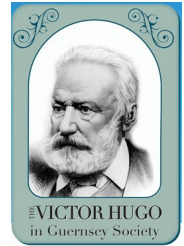


The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society @ the Ideathon 2018

VICTOR HUGO IN GUERNSEY INFO PACK



Victor Hugo and his son Francois-Victor in the garden of Hauteville House around 1864

Victor Hugo: born Besançon 26 February 1802 (he's a Pisces!), died Paris 1885

NEWS: 16.10.2018: Francoise Nyssen, outgoing French Minister of Culture, quotes Victor Hugo in her last speech as minister: French media report it and remark 'No speech would be worth making without including a quote from Victor Hugo.'

France 2, the equivalent of BBC2, is showing a drama series in November: *Victor Hugo, Enemy of the State*, and in the spring Andrew Davies' six-part version of *Les Misérables* will be shown on BBC1, with an accompanying republication of the original book.

In 2012, Gerard Depardieu starred in a movie version of *The man who laughs*, Hugo's 'Gothic' novel written in Guernsey and published in 1869.

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

- In France, Victor Hugo is known primarily as a POET (and all the other things)
- In Britain, Victor Hugo is known primarily as a NOVELIST
- In America, Victor Hugo is appreciated as a NOVELIST and a PHILOSOPHER

He is also famous for his SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT:

- He campaigned constantly for the abolition of the death penalty around the world
- He believed in freedom of expression and of the press
- He was excited by progress but wanted to hold on to the best of the past
- He believed prison should be for rehabilitation of offenders
- He thought that nurture not nature was mostly responsible for criminality
- He thought that everyone should work in some way to give them dignity and prevent crime
- He believed that children should be well-fed to ensure their wellbeing later in life
- He saw the value in preserving local culture and dialects
- He successfully promoted a law while in parliament to give education to girls in France
- He opposed slavery
- He did not discriminate by the colour of someone's skin
- He was not an atheist, but believed in God and revered Jesus
- ONE WORD to describe what Victor Hugo fought for:

LIBERTY

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

State of play 2018

Hauteville House

Visitors to Guernsey can visit Hauteville House usually from mid-April to mid- September. It is the sister museum to the Victor Hugo Museum at Place des Vosges in Paris and belongs to, and is run and funded by, the City of Paris. The House is due to reopen at the end of April 2019 after a significant renovation.

The House is limited by its size and can only take relatively small groups at a time. (Up to 30 people can be accommodated at once in the Red Room for talks, receptions etc.) The garden is usually free to access.

A team of permanent staff look after the House throughout the year and young guides fluent in French and English are brought over for the tourist season.



A new guidebook to the House is being planned in French and English.

This corner of the earth is humble and I like it; for space is

Above my head, and the stars shine in it, and eagles pass by through it,

And the vast North wind floats wildly around in it.

