

# RURAL

Jersey Country Life Magazine

Issue 41 | Winter 2022

## Jersey at a crossroads?

...asks Charlie Malet de Carteret, due to be elected as the next president of the National Trust for Jersey

## The 100 days of Darien

Jersey's eminent explorer, Colonel John Blashford-Snell CBE, writes about the famous Darien Gap expedition

*Special theme:*

## Farming in Jersey today

The state of the Jersey Royal industry

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# Welcome

Christmas still feels a long way away at this present time of writing – the first week of November. Despite the lights going up in town, any Christmas spirit seems spectacularly absent, with so many things happening that are inimical to a sense of happiness and wellbeing: locally, nationally, internationally, politically, environmentally ... the sense of uncertainty and worry is almost palpable.

Not least in the farming sector. Regular readers will have read our survey of the Island's dairy industry in the last (Autumn) issue. In this issue we focus on the horticultural industry – or to be blunt, the Jersey Royal potato, since there is precious little else to survey. It is not, on the whole, a happy story, although it is a story that needs to be told.

Most communities, large or small, have a sense that their soul – or, if you prefer, the archetypes that define their innate identity – resides in their own countryside. With some obvious urban exceptions, it is the countryside that defines the nation.

In Jersey, it is the cōtills, the coasts, the hidden valleys, the winding country lanes that make Jersey, Jersey – more so than the Finance Quarter, at least.

And this attractive rural landscape would not exist without farming and farmers.

That is the core purpose of RURAL magazine: to highlight the contribution of the local rural sector to Island life, the Island economy, the Island's landscape – in short, the Island's soul.

And that is why we are marking RURAL magazine's anniversary – its 40th issue last month, its tenth anniversary in the Spring of 2023 – with a focus on farming, even if it is hardly the jolliest of seasonal subjects.



In the next issue, we shall be asking: what is the future of farming? That is only part of the much wider question: whither Jersey?

In this dark winter season in this especially dark year, let us celebrate, as once did the Romans, the Unconquered Sun, and remember that spring follows winter, and that Christmas is a time of all hopefulness.

*To celebrate our 10th anniversary in 2023, we intend holding a number of reader events.*

*To keep in touch with us so as to receive advance notice and further details of them via our fortnightly e-mail newsletter, please e-mail us at [events@ruraljersey.co.uk](mailto:events@ruraljersey.co.uk)*

.....  
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Peter Le Maistre, president of the Jersey Farmers' Union  
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*See page 52*

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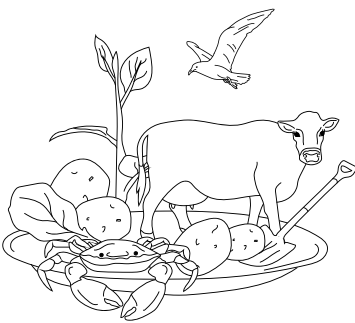
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John Blashford-Snell	Peter Le Maistre
Max Burnett	Donna Le Marrec
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Ruth Le Cocq	Hannah Voak
Cathy Le Feuvre	

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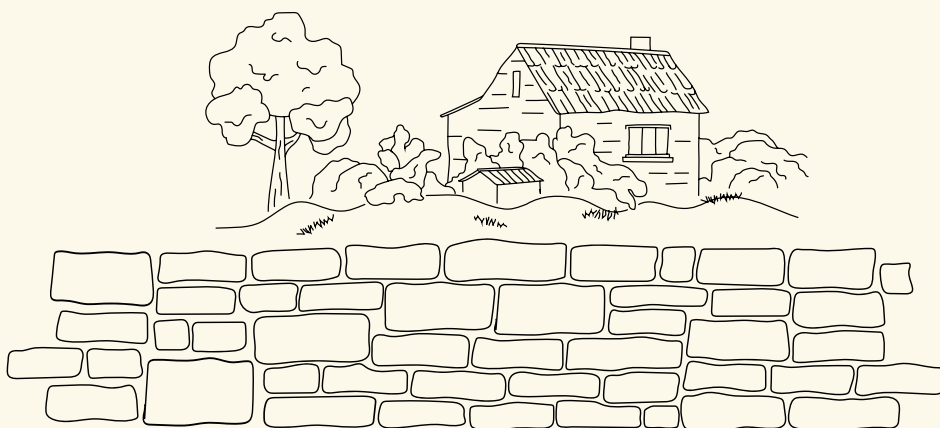
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# Over the wall

A RURAL view



Anyone who, despite all the gloomy news of 2022, is still feeling that it's a wonderful world and that all is for the best, should find that a conversation with a farmer would be a dependable antidote to dispel any unwarranted levity.

Enough has been written about the 'perfect storm' currently facing the farming sector: Covid, Brexit, the war in Ukraine, an extreme drought in the summer, a dramatic rise in costs – all issues beyond their control – they have all come together dramatically to challenge the profitability of farm businesses. It has rightly been called an 'existential threat'.

'On a knife edge' – it's a phrase one hears time and time again.

In the last issue of RURAL, the president of the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society, Robert Perchard, wrote: 'The wellbeing of the Island Jersey herd can only be assured so long as there is a viable and functioning dairy industry. Yet, the breed locally finds itself potentially on the brink.'

He went on to list some of the factors causing that existential crisis to the few remaining dairy farmers in the Island: an unwillingness to struggle on in business in such difficult times; a threat to the integrity of the Jersey breed in the Island and its precious gene pool, resulting from the decline in the number of cows and herds in recent times; ageing members of the industry unwilling to invest to expand and modernise their businesses.

The impossible challenge facing new entrants to the industry is another factor, since barriers to entry are incredibly high due to the huge capital sums that are involved in operating a dairy farm nowadays, as well as the difficulty in gaining planning permission for infrastructure. Levels of profitability are low.

In this present issue we have the president of the Jersey Farmers' Union, Peter Le Maistre, describing the view from the horticultural sector. They have the same problems of 'the perfect storm' described above. Furthermore, he states that the next six months will be a critical period for Jersey agriculture. He lists the ever-increasing cost of labour and that 'the Council of Ministers intention to further increase the minimum wage to a living wage must be coupled with extra support for the industry – otherwise it will cease to exist.'

The business unit director of the Jersey Royal Company, Mike Renouard, also interviewed in this issue, had similar worries and concerns, concluding: 'If Government doesn't support agriculture, there won't be an agricultural industry in time and that will greatly affect the rural landscape that many take for granted.'

Three leading members of the farming sector with one message, speaking very clearly about the existential dangers facing agriculture and horticulture in the Island.

Fortunately, there are indications that Government is listening and that it will do what it can. But a willingness to help is very different from the practical realities of life and the limitations imposed by other government concerns and spending obligations.

So, a very unsettling and disturbing picture, but of course that extends far beyond farming matters. On a far wider scale, the normal infrastructure of our daily lives seems to have become dislocated; or, to change the metaphor, things have come off the rails – we can only hope the ensuing crash will not be too bad.

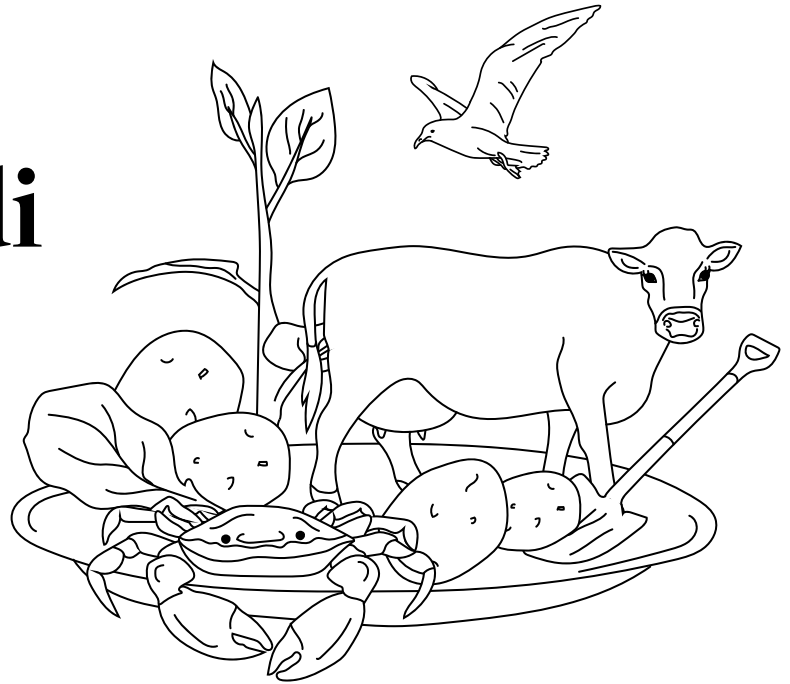
As far as the farming sector is concerned, perhaps one of the most alarming things on the horizon is the effect of the minimum wage. It is designed to help low-paid workers with the cost of living, and the main cost of living in Jersey is the cost of rental accommodation. But agricultural staff are not exposed to that, as the Jersey Royal Company's Mike Renouard, makes clear in the article on page 55, because subsidised accommodation is supplied by their employers, which assists their living costs. They only charge for their accommodation the maximum offset that the minimum wage allows them, and that hasn't been keeping up with the cost of living. As Mike says, the minimum wage has increased 31% since January 2020, or if you like, 46% since January 2018.

So, a measure with the laudable intent of being kinder to low-paid workers and making life a bit easier for them has had the contrary effect of being cruel to their employers and making life considerably more difficult for them.

The year 2022 will have ended by the time the next Spring edition of RURAL magazine is published. Happy New Year? If only. Fingers crossed, especially over the next six months. We do indeed live in interesting times.

# The Jersey Salmagundi

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



## The Darien Gap



**T**he Darien Gap – a tiny thrombosis stopping the flow of lifeblood between North and South America. Its hills, jungle and swamps have defied the completion of the Pan-American highway system – the 17,000-mile link between the snows of Alaska and the glaciers of Southern Chile.

So, what is the link between all that and Jersey? Answer: the 1972/73 expedition led by the Island's eminent explorer, John Blashford-Snell, to find a vehicle route through the Darien Gap, a remote, roadless region of Central America, which straddles the countries of Colombia and Panama. He marks, in this issue of *RURAL*, the expedition's 50th anniversary next February.

A special evening event will be held on the evening of 24 February 2023 at the Royal Jersey Showground, Trinity. Funds raised will go to sponsor a Jersey explorer – applications are invited.

John Blashford-Snell's article on the Darien Gap expedition can be read on page 28 of this magazine issue.

Members of the original expeditionary team were four Islanders or people with strong Island connections: Colonel John Blashford-Snell (leader); Kay Thompson (general manager); Major Kelvin Kent (deputy leader); Captain Peter Marett (Intelligence Officer).

Colonel John Blashford-Snell CBE is chairman of the Jersey Scientific Exploration Society and the water charity, Just a Drop. Among his other expeditions were the first descent of the Blue Nile in 1968 and a navigation of the Congo River in 1974 to 1975. In 1978, he established Operation Drake, which later developed into Operation Raleigh, an educational initiative for young people, of which he was Director General until he retired from this post in 1991.

Born in 1936, he was asked, on his 80th birthday, if he now proposed to cut down on his annual number of expeditions and he replied: 'Unfortunately, I may just do three or four a year.'

In fact, his annual programme was curtailed, not by advancing age but by Covid lockdown regulations. With Covid hopefully now in the rear-view mirror, he is continuing to lead expeditions and lecture worldwide.

Colonel Blashford-Snell's new book, *'From Utmost East to Utmost West'* was published by Bradt in October 2022. Autographed copies will then be available from the Scientific Exploration Society: e-mail [jbs@ses-explore.org](mailto:jbs@ses-explore.org). The film of the expedition can be viewed on YouTube: search for 'The Darien Conquest'.

Jackson's and the Jersey Landrover forum will be displaying both contemporary, vintage and adapted land rovers and range rovers to commemorate the event.

For further information about the anniversary event on 24 February next year, or to apply for sponsorship of an exploration project, please contact David Langlois by e-mail: [langloisltd@gmail.com](mailto:langloisltd@gmail.com)

If readers wish to attend the event, please register and visit: [eventbrite.com/e/415470472367](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/415470472367) or scan the QR code.





## The great taste of Jersey cider

A Jersey farmer, who is also now a cider maker, has just received a two star award from the influential Guild of Fine Food, just one year after launch.

Jenni Liddiard from Field Farm in St Lawrence is naturally cock-a-hoop with the news that her sparkling, medium-sweet cider – Eve Cider – Tempted by the Apple – has been given the ‘Great Taste’ award, and that it is the only Jersey product to feature in this year’s list.

‘Great Taste’ is recognised as a reliable stamp of excellence among consumers, retailers and major food buyers alike. It is the largest and most trusted food and drink accreditation scheme in the UK, and supports and promotes food and drink producers large and small, giving buyers and food lovers reliable recommendations for great tasting food and drink.

Since 1994, more than 150,000 products have been put through this robust judging process – including Gail’s Artisan bakery, English Heritage strawberry wine and Glen Marnoch 12-year-old Speyside single malt whisky – all of which have been fastidiously blind tasted by selected chefs, cooks, buyers, retailers, restaurateurs, food critics and writers.

Two stars means outstanding - *above and beyond delicious.*

Less than 10% of entries will achieve this rating, whilst three stars, for *extraordinarily tasty foods*, are only awarded to around 2% of products each year.

In 2022, 35 cider producers in the UK entered. Only two received a three star rating and 12, including Field Farm, received two stars.

Jenni is indefatigable. She started her farming career when she retired as a hospital radiographer in 2013 and she has lovingly converted what was once a large potato field into several paddocks, a farmstead and a home where she now produces seasonal lamb, bacon and pork, eggs and apple juice, and runs various animal husbandry courses when time allows.

‘The Cider transpired because of such an abundance of early ripening apples. They weren’t lasting until the early autumn, when the rest of the apples were ripe,’ she explained.

‘Ordinarily, we make and sell a cloudy sparkling apple juice, so we already had all the equipment necessary. I just needed to learn how to make it.

‘Above all else, I favoured making it from 100% apples and no water or concentrates. It took two years to perfect, and we “back sweeten” the fermented cider with russet juice and then carbonate and pasteurise.

‘I originally intended it to be a lady’s drink: light, sparkling and medium-sweet with a low alcohol volume. My husband prefers a medium-dry cider, so it took me by surprise when we both found it really delicious.



‘I’m delighted it has received two stars.’

Eve Cider is on sale at Plémont Café in St Ouen and Brunch café in St. John, and it is also available at Field Farm by contacting [jerseysheep@gmail.com](mailto:jerseysheep@gmail.com)

By Gill Maccabe



## JHOYS 2022



**A** new word for Islanders' vocabularies: JHOYS – to rhyme with PAY BOYS. It is short for the Jersey Horse of the Horse Show: a new addition to the sporting calendar, and one that has been a great success.

Its aim was to introduce the 'sparkle and magic' of the UK's Horse of the Year Show ('HOYS', of course) to Jersey.

Karen Barette, of Home Farm Equestrian said: 'Because I had been fortunate enough to have entered and qualified for HOYS, I thought: "We don't have anything like that in Jersey, and a lot of people aren't able to compete in it because of the cost of getting their horse and themselves there, so they will never be able to experience it.'

'I thought, in late 2021, it would be really nice to bring HOYS to Jersey. Then Nicolle Maltwood, who became the secretary of the organising committee, asked me: "When were you thinking of doing this? 2023? 2024?"'

I said: "No – 2022!" It seemed a long way off at the time, but of course October 2022 came round all too quickly!'

A lot of hard work had to happen, and there were some frights along the way. Not least, when Nicolle had a riding accident just a few weeks before the show was due to start.

'When I was struggling at the worst time, feeling totally overwhelmed, Nicolle said to me: "Karen, it is only six shows over six different days." That stuck in my head and made me feel a bit better – and we did it!'

Like all the best productions, it was 'alright on the night': 'In the main, we were so proud how it turned out and the feedback has been massive, from everybody – from competitors and from the public and especially from the sponsors. Even from people who aren't particularly "horse-y" – everybody just loved it!'

The only real problem was trying to fit everything in. So, the show will be longer in 2023: 11 days instead of six, which will make it easier for competitors to come from Guernsey. 'Some people didn't want to come just to enter one class, and there will be more qualifying classes for them to make the journey more worthwhile.'

Over 450 horses took part in the first JHOYS – and next year, now that the show is manifestly successful, more competitors are expected to enter the 2023 event.

