



La Société

For nature, history and science in Guernsey



Members of the Bell family enjoying the bug hunt with Nature Guernsey at The Open Day!

Photo courtesy of the Guernsey Press.

From the Président

It is with deep regret that La Société learnt of the death of Her Majesty the Queen, Elizabeth II. Our sympathies go out to the entire Royal Family. We congratulate Charles III on becoming King where hopefully, his longstanding care and understanding of the environment will prosper for the benefit of us all.

On Tuesday 20th September La Société assisted The Ladies College in the presentation of a talk by glaciologist Martin Siegert FRSE. Martin described how the warming of the planet could be confirmed by his work and measured from the effect upon ice deposits on Antarctica. His research confirms the previously stated likely outcomes from the world's far too slow reaction to global warming - particularly in the rise of ocean levels. Guernsey will be at risk and the 'tinkering' with sea wall heights will not be enough. Islanders, and the whole of civilisation has to tackle the problem by stopping the emission of carbon dioxide NOW. That means changing home and office heating. That means changing lorry and car engines. What we do in Guernsey matters and influences - let us do it now.

One might assume that with the very many communication systems now in place, imparting such information to fellow islanders would be simple - but no, it has become almost impossible for one simple reason. Islanders, and particularly young islanders do not watch television or read newspapers anymore! They are able to re-visit programmes at a later date and often do not, they are influenced by random stories and opinions on social media without validation and are vulnerable to 'fake news' and 'fake facts'.

So, generally islanders are more poorly informed than ever before about local, national and international matters!

Nevertheless we are trying to take the environment message to the people, starting with children. Our Education Officers have been successful in securing regular contracts with all our Primary schools. They will visit and present outdoor, hands-on classes on environmental issues to Guernsey's children. In addition, the team is active in presenting Corporate Social Responsibility courses to Corporate employees.

In 2022, La Société received funding to deliver a 'Bat Up-skilling Course' on-island thanks to funding from the Strategy for Nature. The aim of the course was to increase both the number of, and skills of bat workers on island to allow the islands' bats to be better and more effectively monitored. This course was delivered across 4 weekends throughout this year. Experts from Sangan Island Conservation, in Jersey came over to share their expertise and provide training. This course was delivered through a series of lectures, surveys, demonstrations, and harp trapping events. A report of the results will be provided in the next newsletter however we are happy to say that it has proved to be extremely beneficial. Thanks to Dr Amy Hall and Piers Sangan for delivering this vital training and sharing with us their wealth of knowledge. It is hoped to repeat this incredible opportunity next year.

It is fascinating to observe that despite recent changes and pressures to our eating patterns, the States refuses to recognise that farmland should be used to produce food. There is little enough of it in our island and while the predominance of dairy is now fading, the lack of government support for alternative horticultural production means that is being reduced.

Guernsey must bring back into food production all its agricultural land and as much of its derelict glasshouses as possible. It makes economic sense to grow food locally. We import over 60 tonnes of such food every week.

Once that revolution starts, all islanders will appreciate that building on agricultural land is a simple NO! NO! The States Committee for Health and Social Care could have proposed the re-purposing of some redundant offices in town rather than press for the destruction of a fully functioning agricultural field for housing staff.

When it comes to housing provision, as long as Guernsey continues to prosper its residents will benefit from well paid employment and be reluctant to work in the support services. There is nothing wrong in importing workers to fill the gaps in services and hospitality as long as they are provided with decent housing - regrettably this is not always the case.

La Société recently enjoyed an Open Day in its fields on the top of Pleinmont. The sun came out, the wind eased and it was a joy to see children chasing insects in the tall grass! The Sections were well represented and able to show and discuss with visitors their objectives and successes. Many thanks to all concerned.

Finally, La Société was founded in October 1882, 140 years ago, as the Guernsey Natural Science Society. Focussing originally on natural science only, the society later broadened its interests to take in other subjects. In 1922, 100 years ago, it adopted its current name. To commemorate the anniversary Richard Hocart will introduce a slide show featuring some the naturalists and scholars who have played a prominent role in the life of the society and also some seldom seen photographs of excursions for members, the earliest dating from 1916. **Please note the talk is now fully booked.**

Roy Bisson, Président.

Book Sale

The book sale in August was a success and we raised over £400. We will be holding a further book sale on Saturday 19th November between 2pm and 4 pm at the Russels, Les Cotils – there will be a selection of good quality fiction and non-fiction books together with a range of local history books. All welcome.

Wanted for the sale, good quality fiction and non-fiction books – kindly drop off at the Russels on Saturday 5th November between 10am and noon.

Christmas Gift Ideas & Local View Christmas Cards

We have a good selection of new local history and nature books available for sale in our office at Candie. A list of titles can be found on pages 21 and 22. You can also order books online at www.societe.org.gg and have the books posted to you or you can collect from Candie during opening hours Tues/Thurs/Sat between 10am and 11.30am. We also sell packs of 6 Christmas cards, local views with a Christmas greeting – 6 cards for £1.00, available from the office.

From Tuesday 22nd November we will also be selling a selection of reasonably priced second hand books of local interest – the office will be open as above for browsing but please note parking at Candie is easier on a Saturday morning.

