miles from Aberdeen on the banks of the River Dee. My father managed his mother's estate and dealt with the letting if stretchers of salmon fishing on the river to people mainly from the South. I can still taste the glorious fresh salmon steaks they use to give us!

When I reached school age we moved into Aberdeen so that I could attend St. Margaret's School for Girls. Very soon the war brook out and strangely enough the school rented my family's home for a boarding school for those children whose parents wanted them away from town and air raids.

The war in many ways passed me by; my father was too old to join up, but became an Air Raid Warden, and I spent my time freely roaming the Scottish countryside and in the holidays trying to beat my mother and father in the putting green.

When the war ended the school returned to town and my final year I was Head Girl. I had great difficulty deciding what to do with my life trying to choose between drama schools London or Aberdeen University.

As my father had died shortly before I finished school, I decided my mother needed me at home I went to University. At University I served on the Student's Representative Council, was secretary of the Debating Society, a member if the liberal Club, and did a lot of amateur dramatics, my favourite role being Lady Bracknell in "the Importance of Being Earnest." After four years study I graduated with an M.A. in English Language and Literature.

Two months later I married Brian, fell student, and we moved to Cambridge where he was to do a Doctorate in Economics History. We lived in a little, rather primitive, college cottage on the river Cam and I acquired my first pet, a cat.

After this Brian did his service in the R.A.F. and we spent a time in Norfolk, and there, again, did amateur dramatics. His service finished, we returned to Cambridge where Brian got a research post and we bought a house in Girton. Now settled I got my first dog, a poodle, to join my cat.

These years I spent gardening, going to the Woman's Institute, acting in dram festivals, and working for the Liberal Party, meeting both Martin Bell and Jeremy Thorpe at bye-election time.

In 1963, Brian was awarded a year away lecturing in Colorado. He left in September, and I joined him the following March having seen his elderly parents through a snowy English winter. First I joined him in Boulder, Colorado but we travelled extensively at Easter and after the college year ended. We visited San Francisco, Washington, New York, Las Vegas, Florida, New Orleans, Boson, Niagara Falls an nearly al the famous National Parks.

In 1966 my marriage to Brian came to a very amicable end and Geoff and I use his words legged it onto the wilderness in Petersfield, Hampshire, U.K.

The following summer, after we were married we wanted a holiday abroad, but there were very strict rules abut taking money out of the U.K. and the only appropriated

places were there was no limit was Malta, Cyprus and Gibraltar. We made the best decision of our lives and chose the Rock, and loved it from the minute we landed.

In the next two years we came four more times, and it was suggested to us by some people at Saccone and Speed that we should star a bar here. We moved here in January 1969, the year the frontier closed. We managed the Lobster Pot beach bar for the Caleta Palace the first two summers much to delight of my three stepchildren who spent all their summers here playing at the beach. At the end of the second season we acquired premises at 150, Main Street and opened the Bat and Ball Bar in the spring.

Early in our time in Gibraltar, Geoff was made a sports reporter on television and so began our very close links with G.B.C. We took part n numerous quiz shows and one of the most terrifying experiences of my life was spending all the night on air discussing the UK. election results as they came through, in a programme run by Peter Plant.

While we had the bar we rented a flat in Tangier to which we escaped whenever we needed a break. During this period I did a short spell on the R.S.P.C.A committee and I served on the Licensed Victuallers committee under chairman John Baglietto. As usual we had pets, a cruelty case dog and a stray cat.

Sadly, visits of the Royal Navy declined and traded decreased and in 1981 we were forced to give up the bar.

For three months I worked in the newly opened Liptons at Mariana Bay in charge of the fruit and vegetables.

Then in July I joined the Civil Service, first in charge of files in General Division, then Treasury and then in Personnel.

In summer of 1988, I started the happiest and most rewarding year's of my working life at St. Bernard's Hospital. Even in a clerical capacity there is a feeling of satisfaction in trying to make life easier for those looking after patients. I was there till retirement in 1995. During this time Geoff was in Customs despite having cancer in 1984 and losing partial use of his vocal chords. He retired in 1995 and tragically died nine months later. The thing that has kept me sane since then is the wonderful friendless of everyone on the Rock. The minute you step out of the door you see someone you know.

I also have tremendous love shown to me by my three stepchildren, the oldest of whom spent over a year here after Geoff died, and made her name in the local music scene.

Last but not least there has been my dear old dog my two cats, and work I do for the R.S.P.C.A.

I have never for one moment found regretted coming to live here, and I will always think myself as Scottish by birth and Gibraltarian by adoption.

Paula Galliano

Paula was born in England in 1939 but her first memories are of the cottage in which the family lived in Wales during the war years.

It was the gardener's cottage of a large manor house in a small village, a seemingly idyllic situation but this was not to long last as he father was posted abroad with the army and the family left behind was just women and children, three generations.

In 1945, however, when peace reined once again the family moved from rural Wales to a flat in London. London was not home for long, however, as Paula's father soon got a job in India, and in 1947 the family moved once again, by converted troop ship, to a new left in India. Paula, her mother and thirty other women all shared one cabin and men had quarters below. Eventually they arrived in Bombay but there then followed another two to three day journey by train to their ultimate destination, Dehru Dun.

Due to the distances involved and the difficulties in India at the time school had to be boarding school and Paula was a pupil at various convent boarding schools having infrequent visits from family.

By 1950 the family found themselves on the return to England, with her baby brother in tow and destined for Liverpool.

In 1952 Paula's father went to the Gold Coast to work and Paula, by now thirteen years, was to stay at her boarding school in Sussex and did not expect see her family for a long time, but later that year, she was allowed to travel out to the Gold Coast for her Summer holidays and she discovered a paradise which was the beginning of a passionate love affair with Africa.

She persuaded her parents to let her leave school early and was back in Ghana, as an impressionable 17 year old, for the Independence Day celebrations in 1955, including the glamorous ball in the evening hosted by the new government. She stayed on and ran a small nursery school, which was very popular with the mothers of the infants for who she cared.

Memories of nurses in the distinctive uniforms during the war and her love of children eventually rekindled a long held ambition to be a children's nurse and made her decision to return to the UK to train.

Applying to London hospitals was not so easy though from depths of Africa: she received lots of letters suggesting she route her application through the Foreign Office! By chance she spied and advertisement in "The Lady" for St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey and it was there that she made her way in 1956. She underwent a very through training. As the hospital had no medical students the nurse got more experience and Paula went on after she qualified to do extra training in surgery, orthopaedics and midwifery. The midwifery was done in London with one object in mind: to get her back to Africa, as with midwifery qualifications the post of a sister would be more easily obtained.

By the time she was ready to join them again, however, her parents were moving making to England, so Paula looked for other equally exotic sounding places to work and was attracted by an advertisement in Gibraltar. In June 1963 Paula left England in the pouring rain bound for Gibraltar and arrived on a balmy, warm evening with a distinct feeling of having arrived somewhere special.

Her heart sank when she was pushed straight onto the Maternity Ward as she had been hoping for general nursing but the initial disappointment soon abated as she found that, in Gibraltar, Maternity nursing is a much nicer, particularly pleasurable and satisfying branch of nursing. Janet Moncur was senior sister, a post eventually ending up as Matron.

The social life was good too and the nurses were much n demand, and within a year Paula had met Charlie Galliano who she was eventually to marry. She remembers her first date with him so well. It was the last night of the La Linea fair and Charlie had been to the bullfight while she was working and they met afterwards for dinner.

One night they were babysitting in the Naval Officer's pavilion and he popped the question. The babies' parents came home to find the babysitters supping champagne.

Charlie had a VWBeetle he drove it to England and Charlie and Paula were married from her parents home in Woking. Their honeymoon by Beetle was to Gibraltar via Paris, Lourdes and Madrid. They arrived back in Gibraltar broke and on little more than £48 per month had to find somewhere to live. Charlie's uncle was a retired priest and he gave them a couple of rooms in his home on St Edwards's Road.

Over the years they were able to take over more of the house as the family grew. The house had originally been a school and Dr Sam Benady's mother remembers going to school there.

Paul carried on working after she became pregnant. She discovered that no one before her had need of a maternity's nurse maternity uniform so was forced to wear an outsize overall.

Simon was born in 1967 and after eight weeks Paula returned to work, breaking new ground again. Three more children arrived over the next five years and with the commendable organisation skill, Paula continued to work, juggling her responsibilities as mother, wife and nurse. She took only the minimum maternity leave but employed a nursery nurse who would bring to newly born infants up to the hospital to be fed.

The family home is just down the hill from the hospital so at least this journey was very short.

The shortage of midwives was acute so there was a lot of pressure to continue working at this time and the pull was very strong.

She never felt that her own children were neglected, however, and her mother-in-law was always on the hand for emergencies, but she did need help with the children and it was hard to find. Times were hard financially too but eventually, after a string of

disasters, a wonderful nanny arrived after the third baby was born and stayed until after they were all at school. The children never came home to an empty house and as lunches were taken at home this was sometimes a nightmare to organise.

The responsibilities on the ward were very onerous. Paula was often the only midwife on duty although there would be a doctor on call; the same one would be on call for 24 hours so would only be called out if the midwife on duty was sure the situation warranted it. This meant that the midwife had a great deal of responsibility but it also made the job very rewarding and was excellent experience.

Paula has found a great deal of job satisfaction in seeing so many of the babies the she delivered grow up and, on a walk down Main Street any day of the week, sees dozens, indeed she is now delivering the babies of those babies. These mothers become her friends: she sees them through pregnancy to labour to delivery and then through subsequent pregnancies and births. This leads to a great rapport developing and the delivery room can be the meeting place of old friends!

Paula sees this privilege and says it makes the midwife feel very special.

In recent years there have been a numerous changes in the Maternity Department. There was a year when the Royal Naval Hospital merged with St Bernard's, an experiment that was abandoned but the merging of the maternity units had highlighted the need for staffing levels to be adjusted. Better equipment has arrived and the total birthing experience has been enhanced by the introduction of a community services that includes post and antenatal visits and special care visits e.g. for patients with high blood pressure.

Retirement was looming but there has been announced recently the creation of the post of Clinical Manager, Maternity. The true professional that she is, Paula saw this opportunity to stay and see through the next round of improvements to the maternity service in Gibraltar before she finally hands over to her successor. She applied for and was awarded this post, a fitting pinnacle to a lifelong career.

When it finely comes, people sometimes find retirement a difficult prospect but with her life's work all around her in the Community I suspect that Paula's advice will continue to be sought on an informal basis for many a year to come and in retirement she will be almost as busy.

Carmen Gomez

Dominique Martinez-Lopez has contributed the following story:

My grandmother, who is affectionately know as "Ya Ya" by the younger members of the family, was born on the 22 February 1919 in La Linea de la Concepcion, very close to the border of Gibraltar. She was named Carmen Gomez Gonzalez. I must have highlighted her double surname to point out that although she lived so near Gibraltar and was to have such strong future links and feels strongly for the Rock, which opens its arms so widely to everyone and seems to capture everyone, no matter what race or religion, she is Spanish.

My first memory of Ya Ya was when she came to live with us in the United Kingdom at the time my youngest brother was born. She came to care for us while my mother was busy with the new baby. I was ten at the time. I remember her vividly, a tall good-looking woman with amazingly beautiful white hair. Her stay with us was to be a long one. Not everyone gets to travel as we did and have their Gran come and travel with them.

I am happy to say I have enjoyed my grandmother's company and her stories for 20 years of my life.

In Mallorca, where we lived for 7 years, she use to travel with local friends from the Island in her spare time, and when she was not with them she use to spend her time with us. In the summer holidays, she took us out and spent many hors playing games with us.

As I got a. little older I really began to know my grandmother; she was a really strong woman who had a difficult life.

Her younger years were spent in La Linea, Span. Her studies had been basic enough to read and write, which even now at 80, is still her major pastime.

In 1936 the Spanish Civil war broke out. During that awful time in La Linea she recalls men knocking on her door and telling her mother "Give me your daughter or the sewing machine" so the machine was handed over to them, only to have it later resold back to them. She remembers being extremely scared and her family having a sword hidden in a walking stick for protection. My great-grandmother, foreseeing the danger, sent my grandmother and her brother to Gibraltar as refugees to stay with a local family. That was her first link with Gibraltar. When the worst was over and they returned to their hometown but only until the Second World War started.

Spain did not participate in the world war, not after the devastating effects the Civil War had on the whole of Spain. Devastating too, on my grandmother's family, as her older brother had been old enough to go to war. The proximity to Gibraltar meant that when Gibraltar was being bombed, the neighbouring town took hits and she recalls living through those awful times during the bombing, hiding under the table, until the worst was over.

Again she was uprooted, this time taken to a small town in Malaga near Ronda call Yunquera to stay with relatives. By this time she had already met my grand gather who, shy tells me was besotted with her but secretly to herself she knew her heart was elsewhere, but being young and under her mother's roof she was strongly persuaded into seeing this handsome young working Gibraltarian.

At 22 she married and honeymooned in Malaga and on her return she found that, although married, they had to live separately, each in their own home on either side of the border, which also closed at night.

My grandmother had become Mrs Carmen Gomez, her husband's name was also Gomez. She then became a Gibraltarian and carried a Gibraltarian passport proudly,

but cud not live in Gibraltar so she had to apply for permit of residence to live in the very house in which she was born, where she also gave birth to my mother.

This was in 1942: they were, therefore, never evacuated although my grandfather was, at a later date. They left for Madrid where my grandfather worked in banking, but was taken ill, and my grandmother returned with her daughter, who was a few years old, back to La Linea. His illness was to last a lifetime so my Gran had to take care of everything and bring up her daughter by herself with the help of her sisters and financial help from my mother's parental family. They still lived in Spain but my mother, being a Gibraltarian, even though she was born in Spain, still needed a permit to live there.

My grandmother's efforts and hard work went into giving her daughter the best private tuition possible making sure her daughter learnt English, as she herself did not speak it, at the same time as their native tongue Spanish.

In 1953 my mother, then eleven, was accepted into school in Gibraltar. Her knowledge of English made this possible and she was accepted as any other Gibraltarian and maintained contact with her paternal grandmother. Thanks to my grandmother's efforts my mother could attend school in Gibraltar, returning to her home in La Linea in the evenings.

The following year 1954, her Majesty the Queen was to visit the Rock and my Gran does not recall any political animosity until that point, although she recalls a definite political attitude toward the Spanish vice versa. This was to be her second stay in Gibraltar: a week to join in the festivities, with my mother, participating in the school's projects and parades for the Queen's arrival.

