

RURAL

Jersey Country Life Magazine

Issue 46 | Spring 2024

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Gardens in a storm

The death and life of
trees at Samarès Manor's
Botanical Gardens

The Branchage - a kindly snip or the unkindest cut?

Proposed changes to the
Branchage Law

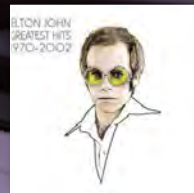
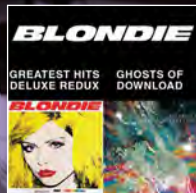
Special theme:
**Gardens and
gardening in
Jersey**





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Welcome

This Spring edition of RURAL has a 'gardens and gardening' special theme, which is appropriate enough, as this is the season when we should be outdoors preparing our gardens or our veg patches for the year ahead.

'Gardening as therapy' is a theme that is regularly mentioned in talks or in print, by people who are far more conversant with both gardening and therapies than the undersigned. So, I shall not add further to that word-board, other than to agree, 'how true'.

Might I suggest, however, that a connection to the earth is an intrinsic part of our human condition. Without that connection our lives are somehow incomplete, banished from the natural world and without our own domestic Edens to give us delight – even if our Eden consists of a couple of flowerpots or a tomato plant.

The 'art or practice of garden cultivation and management' is the definition of Horticulture, which is often paired with Agriculture, as in Jersey's own Royal Jersey Society.

There is a lot of talk about 'rewilding' at the moment – and in some ways, this seems a most romantic notion. Who, for example, would not like to see wolves once again roaming the wilder parts of Britain and to hear their wolf-song? (Well, local sheep farmers might not be too impressed with that idea). But unfounded and unfocussed enthusiasm for rewilding often seems like a panicked stampede back to the Palaeolithic. An inchoate desire, on the mainland, to cover swathes of the countryside with trees, perhaps as remission for the sin of air travel, is another example of this unfocussed enthusiasm.



Gardening – horticulture – agriculture. The three words should mean much the same thing. Whether we are tending a garden dear to us, or providing food for ourselves and friends in an allotment, or growing a commercial crop in a field, we should, with apologies to Kipling, consider that:

'Our Jersey is a garden, and such gardens are not made

By singing:—"Oh, how beautiful!" and sitting in the shade.'

Good, productive land – be it a garden or a field – can deal both with carbon issues and also help produce food for ourselves and our Island community.

Think gardens and crops, and cows in fields rather than trees in fields – at least cows don't blow over in a storm.

.....
Alasdair Crosby | Editor
www.ruraljersey.co.uk

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Alasdair Crosby". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

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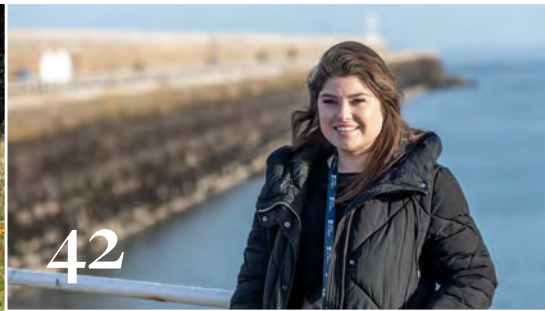
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A £300 voucher
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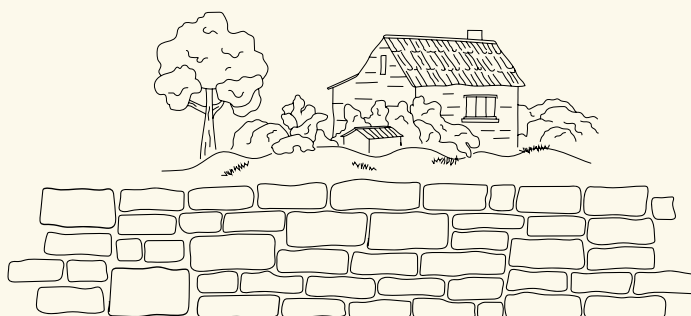
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Over the wall

A RURAL view



It is always quite astonishing how much can be said and written about potatoes. That's understandable, though, as the export of the Jersey Royal potato is the Island's main export industry and with dairying, one of the two pillars of agricultural production in Jersey.

Of course, it is easy enough to grow potatoes (or, indeed, most crops) in Jersey's favourable climate, but what about the market?

Well, despite some adverse circumstances – like there are less potatoes being eaten these days in the western world - the Jersey Royal industry is fighting back gallantly to let the world know about the Island's delicious Jersey Royals.

A new marketing trend that is emerging is a wish to expand the traditional UK-based export market to possible markets in Europe, if not even further afield. This is still in its early stages.

Another potato topic would be whether it is advisable to concentrate on an export market when there is so much emphasis of late on shortening the distance 'from farm to fork'. Should the Island be diminishing the land area under the export-led Jersey Royal crop, in favour of growing a wider diversity of produce for local consumption?

That is hardly a view likely to appeal to potato growers, of course. But it has to be said, that if you have a thriving export market, it's much easier then to supply the local market as a sideline. In addition, large scale export is better for the agricultural support industries; it helps employ more people, and provides greater revenue to lubricate the Island's wider economy.

Next question: how do you organise the export marketing of the Jersey Royal?

That is very much the topic of the minute. At the moment there are three ways of packing and exporting the produce to the export market: via the Jersey Royal Company, or Albert Bartlett and Sons, or via independent exporters. Each way has its merits and demerits.

The ethos of the Jersey Royal Company on its foundation, back in the early years of the Millennium, was to centralise and rationalise the businesses of smaller independent growers with an efficient corporate structure that could take advantage of economies of scale and best promote the crop in modern times.

The establishment of the Jersey Royal Company was followed in 2008 by the arrival in Jersey of Albert Bartlett and Sons, a Scottish based company which had a different structure: their suppliers remained independent, were not subsumed within a greater corporate whole, but were contracted individually to supply Bartlett's.

As we go to press, the Jersey Royal Company, which, in 2014 had been purchased by the UK group of Produce Investments Ltd, could now be purchased by Bartlett's, if approved by the Island's competition regulator. Bartlett's have made a formal application to the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority over the potential acquisition. At the time of writing, this is still pending.

A statement released by Tim Ward, Bartlett's Jersey operations director, has said: 'Consolidation of the Island's leading producers is seen by both businesses as key to delivering a sustainable future for the famous Jersey Royal product and continuing to deliver great product for consumers.'

Whether or not the sale is permitted, all this UK boardroom stuff begs the question: could not really the marketing of the crop return to Jersey? Is the Jersey Royal industry best controlled by entities that are less connected to Island life or local farming aspirations?

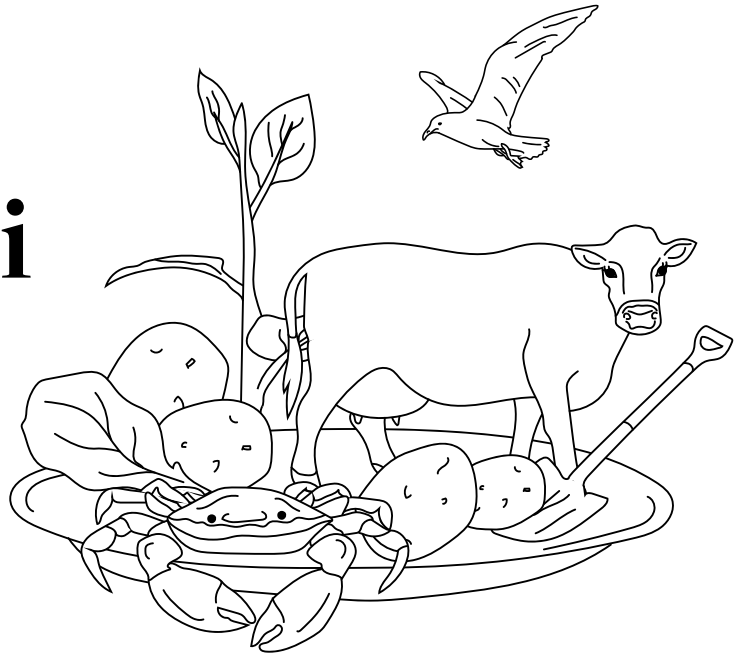
Fundamentally, what all Jersey growers want is a fair and reasonable return from the marketplace. The Jersey Royal is the only potato that carries the EU Protected Designation of Origin mark of authenticity (PDO) and so long as government ensures that it is being marketed in the best interests of Jersey and Jersey growers, the marketing framework is of lesser concern.

One framework that has been discussed is a farmer's cooperative, along the lines of the Jersey Milk Marketing Board, which would decide locally on the marketing of the crop and thus 'bring the Jersey Royal home' once again. But the possibility of a local cooperative is dependent on the agreement of all local growers, which may or may not be forthcoming.

One thing is undeniable: conversations about potato growing and marketing in Jersey will not cease because of cosy agreement or lack of anything much to talk about.

The Jersey Salmagundi

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



Open gardens for St John Ambulance

The gardens at Rosel Manor are being open to the public on the afternoon of 28 April for St John Ambulance, by kind permission of the owners, Stewart and Emma Johnston.

The gardens have not been open for many years and look magnificent in the spring.

The manor's chapel will also be open with teas served on the lawn next to it.

Intending visitors have been warned to wear shoes suitable for walking on rough ground.

The Garden is open from 2-5pm. Parking free. Children under 12 free. Entrance £7



Rural landscapes, saving seeds and food security

The RURAL magazine Jersey Landscape Art Awards evening will take place at the CCA International art gallery, as part of its Summer Exhibition.

This year, the annual competition awards evening will take place on Friday 12 July, and the presentation of the awards will come at the end of an afternoon event themed around food security and seed saving.

There will also be a further prize competition, titled 'Inspired by the Sea', introduced by CCA International.

Both competitions will follow the same format as the RURAL Landscape Art awards over the past five years. Works of art that have been selected to be a part of the CCA Summer Exhibition, and which portray Jersey's rural landscape or its surrounding seascape, will be judged separately by a team of local judges, and prizes awarded to the three winners of the landscape and seascape themed works of art.

The theme of both competitions is to acknowledge the inspiration that the Island's landscape and seascape provides for artists and to encourage them to produce artwork inspired by nature.

Works can be in any medium but the Landscape competition must find inspiration in Jersey landscapes, its farming, food, animals, plants – in general, the natural world. Similarly, the seascape competition focusses on Jersey's beaches and surrounding seas.

Deadline for submissions to the CCA Galleries International's Jersey Summer Exhibition is 7 April.

The expansion of the Awards into a longer event has been inspired by the current concern about food security in an uncertain world. It will focus on saving the seeds of edible and useful plants, with demonstrations and hands-on practice at saving seeds from the main edible plant families, companion plants and wildflower pollinator attractors.

Hosting the food and seed event is Laura Hudson, the gallery's development manager, and environmentalist Sheena Brockie.

The event will include demonstrations of seed saving techniques for each of the key plant families from which most of our food is derived. Visitors will also be shown how to make beautiful seed packets in which to store seeds.

The event will take place on Friday 12 July from 2pm. The presentation of the art competition awards will take place on that same evening at 6pm.

To find out more about CCA International's Summer exhibition, visit their website - www.ccagalleriesinternational.com

There is no charge, but please register via Eventbrite's CCA page:

eventbrite.co.uk/o/cca-galleries-international-77915053073

Email: enquiries@ccagalleriesinternational.com



Ann Morgan with her winning picture from the 2023 competition

Are you a Poingdestre?

Perhaps you have Poingdestre relations or ancestors?

If so, family members and descendants of the Poingdestre family are cordially invited to attend a family reunion, which is going to be held on the afternoon and early evening of 8 May at Morel Farm, St Lawrence.

The event has been jointly organised by James Kaye of Colorado, who has recently become the Seigneur of the Fief ès Poingdestre in St John, and by Rosie Boleat, herself born a Poingdestre – her parents, Sid and Dulcie Poingdestre, once farmed at Morel Farm.

A provisional programme has been arranged: it will include the 1781 Jersey Militia, a performance of 'Beautiful Jersey' by Sydney Haskins, who was PwC Jersey Young Musician of the Year Winner in 2023, and an announcement of a scholarship from the 'Seigneur's Trust', which has been awarded to Jae Poingdexter, a Poingdestre descendant who is currently studying at Texas State University.

The aim of the scholarship is to improve the lives of citizens of the United States and the Channel Islands by increasing awareness and cooperation. Jae will travel to Jersey in July and participate in a three-week field study excavation at a Neolithic dolmen.

James Kaye also wishes to reestablish the Fief's court and will award badges of office to the recently appointed Court Seneschal (Melanie Guest) and Prévôt (Rosie Boleat, née Poingdestre). Jersey does not have a sitting Fief Court, which he says are now used to continue to preserve history and as a tool for community outreach.

All enquiries about the Poingdestre reunion please to Rosie at r.boleat@localdial.com or to James at poingdestre@seignory.org – and for event planning purposes, could any reader who would like to attend the reunion on 8 May please let them know.



A Plurality of Poingdexters, photographed at their family reunion in Virginia in September 2023. James Kaye and his wife, Katherine, are in the centre of the front row.

JAYF Open Gardens

The open gardens for this year are:

Sunday 21 April

Domaine des Vaux *Rue de Bas, St Lawrence*

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



Sunday 19 May

Oaklands *La Rue d'Elysee, St Peter*

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



Sunday 2 June

Les Aix *Rue des Aix, St Peter*

The home of Ariel Whatmore. Each room has a different colour, the grey room in the courtyard, the white room flanking the west of the house, and not to be missed – the yew maze, nearly a thousand box plants forming the internal spaces which symbolize an artist's palette, five small circular gardens of different colours and an old Jersey cider press where the artist's thumb would be holding the palette.



Sunday 9 June

Woodlands Court *La Route des Côtils, Grouville*

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



Sunday 23 June

Old Farm *La Route de La Trinite, Trinity JE3 5JN*

This beautiful garden includes a well established arboretum and orchard, with the main lawn surrounded by herbaceous borders and garden 'rooms'. Climbing roses adorn the granite walls and there are about 20 different varieties of camellia. The avenue of magnolia is a further highlight.



For further information during the coming season, please look at the JAYF website: www.jayf.org.je/events/

Facebook page: JAYFJSY

or contact us via email: gardens@jayf.org.je





The death and
life of trees



The grounds of Samarès Manor were devastated by Storm Ciarán last November. But both restoration and regeneration were taking place in time for the re-opening to the public in March. Alasdair Crosby joined the manor's owner, Vincent Obbard and the estate's managing director, Caryl Kemp, to see work in progress



Jersey expected a storm, but not a tornado. When Storm Ciarán came visiting last November, along with that tornado, the Samarès area was right in its path. The tornado cut a swathe through Samarès Manor grounds and between 100 and 200 trees on the estate were either uprooted or broken in two. It was worse, said Vincent Obbard, Seigneur de Samarès and the owner of the manor, than the previous ‘Great Storm’ of 1987.

‘The apple trees were completely devastated and those that were not totally uprooted or snapped in two, stood at funny angles. Also blown down were great “monumental” trees in the front garden: a huge oak, a big poplar that also brought down an old wall that divided the manor gardens from an adjacent field... we couldn’t walk down the paths because of all the bits of tree that littered them.’

