

Proposal for the 3rd MMHN Conference

Tito Mesod Benady

The Trade of Gibraltar 1805 - 1819

A further step in my research into the history of Gibraltar is to study the economy in the nineteenth century. Overall statistics do not exist and this has to be approached in the first instance through the study of the ships that arrived, the places they came from and the types of cargoes they brought. However, the port books only start in 1820, but prior to that a great deal of information can be obtained from the pages of the local newspaper Gibraltar Chronicle which gives weekly lists of ships, their port of origin and the nature of their cargoes.

The years 1805 to 1814 also give information on the movement of military and naval store ships for the forces in Gibraltar and Malta, and should show that in the years after Trafalgar, and particularly after 1808 when the war moved from the western to the central Mediterranean, Malta superseded Gibraltar as the main British military and naval depot in the area.

There is very little record of Spanish ships sailing from the west coast of Spain to the east coast, and vice versa, calling at Gibraltar, although they often did, and it is important to consider the reason for this omission.

Ships carrying exports are not registered although aggregate figures are sometimes given for the number of bows (bous) and other small vessels which formed the bulk of the vessels registered in Gibraltar. Some of these traded with Morocco with goods transhipped at Gibraltar to smaller vessels which could enter the small Moroccan harbours which were normally blocked by sand bars which the larger vessels could not negotiate. These would therefore have to anchor off-shore on a lee coast exposed to dangerous changes of weather while they discharged their cargoes. The bulk were employed in smuggling into Spanish and other southern European territories, at first, in the teeth of Napoleon's Continental system, and subsequently as purely illicit activities

Bionote

Tito Mesod Benady has been working on the history of Gibraltar since he retired from the world of finance twenty-five years ago. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and was awarded an MBE by the Gibraltar Government for his work in promoting the study of the history of Gibraltar through the annual journal he founded in 1993.

He has published a number of books and numerous articles, including inter alia *The Royal Navy at Gibraltar* (1992), *The Streets of Gibraltar* (1996), 'The Settlement of Jews in Gibraltar, 1704 – 1782' (Transactions Jewish Historical Society of England, 1979), 'Spaniards in Gibraltar after Utrecht' and 'Genoese in Gibraltar' (Gibtel Gibraltar Heritage Journal, 2000 and 2001), 'The Settee Cut: Mediterranean Passes issued at Gibraltar' (Mariner's Mirror, 2001), 'Trade and Contraband in Gibraltar' (Anglo-Saxons in the Mediterranean, 2007)