

# 40 people who have shaped Jersey

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## Introduction

Jersey as it is today has been shaped by particular events and decisions over many centuries. Some were external to the Island, some were instant and some were over a period of many years. In some case they can be linked with particular people or persons. Identifying people who have been instrumental in shaping Jersey helps in the understanding of the history of the Island and more generally in understanding the Jersey identity.

However, identifying say 40 key people who have helped to shape Jersey is a far from easy task and is inevitably subjective. There are many different criteria that can be used and judgments have to be made about the relative merits of particular people holding the same position or the ranking of particular activities.

This paper draws on existing literature and research to identify 40 people who have made a significant contribution to political, economic or cultural developments in Jersey. People still alive are excluded, partly because the impact that people have can take a long time to become apparent.

The brief biographies in this paper are not original but draw on six sources –

- The two-part *Biographical Dictionary of Jersey* by George Balleine (Staples Press, 1948, republished by La Haule Books, 1993).
- *A biographical Dictionary of Jersey Volume 2* by Frances Corbet and others (Société Jersiaise, 1998). In effect this is a continuation of Balleine's study, covering the 50 years from 1948 to 1998.
- *A concise history of Jersey*, by Colin Platt (Société Jersiaise, 2009).
- *Balleine's history of Jersey*, by Marguerite Syvret and Joan Stevens (Phillimore, 1998).
- Jerripedia
- Wikipedia.

Where other sources have been used these are indicated as are sources of further information.

The choice of people and the biographies have been influenced by members of the History Section of the Société Jersiaise through a roundtable discussion and subsequent email comments. However, no two people will ever agree on who should be in such a list and so I take full responsibility.

Most of those listed had a significant impact in the Island but a few are included who were notable for what they did away from Jersey but who are firmly identified with the Island. Here it must be recognised that in many areas of activity – such as sport or acting – people need to leave Jersey in order to become famous. The list excludes many famous people born and educated in Jersey but who had no impact on the Island. Sir William Haley, former Editor of The Times and Director General of the BBC, and the actor Kenneth More are good examples of such people.

## An overview of the list

The list, in order of date of birth –

Bishop Geoffrey de Montbray, 1029-1093, established current parishes  
Wace, 1100-1174, poet and historian  
King John, 1166-1216, English monarch  
Peter de Préaux, 1150-1212, French knight  
King Edward III, 1312-1377, English monarch  
Sir Walter Raleigh, 1552-1618, Governor of Jersey 1600-1603  
Jean Poingdestre, 1609–1691, writer  
Sir George Carteret, 1610-1680, Bailiff  
Philippe Falle, 1656-1742, historian  
Marie Bartlet, 1677-1741, benefactor of the General Hospital  
General Henry Conway, 1721-1795, Governor of Jersey 1772-1795  
Charles Robin, 1743-1824, merchant and cod fisherman  
Philip D’Auvergne, 1754-1816, naval officer  
General Sir George Don, 1756-1832, Governor of Jersey 1806-1814  
Major Francis Peirson, 1757-1781, soldier  
Sir John Le Couteur, 1794-1875, politician, writer and agricultural scientist  
Abraham Le Cras, 1798-1869, political campaigner  
Victor Hugo, 1802-1885, writer  
Pierre Le Sueur, 1811-1853, Constable of St Helier  
Jean Le Capelain, 1812-1848, artist  
Philip Oules, 1817-1885, artist  
John Lecaudey, 1821-?, agriculturist  
Charles Le Cornu, 1829-1911, agriculturist  
Sir John Millais, 1829-1886, artist  
Joseph Sinel, 1844-1929, scientist  
Jesse Boot, 1850-1931, and Florence Boot, 1863-1952, philanthropists  
Lillie Langtry, 1853-1929, actress, producer and socialite  
Thomas Davis, 1867-1942, philanthropist  
Harry Vardon, 1870-1937, golfer  
George Balleine, 1873-1966, historian  
Carlyle Le Gallais, 1881-1967, businessman and founder of National Trust for Jersey  
Edmund Blampied, 1886-1966, artist  
Lord Coutanche, 1892-1973, Bailiff  
Cyril Le Marquand, 1902-1980, politician  
Arthur Mourant, 1904-1994, scientist  
Frank Le Maistre, 1910-2002, writer and Jèrriais advocate  
Ralph Vibert, 1911-2008, politician  
Norman Le Brocq, 1922-1996, politician  
Gerald Durrell, 1925-1995, conservationist and author  
Colin Powell, 1937-2019, public servant

There are a few legitimate discussion points on the list –

- There are some omissions simply because the people responsible for certain important events are not known.
- The Occupation helped to shape Jersey in so many ways. Ultimately Hitler was responsible for this but clearly it would be wrong to include him.

- Which artists should be included? Oules, Le Capelain and Blampied featured Jersey in their paintings and are included. Sir John Millais may be better known but other than his famous painting of Lillie Langtry, Jersey features little in his work, but he has still been included.
- Just how strong does a connection with Jersey have to be? Victor Hugo is included although he spent just three years in the Island before being expelled. He clearly liked Jersey and the Island seem to have claimed him as one of their own so he is included. Harry Vardon is included as undoubtedly the most famous sportsman to come from Jersey, but his career was entirely outside the Island.
- Major Peirson is included but he is famous just for what he did on one day, being killed on that day and being featured in Copley's painting. But every community needs at least one hero.
- There are just three women in the list, but this reflects that the list is historic, and the reality is that Jersey, like other places, was male dominated until recently. It is worth noting that Balleine's biographical dictionary records just six women (one of whom, Hilda Balleine, was his sister) out of 290 and Corbet's biographical dictionary, covering the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, has just 22 women out of a total of 212.
- The list is not confined to people born in Jersey, whereas Balleine lists separately "Non-Jerseymen" who have left their mark on Jersey history".

The list is inevitably biased towards most recent times as it is the last two hundred years that have seen most change in Jersey. There is just one person born in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, three people born in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, one in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, one in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, four in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, seven in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, 16 in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and seven in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

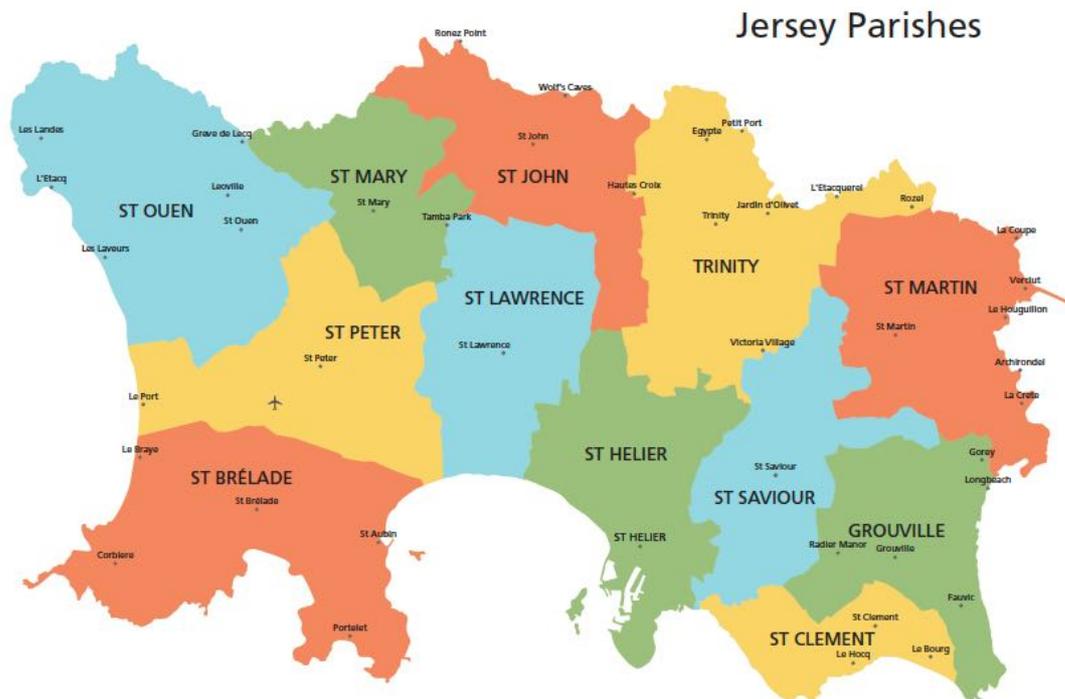
The breakdown by area of activity is –

Writers – 6  
 Politicians – 5  
 Governors – 3  
 Artists - 4  
 Business people – 4  
 Military - 3  
 Philanthropists – 3  
 Bailiffs – 2  
 English Kings – 2  
 Scientists - 2  
 Others – 6

But even this categorisation is subject to many qualifications. The two Bailiffs (Carteret and Coutanche) are in the list because they were politicians and not as Bailiff as we know the role today. Gerald Durrell can count as an author, businessman and conservationist. Sir John Le Couteur can count as a politician, businessman (because of his contribution to agricultural science) as well as having a distinguished military career.

It is also worth noting the breakdown by place of birth and time spent outside the Island. Over the 40 people just 15 were born in Jersey and spent their whole lives in Jersey (other than brief periods for education or War service), 10 were born in Jersey but whose claim to fame is partly because of their work outside Jersey, and 15 were born outside Jersey, only one of whom spent the majority of his working life in Jersey. Of the 25 born in Jersey, nine were born in St Helier, five in St Saviour, three in St Saviour and three each in St Brelade and St Ouen.

## Bishop Geoffrey de Montbray, 1029-1093, play a part in establishing the parishes



The parishes are an integral part of Jersey. A map of the parishes shows that they range in size from St Clement (4 sq km) to St Ouen (15 sq km). They each have a coastline, although in the case of St Saviour this is a small sliver of land at the Dicq. The boundaries of the parishes have been little changed for hundreds of years. Today, their populations range from over 33,000 in St Helier to under 2,000 in St Mary. However, in 1331, the earliest year for which there are reasonable estimates, all the parishes had a population of between 500 and 1,000. It seems clear that the parishes were originally established so that each had a coastline and that they were of broadly similar sizes in terms of population. So clearly whoever drew the map had a significant impact on the structure of Jersey which remains to this day.

