A brief history of Jersey

Mark Boleat, February 2022

Introduction

This paper draws on the available literature on the history of Jersey with the objective of producing a brief, but comprehensive, summary.

Earliest times

The earliest evidence of human activity in Jersey comes from about a quarter of a million years ago, when bands of Palaeolithic (old Stone Age) hunters moved through the area, following herds of mammoth. Two cave sites, at La Cotte de St Brelade and La Cotte à la Chèvre, tell the story of these early days.

However, people really settled only at about the time Jersey became an island – about 7,000 years ago, when the water from the melting Arctic ice caps eventually flooded over the low-lying plains between what is now Jersey and France. This was the beginning of the Neolithic period, or new Stone Age, and it was then that the first farmers began to settle. The most obvious evidence from this time is their religious sites – the tombs known as dolmens – that can be seen around the Island, the biggest and most spectacular being at La Hougue Bie.

It is estimated that between 4,000 and 3,000 BC the population of Jersey was between 2,000 and 4,000, comprising between 10 and 20 separate communities each with a population of between 200 and 250. There was then a significant decline in the population largely because of the loss of land to a rising sea level. The population may have fallen to about 500 in the middle Bronze Age (2,000-I,500 BC). During the Iron Age (800BC to 100AD), Jersey was inhabited by Celtic tribes, evidenced by hill forts such as Câtel de Leq and hoards of coins.

England became part of the Roman Empire from 43AD to 410AD. Jersey was largely untouched by the Romans although the recent finding of a significant coin hoard perhaps indicates the first large-scale use of Jersey as a safe haven for storing money. The Island was known as Andium at that time. Although the Channel Islands were part of the Roman trading system, Guernsey was of more significance than Jersey, its northerly location put it more directly on the sea route from southern Europe to England, and St Peter Port became a significant Roman port of call.

The departure of the Romans led not only to an economic slowdown in Jersey but also to a period of several centuries when little is known about what happened in the Island, or indeed in England, the period being known as the "Dark Ages". However, it is known that when the Romans departed Europe was invaded by Germanic peoples from the East. In the case of Britain these were Angles and Saxons but in the case of Gaul and the Channel Islands, these were Franks. "Britons", who had fled from Britain ahead of the pagan Saxons, also arrived in the Channel Islands at this time. The Franks were well-organised, developing both civil and Christian administrative systems, possibly creating the early parishes and most certainly the origins of Jèrriais. The 9th Century also saw new invaders arriving from the north who were to have perhaps the greatest influence on the identity not only of Jersey but also of Britain. The early Vikings raided the coast, especially wealthy monasteries such as Mont St Michel. It is likely monasteries on Sark and on the Islet of St Helier were also raided at this time.

The links with Normandy

The Frankish Kings did all they could to defend themselves against these invaders and one action was to give the Channel Islands to the King of Brittany in the hope that he would keep the Vikings out. The French king gave the Viking chief Rollo land around Rouen in return for his allegiance. This land of the Northmen became Normandy and was extended west until AD933 when Rollo's son, William Longsword, was given the western Cotentin and the Channel Islands. It seems likely that it was not until the early 11th Century that the Dukes of Normandy finally had time to put their stamp on Jersey. The Parishes and their churches were firmly established within the diocese of Coutances, with much land given to Norman Abbeys, and aspects of law and government were put in place. The local language, Jèrriais, acquired many Norse words at this time as did place names.

The Dukes divided the Island up into land holdings called fiefs and gave them to their followers in return for certain services. These tenants of the Dukes were called seigneurs, who in turn granted land to their followers, again in return for services and rent.

In 1066 the seventh Duke of Normandy (William II of Normandy) defeated King Harold of England in the Battle at Hastings and became King William I of England. The Channel Islands and Normandy were therefore united with England under the same ruler. At the death of King William, the King of England and the Duke of Normandy were once again split and it was not until 1150 under Henry II that the King and Duke were united again.

Under Norman rule, in 1155, an abbey was established on the islet where Elizabeth Castle now stands; it is believed to have replaced an earlier monastery dedicated to St Helier. The abbey must have been the grandest building in Jersey and not only the Island's most important religious site but also the place where important documents would have been written.

The Islands seems to have been reasonably prosperous at this time. Jersey was already densely populated with about 6,000 people. Jersey had emerged as a shipping centre in the late 12th Century as landfall for ships between France and the British Isles. Fishing was a major industry, mainly mackerel and conger eels, with significant exports to France.

