

# MERMAIDS AND RELATED FIGURES IN JERSEY AND CHANNEL ISLANDS' FOLKLORE

[Received March 8th 2023; accepted March 15th 2023 – DOI: 10.21463/shima.194]

Giles Bois

<glsbso@gmail.com>

**ABSTRACT:** Drawing on the author's sustained research on Jersey over the last forty years, this article surveys Channel Islands' folklore concerning mermaids and related figures. In particular it examines the absence of interactions between Channel Islands' mermaids and landsmen and the possibility of residual traces of mermaid folklore in local tales and legends. In light of this, the sources of Jersey folktales, legends and superstitions are reviewed, with the likely impact of the nature of these sources on the authenticity of surviving material and any likely loss of folktales before they could be recorded, that might explain this absence. The effects on the Islands' indigenous languages (Norman-French dialects) of immigration from the United Kingdom and the introduction of English over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is also considered. A brief review is made of the religious disdain in Jersey towards superstitions, which nevertheless persisted. The rise of vernacular literature from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century provided a medium for recording some traditions, that by then were already starting to fade away. The focus here is on Jersey, with reference to examples from Guernsey, in support.

**KEYWORDS:** Jersey, Guernsey, mermaids, mermen, sirens.

## Introduction

The Channel Islands consist of eight principle islands, seven of which are inhabited, divided into the Bailiwick of Jersey and the Bailiwick of Guernsey. Each Bailiwick has its own legislature and judicial and fiscal systems, completely independent from each other and from those of the United Kingdom. The Islands are remnants of the Norman state, which conquered England in 1066, after the Norman barons defected to the King of France in c. 1204. Separated from continental Normandy, the islands were the only part of the King of England's Norman patrimony remaining to him and as such they are 'peculiar' of the Crown, held by the Kings and Queens of England independently from their realm, much as the Plantagenet dynasty did with their expanded territories in France. The bailiwicks are domestically autonomous, with the Crown being responsible for Defence and Foreign Relations, although the islands increasingly assuming responsibility for some of the latter. In Jersey, the Crown is referred to as 'The Crown in Right of Jersey' and is distinct from the Crown in the United Kingdom. Until the 19th century, the majority language was Jèrriais (the Jersey branch of Norman-French), with 'Formal French' being the language of administration and government. From the early 20<sup>th</sup> century on, English was probably a majority language as a second language. Over the course of the 20th century, English was allowed in the States' Assembly and Courts in Jersey, then, eventually, displaced French completely and Jèrriais has seen a similar decline, although efforts are being made to rejuvenate its use. The Islands' cultural history is principally Norman, with limited English

influence, aside from for the presence of a small garrison, until the 19th century. The Islands are located in the Gulf of St. Malo, 22.5 kilometres from the west coast of Normandy and about 65 kilometres from the north coast of Brittany (Figure 1). Jersey is about 160 kilometres south of the south coast of England.

For a seafaring people, interactions with mermaids are notable for their absence from Jersey and Guernsey folklore. In Jersey, there are four sources of the Island's folklore; oral sources, legends from early 19<sup>th</sup> century guide books; literature from the Norman Cultural Revival of the later 19th century,<sup>1</sup> which includes articles in the Jersey language (Jèrriais) and French, from the almanacs of the local French language newspapers; together with one or two early legends published by early Jersey historians in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. To the last could be added *Jersey Folklore* by J. H. L'Amy (1927), *Stories of Jersey Seas* (in three parts) by Philip Ahier (1955-57), and Frank Le Maistre's *Dictionnaire Jersiais-Français* (1976) and his occasional articles on folklore in *Lé Bulletin d'Quart d'An dé L'Assemblée d'Jèrriais*.