This modest garden and this high heaven

Are mine; these flowers, these leaves, this grass

Love me, and I feel growing in me the magnificence of forgetting

From 'Spring,' L'Art d'être grand-père, 1877

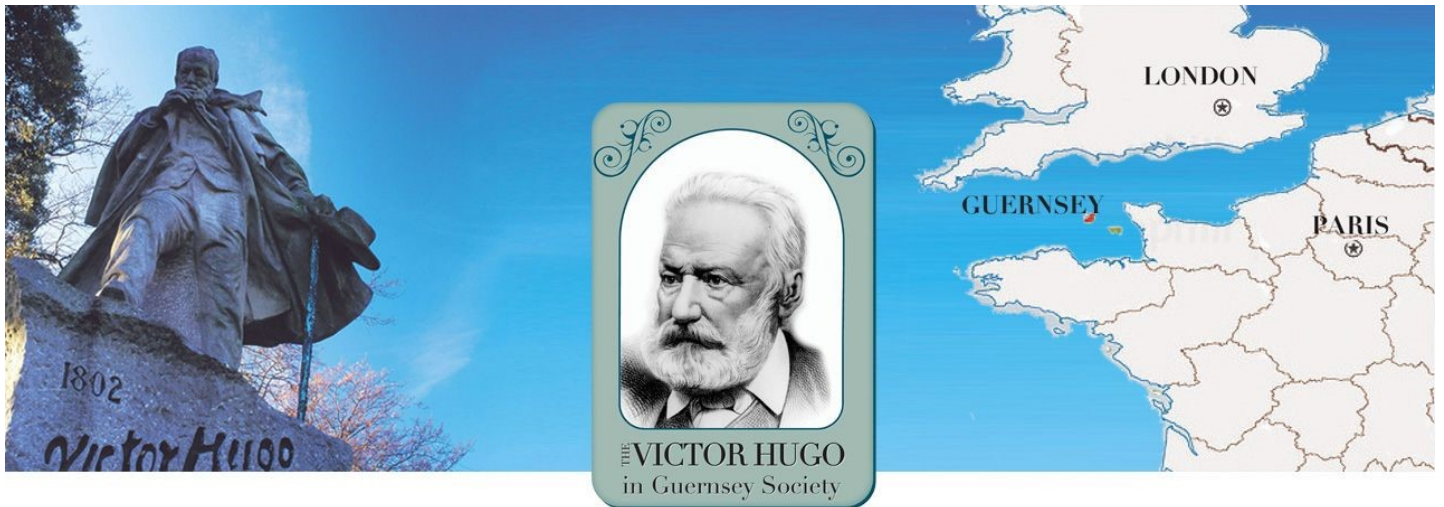
Ce coin de terre est humble et me plaît ; car l'espace
Est sur ma tête, et l'astre y brille, et l'aigle y passe,
Et le vaste Borée y plane éperdument.
Ce parterre modeste et ce haut firmament
Sont à moi ; ces bouquets, ces feuillages, cette herbe
M'aiment, et je sens croître en moi l'oubli superbe [from
L'Art d'être grand-père]

Victor Hugo lived an occasionally nomadic life and enjoyed travelling, writing several travel essays and books. He rented various homes in Paris and for short times elsewhere (this was quite usual at the time). The first property he ever bought was Hauteville House in Guernsey in May 1856, on the advice of his Guernsey friends. He had recently been ejected from Jersey; his friends told him he was legally far less likely to be thrown out of Guernsey if he owned a house.

He died at home in Paris on 22 May 1885, aged 83. His State funeral took place on June 1 and was attended by 2 million people.

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society



The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society was founded in 2015 originally to support a week-long festival celebrating the 150th Anniversary of Hugo's Guernsey novel, *The toilers of the sea*, organised by its founders, Gregory Stevens Cox and Roy Bisson.

It organises events, talks and conferences in Guernsey about Victor Hugo, especially celebrating his deep connection with Guernsey, featuring prestigious speakers from the UK, France and America (so far!).

It is a charity whose aim is to promote Victor Hugo and Guernsey and to educate people about Victor Hugo, particularly in schools, and it raises funds to that end. The Society recently translated and put on the world premiere in English of one of Hugo's plays, written in Guernsey in 1866, *The Intervention*. The performance was filmed and it will be put on their website and on Youtube. The Society has published the script in English and will also make it freely available via their website.

They also provide advice and information to the world's media, and members are also frequently interviewed about Victor Hugo and his life in Guernsey for French television and radio (and the BBC!)

You do not have to speak French to join the Society and take part in the events!

