

# RURAL

Jersey Country Life Magazine

Issue 50 | Spring 2025



## The future of solar power

What do readers think about putting solar panels in the countryside?

## The future of the past

From Jersey antiques to the Island's heritage of old buildings

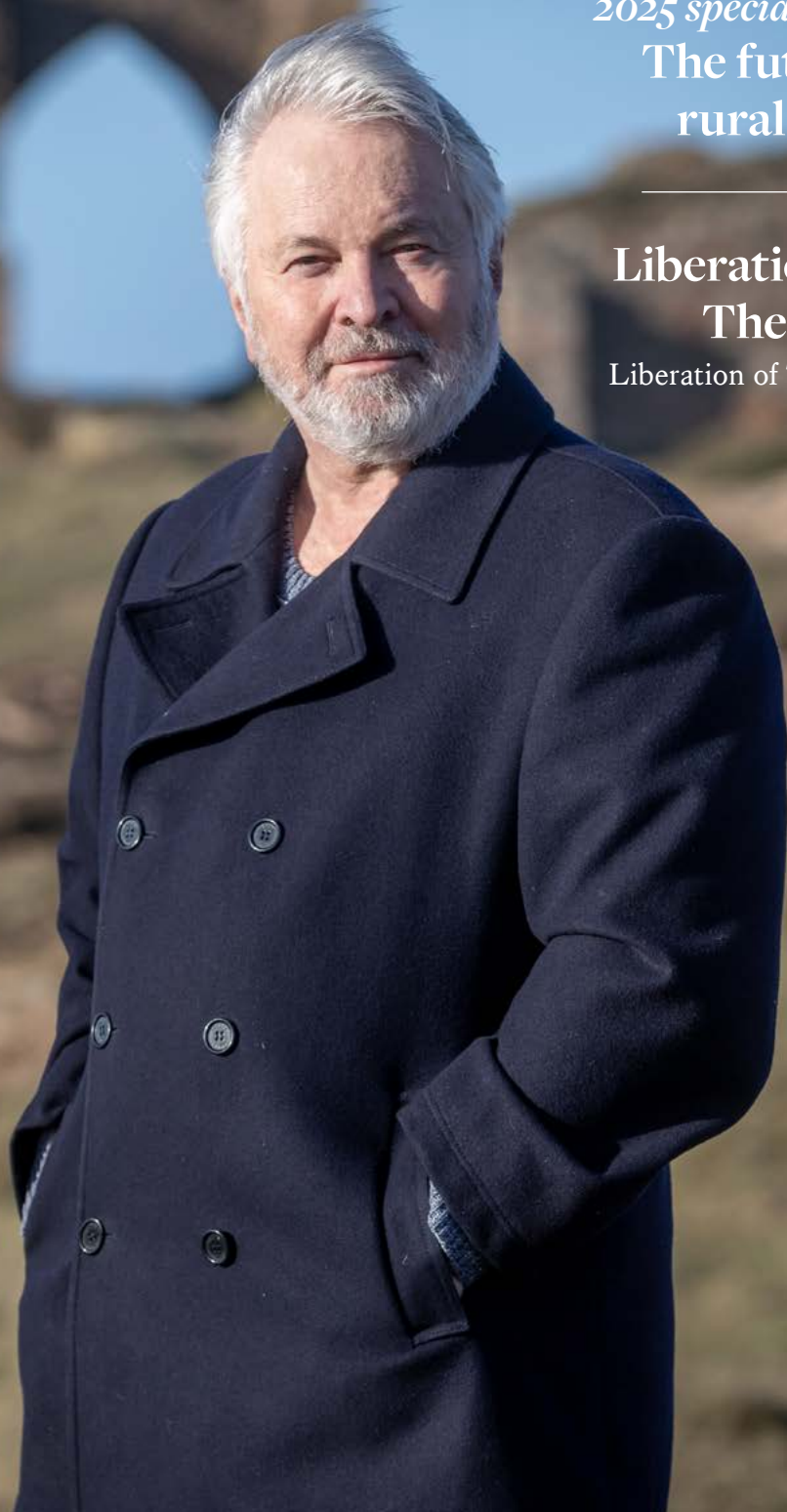
*2025 special theme:*  
The future of rural Jersey

## Liberation and The Bailiff

Liberation of The Bailiff

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# Colmar

# Welcome

This is our 50th edition, which for us, is a rather special edition of RURAL magazine.

Although we say it ourselves, publishing 50 quarterly editions over a time period of 12 years is not too bad an achievement – but this ‘Welcome’ page is not intended to be smugly ‘Glory be to RURAL’. We know we are fantastic – there’s no need for us to crow about it.

With this present issue, considering that it provides an opportunity to look forwards to the future of our own publication, we commence articles this year on the special theme of ‘Jersey futures’. At the very core of Jersey is its farming and its breathtakingly lovely countryside, and likewise these remain at the very core of the magazine, as does the importance of maintaining a sense of local community in the modern globalised world.

How will these fare? Be it the future of the past (a theme to which Jersey Heritage is contributing this year), or the future of energy requirement – a very topical and controversial theme as we go to press – or the future of the National Park, or the future of farming and the Jersey Royal export crop... what does the future have in store for Jersey?

And, for once, I have grabbed my own space in the magazine’s tail end commentary ‘Last Word’ piece, to consider a statement made in an American publication: ‘The Future is Rural’.

Let’s hope that’s right.

I owe many thanks to many people and none more so than to our advertisers and sponsors. Without them, we would not have the oxygen that keeps us alive as a publication.

Then, thanks to our readership and all those who have kindly told me how much they enjoy reading RURAL.



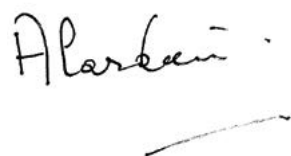
I could live quite happily without delivering 6,000 copies of my photo ID around the Island four times a year, but if no one were to read the magazines, I would feel even more silly doing the deliveries.

There is a great team working with me, who, like me, see something in the ethos of the magazine that is worth striving for: I could not ask for better or more committed colleagues.

As we said in the very first issue: *‘How Jersey’s local countryside, local culture, local community and local heritage can remain intact in today’s modern world should always be a theme to engage our attention and be a subject for debate.’*

It is an ongoing debate to which RURAL’s raison d’être is to help make a useful contribution.

Alasdair Crosby | Editor  
[www.ruraljersey.co.uk](http://www.ruraljersey.co.uk)



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The Bailiff, Sir Timothy Le Cocq  
Photograph by Gary Grimshaw  
*See page 28*

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6 bottles of  
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Yellow Label Brut  
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Anna Bradstock  
Stephen Cohu  
Philippa Evans-Bevan  
Gary Grimshaw  
Kieranne Grimshaw  
Ruth Le Cocq

Cathy Le Feuvre  
François Le Maistre  
Katharine Marshall  
Harry Matthews  
Sarah Parish  
Bryony Richardson  
Taylor Smythe  
Mike Stentiford  
Jonathan Sykes



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# Over the wall

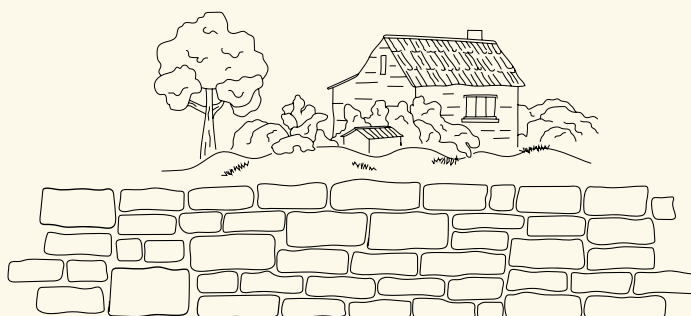
## A RURAL view

The generation of heat and power ... and that refers only to the arguments for and against a reliance on solar energy, and the placing of solar farms in areas of the Island that have, throughout history, been part of the rural and agricultural fabric of the Island.

We make no apology for giving so much space to these arguments in this edition of RURAL magazine. It is a matter of considerable importance to the future of Jersey and vital that readers should hear both sides, and judge for themselves.

In a statement at the end of February, Jersey Electricity (JE) said that it had taken the decision to temporarily withdraw the Planning Application for the proposed solar farm at Champs Verts, St Mary, but fully intended to resubmit the application in due course. So only a lull in the battle of ideas, then.

The vision put forward by Jersey Electricity (JE) for these panels in an area totalling almost 50 vergées sounds most attractive. The panels themselves would be landscaped and well screened by apple trees, producing cider for the nearby La Mare Wine Estate. There would be beehives set among the panels and the bees would help pollinate the trees and there would be space for growing premium vegetables. At a site in St Clement, where panels have already been installed, sheep might safely graze among the panels and provide further diversification for agriculture in the Island. The sun would shine, its heat would be captured and provide electric power for Islanders. Lovely.



Furthermore, in St Mary, JE says that the land is mediocre, degraded with chemical additives and questionable for a farmer wanting to grow a profitable crop of main crop potatoes. Their own plans would herald a regeneration of Island farming and a contribution towards a new, diversified agriculture producing something more exciting than spuds, and which would supply local produce for local people.

Local residents in St Mary are not quite so sure about all this, to put it mildly, and do not buy into this bucolic vision. Instead, they are aghast at the possibility of over 9,000 solar panels plonked into a field near them, and that this quiet area of rural Jersey would be transformed into what one neighbour describes it as 'the largest industrial complex ever built in this Island, the largest building development of land since the Occupation.'

Almost every argument put forward by JE is disputed. No, the apple trees would not screen the site; the apples would not produce enough cider to make the venture commercially viable. Is this proposed development truly worth the environmental and agricultural costs it imposes? It contravenes the Island Plan. The quality of the land is in the top half of the Island's field area, and in any case could easily be brought back to prime condition with a load of topsoil spread over it. Young farmers would be very pleased to be able to farm the land, which could sustain local food production and reduce reliance on imported goods.

In short, it is stated that the ideas of JE constitute hobby farming, not a serious agricultural vision that would benefit the Island – and actually, they should not be using agriculture as a cloak for their development plans, since they obviously know nothing about it, and they should just concentrate on the day job of providing electricity.

Phew!

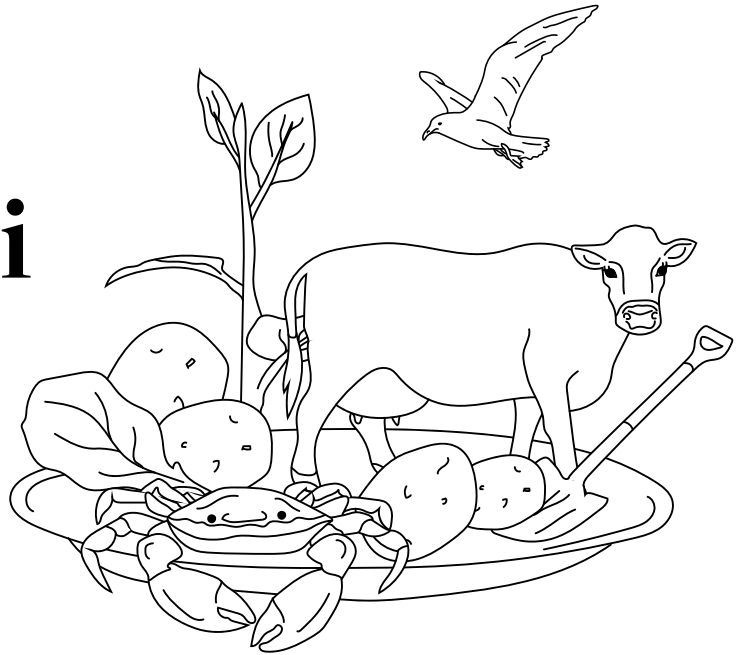
The opponents to JE's plans are by no means opposed to solar power in principle, just to the proliferation of solar arrays on good farming land in Jersey. The site in St Clement, for example, is in the so-called 'golden mile' of prime agricultural land from which a farmer could normally expect a very good financial return on his labours.

Transcending our insular debate is the issue of solar panels versus farmland in the UK, where Jersey's own concerns over having sufficient land to provide local food for local people is writ large. There, the debate is led, on the one hand, by those concerned about meeting the targets of net zero, and on the other hand, by those who think the target of net zero is unachievable – efforts to do so are simply ruinous to the economy, and farmland should be used for producing food for domestic consumption in an uncertain world. The story, both national and insular, will run and run.

But while we wait for a planning decision on Les Champs Verts in St Mary, expected within six months, one bit of advice that we can give to JE, is to redouble their efforts in promoting their own side of the issue to some very product-resistant customers.

# The Jersey Salmagundi

A mixed salad of events and news, with a bit of this, that and the other thrown in



## Dogs of the year

The Channel Islands Dog of the Year Show was held in Jersey on 8 February. Judge was Mr Howard Ogden.

The Dog of the Year title went to Chrissy & Paige Le Moignan's Tibetan Terrier Waterley Honey Rider at Fideletchan. Reserve was Nicola Brouard's Alaskan Malamute Jsy Ch Orsamals Pepe Le Peew, PdH.

Puppy of the Year was Chrissy & Robert Boxall's Samoyed Valentino Boschi Vecchi; Veteran of the Year was Nicola Brouard's Alaskan Malamute Jsy Ch Sutarka Coco Chanel at Orsamala, PdH.

Junior Handling Winner was Everlynn Stewart-Smith.

There were also competitions for the Agility Dog of the Year, Jumping Dog of the Year, and Obedience. Rosettes were sponsored by RURAL magazine.

The Jersey Dog Club was formed in 1888, and in 1899 the reciprocal agreement between The Jersey Dog Club and the UK Kennel Club began a relationship that is maintained to this day.

The main object of the club, always has, and always will be, 'the improvement of the breeds of dogs in the Island'.

The Kennel Club of Jersey provides more information about all things canine in Jersey.



See their website:  
[thekennelclubofjersey.com](http://thekennelclubofjersey.com)

The Dog of the Year: Chrissy and Paige Le Moignan's Tibetan Terrier



## Jersey Symphony Orchestra appoints a new musical director



Jersey Symphony Orchestra has announced the appointment of Natalia Luis-Bassa as its musical director for the next three years.

Ms Luis-Bassa conducted the JSO in its Christmas Concert in 2022 and its summer concert in 2024, both of which received excellent reviews in local media.

Natalia, who began her musical training in her native Venezuela, is a Professor of Conducting at the Royal College of Music, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Oxford University Orchestra.

She is a passionate advocate for music education for young people and has a long-standing association with the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain. She has built strong partnerships with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, The Benedetti Foundation, The Purcell School, and Wells Cathedral School among others.

It was at the Royal College of Music where she developed a love for the music of Edward Elgar and was named an Elgar Ambassador by the Elgar Society.

Natalia is committed to widening access to the performing arts and providing opportunities for everyone to get involved.

Nick Cabot MBE, president of the JSO, said ... 'Natalia built a close relationship with the JSO from day one and her strong credentials regarding working with both youth and adults, together with her passionate advocacy for placing orchestral music at the heart of a community, made her an easy choice as our musical director. We are looking forward to working with her both at our usual three yearly concerts but also opening up new directions for working with the musical education of young players in the Island.'

Natalia will next appear in Jersey at the JSO summer concert on 2 August, but before then and for the first time in its history, the JSO will be conducted by a Jerseyman, James Southall, who is currently the Music Director of the David Seligman Opera School at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama where he has been for the past 15 years. James will conduct the JSO spring concert on 12 April.

## A new bookshop opens

The Jersey Bookworm and Poets Corner was opened to a big crowd of authors and friends at The Harbour Gallery Jersey on Saturday 8 February by popular author and Jersey resident Peter James.

The director of Art in the Frame Foundation, Pat Robson, said she was astounded to discover how many writers and poets are in or from the Island. As a charity set up to promote local up-and-coming artists and to work in the field of art education and wellbeing/mental health, she felt that a 'hub' was needed for these local writers and poets to work together and to work with some of the artists.

Over the Christmas holiday an area in the gallery was transformed into The Jersey Bookworm and Poets Corner, stocking books written by people living in or from the Island.

It will also act as a place for a book launch (the first one booked in is for September), book clubs, readings, etc.

The first very successful workshop has just taken place. It was a combination of creating a little 'Zine' with artist Justine Williams and writing poetry for the Zine with local poet Juliette Hart.

What is a Zine? It is defined as a small-circulation print or online publication that is produced through non-commercial means and is meant to appeal to a niche audience. The term 'zine' derives from fanzine, an amalgamation of the words fan and magazine.

The Zine will be repeated on 26 and 27 April; bookings are being taken now.

The Harbour Gallery is open seven days a week, from 9.30am to 5.30pm. It is situated at 19 The Quay, Commercial Buildings, St Helier. There is plenty of on-road parking and it is just two minutes' walk from the Tunnel.

Please e-mail [partintheframe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:partintheframe@yahoo.co.uk) for further information or to use The Jersey Bookworm and Poets Corner for an event. The website is [theharbourgalleryjersey.com](http://theharbourgalleryjersey.com)



Pat Robson watches Peter James cutting the tape at the entrance to the new bookshop space

## The future of the JSPCA

The interim chief executive of the JSPCA, Tom Noel, has been speaking about his role and the charity's future plans and expectations.

Tom, who used to volunteer as a child at the Animals' Shelter, began working at the JSPCA in November. His role has been to 'steady the ship a little bit' and also to recruit a full-time chief executive.

The job description is varied: 'I think first and foremost I'm looking for somebody who's going to take on our mission, so as to prevent cruelty, promote knowledge and to provide help for aged, sick and lost animals of Jersey. We've had a difficult recent history, so we need someone who can really lead the organisation into the next era.

'My predecessor, Debra D'Orleans, did a brilliant job of getting the charity back on a good financial footing, but the charity and the Shelter desperately need investment. The next CEO is going to be managing that investment, but also leading the team, which is the most important bit.'

Building up the welfare service will be a main priority. Working closely with the States Vet, police and the parishes, the team do their best to prevent cruelty. The current laws, which are being reviewed, can make this challenging, especially when dealing with the most urgent welfare cases. Improving the Ambulance Service is another concern, as well as the safety and skillset of the people who staff it.

Seeing investment in the premises as crucial, Tom said: 'We currently have 18 buildings here. I'd say pretty much every one of them needs investment. We are currently looking to create a "Property Master Plan" and see what is the most effective use of the funds that we're very lucky to have.'

After some challenging years, Tom believes the impact has caused the Shelter to become very closed off.

'We should be at the heart of the animal welfare community. On 30 January we held an open evening with all the local animal charities explaining what they do.' Tom hopes this will become a regular event involving local stakeholders.

