
ASSIGNMENT 4 – A SENSE OF PLACE

Crawley Memorial Garden

In the centre of Crawley is an oasis of peace and quiet surrounded on 3 sides by a busy shopping centre and a hectic 4 lane road system on the other. I have been going to Crawley for over 2 years through work and have used the Memorial park as a quiet place to sit and read or just take time out from the hustle and bustle of the town.

I decided to use this park as the subject for the 4th assignment. This assignment calls for you to take 12 photos from which 6 could be selected for an article on a location for an intelligent travel publication.

I wanted to capture, what I saw as the essence of the park; the quiet and tranquillity of the place despite it's location. I decided to have an idea of the type of photos I wanted to capture which would convey the park and how it is used.

- Photo from outside with people rushing past
 - Long exposure to blur people
- As above but from road showing lots of traffic giving the idea of how busy the surrounding area is compared to the park
- Park from a distance
 - Scene setting
- People using the park
 - Sitting reading
 - Cycling
 - Picnicking
- Education signs
 - Park is used by the Council to say about saving water
- Planting

This was a rough plan as it all depended on what people were doing in the park at the times I was there.

Following on from my previous assignment feedback, to give a consistent feel to the photos, I decided to use a focal length of around 50mm. That way all the images would have the same style rather than being affected by the focal length used. It would mean that I would have to move rather than using changing the focal length of the lenses to change the framing of the photograph. I could crop the photo later if required but wanted to try and keep this manipulation to a minimum by making sure the image was framed properly in camera.

Photos



Although this works as I wanted for showing people rushing past the park, the person on the left has his foot clearly suspended in the air while the rest of him is blurred. This creates a surreal image and not what I wanted.



The entrance to park is shown in the bottom left of the photo with the busy road in front. It didn't work as I wanted as this entrance is not prominent enough to show that there is a park behind.



Although it is a park for people to use, there are still rules to be followed.



This could be the intro or scene setting photo as it shows the park and a person sitting in the background.



I wanted to capture how people have used the park for a picnic without showing the people. This works well as it shows the rubbish left behind giving the impression of how people treat the park. They leave their rubbish behind despite the rubbish bin shown in the background being close by. Also the scene is confirmed as being in the park by the sign.



All the other photos showed the park and some of the uses without any people being present. I wanted to include some people and took this one of the couple chatting in the late afternoon sunshine.



A small area of the park has been set aside for wild flowers planted to remember the 100th anniversary of the start of the Great War. I wanted to show that the park is used for many uses other than recreation.

Subject re-think

Having made the selections above, I realised I would need another visit to the park to take more photos as well as taking better ones of the road and park entrance.

I was not due to return to Crawley for a few weeks. This absence was increased due to a family bereavement and going on holiday.

Gibraltar

I had returned to Gibraltar for a family holiday to coincide with the 20th anniversary of me being posted there for 3 years with the RAF in August 1994. While I was wandering about taking photos, I started to think that I could use Gibraltar as the subject for the assignment. I was already trying to take photos which summed up Gib as being a holiday destination but as I walked about, I started to think of it as more than that. I had experienced a feeling of familiarity but also unfamiliarity; there had been so many changes since I had left at the end of my tour that although the place was familiar, it had changed quite dramatically. For a start, Gib has actually grown in size as there has been large scale land reclaiming from the sea. This land has enlarged the actual area the town by about 1/3. As soon as the land was reclaimed, it has been built on with luxury apartments and flats and new marinas constructed. So what was sea when I was here previously was now apartments; buildings that were next the sea were several hundreds yards from the sea now.

My feeling of confusion seemed to represent Gibraltar as well. Gib has always been publicised as a little Britain in the Mediterranean. Although it is a British territory, giving the impression of being British, the people are a mixed heritage and speak English and Spanish equally. They are fiercely patriotic of being Gibraltarian and very independent but very British when threatened by the Spanish. It is a country of opposites and contradictions.

I made a list of what I saw as the contradictions that make Gibraltar.

- Noise/ Peaceful
 - It is very noisy in the town as there are very few trees or green areas to absorb vehicle noise. The roads are bounded by concrete walls or buildings which channel the noise rather than absorbing it. In contrast, there are a few quiet areas in the

town but the main quiet areas are outside the town at Europa Point and the Upper Rock area.

- Busy / Quiet
 - There is always something going on even in the early hours of the morning. Gib has a vibrant night life, previously based around the many pubs in Main Street. This has migrated to the many bars and restaurants around the new marinas. In the town it is difficult to be on your own. To do that you either have to make conscious decision to ignore everyone or go outside the town to Europa Point or the Upper Rock area.
- Old / New
 - Gibraltar has buildings dating from the 1600s right up to modern day buildings. These nestle side by side in many cases in a general acceptance of each other. This could be seen as a metaphor for the population of Gibraltar where many different nationalities and religions nestle quite happily together. For example, a large Mosque was built within a couple of hundred yards of the oldest church on the Rock at Europa Point.
- Military / Civilian
 - Gibraltar has always been a vital military location with it's naval base and airfield. The general population has embraced the military as a source of protection, employment and financial. With the cutbacks in the forces, this has had an impact on Gib just the same as everywhere else. There is still a military presence in Gib but it is reduced to a minimum. Very few servicemen are seen about the place now and what were military buildings have been taken over by the local government for either demolishing and reusing the land or reusing the buildings.
- Air / Sea
 - Until the border between Spain and Gib was reopened in 1982, the only way in and out of Gib was by air or sea. These are still 2 vital travel routes; the airport provides easy links to London and Morocco while the marinas and harbour allow for all size shipping from cruise liners to small yachts.

