

COMMUNIQUÉ

The Newsletter of **LA SOCIÉTÉ GUERNESIAISE**

October 2018 Issue No.97

Guernsey's Local Research, Natural History and Conservation Society

2017 TRANSACTIONS

It is hoped to publish the 2017 Transactions before Christmas. Members will be informed by e-mail when they have arrived and are ready for collection.

We have many uncollected Transactions for 2014, 2015 and 2016 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.gg.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members

Since my last report we have enjoyed a wonderful summer. Many of us will have been out and about a great deal enjoying the natural beauty of our islands.

In August La Société took a stall at the West Show and volunteers were kept busy talking to many individuals about the work we do. People were keen to learn more about us on a range of topics including what they can do to encourage wildlife in their gardens. We also gained some new members. Membership subscriptions are La Société's principal source of income. Although our overheads are very low - we only have one part-time member of staff - the cost of managing our many reserves in particular means we need to increase our income. If you have friends or family who might like to join La Société, both for the benefits it brings and as a way of supporting the important work that we do, please do encourage them to sign up online. Anybody joining now will receive membership until December 2019 for the usual annual subscription of £25 for individuals or £30 for joint/family membership.

As you may be aware we are currently looking at ways we can improve what we offer to members. The group working on this has taken a break over the summer but will be reconvening soon to carry on with the task. As one part of this we will be looking at the viability of bringing over well known people in the environmental world who will also attract audiences outside of our membership. However, as always, members will receive preferential booking and ticket prices. At the time of writing we are just about to secure a very well known naturalist, author and TV personality and I look forward to updating you soon. If you have any suggestions or ideas about what you would like to see from your organisation, do drop our Secretary, Kate Lee, a line. secretary@societe.org.gg

I'm delighted to announce that this year the Griff Caldwell bursary of £1000 has been awarded to Pieter Durman. Pieter is studying Natural Sciences at Cambridge and we wish him well with his studies.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (CONT)

In September we received news that a proposal submitted by Jessi Jennings to the States of Guernsey Biodiversity Strategy (before she left for New Zealand) has been successful and £5,000 per annum for five years has been secured for the Seasearch marine surveying project. This is great news and we will have more details about it in a future edition of the newsletter. The Biodiversity Strategy was approved by the previous States with an extremely modest budget of £80,000 per year - much lower than in comparable places - but the money is certainly working hard funding environmental causes including the Pollinator Project and of course the post of Biodiversity Education Officer which is held by Julia Henney.

A few weeks ago La Société was represented in Jersey at the annual Inter-Island Environmental meeting which was hosted by the National Trust for Jersey. The theme of this year's meeting was Environmental Partnerships, in particular the sharing of environmental information and skills between the islands. Guernsey gave several presentations including one by Barry Wells on the Pollinator Project. This was very well received and was reported in detail in the Jersey Evening Post. If you haven't had a chance to look at the work of the Pollinator Project yet, there is a dedicated website at www.pollinatorproject.gg which is well worth a visit as well as a report in this newsletter. As part of the ILEM, a field visit was laid on to the north coast cliffs to see the red billed chough reintroduction programme (Birds on the Edge) and the herd of Manx loaghtan sheep. The sheep have been introduced to an area of 180 verges of bracken-covered headland in order to increase biodiversity and to manage habitats.

After ten years' meticulous work, Jane Gilmour has retired from the Biological Records Centre. The Centre is a partnership between the States of Guernsey and La Société Guernesaise. Jane's detailed knowledge of flora and fauna has been an immense asset to the important work done by the Centre and on behalf of Council I would like to extend our thanks and wish her well in her retirement.

Finally, we enjoyed a further two presentations by Rachel Butler about her work on the Blue Planet II series. As with the first two these filled up very quickly and I'd like to extend our thanks to Rachel for her time and enthusiasm in doing these talks.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a list of our upcoming events for the Autumn. I do hope you will be able to join us for some of them.

With best wishes

Yvonne Burford
President

NATURE GUERNSEY

The second Nature Guernsey event took place on Saturday 12th May and was based at the Orchid Fields at Rue Du Douit de Moullin. After a busy morning setting up the gazebos, the activities began at 2pm.



