



COMMUNIQUE

The Newsletter of **LA SOCIÉTÉ GUERNESIAISE**

May 2016 Issue No. 90

Guernsey's Local Research, Natural History and Conservation Society

EVENTS

Saturday 28th May 11am to 3pm – Société Booksale - there will be a sale of second-hand donated books at the Candie headquarters with a wide variety of good quality titles covering biography, travel, history, antiquity, gardening, etc. plus some paperback fiction and children's books all available for purchase at reasonable prices. The proceeds will go to La Société's funds. Entry is free via the Société door to the rear of Candie. However if you wish to attend the Big Geekend as well (details below) normal admission to the Museum applies.

The Big Geekend Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th May 10am to 5pm at Candie.

As the name suggests, The Big Geekend is all about celebrating offbeat hobbies, pastimes and collections. So far confirmed we have Morris dancers, a wargames group, tapestry stitching, comic book collectors, model trains and folk music. And, as last year, we're over the moon that the Conservation Herd will be with us in the garden too. Most of the participants will be positioned within the Museum and galleries but, because our displays are being updated, some will set up outside on the terrace. The event will aimed at families and there'll be things for visitors to make and do in the Discovery Room (last year we created robots out of recycling). It's a really fun weekend. Normal admission to the Museum applies.

LECTURES

Thursday 16th June - 7.30pm, Frossard Theatre, Candie. Astronomy lecture entitled *"Black Holes, Dark Matter and Vacuum Energy"* by Dr Robin Catchpole from Cambridge University. **Free entry.**

Friday 16th September - 7.30pm, Frossard Theatre, Candie. History Lecture entitled *"The Sailing Letters Project and how a Dutch nobleman landed involuntarily on Guernsey"* by Mrs Els. van Eijk, (Director of Finance and Corporate Services at the National Library of the Netherlands and formerly head of Collections and deputy Director of the National Maritime Museum in Amsterdam) and Mr Siem van Eeten. The talk will be in English. **Free entry for members.**

JETHOU TRIP

Please note we have arranged a trip to Jethou on **Saturday 11th June at 9.30am** departing from the near the Sark boat waiting room. According to demand there will be later boats that morning. Please note the trip lasts 2 hours and there is a toilet on the island for visitors to use, near the jetty. Please note that due to insurance regulations these trips are strictly for Members only and the cost per person is £20. **Kindly e-mail secretary@societe.org.gg to book a seat.**

When visiting Jethou there is a specified dedicated coastal and part woodland walk. A map is provided with the paths clearly shown. The walk at times can be demanding and does require some agility. Please do not walk near the outward side of the lower path as there are steep drops.

The paths are mainly grass with occasional steep steps and stout walking boots are always a good idea. The walk, although short, has its challenges and if a warm day, please be sure to bring some bottled water as this hike can make visitors thirsty.

Please be aware there are no facilities for first aid on the Island and please consider the above when contemplating your visit.

NATIONAL TRUST EVENTS

On the evening of **Wednesday 8th June** the National Trust of Guernsey will be opening their site at Les Caches barn for an evening between 6pm and 8pm to let people get a chance to access the site which will be closed all this year for continuing restoration work. All welcome.

Thursday 23th June - 6pm until 8pm - The Folk and Costume Museum would like to invite Société Members to a free open evening with a guided tour of the Museum. Alternatively Members can wander around freely on their own. If you would like to attend kindly Email: secretary@societe.org.gg stating whether you would prefer a guided or unaccompanied tour.

2014 TRANSACTIONS

We still have a lot of uncollected Transactions. Please note Saturday morning between 10am and 12 noon is a good time to collect them as there is usually parking outside Candie.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Things are hotting up!

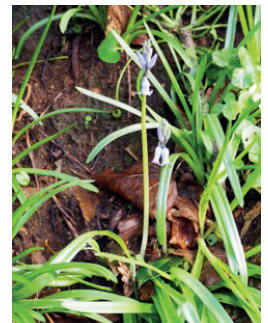
The natural world is full of interest. Following record high temperatures in December, wild plants seen on our regular walks along the cliffs were coming into flower much earlier than normal, but then as temperatures were much cooler in March and April, spring flowering seemed to be extended over a longer period than usual so that now in May, everything seems normal.