I then made a list of key words or thoughts which come to mind when I think of Gib.

- Other memorable thoughts
 - Patriotism
 - Runway crossing the road
 - Dolphins
 - Monkeys
 - Rock
 - Levanter cloud
 - Hot / Cool
 - Dry / Wet
 - Tourist / Locals
 - Clear / Cloudy (Levanter cloud)
 - Apes
 - Rock / Flat
 - Blocks of flats
 - Steps

These lists gave me ideas for subjects to photograph. I would use the list as I walked about to look for subjects which gave a sense of Gibraltar.

Selections

Over the holiday, I took over 1,500 photos. Obviously, not all were for the purposes of the assignment. In making the selections, I decided to select photos which showed at least 2 of the key words or contrast that summed up Gib.



4943.jpg



5010.jpg



5014.jpg



5019.jpg



5034.jpg



5021.jpg



5358.jpg



5475.jpg



5605.jpg



5616.jpg



5707.jpg



5736.jpg



6483.jpg



6504.jpg



6544.jpg



6562.jpg



6632.jpg



6668.jpg



6669.jpg



6716.jpg



6776.jpg



6830.jpg



6833.jpg



6838.jpg



6846.jpg



6854.jpg



6872.jpg

First view of the Rock through aircraft window



4943.jpg

Crowded main st



5010.jpg



Cafe / Mediterranean scene. like Dolce Vita on canopy - Name of pub is English.
5014.jpg

Similar



Military + civilians mixing in social scene.
5019.jpg



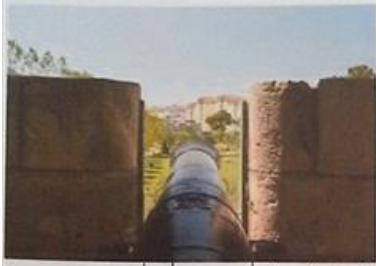
Tunnel

5034.jpg



Planes and boats.

5021.jpg



Cannon overlooking reclaimed land + park + buildings.

5355.jpg



Tunnel.

5475.jpg



steps! flag + making use of the garden!

5505.jpg



marina.

5510.jpg



contrast old + new military civilian.

5707.jpg



beaches + fortification.

5711.jpg



Batles with flag
6483.jpg



Mosque + Rock.
6504.jpg



Batles from 5735 as blue sky
+ flags.
6544.jpg



Peace + quiet.
6582.jpg



Solitude.
6632.jpg



Steps
Patriotic
Batles in
portrait
as shown
more of
steps/steepness.
6656.jpg



6669.jpg



Rock, airport + Spain.

6716.jpg



Bit 'lovely' but is GIB

6776.jpg



6830.jpg

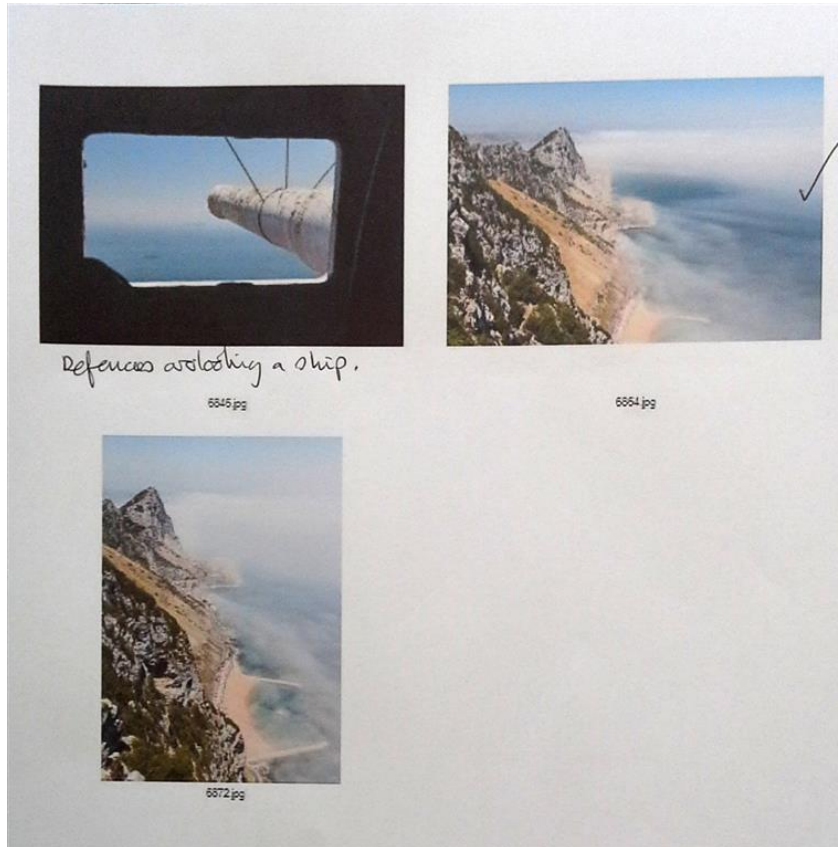


6833.jpg



6838.jpg

Strait
to Africa.



