Gerald Durrell Week
Jersey, 25 June to 1 July 2016

conservation academy
durrell

saving species from extinction
A note from Lee Durrell

Gerald Durrell Week is a magical and fascinating experience for anyone who has been inspired by Gerald Durrell’s books. It is a gathering of like-minded people who follow in Gerry’s footsteps, visiting the places he wrote about, meeting the animals he loved and reminding each other of the important legacy he left the world.

The first Gerald Durrell Week was held in Corfu a number of years ago. It became an annual event, one so successful that we have decided to offer a similar experience in Jersey, where Gerry eventually settled.

I do hope you will be able to join us for the first ever Gerald Durrell Week Jersey!

Lee Durrell
Overview of the course

Led by our Honorary Director, Lee Durrell, this week-long course will introduce you to the headquarters of Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, showing you just how Gerald Durrell’s work lives on in the organisation he created to save species from extinction. During the week you will get to know our expert staff, who will show you behind the scenes in the animal departments and explain how the work we do here at the Durrell Wildlife Park supports our projects around the world. You will also learn about our major conservation programmes in Madagascar and Mauritius and the impacts they are having on species, wild habitats and people.

There will be field trips to our Jersey-based projects to see how we are contributing to wildlife conservation in the Island. You will learn about Jersey’s fascinating natural history from local experts, and you will visit places of historical and cultural interest around the Island.

All this will allow you to discover the Jersey that became Gerald Durrell’s home for more than 35 years.

We will be joined by tutors from Gerald Durrell Week Corfu, eminent natural historians who will talk about their work on wildflowers, butterflies and herpetofauna in Corfu and elsewhere.
Course outline

The whole week will be an informal mix of talks, walks, visits, readings from Gerald Durrell’s books and special behind-the-scenes access to parts of Durrell Wildlife Park normally not open to the public. We will also explore some of the highlights of Jersey’s natural scenery.

Saturday 25th June
Arrival and welcome
Arrive in Jersey and welcome dinner at Durrell, hosted by Lee.

Sunday 26th June
Menagerie Manor and the Durrell Legacy
An introduction to Gerald Durrell’s legacy and a tour of the Wildlife Park led by Lee. Experienced staff will take us on detailed tours of some of the animal sections and other departments within the Park. David Shimwell and David Ascroft will speak about Corfu and its spectacular natural history, which so inspired the young Gerry.

Monday 27th June
Jersey – the Corfu of the English Channel
In the company of some of Jersey’s finest natural history experts, we will start to explore the Island, observing Jersey’s rich bird life and visiting Durrell’s reintroduction site for the red-billed chough. We will spend the afternoon exploring the dunes and wetlands of St Ouen’s Bay, delving into a treasure trove of orchids, insects, birds and other animals.

Tuesday 28th June
Ark on the Move
We will learn about Durrell’s conservation activities around the world, particularly in Mauritius and Madagascar. We will tour the animal sections and other departments within the Park not seen on the first day. The afternoon will be spent exploring more of Jersey’s natural areas.

Wednesday 29th June
Jersey’s Coasts and Seas
We will discuss and explore some of Jersey’s marine life in the company of local marine biology experts, and look at the Island’s network of Ramsar protected areas. Subject to suitable weather, we will take a low-tide walk to explore Jersey’s internationally important and spectacular intertidal marine zones. Subject to confirmation, we will also visit the famous Eric Young Orchid Foundation.

Thursday 30th June
The Cold-blooded Cohort
We will go on expedition with butterfly expert Dr Dan Danahar, visiting Jersey’s best insect-spotting sites and contributing information to Jersey’s butterfly database. In the afternoon, we will visit the famous Mont Orgueil Castle and learn some of its human history and natural history. It is a stronghold for one of the only populations of wall lizards in the British Isles.

Friday 1st July
Animals in Trust
We will spend our final morning at the Wildlife Park, visiting behind the scenes in the Veterinary Department and the Organic Farm. There will be free time in the afternoon, including an option to take a boat trip (additional charge) to Les Ecrehous, one of Jersey’s offshore reefs. We will wrap up the week in style with a Durrellesque feast and reflect on the Week’s experiences.

In addition to the activities above, there will be informal evening sessions to include films, talks and lessons in how to use a bat detector and a moth trap. Please note course outline may be subject to minor changes.


**Course leaders**

**Dr Lee Durrell**
Lee is Honorary Director of Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, taking on the mantle when her husband, Gerald Durrell, passed away in 1995. Lee gained a PhD in zoology from Duke University in the US with a dissertation on animal vocalisations in Madagascar, where she lived for two years in the early 1970s. She married Gerald in 1979 and worked with him on books and television series about nature and conservation over the next decade. Lee established and ran the Trust’s conservation programme in Madagascar from 1983 to 2001, the first project being for the recovery of the critically endangered ploughshare tortoise, earning her the nickname ‘Grandmother of the Tortoise’ in Madagascar. In 2000 she acquired her first light aeroplane and flew animals to and from their breeding programmes in Jersey and various British and European zoos for the next ten years. In 2011 she was awarded the MBE for services to conservation.

**Prof David Shimwell**
David, affectionately known as Chunkie, was David Bellamy’s PhD student and is now a close friend. Chunkie is a great asset to Gerald Durrell Week as a botanist, campaigner on environmental conservation, a lecturer at Durham University on Mediterranean ecology and the history of European vegetation. He is currently writing a book on the differences between Gerald’s Corfu and the present day.

