



## La Société

For nature, history and science in Guernsey



*Aerial view of the Vale Pond, part of the Colin McCathie Nature Reserve taken (with permission) by Mike Stratford during the filming of the World Aid Walk in May 2022.*

In a recent discussion with friends it became clear that humanity is just becoming aware that there is not a square millimetre on earth that is without some form of life present and now that we can observe, or at least detect its presence, we are becoming increasingly fascinated. And so it is with La Société - birds, bats, insects, fish, plants - members continue to take interest and be fascinated by life.

One of the greatest accolades for La Société has been its rigorous, even meticulous, creation of records since its foundation. A fount of information that is proving vital as we all strive to find a way to prevent Earth from environmental destruction. Our 'Guernsey Biological Records Centre' is an island asset that we can be proud of. It is about to be taken over by the 'Nature Commission' where it will be assured of sufficient funding and continued recognition. La Société will however keep an eye on its future and continue to provide the vital and continuous flow of data it processes and preserves.

Besides watching and recording life, La Société has always been active with delving into the past and one of its greatest contributions has been in assisting islanders to trace their family history. Assisted by the Priaulx Library, this section is constantly bringing family backgrounds and origins to life, generating many proud moments for local families.

But family history is not only about the people but also about where they lived and worked. The history of their homes is proving to be increasingly of interest to building owners intent on restoring ancient cottages, farms and outbuildings. The Historic Building Section frequently visits these sites, learning the how and why of construction and design throughout the ages. For in Guernsey, where land has always been at a premium, buildings have been constantly worked over and over again. Members of the Section will be off once more to Northern France in June to study the many influences that swiftly appeared in Guernsey construction. Space being so available there that designs of different eras stand next to each other rather than on top!

Increasingly the knowledge and skills of the members of our Société are being recognised by islanders and officials. Sections, and particularly our professional arm: 'Environment Guernsey' are being asked for advice and even becoming recognised as the source of information. This has particularly grown with the States Planning Service which frequently asks development applicants to seek advice from La Société.

This brings me to our campaigns. **Land use** - there is an increasing trend among property owners, particularly new land owners to wish to extend the 'Curtilage' of their properties. This helps garden development, but more dangerously can lead to future land division and further building. Inevitably destroying valuable agricultural land. As an Island Guernsey should be making a greater effort to becoming self-sufficient in food production. Without that effort the value of the land is diminished. We are asked and we frequently make the point to Planning against curtilage extension.

**Hedge and bank cutting.** Nothing is more irritating than the wild extension of brambles and tree branches across country lanes, but the present habit of many contractors of 'thrashing' hedges and banks with flail cutters is so destructive it has to be stopped. La Société has long proffered this view, but now we must actively campaign. Birds nests and habitats are being destroyed long before chicks have fledged and left the nest. Rare ferns and plants, that only exist in Guernsey's unique high banks are being 'strimmed' down to destruction. We will make every effort to teach islanders, contractors, and administrators as to the importance of careful treatment for these natural areas. Please take care of your own banks and hedges.

I deem it a great honour to be elected as Président of La Société and will do everything in my power to preserve its assets and develop its contribution to our Island.

**Roy Bisson. Président.**

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## AGM 2022

Please note that the postponed 2022 AGM due to be held on Wednesday 23rd March has been moved to Tuesday 9th August at 7.30pm in the Frossard Theatre, Candie. A full agenda together with the minutes of the 2021 AGM and a copy of the 2021 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 Wednesday 20th July 2022. The talk after the AGM is yet to be confirmed.

If anyone is interested in being an Ordinary Member there are 4 vacancies. You are welcome to contact our Secretary Kate Lee email [secretary@societe.org.gg](mailto:secretary@societe.org.gg) for further information (frequency of meetings, etc.). You would need to provide a short resumé and a proposer and seconder.

## 2020 Transactions

The 2020 Transactions (photo of Forest Church on the front cover) are now available for collection from Candie on a Tuesday/Thursday or Saturday morning between 10am and 11.30am. Parking is easier on a Saturday.

**If you no longer require a hard copy of the Transactions or would prefer to download them from the website kindly email [secretary@societe.org.gg](mailto:secretary@societe.org.gg). If you are unable to get to Candie to collect your copy please advise us.**

## Mail Chimp

You might have noticed that we have recently switched advertising talks and events over to Mail Chimp. This system gives Members the chance to unsubscribe from receiving details of our events. We would then only contact you by email to inform you when the Transactions are available for collection, details of the AGM and on any subscription matters. If you have any questions about Mail Chimp please contact the Secretary.

## Jethou Trip 2022 – Saturday June 11th



*Jethou island. - Photo courtesy of Julie Davis.*

We are offering guided walks on Jethou on the morning of Saturday 11th June. Each trip will last two hours and forty minutes in total, consisting of two hours on Jethou plus travel time of 20 minutes each way.

Each walk will have two guides from different Société Sections and the group must stay together; you are not permitted to wander separately from the group.

### Kindly note the following:

- The route follows a part coastal and part woodland path with a section of steep steps without a handrail
- The terrain can be demanding and requires agility and sure footedness
- The walk must be completed in the time allocated (2 hours) due to the scheduled boat times
- Stout walking shoes/boots are required
- Bring water, sun cream and any other refreshments and medication you might need
- The only visitor's toilet is near the jetty, there are no facilities on the route
- The trip is not suitable for children
- There are no first aid facilities on the island

### **Please consider the above as a minimum when deciding if this trip is suitable for you**

The cost is £40 plus a booking fee per person with a maximum of 10 people per group plus two guides. Booking through Eventbrite please. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jethou-trip-2022-tickets-347892705447>

### **Saturday 11th June**

**9am** - Ornithology walk with Julie Davis and Chris Mourant

**9.45am** - Botany walk with Anna Cleal and Gareth Coleman

**11.45am** - Archaeology walk Jenny Cataroche and Phil de Jersey

### **Please note that for insurance reasons the trip is for Members only. New Members are welcome to join.**

The boat will depart from the inter island quay, where you get the boat to Sark - kindly arrive 15 minutes before the departure time stated above.

# Section Reports

## Archaeology

The year started out with clearing rubble, WW2 and post-war deposits off the Victorian gun emplacements to the southwest of Fort Richmond. The inner traversing gun ring's pivot pin and two large granite slabs survived. The other two large granite slabs which complete the inner gun platform were found inside the Fort by the current owner. The majority of the outer gun ring survives in the main, however a portion to the south has been demolished for the construction of a German bunker that was never built. The demolition extended to the encircling defence wall and moat. The finds recovered were associated with the German demolition and more modern dumping periods including an unprecedented amount of Shipman's paté jars. A program of further works is likely to continue in the summer.

