

Archaeology -Continued

Evidence of structures has remained elusive however and we will do as much as we can on this site before it is lost to the airport extension project. Helene Pioffet has made a preliminary study of the pottery and dated the bulk of it to the Early Neolithic period c4500BC. This is considerably earlier than we had suspected and corresponds to the settlement at L'Erée.



Above: One of the trenches at the prehistoric site west of the airport, with inset of recently discovered rubbing-stone and glass bead.

If you are interested in helping with excavations and/or processing finds, do get in touch. We meet most Wednesday mornings and Thursday evenings and sometimes at the weekend.

Dr Philip de Jersey will be giving a "review of archaeological excavations in the Guernsey Bailiwick in 2011" at 8.00 pm on Thursday 10 November in the Frossard Theatre, Candie.

Tanya Walls

Nature Conservation

The Section will meet on the third Monday of the month at 8.00 pm at Candie HQ:

17 October 21 November
No December meeting 16 January
21 February 21 March

For further information please phone Denise Thoumine on 723003

Astronomy

Our new format this year of keeping every Tuesday for members' nights and selective Thursdays for public open evenings appears to be working quite well. We have had seven open evenings, two were nice and clear and we were able to use the telescopes and also gave illustrated talks. The others were cloudy so we gave illustrated talks and showed films. Throughout the school summer holidays we had an open evening every Thursday. This gave the children an opportunity to stay up a little later. In all we had around 200 visitors.

The repairs needed to our telescope building are ongoing. The roof has been repaired and no longer leaks, but the supports for the sliding roof have still to be changed. Work has started but not yet finished.

The British Astronomical Association held its conference in Jersey this year, the first time ever outside of the UK. David Le Conte was one of the speakers along with other eminent astronomers from an association which holds worldwide respect. The weekend was enjoyed by everyone who attended and even gave us a chance to meet up with our colleagues at the Jersey astronomy club.

We have on loan from Hertfordshire University an 'All Sky Camera'. This is fixed to the roof of our observatory and takes individual images of the night sky between sunset and sunrise. These images can be accessed using our web site www.astronomy.org.gg. Under the heading 'interesting images' you may see a barn owl who found it a convenient resting place.

Frank Dowding

Botany

Section members will receive a monthly newsletter, either by post or email. Please send a cheque to Soc. Guernesaise Botany Section with your details to Jean and Gavin Sampson, The Ferrers, 1 Milton Gardens, Rue Cauchée, St Martins, Guernsey GY4 6NU, tel: 234430, email: gavsampson@cwgsy.net. Send your name, address, postcode and telephone number, and your email address if you wish to receive your newsletter that way.

Entomology

The Entomology Section will meet with the Botany and Nature Conservation Sections for their monthly outings in 2011. Please see these Sections for times and places.

Family History

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

Edith Le Patourel

Officers and Council Members

Officers:

President	Rodney Collette	249021	president@societe.org.gg
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Reserves Committee Chairman	Jane Gilmour	700024	
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The Alderney Society & Museum	The Secretary	823222	
Alderney Wildlife Trust	Roland Gauvain	822935	
Bat Group	Pat Costen	264500	
Guernsey Conservation Volunteers	Angela Salmon	721163	
Friends of the Priaux Library	Gavin Lanoe	246715	
La Société Sercquaise	Jo Birch	832788	
National Council for the Conservation of Plants Guernsey	Tattie Thompson	239444	
Lé Coumité d'la Culture Guernésiaise	Hazel Tomlinson	255891	
Meteorological Observatory	Martin Crozier	237766	
WEA	David Le Conte	264847	
The Guernsey Botanical Trust	Raymond Evison		


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

J. Hooper (co-opted), Miss J. Gilmour (co-opted), Mrs S. Brouard, Ms J. Keen, R.B. de la Rue, M. Deane and R. Lord
Any member of La Société who is interested in joining one of the Sections or groups should contact the relevant Section Secretary.

Office Hours: The office at Candie is normally open between 10.00 and 11.30am on Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays.

