



COMMUNIQUE

The Newsletter of **LA SOCIÉTÉ GUERNESIAISE**

Early Summer Issue No.72

Guernsey's Local Research, Natural History and Conservation Society

Annual Sale

The Annual Sale will take place at **2.00 pm on Sunday 23 May** at Blanchelande College, Les Vauxbelets, by kind permission of Mrs Lesley Le Page. There will be the following stalls, for which all kinds of contributions will be gratefully received:

Plants - Pat Costen, tel. 264500

Cakes - Julia Peet, tel. 238620 and Lawney Martin, tel. 237853

Books - Nature Conservation Section: Denise Thoumine, tel. 723003 and Jane Gilmour, tel. 700024

Bric-a-brac - Tanya Walls, tel. 727614 and Vanessa Crispini-Adams, tel. 238150

Raffle - Ornithology Section: Judy Down tel. 256464

Please donate generously to the various stalls, and come along and support this enjoyable event.

Diary Dates

8.00 pm on Thursday 13 May 2010 at Les Côtils Centre.

The Raymond Falla Memorial Lecture: Guernsey Heroes of the Royal Society. Amanda Bennett, Chief Librarian, Priaux Library, and David Le Conte, Past President, La Société Guernesiaise, will present an illustrated talk about the lives and work of Guernseymen who were Fellows of the Royal Society.

The lecture is being organised by WEA Guernsey, and is free. WEA would be grateful for prior notification of attendance (tel 237888). The related exhibition is at the Priaux Library until 25 June.

8.00 pm on Wednesday 12 May at Frossard Centre.

A lecture given by Dr. Jeanette Neeson PhD BA, currently Associate Professor of History at York University, Toronto, Canada, on 'Gathering the 'Humid Harvest of the Deep': The Custom of the Guernsey Foreshore'. Dr. Neeson has been researching the subject of seaweed gathering in various parts of the British Isles, including Guernsey, over a number of years, and will speak on the subject.

8.00 pm on Tuesday 15 June at The Frossard Centre.

Sean Kingsley, a superb and passionate archaeologist and a well published author, has agreed to give a presentation on the subject of the discovery of HMS Victory and subsequent work to recover two cannon, as well as future plans. Open to all.

Jethou Trips

There will be two trips to Jethou this year, by kind permission of the tenant, Sir Peter Ogden. The dates are **Saturday 5 June** and **Saturday 17 July**. On each occasion the departure time is 9.30 am returning at 12.00 noon. A second boat may operate, leaving at 10.00 am and returning at 12.30 pm. The cost is £18 per person and booking and pre-payment are essential via the Secretary, to whom you should send £18 pp along with the names of those wishing to go. Travel will be on Buz White's Access Challenger, leaving from the Sark boat quay.



Orchid Field Walks

The following walks have been arranged and will start at 10.00 am at the car park with the bus shelter opposite the L'Erée Hotel, Perry's P20B1. The cost is £4 per person and the walks will last about one and a half hours. The walking is easy on flat ground. The orchid fields are renowned for their spectacular displays. The walks will take place whatever the weather!

Wednesdays 12, 19, 26 May and 2 June and Sundays 16, 23, and 30 May.

President's Report

AGM

The AGM was very well attended this year. We are delighted that Rodney Collenette has agreed to become Vice-President. He has previously served on Council and the Finance Sub-Committee, and brings a wealth of experience in many fields. We also welcomed Sylvia Brouard as a new Ordinary member of Council. She is a Gold Accredited Guide, and we will be able to put her passion for Guernsey to good use. Nick Day was re-elected as a Council member. We were sorry to lose Mike Bairds and Geoff Allez, who were not eligible to stand again. We thank them for all their hard work and good advice over the 6 years they have served on Council.

This year we looked at subscription levels once again. In keeping with many organisations, it was recommended that we should increase some of our rates: the local single to rise to £22 pa, the local double and the family rate to rise to £30 pa; life membership will rise to £300 for local and £400 for double. The student rate would remain at £5 pa. The biggest change is that it was decided to merge single and double overseas rates into a new rate of £20 pa.

The meeting was followed by an extremely interesting illustrated short talk given by Jurat David Le Conte on the Society's 125-year history.

