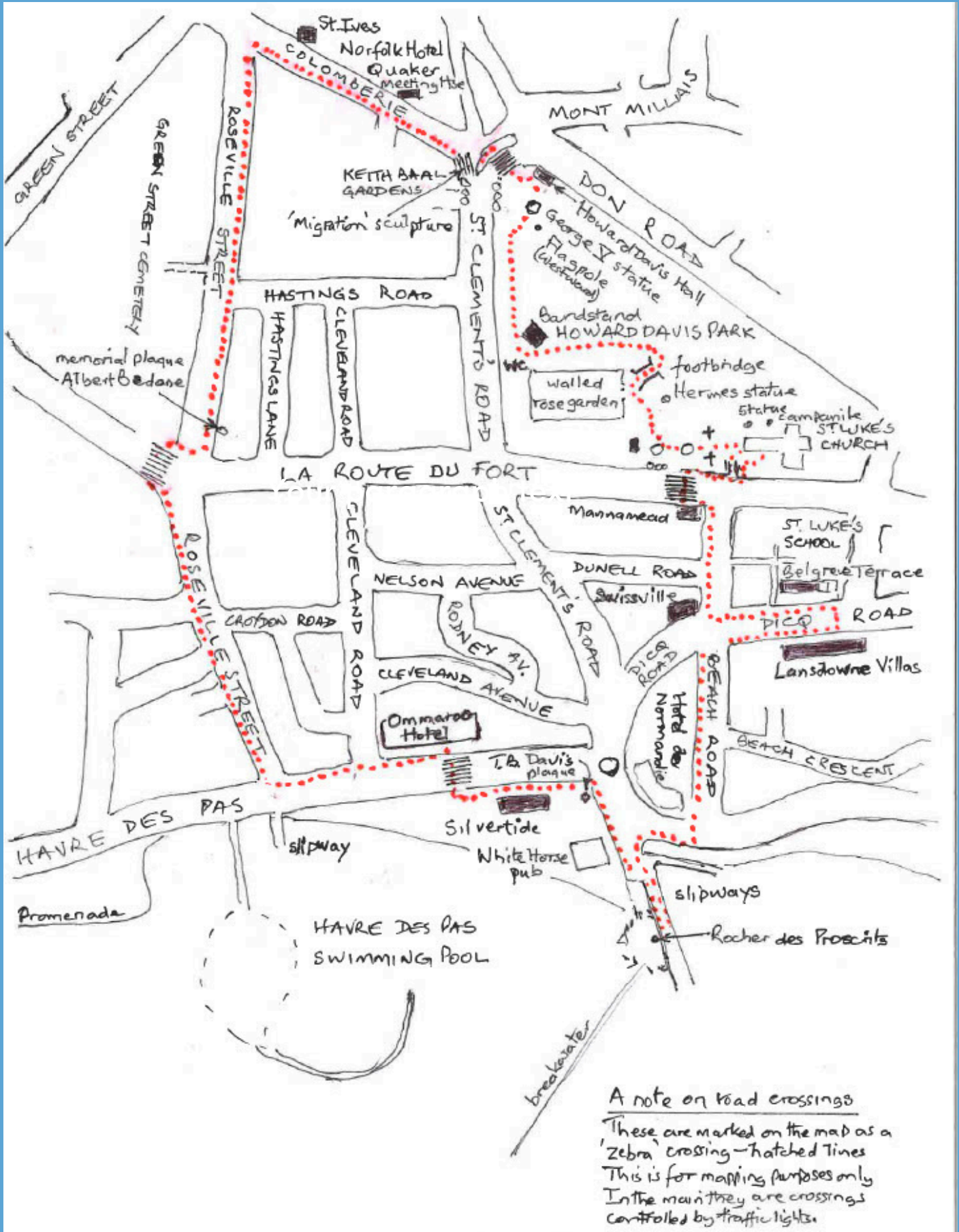


Ommaroo Hotel Walk, kindly collated by Adrian Light



This Ommaroo Hotel Walk was kindly collated by local history enthusiast,
Adrian Light.

