

Anne and Dave's Christmas Letter for 2017

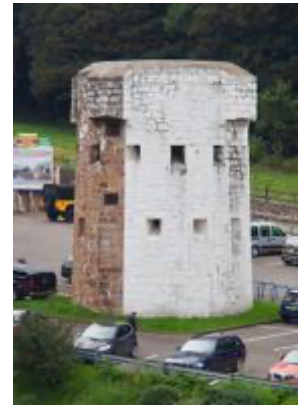
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We had variable weather in the first week, some of it fine and windy and the rest very wet, particularly at the end. However, we were still able to visit many well-known coastal spots, driving to the north, east and later south and west coasts. The island is small enough to enjoy its range of scenery and history without too much driving, although Dave did find the narrow roads and amount of traffic hair-raising at times (saved by the local drivers who are politer than in most other places).

Our first foray was to Greve de Lecq, a small picturesque town on the north coast with a beautiful beach and one of the many Jersey Round Towers.



Greve de Lecq on the north coast of Jersey: eastern end of beach with offshore hazards (left), beach with small protected harbour (middle), and Round Tower (well inland in the carpark!) (right)

The town of St Helier was most interesting, historic and confusing, with parking meters and congestion everywhere in spite of the fewer than normal visitors this late in the holiday season.





St Helier: view of the Harbour and Elizabeth Castle from Fort Regent (upper left),
typical architecture in the city centre (upper right),
Royal Square (the site of many important historical events) (mid left),
King Street (now a pedestrian mall) (mid right), Memorial to Seamen of Jersey (lower left),
and the Memorial in Liberation Square commemorating the end of German occupation during WW2 (lower right)

We drove eastwards along the southern coast of Jersey from St Helier and explored the Round Towers of Le Hocq and La Rocque, both good examples of the many defensive fortifications that can be found around Jersey. The Seymour Tower south of La Rocque appears to be well out to sea at high tide but actually marks the outer edge of a large area of very shallow (and sharp) rocks.



Round Towers of SE Jersey: Le Hocq (part painted to aid navigation) (left), La Rocque (middle),
and Seymour Tower at high tide offshore from La Rocque (note sharp rocks!) (right)

The town of Gorey is situated on the east coast of Jersey and is home to the impressive castle of Mont Orgueil - we climbed up many sets of steps of exploring the castle and taking in the views (including glimpses of nearby France).



Mont Orgueil Castle at Gorey (eastern Jersey): view of castle from the town of Gorey



Mont Orgueil Castle at Gorey (eastern Jersey): Dave, Don and Vera climbing steps in the castle (left), and Gorey and its harbour (at almost low tide) from upper levels of the castle (right)

We also visited the Samares Manor House and, after a scrumptious lunch at their café, explored their wonderful Botanic Gardens. This was a working manor farm until recently and the main building and a collection of farm buildings now provides accommodation for visitors.



Samares Manor House and Botanic Gardens: Manor House with cafeteria area on left (top), main entrance (lower left), and Herb Garden (lower right)



Garden reflections (left), Vera and Dave at the Dovecote (middle), and view towards Japanese Garden (right)

Don and Vera spent a day visiting the French town of St Malo by ferry, while we visited the Jersey Archives and Museum. Pam from the Channel Islands Family History Society helped us a lot with chasing down information on the Hubert's in Jersey and took us to St Saviour's Church, in the north east of St Helier, to see the grave of Anne's paternal grandfather Horatio John Hubert.



Anne's paternal grand-father Horatio John Hubert (1864-1926):
grave (left), headstone (above right), and St Saviour's Church, St Helier, where he was buried (lower right)



La Corbière Lighthouse (southwestern Jersey) at low tide with impending bad weather:
the lighthouse (left), lighthouse and surrounds (upper mid), view northwards across St Ouen's Bay (upper right),
St Ouen's Bay with La Rocco Round Tower (lower mid),
and "Here comes the rain" with Guernsey in the distance (lower right)

The end of the first week was an extremely wet and windy day but we did manage to explore the southwestern part of Jersey including La Corbière lighthouse, which is accessible only at low tide. We tried to get there but the bad weather came in faster than we had anticipated so we had to turn back.

