RURAL

Jersey Country Life Magazine

Issue 42 | Spring 2023

Anniversary Edition 2013 10 2023 YEARS

Pruning with passion

When to prune? How? Whether?

Ten years on - The squirrel's story

Our cover story from RURAL's first issue in 2013

Special theme:

Food, smallholding and the future of farming

Is there a future for Jersey's 'home grown' industry?

WIN

6 bottles of Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé Brut Champagne

RURAL
La Bestiaire
Genuine Jersey at Christmas
A Summer on the Brink
The Big Apple
They're Off!
Ice Age Jersey
Plan Bee
Sea Fever
Easter Lamb
FARMING IN JERSEY
THE POWER OF THE DOG
LOCALISM
CHRISTMAS
GARDENS AND GARDENING
SPECIAL CARS
A HOST OF GOLDEN DAFFODILS
THEY'RE OFF!
RURAL
Jersey Country Life Magazine

Welcome

With this issue, RURAL magazine celebrates its tenth anniversary: our Issue No 1 appeared in March 2013.

A 'Welcome page' letter has appeared in each issue and so it is natural to look back ten years ago at that first Welcome page: it could easily have been written yesterday. I quote:

'It has been suggested to me that this is an 'elite' or 'lifestyle' publication. I would far prefer the description 'community and cultural publication'. Jersey's still close-knit community is especially strong in the rural parishes and the greater Island community comes together to enjoy, in company, the arts and entertainment.

'At a time when Jersey is attempting to raise perceptions of its own particular identity across the world, it would be nice to think that our political and business envoys could show this magazine to their foreign hosts or contacts and say to them: "Look, this is the Island where I come from. See how beautiful it is. Yes, of course, we are a very safe place for foreign investment, but we are not just a finance centre, not just office blocks and palm trees. There is still a viable local community, local produce of the highest quality and a particular local, centuries-old culture and heritage.'

Ten years on, we remain, proudly, a local magazine. But more importantly, we are a 'localism' magazine, batting, as best we can, for the retention of a sense of a local community and for the best parts of what has often been described, sometimes with unfounded derision, as 'the Jersey way'.

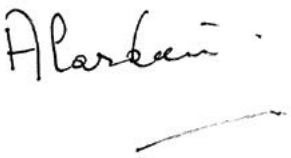
Compared to the currently sad and chaotic 'UK way', about which news outlets inform us every day, it seems essential that we do not jettison, through design or just through apparent absent-mindedness, our own, local character.

We are celebrating our tenth anniversary with a new redesigned website and our e-mail newsletter, RURAL POST. Our Jersey rural landscape art competition, in collaboration with CCA Art Gallery, will continue in the summer. In the autumn, we look forward to our seminar and workshop event on permaculture.

To be kept informed about these forthcoming events, please sign up for our e-mail newsletter via the website: **www.ruraljersey.co.uk/rural-post**

As we said ten years ago: *'How this local countryside, culture and heritage can remain intact in today's modern world should always be a theme to engage our attention and a subject for debate, lest by forgetting the local and the particular, we lose a precious inheritance.'*

Alasdair Crosby | Editor
www.ruraljersey.co.uk



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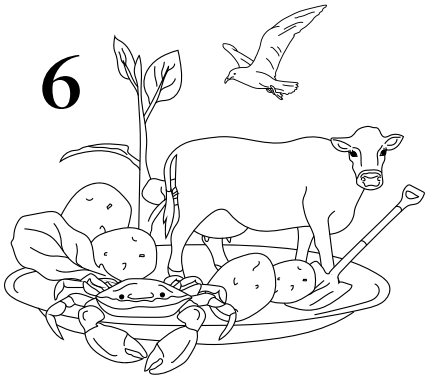


RURAL Magazine:
10th Anniversary Issue

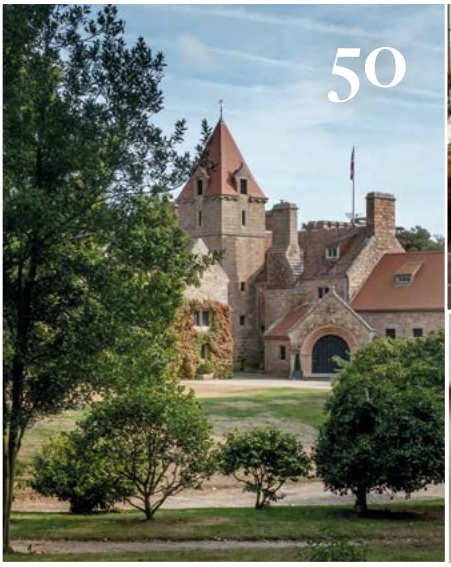
Special theme:
The future of farming & food

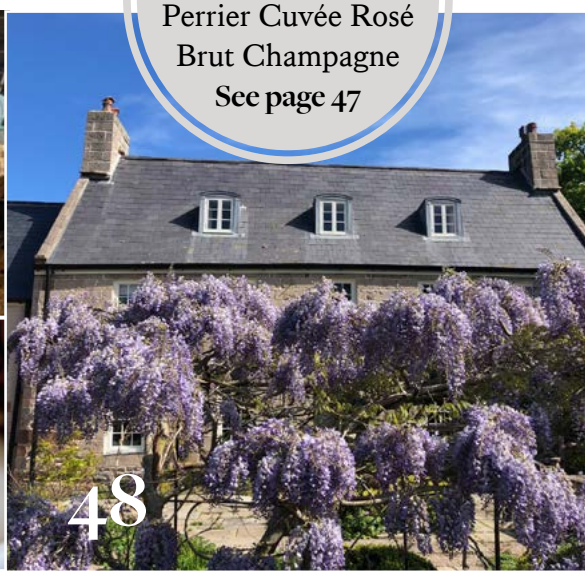
Special theme:
Smallholding in Jersey

Jersey's heritage

The environment

Gardens & gardening





WIN

6 bottles of Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé Brut Champagne

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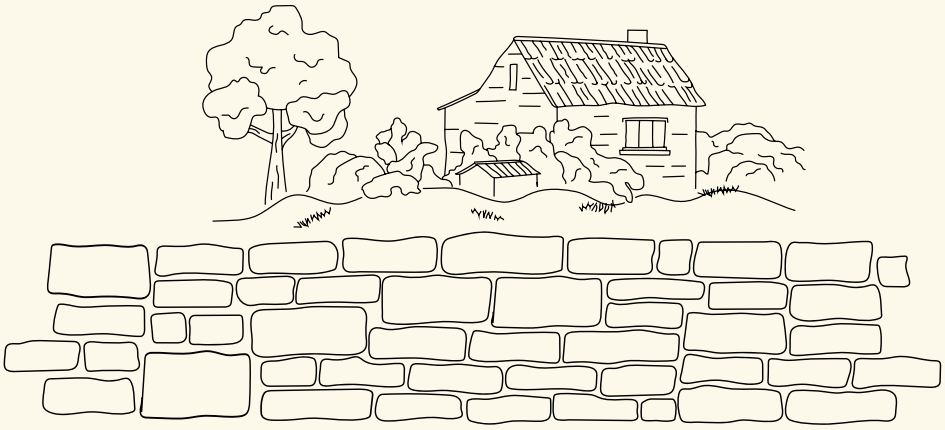
Over the wall



A RURAL view

It is good news (for once). The farming sector is getting a markedly increased level of funding. As reported in this issue of RURAL, in our interview with the Minister for Economic Development, Deputy Kirsten Morel, the industry is now the recipient of an extra £1.5m of government aid. It brings the total of 'new money' to agriculture in the past year to about £3.3m. Compare that to 2018, when there was only £900,000 available for the entire industry.

But the bad news is that the increase will really only pay for the next rise in the minimum wage. As the Minister says, he and his department are scouring the government landscape, trying to find unused pockets of funding that can be hurried up to the Front to support agriculture.

So the tension continues, really, and the funding problem underlines the fact that there are still on-going, deep-seated problems relating to the future of farming in Jersey.

Many of these problems relate to the size and location of the Island. We are a small island and a very fertile island: one can grow mostly anything here. But how can it ever cope with giant farming units in the UK and elsewhere, and when shipping any produce across the water is so expensive?

It is indicative that over the past 250 years, only the Jersey cow and its products, and then the Jersey Royal potato, have remained consistently the only long-term export agricultural crops, while other crops have come and gone, leaving barely a trace of their relatively short-time popularity. It is difficult to see this situation changing anytime soon.

Helping to discuss and advise on the Island's farming problems is a new Rural Forum; half a dozen members respectively from farming, government and knowledgeable experts from outside the industry but with connections to it. It is due to meet quarterly but has not met yet at the time of writing. Time will tell if this Forum will be more than just a talking shop, but there are certainly enough subjects to talk about.

Without too much difficulty, we can suggest at least three talking points to engage their attention – land use, resilience and succession planning.

Land use and resilience tend to merge into one another. The immediate past and current outlook, both political, climatological and environmental, has produced many problems, as has been exhaustively pointed out. We have seen, for example, how dependent Island farmers are on fertiliser and how badly the rise in its price has affected them. In more general terms, suppose, for any reason, that there was a suspension in shipping for an appreciable time, how on earth would the Island cope and how resilient could we be?

Part of the answer is to maintain a viable land bank for the agricultural industry and to resist the temptation to cover everything with concrete, or at least, with building development. Yes, we need affordable housing, but we also need food. The 'suburbanisation' of the countryside is also to be avoided: extending gardens under the pretence that they are commercial apple orchards or turning too many fields into horse pasture.

It has often been suggested that we could grow considerably less potatoes for export and instead allow many potato fields to become fields growing local produce for local people.

It is not an idea that finds much support from potato growers, but there are certainly many Islanders – perhaps youthful ones in the main – who would like to 'have a go' at farming. They think of enjoying 'the good life', of smallholding, of organic production, or of alternative crops that would give them a 'Unique Selling Point' opportunity in the local market.

There is much to commend in all this; it is certainly part of the answer and we feature several smallholders in this issue. All well and good – and great fun – but when the smallholders become a little more wearied with age and they cannot expand their smallholding income or persuade anyone else to take on their land... what then?

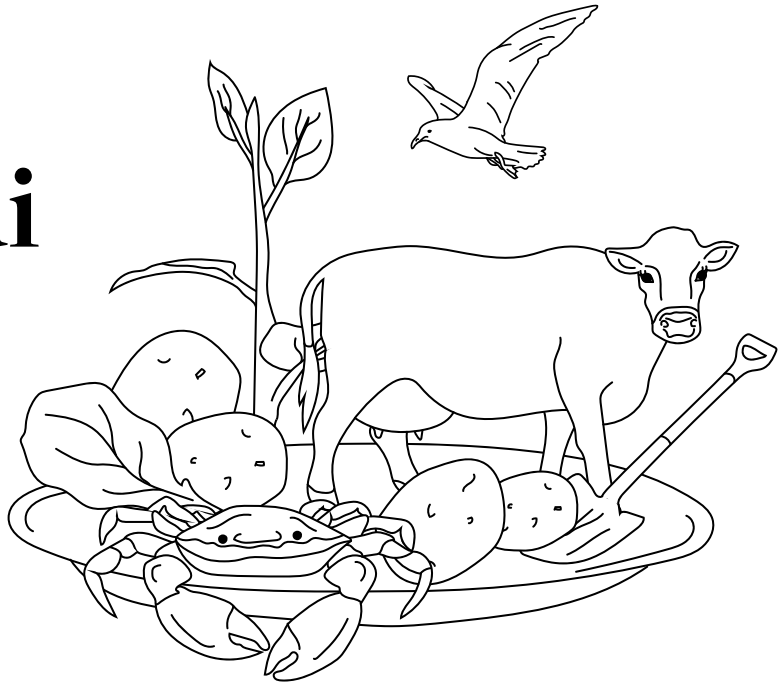
If smallholding is part of the answer, so also is major, export-led mainstream agriculture. Going back though history, Island agriculture has always been export-led: potatoes, cows, cider from cider apples, cod fishing... even local piracy was dependent on a free export market.

Succession is also a problem, considering the impossibility of young would-be farmers ever being able to set up as a farmer unless they can use inherited land. There are ways round this being discussed at the moment – we hope an answer will evolve. Fortunately, there is a younger generation of farmers in place, taking over –or who already taken over – their family farms.

All is not lost: farming in Jersey will continue to evolve and play its important part in Island life.

'Steady as she goes' has to be the only sensible answer.

The Jersey Salmagundi



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

Bouan Appétit!

A new exhibition is opening this summer at Jersey Museum, Art Gallery and Victorian House and will explore the story of food and its importance to our sense of Island identity.

The geography of Jersey, with its steep côtils sloping to the south to catch the first warm rays of spring sunshine, inspired a whole industry based on the growth and export of early varieties of potatoes. John Lecaudey pioneered this lucrative trade in the mid-19th Century, and 20 years later farmer Hugh de la Haye discovered the Jersey Royal Fluke, which has since become synonymous with our Island.

Turning to the sea, Jersey has an exceptional tidal range of up to 12 metres. Low tide uncovers a vast landscape of sand banks, shingle, rock pools and gullies – home to a wide variety of shellfish. Low water fishing has been practiced for generations and what is now a leisure pursuit for many, at one time provided a vital source of protein. Local artist Jean Le Capelain was fascinated by low water fishermen and sketched people wading with shrimping nets and wicker creels. The 19th Century oyster industry, operating out of Grouville Bay, also provided inspiration for local artists. Oysters were a very valuable export crop for around 30 years until the oyster beds were overfished and the industry collapsed.

Food has been a major influence on the Island's intangible heritage and the new exhibition will explore traditional activities and festivals that shape the year. The first day of February, for example, was the start of the vraicing season, when Islanders had the right to cut vraic (seaweed) from the rocks to fertilise their fields. Traditionally, this community activity would be fueled by vraic buns, a type of very large, sweet bun with currants. Easter was celebrated with a type of milky dumpling, known as 'les fiottes' in Jèrriais, and of course Jersey Wonders or 'les mèrvelles' are still very popular – just be sure not to cook them on a rising tide as it is said the oil will boil over!

The autumn offers treats such as locally produced cider (once the major export of the Island when a quarter of the land was given over to apple orchards) and that delicious Jersey speciality, black butter or 'lé nièr beurre'.

This is just a taster of the stories that will be part of the forthcoming 'Bouan Appétit' exhibition and there are also plans for a series of producer talks and supper clubs in the autumn.

Below: Continuing the tradition of black butter making in 1975. Courtesy of the JEP Collection at Jersey Archive.

Jersey's first Eco Gin distillery

Based in a garden shed in Gorey Village, the Island's first Eco Gin distillery has just won a Bronze accreditation from the World Drinks Awards.

It's a great achievement because the World Drinks Awards promotes the world's best drinks to consumers and trade across the globe, both online and in their eponymous 'World's Best Spirits' range of books.

Sea Level Eco Distillery, the brainchild of Sarah Gaudion, who works as a financial director by day, was launched early last year after a decade of dreaming and planning, and by the close of last year had sold some 850 bottles.

The single mum of two young girls aged 10 and 7 is naturally cock-a-hoop with scooping the Bronze Award for her distinctive Old Tom Gin.

'Old Tom Gin sits halfway between a London Dry and a Genever Gin. It's drier than the Genever, sweeter than the classic London Dry,' she explained.

'Our blend is lighter in juniper with natural sweetness from the botanicals we use, and orange and yuzu fruit gives it a warm citrus base. Some distillers sweeten their Old Tom, but we don't. We also produce a London Dry and a Pink Gin.

'The wining bottle was actually from the first ever batch of Old Tom I created and only the third batch of gin I had produced.

'I really just did it to get feedback, then sort of forgot all about it.

'I couldn't believe it when I got a Bronze award. It is literally amazing,' she said.

Whenever possible Sarah uses botanicals and ingredients grown in her own garden such as coriander, fennel seeds, lavender, rose, raspberries and lemons. She uses recycled bottles and stoppers from natural cork; the labels are paper, and she packs all her orders in old Jersey potato trays and delivers them by hand.

'We recycle and repurpose everything, we don't use any pesticides on the botanicals we grow and all green waste is composted and used in the garden, or fed to our chickens who in turn produce compost. We even use rainwater to cool our condenser.'

And by the time you read this, the Island's first-ever Limoncello will be on sale – a run of 150 bottles will be available from March – produced solely from home produced lemons.

Sarah uses lemons grown by Joe Freire in his polytunnels in St Lawrence. As she said: 'It's daft to import lemons from Spain or Italy when we have them on our doorstep.'

You can find Sea Level Gin in shops Island-wide, or purchase it from **www.sealeveldistillery.co.uk**

– *Gill Maccabe*

Open Gardens for Jersey Association of Youth and Friendship: 2023 season

Sunday 16 April

Oaklands
La Rue d'Elysee, St Peter

Highlights include an impressive collection of camellias and specimen shrubs and a large pond. The extensive woodland features silver birch, acers and what is reputed to be Jersey's largest walnut. A further highlight is the well-stocked kitchen garden, which keeps the Bonn family self-sufficient in fruit and vegetables.

Sunday 23 April

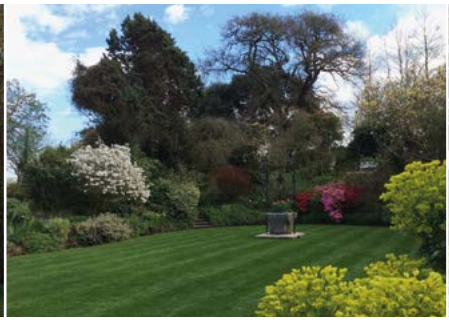
Domaine des Vaux
Rue de Bas, St Lawrence

Marcus and Anne Binney's garden never fails to please, whatever the time of year. There's a beautiful valley, which contains native and species trees including magnolias and camellias and ponds fringed with gunnera and arum lilies. The glorious main garden is a riot of colour and scent and there's also a formal herb garden and a productive green house and vegetable gardens.

