



## Secretary's Annual Report

13<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hereby submit my first annual report for the year just ended. Below is a summary of our member meetings and Society events for the previous 12 months.

### 2018

- March**      **Annual General Meeting**  
Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> at the Société Jersiaise
- April**        **"Living Off the Land" Joint Working Event**  
Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> in the Victorian Walled Kitchen Garden at Saumarez Park. Guernsey.  
Organised by Richard Heaume, Colin Isherwood, and Wendy Brée
- May**         **Liberation Day**  
**Slave Workers Memorial Service**  
Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> At the Slave Workers Memorial, Westmount
- 2018 Occupation Review**  
Review No. 46 was released by the CIOS Guernsey branch
- June**        **Masonic Temple Visit**  
Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> organised by Geoff Morris
- July**         **"K2" Bunker 40th Anniversary Opening**  
Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> at Strongpoint Corbiere
- August**      **CIOS Guernsey Visit**  
Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> organised by Noel Le Fondré and Colin Isherwood
- Normandy Day Trip**  
Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> organised by Noel Le Fondré
- November**   **"Festung Vlissingen" Talk**  
Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> at the Société Jersiaise, organised by Neil Walker
- Trinity Commando Raid Memorial Service**  
Friday 9<sup>th</sup> at Petit Port, Egypt, Noel Le Fondré representing the Society

### 2019

- January**     **Local History Fayre**  
Friday 18<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> at the Town Library, Tony Pike representing the Society
- Holocaust Remembrance Day**  
Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> at the Maritime Museum, Noel Le Fondré representing the Society
- February**    **Occupation Conversations Nos 2-4**  
Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>, at the Société Jersiaise



## The Past

The Society's roots are in Guernsey, going all the way back to a then-14 year old Richard Heaume's "German Occupation Collector's Society". This was later re-formed as the Guernsey Occupation Society and as new members from Jersey joined, it became the Channel Islands Occupation Society. Its aims were to organise walks and talks, to archive Occupation photographs and information, and to publish annual A5-sized Occupation Reviews.

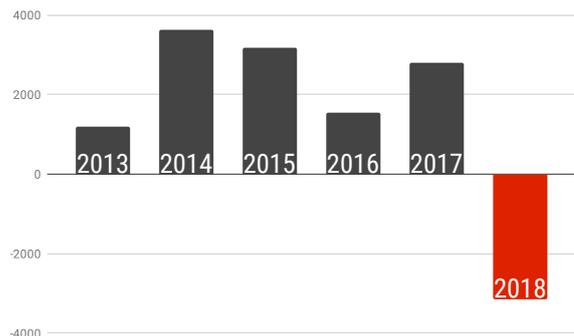
Years later, meetings were held with Jersey's Public Works Department and it was agreed that the growing Society could open up the Underground Command Bunker at Noirmont Point.

The Jersey Evening Post's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Liberation Day supplement contains a quote from the late Michael Ginns, in which he says *"One of the most important objects of the Society is to get to the truth of what happened during the Occupation whether people like it or not"*. Deported to an Internee camp in Bad Wurzach for most of the war, Michael also focused on reconciliation with Germany.

## The Present

Today's Society is different. Membership numbers are declining, as of Monday we have 371 members which is 48 fewer than this time last year, an 11% decrease.

Most of our resources are devoted to operating and expanding the portfolio of fortifications we manage. Insurance and upkeep will remain a large portion of our annual budget, these things are costly after all, however this year spending by the Fortifications Sub-committee has soared.



CIOS annual net profit/loss

The draft 2018 accounts I've seen reflect a net loss exceeding £3000, with the bunker teams spending nearly £5500 more than what they earned last year. If a commercial trading company reported similar membership and net income declines, Board members would be getting sacked already.

Last year we raised member subscription prices, in part because the bunker teams opposed using bunker takings to cover member expenses. Now a costly new project at Battery Moltke is on hold, awaiting more income from member subscriptions this month. That does not seem fair.

Bob Le Sueur tells me *"The CIOS rather desperately needs people at the top who are more interested in what effect those five years had on the island's social, cultural, economic and post-war political life than in the physical conservation of what were buildings put up by people who were then"*



*incontrovertibly the enemy.*" I wholeheartedly agree. I think the bunkers are fascinating and well worth preserving in a sustainable way, but I think the experiences of Jersey's civilian population during the Occupation period are even more fascinating.

Most of the people on the bunker teams do excellent work, and act with integrity. Resistance Nests Millbrook and La Mare Mill are my favourites, with their emphasis on authenticity. However there are some issues with oversight of the bunker teams which we should not ignore.

January 2017 the Committee adopted a requirement that all mechanical and electrical works be safety inspected by an engineer before that opening season. I ask about it at Board meetings and I believe little progress has been made. We owe the bunker teams and visiting public better safety processes.

I have opposed Fortifications Sub-committee plans to change our Rules and allow re-enactors as this is damaging to our image. Our TripAdvisor page features recent photos of a re-enactor in German uniform visiting Strongpoint Corbiere. It's not a good look, and is a flagrant breach of our Rules. I opposed a Committee member who falsely claimed to have prior permission for a new project from a previous Committee, after I checked those meeting minutes and discovered the truth.

My challenges often lead to arguments and complaints about my tone, but this increasingly looks to me like a focus on the messenger instead of the message. Complaining about my tone is easy, but it does not fix the larger issues we face. That takes leadership skills and focus.

Disagreements are frustrating but are not necessarily a bad thing, or a sign that the Society is "falling apart". For proof, look no further than the politicians up in Westminster (especially today), it's complete havoc. Parliament isn't in any danger of going away, they will eventually agree some compromise. What worries me is apathy. Apathy is what causes groups to fail, when people stop caring enough to fight their corner.

## **The Future**

My top priority is to place a renewed focus on Jersey and its civilian population. I'm out interviewing people and collecting their memories, recording videos, and sharing their essays on our website and in our newsletters. This is going exceptionally well but my time is limited, and I could use more help. I note CIOS Guernsey have three Secretaries on their Committee, which proves they are smarter than us.

We are now a registered Charity and I would like to work more closely with local good causes. Jersey Heritage and the Société are digitising artefacts and putting them online, which is an area we lag behind in. Looking at the larger picture, I am working with Acorn Enterprises to try to recruit volunteers from the Disabled community to assist us, boosting their skills and confidence. Same



for the States of Jersey's "Back to Work" team, I believe we can put the fortifications we manage to better use and see them opened more frequently, while at the same time helping people develop job skills and local knowledge.

Therefore I ask you to consider the election this evening. I have proposed three new people and this is very much a package deal. All three are excellent candidates and if I am re-elected, I need them on board to deliver a more balanced Society and to tell the story of Jersey. We have a major milestone next year with Liberation 2020, and your vote will decide what our priorities shall be.

We have a lot to do before Liberation 2020 but I remain optimistic and I believe we can make great progress in telling the story of Jersey during World War Two, and preserve all that amazing history.

Tom Brossman  
Secretary  
13<sup>th</sup> March 2019