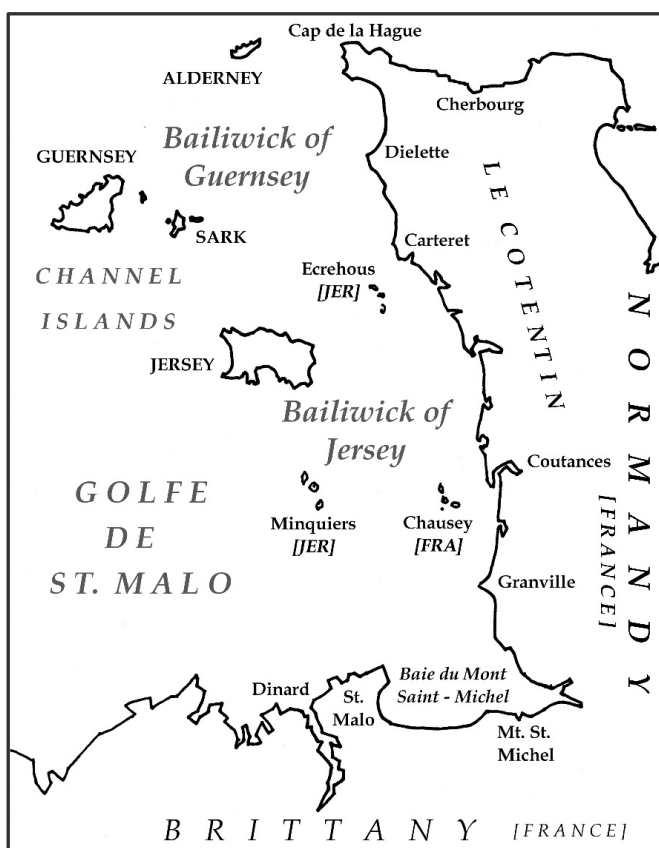


Figure 1 – Map of Channel Islands and adjacent coasts of Normandy & Brittany.

<sup>1</sup> The Norman cultural revival was a literary movement to record the languages, traditions and social customs of Channel Islands and Normandy in the face of English emigration into the Islands, starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the inroads of standardised French education in Normandy. It was started in Guernsey and spread to Jersey, then from the Islands to Normandy.

References to mermaids in guide books were largely written by visitors for consumption outside the Island and although they may have been built around kernels gleaned from authentic oral sources, they likely re-worked them completely to suit the tastes of their target audiences and if their yarns reflected any originals in the vernacular, the latter went unrecorded. The legends and stories from the cultural revival of the late 20th century were drawn in part from these. So, the antecedents of Jersey folktales derived from published legends are uncertain, with some slight correlation to related but fundamentally different material in the oral repertoire. Of these, the oral sources and one of the guidebook legends are relevant to the present enquiry. Although there are no obvious accounts of interactions between mortals and mermaids, apart from one involving a merman, there is mention of them from oral sources.

Jersey *syraïnes* (mermaids)

Le Maistre's *Dictionnaire Jersiais-Français* gives us *syraïne* as a word for a *loup-mathîn* (a grey seal) (1966, p. 494). Evidently, this was seen as a source of the mermaid, locally, or is at least an allusion to grey seals perceived as mermaids or sirens. Le Maistre noted that in 1966 there were still some amongst the elderly, who told him that *la syraïne* was half a fish and half a woman. The term is also spelled as *sirène* and *séraine* on Jersey. A certain *vieillard* (an old man) in the same neighbourhood told him that he had seen one of them "tchiquefais à P'tit Plémont" ('sometimes at Le Petit Plémont' – see Figure 2). From this, it is evident that mermaids were known to Jersey men and Jersey women, but sadly, no stories have come down to us involving their interaction with the islanders.

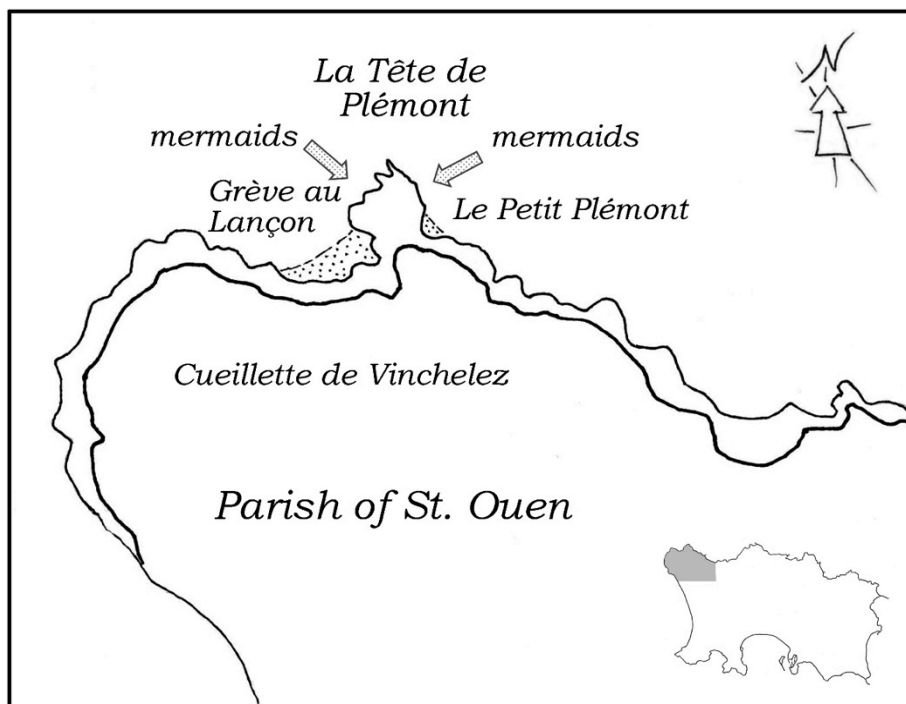


Figure 2 – Location of mermaid sightings at La Tête de Plémont. Guernsey *seirènes*

