Gerald Durrell Week
Jersey, 15 - 21 July 2017
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 now offer a similar experience in Jersey, where Gerry eventually settled.

I do hope you will be able to join us for the Gerald Durrell Week Jersey!
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 Durrell Wildlife Park supports our projects around the world. You will also learn about our major conservation programmes in Madagascar 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, www.geralddurrellscorfu.org, eminent natural historians who will talk about their work 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 15TH JULY
Arrival and welcome
Arrive in Jersey and welcome dinner at Durrell, hosted by Lee.

SUNDAY 16TH JULY
Menagerie Manor and the Durrell Legacy
An introduction to Gerald Durrell’s legacy and a tour of Durrell 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. There will be a talk about Corfu and its spectacular natural history, which so inspired the young Gerry.

MONDAY 17TH JULY
Jersey – Jewel 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 18TH JULY
Ark on the Move
We will learn about Durrell’s conservation activities around the world, particularly in Madagascar. We will tour further 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, including a visit to the spectacular Ouaisné Common, home to some of the rarest amphibians in the British Isles.

WEDNESDAY 19TH JULY
“Touch one thread…”
We will spend the morning at Durrell Wildlife Park, visiting behind the scenes in the Veterinary and Herpetology Departments and the Organic Farm. In the afternoon, we will visit the internationally-famous Eric Young Orchid Foundation.

THURSDAY 20TH JULY
The Cold-blooded Cohort
We will go on expedition with local natural history experts, visiting some of Jersey’s best insect- and plant-spotting sites and contributing information to Jersey’s butterfly database. In the evening, we will experience a special Gerald Durrell-themed meal, and then explore the nocturnal world of bats, moths and glow-worms, on a unique out-of-hours tour of Durrell Wildlife Park.

FRIDAY 21ST JULY
Jersey’s Coasts and Seas
We will discuss and explore some of Jersey’s marine life in the company of local marine biology experts. Subject to weather, we will take a low-tide walk to explore Jersey’s internationally important and spectacular intertidal marine zones. In the afternoon, we will visit the famous Mont Orgueil Castle and learn some of its human and natural history. It is a stronghold for one of the only populations of wall lizards in the British Isles. 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 talks and classic Gerald Durrell films. Please note that the above 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.

Dr David Shimwell
David, affectionately known as Chunky, was David Bellamy’s PhD student and is now a close friend. Chunky 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.

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 fulfill 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.
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 29 years. In 2015 she joined Gerald Durrell Week Corfu which she loved, and as a result helped establish the Gerald Durrell Week in Jersey from 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.
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 5,000 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 £1035 per couple. A limited number of places are available for accompanied children (minimum age 12) for a fee of £400 per child. Durrell Wildlife Hostel offers full board accommodation for £37 per night. This can be booked at the same time as places on the course. If you choose to stay elsewhere, you are responsible for booking your accommodation, and for arranging your own transport to and from the Wildlife Park.

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