Please do take time to follow the walk route and, if you enjoy it, please
consider making a small donation to Dementia Jersey, using the collection
box at Reception.

Thank you.

The Ommaroo Hotel team



Dementia Jersey

Support when you need it most

This walk starts and ends at the Ommaroo Hotel. It is just over 1 mile (1700 metres) in length. It will introduce you to some significant events in Jersey's history (including some aspects of the German Occupation), to the work of one of its most illustrious architects, to some delightful domestic seaside architecture, and to one of France's greatest writers. Jersey, and St Helier in particular, is blessed with an inordinate amount of Public Art and this walk also features several of these works.

During the walk, you are encouraged to look up at the buildings. Many feature lovely dormer windows, gables and ridge tiles. At ground level you will also find that there are a lot of ornamental railings (e.g. the top of Beach Road). In the UK many railings were removed to provide material for armaments during WWII, but no such measures occurred in Jersey under German Occupation.

Before you leave the Hotel, you will find it useful to grab a copy of Visit Jersey's Tourist Map, available at Reception. This will supplement the sketch map of your route and enable you to appreciate the wider context of the walk. There are public toilets in Howard Davis Park, not far from St Luke's Church.

Leave the Hotel by the front entrance, cross the pedestrian crossing immediately to you left. Having crossed the road turn left.

Look back at the Hotel. The Ommaroo is just one of many hotels that were created to service the growing popularity of the area of Havre des Pas as a seaside resort in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Hotel was originally a terrace of four houses. Numbers 3 and 4 were designed by the pre-eminent Jersey born architect, Adolphus Curry (1848-1910), who also designed the Jersey Opera House. More of his work will be encountered later in the walk. The terrace opened as a hotel in 1916. Its unusual name is believed to arise from the name of a town in New Zealand – Oamuru.

Walk eastwards towards the mini-roundabout.

On your right you will see a building, Silvertide, now Apartments. During the German Occupation of the Channel Islands this building was the headquarters of the German Secret Field Police (Geheime Feldpolizei, or GFP). They are often confused with the SS but were a secret military police who carried out plain clothed and undercover security work in the field. They were created for the length of the war, so the units ceased to exist at the end of WWII. However, like the SS they were not above carrying out torture and executing prisoners. Ironically, with the collapse of the Nazi regime, the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, in trying to escape the Allies, posed as a member of the GFP, not knowing that they too had been proscribed as potential war criminals and when stopped by Allied troops was taken into custody. He promptly committed suicide in his cell.

Continue as far as the mini roundabout.

Up on the shop (Cleveland Stores) wall on your right you will see a plaque commemorating the fact that T B Davis was born here. Born to a shipwright working in the shipyards at Havre des Pas, Davis was to make a fortune as a stevedore in South Africa and his philanthropic gifts to his native island included the Howard Davis Park, more of which when we enter the park later in the walk.

Turn right at the roundabout. Keeping the White Horse pub on your right go down the right hand one of the two slipways to the sea.

There are numerous slips all over the island, giving each of Jersey's 12 parishes access to the sea. One of their principal functions was to enable the gathering of vraic (seaweed) which was used to fertilize the land.