As a family we always compete to see who can spot the earliest flowering of a wide range of different wild plants, with pride of place going to the person who can spot the earliest Bluebell. That prize went to me this year with a sighting of an early bluebell on 11th February, some 3 weeks before the earliest one we have previously recorded. It's amazing to realise that the main bluebell flowering is still occurring now, almost 3 months later, whilst the cliffs are covered in a plethora of wild flowers, the swallows have returned and birds are nesting. Such changes and natural events remind us how exquisitely sensitive nature is to a changing environment.

Guernsey Met officer Martin Crozier told me that the mean temperature last December had been a record high in the island. January was still mild but not close to a record and February was only just above average temperatures. Since then it has been much cooler.



Spring Walk – Photo Courtesy of Andrew Casebow



Early Bluebell – Photo Courtesy of Andrew Casebow

Martin said that "For most of the winter we had been certain that it would prove to be the warmest winter on record, but the last chilly week of February snatched that away and we ended up very similar to the winter of 2006/7 as the 'joint warmest winter on record', with an average winter temperature of 8.9°C (30 year average is 7.1°C)." It was not all good news because we also had significantly higher rainfall (346.9mm compared to the 30 year average of 274.6mm) and, as there was more cloud cover, the amount of sunshine we enjoyed was lower than normal (174.8 hours instead of a 30 year average of 205.2mm). Perhaps this is a sign of things to come as our climate is set to warm significantly in the coming years.

The warm December was put down to the El Niño effect, a warming of the waters in the south Pacific and along the equator, which influences the jet streams.

Climate scientists worry that dramatic alterations to the planet caused by anthropogenic climate change may interact in unpredictable ways with natural phenomena, such as El Niño. This is uncharted territory and can lead to a disruption of the natural systems, such as the migrations of birds, fish and aquatic creatures, and the times of breeding of many wildlife species. It can also cause greater flooding and severe droughts in many areas of the world leading to possible food shortages.

Annual General Meeting

We held the AGM in March at which I was able to report on some of the highlights of the past year:

1. Draft Island Development Plan:

The Draft IDP was reviewed by Planning Inspectors in a long series of meetings during last summer 2015. The Inspectors report (expected shortly) is due to be debated by the States later this year. Jane Gilmour was initially involved in reviewing the proposed Sites of Special Significance and Areas of Biodiversity Importance and Jamie Hooper made a large number of representations to the Inspector on behalf of La Société.

2. The Environment Department's "Biodiversity Strategy":

The proposed island Biodiversity Strategy was debated by the States assembly last November. This was politically the most important event for biodiversity and wildlife in the island and was approved by the States with a vote of £80,000 towards the cost of implementation. We owe a big vote of thanks to Phil Atkinson, Jessi Jennings and Julia Henney who led La Société's campaign of support for the strategy. I learnt a lot about the use of social media, with increasing amazement but I admit to still being perplexed by it.

3. Ramsar Sites:

The latest Ramsar site (Herm and the Humps) to be awarded international status was officially recognised in January this year. In his 1995 report, Dr Mike Pienkowski of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, identified 5 potential Ramsar sites in the Bailiwick (Lihou Island and L'Erée Headland, Alderney West Coast and Burhou Islands, Gouliot Caves in Sark, North Herm and Les Amfrocques, and Les Vicheries Orchid Fields at Rocquaine Bay). Now just the traditionally managed marshy meadows in Rue des Vicheries remains to be recognised. The process of applying for Ramsar designation is particularly protracted and time consuming and the Reserves Committee and Council will need to decide whether this should be a priority. An alternative might be to link the Orchid Fields with the Lihou island and L'Erée Headland Ramsar site.

4. Family History Section:

One of the major concerns this year was the Family History Section's move from Blanchelande College. Family History has to vacate their current premises by June 2016 and finding acceptable new premises at an affordable price was becoming a real headache when, following a conversation with the Very Reverend John Guille, we heard that Les Cotils Christian Centre was looking for a new tenant for the Russells Centre. La Société made an acceptable offer to take on this building as tenant (initially for a 5 year period), subject to a successful 'Change of Use' application to the Environment Department, which has now been granted.

