

Bicentenary of the Peninsular War

In November 1807 Junot invaded Portugal and soon after, crossing the frontier near Rosmanihal (not far from Castelo Branco), he quickly reached Lisbon. French troops raced to St. Julian's fort at the mouth of Tagus to stop the Royal Family sailing away to Brazil (escorted by Royal Navy vessels) to no avail. They watched the sails of the fleet on the horizon. King D. João VI only returned in 1821.

But 2007, therefore, marks the bicentenary of the beginning of the Peninsular War. There will be many occasions, commemorations, visits, lectures, seminars and publications in the next few years.

Not far from Lisbon we find the battlefields of Roliça and Vimeiro (where Lt. Col. The Hon. George Lake's monument exists) which this Society is in the process of having restored and, of course, the famous Lines of Torres Vedras. As members are aware, this Society was the first organization to provide a proper guide book to the Lines which is still in print.

The local Câmara Municipal de Torres Vedras now publishes a more handsome publication both in English and Portuguese but the texts are basically written by ourselves.

Clive Gilbert has been our driving force in this matter.

Ever since of the Corps of Military Engineers of the Portuguese Army under Col. Francisco Eduardo Baptista restored Fort St. Vincent at Torres Vedras in the early 60's little has been done to further restore or even maintain the remainder of the forts built by Wellington during 1809-10. The one possible exception to this state of affairs has been the annual clearing of the undergrowth of various forts in the First and Second Lines by the *Escola Prática de Infantaria* at Mafra under Captain Campião. Sadly this latter initiative no longer takes place with the recent ending of National Service. Over the years several forts have disappeared as a result of agricultural and building construction development although local authorities are now aware of the situation and have taken steps to avoid further destruction.

Present situation:

The six Municipal Councils covering the area of the Lines (Mafra, Torres Vedras, Arruda, Sobral do Montagaço, Loures and Vila Franca de Xira) signed a protocol in 2001 with IPPAR and

presented a joint restoration project in 2002. Each Council prepared a proposal for cleaning up and restoring selected forts in its area with the

necessary access roads. The idea is to identify all forts that still exist. Those selected would be cleared of undergrowth and provided with interpretation signs that would visually link in with others in the system. Routes for walkers and drivers would be selected and marked out. IPPAR however considered the project to be too ambitious and remained to alter the project but until now nothing apparently has been done. IPPAR has also not dealt with the classification of the forts, a simple administrative procedure, according to those involved, which would open up the project to EU funding. The six Municipalities organized a Congress in 2001 whose aim was to draw attention to the need for the restoration of the Lines. Clive Gilbert delivered a paper at the final session held at Torres Vedras. The *Instituto de Defesa Nacional* organised its own Congress a year later and both Dr. Paulo Marques and Colonel Napier delivered papers.

Recently the Vila Franca de Xira Municipal Council contacted the British Historical Society through Clive Gilbert with a view of obtaining its support, together with that of other similar institutions, to pressure the IPPAR to reply to the project.

At the end of last year the Municipality of Sobral de Montagaço gave building permission for a building development in front of Wellington's Headquarters at Pêro Negro. Local hearsay has it that the developer handed over the building to the Municipality in exchange for building permission for 12 blocks of flats and 25 villas in the area around the Headquarters. Apparently the Municipality would like to set up a museum in the building (there is much rivalry between the municipalities of Sobral and Torres Vedras...). As soon as the BHS heard about this project Clive Gilbert went to the site and took photographs of the early excavation work. Letters of protest were sent to LUSA, the President of the Sobral Municipal Council and to General Valença Pinto, Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Army signed by the Chairman, Dr. Paulo Marques. Further letters were written to institutions in the UK (Waterloo Committee, Royal Engineers Museum in the person of its former director, Colonel Napier, amongst others). Little interest in the matter was shown by any of the Portuguese authorities contacted.

Two months ago Colonel Napier requested the assistance of the BHS to arrange meetings and visits during the week of 7th February to help him prepare his talk to the Anglo-Portuguese Society at Canning House on April 13th. The talk is entitled

'The Lines of Torres Vedras, Past, Present and the Future'. Interviews were arranged with Col. Baptista Faria, Director of the Military Museum, General Sousa Pinto, President of the '*Comissão Portuguesa de História Militar*', Col. Sousa Lobo, President of the *Associação Portuguesa dos Amigos dos Castelos*, Col. Tavares Nunes, Commanding Officer of the *Escola Prática de Infantaria* at Mafra and finally with Dr^a Isabel Luna, Director of the *Museu Leonel Trindade* at Torres Vedras.