'My focus is opening us up and being a warm, welcoming place again. We used to have an Education Centre, which has now gone. It's something I'm quite keen to put back in place. We have the buildings, we just need to refocus on the mission.'

Contact: [www.jspca.org.je](http://www.jspca.org.je)

*Kieranne Grimshaw*

“ My focus is opening us up and being a warm, welcoming place again. We used to have an Education Centre, which has now gone. It's something I'm quite keen to put back in place. We have the buildings, we just need to refocus on the mission



Tom Noel director of JSPCA and shadow the cat

# The future of solar panel arrays on Jersey farmland

## A new vision for Island agriculture – or a major blot on the landscape?



## Pour: In favour of the panels

**Agriculture in Jersey is at an important crossroads – and ground-based solar arrays could provide some of the answer as well as significant other benefits, according to the chief executive of Jersey Electricity, Chris Ambler. He spoke to Alasdair Crosby**

**S**olar farms on green field sites... the topic is generating a lot of energy in itself. The chief executive of Jersey Electricity, Chris Ambler, was asked why such effort, time and trouble was being expended on installing these panels in agricultural parts of the Island.

### **He gave three key reasons:**

Firstly, as an Island, we need to diversify our energy sources and we need to be more self-sufficient.

At the moment, the vast majority of our energy requirements are imported. That has served the Island very well. Imported power is virtually completely decarbonised, been proven to be very secure and our prices are about a third cheaper than in the UK.

‘But we need to continue to diversify, especially as the Island becomes increasingly dependent on electricity in a decarbonised world.

‘Our strategy has been very much anchored around being an importer of power, whilst at the same time developing new sources of renewables on the Island, as and when they become economically viable. Larger scale solar is one of the most viable sources of renewable energy in Jersey. Larger scale solar is one of the most viable sources of renewable energy in Jersey.’



“ Do we carry on farming the same old way, and keep spraying crops and using fertilisers and pesticides that leech into the water system and degrade the land, or, do we invest behind new types of agriculture...?”

Chris Ambler: Image courtesy of the JEP

‘Secondly, we feel that the agricultural sector is stuck at a crossroads. One choice is to cling on to traditional crops, such as main crop potato, or else to invest in new types of farming that have a long-term future. We feel we have an opportunity here to work with farmers and landowners to invest in and help diversify agriculture so as to make it more sustainable.

‘Thirdly, we believe we have an opportunity and a duty to the Island to help enhance the environment and to promote biodiversity, land and soil rejuvenation, crop rotation and the “resting” of the earth.

‘Solar is a technology whose time has come and I think there is an opportunity for Jersey to achieve all three of those aims working in harmony for the benefit of the Island.’

#### **Would solar panels lead to cheaper power?**

‘That is our objective and our expectation – to deliver new sources of energy in a way that keeps prices lower and more stable. That is an important goal for us, to ensure that we can get access to cost-competitive energy and to make the cost of that energy as cheap as possible. This in turn will help us keep retail prices to customers as low as possible.’

#### **Would these panels make us self-sufficient over the course of time?**

‘Not in themselves, but they are an important part of an overall eco-energy system, so they have an important role to play. We will still need to import power from France, and of course that power is already low carbon and some of it is renewable. Energy systems like our own in Jersey work best if they have access to diverse types of generation that have different characteristics – all being optimised together. We are also interested in offshore wind and tidal power, although these are longer-term opportunities.

‘It’s not one or the other of these technologies. We need all of them working together in the ecosystem.’

Chris stressed that JE didn’t want to fill the rural landmass up in Jersey with ground-based solar arrays: ‘This is about taking a proportionate and sensitive approach, being mindful of Jersey’s beauty and limited landmass, using what are small ground schemes by international standards. What we are looking to do is to deliver about 25 megawatts of Island-produced solar energy by 2026, and 25 megawatts is roughly about one third of our summer peak demand.

‘It won’t be full energy independence, but it would deliver a meaningful contribution to the energy system for a large portion of the year, and it is very complementary to the other technologies that we have in place.’

JE aims to create six to eight ground-based developments, but in addition, it is pursuing roof-based solar as well as continuing to connect private domestic installations. It continues to invest in roof projects and is exploring around 20-25 roof schemes with various partners; it is inviting interest from other building owners to come forward.

#### **Asked why they were developing fields with arrays of solar panels rather than mounting them on rooftops,**

Chris answered: ‘We need to do both. We are continuing to build roof-based arrays and in fact, we have done seven big roof-based developments in Jersey – that is 1.2 megawatts of generating capacity. We’ve got three of the biggest roof solar arrays in the Channel Islands, and we will soon start work on another 450-kilowatt roof array at the airport, in partnership with the Ports of Jersey. We are also working on a very large 1 megawatt roof-based solar scheme, which will be by far the biggest roof scheme in the Channel Islands.

‘We hope that by 2030 we will have the equivalent of 5,000 homes run on solar energy. So that’s an important qualification: it’s not ground *or* roof-based solar. It’s ground *and* roof-based solar.’

**It might be hoped that the Government of Jersey would be leading the way in committing to installing panels on top of their own portfolio of buildings?**

‘We’ve presented a proposition to them, which they are currently considering, but it’s a great opportunity for them to demonstrate their leadership. Of course, roof surveys are necessary and some roofs are just not suitable. But panels on government buildings are an important opportunity that we should pursue.’

‘We need both ground and roof-based solar, because we are such a big importer of power: 95% of the Island’s electricity requirement is imported from France and demand for electricity will increase still further.’

**Asked if La Collette would continue to play a part in the future of the Island’s energy requirements,**

Chris replied: ‘It would still be a very important stand-by facility. In fact, we are in the course of doing another major investment programme there – about £25m investment in stand-by generation. But it is only a back-up facility. We hope we won’t need to use it, but occasionally we do. Nevertheless, it is there and capable of being run if we need it – and that’s very important.’

‘At the moment, our renewable focus is on ground-mounted schemes and large roof schemes because these tend to be far more cost effective than smaller domestic arrays and the larger schemes will help keep power prices lower.’

JE has looked at around 200 ground sites and whittled them down to around six to eight sites, ones that are the most economically viable, but also, importantly, the ones that are the most capable of supporting a new vision of Island agriculture.

‘We have voluntarily signed up to Planning obligation agreements that will ensure that the sites are able to continue with agriculture.’

‘But we also want them to be screened, to minimise the visual impact. We’ve gone through quite a big process of evaluation.’

The sites are in St Clement, where the panels are already now in place. The two other sites are at Sorel (St John) next to the quarry and the Rue d’Olive (St Mary). The Planning Application for the site at Les Champs Verts (also in St Mary) has recently been withdrawn, but JE fully intends to resubmit the application in due course, probably within six months.

Local residents and neighbours of Les Champs Verts have made their concerns plain: at the time of writing, there are banners on the side of the lane that would run past it stating ‘Save this view’.

It is 20% bigger than the site at St Clement, but Chris gave an assurance that the site would be well screened by tall hedging and three rows of apple trees planted around the perimeter of the fields. There would be a wider margin of land around the panels to ensure that the solar array itself is neat but broken up and that there is proper landscaping, so that it fits with the local environment.

Chris stressed that Les Champs Verts was not a prime agricultural site, and JE was not targeting prime agriculture. ‘What we want is medium to low grade land that is not commercially viable for anything else.’

At Les Champs Verts, the land has been ‘over-cropped’ for main crop potato growing. There has been worm infected potato, blight and three failed crops in the past three years. It is not the best land for Jersey Royals, Chris said.

‘We want this land to stay in agriculture, but it has a limited future in potato farming because the land has degraded and it’s hard for these “late” fields to compete in a main crop potato market when it’s so much cheaper in the UK.’

Les Champs Verts is located very close to La Mare Wine Estate, and JE are working closely with La Mare to plant an apple orchard for cider, that would screen the panels.

“ Solar is a technology whose time has come and I think there is an opportunity for Jersey to achieve all three of those aims working in harmony for the benefit of the Island

That would be 700 new orchard trees growing up to 18ft high. There would also be beehives for honey production.

La Mare also wants to trial a particular grape variety, *Solaris*, in between the solar arrays. Underneath the translucent panels they would be developing niche premium crops such as herbs and vegetables, for example lavender and asparagus.

At St Clement, smallholder Jeremy Hughes of Panigot Farm, will be putting 50 sheep on the site and hopes to produce lamb for local meat production. Other crop trials are due to take place at the other sites.

Chris posed the question: ‘Do we carry on farming the same old way, and keep spraying crops and using fertilisers and pesticides that leech into the water system and degrade the land? Or, do we invest behind new types of agriculture, enabled by “agrivoltaics” – a combination of agriculture and electricity generation, working together in harmony?’

‘I’m actually very excited about this. I think it will dramatically increase biodiversity as well as reducing our imports of electricity and increasing our resilience. I would always wish to buy power locally, if at all possible and here we have additional benefits. JE presently spends £60m to £70m a year on power, which mostly leaves the Jersey economy and goes straight into the French economy. I would far prefer that some of that went into boosting the local agricultural sector and local environment.’

‘That’s what this is all about.’

# Confre:

## Against panels on agricultural land

**‘I write today with a heavy heart and an urgent plea, driven by deep concern for the future of our beloved Island’**

**S**o wrote Nicola Hay, a neighbour to the proposed solar array at Les Champs Verts in St Mary. As a parishioner, she feels... ‘a profound responsibility to speak out about the proposed solar farm development, a proposal that threatens not only the beauty and tranquillity of our landscapes but also the very soul of this Island we call home.’

Her remarks were written in a letter sent to all States Members, asking them to oppose the solar project.

**Just before RURAL went to press, JE announced that it was withdrawing its Planning Application to construct a solar farm on Les Champs Verts in St Mary. It stated, however, that it fully intended to resubmit the application in due course – so only a temporary relief for neighbours Nicola Hay and Brian Mansfield.**

She writes in her letter: ‘Jersey is a small Island and every inch of our land is precious. The green spaces we have left are woven into the very fabric of our identity. As stewards of this Island’s future, you and your fellow States Members bear an immense responsibility: to protect these irreplaceable green spaces for the generations that will come after us.

‘It is for this very reason that I ask you to protect Jersey’s landscapes and agricultural heritage from the irreversible damage the proposed solar development will cause.’

Three solar farms are already being developed. This application would be the second in St Mary, and the largest, covering eight fields.

Nicola says: ‘It will cover prime agricultural land – some of the best, most fertile soil in Jersey’. This point is disputed by Jersey Electricity.

‘By approving this development, we are not simply losing agricultural land for the next 40 years – we are losing part of Jersey’s identity and heritage forever. This proposal is not just a breach of our Island Plan, and it is a betrayal of our fundamental duty to safeguard what makes Jersey, Jersey.

‘Once this land is converted into solar farms, it is gone for good – not just for farming, but for biodiversity and for the sense of peace and serenity these fields provide. In a few short decades, we will look back and deeply regret that we allowed these fields to be lost, forever. We are already running out of agricultural land in Jersey. With the pressures of housing demands, these are some of the last tracts of land we have left to preserve our farming legacy and food security. Once it’s gone, there is no turning back.

‘This land is not just property; it is the foundation of everything that Jersey represents. The fields, lanes, and vistas are integral to our way of life. This is our heritage, and it is our solemn duty to ensure that it remains protected for future generations.

‘Renewable energy is crucial, but there are alternatives that don’t involve destroying the land that defines us as Islanders.

‘Jersey already imports green electricity from France – there is no need to sacrifice our countryside for a small and fleeting gain in energy production.

‘Green spaces are crucial for our mental health, providing us with the peace and clarity needed to face daily challenges.

‘A thriving economy is important, yes, but not at the expense of Jersey’s natural beauty, its agricultural heritage, and its timeless landscapes. We must preserve the landscapes that make this Island truly special and ensure that future generations inherit a Jersey that is as beautiful, tranquil, and connected to the land as we have known it.

‘These fields are not just assets – they are the heart of our island, and they must remain protected.’

“ This land is not just property; it is the foundation of everything that Jersey represents. The fields, lanes, and vistas are integral to our way of life. This is our heritage, and it is our solemn duty to ensure that it remains protected for future generations



Brian Mansfield and Nicola Hay

**Did Nicola accept that it would be easy for her to be judged as a ‘Nimby’ – a ‘Not In My Backyard’ individual?**

She replied: ‘I haven’t got an answer, because I am a Nimby! Also, because Jersey is only nine miles by five miles, it’s not just us that is being affected by this proposed development: the whole population is being affected by this – we are all Nimbys! I wish all these solar sites remained undisturbed, for Islanders’ food production, relaxation, mental health and mental wellbeing.’

Brian Mansfield also lives close to the proposed solar farm at Les Champs Verts.

‘This is the largest industrial complex ever built in this Island, the largest building development of land since the Occupation,’ he said.

He takes issue with all the arguments in favour of installing solar panels on the site, and his concerns and the concerns of other Islanders are detailed on page 14.

‘Large solar arrays have been installed worldwide,’ Brian said, ‘and if there were a financial benefit to growing crops beneath them, this technology would already be well-established. There is no economic argument for growing anything under panels. If there were, you would have commercial enterprises undertaking this, but they are not. It is a complete nonsense.’

**Is the land degraded, as has been claimed?**

‘JE have undertaken soil samples, and they say the land is poor quality, but the Jersey Farmers Union states that this land is within the top 50% of the best quality land in the Island. It may be the land has been poorly farmed over the last few years; however, the land can be reinstated to its previous form by good farming practice. I would suggest that soil samples are taken from surrounding fields and compared with the soil samples taken by JE. And then ask the question: ‘Why were the JE samples so poor?’

He continued: ‘Jersey has a population density of 872 people per square kilometre, compared to the UK’s 279 people per square kilometre and France’s even lower density. Land is Jersey’s most limited resource, and it is vital that we preserve it for future generations. Using land for solar panels is not a sustainable solution for the long-term benefit of the Island and its residents.

‘If this were 100% necessary, if we were desperate for electricity, or if electricity was really expensive on the Island and this was impacting on those who could not afford it, I would say OK, maybe there was a case for this.

‘But there’s no case.

‘And when do we get this electricity? In the summertime, apparently, when there is far less electricity being used. When we do need it, is in the winter.

‘The technology is also out of date, because within 20 years there is likely to be such great offshore generation of electricity that onshore panels won’t be needed. But we’ll be stuck with the panels for a further 20 years.

‘It’s just not right. I don’t know where we go from here, other than trying to oppose it. But I refuse to go down without fighting. I am so upset by the way Jersey people have been ignored, I’ve got to continue and try to do something about this.

‘All we can do is try. I’m certainly not going to give up.’

# Pour and Contre - Solar farms in Jersey's countryside

## A summary of the opposing points of view

### Pour:

- As an Island, we need to diversify our energy sources, and we need to be more self-sufficient. Larger scale solar is one of the most viable sources of renewable energy in Jersey.
- The combination of agriculture and solar power ('agrivoltaics') is an opportunity to work with farmers and landowners to invest in and help diversify agriculture so as to make it more sustainable.
- This is an opportunity to help enhance the environment and to promote biodiversity, land and soil rejuvenation, crop rotation and the 'resting' of the earth.
- An important factor in the selection of sites has been the ability to have good visual screening. The Champs Verts site in St Mary has been deliberately chosen to allow for wider field margins. There would be three rows of apple trees planted around the perimeter of the fields, tall hedging, and landscaping to shelter the development so that it fits with the local environment.

- There would be high hedgerows, three layers of trees in an orchard, and evergreen trees as well as other mitigation. In short, there would be a lot of screening between the site and nearby properties. The panels would not come up to the side of the road; there would be proper landscaping, so that it integrates into the local environment.
- According to JE, this is not a prime agricultural site, and JE is not targeting prime agriculture, but medium to low grade land that is not commercially viable for anything else. It is not best land for Jersey Royals and has a limited future in potato farming because the land has degraded. This is low to medium grade land that is not commercially viable for farming. In the UK, this land would be classed as Grade 3, which is of only average quality.
- La Mare Wine Estate, close by, wants to trial a particular grape variety, *Solaris*, in between the solar arrays. Underneath the translucent panels they would be developing niche premium crops such as herbs and vegetables, for example lavender and asparagus, as part of a biodiverse agriculture.



3D render of the development proposal at Les Champs Verts, prepared by William Layzell. This has been done very accurately to the dimensions and levels that JE have submitted along with using the Digimap Jersey LIDAR digital terrain maps

- JE presently spends £60m to £70m a year on power, which mostly leaves the Jersey economy and goes straight into the French economy. They would far prefer that some of that money went into boosting the local agricultural sector and local environment. This would dramatically increase biodiversity and reduce imports of power.
- JE's goal is to pursue economically viable projects that help keep electricity prices in Jersey low and stable. JE says they do not want to fill all the available land in Jersey with ground-based solar panels.
- JE are looking to deliver 25 megawatts of solar capacity, generated in the Island, by 2026, which is roughly about one third of the Island's summer peak demand.
- It is a Planning obligation that they will have to remove the solar panels at the end of the 40-year period. If, after 40 years, the next generation decides they want to use the land for potatoes or anything else, they can do so.





Current view

## Contre:

- There should be more cohesion in the States and in Jersey Government and there should be a body to consider all aspects of renewable energy. If renewable energy is the way forward, that should be the subject of an Island Energy Plan, similar to the Island Plan. Wind power is being considered, but that is too narrow to cover all the concerns and practicalities of renewable energy.
- Sorel solar power farm is being constructed 100 metres away from fields in a Coastal Protection Zone. Opponents recall the 'Line in the Sand' campaign in St Ouen's Bay to highlight a need for a halt to large-scale shoreline developments and further protection for the coastline there, and suggest that there should be now 'A Line in the Fields'.
- At Les Champs Verts in St Mary, apple trees are due to be planted to screen the view of the panels. Jersey Electricity (JE) has stated they are planting 700 apple trees, but what height will they actually be? 18ft high as stated, or bush-type commercial trees no taller than the solar panels? The latter would make sense, as it would avoid interference with the solar arrays, although it would offer little in terms of visual screening.

- A commercial orchard typically plants between 700 and 1,000 apple trees per acre, meaning less than 5% of the 49½ vergée (22 acre) site would be used for agricultural purposes. These 700 trees would likely yield between 500 and 700 litres of cider per year, with an estimated value of £1,800. This hardly constitutes a commercial enterprise. How can this land usage be justified?
- Vineyard and Solar Arrays: It seems unlikely that vines could be successfully grown between the solar arrays while leaving sufficient space for the maintenance of the panels. Vines, like all plants, require both sunlight and water, and it is clear that they would not thrive under the black solar panels.
- The proposed land is classified as prime agricultural land, but it has been allowed to degrade. It is relatively straightforward to bring this land back to its prime condition, as agricultural experts have confirmed that it ranks within the top 50% of Jersey's land and is ideally suited for growing early main crop potatoes, which can fetch a premium in the UK. Additionally, it could support grazing silage, and other crops.