5. The inaugural Griff Caldwell Educational Bursary

Evie Wood, a Ladies College student, who is now at Brighton University studying Environment and Media, was awarded the first Griff Caldwell bursary of £1,000. Richard Hocart, Jessi Jennings and Julia Henney formed the interview panel. Richard Hocart has designed a poster advertising this year's award. This is being displayed in schools and colleges in the island and advertised in the Press and on social media. Please ask any prospective applicants that you know to download an application form from our website www.societe.org.gg

6. NBN Gilbert White Award

On behalf of La Société I nominated Nigel Jee for the inaugural Gilbert White Award that was to be presented by the UK National Biodiversity Network. Nigel was successful out of a strong field of over 30 nominations and Nic Jee, Nigel's son, collected the posthumous award on Mrs Jennifer Jee's behalf. Nigel's diaries and written records were transposed and digitised by Professor Tim Sparks and Anna Bock of Munich University and, with Mrs Jee's permission, a final copy of this is being prepared by Anna for safe keeping at La Société. Anna Bock used the records for her PhD degree and has since had articles on the records published in a number of academic journals. Most recently I have been contacted by Dr Ailene Ettinger, a post doctoral researcher in the Biology Department at Tufts University, Massachusetts, USA, who wishes to use the dataset in a joint study being conducted at that university and at Harvard University. Following consultation with Mrs Jee we have agreed to this request.

7. Events in 2015:

La Société was once again well represented at a number of island events, including the Viaë Marchi, the West Coast Weekend, the Vraic Days, the West Show and the Round Table Christmas Fayre. Attendance at these events is essential for an outward looking society and I should like to thank all the members and others who volunteered to attend these events and man our stands. The sale of books and other items raised a very creditable £280 but the main reason for our attendance was to be seen as an indispensable part of the community, participating in these events.

8. People: All members of La Société are important but I should particularly mention:

- Anthony Stagg – Anthony has been awarded Honorary Membership in recognition of all his work as Volunteer Coordinator for Reserves. Anthony undertakes a very vital role organising corporate volunteer days on our nature reserves and in doing so publicises La Société's role and raises a significant amount of money from participating businesses within the island.
- Lawney Martin took on the role of Membership Secretary, initially for one year, but has agreed to stay on in this role at the present time.
- I also want to mention with thanks the several members who turn out regularly to help our Secretary Kate to stuff envelopes with the quarterly Newsletter. A particularly thankless but vital task.

- The Council has gratefully accepted David Le Conte's offer to undertake the role of librarian/archivist for La Société and I'm hoping that this will prove a very useful and much used resource in the future.
- Chris Mourant has taken over from Pat Costen as leader of the Junior Section. Chris is a passionate ornithologist and is keen to pass on his very deep interest in wildlife to our young members. He has previously run a very successful RSPB 'wildlife explorers' group and so I'm looking forward to him taking over this role for La Société.
- Peter Langford has taken over from Frank Dowding as Secretary of the Astronomy section. Peter has been a longstanding member of the astronomy section, serving as its treasurer for many years and as editor of Sagittarius, the section's newsletter. I should like to thank Frank for all his work on Council in recent years.
- We welcome Aimée Golden as Secretary of the recently formed Bat Section and wish her well in the post.
- Sylvia Brouard has stood down as her term as a 'Co-opted Member' on Council has sadly now ended. Sylvia will be sorely missed as she has never stinted in her support for La Société and can always be relied upon to help man stands at the numerous events that are held during the year.
- Following the AGM we now have two new co-opted members on the Council: The Very Reverend John Guille and Alex Herschel.
- Our thanks to Sheila Cataroche of the former Rex Stationers for all the donated stationery over the years. Finally our thanks to George Garnett for his excellent talk after the AGM on his experiences as a young botanist in the Peruvian Amazon.

9. Talks: There have been many fascinating talks over the past year, most recently Brigit Strawbridge's talk: *'Bee Aware - Our bees are in trouble.'*

I have been overwhelmed by the breadth of the subjects covered and have made a personal resolution to attend more in the coming year. One of the highlights for me was the wonderful lecture entitled 'From here to the edge of the observable universe' that was given by Dr Robin Catchpole of the Cambridge University Institute of Astronomy. Dr Catchpole will be returning shortly to give another lecture, when I anticipate another 'full house'.