They stayed at the friend's hose, who had taken her and her brother in as refugees so many years before.

My Gran finally settled in Gibraltar for good and felt very much a Gibraltarian. She worked in St Bernard's Hospital and participated fully in all Gibraltarian festivities including Corpus Christie and other Roman Catholic processions.

Even when her only daughter married and started a family and began travelling around the world, my Gran stayed in Gibraltar. She could have returned to Span to her family, bust she felt she belonged in Gibraltar. She even had to visit her mother and sister while the border was closed via Tangier like everyone else at the time.

She spent her years working and living in Gibraltar making many friends in the Indian, Jewish and other local communities until she returned and came to live with us in the UK.

We all finally returned to Gibraltar in 1985 when she became a member of the Senior Citizens Club, is proud to have met the Governor and his wife and looks forward every year to September 10.

She has always been political and displays her own Gibraltar flag proudly during National Week.

So look out for her she will be at Casemates Square, wearing a red skirt, white blouse and a big red and white rosette saying "I am 100% Gibraltarian."

Jane Howard

I was born in Rugeley, Staffordshire in 1947 where my farther was an antique dealer.

After a Public School education I entered the world of antiques, employed in the Kings Road London. I followed in my father's footsteps for several years. In fact, I feel very deeply that I still am an antique dealer at heart.

My interests were varied from taking and electrical engineering course to a year on a local newspaper and librarians course. Then I left all this move to Europe with my first husband – an interpreter.

We lived in Vienna, Geneva and Russia before settling in Paris. I found work with the O.E.C.D. – as an international civil servant. This was a fascinating time. We were overpaid and over-privileged making a lot of money.

However, in 1985 I needed a change and decided to move to Spain. We planned to buy a restaurant in Majorca, and were due to catchy the ferry from Barcelona. As fate would have it, we were too early in the season and so drove down to Gibraltar finding that the frontier had just opened. Here we found the Cannon Bar was up for grabs – and so we did. It was totally unplanned nut business was immediately excellent – I also bought the Captain's Cabin but the late eighties brought changes: less forces, fewer tourists and total business climate.

Soon not only were the expat, Costa community alienated from Gibraltar but the town was an immense building site. I actually had building workers carrying customers over the holes in the road.

Much against popular opinion during the time of recession a friend and I started an upmarket second- hand shop, "Change of a Dress", the first of its kind in Gibraltar, which was a success. We sold it two years ago as tourist business started to improve. I really miss the clothes we used to have first choice buying!

I love living in Gibraltar. I enjoy wandering down Main Street saying bye to everyone I know. The mixture if nationalities fascinate me in Tangiers who remark "there's Mrs.Cannon Bar." Saturday mornings are wonderful. The bands march down Main Street, to the delight of the tourists, the Jewish community socialises and weddings follow one after another at the Cathedral.

As a tourist destination our Sundays are not good. Why are so many of our main attractions closed? Particularly, the cable car and Museum. I am embarrassed to have to explain to visitors that their only option seems to be an expensive Taxi Tour. Also I do wish we could install more pride in the town amongst the teenagers and children. They do run riot and everyone blames everyone else for the rubbish.

I guess my choice for a Millenium project would be to educate us all to keep the Rock beautiful.

Nothing tempts me to go back to living in England again. I defiantly wish to retire here.

I am still at the Cannon Bar and things are better now. As a publican you see all the walks of life, through good times and bad, and I still get tremendous pleasure from seeing my naughty bys of 14 years ago transformed into lovely family men today.

Joanne Kwan

Joanne Kwan first visited Gibraltar in April 1988. She came on holiday from her homeland, Hong Kong with her mother and her 2-year-old daughter, Jennifer, stay with her sister, who had a restaurant and business here. Her sister had been in Gibraltar for six years by that time and had told her on many occasions that Gibraltar was a good place to live.

Joanne had never thought of giving up her moderately good lifestyle or of leaving the place where she had been brought up, educated and begun her working life but was impressed by her sister's stories of what a wonderful place Gibraltar was, particularly its people, culture and the safe environment in which one could raise a family.

So determined were Joanne's sister and her husband to lure Joanne here that they prepare her CV for her. At first she thought it was a joke but they were so persuasive that she agreed to apply for a job at the Hong Kong Bank, an offshore bank in Gibraltar. Joanne's application relieved heavily on the help and support of her brother-in-law who not only typed her CV, a letter of application and the application for but even posted the letter for her. All Joanne had to do was sign the various documents.

The Hong Kong Bank interviewed Joanne and offered her a post as an accountant, doing similar work to her job in Hong Kong. The arrangement was that she would have a six-month attachment at the Head Office of the Hong Kong Bank in Hong Kong. Thus, once she had completed her holiday in Gibraltar, she returned with Jennifer, to her home and husband, Andrew in Hong Kong.

Her mother remained in Gibraltar for three years in order to help Joanne's sister to cope with her twin daughters whilst she was involved with the business.

The main reasons why Joanne and Andrew were happy to move to Gibraltar and cope with the initial difficulties were that it would mean that Jennifer would be brought up in a non racist society and in an environment whatever the financial status, whereas in Hong Kong there were no points of contact between the experiences of rich and those of poor.

Prior to this eventful visit to Gibraltar, Joanne and her family had led a typical family life in Hong Kong.

Andrew was a social worker, and the family lived in accommodation provided at the children's home, where he worked. Joanne had been employed for ten years as an accountant at a major shipping company and had risen to the post of assistant manger there. This was not only Joanne's job but also her last job in Hong Kong prior to her leaving, and during her time in the company she gained good many friends and now has interesting memories in her life.

Most of her friends are now residing in different countries around the world – Canada, America, Australia and Singapore – and Joanne has said that she would like to end up travelling around the world, not just for sightseeing but also to meet up with her friends again.

Each year at Christmas times she spends £40, not buying Christmas presents or Christmas cards, but just on the postage for all the greetings cards she spends.

One of the major things Joanne has been proud of and that is of historical significance a she looks back on her working life in Hong Kong, is that her ex boss at the Shipping Company was elected Chief Executive of Hong Kong when Hong Kong was handed back to China by the British in 1997.

The special features of life for Joanne and her family in Hong Kong were the great variety of food shops and clothes shops and the choices in the night life for adults – they were in the habit of eating out nearly every night.

For example in her one and a half hour lunch break she could go to one of the street markets and buy design garments which, although they might not be perfect or were shops soiled, were available at a very reasonable price.

However, there were also difficult aspects to her life there; one of these was that she had to spend 3 hours travelling to and from work on Mondays to Fridays, and for the half day which was required on Saturday. Once Joanne had completed the training at the Hong Kong Bank in Hong Kong, she returned to Gibraltar with her little daughter, Jennifer. It would be a whole year before it was possible for Andrew to join them here.

Initially they stayed with her sister, but after four months Joanne was able to buy a flat for them both.

She worked, two years with the Hong Kong Bank in Gibraltar, and then for a further two years with the Midlands Bank, before its merge with HSBC, She then moved to NatWest Bank, which is both offshore and retail, where she has been for the past seven years.

In the years that her husband has been here, he has worked in business and is now employed by a local company.

They all enjoyed living in Gibraltar and have adapted to the different life style, and appreciate the fact that they have family here with whom they can socialise.

Joanne and Andrew are pleased their daughter, who is now in her teens, has so many opportunities – in education, music and sports, in particular swimming.

After so many years in Gibraltar they still miss the variety of choices from an evening out that they had in Hong Kong. They have solved the problem of the specialist ingredients that they require for traditional dishes that they prefer t cook – they buy them in bulk when they go on holiday, either in China Town in London or else in Hong Kong, and bring them back home.

Joanne's colleagues at NatWest have often asked her to organise a cookery course for them, so that they can share the benefits and pleasures of Chinese food at home, rather than having to go to a takeaway or restaurant. If she ever does take on such a venture she has sad that the general public also be most welcome.

Alice Mascarenhas

I am after all, just one more Gibraltarian amongst a few thousand privileged to witness the third Millenium, and to have lived the last 38 years, of a rapidly changing planet – where the world I grew up in, is seriously evaporating, facing new challenges with different moral, religious and social values, as the globe gets increasingly smaller.

I was born in Gibraltar in 1961. Then Gibraltarians were first seeking recognition, constitutional, development and a voice.

Gibraltar's leaders first went before the United Nations, and as people we were growing in nationhood – even forced because of Britain's slow reaction to the wishes of people who had discovered their identity just 20 years before during the World War II evacuation of men, women and children, to London, Madeira, Jamaica and later Northern Ireland, and because of a neighbour with a stubborn determination to suppress any possible development, however small, of just a handful of people.

Although I was already 8 years old when the frontier was closed by Franco in 1969, my recollection of Span prior to the closure is merely, a handful of blank pages in my memory banks – yet the referendum of 1967 is vivid in my mind. I even recall walking into the booth as my mother pulled back the curtain and became one of the 12,138 who voted in favour of a British Gibraltar; and the red, white and blue fever, which then engulfed Gibraltar, as if the Rock were almost wrapped in a gigantic Union jack.

My childhood was very happy and rich in family life, tradition, culture and more importantly love and respect. I was not deprived of any of the essentials of childhood although I grew up in a limited space with limited resources – I just got on with it, in the same way my parents had.

I took are lessons with local painter Leni Mifsud. I vividly remember her studio, covered in paint, canvasses, brushes, pencils and sketches upon sketches on long

boards attached to, and running alongside, the walls, where you never found anything but fingertips.

I took my lessons in the early days of the Music Centre at Sacred Heart Church.

In school I had ambitions of becoming a ballet dancer but a few lessons with Mrs Frost the ruled that out.

At home, no subject was taboo – conversations flowed, especially at meal times.

I grew up with a great understanding of people and life, and a passion for all types of music and live performances, with a solid sense of cultural identity – of being Gibraltarian not English nor Spanish but with a mixture of the best from all worlds: Zarzuela, Opera, Rodgers and Hammerstein, theatre, Catholicism, the Three King's Cavalcade, bullfighting, the Indian Social Club, the Regal and Queens Cinemas, the Gibraltar Song Festivals, Radio Gibraltar, a knowledge of local politics – and long hot summers on Catalan Bay.

My roots are in Gibraltar, my father's family having come ashore early in the 1800s from Portugal, and on my mother's side from Italy.

I was an only child – we never went to Spain because my father, Manolo Mascarenhas, journalist and broadcaster, was on Spain's black list, as one of the people who maintained the Gibraltar spirit alive during those crucial years of the sixties, through weekly Radio Gibraltar broadcast called "Palabras Al Viento", which counteracted all the Spaniards were throwing Gibraltar at a time when the Spanish campaign against the Rock reached its peak.

In those days it seemed to me all my friends went to Spain on holiday.

As I grew up, I recall thinking, how harrowing the crossing to Tangier, Ceuta and the Algeciras must have been – only to reach La Linea to shout across the frontier – la verja – in order to tell relatives in Gibraltar they had arrived safely.

Even today, I am horrified at the thought of local families from Gibraltar and La Linea, having to find out in this way, that a close relative had died, or worse still via a radio dedication on Radio Gibraltar in the Spanish section because there was no other form of communication.

In those days Radio Gibraltar played a most important role in keeping families in touch.

Most of my holidays at this time were spent in Morocco. I vividly remember crossing the Straits, with our old blue car in the Mons Calpe and sightseeing the dolphins out in Bay, reaching M-Diq, Tetuan and Chaouen – but just looking at Ceuta from a distance.

A Loreto Convent pupil, I had vivid and fond memories of those early days – Mission Saturday s, the processions in honour of Mary in May, St Patrick's Day, the long

black habits that put the fear of God in you and called for respect, the religious doctrine, and the strict surroundings.

Now I realise this gave me a strong foundation for life and Gibraltar life – a close community in an everyday mixture of a culture/ religious society, almost like an open university, diverse in cultures, beliefs and peoples, where co-existence and respect for each others space – can only be described as a bottomless priceless living treasure chest.

Moving to secondary school in the seventies, my year was the second year intake into Comprehensive, a system teachers were still getting to grips with. It was almost like breaking with traditional having come from such a very disciplined and yet homely background. I was in a totally different school environment where I made new friends, and strengthened the old.

I joined Radio Gibraltar as a presenter/announcer having just completed my O'Levels.

Sir Joshua Hassan and the AACR were still in power, pay parity with the UK had still not come in, life was slow, a closed frontier, with not much happening but where it was the easiest thing in the world to create your own entertainment and I still cringe when I hear my first radio music programme – Take Five.

As a child my parents always took me everywhere – theatre, concerts, and exhibitions: I always seemed to be at Wellington Front in the old GBC TC studios, or inside an Outside Broadcast van.

To this day I have a soft spot for the early Gibraltar Song Festival days and remember many of the songs from the early seventies, for I was not only there on the night but all the rehearsals as well. I can still shut my eyes and see the late Pepe Noguera with his baton conducting the Gibraltar Song Festival Theme, which he had composed early years earlier for the first local festival in 1964, and the year Dorothy Squires sang Rock of Ages in St Michael's Cave… "Rock of ages proud and strong, terrain of majesty and beauty may the flag of Britain soar, Gibraltar evermore."

I therefore grew up with a sense of community, which has proven so vital to my career, although if destiny had not intervened, I probably would have become a Maine Biologist but, in retrospect, microphones, mixers and cameras were like my toys, so maybe it was inevitable I should choose to be in the same profession as my father, although he began in newspapers and ended up broadcasting, and I did it the other way round.

At 30, having worked on both radio and television for fifteen years my career changed direction. I went to London where I qualified as a Stage Manager, and worked professionally for a while.

My love for the theatre is something I share with my father's side of ht family – my father an amateur actor and singer who enjoyed reciting monologues and poetry in Spanish, like my great-uncle Gustavo Mascarenhas, Roberto and Jaime Hanglin, exceptional musicians – all with a passion for la Zarzuela.

I have a passion for the musical and everything dramatic.

Again it seemed inevitable I should follow in their footsteps but behind the scenes. At an amateur level I have had the opportunity to work with some of Gibraltar's best actresses, actors, and directors, Cecil Gomez, Leslie Zammit and Humbert Hernandez.

There have been numerous productions – but if I had to choose without hesitation the best plays would have to be those by Elio Cruz, "La Lola Se Va Pa Londres", "Connie Con Cama Camera" and "L.M.N.O.P., for they portray a part of Gibraltar's social history which has only remained alive through these plays and have always been well received by Gibraltarian audiences, who have such capacity to laugh themselves – for they are written in true Llanito style.

