



NEW STAFF, NEW PROJECTS, NEW VISIONS: AN UPDATE ON WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING THIS PAST YEAR IN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE DEPARTMENT.

Press release, Tuesday 12 November 2024

From exciting exhibitions featuring 150-year-old photographs to inspiring a new generation of historians and photographers, several changes have taken place over the past year at the Société Jersiaise photographic archive. Two new enthusiastic staff members joined and have plans to reinvigorate the department as well as developing an exciting new project looking to improve access and understanding of the Société's iconic photographic collections.

University graduate and ex-finance administrator Rochelle Merhet assumed responsibility for the department in June earlier this year along with photography graduate Max Le Feuvre.

"It's a pleasure to get to work at my dream job everyday with such a fascinating collection and the most inspiring people. Much of my role consists of managing the photographic collections and assisting researchers looking to investigate the history of our island. We also get a few publishers looking to reproduce our collections".

Rochelle Merhet, Archive and Records Manager

Portraits by Victor Hugo and Thomas Sutton

The team assisted with exciting exhibitions in both the local art scene and in the Island's heritage sector. The SJPA worked in partnership with Jersey Heritage showcasing the portraits of the famous Victor Hugo at Jersey Heritage's new permanent exhibition *La Tèrr'rie d'Jèrri - D's histouaithes dé not'île* based at the Jersey Museum & Art Gallery. Landscape portraits by the 19th century photographic pioneer Thomas Sutton have also been featured.

Rochelle stated that *"we are honoured to play a part in making such important work from these significant photographers available to the public, this is showcasing two important individuals in Jersey's cultural legacy"*.

The exhibition is located on the 2nd floor at the *Jersey Museum and Art Gallery* and went live 10th September 2024.

The Daguerreotype of John-Friedrick Gibaut

At the beginning of 2024 the team lent a daguerreotype from the collection with the inscription; *John Frederick Gibaut, born in Bahia 22nd May 1823, daguerreotyped in Muritiba, November 1843*. It was part of artist Martin Toft's installation and short film, *The Seaflower Venture – Re-imagining the merchant network of Charles Robin* included in *The Channel Islands Contemporary Art Show*, produced and

curated by ArtHouse Jersey and Art for Guernsey, in association with Les Champs Libres in Rennes. The portrait of John Frederick Gibaut was donated to SJPA in 2017 together with another daguerreotype of his father Jean Gibaut who owned a coffee slave plantation in the state of Bahia in Northeast Brazil. Martin Toft visited Brazil in 2018 as part of his maritime photographic research project, Entrepôt and footage from the rural town of Muritiba, where descendants of the Gibaut family still reside is featured in his film.

The Channel Island Contemporary Art Show took place Friday 19 January to Sunday 25 February 2024 At *ArtHouse Jersey* at Capital House, 8 Church Street, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 3NN.

Working with artists: The *Moving Arts Collective*

Earlier this year, members of the art group the *Moving Arts Collective* came together Wednesday 24 July 2024 to explore and research the SJPA's collection surrounding Jersey's tradition of *vraic* collecting.

See the groups article here: <https://www.themovingartscollective.com/news/vraicqusie-visit-to-societe-jersiaise-archives>

Haulieu A-Level Student's annual visit to the Photo Archives

Tuesday 10 September, the SJPA had the privilege of hosting Haulieu's Year 13 A-level photography students for a special introductory session on the importance of archives as well as an exploration of the photographic collections, with specific focus on Jersey's maritime heritage and historical developments of St Helier Harbour.

Full article available here: <https://www.societe.je/photo-archive-department/>

Access to Records Project, Funded by the Jersey Community Foundation

The SJPA launched their Access to Records Project in June earlier this year and supported by The Jersey Community Foundation with funds from the Channel Islands Lottery. The project is being undertaken by writer and translator Orlando Echeverri.

In the past, the focus has been on describing individual photographs in the collection, which has allowed people to access specific pieces of visual content. However, this approach has made it harder to understand the larger picture and the historical importance of the entire collection. Not all our collections are available online, so if someone wants to view materials that isn't sufficiently listed, they must contact our staff members. This significantly limits access for many people and takes up valuable staff time.