Finally, let me just tell you about some people who have agreed to come to give talks this coming autumn and winter:

TV wildlife presenter George McGavin has agreed to give the 'Charles David Memorial Lecture' in September (date and venue to be confirmed). He will be giving a talk called: "Bug World: Sex, violence and a cast of billions". Dr Huw Lewis-Jones, Director of Polarworld and author of books including 'Across the Arctic Ocean', 'The Crossing of Antarctica' and 'The Conquest of Everest' will be speaking later in the year.

Dr Andrew Casebow

BEE AWARE TALK *Held on Wednesday 20th April*

Such was the success of the visit, albeit fleeting, of Brigit Strawbridge two years ago that Council avowed to invite her back at the first opportunity and this duly materialised last month, encouraged, we should add, by the Guernsey Beekeepers' Association. In view of the popularity of the previous talk when the Frossard Lecture Theatre was filled to overflowing it was decided to hold the event at the theatre of the Princess Royal Centre, the Beekeepers assisting with the publicity costs and Chartered

Accountants Collette Jones underwriting the theatre hire and Brigit's fee and travel costs. The evening was a triumph with 165 persons attending, including several children and students. As previously Brigit concentrated on bumble and solitary bees, their importance, nesting habits, means of nectar and pollen collection etc., many were astonished to learn for example that there are 'cuckoo' bees that lay their eggs in other bees' nests; she also highlighted the threats the bees faced, especially loss of habitat and modern insecticides.



Brigit Strawbridge with Bumblebee Conservation Trust Poster - Photo courtesy of Richard Lord

As opposed to her last visit which had lasted just over 12 hours Brigit was in the island for several days which enabled Brigit and her partner (they became engaged on this trip) to explore the island and the audience was delighted to hear her report on the very healthy state of our bee population, she describing the island as being criss-crossed by corridors of gardens and wild flowers, the bees not being restricted to isolated pockets as was happening elsewhere.

Thanks are due to our Secretary, Kate Lee, who spent many hours in the event's organisation.

Rodney Collette

Recent Publication

The States and Secondary Education, 1560 to 1970 by Dr Rose-Marie Crossan - priced at £5 and available from Dr Crossan at gsyhist@gmail.com or by writing to her at Mimizan, 11 Croutes Havilland Close, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 1EU.

SECTION REPORTS

ARCHAEOLOGY

Any Archaeology queries should be sent to Tanya Walls by Email: archaeology@societe.org.gg

ASTRONOMY

I find the first few months of a year to be the busiest in our astronomy calendar. There are a number of reasons for this. One is the darker evenings which when clear encourage people to notice the beauty of a starry night resulting in a number of groups asking to visit the observatory. We welcome these people from all walks of life, Scouting, Retired groups, Social clubs, W.I. Schools and Colleges. Each group are looking for an hour or so quality time without the bustle of many people during an official open evening. We welcome everyone to show off our big telescopes and give illustrated talks on subjects chosen by our visitors.

We held our astronomy course for the Workers Education Association (WEA) during February and March. This is always popular under the supervision of David Le Conte. This year for the very first time, David had to be away for part of the course. But David's enthusiasm must have helped us to see it through successfully during his absence.

Our AGM is also held in February. At the 2015 AGM I gave a year's notice of my intention to resign. Which was accepted at this year's AGM.

My reason was straight forward in that I was finding less time to devote to other interests in my life. This I put down to the increasing but welcome number of Group Visits. So I suggested that it needed a dedicated Officer position of 'Event Co-ordinator'. This was agreed and I became that Officer. I am very pleased to have this duty as apart from the generous donations which are given towards our running expenses, I do enjoy greeting people and giving illustrated talks to those with similar interest to my own and it helps me to keep abreast of astronomy science.

At the Société AGM on Wednesday 23rd March, Peter Langford, our treasurer and a member of our section for many years, officially became the new secretary of the astronomy section and I could not be happier to have Peter as our new leader.

