

LA SOCIÉTÉ SERCQUAISE

2013/2014 NEW YEAR NEWS

from Richard

Axton

A Happy New Year to all members from a gale-lashed Sark!

There is not much news following a bumper crop in August, but the Society's work has been pushing ahead both indoors and out, so a brief round-up may be welcome.

On a sad note, I must mention the passing, early in November, of Philip Malet de Carteret, Seigneur of St Ouen. He was a generous host and took a keen interest in Sark's historical heritage, particularly the Seigneurie Archive (now in the Society's custody). Much of his energy was devoted to restoring St Ouen's manor and it is very touching that he generously wrote to contribute to our Barn Restoration just a few days before he died. Gales prevented David and Susan Synnott from attending the funeral in Jersey, to offer condolences on behalf of the Seigneurie and La Société.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on FRIDAY 28 MARCH 2014 at the Visitor Centre at 5.30 pm. Proposals of items for the **Agenda** and any notices for publication should reach the Hon Secretary, Jo Birch, by February 22nd.

Reports on the activities of 2013 should likewise reach Jo by February 22nd, preferably as Word files (jo.birch@cwgsy.net).

Papers for the AGM, with reminders about annual election of officers and council, will be sent out in March.

Subscriptions

The Council has reluctantly decided to raise subscriptions to £10 for single and £15 for family membership. We shall have greater outlays with 2 buildings and at present even clerical basics and postage are heavily subsidised by the officers. It is important not to use appeal money for running costs.

Visitors to the Room numbered over 1600 – twice last year's total. We take no credit for the fine summer weather (once it started) but the record numbers and their comments show how much the work of the Room Monitors is appreciated. Much of the success is thought to be due to the visual appeal of the Sark Farming exhibition.

Digimap work

The land use maps for 2012 and 2014 are now complete and copies with supporting data have been passed to the Agriculture Committee. Field walking to complete 2014 will commence shortly. Data for the updated States Bailiwick map have also been forwarded for printing shortly.

States Digimap have kindly loaned a GPS unit for recording of all things wet. This includes wells, boreholes, cesspits, reed beds, dew ponds etc. This combined with geological mapping will be useful to the Douzaine, Public Health and DCC. This work entails recording some 700-800 features so it will take some time to complete.

The Tenement map begun by Tim Gordon-Brown is being updated and we hope to have a new print on the wall for the coming season. Updating the 1980 Cadastre is going forward, helped by Digimap's aerial photos regularly taken since 1996.

Should you wish to see the work or even have a plan printed for an application to DCC (for a small fee), please contact Jane Norwich.

Barn restoration work and archaeology

Resident members gathered in the barn on 19th October. Attention focused on the floor, excavated with assistance from colleagues in the States Archaeology Department. It was decided to expose and then repair the original circle of cobbles; the western half of the building would have a packed gravel floor a few inches higher. There was general enthusiasm for acquiring traditional cider-making gear as the opportunity arises. A memo of the meeting was sent out, with Jane Norwich's summary of the archaeological findings at that date, and a report was printed in November's *Scribe* together with photos taken by Puffin Tylour.

Since then, good progress has been made indoors. Demolition of the grain bin revealed a further section of cobbles well preserved. The entire floor has been excavated down to 'the natural', revealing in all four wooden tubs for collecting stable effluent and numerous postholes. Some of these are medieval, i.e. pre-existed the Jacobean cobbles. Most of the pottery is 19th century but Andrew found a medieval sherd and three from the Iron Age. Massive fireplace jambs and quantities of bituminous coal and charcoal suggest forge use, perhaps as early as the 17th century. A 12kg French (26 livres) cannonball was also uncovered.

A drain* has been laid from a sump outside the back door round the edge of the cobbles and into the large underground tank to the south. A half-circle of granite blocks protects the pipe and makes a step up to the western 'half', which will be covered with compacted Sark gravel after Andrew has made a brick hearth for the woodburner donated by Chris Harris. Overhead, Jeremy's mezzanine floor is in place, lacking only a swing-down ladder stair. His three solid oak windows are in and glazed, his stable doors are under construction.

The shrouding and scaffolding were removed early in November, before the gales, and Jeremy put guttering up before the rains came. Roof water will be collected in an oak barrel that Phil Tostevin is sending from Guernsey. I have hacked out and Andrew has pointed about half the mortar joints on the south and east walls. To date, the building is shedding water nicely and we hope that the drain* will obviate the need for massive earthwork on the north side. Incidentally, the dry-stone boundary wall has again begun to fall into the road, under pressure from the sodden earth bank. Sally Ward-Jones is having the high ground removed and the wall rebuilt to abut the northeast corner of the barn – and work has just begun.

Funds are down by 75%. We have done a good deal more than the basics but we still have some way to go. So **contributions, large or small, will be welcome**. We shall certainly need fresh funding to secure cider pressing gear and to 'furnish' the barn for use. But I think people have been surprised at what a handsome building we now have. Everything we do from now on will make it more useful and attractive. So keep the donations coming!

Cheques to 'La Société Sercquaise Restoration Fund' can be sent to

Chris Elgie	or	Richard Axton
Hon Treasurer		La Société Sercquaise
Natwest Bank		Visitor Centre
Sark GY10 1SE		Sark GY10 1SA

Donations direct to Restoration Fund: **Natwest, Sort code 60-09-20 Acc.74375040**

Overseas codes: IBAN: GB73NWBK60092074375040

IBAN BIC: RBOSGGSX

Publications available from La Société Sercquaise

- #1 *Sark's Windmill 1571*, by Richard Axton £1.00
- #2 *Sark Prisons* , by Richard Axton *et al.* £2.00
- #3 *St Magloire, Patron Saint of Sark*, a pamphlet written and illustrated
by Martin Remphry. £2.00
- #4 *The Ferns of Sark*, by Susan Synnott £3.00
- #5 *The Gouliot Caves*, by Anne Allen *et al.* (publ. with La Société
Guernesiaise) £3.00
- #6 *Sark Voices* CD (Traditional Sark songs, from the BBC Archives,
produced by Ken Lees. With texts.) £10.00 including postage
- #7 *Wild Flowers of Sark*, by Susan Synnott (Seaflower Books 2011)
£12.00 including postage
- #8 *Sark Rocks*, by Felicity Belfield (small Island Publishing 2012)
£10.00 including postage

Order any of these by sending a cheque to La Société Sercquaise,
Visitor Centre, Sark GY10 1SA

For any of the pamphlets (#1-5) please add £1 for postage.

**Membership of
Sercquaise for**



**La Société
2014**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ Please make cheques payable to:
La Société Sercquaise
and mail to:

_____ Sue Guille
Cae de Mat
PHONE NUMBER: _____ Sark, C I GY10 1SD

SPECIAL INTERESTS: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____ (Please write
legibly)

Yearly Membership: £10.00 Individual and £15.00 Family Membership

Annual subscriptions will just cover running expenses of La Société and its Centre. If we are to continue to build the museum collection and its facilities – and to undertake essential conservation – we need more funds. Thank you for your generosity so far. Please consider making a further donation. Every penny translates into some improvement!

Annual Subscription £ _____ Donation £ _____

We would be very grateful if you could pay by STANDING ORDER. If you bank online you can download the necessary mandate form or pick one up at your local bank branch. Our account is at the Natwest Bank, Sark, Sort Code 60-09-20, No. 74012363, in the name of Société Sercquaise and the due date is 30th April

Please return this form with your cheque by 30th April so that we know you wish to remain a member