1204 -1341

The year 1204 is seen to be the defining year in Jersey's history, when it lost its allegiance to mainland Normandy. However, the development of an affiliation with England was a rather long process and not a single event at one time, and particularly so in respect of the economy of the Island.

In 1204 Normandy and England separated but with Gascony and the Channel Islands being retained by the English Crown. Although 1204 is generally accepted as the year in which Jersey became a territory of the English Crown, in practice 1206 was the more significant date and the separation from Normandy took place over a period of years including a number of periods when the Island was under Norman control. Successive English kings wished to keep the Channel Islands largely because they had territorial claims in France and saw Jersey as a useful asset in this respect. However, for the same reason their proximity to France meant that they needed to be defended. Mont Orgeuil Castle at Gorey was built in the first half of the 13th Century and other fortifications and support for the Island followed.

The split from Normandy did lead to a change in the structure of land ownership. Ownership of land in both Normandy and Jersey became impractical. The large landowners split their estates with the smaller parts, that is the land in Jersey, being allocated to younger sons and daughters. Those who left Jersey altogether forfeited their lands to the Crown. The abbeys and priories of Normandy also continued to own land in Jersey and benefitted from rent and other payments. It was not until 1569

that Jersey's religious links moved from Normandy to England.

The move of Jersey's allegiance from the Dukes of Normandy to the Kings of England became formalised with the Treaty of Paris in 1259, under which the English Crown gave up its claim to France, other than Gascony. In 1294 England lost Gascony to France leaving the Channel Islands as the only remaining "French" possession of the English Crown.

The first "snapshot" of Jersey is a 1331 document popularly called the Jersey Domesday Book, but more accurately the Extente. At that time the land in Jersey could be subdivided into three categories –

- Land owned by the King - about 20% of the total.
- Land previously owned by the King that had been gifted to his followers in exchange for certain services – around half the land.
- Land that continued to be in the hands of Abbots and Bishops of Norman monasteries and churches, notwithstanding the break with Normandy in 1204 – under 20 % of the land.

The land held by the King, the seigneurs and the abbots and bishops was occupied by tenants who paid a rent either in cash or kind – generally wheat, but also barley, hens, capons, eggs and loaves. A tax was levied on all households. About two thousand households were liable to the tax, which suggests a population of 10-12,000.

In 1341, following a French raid in 1338, King Edward III granted a charter to Jersey which confirmed "all privileges, liberties, immunities, exemptions and customs in persons goods moneys and other things…….without hindrance or molestation". This charter, the terms of which were expanded in a number of later charters, gave Jersey its special status in relation to England.

The black death 1347-51

The first half of the 14th Century was eventful for Jersey. It followed a period of strong economic growth. However, between 1315 and 1319 there was a great famine, which led to many deaths. The raid from France in 1338 was another significant setback and reportedly devastated Jersey. But Jersey rebounded until the plague, known as the black death, swept Europe between 1347 and 1351. It was particularly severe in coastal areas, with Normandy suffering particularly badly. There is no reliable specific evidence on the effect of the black death on Jersey, other than that eight out of ten rectors in the Island were victims. However, given what happened in Normandy, it is reasonable to assume that the effect was substantial, particularly on the fishing industry.

There were further outbreaks of the plague throughout the second half of the 14th Century, and around this time the Island was also adversely affected by climate changes known as "the little ice age" that reduced crop yields. The population of Jersey fell by 30-40% and in the early 15th Century was probably 4,000-5,000.

The Tudor period 1405-1603

The Tudor Period in England ran from 1405 to 1603 and including the reign of Elizabeth I from 1558 and 1603. This period is widely regarded as a golden era in English history. Jersey was adversely affected by the war of the Roses (1455-85) to such an extent that French troops entered the Island unopposed in 1461 and occupied it for seven years. In 1468 the French and English Kings reached an agreement, endorsed by the Pope, that the Channel Islands would enjoy commercial neutrality in future wars, a status that lasted for nearly 300 years and which was of great benefit to Jersey economically.

The Reformation was generally welcomed in Jersey as the Island did not feel it had been well-served by the diocese of Coutances. It was greatly influenced by the Protestantism of Calvin and was happy to whitewash paintings on the church walls and remove other trappings of Catholicism. In 1569 the churches in Jersey finally formally moved from being responsible to the Catholic bishops in Coutances to the English diocese of Winchester. The French had their own wars of religion between 1662 and 1629, which benefitted Jersey both through an influx of protestant refugees who brought wealth and skills, and through the reduced risk of French military action.

