



La Société

For nature, history and science in Guernsey



Our bursary recipient at work. Photo courtesy of Stefan Yerby.

From the Président

This summer has witnessed the much-anticipated launch of the Nature Commission and two people well-known to La Société Guernesaise will be responsible for its direction in the early stages. Charlotte Burgoyne who has been appointed as the Commission's ecologist, was the recipient of La Société's bursary in 2020; she is currently training as a bird ringer and is also completing a Bat Handling course. Charlotte will be under the direction of Angela Salmon, a Council member, who you will all know through her work with the Guernsey Conservation Volunteers, where she is the Operations Director. The initial work of the Commission is to produce a report on the 'state of nature' on the island and it also hopes to set in motion a number of citizen science projects in the new year. La Société would like to wish the Commission, Charlotte and Angela all the best and assure them that our Sections are ready and willing to help when required. We look forward to collaborating with them and other organisations to ensure that Guernsey's rich Natural Capital is given the focus it deserves.

Those of you who visit our reserves regularly will know that Le Grand Pré, in the Vale, has had more than its fair share of work in recent years. Dredging work on the southern side was carried out in 2021, and this has resulted in higher levels of water being retained and as a result has ensured good quality reed growth. This autumn will see diggers going into the northwest of the reserve to remove many of the Grey Willow *Salix cinerea* which has become overly dominant and together with other species such as Alder *Alnus glutinosa* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* have contributed to the drying out of the reed bed. The spoil will be removed and placed on the northern path which will help to make it level and easier to walk along. The work will inevitably mean that the corner of the reserve will not be looking its best in the short term; however, it won't take long to recover, and I know Helen Litchfield is looking forward to seeing what might germinate from the seed bank, while Julie Davis is hoping more wading birds may be attracted to the exposed mud! The majority of the land which makes up this reserve is leased from the States of Guernsey. We are in the process of renegotiating this lease and hope to agree on terms shortly. Once this has been finalised it is hoped that funding can be found enabling access to be created onto the reserve for those with impaired mobility, the plans for which have already been passed. Thanks must go to Lesley Bourgaize, the Reserves Committee chairperson, Andy Marquis (Entomology) Helen Litchfield (Botany) Julie Davis (Ornithology) Alan Ritchie (Research and History), and in particular Jamie Hooper, Land Management and Conservation Officer, who advises and oversees the work. If you are unfamiliar with our reserves, details can be found on the website. If you have any queries, please drop me an email at President@societe.org.gg.

The Castel Hospital has been in the news recently after the Planning Authority gave it protected status. John McCormack (Historic Buildings) is firmly of the opinion that this is the correct decision and that parts of the site are of architectural and historic merit. The listing does not prevent development on all parts of the campus, but hopefully, this will not extend to the Agricultural Priority Area adjacent to the site that was recently purchased by the States of Guernsey!

Staying with planning issues, the Planning Authority is conducting a targeted examination of certain IDP policies. It is inviting suggestions from the public to identify areas of land that could be used for housing. There can be little doubt that Guernsey is in dire need of more housing, particularly for first-time buyers; however, La Société is firm in the opinion that housing should be concentrated in the centres and on brownfield sites. Any ingress into protected land would be a retrograde step and set a precedent.

Moving on, I am pleased to confirm that we have purchased another field in the Perelle area, adjoining land already owned by La Société. The area as a whole is damp and has some interesting botanical specimens as well as associated invertebrates. In the coming months, the Reserves committee will be giving consideration as to how the area can be improved for wildlife.

Our Education Officers, Becky Ogier and Sarah Allez, have just begun their second year working with all Reception classes in States-run schools, delivering environmental education as part of the Cultural Enrichment Programme. It is wonderful to see the positive feedback that follows these sessions. They also work with other age groups when requested, and recently completed a bug box-making session at Melrose, which was very popular with both pupils and staff! They continue to organise CSR days and I know the Reserves Committee are very grateful for the work parties they run on LSG reserves. Thank you to them for all their hard work and their 'can do' attitude.

La Société is delighted to have selected Stefan Yerby for this year's Science and Nature Grant. Stefan will be investigating seaweed's potential to reduce the environmental impact of livestock farming, a project that combines his passion for farming with academic research. The project aims to develop dietary intervention strategies that can mitigate climate change and improve the sustainability of

ruminant production by reducing the output of pollutants, such as methane and ammonia, through the manipulation of microbial populations in the rumen. Stefan will harvest selected species of seaweed from Guernsey's shores, preserve the samples, and transport them to a lab in Glasgow. In vitro experimentation using rumen fermentation mimicking apparatus will be conducted to test the samples under controlled conditions. Parameters such as gas production and composition, digestibility, volatile fatty acid production, and dry matter disappearance will be analysed to assess the efficacy of different seaweed species in decreasing the environmental impact of ruminants. We look forward to hearing the results of his research at a later date.

In June we were delighted to welcome the Lt Governor, Lt General Richard Cripwell, and his wife Louise to Candie Headquarters where they were given a presentation covering many aspects of La Société's work. Lt General Cripwell and his wife were also shown the herbarium containing plant specimens dating back to the eighteenth century. All who attended were delighted with the kind comments made by His Excellency. "It has taken us far too long to visit La Société and we have seen over the last year, elements of the remarkable work that the people here do, it's been long overdue to come and see how all of that work adds up. There is something for everybody here and in learning about the thing that you are particularly interested in, you get the chance to see how that fits into a much bigger picture."

La Société has had a busy summer. The Jethou trips were as popular as ever, with six walks taking place over 2 days and we are grateful to Sir Peter Ogden for continuing to allow us access to this wonderful island. I would also like to thank skipper Richard Keen who took the groups over on the 'Margaret K' and all the volunteer leaders, without whom the trips would not have been possible. La Société took a stall at the Guernsey National Trust's Le Viaër Marchi and at the Charities Fête at Government House, and we were represented at the St John Sea Front Sunday in September by the BEEP, Seasearch and DolFin projects. Many thanks to all those who manned the stalls and engaged with the public to spread our message. Botany, Ornithology, Bat Section and Historic Buildings have continued to lead walks for Section members, with some being open to the general public. Astronomy has continued its outreach programme and I was delighted to be able to attend one of these sessions. Sarah, our ECA, has run a varied programme for Société Junior members and I know she has appreciated the support she has received from Section Secretaries. I have been able to attend a number of these sessions and it is great to encounter such enthusiastic youngsters. Nature Guernsey organised its usual programme of family-friendly events, which are free and open to all, culminating in the annual Late Summer Family Event held at Pleinmont on September 3rd, which, as always, was well attended. Many Sections came together to make this the success it was and I am grateful to them all.