The situation in Guernsey is similar, with a belief in mermaids and their being seen, but without forming any liaisons with mortals. Sir Edgar MacCulloch, in *Guernsey Folklore*, (1903, p. 224) also reports that six mermaids or *seirènes* were seen disporting themselves on the sands in Petit-Bôt. The man who saw them described them as half women and half fish. He hurried down to the beach, but as he approached them, they took off into the sea and vanished from sight. MacCulloch names his sources and this witness. He also notes that no tales concerning them appear to have been preserved amongst the people. But his editor (Edith Carey) added a note that in Sark as well as in Guernsey they still believed in sirens, who were young and beautiful, in 1903 (the edited text was published sometime after it was written) (1903, p. 225 fn 112). In Guernsey, fishermen said these were old women who would sit on the rocks and sing before storms and that ships were brought in closer out of curiosity, being broken up on the rocks as the storm arrived, then the sirens (whether young or old) would carry the men down to the bottom of the sea, to eat them.<sup>2</sup> Marie De Garis (*Dictiounnaire Angllais-Guernesiaais* gives *siraunne* and *loup marin* for seal (p. 280) and *sirogne* as a mermaid (p. 108).

It may be significant that the present population of Sark is descended from emigrants from Jersey, who repopulated the island in 1565 after its depopulation by pirates. These immigrants came from the Parish of St. Ouen, so these Serquais' ancestors may have been familiar with the mermaids at Petit Plémont, in their former parish.

### Specific Tales<sup>3</sup>

#### a) Lé J'va Dgillaume (Le Cheval Guillaume – William's Horse) Bonne Nuit, Jersey

This story first appeared in English, in the guidebook *A week's visit to Jersey* (1844) framed as a holiday journal for his sister in Calcutta, by the anonymous author. The description of the merman as a kelpie (a Scottish term for a shape shifting, and often horse-like, water-based entity capable of adopting human form) popularised in English literature, is an indication of the story's re-working to suit his audience's tastes (1844, pp. 163-165). The author claimed to have found it in earlier publications, but if so, no examples of these have come to light. The 'legend' was expanded through later publications in English and French and was eventually translated into Jèrriais. Whilst it is possible the story was faithfully reproduced from an oral source, if it was a fabrication, it still appears to reflect elements from authentic tradition concerning the rock it describes and attributes its origin in line with its authentic name.

The story describes the attempted abduction of a local girl by a kelpie at Bonne Nuit, a cove and fishing harbour on the North Coast (Figure 3). He intended taking her to his submarine

---

<sup>2</sup> This bears a slight comparison with the 'sirenesque' storm raising dances and screeching of witches at Rocqueberg, in St. Clement's Bay, Jersey, and their demand of tribute from returning fishing boats, to be considered shortly.

<sup>3</sup> There is also a tale of an interaction between a local fisherman and a mermaid in a story entitled 'The call of the sea' that appears in Geraldine McCaughrean's collection *The Crystal Pool* (1995). The author claims to have got it from a tourist. Her informant was supposedly told it by her landlady at the guesthouse where she stayed at Bonne Nuit. The authenticity of this story is highly questionable, apart from the source being vague. Usually with such stories, they are confirmed by being repeated from other oral sources, but this is the only published source I have discovered and I have never heard of this tale locally and it may be discounted as an actual folkloric tale.

## Bois: Mermaids and related figures in Jersey and Channel Islands' folklore

cave off the coast, to make her his wife. The story ends with the kelpie assuming the form of a horse, in a failed attempt to drown the girl's fiancée, and he is turned to stone in his equine form as an explanation for the name of a rock in the approaches to the harbour. The heroine's name varies, from Anne-Marie to Nicolette and the hero is always called William. The rock is called Lé J'va, or Lé Ch'va (the 'cheval' or 'horse') and in English is known as the 'Cheval Rock' (Figure 3). Traditionally, at Midsummer, fishermen from Bonne Nuit Harbour would row in a solemn procession around this rock, then return to the harbour. The reason for this procession was not recorded but was clearly a commemoration of some event or a ritual of propitiation. There were other Midsummer ceremonies observed on the cliffs above, to do with the fertility and health of crops and livestock and the driving away of evil spirits. It may be significant that this obstruction in the approaches to the harbour's pierhead did not receive the treatment with gunpowder, usually reserved for obstacles near the Island's harbours.