- Neighbours of Les Champs Verts were told that the total output from all the ground-based solar panels would only account for 3% to 5% of the Island's total electricity demand. This amount could be generated by just 1 to 1½ offshore wind turbines.
- Large solar farms are unsustainable for a small island. They dominate the landscape and are ugly. Trying to keep sheep, plant orchards and grow vines in among solar panels is ridiculous. This sort of farming is hobby farming and is certainly not going to feed the Island.
- Will JE be paying commercial rates for this industrial site? Or will they be hiding behind the cloak of agriculture because they are keeping a few sheep at the St Clement site?
- Who is paying for these solar farms and others that are being proposed? Is it the taxpayer, or consumer? Bear in mind that these solar farms will not bring down the price of electricity.
- What is the estimated revenue from these solar farms?
- Bear in mind that renewable energy is unreliable, and sometimes demand outstrips supply.

### What do you think?

**Do you think the plans outlined for solar farms in Jersey are a good thing or a bad thing?**

**Email: [editorial@ruraljersey.co.uk](mailto:editorial@ruraljersey.co.uk)**



Regen event, 2024



**The future of Jersey's agriculture is rooted in regenerative practices, a vision that is becoming more tangible as a movement fueled by a growing number of people who prioritise community, health, food production, and the environment. By Taylor Smythe, of Hypha Consulting**

**R**ecently I attended a farming conference in Devon, called Rootstock, where scientists and farmers shared their stories of regeneration and resilience. What struck me most was the feeling of optimism, collaboration, and humanity that filled the space.

Anyone who has attended the Jersey Farming Conference or Regen Gathering knows the sense of inspiration that arises when farmers and scientists alike share their journeys so openly – highlighting both their successes and their challenges. It is a community of people, all committed to regenerating land, improving practices, and rebuilding trust in our food systems.

This is the spirit that Jersey's rural economy is beginning to embrace, and it is a vision rooted in regenerative agriculture.

Regenerative agriculture is gaining significant global traction, and for good reason. It encompasses farming practices designed to restore soil health, enhance biodiversity, and improve water retention, all while reducing carbon emissions. The promise of regenerative farming isn't merely environmental; it is deeply connected to social and economic regeneration. At its core, it is about renewing the relationships between livestock and landscapes, plants and soil microbes, and within the entire supply chain between producers and consumers.

As Jersey looks to the future, adopting regenerative practices is vital for natural resource management, food sovereignty, and Island prosperity.

Contrary to popular belief, the biggest barrier to regenerative agriculture is not farmers' interest or commitment. In fact, many of Jersey's farmers are already on the journey toward resilient, profitable, and regenerative farming with LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) certification.

The real obstacles lie in the economic structures, specifically the lack of a functioning free market that creates channels for food that maintain sovereignty and reward good stewardship.



One of the most important characteristics of a healthy economy is the existence of markets that allow producers to thrive. The failure of markets to reward good stewardship is one of the most significant flaws in modern agriculture.

For Jersey, this flaw is evident. Farmers, who are the custodians of our land and the producers of our food, are still working within a commodity-driven system, where they do not control the prices of their products. In such a system, the focus shifts to maximising yield and efficiency, often at the cost of environmental sustainability and nutrient density. It's a system that rewards soil-depleting practices and leaves little room for regenerative techniques to thrive. An economy based solely on quantity over quality is ultimately unsustainable. We must shift the focus back to excellence in farming practices, where the value of a product is not solely determined by volume but also by its environmental impact and contribution to community health and resilience.

However, the retail sector has been slow to support regenerative farming initiatives.

Although there is much conversation around sustainability and local food systems, actual support for regenerative farmers is still lacking.

Retailers talk about sustainable sourcing, but the systems in place fail to create real market pull for regenerative products.

A positive example comes from Waitrose, which, in partnership with LEAF, is setting up eight satellite farms in the UK as part of a three-year programme aimed at supporting more than 2,000 farmers to transition to regenerative practices and accelerate nature-friendly farming. A good middle actor or food retailer amplifies the best a farm has to offer by effectively communicating their story, environmental and ecological practices, and community impact. They create a bridge that highlights the value of sustainable and regenerative practices, helping consumers connect with the farm's values and products. This needs to change, and it needs to change now.

As Sue Pritchard of The Food, Farming & Countryside Commission rightly put it: 'We need to tell people how it is and how it could be.'



Regen event, 2024



Regen event, 2024



Image credit: Nathalie Meyer

Our conversations suggest that citizens are ready to support a more sustainable food system, but we need better storytelling to tap into that desire for change. The prevailing assumptions that people are lazy, only interested in supermarket convenience, or that local food is too expensive must be challenged. People need to understand that they have agency in shaping the future of food in Jersey. When they realise that, they can make a difference. The ripple effect is powerful, and that sense of empowerment is contagious.

Jersey is uniquely positioned to embrace regenerative agriculture and to make the possibility of food sovereignty a reality.

Through the Economic Framework for the Rural Environment policy, Jersey's agricultural landscape is evolving, making regenerative farming more accessible and viable, and simultaneously driving down the cost of local food, making it competitive and even cheaper than imports in the peak growing season.

With its innovative credit scheme and growing momentum, Jersey is arguably the best place in the world to establish a rural business right now. Over the past three years, 80 new rural businesses have emerged, with that number expected to double within the next two years.

By encouraging a diverse range of rural business models, we increase our resilience, creating multiple avenues to resist failure and strengthening the Island's food system.

The key to this transformation lies in rebuilding trust within the community and fostering relationships based on shared values of sustainability, resilience, and local pride.

A regenerative food system in Jersey promises a future that is decentralised, democratic, and rooted in community. In this vision, trust, relationships and cooperation are the true currency. People are no longer passive consumers; they are active participants in shaping the future of their food systems. This new approach doesn't just feed the Island's population; it nourishes its soul, creating a more resilient and connected community in the process.

Regenerative agriculture is not just a way of farming – it is a way of living, a way of ensuring that Jersey's rural economy thrives for generations to come.

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# The future of the Jersey Royal



**Many Islanders will have been looking forward to the season’s first crop of Jersey Royals and the start of spring. Kieranne Grimshaw spoke to the business unit director at Albert Bartlett, Tim Ward, to find out how last year’s acquisition of The Jersey Royal Company has progressed**



Kieranne Grimshaw

**H**ow many potatoes are lucky enough to have a factory built especially for them?

Lucky Jersey Royals – in 2007, after their arrival in Jersey, that is what Bartletts did, building an impressive factory in Trinity for the benefit of Jersey’s unique product, to facilitate the export of the Island’s famous early potato. Last year they purchased what had been their commercial competitors in the Island, the Jersey Royal Company.

The business unit director at Albert Bartlett, Tim Ward, said his company had seen a major change in the way consumers were buying.

‘Everyone is moving down the route of convenience,’ he said, ‘so, both washed and packed potatoes, and Jersey were starting to lose their way in the marketplace. We were shipping to the UK overnight and they were arriving a day later to be delivered to a packer. The shipment was three or four days old before it got packed, and then nearly seven days before getting on to the table.

‘It’s all about shortening that timespan and doing what’s right for the product.’

With the new ferry company, DFDS, up and running, Tim is confident they will provide the essential daily service for their produce. The potatoes are literally lifted at 5am, are in our factory at 8am, then shipped out that night – so, a very short time period.’

The industry also faces comparatively new challenges, resulting in a reduction in volume. Factors include better quality produce from other countries, meaning stronger competition; a change in people’s eating habits and choosing more rice and pasta over potatoes, have contributed to a reduction in volume.

‘We have to adapt to this and we’re putting the best possible package on the shelf to keep the premium, quality and the name.’

With more competition and pricing pressures, Bartletts recognised the need to be more productive and efficient.

‘We needed to have more collaboration and togetherness as an Island.

‘We previously had two completely different set ups in terms of structures of both businesses. Ours was very much about independent farmers, buying products from them, and packing and distributing to the UK. The Jersey Royal Company were far more integrated regarding growing their own products, they only had one independent grower.’

These factors enabled a deal to be passed last March, where they could look at the best parts of both businesses to ensure independent growers could benefit from a holistic approach.

‘Previously we would have been under 50% of the market and the Jersey Royal Company just over 50%. You’d have different arrangements with different customers and different pressures to meet their requirements.



'Now we are looking at the whole picture, maximising and benefitting the quality of the product at the same time.'

With unpredictable weather patterns, each season is different. Early in the year, up to 20% of the crop has been planted, but the result is uncertain. Traditional methods remain, however. 'Most growers are now fifth generation farmers and they're even using the same seed box used back in 1878. It's a testament to how good it is. It's that attention to detail and passion that hopefully delivers the right product.'

Showing commitment to sustainable farming, one of the first initiatives Bartletts introduced was the Cover Crop Competition, encouraging local farmers to adopt cover crop techniques and best practices, thereby supporting healthy local habitats.

'We're having to rethink how we're managing land for the next generation and cover crops play a massive part in that.' Tim said.

'We've increased the amount we do in cover crops, as we've seen the benefit. Looking at the whole Island, we're able to help, rotate and use the land in a better way.'

Involving the entire farming industry as part of natural rotation, discussions have begun with Jersey Dairy for a way forward. With consumers' higher expectations in food quality, there have been some fields that are unable to reach the required standards. Efficient machinery management is another key factor for success, Bartletts has its own engineering department, with about 12 engineers.

This year will be a big year for Albert Bartlett. 'We're hoping to see the benefits regarding productivity and efficiency. In the past, with two factories, one at Peacock Farm and one here, at the start of the season each would have both been running part-time. Then at the seasonal peak, when under pressure to cope with high volume, end factory would probably end up running at low capacity.'

Tim continued: 'A lot of work has gone on, but we're still trying to integrate some of the systems and I.T. and getting the parts to talk to each other.'

Maintaining the brand is vital. Consumers expect the unique kidney shaped potato to be not too big: 'We've done a lot to improve the multiple yield of that size grade, by increasing planting density, putting more seed in and generally managing the crop to get a better tuber number.'

Without devaluing their own market, Bartletts have also supplied Jersey Vodka with oversized potatoes and a few have been successfully exported to Poland. They are aiming to get their new brand into a number of retailers this year for the first time.

'It would have been difficult for two operating businesses to continue in the current marketplace,' Tim said. 'It needed to happen for both parties. Now we're in a better place to build it for the future.'

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# Could the future be 'national'?

## Mike Stentiford of the Jersey National Park says it's already well on the way

Applied locally, it would appear that the word 'national' is currently glinting in the springtime glow of public sunshine.

There's nothing new about the word itself, of course, because it's been hovering within 'Island-speak' for quite some time.

For instance, think the National Trust for Jersey, a major charity that first saw the light of day as long ago as 1937 or, far more recently, the National Cricket Centre, a self-explanatory sporting endeavour that set out its wickets in 2022.

And now, following on their heels comes another twosome of applicants, each wishing to become potential 'national treasures' – a Jersey National Anthem and a Jersey National Day, both specifically in tune with the Liberation celebrations.

And why not indeed, if something is regarded with such public pride, should it not be rewarded with an equal measure of deserving 'national' identity?

In this respect we must also include another comparatively 'new kid on the national block', the Jersey National Park, an environmental asset that sits firmly within the Island Plan.

Since its arrival over a decade ago, it would be fair to say that, despite operating with a remarkably small and mostly voluntary workforce, it has gained maximum brownie points by way of determination, resilience, diligence and achievement.

Having gamely ridden some choppy waters since its launch all those years ago, 'team national park' modestly considers itself now well placed with regards to complying with all of its stipulated obligations. It is also fully aware that continuing with its environmental achievements while dealing with any unexpected challenges remains at the very core of its future purpose.

As a consequence, the park's political overseers and board of advisors can be relied upon to offer collective wisdom in setting out the park's future targets, aspirations and strategies.

As expected, each of these wide ranging and environmentally focussed obligations are entirely reliant on fostering good working relationships with a number of other likeminded partners.

One particular initiative is focussed on assisting the Environment Department (officially designated as Infrastructure and Environment by the Government of Jersey) in the restoration of a specific degraded area on the Island's north coast.

Rightly regarded as a key project, it is directly linked to the reserve conservation sheep initiative, and grazier Aaron Le Couteur. It has long been sensible practice to introduce Manx Loaghtan long horn sheep into carefully selected coastal areas where improved grazing can create biorich habitat.

To help strengthen such an environmental win-win situation, the National Park is also contributing towards a number of 'no-fence' GPS sheep collars, a brand new self-explanatory initiative that alleviates the costly necessity of stock fencing.



In direct tandem with this new technological project, the JNP is especially delighted to be partnering with the Société Jersiaise on whose land at Egypt this coastal grazing project is about to take place. Like all other park-related environmentally enhancing initiatives, such direct and appreciated collaboration and practical support is deemed as essential.

On a final note, there can be little doubt that, worldwide, National Parks are universally acknowledged as special places. As well as being a kindred spirit to other likeminded agencies by protecting sensitive landscapes, wildlife habitats and cultural heritage, they also provide focus for recreation and tourism.

In every respect, the Jersey National Park can be recognised as being no different. It would, indeed, be very foolish to believe that the protective value of having our very own national park is of little or of no consequence.

The fact is that it is writ large in the Island Plan and functions both reliably and responsibly and should, in the opinion of many, eliminate any doubts there may be with regards to its future and to its eminent 'national' status.

# The future of Jersey's historic buildings

**Jersey's landscape is full of historic buildings, many of which have protected, defended and sheltered us over the centuries. But to keep them safe for the next generation to enjoy, these important buildings need a new purpose. Suzi Austin explains how Jersey Heritage developed its successful Heritage Lets programme to protect their long-term future**

**I**t is 20 years since Jersey Heritage was given the green light to begin its programme to restore some of the historic military sites, historic buildings and heritage cottages across the Island and transform them into self-catering accommodation.

The aim behind the Heritage Lets programme, known at the time as the 'coastal forts and fortifications initiative', was to find a new way to use redundant historic buildings and remove the risk of losing them in the future. The buildings were listed, and therefore protected by law, but some of them were decaying or on the brink of collapse.

The buildings needed attention to survive and this required investment. In 2005, a States grant from the Tourism Development Fund (TDF) was awarded to Jersey Heritage for the first phase of the Lets project. Work began to carefully and sensitively restore and refurbish some of the buildings, providing visitors and Islanders with unique places to stay.

Fort Leicester overlooking Bouley Bay, Barge Aground in St Ouen's Bay and Radio Tower at Corbière were the first of the Heritage Lets to be completed. Today, there are 14 sites available to rent, including Archirondel Tower; the Cider Barn and Stable Barn Apartments at Hamptonne; Elizabeth Castle Apartment; Kempt Tower; L'Étacquerel Fort; La Crête Fort; Lewis's Tower; and Fisherman's Cottage (run on behalf of the Parish of St Helier); as well as two offshore towers, Seymour and La Rocco, which require a guide to escort guests.

If there were any reservations about the decision to combine the restoration of these heritage assets with a commercial venture, they have been well and truly put to bed over the past two decades; the right balance between conservation and commerciality was struck and the Lets are now universally regarded as a great success.

Their popularity has soared and figures for the past ten years show that almost 28,000 guests have enjoyed stays in the historic properties since January 2015, with Radio Tower, Kempt Tower and Barge Aground proving to be the top three choices.



Jersey Heritage: The Officers' Quarters on the Parade at Elizabeth Castle is being renovated to provide group accommodation

The Lets were especially popular in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 when travel was difficult and Islanders were looking for an opportunity to staycation. Occupancy during that winter was 200% higher than during a normal year.

Breathing new life into these buildings has ensured their long-term future.

It has not only given them a new purpose but the funds raised by people booking to stay in them are ringfenced and ploughed back into the Lets programme; the money is used to maintain the existing properties in the Lets portfolio and to care for other historic properties that come under the umbrella of 'forts and towers', in a nod to the 2005 name of the scheme.

Archirondel initially offered basic accommodation before a refurbishment was completed in 2019. Renovations included opening up access to the top of the Tower, which has panoramic views across the east coast to St Catherine's Breakwater and France. As work progressed and sections of the concrete floor were removed, it was discovered that the existing stairwell was not perfectly cylindrical and the proposed spiral staircase would not fit, which meant it had to be redesigned.

More recently, the lounge on the fifth floor of Radio Tower was due a revamp but the design of the Tower meant the furniture could not be brought up from the inside. Instead, they were hoisted into place using a crane.

In the latest chapter of the Lets' story, work is ongoing to create the Elizabeth Castle Retreat experience, which will launch later this year. As well as considering the requirements of 18th Century buildings, the teams involved are having to navigate the weather and changing tides as they create group accommodation in the Officers' Quarters at the Castle and a meeting room and kitchen in the Coal Store next to the Georgian Hospital Block.

Despite these challenges, the Castle restoration project and the continuing popularity of the Heritage Lets stand testament to the fact that the right formula was found to protect the long-term future of many of the Island's historic buildings. By providing people with somewhere unique to stay, these buildings continue to add to the cultural fabric of the Island. Left to deteriorate and crumble without a new purpose, they might not have survived.

**Heritage Lets bookings for 2026 are currently being held at 2025 pricing, if booked before May 2025. For more info, go to: [jerseyheritage.org](http://jerseyheritage.org)**



Jersey Heritage: An artist's impression of how the completed accommodation will look for the Elizabeth Castle Retreat



The additional sites that currently fall within this broader funding scheme are St Catherine's Powder Magazine; Icho Tower; the Cold War Bunker; L'Étacquerel Powder Magazine; Les Hurets Guardhouse; La Tour Janvrin/Portelet Tower (Ile au Guerdain); La Rosière Quarry Stone Crusher and Powder Magazine; La Tour Cârrée; Plémont Fort and Guardhouse. Not only does this mean the future of these historic buildings is actively being protected, but some of them may one day become the latest Lets available to book.

The last addition to the Heritage Lets portfolio was Archirondel Tower and, as anyone who has been involved in a restoration project knows, transforming an historic property is not without its challenges.

Jersey Heritage: The spiral staircase proved to be a challenge during the renovation of Archirondel Tower

# The future of Jersey's past

By Stephen Cohu, of Stephen Cohu Antiques

If you'd said to me 32 years ago when I first started dealing full time in antiques, that by 2025 a Georgian mahogany Jersey chest of drawers would be significantly cheaper than an MDF catalogue flat pack equivalent, I would have scoffed at such a ridiculous suggestion.

