

Guernsey Conservation Volunteers

Although we are very pleased with the number of members in GCV we would always welcome more! If you would like to come along to a work party, or just find out more about the group, please contact Angela Salmon on 721163 or through the GCV website www.gcv.org.uk.

Old mobile telephones

La Société is now able to recycle mobile phones. This initiative helps protect the environment and reduces the use of limited resources. Any money raised will be used for local conservation purposes. If you have an old phone you no longer use, you can pop it through the letterbox at Candie.

Legacies and donations in lieu of flowers

Members are reminded that it is relatively simple to leave money to La Société in a will. All that is required is a codicil to a member's will which can be arranged by an Advocate or Solicitor. Money or property can be left for general use, or if desired for a specific purpose.

They are also reminded that donations in lieu of flowers can be made in memory of members who have died.

WEA Guernsey

Full details of all courses may also be listed on the Association's web site: www.wea.org.gg.



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Environment Guernsey is the wholly owned company of La Société Guernesaise
We manage La Société's nature reserves and undertake numerous land management contracts for various States of Guernsey Departments, the National Trust and private individuals.
We also run the Guernsey Biological Records Centre and provide an environmental consultancy service.
For all aspects of conservation advice and contracting, please contact us.

Officers and Council Members

Officers:

President	Rodney Collette	249021	president@societe.org.gg
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Associated Groups:

The Alderney Society & Museum	The Secretary	823222	
Alderney Wildlife Trust	Roland Gauvain	822935	
Bat Group	Pat Costen	264500	
Guernsey Conservation Volunteers	Angela Salmon	721163	
Friends of the Priaux Library	Gavin Lanoe	246715	
La Société Sercquaise	Jo Birch	832788	
NCCPG	Tattie Thompson	239444	
Lé Coumité d'la Culture Guernésiaise	Hazel Tomlinson	255891	
Meteorological Observatory	Martin Crozier	237766	
WEA	David Le Conte	264847	

In addition to the Section Secretaries being Council members, other Council members are: J. Hooper (co-opted), Prof N. Day, Miss J. Gilmour (co-opted), Mrs Judith Keen, R.B de la Rue and Mrs Sylvia Brouard, M Deane and R Lord.
Any member of La Société who is interested in joining one of the Sections or groups should contact the relevant Section Secretary.

Office Hours: The office at Candie is normally open between 10.00 and 11.30am on Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays.

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COMMUNIQUE

The Newsletter of **LA SOCIÉTÉ GUERNÉSIAISE**

Summer Issue 2011 No.75

Guernsey's Local Research, Natural History and Conservation Society

Annual Sale

Sunday 29 May 2pm

at the Professor Shaw Community Centre, St Martins
There will be the following stalls:

Plants Pat Costen 264500
Any plants welcome, but named varieties are particularly popular

Cakes Lawney Martin 237853
Julia Peet 238620

NB Having run this stall for years, Lawney and Julia have indicated that this will be their last. Any volunteers?

Books Nature Conservation Section:
Denise Thoumine 723003
Jane Gilmour 700024

Bric à brac Vanessa Crispini-Adams 238150

Please could we have only good quality clean items. In previous years we have had to use some of our profit for tip charges.

Raffle Bird Section: Judy Down 256464

Help needed

We would welcome help on all the stalls. At the moment Pat and Vanessa are alone on Plants and Bric à brac. If you can help, please call Pat Costen on 264500.

Trips to Jethou

We have arranged trips to Jethou on 21 May and 25 June, by kind permission of the tenant, Sir Peter Ogden. Using Buz White's Access Challenger, the sailing time will be 0930, leaving Jethou at 1200 hrs, and the cost is £16 per person. These visits are for Société members. Those wishing to go should send their names and a cheque to La Société Guernesaise HQ.

Wildflower and Orchid Field Walks

Sadly, for the first time in many years, we have been unable to find anyone to lead our very popular guided walks.

Diary Dates

The Herm Conference - The weekend of the 21 and 22 May.