Figure 3 – Bonne Nuit harbour and Cheval Rock (author's photo)

In the 1844 story, two local girls went down to the shoreline to skip stones across the surface of the sea, to predict when they would marry. The first girl's stone bounced along and told her how many years she would have to wait. The second girl's stone sank straight down, as if plucked down by an unseen hand. This was followed by a furious bubbling of the sea and then her fiancé, who was a soldier away at war, appeared on a rock nearby. Assuming he had alighted from a departed boat, she ran into his arms, only to find that she was being held by the leathery dank arms of a kelpie, who tried to drag her into the sea, to make her his wife in his submarine cave beneath the waves. With the help of her friends, she escaped his grasp and as a cockcrow rang out from the cliffs above, the sun breached the Norman mainland in the east and the kelpie was banished to his watery lair.

Not long afterwards, her fiancé, William, returned on leave and they were reunited. The night before his leave was due to end, he had a dream in which a voice told him to go at midnight to Le Couperon, an area along the coast associated with sorcery, to cut a switch of mistletoe and to keep it with him. Having done this, when he awoke the following morning, he found a large white horse waiting for him in his father's farmyard. As his own horse had been shot from under him during a battle, he assumed this was a gift from a generous neighbour. No sooner had he mounted the horse, than it took off for the coast, down the scree on the cliffs and into the sea, where it tried to drown him. Remembering his dream, he took out the mistletoe and struck the horse across the neck, on which it was turned to stone. This petrified demon-horse can still be seen to this day, being the rock outside the harbour beyond La Crête, about level with Frémont. This rock is called Le Cheval Guillaume (William's Horse) or simply, Lé J'va (The Horse). The horse was a disguise assumed by the demon, who wanted to drown his rival in love, so the way would be clear for him to take his bride, but who being struck by the magical branch, was turned to stone forever, in his assumed equine form.<sup>4</sup>

b) The Fishermen's Tribute at Rocqueberg – The Thirteenth Fish (St. Clement, Jersey)

The raising of storms, attributed to 'old' mermaids by Guernsese, comes from a common motif involving sirens who, across time and place, are sometimes perceived as mermaids. It has a parallel in a tradition from Jersey, mentioned here because it fits into the pattern for sirens, but it involves the raising of storms by Jersey witches, who are clearly not mermaids. They would raise storms by singing and dancing and would demand from returning fishing boats the thirteenth fish of their catch, in tribute, and if they refused or had lost count, they would draw their boats in to be smashed on the rocks. These witches are associated with a large rock called Rocqueberg in French and Roc Bèr in Jèrriais, both derived from a Germanic word meaning 'Bright Rock'. It is slightly inland from the witches' coastal dancing 'stage' and was one of three or four of the Island's meeting places for *les chorchières* or *les gens de vendrédi* (witches) at their Friday *sabbats* (their weekly gatherings at special meeting places on Friday nights, the term based on the religious 'sabbath' [Saturday in Judaism and Sunday for Christians]), perhaps in parody. This rock is associated with another guidebook legend (Rooke, 1856, pp. 28-30) concerning the bewitching and seduction by a senior witch or their chief (La Néthe Méthe)<sup>5</sup> of a young man from the

---

<sup>4</sup> There is another story of a real horse that died from being raced through the sea to this rock by its owner, for a frivolous bet. Later the horse appeared on this rock to his owner and the owner drowned not long afterwards. This may only be a ghost story, but perhaps it had antecedents in another local tradition connected to the water horse?

<sup>5</sup> Not likely, as despite the gender of the name 'she' was usually male. Witches were male and female, *chorchières* (plural), *chorchyi* or *chorchi* (male) and *chorchiéthe* (female). The literal meaning is

fishermen's village at La Rocque (Rooke, 1856, pp.28-30). These two stories may have parallels with mermaid encounters, but they represent unrelated traditions using similar motifs.

Mermaid Liaisons – less likely candidates

There are some other local legends that might allude to liaisons between mermaids and mortals, or at least that involve interactions with beings from the sea, or associated with the sea, but these are less likely than with the merman or water spirit at Bonne Nuit:

c) St. Marcouf<sup>6</sup> and the Temptress (Jersey)

This story involves a lascivious maiden coming out of the sea to try to seduce the missionary St. Marcouf whilst he was contemplating God on the foreshore. She came out of the sea, scantily clad in wet clothing, claiming to be the victim of a shipwreck and begged him for something to eat and drink. So, he gave her some bread, which he had marked with a cross, and she was immediately revealed as the Devil and sank into a cloud of steam rising from the sea, falling back into Hell. He related this story to his fellow monks, on his return to the monastery.<sup>7</sup>

