



COMMUNIQUÉ

The Newsletter of **LA SOCIÉTÉ GUERNESIAISE**

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Guernsey's Local Research, Natural History and Conservation Society

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2018

Subscription rates remain unchanged for 2018 as follows:

	Local	Overseas
Single	£25	£25
Double/Family	£30	£25
Student	£5	£5
Corporate	£200	£200
Schools	£20	£20
Life Membership-single	£300	£300
Life Membership-double	£400	£400

Standing Orders and Direct Debits were taken in January 2018. For those paying by cash, cheque or Paypal (via the Website www.societe.org.gg) please note that your 2018 Subscription is now due.

A few of our members are still paying by Standing Order at out of date rates. If you are paying by Standing Order then kindly instruct your bank to pay the correct amount as shown above. If you would prefer to switch to paying by Direct Debit for 2019 then kindly e-mail secretary@societe.org for a Direct Debit form which will be processed in time for January 2019.

2016 TRANSACTIONS

The 2016 Transactions are now available for collection from Candie. The picture on the front cover is of a Menhir on Jethou. The office is open on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning between 10am and 11.30am – parking is easier on a Saturday morning.

As well as the usual reports from the President, the Section Secretaries and the Land Manager, the 2016 Transactions contain the results of the 2015 census of the breeding seabirds of the Bailiwick of Guernsey, the report on the 2007 archaeological excavations on Jethou, including the discovery of what may be a medieval chapel, the second part of the report on the excavations carried out before the redevelopment of the site of the Royal Hotel and a note on the collection of lizards and choughs for a seventeenth-century Governor of Guernsey.

We have many uncollected Transactions for 2014 and 2015. If you are unable to get to Candie to collect kindly let us know. If you no longer wish to receive the Transactions or would prefer to receive them electronically via our website kindly e-mail secretary@societe.org

AGM 2018

The AGM will be held at Candie in the Frossard Theatre on Thursday 22nd March beginning at 7.30pm for the purpose of transacting the following business:

- (a) To hear the report of the outgoing President, Dr Andrew Casebow.
- (b) To receive the annual statement of accounts.
- (c) To elect the officers and members of the Council.

Two Ordinary Members of Council are retiring, Mr Adrian Nicolle who is not eligible for re-election and Helen Litchfield who is available for re-election. One nomination for President has been received, Yvonne Burford is proposed by Dr Andrew Casebow and seconded by Kate Lee. One nomination for Vice President has been received, Barry Wells is proposed by Lesley Bourgaize and seconded by Vanessa Crispini-Adams.

There are three vacancies for Ordinary Council Members.

Any nominations for these vacancies should be sent to the Secretary, supported by a seconder, to reach her no later than Thursday 8th March.

- (d) To appoint accountants.
- (e) To consider any other matters or propositions affecting La Société. Any member who wishes to make a proposal at the AGM should submit it in writing, supported by a seconder to the Secretary to reach her by Thursday 8th March.

A full agenda together with the minutes of the last meeting and a copy of the 2017 accounts will be available to all members who attend the AGM. Details of nominations for Members of Council and all proposals for discussion will be displayed on the Noticeboard at Candie from Friday 9th March.

After a short break, during which refreshments will be served, Barry Wells will give an illustrated talk entitled "Saving the Island's Pollinators".

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I'm just back from my daily walk on the cliffs around St Martins. Waterproof boots and wet weather clothing are essential because many of the paths are so muddy this year and the rain showers have been so frequent. For me, one of this winter's highlights was seeing a seal in Marble Bay on 1st January. Unfortunately it was only there for two days and I've since spent at least 15 minutes each day looking and hoping that it will return!

Winter weather

This winter has been very mild. Temperatures for December were 0.60 C higher than the average at 8.30C and the Met Office only recorded 2 ground frosts in December and none so far in January. January's average temperature is 8.10C compared with the 30 year average of 6.90C. This sounds quite good until one remembers that milder temperatures usually go with greater cloud cover, less sunshine and wetter weather.

Chris Archard at the Guernsey Met Office, tells me that rainfall in December was about 10% above the average (125mm) and so far this month we have had about 25% more rain than normal. However, this is still considerably less than the last really wet winter in 2013/14 when each of the winter months received over 150mm of rain. Perhaps we were spoilt by the very dry conditions last winter, which was the driest for over 20 years.

Milder temperatures over winter lead to earlier flowering of many of our spring wild flowers. 'Paper white' Narcissi have been flowering for some time now and other varieties are opening too. Hazel catkins and Celandine were flowering early and Alexanders, Violets, Daffodils and Primroses are now coming into flower along the cliff paths. It reminds me why I love being in Guernsey in the springtime.

Future strategy

Last Saturday members of Council met at Candie for a workshop to discuss the future strategy for La Société over the next 5 years. The workshop was led by Wayne Bulpitt and Jim Roberts from the Guernsey Community Foundation. It was a very worthwhile afternoon and we are very grateful to Wayne and Jim for facilitating the workshop. However, this is just the start and we need to think more about improving our website and using social media more effectively, about the future governance of La Société, its finances, membership benefits, our image and our opportunities, for instance having regular open days at our wildlife reserves.