On the last day of January and the first day of February Lihou priory was treated to a long overdue weed and clean up.

The Junior events consisted of a pottery reconstruction and illustration session, prehistoric pottery making and artefact cleaning in the Société room at Candie Museum and another go at recovering artefacts from Cow Bay in conjunction with looking for crabs and other marine life. It was another sunny day with a good turnout. Prehistoric flint, pottery from the medieval period onwards, glass bottles and interesting bits of metal and wood were collected.



Fort Richmond's southern gun ring. - Photo courtesy of Andy Lane.

In March a return visit to the Sandy Hook dolmen was initiated by the GHA wanting to position a couple of parking places close to the monument, so the previous years trench was extended to the southwest. As before we recovered numerous amounts of flint debitage including a couple of scrapers and other rudimentary tools as well as a small quantity of prehistoric pottery. The trench revealed quite a depth of relatively clean wind blown sand presumably the backfill of the early 20th century excavations sat above more sand which in turn sat above the raised beach. A gully was located running down the centre of the trench in a northeast/southwest alignment, that also contained flint debitage. A piece of charcoal from within the raised beach layer was sent off for carbon dating and came back with a surprising date of c. 600AD. This indicates that the site was not inundated with wind blown sand until after this period.



View of raised beach and gully at Sandy Hook, looking southwest. - Photo courtesy of Phil de Jersey.

A resistivity survey of the sports field behind Les Ozouets Campus was carried out prior to its impending development. Interestingly the lime line markings from many different sporting activities showed up incredibly well, possibly masking any archaeology beneath. A program of trial trenching may be on the cards in May.

**Andrew Lane - Archaeology Section Secretary**

## Astronomy

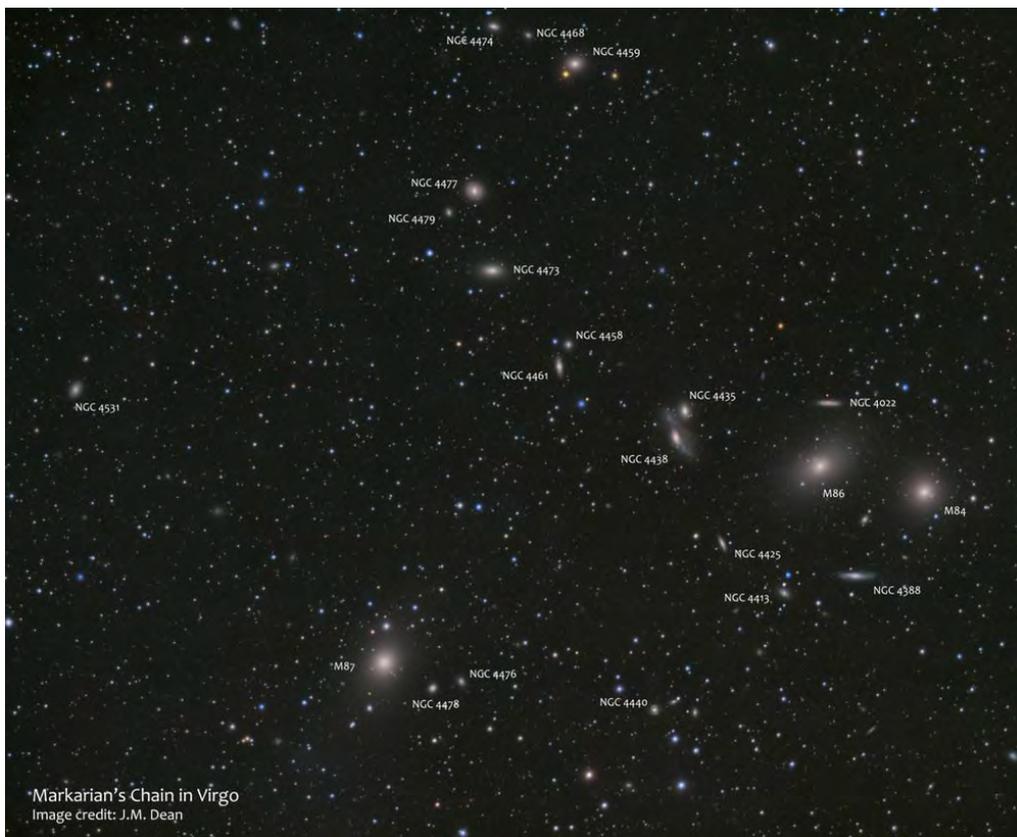
### Markarian's Chain of Galaxies in the Constellation of Virgo

Spring and summer are the best seasons to view many of the prominent galaxies in the night sky. This is particularly so for the galaxies that make up the Virgo Cluster, one of the nearest galaxy clusters to us, at a mere 50 million light-years distance. It contains about 2,000 member galaxies and has a noticeable gravitational influence on our own Local Group of Galaxies.

The image shows part of the Virgo Cluster, centred around a distinct string of galaxies called Markarian's Chain. It was named after Armenian astrophysicist Benjamin Markarian, who discovered that many of the string of bright galaxies share a common motion through space. The chain is anchored by prominent lenticular galaxies, Messier 84 and 86, while near the centre sit a pair of interacting galaxies NGC 4438 and 4435, known as Markarian's Eyes. The supergiant galaxy, Messier 87, home to several trillion stars, can be seen towards the bottom centre.

The field of view of the image is  $2^{\circ}41' \times 2^{\circ}11'$ , or approximately 5 x 4 full moons. The remainder of the image might appear to comprise stars, but most of the points of light are galaxies, many of which are elliptical. A plate solve of the image shows there to be over 550 galaxies!

The image was taken with a monochrome CCD camera cooled to minus  $20^{\circ}\text{C}$  and a 264mm focal length refracting telescope. It comprises 91 x 300-second images with red, green, blue and luminance filters.

