



GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
MINISTRY FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE, SPORT & LEISURE
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Our Underwater Heritage

Dr Geraldine Finlayson has returned from Portsmouth where she had been invited to deliver a lecture at the Annual Conference of the Nautical Archaeological Society (NAS) held at the Portland Building, Portsmouth University.

NAS is dedicated to advancing education in nautical archaeology at all levels; to improving techniques in excavating, conservation and reporting; and to encouraging the participation of members of the public at all stages. It is a non-government organisation formed to further interest in our underwater cultural heritage. It aims to preserve our archaeological heritage in the marine environment, by acting as a focus for coastal and marine archaeology. To do this they involve everyone - divers and non-divers, scientists, historians and anyone with an interest.

Our underwater heritage is not renewable, and is at constant threat from natural and human agencies. Preserving a record of the past is vital, and it is important that this record is as accurate as possible. To achieve this NAS aims to improve archaeological techniques and encourage publication and research. In this context Dr Finlayson's presentation, on what has become widely known as "the Gibraltar Method", was particularly relevant. In her presentation she described the method, which had initially been developed by the Gibraltar Museum team for land sites, and its application to submerged sites. The submerged heritage method, a tool in management and conservation, is in the process of publication.

Dr Finlayson's paper was very well received with many enquiries regarding its application to other countries. The prestigious international conference also heard from invited speakers from the United States, Sweden, and South Africa as well as from the United Kingdom. The Society's president, Phil Harding of Time Team fame, closed the conference commenting on the high standard of the lectures from the invited speakers.

Gibraltar's involvement with NAS over the years has placed it in a central position regarding the study and protection of submerged heritage. In 2003 the Gibraltar Museum team was awarded the first prize in the NAS' "Adopt-a-Wreck" programme for their work on the armed trawler HMS Erin. The Museum team, with Dr Finlayson and Dr Darren Fa who are qualified underwater archaeological instructors, have run approved NAS courses for divers on the Rock and are discussing future projects with NAS.

Note to Editors: For further information please contact Marie Mosquera at the Gibraltar Museum on 200 74289. Alternatively, email: musadmin@gibraltar.gi