



LE CERCLE DE CARTERET



De Carteret Family Reunion, September 24, 2011, JERSEY CHANNEL ISLANDS.

SUNNY Jersey welcomed members of one of the Channel Island's most influential families for a grand reunion this September.

Echoes of the De Carterets' illustrious past were everywhere as historians took the party of over 50 descendants on a whistle-stop coach tour of some of the island's legendary landmarks.

The group mustered in the picturesque Royal Square in St Helier clutching cameras and wearing name tags for the start of an historical insight into a family whose name is synonymous with Jersey.

Many had taken the early morning ferry from Guernsey while others had travelled from France, flown in from the USA and UK or joined the party from different parts of Jersey.

Local historian Frank Falle was first to take the stage by the imposing golden statue of George II in Royal Square to transport visitors back to the dark days of the Civil War and beyond.



Previously *La Cohue* – a Norman word for courthouse – stood on one side of the square which was rebuilt as the Royal Court and States Chamber.

The Royal Square was also the scene of the Battle of Jersey when French soldiers tried to seize the island on January 6, 1781. Musket shot holes can still be seen on the wall of The Peirson public house as a reminder of the bloody conflict.

The statue of George II is also the zero mile stone from which all main road distances in Jersey are measured.

Next was a viewing of the royal mace inside the States building as visitors piled in for a closer look of the gilded artefact which was given to the island from a grateful Charles II in recognition of its support, loyalty and hospitality.

Jurat Paul Nicole guided the party round the States Chamber and explained the significance of the mace which is still carried before the bailiff at sittings of the Royal Court and meetings of the Assembly of the States of Jersey when it is placed upright in a socket in front of the bailiff's desk to symbolise the special relationship between Jersey and the Crown.



Royal Mace

Engraved at the foot is a Latin inscription which reads: "*Charles II, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, as a proof of his royal affection towards the Isle of Jersey has willed that this Royal Mace should be consecrated to posterity and has ordered that hereafter it shall be carried before the Bailiffs in perpetual remembrance of their fidelity not only to his august father Charles I but to His Majesty during the fury of the civil wars, when the Island was maintained by the illustrious Philip and George de Carteret, Knights, Bailiffs and Governors of the said Island.*"

One of the great ceremonial maces of the 17th century, it is an outstanding piece of craftsmanship consisting of 11 pieces of silver gilt and is nearly 5ft (1.5m) long.

Back on the coach the party caught glimpses of the craggy east coast as they journeyed towards Mont Orgueil Castle overlooking pretty Gorey harbour.



The impressive castle has strong associations with the De Carteret family and was the primary defence of the island until the development of gun powder which rendered it indefensible from Mont St Nicholas, the adjacent hill which overlooks it.

For many years it became a prison, then repairs were carried out from 1730-34 and for the rest of the century it was adapted for garrison accommodation.

In 1800 the castle became the HQ of Admiral Philippe d'Auvergne who defended the island with eight Royal Navy ships. While supporting the royalist rebels in Normandy and Brittany he also operated a secret service known as 'La Correspondence' and dispensed huge amounts of monies provided by the British government to support Royalist refugees of the French revolution escaping to Jersey.

In 1846 Mont Orgueil was visited by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and has hosted royal ceremonies to welcome George V in 1921 and Elizabeth II.

Lunch at The Dolphin along the harbour in Gorey gave descendants of the De Carterets an opportunity to rekindle old friendships and make new ones.



Reputed American automotive historian Larry Gustin from Michigan, USA, had flown in with his wife Rose Mary to London Heathrow, then travelled to London Gatwick to catch another flight to Jersey to visit the island, and especially L'Etacq, more than 300 years after his ancestor had left.



Another US citizen David de Carteret was there with wife Gretchen. His great grandfather left Guernsey to work in the car industry in Detroit. David now earns a living in the same industry in Michigan.

With no time for dessert at The Dolphin the group was ushered on to the coach once more for the highlight of the tour – a rare visit to the ancestral home of the De Carterets at St Ouen's Manor.



Before that came a drive through the grounds of stunning Trinity Manor as the coach brushed past overhanging trees in the extensive private grounds and a large herd of inquisitive Jersey cows ran to the fence to have a better look. Camcorders clicked as the manor came into view which was rebuilt in the style of a French chateau in the early 1900s.

The grounds have been known for their beauty since the 17th century and feature a lake with swans and water fowl and an oak tree which is believed to have been there when Charles II visited in 1649.

The most famous seigneur was Philippe de Carteret who entered the navy in 1747 and, as a lieutenant in the Dolphin, accompanied Captain John Byron during a voyage of circumnavigation from 1764-66.

He was then made captain and given the command of the Swallow to again circumnavigate the world. Carteret discovered Pitcairn Island – of *Mutiny on the Bounty* fame – and the Carteret Islands which were named after him along with a number of other islands. He arrived back in England in 1769.

The Guinness Book of Maritime Records reads: “*The number of islands in the Pacific discovered by Philippe de Carteret entitle him to be ranked as one of the greatest explorers of his day; yet, unjustly, his name is seldom remembered, Carteret discovering and naming en route at least 20 islands.*”

He eventually inherited Trinity Manor and on his return from sea the flag of the Swallow flew above the house.

This year is exactly 100 years since the manor was remodelled and the group was treated to a magical drive through the estate courtesy of the current seigneur Dame Pamela and Mr Paul Bell.