It is important to seek your views. What do you want from your membership of La Société? What do you think works and what needs to be improved? If you have any views we should be really grateful to hear from you. Please email any comments or suggestions to myself or to Kate Lee our secretary.

States debate on Inert Waste

The States debated the disposal of inert waste in December. Whilst this does not seem to be an issue that La Société should be getting 'hot under the collar' about, the preferred site is known as Longue Hougue South which covers Spur Point and Spur Bay to the North of Belgrave Bay. There is an unusual outcrop of rock at Spur point known as St Peter Port Gabbro, which is an igneous rock. This rock is present throughout Belgrave Bay but we understood that the exposure in Spur Bay and at Spur Point is unique in that the crystals of Black Hornblende within the rock are aligned horizontally with lighter bands of Grey Felspar. This is a most unusual feature, if not internationally unique.

Spur Point is also one of only two known sites where the Scaly Cricket has been found in Guernsey. The Scaly Cricket was first discovered in the Channel Islands at Dixcart Bay in Sark in 1998. Before this it was only known in N.W. Europe from Chesil Bank in Dorset, England, where it had been since at least the 1940s, and from one record from Granville in France in 1950. Whilst it has since been discovered in a number of other sites, it remains a rare species. La Société made representations to States Deputies and an amendment was approved. I understand that Environmental Risk Assessments will be carried out on this site and on another potential site before a final decision concerning development is made.

People in the news

Our congratulations go to Julia Henney, Council member and secretary / manager of the Guernsey Conservation Herd, who has been appointed Biodiversity Education Officer. This is a very important role funded by the States Biodiversity Strategy. She has said that she hopes to make environment and our local wildlife integral to the school curriculum and to open up conservation projects to Guernsey's community. Working with Environment Guernsey, La Société's consultancy company, she will organise a programme of educational resources and organise conservation projects so pupils can get 'hands on' experience.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (CONT)

Aimée Golden was awarded the £1000 Griff Caldwell Bursary. I am particularly pleased that Aimee was awarded this bursary as she is doing an Open University degree in Environmental Science. The first recipient was Evie Wood in 2015 who was working on a 1st Degree at Brighton University. The bursary was then awarded to Laura Bampton who was undertaking an MSc at Edinburgh University (and who has since taken on the role as La Sociétés Marine Biology secretary), and now it has gone to Aimée who is studying at the Open University. Aimée has since taken on responsibility as secretary of our Bat Section. Applications are now open for the 2018 award so please inform anyone you know who might qualify.

Aimée Golden receiving the Griff Caldwell Bursary from Dr Andrew Casebow and Vita!

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Janice Firth has taken over the role of Membership Secretary from Lawney Martin. I should like to thank Lawney for all her service to La Société over the years, both as La Société Secretary and more recently as Membership Secretary.

Colin Spicer has taken over as Astronomy Section Secretary. Colin has taken over from Frank Dowding who was temporarily standing in for Peter Langmead.

Our congratulations to Edith Le Patourel who was 90 recently. Edith decided to retire as Section Secretary at the Family History Section AGM in November. Maria van der Tang has taken over as Section Secretary.

We still have vacancies as Section Secretary of the History and Zoology sections. The roles involve organising events, such as outings and talks and representing the sections on Council. If you are interested please speak to Kate Lee, La Société Secretary.

Equipment Purchases

La Société has recently purchased some geophysical equipment that will be used extensively by the archaeological section to scan large areas for archaeological remains. We are fortunate that our member Louise Randell is experienced in using this type of equipment. Our thanks go to past-president Tim Peet for his generous donation towards the considerable cost of purchasing the equipment.

New bat detection equipment has also been purchased for the bat section. This detects and records high frequency sound that enables the identification of individual bat species and numbers. This equipment has been purchased with money donated in memory of Pat Costen.

Land Purchases

La Société continues to acquire suitable land for wildlife conservation. In the past year it has purchased two fields in a wetland Area of Biodiversity Importance near Route des Coutanchez and to the West of the Chateau du Marais. These fields have been classified as Sites of Special Significance in the Island Development Plan and are literally 'full' of Yellow Flag Iris.

La Société has recently agreed to purchase two more adjoining fields, both classified as Sites of Special Significance and it is anticipated that this transaction will be finalised shortly. It is hoped that these four fields will form the core of a new wildlife reserve in the East of the Island that could eventually, with additional land purchase, join up with States land near the Chateau du Marais and form a large wetland wildlife reserve. In the last few days La Société has also agreed to purchase a small wetland field at Perelle, following advice from the Reserves Committee.

National Trust Folk and Costume Museum

The Folk and Costume Museum at Saumarez Park was set up as a joint venture between the National Trust of Guernsey and La Société in 1968. This year marks the 50th anniversary of its founding. As a consequence, I have been asked, as President of La Société, to 'open' the museum for this season on Tuesday 20th March 2018. Société members are invited to attend and will be welcome to go on a guided tour of the museum at 10.30am. We are reminded that there is an on-going agreement that all members of La Société have free entrance to the museum whenever it is open.

La Société Meetings – dates for your diary

Some excellent talks have been arranged this spring. Among these are:

On Thursday 1st March Prof. Tim Sparks, who worked with myself in analysing Nigel Jee's botanical records will speak on "Is Today the First Day of Spring?". A flier is attached on page 6.

