



Falkland Islands Newsletter

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Remembrance - and the Future

Islanders have been honoured to welcome into their homes Land hearts more than two hundred veterans of the Falklands War. It was an emotional reunion. For Islanders it recalled the horror of invasion, occupation, and then the euphoria of liberation. Although twenty years ago, these memories are still fresh. Islanders are, and always will be, grateful for the sacrifices of their liberators.

For many veterans it was a healing process. They saw the places where their comrades died. They saw the Falklands in peace, developing and infinitely more confident than it was in 1982. They saw that their sacrifices had not been in vain.

In this edition, the Newsletter would have liked to report the pilgrimage by the Falklands War veterans and then look forward to a peaceful future. Sadly, that cannot be. Argentina, although in economic and political chaos, continues to press its claim to the Islands. Its popular press continues to portray the Falklands maliciously. In November, the Argentine Senate passed a bill to impose fines on vessels fishing in Falklands

waters. This is intended to deter fishing vessels from taking up Falklands fishing licences.

Argentina has all the resources it needs to be a success. Its agricultural potential is enormous. Yet some of its poorest people are starving and children dying from malnutrition! Because of the extermination of the indigenous Indians, Argentina has a largely European population, perhaps the best educated in South America. But this has not led to European levels of stability or success; far from it. Argentine institutions are corrupt. Its politicians are unable to put the common good ahead of personal ambition. It is bankrupt, and has been seeking yet more IMF aid. It seeks support from countries whose investors hold Argentine bonds that are now worthless - including Britain. Yet it still covets and tries to harm the Falklands.

After the Second World War, the defeated belligerents abandoned their ambitions, and began to live in peace with the countries they had forced into war. There is no reason why Argentina should not do the same.



Falklands Veteran, HRH Prince Andrew, at the Liberation Monument in Stanley

Photo: Courtesy of Nigel Hawks

PM's New Year Message

"New Year is traditionally a time spent in our communities with families and friends. It's a time for celebration. And a time for reflection. My own thoughts and best wishes are with you and with our armed forces who - away from their own families at this special time of year - do so much for us around the world, to defend our rights and promote peace, security, and justice. I was delighted to learn that you hold the British forces in the Falklands in such high regard that you honoured them with the Freedom of the Falkland Islands during this, the 20th anniversary year of the conflict.

This year in particular has provided an opportunity for remembrance of all who lost their lives in the conflict. The commemoration events have touched many on the Islands and beyond, culminating in the Duke of York's recent visit and his personal gesture of reconciliation in laying wreaths at both the British and Argentine cemeteries. The ground was of course prepared beforehand in a profound gesture of reconciliation by your Government earlier in the year in their approval of plans for a memorial to the Argentine war dead at Darwin.

Events such as these, and the personal pilgrimage by members of the South Atlantic Medal Association in November, have also highlighted the close bonds between those who fought in the conflict and those who endured it.

The Falkland Islands have a bright future. This year the



international community has seen that the Falklands is a prosperous, vibrant and self-confident community. Your new Governor has spoken of an entrepreneurial spirit in the Islands - of new opportunities, and of young people eager to return after completing their education in the United Kingdom. You recognise the importance of economic diversification.

The Islands Plan provides an admirable strategy for the continued development of a sustainable economy, protection of the environment, and improvements to your quality of life. You have achieved so much in recent years and I am sure that your prudent management of affairs will continue to provide a secure platform for future generations.

The United Kingdom's relations with Argentina are good and we continue to work to improve them. I therefore hope that practical cooperation and mutual understanding between the Falklands and Argentina can be further developed where this is in the interests of the Islands and in accordance with the wishes of the people.

But I recognise that the partnership between the Falkland Islands and the United Kingdom is vital to your continued prosperity and security and that your confidence in dealing with your neighbours will be enhanced in the secure knowledge of the guarantees I have given of my Government's commitment to your self-determination and sovereignty.

Let me finish by wishing you and your families a peaceful and happy New Year".

Tony Blair

Argentina Moves Against Falklands Fishing

Although still in a state of economic collapse and seeking IMF aid, Argentina continues to do what it can to harm the Falklands. The Argentine Senate has passed a bill to make fishing in Falklands waters subject to Argentine Federal Fishing Laws.

The bill was proposed by Peronist Senator Mario Daniele of the Province of Tierra del Fuego. It provides for fines of between 100,000 and a million pesos for violators. This is intended to deter foreign fishing vessels from taking up Falklands fishing licences.

The bill will be considered by the Argentine Chamber of Deputies, which cannot take place until after March 1st when it re-assembles after the Christmas recess. The presidential election is on April 27, so this bill may be intended to exploit the

Falklands for political advantage then. Dr. Carlos Menem did this in his election campaign in 1990, and is a candidate again.

But this may not just be electioneering. Tierra del Fuego was made into a province only in 1990 by Argentine law. It now behaves as if it includes the Falklands, although the original boundary clause, that specified this, has conveniently been forgotten in the Argentine Congress.

Readers may see for themselves how prominently the Falklands (and Argentine Antarctica) feature on the provincial website www.tierradelfuego.gov.ar. The creation of the province of Tierra del Fuego, and all the Argentine politics over whether to include the Falklands, etc, was covered in Newsletter number 55 in 1993, page 4.

Royal Visit

In addition to taking part in the SAMA veterans pilgrimage, Prince Andrew also had a full programme of civil activities.

He arrived at the Community School playing field by helicopter where he was greeted by excited Islanders. He met Islanders at a public reception at the Falkland Islands Defence Force hall. He had tea at Fox Bay village, meeting the Islanders there. He saw a sheep shearing and wool handling exhibition at Goose Green. He visited the Argentine cemetery and the British cemetery at San Carlos, where local residents had the opportunity to meet him.

New School Extension Opened

Prince Andrew opened the new Infant/Junior School extension, in the presence of Governor Lamont, Director of Education Mrs Sylvia Cole, Councillors, parents and school-children. He toured the new school building, seeing the pupils' activities, and watched a ball game.

Wildlife Conservation Interest

Prince Andrew also went to New Island and opened the new field station there for the New Island South Conservation Trust. This is named the "Geoffrey C. Hughes Field Station" after the benefactor whose generosity made it possible. The Prince was shown around by Harald and Hedel Voss. The New Island South Reserve boasts an albatross and rockhopper penguin colony.

Prince Andrew visited the New Island North Reserve, run by Tony and Kim Chater, which has a fur seal colony.

Prince launches Adopt a Penguin scheme.

Prince Andrew, who is patron of Falklands Conservation, also launched the "Adopt a Penguin Scheme". This allows benefactors to adopt a king penguin for £25 and receive a photo and the Volunteer Point Newsletter. Details may be obtained from website www.falklandsconservation.com or from Falklands Conservation, 1 Princes Avenue, London, N3 2DA. Tel/Fax: 020 8343 0831.

Falklands drastically reduces squid fishing

The Falkland Islands Government has shortened fishing seasons as stocks of loligo squid have dropped dramatically during the last few months. This will seriously affect fleet activities that are mostly joint ventures between Falklands and Galician companies. Scientists estimate that a 50/60% reduction in the catch is needed in the long term.

The Spanish partners, represented by the Association of Community Fishery Joint Companies (Acemix), support the decision. "Obviously, it is in our best interest to comply with these bans," sector sources told newspaper *Faro de Vigo*.

"The loligo squid harvest season has been shortened to significantly reduce the fishing effort," confirmed Falklands' Government House spokesman Russ Jarvis in Stanley. He told Penguin News that there was an agreement with the Government "to reduce the fishing effort to facilitate the survival of sufficient reproductive biomass.... "Some fishing vessels will be allowed to stay in the area during the ban to collaborate with resource monitoring activities".

Statistics provided by the companies are not encouraging; loligo catches have decreased dramatically from 65,000 tonnes in 2000 to 53,000 tonnes in 2001 and 23,000 tonnes in 2002, the lowest on record.

Six Weeks instead of Four Months

The reduction affects 16 large freezer vessels, based in Vigo but all in the Falklands Register and employing 640 crewmembers. The loligo fishery normally has two fishing seasons in Falklands' waters, February to May and August to October, but the first season will now last for only six weeks instead of four months, from March to April 14th. However,



Falkland's fisheries authorities have said that in the event that catches are good "it may be possible to extend the season, although the first priority will be to increase the spawning stock biomass at the end of the season".

The good relationship between the Falklands government and Spanish companies makes the Falklands' fishery one of the more stable and better managed in the world. Pescanova, Pesca Puerta, Pereira, Copermar, Touza and Fontán freezer have joint ventures with local companies.

The Falklands fishing industry and Government hope that before the second fishing season begins, which extends from August through October 2003, squid stocks will recover.

Squid has a one year life cycle and it's difficult to make predictions. This year for unknown reasons Loligo migrated from Falklands EEZ to the high seas. The shorter season is a short term measure but the industry believes it could mean a reduced number of vessels in the longer term. **Mercopress**

Mystery Penguin Deaths

Possibly allied to the failure of the commercial squid fishery, is the appalling mortality among Falklands Penguins. The rookeries at New Island, Fox Bay, Port Howard, Carcass Island, Saunders and in many other places have been decimated. The skuas, seals and other predators have made matters worse by attacking the weakened penguins and the surviving chicks all the more aggressively.

The true cause is still not known. Starvation does not appear to be the principal cause as many of the dead penguins are not emaciated - although some are. This, of course, would be consistent with the failure of the squid. Explanations of this squid failure are now attributed more to changes in ocean temperatures and currents probably caused by the excessive calving of icebergs from the Antarctic ice shelves as global warming upsets the ecosystem there.

EU Standard Abattoir Opens

The Sand Bay abattoir (Photo Right) was granted European Union certification on November 20, subject to the commissioning of a temporary cold storage facility.

The abattoir opens the possibility of sales of Falklands lamb, particularly organic lamb, to the European Union. But what is really much more important is that lamb can now be offered to the Ministry of Defence for consumption by the Falklands garrison, thus eliminating the absurdity of frozen lamb from New Zealand being shipped in - a classic case of sending coals to Newcastle.

The abattoir project has been bedevilled by EU bureaucracy. Councillor Richard Cockwell described the opening as: "Brilliant news, this will enable us to get the abattoir operating after so many setbacks".

But another explanation is gaining popularity - that the penguins are being poisoned by blooms of algae in the sea - Red Tides. This would explain why some penguins come ashore unable to walk properly. Other animals in the food chain appear to be affected by this too. This explanation is supported by the fact that algal poisoning has caused severe sea bird mortality along the coast of South America.

The bodies of dead penguins have been sent for autopsy and the findings are expected shortly.

Joint Venture to Seek Gold

EXCO has approved a plan by a consortium of Cambridge Mineral Resources, Falklands Mineral Development and the Falklands Islands Company to conduct exploration trenching at Swan Inlet, Black Rock and Cerritos for gold.



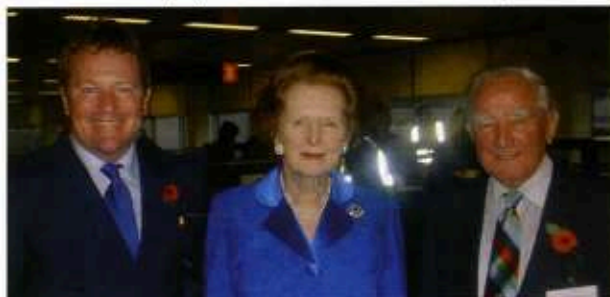
Veterans Pilgrimage 2002



Photo: Nigel Hawks



Above: Baroness Thatcher signs a pilgrim's card at Gatwick. Below: Jim Davidson, Baroness Thatcher and Sir Rex Hunt seeing the Pilgrimage off. Bottom: Air 2000 Capt Nick Corcoran, Jim Davidson and John Murphy of Air 2000 Photos: Sukey Cameron



By Denzil Connick Founding Secretary of SAMA (82).

How it all began

I need to briefly describe my first visit to the Falklands in 1999, nearly 17 years after the war, invited by the Falklands Government in my capacity as Secretary of SAMA (82).