Publication of 2021 Transactions

We hope to have the 2021 Transactions before the end of December 2022. Members will be notified by email when copies are ready for collection from Candie or available to download from our website. If we don't have your email address kindly send it to secretary@societe.org.gg

Subscription Rates for 2023

A polite reminder that if you pay your subscription by cash, cheque or Paypal your payment for 2023 is due on 1st January 2023. For those paying by Standing Order or Direct Debit your subscription will be taken automatically in January 2023.

Subscription rates remain unchanged for 2023 as follows:

	Local	Overseas
Single	£28	£25
Double/Family	£34	£25
Student	£5	£5
Corporate	£200	£200
Schools	£20	£20
Life Membership-single	£360	£360
Life Membership-double	£480	£480

Where there is a shortfall in the amount received; regrettably we are unable provide a copy of the annual Transactions.

Beauty and the Beast by John McCormack

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder”, as we know. Thus for some, beauty is not complete without the addition of a tattoo or stud; while to others, the exact reverse applies. Some prefer the wrinkles of wisdom and age, but for most, it is the naïve, pristine grace and vigour of youth that attracts. A faithful marriage may lead one to value largely unseen qualities, little details that cannot be fully appreciated without living with someone; but whatever it is, we have long tried to capture this beauty in sculpture, painting, and now photography. ‘This is what I looked like before I had to wear glasses,’ we proudly say as we grow fatter or more gaunt, or the hair on our heads descends from top to bottom. Of course, we only know the reactions of human to human; what a cow or a dog thinks of us we cannot tell.

“If only these walls could speak!” is another cliché we often hear. Very fortunately, they can’t. So it is we who must speak for them, recording, as with our own appearances, what things look like before they suddenly have to change, or someone has a bright idea. ‘What did this building once look like?’ we wonder, as we contemplate it now, the equivalent in bricks and mortar of someone wearing a Maori head-dress, a kilt, platform shoes and Edna-Everidge glasses. One might think that it is simple enough to make a place look beautiful, but it is a very great deal easier to make it look ugly.

Even landscapes that we admire often exist because some happenstance of farm management has composed them, though often with an intimate knowledge of place, only sensitively adding, or exaggerating with walls or planting what was already agreeable; whereas dogma, obedient to some rule laid down in order to align with the latest fashionable cause, can easily upset everything. Great swathes of forest planted to accomplish some artificial goal, or windfarms that attract the eye away from everything that used to be pleasant can, at a stroke, render an area repulsive or just ordinary.

Look at our airport. Its interior, never, to my eye, better than a mediocre space, is now just a mess. Can the clock be turned back? I doubt it. And the same has happened to more important buildings. Fortunately, the demolition of interesting houses has almost ceased. Vertical cracks, such as those that led to the pulling down of Les Beaucamps de Bas, for instance, in the 60s (or was it the early 70s?) can, with modern techniques, be dealt with in less drastic ways: not all modern interventions are evil, and, to continue the metaphor we started with, subtle lipstick, appropriate dress, can indeed accentuate beauty, not destroy it.

I sang in the Town Church choir for almost 30 years, and, in that time, witnessed the start of a gradual degradation and lack of recording that has accelerated to the present day. I do not mean that nothing good has been achieved there. Much good work has indeed been done, but unfortunately, it is the lapses in what seem to me good taste, or of any sense of decorum, that have now come to dominate, especially in the interior. Long ago, I remember coming across a number of Town Church pews in a barn in St. Saviour’s, from whence they seem to have vanished further into oblivion. They were probably the ones that were removed in order to instal a row of cupboards of much the same appearance as bedroom wardrobes across half the South Transept. Locked, these cupboards now conceal the best medieval piscina in the church.

When there was a leak in the valley gutter between the North Aisle and the chamber over the North Porch, some of John Wilson’s imitation vaulting of lath-and-plaster had to be removed from inside to inspect damage and repair it. As far as I know, no-one else bothered to record, either by drawing or with photographs, what was revealed during this work: there, briefly, was the only wall-painting remaining

from medieval days, attached, on timber-framing, to a roof-truss that was probably dateable to the fifteenth century. There, also, one could see how the enlargement of the building in 1466 broke into thirteenth-century stone vaulting over the North Aisle, providing a nice little miniature kingpost for attaching the new work. I did my best to draw everything and publish it. All is now covered up again.

Before the millennium, the then Dean decided that it would be a good idea to commemorate it by installing a new bell-frame: an entirely praiseworthy and useful thing to do. Unfortunately, he also instructed the contractors to remove from the tower every piece of medieval timber, all of it oak, dating, one imagines, from round about 1440. This was absolutely unnecessary and unforgiveable, since it in no way impacted on the bell-frame work nor was it even at anything like the same level. One major beam was over 12" square, in excellent condition, and, short of digging a hole in the tower wall, could only be removed by cutting it up. It so happened that I was passing through Church Square when a builder's truck was loaded with all the timbers. 'Where are you taking these?' I asked the chaps. 'To the tip,' they replied. I bribed them, instead, to bring them up to what I euphemistically call my workshop, from which, from time to time, I distribute them to worthy homes.