The turn of the century saw a significant development in the fortification of the Island with the realisation that Mont Orgeuil Castle was in the wrong place to defend the Island and also unable to withstand cannon fire. Accordingly, work commenced on building the more strategically placed Elizabeth Castle. Between 1600 and 1603 Jersey had perhaps its most famous Governor, Sir Walter Raleigh.

The English Civil War 1642-1660

Jersey became embroiled in the 17th-century English Civil War, which for two decades dominated politics in the Island and intruded into everyday life. After the outbreak of war in 1642, most Islanders were sympathetic to the parliamentarian cause. This may have been through conviction or widespread resentment of the Carteret family, led by the Bailiff and Lieutenant Governor, Philip de Carteret, who controlled the Island on behalf of the English king.

George Carteret, a nephew of Philip, and a key figure in the King's navy, ran a privateering fleet out of St Aubin, which raised a fortune for the Royalists. When Philip died in 1643 George succeeded him as Bailiff and Lieutenant Governor, and the Island became firmly in the Royalist camp. For a few months in 1646 the Prince of Wales, the future Charles II, sought refuge inthe Island and was lodged in the Governor's House at Elizabeth Castle. After the execution of Charles 1 in 1649, Jersey was the first place to proclaim his son as King Charles II. A few months later Charles returned with his brother, the Duke of York (the future King James II). Although he was now a king in exile, Charles was very short of money and his stay was a financial burden on the Island. In response to Carteret's activities, the Parliamentarians despatched an invasion force to the Island in 1651. Carteret and his men retreated to Elizabeth Castle, where they were finally forced to surrender after being bombarded from the Town Hill. A harshly puritanical regime then governed the Island until the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

In recognition for his loyalty during the Civil War, King Charles II gave George Carteret a Royal Mace and tract of land in North America, which became known as New Jersey.

Economic developments, 16th – 18th centuries

Until the early 1500s the Jersey economy primarily consisted of agriculture and fishing. While agricultural products were largely for domestic consumption, a significant proportion of the fish, largely conger and mackerels, was exported to France. From the 1500s two industries developed – knitting of woollen stockings and cider production. The knitting industry relied on wool imported from England, and much of its exports went to France, a good proportion illegally. By contrast cider production relied on home grown apples, but with much of the product being exported to England. Both industries depended on the sea being a highway rather than a barrier and favourable tax treatment from England.

However, it was cod fishing in Canadian waters that became the dominant industry in Jersey. As this activity began to become viable so this attracted interest from Jersey. It is possible that initially the interest was from people from Jersey crewing French boats operating from St Malo, but it was not long before some of the more entrepreneurial Jersey merchants, based in St Aubin, began fishing in

Canadian waters in their own right. There is clear evidence of Jersey merchants operating in the Newfoundland area in the late 16th Century. By the second half of the 17th Century as many as 20 Jersey vessels were operating around Newfoundland. For a variety of reasons the industry then declined but resumed growth in the first part of the 18th Century. In 1731 it is estimated that 17 Jersey vessels sailed to Newfoundland with 1,500 seamen and by then permanent bases had been established in Conception Bay.

The second half of the 18th Century saw the focus of the industry move from Newfoundland to what is now mainland Canada. A landmark event was the establishment by a leading Jersey merchant, Charles Robin, of a factory in Paspébiac in the Gaspé peninsular, marking a significant move to land-based operations. By the 1770s there may have been up to 70 Jersey ships and 2,000 Jerseymen engaged in the cod trade. By the 1840s it is estimated that the industry employed directly 4,000 people. Also, many others were engaged in manufacturing goods to be exported to the Canadian settlements.

However, Jersey was not without internal troubles notwithstanding increased prosperity. Both war and poor harvests lead to increases in corn prices of such magnitudes that the poor were unable to feed themselves. Matters reached a head in 1769 when wealthy mill owners tried selling the little corn there was at very high prices to France, causing some local people to riot. The rioters went on to demand changes to the Island government which resulted in the Code of 1771 giving more power to the States Assembly.

French and English conflict

England and France were in a state of war or tension for much of the second millennium. England regarded Jersey as a “fortress town” and continued to support it by military expenditure and preferential treatment for Jersey people and goods in England. There was a period of comparative calm in the late 16th and 17th Centuries, when the French had other territorial concerns. During the 18th Century, France and England were almost constantly at war as the European nation states struggled to achieve a balance of power.

