



**The Channel Islands are an archipelago in the English Channel off the Normandy coast of France. They are divided into two British crown dependencies, the Bailiwicks of Guernsey and Jersey. The former also includes the islands of Alderney, Sark and Herm, and smaller islands are divided between the two bailiwicks.**

The islands are not part of the United Kingdom or European Union, but rather are possessions of the British Crown with independent administrations. Their inhabitants are British citizens.

The Channel Islands were owned by the Duchy of Normandy and passed to the English Crown when William the Conqueror became King of England in 1066.

While England lost mainland Normandy in 1204, the islands remained possessions of the Crown and were divided into the two bailiwicks later that century.

Since then the bailiwicks have maintained separate institutions, laws and media, with the exception of a common independent TV station, Channel TV.

### **CHANNEL ISLANDS: FACTS**

- **Capitals:** St Anne (Alderney) St Peter Port (Guernsey) St Helier (Jersey)
- **Area:** 198 sq km
- **Population:** 171,900
- **Languages:** English, French, local forms of French

During World War Two the islands were occupied by Germany, causing considerable suffering to the locals. Some were deported as slave labourers, Jews were sent to concentration camps, reprisals for partisan activities were harsh, and many were reduced

to near starvation by the end of the war. Accusations of collaboration and cover-up poisoned relations between many islanders for decades.

The overwhelming majority of the population is made up of native islanders of Norman French and British extraction. There are also groups of European Union citizens, with a prominent community from Portugal.

As crown dependencies the islands are not part of the United Kingdom or European Union, nor are they colonies or overseas territories of the United Kingdom like Gibraltar. They are possessions of the British Crown with independent administrations. Their assemblies pass their own legislation with the assent of the Crown granted in the Privy Council.

The Crown is responsible for defence, diplomatic representation and citizenship, although the islands maintain their own controls over housing and employment that apply to British as well as other citizens.

The islands have the right to establish direct relations with foreign governments.

The bailiwicks are governed by elected parliaments called States, while the smaller islands of Alderney and Sark also have their own assemblies - the States and Chief Pleas respectively.

The bailiffs are the chief civil officers and preside over the States and court of law. They are appointed by the Crown, and usually serve until retirement or death. Their powers have been steadily transferred to the States over the last 100 years, culminating in the adoption of a ministerial system and appointment of chief ministers in 2005.

The economy of the islands is dominated by financial services, tourism, electronic commerce and agriculture. The relatively light tax burden has encouraged a booming offshore finance sector.

Pressure from the European Union and the OECD has obliged the islands to change their taxation systems for the sake of compliance, as with other offshore centres.

Following the 2016 EU referendum, the EU and UK concluded a Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) in December 2020 that applied provisionally from January 2021 and entered into force in May 2021.

In December 2020, the four parliaments of the islands approved their inclusion in the agreement. For most purposes, including tax, financial services, anti-money laundering and data protection, the islands have always been third countries to the EU, and this is not affected by the TCA.

Jersey is the largest of the seven Channel Islands and is just 9 miles long by 5 miles wide, but with a population of around 106,000

Until 1066 Jersey formed part of Normandy and paid its dues to the Abbey of Coutances. But in 1066 William the Duke of Normandy defeated Harold of England at the Battle of Hastings, and Normandy, including the Channel Islands became part of the English Crown. In 1204 when John 1 of England carelessly lost his lands in Normandy to Philippe

of France the Channel Islands were given a choice between loyalty to the British Crown or to France. John offered the islands their independence. Remain loyal to Britain, and form the first line of defence against the French, and the islands could govern themselves, write their own laws, set their own taxes. France offered nothing, so the Channel Islands chose loyalty to the British crown.

Today the Channel Islands remain fiercely independent with their own governments. They are neither part of the United Kingdom nor the European Union but stand proudly apart.

Until 1901 however the island's first language was French or Jersey French, and until very recently the Laws were still written in the French language. Even today Court sittings are commenced with an address in French.

## **JERSEY**

### **1. Jersey wasn't always known for its finance industry**

Jersey and Guernsey have thriving finance industries, but in days gone past in Jersey agriculture, knitting, cider making, oyster farming, shipbuilding and from the 1870s tourism were the mainstay industries.

The industrial revolution in Jersey happened on the beaches.

During the 19th century, the Islands shoreline was littered with shipyards, producing cutters, coastal traders, schooners and brigs.

One of the biggest vessels to be launched from Gorey Village on the east of the Island, was the 365-ton barque, Montrose. She was built in 1861 by George Asplet for Scrutton, Sons and Company of London.

The largest island shipyard however, was FC Clarke, on the South Coast of the island just in front of where the Grand Hotel stands today. The remains of the largest shipyards lie underneath Victoria Avenue, the Island's only dual carriageway.