Astrophotography has moved on with a satellite tracking system. David Le Conte managed a picture of the space station as it crossed the face of the moon. Both David Le Conte and Matt Skillett continue to obtain even more remarkable results. A selection of pictures is available on our web site astronomy.org.gg

I am pleased to say that a number of Grammar School and Beaucamps high students are regularly attending now on our Tuesday evening Members Night. They are making significant contributions to the section. We have had an approach from the University of the Third Age (U3A). This organization benefits people who have retired but wish to improve their knowledge of chosen subjects.

We have two computers, one for use with the large telescope and the other during illustrated talks. Both are rather elderly and slow. In line with keeping our equipment in good condition for ourselves and our visitors we are currently replacing both.

This will be my last Société report. Peter will now take over. Although I have found it rather busy, I have actually enjoyed it very much and a big thank you for the help I have received from all our members. I now look forward to co-ordinating our future events.

Frank Dowding BSc

See the Stars with Large Telescopes

Visitors are welcome at Guernsey's Astronomical Observatory on the following dates:

Thursday 21st July at 9pm

Thursday 28th July at 9pm

Thursday 4th August at 8.30pm

Thursday 11th August at 8.30pm

Thursday 18th August at 8.30pm

Thursday 25th August at 8.30pm

Thursday 1st September at 8.30pm

Visitors will be shown how the telescopes operate with viewing if clear and given illustrated talks on space related subjects. Donations are welcomed and assist with running and maintenance costs. We suggest adults £2, children £1.

The Observatory is in La Rue du Lorier, St Pierre-du-Bois. Perry's Guide reference 21 E3. Parking is usually available at La Houquette School, Rue des Paysans. From the school go 100 yards up the road, then left onto Rue du Lorier, then immediately right, behind a large bunker. The road is dark, so a torch is advisable. For further information and directions see www.astronomy.org. gg or call Peter Langmead on 265557.

BAT SECTION

The Bat Section of the Société Guernesiaise was established on 5th March 2016. The aims of the Bat Section are to rehabilitate injured bats and to carry out roost surveys to help identify the various species of bats found in Guernsey and to record any changes to the populations of those species.

We are pleased to announce the first Bat Section Secretary, Aimée Golden. Aimée is a Company Secretary at a Private Equity company and is currently studying towards a degree in Environmental Science with the Open University.

In her spare time she is a member of the Guernsey Conservation Volunteers and is a stock checker for the Guernsey Conversation Herd. Aimée has a keen interest in bats and is delighted to be part of the La Société and to be given the opportunity to support the conservation of the Bailiwick's natural environment.

If you find an injured bat you should contact Aimée Golden directly on 07911 713115 or the GSPCA, who will contact the Bat Section.

The next Bat Section meeting will be held on Wednesday 3rd August 2016 in the Section Room at Candie Gardens at 7:45pm and new members are very welcome.

Aimée Golden

BOTANY

Events

Saturday 4th June - 2pm for a 2.15pm start - Bunker Hill to look for Deptford Pink, Perry's ref. page 7, f3.

Saturday 2nd July 2nd - 2pm for a 2.15pm start - Port Soif to look at the orchids and other grassland species. Meet in the car park near the kiosk. Perry's ref. page 8, c1.

New Botany members should contact Jean and Gavin Sampson as below. Members will receive a monthly newsletter, either by post or Email. Please send a cheque to Soc. Guernesiaise Botany Section with your details to **Jean and Gavin Sampson, The Ferrers, 1 Milton Gardens, Rue Cauchée, St Martin, Guernsey GY4 6NU** Tel: 234430 Email: gavsampson@cwgsy.net. Please send your name, address, postcode and telephone number, and your email address if you wish to receive your newsletter that way.

For enquiries about events please contact Anna Cleal by Email: botany@societe.org.gg

ENTOMOLOGY

Any queries kindly contact Mark Lawlor by Email: mplawlor@cwgsy.net



Grey Long-eared Bat
Photo courtesy of Orly Razgour



Natterers Bat - Photo courtesy of Jane Gilmour

FAMILY HISTORY

By the time this Communiqué is published the Family History Section will be settling in their new "home". The new accommodation is situated at the Russells building at Les Cotils Christian Centre, Les Cotils, St Peter Port. This complex can be found at the sea side of Cambridge Park, at the end of L'Hyvreuse Road (not avenue), just a short walk from the Priaulx Library and La Société Guernesiaise HQ at Candie.