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Environment Guernsey is the wholly owned company of La Société Guernesaise

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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COMMUNIQUE

The Newsletter of **LA SOCIÉTÉ GUERNESIAISE**

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Guernsey's Local Research, Natural History and Conservation Society

Christmas Luncheon

Sunday 11 December

Following last year's excellent Christmas lunch at the Wellington Boot (Hotel de Havelet), we will be holding this year's lunch there at 12.45 pm on Sunday 11 December. The cost will be £16 pp, including tip to the staff, but excluding drinks.

The menu is on the enclosed sheet. Please send your cheque, payable to La Société Guernesaise, along with the names of those attending and their menu choices, to the Secretary by 30 November. There will be no seating plan.



Publication of the Annual Report and Transactions for 2010

This will be available from Candie HQ from Saturday 14 January 2012 on Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday mornings between 10.00 and 11.30 am. Members who asked to receive a printed copy are requested to make every effort to collect their copy between 14 January and 25 February 2012. Those who elected to have access to the electronic version will be sent a password in January.

The annual Report and Transactions for 2010 contains the usual reports from the sections recording their findings over the year. The report of the Archaeology Section contains short accounts of the exceptional number of excavations that were carried out in the bailiwick in 2010 by local diggers led by Philip de Jersey, the States Archaeologist, and by eminent archaeologists from the UK. The Ornithology Section report is accompanied by a report from Paul Veron detailing the results of his gull-ringing studies which are yielding new information about the movements of Guernsey's three species of gull.

Publication of the Annual Report and Transactions continued

In 2010 we saw the deaths of Marie de Garis, the compiler of the Dictionnaire Angllais-Guernésiais, and Bob Burns, who transformed our knowledge of prehistoric and medieval Guernsey in a series of excavations in the 1970s and 1980s. Obituaries of both appear in the Transactions.

The 2010 Transactions will contain six articles. Amanda Bennett and David Le Conte have written an account of the distinguished Guernseyman who were Fellows of the Royal Society. Richard Hocart has written a study of Jean Guille of St. George (the second of that name) who lived from 1712 to 1778. Gillian Lenfestey has written a biographical study of George Métiévier, widely regarded as Guernsey's national poet. John McCormack discusses the evidence for very early date for the chancel of the Vale Church and sets it within the context of the early history of Christianity in the Channel Islands. Elisabeth Ridel of Caen University has written a discussion about place names of Guernsey of Scandinavian origin, and Tanya Walls and David Lane have written a report on their watching brief and excavations in the area designated for the extension of the Vardes Quarry in St. Sampson's.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2012 will be held at the same rate, that is:

Local single - £22
Local double/family - £30
Overseas (single, double or family) - £20
Students - £5
Corporate - £200
Single Life - £300
Double Life - £400

Thank you to so many members who have switched to Direct Debit. There should be fewer problems in the future. **Those who pay by cheque should please note that subscriptions are due on 1 January.**

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President's Message

Well, I have now completed my first six months in office and what a steep learning curve it has been. The position holds great responsibility but is made relatively easy by the wonderful support I receive from the Council members, section secretaries and officers. I have in the past served on Council but it is only now that I have really become aware of the extent of the commitment and dedication, not to mention the energy, of these wonderful people. I would go as far as to say that many important aspects of Guernsey would be in a very sorry state without their endeavours.

I am particularly grateful to my predecessor, Pat Costen, who was so helpful during my term of vice-president and has held my hand since my election to the higher office and continues to do so.

A real tower of strength has been and is our Secretary, Lawney Martin, who sadly after seventeen years of loyal and devoted service has given notice of her intention to retire next June. I know that they say that no-one is indispensable but it is a fact that some people are near impossible to replace and Lawney certainly comes into that category. If there is someone out there who would be interested in the position (it is salaried) please let us know. Lawney will be pleased to provide a job description. Our treasure of a Membership Secretary, May Teagle, is also stepping down at the same time after 18 years in a voluntary capacity, but it appears that we may have someone waiting in the wings to take her place.