The granite setts of the slip are set with a raised leading edge so that the horses, drawing the carts up from the beach, could get a grip. This slip is part of the very narrow shoreline of St Saviour Parish. In just a few hundred yards you will have gone from St Helier Parish into St Saviour and will briefly touch the eastern parish of St Clement. This area is heavily associated with the French novelist / playwright / poet / philosopher Victor Hugo (1802-1885). You will see a stone plaque on the large rock on the right of the main slip which was placed here in 1954 and commemorates Hugo's exile in Jersey from 1852-5. He later became persona non grata in Jersey and went to Guernsey, where he remained from 1855-1870. Hugo had been forced into exile (Fr. Proscrit – hence this rock is known as Le Rocher des Proscrits) by Napoleon III and Hugo initially went to Belgium. Hugo was to return to France in 1870 when Napoleon III fell from power and Napoleon III was himself exiled to England where he died in 1873. (His Mausoleum is in Farnborough, Hampshire). Hugo arrived in Jersey from Belgium on 5th August 1852. Hugo eventually settled with his wife, sons, and a son-in-law at St Luke's, 3 Marine Villas, Greve d'Azette, just to the east of Le Dicq. His family were pioneers in the field of photography and a number of photos exist of Hugo either leaning on, or on top of, Le Rocher des Proscrits. The rock itself is of Jersey granite but has a Dolorite intrusion. Hugo was followed to Jersey by his mistress, the courtesan Juliette Drouet (1806-1883) who faithfully followed him for the rest of his life. She lived at Havre des Pas, close to the Ommaroo Hotel. On his return to France Hugo was feted by the Parisian population and on the eve of his 79th birthday (significantly entering his 80th year) a huge parade was held in his honour. On his death on 22nd February 1885, it is estimated that more than two million people watched his funeral procession from the Arc de Triomphe to his internment in the Pantheon.

Return to the road by the pub. Facing you is the Hotel Normandie.

This is another hotel that has expanded considerably over the years. The section with the distinctive three gables facing you is the original hotel.

Turn right for 50 yards to the bus stop and carefully cross the main road to enter Beach Road and, initially, go up its lefthand side.

Beach Road was developed from the mid- 19th century, to provide desirable residences in a burgeoning seaside resort. Reputedly, this area was particularly attractive to retired British naval officers retained on half pay. You will see from your map that to the northwest, behind the Ommaroo Hotel, there is a Nelson Avenue. There is also a Rodney Avenue linking the middle of Nelson Avenue with Cleveland Avenue. Nelson Avenue is clearly named after Admiral Horatio Nelson and Rodney after Admiral George Rodney who fought, on the British side, in the American War of Independence. We will see that many names of houses and terraces in Beach Road reflect the period in which they were built. Some commemorate important events in, or connections with, the history of the British Empire.

The first road on your right is Beach Crescent. This terrace follows the line of the former Jersey Eastern Railway, which crossed Beach Road by a level crossing at this point. St Luke's Railway Station also stood just on the right. At one point the manager of Jersey Eastern Railway was Charles Gilbert More, the father of the actor Kenneth More (1914-1982) who attended Jersey's Victoria College. It is also recorded that Kenneth More stayed at the Ommaroo Hotel, as did Cecil Parker, his co-star in the film The Admirable Crichton.

The house on your left-hand side, on the corner of Dicq Road and Beach Road, is now named Swissville, but when built it was first called East Lynne. Again, this is a clue to the period when it was built because East Lynne was a blockbuster Victorian Sensation Novel by Mrs Henry Wood that was published in 1861. She even outsold Charles Dickens! There is another house called East Lynne in the southeast corner of the island which achieved fame because it became known as the Fauvic Embarkation Point in WWII, as it was from here that many escapees from Jersey gathered to leave the island during the Occupation.

If you are taken by the domestic architecture of this area, dip into Dicq Road on your right. It has some delightful architecture. Beyond Belgreve Terrace on the left, the two houses forming Belgreve Villas are designed by Adolphus Curry.

Return to Beach Road. Turn right, crossing to the left-hand side of the road. At the top of Beach Road cross the main road by the pedestrian crossing controlled by traffic lights. Turn right and then enter the grounds of St Luke's Church.