Photo courtesy of Andy Marquis

NATURE GUERNSEYS (CONT)

Although the orchids had been delayed a little by the weather, there were still lots to be seen and guided walks around the meadows were led by members of the Botany Section. A bug hunt was led by members of the Entomological Section, and this proved very popular with both young and old, as can be seen from the photograph below.



Photo courtesy of Andy Marquis

For those waiting for a walk to begin there was lots to see back at the gazebos. There were displays by the Botany Section and the Pollinator Project, who were also happy to offer advice on how to attract pollinators to gardens. A trawl of the douit, from which the lane takes its name, produced lots of 'creepy crawlies' to look at in bug pots and under the microscopes and meant that a number of volunteers, including Laura Bampton, the Marine Biology Section Secretary, were kept busy showing people what had been found.

While this was happening down on the coast a second group of volunteers was setting up at the Silbe Nature reserve and during the afternoon 2 guided walks set off from the Orchid fields to the Silbe. Volunteers at the Silbe included Chris Mourant, the Ornithology Section Secretary, who gave a demonstration of bird ringing, and members of the Entomology Section, who were on hand with a selection of moths caught the previous night. Other insects were also found and identified, including several types of Shield Bugs, Cockchafer Grubs and various Ground Beetles. An obliging Blue Tit, which was nesting in a box adjacent to the gazebo, kept visitors amused by appearing at intervals with a beak full of caterpillars to feed its young.



Photo courtesy of Andy Marquis

The Nature Guernsey committee was pleased with the way the event went and it was great to see so many families coming along to join in the activities. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all Societe members who volunteered to help, in whatever capacity; we really appreciated your support. Sadly we were forced to cancel the August event due to severe weather warnings being in place that weekend, but we will be back on Thursday 1st November, when we hold a joint event with the Astronomy Section at their headquarters at Rue du Lorier.

Lesley Bourgaize

POLLINATOR PROJECT

The Pollinator Project has had a very busy first year, since it launch at the Bean Jar Jamboree in October, 2017.

One of the main aims of the project was to work with schools. We have now established "Pollinator patches" at ten local schools (with more to follow this autumn). This has involved working with pupils, teachers and parents to plant pollinator-friendly trees, flowers and shrubs, and we have given illustrated talks to over 1000 children, thus far.

The Pollinator Project at the Vale School Open Day in the Summer.
Photo courtesy of Barry Wells.



Following a talk on pollinators to all the island's Floral Guernsey groups, we are now establishing partnerships with individual parish groups to enhance areas for these insects. We have worked with the Forest Parish Group to establish a "Pollinator patch" in their Wildlife Spot, which featured as part of their "Britain in Bloom" submission this summer. Another patch was created at the Brothers' Cemetery restoration in St Peter Port, which will be extended next year.

We have worked with the Vale Commons Council who are very keen to increase biodiversity on the Common. We identified a badly worn area at Fort Le Marchant, that could become a 'bee cliff' pilot scheme. We did some digging in the Spring, and the results have been superb. Specialist sand dune pollinator species, such as Beewolves and Silvery Leafcutter Bees are breeding in the cliffs. The Commons Council are happy for us to extend the project next year. As the Pollinator Project is an awareness campaign, we take every opportunity to publicise our efforts, and we received great media coverage on the bee cliff project, including an interview on Channel Television.



The Bee Cliff Project at Fort Le Marchant.
Photo courtesy of Barry Wells.

We are working with Grow Limited, Guernsey's Rural Occupational Workshop, which provides help for people with learning and other disabilities. We are using a Co-op Eco Fund to buy seeds and pay GROW to produce pollinator-friendly plants which are difficult to source locally. These will be used on our sites next year, and any excess will be sold to the general public.

Earlier this year we decided to create bee hotels that provide homes for solitary bees and wasps, and also provide a great educational resource for schoolchildren. Swoffers Estate Agents had previously sponsored the making of bird boxes for RSPB, so we approached them to help with this project. We also approached Norman Piette for sponsorship and with the generous financial support of these two companies we were able to get 50 made by prisoners in the Prison's carpentry workshop through their charity CLIP (Creative Learning in Prison). These are now going up at schools and other public areas over the winter.

