



## **Gibraltar: Challenge, Change & Continuity**

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

### **PEPE VAUGHAN - Interview with Mary Ingoldby 9 July 2013**

#### **Track 1**

My name is Pepe Vaughan. I was born in Gibraltar on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 1926, so in other words I'm just under 21. ...I've had a long varied life, and being of the age I am, 86, I went through the evacuation process, which is what I think you're interested in...

My mother was born of a Spanish doctor father and a Gibraltarian mother of Italian extraction. My father was born in Chard in Somerset, where I went to school later on in a place called Ilminster, about 5 miles away from Chard. He was born there and went to school there. He came to Gibraltar with a company called the Eastern Telegraph Company (which was really [the predecessor of] Cable and Wireless). He met my mother and married in Gibraltar and lived in Gibraltar for the rest of his life, except for the service that he did in the Naval Intelligence Branch of the Royal Navy during the War.

I was born in Gibraltar. I had an older brother, eleven months older than I am, a sister three years younger than I am, and a brother who was born in Malta, when my father was posted to Malta; so all of British extraction. My father was a genuine Englishman from Somerset. His father was in the Indian Army during the first great World War ...they lived in Ilminster in Somerset, they were lovely.

When I went to do my naval exams for flying I went to Bristol and we got bombed in Bristol: my mother was so worried, she went to phone the police to see if I was all right. I was in a boarding house, getting my head down, they said go down to the shelter, I said, no way, if I'm going to get bombed, I'm going to get bombed, it doesn't bother me.

I went to school where my father went to school, the same as my father, Ilminster grammar school, 500 years old. I was 14.

I went to school in Gibraltar and Malta, three years in Malta ...Gibraltar - a wonderful place, still is, the best place in the world actually. I really enjoyed my

schooling -educated by Irish Christian brothers at a place called Line Wall School, Line Wall College, with all the tradition and everything. It was a boarding school, actually, and some Gibraltarians who lived in Tangier, Morocco used to come over to board here. It was a lovely school, lots of tradition. The Irish masters were Christian Brothers, they were fantastic, they really were.

[My family life] was very British actually. My mother was an English speaker; she spoke Spanish as a second language. My grandfather was a Spanish speaker. He died very young, about 60 at the time, which is old – but young nowadays. He died in the country of a heart attack. He had lots of land and he got rents and things like that, so he wasn't on the bread line, so to speak; he was a lovely character. My granny on my mother's side was a Gibraltarian of Italian extraction and my grandfather, my father's father, was ex-Indian army, lived in Somerset with all the tradition of the ex-army of the time, going out fox hunting and all sorts...

We played a lot of sport actually. We were very sporty; swimming, lots of swimming, lots of soccer, cricket - played cricket as well. I played cricket in Gibraltar for the school and soccer for the school. And then I was a member of the Gibraltar cricket club ....the youngest team .... We played at North Front and sometimes on the grounds here in town.

Gibraltar was a quiet place. There were no cars - very few cars - horse drawn gharries, which was the main mode of transport, largely horse-drawn trucks, carts, a lot of stuff came in on carts from Spain - horse-drawn or donkey-drawn carts, from Spain, full of vegetables. There was no problem at the frontier in those days, as there is now.

My father had a car and my grandfather had a car as well. Very few people had motor vehicles in those days.

There was a racecourse in Gibraltar amazingly, where the airport is at the moment. During the war it was knocked down and a landing strip was built there. It was a racecourse and the horses came over from Spain to race in the gymkhanas, run by the military, largely. There was a Gibraltar Racing Club, the Mediterranean Racing Club, with all the tradition of the Jockey Club in England - all the rules and regulations, very traditional - there was a grandstand [where] people used to sit ....I remember going to watch horse races ...Silks and all the rest of it.

It was lovely, really lovely – quiet, nice, pleasant and obviously at that age I didn't bother a lot about the political world at the time.

We used to swim off the beaches -Sandy Bay: it was a military beach actually; some civilians got special permission from Fortress Headquarters. The military controlled everything in Gib at the time: it was a fortress rather than a city as such.

The [military] used to march around... they used to have their traditional parades on Casemates and on their own squares ....They were very prominent, the military, in those days.

[The relationship between the military and the Gibraltarians] was OK. I think the working class Gibraltarian, if you want to put it that way, didn't mix at all with the military – it was the professional classes, rather, who used to mix with the military – people in shipping, people in the professions, lawyers, doctors, they mixed a little bit ...not a lot, but they did.