Until the Pilgrimage this November, only a trickle of veterans has ever been able to visit the Falklands; certainly very few had ever been back as civilians. I was very nervous about returning. I wanted so desperately to go, but felt it would be too much to bear emotionally and might make matters worse for nerves shattered by the horrors of war. I suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as do most combat veterans to one degree or another, and was unsure about confronting such vivid reminders of the saddest and most terrifying period in my life. Even so, the day arrived, and instead of a deadly enemy, I was greeted by my host, old friend and comrade Terry Peck.

All my fears were unfounded. I visited Mt. Longdon, scene of the battle fought so bravely and at such huge cost by my battalion, 3 Para, where I was so badly wounded on June 13th, just one day before fighting ended. I visited other places and took time in prayer to remember all my comrades who died 17 years before. I delighted in the beauty of the islands in peacetime, untarnished by the misery and squalor of war. I saw how brilliantly the people have taken care of their islands since they were liberated, ensuring that the sacrifices made for their freedom were not in vain.

The bottom line is this; 'I returned home to Wales a much happier and nicer Denzil Connick'. I was more relaxed, less moody and according to my wife Theresa, 'a much nicer person to live with'.

Reporting back to SAMA, it became obvious that revisiting the islands could assist other veterans come to terms with their memories of war and 'lay their ghosts to rest'. Soon after this SAMA formed a special committee to investigate the feasibility of a special pilgrimage to the islands during the 20th Anniversary in 2002.

The Planning

Early meetings of the Pilgrimage Committee, headed by Maj.

Gen. Malcolm Hunt, highlighted the enormity of the task. None the less, dedicated members and supporters kept the project alive.

The biggest hurdle was air transport to the Falklands. The RAF couldn't assist. Quite understandably, 'operational requirements' took priority and they couldn't set a precedent for SAMA, if they couldn't do the same for other veterans groups. We would need to charter a plane privately and the cost was daunting. One quote was in excess of £500,000!

After determined searching (by Rick Jolly), we got a more palatable quote from Air 2000, of about £250,000. The next battle was to get this.

Time proved how generous people can be, given the right cause. From raffles to sponsored parachute jumps (one jumper was our bilateral amputee, John 'No Toes' Jones), public donations following media appeals (in particular in *The Daily Express*) and by our great friend and supporter Jim Davidson and from an ever generous Falklands population, the money came in steadily. David Brown (SAMA North), made considerable contributions from two reunions at the Guide Inn, Yorkshire. David also helped design and sell the SAMA Polo Shirts. The major service charities such as the RN (RNBT) and the Army (ABF) supported some individuals who could not afford the personal contributions involved. This was boosted by Islanders who gave up their unused FIG Holiday Travel Credits!

With finance assured, a recce party of Lt. Colonel Tony Davies (ex Welsh Guards) and myself, returned to the islands. We met Governor Lamont, the Councillors, our own SAMA Committee in the Falklands, British Forces there, and many others. All were enthusiastic.

This was the first time Tony had returned. The marvelous effect on him again confirmed the good the pilgrimage would do. The SAMA Falklands Committee launched the 'Bed for a Vet Appeal'. A Transport Committee was formed, ensuring this for us too.

Last September, I made a final solo recce to tie up loose ends. This time I stayed at Government House as a guest of HE, an experience I shall always treasure. Here I was in splendid luxury and peaceful surroundings... in complete contrast to my humble dwelling on a bleak and dangerous Mt. Longdon. I must mention too, that the Governor's single malt whisky collection was excellent!

D Day is coming!

The weeks preceding our journey were a blur of activity. Final changes to the pilgrim list went on right up to the wire. Sadly, one was Maj. Gen. Malcolm Hunt, our President and Committee Chairman - ordered by his doctor not to travel. Malcolm had worked hard to keep us going during the difficult early stages, and deserves recognition for his leadership with the pilgrimage efforts throughout, even when he became ill.

With the welcome addition of Debs Ford from FIGO London, communications between the UK and Falklands streamed back and forth with drafts of accommodation lists and the programme. But, Terry and his team came through for us, just as they did back in 1982. Thank you chaps and chapeses.

Rick Jolly, his wife Suzy and secretary Rosalie worked many nights into the small hours on the manifest and loading



Piper Keith (Paddy) Burton

configuration of our tightly packed Air 2000 Boeing 757.

Our media entourage were co-ordinated by our great friend and superb photographer, Nigel Hawks. Capt. Martin Reed MN, another stalwart, and 'Chairman Elect' of SAMA, departed as a one man 'advance party' two days ahead of the main pilgrimage group. He would be our representative for the UK Committee whilst we were in transit.

It's really happening, we're flying today!

Departure from a cold and damp Gatwick Airport dawned with a breakfast at our little hotel, The Corner House. About twelve pilgrims spent the night there, mainly ex 3 Para and some sailors. There was a 'mini-reunion'. The bar ran out of beer! Need I say more, but the excitement of our journey overcame all hangovers.

Our check-in desk at the airport was busy checking off the pilgrims who were quickly moved to our private departure lounge to await our special guests coming to see us

off. They were none other than Baroness Thatcher, Sir Rex Hunt, Maj. General Julian Thompson, Maj. General Malcolm Hunt, Mr. Jim Davidson and Miss Sukey Cameron.

There is much affection for Baroness Thatcher from the veterans. I have seen surprise in Britain over this. After all they say, "wasn't it her as Prime Minister who sent us to war and an uncertain future, to suffer?" They have missed the point completely... we went to war for the most honourable principle known to man, to defend the freedom of our own people. We did so proudly and with the same determination as Margaret Thatcher. She had the courage to take on this awesome responsibility. We did not let her or Britain down! The same affection is shown to the great Winston Churchill. Why should it be different for Margaret Thatcher? Just because the Falklands are 8000 miles away does not make them any less British or less a sovereign state.

Maggie was on form and patiently signed our special postcards. Sir Rex mingled among the men giving encouragement and best wishes, as did our Generals Julian and Malcolm.

Jim Davidson's speech turned into one of his comedy routines - much to the delight of everyone. Everyone knows of his huge respect for British Forces and he is a relentless supporter of SAMA. The best surprise was when Maggie, Sir Rex, General Julian and Jim Davidson came aboard once we were all seated and gave us a speech over the pipes. There were not many dry eyes as we waved good bye and soared off.

The Great Arrival

As we began our descent to the Falklands the atmosphere was electric. Some tried to catch a glimpse of the islands. Over West Falkland there was a hint of dawn. A great cheer went up as we touched down; at last we were there!

We were greeted by RAF ground crews and the sound of the pipes from our very own piper, Paddy Burton. I was among the first off (due to my crutches) and was met by Commodore Richard Ibbotson, the Commanding Officer and his staff. He greeted everyone as they stepped onto Falklands soil again, saluted and shook their hands, which I thought showed great humility and respect on his part.

We were taken to the Officers Mess for another breakfast. Any tiredness quickly went as we moved off in buses to



Falklands CO Commodore Richard Ibbotson, DSC, greets Army Air Corps veteran Tim Lynch as he disembarks at Mount Pleasant Airport

Below: Pilgrimage organiser, Dr Rick Jolly, Miss Anna Pukas of the Daily Express, whose readers did so much to raise funds for the pilgrimage, and Commodore Ibbotson.

Photos: Nigel Hawks



our welcome address by the Governor in Stanley. By now daylight was complete. There was excited chatter all around: 'look there is a mine field and look, there is that stone run I walked through one night and wow, that's Mt. Harriet isn't it?'

A large home made sign by the road said: 'Welcome SAMA 2002' these words set the theme for all our time on the islands as very welcome visitors indeed! The Governor made a wonderful speech. Then everyone went to meet their hosts.

I was staying at the Cable & Wireless house with fellow pilgrims Mike (Mush) Bateman, a comrade of my own platoon and his brother-in-law, Alan Matthews, of the Air Defence detachments, Royal Artillery, in 82. Mush was wounded by splinters that destroyed his vocal cords. He still has to breathe through a tracheotomy, a hole in his wind pipe.

Brian Summers had stocked the fridge to get us started. Unlike most other pilgrims, we three were going 'self catering', but, Brian offered us a hot meal that evening if we wanted it.

After a while, we had our first visitor, Marvin Clarke. He became, on his volunteering, our guide and driver whenever we needed him. We re-named him 'Marvellous Marvin'!

I had arranged for a vehicle from Stanley Services. On collecting this, I was again surprised by the generosity that would overwhelm us all. Robert Rowlands of Stanley Services said there would be no charge. Thank you Robert.

That evening, after some rest, we paid our first visit to the Globe pub. We were not surprised to see many other pilgrims and islanders. The pilgrims were impressed with the arrangements and the changes in the town. I took a drive out to Estancia Farm alone to visit Tony and Elsa Heathman. They are old friends and I wanted to see them as soon as possible.

Day Two - Port Pleasant and San Carlos

Marvin arrived early to take us out, and we saw for the first time the support offered us by Islanders. There were an impressive eighty plus 4 x 4 vehicles to take the pilgrims out.

We headed out up the airport road. It looked like vehicles stretched for miles. I doubt if there had ever been so much traffic on a Falklands road.

Every mile or so, we passed vehicles stopped with veterans looking and pointing to some distant feature, no doubt reminiscing about it twenty years before. Marvin kept us informed with a commentary.

First stop would be Goose Green and the 2 Para Memorial and settlement. This was also the day our Welsh Guards would face their ghosts where they last saw the Sir Galahad. This is not at Bluff Cove, as has been wrongly reported, but Port Pleasant. There was nothing pleasant there 20 years ago. This time they could pay respects to their lost comrades, and keep forever a new and more heart-warming memory of the place.

They were supported by the extended family of veterans and islanders, who were there for them then, as they will be for ever. The Celtic Cross, of Welsh stone, is a beautiful monument on the shore of the wild South Atlantic. Not far away, the men who died, lie in the ship that is now their coffin. You feel as though you can connect with the souls lost in this very spiritual place.

One of the difficulties for the friends and relatives of those whose grave is the sea, is that there is no 'tangible' grave to visit. Memorials are the next best thing. Those at Port Pleasant are among the most moving in the world.

We arrived at the 2 Para Memorial, just outside Goose Green.. and gave the brass plaque a polish... we cleaned all of them. Mush and Alan were becoming somewhat emotional. Unlike me, this was their first time back. Others began to arrive and we moved on into Goose Green itself.

At the community hall we enjoyed teas and cakes put on by the residents. It's hard to imagine so many men women and children being confined here during the Argentine occupation.

You could tell how proud these people are, that they could open their doors again for their victorious saviours. 2 Para veterans described to army and navy colleagues the



Above: Veterans pay their respects at the 2 PARA Memorial on Darwin Hill, just outside Goose Green.
 Below: Veteran Mark Sleep pays his respects at the cairn marking the spot where Col "H" Jones VC was killed in the battle of Goose Green. *Both photos by Nigel Hawks* Right: Close up of the wreaths on the memorial *Photo: Debbie Ford*



intricacies of the battle there. This would be returned later on Mt. Longdon where contrasting terrain offered opposite problems, in these amazing feats of battle.

Blue Beach Service

Next stop was Blue Beach Cemetery at San Carlos for a short service and lunch. By now the wind was blowing hard, the warm sun replaced by cloud. The pilgrims gathered around the few houses at San Carlos, near the little museum.

A helicopter landed with Governor Lamont, his wife Lynda, Commodore Ibbotson, his aides and the clergy. The beating of the rotor blades brought back memories of the frantic activity here twenty years before as the Task Force gained the 'beach head'.

We gathered around the tiny cemetery. This would be the first of several emotional 'official' services of remembrance.

The cemetery reminds me of a stone sheep corral, I guess this was the intention. One of the graves is of Colonel 'H' Jones VC. There is a facing wall listing all those whose grave is the sea. It eases the grief of those with no land grave to visit; again in a splendid location and close to some who rest in the sea nearby.

The Rev. McHaffie began. There was a hymn, prayers of remembrance, a scripture reading, the always emotional, 'last post', silence, and reveille. We listened to the

Below: The Commemoration Service at Blue Beach Cemetery. *Photo: Nigel Hawks*





2 Para veterans Mick Haines and Richard Helleur by the grave of their friend, Pte Fred Slough, who was killed at Goose Green. *Photo: Nigel Hawks*

haunting tune of the bagpipes playing a lament. There were not many dry eyes.

Many veterans and relatives stayed to look at the graves and roll of honour, some tracing their fingers over the names carved in the stone; so many memories, so much grief. It's hard to transcribe my thoughts without a great lump to my throat.