Sunday 14 May

Grey Gables
La Rue Du Bocage, St Brelade

The family of the late Celia Skinner are kindly opening their glorious gardens with extensive terraces and formal areas. The mature spring flowering shrubs jostle for attention and line the paths to the various rooms, which include a stunning rose and peony garden underplanted with bluebells, primroses and foxgloves.


Sunday 04 June

Les Aix
Rue des Aix, St Peter

The home of Ariel Whatmore. Each room has a different colour, the grey room in the courtyard, the white room flanking the west of the house, and not to be missed the yew maze, nearly a thousand box plants forming the internal spaces which symbolize 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 11 June

Woodlands Court
La Route des Côtils, Grouville

A new entrant last year, the garden created by Jurat and Mrs Robert Christensen is a magical space set high above Grouville Bay with glorious views of Mont Orgueil Castle. The immaculate sweeping lawns lead off into various rooms full of colour and joy. Children will particularly love this garden. The kitchen garden with its ancient wall and traditional sunken greenhouse is worth a visit alone.

Sunday 18 June

Beau Désert
La Rue de la Garenne, Trinity

Originally designed by Chelsea Medal winner, Robin Williams, and further developed by local garden designer, Paul Bennett. The grounds include a woodland walk, a stream, a small lake and glorious Mediterranean and herb gardens. The main garden, with its panorama of lawns and wonderfully colourful beds, is spectacular. By kind permission of Mr and Mrs Crane.



New footpath from Gigoulande in St Peter's Valley

A footpath now exists that links the historic remains of La Gigoulande Mill in St Peter's Valley to The Elms, the headquarters of the National Trust for Jersey.

It has been named the Platinum Jubilee Footpath, in honour of the Platinum Jubilee of Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

The path will connect with the St Peter's Valley footpath at La Gigoulande Mill and join with the path through St Peter's Valley to create a north-south route across the Island. Once this is finished, it will be possible to walk from the south coast near Sandybrook to The Elms, after which walkers can connect to other paths, including routes to the north coast.

The new footpath was opened by the Lieutenant-Governor, Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd CBE, just before Christmas. It is the latest stage of a project that should have been finished by the Jubilee in summer 2022, but which was delayed because of the disruption caused by the pandemic.

The project has been managed by the former Receiver General, David Pett; the mill is located on Crown land. He retired from his appointment in 2020 but has since then continued to oversee the 'Gigoulande project'.

He thanked the organisations that had been of great assistance in contributing to the to the project, including the Jersey Round Table, whose members worked on refurbishing the millpond, and the Probation Service, which used community service crews to build the path. Mr Pett also expressed thanks to the Roy Overland Charitable Trust, which provided funding for fencing, as well as Granite Products Ltd and the National Trust for Jersey.

La Gigoulande Mill has a long history, from the 12th Century to the mid-20th Century, but since the Occupation it has been in ruins.

It is also of technical interest but for decades it has been a neglected asset. It is one of only four water mills in the British Isles known to have been fitted with two overshot wheels – where water drives an upper wheel before flowing further downstream to power an additional wheel.

The lower wheel was used to generate electricity by German forces occupying the Island during the Second World War. They also largely destroyed the building, possibly to make it more difficult for escaped Russian workers to hide there.

Since 2020, the footpaths have been laid and the millpond restored – which is now visible from the main St Peter's Valley Road.

Ultimately it is hoped to restore the Mill building and to secure for it a useful role in the future, just as it has had in the past.

A thriving future for farming in Jersey

Not often are the above words used altogether in the same short phrase. But the Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Economic Development, Deputy Kirsten Morel, is working hard to bring about that desirable state of affairs. He was interviewed by Alasdair Crosby

Deputy Kirsten Morel, as the Minister for Economic Development, has the political responsibility for 'the business side of farming' in Jersey.

He said he was passionate about agriculture, understood its importance and wanted to see it thrive in Jersey.

It is certainly more capable of thriving since 1 January this year – the industry is now the recipient of an extra £1.5m government aid. It brings the total of 'new money' to agriculture in the past year to about £3.3m.

'To cast your mind back to 2018, we had £900,000 support for the entire industry. Compare that to £3.3m in 2023: a 400% increase in five years. That is really good and shows finally that we have a government that understands the importance of farming. The extra £1.5m at the turn of the year is already in the process of being distributed.'

The aid package has been designed by the civil servant in Economic Development with responsibility for agriculture, John Vautier, himself a former potato grower. It breaks down farming into different variables, such as land management or hedgerow management – there are about 38 variables in total. Applicants for the funding can gain credits for each and every one of them; the credits are calculated by the amount of area covered (e.g. 100 metres of hedgerow) and these credits correspond directly into the amount of the disbursement.

'The whole idea is that in this way we can encourage more environmentally friendly farming. We can also extend this scheme in a way it hasn't been for a long time. So, the scheme now covers protected crops (glasshouses), smallholder farming... which, until this year, it didn't. We are now reaching more farmers and more different types of farmers, than we were before. I can heavily endorse John's scheme, because it represents a seachange in the way we reward the work of farming.'

> "To cast your mind back to 2018, we had £900,000 support for the entire industry. Compare that to £3.3m in 2023: a 400% increase in five years

However, a rise in the minimum wage will impact inevitably on the value of the funding. The Minister said: 'Although government has put an extra £1.5m into farming this year (which is vitally important), I know that is still not enough. Pretty much the whole of this extra £1.5m will be wiped out by the rise in the minimum wage.

'It is my intention to try to find extra funding through this year to enable farmers to actually benefit more clearly from the increase. It is a case of looking round government, trying to find pockets of money here and there – and both John and I are on the hunt!

'I know that the Chief Minister is very keen on moving the minimum wage up, closer to a living wage, and I understand that and have huge sympathy and support for that. That can only be achieved if you acknowledge that some industries, most particularly agriculture, struggle with that.'

Since farmers in particular find it difficult to pay some of their staff at a higher minimum wage level, Deputy Morel said there three ways of helping them: finding extra money to pay farmers so that they can cope with it, making exemptions to the minimum wage for farming and accommodation offsets to allow farmers to reduce costs.

'I'm open to all three solutions,' he said. 'A combination of extra funding and exemptions is probably the way forward. At the moment, we have no exemptions to the minimum wage. The accommodation offset policy hasn't been used properly, it hasn't grown properly in line with the actual value of accommodation.'

Asked if he agreed with Jersey farmers who maintained that there was no level playing field for them in competition with farmers in other jurisdictions, Deputy Morel replied: 'That is absolutely, completely correct. It is the same argument as regards fishing (also the recipient of extra funding in January 2023).

'Between 2000 and 2018, financial support from government to farming fell dramatically – massively – by many millions of pounds. Essentially, the government was saying that farmers had to operate in an entirely free market. That's fine, except for the fact that the rest of the world doesn't operate an entirely free market for farming, so Jersey was pretty much the only place in the world that effectively was not supporting its farmers. In 2018, £800,000 was being paid in support of around 40 farmers, which meant hardly anything per farmer.

> "So we were expecting Jersey, where there are no economies of scale, to be competing against massive farms elsewhere which were also receiving massive subsidies in comparison to Jersey. Not only was that not viable; that pathway could only lead to the collapse of farming in Jersey

'In Jersey, it got to the point where farmers were being told: "Act as though you are in a free market", when all our farmers' competitors were not operating in a free market; all of them were being subsidised to a much greater extent by their home jurisdictions.

'So we were expecting Jersey, where there are no economies of scale, to be competing against massive farms elsewhere which were also receiving massive subsidies in comparison to Jersey. Not only was that not viable; that pathway could only lead to the collapse of farming in Jersey.

'Hence, we stepped in to say: "No, that is not a pathway that we are willing to tread. Farming has huge benefits for Jersey: food security, landscape management, culture – and therefore we want to support it, and we know that the only way farming here will survive is by government support." Anyone who is so libertarian or neo-liberal as to believe that farming can stand on its own two feet is sadly misguided.'

He agreed that a long-term challenge was how to enable young people to launch a farming career, because of the enormous capital costs involved.

This problem was addressed, he said, in the Rural Economy Strategy, by proposing a Farming Foundation, which could potentially own land to let out to farmers and young farmers.

'I've no doubt that there are young people interested in farming. I think a lot of them aren't exposed enough to farming, to know if it's the sort of thing they would like.

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'So, there are two aspects to the problem: (1) getting the interest in young people; (2) converting that interest into a viable step forward which enables them to farm without the capital costs piling up. These costs are just unreal ... eye-watering! A poor 18-year-old just out from school would find that more than tough!

'It's not just on our radar, it's definitely something that we are actively trying to work to solve. Because again, we know that we've got a lot of farmers coming closer to retirement and we need to have a viable succession plan for all those farmers.'

Left - right: Deputy Morel, dairy farmer Andrew Le Gallais and friend

'The departure last year of Woodside Farm's local produce from local retail outlets demonstrated how difficult it was to supply local food to local people. Was there any way that local food production could be made sustainable?

The answer from the Minister was once again: 'Principally through government support, which is why this present support scheme is so important. It enables different ways of farming; hence we are supporting smallholders for the first time. In many ways, smallholders are the laboratory of farming.

'They can experiment with different ways or crops, often they want to farm regeneratively or organically, and they are more able to do that on a small scale.

'Let's face reality: we will never be able to feed a population of more than 100,000 people, purely from local produce. What we can do is to provide more food for people in Jersey, while also developing our export markets. Historically, Jersey's food production for local consumption has been on the back of an export market. I am sure there are innovators in the industry who want to find new markets, so it's not just all about Jersey Royals!

'And it's not just about encouraging farmers, it is also trying to encourage consumers to buy local – and to stop being so fastidious about the produce's aesthetic appearance and to stop spurning "wonky veg". If our farmers didn't have to throw so much of their crop away to meet certain aesthetic standards, then I think you would find local produce becoming more profitable'.

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"I believe the Jersey agriculture sector can have a really good future, based in market realities – and it needs government support if it is to have a long-term future

In conclusion, how did Deputy Morel see the future of agriculture in Jersey?

'I believe the Jersey agriculture sector can have a really good future, based in market realities – and it needs government support if it is to have a long-term future. I do believe it has a particular niche: its high quality products, from a tiny island, its small farms... those are the sorts of stories that people who market products and end consumers love.

'So, I have no doubt that we can provide produce to all corners of the world, and that people will be happy to pay a premium for them. But we also need to know that we must constantly innovate, in order to stay as a competitive market, and we can't pretend that farming in Jersey will necessarily look the same as farming in Jersey has done for the past 100 years or so. There will be different ways of farming.

'I believe we can have a strong and successful farming community – I want us to, because it shapes our landscape and I like the landscape we have, but we need to be aware that government will need to maintain its support and equally, farmers will have to constantly innovate and be ready to change and to adapt – but farmers are pretty used to adapting and innovating.

'I think we can have a thriving future for farming. I believe that is possible – but not without government involvement.'

The future of food and farming

William Kendall, regenerative farmer, active environmentalist and campaigner for better food and rural issues, visited Jersey last year as a guest speaker for a meeting of the National Trust for Jersey, the subject of which was 'The Future of Food and Farming'

William Kendall built up The New Covent Garden Soup Company before selling it to a public company. He and several colleagues then bought the embryonic Green & Black's from its founder and grew it to an international brand which they sold to Cadburys in 2005. Over the years, William has developed experience in such diverse sectors as London restaurants, flower retailing, natural insulation, pottery, specialist concrete, bovine genetics and building hotel chains.

He is advisor to or director of many organisations, a trustee of The Grosvenor Estate and director of its Food and Ag Tech division which invests in areas such as regenerative agriculture, vertical and insect farming. He is also a Trustee of Gascoyne Cecil Estates which oversee the assets of the Marquess of Salisbury and the Cecil family, such as Hatfield House.

He is an active environmentalist and a campaigner for better food and rural issues and is president of The Suffolk Wildlife Trust. He speaks and writes regularly on these issues.

Farming in the western world – certainly in Britain – is at a once in 10,000-year crossroads – the first real crossroads since the end of the last Ice Age, when mankind began to farm rather than just hunt or gather wild food.

We need to ask ourselves: in what direction does the future of agriculture lie? Is it just more of the same, or do we need to make major changes?

For example, despite ploughing being a farming activity that goes back to prehistory, do we need to cease 'ploughing the land and scatter'? Was ploughing the biggest mistake we ever made? Shouldn't we have developed an agricultural system that doesn't require it?

On the whole, farming has always been practised as a destructive war against the natural world. Agriculture has probably changed the global climate more than 300 years of steel-making have done, or several centuries of coal mining and burning. That's the context – and we now need to do something about it.

But the good news is that you can farm hand in hand with nature and with modern science. But it obviously requires a pretty major shift from how we have been working the soil.

Farmers, on the whole, are pretty slow to adapt new methodologies. They are wary about people from outside telling them what to do.

I think, however, that the present moment could be a huge opportunity for sustainable farming: we continue to need to be fed and also, we need to mitigate the effect of climate change – farming regeneratively is a fabulous way of mitigating climate change. It's the only industrial sector where applying extreme climate mitigating measures actually improves the quality of the land and improves the farming. It is relatively straightforward, it reduces input costs, which at a time like this, when input costs have gone through the roof, has to be an appealing prospect, and it produces better quality food – just less of it.

So maybe we shall have to adjust our diets, in a limited way, to accommodate a system that farms hand in hand with nature. Not in any extreme way – we won't have to eat nothing but lentil pies, but a reduction in meat eating is good for us and it would be good for the planet.

Rewilding has a place in all this. It is argued that if you are farming regeneratively, yields may fall, so how can you afford to take land out of production completely? Rewilding doesn't necessarily mean you are not producing any food; it probably means you are just producing less food on the same land.

Huge chunks of the British Isles are not producing very much, anyway. The Rewilding Britain campaign group has a target of rewilding 4% of Britain's surface area (which still leaves 96% left). That's the equivalent area of all the golf courses in Britain. I'm not saying 'rewild all the golf courses' (although that wouldn't bother me!), but depending on which land you choose, it is not going to have a significant effect on food production. I happen to think 4% isn't enough.

The Knepp Estate in West Sussex, pioneers in rewilding, have survived all the trials and tribulations of rewilding their farmland. Now, people want to go and have a look at it, and what with the hospitality side of their business, they are now employing more workers than they ever used to.

I think there's room for more of that type of farming. But there is also room for intensification as well, such as Vertical farming, the practice of growing crops in vertically stacked layers.

Vertical farming often incorporates controlled-environment agriculture, which often aims to optimise plant growth. Some common choices of structures to house vertical farming systems include buildings, shipping containers, tunnels, and abandoned mineshafts. In New York, a vertical farming operation shows leafy greens being grown on the middle of one of the world's biggest conurbations.

I'm not saying that that is going to take over food production in the next few years – or ever! It is one particular application. It is quite an expensive way of producing food, and it involves more capital expenditure.

On the other hand, however, it makes many of the costs of traditional farming less significant. If you use it to produce food that has a high value, and also has a short shelf-life, and you need to bring it closer to markets, then I think it has its uses.

Jersey is a place where glasshouse production was at the fore at one time. Advanced glasshouse production is just a much cheaper form of vertical farming.

Robotics: Farming has problems of gas and labour shortage, so this should encourage the development of robotics. Plants can be monitored every half-second of their growth and this gives the grower so much data, and an understanding of how they can tweak things. For example, they can reduce virtually all of the input costs... imagine that sort of technology being applied to a potato field in Jersey! You wouldn't need to cover up the field, but you could have robust, outside monitors.

It's happening already, where modern, digital technology is being used to monitor the life of the plants in the field; this can reduce the input costs significantly. It removes or reduces the need to spray for pests. We would need less land to produce the food that we need on the planet and also it would provide more space for nature.

Tractors have just been getting bigger and bigger and still bigger because of the cost of employing workers to drive them. But if you save the cost of a driver, there's no reason for them to be any bigger. They could be smaller, more versatile, more efficient to run, and cheaper – and less damaging to the soil, as well.

Eating insects instead of meat and other substitutes: I don't think humans are going to be eating insects or worms anytime soon, but there is no reason why we shouldn't.

Two billion people around the world rely for their protein on insects, and in Jersey you eat marine insects – you call them lobsters and crabs, and they taste rather good. There are other parts of the world where eating a shellfish is perceived as being disgusting. We are just conditioned to be nervous about eating insects.

It probably does make more sense to feed an insect larva to a fish, or to a chicken, and then eat the fish or the chicken, rather than the insects themselves. It provides them with a source of nutrients, which they can then process.

If you think 'yuck!' about the idea of eating insects, have you been to an industrial chicken farm?

Cultured meat is still some way off, certainly until one can use cultured beef to roast. It is still very expensive at the moment. The enthusiasts for it say the price will tumble very fast from now on, and that you will be able to eat a cultured meat joint in five or ten years' time – and it will cost less than animal meat.

It is not synthetic meat, it is animal meat, just produced outside the animal.

As a family, we eat a lot less meat than we used to, but still enjoy real meat. In regenerative agriculture we will need animals grazing the grass, because that is what they were designed to do, and eating their meat seems to be a good by-product of regenerative agriculture. But there won't be nearly as many farm animals needed for that purpose.

So I imagine that if we are going to eat proper, regenerative agriculture meat, we're going to have to pay for it.

Some might say: 'that's unfair, because there are poor people who won't be able to afford real meat, but will have to eat cultured meat instead.' I'm not sure how many poor people eat much meat, anyway. They have access to it, but don't have access to a lot.

So food may cost more, but I'm not sure that it will lead inevitably to higher food prices.

If you look at the poorest 10% of society: the reason why their food costs are so high is that there are a whole lot of societal issues – access to kitchens, access to understanding how to cook, dysfunctional families where people aren't eating together... all those sorts of things are adding to their cost of food much more than the way food is produced in the first place.

To view a video that covers the subject of this interview, go to **vimeo.com/687945271** – the password is 'Jersey'.
This is also available on our website: **www.ruraljersey.co.uk**

A small farm future

India Hamilton of SCOOP discussed the future of farming in Jersey with Ruth Le Cocq

Small-scale 'community-owned' farms may become part of an Island Farming Foundation to supply more locally grown food, and smallholders may be encouraged to provide produce for the domestic market.