The Cotils Centre has parking, a coffee shop and visitors accommodation.

Times of opening of the Section room have not been discussed yet but if one wants to do research it is best to contact Maria van der Tang on mariavdt@hotmail.com or Tel: 07781 105331.

Edith Le Patourel

Events

Thursday 16th June - 7pm, Brother's Cemetery Visit, Rue des Frères, St Peter Port.

Wednesday 20th July - to be announced.

Any general Family History queries should be addressed to The Family History Section, PO Box 314, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 3TG.

Alternatively Email: [Maria van der Tang researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Maria.van.der.Tang@researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk)

GEOLOGY

Contact Andy Dorey Tel: 252123 or Email: andydorey3@gmail.com

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

For the avoidance of doubt, please note that there will be no meetings of the Section in May. This is partly due to the fact that we shall just have had the last of our Winter and Spring talks on the last day of April, and partly because the Secretary will be away for two weeks in the oldest republic in the world – that of Mount Athos, which is semi-independent within Greece a bit like the Channel Islands are to Great Britain.

There, he will join a group of volunteers who go every year to keep the monastic footpaths open, swiping with sickles, sawing up fallen trees and chopping up spiny creepers. Although we have to hack our way through beautiful cistus in bloom, cut down butcher's broom that likes to grow between the stones of these paved ways, and occasionally we also have to decimate a spectacular genista, all in order to create width and height for an hypothetical fat monk on a donkey, we are actually perpetuating a thousand-year tradition in one of the most untouched and forested regions of Europe. Last year 20 people cleared about 200 miles of such footpaths.

So the next meeting will be on Saturday 4th June, when we shall carry on where we left off, thinking about the Town Church, led by Andrew Dyke and John McCormack. This meeting is open to all and will be a fairly comprehensive tour around the inside and outside of the building, including mounting the stairs past the oldest door in the islands, and up the tower to see the medieval structure inside the spire. We might, in passing, admire the view, of course! Like all our summer fixtures, this will start at 2.30 p.m.

Towards the end of the month, some of us will be joining colleagues from Jersey and Alderney to meet the Vernacular Architecture Group of England and Wales in the area around Le Mans, where we have been offered a four-day conference by French colleagues, looking at exceptionally interesting medieval buildings. The Channel Islanders will be staying in two fifteenth-century houses within a big estate containing a château with even more rooms, and we shall look after ourselves as at a gîte, joining the English contingent in following cars as they trundle around in a coach. Applications to join this trip are now closed.

Unfortunately, I have to report that the visit on Saturday 9th July has had to be cancelled. However, we intend to add to the original programme a boat trip along the south coast of Guernsey, on an evening somewhere between 16th and 27th July, when we aim to think about sea defences over the ages, and in particular see if there are any signs at all of the long flight of steps shown in the 1680 Legge Report giving access up a gulley to Corbière Castle, already ruined at that time. Depending upon what boats are available, numbers on this trip might have to be limited, so those who are interested in coming, please express this interest to the Secretary, and if you have knowledge of a boat that might be available, please get in touch about this too (mrjam@cwgsy.net or 720303).

We have also arranged an additional talk on thatching, to be given by a Lincolnshire thatcher who will be on holiday here with his family. This will be at 7.30 p.m. on Saturday, 30th July at Candie, and will also be open to all at no cost.

In August we have just one meeting, on Saturday, 13th, which will be a little out of the ordinary. We shall be looking (externally) at the various houses that appeared along the Ruelle Braye and in St. Peter's Valley during the nineteenth century; in 1787 there were none at all. As two members of the Section own property here, this should be quite informative, and there will be access to one of the houses at St. Peter's Terrace, with tea in the garden afterwards if the weather is good, or else indoors.

The visit to the Château des Marais is postponed until 2017, so the last outdoor visit of the year will be on Saturday 10th September, at 2.30 p.m. to La Gaudine, in Les Martins, St. Martin's, where we hope to bring together documentary, archaeological and architectural evidence to elucidate quite a complicated house and former farm buildings. After this, we shall return indoors to Candie in October.