Talking of Botany, just a thought, I notice that Botany Section's Facebook group "Guernsey Wild Flowers" now has 163 followers. I particularly enjoy the regular posts of photographs sent in. Please see page 14 for further details.

BBC Blue Planet II: Rachel Butler a wildlife film maker who attended Blanchelande School, will speak on her experiences working on the BBC series with Sir David Attenborough. Following degrees at Oxford University Rachel worked on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia before working as Assistant Producer on the "Blue Planet II" series broadcast last autumn. Rachel will speak at Candie in March or April (exact date to be confirmed) about her involvement of the making of the series. Please keep an eye on our website www.societe.org.gg for confirmation of the date.

Barry Cunliffe, Professor of Archaeology at Oxford University will speak on his excavations in Sark on Friday 8th June. Frossard Theatre, Candie at 7.30pm.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM of La Société will be held on Thursday 22nd March. Unfortunately, I have served my time as your president and will be standing down at the AGM. It has been a great pleasure acting as your president over the past two and a half years following a period as Vice President. I have enjoyed meeting members and working with Council over this period although, sadly, I had to take over as acting-president when my predecessor Pat Costen became ill in 2015. It has been an interesting journey and I shall be nominating Yvonne Burford to succeed me at the coming AGM. Thank you for all your support.

My best wishes to you, Andrew Casebow
29 January, 2018.

La Société Guernesiaise

7.30pm Thursday 1 March 2018

Frossard Theatre, Candie Museum



Tim Sparks

Professor in Environmental Change, Coventry University

The UK Met Office attribute spring to be the period from March 1st to May 31st. Dividing the year into four seasons, each of three months, is a convenient thing to do, but may not bear much reality to the varied climates of the British Isles, which spans more than a thousand kilometres of latitude. Most of us would rather associate the seasons with the state of the natural environment and the study of the timing of natural events is called phenology. In this talk Tim will discuss the fascinating topic of phenology and how it is changing, using examples from Guernsey and further afield.

Tim Sparks has a long standing relationship with Guernsey and La Société, including evaluating Nigel Jee's notebooks that detailed the first flowering of wild flowers each year and collaborating with Andrew Casebow on the 'Planet Guernsey' book on climate change within the Bailiwick.



Open Event ★ All Welcome ★ No Need To Book

- ★ Free for all students & La Société Guernesiaise members
- ★ £5 contribution requested from non-members (payable on door)
- ★ Queries: Kate Lee on 725093 or societe@cwgsy.net

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES NEWS

Since taking over the role of Librarian and Archivist for La Société in 2016 I have concentrated on completing the library catalogue, organising the shelving, and deciding on the disposition of a number of publications and documents. The library itself is located at the Candie headquarters and currently consists of some 400 volumes – a number which is being increased regularly by donations and other acquisitions. It is available for Members to use on application to the Société Secretary Kate Lee. Please e-mail secretary@societe.org.gg to arrange to borrow individual books. They are organised into various subject headings, and I have shelved them in a generally chronological order, by date of publication.

A large quantity of material has been deposited in the Société's archives held by Island Archives at St Barnabas. Access to this material can be gained through Island Archives. The catalogues for both the library and the archives are soon to be placed online on the Société's website.

Last year I was fortunate to receive a lot of documents relating to Warren De La Rue (1815-1889) from Derek Wallace in England, and I have donated these to the Société archives. My own extensive collection of documents about him is in the process of being catalogued and will also be deposited with the archives.

We have also recently received a generous quantity of books and other items from Peter Le Huquet in England, for which we are most grateful. A number of badges relating to the Guernsey Militia have been passed on to the Family History Section.

In order to free up shelf space for the main library collection I have relocated books held for Société Sections to The Russells building at Les Côtils. These relate to: Archaeology, Botany, Geology, Philology, Marine Biology, Nature and Ornithology. They may be consulted on application to the relevant Section Secretaries.

In addition to published volumes, which date back to the 18th century, the Société's collections include a large number of photographs, slides and manuscripts.

Some material has been found to have little or no relevance to La Société's interests. A few items have therefore been donated to the Priaux Library, and a small number have been sold or are available for purchase.

Although the library is quite extensive it is by no means a complete collection of books relating to the Bailiwick. Donations therefore continue to be most welcome.

David Le Conte

THE GRIFF CALDWELL BURSARY, 2018

La Société Guernesaise has established a bursary in memory of Frank Griffiths Caldwell, who was known to all as Griff. The bursary is a single payment of £1,000 for a student from the Bailiwick of Guernsey taking a higher education course. The bursary is intended to support a student who is studying a subject related to Griff Caldwell's interest in fauna, flora and the natural environment, and their conservation. Please complete the application form, which can be downloaded from La Société's website: www.societe.org.gg along with an information sheet. The completed form and letter should reach the office of La Société Guernesaise by 31 May 2018. We intend to decide on the award by 31 July 2018. **Any queries should be directed to the Secretary Kate Lee, e-mail secretary@societe.org.gg**

2017 NATURE FESTIVAL GUERNSEY

La Société Guernesiaise was part of Guernsey's first 'Nature Festival' when it came together with other environmental organisations at the hugely popular Bean Jar Jamboree event held at Les Cotils on Saturday 14th October 2017.