### **2. The island was known for its cider**

People have always needed something to drink, in addition to water, and for hundreds of years Jersey's first choice of beverage, before the arrival of tea and coffee, was cider. The water was rather brackish so even the children drank it!

In the 17th century, the States of Jersey became concerned that too much land was being used for orchards, at the expense of vital crops such as corn, and in 1673 an Act was passed which forbade the planting of any new orchards

By 1801 it was estimated that the island produced 2 million gallons of cider a year.

Jersey was so renowned for its apple production that in 1856 *La Société Centrale d'Agriculture de la Seine Inférieure* did not turn to nearby Normandy for help with its own cider production, but sent two representatives to Jersey for advice. They rated Moise

Gibaut, of Mainland, St Lawrence, as the best producer and said that they had never tasted cider of better quality than his.

### **3. Knitting was so popular it was outlawed**

Knitting was such a widespread and profitable activity in 17th century Jersey that the island's farming industry began to suffer badly as workers refused to till the fields and whole families devoted their waking hours to making woollen garments.

So much so that a law was passed forbidding men from knitting during harvest time, on pain of a large fine or imprisonment. This law remains in force today.

It is widely believed that a jersey, the fisherman's sweater to which the island gave its name, was the principal product, but in fact, it was woollen stockings which were in such demand that they were exported in their thousands every week, mainly to Continental Europe.

Mary Queen of Scots went to her execution wearing a pair of Jersey Woollen Stockings.

### **4. Seaweed was used as fertiliser**

In the Channel Islands, vraic (seaweed) was a highly valued fertiliser. Statistics from around 1893 show that around 30,000 loads of vraic were obtained from Guernsey and Herm and much more than that was obtained from Jersey per year.

Even today, as you wander the beaches around the island at low tide, you will see the ancient vraic markers. The tide had to be beyond this point before vraic could be gathered by licensed collectors.

The vraic was dried and burnt and the ashes used as fertiliser.

### **5. Jersey has one of the largest tides in the world**

Jersey has the third largest tidal movement in the world, with tides of over 40 feet (13 metres). The tide rises at a speed of 10 kph but on the south coast of the island, the sea rushes through the gullies at some points faster than a running horse.

An Island Poem states ...

*On this little island, just nine miles by five,*

*there is just one important question, what time is high tide?*

### **6. Jersey is home to the British Isle's most southernly lighthouse**

Jersey is home to La Corbière, the most southerly lighthouse in the British Isles.

It was also the first lighthouse in the British Isles to be constructed in concrete. Built in 1873 on a tidal island, it is linked to the main island by a causeway that is twice daily submerged by the tide.

## **7. Jersey exported tea around the world**

The Overseas Trading Corporation was a tea blending and trading company that had a global impact. It was the export division of the Allied Lyons empire, Tetley's and Horniman's tea was blended and exported around the world from Jersey.

Interestingly, however, Allied Lyons didn't create OTC, it bought into an existing worldwide operation. In April 1876, Thomas Cook, an export Merchant from Reading (not the explorer) with flourishing markets in South America and the Far East, came to Jersey. He rented premises in Commercial Buildings, Old Harbour, St Helier, from where he packed tea. This new tea-packing business was launched and remained popular for over a century.

## **8. Les Ecrehous, Jersey's very own offshore reef**

Les Ecrehous is an offshore reef and Ramsar site of special interest. It belongs to the Parish of St Martin although it lies midway between Jersey and Carteret on the Cotentin Peninsula. It is largely uninhabited but does have a collection of fisherman huts and tiny houses, and a customs office. It doubles in size at low tide.

In the 19th century, Jersey had two political parties, The Rose Party and The Laurels. It has been said that on election day, various members of the electorate were kidnapped by the opposing parties and marooned at Les Ecrehous to prevent them from voting.

## **9. Jersey was occupied during WW2**

The Channel Islands were the only part of the British Isles to be occupied by the German Forces during WW2. Jersey was destined to be Hitler's very own holiday island, for the rest and recuperation of his military elite on the successful conclusion of the war (from Hitler's point of view). Thankfully this never came to pass and the islands were liberated by the British on 9th May 1945.

## **10. We're closer to France than the UK**

France, at its closest point, is just 14 miles from Jersey.

From La Rocque, you can see two low long hills that appear side by side. The spire of Coutances Cathedral is sometimes visible between these hills. Occasionally the hill on the right-hand side disappears into the haze. That is because one of the hills is, in fact, quite some way away from the other. It is purely by chance that on a clear day the following three things can be observed from La Rocque harbour:-

1. The hills appear side by side
2. The spire of Coutances Cathedral looms proudly between the hills

3. The hills, although very different in size, appear to be the same height.

### **11. You could be arrested for gossiping (in the 16th century)**

Following the reformation, during the 16th and 17th centuries, the Island was swept by the stiff uncompromising puritanism of France. The Royal Court passed a series of laws relating to the keeping of the sabbath. Dancing, skittles and gossiping could result in a prison sentence, while missing church, swearing and drunkenness could lead to a fine.