The party also learned about the importance of nearby Trinity Church for the De Carteret family.

In 1643 after George Carteret had recovered the island for the king, he chose to be sworn in as bailiff and governor there as it was safer than St Helier where there were still many Parliamentarian supporters.

It also features the finest mural monument in the island – a plaque to Sir Edouard de Carteret who was usher of the Black Rod to Charles II and died while on a visit to St Ouen’s Manor in 1683.

He was to have been buried in St Ouen’s Church but a clap of thunder startled the horses and they bolted with the hearse until they stopped outside Trinity Church. The mourners took this as a sign that he wanted to be buried in his native parish so they adjourned to Trinity Manor while a grave was dug!

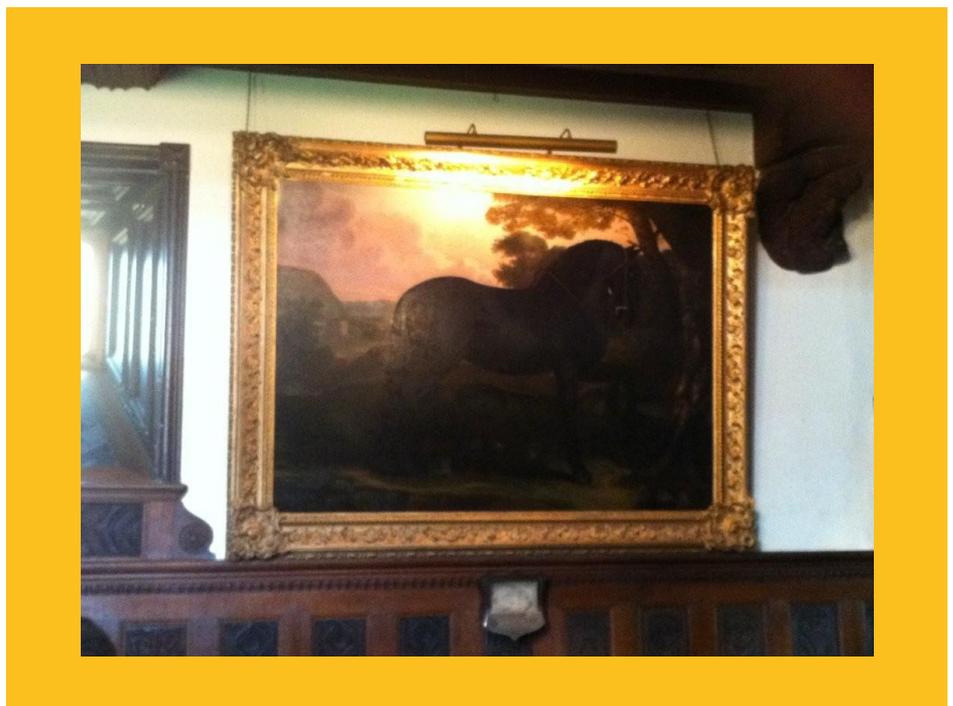
Finally on to the stately home of the De Carterets - St Ouen’s Manor - where the owner and seigneur Philip Malet de Carteret was there to greet guests with his wife Adele along with son Ned Malet de Carteret who had accompanied the visitors throughout the day-long tour and added many fascinating details about the family’s exploits.

De Carterets are recorded as having served with William during the Norman Conquest and the family has played a central role in Jersey political life. During the Civil War, perhaps one of the most famous of the Carterets - George Carteret - gave shelter to a young Charles II after the execution of his father Charles I and was later rewarded with high office and lands in America including New Jersey. His portrait by Sir Peter Lely hangs in the manor.



Another legend of a loyal black horse belonging to Philippe de Carteret of St Ouen's Manor was retold by the current seigneur to his captive audience as they gathered in the imposing entrance hall.

The story goes that Philippe de Carteret deeply resented the presence of French troops on the island who in 1467 were weakened sufficiently for him to begin to oppose them.



However, they were keen to capture him too and while he was fishing one day at St Ouen's Pond some French soldiers crept up on him. He saw them in time, however, and mounted his trusty steed and galloped off towards the manor.

When he was cut off by more French troops he was forced to head for Val de Charriere where his way was blocked by a sunken road 18ft (5.5m) deep and 22ft (6.7m) wide.

Spurring his mount he jumped the gulf and raced for the manor whereupon his gallant horse died beneath him as he made good his escape.

The indebted seigneur made sure the beast was buried in the manor grounds and in 1904 the shoulder blade of a horse dating back several centuries was unearthed.

Jean Marsden-Khan, who had travelled from London with her family to be at the reunion, said: “It was a fabulous day with so much history and many ‘cousins’ to meet and swap phone numbers and emails with.



“Le Cercle De Carteret did a fantastic job organising a fascinating trip which went off without a hitch and brought the De Carteret family history in Jersey to life.

“The highlight for me was the opportunity to visit St Ouen’s Manor and see the Charles II riding gloves and the paintings of the black horse and George Carteret who is buried in England.

“No-one seemed to know, however, why the Carterets’ coat of arms is a squirrel cracking a nut!”.



Le Cercle De Carteret party with the seigneur Philip Malet De Carteret, his wife Adele and son Ned De Carteret (centre) and group chairman Mike De Carteret (centre left)

You can view the footage at http://www.channelonline.tv/channelonline_jerseynews/displayarticle.asp?id=496276