The supreme champion was Nicolle's horse, The Big Mackleby, ridden by Naomi Aguilar. Go to the JHOYS website – [www.jhoys.co.uk/results](http://www.jhoys.co.uk/results) – for the full results.

The lead sponsor of the event was the Jersey Royal Company. The long list of class sponsors (75 in all) included RURAL magazine. Many existing sponsors have said they want to support the show again and new ones are already queuing up.

The show will be held in the period 6 September to 17 September 2023 – lighter evenings, less mud in the grassy car park and less stumbling around in the dark.

Karen said: 'We loved the show and are proud that it has been so successful. It was absolutely great. We were physically on our knees, but we loved it.'

**For competing or sponsorship inquiries, contact Nicolle Maltwood on [equestrian@homefarmjersey.com](mailto:equestrian@homefarmjersey.com)**



Left to right: Nicolle Maltwood and Karen Barette

## 'Normality' resumes for the World Jersey Cattle Bureau

The World Jersey Cattle Bureau (WJCB) has traditionally organised annual meetings and tours in one of its member countries, but this practise was disrupted during the recent Covid-19 pandemic, the last one being to Rwanda and Kenya in June 2019.

So, it was really great to be able to resume this networking and breed promotion activity in September 2022 when a dozen Jersey breeders and enthusiasts were in the Island for a week visiting herds, attending social events with the local farming community, ending with a day trip to Sark. All the international visitors that had previously visited Jersey commented about the vast improvement in our cattle over the years since the change in the law in 2008 to allow for the importation of Jersey genetics from other countries.

The Jersey and international group then moved on to France joining up with other breeders from around Europe and the world, with over 80 from 14 countries in the tour group. The WJCB and the European Jersey Forum (EJF) combined to put on a highly successful week of farm and tourist visits in western France, which included a day at Space 2022 in Rennes, the country's premier agricultural exhibition, where a highly impressive National Jersey cattle show took place.

Both the WJCB and EJF held their annual meetings during the week in France, and for the first time in three years these were held in person rather than virtually as had been the case during the pandemic.

Hopefully this is the start of the process to resume some semblance of 'normality' for the Bureau, and planning is currently underway for the next annual tour and meetings in November 2023 in Guatemala and Mexico, followed by the next International Conference in Denmark in May 2024 – *Stephen Le Feuvre, WJCB president*



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# Jersey at a crossroads

**... believes Charlie Malet de Carteret, who is due to be elected in the spring as the next president of the National Trust for Jersey. He talked to Gill Maccabe**

**I**t does seem wonderfully fitting that the custodian of the oldest manor and gardens in the Island, which has been the ancestral home of his family for almost 900 years, should be elected the next president of the National Trust for Jersey.

Charlie Malet de Carteret (62), the current Seigneur of St Ouen, is approaching his formal election - at the AGM on 28 April - with relish.

In late October - in the large kitchen of the manor, with two elderly pugs and a terrier bouncing at his feet - Charlie was brimming with enthusiasm and passion for his new role. He is no stranger to the Trust: his wife, Georgina, served a term of office as president in 2017-2020 and he currently chairs the panel that scrutinises and reviews planning applications, an objection from which can send architects and developers into a tailspin.

The current president, Stewart Newton, successfully proposed a change to the rules of appointment from a three-year term to a maximum of two consecutive three-year terms, so Charlie is hopeful he will be allowed to serve the full six years.

He is due to take up the role following a period of some controversy for the Trust.

There is a lot of unfinished business due to Covid and planning objections: for example, Morel Farm self-catering should have been open to paying guests by now, but the project has been delayed.

'It is going to be fantastic, a chance for visitors to come here and have the unique experience of living in an 18th Century farmhouse,' he enthused.

“ The line between growth and protection is a real balancing act, but we fight the corner for protection and we give it our best shot

And then there were the negative media comments over the sale of La Ronce in St Ouen earlier this year.

‘We bought a run down 17th Century property in 1987, spent years and thousands of pounds on painstaking restoration work and sold it to a young local family with restrictive covenants attached. We feel that we have done our job to preserve this wonderful house,’ said Charlie.

‘What really got me interested in getting involved with the Trust was Plémont, and the passion and the way in which the community stood up for itself.

‘It was a real David and Goliath situation, with a rich and influential property developer and the States dragging their feet. It was an extraordinary team effort and a real struggle to get that over the line.

‘The States eventually agreed to contribute half the money, without which we couldn’t have done it, but we put up the thick end of £3.5 million from donations from our members and supporters,’ he recalled.

‘We have always been a campaigning organisation. I was looking back through the minutes book from 1936 (The National Trust for Jersey was founded in that year, in response to concerns about over-development) and we have always been at the cutting edge of fighting to protect Jersey’s natural beauty.

‘We have never been scared to express our views and that doesn’t always make us friends, particularly if we are dealing with developers or people who don’t get why we are fighting.

‘The line between growth and protection is a real balancing act, but we fight the corner for protection and we give it our best shot. We are happy to continue doing that, and we don’t shy away from speaking our mind when we need to.’

With fewer than 20 staff members, Charlie laments that the Trust has to be selective about what it can get involved in. But top of his list, for at least the first term of his tenure, is the Coastline Campaign and ensuring that the Bridging Island Plan sticks to what it says.

‘We want to continue our plan to protect another 1,000 vergées of countryside around the coast and we want to get statutory protection for the Coastal National Park. Relentless development around the coastline, notwithstanding the restrictions contained in the Island Plan, continues to nibble away at the beauty of the Park.

‘We remain particularly concerned about St Ouen. There has been more development in the last ten years around this part of the coast than there should have been.’

To assist its aims, the Trust is hiring someone to do research into who owns the land, to provide impetus to the project and dedicate resources to it, so that generations of Islanders will continue to be able to walk the cliffs freely, swim the seas and enjoy the natural beauty of their Island home.

‘Jersey is at a crossroads. Mass tourism is no longer possible and hotel bed numbers are shrinking. We have something different though. We have our wonderful coastline and our green lanes, and we must protect them.

‘The government has signed up to the Bridging Island Plan. We are going to work really hard to do what we can to work with them and hold their feet to the flame, to make sure they deliver what they promised.’

No doubt the Trust is glad Charlie has eschewed a career in politics, unlike many of his forebears.

‘Yes, I have been asked,’ he laughed, ‘but I think the National Trust is far more exciting.’



# Why is our rural environment important to us?

## The economy

Our culture is deeply rooted in agricultural heritage, with farming being a dominant economic activity.

Over **1,000** people employed in agriculture... who work an average of **49.5 hours** per week



**£56** million contributed to the economy in 2021



Over the centuries, we have introduced farming methods, new crops and have explored previously untapped markets.

### Our Product Heroes

The 'Jersey' is the **2nd largest dairy breed** of cow in the world.



Jersey Royal potatoes are the **main crop grown** in terms of monetary value.

We have a **thriving community of small holder farmers**, who supply a network of local fresh food all over the Island.



**7 Farm Shops** | **90 Hedge Veg Suppliers**

## Our environment

Jersey has 48 miles of coastline to enjoy, which includes the landscapes of the Jersey National Park.

## Custodians of the park

Recognising those who care for the park



Walking  
Running  
Exercise  
Cycling  
Dog walking  
Connecting to nature  
Wellbeing  
Fresh air  
Time away from it 'all'  
Being outdoors  
Enjoyment  
Appreciating the countryside  
Exploring



The way the rural environment is cared for is not only important for nature, our climate, the economy, but our health as a community.

## Natural habitats

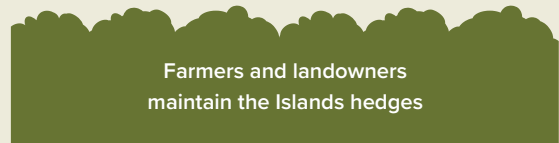
Our Island, despite its relatively small size, has an incredible diversity of wild habitats, including many important places for wildlife that are protected.

**30** Sites of Special Ecological Interest

**1/2** of Jersey is farmed

**10%** of the Island is woodland

**Around 1,000** hectares of environmentally sensitive land managed



**80%** of farmland is managed under the LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) Standard, which focuses on how all elements of the farm are interconnected such as **soil management, water, crop protection and landscape.**

The Park, which accounts for **16% of the Island**, comprises of both public land and private land owned by organisations such as Jersey Water, The National Trust for Jersey and farmers.



# Applauding the guardians of our landscape

**When the Jersey National Park interim working group received official government recognition in 2014, a number of challenges needed to be confronted and specific requirements implemented. By Mike Stentiford**

**W**hile acknowledging that ‘protecting the Island’s outstanding land and seascape character’ was just one of a number of key purposes, the immediate acceptance was that little could ever be accomplished without the direct collaboration of other major environmental stakeholders.

Included among those having direct interests within the Park boundaries are private landowners, leading environmental and heritage charities and those working within the agriculture industry.

Without their collective and constant hands-on management of fields, wetlands, woods and headlands, the rural character of the Island would look and feel very different to what we all love and respect today.

It was also recognised that without the generosity of certain government and charitable organisations, public access to much of the Island’s open landscape would be off limits.

In order to develop meaningful engagement with willing partners, a series of major national park public events have therefore been arranged annually.

While the early spring ‘Walk in the Park’ promotes the remarkable environmental and cultural input given to the Island by specific charitable agencies, ‘Picnic in the Park’ offers supportive promotion to local growers and to the hospitality industry.

In October 2022, the JNP launched its third and newest collaborative annual campaign – ‘Custodians of the Park’.

Included within this aptly named awareness initiative were certain factions of the agricultural community that offered direct emphases on how farming practices have created, and continue to create, a strong relationship between the public and the rural landscape.

Raising issues of environmental concern while advocating due respect for the countryside were the main drivers of this event, which could not have materialised without the direct involvement of an impressive number of individual representatives from a wide diversity of organisations.

As a result of such supportive collaboration, subjects ranged from the provenance of food and its ecological footprint to the environmental link between farming, conservation management and habitat enhancement.

Additionally, several on-site visits to selected locations within the borders of the national park allied to a number of indoor presentations and exhibitions, strove to emphasise the astonishing debt of gratitude we owe to those who shape the Island’s rural identity.

Whether farmers, environmentalists, horticulturalists, conservation rangers or ecologists, each one plays an often unsung role in carrying out sustainable countryside husbandry and environmental management.

What has now become widely recognised are the many challenges facing the farming industry and those tied to the rural economy.

Industrialisation has profoundly changed the way food is produced and consumed, while supermarkets continue to have a major influence on food packaging and distribution.

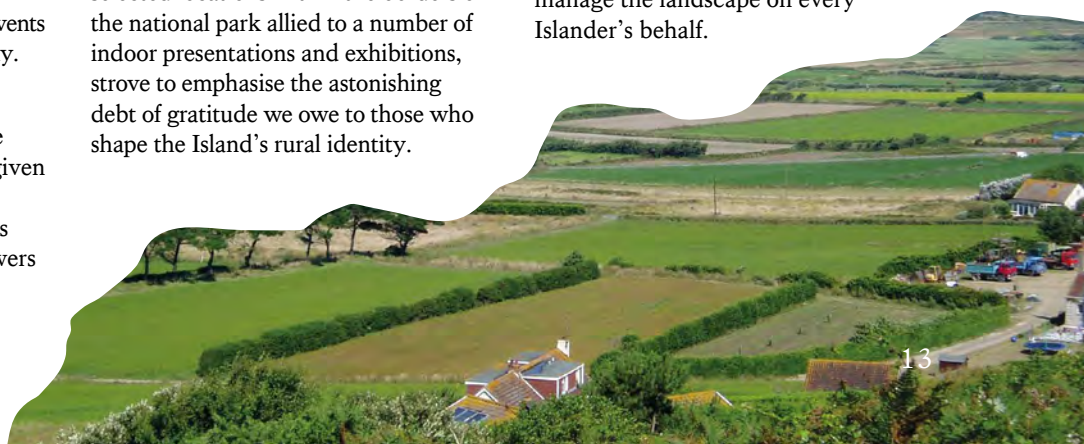
While understanding that imported food products account for a major portion of what we consume, the distances travelled and the carbon created is something that often slips to the back of the mindset.

Add to this the global competition, ever increasing production costs and the unpredictable threat of extreme weather conditions, and the challenges facing the local agricultural community become worryingly clear.

What is firmly acknowledged is that the Jersey National Park is not a landowner, but that within its designated boundaries a diverse range of organisations and commercial activities each play a crucial role in maintaining the Island’s remarkable rural character.

Offering full support to such agencies will be the sole and genuine purpose behind future events such as the ‘Custodians of the Park’.

More to the point, this particular initiative will have shed some topical light on those who maintain and manage the landscape on every Islander’s behalf.



# 'Potty' plant pot recycling



**Avid recycler and environmental campaigner Kalina Le Marquand has helped save over 120,000 plastic plant pots from the Island's incinerator, thanks to her garden reuse scheme - Potty Eco Pots. Hannah Voak finds out what's next for the community project**

While most gardeners will admit to hoarding one too many pots in their garden shed, this is on another scale.

**Why does Kalina have so many pots stored in this inconspicuous alleyway?**

'In early 2021, I discovered that a skipload of plastic plant pots was being burned every week in the incinerator,' she says. 'It was just potty how many were finding their way into the waste stream.' From that moment on, Kalina vowed to help clean up the Island's plastic waste problem, sowing the seeds for a green reuse initiative she would later name Potty Eco Pots.

Most plastic plant pots are made from low-grade mixed plastics that cannot be recycled in Jersey so Kalina started by asking La Collette Household Reuse and Recycling Centre if they could save any pots left at the facility. 'I then put them on E-cycle Jersey on Facebook and two local schools commented saying they would like to take them,' she recalls. 'Potty Eco Pots has grown from there.'

The project soon outgrew the narrow alleyway that runs alongside Kalina's apartment building, so she started looking for ways to branch out. 'We've now got two big collection boxes at La Collette and have various boxes at other sites, including Waitrose at Vallée des Vaux and behind SCOOP in St Lawrence. All the boxes are made from recycled materials by local carpenters.'

Islanders can drop off unwanted pots and trays at one of the collection points for others to pick up, free of charge.

In the scheme's first year, Potty Eco Pots helped save around 120,000 pots from going to waste. 'If these pots can be reused again and again before they hit the incinerator, then that's great. It's also helping cut down on imported goods to the Island. If people aren't buying pots, they won't be imported.'

Local organisations are also getting involved. 'Samarès Manor, for example, is buying bare root plants and potting them in recycled pots, rather than importing plants in pots.'

Kalina currently works with a small group of volunteers who help collect and distribute the plant pots around the Island. But to cut back on transportation and reduce carbon emissions, she wants to expand the reuse scheme to every parish.

'It seems wherever we go, people are wanting to have a box. The collection points will stop so many pots from going to the incinerator and will also cut down on people driving to the recycling centre to dump them. It will take a bit of time, but we're going to have at least one box in every parish.'

'We also go along to events such as the RJA&HS shows and parish eco fairs,' Kalina says. 'Lots of people recycle on a small scale, but at the Trinity eco fair we gave away a thousand pots.'

**W**alking along a busy residential road in the centre of St Helier, I spot the handmade sign Kalina Le Marquand has told me to look out for. Hanging on a side gate, in bright letters painted on a piece of reclaimed wood attached by a piece of old rope, the sign reads: 'Potty Eco Pots. Please reuse! Take as many as you like.'

I lift the latch and push open the gate. Behind is an alleyway no wider than a metre and it's brimming with plant pots. Arranged neatly on shelves are a couple of dozen ceramic pots, some metal planters and a few wicker baskets. There's even a pot shaped like a wellington boot. Beyond the racks are hundreds more pots, this time made of plastic, stacked waist-high.



Community is at the root of Kalina's initiative too. 'It's all about the gift economy, which in my eyes, is the future. At one event, someone took some pots and gave us marrows in return. Another person brought us some bread to give away. That's what Potty Eco Pots is about – being kind and sharing.'

Once all the parishes are covered, Kalina's vision is to expand to other reuse schemes. 'I'm thinking kitchen utensils, crockery, saucepans and cutlery. We've got all the resources we could possibly need, so the idea is to get the whole Island together to share these resources.'

Ultimately, the initiative will help reduce consumption and cut down on plastic waste. In the EU, many single-use plastic products are already banned, including straws, cotton buds and disposable cutlery. In Jersey, a new law was introduced in July banning most single-use plastic and paper bags.

Rather than plastic plant pots, gardeners can opt for biodegradable containers made from natural materials such as rice, coconut husks or wood pulp. Kalina suggests that homemade pots using old newspapers could also be the answer.

