

THE JERSEY EXPERIENCE 1983

Tuesday 2nd August

After what was then a serious heart operation in London (a triple bypass) the previous year, my father embraced early retirement from HM Dockyard when he was 59 with what can only be described as happiness. From the resultant payout, he booked a family holiday for us all in Jersey. Thus at around midday, a Dash 7 left Roborough Airport at Plymouth carrying Dad, Mum, Alan, 7 year old Daniel, 2 year old Rachel and me.

There had been an amusing moment when our hand luggage had been checked, as I was carrying a yellow potty for the newly trained Rachel - her motto (or mine) being currently *Have potty, will travel*. The lady who inspected the potty remarked that it was very interesting...

It was my fifth flight and I was no less nervous as I somehow ended up sitting at the front next to Dad. I didn't know whether to be comforted or embarrassed as my normally rather reserved father held my hand during take-off. I hadn't realised my fear had been that obvious! However, I relaxed a little as we were served coffee and biscuits and then about half an hour after take-off, we began our descent to Jersey.

I became fearful again as we started to bank over green fields far below us, but it was a slight comfort when the landing wheels descended and after a bit of a bump-bump situation, we landed on Jersey soil and I was able to look forward to the next ten days.

A minibus drove us to Falles Garage to collect the hire car, where Alan discovered he'd forgotten his driving licence. Fortunately, Dad had just taken some refresher driving lessons to ensure he was capable of driving again - he always took driving very seriously. We then, after only one wrong turning and a few heated words between Alan and Dad, drove safely to our guest house named *Gros Puits*, translated according to my schoolgirl French as *Big Wells*.

We were revived by a warm welcome and a cup of tea, before walking into St Helier, where Alan visited the AA office to sort out an international driving licence. While he and Dad were thus engaged, Mum and I took the children for a walk along the nearby promenade above a beach. We decided to enjoy an ice cream while we waited, as it was quite hot and sunny. Many people were enjoying the beach and as I watched the scene below, I was pretty sure I saw a topless sunbather - female, that is.

Later on back at *Gros Puits*, dinner was vegetable soup, pork and fruit salad. It was rather filling, so we decided to go for an evening stroll to Howard Davis Park, which we had wandered through in the afternoon. We attempted a short cut (which seemed to turn into a long cut) but when we finally arrived there was a school band playing, creating an upbeat holiday atmosphere in the fine, warm evening.



Colourful Jersey flowers

Daniel was very excited - quite high, really - but Alan was worried about some milk we'd ordered for Rachel at 21.00, so we didn't stay long. I think it's safe to say that everyone went to bed quite happy on our first night at Jersey!

Wednesday 3rd August

Rachel greeted the day at 06.45 and therefore we did too. After a morning cup of tea at 08.00, there followed an enormous breakfast at 08.45, consisting of fruit juice, cereal, cooked breakfast and toast. If we're not careful, we shall all put on vast amounts of weight.

We walked into St Helier to buy a few necessary items, as well as a few unnecessary items. We also had coffee in a rather posh but pleasant shop, before depositing a sleeping Rachel on her bed in *Gros Puits*. After a short rest ourselves, we took to the car for an afternoon's outing.

Our destination was Strawberry Farm, which offered various and seemingly quite random attractions. First of all we looked around some model buildings...



Jersey in miniature

and had our picture taken in an old car...



Daniel test drives an old jalopy

then we looked inside a German bunker. Following that, we viewed a glass blowing area, perused the gift shop and finally indulged in some strawberries and cream. Rachel unfortunately became extremely wriggly and noisy, so we made a somewhat hasty departure.

Dad suggested a drive around, but it was horrendous in the back seat with Rachel, as she just wouldn't keep still. This, of course, was before the law about child safety seats in cars. We stopped briefly at a sloping, pebbly beach, drove through Gorey and then back to *Gros Puits*.

Dinner was chicken vol-au-vent, ham salad and lemon meringue - filling again. Alan started talking to our neighbours in the dining room, who are Irish and seem to enjoy a drink or several. When we started our evening walk to Howard Davis Park, they bumped into us and talked all the way...