We gathered at the settlement for refreshments. This was a liberal supply of tea, beer and an excellent chicken curry or beef stew. The day had been a great success. Changes in the group were evident already; any nagging doubts about coming to the islands were gone for ever. The Governor, CBFFI, and their group left to greet HRH Prince Andrew at the airport.

The garrison had laid on a landing craft to get across to Ajax Bay. This is where Dr. Rick Jolly's Field Hospital was set up in an abandoned concrete abattoir. The combined medical teams gave it the endearing name: 'The Red & Green Life Machine' after their maroon and green berets. It holds many memories for those with burns, blast and gunshot wounds and those who cared for them. Famously, it was attacked, leaving two unexploded bombs close to those working there. Courageously, the medical teams carried on regardless.

The Royal Standard Flies

Back in Stanley, we passed Government House with pride. The Royal Standard was flying, a rare sight indeed. We watched Coronation Street - and then visited the pubs. In the Globe it was Karaoke Night! I like a good sing song, which my old mates from 3 Para will vouch for! Microphone in hand, I was soon destroying whatever song I chose to sing, but hey! Its only fun! The mood was fantastic, veterans and islanders, as one, having a ball! I had a dance with a great character... Mrs Betts, mother of Terry Betts who wrote the song '255', written in memory of those who died in the war.

Day Three - Liberation Monument Service

We dressed in our best for the parade at the Liberation Monument. It was cool and sunny. Terry Peck was anxious to get everyone into position for the arrival of the Governor and HRH. Islanders turned out in force. There were hundreds from town and camp. The Falkland Islands Defence Force (FIDF)

provided an Honour Guard in best uniforms. They stood with rifles muzzle down, heads bowed and perfectly still, impressing even the guardsmen among us.

The Royal British Legion and our own SAMA Standards were to my right. Kenny Dawkins our Standard Bearer, did an excellent job then and later. Well done Kenny!

HE and HRH arrived, and the service began with the National Anthem. We all sang with pride. HMS Leeds Castle was anchored just behind us. She is a veteran of the war and must have been a strange sight for the few Leeds Castle veterans with us.

Following welcome, hymns and prayers, poems were read out by Dr. Rick Jolly and Capt Martin Reed. Rick read his own version of the WWI poem 'In Flanders Fields'. A very moving poem. This time, Rick used the words 'In Falklands Fields' and scattered poppies. Along our front rank many had tears rolling unashamedly down their cheeks. A glance up at the people surrounding the monument showed the same.

We went through the traditional Acts of Remembrance, The Last Post, Silence and the laying of wreaths, with a lament from our piper Paddy. It was most poignant when our Next of Kin (bereaved) pilgrims laid wreaths. Widows, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, come to pay their own homage in a most emotional act in front of so many people.

At the end, the Governor and HRH came along the ranks to meet and greet the pilgrims. What began as a rather formal and stiff occasion soon broke into gales of laughter. Someone, (no names no pack drill) broke wind and was clearly noticed by HRH. A shout went up 'I'm Spartacus!' Followed by another person declaring, 'I'm Spartacus!' HRH was highly amused. He is a veteran and member of SAMA and clearly enjoys the same 'service' sense of humour. The mood was now one of high spirits as HRH met as many of those present as possible.

Fishing Interlude

The day was warm and sunny. We got a picnic and went fishing with Debs Ford, Ralph (Nobby) Clarke ex 3 Para, his host Maggie Battersby and her mum Nora Smith. SAMA film maker David MacCreedy and cameraman Frazer Reid joined us to film the fishing and get some 'sound bites'.

Our three car convoy left on the road to Teal Inlet. We passed the wreckage of the Argentine Chinook helicopter shot down in '82 and stopped for a nose about. David filmed this. Close by is the wreck of an Argentine Puma helicopter. We had pillaged a quantity of 7.62mm ammunition from this prior to the battle for Mt. Longdon.

Just after Estancia, we came across a pleasant inlet where we fished for a while. The tide was going out and we never



Denzil Connick with SAMA film-maker David McCreedy on their fishing trip near Estancia House, from where the assault on Mt. Longdon began. *Photo: Debbie Ford*



Above: 3 Para RSM in 1982, Laurie Ashbridge, by the Liberation Monument.



Above Right: The Commemoration Service in progress at the Liberation Monument.

Right: Close-up of the Veterans just before the Commemoration service.

Above photos by Nigel Hawks

Below: The Duke of York, Governor Donald Lamont and military leaders salute before laying their wreaths *Photo: Kevin Clapp*



The clergy who provided spiritual leadership during the pilgrimage. Left to right they are: Father A.Hayes, who is an '82 veteran himself; the Reverend Ken Newton, Chaplain to the Seamans Mission; RAF Chaplain, the Reverend Olanrewaju; The Reverend David Devenney who fought in the Falklands war and took holy orders later; the Reverend Alistair McHaffie, Rector of Christ Church, and Vicar of Saint Mary's, Monsignor Michael McPartland.

Photo: Nigel Hawks



Left: Three Royal Marines pay their respects. *Photo: K.Clapp*

caught a thing. Still, this was of no consequence as we enjoyed our picnic, sat on the soft grass talking and relaxing.

On our way back we looked at the penguins at Gypsy Cove. Some of the nests, made from holes in the ground, had a penguin inside, but most were vacant. This was because a seal had been disturbing the colony, eating the penguins. The errant seal was nowhere to be seen.

After a most enjoyable day out, it was on to the public reception at the HQ of the FIDF. It was bursting with islanders and veterans. Tables groaned under beer and food. People stood talking and gesturing, in a tremendous atmosphere.

HRH arrived and moved among us talking with those lucky enough to get close to him. After a couple of hours, I got a lift to The Narrows Bar. Here the Fighting Pigs were playing their mix of country, rock & blues and popular music. They can do well at any venue. I was chuffed to be given a T-shirt with the band's motif. I finally crawled into bed exhausted.

Day Four (Remembrance Sunday)

I awoke to find Islander Philip Miller chatting to Mush and Alan. Philip is an old friend who as a very young man assisted my battalion by driving the tractors and sledges carrying our Milan missiles. Recently married to his lovely wife Sheena, Philip runs his farm on Cape Dolphin, a very beautiful part of East Falkland. He was recently elected Councillor.

Ready to go again, we met at Christchurch Cathedral for the service preceding the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service at the Stanley Cross of Sacrifice.

The cathedral, whilst it is a cathedral, is only the size of your average village church. It was packed with local people and veterans in the company of HRH. There was an overspill in the nearby church hall. Connected by speakers, the church service was relayed live to all outside the church.

This over, we marched the short distance to the Cross of



Above: Veterans march to the Cross of Sacrifice for the service (below).
Photos: Brian Smith, Daily Telegraph



Sacrifice. Led by the Standards, serving troops, the FIDF and sea cadets, we marched with the band playing. We were clapped and cheered by islanders along the route.

We were now paying our respects to all who died for the Commonwealth in both world wars, as well as those who died in 1982. The Roll of Honour was read out. It was clear that the losses per head in the Falklands had been very high compared with other nations. It shows how proudly British these islands have always been; a point worth remembering.

Memorial Wood

The service over, we marched to Memorial Wood, and each collected a little poppy cross to be placed by its appropriate tree. Each tree was in memory of one of the 255 killed from the Task Force and the three Islanders. We each went to find our tree and, with one of the children there to accompany us, planted the cross.

There were some strange coincidences. We had collected our crosses at random, none of us knew which tree or person it



Royal Navy veterans by Memorial Wood Photo Nigel Hawks

belonged to until we looked at the map. But a few of the chaps actually got crosses belonging to close friends. Mine was for Neil Grose, killed on Mt. Longdon with 3 Para. I had a letter from Ann Grose, Neil's mother, just before we left for the islands with a special request. It reads as follows:

Dear Denzil, When we met in June you spoke of putting crosses from relatives in the Falklands when you visit in November. As you know, Neil was with you at Mt. Longdon. If appropriate, please leave the following message on a cross.

Neil - much loved son and brother, remembered always, constantly in our thoughts and dreams... Mum, Mark and Debbie.

For me to actually pick Neil's cross at random and to have his mother's message in my pocket, is to me, more than coincidence. I believe God had a hand in this. There were other similar strange 'coincidences'.

That afternoon, we went to the FIDF for another fine reception. It included the presentations of cheques to SAMA from Captain Tam Noble 2i/c of the Resident Infantry Company posted from the Parachute Regiment. Men from Tam's Company had marched from MPA to Stanley and rowed on a machine a distance equivalent to around both East and West Falkland Islands. Tam is an old mate, who was a Corporal with 3 Para in 82. Now a Captain, Tam is fiercely proud of his Regiment and its part in the '82 war. During his six months on the islands, he often took young servicemen and women on battle field tours, imparting his intimate knowledge to them, particularly on Mt. Longdon. His crowning glory, at the end of his tour, was to parachute jump with his platoon onto Goose Green! 'Airborne all the way!' Tam joined the veterans on many activities during the pilgrimage.



Left: Deniz is baptised on Mt. Longdon by '82 veteran the Rev David Devenney. Above with 3-Para veteran Mike (Mush) Bateman. *Photos: Nigel Hawks*

There were presentations from individual pilgrims. Phil Adkins presented the FIDF with a Welsh Miner's 'Davey Lamp'. A limited edition print of the two posthumous VC winners of the war, Col. 'H' Jones and Sgt Ian McKay, signed by the widow and mother respectively, was also presented.

After a strongly emotional few days, this was a good opportunity to decompress over a few 'more' beers; chatting with serving personnel from MPA, the FIDF and locals.

Day Five (Mt. Longdon & Baptism)

Another special day. I would once again visit Mt. Longdon and be finally baptised into the Christian Church.

The idea of baptism came to me on the flight down to the islands. Sat in the row of seats behind me was old friend Rev. David Devenney. Like me in 1982, he was a JNCO, but with 42 Commando RM. Like me, he had sailed south on the Canberra. When we cross-decked to our assault ships for the landings, we shook hands and wished each other well for what we were to face. We never saw or heard of each other again until David joined SAMA 15 years later. He had found inner peace in God. Not only that, he had studied theology at university and been ordained a Church of Scotland minister.

I am not very religious, but I am a 'believer'. I was shocked to find out I had never been christened as a child. None of my brothers had either. Mother and dad thought it would be better left to personal choice as we grew up. Since I learned of this I felt I needed to get baptised - to make a statement that I do believe in God and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thinking of David assisting the other chaplains during our various services, it came to me that I would like him to baptise me in the Falklands. David thought this a splendid idea, but wanted to chat through the commitments and reasons behind this very important personal event. As he correctly pointed out, this is a personal contract with God himself, and not to be taken lightly! He wanted to be sure that I was doing it for the right reasons. I satisfied his searching questions. He also sought advice and permission from Rev. Alistair McHaffie at Stanley Cathedral. The formalities taken care of, we set the date and place for the summit of Mt. Longdon, under the stainless steel cross, for Monday 11th November 2002.

On Mt. Longdon would be all the 3 Para lads on the pilgrimage, some of the Next of Kin, these being Dick and Gareth Jones (father and brother of Craig who was killed by the shell that wounded me), Geoffrey Crow (father of my great pal John Crow killed at the height of the battle), our great friend



Phil Adkins (left), who fought as a 17 year old on Mt. Longdon, by the foxhole he and two others took over from the defeated Argentines, and then sheltered in under shellfire. Like so many veterans, he was anxious to visit the site of his action. On the right is Islander Patrick Watts, who was radio announcer in 1982. *Photo: Patrick Watts*



Welsh Guardsman John "No Toes" Jones on top of Mount Tumbledown, which he climbed using his artificial legs "as a tribute to the Jocks who fought on the mountain". John was involved in the operation for Mount Harriet, but tragically lost both legs in an accident just after the Argentine surrender. *Photo: Patrick Watts*



3 Para Veterans gather on the summit of Mount Longdon. *Photo: Debbie Ford.* Below: 3 Para Veterans at the Granite Memorial just below the summit of Mt. Longdon, with metal poppies for every life lost. The gold medallions later presented to the Queen can be seen in their hands, and in the hands of Welsh Guardsman John Jones opposite. *Photo: Nigel Hawks*



and 'Honorary' Paratrooper, Terry Peck, Phil and Sheena Miller, Tony and Ailsa Heathman (it was Ailsa's birthday too!), Debs Ford, some media followers and our tireless drivers.