Finally, it is probably usual for an incoming President to have a personal target and mine is to swell the Société's corporate membership. After all, the Société contributes so much to making Guernsey such an attractive place in which to live that I have no doubt that the many corporate bodies established here will be more than willing to play their part. The Treasurer Peter Budwin and I will in the near future be mounting a concerted campaign to boost that area of membership.

Rodney Collenette

Marathon des Sables

Mike Meinke has been given a place to run the gruelling Marathon des Sables in 2013, which involves a 6-day 151-mile run across the Sahara desert. Some 700 competitors will have to carry everything they will need for the duration (apart from a tent) on their backs in a rucksack (food, clothes, medical kit, sleeping bag etc). Water is rationed and handed out at each check-point.

They will experience mid-day temperatures of up to 120°F, and of running or walking on uneven rocky, stony ground as well as sand dunes.

Mike has generously expressed his wish to raise funds for conservation and maintenance of the reserves of La Société Guernesaise, and a donations "button" has been created on our website (societe@org.gg). Please show your support for his dedication in the 2-year training leading up to this amazing human effort by donating to his chosen charity.

Annual Sale

The Annual Sale took place on Sunday 29th May. For the first time we had a change of venue and the Professor Shaw Centre at St Martins proved to be ideal. However, although a lot of members worked very hard and despite receiving plenty of goods to sell, our profit was just £734. This is a welcome sum to add to general funds of course but compared to earlier years it was disappointing.

There could be many reasons. Having organised thirteen sales I am standing down and a new, possibly younger person may inject fresh ideas and vitality into the venture. The date was over half-term and the day before the NCCPG Plant Sale. There may be too much competition nowadays, with, for example, farmer's markets a popular feature of island life.

Nevertheless sincere thanks to the following: Lawney, Carol Goodwin and Catherine Peet (standing in for Julia) on Cakes; Edith Le Patourel on Teas; Vanessa Crispini-Adams and Judith Keen on Bric-à-brac; Denise Thoumine, Ann Dorey and Peter Budwin on Books; Judy Down and Mary Simmons on Raffle; Jean and Martin Bienvenu on La Société goods; Hazel Hill, Hazel Gray and Kathy Stagg on Plants.



On behalf of La Société I would like to offer particular thanks to the following plant nurseries whose kind donations provided a substantial basis for the plant stall: Cl Plants St Martin, Dell Nursery, Earlswood Nursery, Guernsey Gardens, Guernsey Clematis Nursery, Kings Mills Garden Centre.

..and finally a special thank you to Brian Sarre and Dave Marquand at the Professor Shaw Centre who couldn't have been kinder and more helpful.

Pat Costen



French Trip

This year's trip was organised by myself (Rodney Collenette) and John Nicolle (mainly the latter) and as a change the Loire Atlantique Département was decided upon from the 1st to the 5th of June.

It was originally planned to hire two nine-seater mini-buses from St Malo which would have proved very expensive, but through his connections John was able to obtain the loan of the Age Concern fourteen-seater mini-bus, so we were able to drive onto Condor in the explicitly signed and decorated bus, much to the amusement (and some consternation) of the bulk of the party, with the remainder in my car (much to their consternation also, no doubt).

Through his browsing of the internet John had come across a very promising Relais in the small coastal village of Quimiac, near the town of Guérande, an area quite well known to both of us, and a recce in April convinced us that we had made a wise choice; a small hotel with excellent cuisine and friendly helpful management.

Due to the Condor sailing time we spent the first night at the Hotel de la Poste in St.Servan where members of the party, several of whom had not met before, were able to relax and get to know each other over a very pleasant meal in convivial surroundings.

On the Thursday morning we departed for Quimiac, stopping en route at the beautiful little town of Rochefort en Terre which overlooks the valley of the River Guezon and is a four-star 'Ville Fleurie', where we enjoyed a picnic lunch, after which we set off for Quimiac, arriving in the late afternoon in time to enjoy the first of our splendid evening meals.