The project has two objectives. Firstly, it is increasing the amount of information available to the public by creating detailed summaries for 20 important collections and basic descriptions for 431 groups of materials received between 1996 and 2020. Second, it is making it easier for the community to access this information through specifically curated online content, such as guides, videos, and brief overviews on the catalog. This effort will help more people discover and connect with the historical collections that are part of their shared heritage.

Read Orlando's two essays in response to the collections here:

- **Société Jersiaise Blog Series: *The Polymath's Journey*, 1 October 2024**
<https://www.societe.je/blog/the-polymaths-journey/>

- Société Jersiaise Blog Series: *The Philosophical Toy*, 2 September 2024

<https://www.societe.je/blog/the-philosophical-toy/>

SJPA Social Media Presence

To further improve access to the collections, Archive and Records Manager, Rochelle Merhet started an Instagram with the intention of sharing the collection with a new demographic of viewers.

“Typically, when we get a new collection, it takes a while before the photographs make their way into the catalogue” explains Rochelle. She continues, *“we need to review, appraise, digitize, rehouse, and set up an items description prior to it being available to the public, the Instagram is a way for us to fast track that process. The material being shared is that of recently digitized collections, much of which has never been visible to the public until now”*.

Rochelle further stated that, *“hiding collections behind a paywall and having material inaccessible with overly technical language are practices I want to move away from. For me, it’s important our collections are made accessible for everyone regardless of their background. I think there’s a real urgency to get the collections out there for people to see and appreciate”*.

Digitising the collections

Max Le Feuvre has been digitizing 15,000 film photographs depicting the life and work of pioneering scientist Dr Arthur Maurant as well as photographs by Maurice Richardson, whose work features charming and colourful depictions of Jersey’s 20th century agricultural community.

“Over the last few months, I have thoroughly enjoyed working on the process of digitising the vast photographic collections of both Dr Arthur Maurant and Maurice Richardson. From the perspective of an active photographer, I have found it really inspiring to reflect upon two collections which contain such a richness of depth and quality to them.

What impresses me most about the work of Dr Maurant is the extreme dedication and focus he has towards his specific subject matters – including architecture, geology and the environment. Whilst he uses photography to record his interests, he does so in a very considered manner with great attention to light and composition, creating images which are as poetic and beautiful as they are objective and practical.

In terms of the Maurice Richardson collection, I am drawn to the very natural and candid feel of his images, an approach strongly linked to classic documentary photography. Subsequently I find his work helpful in terms of reflecting upon my own work and inspiring new ideas, specifically as it provides me with an example of high quality colour documentary photography taken in Jersey.”

Max Le Feuvre, Archive Assistant

END

EDITOR NOTES

The Jersey Community Foundation, a registered charity, links donors with local causes in Jersey. As part of a global network of 1,800+ foundations, it ensures efficient fund management, aligning with donors' wishes through specialised services.

The Société Jersiaise is an educational charity concerned with the history, language, culture and environment of the island of Jersey. The SJPA serves this purpose by preserving and providing access to records. The archive is a unique and important cultural heritage asset for Jersey, documenting our archaeology, geology, ecology, economy, community, architecture and culture through 150 years of producing and collecting photographic materials.

The Société Jersiaise Photographic Archive (SJPA) supports the mission of the *Société Jersiaise*, in serving the community and facilitating research. Notable collections include those of Henry Mullins, Thomas Sutton, Percival Dunham, Ernest Baudoux, Albert Smith, Joan Stevens, Maurice Richardson, Dr Arthur Mourant.

Rochelle Merhet is a semi-recent university graduate with who completed her degree in Illustration at the University of Lincoln in 2022 before beginning her career in private wealth administration at *IQ EQ Jersey*. She recently began her masters in Archives and Records Management at the *University of Dundee*.

Max Le Feuvre completed his undergraduate degree in Photography with Video at the University of Ulster in 2020. He has been involved in several of the SJPA's projects throughout his education and career including the digitising of the photographs by Margaret and Roger Long. He previously worked as a picture framer at the Framing Workshop before taking on a full-time position as the SJPA's archive assistant in April of this year. Max is also an active freelance photographer and has previously worked on assignments with several organisations and groups including the Bailiwick Express, Jersey Cricket and Jersey Irish GAA Club.

Orlando Echeverri is an author and translator working on the Access to Records Project at the *Société Jersiaise Photographic Archive*.