John McCormack Email: mrjam@cwgsy.net or Tel: 720303

GUERNSEY MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY EVENTS

Guernsey French daytime courses continue – please contact Jo Dowding if you'd like to sign up for a 6 week course. Tel: 726518.

May Half Term sessions for families: Micro World (30th May - 5th June)

Have you ever wondered what lives in your garden or lurks in your lounge carpet? Join us to look through microscopes, make models and zoom into the small detailed world of everyday objects. In each session there will be a quiz and a fun, practical activity. These activities are based around the 'Beyond the Naked Eye' exhibition, which features enormous images of the tiny insects that share our world. These sessions will be held each day (Monday 30 May - Sunday 5 June) from 1.00-3.00pm at Candie. Normal admission applies and there is no need to book. Activities are aimed at children 5 years and over but we think there's plenty to keep the younger ones happy too. These sessions are led by a member of the learning team but adults are expected to stay and join in the fun too.

Events

Sunday 22nd May

Accompanied viewing of the *"Beyond The Naked Eye"* exhibition at Candie. Meet at Candie between 1.30 and 2.00pm. The exhibition is devoted to magnified views of nearly 50 various mini-beasts, obtained by scanning electron microscopy, and the whole is very much a visual experience combining science, artistic photography and technology which is superbly displayed.

Included are mainly insects with other creepy-crawlies and massive wall – sized images of spiders which deserve special mention for persons of a nervous disposition!

Various worksheets will be available for the Juniors to choose from and to work on in the exhibition space at their own speed with parental assistance and me on hand, after which we'll adjourn to the Section Room where they'll have the opportunity to use optical microscopes to look at prepared specimens. Reflecting the main exhibition, this is very much an opportunity to combine science and art, so participants would benefit from coming equipped with their own supply of drawing materials. A hand held magnifying glass, if you have one, would also be of use. This event will be led by Dave Lane.

Saturday 18th June

We will be meeting at the Fisherman's Quay at 1.30pm to take a boat trip up to the North of Herm to an area known as the Humps to look at the Atlantic grey seals and to discover the importance of the Humps as a seabird breeding area. The trip will be about three hours. Please note there will be a small charge for parents who want to attend this trip.

Sunday 17th July

We will be meeting at Moulin Huet car park at 11am for a walk down to the beach with the Marine Biology Section led by Jessi Jennings to discover what lives there and to learn more about the importance of our marine life and to look at how surveys are conducted.

Pending events

In August I will be looking to organise a Bat and Moth night at Sausmarez Park. This would entail setting up a Moth trap then taking a walk around the park with a bat detector to listen to the high-pitched noises that bats make this event would be quite a late start and going on into the late evening possibly as late as 10.30pm at night

Another late night would be a trip up to the Observatory to look at the sky at night in September. I would also be looking at doing some workshops, events and even some slideshows or films about the natural world and hopefully involving other Sections in the Autumn months.

I am also hoping to put together a magazine with the help of the children. If you have any ideas on what you would like to do or how we can improve the junior section please let me know so that we can arrange a meeting to discuss ideas for the future.

Chris Mourant

Contact details - Mobile: 07911 130415 Email: chris.mourant@yahoo.co.uk

After and long, cold and very wet winter, the Herd has been moved back to the grasslands at Port Soif. We are continuing Operation Skylark and with the success of last years grazing season we are going to be grazing even more sites. The first site the steers grazed this spring was an area next to Rovers AC. This grassland is the last site at Port Soif where skylarks were recorded as having bred. Over the past few years the grass had grown tall and rank and was becoming overtaken by brambles. It was also being used as a bit of a litter dump, probably because of its unkempt appearance. So grazing this site will not only repair the grassland and allow wildflowers and invertebrates to return, but will also create a more open and inviting space for the public.

We have received fantastic support from Rovers AC. In exchange for having 6 new football supporters, the Herd has very generously been supplied water from their site. The Herd are getting big now and require a lot of water so their generosity has made a very big difference to the workload of the volunteers who would otherwise have to cart the bowser off for filling on a regular basis!

Over the next month or so we will be moving the Herd around other sites at Port Soif to continue to graze. We are so grateful for all the support we receive from the local community whilst they are there. It is brilliant to know the steers have been welcomed into the community.