The same Dean, coming from the glories of the Chained Library in Worcester, wanted to throw away all the books that were gathering mildew in the room above the North Porch; they were the library collected for Guernsey by the first Anglican Dean, de Sausmarez, at the Restoration in 1660. I took them up to the Priaulx Library, where I suppose they remain.

It was a different whistle-blower (whom many of you know well enough but whose name will go with me to the grave) who alerted me when a rolling programme of roof inspections led to what amounted to an ad hoc decision between architects, Rector and Dean to destroy completely one of the only three major medieval timber roofs in the Channel Islands, that over what is at present the Organ Chamber, to replace it with a new one. As well as being of importance in having survived since 1466, the old structure also recorded an otherwise unknown phase when a skylight had been inserted to serve a gallery in the eighteenth century. The entire operation was to take place without any Faculty having being applied for or issued, or any recording done. I drew the whole matter to the attention of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, formed by William Morris at the end of the nineteenth century, and which has to be consulted in England whenever it is proposed to undertake such work. They in turn consulted the diocesan authorities, who, even though their legal involvement in this regard here is non-existent, managed to exert enough influence to halt the work and save the roof. I did this, because I knew, if this roof were lost, that when the programme of inspections reached the even more important great roof of the South Transept, that too might disappear without comment. In the event, the latter roof was properly researched, conserved and treated with proper respect during renovations.

It is not only the Town Church that suffers in this way. A few years ago, a different informant told me of work going on in the Forest Church. I had other reasons for being interested in what was being done, and so went along, to find a workman in the process of drilling with his kango through the mouldings of a thirteenth-century cream Caen limestone piscina that would have served the medieval main altar. 'That's of no importance,' he told me, 'because it's different stone from everything else.' He had been completely unsupervised, either by church or secular authorities: unbelievable. What is left of the piscina was saved, and now is only covered by other paraphernalia.

On the other hand, when a new choir vestry was needed at the Vale, the Rev. Peter Simpson oversaw the construction of a sizeable room, up in the air, excellent and discreetly designed so as to look good inside the church without interrupting anything at ground level: this from a priest as sensitive to the history and liturgy of his church as any we have been fortunate to have had in the island in recent times. In his day, congregations were large indeed.

One could go on. But the chief reason for these comments is to put into context what very many of us think is the wholly unwarranted treatment of the great west doors at the Town Church that was mentioned at our AGM (and under no prompting from me). When our present Dean said that all procedures had been followed, this might technically have been true, since the Faculty system of ecclesiastical approval to church work has been allowed to lapse, so that at present any bright idea needs only to run the gauntlet of Building Control. This is entirely unsatisfactory, as the Dean acknowledged in a letter to me, and he has begun the process of inventing some new system.

I suggest that whatever he proposes is shown not only to all island bodies with an interest in these most important historical buildings, on which our parishes spend so much in order to keep them in good repair, but that the proposals are also scrutinised for comment by those authorities that would routinely be approached in Britain (and in most other civilised countries) when any such work is contemplated. And I suggest that La Société becomes involved, not as any sort of clearing-house for applications, nor only out of courtesy, but primarily in order where appropriate to provide accurate dating of fabric, architectural contexts and maybe even some supervision of work undertaken where others do not have resources to oversee things as adequately as should be done when 'running briefs' are appropriate.

It just is not good enough to eject from their rightful positions historic artefacts through errant ignorance, or to satisfy some passing whim that, when examined, is almost entirely nonsense.

Section Reports

Archaeology

The long hot summer has been a doubled edged sword for archaeology, we have certainly not been rained off, but the ground has gradually become very hard and the archaeological features have become quite difficult to see as we found out in Herm. The season began with Sir Barry Cunliffe's 18th year in Sark, paying particular attention to the spring in the field opposite the Le Manoir. One trench was opened immediately west of the stone wellhead which was cleaned and recorded. The trench revealed a post-medieval land drain running down the valley and a possible prehistoric feature. Finds varied from the prehistoric period to the modern, presumably washed down the valley from settlements above.

After the exciting discovery of four bronze socketed axes a trip to Herm was organised to carry out a resistivity survey within La Cloture field encompassing the site where the axes were found. The survey informed the location of the evaluation trenches that were excavated in August in very dry conditions. As soon as the turf came off prehistoric pottery, stone and flint finds were recovered along with medieval, post-medieval and modern finds. Of note was a hammer stone and a ceramic spindle whorl. Two trenches were opened, one only displayed plough marks whilst the other which was targeted to investigate where some of bronze axes were located, revealed two stone lined hearths, a shell midden post holes and pits of a Late Bronze Age - Early Iron Age date. More modern, probably Victorian quarry works/disturbance was also discovered.



Socketed bronze axes c. 800BC. Photo courtesy of Phil de Jersey.

A return to Fort Richmond in July saw a very dusty three week excavation that revealed more of the Victorian gun emplacement, the majority of the southern side was almost complete, however the damage caused by the construction of WW2 defences was very evident on the northern side, luckily some large pieces of dressed stone along with some foundations were discovered allowing us to trace the exact location of the west wall. The new owner of Fort Richmond kindly let the junior section have a tour around the recent excavations as well as a sneaky peek inside, including lots of biscuits.