Ahead of you, at the northwest corner of the Church is the statue of The Risen Christ (1991) by Allan Bransbury, a Jersey-born sculptor. However, the resin nickel brass was produced a long way from Jersey – in his workshop at Kilmuir in Scotland. Another of his works, a Madonna and Child, is in the FCJ Convent in St Saviour. To the right of the statue is the Church's unusual bell-tower – a free-standing form of campanile. The Church was built to serve the growing population of the Havre des Pas area. It was completed in 1851 and the first service was conducted by the Dean of Jersey, the Very Revd William Corbet le Breton. Arguably, he is now most famous for being the father of the Jersey Lily – Lillie Langtry. The Church was consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester, Bishop Charles Richard Sumner. Sumner came from an ecclesiastical family. His brother was the Archbishop of Canterbury. His son, George Sumner, became Bishop of Guildford. George's wife founded the Mothers' Union. Their son, George Heywood Sumner, became a very famous Arts & Crafts artist – 'the Hampshire William Morris', whose lovely decorative schemes included churches in England and Wales.

At the start of the German Occupation of Jersey, the Vicar of St Luke's was the Revd Cecil Bingham Atyeo. On 15th September 1942 the Feldkommandant of Jersey, Knackfuss, issued a deportation order which stated that the following British Subjects will be evacuated and transferred to Germany "... (b) all those men not born on the Channel Islands and 16 to 70 years of age who belong to the English people". This included the Revd Atyeo, his wife Beatrice and his son Henry. Together with other Jersey deportees they were sent to Bad Wurzach internment camp, where the Vicar became the camp padre. Regrettably he died in the camp from pneumonia on 27th January 1945, just 12 weeks before the camp's liberation by French troops. His wife and son survived and returned to the UK, to the Isle of Wight, to live. If the Church is open, the entry is by the south door facing the main road. It features a lovely wooden roof and some fine stained-glass windows. The roof is reminiscent of an upturned boat, which is believed to be the reason that the main part of a church is known as the nave - from the Latin navis, meaning ship.

Go westwards from the Church, crossing the main entrance to the park, to the distinctive wooden crosses of the war graves.

There are 54 crosses marking graves from WWII, one burial from WW1, and a solitary grave of a repatriated Jersey deportee. The majority of graves in the first rows to the right and left of the path are of "A naval rating R.N. buried 17/11/1943".

The graves in the second row to the left of the path are sailors from the sinking of HMS Charybdis in an action known as the Battle of Sept Isles off the north coast of Brittany on 22-23 October 1943. Many of the bodies of the sailors lost were washed up here and in Guernsey. The last five graves in the second row to the right of the path and all the graves in the third row to the left of the path are of USA naval personnel and airmen. All American burials were taken to the USA after the war, and many (all?) were then interred in the huge American WWII cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer in Normandy. The solitary grave to the left of the path is of Maurice Jay Gould. When we were in Beach Road you will recall that escapees from Jersey often left the island in the southeast corner from what was known as the Fauvic Embarkation Point. On the night of 3rd May 1942, Maurice (aged 19) and two other teenagers, Dennis Audrain and Peter Hassall, attempted to escape by boat. The boat capsized and Dennis, who could not swim, drowned. Maurice and Peter returned to shore and were captured by the Germans. As they were found to have details of the German garrison on the island they were treated severely and taken to the Continent. Maurice Gould died in 1943 and was buried there. Peter Hassall survived the war and due to his efforts Maurice's remains were brought back to Jersey and reinterred here.

Walk further into the garden to the water feature with its monolith and turn right to exit this part of the gardens. Turn left with the walled garden on your left and then right at the next path junction. At the path junction there is a commemorative stone to the Occupation deportees. On your right is a water feature. Almost hidden in the bushes is a seated statue. This is a bronze statue of Hermes, of unknown date. It is based on a sculpture found in Herculaneum and now in the Naples Museum.

Go forward and over the little bridge, turn left and follow the path round until you emerge onto a wide tarmacked path near the children's playground. Turn right and follow it up to where the vista opens out with a large flagpole on your right, together with the statue of George V on its column. You might like to pause briefly here on one of the benches. (Ladies toilets are over to your left).