On the Friday we visited the market in the square, acquiring goodies for our picnic lunches and then set off for the hamlet of Kerhinet which has been created by the re-erection of buildings, all thatched, from other parts of the Parc Naturel Régional de Brière to form a living museum. After lunch we continued to Breca on the edge of the Marais de Grande Brière where a tour of this fascinating area had been arranged, firstly with a ride on a 'calèche', Sark style, followed by a trip on a barque (punt) through the famous marshes where we saw waterfowl, dragonflies and not too many giant sized mosquitoes. This regional park is the largest wetland in France covering some 100,000 acres, criss-crossed by a network of canals.

On Saturday morning we drove, via La Roche Bernard, to Vannes, parking in the area of Le Port where most of the party enjoyed café lunches in the sunshine and a bit of shopping (there had been a very amusing cross-conversation over breakfast between two members, one of whom was rather deaf and who was in the habit of referring to the bus as the van; you can imagine the confusion when he was told that we would be lunching in Vannes). After lunch the bulk of the party drove the short distance to the Sene peninsula on the Golfe de Morbihan which is part of a Ramsar Site and a famous bird reserve, with an interpretation centre and specially prepared walkways.

It was an extremely hot day with the temperature in the low forties Celsius, not really conducive to bird watching, but we did see interesting wader including avocets and black-winged stilts.

On returning to the hotel several members took the opportunity of swimming from the nearby beach in order to cool down; the more sensible of us did so by means of a cold beer or two.

Sunday was our last day and we set off early for a guided visit to 'Terre de Sel', the sea salt centre. Unfortunately after four days of glorious sunshine the heavens opened (just as they had done on a previous Société visit) and our tour was restricted to the information centre where we were given a very informative talk on the amazing salt making-process. After a lunch in the lovely old walled town of Guérande, by which time the weather had improved, we set off for St. Malo where we were able to spend a pleasant hour before boarding Condor for home.

Rosemary Jagger 1932 - 2011

Rosemary was born in Guernsey on 10 March 1932, the daughter of the prominent Guernseyman R.O. Falla, and his wife Ethel Touzeau. She was evacuated to England during the Occupation, later becoming qualified in nursery nursing and gaining a degree at Bristol University.



As a Navy wife she spent some years in Malta and Australia, returning to live in England and then Guernsey. Much of her life was spent in helping young children, setting up playgroups, working to support single-parent families, and serving as a member of the Children Board. She worked on the Imperial Cancer Research Fund's research on Guernsey women.

As a keen gardener Rosemary took a special interest in botany, and was a member of gardening clubs. She was a member of La Société Guernesaise for many years, and served on the Société Council from 1985 to 1987. She was President of the Workers' Educational Association from 1998 to 2010.

As Chairman of the Council of Churches she worked for reconciliation with Biberach, which led to goodwill exchanges. As District Ecumenical Officer for the Methodist Church in the Channel Islands she served on the committee which formulated the Covenant between the Methodist and Anglican Churches in 2003.

After a two-year illness she died on 26 June 2011, and leaves two sons (Nick and Simon) and a daughter (Sarah). She will be remembered for her cheery smile, her boundless sense of fun, and her enjoyment of all things beautiful.

SECTION REPORTS

Archaeology

The unexpected excavations at St Tugal's Chapel in Herm kept us very busy through the spring. We identified at least 38 burials, mostly of children and adolescents; some of the skeletons were left in situ but about half were brought to the museum for further research. Jenny Cataroche is working on these as well as the three skeletons we excavated from St Martin's Church last winter. The analyses are ongoing but the St Martin's Church report is due to be completed within the next few months. The report will detail the age and sex profile of the burials, and, where possible, will give a commentary on any signs of disease in the skeletons which can give an insight into the health of the people buried and conditions they may have suffered from in life.