As the world moves into the Millenium, the media in Gibraltar has, I feel, a major role to play.

As frontiers came down, as Europe unites, and the identity we so desperately seek eventually dissolves into a European identity – newspapers, television and radio, must keep alive the character of people born out of a mixture of European and Mediterranean peoples.

I am often asked why I returned to Gibraltar after my spell in England, and perhaps it is an affinity with Gibraltar's past and the long ongoing battle with Spain, which unites all Gibraltarians.

The fact is, most of us eventually do return to the Rock, the pull is too strong, and the roots too deep and Gibraltar's closeness although sometimes frustrating, brings with it a quality of life not found elsewhere.

Gibraltar has remained almost in a political time wrap over the past forty years.

At times I have read some of my father's writings of "Palabras Al Viento" – the frontier queues, the harassment, the insults and I think noting much has changed just the technology and the world as the Gibraltarian keeps fighting for recognition as a people which is rightly theirs.

In this respect, the conversation of Gibraltar's heritage is vital – past, present and future – its survival into the fourth Millenium.

As a journalist I have a duty to help preserve this in the form of words.

Making, the move from broadcasting to the written word, as Features Editor of the oldest and only daily on the Rock, the Gibraltar Chronicle, was inevitable – writing was something I had wanted to do for a long time and I adapted quickly.

Now I find myself in a position to encourage new writings on Gibraltar. To ensure future generations can read about those issues significant to us today – of being Gibraltarian, of what it meant to live at the mouth of Europe.

Our Rock of Gibraltar has survived many sieges, it will have to undergo many changes in the next one thousand years but somehow I feel the spirit of the Gibraltarian will live on.

Denise Matthews

Denise Matthews was born in Gibraltar where she attended primary school and middle school; then from the age of 12 to 17 she joined the International School at Sotogrande finishing her education back in Gibraltar, at Westside School, for her A'Levels. Then she decided to go and study for Nursery Teaching in U.K. but after 3 months she realised this was not her vocation and returned to Gibraltar.

On her return, Denise joined Golt & Associates, a public relations company, working in the office and doing some modelling/hostess work for the agency and she soon realised that Public Relations was the career she really wanted.

She thoroughly enjoyed the behind the scenes and organisational work involved in preparing for events.

Whilst at Golt & Associates Denise was awarded the title "Best P.R. of 96" and "Young Communicator 97."

This success motivated her to taking up this type of work freelance. From the on she has never looked back. She started DM Promotions about a year ago. The company handles all kinds of promotions. Recently they promoted the "Variety Heineken Band Marches" on Saturday mornings. They also undertake product marketing.

Only recently they organised all the fun events, animators and PR for a Ronald McDonald promotion. This took place over National Day and some local people believed that Ronald McDonald's colours were the colours of the Spanish flag.

Denise acted quickly and decided to change the colour of the balloons to red and white, Gibraltar's national colours.

DM Promotions has undertaken opinion polls and was asked to provide and Exit Polls for GBC, when Dr Garcia stood for election, canvassing opinion with clipboards and ballot sheets. People were, however, very reluctant to give information, even though they all wanted to be able to go home, put on the T.V. and see the outcome poll.

Apart from this Denise has also been helping her father, Denis Matthews, for the past 6 years with his amusement and gaming machine company. Denise lives with her parents and works with her father so they sometimes have their ups and downs, as in all relationships, but at the end of the day everything turns out n top. Part of her job in her father's company is to co round every month to check on the machines, a sort of roving supervisor, because of this Denise has met people in nightclubs, bars and alcohol distributors making useful contacts for her own company.

Denise has also been influenced by her father, Denis's involvement in the Self-Determination for Gibraltar Group of which he was Chairman. This organisation is

non-partisan and campaigns for the achievement of self-determination for Gibraltar, the right of the Gibraltarian to decide, his or her own future. Denis has always been involved in community affairs but, as his daughter also, in non-politically aligned manner. Both feel that there is a need for intermediaries between the person on the street and the politicians.

Denise wants to be seen as an ordinary Gibraltarian promoting Gibraltar and its problems to the entire world.

In 1992 Denis attended a talk in the John Mackintosh Hall given by Michael Llamas, a young and idealistic Gibraltarian lawyer specialising in European law. They talked together afterwards and discussed the idea of mounting a case to take the UK to court for denying the right to Gibraltarian resident in Gibraltar, to vote in the European elections. They would take this all the way to the European Court if necessary. The irony was that, at the time, a Gibraltarian resident in the UK was able to vote. They decided that they needed a young person, just turned 18 and who had therefore just reached voting age, which wanted to be able to vote in the European Elections, but could not. Several people put their names forward and Denise was submitted as one of the candidates. Denis helped Denise prepare herself to be a plaintiff.

She had to be prepared to testify, a task she undertook with great pleasure. She was selected to be a candidate who would make her complaint, first to The House of Assembly in Gibraltar.

There were scepticism at the time that the case would ever reach court but Michel Llamas made a huge effort to prepare his case, which was eventually heard in the European Court of Strasbourg and the outcome was a ruling in Denise's favour. In February 1999, she won the right to vote in the European elections on behalf of all those disenfranchised Gibraltarians. As a result Denis has been interviewed many times including live on a Spanish T.V. show, for an hour.

Unfortunately, some of the people kept trying to ask very technical political questions about Gibraltar making it a highly charged issue. The T.V. presenter kept trying to stress and remind the Spanish panel that the interview was on the Euro Vote and not other aspects of the Gibraltar question. Denise has nevertheless enjoyed all the interviews she has attended and would never say no to an interview. Even though she may be concerned about what to expect during an interview Denise feels that it is her duty to use the publicity to promote Gibraltar's cause. A lot of resultant publicity has been very positive e.g. a writer through the Euro Vote Case, went on to write an article entitled "The Young Gibraltar Community."

During the European elections her opinion was much sought after by T.V. and radio stations, all over Europe. She has even been contacted via Internet.

The cause has gone down in history and many young people undergoing studies will refer to this court case, "Matthews versus the U.K., in which Denis Matthews achieved a legal ruling that Gibraltarians are entitled to vote in European elections, a landmark decision because it establishes for the first time ever that the European Parliament is a Legislature.

Denise has a very warm and outgoing personality combined with a level-headedness beyond her years, no wonder that she made such a stable candidate to represent her homeland and returned victorious.

She will no doubt succeed in her career.

Julie Mifsud

Julie Mifsud was born in Gibraltar 75 years ago in police barracks where her family lived as her grandfather was a policeman. Her father worked in the Naval Dockyard where he began work as a 14-year-old. Eventually he became the Private Secretary to the admiral whose office was in the Tower, a prominent landmark.

During the Second World War he was responsible for issuing the traders' passes.

She closely remembers the day he won the lottery, ten paid in "duros, and he bought a house in La Linea close to the bullring, which was enjoyed and occupied by the whole family, on and off, for many years.

She attended school at Loreto Convent where she excelled at sports especially netball.

At home music was the dominant activity and she learnt the cello. Her father had a fine baritone voice and her mother – as Dolly Howes – was a well-known pianist and piano teacher. Her parents often took part in zarzuelas at the Theatre Royal and she recalls some of the performances such as "La Parranda."

One time when she was 5 or 6 years old she took part, as the story required some children, and she remembers the grand costumes which came from Madrid.

On another occasion her father's part required him to feign sleep on stage but unfortunately he fell asleep for real and needed loud prompts to return him to the performance.

Her mother often performed in public as a pianist even appearing in recitals in Algeciras and on the radio in Spain.

At the age of 17, school came to an abrupt end when War broke out in 1939 and women of the family prepared to be evacuated. They went first to Casablanca in Moro0cco where Julie's aunt was living. She found them a flat but their stay was cut short when France capitulated and the Gibraltarians had to leave Morocco in a hurry. They were first shipped back to Gibraltar, with Julie suffering from the measles; to be briefly reunited with the men but then set sail again for England.

They were sent to central London, from where London's women and children were being evacuated out to the country. Every night she went with her mother, grandmother and younger brother to sleep in Hyde Park Tube Station, bedding down for the night after the last train passed through at around midnight.

The Gibraltarian contingent nevertheless found the time and energy to form a Symphony Orchestra in which Julie played cello and her mother the piano and they gave lots of concerts. Home, at least for the daylight hours was Wembley Pool to begin with then a seventh floor flat on the Fulham/Hammersmith border.

Soon after arrival Julie kept herself busy translating for some of the older women who couldn't speak English and needed help with the doctor and suchlike. Soon she found more permanent employment with the Ministry of War in the Transport Office in Berkley Square. She can still smell the roses the Chef Clerk often brought into the office. After four years a ship brought them back to Gibraltar and the family was reunited once more.

Many buildings in Gibraltar were requisitioned by the authorities and some of the men could not remain in the families' original homes but they saved their family's belongings by moving them into the buildings which men occupied together. When Julie's family were reunited they moved to a flat in Town Range and her mother was able to begin the task of home making once again.

Julie got a job in the Dockyard and it was not long before she met her future husband. He was working for Molinary's in the butchery department and she was a customer. He invited her to a tea dance and the romance blossomed. They married in 1946.

Julie was not a working mother – it was not usual then to carry on working after marriage – and she believes in mothers being the best person to care for their young offspring but she developed a great interest in politics and non-partisan fashion.

Her abiding interest is in seeing fair play and any issue where there is an infringement of human rights has seen Julie taking a stand. She was an early member, and served twice as Chairwoman, of the Gibraltar Women's Association, which started in 1969 when the border with Spain was closed by the Spanish. One of the Association's early endeavours was to form a co-operative to bring fruit and vegetables over from Tangier and sell them in the public market.

The Gibraltar Housewives Association, as it was called in the early days, was formed to help give woman a voice. Few women worked after marriage in those days and there were plenty issues that had to be fought for: playgrounds, school hours, nursery provision, and the border problems.

One way Julie tried to get Gibraltar's problems recognised and attended to by Britain's politicians is to confront them on a personnel level whenever they come to Gibraltar. Often she would be invited as Chairwoman of the Association to receptions foe visiting dignitaries and she never let the opportunity pass to express her views on the issues on which she feels so strongly. The least impressed by this approach was David Davies' secretary who fled in panic.

Most though are impressed by her convictions including Margaret Thatcher on her recent walkabout in Main Street who was asked the simple question: "Why don't you defend Gibraltar's interests?" She feels that Britain has never made the position sufficiently clear to Spain and therefore the Spanish have remained hopeful.

Evidence of this lacked forthrightness is that it took the winning of a case in the Court of Human Rights on the Hague to get Britain to recognise the rights of the Gibraltarians to vote in the European elections.

She has sheaves of letters too that she has written over the years to politicians and others over human rights violations that she considers the Gibraltarians have suffered at the hands of Spain.

She was most impressed by the response she received from Ted Heath but sometimes she does not even get a reply.

She feels that theses constant attempts to bring these issues onto the desks of politicians are worthwhile and she does so as an ordinary woman and mother exercising her public duty as an aggrieved citizen and believes that if everyone did the same we could make a real difference.

She has certainly never eased off with her efforts and is a regular viewer of Today in Parliament on T.V., which keeps here in touch with who is saying what especially in respect of the Gibraltar issue.

Julie has remained a keen sportswoman even if as spectator now rather than a participant – netball, hockey tennis and table tennis were always firm favourites.

She played golf for some years in Campamento where there was a nine-course there. Now she has taken up petanque on the recently acquired site and even follows football as an Arsenal fan like her grandson.

It is in the cause of individual's right to freedom that Julie's voice will continue to ring out the clearest and so long as there is injustice in the world, and particularly in Gibraltar, she will be fighting for the rights of those who cannot or will not speak.

Vin Mifsud

Over cover illustrated courtesy local artist Viv Mifsud who insists she has become a businesswoman by accident.

Finding the demand for numerous paintings of the Rock a little tedious she ordered prints and cards from some of her works which are most popular with the tourists thus leaving her more time to devote her creative and less commercial paintings.

One of Gibraltar's most respected artists; she still remains very busy with commissions and produces an exhibition each year.

She is currently President of The Fine Arts Society.

Outside her home life and painting Vin is a Scrabble player of some repute.

Born in Barnsley, Yorkshire in 1941, Vin came to Gibraltar in 1972 on holiday where she met Raphael whom she married the following year. She soon became immersed

in her new environment and its history, Raphael's family having been Gibraltarian for many generations.

His great-grandfather owned shorthorn cows here, his grandfathers having had a dairy on City Mill Lane.

They have a son Daniel, who is now n the Gibraltar Regiment.

Vin has pained for as long as she can remember and studied at Barnsley Art School. This she felt led her to a too commercial aspect of art so for some years she became a fashion model instead. Later she became a Marketing Representative for a large carpet company, travelling all over the U.K. between stores in major cites including Harrods.

At the time she met Raphael, she was representing a steel company, which manufactured all kinds of metal products. This demanded a high degree of specialised knowledge and today Vin can still tell you the components and methods of making almost any metal object. All this she gave up to come to live in Gibraltar, but there are no regrets as here she has had the opportunity to fulfil her artistic potential.

Vin finds what she describes as a special clarity of light in Gibraltar and enjoys painting in watercolours best. She uses acrylics for textured flower paintings and sometime pen and ink.

When asked about the future she replies, "Real artists never retire."

So, as the face of Gibraltar changes we can look forward to more Vin's portraits of local scenes.

Donna Lorraine Montegriffo

I was born in Kent, England, the daughter of Eileen and George Hall and sister to Gordon, Yvonne, Laurie and Cliff.

I had the most wonderful childhood in a warm and loving family but when I was 19 years old I had the notion to go and live and work abroad, to go on adventure.

My father has spent a great deal of his life serving in the Royal Navy and when I informed him that I was going to Gibraltar, he felt that it was as good a place as any as everybody spoke English and that it was a marvellous place. He remembered having spent many happy hours at the tea dance in the Winter Gardens.

Just before I left the UK I travelled round England seeing many of my relatives to say goodbye, though I had no idea at the time I was to make my stay in Gibraltar a permanent one. Late at night on March 10th 1970, I made my way by train, with a very large suitcase that I could hardly carry, to Brize Norton, an RAF airfield in Wales. I was very nervous but I was met at the station by an RAF officer and escorted to the RAF establishment where we would stay the night before the flight. I was woken around 5:30am, and frightened half to death, by a voice that seemed to

come out of the wall of my bedroom telling me to rise, pack my suitcase and make my way down to breakfast.

