

Lettre Jèrriaise- Aline Cattermole- April 2021

Good morning everyone,

It's me again, Aline Cattermole, who's presenting the "Lettre Jèrriaise" today Saturday 3rd of April 2021.

Now that I'm talking to you, we're still disrupted by the virus and we still cannot travel off-island or even have visitors in Jersey. Time is long for people who have family off-island, like us who have our Family in Normandy and in the South of England. It's difficult as well for people working in the tourist industry like hotels etc... They are probably impatient to return to a more normal situation.

But we have to stay optimistic, and we hope that the situation is going to improve with the vaccination and with the arrival of the summer. We need wait and hope.

Still, they are good things about not being able to travel. First, it's better for the environment as there are less carbon emissions. I don't know if you have noticed but, during the first lockdown, the sky was much bluer and clearer than usual. It's probably because there were less vehicles on the roads and less planes in the sky.

Another positive thing about not being able to travel is that it gives us the opportunity to discover our island. There are wonderful places in Jersey that I've discovered only recently. For example, the dolmens like Faldouet. What a surprise!

When we start getting interested into the place where we live, we start getting interested into its history as well. It is what happened to me, and I discovered an interesting author who writes about Jersey history. His name is Paul Darroch.

From what I know, he published two books about Jersey "Jersey hidden histories" and "Jersey: secrets of the sea". Both are available at WH Smith in town and on the Kindle app. I bought the books on Amazon and downloaded them on my tablet. I really recommend these books. They are very well written and enjoyable to read. What I like very much is that Paul Darroch combines the big History with local legends and little stories about Jèrriais people's life during their time.

He records a series of podcasts whose name is 'History Islands'. You can receive them in your email box and listen to them on any electronic device. March's podcast was about the life of Florence Boot. I think he chose this topic because in March was International Women's day.

Florence Boot had a very interesting life, and she left an important heritage to Jersey. She was born in St Helier in 1863. She was the daughter of a book seller. She met Jess Boot, a young chemist and they got married in 1886.

Florence was intelligent and very imaginative. She had the idea of creating an alley for ladies' toiletries in the pharmacy and changing the little shop into a big store. The idea was a great success, and the pharmacies "Boots" became a phenomenon.

The couple became very rich, and Jess Boot bought Beauport Bay for his wife's birthday. He sold his business for 2 million pounds after the big war which was a very big amount of money for the time.

But the couple was generous, and they did a lot for their community in Jersey. For example, they built the "Florence Boot cottages" in order to offer decent homes to people.

Florence Boot invited the French artist René Lalique in Jersey. He transformed St Matthew's church in Millbrook into a magnificent glass church. Today it is a renowned masterpiece.

She also offered the magnificent garden of her Jersey house. Today it is Coronation Park in First Tower. Finally, at the end of her life, she gave back Beauport Bay (that her husband had bought for her birthday many years before) to Jersey people.

Florence Boot's heritage in Jersey is very important. I didn't know it. And I thank Paul Darroch for making me discover it. That's all for today. I wish you a happy and peaceful Easter.

Thank you very much for listening to me. Keep safe.

Bye for now.