This would be my fourth visit to Mt. Longdon, but, for most, it would be the first, including Mush Bateman, with me in the Landrover. I sensed the atmosphere change as we got closer. We began to recognise land marks and of course, the many shell holes now full of dark peaty water.

We gathered about the great silver cross on the summit. Laurie Ashbridge, our RSM in 82, organised us into a formal group to observe the silence for the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. David said a few words as a service and wreaths were laid, one by Mush and myself on behalf of the Patriot MC of which we are both members. It was eerie to hear the distinctive voice of Laurie Ashbridge where over twenty

years before, he had been heard asking of our welfare following the battle. He used our first names then too, something I remember! Some were overcome with emotion as we hugged each other, a sign of the huge bonds that exist between this unique brotherhood.

Then we settled down for my baptism. I sat under the cross. David stood to my side, bible in hand. The words of the traditional baptism were read. I answered the questions and made my commitment to God. David poured water from the cup of a thermos flask onto my bowed head as he spoke the words of baptism. It was cold and windy, but I felt true inner warmth. I know too that those in our company were as moved as anyone could be. It simply felt right and proper

to be here at this special place, at this time, surrounded not just by my living friends, but also by the spirit of dead friends... what could be better than that?

We then went about the old position to reflect and take in the wonderful views from the top of Mt. Longdon. A FIGAS plane was flying around with other pilgrims on local sight seeing flights. We waved and cheered as they came close.

Following some lunch, nips from hip flasks, and a whole bottle of whisky brought by the Millers, we slowly began our journeys back to Stanley, some possibly for the last time, but for others, myself included, till the next time, maybe with my children to show them where it all happened for their old man!

That night Sheena Miller cooked us home made sausages and mash with onion gravy. We ate well and went out to the pub again. It was packed.



Welsh Guards Pilgrims at the memorial to those who lost their lives on the Sir Galahad at Port Pleasant Photo: Rick Jolly

Day Six (Fly Fishing on the Malo and Pedro)

Today I would be having a day for myself. No memorials, no battlefields or official visits and functions, the day was clear for me to fish some of the most productive sea trout rivers to be found anywhere in the world, total bliss!

I went with Pete Lygo (ex 3 Para). He caught the 'bug' (excuse the pun) to fly fish from me last year on Exmoor where I taught a number of SAMA members who suffer from PTSD how to fish. Fishing is good therapy for stress, and here in the Falklands, you would be hard pressed to find more unspoilt natural beauty.

Our guide was expert fly fisher Paul Chapman. He moved to the islands from his native Yorkshire after falling in love with them while on contract as a decorator. Now he is a respected Falkland's citizen, and member of the Malo Fly Fishing Club.

Time flies when you are enjoying yourself and it was soon time to leave. On our way back, we visited the Heathmans at Estancia. We were pleased to see they had a house full.

Back at my digs there was just enough time to change and get a taxi to Government House. The taxi services in Stanley were working 'overtime' and did a great job at very reasonable fares. The standard fare is £2.50 anywhere in town.

Governor's Reception

We were greeted by Governor Donald Lamont and his charming wife Lynda. Government House layout is now quite familiar to me. It is very British in its design and furnishings. Pilgrims visiting for the first time were impressed too - with the house and the hospitality of our host. Donald made sure that plenty of food and drink was available and this was brought by very attentive house staff.

Our Pilgrimage was one of the last official events for the Governor. He had already served as Governor for well over three years and had an extension to be there for the pilgrimage and royal visit. I know personally how interested he was that these should be a success and was in regular contact with him

throughout his Governorship. I hope to remain in contact with Donald and Lynda, who I regard as friends. I would like to thank them for being such wonderful hosts and for taking a keen and helpful hand in the pilgrimage plans.

Ours was the last of the Governor's receptions for the Pilgrimage - and an opportunity for some speeches. The Governor made the first, and it went down well. He came over as genuine, which I already knew, and which others recognised too. David Brown presented him with another framed and signed print of the two Falklands War VC winners Lt. Col 'H' Jones and Sgt. Ian McKay. This will probably hang in Government House. Dick Jones presented the Governor with a bottle of rare Scotch from a limited number specially labelled for The Parachute Regiment, allegedly the last bottle! The Reception was a great success. Our last night ended back at the pubs, many 'goodbye' drinks and a very late night. Tomorrow, we were going home - all too soon. A rather sad atmosphere pervaded that this was the case.

The Return Journey

We were awake early and frantically packed. Marvin was on hand to assist. I had far more things than when I arrived. I carefully packed a beautiful limited edition gift set of Falkland Islands crystal glasses made to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the war. The owners of this Falklands business, Keith & Marilyn Grimmer, gave me set number 82 - very special indeed. Keith is a great fisherman too!

Everyone had to be at the HQ FIDF by 0730 to be collected by the coaches. Governor Lamont made a great farewell speech, as did Gary, the champion of our Transport Committee, who had pulled off a minor miracle. The Governor, assisted by two children, then presented SAMA, on behalf of the Falklands people with a copy of the document giving the Freedom of the Islands to British Forces who had served and continue to serve in the Falklands to maintain the hard won freedom and peace that is enjoyed by everyone today and in the future.

Rick Jolly accepted this and thanked everyone for the wonderful time we all had on this very special pilgrimage. Special mention was made of those who had helped in the planning, in particular, Terry Peck and his team, FIGO and the many ordinary Islanders who had given up their homes, vehicles, time and money to make the venture possible.

Rick then presented the Governor, for the people of the Falklands, solid silver medallions showing the obverse and reverse of the South Atlantic Medal, struck in the Royal Mint by permission of the Queen. These were in recognition of the many Islanders who by passive resistance or otherwise, defied the Argentinians and who never received recognition with a South Atlantic Medal. Her Majesty received solid gold versions of these medallions at a special audience later.

The roller coaster of emotions now finally spilled over. We boarded our coaches and paid last farewells to our many friends, with tears and hugging and lumps in throats. We left Stanley with a police escort, and were waved the whole way out by the many people who turned out to see us all off.

On my coach, we were kept from crashing down too hard by Laurie (Blandy) Bland (ex 3 Para). He is a natural comedian and found a microphone lying idle... deadly mistake! Blandy entertained us with quips in his fine Yorkshire accent as though he were a tour guide in the Yorkshire Dales.

In the airport, Paddy struck up on his bagpipes. I laid my crutches on the floor as crossed swords and Blandy danced a 'highland fling' between them, much to everyone's delight.

A good number of islanders had followed us to the airport to wave us off. These farewells were very emotional. Hugging Philip & Sheena Miller my own waterworks began and I had to make my excuses to try and be alone.

Claudette handed me the flag of the Falkland Islands that once flew outside the Councillors' Office and said it could now be used by SAMA to drape over the top table at official functions. We had a more immediate use for it! We formed a group and posed for a photograph, the flag held out by the front row - one for the album!

After we took off, the Captain did a low pass over MPA. The mood was subdued but we cheered up a little at Rio for refuelling. There we dropped off Col. Mike Bowles and Richard Morris. Mike was a Major in 1982 with the RCT Port Squadron and is now Military Attaché at the British Embassy there. He kindly bought us all a round of coffees and beers. Richard Morris an ex RM now lives in Florida and was catching his connection on from Rio the next day. Richard is the SAMA Rep in the USA.

Banjul

We continued on to Banjul in the Gambia. The Captain and crew had spent the pilgrimage with us, and gave us a moving speech about how privileged they had been. We had blown a tyre on landing due to runway debris. This delayed us eight hours! We had a replacement tyre, but no compressor to inflate it. Messages were sent to the UK that we would be very late. Rescue came from a passing Russian Ilyushin. They had a compressor at a lock-up used for maintenance at the airport.

The Gift of a House

The flight to Gatwick seemed to take for ever. Before we landed, Rick Jolly said a few words and so did John Jackson our welfare officer. He announced the amazing gift of a house on the Falklands by Falklands Councillors and farmers Roger and Norma Edwards at Fox Bay on West Falkland. I said a few



Rick Jolly with Tiphane May and Teraaka Middleton, who presented SAMA with a cheque for £400 raised by the Community School, which was gratefully received. Photo: Nigel Hawks

words on how fantastic the week had been for me and how I knew how much it had meant to all concerned. Mr. Gerald Howarth, MP for Aldershot, with us for the pilgrimage, told of his own feelings of privilege on being with us, and that he would quickly report back to his colleagues at Westminster on its success - and encourage them to support future similar ventures.

David Morgan, Phil Adkins and I caught the bus back to our hotel to collect my car and travel back to Wales. I arrived home at midnight - totally exhausted.

Early Aftermath

In the weeks since, I have been moved by the many letters and e-mails from pilgrims, wives and family telling of the great benefits the pilgrimage has brought them. Dr. Morgan O'Connell, our in-house psychiatrist and a 1982 veteran himself, is collating the questionnaires we all completed. This will form part of valuable research into the therapeutic values of conducting a pilgrimage in the way SAMA has.

In the future, hundreds more Falklands War veterans and families will travel to the islands (in smaller groups) based on the 2002 experience. In the long term, many thousands of veterans stand to benefit from this. In the words of one pilgrim from the Welsh Guards: 'One week in the Falklands has done me more good than a whole year of counselling'.

My own last words are these: "No one can be as proud as I am on seeing the SAMA Falklands Pilgrimage become the reality and success that it has. The hard work that it took by many dedicated people has been rewarded with the 'well being and healing' it has brought to the hundreds of veterans, families and Falkland Islanders. I am proud to be associated with SAMA, the Falkland Islands, and with the on-going success of all our endeavours. Thank you".

The Beginning of The End



Presentation to the Queen

The SAMA medallions in gold showing the obverse and reverse of the South Atlantic Medal were presented to The Queen by three leaders of SAMA: Chairman and co-founder, Dr. Rick Jolly, Secretary and co-founder Denzil Connick and Lt. Colonel Tony Davies, who was founder Treasurer of SAMA. They were accompanied by Miss Sukey Cameron, Falklands Government London Representative.

The Queen was also presented with a photograph album of the Pilgrimage including photographs of her son the Duke of York, who fought in the 1982 war. She was delighted with these gifts.

The Queen was pleased by what the SAMA veterans told her - particularly Dr. Jolly's comment that they had restored to their rightful place the pictures of her that Islanders had been forced to take down at gunpoint.

Photograph Courtesy of the Press Association



Falkland Islands Honours

As well as the MBE awarded to Claudette Anderson in the New Years Honours List for public service in the Falkland Islands, a knighthood goes to Professor Lawrence Freedman, who is writing the official history of the 1982 Falklands War. He is Professor of War Studies at London University and is given the award for services to strategic studies.



Claudette Anderson, who works in the Government Secretariat in Stanley, has been involved in organising a number of visits by Royalty and other prominent personalities.

An MBE also goes to Leonard Yeatman, for services to the HMS Ardent Association. The frigate was bombed and sunk in the Falklands War, captained by Commander Alan West, now Admiral Sir Alan West, First Sea Lord.

Jubilee Gift to the Queen

The people of the Falklands have presented the Queen with a unique Jubilee gift - a glass-top, wooden occasional table with a tapestry showing the Falkland Islands coat of arms.



The tapestry was made up of stitches applied individually by 300 Islanders, who were invited to "make a stitch for The Queen". Others were invited to make a charity donation. Members of the British Forces serving in the Falklands also contributed. Additional donations raised over £1,300 towards the Blue Bus for the elderly in the Islands. The Governor's wife, Lynda Lamont, with the local Craft Group organised the tapestry and the charity fund raising, while Councillor Roger Edwards crafted the table.

Falklands' outstanding student



Daniel Fowler of Stanley has been presented as this year's outstanding Falklands overseas scholar with the Bill Hunter Christie Memorial Prize in London, watched by his

girlfriend, Anna Luxton, who won the prize last year.

Daniel, son of Falklands Tourist Manager, John Fowler, and Stanley teacher Veronica Fowler, received the prize, a world atlas, at the AGM from Mrs Merle Christie, widow of Bill Hunter-Christie, who led the campaign to protect Falklands sovereignty.

Daniel is studying Biological Sciences at Edinburgh University. In a successful year, he has won two gold medals for rowing with the University Boat Club.