'But as these plastic pots currently exist,' she says, 'we might as well reuse them as many times as we can!'

**To find your nearest plant pot collection point, visit the Potty Eco Pots Facebook page.**



  
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2nd MARKET	Thursday 1st to Sunday 4th December
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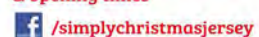
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# A job in a million

**Meg Winton of Saltgate Jersey described to Gill Maccabe how her company's environmental, social, and governance programme helped her and supported the Beresford Street Kitchen**

**T**he Covid pandemic brought out the best in our community but whilst many of the initiatives have been shelved or forgotten, one local company that donated £100,000 to charities supporting communities through the crisis is continuing to put its money where its mouth is.

Saltgate, the fund administrators that operate from offices on the Esplanade but also have a presence in Luxembourg and London, have been supporting the Beresford Street Kitchen (BSK) social enterprise by sponsoring five young people with learning disabilities and/or autism through the first year of a programme designed to build and develop their skills for independent living and employability.

**“ The people I work with are one in a million and Saltgate's culture and values makes it a great place to work. This is my first job out of university, and I feel I have really grown as a professional – I feel so supported**

The charity was founded in 2017 to provide much needed choice for people over the age of 18 and last September they launched a five-year strategy, which included BSK Academy and the Learning for Life adult education programme. Currently they provide 11,000 workplace training and employment sessions per year and have 50 crew members, and a waiting list of 46.

The large site in Beresford Street features a restaurant, events catering and a print works, and there is also a satellite tearoom at La Hougue Bie. The crew members on the structured programme, which is designed to develop skills for independent living and employability, work alongside training mentors, professional chefs and graphic designers.





Saltgate also has a five-year strategy: to give £2.5 million of its profits over five years to its environment, social and governance commitment (more commonly known as ESG), and BSK is a charity with which they have been keen to partner and to provide support to over the years.

They were also one of the sponsors of the BSK fifth anniversary charity dinner at the Royal Yacht Hotel in September – a star-studded glossy evening of fundraising and fun which raised in excess of £13,000 – and they regularly use the BSK chefs for their staff parties and cookie events at the office.

Saltgate was established in 2007 and unlike most of its competitors in the industry is a privately owned specialist which focuses exclusively on fund administration, meaning that the core focus can be on providing excellent client service and commitment to its people first strategy, which extends across the ESG platform.

Staff are encouraged to take part in community initiatives and just like the charities they support, they also help their own staff realise their potential.

Meg Winton (24) has always dreamt of being a journalist, but the former Hautlieu student is living the dream as the company’s communications and engagement officer.

Meg studied multimedia journalism at Bournemouth University and as part of her degree interned at various local media outlets, including the JEP. But her job, which she has been doing for three years now, allows her to combine her love of writing and people whilst being at the core of the Island’s key industry and learning new skills every day.

‘My typical day includes creating the weekly newsletter and writing intranet articles for colleagues to read. I also do social media posts, write website articles and press releases, report on stats and keep our LinkedIn and Instagram feeds fresh each day.

‘I work on internal and external campaigns and initiatives and attend weekly briefing meetings with my seniors to see what’s in the pipeline and get to be really creative in my writing. I regularly write for different purposes, which develops my skills and makes me a stronger writer. I love the freedom I get to use my own initiative, share my ideas and try new things.

‘The people I work with are one in a million and Saltgate’s culture and values makes it a great place to work. This is my first job out of university, and I feel I have really grown as a professional – I feel so supported.

‘The company has funded training with the Chartered Institute of Marketing which has enabled me to develop my knowledge further. All of our teams are offered the opportunity to gain professional qualifications in their fields of interest.

‘There is a genuine “people first” culture, and senior management are really approachable. I get to hang out at BSK as part of my working day – and be photographed for RURAL magazine. What could be better?’

**If you would like to know more about a career with Saltgate visit [saltgate.com/careers](https://saltgate.com/careers) or scan the QR code.**



# No cost tree transplant

Anna Bradstock, who moved back home to Jersey three years ago, brought with her a wealth of knowledge of plants and trees in particular. Gill Maccabe caught up with her in the wooded garden surrounding her 18th Century farmhouse

**H**ow many times have you moaned about a tree blocking your light but don't know what to do about it? Perhaps you have hacked it indiscriminately and ended up with a tortured looking bush?

Amateur gardeners are often terrified of trees and either don't include them in their landscaping plans, in favour of instant colour; or, if they have been inherited with the garden, they ignore them until they get too big, at which point they call in the tree surgeon at great cost. But most trees – under, say 10 feet and a few years old – can happily be moved, without help, as long as you follow a few simple rules.

“ This garden is very much a work in progress. My aim here was for enhanced woodland to cause minimal upheaval to the existing peaceful valley with its own biodiversity

Smaller gardens can benefit fully from the structure and balance, privacy and beauty that well thought out tree planting and maintenance can provide.

Trees such as the beautiful *arbutus unedo*, sometimes called the strawberry tree, with its gorgeous pink flowers and red fruit which goldfinches love; the *cercis Canadensis* or forest pansy, with its deep purple foliage and rose-coloured flowers; the *Crataegus persimilis* 'Prunifolia', a beautiful ornamental hawthorn; and the *Sorbus commixta*, a Japanese rowan, can provide interest all year round.

They also don't take up too much room and are convenient pit stops for birds and other wildlife.

When Anna Bradstock (née Riley) moved back to the Island of her birth three years ago with her husband Rupert, she brought with her a wealth of knowledge of plants and trees in particular – knowledge which she has poured into the wooded garden with duck pond surrounding their 18th Century farmhouse, which is hidden away down a lesser-known green lane in a sheltered position on the north coast.

Anna reckons her passion for gardening blossomed when she was around 32 years old and started to create her own seven acre garden in Berkshire.

But no doubt her childhood, spent in the fertile grounds of Trinity Manor gardens, left a lasting impression and Anna is naturally thrilled that the original garden planting by Kew has been celebrated and developed by the new custodians, with extensive tree planting along the drives and parkland.

During a diploma course at Chelsea Physic Garden (where lecturers included Gardening World's Carol Klein) Anna attended a tree course at Kew Gardens, where curator Tony Kirkham instilled in her a deep and lasting love of the fascinating world of trees.



Anna Bradstock and Myrtle take a breather



Further study at Westonbirt Arboretum led to working at Harcourt Arboretum (an extension of Oxford Botanic Gardens) when she became a member of the prestigious International Dendrology Society.

The society aims to promote the study and enjoyment of trees and other woody plants, to bring together dendrologists from all round the world and to protect and conserve rare and endangered plant species worldwide, whatever the size of your garden.

Anna was also a guide at The Savill Garden – the spectacular 35 acre woodland site in Windsor Great Park – and still found time to run a country house in Berkshire, be a wife and mother of two and run a consultancy called Garden Roots, running workshop days for groups keen to learn hands-on gardening.

Now, she is revelling in the benign micro-climate of a sheltered valley and a much smaller garden where offspring of her original plants from Berkshire are growing to twice their original size.

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And she is even able to grow the beautiful *Arbutus x andrachnoides*, a much sought-after, hybrid, evergreen tree she admired which was planted in the street outside the Chelsea Physic Garden some thirty years ago, and the beautiful, spreading katsura *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* – known to many as the candyfloss or burnt sugar tree – which fills the air with its delightful, sweet fragrance in autumn as the leaves take on fiery autumnal shades.

“ I was always constantly apologising to the children when they were younger about always being in the garden, but they didn’t seem to mind

While hard at work one rainy September morning, Anna demonstrated just how easy it is to move and transplant trees – and much more besides.

Jeans had replaced her normal workday uniform of T-shirts and shorts and she was suffering in the heat. She had just dug up a prepared *Cephalotaxus harringtonia* ‘Fastigiata’ – commonly known as Japanese plum yew – and transported it over to a steep bank for transplanting.

‘I grew this from seed, and I think it will do better over on the other side of the pond. It’s a very amenable species that is unfussy about position and is fairly undemanding, but it doesn’t like cold dry winds,’ she explained.

Anna employs the services of a gardener one day a week but otherwise does all the labour herself.

‘I was always constantly apologising to the children when they were younger about always being in the garden, but they didn’t seem to mind,’ she recalled.

‘This garden is very much a work in progress. My aim here was for enhanced woodland to cause minimal upheaval to the existing peaceful valley with its own biodiversity.

‘But by planting a wider variety of species I hope to improve things, by providing as many insect pollinated plants and trees as food for small birds, with some evergreen shelter from the increasing number of birds of prey.

‘I have tried not to include too many exotics for this reason, although I have been seduced by the odd irresistible favourite such as the exotic temptress *Meliosma veitchiorum* – a Chinese feathered tree with distinct white flowers – and possibly my favourite tree ever, *Stewartia pseudocamellia* – a deciduous camellia with attractive, flaking bark and ovate leaves turning orange and red in autumn.

‘Oh, and the excitement of having a wonderful mature myrtle against the house is heaven. It has already provided me with many offspring in the way of seedlings which seem to thrive without too much watering.

‘I would therefore recommend them for smaller Island gardens. Being summer flowering, as well as having magnificent bark and evergreen foliage, you can prune them to accommodate space available – and they are supposed to be lucky! I have lots of birds lodging in my tree below the bedroom window, and of course have named my border terrier Myrtle.’

Anna explained that as she is getting to know the garden and valley better, she is spending a lot of time thinking about whether the tree positions are right: some areas are too dry (she says it is noticeably drier than in Berkshire) and others aren’t light enough. And then there’s the drainage.

‘I’m still making mistakes and so I move a lot of trees,’ she explained.

The first thing Anna recommends, when transplanting, is to think about which trees you are going to move at least six months, or preferably one year before you do it. This is so that you can prune the roots before transplanting, so that they don’t go into terminal shock.

Tree roots absorb water and nutrients, but the large roots nearest the tree trunk absorb very little. The tiny feeder roots which extend beyond the tree perform most of that function.

Root pruning stimulates small, new feeder roots nearest to the trunk.

Once you understand that, the rest is simple. Here is Anna’s step by step guide to moving and transplanting small trees:

## The preparation

1. Mark the area of the zone to be pruned
2. Cut a trench, using a sharp, flat spade with the face turned away from the plant
3. Include 10 to 12 inches of root ball diameter for every inch of trunk diameter
4. Deepen the trench. Continue digging, cutting roots as you go down about 24 inches to reach as many lateral roots as possible. While digging, separate the topsoil from the subsoil to return to the trench
5. Replace the soil and water thoroughly. New feeder roots grow from the cut ends. You must include these roots with the transplant
6. Now leave it. Do nothing until next spring, before the buds come through – or better still, wait until next autumn when the leaves fall. It will grow quite happily and forgive you for touching its roots

## The transplant operation

1. Choose your new spot, checking if the light, drainage and spread is adequate
2. Mark out a circle in the new turf. Use a sharp edging tool or spade, lift the surplus turf and discard in your compost heap – you must not replace it
3. Within your circle dig a square hole, the corners of the square coax the roots into the soil without circling
4. Exposure to the air can cause damage to the bare roots of a tree within minutes, particularly in windy or sunny weather so when moving, move swiftly, if not then protect the roots with a planting bag or a bin liner
5. Brush the roots with a generous dose of mycorrhizal tree planting powder, cover with loam and water thoroughly
6. Don’t plant too deep, this can kill healthy plants

Anna added: ‘It is vital that the grass is not replaced around the trench. I despair when I see trees crammed into a hole surrounded by grass, it is an absolute no!

‘Trees need loam and earth around their roots, not a grass blanket tucked around their necks. Bark mulch is useful to keep the grass at bay and retain moisture. It also makes a smart ‘cared for’ circle at the base of the trunk.’

And Anna’s final thoughts on tree planting: ‘I saw some trees planted in pots in town recently. So don’t get me started on urban tree planting!’



Sprinkle roots liberally with mycorrhiza powder

# Dairy for development

**As we conclude our series about the role Jersey is playing in helping smallholder farmers across the globe, Cathy Le Feuvre discovers what the future has in store for RJA&HS-led projects aimed at improving lives through smallholder dairy farming**

**B**ack in the early 2000s the Royal Jersey Agricultural & Horticultural Society was asked to help re-establish an AI (Artificial Insemination) technician service in the African country of Rwanda, through which Jersey genetics would improve the quality of cows and increase milk production.

Nearly two decades on, RJA&HS Dairy for Development (D4D) projects have worked with, had technical oversight over, trained and helped thousands of farmers and their families not just in Rwanda, but also in Malawi, Ethiopia and Nepal. Soon the RJA&HS D4D team based in Trinity will also manage a new programme in Zambia.

It's a significant development for the work of the D4D team, which is headed by David Hambrook, supported by programme officer Sam Thomson, coordinator Louise Agnès and UK-based market development specialist David 'Dai' Harvey, who is originally from Zambia.

But it's not just about geographical expansion, according to David Hambrook.

'In a world where climate change is significantly impacting weather patterns, the future needs to include mitigations for climate change, if projects are to maximize sustainability.

'The current and future projects will be using the Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) approach and will ensure that farmers are trained in the various technologies so they can continue to use them long after the D4D project finishes,' said David.

CSA is defined by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) as 'agriculture that sustainably increases productivity, enhances resilience (adaptation), reduces/removes greenhouse gases (mitigation) where possible, and enhances achievement of national food security and development goals.'

The key question for the sustainability of CSA projects is threefold and needs to consider the three Ps - People, Planet and Profit (for the smallholders).

'Using Jersey cattle breed genetics in Africa is viewed as CSA because it ticks those boxes. First, the genetics increases productivity as the cow produces more milk. Dairy in general offers a more stable income to farmers than solely growing crops, which in turn means that the farmer is likely to be more resilient to external shocks like extreme weather or economic downturns. If populations are better able to support and feed themselves, building up savings and assets in the form of appropriate dairy cattle, their vulnerability to climate change is reduced,' David continued.

**“ The future is exciting. The work achieved so far has had massive benefit to the smallholder farmers involved and the D4D team are raring to go and keep the momentum going of spreading the 'Jersey breed' word around the tropical world!**

By cross breeding local cows with Jersey genetics, offspring should inherit the best of both breeds - local genetics retain resistance to local diseases and an ability to thrive in the local area, while the Jersey brings increased milk yields and easier calving. Among other benefits, the Jersey cow's smaller size also means they require less feed to produce every litre of milk.

But to raise healthy animals, it is also important that farmers and smallholders grow suitable feed for their cows.

'By encouraging and educating in better feeding using the right crops – for example, drought resistant varieties or other crop by-products – using fodder banks, improved manure management, improved pasture species and planted legumes all allow farmers to transition to fewer cattle which are more productive, helping to reduce emissions per unit of milk produced,' said David.

In line with the CSA approach, the RJA&HS are also encouraging and enabling knowledge exchange visits through which people who have been helped by the projects so far will continue to thrive and will be able to share what they know to help others.

'Now that post Covid travel is possible, exchange visits have been organised between projects, so that extension and field livestock technicians can learn from each other.



‘These visits, networks and mutual exchange of knowledge will be the future long after the projects have finished.

‘The creation of the African Jersey Forum (AJF) is intended to be a platform for this knowledge sharing, and whilst being D4D team managed at the moment, it is hoped and intended that this will become an African based self-managing entity in the future. Planning for an AJF event in Malawi in mid-summer 2023 is underway.

‘The future is exciting. The work achieved so far has had massive benefit to the smallholder farmers involved and the D4D team are raring to go and keep the momentum going of spreading the ‘Jersey breed’ word around the tropical world!’ David concluded.

**For more information about Dairy for Development go to [www.royaljersey.co.uk/new-dairy-for-development](http://www.royaljersey.co.uk/new-dairy-for-development)**




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# Dogs welcome

What can be better than a bracing walk across the beach, with wind in your hair, and the fresh salty smell of the sea, followed by a steaming cup of something hot and your canine companion at your side? Kieranne Grimshaw discovered Nude Food Beach on the south coast, where dogs are given a warm welcome

Situated at La Haule directly on the shore, this beach café and restaurant is the perfect pit stop for both dogs and their owners. There's indoor and patio dining, as well as an alfresco area directly on the beach. With a door at each side of the inside area, dogs always have easy access to outside.

Manager João is no stranger to dogs.

'Back home in Madeira I had three. I've only been here since May, but I love it,' he said. 'People like to bring their dogs here. You can have whatever you want – breakfast, lunch or dinner, or just come for a drink and at the same time have fun with your dogs on the beach. It's a natural play area outside.'