These suggestions, together with a commitment to support advances in agricultural technology, such as robotics and precision farming, are just part of the Government's latest Economic Framework for the Rural Environment.

Its release earlier this year coincided with the decision of the Island's largest supplier of locally grown vegetables, Woodside Farms, to give up on that sector of its business as profitability was too low. Farm owner Charlie Gallichan said it was like 'market gardening in the middle of London – and that doesn't work'.

India Hamilton, co-founder of SCOOP, a non-profit organisation, welcomes the Jersey Government's shift towards working more closely with smallholders and community agriculture particularly as latest UK research has revealed how 'absolutely critical' food hubs were during the Covid crisis.

India Hamilton and Kaspar Wimberley set up SCOOP in 2018 to create a sustainable supply of food in Jersey through working with farmers and growers who care for the environment.

'I think the authors of the rural economy strategy have been brave and amazing,' she said, 'as they are holding two traditionally different ideologies about farming and allowing them to work together, and I can't wait for the time when we all meet as a farming community and see value in everything that we do.'

India, who is writing her PhD on agriculture in Jersey and has a food and development degree, said every country in the world is having to reimagine what food security means, and Jersey is no different.

'It is generally accepted that things need to change. Oxford University just reported that small-scale agriculture and food hubs were absolutely critical through the Covid crisis, which I can assure you is a major shift in analysis from them. Small scale/biodiverse farms are nimbler and require less technological investments, and the community engagement means there is a wider support network for the sector,' she explained.

'We set up 'Pathways to Organic Markets' in 2018, so we buy off the farmers and it is super viable.'

> “Everybody talks about the death of small-scale agriculture, but it didn’t actually die it just became really marginalised

‘We are turning over £750,000 in our 100 square metre farm shop and we have put £625,000 into the local organic market and small-scale market in the last three years. When you take into account that we don't sell everything that's grown and the land coverage is less than 1% of the total agriculture, the figures highlight some real potential.’

India emphasised that there are people who want to work the land in Jersey.

‘There is a mandate to ‘Keep Jersey Farming’ and this latest rural economy strategy, which is so different from the last one I read in 2017, makes our work easier. I’m really looking forward to bringing it to life.

‘Everyone has a right to grow and to have access to food that is grown in a particular way so it is nutrient dense. There is a farming culture here of people who are looking after the land and developing ways of finding food by developing businesses and representing their cultural community. When I think about Jersey’s culture it’s most commonly about change – we must look back to go forward and not be held back by old-fashioned economic assumptions,’ she said.

Recently India and Oliver Griggs, who runs an environmentally friendly small-scale farm in St John, set up an unofficial community group called the Jersey Food Systems Lab and the duo have invited people with a link to food in Jersey to discuss their differing visions for the future.

‘It’s been quite an intense clash of different ideals but we give everybody a chance to speak,’ said India. ‘In the last session we asked what does food security mean to you and it was a very complex conversation.’

The Economic Framework describes the Island as having a ‘fragile economic ecosystem’, adding that Jersey struggles to compete against other jurisdictions that enable supplies to undercut local produce. Yet it also recognises that local consumption of local produce is ‘vitally important’ to maintain the existing agricultural mix.

‘A diverse local production base would assist in strengthening rotational practices improving soil health, water quality, biodiversity and may offer opportunity for new land-based businesses to be established,’ says the framework. ‘Establishment of new holdings is more easily achieved on a “smallholder” scale.’

India agreed: ‘Everybody talks about the death of small-scale agriculture, but it didn’t actually die it just became really marginalised. Once it is given the structural support and belief that the industrial industry has had, the social and environmental benefits will be felt.’

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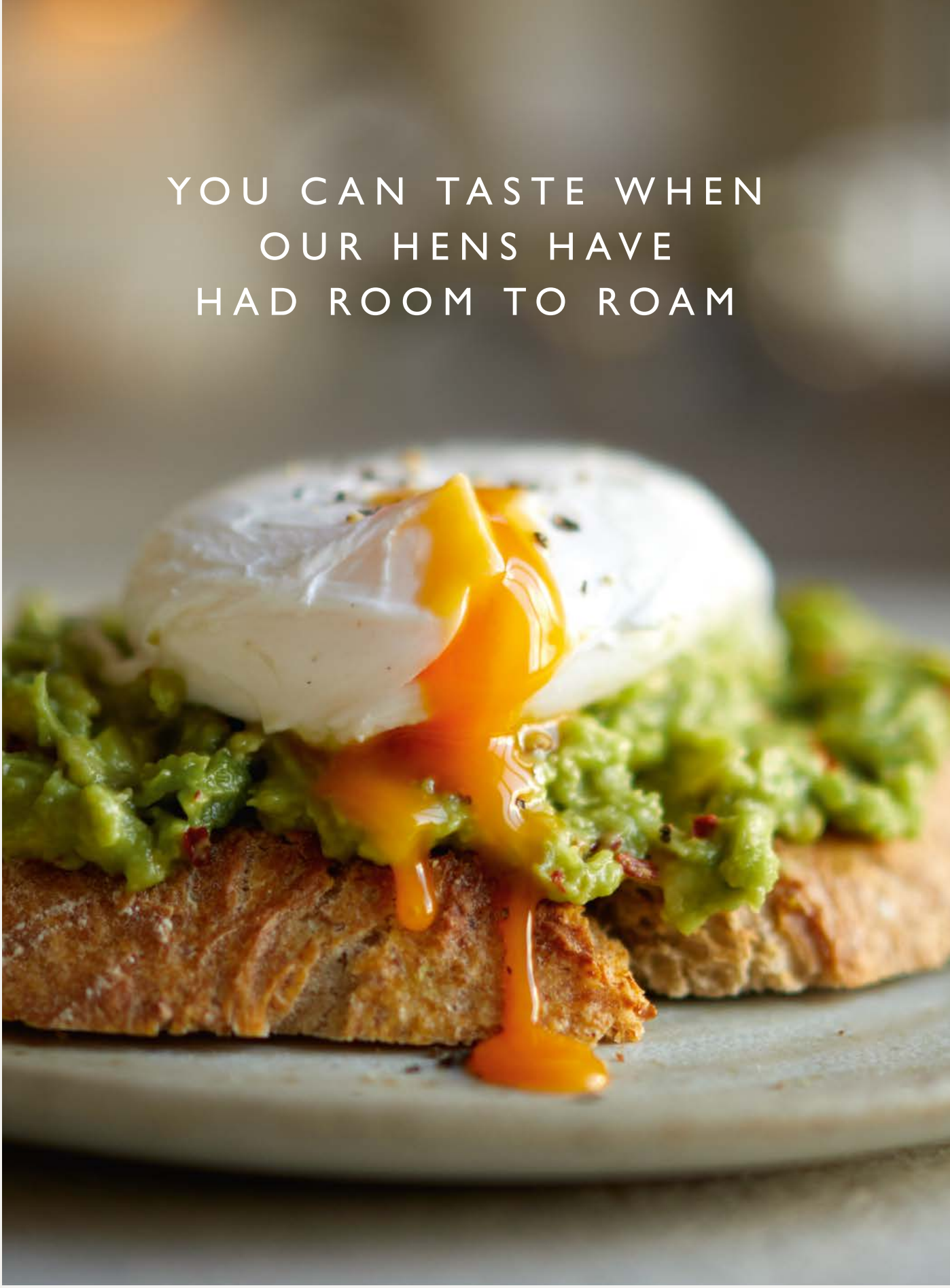

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Sweet and tasty

Ruth Le Cocq visited 'Rob's Rhubarb'

Some like it thick, some like it thin - and some like it in gin. But the sweetest, most flavoursome rhubarb has deep red stems and is grown outdoors.

This is good news for Rob Pinel and Penny Cruttwell of Rob's Rhubarb who spend their spare time tending thousands of rhubarb plants in a couple of fields in Trinity and St Ouen during an ever-lengthening season.

'The season has become much longer because the rhubarb is coming up much earlier,' said Rob. 'Twenty years ago, I wouldn't start picking until the end of April and now, if it's a mild winter, it's in March.'

Unlike some farmers, who grow forced rhubarb in sheds by mimicking ideal growing conditions, Rob relies on the Island's natural weather.

'Rhubarb comes from Siberia so it is frost resistant,' said Rob. 'After frosty conditions, the growth of rhubarb is triggered. It's also a very thirsty but resilient plant – it's 94% water.'

The couple have just relinquished a two-vergée field in St Ouen where they had grown rhubarb for eight years.

'The rhubarb had been in the ground too long and the heads became crowded so the stems became really thin. When it gets to a certain point you have to dig it up and cut it into smaller portions which you plant,' said Rob.

> "Twenty years ago, I wouldn't start picking until the end of April and now, if it's a mild winter, it's in March

Penny added: 'The field was very weedy and, as you don't plough, if you get too many established weeds you can't get rid of them.'

In that field 60 to 70 tonnes of horse manure had been added as mulch over the years providing the plants with vital nutrients.

All of Rob's rhubarb comes from a couple of plants given to him by a friend over 20 years ago and originally grown in his mother's garden.

Back then Didier and Christine Hellio asked him to supply some rhubarb for their farm shop at St Ouen, and then Rob began supplying Three Oaks Vineries Ltd, Homefields and Master Farms.

Penny explained that, as they both work elsewhere, Rob delivers the rhubarb to their wholesalers around 6am.

'I started helping Rob about six years ago and I love it. We are busy during the day and it's nice to do this together,' she said.

Rob's Rhubarb grows about four tonnes of rhubarb annually and in 2021 La Mare Wine Estate bought half a tonne of their crop to make their limited edition Rhubarb and Honey Royal Gin.

'It was really nice seeing our name on the label and it was a bit of fun too,' said Penny.

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Too much water – not enough cress?

Ruth Le Cocq went for a paddle with watercress grower Colin Roche

Skill and a very sharp blade are what set Colin Roche apart from most other men, as well as an ability to stand in not so deep water.

These attributes were put to the test in January this year when two weeks' worth of rain fell in just 24 hours, flooding two of his three watercress beds.

'It's the first time it's flooded that badly,' he said. 'If it had happened in the summer that would have been it for me.'

Colin, who has spent over 40 years growing and supplying watercress to the Island's wholesalers, supermarkets, farm shops and the Central Market, took 100 wheelbarrow loads of silt from just one of the flooded beds before tackling the other.

'It took a lot of time and physically it was really hard work,' he said. 'I'm nearly 70 years old and in recent years I've been trying to make life a bit easier for myself.'

In the past Colin produced 100 cases of watercress a week but now he picks a more comfortable 30.

'It's nice that it's slowed down, but it was hard last year because of the weather,' he explained.

At that time rain was in short supply but Colin was not surprised that the springs supplying his watercress beds, in secluded St Martin, continued to flow.

'That spring never stopped even in 1976,' he said, pointing to a trickle of water coming out of a pipe, 'and even though it doesn't look like much, more water comes in and goes down the side.'

Colin couldn't have found a more ideal setting for growing watercress, which is known as a superfood full of iron, calcium, folic acid and vitamins A and C. But it almost all happened by chance.

He made a snap decision to move to the Island about 45 years ago after driving a friend down to Weymouth to get the ferry and then taking up his offer to stay the weekend. He never left.

It was a visit from his brother that prompted a discussion about growing watercress.

'There was a farmer called Steve Holley and his cows used to get stuck in all the marshland, so we asked if there was any chance if we could have a little bit of the old meadow,' said Colin.

Steve agreed, although he hadn't been expecting a JCB to dig down to the clay base so sand and gravel could be added to enable the watercress to thrive. And thrive it did except for one year.

'I used to get the seed from a certain supplier, but he sent the wrong seeds, micro watercress seeds, and it didn't grow – size really does matter,' laughed Colin, before becoming more serious. 'I nearly lost the whole business.'

He said the financial side of being self-employed could be stressful, but it was tempered by the joy he feels being surrounded by nature.

'It's a nice life and I finish at one o'clock every day because you can't pick watercress when it's too hot – climate change is really starting to bite as I used to be able to pick it for longer,' he explained.

Seed is planted twice a year to ensure availability between March and January and the ideal conditions mean that Colin has rarely had problems with pests.

'I've only had caterpillars once in nearly 40 years and it was weird. I saw a patch over there and it was moving! Luckily, I used an organic spray.'

And with that Colin put on a pair of gloves, stepped into the water and started to wield a very large and sharp knife as he cut the watercress into bunches ready for packing.

The lady and the sheep

Jenni Liddiard, a farmer's daughter who used to work as a radiographer in the Hospital, is known as Jersey's Sheep Lady. Gill Maccabe visited her at Field Farm, St Lawrence

Jenni Liddiard likes to call herself a Jersey smallholder but there are surely more epithets for someone who arrived in the Island over 40 years ago to work as a radiographer in the Hospital and is now known as Jersey's Sheep Lady, having kept sheep in the Island for nearly 25 years, as well as working full-time.

In 2009 she started her dream to transform a former potato field into a working farm. It took seven years and nine planning appeals to achieve but Field Farm and its strapline – 'Grown Here, not Flown Here' – has secured its reputation as a Genuine Jersey producer of top-quality pork and lamb and award winning cider and apple juice.

She also rears pygmy goats as pets.

Jenni was brought up on a farm in the Lincolnshire Wolds, the youngest of five children. It was a mixed sheep and arable farm producing mainly cereal crops, peas, potatoes, strawberries and a few hundred sheep, mainly Border Leicesters crossed with Suffolk rams.

> **“There’s no such thing as an average day for a farmer. Each season has its own variety of tasks and it is just a case of trying to accomplish all of these whilst maintaining a pleasurable work/life balance**

This childhood, plus her adventures along the way to where she is now, has inspired her to put pen to paper, and for the last year she has been writing a book which she has named *The Jersey Sheep Lady.*

‘It is stuffed full of characters, some well-known, others not and there is even a bit of murder mystery and suspense in Australia. ‘I’ve had great fun unearthing family secrets and history,’ said Jenni. ‘I’m very inspired by Winifred Foley who wrote of her childhood in the Forest of Dean and of course Julian Norton, the Yorkshire vet – and I love social history.’

It seems as if Jenni has recreated her own bucolic idyll 63 years on. As you turn off Rue de la Golarde, St Lawrence, the farm track takes you around a gentle curve; there’s a neat orchard on your left and a paddock full of Lleyn sheep, a Welsh breed known for being good parents and productive.

A herd of utterly gorgeous inquisitive pygmy goats gambol and call out as you pass by. They have their own wooden playground and climbing frame, which was built for the grandchildren of her husband, David - but the goats seem to have assumed ownership.

There is an air of calm and order, and professionalism. Jenni makes farming look easy. How on earth does this slim 63-year-old with immaculate blond hair and a huge smile pack everything into one day?

‘Well, fortunately, I no longer have hundreds of chickens to rear; they used to take up so much time and I hated seeing them shut in the polytunnel during avian flu. After their third lockdown, I decided enough was enough and I now only keep half a dozen for us.

‘There’s no such thing as an average day for a farmer. Each season has its own variety of tasks and it is just a case of trying to accomplish all of these whilst maintaining a pleasurable work/life balance.

‘The autumn mornings probably follow the closest thing to a routine. I start around 7am and work till midnight.

> Every day I appreciate just how lucky I am to be the custodian of this land for my lifetime

'As well as looking after all the animals, I pick and sort the apple harvest and produce the cider and juice, and prepare the animals for the next season. If the weather is poor, we label and box all the drinks, or bake – I like cake.

'The spring is entirely different, especially during April and May. The alarm goes off at 6am and I cast my eyes over the sheep or goat cam where I can zoom right into the lambing or kidding scene in the barn.

'The rest of the day is spent being a sheep midwife. I also run lambing courses and, of course, any hour that I can grab, I write. I'm really enjoying what I've created.

'Every day I appreciate just how lucky I am to be the custodian of this land for my lifetime.'

For all meat or cider purchases or Lambing courses contact Jenni on jerseysheep@gmail.com

The Jersey Sheep Lady **will be on sale later this year.**

Strawberries, peonies...and lemons!

Grower profile: Joe Freire, by Ruth Le Cocq

Joe Freire doesn't leave anything to chance. He has nurtured his land for over 30 years, coaxing it to yield an abundance of fruit, vegetables and cut flowers.

He discovered how to identify and fill gaps in the market, and that willingness to experiment with new crops, together with a passion for growing, means there is a grove of lemon trees under cover at his farm in St Lawrence.

'I've always been a bit different,' Joe laughed. 'I study the market before I start growing things. I go and ask the shopkeepers and wholesalers and see where there are gaps for some sort of produce.'

Hence the 100 lemon trees which he planted in 2016 in opened-ended French tunnels and harvested for the first time in 2019.

'I spent three years learning how to manage them – they are a winter crop from December to April – and last year I had a bumper crop of lemons,' he said with delight.

Joe arrived in Jersey from Madeira when he was 18. He worked for an elderly couple and eventually he took over running La Houguette Farm and is perhaps best known for growing strawberries.

'I have seen so many changes over the years. Twenty years ago, we only had strawberries for six weeks – it was seasonal. Now the world has become too small, and you can get strawberries from Australia or Israel or anywhere at the same price,' he said.

To combat this, Joe experimented with extending his season by getting different plant varieties and lifting and freezing them until they were required for a staggered planting in June.

'We used to plant them in the ground, but it became non-economic so now we have the Everbearing variety of strawberry that gives three or four flushes between June and October.'

Joe supplies the Island's wholesalers with a range of produce including raspberries, asparagus, beans, rhubarb, pumpkins, coriander, parsley and dill. He also grows peonies, freesias and anemones.

However, since Covid and Brexit, Joe has reduced the land he farms and now employs three staff instead of eight.

'I've got staff who know the work and they work like me and when they go then I will go with them. It's my choice. The expenses are getting higher and every year one or two crops don't work and don't pay, and it's a lot of work.'

