

Hidden chamber found in Vanguard Cave – part of Gorham's Cave Complex in Gibraltar

September 30 2021, by Bob Yirka



Vanguard Cave. Credit: Gipmetal77 modded by Victuallers/Wikimedia Commons. CC BY-SA 3.0

A team of researchers with the Gibraltar National Museum has found a hidden chamber in one of the caves that make up Gorham's Cave Complex in Gibraltar. They have posted [a press statement](#) on their website describing what they have found in the chamber thus far.

Prior research has shown that both [modern humans](#) and Neanderthals lived in parts of Gorham's Cave Complex in Gibraltar, though not at the same time. Both groups left behind a treasure trove of artifacts, including tools, butchered remains of animals and fossils. For that reason, the site has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In 2012, a team at the Gibraltar National Museum studied the caves. As part of that mission, they sought chambers they believed were hidden in the caves. Such chambers are common in caves formed close to the sea due to environmental factors. Over the course of nearly a decade, the search for hidden chambers came up empty. Then, as one group was searching the back of Vanguard Cave, they found evidence of soft sediment, which they believed could be hiding a [chamber](#). Some digging proved their hunch to be correct; behind the sediment plug, they found a large chamber.

The chamber was located higher up than the [cave](#) and was approximately 13 meters long. The amount of sediment in the plug suggested that the chamber had been sealed for tens of thousands of years. On its floor, they found the remains of a Griffon vulture, a hyena and a lynx, animals fully capable of climbing up into the chamber. But they also found the shell of a dog whelk—a type of sea snail, which the researchers note would not have been able to climb up into the chamber. This, they note,

suggests something carried it up there. The team also found scratches on the walls of the chamber, though they were unable to discover their source.

Initial estimates suggest Neanderthals likely were living in the area during the time the chamber was open, though the researchers have not yet found any evidence. They plan to begin digging in the chamber floor to see what other evidence might be found.

More information: [www.gibmuseum.gi/news/recent-d... at-vanguard-cave-335](http://www.gibmuseum.gi/news/recent-d...-at-vanguard-cave-335)

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