



COMMUNIQUÉ

The Newsletter of **LA SOCIÉTÉ GUERNÉSIAISE**

May 2017 Issue No.93

Guernsey's Local Research, Natural History and Conservation Society

JETHOU TRIPS 2017

We have arranged a trip to Jethou on Saturday 17th June at 9.30am departing from the near the Sark boat waiting room. According to interest further boats can be arranged that morning. The trip lasts 2 hours and there is a toilet on the island for visitors to use, near the jetty. Please note these trips are strictly for Members only due to insurance restrictions and the cost per person is £25.

Kindly e-mail secretary@societe.org.gg to book a seat.

Please note this is an unguided trip. When visiting Jethou there is a specified dedicated coastal and part / woodland walk. A map is provided with the paths clearly shown. The walk at times can be demanding and does require some agility. The paths are mainly grass with occasional steep steps and stout walking boots are always a good idea. The walk, although short, has its challenges and if a warm day, please be sure to bring some bottled water as this hike can make visitors thirsty. Please be aware there are no facilities for first aid on the Island and please consider all the above when contemplating your visit. A full risk assessment has been taken.

When booking kindly send passenger names and a mobile contact. Payment in advance please by cheque to Candie or via the Donation page of our [website www.societe.org.gg](http://www.societe.org.gg)

If the weather is bad you will be notified by phone the evening before and the trip will be re-scheduled.



Wild Mallow – Jethou June 2016
- Photo courtesy of Beckie Smith



Great Black-Backed Gull - Jethou June 2016
- Photo courtesy of Beckie Smith

UPCOMING LECTURE

Saturday 27th May, 1.30pm, Frossard Theatre, Candie - "The Huguenots: the Almost-Forgotten People" by Robert Nash of the Huguenot Society of Australia. Free entry for Société Members, £5 for non-members payable on the door. Apologies we are not able to take seat bookings in advance so kindly come early to avoid disappointment.

2015 TRANSACTIONS

Please note the 2015 Transactions (Statue of Victor Hugo on the front cover) are available for collection from Candie. The office is open on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning between 10am and 11.30am – parking is easier on a Saturday morning.

If you no longer wish to receive the Transactions or would prefer to receive them electronically via our website kindly Email: secretary@societe.org.gg stating your preference.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

When we held the AGM in March I was able to report on some of the highlights of the past year:

1. 'Way Forward Group':

The Council set up a 'Way Forward Group' last autumn to consider a number of important issues concerning La Société and the group has been meeting monthly throughout the winter. We have been particularly concerned about the need to improve communications with the membership and how the various sections link together in a coherent whole. We are thinking about a gradual evolution of the way that La Société works and its management structure. We want to raise the profile of La Société and make it more attractive to new members and, in particular, younger members by improving our website and social media presence. I am not proposing to say any more at this time but it is our intention to hold a special Extraordinary General Meeting later this year in order to fully discuss our proposals and to gain members approval for any changes that might be suggested.

2. Land Purchase:

We were offered two fields of land for purchase last summer, both of which La Société had been renting for many years. One of these was adjacent to La Claire Mare and enhanced that nature reserve. I can report that we were successful in that purchase. Last autumn we also became aware of another block of land between Pitronnerie Road and the Château du Marais. This area has been designated as a Site of Special Significance in the new Island Development Plan and it links with a large area of low lying wet meadow land that is also designated as either a Site of Special Significance or an Area of Biodiversity Importance. Potentially it could form the basis of a future new wildlife reserve for La Société on the Eastern side of the island. We completed on this purchase in April 2017 and the fields are currently resplendent with yellow flag irises. I can also report that we have shown interest in purchasing some other areas of land that could be potentially very exciting in the future. We are keen to expand our reserves, particularly in areas of land that have been designated as Sites of Special Significance or Areas of Biodiversity Importance.