POLLINATOR PROJECT (CONT)

We are working closely with States departments and public utilities to develop some of their sites with pollinators in mind. In the spring, we brought Andrew Whitehouse, Buglife's Counties Manager, to the island to help in this regard. Buglife, are the UK's largest invertebrate charity, and have a great deal of expertise in working with schools and local government, and his visit was invaluable. Hopefully by next spring, we will have "Pollinator Patches" across the island on sites owned by Guernsey Water, State Electricity, the Agriculture, Countryside and Land Management Services and the Princess Elizabeth Hospital.

We will also be launching a public campaign to get homeowners to set aside a small part of each Guernsey garden to support pollinators, as well as a citizen science project that we are developing with Jersey, Sark and Alderney.

Finally, the Pollinator Project was delighted to win Best Conservation Project 2018 at this year's Insurance Corporation Conservation Awards. We are currently looking to expand the Pollinator Project team so please get in contact if you would like to get involved with this valuable project. All welcome. Please contact Barry Wells e-mail bgw247@me.com



Barry Wells, Vanessa Crispini-Adams and Vic Frome with the 2018 Insurance Corporation "Best Conservation Project" awards.
Photo courtesy of Jayne Wells.

Barry Wells

UPCOMING EVENTS

Book Sale at the Russels, Les Cotils Sunday 4th November 2 - 4pm.

There will be a good selection of secondhand fiction and non-fiction books plus new and antiquarian local history books. There will also be family history books for sale and some homemade gifts. We will have a good selection of local view Christmas cards priced at £1 for a packet of 6.

Contact Kate Lee – secretary@societe.org.gg

Saturday 17th November – 2pm Language Talk - “Why Should We Bother About Guernésiais?” by Professor Mari C. Jones, Frossard Theatre, Candie.

This talk is aimed at a broad, general audience – and is accessible to all, regardless of whether or not you speak Guernésiais. I will begin by explaining what led me, a Welsh-speaker from the Valleys of South Wales, to become interested in Norman, and why I have chosen to devote a large part of my academic career at the University of Cambridge to studying the Norman French of the Channel Islands. I will then consider reasons why I believe that learning Guernésiais is important and describe how speaking Guernésiais can benefit Guernsey’s younger generation. The talk will also explore how speaking Norman French can help us to learn more about the history of English and how Guernésiais could have a valuable role in developing cultural links between Guernsey and the Norman mainland. Saturday 24th November – 11am – Frossard Theatre Candie – a talk entitled “An Anglophone Colony: Guernsey Residents in 19th Century Dinan” by Jersey historian Diane Moore. Diane’s talk will focus on the English-speaking community in Dinan, how and why it came about, and will focus on areas such as housing, education, the erection of an Anglican church, clubs, the English Cemetery in Dinan, artists and writers and their role within a French town. It will also include a number of interesting / notable Guernsey people who settled in this community and left their mark on the town.

Contact Kate Lee – secretary@societe.org.gg

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Contact Kate Lee – secretary@societe.org.gg

Tuesday 4th December – 7.30pm – Frossard Theatre, Candie - Archaeology talk entitled “Life and Death at Longis: the latest finds from Alderney” by Philip de Jersey, Jason Monaghan and Tanya Walls. The Nunnery’ at Longis Bay is the only surviving Roman fort in the Channel Islands and is remarkably well-preserved. Since the 19th century there have been frequent discoveries of Iron Age and Roman remains on Longis Common. This talk will discuss the latest thoughts about the fort and the most recent discoveries from the Common; including an account of the excavations carried out in July this year. All welcome. **Contact Tanya Walls – tanyawalls@gov.gg**

ARCHAEOLOGY

It has been a very exciting summer for archaeology. Details of two geophysical surveys were featured in the spring newsletter - one at a garden in Queen's Road and one on Longis Common (Alderney). We went on to excavate at both of these sites.

