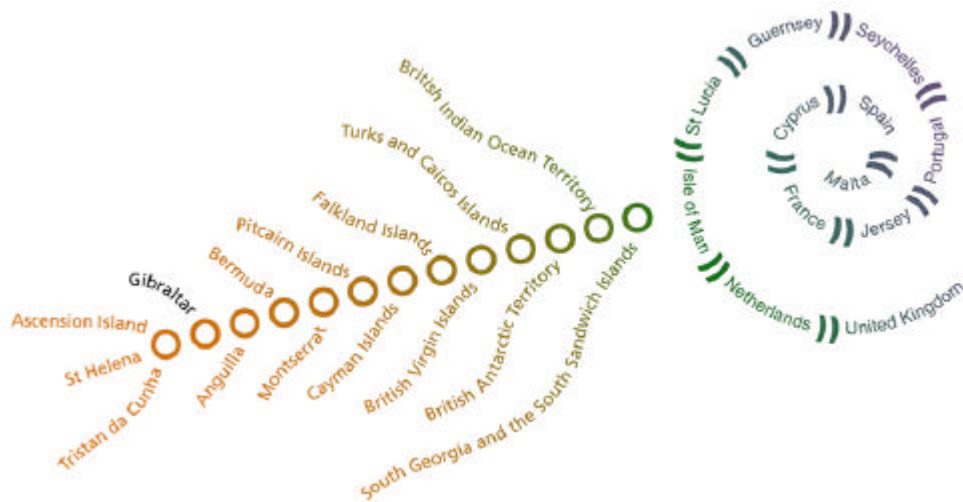


CALPE 2000: LINKING THE FRAGMENTS OF PARADISE

An international conference on environmental conservation in small territories



28th September to 1st October 2000, John Mackintosh Hall, Gibraltar

Sponsored by the Government of Gibraltar; organised by the Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society, with the support of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum



Proceedings edited by Mike Pienkowski
UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum

September 2001

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BACKGROUND

This conference formed one of a new series sponsored by the Government of Gibraltar, under the series title “Calpe”, which is the old Roman name for Gibraltar. This particular conference addressed the very topical issue of environmental conservation. Its title reflects one of the first publications (*Fragments of Paradise: A Guide for Conservation Action in the U.K. Dependent Territories*, 1987) highlighting the immense biodiversity value of the UK Overseas Territories, and the need to provide for increased exchange of knowledge between them and other areas.

The fundamental role that this plays in the economic and social well-being of people, as well as its inherent importance, is being recognised increasingly. Throughout the world, countries are preparing action plans for the environment. Indeed, those which are party to the Convention on Biological Diversity have committed themselves to integrate planning for the environment into all planning processes. This need is at least as true of small territories as elsewhere; in fact, it may be more so, because such territories are often very closely dependent on their natural environments.

The conference was intended as a working meeting, to help Territories take forward work, particularly in a range of areas that have been identified as priorities by workers in the small territories:

1. Environmental awareness and education
2. Information networking
3. Tourism and funding for the environment
4. Making protected areas effective
5. Biodiversity action planning

Emphasis was placed on sharing knowledge and experience between workers from the various UK Overseas Territories, but also with other Overseas Territories, such as those of France, Spain and the Netherlands, as well as relevant small independent states.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

We have tried to bring these contributions together with a reasonably consistent appearance, but without imposing too standard a style on the contributions, which covered a diverse range of approaches to issues. We have used UK English, except in direct quotes or proper names.

Where views are expressed, these are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, the conference organising bodies nor the funding organisations.

Whilst a great deal of time and effort has been put into checking and correcting the material, mistakes undoubtedly remain, and we apologise for missing these.

The contributions are grouped into the subjects which were the basic structure of the programme, with minor adjustments to fit the published format. (The conference programme in its final published form, subject only to changes made during the conference itself, is at Appendix 1.) The texts of any poster displays received have been incorporated in the most appropriate section.

Despite our best efforts, a small number of contributions have not been received in either electronic (preferred) or paper form. We would consider adding these as a supplement to these Proceedings on the Forum's web-site if they are received.