If I haven't mentioned a Section or Project by name, please be aware this is not due to a lack of interest or appreciation, but rather time and space. La Société is made up of many parts all of which are valuable, and I look forward to reading the reports from Sections and Projects which will appear on the following pages.

Lastly, at a recent Council meeting, it was mentioned that in the past, La Société offered a number of general events which were particularly popular with those who did not belong to specific Sections. We are hoping to see such a programme reinstated in 2024, so if you had a favourite event or have some ideas for new ones then please email me at President@societe.org.gg.

Trevor Bourgaize, President

September 27th - 28th – Inter Island Environment Meeting

The Inter-Island Environment Meeting (IIEM) is an annual gathering for environmental experts in the channel region and Crown Dependencies. Now in their 23rd Year, the meetings are an opportunity to present regional updates, and highlight opportunities for cross-regional engagement for research and conservation in both terrestrial and marine environments. This year the event was hosted by La Société Sercquaise and included representatives from Guernsey, Jersey, Isle of Man, Isle of Wight and France. A huge variety of presentations were given, including progress on classifying and monitoring for invasive and non-native species (INNS), Balearic shearwater monitoring, habitat classification schemes, marine spatial planning and eelgrass projects across the islands. Cross channel programmes were also presented including updates on the Channel Island Records Centre plan, and a cross-channel scheme known as Fish Intel, which Jersey plays a major role in overseeing. Société Guernesaise members Laura Harrison (Guernsey Bat Group/ Pollinator Project), George McLellan (Sea Search/ States of Guernsey) and Nicky Harris (DolFin Project) were able to attend the full meeting, with huge thanks going to the Island of Sark, La Société Sercquaise and in particular Sue Daly, for organising such a fantastic event. Links for the talks will be available through the Soc Sark website in due course for anyone interested. Next year's IIEM is planned for Sept 2024 and will be hosted by Jersey, with provisional plans for the 2025 meeting to be hosted in the Isle of Man.



IIEM delegates, over 60 attendees were able to make this year's meeting. Photo courtesy of Sue Daly.

Nicky Harris – DolFin Project Leader

Annual Report and Transactions for 2022

The Transactions for 2022, i.e. for last year, will soon be available for collection. Members who have opted to receive a printed copy will receive an email notifying them when they may collect their copy. Members who have opted not to receive a printed copy will be able to access an online copy on La Société's website using the members' password.

The Transactions for 2022 contain the traditionally informative reports of the activities and research carried out by the Sections, illustrated with photographs including images of bronze axes discovered in Herm, of nebulae taken by the Astronomy Section, and of new moths and other invertebrates recorded in Guernsey. There is an obituary of Bill Gallienne, our President from 1999-2002.

There are four articles contributed by members. Maria van der Tang describes the recording of the family graves at St. Sampson's Church Cemetery lost in the landslip in 1969. Andy Lane and Phil de Jersey report the findings of the excavations carried out between 2001 and 2019 on a somewhat enigmatic prehistoric stone structure found under later layers in a back yard behind a derelict house in Les Canichers. Jenny Cataroche reports on the skeleton of a person who lived in the medieval period and was buried close to the beach at Portinfer.

Richard Hocart examines the circumstances that led to the despatch in 1579 by Queen Elizabeth I of a 'royal' Commission to Guernsey to examine and report back on a host of complaints against the Governor, Sir Thomas Leighton, and the Bailiff and jurats. He shows that some of the complaints can be attributed to a determined push by the Privy Council and Leighton to maximise the money collected as annual Crown revenue, a policy that succeeded thanks in part to the unity and persistence of the Queen's senior ministers. The Commission of 1579 also dealt with many issues of Guernsey law and led to the production of the law 'code' of 1583 which became an important source of island law for centuries.

Richard Hocart – Editor of the Transactions

2020 Transactions

I am short of copies of the 2020 Transactions, if anyone has a copy they no longer require please could they drop it off to me at Candie. Many thanks.

Kate Lee – Secretary

Transactions for Sale

The late member Tony McDade very kindly donated us his set of Transactions to raise funds for La Société so we are pleased to be able to offer the volumes below from 1895 to 2021 (inclusive except for the scarce 1921 volume of which there is a photocopy included) priced at £1,000. Condition varies so if you would like to view the set during office hours please contact our Secretary Kate Lee by email secretary@societe.org.gg to arrange a time. We are grateful to Tony's family for bringing the Transactions and a large number of his personal local history books to Candie. Some of the books have gone into our library and the rest will go into a local book sale to be held by La Société at a later date.



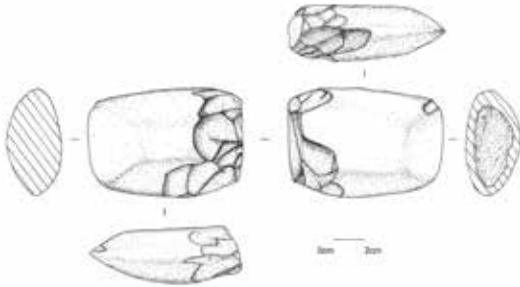
Wanted - Philology Section Secretary

La Société is seeking someone to become Secretary of the Philology Section. The Secretary deals with enquiries about Guernsey-French from within and outside the island. The Secretary is a member of the Council of the Society and advises the Council on matters relating to Guernsey-French. There has not been a Guernsey-French group in the Society for some time. We hope that the new Secretary will form such a group if there is sufficient interest. We also hope that the new Secretary will establish good relations with L'Assemblaie d'Guernésiaise and the new Language Commission.

Anyone interested in becoming Philology Section Secretary is asked to contact the Secretary of the Society in the first instance by emailing Kate Lee - secretary@societe.org.gg.

Section Reports

Archaeology



Drawings and photographs of the Stone Axe.

Photo courtesy of Andy Lane.

The exciting discovery of a stone axe by John Corbet, a sharp-eyed enthusiast, near one of Guernsey's south cliff foot paths was reported to one of our members who is interested in the accurate recording and study of artefacts found within the Bailiwick. The granite stone axe has a greenish hue and still sports a keen edge with one small chip, most probably chipped in antiquity. Unfortunately, it was broken at the proximal/butt end. This end exhibits striations across its surface that may have been the result of creating a flat platform. It appears to have been used as a possible pestle, this has been suggested because it possesses a smoother texture than the exposed side fractures, it certainly fits well in the palm of a hand. The artefact weighs 452g with maximum dimensions of 100mm in length, 70mm wide and 37mm thick. The axe would have been a treasured possession during the Neolithic period and I'm sure whoever dropped it would have been quite heartbroken.

As well as the above axehead, unusually large and interesting flint waste flakes and a flint tool, that were found over thirty years ago by Sara de la Mare whilst walking around the coastal areas of Vale were brought in for identification and recording. This information has been added to the Museum Service's Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Records database. The location of the finds is also plotted onto a map and allows us to build up a visual representation of clusters of past human activity.