There is no definitive explanation of the history of the parishes. It has been suggested that the five central parishes (St Saviour, St John, St Mary, St Peter and St Lawrence) date back to around 475 AD. The most authoritative paper on the history of the parishes by N L Myres concluded that: "The apparently symmetrical pattern of the twelve parishes of Jersey can be traced back to the first half of the eleventh century, when it formed part of the reorganisation of the diocese of Coutances". However, it is impossible to credit one person with devising the parish system. It is also clear that the parishes evolved over a period of time such that by 1331 they were well established. Geoffrey de Montbray (also Meaubret) may well have played a significant role. He came from Monbrai in Manche, Normandy and was consecrated as Bishop of Coutances, whose remit included Jersey, in 1049, a position he held to 1093. He was a major figure in the politics of Norman expansion and played a leading role in the conquest of England, from which he derived great wealth.

Further reading: N L Myers. "The origin of the twelve parishes", *Annual Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, 1978.

### Wace, c1100-1174, poet and historian

Wace, who is sometimes also given the first name of Robert, was born in Jersey sometime between 1090 and 1110 but while still young was sent to Caen in Normandy to be educated. Wace wrote poems in an Anglo-Norman language. Wace's first great work involved turning Geoffrey of Monmouth's work of fiction in Latin, *History of the Kings of England*, into a 16,000 word Romance poem *Roman de Brut*, adding a wealth of detail such that the poem is regarded as an important link in the Arthurian legend. He subsequently wrote a history of the Dukes of Normandy and then his second great poem, the *Roman de Rou*, which is regarded as a valuable source of historical evidence, particularly for the Norman conquest of England.



It may well be asked whether Wace can be regarded as someone who has made a significant contribution to Jersey. The language in which he wrote is variously regarded as a dialect of the Norman language, a dialect of Old French, or specifically the precursor of Jèrriais. Writers in Jersey have looked on Wace as the founder of Jersey literature, and Jèrriais is sometimes referred to as the language of Wace although the poet himself predated the development of Jèrriais as a literary language.

What is certainly the case is that Jersey has adopted Wace in the same way as it subsequently adopted Victor Hugo, who spent just three years in the Island. Wace also spent just a few years in Jersey as a child and there is no evidence that he ever returned to the Island.



An international colloquium on Wace was held in Jersey in 2004. A stamp was issued to mark the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of death in 1174. Also, there is a granite memorial stone to Wace built into the side of the States Building in the Royal Square. This includes a quote from the *Roman de Rou* that expresses the poet's pride in his place of birth – English translation -

*I say and will say that I am  
Wace from the Island of Jersey.*

Further reading: *Maistre Wace – Proceedings of a colloquium held in Jersey September 2004*. Société Jersiaise, 2006.

### King John, 1166-1216, English monarch



John was born in 1166, the youngest of the four surviving sons of King Henry II of England and Duchess Eleanor of Aquitaine. Henry had inherited significant territories along the Atlantic seaboard – Anjou and Normandy - and expanded his empire by conquering Brittany. In 1199 John claimed the throne when his brother Richard I died. However, the throne was also claimed by Arthur I of Brittany, the son of John's elder brother Geoffrey. Conflict inevitably followed. In May 1200 peace was temporarily achieved by the Treaty of Le Goulet by which King Philip of France recognised John as the rightful heir to Richard in respect to his French possessions, temporarily abandoning the wider claims of Arthur. John, in turn, abandoned Richard's former policy of containing Philip through alliances with Flanders and Boulogne, and accepted Philip's right as the legitimate feudal overlord of John's lands in France. However the conflict restarted in 1202 following John's decision to marry Isabella of Angoulême. The war went badly for John and by August 1204 Philip had taken Normandy and advanced south to occupy Anjou and Poitou as well. John's only remaining possession on the Continent was now the Duchy of Aquitaine, that is the south west of France.

For reasons that historians still debate the Channel Islands remained with the English Crown. King John wanted to keep the Islands as he retained his claim to large parts of France, and the Islands were strategically important for this reason. Citing Gustave Dupont's *Histoire du Contentin et des Iles* (Caen, 1870) Balleine comments: "A more cogent reason for the islands not being lost with Normandy seems to be that as yet the French had no fleet with which to protect them, while the English not only had a strong naval force, but were anxious to preserve the islands as an important staging post on the route to Gascony." In fact, the French occupied Jersey in 1204-06 and 1216-17 and on both occasions John used his naval power to recapture the Island. By retaining the Channel Islands, strategically located near the coast of France, and given the periodic wars between England and France over the next 600 years, in effect King John committed England to supporting Jersey with military expenditure and to maintaining the support of the people of Jersey.

Subsequent military expenditure, opportunities for privateering and trading privileges with England and the colonies laid the foundations for Jersey's economic prosperity. If it had remained part of France then, in all probability, Mont Orgeuil and Elizabeth Castles, Fort Regent, St Aubin's Fort and the Martello and Conway towers would not have been built, the road network would be less developed, and Jersey would not have been a major centre of the cod fishing industry in the North Atlantic nor would it today be a major international financial centre.

### **Peter de Préaux, c1150-1212, French knight, gifted the Channel Islands by King John**

Peter de Préaux was a Norman knight who served English Kings, in particular King Richard in his conflict with France between 1194 and 1199. In 1199 King John, who had succeeded his brother Richard, handed the Channel Islands to de Préaux. In 1204 Philip Augustus of France gradually took control of Normandy, the final capitulation being at Rouen in June 1204. Peter de Préaux duly was forced to cede control of his properties to Philip Augustus. Balleine's *History of Jersey* commented -

The French historian, Dupont, claims that Peter de Préaux was governor of Rouen and headed the signatories of capitulation, having been promised extensive lands by Philippe-Auguste. When the French King failed to keep his promise, Peter de Préaux abandoned him and returned to support John, thus giving to England in 1206 the Channel Islands of which he was also Governor. A more cogent reason for the islands not being lost with Normandy seems to be that as yet the French had no fleet with which to protect them, while the English not only had a strong naval force, but were anxious to preserve the islands as an important staging post on the route to Gascony.

In their book *Jersey 1204* Everard and Holt noted that in 1204 "The immediate fate of the Channel Islands was thus determined far away in Rouen, by a 'lord of the Islands' with little or no interest in their fate." It is not clear if de Préaux actually played a significant role in the Islands being recovered by the English Crown in 1206, or indeed what would have happened to the Islands had he not been gifted them in 1199. But it is clear that Peter de Préaux was a key figure in the events which led to Jersey's ultimate allegiance to the English Crown. This was formalised in 1259 in the Treaty of Paris by which the French Crown formally gave up its claim to the Channel Islands. However, this did not prevent further conflicts including a raid in 1461 after which the French held Mont Orgeuil Castle for seven years.

## King Edward III, 1312-1377, English monarch



Edward was born in 1312, the son of Edward II. He was crowned King of England in 1327 when his father was deposed by his mother, Isabella of France, and her lover, Roger Mortimer. In 1337 the French seized the English King's Duchy of Aquitaine. Edward responded by claiming the French throne, and the 100 Years War began. This had clear implications for Jersey, an English Crown possession lying just off the coast of France.

There was a French raid on Jersey in 1338, which prompted a strengthening of defences, but also the granting of special privileges. In 1341 Edward granted a charter to Jersey which confirmed "all privileges, liberties, immunities, exemptions and customs in persons goods moneys and other things.....with hindrance or molestation." Platt commented "Jersey's exceptional privileges have owed more to this document than to any other royal charter". Later charters expanded these privileges. They were to form an important part of the framework which contributed to Jersey's prosperity, in particular by allowing goods to be exported from Jersey to England free of duty. This was to prove hugely beneficial to the knitting and cider trades and later to cod fishing, shipping and shipbuilding.



Know ye that we in grateful memory, considering how faithfully and magnanimously our faithful and beloved people of our Islands of Guernsey, Jersey, Sark and Alderney have hitherto always persevered in their fidelity towards our progenitors kings of England, and how much they have borne in defence of the islands, and in the maintenance of our rights and honour in the same, as well in personal danger as in the expenditure of their own means; and therefore, willing to bestow our gracious favours upon them, we concede for ourselves and our heirs, to the said people of the aforesaid Islands, that they, their heirs and successors, do hold and retain all privileges, immunities, exemptions and customs in persons, goods, monies and other things, in virtue of the concessions of our progenitors kings of England, or of other legitimate competency; and that they fully enjoy and use them, without hindrance or molestation from ourselves, our heirs, or our officers whomsoever; even as they and their predecessors, inhabitants of the said Islands, have reasonably used and enjoyed them; which we now also confirm to them, generally, in the aforesaid form; being willing, when we have been fully informed of the above according to justice, specially to confirm them.

*The original 1341 royal charter giving Jersey privileges and an English translation*

### **Sir Walter Raleigh, 1552-1618, Governor of Jersey 1600-1603**

Walter Raleigh was a favourite of Queen Elizabeth I, although his relationship with the monarch was far from smooth. After playing a part in the colonisation of Virginia he secretly married one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting, for which he was sent to the Tower.



Raleigh was appointed Governor of Jersey in 1600, not apparently as a reward but rather at his instigation to avoid his opponents at Court. Unlike some other Governors he spent time in Jersey and is credited with modernising its defences, particularly Elizabeth Castle.

Raleigh's record in Jersey has been described by A C Saunders:

He remained in the Island, subject to periodical visits to the mainland, until near the end of 1602, shortly before the death of the Queen, and his departure was a great loss to Jersey. During his Governorship he had fostered trade and introduced a registry for title deeds. He took great interest in the affairs of the Island, and, when possible, attended the sittings of the Courts.

Saunders said that Raleigh had the reputation of having introduced the value of the potato to his fellow countrymen and possibly to Jersey and that he brought tobacco into use in the Island. He also suggested that Raleigh greatly encouraged the cod fishing trade.

Raleigh was deprived of his governorship in 1603, charged with high treason and again sent to the Tower.

Raleigh's later life included ill-fated expeditions in the search for the mythical El Dorado, following the last of which he was subjected to a show trial and beheaded.

Further reading: *Jersey in the 17th century*, A C Saunders, 1931.

### Jean Poingdestre, 1609–1691, writer



Jean Poingdestre (also described as John Poindexter) was born in St Saviour in 1609. He studied at both Oxford and Cambridge universities, being a Greek scholar and probably studying law as well. He was ordained as a deacon in Westminster Abbey in 1641.

Poingdestre performed some duties in the household of King Charles I. He supported Sir George Carteret in the Royalist cause during the English Civil War and managed to live quietly during the Parliamentary rule of Jersey. Between 1669 and 1676 he was Lieutenant Bailiff of Jersey.