The Editor would like to thank all contributors for their help, co-operation and tolerance of pestering – and Frances Marks for undertaking much of the pestering on his behalf! We are grateful too to John Wheeler for the help we shall have received from him by the time you read this, in making this very large document as small as possible to download.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The conference was sponsored by the Government of Gibraltar in their *Calpe* series. The organisers (and participants) are grateful to them for this initiative and their substantial support. We would like to thank also the Environment Policy Department of the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office for major support, particularly to allow many of the participants from UK Overseas Territories and other small countries to attend, as well as funding some of the organisational work. We thank too several member organisations of the Forum for aiding the attendance of other such participants.

In addition to the support noted above, the organisers would like to thank several Gibraltar Ministers for finding time to attend parts of the meeting, despite major issues which were demanding their attention at the time. The Deputy Chief Minister made several visits, and we were pleased to see that one included his infant, in what was clearly a visit in off-duty time!

The conference depended on much time freely given by many participants, whether speakers, those preparing or presenting displays, workshop and field-study leaders, chair-persons, participants in discussions and assorted behind-the-scenes roles. We thank them all. The Forum would like to thank its partners in GONHS; the commitment by its many volunteers was noted by many participants as one of

the major strengths leading to the smooth running, effectiveness and enjoyment of the conference.

GONHS and the Forum would like to thank also the management and staff of the conference hotels, of the John Mackintosh Hall and of all those involved in organising the Conference Dinner and music in St Michael's Cave, the audio and projection technicians, and, of course, the local organiser, Patricia Johnson, and the Forum organiser, Frances Marks.

We thank Tim Heath, of the House of William Blake, for modifying the "Breath of Fresh Air" logo for this conference, and Iain Orr and the Environment Policy Department of the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office for support for this.

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Falklands Conservation: page 106
Fred Burton: pages 54, 119
Steven De Silver/David Wingate: page 7
Michael Gore: pages 69, 81(lower)
Frances Marks: pages 25, 51, 52, 105, 165
Mike Pienkowski: pages 3, 15, 16 (first), 72, 73, 137(top), 145.



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Conservation and education: bluebird nestbox construction by students at a school in Bermuda



THE CONVENT,
GIBRALTAR.

Message from the Governor, HE The Hon David Durie CMG to participants in the Calpe 2000 Conference

As Governor and also as Patron of the conference organisers, the Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society, it gives me great pleasure to welcome the participants in the *Calpe 2000 Conference: Linking the Fragments of Paradise* to Gibraltar.

The importance of conservation of the environment and of ensuring the continuation of the earth's biological diversity is one that is being increasingly recognised around the world, not least in the small territories where the possible dangers faced by this biodiversity can sometimes be greatest as the aspirations of the inhabitants to progress socially and economically put pressure on the natural resources.

But the fundamentals of biological conservation in social and economic development are also being recognised more and more, and many countries are now committed to integrating environmental and biodiversity considerations in the planning process.

The small territories represented in Calpe 2000 vary greatly in geographical location, in size, in population and in character. They all have their problems, their successes and their experiences to share. By sharing this experience, by learning from each other, we will all be better able to cope with the challenge of preserving the Fragments of Paradise entrusted to us.

I would like to take this opportunity of wishing all the participants in Calpe 2000 a productive and rewarding Conference, and I hope that you all enjoy, what I am sure for many, will be your first visit to Gibraltar.

26 September 2000

Opening of the Conference by the Deputy Chief Minister, Keith Azopardi

The annual *Calpe* heritage conference has now become consolidated in the calendar of Gibraltar events. The rationale behind the organisation was to heighten research, awareness and participation in our heritage and to celebrate our identity as a people.

Our assertion of our separate identity depends on our knowledge of our roots and that in turn means that we must encourage analytical sessions on aspects of our history, culture and natural heritage. Understanding our past and our environment we will be able to better plan for our future.