Sadly, or happily for those who wish to own an antique anything, that is now the situation. Prices are dictated by supply and demand and the finest Jersey pieces are now very difficult to find and equally difficult to sell!

During the post-war period when furniture and homewares were scarce and subject to being made in accordance with economy standards, people made do with the old-fashioned inherited or handed down furniture, china, glass and household items.

Homes were furnished with utility walnut, thinly veneered plywood susceptible to almost ubiquitous woodworm infestation, mixed with traditional furnishings. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the taste for antiques was replaced by the 'mid-century' look of G-Plan, Nathan, Ercol Jacobean revival, and antique furniture was ritually removed from your average farm dwelling and burned on a big bonfire in the name of progress. Then in the 1980s and '90s tastes dramatically changed, antiques became fashionable, and prices skyrocketed.

There was huge demand for traditional Jersey furniture both here and overseas in the UK, Australia, South Africa, the USA and Canada. Every week containers of linen presses, extending dining tables, chiffoniers, six panel presses, chests of drawers, Jersey pine dressers and half tester beds were sent to exporters across the Channel in vast numbers. Particularly desirable were the tall chests on chests, or tallboys, inlaid with ivory and boxwood, often with rosewood crossbanding.



Traditional Jersey six panel press constructed from fine quality mahogany from the Caribbean circa 1800



Jersey bow fronted chest of typical design circa 1820

So much was exported that these items can now be considered rare to find these days. Sadly, rarity doesn't make for desirability and these wonderful pieces of furniture are now largely overlooked by furnishers and decorators. Consequently, they are extremely good value for money and as we've stated before, at length, they have zero carbon footprint. They are the greenest brown you can find.


The reason that there was so much fabulous quality furniture made in Jersey during the late 18th to the mid-19th Century was down to what is known as the Trade Triangle between Jersey, Gaspé in Canada, the Colonies of the West Indies, back across to Europe and then to Jersey. Jersey dominated the cod fishing industry in Gaspé until the mid-19th Century and the merchants that made their money from this trade triangle built large 'cod' houses on the profits, very much a symbol of success.


Jersey ships would sail from Jersey with supplies for Robin & Co in Gaspé, sail to the Colonies with the cod and other trade goods, unload and load up with rum and sugar using exceptional mahogany timber as ballast, drop off in Europe and on to Jersey to unload then reload with supplies for the fisheries in Canada.

Hence the quantity of large-scale furniture made in Jersey from the best wood for the wealthiest merchants with the biggest houses. Sadly, much of this furniture does not suit the more modest houses and apartments built today and would rather dominate the space. However, much of it is perfectly serviceable, not too large in scale and is most appealing in its appearance. Above all, it reminds us of Jersey's importance in trans-Atlantic trade during a considerable part of the Georgian and early Victorian period.

So, what does the future hold for Jersey's historic past? That is very much up to you, the readers of this piece. Stop buying Indonesian hardwood furniture with its associated environmental destruction, stop buying rubbish quality particle board flat packs which will fall apart in months if not weeks, stop installing fitted furniture at breathtaking cost and start buying into Jersey's great historical past before it's too late and the little that is left is lost forever.

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# Liberation and the Bailiff

## —liberation of the Bailiff

**The Bailiff, Sir Timothy Le Cocq, looks forward to the important 80th anniversary of the Liberation in May, and also to his own 'liberation' (or rather, retirement) from office in October, in conversation with Alasdair Crosby**

There are ten swords displayed around the walls of the Bailiff's Chambers; fortunately, the Bailiff, Sir Timothy Le Cocq, said he had never had to grab one in anger. Good news for visitors – and interviewers.

The swords are in part a reminder of his membership of the European Historical Combat Guild, which had a Jersey chapter, and he was also a member of the Duke's Leopards historical reenactment society. He has no plans to resume those interests, but he still has all the kit.

The Bailiff was talking about life after retirement and personal interests for which he might have more time. On the day he was interviewed for RURAL magazine, there were 248 days to go until his retirement on 19 October.

Not that Sir Timothy Le Cocq is blocking off the days on the calendar; he is still enthused by the tasks and duties of his remaining term of office. Not least is the important 80th anniversary of Liberation Day on Friday 9 May.

How, he was asked, is it possible to make the annual anniversary of Liberation relevant to a modern generation?

Sir Timothy said: 'I think we are very much in a transitional time, slipping from the time that first hand stories of the Occupation were told to us, the following generation. Now, that second generation is slipping into a third or even fourth generation, and we are dealing with an event that is becoming increasingly historical, a matter of history rather than of direct family and personal memory.'

“ I take a view that it's time to reframe the anniversary celebrations, so that they inform the future, as opposed to simply being about only looking back to the past

'I take a view that it's time to reframe the anniversary celebrations, so that they inform the future, as opposed to simply being about only looking back to the past.'

'Liberation Day is always going to be a time to remember an enormously important part of the formation of the Island's way of thinking in modern times. So, of course, we would never forget the original Liberation, but we have to make it increasingly relevant to younger people. We have to talk about it, about the lessons of Liberation

Day, and the lessons of memory, the importance of liberty, of freedom and of democracy. And, above all, the importance of our Island community.'

'In thinking about those things, and in pointing to them as being a significant part in our past, that is one way of carrying them forward to the next generation and to generations to come.'

So, it should become more of a 'National Day' for Jersey ?

'Yes, but that's not to say we won't have the traditional features for a long time to come, perhaps even in perpetuity. After all, the French have their Bastille Day- that's celebrating an event much further back in history than our own Liberation! And although the French understand the importance of the storming of the Bastille, equally, it's a modern French celebration as well. We can do the same.'

Members of the Bailiff's own family were living in Jersey during the Occupation or returned to the Island at Liberation time. His mother had been evacuated and she spent the wartime years in Barnsley. His father, Bernard Le Cocq, had been working in a bank in Poole, but enlisted into the Royal Navy, and came back to Jersey with Force 135 at the time of Liberation. Sir Timothy's uncle, Kevin, and his grandparents, remained in Jersey throughout the Occupation.

His grandfather was the licensee of the Exeter pub in Queen Street. His grandparents and uncle, Kevin, lived above the pub and it was from a window of their home that Kevin took a photo with his Box Brownie camera, illicitly, of German troops marching down the street outside.

Royal Visit: The Bailiff, HM King Charles III, Dougie Richardson (JFU president); The Queen is seen standing behind the Bailiff. Credit: Jersey Evening Post



Anticipating his retirement date, Sir Timothy is looking forward to having more time to pursue his own personal interests.

‘I’m lucky,’ he said. ‘I still have my health and hopefully, with a few more long nights sleep, and not worrying about what jobs need to be done next day, I’ll be able to be pretty active in the years to come.

‘I would want to read books. Seems a silly thing to say, given the job I do now, but I actually can’t read for pleasure at the moment; I spend all my working time reading on-screen and reading paperwork. But I like the sensation of reading a book, so I am rather hoping that I will have more time to do so after retirement.

‘Certainly, I would like to travel. No doubt about that. I have family in Australia and New Zealand.

“ Liberation Day is always going to be a time to remember an enormously important part of the formation of the Island’s way of thinking in modern times. So, of course, we would never forget the original Liberation, but we have to make it increasingly relevant to younger people...”

‘My wife and I enjoy travel and there is lots of Europe to visit and plenty of cities to see.’

In the past he liked to sing and used to sing in choirs. He was a member of a barber shop quartet called Pzzazz, together with Terry Neale, Nigel Crespel, and Les Norman. ‘We had great fun doing that for a couple of years. But it’s close harmony, and requires real practice, and performing on stage doesn’t feel quite right for a Bailiff. But when I retire, I’d like to do some singing. Hopefully, there will be a space for me in one or two choirs.’

Apart from singing, he used to have some much more active hobbies. He rode with the Jersey Drag Hunt, but stopped after he concussed himself twice in one year. ‘But I do love horses. I suppose I could toddle around on one during holidays.





“ I still have my health and hopefully, with a few more long nights sleep, and not worrying about what jobs need to be done next day, I'll be able to be pretty active in the years to come

‘But, never say never – even though they are obviously a significant commitment.’

Sir Timothy loves France, but his legal training never took him to study in Caen. ‘I plan to get a lot more fluent in French when time permits.’

History is an interest that has developed over his lifetime. The more his professional career has developed, the more he has understood the historical context of Jersey's laws.

But he is also fascinated by ancient history and cultures, not just the history of Egypt and Sumer, but also local prehistory and the Neolithic culture that built the Dolmens and Menhirs still visible in the countryside.

‘Those sorts of things are real things that resonate with the fantasy world that I used to love as a child, and Tolkien's Middle Earth – I am very much a sword and sorcery type of person.’

‘I don't intend to give up working entirely but who knows what the future will hold?’

The Bailiff, Sir Timothy Le Cocq, Visite Royale



# Telling the story of liberation



Welcome home . Credit: JEP collection at the Jersey Archive'

## 80 years after the Liberation on 9 May 1945, Cathy Le Feuvre dips into Jersey Archive to discover how one man documented this crucial period of our history

**M**ost of us may know that Alexander Coutanche was Bailiff during the Occupation, but what about the man who worked alongside him during that era?

Stored at Jersey Archive, which is run by Jersey Heritage, is a diary written by Ralph Mollett, who was Bailiff's Secretary in the lead-up to, during and after the Occupation.

Linda Romeril, Archives and Collections Director at Jersey Heritage, says the diaries offer a fascinating view of government during the period and of the important and very difficult balance between looking after the local population while also liaising with and dealing with the German authorities.

'Ralph's diary is very much written to be read. It's a diary and a scrapbook. He's got photographs, extracts from the States, from newspapers. He's telling us the story of Occupation.

'There's a photograph of the huge white cross that was painted on the Royal Square just before the Germans came to the Island... it could be seen from the air so they could see that the islands were surrendering. It's such an emotive photo.

'There's a photograph of the Bailiff standing outside the State's building with crowds of people in the Royal Square, and underneath we have an extract from Ralph... "1st of July 1940, 1230pm, Bailiff of Jersey makes his last public speech."

“ **Ralph's diary is very much written to be read. It's a diary and a scrapbook. He's got photographs, extracts from the States, from newspapers. He's telling us the story of Occupation** ”

'Two pages later, we see Alexander Coutanche at Jersey Airport, meeting the German troops who had just arrived on the Island. So again, incredibly emotive images, giving us a very visual impression of what was happening at the time. We don't know who took the pictures. We don't know if it was Ralph, but he obviously had copies and he put them in this very important document.'



Ralph Mollett. Credit: Jersey Heritage

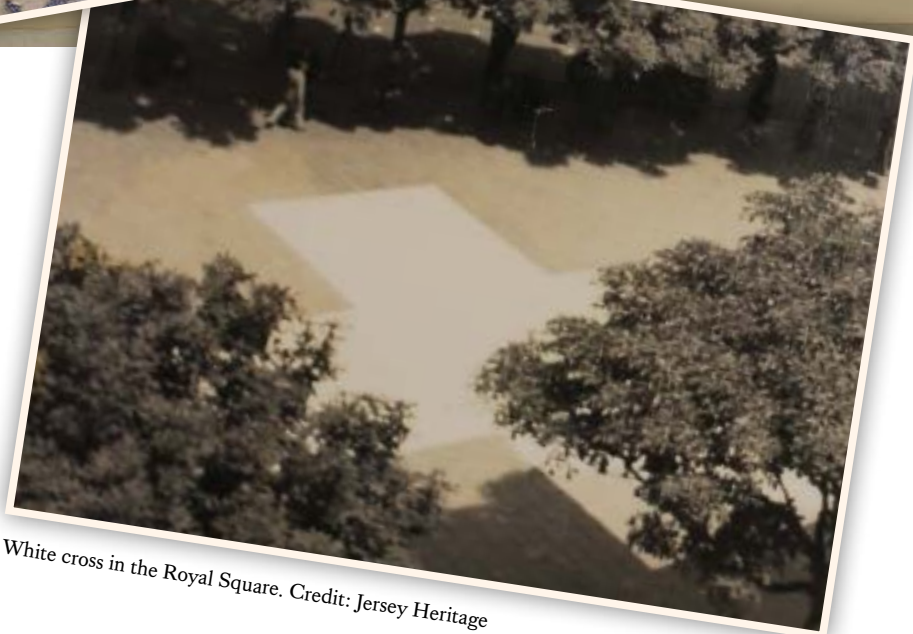
Ralph Mollett's Occupation diaries run across three volumes, the last covering June 1943 to 15 May 1945. Around D-Day in June 1944, he writes how Islanders hoped for liberation but were disappointed when the Allies passed by through France. Also documented is the final difficult winter, when food was so short and then, the life-saving arrival at the end of December 1944 of the Red Cross ship, the SS VEGA.

Finally, we reach May 1945.

'It's interesting because Ralph's notes get very brief at this point ... almost just a sentence a day... I suspect, because he was so busy,' Linda continues.

'On May 1st he records "Adolf Hitler died at 3pm" and, at the same time that he's recording this incredible internationally important event, he reports that there's snow and ice in Jersey. That's something I've never heard in terms of Liberation.

"On 4th of May, he writes "there are lots of rumours going around". On May 5th, "there are crowds in the Royal Square." On May 8th, Ralph tells us the American and French prisoners of war in Jersey were released by order of the Germans. They hear Winston Churchill's famous speech about "Our dear Channel Islands" at 3pm, the Union Jack goes up on the Royal Court and the State's building. This is written in red... "May the 8th Victory Day!"



White cross in the Royal Square. Credit: Jersey Heritage

“ There’s a photograph of the huge white cross that was painted on the Royal Square just before the Germans came to the Island... it could be seen from the air so they could see that the islands were surrendering

“Then we move on to the 9th and the surrender of the German troops on board a ship of the Royal Navy. It’s a very brief note... “The islands were liberated at 7:14 in the morning in Guernsey. The unconditional surrender was signed and now we need to get on with the business of rehabilitation.”

‘His last entry in the diary is a wonderful letter to the (British) Home Secretary on the May 14th, where he writes: “Sir, I enclose a copy of the message which his most gracious Majesty the King sent us just before the Occupation. This copy I have kept in my pocketbook, like a love letter, and during the long years of the Occupation by the King’s enemies, when people were giving up hope, I used to give them fresh hope by reading His Majesty’s last message to them.”

'The Ralph Mollett diaries are such an important part of the Island's history, such an important set of documents. This is the man who was standing next to history... it's a first-hand account of that story.'

Ralph Mollett's diary is part of Jersey Heritage's 'Mémouaithe: a Liberation Journal', a video project sponsored by Insurance Corporation to mark the 80th anniversary of the Liberation. Eight diaries written during the Occupation years are read aloud by people playing the parts of the authors. The videos will be released in the run-up to Liberation Day on social media @jerseyheritage on Facebook, Instagram and X.



Bailiff addressing Royal Square crowds July 1st 1940. Credit: Jersey Heritage



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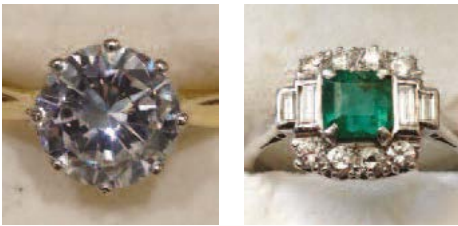
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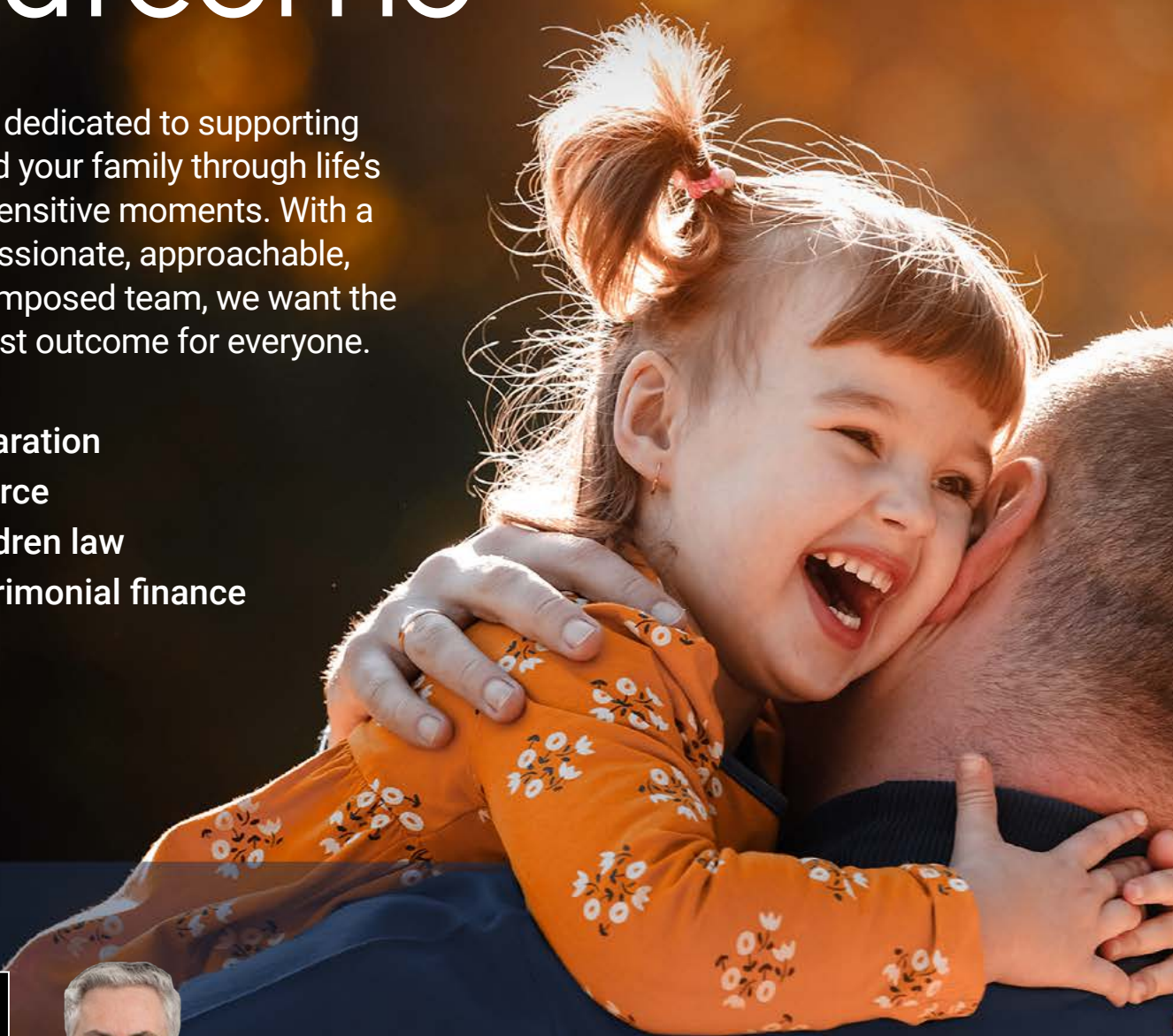
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# La ferméthie du temps passé 'farming in times past'

We are always glad to include articles in Jèrriais, Jersey's own historic language, in RURAL magazine. As we look cautiously at what the Island's future might be, this article reminds us of its heritage – really, not so long ago – and we thank François Le Maistre for sharing his memories. An English translation follows





### *Jèrriais:*

Quand j'allais siez man Papa L'Maistre à Lé auprès la dgèrre, dans les mille neuf chens quarante, les vacques 'taient tréjous a paître au lian dans les clios. L'embar'rie des clios aue du fi d'fé électrique né c'mencht qué dans les mille neufs chents chînquante, et j'tais iun des jannes fèrmièrs tchi c'mencht à faithe sèrvi chute nouvelle manièthe en 1955-56. Man vaîsîn m'dit qué chenna s'en aller janmais travailli! Enfin, tchiques années pus tard, i' c'mencht à faithe la même chose! I' 'tait convaintchu qué ch'tait eune bouonne chose. Ches jours, les vacques sont a banon dans les clios et enfreunmaient par du fi d'fé électrique par tout. V'la tchi sauve du temps duthant la journée. Nouos n'a pon besoin dé changi les lians trais ou quatre fais par jour!