This seems an ideal venue with plenty of space, especially at low tide. For anyone with energetic dogs, this is the place to let off steam. It's also a natural stop between town and St Aubin. For a more diverse walk, there are even some woodland footpaths almost opposite the café – albeit a rather steep incline on the way up.

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Dog owners need not be concerned about their messy pets. With its wooden floor, the establishment is perfectly designed to accommodate dogs all through the year.

'They're always welcome here, even sandy, wet dogs,' Joao said. 'We also open evenings in the summer.' So, no need to feel guilty about leaving your loved ones behind.

'All the staff love meeting dogs,' João continued. 'Our most regular customer brings in his three dogs every single morning. They are just lovely and part of the family already – they have their own table.'

Two Westies are curled up under a corner table, looking very much at home. Owners, Jane and Nigel declared they visited every weekend. 'The dogs love it here, they get lots of attention. We like it for the beach and the staff are lovely too.'

Looking ahead, Joao confirmed the new outlet at La Pulente should be ready by early 2023. It will have lots of covers, both inside and out – and be dog friendly, of course!



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# For horses and ponies only

**Jersey's horses and ponies now have an independent vet practice dedicated solely to their wellbeing following the launch of Island Equine Veterinary Services.**

**Report by Ruth Le Cocq**

**S**pecialist equine vet Róisín Wood, who has spent the last eight years working with a range of animals at New Era Veterinary Practice, decided it was time to focus her energy entirely towards her fascination with horses and ponies.

'It's the first dedicated equine practice we've ever had in the Channel Islands,' said Ró. 'Historically I think there has not been enough horse work to sustain an equine practice, but I think clients got frustrated and I got frustrated. If you call a vet for your horse you want to get someone who has a specialism in horses, and that wasn't always the case.'

Setting up as a 'one-man band' means Ró can also focus on her work/life balance. She realised things needed to change following the arrival of her son, Joey, nearly three years ago.

She explained that flexible working hours tend not to be an option within today's veterinary industry, which currently has 2,500 unfilled vacancies in the UK.

'These days you need to earn a full-time wage and in a lot of families both parents have to work, but within the veterinary industry you either do the 36-hour on call shifts and the 17-hour days or pretend it's a half job.

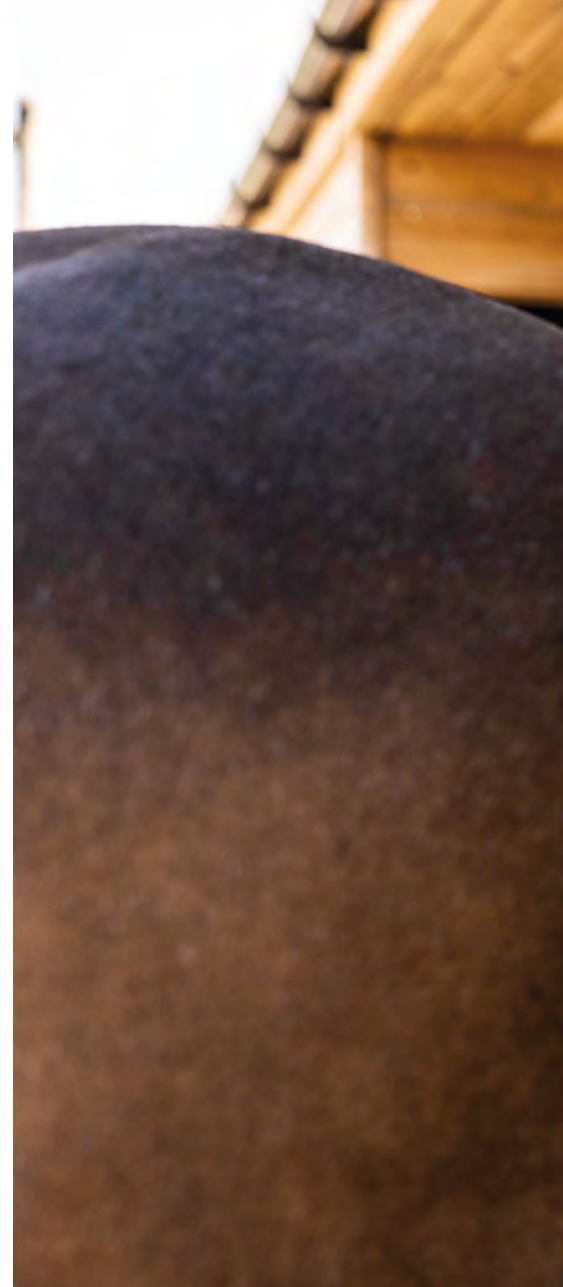
That is one of the things that is destroying the industry because 85% of graduates are women. You lose people forever because it becomes so difficult to work, and then they just give it up completely and they never come back to it and it's such a shame.'

Ró's office is based at Haie Fleurie, the home of HFP Equestrian Limited, which has excellent facilities in St Martin. From there she welcomes vets from the UK's Liphook Equine Hospital who carry out standing surgeries.

'It's a perfect base, especially for people who have horses that are lame and who don't have stables, as they can come up to Haie Fleurie and use the surface there.'

Over the years Ró realised that the needs of Jersey's horse clients are slightly different to those in the UK, and this has encouraged her to work to a higher standard.

'Jersey has a small community feel even though there are more than 103,000 people here and probably 1,000 horses on the Island. It's unique in that there are some really smart horses here and people have the money to spend on them but it's quite difficult to refer horses.



“ **It's the first dedicated equine practice we've ever had in the Channel Islands** ”

In the UK you send the horse down the road to the nearest equine hospital but, although I certainly do refer things to a specialist, I've been pushed to become better and do all sort of things that, at the beginning of my career, I wouldn't have imagined myself doing.'

In fact, Ró never intended to set up an independent practice in Jersey. She was urged to do so by long-standing clients who appreciated her work ethic, her attention to detail and her ability to read both horses and clients to ensure they received the best service possible.



‘The overriding thing is that I really love ponies, I really love horses and I really like people,’ said Ró. ‘When I was a child, I watched a million horses trot up and down and I used to go to Olympia to watch the dressage, and I can tell when they are just not moving right. They are all so different – the little Welsh ponies move in a certain way and the big warmbloods move in a certain way and it’s just knowing.’

Ró was a pony-mad girl living in London whose bedroom walls were plastered with magazines and pictures of horses and ponies.

‘There was a local inner city riding school and I would go there and lead the ponies around for nine hours so I could get rewarded by riding them back to the field bareback,’ she laughed.

“ **When I was a child, I watched a million horses trot up and down and I used to go to Olympia to watch the dressage, and I can tell when they are just not moving right. They are all so different – the little Welsh ponies move in a certain way and the big warmbloods move in a certain way and it’s just knowing**

‘I was always obsessed with animals and my father called me “The Little Goose Girl” because we lived in London, and we had this tiny little garden that was like a postage stamp, and it was full of chickens and ducks and guinea pigs and rabbits and various other things because I wanted them. My mother is the same as me, so we were always hatching things in the incubator and that was our favourite thing to do.’

Now Ró can’t imagine being anything but a vet although she admits to being a little bit daunted about being on call 24/7.

‘I think this is going to be the best thing that has ever happened to me,’ she said. ‘I’m certainly not afraid of hard work and I’m a horse person and I am fascinated by them, and I think you have to have that little bit of fire to be good at it.’

# The 100 days of Darien



Colonel John Blashford-Snell, at the time of the Darien Gap expedition

**On 24 February 2023, at the Royal Jersey Showground, Jersey's eminent explorer, Colonel John Blashford-Snell CBE, will host a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Darien Gap expedition of 1972/73. In this article, he looks back on this famous jungle expedition – it was no place for learner drivers!**

In 1971, an Anglo-Latin-American committee asked me to lead an expedition to drive from Anchorage in Alaska to Tierra del Fuego on South America's southern tip. In particular, to find a vehicle route through the notorious unconquered 250-mile blockage of jungle and swamps – known as the Darien Gap – and encourage the building of the last section of the great road. We were also to study the fauna, flora and people, hoping they might be protected.

It would be uncomfortable; snakes, insects, heat, rain, jungle and swamp. Several expeditions had failed to cross the complete gap.

The weather dictated that we should move from north to south in the dry season, a relative term, which should run from mid-December to mid-April. The vehicles should leave Alaska in early December to reach Tierra del Fuego in May.

The Rover Company generously loaned two newly produced Range Rovers and the Army backed us with a Beaver light plane. So, the expedition assembled; servicemen, scientists and medics from America, Britain and Latin America and a Gurkha. In all, 59 men and five women.

In the team were four from Jersey, Kay Thompson as general manager, Major Kelvin Kent as the deputy leader, Captain Peter Marett as Intelligence Officer, and myself.

The Army and the Scientific Exploration Society supported us, as did dozens of British companies.

Our two Range Rovers set out from Alaska in December 1971. Our main column would enter the Darien jungle, in a remote, roadless region of Central America, between the North and South American continents, straddling Colombia and Panama. A recon team would scout ahead and find a route for sappers to clear.





The Chief Engineer designed a special Avon inflatable raft to get vehicles across rivers and through the vast Atrato swamp. I hoped to cross this morass before the mid-April rains. Then go to the Columbian capital Bogotá and, having sent the Range Rovers to Tierra del Fuego, return to Britain.

On a cold, wet January dawn in England Peter Marett and I climbed shivering into the cavernous belly of the RAF Hercules. We carried a Jersey flag presented to us by the JEP.

In steaming Panama we met the vehicle team hotfoot from Alaska and set off. Soon glutinous mud caused havoc with the heavy Range Rovers. Much worse followed, with breakdowns and dense vegetation reducing us to an exhausted group of mud-babies. The jungle was consuming us, mentally and physically.

On 30 January we reached a large clearing. Lush grass abounded and our 28 packhorses filled their bellies. In the forest they lived on airdropped corncobs and giant leaves from trees.

There were more mechanical problems and it was not until 5 February, with everyone pushing and winching, that we got the stricken vehicles to the forward camp to find the differentials had disintegrated! Urgent messages went to Rover in England.

We had advanced only 30 miles in 17 days and had over 200 to go. The worst going lay ahead.

Rover pulled out all stops and sent out an expert with a pile of spares. Meanwhile we sought a Pathfinder vehicle to press ahead with the sappers.

Kelvin found a battered Land Rover in Panama City.

Stripped down to its bare essentials, this was airlifted in by a giant USAF helicopter and the sappers pressed on, preparing a route.

After dark, the jungle becomes a towering wall of blackness, broken only by fireflies. At night the creatures of this luxuriant world come forth to hunt and feed and the noise of the beasts reached an awesome crescendo. Frogs croaked, monkeys screamed and chattered, and birds flapped loudly in the tall trees.

Our Gurkha NCO organised a Cuna Indian working party, and the column struggled on. The mud deepened, horses sank in, loads came off, hornets attacked and tempers flared. It took 19 hours to extract one horse, only for it to run back in! Then the way ahead became waterless. By radio our recce leader David Bromhead reported formidable obstacles: fallen trees, herds of aggressive wild pigs, insects and snakes. Even the Amerindians avoided this region. We needed water, and more tools to cut the trail through.

Vampire bats attacked the horses at night. Their screams kept us awake and they grew weak through loss of blood. A Royal Engineer made a protective nightshirt from a pink parachute for a badly bitten animal.







Eye and nostril holes were cut and the horse hobbled. But at dawn the horse had gone. Searching for it we came upon some terrified Amerindians who had been celebrating the fertility rites; the dancing girls were whirling faster and faster when a pink apparition had walked in and ruined everything. They supposed it to be a ghost rebuking them. Discovering it was our horse, they were not pleased, so I let them keep it.

There were several narrow escapes from serpents. As I held our ornithologist on my shoulders to examine a bird's nest, a deadly coral snake slide along his arm and into his shirt: luckily it was not tucked in, and the reptile dropped out. Later a six-foot bushmaster sank its teeth into the heel of David Bromhead's boot. Its fangs stuck and David blew its head off with his revolver. My hand was sliced on a machete and it became infected, and as we tried to ascend the hills early torrential rain drenched us.

For ten days we struggled to conquer the heights, hiring prisoners from a town jail, including murderers, to cut

for us. In the wet I asked a friendly local... 'Is this the rains?'

'Rains, man?' He shook his grizzled old head. 'No this is jus' hoomidity!'

At Cruso Mono, the Choco Indians dragged logs down to the river. Maybe a vehicle might be winched up. But it could only be reached by a river, so we gambled and motored the cars up the bed. At deep pools the raft was used to ferry the cars. The raft struck a log and it reared up like a stricken beast. A helmsman yelled: 'She's going, lads! Get away, we're going over!' The tow rope from my canoe parted as the raft and its swaying Range Rover spun out of control in the foaming water, engines racing and men plummeting over the side. Water was pouring in through a two-foot gash in the hull of one pontoon.

Miraculously, the raft was beached. Later a Range Rover sank into a hole while fording and it took 36 hours to dry out. Racing against time we hauled the cars up the cliff at Cruso Mono and followed the Pathfinder's route to the border.

Here the Colombian Army welcomed us, recalling how British troops had come to the aid of Simon Bolivar's rebels in 1821 and we crossed the forbidding Atrato swamp on our raft. We finally reached the southern part of the Pan American Highway on St George's Day – 100 days after we entered the Gap.

The Range Rovers drove on, completing the 17,000-mile journey, and in June 1972 plans to protect the region were submitted – but for political reasons the road has never been finished. However, our scientific studies helped create the National Park of Darien and protect the Amerindians way of life.

Today the area is alive with Colombian terrorists and people smugglers. I don't advise anyone to try driving through again.

**Contact David Langlois by e-mail: [langloisld@gmail.com](mailto:langloisld@gmail.com) for further details about the anniversary event on 24 February 2023**

# The sign of four

**A bakery which exemplifies the concept of localism**

**– ‘Four’ Bakery in Bath Street.**

**Alasdair Crosby met the owner, Simon Rodgers, who shares recipes for his very natural products**

**W**ithout further ado, let us move to the wherefore (Where four?) and the why fore (why four?) of Simon Rodgers’ bakery business.

The ‘where four’ is easy enough to answer: 53-55 Bath Street, opposite the old Le Gallais building. The ‘why four’ needs a little more explanation, which Simon provided:

‘Very simply, we use no additives, no preservatives, no chemicals. We try as much as we can to use Jersey produce – Jersey butter in everything (except the croissants) fruit and vegetables from Homefields farm shop, pork from Jon Hackett, Jersey milk, and Jersey free range eggs. “Four” means we make four types of bread: it is also French for “oven” – so a very suitable name for our bakery.

‘Everything we buy is from renewable sources. We keep waste to the absolute minimum, and anything left over at the end of the day we give to the Hospital or to the Salvation Army citadel nearby.

‘I’m very conscious of food miles. Much of the flour used in the UK comes from Canada or America or Kazakhstan, or wherever. I’d love to use Jersey flour but there is just not enough wheat grown in Jersey to provide for the volume or the consistency that we need.’

So, perforce he has two other sources of flour: Wildfarmed – ‘it is as organic as you can possibly get. They refuse to use man-made fertilisers. There’s no genetic modification, it’s proper farming, like it used to be!’ – and Marriage’s Chelmer Flour, guaranteed to be grown in the UK.

He continued: ‘We make croissants, and we have tried to make croissants with Jersey butter but there is a difficulty with the chemical composition of the butter, so we use French butter instead. But we want to be the very best, so we try to use local as much as we possibly can. Also, we use a sourdough starter, so we don’t use commercial yeast in the bread... we don’t use anything that your grandma wouldn’t have recognised!





“Four” means we make four types of bread: it is also French for “oven” – so a very suitable name for our bakery

‘We try to keep food miles down as much as possible. Our bread may seem expensive at first glance, but consider the ingredients that have gone into it, and that it is made by hand, fresh every day.’

‘We don’t say: “Just eat our bread, and nothing else,” but “Try our bread for special occasions or as a treat and compare the quality to other breads.”’

He said he was really lucky to have found Ellen Johnson, his head baker (who suggested a rebranding of the shop premises from R & R Bakehouse to ‘Four’), and Grace Buesnel, both formerly of Longueville Manor and both of them ‘brilliant pastry chefs and brilliant bakers.’

Like any bakery, there is a range of products on the counter, but cabbage loaves are a speciality, made according to an old Jersey recipe.

Before he opened Four Bakery, Simon was a director and shareholder in a trust company, now known as IQ-EQ. Originally, he was invited to spend a long weekend in Jersey, staying with a friend who had invited him to ‘come for a few beers and see the Island’.

That was 38 years ago, and he is still here.