We already have settled plans for next year's conference and will be taking a decision soon on the theme for *Calpe 2002*. The *Calpe* series of conferences have now become a focus for annual reflection on our history and heritage. Some times the sessions will be more technical than others. Some times the themes will be broader and of wider appeal. Whatever the topic our aim is that it should provide an opportunity to highlight an aspect of our heritage that will lead to greater local and international understanding of Gibraltar.

This year's conference is about conservation and concentrates on the natural heritage of small territories. Delegates have come from many small countries and island states to discuss environmental issues. These countries are very rich in heritage. Many are small in geographical dimension or in population terms and many are also seeking to maximise the benefits of eco-tourism to ensure economic self-sufficiency. These factors create the need for sensitive heritage and tourism management policies. A balance needs to be struck to ensure a partnership between economic development and the use of heritage assets which does not detrimentally affect the integrity of the sites or the quality of our environment. A comprehensive approach requires policies on transport, land use, access to visitor sites, education, training and funding. On occasions hard choices need to be made on the issues arising under any of those areas if we are to achieve the final goal of economic and environmental sustainability.

The reality is that many of the needs of and pressures on small countries are similar. This makes a sharing of experiences about the management of our cultural heritage and environment very useful. The *Calpe 2000* conference will assist in this exchange of experiences and information which will no doubt help small territories in understanding and perhaps applying models in existence in other countries.



Heritage should not be seen as the province of an elitist few. Instead we must foster a feeling of common ownership of our heritage. There is no mystery to heritage. It affects us all on a daily basis. Gibraltar is, almost in its entirety, a unique heritage site. A natural fortress that has evolved over the centuries surrounded by man-made fortifications. A population that has emerged as an inseparable part of the territory and which, together with the natural and cultural structures, forms the living fortress that Gibraltar is today.

We are justifiably proud of Gibraltar. When we assert our separate identity (as we most recently did in our National Day celebrations) we should not lose sight that it is inextricably linked to a holistic understanding of our heritage.

Several pieces of legislation protect Gibraltar heritage assets. The Nature Protection Ordinance and Endangered Species Ordinance protect the natural heritage. The Heritage Trust Ordinance addresses the urban and cultural heritage. The planning process that supervises works in sensitive areas and oversees applications is the Town Planning Ordinance in which there now is a large measure of public participation. We are in the process of reviewing the legislative protection of buildings, conservation areas and the landscape.

Our position in the European Union means that our House of Assembly must transpose all relevant European legislation in this area. The provisions on freedom of information on the environment, on designation of habitats, and environmental impact assessments have all made significant changes and transformed the legislative culture.

Gibraltar is not only reviewing its legislation and structures but is also investing substantial Government and EU funds in the environment and heritage. Through direct funding or the provision of tax concessions we are encouraging key urban renewal works and giving citizens a sense of participation and stake in their environment.

In a place the size of Gibraltar it is sometimes difficult and always challenging to try to maintain the necessary balance between essential redevelopment and protection of the environment. Scarcity of land and density of population are key factors in that calculation.

The Government's general heritage policy is reflected in the Mission Statement that was agreed earlier this year to govern the drive to achieve sustainability.

Gibraltar aspires to World Heritage Status. The entire philosophy of the 1972 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of World Heritage lays emphasis on the

importance of globality (in the sense of world significance) of the proposed site. This has been reiterated in recent declarations issued by meetings hosted by UNESCO in Suzhou, China; Nara, Japan; Phuket, Thailand; and Suwon, Korea. Indeed latterly there has been a concerted move to ensure that new sites are representative of the entire world and are seen (not in isolation) but in the context of their surroundings.

We feel confident that, if Gibraltar's application is judged purely on its heritage merits, it will clearly be seen that the natural and cultural living fortress is a fine and unique example worthy of the accolade and prestige of the endorsement by UNESCO.

The organisation of fora such as this can help us all to understand our respective country's heritage and help us co-operate on such matters. Co-operation on matters of the environment is important on a local, national, regional and international basis. The environment knows no frontiers and, if we are to try to safeguard our local and international environment and our quality of life, we must work together without regard for political prejudices.

I feel sure that this conference will allow a useful exchange of ideas and experiences and am delighted to declare this fourth *Calpe* conference open.