However, he continued: ‘We have taken a positive view, that a broken or a fallen tree doesn’t necessarily mean that you have to go along and cut it up into small pieces, and have the root removed. Sometimes storms happen. It is part of a tree’s cycle of life and death – a tree stump is not, in itself, an ugly thing to look at. It need not be removed – it is just part of its story.’

Since November, the five-man team working at Samarès Botanical Gardens have been clearing away the storm damage.



“ We have taken a positive view, that a broken or a fallen tree doesn’t necessarily mean that you have to go along and cut it up into small pieces, and have the root removed. Sometimes storms happen...

The grounds have been closed to the public: ‘Health and Safety’ is not a concept to be treated with undue lightness in the aftermath of a storm and tornado.

Managing director Caryl Kemp said: ‘Imagine: a combination of bonfires, children running about, and flooded drains and ponds overflowing its verges – so, all too easy to suddenly find oneself in deep water.

‘But our members have been very supportive, realising that we need to get the gardens into a decent state before we could open to the public again in March.’

The gardens have certainly changed their aspect although certain parts of the estate remained unscathed – the colombier, for example, was untouched. The manor house lost around 30 slates from its roof, although there was more structural damage to the farmyard buildings. Likewise, the wildflower hub and the herb gardens avoided any damage.

‘It was very erratic, even though we were on the route of this tornado. It is extraordinary how some trees were totally untouched – it’s as if there were strands within the tornado that allowed some trees to escape,’ Vincent said.

Not so lucky was the Manor Lodge, facing the main road. A tree crashed on to the roof and destroyed at least one room. The Lodge is occupied by care workers – the person who should have been sleeping in that room was on night duty. As Vincent said – it is amazing that no one was killed.



“ It was very erratic, even though we were on the route of this tornado. It is extraordinary how some trees were totally untouched – it’s as if there were strands within the tornado that allowed some trees to escape

Vincent and his wife, Gillie, were on the point of going to bed, around 11pm on the night before the storm, when they realised that was no ordinary bad weather event; apart from the strong wind, rain was lashing down and there were thunderclaps for variety. Fortunately, they were able to sleep through most of the night, unlike nearby residents in their own homes. Caryl, who lives nearby, said there was a noise like a jet engine throughout the night – she did not get much sleep.

Vincent said it was much worse than the ‘Great Storm’ of 1987: ‘I reckon the tornado started on the Minquiers. We have a hut there, and the roof was just lifted up and dumped in the sea! Nothing of it is left. At least there was no problem with disposal of asbestos. One gable end of the hut blew down on to the slipway.

‘In Jersey, the tornado came on to the Island in the La Mare slipway area, travelled over us, took out the golf course, went on to St Saviour and Grouville before exiting the Island at Fliquet.’

They employed tree surgeons Channel Island Tree Services for the really dangerous tree removal work, but once a tree was safely on the ground, it was cut up and removed by the estate’s staff.

About five days after the storm there were strong winds yet again and where roots had been exposed under the trees that were still standing, they could be seen to be blowing about, causing anxiety that the trees above might come down at any time.

Everywhere in the grounds there are now stacks of wood cut up. Much of it is unburnable: too green, or, in the case of poplar and pine, too oily.

But oak will be kept, seasoned, and used (or sold!). There is enough fallen oak to last them 20 years.

Looking on the bright side of things, where trees have gone, there are now new vistas, and young trees, whose growth had been stifled by bigger trees that did not allow them any room, now have room to breathe and grow.





Vincent reiterated his comments about fallen trees or tree stumps being not necessarily an eyesore to be removed.

‘We have had fallen trees in the past. There is a willow tree that fell into the pond in the front garden. After a few years it now looks very attractive – a bit like a beaver’s dam. It is just part of the scenery. I am happy to leave a fallen tree here and there.’

He continued: ‘Admittedly, the couple of months since the storm have been a bit sad, although the snow lifted our spirits in the short snowy period that we had.’

“ **But now, it is work in progress to make the gardens safe and sightly, clean and tidy for when we reopen on Saturday 2 March. We plan to enhance the garden by adding colour and interest, where new opportunities arise**

‘But now, it is work in progress to make the gardens safe and sightly, clean and tidy for when we reopen on Saturday 2 March. We plan to enhance the garden by adding colour and interest, where new opportunities arise.’

‘But it is looking better every day. The show must go on – and we very much look forward to the return of normality.’



Gardening in Spring

Sponsored by



Ariel Whatmore describes her list of things to do in the garden during springtime

As I walked out to feed the chickens early this morning, when all was quiet and no one was around, I noticed a carpet of violets in the grass, such a bright deep and distinctive blue.

It reminded me of the fields of violets in the French town of Tourrettes-sur-Loup, where there used to be 32 violet farms. In the Middle Ages, violets were used for many purposes; they were not only 'posey flowers' but were used in syrups and salads as well as stuffing and sauces. Otherwise they were strewn on floors to discourage fleas.

I can also see enthusiastic daffodil bulbs poking their stems through the ground, which is an alert that spring is not far off, and being a keen gardener, it is no time to relax.

Over the years I have planted an avenue of hydrangeas up our drive. And unsurprisingly, they look rather brown, forlorn and bedraggled at this time of year.

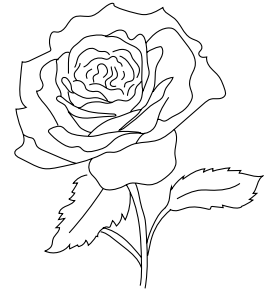
There is a debate by the experts as to whether it is safe to remove hydrangea flowers this early, but I like to do so as the fading flowers do not look good. Also, as Jersey has a relatively mild climate, these shrubs don't seem to be affected by severe frosts and therefore deadheading can be justified.

Certainly, one of the most tedious jobs in a garden is spreading compost that has been building up over the months and has now rotted down for distribution. However, the benefits are considerable; initially, for keeping in the moisture during the drier months of the year, and also for adding valuable nutrients. We keep two separate areas for compost in order to alternate the distribution.



I have always had a passion for roses, even though, way in the past, I was told that Jersey isn't particularly suitable for roses. While watching *Gardeners' World*, I heard of an enthusiast who claimed to have a range of 350 varieties. I have tried to keep a record of my roses and also where they are placed, and find I have a range of about 60 varieties. I also try to have labels attached, though these have a tendency to get lost. If you wish to add a rose to your garden there is still time, though it is better to do so in the latter parts of this year. The company, David Austin Roses, has always been very efficient at sending bare root roses within a few days of my order.

This year my choice has been a yellow shrub rose, named Call Me Sunshine, which will go into the yellow border on account of its colour. It is extraordinary to see the height that a single white rambling rose can climb. One variety – Swan Lake – has climbed 40ft or so up an oak tree at the entrance to our gardens.



When organising and working in a garden there is always a considerable amount of work to be done whatever the season.

I try and fit in some weeding or gardening in some form or other most afternoons. As my mother, who was a keen gardener, used to say... 'bottoms up in the garden', which is a true definition as one is bent over almost double a great deal of the time. As a result of this 'work', I have decided a reward is justified, so, on an almost weekly basis, I try to visit a nursery and probably to buy a new shrub or plant. Jersey is blessed with five excellent nurseries with a wide and interesting selection of species.



Spring, almost automatically, brings to mind a certain range of plants. Being in Jersey, the word 'daffodil' comes to mind as they have spread and multiplied up and down the roadsides and country walks. Indeed, as I write, there are whole fields meticulously planted with new crops. A friend and I once had to pick a thousand flowers, divided into bunches of ten for a particular shop. It didn't take that long.

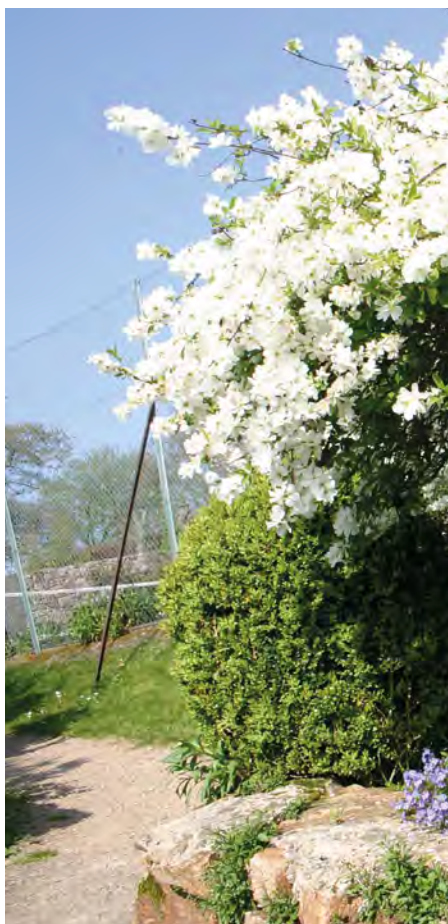


But the spring flowers that have particularly interested me are snowdrops, aconites, bluebells and hellebores which I have cultivated in an avenue in my garden called 'the spring border'. The snowdrops have been planted on a gentle slope so that the seeds have slowly dropped down the incline and made a delightful carpet from a relatively few original plants.

The Chelsea Physic Garden has a winter celebration named 'Snowdrop Days'. I once made a point of visiting this woodland area with its wide range of snowdrops.

The flowers appeared to be relatively similar, but it was the leaves that varied considerably. Collectors are known to pay £3.50 per bulb for *Galantus 'S Arnott'*, but in 2015 an incredible £1,390 was paid for a cultivar called Golden Fleece.

Early spring may be the coldest time of the year but there is always an air of expectation. The long-tailed tits are feeding from the bird feeders alongside the robins and even great tits. And, if we're really fortunate, we may see the great spotted woodpecker drumming its beak on a chestnut tree.





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Trinity Manor's open garden to celebrate 200 years of the RNLI



This year – 2024 – is a special year in the RNLI's history, marking the Institution's 200th birthday. As part of the celebrations, Trinity Manor will be opening its magnificent gardens to all, with a rare opportunity to visit these beautiful grounds and to help raise funds for RNLI Jersey

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution was the fruition of Sir William Hillary's vision and it became a reality in the City of London Tavern in Bishopsgate in 1824. Hillary had witnessed dozens of shipwrecks first-hand' around his home town of Douglas in the Isle of Man and was inspired to set up the charity to try and reduce the loss of life from these disasters.

Whilst loss of life at sea was an accepted part of seafaring life in the 19th Century, with up to 1,800 shipwrecks a year around the coasts of the British Isles, Hillary knew that more could be done. His initial appeals to the Navy and government ministers to set up a national lifeboat service did not have the desired effect, but his persistence eventually bore fruit with more philanthropic members of London society.

At the inaugural meeting in February 1824, those attending unanimously passed 12 resolutions, including those of setting up the organisation to receive charitable donations and with the purpose of offering assistance to those in need at sea – these still form the basis of the RNLI's charter some 200 years later and they are the foundations upon which the RNLI Jersey crews, lifeguards and fundraisers serve to save lives at sea.

Today, RNLI Jersey comprises over 60 crew and operational management volunteers, and more than 50 fund raisers, in addition to the paid lifeguards who patrol Jersey's western beaches over the summer season. They operate three lifeboats (two inshore and one all-weather) from two stations, every day (and night) of the year.

Although many people have heard about Trinity Manor, one of Jersey's finest manor houses, its magnificent sprawling gardens are one of Jersey's best kept secrets.

Normally closed to the public, Trinity Manor's owners Paul and Pam Bell are generously opening them to the public on 7 July 2024, with all proceeds going to RNLI Jersey.

The 29.5 vergées are lovingly cared for and managed by David Room and his team, whose vision has transformed the gardens over recent years. Calling it a garden is a misnomer, a stroll through the gardens is more akin to harmoniously moving from one unique garden room to another.



The array of different plants all placed together in harmony, but equally and carefully planted to highlight their differences.

There's the Folly Garden with its big leaved plants punctuated by pops of brightly coloured flowers, contrasting with the peace and calm of the Mediterranean walled garden. Wandering around the manor, you marvel at the stunning water feature in the Zip Garden, and delight in the magnificent James Doran-Webb driftwood sculptures dotted around the gardens.

The latest addition to the gardens is the magnificent Japanese garden which contains many Japanese plant varieties.

This rare opportunity to have an enchanting stroll around these gardens is not to be missed.

The main gates will be open on Sunday 7 July between 2pm and 5pm. Entry is £5 per person, with plenty of parking available. RNLI Jersey will be holding a raffle, and serving tea and delicious homemade scones. Plants will also be available to purchase, as well as RNLI merchandise. Further details at www.rnlijersey.org.je

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Prize winning gardens around the island

Results of the 2023 Royal Jersey Agricultural & Horticultural Society All Island Garden Competition. By Rachelle Robinson



2023 saw some amazing gardens enter the competition. Two judges – Tom Robinson and Paulette De La Haye – spent three days judging 53 gardens, consisting of small and large gardens, allotments, vegetable gardens, informal gardens and lots more. They said... ‘The standard was very high this year and it was close between the entrants in all the classes.’



For the RJA&HS All Island Garden Competition, elected judges spend three days visiting and scoring lots of different types of gardens in the Island, and award prizes to the best ones in each class.

Anyone can enter, and the competition is kindly sponsored by Ransoms each year, who give gift vouchers to the winners of 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in each class, along with a discount voucher for every person who enters the competition.

At the end of all the judging, the judges decided that the overall winners were Artur Bobak & Przemyslaw Poznanski, whose beautiful garden received a perfect score of 100 (out of 100)! Their garden won the ‘**Large Garden**’ class and the judges loved their garden saying it was ‘simply perfect – an absolute joy to behold with something to please you all year round. The wisteria is stunning and a real gem, and this garden has a soul which moves you and makes you feel warm inside.’



The ‘Judges’ Award for ‘**Garden Design**’ was awarded to Michael and Betty Quénault’s quirky and delightful garden, which won the ‘Patio Garden excluding a lawn’ class, with 97.5 points.



The ‘Jersey Beekeepers Association Shield’ is awarded to the ‘**Best Pollinator Friendly Garden**’ each year and Marti Rault’s lovely informal garden was awarded this prize. Marti also won the ‘Informal Garden’ class with 97 points.



The ‘Judges’ Award for ‘**Best Use of Recycling Material**’ went to Nadine Olayan’s roof garden in the middle of town.



The class with the greatest number of entries in 2023 was the 'Best Floral Parish Hall' class, with eight Parish Halls entering. The winner was St Helier Parish Hall with 99 points – the same parish also won in 2021. It was wonderful to see the Town Hall looking so well.



A new class introduced two years ago is the 'Young Gardener' class, and with a new trophy to be won kindly sponsored by Kevin Roberts, the Sheep Shed Jersey won the class with 92 points. Their wonderful allotment and growing area, which is looked after by lots of keen children, won the hearts of the judges.



Anyone with a garden, no matter how large or small, can enter the All Island Garden Competition. In 2024, the judging will take place on 9, 10 and 11 July 2024. Deadline for applications will be 1 July.

For more information, please contact Rachelle Robinson at the RJA@HS on rachelle@royaljersey.co.uk or 860648.

The Jersey Gardening Club

by Marilyn Le Beurrier, president, Jersey Gardening Club

At the Jersey Gardening Club, we offer everyone a warm welcome to join our exciting programme of talks held on the third Tuesday of the month from expert speakers living in Jersey or further afield, on a variety of garden related topics.

