



# COMMUNIQUE

The Newsletter of **LA SOCIÉTÉ GUERNESIAISE**

May 2015 Issue No.87

*Guernsey's Local Research, Natural History and Conservation Society*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Vice-President

At the AGM in March, Dr Andrew Casebow was unanimously voted Vice-President. With his extensive knowledge of farming and the environment, renewable energy, climate change and wildlife conservation, together with a keen academic interest in the non-wildlife disciplines of La Société, Andrew is most welcome on Council.

**Helen Litchfield** Also elected onto Council was Helen Litchfield, who joins as an Ordinary Member. Helen trained in Landscape Construction and works as a Garden Designer. She has a particular interest in organic gardening methods and supporting the creation and maintenance of our public conservation areas.



**Bill Gallienne** After twenty years as History Section Secretary Bill Gallienne has decided to stand down. Bill has led countless walks describing the history of this island with many members and non-members, some of whom have been accompanying him from the start. Bill has been an outstanding Secretary and he will be much missed. He will, however, continue as Philology Secretary.

### OUR HERBARIA

Every Saturday morning for the last few months, Rachel Rabey has been joined by George Garnett to undertake a complete overhaul of our two herbaria: The Gosselin Herbarium c.1790 and our own which was begun in 1892. George Garnett is the Elizabeth College student who walked into our headquarters at Candie one Saturday morning and asked to join La Société as he was 'interested in botany'. This was at a time when we were beginning to worry that there were no young botanists to take up the discipline in our society, which has had botany at its core since we were founded in 1882. Rachel and George's task is now complete and both would tell you that they have learned much from exercise. Our sincere thanks go to both of them.

*Pat Costen*

## JETHOU TRIPS 2015

We have arranged 2 trips to Jethou this Summer. The first trip will take place on Saturday 27th June departing at 10am from near the Sark boat waiting room. The second trip will be on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July departing at 10am. According to demand there will be later boats on each 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 these trips are for **Members only** and the cost per person is £20. Kindly **Email: [secretary@societe.org.gg](mailto:secretary@societe.org.gg)** to book a place.

## SUMMER EVENTS

**West Coast Weekend (10th/11th May 10am to 4.30pm)** – we will have a display of our books and cards in the Magazine at Fort Grey. The Conservation Herd will be on land nearby. Various Sections such as Botany, Marine Biology and Archaeology will hold events in the area over the weekend. More details to follow. Please note we will have a table of books and cards for sale and demonstrations of Guernsey Patois at the **Viaë'r Marchi (Monday 6th July)**. Charles and David of the Conservation Herd will also be present and we hope to have our stall situated near their enclosure.

*Cont.*

We will also have a table of books, cards etc at the **West Show (19th/20th August)**. Do come along and support us. Remember you can check all our events on our **website [www.societe.org.gg](http://www.societe.org.gg)**

### **Saturday 6th June - 1pm in the Frossard Theatre, Free Entry For Members**

**Conservation Herd** An illustrated talk by Julia Henney on why the herd was established and how the steers are becoming an important Section in La Société. This talk is open to all, but members of the Junior Section are particularly welcome. They will be taken to meet the 'boys' (see Juniors, page 5) and will also be introduced to the two newest members of the Herd when they arrive to stay with Pat Costen for their nursery care in January 2016.

## RE-SCHEDULED TALK

### **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October, Frossard Theatre, Candie at 7.30pm - Free Entry for Members**

Richard Hocart will give a talk on 'Cattle, Corn and Cider: Agriculture in Guernsey, 1640 to 1840'. This will bring together his research over many years on the development of farming during this two-hundred year period, and will attempt to answer some important questions. How did such a large rural population survive on such a small landmass? Were our farming predecessors resistant to change, or were they willing to innovate? How did law and custom shape island agriculture?

## SECTION REPORTS

### ARCHAEOLOGY

In February the Section visited Mont Crevelt Fort. Although it is always possible to walk around the outside of the fort, we were able to obtain keys to get inside. The tower is one of the fifteen loop-holed towers built around the coast between 1778-9; the site was developed into a fort in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and then refortified by the Germans during the Occupation. The bunker complex on the south-east side was particularly interesting and there were great views from the top of the fort. We also took advantage of a low tide in mid-February to check west coast rocks at Houmet Jerbe (off Grandes Rocques). There are areas on these rocks where soil survives and flint is eroding from the buried prehistoric land surface. Over two hundred flints were recovered, in addition to a collection of small pottery sherds from a single Neolithic or Bronze Age vessel.