Sample of the flints collected by Sara de la Mare.

Photo courtesy of Andy Lane.

Two Dolmens at Robert's Cross in Herm were given a bit of attention in July/August in the form of vegetation clearance in order for a series of high-resolution aerial photographs by drone to be taken. Ground markers (survey points) were positioned and plotted using GPS survey instruments to enable an accurate 3d image of the structures. The processed information will form the basis of a possible future excavation by a team led by Professor Chris Scarre.



Drone survey at Robert's Cross, Herm. Photo courtesy of Phil de Jersey.

An excavation at Fort Richmond was held over a weekend at the beginning of June for the Juniors to get an introduction to archaeological excavation. Due to the enthusiasm and hard work of all the diggers, it was a great success. We managed to uncover the majority of the Victorian gunpowder magazine walls and made a very good effort to get to the floor within the magazine. A vast number of artefacts were collected, including roof tiles, pottery and glass bottles. These will undoubtedly make their way into the owner's museum at the Fort itself.



Magazine excavation at Fort Richmond. Photo courtesy of Andy Lane.

Andy Lane – Archaeology Section Secretary

Astronomy Summer Outreach

The summer was a busy time for outreach. We hosted three Introduction to Summer Stargazing lectures aimed at all age groups. For 4-6 year olds we ran three Rocket Ship Rides around the Solar System where the children learned about gravity and stopped off at the International Space Station to learn how to make a space-sandwich, before heading off to the outer reaches and planet Neptune. To round the summer off we hosted a visit from twenty Australians on a tour around Blighty, led by Australia's Government astronomer Professor Fred Watson.

Safe Return of Asteroid Bennu Sample

A capsule released from the OSIRIS-REx spacecraft containing a 250g sample from asteroid Bennu touched down safely in the Utah Desert on 24th September after completing a 7-year, 1.2 billion mile journey. Asteroids are time capsules from when the Solar System was forming some 4.6 billion years ago. Carbonaceous asteroids such as Bennu contain water and carbon, making them the most likely source of these components on Earth. Studying samples can help answer questions such as the formation of the Solar System and the evolution of life on our planet.



Near-Earth asteroid Benu which is about half a kilometre at its equator. Image credit: NASA



The charred sample return capsule in the Utah desert. Image credit: NASA/Keegan Berber



Autumn Stargazing

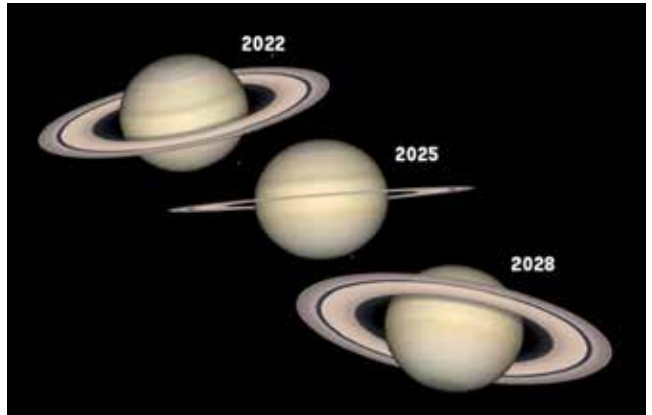
The planets Jupiter and Saturn are easy to identify in the southern sky as they are bright and stand out against the stars. With a pair of binoculars, you will be able to make out some of their many moons. This is also the last opportunity for a couple of years to see Saturn's rings in all their magnificent detail as it is approaching a ring crossing. It takes Saturn 29-years to orbit around the Sun, as it does so, the view of the rings that we see from Earth changes with Saturn's season. At one extreme we see the rings face-on, either from underneath or above and at the other extreme edge-on when they all but disappear from view, which is called the ring plane crossing.

Orbit of Benu and close approach in 2135. Image credit: CNEOS/JPL

There have been two other successful sample returns from asteroids by the Japanese Space agency (JAXA), one from siliceous (stony) asteroid Itokawa in 2010 and the other from carbonaceous asteroid Ryugu in 2018. Examination of material from Ryugu shows that it contains thousands of different carbon-based molecules (organic molecules), prebiotic carbon compounds, amino acids, aromatic hydrocarbons and other elements crucial for life such as sulphur, nitrogen and iron. Minerals found in Ryugu indicate that they formed in the presence of water, another essential for life.

The name Benu is appropriate as it represents an Egyptian deity linked with the Sun, creation and rebirth. It measures about 500 metres across and is classed as a potentially hazardous asteroid (PHA) because it makes close approaches to Earth. On the 25th of September 2135 it will make a particularly close approach of about 121,000 miles (half the Earth-Moon distance). This will be perfectly fine, providing the orbit of Benu does not change for the worse, putting it on a collision course. Asteroid orbits are generally easy to calculate, but they are subject to the very unpredictable Yarkovsky effect, which is when the asteroid surface heats up during the day and cools down at night, giving off radiation that can act in a similar manner to a mini-thruster, altering the orbit over time. Part of the OSIRIS-Rex mission was to study and better understand this effect. Currently there are 2,305 known PHA's which are closely monitored by the Centre for Near-Earth Objects at NASA/JPL.

The rings, comprise mostly water ice with small fragments of rock and dust and are typically only about 10 metres in thickness. There are seven main rings with thousands of ringlets in between. It is thought they originated from pieces of comets, asteroids and/or shattered moons that were torn apart by the planet's powerful gravity. The Cassini spacecraft also discovered that Saturn's moon Enceladus, which is venting icy particles and gas into space, contributes much to one of its outer rings.



Saturn's ring plane crossing. Image credit: NASA



Night sky looking south on 1st November at 8pm. Base image generated by SkySafari

Venus becomes a morning object, with gradually increasing illumination. You should also see Sirius and the constellation of Orion in the pre-dawn skies – a sign that we are in Autumn!

**Dr Jean Dean –
Astronomy Section
Secretary**



Night sky looking south on 1st November at 6am. Base image generated by SkySafari

Members Observations – Crescent Nebula

The Crescent Nebula, or NGC 6888, is an emission nebula located within the constellation Cygnus, near the bright star Sadr, at a distance of approximately 5,000 light-years from Earth. Discovered in 1792 by William Herschel, certain portions of NGC 6888 are visible through telescopes under favourable sky conditions. However, capturing the intricate details of the oxygen regions and surrounding hydrogen clouds requires extended exposure times with a camera.

The structure of the Crescent Nebula is often likened to a brain or a jellyfish and is the result of the stellar winds emanating from a Wolf-Rayet (WR) star colliding with the surrounding hydrogen and oxygen gases. WR stars are a rare group of stars, often described as the “party-animals” of the universe, they are very high mass and burn through their fuel very quickly, thus producing strong stellar winds.