The Governor was a powerful man: he made the laws, he did everything, you know, until the years during the war actually – when the feeling of emancipation, of ruling your own destiny, politically, started to build up, when the evacuation happened – that triggered off a feeling for closeness amongst the civil population. The wives and the kids were away and the husbands were worried about them. They were not agitating, but worried about the welfare of their loved ones who were in England, in Madeira, in Jamaica, all over the place. Largely the population went to London where all the bombing went on, so they moved them out, after a lot of agitation. People said why bring us to London? ....so they sent them to Northern Ireland most of them.

Water [in Gibraltar was got] from the catchment area - there were huge tanks hewn out of the Rock; there were galvanised iron sheets on the east side of the Rock and all channelled into huge catchment area tanks inside the Rock. I don't know how many millions of gallons of water. There was one law which was passed about 150 -200 years ago that anybody building a house in Gibraltar had to have an underground tank to collect rainwater from the roofs so they'd have all these pipes going down the old buildings going down from the roof to underground tanks

The water for the services - the sewage and the loos and things like this - was salt water. So there were two water systems - fresh for cooking and drinking and washing - salt water for flushing.

The water came from the roof of the house and down into the underground tank. Some places, where they lived in tenement buildings, they used to collect water from collection points in various areas in Gibraltar: Willis's Road for example,

there was a tap that came in from .....The people used to pay a penny for a couple of buckets of water.

I lived in Library Ramp, opposite Garrison Library - a good position, because it was out of the main hurly burly of Main Street and within walking distance of town, and the church was next door, the hospital was a bit further down the road - a lovely area actually.

[I have vague memories of the Spanish civil war]... [It] was the result of the growing of a sort of quasi- communist party, socialist party in Spain, which wanted to take away all of the land that the wealthy people had and give it away to the tenant farmers. The landowners objected to this, because they were powerful people, in a strong political position. They started agitating against these demands from the 'socialists' as such, extreme left wing, largely. As a result of that here was turmoil in the political world in Spain and Franco, who was a general, was called upon by other military high-ups to lead a so-called coup to oust these extreme left-wingers from power; and he did so with his Moroccan garrisons from Spanish Morocco, Tetuan, Ceuta and places like that, and Arrache...

He was in the Canary Islands at the time, General Franco ...he was very young for a general in Spain. He was subsequently selected as head of state by his fellow generals in Salamanca, when they invaded Spain and ousted all of the left-wing system ....

[There were refugees from La Linea in Gibraltar.] One of my aunties, my mother's sister, married a Spaniard from Jerez, who used to deal in horses, horse racing, things like this, and he was a right winger: what they called *Requetes*. He was shot actually on the 28<sup>th</sup>... in a skirmish in La Linea, and he was brought over to Gibraltar by the Spanish ambulance services and plonked in the frontier. He was dead by the time he was actually buried in Gibraltar. He was a right-winger. The *Requetes* used to wear a red beret. There were the Falangists and there was another group called the *Requetes*, who were royalists; the Falangists were a socialist right wing party they backed the royalty rather than anything else.

I was 12 at the time ...I just followed the radio when the left wing government in power was overthrown by Franco. I used to hear it on the radio. 'We'd won a battle in Teruel' ....but I didn't follow the proceedings as I did later on in with the Second World War.... I was more worried about my football skills and cricketing and swimming than the political argy-bargy in Spain. But It was very difficult: very cruel, brother against brother, and families - very terrible, really terrible.

## Track 2

MI: *You were sent off to school in the late 1930s ...did you notice the build-up to the Second World War?*

PV: Not really, but then I didn't follow it politically ...the 1936 Anschluss and the taking over and all of it didn't sink in: what did sink it was when war was declared on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September in 1939. I was sitting on one of the benches in Line Wall, opposite where the tourist office used to be in Line Wall, which is the Duke of Kent's house, where they had a mutiny in 1802...

When the war was declared by Chamberlain on 3<sup>rd</sup> September in '39, I remember that ... I heard it on the radio and then went and sat down there. All the radios were full on, because Chamberlain was going to make an announcement...the Germans invaded Poland and the British gave a warning that if they didn't pull out there would be a state of war.... Everyone was listening to the radio just to see what was going on.