In March the Archaeology Department carried out a watching brief at fields on the south side of the Forest Road, where an area of around 1000 square metres was mechanically excavated to remove contaminated soil. The soil contained PFOS, originating from fire retardant foam used by the emergency services following a plane crash on the site in 2001. We were able to record features including ditches and a possible hearth, as well as to collect prehistoric flint and pottery. This site is more than a mile away from the West of Airport site where we found very similar evidence for occupation during the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods (c6000 – 1500 BC). Also in March Donovan Hawley, a PhD student from Southampton University, carried out a small excavation to examine an eroding flint site at Creve Coeur west of Fort Pembroke. Donovan is studying the flint recovered from both excavated and eroding sites around the island. The weather was bleak on this exposed headland, but Donovan was assisted by Section members Hazel Hill and David Lane and extensive deposits of flints were found. This was probably a knapping site and we await Donovan's report, in which he will be able provide dating on the basis of the tool technology.

The Section is still working on the restoration of the Brother's Cemetery and making good progress. Hopefully it will be possible for the public to visit later in the year. In the meantime if you would like to know more have a look at Philip de Jersey's excellent blog at <http://brotherscemetery.wordpress.com>

The archaeology exhibition **Celts & Romans: Treasure & Trade** is displayed at Guernsey Museum all summer and includes recent finds from excavations at King's Road, timbers from the St Peter Port Roman ship (Asterix), as well as items borrowed from Jersey - including a facsimile of the amazing Jersey Hoard. There is a series of public lectures to accompany this exhibition, all are at the **Frossard Theatre, Candie and begin at 8pm - Free Entry**

- **Tuesday 26th May, Dr Phil de Jersey:**  
**On the edge of the Celtic world: The Channel Islands and their response to Rome**
- **Tuesday 2nd June, Dr Phil de Jersey:**  
**Hiding Treasure on an offshore island: the Jersey coin hoards of the first century BC**
- **Tuesday 9th June, Dr Jason Monaghan: Romans in the Bailiwick**
- **Tuesday 23rd June, Dr Jason Monaghan: Guernsey's Romano-Celtic Ship**

Finally, the Digimap website has redesigned its Antiquities Map; it is now more user-friendly and has updated information supplied by Guernsey Museum Sites and Monuments Record.

*Tanya Walls*

## ASTRONOMY

Our year normally starts with an approach from the BBC in January to join them with an open evening for their Stargazing Live programme. This year was a little different as they had decided to move their programme to March so coinciding with the solar eclipse on March 20th. As we had already decided to stage an event with invited guests on that day, this year we had to decline their offer.

February 5th was the first evening of six for our WEA astronomy course. We hold this every year under the guidance of David Le Conte. The class of twenty is always full and this year we had remarkably clear skies for the viewing aspects of the course. It was the same last year but we are not that fortunate every time.

February and March are always popular with our group visits. This is where we mutually decide on a suitable evening for a group of twenty or so people to come and have an hour or so quality time with us, rather than a busy open evening. This year we have enjoyed the company of school children, scout groups and social clubs. We do not charge for these evenings but people are very generous with their donations.

The solar eclipse day as mentioned earlier on March 20th was very successful. This may sound odd as we had thick cloud and did not once see the sun as it was being partly hidden by the moon. But the success came from the planning which preceded the day. David Le Conte was the co-ordinator and a number of us had specific duties to ensure that our invited guests were kept informed of proceedings. They included all astronomy section members, Pat Costen, Société Guernesiaise President, Mrs Gillian Lenfestey, children from the nearby La Hougette School and His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and Mrs Walker. The media were also invited. Had we been able to see the eclipse it would have started at 8.19am and finished at 10.35am guests arrived between 9 am and 10 am.