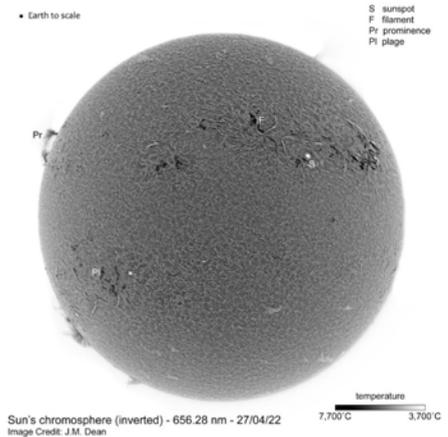
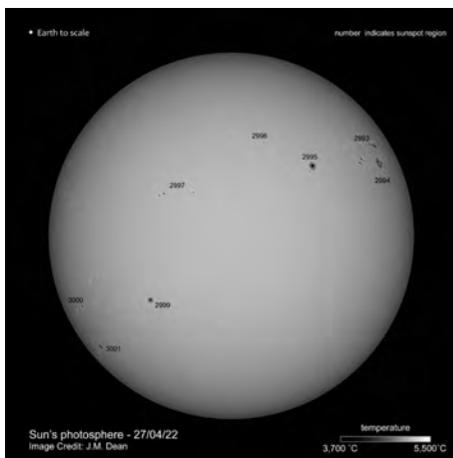


## Solar Activity for 2022

As we progress through solar cycle 25, activity is increasing and sunspots are becoming a permanent feature on the solar disk. On Wednesday 27th April 2022, there were eight active regions visible on the photosphere, which is the surface from which the light escapes. Sunspots are regions of highly concentrated magnetic field strengths, the dark centre being the strongest. The magnetic field traps the plasma and it begins to cool, with a temperature at the centre of about  $3,700^{\circ}\text{C}$  while the surrounding region is about  $5,500^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Typically sunspots can last for several days to a week, but the larger ones can persist for several weeks. The brightest areas, looking like a crazed pattern and particularly noticeable on the limb regions, are solar faculae. The “grainy” texture of the photosphere is solar granulation, which is the tops of convection cells where hot fluid rises up from the interior, spreads out across the surface, cools and then sinks inward along the dark lanes. Solar granules are relatively small at about 1,000km in diameter.

The chromosphere is an irregular layer above the photosphere, where the temperature rises from about 3,700°C at the bottom to 7,700°C at the top. At these high temperatures, the hydrogen in the Sun emits a deep-red light at 656.28nm which is the Balmer series hydrogen-alpha (Ha) emission line. The image of the chromosphere taken on the 27th of April was taken with a solar scope which has an etalon tuned to the Ha peak. The image has been inverted to highlight certain features, the sunspot centres (S) are white, cooler regions. Prominences (Pr) can be seen on the limb of the solar disk. These are dense clouds of material suspended above the surface of the Sun by loops of magnetic field, anchored to the Sun by a positive and negative end. They can form in a matter of minutes or hours and persist for days to weeks. The typical size of a prominence is about 100,000 km or about 10 times the diameter of Earth. This is better demonstrated by solar filaments (F), which are prominences seen face-on against the solar disk. Solar plages (the French word for beach) are hotter regions that are associated with sunspots. In non-inverted light plages would be the brightest regions, and similar to their faculae counterpart in the photosphere, they are associated with highly concentrated magnetic fields.

The photosphere image was taken with an 80mm diameter refracting telescope fitted with a Herschel wedge and the chromosphere image with a 60mm Lunt Ha solar scope. Both were taken with a ZWO ASI178 monochrome planetary imaging camera, collecting thousands of short video exposures which were sub-sampled for quality and stacked into a final image.



## Open Evenings

We will be holding a series of four open evenings, on Friday the 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd of September. They will comprise a talk and viewing through the Section's telescopes. Further details will be released nearer to the time and on our website: <https://www.astronomy.org.gg/events>

**Jean Dean – Astronomy Section Secretary**

## Bat Section

### The work continues for the summer.

We have two members of the section on the Bat Catching course provided by Jersey bat group. This will involve teaching how to erect a mist nest, catching and handling bats, identifying them and studying the Ecology. It's a big thing catching wild animals. I remember gaining my small mammal handling certificate and getting bitten by angry wood mice and voles. So good luck to our aspiring bat catchers.

We also have summer roost surveys to organise. This involves standing outside a known bat roost and trying to count the bats as they emerge from their roosts. It involves having sharp eyes and a good span of attention. We are continuing on with our summer public bat walks at Sausmarez Park and we had an excellent turnout of 50 members of the public who were entertained by the antics of the bats over the park pond.

We are hoping to work with the LSG Education team and provide a bat day on Saturday 27th August which is International Bat Night. We hope to have a bat walk and some bat lectures... so keep an eye on our website calendar [www.societe.org.gg](http://www.societe.org.gg)

Guernsey is an important place for bats (even with all the pollution and development we have here) There is a steady encroachment of trees on the island and the vast array of old roofs and buildings which provide plenty of roosts for bats. One important habitat for bats that is very threatened is damp grassland. There is now only one percent of this habitat left on the island, but bats are clever and adaptable and we look forward to finding more interesting results from the 2022 Bailiwick Bat Survey.



Local bat – Photo courtesy of Hannah Brehaut.

We would like to ask members to be aware of the biodiversity on their land and buildings. This involves regular inspections of your building and garden. We had a recent email from a member of the public who noted a bat roosting in her shed. The little fellow was quite happy and probably being a solitary male was camping in the shed for a few days before moving on. Be aware if you develop property or lock in wild animals they could be harmed and it's important to know what is going on ecologically on your property.

The summer is here and that means bat season. We would like members to let a bit of their garden lawns to go a wild over the summer to provide insects which are bat food and please remember not to leave external lighting on all night as bats are light phobic. Also please be aware that there are a lot of rats on the island at the moment post covid and rats are bad for our native wildlife so managing rats on your property is important for the welfare of birds, bats and invertebrates.

### Charles Hurford – Bat Section Secretary

Contact Charles Hurford email [bats@societe.org.gg](mailto:bats@societe.org.gg) for details of the next Bat Section meeting at Candie. New members are always welcome.

**If you find an injured bat please contact the GSPCA direct on 257261 or 07781 104082 (24 hour emergency). Any bat queries can be sent by e-mail to [charleshurford@hotmail.com](mailto:charleshurford@hotmail.com)**

## Botany

The Botany group has been more fortunate with the weather so far this year and we have been pleased to welcome new members at most of our meetings.

February saw us meet at St. Saviours and visit the churchyard and the nearby reserves at Sous L'Eglise. Highlights of the visit included a beautifully scented patch of Sweet Violets (*Viola odorata*), Opposite-leaved Golden-Saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*) and Krauss's Clubmoss (*Selaginella kraussiana*). We also spent some time examining Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) for the small red female flowers which are very easily overlooked.