The story's motif may be built on an earlier mermaid template, but stories of the Devil appearing as a beautiful woman for the purposes of seduction and entrapment are found elsewhere and belong to a distinct motif from an unrelated strand of folklore. A similar example from Normandy, is the encounter between Richard-sans-Peur and the demon Brundemor, who enticed him into a small boat at Granville and who took him out to sea. Eventually, in female form, Brundemor married the Duke in what was a long and happy marriage (Conlon, [Ed.], 1977). The *Chronique de Normandie* (c1400-1415) mentions a similar tale involving Richard-sans-Peur. After being attacked by the Devil and defeating him on the road, the Devil later appeared to him in the form of a richly adorned very beautiful lady. She tricked him into joining her in a boat at Granville, abducted him and dumped him on a rock off Guernsey. This is probably another version of the same story.

d) Le Puits de la Chuette (Lé Pits d'la Tchuette – The Vat Well), St. John, Jersey.

There are other maritime stories and traditions from both islands, but none involving mermaids, unless they are remnants from such stories. One could be that involving a couple who had a temple or castle at Sorel Point, in St. John, who would lure ships onto the rocks below the headland, murder the sailors in a fake trial and then dump their bodies in a large natural pool on an intertidal shelf. When the pool was full, a mysterious ship would come from the French coast and take them away to Dielette, a port further north on the opposite coast. This has strains of Charon's boat across the Styx to Hades, combined with 'wrecking', but submarine marriages may have some such associations. This particular story, which consists of a number of distinct phases that may suggest three stories grafted

---

sorcerer. Another leader of the Sabbat was Lé Tchéthiaûd, the Devil's deputy, but this word is just a dialect variation within Jèrriais for a common word (with other district variations) for a witch or healer, *quéraud[e]* or *tchéthaud[e]* or *tchésiaud[e]*, *tchéziot* etc., [male or female].

<sup>6</sup> Commonly known in France as St. Marculf.

<sup>7</sup> The French variant of this story has the incident with the watery maiden taking place at islands off the Cotentin peninsula that were subsequently named the Îles Saint-Marcouf (Société Jersiaise, n.d.)

together, was collected by Dr. Le Maistre from what he believed to be a highly credible local oral source that did not require confirmation from duplication elsewhere. In any event, it would have been likely to be lost had it not been collected when it was. Undoubtedly many such stories have been lost without being recorded or passed on to later generations and as the references to mermaids at Plémont suggest, some may have involved mermaids and mermen, it would be very surprising for a population so tied to the sea, if there were not such stories. There are examples of stories and beliefs that remained oral until fairly recently (into the 1950s and 1980s) that I have encountered and that did not receive the attentions of the 19th century guide book writers, apart from *Lé Pits d'la Tchuette* (French: *Le Puits de la Chuette* – the well of the vat/vat-shaped well): the pool now known as the *Lavoir des Dames*<sup>8</sup> (French - translated as the fairies' bathing pool) (Figure 4).

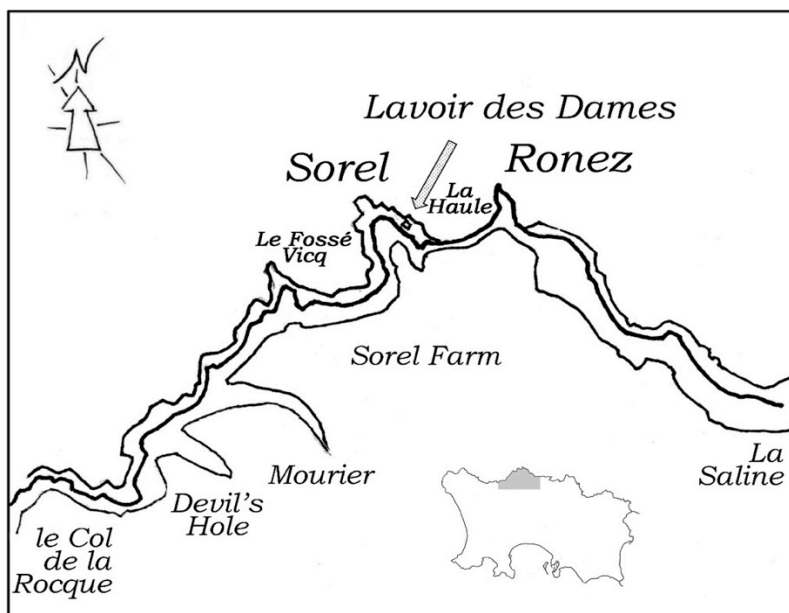


Figure 4 – Map of *Lé Pits d'la Tchuette* / *Lavoir des Dames* and its position on the north coast of Jersey.