Crescent Nebula. Image credit: Jacques Loveridge

This image was taken using the Astronomy Section’s Sky Watcher Esprit 80ED Refractor, paired with the ZWO ASI533 cooled astronomy camera, atop a Sky Watcher EQ6-R Pro mount. An Optolong L-enhance dual-band filter was used to improve contrast within the emission nebula. By selectively allowing specific wavelengths of light, including Hydrogen Alpha (appearing in red) and Oxygen 3 (visible in blue), while blocking other wavelengths, including most forms of light pollution, this filter significantly improves contrast.

The image is approximately 4 hours of integration time, with individual exposures lasting 10 minutes (600 seconds) and the camera cooled to -15°C .

Jacques Loveridge – Astronomy Section Member

Bat Section New Bat Section Leaflet Published



The La Société Guernesaise Bat Section is pleased to announce the publication of a new “Bats of the Bailiwick” leaflet. The previous leaflet was out of date, as it listed only five species of bat confirmed as present within the Bailiwick. Thanks to the efforts of hundreds of people involved in the citizen science project “The Bailiwick Bat Survey”, we now have evidence of thirteen bat species here. Whilst many excellent resources on bat ecology are available through the UK based Bat Conservation Trust, we wanted to produce something specific to our islands, to highlight the differences between the bat populations here and in the UK. We hope that many will find the leaflet will be engaging and informative, and stimulate some to want to find out more about these fascinating mammals. The production of the leaflet was kindly sponsored by the Canaccord Genuity Wealth (International) Charitable trust.

Laura Harrison – Bat Section Secretary

Please contact Laura Harrison email bats@societe.org.gg for any general bat queries or 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)**.



Botany Section

Botany Report

It was not the best summer that we have ever had. Unusually, due to heavy rain and wind, we had to take the reluctant decision to cancel our public walk on the 5th August at Silbe reserve. We couldn't risk branches toppling around us. However, we took the opportunity to move it to September. Despite the road closure and absence of parking, we were pleased to show some new faces around this tucked-away site. Later in the month, Raymond Evison led a very well attended outing to Petit Bot along with the Junior Section team. We are extremely pleased to see more children and young people joining our walks.

Record and Inaturalist

Our local Biological Records Centre (GBRC) is migrating to using Irecord to input data.

Helen was appointed verifier for vascular plants on Guernsey, Sark, Herm and, more recently, Alderney.

We would welcome input from everyone. The more records the merrier. However, don't forget to record the usual species as well as the rare, we are in danger of the islands being smothered with Autumn Squill without a daisy in sight! Irecord also includes species recorded on Inaturalist as well so, if that is your preferred app, do keep using it.

La Société Botany group will continue to visit and record plants in the old-fashioned pen and paper way for uploading to the various databases by way of excel lists.

Alderney throws up some records of species that we don't find in Guernsey and Helen is working with Lindsay Pyne in Alderney to update the online register.

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.org.gg.

Interesting finds:

Plantago media, Hoary Plantain – recorded in Alderney



Hoary Plantain (*Plantago media*).
Photo courtesy of Lyndsay Pyne.



Beggarticks (*Bidens frondosa*).
Photo courtesy of Jamie Hooper.

Bidens frondosa, Beggarticks – Jamie Hooper alerted us to this plant growing at Pleinmont, a couple of weeks later, a photograph appeared on Facebook in a garden below the reservoir. An invasive species in New Zealand, it is certainly one to watch locally.

Chaerophyllum temulum, Rough Chervil, had us scratching our heads at La Houquette School Nature area. So much so that a photograph was sent to John Poland. He kindly identified it. This is a possible introduction as it has never been recorded before.

Helen Litchfield – Botany Section Secretary

Botany Walks – please meet at 2.00pm.

Saturday 4th November – Open Meeting – Talbot Valley Lanes – Perry’s Guide ref. Page 23, E1

Saturday 2nd December – Open Meeting – Moulin Huet – Perry’s Guide ref. Page 30, D3

For further enquiries about the monthly Botany walks please contact Anna or Helen by email: 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 Section

Entomology Report

Autumn has arrived and with it the expected run of migrant moths from the continent and further afield.

The local trappers have found high numbers of Vestal arriving as well as many other common migrants such as White Speck and Delicate. We have also seen some rarer migrant species as follows:

- Pale Lemon Sallow – 4th for Guernsey
- Three-humped Prominent – New for Guernsey
- Brindled Green
- Southern Brindled Green
- Sombre Brocade
- Radford’s Flame Shoulder
- Golden Twin-spot has been recorded with three different moth trappers around the island representing the 2nd to 5th records for Guernsey
- Clifden Nonpareil
- Dewick’s Plusia



Pale Yellow Sallow



Three-humped Prominent



Brindled Green



Sombre Brocade



Radford’s Flame Shoulder

We often think of only moths being attracted to the moth traps, but there are also many “intruders” which also arrive to the lights which can include various parasitic wasps, Hemiptera, Orthoptera, even Dragonflies and Butterflies can be attracted to the light.

Here are some of those recently attracted to light:

- 18-spot Ladybird
- *Phytocoris tiliae*
- *Kleidocerys resedae*
- Hawthorn Shieldbug
- *Nabis ferus*
- *Deraeocoris lutescens*
- *Liorhyssus hyalinus* – 2nd and 3rd Records for Guernsey
- Southern Oak Bush-cricket – A recent coloniser in the island
- *Leopoldius calceatus* – New to the Channel Islands from Rich Austin



Phytocoris tiliae



Southern Oak Bush-cricket

We also now have a positive identification on a thrip found last summer as part of the Strategy for Nature work Entomology Section were doing at Ivy Castle. It turned out to be *Merothrips brunneus*, identification from a specimen sent to world expert Manfred Ulitzka in Germany.

This species is known from New Zealand, Australia, New Caledonia, Costa Rica, and the Amsterdam and St Paul Islands in the southern Indian Ocean. The question of how it got here, and to Hastings where it was also found is a bit of a mystery, but this now joins an ever increasing list of species with an apparent Antipodean origin which are turning up in Guernsey.

Entomology Section also assisted at the Nature Guernsey Open Days at Bordeaux Mound and at Pleinmont, details of moth and insect finds reported in the newsletter under Nature Guernsey.

Andy Marquis – Entomology Section Secretary

Family History

The Family History Room at the Russels, Les Cotils, is open on the 1st and 3rd Saturday each month from 10am until 12 noon. All other times and dates are by appointment only which can be done by sending an email to researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk.