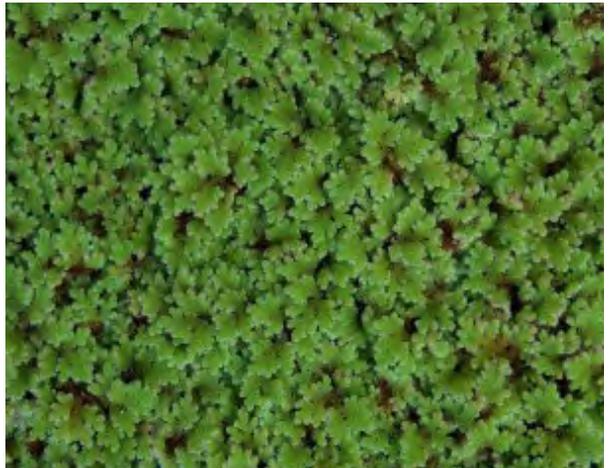


Sweet Violets (*Viola odorata*) – Photo courtesy of Anne Woodington.

Botany members also assisted with Junior walks at Petit Bôt and Icart point during March.

Grow Guernsey Natives (GNN) was launched on 5th April by Fred Rumsey formerly the British plant expert at the Natural History Museum and a past President of the British Pteridological Society. The Botany section is pleased to be part of this project led by Raymond Evison of Guernsey Clematis Nursery with the help of Chris Chatfield and Grow Ltd. The Grow Guernsey Natives initiative hopes to help preserve some of our Island's native and naturalised plants by encouraging gardeners to plant them in their gardens. So far sales have been excellent. There are a few plants left and more will be available in the autumn.

In a change to our original planning we visited L'Eree in March instead of Fort Doyle. A pre-visit walk at Fort Doyle had revealed very few plants probably due to the preceding weather conditions. The more sheltered lanes around L'Eree enabled a far more interesting walk even though the weather on the day was still a bit cold and windy. The presence of Water Fern (*Azolla filiculoides*) in one of the water troughs sparked a discussion about the problems this invasive non-native plant can cause in waterways, as well as issues surrounding Sour Fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*).



Water Fern (*Azolla filiculoides*) – showing the green coloured foliage when it grows in the shade – Photo courtesy of Anne Woodington.

In the evening Fred Rumsey gave a talk to Société members at the Frossard Theatre on Guernsey's unique hybrid ferns and other special plants. It was an interesting talk with Dr Rumsey's enthusiasm for his subject obvious.

Whilst Dr Rumsey was on Guernsey he led walks for Botany Section members. Sadly the weather was not always the best which led to a number of last minute changes. The walks focused on searching for Guernsey's hybrid ferns the Guernsey Spleenwort (*Asplenium x sarniense*), the Guernsey fern (*Asplenium x microdon*) and Land Quillworts (*Isoetes histrix*) as these are a particular interest of Dr Rumsey but he kindly answered any plant identification questions the attendees put to him. A group of six botanists from Jersey also joined us led by Anne Haden from Société Jersiaise. Anne is very knowledgeable so we had the benefit of two experienced Botanists. It was a very intensive week but those Botany members who were able to attend feel they have gained a lot of information which hopefully will be put to good use.

Dr Rumsey identified a number of the *A. x sarniense* as well as *I. histrix* sites we were not aware of. Gareth Coleman is currently making a list of the identified *A. x sarniense* with locations so the Botany section can return to study these hybrid ferns.

The botany meeting in April saw us revisit Icart point and the route taken by the Junior section walk just a fortnight earlier. Although most of the plants seen on the two walks were very similar the April walk saw slightly more English Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) in flower and slightly fewer Daffodils (*Narcissus*). We also saw a number of large beetles possibly Oil Beetles crossing the path. The woodland in the valley had large swathes of Opposite-leaved Golden-Saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*) which has lovely bright yellow-green foliage at this time of year.



Opposite-leaved Golden-Saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*) – Photo courtesy of Anne Woodington.

**Anna Cleal - Botany Section Secretary and Pat Turner - Botany Section Member**

## **Botany Walks – please meet at 1.45pm for a 2.00pm start.**

**Saturday 4th June** - Les Vicheries Orchid Fields (*Perry's Guide ref 22 B3*) – this will not be a guided walk but an opportunity to download a spotters sheet and do your own walk in the area or elsewhere.

**Saturday 2nd July** - Fort Hommet to look at coastal plants (*Perry's Guide reference 13 F1*)

**Saturday 6th August** – Bordeaux walk to Grande Pré to look at Reserve plants (*Perry's Guide reference 7 H5*)

**Saturday 3rd September** - Forest Church Green Lanes to look for Ferns and Hedgerows (*Perry's Guide reference 26 D3*)

**Saturday 1st October** - Torteval Church and lanes to look at Country Lane plants (*Perry's Guide reference 26 D3*)

For further enquiries about the monthly Botany walks please contact Anna Cleal by email: [botany@societe.org.gg](mailto:botany@societe.org.gg)

Join the Botany Section's Facebook page to find details of the monthly walks and recent plant photos. Once you have joined you can add your own images.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1310943042297921/>

## Entomology

### Odonata survey 2022.

In 2022 the Entomology Section has undertaken to conduct an “audit” of Guernsey’s Dragonflies and Damselflies [Odonata]. This has been prompted by a combination of factors including the continued drainage of sensitive sites and a lack of maintenance of others which leads to “pond progression”, a process whereby rotting vegetation increases the soil level eventually resulting in the loss of these sites. In recent times 11 species of Odonata, previously known to be present, have not been recorded. However all is not lost and if the habitat is available the island could be recolonised. In addition, with increasing temperatures forecast, new species could reach our shores. It is important to not only identify the insects themselves but identify areas that are suitable for restoration. LSG have started this process at Le Grand Pre NR where three canals have been re-excavated. Further work is planned at Pre d’Enfer NR and the Silbe NR. This group of insects are particularly prone to herbicide, pesticide and nitrate pollution. With the demise of the greenhouse industry in the past few decades we had hoped that our streams were getting cleaner, however with Guernsey Water recently announcing that levels of pollution have increased significantly that, alas, is not the case. We hope that campaigns such as that launched by the Pollinator Project will result in the reduction of indiscriminate use of chemicals.