The legacy of Barbara Tostevin

We were delighted to receive £55,000 last month, from the estate of the late Barbara Tostevin. However, much to the regret of the entire Council, none of us knew her, apart from Edith Le Patourel who was at school with her but didn't know her well. Clearly either La Société meant a great deal to her, or it may just have been her way of ensuring that her bequest benefited her island. Either way we would be grateful for information about her from anyone who did know her well, so that we may ensure that the legacy is used in a way that she would have particularly enjoyed.

Guernsey's Countryside: an Introduction to the History of the Rural Landscape by Richard Hocart

Council is extremely pleased to endorse the publication of a new book by Richard Hocart, which will trace the development of our rural landscape from prehistory to the present day. It will cover many themes such as fiefs, settlement patterns, roads, houses, fields (particularly the enclosure of open fields), banks and trees, mills and churches and will include local peculiarities such as rabbit warrens, fief courts, stone well heads and abreuvoirs.

It is written for the general reader and will be well-illustrated with 90 photographs (85 in colour) and six maps. Publication is expected to take place in August/September and the book will be available from La Société at Candie and Les Sablons and via the website.

Pat Costen

SECTION REPORTS

Astronomy

The members of the Astronomy Section are pleased to advise that the Observatory is now up and running following the building works completed on the meeting room. To mark this event the members invited our landlords, the members of the Council, and a few other guests together with His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and Lady Malbon to attend an 'opening' event on **Monday 22 March at the Observatory**. The event was well attended and despite the weather letting us down, it was a successful evening. We had set up a display and in addition we had astronomical images projected on to the walls, which ran in a cycle during the evening. The press attended and followed it up with a centre page piece about astronomy, which is enjoying a new enthusiasm with the recent Dr Brian Cox series about the solar system. We also met with Radio Guernsey a few days later and they ran a feature on astronomy on 3 April. The building looks really smart. We have acquired some office furniture and have added a ceiling-mounted projector, which has already proved its worth during the Workers Education course we ran in February and March. It will be extremely useful for those visits arranged when the skies are cloudy, as it works with our computer. We are very grateful to our landlords for their generosity in the extensive work carried out.

The end of March and early April had a fine sight in the western evening skies. The brilliant planet Venus was shining brightly in the post sunset sky, a planet that many people will recognise simply because it is so bright, but alongside was the elusive Mercury. Mercury is so close to the sun that there are only a few opportunities in the year when it can be seen, either in the pre-dawn eastern sky or, as was recently the case, the west of the sky as the sun sets. Despite the planet being reasonably bright, it can be difficult to spot, and of course care must be taken if one looks for Mercury before the sun is completely below the horizon. The proximity to Venus made it easy to see this time around. There is many a regular stargazer who has never managed to see Mercury, so if anyone was wondering what the 'star' next to Venus was, you did see something that is not seen easily or often.

We have arranged several open nights during the summer and they will run from 27 July to 31 August on each Tuesday, with a further night on Tuesday 12 October. Additional dates will be advertised as and when they are arranged. For more information please contact Debby Quertier on 725760.

Entomology

The Entomology Section will meet with the Botany and Nature Conservation Sections for their monthly outings in 2010. Please see the website for times and places.

Ornithology

The Ornithological Section met for their monthly meeting on the first Thursday in April; however this one was tinged with sadness, as this was Nancy Ogier's final meeting as Section Secretary. She has done a wonderful job during the last six and a half years that she has filled the post.

We could be assured of her quiet efficiency putting together the monthly programme, and chairing with an authority that no doubt stemmed from her years in teaching. We took the opportunity to propose a vote of thanks for her faithful service to the Section, and look forward to her continuing presence in future meetings. We also welcome back Vic Froome, who is returning to the chair after a six year rest.

It was while she was explaining how much easier it is these days to run the Section, with various people doing numerous tasks, that I began to reflect on just what a huge amount of input there is by the sections members. I thought, why wait till people resign to tell them what a great job they are doing. The danger of course is that you miss someone out, if I do then please forgive me, as we are grateful for all that is done. For the size of the Section, there is a huge amount of work that goes on continually.

Every month we have a survey called the Wader Count where Section members each survey a specific area of coastline. The following extract is taken from the Société website.