Kenny Ball and his Jazzmen were playing in the park, enlivening the evening. Seeking more peaceful surroundings, Mum, Daniel and I went to look at a very pretty rose garden and some war graves. Some of the graves simply said: *A Naval Rating, Known to God*. We looked briefly inside St Luke's Church, then found Alan, Dad and Rachel, now minus the Irish couple (the man referred to by Daniel as Herman Munster!)

We strolled back to *Gros Puits* for our second night in Jersey. I wish mainly that Rachel would sleep well at night and also that we had an en suite bedroom, as I keep thinking I'll bump into someone in the corridor on my way to the bathroom while carrying the famous yellow potty!

Thursday 4th August

I was the first one awake at just before 07.00 and took the opportunity to wash my hair. The others soon surfaced, although Daniel seemed tired. We had baked beans on toast for breakfast, plus the rest. Rachel was misbehaving at the table, so Alan took her outside and thereby went without his cup of tea. The terrible twos, personified in our little Rachel!



Outside Gros Puits

As it was another sunny day, we drove to the lovely sandy beach at Gorey and all of us except Mum (who was having trouble with a sore throat) went in the sea. It was shallow for a long way out and the children had a great deal of fun splashing around. Dad also enjoyed his swim and I managed my first few strokes for several years - I felt slightly out of condition, though.

Alan built a sandcastle for Daniel, who was crabby because Mum and Dad had gone to *The Secret Garden* café for a cup of coffee - Daniel and Rachel are just nuts about Grandma! After they returned, the four of us went to *The Secret Garden* (not so secret after all) for a drink and some sandwiches. We then went in search of a fruit shop, to subsidise our intake of vitamin C.

After buying quite a lot of fruit, we decided we might as well visit Jersey Potteries, which was just up the road. It was a big place, where the public could view the different processes of making pottery, from throwing the clay to the final paint decorating. It was very interesting and we were tempted into making some pottery type purchases before we left. We then went in search of a Pure Jersey Ice Cream, which in the end turned out to be much too large and Rachel had one of her funny turns while eating it. Children are so easy to cope with! However, there was an intriguing looking castle in the near distance, so we naturally went to investigate.

It was hot, the castle was further away than we thought and there were lots of steps up to the top, but we finally made it. Alan had to carry a sleeping Rachel up the steps, whereupon she woke and wanted a wee, so he carried her all the way down again - and then carried her all the way up again afterwards!



Resting our legs after all those steps

Inside Mont Orgeuil castle, there were waxwork models and running commentaries depicting various historical happenings. It brought everything to life and gave it some helpful context, but I found it impossible to take in all at once. I do like a nice castle, though...

We returned to the car with aching feet and after arriving back at *Gros Puits*, bathed the children and had a drink before dinner. This evening it was melon, lamb cutlets and fresh fruit salad. Dad wanted to go to the 'bank' afterwards, so Alan went with him, taking Rachel in the pushchair. They didn't return until 21.15! In the meantime, Mum had been playing ball and then cards with Daniel, while I caught up on various jobs. Bonne nuit!

Friday 5th August

Rachel was restless in the night and I was awake for an hour, but amazingly we all slept on until nearly 08.00. Mum's sore throat was still bothering her, so she made a doctor's appointment for 12.00. Therefore, we just spent the morning at *Gros Puits* in the sun. We had coffee, Dad and Daniel played with golf balls and putting sticks and I did some washing.

At 11.30 Alan drove Mum and Dad to the doctor's and we all waited for them in the park (after driving around for at least 10 minutes looking for a parking space). It was hot in the noonday sun, so we sat in the cool shade of the bandstand watching Kenny Ball sign autographs. Had he been there all night?!

Mum and Dad returned, having had to pay £8 for the consultation and £4 for a prescription. We then drove by mistake to the German Underground Military Hospital - it was a mistake because we'd been trying to drive to St Matthew's Glass Church.

After staying outside to have a drink and to eat fruit and a Cornetto, we ventured inside the hospital, which had been built by prisoners of war during the German Occupation of the Channel Islands in World War II. It could be described in one word - chilling. It was morbidly interesting to see where the Germans and prisoners had been, though, particularly for some reason the hospital ward, operating theatre, officers' mess and an unfinished tunnel. We read all the notices about it and looked with a certain amount of horror at the exhibits - what peculiar madness it all must have been, but for us it was a worthwhile visit.