The last excavation within the Nunnery walls in Alderney was carried out by 'Dig Alderney' in May-June under the direction of Dr Jason Monaghan, two areas were investigated, under the demolished Sun Room and the gun ramp along the southern wall of the Nunnery. Several walls were located including

the remains of a later medieval or Tudor building that may have housed the Governor of Alderney. The point at which the Roman curtain wall and its medieval repair was revealed along with the surviving Roman parapet. Running alongside the excavation Dr Rob Fry undertook a program of geophysics on Longis common, the golf course and the field adjacent to Coastguard Cottages with Ground Penetrating Radar. The survey will inform next years excavation which is planned for the spring.

Andy Lane – Archaeology Section Secretary



Excavations at Fort Richmond. Photo courtesy of Phil de Jersey.

Astronomy

New telescope building

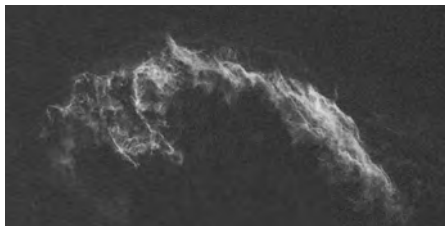
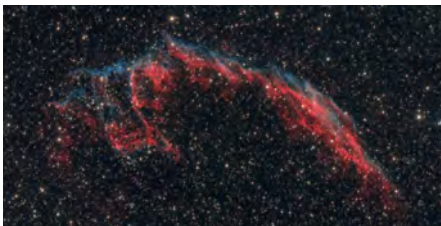
We are very pleased to announce that our new roll-off roof telescope building is completed. At the end of July, we held a solar open day to mark the occasion which was very well attended with over 100 visitors. We are now looking forward to getting back to normal activities, including public open days and educational outreach. For any group wishing to visit our educational prospectus may be found on our website: <https://www.astronomy.org.gg/events/outreach>



New Telescope Building. Photo courtesy of Dr JM Dean.

Eastern Veil Nebula

During August members were busy collecting data on the Eastern Veil Nebula which is 2,400 light-years away in the constellation of Cygnus. It is part of the Veil Complex, a cloud of heated and ionized gas and dust which are the remnants of a supernova, an exploding star at the end of its life. As a star explodes it expels into space elements such as oxygen, carbon, nitrogen, sulphur, phosphorus, iron, silicon and calcium – all the elements required for new planetary systems and life. This image was taken with a colour camera, it records hydrogen as red and oxygen as teal. The hydrogen was enhanced by using a narrow band hydrogen-alpha filter that looks at the 656.28nm spectral line of the Balmer series. The colour image is the combination of 30 individual exposures 9 minutes each.



Veil Eastern_Colour and Veil Eastern_Ha. Photos courtesy of Astronomy Section Members.

Autumn stargazing

Gas giants Jupiter and Saturn are visible in the evening with the naked eye, as is the terrestrial planet Mars. With a pair of binoculars, you will also be able to see some of the moons around the gas giants. Jupiter's Galilean moons Ganymede, Io, Europa and Callisto form a line and resemble a mini-solar system around the planet. The largest moon orbiting Saturn is Titan, the only other place in the Solar System where liquid exists on the surface of a world, only rather than being water, it is liquid methane and ethane. Ganymede and Titan are larger than the smallest planet Mercury and both have global oceans beneath a crust of ice. If you want to see what is in the night sky each month and the position of the Galilean moons, please see the Astronomy Section website: <https://www.astronomy.org.gg/do-and-see/months-sky>



Pleiades and Naked Eye Planets SkySafari, NASA. Images courtesy of Dr JM Dean.

Another object worth looking at with binoculars is the Pleiades open star cluster. It is easy to find with the naked eye, it looks like a fuzzy patch in the sky. It contains over a thousand stars that are loosely bound to each other by gravity, but visually it is dominated by a handful of very bright stars. The cluster is currently moving collectively through a dusty region of space and the starlight is reflecting off the dust to give blue reflection nebulosity.

Dr Jean Dean - Astronomy Section Secretary

Bat Section

If you find an injured bat please contact the GSPCA direct on 257261 or 07781 104082 (24 hour emergency line). Any bat queries can be sent to Charles Hurford (bat Section Secretary) by email to bats@societe.org.gg

Botany

It has been a rewarding few months for the Botany Section.

Grow Guernsey Natives continues to go from strength to strength. Additional plants were delivered to our partner, Grow Ltd and they are currently holding stock of in the region of 1500 plants of 16 different native or naturalised species. If you haven't already been to look and, hopefully, buy the plants, please do so. We are also building stock of some of our rarer plants to ensure the survival of the species. Rayond Evison is particularly pleased to have successfully propagated Dwarf Pansy, *Viola kitaibeliana* and Small Hare's-ear, *Bupleurum baldense*. We are very grateful to him for spearheading this valuable project.

Following on from the visit of Fred Rumsey in Spring, we were delighted to welcome John Poland to the island. Co-author of *The Vegetative Key to the British Flora* it was an honour to host him and he gave generously of his time to lead several walks in different locations. My previously pristine copy of his book is now well thumbed and my current bible. His patience in explaining the terminology and abbreviations was greatly appreciated and those that joined him have increased their knowledge, especially in the identification of those tricky Fleabanes and Oraches not to mention the various Fescues.