Ortac Gannets

Known locally as the 'wader counts', these have been a monthly institution since 1979 although technically they cover much more than just waders! Each month, volunteers visit 10 sectors along the Guernsey shore and count all the waders, ducks, geese, gulls and other water birds such as Cormorant and Shag, Kingfisher, Coot and Moorhen. These data are collected as part of the Wetland Bird Survey organised by the British Trust for Ornithology and are collated into annual reports. However the results have provided us with an almost unique dataset allowing us to look at changes over almost 30 years. There are many people to name individually but to make this analysis I would like to thank Wayne Turner, Jen Smart and Mary Simmons for

entering a vast amount of data from paper forms to allow these analyses."

Also going on virtually all year round is bird ringing. This is carried out by our registered bird ringers, particularly Jamie Hooper, Chris Mourant, and Paul Veron, along with a small number who participate from time to time. Together these people annually ring thousands of birds, including the gannet colonies off Alderney (risking life and limb), Jerbourg, Trinity at Pleinmont, Chouet tip, Claire Mare, Rue Des Bergers, just to name a few. It is by such commitment that we know so much more about where a bird goes, how long it lives, etc. All these birds' details have to be recorded, such as ring No., species, age, sex, weight, fat content etc. I'm so pleased I'm not a bird, as my fat content could be a bit on the high side!

All species trapped are listed in great depth in the Transactions. Richmond and Margaret Austin are the ones who compile this, and who submit all the data to the relevant bodies. They have records going back to the 1930's on paper. They are currently looking for willing volunteers to input all this data. Rich did say he has put in 60,000 records this winter alone!



Claire Mare Reserve

Our reserves, which thankfully are growing ever more numerous, have to be monitored. Hides are built, reed beds cut, and paths preserved, or restored, nest boxes put up, scrapes dug, and so much more. Much of this is co-ordinated by Jamie Hooper in his role as MD of Environment Guernsey; however there are still volunteers who turn out when the need arises. Even the likes of our dear Barbara Falla often takes it upon herself to clean out the Vale Pond hide, which sadly is often in a shocking state.

We have our Rarities Committee which meets to consider any species that have been submitted as a record; the members sift through the evidence before deciding whether the record is accepted. This includes Mark Lawlor as our Recorder. In this role he compiles an amazingly complex report on all the birds seen throughout the year, and has faithfully been doing this for a number of years now, and we hope will continue to do so!

Vic Froome continues his mission to give every bird a home, by building Owl boxes (over 500 now!), Kestrel boxes, swift boxes, Sand Martin drums, and who knows what else. I wish I had half his energy and passion. Mary Simmons continues to write up the

Juniors

monthly meetings minutes. Pauline Chapman ensures that we never run out of money by gathering subs and running the accounts as our Treasurer. Phil Alexander has been co-ordinating the Guernsey part in the huge BTO Bird Atlas initiative, and has made us feel guilty enough to get out there and do some survey work, at least a couple of times a year. He really has worked hard on this.

Phil Atkinson has put a tremendous amount of work into producing the wonderful new Société website, and in particular the birding section, where we can input sightings and photographs directly, and have up to the minute reports of what is about.

Mike Bairds continues every month to produce a wonderful full colour publication called "Guernsey Bird News", wherein all the monthly bird sightings submitted by our members are condensed into species seen, location, when, by whom, and how many! No mean feat given the amount of birds seen in a month.

As you can see there is a lot going on, being ably accomplished by a lot of lovely people, and as I said at the beginning, we want to say thank you to them all for making the Section what it is. There is bound to be somebody that I have forgotten to mention, and if it is you, thank you too for what you do.

Finally after all that, we would be pleased to welcome you to our monthly Section meeting that takes place on the first Thursday of each month at Candie Museum.

Rod Ferbrache

Family History

- 19 May** A talk by Sylvia Miller on her Le Page and Carré families
- 23 June** "Going for Gold" – a talk by Sylvia Brouard
- 12 July** "Guernseymen at the Battle of Trafalgar" – a talk by Ron Le Moignan
- 20 October** Annual dinner
- 17 November** "When the Abbot and the Duke of Normandy first met" – a talk by Brian de Jersey, followed by the AGM

Please note there are no outdoor meetings this summer. Meetings will be in the Frossard Theatre, Candie, beginning at 7.45 pm.

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

Edith Le Patourel

Family History

In January Maria Van der Tang of the Family History Section took the juniors through the process of writing a family tree. The children had been given templates beforehand to fill in with as much information as they could glean from parents and grandparents. Maria, and Marie Sillars who was also there to lend her expertise, then took them over to the Priaulx Library to show them the comprehensive resources available for anyone wishing to research their Guernsey family roots.

