



**GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR**  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

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Earliest evidence of human occupation on the Rock revealed

Gibraltar continues to provide surprises as the Gibraltar Caves Project Team, led by Professor Clive Finlayson of the Gibraltar Museum, continues to explore and investigate around different parts of the Rock. The latest findings, published jointly with Spanish archaeologists and geologists who have been collaborating for many years as part of the team, reveal the earliest dated evidence of people on the Rock.

A paper published in the international, Spanish language, scientific journal *Geogaceta* reports on results from Beefsteak Cave, near Europa Point. This cave appears to have been occupied by Neanderthals who left their stone tools behind after hunting large grazing mammals that were probably taken from the Windmill Hill Flats that are located above the cave. The place where the Neanderthals had been was later covered by cave deposits which are the ones that have been dated.

Because of their age, conventional radiocarbon dating (which has its upper limit at 40 thousand years ago) could not be applied. So the scientists turned to the technique of measuring the ratio of Uranium isotopes in the deposits. The stunning results gave an age of 98.8 thousand years which means that the Neanderthal level, below it, was older and probably around 100-120 thousand years old.

In 2006 the team published results of very recent Neanderthals in Gorham's Cave, where they survived much later than anywhere else on the planet to around 24 thousand years ago. The latest results from Beefsteak Cave, not far from Gorham's Cave, show that the Neanderthals lived on the Rock for at least 100 thousand years.

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