



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
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Costa highlights growth and success of 2nd Gibraltar Literary Festival

Gibraltar became a focal point of the literary world during the past weekend when some of Britain's leading authors, poets, historians, philosophers and opinion formers converged on the Rock for the second edition of the Gibunco Gibraltar International Literary Festival.

The Festival proved to be yet another resounding success with a 64% registered increase in ticket over last year, the Hon the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo QC MP declared yesterday during the closing dinner for writers at the Caleta Hotel.

Gibraltar's famous venues including the Garrison Library, which was the hub of the festival, The Convent, King's Chapel, John Mackintosh Hall, Kings Bastion and the Sunborn, came alive with a packed programme of enthralling lectures and events that kept audiences entertained.

There was constant interaction between authors and audiences just like last year, as people were able to purchase the books on sale at the different venues and then have them signed personally by the authors after each event, with an added opportunity for exchanging views and impressions on the talk.

History, literature, popular culture, politics, religion and the world of ideas all featured heavily in the programme. The eclectic nature of the festival was underlined by events that celebrated the gastronomy of Italy and India, sherry wine tasting events, art appreciation, jazz music and poetry. There was also room for conferences about Spanish football, rock'n'roll, Sephardic music and a debate on the topical issue of Cataluña with representatives from both sides of the divide on the independence question.

A section entitled 'Voices from Spain' also brought together some young Spanish authors currently making a name for themselves in the national literary scene and offering an insight into the themes and concerns reflected in their work.

An innovative schools festival was also held with the participation of the Kusuma Trust which made it possible for 18 speakers including Christopher Lloyd, Jimmy Burns, Jonathan Fenby, Lord Carey and Professor Sir Diarmaid McCulloch to address pupils from both Westside and Bayside Comprehensive Schools.

Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port, the Hon Neil Costa MP expressed his delight at the conclusion of the three-day festival.

“It has been an absolute pleasure to witness how the Gibraltarian public has responded with enormous interest to the impressive array of authors and celebrities that formed part of our programme at this second edition of the Gibunco Gibraltar International Literary Festival. It is a testament to the success of our efforts over the past year to meet the challenge of equalling what was accomplished last year, that not only do I think that we have we done that, but have actually surpassed what was achieved in our inaugural edition. The growth and consolidation of the festival has now become a wonderful reality.

“I would also like to repeat my appreciation and gratitude for the generosity and support of all our sponsors that make this festival possible. Equally, I must express my deepest thanks to all the members of staff who worked tirelessly the moment our guests from abroad started to arrive. The constant words of praise I received from all of the authors with whom I spoke testify to their excellent hospitality for which I deeply admire them and, without which, the Literary Festival would simply not be possible” he declared.

Total attendances soared from 1999 in 2013 to 3569 this year, an increase of 79%.

Online ticket sales also registered an increase from 1034 in 2013, to 1475 in 2014, an increase of 43%.

Tickets sold in Gibraltar experienced a 125% increase from 357 in 2013 to 805 in 2014.