3. Biodiversity Partnership Group:

Following the States approval of the Environment Department's 'Biodiversity Strategy' and the vote of £80,000 towards the costs of implementation, there have been a series of meetings at which La Société members have played a very full part in developing proposals for the future. Recent meetings have aimed to agree a consensus of priorities and an implementation plan for future biodiversity work. I understand that a new Habitat Survey has been proposed as well as several baseline studies. I'm also personally very pleased that a scheme for growing wild bird seed crops appears to have gained approval as I ran a successful 'Pilot Habitat Enhancement Scheme' that did just this some 12 years ago, when States funding was withdrawn.

4. Inter-Island Environment Meeting 2016:

The annual Inter-Island Environment Meeting was hosted by La Société and held at Castle Cornet last September, 2016. These 2 day meetings have been taking place for the past 16 years on an annual basis (with a short break between 2004 and 2007). The meeting is held in a different island each year. In 2015 it was held in Alderney and this year (2017) preparations are being made for the meeting to be held in Sark. The numbers of people attending increases every year.

Our thanks go to the Insurance Corporation of the Channel Islands for their continued support and sponsorship, to Herm Island for hosting a field trip on the second day, and to Jessi Jennings and Julia Henney and the organising committee for making it such an enjoyable event.

5. The Russels Centre, Les Cotils:

La Société became tenant of 'The Russels Centre' at Les Cotils last spring. The Family History section moved into a part of that building and it has proven to be an excellent home for the Section. We are using the remainder of the space available as book storage at the present time, but hope that in future we can develop this area further.

6. Griff Caldwell Educational Bursary:

It was decided that the Griff Caldwell bursary would be extended so that post-graduates as well as first degree students could apply as it was felt that post-graduates are often in a much more difficult financial position. This year's bursary was awarded to Laura Bampton who is undertaking an MSc degree in 'global environment, politics and society' at Edinburgh University, following a Natural Sciences degree at Cambridge. I had pleasure in presenting her cheque last December. Last year's bursary winner Evie Wood, who is studying at Brighton University, contacted me by email just this morning saying how thrilled she had been to receive the award last year and how beneficial it had proved to be.

7. UK National Biodiversity Network Award.

Last year Nigel Jee was awarded the inaugural Gilbert White award of the UK National Biodiversity Network. This year La Société has notched up another coup as George Garnett was awarded the NBN's Gilbert White Youth Award for Terrestrial and Freshwater Recording. George received a pair of high-spec binoculars at an award ceremony last November. La Société is really 'punching above its weight' in these National UK awards.

8. Events in 2016:

La Société was once again well represented at a number of island events. I should like to thank all Members and their families who volunteered to attend these events and man our stands. A book sale in May raised £324, the Vraic Day in August £48 and the West Show £160. I should like to thank Richard Hocart for donating the proceeds of the sale of Anne Hocart's (his mother's) books to La Société.

9. Books:

Whilst on the subject of books:

a. Richard Hocart has published his very readable account of the 'Country People of Guernsey and their Agriculture 1640 – 1840'. This is the result of Richard's very detailed original research into this important part of island life. The book is priced at £12.

b. Rachel Rabey (ably assisted by Andrew Lee) has produced an invaluable guide: the Check List of Plants in St Martin priced at £3.50 and I understand that she is now working on revising Bridget Ozanne's Check List of Plants in Guernsey, which is due for publication shortly. Rachel personally paid for the publication and is donating all the sale proceeds to La Société (£52.50p so far) for which we are very grateful.

These books are available from our Secretary, Kate Lee, in the office during opening hours – Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday between 10am and 11.30am.

10. Talks/Lectures:

We have had some excellent talks in La Société this year. I don't wish to single any out because they have all been really wonderful but I would just mention the talk on insect life given last October at St James by George McGavin the TV wildlife presenter. This was an excellent event sponsored by Collenette Jones. I am pleased to report that George has agreed to make a return visit this coming autumn to tell us more about his life and work as a TV presenter.