Gardening enthusiasts gather in St Lawrence or Trinity Parish Halls at 7.30pm to enjoy the evening talk with an opportunity to show their plants in a light-hearted atmosphere over a 'cuppa', socialising after the talk. Potential new members are invited to attend a meeting as a guest, so come and see what we are up to in 2024.

Our much acclaimed annual garden party, with a fabulous cream tea, is held traditionally in July, by kind invitation to a beautiful private garden with space for all members. We will also be visiting local businesses of interest and enjoy additional invitations to members' own gardens.

We look forward to meeting you at our pop-up stand at Ransoms Garden Centre in the coming months.



'Spreading the word' at Co-Op Grande Marché on Saturday 3 February where The Jersey Gardening Club's Fiona Murphy and Anna Bradshaw spent a fun afternoon meeting lots of gardeners of all ages growing everything from cactus to cannas!

The club is affiliated with the Royal National Rose Society and the Royal Horticultural Society so as a club member you will have direct access to expert advice.

In February 1982, a seed was sown, from which the Jersey Gardening Club sprouted into life and now, over 40 years later, we are working hard to keep it growing.

*Want to know more? Let's stay in touch
Email: jerseygardeningclub@gmail.com*

Granite for the garden

By Stephen Cohu of
Stephen Cohu Antiques

Spring is about to be sprung and our thoughts will turn once again to venturing out into the garden. After the devastating effects of Storm Ciarán, many gardens will be needing a bit of a makeover. Whatever size of garden you have, you can jazz it up without spending a lot of money, with a few carefully selected granite pieces from Jersey's rich farming history.

Low maintenance is the keyword in any recent garden design. This does not necessarily exclude character, which can easily be introduced with the addition of items such as ancient granite corn weights, mushrooms and troughs or, if you have enough room, an apple crusher.

These very attractive pieces have found a new life as decoration rather than for their original purpose. The granite trough for watering cattle in the field has been replaced by a well-used bathtub, and troughs for salting your favourite pig have been superseded by the chest freezer. Nowadays, the silo has replaced the shed built on granite mushrooms to store grain.

Corn weights with their original iron rings make a very attractive feature arranged in a small group or are useful singly as a doorstop. If you have enough, they can be used to form an entire edging to a flower border and come in all different shapes, sizes and colours. Trading Standards have long seen the end of use of the granite weight as a unit of measurement, the numbers carved onto them don't seem to bear any relation to what they actually weigh and simply carving a number on to a flat based boulder from the beach may be open to abuse!



Granite mushrooms are a unique product of the Channel Islands, pink ones from Jersey and grey/black from Guernsey. The English equivalent is the saddle stone, but they are not found in France. Again, a small group arranged under a tree can be very effective or as a pair either side of a pathway. Arranged in a group of three or four of different heights and sizes, they are at their most attractive. Some people like the flat tops as they are very accommodating for your favourite tittle on a summer evening, others prefer the domed tops that make them more like a mushroom.

One of our clients recently created a Stonehenge feature, in an open west-facing location, using ancient granite fenceposts with holes cut through them. They calculated the position of the setting sun on Midsummer's Day and waited with bated breath to see if they were correct. Much to their relief the positioning was perfect.

Granite troughs can be found in a vast array of sizes and shapes to suit the smallest to the largest garden. Round, square, rectangular, D-shape in pink, yellow or grey granite ranging in size from 40 centimetres diameter to 4 metres long – the options are many. As well as having more character than plastic, terracotta and wood they are far more robust. Although they are more expensive to begin with, they will never have to be replaced and will last your, your children's and your grandchildren's lifetimes and then some! How many wooden or plastic planters would you have to buy to last the lifetime of a granite trough?! Planted with flowering bedding through the year, they will deliver a changing splash of colour for every season.

Investing a bit of time, effort and imagination into finding something special for your garden will be well worth the effort. Introduce a little piece of Jersey history to enhance your surroundings. They look beautiful and if you decide on a change, you will be able to pass them on to the next custodian of our valuable heritage.



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A knot of herbs & flowers

In Tudor times (1485-1603) formal garden designs were popular and these included both parterres and knot gardens. Pat Jackson, chairman of the Garden History section of the Société Jersiaise, looks back along the garden past



Parterres were often square-shaped gardens and divided into compartments by hedges of e.g. box or lavender. The enclosed beds were filled with herbs and flowers which were used in food and medicinally; also for strewing to kill odours and unwanted insects like fleas; and also for plant material to make fabric dyes. The sweet smell of flowers lifted the spirits and introduced a spiritual element.

The paths around the beds were made of coloured chippings or coloured sands, and also crushed shells, which made a harder surface to walk on. There is a parterre garden at Mont Orgueil at Gorey, known as the de Carteret Garden, and which might be above an old, 17th Century garden.

This garden has a central round bed featuring blousy, pink Rugosa roses, while both Gallica and Moss roses were also used in Tudor times. Roses were traditionally planted because they represented the Virgin Mary and earthly love, with parts of the roses used medicinally. Rugosa roses, originating in Persia, are tough, they withstand salt-laden winds and don't need much TLC.

In knot gardens and parterres there's a strong monastic, religious significance linked to the design and plant material. From old herbal books produced by botanists such as John Gerard (1545-1612) and Nicholas Culpeper (1616-1654) we know what plants were available. Many of these originated in the Middle East and Mediterranean regions and came west, with explorers and merchants. There, gardens gave people the opportunity to display new ideas and plants, particularly those coming from Italy and France.

Early in the 1600s, the knot garden was simplified into an arrangement of compartments without the interwoven hedges. Parterres flourished in France and the design idea was copied. In the 16th Century, Tudor gardens ranged from simple cottage gardens to elaborate layouts of nobility and royalty.

King Charles III has just commissioned a similar large, formal, knot-type garden in front of Sandringham, his Royal residence in Norfolk, where topiary is a special feature.

In monastic times there were two types of herb garden. One was the infirmary or physic garden, which often had raised beds where each contained a different medicinal herb. The second was the kitchen garden, where besides vegetables, culinary herbs were grown. The range of plants for everyday use was far more extensive than one might think! There was, for example, green alkanet which gives a red colour and was used by fabric dyers. The well-known Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla*), which was used as a salve for burns and for rejuvenating tired complexions, was also grown, along with mint, which besides being a flavouring, was believed to calm the nerves and treated coughs, migraines and stomach gases.



Samares Manor, herb garden from viewing platform

These are just three of the many indigenous and exotic herbs available in the herb garden medicine chest.

The flowers of the Tudor period are still used today – pansies, gillyflowers (*Carnations*) and others of the *Dianthus* genus; also cornflowers, columbines (*Aquilegia*) and hedgerow plants such as cowslips. Herbal use continues to this day, not only in our cooking, but many herbs are currently being scientifically researched to extract bioactive compounds used in modern medicine. Samarès Manor has a large herb garden, which is at its best in summer.

The themes of gardening and flowers inspired other aspects of life in the past. Tudor garments of the wealthy were often embroidered with stylised versions of local flowers and formal knot garden designs were copied for embroidery patterns as cutwork on cuffs, blouses and pillowcases. They also appeared on plaster work and in stained glass windows.



Beau Desert, Trinity, herb garden with box-edged parterre

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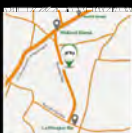
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Springtime in the vegetable patch

Spring is one of the busiest times of the year for the vegetable grower. It is time to get your patch ready, start sowing seeds and potting on seedlings. By Tom Robinson, RJA&HS Horticultural Committee member

Preparing my patch ready to start the growing season is usually the first thing that I do. I grow in raised beds in my allotment and I do some beds as the conventional gardener, and I have some beds where I do a 'No Dig' approach. Which one you choose will depend on your gardening philosophy – I understand and appreciate the benefits of both.

With the 'No Dig' method, I place a thick layer of manure on top of the bed with a good sprinkle of garden lime.

This helps to keep the soil pH neutral as manure will lower it, so making it harder to get the full potential out of your crops. I prefer this method on my brassica beds, as they do not like loose soil around their roots preferring to have them snuggled tightly by the soil.

With the conventional approach, I still put a good layer of manure and lime, but I dig these in and then leave the winter weather to break down the soil.

A week or so before you are ready to plant outside, dig the conventional beds again and break all the clumps down, apply a good handful of whichever fertilisers you prefer and rake the ground level and to a fine tilth (breadcrumb-like texture). This will make it easier for your new plants to settle in.

With the 'No Dig', you literally do nothing with them and just make the hole for your young plant.

While your beds are settling, it is my favourite part of all – the sowing and transplanting of your baby veg plants. The key to a successful vegetable patch is growing what you like to eat and as you gain experience you can try the more challenging vegetables.

If you are just starting out, then I would recommend keeping it simple. Easy plants to grow are tomatoes, lettuce, peppers, courgettes, runner beans, French beans, peas, kale, spring cabbage, butternut squash, beetroot, spring onion, onions, and radish. As you can see, there is a large range of veg that is straightforward for the beginner to grow and enjoy.

When it comes to buying seed, you can either go to the garden centre or buy online from the many seed companies. If you do go to the garden centre, make sure you get the freshest seed on display, i.e. the ones with the latest 'sow by' date.

When buying your compost into which to sow your seeds, try to get ones that are produced for seeds and seedlings – these will be much finer and easier for the baby roots to spread. You can either get yourself some seed modules to sow into, or use small pots to start off in. I tend to use a mixture of both, but I do prefer using the small white plastic drink cups, as I can write on the side what I have sown. It is important that whatever you sow, you label and show the date sown.

Alternatively, you can use little yoghurt or cream pots or even toilet rolls, which are especially good to start your beans off in because you can just plant the whole lot as the cardboard will rot during the year. Some vegetables like tomatoes and peppers will need some warmth to germinate, so simply wrapping some cling film over the top of the pot will create so much heat and you will be away.

I am happy to see tomatoes growing 'leggy' as this will mean you will have a much better root structure. Tomatoes will put out roots from the stem, so when you transplant your seedling, pot it right up to the leaves and you will have much more roots on your young plants.

Some good advice about lettuce is ... never sow too many in one go, as there are only so many you can eat, and they do not stay ready in the ground for long. Sow a dozen or so every other week and they will give you a continuous supply throughout summer and autumn.

With courgettes you will only need two or possibly three plants to keep an entire family fed and you will be amazed how many courgettes one plant can produce if you keep picking! As your seedlings develop, they will need potting up, meaning you repot them into bigger pots so the roots have room to grow as the plants get bigger. You will also need to harden your plants off in the weeks leading up to them being planted ... all this means is that you put your plants outside for a couple of hours a day, so they do not get shocked when they are planted out.

Different veg take different times from sowing to harvest.



Radishes will be ready in 5-6 weeks, lettuce 8-12 weeks (weather dependent), beans and peas are usually around 12 weeks, beetroot is usually 16-18 weeks, cabbages around 12-14 weeks from planting, tomatoes start from 20 weeks and courgettes can be ready from 16 weeks.

Next time we will go into a little more detail as to how to look after your crops and get the most out of them, plus we will show you how to get free plants.

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Tool stores and tempests

The Royal Jersey Agricultural & Horticultural Society finally secured planning permission for the construction of 59 tool stores at their allotment site, the F J Ahier Country Gardens in St Lawrence – but the wind keeps on huffing and puffing and blowing them down.

By Martin Preisig

The story begins back in 2009 – but actually, much earlier, when in 1955, Francis John Ahier left a bequest to the Horticultural Department of the RJA&HS, specifying that he wished the land to remain in horticulture and not become a building site. During 2008, when the Society celebrated its 175th anniversary, the idea of setting up allotments was mooted.

The RJA&HS applied to the then Planning Committee to establish allotments on the field, *'Seeking consent to create 61 allotments, sheds, fencing, car parking and other infrastructure'*.

Although the general principle for the establishment of allotments was supported, the site was within the Countryside Zone, remote from any settlement and was only accessible by private car. The Society was requesting car parking and other infrastructure in the open countryside and the visual impact of the sheds on an otherwise 'natural agricultural field' meant that the application for the structures on allotments was refused – allotment sites did not fall within the then Island Plan.

The site was ready for use by the end of June 2009. Everyone was enthusiastic and started planting and sowing straight away. By October the holders were picking their own produce. The then Lieutenant-Governor, Lieut-General Sir Andrew Ridgway officially opened and named the gardens on 5 September 2009 as 'The F J Ahier Country Gardens'.

In 2017/18 the Horticulture Committee discussed the possible establishment of shed or tool stores at the Country Gardens. It was unanimously agreed to go ahead with the preparation of an application in light of the fact that since 2009 a number of allotment sites had been established across the Island, with permission granted for the construction of sheds on these sites.

The pre-planning application was lodged in early 2020, but as a result of Covid, any planning decisions were postponed or delayed. Approval of the application was finally granted in February 2023.

Following planning approval, funding was secured from the RJA&HS Trust Fund and tool stores were constructed on each plot. So now, all plot holders had a secure tool store to store all their tools and other gardening equipment.

Then along came Storm Ciarán on the night of 2 November. The Country Gardens remarkably suffered little damage compared to other areas of the Island, but 29 of the 59 tool stores erected in August were blown over.

Members of the Horticultural Committee re-erected them, but sadly the site was hit again by the next storm in early December – once again, a number of tool stores were blown over.

Fencing stakes were purchased and installed, but eight tool stores were once again blown over during the next storm, so yet more stakes were installed in January of this year.

Fingers crossed, no more severe storms for a while.

To help reduce the visual impact of the tool stores and to act as windbreaks on either side of the site, in 2019 the Society planted over 200 additional indigenous hedgerow trees to fill in the gaps in the hedge that had been planted when the site was established in 2009.

To find out more about The F J Ahier Country Gardens and the activities of the Royal Jersey Agriculture and Horticulture Society please visit the website www.royaljersey.co.uk





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Spud-facular

By Ruth Le Cocq

It's that time of the year when the parish constables, the local media, Occupation VIPs, the Island's branches of the Women's Institute and all 33 primary schools put their gardening skills to the test in the Jersey Royal Potato Growing Competition.

Local fruit and vegetable wholesalers Homefields have delivered over 300 growing kits to mark the launch of Genuine Jersey's 18th competition.

Judgement day is Thursday 16 May when it will be revealed who has cultivated the heaviest crop and who has achieved the highest yield in each category.

Every competitor has received a complimentary growing kit, comprising two Jersey Royal seed potatoes from Master Farms along with soil donated by the Government of Jersey's household green waste team.

John Garton, Chief Executive of Genuine Jersey Products Association expressed his enthusiasm for this annual event.

'The Jersey Royal remains a cornerstone of the Island's exports, and the inclusivity of this event, involving people of all ages, exemplifies its brilliance. Come weigh-in day, we revel in witnessing the joy on every face of those who have dedicated 12 weeks to this competition as they unearth the fruits of their labours.'

Catherine Conway, Director of Homefields, the event's sponsors, said: 'We take pride in supplying and distributing the growing packs, contributing to educating young minds about the significance of fresh, local produce and the Island's agricultural heritage.'



Top: Last year, St Michael's School Class 2B won the prize for the greatest weight of potatoes.



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Time for Branchage?