We were evacuated from Gibraltar like all the civil population was. The civil population, the women and children, were so-called 'useless mouths', by one of the governors, I think it was Liddle? Called them useless mouths: 'We must get rid of them' - He was like a god, what he said went, they needed space to accommodate all the military who were coming in because Gibraltar was a vital point for bunkering and coaling in those times for the British navy and the few allies that it had - It was on its own after 1940, when the French packed in.

Ay, fame at last, they're interested in me!...We were evacuated under a naval scheme, firstly to Rabat in Morocco and we were in a hotel called the hotel *Morisel*.....we lived it up on the beach, we were enjoying ourselves while everyone was worried and terrified about the future.

And then in May 1940 the French surrendered to the Germans and we were told by the authorities in Morocco to get out of Morocco - they gave us 24 hours in which to do so; so we had to pack up in 24 hours, get on a train and we all went to Tangier which was the nearest neutral point in Morocco and the easiest to get to because there were no ships. Some ships were sent down for the main population of Gibraltar in terrible conditions...another story in itself.

As far as we were concerned we were sent to Tangier. We came over to Gibraltar and stayed a month or two before we were sent to England under the naval scheme.... My father was in the navy here so he couldn't come with us.

Our Nanny came with us. She came into the household when I was 9 months old and died when I was 54... She came over with us rather than go with her family ...Anna ...Seri Terrina she was Gibraltarian, lovely, like a second mother  
....

She wasn't married at the time; she married later when she came back to Gibraltar after the war.

I didn't come back with the evacuation, because I joined the Fleet Air Arm during the war.

From Tangier we came back to Gibraltar by ferry boat. Then we were evacuated in a ship called the *Bruyere* which came from Madeira – a coincidence, Mickey Brufal was a toddler about 3 or 4 years old .... Another family as well – so there were four of us and mother and the nanny and the little fellow and Penelope his mother, his father was still in Gibraltar and he stayed there.

I was 13. 14 days in a convoy from Gib, to England, to Belfast; we crossed from Belfast to Liverpool in a ferry and then from Liverpool down by train to Ilminster in Somerset.

We were looking out of the window saying 'there's Ilminster, there's Taunton'...not soaking in the war, just enjoying the countryside and 'Mummy I'm hungry, Mummy I'm thirsty ' and all the rest of it! Mummy putting up with all the rest of it, trying to pacify kids in a train journey that took hours....

Mother was terrified, poor darling. She didn't realise at the time that two of her sons, my elder brother and myself, would join the Navy. I was in the Fleet Air Arm, my brother was in the Navy ... and my dad was in the Navy, so three of the family were fighting it out as volunteers: because the Gibraltarians were not conscripted in the war. They were all volunteers, every Gibraltarian who joined the British services at the time: like the Canadians, South Africans, Rhodesians, Jamaicans and lots of people from overseas....They were never conscripted, they were all volunteers and some Americans even.

About a hundred Gibraltarians volunteered.. There's a book on it, *They also serve*, written by a chap called Canessa, who was an engineer: a very interesting book which gives the life stories of each individual, gives the names

of all those who served: Immosi, Cardona, all the Gibraltarian names, Latin sounding names.

*MI: 100 out of the population doesn't sound very much –*

PV: But there was Gibraltarian conscription for the Gibraltar Regiment, which is an anti-aircraft regiment. There were hundreds of them - all of those who were not in reserved occupations, medics, electricity supplies.... The Gibraltar Regiment was largely anti-aircraft batteries, who joined the gunners, masses of them.

The rest of them, you had the port, launches in the bay who berthed ships, aircraft when the airfield was built, people had to service different sections of the airport... They were really in reserved services, doing war work.

### **Track 3**

I went to school where my father went to.... In 1943, I volunteered for the Fleet Air Arm.

Mother was doing war work in Somerset, she had to do war work in a factory close to Ilminster, between Ilminster and Chard actually.

She'd travelled before. She'd been to England before. Other Gibraltarian women hadn't - the nearest was La Linea and Algeciras. A lot of Gibraltarian women hadn't left Gib, but that was the circumstances of the time: economic circumstances restricted their movements, so to speak.

*MI: For the women who hadn't been, it was an amazing culture shock to be in Kensington High St*

Imagine being plonked in a ship sent to Madeira some of them; the others went to Jamaica, which was across the Atlantic, with all the submarines sinking ships; or being sent to England and being plonked in the middle of London with all the bombs dropping....

