

Hello, it's Merry Bond from St Peter, speaking on 6th August 2022. I'm one of the Jèrriais teachers, in the Jèrriais teaching Service.

After nearly a year of learning Jèrriais, I did my first Eisteddfod in March with a poem by Michael Vautier.

I can truly say that it was an honour to read this beautiful poem by Michael:

Jèrriais, my language:

It always gives me so much pleasure when a child first speaks but when those first words are in Jèrriais, what a joy it is!

This language, that of my parents, language of preceding generations.

There was a time that this was the language of all Jersey folk, that is sadly now almost forgotten.

For me, it is still my first language.
The language that I learned as a child.
The language of my dreams and my thoughts.
For me it will never be forgotten.

At the age of six years old, I was sent where only English was spoken and Jèrriais?

Not a word!

To me this was a strange school.

There we were reprimanded if we spoke in Jèrriais.
English of course, needed to be learned but Jèrriais was always my language.

I knew plants and flowers in the hedgerows by their Jèrriais names.

The crops and the weeds in the fields, the animals and the birds too.

Bindweed, black nightshade,
Magpie, blackbird, robin, pigeon,
Cabbage, potatoes, carrots, parsnips,
And the elm and the oak, the king of the trees.

I've heard it said since I was little that an appetite comes when you eat.

Apple dumplings, bean soup,
Jersey wonders, fruit cake,
Bean crock, seaweed biscuits,
Apple pie, salted pork
Being spoiled by such a feast there is a danger of eating too much!

To laugh and have a good time,
To be happy and really content,
To be touched and really moved
It is in Jèrriais that it is done better.

The more that I learn the language and that I spend time with people who love speaking Jèrriais, the more that I have a passion for this language. It's the reason why I chose this poem because Jèrriais has become my language, even though it's not the language that I spoke as a child. This poem has really touched my heart and as the final line of the poem says "this goodness that is sent to us, I appreciate it more in Jèrriais"

I would like that one day this will be the same for me and that I will be able to say "I appreciate it more in Jèrriais"

I am so thankful for the encouragement that I have received in learning Jèrriais and the amazing patience, even when I stumble through a conversation.

My special thanks go to Nancy and Michael Vautier and Enid De Gruchy for the hours that they have given me (it's because of Jèrriais that I have these precious friends) and to François Le Maître who gives of his time to the Jèrriais team and of course to the gang who meet at Jersey Pearl on a Friday morning.

What a delight and honour it is that I have in teaching this beautiful language and being part of something so important in helping Jèrriais to continue down the generations in Jersey.

Thank you for having listened to me.