Grow Guernsey Natives labels. Photo courtesy of Pierre Ehmann.

With Fred's help, we marked several of our special Guernsey *Asplenium* hybrids in the Ruelle des Gains. These are not easy to differentiate and Gareth has flagged both *A. x sarniensis* and *A. microdon*. The owner of the bank was unaware of the importance of these plants and has undertaken to ensure that they are not destroyed by cutting.

Our Saturday walks continue to be well attended and it is heartening to see the level of interest in our local flora.

The Botany Section are always interested in surveying new areas, so if you have an area of land that has been managed with conservation in mind, then please don't hesitate to email botany@societe.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>

Helen Litchfield – Botany Section Secretary

Events

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

Saturday 5th November – Little Chapel Gardens – Perry's ref 23 EH

Saturday 3rd December – La Vallette to look at the East Coast habitat – Perry's ref 25 H3

Family History

The Family History group are still busy indexing behind the scenes, the Civil Births for 1922-1932 are nearing completion and will be available in the Family History section room at the Russels in the not too distant future. We are also bringing the Parish Marriages and Burial indexes up to 1950.

I am continuing to send in the errors for the 1921 Census online and they have been fairly quick at amending the indexes.

On Saturday 22nd October we have our annual Tennerfest meal at La Barberie Hotel (FHS members only).

Our AGM is on Saturday 26th November and will be held in the Frossard Theatre, Candie at 10.30am followed by an illustrated talk by Trevor Cooper entitled "Opening More Doors to the Past following on from Mansion, Manor and Merchant Houses". You will be notified by email when you can book a seat, Family History members will receive priority booking.

The Family History room at the Russels, Les Cotils remains open on the first and third Saturdays of the month between 10am and noon.

If you have any family stories you would like published in our Journal please email them to researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk or by post to FHS, PO Box 314, St Peter Port, GY1 3TG.

Maria van der Tang - Family History Section Secretary

Historic Buildings

Events

All talks are held in the Frossard Theatre, Candie and begin at 7.30pm. New members are always very welcome to attend, but should contact John McCormack (tel. 720303; e-mail mrjam@cwgsy.net) beforehand in case of alterations or final instructions. Those attending regularly should ensure that they are already members of La Société.

Saturday 12th November – "The orientation of medieval houses in all the Channel Islands" – a talk by John McCormack.

Saturday 26th November – "How to date beams and joists by the types of wood used and the design of mouldings and chamfer stops" – a talk by John McCormack.

Saturday 10th December – "Re-examining the island evidence for chamber blocks, their origins and derivatives" – a talk by John McCormack.

Ornithology

Early Autumn 2022 - The Barn Owl Survey

After a two-year delay because of Covid and lockdowns, fieldwork was able to get underway this summer and has now been completed. Viable breeding sites have been monitored and four broods were ringed by Chris Mourant. One of the ringing sessions was filmed by the Wild Islands team, who won this year's bursary awarded by La Société. The survey report will be published towards the end of this year.

The team are planning, with some volunteer help, to set up a four-year rolling winter programme of nest box maintenance and clearance.

Avian Flu

Waterfowl flocks and seabird colonies have been devastated by this new strain, particularly in Scotland and the north of England. The Channel Islands have also been affected. Two dead Herring Gulls found at Havelet on 14th July were the first confirmed birds to have died from the virus. Since then, several sick or dead Gannets have been washed up on Guernsey's shoreline. We do not yet know how badly Avian Flu has affected the Alderney gannetries. It may now be endemic and poses a serious threat to the future well-being of our sea birds.

Interesting sightings

Rose-coloured Starling chose Dave Carre's garden for a stop-over on 2nd August.



On 12th August many people had the opportunity to see a Little Tern at Port Soif and then later at Pembroke.

Mike Cunningham was one of several fortunate people who saw an Osprey touch down on to Guernsey granite off Pleinmont on 2nd September. The island is on their migration route in spring and autumn, but this was a rare and magnificent sight.



Jamie and Michelle Hooper had the third Guernsey record of a Siberian Stonechat at the Société fields at Pleinmont following north-easterly winds on 17th September. Photograph by Mark Lawlor.



Chris Mourant finally succeeded in having a pelagic trip, after a couple of postponements, on 18th September. Reports of seabirds were promising. The trip was successful with sightings of Common and Arctic Terns, Arctic and Pomeranian Skuas, Shearwaters and close views of Blue-fin tuna.

Andy Marquis caught the moment when an Arctic Skua bullied a Common Tern out of its lunch – kleptoparasitism. The Arctic Skua snapped up the fish.

For Autumn and Winter Walks, please check with the Events page and diary on La Société's website - www.societe.org.gg

Julie Davis – Ornithology Section Secretary

Nature Guernsey

During 2022, Nature Guernsey has organised six family events highlighting the natural history and history of the island. Unlike Junior events which are for members of La Société Guernesiaisie [LSG], Nature Guernsey events are free and open to all. In addition to sharing our enjoyment of the natural world and the need to care for it, we also aim to highlight the important work carried out by the society and to promote the benefits of membership. In the spring newsletter, I reported on the first three events, so this report covers the second half of the year.