11. People:

I am pleased to announce that:

- Council has agreed to award Life Membership to two members of the Family History Section –
 - i. Mrs Marie Sillars for her past service as section treasurer and journal editor: and
 - ii. Mrs Sheila Greenough as archivist of the section.
- The following Honorary appointments have been made to Council:
 - iii. Vic Froome has retired as the Ornithology Section Secretary and Chris Mourant has taken up this position on Council (and I should also like to thank both Vic and Chris for their work rebuilding the wall adjacent to the Vale Pond and hide). Our thanks to Judy Down who has represented the Ornithology Section on Council for many years
 - iv. Mark Lawlor has stood down as Council liaison with the Entomology Section and Trevor Bourgaize has become Entomology Section Secretary.
 - v. Aimée Golden has taken up position as Section Secretary of the newly formed Bat Section.
- Sadly, the following have come to the end of their term on Council:
 - vi. Richard de la Rue, Mike Deane and Lawney Martin are standing down as Members of Council this year.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (CONT.)

vii. I should like to thank Vic, Mark, Richard, Mike and Lawney for their long and valuable service to La Société.

Let me also thank Richard Hocart for his mammoth work each year editing the Transactions. This is a huge amount of work on La Sociétés behalf.

Finally, my thanks are due to all members of the Council who have worked so hard this year. I should particularly like to mention David Cranch, Treasurer, Lawney Martin, Membership Secretary and Kate Lee our very able Secretary, who is by far the most important person and without whom I should be completely lost in this role.

Dr Andrew Casebow

New Members on Council

We would like to welcome the newly appointed Ordinary Members Vanessa Crispini-Adams and Roy Bisson to Council. Vanessa and Roy were voted in at the recent AGM.

THE GRIFF CALDWELL BURSARY, 2017

La Société Guernesiaise has established a bursary in memory of Frank Griffiths Caldwell, who was known to all as Griff.

Griff Caldwell was born in Guernsey in 1921. After an army career in which he reached the rank of Major-General he retired to Guernsey. He was involved in the running of La Société Guernesiaise and served as president of the society for three years. He helped the society to acquire several nature reserves and initiated various projects to enhance nature conservation in the island. He died in 2014.

The bursary is a single payment of £1,000 for a student from the Bailiwick of Guernsey taking a higher education course.

The bursary is intended to support a student who is studying a subject related to Griff Caldwell's interest in fauna, flora and the natural environment, and their conservation.

Who is eligible to apply for the bursary?

Any person who:

- (a) is ordinarily resident in the Bailiwick of Guernsey at the commencement of his/her course of higher education; and
- (b) is attending, or will be attending, in the autumn term 2017 a course of higher education in biological, ecological or environmental science or a course which contains a substantial element of such science.

Applications may be made in respect of undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

How to apply: Please complete the application form, which can be downloaded from **La Société's website** www.societe.org.gg

THE GRIFF CALDWELL BURSARY, 2017 (CONT.)

Please supply with your form a letter addressed to The Secretary of La Société Guernesiaise stating:

What aspects of nature and conservation you are interested in.

What activities related to the study and conservation of nature and the environment you have been involved in.

How your course relates to your interest in nature and conservation.

Your plans for the future after completion of your course.

The completed form and letter should reach the office of La Société Guernesiaise by Saturday 15th July, 2017.

How we will deal with your application:

We intend to decide on the award by Saturday 30th September, 2017.

We will ask you to inform us of the results of any "A" Level or other academic examinations taken this year. We may wish to interview you. It would therefore be helpful if you would let us know when you will be in Guernsey or the other islands in August and September.

INTER ISLAND ENVIRONMENT MEETING 2017

In 2016, the Inter Island Environment Meeting (IIEM) was held in Guernsey and hosted by La Société Guernesiaise and the States of Guernsey. The tradition is to hold the Meeting in a different island each year, and so this year the IIEM will be held in the beautiful location of Sark.

The date for the IIEM this year is Thursday 21st – Friday 22nd September 2017. The broad theme is Habitat Management, allowing for presentations, discussions and visits covering the seabed to the skies above. The IIEM 2017 management team currently have speakers covering topics such as managing landscape changes, insect and bee habitats, freshwater ponds, marine habitats, and the Sarkwatch Group. Updates on speakers and the confirmed agenda will be made available as soon as the details are confirmed.