We re-entered the normal world of sunshine and drove to a Butterfly Farm. Rachel was being her 2 year old best (otherwise known as worst) on the journey there. She scrambled and flung herself around and finally went into a rage of crying. It was all I could do to stop her flinging herself into the front seat with Daddy. The later introduction of child seats was a good move!



Reflective at the Butterfly Farm

Just Mum, Daniel and I decided to go inside to see the butterflies, which were mostly big and

pretty. Some were like miniature bats flying around and I felt rather weird when they flew close to me! We saw a pair chasing and then a pair mating - fascinating. After rejoining Dad, Alan and Rachel outside, we had a drink and a biscuit, but by then it was gone 16.00 so we decided to drive back to *Gros Puits*. Daniel and Rachel spent a little while with Mum and Dad and then we all met up again in the Lounge Bar.

Dinner was vegetable soup, fish and chips and cheesecake. The only trouble was that Rachel hadn't slept all day and she started to cry during the first course. Alan took her upstairs and she promptly went to sleep. I relieved him after quickly eating my main course and he later brought me some cheesecake.

Meanwhile, Daniel went to play outside but fell down, grazing his knee. Jim, our Irish drinking table neighbour aka Herman Munster, picked him up - as Mum relayed to us when she later appeared carrying a stricken Daniel to our room. It was just one of those evenings! Alan and I read until about 21.30 and then prepared for our fourth night in Jersey. Rachel was sleeping soundly, so all the activity of the last few days must have caught up with her at last.

Saturday 6th August

Rachel slept for 13 hours last night! I couldn't face a cooked breakfast this morning, but everyone else did. Today's choice of visit was Jersey Zoo, founded by Gerald Durrell, where we arrived at about 10.30. As I had read and enjoyed several books by Gerald Durrell about his experiences looking for endangered species in various countries, I was intrigued to see some of the animals in the flesh, particularly Colobus monkeys described in *Catch Me a Colobus*.

I also recognised tamarins and pink pigeons, not to forget orang-utans and spectacled bears. In fact, we saw a great number of animals, birds and reptiles and sadly, most of them had a dodo symbol on their enclosures, denoting that they were endangered species - "The final emptiness of extinction."



The iconic dodo symbol

We had a sandwich for a late lunch there, followed later by an ice cream sitting in the grounds. After an obligatory look around the gift shop, we finally left at mid afternoon, feeling quite uplifted that something practical was being done to save such amazing animals.



A species endangered only by ice cream

As we still had some spare day time left, we went to look for St Matthew's Glass Church and actually found it this time - but it was closed because it was Saturday! There was a children's playing park nearby, so we just went in there for an hour to keep Daniel and Rachel amused. Mum/Grandma became worn out with all the exercise, although Alan and I helped as well.

We returned to *Gros Puits* and dressed in some more presentable clothes for dinner, then stayed outside in the garden to while away the time. There were two not so nice little boys who threw a couple of the golf balls over the wall, much to Daniel's annoyance.

After dinner we went for a walk. Dad led us into St Helier, which was full of people even though most of the shops were shut. It was becoming late and dark at 20.45, so Alan mentioned to Dad that we ought to take the children home. Dad said he wanted to carry on, so we left him striding out and returned to *Gros Puits* for a bedtime drink and our fifth night here. Daniel and Rachel are sleeping in bunk beds, with Daniel naturally on the top one. When Rachel hears him moving around, she says, "Keep still Da-da!" (which is her name for him).

Sunday 7th August

Another restless night with our beloved 2 year old, but we all arrived at the breakfast table in fair working order to consume cereal, egg and toast. Afterwards, we drove to see a Shell House, although it was right by the bend of a busy road and rather dicey to park the car.

However, the entrance fee was only 20p and the shells were very pretty and must have taken absolutely ages to do. They were packed in some sort of red coloured cement in all sorts of intricate shapes, sizes and models. Mum, Daniel and Rachel seemed intrigued, anyway...



Shell shot

We then drove on to St Brelades Bay, another lovely, sandy beach, although we hadn't come prepared so didn't venture forth onto the sand. Instead, we had a rather decent cup of coffee and then walked along the front until we came to a shop where we all bought Jersey t-shirts and Daniel and Rachel bought a Jersey cow (a miniature furry one, that is!)