Selected Images



First view of Gibraltar for many people is when they arrive on a plane.



Crowded street scene with narrow street, lots of people and cafes.



Mediterranean / street café life style. The striped canopy on the left has Dolce Vitae which seems appropriate. A bit of a confusing scene though with the name of the pub being very English and serving a carvery on Sunday.



The two of the ways of arriving in Gib – sea and air.



Being on the side of the Rock, the houses are built on a slope with steps leading between the houses. I wanted to use this one as it shows the slope and how the residents make use of their small patios. The board at the back with the Union flag and Gib crest is a common sight showing the patriotism of the residents.



The old victualling yard in a disused naval harbour contrasts with the modern vehicle.



This photo shows the essential element of Gibraltar. The Rock and being British contrasting with the Mosque.



Although the military have pretty much withdrawn from Gib, they presence still dominates the area.

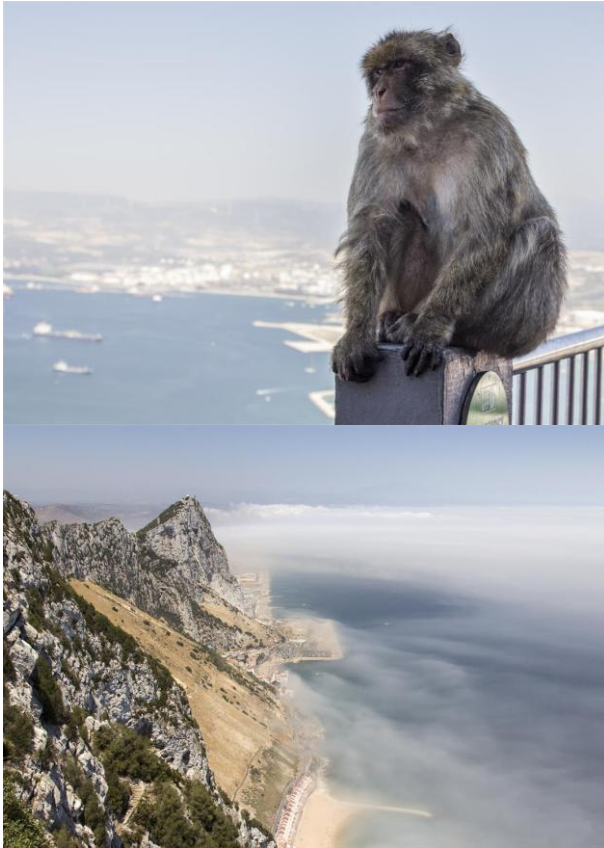


Although Gib is a crowded and noisy place, it is still possible to escape from the crowds and have a quiet moment.

I selectively processed the man to bring him out from the shadows and make him more noticeable.



More steps and a different way of showing the residents patriotism.



Apart from the Rock, Gib is also known for it's apes. Although this is a bit touristy, I have included it as apes are synonymous with Gib.

I included this photo as it was very atmospheric with the sea mist and clouds hitting the Rock. The Rock is shown as solid with the transitory mist.

I have chosen a mixture of landscape and portrait photo to allow for greater variety in the magazine layout.

Review

I initially set out to take a series of photos which showed the contrasts that I saw in Gibraltar. While taking the photos, this evolved into taking a series of photos which gave the character and sense of what Gibraltar means to me. Essentially Gibraltar is a small town on the side of a large lump of rock in the south of Spain. But this misses that it is an intensely patriotic place with strong ties to Britain. It is often billed being Britain in the sun. For most of the inhabited time, Gib has been a naval base with a large Army garrison and Air Force base. Over the years the military presence has reduced leaving many memorials and fortifications. The military has been replaced with tourists looking for duty free products. Many tourists still arrive by air but also by cruise liners which call in for a few hours. The passengers take a short taxi tour of the Rock to tick the destination off the holiday itinerary.

If I had to sum up Gibraltar in a few words it would be

- Rock
- Sun
- Patriotism
- Military history
- Tourists
- Apes

It was these 5 words that I wanted to show as the main character in the photos.

I wanted to avoid taking photos which were too “touristy” and show more of what Gibraltar means to me. I believe I have achieved this in the set of photos which I am submitting. I would have liked to have included some more photos of the Rock at night. The North Front facing the airport is lit at night and is quite spectacular. Unfortunately, I wasn’t able to take these photos as I lost my glasses half way through the holiday and had to use a pair of sunglasses to see. These were fine for use during the day but were obviously not practical at night.

If I had been doing this without the thought that the photo might be for publication, I don’t think I would have done any much differently. The assignment was to show the sense of the place and these photos do that. The publication part of the assignment does not make any difference the photos as far as I believe.