The main venue for the IIEM 2017 is the Island Hall for the focus of the wide-ranging agenda of presentations, discussions etc. with space for a display of posters.

A range of outdoor activities are provisionally planned, including a visit to the Gouliot Caves via boat (subject to weather), and on foot a Gouliot headland walk looking at plants, rockpooling on the L'Eperquerie, a wet valley walk, and (subject to cloud cover) stargazing in the new observatory. Two exhibitions on coastal erosion and landscape changes through the centuries are also in the pipeline.

Anyone who has an interest in the natural environment of the Channel Islands is welcome to attend. If you have not received the email sent out in April about the IIEM 2017, and are interested in attending, please Email: jane.norwich@cwgsy.net to add your email to the mailing list. Check out the Facebook page for more info: @IIEM2017



ARCHAEOLOGY

Over the past months we have made a number of visits to archaeological sites on the north and west coasts. We collect any eroding material, usually flints and pottery, which is then brought to the museum to be washed and studied. Sites visited include: the flint knapping sites at Pembroke and Creve Coeur, one of which was excavated two years ago and shown to be Neolithic/Early Bronze Age in date. The prehistoric settlement at L'Eree, which was excavated in 2008-2011, and is due to be published in *Neolithic Stepping Stones: Excavation and Survey Within the Western Seaways of Britain, 2008-2014* by Duncan Garrow and Fraser Sturt; expected to be on sale in July. The medieval settlement site at Albecq, where one building is slowly eroding from the cliff. The tidal islet of Chapelle Dom Hue, between the L'Eree headland and Le Catoroc, where there are remains of a small building thought to have been a hermit's cell, perhaps associated with Lihou Priory. The pottery found on this small islet reinforces the belief that the building was medieval. There is also a lot of prehistoric flint, which must have been deposited at a time when this was still part of mainland Guernsey. On a particularly low tide we went to Cow Bay below Castle Cornet and collected material dating from the Roman through to the post-medieval periods; some of this was probably rubbish from the castle and some is from shipwrecks lying on the seabed in the mouth of the harbour.

Restoration work on the tombs in the Brothers Cemetery is now complete and it is hoped that the cemetery will be re-opened later this year. For more information go to <https://brotherscemetery.wordpress.com/>

From 15th-24th of May the Clifton Antiquarian Club will be excavating Le Trepied at Le Catoroc. Seven small trenches will be dug around the outside of the dolmen and the team hope to show whether it was originally covered by a mound and to find material to help date the monument more accurately. They will be working all day, including the weekend, and visitors are very welcome; there will probably also be an open day.

Other forthcoming events include: a trip to Lihou to clear vegetation from the priory and dovecote; a visit to Sark to see the excavations by Professor Barry Cunliffe and team; and a possible visit to Herm. There are no fixed dates for these events yet, but when finalised they will be put on the website and also emailed to Section members.

Tanya Walls
Email: archaeology@societe.org.gg



Collecting flints at Creve Coeur
- photo courtesy of Tanya Walls



Cleaning up the eroding cliff at the L'Eree prehistoric settlement – photo courtesy of Philip de Jersey



Springtime in the Brothers Cemetery
– photo courtesy of Philip de Jersey

During February and March we held our annual Stargazing Course over six Thursday evenings. This has proved to be very popular over the years as part of the Workers Education Association (WEA). A number of us are involved under the guidance of David Le Conte. It would seem that we seldom have a clear sky on a Tuesday evening, but there was a fortunate spell a few weeks ago when along with other celestial objects we were able to look at 'Vesta'. This was particularly satisfying as Vesta is an Asteroid in the asteroid belt only about 350 miles across and over 150 million miles away between Mars and Jupiter. Jupiter itself is highly visible at the moment.

On the evening of Tuesday 4th April we were honoured by a visit from His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor Vice Admiral Sir Ian Corder and Lady Corder. This had followed an earlier conversation when His Excellency had expressed to David Le Conte his interest in astronomy and would very much like to visit our observatory. Unfortunately the weather was not suitable for viewing, but the visit was a huge success and we were all impressed with Sir Ian's astronomical knowledge, particularly his star navigation. The visit coincided with our normal Tuesday evening Members night and we are keen to welcome Sir Ian and Lady Corder on a return visit and hopefully next time we will have clearer skies.

