



Gibraltar: Challenge, Change & Continuity

The Friends of Gibraltar Oral History Project (1930 to 1970)

Juan Candeas

Interviewed by Mary Ingoldby at Mount Alvernia Gibraltar on 11th July 2013.

Track 1

Introduction: Family Father from Gibraltar mother from La Linea. Five children in the family; JC born 23rd September 1920.

Family lived in La Linea and Gibraltar; during evacuation sent to England and Northern Ireland; JC speaks about first evacuees being sent to Morocco then returned to Gibraltar; other places where Gibraltarians were evacuated;

JC speaks about having never been at school in Gibraltar, when he was school age the family were living in Spain

Evacuation: 14 thousand people waiting for the Germans to clear out of the bay, we went out to sail to England, notice from the captain that they had to come back to Gibraltar and once there we stayed there for two weeks doing nothing, just inside the boat;

Looking for work in London, offered a job in Shepherds Bush and when they got there the place had been bombed.

The food was good in the hotel; some of the women cooked for the Gibraltarians, paid for by the British;

Work. The Gibraltarians worked for a Mr Ware who employed them to do piece work – working on leather hats; some of this work was brought back to the hotel and offered to people there.

London – very surprised and very nice.

JC speaks again about his education – the family was living in La Linea and his father brought a teacher from Gibraltar over every evening to teach him Spanish.

MI speaks about the project

JC speaks about difficulty of speaking English in the UK for the Gibraltarians, they often mimed/acted out what they wanted – sign language?

People used to take mattresses down to the shelter in Tottenham Court Road and sleep in the underground; some of the hotels had shelters; Accommodation in the hotel depended on size of family. JC in London for two years and then moved to Northern Ireland when the flying bombs started.

Track 2

JC speaks about playing football – he used to play in Gibraltar and England. They had a league between all the hotels, nearly 20 hotels. JC's football team was called Ivanhoe Hotel; The team played everywhere, played in Fulham; we made a league team for a trophy; JC used to play for GFA (Gibraltar Football association?).

JC was the captain of the team and the selector; their kit was given to them;

The football was very important because we had nothing to do; as soon as we got to England I saw that we could make a team from the Ivanhoe and I was named the captain from the start.

National Hotel, Thackeray Hotel, Marble Arch Hotel – all of these had a football team; Teams played every week; training; Climate. Very cold and seeing snow for the first time.

Northern Ireland:

Living in hut; buses from London to Belfast –

about 20 coaches full of people from England sent to Northern Ireland and the people thought they would be living in a hotel like they had lived in England, and when they saw the Nissan Hut – where's the hotel, which hotel, and they said this is your hotel, the Nissan hut, we had nothing else.

A Nissan hut with four beds and a fire in the middle of the room, a coal fire; it was very very cold, we had plenty of clothes.....

Sometimes because we had nothing to do, we had to do some exercise we are not going to stay in the hut the whole day, we went to look for rabbits, we caught them in a net... we took them to the people in the hut, they cooked them.

JC learnt some cooking from his father; Mass held in Ballymena Church Ballymena a small town, took a taxi from the camp to the town it cost one shilling per person; sometimes they held a mass at the camp; JC in Ireland for about a year and a half; carried on playing football,

The people from Northern Ireland, the people from Ballymena they had a team and they made a league, they wanted us to get into the league; JC's team got into the final, more people supported the Gibraltarians than the Northern Ireland team, they lost 2-1 – the people from Northern Ireland they were applauding us... JC had a newspaper with all the names of the people in the team which he brought back to Gibraltar to show the people how popular they were in Northern Ireland, but the suitcase was lost on the way back to Gibraltar.

The people from Northern Ireland wanted me to stay there to play in their team; but after five or six years wandering around I didn't want to stay.

MI and JC speak about photographs of the team.

Very exciting to come home; coming home; Couldn't go back to his house in Gibraltar; JC met his wife the day of evacuation; married in Gibraltar when they returned; ***I stayed in London and Ballymena by her side***; she was looking after two little girls that belonged to her brother, she stayed on in Ireland and returned to Gibraltar in 1944/45.

They had a house in a lane in Main Street near Casements and when they returned from England somebody else was living there; the family lost everything; Wasn't allowed back to Gibraltar until the government had found a house for them; the new house was in South Barrack Road, Gibraltar.

I feel English all the time...I feel English all the time; I love Gibraltar, I love England, but Spain no, only England and Gibraltar.