As a former winning team member of the Times Educational Supplement Newsway Competition, he also helped look after four young students from the Falklands as they collected this year's Newsway competition prize. And he took part in a month's expedition in Peru, in a small village, clearing ruins.

He hopes eventually to return to the Falklands to work as a scientist in the fisheries department, where he spent part of the Falklands winter doing work experience.

Anna, who is studying physiotherapy at London's Brunel University, posing happily for pictures with Daniel, was delighted that her boy friend had been awarded the prize she herself had won the previous year.



Islander Lisa Newman and Charles Lockhart were married in Hythe, Kent, in September. They are hoping to live in Saffron Walden. Some 80 guests attended, some travelling from the Falklands



Falklands youngsters test a bridge on the new coastal path between East Stanley and the port complex, FIPASS. The path should be usable all year round by cyclists. *Photo: Penguin News*



Falklands schoolchildren by the beacon at Bull Point near North Arm while on a week's camping trip.



The group Vocalise performing at the excellent Community School variety show. *Photo Penguin News*



Julie Clarke and Johnathan Ford who competed at the Winmau World Masters Championship at Bridlington, Yorkshire, in November. Both played well, gaining valuable experience. *Darts Photos: K.Clapp*



Jane Clement winner of the individual Darts League and other prizes. Governor Lamont celebrates with one of these.



Battle Day in the Falklands

Above: The new Governor, Mr. Howard Pearce, inspects the RAF band on Battle Day, and (Right) the Falkland Islands Defence Force contingent.

Below: The Royal Navy contingent presents arms.

Photos: Ministry of Defence

Below Right: The RAF band leads the march past.



Wildlife Weekend for Conservation Watch Group. Falklands youngsters on a visit to Port Stephens and Beaver, Staats and New Islands all courtesy of Jerome Poncet's yacht *Golden Fleece*, which is visible in the background.

Falklands pupils celebrate their last day at the Falklands Community School some of them in St Trinians style fancy dress.
Photo: Penguin News

Memories of War



Island youngster with "Noddy" Dunn at San Carlos



Unidentified Islanders and a Marine at Port San Carlos immediately after the landings there.



Young Islanders (one of them Andrew Anderson) help troops to dig in at Port San Carlos



Suzanne McCormick and Kia Miller helping out at Port San Carlos after the Liberation



Colour Sgt Terry Morrison of HQ Signals Sqdn meets his mother, Islander Mrs. Marg Morrison.



The murderous Alfredo Astiz surrenders to Captain Nick Barker at South Georgia. Astiz had an electrically controlled mine prepared at the spot agreed for Captain Barker's helicopter to land in an attempt to murder him. Wisely, Capt. Barker decided to land elsewhere. Astiz is still wanted by the French Government for throwing two French nuns out of his helicopter and by Sweden for murdering 17-year-old Swedish girl Dagmar Hagelin.



The price of freedom. 2-Para buries its fallen comrades at Goose Green.



Margaret Neilson and son Harold with a Royal Marine.
All Photos courtesy of the Royal Marines Museum



Anya Cofre (nee Smith) and Diane Hall (nee Cheek) with Royal Marines. In the background Stanley Police Station.



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Experienced New Governor

The new Governor of the Falklands, Howard Pearce, says he feels it a privilege to have been appointed. He is returning to an area he knew well during military rule in the 1970s in Argentina, where he was desk officer for Falklands Affairs in the British Embassy in Buenos Aires. He visited the Falklands three times, in 1975, 1976 and 1978.

He is favourably impressed with the Falklands of today. In an interview with the Newsletter, Mr Pearce said: "Many things have not changed – the remote location and stark beauty of the landscape and the warmth of the people, enormously kind and hospitable.

But there are great changes and improvements, with new roads, a new hospital and more up-to-date air service. The most significant change is in the outlook of the community, now so much more positive and full of optimism for the future, and there are good grounds for that. The Falklands now has tremendous self-confidence, dynamism, and an entrepreneurial outlook. The community has embraced the good aspects of change with enthusiasm and many very impressive young people are returning from their education abroad to work there, which is tremendously encouraging".

Falklands Sovereignty – "Rock Solid and Clear"

On sovereignty, he applauds the British Government's tough policy. "It is absolutely clear sovereignty is not on the agenda. The wishes of the Islanders are paramount and will determine their future. The British Government is absolutely consistent in its commitment to respect the Islanders' wishes. I am entirely confident that during my time as Governor the position will be absolutely rock-solid and clear".

Recalling his experience of Argentina 25 years ago, he says it was an extremely sad and tragic time. The death throes and anarchy of the Peronist government were replaced by the military junta that not only launched the 1982 invasion but was responsible for massive human rights violations. He believes that Argentina's present economic difficulties are in no one's interests and hopes it can get back on a more positive course.

More responsibility for Councillors

Mr. Pearce speaks as a very experienced diplomat, more knowledgeable about Argentina than many of his predecessors. He has completed three years as High Commissioner in Malta and previously served as Head of Central European Department in the FCO in London, deputy head of personnel, and various posts abroad including Hungary and Kenya. He also spent a sabbatical year in America at Harvard University.

He is excited to be tackling new challenges. "The British Government" he says, "is keen to devolve more and more responsibility to the elected representatives of overseas territories. Falklands Councillors take decisions, which is right and proper, and I look forward to a very close and co-operative and consultative relationship between the Governor and the Councillors".

"It is not for the Governor to intervene in every detail of life or every decision. Ultimately the Governor is responsible to the British Government for good governance in the Islands. But there are more sophisticated ways of delivering that rather than getting involved in every decision... The trick lies in maintaining everyone's confidence in the Governor, which is not always easy".



Newsletter Co-Editor Harold Briley interviews the new Governor, Mr. Howard Pearce.

A hobby

Mr. Pearce is 53 and single and was born in Twickenham. He is affable and pleasant but speaks with the precision of a man who has degrees in law and international law from Cambridge University. His hobbies are reading and music, and he is very interested in wildlife from his time in Kenya.

He also plans to take up a new Falklands hobby — fly-fishing, encouraged by Admiral Kit Layman, commander of the frigate HMS Argonaut in 1982 and later Commander British Forces in the Falklands, who is a regular visitor and fly-fisher. "I hope he'll pass on some tips", says Mr. Pearce. **HWB**

All Change at Christ Church too

The Reverend Paul Sweeting has been appointed to the post of Rector of Christ Church Cathedral. He will take up his position in March, when the Rev Alastair McHaffie, leaves.

Paul is married to Maxine, who is a qualified primary teacher and they have two sons, Jonty aged 6 and Adam 4 (See photograph below). Paul has been curate at Saint Gabriel's Church in Blackburn. He visited the Falklands for two weeks last November/December to acquaint himself with the people and place. He told the Newsletter that he was most impressed and is looking forward to the job.



New Minister for Latin America and Falklands

A new Foreign Office Minister has been appointed to take responsibility for Latin American and Falklands issues.

He is Bill Rammell, aged 43, formerly an assistant whip in the House of Commons. He replaces Dr Denis MacShane, who has been promoted as Minister for Europe.

Mr Rammell has been a MP (for Harlow) since 1997 and, unlike his predecessor, has no previous experience of the Foreign Office. Dr McShane had worked as a parliamentary private secretary to several Ministers.

Mr Rammell will also have other areas of responsibility including China and Hong Kong, the United Nations, and maritime, energy and environmental issues.



French speaker interested in Europe

Mr Rammell is a French speaker with an honours degree in French and politics from Cardiff University where he was President of the Students' Union in 1982. He lists his countries of interest as France, Sweden, the USA, Germany, Hungary and the Netherlands, and his "special interests" as Europe, education, housing, economic policy, media and sport. There is no mention of Latin America.

He married in 1983 and has children. He has had a varied professional career, as a British Rail management trainee, a National Union of Journalists' official, Head of Basildon Council Youth Services, and a business manager at two London Universities.

New Chief Executive Appointed

It is all change in several top jobs in the Falkland Islands. As well as getting a new Foreign Office Minister for Latin America, there is a new Governor, a new Chief Executive, a new Commander British Forces, a new Rector for Christchurch Cathedral in Stanley, and, in Britain, a new chairman of the South Atlantic Medal Association.

The new Chief Executive is 50-year-old Chris Simpkins, a local government expert, who replaces Dr. Michael Blanch next March. He brings to the post expertise in a diverse agricultural environment in Lincolnshire where he has been Chief Executive of South Holland District Council for 14 years, believed to have been the youngest local government chief executive in Britain at the age of 36.

His new post could hardly be a greater contrast. From serving 38 councillors and 75,000 people in 285 square miles of mainly rural Lincolnshire, he will have only eight Councillors in the Falklands, and only 2,400 people, but a vastly greater area of 4,700 square miles. But there are similarities in the promotion of agriculture, horticulture and food processing.

He relishes what he calls an amazing challenge in a fascinating role and a unique environment. "It fulfils many ambitions", he says. "Adventure, travel and an opportunity to promote a unique country with tremendous potential".

He is excited at the prospect of developing the Falklands organic food potential in what may become the world's first officially designated organic country.

"Its clean, green image is eminently marketable", he says, while acknowledging the obstacles, not least the long supply route to the markets of Europe.

His experience in Lincolnshire is apt. He created Britain's first Rural Action Zone, to attract increased resources to rural development. The aim has been to break down barriers between different organisations to overcome the inequalities of rural life and collectively use their finances in a more intelligent way for real collaboration. This pioneering idea is being increasingly adopted throughout Britain.



He left school at 18, and studied in his own time to gain a Diploma in Municipal Administration. His Falklands appointment is for three years with an option for a two-year extension if invited.

The Chairman of the Appointments Panel, Councillor Richard Cockwell, said: "We were very impressed by Chris Simpkins. He will bring considerable experience to managing government". Former governor, Mr Lamont said: "He is well equipped to take forward with Councillors their plans for modernisation and development of the economy".

He was urged to apply for the Falklands post by his wife and encouraged by the experience of his former Finance Director in South Holland, Keith Padgett, who moved to the Falklands as Deputy Financial Secretary, and spoke in glowing terms about life there.

Mr Simpkins' wife, Denise, is an education adviser involved in projects to raise public awareness of higher education opportunities for those aged over nineteen who have missed out on education earlier, giving them a second chance to learn and to realise their full potential. Denise enthused about their brief visit to the Falklands. "We had an amazing interview, wonderful week, seeing the wildlife and meeting so many friendly people".

Mr Simpkins' two children both want to become doctors. His daughter, Carley, is in the final year of her medical degree at the University of Wales. His son, Gareth, who already has a Psychology degree from Bristol, plans to study medicine after travelling the world in a journey that has so far taken him to Brazil, Argentina, Chile and New Zealand.

The Falklands are an ideal environment for the Simpkins' hobbies. "We enjoy simple pleasures", he said. "We enjoy wildlife and walking with our dog, Mac, an Irish setter, who'll be arriving by sea. We enjoy wide open spaces -- and you don't get much wider than the Falkland Islands".

Chris Simpkins also hopes to find time to indulge in another of his hobbies -- wind surfing. He won't get much stronger winds or rougher surf than in the South Atlantic!

Gibraltar Referendum

On November 7th, and by an overwhelming margin, 98.97% to 1.03%, Gibraltarians rejected the idea of any sharing of their British sovereignty with Spain. The referendum question was: "Do you approve of the principle that Britain and Spain should share sovereignty over Gibraltar". The result was:

Yes 187
No 17,900

Turnout was 87.92% of registered voters. Feelings ran so high that voting boxes were even brought to hospital bedsides!

Opening Pandora's Box

The decision to call a referendum was provoked by Foreign Secretary Jack Straw's surprise announcement on July 12th that Britain was willing to share sovereignty over Gibraltar. This immediately led to the Perejil Island crisis as Morocco moved to threaten the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.

Just days later, the Basque Nationalist Party, PNV, also called for a sovereignty deal for the Basque country where terrorists have been fighting for decades to break away from Spain. There may now be a similar referendum there. Shortly after the Gibraltar referendum, the Catalan nationalist party, Esquerra Republicana, sent its congratulation to the Gibraltar Government.

In the U.K. the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and many other bodies have criticised the Government's actions over Gibraltar.