On a glorious day at the end of May, Nature Guernsey, supported by members of the Entomology Section, held a 'Big Bug Hunt' at two of LSG's adjacent nature reserves, Le Grand Pré, a wetland site, and La Marettte, an orchard. The event began at 2 pm and a steady stream of enthusiastic families was soon collecting nets and pots and heading on to the reserves to see what they could find – caterpillars, butterflies, grasshoppers, spiders, shieldbugs, you name it, they found it! Members of the Entomology section were on hand to help identify over 40 species and we were also lucky enough to be joined by a member of LSG, James Edmunds, who took some amazing photos, two of which are reproduced below.



Hairy Shieldbug (*Dolycoris baccarum*).
Photo courtesy of James Edmunds.



Cockchafer beetle (*Melolontha melolontha*).
Photo courtesy of James Edmunds.



In early August, Nature Guernsey organised a Bat Walk in Saumarez Park, this time supported by La Société's Bat Section. It was a beautiful evening and over a hundred people attended the event which was preceded by a short talk given by Bat Section secretary Charles who shared some fascinating facts about bats, as well as information about the species found on Guernsey. Our knowledge of these has greatly increased following the Citizen Science Bat Project undertaken over 2021/2022, which has been a collaboration between La Société and the British Trust for Ornithology [BTO]. Eleven species have now been positively identified. After distributing bat detectors, Charles led us from the Adventure Playground to the pond, where many Common Pipistrelle, the species most usually seen in Guernsey, were visible as they swooped back and forth searching for insects.

At the end of the month, Nature Guernsey held its annual Open Day at Pleinmont Headland on land owned and managed by La Société. The society is always looking to increase its land holding in the area and has recently acquired three more strip fields. So, when, for the first time, it was decided to combine this event with an LSG Open Day, two of these new strips were utilised. With display boards and artifacts highlighting the many different areas of interest that the sections cover, as well as activities for children, it was good to see so many people moving between the two events.

As always, the Nature Guernsey event began with viewing of the moths caught nearby overnight, with one intrepid member of the Entomology Section, Andy, having set his trap part way down the cliff! This proved to be well worth the effort as no less than seven *Convolvulus* Hawk-moths were attracted to the light. This is a migrant, and as one of the biggest moths seen in Guernsey, proved fascinating to visitors. Many other species were also caught and as always, onlookers were amazed at the range of sizes, shapes, and colours, of the moths on show.



Convolvulus Hawk-moth (*Agrius convolvuli*). Photo courtesy of Lesley Bourgaize.

The next activity was a walk looking for migrant birds led by Julie and Chris, the current and former secretaries of the Ornithology Section. A flock of Sand Martin and Swallow seen coming in off the sea was one of the highlights, both stopping off on their way south to their wintering grounds; the former to an area south of the Sahara, the latter heading to Southern Africa. Wheatear, another migrant spotted, will also soon be heading south. Not a migrant, but always great to see, was a Marsh Harrier, a species that has been nesting locally for about twelve years. In all, sixteen species were seen on this short walk.

Next came a Bug Hunt. These are always popular and soon lots of children and adults were searching in the field known as the ‘weedy strip’, with finds being identified by members of the Entomology section – although often, the chase was as much fun as the catch!

Bird ringing was due to take place all morning and despite the stiffish breeze, our ringing team of Trevor, Julie and Charlotte persevered much to the delight of visitors; seeing birds in the hand is always a very special experience. A total of seventeen birds were caught and ringed, with Trevor explaining the process and passing on information about each species. Amazing to think that the four Willow Warblers caught that morning, and only weighing around ten grams, will now be heading to the west coast of Africa!

The final Nature Guernsey activity was a butterfly walk, led by Andy and Ian. Unfortunately, the weather was not ideal, but catching up with a Small Copper was a highlight. This butterfly, one of the smallest seen locally, is a real beauty with its bright copper-coloured forewings.

While the Nature Guernsey team began to pack up at 1 pm, there was no need to leave the site as La Société’s Open Day continued into the afternoon.



Ringing a Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*).
Photo courtesy of Lesley Bourgaize.

As always, I am hugely indebted to the volunteers who support all the activities organised under the Nature Guernsey banner, as without them the events could not take place. It is a small team and we are always looking for people to join us. Whether it be sharing your knowledge of natural history, acting as meeters and greeters, or helping with the practical side of events **WE NEED YOU!** You can message us via the Nature Guernsey Facebook page or contact us via the LSG office.

Lesley Bourgaize - Chairperson, Nature Guernsey

Education and Conservation Team

The Education Team had another very active summer, working with students of all ages on activities ranging from field trips with pre-schools to wildlife surveying with students from the Sixth Form Centre, as well as events with youth groups such as Cubs and Rainbows. We were also delighted to be asked to work with Youth Commission's Playscheme again over the holidays and we visited locations such as Bordeaux, St Saviours reservoir and Lihou causeway with the various groups.

