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# INTO EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2019

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Les Caches Farm bequeathed to the Trust in 1993 by Ruth Le Huray

## Open House Category

The National Trust of Guernsey (NTG) is pleased to submit Les Caches Farm for consideration in the Open House Category of the International National Trusts Organisation Excellence Awards 2019

Contact Details:  
Sara Lampitt,  
Vice-President and Honorary Public Relations Officer,  
National Trust of Guernsey  
26, Cornet Street,  
St Peter Port  
Guernsey  
GY1 1LF  
E-mail: [admin@nationaltrust.gg](mailto:admin@nationaltrust.gg)



*The National Trust of Guernsey aims to preserve and enhance the island's natural beauty, its historic buildings and its heritage.*  
– Mission Statement

## Highlights

The NTG works to satisfy the purposes set out by its founder members and imagines they would be proud that Les Caches Farm stands out as the Trust’s newest public face.

All heritage organisations share the dilemma of putting their aims and objectives into practice while facing uncertainty over issues, often outside their control, such as regulation, funding and reliance on volunteers. Les Caches Farm has been a success despite such challenges.

The potential for Les Caches Farm to offer new activities whilst remaining true to its acknowledged place in local history is substantial, and merits recognition.

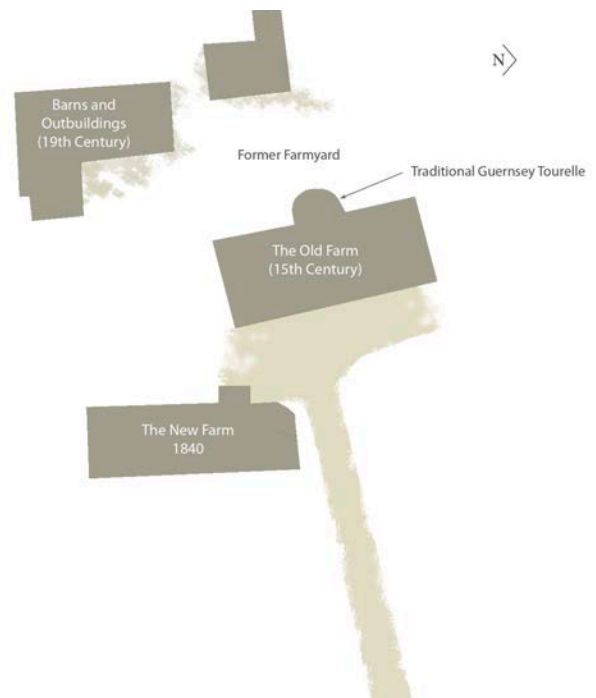
## Summary

The National Trust of Guernsey (NTG) was established in 1960 when a dedicated group of individuals, concerned that the natural beauty of the Island was at risk from inappropriate development, formed an Association to arouse public interest in the subject, to preserve buildings of architectural and/or historical merit and to own property which should be preserved.



One of three public-facing properties managed by NTG, the site of Les Caches Farm, generously bequeathed to the Trust by Ruth Le Huray in 1993, lies in the rural setting of Les Villets, a hamlet in the Parish of the Forest.

Comprising five buildings in varying degrees of neglect or ruin, including a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Guernsey farmhouse (Les Caches Farm), a 15<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse (Les Caches Barn), a cider press barn and associated outbuildings, a twenty year project to restore and conserve the buildings is now complete. All site buildings are considered to be fine examples of their original purpose and style and have been returned to active use.



Site plan showing the five buildings, all of which were in varying degrees of neglect or ruin





In 2009, the restored Les Caches Barn opened to the public, with limited practical use, serving as an annexe to the NTG's Folk and Costume Museum, rather than being identified as a distinct venue with its own prospects. During the last three years, the site's potential to serve several further purposes has been recognised.



Outlying buildings lay in a state of ruin





2012 – 2014 restoration of all heritage buildings at the site



2014 saw the completed restoration of all the heritage buildings at the site, after which attention turned to the enhancement of outlying agricultural areas. In 2017, as part of a community project with Forest Primary School children and in partnership with four Island organisations, the NTG planted an apple orchard in an area at Les Caches Farm, previously recorded in the 1787 Duke of Richmond map, as a cider apple orchard.

## Forest pupils see the wood for the trees

by Helen Devonshire

hdevonshire@guernseypress.com

CIDER apple trees were planted by Forest Primary School pupils on a National Trust site which has been restored to resemble how it would have been centuries ago.

There are now 24 trees, made up of three varieties – Michelin, Browns and Harry Masters – planted at the Les Caches Farm site, Forest.

The site is an example of a mid-19th century Guernsey farmhouse and barn.

The project was part of the Channel Islands Co-operative Society carbon offset policy and in conjunction with Guernsey Trees for Life, the society is committed to funding tree planting in the island to cover its carbon footprint.

**‘We’re delighted that the children from the Forest School are getting involved in this worthwhile environmental project, which is part of our lasting legacy to the island’**

Channel Islands Co-operative Society community officer Tanya Dorrity

Representatives from the National Trust, Roquette Cider and CCD Chartered Architects also assisted with the work yesterday.