He believes the Government of Jersey needs to help growers.

'It is demoralising when you go to sell your produce and you get so little when you have worked so hard. We need help selling our produce. We don't need it for growing – if you have the money up front you are not going to try so hard, and it is easier to fail.'

That said, Joe still has lots of ideas for the future and he would like to share his knowledge and experience with somebody who is as passionate about growing as he is.

'In the meantime, I'll be tending the peonies, the lemon trees and the anemones, which I like best, myself,' he smiled.

Smallholding side hustles

Starting a farm might seem like an unconventional side hustle, but for a growing number of millennials, it's a way of getting a foot on the farming ladder. Hannah Voak met some first-time smallholders who are giving it a go alongside their day jobs

The Lomah

For smallholder Ollie Griggs, nothing compares to the taste of fresh, homegrown produce. And it's this sentiment, coupled with a desire to be more self-sufficient, that prompted him to start a farm in 2022.

'Having a farm is a wholesome, fulfilling way to live,' he says.'But I started farming out of fear – fear that I wouldn't be able to easily find the food I wanted to eat.'

Ollie knew that global conflicts, the climate crisis, and fallout from the pandemic were a recipe for disaster when it came to food security. So, he set to work clearing an overgrown two vergée plot on his parents' land not far from St John's Village. He named his farm The Land of Milk and Honey – or The Lomah, for short.

It was a challenging first year – not least for someone with limited hands-on farming experience. Record high temperatures caused unrelenting droughts, and there were countless bird flu restrictions. But despite the odds, Ollie had a fruitful 12 months, harvesting everything from green beans and gherkins to turnips and tomatoes. He also began supplying eggs from his 60-strong flock of chickens to some of the Island's top restaurants.

While Ollie continues to work part-time, his long-term goal is to earn 100% of his income from farming.

'Young people don't often see farming as a prosperous career, but that image can be inaccurate. There are lots of examples from around the world of people who earn a good living from not a lot of land.'

He also wants to address the growing disconnect between consumers and food producers. It's for this reason that Ollie enjoys showing guests around the farm.

'I've had so many more meaningful interactions this year since having a farm. It's interesting for people to see the produce growing and appreciate that there's a whole story to it. Supermarkets do a good job of taking that side away,' he says.

'People love to pick and try produce straight from the field too. You really can taste the difference.'

Ollie sells his produce from a 'self-serve' box at The Lomah on La Rue du Muet in St John. He shares his farming journey on his Instagram page (@the_lomah) and YouTube channel.

G&H Agriculture

When Henry Lucas and his partner Georgie Barclay set up G&H Agriculture in 2021, their aim was to provide fresh, local produce at an affordable price. Henry was keen to start farming alongside his full-time job as a commercial airline pilot, and Georgie had recently switched careers after working in finance. Neither of them had any hands-on experience but they were eager to learn and willing to put the work in.

The idea for the couple's smallholding took root one year earlier, during the first coronavirus lockdown. 'I obviously had loads of time to devote to growing vegetables at the bottom of the garden,' Henry recalls, 'and Georgie wanted a few chickens.'

'I built our first coop out of wood that was lying around, since all the shops were closed. Then Georgie wanted more chickens. And some more.'

Soon the garden was so full of hens that the pair started looking for extra space. They were lucky, Henry says, that a local landowner took a punt on them. 'That's how it leapt from being very small-scale to leasing 10 vergées of land.'

Georgie and Henry jumped in feet first, dedicating any spare time to raising their chickens and growing the farm. 'When we were at our peak with the eggs, we were selling up to 1,000 a week from our hedge veg stall. Everything we grew was hand-planted and cut, so from a carbon point, it was pretty low. We also allowed the fields to grow a little wilder than others would let them go, to help with biodiversity.'

Two years in and Georgie and Henry say they continue to take each season at a time. 'While we won't be as busy on the farming front this year, it's safe to say it's still going to be hectic'.

For now, the couple's secluded smallholding remains open for business. And while their hedge veg stall may be located down a dirt track in the depths of St Peter, there are ample rewards for those who travel off the beaten path. If the views across open fields out to the Atlantic don't convince you, the eggs from their flock of French Reds certainly will.

G&H produce is available from Georgie and Henry's hedge veg stall in St Peter, located on Mont De La Mare just off Rue De La Presse. The couple share stories of farm life on their Instagram page (@gandhagriculture), including the adventures of chickens Beryl and Babs.

Jersey's rural and farming heritage

On the farm

Making Black Butter

Crushing apples for cider

Flowers from Jersey

Gathering vraic

On the farm - 1912

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Information for the captions was obtained with the kind help of Derrick Frigot, author of three invaluable works on Jersey's farming history.

The kind assistance of the JEP, Jersey Heritage, the Jersey Archive, the RJA&HS and Mr Frigot is gratefully acknowledged.

RURAL magazine welcomes receipt of old picture images illustrating Island farming life in years gone by. Images should be sent to pictures@ruraljersey.co.uk and will be reproduced, if possible, either in RURAL magazine or on the RURAL website: www.ruraljersey.co.uk

What did the Société Jersiaise ever do for Jersey?

And what does it do now? The Société's president, Nicolette Westwood, describes its current educational and research agenda, in which all members can participate – and membership is open to anyone, no matter what their level of knowledge

This year the Société Jersiaise celebrates its 150th anniversary. Founded in January.

1873 by a group of prominent Islanders, it protected the Island's heritage and preserved its history and historic sites. It was the only institution of its kind that pledged to protect the Island, and very quickly supporters donated buildings, money, and sites to its cause. It purchased the sites of La Hougue Bie and La Cotte de St Brélade, and other monuments and sites joined its portfolio, such as the dolmens.

It was the Société's foresight which preserved much of what we see today. One hundred years after its inception, the Société was still responsible for the history of the Island, most of its prehistoric sites, the preservation of the flora and fauna, the local language – Jèrriais – and the Island's museum.

So that answers what the Société did for us, but what is it doing today?

In 1983 Jersey Heritage came into being and took over the commercial side of the Société, which included the museum and other major sites. With that element taken care of, the Société continued to focus on its many interests. This leads to walks and talks and other events, but primarily the Société has an educational and research agenda. There are 17 Sections of enthusiasts dedicated to preserving the Island's story. Anyone can join the Société, no matter what their level of knowledge.

Below is a taste of the different Sections and what they are currently doing. All the Sections have specialists in their field, as well as citizen scientists and amateurs.

The **Archaeology** Section are working on a site at St Clement where Gallo-Roman remains have been discovered.They are supported by the Société's qualified archaeologist. The members of the **Architecture** Section take an interest in current and past architecture and supports the *Buildings at Risk* scheme.

Bibliography are aware of any publication involving Jersey and have copies of the same. **Botany** members are out regularly maintaining their meticulous records, widening their knowledge, and enjoying different aspects of the Island. The **Entomologists** meet biweekly to compare notes – they have the Island's largest moth collection. The **Environment** Section members support the local environment, both physically and by taking an interest in government policy and climate change.

Marine Biology

The **Garden History** Section have researched specific plants, gardens, and botanical enterprises of all kinds.

The **Geology** Section have recorded the Island's geography and provide fascinating walks and talks. The **History** Section members comprise a group of enthusiasts who have independently worked on different projects, and also combine when the interest takes them. Every year they have a range of historical walks and talks. The **La Langue Jèrriase** group are creating a hub to support our threatened native language. **Marine Biology** are very active, but the current main feather in their cap is the recently created Portelet Bay No Take Zone, a protected area where no biological material can be removed. This is one of only a few in the British Isles.

Meteorology take a keen interest in the Island's weather, and Section meetings can involve unusual photos of clouds and weathervanes. Members of the **Mycology** Section have recently acquired two new microscopes for identifying the Island's fungi. **Numismatics** are a busy Section, identifying the many coins which are brought to them, and discussing the Island's coinage since pre-history. The **Ornithologists** are always out in the field and continue to publish the *Jersey Bird Report*, first produced in the 1920s. The **Photography** Section are an energetic group of individuals with eclectic interests. **Zoology** incorporates several areas of interest, including the Bat Group.

The rooms at Pier Road and La Hougue Bie provide plenty of space for the Sections to operate, and also to store their research and finds. They can take advantage of the finds and records that the Société has preserved over the last 150 years, which include those in the Lord Coutanche Library and the Photo Archive, some dating back centuries.

The bookshop has an interesting range of books, many written by our enthusiasts or commissioned by the Société. If you're interested in joining or seeing what else we offer, take a look at the website **www.societe-jersiaise.org** or pop in and visit at **7 Pier Road**.

Contact Nicolette Westwood
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Société Jersiaise Botany

Memories of La Rocque

By Colonel John Blashford-Snell, who recalls the effects of wartime bombing raids and their effect on life and property at La Rocque

Since Baron Philippe de Rullecourt's French invaders landed in 1781, La Rocque had been pretty peaceful, but on the warm summer evening of 28 June 1940 the sound of approaching aircraft reached the children on the harbour walls Glancing out to sea, seven-year-olds Gerry Le Marrec and his friend, Bernie Robert, saw three German Heinkel bombers flying low over the rocks around Seymour Tower and coming towards them. However, having seen German planes previously, these stalwart lads were not unduly concerned.

But suddenly, the aircraft were right overhead and there came the shriek of falling bombs. One exploded with a roar on the beach, and another struck the road leading down to the Martello Tower.

Luckily the boys fell over the wall on which they were sitting, which protected them from the blast and flying debris. Dense black smoke covered the area and for a few moments they had no idea what was happening. However, Gerry will never forget the fisherman, Frank Gallichan, who seized the lads, together with Bernie's sister, Mary and her friend, Yvonne Hamon, and pushed them under a bench to provide some shelter.

Nearby, young Pam Tanquay was picking tomatoes in the field above La Roque when the planes returned, machine-gunning the area, their bullets flinging up clods of earth but fortunately missing the little girl.

Alas, those near where the bombs fell were not so lucky. The Air Raid Precautions Warden, Jack Adams, was killed right outside his doorway; Minnie Farrell died from shrapnel coming in through her kitchen window and Major Thomas Pilkington died on the road.

To get away from the harbour, Gerry Le Marrec and the other children moved inland to stay overnight with relatives.

The German Occupation followed and once again, on 19 June 1944, the noise of aircraft was heard in La Roque. The sky was alive with Allied bombers flying south in support of the D-Day landings and a German anti-aircraft battery based near the Martello Tower opened fire.

West Lea, La Roque in the 1930s

Annoyed by this, one aircraft turned back and came roaring in over the harbour. Bombs hurtled down on the gun emplacement, but one fell in the road leaving a 10ft deep crater said to be 20ft wide. Thankfully, although there were some minor casualties, no one died but twelve houses were seriously damaged, among them my grandmother's. 'West Lea', her home before she had been evacuated in 1940 to live with us in England, was a complete wreck.

Looking out across the jagged reefs towards Seymour Tower I remember my father telling me of his youth and later, how he had brought his Scouts here for exercises after the First World War. I recall how, as a schoolboy, I ventured out to seek ormer, and raced back to beat the rapidly incoming tide.

La Roque has always been a special place to me and on the walls of the harbour and the slipway you can find memorials to the two bombings in the 1940s. The earlier landing of Baron de Rullecourt's invaders and their defeat by British and Jersey Militia regiments is also commemorated on a plaque at the harbour. La Roque is indeed part of our Island's history.

West Lea after bombing

John Blashford-Snell's father, Rev Preb Leland Blashford-Snell, with the Victoria College Scout Troop he founded, around 1920

Jersey's woolly bracken bruisers

Ruth Le Cocq met Aaron le Couteur, guardian of Jersey's Manx Laoghtan flock of sheep

A hint of heather, signifying hope, renewal and new beginnings, murmurs into life on the headland overlooking Le Mourier Valley, as Red-Billed Choughs forage for the first time in over 100 years on land grazed by Manx Loaghtan sheep.

The habitat has been managed by conservation grazing for nearly 15 years, enabling the chough's food sources to thrive. It's an ongoing success story but the regeneration is a slow process aligned with the words of the Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, who once said: 'Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.'

This truth is not lost on Aaron Le Couteur who became a shepherd in 2008, answering the call of The National Trust for Jersey which introduced 20 Manx sheep to 140 vergées of land between Sorel Point and Devil's Hole. The aim was to try to halt the degradation of the land which was being smothered by bracken, gorse, holm oak and sycamore.

'I'm glad I started with 20 and not 200 – it was a steep learning curve,' laughed Aaron. 'I was lucky that the breeders who supplied the sheep were great sources of experience and our first vet, John Mather, had so much knowledge.'

Aaron is committed to enhancing the sustainability of the local environment but balancing that with the need to survive financially has been like living on a knife edge.

'Over the years we have tried to be really shrewd to make sure that we can make ends meet, as there's not a lot of income coming in from wool and meat. We've been through a period of really hard graft and the only thing that got us through, like many a Jersey endeavour, was stubbornness,' he said.

Now Aaron tends between 400 and 500 sheep which graze on seven sites around the Island. He works closely with The National Trust, the Government of Jersey and private landowners, utilising land that is difficult to manage.

'We couldn't do what we do with a standard commercial breed of sheep,' he said.'It's really about what the Manx find palatable, and they will graze a far wider range than a normal sheep. They eat a lot like a goat, so they will browse young saplings as well as eating grass and everything in between.'

At the top of the Manx sheep's skills list is 'bracken bruising'.

'One of their main objectives is to tackle the bracken which, although it is arguably native, is a significant deteriorator of biodiversity,' said Aaron. 'Where it grows, it swamps everything else out so successfully that instead of having 100 or more species in every square metre of land you have just one species.'

The trampling by hundreds of cloven hooves means that heather is now starting to flourish in a small fenced off area on the headland.

'The fence didn't go up until the heather came and the heather didn't come up until the sheep came.

'That particular area was seeded by The National Trust years ago, but it never germinated because the conditions weren't right,' Aaron explained.

'You can already see that it's creeping underneath the sheep grazing so it's going to get bigger and bigger. That's the beauty of it all. When it's sustainable it doesn't matter if the improvement is 0.01% – we don't have to do it overnight, we just have to be here.'

And being here, managing the sheep, is starting to get slightly easier. Agricultural funding means that Aaron, who has a daytime job elsewhere, has been able to employ a full-time shepherd and he has also invested in some time-saving equipment. This means all the fencing equipment can be loaded on to one trailer and, thanks to a kind benefactor, the shepherds now have a mobile sheep yard.

'That's been a game changer,' said Aaron, 'it just folds up behind the truck and we can take it home when we are finished.'

However, money is still tight so more grazing sites are needed.

'Fortunately, we are a lot less dependent on external costs than other farming practices and as the decades tick by we get more and more viable,' said Aaron.

'That said, the sheep aren't a silver bullet – they are very good at what they do but they are not a one-stop shop. It all depends on the environment and the extent to which that habitat is already degraded before we start.'

As Aaron stood on the headland, he pointed to an area further along the northern coast.

'All of that is bracken and that habitat is degrading every single day. Nature is trying to hold on – you can see little patches of grass – but as the bracken keeps growing it will just swamp it all and there will be nothing left. All that biodiversity will be lost.'

And with that, he turned and started walking back towards his truck where Nidge, the sheepdog, waited eagerly to receive his instructions for the day.

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Water, water, everywhere

In January 2023 the area of Samarès Manor's gardens once again resumed its historic watery character. Its owner and Seigneur of Samarès, Vincent Obbard, recalls floods ancient and modern, and the methods used to deal with them

The site of the Canal in front of the Japanese pagoda

It was the time of the floods, which caused so much inconvenience and distress in Jersey in January this year. At Samarès Manor, a picture of the flood published on Facebook attracted attention, and concern was expressed that the flood waters might do irreparable damage.

But only 24 hours later the flood had receded, the fish had not escaped from the pond and, as far as I can tell, little damage, if any, was done to the surrounding paths or trees and shrubs, apart from a light coating of mud.

The gardens flooded because the canal was temporarily unable to cope with the exceptional volume of water that fell within 24 hours. The Samarès Canal runs through Samarès' gardens, then through the St Clement's Recreation Grounds' Golf Course, until it joins the underground stream, known as the Baudrette Brook, which continues to the coast at Le Dicq, where it runs into the sea.

The Samarès Canal is not a natural feature. It was dug by hand for my hero, Philippe Dumaresq, former Seigneur of Samarès – by his loyal workers, with spades, in about 1675. Philippe is my hero because, apart from being a great seaman, surveyor, mapmaker and gardener, he planted a huge apple orchard at Samarès – a man after my own heart. He was a friend of the famous contemporary diarist, John Evelyn.

The Canal was an important feat of engineering for his time, indeed, any time. Its purpose, apart from being a Baroque style ornamental feature, was to drain an area of marsh and reed bed. A view of the Manor House from a distance along the Canal must have been impressive.

Arguably, it is presently no longer 'a canal' at all, because in about 1931 it was narrowed down to a channel with concrete sides, only about a metre wide, but it still continued to drain the marsh.

On the 1795 Richmond map of Jersey it is shown as a major feature in the landscape, said to have been 12 yards wide, and the Godfray map of Jersey (1850) also shows the same feature.

It was certainly wide enough for the legend to be true – that the Seigneur of Samarès would use a punt to travel as far as Plat Douet Road on his way to town.

The remains of the original wide Canal can still be seen. The Japanese summer house, where many couples say their wedding vows, is built on the site of the original Canal and their witnesses gather where there was once water.

I assume that the then Seigneur of Samarès, Sir James Knott, created the more modern concrete channel in about 1931, because it was cleaner and easier to maintain than the soft-sided waterway of 1675.

There are two difficulties with the site of the Canal. The first is the fact that it has almost no fall. Plat Douet ('Flat Stream') Road, St Clement, is so named because it is built next to a stream with no fall. The Samarès Canal may have even less flow. So, if the pond overflows, the Canal does not have sufficient capacity to take the water.