Poingdestre was the author of the first history of Jersey – *Caesarea – or a Discourse on the Island of Jersey*. Philip Stevens commented that the book was based on extensive reading. He went on –

*Caesarea* begins with an apt quotation from Homer, in which Odysseus tells King Alcinous that his native island, Ithaca, '...is a rough land, but nurtures fine men. And I, for one, know of no sweeter sight for a man's eyes than his own country'. There follows a description of the island, agriculture, architecture, customs and governance, and shows an observant and well-informed writer. The second part deals with its history. Also surviving are some passages in his own hand which were much changed in the final version: on some prehistoric monuments and, a nice touch, on varieties of field mice.

Stevens suggests that a first draft of the book was completed in 1682. The book was passed on to Philip Falle (qv) who drew heavily on it for his *An account of the Island of Jersey*, published in 1694, which gave due credit to Poingdestre. Poingdestre's own work was belatedly published by C. Le Feuvre for the Société Jersiaise in 1889 and is available on Google Books.

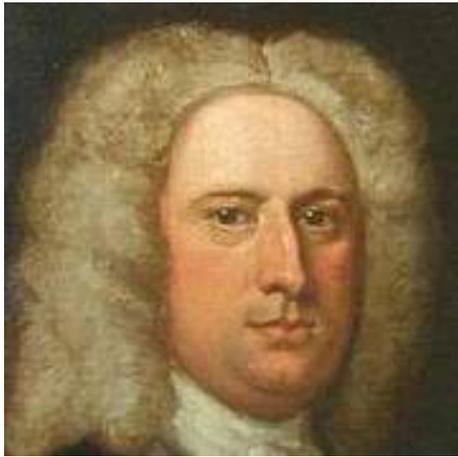
Stevens summarised the life of Poingdestre –

Jean Poingdestre, classical scholar, linguist, university tutor and fellow, lawyer, courtier, government secretary, jurat, lieutenant-bailiff, and author of works on Jersey history and law, was a man of many qualities and achievements. In a cynical age of influence and trimming, he stands out as a devout, upright and incorruptible man. He also led a curious double life, partly in Jersey and partly in the universities and offices of state in England.

There is a monument to Poingdestre in St Saviour's church.

Source: Philip Stevens. "Jean Poingdestre", *Annual Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, 2014.

### Sir George Carteret, 1610-1680, Bailiff to whom New Jersey was founded



George Carteret was born in St Helier in about 1610 – there is no record of the exact date. He was part of the de Carteret family, a long-established prominent Jersey family. He was the son of Jurat Elie de Carteret, Lieutenant Bailiff, and nephew of Sir Philippe de Carteret, Bailiff and Lieutenant Governor of Jersey from 1627 to 1643.

George (who dropped the de from his name) made his name as an English naval officer, receiving his first commission in 1629 and playing a prominent role in the North African campaign between 1637 and 1639. In 1641 he was appointed Comptroller of the Navy and in the same year he married his cousin, Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Philippe.

The English Civil War broke out in 1642 and Jersey was divided between Royalists and Parliamentarians. In 1643 Sir Philippe died and the King appointed George to succeed him as Bailiff and Lieutenant Governor. He quickly turned Jersey into a Royalist stronghold. He was knighted, possibly in 1644 although exactly when is not certain, and appointed Vice Admiral of Jersey, while at the same time operating as a privateer. In 1649 Charles I was executed. Jersey duly proclaimed his exiled son, Charles II, as King and for a brief time the younger Charles made Jersey his headquarters before moving to Holland. In 1651 the Civil War ended, and a Commonwealth proclaimed with Oliver Cromwell taking the title Lord Protector. The Commonwealth attacked Jersey, Carteret surrendered in 1651 and was removed from office. He moved to France, where he managed to obtain a commission in the French navy, engaged in privateering and continued to support the King.

The Monarchy was restored in 1660 and the King immediately rewarded Carteret by appointing him Vice Chamberlain of the Royal Household and Treasurer of the Navy. In 1661 he resigned as Bailiff of Jersey and for the next six years concentrated on his work for the Navy.

In 1664 the King gifted him and fellow courtier Sir John Berkeley land in America that he named New Jersey. Sir George never visited New Jersey; instead a relative, Philip Carteret, just 26 years old, was appointed as Governor. In 1674 Berkeley sold his interest and Philip thereafter governed only East Jersey. After Philip died in 1682 East Jersey was sold so ending the formal connection with Jersey. In 1701 East and West Jersey were reunited to become New Jersey.

Today, St Helier is twinned with Trenton, the capital of New Jersey, after which Trenton Square on the waterfront is named.



Sir George died in his manor in Bedfordshire in 1680, shortly before he was about to be made a peer.

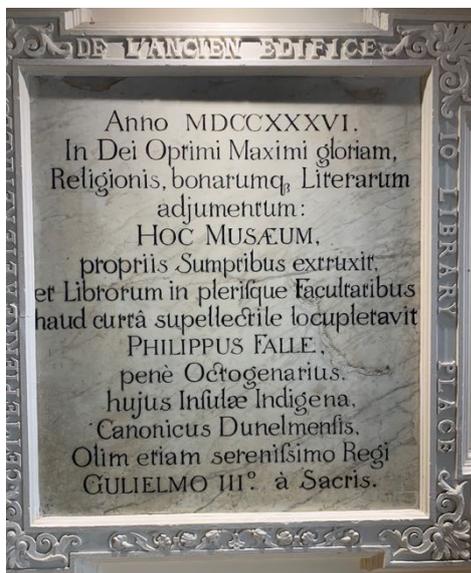
Sources: George Balleine. "Sir George Carteret", *Annual Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, 1957. "The New Jersey Venture", *Annual Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, 1964.

### Philippe Falle, 1656-1742, historian

Philippe Falle was born in Jersey in 1656, the son of a St Saviour Centenier. He was sent to school in London and then studied at Oxford and Cambridge. He was ordained in 1677. He returned to Jersey in 1681 when he was appointed rector of Trinity. He was soon in dispute with his parishioners and returned to England in 1687. He was censured by the Jersey Ecclesiastical Court in 1689 for non-residence, but the following year returned to Jersey as rector of St Saviour.

An active States Member, in 1692 he was sent as one of two representatives with a petition to the King for improved defences to protect the Island from the French. Realising how little the English knew about Jersey, he set about writing *An account of the Island of Jersey*, published in 1694. It was an account, rather than a history, drawing on other material, in particular Jean Poingdestre's *Caesarea or a discourse of the Island of Jersey*, which had been written but not published (it was belatedly published by the Société Jersiaise in 1889).

In 1694 after a short visit to Jersey to report on his mission to London, he returned to England and seems never to have visited Jersey again. However, he retained the rectorship of St Saviour until it was removed from him 12 years later in 1706. In 1708 he became rector of Shenley, near Barnet in London, and he lived there until his death in 1742. However, he maintained his interest in Jersey. A second, expanded, edition of *An account of the Island of Jersey* was published in 1734.



Falle was instrumental in establishing a public library in Jersey, offering both books and a modest amount of money. The foundation stone was laid in 1737 and the library was opened in 1743, shortly after Falle's death, in what became Library Place. The new library in Halkett Place has in its entrance a plaque, recognising Falle's contribution.

### Marie Bartlet, 1677-1741, benefactor of the General Hospital



Marie Bartlet was born Marie Mauger in St Brelade in 1677. In 1704 she married Francis Bartlet, an English-born merchant who had settled in St Aubin. Bartlet successfully built up a trading business. He died in 1734 and having no children left all of his assets to his widow Marie. She continued the trading business and died a wealthy woman in 1741.

Her will left a large amount of money to be used, among other things, to build a hospital for the poor in St Aubin. There were lengthy disputes over the terms of the will. The States

appealed the will and eventually the Privy Council agreed to remove the St Aubin's clause on the grounds that an hospital in St Aubin's was not practical.

The builders began work in 1765, over forty years after her death. However, the building was soon commandeered to house troops. It was 1793, over fifty years after her death, that the hospital was first used for its intended purpose. The States erected an obelisk over her grave in St Brelade's Church and a portrait of her is in the Committee Room at the hospital.

### General Henry Conway, 1721-1795, Governor of Jersey 1772-1795



Henry Conway was born at his ancestral home, Ragley, in Warwickshire in 1721. He combined a political career, serving in the English and Irish parliaments and including spells in Government, with a military career which although generally distinguished included an unsuccessful mission in the Seven Years War.

In 1772 Conway was made Governor of Jersey. However, he remained active in English politics, and he first visited the Island in 1778, six years after he took office. He was heavily influenced by the impact of the American War of Independence, which had raised tension between Britain and France, which in turned raised the threat of France attacking Jersey.

He was appalled by the state of the Island's defences and started a programme of building coastal towers. Work began in 1779, but only four had been completed by the time of the Battle of Jersey in 1781. Conway was not in the Island when the battle occurred and by the time he knew about it, it was all over. Work continued on the towers. Seymour Tower, which replaced an earlier tower on the same spot at La Roque, was built of granite and was the only square tower. The other 22 round towers include La Rocco, Le Hocq, Archirondel, Ouaisné, St Brelade's and Grève de Lecq towers. Although frequently called Martello Towers, they predate the development of true Martello towers. The round towers differ from Martello towers in several ways. The Jersey towers are rounder, mostly built with local granite rather than brick, have a slighter batter (taper), and most importantly, originally did not have a cannon on the top platform. During the Occupation, the Germans adapted some of the towers to their own purposes. The Germans also destroyed several towers.



*La Rocco Tower*



Conway was highly regarded in Jersey so much so that in 1785 he was gifted a dolmen which he transported to his estate in Henley on Thames. He subsequently had to deal with many major issues including the influx of refugees after the French revolution. He died in 1795 while still in office. Conway Street in St Helier is named after him.

Source: William Davies. "General Conway", *Annual Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, 1995.

## Charles Robin, 1743-1824, merchant and cod fisherman



Cod fishing in North American waters is one of the defining characteristics of Jersey's economic history. Ommer, the leading expert on the subject, commented that Jersey's "participation in the fisheries of British North America was perhaps her greatest international commercial endeavour".