It was then time to drive back to *Gros Puits* for Sunday lunch, which consisted of tomato soup, roast beef with Yorkshire pudding and various desserts. We had stopped in the Lounge Bar for a drink beforehand and Dad had ordered a bottle of wine with lunch, so afterwards we relaxed in the garden for a while.

The afternoon was relatively young, so we decided to drive to St Ouen to see a museum containing some of the past floats from Jersey's famous Battle of Flowers. They were made out of dried marram grass and horsetails and were most impressive. Lots of them were made in animal shapes and were quite lifelike.

As there was a putting green nearby, we decided to have a game. It was a flat, well looked after course and we all enjoyed it - Daniel did very well for a 7 year old. It was near the airport and we could see all the incoming planes (not that I enjoyed being reminded of our future flight home). After a King Cone, we drove back to St Helier for a teatime snack.

Alan parked the car and we walked around looking for a café, but seemed overcome with indecision. We actually went into one place that advertised sandwiches, but they were only serving hot meals, so we walked out again. It had been quite cramped, with no likely looking toilet (for Rachel plus the yellow potty) and I began to worry a little. This led to a disagreement between Alan and me, so we walked back to the car and returned to *Gros Puits*.

Later on and feeling less indecisive, Alan and Dad walked to a pub to buy crisps and nuts for Daniel, who was hungry. I washed my hair and so the evening passed - a strange evening!

Monday 8th August

I was first awake at 07.15, although I felt tired. Daniel seems to have gone off having cooked breakfast, whereas Rachel ate loads of toast - maybe stocking up on energy for the day ahead!

When we were ready, we drove to St Matthew's Glass Church at Millbrook and looked around inside at the glass crucifix, font and many other parts of the building. It seemed an original idea and as I'm very partial to glasswork, I found it pretty and most unusual.

After buying postcards, Dad and Alan thought it would be good exercise to go for a walk, so Alan parked the car among green pastures and off we set down a country lane. It was very pleasant for the first half hour or so, but then we seemed to become rather lost. Alan asked the way from a man in a tractor and we set off again for a while, but seemed to be heading nowhere. It was getting hotter and we had no drink with us, so Alan walked back to get the car by himself while the rest of us waited for him on a grass verge.

It was quite a relief when he returned at 12.30 and drove us to the nearest pub, where we bought sandwiches, crisps and drinks, which went down very well. We then drove to St Ouen and played a round of crazy golf. It had become windy, but Daniel had a really good laugh and Alan played with Rachel, so it was successful. Also successful was the daily ice cream, a King Cone again - but I noticed that Alan sat away from Rachel to avoid getting messy!

Our next visit was to La Mare Vineyards in St Mary, run by the Blayney family. Sadly there were no samples, but it was interesting to see the grapes growing, to read about the processes involved and to see the cider press. Alan and Dad bought some cider and we sat on a wooden bench under a tree for tea and home made flapjack, enjoying the relaxing ambience.



Tea? Cider? Flapjack?

As it was around 16.00, we headed back to *Gros Puits*, stopping only for some stamps to post our postcards at last and one of Rachel's yellow potty interludes. We convened in the Lounge Bar for a pre-dinner drink and then went into the dining room for prawn cocktail, pork chops and cheesecake. Rachel had to be taken quickly from the room at least four times, she had obviously had too much to drink!

Afterwards, we walked to Howard David Park and found that a bugle and drum band from Holland was performing at 20.15. We stayed to watch and they were very good indeed, with little side steps and hops in their marching. It was an unusual but uplifting finale to the day.

Tuesday 9th August

A rather disturbed night, as some people woke me up just as I was dropping off (not the bed) by saying goodnight to one another just outside our door. However, we all slept late - I was first awake at 07.55! Breakfast was as usual, but I couldn't cope with a cooked one.

We packed for the beach and drove to Gorey (after Mum had nipped out to have her hair done at the local hairdresser's shop called *Laraine*). It was much windier than our first visit and the resultant waves put most of us off swimming. We sat down and played with the sand at first, then Alan made a big sandcastle.



An improvised flag...

Later on, Rachel started her running away to the water act. I went to the water's edge with her and Daniel and then Dad took a turn, but he came back worn out, saying he couldn't control or catch Rachel! Alan then went with them for a long time and they came back wet and satisfied. All this time the tide had been steadily going out, it seemed to have gone out for miles.