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

Copyright

- Victor Hugo's basic texts are out of copyright. The manuscripts are owned by the Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- Most translations in to English are either in copyright or are very old-fashioned.
- His drawings are owned by the BnF, the Maisons de Victor Hugo, the Hugo Museum at Villequier in Normandy, other museums and private individuals. Permission to use his drawings must be obtained from the copyright holder.
- The Priaulx Library owns images of contemporary engravings. The Candie Museum owns one Hugo drawing, a bust of the writer by Auguste Rodin, and some other bits and pieces of local Hugo interest.
- The majority of the photographs of Hugo and his family, particularly when in Guernsey, belong to the Maisons de Victor Hugo Paris/Guernsey (Hauteville House), and to the Musée d'Orsay. Application must be made to these bodies to use them. The Priaulx Library owns a good number of contemporary photographs and a couple of photographic plates of Victor Hugo and permission may be sought to use these images.
- The Priaulx Library also owns letters and books signed by Victor Hugo.

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

State of play 2018 II

Merchandise

Jill Vaudin produces teatowels, keyrings etc with the statue of Victor Hugo in Candie Gardens.

The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society is a charity and produces merchandise to accompany its events. A canvas bag in Fairtrade cotton, retailing for only £4, has been a good seller since the Society's 2018 conference in June. They also sell postcards, mugs, and books but always look to market the island through Victor Hugo however they can.

Iris and Dora produced a high-end set of merchandise in 2016 for the Toilers of the sea Festival. These were rather expensive but very high-quality and were produced in small numbers.

Most **books** about Victor Hugo are in French, but a few books in English are available to buy in the local bookshops and in the Guernsey Museum and Priaulx Library. The main study collection on Victor Hugo is in the Priaulx Library. Gregory Stevens Cox has written a set of books specifically about Victor Hugo and Guernsey, which are still in print. A new short biography of Hugo is due to be published at the beginning of 2019 and its author, Dr Bradley Stephens, will be attending the Literary Festival. He is the VP of the Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society and has been invited to the island by the Society to deliver lectures in 2017 and 2018. Translations of Hugo's Guernsey novels and some of his poetry are also available. Popular are:

- *Victor Hugo's St Peter Port*, Gregory Stevens Cox, Blue Ormer, 2018, £12.99
- *Victor Hugo's Guernsey Neighbours*, Gregory Stevens Cox, Toucan Press, 2015, £4.00
- *Victor Hugo in the Channel Islands*, Gregory Stevens Cox, Toucan Press, 2010, £7.99
- *The Channel Islands by Victor Hugo*, Alpha Wearing, £9.99
- *Victor Hugo, A selection of short poems*, Alpha Wearing, £4.95

The toilers of the sea has been dramatised by Patrick Dickson and published as an audiobook. Mr Dickson performs a one-man show based on *The toilers of the sea* which he will be bringing to Guernsey shortly.

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

Visitors can buy a **map** of Victor Hugo's Guernsey very cheaply (for £1). Written by Gérard Pouchain, the leading expert on Victor Hugo and the Channel Islands and Honorary President of the Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society, the map is on colour and the text is in French and English. It is sold by the Society at various outlets on a non-profit basis and given to visiting media and VIPs, and is very popular.

Some of the places particularly associated with Victor Hugo in Guernsey:

See The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society MAP

- Hauteville House (see book, *Victor Hugo, décorateur*)
- 20, Hauteville (the Hugo family's first house, later the house of Juliette Drouet)
- La Fallue (Juliette Drouet's first house, now part of the Pandora Hotel)
- Moulin Huet and Fermain
- West coast
- Havelet Bay and Bathing Pools
- Le Gouffre and Moye Point
- La Varde Dolmen; Le Trepied (Le Catoroc Dolmen)
- Houmet Paradis and St Sampson's
- Caves de Bordeaux; Victoria Tower
- St Peter Port in general: Cornet Street, Barbet's stationery shop, The Old Bank, 7, Mill Street (workshop of Henry Turner, his bookbinder), Town Church, the Harbour, the Bathing Pools
- Jean Boucher's statue in Candie Gardens (inaugurated 1914)



Victor Hugo trails for the island and for St Peter Port in particular, both text-based and digital through podcasts, are under development.