Maria van der Tang - Family History Section Secretary

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

Historic Buildings Section

Events

- Saturday 28th October at 7.30pm** – Frossard Theatre – A talk by John McCormack on the geology of our building materials.
- Saturday 11th November at 7.30pm** – Frossard Theatre – A talk by Eric Grimsley on “Carpentry details with an examination of carpenters’ tools”.
- Saturday 25th November at 7.30pm** – Frossard Theatre – A talk by John McCormack entitled “The approach to a medieval house of quality: gatehouses, arches and gentlemen’s driveways”.
- Saturday 9th December at 7.30pm** – Frossard Theatre – A talk by Janet Simon entitled “A pot-pourri of old photographs and paintings of old houses”. Janet will use her extensive collection of Guernsey ephemera, with puzzles for identification.

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 kindly ensure that they are already members of La Société.

Nature Guernsey

In 2023, Nature Guernsey events began with a Rock Pool Ramble that took place on a Sunday in March at Belle Greve Bay. It was a lovely, sunny, day and about 100 people joined us to explore this stretch of coastline. With low tide leaving a large area of pools and gullies to investigate, some fascinating creatures were found, including Sea Lemons, a type of sea slug, six different species of crab, two species of starfish and numerous species of fish, all of which were released safely at the end of the event. This was the second such event that Nature Guernsey had organised on the east coast, as with Belle Greve being the only major rocky bay on this side of the island, it is an important habitat with maerl, sea grass and kelp acting as a nursery for a range of species.

A second seashore-based event swiftly followed this in April. Organised with the Archaeology Section and Société Juniors it was entitled ‘Crabs and Crocks at Cow Bay’, nothing like a bit of alliteration! This area is steeped in history as it has been a trading port for over 1000 years, making it a perfect place to explore and this was the third year the event had been held. We were again blessed with fine weather and families enjoyed an afternoon hunting along the shoreline with volunteers on hand to help with identification, both marine and archaeological. In all, eight species of crab were discovered, the most numerous being the Broad Clawed Porcelain crab, and lots of other fascinating creatures were seen including Pipe fish, Squat Lobsters and even a Sea Hare. Some great ‘crocks’ were found too, including pieces of clay pipe, a flint, a piece of Normandy Gritty ware and the base of a pot, which was almost certainly Roman.



*Broad Porcelain Clawed Crab.
Photo courtesy of Andy Marquis.*

Our next event was due to be a bird ringing demonstration at the end of April, but sadly, on this occasion, the weather let us down. Rain showers meant the event had to be cancelled as the welfare of the birds is always paramount.

In May Nature Guernsey and the Botany Section organised a joint event at the beautiful Bridget Ozanne Orchid fields in Rue des Vicheries, which are considered to be some of the best in the British Isles. The weather was fine and throughout the afternoon, members of the section led groups around the fields pointing out not only the various orchids species - Loose Flowered, Heath Spotted, Southern March and Common Spotted – but also other plants such as Ragged Robin, Bugle, Ladies Smock and Marsh Pennywort.

On June 24th it was the turn of Entomology to co-host an event with Nature Guernsey, the date being chosen as it coincided with National Insect Week which ran from the 20th to 26th. The event took the form of a bug hunt on Bordeaux Mound and the weather was perfect. Pots and nets were available, and soon lots of excited youngsters were spotting, and potting, specimens for our volunteers to identify. Five species of butterfly were seen, as well as True bugs, moths and other insects. For the adult volunteers, the most exciting find was the Fiery Clearwing, a day-flying moth, for this is a rare and endangered species, even though its food plant is Dock! It is always pleasing when our events result in records such as these being added to the local database.

Bat walks are always very popular, and this year was no exception. Although originally planned for August 2nd, adverse weather conditions meant that it was delayed until the following week but it was worth the wait as the weather was perfect on the 9th. The meeting place was the Pirate's Playground at Saumarez Park and early arrivals had a chance to try out the Bat Soundboard designed and built by section member Paul Wadley. This clever piece of kit is an interactive device that allows people to have a better understanding of the bat calls of the different species which have been recorded within the Bailiwick. For the more technically minded, the device consists of a microchip board which holds a small amount of prerecorded soundtracks and micro switches to play those recordings. Not surprisingly it is especially popular with children! As the start time for the walk approached, Bat Section Secretary Charles Hurford gave a short but fascinating introduction, while a Common pipistrelle flew overhead! Bat Section members then handed out a number of bat detectors before we all headed off along the path towards the pond. Most of the bats recorded were Common pipistrelles, but at least one Kuhl's pipistrelle was recorded as well as a possible Noctule.



Four-spotted Footman.
Photo courtesy of Andy Marquis.

The final event in this year's Nature Guernsey calendar was the annual Late Summer Family Event at Pleinmont on Sunday September 3rd, based on La Société-owned fields. Although the morning began with fog, this soon cleared away leaving behind glorious sunshine. As well as our usual guided walks, moth trap emptying, bird ringing and a bug hunt there were craft activities throughout the morning, led by our Education Officers, Becky and Sarah, Solar telescopes, manned by members of the Astronomy Section and a display by Bat Section, including the amazing Bat Soundboard, so lots to see and do, and as usual our volunteers were on hand to help with identification or just admire the finds! The event proved as popular as always and it was very encouraging to see so many youngsters engaging with nature.



Bird ringing at the Pleinmont Family Day. Photo courtesy of Lesley Bourgaize.



Whitethroat. Photo courtesy of Andy Marquis.

As it was an exceptionally low tide, we couldn't resist adding a Rock Pool Ramble in the afternoon at Fort Pezeries, a new site for us to explore. A variety of creatures were found including good numbers of Snakelocks anemones, several Strawberry anemones, several species of crab, both Cushion and Brittle starfish and several Ormers! Definitely a site to revisit in the future.

Snakelocks anemone. Photo courtesy of Andy Marquis.



Although Nature Guernsey events aim to showcase the natural world and encourage enjoyment of it, as well as an understanding of the need to care for it, the records collected at these events are an important 'by-product'. This is particularly true of the Pleinmont event which is held annually and at a similar time. All records are passed on to the relevant body or uploaded to iRecord.

Finally, a huge thank you to all the volunteers who have supported Nature Guernsey again this year. I think all would agree that although we sometimes need a bit of recovery time at the end of an event, there is much enjoyment and satisfaction in seeing the faces of children, and sometimes adults too, light up as they take part in all the different activities, spot new things and absorb new knowledge.

Think you might like to volunteer? You don't need to be an expert. Talking to the children, encouraging them to explore, admiring their finds and sharing their enthusiasm are all an important part of what we do, and there will always be someone who can help with ID if needed! The more volunteers we have, the more events we can organise and the more our message will spread. Please email NatureGuernsey@societe.org.gg for more information.

Lesley Bourgaize - Chairperson, Nature Guernsey

Ornithology

Autumn 2023

Seabird Monitoring Programme

Environment Guernsey carried out the survey over the summer. Thirteen species of bird were included as well as Atlantic Grey Seal. Thirty-eight different areas were surveyed along the south coast and east to Fermain, Paradis and Omptolle, Lihou, Herm, Jethou and the Humps.