Charles Le Maistre, conveyancing manager at Ogier, draws on his extensive insight into Jersey's property landscape and hands-on farming experience to provide a well-rounded perspective on proposed changes to the Branchage Law



Those biannual events in spring and autumn – the branchage – are part of the Jersey way of life. So, also, are the debates that spring up every branchage season about how it should be (or should not be) undertaken.

Apart from being the conveyancing manager at Ogier, I am also a part-time farmer, working with my brother and cousin. Our farm has an environmental focus, and we are proponents of traditional agricultural methods.

There are lots of roadside verges to our fields; the vast majority of them border on to parish lanes, so the branchage takes up a significant amount of our working time. Branchage and related boundary considerations are also a regular feature of conveyancing advice.

I think sometimes people overlook the fact that there are roughly 350 miles of road in Jersey (which means 700 miles of roadside) many of which are country lanes, enclosed by hedges and banks that are subject to the annual branchage.

Branchage itself has a rich and complex history, but the modern version is a comparatively recent adaption, introduced in 1914, by the Loi sur la Voirie.

The Island had no truly recognisable roads until the 18th Century. Until then it was traversed only with basic farm tracks, that were muddy and treacherous in winter, acting as involuntary drainage ditches for the surrounding fields, which slowly dug into the earth. But this all helped to create the beautiful sunken lanes that we see and admire today.

Roads were once controlled by the Seigneur of each fief, before eventually becoming the responsibility of the parish authorities, which administered the French custom of *corvée*, a requirement that male parishioners gave six days unpaid work each year towards the maintenance of parish roads.

The 1914 law is very clear, and its laudable intention is to keep roads safe and to maintain visibility for all road users.

Some balance must be found, however, between the need to clear roadsides and the need to protect our natural environment. The Branchage Action Group have put together a helpful guidance sheet on best branchage practice, which I would recommend landowners to consider before the forthcoming trim. The basic principle is to cut with care, consider wildlife, only remove vegetation which directly encroaches over a road during the first (spring) branchage and then, if desired, cut the tops of vegetation during the second (autumn) branchage. All eminently sensible.

Further changes being proposed by various groups include amendments to the law to ensure that vegetation bordering any road must not be cut shorter than 10cm from the soil, and for the tops of banks to be left uncut, insofar as they do not encroach over roads.

While such propositions and their related intentions are admirable, there remain a number of ancillary considerations to be addressed and I suspect that some people will have reservations with the possible introduction of restrictions on the management of private land. A 'Goldilocks' approach with fines for cutting too much, but also for cutting too little, would need to be carefully considered.

Guidance from the Comité des Connétables as to how much vegetation can be left before it is deemed to be an encroachment under the law would be of great assistance here. Perhaps assurance that non-woody vegetation of up to 10cm in thickness from the soil surface would generally not be considered an encroachment and enforceable during branchage, would help to clarify matters further.

Most landowners I speak with do not want to cut back any further than they are required. I suspect that a significant cause of 'harsh' or low cutting is the black and white nature of the branchage procedure. I have certainly been guilty of cutting more than I would like to do, out of fear of being fined. The current process leaves landowners in a position where it is better to cut low and be certain, then to cut high and be caught out. I suspect that if landowners knew that they could leave 10cm of grass, then the majority would do so.



I also wonder whether, over time, most landowners have simply become accustomed to cutting more than is required. Branchage does not require any person to cut back any branches or overgrowth which is not actively encroaching over a road. In many cases there is no need to cut the whole of a bank. I regularly tell clients and would encourage readers to consider the branchage parameters as a series of straight lines: two vertical on either edge of a road and one horizontal on top of those lines at 12 feet in height. You are only obliged to cut anything that encroaches within these lines.

Further advice is to consider our wild plants and animals – don't feel obliged to cut more than you have to. Cut with tools and machinery that are appropriate and proportionate to your area of responsibility. Never cut so much that bare soil is exposed.

A last thought on mechanical hedge trimming: I would encourage some sympathy towards those who carry out the annual branchage over large areas of land. The truth is, that in this day and age it is an incredibly expensive procedure and one which would be difficult if not impossible to achieve without some degree of mechanisation. Unfortunately, such activity is increasingly being met with condemnation rather than praise.

Nobody wants to see hedges and banks decimated by large machinery and careless operation.

Perhaps with some of the changes highlighted throughout this article and with the helpful insight and guidance of the lobbying bodies, a compromise can be found whereby well-managed and carefully operated machinery will once again be welcomed and appreciated. In truth, without machinery there simply isn't the labour or finances available that would be necessary to accommodate an Island-wide manual branchage.

I suppose that we could reintroduce the duty of *corvée*, to include hedge cutting services, which seems to me the only means by which enough labour could be found to trim those 700 miles of enclosure each year, without machinery or significant cost... but I can't see that suggestion being very popular, either!

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Amanda Bond at Judith Querée's garden.

Wildflower meadows

Meadows that promote belonging, community, wellbeing and biodiversity. By nature and forest therapy guide Amanda Bond

Many of you will be able to conjure up a picture of a wildflower meadow in your mind, but sadly few of you will have actually walked in one.

97% or 7.5m acres of wildflower meadows have been lost in the UK and Jersey since the 1930s. For 1,000 years these meadows provided biodiversity for nature, and a valuable crop and late summer grazing. Here in Jersey, cattle were moved to graze upon such meadows to enhance their milk's nutritional content.

With growing awareness of the significance of the loss of this vital landscape, more and more of intensively farmed fields are now being restored to meadows.

Many people can picture a meadow in their minds, of tall waving grasses (vital for moths to lay their eggs on, whose caterpillars provide nourishment to our birdlife), and wildflowers that make us feel happy.

Grasslands – whether its meadows, verges, or urban green spaces – have the power to benefit biodiversity, climate and people, by becoming wildflower-rich habitats

- *Plantlife, the wild plant conservation charity*

But nowadays a person can count themselves lucky to spend time in one. Over the last nine years, I've guided many groups of people around the natural areas of Jersey, to support a reconnection with nature, remembering our forgotten deep relationship with the land and more-than-human world that living an urban lifestyle separates us from.

A particular favourite of mine to share with people is a hidden gem in St Ouen – Judith Querée's garden. Created by Judith and her late husband, Nigel, it is a haven of wild and cultivated flowers from all over the world.

The groups from Macmillan Jersey Cancer Support I took there revelled in this peaceful valley, delighting in the cottage and its lovingly crafted garden and meadow. The strips of wildflower meadows brought beaming smiles and pure joy, glimmers – a sense of wonder that brought them into the moment, and a feeling of wellbeing with the world.

This is the ground that has inspired me to restore wildflower meadows in the Island, to create places where people can reconnect with each other and the earth.

A circular process, of tending the land, growing wildflowers and herbs, sharing the seasonal practices, opening up to the simple pleasures of walking among wildflowers, and harvesting the flowers, medicinal and culinary herbs to make herbal products for wellbeing, all the time increasing biodiversity.

Did you know that wildflower meadows are natural probiotics and good for gut health? This year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show will feature a wildflower meadow in the Bowel Research UK Microbiome Garden exploring the link between a healthy landscape, a healthy gut and a healthy mind.

Microbacteria in soils, for example, have a serotonin-like antidepressant effect, while petrichor – the metallic smell emitted by the earth after rain – contains compounds which trigger the areas of the brain associated with wellbeing and relaxation. Listening to birdsong has been demonstrated to reduce levels of cortisol, the primary stress hormone.

The King's Meadow Project seeks to restore 100 meadows across 100 historic sites, through a partnership between Plantlife and English Heritage. Flower-rich grasslands and meadows can store 500% more carbon than monoculture fields of pure grass. Meadows and grasslands are among our most wildlife-rich habitats. They can support over 700 species of wild plants and 1,400 invertebrate species!

As an ecotherapist, experienced in connecting people with nature, I'm keen to hear from farmers and landowners who may be able to set aside an area of land, large or small, to create a wildflower meadow.

Having made my own wildcrafted herbal infused oils and tinctures, balms and salves, as well as flower essences since 2005, supporting friends, family and clients, I aim to produce a range of natural remedies this year from sustainably sourced foraged materials and wildflower meadows.

And in all this I'm guided by the model of Dr Sally Gouldstone of Seilich Botanicals, one of the RBGE (Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh) tutors on the Diploma in Herbology, that I am currently studying with the support of the Howard Davis Trust.



Top: Wellbeing, community and biodiversity: picnic in a meadow. Bottom: A wildflower meadow.



New views and delightful details

A new picturesque footpath on the north coast moves walkers away from the road.
By Tori Orchard

Walkers can now enjoy a whole new vista on Jersey's north coast, thanks to the creation of a brand new footpath. The path, which runs for more than half a mile eastward from Ronez Quarry, means that people no longer have to walk along the busy roadside to continue their walk.

Most of Jersey's coastal footpath was created in the 1980s, however this section in St John, across public land, was never completed, with walkers previously having to instead divert to use the pavement along La Route du Nord.

The Minister for the Environment, Deputy Steve Luce, said that the path would make a significant difference to the safety and enjoyment of countryside walks in the area.



“ **A place like this where Islanders can come and enjoy nature is so beneficial for your wellbeing. This particular stretch ticked a lot of boxes for the Fund**

‘This has been on our wish list for some time now,’ he said. ‘Even as we speak, and we are only a few feet below the level of the road, already the noise has disappeared completely, and you can’t hear the traffic – you’re at one with nature.’

The six-month creation of the footpath was supported by around £68,000 from the Covid Health and Social Recovery Fund, which Deputy Luce said would be important to the recovery of Islanders’ wellbeing.

‘A place like this where Islanders can come and enjoy nature is so beneficial for your wellbeing. This particular stretch ticked a lot of boxes for the Fund.

‘Our wish would be to have a series of individual use paths, such as a bridle path, a bike path and a walking path – but this is not easy to do. We will speak to the cycling community to see how we move forward to accommodate everyone. We certainly don’t want to stop them from enjoying their hobby.’

Walkers along the new footpath can see some rather strange but beautiful old walls, as well as what look like old stone gate posts. Julia Clively, Government’s senior natural environment officer, said that this area had been untouched for many years, but there was evidence everywhere that it had been originally farmed.

‘We’ve got beautiful gate posts, some amazing old stone walls, and have tried to make use of those features,’ she said. They have been hidden for so many years – you could not get down here at all – it was a dense woodland and we even questioned whether a footpath would be possible. It would have definitely been a difficult area to farm back in the day due to the slopes and exposure of the land.’

“ **Even as we speak, and we are only a few feet below the level of the road, already the noise has disappeared completely, and you can’t hear the traffic – you’re at one with nature**



Travelling in the right direction

Caroline Spencer met the Head of Sustainability and Community Value for Ports of Jersey, Sophie Roffe



Islanders know how important it is to get off the rock and that inevitably involves using the Harbour or Airport. The trouble is this does have an impact on our carbon footprint.

As Head of Sustainability and Community Value for Ports of Jersey, Sophie Roffe feels she can make a difference.

‘I don’t think the solution is not flying,’ she said. ‘Flying is so good at connecting us culturally, socially, or for medical services. The solution lies in finding the technology to make flying sustainable. We are already working with Universal Hydrogen and Blue Islands to trial hydrogen as an alternative sustainable fuel. The technology is developing fast.

We have also launched our app, CarbonPass, for our passengers to balance their transport emissions with Durrell’s Rewild Carbon.’

Six months into the role, Sophie is involved in considering sustainability in every Ports of Jersey project, whether it is replacing grass on the airfield, or the new Harbour Masterplan.

‘I’m really lucky that sustainability is one of the key drivers for the executive leadership team and it’s one of the four pillars of our strategic business plan,’ she said. ‘It might mean extra expense along the way but it’s non-negotiable. It’s not like we have a choice. Sustainability is an integral part of any big project.

‘We have set a target to become net zero in our own operations by 2030 and to require our business partners to reduce their emissions by 30% by 2035.’

One of the projects Sophie is involved in is setting biodiversity targets for the Ports of Jersey estate and identifying ways to support biodiversity regeneration.

‘In St Catherine, for example, we are trialling moorings which have less of an impact on seagrass,’ she said. ‘We also ran a competition with schools to create living sea walls, which will encourage local species to grow in the marina.’

On the other hand, at the Airport, they have to choose grass that does not encourage biodiversity because the last thing you want is flocks of birds getting in the flight path.

‘But what we can do is plant a different grass on the airfield, which sequesters much more carbon than the grass we have now,’ Sophie said, adding that they also monitor the soil health around the Airport.

‘We have a partnership with Jersey Trees for Life, to work on the regeneration of land on the north side of the airfield. It’s already a popular area for dog walkers but there is more we could do with nature trails, engagement and education, and different types of tree planting.’

Sophie (27), a former student at Jersey College for Girls, studied languages and international relations. ‘Growing up, I always wanted to be a judge for the UN,’ she said. ‘And I was going to study law after I graduated but I got sidetracked by travelling in Australia.’

“ We have set a target to become net zero in our own operations by 2030 and to require our business partners to reduce their emissions by 30% by 2035

Before Ports of Jersey, she worked for the Government of Jersey as Social Value and Sustainability Lead. ‘This amazing opportunity came up, looking at ethical and sustainable procurement and the social value that we could harness through the big contracts we had in our supply chain. It gave me a really good opportunity to explain social sustainability to people who are more focused on numbers and financial impact, to put it into their terms and speak their language.’

Sophie says she is optimistic about Jersey’s future.

‘I think that we’ve got a long way to go, but coming from government and understanding the work on the Carbon Neutral Roadmap I feel like we are in safe hands,’ she said. ‘We are so fortunate to have some great sustainability professionals in Jersey who are leading the way and there’s a lot of collaboration going on. In the sustainability world, because everyone is working towards the same goal, everybody is much more willing to share ideas and that helps us achieve things much more quickly.’

‘But future technology is still unknown, and we are waiting for solutions to come from a global perspective.’

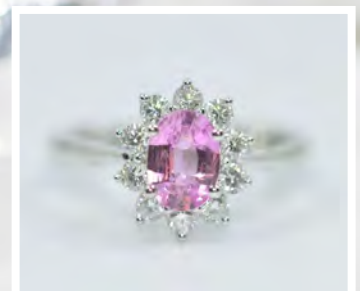
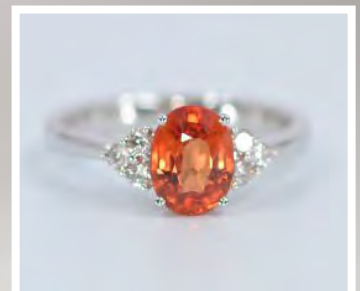
‘Sometimes it can feel like an insurmountable challenge but in Jersey we are taking some really good steps. We are heading in the right direction.’

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A little light music

Enjoying the virtuosity of seasonal birdsong, by Mike Stentiford

Now let's be honest, one would need to toss a coin to discover who gets the most powerful adrenaline rush from this comparatively early part of the year – us humans or nature?

A quote from the late Robin Williams really says it all – 'Spring is nature's way of saying "let's party"'. And nothing guides us on our cheery way more than the highly visible wake-up call in our gardens, parks and countryside.

Who could not possibly thrill at the wonder of it all as bulbs burst, flowers explode, and new growth starts to get seriously fidgety. And, while witnessing all of this offers a veritable feast for the eyes, sharpening the ears to the sound of birdsong further accentuates the season's abundance of natural wonders.