*MI: An extraordinary story; especially since all the children had been evacuated from London and then all the Gibraltarian children arrived*

*MI: The Gibraltarians were known as being lucky..... that a lot of people would go to the hotels where the Gibraltarians were....*

They didn't have an option really. They were plonked in hotel rooms which were the only places that were vacant during the war. Nobody travelled during the war so the hotels were empty accommodation where they were all grouped together in the middle of London.

[My mother] left her sisters behind; one of her sisters went to Madeira, the other one was in Spain, the one whose husband was Republican, on the opposite side with Franco and he had to get out of Spain and he went to France: that's another story. He went to Tangier and was caught and put in prison. The other one, her husband died during the war, while she was pregnant, so it wasn't pleasant ...very worrying...

She didn't talk about it afterwards – in that sense we were rather reserved, we didn't talk about our war service; we didn't talk about suffering... it was stiff upper lip ....the stress must have been horrid.

We lived in our own house, we rented a house. Somerset was very quiet: it was beautiful, it was lovely. The bombers went over - when they went over to Bristol and Swansea and Cardiff and all the ports on the western seaboard of England were bombed, because this where the supplies from the States were coming in ....The ones on the Atlantic side and the North Sea were also bombed, but not as severely as Port Talbot, Plymouth, Liverpool, Glasgow and places like that.

It was frightening [to hear the bombers coming over]. The sound of the engine of a German aircraft was completely different from the sound of a British aircraft – the German 'woom woom woom woom woom'; the English 'brrrrm': it was incredible; you could tell the Germans were going over. It was quite hairy: the sirens went off and that was frightening as well, until the all clear was in one long blast of the siren. We never went to the shelter because we knew that Ilminster had no factories or nothing to bomb: or no car manufacturing or tank manufacturing or arms manufacturing.

Some of the masters at school had joined up. I remember Danny Bail (?), one maths teacher went to the RAF. He was a flight lieutenant on the teaching, on the educational side. We picked up supply teachers. One was called Max Finch, he was a writer, he had to be picked out of the ditches drunk as a coot every morning. He used to come in and teach English: but he was brilliant, a lovely man, but he was always drunk, poor chap.

We didn't board ....We were surviving economically and surviving as we could. It was tough during the war in England, really tough. The rationing system - we were young, we were hungry; young kids are always hungry, particularly at 14 and 15 - who have a square meal at 1 o'clock and they want another at 4 o'clock and another one at 6.30. We were always hungry, but we never felt - if we were hungry, we used to eat swedes, chew swedes, scrump in people's orchards, nick apples, pears, fruit. It did us a lot of good, actually, to realise that food was difficult to come by and even to this day, we always eat everything ...don't waste....

Father came to visit once. He came over and I hadn't seen him for 3 years: that was in '42, before he was posted from Gibraltar, he went up to Scapa Flow in the north in the Shetland, sorry. Orkney Islands. He was operating with Norwegian resistance at the time.... He used to come kitted out with his sealskin waistcoat and things like this, as it was so cold up in the Orkney Islands- to get across, he would go by air, he went by train and then by ferry across rough seas...After being in the Orkney Islands a year or year and a half he was sent out Madagascar, because he was a French speaker. They were French people as he was a French speaker quasi German occupation of Spain....

When you're in the services, they send you everywhere. I was sent to Ceylon at one stage and my mother wrote to me and said why don't you go and see Dad in Madagascar, which was 2,000 miles away!

This was war – the answer was 'Don't you know there's a war on?', when you wanted something. This was the simple answer. You didn't ask for things that you couldn't achieve or want: there was a war on and everyone was working for the war effort and that's how everyone survived, through this character, resonance, toughness.....

#### **Track 4**

In 1942 - I wasn't enlisted, I volunteered, as Gibraltarians were not conscripted ....I was a volunteer. I went down to Exeter, to do all my premedical, in 1943 and in 1944 I was called up and I went into the Fleet Air Arm. I went to Bristol for a flight test. I was colour blind, so couldn't go in as pilot, so I went in as an air gunner... They discovered it there and then. You can't distinguish the shapes of colours: you can distinguish grey and green but the blues and pale blues and yellows ....dangerous. [I was] very disappointed, actually. I thought it was an excuse, that they had too many volunteers to fight and they wanted me for something else.... air crew, what's the difference?

*MI: Being a Gunner is much more dangerous....*

I was 16 and half. I had to have a chitty signed by my father and mother that they allowed me to volunteer at that age – madness!