This was marvellous; what a selection of fried foods and beans and toast was t be had, but for those like myself, who were not strapping service men and stood less than 5 feet tall had little chance of reaching my choice of breakfast: the grapefruit, cereals etc were sitting way up in the air on a higher shelf of the breakfast servery. I was too nervous to ask for help and just took a glass of milk not realising that it would be a 4-5 hour trip. I was pretty hungry by the end.

Soon we were airborne, my very first flight, in a huge old propeller driven RAF Hunter. I remember speaking to an RAF Officer's wife on the flight that was extremely worried, because her husband was a pilot and had been forced to land his plane some days earlier in Spain.

Spanish airspace was not available to any Gibraltar flights.

She had not had word of him for some 10 days and was arriving for the first time in Gibraltar by herself, not knowing if he would be there to meet her.

Of course, I had my own reservations; after all, I was going to a foreign country. Of us five siblings, only my sister had been abroad. As I arrived I made my way through town being absolutely fascinated by the aerials and washing lines outsides of the apartment windows.

There were a lot of red, white and blue markings left over from the days of the referendum; it somehow gave me a feeling of home and safety.

The English spoken by the elderly taxi driver was different; there was a lovely accent but also a wonderful chatty friendliness.

I knew almost at the moment I would fall in love with Gibraltar and probably never leave.

Work was very scarce even for a qualified Secretary/PA and I started off by lending a hand at the Montagu, a day centre for people with disabilities. This was very rewarding and quite different from Doctor Barnardo's Homes I had helped in back home. The persons attending only spoke Spanish and this is where I first realised my need to learn the language.

Finally three secretarial positions became available, and I have to say I went for the one paying £2 more a week after the first year, giving me a weekly earning of £12. This was a huge drop from the £33 a week I was earning in London with the ABC Film Company.

The only answer was to marry the boss.

With my husband came two adorable young men. I was just a young 20 something with a husband, two young stepsons aged 11 and 13 years, a dog named Riki and a job. After four years we had a little girl. I came out from hospital with this new

addition only to find that I now have to mange a baby, a pram, four flights of stairs, the dog, the shopping and the cooking.

I remember on one occasion being in such a rush to get back from Lipton's with the shopping and dog, to get the meal ready for the boys at lunch time. I succeeded and even managed to get the dishes done when I realised I hadn't carried the usual mid lunch nappy change, I ran to the bedroom felling sorry, she must be soar, but no baby – I'd left her outside Lipton's. I made the guilt-ridden dash – but, of course, she still lay safe and sound the way I have always felt in Gibraltar.

The language issue became a case of learn or to be left out. Our home was no different to any the local family and Spanish was the language mainly spoken at home. I had no time for lessons and to this day still hope to manage some grammar someday. I practiced with the small stores and usually could at least get the names of the foods and fruit and vegetables correct. At home I tried to copy Maurice and the boys as best I could. Peter the youngest found this a great delight and had such a wonderful time continually making fun of me. I didn't have time to worry so I just kept making mistakes until I got it right.

I spent an entire year following my husband into restaurants and greeting friends telling them to "compra leche" instead of as my husband was saying "aproveche." One day he finally shot backwards towards me asking me to repeat what I had sad, at least I'd been corrected. One another occasion I asked Mr "Galgo" for a quarter of "norcilla" amongst buying the ingredients for a cabbage soup. It was quickly pointed to me that I did not want chocolate spread but "morcilla."

My mother-in-law, although in her late years, and now over 100, spent many hours sharing her local recipes with me to cook the wonderful local dishes. I learned to clean and cook fresh fish and we made calamares rellenos, albondigas, paella, carne empanda, rollitos, mantecados, rinones jerez, and hojuelas.
The last item is very difficult to make and I am still practising.

For this help and for many hours of exciting games she played and all the exquisite clothes she made for the children I would like to take this opportunity to thank her.

All our lives have been enriched by her continuous vibrantly joyful attitude to life.

The children grew: Michael and Peter are both happily married wit beautiful children and Natalya-Marisa has just graduated and set up a home in London about to embark on a whale new future.

I keep myself busy working and with my many hobbies especially building and furnishing miniature houses and making all the accessories. I have just completed soft furnishings for all the rooms in one house in miniature cross-stitch. I continue to write poetry having had another poem published last year in an international competition.

I look forward to meeting the challenges of the next century in Gibraltar with my family and friends and wonder what further joys the future will have.

Carol Nash

I am Carol, mother of the Fortuna Dolphin Boat family. We arrived in Gibraltar in the summer of 1988 on a small yacht, and have been here ever since.

I was born in London in 1954 and have a brother 3 years younger. Our mother died when I was 4 years old. We were shunted around various foster homes, and finally put into a children's home. In 1960 we were adopted by a farming couple and went to live on a small fern in the heart of the Kentish countryside.

I met Graham in 1973, an we married at the end of that year. We moved around a bit, living mainly in rural areas, and for a very short time, had a house in the town. When we lived in the town, I never felt home, mental we sold the house, an moved onto a small boat.

I guess this story really begins in Kent, England in 1987.

We are a perfectly normal family, who, in the 80s, lived and worked in England, with a mortgage and four kids at school, and a regular, but low, income. We had no savings, and if we could not afford something, we went without. We rarely had new clothes, never went out. We had purchased our house really cheaply. Then followed a property boom, and we sold the house, cashing in on it at just about the right time. With the proceeds of the sale we bought a small, 30 foot motor sailer, and decided to take a year out and have a look at the South of France.

At this stage, the children, Heidi, Lucy Philip and John, were aged 12, 11, 9 and 7.

Our journey was close to being aborted, however, as we rode out the October 87 hurricane in Dover harbour. Nine year old Philip slept right through it.

Although Graham has spent a good part of his life working on his boats, the kids and I were completely novices, so we took the canal route through France. The children would get their exercise by taking it in turns to cycle between the locks. Weekdays also meant school lessons in a variety of subjects, normally taught myself. Bad behaviour was not tolerated, and they rarely had to stay behind after school hours. This was just as well because evenings saw us tied to the canal bank, with play time and exploring for the kids.

As with all boating families, if more hands were needed for a particular task, everyone helped.

On reaching Paris, we locked into our first marina, right beside La Bastille. We booked in for just one night, but the Port Captain told us we had to stay for at least a week to see the city. He was correct, we left five months later.

Graham found work decoration Parisian apartments, while I taught the children, and gave English lessons to some French neighbours, who, in return, valiantly tried to teach our kids French. Here, we met plenty of different people, but none travelling

with so many young children. There were both cruising people and Parisians, who preferred to live abroad, and rent out their apartments.

We came to know Paris better than the locals because we walked everywhere, whereas they took the Metro. We discovered that our finances to fund our journey had gone seriously wrong in the UK. So, major decision time, return to UK, or go south to Gibraltar to see if we could find work. We had adapted to a different way of life, and we had enough money to go to Gibraltar.

Our journey continued to the south of France, and into the Mediterranean. Down the Spanish coast we would anchor or moor in the tiny fishing harbours where it was free, earning a few bob here and there to keep the wolf from the door. It is amazing how versatile you become on a really tight budget.

The small boat was our home for 3 years, and we literally outgrew it. Four children grow a lot in 3 years; not just physically, they seem to accumulate loads of junk. I suppose the confined accommodation was not noticeable to the children; just a minor inconvenience winding the table down at night to make the girls bed, and up again in the morning to form a dinning table, school desk etc.

Obviously, in fine weather, school work and meals were taken “al fresco” on the deck, a water gypsy kind of life. The kitchen gallery was tiny. We had to step into the passageway to turn around. When the door of the small gas cooker was open, it completely covered the floor. We had a marine toilet and wash basin, but n space for a shower. Half barrels and large buckets came in handy for laundry and kid’s baths. The toilet was a source of immense fascination, and squeals of delight emanated from this tiny room after dark. Watching the phosphorescence in the toilet bowl really brought out the best in child poets.

We carried a substantial library on board to assist with the school lessons, and the children all have a love of books, so the poems improved as the kids got older.

Lack of privacy wasn’t too much of a problem for the kids until they were in their teenage years, but by that time we had moved into a larger boat, where each had their own cabin.

We reached Gibraltar on 1st June 1998, and continued living onboard. Graham and I found work, and the children went to school, staying on anchor to save money.

We had our trials and tribulations, seeming to be almost penalised for not living ashore with rent receipts, electricity bills, and the like, but this was 11 years ago.

There was a little community of families like us, anchoring off to save money, and within the community there were 21 children. Consequently, everyone had an eye on all kids. All of them learned to swim, and birthday parties always revolved around water oriented games. Even the adults got together to play water polo.

We came across the Fortuna in August 1990, in a very sorry looking sate, but palatial in size, by comparison to our faithful Star. We moved into the Fortuna. Living on a

bat is no different, in many respects, to living in an apartment, except, perhaps, that the rooms are smaller.

On the Fortuna, we have 3 twin cabins and 2 singles, saloon and dinning area, 2 toilets, and a kitchen with standard domestic cooker and sink. Obviously there is no space on our boat for washing machines, but we have central heating, and can generate all our own electricity. Our large water tanks can keep us supplied for a few weeks before having to fill up from a shore supply.

In the 9 years that we have owned Fortuna, we have fully restored her, and many of our regular passengers are keen to see the changes we have made since the previous visit.

It is with thanks to all our passengers, both local and foreign, that we have been able to fun her restoration, so that our grand Old Lady of the Sea, Fortuna, can continue to give pleasure to hundreds of people each year.

Since arriving in Gibraltar, our family has grown to include Heidi's husband Ralf, from Germany, and their son, Nathan; and Lucy's husband Isak from Sweden, and their daughter Hannah, and child number 2 due in December.

Both weddings took place in Gibraltar, and yes, their husbands both arrived here on yachts. One of the lads had also been on a yacht since childhood.

Although our kids have grown up and left home, they all live in Gibraltar. Both the girls have tried living in Spain, but have returned to Gibraltar, and none of us have any desire to return to England. Two of our kids still work with us, and one even gees home to his own small yacht every night.

As for brining up kids on a boat, they have all grown up mature, responsible, intelligent, healthy and independent. This is not just our kids: the same applies to every child we have ever met who has bee raised on a bat. As one person said of our 13 year old a few years ago," He's 13, going on 43."

I know the vast majority of people see a yacht as a luxurious item, and this assumption would be correct about some of hem, but over the years, we have met many people, of many nationalities, also doing their own thing. These families come from all walks of life, and their reasons for taking up this way of life, are, on the whole, a good reflection of the vagaries of life ashore.

We have threatened to leave Gibraltar several times, but we like this area, and our way of life, showing the dolphins, and the Rock, to so many tourists each year.

Our dolphin watching operation is another story, but many of our passengers today are amazed that we actually lived on board. One German lady even said, "You can't possibly live on this boat; boats are only for holidays!"

Well, we like this permanent holiday. Fortuna, our home, transport, and business, operating dolphin watch trips for the public, in Dolphin Bay, Gibraltar.

Rosanna Olivares

I was born in 1954. My ancestors were from varied origins Aix En Provence, France, Malta and the Island of Mahon. My parents, Victor and Herminia Victory, were 42 years old when I was born, so my sister, Josephine, who was 15, was more like my mother.

My earliest memories are living in Penny House. Shared a room with my two nephews and niece who were like my brothers and sister. I have many happy memories from that bright sunny flat on the fifth floor.

There were lots of children may age so there was no need to go out much as we were very happy playing in the patio and all the neighbours were one big happy family. Now I still keep in touch with most of them, the young and the elderly.

There was an age and mentality gap between my parents and an early age. I always remember my mother cooking and being home when I came home from school. My father in his young years was a turner fitter and latter a highly respected smuggler. I considered him very responsible, hard working and down on earth. I could write a book on all the adventures he has told me about, how difficult it was to get started. After his trade as turner fitter, he worked on a steam-powered boat smuggling goods for now important Limited Companies, later working for himself. He was also a keen fisherman.

I went to Loreto Convent and I have thank all the nuns and teachers for what they taught me, especially Religious Education which is foundation and principle of my entire life. I enjoyed my school life and I loved to help organise jumble sales for the Loreto missions. I have always wanted to learn about everything and therefore I asked lots of questions. I also did a two year secretarial course at the Commercial College, I clearly remember my disappointment when, at the age of 18, I had t cancel my application as shorthand typist simply because my father refused to allow me to work because he wanted me at home.

Instead I became as creative as possible and enjoyed sewing and embroidery and especially cooking and baking. I went into this quite thoroughly, baking all the family weeding cakes, each one more complicated. I gave several demonstrations on choux cakes and petite fours and people still ask me for recipes. I would have loved to open a Patisserie, but this was not to be.

At the age of 19, I married Stephen, who was 20, we both felt mature but it was quite normal to marry young.

Most of my friends married that same year in 1974and now in 1999 most of us have celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary.

Stephen's parents were also 42 he was born so all his brothers and sisters were considerably older than us.

We had, and still have, very dear friends.

Two years after our marriage our first daughter was born and by the age of 24 we had completed our family and had three daughters. I was a full-time mum when they were young and thoroughly enjoyed it. We have had an adventurous life together with our friends and their children.

By this time my brother-in-law has built two houses in the Upper Rock. My sister convinced my father to buy me one and we moved up together and that is where we still live. We Gibraltarians like to live near our family.

I grow fruit and vegetables and in the past I used to have lots of chickens. This activity is very rewarding, especially as it is a total contrast to my busy life.

In 1980 a new challenge: my sister, her friend Ameila, and I opened a jewellery shop called "The Jewel Box" in Main Street. At first I only worked in the mornings. From the day Gibraltar frontier with Spain opened, my daughters were allowed to stay in school for lunch so we kept the shop open all day and I started working from 9am to 4pm.

I adapted each situation to suit my family life because I had one thing very clear: to bring up my daughters was my priority and enjoy their company and upbringing. Those moments are precious and they grew quickly, really we only borrow our children to prepare them for their independent future.

In 1986 Amelia wanted to retire and sell her part of the business. My sister also told me she would sell me her part of the business. By this time I was older and had gained the confidence to run the business by myself. My father was totally against this idea and refused to help me because he did not want me to get so seriously involved; he still wanted me to stay at home.

This time I could not comply, I followed my instincts. My sister and her husband helped me to buy the business. My guardian angel must have given me the energy and willpower because I was positive against all odds.

My husband sold his car and his life insurance and we put all our eggs in one basket. He has always had an independent job but has helped me backstage.