The Battle of Jersey occurred in 1781 when a French force under Baron de Rullecourt came close to capturing the Island.The Lieutenant Governor, Moyse Corbet, was captured and surrendered. An English army officer, Major Peirson, disobeyed orders, refused to surrender, and, supported by the local militia, led a successful attack on the French soldiers in the Market Square (now the Royal Square). The Battle of Jersey has been a continuing inspiration for commemorative souvenirs and is the subject of a famous painting by American artist, John Singleton Copley, a copy of which hangs in Jersey’s Royal Court.

War with France saw Jersey ships return to the privateering, that had been so successful during the English Civil War, but this time the target was French shipping. A ship owner was licensed by the Crown to attack enemy shipping by a 'Letter of Marque’, which entitled him to keep the profits from any prize he captured. Many merchantmen carried on with their normal trade but took any opportunities that arose to attack enemy ships. The profits from the sale of any ship or goods captured were shared between the Crown, the owner and the crew. Privateering could be a very lucrative business and many Jersey fortunes were made this way. On the other hand, there were risks, as corsairs operating out of St Malo were very active. In 1793-95, 42 Jersey boats (70% of the Island's shipping) and 900 men (4% of the entire population) were captured by the French. Privateering finished with the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815.

The conflict with France let to the fortification of the Island, evidence of which remains to this day. It has been noted that Mont Orgueil Castle was no longer able to protect the Island, being in the wrong

place and unable to withstand cannon fire. New fortifications were built on the islet at St Aubin and then on St Helier's islet, starting in the mid-16th Century. This developed into Elizabeth Castle, the main defence of the Island throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. During the Napoleonic Wars Fort Regent was built on the Town Hill. It superseded Elizabeth Castle, but was only completed in 1814, just in time for a long period of peace.

After the French invasion attempt of 1779, 23 coastal towers, known as Conway Towers after the Governor of Jersey at the time, were constructed around the coast in a style that is unique to the Island. Eight squat Martello towers were built after the turn of the century and are similar to towers around the British Isles. Other batteries, guardhouses and magazines, built in the 18th Century, have survived in varying states of ruin.

In 1843 Parish Arsenals were built and in 1847 the British government, suspicious of French naval intentions, ordered the construction of a deep-water harbour at St Catherine's. The project was at best over-ambitious and only one part of it was built – St Catherine's Breakwater, which remains an impressive structure albeit with no purpose. The French threat effectively ended with the accession of Napoleon III in 1852, and Jersey ceased to benefit from military expenditure.

More general political uncertainty in the middle of the 19th Century led to a number of political refugees seeking shelter in Jersey. The most famous was the great French writer, Victor Hugo, who arrived in Jersey in 1852 and stayed for three years before moving to Guernsey. Although he was in Jersey for only a short time he developed a love for the Island, reflected in some of his writing.

Economic growth in the 19th Century

Jersey enjoyed an unprecedented economic boom in the first half of the 19th Century. The cod trade was at its peak. This stimulated a separate shipping industry. The fish caught in North American waters was typically sold not in England but rather in Central and South America and southern Europe. The fishing vessels did not sail back to Jersey empty but rather the proceeds of the fish sales were used to buy commodities such as coffee, sugar, mahogany, wines and spirits and fruit. These were re-exported to England or to the colonies. Products made in Jersey could be exported to the colonies free of tax, which led to manufacturing of some items, particularly shoes, which were then exported to Canada.

The cod trade and related shipping industry spawned a shipbuilding industry with a significant number of shipyards on the south and east coasts of Jersey. Initially, fishing vessels for the Jersey fleet had been built in the outposts in Canada. The activity then shifted to Jersey, with the first large scale commercial shipyard start operation in 1815. In that year, 69 vessels with the total tonnage of 7,519 were registered in Jersey. By 1865 these figures had increased to 422 and 48,629, about 80% of the tonnage having been built locally. It is estimated that in the 1860s about 6% of the total tonnage of wooden fishing fleets built in the British Isles had been built in the Channel Islands, mainly Jersey.

The best indication of the growth of the economy in the first half of the 19th Century was a doubling of the size of the population from 28,600 in 1821 to 57,020 in 1851.

The rapid immigration led to significant changes in the composition of the Jersey population. After the Napoleonic Wars there was an influx of English-speaking British Army officers retired on half-pay who found life in Jersey congenial and cheap. These waves of settlers created a demand for housing that was met largely by the expansion of St Helier.