Welcoming Address: Conservation as viewed from a Gibraltar perspective

John Cortes, Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society

GONHS, PO Box 843, Upper Rock, Gibraltar Tel: +350 72639 Fax: +350 74022 Email: gonhs@gibnet.gi

Hi. It's good to be here. Yesterday we had an opportunity to meet, get to know each other and see a little of what Gibraltar has to offer wildlife - and to see some of the problems we face. So I don't have to spend time now going over why the Rock is important for migrating birds, or its territorial waters - with or without Spain's acknowledgement - for marine life, or even its habitats for endemic plants and snails. That was going to be my slide show. Instead, I'm just going to talk from a Gibraltar perspective. Later on tell me how many of these points seem familiar to you in all those other small lands across our fragile earth.

From a Gibraltar perspective: you see, what's important to us in Gibraltar might not be important to anybody else. An endemic plant just saved from extinction *Silene tomentosa* is our example of that, our equivalent of a certain Bermudan seabird [see following paper]. Or a small population of a globally threatened taxon, like our western Mediterranean shags, is important to all – or even our healthy population of peregrine falcons. These things are of interest and importance on a global scale. And imagine, just imagine, if we allowed the shooting of migrating honey buzzards or the trapping of passage warblers. Or the quarrying of the landscape and botanical features - and *potential* botanical features that are our Great Sand Slopes.

But from a Gibraltar perspective, even a patch of wild olive scrub, a stretch of open grassy ground, a small colony of ten house martins nests, or a roof full of nesting pallid swifts is important. And we fight for their survival. Because we are looking at a matter of scale, and a matter of identity. One basic fact about a small territory is that things take on a dimension perhaps not clearly recognised or even appreciated by people from the bigger nations. And we have the right to determine what is important to us.

And so we must start from here. Our aim in the organisation I belong to is that we need to protect, manage and improve *all* our natural assets because, in Gibraltar, we are so small, and almost by definition, everything is rare.

There are disadvantages of small size. The greatest one is shortage of resources. We are few, and we are busy, and no matter how seriously we take our work, our often unpaid, voluntary, our because-it-comes-



from-the-heart work, there is always a lot more to do. We haven't got the time, the money, or perhaps even the patience to commission a five year study of the possible environmental impact of the reclamation of a one kilometre stretch of coastline from the sea on the east side of the Rock. Because by the time we have reached a scientific conclusion, we've lost the stretch to a sewage plant. Often, very often, because of the constraints upon us, we have to protect, or at least campaign to protect, before the scientific study has even been considered. Experience tells me that if we had not done this here, on many occasions, much more would have been lost than has been lost. For one thing the east sand slopes, for another much of our remaining natural shoreline.

Should we feel bad about this? Does that mean that conservation here is haphazard, and not based on sound scientific fact? Haphazard, maybe a little, more like reacting to problems, perhaps, not through our fault, but that of planning authorities through the decades. But based on scientific fact yes. The facts are there, and we know them, we just haven't had the time to extract them and to write them up yet.

For once I've jumped into the thick of it. No structured gentle introduction. And no apologies for this. We have problems in our small bits of land. There are pressures, big pressures, on our lands – often just/ified – often just/inspired by the monetary desires of a few. Problems from pressures to build, to progress, to develop. The last thing we need is destructive questioning and undermining by those – the would-be scientists from within and without – who should be on the side of conservation. We can do without these conflicts.

I have been involved in the conservation movement in Gibraltar since its infancy. I have seen it grow to the point today where we can welcome all of you to share a little bit in it. In 1974, as a keen Queens Scout, my late father, Pepe Cortes, who was the Commissioner at the time, had just returned from the World Scout Congress in Nairobi, with a wealth of literature on how scouting could promote conservation. He was enthused at the diversity of people whom he had met, all sharing a common aim. He allowed me to organise, with my colleagues, a campaign to encourage wildlife conservation and he told me to look forward to the day when we could bring people from all over the world to see what Gibraltar had achieved. Sadly he passed away a year, to the day, before this conference. Happily it was the day after a year ago to the day, following Mike and Sara's first visit to Gibraltar, we had decided that this conference would go ahead. I'm sorry to bring this up, but you will realise it has served as an inspiration to me. Much has been achieved since the 1970s, certainly we have not lost as much as in the preceding 25 years, but much, much more still needs to be done.