This conference brings together the preliminary results of a three-year project to investigate the buried Neolithic landscape of Herm. The work has been directed by Chris Scarre (Department of Archaeology, Durham University), and supported by a team of specialists from the Universities of Durham, Cambridge and Oxford and from the Guernsey Museum. The first day will be held at Guernsey Museum and the second in Herm, there will be variety of speakers. If you would like more information or an application form, please contact the Archaeology Secretary or Guernsey Museum.

NCCPG

Bank Holiday Monday 30 May: NCCPG Giant Plant Sale 10.30am at Sausmarez Manor. Parking in the field opposite.

Friday 7 October at 7.30pm at Les Cotils: Lecture by Dr John David on 'Nerines'.
Entry to non-NCCPG members £3.

Saturday 8 - Saturday 22 October: NCCPG Nerine Festival in the lower glasshouse Candie Gardens. Opening times Sat 8 2.30pm - 4.00pm Sun 9 - Sat 22 10.00am - 4.00pm. Entry free. Nerines for sale.

Wednesday 16 November at 7.30pm at Les Cotils: Lecture by Marla Gagnon on 'Gardens of the Hamptons' (USA). Entry to non NCCPG members £3

Annual General Meeting

The AGM took place on Tuesday 22 March at La Trelade Hotel. Pat Costen, the retiring President, said that Les Sablons Interpretation Centre and Tea Room at L'Érée had been very successful, but the landlord had died and La Société would no longer be able to use the premises. It was hoped a suitable alternative would be found. She gave a tribute to Bill Gallienne who is undertaking the enormous task of updating the Dictionnaire. He had been working with the author, Marie de Garis, until her death in August aged 100. She also congratulated Richard Hocart on his excellent publication Guernsey's Countryside. She was delighted to award Honorary Membership to the very hard-working Hon. Treasurer Peter Budwin, who has for 13 years undertaken the taxing job of preparing the society's accounts and liaising with the auditors. She then handed over the Presidency to Rodney Collenette.

The Hon. Treasurer reported that subscription income had been slightly lower, bank interest rates were poor but a 2-year bond had matured; the company had been able to pay a dividend. General running expenses and conservation expenses were reduced, and we had received a grant for one project. Legacies continued to fill the gap but could not be relied on in the future. KPMG were thanked for their continued support by completing the final accounts and the audit.

The Officers were re-elected en bloc, and Frank Dowding was welcomed as the new Astronomy Section Secretary. There were three new Council members: Richard de la Rue, Michael Deane and Richard Lord.

Jamie Hooper, Managing Director of Guernsey Environmental Services Limited, reported the continuing success of the company, and said that it had held the West Coast Path contract with the Environment Department. After losing a stream cleaning contract with Public Services in 2009 and gaining a green lanes contract (86 green lanes), the company was successful in obtaining both contracts in 2010, despite heavy competition from numerous local gardening firms.

The Biological Records Centre continued to thrive with Charles David as Manager, helped by Jane Gilmour on a part-time basis.

After a short break the retiring President gave a brief presentation on Guernsey bats and the threats that they face.

Section Reports Archaeology

The St Saviour's skeleton found in the autumn last year has turned out to be the first of many. Due to the acid nature of Guernsey soils, bone does not survive for long periods and is rarely found on prehistoric or Roman sites. Medieval and later burials are usually in known cemeteries and are of course not disturbed without good reason. Although it was found beside the road, the St Saviours skeleton was in fact a burial from the parish church; the shape of the cemetery was altered in the 19th century when a portion was cut off by a new road layout.