**Dr Dan Danahar**
Dr Dan Danahar is the Biodiversity Co-ordinator at Dorothy Stringer School in Brighton. He has led a number of local biodiversity-related initiatives, including persuading the public to count butterflies, which in turn inspired the charity Butterfly Conservation to develop the Big Butterfly Count. He also introduced Butterfly Havens as a habitat restoration approach for chalk grassland butterflies, giving the public access to nature on their doorsteps. Most recently he has been producing “Butterflies of the Biosphere” video series, which can be viewed on YouTube. Dan is Executive Trustee of the charitable company “Big Nature”, which aims to revitalise the relationship between people and their local wildlife by creating natural habitats within the Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere region.

**David Ashcroft**
David was the Managing Director of The Durrell School of Corfu which ran from 2002 to 2014. He is a strong supporter of compassionate farming, originally trained in agriculture, specializing in genetics, at Lancaster University. He managed several commercial farms before taking up the reins of running the largest city educational farm in London, The Mudchute. His farming career led him to take his family back to Cornwall in order to fulfil his life’s aim and run his own farm. David now lives in Corfu and spends his time between renovating houses, enjoying the wildlife and planning and running Gerald Durrell Week Corfu with his wife, Alexina.
Course leaders

**Anne Binney**
Anne has chaired the Landscape Advisory Committee at Durrell for many years and is a keen gardener. She has raised over half a million pounds for Durrell by putting on opera performances in her garden for the last 28 years. In 2015 she joined Gerald Durrell Week Corfu which she loved, and as a result felt that a Gerald Durrell Week in Jersey was a great idea for 2016. She has been very involved in putting the programme together and planning the logistical aspects of the week. She will be available throughout the week to help with running the course and has written an exciting quiz which will be a fun event at the end of the course to check you’ve been paying attention!

**Francis Binney**
Francis grew up on Jersey and has always been fascinated by the sea. Since he first donned a SCUBA tank aged 12, he has wanted to study and work in the marine environment. Gaining a degree in Marine and Freshwater Biology, Francis spent some time working in Indonesia and Sri Lanka before returning to Jersey where he now chairs the Marine Biology Section of the Société Jersiaise. The Section’s work has focused on recording, mapping and protecting the diverse flora and fauna along the coasts and in the shallow seas. Francis has studied a variety of subjects ranging from the habitats of rare molluscs to the huge blooms of Ulva spp. on Jersey’s beaches and the impacts they have on local wildlife.

**Mike Stentiford**
An enthusiast of Jersey’s natural environment since the mid 1970s, Mike continues to be actively involved in local nature conservation. As local group leader of the Young Ornithologists Club and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, he received the RSPB Presidents Award in 1991. In 1978 he was instrumental in setting up the Jersey Conservation Volunteers and was countryside interpretation officer with the States of Jersey until his retirement in 2000. Mike was President of the National Trust for Jersey (2008-2011) and is currently Chairman of the Trust’s Coastline Campaign. He received an MBE in the Queen’s New Year Honours List in 2000.

**Jordan Todd**
Jordan Todd is an assistant ecologist and countryside ranger for the local environmental consultancy, Nurture Ecology. He attended school in Jersey before attaining an honours degree at Plymouth University in Environmental Biology. In his spare time Jordan operates a popular wildlife blog, Jersey Naturalist, sharing images of local wildlife to try and raise environmental awareness. The blog currently has a following of nearly 10,000 islanders, and as a result of this success Jordan was voted Environmentalist of the Year in the Pride of Jersey Awards 2015.
The course will be held at Durrell Conservation Academy in Jersey, Channel Islands. Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (Durrell) was established by the world-renowned naturalist and author Gerald Durrell in 1963 with the primary aim of saving species from extinction. We now run nearly 50 projects in more than a dozen countries worldwide and have played a pivotal role in the recovery efforts for several species.

Durrell Conservation Academy is located at the Trust’s headquarters, Durrell Wildlife Park. In 1984 Gerald Durrell formally established the International Training Centre (now known as Durrell Conservation Academy) on Jersey as a form of “mini-university” designed to equip conservationists from across the world with the animal management and critical thinking skills required to bring species back from the brink of extinction. The Academy has taught more than 4,000 people from 137 countries.

Our facilities include a 54 seat purpose-built lecture theatre, two libraries, a computer lab and a classroom. There is 24 hour access to our computers and free wifi is available throughout.

Most course participants choose to stay at our YHA-accredited Durrell Wildlife Hostel, which is immediately adjacent to Durrell Conservation Academy, although if you prefer to stay elsewhere, we will be happy to suggest suitable accommodation. The Hostel offers shared rooms in a hostel-style residence right next to the Wildlife Park. It includes a TV lounge, kitchen and dining room, and lunches and evening meals are provided for course participants staying at the Hostel.
Cost and booking information

The course fee is £575 per adult and £980 per couple. A limited number of places are available for accompanied children (minimum age 12) for a fee of £315. Durrell Wildlife Hostel offers full board accommodation for £35 per night. If you choose to stay elsewhere, contacting and booking accommodation is the responsibility of the participant. If you do stay offsite, please note that there will be evening meals and events that you are expected to attend. You will be responsible for your own transport to and from the Wildlife Park and there will be a £9 per person surcharge for meals.

Please note that we plan to have several café/pub lunches while exploring Jersey during the week, but the cost of these is not included in the package. There will be several walking excursions, so participants should come suitably equipped with walking shoes and waterproof jackets. Do bring binoculars if you have them.

Travel to and from Jersey, as well as appropriate travel insurance, are the responsibility of the participant. We may be able to provide a pick-up service between the airport/harbour and Wildlife Park, but this is not guaranteed. Minibus transport will be provided for excursions during the week.

For further information or to book a place, please contact +44 (0)1534 860037 or email academy@durrell.org