The second difficulty is that, at high tide, or in times when the volume builds up by the sea wall, it needs the assistance of a water pump. Without this, flooding in Georgetown Park Estate was common in the 1950s. Nowadays, the pump takes the form of two, 10 metre long, primitive-looking Archimedes screws, recently replaced in 2019. The photo shows one of them being installed by crane. So, if the tide is high or there is excessive water anyway, due to unusual rainfall, the pump may be unable to cope, causing excess backward pressure, and temporary flooding.

Left: One of the Archimedes pump screws, being installed at Le Dicq in June 2019. Right: Part of the Canal as shown on the 1795 Richmond map

How did Le Dicq get its name? I would suggest that the place was known as such from a stone dyke (or bridge?) which had been built to allow horse drawn traffic to pass along the coast at the same time to allow the Baudrette Brook to exit into the sea.

In a report written for the States in April 1812, the author Thomas Quayle says the dyke was described as 'having been suffered to fall into utter disrepair', no doubt resulting in considerable flooding at certain times, either from the sea or from the accumulation of stream water.

Even now, drainage solutions are not perfect, and with additional run-off water from recent development in St Clement and, because of climate change, there could be more trouble in store.

A bird with attitude...

...and with something to crow about. By Mike Stentiford

In years gone by, creating a comprehensive tally of all the Island's wildlife rarely proved a reliable undertaking.

True, during the early 1900's a few random reports – on bird species in particular – did, somehow, manage to find their way into a few record books.

Unfortunately, identification in those days could only be professionally confirmed after the bird was shot – not a very environmentally friendly way of compiling a local species list.

Collating such occasional and ill-gotten reports came to a particularly abrupt halt during the years of Occupation when Islanders had far more serious issues to contend with. As a result, instead of finding themselves writ large in a local natural history species register, birds and animals, both large and small, inevitably ended their days in a traditional Jersey cooking pot.

There are, though, a few tantalising glimpses of those austere 'wild times', not least regarding one of the Island's most familiar, yet least loved, avian residents – the Carrion crow.

Prior to 1940, these common coal-black scavengers made their untidy nests on the Island's sea cliffs. But, due entirely to disturbance caused by the building of the German sea defences, crows were forced to seek the less chaotic ambience available in the trees and hedgerows of the Island's inland parishes.

Unfortunately for the crows, this proved not to be a particularly clever move as, by 1944, an estimated 200,000 trees had been felled for fuel and cooking purposes. This obviously left the entire residency of crows in a bit of a quandary as to where, next, to set up a communal homestead – an 'Occupational hazard' as one might say.

Like many other species, however, confronting the unexpected is something that the canny old crow is fairly adept at dealing with. Hence the species claiming more permanent residency among the many agricultural fields, parkland, sports fields and wooded areas in our rural environment.

It is within all twelve parishes that collating data on all things fur and feathery has now resumed as a vitally valid activity. With environmental issues at the forefront of general debate, sustaining a census of local biodiversity has become something of a serious hobby for scores of nature-loving Islanders.

At the forefront of all this data gathering is the Jersey Biodiversity Centre, a charity that relies heavily on the generous input of keen-eyed volunteers. Rightly credited as being 'citizen scientists', volunteers report on every plant, bird, animal or insect seen in any of the Island's twelve parishes.

Unsurprisingly, sightings of certain species in rural environments tend to be a little more diverse than those recorded in more urban parishes. Nevertheless, several species of birds have developed both an attachment to, and a reliance on, many of the Island's built-up areas.

This can be confirmed in countless town gardens, where hanging up the bird feeders is now regarded far more as a daily duty rather than just as an occasional pastime.

With its local residency now well secured, the Carrion crow has become an extremely familiar and all-Island sight, despite its exclusion from the list of protected species.

All the more reason perhaps, when next its acquaintance is made, that we spare a brief thought as to the crow's comparatively recent history and how, like many an Islander, it has been forced to learn the lessons of adaption.

Putting it simply – never take any such familiar species for granted.

Whether we find 'something to crow about', clamber up high to the 'crow's nest' or just feel bemused by the remark, 'stone the crows', it's a bird with attitude – and one that's left quite an historical mark on the Island.

WIN

6 bottles of Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé Brut Champagne

Celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Rural Magazine with 6 bottles of Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé Brut Champagne, courtesy of Liberation Quality Drinks

Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé Brut is famous for its highly expressive bouquet, from the very careful preservation of the grape's natural fresh red fruit aromas, and salmon pink colour which stems from the maceration techniques used.

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A: Sixteenth
B: Seventeenth
C: Eighteenth

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Pruning with passion

There is a lot of confusion amongst gardeners about when to prune, how much to prune and sometimes, if you want to rewild your garden, whether to prune at all? By our gardening writer, Gill Maccabe

In the past I've tried leaving hydrangeas until the wind knocks their dry heads off, I've largely ignored the wisteria and left the box hedges until the branchage season.

This year, however, I've become a passionate pruner and thanks to a session with skilled local gardener Anna Bradstock, who is also a member of the prestigious International Dendrology Society, a more knowledgeable one too.

Winter pruning is used to renew and invigorate, whereas summer pruning is used to slow down growth as you are cutting down the plant's ability to photosynthesise. Not all plants need to be pruned – you should avoid pruning Daphne and Japanese maple for example, but if in doubt the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) websites offer clear practical tips.

First of all, you need very sharp secateurs, and it would help to become familiar with three terms:

Hard annual Prune

Use for plants flowering on current seasons growth, e.g. *Buddleia*, late flowering *Clematis*. This is to curtail apical growth (which means the growth occurring at the tops of the plant) and to encourage less vegetative growth and more flowers.

One third method

This is used on plants which flower on previous seasons growth such as the vibrant yellow *Forysthia* or the beautiful white *Philadelphus*. Remove stems from the base every three to five years to ensure that older branched stems are renewed before they become so twiggy that they lack energy to produce decent flowers.

Spur pruning

This method is used on *Wisteria* and *Malus domestica* for example. A permanent framework is established where spurs build up over time to produce flowers or fruit. These are pruned back to limit stems and thereby increase the quality and size of flower and fruit production.

To assist you further, here are tips, using the above three methods, on how to prune five of the most popular plants seen in Jersey gardens.

Apple trees

Freestanding trees such as bush forms and standards should be pruned in winter when leaves have fallen. Check to see if your variety is a tip bearer or spur bearer. If it produces most of its fruit on the tips then thin the branches out to open up the centre, ensuring that the tips of the remaining branches are uncut. Spur bearing shoots need to have their shoots cut back to about four buds, thin out existing spurs and remove dead or diseased wood and any branches growing towards the centre. Heavy crops of apples should be thinned out in June to avoid snapping.

Hydrangea macrop

Mop head or lace cap. Use the One Third method once shrub is established, in early spring remove deadheads back to the first fat buds.

H.paniculata (the gorgeous top heavy white one) – prune back to an open framework at whatever height you require, removing weak twiggy shoots.

Wisteria

You should prune wisteria twice a year to keep it looking at its best and, above all, don't be scared of it.

Cut back the whippy green shoots of the current year's growth to five or six leaves after flowering in July or August. This controls the size of the wisteria, preventing it getting into guttering and windows, and encourages it to form flower buds rather than green growth.

Then, cut back the same growths to two or three buds in January or February (when the plant is dormant and leafless) to tidy it up before the vigorous growth starts.

Before and after pruning of wisteria, courtesy of Anna Bradstock

Salvias

Shrubby salvias such as *Salvia microphylla* and *Salvia* x *jamensis* need deadheading through the summer to keep the flowers coming.

Do not prune back hard until the spring as this will encourage new growth to shoot before the worst of the cold is over. When the warm weather arrives, cut back to a healthy pair of new shoots to keep the plant bushy. Half-hardy salvias like *S.leucantha* should be trimmed to remain tidy and avoid 'rock over' (tender plants moving in the wind) in winter.

Finally if you have box hedges, slow down their growth by trimming at the beginning of June and do not prune them on a hot day, wait until it is cloudy or wet – or water straight afterwards.

Anna Bradstock will be hosting winter pruning workshops for 2023/2024 season offering practical hands-on advice for small groups at her garden in Trinity.

You can contact her on annabradstock@gmail.com for more information and booking, and also see: www.facebook.com/Gardeningroots

History and beauty in the west

Gill Maccabe visited the gardens of one of the Island's most famous private homes – St Ouen's Manor, home of Charlie and Georgina Malet de Carteret

The ancient manor of St Ouen, with its moat and ponds, ramparts and original stained glass windows, gargoyles and even a nymphaeum, has been the home of the de Carteret family since around the time King John lost Normandy in 1204.

The current Seigneur, Charlie Malet de Carteret, and his wife have only been custodians in residence for five years, but their stamp is obvious, particularly in the garden, for which Georgina is particularly passionate.

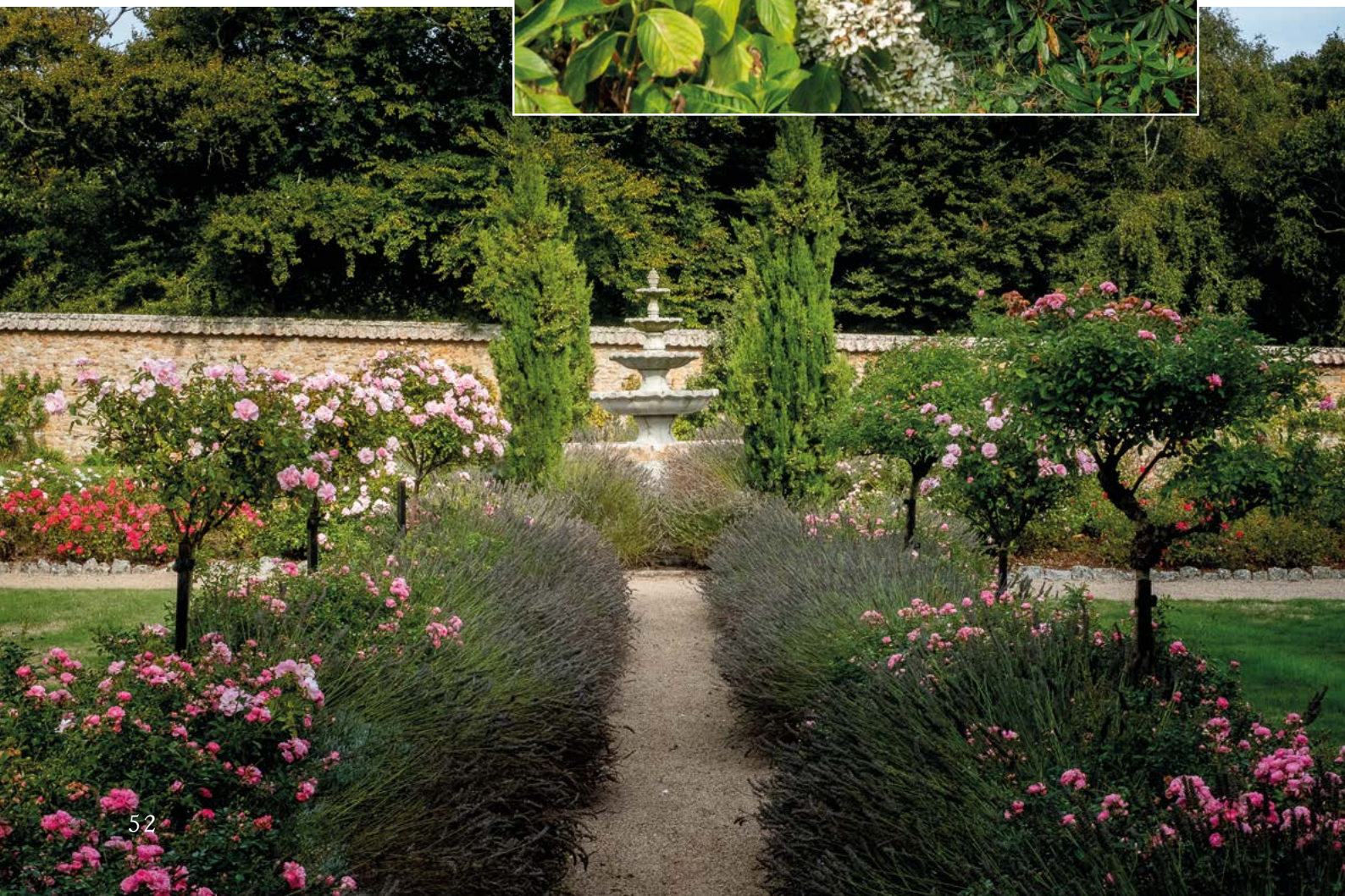
Charlie is an art collector and the president designate of the National Trust for Jersey. He is keen to make the manor an active part of Jersey's culture and heritage; annually it houses numerous events including weddings, concerts summer fêtes and photoshoots.

Georgina is warm and engaging and has in-depth knowledge and love of art history, culture and the natural world and is dedicating her experience and expertise to the thoughtful restoration and conservation of the house and gardens.

Her 'to do' list is extensive, and projects such as desilting the bottom pond and perhaps turning it into a place to swim, creating a bog garden and unearthing an ancient section of the garden dominate her thoughts and time when she is not constantly replanting trees.

She seems to know every plant and tree and her conversation is peppered with anecdotes and stories, which brings the gardens and extensive woodland to life.

There's a mulberry tree bordering the front lawn named after Philip (Charlie's father, the previous Seigneur) which produces abundant crops; near the top pond is an ancient oak probably 200 years old, which escaped the German axe when the manor was requisitioned during the Occupation. And just beyond the largest chicken coop I've ever seen for just five hens is a delightful field full of young trees called Alice's Field. It is full of mainly British native species and named after their daughter, who was married four years ago and decided she didn't want presents so asked her guests to donate a tree instead.



There's a wonderfully romantic white garden in the southwest corner overlooking the pond where, when time and weather allows, Georgina and Charlie love to sit of an evening. It starts in spring with *Narcissus Silver Chimes* and as the season progresses is layered with white dahlias, perennial geraniums, penstemon, frothy gypsophila, white *Fuchsia Hawkshead*, *Gaura Lindheim*, and lots of lilies including dramatic white tree lilies.

'It's full of texture – and I love it,' enthused Georgina. 'Oh, and a beautiful pale pink rose, *Rosa Cécile Brünner*, has snuck in. It is heavenly – it literally drips with flowers and is so romantic.'

Georgina is wonderfully frank about those projects which perhaps didn't quite work out as planned, such as the 3,500 *Tulipa Queen of the Night* which were purchased and planted under the canopy of newly planted cherry trees, on the other side of the top pond.

> "It's full of texture – and I love it

'I didn't know they were like chocolate to squirrels; I think there are around 12 left,' she reflected.

'The supplier assured me they would naturalise in the long grass. He didn't say anything about squirrels. So, we have replaced them with purple camassia, which looks gorgeous in the spring underneath the froth of cherry blossom.'

The walled garden, however, created in the 19th Century to house the manor's kitchen garden and flanked by two dovecotes, is an absolute success and joy, and in almost constant use in the summer for weddings and events.

In the centre is a dramatic fountain, just like the one into which Keira Knightly famously dived in the film, *Atonement*, surrounded by a narrow path lined with the glorious bright pink large rosette shaped *Rosa Gertrude Jekyll* and purple lavender.

The ancient warm walls play host to a seductive mêlée of predominately purple pink and white, there is *Rosa Madame Alfred Carrière* and one *Rosa Mermaid* in celebration of Georgina's father as he loved it, cherry and wisteria. And the deep borders full of rich loam, spiced with manure from their daughter-in-law's horse, are stocked with agapanthus, dahlias, nepeta and masses of seasonal bulbs and perennials.

'Charlie remembers this being the kitchen garden when he was a boy,' said Georgina. 'We have another kitchen garden being created over the other side.

Oh, that's another project,' she laughed. 'We will be eating mince for years.'

I left thinking how very lucky St Ouen is to have its very own manor, alive and well for future generations to enjoy.

From Russia with love (and a waggy tail)

As black as the River Volga and larger than life, the Black Russian Terrier (a dog, not a cocktail) was originally bred for a specific military purpose. Perhaps surprisingly, it is equally adaptable as a pet. Kieranne Grimshaw met with owner Oksana and her daughter, Katya, to discover more about this unusual breed

River, a female Russian Terrier, was brought to Jersey from Ukraine in 2021 and has embraced Island life with her new family.

'We used to have a Giant Schnauzer, and after she passed away my partner spotted a Russian Terrier at *Discover Dogs* in London,' Oksana explained.

'I thought they may be too big and high maintenance for a family pet, but my opinion was outweighed.'

Katya continued: 'They are very intelligent and easily trainable. River learns things very quickly. She gets attached to one person and is very handler orientated. The breed is really good with people.'

Originally bred by the Russian military, selective interbreeding with the Giant Schnauzer, Rottweiler, Airedale and Newfoundland was used to create this unique dog. At first favouring the Airedale as her breed of choice, Oksana very quickly adapted to River as her new pet.

'They are high maintenance for grooming, but very easy to live with. River's walks consist of around two half hour outings a day, but after that she just chills on the sofa, once she's had her exercise. She doesn't moult at all, so is ideal for people with allergies,' Oksana said.

‘The grooming is Katya's job, it takes a while, but once done, all River needs is a little brush and she's good to go. As an all-weather dog, we've been told not to shave her.’

With River's solid black double coat, hair rather than fur, overheating isn't normally a problem. A minor issue though, is River's sheer size.

‘She can get quite bouncy,’ Katya said. ‘She thinks she's a lap dog and likes to sit on my lap.’

Researching the right breed is vital for anyone buying a puppy for the first time.

Oksana explained: ‘Because this breed is so intelligent, they aren't ideal first dogs. I've had dogs before, but River does try to outsmart me with her puppy eyes, to try and get her way – which she does!’

‘She's sort of snuck into our lives and has learnt to try and move us from the sofa so she can sit there. She also watches TV and likes horses – she actually stares at them, trying to get to the back of the set. As big dogs they can be quite pushy.’

It's quite impressive how multi-talented these dogs can be. As well as being used for Search and Rescue, they're also good personal protection dogs.