The education officers have a busy year ahead - in addition to our usual programme of activities with schools and youth groups we will be visiting Reception classes in all States primary schools over the next school year to deliver the outdoor education element of the Cultural Enrichment Programme. We will deliver four weekly sessions to small groups of children, which means that every States school pupil participates in the same outdoor activities. We are particularly pleased to be working with Reception children this year, as these pupils experienced Covid restrictions at a very young age and we think will benefit a great deal from being encouraged to get dirty outdoors after having to do so much hand-washing as toddlers!

We also submitted the Environmental Education Entitlement document to the Education Department and are very much looking forward to working with teachers to ensure that all children receive a common baseline of environmental learning.

A high point of the year thus far was being selected as Investec's charity partner for the next three years. We are proud to have been chosen by the staff themselves to benefit from their CSR hours and Investec's financial support, and are currently putting a programme of volunteer events into place.



Beach clean at Rouse with HSBC. Photo courtesy of Becky Ogier.

We are, as always, hugely grateful to the businesses who use our services to fulfil their Corporate Social Responsibility requirement; volunteers have carried out essential maintenance work on a number of nature reserves over the recent months including Silbe, Les Vicheries, Jardin de Lorette and Pré d'Enfer. Do get in touch if your company or group are seeking a fun and rewarding volunteer activity – contact Becky at ecl@societe.org.gg for our online brochure.



CSR at Jardin de Lorette with Vision Estate Agents. Photo courtesy of Becky Ogier.

Becky Ogier – Education and Conservation Leader.

Juniors

Throughout the summer months we've had three Junior events and as always, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated members who come along and support our events, as well as the La Société section secretaries and volunteers who help to lead these events.

We began the summer with a popular bug hunt during June half term. This took place around Bordeaux Mound in glorious sunshine, and we saw a wide variety of insects. Our Juniors thoroughly enjoyed using their spotter sheets and sweep nets to see what they could find!

In July, we had our highest junior event attendance so far in 2022. This was at an afternoon of rock pooling at Portelet Bay. The event was a great success, helped by a very low tide meaning we found lots of very interesting sea creatures such as ormers, a cowrie, strawberry and gem anemones, sea hares and even a lobster!



Lobster found at Portelet Bay. Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.

In August, the Archaeology section kindly hosted a tour around Fort Richmond. Archaeological investigations had just finished so our Juniors were able to explore the recently uncovered remains of the Victorian gun which had not been seen since the Second World War. Thank you again to the Archaeology section and the owner of this site for kindly providing this experience.



Some of the findings from the archaeological investigations at Fort Richmond. 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 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

Sarah Allez – Education Conservation Assistant

Upcoming Junior events for 2021:

Sunday 16th October, 4x40 minute slots between 14:00 – 16:40, archaeological store tour at Grange House led by the Archaeology Section.

Saturday 12th November, 11:00 – 13:00 (drop-in session) – Create bug hotels and bird feeders out of recycled materials, at La Société Section room, Candie Gardens.

Saturday 3rd December, 10:00 – 11:00 & 11:30 – 12:30, Eco-friendly wreath making sessions at La Société Section Room, Candie Gardens.

Projects

Conservation Herd

The herd have had to split into two groups due to the lack of grazing available in any one field, this means this year's calves have some company for the first time and have to get used to sharing their field. The 4 youngest are in the orchard fields with the 4 oldest in a reed bed near the Driftwood Inn.



David in his reed bed. Photo courtesy of Dave Bartram.

Wanted

A volunteer to keep our scrapbook of newspaper cuttings up to date. This can be done during office hours or at home. Please contact our Secretary Kate Lee if you can help - [email secretary@societe.org.gg](mailto:secretary@societe.org.gg)

New Books For Sale

NATURAL HISTORY BOOKS

Guernsey's Earliest Flora - Flora Sarniensis by Joshua Gosselin with an introduction and commentaries by David McClintock. **£5.00.**

Guernsey's Countryside – An Introduction to the History of the Rural Landscape by Richard Hocart. La Société Guernesaise. **£9.50.**

Check List of Guernsey Plants by Rachel Rabey and Jane Gilmour, La Société Guernesaise. **£6.00.**

Wild Flowers of the Bailiwick of Guernsey edited by Griff Caldwell with illustrations by Wendy Bramall. La Société Guernesaise. **£3.00.**

Supplement to The Wild Flowers of Guernsey by David McClintock. La Société Guernesaise. **£4.00.**

Field Key to the Commonest and most Conspicuous Species of Channel Island Mosses and Liverworts adapted from E.V. Watson by C.T. David. Guernsey Biological Records Centre. **£2.00.**

Common Life on the Seashore of the Channel Islands by Gene Rowe with illustrations by Wendy Bramall. La Société Guernesaise. **£3.00.**

Marine Life of the Channel Islands by Sue Daly. Small Island Publishing. **£20.00.**

Gouliot Caves by Ann Allen. Guernsey Biological Records Centre. **£2.00.**

The Rocks and Scenery of Guernsey by Mick de Pomerai and Andy Robinson. La Société Guernesaise. **£4.50.**

L'Erée Ramsar Walk - La Société Guernesaise and Guernsey Biological Records Centre. **£2.00.**

The Distribution of Breeding Seabirds in the Bailiwick of Guernsey 1986 – 1990 by Mike G. Hill. La Société Guernesaise. **£5.00.**

