

Falkland Islands NEWS



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GET IT RIGHT THIS TIME

The remarkable success of the British Task Force in achieving an Argentine surrender is clouded only by the tragedy of British deaths, both soldiers and civilians. To them we will pay everlasting tribute.

Now, we must consider the future of the Islands and their prospects in an entirely new context.

The formidable political, diplomatic and military initiative taken by Britain in restoring the Islands should now be followed up with equal determination in securing their future. Britain's boundless scientific, technical and commercial resources must be fully deployed in this endeavour.

To trim, to compromise, to delay would be a failure of nerve and a betrayal of such new spirit in the British people as the crisis has sparked. Worse, it would be a betrayal of our dead and our wounded - and the trust and respect of other nations.

We should not be ashamed of our resoluteness or our sovereignty. The Falkland Islands are unquestionably British territory; uninhabited lands settled by Britons more than 200 years ago and even then garrisoned by the Marines; persistently maintained by the British crown until the formal colony was

established in 1833 and since then peaceably farmed, developed and administered for 150 years. Moreover, the Falkland Islands have been the stepping stone to our great interests in Antarctica and the Dependencies.

Britain's new North Sea

The Falkland Islands Office proposes to do all it can to stimulate the economic development of the Islands, sometimes described as "Britain's new North Sea". It will shortly publish a paper setting out the Islands' prospects and needs. It will look for the new spirit and initiative in Lord Shackleton's review of his excellent 1976 Economic Survey. It will campaign at home and abroad because it believes now, no less firmly than in the past, that the Falkland Islands have a great economic, scientific and strategic importance which it is Britain's duty, with the Islanders, to uphold.

Two appeals have been set up as a result of the invasion. The Falklands Appeal will help the Islanders rebuild their shattered lives and repair the damage and losses suffered at the hands of the invaders.

The Falkland Islands Office Appeal will finance our campaign to win the hearts and minds of the world and provide the Islanders with a secure future.

Now is the time to reinforce success.

Falklands APPEAL

A fund established in Britain for the benefit of the Falkland Islanders

12 Greycoat Place, Westminster, London SW1
Telephone 01-222 2541/2

Patron: The Right Honourable Lord Shackleton, KG, PC, OBE
Honorary Director: Major General A.O.G. Mills

THE FALKLAND ISLANDS OFFICE DURING THE CRISIS by John Cheek, Falklands Legislative Council

The Falkland Islands Office in London has played a vital rôle in support of the interests of the Islanders since the shock of the invasion on April 2.

The day before, Air Commodore Frow (Director-General) and Miss Sukey Cameron (Executive Secretary) were alone, answering calls from increasingly anxious MPs, journalists and Islanders in Britain, all concerned about the growing tension created by the infamous scrap-metal merchants.

When the Argentines invaded, the tiny office above a cafe in Westminster was crowded with people offering help. The telephones began ringing and they have not stopped ringing at all hours of the day and night for ten weeks.

The Office was set up in 1977 to represent the wishes of the Islanders. It has maintained a continuous relationship with parliamentarians, diplomats, departments of state, the media, Islanders living in Britain and supporters everywhere. Guided by the twin Falkland Islands Committees - one in Stanley, one in London - the Office has played an important rôle in keeping the Falkland issue alive.

It has lobbied, cajoled, pleaded, insisted and criticised, always on behalf of the Islanders. On a small budget, funded by voluntary contributions from the Islands and sympathisers in Britain, the Falkland Islands Office has acted as a High Commission, Press Centre, publisher, research body, Economic Development Office. Although every company (some 20 in all, mostly sheep farms) in the Falkland Islands subscribes to the Office, none of them seeks to influence its policy.

As an unofficial body, the Office has achieved an exceptional credibility among opinion-formers and decision-makers. True, its view is partial; but so is that even of most departments of state. The Falkland Islands Office has always fought its corner as a clear and honest spokesman for the Islanders.

A great tribute must be paid to all those who have given up so much of their time to the cause since the invasion. The Camerons, Sukey and Alastair (her elder brother who left his job in Cologne to help out and is still doing so) who have been in the Office at all hours, have worked tirelessly answering telephones, finding photographs, maps, relations, flags, statistics and information for the Press. Literally thousands of radio, TV and Press interviews have been arranged and given to the world's media; and Press statements issued and distributed by the Office team. A special "thank you" is owed here to Pollard Thomas and Co, (Solicitors) the Office's landlords, whose work - and office space - has been disrupted by several TV crews working at once, and to the Metropolitan Police for their watchful eye.

The Office has had a Falkland Islander on hand at all times. No better representative could have been found than Patrick Berntsen from San Carlos, who left his job in New Zealand to help, and who is determined to get back to the Islands as soon as possible - and Ian White, the Islands' chief pilot, with a wealth of topographical and technical know-how.

Merle Christie has spent hours each day answering letters, sending off T-shirts, keeping others sane, between looking after her young family and more recently, devoting her time and her house to the Falklands Appeal. (Of her busy barrister husband, Bill, it need only be said that the Falklands would have been Argentine territory years ago but for his enormous and continuing endeavours).

Les Taylor, the honorary subscriptions secretary of FIRADA, the Office's fund-raiser, has kept the finances in order, with a zest that shames younger men. To the Daillie family, and Jane and Donald Cameron and Mike Summers, always on hand to help, and to David Summers, who flew over from Bermuda and for the first two critical weeks worked on the U.S. media, all praise and gratitude. A special word too for Elena Butler, who took on the organisation of the annual reception at short notice and found herself dealing with an event which attracted nearly 500 guests. Somehow she has coped at the same time with running a restaurant.

In the regions, Major Ronnie Spafford has been writing articles, appearing on local TV and radio and in every sense justifying the sign on his gate in Weston-super-Mare - "Western Region Ops". Behind the scenes, his guidance and help has been truly far-reaching. In the North Councillor Roy Walker in Manchester and Martin Dodds in Cumbria and Leif Maitland (she was Leif Barton) in Edinburgh have accomplished much.

The Falklands Appeal team, with Major-General Alan Mills as director and Robert Elgood and Catriona Leach, are moving into top gear in the appeal office which they have found and furnished in Greycoat Place, giving their time to the cause of helping the Islanders rebuild their shattered lives.

To the countless well-wishers and supporters everywhere who are selling T-shirts, stickers and ties, raising money to help the campaign to secure the future of the Islands, the Islanders must be grateful. And to Ian the motor-bike messenger and Ansamatic and Piercy's Electrical of Westminster (for a Teletext TV) the Office is indebted. To Lawlers the vintners for their Heideick champagne and to many, many other commercial organisations who have provided such help during the past weeks, it is an understatement to say "They did their bit".

John Cheek