This years two new calves – Seven and Eight – are now 16 weeks old and have been fully weaned. They are still on a quiet private field but soon, when the weather warms, we will be moving them out to a nature reserve to start work.

You can keep track of where the Herd are grazing through our online map at arcg.is/1dHGjOb

Julia Henney



Far right Charles, David and 2 other Herd Steers - Photo courtesy of Julia Henney

The Marine Biology Section, with the knowledge and expertise of Dr Mel Broadhurst, carried out a Phase 1 habitat survey of Vazon Bay intertidal over a four day period from 8th April 2016. During this time we were able to cover the whole bay, finding a variety of interesting habitats along the way.

We used habitat codes as per the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Phase 1 habitat classification guidance.

Due the various differences in our local habitat types compared to the UK it has been necessary to liaise with the JNCC in relation to habitat types confirmation, and in some instances new codes have had to be created!

Many thanks to Dr Broadhurst and the volunteers who gave their time to assist with the survey. Photos taken over the four survey days are available on the La Société Facebook page.



One of the habitats identified during the survey
Photo courtesy of Jessi Jennings

Jessi Jennings

For more information on the above please visit the website www.societe.org.gg Facebook page or Email: Jessi Jennings: marinebiology@societe.org.gg

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Events

Monday 20th June - 7.30pm - Bordeaux tip (reclaimed quarry - to see how site is developing). Perry's Guide page 7 H5 – meet in car park.

Monday 18th July - 7.30pm - Silbe Visit 2 Parking is tricky so good to double up where possible. (Wooded valley - to review site with possibility of putting forward suggestions for management). Perry's Guide page 20 D5 meet at top of track.

Monday 15th August - 7.30pm - Ronez (we will be looking at an old greenhouse site which was used as a quarry spoil 'tip' when the quarry was extended in 2010 - to see how vegetation is developing). Perry's Guide page 34 G3 meet by entrance to site.

Monday 19th September - 7pm - Pleinmont (coastal grassland/scrub). Perry's Guide page 32 C4 meet in car park opposite motor cross track.

Sunday 16th October - 2pm Claire Mare and surrounding area (swamp/marshy grassland/open water). Perry's Guide page 12 C4 meet on pavement opposite entrance to Nature Reserve.

More information about the section can be found on the Société website or by contacting Lesley Bourgaize on 710737 or Email: lbourgaize@cwgsy.net

ORNITHOLOGY

As I write April is three weeks old and the weather is still unsettled. Our first Spring migrants and summer visitors have been seen, but numbers are few, probably partly due to the weather; other reasons being loss of habitat in their wintering grounds and the scourge that is hunting, especially in and around the Mediterranean countries. These factors mean that many species are suffering population declines.

During the last week of March the birding equivalent of the World Cup takes place. Teams of the world's best birders gathered in Eilat, Israel, this year to put their skills to the test and raise vital funds for conservation. The fundraising for Birdlife International is the main purpose for being a 'Champion of the Flyway', one also has fun however.

For 24 hours the teams 'bird' noting how many species they see in that time. To support their efforts and help to end the hunting of migrating birds, go to champions-of-the-flyway.com/the-birdlife-swarovoski-optic-racers.

On Sunday 1st May our sponsored takes place with teams of 3 or 4 birders scouring the islands from dawn to dusk looking for as many species as they can find. All funds raised go to support the local RSPB and La Société Guernesiate.

Both these organisations do all they can to help migrating and resident birds. If you wish to support the efforts of our teams please send your cheque payable to **La Société Guernesiate, Ornithology Section to, Jamie Hooper, 1 Trinity Cottages, Rue du Portelet, Torteval GY8 0QD**, noting that it is for the Bird Race. Thank you,

Nancy Ogier

Members are reminded that it is possible to make La Société a beneficiary of their will. 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.

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In addition to the Section Secretaries being Council members, other Council members are:

Jamie Hooper (co-opted), Jane Gilmour (co-opted), Helen Litchfield, Richard de la Rue, Michael Deane, Adrian Nicolle, Lawney Martin, Rodney Collenette, Alex Hershel and the Very Reverend John Guille

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