The Queen's Road garden is very close to the Iron Age cemetery and settlement on the east side of King's Road, so we were pleased to have the opportunity to excavate here. The geophysical survey indicated the possibility of a substantial rectangular building and we positioned a trench to investigate this. Excavation showed no building, but a significant depth of loess below which were plough lines; these were at a depth of about 70cm and probably prehistoric in date. It would appear that this area lies outside the Iron Age settlement. A second trench was dug to the west - closer to the Iron Age site - and the evidence here indicated that we were inside the occupation site. The soil was much shallower and there were features cut into the subsoil, very much as we have seen in previous excavations off King's Road. We recovered Iron Age pottery, part of an iron blade and a quartz pounding stone. The two trenches were very useful in showing the likely extent of the Iron Age settlement on its eastern side and we hope to return to this site at a future date.

In June we returned to Alderney to follow up the geophysical survey carried out in the spring. Once again we sited two trenches on features identified by the survey; these were also located close to the Iron Age burials cut by an electricity trench in 2017. We were expecting to find more of these burials, but we didn't, instead we uncovered the remains of Roman buildings. A total of four walls were uncovered: one in Trench 1 which was probably a boundary and retaining wall for a midden, and three in Trench 2 which were associated with stone paving and probably parts of buildings. A dark occupation soil which ran through both trenches contained Roman pottery, tile, animal bone, lots of marine shells (mainly limpets), iron nails and other small bits of metalwork. There were also more unusual finds, such as copper alloy finger rings, a coin, tiny pieces of glass, a quern fragment and part of a blue glass bead. The finds date the site to the 2nd and 3rd century AD. Towards the end of the excavation we dug a sondage (a small investigative pit) in a corner of Trench 2 to look beneath the Roman ground level. The sondage was adjacent to the Roman paving and in a deposit associated with this a coin of Antoninus Pius (Emperor from AD 138 -161) was discovered. This dated the construction of the paving and probably the buildings to after about AD 140.



Longis, Alderney: Trench 2 showing the remains of Roman buildings and the sondage which revealed evidence of an Iron Age burial beneath.

Photo courtesy of Phil de Jersey.

SECTION REPORTS (CONT)

Below the Roman ground level, occupation soils continued for about a metre and then a layer of stones appeared upon which was part of a human jaw bone and some other fragments of bone – apparently we had reached a disturbed Iron Age burial and it was not outside the Roman settlement but underneath it, in this part of the site anyway. The Iron Age cemetery is about 250 years earlier than the Roman buildings and the nearby Roman fort (known as The Nunnery) is about 200 years later. The archaeology of Longis is truly remarkable in its extent and the degree of its preservation; we are making plans to return next year to investigate further.

There will be a talk about the work in Alderney - the date of this is yet to be fixed, but we hope it will be in November.

Finally – look out for the ‘Roman Guernsey’ book available in the museum shop now. This includes excavation reports of two sites in St Peter Port: La Plaiderie and The Bonded Store, as well as a gazetteer of all the Roman finds made in Guernsey Herm and their surrounding waters.

Tanya Walls



Coin Sestertius of Antoninus Pius (AD 138 – 161).
Photo courtesy of David Nash

ASTRONOMY

Guernsey and Sark Night Sky

We have been very fortunate to have had three guest speakers over the summer months. Dr Robin Catchpole from Institute of Astronomy at Cambridge spoke in July about “The Sun and Climate Change”. The Frossard Lecture Theatre at Candie was packed and overflowing. In August, Professor Ian Morison formerly of Manchester University’s Jodrell Bank Observatory gave a lecture entitled “Proving Einstein Right” to another full house. Two days later, Astronomer and author, Robin Scagell visited the Guernsey Observatory on one of our Public Open Evenings and spoke about recent discoveries in the Solar System in our meeting room. He was also on hand to assist with observing.

Ian Morison and Robin Scagell had spent nearly a week in Sark in the run up to the peak of the Perseid Meteor shower on Sunday 12th August. Sark has won the classification of being the first Dark Sky Island. Robin Scagell took images of Sark’s night sky and Guernsey’s from our Observatory which are shown here.





The Milky Way is clearly visible in both these images and would not be visible from urban locations in the UK.

Robin's commentary is as follows:

"After the observing session on the Thursday night I went out with the same camera and lens that I'd used on Sark and took a comparison shot with the same settings, at about the same time of night though the camera orientations were slightly different. The results, attached, are interesting. I thought the two nights were equally transparent, but the Sark one may be a bit hazier. On the Guernsey one you can see the light from the West Show, which still had lots of lighting though the fair itself had finished. I went out along Route de La Marette between Perelle Bay and Vazon Bay, so there were no local lights.