The Marine Biology and Bat Sections were represented and the Pollinator Project team launched their wildlife gardening initiative. They were joined by the States Principal Crop Biologist, Linda McCutcheon, who was showing the fascinating (and frozen!) Asian Hornet nest to the public that been located days earlier by Guernsey Beekeeper, Damian Harris, who was also part of the Nature Festival.

The RSPB had information on 'Giving Nature A Home' and Vic Froome had a number of locally made bird boxes for sale. Andy Marquis was showing the moths that had been caught in moth traps set up the previous evening. Guernsey Trees For Life and our Bat Section offered natural craft activities for families as well as the opportunity to 'plant a tree' with acorns carefully sourced by Andrew Lee from an oak tree with Guernsey provenance.

Local teacher and artist, Sharka Lee, co-ordinated a community art event, creating sculptures and artwork with marine litter collected from Guernsey beaches. People of all ages joined in and the results were arresting, reminding us of the damage caused to our fragile marine ecosystems by the growing problem of ocean plastic pollution. The artwork went on to promote the screening of the environmental film 'Message In The Waves' by the Marine Section at Candie on the 5th December 2017.

Thanks go to Guernsey Climate Action Network for generously covering the cost of The Nature Festival tent and to Guernsey Gardens who supplied pollinator friendly plants and native trees.

On the back of the festival, the organisations involved co-ordinated a series of Autumn Nature Festival events from mid October to mid December. This initiative was well received and we will look to take this forward in 2018.

Vanessa Crispini-Adams



Artwork produced from marine waste at the Bean Jar Jamboree – photo courtesy of Vanessa Crispini-Adams

THE POLLINATOR PROJECT GUERNSEY

The Pollinator Project is La Societe Guernesiaise's most recent initiative and was established by members, Vanessa Crispini-Adams and Barry Wells. The project was launched at The Nature Festival held at Les Cotils, in October, 2017. Its key aim is to raise awareness of the genuine contribution we can each make to the enhancement of Guernsey's biodiversity by providing food and habitats for pollinators.

The project has an informative website: <https://thepollinatorproject.wordpress.com> which outlines the projects's aims, provides information on pollinators as well as tips and ideas on how gardeners can create wildlife habitats for pollinators throughout the year. Posters and flyers promoting the project will be available at parish halls, garden centres, and schools and information will be circulated via Facebook and Twitter.

There is increasing scientific evidence that pollinating insects are in trouble. Intensive farming, climate change, urban growth and the over use of pesticides have all been devastating to these insects. Two thirds of our butterflies and moths are in long term decline. Across Europe 38% of bees and hoverflies are also in decline. And yet, one out of every three mouthfuls of our food depends on pollination taking place. It is impossible to overestimate how important pollinators are.



Solitary Bee feeding on Bluebell – photo courtesy of Barry Wells

Urban and domestic areas support a diverse range of habitats that are becoming increasingly important for many species of pollinators, when managed properly. These include: public and private gardens; natural areas in school grounds, sports pitches and golf courses; parks and patches of formal landscaping, such as flower beds and roundabouts and on business premises; brownfield land and industrial estates.

Over 1700 of the Guernsey's 6300 hectares of land is designated as gardens. This is a massive opportunity for supporting biodiversity in small and manageable ways. If garden owners "set aside" just 10% of their properties for pollinating insects, this would add over 150 hectares to the 'natural' habitat of island – the equivalent of over 200 football pitches.

THE POLLINATOR PROJECT GUERNSEY (CONT)

As with most change, education is crucial and by demonstrating how to support pollinators, the project hopes to encourage a deeper interaction between people and the ecosystems that biodiversity depend upon. Developing local knowledge at community level - about what species we have in Guernsey and what plants they depend upon for their survival - is one of the key aims of the project. Recent research points to the need to engage the community in the conservation of our natural world, if we are going to stem the tide of species decline.

The Pollinator Project has received an EcoFund grant from the Co-operative, a generous legacy donation from Guernsey Climate Action Network is being supported by the Biodiversity Partnership with funds allocated to the States Biodiversity Strategy.



Red Admiral feeding on Verbena – photo courtesy of Barry Wells

Their busy action plans for 2018 include:

- working with schools to enhance existing wildlife friendly areas and create new ones
- working with States Works and ACLMS to look at adapting some amenity flower beds in town and in parks to more 'wildlife friendly' areas
- working to create 'pollinator friendly' wildlife areas at the Princess Elizabeth Hospital
- presenting to schools, businesses and community groups on the importance of pollinators, the species we have in Guernsey and how small, collective changes to how and what we plant in our community can make a positive difference.
- raising awareness through contributing articles on 'Pollinator Gardening' to Guernsey Press, lifestyle and parish magazines and providing radio and TV interviews.
- meeting with Garden Centres to discuss the establishment of "wildlife friendly" areas within their premises, containing suitable plants, bug hotels, etc and provide them with educational point of sale material promoting the Project.
- establishing a partnership with GROW Limited to cultivate pollinator friendly and local native plants on island
- establishing a partnership with Swuffers, Norman Piette and the Prison Service to make Bee Hotels to use in schools and community areas.

Please note I will be giving an illustrated talk entitled "Saving the Island's Pollinators" after the Société AGM on Thursday 22nd March in the Frossard Theatre, Candie.