Websites and social media

<http://www.maisonsvictorhugo.paris.fr/en/museum-collections/house-visit-guernsey>

www.victorhugoinguernsey.gg

<http://www.victorhugoinguernsey.gg/international-conference/>

<https://www.arte.tv/fr/videos/080402-001-A/guernesey-le-magnifique-exil-de-victor-hugo/>

<https://dukeofnormandie.com/2016/10/12/victor-hugo-experience/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3D1P76-ikTE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxTvWkQhaL8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnmGcParjtA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFUPKBvt4T0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFUPKBvt4T0>

<https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/exhibition-victor-hugo-shows-novelists-massive-influence-art>

<https://www.la-croix.com/Culture/Expositions/Guernesey-exil-Victor-Hugo-2016-04-07-1200751722>

Facebook: the Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society <https://www.facebook.com/VictorHugoInGuernsey/>

Maisons de Victor Hugo <https://www.facebook.com/Maisons-Victor-Hugo-Guernesey-163510660344111/> and

<https://www.facebook.com/Maisons-de-Victor-Hugo-Paris-160681813952769/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mvhugo?lang=en>

<http://souloftheseaguernsey.blogspot.com/>

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

What did Victor Hugo do while he was in Guernsey?

He wrote a great deal.

He had a very fixed routine, devoting a large part of the day to writing:

Poetry: he published *Les Contemplations* (he used the income from this collection to buy Hauteville House), although these were mainly written in Jersey; *La Chanson de rues et des bois* (The song of the woods and the trees), *La Légende des siècles* (The legend of the centuries), *La Pitié suprême* (*Supreme pity*), *Le Théâtre en Liberté* (several 'modern' plays in poetry and prose, including *L'Intervention*, which was given its world premiere in English here in Guernsey in June 2018 by the Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society), and a large amount of poetry which was not published until later. *The Voice of Guernsey* (1867) was a poem written in support of Garibaldi and his fight for the people of Italy against the papal forces and the French King.

Novels: He worked up and published *Les Misérables* (1862), followed by his homage to Guernsey and its people, *Les Travailleurs de la mer* (*The toilers of the sea*) (1866); he then published his most political and philosophical novel (1869), the grim *L'Homme qui rit* (*The man who laughs*), the inspiration for the Joker in Batman and other elements of modern fiction, part of which is set off the Casquets; and *Quatre-vingt-treize* ('93), about the French Revolution, written during his second stay in Guernsey in 1872-3.

Speeches and letters: about many things: in support of John Brown, the abolitionist, against various sentences of death, including that of the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, supporting revolutions in S America, against slavery; funeral orations, for Hennet de Kesler and Emily de Putron.; in support of his project to feed the Poor Children.

Thousands of private letters.

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

What did Victor Hugo do while he was in Guernsey?

When Victor Hugo was not writing in the lookout:

He walked and took carriage rides around the island, on his own and with family and friends **HE ALWAYS STUCK TO THE SAME ITINERARIES (see map)**

He went to visit Juliette Drouet up the road, read her daily letter to him, and after his wife's death went on walks with her

He visited St Peter Port on errands, to buy materials, go to the barber or to the bank

He received visitors (often people he knew or knew of, but it was possible to look around the house as a tourist and to ask to meet him if he was not working)

He dined with his Guernsey friends, both at Hauteville House and at his friends' houses

He sat or walked in his garden

He made art: he drew, or decorated frames for his drawings, or received bits of old furniture and china to incorporate in the house

He harassed the maids

He visited his lady friends

He went to the poorer areas of St Peter Port (or example, the Canichers) to help out those in need (or to visit his lady friends!)

He gave money to people who asked for help (always 5 francs)

He listened to the locals talk about their lives in poverty, or at sea, or discussed folklore and local history, or politics, with his grander friends

See Gregory Stevens Cox: 'Victor Hugo's Guernsey Neighbours,' 'Victor Hugo in the Channel Isles,' 'Victor Hugo's St Peter Port.'