Gibraltar is in a curious situation in that it is part of the European Union, through the member State, the United Kingdom, and claimed, sometimes aggressively claimed, by another Member State, Spain. And so European Directives and Regulations apply or should apply in Gibraltar, and the UK enters into international treaties and conventions on behalf of Gibraltar. But Spain offers the proverbial spanner in the works by choosing, according to convenience, whether it supports or acknowledges Gibraltar's status under any or all of these. In addition there are the various administrative levels in our neighbouring Spain, often with overlapping jurisdiction, ranging from town councils to districts - the so called mancomunidades - provincial governments, autonomous governments, and agencies, such as the Port of Algeciras, that work directly under the national Government of Madrid. And often the politicians at all these levels are from different parties. Within Gibraltar itself, there is the Government of Gibraltar and there is the Ministry of Defence, but then there is also a Foreign Office presence. There is a Governor and a locally elected Government who, depending on very many factors, may or may not see eye to eye or

even trust each other. And then there is nature, the environment, and those of us trying to work for it.

And through all this, GONHS has been able to score considerable successes. Probably the most important was the spate of wildlife legislation carried through a decade ago, with the Endangered Species Ordinance updating CITES in 1990 and, most significant, the 1991 Nature Protection Ordinance. This Ordinance protects all terrestrial and much marine wildlife, reverse-lists plants, provides for the setting up of protected areas and limits the activities that are permitted which may impinge on the plants and animals. But we have the usual problem of the need for effective implementation, and the frustration that only the Upper Rock is a declared Nature Reserve and the seas around Gibraltar, while nature reserve under Regulation, have never been officially declared such. Instead we race speedboats on them. As the Gibraltar Chronicle reported yesterday, "spectators watched with pleasure as the speedboats tore up the Bay." Neither of these reserves as yet has proper management.

Being in a small territory can have its advantages, as we saw yesterday in the fascinating talk on Bermuda [following paper]. One advantage is that it can make it easy for a group such as ours to draft a law and get it through the legislative body, in our case the House of Assembly. But first it has to have a certain level of priority with the Government, and to keep on doing this again and again is not easy. Next, once on the statute books, it must be put into effect. And so, while our wildlife laws are in fact very thorough, we have a draft bill to control import of some pet animals pending for nearly three years.

Another milestone achievement was that of GONHS achieving membership of the Development & Planning Commission, within which it exerts a considerable influence. It has in practical terms prevented a considerable amount of reclamation of natural rocky shoreline, prevented the quarrying of the sand slopes, and is achieving the restoration of the vegetation there. Other sites of importance, like at Europa Point and on the lower slopes of the Rock, once designated for the building of a new road, have also been saved.

One reason for this is that in Gibraltar conservation is largely NGO-led. Our keen band of observers rapidly reports anything untoward and this is taken up. Surprisingly, despite any impression you may be getting, it has led to an excellent working relationship between GONHS and Government. It is our willingness to hold our views and state them frankly, while continuing to work constructively, that has led to what is an extraordinarily open but strong and successful working relationship, between GONHS and Government and between GONHS and MOD – a

relationship in which we are respected as sound scientific advisers. Over the past few years, we have been contracted to take on some aspects of vital wildlife management work. This could serve as a model for those territories without a fully-fledged environmental department in Government. It is a model that can work well, although there is still room for improvement in Gibraltar. The role needs to be formally recognised by resources being given to GONHS to employ a core of staff to run effectively the Government-related work.