If you would like to join the Pollinator Project team, either as a pollinator expert/enthusiast or to volunteer some practical help with planting and maintenance, we would love to hear from you. Email us at pollinatorproject@icloud.com or Vanessa on 07781 422 188 or Barry on 07781 102313.

Barry Wells

ARCHAEOLOGY

A generous donation by Tim Peet plus some funds from La Société have enabled the Archaeology Section to buy an earth resistance survey kit. This equipment can detect buried archaeological features by measuring variations in soil moisture. It works by introducing a low level electrical current between two probes and then measuring the resistance, which will vary according to moisture content or porosity. Common features detected in this way include ditches (low resistance) or solid features like buried foundations or walls (high resistance). This geophysics equipment is regularly seen on TV programmes such as Time Team. Carrying out a survey is not too complicated, but interpreting the results can be. Fortunately we have a Section member - Louise Randell - who worked as an Archaeological Geophysicist for English Heritage and she is happy to train Section members in both survey and interpretation.



Kit Hughes, John Lihou and Louise Randell with the RM85 resistance meter - photograph courtesy of Tanya Walls.

The Section has identified several potential sites. However if any member has land they would be happy to have surveyed, please let us know. It would need to be relatively clear of high vegetation, not too steep and without known contamination from modern structures such as greenhouses. The survey is completely non-invasive. Please contact Section Secretary Tanya Walls if you can help tanyawalls@yahoo.co.uk

If you would like to know more about geophysics in archaeology then you will be pleased to hear that Louise Randell has agreed to give a talk on the subject, see below for details.

The Archaeology Section has three forthcoming talks which are open to all:

Dig with a purpose – excavations at Chapelle Dom Hue - Tuesday 20th March at 8.00pm by Dr Phil de Jersey (States Archaeology Officer).

Towards the end of last summer the Archaeology Section spent several weeks excavating the remains of a small building on the tidal islet of La Chapelle Dom Hue. Find out about the excavation and its discoveries.

Geophysics in Archaeology - Seeing beneath the soil - Thursday 26th April 7.30pm by Louise Randell (Archaeological Geophysicist).

Louise has over 13 years' experience in geophysical survey and has worked on a wide variety of sites across England. Discover how geophysics works and its potential for archaeology in Guernsey.

Sark - a Sacred Isle? - Friday 8th June at 7.30pm by Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe.

Professor Cunliffe conducts a project investigating the archaeology of Sark. In June he and his team will be returning for their 14th season of fieldwork.

Tanya Walls

Frank Dowding has coordinated our outreach activities for six or more years. In the summer months, particularly for the entire length of the school summer holidays we organise public open evenings which are always well attended. During the winter we focus on groups, be it youth groups, schools of all ages, company social clubs and Women's Institutes. Frank has not only coordinated the events, liaising with the groups but takes an active part by presenting a topic to each group. Frank will be stepping down from this role at the end of our "winter series" at the end of March. His dedication to this task will be sorely missed and it will be extremely difficult to replace him. This year's events he has overseen (as "front of house" to use his term) is as follows:

- January** Guides
- February** Blanchlande College (Years 1 and 2), Cubs, Ladies College (Year 8)
- March** Hougette School, Elizabeth College (6th form), 9th Guernsey Scouts, Monkey Puzzle nursery at Kings, Les Voiles School
- May** Castel Primary School, Solar Open Day (cloudy)
- July** Bowker family, Open Evening
- August** Dartford Scouts, Sunshine nursery, Open Evening (x 5)
- October** Halloween Open Evening
- November** Beavers, Brownies, Elizabeth College Science club, Cubs, Air Scouts, Vale Primary, Catenian Association, Grammar School (6th form)

Frank has been assisted by David Le Conte, Jason Hill, Elaine Mahy, Debby Quertier, Geoff Falla, Paul Gavey, Jean Dean, Jim English and myself. This is quite an undertaking with many people giving up their time to encourage an interest in science.

The Halloween Open Evening is of particular note. This was run over the October half term and started early in order to encourage children to visit. We decided to produce Halloween themed flyers for the event and as part of a new initiative by the Societe we were joined by the Entomology Section who erected a moth trap with Andy Marquis on hand to demonstrate and identify moths. Bat detectors were supplied by the Bat Group (ably operated, although not an expert, by my wife Jackie Spicer). Judy Porter did some face painting too. Some of us dressed for the occasion and the Observatory site was decorated with pumpkin lanterns. We were extremely fortunate with the weather and the Moon was available for the entire time. The queues to view with the main telescope were excessively long!

I have included below Frank's own account of our outreach activities published in the Astronomy Section's newsletter Sagittarius. Many thanks go to Frank for organising and manning these events over a number of years. In 2017 alone over 1000 people, including many children, have visited the Observatory. I hope that a worthy volunteer will take on the role vacated by Frank in the Spring.

As in recent years we have had a visiting speaker and this year it was David Hughes, Emeritus Professor of Astronomy at the University of Sheffield. He gave us an entertaining talk about the Mysteries of the Solar System and his enthusiasm was strikingly infectious. The talk was very well attended at the Frossard Lecture theatre, Candie Gardens and we were only just able to seat everyone. This time we didn't seek sponsorship for the event but as he was visiting Sark and Jersey the cost was spread but nevertheless the cost was offset by a leaving collection.