With somewhere in the region of 9,000 species of birds worldwide, it's that one particular specialised group that we applaud for its ability to sing – the oscines, or songbirds. Admittedly, while not all pass muster when it comes to harmonious sweetness, the sounds emitted from the majority of these feathered 'communicators' can never be dismissed as 'uninteresting'.

Whether described as a warble, a twitter, rattle, whistle, a trill, fluty, rich, mellow or liquid, the complexity of vocal connectivity between birds is truly astonishing.

Some, such as the cuckoo and chiffchaff, make species identification so much easier by considerately and clearly stating who they are.

And here's a thing. I've often thought that, were there to be a gloriously inclusive avian choir, there would be certain species that could easily take on the role of adored soloist simply by their purity of song. Our resident skylark, blackbird and blackcap, for instance, would surely get a majority vote should such a fantasy concert ever transpire.

And yet, one species, due entirely to its loud, excitable and overwhelmingly vocal shock tactics, would probably be excluded from any proposed songbird choir – the tiny wren.



Robin

For a species so diminutive, how it manages to create such an overwhelming volume of decibels is difficult to comprehend.

Certainly, sweet and melodious is not something that applies to the jay, a member of the crow family that betrays its woodland presence by the most raucous of screams.

Only a jay would know just why a potential partner would accept such an excessively loud shouting match as being 'attractive'.

But should one be seeking a song with a difference than look no further than the dense reedbeds alongside St Ouen's Pond.

Throughout the coming weeks, the listener will be rewarded with the manic song of the reed warbler, a species that seems to have an awful lot to say but little time in which to say it. It's the kind of jolly little song that, providing no one nearby is watching, encourages one to join in with some gently innocent dance movements.

Sad maybe, but still a difficult invitation to resist.

When it comes to pure melody, of course, we have the song thrush and although its song is nowhere near as common as it once was, its regularly repeated notes prove yet another absolute bonus for the intent bird listener. The quite beautiful song of this species will be forever lauded by Robert Browning in his poem 'Home-Thoughts, from Abroad'.

On a purely personal note, I have to say that if ever the song of a garden bird was underrated then, surely, it has to be that of the dunnock, or hedge sparrow.

What this diminutive bird lacks in colour tone is amply compensated by its cheerful trilling song, similar to the wren but, to my mind, equally as musical.

And, if ever a trophy was to be awarded to the 'marathon songbird' then, likely as not, the robin would proudly step up to the podium to receive the honour.

Apart from a few weeks during its mid-summer moult, robins strut their musical stuff throughout the entire year – a wonderfully appreciated gift from what must surely be our favourite garden visitor.

Unfortunately, and never to our own express benefit, the majority of birdsong can rarely be put into words, although there are a few exceptions.

Who, for instance, can ever doubt the sporting fanaticism of both the wood pigeon and the collared dove?

While the repetitive five-syllable call of the former denotes that ‘I-do-like foot-ball’, the latter is a little more team focussed with its three-syllabled ‘U-ni-ted, U-ni-ted’.

With the great tit’s repetitive ‘teacher teacher’ contact call and blue tits communicating with each other with ‘is it you, is it you/ (and the resonant reply of ‘yes it is, yes it is’), the joy of recognising birdsong becomes ever more pleasurable.

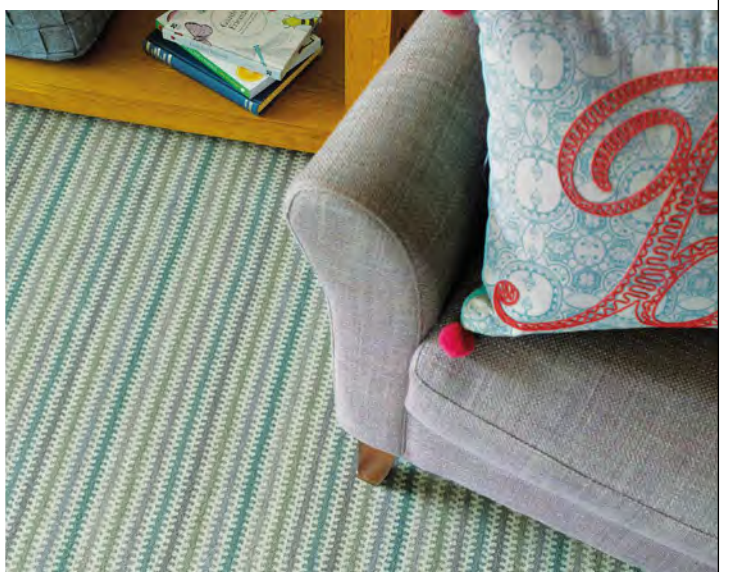
The sad reality that so many declines in bird populations are now being recorded signifies just how fortunate we all are when our songbirds briefly contribute to this annual singalong.

For the birds themselves, song is a very serious business and is certainly not delivered simply for our own listening pleasure. Nonetheless, there’s very little excuse for us not to embrace the joys of birdsong whenever, or wherever, an opportunity occurs during this most musically vibrant time of year.



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2007 was a landmark year for Jersey Trees for Life (JTFL).

As well as adopting a new name after 70 years as Men of the Trees, it also launched the Hedgerow Campaign, a long-term initiative to benefit the Island’s environment by planting hedgerows.

Healthy hedgerows provide myriad environmental benefits and are a crucial part of the ecosystem. They increase biodiversity and provide habitat for pest predators. They act as windbreaks and keep soil warmer, protecting crops. They also reduce soil erosion and run-off, helping minimise flood risk by reducing silt in waterways and absorbing and releasing (or ‘transpiring’) soil water.

Fast forward to 2024 and the campaign’s impact is clear. Assisted by a variety of volunteer teams, the charity has planted over a half a mile of hedgerow annually. In fact, Jersey’s countryside is richer by over 31 miles of new hedgerow since 2007 from this campaign alone – approximately 200,000 whips and trees.

With the 2023/24 Hedgerow Campaign planting in full swing and the season’s conclusion fast approaching, JTFL’s attention turns to next season and two objectives: finding land and funding the whips and trees.

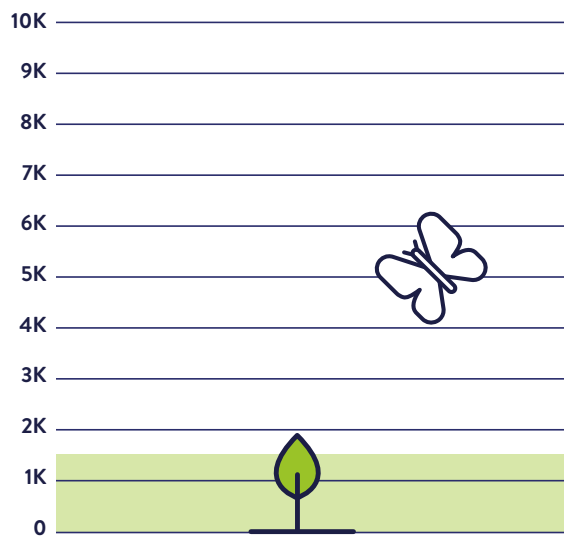
With various Island-wide plots agreed for 2024/25, the charity is delighted to confirm that the second objective is now in hand too, thanks to a sponsorship agreement with ATF Fuels that will directly cover this core cost.

‘This season’s Hedgerow Campaign has been a great success,’ said Alex Morel, CEO of Jersey Trees for Life. ‘With next year’s funding now confirmed, we’re confident we can do even better next year.’

More hedgerows can only be good news for our countryside.



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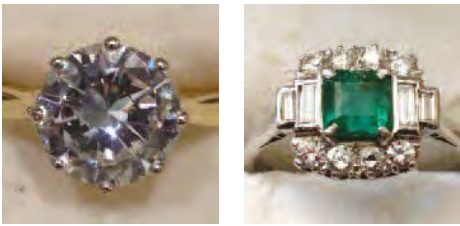
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Where the office is a tree canopy

Kieranne Grimshaw talked to tree surgeon Ian Averty about how he dealt with Storm Ciarán – it wasn't just a storm in a tea cup

His office is a tree canopy. 'You have to love trees,' said tree surgeon Ian Averty. 'You also have to be an outdoor person; we're never rained off – we work, rain or shine.'

One month before the big storm of September 1987, having recently qualified, Ian Averty returned to Jersey to start his own one-man tree surgeon business. Great timing? He was in at the deep end – but he survived and kept going.

He was asked how Storm Ciarán compared to the 1987 storm.

'I'd say this one was probably worse,' Ian answered. 'There are still a lot of trees down and suspended broken branches. Because the root plates are lifting up, it makes the situation so much more difficult to deal with safely. Once started, you can't leave the site until the tree is stable. We do a professional assessment – we walk the site and ensure that it's fit for use. Once an area is cleared, we are responsible for allowing people back in again.'

The main challenge for Ian was dealing with people's concerns; he received over 100 calls on 2 November alone. While he was also busy working for his parish (St John) clearing roads, his wife fielded the calls.

'Everyone thought their own problem was important, but you had to choose which case was the most dangerous – you couldn't visit all of them. I also spoke to a lot of property owners, trying to manage expectations and am still speaking to them now.'



“ There are still a lot of trees down and suspended broken branches. Because the root plates are lifting up, it makes the situation so much more difficult to deal with safely

Walking around the Island, the scale of the recent storm is still evident.

‘The actual damage was more localised than in 1987,’ said Ian. ‘The types of trees affected were less specific, although the English oaks fared quite badly, as did sweet chestnuts and leylandii hedging. A lot of leylandii came down as they were over mature; when they’re damaged, they won’t re-shoot, so unfortunately you have to remove them.’

Being so localised, some of the damage wasn’t apparent until Ian’s team had begun the clearance work. The staff of nine are all qualified and trained to deal with storm damage. There are only a few tree surgeons on the Island who are able to deal with this type of work. Storm damage is completely unique and different from tackling normal everyday tree care.

During the storm and its aftermath, the work was constant, seven days a week for nearly a month. Another challenge was maintaining the high levels of safety required for this type of operation. Fortunately, Ian was prepared: ‘Luckily just before the storm, we ordered some new machinery, so that helped. We did a lot more winching to bring stuff down instead of having to clamber onto it – so much simpler and easier.’

As a small business, coping with the recent storm damage has taken up all their resources; regular maintenance work has been on hold since 2 November. As he already has a long list of waiting clients, Ian believes it could be a year before his business is back on track. To manage these challenges requires real dedication and a commitment to the care and maintenance of trees and their environment.

Ian qualified and went into the business as he always wanted to do the best for trees.

If a client asked him to do something that he didn’t think was correct, he would advise against it and refuse the work.

Storm Ciarán’s impact is noticeable on many roadside banks with logs piled up on rural properties. Most of it is stacked on site until it rots. It goes soft, then seizes, so there’s a fine window when it can be used.

“ The positive is that wildlife love it - it’s a habitat area that can’t be disturbed for several years

There are some benefits, however: ‘The positive is that wildlife love it - it’s a habitat area that can’t be disturbed for several years.’

Tree surgery is no nine-to-five job, but for those who love the great outdoors, the advantages are evident: working outside in stunning natural surroundings and being amongst trees and wildlife. It can be very rewarding, making a difference to the environment.

‘I’ve got trees that I planted in the late 1980s that are now 30 feet tall,’ Ian said, ‘and also all the trees at the Chateau Vermont Music Academy, so that’s very satisfying.’

Going forward, Ian sees his company becoming more involved in advice and consultancy work, hopefully with no hat trick.

‘We don’t need any more storms!’





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Come racing! Come racing!

... as the late and much-missed Jersey bookie, ‘Honest Nev’ Ahier, used to declaim in radio interviews. The newly elected chairman of the Jersey Race Club, Jim Cante, has exactly the same message.

He spoke to Alasdair Crosby

Jersey Race Club starts another season... not on Easter Monday (Easter is so early this year) but on Sunday 12 May.

The new season will start with a new committee: it is ‘all change’ at the Jersey Race Club. At the club’s annual general meeting in December, Elizabeth (‘Bunny’) Roberts became its honorary president (a new position).

“ My ambition is to get more people interested in horses, in riding, and in racing – and to join the club. That’s what we are – we are a club, and we are a welcoming one

The club chairman – also a new position – is James (‘Jim’) Cante, who has been Clerk of the Course for the past three seasons.

In an e-mail to members at the start of 2024, Jim thanked Bunny for her work as president of the Jersey Race Club. Her commitment and resilience during the past few challenging years would not be forgotten, he said, and she would still be attending race meetings in her capacity as honorary president.

To introduce Jim: he comes from Bedfordshire; he has been living in the Island for the past five years and is the owner of a building company. He has always been involved with racehorses: ‘When I was a lot lighter and a lot fitter, I helped with training young horses and I did a lot of riding. I have always been involved with horses and been around horses. I used to ride out until about 15 years ago, and I have always loved horseracing.’

The time that he has now spent in Jersey since moving to the Island has flown by, he said. ‘It’s been a complete change of lifestyle. I go back every other week for a day or so, but it has become more of a case of going back for Cheltenham, or rugby (I’m a big England fan) and fitting the business in with that.’

Jim continued: ‘That was one thing that really amazed me when I came to live in the Island and when I joined the club five years ago: it was the number of people who not only didn’t go horseracing, but more importantly, didn’t even know that there was horseracing in Jersey.’

It was always on his agenda to become involved with horseracing in Jersey, since there is so much potential to promote racing – indeed, to promote the whole equestrian sector. That is now his mission.

‘We are restructuring the club’s committee similar to a company’s board of directors’ Jim said. Everybody has their own area of responsibility; they can report back at committee meetings, and it should make things a lot quicker. Each committee member can set up their own subcommittee to include people who are not on the main committee and who can provide necessary expertise or assistance in a particular sphere.



So, subcommittees are being set up, and all the members will have jobs to do, hence running the club should be a bit more structured.

‘I hope this will bring in more members, and, as I said at the committee meeting, we do need to encourage more people to become members. I plan to send out information to members throughout the season, so that they have a bit of information as we go along – and maybe it will encourage others to join.’

Asked how things were looking for the oncoming season he replied: ‘We have the usual problems of lack of staff for the trainers – a problem we are currently dealing with, because they may want to bring a new jockey in, but Customs don’t recognise a jockey as a sportsman: they will accept a rugby player as a sportsman, but not a jockey who rides a horse at 40mph. The trainers want to bring in jockeys – only for a for a six-month period, not for ever – but we are not allowed to bring them in. It’s very frustrating.

‘Jockeys need to be licensed. Although you can ride a horse out for a trainer, you can’t ride one in a race.’

Nevertheless, things are looking promising for the season and a number of trainers from the UK may well be entering horses for race meetings.

There are between 50 and 60 horses in training in Jersey, with more horses arriving before this next season starts. ‘But,’ he said, ‘don’t forget, we have five races at every meeting so we do need other horses to challenge our horses. We don’t have enough horses, because we have 45 races, and some of our horses might have minor injuries or are not fit for the race distance, for example, so won’t be able to race. In short, we need more horses.’

A major initiative of the new committee is to encourage horse syndicates in which people can be the proud owner of, for example, a leg of a horse, or perhaps a tenth of a horse. There are a couple of syndicates being put together at the moment, consisting of eight to ten people. This keeps the cost of ownership down, and keeps the interest level up.