La souongnéthie des bêtes à ch't heu est tout à fait difféthente. Les fèrmièrs sauvent du fain bein seux, mais i' copent l'herbe fraîche et la garde dans des storres à tour pour souongni les bêtes dans l'hivé. Les temps passé, nous craissait des navets, des raves, des épions d'chours, etc et tout l'travas tchi fallait faithe pour les tchultiver ; la sèmethie, la sèrclièthie, la ramâs'sie au S'tembre et pis mettre tout chonna dans des creux dans la terre et pis les couvri aue d'la feugiéthe pour les protégi d'lag'lée.

D'avant la dgèrre, man Papa mé disait qué toute la touonn'nie des clios 'tait faite aue eune grand' tchéthue et quatre j'vaux et un tas d'ouvrièrs a foui les carres, lé pitchage pour la préchaine raie, a rabillyi la raie ouaisqu' i' y avait des fias, etc. eune vraie racachie d'monde. À ch't heu, eune pèrsonne fait tout ch'na à san tout seu! I' s'assied dans la cahuche d'un immense tracteu aue quat' ou chîn' tchéthue en drièthe, cache au clios et il est finni d'la touonn'nie dans raide temps. Ouaisqu' lé temps passé i' fallait des s'maines et eune racachie d'gens; mais les fouoyèthes 'taient bein dréchies et i'n' y avait pon bésouin dé labouother aue eune aut' machinne pour arrangi et mettre tout dé nivé. Mais, si les vièrs gens r'touonnaient ches jours et vyaient chenna, 'Man Doue d'la vie, tchi couochonn'nie!'

Ch'est la même chose aue la pliant'tie d'patates aniet. Eune dgaîngue dé monde arrivent au clios (p't-ètre eune vingtaine) aue toute lus machinnes. Iun des cacheurs saute sus san tracteu et c'menche à s'mer l'engrais, un autre lé suit aue san tracteu et san griffon et prépathe la terre, et pis lé traisième cacheux c'menche a ouvri des rangs aue sa houette à houetter, siex ou huit rangs à la fais. Et, à la fin, les plianteurs c'mencht à planter les patates dans les rangs ouverts; quand lé cacheux des houettes est finni d'ouvri les rangs, i' r'veint souotre les plianteurs et couvre les patates tch'ont 'tait pliantées dans la terre, aue ses houettes.

Mais, lé temps passé, ch'tait tout à fait difféthent. Nouos arrivait au clios et l'engrais avait 'tait s'mer lé jour dé d'avant et la griffonn'nie et la prépath'thie étout. Les bouettes dé patates 'taient pilées alentou du clios et lé patron décidé ouaisqu' les plianteurs füssent pliaichis, chatchun avait sa tâche; et fallait finni d'planter ses patates devant qu' lé j'va r'touonné aue la tchéthue pour les couvri et ouvri lé préchain rang.

Mais, tout l'monde arrétaient qué s'sait à dgiex heuthes ou dgiex heuthes un quart, pour la bouochie. J' fèthions chenna acouo dans mes preunmièthes années sus la fèrme et ma m'mée v'nait au clios aue du café dans eune jougue ou eune canne à lait dans un p'tit bathi aue du fain alentou pour garder lé café caud. Et pis des beurrées et d'la gâche à corînthe ou des mèrvelles ; et l'arlévé, la même chose. À ch't heu, ch'est l's ouvrièrs tch'amènt lus bouochie. Lé temps passé, ch'tait eune courtouaisie, pace qu'un tas des plianteurs, ch'tait des vaîsîns ou d's anmîns à aidgi pour la journée! Nouos a r'oublier tout ch'na à ch't heu.



*English:*

**W**hen I visited my Papa Le Maistre at Lecq after the war in the 1940s, the cows were always tethered with a peg and chain in the fields. The use of electric fencing started in the 1950s, and I was one of the first young farmers to start using this new method in 1955–56. My neighbour told me that it would never work! However, a few years later, he started doing the same thing! He had been converted and thought it was good practice. These days, cows are roaming free in fields encircled by electric fencing all day long. That saves a mountain of time each day. One no longer has to change the tethering three or four times a day!

Care of the cattle these days is totally different. The farmers still save hay, but they also cut fresh grass and store it in silos in order to feed the cattle in winter. Long ago, we grew turnips, mangolds, kale, etc and all the work that this entailed to cultivate them; the sowing, the weeding, the harvesting in the autumn. And then placing them in clamps in the soil and covering them with bracken to protect them from frost.

My Papa told me that before the war, all the ploughing was carried out with the ‘Big Plough’ with four horses and a host of farm labourers digging the corners, digging out the trench for the plough to start the next furrow, levelling the soil where there was a hollow, etc – a whole army of people. Now, one person does it on his own! He gets into the cab of a huge tractor with four or five ploughs attached on the back and drives to the field and is soon finished ploughing in no time at all. In past times it used to take days if not weeks and loads of workers; but the headlands were levelled and there was no need to rework or rotovate with more equipment in order to arrange or ready the soil for planting. But suppose the old farmers were to return today and saw some of the work, and their comments – ‘What terrible work!’

It’s the same thing with the planting of potatoes today. A gang of workers arrives in the field (maybe 20 all told) with all their machinery. One of the drivers jumps onto his tractor and starts to sow the fertiliser, another follows him with his tractor and scarifier and prepares the soil, and then the third driver starts to open up the furrows with his ‘bankers’, several rows at the same time.

And, at last, the planters start placing the seed potatoes in the open rows; when the driver of the bankers has finished opening up the rows, he then returns to those rows where the planters have finished their work and then proceeds to cover the potatoes that have been planted, with his bankers.

But, in past times it was all so different. One arrived at the field and the fertiliser had been sown the day before and the scarifying and the preparation as well. The potato boxes were already piled around the field and the boss decided where the workers would plant the potatoes, each having his or her allotted task; and one had to finish planting your potatoes before the horse returned with the plough to cover them and open up the next row.

However, everyone stopped at 10am or 10.15am for the mid-morning break. We were still doing that in my first years on the farm and my mother would come to the field with a large flask or a milk can in a small barrel with hay wrapped around it, in order to keep the coffee hot. And, of course, sandwiches and a cake or Wonders – and, in the afternoon, the same thing. Now, it is the workers who bring their own ‘bouochie’. Time past, it was a courtesy, as most of the planters were neighbours or friends who were helping for the day! One forgets all that these days.



# Preserving a past way of life

Ruth Le Cocq was guided around the Agricultural and Rural Life Museum at Samarès Manor by its owner, Vincent Obbard

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Extraordinary things from the ordinary days of yesteryear jostle for space at the agricultural museum at Samarès Manor.

Many of the once commonplace items are likely to be one of a kind, particularly in respect of the horse-drawn equipment, such as the 19th Century traditional six-horse Jersey trench plough.

Vincent Obbard, the Seigneur of Samarès Manor, explained why he had built up his collection.

‘At the end of the Second World War there was a big bonfire in People’s Park, and everybody just pushed their horse vehicles on to the fire. They burnt a whole way of life and the sadness of it all – they were keen to move on.’

Move on they did. Yet, over the years, Vincent has discovered long-forgotten agricultural items hidden away in the undergrowth in fields or tucked away collecting dust in farm outbuildings.

Cider presses, horse gins, threshing machines, scarifiers, harrows, hand tools, as well as tin bathtubs, mangles, ice cream makers and, one of Vincent’s favourites, an implement for cutting seaweed off rocks – they are just some of the items on display.

‘This museum came about as a sort of process of me still loving the outside life and the countryside and respecting the people who still did things the old-fashioned way.’





The young Vincent Obbard, aged 5

At one time there were farm sales every month and all this equipment, which I had learned to use, was being dispersed to goodness knows whom. The future of it was non-existent,' he said.

Vincent has a vivid memory of himself, as a five-year-old boy, sitting on a horse cart loaded up with mangolds.

'It was pouring with rain, and I was wearing a sou'wester, and I found the whole thing very exciting. I was aware the cart was full of farm produce that was grown for a purpose, and it was going to be pulled by a horse in a field. There was energy and movement in the cart, in the people around me and in the weather, and I knew the outdoor life was for me.'

**“ This museum came about as a sort of process of me still loving the outside life and the countryside and respecting the people who still did things the old-fashioned way**

Celebrating that outdoor way of life has been a lifelong passion and has included the restoration of the botanical gardens at Samarès Manor where visitors have enjoyed tours of the manor house, the farmyard and, at one time, rides in a horse and cart.

Vincent acquired several of the horse-drawn carriages currently featured at the museum from John Curwood, who ran a limousine business and provided horse-drawn carriages for special occasions.



**“ At the end of the Second World War there was a big bonfire in People’s Park, and everybody just pushed their horse vehicles on to the fire. They burnt a whole way of life and the sadness of it all – they were keen to move on**

'I like carriages when they have a story behind them that means something,' said Vincent. 'It brings you out from the wood and metal of the vehicle itself into the people who enjoyed using it at various occasions.'

He said the canoe-shaped Landau, displayed at the museum entrance, was originally bought by John’s grandfather in 1895. HM the late Queen Elizabeth II and HRH Prince Philip rode in it during one of their visits to Jersey.

And, as Vincent cast an eye over the vast array of curiosities displayed in what was once his cowbarn, he smiled appreciatively.

'The collection, I suppose, is all part of me, my life at Samarès.'



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# When is a foot not a foot?

## Jersey's unique measurements

Did you know that in Jersey, a 'foot' might not be what you think it is? While most of the world measures land in acres, square yards, and square metres, Jersey has its own system of peds, perches, and vergées

The use of peds, perches, and vergées can be traced back to the medieval period when Jersey was part of the Duchy of Normandy. Over time, these units have become standardised in local land transactions, agricultural practices and legal documents, and are still used today alongside modern measurements such as metres.

### Peds: the foundation of Jersey measurements

The ped (also known as a ped de perche) is Jersey's equivalent of the English foot. However, in typical Jersey fashion, it has its own distinct length. One Jersey ped is 11 Imperial inches (approximately 0.28 metres), making it an inch shorter than an English foot.

Moving up from peds, we encounter the perche. One perche is equivalent to 22 Imperial feet (approximately 6.7 metres). When measuring area, you can use a perche carré, which is defined as the area of a square with each side measuring one perche. This equates to approximately 44.97 square metres. The perche is often used to measure smaller plots of land or specific features within a larger area, such as fences or walls.

### Vergées: the agricultural standard

For larger agricultural and rural areas, the vergée is the traditional unit of choice here in Jersey.

One vergée is equivalent to 40 perches carrés, or approximately 1,798 square metres.

Our neighbours in Guernsey also use the vergée, but naturally, they are not the same size. In Guernsey, one vergée is approximately 1,638.8 square metres. This means another win for Jersey, where our vergées measure a more generous 1,798.6 square metres.

### Visualising a vergée

Describing these somewhat abstract concepts of area is all well and good, but what do they actually look like in real life?

- A Premier League football pitch is approximately 3.97 vergées
- Millbrook Park is approximately 22.28 vergées
- Trafalgar Square in London is approximately 6.67 vergées

While the metric system and other modern measurements are widely used in Jersey, peds, perches, and vergées will always hold a special place in Island life.

### Quick conversions

- 1 ped  $\approx$  0.28 metres
- 1 perche  $\approx$  6.7 metres
- 1 perche carré  $\approx$  45 square metres
- 1 vergée  $\approx$  1,798.6 square metres

When is a foot not a foot? In Jersey, it's when it's a ped de perche.

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OUR HENS HAVE  
HAD ROOM TO ROAM



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# The story of a coffee cup

By its owner,  
Jonathan Sykes

Nowadays, this 18th century Worcester coffee cup takes pride of place in a pigeon hole of my bureau – to protect it from Ronnie, the cat – in our cottage in St Helier.

But who has had coffee from it?

You see, it is not simply a collectable piece of Worcester, but a curiosity of times past, which spurs the imagination. Just think of the stories it could tell of its Georgian world!

The cup is a rare survivor of the Admiral Gayton Service, named for its original owner, the not so famous Admiral Clark Gayton (an ancestor of the Sykes family), who was born in 1712 in Portsmouth, the son of John Gayton, a former Postmaster of Portsmouth.

Clark Gayton became a Midshipman in 1735 and would hold several commands before distinguishing himself in 1759 as captain of HMS *St. George* in the West Indies. His naval career would culminate in the command of the Jamaica Station, and promotion to Admiral of the White Squadron.

Recognised as a brute and disliked by Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood, the friend and fellow officer of Admiral Horatio Nelson, he died a rich but sickly man, unsurprisingly suffering from gout, in Fareham, Hampshire in 1785, survived by a son and his much younger (second) wife. He was painted by John Singleton Copley, the same artist who painted the 'Death of Major Peirson'.



At the beginning of his career, like many of his contemporaries, Gayton was bound for British America. He married, first, Judith Rawlings in Boston, the granddaughter of Jean Ralins, a deacon of the French church in Southampton, and Judith de Carteret, daughter of Dr Philippe de Carteret MD, Cromwellian Judge-Advocate and Seigneur of La Hague, St Peter. Through this marriage he would go on to establish connections to Jersey.

Gayton's brother-in-law, John Rawlings, was momentarily Seigneur of La Hague, inheriting the estate of his great-great grandfather. But beyond this link, Gayton would actively provide his patronage to one Jerseyman in particular, his nephew, Captain Francis Le Montais.

Francis was the son of Clement Le Montais and Elizabeth Rawlings of Mont des Vignes, St Peter. He would perish in a hurricane in 1786, but would benefit from his uncle's position in Jamaica before his untimely demise.

Le Montais was given the command of the *Porcupine* schooner by Gayton and in 1777 he would become Master and Commander of the *Stork*, a sloop of war. He was acting-Lieutenant on HMS *Antelope*, Gayton's flagship, and like others, he was a contemporary of Admiral Nelson and Admiral Collingwood, who were stationed in Jamaica at the same time. Both would command the armed brig *Badger* after it had passed to Le Montais. Although he captured several prizes of war, including a schooner bound from Virginia and one for Philadelphia, it is fair to say that this Jerseyman of St Peter had his uncle to thank for his good prospects.

Gayton was known for keeping an unruly ship and was clearly popular with his men, some of whom defected from other commands to join him.

That coffee cup, one of the only surviving pieces of the Admiral Gayton Service, was previously in the private collection of John Sandon and Geoffrey Godden, two British porcelain experts known for their regular appearance on the BBC's Antiques Roadshow.

I collected it from John at Bonhams, Knightsbridge in 2019 and while it could not compete with many of the pieces up for auction that day (including a butter tub from the Admiral Nelson Service that realised over £11,000), it would be a disservice to think of it as simply a piece of Worcester.

Sandon writes in his Dictionary of Worcester Porcelain: 'The Worcester service of fluted shapes dates from c.1780, after his return to England.'

Perhaps the white porcelain, slightly pitted, could easily represent the Admiral's appearance – not quite as generously painted by Copley. While the flags and cannons pay homage to his triumphs at sea, the gold highlights allude to his wealth.

Now, the life of this not very well-known Naval officer of pre-Napoleonic times can be represented by a surviving Worcester coffee cup. It has survived for over two centuries – may it survive for two centuries more.

# The problem pooch

Harry Matthews of Origin Dog Training answers some common problems that owners find as they train their dog. In this issue, Harry comments on a common problem

**‘My dog’s recall is fine until they see a dog/bird/person’**

Many owners have this problem. So how do we fix a dog’s recall?

We create a system, based on dopamine – the BIG reward neurotransmitter. It feels amazing; humans are obsessed with it and your dog is also obsessed with it.

We create a rock-solid recall in a ‘classroom’ – such as your house or garden. It is an easy environment in which the dog can learn. We use a long line – a 10-metre biothane lead that is attached to the dog’s harness. ‘Knots for Nature’ make great ones. Prevention ensures the dog can’t run off in the first place.

*Step 1: Start with the dog’s name*

Say the name. Throw a treat. Repeat. This takes repetition. This is your interrupter. We need focus before we can give the dog something to do.

*Step 2: Build in the word*

What was called a command, we now call a ‘cue’ word. We use the word ‘come’. Any word works. It needs to be said loudly but never shouted or screamed.

The reason we use the word ‘come’ is because that is often the first word you’ll shout as a handler.

So, let’s make it easy for the human as well as the dog.

If you want to use a whistle (and we do often) then a whistle takes the place of steps 1 and 2. But you have to condition the whistle by practicing the system regularly.

*Step 3: Move*

This is the bit people forget or skip and that’s often because they focus on Part 4. Movement is the reward.

The dopaminergic system starts releasing dopamine BEFORE the dog reaches you. Think of your football team about to score ... the build-up to the goal can be as exciting as the goal itself. The thought of opening the bottle of red wine is as alluring as the taste itself.

Move away from the dog – obviously not if your dog is about to run into a road – but while training.

Move sharp and fast – like prey. You become fun and interesting and unignorable.