Both Oksana and Katya envisage enrolling in future courses with River, when she does obedience training. This has many benefits, including strengthening the bond between dog and owner.

River also gets taken on outings. ‘She's been to Ransom's Garden Centre to get weighed, to make sure she is fit and healthy,’ Katya said. ‘She's also very food orientated and particularly enjoys raw treats.’

Eating just two meals a day, Oksana thought River would eat more, considering her size. It's ultimately every owner's duty to adapt to their pet's own individual eating habits.

Being a relatively new and rare dog breed – there are only two other male Black Russians in the Island – people often stop on a walk and ask:‘*What breed is she?*'

‘Her favourite walk is on the beach as she gets to run off the lead,’ Katya said. ‘In summer she likes chasing her ball. She's very friendly with other dogs, but if chased by a smaller one, she'll just turn around and come back.’

The future looks to be full of action for River. ‘She's qualified for Crufts again this year, because she won her class last year,’ Katya explained.

‘We take her to shows about four or five times a year. She was first taken at seven months old, and she won best in group.’

Visits to shows are fitted around the school term, as Katya is just 15. Fortunately, River travels better than her early days and seems more used to the journey – travel sickness isn't just for humans!

River clearly enjoys showing. ‘Once at the ring, she gets quite excited,’ Oksana said.

‘I've noticed, it's very funny, when someone claps around her, she jumps up and looks like she's saying *“what have I done?”* – as if it’s all about her.’

Katja continued: ‘They love attention – every dog I've met at each show seems to love it – if you're patting them and stop, they'll just paw you. I've had multiple Black Russian Terriers just paw me!

‘Having a dog also gets you out of the house more. You meet lots of people through the Jersey Kennel Club and the Obedience Club, through the Dog Training Association.’

Despite their original breeding, these gentle giants adapt well to domestic life.

Oksana admitted: ‘I see River as more pet than show dog.’

Ten years on

Paying your own way

From our first issue in March 2013 – and while a couple of the issues raised have been resolved in the past decade, in the case of many of the challenges highlighted it's 'Plus ça change...' It was written by a contributor, well-known in the Island, using the nom de plume 'Michael Alexander'

A source of permanent amusement is to read of protests about the closing down of a local shop in a gentrified village where the rise in property values, hastened by recent arrivals, has pushed the locals away.

'A village needs a local shop', goes the cry, but then it transpires that very few of the protestors do much more than buy the odd extra pint of milk or box of eggs needed after the weekly run to Tesco or Waitrose 20 miles away.

So, despite the fact that those protesting had been part of the problem which caused the shop to close, the feeling was that someone, somewhere, should do something, and that someone else should pay to preserve a local amenity that we don't use ourselves.

Fresh vegetables at SCOOP

Special interest groups calling for other people to pay for their ideas to be put into effect is not an unknown phenomenon in Jersey. Think about the much maligned, and now abandoned, cycle track in the old harbour; think about residents' groups trying to persuade someone else to spend much more on a proposed new house; think about a whole variety of soi-disant spokesmen calling for States money (that's shorthand for your and my taxes) to pay for their ideas about what should be done and, while on the subject, think about (dare I mention it?) Plémont. They all have one thing in common: I want you to pay.

So, what is this I am now hearing as I stroll around with my ears flapping? Farmers should be encouraged by public funding to stay in farming and not allow their land to be given over to equiculture or, worse, housing. They should continue as growers and care for the land by working it in a traditional way. Grow our vegetables; give us a greater degree of food security. All well and good, but suddenly I am seeing those village protests on television once more. 'Keep the village shop open while I shop elsewhere'.

There is only one way of making sure farmers stay farming and that is by consciously choosing to buy local produce. If you see Genuine Jersey products on sale then buy them, and don't go looking for the cheaper ones that have been imported from some farm (the size of Jersey) in East Anglia, even if they do seem well presented, are all the same size and colour, and are on offer at a cheaper price. It simply does not make sense to complain about the loss of good growing land while at the same time choosing to buy imported produce.

We cannot all follow the example of other pressure groups and expect the States to take the responsibility (and cost) on our behalf.

The choice is mine, the choice is yours; it is a universal choice. If you want Jersey to have a thriving rural economy with our supermarket shelves full of locally grown seasonal produce, then you have the answer in your hands.

Reach out and buy local; enjoy our abundance of local food and if the supermarket offers only a cursory selection, preferring you to buy instead its own branded produce imported from England, then go someone else. Eschew those who make a half-hearted genuflection to Jersey produce by showing a few examples of Genuine Jersey products. Go to the Central Market, go to a supermarket chain that genuinely supports local growers and proves it by buying in millions of pounds a year to sell on, rather than a shop that displays them only to highlight the cheaper price of an imported brand.

It is a choice we all have to make at some time even if it is presented in differing guises. It all boils down to the same question in the long run, which could be phrased something along the lines of: 'How many people do I want to put out of work, how many small businesses do I want to see go bankrupt, how many vergées of farmland do I want the Island to lose so I can save a few pounds a year?'

Perhaps we should each make a resolution, for once, to pay for our own values and so take the responsibility for ourselves rather than expecting everyone else to subsidise our beliefs.

Ten years on

Woodland walks, cracking nuts and evenings in a cosy nest...

...'Are we the only ones?' ask Britain's red squirrels. Jersey squirrels – enjoy companionship, and more, with a furry friend in the UK, said author and journalist Robin Page in our first issue in 2013

I am in a constant state of amazement these days. From every corner of the globe I am being bombarded with tales of wildlife gloom and doom.

The demands are Save the Tiger, Save the Rain Forest, Save the Rhino, and save virtually everything that can run, jump, hop, crawl, fly, climb and slither.

They may be achievable – who knows? Such drives certainly take the savers to some beautiful, exotic places.

But I am troubled. I want to save a stunning animal that is much nearer home but for some reason it gets ignored for creatures far away. I want to see the red squirrel become more secure in Britain, and Jersey could play an important part in that.

But why the red squirrel? Simple – it is stunningly beautiful, yet so many people, including those in assorted conservation bodies, seem to ignore both its attraction and the threats that face it, and make no mistake about it, those threats are very real.

That is why Jersey is so important: Jersey has red squirrels, and being an island, the threats to it are not as great as they are in Britain and in mainland Europe – yes mainland Europe. The grey squirrel invasion of Italy is well under way and moving north and it seems to me that the threat is almost ignored.

In Britain the number of red squirrels is already down to about 120,000 and falling, and it is estimated that there are three million grey squirrels and rising.

The problem is that the grey is larger and more aggressive than the red and also carries the squirrel pox, harmless to greys, but fatal to reds. It is a fact, too, that the damage done to woodland by greys can be severe and they are far more destructive than reds.

Consequently it is vital that secure island populations free from the threats posed by greys are developed – hence the importance of the Jersey reds.

It is thought that the red squirrel was introduced to Jersey in 1885 and there are now about 800 individuals living well and adding to Jersey's wildlife; indeed some people would even consider that it has become the star of Jersey's wildlife. But what the red squirrels on Jersey show is that an Island red squirrel introduction can be carried out successfully with no problems to other wildlife.

I believe that the example set by Jersey ought to be followed by those living on other islands. Because of this I was happy to be involved with a scheme to take red squirrels to the Isles of Scilly. David Mills, owner of the British Wildlife Centre on the Surrey/Sussex border sent some captive bred red squirrels to Robert Dorrien-Smith whose family has leased Tresco from the Duchy of Cornwall since 1830. It is an exciting project, and if successful it could have implications for other islands too.

Looe Island, just off the Cornish coast, is one obvious place for a red squirrel introduction, but much more suitable is the Isle of Mull off the west coast of Scotland, and then of course the best prize of all, the Isle of Man. To me, the most amazing aspects of squirrel introductions to islands are the attitudes of those who oppose such potentially positive schemes. Incredibly, indignation usually comes from within the ranks of the conservationists themselves – conservation fundamentalists/purists – I call them the conservation Taliban.

I believe that they should look at a successful red squirrel introduction, such as Jersey, and a secure island red squirrel population such as the one on the Isle of Wight, and want to see more successful island populations to give the British red squirrel a completely secure future.

There are those squirrel enthusiasts in England who are also working hard to breed squirrels in captivity, waiting for the day when more releases can be carried out.

This is where Jersey can help too. The captive breeders are always looking for a few new squirrels, to broaden the gene pool, particularly females, and so far, Natural England have not been particularly interested or helpful.

Jersey red squirrels – Britain's red squirrels need you!

In the kitchen

In our first issue, our then cookery writer, Zoë Garner, discusses the cooking potential of Jersey's favourite local produce – the Jersey Royal potato. Unfortunately for us all, she later moved away from cookery writing and is now in the travel sector

Baby jacket potatoes

Jersey Royal jacket potatoes are a great seasonal nibble
Serves approximately 2 per person

1 Toss in a little olive oil and seasoning and roast at 190C (170C fan) mark 5 for 30min, or until tender.

2 Cut in half, but not all the way to the bottom, and add your favourite filling.

3 A little cream cheese, topped with smoked salmon and a sprinkling of chives is a great crowd pleaser.

Jersey Royals are undoubtedly the Island's favourite produce. You won't find a better potato than the Jersey Royal. They're in season now, so make the most of them at their best. With a papery skin that's full of flavour and high in vitamin C, there's no need to peel them, just a little scrub will do. It now accounts for almost half of Jersey's income from all agricultural products.

Herb crusted rack of lamb

A little touch of spring and super delicious!
Serves 4
Prep time: 10 mins
Cooking time: 20 mins

50g (2oz) fresh breadcrumbs
25g (1oz) unsalted Jersey Butter, very soft
15g (1/2oz) each chives, mint and parsley, chopped
1tsp dijon mustard
1/4tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 medium egg
2 racks of lamb

1 Preheat the oven to 200C (180C fan) mark 6. Mix together all the ingredients, except the lamb. Season well.

2 Put the lamb on a baking tray and spread the herb mix over the top of the meat, to form a crust.

3 Roast for 18min for pink or 23min for medium. Take out of the oven and loosely cover with foil, leave to rest for about 10min. Slice between the cutlets and serve. Great with boiled Jersey Royals and Asparagus.

Zoë's Tip: *Prepare up to 4hrs ahead, so as to avoid the last-minute rush! Chill in the fridge, but remember to take it out half an hour before you plan to put it in the oven.*

Chocolate easter bites

A little sweet treat, that's super quick and easy to make
Makes 16 squares
Prep time: 15 mins

100g (31/2 oz) unsalted Jersey butter
150g (5oz) each plain and milk chocolate, broken into pieces
2tbsp golden syrup
125g (4oz) sultanas
75g (3oz) pistachios
100g (7oz) shortbread, roughly broken into pieces
Mini Eggs, to decorate

1 Line an 8in (20.5cm) square baking tin with two layers of cling-film, leaving excess hanging over the sides.

2 Put the butter into a large heatproof bowl and set over a pan of barely simmering water, stir until melted. Add the chocolate and stir until melted and smooth. Stir in the golden syrup, sultanas and pistachios, followed by the shortbread.

3 Spoon mixture into prepared tin, scatter over the mini eggs and chill in the fridge until set, about 4hrs.

4 Remove from the fridge 10min before cutting. Cut into 16 squares.

Zoë's quick kitchen tips:

Calling all chocoholics!
You may find a white 'mould-looking' coating on your chocolate sometimes, especially on those leftover Easter eggs. But fear not, it's just the sugars in the chocolate reacting to the moisture in the air. It is still perfectly fine to eat!

Better Eggs
When scrambling eggs, hold off on adding the salt until the last minute. The salt breaks up the protein in the eggs and can make them go watery.

Marvellous marinating
The next time you need to marinate meat, use a food bag instead of a bowl. Pop the marinating ingredients in along with the meat, then shake and massage until well coated. Quicker, easier and you'll find you have more space in the fridge too!

Ten years on

Apples and cheese

In the early years of RURAL's existence, we regularly carried articles about Jersey's close neighbours, Normandy, Anjou and Brittany – areas of France within easy reach of Islanders on their holidays. Covid put a stop to that – among a few other things, of course. It is hoped that with that nasty bug now in the rear-view mirror, these articles can now resume. In this republished article, Hamish Marett-Crosby, an award-winning wine writer, eschews grapes and instead, looks at apples and cheese

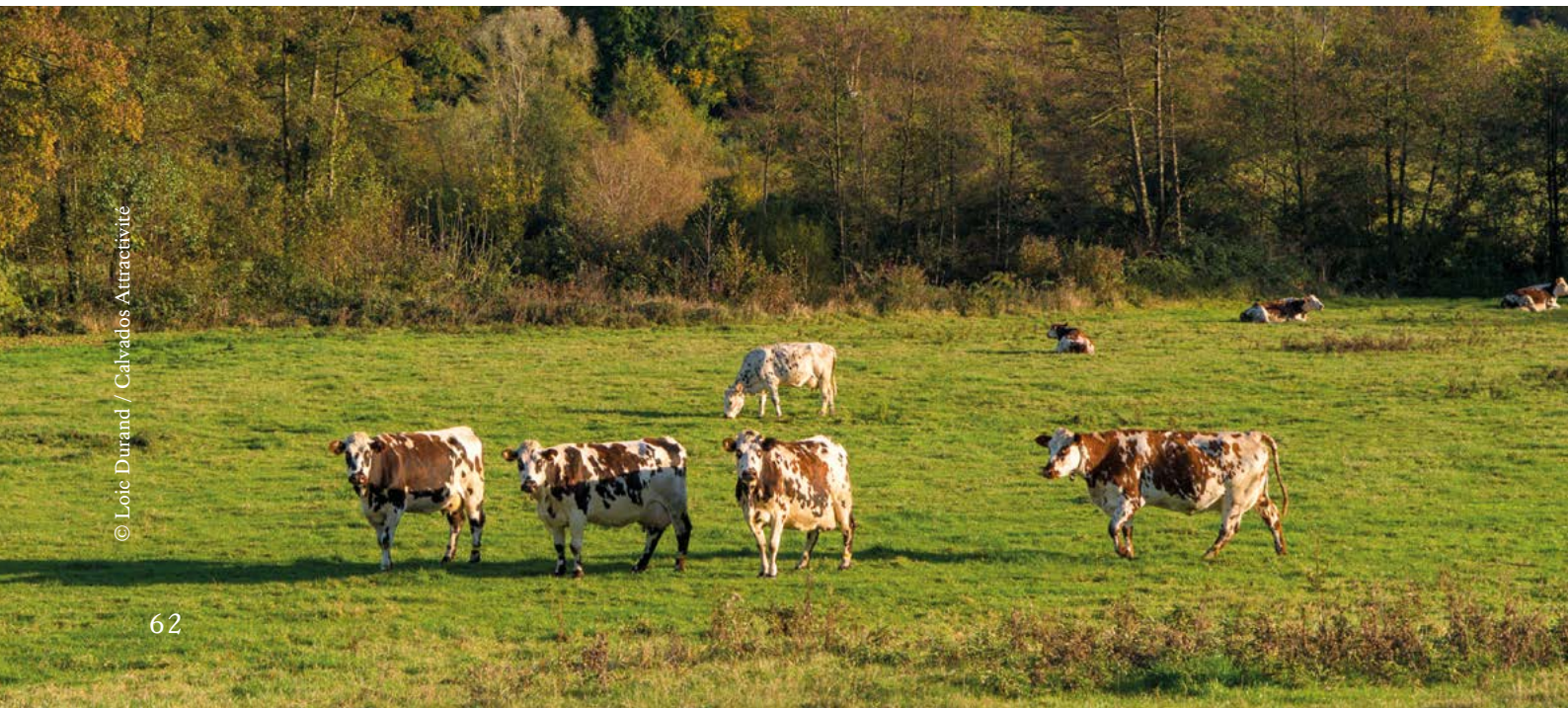
Normandy is famous for its cream and its apples and, if there is one part of Normandy which sees itself as producing the best products from cows and orchards, it is the Pays D'Auge, that area bordered by the approaches down to the Seine Valley on one side and an imaginary line just east of Falaise, north to the coast, on the other.

It has always been a favoured part of France, particularly with the English, who have been marching through here for centuries.

That was before high society took over and the social acceptability of seaside holidays near Deauville, offering lots of activity not too connected with the sea, became popular. Then the next generation discovered the countryside.

And it is easy to see the attraction. Imagine gentle rolling hills with ancient, attractive villages (Cotswolds, Oxfordshire) and, between them, manor houses –many built, like the villages, in the half-timbered style so favoured by the Tudors and all followers of Tudorbethan revival ever since.

Sprinkle the countryside with apple orchards and dairy farms, insert some distilleries and creameries, then add the French penchant for making something superlative out of something pretty standard, and you have the region of the best (double distilled) calvados, as well as the great cheeses of Pont L'Evêque and Livarot. Thoughtfully, a host of excellent restaurants has been provided at which to put these products to the test.



© Loic Durand / Calvados Attractivité

Cheese making at La Ferme de la Mondiere/ Dimanche Calvados Attractivité

In this region, calvados is king. As an apèritif, I was told to try the basic variety with tonic *'fine tonic'*; yes, I know, but believe it or not, as a long drink with ice it is a great summer splasher. During the meal it appears as a *trou Normande*, served not on its own, but poured over an apple *granité* and of course, at the end, where the traditional Jersey call of 'and I'll have a calvados' produced, in one restaurant near Honfleur, a list of some thirty of them with prices rising to £75 per glass.

This is not the occasion to go into great detail as to why the Pays D'Auge Calvados is (certainly) different and considered (by those from the region) to be superior; suffice it to say that it has a separate *Appellation Contrôllée* and is double distilled in Charantais stills with apples grown only in the region, otherwise it cannot truly be called Pays D'Auge.

We have all bought cheap bottles of Calvados on day trips to France – and then lived to regret it as you run out of friends into whom you can pour it. That's the base level, but an aged Pays D'Auge is something else again. If you want to learn more, go to the Père Magloire museum in Pont L'Evêque; it is obviously a bit commercial, but it tells the story well.