Guernsey Trees for Life secretary Andy McCutcheon said: ‘The idea was to get the school involved



Forest Primary pupils planting trees at National Trust land at Les Caches Farm as part of the Co-op’s carbon offset policy in conjunction with Guernsey Trees for Life. Left to right are: Emma Toms, Joud Ismail, both 10, Jessica Swale, Ethan Bell, both 11, and Lauren de Jersey, 10.

(Picture by Peter Frankland, 17409375)

at the early stage of planting, trying to re-create the 18th century cider apple orchard.’

Year 6 pupils Ethan Bell, 11, and Lauren de Jersey, 10, enjoyed taking part.

‘We have been learning how to plant trees’, Ethan said.

Lauren said they had also found out how to protect the tree while

it grows.

‘We have also been learning about why we were putting in the guard, and the wire and the chips and why the post is there’, she said.

Ethan said they all had different jobs to do.

‘Some of us got the soil to put the tree in.’

Lauren said: ‘We all put the soil

in and some held the wheelbarrow.’

National Trust of Guernsey honorary treasurer Ian McCathie said it had put a lot into restoring the site.

Channel Islands Co-operative Society community officer Tanya Dorrity said: ‘We’re delighted that the children from the Forest School are getting involved in this

worthwhile environmental project, which is part of our lasting legacy to the island.’

Design director at CCD Chartered Architects, Oliver Westgarth, said it had already restored the thatched building and barn on the site. He said the Duke of Richmond map showed this site had a cider orchard there previously.

Since 2017, the NTG has been working with representatives from La Société Guernesaise, a local learned society, to understand better the site’s biodiversity and to establish the most appropriate means of land management. NTG is also working with the local award-winning Pollinator Project to enhance biodiversity potential and educational opportunities at Les Caches Farm.

A nearby reed bed is within a designated Site of Special Significance. Two adjacent fields, which have most recently been used for hay-making or the grazing of sheep, offer enormous scope for the study of nature and wildlife. Indeed, as birds, insects and small mammals are constant visitors to this natural environment, the grounds of Les Caches Farm were used during the summer of 2018 as part of a university Master’s research study into the behavior and habitat of Guernsey’s small mammals.

The Les Caches Farm site, with its restored and refurbished buildings and contents, all in their natural setting and open to NTG Members and the visiting public alike, demonstrates that NTG has fully satisfied its general purposes of preservation, restoration, enhancement, protection and exhibition as set out in the National Trust of Guernsey (Incorporation) Law, 1967.



## Open House Category Criteria

- Historic places creatively reimagined

Les Caches Farm well illustrates what can be achieved through the involvement of specialist advisors and craftsmen, enthusiastic staff and volunteers, in restoring buildings to give renewed purpose.

Les Caches Farm remains embedded in its agricultural and architectural past which may have been lost to future generations had it not been for NTG's commitment to preservation and restoration in accordance with its mission statement. Opportunity abounds for a range of social, cultural and educational activities, for all ages mindful that the premises were almost always a home as well as a working farm.



An arts and crafts competition was held, focusing on the site for subject matter, followed by an exhibition of artwork within Les Caches Barn. Organisations have held meetings in Les Caches Barn and musical recitals have taken place, both inside the building and in the courtyard. Les Caches has also proved an ideal and warmly appreciated venue for a humanist funeral.

Specialist tours have taken place for historic building enthusiasts and activities such as planting trees in the orchard, planting bulbs, or tending the grounds have encouraged environmental interest and participation from local school groups. Well-received reviews and future bookings endorse Les Caches Farm as a successful venue for many types of gatherings.



- Historic places more accessible

Visitors are encouraged to explore the buildings during the open season from May to September, when guided tours are available. The surrounding land is open all year round for visitors to freely enjoy the fields, the orchard and to see the reed beds.



During the restoration process, demonstrations and seminars of the traditional crafts and materials were held, including lime plastering, thatching and granite masonry. A film of the work forms part of NTG's educational resources, demonstrating its commitment to teaching and learning, as well as safeguarding and celebrating the Island's cultural and built heritage.





- Historic places relevant in today's society

Aware of the increasingly apparent habit for upcoming generations' lifestyle to be tech-tied, the encouragement of young people into the environments available through NTG's landscapes and properties is a high priority. Les Caches Farm is able to meet this aim. An educational programme with Elizabeth College students, based at Les Caches Farm, includes field work and exploration into nearby NTG landscapes and properties. Planning further educational schemes for school children of all ages, is underway for 2019 and beyond.

Hundreds of visitors to Les Caches Farm during 2018 have voiced great appreciation of the restored site and its new calendar of events. An open-door policy for ad hoc visits has been enjoyed, together with social engagements for as many people as possible, and planned events.

Some fifty years later, the vision of NTG's founding members, supported by political recognition through its 1967 incorporation, remains highly relevant. NTG's aspiration to protect the Island's natural beauty, traditions and heritage for future generations is not only embedded, but expansive and expanding with Member support.

The restored site of Les Caches Farm undoubtedly provides new opportunities for many to appreciate Guernsey's heritage, social history and agricultural inheritance for years to come.