In January work began on the installation of a small boiler room near the west door of St Martin's Church. It was anticipated that burials may be found in this area – although there were no grave markers – and so the foundation platform was dug by Guernsey Museum archaeologists. Jumbled human bone was found in the upper soil levels, probably from burials disturbed by an adjacent 19th century box vault. Below this level, three intact burials were found, one lying underneath the other two. The condition of the bone is poor and one of the skeletons had been partly crushed, but it is proving possible to extract the bone from the soil matrix in which they were lifted from the site. Once they have been cleaned, local osteoarchaeologist, Jenny Cataroche, will examine the bone and should be able to work out their ages and perhaps the sex. She will also look for signs of chronic illness or injury which can leave evidence on the bones. It is intended that radiocarbon dating will be done and so hopefully we will find out roughly when the individuals died.

A few weeks after this discovery, workmen digging a soak-away and drain for St Tugual's Church in Herm also found human bone. Although the chapel dates from at least 1480 and is probably considerably earlier, there is no record of an adjacent cemetery. At the time of writing, excavation at the site is ongoing and so far burials of around 25 individuals have been discovered. The bone is in much better condition than found at St Martin's Church and it can already be seen that most of the individuals were children, including a few very small babies. This probably reflects the high infant and child mortality rates at the time of the burials, although it is also possible that different people were buried in different parts of the cemetery, or that these are the casualties of an epidemic disease. Clearly they are not the monks of St Tugual's and were probably from the local Herm population – but when exactly? The area is now a lawn in front of the Manor House and enough time has passed for its use as a cemetery to have been forgotten. It may be expected that the cemetery was operational at the same time as the chapel and we know that it was re-consecrated in the 19th century, so it may have gone out of use at the Reformation. This would make the burials 15th century or earlier, but bearing in mind the condition of the bone, the later end of this range would seem more likely.

These skeletons will be examined by Jenny Cataroche and some will be radiocarbon dated. This work will take time, but once it is complete the bones will be returned to their resting place in Herm.

Last month we enjoyed a fascinating talk on the cave art of Cresswell Crags in Nottinghamshire by its discoverer Dr Paul Bahn. He was able to spend a couple of days in Guernsey and had the opportunity to view our prehistoric art – 'Le Gardien' of Le Déhus and the statue menhirs of the Castel and St Martin's Churches.

Work will soon resume at the Bronze Age site off La Mare Road at the west end of the airport. This area gets very wet in the winter and so we have been unable to dig there for some months. A new phase of work will see an area machine stripped of topsoil, thereby enabling us to target archaeological features and make more sense of this enigmatic site.

If you are interested in helping with excavations and/or processing finds then do get in touch. We meet most Wednesday mornings and Thursday evenings and sometimes at the weekend.



Herm Project excavations 2010



The excavation of St Tugual's Chapel in Herm

Astronomy

Debby Quertier has been our Secretary for the past 13 years. The earlier years were shared with Jessica Harris. We have seen many changes during her time of office, ranging from the purchase of new telescopes to the complete renovation of our meeting room. Debby's knowledge of the night sky is legendary and during our open evenings she held the interest of everyone. We at the Observatory all agree that you have done a wonderful job Debby, and all with a minimum of fuss. So, with that background, I take over as Secretary, knowing that I have a very difficult act to follow.

We are now well settled in to our renovated and upgraded meeting room; a special thank you to the generosity of Mr and Mrs Lenfestey and La Société Guernesaise.

We do have a problem occupying our minds at the moment in that the building we constructed twenty years ago to house our main telescopes requires essential maintenance. Supports for the sliding roof need to be replaced and the roof itself is letting in rainwater. We are intending the repairs to be carried out in the near future.

We are trying something different this year with our open evenings. There will be a talk with slides or a film show, and if we have a clear sky then using the telescopes would be a bonus. We have tried this recently with some group bookings and it worked very well. This was due to the enormous assistance and knowledge of David Le Conte, Geoffrey Falla, Roger Chandler and Holly Bisson, all of whom I thank very much.

Our first open evening will be Thursday 26 May at 9.00 pm at the Observatory. Thereafter they will be on Thursday 28 July and every Thursday in August.

Frank Dowding

Botany

All meetings will take place at 2.15 for 2.30 pm on the first Saturday of the month.