ASTRONOMY (CONT)

The Channel Islands Group of Professional Engineers organised a talk by geologist Professor Sanjeev Gupta from Imperial College about NASA's Curiosity Rover on Mars. Curiosity Rover has been exploring the Gale crater since August 2012 and we were privileged to see some stunning images from Mars. The timing of transmissions from Mars means that Professor Gupta is in the fortunate position of being able to see new images before the American scientists are awake.

Peter Langford had instigated regular talks when we meet on a Tuesday evening and this has continued this year. The rule is, however, should the evening be clear then we observe with the telescopes but nevertheless we have gone through a large list of topics. More recently we have used Royal Institution lectures to supplement our talks. Some highlights in the table below.

Astronomical highlights 2017	David Le Conte
Introduction to image processing	Jean Dean
James Clerk Maxwell	Colin Spicer
International Space Station update	Frank Dowding
NASA Science Casts	Peter Langford
Messier Marathon	Colin Spicer
Globular Clusters	Frank Dowding
Richard Feynman lecture	Peter Langford
Newton's Laws of Motion and Classical Mechanics	Colin Spicer, Jason Hill
Orbital Elements	David Le Conte
Black hole firewalls - Sean Carroll and Jennifer Ouellette	RI lecture
Space tracking in the Apollo era	David Le Conte
Cassini and Huygens at Saturn	Frank Dowding
A Journey to the centre of the Sun – Lucie Green	RI lecture
The Great American Eclipse	David Le Conte, Elaine Mahy, Jason Monaghan, Tim Langlois
Molecules with sunglasses – third form of carbon	Colin Spicer
Some old astronomy books	David Le Conte
The Planets – Carl Sagan	RI Christmas lectures 1977

In July, David Le Conte gave us a presentation of his career as a professional astronomer in the UK and the United States. We found out that David's team was responsible for a ground based photograph of Apollo 8's trans-lunar injection burn which was the first time man truly left the Earth. In September, we had four presenters sharing their experiences of the Great American Eclipse. Perhaps the most engaging presentation was that of Elaine Mahy and her difficult but successful attempt to capture an image of the partial view of the eclipse from the cliffs at Pleinmont.

Our two social events of the year are the barbecue in August which is coincident with the Perseid meteor shower and the Christmas meal which was held at the La Grande Mare hotel. 15 people attended the barbecue which was overcast and so no meteors were seen but at least the rain held off to make it an enjoyable evening. I foolishly suggested that the dress code for gentlemen for the Christmas meal should be a turtle neck / roll neck shirt in the style of Carl Sagan whose Royal Institution Christmas lectures we had recently watched but sadly it was only I so attired.

Dr Colin Spicer

ASTRONOMY (CONT)

See the Stars with Large Telescopes

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

Bank Holiday Monday 28th May from 10.30am to 12.30pm to observe the sun.

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 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 **Frank Dowding on 255215.**

BAT SECTION

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 at the Section Room at Candie Gardens at 7:45pm and new members are welcome. **E-mail address bats@societe.org.gg**

BOTANY

Please join the Botany Section's new Facebook page where you will find details of the monthly walks and recent plant photos. Once you have joined you can add your own images – please see <https://www.facebook.com/groups/131094304229721/>

BOTANY WALKS

Saturday 3rd March – meet at Icart Point at 2pm, Perry's Guide page 30, B5.

Saturday 7th April (to be announced – please check website www.societe.org.gg for details)

Saturday 28th April – meet at 2pm for a walk around the grounds of Grenada, Fosse Andre, thanks to Mr Wilkinson. Ground soft after rain please wear suitable walking shoes or wellie boots. Limited parking at property please can we share lifts, alternative parking next turning on the right. Come down hill just as it levels off school sign turn in right immediately before sign. Careful parking for half dozen cars.

For further enquiries about the monthly Botany walks please contact Anna Cleal by e-mail: botany@societe.org.gg

ENTOMOLOGY

Contact Trevor Bourgaize e-mail entomology@societe.org.gg

FAMILY HISTORY

2017 saw the retirement of our Section Secretary Edith Le Patourel, who also turned 90 in October. Edith has been section secretary for 24 years, and on behalf of everyone I would like to thank her for the dedication and commitment to the Family History Group.

Forthcoming talks to family history are:

Wednesday 21st Feb - My Life and Family by May Way at Grande Rocques Hotel 7.45pm.

Wednesday 21st March - A Brave Brouard and Others by Sylvia Brouard, Frossard Theatre, Candie at 7.45pm.

Wednesday 16th May - Guernsey Inheritance Laws by Advocate Peter Atkinson, Frossard Theatre, Candie at 7.45pm.

All talks are open to non-members of the Family History Section.

The Family History Room at the Russel's, Les Cotils is open on the 1st and 3rd Saturday each month from 10am to 12 noon, non-members are welcome. In 2017 we had a tremendous amount of people coming through the door.

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

Alternatively e-mail Maria van der Tang researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk

Maria van der Tang - Section Secretary.

GEOLOGY

Contact Andy Dorey Tel 252123 or e-mail: andydorey3@gmail.com

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Events

Saturday 10th March – a talk entitled Clearing the Land – a Neolithic and Bronze Age Landscape by Tanya Walls, Frossard Theatre, Candie at 7.30pm.