After playing with the sand a while longer, we started to pack our sandy things away at around 13.00, put them in the car and then walked to the nearby Jersey Potteries. We went into the restaurant for some lunch, but there was such a slow moving queue that it was gone 14.00 before we had our food. By that time, Rachel had become so tired that she had one of her crying sessions about drinking her own full to the brim orange drink. Alan and I ate our rolls quickly and walked her around in her pushchair until she mercifully fell asleep.

There was then a slight contretemps when Alan asked for a pair of matching candle holders for me and the girl brought loads of them out onto the counter in order to find a match. None of them were identical, of course, as they're all hand painted. I wanted very badly to run away!

After spending rather a lot in the Potteries, we returned to the car and ate some fruit. Alan then drove us along a coastal road, stopping at La Rocque, which was appropriately named as the beach there was nothing but bleak, desolate rocks that seemed to stretch for miles. We drove on to Le Hocq, where we stopped for an ice cream and for Alan to take some photos. It was still very rugged there and somewhat resembled the surface of the moon.

We were unpleasantly caught up in the rush hour driving back to *Gros Puits*, but made it in time for Daniel and Rachel to have a bath to wash away all the sand and also for a pre-dinner drink in the Lounge Bar. Dinner was vegetable soup, roast chicken and finally raspberry flan, all very good. It started to rain while we were eating, although it was just a drizzle.

The rain stopped, so we walked again to Howard Davis Park, where yesterday's band (from Etten-Leur) was playing again. Unfortunately, Rachel seemed overtired, so Alan took her back to *Gros Puits*. When I got back at 21.00, she was still very tired and unfortunately did a wee on the carpet in our room. I sponged it out very well, though, so nobody would ever know...

Wednesday 10th August

A disturbed night, as I got up twice to sneak down the corridor to the toilet, had a nightmare about a car accident and then woke up early. However, it was a thumbs up for the cooked breakfast! It had been raining in the night and was cloudy, so we decided to walk to Fort Regent, an indoor entertainment place. I'm not normally one for these sorts of attractions but we had Daniel and Rachel to consider.

Fort Regent is actually a castle built at the time when Jersey thought Napoleon would invade. He never did, but the castle was used during the German Occupation. We had walked all the way up to the castle, as opposed to taking a cable car and my first impression of Fort Regent as an entertainment place was that it was very modern and noisy.

It was mid morning and Mum bought us coffee and orange (but not together). However, as soon as she sat down with us at the table, a band began to play and it was so loud that we could hardly bear it. I had to take Rachel to the toilet and when we came back, everyone had left the table, even though Rachel and I hadn't finished our drinks.

We wandered around and looked at an aquarium and a shell museum, where Alan bought me a fossil. I love fossils for some reason - they're so old! Then Dad, Alan, Daniel and I went on a simulated trip inside a bathysphere. I couldn't help thinking how contrived it was and it was very hot cooped up inside with all those other bodies, so I was quite glad when it was over.

At lunch time we went in search of the advertised snack bar, which consisted only of three grotty machines, one of which was out of order. We managed to extricate crisps, Mars bars and drinks and after consuming these less than healthy options, went to see a film called *The Jersey Experience* in a small cinema. It lasted for about half an hour and was excellent, depicting the history of Jersey interlaced with modern Jersey. The presentation, narration and sound effects were very good indeed. Rachel was also quite good, sitting on me for most of the time and reaching over to Alan and Mum on either side to play with their ears.

After that we went to see the Charles Dickens Waxworks, featuring scenes from his most well known books. Alan was annoyed that he didn't have his flashgun, but still enjoyed looking at everything, or do I mean everyone? We then went outside to a kind of fairground, with a Big Wheel and some imaginative roundabouts. Daniel didn't want a ride on anything and Alan told me later when it was too late that he would have liked to go on the Big Wheel! From there, we wandered into a rose garden and looked at the views down below, before our ice cream of the day - quite expensive Cornettos at 40p each.

At 16.00, Mum and Dad took Daniel to see an hour long production of *Peter Pan*, but Alan and I didn't fancy trying to keep Rachel still for an hour. We walked around with her outside on the ramparts for a while, then inside a souvenir shop and postal exhibition, before watching the final part of *Peter Pan* from the gallery. It seemed to be a really good, professional production - Mum, Dad and Daniel certainly enjoyed it and Mum bought Daniel a *Peter Pan* book.