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

Why should we be excited that Victor Hugo lived here in Guernsey? Exactly how famous is he?

Victor Marie Hugo is one of the most famous writers that ever lived. Ever since he first began to write poetry, plays and novels (and he began young—at the age of 17!) he inspired devotion amongst his many followers.

He wrote plays, poetry, novels, speeches, essays, travel books, thousands of letters, newspaper articles, drew extraordinarily modern artworks, showed enormous talent as an interior decorator, and never stopped trying to do the right thing and to persuade the rest of us to do the right thing too. If the 19th-century was a second Renaissance, Victor Hugo was a true Renaissance man; a genius in several fields. Some people hated him, some loved him, but he was enormously influential in his political and social engagement.

He first gained great fame as a young man, with his defiance of convention : he is credited with having introduced Romanticism with its freedom of plot and expression to French theatre, which had previously been stifled by classical rigidity—though not without a fight (literally). The theatre was at the time one of the only ways in France to reach ordinary people, most of whom were illiterate. He was a conservationist, publishing *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, where he lamented the effect of unfettered progress on ancient ways, buildings, and people. Later he was regarded as a radical, a 'red', 'a socialist, and some of the grander Guernsey people kept away from him because of that, although he had begun life a true royalist. But he had a small band of loyal Guernsey friends who never deserted him and who helped him to spread his message.

His popularity in Guernsey was destined to grow, however, when he began to look after his 'poor children.' His Guernsey project to feed the children gained fame throughout the world. It was not coincidental that the year the project began in earnest , 1862, was the year of publication of *Les Misérables*.

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

Why should we be excited that Victor Hugo lived here in Guernsey? Exactly how famous is he? *Cont.*

Hugo rejected amnesties that were offered from 1859 onwards, as he believed that Liberty had not yet been restored to France. After the French were defeated at Sedan in 1870, and with the fall of Napoleon III, he returned in glory to his homeland. He supported the incumbent government during the war but when he protested against the treatment of the Communards, members of a political party, prone to violence, who had formed a short-lived government, and who had then been executed in large numbers and sent to penal colonies in the tropics, he became very unpopular; his apartment was stoned by crowds shouting, 'Down with Jean Valjean!' He left France and returned in 1872 to Guernsey, where he wrote his final novel, '93, about the horrors of the guillotine and the death penalty during the French Revolution. In 1873 he went back to France to look after his grandchildren, whose father, his son Charles, had died unexpectedly. He returned in 1875 for one week to Guernsey to retrieve his manuscripts from the Old Bank, where he had deposited them in 1870. He was elected a senator in 1876, still attempting to get an amnesty for the Communards, and the following year was published ***The art of being a grandfather***, a collection of poems, some about Guernsey, which helped to cement his growing reputation as an avuncular yet extraordinary literary genius and indefatigable campaigner for human rights, a 'grand'homme' (great man). In 1878 he became exhausted and was taken by his family back to Guernsey. After this were published many poems and other writings, most of which had been written during his years of inspiration during his exile, 1850-1870.

In 1881 he received total exoneration for his banishment in 1851 and a pension. He died in 1885 and although a space was waiting for him in his family plot in Villequier, he was given a state funeral, attended by 2 million people, and buried in the Pantheon in Paris. Today he is embraced both by the left and the right in politics.

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

How did Victor Hugo end up in Guernsey?

When Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, nephew of Napoléon I ‘the Great,’ told Victor Hugo that he would be ‘the new George Washington,’ Hugo optimistically believed him and gave him his political support. Instead Louis-Napoléon staged a *coup d'état* in December 1851 and became Napoléon III. Arrests followed: on 8 January 1852 he ‘proscribed’ Victor Hugo and other influential figures who supported democracy and openly opposed him. Hugo was forced to flee to Brussels with a false passport, his imprisoned sons’ cries of ‘we told you so!’ ringing in his ears. His family liked Belgium, but his anglophile son François-Victor urged him to ‘go to England,’ land of free expression and press freedom.