As the weather deteriorated even further we drove to St Brelade's Bay, where it really began to rain hard. We stopped for a lunch sheltering in the café (with many others) – Anne's mother and father had visited this café in 1930 (just after they got married).



St Brelade's Bay in the rain:
beach with lifesaving equipment ready but no people! (left), and the western end of the beach (right)

Once the rain had eased off a little we headed on to St Aubin which is a lovely seaside town with a nice harbour. St Aubin is on the western end of the bay from St Helier but its castle (St Aubin's Fort) is much smaller than Elizabeth Castle.



St Aubin town and harbour at low tide: view to the east towards St Helier and weather (above),
boats in the harbor at low tide (lower left), and the waterfront (right)

After lunch at the Art Gallery we drove Don and Vera to the airport and as the weather was much nicer they were able to fly back home to Cheshire without any delays. Apparently, that day had been the wettest day on record for western Jersey – with pictures in the local paper of surf boards being ridden down the street!

Anne's niece Nicola then joined us for the second week on the island, accompanied by her elder son Michael for the first two days. Luckily the weather improved so we were able to be more active and explore the island as well visit places of family history significance.

It was low tide, on our first day, so we walked across the tidal flats to St Helier's Elizabeth Castle – Sir Walter Raleigh developed the castle in the early 1600's once Mont Orgueil was deemed to be too vulnerable to attack from the land. Elizabeth Castle has been added to many times since including during the German Occupation of Jersey in WW2.



Elizabeth Castle, St Helier: view across tidal flats (above),
causeway and castle at low tide (mid left), breakwater and Saint Helier's Hermitage (mid right),
all tides transport (lower left), and view from top of the castle towards St Helier's harbour (lower right)

After several hours exploring the castle, we then took Nicola and William to the southwest of Jersey for lunch at St Brelade's Bay and then on to see La Corbière

Lighthouse – now being seen at high tide and in fine weather. We then drove northwards along St Ouen’s Bay to the north west of Jersey.



La Corbière Lighthouse and St Ouen’s Bay at high tide and fine weather:
no access to lighthouse at high tide (upper left),
view to the north across St Ouen’s Bay (note La Rocco Round Tower surrounded by water) (upper right),
lighthouse with inter-island ferry to Guernsey passing to the west (lower left), and
northern end of St Ouen’s Bay with Guernsey in the distance (lower right)

On the next day, we visited the old family farm and house “Oakdale” on the border of St Peter and St Mary parishes, where the last of Anne’s line of Hubert’s lived until the 1960’s. We were lucky to encounter David whose parents had looked after Eva before she died in 1964 and subsequently inherited the property. The “Oakdale” property has now been modified to accommodate several families but was originally a farm with substantial (for Jersey) holdings of some 10-12 acres. Sadly, the main house had to be rendered to protect the crumbling stonework, however the original granite can be seen in the courtyard behind with parts of the building dating back to 1702.





"Oakdale" on border of St Peter and St Mary parishes:
 Anne at the front of the main house at "Oakdale" (upper left),
 courtyard behind the main house with buildings now converted into apartments (upper right and lower left),
 western end of the courtyard buildings (lower right)

A windmill next door to "Oakdale" was used by many of the farms from the surrounding area – the building has now been renovated and converted into accommodation. St Mary's Parish Church is a small distance east of "Oakdale" and is where Susanne de Caen (Anne's great-great-grandmother) was buried.



St Mary's Parish Church and Windmill near Oakdale:
 church (left), Susanne de Caen's grave in St Mary's churchyard (middle),
 interior of St Mary's showing original arches (upper right), and restored and converted windmill (lower right)

Our next drive took us to the east coast town of Rozel, a small fishing village with interesting architecture, an old barracks and good cliff top walks with views of the surprisingly close coast of France – apparently Jersey people could watch the WW2 invasion of Normandy from these cliffs.