By the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Jersey boats were fishing off the coast of Newfoundland, and in the 1670s permanent bases were established. The industry grew particularly rapidly in the final third of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. By the 1830s the industry was huge, employing 100 boats and 2,500 Jerseymen. The industry was run entirely from Jersey and on the back of it Jersey developed shipping, shipbuilding and other ancillary support services. Most of the wealth generated by the cod fishing industry was realised by merchants, their investors and advisers in Jersey. The industry was the basis of the massive economic growth that Jersey experienced in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Charles Robin was the most prominent person in the industry. He was born in 1743 in the family home in St Aubin – now the St Magloire hotel. 1765 he joined the newly established family firm Robin, Pison and Co, which had trading links with Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia and the British colony of Newfoundland. In 1766 Robin discovered that some of the best cod-fishing grounds in the Atlantic were on the Gaspé Coast where the banks extended from the Baie des Chaleurs into the St Lawrence River. Robin returned the following year and chose Paspébiac as one of the drying sites and established a tiny port as the headquarters for his company. There was a lagoon where the small fishing ships could beach in safety and a secure anchorage for larger ships. From there cod was exported to Spain and South America.



A monument to the cod fishing industry and Charles Robin at St Aubin's harbour

The American War of Independence from 1775 to 1783 disrupted the trade. Robin returned to Jersey to engage in privateering and he also fought in the Battle of Jersey. After the war with America was over Charles returned to Paspébiac, formed Charles Robin & Co, and rapidly built up a big business. This included Robin Stores, which became the principal trading places and community centres. Robin also established a shipbuilding industry in Paspébiac, the ships counting as part of the Jersey fleet.

Charles retired to Jersey in 1802. Led by his nephews, the company continued to expand. Robin died in 1824.

### Sources:

Alan Le Rossignol. *Charles Robin – the Jersey Codfather*. ELSP, 2017.

Rosemary Omner. *From Outport to Outpost, A Structural Analysis of the Jersey-Gaspé Cod Fishery, 1767-1886*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991.

### Philip D'Auvergne, 1754-1816, naval officer



Philip D'Auvergne was born in St Helier in 1754. Through family connections he quickly established himself in the navy, and at the same time showed great interest in science. His naval career was both active and varied, surviving two court martials, both of which ended in his favour. In between naval assignments he continued studying, earning an LLD and being elected a fellow of the Royal Society.

In 1793 France declared war on England and D'Auvergne returned to naval duties. Based in Mont Orgeuil, D'Auvergne was successful in protecting communications in the Channel and frustrating a potential invasion of the Channel Islands by the French. D'Auvergne also organised a secret service, known as La Correspondance, which engaged in espionage, economic warfare and supplying rebel groups in France. D'Auvergne's work was recognised, being promoted to Vice Admiral.

Parallel with his naval career D'Auvergne had also established a family relationship with the rulers of the principality of Bouillon, in the Ardennes in Belgium. He became accepted as the Crown Prince in 1792 and took the title Duke of Bouillon. He sought to claim the territory on the death of the ruler in 1802. However, Napoleon annexed the territory. After the fall of Napoleon D'Auvergne was restored as Duke of Bouillon, but this was short lived, the Congress of Vienna in 1816 awarding the territory to the Netherlands.

D'Auvergne died in London in 1816, ruined by costly litigation and with little left to live for. He had made his home in Jersey at Bagatelle and fathered three illegitimate children to whom he gave his name and were accepted as his children in Jersey society.

Source: Philippe Le Geyt dit Rauvet. "Philippe D'Auvergne", *Annual Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, 1947.

### Major Francis Peirson, 1757-1781, soldier



Francis Peirson was born in Yorkshire in 1757. He joined the army in 1772. In 1779 he was engaged to raise 100 men for the 95<sup>th</sup> regiment for the duration of the American Wars. In April 1780 the regiment, led by Peirson, was posted to Jersey and stationed at La Hougue in St Peter.

England and France had been in state varying between tension and war for hundreds of years. In 1775 the American War of Independence began. France and other countries saw this as an opportunity to retrieve some of the possessions they had lost to Britain during the Seven Years War (1756-63). In 1778, the French formally sided with the Americans secessionists. This contributed to the growth of activity by Jersey-based privateers, which in turn

led the French to consider attacking Jersey. An invasion in 1779 was easily countered and prompted a further strengthening of Jersey's defences.

Led by Baron Philippe de Rullecourt the French planned a new invasion. On 5 January 1781 a force of 1,500 men set sail for Jersey. However, the tricky Jersey coastline and poor visibility reduced this number by almost half, five vessels being wrecked and a number being forced to return in France. In the early hours of 6 January, 600 men landed in St Clement's Bay and unopposed made their way to St Helier. A French patrol detained the Island's Governor, Moyse Corbet. Corbet was persuaded that thousands of French troops had already overwhelmed Jersey and threatened to burn the town and slaughter the inhabitants if the garrison did not capitulate. Corbet, unable to ascertain the true

situation, surrendered. He was persuaded to order Elizabeth Castle and 24-year-old Major Francis Peirson's troops at St Peter's Barracks to surrender as well. However, Captain Aylward, commander at Elizabeth Castle, and Major Peirson, supported by the Jersey Militia, instead counter-attacked and defeated the French, although Peirson was killed in the process, possibly by friendly fire.



John Singleton Copley's famous painting of the death of Major Peirson was bought by the National Gallery and is now in the Tate Collection. A copy was commissioned to hang in Jersey's Royal Court when the Island failed in its bid to secure the original.

Peirson is regarded as a key figure in Jersey's history. However, he spent less than a year in Jersey and it was his death, the Copley painting and the Peirson Pub that have made him so prominent.

Peirson is regarded as a key figure in Jersey's history. However, he spent less than a year in Jersey and it was his death, the Copley painting and the Peirson Pub that have made him so prominent.

Source: Louise Downie and Doug Ford. *1781: The Battle of Jersey and death of Major Peirson*. Jersey Heritage, 2012.

### General Sir George Don, 1756-1832, Governor of Jersey 1806-1814



George Don was born in 1756, the son of Sir Alexander Don of Berwickshire. He joined the army in 1770 and had a distinguished military career, culminating in being appointed Lieutenant General in 1804.

General Don was made Governor of Jersey in 1806, a time when Jersey faced the threat of an invasion from France. He immediately took steps to strengthen the Island's defences, including establishing a signalling system, disciplining the Militia and carrying on the work of his predecessor, General Conway, by beginning the construction of Fort Regent and completing work on the coastal towers.

Don's principal achievement was the construction of a road system, which largely remains in place today. When he arrived in Jersey in 1806 the only roads were numerous narrow communications, winding in and out in an aimless manner, muddy in winter and which made it impossible to move troops or artillery with speed. The construction of new roads inevitably caused disruption and met substantial opposition. His first roads were from Grouville to St Helier via Longueville, St Ouen to Beaumont and St Helier to St Aubin. He was recalled to the Army in 1809 to help evacuate troops from the Dutch island of Walcheren. He returned in 1810 and resumed a programme of road building in which 15 roads were completed in just four years, all under his direct supervision. Following serious flooding in 1812, when the sea wall in Grouville was breached, he rebuilt the entire sea wall from St Helier to Gorey.

He also took a keen interest in the general welfare of the Island and frequently sat with Sir John Dumaresq, Lieutenant-Bailiff, in the Royal Court, where, being a fluent French scholar, he had every opportunity of becoming more conversant with the laws and institutions of the Island.

Don left Jersey in 1814 to become Governor of Gibraltar. He left with a glowing tribute from the States: "The States recognize that no one ever won a better right to their esteem. He is one of that small group of distinguished men whose work has made an epoch in the history of Jersey. In the short space of eight years he has changed the face of the country."

Don Street, Don Farm, Don Bridge and General Don's Farm are all named after him. A huge statue of Don was unveiled in the Parade in 1885.



### Sir John Le Couteur, 1794-1875, politician, writer and agricultural scientist



John Le Couteur was born in St Aubin in 1794, the son of General John Le Couteur who himself was prominent in Jersey in the militia and politically. As a very young army officer he played a major role in the [War of 1812](#) (between Britain and America). This included leading his men on a 700-mile march though difficult conditions in the depth of Winter. Le Couteur's account of this march gained him renewed public attention in both Canada and Jersey when it was adapted into an award-winning short film, [The Winter March](#), in 2013.

He returned to Jersey in 1817 where he involved himself in parish politics and was responsible for the introduction of the tarmacadam process on the parish roads, probably before it had been used anywhere else. He was Constable of St Brelade for nine years from 1826. He was responsible for the purchase of the Island's first lifeboat and was put in charge of the construction of the new road from St Helier to St Aubin. He was also responsible for the removal of Militia cannons from the churches, the construction of arsenals and the abolition of Sunday elections.

In 1808 Le Couteur had shared a sick room with the future William IV. When the latter became King in 1830 Le Couteur was appointed his aide-de-camp for Jersey, and he maintained good relations with the King and subsequently with Queen Victoria. He was elected a jurat in 1835, appointed Viscount in 1842 and took command of the Town Regiment of the Militia in 1850.

Le Couteur had many interests and was a competent artist. He undertook a sustained scientific study of wheat and produced several books on agriculture including *On the Varieties, Properties and Classification of Wheat*, *On the Use of the Jersey Plough* and *On the Rise, Progress and State of Agriculture in Jersey* (1852). More generally he was a prolific writer. His papers are now held by the Société Jersiaise. He founded the Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society and was its Secretary.

He gave valuable information to the 1859 Royal Commission on the duties of the Vicomte, the administration of the prison and the laws of the Island, in particular the unsatisfactory nature of real property law.

Le Couteur was knighted in 1872 and died in 1875.

### Abraham Le Cras, 1798-1869, political campaigner



Abraham Le Cras was born in Salisbury in 1798 of a Jersey family and spent part of his childhood in the Island. From the age of 20 he lived in Jersey. He became a political agitator, investigating with great industry the Island's constitutional history, his basic argument being that Jersey was subject to the English Parliament and Crown in much the same way as the Isle of Wight.

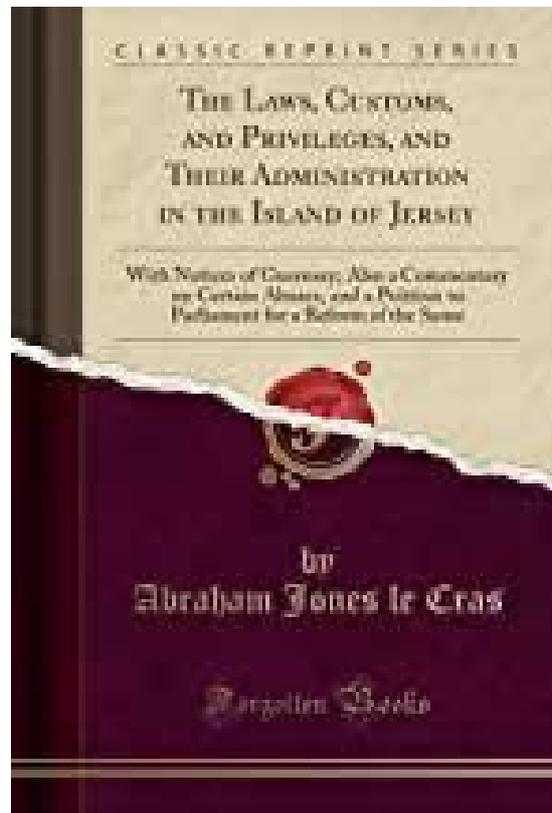
He allied himself with the relatively wealthy immigrants who had moved to Jersey in the 1830s and who felt discriminated against. He founded and edited two weekly newspapers, the *English and Foreign News* and *Jersey Patriot*, which gave him a platform for his policies, which were essentially against the whole of the Island's legal and political system. His views were

condensed, albeit in 400 pages, in an 1839 book, *The Laws, Customs and Privileges and their Administration in the Island of Jersey*, which contained a 52-clause petition to the British Parliament.