Asked why he had left finance to become the owner of a bakery, he replied: ‘I had a major health scare, when I was diagnosed with bowel cancer. I started looking at my diet and was really quite surprised at the number of unnecessary additives that go into bread. Many commercial bakers use something called a dough enhancer, which is using any number of chemicals just to help the dough rise.’

‘I was chatting to some chums about it, and they said: “Why don’t you set up a bakery?” So, I did. If I break even, I’ll be more than happy. I’m also doing it for shits and giggles... and that is the name of my company: Shitz and Giggels International Ltd.’

During the first Covid lockdown Simon was making bread at home for friends and family, and he made a few dozen loaves a week; since then his business has just grown and grown.



Pastry chef Grace Buesnel

On 13 September last year, he turned 65; he opened the bakery the next day.

His baking philosophy: ‘When you eat bread like this, you just don’t eat, you get nourished.’

“We don’t say: “Just eat our bread, and nothing else,” but “Try our bread for special occasions or as a treat and compare the quality to other breads”

# Sourdough recipes

## Sourdough starter

- Put 50g strong white flour and 50g blood temperature water in a clean jar. Mix well. Loosely cover and set aside
- Repeat in same jar next day
- Day three - repeat
- Day four - discard all but 100g and feed remaining mix with 100g flour and 100g water
- Day five - discard all but 100g and feed remaining mix with 100g flour and 100g water
- Keep feeding as above

Your starter will start to bubble and froth - you will know when it is ready to use when you feed it and it doubles in size or when a spoonful floats in a bowl of water. If you are not going to be making bread regularly keep the starter in the fridge and feed it once or twice a week. A good hint as to when to feed it is when you see a grey film on the top which is the dead yeast. Instead of throwing it away you can fry it, à la fried bread).

## Jersey cabbage loaf

*based on a description found in the Société Jersiaise library*

- Weigh 300g of water and 50g of Jersey beer into a mixing bowl
- Weigh 130g of ripe starter and put in water/beer mixture
- Whisk starter into water to fully incorporate
- Add 400g white flour, 50g wholemeal flour, 50g rye flour and 14g of salt and mix thoroughly
- Leave for 45 minutes
- Wet your hands. Grab dough from bottom of bowl and fold over the top - spin bowl 45 degrees and do the same, repeat until you have folded the dough 8 times
- Wait 30 minutes then do stretch and fold technique again
- Do this 4 more times, leaving 30 minutes between each repeat. Cover the bowl with a tea towel whilst it is resting between each workout
- Final shape. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured worktop and flip over so the seam side is facing up. Starting on the left side, stretch the dough outward and fold it over toward the centre. Repeat on the opposite side. Stretch and fold the dough from the bottom to the centre. Repeat at the top. Flip the dough over and let it rest for 5 to 10 minutes to relax the gluten.
- With floured hands, gently cup the dough and move it around in a circular motion to tighten the shape. Dust a tea towel or muslin square liberally with flour and line a clean bowl with it or use a well dusted banneton
- Dust the loaf with flour and put into the bowl/banneton seam side up
- Cover with a tea towel and place in the fridge overnight for 12-22 hours to suit - the longer the better!

### To bake

- Put a Dutch oven or casserole dish into your oven on 250C and heat for 20-30 minutes with the lid on
- Turn dough out onto a large cabbage leaf seam side down
- Score the dough top with sharp knife or razor and place a large cabbage leaf on top of the dough
- Get the Dutch oven/casserole dish out of the oven and put the dough into it
- Put the lid on and place the Dutch oven/casserole dish back in the oven
- Cook for 35 minutes at 250C
- Take off the lid and cook for 15-25 mins or so at 220C, or until golden brown
- Turn onto a cooling rack and let rest for at least an hour before eating





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# Art, inspired by nature

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

**T**he awards presentation of the 2022 RURAL magazine Landscape Awards was held at the CCA Galleries International, 10 Hill Street on Thursday 7 July.

For the first time, there was a category for photographs as well as for paintings. The winning photograph was judged to be 'Morning Pickers', by Max Burnett, shown here.

# Ready for take off

**Philippa Evans-Bevan met Steve Davies, Associate Member of the Guild of Aviation Artists UK, as he takes off, on his solo flight**

**S**teve Davies was born in Southampton but came to Jersey as a baby with his adoptive parents, where he attended De La Salle College.

At the age of 14 he underwent major corrective eye surgery, leaving him with chronic double vision. During his recovery period he found solace in his love of drawing and developed a new style and passion for black and white detailed sketching.

Steve explained: 'I was inspired by my late father and also the artwork for Airfix kits by Roy Cross. Artists Ian and Cam Kennedy were illustrating aircraft in many comic books, and as a teenager I loved this world of visual adventure. I wanted to replicate it, using my newly found drawing ability.'

Steve's art teacher, Mike Blanchard, strongly encouraged his talent for drawing and he excelled.

'My style is very individualist,' said Steve, 'and although I specialise in highly detailed black and white pencil drawings, with a splash of colour, these are not just in aviation or military themed work, but in all subjects. I am always delighted to draw other subjects for my commission clients.'

Steve's genre has developed and been honed over 35 years, but it is not exclusively inspired by Airfix artworks, nor from the covers of the War Picture Library for the 2000AD, Battle, Warlord and Commando issues by DC Thompson and Co. Steve's fascination with Impressionist and Romantic painters of the 19th Century has also had an influence on his art.

Steve's first job after leaving school was with the Jersey Evening Post in their art department, he then moved on to graphics and subsequently landed a job in finance. So, a deviation from his passion for drawing but alongside the day job, Steve continued to draw.

He is very modest about his artistic accolades, not least being a member of the UK based Guild of Aviation Artists with no less than eight successful submissions.

The Jersey Arts Trust Projection Gallery showcased Steve's work for Remembrance Day in 2015.

He was awarded Artist of the Year by the magazine *Society and Living* and his work has been exhibited at Jersey Airport and in the Jersey Museum. In May 2021 Steve presented his work to the then Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Stephen Dalton, and Lady Dalton at the Alliance Club, which was well received.

Covid has had a profound impact on everybody's lives; for Steve, it precipitated a clear decision to give up the day job and concentrate on what he loves. Steve now has a strategic vision to grow his business locally in Jersey, in the UK, and internationally.



Starting close to home, Steve has a busy itinerary planned leading up to Christmas at the Vibrant Jersey Christmas Fayre at the Pomme D'Or, the Healthy Living and Lifestyle Festival at the Radisson and all the Genuine Jersey Simply Christmas Markets.



## **Stephen Davies Art**

Graphic artist / illustrator, specialising in highly detailed black and white pencil drawing in aviation or military themed work and in all subjects.

My speciality is aviation and I am also an Associate Member of the UK Guild of Aviation Artists. I can illustrate / draw anything a client / customer wishes or desires. My artwork can be seen and purchased from many outlets in Jersey as well as directly from me. Please contact me directly for any work not shown on the website.

## **Contact Stephen Davies**

07797 734 774

Email: [stephenjedavies@yahoo.com](mailto:stephenjedavies@yahoo.com)

[www.stevedaviesart.com](http://www.stevedaviesart.com)



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# Ageing wisely - considering options

By Helen O'Meara, *Director, CI Home Care*

The word 'options' in this article's title may surprise some people, as many believe that options diminish as we age.

Certainly, some aspects of ageing are sadly beyond our control, but there are often options regarding how we deal with the consequences of ageing. If the time arrives when full-time support is needed, a key consideration is whether to choose such care in a residential setting or within your own home - to paraphrase the Bard of Avon: to stay or not to stay, that is the question'.

The answer is uniquely personal; there is no right or wrong, only what is right for you or your loved one. It is important to investigate, preferably before full-time care is needed, and bear in mind that live-in care is often financially comparable with residential care. Crucially, however, it offers one-on-one support and a quality of life that is difficult to achieve outside your own home.

There are several factors to consider. Do you enjoy your own company or prefer socialising with others? Do you mind set mealtimes from a limited menu, or would you rather ask a personal Carer for whatever you fancy? Do you want to keep a pet - which is sometimes impossible in a residential setting? Do you enjoy watching whatever you like on TV, and being able to request a cup of tea - or something stronger - whenever you want, rather than when the trolley appears?

There are also things that aren't possible in a residential setting. With live-in care, if you have children and grandchildren living off the Island, they can still come and stay with you at home. There's also a big difference between a family visit listening to bedtime stories and cuddling sleepy, freshly bathed babies, and stressful visits in coffee shops and restaurants! Similarly, if you like to get up and go to bed when you please, a residential home may not be able to accommodate you; your dedicated, live-in Carer at home will.

'I'll never forget a rather forthright client lamenting the menu choices at a more upmarket residential home where she and her husband had stayed for a short while - curry but no rice, only chips. She was appalled!' reminisced a smiling Nicola Heath, Registered Care Manager at CI Home Care. 'Whilst our live-in Carers may not be Michelin-starred chefs, we can usually cook to your taste - and are always open to instruction.'

There lies the most significant difference. With live-in care, you are the master/mistress in your own home and the Carer is there to support only you. In residential care you are a client or guest in a shared home and the Carers and timetable cannot revolve only around you.

Options - they may diminish with age but they do not disappear completely.

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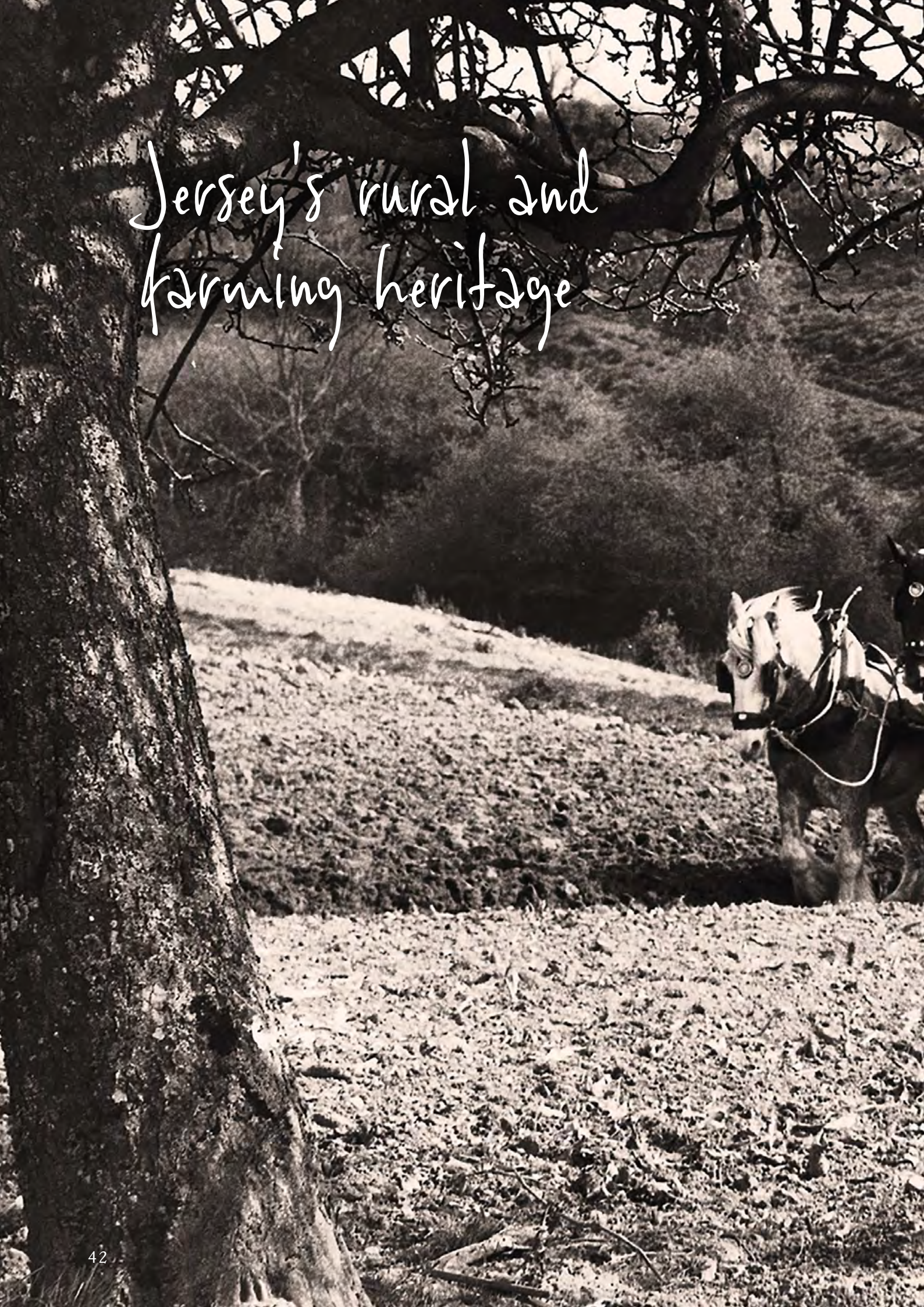
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Preparing the land



Planting with a tractor and winch at Gorey



'Le Tacheron' – the team that consisted of the complete 'fork'



Lifting the crop



Breton women piling the stalks and clearing the field ready for the second crop. 'La fourque à cinq de' – the five-pronged fork was especially made for digging potatoes in Jersey

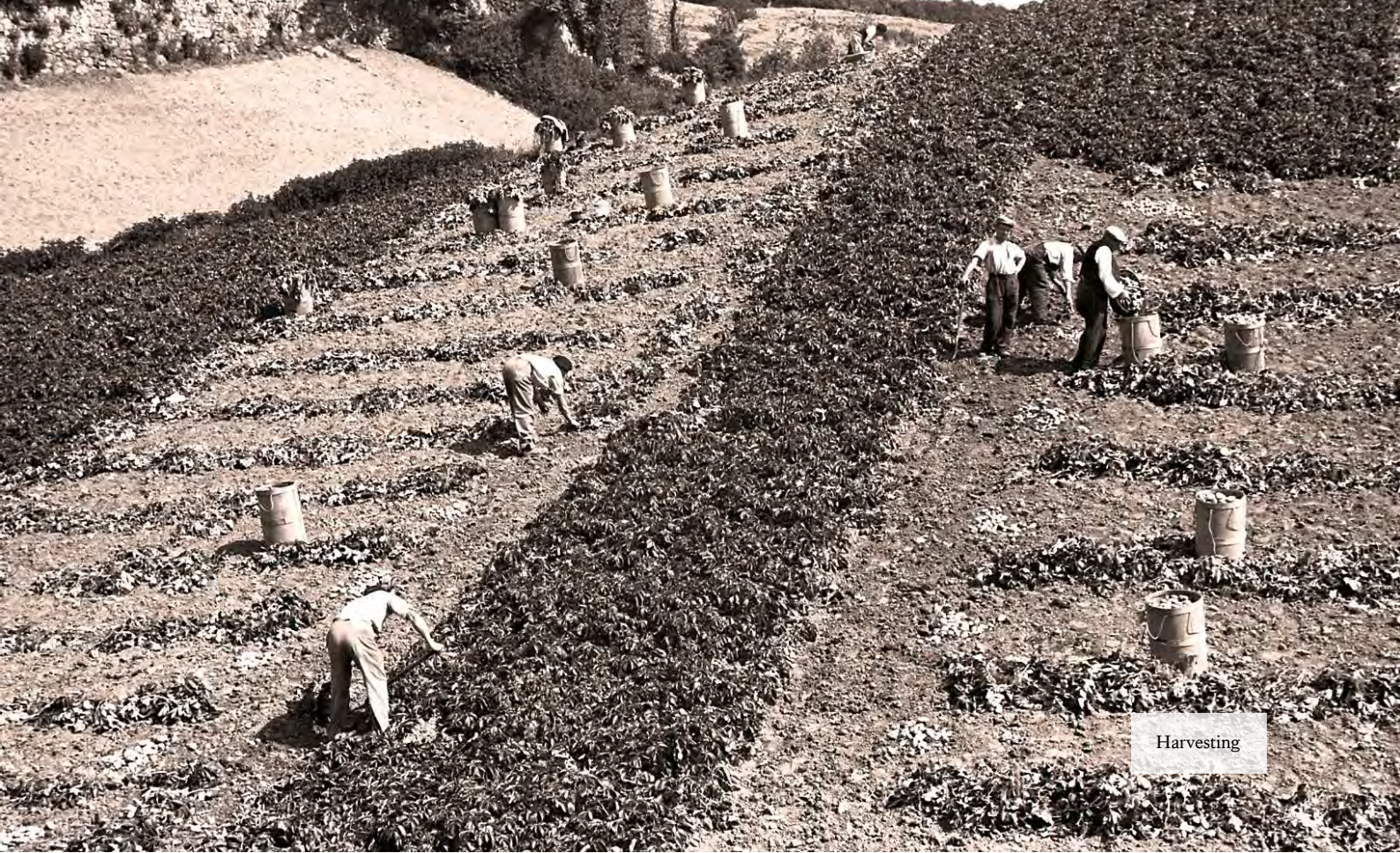


On the way to the Weighbridge



On the 'Bridge





Harvesting



The outdoor tomato crop



The chain harrow - used to loosen up and even out the soil

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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](mailto:pictures@ruraljersey.co.uk) and will be reproduced, if possible, either in RURAL magazine or on the RURAL website: [www.ruraljersey.co.uk](http://www.ruraljersey.co.uk)**