This work is part of a national survey. It is sobering to think that because of human impacts, including climate change, all the seabirds and gulls found in Great Britain are red listed except for the Cormorant.



Numbers of Herring Gull continue to decline. *Julie Davis*

Balearic Shearwater

The Section was set up to do land-based counts of these late-summer visitors. In recent years there have been rafts of a couple of thousand birds, mainly off Les Hanois. Chris Mourant contacted fishermen and they were given a sheet to help with counting. Unfortunately, the birds didn't turn up! A few hundred were seen in May and then numbers dwindled to a few individuals. We're not sure exactly where they went, good numbers were seen in Jersey waters in the early autumn, but they didn't come here. Maybe next year...



Balearic Shearwater *Andy Marquis*

CABS

Sponsorship money from Bird Race Day and a contribution from Section funds went towards a donation of 300 euros to the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS). This charity sends teams out to Malta, Cyprus, the Lebanon and other parts of the Mediterranean to rescue illegally trapped birds, confiscate equipment and gather evidence to prosecute poachers. This summer alone, thousands of Honey-buzzards have been shot as they migrate through the Eastern Mediterranean.

Outdoor Meetings

The day trip to Herm recorded a list of 35 species, including breeding Sand Martin at the north end of the island.

Also in May, six of us set an early alarm to do the dawn chorus walk in Saumarez Park. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was drumming and this walk is a good opportunity to see Short-toed Treecreeper. Both species are resident here.

In June we ran two boat trips with Richard Keen around Herm and the Humps. The trips had good weather and people who went on both had good views of Bottle-nosed Dolphin as well as seabirds and gulls.

Chris Mourant organised two pelagic trips in August with a view to surveying Balearic Shearwater numbers. As mentioned above, they didn't want to play ball. A few were seen but they were largely absent. A raft of around 45 Cory's Shearwaters close to the boat on the first trip more than made up for the lack of Balearics and rates as one of the best sightings ever. We were also treated to excellent views of Common Dolphin. The second trip gave us a sighting of Risso's Dolphin and excellent views of a Sabine's Gull. A personal highlight on both trips was close views of Storm Petrel surface feeding. It is astonishing that these birds are true ocean birds, mostly living out at sea although they are about the size of a Swallow.

Cory's Shearwater *Andy Marquis*Sabine's Gull *Karen Jehan*Storm Petrel *Andy Marquis*

Our most recent walk took place at Jerbourg at the end of September. The weather was much kinder than last year and the group saw around fifty Swallows heading out to sea as they leave Europe for Africa. In good weather, this is always an enjoyable autumn walk as it's possible to see a wide range of birds, including birds of prey.

Indoor Meetings

This year we are holding quarterly indoor meetings. In June, there was a presentation about the Balearic Shearwater and how the French Environmental Agency are keen to include the Channel Islands in helping to survey this critically endangered species.

The main topic for discussion in September was the impact of human activities on Guernsey's birds, both resident, overwintering and on passage. Natural habitats have very little statutory protection and the increase in our population and the popularity of outdoor activities have increased disturbance. A few protected areas on the coast and inland would help to redress the balance.

The Section has close links with the Channel Islands Bird Ringing Scheme. We were happy to donate £100 towards the unexpected costs of a new computer and programme updates.

The Barn Owl Survey for this year had a final count of a minimum of 81 owls in total with 24 fledged owlets. We did not get a count from a couple of sites from last year's survey and there are sites that we don't know about, so the actual number will be near to 100. The good news is that we have added a couple of sites to the survey. We know of two young owls that fell from their nesting site. One did not survive, but the other was hand-reared (grateful thanks to the landowner who has done a terrific job). It was released recently. It is returning for food, we can only hope that with the recent fine weather, it will develop sufficient skill in hunting for itself to survive the winter. Despite the cold spring and summer, it has been a good year for the Barn Owls as there seems to be a good supply of voles.

Barn Owl *Ben Le Prevost*

Looking ahead

The Section is planning to hold more indoor meetings next year. It is expensive to bring speakers over from the UK but Zoom meetings can give us ready access to a wide range of topics. I intend to make better use of on-island expertise, holding some members-only workshops on a Thursday evening which will cover topics such as identification, favourite bird watching places in Guernsey, and what to see when. If any member has other suggestions, I would be happy to hear from you.

Interesting Sightings



Long-eared Owl Dave Carré (taken in Guernsey)

Long-eared Owl, Herm, June 2023

A juvenile was heard MCS

Common Crossbill, Torteval, WRT

Montagu's Harrier, Pleinmont, mid-August, JH et al

Little Gull, L'Eree, 1st August, WRT

Solitary Sandpiper, 5th September MPL et al. 2 on 12th September AJB et al. This is worth two photos.



Solitary Sandpiper Mike Cunningham



Turtle Dove, Les Tielles, June 2023 AS



Two Solitary Sandpipers Dave Carré

The Solitary Sandpiper is a vagrant, blown across the Atlantic from America. This year's autumn migration has been a standout for American birds recorded in the UK, mainly in the Scillies, Shetland and coastal areas in the west. This species was first recorded in Guernsey in August 1997 (AJB) at Pré d'Enfer, Rue des Bergers. The second record was from the same location this year. It stayed for several days and many people were able to see America's answer to our more common Green Sandpiper.

Then, on 12th September, there were two. This is an extraordinary record. As their name suggests, they are not gregarious and usually migrate alone. Dave Carré's photo of the two birds is something we are very unlikely to see again.

Woodchat Shrike, juvenile, Le Parcq Lane, MSC, AJB et al

AJB – Tony Bisson, JH – Jamie Hooper, MPL – Mark Lawlor, MCS – Mary Simmons, AS – Andy Stooling, WRT – Wayne Turner

Forthcoming Events

Indoor meeting, Wednesday 7th December at Candie

Our last meeting of the year is on a Wednesday to avoid parking problems with late-night shopping in St Peter Port on Thursday 8th.

This will be an informal meeting, including a presentation of members' photos looking back over 2023. There will be refreshments, including homemade mince pies.

Julie Davis - Ornithology Section Secretary

Education & Conservation Team

Autumn Report

Summer 2023 was all about sea and shore for the Education Team, as rock pooling became the main focus of our work with schools and corporates chose cetacean surveys and beach cleans as their CSR activities. Sadly, the weather wasn't always all it could be, but this was more than made up for by the beautiful September and early October which meant we were extremely busy with volunteers into autumn, with work parties at Silbe, Vale Pond, Jardin de Lorette and La Marette.