There is more light along the horizon on the Guernsey one, but the differences are not as great as I thought they might be."

Events

The second "night time" Nature Guernsey Family event "Halloween at the Observatory" will be on Thursday 1st November from 6.30 pm at the Observatory. This is during half term. As well as viewing celestial objects expect to see bats and moths. Appropriate fancy dress to be worn please! Please see the poster overleaf for further details.

Dr Colin Spicer
Astronomy Section Secretary



Halloween at the Observatory



With Special Guests
**SEE STARS with LARGE
TELESCOPES**

Creepy Crawlies



BATS



HALF TERM! THURS 01 NOVEMBER @ 6.30 pm

The Observatory is in La Rue du Lorier, St Pierre-du-Bois. Perry's Guide reference 21 E3. Parking is usually available at La Houquette School, Rue des Paysans. From the school, follow the signs: 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 and high-visibility clothing are advisable.

For further information and directions see www.astronomy.org.gg, or call 721997.



This event is manned by
volunteer members of the
La Société Guernesaise.



**Donations are welcomed and assist with running and
maintenance costs. We suggest adults £2, children £1.**

CHANNEL ISLANDS BAT CONFERENCE 2018

The Bat Conference took place at La Société Guernesiaise headquarters at Candie Gardens Friday 17th to Sunday 19th August. It had been organised by Annika Binet of Jersey Bat Group with our assistance. Delegates came from the UK, Jersey and Guernsey.

It was an exciting weekend and we were most fortunate that so many highly qualified and skilled bat specialists attended. There were fascinating lectures and trapping sessions at pre-selected sites recommended by the Guernsey Bat Group. The trapping was done by experienced Bat Workers using highly specialised equipment. It was fascinating for the Guernsey group who did not have any experience of trapping or the necessary equipment.

The weekend kicked off on Friday with the first trapping session at one of the sites. The conference took place on Saturday and Sunday with lectures including bat work in Jersey, Grey Long- Eared Bat conservation in the UK, bat identification, and tree inspection and surveying, sonobat auto identification programme and other bat identification using sound analysis, and, finally, thermal imaging. Saturday evening more trapping took place. The final count of bats trapped was 78 bats of 5 species caught over 2 nights at 7 sites, including one new species for the island. There were 63 common pipistrelles, 3 Kuhl's pipistrelle (the new species), 3 Natterer's bats, one Greater Horseshoe bat and 3 Grey Long-eared bats. All bats were trapped humanely, handled with great care and released without harm once they had been weighed and measured.



Long Eared Bat – photo courtesy of David Niven.

A big thank you to all the participants especially Annika Binet who provided inspirational organisation and guidance throughout.

Sally Pedlar, Guernsey Bat Group

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

BOTANY WALKS

Saturday 3rd November, 2pm – Botany Walk – Moulin Huet. Please meet in the Moulin Huet carpark. Contact Anna Cleal – botany@societe.org.gg

Saturday 8th December, 2pm – Botany Walk – Spur Point. Please meet at Richmond Corner, Bulwer Avenue. Perry's guide page 11, E5. Contact Anna Cleal – botany@societe.org.gg

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

Please join the Botany Section's 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/1310943042297921/>

ENTOMOLOGY

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

FAMILY HISTORY

We have had a very good summer with visitors coming into the family history room on a Saturday morning to do their research or for a query they have not been able to solve.

Please note that we are now back on our winter opening times of 10am until 12 noon on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month.

Events

The Island Archives currently have an exhibit on the ending of WW1 together with a display of some of the Charles Richard Hodder collection of letters and photos which belongs to FHS.

Wednesday 21st November - a talk by Richard Hocart on his Barbet and Angel ancestors, from St Peter Port at 7pm, Frossard Theatre, Candie, this is followed by our AGM.

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

GEOLOGY

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

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Saturday 13th October, 7.30pm - Historic Buildings talk "And Shall These Dumb Stones Speak?" A look at X-engraved stones in Guernsey – by John McCormack, Frossard Theatre, Candie.

Saturday 10th November, 7.30pm – Historic Buildings Talk – "Commemoration in and around Churches" by Richard Hocart. Frossard Theatre, Candie.