Saturday 24th March – a talk by Simon Coombe promoting the recently published “Wilson’s” biography, Frossard Theatre, Candie at 7.30pm

Saturday 21st April – a visit to La Brigade Farm, St Andrew’s by kind permission of the Hocart family –plenty of parking – please meet at 2.30pm

Please see our website www.societe.org.gg for details of the many talks and events this Section organises.

Any queries can be sent to John McCormack mrjam@cwgsy.net

JUNIOR SECTION

For details of Junior events please contact Chris Mourant Tel.07911 130415 or e-mail chris.mourant@yahoo.co.uk

For details of how you can help with the Herd please e-mail Julia Henney – conservationherd@societe.org.gg or join us on Facebook at La Société Conservation Herd.

MARINE BIOLOGY

Over the autumn and winter, the Marine Biology Section has focused on raising awareness about marine litter.

As part of the Autumn Nature Festival, we hosted a screening of the BBC Natural History Unit film “Hawaii: Message in the Waves”. This film from 2007 highlights the devastating impact of marine litter on the island ecosystem of Hawaii. Although a very long way from home, the issues in this film are applicable all around the world. At this event, we also showcased some artwork made from litter collected on Guernsey beaches. The sculptures and paintings were the outcome of a community art project that took place at the Bean Jar Jamboree in October. Aside from one or two technical issues, the film was well-received and the evening was a success.

Also as part of the Autumn Nature Festival, the Marine Biology Section organised a public beach clean at Pezeries. This area seems to be something of a hotspot for litter, particularly polystyrene fragments. All litter was categorised and counted and submitted to the Marine Conservation Society’s Beachwatch project, a valuable dataset on the types and amounts of litter found on beaches all around Britain’s coasts. A total of 3037 pieces of litter were collected at our beach clean, of which 96% were plastic.

More recently, the Marine Biology Section participated in the Big Channel Islands Beach Clean. For the second year, volunteers from Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, and Herm joined forces to clean many beaches across the islands. Sark was unfortunately hit by flu, so are organising a clean later this year. In Guernsey, we cleaned from Cobo kiosk all the way to Port Soif kiosk. 85 volunteers helped to collect 24 bags of rubbish, including 92 plastic bottles. I never expected the event to be so well attended, and we quickly ran out of gloves and litter pickers- a nice problem to have! Across the Channel Islands, 571 volunteers participated in this event, collecting 140 bags of litter, including 383 plastic bottles. 400 volunteers took part in Jersey, a huge number! Hopefully we can grow this event even further in Guernsey in 2019. Thanks must go to the staff at the Alderney Wildlife Trust for overseeing the organisation of this event.

People were hugely enthusiastic about attending more beach clean events, and, unfortunately, marine litter is not a problem that will go away in a hurry. As a result, we will be running more frequent public beach cleans throughout 2018, and we’d love them all to be as well attended as the Big Channel Islands Beach Clean! By joining with other organisations and members of the community, we can help to keep our beaches beautiful and do our bit to help marine life.



Artist Sharka Lee with marine waste at the Bean Jar Jamboree – photo courtesy of Vanessa Crispini-Adams.

MARINE BIOLOGY (CONT)

Aside from more beach cleans, there's a lot to look forward to in the year ahead, including ormer surveys, the Big Seaweed Search, snorkelling expeditions, and much more. Look out for these events on the La Société website events page, and on the Facebook page. We're also looking forward to working more closely with our counterparts in the other Channel Islands on some exciting new projects, including a marine mammal sightings app, and a grey seal photo ID catalogue. If anybody has any photographs of seals around our coast, please email them to marinebiology@societe.org.gg, along with the location and date when the photo was taken.

If you would like to find out more about what the Marine Biology Section does or become more involved in the section please email marinebiology@societe.org.gg - we're always happy to see new members!

Laura Bampton

NATURAL HISTORY

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

ORNITHOLOGY

With January coming to the end it has really been a bad month for our feathered friends with high winds and above average rainfall for the month many species are struggling especially some of our seabird species like guillemots razorbill and shags with continuous rough seas and murky water these birds are finding it hard to find their food so many will die and be washed up on our beaches but on the plus side 2017 has been an exceptional year for rarities such as Royal tern turning up, from the ring that was on this bird it was able to be identified as an American Royal tern which was ringed on the east coast of America. The second record of Wilsons petrol seen from pelagic in August with a school of blue fin tuna fish also seen on this pelagic, it will go down as one of the best but it will also be sadly remembered as a few weeks later Julian Medland lost his fight with cancer. He was a great birder with his passion in seabirds and a great supporter of the pelagic trips. He will be sadly missed by us all.

With an influx of Hawfinch invading the UK it was not long before a flock of 35+ birds were seen coming in off the sea at pleinmont, on 27 October. There was also the second sighting of glossy Ibis 10 birds were seen flying in from the north of the island they were soon relocated at the Colin Best nature reserve, with at least one bird still present in January and 3 to 4 Hawfinch it be a good start 2018 As for the ringing side 2016, it has been another good year for the newly formed Alderney bird observatory with just under 10,000 birds ringed it makes my ringing efforts here in Guernsey look a bit poor with only 1,245 birds ringed at the moment. I'm not sure on the totals from Jersey hopefully I will be able to bring you this in February once all the ringing totals are in for 2017.