Then I went to train in Warrington: marching drills and things like basic training, how to fire a gun, how to wear a uniform, how to salute officers ....I volunteered for a special commando in Warrington, because I wasn't satisfied that I was going to actually fly, I which I did eventually. I joined a special mobile operational naval airbase: you went in and killed Japanese.... it was brutal, they de-humanised you in the course. It was such a tough assault course that they put it into your service record....a type of commando. I joined that mob and we had a whale of a time, hanging around. We used to do a lot of fighting in the jungles, we expected to so we were loafing around ... in Ceylon, until something cropped up. We did an operation off the coast of Burma .....We enjoyed ourselves, it was lovely.

In those days we were heroes, so everybody thought, if you went up flying, you were a hero. They never told you how many people were killed at the Battle of Britain, they told you the ones who survived: all the special ones who saw at night, who ate a lot carrots and things like this, because it was good for the eyesight – rubbish, all the propaganda - we all swallowed it, you know.

[When you're young, you don't think you're going to die]. It was all an adventure, as if we were in the scouts, in an adventure ....what happened during the war, people who were older than I was, people of 40, some of them were given white feathers as cowards or conscientious objectors. There was a film, the White Feather.... It was unfair, because they were probably in very reserved occupations, or in the spying business, actually, flying into France and all these places... So it was difficult for people of a certain age not to be in uniform.

I was de-mobbed when I was 20, I wasn't even 21, in December '46. They said 'We're not going to demob you, because you're too young'. They used to give you a letter and a number.... After the war the people who were released first were people who could repair the war damage: carpenters, electricians, masons, people like that, people in the building trades, they were bombed out, they released all the tradesmen first. People like myself who were superfluous, not tradesmen, like myself, just fliers, they were the last to be released my number came up and I was demobilised in Gibraltar.

I was sent over from Trincomalee in Ceylon, I was based at Trincomalee in Ceylon, at a place called China Bay. I was based in a huge naval base and they said 'you're going back to Gibraltar, because *The Indomitable* (which was a ship I'd served on during the war) is going back and touching into Gib, and will drop

you off': can you imagine the amount of fuel just for one guy, the amount of fuel? Instead of going straight through the Straits and up to England ...which was lovely and I was demobilized in Gibraltar, in *HMS Rooke* naturally, and they didn't want to demobilize me they said I was too young: my number and my letter wasn't on the list... That was the 18th December 1946.

Mother had returned by this time and they went to Spain to live. The house they had here had been taken over by the military and they couldn't get in. They didn't get it back. It was taken over by somebody else. They never got it back, but we lived in Spain until I got married in 1954.

.....It's comical, it's the sort of thing you see in a film, but it's true....My father came out on one of the tenders to see if he could see me: he got on one side and I got off the other side. It was lovely to get back home and see your family, it was reintroducing yourself to the family at a different age - because I'd left ....I was in India for 2 and a half years, so I didn't see my family for about 3 years...

Then we were all together; we got very drunk that Christmas of 1946. Very drunk! ....We had a good celebration.... in San Roque, not so far away, about 5 miles away. We had a house there: my mother had property which she inherited from her father; and I'm living now in a house in Spain, which she inherited from her father on a piece of land outside San Roque. I built a house there...

Mothers are different from fathers - fathers come in and use a heavy hand. The mother hen looks after the kids when they're sick and ill ....

She loved my brother, my elder brother - My father used to she was a widow with one son, but he didn't say that my sister was an apple in *his* eyes; but it was lovely, a great family, not a lot of money, but a good family, a happy family, a lovely happy life.

My father and mother were completely and utterly in love with each other. They were family - not a lot of wealth, well, sufficient, you know – but it was a happy family, a lovely existence, always laughing, always joking, a good family...

They were upset about losing the house in Library Ramp – they were upset – it was rented – the furniture was all stored. Awful, awful. The house was allocated to somebody else; they didn't allocate it to my father, because he said he wasn't Gibraltarian. He was English, but the children were Gibraltarian and my mother was Gibraltarian: the wife was Gibraltarian....

We were a family we kept together I enjoyed life in San Roque.

No, I haven't been back. I don't want to go back. They took it away from us and they gave it to somebody else. The British military were there and when they left, they handed over to somebody else. I don't want to mention [who it was] it was a terrible bad deal, one of the unfair deals –and he never served in the services, he never did anything; he made a lot of money in a chemist's - terrible.

The non-Gibraltarians living here permanently were treated badly after the war – the ones who were living here permanently - my father was here later on.