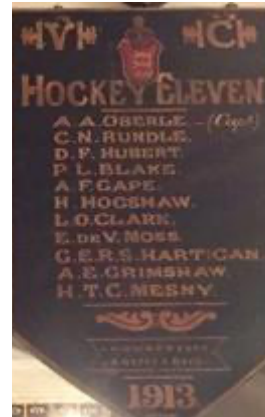
Rozel on the east coast of Jersey: town and harbor at low tide (top), renovated fisherman's huts (mid left), fishing birds on offshore rock (mid right), distant views of offshore rocks and coast of France (lower left), and the White Rock on the cliffs north of Rozel (lower right)

Anne had arranged for us to visit Victoria College where Donald and John Hubert (Anne's uncle and father respectively) were educated between 1905 and 1918. We had been led to believe that we would get a short tour of the school but we were treated to a very extensive tour with the current headmaster as our enthusiastic guide. We were shown the Sir Galahad memorial to Victoria College students who had lost their lives in the Great War, the list including Donald's name – D F Hubert.

We then visited the magnificent Great Hall in which past student names are placed on the backs of chairs with often 2 or 3 from one family on each chair. We also located the honour and school team boards to find both Donald and John's names well represented – Donald had been a good shot and John was very good at running but both their names featured in various hockey teams.



Victoria College, St Helier: the main building (left), and the Great Hall (right)



Sir Galahad Memorial to Victorians who died in The Great War of 1914-1918 (far left),
 names on rear of Sir Galahad Memorial including D F Hubert (mid left),
 D F Hubert's name on 1913 Hockey Eleven Team (mid right),
 J A Hubert's name on 1918 Hockey Eleven Team (named as Captain) (far right)



Parish Church of St Helier: exterior view (top left), interior view (top right),
 D F Hubert's name on Memorial to those connected with the church who died in the Great War (bottom)

On the next day, we went to look around the Parish Church of St Helier and were pleasantly surprised to see a memorial with D F Hubert's name on it – this was in a chapel dedicated to various memorials for those connected with the church.

Nicola and Michael wanted to do a cliff walk so went to the north west of Jersey and stopped at Le Poulec at the northern end of St Ouen's Bay. After lunch Nicola and Michael set off on their cliff walk while Anne and Dave explored the area and then drove to Plemont where we all met up again.



Le Poulec at northern end of St Ouen's Bay: Anne, Nicola and Michael at lunch spot (top left), Anne at the lunch spot viewed from track (top right), low tide exposing colourful rocks (mid left), natural harbour (note Guernsey and smaller islands in distance) (mid right), view southwards across St Ouen's Bay (note airport buildings on the skyline to left) (lower left), and distant view of La Corbière Lighthouse from the north (lower right)

Plemont is a small town on the north coast of Jersey with a delightful beach and a good café. There are numerous walks in the area and interesting features along the steep rocky coastline. Les Pierres de Lecq (The Paternosters) are the most prominent rocks offshore from this coast and sailors offered prayers to those who

had lost their lives when shipwrecked there. After lunch at Plemont we headed back to the ruins of Grosnez Castle situated at the northwest corner of Jersey.



Plemont Bay north west Jersey: panorama of the bay with islands in the distance (upper),
café at Plemont (lower left), and down the steps to the beach (lower right)



Grosnez Castle north west Jersey: 16th century castle ruins (upper),
Nicola and Dave at Grosnez Beacon (lower left),
and sea and rock patterns near Grosnez Beacon (lower mid and right)



North coast track near Grosnez Castle ruins with Les Pierres de Lecq (The Paternosters) and the coast of France in the distance

Anne and Nicola found the “town house” at Victoria Crescent where Anne’s grandfather and family lived in St Helier – only a five-minute walk from where we were staying!