Jim Cantle with groundsman Glyn Mitchell

If this idea is of interest, he asks potential syndicate members to contact the Jersey Race Club secretary, Andy Cadoret, who will pass it to the right quarter.

Currently, there are only two trainers in the Island, Alyson Malzard and Karl Kukk, although there is a possibility of another two starting up. Every encouragement is being given to UK trainers to bring their horses to Jersey race meetings. Every discouragement is caused by the cost of travel, even though there is a contribution towards the cost, which is made by the club.

Then there are the problems of Jersey’s weather: a trainer might be thinking of a three-day visit, with the race day on Day 2 – but that suddenly might become a four-day or five-day visit, with the paid staff stuck in the Island and not being able to do what they should be doing in the UK.

Nevertheless, what could be more fun for a trainer and his staff than to make an excursion to Jersey – plus have a chance of winning a race? In addition, there is the hospitality that the club and its committee members will offer them.

It has been suggested that there could be merit in having a centre for equestrian excellence – which, in respect of racing, could fulfil a number of useful roles, including stabling for visiting racehorses and accommodation for staff, and in the wider equestrian sector, encourage an interest in riding in all its different aspects.

Jim quite agreed. ‘There are so many different activities within the equestrian sector. Pony Club, horseracing, show jumping, dressage... but how we bring that altogether, is a massive job.

‘It would need sponsorship, of course, but to encourage more people to go horse riding is a worthy cause. It’s a great sport, a great activity, and encouraging the young is something that we all need to do, whatever riding direction they take subsequently. But it all starts with getting them on their first pony... Not many people start riding on thoroughbreds – it all starts with ponies.’

But, back to the Jersey Race Club. Jim is emphatic that he wants more members – and he is looking for new committee and subcommittee members, as well as more people to become involved in syndicates, to come and enjoy the racing, and enjoy the on-course hospitality. There are opportunities for corporates to have their own tents up there, more space for retail outlets – the club is open to suggestions. He would like to organise a ‘family day’ at the racecourse perhaps with the involvement of the Pony Club.

He said: ‘Membership is a vital part of the Jersey Race Club, so if you are not a member, do consider joining and encourage friends and family to do so. We are also looking for stewards and race day volunteers to train for tasks such as hurdle attendants. We welcome as many as possible to join or to become more involved in the club. Please do offer your services via our secretary, Andy Cadoret.

‘My ambition is to get more people interested in horses, in riding, and in racing – and to join the club. That’s what we are – we are a club, and we are a welcoming one.’

For more information about the Jersey Race Club, contact the secretary, Andy Cadoret: secretary@jerseyraceclub.com



Riding high

Retired vet John Hamilton is best known for keeping Jersey's horses in the best of health. It left him little time to bond with a horse of his own. All that changed after a family riding holiday exploring the wilderness of Wyoming. Ruth Le Cocq met him and his gentle giant of a horse, Bailey

How do you give a large Clydesdale horse a workout? Carrots might be the answer.

Retired vet John Hamilton showed how, as he stood shoulder to shoulder with his horse, Bailey, standing at 18.1 hands high. There was a little bit of jostling as they both leaned this way and that during their daily carrot stretch routine. Bailey's fumbling lips tried and tried again to reach the tasty morsel held in John's hand.

The giant horse planted his front feet wide apart; his head and neck leaned down and, as he lengthened the muscles all along his spine stretching from the tips of his ears to tip of his tail, he tasted success.

It's quite a workout for John too who, after a lifetime as a vet specialising in caring for larger animals, has had his fair share of injuries. But, while carrot stretches might hit the spot for Bailey, John relies on a weekly Pilates class to ensure he is riding fit.

Bailey is one of just a few Clydesdale horses in Jersey and his large size makes quite an impression. His 'wow factor' has also been boosted recently as he is 'Mr April' in this year's Jersey Evening Post's calendar.

'Bailey is really well known around St Ouen – much better known than me,' laughed John, 'and I've been in the parish for over 30 years.'





It's two years since the Clydesdale horse arrived in the Island and, within days of meeting each other, John and Bailey developed a strong bond of friendship.

'We had the usual Jersey winter weather and we couldn't get him across, so he actually arrived on 13 January 2022,' said John, who paused and took a deep breath. 'It was the first anniversary of Paddy's death so it's always a bittersweet day for me.'

Paddy was John's first horse who he bought after his passion for riding was rekindled at a dude ranch during a family holiday to Wyoming in 2016.

'I said to my wife, Emma, that I was going to get myself a horse and she held me to it when we got back.'

Although John had a few riding lessons as a child, he didn't develop a love for horses until he was at university and vet school.

“ **Bailey is really well known around St Ouen – much better known than me... and I've been in the parish for over 30 years**

'I started working in stables in the UK. It was all part of the vet training because you need to get to experience handling animals and that's when I started to develop my love, I would say almost passion, for horses.'

John rode in mounted games and a few competitions but he mostly enjoyed riding across country at speed.

'I thought I was pretty good but now I've come to realise, 35 years later, that I had more confidence than ability and I did fall off a lot!'

After a long lay-off from riding, John bought Paddy and had lessons with Penny Cruttwell in his quest to become a more sympathetic rider.

'I ride a bit like Richard III as I'm distinctly twisted to one side after a combination of injuries over the years. Paddy used to cope with that, but Bailey is a lot more sensitive.'

'I loved Paddy with all my heart. He was a bit sharp at times and I did spend a fair amount of time either on the road or in fields, so I bought myself an air vest. I think I got through 15 cannisters at that time!' John smiled.

'I had a fantastic four years with him before we very, very sadly lost him to an acute colic and that was probably the worst night of my life. Paddy was gone in four hours – I couldn't control his pain.'

John takes another deep breath acknowledging the helplessness he felt as, despite his extensive vet experience, he was unable to save his beloved horse.



Sadly, just four months earlier, his wife had lost her Dutch Warmblood horse to colic too.

It was later that year that John decided to retire from vet practice.

‘Mentally I was done with running the practice and physically my body was done with the horse work because I wasn’t quick enough to get out of the way.’

His only regret is that he wishes he had spent more of his leisure time with horses during his professional life. John, who has always had a penchant for the Clydesdale breed, savours every moment he spends with Bailey. These Scottish draught horses, who used to plough fields and were once classed as vulnerable to extinction, now tend to be used as carriage and driving horses because of their active gait depicting power and quality.

‘Bailey falls asleep while I’m washing his legs and I think he quite likes it,’ grinned John, ‘sometimes he licks my head which I take as a form of appreciation.’



Settling in your new puppy

By Harry Matthews, of Origin Dog Training

Spring is a time for new life and growth. So, what better time to discuss puppies, the reason we love them and how to help your new puppy settle in at home?

Scientists debate when the wolf crept closer to man's fire. Estimates range from 30,000 years to 15,000 years ago. There are many theories but the most prominent is the cute puppy theory.

When humans have a baby, both mother and father release oxytocin, an incredible chemical that helps parents bond to their newborn child. New lovers release the same hormone when they go on a first date with plenty of eye contact. Oxytocin is the relationship forming hormone – the warm fuzzy feeling you get when you look at your loved one or your child. When they're behaving, of course.

Wolves do not naturally release this hormone when they look at humans. But one wolf cub must have. To form the bond. Wolves and proto-dogs (the ancestors of the domesticated dog of today) have hijacked the oxytocin loop once reserved for parent and baby.

This is why, no matter how hard-nosed you may be, or how tough a bloke you are, the second you pick up a puppy you cannot help but think, or even verbalise 'awwwww'.

Like with most things in history, it's never just one thing. The other prominent theory is that as dogs are scavengers, they learned to process our leftovers and scraps. This meant they could feed themselves without having to hunt, gradually coming closer to the fireside.

So now we know how the puppy manipulated man.

“ You should also do a lot of research into the type and breed of dog you want. Read that sentence again. And then again. And when you've finally decided, read that sentence again

It is always worth discussing what you need to consider when looking at getting a puppy or even a new dog.

Decide whether you want a pure breed or rescue. There are pros and cons to both.

You should also do a lot of research into the type and breed of dog you want. Read that sentence again. And then again. And when you've finally decided, read that sentence again.

Know the breed history. Their traits. Their origin. This is just as true for rescues as it is for pure breeds.

If you go down the pure breed route, and you have found a reputable breeder, ask them questions. You'll want to know about the grandparents and parents. Their health. Their behaviour.

Be curious. Be discerning. Ask questions.

Any good breeder will be happy to give you all the information.

Get in with a vet before your puppy turns up. Your puppy will arrive at eight to ten weeks. They'll have a range of jabs. Speak to your vet.



A question I'm asked often is "When can I start training my puppy?"

My answer is always the same. Day one!

As soon as you get your puppy you can start training. At home. Before your puppy is allowed outdoors, they can be toilet trained, socialised and start some fundamental skills training.

For information on socialisation and training, contact us at Harry@origindogtraining.com

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Closing date for entries is 31 May 2024.

Winners will be contacted via email.

Good Luck!

Canine hip dysplasia

Sarah Lewis of Pawellness is a veterinary physiotherapist, practising in Jersey

70 % of dogs have hip dysplasia, and it is one of the most common conditions I see as an animal physiotherapist. Initially, that is often a devastating diagnosis to hear – but dogs can lead long, healthy lives with management.

What is hip dysplasia?

Hip dysplasia is a skeletal condition affecting all breeds but particularly large and giant breeds. It is a developmental disorder where the hip joint doesn't fit properly into the hip socket, leading to instability and potential damage. This condition can vary in severity, and while it is known to have a genetic component, environmental factors can also play a role.

What are the causes of hip dysplasia?

Initially, it was thought that hip dysplasia was genetic, but research suggests that the environment does also play a role.

Certain breeds are genetically predisposed to hip dysplasia. Large and giant breeds, such as German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, and Saint Bernards, are more commonly affected. It is *always* a good idea, when thinking about a larger breed, to ask about hip dysplasia in the parents or previous litters.

While genetics do play a significant role, environmental factors can contribute to the development and severity of hip dysplasia.

Factors such as rapid growth, improper nutrition, excessive weight, and certain types of exercise can influence the progression of the condition.

Excessive weight is thought to be the biggest contributing factor to abnormal hip development in addition to high impact repetitive movements like ball throwing whilst in the early stages of development. Slippery floors and stairs have been found to also contribute to the development of hip dysplasia.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of hip dysplasia can vary, but common signs include lameness, difficulty rising or climbing stairs, reluctance to engage in physical activities, and a bunny hopping gait. Dogs with hip dysplasia may also show pain or discomfort in the hip area and you may notice a loss of muscle around the hip joint.



How do we diagnose hip dysplasia?

Diagnosis is generally done through x-rays, which give the most accurate picture of what is occurring and the severity of the disease.

What are the treatments?

Treatment options depend on the severity of the hip dysplasia. Mild cases can be managed with weight control, exercise moderation, and joint supplements. A conservative plan consists of physiotherapy exercises specifically to strengthen the hip stabilisers and build muscle around the hip joint to control the movement.

With hip dysplasia also come compensatory patterns which can be seen below. An animal physiotherapist doesn't just treat the hip, but the whole dog.

What about prevention?

While it may not be entirely preventable, maintaining a healthy weight, providing proper nutrition, and avoiding excessive high impact exercise during a dog's growth period can help reduce the risk and severity of hip dysplasia.



1. The head and neck will lower to shift more weight onto the front limbs.

2. The hind legs will step further forward under the body to reduce the degree of extension in the hips.

3. The pelvis and lumbar spine will flex, creating an arch in the back.

4. The front legs will come a little further backwards underneath the body.

5. The carpus will become progressively more extended and laxer, as it carries more weight.

6. The centre of mass will shift a little forward and down.

More severe cases may require surgical intervention, such as hip replacement or other corrective procedures.

A proper warm up and cool down routine before and after off lead exercises and keeping repetitive movements to a minimum will also reduce the risk.

Early detection and appropriate management can significantly improve the quality of life for dogs with hip dysplasia.

If you suspect your dog may have hip dysplasia or if you have concerns about your dog's joint health, it's essential to consult with your vet for a thorough evaluation and guidance on appropriate care.

Any questions or advice on how you can help your dog email: info@pawwellness.co.uk



**Come join our free Facebook group
Canine Hip Dysplasia Support**

Supporting you and your dog with Canine Hip Dysplasia.



SCAN ME



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Queen of the Czech mates

Christine Marett with her two Cesky Terriers, Ivan and Rose, talked to Kieranne Grimshaw about this breed – one of the sixth rarest dog breeds in the world and unique in Jersey



The Cesky Terrier was originally bred for hunting in the forests of Bohemia (think Smetana's *Má Vlast*) and is the national dog of the Czech Republic – supposedly one of the most dog friendly countries in Europe. Most locals take their dogs everywhere as they tend to be treated as well as any human.

Christine Marett, who owns the pair of Cesky Terriers, Ivan and Rose, said: 'It was Diana Abbott, a local dog groomer, who brought the first Cesky, Ripple, into the Island in the 1990s. When Di sadly passed away, we went on to inherit Ripple, Rolo and Minstral, and then bought Flyte for our son Adrian.'

Wanting a dog which was versatile for a junior handler, including obedience, showing, and agility, Christine discovered her ideal breed and now owns five Ceskys – and has never looked back.

Ceskys are great family dogs, being friendly and energetic but less excitable than other terriers. This breed just loves games and are quite competitive in dog competitions, so are suitable for the more active owners too.

'We bought our second dog, Ces, for our son to do agility classes with him. The breed is good at this, as they're very agile, but quite loose shoulders, so they can go overground as well,' said Christine. For anyone interested in having a bit of fun with their dog, the Cesky could be for you.

Despite their all-round adaptability, Ceskys are still quite rare, as Christine explains: 'I wish I had a pound for everyone who comes up and says... "Oh What a nice Schnauzer!" Ceskys are longer and not as tall, but people look at the face and see the long forelock. My friends also often say to me "Even the women have beards!"'

Unlike most terriers, Ceskys' coats which come in various shades of grey, need to be clipped, not stripped. 'They don't moult,' said Christine, 'but can be quite high maintenance with grooming. I do my dogs about every six to eight weeks. When they are puppies, as their coat is very soft, they tend to mat a lot more.'

The benefits of regular brushing our pets, however, are twofold – as this serves as both a bonding and affectionate experience with their owners.

She continued: 'They're quite laid back and great with people. They're also happy to go for a walk, but if the weather is awful, they're equally content to curl up on the settee and watch TV with you. Mine aren't very keen on going in the water. When it's bathtime, you usually find they've all suddenly disappeared.'

The versatility of this breed is evident as Christine explained that Flint visits local schools as a pet therapy dog.

“ They're quite laid back and great with people. They're also happy to go for a walk, but if the weather is awful, they're equally content to curl up on the settee and watch TV with you

‘He’s been into St Clement’s School this morning and he’s going to Grands Vaux tomorrow. He gets so excited, as he knows when he’s going. I tie his hair up and the children love it.’

Ceskys make successful therapy dogs as they get along well with children and are not too big.

For a perfect opportunity to meet this distinctive breed, Christine will be taking her five dogs to Crufts later this year, not just for showing.

‘They will all be at Discover Dogs, a booth where you can go round and find out more about your particular breed. They love it and people can come and meet them and have a chat. Anyone interested in buying one should always go through the Kennel Club or Breed Clubs.’