The summer instalment of the Cultural Enrichment Programme saw us working at Amherst, Notre Dame, Vauvert and Le Rondin schools, all of which were very enjoyable and rewarding for us. We kicked off the new school year with environmental education lessons at Melrose during September and October and will resume the CEP shortly with sessions at Vale, La Houquette and Vauvert schools.

One new development this summer was collaborating with the Sixth Form Centre and Elizabeth College on their work experience programmes and we were joined by six students in all. This was a wonderful experience for the Education Team and we were truly impressed with Amelie, Deanna, Jack, Patience, Reuben and Vicky – all had a great work ethic and lots of enthusiasm – we really did get lucky with our first crop! Among other activities they bled bracken at the Vale Pond, searched for signal crayfish at Chateau de Marais, pulled sour fig at Grandes Rocques, cut Hemlock Water-dropwort at the orchid fields, joined in with school trips and corporate CSRs and were generally a big help. Thank you!



*Sixth Form Centre students bracken-bleeding at Vale Pond.
Photo courtesy of Becky Ogier.*



*Elizabeth College students surveying crabs at Belle Grève.
Photo courtesy of Becky Ogier.*

We were once again invited to participate in Nature Guernsey's Family Fun Day which as always was hugely enjoyable and saw us making bug boxes in the morning and rock pooling in the afternoon – what's not to like? - and took part in the charity fête at Government House, which brought us some new members.

We are already planning our volunteer activity for next spring and have opportunities available throughout the year so please contact Becky at ecl@societe.org.gg should you or your company like to donate your CSR hours to La Société.

Becky Ogier – Education and Conservation Leader

Juniors

Our Junior events this year so far have already covered a wide variety of environmental subjects! We have learnt all about different areas of our local nature and wildlife, how to identify certain species, helped to protect these species and their habitats, whilst also having lots of fun!

On a windy day in May, we headed to Grandes Rocques and undertook a beach clean. In under two hours, we managed to fill 8 buckets of rubbish which we then removed from our beautiful landscape, reducing the damaging impact it could have had on our local wildlife. Although we wish we didn't have to collect this amount of pollution from our island, it is a satisfying activity to undertake which allows you to visually see the positive impact you have achieved!



Our beach clean event at Grandes Rocques. Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.

Across a weekend in June, our Archaeology section kindly held a two-day archaeology dig at Fort Richmond. Our Juniors were invited to drop in throughout the two days to help uncover an old magazine. We did some fantastic work, with some of our Juniors even coming back both days to help! Despite the rain at points, we had great conditions and our Juniors worked hard to uncover the magazine as well as lots of other smaller interesting finds. Thank you again to the Archaeology section and the owner of this site for kindly providing this experience. Hopefully we can head back again soon to finish it off!

In July, we held a crab surveying event at Portelet Bay! This was very well attended, and we were able to survey over 80 crabs! One attendee even managed to uncover over 25 good sized crabs under one single rock! Throughout the morning, we found four species of crab which were the Shore Crab, Furrowed Crab, Velvet Swimming Crab and the Brown Crab (also known locally as a chancre!). Crabs are a really good marker of our coastal environment and crab surveying helps us assess the status and health of our local crabs, population changes of native and non-native species, and also helps us to monitor human impact on marine life. Crabs are easily impacted by human activities, including warming seas, the introduction of invasive species and overexploitation. This makes them an ideal subject to help indicate how oceans are changing and the impacts of these threats. The data collected therefore holds a high value and has since been added to our islands' records at the Guernsey Biological Records Centre.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our rock pooling event we had scheduled in August due to the high winds that we had on the day, however we are happy to say this event has now been rescheduled for October, and we're looking forward to seeing what we can find in our waters in Autumn!



Our spotter sheet for our migratory bird walk around Pleinmont. Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.

In September we held two junior events. Our first event was a lovely bird walk led by the Ornithology Section Secretary Julie Davis around the Pleinmont headland in search of migratory birds passing over our island. We saw a good number of migrant and resident birds including Buzzards, Wood Pigeons, Swallows, Finches, Wrens, Linnets, Blackcaps, Stonechats, Carrion Crows, Blackbirds, Gulls and a Marsh Harrier. As an added bonus, the butterflies were out in full force - Small Coppers, Holly Blues, Red Admirals, Large Whites and even a couple of Brown Argus.



Our autumn botany walk on the Petit Bôt cliffs. Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.

Our second event in September was an autumn botany walk along the Petit Bôt cliffs, ironically on the hottest day of the year so far! In challenging conditions, our group did very well and found every wildflower, plant, fruit and seed we had on our spotter sheet. It was fantastic to see the plants in seed and fruit, which was very different to our previous botany walks which we normally undertake in Spring! Thank you again to our Botany Section and Raymond Evison OBE for leading this walk.

As always, these events would not take place without the support from our members; 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 are looking forward to the rest of the junior events we have lined up for the rest of the year and hope to see some of you there!



Our spotter sheet for our Botany walk at Petit Bôt. Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.

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. The details of our events are sent out to all members of La Société for whom these activities are free of charge.

Sarah Allez – Education Conservation Assistant

Upcoming Junior Events for 2023:

Sunday 29th October, 12:00 – 13:30pm

Rock pooling at Belle Greve Bay.

Sunday 19th November, slots available between 14:00 – 17:00pm

Archaeological store tour at Grange House led by the Archaeology section.

Saturday 2nd December, workshops between 13:30 – 16:00pm

Eco-friendly wreath making workshops at La Société Section Room, Candie Gardens.

Projects

Conservation Herd

The Herd arrived at our Claire Mare Reserve on Sunday 17th October where they will be for the next 3/4 weeks. The boys can be seen here inspecting their transportation.

**Dave Bartram -
Conservation Herd Manager**

Tel. 07781 168529

email conservationherd@societe.org.gg



Ready for pastures new! Photo courtesy of Tracy Spearing.

How a new hobby opened my eyes to the importance of biological record-keeping



Oxeye Daisies (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)

I come from a family of, what I like to call, “plant people”. My paternal grandparents were growers, they had four large greenhouses, and provided tomatoes for the markets. After my grandpa retired in the 1980s, they grew other fruits and vegetables; potatoes, melons, grapes and lettuces, and sold them as hedge veg. They also entered the North Show and often won various prizes, especially for their grapes. When I was young, they had mostly wound down the growing, but there was always much talk in the family about how hard-working and passionate my grandpa had been. My sister and I would skip through the empty greenhouses with glee, the rich earthy scent filling our lungs and award-winning grapes hanging above our heads. Sometimes we’d have “tight rope races” along the watering pipes, much to our dad’s horror. My granny eventually had most of the greenhouses knocked down, but it was always a joy playing in them (and I suspect most of my freckles come from the hours spent in them).

My maternal grandmother, Jennie Grange, also enjoys gardening and growing, but her true love is wild flowers. She was the secretary for the Botany Section in La Société Guernesiale during the 1980s, and has had some fantastic opportunities to develop her hobby, such as learning from the late David McClintock and identifying and labelling old herbaria.