The Constitutional Pledge

In the Gibraltar Constitution Order 1969, given at the Court of Holyroodhouse on the 23rd May 1969. The preamble reads:

"Whereas Gibraltar is part of Her Majesty's dominions and Her Majesty's Government have given assurances to the people of Gibraltar that Gibraltar will remain part of Her Majesty's dominions unless and until an Act of Parliament otherwise provides and furthermore that Her Majesty's Government will never enter into arrangements under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another state against their freely and democratically expressed wishes".

Spanish Anger

Gibraltarians reported a number of ugly incidents immediately after the referendum in La Linea, the town just across the border. Most were just cases of verbal abuse and insults, but two groups of Gibraltarians were physically assaulted.

Spain's politicians and media have continued to vilify Gibraltar. Spain, which has already succeeded in damaging Gibraltar's financial status, is now trying to destroy Gibraltar's bunkering industry. Falsehoods that Gibraltar was somehow responsible for the disastrous sinking of the oil tanker *Prestige* have been common, but have been shown to be smears and forcefully dismissed by the British Government.

Information on Gibraltar is available on the following websites:

www.gibraltar.gov.gi For the Gibraltar Government office.

www.gibraltar.gov.uk For the Gibraltar Gov UK office.

www.iberianews.com For Gibraltar's leading news website.

www.chronicle.gi For Gibraltar's leading newspaper.

www.panorama.gi For Gibraltar's second circulation paper.

Information can also be obtained in Britain from: Mr. Michael Brufal, Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society, E-mail lendinez@aol.com. Tel: 01252 652030.



Gibraltarians demonstrating against any sovereignty deal against their will.

Photo: J.L.Mascarenhas

History

The Romans occupied southern Spain, but not Gibraltar, until defeated by the Visigoths in the Fifth Century AD.

In 711, the Moorish leader Tarik-ibn-Zeyad landed on an unoccupied Gibraltar, which derives its name from him. In Arabic it is Jebel Tarik (Tarik's Mountain). The Moors then made much of Spain Moorish until the 15th Century.

With a short break between 1309 and 1333 Gibraltar remained under Moorish control. The first town was built by order of the Caliph of Morocco, Abdul Mamen, in 1160. The Castle that still stands is Moorish.

Gibraltar was first captured by Spain in 1462 and then again in 1466. But it was captured by Anglo-Dutch forces, under Admiral Rooke, in 1704 during the War of the Spanish Succession. It was then ceded in perpetuity to Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1711. **It has therefore been British much longer than it was ever Spanish.**

Gibraltar was vital to Britain in the Seven Years, Napoleonic and many other wars. Without it in WWII, Malta would have been lost, and with it the North African Campaign. General Eisenhower's "Torch" landings in North Africa would have been impossible. Gibraltarians gave up their homes then so more Allied troops could be stationed on the Rock. By contrast, General Franco allowed enemy frogmen to be based in Algeciras, from where they attacked Gibraltar.

The Spanish claim was revived by Franco in 1963 and Gibraltar has been under serious Spanish harassment since 1967. Spain is now known to have collaborated with Argentina in its attempts to take over the Falklands through the "Memorandum of Understanding" during those same years.



General Franco who closed the border with Gibraltar in 1969, seen here with Adolf Hitler during World War Two.

The Lesson for the Falklands

No Government Can Bind Its Successors

There can be no doubt that Prime Minister Blair's promise to preserve Falklands self-determination is genuine. He has made this pledge several times as have several other Ministers.

The lesson of Gibraltar is that **no government can bind its successors**. Gibraltar has had many similar pledges too. The best known was made by Harold Wilson's Labour Government in the late sixties, when Gibraltar came under pressure from Spain - then still ruled by the hated General Franco.

The Wilson Government put a pledge (See opposite page) in the new Gibraltar Constitution in 1969. This specifically promises not to hand over Gibraltar against the wishes of the people - and is supposed to be legally binding. Just after it was promulgated, Franco shut the border completely. It stayed shut until 1985 - ten years after his death! Now Spanish bullying has paid off. The current British Government is rewarding this by conceding the principle of shared sovereignty.

We now know that FCO Minister Mr. Peter Hain actually shook hands on a shared sovereignty deal with Spain back in April, but Spanish Prime Minister Aznar rejected this before Mr. Hain could get back to London - because it included a declaration that Spain would not press on for full sovereignty and because it would have required consent from the Gibraltarians. Despite this, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw announced acceptance of the principle of shared sovereignty on July 12th.

Although other details of the negotiations are secret, newspapers have reported that Britain is not willing to share command of the 46 military installations on the Rock. Gibraltarians interpret this to mean that Britain would sacrifice them, but not the part that Britain does actually control - because this serves to defend Britain. This, and the belief that the whole process is just EU horsetrading, infuriates Gibraltarians.

Gibraltarians regard British Government claims to be acting as if to solve their problems as disingenuous, when it knows Gibraltarians would rather put up with Spanish bullying, than accept sovereignty concessions. Many believe Britain is primarily trying to solve its own problems, rather than theirs. They want Britain to defend them as vigorously as Spain defends Melilla and Ceuta (which is actually visible from Gibraltar).

It could happen to the Falklands

Islanders must always deal with Argentina in the knowledge that what is happening now to Gibraltar could one day happen to them. Mr. Blair will not be Prime Minister for ever. His successors may not honour his promises, just as he is not genuinely honouring the promises his predecessors made to Gibraltar. This particularly applies to things like oil, fishing, and communications with South America which would inevitably outlast Mr. Blair's administration. Subsequent administrations might see things differently.

Britain might one day not even have an independent foreign policy, if it is drawn yet further into the European Union. Then concessions over Gibraltar now, largely obtained by EU pressures, could be a precedent for concessions to Argentina.

Like the Memorandum of Understanding

The late sixties, when the Wilson Government was so supportive of Gibraltar, was also when it and the Foreign Office did their best to betray the Falklands to Argentina via the so-called **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**. Despite frantic Falklands opposition, this was going to indicate a British

willingness to cede Falklands sovereignty under certain circumstances, **but an undertaking to Parliament would have said that it could not be implemented without Islander consent.**

In 1968, Argentina refused to sign the MoU at the last moment, unless Britain withdrew its promise that sovereignty could not be transferred without Islander consent. This caused the process to collapse. It had, however, given Argentina the idea it could get what it wanted and was a major cause of the 1982 War. See Newsletter, January 2002, pages 20 & 21.

This is all very similar to what has happened recently over Gibraltar. Negotiations have gone on despite Gibraltarian opposition and the pledge in the Gibraltar constitution. Any resulting sovereignty agreement would have been offered to the people of Gibraltar, but would have remained hanging over them, if they had turned it down - as they surely would have. Spanish pressure would then have increased, while British politicians would have hidden behind the promise that nothing could change without Gibraltarian consent.

Now, despite the failure of Mr. Hain's deal and result of the Gibraltar referendum, the British Government is still continuing to negotiate with Spain, albeit at a much reduced level.

The Consent Fraud

In 1968, Argentina was a military dictatorship. If the MoU had been signed - and the pledge made that it could not be implemented without Islander consent, Argentina would have known that only 2,000 isolated people stood between it and Falklands sovereignty. It would have bullied the Islanders mercilessly to get this. Most would probably have chosen to emigrate. This is what "consent" would actually have meant.

Argentine Reaction

Argentine newspaper *Clarín* clearly indicated Argentina's attitude towards the Gibraltar issue. It described the situation there as: **"very important for the conflict over the Malvinas, as the Argentine government like the Spanish government doesn't accept that its sovereignty over the Islands should be ratified by a referendum of a population brought there by the occupying power"**. (See Note).

It quoted Spanish Foreign Minister, Ana Palacio, describing the referendum as **"something that cannot stand, that has no legal status and that contradicts all the resolutions of the United Nations"** (which of course it does not).

Clarín quoted Tony Blair's spokesman as saying **"there are things that cannot be avoided and that must be discussed with the peoples of Gibraltar and Spain"** - as if to say that because there was a problem over the Falklands this should be handled similarly. For the same reason, it quoted Dr. MacShane, the new Minister for Europe as saying: **"there will be no stable future for Gibraltar while the dispute continues with Spain, and important problems remain unresolved"**.

Note: Argentines like to suggest that the Falklands has a population brought there by the "occupying power" - and therefore has no rights - when the Falklands had no indigenous population at all. By contrast, Argentina was inhabited by Indians who resisted the Spanish invaders fiercely. They were largely exterminated in the so-called "Desert Campaign" in the late 1870s and early 1880s when the new breachloading Remington rifle and Spencer repeating carbine tipped the balance of power against them. This was fifty years after Britain re-established the Falkland Islands Colony.

Galtieri Dies

General Leopoldo Galtieri, the Argentine dictator who launched the Falklands War, died of heart failure following cancer of the pancreas in Buenos Aires on January 12th, aged 76.

Like so many South American military dictators, Galtieri was a graduate of the notorious Escuela de las Americas, run by the US in Panama. As Commander of the Argentine Second Corps in Rosario he was involved in the "Dirty War" when thousands of Argentines were murdered. He was the third of the military leaders, following Videla and Viola, who seized power in 1976, deposing Isabel Peron (Colonel Peron's widow).

Three days after the Argentine surrender in the Falklands, he was forced to resign. He was sentenced to twelve years in prison for incompetence in the war, but passed his sentence in relative luxury at a military base near Buenos Aires. He was released in President Menem's 1989 general amnesty.

More recently, an international warrant was issued for him for the murder of three Spanish citizens. Last year, despite the amnesties the Argentine military forced the 1983 Alfonsín government to grant, he was arrested in Argentina for the murder of Montonero guerrillas during his time as army commander in Rosario. He was under house arrest for these crimes when his final illness forced him into hospital.

Argentine newspaper *Clarín* reported on the day of his death that **Galtieri had launched the Falklands War to divert public attention from what it called the worst economic crisis since the 1930s.** The Argentine press poured scorn on Galtieri in their obituaries, and relatives of victims of the "Dirty War" defaced his grave with red paint only an hour after his funeral.



General Galtieri, last year.
Photo: Jon Freeman.

SAMA Chairman from Canberra

SAMA 82, has a new chairman - former Merchant Navy Captain Martin Reed, Chief Officer of the liner Canberra which played a vital part as a troop ship, hospital facility and floating POW camp in 1982.

He takes over from founder chairman, Doctor Rick Jolly, former Royal Navy Captain, who takes on a new role as Special Projects Officer, especially helping veterans still troubled by their experiences, and by post traumatic stress disorder.

Dr Jolly said Captain Reed's appointment acknowledged the vital part played by the Merchant Navy. He had been a keen supporter of SAMA as well as fulfilling a critical role and doing so much hard work in 1982, helping to get the fighting men to the Falklands and ashore at San Carlos. The liner, known as the Great White Whale, was in dire danger from Argentine air attack. As Chief Officer, Captain Reed was in charge of discipline, navigation and seamanship.

Martin Reed, 59, now retired from the Merchant Navy, remains on the retired list of the Royal Navy Reserve with the dormant appointment of Senior Naval Adviser. He comes from Hampshire and now lives near Oxford.

He is a founder member of SAMA and played a major part in organising the recent SAMA veterans pilgrimage to the Falkland Islands. One of Captain Reed's aims is to increase awareness of SAMA's role in helping veterans of the '82 war, and to increase membership, especially among the Merchant Navy veterans.



Falklands heroes head Royal Navy and RAF and visit Argentina



Sir Alan West

A hero of the Falklands war, Admiral Sir Alan West, whose frigate HMS Ardent was sunk by Argentine aircraft, has been appointed to head the Royal Navy as First Sea Lord. He took over in September from Admiral Sir Nigel Essenhigh.

Admiral West, 54, was commander of HMS Ardent when it was sunk on May 21,

1982, as it supported the landings at San Carlos. Twenty-two of Ardent's crew were killed. Commander West was awarded the DSC and led the Victory Parade through the City of London.

Recalling the action recently, Admiral West said: "Giving the order to abandon ship was one of the hardest decisions I have ever had to make... because you fall in love with a ship... HMS Yarmouth put her stern onto our bow because we were sinking. I stepped off onto her". He is President of the HMS Ardent Association.