We are very pleased with the many Group Bookings we have welcomed. Groups from Social Clubs, Guiding and any group of people who wish to visit for an hour or so at the observatory without the bustle we have on our popular Open Evenings. We often have School Children and it was particularly satisfying during these last few months to impart our knowledge to a wide range of Students from Pre school level to 6th Form. It is so important to encourage questions on space research from all ages and the more challenging the question the better.

On Monday 29th May Spring Bank Holiday, we are holding an Open Day between 10.30am and 12.30 pm. This is instead of an open evening and if the weather permits we will use our special equipment to look at the Sun. There will also be films and illustrated talks for all ages. Our first Open evening will be Thursday 27th July at 9.00 pm. Further Open evening dates below. All are welcome.

Frank Dowding
Acting Secretary

SEE THE STARS WITH LARGE TELESCOPES

Visitors are welcome at Guernsey's Astronomical Observatory on the following dates:

Thursday 3rd August at 8.30pm	Thursday 10th August at 8.30pm
Thursday 17th August at 8.30pm	Thursday 24th August at 8.30pm
Thursday 31st August at 8.30pm	Thursday 26th October at 6.30pm

Visitors will be shown how the telescopes operate with viewing if clear and given illustrated talks on space related subjects. Donations are welcomed and assist with running and maintenance costs. We suggest adults £2, children £1. The Observatory is in La Rue du Lorier, St Pierre-du-Bois. Perry's Guide reference 21 E3. Parking is usually available at La Houquette School, Rue des Paysans. From the school go 100 yards up the road, then left onto Rue du Lorier, then immediately right, behind a large bunker. The road is dark, so a torch is advisable.

For further information and directions see www.astronomy.org.gg, or call Frank Dowding on 255215.

BAT SECTION

The Bat Section of the Société Guernesiaise was established on 5th March 2016. The aims of the Bat Section are to rehabilitate injured bats and to carry out roost surveys to help identify the various species of bats found in Guernsey and to record any changes to the populations of those species.

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

Bat Section meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month in the Section Room at Candie at 7.45pm. New members are very welcome.

BOTANY

Events - Upcoming Guided Botany Walks:

Saturday 1st July at L'Eree headland – Perry's Guide page 20, A1.

Saturday 5th August at La Grande Pré reed bed reserve Perry's Guide page 7, G4.

Saturday 9th September- meet at Portelet for fairy ring – Perry's Guide page 32, D2.

Saturday 7th October – meet in the back car park Saumarez Park for nature trail - Perry's Guide page 15, G1.

Please join the Botany Section's new Facebook page where you will find details of the monthly walks and recent plant photos. Once you have joined you can add your own images – please see <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1310943042297921/>

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

ENTOMOLOGY

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

FAMILY HISTORY

The Family History Section was formed 30 years ago in April 1987 and they will be celebrating this in July with afternoon tea at the Copenhagen Restaurant. It is interesting to note how much information has been collected during this time.

Events:

Wednesday 21st June – a walk and talk entitled "Celts and Romans" by Sylvia Brouard – please meet at the Liberation Monument at 7pm.

Wednesday 19th July – a visit to the Priaulx Library. Please meet at the library at 7pm.

FAMILY HISTORY

Opening Hours 2017

The new Section room at the Russels Centre at Les Cotils will be open on the first and third Saturday of each month until further notice. All welcome.

Any general Family History queries should be addressed to The Family History Section, PO Box 314, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 3TG. Alternatively Email: researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk

GEOLOGY

Contact Andy Dorey Tel 252123 or Email: andydorey3@gmail.com

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Please see our website www.societe.org.gg for details of the many talks and events this Section organises.

Any queries can be sent to John McCormack Email: mrjam@cwgsy.net

JUNIOR SECTION

Next Event:

Sunday 28th May – Trip to the Humps – please meet at the Fishermans Quay at 1.30pm, weather permitting.