Additional English-speaking immigrant labourers - many of them Irish - came to work on the major building schemes such as the Esplanade, the harbour development, Fort Regent and the St Catherine's

Harbour project. The unskilled workers were underpaid and exploited. They lived in the poorest parts of the town, where they were particularly susceptible to the cholera epidemics of 1832 and 1849. Other nationalities began to make their mark in Jersey, attracted by work opportunities.

Politics and social unrest

Economic growth brings with it tensions and Jersey was not immune from these. There was tension between islanders and new arrivals, many of whom had little wish to integrate. The character of the Island changed with English being more commonly used. There were also political tensions within Jersey, with two factions, the Laurels and the Roses, hating each other. The exclusion of immigrants from government and concern about judicial processes led to pressure for reform. This led to a Royal Commission of Enquiry into the Jersey legal system in 1845. This had little effect. In 1859 a more wide-ranging commission was established. Its main recommendation was a separation of the judiciary from the legislature and the establishment of an Island-wide police force to replace the honorary policy system run by the parishes. However, its proposals were largely rejected.

Economic decline 1851 - 1921

The economic boom, which had stimulated the rapid increase in population in the first half of the 19th Century, ended abruptly in the 1850s. The primary reason was the collapse of world trade and the cod fishing industry, which in turn led to a banking collapse in the 1870s. Other factors played a part –

- A thriving oyster industry peaked in 1852-53, but within 10 years output fell by 95% as a result of over-fishing and health scares.
- The shipbuilding industry could not make the change from sails and wooden hulls to steam and iron.
- The cider industry declined by 90% in the ten years after 1865, partly because of competition from English suppliers, and partly because the potato industry offered higher returns.
- Jersey had ceased to be of significant strategic importance to the UK after 1815 – although with a temporary blip in the 1840s. After the Franco-Prussian War of 1871 Jersey ceased to have any strategic value to the UK and therefore no longer benefited from defence expenditure.
- The major construction project of the harbour at St Catherine's and other projects were abandoned.
- Jersey's uniquely favourable tax position was eroded in the 1850s and 1860s by a series of measures, in particular the Customs Amendment Act 1860, which imposed a duty on all goods entering the UK.

The population fell in response to the decline in economic activity. By 1901 it had fallen from its 1851 peak of 57,020 by 7.8% to 52,576; it fell further to reach a low point of 49,701 in 1921, 12.8% below the 1851 peak. Although the overall population numbers declined a significant development was a steady flow of migrant workers from Brittany and Normandy to Jersey, largely to work in the agricultural industry. By 1901 it is estimated that the number of French-born people in Jersey was 6,000, about of 10% of the total population. The increasing size of the French-born population raised political concerns about the influence they were having on social structures in the Island.

Although there was a downturn in the economy generally in the second half of the 19th Century two sectors increased significantly in size and became the mainstay of Jersey's economy for the first part of the 20th Century.

Tourism developed as Jersey's natural attractions became open to visitors from England given the development of regular steamship services. The services were part of the railway network and

employees of the railway were able to secure very attractive fares. This group comprised a significant proportion of total tourism activity.

Within the agricultural sector the significant trend was the development of the Jersey new potato industry. This resulted from a combination of research, Jersey's natural advantages, in particular its favourable climate, and marketing. The relatively short new potato season was possible only through use of seasonal immigrant Labour from Brittany and Normandy.

World War I and the inter-war period

After the outbreak of War in 1914 the British garrison in Jersey was withdrawn. The Island was not directly affected by the war but many Jerseymen served overseas. In 1916 conscription was introduced. Over 6,000 men served in the forces. Men unfit for active service, or in occupations such as agriculture, were formed into the Royal Jersey Garrison Battalion.

The War had a lasting legacy on Jersey as it did on the UK. Of the 6,000 Jerseymen who served during the War 862 were killed, many of whom would have been expected to play significant roles in the economic and political life of the island. Economic recovery was painfully slow. Jersey was not immune from the factors that led to the worldwide depression at the end of the 1920s and in the early 1930s.

By this time Jersey's maritime industry had virtually ceased to exist. Agriculture was the principal industry accounting for well over a quarter of the working population in 1921. The tourism industry also developed in importance in this period.

A significant social trend, replicating what was happening in England albeit somewhat later, was the removal of discrimination against women. Women were given the right to vote in 1919, and this was followed by liberalisation of rights in respect of land ownership and standing for election.