Hugo published *Napoléon le petit*, in 1852, knowing full well that its criticism of Napoleon III would mean he had to leave Belgium, and he moved with his family to Jersey, a French-speaking ‘England,’ not far from the grave of his beloved daughter Léopoldine in Normandy. The family spent four years in Jersey, which they enjoyed; but Victor Hugo’s friends in exile there with him were rasher than he was. They wrote scurrilous articles about Queen Victoria, Britain was allied with France: they were ordered out in late 1855, and Hugo in solidarity challenged the Jersey authorities to remove him, too. They did, and suddenly the family was on the move again, this time to neighbouring Guernsey. Hugo arrived here in a storm on 31 October 1855.

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

He arrives a star ...

JERSEY (5 August 1852 - 31 October 1855)

GUERNSEY (1 December **1855**-5 September **1870**: buys Hauteville House in May 1856)

To Madame Victor Hugo, Guernsey, 3 p.m., 1 November [1855].

Dearest, we have made it and are landed, not without a bump or two. Huge swell, wild wind, cold rain, black fog. Jersey is no longer even a cloud, Jersey is nothing; the horizon is empty. I feel as though I am in suspended animation; when you are all here with me life will begin again.

We were well received. There was a crowd on the quayside; silent, but sympathetic, at least so it appeared; everyone had taken off their hats as I passed.

As I write to you I am looking out at a superb view. Even in the rain and fog, the entrance to Guernsey is magnificent. [François]-Victor is in raptures. It is a real old Norman port, hardly any English influence. The consul, wearing a white tie, was present as I disembarked. Someone told me he too had acknowledged me as I went past. It would seem that the local authorities have said they we will be left in peace here, as long as we don't cause any trouble. They treat us as though we were common criminals. But bucketsful of water won't put out volcanoes.

... and leaves a superstar

10 August 1872-30 July **1873**: remains at Hauteville House for a year (with Juliette Drouet)

19-25 April **1875**: stays one week

5 July-9 November **1878**: remains four months (with Juliette and his grandchildren)

Victor Hugo in Guernsey

A poem (from *L'art d'être grand-père*, 1877):

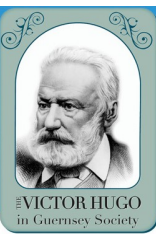
Fenêtres ouvertes /Open windows

Le matin - En dormant.

*J'entends des voix. Lueurs à travers ma paupière.
Une cloche est en branle à l'église Saint-Pierre.
Cris des baigneurs. Plus près ! plus loin ! non, par ici !
Non, par là ! Les oiseaux gazouillent, Jeanne aussi.
Georges l'appelle. Chant des coqs. Une truie
Racle un toit. Des chevaux passent dans la ruelle.
Grincement d'une faux qui coupe le gazon.
Chocs. Rumeurs. Des couvreurs marchent sur la maison.
Bruits du port. Sifflement des machines chauffées.
Musique militaire arrivant par bouffées.
Brouhaha sur le quai. Voix françaises. Merci.
Bonjour. Adieu. Sans doute il est tard, car voici
Que vient tout près de moi chanter mon rouge-gorge.
Vacarme de marteaux lointains dans une forge.
L'eau clapote. On entend haleter un steamer.
Une mouche entre. Souffle immense de la mer.*

In the morning – While sleeping

*I hear voices. Lights through my eyelids.
A bell is swinging away in St Peter Port church.
Shouts of bathers. Nearer! Farther! No, over here!
No, over there! The birds are chirruping, Jeanne is too.
Georges calls her. The cockerels' song. A trowel
Scrapes a roof. Horses pass by in the street.
The grating sound of a scythe cutting the lawn.
Bangs. Noises. Roofers are walking on top of the house.
Noises from the port. Whistling of the warmed-up engines.
Military music reaching me in snatches.
A to-do on the quay. French voices. Merci.
Bonjour. Adieu. It must be late, because here
Is my robin, come right up close to me to sing.
In a far away forge I hear the anvils ring.
The water laps. You can hear a steamer panting.
A fly comes in. The immense breath of the sea.*