He has visited the Falklands several times and also Argentina. Marked out as an outstanding officer, Admiral West's subsequent posts included Naval Secretary and Chief of Defence Intelligence. He joined the Royal Navy in 1965 and spent most of his career at sea, serving in fourteen different

ships, and commanding three of them. Since November 2000, he had been C-in-C Fleet, C-in-C East Atlantic, and Commander Allied Naval Forces North.

Sir Peter Squire

Last December Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Squire, another Falklands War veteran, met the Head of the Argentine Air force, Brigadier Walter Barbero (see below), in another move to improve relations. In 1982, Barbero had flown a Boeing 707 reconnaissance plane that Sir Peter had tried to intercept in his Harrier - without success.

Visiting the Argentine Air Force base at Tandil, Sir Peter flew an Argentine Mirage jet similar to those that Argentina used during the war.



Editors' Note: Visits by Admiral Sir Alan West and Air Marshal Sir Peter Squire offer friendship to a former enemy. The Newsletter understands such efforts to improve relations.

Sadly, this does not mean that Islanders or their supporters can lower their guard. Argentina pursues its claim to the Falklands diplomatically just as fiercely as ever.

Argentine Foreign Minister Visits

Argentine Foreign Minister, Dr Carlos Ruckauf visited Britain in November, seeing Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, and Eddie George, Head of the Bank of England. His visit was primarily to drum up support for IMF aid for Argentina.

Mr Straw said he hoped Argentina's IMF negotiations would be successful. Argentina was plunged into political and economic chaos a year ago, causing it to replace its President, renege on its international debts and devalue its currency. It has been negotiating for emergency IMF aid ever since.

Dr. Ruckauf had lunch with Mr. Bill Rammell MP, the new FCO Under-Secretary with responsibility for the Falklands and repeated Argentina's claim to the Falklands.

Britain's response was that sovereignty was "non-negotiable" - despite what Argentina sees as encouragement from the softening British stance on Spain's claim to Gibraltar.

Dr. Ruckauf was quoted in Argentine newspaper *La Nacion* as saying "I am a Malvinist. We are not going to omit this from our conversations, but there are also a great number of subjects that are important to our people" - a reference to the aid Argentina so desperately needs.

Prince of Wales a "Usurper".

Dr. Ruckauf is little known in Britain, but as Vice-President in President Menem's government criticised Prince Charles' 1999 goodwill visit to Argentina. Prince Charles had called for Falklands self-determination. Ruckauf described this as an "intolerable attitude" and said Islanders had no right to self-determination. Dr. Ruckauf also publicly called Prince Charles a "usurper". *Clarín* reported him standing by this insulting remark just a week before his visit to Britain!

Regular talks - Ruckauf's only "Conquest"

In what Argentine newspaper *Clarín* called his only "conquest", Argentina and Britain agreed to hold annual talks

at a "senior level" which would "focus on key topics on the international agenda where the United Kingdom and Argentina share mutual interests". It is not clear whether this includes the Falklands, but it did set alarm bells ringing. Just before the 1982 invasion Argentina got Britain to agree to hold regular discussions on the Falklands. Argentina intended these to lead rapidly and inevitably to sovereignty concessions. Galtieri's invasion occurred just weeks later.

Economic Plans and a Dubious Past

Dr. Ruckauf's only public event was a speech to diplomats and businessmen at Canning House, explaining Argentina's policies to cope with its appalling economic chaos. Many worried British investors attended this.

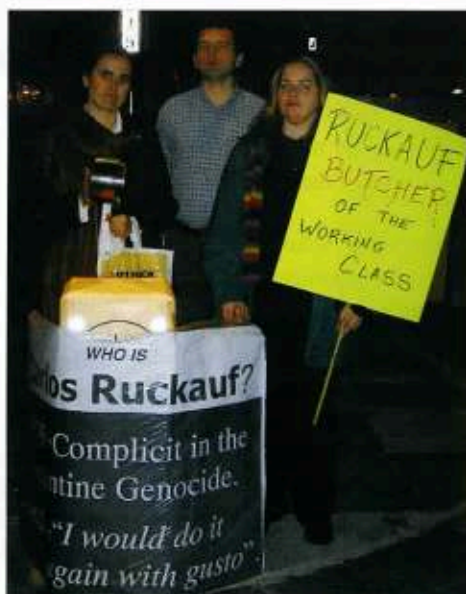
This meeting was marred by the ghost of Dr. Ruckauf's past. Outside Canning House, several Argentines (Photograph Left) with placards denounced his 1975 role as Labour Minister in the Government of Isabel Peron, when he ordered the Armed Forces to "Eliminate the activities of subversive elements". The demonstrators alleged that as a result 14 men from the Mercedes Benz factory in Buenos Aires "disappeared".

During his speech a demonstrator burst in shouting that Dr. Ruckauf "had blood on his hands". She scattered latex gloves with red paint on them to make her point, before being ushered out.

French Connection

Dr. Ruckauf's visit to Paris last September was marred by a similar incident. A French magistrate issued him with a summons to give evidence over the "disappearance" of French journalist Maurice

Jaeger. He was seized by Argentina's Armed Forces in 1975 together with his pregnant wife, and last seen alive in the "Escuelita" concentration camp in Famailla. But for diplomatic immunity, Dr. Ruckauf could have been in some difficulty.



Argentina's Year of Chaos

Half a million Argentines lost their jobs in 2002. Most others took salary cuts. The peso devalued to less than a third of its former value. Some 10,000 demonstrations included mass parades, route blockages as the unemployed tried to force the authorities to provide aid or food, or as infuriated savers tried to get their money out of banks. Many food shops were sacked. People harassed the government figures responsible.

Crime Wave & Starvation

In an appalling crime wave, kidnapping was - and still is - endemic. Some 300 shopkeepers and 101 policemen have been killed by armed robbers!

Argentina is a major food producer, but 53% of Argentines cannot afford basic foodstuffs. Soup kitchens still feed thousands. Death by starvation has been reported. *Clarín* reported 11,400 schoolchildren undernourished in Tucuman. Other provinces have reported this in up to 13% of schoolchildren!



Restrictions on people's bank accounts were partially lifted in November in order to stimulate the economy and now Argentina has at last got IMF aid. Tourism has improved recently as devaluation has forced Argentines to stay at home and attracted foreigners. But the general situation is still grim.

Argentina's political situation is as bad as ever. Presidential elections will be held on April 27th. Former President Carlos Menem is battling for the Peronist presidential nomination against a faction led by his bitter rival President Duhalde. Various attempts have been made to gerrymander the internal Peronist nomination election.

Italy Condemns Junta Criminals

An Italian court has sentenced Argentine Generals Suarez Mason and Omar Riveros and five other officers to life imprisonment for the torture and murder of eight Italians during the "Dirty War". None of these can now leave Argentina where they are protected by amnesties. Suarez Mason is already under house arrest for the theft of babies, which is the one crime not covered by these.

Upholding Falklands' self-determination

No opportunity has been lost during the 20th anniversary year of the Falklands War to remind the British public of the sacrifices made in 1982 and the pledge given to uphold the right of the Islanders to self-determination.

This was stated by former Governor, Sir Rex Hunt, in his address as chairman to the AGM of the Falkland Islands Association in London. He told a packed meeting that it had been a quiet year on the political front but very busy on public relations. Media interest in the anniversary was immense. The publicity has been good for the Falklands. All the British Government's statements reaffirmed the pledges made since 1982.

"Close watch" on Anglo-Argentine talks

But Sir Rex called for continuing vigilance after the agreement between Foreign Ministers Jack Straw and Carlos Ruckauf in November that Britain and Argentina hold a yearly discussion at ministerial level on bilateral and multilateral subjects. Sir Rex declared: "We shall need to watch this closely."

The Association's leadership arranged to meet the new Foreign Office Minister with responsibility for the Falklands, Mr Bill Rammell, to express their views. They previously had a useful meeting with the new Governor, Mr Howard Pearce, before he left for the Falklands.

Sir Rex thanked London Representative, Miss Sukey Cameron and her staff at the Falkland Islands Government Office, for their help and co-operation during a hectic year. He recalled that at Lincoln's Inn in June, Miss Cameron had said freedom was hard won and easily lost, and "there are still those who would take it from us". Sir Rex concluded: "Let us hope that the present Government learns its lesson from Gibraltar".

MPs assure Falklands of strong support

Mr. Andrew Rosindell, MP, who is active in the All-Party Parliamentary Falkland Islands Group, told the AGM: "Be assured that should there be any suggestion of any threat to the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands as there has been over Gibraltar, there are large numbers of MPs in all parties who will stand firmly to support the Falkland Islands just as we have been doing over Gibraltar".

He went on to thank Miss Sukey Cameron and the Falklands London Government Office for providing so much information and support to MPs to ensure that the importance of the Falklands and their messages are disseminated within Parliament. "You have many friends in the House of Commons and the House of Lords and I am very proud to be one of those MPs", he said. "I will report the success of the Association's AGM to the Falklands Parliamentary Group".

Sir Rex Hunt said membership now includes 28 MPs, one MEP and one Peer, who have accepted invitations to be become Honorary Members, a decision recently taken by the Executive Committee. "With Miss Sukey Cameron's help", Sir Rex said, "we shall continue to invite all MPs who visit the Falkland Islands as guests of the Falkland Islands Government to become Honorary Members of the Association....We are constantly increasing our support in Parliament".

Association Membership Drive

Sir Rex announced a new drive to increase the Association's general membership, now standing at 968. He urged members to recruit at least one member each and said cruise ship passengers visiting the Islands would be targeted to build up a substantial base of over a thousand members. Thanks to good publicity last year, this should not be too difficult.



Commodore Michael Clapp, who laid the wreath for the Armed Forces, together with his distant relatives, Association Treasurer Ted Clapp and his wife Jean.

New Falkland Islands Association Secretary

The Association filled a long-standing vacancy for a new Executive Secretary by appointing Mr Andrew Knapp, an ex-Royal Navy submarine officer cadet, with professional experience in business management and communication skills. He is combining the part-time job with study for a BSc degree at the Greenwich Business School for Management.



Sir Rex Hunt paid tribute to the Honorary Treasurer, Mr Ted Clapp, for the extra burden he had carried keeping the office going for the last two years without a Secretary. "Ted did it for the sake of the Association", Sir Rex said, "and deserves sincere thanks for doing so". He also thanked the longest serving member of the Executive Committee, Mrs Merle Christie, for helping to fill the secretarial gap.



Young Islanders tuck into the buffet after the Association AGM. L to R they are, Stacey Bragger, who is studying film making at the University of Surrey, Toby and Michael Poole, both at Peter Symonds College.

Battle Day in London

Falklands Commodore leads wreath layers

One of the outstanding commanders of the 1982 Falklands War, Commodore Mike Clapp, CB, laid the wreath in memory of the Armed Forces at the Falkland Islands Association annual Act of Remembrance commemorating Battle Day on 8th December, 1914, when the Royal Navy defeated the German South Atlantic fleet. It now commemorates those who fell in the 1982 Falklands War too.



Whitehall's traffic was brought to a standstill to allow the service to take place at the Cenotaph on a dull, cold morning. It was conducted by the Rev Peter Millam, a former rector of Christ Church in Stanley.

Wreaths were also laid by Sir Rex Hunt, Chairman, for the FIA; Miss Sukey Cameron London Representative, for the Falkland Islands Government; Mrs Sara Jones, CBE (widow of Colonel H. Jones, VC) and Mrs Paula Shear for the Falkland Families Association (Photo Right); Captain Martin Reed (of the Canberra in 1982) for the South Atlantic Medal Association of which he is chairman; Mr Michael Poole for the young people of the Falkland Islands; and Sir John D. Grugeon for the Association of Men of Kent and Kentish Men.

The Royal Naval Colour Party included several veterans of 1982 and representatives of Pangbourne College and the Falkland Islands Defence Force and were led by parade marshal, Air Commodore Peter Johnson, a former Commander of British Forces in the Falklands. Royal Marines buglers played the Last Post and Reveille.

Commodore Clapp conducted amphibious operations in the 1982 war, including the landing at San Carlos, under Argentine air attack.

Above Right: Captain Martin Reed MN, the new Chairman for SAMA 82, and Sir Rex Hunt lay their wreaths at the Cenotaph.

Right: Mrs. Sara Jones and Mrs. Paula Shear, lay their wreaths for the Falklands Families Association.

Below: Commodore Clapp chats to Islander Sam Cockwell who was part of the Colour Guard.