The Herm 'Island of the Dead' Conference in May was a great success. This was the opportunity to hear the results of Professor Chris Scarre's Herm Project. We enjoyed a day of lectures by the Project team: Chris Scarre, John Renouf, Duncan Hale, Charlie French and Rob Scaife. Unfortunately Ian Bailiff was prevented from attending due to fog, but we heard about the very successful results of his dating of sediments using a technique known as optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) and now have some precise dating for the tomb constructions and the sand blows which covered them. There were also lectures placing the Herm Project in its wider context: these were given by Heather Sebire, Duncan Garrow, Fraser Sturt, Philip de Jersey, Jenny Cataroche and Barry Cunliffe. The second day comprised a trip to Herm where Chris Scarre gave us a tour of the excavation sites and summed up the discoveries made. Essentially Herm now has evidence of the occupation sites of the monument builders, as well as more accurate dating of the tombs themselves and a much enhanced understanding of its past landscape and environment. The final season of excavations has just commenced and we await the results with interest.

June saw the first in a series of research excavations by visiting archaeologists. Dr George Nash (Bristol University) completed another season of work at the ruined gallery grave at Delancey. The site must have been quite damaged when it was discovered in 1919, and the excavations of Miss Vera Collum in 1932 appear to have removed or disturbed much of the archaeological deposits. However, some prehistoric pottery and flint was discovered, along with three blue beads which are thought to be Bronze Age. Dr Nash gave a lecture on his work at Delancey, putting the monument into its wider context both in terms of the landscape and by comparing it to sites in Jersey.

In July Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe completed another short season of work in Sark, at two sites: the field near the Mill where the hoard was found in 1719, and the rubble cairn near Port à la Jument, in the north-west of the island.

Both sites revealed significant traces of Bronze Age settlement and, in the case of the cairn, evidence of earlier (late Neolithic) occupation as well. From a pit beneath the cairn came two beautiful flint blades; the flint - and perhaps the finished artefacts themselves - was certainly imported and may have come from the Le Havre area of northern France.

At the time of writing the fourth season of excavations is under way at L'Érée; the site is just above the small beach on the southern side of the headland. This project is led by Dr Duncan Garrow (University of Liverpool) and Dr Fraser Sturt (University of Southampton). Last year hearths and post-holes were excavated and this year's trench has been sited adjacent to these discoveries. The Neolithic people were the first settled farmers and Guernsey provides an important link between Britain and continental Europe in studying the spread of this way of life. In a lecture for La Société the conclusions from the work at L'Érée were outlined: settlement at the site appears to have been temporary, with the occupants returning repeatedly and perhaps seasonally. An Early Neolithic occupation of the site corresponds to the time when the nearby tomb of Le Creux es Faies was built, while an Early Bronze Age phase coincides with later use of the tomb.

In August there were two excavation projects in Alderney: at The Nunnery and Les Rochers. Museum Director Dr Jason Monaghan led the excavations at The Nunnery and has been trying to prove conclusively that it was a Roman fort. Having found clear evidence of the defensive tower which stood within the curtain walls and Roman pottery and tile, there is little doubt that this is a fort of the Late Roman period which has been re-used down the centuries. The curtain walls actually survive to their full height in places and include the parapet walkway and crenellations. This is an exceptional state of preservation for a Roman building and deserves to be much more widely known. The second project investigated the theory that there are prehistoric alignments on high ground in the centre of the island, known as Les Rochers. The name describes well the boulder-strewn hill. Old sea charts show Les Rochers with stones set in lines and it has been thought that these were prehistoric alignments, later used as seamarks, which have now been destroyed or lost. The Wildlife Trust has a tree planting scheme in this area and tree roots can be very damaging to archaeological deposits. Five trenches were opened up across the hill, but only a few flints representing a 'background' of prehistoric activity were recovered. On present evidence we must conclude that it is likely that the stones shown on the charts were natural outcrops depicted in a stylised manner.

Work is still ongoing at the prehistoric site west of the airport. This summer we opened a series of long narrow trenches close to La Plaisance Road and uncovered more of the enigmatic ditches which have characterised this site throughout. Most of them are dated by finds of pottery and flint to the prehistoric period and there is no doubt that there is a largely undisturbed and extensive prehistoric land surface surviving in this area.