But as in all such areas, what matters is the feel of the place, and this can only be found on the side roads. Begin at Honfleur.

This is the archetypal little port with the houses and restaurants clustered round the inner harbour, with artists and wannabe artists selling their wares, and the extraordinary wooden church of St Catherine, built by the shipwrights of Honfleur after the 100 Years War. They built as they knew how, and so the feeling within is like looking up at the inside of a boat's hull; it is, in effect, a clinker-built church.

From there, head south in the general direction of Pont L'Evêque via Beaumont-en-Auge, an 'artists' town with attractive houses, church, public buildings, set on a bluff overlooking the marshes heading down to Deauville.

Down the road is Pont L'Evêque (of cheese fame) and, from there, head south to pass through village such as Pierrefit-en-Auge or Beuvron-en-Auge where the half-timbered houses and barns show traditional building methods at their best. It is also the area producing the best *cidre bouché*, but that's a story for another time.

And down to Livarot - by way of Lisieux if you must, a busy commercial town to which, over the past 70 years or so, has been added the immense pilgrimage trade to the basilica and reliquary of St Thérèse – and finally to Livarot, the home of one of the smelliest cheeses in France and an absolute must-buy if you want a seat to yourself on the ferry back to Jersey. Allow it to breathe in an open carrier bag on the seat next to you, then relax and enjoy the unaccustomed elbow room.

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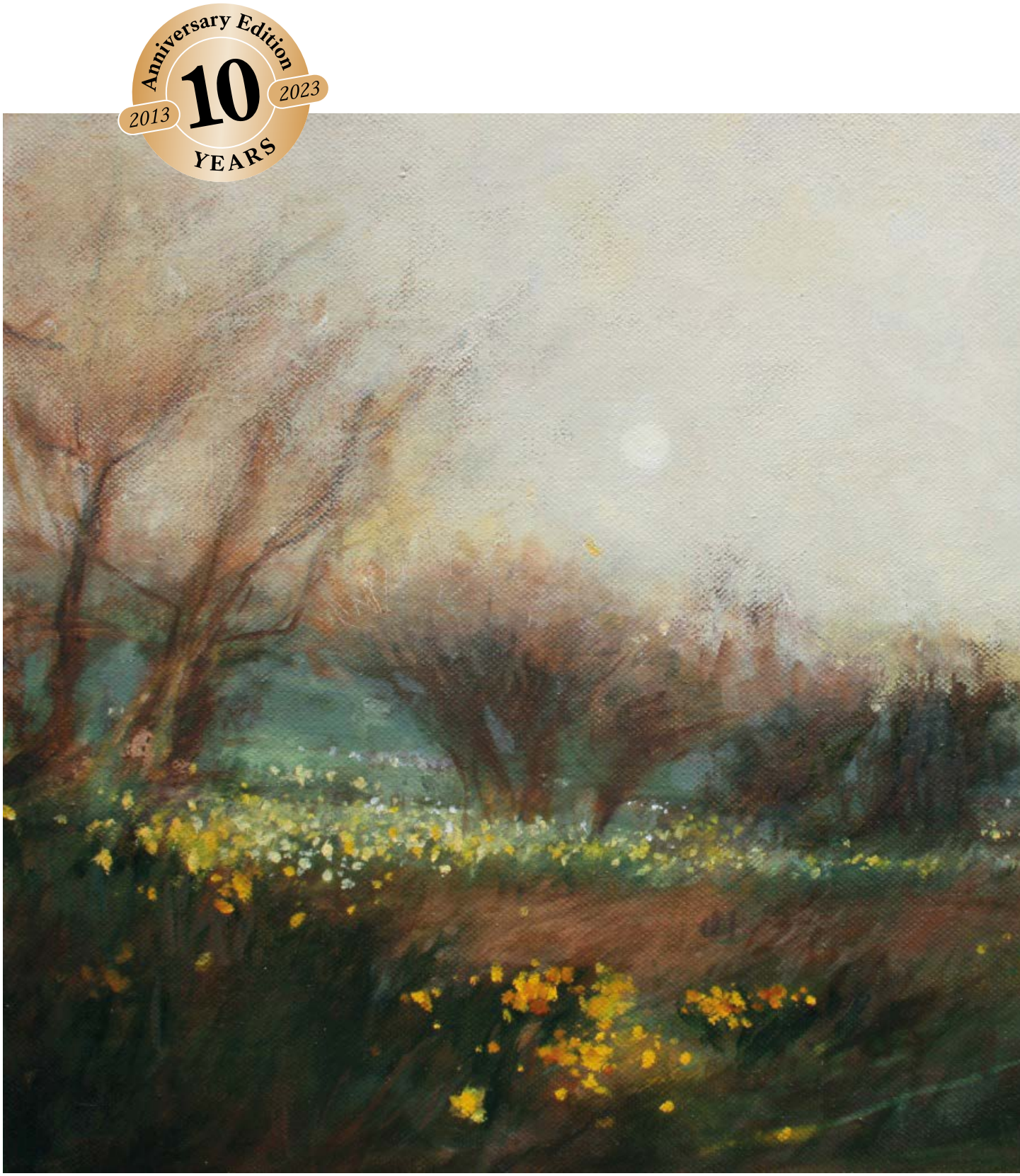
Anniversary Edition
2013
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YEARS

Art, inspired by nature

In each issue of RURAL, we have always profiled works by contemporary artists, who draw their inspiration from Jersey's landscapes, natural environment or farming heritage.

When we first went to print with Issue 1 of RURAL in the spring of 2013, we included this painting by Anna Le Moine Gray, titled: **Daffodils and Gorse**. It is a marvellous evocation of springtime in Jersey.

At the time, she wrote: *'I was walking along the north coast cliff paths during an early spring evening when I saw this delightful display of yellows and golds above Bouley Bay, by a small windy lane called Le Chemin des Hurets (also known as 'La Chretienne'). Gorse was beginning to redden with the warmth and the willd daffodils had appeared on a bank at the foot of leafless trees – the old, small, gnarled oaks that line Jersey fields are among the last trees that come to leaf – these are red, copper, almost crimson when young – it is a real enchantment to take an evening walk along the last bits of "nature" in Jersey!'*

Now, ten years later, we have pleasure in showing this painting once again.

Anna has since moved to the west coast of Brittany, not too far from Brest, where she still paints and exhibits her paintings. Her next solo exhibition is at Pont Croix from 1 May to 15 June.

For further details, please contact her by e-mail: anna.lm.gray@gmail.com

Swans, hares, and dragonflies...

... and quite a lot more! James Doran-Webb, who creates animal sculptures from driftwood and stainless steel, talked to Alasdair Crosby following his last exhibition at Trinity Manor in November 2022

The driftwood animal sculptures of James Doran-Webb underwent what might be called 'user trials' at his last exhibition in the gardens of Trinity Manor. The trials were caused by the weather and answered the question: *were these sculptures impervious to rain?* They passed the rigorous trials with flying colours.

James commented afterwards: 'I have access to what is arguably the best wood in the world for outdoor sculptures – Molave. This wood, which I have been collecting for over 30 years, is in all cases more than 40 years dead. It deteriorates very slowly and is rich in tannins. The wood is well known in the Philippines for being impervious to all extremes of weather, to powder post beetles, wood borers, and termites. And that's only some of the qualities of this magnificent wood.'

James Doran-Webb.

Top - bottom: *'The Sunflower Hare'* and *'Airbourne'*.

To be fair, the heavy rain was interspersed with some bright and sunny days, especially the first day of the exhibition, in which the beauty of the sculptures was well complemented by the attractive gardens. The successful event was hosted by the owners of Trinity Manor, Pam and Paul Bell, and 30 per cent of the sale takings went to benefit the Jersey Wildlife Conservation Trust.

'I am looking forward to further collaboration with the Trust,' James said. 'I am hoping to make some sculptures for their upcoming auction. Strangely, there is a connection between the Trust and the island of Cebu [in the Philippines] where I live. The Trust has a successful breeding programme for the Visayan Warty Pig, an endangered species that can be found in Cebu. So, look forward to a family of Visayan Warty Pigs at the next auction!'

The pieces on show were predominantly new creations. The centrepiece was a water feature, a swan rising from the water, titled *Airborne*. It made use of stainless steel, which had been carved and welded and buffed and shaped and worked.

James said: 'The left palmate attaches the swan to the water feature; but since it is hovering on the surface of the water – you can see no pipework or retaining posts.

The swan is very much in flight! Internal pipework feeds water through the body of the swan and drops it from the right palmate which is suspended over the water. The head of the swan is also made from recycled stainless steel.'

Another dynamic piece shown at the Trinity Manor exhibition is along the same lines: *The Sunflower Hare*, where he has six sunflowers branching up from a base, all made from recycled stainless steel, over which the driftwood hare appears to be floating – as if it is galloping through a field of sunflowers.

'Using stainless steel as a base adds drama to the piece and actually allows the sculpture to move gently and interact with the wind, unlike bronzes which, with their double skin, don't allow for such movement.

'I have a similar piece: *The Bulrush Respite*, which depicts a dragonfly landing on a bulrush. The bulrushes are also made from recycled stainless steel and are some six feet high. The dragonfly is driftwood, and if you get a bit of a breeze, the dragonfly will gently move back and forth, which brings the composition to life!'

James has connections to the Island; not only does he have cousins living here but it was at Falle Fine Art, then a prominent gallery in St Helier, where he was given his first European solo exhibition.

'That was some 13 years ago. It was an amazing success. For me, it was very memorable, because it was literally my first exhibition in Europe and effectively launched my European career. So, Jersey does have a very special place in my heart and is also, as a result, home to a lot of my early work. For me, Jersey is definitely a second home.'

James had an unconventional childhood. His parents were antique and art dealers, and from the age of eight he travelled the globe, following his parents as they bought their pieces. Eventually he ended up, aged 16, in Notting Hill Gate, London, at a crammer to study for his A-Levels.

'My stepfather was not overly concerned about our formal education, preferring to expose us instead to the different cultures of the countries we visited – which did not sit well with my mother! The trade-off for packaging me off to a London crammer was that I should pay for part of the fees by selling antiques that he would send me! I opened up an antiques stall in Portobello Road Market on Saturdays.

The problem was that I finished up at the end of the week with far too much money in my pocket for a student and started to question the logic of continuing on with my studies!'

Aged 20, James moved to the Philippines after a year working in New York. That's when he started to make animals in all their various forms, including 'mobiles' for children – small animals that balance and turn in the wind, and also papier-mâché animals. Twenty years ago, he made his first driftwood horse.

In the Philippines he is well-placed to collect his raw materials: the Molave wood comes either from old houses that have fallen down, or from little bits of wonderfully shaped wood that he finds here and there. Then he has convenient access to nearby boat wrecking yards from where there is a steady source of marine-grade stainless steel – all of it recycled, of course.

There is also the advantage of the warm climate: a lot of the work is done outdoors.

'I have some 400-500 tons of this magnificent long dead wood which is all stored outside. A large part of the working day is spent outside on the woodpile, looking for that piece needed to fill in the eyebrows of a horse or the tine of a stag's antler.'

He still lives in the Philippines with this wife and daughter, only visiting Europe for such events as the Chelsea Flower Show and the Jersey exhibition. 'I've spent most of my life in Cebu. Creatively, I couldn't wish to be in a better place. I'm so very fortunate and honestly don't think that I could make this particular breed of sculpture anywhere else! Definitely not to the quality and scale of my current work.'

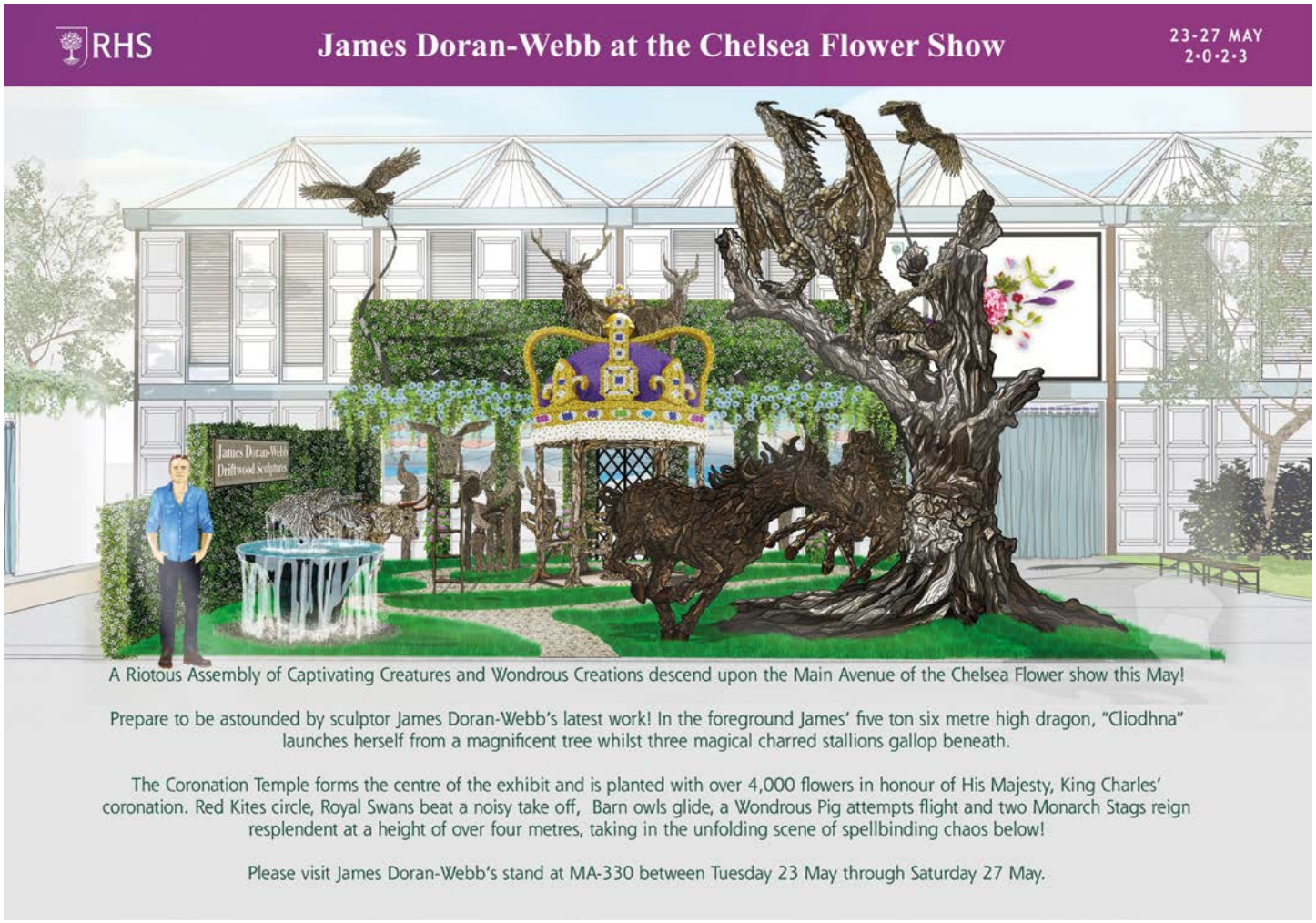
His sculptures are sent by shipping container to the UK once or twice a year in time for Chelsea or Jersey.

'That's the easiest part; the hardest part is making the pieces and letting go – and I hate letting go of my sculptures. If it weren't for exhibition deadlines, I would never send anything out of the workshop.'

In 2021, however, shipping was by no means the easiest part: 'We were in the midst of a shipping crisis. Shipping schedules went absolutely haywire: you couldn't find the container or depend upon the schedules. I had allowed a month in hand to get the sculptures to Jersey, but it wasn't enough. Week by week and day by day we were advised of further delays. It got to the point that in the end I had to cancel the Jersey exhibition. It was very depressing.'

2022 was luckier, with three successful exhibitions, of which Jersey was the largest. This year, at the Chelsea Flower Show, the centrepiece of the stand will be a 7-metre-high wyvern (dragon). Also, three galloping thoroughbreds – and what should be an arresting sight: a piece titled *The Importance of Belief*: a ladder that rises up 220 centimetres and has a British Lop Pig on the top of the ladder, with a couple of wings, about to try flying.

What a line-up for the Chelsea Flower Show!



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Feeling well at Saltgate

By Gill Maccabe

The office first aider is a familiar sight in the Island, but the Mental Health First Aider (MHFA), someone trained to recognise the signs of emotional distress, is a relatively new initiative.

The workplace has changed for people and organisations. In the last few years we've seen a global pandemic, economic downturns, adapted to hybrid working, cost of living pressures and a recruitment crisis.

It has taken a toll on employees and now, more than ever, they need mental health support in the workplace.

Saltgate, a regulated and independently owned alternative fund administrator based in Jersey but with offices in Luxembourg and London, currently has 20 qualified and accredited mental health first aiders out of a total workforce of just under 200 employees across the regions. In addition, 13 other staff have attended tailored sessions to make them mental health aware.

Ali French, Chief People Officer.

> "Saltgate is fully committed to providing a safe and respectful working environment, where our team feel not only empowered to share their own worries or concerns but are also equipped to do so on behalf of others around them. There's always a listening ear

This doesn't mean that Saltgate has a problem with stress or distress, quite the opposite in fact. They take wellbeing so seriously that this training is now a permanent feature on their annual management learning and development calendar.

In general, the role of a mental health first aider in the workplace (and remotely), is to be a point of contact for an employee who is experiencing mental health issues or emotional distress. Interaction could range from having an initial conversation, through to supporting the person to get appropriate help. They are trained to not only spot the early symptoms of mental ill health but also to recognise a worst-case scenario and have the confidence to escalate the response if necessary.

For some employees, working from home has been a trigger and MFHA's can help with feelings of isolation and help them feel connected with colleagues while working remotely.

Anna Kielczewska (left) and Aneta Wejnerowska (right) who helped organise Brew Monday for the Jersey team.

Saltgate has become well-known in the Island for their generous financial commitments to the community, but probably less well-known is this commitment to their staff. There's a noticeably happy buzz in the suite of offices situated on the Esplanade, thanks no doubt to their range of internal initiatives, with wellness at its core.