Little practical assistance was obtained from the first two visits but it was possible to see that Col. Sousa Lobo's Portuguese Forts Association has the skills, knowledge and contacts to oversee actual restoration projects. Dr^a Isabel Luna provided us with information on the Torres Vedras restoration project and took us to see Forts 129 and 130 on the ridge above Catefica. Curiously and fortuitously the companies setting up the new windmills that will supply electrical power to the National Grid nearby have already carried one of the works included in the project, a road leading to and linking the two forts. Following lunch at Mafra Col. José Américo Henriques, a military engineer and historian, took us to the Grand Redoubt at Sobral. From this site, the most significant along the Lines and which Wellington visited every day until the French withdrew to Santarém, it is possible to appreciate the strategic importance of the Lines. This would be one of the prime sites for restoration particularly as it also possesses possibly the last remaining stretch of military road built by Wellington's military engineers. Sadly local timber merchants have been using this road to access the eucalyptus trees surrounding the Grand Redoubt (or Forte de Alqueidão as it is known locally) at the crown of the hill.

Future developments: We believe it to be the opportune moment to raise interest in possible future sponsors for restoration work, both Portuguese and British. Seizing on the occasion of the talk at Canning House, the first of many events of this nature to take place in the leading up to the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the invasion of Portugal in 1807 would be ideal. This would include the approved project as already set out by the local authorities. The classification of the forts as a national monument, a simple administrative matter, is a further fundamental aspect of this question and would free EU grants. With this idea in mind the BHS requested a meeting with the President of IPPAR, Arq. João Rodeia which has been set for 2nd March.

The purpose of this note is to inform our members what your Society has been doing regarding the Lines of Torres Vedras.

We, of course, would be very grateful if a member or others created a sort of "Friends of the Lines of Torres Vedras" which would attract volunteers to clear up certain of the sites and coordinate efforts with the local Municipalities.

News Items

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has published its March 2005 Anglo-Portuguese Cultural Relations Programme Newsletter with news on their future plans for this month of March in the UK. It covers events in Edinburgh, Bristol, Lincolnshire, Liverpool, Bedford, Leamington, Buxton, Malvern, Birmingham, Bath, North Hykeham, High Wycombe, Bury St. Edwards, Sleaford and, of course, London. Those interested should contact Anglo-Portuguese Cultural Relations Programme, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 98, Portland Place, London W1B 1ET. E-mail: apcr@gulbenkian.org.uk.

At the Instituto Camões in the University of Rutgers, Newark, U.S.A., just outside New York, an exhibition of Portuguese Ceramics of the Art Deco period will open on March 31st and goes on until April 29th. It will be found in the John Cotton Dana Library, Dana Room, 4th floor at 185 University Avenue, Newark.

New Books

Vimeiro 1808 Wellesley's First Victory in the Peninsular War

by René Chartrand
Osprey Publishing Ltd. 96 p.p.

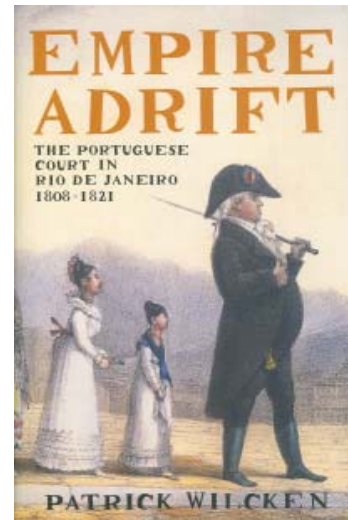
A very well illustrated small book on the 1807 first invasion of Portugal. Very good maps and explanatory pictures. Good chapter on the controversial Cintra Convention and also the chapter on the battlefield today is very interesting.

Napoleon et le Portugal

by Nicole Gotteri
Giovanangelli 2004
€ 27,60

A rare French book on the Peninsular War in Portugal. Napoleon, of course, never actually came to Portugal unless we accept that his stay aboard ship in Funchal bay on his way to St.

Helena counts. But the "French angle" to the Peninsular War is seldom explored especially by English readers. Curious to note that in the bibliography the author hardly cites a single English historian which, I think, readers will agree, is rather overdoing the meaning of the word "chauvinism".



Empire Adrift The Portuguese Court in Rio de Janeiro 1808-1821

by Patrick Wilcken
Bloomsbury. London. 2004. 300p.p.
£ 16,99

10,000 people (plus his mad mother Queen D. Maria I) in all travelled to Brazil with the Prince Regent (later King D. João VI) in 1807 when the French first invaded Portugal. It has often been described as a flight but, in reality, it was a well thought out policy. The actual circumstances of the embarkation were pretty chaotic but the idea had been debated for a long time. Had England been invaded in the 2nd World War, the Government and the Royal Family would have gone to Canada. The Spanish royals didn't and were imprisoned near Bayonne and the throne occupied by Napoleon's brother Joseph. The Portuguese royals learnt their lesson.