World War II – the Occupation

War between Britain and Germany broke out in 1939. By 1940 German forces had overrun most of northern Europe and it was impractical for the British to defend the Channel Islands. To save unnecessary loss of life, the Islands were demilitarized. The British Army moved out and after a brief bombardment the German Army moved in. The Occupation began on 1 July 1940. During the next five years a strict curfew was enforced, censorship was imposed, the possession of radios and cameras was forbidden, and stringent rationing was introduced. The learning of German was compulsory in schools. More than 300 Islanders were sent to prison or concentration camps for "political crimes", which included helping Russian prisoners and listening to the BBC. Twenty-two of them died in captivity. A further 1,300 British-born men and women and their families were deported to internment camps in Germany. Food, clothing and fuel were scarce throughout the Occupation. After the Allied landings in Normandy in June 1944 the situation worsened as the Channel Islands were cut off from German supply lines. Everyone was near to starvation by the time the International Red Cross ship *Vega* arrived on 30 December 1944 with food parcels for the Islanders.

Slave labour was imported by the Organisation Todt to help in the construction of massive fortifications. Not only did the artillery batteries on the Channel Islands protect the whole Bay of St Malo, but the Islands themselves were made impregnable. Hitler was determined to defend the only British soil his forces ever occupied. But the defences were never put to the test. The Allies avoided the Islands, and Jersey was not liberated until May 9 1945, the day after VE Day.

Between the outbreak of War and the beginning of the German Occupation 2,000 Jersey people, mainly men, left the Island, many of the men enlisting with British forces. Immediately prior to the

Occupation evacuation schemes were organised for those who wished to leave the Island. Eventually, some 6,600 people out of a total population of 50,000 left the Island. By contrast, out of the much smaller Guernsey population of 42,000 as many as 17,000 left. Most of those who left returned to the Island after the War but many did not.

The Occupation had a huge impact for many years after 1945. The term "the Occupation" has been one of the most commonly used expressions in Jersey. Physical manifestations of the Occupation are still apparent nearly 70 years later through extensive fortifications built by the Germans. Periods of forced exile and in some cases internment significantly affected attitudes and perhaps served to widen people's horizons. There have been numerous publications dealing with particular aspects of the occupation and also many personal narratives. Liberation Day, May 9, remains the single most important day in the Island's calendar.

Post-War Jersey

While there was immediate relief following the liberation of Jersey there were inevitably tensions arising from the period of occupation, with differing views on the relationship between the Island authorities and the German occupying forces and also resentment against those who had exploited the Occupation through collaboration. There was a clear desire for change, particularly political reform, which this duly occurred in the years after the War. The first significant move was the removal from the States Assembly of the Church of England rectors and the jurats, who had been in the anomalous position of being members of the legislature and of the Royal Court. In place of 12 jurats provision was made for 12 senators, elected on an Island-wide basis, and the number of deputies was expanded to give greater representation to St Helier which previously had been unrepresented. Other significant legislation including the enactment of Jersey's first divorce law in 1949 and the introduction of enhanced welfare provisions, which at the time was fiercely controversial.

The post-War period proved to be one of economic boom. Agriculture quickly recovered, tourism expanded significantly and Jersey began to attract wealthy expatriates who contributed significantly to the Island's tax revenue. A particularly significant development was in 1962 when a ceiling on interest rates in Jersey, which dated back to 1771, was removed. This laid the foundation for the establishment of the international finance industry, which subsequently has grown to be Jersey's major industry.

The most significant political development for Jersey in the post-War period was Britain's accession to the European Economic Community in 1972. Jersey had grown prosperous through its strong connections to the United Kingdom while being able to be sufficiently different through using its tax system to attract people and business to the Island. Britain's entry into the European Economic Community threatened this position. If Jersey was inside the European Economic Community, then much of its autonomy would be lost, but if it was outside the Community then the close economic links with Britain on which it depended would be severely damaged. In the event, a special arrangement was negotiated which gave Jersey and the other British Crown dependencies the best of both worlds, that is being within the common external tariff of the European Community but otherwise outside of the single market provisions.

With this issue settled after 1970 Jersey's prosperity has continued almost unabated. This is reflected in population growth. The Island had recovered quickly after the war the population increasing from 51,000 in 1939 to 57,000 in 1951. Since then the population growth has been more rapid reaching an estimated 108,000 in 2020.

Further reading

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