In January Saltgate celebrated Brew Monday, mental health charity Samaritans' take on that Monday in January that the tabloids call Blue.

Early in the morning, before staff arrived, the canteen tables were shoved together and a huge buffet breakfast worthy of a five-star hotel was laid out, including detox and energy smoothies. A similar feast, with talks, was provided one lunchtime in January to celebrate Chinese New Year and there were even Mandarin lessons for those interested.

They have also just completed a whole month of *Feel-Good February*, 28 days of promoting physical activity, healthy living, and mental wellbeing – all while raising money for charity.

Throughout the month, the Saltgate team will be nominating each other to do five-kilometre runs, walks, or equivalent, and for every completed activity, the organisation will donate £5 to the Ukraine crisis Appeal.

Some kind of physical challenge is an annual event in Saltgate's calendar, aimed at getting colleagues active and connecting with each other, all while doing their bit for worthy causes.

One permanent initiative which is hugely popular is the temporary seating rule whereby all staff members, even the directors, move their desk every three months so that they get a chance to meet different people.

When I last worked in an open plan office, I spent most of my time shivering underneath an air con outlet, whilst a middle manager in shirtsleeves two seats along guarded his sun-drenched window seat and tended tropical plants on his windowsill. He would get very cross if anyone sat in his seat whilst he was on leave, particularly if they moved his family pictures.

That wouldn't happen at Saltgate.

As Ali French, the Chief People Officer explained: 'Saltgate is fully committed to providing a safe and respectful working environment, where our team feel not only empowered to share their own worries or concerns but are also equipped to do so on behalf of others around them. There's always a listening ear.'

If you would like to explore a career in Saltgate contact **opportunities@saltgate.com**, or visit the QR code below.

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Knowing your boundaries

Boundaries might not be the first thing that comes to mind when house-hunting, but they're important to note and understand to avoid any disputes with your future neighbours. By Katharine Marshall *(partner)* and Tim Bechelet *(high value and commercial specialist conveyancer)* at Ogier

A property's boundaries are not always obvious, and Jersey Law has a unique way of dealing with these.

Boundaries and offsets (or 'reliefs')

A conveyance will describe a property's boundaries usually by reference to walls, boundary stones and other physical enclosures, for example, a bank, hedge or, more recently, GPS coordinates.

If a wall or other enclosure is stated to be party owned (which means you jointly own it with your neighbour), the boundary line will run down the middle of that wall or enclosure.

However, if properties are divided by reference to a demarcation line rather than a physical fence or wall, and there is no legal provision allowing either neighbour to build a wall or fence over or up to that line, an offset or 'relief' of 18 Jersey inches (16.5 imperial inches) must be allowed between the construction and the demarcation line.

The likely original purpose of a 'relief' was to provide an access strip between neighbouring properties. In modern conveyances, it is standard to provide for an express right of access on to a neighbouring property with or without workmen, ladders, scaffolding and tools, usually after having provided your neighbour with notice (save in the case of emergency).

If ownership of a wall or other enclosure is claimed in a conveyance, it will (unless the contract states otherwise) be owned with the benefit of a relief.

In the absence of a relief or express right of access, Jersey Law does not imply any right of access to go onto neighbouring property to undertake building or maintenance works, save where the historic Jersey right called 'tour d'échelles' (ladder rights) may apply.

Party ownership

Each owner may make reasonable use of their own 'side' of a party owned wall, and the costs of maintenance and repair will be shared between the owners.

Unless there is express provision to the contrary in the title contract, a party may not use more than their half-width of the party owned wall. Even then, they may not do so if such use undermines or overburdens the wall. In such cases, there will be no right to go on to the neighbour's property to build or repair the wall unless a specific right of access for maintenance purposes is created within a contract passed before the Royal Court.

A party owned wall may not be demolished or substantially altered without the consent and participation of the neighbour.

A window, or other opening, cannot be established in a party owned wall unless there is a clear express right to such effect in the title contract.

Encroachments

Jersey common law dictates that whoever owns the soil owns everything above and beneath. Accordingly, if part of a building overhangs or, for example, foundations or drains have been established underneath a neighbouring property, these are an unlawful encroachment unless provision has been made in the title contract.

A guide to personal injury in Jersey

By Jeremy Heywood and Christina Hall, Dispute Resolution Partners at BCR Law LLP

Hopefully, you will never experience a serious accident, but the unexpected can happen. Whether that be at work, on holiday, playing sports or just out for a walk with the dog – life can happen at any time, anywhere. If you were injured in circumstances that were not your fault, you may be able to claim compensation.

So, how do personal injury claims work in Jersey?

Establishing a claim

To have a valid claim you must be able to establish that the wrongdoer owed you a 'duty of care'. A 'duty of care' is an obligation to take 'care' of your wellbeing or safety. If you can establish a duty, you then need to be able to prove that the other person failed in their discharge of that duty. Finally, you have to be able to show that you suffered some form of loss or damage that was caused by the other person's failure.

Making a claim

You only have a certain amount of time to bring a claim.In Jersey, you generally have three years from the date of the accident unless the wrongdoer owed you a contractual duty of care (for example, if the wrongdoer is your employer), in which case you will have ten years.

You can represent yourself, but personal injury claims are often complicated, so it is advisable to see a lawyer if you can.

The first step is to write to the wrongdoer. This 'letter before action' will need to set out what happened, how you have been impacted, and (if possible) what the estimated value of the claim is. The defendant (the wrongdoer) must respond to that letter, usually within a maximum of three months. The claim might be settled at this stage, but this is unlikely.

Formal proceedings are begun by filing an Order of Justice. This is a formal legal document which sets out who you are, what happened, why it was the fault of the defendant, what injury you suffered, and what loss or damage you have suffered. The defendant will then file an Answer, which is a formal response to the allegations you have made and set out any defence to the claim.

Settlement

At any stage during the process the parties can engage in 'alternative dispute resolution' to attempt settlement of all or any part of the dispute. This is very much encouraged by the Court.

Trial

If the case does not settle then it will proceed to trial, with various procedural steps in between, such as disclosure of relevant documents, witness statements, exchange of expert evidence etc. At trial the Court will hear from you, and your witnesses, and the defendant, and its witnesses, and will make a decision.

Things to consider

It is easy to underestimate how long it takes to take a claim to the end of trial. Similarly, people often underestimate the cost of pursuing a claim, both financially and in terms of the emotion and stress involved. It can be intrusive, leading to a detailed examination of your medical records or other personal information. It can be a long and difficult process with an uncertain outcome, particularly if you do not have the right assistance guiding you through the process.

For further information, contact BCR's dispute resolution team.

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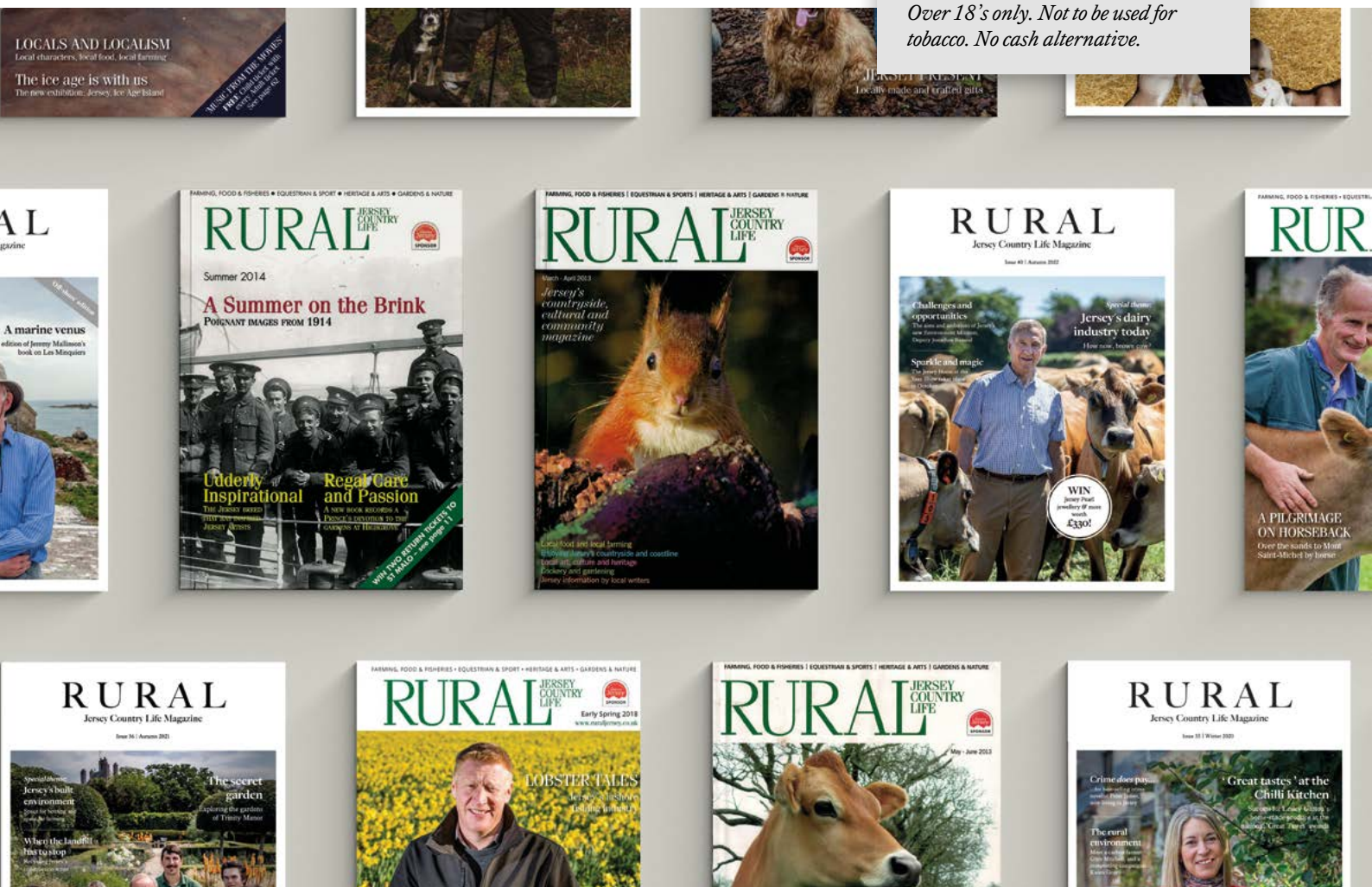

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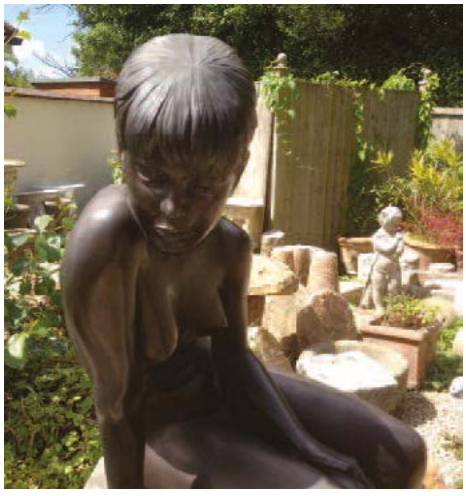

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Resolutions

Donna Le Marrec has the last word

Intentions, aims and aspirations that seem all important at New Year but which dim by the day and disappear within a few weeks!

Anyway, that is what usually happens to me. Every year I have the same aims; to lose weight, move more, make more effort to see friends, work to live, appreciate the island, enjoy each and every day and exploit each and every opportunity...

This year though I am going to try harder.

We were talking in the office about Covid restrictions and lockdown. I had felt in retrospect that nothing much had changed during this rather bizarre period. I still worked full time, although from home, continued to 'meet' family and friends via Zoom or on a walk. We were enterprising at work creating virtual events (a feat when the event was a floral workshop and fresh flowers and 30 participants were involved!), we established an 'Activity Hub' on the website with lots of fun and worthwhile pursuits and developed a large quantity of self-guided walks, timed to fit in with whatever restrictions were in place at the time!

I enjoyed my house and garden and my neighbours. We celebrated occasions such as Liberation Day although socially distancing (at first...!) which we had never done before, I even celebrated a significant birthday with coffee and croissants in a car park in the rain and at minus 3 degrees with 10 of my nearest and dearest! Looking back there was certainly a different pace of life and a coming together that seems to have disappeared somewhat. I know that I will never forget that particular birthday, which I actually really enjoyed – everyone had a laugh despite the weather and it was so much simpler than dressing up and spending money in a fancy restaurant.

Perhaps we need to try and recapture that slower pace and perhaps aim for a simpler way of life? Having recently travelled, I can confirm that it is hell and we weren't travelling long haul. Airports are just one long queue with few staff at border controls and lots of tired and stressed-out passengers. So, one resolution is to holiday closer to home.

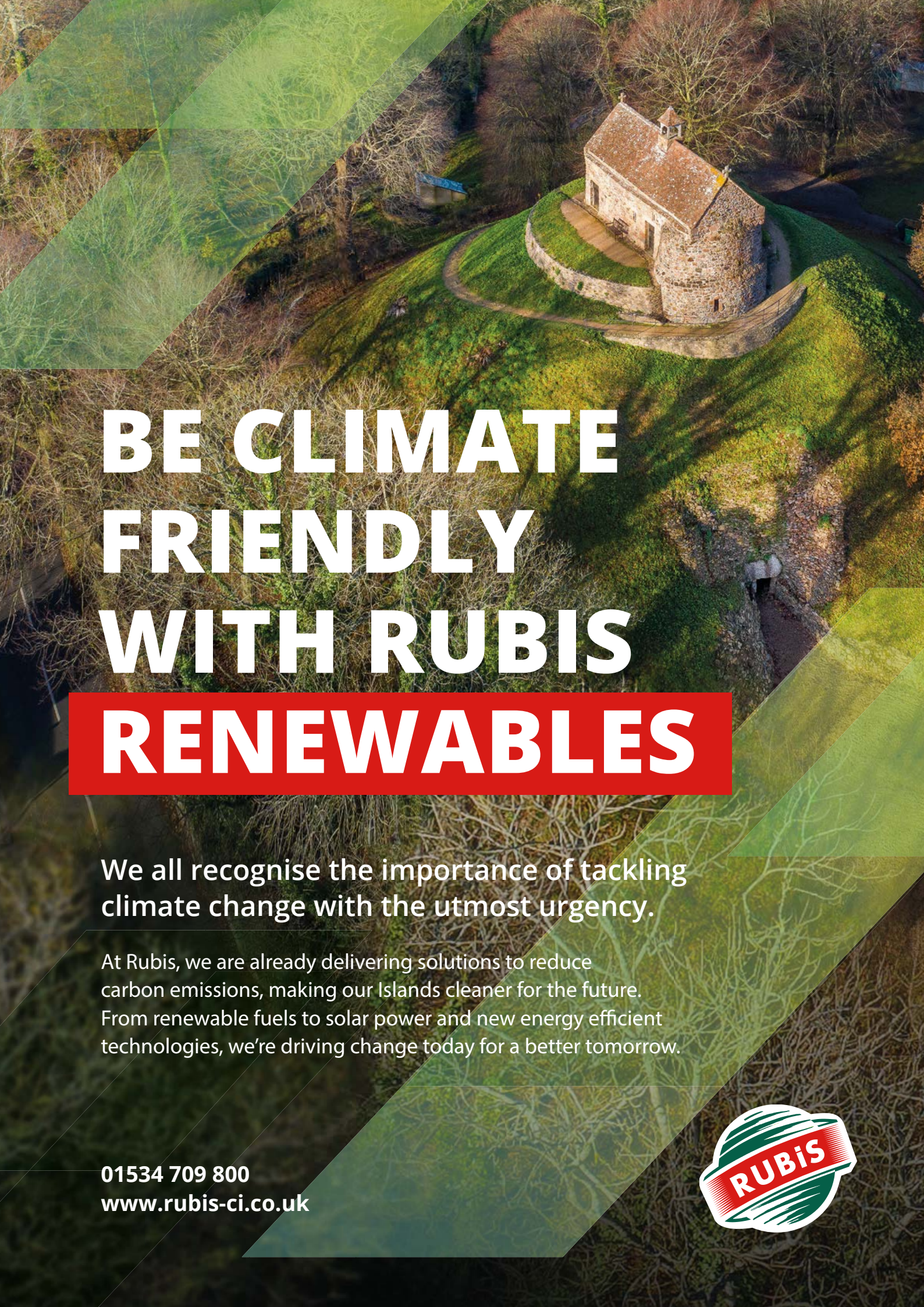
I think we also need less 'stuff'. All my friends and family know that I like to spend. However, I am determined to upcycle and repair where I can and if I do buy anything, I will aim to buy 'pre-loved'. The beginning of this year has involved copious episodes of BBC's 'The Repair Shop' and, even better 'Money for Nothing' and I am fired up with the thought of turning rubbish into desirable items!

Our home is a mixture of colourful furnishings and with some really nice pieces of upcycled furniture. My husband has some of his grandfather's carpentry tools (old lathes) together with an old workbench and I have shoe lasts, ancient keys and medicine bottles from markets and dépôt-ventes on display which I move around whenever the fancy takes me.

I love aged patinas and objects that have a history and I am determined to visit every vintage fair in St Aubin, skulk in antique and second-hand warehouses and revel in the annual shabby chic fair at the Royal Jersey Showground for the remainder of 2023.

Rather than buying something mass produced and shipped from China there is nothing better than supporting local trade and knowing who made your purchases. I have stopped buying flowers from M&S and now buy, in season, locally grown flowers from Jersey Flower Farm. My husband loves Saturdays when he visits the team at Brooklands Farm and buys fresh eggs, pasties and locally reared meat and one of my favourite activities is to wander around the central market and Beresford Fish Market with my sister on a Saturday.

Perhaps 2023 is the year when we value where we live, what we have, cherish special places and activities and really appreciate all our wonderful local suppliers and producers.



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