On a previous city break to Prague, Christine admitted she didn’t see one Cesky.

‘We went for four days, I was so disappointed. I was told they would be on the buses, but I didn’t spot one!’



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Howard Davis Park Bluebells in Spring, by Patricia Blandin



The Jersey Society of Artists

By its president, Sally Reading

The Jersey Society of Artists has been a thriving, friendly art club for over 60 years.

It is currently based at the Community Centre in St Ouen, where we enjoy several sessions each week.

On Tuesday mornings there is General/Still Life, plus Life drawing (with a model). Wednesday afternoons is Portrait (with model) and Saturday mornings is General plus Life (with model). Our artists use all media i.e. water colour, oils, acrylic and even collage.

During the year we hold workshops with both local and visiting tutors. These are always popular and well-attended. The Society holds two exhibitions each year and all members are able to submit paintings for sale. During the summer months we paint en plein air at various venues, including private gardens plus some public spaces or churches, manors, etc. We occasionally enjoy a few socials and have a summer and winter lunch at local restaurants.

Our first exhibition this year will be at the Grève de Lecq Barracks, from 2 May to 12 May. Why buy a mass-produced print when you can choose your own original work of art? There will be a Browser bin for unframed paintings, and artists' cards.

Come and see and meet us – you'll be very welcome!

The Society does not receive any government funding and this year we intend raising money by holding an auction and sale on Saturday 10 August at the Community Centre, St Ouen. We held one two years ago and it was great fun and very enjoyable. Sale items included art books and magazines, together with all sorts of artist's materials.

That auction had lots ranging from having a painting done of your pet, your house or even yourself; art or pottery throwing tuition; a round of golf at the Royal Jersey Golf Club; a case of wine; afternoon tea at a local hotel, and much more. This time we are planning on having auction lots of similar quality. Watch this space!

Additionally, last year we produced a calendar showing off some of our artist members' talents for the first time. This was kindly sponsored by Collins but unfortunately, due to their major building problems, it was very late in distribution. In spite of that it was a very successful venture, and we are hoping to be able to produce a new one for 2025.

We allow prospective members one free trial session so they can meet us before committing – 'try before you buy'!

A painting by one of our members is being included in each of the four quarterly editions of RURAL this year, chosen to portray the season. For this Spring edition of RURAL, we have chosen *Howard Davis Park Bluebells in Spring*, by Patricia Blandin.

If you would like more information about the Jersey Society of Artists or are interested in joining, please contact aldythstansfeld@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you

Trade not aid...

creating a fairer world

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Fairtrade mark, the symbol which can now be found on 5,000 products in our shops. Cathy Le Feuvre met Mike Gidney, chief executive of the Fairtrade Foundation, during a visit to celebrate the renewal of Jersey's status as a Fairtrade Island

Sitting in a courtyard at Jersey College Prep, where Mike Gidney had just spoken to the whole school and met the enthusiastic young members of the school's Eco Team, his passion for and commitment to the ethical trade movement that he leads was palpable.

The previous evening, Mike had been guest of honour at a dinner organised by the Jersey Fairtrade Island Group.

There he presented the then Assistant Environment Minister, Deputy Hilary Jeune, and the outgoing chair of the group, Tony Allchurch, with a certificate to recognise the renewal of Jersey's status as a Fairtrade Island. This status was first granted in 2005, after years of campaigning by enthusiasts including the late Ed Le Quesne, who first encouraged Tony to get involved.

The concept of Fairtrade, Mike explained, was perfectly encapsulated by one young JCP pupil during the school assembly.

'She just said Fairtrade is about a better deal, putting more money in the hands of the farmers, and showing you care. She absolutely nailed it. It's quite simple really, but it's transformative if we all do it together.'

'Fairtrade is becoming part of life and that's incredibly important for farmers because every time shoppers buy a Fairtrade product a guaranteed benefit goes back to the farmers. This helps them plan and invest and build stronger farms, stronger communities. It's trade, not aid! But none of that is possible without people looking for that Fairtrade mark.'

With Fairtrade products now available in 125 countries, the Fairtrade Foundation works with 2 million farmers in 75 countries across Latin America, Africa and Asia and there are two financial aspects to Fairtrade.

'One is a guaranteed minimum price that goes directly into the hands of the farmer. So, a smallholder cocoa farmer in Ivory Coast growing cocoa for our chocolate bars will get an absolute guaranteed minimum price for her cocoa, without question. But on top of that there's an extra premium, which is about a 10% bonus, which goes to her community, very often a co-operative. And it's that premium that communities use to invest in big projects like schools, hospitals and healthcare,' Mike said.

Fairtrade prices and premiums help poor smallholder farmers provide for their families and send their children to school, and it's also helping them to tackle climate change, which is hitting them hard.

'Increasingly, we're seeing Fairtrade communities using the extra premium to invest in adaptation and mitigation against the climate crisis – including better irrigation and planting shade trees to protect things like cocoa and coffee, which are quite vulnerable to too much sun exposure.'

'But all that costs money, and when you're still paid below the cost of production, adapting to the climate crisis is really tough. That's where Fairtrade is more important than ever.'

The enthusiasm of the younger generation, including the pupils at JCP with whom Mike spent time, is crucial to the future of Fairtrade.



Receiving the renewed status. Left to right: Tony Allchurch, Hilary Jeune & Mike Gidney

‘Companies only respond to Fairtrade because they understand that it matters to the public. They give customers what they think the customers want.

If there wasn't public support, like here in the school, across Jersey and all of the different communities, in faith groups... companies would stop being involved. It's the most powerful way of persuading companies to stock Fairtrade products, to convert more of their products to Fairtrade, which in turn benefits the farmers, which then of course benefits us as consumers.

“ I get a really strong sense of community support in Jersey for Fairtrade, which is for me really inspiring, because it just sustains me in what I'm trying to do as well

‘The Co-op, in Jersey and across the UK, have been standout supporters of Fairtrade for years, ever since we began... all of their bananas, all of their coffee and tea, their cocoa is Fairtrade. They really are committed,’ Mike continued.

‘I get a really strong sense of community support in Jersey for Fairtrade, which is for me really inspiring, because it just sustains me in what I'm trying to do as well.

‘Sometimes the world can seem daunting and depressing, and Fairtrade is just a little bit of hope that together we can build a better future. You can just start to change the world bit by bit when you go shopping.’

A longer version of this interview can be found on www.ruraljersey.co.uk/fait-trade



JCP Eco Team with Mike Gidney, Tony Allchurch and JCP teacher and Eco Team leader Mrs Andrea Christopher

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Viticoltori Ponte

Quality, constancy and foresight: the secrets of a constantly evolving company

Founded in Ponte di Piave – in the Veneto Region of Italy – in 1948, Viticoltori Ponte is one of the most important and innovative companies in the international wine industry.

It represents 1,000 members and encompasses 3,000 hectares of vines, spanning from the north of Venice to the foothills of the Province of Treviso, with around 20 million bottles produced every year.



Operating in over 30 countries around the world, Ponte delivers certified quality across its entire range, from still to sparkling via bubbly and organic wines, winning a host of accolades and plaudits from the leading voices in the industry.

The Prosecco DOC Extra Dry Treviso is one of the bestsellers of the winery. With mousse-y bubbles and aromas and flavours of white flowers, crisp apple, and ripe pear, it is a versatile wine that can be served as an aperitif or paired with a range of dishes, such as shrimp scampi.

In 2007, the company, which was already at the forefront of the Prosecco Rosé trend, sought to elevate the pink sparkling wine and imbue it with a richness and complexity that was uncommon at the time. They created a cuvée with 85% Glera and 15% Pinot Noir. The addition of the Pinot Noir added an aromatic intensity and flavours of red berries to the beautifully textured Ponte Prosecco DOC Rosé.

“ Balances shift rapidly, reminding us that nothing can be taken for granted. Only caring for our planet and a healthy coexistence, focussing on cooperation rather than elimination of all organisms, can allow us to dream of a better future



Left to right: Luigi Vanzella, General Manager, and Giancarlo Guidolin, Chairman

Furthermore, Viticoltori Ponte strongly believes in the importance of sustainable winemaking that works in harmony with nature. After more than a year of thorough testing and rigorous audits, CSQA, which is a leading public certification body in the agriculture and food and beverage sectors, has certified that the sustainability management system of Viticoltori Ponte complies with the SOPD EQUALITAS standard, drawn up in accordance with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The goals refer to fundamental issues for global development and aim to end poverty, fight inequality, deal with climate change, and build peaceful societies that respect human rights.

This has already been attested by another recently acquired certification, namely the National Integrated Production Management System (SQNPI) certification issued by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, providing enhanced consumer protection that is instantly recognisable, thanks to the bee logo on labels.

Giancarlo Guidolin, Chairman, and Luigi Vanzella, General Manager of Viticoltori Ponte, have stated that: 'Balances shift rapidly, reminding us that nothing can be taken for granted. Only caring for our planet and a healthy coexistence, focussing on cooperation rather than elimination of all organisms, can allow us to dream of a better future.'

For further information contact Matteo Bagnara, communications manager

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E-mail: matteo.bagnara@ponte1948.it

www.ponte1948.it

In the kitchen

Three ways with Jersey Royals, by Zoë Garner

Jersey Royals, three ways...

Our Island's most famous ware, and aren't we proud of it! You can't beat them simply boiled, buttered up and served alongside most things, but here are three of my favourite ways to enjoy them with a little twist.

Zoë is a trained chef of Leith's, London, and as well as writing for our food pages here, she has her own business www.zoes-kitchen.com. Her passion is baking and so she has created a range of pre prepared mixes for you to become the baking king or queen of your own kitchen. Her range includes cookie & brownie mixes, as well as personalised children's party boxes, making baking a fun activity for the whole family!



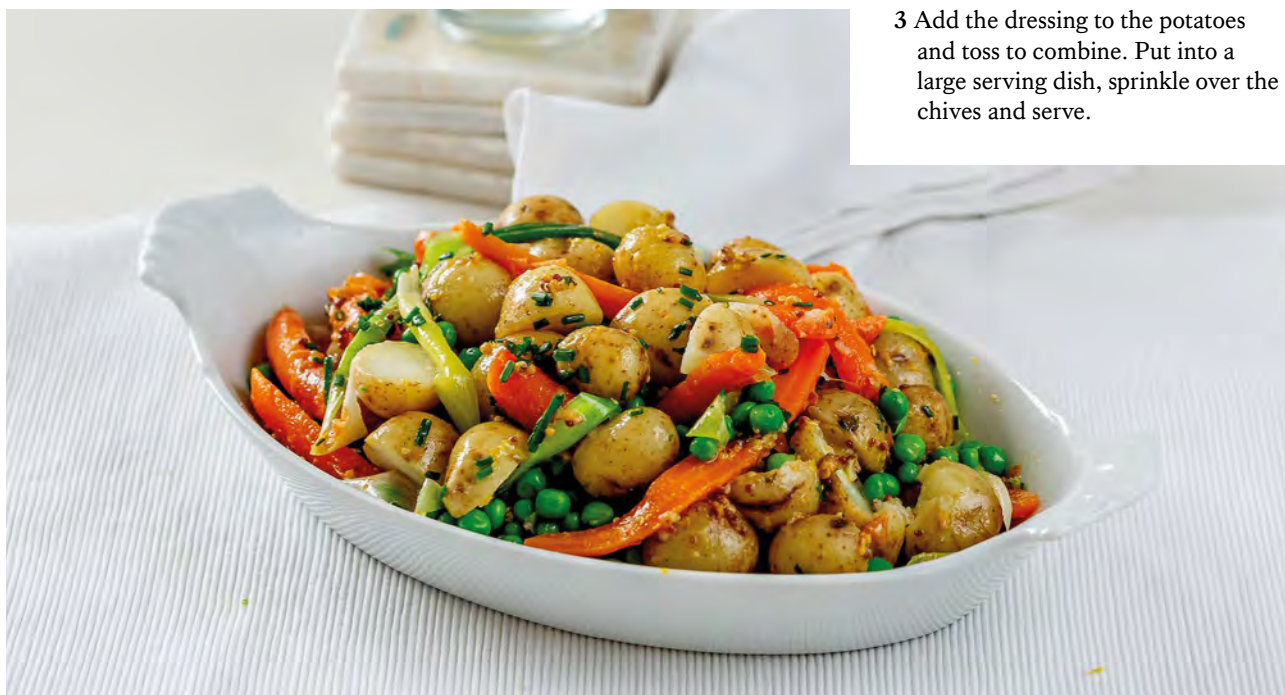
Royals with Spring Vegetables

Serves 4

I find this recipe works great alongside a roast chicken at the weekend, especially in spring time, a little lighter than your traditional roast potatoes.

500g Jersey Royals, halved
 200g baby carrots, trimmed & halved lengthways
 4 spring onions, trimmed & halved lengthways
 250g frozen peas
 zest & juice of 1 lemon
 1tsp honey
 1tbsp wholegrain mustard
 5tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 2tbsp freshly chopped chives

- 1 Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil, add the potatoes and simmer for 10min. Add the carrots and simmer for a further 4min. Add the spring onions and peas and simmer for a final 1min. Drain and return to the pan.
- 2 Put the remaining ingredients, excluding the chives, into a small pan and heat gently for a few minutes until warm.
- 3 Add the dressing to the potatoes and toss to combine. Put into a large serving dish, sprinkle over the chives and serve.



Hasselback Royals with Spiced Crème fraîche

Serves 4

I love serving these along with a barbecue.

750g Jersey Royals
2tbsp olive oil
1tsp paprika
200ml half fat crème fraîche
1tbsp sweet chilli sauce

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan). To slice the potatoes, one at a time put them on a wooden spoon and cut across their width at 4mm intervals (the spoon will stop you from cutting all the way through).
- 2 Put the potatoes in a roasting tray, coat with the oil, sprinkle over the paprika and roast for 45min, until tender.
- 3 Meanwhile, put the crème fraîche into a bowl and stir in the sweet chilli. Serve with the potatoes for dipping.



Royals with Broad Beans and Pancetta

Serves 6

A perfect midweek accompaniment to some grilled fish.

750g Jersey Royals, sliced 1cm thick
77g pack diced pancetta
1 small fennel bulb, trimmed and finely chopped
100g shelled edamame or broad beans
2tbsp red wine vinegar
1tbsp maple syrup
1tbsp freshly chopped dill, plus extra to garnish

- 1 Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil, add the sliced potatoes and simmer for 10min, until tender.
- 2 Meanwhile, heat a large frying pan over a medium heat, add the pancetta and cook for 3min. Add the fennel and beans and cook for a further 5min. Remove from the heat and add the remaining ingredients.
- 3 Drain the potatoes, add to the pancetta mix and combine. Pile into a bowl, scatter over the dill and serve.

Standing firm against the onslaught of modernity

The Farmers Inn, St Ouen – a traditional social hub for the community. A regular there (who doesn't want to be named – we wonder why?) describes its attraction

We are being told all the time that our generation is drinking too much and needs to live a less boozy lifestyle... only drinking at the weekends and of course doing so in moderation. However, as we follow man's natural desire to be social and cheery, particularly after the limitations on normal life caused by the pandemic, we do need to support local social hubs in case they fall victim to the types of development that have slowly chipped away the social fabric of our communities.