The pool is an extremely rare geological formation on the Norman and Breton coasts of the Gulf of St. Malo and those of the Islands. There is another similar example in Sark called The Venus Pool (not nearly as deep as that at Sorel, the latter at about twenty feet deep). If the pool at Sorel (Figure 5) formed during an earlier insolation of Jersey, during the Neolithic it could have been a freshwater pool, well above high tide and overlooking a valley opening onto the shoreline, sea levels being lower than they are now. On the Hugh Godfray Map (made for the States of Jersey in 1849)<sup>9</sup> it is shown as being fed by a stream from Sorel Farm, but it is only above water at low tide and sometimes not at all on neap

<sup>8</sup> *Danne'* in Jèrriais, also signifies a woman and is used as *Blianche Danme* to identify a nature spirit associated with menhirs and dolmens (Neolithic structures) or the stones themselves and ghosts (but commonly not the ghosts of the dead, more a ghost in its own right).

<sup>9</sup> The States of Jersey is an assembly that passes legislation and appoints the Chief Minister of the Government of Jersey and the government is answerable to the States' Assembly. Until recent reform, it was also the government, when the Legislature was separated from the Executive.



**Bois: Mermaids and related figures in Jersey and Channel Islands' folklore**

tides. Neolithic quern stones (for grinding grains) have been found near Sorel Farm and according to earlier accounts, structures once existed on the landward eastern flank of the headland and on the shoreline below, with Neolithic pottery and flint flakes being found in the area, which may suggest this was a significant habitation or ritual site in that period of prehistory. Certainly, wheat was ground into flour in the vicinity of the farm.

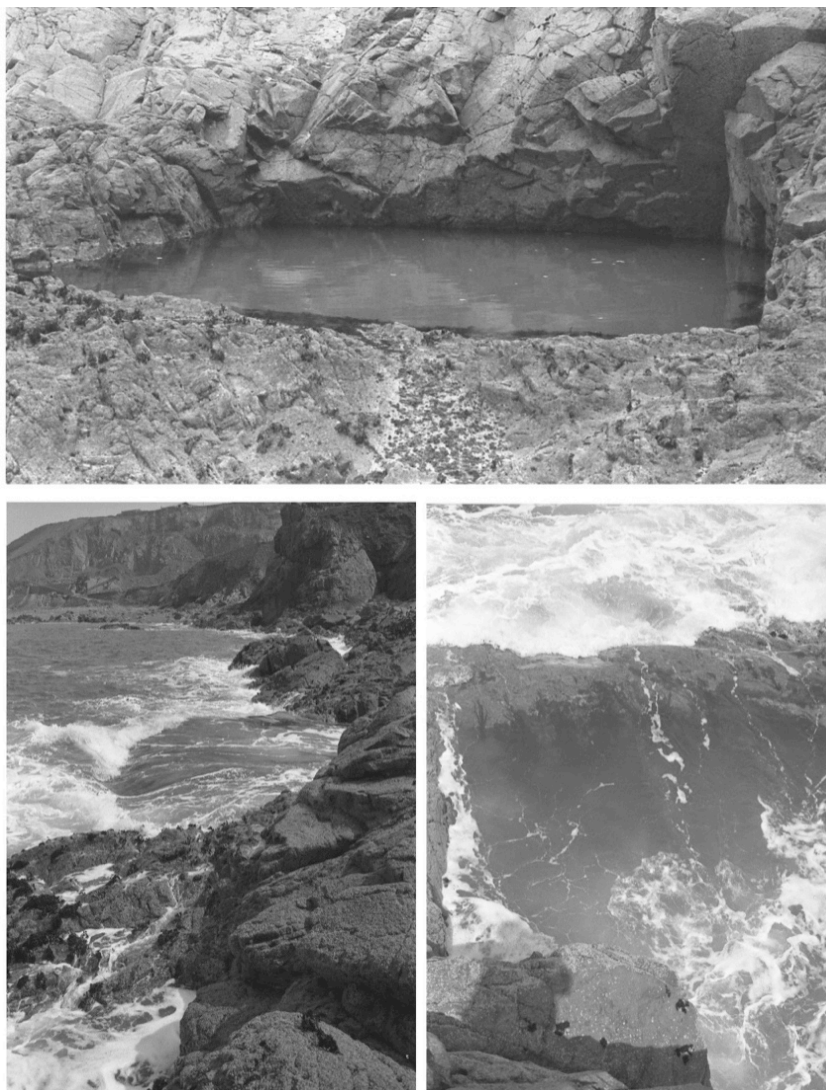


Figure 5- Lé Pits d'la Tchuette / Lavoir des Dames (author's photos).