Important Sites for Birds in the Channel Islands edited by Paul K Veron. La Société Guernesaise **£7.00.**

Birds of Guernsey Migrants and Visitors – A month by month guide to 100 of Guernsey's visiting birds by Mike Cunningham and Royston Carré. **£2.00.**

Guernsey Bird Guide and Map by Vic and Jill Froome. La Société Guernesaise. **£2.00.**

Perry's Coastal Walks & Nature Trails in Guernsey - **£7.95.**

Check List of Plants in St Martin Guernsey by Rachel Rabey. La Société Guernesaise **£3.50.**

Guernsey's Earliest Flora, Flora Sarniensis by Joshua Gosselin, with an introduction & commentaries by David McClintock **£5.00.**

HISTORY BOOKS

Pierre Bonamy - A speech delivered in the States of Guernsey in 1684 edited by Richard Hocart. £10.00.

Guernsey in the Reign of Charles II by Richard Hocart. Published in 2020 £12.00.

Channel Island Houses by John McCormack. Published in 2015. £65. Hardback

The Country People of Guernsey and their Agriculture, 1640 – 1840 by Richard Hocart. Published in 2016. £12.

James Saumarez – the Life and Achievements of Admiral Lord de Saumarez of Guernsey by David Shayer. La Société Guernesaise. £12.00.

The Charters of Guernsey by Tim Thornton £10.00.

Guernsey Sundials by David and Dorothy Le Conte. La Société Guernesaise. £3.00.

Guernsey Connections edited by Heather Sebire. La Société Guernesaise. £10.00.

Diary of the German Occupation of Guernsey 1940 – 1945 by J.C. Sauvary. La Société Guernesaise. £12.00.

Peter de Havilland – Bailiff. A History of his Life 1747 – 1821 by Richard Hocart. La Société Guernesaise. £10.00.

The Royal Guernsey Militia. A short history and list of officers by Major Edwin Parks. La Société Guernesaise. £9.00.

Notebook of Pierre Le Roy. Published in 1895 and edited by G.E. Lee, and **Josué Le Roy 1649 – 1701, the youngest son of Pierre Le Roy** by E.B. Moullin (offprint from 1951 Transactions). £10.00 for the two.

Guernsey Emigrants to Australia 1828 – 1899 by David Kreckeler. La Société Guernesaise. £12.00.

The Secret History of Guernsey Marmalade by W.M. Mathew. La Société Guernesaise. £5.00.

The Re-Excavation of the Déhus Chambered Mound at Paradis, Vale, Guernsey by V.C.C. Collum. La Société Guernesaise. £10.00.

The Collected Works of Marjorie Ozanne, 1897 – 1973 in Guernsey-French with English translations edited and translated by Ken Hill. La Société Guernesaise. £5.00.

The Collected Works of Marjorie Ozanne, 1897 – 1973 in Guernsey-French with English translations vol. 2 edited and translated by Ken Hill. La Société Guernesaise. £5.00.

The Expulsion of Victor Hugo by Jean Le Pelley. Offprint from 1970 Transactions. La Société Guernesaise. £2.50.

The Letters of Peter le Page Renouf (1922 – 1897), vols 1 and 2, edited by Kevin J. Cathcart. University College Dublin Press. £33.00 each. Hardbacks.

Dictiounnaire Angllais-Guernesaise Edited by Marie DE Garis £30.00. Hardback.

Glossary of Guernsey Place Names by Marie de Garis. La Société Guernesaise. £5.00.

Guernesiais: A Grammatical Survey by Marie de Garis. La Société Guernesaise. Photocopy from the 1983 Report and Transactions. £5.00.

The Church Bells of the Channel Islands by David Cawley and Frederick Sharpe £7.00.

One Hundred Years of Health – The Changing Health of Guernsey edited by Dr David Jeffs. Board of Heath 1999 £7.50.

Books can be purchased from the office during opening hours (see page 24) or ordered on line at www.societe.org.gg and either posted to you or collected from Candie.

Associated Groups

Alderney Wildlife Trust	Roland Gauvain	822935 bluedolphinssac@gmail.com
Blue Dolphins Sub-Aqua Club		
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		
G.S.P.C.A	Martin Crozier	237766
La Société Serquaise	Steve Byrne	257261
Le Cercle Français	Jo Birch	832788
Lé Coumité d'la Culture Guernésiaise	Geoff Mahy	263029
Guernsey Trees For Life	Dr Harry Tomlinson	255891
Plant Heritage (Guernsey Group)	Andy McCutcheon	07781 110180
Royal Society of Biology (<i>local members group</i>)	Tattie Thompson	239444
The Alderney Society & Museum	Jo Arendt	arendtjo@g.mail.com
The Guernsey Beekeepers' Association	Karen Hill	823222
The Guernsey Botanical Trust	Damian Harris	07911 721785
The Guernsey Society	Cathy Morgan	07911 732912
The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society	Michael Paul	253858
	Roy Bisson	07781 100296

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, Torveal,
Guernsey, C.I., GY8 oQD**

Tel: (07781) 166924

**Email: jamie.hooper@cwgsy.net
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.

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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.

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