And standing firm against the steady onslaught is the Farmers Inn, St Ouen.

As many know, Jersey has a strong and reliably recorded history of drinking. In 1844 (presumably at the height of Methodism) there were over 400 alehouses in St Helier alone, when licences to sell ale were regulated by the States Assembly... with the notable exception of St Ouen, where the Seigneur was in charge of issuing parish licences. One might even think it is still the case as there's still an enthusiastic clientele of socially minded folk at one of Jersey's remaining authentic pubs, helping to carry on the old tradition of heartily quenching their thirst at the Farmers Inn.

The Farmers has resisted the desire of many breweries to update its tenanted estate with improving the décor and by doing so justifying an opportunity to drive up prices.

Far from having the inside 'tarted up', the pub has retained its charm with 'smoke cured' walls and seemingly late 20th Century tables and chairs. The pub has retained its well-worn character... it has wooden floors, perfect for those of an unsteady hand. The only nod to modernity is a couple of TV screens and none of the dreadful muzak – just the noise of chatter, the odd burst of laughter and sometimes an undercurrent of conspiratorial whispering from the 'after work' gang.

The landlord manages to deliver up a solid menu of four or five courses a couple of times a week, always featuring a liquid absorbing fish and chips or sausage and mash... almost gastro in its unchanging fare... and despite having solid Liberation ales and a guest beer too. From time to time the cognoscenti will saunter in from other parishes when the word is out that La Robeline cider, of sometimes unusual strength, appears for its seasonal debut.

Unlike other pubs, this is a local with local attributes and a clientèle that welcomes others. Silence can often be a warm welcome here and maybe after a few visits a nod is offered... as close to a handshake elsewhere!

It's almost as if the regulars don't want everybody to share their secret joy at this most characterful of Jersey pubs!





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A Haven for Foodies and Relaxation Enthusiasts

The Waterfront Bar & Terrace is excited to announce its newly extended food serving hours from 8am – 10pm daily, ensuring all guests are never short of delicious culinary delights. Sit and relax with a view while indulging in our mouth-watering food offerings.

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

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

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

*For more information, please contact:
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Key questions answered by Shani Clark
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What is a personal pension, and do I need one?

A pension is a tax-efficient way to save for retirement, during your working life. Most pensions are simply investments that build up over time.

Although everyone needs to save for retirement, not everyone needs a pension to do this. They can be expensive, especially in the early years, often keeping things simple with a straightforward investment plan can be more cost effective.

I have an old pension – what should I do?

We frequently see pensions that are not invested in line with clients' objectives or plans, often causing them to lose out in a big way over the longer term, so it's always sensible to seek independent advice to understand your options.

What advantages can there be in transferring to a Jersey Personal Pension?

Many pensions now have a retirement date of 65/67, which for most is simply too late. With a Jersey Personal Pension, you can access your money from age 50 and enjoy up to 30% of the value as a tax-free lump sum.

Often unlocking greater flexibility as to how your pension is invested and managed, you can also consolidate multiple pensions into one, potentially saving money, and making it much easier to manage and to keep track of how you are doing.

How much should I save for retirement?

I've never met anyone who has been disadvantaged by saving for their future! There is no magic rule, however, saving what you can afford and starting as soon as possible is nearly always advisable.

What else should I consider?

Protection – this is an area that is often overlooked. Life Cover, Critical Illness and Income Protection should be the bedrock of any financial plan to protect you and your family – often much cheaper than you think.

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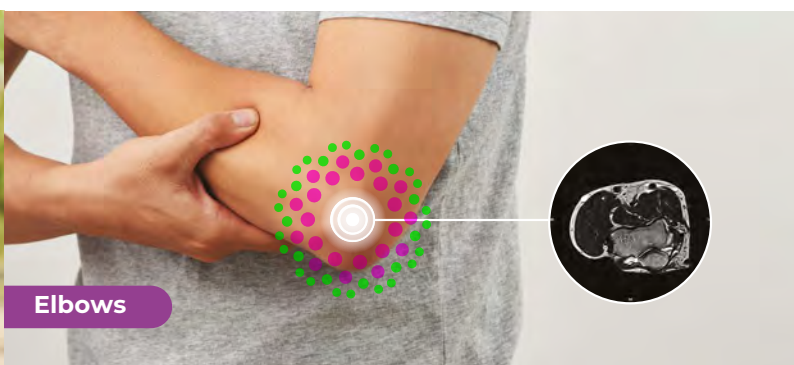
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Diabetes Jersey

Between this issue of **RURAL** and the next, more than 90 Islanders are likely to be diagnosed with diabetes



How ever much Covid-19 dominated our lives for three years, in that same time another disease has continued to be very active and is still just as active today. But this one is different. No one yet knows what causes it, no one yet has found a cure for it, and no one yet has found a way to vaccinate against it. This one is diabetes.

Talking about diabetes is probably an unlikely topic for a publication that majors on the local countryside and those who spend their lives in it. Nevertheless, among their number will be many who will either already have diabetes or are likely to acquire it.

So, what is this condition that was known to the ancient Egyptians, but it was only in the 1920s that a means of extracting insulin from one pancreas and injecting into someone with diabetes was discovered?

Diabetes occurs when the pancreas (and we all have one) either stops producing insulin (the hormone that keeps our body sugar balanced) or progressively produces less of it.

It is almost impossible for us to ingest any food that does not, in some shape or form, contain sugar.

Lactose is the sugar in milk, fructose is the sugar in fruit, and glucose occurs in almost everything else.

No one has yet established for certain why, in the instance of Type 1 diabetes, the pancreas suddenly stops producing insulin. Type 1 can manifest itself very suddenly without any preventable cause. This can be particularly distressing for parents if the person acquiring the disease is a child since anyone, whatever their age, must take insulin by injection, sometimes several times a day.

Type 2 diabetes, where the production of insulin decreases over time, is more common in adults, although overweight teenagers are now recognized as being at risk of acquiring it.

In Jersey around 4,500 people have diabetes of which around 10% are Type 1.

Although most people with diabetes will manage it because they are aware they have a serious condition, untreated diabetes can lead to blindness, impotence, a predilection to strokes and heart attacks, the loss of limbs and ultimately death. As with many other diseases, the earlier the detection, the better.

There is no early detection for Type 1 diabetes, but Type 2 can be detected with a blood test and if discovered early enough can be managed, and even reversed.

Anyone whose Body Mass Index (BMI) qualifies them as obese, whatever their age, is at risk especially if they do little or no exercise or already have diabetes in the family. However, it takes a long time for Type 2 diabetes to manifest itself and anyone who is overweight, does not exercise and is careless how much they eat, drink or smoke, increases the risk of contracting diabetes. Anyone who fits any of the forementioned characteristics should ask their GP or pharmacist for a simple finger prick test. The sooner diabetes is detected, the easier it is to manage.

While the seriousness of diabetes can never be underestimated, modern means of detection and monitoring of sugar levels has meant that those with diabetes, whether Type 1 or Type 2, can and do live long, full and fulfilling lives.



**TYPE 2 DIABETES
SERIOUSLY CHANGES
YOUR LIFE.**

Be like Mary. Change to a healthier lifestyle.

For more advice and support visit diabetesjersey.com

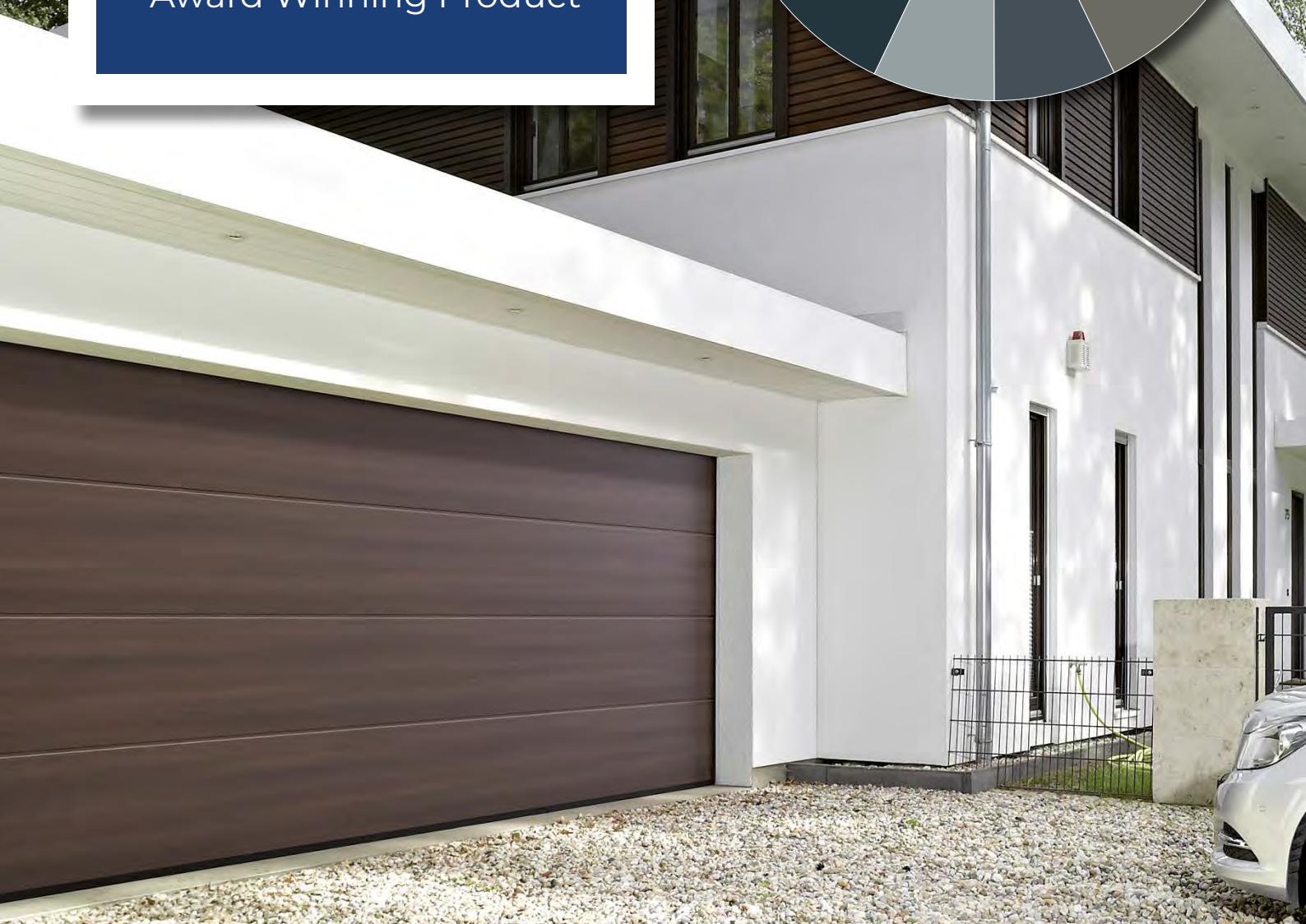
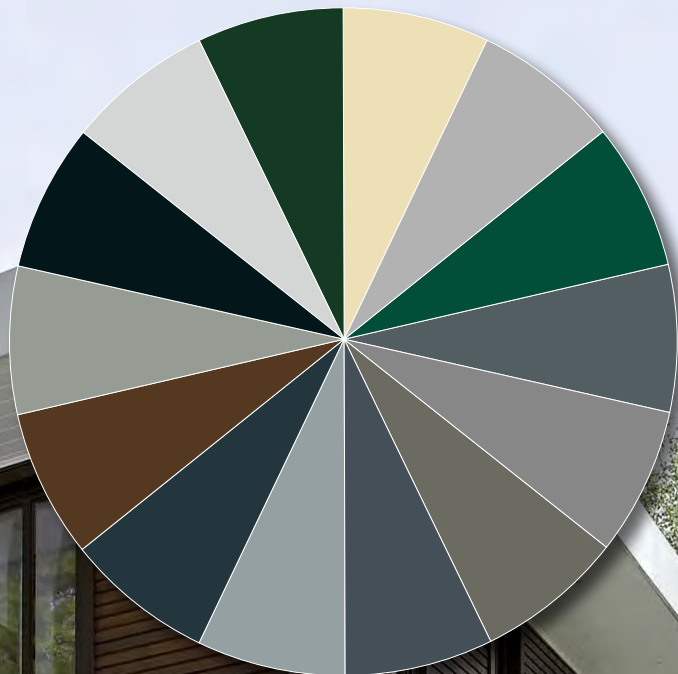
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The happy wanderer

Our new columnist, Michael Blackie, recipient of the MBE in the New Year's Honours List and chairman of the Jersey Eisteddfod, has the last word

I remember, I remember the house where I was born... in Exeter.

Although over the years Exeter has expanded, the sight of the surrounding hills was never lost, as I discovered when I started work there. From the office window I looked over to the Haldon Hills and saw a folly famous in the area, the Belvedere, a triangular tower built in 1788 that can be seen for miles around. It is always called to mind when I look out of our study window here in St Clement and see a similar, if somewhat smaller, folly – the Nicolle Tower, built just 24 years later.

The view from our study encapsulates Jersey beautifully. We live on the busy La Grande Route de St Clément; behind us, separating us from La Rue au Blancq, are fields just recently covered in plastic to signify that the potato season has started. We are thus on the border between residential and agricultural St Clement.

This is a fascinating part of the year that I love to observe. The conversion of the fields from grassland to potato nursery is like a military operation. Everybody knows what they are required to do and by the end of the day the fields are covered in white plastic. When it is time to lift the crop, another military operation will take place. It is all very impressive.

To describe these operations in such simple terms, you will perhaps think of me as a 'townie'. And so I am, but walks in the countryside were an important part of my childhood. It is a trait (perhaps that should be treat) that has continued here with my wife and daughter, Jane and Amelia.

We have a number of books promoting the interesting walks available in the Island and what we can see. No need to tell Jane, she was born here, but pointing out items of interest as we strode along seemed to me an important and pleasing part of my parental duties.

Walks were a tremendous comfort during the Covid emergency when a kindly Government decided that we should be allowed to leave the house for two hours a day. They proved to be a most profitable two hours, too. With Jane and our dog, Nipper, we walked the lanes that are our hinterland. Jersey is awash with lanes, and they are among the Island's greatest treasures.

Jane clearly thought that these Covid Walks were an opportunity to improve my botanical knowledge. This was fine, except for one small problem.

She refers to the plants by their scientific Latin names, whereas I am intrigued by their quirky old English names.

She points to *Petasites fragrans*, but 'cherry pie' is so much more enticingly mouth-watering. A few steps later we encounter *Silene dioica* or red campion, known, confusingly, in one variety (why?) as 'ragged robin'. I am getting better, but I forget what I learn (I have retired from amateur dramatics for this reason!) but, with a little prompting, I remember that this is periwinkle and that is a wild geranium and all the while we look down from La Rue au Blancq to Icho Tower and Seymour Tower.

Further east, we climb the steep path by St Clement's Church and in no time are on a level with the top of its steeple. But the road that really goes up in the world is closer to home. Coming off La Rue du Pignon, it is signposted as La Rue Genestet, but by the time it joins La Rue au Blancq it has become La Rue du Genestet. Truly, a peer amongst its peers.

In sum, rambling is one of life's joys – as you will have guessed from the efforts of this scribbler.



Michael Blackie



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