Saturday 24th November, 7.30pm - Historic Buildings talk "The Listing of Houses, Justification, Criteria and Process" by Elaine Jordan, Frossard Theatre, Candie.

Saturday 8th December, 7.30pm – Historic Buildings talk "The sixteenth-century French defences of Sark" by John McCormack and Dr. Richard Axton, Frossard Theatre, Candie. Contact John McCormack

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 chrismourant101@yahoo.co.uk

LA SOCIÉTÉ CONSERVATION HERD

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

Beach Cleaning in Guernsey

Why not join a group clean? These are organised each month by La Société Guernesaise and Guernsey Recycling Group. Equipment and hot drinks will be provided. For more information email marinebiology@societe.org.gg or call Guernsey Recycling Group on 247786.

Date	Location	Meet Time
03/03/18	Portelet– Meet at kiosk	1100
31/03/18	Belle Greve– Meet in coastal car park opposite Channel TV	1330
28/04/18	Vazon– Meet outside Surf School	1130
26/05/18	Pembroke– Meet in car park by the Beach House	1030
30/06/18	Cobo– Meet at kiosk	1400
28/07/18	Bordeaux– Meet at Woodies car park	1330
18/08/18	Rousse– Meet at kiosk	1700
15/09/18	Grandes Rocques– Meet at kiosk	1500
16/09/18	L'Enée– Meet in car park opposite hotel	1500
13/10/18	Grand Havre– Meet at Vale Pond kiosk	1500
10/11/18	Chouet– Meet at kiosk	1330
08/12/18	Pezorles– Meet at Portelet kiosk	1100


Take 3 for the Sea

Not able to take part in an organised clean? Don't worry, you can still do your bit! Every time you visit a beach, just take 3 items of litter away with you. If you want to share what you've collected, take a picture and upload it to Instagram or Facebook using the hashtag #Take3forthesea and tag the location.

Help and Advice

If you find any items too large or heavy to move, make a note of the location and call Land Management Services on 234567, who will arrange for it to be collected.

If you find any containers or drums that you think could contain hazardous substances, please advise the Guernsey Fire & Rescue Service on 724491.

 **LA SOCIÉTÉ GUERNESAISE**  **GRG**  States of Guernsey
Agriculture, Culture, Youth and
Land Management Services

A big *thank you* for helping to protect our beautiful natural environment!

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

ORNITHOLOGY

May was the last month when there were regular sightings of 'our' Royal Tern. It was recorded on the south coast of England in Hampshire and Dorset the following month. Subsequently, there was one reported sighting back here in Guernsey, but as there have been no more it would seem that it has, finally, left our shores.

To make up for the apparent departure of the Royal Tern, there was a first recorded sighting for the Channel Islands of a Semipalmated Sandpiper on 17th May at the Colin Best Nature Reserve. It is so-called because it has partial webbing on its feet, unlike most waders.

Summer, particularly July and August is a quiet time for birdwatchers on Guernsey. The Spring migrants have long gone and breeding birds are hard to find in the trees and bushes that are thick with foliage. Many birds sing far less than in the spring as they have found a mate and are busy feeding late broods. The fine, dry Summer has been beneficial to birds that breed on the island as they have been able to hunt or forage without being impeded by poor weather. Good numbers of young birds have been noted.

This is the time of year when sea-watching starts in earnest. Sitting on a small stool, peering through a spotting scope, usually at moving dots that are closer to Alderney than Guernsey; this pastime is not everybody's cup of tea. We are lucky to have a few experts on the island whose knowledge and ability to identify these birds is humbling. It is unusual to see ocean-going birds close enough to shore to identify with binoculars, but the regular recording that has gone on over the past few years has made a significant contribution to understanding the seasonal movements of birds such as Shearwaters, Skuas and Petrels. As with all recording, it is not the one-off sighting of an unusual or rare bird, but the building up of sightings year on year that is important.

Some section members had good sightings on the Pelagic Trip on 9th September: Fulmar (40), Manx Shearwater (1), Balearic Shearwater (60), Wilson's Petrel (1), Storm Petrel (50), Gannet (250), Great Skua (8), Little Gull (1), Lesser Black-backed Gull (20), Great Black-backed Gull (5), Sandwich Tern (2) and Common Tern (1).