In 1846 he started stirring up the English Parliament to assert the powers in respect of Jersey that he was convinced existed. The response was the appointment of a Royal Commission which rejected some of his demands but recommended others including the appointment of paid judges to replace jurats and the establishment of a paid police force.

In 1850 he left Jersey to live in Dorset but continued to be an agitator and writer. In 1856 he published *Manorial Rights in Jersey* and in 1857 *The Constitution of Jersey*. In 1858 and 1859 he presented petitions to Parliament which led to the appointment of a new Royal Commission. In preparation for this he established a Jersey Reform Committee which produced two papers and he gave five days of evidence to the Commission.

The British Government was reluctant to intervene in Jersey and the States adopted a line of passive resistance. However, a plebiscite was held on one of his principal demands - the question of substituting paid judges for the 12 jurats. This was heavily defeated after which Le Cras took no further part in public life. He died in 1869.



### Victor Hugo, 1802-1885, writer

Victor Hugo was born in Besançon in eastern France. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest French writers. His literary career lasted over 60 years and covered all forms of writing. His best-known works are the novels *Les Misérables* and *Notre-Dame de Paris*, known in English as *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*. His works inspired the musicals *Les Misérables* and *Notre-Dame de Paris*.



Hugo was keenly interested in politics. He was elected to the National Assembly in 1848 as a Conservative. He campaigned for universal suffrage, free education for all children and the abolition of the death penalty. After Louis Napoleon seized power in 1851, he was declared a traitor to France and, after a short period in Brussels, in 1852 he moved to Jersey.

Hugo spent just three years in Jersey, but it was an eventful three years, which has been well documented by Philip Stevens.

His arrival in Jersey was itself a significant event and he was particularly welcomed by a number of French republican refugees, known as the proscrits. He rented a house in Marine Terrace, which no longer exists, in St Clement near the boundary with St Helier, around Grève D'Azette. He and other proscrits became associated with the large rock at the Dicq, Le Rocher Bernard, which became known as Le Rocher des Proscrits. There are several pictures of Hugo on this rock.

He continued writing, most of *Les Contemplations* and half of *Les Châtiments* were written in Jersey.

Hugo also maintained his political activity. He was not alone. There were about 300 proscrits in Jersey at that time. In his time in France he had been critical of England so Hugo's political activities had been noted in England. Hugo became embroiled in a controversy caused by the publication in London of an open letter by the French exile Félix Pyat, which among things attacked Queen Victoria. The letter was circulated in Jersey and caused a political storm, leading to a reaction against the proscrits, some of whom were expelled, notwithstanding a public appeal by Hugo. Hugo himself then moved to Guernsey where he lived from 1855 to 1870 and again in 1872-1873.

The political controversy died down and in 1860 Hugo was invited to speak at an event in Jersey in favour of Garibaldi who had just captured Salerno. 3,000 people attended the speech which had a warm reception. A few days later a banquet was given for Hugo at the Pomme D'Or. His speech included some very complimentary comments about Jersey including: "I will tell you what I love about Jersey: "I love it all" and: "There are two things which make a people both great and attractive, and these are liberty and hospitality; hospitality was the glory of ancient nations, liberty is the splendour of modern nations. Jersey wears both these crowns; let her guard them."

Further reading: Philip Stevens. *Victor Hugo in Jersey*, Philimore, 1985.

### **Pierre Le Sueur, 1811-1853, Constable of St Helier**

Pierre Le Sueur was born in Broad Street, St Helier in 1811. He studied law in Jersey and Paris and began practising law in Jersey in 1837. He was engaged in most major law cases, generally with another eminent lawyer, François Godfray, as an opponent.

He was elected Constable of St Helier at the age of 28 in 1839 and re-elected four times. His record included building a substantial network of underground sewers, there previously having been no sanitation at all in some of the poorer districts of St Helier. He also widened

some of the streets, introduced naming and numbering of streets, established a fire service and prosecuted slum landlords. Le Sueur dealt firmly with bread riots in 1847 but, recognising that a real problem existed, also established a fund for the relief of distress.

Le Sueur was also active in the States, being appointed Treasurer in 1846, and his skill as a lawyer meant that he played a major part in drafting laws.

After years of overworking Le Sueur died suddenly in 1853 at the age of just 41.

Such was the high esteem in which he was held that in 1848 he was given a valuable gift of silverware by his parishioners. After his death an obelisk was erected in his memory in Broad Street, which today is a significant, although not very attractive feature, of the town. The States also commissioned a portrait of Le Sueur, and of his contemporary François Godfray “two men who as members of this Assembly have rendered great services to the country, and have always shewn themselves animated by patriotic sentiments in defending its institutions whenever they were seriously threatened.”



**Jean Le Capelain, 1812-1848, artist**

Jean Le Capelain was born in St Helier in 1812. Entirely self-taught he developed an individualistic artistic style, with an emphasis on atmospheric effects. When Queen Victoria visited Jersey in 1846 Le Capelain was commissioned by the States to prepare an album of paintings for her. He produced 25 water colours, six of the visit itself and 19 of local scenery. These were put into a book *The Queen's visit to Jersey, drawn by J Le Capelain*, published by Philip Falle.



Le Capelain worked from a studio at the top of the Calvados Hotel at the corner of Church Street and Hill Street.

Le Capelain developed TB and died in 1848 at the age of just 36.

His pictures today are in the Museum, the Town hall, Rozel Manor and the Barreau Art Gallery. Le Capelain House, at Castle Quay, is named after him and is alongside Millais House, named after Sir John Millais, another prominent Jersey-born artist.



**Philip Oules, 1817-1885, artist**



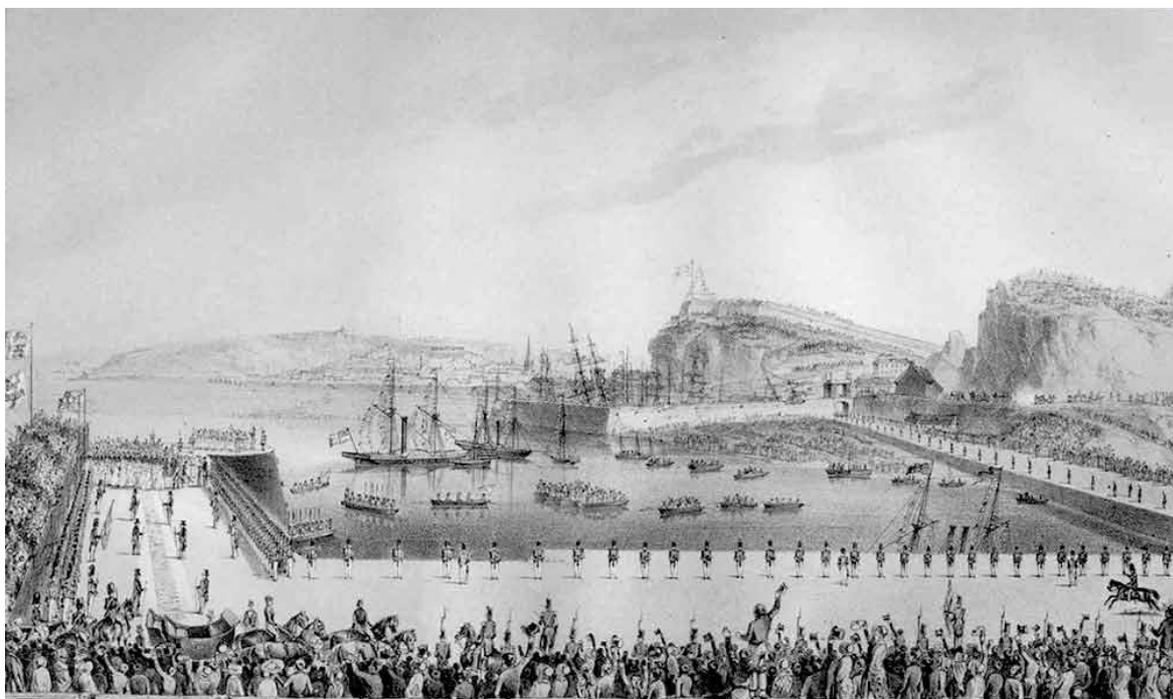
Philip Oules was born in St Helier in 1817, the son of Philippe Oules, the leading auctioneer in the Island. He studied painting in Paris and soon established himself as a marine, landscape and portrait painter. He received numerous commissions from ship owners and masters, benefiting from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century boom in shipbuilding. As well as the new paddle steamers, Oules painted early racing yachts. He recorded the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to Jersey in 1846 in eleven watercolours, which were published the following year. He published a number of other albums of local views including *Scenic Beauties of the Island of Jersey* (1840), *The Death of Major Peirson* (1881) and *The Écrehous* (1884). Oules also recorded a number of events,

particularly shipwrecks, which were reproduced in the *Illustrated London News*.

Philip Oules was not only an accomplished artist, but he was a pioneering photographer. His son Walter Oules (1848-1933) became a portrait painter.



A typical painting by Oules - the Dewdrop off Corbiere



Oules's etching of the landing of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert

### John Lecaudey, born 1821, agriculturist



John Lecaudey was born in St Ouen in 1821. He was a successful farmer who can take much of the credit for the development of Jersey's potato industry.

Potato growing became significant in Jersey in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. By 1807 maincrop potatoes were being exported. However, the industry suffered with successive bouts of blight. The disease, which was the cause of huge famine in Ireland, first reached Jersey in 1845. By 1858, following another couple of bad years of blight, the Jersey farmers were facing ruin.