Another tradition involving this pool appeared in the 19th century with claims that it was where the fairies bathed (*dames* being one of the many words for fairies) and that any man

spying on them would be struck blind.<sup>10</sup> This rumour may have been originated by the women of the parish, who used it for bathing, since it was well away from prying eyes.

e) La Damme du Vivié (La Danme du Vivyi – The Lady of the Vivier [Pond])<sup>11</sup>

This story by C. du Mont<sup>12</sup> from the *Almanac de la Chronique de Jersey 1910*<sup>13</sup> and dated by the author as 1908, is probably *not* derived from any earlier tradition concerned with mermaids, but exhibits some features that relate to elements of their liaisons with mortals in countries elsewhere that are purely incidental. In fact, this is most likely a completely new composition based on an actual event, of the suicide or accidental death of a bride on her way to her wedding, who drowned herself in Dannemarche millpond to avoid an unwanted marriage, or was thrown from her overturned coach and broke her neck by the millpond, and who re-appeared near China Quarries with her bridal procession, on the centenary of the event. Apparently, she has also been seen at other times. The evidence of this use of an authentic tradition for a completely new plot only vaguely connected to its source is an indication of how some of our 'legends' may have departed from earlier authentic sources, which have gone unrecorded and have since been forgotten. This may be an example of the mechanism by which any liaisons between mermaids and Jersey men may have been lost (if there were any), although the following, as will be seen, is not one of them.

C. du Mont's story involves a bride who drowned herself in a seigneurial *vivier* (a manorial fish pond)<sup>14</sup> to avoid her marriage to her father's elderly business associate. She would re-appear on the anniversary of her death to form a liaison with any passing likely-lad, obtain a commitment to marriage, then take him to their nuptial bed at the bottom of the pond. In this story her latest victim is a young naval officer staying with his uncle, who is invited by a neighbour to make use of the rowing boat on his pond, falls for the wiles of the demure maiden who frequents the pond after dusk, rowing with her on the water for a couple of hours each night over a few nights, agrees to elope with her, but is warned off by his uncle's housekeeper. When he declines to attend their final meeting for their elopement (knowing what is coming), she seeks him in his bedroom cowering under his sheets, in her decaying form, and the housekeeper drives her off with a Bible, but not before the wraith puts a curse on her recalcitrant fiancée, that he will have many lovers but will never marry (a

---

<sup>10</sup> The renaming of the pool was nonsensical and suggests an intervention by someone with a poor understanding of French, as a *lavoir* is an enclosure on a stream for washing laundry (a *dou-à-laver* in Jèrriais and *lavoir* in 'Official French' - the lawyers' French used by clerks), not for washing the body, which would be *bagnoles* or something similar from the period, signifying bathing.

<sup>11</sup> Jèrriais consists of a number of dialect variations. The 19<sup>th</sup> century writers were from the East and North, with some from the Centre. The standard now is based on St. Ouennais, from the West. In addition, writers from these different periods used slightly different spelling conventions. This results in variations such as *Damme* and *Danme*, reflecting the lengthening of different vowels and changes in emphasis between different dialects.

<sup>12</sup> The nom de plume of Charles Picot (1886-1916)

<sup>13</sup> *La Chronique de Jersey* and *La Nouvelle Chronique de Jersey* were rival French language newspapers that occasionally published articles in the Jersey language, mainly in their annual almanacs. Earlier French language newspapers rarely if ever did so. Jèrriais was a spoken language and Jèrriais speakers (the majority of the population) would write in French. These two languages are quite distinct, with differences in much of their vocabularies and grammar. The indigenous language is almost unintelligible to the French and is classed by the L'Académie Française as a *langue de minorité*, although it is a Norman dialect, described in French as the *normand de Jersey*.

<sup>14</sup> For a stock of live fish for the dinner table, but in this case, also used as a boating-lake.

curse!?) to die lonely and disabled, with no-one to care for him. The parallel with liaisons between mermaids and mortals is in the final liaison underwater itself, although these usually have a happier outcome (the groom does not always drown and often can breathe underwater, as freely as above), with the establishment of a new family line, sometimes having an exceptional set of maritime skills.

This *damme* is more reminiscent of the vengeful *dames blanches* of woodland ponds and meres in France (Del Regno, 2018) and of the Rusalka of Slavic riverbanks (Goscilo, 2007) than the light hearted *dames* and *p'tites dames* (fairies) or the passive *bianche danmes*<sup>15</sup> of Jersey folklore, or La Grande Garce (the 'big lass') from Sark, although mermaids can have a sharp edge to them, in their encounters with passing landsmen.

## Reflection

Guernsey Folktales are notable for being more complete and detailed than those from Jersey. To a large extent this is because the publication dedicated to recording folklore in Guernsey (McCulloch, 1903) was researched at least a generation before those in Jersey and during a period of rapid change. The legends published in the Jersey almanacs were approximately contemporary with this Guernsey work, but these were more creative interpretations of the way of life and language than a serious study of folktales and customs and their work in those areas was sketchy.