The Howard Davis Park is named after the son of Thomas Benjamin Davis (1867-1942), known in later life as T.B., the site of whose birthplace we passed near Le Dicq. His son, Howard Davis, was killed in the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

The park was formerly the site of a large house, Plaisance, owned by Jurat Falle. The young T.B. attended the nearby St Luke's Elementary School and was a choirboy in St Luke's Church. The story goes that one day T.B. and a friend were trespassing and collecting conkers in the Plaisance and were caught by Jurat Falle. He promptly put the young T.B. in the cellar of his house and made him clean all the boots there. The other lad was reprimanded and sent home. After this experience T.B. allegedly said that he would make his fortune and come back and knock the house down.

In 1899, at the age of 32, T.B. went to Durban in South Africa and within 10 years had made his fortune through stevedoring. Fortuitously Plaisance came on the market in 1927 and true to his word he bought it, and his friend Alexander Coutanche was charged with knocking the house down. T.B. came back to find that the cellar in which he had suffered years earlier was still in existence, so he ordered its destruction. If you face the main exit of the park, you will see over at about 2 o'clock a building resembling a Classical temple. This is the original billiard hall attached to Plaisance and is now renamed the Howard Davis Hall.

The imposing bronze statue of George V (1939) was also placed here by T.B. It is by Sir William Reid Dick (1878-1961). Like T.B., Dick came from a humble background (he was born in the Gorbals area of Glasgow) but achieved great things. A further statue of George V by Dick is in Old Palace Yard at Westminster, and he also sculpted the chest tomb of George V and Queen Mary in St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle. It is also fitting that there is a statue to George V because T.B. was a great yachtsman and in his yacht "Westward" raced against George V in his yacht Britannia and they became friends. The flagpole just to the south of the statue is the spinnaker of Westward which was scuttled in the Hurd Deep in 1947. T.B. presented the Park to the people of Jersey in 1937. Other examples of his Jersey benefactions include the Howard Davis Farm, the Howard Leopold Davis Scholarship Trust of Victoria College, Portraits of King George V by the famous Jersey artist John St Helier Landseer, St Luke's Church Hall, and Jersey's first motorised RNLI lifeboat, the Howard D, gifted in 1936.

Exit the park at the main gate. Be aware that the road carries one way traffic coming from your left. Cross to the central reservation and then go left to cross at the other lights to a sculptural work outside the entrance to Keith Baal Gardens and so into Colomberie.

The sculptural piece on the corner, Migration (1996), by Nenne Van Dijk, commemorates a former Connetable of St Helier, Keith Baal. Fittingly, he was a keen ornithologist. The housing development behind the sculpture is named after him. Originally, the roads in the old town of St Helier had French names and they were subsequently altered to English names. Colomberie, its original name, was briefly changed but has reverted back. This area was once part of the Manor of La Motte. Jersey manors invariably had a large dovecot, or colomberie. Several of these are in existence, for instance at Samares Manor, just to the east of St Helier.

Enter Colomberie and walk westwards. On your right is the Quaker Meeting House.

Next to it is the Norfolk Hotel. Next after the hotel is a parade of shops. The first house on the right, slightly set back, No 71, is by the architect Adolphus Curry.

Turn left down Roseville Street taking the right-hand pavement. Continue south down Roseville Street.

Just before reaching the main road, on the opposite side of Roseville Street, there is a 'blue plaque' commemorating Albert Bedane (1893-1980). Bedane was born in France but brought up in Jersey by his widowed mother, a Jersey woman. He served in the British Army 1917-1920 and was naturalised as a British subject in 1921. He lived here and practised as a masseur / physiotherapist. During the German Occupation he sheltered escaped Soviet slave-workers and a Jewish woman, Mary Richardson, for 2 ½ years. It is said that he had escapees in his cellar whilst treating German soldiers in his rooms above. For his bravery he was honoured by the Russian Government, and in January 2000 he was recognised as Righteous Among the Nations by the State of Israel. He is the only British subject to be honoured for an act of heroism on British soil.

When you reach the main road, cross over, using the controlled lights and carry on down the continuation of Roseville Street.

This is another road that displays some interesting architectural features.

Continue on down Roseville Street until you emerge onto Havre des Pas. The Ommaroo Hotel is immediately along on your left.