You can move with your voice. Encourage the dog to come to you: ‘Keep going!’ ‘Nearly there!’ ... It’s like teaching a baby to walk – and it’s not done in silence.

*Step 4: Reward*

Reward big, with lots of praise (more than you think the dog needs!) Your praise should be high-pitched and fun. Let there be squeals of excitement – dance with your dog.

Always praise first, treat second. That way, the dog doesn’t run in, take the treat and run off again.

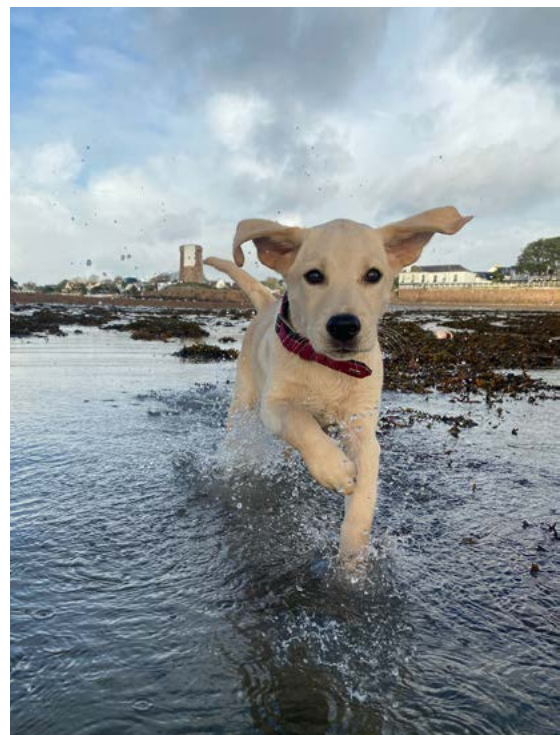
You can use high value (i.e. smelly or high calorie) treats. Play with the food – throw it in the air, throw it in the grass for your dog to hunt for.

You can use toys. Tug toys are best if your dog likes tug. K9 Wellness Centre sell tug-e-nuffs which work very well.

Adding play into your recall rewards will improve your recall massively.

Well done! You’ve just added four times as much dopamine by moving, praising, treating and playing with your dog, rather than offering one measly treat for a basic command.

Add more dopamine. Give your dog what they want. Play more. Your dog’s recall will be a lot better.





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# Running to remain in the same place

**Rosie Barclay, who is a clinical companion animal behaviourist, practising in Jersey and recently retired, with a personal reflection on the world of animal training**



Rosie and her dog, Thisbe

**W**hen Alice stepped 'Through the Looking Glass', she found herself running very fast. The Red Queen explained: *'Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!'* (Lewis Carroll 1872)

In 2004 I stepped through Jersey customs and ran a clinical companion animal behaviourist consultancy until the end of 2024, when I stopped running.

Looking back, have the pets in Jersey got to 'somewhere else' in their behavioural health? Did I run fast enough?

In the early years I worked alongside the small number of qualified dog trainers in Jersey, and we grew together. Social media was in its infancy and word of mouth was king. Around the globe new companion animal courses were being developed and a flourish of scientific research rapidly followed.

Jersey added its own animal care college course and we developed school programmes and seminars to help raise awareness of pet training, behaviour, safety and welfare. So far, so good – we were getting 'somewhere else'.

However, there was maleficence haunting the TV screens and YouTube channels. Alongside our informed colleagues around the world, we stood up against the cruel training methods that shock and coerce behaviour change that were being endorsed. We rallied to raise awareness that training and behavioural change could be achieved through reward and kindness. The politicians, including those in Jersey, agreed and promised change. We believed them.

And as this positive reward-based training bandwagon trundled forwards, we rode high on our white horses oblivious to what was coming up behind. Because about to outflank us were those commercially invested in these harsh products and their followers who believed the misinformation. We returned fire with science-based evidence, but they fought back with power, money, misguided belief... and rode on the backs of TikTok and Instagram.



Rosie with the family dog, Lion, 'her first client'

So, are we any closer to banishing such outdated and cruel methods? I am not so sure. I feel we are still running fast just to stay in the same place but hopefully those in Jersey who can make a difference will do the right thing.

More recently there has been a surge of dog walkers and doggy day care establishments in Jersey so our canine companions are not left alone all day. There are also more commercial breeding units off the Island that supply puppies on demand and endless 'rescue' organisations offering dogs with sad back stories. We don't even have to travel, as there are pick-up services for pets. So, have we got to somewhere else? Are more dogs and the resulting dog care facilities a positive outcome? Well, it depends. All of the above have negative as well as positive consequences. Some of our pets will thrive, some will not, and some will simply put up with it.

I have also seen an increase in dog trainers offering a myriad of reward-based training classes such as sniffer, man trailing, tracking, gun dog, trick, agility and flyball. But does this mean our dogs were not happy before they had access to all of this? I would suggest that perhaps due to less people and dogs, our canine companions had more space to run freely and felt less restricted and frustrated. We no longer have that privilege but we can adapt, so keep on running all of you pioneering training magicians.

However, as fast as we are producing amazing behaviourists and trainers, the faster the unqualified are grifting on social media to millions of followers. In this sense, I feel we may not be running fast enough.

So, it does seem that over my last 20 years here in Jersey, for our dogs at least we may still be running fast just to stay in the same place. However, on a positive note, in the cat world science-based information does seem to be filtering through and is being embraced by owners, vets, breeders and cattery owners. And clinical behaviourists are generally seeing less cats for problem behaviour. So, in the world of cats we may be getting 'to somewhere else' after all.



Rosie soon after she came to Jersey, with her Airedale, Lowry, and horse, Gypsy

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# Rooted in Tradition, Growing for the Future:

## How Jersey's Rural Families Are Securing Their Legacies

Jersey's countryside is more than just a beautiful backdrop—it's the heart of the Island's identity. Across the rural parishes, families have built homes, farms, and businesses that stretch back generations, forming the foundation of Jersey's unique economy and culture. But while history runs deep, the future isn't something to leave to chance. More and more rural families are thinking ahead, securing their legacies, and ensuring that what they've built lasts for generations to come.

### A New Approach to Tradition

For decades, many assumed that family farms, rural estates, and artisan businesses would naturally pass from one generation to the next. But times are changing. Not every child wants to take over the farm or continue an artisan trade. Some families have multiple heirs with different visions. Others want to ensure their estate is protected from unnecessary legal disputes. The key to long-term success? Estate planning.

Take, for example, a family running a successful Genuine Jersey farm and farm shop, selling homegrown produce and dairy products. They realised that while their business was thriving, they needed to put the right legal structures in place to ensure a smooth handover when the time came. By structuring their estate properly and clarifying inheritance plans, they gave their next generation a secure foundation to build upon, rather than uncertainty and potential disputes.

Similarly, many Genuine Jersey artisans—from cider makers to cheesemakers and beekeepers—are ensuring that their skills, businesses, and traditions are safeguarded for the future. Whether it's a multi-generational distillery refining their craft or a local family-run bakery keeping island recipes alive, proper estate and succession planning ensures that these businesses stay in the right hands for years to come.

### Building Stability While Embracing Growth

Jersey's rural economy is evolving, and the families who thrive are those who balance tradition with careful planning. Whether they own a working farm, a historic estate, or a Genuine Jersey-certified business, ensuring the right legal foundations is just as important as managing the land or perfecting a craft.

- **Wills and Trusts** – Protecting assets and ensuring a clear, fair inheritance process.
- **Estate Planning** – Keeping rural estates and businesses intact and avoiding unnecessary disputes.
- **Succession Planning** – Ensuring a smooth transition for landowners, farmers, and artisans.
- **Property Ownership Planning** – Avoiding complications over farmland, homes, and family-run businesses.

### A Future Built to Last

Jersey's rural heritage has always been about resilience, craftsmanship, and family legacies. By planning ahead, today's farmers, artisans, and small business owners are not just preserving the past—they are securing their success far into the future.

At BCR Law LLP, we work with rural businesses, landowners, and artisans to ensure that what they've built stands the test of time. The best way to honour tradition? Make sure it thrives for generations to come.



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# The Rose House home

**This is the house that Philippa built – or at least, is still building. Philippa Evans-Bevan reports on work in progress**

**E**very Old Master starts with a blank canvas.

When I embarked on building a new house, I knew I could never ‘magic’ the aged character and enchantment of a centuries-old house. I was nonetheless determined to create a strong outline which could be infilled with colour, intrigue, detail and surprise, a reflection of my life and the building’s evolution.

The infancy of the house destined to be my family home would hopefully be a long-term legacy for my children and future generations, growing to symbolise a place of affection and security. A comfort zone for family, pets and to enjoy with friends.

Living in an era when we have so many technological advantages and knowledge of how best to build well insulated, sustainable and low maintenance economical dwellings, I listened to the modern advice.

My aim was to design a high specification modern skeletal frame and embellish it with elegance. A home to share, but a home personal to me, a backdrop to a story of which my house would become an intrinsic part.

Chapter One: massive outside walls, highly insulated from the stone plinth to the slate roof and rafters. Underfloor heating run by an air source heat pump. Large aluminium windows with fine glazing bars, affording an orangery feel in parts. Dressed stone lintels and sills as a contrast to pastel elevations. All trimmed with a seamless aluminium guttering system for longevity and a profiled trim, giving a crisp frame to the ‘painting’.

I am not capable of writing a technical tome on how my imaginative ‘sketch’ became a reality.



Philippa with her canine family

Critically, a talented builder, and trades who can translate in practical terms are vital to the delivery, only achievable when communications are good and when an appreciation and understanding of the vision are shared. I have been more than lucky with an enthusiastic and exceptional band of convivial craftsmen.

‘What goes where’ is fun to plan and important to get right, starting with orientation.

Named the Rose House from its conception, as a nod to my love of roses, it will be a good while before beds of fragrant rose blooms replace the curtilage building site.

Roses, however, have contributed to the layout and aspect of the rooms. Easterly vistas, so the sun will shine in the kitchen in the mornings and transport glorious scent. Southwesterly elevations pitched for rose gardens to be enjoyed in the evening on a sunny terrace adjoining the drawing room and hall. Low windows affording the pleasure of garden and far-reaching views from the armchair.

Perspectives are critical and equally important, but utilitarian issues – car parking, dustbins, tool shed and pump house – are banished to the northerly back yard, yet accessible and convenient for ease of unloading.

Internally, of course, much of the planning and design depends on how you live and what you need. I have provided for present needs but have also had an eye to future-proofing.

We are a family of grown-ups – my children are all over 26, they come and go regularly with entourage, and we have a fondness for fun and entertaining. As a result, it was a priority to create a longed-for large open hall, suitable for gatherings and dancing.

The Rose House hall has full-length windows, with a balcony along three sides overlooking the main area. There is room for a piano, a drum kit and it has good acoustics. A separate butler's pantry has been strategically positioned close by and an open fireplace features in the adjoining drawing room area.

My preference is for light airy rooms which I feel happier in – and so do plants. Loving gardens as I do, the Rose House will be a continuation of the garden and an environment in which shrubs and plants become a living part of the furniture.

A sunny kitchen is a must, with a well shelved walk-in pantry – we spend much time in the kitchen. It is designed to be large enough for others to participate in the camaraderie and fun of making meals. An adjoining dining room is for larger gatherings, with a terrace for outside dining, and I decided to install a wood burner in the dining room for chilly winter evenings, when it is also used as a snug. So, while every area has its designated function, a good degree of versatility is built in.

A separate office is essential for my focussed detachment and 'going to work' in my own home. A quiet room where I can reflect and work on my palette, to finesse the hues and consider the next brush strokes of my painting: for a home that will be filled with love, laughter, conviviality ... and the scent of roses.



# The Waterfront Bar & Terrace

## A Haven for Foodies and Relaxation Enthusiasts

As spring has sprung, The Waterfront Bar & Terrace is now open for food and beverages with extended food serving hours from 8am – 10pm daily, ensuring all guests are never short of delicious culinary delights. Sit and relax with a view while indulging in our mouth-watering food offerings.

Our terrace area, boasting stunning views of the marina, will be re-opening in March (weather permitting). Guests can revel in this beautiful setting, perfect for an afternoon tea with a view or a sunny lunch to brighten up their day. On weekends, live music will add to the already vibrant and lively atmosphere, creating an unforgettable experience.

For those driving to our location, we offer complimentary car parking. Our convenient location makes it easy for locals and tourists alike to enjoy all that the Waterfront Bar & Terrace has to offer.

We are committed to offering an experience that is both unique and relaxing for all of our guests. Whether you're stopping by for a quick lunch, dinner with loved ones, or just a drink with friends, we've got you covered. Our friendly staff are ready to welcome you and ensure that every visit is a memorable one.

Come join us and indulge in an experience that is sure to leave you satisfied and longing for more!

*For more information, please contact:  
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# An eco-community development

**An ancient farmhouse has had new life breathed into it – as an eco-community. Alasdair Crosby spoke to the developer, Andrew Frigot**

**A** community of like-minded people, with a common interest in the environment, is the intention of a development of an old farmhouse and its buildings in St Saviour.

La Porte Farm in La Rue du Pont, Maufant, is currently being developed by La Porte Development Ltd, a partnership set up by local developer Andrew Frigot and roofing contractor Neil Livesey. One of the buildings dates back to the 15th Century and the farm was owned by the Billot family for around 700 years, passed down from generation to generation until its sale to Andrew and Neil in 2023. It is Grade 3 listed.

This most recent chapter of the site's long history is its conversion into nine family homes of two to four bedrooms. It is an eco-community development, which means, among other things, that the new owners of the nine houses will have free heating for life, according to Andrew, saving themselves at least £2,000 per year on a dwelling of similar size. All the houses have been fitted with wet underfloor heating in every room.

Andrew explained: 'The USP of the development is that all nine houses are connected to a district heating system, which runs off 100% on-site generated renewable energy.'

'The site generates 50kW of renewable solar and wind energy, which is used to run twin industrial air source heat pumps that are then connected to a 1,200 litre buffer tank, all sited within an eco-hub building, at the far west end of the site.'

'This set-up generates more than enough free hot water, which is circulated around the site via a network of heavily insulated underground pipes connected to each house. It provides 100% free heating for every room in every house.'

The renewables generate more electricity than the heat pumps require so that surplus electricity will be sold back to the grid to provide a sinking fund, which will cover the annual maintenance of the district heating system.

The buildings are former stables, as well as the main house and cottage, which, like all large old houses, were leaching a fortune in upkeep bills.

**“ This set-up generates more than enough free hot water, which is circulated around the site via a network of heavily insulated underground pipes connected to each house. It provides 100% free heating for every room in every house**



All the buildings are full of character. In the cottage, which is the earliest dwelling on the site, the original 15th Century arched entrance is preserved and is a feature in the newly renovated kitchen. The floor of an upstairs room tapers downwards. 'Was the floor about to give way?' Andrew asked himself when he first saw it. But no, the room was once a barn where hay dried, and the tapered floor allowed the moisture to drip downwards through a hole, where a container in the room below would catch the water.

Beside the big open fire in the kitchen is still preserved the 'granny chair', where an elderly lady could sit warmly and do her knitting. Some of the beams have not been converted too much from the original tree trunks – one of them still has traces of the bark. There are tally marks on beams, written in chalk, with dates written in French: '15 Mai' rather than 'May', dated to about 180 years ago.

“ We don't want the history of the house to be lost, and we want to preserve all its quiriness. The history of the house is written on its walls

One of the thick granite walls has an indent in it... why? Because it housed a cider crusher, and as space was tight for the horse or donkey that went round and round it, the wall was altered so that it had room to pass.

'We don't want the history of the house to be lost, and we want to preserve all its quiriness. The history of the house is written on its walls,' Andrew said.

'My concept when designing this project was to build Jersey's first eco-community for nine families to live in an environmentally friendly, comfortable and inexpensive lifestyle.

'I wanted to show that eco-houses don't need to look futuristic or dull and that it is possible to reuse existing buildings with plenty of historical character.'

All nine houses have been insulated to a very high level with new roofs and new heritage hardwood double-glazed doors and windows throughout. Each house has at least two parking spaces, one of which comes with electric car charging facilities and most of them have at least one garage space with a storage loft above.

The houses have well above average-sized private gardens and, as part the 'eco' aspect, there are large community amenity spaces provided at both ends of the site in the form of a picnic/play area to the east and a rewilded nature area, with paths for walking, to the west.

The site is going to be surrounded by hedging, with a double row of trees in the rewilded area.

Nor has the site lost any of its rural atmosphere: the windows in all the accommodation units look out on the fields of neighbouring Cowley Farm, with Jersey cows coming to look inquisitively at what's happening on the other side of the lane.

'We have tried to use as many natural materials as we can. The whole building is designed to be as natural as possible, not least because we are using an existing farm.'

Further eco measures include new fully fitted, and good-sized, kitchens with low energy appliances, low energy lighting in the houses and free communal area lighting which also runs off the on-site renewable energy production. On-site secure cycle storage rooms (independent of the garages) and bin sheds have also been provided at both ends of the development.

Currently four houses have been completed, each with three double bedrooms and two or three bathrooms, and the cost of each ranges from £850,000 to £995,000.

'I wanted to give these homes a bit of character, I didn't want them just to be dull white boxes or built from cheap materials just to maximise the developer's profitability like so many new builds these days. I want to create nice, high quality liveable homes,' Andrew said.

'I see these houses aimed at either downsizers or people wanting to start or who already have a young family, maybe moving out of a flat into their first house. As these homes are effectively brand new houses hiding inside historical buildings, another major advantage for the new owners is that there will be very little in the way of maintenance costs going forward.

'It shows that you can use historic old houses to build eco-homes in a traditional manner, the result needn't be terribly modern – or terribly dull.'

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# Wallpaper – better than watching it dry

**Bryony Richardson discovers the where's and 'whatfor's' of wallpaper**



**S**ince the days of britches, bustles and top hats, wallpaper has been the staple go-to for the house-proud Briton.

It's a trend that's not going anywhere – a bit like some of the paper. Original Anaglypta can still be found with 160 years of paint layers seemingly holding up the walls of some drinking establishments in corners of the UK.

Lincrusta – a textured wallpaper company founded in the 1860s by the same gentleman who invented linoleum – is enjoying a massive resurgence and has been chosen to grace the walls of Hermes' newly renovated showroom in Paris.



Top: Bryony Richardson  
Middle: Paolo Moschino  
Bottom: De Gournay



Wallpaper remains a useful tool in the decorator's box of tricks. The choices are limitless so it's sensible to approach wallpaper with a fairly clear idea about what you're wanting to achieve in order to help refine your search.