It was unfortunately rush hour again as we headed back amongst all the traffic. We had to stop for a short rest in Howard Davis Park, as poor Daniel was exhausted, although Dad went on to *Gros Puits*. The rest of us managed to get back in time for a pre-dinner drink (Alan had brandy for a change).

Dinner was chicken vol-au-vent, ham salad and lemon meringue, the same as last Wednesday! Rachel is now familiar with the place and therefore more inclined to be her 2 year old self, which is sometimes a bit of a noisy nuisance. Daniel, on the other hand, seems to enjoy stacking up our dirty dishes for Debbie the waitress, who he appears to like.

Alan has been counting the remains of our money and wondering how we'll survive to the end of the month. As we always do, of course, although we'll be broke but happy because of the holiday! Dad, Alan and Rachel went into St Helier by car this evening to buy what they wanted for duty free goods. Alan just bought three bottles of wine for us, plus some tobacco and cigarettes for people at work. I understand that Dad bought rather more bottle-wise...

Thursday 11th August

Daniel was awake at 07.30, reading his *Peter Pan* book. The weather seemed less windy today as we ate the usual enormous breakfast. We then walked into St Helier to do a little shopping. Although we were in Jersey, Mum and I ended up buying Guernsey jumpers, Alan a Breton jumper and Dad a tie. When Alan tried on his red and dark blue striped jumper, the lady who was serving us said all he needed was a beret and a bag of onions!

It was nearing 12.00 and the day of the famous Battle of Flowers parade. Lots of people seemed to be heading towards the area where the parade would be taking place, so we joined them, stopping en route at a hotel for coffee and sandwiches.

On rejoining the throng, we decided to look for a place to stand or sit to watch the procession. As we hadn't booked or paid for a seat, we had to take what we could find, which wasn't a lot. We found a place high up on a steep, grassy bank and sat down to wait. It was 13.00 and the first event was Majorettes at 13.45 with the main procession starting at 14.30.

We ate some fruit and bought ice creams from a passing salesman, but Rachel was tired and hence very crabby, so Alan kindly took her for a walk in her pushchair. More people started to arrive where we were and gradually some began to stand on the path in front of the grassy slope, so that lots of us couldn't see. A couple of men where we were kept shouting at the people in front to sit down so that we could all see, but it was unfortunately a losing battle (of flowers or otherwise).

Alan returned with a sleeping Rachel and the floats began to appear. They looked really lovely from what we could ascertain from a distance, but it was most frustrating trying to see over people's heads and becoming stiff and numb from sitting down so long.



Without people's heads in the way



Mr Men!

At about 15.30, Alan said he was going to go because there was a huge crush of people on the path and he didn't want to get caught up in it when they all dispersed. I was getting desperate for a toilet, so went along with him and so did Dad. That left Mum and Daniel sitting on the slope, trying to see it all. It was such a shame that Mum hadn't booked seats for her, Dad and Daniel, as she really wanted to see it all. We live and learn...

St Helier was very quiet as we walked back to *Gros Puits*. Mum and Daniel returned sooner than I'd expected, which was a relief, as I'd been worried about them finding their way back. When we were having our last pre-dinner drink in the Lounge Bar, people were saying how lovely the Battle of Flowers floats had been! We found out the winning floats would be on show on the sea front for the evening, so it seemed most opportune to go and have a closer look.

Our final dinner at *Big Wells* was pâté with salad and toast, lamb and then raspberry flan, washed down with a bottle of sparkling wine that Dad ordered. Just before 20.00, Alan drove us into St Helier and eventually found a parking space. We walked along to where the floats were on display and although there were still crowds of people, we could see the floats close up at last. Some were of paper flowers, some part real and paper and some all real flowers or grasses. Daniel liked the one of ET best, but I liked the butterfly ones (there were two).

Rachel wanted to use the potty in amongst all the crowd, which was somewhat embarrassing! However, it was dark by then as we were walking along. Suddenly a firework lit the sky and we realised there was going to be a firework display. Some of the fireworks were the best I've ever seen, they lit up the sky with many different colours. Some of them were very loud and Rachel became so alarmed that we had to take her out of her pushchair and cuddle her.