May - Fort Hommet, Vazon, P13F2, Car park below hill - coastal flowers

Jun - Fort Doyle, P7H2, park at end - Orange Bird's Foot etc.

Jul - Ozanne Reserve, L'Ancrese, P6B4, car park at Lucksall on Amarreurs Rd - Orchids and common

Aug - Pleinmont, P32C4, cliff top car park - heather and coastal plants

Sep - Richmond end of Vazon, P13G3, car park at road bend - Great Horsetail etc.

Oct - Vale: Late summer flowers on hill, P11G2, coast car park near ramp to castle

Entomology

The Entomology Section will meet with the Botany and Nature Conservation Sections for their monthly outings in 2011. Please see these Sections for times and places.

Family History

At the March meeting we welcomed one of our members, Bryan Vandertang, as the evening's speaker. He spoke on how he researched his Dutch ancestry, and on meeting up with relatives for the first time who helped him to reach back many generations.

At our next meeting, 18 May at 7.45 pm at Candie, we will welcome Sir Geoffrey Rowland, who will be talking on "The Evolution of the Guernsey Constitution".

Outdoor meetings:

22 June – Visit to Folk Museum at Saumarez Park
10 July – Gill Girard: Walk around the Bridge, St Sampson.

Any family history queries should be addressed to The Family History Section, PO Box 314, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 3TG. All are welcome to our meetings.

Edith Le Patourel

Geology

Wednesday 11 May - a walk down the cliff path to Moulin Huet bay to look at the caves on the beach. Meet at Moulin Huet car park at 7.00pm.

Wednesday 8 June - to be announced.

Wednesday 6 July - a look at the contact zones to the west of the bay. Meet at "La Mirage" car park at 7.00pm.

Andy Dorey

Historic Buildings

7 May From medieval to Jacobean styles of building: meeting at 7.30pm at Candie.

21 May Visit to the Vale Church and Priory, with particular reference to Roman discoveries and to work at the priory gatehouse. Parking outside the churchyard. Meet at 2.30pm.

9 – 11 June Trip to Alderney. For details, please contact the Secretary. We intend to have two days of visits to individual houses and to the Roman fort at The Nunnery as well as to at least one nineteenth-century fort; also probably an evening talk open to the public.

9 July Visit. Location to be confirmed.

Historic Buildings *Continued...*

13 August Walk through La Couperderie, St. Peter Port, examining differing styles and dates of masonry, followed by a party at St. Peter's Terrace, St. Martin's. Parking will initially be at the car park opposite St. Joseph's Church unless advised otherwise, but at St. Peter's Terrace will only be available for the infirm; others please park elsewhere. Meet at 2.30pm

15 October The influence of Calvinism: grey stonework of the 16th to 18th centuries and the ascendancy of Perelle gneiss. Meeting at 7.30pm at Candie.

12 November The use of foreign stone from the 16th to 18th centuries. Meeting at 7.30pm at Candie.

26 November The opening of 19th-century quarries and building in coursed rubble masonry. Meeting at 7.30pm at Candie.

10 December Stonework of the later 19th and 20th centuries. Meeting at 7.30pm at Candie.

John McCormack

Juniors

In February Sylvia Brouard gave a most interesting illustrated talk on the German Occupation at the Frossard Theatre. She brought along some interesting artefacts including a mine and a gas mask.

There were no meetings in March and April but a stimulating programme is being planned for 2011.

Sunday 15 May at 11.00am Lihou causeway. Richard Lord will lead a Rock pool Ramble.

The Junior Section is open to all juniors that are members of La Société in their own right or are the children of family members. Regular members will be contacted by email and details of meetings will appear on the website.

Pat Costen 264500 or patcosten@cwgsy.net

Nature Conservation

16 May	7.30 pm	Vazon
20 June	7.30 pm	Le Villocq/Le Friquet
18 July	7.30 pm	Chateau des Marais
15 Aug	7.00 pm	Vale Pond

For further information phone **Denise Thoumine** 723003