We are very fortunate that La Hougette School allow us to use their car park for our open evenings, but on this occasion with the school in session this was not possible. We are therefore extremely grateful to Mrs Damsell for allowing car parking in her field near the Observatory. Despite the cloud cover, we were able to show on our viewing screen the eclipse as was being seen from an area near the Faroes. The school children took full advantage of seeing our telescopes and asking lots of questions. His Excellency and Mrs Walker spoke with the children and were impressed with their knowledge. This was the first time that His Excellency and Mrs Walker had visited our Observatory so it gave us the opportunity to show them the sort of things we do and the equipment we have.

March 27th was our first open evening of 2015. It was rather disappointing in that it rained and very few people came, but those that did enjoyed being shown the telescopes and listening to various illustrated talks.

Our next project is an open 'day' on May 25th from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm where we intend to view the sun using our ultra safe equipment.

*Frank Dowding*

## EVENTS - SEE THE STARS WITH LARGE TELESCOPES

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

**Monday 25th May (Observing the Sun) 10.30am to 12.30pm**

**Thursday 30th July at 9pm**

**Thursday 13th August at 8.30pm**

**Thursday 27th August at 8.30pm**

**Thursday 23rd July at 9pm**

**Thursday 6th August at 8.30pm**

**Thursday 20th August at 8.30pm**

**Thursday 29th October at 6pm**

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 Houguette 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](http://www.astronomy.org.gg) or Tel: 255215

## BOTANY

### Events

- **Saturday 6th June 2.30pm - Botany Walk - Grandes Rocques to Port Soif**
- **Saturday 4th July 2.30pm – Vale Pond.**
- **Saturday 1st August 2.30pm – Silbe Nature Reserve – meet at entrance.**
- **Saturday 5th September 2.30pm – Le Grande Pre – meet at entrance.**
- **Saturday 3rd October 2.30pm – Bordeaux – meet at North car park.**

All venues provisional. Please refer to the website [www.societe.org.gg](http://www.societe.org.gg) for confirmation.

**Contact Hazel Hill Tel: 244879 or Hazel Gray Tel: 239449**

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 or Email: [gavsampson@cwgsy.net](mailto: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.

## ENTOMOLOGY

In the absence of a Secretary **Mark Lawlor Tel: 710374** will field any entomological enquires

## FAMILY HISTORY

The Section Room at Les Vauxbelets is now open for research (non-section members welcome) on the first and third Saturdays in the month, 10am to noon.

### Events

- **Wednesday 20th May - 7.45pm - Family History Talk - WW1 Guernsey Heroes - 16th (Irish) Division, Frossard Theatre, Candie. Free entry, all welcome.**
- **Wednesday 17th June - 2.30pm - Family History Outing to Warwick House, Grange, St Peter Port at 2.30pm. Free entry, all welcome.**
- **Wednesday 22nd July – 7pm – Checking Grave inscriptions at Catêl Church. All welcome.**
- **Friday 2nd October – Annual Dinner.**

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

### Events

- **Wednesday 10th June 7pm- Geology Outing - South side of L'Eree headland. For a change we will look at the South side of L'Eree rather than the more usual North side. Park at the top of L'Eree slipway. Contact Andy Dorey Tel: 252123 or Email: andydorey3@gmail.com**

## HISTORIC BUILDINGS

### *Summer Visits 2015*

I apologise for not arranging a full programme earlier, but as most members will know, my time has been entirely taken up with preparing 'Channel Island Houses' for print. I am happy to tell you that at last this book will be ready for the end of May, and notices will appear in the media and elsewhere before the end of next month as to the exact arrangements for collecting or buying copies. Pre-publication subscribers will be separately notified in the next few days as to these arrangements.

At relatively short notice, I am happy to say that I have now been able to arrange three visits over the summer. We are very grateful to house-owners and others for co-operating in this matter so willingly. Bearing in mind that only about half the Section are taking part in this year's French trip (although our numbers remain the same, thanks to interest from the other islands and further afield) I thought it as well to start with something in June. All three meetings will begin at 2.30 p.m., as usual.