Lecaudey pursued the idea that Jersey, with its warm climate and mild winters, and warm soil on south facing cõtils, would be the ideal place for growing very early potato crops. These could reach the London market well before the English crops were ready, and would therefore fetch the highest price there. Lecaudey put his idea to farmers, who welcomed it, and agreed to follow the variations in planting technique he had suggested, including the very liberal use of guano, a natural fertilizer of the excrement of birds. He then set out for England, Scotland and France, and spent much time and

money travelling to buy 'seed', to meet importers and shipping agents and to arrange for the exportation of the new earlies consigned direct to London. He opened the first potato store specifically for packing and exporting the new earlies, and for importing guano, seed and other commodities required by the farmers.



On 16 April 1859 the first basketful of earlies was sent up to London were a great success at Covent Garden. The industry rapidly took off with a huge benefit to the farmers and the Island generally. In 1864 nearly 4,000 tons were exported and in 1868 7,890 tons.

Lecaudey's contribution was recognised in 1870 when the farmers of Jersey presented him with an inscribed gold watch and chain, a purse of 150 gold sovereigns and an illuminated address with the names of 553 inscribers.

In 1880, aged 60 and a widower, Lecaudey married 27 year old Alice Jones. No record can be found of his death.

Source: Durtnall, KP. *Jersey Potato Exports in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the Export of the First Early Potatoes to the London Market in 1859.* Unpublished paper in Jersey Library.

A shorter version of this paper was published under the title of "John Lecaudey and the export of the first Jersey early potatoes" in the *Annual Bulletin of the Société Jersiaise*, 1991.

## Charles Le Cornu, 1829-1911, agriculturalist



Charles Le Cornu was born in St Ouen in 1829 and educated in Southampton. After a distinguished military career Le Cornu returned to Jersey and held leading positions in the militia until 1896.

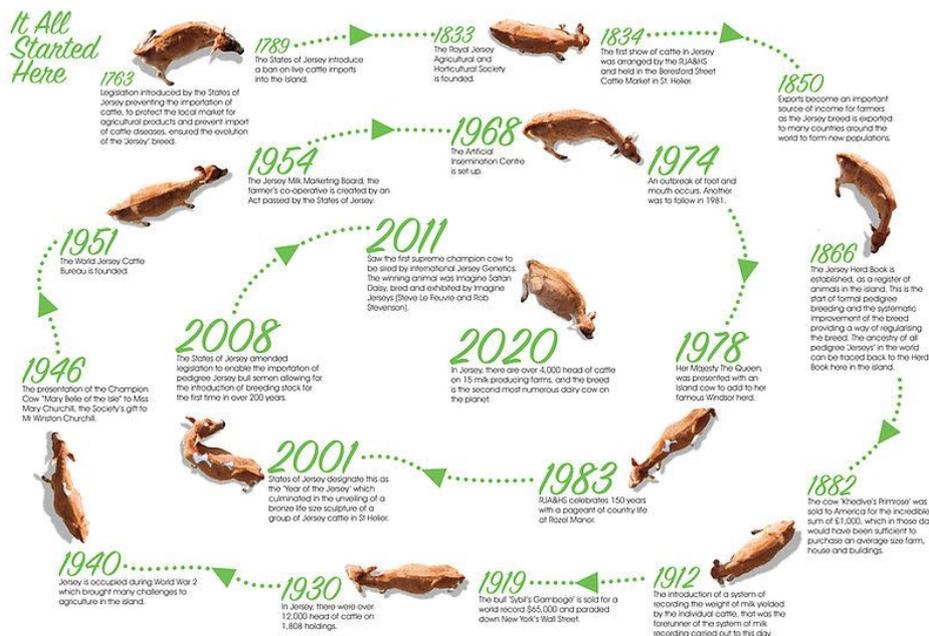
From 1875 to 1881 he was a deputy for St Peter in the States and oversaw the construction of the new markets and the road through Beaumont. His interest in agriculture saw him acting as a judge at the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society's shows at the age of 22 and he was secretary of the agricultural section for ten years from 1857. In 1864, he was responsible for the introduction of the Herd Book, in which all

cattle in the Island have subsequently been registered. He served as the Society's president from 1870 to 1872 and was also an active member and judge of the Royal Agricultural Society of England. He wrote three pamphlets on the farming industry in Jersey – *Agriculture in the Channel Islands*, *The Potato in Jersey* and *The Jersey Dairy Industry*.

He was a founding member of the Société Jersiaise, and president from 1882 to 1905. He wrote regularly for the annual bulletins and had an extensive collection of Jersey documents which were presented to the Société on his death.

He took a great interest in the parish of St Peter, where he bought a number of fiefs, took the initiative to restore the church and published an account of its history and architecture.

Balleine wrote: "He was one of the outstanding Jersey personalities of his day. It was he who conceived in 1870 the idea of holding a Channel Islands Exhibition, and it was largely his energy and enthusiasm that made it a success."



Additional source: RJ&HS

### **Sir John Millais, 1829-1886, artist**

John Millais was born in Southampton in 1829. However, he was from a prominent Jersey family that was recorded in the 1331 Extente. The family returned to Jersey when John was 4. Most of his early childhood was spent in Jersey, to which he retained a strong devotion throughout his life. He quickly showed promise as an artist and by the age of 8 the family had moved to England to further his education. By the age of 16 he was firmly established as a prominent artist.

His early pictures were of historical scenes. Subsequently he was one of the founders of the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood and then he turned to portrait painting, becoming one of the most successful English portrait painters of the age, and of popular historical and genre subjects. His output was huge with at least 350 large easel paintings and numerous black and white drawings.



Between 1870 and 1892 he concentrated on landscape paintings, usually depicting difficult or dangerous terrain. Millais was also very successful as a book illustrator, notably for the works of Anthony Trollope and the poems of Tennyson.

In 1885 he was created a baronet and the following year he became President of the Royal Academy. He died later in 1886.

Millais painted a famous portrait of Lillie Langtry, the Jersey-born actress, a painting that enhanced the reputation of both painter and subject. It is said that they spoke to each other in Jèrriais during the sitting and more generally that he was proud of his Jersey origins. He is regarded as a great Jerseyman. However, in practice his links to Jersey are fairly tenuous, and derive entirely from his family origins. He was not born in Jersey, lived in Jersey for only a few years and none of his paintings, other than of Lillie Langtry, have any link with Jersey.

**Joseph Sinel, 1844-1929, Scientist**

Joseph Sinel was born in St Helier in 1844, the son of a tobacco merchant. He began his working life at Voisins where he rose to become manager. However, he always had an interest in natural science. He left Voisins and set up in business as a taxidermist. He rapidly established a reputation as a marine biologist and established a biological station at Havre des Pas.

He played a major role in reorganising the Jersey Museum and was its curator from 1907 until his death in 1929. During the last 20 years of his life he turned his attention to prehistory, and took an active part in the explorations made by the Société Jersiaise, and he contributed numerous papers to the annual bulletins of the Société. He also engaged in psychical research, publishing a number of papers on the subject.



### Jesse, 1850-1931, and Florence Boot, 1863-1952, philanthropists



Jesse Boot, born in 1850, transformed Boot's the Chemist, founded by his father John in Nottingham, into a major national retailer. In 1885 he visited Jersey for health reasons where he met and married Florence Rowe. Florence had been born in St Helier in 1863.

Florence subsequently played a major part in the development of the business and was strongly committed to the welfare of staff, more particularly because many of them were women. Among her innovations were

the employment of welfare officers and the provision of breakfast for staff. A Boots store was established in Jersey in 1896.

Crippled by arthritis, Jesse Boot sold the company in 1920, and in 1928 he and his wife retired to Villa Millbrook in St Lawrence. Boot, who had become Lord Trent, was believed to have donated upwards of £2m at 1930 prices to charitable causes. Much of his giving was focused upon his home city of Nottingham. However, he also made major gifts to the people of Jersey. The best known is the athletics complex in St Clement, which is known as FB Fields. He also paid for the building of the school at La Motte Street in St Helier, and provided the land adjacent to FB Fields for the new St Nicholas Church.

After her husband's death, Lady Trent commissioned the rebuilding of St Matthew's Church at Millbrook with interior fittings by Rene Lalique. She also donated the land surrounding the church to be laid out as a park - now known as Coronation Park.



*The FB Fields in St Clement*

### **Lillie Langtry, 1853-1929, actress, producer and socialite**

Emilie Charlotte Le Breton was born in Jersey in 1853, the daughter of the Dean of Jersey and Rector of St Saviour, the Rev William Corbet Le Breton. The Dean was himself has a colourful figure, a womaniser who eventually was removed from office and left the Island in disgrace.

Emilie was always known among her friends as Lillie. Proving too much for her French governess, Lillie was educated by her brothers' tutor, becoming unusually well-educated for women of the time. She was tri-lingual, speaking English, French and Jèrriais, and by all accounts was beautiful and someone who always attracted attention. When she was 16, she made her first visit to London. In 1874, at the age of 20, she married 26-year-old Irish landowner Edward Langtry, who she had met at her brother's wedding in Jersey. They lived in Belgravia but also bought Noirmont Manor, the former feudal seat of the Le Breton family.



*Millais's' portrait of Lillie Langtry*

Lillie quickly attracted notice for her beauty and wit. One of the celebrities she met was the artist John Millais, who had spent part of his boyhood in Jersey. Millais's portrait of Langtry raised the profile of both artist and subject and gave Langtry the nickname, the "Jersey Lily". The painting caused great interest when exhibited at the Royal Academy. Lillie became much sought after in London society, and invitations flooded in. Her fame soon reached royal ears. From late 1887 to June 1880 she had an affair with Edward, Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII. This was followed with an affair with Prince Louis of Battenberg, father of Early Mountbatten of Burma and grandfather of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. There was one child from this relationship – Jeanne Marie, born in Paris in 1881.

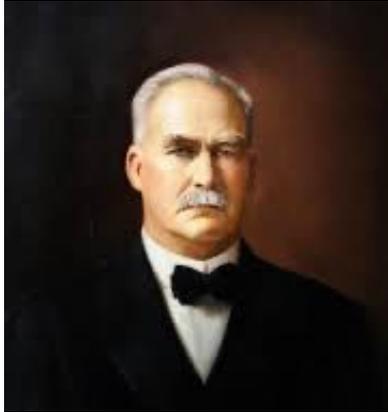
Lillie moved back to London and, at the suggestion of her close friend Oscar Wilde, embarked upon a stage career, which caused her to attract more admirers, including the prime Minister William Gladstone. Her acting career took her to America which she was a great success. Lillie's marriage with Edward Langtry had long since broken down and in 1887 she became an American citizen so as to be able to divorce him. She continued her acting career in England. Jersey was not forgotten with two performances in 1889 at the then Theatre Royal in Gloucester Street.