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SOCIALS

Website: www.societe.je

SJPA Instagram: [@societejersiaise_photoarchive](https://www.instagram.com/societejersiaise_photoarchive)

IMAGES: please contact Rochelle Merhet for high resolution copies.



1. PORTRAITS OF MONS VICTOR HUGO

SJPA/002535, SJPA/003803

Charles Hugo

1853

Salted paper prints

Photographs taken in Jersey by his brother Charles Hugo while both were in exile from France.



2. TOUR DU SUD, LA CARRIÈRE, ST. OUEN'S BAY

SJPA/008010

Thomas Sutton

Salted paper print

Remains of ruined coastal defense tower, Tour du Sud, la Carrière, St. Ouen's bay, Jersey. Plate from souvenir de jersey, published 1854.



3. ST. HELIER HARBOUR

SJPA/000271

Albert Smith

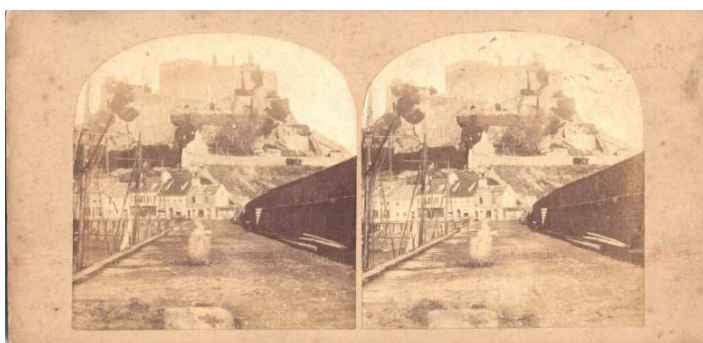
1897

The S.S. roebuck dressed overall on it's maiden voyage 1897. View towards fort regent with observers on quayside of St. Helier harbour



**4. HAUTLIEU
STUDENTS
VISITING THE
SOCIÉTÉ JERSIAISE**

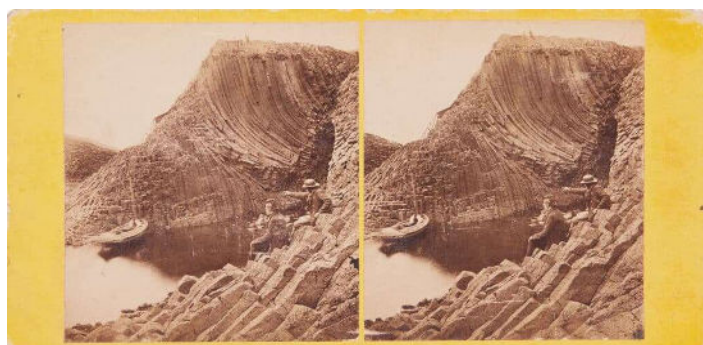
Photograph by
Martin Toft
Tuesday 10
September 2024



**5. STEREOSCOPIC PHOTOGRAPH OF MONT
ORGUEIL CASTLE**

AC-002

Unknown photographer
Part of the Arthur Mourant Collection
c. 1850 - 1900



**6. STEREOSCOPIC PHOTOGRAPH OF THE
MOUTH OF THE CLAMSHELL CAVE, STAFFA**

AC-002

By G. W. Wilson
Part of the Arthur Mourant Collection
c. 1850 - 1900



7. CONGLOMERATES, LA COUPE, JERSEY

AC-002-BC-217

Arthur Mourant

August 1953



**8. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ITEMS FROM THE EXCAVATION
OF FALDOUET AND THE PINNACLE, JERSEY**

AC-002-BB

Arthur Mourant

April 1981

Polished stone segmental pendants. Faldouet and
Pinnacle polished beads. The smaller one of siltstone.



9. PHOTOGRAPH OF FARMERS AT GOREY, JERSEY

AC-004-03-11-13

Maurice Richardson

February 1981



**10. PHOTOGRAPH OF MEN IN FRONT OF BARRELS,
JERSEY**

AC-004-02-00-01

Maurice Richardson

November 1977



**11. PHOTOGRAPH OF HAYSTACK AND THRESHING
MACHINE, JERSEY**

AC-004-02-12-03

Maurice Richardson

November 1978