Once I got into the jewellery business I enjoyed the challenge and had a lot to learn especially in the Gemmology field. Now we have two Jewellery shops and a workshop with design studio.

Luckily my three daughters are involved n the business: one helps me in the office, one in the workshop and the other one in the new shop. I consider the rest of the team at "The Jewel Box" like family because we spend a good portion of our lives together.

I have always enjoyed doing different activities with children and teenagers, especially the disadvantaged, an am concerned about our society, especially children who live difficult situations.

I think that the best way of entering the new millennium would be if we humans could all unite our energy and try to make the world realise that although man has been to the Moon, there is still a lot to do here on Earth.

We have to educate and make self sufficient all the underprivileged people of the world.

Each and every child needs to be cared for, fed adequately and loved.

Lillian Pitaluga

Lillian Pitaluga was born in Gibraltar in 1932 in the family home in Main Street in the centre of town. Her sister Yvonne is two years older. Her father worked for Saccone and Speed, wine and spirit merchants, and the family spent the first 7 years of Lillian's life in Gibraltar, but when the Second World War broke out changes prompted by it were to radically change their lives.

To begin with, in 1939, Lillian, her sister, mother and maternal grandmother were evacuated to Morocco and settled in Casablanca. When the British became personas non grata, however, the family was hurriedly transported back to Gibraltar with a large number of other Gibraltarians.

They were lucky, though, as they next went to England and Lillian's father was able to accompany them and also because they travelled in a liner making the journey in only one week whereas others had to endure a much longer voyager in other vessels.

The family found accommodation in London, in the midst of the blitz, having on one occasion a most fortunate escape when a bomb fell near them; no family members were hurt.

Lillian's father continued to work for Saccone and Speed in London but also volunteered to be a member of the Home Guard and was an ARP.

Keen to take her family out of London whenever she could, Lillian's mother took them to the Lancashire village of Lostock Hall near Preston for a while, but for her schooling Lillian was admitted to the Sacred Heart Convent School in Hammersmith and attended along with about thirty other Gibraltarian girls. This is the same school attended y one of Tony Blair's children today.

Lillian views this time of the evacuation as being a time of much anguish due to families being split up, but also one of great opportunity for women. Life in London for these women was a chance to learn English, Spanish being much more widely spoken in the Gibraltar of the 1930s, indeed for her grandmother's generation almost exclusively so, and to be independent. Even queuing for rations and earning a living, no matter how menial the job, was a way of broadening experience and these women, when they returned to Gibraltar, had gained in stature and self worth.

To get a good education though was a special key and Lillian's parents soon realised that they wanted to ensure that their daughter completed her education in England and

moved out of the way of some of the bombs and so in 1943 she transferred to St Bernard's, another convent school in Slough, run by a Cistercian order where she was to be a boarder until 1949.

This was a very happy time; Lillian made many lifelong friends among her fellow pupils. The current headmistress was one of these schoolfriends from the 1940s.

Her father, still with Saccone and Speed, was able to find the family a flat close to the company's factory in Devil's Tower Road and the family's furniture came out of its wartime storage.

After completing her school certificate Lillian returned, to Gibraltar her parents having returned before her to resume life in their homeland.

Lillian then undertook a secretarial course in Gibraltar but was encouraged by her tutor to take up a teaching career and thus was son back to the UK, to Digby Stewart Teacher Training college in Roehampton for the two year course.

On the very day of her return she met, in Gibraltar, the man who was to become her husband but fulfilled her contract that under the Government rules obliged her to work for five years.

They married in 1960 and, as was the custom of the day, Lillian gave up her job.

After a two month honeymoon spent touring Europe the newly weds were anticipating that married life in Gibraltar might have to begin a hotel but at lat minute they were lucky to secure a home in Francis Flats in South Barrack Road. It seemed very expensive at the time but they were lucky to get it.

Not only did Lillian have a happy and fulfilment married life bit as she eventually had five children, it was one which she readily admits was made all the more pleasant by domestic help that was available at the time.

Education was very important to the Pitalugas and Lillian made sure her children received every opportunity not only to study to the highest level possible, her son Christopher also went to St John's College Oxford, the same college as his father, but also that they spoke a good standard of English, in addition, of course, to the Spanish still widely spoken.

Lillian remembers a visiting German professor, who was studying the adoption of and use of two languages by people living near borders, commenting to her that he never had encountered before n his studies, the facility with which the Gibraltarians ca not only move from one language to another but in the same sentence. He thought this phenomenon should rather than be llanito be called swichito.

The difference in the standard of living between Gibraltar and nearby Spain was marked at this time – the early 60s. On visits to Spain one would encounter many beggars and ample evidence of the near starvation of the population under Franco regime. She remembers her Spanish washerwoman would take empty tin cans home

with her to Spain and that in the area where the Rocamar Hotel stands toady were shanty huts with roofs made from flattened tin cans.

Those Spanish who worked in Gibraltar were very glad to have jobs and the closure of the frontier in 1965 presented seem with huge dilemmas. She remembers one particular cleaning woman who worked for the family for many years who had come from a small village near Ronda. Eventually she met and became engaged to a British sapper stationed in Gibraltar and when the border closed had to decide whether to stay in Gibraltar and be cut off from her own family or go back to Spain and a life of poverty without her fiancé. She chose to stay in Gibraltar and later moved to England where she still lives. Lillian still exchanges Christmas greetings with her each year.

In the early 60s Lillian's husband, Joe, worked for the Colonial Secretary and became an important supportive player in the efforts being made by the Government of the day to achieve recognition of the rights of ht Gibraltarians by the UK, by Spain and by the United Nations. He accompanied the late Sir Joshua Hassan when he went to the United Nations and on other missions abroad. Sir Joshua regarded him as his personal aide in his legendary fight for self-government. Joe met many MPs and other dignitaries in the course of his duties.

Relations with Spain were worsening at this time; it was a period of insecurity. Joe took his duties very seriously and they meant to him far more than a job or even a career. He was deeply conscious of the importance of the political ramifications of events as they were unfolding and Lillian remembers him shedding tears of frustration and sadness when the fight too a turn for the worse. Finally, Spain closed the border but the political problems continued.

There were many incidents of industrial and civil unrest particularly over the views being expressed by the Doves a minority who favoured reaching an agreement with Spain. Contrary to the intention of the Spanish, Lillian believes the closing of the border by Spain has helped to cement even further the resistance of the vast majority of Gibraltarians to even concede to the Spanish.

Life this side of the closed border settled down to one of self-reliance. Many workers and goods and services had come from Spain and these were now obtained from UK and Morocco.

It was a natural development of a student's education that a tertiary level this took place in the UK.

Lillian was an early member of the Gibraltar Housewives Association, later the Gibraltar's Women's Association, started by Angela Smith, and helped to organise the importation of fruit and vegetables from Morocco.

It was at this time that Lillian became more involved in voluntary work e.g. at the hospital. In 198, Lady Williams, wife of the then Governor of Gibraltar, had the idea of staring a day centre as a hospice for those suffering from cancer and their carers. She formed an association an Lillian became the first Chairwoman of the Gibraltar Society for Cancer Relief and the Lady Williams Centre on Devil's Tower Road was opened.

Over the years the generosity of the people of Gibraltar has enabled the provision of the first service to be maintained as well as the supply of equipment, the establishment of the Hospice at Home service, the provision of specially trained nurses for the very seriously ill, together with the provision of the Macmillan nurses who offer a special district nursing service to cancer sufferers.

There is still only one paid person at the Centre and Lillian and her team of helpers provide many of the services: lunches, drivers, hairdressing and aromatherapy.

There is also a Bereavement Group and a Cancer Support Group with regular meetings. All this has necessitated a tremendous amount of energy and dedication over many years but, far from resting on her laurels, Lillian is now looking at the need for additional funding as the Centre building is nearing the end of its useful life and needs replacing.

Another of Lillian's voluntary activities has been her work with the Gibraltar Counselling Service – Marriage Care. This is similar to the organisation Relate in the UK. Although supported by the Catholic Church, it was first set up by Bishop Rapallo when the divorce laws changed; it exists to provide anyone regardless of their religious persuasions with support in the event they experience difficulties in their marriage. There are 9 qualified counsellors who have had to undergo extensive training the counsellors who must undertake 80 hours of client contact a year. The service employs very strict rules of confidentiality and clients are never referred to by their real names even when cases need to be discussed between the counsellor and his or her supervisor. It is very important to gain the trust of those seeking the service.

Although still involved in the service and often providing cover, Lillian has adopted a more administrative role lately as she thinks younger counsellors may gain better rapport with the clients. She helps to organise pre-marriage courses for those intending to marry. There have been 60 such couples this year. Lillian believes that most people using the Marriage Care service come for help too late but that they can still be helped through difficulties to find the best solution to their problems.

Lillian is also Vice-Chairman of the Corona Society. This society was originally set up, as it was in other parts of the world to help expatriate British workers' wives, especially in the Armed Services, coming to Gibraltar, to set up home and settle into the local community. There was even a special chest of goods available on loan to those whose own had not arrived. This need is no longer there to the same extent but the local/ expatiate mix is still evident and helps to forge friendships though locals now outnumber the expatriates.

Members make a special effort to help the elderly in the community with gifts and visits. Speaker meetings are arranged on a variety of topics.

Lillian feels this Society is an important venue for those women just retired and for widows who need a social outlet and negates the need for them to go to Spain for such diversions.

Lillian herself has had health problems in recent years resulting in difficulties in waking but this has not sapped her determination to keep busy and active with the accent very much on giving. Her daily routine would defeat many a younger, fitter woman encompassing as it does a round of meetings and the administrative duties associated with her various voluntary projects feted in around the minding of some of her 11 grandchildren early in the morning and at lunchtime.

There must be countless members of our community who owe much to this lady's generosity and boundless energy.

Liz Plummer

The first time I saw Gibraltar was in August 1989 when I flew in to consider the possibility to taking a job in Sotogrande.

As many people do I walked across the border without being aware of the politics of the situation, I couldn't even tell you if there was a queue, something I am now extremely aware.

A lot had already happened in my life before I arrived in Gibraltar to make a decision, which was going to change my life dramatically.

I was born in Bloxwich in the West Midlands, my father was an accountant with the Gas Board and my mother, originally a nurse, was hen a housewife. Went to a local junior school and after passing my 11 plus went to the local girl's high school, which I left with 5 'O' levels and 4 'A' levels. This was followed by three years at Warwick University where I primarily read life, universe and everything at the same time, when I could fit in, Economics. I still emerged with an adequate honours degree, which helped the next stage of my life.

After university I was offered, and took, a training contract with a large firm of Charted Accountants at their office in Birmingham. It took three years of full-time work mixed with study to qualify as a Charted Accountant. It was after qualification that, without deliberately trying to, I became a female pioneer in many ways.

The first occasion I recall was when a female colleague and I went to Southern Ireland for a particular client. This was the first time in the office that two girls had gone alone and it was especially prestigious said it was a job abroad of which there were few. The client's staff in Ireland, thinking that we were bridge-playing friends of the chairman, booked us in a quiet hotel on the edge of Galway. Only when we arrived did they learn of their mistake.

In the meantime, I got married to a man with whom I had studied at university and who also had gone to qualify as a Chartered Accountant. Two years after qualifying he was made redundant and his new job took him initially to Bristol, then over the border into South Wales and I, once I had found suitable employment, followed him. Our life in South Wales was good, money was not a problem and we had lots of friends.

As the weeks and months went by I became more and more discontent. My husband, to provide himself after his redundancy, became a workaholic staying in the office until 10 or 11 at night on a regular basis and as a result I began to develop an independent life which inevitably made me a more independent person.

It was a holiday in Lanzarote, which finally made up my mind. We had a lovely holiday enjoying the sun and fantastic sports facilities at the razor but the situation made me realise that the life I had at home was not enough – I was existing rather than living and I needed to change.

Back at home my husband and I discussed the situation and the way we both felt and came to the decision that we would separate. It was a terribly civilised break-up no arguments, no hysterics and no tears, but that is not say9iign it was easy. It was difficult telling people, not knowing how they would react, and once on my own it was difficult adjusting to being one, not being half a couple, after 12 years…

The trigger to my move from the UK was a meeting with the senior partner of the firm of accountants for whom I was working. At the time I was a senior manager and the next promotion should have been an invitation to become a partner, but his comments eliminated that possibility. His words, forever etched in my memory, "You are a woman and you might become pregnant."

This incident happened whilst I was in Bristol but spite of having a flat there, the world being at my feet with the opportunity to go anywhere, in fact I didn't go very far, just along the M4 to Reading. The move was the worst mistake I have made in my career and it lasted six months before I caught the plane to see if I could live in Spain.

Coming to this part of the world wasn't a very difficult decision to make. I walked into the office in Sotogrande on Friday 13 October 1989. At least Friday 13th is not unlucky in Spain.

A move to another country is different from a move from another part of the same country, as there are cultural differences to take into account as well as a different language. Even in Gibraltar, where English is spoken, the way something is said can mean something different to an English person than to a Gibraltarian.

Adaptation is the most important ability.

One of the biggest differences I have noticed between England and Gibraltar is the role of women.

Opportunities are not equal in either place but there is a better chance in England, although since I have been here the gap has reduced.

One very good indicator of the changing level of women's involvement in business in Gibraltar is the increase in the membership of the Gibraltar Business Network.

My favourite soapbox stand is that girls should get their qualifications.

As one of only two female accountants who have become partners in practice here I would say that more doors have opened for me because I had the appropriate piece of paper: once inside, then you can prove what you are capable of.

I opened the office in Gibraltar in September 1990 and so much has changed since then. We started with three staff including me, now nine years later on we are twenty in total with fur more expected in the next dew months.

I have been trying to recall some specific incidents that have happened to me in the past ten years but there are too many to pick on any one.

I have enjoyed the company of many different people in Gibraltar from all different walks of life and all seem to involve eating and drinking, the best of hospitality and friendship.

One passion I have discovered since being in Gibraltar is golf. Although I am not particularly good, I do enjoy playing and had many interesting days at the 19th hole.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to come to Gibraltar.

Although my formal education finished long before I arrived here, I believe that I have learned a great deal about the wider aspects of business, and life in general, and I consider that the lessons I have learned here will have given me a much better appreciation of things should I have to move on.

I hope that that will not me necessary but they say all good things must end.

Annie Risso

I was born, in Gibraltar, Annie Mary Walker, of an English father and a Spanish mother.