Astronomy Section

In February we were able to visit the newly refurbished Observatory and were rewarded with excellent views of the Moon, Mars, Orion's Belt and below Orion's Belt a nebula, a cloud of dust and cases where new stars are being formed, literally a stellar nursery which looked like a cloudy patch to the naked eye.

Geology

There was no March meeting, but Andy Dorey, Secretary of the Geography and Geology Section, and his daughter Sarah, took us on a splendid geological tour of Moulin Huet bay.

We were shown lcart gneiss, magma dykes, raised beaches many metres above our heads, and many more features which brought the whole subject to life. Back at the car park, Andy showed us some more rocks that he had brought along and we ate delicious rock cakes baked by Sarah.

Future Meetings

Saturday 8 May 8 at 2.00 pm: Bats. An indoor meeting at the Frossard Theatre

Saturday 15 May: A combined moth and bat evening at the Dell Nursery on National Moth night. This will be open to all, but the juniors will be most welcome. Details will be on the website nearer the time.

Saturday 5 June at 2.00 pm: Sylvia Brouard, who has just come onto Council and is an accredited gold badge guide, will take us round Cobo looking at the botany, ornithology archaeology and general history of the area. Meet at the car park opposite the Guet.

Sunday 4 July: Charles David will lead another Bug Hunt, this time at Mont Herault.

August, Tanya Walls will lead another archaeology meeting at L'Erée headland when the same team returns to excavate.

Pat Costen

Bat Group

This year, National Moth Night, organised jointly by Butterfly Conservation and the moth journal Atropos, will be on **Saturday 15th May**. Bat Groups have been invited to team up with the moth people to give joint publicity to those important creatures of the night, moths and bats. We will be joining Rich Austin at the Dell Nursery at about 9pm. He will set up the (non-killing) moth trap over a white sheet and will identify the moths as they come in. I will bring along a selection of bat detectors and we hope to pick up both pipistrelles and long-eared bats. This event will be open to all.

Pat Costen

NCCPG

Wed 5 May at 7.30pm at Les Cotils: Susan Campbell will give an illustrated talk on "The History of Walled Gardens" Entry £3 to non - NCCPG members.

Bank Holiday **Monday 31 May** NCCPG Giant Plant Sale at 10.30am at Sausmarez Manor.

Nature Conservation

The following outings planned for spring and summer 2010:

- Sat 15 May** lunchtime visit to Houmet Paradis to look at intertidal zone – meet at Bordeaux at 12.45 pm
- Mon 7 Jun** visit to the orchid fields at La Rue Rocheuse
- Mon 19 Jul** visit to L'Ancrese – to look at good sand dune habitat
- Sat 21 Aug** Bar meal followed by bat walk
- Sat 11 Sep** visit to the Gouliot caves in Sark – open meeting

For further information, please phone Denise Thoumine on 723003.

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.

Old Mobile Phones

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, or take it along to Les Sablons Interpretation Centre.

The National Trust of Guernsey

Many congratulations to the National Trust of Guernsey for achieving their 50th anniversary. They have put together a wonderful and varied programme of events to celebrate their successes.

Stop Press

Fish and chips will no longer be served at Les Sablons Interpretation Centre.



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Environment Guernsey is the wholly owned company of La Société Guernesiaise
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	Pat Costen	264500	president@societe.org.gg
Vice-President	Rodney Collenette	249021	
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Honorary Treasurer	Peter Budwin	716134	treasurer@societe.org.gg
Membership Secretary	May Teagle	724835	
Editor of the Transactions	Richard Hocart	254693	editor@societe.org.gg
Reserves Committee Chairman	Jane Gilmour	700024	
Land Management and Conservation Officer	Jamie Hooper	266924	
Volunteer Co-ordinator - Reserves	Vanessa Crispini-Adams	238150	
Librarians	Jean & Gavin Sampson	234430	

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MARINE BIOLOGY & ZOOLOGY	Vacant		
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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 Priaulx 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), Mrs V. Crispini-Adams, A. Ritchie, N. Day, Miss J. Gilmour, Mrs Judith Keen, R. Collenette and Mrs. Sylvia Brouard

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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