ACLMS and Guernsey Water have been very helpful in offering suggestions of where to search and arranging access to some of these sites. We also hope to survey areas that are privately owned, some of which have been good locations in the past. If you have a pond that you would like to be surveyed then please contact us at [Entomology@societe.org.gg](mailto:Entomology@societe.org.gg). It is hoped that by the end of the year we will have gathered enough evidence to suggest where improvements are necessary and, in some cases, make suggestions where new habitat could be created. It should also be remembered that there is a huge amount of other insect life in a pond; Pond Skaters, Water Beetles, Caddis Fly larvae plus lots more. If fish are present then areas that insects can retreat to are desirable. Even the smallest garden pond can be a haven for Odonata. Entomology would be delighted to receive details of your sightings, and if you have photographs of species you are unable to identify, then send them to the above email address and we will ID them for you.



Emperor Dragonfly (*Anax imperator*)



Blu-tailed Damselfly (*Ischnura elegans*)

**Trevor Bourgaize - Entomological Section Secretary**

## Family History

Family History Section had to postpone its AGM this year due to covid so all FHS members received the reports and accounts by email and post, we will get proposals at our next meeting.

We are still working behind the scenes, Holy Trinity Baptisms are now available in the Family History Room at the Russels, Les Cotils and also at the Priaux Library. The Civil Births from 1922 to 1933 are being typed up still and you will be notified when they are available. I am now working on St Sampsons Parish Church Cemetery, concentrating on the area that fell into the quarry all those years ago, I will tell you more on this as time goes on. We are still working on outdoor events for June and July and you will be notified by email with regard to these.

**Maria van der Tang – Family History Section Secretary**



Last year attendees received a Halloween treat made by Maria –  
Photo courtesy of Maria van der Tang.

## Events

**Saturday 22nd October 2022** Tennerfest/Octoberfest Lunch at La Barberie Hotel. *(FHS Members only)*

**Saturday 26th November 2022** - Trevor Cooper has confirmed he will make another presentation at our AGM. More details to follow.

The Family History Room at the Russels, Les Cotils is open on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month between 10am and noon.

**Any general Family History queries should be addressed to The Family History Section, PO Box 314, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 3TG. Alternatively email Maria van der Tang [researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk)**

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## Historic Buildings

### Events

**Saturday 9th July** - 2.30pm - a visit to the Vale Castle led by Callum Tostevin-Hall

**Saturday 13th August** - Second Churches Study Day – examining in detail the fabric of the Castel, St Pierre- du-Bois and the Forest churches with a picnic lunch at St Peter’s Terrace. Details to be confirmed.

**Saturday 8th October** - an evening to put together material gathered at the Churches Study Day – 7.30pm Section Room at Candie

New members are always very welcome to attend, but should contact John McCormack (tel. 720303; e-mail [mrjam@cwgsy.net](mailto:mrjam@cwgsy.net)) beforehand in case of alterations or final instructions. Those attending regularly should kindly ensure that they are already members of La Société.

## Ornithology

### Events & Outings

The Ornithology Section holds regular monthly outdoor meetings, except during the quieter summer months. We cover a range of habitats and take in seasonal birding highlights with guided walks during the week and at weekends so all members are able to attend at least some. Chris Mourant continues to help and led a recent walk at Pleinmont. La Société's Vice-President, Trevor Bourgaize, also comes on many of the outings. His keen eye and extensive knowledge are always appreciated.

Over the late winter and spring there was a chilly walk at Bordeaux, a wander around the western arm of the Reservoir and two walks around Pleinmont. The Pleinmont walks in particular were well-attended. It has been encouraging to welcome several new members.

The Reservoir walk was repeated on 14th April when we hosted the Juniors. It was well attended. Sarah Allez had prepared some spotter sheets and Becky Ogier arrived with a box of binoculars which were all put to good use. Lesley Bourgaize from Nature Guernsey also came to help out. It was a very enjoyable morning with some good sightings as the trees were only just coming into leaf.

#### There was an indoor meeting in April

- **Roadside hedge cutting:** in June this is a legal requirement but it is detrimental to some nesting birds. The section will help Communications Officer, Pierre Ehmann, to create a poster promoting good practice that minimises disturbance. This will be publicised on social media and, with Council's agreement, sent to the parish Constables.
- **Barn Owls:** two boxes to replace the dilapidated ones at Rue des Bergers and the Vale Pond have been bought from Grow Ltd. and will be put up soon. The Section agreed to buy three trail cams. A thermal imaging monocular has also been purchased with funds from money raised in memory of David Le Conte. This means that boxes can be monitored with minimal disturbance. Fieldwork will get underway in May and a Survey Report will be published by early 2023. (Update – the trail cams arrived at the end of April and by early May one was in use in the forest, monitoring an owl box where there has been a lot of noise. The other two will be in use very shortly.)
- **Lihou:** the footpath is roped in spring every year. This encourages people to stay away from breeding bird areas. The seaward side of the path was completed in March and it is planned to rope the landward side in May.



One of the Pleinmont walks. Photo by Julie Davis

## Some Interesting Sightings

Two **White Storks** were seen around the island on 10th and 11th April. (WRT) They were ringed, so there is every chance that they are from the Knepp Estate in West Sussex. It is interesting to note that two were also seen in Guernsey last year.

With the Knepp Estate White Storks doing well, might this become a regular spring sighting as they migrate home?

A **Hen Harrier** has overwintered in the island and was still present in April. (WRT, DJC)



White Stork by Mark Guppy



Hen Harrier by Cindy Carré

**Little Ringed Plover** (JH) was seen on the salt marsh at the Colin Best Nature Reserve. A single one on 22nd March was later joined by another two. They remained for a week. Unusually, one was seen at Les Tielles (DJC) on 31st March. Andy's photograph clearly shows the yellow eye ring which is a key identification feature of this regular seasonal visitor to the reserve.



Little Ringed Plover by Andy Marquis

There was a **Spotted Redshank** at the Colin Best Nature Reserve on 28th March (MAG, APL). This elegant wader is a very uncommon visitor, the last one was seen in 2019. This one stayed two days before heading off north to its breeding grounds.

**Woodcock** are an under-recorded species, one was seen flying across La Rue du Passeur on 9th March. (MAG)

The first **Cuckoo** was heard at Vaux de Monel on 24th April. (DJC)



Alpine Swift by Dave Carré

**Alpine Swift** is a very rare visitor and this bird had some members scouring the skies between Mont Herault and Perelle between 26th and 28th March. (DJC, JH, MH) Dave's excellent photo shows the pure white belly patch and the dark necklace. The white throat can just be seen.