Much of my childhood was spent travelling from Gibraltar to visit relatives: to Harthill, near Sheffield, on the Orient Line, to keep in contact with my relative on Dad's side and on Mum's side we would travel by motor bike and sidecar to La Rabita in Spain.

My sister Eileen and I learned to love the country and sea.

We raised with pets and went through Brownies, Guides and Sunday School.

I ended up running a Brownie Pack, Youth Club and Sunday School at the Parish Hall of the Holy Trinity Cathedral.

I studied for my O Levels at the Loreto High School and although I had a scholarship to go to Teacher Training College, my boyfriend, who was Gibraltarian, would not hear of it and I loved him so much that I let it go.

I joined Barclays Bank D.C.O. until we married. I was 22 years old. I left work immediately and we had three beautiful daughters.

We were very much in love but possibly I trusted too much and at the age of 53 I found out that he had been unfaithful to me on numerous occasions and his last affair was a long-standing one. Looking back everything is still raw. I realise it is thanks to my upbringing, my strength of character and my love for life and sense of humour that everything ca be surmounted. My married life started in a rose-coloured hue.

My daughters were my life. I love to sew and would make most of their dresses for them.

When the three were finally in school, I felt a deep sense of loss and I searched for a part-time job, much against my husband's wishes. At the time, the majority of married women in Gibraltar did not work. If they did, it meant that Macho man was not able to provide for the family. Thankfully today that attitude has changed.

I stuck to my guns and landed as a part-time classroom aide at St. Bernadette's Occupational Therapy Centre. Little did I know how much this was going to change my life. I had rarely dealt with or know of people with learning disabilities.

My only contacts had been seeing a person with Down Syndrome with his parents in a park and another when I became paralyised at the age of 9. I was in school in Harthill at the time and I developed a white tumour on the hipbone. I spent months in Sheffield Children's Hospital. There I saw and shared experiences with many children wit many disabilities. I felt their pain where they had lost a limb or had different degrees of burns. We were together in our experiences. I finally recovered from the tumour but had to learn to walk again.

The care, encouragement and my own feeling of despair when I couldn't walk gave me a deep sense of understanding and feeling of the frustration that others have, something that has remained strongly in me ever since. For a 9-year-old, I now feel that it was a great foundation for what life had in store for me. A year later I was finally able to walk again.

This taught me determination, achievement and optimism.

My life started at St Bernadette's. I found my sewing skills and my taint crafts a bonus. I learnt canework and stool-making in order to teach trainees. I was earning a wage and doing things I liked and learning about people I had never had a change to be near. I found how generous they were with their love. There was no malice, only hasty and truthfulness. My family and I were enriched. They, alongside me, grew to understand and appreciate things in life that we normally took for granted.

Five years later, as my children were older, I was offered full-time employment, which by then I was able to take. I spent more time at the Centre and started to do physical training. I found that the trainees loved to experience movement, especially ground work.

An Occupational Therapist at the Centre introduced me to Special Olympics. Together we felt that this was something that could further enrich our people's lives. The norm was that they left the Centre and went home. We started training athletics after hours and little did we know what it would lead to.

As with anything new, especially in the field Learnt Disability, there was a great deal of oppositions, but in 1985 a team was put together and we attended the European Games in Dublin, Ireland. I was the Swimming Coach. I had three swimmers and they achieved 2 silver medals and one bronze. How proud they were, their families, and the whole team. At the time we were only correspondent members.

The Occupational Therapist left and, as happens, nobody gave a toss whether Special Olympics would survive. Today I say to those people eat your hearts out. Fifteen years on and we are still going strong. Today our athletes are true globetrotters. Our various athletes have visited Dublin, Glasgow, Minneapolis, Indiana, St Paul, New Haven, Connecticut, Canada, Austria, Monaco, Luxembourg and North Carolina, not forgetting Spain and Portugal. As a result of participating in Games in so many countries there have been a number of different wonderful experiences.

One of our athletes loves rockets and aeroplanes and when we were in a NorthWest Carrier somebody noticed the Concorde flying pas and drew it to his attention. Another concerned the actor Don Johnson: everyone in Gibraltar was crazy over the series Miami Vice and idolised Don Johnson. Lo and behold on Indiana he gave the opening speech and our athletes were able to see him live. We had similar experience with the series "El Coche Fantastico" on Spanish TV. In Minneapolis the actual car used in the series was on show and we all got to see it.

There were other episodes: like the hotel we stayed in Switzerland which had, in the bathroom, a cabinet full of perfumes, gold plated toothbrushes etc. An athlete opened it and removed a few items, which she though she could take free of charge. Going overland to Austria we were taking potluck in hotels. One night in France it was late but we managed to find a hotel run by an old woman. She obviously was finding it hard to keep things clean as we found, on waking up in the morning, cobwebs dangling over our faces from the overhead lights. Our athletes still remember that Hotel. One of the great experiences was when one of our athletes was abler to touch his idol, Arnold Schwartzenegger he didn't was his hands all day.

I personally enjoy and value these experiences.

I had no thoughts of ambition when I entered this field. Today I am a full-time salaried manager of St Bernadette's Occupational Therapy Centre and I run Special Olympics as the National Director on an entirely voluntary basis.

I was awarded M.B.E. in 1992 for services rendered to people with learning difficulties.

My mentor was Eunice Kennedy Shiver, an exceptional woman. A woman of strength and courage. A believer in what she does and, with great tenacity, imparts on the rest of the world this great belief. Everyone she touches goes away with a feeling

of having a drawn strength from her. The day she leaves us many people will mourn Special Olyimpics will be at a great loss.

I have seen the Centre progress from 15 trainees to 35. From small beginnings of four rooms, dinning room, kitchen and four toilets, we now have this wonderful purpose-build centre with a great hydrotherapy pool donated by Albert Hammond and wonderful gardens upgraded by the Royal Bank of Scotland. Our people are happier and respected by their parents and supported for their achievements. Most of them have grown in confidence and self esteem but there is still a lot of work to be done.

Our greatest need is job opportunities. These are few and far apart. Everyone knows how great you feel when at last you get a job. You are part of the Community, you feel useful, and you are a citizen. Today we are talking about people up to the age of 54 who may not have had the opportunity of employment. They have survived birth and childhood; they have achieved a life; they have achieved sports; they have achieved to be part of our community and it is now up to us to help them become fully recognised citizens by offering them job opportunities. Admittedly, there are those who, because of their varying degrees of disability, may not be able to enter employment but there are many who can. They just need to be given the opportunity.

My life today is enriched by my daughters, Elaine, Denise and Penny, two great sons-in-law, Danny and Joe, who are a terrific support, my grandsons Jordan and Jaime. My parents are both still alive, Albert and Rosalia.

Life is wonderful and it is there for living. Never give up, show strengths and character and always be true to oneself.

Sister Presentation

My family consisted of my parents, three girls and one boy, the youngest. We were a very happy group and lived in the Marble City – so called because of its black marble quarry.

Kilkenny s a very historic city – renowned for is Norman Castles, Round Tower, Cathedrals and Churches. Beside our four Parish Churches, the Franciscan and Dominican Orders are very influential and popular in the City. Kilkenny is also widely renowned for its interest in sports especially hurling, which is a very skilled game. The Black and Amber Jerseys of the teams in training and were fascinated by the sped of players. During my holidays I still enjoy watching Kilkenny play in the All-Ireland Championships.

Vicar Street, where I lived, still retains its ancient name. Our house, No 12, was built by my father and that was where I was born and lived till I life it in 1938. Behind the house was a fine orchard supplied magnificent fruit for customers from the city and surroundings.

My mother often said it was useless cooking meals for us children, during the fruit season, as the orchard fruits of luscious plumbs, pears, apples, gooseberries, currants and strawberries were too tempting.

Many times we children, an our many friends, would be sent down the garden with Shep, the man who helped us to pull the fruit, to carry up the baskets to the stores, where the fruit was sorted out for sale in the shop or for export.

My father was very proud of his produce and treated the trees as if they were his family. How sad he was when his gardens were raided and branches were broken.

During school days Shep, our friend, would carry our books to school while filling our bags with fruit and sweets for the very young boarders in school. We felt so sorry for these six and seven year olds who were away from home, but we were in trouble with dinning room staff when meals were left unfinished.

My father was keenly interested in greyhounds and owned and bred many successful animals.

Coursing Matches were very important meetings for him.

We all loved animals especially cats and dogs.

Childhood and school days were indeed the happiest days of my life.

The Loreto Convent School was a stone's throw from my house and I have very pleasant memories of my years there, and the kindness and interest of the nuns and teachers.

Many lasting friendships were formed there and to this very day a group of my classmates meet together in Kilkenny's new Convent. We spent many an hour reliving the happy experiences and teenage exploits we had and I look forward to hearing about their lives.

During our senior years a time came for us to decide our future and before long, I found myself wending my way to the Loreto Noviciate in Rathfarnham, Dublin. It was my first experience living away from home and I shed many a tear in private. However, time is a great healer and I found myself entering happily into this new phase of my life preparing for my profession as a Loreto Sister. That was the first step on a long nine years preparation of study for Final Profession of Vows.

After sixteen years teaching in various Loreto Schools in Ireland, I was posted to Gibraltar. On 14th August 1954 I set sail from Dublin to Tilbury Docks, where we embarked on the Kenya Castle liner. My heart was breaking. After four days at sea, in the early hours of the morning we reached Gibraltar to be greeted by our Nuns and many who had come to welcome us.

I tried my best to be brave but when Mother Ita who was standing at the gangway said ""Aren't you wonderful to be smiling", the floodgates opened and I was whisked into a waiting car and driven away.

I do not remember my first impressions of the actual Rock but I can recall driving through narrow streets and wondered how on earth two cars could pass on another.

Finally we arrived at our Convent. After a very welcome cuppa tea, we were shown round the house and were more than glad to go to be for a good nigh sleep. Next day I was introduced to the late Viola Rugeroni – whom I declared I have not yet mention. Viola said, "Indeed you did meet me, I drove you to the Convent yesterday, but you could not see me through your tears."

I spent twenty-two years teaching at Convent Place Grammar School. I was very happy there and came to the children, staff, Gibraltar and its people.

As the particular Apostolate of the Loreto Order is education with an emphasis on the "Care of Faith" was especially glad to be occupied in this work. Our aim as Christian educators is to bring others to awareness of God's love, care and compassion s that they will find meaning in life and hope for the future. It was good to be involved in such great work.

Starting off new with me was Mother Oliver, well known now to so many in Gibraltar. She was to become the new Head Mistress of the Green School, as it was affectionately known.

My work was to teach Religious Education, Art and General Subjects. These tasks were made easier by the warm welcome and great support of all the Staff. These were great years of experience and my wonderful students passed through our school;

In my many years here I have known five bishops. They, and all the clergy, have always been very supportive and interested in our work for Education. Perhaps I should mention Monsignor Grech, who was a very good friend of all the nuns. We worked extremely close with the Christian Brothers and it was a very sad day for us when they left Gibraltar. The only occasions when we came into competition with them were during the Drama Festival time when both staffs set their sighs on winning.

In 1963 we were overjoyed to welcome the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood to the Rock. They were our neighbours in Mount Alvernia and soon became good friends. We spent many happy times together especially during Christmas, Easter and the holidays. Alas they too have gone. We miss them very much we have very happy memories of them.

After twenty-two years here in Gibraltar I was recalled to Ireland not knowing whether I would ever see the Rock again. If I shed many tears on my arrival here in 1954, I wept far more leaving 1976.

After six years in Ireland, I was told Gibraltar was my next posting. Though it was very sad leaving all my wonderful friends in Donegal, my heart was happy now knowing I was returning to more friends on the Rock. This time it was to be a familiar scene and faces, even though Comprehensive School had been introduced. I was coming to teach in the Junior School in Europa. This I enjoyed equally well and was able to keep up contact with the pupils and staff of both schools especially when it involved the Drama Festivals, Sports Days and Mission Sales.

I am still involved in helping with the Religious Formation of the First Holy Communion classes in St Mary's Primary School. This is a very fulfilling duty and one that demands serious preparation. On Thursday afternoons Sister Eucharia and I spent time preparing children for Sunday's Mass.

Another for of social work is helping in the Soup Kitchen in Nazareth House where we served hot meals to many people – pavement artists, musicians and those in need. We also visited some elderly people.

Retirement can be quite a busy time and we occupy ourselves with various activities including Art and Craft. I shall soon be forty years on the Rock and I am proud to say how happy I am to have served so many generations of Gibraltarians.

Diane Sloma

My earliest memory is of refusing to have buttons on my leggings done up before being taken by the maid on an afternoon jaunt in my push chair to the Tower of London, for my local park.

I must have been about two years old, having been born in the East End of London in the flat over my father's Drapery Shop.

Although we were comparatively poor my birth was attended by a Midwife from the Queen Charlotte Hospital, who stayed during the first two weeks of my life. We also had a live-in maid, usually a Welsh girl who was paid five shillings a week wages.

From the beginning I was a strong-minded child. I had early learned to read and count from playing with the labelled boxes in the shop. I was sent to the Preparatory Department of the City of London School at the age of three. The term fees were three guineas, quite a large sum in those days.

Childhood came to an abrupt end with the outbreak of war, when, at the age of ten, I was evacuated with my three year old sister. We went, clutching our gas masks and small cases, by train to Newmarket on Friday, September 1st 1939, two days before was officially declared. I have vivid memories of being marched to Liverpool Street Station along streets lined with crying mothers, of the day long journey and the arrival at a village hall, bewildered and tired in the early evening. It was like being at a cattle market, villages debating whether they wanted a boy or girl. My Mother's last instruction to me had to been to look after my baby sister whose hand I held tightly and refused to be separated from.

I don't remember being homesick during my four years in the country, only annoyed at restrictions such as being told "little girls don't need to read newspapers." I rapidly learned to say yes and no in the right places and to do or, if not possible, to think exactly what I intended.

Meeting my husband is my most important memory. I thought he looked as handsome as Tyrone Power, my favourite film star. We met at a Youth Club dance, he spoke as

I thought. He was 24 and just out of the Air Force and I was 17 and in my last year at school. It was a love that lasted almost 53 years.

The family wedding, the birth of our twin sons, my husband obtaining his engineering degree and then passing his Bar exams after 14 years of continuous part-time stud fled all too quickly and the boys were grown and themselves married.

There was sadness too, our eldest son's divorce and our younger son's death from cancer leaving three grandchildren. In between I had returned to take up the College education I had relinquished to get married.

There followed a variety of teaching in schools and technical colleges, market research, freelance journalism and my last job of heading a team of lawyers in preparing the estate records of a large property company for computerisation.