Lillie then turned her attention to horse racing, becoming a successful owner, particularly through her horse Merman. By this time Lillie was by any standards very rich. In 1889 in Jersey she married Hugo Gerald de Bathe, 19 years her junior. He did not seem to feature in her life subsequently. In the same year she formally opened the Opera House, built on the site of the Theatre Royal in Gloucester Street, which had burnt down ten years earlier. She had retired from acting but rather bought theatres in London.

In 1906 Lillie returned to the stage in vaudeville and is also credited with inventing the concept of the "red carpet". She finally retired from the stage in the early years of the First World War and subsequently moved to Monaco where she wrote her autobiography. But she continued to visit London where she was friendly with King George V and Queen Mary. Lillie died in 1929. At her request her body was returned to Jersey to be buried in St Saviour's Churchyard.

Source: Sonia Hillsdon. *The Jersey Lily – the life and times of Lillie Langtry*. Seaflower Books, 1993.  
Further reading: Lillie Langtry, *The Days I knew*, 1925, republished by Futura publications, 1978.  
[Lillielangtry.com](http://Lillielangtry.com)

### Thomas Davis, 1867-1942, businessman and philanthropist



Thomas Davis, or TB Davis as he was always known, was born at Havre des Pas in 1867. He went to sea as a young man, established a stevedoring business in South Africa and eventually returned to the Island of his birth a rich man. A great admirer of the monarchy and friend through their joint love of sailing of King George V, Davis donated land to the people of Jersey as a public park, named the Howard Davis Park in memory of his son Howard, who lost his life in World War One, and to erect a statue of King George.

Davis also bought a farm (then known as Parkfield) in Trinity. In 1929, he gifted the property, later named the Howard Davis Farm, to the States of Jersey on the understanding that it should be used

as an experimental centre for the development and study of agriculture and for the instruction of young Jersey people and other interested parties in the science of agriculture. Following discussion with the family The Howard Davis Farm Trust was launched in 2009 to provide direct financial assistance for appropriate training, research and projects in every aspect of agriculture, horticulture, together with protection, enhancement, monitoring, training and research relating to the natural environment.



*The Howard Davis Park*

Additional source: The Howard Davis Farm Trust

### Harry Vardon, 1870-1937, golfer

Harry Vardon was born in Grouville in 1870 and learned his golf as a teenager at the Royal Jersey Golf Club. At the age of 20 he turned professional. In 1896 Vardon won the first of his six Open Championships (a record that still stands today). Vardon had great rivalries with James Braid and J H Taylor who each won five Open Championships; together the three formed the "Great Triumvirate", dominating worldwide golf from the mid-1890s to the mid-1910s. These rivalries enormously increased the public's interest in golf.



During his career, Vardon won 62 golf tournaments, including one run of 14 in a row, still a record to this day.

He made three visits to North America, in 1900, 1913 and 1920. In 1900 he won the US Open. In 1913 he was the joint runner-up, with fellow Jerseyman, Ted Ray, to a 20 year old amateur, Francis Ouimet, an event portrayed in the film *The Greatest Game Ever Played*. In 1920, at the age of 50, he was runner up.



In his visit to America in 1913, accompanied by Ted Ray, also the winner of an Open Championship, he played in 45 exhibition matches winning 36 of them.

In 1974, Vardon was chosen as one of the initial group of inductees into the World Golf Hall of Fame. In 2000, Vardon was ranked as the 13th best golfer of all time by *Golf Digest* magazine.

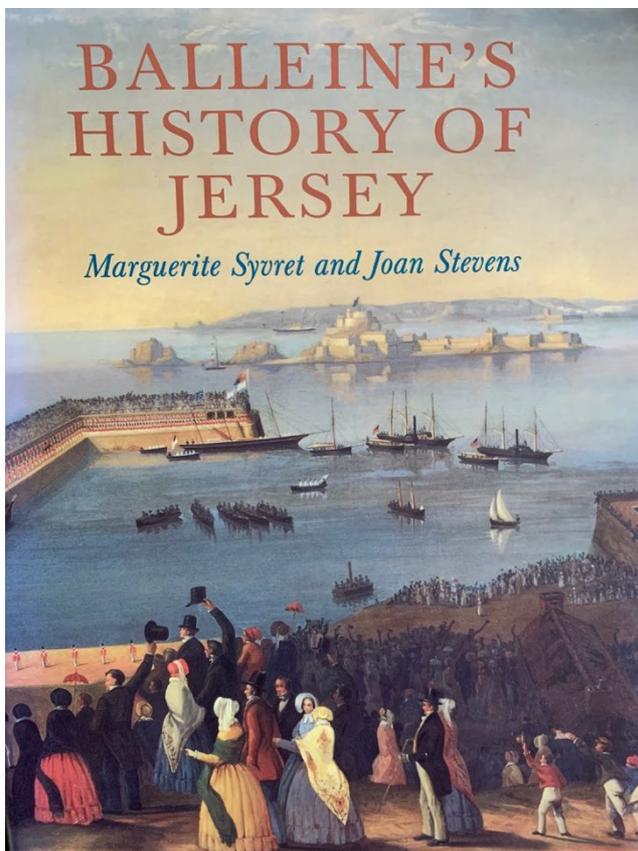
Vardon was also well known for the Vardon grip, or overlapping grip, the grip most popular among professional golfers.

His most prestigious medals, including those from his six British Open Championships, are on display in a tribute to him at the Jersey Museum. There is a statue of him at the entrance to the Royal Jersey Golf Club in Grouville.

**George Balleine, 1873-1966, historian**

George Balleine was born in 1873 in Oxford where his father, subsequently Dean of Jersey, was a rector. He was educated by his father, at Marlborough and in Jersey. After reading history at Oxford he was ordained in 1896 into the Church of England, serving in various positions in London until he retired in 1938. During this time he also developed a love of history, publishing significant works on the Church of England in 1908 and 1913.

In that year he returned to Jersey to property inherited from his uncle. During the Occupation he held a number of positions in the church including Rector of St Brelade. In 1939 he was appointed honorary librarian at the Société Jersiaise with the task of cataloguing its historical material.



This set him on the path of writing Jersey's history, which he did for the next 20 years. He is best known for his *History of the Island of Jersey*, published in 1950, which quickly became accepted as the definitive history of the Island. This book has subsequently been revised, expanded and updated by Marguerite Syvret and Joan Stevens in editions published in 1981 and 1998 under the title *Balleine's History of Jersey*. His second most significant publication was the *Biographical Dictionary of Jersey* (1948).

## Carlyle Le Gallais, 1881-1967, businessman and founder of the National Trust for Jersey



*Carlyle Le Gallais with his father and son*

Carlyle Le Gallais was born in St Helier in 1881. He joined the family business F Le Gallais and Sons, which had been founded by his grandfather Richard Le Gallais in 1825. The business had begun as a furniture maker but expanded into warehousing, auctioneering and estate agency. It was the first Jersey business to receive the Royal Warrant.

After War service Le Gallais also developed a farming business. He served as President of the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society from 1938 to 1950. He was instrumental in the development of Springfield.

In 1936 Le Gallais was one of the founders of the National Trust for Jersey and also its first benefactor.

In 1948 he was among the first senators to be elected to the States Assembly, then serving as President of the Housing Committee.

The company suffered a serious fire in 1949 and then in 1954 its premises in Bath Street and Minden Place were gutted in a major fire. He resigned from the States to help rebuild the firm.

### Edmund Blampied, 1886-1966, artist



Edmund Blampied was born in 1886 in St Martin but spent most of his childhood at Augrès, Trinity and all his school life at Trinity School. He was a born artist. At the age of 17, he went to London to study at the Lambeth Art School. Initially he developed expertise in etchings.

In 1916 he returned to Jersey where he served in the Royal Jersey Militia. He returned to London after the War where he quickly gained fame for his etchings and drypoints, published at the height of the print boom in the 1920s during the etching revival. He was also a lithographer, caricaturist, cartoonist, book illustrator and artist in oils, watercolours, silhouettes and bronze.

In 1938 he returned to Jersey and remained in the Island throughout the Occupation, during which time his output was continuous notwithstanding a lack of materials and inability to obtain commissions for his work. He designed stamps and banknotes for Jersey and also designed two stamps issued in Britain in 1948 to mark the third anniversary of the Liberation.

Blampied was an ardent Jerseyman, but one attracted to the countryside rather than the sea. Many of his works depicted rural life in Jersey. His scenes of collecting vrac from the beaches of the Island using a horse and cart were, he said, his signature tune. He also wrote poetry in Jèrriais.



Blampied spent his final years at La Haule Court, where he died in 1966.

### **Lord (Alexander) Coutanche, 1892–1973, Bailiff**

Alexander Coutanche was born in St Saviour in 1892. He was educated in Jersey and then at the University of Caen. In 1913 he was called to the Jersey Bar. He served with distinction in the First World War and left the Army in 1920 with the rank of Captain.

He was elected to the States in 1922 as a Deputy for St Helier. In 1925 he was appointed Solicitor-General, and went on to reform the Law Officers Department and the States Greffe. He was promoted to Attorney-General in 1931. He did much to reform and update court proceedings, including the introduction of English as the court language. He was appointed Bailiff in 1935 and in that capacity steered through a great deal of new legislation.



When the Occupation began in 1940 Coutanche was appointed Governor in addition to being Bailiff and he chaired the Superior Council, effectively the body responsible for the administration of the Island. He had the difficult task of managing the relationship with the German occupying forces and leading the administration of the Island, which at a stroke had been cut off from the UK. In recognition of the role he had performed during the Occupation he was knighted in 1946.



Jersey faced significant challenges after the War. Sir Alexander was prominent in the fundamental reform of the composition of the States in 1948 and the framing of a number of significant new laws. He pressed for the introduction of a Channel Islands Court of Appeal, realised some years later, and in the appointment of a Deputy Bailiff. In 1960, to mark his Silver Jubilee as Bailiff, the States presented him with a portrait which today hangs in the Royal Court.

He retired as Bailiff in 1961 and was made a life peer with the title of Lord Coutanche of Saint Brelade in the Island of Jersey and the City of Westminster. He died in 1973.

### Cyril Le Marquand, 1902-1980, politician



Cyril Le Marquand was born in 1902 in St Lawrence and after leaving school joined the family business of Le Marquand Brothers, food manufacturers and seed merchants. From an early age he took a keen interest in the economics and politics of Jersey.