This shortage of Government/civil service resources to the environment has meant that, despite the work of the NGO, Gibraltar is lagging behind in the implementation of international commitments. Thus the European Habitats Directive, although now incorporated in Gibraltar law, and the Birds Directive, have not been fully implemented in that Special Areas of Conservation have not yet been designated under the Natura 2000 programme. The relevant papers, prepared by GONHS, left my desk years ago but must have fallen on to a pile somewhere between the seat of Gibraltar Government at 6 Convent Place, the Governor's offices at the Convent, the HQ British Forces at the Tower, and some office in London – or maybe Brussels. Another problem concerning an Overseas Territory - how many desks do its papers have to travel over, how many in-trays and out-trays, or to use civil service jargon, BUs and, hopefully, not too many PAs.

The important thing though is that our habitats and species do not have the protection that they need and deserve from a European perspective. There seems to be a similar problem with declaring Gibraltar waters a Ramsar site for which it clearly qualifies. Fears of offending sensitivities – or lack of understanding of the real benefits – may all be playing a part in this.

In contrast, designations that do not require involvement by Governments are achieved. Gibraltar has two sites recognised as BirdLife International Important Bird Areas, the Rock and the Strait. Significantly the latter is one of only a few international IBAs.

True, some of these Directives and similar have financial implications. The money might not be there, or the Government may have other priorities. And here environmental protection has to compete for funds with the restoration of Main Street, the National Day Fireworks Display, the building of pensioners' houses, or the Miss Gibraltar Contest. But funds required for projects in these small territories are often small in relation to funds for other projects elsewhere, because of the size of the territory. So an international source, such as the EU, can be identified. Or, dare I suggest the Administrative Power, in our case the UK? But then the local Government will get

suspicious of the motives, or fear that someone else is going to steal the credit for their work, or just be too proud to even ask for help. And who loses out?

Mind you, the problem can be in the other direction too. Little Gibraltar is often forgotten by international legislators, and by some of the big national and international conservation organisations. For example, we have long been an active member of BirdLife International, even though our status as a full Partner was at a time threatened by Spanish objections, which were resolved thanks to extraordinary diplomatic ability and persuasive powers, if I say so myself. The move to set up a Plantlife equivalent within Planta Europa almost forgot Gibraltar, and would have if we hadn't barged in. And so the Gibraltar campion, one of the rarest plants in Europe, once extinct in the wild and now conservation-dependent thanks to the work of GONHS and of the Gibraltar Botanic Garden, does not appear on the schedule of the EU Habitats Directive. We even have to worry about things like that.

And where our legislation is up to it, something else fails. Under our CITES laws, Gibraltar has regularly confiscated animals in illegal trade. It is part of Gibraltar's responsibilities under the UK as a signatory to the Convention. And yet these animals are looked after and fed by GONHS volunteers, using up our short funds.

And that is surely significant. GONHS has always recognised that nature does not have political frontiers. Our relationship with NGOs and institutions in Spain have always been excellent, and the presence here of my friend Puri Canals, President of the Iberian Council for the Defence of Nature of which we are full members is proof enough of that. But politically the climate changes constantly, and our work in this is consequently undermined. There have been countless declarations of intent on environmental co-operation between Gibraltar and the surrounding Spanish municipalities. But they have all come to nothing. And there is a vital need to co-operate at Government level on such matters as protection of that great asset we have in common, the Bay, as well as in energy production, disposal of wastes, and many more. But it just does not happen.

But relationships with Spain can serve to illustrate most clearly that in small territories we are often at the whim of political expediency. When in 1998 small time Spanish fishermen insisted on fishing in Gibraltar waters in breach of the Nature Protection Ordinance, we insisted on upholding our law. They blocked the frontier and began to create anti-Gibraltar feeling in the surrounding area. There was ample justification for this law in conservation terms and in international law. We went to London and made a case in which we convinced the Foreign Office - whether they'll admit it

or not - that we were right. And yet the Gibraltar Government allowed them limited fishing rights (regularly abused) in order to avoid the blockages at the frontier. (In fact, this seems a very similar situation to the one some of us heard about in the sovereign bases in Cyprus with bird trapping.) In the meantime our seabed and our fish stocks have been devastated.

And yet in neighbouring Spain the sea is increasingly protected, and more and more resources are being put into conservation. We are being left behind, but at the same time we have considerable specialist knowledge we can offer. We are often called in by NGOs, like the Spanish Ornithological Society SEO, to help in their work, and I sit on the Board of the largest nature reserve in the region. But the political unwillingness to co-operate on the environment, and on anything else, is obvious, and not good for the wildlife.