Life was not all work and from taking the boys in a punt through to a 25 and then a 35 foot boat my husband and I started on our final boating project. The design and construction of a steel, twin-screw diesel yacht. Our aim was a five year retirement cruise to Greece.

The keel of SILVARDA was laid on our silver wedding day in 1972 and ten years later the dream became a reality when we set out soon after my husband's 60th birthday on a journey, which was to take over a year and land, us in Gibraltar for what was scheduled as a three week stop.

I shall never forget the sight of the Rock against a background of a darkening evening sky, with Africa on our starboard side, Spain to port and the Mediterranean glistening cobalt blue ahead. We entered Gibraltar Bay and were delighted to be checked in by English speaking Customs Officers after 18 months f French, Portuguese and Spanish toting guns.

Liptons was a revelation after mercadona in Spain and Portugal. Heinz baked beans, tea bags and cheddar cheese fully compensated for the poor selection of vegetables due to the then clued border.

We had been commissioned to write a Yachting Pilot for the coasts from La Corunna to Gibraltar on our journey down and we decided to stay on the Rock until this came out in the summer of 1983.

It was then we first appeared on G.B.C TV. After the interview we were asked by a local book seller to write something on yachting in Gibraltar.

At first, Yacht Scene was produced on or own portable typewriter every three months. After a year the advertising support and sales led to an annual production of a local Nautical Almanac, now in its fifteenth year.

Having got the authorship bug it was not long before "The Gibraltar Financial Service Handbook" was envisaged. Its conception in 1987, was encouraged by the late Frank Galliano who, nominated me for a Directorship of the Chamber of Commerce.

I was elected and served six years, the last two as Hon. Secretary. During this time the idea of the "Gibraltar Business Network" was born and together with Annie Galliano, and Lydia Darham, was founded.

The Network's present Chairman, Barbara Sellors, is to be congratulated for coming forward with the idea of this millennium book.

By this time all thoughts of sailing on had disappeared, the boat had been sold and we had moved ashore. We still have our house in England but soon realised Gibraltar was the place where we wanted to spend our remaining years.

Sadly my dear husband Bert had not lived to celebrate the millennium with me, nor my being awarded my PhD, Gibraltar: Fortress and Colony in Strategy, Economics and War 1918-1947, which he had given me such support to complete.

I face the Year 2000 not alone but with a family that is comprised of the wonderful community of Gibraltar to which I have been privileged to be adopted into.

I enjoy visiting my son in America, my grandchildren in England and my sister in Spain, but best of all is coming home to the Rock.

Irene Louise (Tita) Stangnetto

My earliest memory is standing in my dropside cot crying my eyes out because I was not allowed to go to my nanny's wedding. I was given a large coloured ragdoll with celluloid eyes to compensate for this.

I remember the sirens going at the start of the war and being picked up and rushed to a shelter by my father.

Another strong early memory is of our dog "Taffy" a wire-haired Yorkshire terrier, quite famous in Gibraltar, and also of "Lassie." They became proud parents of seven puppies, which we names after Snow White's seven dwarfs.

However, evacuation of women and children was enforced and we were sent off to Casablanca only to find ourselves back in Gibraltar shortly afterwards. Soon after getting home we packed off again and arrived in Madeira where we spent five years. We meant my mother, granny, two brothers and myself, my father had to stay behind.

Madeira brings me horrible and sad memories. My little brother of two years and four months suffered a terrible accident and died of meningitis. Although I was only five at the time I felt as though I should have been watching out for him.

The last years of the War we spent in Tangier. We flew from Madeira to Tangier in a seaplane and it was a thrill landing in the sea. I went to a French school where I learnt all the French I know. My sister Christine was born in Tangier.

After the War, back in Gibraltar life became more normal with School at the Loreto Convent and activities.

I was eleven when I started to play tennis a sport I love and still play. I was lucky enough to have a natural ability and my brother and I would go on court as often as possible to practise. I was fifteen when I won my first major tournament and never looked back. I won practically every competition I entered and this went on for forty-three years. My greatest achievement was winning the ladies doubles with my mother and twenty-five years later wining the same even with my daughter.

At the age of fourteen, after good results at school certificate, I was expelled from school it was a religious thing. It traumatised me, especially having to tell my father.

My farther was the most wonderful man. He was hard working, loved his profession, and was a man of principal – a disciplinarian, but fair with it. He used to sing, "If you were the only girl in the world." I know he loved me very much and the last thing I wanted was to disappoint him so I felt I had to prove myself and strive to succeed despite the setback. I would have dearly loved to have continued my studies.

After almost dying of typhoid fever, I became a kindergarten teacher where the like of Hector Cortes was one of my babies.

At the age of seventeen I was sent to a college in England called the Ashridge House of Citizenship, which was run by a formidable lady called Dorothy Neville-Rolfe. There were only seventy-four students from all over the world.

When I left college I worked in London on and of for five years and shared a flat with a friend who later became my sister-in-law. I earned £4.16s a week but with very little money we had a great time.

When I was twenty-one I went to Norway where I worked and lived with a dear friend and her family. Norway has the most exquisite scenery.

When I returned to London, I had my four wisdom teeth extracted. I got an infection and felt so dreadful I returned home to be nursed by my mum.

I thought I would stay in Gibraltar for a while and got a job at Bland's in the travel department. It was a happy office and the boys working in the office at that time remain friends.

I had always wanted to go to America and so in 19660, after much trouble acquiring an immigration visa, I boarded the S.S. Saturnia and with fifty dollars in my pocket went of to the U.S.A. At the time it was extremely easy to find a job, and with a wide choice, and I decided to work in the Therapy Department of the Psychiatric Section of the Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, New York.

I joined a tennis club and met a wonderful cross-section of people and, on winning the Rochester City championships, I was in the news.

My brother was doing dental research and I typed his thesis, which won an award. I quote from the Democratic Chronicle, Rochester, New York of 30th July 1960: "For his research work Dr Andlaw has won the Edward Hatton Award of the International

Association for Dental Research. Dr Andlaw, who expects to return to Gibraltar, is brother of Miss Tita Andlaw who recently won the City Women's Tennis Championships.

With my brother and a friend we camped right across the U.S.A. What a magnificent country America is, how vast, how different from East to West. The Grand Canyon, Yellowstone Park, the Rocky Mountains, Salt Lake City, Lake Tahoe, Las Vegas, Reno, and the Redwood Forest – you name it – we were there. We even spent a week at a ranch belonging to a young man we met. The ranch was so vast that standing in a hill the land all around reaching to the horizon was his. They used to go out and herd in the cattle on horseback and it took weeks. Now, of course, they do it with four-wheel drives. The grandmother had crossed America in a wagon just as we see in the Wild West movies.

Before gong to America, I me Johnnie Stagnetto, a handsome, tall, charming man whose passion for the sea and boats had taken him around the Mediterranean for years. I was quite smitten by him but thought it best to carry on with my idea travelling to America just in case it was one of those things but we wrote to each other and he asked me to marry him and, although I met attractive and eligible young Americans, one even teaching me to fly his biplane, none could match Johnny's wit and intellect so I came home.

On my return I took a teaching job at St Margaret's School. The education system was not as it is today. My class consisted of forty, fourteen- year old girls who were as lively as anyone could possibly handle. I took them for all subjects and it was extremely difficult to keep them interested and in order. I surprised myself at being able to achieve success at this as well as being their friend.

In 1963, Johnnie and I married.

With Johnnie's artistic flair and his partner Charlie Cruz's business qualities they opened up numerous catering enterprises – yachtsman's cellar bar where the likes of Albert Hammond entertained, four restaurants, the first pub in Gibraltar and a large bar in Main Street.

In the meantime I produced two adorable children a son Jonathan, and daughter, Tanya.

We did not foresee disaster looming.

From 1963 to 1969 things went swimmingly but with the closing of the frontier by the Spanish authorities, life as we knew it collapsed. We lost every penny we had invested. On top of this there was a legal court case on the property where we had done up a sweet flat. We lost the case and were given ten days to leave. The seven bad years had begun with my father and Johnnie's father both dying in 1970. Charlie Cruz was killed in a tragic car accident with two cousins of mine, both badly hurt.

We kept the first and smallest of the two restaurants, La Bayuca in Turnball's Lane, and I came down to help Johnnie and we are still there.

Our children grew up and did us proud. They are the most wonderful people who, in turn, married wonderful partners and we are now grandparents to six delightful gorgeous grandchildren.

I took a tennis-coaching course at Bath University in May 1984 and thoroughly enjoyed coaching and keeping in touch with young children.

In 1985, I was appointed a Justice of the Peace. I do my best an am conscious of the responsibility involved.
I am, at the moment, Vice Chairman of the Gibraltar Magistrates Association.

I have been blessed with good health, a loving family and relations and very many dear friends. I look forward to a few more happy and productive years.

Mariola Summerfield

My name is Maria del Carmen Summerfield nee Benvenutto, better known as Mariola, as my aunts wanted to name me.

I was born in Gibraltar on 28th June 1927, of a Spanish mother and Gibraltarian father of Italian descent. My father's family were seafaring, and owners of a fleet of merchant ships trading in the Mediterranean. They settled in Gibraltar soon after 1704.

Both my parents came from Victorian and religious families.

I was educated firstly by nuns and excellent in religion, music and dancing, which together with opera spaces, are some of my passions.

I was a lively child and tented to rebel against the old fashioned upbringing of the era.

In 1939 the Second World War broke out and the Spanish Civil War was about to end. In 1940 the population had to be evacuated and my education was interrupted. We were taken to Morocco where nuns gave us French lessons in an army hut.

Unfortunately, when France capitulated to the Germans we were pushed out a short notice and after hours at the jetty at Casablanca under the heat, without food or water, we were exchanged for German prisoners of war. Under the shadows of bayonets we managed to board a ship in appalling conditions, initially for the West Indies, but it stopped in Gibraltar for supplies, an because of the danger of U-boats we sailed for the UK. The journey took 18 days and we encountered storms and torpedoes and ran out of water and food until we arrived at Swansea. There we received medical attention and were taken to a London refugee camp. We were then moved from place to place until we settled in a centre in Kensington.

With all this displacement I went without a school for a year. Being 13, I then had to work hard until I got a place at a Secretarial College, undergoing training in administrative and secretarial work. Eventually, after graduation, I got a job with the House of Frazer as a Junior Secretary to one of the Directors.

Unfortunately, the bombing got too severe in London so we were transferred to Scotland for safety and to await the end of the North African Invasion; some time later we repatriated to Gibraltar.

Whilst in London, back in 1942, I met the man who was later to become my husband. He was visiting his mother in London. The chemistry between us was such that 2 years later in 1944 when wend repatriated back to Gibraltar he was waiting at the jetty along with other men waiting for their families.

The war was still on and I got a job at HM Dockyard for the duration.

In 1949 I married my husband. He was 13 years my senior and Church of England. There was opposition from all quarters and due to the intransigence of the Church at the time, I was excommunicated. It was painful for both of us, but I believed that God being Love we would not be punished. Thankfully after the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council of 1966 our union was blessed by the Roman Catholic Church.

We had two lovely children, a daughter and a son, our pride and joy on whom we lavished all our love and dreams; latter we had 7 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

Offers of good jobs came my way but I chose to dedicate my life to the home and family.

My children having reached the ages of 14 and 16, being public-spirited and having taken part in concerts playing piano for charity etc during the War, I now had more time for activities without abandoning the needs of my family.

In the mid sixties in Gibraltar all was not well vis-à-vis Spain.

Women were becoming more and more aware of their responsibilities and when a group of ladies decided to get together to discuss the situation, I went along. As a result the Gibraltar Housewives Association was founded. Its aim was to look after the interests of our families and our future.

Soon after, a Petition to Her Majesty the Queen was organised, asking for perpetual retention of our British Heritage. The Petition with the signatures of almost all the female population of voting age was taken, after pres conferences, TV appearances and sheer hard work, to Buckingham Palace by myself and the then Chairman of the Association. Within hours an answer was received from Her Majesty's Private Secretary.

I can say that Gibraltar and its problems became known internatonallaly.

On returning to Gibraltar the population was out in the streets to give us a resounding welcome.

A few years later a second Petition was taken to 10 Downing Street.

When, in August 1966, Spain withdrew Spanish female workers from the Rock, the Association organised a voluntary labour force, manning all essential services such as old people's homes, hospitals, hotels etc.

This broke the ice and, as before it was almost unknown for women to work outside the home, many of the volunteers remained in employment which proved beneficial to the social and economic life of the community, particular as Spain later withdrew the male labour force and imposed further restrictions which led to the closing of the frontier and all communications.

The Association went from strength to strength encouraging women to take their place alongside men in many spheres, and worked incessantly to safeguard the interest of its members. It dealt not only with domestic matters such as education, housing, price control, transport etc, but with political matters from a human angel. Letters were written to MPs, I took part in debates with the Spanish Foreign secretary Fernando Moran, the Marquis of Duro amongst others and also made numerous TV appearances including on Spanish TV.

The Association became a powerful pressure group and envy mediated in industrial disputes in the seventies. The year 1975 was proclaimed International Woman's Year by the United Nations.

The Government asked me to set up a committee to look into the matter of sex discrimination. Although discrimination in Gibraltar is minimal compared to other parts of the world, we looked into all areas of the law as it affected women subsequently many laws were amended by the House of Assembly.

In June of that year I was asked to represent Gibraltar at the International Conference in Mexico, where I addressed an assembly of 700 women and met heads of state, appeared on international TV and was interviewed by the media, so Gibraltar was once again on the map.

Since then a watchful eye has been kept on equality, status and the rights of women in modern society.

The thought of entering into politics often crossed my mind, in fact I have been empanelled several times. However, I am too outspoken and independent to belong to any political party.

In 1978 I was awarded the Silver Jubilee Medal.

By this time my family were out of my hands so I decided to go out to work.

In 1980 I felt the Association needed new blood so I retired from public life making way for the younger generation. I was voted Hon. Life President of the Association and I still advise and carry out charity work behind the scenes.

Later I was awarded the MBE by Her Majesty the Queen.

All through my work I have had the support of my husband. Years later we both decided to retire from work, we relieved out youth and travelled all over the world. In December 1990 trudged struck: my husband died suddenly.

I felt numb, dead and wanting to go too. A felling that is still with me, but my faith, and God given strength and peace enables me to carry the burden which I hide under the mask, although crying inside, for I not only lost my husband, and partner, but my lover, friend and brother.