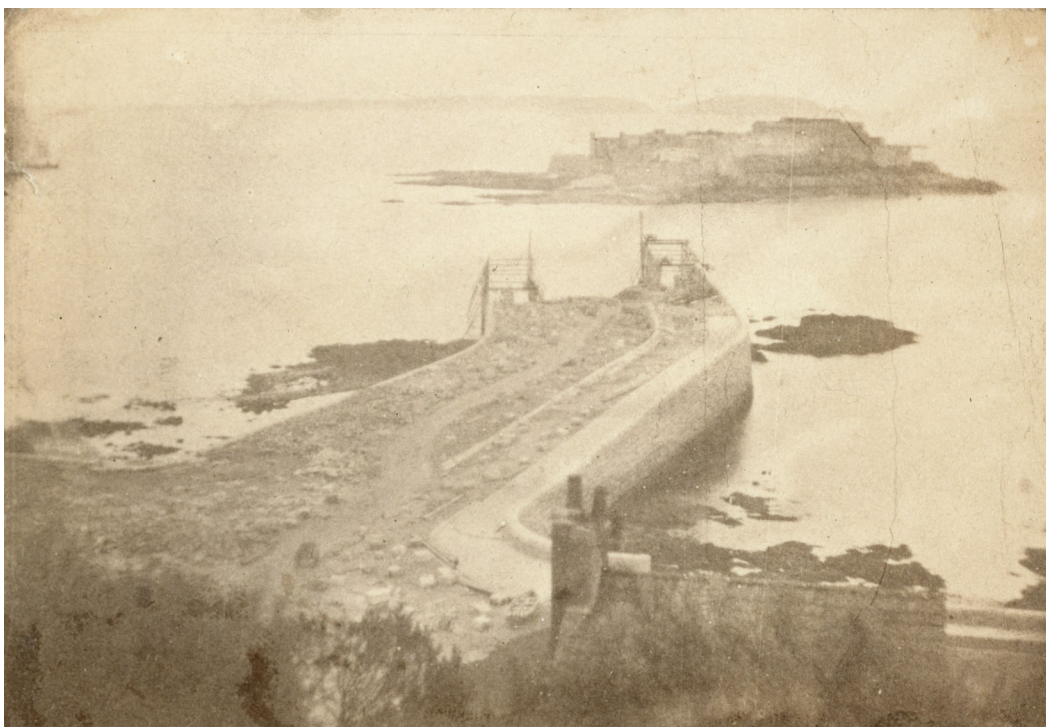


Victor Hugo's opinion on Guernsey, July 26, 1856

Jersey believes itself to be as superior to Guernsey as does Paris to any provincial city, and looks down upon Guernsey from the height of what it believes to be its greatness. For me, I had, despite myself, absorbed this notion and believed that the people of Jersey were right. But it did not take me long to realise my mistake. I find Guernsey much more beautiful than Jersey; it is true that this is entirely attributable to natural causes; but what is down to the Guernsey people, is that they are infinitely more intelligent, polite, and civilised than the people of Jersey. I have found in Guernsey politeness, helpfulness, sense, probity everywhere; the courts administer justice, which is saying quite a lot these days.

There is one thing of which I am certain, which is that as soon as you have finished building this fine port that I am watching growing, as it were, beneath my window, once the railway from Paris to Cherbourg is completed, Jersey's prosperity will pass to here, and Guernsey will be able in its turn to look at Jersey from the height of its greatness. ©

The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society



Charles Hugo, The Castle breakwater under construction, © Maisons de Victor Hugo Paris/Guernsey