So where are we in Gibraltar with regards to nature conservation? Relations between GONHS and the authorities – Government and MOD – are good. There is a great deal more consultation than there has ever been. We would like the environment – not just nature conservation, but alternative energy, the promotion of carbon credits, etc – to feature more prominently in the Government's priorities for legislation, enforcement and funding. Noticeably the environment did not feature in any party's electoral manifesto earlier this year. Our concern is that opportunities are being lost – opportunities to conserve, opportunities to create jobs, opportunities to achieve potential, which only a little more money could achieve. I shall mention the Botanic Gardens where I work (or used to) as an example of something that could do much more and look much better with just a little more investment.

Investment would allow us to **MAKE OUR PROTECTED AREAS EFFECTIVE**, and stop the drop in biodiversity which, particularly in plants, but also probably but less noticeably in invertebrates has been considerable in the past century. For this we need to plan for **BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION**, and be able to put these plans into effect.

And where is the public in all this? Well, it's there. GONHS membership is about 1.5% of the population – and would be a lot more if we dedicated more of our work to recruitment – but at the expense of what? There is a great deal of awareness, but we certainly need to move in the fields of **PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION**.

Funding for all this needs to be found. I have alluded to overseas sources, but what of **TOURISM**, that resource of so many small exotic lands. So much money our wildlife brings in – in our case especially the monkeys and increasingly so the dolphins – and

they are just abused by the operators and the money goes nowhere near them nor the rest of the wildlife.

And what is the situation in other small territories – well, I don't really know. One of the reasons why we in Gibraltar have wanted all of us to get together is simply that – to find out what the situation is elsewhere, to learn, and to share our own experiences and successes – and we have quite a few – with others who can benefit from them. And those of you from the larger lands, you can teach us too. You can provide resources which we may be lacking. But you must also learn from us. Learn how much conservation can be on the cutting edge in our situation, how the smallness which can make a City a Nation can in fact be an effective tool. And please do not make the mistake of just coming here and telling us what to do. Some of us have had enough of the old colonialism. Colonialism has many faces and those of us who feel the maturity to stand on our own do have the modesty and the ambition to turn to others for help, for advice, but not for patronage. We want to receive the respect we in turn offer. We need support, not control.

We in GONHS have learnt that, in order to achieve the most we must work with a purpose, avoid duplication in effort, avoid competing within and without, avoid revisiting old ground, but keep moving on, conserving now, as later will be too late.

So what do we want to achieve here on this famous Rock, over the next few days? Rock has long been held to be the medium on which to dig strong foundations. Let this be the foundation for a proper network and exchange of information, one that works in practice and is not just established in theory. Electronic communications mean that basically we can all sit on the same committee, if it is a committee we want, and contribute to joint decisions, even if we are half a world apart. They can certainly ensure that we keep abreast of each others' problems, possibilities, failures and successes. Let us use this meeting to learn, reach decisions on what we can do, and then go and do it.

Calpe is the old Roman name for Gibraltar, this Pillar of Hercules that signalled the end of the earth. Beyond that lay an abyss, an unknown, another world. But beyond the pillar, beyond the Strait, was a paradise. There are many of you who come from fragments of that paradise. But on the inland side of that pillar lay a paradise too. Compared to the present day the Mediterranean Basin was teeming with wildlife. Gibraltar was evidence of this and the Neanderthals who inhabited our lands and used our caves knew it well, judging from the remains of many wild animals found in our archaeological sites. Now the Mediterranean too contains only fragments.

How easy it would be for us in these small lands to relinquish our responsibilities. To claim impotence due to our size, or to give up through sheer frustration. But we don't. We battle on, stretching ourselves at the expense of a great deal in order to preserve what we have had the privilege to inherit. For the sake of our

children, in memory of our fathers, and frankly, because we have to.

How good it is to see you all here. How good it is to know, in truth, after so many years that no, we are not alone.