Not much later I lost a 24 year old grandson and more loved ones and friends seemed to go with the passing of time. I then dedicated all my strength to looking after my elder mother and when she also died I felt tired and weary. When I had a check up and was in hospital for tests I was sent to the UK for investigations. I was diagnosed as having a heart condition and had to have emergency open-heart syrgery. I have complications, and a year on I have still not quite recovered.

Problems there always are, but in spite of adversity and broken damage I have had a full life, lived and loved intensely and thank God for numerous blessings and joys, for a loving family and wonderful friends, and whatever happens I look forward to the new Millennium with hope and faith.

Marsire Taylor

During my life I have signed the Official Secrets Act four times. The first time was in 1942 when I joined the Royal Navy. The second was in 1962 when I joined the Royal Auxiliary Service as a volunteer in though Naval Control of Shipping and remained in it for 21 years. Then in the 1980's I signed it again when I volunteered as an Auxiliary Coastguard in Cornwall, where I had a holiday flat. My last signing of the Official Secrets Act was also in the 1980's when I was working at the Public Records Office, Chancery Lane, London.

I am glad that I was of age to take part in the War, for that is a pert of my life that I would not have missed.

The fact of being in danger, especially in 1940 and 1941, heightened one's awareness of life and the feeling that one was taking part in something important.

I was living with my parents in London at the outbreak of War in September 1939, for my father had been recalled to the War Office. I had finished a secretarial course and was hoping to go into the Foreign Office for I had completed my schooling in Paris and then gone to Germany so as to get knowledge of both languages. However, I came home one day and announced that I had joined the Mechanised Transport Corps, a corps of women drivers being formed to replace men who were being called up.

The Corps supplied drivers for Embassies, Ministries, Government Offices, and Civil Defences etc. It was the latter that I was seconded to – in the Borough of Lambeth. This meant that I could walk home in Westminster and cross the Thames our dot just off the Lambeth Walk.

It was important to be able to walk there, for after the bombing started one did not know when buses would turn up.

I carried a gas mask and wore a tin helmet. It was anchored with a strap under the chin so stayed in place even when one had to throw oneself to the ground, which one frequently did. We were advised that the tin helmet should be worn flat across the head, not toileted. Some women liked to wear theirs at an angle that showed more hair. However, that way you were likely to have your neck broken if a piece of shrapnel landed on your head.

We M.T.C. drivers were with a Light Rescue Depot, which meant that we drove cars with stretchers on top and carried a team of four men trained in rescue work. We did 24 hours on and 24 hours off and worked in rotation, so that if you were first out one night you were last out the next time you came on duty. Of course, when the raids were heavy, you went out several times in the one night.

I remember my first raid with great clarity. It was a pitch-black night and my four men had vanished into the darkness. A plane overhead was dropping a stack of bombs, screaming as they came down, and exploding nearer and nearer to me. There was not a soul in sight and I remember trying to crouch beside the car, which gave no protection whatsoever. When the last bomb exploded beyond m I knew that I was going to be all right – during that raid at any rate.

Incidentally, my only residue of the war – if one can call it that – is when I hear a high pitched whine, similar to the scream of a descending bomb, and I fell a pain in my solar plexus.

The other raid I remember clearly was on the 15th October 1940 when Merely College was hit. It was no longer a college but a refuge for people who had been bombed out from their homes. It was a bright moonlight night and we were called out from our depot. When we got to the college we found it had almost demolished by a direct hit. The Heavy and Light Rescue teams nod ambulances were all on the sport.

We drivers tread to help with the rescue too. I remember crawling along in the darkness on my tummy to take some water to a woman they were trying to rescue. She was trapped by the partially collapsed building and I could not see her but chatted to her to keep her spirits up. We were both very conscious of the fact that the rest of the building was likely to fall on us at any moment and there was no one else in sight – the rescuers being high above us. I remember putting my hand on something soft and found that it was the arm of a person completely buried.

That night more than 400 aircrafts attacked London, 430 civilians were killed and more maimed and mutilated.

In February 1941 I was told that I and another and three men had been awarded the British Empire Medal for our bravery on that night.

In March we went to an investiture at Buckingham Palace to receive our awards from the King. He did not speak to everyone but he did speak to me. However, I was so nervous that I did not hear a word he said.

In 1942 I joined the Royal Navy and after initial training was sent as a WRNS rating to Norfolk House in St James Square where the invasion of North Africa was being planned. My job was to type operational orders, so my secretarial training came in useful after all.

After that we worked on the plans for the capture of an island. I did not know where it was – we just referred to it as Operation Husky. This turned out to be the invasion of Sicily.
I remember seeing a boy friend's name as commanding one of the landing parties.

I was chosen to be part of COSSAC's staff.

He was a British General and this was long before Eisenhower had been designated Suprem Allied Commander for the invasion of Europe – Operation Overload.

There were Army, Navy and Airforce in his secretariat and we all had high security rating for we knew the date the D-Day and where the landings would take place.

I remember afterwards being asked by people if it was not difficult to keep everything secret, but it was not difficult at all for you had so much knowledge – not just a tiny bit.

If I were asked where I would worked I just answered "Naval Intelligence" and left it at that.

In 1944 the tempo of the planning staff increased an we worked extraordinary hours – 6am- 12noon, 6pm – midnight and then 6am – 12 noon again and on and on. I cannot remember for how long.

After D-Day on 6th June, when our work was over, I was recommended for a commission but never again had such an interesting or worthwhile job.

Memories of service life came to force in 1995 in Gibraltar, with the VE/VJ Parade, when I was the only woman in the Veterans Contingent.

It was very exciting to take part; first of all the parade itself on the Naval Ground where the contingents from the Royal Navy, the Army and Royal Ai Force and the United States Navy were all drawn up before we marched on to the music of the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Corps of Drums of the Gibraltar Regiment, then the inspection by the Duke of York; then the march past and lastly the march through the City, from Casemates Square up to Inces Hall.

All the service contingents who had been on the parade ground, including the two bands, marched up Main Street ahead of us. The Mayor took the salute from the House of Assembly and the Duke of York and Governor Sir John Chapple at the Convent. As we turned round the corner round Inces Hall we found to our astonishment all the services drawn up to face us. After we had come to the halt they gave us three cheers, raising their caps in perfect unison.

Claire Vinales

My name is Claire Vinales and I am a sixteen-year-old girl who was born on 2nd July 1983 in Gibraltar.

I have identical twin brothers and they are thirteen years old. My relationship with them isn't very good, we have our ups and downs and we have our little fights now and again but I guess all brothers and sisters fight and hopefully soon will pass this phase in our lives and we will be able to talk and without having to fight or have an argument.

My parents are very happily married and my relationship with them is very good; we can communicate very easily and that's why we get along with each other so well.

I enjoy living in Gibraltar as I have loads of friends and love going out and having fun.

The other good thing about Gibraltar is that I have my family very close together and I can visit them whenever I want, because they don't live more than 15 minutes from me.

I feel Gibraltar is a very safe place for a teenager, but the problem is that night life in Gibraltar isn't very good, most of the places are for over eighteens so I guess there is not much choice for a sixteen year old on a Friday or Saturday night.

However, I can still have fun wherever I go so long as I am in good company.

What I also like about Gibraltar is the weather: it's nearly always sunny although we get the odd rains now and again.

Summer here is great because all my friends and I go to the beach together; we have a great time talking, swimming, sunbathing, playing games and of course socialising.

It's also nice when I go with my parents up the coast, especially in the summer.

I am a pupil at Westside School and right now things in school are getting better. Last year I sat my GSCE but I didn't do very well because I wasn't interested in school. I only passed three GCSEs English, Spanish and Drama. I am quite happy I passed these three because English is one of the most difficult exams and I got through. Now in school I am doing my repeats of Maths and Science but I have to do five different subjects so I decided to do Italian, Photography and Spanish Literature.

If I pass these exams I would like to start a nursing career and if I make it there I would like to specialise in midwifery because that's what I always wanted to be since I was a young girl. I like the idea of being a midwife but it will mean a lot of hard work as I've got to work up the ladder and become staff nurse. I like nursing because it involves helping others specially the cases that go to accidents and emergency. Midwifery involves bringing new life into the world although sometime some babies

are still born or have major problems and obviously this is an unhappy time for everyone.

I am confident I would be able to give good advice and reassurance when the need arises.

I decided to become a vegetarian when I was fourteen years old. I did this because I am an animal lover and I believe in animal rights I refused to eat meat and animal fat. At first my meals were becoming very limited and my parents convinced me that I had to eat fish at least, so I started to eat fish. So my meals are now more varied and I can eat a good meal wherever I go. When I am older and live by myself I will hopefully give up fish and slowly give up any food products that have to do with animals and perhaps become a vegan.

As we approach the millennium it reminds me that in the year 2000 I will hopefully start my nursing career something which I am really looking forward to.

Although I am not very politically inclined I hope that Gibraltar achieves self-determination and, if not, an amalgamation with Britain. The last thing I would like is Gibraltar to become Spanish.

I would also like to see a change in the world we live in, no wars and no poverty and for scientists to discover cures for incurable.

Amina Zoubair

Amina's father first came to Gibraltar around 1960 to work and he would return to Morocco for a while and then come back to Gibraltar to work again off over a number of years.

It was possible to bring a wife over to Gibraltar but if she became pregnant then the police would knock on the door when she was about six months pregnant to make sure she left in time to get back to Morocco before birth. He missed his family too much to think of staying here for long on his own.Eventually, in 1969 he came to Gibraltar again but this time bringing his wife and daughter, Amina, with him. He fought a long battle with authorities here to have to whole family stay at first Amina would come for short holidays only but she was finally given a temporary permit to reside here. This permit had to be renewed every three months.

At eight years old she became the first Moroccan girl to enter school in Gibraltar. This had to be private schooling and she went up to Loreto Convent to be introduced to her classmates knowing not a word in English. Her parents were very pleased and proud that they had achieved this start in life for their only daughter.

For the very first time Amina found life at Loreto very happy and cannot recall one incidence of any form of prejudice. She excelled at games particularly netball and running and this helped to make her popular. So well integrated did she become that the question of her nationality was never an issue and her best friend at school was an

Indian girl. She soon learned English to add to her French, Arabic and Moroccan languages. She listens to Arabic TV to keep her fluency level but thinks in English.

Her parents were always very supportive and still are immensely proud of her achievements. They received virtually no schooling themselves and cannot speak English but they knew the value of education and were determined that their daughter would have every chance.

When it came for secondary education, Amina, though still requiring the renewal of her quarterly permit, found no problem getting into Westside Comprehensive School and her parents no longer had to find school fees. Amina continued to do well at games and athletics and even travelled, with no problems, to the UK as part of the school netball team.

She studied for “O” Levels and then Business Studies.

By this time she was fully integrated into local community and felt completely at home with her friends and classmates but when se began to look for a job she was reminded of her nationality. She was keen to work as an Air Stewardess but this proved impossible. She simply didn’t get interviews when she mad applications.

Being the outgoing and determined person she is Amina decided that the best way to get a job was to appear in person before any preconceptions from her CV could be made.

Now, too, she was able to obtain an annual work permit. Amina enjoyed this very much but after five or six years she thought it was time to look for another job, she had begun to work at the Courts as an Interpreter. The Chief Justice was very impressed by her efforts and wondered why she did not work as an interpreter full-time. This was not possible because of her nationality.

She moved to Bland Travel as a travel assistant, again presenting herself in person to secure the position. Again, the opportunity to work with the public made this an ideal position for her and she took to the travel industry very easily.

A few years later, Amina met and married a fellow Moroccan who was also working in Gibraltar. Soon their first daughter, Jihane was born, to their great joy but another problem loomed: Amina had given up work to devote herself to brining up their baby and discovered that her status had changed.

She would only be allowed 6 months out of work then had to get permissions to stay in Gibraltar, making a new application each month. This fragile state of affairs was too worrying and despite the fact she would have preferred to be a full-time mother she and her husband decide that he would employ her in his catering business, paying tax an insurance to keep her work permit going and her status more secure. This arrangement could then be fairly flexible so that for instance she could take time off to visit Moroccans.

A second daughter Shakira was born. Amina is glad that her children were born here. After ten years thaw acquire the right to Gibraltarian status.

The necessity to keep work permits and residency permits valid is worrying and complicated enough but added to that is the difficulty and expense of getting visas to travel.

Spain still insists that Moroccans travel to UK in person to obtain visas to visit Spain or even just travelling through.

The problems recently over the provision of the Gibraltar-Tangier-Gibraltar ferry when none were operable for some time were exacerbated by the extra problems getting from Gibraltar to Algeciras to get the ferry from there.

The cessation of flights between Gibraltar and Morocco has been an additional obstacle.

If Amina's mother has taken the children over to Tangier to visit relatives Amina has been very worried that the return journey will be problematical.

Many of Amina's friends have no idea of the difficulties she encounters in respect of her stat and movement across borders and are often very surprised when she cannot travel at short notice.

Amina's mother's employer went bankrupt and had the difficulty of staying until she, too, was offered employment by her son-in-law but at least by then Amina was working again. At first this was for the Floks Eye Treatment Ship and ten back in the travel and tourism business at Exchange Travel.

She is senior travel assistant but feels that her chances of promotion are limited by the difficulties she often has when it is necessary or desirable for her to go to Spain or UK on business.

She is still renewing her work permit annually and going to the UK, for which she also needs a visa, for a visa each year to visit Spain though it did become possible about five years ago to get a multiple visa which allows passage in and out of Spain on several occasions. Or it was – until last year when the Spanish decide quite suddenly that they would stop issuing visas for no-EU-citizens to enter Spain from Gibraltar.

In 1982, Amina applied to the Government of Gibraltar for naturalisation. She has not received any response but neither has she been turned down so she lives in hope.

Amina believes in doing things the correct way and when Shakira was born she made an appointment to see the Chief Minister to plead her case.

Again, though she is still waiting she has not actually turned down. She knows in heart she deserves to have her status changed.

Her children will be able to be Gibraltarians when they are ten but she would like their mother to have that option too, as she has to support them for many years.

Amina and her husband have made sure that their daughters remain in touch with Moroccan culture and speak Moroccan but they have, like their mother before, them, become very well integrated into the local community and school.

Amina's biggest motivation in life is her children and she wants only to provide the very best future for them as her parents did for her.

She has worked hard and been very responsible in her life, a good citizen, and wants to feel more secure and permanent. She longs for the whole family to be formally accepted by the authorities as completely as they have been by the people of their adoptive homeland.