Even as recently as the 1980's establishments could not permit dancing on a Sunday, and it was also illegal to buy cigarettes on a Sunday.

Gorey Castle was our only prison up until the 17th Century, and it not only held political prisoners but also prisoners associated with the new puritan morality. Many of those held were suspected witches, and in fact in Jersey at that time more people were hanged for witchcraft and theft, than for murder.

Interestingly, even in the 16th Centuries speeding in the island was an issue, and you could still be arrested for "furious driving".

### **12. We used to own New Jersey, USA**

New Jersey is so called because of a famous Jersey historical character, Sir George Carteret.

During the English civil war Sir George Carteret, the head of the island of Jersey at that time, hid the two princes, Charles and James, at Elizabeth Castle. They came in 1646 and again in 1649, following the death of their Father, Charles I of England. Sir George was adamant that England needed a Monarch and he gathered the most influential families of the island together to sign a proclamation naming Prince Charles, Charles II of England. A copy of the signed proclamation hangs today in our Royal Court (the original being held securely at the Jersey Archives).

Charles never forgot this act of support and the kindness he had received at the hands of Sir George and the Islanders. When he ascended to the throne at the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 he gave Sir George a couple of lovely gifts. The Royal Mace, a priceless artefact which is now used in all formal government and court sittings and processions; and a tract of land in the Americas, which you know today, as New Jersey.

**BLACK BUTTER** - known locally as Du Nier Beurre, Jersey's delicious Black Butter is a traditional preserve made from a unique autumnal mix of harvested apples, cider, sugar liquorice.

### **The History of Black Butter**

In the 1850's, a third of Jersey's arable land was made up of orchards, with the island exporting around 150,000 gallons of cider a year. It is this booming cider production that the creation of black butter stems from, as making the preserve was a good way of using up a seasonal glut of apples and any surplus of cider. There is no tracing back to when this apple spread was invented, yet recipes have been seen dating back to the 14th century! The preserve has traditionally been cooked in farmhouse kitchens by Jersey women stirring big, bubbling pots of cider and spices.

Centuries on, this delicacy is still made collectively island-wide and visitors can witness the making of this traditional lip-licking concoction at National Trust property, The Elms: a handsome 18th century farmhouse, situated at the top of St Peter's Valley. Black Butter is a farmhouse delicacy and now plays a key role in maintaining the traditional and rural culture of the island.

### **What is Black Butter?**

Jersey Black Butter is a unique medieval recipe for apple sauce, which has been adapted over the years. Black butter is a blend of harvested apples, cider, sugar, spices, liquorice and lemons. The spread can be eaten on toast, with biscuits and even on its own.

The laborious cooking process initiated co-operative and community projects within the islanders to work together and make the process easier and a more social event. The process begins with the peeling of the apples, which can take hours when dealing with large quantities of freshly harvested fruit. In order to help the time pass, the locals would play music and tell stories while working and this tradition has been passed down through the generations.

Next, a fire is lit, traditionally in an old bakehouse of a Jersey farm, and the apples are placed in a bachin (copper cauldron) with the other ingredients. The cauldron contents would bubble and need to be stirred continuously for 24-30 hours. All the peeled apples would be added until none are left and the mixture has reached a jammy consistency. The cauldron is then removed from the fire and allowed to cool before the contents is split into jars, ready to be consumed. Again, music, cards, games and story-telling would be done throughout to entertain the workers and keep the morale high.

# GUERNSEY

The Island of Guernsey has had a long and eventful history, much of it shrouded in mystery and folklore, and visitors are often gripped by tales of the island's past. Here are some facts that you probably didn't know about our fascinating island.

## **1. Guernsey has one of the world's largest tidal ranges**

Guernsey's tidal range of 33 feet is one of the largest in the world, transforming the coastline every six hours or so. High tides are perfect for swimming, and children love to explore the rock pools at low tide.

## **2. It is home to one of the oldest post boxes in the British Isles**

The post box in Union Street is the oldest cast iron pillar-box still in use anywhere in the British Isles. It is easily recognisable, as it is the only red post box in Guernsey; all the others are painted blue

## **3. Houses have special seats for witches**

Many of the houses in Guernsey's west have an unusual, strange piece of granite sticking out of them – these are “witches' seats”. Back when they supposedly ran wild in the western parishes, residents built them onto their houses so that the witches could stop and rest, rather than causing havoc.

## **4. We have a world-renowned dairy herd**

The world-renowned Guernsey cow produces some of the most rich and delicious dairy products in the world; this is because of the high butterfat and protein levels in its milk.