Victoria Crescent in northern part St Helier:
12 Victoria Crescent home of Anne’s grandparents (Horatio and Blanche) (upper left),
Victoria Crescent from the eastern end (upper mid), back garden of 12 Victoria Crescent (upper right),
and views of the crescent from the communal gardens (lower left and right)

We had an enjoyable walk starting at the St Lawrence Parish Centre near the centre of the island. The walk took us along narrow lanes, some of which were green lanes with appropriate vegetation and narrow width. We encountered old buildings and interesting farms along our very pleasant walk nicely rounded out by a great lunch at the “The British Union” pub.

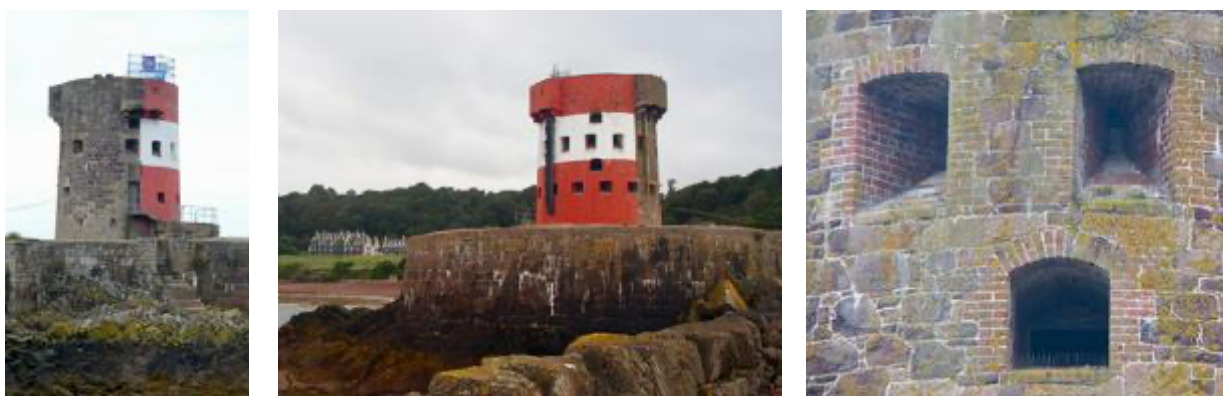


Green lanes walk starting at St Lawrence near centre of Jersey:
 St Lawrence Parish Church (upper left), church tower (upper middle),
 “Le Rât” National Trust house (upper right), green lane scenes (lower left and middle),
 and roadside blue flowers and berries (lower right)



Morel Farm - a National Trust farm near St Lawrence:
 main farm buildings (left), gateway arch dated 1666 (middle), and front door cane decorations (right)

On our last day on Jersey, we again went over to the east coast to see Archirondel Tower at the southern end of St Catherine’s Bay. The weather was cloudy and occasional rain but we still enjoyed seeing the tower and its surroundings.





Archirondel Tower at the southern end of St Catherine's Bay on the east coast of Jersey: tower from the landward side (upper left), tower from the seaward side (upper middle), renovated windows (upper right), flowers and birds near the tower (lower left and middle), and Havre de Fer just to the south of the tower (right)

The tower is currently being renovated but we were able to see around the outside. The seaward side is unique in that it is painted red and white to distinguish it from the other towers along the coast.

We finished our east coast jaunt returning to Gorey, where Nicola had a quick visit to Mont Orgueil castle and we all enjoyed lunch. The return to St Helier was along the coast past the Seymour Tower, which at low tide is accessible across seemingly miles of rocks and sand. La Rocque and Le Hocq were visited but only briefly.



Seymour Tower on the south coast between Gorey and La Rocque: the tower can be reached at low tide but it is a long way – care is advised! (left), and the tower and boats stranded at low tide (right)

Altogether our holiday in Jersey provided very rewarding research opportunities and we thoroughly enjoyed both weeks of the stay and spending time with close relatives.