Wallpaper is probably first and foremost what comes to mind if you're looking to ramp up the 'drama' of a space.

A cloakroom or study – or other fairly bijoux and perhaps not everyday spaces – offer a great opportunity to indulge in your most daring choices, safe in the knowledge that you can love occasional glimpses of those loud and rowdy walls and then close the door on them. Also, by dint of their size, these rooms are not going to need an awful lot of the stuff in case you have a change of aesthetic direction down the line.

Larger, everyday enveloping walls should perhaps be approached with a little more caution although the last few years have seen a trend for elaborate wallpaper all over the house. No one has the monopoly on 'good taste' so these are purely opinions, but as an interior designer who tries to err on the side of sustainable and long-lasting spaces, I would never suggest 'of the moment' prints. This is for the simple fact that you are placing a flag in the sand that gives a very clear timeline to the renovation of your property.

By covering your walls with, for example, William Morris print wallpaper, you're creating a very '2000s' scheme. There's nothing wrong with this per se and some of the prints are beautiful – just be prepared to want to redecorate sooner than perhaps you'd want to if you'd opted for something less fashionable and popular. Also, bear in mind there isn't any hiding from wallpaper if you've plastered it onto high traffic zones – it's going to be in your eyeline a lot!

If you are keen to paper a large area, you may wish to consider a classic wallpaper.

Classic wallpaper tends to have a fairly high proportion of negative space/ breathing room – not all over pattern.

Or it can also be fully patterned but a smaller format, geometric constant repeat print in muted colours which tends to lead to a generally calmer vibe than the louder, directional papers.

Botanic style prints are generally pretty classic when they follow the negative space rule and can create a feeling of wellbeing in a room. Highly directional wallpaper that is following a prevailing and ubiquitous trend (sorry, William Morris but your revival prints are getting another mention) really make their presence felt in a space, so I wouldn't consider going there unless it's true love ... or perhaps you're happy to treat it as more of a holiday romance and be prepared to replace it after a few summers with no regrets.

Also worth considering for the larger and perhaps contiguous walls, are woven silks and raffias. These are available in a huge array of textures and colours and can offer a really effective way of ramping up the atmosphere and polish in a house in a sophisticated, timeless and nonchalant manner.



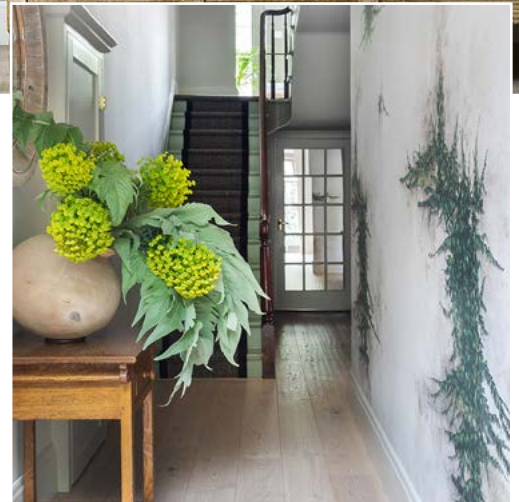
Top: Plain, woven silk wallpaper like this example from James Hare, quietly ramps up the polish of a space

They can also be surprisingly effective in dampening and absorbing sounds in noisy, echoey houses.

There's more about Bryony on her website: [bryonyrichardson.com](http://bryonyrichardson.com)

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# The hidden garden at St George's School

**Anna Bradstock reveals some history of the house and arboretum, originally planted by the Victorian owner of La Hague Manor**

If you ask any pupil of St George's School about the heritage of their school, they could inform you that it was named after a landowner in 1025, Onfroi de la Hague. Today, under the serendipitously named headteacher Sarah Hague, the custodianship of this fine house and important garden is celebrated and will be shared this year as one of the Jersey Association of Youth and Friendship's Open Gardens, on Sunday 18 May.

This historical site in St Peter was sold to François de Carteret in 1602, who built the colombier which is now part of the walled garden. But the main 18th Century building and façade of the manor was the responsibility of Thomas Le Breton, whose family continued to live in the property until it was sold to Colonel C. P. Le Cornu in 1871.

A colonel of the Royal Militia, Charles Le Cornu grew up at Vinchelez de Haut Manor in St Ouen, was ADC to Queen Victoria and Deputy for St Peter. He restored La Hague Manor extensively and, we assume, established much of the garden we see today.

Sadly, no records of the original plans have been found, but the Victorian passion for planting newly imported tree species from around the world is certainly reflected in this valuable arboretum.



The Colonel, or indeed his wife, Anne, made full use of their property's sheltered còtills for the exotic species that were being introduced as 'must haves' for any Victorian garden.

*Magnolia*, *Rhododendron*, *Camellia* and *Acer* were yet unproved to be reliably hardy, but, growing in our benign Island climate with the shelter provided, some massive specimens cascade down the valley seen from the woodland trail, as they would be growing in the mountain valleys of China and Japan.



In the valley at La Hague, we see Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), easily identified by scales like a mouse's tail on their cones, Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) the tallest tree in Jersey, Monterey Pines (*Pinus radiata*) and *Mahonia aquifolium*, all introduced from America's Pacific coast by the intrepid plant hunter David Douglas in the 1820s.

Monkey Puzzles (*Araucaria araucana*), brought back from Chile by William Lobb, became all the rage in 1841. Their armour-plated bark can withstand lava flow from surrounding volcanos, leaving extant forests of trees over 1,500 years old. La Hague's original Monkey Puzzle sadly fell in 1987 but has a handsome replacement.

Lobb's master stroke, however, was to track down 'the Big Tree' (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), reputedly even taller than the Coastal Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) already introduced from America's Pacific coast. The Giant Redwood is found further inland, in Sierra Nevada, where magnificent trees stand over 100m, some over 3,000 years old, with notable red fibrous bark able to withstand cycles of fire. Lobb delivered seed home in 1853, and the species was named *Wellingtonia gigantea* after the Waterloo hero – Veitch Nurseries in Exeter sold 3,000 seeds in one day at £200 each in today's money!

European trade with China and Japan was reestablished in the 1800s when Japanese Maples (*Acer palmatum*) appeared in many Victorian gardens. A wide spreading 'champion', *A. palmatum* is one of many cultivars found artistically placed along the cōtil paths.

With right plant, right place in mind, a Swamp Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) has been planted with its feet in the stream that runs down the cōtil. So, too, has the Weeping Willow (*Salix x sepulchralis*) planted further upstream for Children's Day on 3 July 2020, on the expert advice of José Goncalves, the astounding gardener responsible for the care and maintenance of this 79 vergée site for over 12 years.

His knowledge and love of the trees is palpable as he showed me with pride the ageing, but beautifully desirable Great White Cherry (*Prunus* 'Tai-haku') and the *Quercus robur* grown from an acorn from Windsor Great Park and planted in 2005 to commemorate Jersey's loyalty to the Crown. So too, the towering *Photinia serratifolia*, from China and introduced to Britain in 1804, with young red foliage and white flowers in April/May in elegant defiance of its ubiquitous car park relatives.

As an ancient 'Georgian', my time at St George's School was spent (happily) in town. But how I wish I could have enjoyed the Forest School and cross-country runs through the trails of this sylvan paradise – don't miss your own chance to enjoy it this May!

*JAYF's Open Garden is on Sunday 18 May 2pm – 5pm. £6.00 entry (under 12s free). Enjoy Tombola, Nature walks with cream teas served all afternoon.*



José Goncalves

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**Sunday 27 April**

**Domaine des Vaux**

*Rue de Bas, St Lawrence, JE3 1JG*

Marcus and Anne Binney’s garden never fails to please, whatever the time of year. There’s a beautifully planted woodland valley, including *Magnolia* and *Camellia* leading to ponds with *Gunnera* and Arum lilies. The glorious main garden is a riot of colour and scent and there’s a formal herb and vegetable garden, greenhouse and Mediterranean garden.



**Sunday 18 May**

**St George’s School**

*St Peter, JE3 7DB*

St George’s School moved to La Hague Manor in 1979. It was built in 1753, remodelled in the 1870s. Sweeping lawns surround the house and include a large walled garden. Follow trails through the extensive grounds to discover gigantic 100-year-old trees from around the world. Children can enjoy the Gruffalo Trail and Jersey Trees for Life will be offering fun activities and information for all ages.

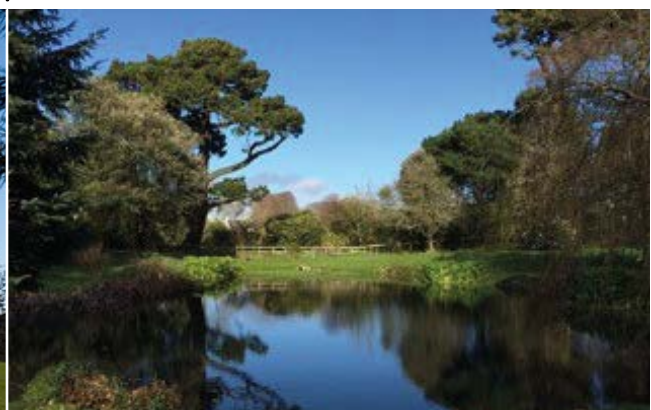


**Sunday 8 June**

**Oaklands**

*Rue d’Elysée, St Peter, JE3 7DT*

Rolling lawns from the house to a large pond filled with duck are surrounded by specimen shrubs and trees. Acers, cherries, *Rhododendron*, Dawn Redwood and what is reputed to be Jersey’s largest walnut. Further highlights are the well-stocked kitchen garden, *Wisteria* arch and woodland bluebell walk.



**Sunday 22 June****Les Aix***Rue des Aix, St Peter, JE3 7ZE*

A charming 12th Century granite farmhouse down a long drive is a rural idyll. The garden comprises rooms of white, grey with fiery red and foliage borders and many beautiful roses. A yew maze of nearly 1,000 box plants symbolizes an artist's palette, five small circular gardens of different colours and an old Jersey cider press where the artist's thumb would be holding the palette.

**Sunday 6 July****St Ouen's Manor***JE3 2HR*

Home to the de Carteret family for nearly 900 years, the 15th Century tower dominates this historic granite manor house. The rampart walk planted with colourful borders overlooking the lawned moat and fishpond leads to a 9th Century granite altar in the chapel. Cream teas will be served in the magnificent walled garden full of roses and lavender. Wander further though wildflower meadows and ancient trees.



*Admission to each Open Garden from 2pm to 5pm remains the same as last year: £6 (children under 12 free)*

*Cream teas served all afternoon remain the same at £5.50*

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# Gardeners' questions

Answered by RURAL magazine's agony aunt on gardening matters – 'Aunty Planty'

If you have a question for Aunty Planty, please contact her at [editorial@ruraljersey.co.uk](mailto:editorial@ruraljersey.co.uk)

**I have a large fig tree with lots of fruit in the summer, but the majority never ripen. Should I prune the tree or feed it?**

**N**o food for Figgy, but some pruning is definitely in order.

With a well-established tree, the opportunity for root pruning is long gone, but if starting from scratch, try to restrict the roots of a fig to deter it from growing into the large tree it strives to be.

You want the one-year-old stems on which the majority of the fruit develop to be within reach. Figs produce two crops a year in their native habitat of the Mediterranean, Middle East, through to India and Asia. Alas, our summers are not hot enough to ripen both crops. The crops with the best chance of ripening here are the pea-sized fruits formed at the end of summer, which safely overwinter in Jersey to produce juicy purple figs the following August.

The confusing ones are the pea-sized fruits produced in early summer which don't have sufficient heat and sun to ripen within the remaining four months of a Jersey summer and remain as green mini-figs into the winter.

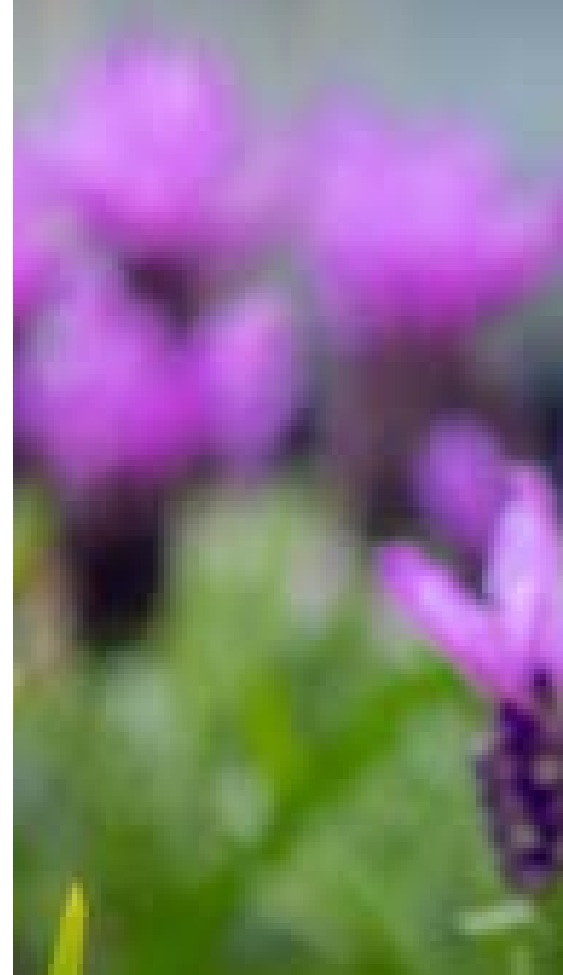
These should be removed as they take energy from the tree when it should be saving strength to produce the all-important early summer pea-sized fruit. If you want a belt and braces job, you can halve the number of these early summer 'peas' to give the ones left more chance of cropping.

But 'I can't reach!' I hear you cry. Sorry, you may need a three-year programme to cut/saw the long-established branches to an accessible height in spring. Rule of thumb is never to prune more than 30% of a tree at one time. Once cut, these will grow new stems to produce those pea-sized fruits in their second and subsequent years. These new stems will grow vigorously, so just select a few to keep under control by pruning five leaves back from the tips in summer.

Good luck ... figgy pudding for Christmas 2027?!

**A few of my lavender plants die every year so now they are all different sizes. I harvest the flowers in August and trim plants in spring, but I don't want to buy new ones every year to fill the gaps**

You don't say which Lavender you grow, but I am guessing it will be a variety of *Lavandula angustifolia* which produce fragrant lilac flowers in early summer.



Growing naturally in a Mediterranean climate, they love a sunny, dry, well-drained (preferably alkaline) soil, generally less happy with our wet winter sitting in heavy (maybe acidic?) soil. It is very annoying trying to maintain a neat row of any plant to a uniform design, be they herbaceous, shrub or tree. I therefore have a few suggestions.

First, improve the drainage by forking in some gravel around the plants, then consider a mixed planting in some pleasing rhythm with other blue/violet flowering plants such as *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low' or *Salvia nemorosa* 'Ostfriesland', or there is now a smaller variety of Russian sage *Perovskia* 'Little Spire' which will extend the flowering season into September. What about sea Lavender, the perennial *Limonium latifolium* which will give you a frothy purple flower heads, or *Linaria purpurea* (purple toadflax) with purple multiflowered spikes, which are both magnets for pollinating insects and can be grown inexpensively from seed?

Take cuttings of your existing lavender to build up reserve plants or try one of the beautiful French Lavenders with the tufty ears, *Lavandula stoechas*, which is slightly earlier flowering and happier in acid soil. But don't cut it in spring or you will have no flowers!



**When is a good  
time to trim my  
overgrown Hebe?**

‘Trim’ is the word to keep in mind; do not cut a *Hebe* too hard into the old wood as it will not regenerate. Give it a trim after flowering in late summer, but if (like me) you have found your *Hebe* almost constantly in flower, the temptation is to leave it!

Last summer I had to be brave with my large dark purple flowered variety which I reduced by a third in height, ensuring that there were green shoots on each of the stems I cut. I hated not having the flowers for September, but nobody else noticed – obviously! I kept it watered, and it looks happy and set to flower this summer.

We are lucky to be mild enough to risk this in Jersey, so give it a go, but take cuttings slightly earlier in the summer as backup, they are fast to root and grow on well. For taxonomic correctness, we should now be talking about *Veronica* not *Hebe*, but I think she answers to both!

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# The curse of plastic

By Jersey's eminent explorer, Colonel John Blashford-Snell

In 1977, 400 years after Sir Francis Drake landed in Central America, I carried my lucky Jersey flag and, displaying the Union Jack and Costa Rica flag, I unveiled a plaque in memory of the great sea captain on the jungle clad coast of Costa Rica's Osa peninsula. The long idyllic beach, fringing the turquoise ocean with its rolling surf, was a breeding ground for huge marine turtles and the swaying palms were alive with scarlet macaws uttering raucous calls.

Returning 37 years later, I was horrified to find the shimmering beach littered with rubbish, especially plastic bottles, flip-flops and discarded fishing net brought in by the tumbling Pacific waves. As a result, our expedition spent a day helping local people gather up the detritus, and I wondered how it could be disposed of.

In 2018 I saw a solution in Kenya. My friend, travel executive Ben Morison, had the brilliant idea of recycling waste plastic from Lamu's beaches into material that could be used to make boats. Together with his childhood schoolmate and Ali Skanda, a talented boat builder, they took on the task of building a traditional 9-metre sailing dhow and coated the hull with colourful flip-flops gathered from the shore. Thus was born the Flipflop Project. Today, they run a complete plastic waste management system with over 30 people employed and over 1,000 collectors receiving income from collecting waste plastics across the Lamu archipelago.

World awareness of the effects of plastic pollution on the health of fish, marine creatures and mankind is growing. The United Nations reckon we throw out 300 million tonnes of plastic annually and in 2023 brought about a global Plastic Treaty.

The Kenyan government have led the way in banning single-use plastic items in protected areas including beaches and forests, but they struggle to enforce this.

Flipflop's first recycled plastic craft sailed to Zanzibar, urging seaside communities to curb the pollution. Later, on a voyage around Lake Victoria – the world's largest tropical lake – the crew launched a regional campaign to ban unnecessary single-use plastics across East Africa. With 20% of the fish people depend on containing microplastics that increase the risk of cancer and affect fertility, effective regional approaches are critical.

Ali and his team have now built three craft and have set up a training centre to protect the heritage of boatbuilding by learning how to transform this waste material.



Costa Rica, 1977

They have already trained more than 30 young people and have even hosted courses for naval architecture and design all the way from Newcastle and Northumbria in the UK!

Now, work has started on a 24-metre dhow to circumnavigate the world promoting the fight against plastic pollution and hopefully visit Jersey. They are also producing furniture, and when HM King Charles visited them last year, they presented him with a grandee's chair or throne made entirely of recycled plastic.