Hoopoe by Wayne Turner

A **Hoopoe** was present at Pleinmont at the end of March. (JH, MH)

The first Swallows were seen on 30th March, but they have been very few and far between. There have been many days over the spring when the winds have been north-easterly. Migration has been slow and numbers of some species low as many birds fly over the islands in clear weather.

A **Water Pipit** noted in the last newsletter has overwintered at Vazon and was still present in February and March. (DS, JH)

**Coal Tits** were present at Le Guet (MPL) and in King's Road (MC)



Coal Tit by Mike Cunningham

The last **Chough** seen in Guernsey was probably back in 1990, so there was great excitement when one was seen at La Claire Mare on 25th March. (CB) Two were seen the following day at Pleinmont. They had been ringed so we were able to ascertain that they were both females from Jersey. There has been a re-introduction program running there for several years ([Home - Birds on the edge](#) | [Birds on the edge | Saving coastal birds and habitats from extinction](#)). These two individuals have since done several away-day trips to the Pleinmont area so many people have been able to enjoy their aerial acrobatics. They are attracted



Chough by Mike Cunningham

to short coastal turf, particularly if it has been grazed organically as they turn over cow pats searching for grubs and insects. Choughs were resident in Guernsey many years ago. Today, while we hope the Jersey birds will continue to island-hop, there may not be enough suitable habitat here to induce them to stay for long.



Photo by Julie Davis

Trevor Bourgaize had a ringing first at the beginning of May with a Nightingale. These are rare vagrants. One of the highlights of a ringing week in Sark in April was when he heard one at the Hog's Back, but to have one in the net at a regular ringing site was something else. I was lucky enough to see it. This individual had probably overshot its breeding area in France. They are unobtrusive birds, so are quite possibly under-recorded. The only other Guernsey record since 2015 was at Pleinmont in April last year when one was observed by Wayne Turner.

#### Observers

DJC – Dave Carre  
 MC – Mike Cunningham  
 MAG – Mark Guppy  
 JH – Jamie Hooper  
 MH – Michelle Hooper  
 MPL – Mark Lawlor  
 APL – Anthony Loaring  
 DS – Dave Spicer  
 WRT – Wayne Turner

## Forthcoming Events

**Tuesday 14th June 17.30 - 19.30, and Saturday 18th June 14.00 - 16.00** Two boat trips around Herm, an early evening trip mid-week and an afternoon trip on the Sunday. Numbers are limited to 12 per trip. Details and booking information will be circulated nearer the time. Please email me at [julied1485@outlook.com](mailto:julied1485@outlook.com) if you would like to book a place. Cost will be around £25 per person, depending on how many people come.

**Friday 19th August 19.00 - 21.30 Longfrie Inn and St Peter's lanes** Supper at the Longfrie followed by Owl Walk. Medium, the walk is along lanes but there are some steep hills. Sunset is at 20.19 so part of the walk will be in darkness, although it will just be past full moon. A torch is recommended.

**Friday 9th September 17.00 - 19.00 Shingle Bank and La Claire Mare** A late afternoon walk on a rising tide should give good opportunities to see gulls and waders. We will spend time in the hides at La Claire Mare in the evening light. Followed by supper at Le Fleur du Jardin. Easy.

**Monday 19th September and Saturday 24th September 08.30 - 10.30 Pleinmont** Starting at the Scramble Track, these walks will be similar to the ones in April with an excellent chance of seeing migrants on their way south. Medium, steps and uneven paths on the cliffs.

**Tuesday 4th October 09.30 - 11.00 Jerbourg** Swallows and House Martin gather here in their hundreds before flying across to Jersey and the continent. Easy for those who would like to go a short distance and have excellent views of Swallow and House Martin. The full walk is medium, steps and uneven paths on the cliffs. Followed by coffee at Hotel Jerbourg.

**Julie Davis - Ornithology Section Secretary**

## Nature Guernsey

Nature Guernsey, made up of the combined Natural History Sections of La Société, has once again organised a series of family friendly events for 2022.

The first event was a bird ringing demonstration by Trevor Bourgaize, of the Channel Island Bird Ringing Scheme [CIBRS], assisted by Julie Davis, Ornithology Section Secretary, and Charlotte Burgoine, who are both trainee ringers.

Although planned for the Monday of February half term, high winds meant the event was postponed until the Wednesday. The ringers were based at La Société's Grand Pré Nature Reserve and nets were erected on this reserve and at La Marette Orchard, which is nearby. During the day twenty-nine species of bird were recorded and of these, seven species were ringed, including this Wren.

The highlight however, was a Fieldfare which was ringed in the afternoon. It had been feeding on the windfalls in the orchard before continuing its journey north.

Adults and children alike were not only fascinated to see birds at such close range, but also to watch the birds being ringed, and learn how data such as weight and wing length is collected and recorded. This helps to provide a better understanding of populations and distributions and how climate change and land use is affecting different species.

The second event, which took place on Sunday March 20th, and was a Rockpool Ramble at Belle Grève Bay. This bay is particularly important because of the large area of sheltered reefs and sandy areas that are exposed at low tide. It is home to a huge diversity of shore-life and is an important area for eelgrass and maerl. Beach visits are always popular and it was wonderful to see over 50 adults and children exploring this environment and finding a range of creatures including seven species of crab and three species of fish, as well as anemones, starfish and sea slugs.



Wren, Britain's commonest bird, and almost certainly a resident – Photo by Lesley Bourgaize.



Fieldfare – Photo courtesy of Rod Ferbrache.



In Guernsey this is known as a Chancre but is also referred to as an Edible or Brown Crab  
 – Photo courtesy of Julie Davis.

This very successful event was quickly followed by another sea shore visit on April 2nd, this time in partnership with the Archaeology Section. We met at Cow Bay, below Castle Cornet to search for crabs and crocks along with about 60 members of the public! As this area has been Guernsey's main hub for thousands of years it is a fascinating area to explore. A pre historic axe head that could be 5000 years old, was probably the most exciting archaeological find, and certainly surprised the young man who spotted it, but other pieces of crock were taken away to be examined by Archaeology section members. Good numbers of crabs were also found along with some more unusual creatures such as squat lobster, brittle star and a five bearded rockling.

Other events are planned for the coming months, including a bug hunt led by members of Entomology Section in May, a bat walk led by members of Bat Section in August and our annual open day based at La Société's fields at Pleinmont later in the same month. More information about all Nature Guernsey events will be sent out nearer the time or check the Nature Guernsey Facebook page for updates.