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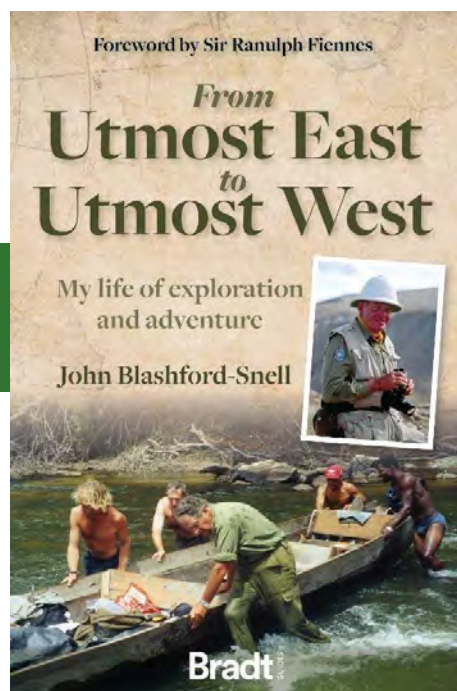
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## From Utmost East to Utmost West

### My life of exploration and adventure

JOHN BLASHFORD-SNELL  
Foreword by SIR RANULPH FIENNES

A remarkable anthology of exploration by one of the world's leading adventurers

**“Without doubt JBS, as many know him, is one of the world's most eminent explorers” – Sir Ranulph Fiennes Bt OBE**

One of the most exciting books to be published this year for fans of travel and exploration

Details of over 100 expeditions the author has undertaken

For over 60 years John Blashford-Snell has been exploring some of the planet's most remote, inaccessible and dangerous places; his name is known globally for his daring adventures and intrepid journeys of discovery. Now, well into his eighties (and still planning future trips), he has gathered together in a single volume a collection of tales from Africa, Asia and the Americas, a mix of mostly new writing combined with some old favourites, extracts from some of the 100 or so expeditions he has led in pursuit of archaeological, anthropological, botanical, biological and zoological objectives.

From the Blue Nile to the Darien Gap, the Kalahari to Colombia, Blashford-Snell is one of the most experienced explorers in the world. He has met with royalty and presidents, travelled with Clint Eastwood and Sean Connery, been on a quest to find a giant pachyderm in the forests of West Nepal, led investigations into Atlantis and even delivered a grand piano to a remote tribe in Guyana! Mountains, rivers, forests and jungle have been his domain and he has seen some of the most extraordinary places known to man.

If meetings with dangerous wildlife, stories of navigating rapid-filled rivers and tales of encounters with bandits are your thing, this new collection from a man who has become an institution in his own right is an essential read.

Holder of almost all the top awards for exploration and three honours bestowed upon him by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, **Colonel John Blashford-Snell** is one of the most eminent and seasoned explorers. He has organised and led over 100 expeditions to far corners of the world. The objectives of his challenging ventures have always included scientific exploration, wildlife conservation and aid to local communities. At the same time he has sought to develop leadership in young people through Operations Drake and Raleigh and assist the less privileged youth of urban areas.



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# Agriculture and survival during the occupation

A new book has been written by Andy Gilson on the subject of farming in Jersey during the German Occupation. The final manuscript is now complete. In this article he describes his book, which is expected will become the seminal work on the subject

For 36 years I have been a schoolmaster in Jersey. I first came to the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society in 2014, following my retirement as Head of History at Victoria College; my idea was to write up the class notes and the German Occupation documents given to me over eight years by my students and which I had developed for A-Level modules on Occupation agriculture.

James Godfrey, the society's CEO, felt that this was an important part of the Island's history, especially that of the farming community, and encouraged me to document the subject. The project has grown over the years and the final manuscript is now complete. The RJA&HS is at present negotiating with a UK publisher and expects that the publication will become the seminal work on the subject.

I have examined over 5,000 pages of primary historical documentation from 300 files and have spent 7,500 hours evaluating the original primary sources. In addition, private letters and documents from Austria and new material from Germany were discovered that have provided me with new insights into this subject. I was helped by the research previously carried out by Alan Allix, a founder member of the Channel Islands Occupation Society, who provided me with details of his interviews with OKVR ('Senior War Councillor') Dr Casper and Major Heider, both of whom were important members of the German military government during the Occupation.

These interviews cross referenced with local primary sources provided important insights into the relationship of the German military government with the Island civilian authorities and the leading farmers.

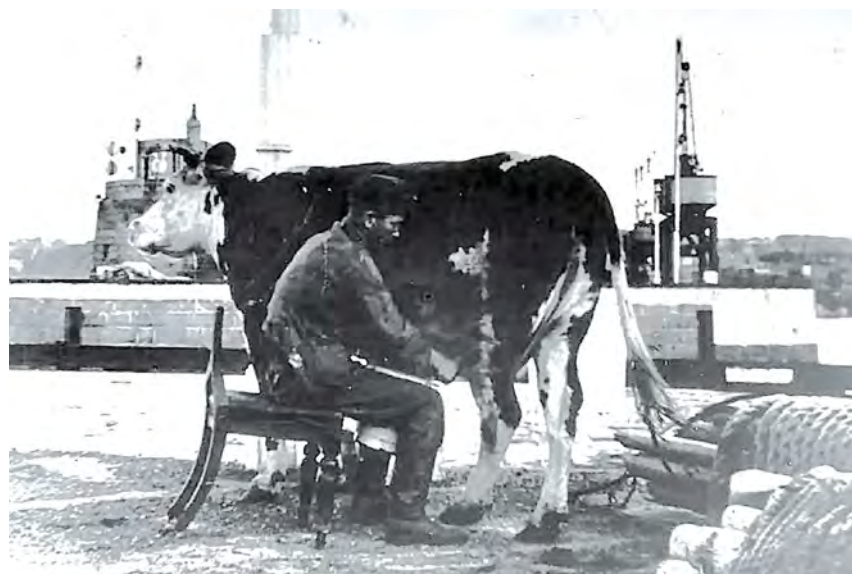
The book is some 17 chapters and comprises 200,000 words, original unpublished photos, maps, letters and diagrams. Topics covered include the dislocation of the 1940 potato and tomato harvests, new cropping plans, the changeover from a cash crop economy to a States regulated system of agricultural inputs and outputs: pigs, cattle and milk control, the rejuvenation of the Island's water mills under the direction of the Department of Agriculture and new forms of agriculture.

A detailed description is given of the increasing German demands for meat, milk and produce, the agricultural black market, the issue of collaboration, and the nature of the relationships between the leading German bureaucrats, the Superior Council, the Department of Agriculture and farmers.

I look forward to putting the results of my extensive research into the public domain.

*The German Occupation of Jersey - Agriculture and Survival in a Time of War, by Andy Gilson.*

**For publication details contact the author, Andy Gilson, by e-mail on [aggilson@gmail.com](mailto:aggilson@gmail.com)**



A German soldier ready to milk a French Simmental cow on Victoria Pier

# WIN

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(Find the answer at [www.laplacejersey.com](http://www.laplacejersey.com))

- A: Sixteenth
- B: Seventeenth
- C: Eighteenth

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

Closing date for entries is 31 January 2023.

Winners will be contacted via email

*Good Luck!*

*\*Offer subject to availability, up to and including April 2023.*

A photograph of an older man with white hair, wearing a green polo shirt and dark blue work pants, standing in front of a large green tractor. The tractor has a license plate that reads 'JI38 875' and the number '650R' on its side. The man is holding a small black object in his right hand. The background shows a rural setting with trees and a clear sky.

# Farming today – in Jersey

## The president of the Jersey Farmers' Union, Peter Le Maistre, profiles the issues facing the farming industry in the Island



The agricultural industry in Jersey over the last 200 years has, as you might expect, enjoyed many ups and downs and the Jersey farmer and grower of 2022 is, unfortunately, farming in one of those periods at the bottom of the cycle.

The outbreak of Covid in March 2020 and the closure of hospitality businesses locally and in the UK meant that trading in all sectors was stifled. By the end of 2021 things began to improve in sales but suddenly costs of production started to rise dramatically. The war in Ukraine has only exacerbated those price rises and the 30 percent rise in the minimum wage has only added to the problems.

On a more positive note, industry leaders have convinced Jersey's Government that extra funding is needed to help the industry through these difficult times. We have been able to show through our commitment to LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming), that money provided not only ensures local food security but that at the same time we are protecting and improving the environment. Similarly, we are working with Trinity AgTech to provide the latest data on our carbon footprint and, more importantly, how we can reduce it.

Part of the new financial package will provide further funding for productivity initiatives. These are imperative if we are to remain competitive in the future. The Jersey Farmers' Union is working with university partners at the moment to see if it is possible to plant potatoes robotically without human involvement. Initiatives such as this are the key to future success.

Part of this year's problems have been weather related (drought). All sectors will soon need to consider what to do if the recent trend continues. For dairy farmers, this may mean different varieties of maize and grass more appropriate to hot dry summers.

For potato growers, perhaps using less polythene and increasing water storage.

Local market supply has been severely affected by the loss of Woodside Farms. Some of the slack may be picked up by other growers, but not all. There are a small number of new producers who can provide seasonal fruit and vegetables and it is imperative that the industry finds a way to encourage their success. At the moment, many of them are confined to selling via SCOOP, the consumer led cooperative, or hedge veg stalls. I believe we must find a way to integrate them into mainstream retail outlets.

I believe the next six months to be a critical period for Jersey agriculture. The ever-increasing cost of labour (14% in 10 months) has more than wiped out any increased support in the 2023 Government budget. The Council of Ministers intention to further increase the minimum wage to a living wage must be coupled with extra support for the industry – otherwise it will cease to exist.

**Contact the Jersey Farmers' Union**  
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# The Jersey Royal *the state of the potato*

Alasdair Crosby spoke to Mike Renouard  
(*business unit director*) and Nigel Holliday  
(*commercial director*) of the Jersey  
Royal Company



The Jersey Royal Company is now over 20 years old and is the largest farm in the Island. It grows, packs and supplies the Jersey Royal new potato to UK retailers, mostly to the supermarket sector.

It farms around 8,300 vergées annually across 1,500 fields, and employs around 250 staff. It produces and packs approximately 14,000 tonnes of potatoes per year.

**“ We were in drought conditions during our main growing and harvesting season, so unless we could irrigate, we got stunted growth and poor skin finish on the tubers**

In 2014 it became part of Produce Investments plc, the Berwickshire-based and AIM (Alternative Investment Market) listed company, owners of the Greenvale AP company, based in Peterborough.

To obtain an overall picture of ‘the state of the potato’ at the moment, two key players in the company commented on the 2022 season – Mike Renouard, business unit director and Nigel Holliday, commercial director. Between them, they told a story that is fairly dark – as it is for so much of agriculture.

### The season

The 2022 growing season has been very tough. The weather has not been kind, although it wasn't a bad planting season in the first few months – just a bit on the wet side, and reasonably mild. After early April, there was no more rain. July saw the hottest day ever in Jersey's history. There was no rain all the way through to August, apart from one short spell which was too light and brief to have any effect.

Mike said: ‘We were in drought conditions during our main growing and harvesting season, so unless we could irrigate, we got stunted growth and poor skin finish on the tubers. Harvesting in particular was a very dusty affair: there was dust on the potatoes and dry soils were hard on the machinery. We had a low yield. It hasn't been a great season.

‘It has also affected the seed for next year. We have had to concentrate on irrigating our seed crop – after all, that is our future.’

### Marketing the crop

‘The market was very subdued across all sectors,’ according to Nigel. ‘Whether it was vegetables or fruit, fresh or frozen – they all saw a decline in sales. Also, for all the reasons that are constantly mentioned, we had extraordinary amounts of inflation, which we had to try to pass on to our supermarket customers. Shoppers were buying less, and were more price sensitive, both factors affected sales. It's been a bit of a challenge.

‘That being said, the Jersey Royal is still one of the biggest brands in fresh produce. It is still a really strong name.

‘Our exports subsidise the cost to Island retailers of southbound containers. Without our volume the containers would on most occasions be going back empty. So even if we are not supplying much food for the Island, we are subsidising food coming in.’

**“ Shoppers were buying less, and were more price sensitive, both factors affected sales. It's been a bit of a challenge... That being said, the Jersey Royal is still one of the biggest brands in fresh produce. It is still a really strong name**





## The challenges

Numerous.

To detail the main problems:

- The cost of fuel (red diesel) has increased over 200% since the start of 2021.
- The cost of fertiliser is four times what it was two years ago.
- Labour can be a challenge. The Jersey Royal Company now has to go further afield to find labour, which makes the situation more challenging. Five years ago, most of the work force came from Portugal or Poland. Now they come from Romania, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Philippines, Brazil, Kenya...
- There are additional costs of getting workers here and back home again, and the added complexity of communication with a multilingual workforce.
- The minimum wage. 'That really affects us,' Mike said.
- 'The reason for minimum wage is to help with the costs of living – and the main cost of living in Jersey is the cost of rental accommodation. Agricultural staff are not exposed to that as subsidised accommodation is supplied by their employers, which assists their living costs. We only charge for their accommodation the maximum offset that the minimum wage allows us, and that hasn't been keeping up with the cost of living. Minimum wage has increased 31% since January 2020 or 46% since January 2018.'
- There is a big challenge from both early potato crops in the UK, and imports providing more competition for Jersey Royals.
- The workers do not get medical coverage for the first six months of their employment. By the time they become eligible, the working season is almost over. If they return the next year, they have to start at the beginning again, with no medical coverage. Granted, that will be one problem less next year, when returning workers who have been in the Island for six months in the preceding year will automatically be covered.

“ The reason for minimum wage is to help with the costs of living – and the main cost of living in Jersey is the cost of rental accommodation



## Local food from former potato land?

It has often been said that the amount of land currently under potatoes for an export cash crop should instead be used for producing local crops for local people.

Mike said: 'Probably we will see that next year. We work very closely with dairy farmers and with Jersey Hemp. So, there will be a decrease of land under potatoes.'

'But diverse crops for local people? That concept is only viable if people are prepared to pay for those local crops. You can't grow crops at a loss.'

## The Covid factor

Every Island business had some form of support through the Covid pandemic – except agriculture, the sole exception.

Staff problems increased; there were problems in keeping staff isolated when working in the fields. There was extra time and expense in transporting workers to the field – making sure that the seating arrangements in the minibuses were Covid-compliant, for example. Although each group was isolated in their own 'bubble' during the working day, that didn't stop some passers-by from taking photos and reporting them to the police for breaking Covid regulations.

Sales dropped off; customers both locally and in the UK had to queue to enter shops. Industry representations to government for emergency funding had no effect.

“**Jersey Royals are quick and easy to cook and can turn a variety of everyday meals into a special treat, – ideal for a time of austerity and inflation**”



## On the positive side of farming...

- Earlier this year, The Jersey Royal Company was officially launched as the Island's first LEAF Demonstration Farm. See our article on page 60 titled 'Demonstrating sustainability'.
- The state of the soil continues to improve, as farming rotation periods lengthen and eelworm and other problems and infestations are kept in check or eradicated. No anti eelworm chemicals are now put on to the land.
- Regenerative farming is practised; cover crops are planted to improve the soil after the potato harvest.
- Their 'best practice' increases their yield without the necessity of using more land.

## On the positive side of marketing the crop...

- A joint marketing campaign in 2022 included celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, who was promoting Jersey Royals.
- For next year, Nigel said: "The focus of our campaign in 2023 is "Simply Seasonal". We know people are struggling to get by. Jersey Royals are quick and easy to cook and can turn a variety of everyday meals into a special treat, – ideal for a time of austerity and inflation."