It was the unfairness of the system at the time. I put it down to that - the dictatorial unfairness...wicked

*MI: There were people who went to Ireland and couldn't get back for a long time, because they couldn't find anyone to vouch for them, and that's terrible stories.*

People married in Madeira to Portuguese – some of them stayed, some of them came back but couldn't get houses because they were not Gibraltarians...

Now they've changed the law if you have a Gibraltarian mother you're Gibraltarian by right.

*MI: This house - you rented it. But it you felt it was yours?*

I always thought it was ours. I didn't think about whether it was rented or not, I thought it was mine, my family's, my father's, my family's. We didn't lose family possessions...the furniture was all stored

*MI: But it was a question of trust ....*

It was wicked to come back to your house, after three of us who were serving in the services during the war, and that didn't have an effect on it at all – wicked!

## **Track 5**

*MI: Another slightly delicate question - during the war ....all the women go to London, some people had affairs with English guys. Here in Gibraltar a lot of men, because the Spanish women all came over, started a new family with Spanish women – do you know anything about that?*

No not a lot: some of them did. I've heard rumours, but rumours are not facts. Men are men, they need sex, women not so much. There were brothels on the other side: some had liaisons, some had children, but I don't know very much. It's all rumours, as far as I'm concerned.

*MI: I wonder what happened to the children born the wrong side of the blanket?*

God knows –there must have been children here born of illegal issue ....with a bit on the side in la Linea - who have step-brothers or step-sisters in La Linea –and they haven't met .

*MI: There must be people who have half-brothers and sisters in Spain somewhere...*

Let me tell you, this is a fact. My uncle who married my mother's eldest sister – he was a lawyer in Spain – he had a second family – and the children didn't know each other until 10-15 -20 years ago – when one of my cousins, legal issue of that marriage, said I want to reconcile with my step-sister because they were not at fault ....when the mother died, this cousin of mine wanted to be reconciled with his step-sister.... so they met. Everybody said, she took her husband away from the wife and things like this, but fortunately the mother was dying by that time – and there was no bitterness. He said I want to reconcile with my stepsisters: and he did.

My sister married a Spanish military man. He ended up as the military governor of Cuenca, a place in the north of Spain; and my brother married three times, actually. He married girl from Torquay, who he met at school. She died of cancer; then he married a second time and she died of cancer. His married a third time and she survived him. He died of cancer. He lived in Gibraltar, Bernard did, and Colin, my younger brother, died of cancer when he was 60....

When I got married in 1954, I lived in Gibraltar until 1981. My first wife died of cancer at 49. I've got two children, a boy and a girl, from her, and then I married a second time: Ivy, and she had 4 children. Her husband died in a car crash, and Ivy survived and we got married. I married a wife with 4 children, a dog and a nanny; and she married me with 2 children, no dogs, no nannies....

We have a very happy life. I carry on the tradition of my family that marriage is a happy situation. ....Everybody has differences, I'm not going to say that everything is lovely, with violins....But I love my grandchildren, my stepchildren .....she is the godparent of one of my grandchildren.

Gibraltar In the '50s - it was lovely, it was fantastic. The military still ruled the roost the Governor was god almighty, with his executive council, who kowtowed to him and then the normal political development of Gibraltar started with the evacuation, until they had elections for the Legislative Assembly in 1950; and Prince Philip was the guy who came to open the Legislative Council – and from there it developed to a parliament now, and ministers....

[There was a] terrible housing shortage and the only people who broke the back of it was the Socialist government in Gibraltar in the '80s. They broke the back of it... by building and getting money and developing Gibraltar to become independent of any aid from the UK. We don't get any aid at all from the UK, we live off our own income.

It was very cramped [in the] tenement buildings. Daughters used to live with their parents and son in laws used to live with parents in tenement buildings, until it got to the state where emancipation demanded that children should have their own home.

Some tenements have been knocked down and some which are empty - [there's a] massive development of housing in Gibraltar: some of them are now being redone and sold to people, so that they can renew them in the town, build the town and develop the centre of the town from Irish Town upwards....

On the sea front, we're enclosed in a concrete chastity belt! You can't see the sea – instead of building high-rise and low rise ....It's terrible what they've done. They've cracked the back of the housing problem, at what expense... we like a view....

*MI: Because Gibraltar is such a mix of different people and experiences - what do you feel about your cultural identity?*

PV: I'm Gibraltarian first; British...British Gibraltarian - I wouldn't change for anything in the world my British nationality and my inheritance, what I was brought up with.