

# HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

The Gibraltar Museum  
18-20 Bomb House Lane



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **The Smart Neanderthal - new book on Neanderthals to be launched on Tuesday**

Professor John Cortes, Minister with responsibility for heritage, environment and climate change, will be launching Professor Clive Finlayson's latest book *The Smart Neanderthal* on Tuesday at 1830 hours at the Gibraltar National Museum. The book is published by Oxford University Press.

Neanderthals have had a bad press. The image of the clumsy, heavy-browed caveman, outcompeted and overwhelmed by our nimble, smart, modern human ancestors, persists, even though we now know that many of us carry some Neanderthal DNA.

For many years, the predominant view has been that modern humans underwent a 'cognitive revolution' in Africa. They began to make fine tools, conceptualize, and paint on cave walls. By the time they encountered Neanderthals in Europe, modern humans were at a significant advantage. The Neanderthals tried to copy them but didn't stand a chance against our predecessors' superior intellect and skills. But is this what really happened?

In the *Smart Neanderthal* Clive Finlayson draws on his team's research in Gorham's and Vanguard caves in Gibraltar, and evidence from other Neanderthal sites, as well as insights from natural history, in particular knowledge from observing birds, to present a very different emerging view of Neanderthals. In a thrilling account of archaeological discovery, detective work, and magical moments watching majestic golden eagles and cunning vultures, Clive paints an image of Neanderthals who captured birds for their decorative feathers and talons, who made engravings and painted on cave walls, and who may have taught modern humans a thing or two. He questions whether modern humans underwent a unique cognitive revolution at all, and mourns the loss of a lineage of humans who were probably just as smart as us.