During the War he moved to England and became assistant Director of Animal Foodstuffs at the Ministry of Food. He also contributed to *Nos Iles*, a document setting out ideas for post liberation changes in the Islands.

He returned to Jersey after the Liberation and became a founder member of Jersey Progressive Party. He campaigned for the reform of the States in 1948, when rectors and jurats were replaced by elected senators. He was elected a Deputy for St Helier later that year. He quickly became a leading States member, became President of the Committee of Essential Commodities, a supporter of the highly controversial introduction of a social security scheme and involved in the reorganisation of Jersey Electricity of which he became Chairman.

In 1957 he was elected as Senator, topping the poll. He became President of the Finance and Economics Committee and also subsequently the Policy Advisory Committee from its inception in 1973 to 1978. Together with Ralph Vibert, he played a leading part in helping to secure a favourable position for Jersey when Britain joined the European Economic Community in 1972.

He is generally credited with taking the key steps that led to the development of Jersey as an international financial centre, in particular by removing the ceiling on interest rates.



The main States office building, Cyril Le Marquand House, was named after him.

### Arthur Mourant, 1904-1994, scientist

Arthur Mourant was born in St Saviour in 1904. He quickly demonstrated a brilliant academic mind. He graduated with first class honours in chemistry from Oxford University and obtained a PhD for a treatise on the geology of the Channel Islands. In 1935 he established the chemical pathology laboratory which became the States Pathology Laboratory. He qualified as a doctor in 1943 and developed an expertise in blood groups. In 1954 he published his major work *The Distribution of Human Blood Groups*. His work was recognised with appointments as a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Pathologists and the Royal Society.



While in London he retained his Jersey connections through membership of the Jersey Society in London and the Société Jersiaise, which awarded him its Medal of Honour in 1961.

In 1978 Mourant returned to Jersey, ostensibly having retired. However, he continued his academic work on blood groups, publishing two books and numerous papers. He became very active in the Société Jersiaise, playing a major role in its work on archaeology. There is a bronze portrait of Mourant in the entrance to the Jersey Museum and a portrait of him in the Société's members' room.

The Royal Society published a lengthy biographical memoir of Mourant in 1999, the opening paragraph of which read –

Arthur Mourant had an unusual career in which he managed to combine his first passionate interest in geology and prehistory with his subsequent medical training and interest in the geographical and racial distribution of human blood-groups. Although it was the work associated with blood-groups that was to bring him international recognition, it was undoubtedly the anthropological rather than clinical aspects of blood-transfusion medicine that most appealed to his imagination. He was devoted to his native island of Jersey and throughout his life continued to take a lively and active interest in the geology and archaeology of the island.

Further reading: *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, 199, Vol 45.

### Frank Le Maistre OBE, 1910-2002, author and Jèrriais advocate



Frank Le Maistre was born in 1910 in St Ouen and was from a long-established St Ouen family. After leaving school he worked in a lawyer's office and then for the Jersey Department of Agriculture at the States Farm.

He spoke and wrote Jèrriais all his life. During the 1930s and the Occupation he produced articles for the *Chroniques de Jersey* under the pen name Marie la Pie. He was editor of the quarterly bulletin of L'Assemblée d'Jèrriais from 1952 to 1977. He collected hundreds of Jèrriais words and phrases from all the parishes and produced numerous literary works and histories. The deep knowledge of linguistics which he acquired permitted him to compose his *Dictionnaire Jersiais-Français* (1966) and collaborate on the English-Jersey Language Vocabulary (1972). He

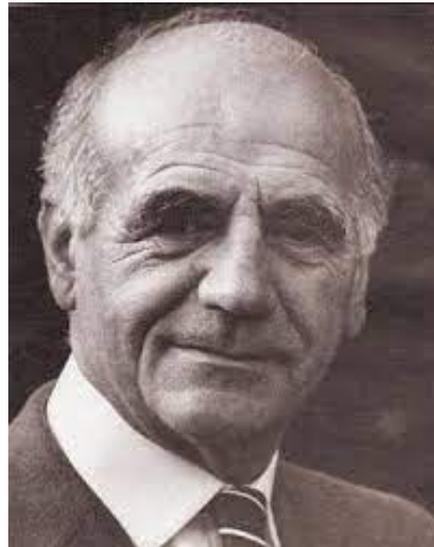
received an honorary doctorate from the University of Caen and was awarded the OBE in 1976.



**Ralph Vibert OBE, 1911-2008, politician**

Ralph Vibert was born in 1911 at First Tower where his parent ran the Martello Stores. He qualified as an advocate in 1934. During the War he served as an army major, an instructor with the Special Operations Executive.

He returned to Jersey after the War and served as Solicitor General from 1948 to 1955. He was elected a Deputy for St Brelade in 1957 and a Senator in 1959. He was President of the Defence Committee for many years, and went on to lead three important and complex committees simultaneously: Constitution, Legislation and Establishment. As President of the Constitution Committee he effectively represented Jersey's interests in the negotiations that led to Britain joining the European Union in 1972, a development that had the potential to cause huge damage to the Island.



Following the death in office of Senator Cyril Le Marquand, he was appointed President of the Finance and Economics Committee. In 1991 he published an autobiography *Memoirs of a Jerseyman*.

### Norman Le Brocq, 1922-1996, politician



Norman Le Brocq was born in 1922 in St Peter, where his parents had a shop. The Spanish Civil War prompted his interest in politics. During the Occupation he openly declared his communist sympathies, actively helped Russian prisoners and assisted with hiding escapees. He was instrumental in establishing the Jersey Democratic Movement and the Jersey Communist Party.

He first stood for election as a deputy in 1945 and although widely respected as a person his communist affiliation counted against him and it was not until 1966 that he was first elected. He failed to be re-elected in 1969, was elected again in 1972, lost in 1975 and then served three successive terms from 1978 to 1987 when he retired.

He served conscientiously on many committees and was widely respected for his integrity and hard work. He campaigned on a number of key issues including pay for States members (at a time when elected States members were unpaid), a minimum wage, an Island-wide police force, free healthcare and compulsory education until the age of 16, all of which were eventually achieved. He was President of the Island Development Committee and instrumental in bringing in the first Island Plan, which laid out zones for housing and commercial development and greenfield sites on which development was not permitted. He was also chairman of the Sea Fisheries Advisory Committee, and a Sea Fisheries vessel is named after him.

He held many positions outside of the States including chairman of the Channel Islands Co-operative Society, President of National Trust for Jersey, Chairman of the Jersey Trades Council and President of Age Concern.

Sir Philip Bailache, Bailiff of Jersey, described him as “A true son of Jersey with passionately held political ideals with which he kept faith throughout his life. For years a voice in the wilderness, he found in late life many of his ideals becoming accepted government policy.”



*The sea fisheries vessel, Norman Le Brocq*

### Gerald Durrell OBE, 1925-1995, conservationist and author



Gerald Durrell was born in 1925 in India where his father was an engineer. His father died when he was just 3 and he spent his childhood in London and Corfu.

After a short time working in Whipsnade Zoo, he joined a number of wildlife collecting expeditions. He began writing to earn some money. His book *My Family and Other Animals*, published in 1956, made him a notable author and brought him public recognition as a naturalist.

Durrell's growing disillusionment with the way zoos of the time were run, and his belief that they should primarily act as reserves and regenerators of endangered species, made him contemplate founding his own zoo. After a long search for a suitable site, in 1959 Durrell founded the Jersey Zoological Park in the 17th-century manor house, Les Augres Manor in Trinity, to house his growing collection of animals. As the zoo grew in size, so did the number of projects undertaken to save threatened wildlife in other parts of the world.

In 1963 Durrell was instrumental in founding the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust (now Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust), to cope with the increasingly difficult challenges of zoo, wildlife and habitat management. In the 1970s the Trust became a leading centre for captive breeding. In 1978 he created what he called 'a mini-university' at Les Noyers, adjacent to Les Augrès Manor, to provide intensive training to conservation workers, so that they could begin the process of saving species in their country of origin. Today, Durrell is internationally acclaimed for its contribution to the professional training of zoologists and conservation biologists, particularly those from the developing countries of the world. Over 3,500 students from more than 135 countries have now successfully graduated from the International Training Centre, to create a global network dedicated to supporting the mission of the Trust.

Durrell died in Jersey in 1995; his ashes are buried in the Jersey Zoo.



*Jersey Zoo, Les Augres Manor*

**Colin Powell OBE, 1937-2019, public servant**

Colin Powell was born in London in 1937, went to school in Sutton and obtained a first-class honours degree in economics from Cambridge University. He began his career in Northern Ireland where he was an economic adviser to the Government from 1963 to 1968.



In 1969 he was recruited to fill the new role of Economic Adviser to the Government of Jersey. He quickly made his mark including publishing in 1971 the *Economic Survey of Jersey*, the first ever detailed analysis of the Island's economy. He was appointed Chief Adviser to the Government in 1992, a position he held until 1998. Subsequently, he continued to work for the Island in many ways, in particular by chairing the Jersey Financial Services Commission. He is widely credited with shaping the financial service industry so it both served the Island and operated in accordance with international standards.

He was active in internal financial fora, and in so doing considerably enhanced Jersey's standing internationally. He was Chairman of the Group of International Finance Centre Supervisors (formerly the Offshore Group of Banking Supervisors) from 1981 to 2011, a member of the Financial Action Task Force on combating terrorist financing and money laundering, co-leader of two Financial Action Task Force groups on money laundering and human trafficking and the abuse of corporate vehicles and Vice Chair of an OECD Peer Review Group that developed international standards for exchange of information for tax purposes.

In a tribute to Powell, the Governor of Jersey, Sir Stephen Dalton, said –

Colin Powell was a true gentleman and someone who set us all a very fine example both in his professional life and as a deeply caring person who campaigned tirelessly and selflessly for the betterment of others. Whether serving the States and people of Jersey, leading the NSPCC here in Jersey or helping to promote and guide the Island's Community Savings Bank, Colin Powell consistently and characteristically gave unstinting support to all with whom he worked and for whom he campaigned. He worked with absolute commitment, energy, and complete integrity throughout his long career in the complex and sensitive area of international finance and politics. He earned a very fine international reputation for wisdom and objectivity. I am clear that he made a very substantial contribution to international standards in the financial world as well as making a most positive economic impact upon the City of London and in Jersey. His contribution to his Island's life and future will mean that he is long remembered as a great Jersey man.