It will be about a three-hour trip from St Peter Port to the north, to an area known as the Humps. Life belts will be provided and there is a toilet on board and a full risk assessment has been carried out.

The area is not only renowned for its marine life but also for the birdlife that make the islets their home. Many seabirds return each year to breed on these islets and it is also where the largest population of Atlantic grey seals breed within the Channel Islands.

Please note that there will be a charge of £20 for parents attending this event with their children – all children must be Members of the Junior Section. Please let me know as soon as possible if you would like to reserve a seat.

New Junior Members Needed - if you are a Member and have children aged between 5 and 15 please get in touch and we will put you on the Junior Section mailing list. Contact details below.

Contact Chris Mourant - Mobile: 07911 130415 or Email: chris.mourant@yahoo.co.uk

LA SOCIETE CONSERVATION HERD

Just as winter was drawing to a close and we were planning our grazing schedule for the year, we were approached by Vale Commons Council and invited to graze L'Ancrese Common as a trial to re-introduce grazing.

L'Ancrese Common was historically grazed by inhabitants of Braye du Valle, who have rights to graze their animals on the Common. As fewer households kept their own cows and it became less economically viable for dairy farms to graze theirs on the common, the number of grazing animals found there reduced. At present, no inhabitants exercise their right to graze.

This loss of grazing has had a significant impact on the ecology of the common – the grassland has become tall and rank and areas have become established by gorse and brambles. The delicate wildflowers which require short, grazed grassland no longer have access to light and so are being lost from the common. This, in turn, leads to a loss of the insects, small mammals, bats and birds which rely on them.

The Herd moved out to the common on the first Sunday of April. They are enclosed within temporary electric fencing and will move around several enclosures for 8 weeks.

Since having been on site, the response to the reintroduction of cattle to the common has been overwhelming. The whole community has offered their support and to many this has brought back a piece of Guernsey's history.

At the beginning of June the Herd will move to Port Soif to continue Operation Skylark but we are already looking forward to returning to L'Ancrese again next year.

While the large steers were busy grazing at L'Ancrese Common, the two youngest members have been busy growing up. They are now almost 20 weeks old, have been weaned from their milk and have become accustomed to electric fencing. They have also attended their first public appearance when they visited the Grammar Schools Wellbeing Fayre to highlight the positive impacts of engaging with nature on mental health and wellbeing.

For details of how you can help with the Herd please Email: [Julia Henney conservationherd@societe.org.gg](mailto:Julia.Henney.conservaionherd@societe.org.gg)



The Conservation Herd grazing at L'Ancrese Common.
Photo courtesy of Andrew Guille



Nine and Ten at the Grammar Schools Wellbeing Fayre.
Photo courtesy of Julia Henney.

New Marine Biology Section Secretary

As some of you already know, I am stepping down from as Secretary of the Marine Biology Section. Therefore, I have been looking for someone to keep the Section running after me. I have run the Section now for about 5 or 6 years, so it is a good opportunity for a fresh pair of eyes to take the Section and see what can be achieved. I have very much enjoyed everything I have been involved with as part of La Société, especially this Section, and I cannot tell you how many opportunities have been granted to me because of it. Check out the Facebook page to see what we've been up to over the years: @LaSocieteGuernesiaise.

I am very happy to say that Laura Bampton will be taking over the Section, starting in October 2017. Laura is 22 years old, has an undergraduate degree in Natural Sciences and at the present moment is completing an MSc in Global Environment, Politics and Society. Laura has been a Section member for some time, and was the recipient of the La Société Griff Caldwell bursary in 2016. I know Laura will do an excellent job with the Section, and look forward to seeing what will be achieved under her direction.

My last week as Marine Biology Section Secretary will be the week beginning Monday 25th September 2017.