**Lesley Bourgaize,**  
**Secretary of Nature Guernsey**



This is a Velvet Swimming Crab, so named because its body is coated with short hairs giving it a velvety texture. It is also known as the fighter crab with good reason, so handle with care!  
 – Photo courtesy of Julie Davis.

## Education and Conservation Team

The early spring looked likely to be a difficult period for the Education Team as Covid cases surged locally and schools once again cancelled activities and visitors from outside of school. We decided to 'earn our keep' by taking on some different activities such as a mini bioblitz at a churchyard and a joint event with the Victor Hugo Society, but luckily the lull was relatively short this time and we now have a busy schedule ahead of us for the rest of the spring and the summer as schools and other organisations reschedule postponed events and we repeat the activities we led last year for various groups.

We are enjoying our usual varied programme with schools, attending Eco Day at Elizabeth College, planting trees with La Mare de Carteret High School, teaching Amherst pupils about local shore life, visiting the bluebell wood with Blanchelande and rock pooling with Vauvert. We worked with Youth Commission on a number of activities, including visiting various locations with their Playscheme during the school holidays, as well as organising events for Cubs, Rainbows and other youth groups, plus helping out at the Nature Guernsey events which are always busy and a lot of fun!

The Education Team is currently working on an exciting project which will see us working closely with all the States primary schools from September; we will have more to report on this in coming months.

As Covid cases subsided we resumed our CSR activities with various businesses, surveying and working on reserves, and are currently scheduling more activities for the summer. As always, please get in touch if your company or group are seeking an interesting and engaging volunteer activity – contact Becky at [ecl@societe.org.gg](mailto:ecl@societe.org.gg) for our online brochure.



Setting up our stall for Eco Day at Elizabeth College  
– Photo courtesy of Sharka Lee.



Apax spent their Giving Back day cutting hemlock with us at Les Vicheries  
– Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.

Junior events have been numerous and varied this spring with an exciting programme planned for the rest of the year - do look out for the regular emails detailing the forthcoming activities

**Becky Ogier - Education and Conservation Leader**

## Juniors

We are delighted to report that our 2022 Junior events have got off to a great start and have been well attended. As always, we are extremely grateful to our enthusiastic members who came along and supported these events.

February's junior event was in collaboration with Guernsey Trees for Life where we planted native tree species at Le Guet to help improve biodiversity and increase wildlife in this habitat. Our Juniors planted over 30 trees which they will now be able to watch grow over their lifetimes.



Sarah Allez, Education Officer, with one of the planted native trees at Le Guet – Photo courtesy of Becky Ogier.

We also hosted a second event in February which was joint with our Archaeology Section. Our juniors enjoyed a variety of activities which included reconstructing pottery vessels from sherds and drawing the pot profiles, creating 'prehistoric' type coil pots and some delicate artefact cleaning. The juniors had a brilliant time and were truly immersed in their activities.

At the start of March, we began a series of junior botany walks, kindly led by Raymond Evison OBE and the Botany Section. Our first event took place along Petit Bôt cliffs. Despite the blustery winds, we had a brilliant time with our spotter sheets and loupes looking at the wildflowers along the way. Our second botany event in March started at Icart Point and then we walked along the cliff path to Saints Bay where there was a multiple of flowers in bloom.

In April, the Ornithology Section kindly hosted a bird walk led by Julie Davis, around the Reservoir. We met at the Outdoor Learning Area and walked along the paths and through the lanes spotting birds with our binoculars along the way. We spotted over 15 species including a few migrants which had just arrived in the island for Spring.

Our May event was in collaboration with The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society and involved another wildflower walk. In celebration of both Victor Hugo and botany, Raymond Evison OBE led the walk along the cliffs at Moulin Huet, pointing out the native wildflowers that inspired Victor Hugo's writings. We discussed how our island's cliffs and coves served as inspiration for many of Hugo's works, as well as Pierre-Auguste Renoir. We then finished the event with a picnic in one of Hugo's favourite spots. We are very grateful to the owners of the site for allowing us to recreate Victor Hugo's famous photograph of his picnic on their property.



Victor Hugo and friends having a picnic outside the cottage at the top of Moulin Huet cliffs – Photo courtesy of Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



La Société's Juniors and The Victor Hugo Society in Guernsey recreating Victor Hugo's picnic at the Moulin Huet cottage – Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.

We are looking forward to the rest of our Junior events and hope to see some of you there! The details of our events are sent out to all members of La Société who hold a family membership for whom these activities are free of charge.

If you are interested in joining the mailing list or would like to hear more about our Junior events, please email Sarah at [eca@societe.org.gg](mailto:eca@societe.org.gg)

Sarah Allez – Education Conservation Assistant

## Upcoming Junior events for 2022:

**Wednesday 1st June, 14:00 – 15:30**, a bug hunt at Bordeaux mound led by the Entomology Section.

**Sunday 19th June**, time and location TBC, archaeological dig led by the Archaeology section.

**Saturday 9th July, 14:00 – 16:00**, a botany walk at Pembroke led by the Botany Section and Raymond Evison OBE.

**Saturday 16th July, 14:30 – 16:30**, crab surveying and rock pooling at Portelet Bay.

**Saturday 6th August**, time TBC, an astronomy event at the Observatory led by the Astronomy Section.

**Sunday 25th September, 13:00 – 15:00**, a beach clean and survey - location TBC led by the Education Officers.

**Sunday 16th October**, time TBC, archaeological store tour at Grange House led by the Archaeology Section.

Sarah Allez – Education Conservation Assistant

## Projects

### Conservation Herd

The calves have been weaned off their milk now and are on solid foods including hay, grass and rearer nuts, they are learning how to graze and are looking forward to their trip to the orchid fields later in the year.

Meanwhile the bigger boys have moved their way further up Bunker Hill and are grazing in consultation with the Value Commons Council Environmental plan.



Home sweet home! – Photo courtesy of Dave Bartram.

**Dave Bartram – Conservation Herd Manager**

Tel. 07781 168529

email [conservationherd@societe.org.gg](mailto:conservationherd@societe.org.gg)

## Request from new Member Della Laine

I know I'm a new member (I haven't got to know any other members yet!) but I was wondering if any of the members would be interested in helping me produce a new storybook I'm working on... it's called Patnaoute le Paen-Paen (ladybird the beetle, in guernesiais!). My plan is for it to be a cute local story but also introduce Guernsey French words and information about Guernsey wildlife (especially pollinators) and local wild flowers. I'm in touch with the Guernsey Language commission folk about the guernesiais, but I'd really like someone/s with more experience than me look over it to make sure the nature bits are correct! I'm also torn about how to illustrate it, I bet some of your members have some great photos of local bugs and environments!