The display only lasted for about 15 minutes, so we made our way through the madding crowd back to the car - and some of the crowd did seem to be a little bit mad. It was mayhem crossing the road and we became separated from Mum, Dad and Daniel, but managed to make it safely back. It was 22.30 by the time Daniel and Rachel had settled down, but it had been an exciting evening that lessened the disappointment of the day. Our final night in Jersey!

Friday 12th August

We all seemed to sleep fairly well and assembled for our last big Jersey breakfast. Dad gave Rachel £5 to give to Debbie the waitress, which she did (poor Daniel was too shy, just like me). After that we finished packing and left our cases in the Lounge Bar until later in the day.

Alan drove us to St Helier and we did some final shopping. We were able to buy photos of the Battle of Flowers (which pleased Mum) and Daniel had his last fling in a book shop. At midday we had sandwiches and coffee in a corner café before catching the ferry to Elizabeth Island. There is a causeway, but it was still covered with water when we crossed. All the pathways were covered with a sandy, shingle mixture that kept finding its way into my sandals.

We looked around at some of the places the Germans had used in the Occupation, then walked across to the Hermitage, a small room built around a cave high up on a rock where St Helier had lived for 15 years as a hermit.



The Hermitage

Rachel was a bit of a nuisance running around on the rocks, so we walked back to the main part and climbed a lot of steps to see a tableau of historic figures and listen to a commentary. There was quite a lot to see outside as well as we walked around in the warm Jersey air. Daniel and Rachel seemed to particularly enjoy sitting on the cannons:



A ladylike cannon...



...and a stonking big boy's cannon!

My legs were too worn out to climb more steps to see the Governor's Residence, but Alan went armed with his camera. After he'd finished, we found the café, where there was no ice cream left - horrors! Mum, Dad, Daniel and Rachel consoled themselves with some enormous sticky buns that Alan and I helped to finish off, we had a drink and then walked slowly back through the grounds and out along the now clear causeway.

It was then time to return to *Gros Puits* for the final time to collect our cases. Rachel was asleep, which was most fortunate, as we could hardly move in the car for luggage. We drove down Fountain Lane for the last time along the familiar road. Mum and Daniel were saying goodbye to everything, it was quite sad!

We arrived at the airport, where Rachel promptly woke up. After checking in our cases, Alan and Dad took the hire car back to Falles Garage, while the rest of us sat in the departure lounge. We had a lot of waiting to do, as it was only 17.00 and our flight was 19.00.

The time was taken up by eating an ice cream, several visits to the toilet, eating crisps and walking around. Mum bought us some mints for the flight, as on the way here our ears had felt uncomfortable. It was very hot sitting where we were, but our flight was finally announced at 18.35 and we went to have our bags checked. This time a man checked the bag I was carrying containing the yellow potty - but he was a very nice man, especially to Daniel.

It was a slight surprise walking to Gate 10 and seeing the size of the aircraft. Inside, there was just one pilot, no toilet and 21 seats. Help! Fortunately we soon took off and flew at a height of 2,000 feet to Guernsey, which took about 10 minutes. I noticed there were lots of greenhouses there, presumably for Guernsey tomatoes?

One person got off the plane and a few people boarded. Rachel had been sitting in an empty seat quite comfortably and although a man boarding at Guernsey should have sat in it, the stewardess let her stay in her seat and put the man in the seat beside the pilot!

We took off again at 19.15 and although the mints helped a little, I still hated every minute of the flight. Rachel, on the other hand, seemed to be enjoying the experience - until she bit her tongue and cried loudly. The stewardess came along with a bowl and some wet wipes, presumably thinking Rachel must have been sick or something.

We approached the coast and despite the sudden bumpiness, it was fascinating to look down and see the contours of the land. It was still a lovely feeling coming down the steps from the plane after landing at Roborough Airport, though! We only had to wait a few minutes for our cases before walking through Customs. We weren't searched, but Rachel's pushchair broke as Alan opened it - how fortunate that it broke at the end of the holiday and not the beginning.

The air felt cooler on the mainland, as we left the airport and drove home. I did enjoy our visit to Jersey very much indeed, with its lovely beaches and more rugged landscapes, its parks and flowers, its visitor attractions and its fascinating history (it seems amazing that only 40 years ago, the island had been occupied territory). There's obviously so much more of Jersey that we never saw at all, so hopefully one day we'll be able to explore the island further...