## **5. Guernsey was once invaded by fairies**

According to local folklore, Guernsey was once invaded by a group of fairies, amazed by the beauty of the local women. The bloody battle that was said to have followed inspired the name of Rouge Rue in St Peter Port, which translates as “Red Road” and refers to the blood that flowed through the street.

## **6. The island used to be connected to mainland Europe**

The island itself used to be the tip of a peninsula attached to mainland Europe, however rising sea levels separated it from modern-day France approximately 8,000 years ago.

## **7. Folklore suggests wishes made at The Fairy Ring will come true**

The Fairy Ring is a mysterious circle in the ground at the island's western extremity, Pleinmont. It was a stopping point for officials of the Royal Court who paraded across Guernsey, and folklore suggests that if you walk around it three times and then make a wish, it will come true.

## **8. Spring comes to Guernsey early!**

Spring actually arrives four weeks earlier in Guernsey than on mainland Britain, which allows some unique and very beautiful flora to grow on the island.

## **9. Guernsey was the location of the world's first underwater arrest**

The world's first underwater arrest occurred in Guernsey. Mr Kempthorne-Leigh was illegally harvesting ormers, a popular local shellfish, and was arrested by a scuba-diving police officer!

## **10. Castle Cornet was once besieged by Guernsey itself**

Castle Cornet was built in the 13th century, and has since been under the control of England, France, Germany and even besieged by Guernsey itself, before being handed over as a gift to the islanders from King George VI after the Second World War.

# **10 things you might not know about Herm, Sark and Alderney**

- 1.** The islands of [Sark](#) and Little Sark are connected by a narrow isthmus, La Coupee. For many years it was believed to be haunted, and residents thought that their donkeys refused to cross the rocky ridge because they were frightened by the presence of a ghostly dog named Tchico - not because of the steep 260ft drops on either side!
- 2.** An unusual animal that inhabits the island of Alderney is the blonde hedgehog, which is extremely rare elsewhere in Europe. Rumour has it that the uniquely coloured creature arrived on the island hidden inside a Harrods shopping bag!
- 3.** There is evidence of life upon Herm all the way back in the Mesolithic period, over 8,000 years ago. Settlers arrived in the Neolithic and Bronze ages in search of food and used the north end of the island for burials.
- 4.** The "Clameur de haro" is a traditional custom historically used on Sark. If a person believes their rights are being infringed, he may recite the Lord's Prayer and then cry "Haro, Haro, Haro! To my aid, my Prince! I am being wronged!" in French, and the disputed action must be stopped until the matter is resolved in court. This was used as recently as 1970 to prevent a wall being constructed!
- 5.** German soldiers used the sandy beaches of Herm to practise landings from barges ahead of their intended invasion of mainland Britain during the Second World War, and even shot a propaganda film on the island entitled The Invasion of the Isle of Wight!
- 6.** When Herm was leased to Prince Blücher during the First World War, he tried to introduce a colony of wallabies to the island! Sadly, none remain there today.
- 7.** Like Herm, there are no cars on the island of Sark. There is however an ambulance as well as a taxi – they are actually towed by the same single tractor when needed!
- 8.** Alderney's own airport is the smallest in the Channel Islands, and even features a box of unfinished knitting to help you pass time while waiting for your flight!

**9.** During the Second World War, the whole of Alderney's population were evacuated to mainland Britain. The Germans established four camps upon the island, and it housed as many as 4,000 forced labourers at one point, most of whom were Russian prisoners.

**10.** In August 1990, Andre Gardes, an unemployed nuclear physicist from France, attempted an audacious one-man invasion of Sark. After arriving on the island, he put up posters declaring his intentions to take control the following day at noon. However, whilst changing the magazine of his automatic rifle the next morning, the island's only volunteer police constable arrested him and the invasion came to an early and unsuccessful end.

## **Brecqhou**

### **Size**

Brecqhou is one of the smallest inhabited Channel Islands, covering only 74 acres.

### **Location**

Brecqhou is a small sister island to Sark, separated by the Le Goulliott Passage, a narrow sea passage that can be dangerous for rowers.

### **History**

Brecqhou was once thought to be part of Sark, but rising sea levels have separated the two.

### **Ownership**

The Barclay brothers, owners of the Telegraph newspaper and London's Ritz, bought Brecqhou in 1993.

### **Accessibility**

Brecqhou opened to the public in 2012, and visitors can pay to visit.

### **Attractions**

Brecqhou's highlights include views of Fort Brecqhou and the seascapes around Herm, Guernsey, and Jethou.

### **Views from Sark**

The views of Brecqhou from the Sark coastline are worth seeing, especially from Pilcher Monument. Pilcher Monument is located on cliffs that overlook Havre Gosselin Bay and Brecqhou.