If you can help please contact Adelaide (Della) Laine by email [della.laine@yahoo.com](mailto:della.laine@yahoo.com)

# Odonata Survey 2022

## Guernsey's Dragonflies and Damselflies are under threat!



Help us to help them!  
Send sightings and photos to  
[entomology@societe.org.gg](mailto:entomology@societe.org.gg)



# BIRD NESTING SEASON



## *A guide to hedge cutting*

The June cut between 1 and 15 June is required by law. It is also a legal requirement not knowingly to disturb nesting birds.

- Earth banks with native hedging are part of Guernsey's traditional landscape.
- They host many species of plants which give food and shelter to birds, insects and small mammals.
- Together with non-native hedging, they can be used by nesting birds

### LSG recommends

- Check the hedge before cutting.
- Where there are nesting birds, if possible, lightly cut back the surrounding roadside growth by hand.
- Leave the cut of the inside of the hedge until the end of August, to reduce disturbance.
- Leave 100mm or 4 inches of vegetation on a bank. Cutting back to bare earth can cause erosion.



**La Société**

For nature, history and science in Guernsey

Find out more about how LSG supports the island's biodiversity [societe.org.gg/wp](https://www.societe.org.gg/wp)

## Thanks to our Corporate Membership Sponsors for 2022

**Bayswater (Guernsey) Limited**

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**Moore's Hotel**

**Perkins Trustees Limited**

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### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

Would your workplace welcome an easy, fuss-free way to organise CSR days? Would you like an interesting and fun day out with your colleagues? La Société recently introduced an expanded range of corporate offerings for companies seeking a useful and enjoyable way to use their Corporate Social Responsibility hours. These activities include something for everyone, from dolphin surveying to bird hide restoration, and are a terrific team-building exercise - perfect for re-bonding after a difficult start to the year and a great opportunity to try something new together. Should your organisation be looking for volunteer opportunities, please contact Becky Ogier on 725093 or at [ecl@societe.org.gg](mailto:ecl@societe.org.gg) for our e-brochure.

### **Volunteer Vacancies - Section Secretaries**

We are currently looking for Section Secretaries for the following Sections: **Climate Change** and **Zoology**. A Section Secretary is responsible for arranging meetings, talks and outdoor events for Members. They have the use of the Section room at Candie for meetings and the Frossard Theatre for talks. Section Secretaries have a seat on Council. For further information kindly contact the Secretary Kate Lee via email [secretary@societe.org.gg](mailto:secretary@societe.org.gg).

## Associated Groups

Alderney Wildlife Trust	Roland Gauvain	822935
Blue Dolphins Sub-Aqua Club		bluedolphinssac@gmail.com
Channel Islands Occupation Society (Guernsey)	Liz Boxall	candielodge@cwgsy.net
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
Plant Heritage (Guernsey Group)	Tattie Thompson	239444
Royal Society of Biology ( <i>local members group</i> )	Jo Arendt	arendtjo@g.mail.com
The Alderney Society & Museum	Karen Hill	823222
The Guernsey Beekeepers' Association	Damian Harris	07911 721785
The Guernsey Botanical Trust	Cathy Morgan	07911 732912
The Guernsey Society	Michael Paul	253858
The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society	Roy Bisson	07781 100296
WEA	Chris Meinke	07781 101095

## 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.

**Environment Guernsey,**  
1 Trinity Cottages, Torteval,  
Guernsey, C.I., GY8 oQD

Tel: (07781) 166924

Email: [jamie.hooper@cwgsy.net](mailto:jamie.hooper@cwgsy.net)  
[gsybiorecords@gmail.com](mailto:gsybiorecords@gmail.com)



**Environment Guernsey**  
Environmental contracting & consulting

### 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 & Council Members

Title:	Name:	Telephone:	Email:
<b>Officers:</b>			
President	Roy Bisson		president@societe.org.gg
Vice President	Trevor Bourgaize		vicepresident@societe.org.gg
Secretary	Kate Lee	235380	secretary@societe.org.gg
Honorary Treasurer	Dave Christopher		treasurer@societe.org.gg
Membership Secretary			membership@societe.org.gg
Editor of the Transactions	Richard Hocart	254693	editor@societe.org.gg
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Communications Officer	Pierre Ehmann		communications@societe.org.gg
Land Management & Conservation Officer	Jamie Hooper	266924	reserves@societe.org.gg
Volunteer Co ordinator			
Reserves	Anthony Stagg	722351	
Archivist & Librarian	Richard Hocart		editor@societe.org.gg
Science Committee Chairperson	Vacant		

### Education Officers:

Education & Conservation Leader	Becky Ogier		ecl@societe.org.gg
Education & Conservation Assistant	Sarah Allez		eca@societe.org.gg

### Section Secretaries:

Archaeology	Andy Lane		archaeology@societe.org.gg
Astronomy	Jean Dean		astronomy@societe.org.gg
Bat Section	Charles Hurford		bats@societe.org.gg
Botany	Anna Cleal		botany@societe.org.gg
Climate Change	Vacant		climate.change@societe.org.gg
Entomology	Trevor Bourgaize	710737	entomology@societe.org.gg
Family History	Maria van der Tang	248538	researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk
Geology and Geography	Andrew Dorey	252123	
Historic Buildings	John McCormack	720303	mrjam@cwgsy.net
Marine Biology	Vacant		
Natural History	Lesley Bourgaize	710737	naturalhistory@societe.org.gg
Ornithology	Julie Davis		ornithology@societe.org.gg
Philology	Bill Gallienne	265529	history@societe.org.gg
Zoology	Vacant		

### Projects:

Conservation Herd	Dave Bartram		conservationherd@societe.org.gg
Guernsey Seasearch	Vacant		

Other Council members are: Jamie Hooper (co-opted), Angela Salmon & Hubertus Lau.

### Office hours:

Our office at Candie is open on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning between 10am and 11.30am.

**Email:** [societe@cwgsy.net](mailto:societe@cwgsy.net) **Website:** [www.societe.org.gg](http://www.societe.org.gg) **Tel:** 01481 725093

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