- The marketing thrust is mainly on social media and short form videos – a way of promoting the product to a younger generation.
- Nigel said: 'Generation Z spend 23% of their income on food & drink. They are experimenting, they are learning to cook as opposed to relying on ready meals.'
- It is often said that the idea of 'meat and two veg' meals has become old-fashioned and outdated, and potatoes have lost out to rice and pasta. Potatoes were seen to be 'a bad thing' for the Atkins Diet. But Jersey Royals are no less convenient to cook than pasta. Jersey Royals need no scrubbing or peeling; just pop them into water, let the pan boil and wait for 15-20 minutes. What could be easier?

In summary, Mike said: "The situation is very challenging and government needs to play a much bigger role than it has been doing. There is no level playing field with agricultural support given to other countries."

'If they don't support agriculture, there won't be an agricultural industry – and that will greatly affect the rural landscape that many take for granted.'

**For an expanded version of this interview, please see our website: [www.ruraljersey.co.uk](http://www.ruraljersey.co.uk)**



# Demonstrating sustainability

## Earlier this year, the Jersey Royal Company was officially launched as the Island's first LEAF Demonstration Farm. By Cathy Le Feuvre

**A**fter a 'virtual' launch back in May 2020, which was held online thanks to Covid pandemic restrictions, in May this year an 'in-person' event was finally held at the company's headquarters at Peacock Farm in Trinity, to celebrate and recognise the organisation's commitment as a centre of excellence for sustainable farming, high environmental standards and climate positive agricultural and horticultural practices.

LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) is the leading global organisation delivering more sustainable food and farming. Among other things, the LEAF Network includes Demonstration Farms - working farms that are committed to delivering and promoting sustainable farming.

The Jersey Royal Company was the first local farm to become a LEAF member in 1997 and it achieved LEAF Marque certification in 2005 - the LEAF Marque is a farm assurance system, showing that food has been grown sustainably with care for the environment. In 2019, when all the local dairy and arable farmers became LEAF Marque certified, Jersey became the first LEAF Marque island in the world.

This May, members of the local farming and wider community gathered at Peacock Farm to celebrate the LEAF status, and to learn more about how the Jersey Royal Company are committed to existing and future sustainable farming practices.

Some of the guests also enjoyed a conducted tour of fields of tea plants – the Jersey Royal Company family includes Jersey Fine Tea – followed by a visit to potato fields and the Jersey Royal packing house to learn more about the sustainable systems which form part of the company's ethos and processes.

The LEAF Network also includes Innovation Centres, which are research establishments that are pioneering and developing new approaches to something called Integrated Farm Management (IFM), which is central to the LEAF ethos. IFM is a multi-faceted nature-based approach to farming that uses the best of modern technology along with traditional practices, to ensure that all aspects of the business are balanced for maximum sustainability. This incorporates everything from organisation and planning, soil management and fertility, crop health and protection, pollution control and the management of farming by-products, energy efficiency, water management, landscape and nature conservation and animal husbandry.

It also includes the willingness to engage with the community in which the LEAF farmers live and work. The Jersey Royal Company is the first LEAF Demonstration Farm outside of mainland UK and it joins 38 others from every farming sector whose mission is to promote the sustainable farming principles of IFM to other farmers as well as to industry organisations, politicians and community groups. This includes education and hosting very successful annual Open Farm Sundays, which are usually held in June.

This year LEAF celebrates its 30th anniversary and Vicky Robinson, LEAF Director Technical, who was visiting Jersey in that capacity for the first time, officially welcomed the Jersey Royal Company to the LEAF Network and explained that the Demonstration Farms have been central to what the organisation stands for – 'innovation, practical and farmer led'.

“ We are delighted to have been recognised by LEAF for our approach to advancing more climate positive farming and we greatly look forward to the role we can play as a both a Demonstration Farm and LEAF Marque certified business, in sharing our vision and inspiring other farmers

Mike Renouard, Business Unit Director at The Jersey Royal Company, told the gathering that they were committed to Integrated Farm Management across the business.

'We continually look to develop, improve, and streamline practices to be more efficient, but crucially, more sustainable. We are delighted to have been recognised by LEAF for our approach to advancing more climate positive farming and we greatly look forward to the role we can play as a both a Demonstration Farm and LEAF Marque certified business, in sharing our vision and inspiring other farmers,' Mike said.

The May 2022 launch was attended by the then Lieutenant-Governor of Jersey, Air Chief Marshal, Sir Stephen Dalton GCB, who later planted a tree to mark the occasion, and supported by Agrii, Jersey Water, Farm Jersey, Jersey Farmers Union, Rubis and David Dumosch, as well as agricultural and horticultural merchants.

**More information about LEAF can be found at [www.leaf.eco](http://www.leaf.eco) and visit [www.jerseyroyal.co.uk](http://www.jerseyroyal.co.uk) for more about the Jersey Royal Company**



# Putting the techno-cart before the mechanical horse

**Erik Rueb is the Jersey agent for Grimme, the huge global company that is at the forefront of potato, vegetable and beet technology. He spoke to Alasdair Crosby about how technology is reshaping the arable sector and about machines that will pull tractors (and not the other way round)**

**A**nyone who drives or repairs a car knows how computer technology has largely reshaped mechanical problems into IT problems. Levers are replaced by touchscreens; instead of getting underneath a car with a spanner and searching for a fault, you can plug into computerised diagnostics online. The same tendency, writ large, applies to the advanced agricultural machinery used by the potato industry.

At the forefront of this technology is the huge German-based company, Grimme, the Jersey agent for which over the past seven years has been Erik Rueb, although he has been working on Grimme machinery for the past 38 years. In that time, he has seen a lot of changes.

'It is a lot more about electronics. Whereas in the past it was levers, now it is touchscreen. Tractors pulling a machine are GPS controlled.

'When it comes to tractors pulling the machine, a lot of it is GPS auto steer systems. There is much more automation. From a mechanic's point of view, it is easier to diagnose a problem now, because you can go to your computer, which tells you that the hydraulic valve is not operating properly. That gets straight to the point: instead of having to search for the problem, now you can see immediately where the problem probably lies. That helps a lot, of course.'





He continued: 'There is ever more complex machinery; it's not so much now about changing bearings, more about downloading software etc – more like being a computer engineer than a mechanic. Control boxes are all touchscreen. It has changed a lot – and is continuing to change.'

Asked how he saw the future, Erik replied: 'Pretty much more of the same: more and more automation. Up to now, the tractor has controlled the machine it pulls behind it. What we are looking at now is the machine controlling the tractor! It tells the tractor how fast to go or how slow to go – that technology is still in development, but it's coming. It's very much a question of the cart pulling the horse – that's on its way.'

Erik, originally from the Netherlands, has been working in Jersey for the past 40 years. He started as a herdsman but transferred to the arable side of things and did a lot of maintenance and mechanic's work. He later worked with Nick Mourant at Melech Farm, with whom he still works closely, and he runs his own business, E R Engineering, which also maintains forklifts, tractors, cranes, bin lorries... 'We do anything,' he said.

In the past he did work for Grimme in the UK, for big self-propelled machines. Then he was asked by Grimme to take over the Jersey agency.

Grimme is a German company – they are the biggest company in the world when it comes to potato machinery: harvesters, planters, graders, as well as beet harvesters and it has diversified into fresh store machinery, cabbage harvesting, bean harvesting ... anything to do, really, with the commercial cultivation of potatoes and vegetables.

The ever-increasing degree of automation is because humans are the most expensive item for a farming business: in these present difficult times it is imperative to save money wherever and whenever possible.

'In Jersey traditionally we have always planted by hand because it has given the advantage of an early crop. Now, we are planting more and more with machines. It's not the same; it means we can plant a little later in the year – but it is so much cheaper.'

'The minimum wage keeps on going up and up and further up, and so labour gets more and more expensive. So we have to mechanise.'

The problem with mechanisation is that the most profitable part of a season is the month of April, from the very early part of the crop. That tides the industry through May and June, when prices are lower. Without a crop in April, it is an unprofitable year. And to produce an early April crop, the steep slopes of cõtils are needed, where one can still only pick by hand.

'So, mix and match,' Erik said. 'The early crop still has to be picked by hand, but later on in the summer the harvest is all automated, because it's so much cheaper. To produce an April crop means hand planting in the winter weather of January and February and finishing by 4 o'clock as it starts to get dark by then. Where and when we can, we use automatic planters so we can switch on the lights and keep on going!'

'It means you get a lot more work done in the working day, and with only two people in the field, instead of 20. Any automation makes things so much more viable.'

Another way of reducing costs is through placing the seed crop in tonne bins in a cool room instead of standing the potatoes in October. When they come out of the cooler, they are warmed up for a few days, and then they go straight into the automatic machine and are planted. 'It's expensive to run a cooler, but it's a lot cheaper than standing potatoes,' he said.

The three parts of Erik's job means a lot of variety, but with that comes a lot of responsibility and a lot of long hours ... and as he said: 'You don't see many young people getting into mechanics. It is not perceived as being a glamorous job. Finance is too attractive – and pays better; nevertheless, my job is still the best in the world and I love it!'



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# Whatever happened to harmony?

**Kevin Hervé,  
the now retired  
owner of Harmony  
Produce and of its  
unused site of empty  
glasshouses, told  
Alasdair Crosby about  
past Harmony and  
present dissonance**

Anyone who remembers the Harmony Produce site in St Clement could not fail to be saddened by its current state.

They would remember those productive glasshouses that gleamed bright in the sunshine, filled with a crop of ripening tomatoes, specifically a sweet baby plum tomato on the vine, branded 'Jersey Jewel'.

The empty glasshouses stand now as a monument to an industry failed – a wasteland. But it was not through its own fault that it collapsed: the stars in their courses were set against it.

Retired glasshouse grower Kevin Hervé is the owner of Harmony Produce and still owns the site at Les Tours Farm. He recounted the history of the business: the farm bought in the late 1960s, growing indoor tomatoes and iris bulbs – three to five million of them throughout the winter, under glass. Eventually the old glasshouses were knocked down and replaced by the present structures in the 1970s.

Starting with just under 3½ vergées of glass, the business expanded to over 10 vergées of tomato production on the site along La Rue des Nouettes. There were another three nurseries that the company rented or owned around the Island.

Kevin said: 'We supplied "Jersey Jewel" tomatoes to 1,200 Tesco stores. Each pack had my photograph on it. When my girls were at university, they would buy a packet and tell the girl at the till: "That's my dad!"

'Protected crops were a thriving export business and a vibrant part of the economy, but everything turned against it to make it non-viable: high freight costs, lack of subsidy compared to EU producers that made their crops cheaper, the cost of heating, light and water. Jersey's crop was just uncompetitive.

'Then, in addition to all that, came, in 2008, the impact of a recently founded giant glasshouse business in East Kent, called "Thanet Earth", which quite literally finished us off. They were in their first year of production, growing 50 hectares of tomatoes and peppers under glass. The money came from the EU, as did the cheap labour and growing skills. They had very modern glass, and gas from Russia was piped through Germany and into Kent. They were also 10 minutes away from the nearest Tesco depot.

'Our advantage had completely changed. Once they had built this big unit in Kent, we just couldn't compete any longer.'

Kevin mused quizzically: 'I wonder what has happened to their business this year, now that a gas bill has gone up from 85p a therm at the beginning of the year to £8.50 now?'

He continued: 'By the end of that year all the Jersey tomato growers were struggling. We had a terrible year, and in my case, Tesco was saying to me: "Look, you've done a wonderful job. Your service levels are extremely high: 98% to 99%. But we want you to reduce the price! You need to compete with Thanet.

'I used to travel to inspect our produce in their outlets and then report back. They realised I was putting myself out: I was their smallest producer. They were very supportive, but we couldn't match the price.

'Other Jersey growers did the same as us, so the industry died that year. We all ended up with a big loss. Thankfully, the banks were understanding and they helped us through. In my own case, 40 members of staff, some of whom had worked for us for 30 years, were all made redundant. It was an incredibly sad time.'

Kevin said that the growers had been warning the Government of Jersey for years that this collapse could happen – it responded by withdrawing support. In 2001, the glasshouse growers had proposed an exit policy: Government could buy all the glasshouses; they could rent them back to growers if they wanted to carry on growing, the others could be used to build social housing. At the same time, the 2001 Oxford Policy Management Report on the Agriculture and Fisheries Industry in Jersey concluded: back the industry - or forget it.

The Government forgot it.

This was in contrast to its level of support for the dairy industry.





During this period Jersey had too many cattle and was overproducing milk.

‘They negotiated a deal with the States, that the cows would be shipped away at £1,000 a cow and planning applications to convert dairy farm buildings would be considered to facilitate an exit strategy. In some ways this was quite right, because the choice was: save the dairy industry or the glasshouse industry? If there were no cows in Jersey fields, it would be a disaster. The glasshouse industry was pretty efficient, but we were burning fuel nonetheless and we were on a hiding to nothing. So, the decision was made not to support horticulture.’

So, what is the Hervé family doing about all those redundant glasshouses? They have made various applications to Planning, for example, to build seven houses of modest size taking up half the total area, together with dry storage units and a small extension of the Agri-Co business, an agricultural engineering company (owned by Kevin’s son-in-law, Simon Cousins) to make it more efficient. The rest would be returned to agriculture and / or the natural environment... The application was refused. They are appealing.

Some small businesses have expressed an interest in renting one or more of the separate glasshouses. None of them have shown a convincing business plan, since the usage would have to be for a purpose that was viable. The cost of maintaining and insuring the glasshouse structures is enormous, as is the redevelopment of the glass. The rental would have to cover these costs.

The only possibility would be medicinal cannabis farming, but the area is not big enough to make this feasible, as it would be for Stanley Payn’s glasshouses at Fauvic nearby.

The nurseries definitely need sorting out; boilers and pipes with the potential to pollute have already been removed at Les Tours at a considerable expense.

‘Some people seem to think that you can just knock down a glasshouse and turn the area into a field. I don’t think they understand that we have to have sufficient income to clean the place up. We could not afford to demolish the whole area. It would cost about £2million.’

Could the area be used for housing development, as at the former Samarès Nurseries site near the Manor of the same name?

‘In our own case,’ said Kevin, ‘the site has no particular advantage for a large development. The approach to it is via a Green Lane and if it were at all possible, we would like to see an agricultural use returned to the site, combined with a partial development of some houses, the sale of which would fund the conversion of the rest of the area. But that would entail Planning permission – a huge cost in itself.’

Kevin added: ‘Nobody wants to see the countryside built over – certainly not us – we have been a farming family for generations. It would be sensible to knock down the glasshouses if the costs of doing so could be recovered.

‘So - what can we do with it? We don’t want to retain redundant, unsightly, and unsafe glass; we can’t afford to knock it down; we can’t afford to redevelop it; potential tenants can’t afford the rental and we can’t obtain “change of use” permission.

‘Seemingly there is no way out.’



# Holme developments

**The owner of Holme Grown, Stanley Payn, talked to Alasdair Crosby about the evolution of Fauvic Nurseries to the present complex of farm shop and café – and the plans for the site in the future**

**A** century ago, William Payn began growing outdoor tomatoes on land at La Rocque. Indoor production began in 1967. Then the glasshouse site was extended from 1968 to 1975. There arose what can best be described as a cathedral to the tomato: long vistas of tomatoes and peppers, as far as the eye could see, protected by shining houses of glass.

William's great-grandson, Stanley, said that the business changed to producing vine tomatoes instead of round tomatoes, the majority of the crop going to Sainsbury's. New glass was built to accommodate the expansion of the business. It was runner-up in the British Protected Awards in 1999.

But the new century saw increasing business problems, culminating in 2007 when the inception of the giant 'Thanet Earth' protected crop business in East Kent brought the whole of the Island's own industry crashing down: it was informed by the supermarkets that they could now buy cheaper elsewhere, and Jersey's produce was no longer required.

Only one producer was left to continue supplying locally grown protected crops to the local market.

So, what to do with 30 acres – or 67.5 vergées – of now redundant glasshouses? Diversification was the obvious answer.

'Holme Grown Herbs' made its appearance: 'We started to grow and export herbs, and we had a niche within the local market. We still do that, but the herbs are imported, because of the cost of growing them. They now all come from Israel instead! Yes – it doesn't seem to make sense – but that's the way of the world.'

A small farm shop was opened in 2003, which quickly became very popular and was very quickly expanded: there was a floristry department in 2005; the café came in 2007 with just soup and sandwiches to begin with, but then expanded from 60 to 90 covers; in 2009 a garden centre was created.

Holme Grown remains the most southerly farm shop in the British Isles and, as Stanley said: 'We are just a bit different from a normal shop!'