A factor in the earlier disdain for recording folktales may have been the Islanders' religion, with a Calvinist theocracy established in Jersey for a time. During the Reformation in England, Calvinism spread to the Channel Islands from France, introduced by the Huguenots escaping persecution. In addition, despite their connections to the English Crown, the Islands were in the Diocese of Coutances, which was Calvinist, having expelled their Roman Catholic bishop ignominiously. Later, the Islands were transferred to the Diocese of Salisbury, and then to that of Winchester as a semi-independent relative. The Council in England largely respected the Islands' religious independence, despite complaints from the various governors. Eventually it became so deeply embedded that the civil government, although still in the hands of the Jersey Royal Court (the judiciary) and the States of Jersey (the legislature), had in effect become an extreme theocratic state. This state of affairs lasted into the early 17th century, but after an accord was reached between all parties, with some assertion of at least nominal authority by the Church of England, the Calvinist undertones rumbled on through the English Civil War. As the Church of England 'Orders of Service' had become more widely established, when John Wesley visited the Islands, many Islanders abandoned the traditional municipal parish churches for the reformed chapels. When Methodism replaced Wesleyanism and broke with the Church of England, many became Methodists.

Despite any theological differences, all the churches treated folk beliefs with mistrust, due to the exploitation of the credulous by *quérauds* and *quéraudes* (also pronounced *tchéthauds* and *tchéthaudes*) – male and female witches or healers, who made a brisk trade selling spells and counter-charms against imagined curses, to the more superstitious amongst the population, with a few recorded examples into the first three decades of the

---

<sup>15</sup> *Bianche Femme* in western Jersey.

20<sup>th</sup> century. This may have resulted in folktales not being recorded at the time that they were still well remembered.

## REFERENCES

- Ahier, P. (1955). *Stories of Jersey seas Volumes 1, 2 & 3*. Advertiser Press.
- Almanac de la Chronique de Jersey* (1910).
- Anonymous. (1844). *A week's visit to Jersey*. British Press Office.  
[https://www.google.com.au/books/edition/A\\_week\\_s\\_visit\\_to\\_Jersey/maZYAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1](https://www.google.com.au/books/edition/A_week_s_visit_to_Jersey/maZYAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1)
- Bois, G.J.C. (1981). *Jersey superstitions in etching & poetry*. Self-published.
- Bois G.J.C., (2010). *Jersey folklore & superstitions, Volumes 1 & 2*. AuthorHouse.
- Bois, G.J.C (2016). *Jersey maritime folklore* (2nd edition), Amazon.
- Bisson, S. (1950). *Jersey our island*. The Batchworth Press.
- Branch J.W. (1927). *Folktales of Brittany*. Chapham & Hall.
- Branch J.W. (1929). *Folktales of Normandy*. Chapham & Hall.
- Chronique de Normandie*. (c1400-1415). <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/105SX2>
- Conlon, D.J. [Ed.]. (1977). *Richard sans peur*. University of North Carolina Press.
- De Garis, M. (1982). *Dictiounnaire Angllais-Guernesiais*. Phillimore.
- Del Regno, S. (2018). *Le livre des dames blanches: De l'origine du mythe jusqu'à nos jours*. Éditions La Vallée Heureuse.
- Goscilo, H. (2007). Watery maidens: Rusalki as sirens and slippery signs. In C. O'Neil, N. Boudreau & S. Krive (Eds.) *Poetics, self, place: Essays in honor of Anna Lisa Crone* (pp. 50-70). Slavica.
- L'Amy, J.H. (1927). *Jersey folklore*. J.T Bigwood.
- Lebarbenchon, R J. (1982). *La grève de lecq*. Isoete.
- Le Maistre, F. (1976). *Dictionnaire Jersiais-Francais*. Don Balleine Trust.
- Le Maistre, F. (Ed.) (1952-1977). *Lé Bulletin d'Quart d'An dé L'Assemblée d'Jèrriais*.
- Lemprière, R. (1976). *Customs, ceremonies and traditions of the Channel Islands*. Robert Hale Ltd.
- MacCulloch, S. E. (1903). *Guernsey folklore*. Elliot Stock/F. Clark.
- McCaughrean, G. (1995). *The Crystal Pool: Myths & legends of the world*. Orion.
- Rooke, O. (1856). *The Channel Islands: Pictorial, legendary and descriptive*. L. Booth.
- Société Jersiaise (n.d.) The foundation of the abbey of Nantus. <https://members.societe-jersiaise.org/whitsco/gross7.htm>
- Syvret, M. & Stevens, J. (1981). *Balleine's history of Jersey*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd.
- Waugh, A. (1960). The folklore of the mermaid. *Folklore* 71, 73-84.