- **Saturday June 20th - A visit to Le Guet, under the leadership of Sylvia Brouard, who will adapt her usual tour with the special interests of the group in mind. Parking will hopefully be available below Le Guet, where we shall meet alongside the German bunker. This walk will not be arduous, going slowly uphill to take in two or three interesting houses en route, and finishing at the watch-house. Some of you might like to park at the top, if you think you may not want to walk down to the coast after looking at the watch-house.**
- **Saturday July 18th - A visit to The Lower Rouvets, St. Saviour's whose new owner is keeper at Castle Cornet. This is an unusual C17 house with much of interest and some good outbuildings. Parking may be difficult here. There is room for a few cars at the house, but perhaps park elsewhere if you can.**
- **Saturday August 15th - Les Domaines, St. Saviour's, a basically C15 house with alterations of various dates and some unusual internal features. Parking again limited. Phone the Secretary Tel: 720303 or Email: mrjam@cwsgy.net nearer the time to see if extra parking has been sorted out.**

Arrangements for any further meetings will be notified in due course. New members or visitors are always welcome to attend, but should **Contact John McCormack, the Section's Secretary, on Tel: 720303 or Email: mrjam@cwsgy.net** beforehand, in case of alterations or final instructions. An annual charge of £10 is due at the beginning of the year, payable by those who expect to attend regularly.

## JUNIORS

### Events

- **Saturday 13th June - The Junior Section will visit the Conservation Herd. Details to follow.**

**Contact Pat Costen Tel: 264500 or Email: patcosten@cwsgy.net**

## LA SOCIÉTÉ CONSERVATION HERD

Over winter our Nature Reserves are too wet to be grazed by cattle so the Herd have been kept on their winter lay-back lands which are a collection of private fields generously loaned to us by private individuals and supporters of La Société.

Five and Six, the two new members of the Conservation Herd were introduced to the established four members (Charles, David, Three and Four) in March and they are now in a large field in La Moye, Vale.

You may already recognise Five and Six from their antics in Pat Costen's house which made it into the International papers!

The Channel Islands Co-operative have kindly invited us to place collection boxes at nine of their stores. So keep your eyes out whilst you're shopping in a Co-op near you!

If you would like any further information or would like to get involved with the Herd **Contact Julia Henney at [conservationherd@societe.org.gg](mailto:conservationherd@societe.org.gg)** or head to our Facebook page



## MARINE BIOLOGY

The Section has a number of events going on throughout the year. **For more information visit the website, the Facebook page or Contact Jessi Jennings on Email: [marinebiology@societe.org.gg](mailto:marinebiology@societe.org.gg)**

## NATURAL HISTORY

### Events

- **Saturday 23rd May - 2pm** – a walk led by Jane Gilmour starting at the swings at Les Amarreurs.
- **Sunday 14th June - 8.30am** – trip to Herm Island to look for nesting birds. We will catch the 8.30am boat and anyone wishing to join the trip should buy their own ticket please.  
This outing will be led by Trevor Bourgaize.

More information about the section can be found on the Société website or by **Contacting Lesley on Tel: 710737 or Email: [lbourgaize@cwgsy.net](mailto:lbourgaize@cwgsy.net)**



It is April as I write and Spring is with us, the birds are in full breeding plumage and nest building and nestling feeding is under way, migrants are arriving and are most welcome. However, back to our resident birds.

In the last newsletter I wrote about the nation's supposed favourite bird, the robin. I feel it is very difficult to name a favourite when they all are so beautiful and characterful.

One bird on my favourite list is the goldcrest. This tiny bird, indeed the smallest British bird, is only 9 centimetres long and weighs the same as a 20 pence piece.

Goldcrests are constantly on the move as they search twigs and leaves for insects and spiders, their preferred food.

If two meet you might see them raise their fiery crown feathers in display or threat. Males have orange crowns, females have yellow ones.



They build fragile nests of spiders' webs, moss and feathers in conifer trees anywhere from a large forest to your back garden. Often they make the nest on the very end of the branch to keep the eggs and chicks as safe as possible. Seven to ten brown speckled white eggs are laid and incubated by the female for about a fortnight, the young fledge after about three weeks. They may have two broods in one year.

The males sing throughout Spring and Summer at such a high pitch that many people cannot hear them, especially as they grow older.

The sound is a very high pitched zi-zi-zi ending with a flourish. In October and November their sharp calls are very noticeable as large numbers of goldcrests come into Britain from Europe and Scandinavia; what a journey for such a tiny bird—the wonder of birds never ceases to amaze me.