'Why not do a similar project in Costa Rica?' I thought, and went there to meet conservationists and the director of the Corcovado National Park. By good fortune, a former Operation Raleigh adventurer, American Lana Wedmore, had set up her famous Luna Eco-Wellness Lodge on the Park boundary and is dedicated to preserving the area, its beaches and wildlife.

Furthermore, the new Raleigh International company is running challenging courses for young people aged 17 to 24 and a charity named Operation Rich Coast is working to keep the country's beaches clean.

In San José, we found a company recycling plastic, including outdated Nicaraguan banknotes! Although not yet equipped to produce parts for boat construction, Producol SA make planks and furniture. Thus, we plan a new expedition to use recycled plastic to repair a bridge built by a Scientific Exploration Society team in 2015 in the Corcovado Park, and to give aid to indigenous villages, whilst carrying out wildlife studies. We plan that young people from Raleigh International, local conservationists and members of the Club will be involved.

I trust that Sir Francis Drake would approve of this effort to preserve the scenic shores on which he landed 400 years ago, and that the beautiful beaches of Jersey will be spared the curse of plastic waste.



Colonel John Blashford-Snell

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# A life with plants

**Finding our true calling in life does not always follow a linear path. Amanda Bond discovered this truth as her life twisted and turned until her lifelong passion for plants blossomed. She spoke to Ruth Le Cocq**

**T**here is a tired-looking patch of land at the Jersey Lavender Farm where a big oak tree still stands to attention despite being forced to shed many of its branches by Storm Ciarán.

The area is on the farm's boundary and the manager, Louise Wilkinson, was wondering whether a wildflower meadow might regenerate the area.

Her musings caught the attention of Amanda Bond, who first discovered the delights of herbal medicine, essential oils and flower essences over 20 years ago, before she trained as a craniosacral therapist and a mindful-based psychotherapist. A twist of fate, involving an epiphany at Aotearoa, New Zealand, led to Amanda refocusing and she is soon to complete a Diploma in Herbology with The Royal Botanic Garden of Edinburgh.

Last year Amanda created a physic garden at The Jersey Flower Farm in St John, growing an abundance of plants and flowers, including medicinal and culinary herbs, from seed. She adhered to some of Dr Rudolf Steiner's biodynamic practices which follow a holistic, ecological and ethical approach to farming, gardening, food and nutrition.

'Instead of reading up on what I should be doing, I just did seeding by the moon and a particular time of the month and I thought I would just sit and walk and observe and see what drew my attention,' said Amanda.

She marked out wavy lines, representing each seed variety, and made little spirals and channels.

'I felt like I was really having a conversation with the plants to see what was needed and sometimes it felt like I needed to remove this plant or that plant.'

This attention to detail was richly rewarded with marigolds and Californian poppies being the first to thrive and others, which she didn't think had germinated, staying true to form.

'I discovered wood betony growing underneath and behind the marigolds. As a woodland plant it was getting the shade from them.'

As a result, Amanda will be creating another physic garden, using the same principles, at the Jersey Lavender Farm this year and giving talks to visitors.

'I will be expanding what I learned last year, working in collaboration with the farm, while helping them to diversify,' she said.

Amanda's eyes shine brightly at this prospect before she shares some of her other projects involving working with natural dyes in textiles and art.





“ Instead of reading up on what I should be doing, I just did seeding by the moon and a particular time of the month and I thought I would just sit and walk and observe and see what drew my attention

‘I am being supported by ArtHouse Jersey to do a year-long course in natural colour-making for artists by finding plant, stone, mineral material and clays to make pigments, to make paints, to make inks.’

As a result, Amanda will soon be offering workshops at The Colour Rooms, a newly-opened gallery at the bottom of Beaumont Hill.

‘It’s a dream come true to work with plants, to work with the land and to help others,’ she said. ‘I’ve worked really hard over a long period of time to navigate my way through different professional training, personal healing and, throughout it all, the plants have supported me.’

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# Photography inspired by nature

**A** magazine should always be as much pictorial as it is 'wordy' and much of the success of RURAL magazine over the years has been the photographs taken of Jersey rural life by our photographic editor, Gary Grimshaw.

This year, we are showing four pictures from him, one in each of our quarterly editions, that show the Island and Island life in the four seasons.

For this Spring edition, we show part of the Jersey herd of Manx Loaghtan Sheep, with their shepherd, Aaron Le Couteur, at Sorel on the north coast.

**To see a full range of Gary's pictures, see his website at: [photoreportage.co.uk](http://photoreportage.co.uk), or contact him at [info@reportage.co.uk](mailto:info@reportage.co.uk)**



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# From Occupation to Legacy

## The Alex Picot Trust story

**Alex Picot Trust has been a part of the Jersey community for over 135 years and our rich local heritage is something we are extremely proud of to this day**

**E**stablished in 1885 as a firm of "agents for commission," our history took shape when Alex E Picot joined as a trainee in 1901. The firm became Alex E. Picot & Co in 1926 and undertook its first trust work in 1932.

In June 1940, the German Occupation of Jersey disrupted the Island's way of life, forcing many local businesses to close. Sensing the increasing threat, Alex Picot paid his employees, urging them to 'do what you think best'.

Refusing to accept defeat, Alex Picot decided to brave it out and keep the firm afloat, joined by colleague Lilian du Feu, who became the longest-serving team member, dedicating 50 years to the company before retiring.

In the months that followed, while other local businesses unfortunately closed, they made the best of the situation and even sought to expand by hiring a couple of additional employees, including Hedley Luce.

One notable aspect of the work done during the Occupation was the formation of the Jersey Insurance Pool, in which Alex and Hedley played a prominent part. Local insurance policyholders were maintained, and premiums collected, resulting in a sizeable insurance pool ready to be turned over to the appropriate insurance companies. This preserved a feeling of normality on the Island and enhanced the firm's reputation for trust and reliability.

The Liberation of 1945 brought a very welcome end to the Island's occupation and set in motion the healing process of Jersey, and of the Picot firm. Alex's sons Donald and Leslie returned home and took over the firm when Alex died in 1948.



The firm continued to grow as a family-oriented business, with more members of the Picot family joining over the years. Donald's second eldest son, Anthony, joined in 1957, followed by his third eldest son, Rodney, in 1959. Their cousin, David Picot, became part of the practice in 1976.

With deep gratitude to Alex Picot and his team for their resilience during the Occupation years, we proudly celebrate our heritage on this 80th anniversary of Liberation. Honouring over 100 years of dedicated service to private clients, we look forward to continuing this trusted relationship for generations to come.

# Jersey Artisans united

**A new place to find unique handmade gifts has opened in St Aubin – Jersey Artisans, Gifts & Homeware. Alasdair Crosby went visiting**

**S**t Aubin has once again got its own shop and gallery for gifts, located at Le Boulevard (The Bulwarks). It is in the same building as The Gallery Café and was previously the home of The Harbour Gallery, before it moved into town.

It is, if you like, a workers' collective – but if that description has political resonance, this Jersey 'collective' is of local craftworkers and small businesses. Think a Genuine Jersey market, but in a permanent location. The collective is called simply Jersey Artisans, Gifts & Homeware.

The group of three creatives who share the collective's day-to-day management of the business are Karen Hibbs (The Pottery Shed), her sister, Amanda Sawyer (The Butterfly and Bee) and Gail Fells (Florence James).

Karen said: 'By forming a collective, not only are we able to share the financial responsibilities but we are also able to take it in turns to cover the shop, meaning that each maker still has time to produce their work'.

The other members of the collective are Lesley Garton (The Chilli Kitchen), Beverley Speck (Beverley Speck – Bespoke Textiles), Sophie Le Blancq (The Jersey Hooker crochet creations), Steve Davies (art, aviation and military art), Liz Lowe (Liz Lowe Handmade) and Lynn Wojciechowski (Made by the Bay). The shop stocks the products of a further 27 artisans.

The Gallery Café was previously located on the first floor of the building. Its manager, Aneta Markowska-Krzeminska, wanted some local artwork and ceramics to brighten up the café and shelves.



Karen Hibbs, her sister, Amanda Sawyer and Gail Fells



“ By forming a collective, not only are we able to share the financial responsibilities but we are also able to take it in turns to cover the shop, meaning that each maker still has time to produce their work

Karen explained: ‘A few of us gave her some stock and she sold it for us – it was really successful. When plans were drawn up to develop the building and move the Gallery Café to the ground floor there was much more floor space than Aneta needed, so she wondered if we might be interested in renting the space adjoining the café. We jumped at the chance! We had to wait a year until the building was ready for us to move in ... quite a long time. But if anybody sees the new café and our shop now, they will know it was worth waiting for!’

‘The three of us had decided that we really wanted to make a go of this opportunity, and that we really wanted our own shop from which to sell our products. The difficulties were how were we going to afford it and how could we staff the shop seven days per week between the three of us whilst also running our own small businesses?’

‘So, we chatted to a few other people, and the collective of nine businesses was formed. We all share the financial responsibilities and the shifts behind the till, so we are able to man it six days a week at the moment, and seven days a week from Easter to September.’

Their shop opened two weeks before Christmas. Many of the group are members of Genuine Jersey and had been working at the Simply Christmas fair. When it closed finally on a Sunday afternoon, they opened up at St Aubin the next morning – just a bit tiring and stressful, as Karen recalled.



‘One day we weren’t open, and the next day we were.’ At least over the previous few months they had stockpiled furniture and shelving.

‘We opened two weeks before Christmas and had a surprisingly good response. We advertised extensively on social media. January and February have been very good as well, despite these normally being quiet months for retailers. Not everybody wants to drive into town to buy a birthday card.’

The floor space is not small, but it is well stocked and colourful with all the locally-produced and carefully curated gifts and homeware products on sale.

Craftworkers are always approaching them to take their work, so they try to include as many of them as possible, if they can find a space and if it’s something that they don’t already sell.

The wide range of items includes art, jewellery, books from local authors, cards, woodwork, jams and chutneys, ceramics, candles and home fragrance, textiles, chocolates, homeware – and much more. The smell of lavender seems to be pervasive.

‘Everybody who comes seems to love the shop,’ Karen said.

**Further details and a list of collective members can be found on their new website: [jerseyartisan.co.uk](http://jerseyartisan.co.uk)**

# WIN

## 6 bottles of Veuve Clicquot Yellow Label Brut Champagne



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- A: 1871
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Please enter online at [ruraljersey.co.uk/competition](http://ruraljersey.co.uk/competition)

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# The future is rural

One day – I think early in 2019 – my inbox brought me an e-mail with this encouraging title: ‘The Future is Rural’.

‘Excellent,’ I thought. ‘This is something about which I must urgently inform all the magazine’s advertisers.’

For a moment I felt moderately encouraged, but within seconds, of course, came the dispiriting realisation that this unfortunately was not a reference to my own magazine, but to a publication from an American organisation called the Post Carbon Institute.

As RURAL magazine celebrates its 50th edition, and as the special theme of ‘Jersey futures’ will find a place in all four editions this year, I remembered the title of ‘The Future is Rural’. With the help of Mr Google, I quickly found the online promotional material for the publication.

To quote from it: ‘*The Future is Rural* challenges the conventional wisdom about the future of food in our modern, globalized world. It is a much-needed reality check that explains why certain trends we take for granted – like the decline of rural areas and the dependence of farming and the food system on fossil fuels – are historical anomalies that will reverse over the coming decades.

‘Renewable sources of energy must replace fossil fuels, but they will not power economies at the same scale as today. Priorities will profoundly shift, and food will become a central concern. Lessons learned from resilience science and alternatives to industrial agriculture provide a foundation for people to transition to more rural and locally focused lives.’

Thus, the book’s message is inspiring, even if is largely aspirational: we are all used to creeping urbanisation – in Jersey as elsewhere. All over the world, rural people move to urban areas, where they quickly lose connection to their roots and become part of some soulless megapolis.

But then, we saw several years ago in Greece during that country’s financial crisis, that city jobs disappeared, and urban dwellers realised that a city environment was no place to grow food or raise livestock. Many city folk returned to their native villages, where the land was a source of riches far more real and beneficial to daily sustenance than the chimera of financial information flashing on a computer screen.

As we jolt from crisis to crisis, where future shocks to our economy and our consumerised way of life can only be expected, there may indeed be a turning back to a more rural existence, closer to the life-giving earth.

This is also a theme of many writers. Helena Norberg-Hodge (*Ancient Futures* [1991] and the website: [localfutures.org](http://localfutures.org)), writes on how the globalised food system has separated us from the sources of our food, thereby severing the land-based relationships that have informed our species’ entire evolution.

‘If food lies at the centre of the problem, it is also central to the solution. By transforming our food systems – by transitioning away from large-scale, industrial monocultures for centralised markets, towards diversified, smaller-scale place-based food production – we really can maximise productivity and feed the world, while simultaneously minimising resource use, healing ecosystems, *and* increasing the number of livelihoods...

‘By shortening the distance between the production and consumption of our basic needs, we stimulate diversified production, rebuild resilient economies in which wealth circulates locally, reweave the fabric of community that is the cornerstone of personal wellbeing, and enable communities to take back control over their own destiny. It is no wonder, then, that we are now witnessing an international resurgence of interest in community-based, sustainable farming.’

## RURAL’s editor, Alasdair Crosby, has the last word (for once)

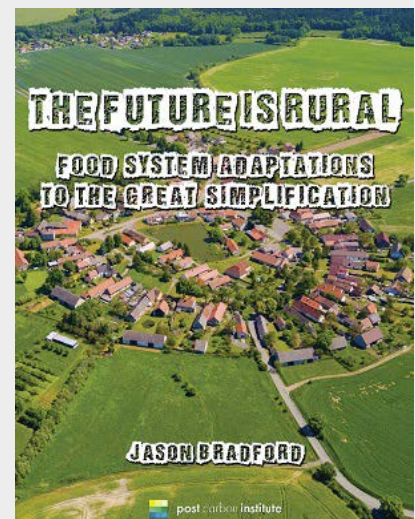
And so to RURAL (the magazine). In its first issue, the Spring of 2013, I wrote in its ‘Welcome page’: *How can the best of Jersey’s traditional, local, rural community life be preserved so that it plays a continued vibrant part in the Island’s present and future?* Still asking that, 50 editions and 12 years later!

The question, in its totality, is unanswerable, of course, even if part solutions can sometimes be glimpsed in the thickets of local, mundane events and day-to-day experience. But it is a question that continually deserves to be asked.

Many people throughout the world are asking the same question about the future of their own local home communities: ‘How can their own local countryside, community, culture and heritage remain intact in today’s modern and globalised world?’

That should always be a theme to engage our attention in Jersey and be a subject for debate, lest by forgetting the local and the particular we lose a precious inheritance.

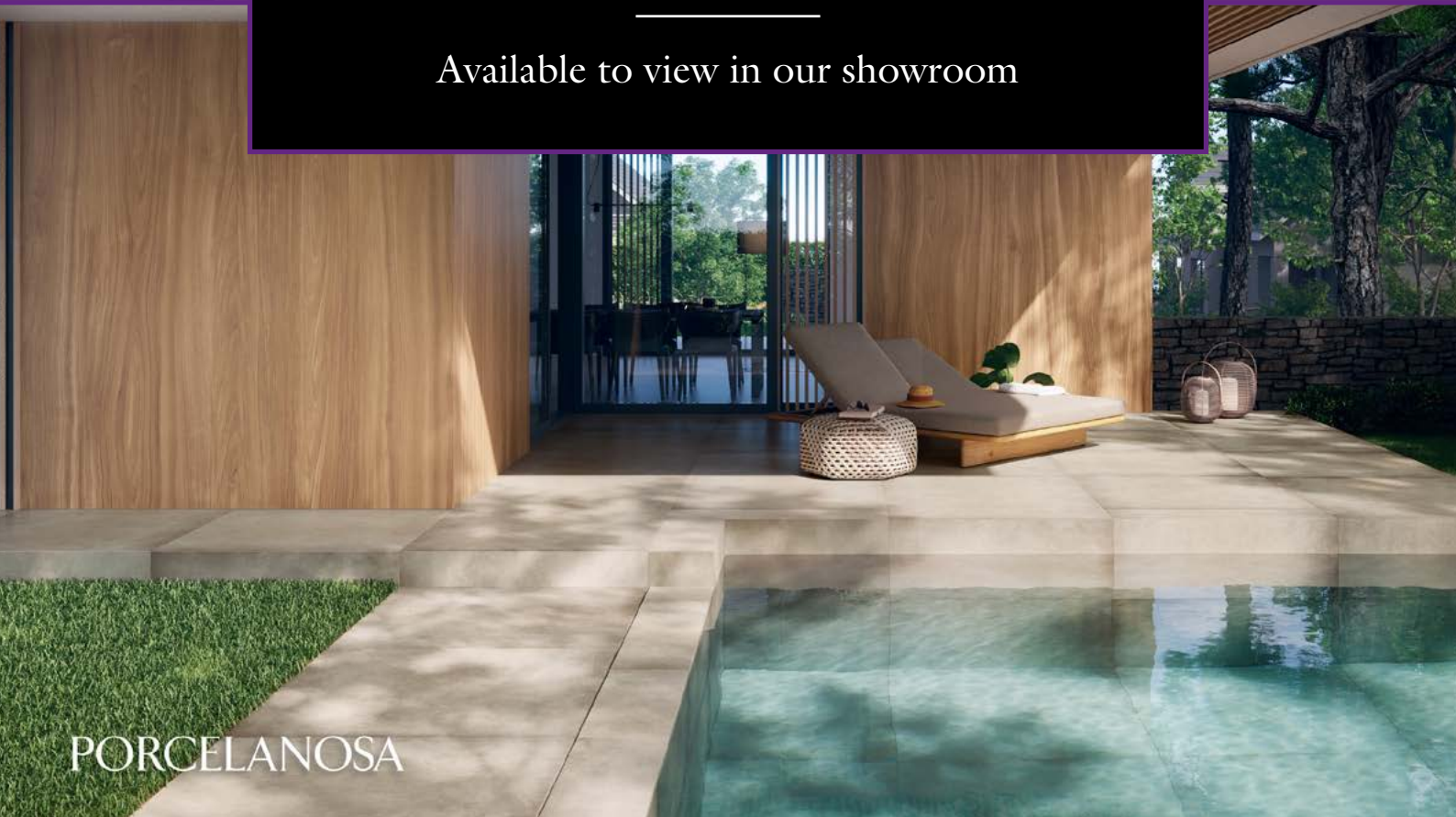
But by asking such questions, and by addressing local, part solutions, we can help to ensure that, indeed, ‘the future *is* rural’.





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