She would often take my cousins, sister and me out on adventures and drop botanical tidbits, hoping her passion would rub off on one of us. She was a secondary school science teacher, so she knew how to capture our attention and make the lessons exciting. In particular I remember examining tree stumps and counting the rings to see how old the trees were, or looking for potential food sources in case of emergencies (we ate many Stinking Onion flowers, I can't say they're a particularly filling option!).



Although I enjoyed her lessons and activities, the plant world was never more than a passing interest when I was younger. It wasn't until I was in my twenties and spending more time with her that my interest started increasing. We'd go on walks together; she'd notice new or unusual things in hedgerows and I'd peer over her shoulder trying to get a better look. Sometimes I'd flip through her books when she wasn't looking, or take photos in her garden. One day we were out in her car and had pulled into Bordeaux car park, she said, "Sorry my love, there's a plant here I need for my class on Saturday. Wait here a minute". When she came back, I tentatively asked "Gran... would you mind maybe teaching me a bit of botany? I'd like to be able to identify the common local flowers...". I have never seen anyone light up with so much excitement, and then try to contain their excitement so terribly.

Grey Willow catkin (*Salix cinerea*)

The next time I saw her, she was armed with her old copy of "The Wild Flower Key" by Francis Rose, a leaflet guide showing the structure of flowers and their identification features, a hand lens and a notebook. We went back to Bordeaux and looked at plants growing on the beach, I was shocked to learn so many plants actually thrived in a sandy, windy habitat! A particular highlight was Sea Rocket which has an excellent fruit dispersal system; the fruits dry out and become cork-like, and float on the sea until they reach another beach. I never realised quite how amazing plants are, and how they've adapted to make the most of their favoured habitats. Over the coming months I had my eyes opened to how many species we have in Guernsey, and how many different habitats too.

After 18 months of weekly botany lessons with my gran, I reached out to the Guernsey Biological Records Centre (GBRC) to see if they had any volunteer opportunities. I spoke with the manager, Liz Sweet, who was keen to have help with standardising and cleaning datasets.

Local Environmental Records Centres (LERCs) have been set up all over the UK to collect, collate, manage and store biological data, they hold information on both common and protected species. Their key aim is to ensure that information is not lost, as quite often this data is held by specialists and then lost upon their death. The audiences of this data are; decision makers (locally, for example, The States of Guernsey), researchers including biological recorders and the general public. Records Centres work with volunteer recorders, through national recording schemes and societies, to build an accurate picture of how local habitats change and develop over time. We're seeing a startling loss in biodiversity due to habitat loss and climate change; these records are vital to track and understand the trends in biological life, and are a starting point for conservation efforts and change.



Pencilled Crane's-bill (*Geranium versicolor*)

It's crucial for both rare and common species to be recorded. Common species, in fact, are often under-reported as people are more likely to submit a record for a new or rare species. The common species also give us a clearer picture on the state of our biodiversity. For example, in the spring of 2023 we saw a massive increase in Sea Radish growing along the coast. This would have had a knock-on effect of limiting smaller plants being able to grow in the area, but beneficial for insect life as they love Sea Radish, and beneficial to birds too as they eat the fruits.

The GBRC is hard at work standardising and digitising records, so that they can be uploaded into Distmaps – a programme originally designed by the late Charles David for mapping local biological records, although the updated one has been created and maintained by Digimap. They're also working on an online platform which will feed into iRecord, a website and app specifically designed for managing and sharing records. Currently, recorders can submit to the GBRC directly, but should inform the Centre if they have also used iRecord. This new online platform will connect the two and avoid risk of duplicate records. Anyone can use iRecord, it's a beginner-friendly app for anyone who is interested in contributing to local records. All submissions will be verified by an expert, and plenty of detail can be added to assist the verification. There are also some apps such as 'Seek' by iNaturalist which uses AI technology to aid identifying, as well as Facebook groups where people are always keen to assist. The GBRC has assisted with recording events such as several BioBlitzs (which in future will be hosted by The Nature Commission), as well as partnering with various non-botanical specific schemes such as the Bailiwick Bat Survey and the Barn Owl Survey. La Société also runs some specific botanical events, one public walk on every first Saturday of the month, and other outings are available for La Société members.

The work I specifically do is formatting and cleaning the datasets submitted to the GBRC, so that all records are uniform and can be imported into Distmaps. Firstly, all identifiers and recorders are given a code, and all species are given a code too. The taxon code list is provided and maintained by the Natural History Museum; this ensures that we're following the UK standard for Record Centres, as most mainland Centres also use this list. However, some records don't match up with this taxon list, and it's my job to investigate why. Common reasons are; spelling errors, extra spaces and synonyms. I then need to send my suggested changes back to the recorder, and receive their permission to edit the records. I also add in the source, accuracy, stage, habitat and classify whether the plants are flowering or non-flowering.

Plants are the foundation of our world, they provide food, shelter, oxygen, soil stabilisation and even medicine. Although many are small, once you immerse yourself into their world, you realise how vital they are, and how clever their adaptations are. Botany is also an excellent starting point for the natural sciences, as it easily leads into studying insects, birds, mammals or fungi. It can also be a great introduction into local history and folklore. In a modern world filled with technology and social media, it's my hope that more young people can slow down, take a break, immerse themselves in nature, and realise how rich Guernsey is. It's an affordable hobby, and easy to begin, as there are so many apps, books and people out there to help with identification and guidance.

Bianca Rondel, September 2023.

Photos are all property of Bianca Rondel.

Associated Groups

Name of Group	Contact	Contact Details
Alderney Wildlife Trust	Roland Gauvain	822935
Bailiwick of Guernsey Guild of Accredited Guides	Margaret Murphy	margaretmgysy@outlook.com bluedolphinssac@gmail.com
Blue Dolphins Sub-Aqua Club		
Channel Islands Occupation Society (Guernsey)	Delga Arnold	delga20034@yahoo.co.uk
Friends of the Priaulx Library	Sue Sweet	info@friends.org.gg
Guernsey Conservation Volunteers	Angela Salmon	721163
Guernsey Meteorological Observatory	Martin Crozier	237766
G.S.P.C.A	Steve Byrne	257261
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Le Cercle Français	Chris Dye	chris.dye@mailmcgill.co
Lé Coumité d'la Culture Guernésiaise	Dr Harry Tomlinson	255891
Guernsey Trees For Life	Andy McCutcheon	07781 110180
National Trust	Jemma Charlotte Field	07781 106461
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

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.

Guernsey Environmental Services Limited,
1 Trinity Cottages, Torteval,
Guernsey, C.I., GY8 0QD

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, Yvonne Burford & Will Harford-Fox

Office hours:

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

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