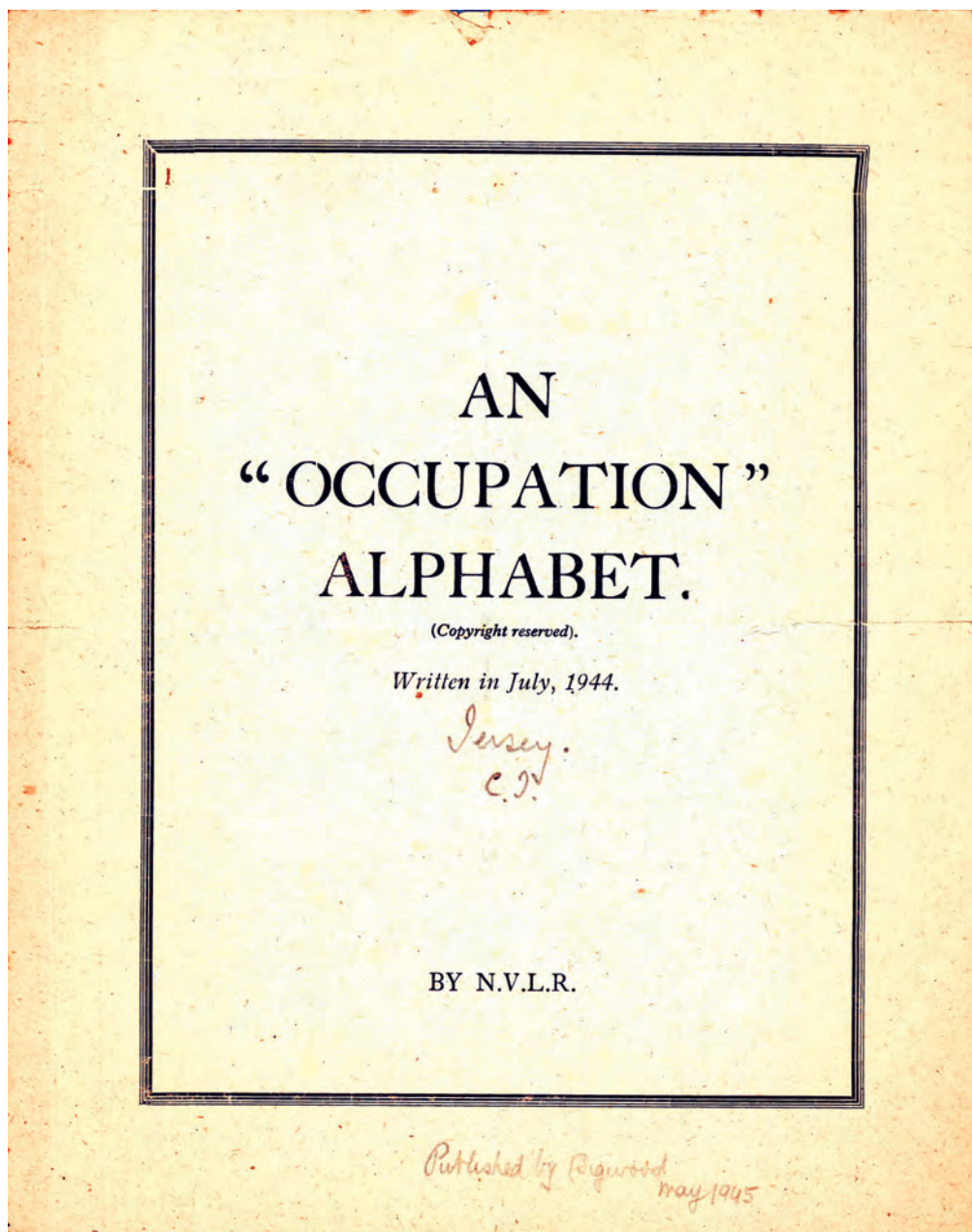
The lovely photograph was taken by Mike Cunningham from our Section. Mike and his friend, Royston Carre, have searched the records and compiled a booklet about migration and in which month we can expect to see certain birds.

To obtain one, cost £1, you can call in at Candie HQ on a Tuesday or Saturday morning between 10am and 12 noon, or call me on 268191. Mike and Royston are currently working, with Tony Bisson, on his list of all species of bird seen in Guernsey since the 1860's, with a view to producing a book, illustrated with their excellent photographs, so, watch this space.