Below Right: Commodore Clapp inspects the Colour Guard. Two Islanders were part of this, distinguishable by the red hat bands of their Falkland Islands Defence Force uniforms. Sam Cockwell is in the foreground and in the back row, Ben Pointing.



Praise for Ian and Georgina Strange's Photographs

An exhibition of Falklands photographs by wildlife expert and artist, Ian Strange, and his daughter, Georgina, on view at the London Falklands Government Office has been praised by the new Governor, Mr Howard Pearce.

"These", he said, "are absolutely beautiful, stunning photographs... which show that the Falklands are a very special place".

Mr Pearce recalled buying three of Ian Strange's prints when they first met in the 1970s. "The prints", he said, "have followed me around the world, hanging on various walls in Britain, Kenya, Hungary and Malta, and I look forward to taking them back to the Falklands where they came from and again meeting Ian Strange".

He was speaking at a reception at the London office where the photographs are on view until January 31st. The Falklands Government London Representative, Sukey Cameron, said: "We are delighted to have these wonderful pictures on display by father and daughter team Ian and Georgina Strange".

Most of the photographs are of New Island, where the Duke of York, Patron of Falklands Conservation, recently opened a scientific field station for the New Island South Conservation Trust, founded by Ian Strange. Among guests at the reception were two Trustees of this trust, Captain Peter Erskine, who served in the Falklands as senior naval officer in 1983 and 1984, and Geoffrey Mills, a teacher at Darwin from 1968 to 1971, who has known Ian Strange for more than 35 years.

Also there was the secretary of the Trust, Mrs Sarah Parry-Jones, Captain Erskine's daughter, and Gillian Walker, from Sussex, a scientist who worked with Ian Strange on New Island for three consecutive summers, and now works on an Antarctic cruise ship.

Right: Miss Gillian Walker.

Below: Officials of the New Island South Conservation Trust: Captain Peter Erskine, Mrs. Sarah Parry-Jones and Mr. Geoffrey Mills.



Mr. Ted Colgate, author of "Falling off a horse in the Falklands", The Hon Alexandra Shackleton, and new Governor, Mr. Howard Pearce.

Photos: H.Briley

Much praised book is launched

Ted Colgate's book about life as a travelling teacher in the 1960's Falklands: "Falling off a horse in the Falklands" was launched at the same reception as Ian and Georgina's photographs, and praised by new Governor, Mr. Howard Pearce.

It is reviewed on the opposite page.

1854 Painting Donated

Falkland Islanders have been presented with a valuable miniature water colour painting of Keppel Island in 1854, donated by the Honourable Alexandra Shackleton. It was accepted on behalf of the Islands at a reception in the Falklands London office by new Governor, Mr Howard Pearce.

Alexandra Shackleton explained how she spotted the picture at Christie's auction house in London and later bought it when she heard that Islanders would very much like it. As she handed it to the Governor, there was laughter when she remarked: "It is quite hard parting with it".

Thanking her for her "very generous gesture", Mr Pearce said: "It will be appreciated enormously in the Islands, particularly in the archives where it will have a very honoured place. It is wonderful to have in one's hands something that is associated with the very early history of the Falklands".



Author Ted Colgate and Miss Sukey Cameron.

Book Review - Adventures as a travelling teacher in the Falklands

"**Falling off a Horse in the Falkland Islands**", by Eddie Colgate, published by George Mann Publications, Easton, Winchester, Hampshire, SO 21 1ES. Telephone: 01962 779944. Soft back, 160 pages, with many colour and black and white pictures. ISBN 0954163427. Price £10.

A new book vividly describing life as a Falklands travelling teacher in the 1960s has been praised by the Governor, Mr Howard Pearce, who called it "a delightful read".

The author, Ted Colgate, a retired teacher living in West Sussex in England, called his book "Falling off a Horse in the Falkland Islands" because, he explained, this sometimes happened in his many fraught journeys between the scattered farms where he taught around San Carlos and Port San Carlos.

The Falklands Government Rep-



resentative, Sukey Cameron, said she loved reading it because "it brought back very special memories of a wonderful childhood" as her family lived at Port San Carlos.

Ted Colgate captures in graphic personal prose his experiences living on farms with the families of the children he taught and respecting their resourceful, pioneering life, in which self-reliance and neighbourliness are two characteristics threading together his many anecdotes.

Forty years later he has turned what he calls his "three memorable years" into a very readable book, fresh with contemporary description from his day-by-day diaries, his letters home, and correspondence from Falklands friends bridging the 40 years since.

Ted Colgate, now 66, taught for the rest of his career in the Sussex village of Hurstpierpoint, retiring in 1998. **HWB**

Left: Mr. Ted Colgate on his horse "Fandango" in the Falklands.

SS Great Britain Anniversary

The Duke of York, as Patron of the SS Great Britain Trust, has hosted a reception at St. James's Palace in London to mark the 150th anniversary of the maiden voyage of the world's first iron built ocean liner, the SS Great Britain.

The ship was salvaged and brought back in 1970 from the Falkland Islands where she had languished as a wreck for more than 80 years.

She is now preserved as an educational and heritage centre in Bristol in the Great Western Dockyard (see above) where she was built for the Great Western Steamship Company under the personal direction of Britain's famous engineer, Isambard Kingdom Brunel.



Photo Right: The Reception. On the left is Mr. Edward Ware, whose company sponsored the event. Next is Vice-President of the SS Great Britain Trust Council, the Rev Dr. Ewan Corlett, author of "The Iron Ship", the leading work on the subject. By his side is former Falklands Governor Sir Cosmo Haskard. Both the Reverend Corlett and Sir Cosmo were actively involved in bringing the ship back to Britain from the Falklands. Next is Prince Andrew, who had just returned from the Veterans' Pilgrimage to the Falklands, followed by Mr. Roger Smedley, Chairman of the Trustees.



Miles Apart

New and secondhand books on the South Atlantic islands

I supply, by post, books, maps, postcards and other publications on Ascension, St Helena, Tristan as well as the Falklands and South Georgia. I also supply a wide range of secondhand material.

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Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7HF, UK**

Tel: 01638-577627 Fax: 01638-577874
E-mail: imathieson2000@yahoo.co.uk

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Oxford Photo Exhibition

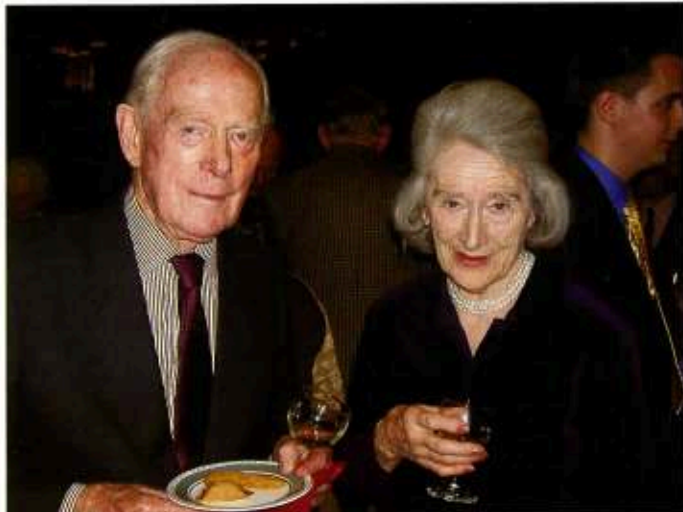
The Lord Mayor of Oxford, Councillor Gill Sanders, opened the Falklands Focus Exhibition in Oxford in November.

Present were Miss Sukey Cameron and some of her staff from London Office and some forty other Islanders, supporters, and Falklands War veteran, Gordon Monks.

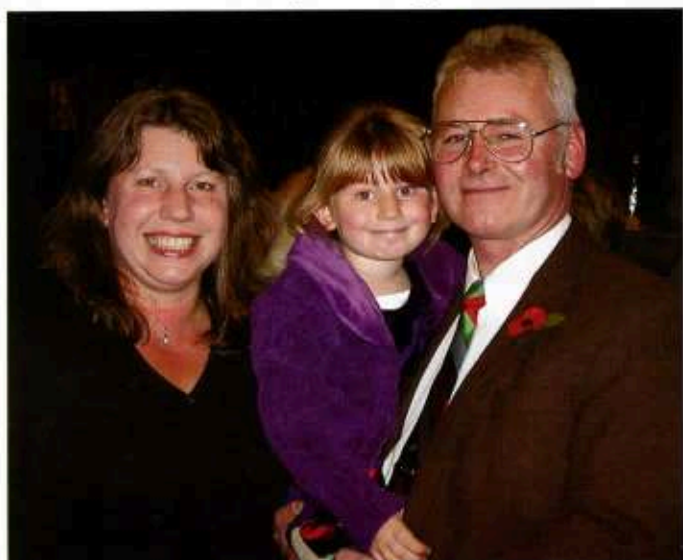
Two Falklands students were present too: Stephen Betts who is studying at Lady Margaret Hall and Tamara Lang who is just completing her nursing studies at the Oxford Brookes Institute. She is now a qualified theatre nurse, in anaesthesia, surgery and recovery. In December she began work at the Radcliffe Infirmary, where she hopes to gain further experience before returning to work in the Falklands.



Oxford student and Islander Stephen Betts who is studying at Oxford, the Lord Mayor Councillor Gill Sanders, and Miss Sukey Cameron.



Above: General Nigel Gribbon and his wife Mary at the exhibition reception. General Gribbon founded the Falkland Islands Trust in 1982, chaired it for years and only retired from it two years ago. They now live near Banbury. Right: Lord Mayor Gill Sanders, with Islander Tamara Lang. Below: Falklands veteran (and SAMA pilgrim) Gordon Monks, his wife Mandy and little daughter Freya. Gordon was on the ammunition ship RFA Resource, which had some close shaves during the landing at San Carlos.



Air Commodore Frow

We regret to report the death of Air Commodore Brian Frow, DSO, DFC, on September 13th. He was Director General of the Falkland Islands Research and Development Association from 1977 to 1982. We will carry his obituary in the next Newsletter.

The New Film
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The Falkland Islands Association

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The Falkland Islands Association brings together those who support the continuing freedom of the people of the Falkland Islands. Its Constitution states that its objectives are:

“To assist the people of the Falkland Islands to decide their own future for themselves without being subjected to pressure direct or indirect from any quarter”

The Association is independent, but maintains close links with many other Falklands organisations. It is a major source of information about the Falklands. It publishes a newsletter, which all members receive, covering political and social events in the Islands, wildlife, tourism, philately, and many other subjects. It welcomes interest in the Falklands and invites all those who share its aims to become members.

Membership Application

I/We would like to support the right of the people of the Falkland Islands to decide their own future for themselves and to help them develop their islands in accordance with their wishes.

I/We wish to join the Falkland Islands Association. (Individual members annual subscription £15, Pensioners and Students £5, Corporate members minimum £50, Corporate Sponsorship £500).

Name

Address

Connection with the Falklands, if any

Signature

Date Telephone

Please return to: Falkland Islands Association, Douglas House, 16 - 18 Douglas St, London, SW1P 4PB. Applicants who do not wish to cut this form from a Newsletter are invited to use a xerox of it. Members are requested not to use this form for membership renewals.

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Dates For Your Diary

Lincoln's Inn Reunion
 Wednesday 11th June.

Battle Day & AGM
 Saturday 6th December.

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Full Page £250
 Half Page £125
 Quarter Page £65
 Eighth Page £35
 Short Insertions £3 per line

Discounts for four insertions by negotiation. A special concession is offered to Association members living in the Falklands, who own small shops and businesses, to advertise in the Newsletter at half the above rates.

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Editorial Committee:

Sir Rex Hunt, C.M.G. (Chairman).
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 Mrs. M.Christie.
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Mrs. Sarah Constance pays her respects at the British cemetery at San Carlos. Her brother, helicopter pilot Lt. Dick Nunn of the Royal Marines was killed near Goose Green. Behind her, wreath in hand, is Air Marshal Sir Roger Austin.



HE Governor Lamont leads military officers from the Falklands garrison and veterans on their pilgrimage in homage to all those who laid down their lives for Britain in war. The Monument commemorates those who fell in the Falklands War and the 44 Islanders who fell in the two World Wars.

Photos: Courtesy of Nigel Hawks