Chris Mourant

For more information go to ornithology@societe.org.gg or call Chris on 07911 130415. He would welcome you to the Section. We meet on the first Thursday of each month, usually at Candie at 7.30pm.



Hawfinch – photo courtesy of Wayne Turner

Channel Island Group of Professional Engineers

Lecture "Tidal Power – Atlantis" by Tim Cornelius - Wednesday 21st March, 7.30pm at the Princess Royal Theatre for Performing Arts – Free entry.

Tim Cornelius, CEO of Atlantis Resources, will be discussing the lessons learned from the MeyGen project including technical challenges and solutions, economics, regulatory and environmental challenges. MeyGen, the first phase of which will soon be delivered into commercial operation, is a tidal stream project of up to 398MW at an offshore site between Scotland's northernmost coast and the island of Stroma).

Lecture "Hadron Collider CERN (Mini Big Bang)" by Professor David Evans – Wednesday 18th April, 7.30pm at the Princess Royal Theatre for Performing Arts – Free entry.

The 27km Large Hadron Collider (LHC), situated 150 metres under the Swiss-French border at CERN near Geneva, is the World's most powerful particle accelerator. Professor David Evans, from the University of Birmingham, will explain the physics behind the LHC and some results. His talk will include some audience participation and demonstrations with liquid nitrogen and is aimed at all age groups.

Plant Heritage

Wednesday 14th March at 7.30pm at Les Cotils, lecture by Derry Watkins of Special Plants Nursery on 'Plant Hunting in Kyrgyzstan - the Switzerland of South East Asia'. She will be bringing seeds from her exciting seed catalogue. Entry free to members, non-members £5 at the door.

Plant Heritage have organised a 3 day trip to the "Gardens of Surrey" on Tuesday 12th to Thursday 14th of June 2018 in conjunction with ECT Travel. Gardens to be visited include Chinthurst Lodge Garden, Loseley Park, RHS Wisley, Heathside Garden, Timber Hill Gardens, Heneage Farm and Painshill. They have a few places available on the trip and further details can be obtained from the group organiser Katharine Thompson e-mail kdt@cwgsy.net or telephone 01481 239444.

Saturday 7th April at 9am -12noon - Plant Stall at the Sausmarez Manor Farmers Market

Lunchtime Language Lessons at Candie Museum

How about learning some Guernesiais? Lessons take place on Tuesday and Wednesday lunchtimes (generally from 12.15pm - 1pm & 1.15pm – 2pm), in La Société's Section Room at Candie Museum and are run as a series of six sessions. All levels are catered for from beginners, elementary, intermediate and 'rememberers' (a class specifically for people who may have spoken the language when they were younger, and who wish to have a go at 're-speaking' their mother tongue. The lessons cost £25 for the 6 week sessions (£20 if you have a Discovery Pass), and are open to all. We also hold one off language workshops and evening lessons if there is demand, please contact:

janmarquis@suremail.gg

Candie Museum Event

On Friday 11th May there will be a "Museums at Night" event between 6 and 9pm featuring Curator talks, Living History, live music in the galleries, a Marine Biology information point plus many other displays suitable for children. Free entry. **Further details from Jo Dowding – e-mail:**

Josephine.Dowding@gov.gg

ASSOCIATED GROUPS

Alderney Wildlife Trust	Roland Gauvain	822935
Blue Dolphins Sub-Aqua Club	Jessie Jennings	bluedolphinssac@gmail.com
Friends of the Priaulx Library	Jenny Tasker	jenny@taskeronline.com
Guernsey Conservation Volunteers	Angela Salmon	721163
Guernsey Meteorological Observatory	Martin Crozier	237766
G.S.P.C.A	Steve Byrne	257261
La Société Serquaise	Jo Birch	832788
Le Cercle Français	Geoff Mahy	263029
Lé Coumité d'la Culture Guernésiaise	Dr Harry Tomlinson	255891
Guernsey Trees For Life	Andy McCutcheon	07781 110180
National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (Guernsey Group)	Tattie Thompson	239444
The Alderney Society & Museum	The Secretary	823222
The Guernsey Beekeepers' Association	Chris Tomlins	07781 100311
The Guernsey Botanical Trust	Ivan Le Tissier	07911 719115
The Guernsey Society	Michael Paul	253858
WEA	Roy Bisson	256848

LEGACIES AND DONATIONS IN LIEU OF FLOWERS

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.

Guernsey Tobacco Factory,
La Ramée,
St Peter Port,
Guernsey,
C.I., GY1 2ET

Tel: (07781) 166924
Email: jamie.hooper@cwgsy.net
gsybiorec@cwgsy.net



Environment Guernsey is the wholly owned company of La Société Guernésiaise

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 & COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Zoology	Vacant		

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

Jamie Hooper (co-opted), Jane Gilmour (co-opted), Helen Litchfield, Roy Bisson, Vanessa Crispini-Adams, Adrian Nicolle, Rodney Collenette, Alex Hershel and the Very Rev. John Guille.

Office hours:

Our office at Candie is open to the Public on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday Mornings between 10am and 11.30am.

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