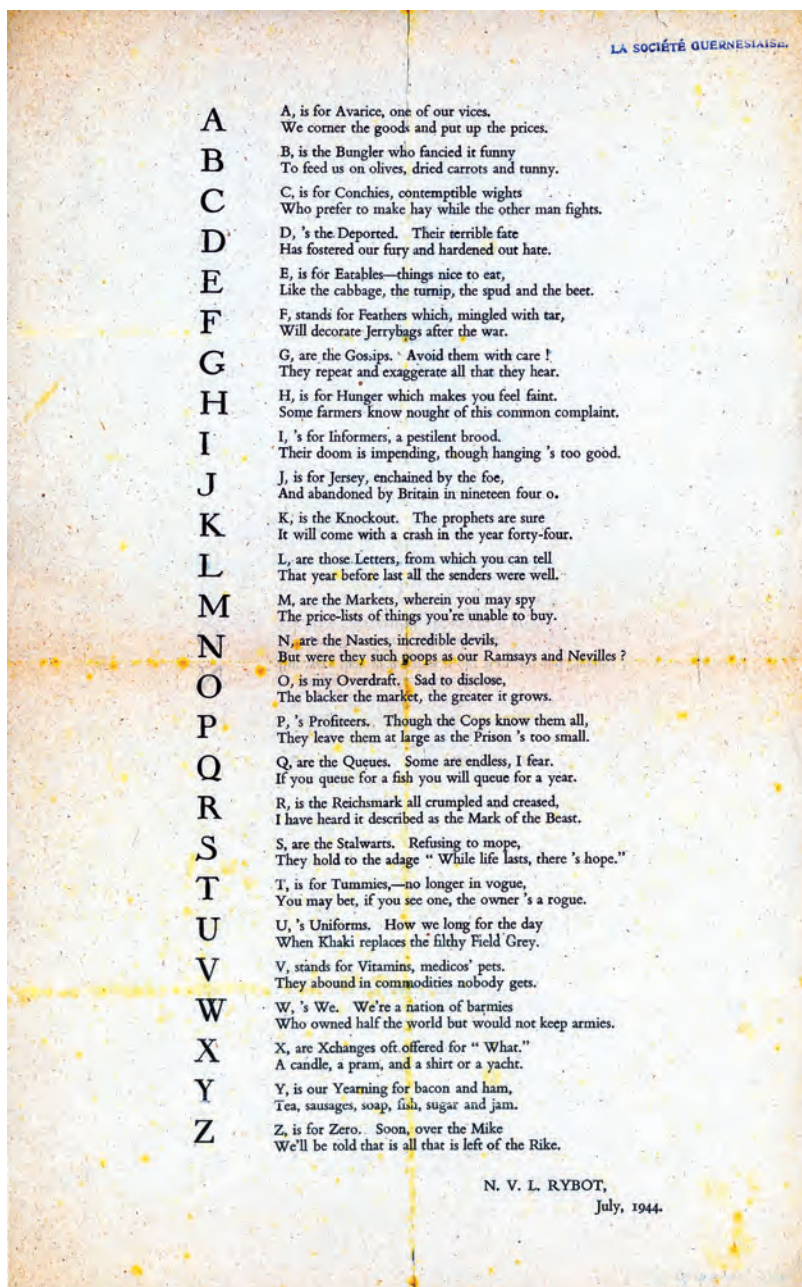
We would welcome you at our monthly meetings held on the first Thursday of the month at Candie at 8pm, where you can learn more about what members are doing.

***Nancy Ogier***

By the time this Communiqué goes to press, the 70th Anniversary Liberation Celebrations will be over. Members will nevertheless be interested to see this Alphabet which we have in our Archives.







The letter F may cause offence but on the basis of *o tempora o mores*, we felt justified in leaving the document as it stands.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Several members, including Bailiff Sir Richard Collas, contacted us to fill in the names of those gathered for the 100th Anniversary Celebrations.



There is only one anonymous gentleman in this picture of the Botany Section with the notable Botanist Lady Anne Brewer, though someone may know the identity of the other person, obscured by Lady Wimborne.



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.**



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.