The business continues to evolve: Stanley is now submitting planning applications for a new Jersey Hospice shop, care home and medicinal cannabis operation.

The new Jersey Hospice Care shop, located in the present Holme Grown car park, would provide an additional donation and retail outlet in the east of the Island.

Stanley said: 'The Hospice has been looking for a site in the east for the past 10 years and not found anything. I have been working with them for the past 3½ years on this. The Hospice is heavily reliant on community funding, a new shop would be very important to the continuation of their ever-increasing service.'

Jersey Hospice is currently celebrating its 40th anniversary and a fundraising retail shop would complement the Parish/Government recycling bank activity already on the site, whereby one journey of disposing of cardboard, tins, batteries etc can be linked with contributions of reusable products for a worthy cause.

The new care home would take the place of the now disused garden centre site and associated glasshouse block. It would be operated by a respected care provider company and would comprise a 50-bed nursing home, 'built to high specification and utilising the latest medical technology,' Stanley said. 'It will ensure that the beautiful surroundings are designed in a style sympathetic to the locality and area.'

The medicinal cannabis operation would be on a much larger scale than anything that has been done before in the Channel Islands.

It would be run by GroVida Jersey Ltd, which has applied for a licence to cultivate medicinal cannabis.

This is a joint venture between Oasthouse Ventures, a leading UK renewable energy and agri-development company, and GroVida LDA in Portugal, an established European cannabis cultivation and manufacture organisation.

The associated landscape strategy is focused on maintaining and enhancing the existing green field boundaries, creating footpaths, and the re-establishment of agricultural field boundaries and wetlands, and a wildlife area.

Stanley said: 'The cannabis operation would include everything from the mother plants' propagation, and then production and drying of the product. In the long-term, the whole processing would be done here as well.

'All we are trying to do is to utilise resources, and substantial investment has been promised. It would employ 52 people, a lot of them part-timers, or housewives who have only got a few hours spare – it's very light work.

It would not be visible from the road and would be powered by totally green energy: solar panels and combined heat and power generated electricity – way ahead of anything that has been up to now in the Channel Islands.'

Production would be totally controlled, Stanley said. 'In our case, the Home Office has been here, checked the site, so all the groundwork has been done – there just remains reams and reams of paperwork.'

Production might start as early as next year if Planning permission is granted. Between £12 million and £15 million would be invested in this project.

Stanley said: 'They talk about attracting the super-rich to come and live in Jersey, but this project would be contributing much more to the Island than just a few rich families would contribute.'

He concluded: 'What we are trying to do is to move the evolution of the whole site forward, ready for the next 60 years.'

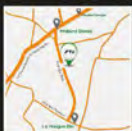
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# A family business

**Matthew Lamy of Somerleigh Farms, St Peter, talked to Alasdair Crosby about their family farm and farming in Jersey – its past, present, and future**

**A**t the end of October, the fields are bare. One potato cycle has ended, the next one has yet to begin. Matthew Lamy was standing in a field of ‘prickly potato’ – a green cover crop that will help to control Potato Cyst Nematodes (PCN) in the soil. The crop will be ploughed back into the soil in due course before another crop of Jersey Royal potatoes is planted. Nearby was another Lamy field of a different type of cover crop.

‘I would prefer to have fields of calabrese and cauliflower after the potato harvest has been lifted,’ Matthew said. ‘Planting cover crops helps build up the organic matter in the soil and helps with soil erosion. We used to be one of the largest calabrese growers in Jersey.’

In these fields – back in the 1990s, on a nice, sunny autumn day – we would be picking caulis and calabrese now and shipping them off to the UK.’

‘The demise of the “other crops” is all to do with the cost of shipping them across to the UK. Only volume sales make exporting viable – not just selling a few bits here and a few bits there – especially with the new increased minimum wage of £10.50 an hour. It would make even less sense for us to send a worker to dig the crop.’

The next viable commercial crop they will probably lose will be the daffodils, he said. A few years ago, they use to plant 150 vergées; now they are planting only 25 vergées.

‘What’s the point of growing daffs if you haven’t got the labour force to pick them or you can’t afford to deploy it? We pick only what we can – so that’s a small area, which the workers can pick if weather stops us from planting Jersey Royals.’

In addition, there are the same old problems of the high shipping costs: ‘We carry on with them mainly because of rotation of the potato land. Daffodils help in the PCN problem, and they rest the field. We now rotate for two or three years and then go back in with a potato crop, without having to use chemicals to deal with PCN – but it’s not a big earner.’



Which just leaves the Island's growers with the Jersey Royal potato crop. In their own case, they export through the Albert Bartlett group to major UK retailers including Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Lidl.

'The supermarkets need to pay us more. The problem this year is that we tried to get more money for the crop, but sales declined. It's a Catch 22 situation at the moment.'

The Lamy family own two farms: his father, Peter, lives at Somerleigh Farm, St Peter, and Matthew and his family in La Verte Rue Farm, St Ouen. The land bank totals 874 vergées. It has been in the family since the early 1960s, when his father, Peter, moved from St Martin, where his family had been farming for several generations.

**“ The supermarkets need to pay us more. The problem this year is that we tried to get more money for the crop, but sales declined. It's a Catch 22 situation at the moment**

Their very diffuse holdings stretch from the uttermost east (Fliquet) to the uttermost west (L'Etacq).

His mother, Marion, was born a Le Feuvre, and St Peter is nothing if not Le Feuvre country.

**“ We could sell up, but we don't want to give up our business and our heritage. It's been in the family for so long and we're passionate about it!**

'We could sell up,' Matthew said, 'but we don't want to give up our business and our heritage. It's been in the family for so long and we're passionate about it!'

Much of what they do is highly traditional: every autumn they collect vrac off La Pulente enough for 60 vergées, which they use mostly on the sandy soil in the west of the Island. Côtils are ploughed and planted by hand. A local beekeeper makes use of the cover crops to produce his honey. They are accredited to LEAF and Red Tractor assurance schemes.

Matthew is chairman of the Environment and Resources Sector of the Jersey Farmers' Union: 'Caring for the environment continues to be an important consideration for Island farmers,' he said. 'Our office is the countryside, and this means that we are increasingly under public scrutiny, both for our stewardship of the countryside and also for the environmental credentials of our produce.'

The business is always looking at ways in which to improve its energy efficiency, reduce its environmental impact and to enhance the natural environment. Carbon is a hot topic at the moment, and they work with the Trinity AgTech Group (nothing to do with the Parish – it is based in London), which advises Jersey's farming sector on their carbon output and conducts audits enabling them to understand how much carbon is being captured or sequestered.

It has often been said that the area under potatoes should be reduced, to allow both for a greater diversity of crops to be grown for the local market and to increase crop rotation periods.



'Everyone wants to reduce,' he said, 'but the trouble is, reducing the volume of the crop also reduces our incomes, which are strained enough as it is, with the massively increased cost of inputs.'

'We do need to increase the price of the crop to the multiples. Consumers are just going to have to pay more. People always say that food is expensive; in fact, in recent years it has been too cheap, and farmers cannot afford to produce it. In any event, selling it cheap only devalues the product.'

The business is still very much a family concern. His father, wife and sister are all involved in it; his nephew Benjamin (3), loves to play with toy tractors; his daughters, Estelle (10) and Georgina (4), are members of the RJA&HS and this year, Estelle showed cattle for the first time at their Autumn Show. Georgina also likes to get involved in activities on the farm.

'We all live, breath, eat and sleep the Jersey Royal potato,' he said. 'We just hope that we can pass on our inheritance – and Jersey's inheritance – to future generations.'

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# Could there be a vibrant future for Jersey Royal

## growers?

Doug Richardson is perhaps best known to the non-farming public as the originator of the Richardson's Jersey Royals, sold in paper bags to retail outlets in Jersey and further afield. Despite the current challenges to the industry, he hopes there may be a way ahead for it in the future



**D**oug Richardson, currently vice president of the Jersey Farmers' Union, has always a wealth of new and innovative business ideas fizzing away like a glass of Alka-Seltzer.

'Jersey's farming heritage is deeply ingrained and makes us all the more determined to find new ways to drive this legacy forward for the next generation,' he said. 'Farming incomes are under ever-increasing pressure, so I have a strong desire not merely to survive, but to thrive.'

'This resulted in us creating our own brand of Jersey Royals, which is very popular in Jersey. Building on this success, we are now well progressed with our plans to make our product more widely available.'

### Where exactly?

'Well... customs rules and shipping arrangements permitting, there is no reason why we couldn't market and sell our spuds worldwide.'

In 2015, he decided to attempt to change totally how Jersey Royals were sold in local supermarkets in the Island. Small paper bags, previously only available from roadside stalls in Jersey, began to appear in the Co-Op and other food retailers around the Island, bearing the logo 'Richardson's Jersey Royals.'



The potatoes inside the heat-sealed bags are hand picked and 'seaweed enhanced'. His revolutionary concept is to dig the potatoes and to fill the bags in the field – no conventional packhouse needed.

'Our systems are totally unique in the potato industry and our Jersey Royals are now very popular, Island-wide, and are receiving high acclaim in the UK. Simon Hopkinson (the author of the acclaimed cookbook *Roast Chicken and Other Stories* and the founder of London's Bibendum restaurant) is a customer and he recently called his discovery of our spuds "the best news in years".

“ Our systems are totally unique in the potato industry and our Jersey Royals are now very popular, Island-wide, and are receiving high acclaim in the UK

'Our unique system ensures the potatoes are exposed to the absolute minimum amount of friction and therefore the potatoes retain as much of their delicate skins as possible in order to fully capture the famous Jersey Royal flavour.

'Combined with a lifting regime that ensures we move fields frequently, we ensure that we are surfing the optimum flavour zone within the crop and maintaining the captured freshness by quickly heat sealing the Royals within the specially lined bags.'

Eager to find new ways to improve margins, Doug introduced the use of a seaweed algae-based product called *Bio-Algeen* at planting time. As well as wanting a marketable yield increase, it is also an easy way to share in 'regenerative agriculture' and he has seen it contribute to soil health as well as to the flavour and texture of the Jersey Royals. So, in his words: 'Every aspect from field to fork ensures the very best Jersey Royals possible.'

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“ The very high quality of the packaging is very important in maintaining and enhancing the status of the Jersey Royal

‘It has been a joy to operate,’ Doug said. ‘The potatoes are hand picked on to two side belts before entering a spray tunnel where the amount of water jets, speed of conveyance, velocity etc have now all been determined to leave the skin almost entirely intact. Then, an operator on the harvester applies generous amounts of coir (coconut fibre) as the potatoes fill crates before eventual grading and packing with all the preassembled equipment at the end of the field.

‘There is a real advantage with the “washing and coir coating” of the potatoes, in that it not only increases, but also extends the freshness within the packs. By using this very dry material the moisture on the potatoes is absorbed into the all- encasing material, and the skins’ delicacy are further maintained. There is also a cushioning effect when the potatoes are gently graded, as coir is inherently softer and less abrasive than soil. A further advantage: the washing and application of coir ensures a consistent product appearance regardless of field conditions.

‘In a nutshell (sorry about the pun), customers pick up the bags in the knowledge that the quality is consistent. Also, the consumer finds the potatoes much easier to prepare for cooking and the moistened skin rubs off a little more easily.’

He continued: ‘It is a very exciting time now that everything is ready to go. The year 2023 will be a very important year for us; we’ve got something here that is really good, and very possibly something to give the next generation coming through some hope for the future.’

Doug only sells to retail outlets in Jersey and Guernsey, otherwise he exports directly to end consumers in the UK by mail order via the Internet (delivery is within 24 hours if ordered before 2pm on the previous day).

They use the same sized brown bags for local retailers as they do for the Internet orders and for catering customers, which seems to work very well.

‘As far as I am aware, Richardson’s are the only operation in the UK to use this form of packaging on fresh potatoes,’ he said.

‘The very high quality of the packaging is very important in maintaining and enhancing the status of the Jersey Royal.’

As early as 2017, Doug was generating interest from European buyers, but a solution had to be found to overcome various EU regulations, notably the phytosanitary requirements, relating to measures for the control of plant diseases, especially in agricultural crops.

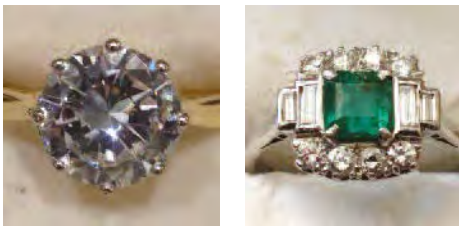
Doug moved forward with an idea that had been in his mind for a long time and so by the end of the 2021 season his new special hand picking potato harvester, grader, mobile pack house, and special transport unit had all passed trials. This ensured that things could progress to the final stage: to modify the harvester to apply water to the surface of the hand picked potatoes to ‘dissolve’ the soil off the potatoes, thus complying with Europe’s demanding phytosanitary rules.



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I am a watercolour, mixed media and acrylic painter who travelled extensively until settling in Jersey in 1991.

My pet and equestrian portraits are popular and I have my artwork on the walls of homes in the UK, Europe and USA. I am available for commissions and work directly from photographs – getting the eyes right is crucial! If you have a clear photo of the animals that you would like painted then you can happily leave the rest up to me.



Contact Anita Eastwood | Facebook: [anitaeastwoodart](#)  
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# Last word

## Become a RAKtivist! Donna Le Marrec has the last word

**T**his year seems to have been especially difficult both here at home and in the wider world.

I have been to a few funerals and only one wedding (is that my age?), friends have had terrible tribulations to overcome, and our beloved cat Ruby died.

It also feels like we have gone back in time to the 1970s and the Winter of Discontent in the UK with widespread strikes, electricity blackouts and soaring rates of inflation. I can vividly remember my mum searching for candles in the dark and my dad digging out our gas camping stove so we could cook (probably Findus Crispy Pancakes).

At the moment I am thoroughly sick of politics (local and global), the energy crisis, climate crisis and Russia! So, I have subscribed to something called 'Positive News' in the hope that I can find some joy!

Positive News is a magazine, both print version and online ([www.positive.news](http://www.positive.news)) about good things. When much of the media is full of doom and gloom, it reports on what's going right. It is a pioneer of 'constructive journalism' which is focused on progress, possibility, and solutions.

Highlights of the most recent edition includes a study that has revealed a million more ancient trees in England than previously thought, a blueprint for the revival of high streets, growing 'green cities', retailers using paper bottles, rejuvenated rivers, electric 'flying' ferries and more... lovely, heart-warming stories that make the world seem a much nicer place and stories that make the future seem so much more positive.

What particularly struck a chord with me, as a perennial 'Moaning Minnie', was an article on 'gentle activism' and five small but significant things we can all do to improve the world right now:

### 1. Find the Joy

Simply put, joy is a radical act because it creates unity between people. 'Recognise that pleasure is a measure of freedom,' writes Adrienne Maree Brown in her bestselling book *Pleasure Activism*. Brown argues that what all activists are striving for – freedom, equality and justice – are in fact joyful states, and so pleasure is a powerful tool in helping us achieve them.

### 2. Fix something

A needle and thread are all you need to take a stand against throwaway culture. Upcycle clothing with some beautifully imperfect stitches, buy secondhand furniture, repair simple but broken things. Or take electrical items to a Repair Café (now also in the east of the Island as well as in the west) – get expert help to fix anything from bicycles to electrical appliances, for free.

### 3. Switch off

The digital world is engineered to keep us glued to the bad news cycle. Ditch those mobile phones, iPads and other devices: declare a screen-free bedroom. Get a real alarm clock, watch, calendar and notebook. And make a list of all the things you'd rather be doing!

### 4. Take a nap

The growing 'rest is resistance' movement invites you to slow down, to deprogramme yourself from the belief that you should be doing more, that we have to be productive every single moment of our lives. Connect with the beauty of being human. See your friends. Care for yourself and others, and rest.

### 5. Become a RAKtivist

Short for 'Random Acts of Kindness activist', this global kindness community is on a mission to make the world a nicer place with spontaneous 'acts of senseless beauty'. There are currently 43,209 signed up RAKtivists in 89 countries. Join them in reminding people how much goodness there is in the world.

I can add more to those five things.

Go sea swimming! I have met so many amazing women this year who swim daily. They all seem to glow with health and vitality! Cuddle a cat and go on a guided walk to learn more about this amazing island we all call home. I still have one beautiful and pampered feline friend, my sister has a mad Labrador puppy who has brought joy, and I have made the first step in terms of sea swimming and have bought a 'dryrobe'!

All I need now is the energy (and bravery) to take the plunge...



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