A Spotted Crake was seen at the Claire Mare on 29th July which was the first recorded sighting since 2011. This was followed a few days later on 2nd August by a Little Stint.

Autumn has now arrived and from late August, migrant birds can be seen on the move again, as many leave their breeding grounds in the north and head south. Returning Wheatears were seen from 21st August and are always a welcome sight. Cattle Egrets, as many as five at Rue à Fresnes, have been sighted. Sightings of this species appear to be on the increase. Spotted Flycatchers have been seen at several sites across the island and there have been a few sightings of the more unusual Pied Flycatcher. Kingfishers were back in the island by the end of the month.

September has been a busy month with sightings of Wryneck, Honey Buzzard and Hen Harrier. There were also several sightings of Tree Pipit.

ORNITHOLOGY (CONT)

Identification of Gulls can be very difficult, particularly with juveniles, so the first Bailiwick record on 18th September (second for the Channel Islands) of a first year Caspian Gull at Perelle was a spectacular find by Mark Guppy.



Caspian Gull. Photo courtesy of Anthony Loaring.

Julie Davis

Nerine Festival



in

Candie

Upper Greenhouse.

Saturday 6th October 14.30-16.00

Sun 7th to Sat 20th 10.00-16.00

Nerines for sale.

Free Entry

SMALL MAMMAL SURVEY 2018

This summer, two students from Imperial College London completed a study on the ecology and evolution of the small mammals of Guernsey. Guernsey has three small mammals in a combination which is found nowhere else in the world; the Greater White-Toothed Shrew, Wood Mouse and Guernsey Vole. The Guernsey vole in particular is interesting as it is a subspecies of the Common vole, which in turn is only found on Orkney and Guernsey in the British Isles. Over seven weeks, live trapping took place across the island to gather information on the distribution and morphology of the small mammal populations.

Guernsey's small mammals have been isolated from the continent for thousands of years, and so may have evolved differences from mainland populations in their size and appearance. For example, the wood mouse of the island has brighter yellowish fur on its sides and underside which is not found in British or French populations. This study was also able to test for size differences between Guernsey populations and those found in Britain and the continent. Guernsey voles are bigger than those found on Continental Europe, though smaller than those from the other island population on Orkney. Similarly, the wood mice of Guernsey are also bigger than either British or continental populations. Rodents on islands often get bigger as there are fewer predators, and the larger individuals can gather more food. However, the shrews are the same size as those from Europe, probably because larger individuals require too much food due to high metabolic rates.

It is also important to monitor populations to provide baseline information, so that in the future any declines can be identified. Though small mammals seem abundant, they are still sensitive to habitat changes that could cause population decreases, which would have knock on effects for their predators such as Barn Owls. Using the locations of the captures, it was possible to calculate a population estimate and habitat preferences for each of the small mammals. There are an estimated 150,510 voles on the island, found mostly in dry grassland. Wood mice are mostly found in broadleaved woodland and dry grassland, and there are an estimated 206,829 on Guernsey. Finally, shrews also prefer dry grassland, and this study estimates a population size of 27,295, though this is likely an underestimation.

This study will hopefully be the beginning of future monitoring which will aim to identify population trends and establish whether the Guernsey populations are subspecies. So look out for more information in the future.

Eleanor Scopes



"A Guernsey Vole" – photo courtesy of Eleanor Scopes.

THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP SPONSORS FOR 2018

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Please note that your 2019 Subscription will be due on January 1st 2019.

Subscription rates remain unchanged for 2019 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 will be taken in January 2019. For those members currently paying by cash, cheque or Paypal (via the Website) we enclose a Direct Debit form for 2019 and we should be grateful if you would kindly complete the form and return to us in the enclosed envelope before 15th November 2018. This will give us time to process the form before January 2019 and simplify our administration.

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

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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,
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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.

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In addition to the Section Secretaries being Council members, other Council members are: Jamie Hooper (co-opted), Jane Gilmour (co-opted), Helen Litchfield, Roy Bisson, Vanessa Crispini-Adams, Adrian Nicholle, Rodney Collenette, and Alex Herschel.

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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