Guernsey Tobacco Factory, La Ramée, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 2ET  
Tel: (07781) 166924 • Email: [jamie.hooper@cwgsy.net](mailto:jamie.hooper@cwgsy.net) • [gsybiorec@cwgsy.net](mailto:gsybiorec@cwgsy.net)

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP SPONSORS FOR 2015

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# LANGUAGE AT LUNCH

Learn Guernsey's native language,  
Guernésiais / Guernsey French

Weekday lunchtimes at  
Guernsey Museum

Different levels  
available from total  
beginner to  
conversational

Enquire or book a place  
726518 / [info@language.gg](mailto:info@language.gg)

Another event organised by  
[@LanguageGG](#)



Guernsey  
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Commission

*speaking up for our language*

ASSOCIATED GROUPS:

|  |                    |  |
|--|--------------------|--|
| Alderney Wildlife Trust  | Roland Gauvain     | 822935   |
| Bat Group  | Pat Costen         | 264500   |
| Blue Dolphins Sub Aqua Club  | Jessie Jennings    | <a href="mailto:bluedolphinssac@gmail.com">bluedolphinssac@gmail.com</a> |
| Friends of the Priaulx Library   | Jenny Tasker       | <a href="mailto:jenny@taskeronline.com">jenny@taskeronline.com</a>       |
| 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   |
| Men of the Trees   | 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 Group  | Chris Tomlins      | 07781 100311   |
| The Guernsey Botanical Trust   | Ivan Le Tissier    | 07911 719115   |
| The Guernsey Society   | Michael Paul       | 235858   |
| WEA  | Roy Bisson         | 256848   |

# OFFICERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

## Officers:

|                                   |                   |                 |                           |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| President                         | Pat Costen        | 264500          | president@societe.org.gg  |
| Vice President                    | Dr Andrew Casebow | 722245          |                           |
| Immediate Past President          | Rodney Collenette | 249021          |                           |
| Secretary                         | Kate Lee          | 235380          | secretary@societe.org.gg  |
| Honorary Treasurer                | David Cranch      | 07781<br>120915 | treasurer@societe.org.gg  |
| Membership Secretary              | Lawney Martin     |                 | membership@societe.org.gg |
| Editor of the Transactions        | Richard Hocart    | 254693          | editor@societe.org.gg     |
| Reserves Committee Chairman       | Jane Gilmour      | 700024          |                           |
| Conservation Officer              | Jamie Hooper      | 266924          |                           |
| Volunteer Co-ordinator - Reserves | Anthony Stagg     | 722351          |                           |
| Archivist & Librarian             | Pat Costen        | 264500          | patcosten@cwgsy.net       |

## Section Secretaries:

|                          |                   |                 |                                 |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Archaeology              | Tanya Walls       | 727614          | archaeology@societe.org.gg      |
| Astronomy                | Frank Dowding     | 255215          | astronomy@societe.org.gg        |
| Botany                   | Vacant            |                 |                                 |
| Climate Change           | Andrew Casebow    | 722245          | climate.change@societe.org.gg   |
| Conservation Herd        | Julia Henney      |                 | conservationherd@societe.org.gg |
| Entomology               | Vacant            |                 | mplawlor@cwgsy.net              |
| Family History           | Edith Le Patourel | 721566          |                                 |
| Geology and Geography    | Andrew Dorey      | 252123          |                                 |
| Historic Buildings       | John McCormack    | 720303          | mrjam@cwgsy.net                 |
| History                  | Vacant            | 265529          |                                 |
| Junior                   | Pat Costen        | 264500          | patcosten@cwgsy.net             |
| Marine Biology & Zoology | Jessica Jennings  | 07839<br>250558 | marinebiology@societe.org.gg    |
| Natural History          | Lesley Bourgaize  | 710737          |                                 |
| Ornithology              | Vic Froome        | 254841          | ornithology@societe.org.gg      |
| Philology                | Bill Gallienne    | 265529          | history@societe.org.gg          |

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

Jamie Hooper (co-opted), Jane Gilmour (co-opted), Sylvia Brouard, Helen Litchfield,  
Richard de la Rue, Michael Deane, Adrian Nicolle and Lawney Martin

## Office Hours:

Our office at Candie is open to the public  
on Tuesday and Saturday mornings  
between 10am and 12 noon.

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