Jessi Jennings

Events

All of the MBS events are put up on the La Société website www.societe.org.gg under the SECTIONS area, and on the La Société Facebook page. If you would like to be included in the Marine Biology Section's mailing list to find out more about our events etc., or would like to become more involved, please email marinebiology@societe.org.gg

NATURAL HISTORY

The events below involve the recording of all plants, birds and insects on each visit with a view to compiling a list at the end of the year;

Monday 5th June meet at Pleinmont car park next to the motorcycle track at 6.30pm

Monday 19th June meet at Grande Pré at 6.30pm

Monday 3rd July meet at Pleinmont car park next to motorcycle track at 6.30pm

Monday 17th July meet at Grande Pré at 6.30pm

Monday 7th August meet at Pleinmont car park next to the motorcycle track 6.30pm

Monday 21st August meet at Grande Pré at 6.30pm

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

First, a belated welcome to our new secretary, Chris Mourant and thanks to Vic Froome from whom Chris took over. Chris has a lifelong passion for birds and has worked unstintingly for their welfare for many years.

In the last article I wrote about the unusual number of Cattle Egrets seen here last Autumn and it is encouraging to report that one was seen as recently as April 28th. With luck they may, like their cousins, Little Egrets, breed here.

Other rare sightings included a Royal Tern which was seen between February 5th and March 31st. This bird is normally found in the Americas so it is doubtful if it will return there. Bearded tits, Garganey ducks and Black-winged Stilts have also been seen.

The annual sponsored Bird Race took place on April 30th. It was a very unpleasant wet day, in spite of which at least 5 teams scoured the island to find as many species as possible. Approximately 90 species were seen; two which eluded the teams were sedge and willow warblers, but, the search for these produced a rare Bittern.

More good news is that, following the passing of the Bio-diversity Strategy, eight fields are currently being planted with wild birdseed which will sustain our resident and migrating birds in the Autumn/Winter when other food is scarce.

Currently birds are busy nesting/raising young and therefore easier to see as they earnestly search for food for nestlings and themselves. If you wish to learn more about them come along to our monthly meeting held on the first Thursday of each month at Candie at 8pm.

Nancy Ogier



Black Winged Stilt - Photo courtesy of Rod Ferbrache



Garganey Duck - Photo courtesy of Rod Ferbrache

THE BIG GEEKEND

Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th May: The Big Geekend at the Guernsey Museum and Art Gallery, Candie Gardens from 10am until 5pm. Admission £6.50 for adults, Children £2.00, under 7's free. Admission free to Discovery Pass Holders.

Embrace your inner geek!

Now it's in 4th year, this weekend is fast becoming a beloved feature of the Museum calendar.

From Morris Dancing and 3D printing to beach combing and lace making, this is a chance to celebrate hobbies everywhere.

Embrace your nerdy nature at this two-day celebration of offbeat hobbies, pastimes and collections.

The two youngest steers of the La Société Conservation Herd will be in Candie Gardens on the morning of Saturday 27th May between 10 am and 2pm.



Model Trains at the Big Geekend 2016
- Photo courtesy of Jo Dowding

outdoors

practical conservation

new skills

education

get involved

socials

fun

caring for the environment

guernsey conservation volunteers

If you would like to find out more, visit our website www.gcv.org.uk or contact Angela on Tel 721163

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP SPONSORS FOR 2017

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Ronez limited
R A Rossborough (Guernsey) Limited
Stan Brouard Limited
The Channel Islands Co-operative Society Limited

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.

ASSOCIATED GROUPS:

Alderney Wildlife Trust	Roland Gauvain	822935
Blue Dolphins Sub Aqua Club	Jessi Jennings	bluedolphinssac@gmail.com
Friends of the Priaux Library	Jenny Tasker	jenny@taskeronline.com
Guernsey Conservation Volunteers	Angela Salmon	721163
Guernsey Meteorological Observatory	Martin Crozier	237766
G.S.P.C.A	Steve Byrne	257261
La Société Serquaise	Jo Birch	832788
Le Cercle Français	Geoff Mahy	263029
Lé Coumité d'la Culture Guernésiaise	Dr Harry Tomlinson	255891
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Vanessa Crispini-Adams, Adrian Nicolle, Rodney Collette,
Alex Hershel and the Very Rev. John Guille

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