The curious slave owning tropical society was so agreeable that when the Peninsular War was over (1813) the King refused to return and even after Waterloo (1815) he procrastinated using the argument that Brazil would break loose which is what, in fact, happened, if he returned. London sent Canning as an Envoy to Lisbon at the time, everybody expecting in vain the King to arrive soon! It is said that when, finally, D. João embarked in Rio de Janeiro (1821) he embraced his son D. Pedro (the future D. Pedro I Emperor of

Brazil) and said: "well if independence comes you will, at least, be polite to your father". The King died in Lisbon in 1826.

Lisbon Before the Earthquake

Panorama of the City between 1700 and 1725

Ed. by Paulo Rodrigues.

Gótica. 2004. 126p.p.

Those who have visited the Tile Museum, the Museu do Azulejo, must have remarked on a very long span of azulejos depicting Lisbon before the Great Earthquake of 1755. It is 23 metres long and comprises 1376 azulejos and shows Lisbon from the palace of the Condes de Miranda beyond Algés in the west to the Convento de Santa Maria de Jesus in Xabregas to the East.

This book reproduces this immense azulejos panel explaining each of the monuments shown and has an anthology of descriptions of Lisbon. It is a very interesting book well worth acquiring. Those interested will recall the large model of pre-earthquake Lisbon in the Museu da Cidade in the Campo Grande. There is a French and Portuguese version of this book.

1755

The Lisbon Earthquake O Terramoto de Lisboa

by João Duarte Fonseca

Argumentum. 2004. 139p.p.

The year 2005 is the 250th anniversary of the great Lisbon earthquake. It was on November 1st so we will have much talk about it as the date approaches. This is a well illustrated book, in both languages, of Lisbon's destruction and what happened afterwards regarding its rebuilding. Curiously comparing this disaster with the rebuilding of London after the great fire, Lisbon was easier because the Church did not insist that churches be rebuilt in the same places. Thus the Basilica dos Mártires now half way up the Chiado, used to be considerably further back near the Largo da Biblioteca Pública. The Marquis of Pombal was, of course, a stronger figure. The Patriarch of Lisbon even allowed the dead to be buried at sea by sinking barges full of bodies. The Houses of Parliament voted a gift of £ 100.000 to help out Lisbon. This city even had a big Tsunami with a chapter all to itself in the books.

Portugal

A Traveller's History

by Harold Livermore

The Bodley Press. 2004. 192p.p.

Prof. Livermore has been a great scholar of Portuguese things for many years. Indeed at one time, long ago, he was headmaster of St. Julian's School. He has often written articles for our Annual Report.

Prof. Livermore has now written a mixture of a travel book and a history of Portugal with very good photographs. The historical side is very well organized with chapters on "Before Portugal" and "Islamic Portugal" for example. He very kindly mentions my father and mother and the APN in the Foreword.

A History of Portuguese Expansion 1400-1668

by Malyn Newitt

Routledge. 2005. 300p.p.

Prof. Malyn Newitt is the Charles Boxer Professor of History at King's College, London and who wrote in 1995 the only authoritative "History of Mozambique".

He wishes with insight this extraordinary phenomenon of the Portuguese overseas empire. How it expanded for about 100 years, reached its height between 1550 and 1580 and then, effectively, collapsed in the XVII century. Yet he examines how resilient these Portuguese overseas communities were. We recall, of course, in our lifetimes how they survived in Africa and Asia only to collapse after 1974. It is curious to meditate that the first step in Portugal's expansion was the conquest of Ceuta 1415, the year of Azincourt. Today in the 21st century after Macau has fallen, Ceuta is still European. Not Portuguese, but Spanish for in 1640 when Portugal regained its independence from Spain after 60 years under the Spanish crown (what is known in Portugal as the "time of the Phillips"), the governor of Ceuta refused to accept the new Braganza King D. João IV and remained faithful "to the Phillips".

Library

Members are reminded that our Library which comprises a collection of books on Anglo-Portuguese history and documentation on several demised British Institutions in Portugal is open every Tuesday from 10a.m. to 2p.m. and by arrangement with our Hon. Librarian Miss Jane Flower (Tel.: 21 458 53 36).

The following publications have been given to the Library:

- Archaeology of the Sintra-Cascais Area. English Translations of Scientific Publications. By Martin Sirous.