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Jersey

Jackie: Regular listeners to these podcasts know that Richard comes from the Isle of Man, but for this week's podcastsineenglish.com we're talking to Robert who comes from Jersey, is that right Robert?

Robert: Yes, indeed.

Jackie: Ok, could you tell us first of all where is Jersey.

Robert: Well, Jersey is the largest of a group of islands known as The Channel Islands. Um... that's the English title. They're variously known as either *Les Isles de la Manche*, Islands of the Channel, or, as a source of history, *Les Isles Anglo-Normandes*.

Jackie: Right, so they sound like they're quite near to France, then.

Robert: Yes, they're situated in the Bay of St Malo. Um... it's 30 miles south to the port of St Malo and 12 miles east to Granville.

Jackie: Ok, but these aren't French islands.

Robert: No, they were originally, as part of the Duchy of Normandy.

Jackie: What language do they speak on the islands, then?

Robert: Well, now of course it's mostly English and although it's a multi-language society now in the sense that we've got Italians, French, Portuguese, and that more recently Polish, the traditional Jersey language is in fact a Norman patois known as Jersey French.

Jackie: Jersey French... and do many people speak that nowadays?

Robert: No, um... there's an attempt at reviving it and they now have classes in both the elementary and secondary schools on a voluntary basis so they're trying to preserve the... the language.

Jackie: And are many of the young people interested in learning that language?

Robert: Surprisingly, yes. There are more... quite a few young people who delight in being able to talk among themselves in a language which nobody else understands!

Jackie: Yes, I can see that would be useful! Tell me about the name Jersey. When I think of the word Jersey I always think of the jumper, the... the pullover - is there a connection with that?

Robert: A very strong connection because um... years ago, Middle Ages on, Jersey was famous for it's knitting and in fact the whole population knitted: man, women and children, everybody knitted and that was where the name Jersey came from.

Jackie: Ah Ok, so obviously Jersey and the Channel Islands are quite south then, do you have many tourists in the summer?

Robert: Jersey had a very large and thriving tourist industry oh I suppose from the 1920s onwards, but it has changed dramatically and the advent of cheap flights to sunny places and although Jersey is a little further south it isn't... you can't guarantee the sunshine.

Jackie: Where you can in Spain.

Robert: Where you can in Spain and it's often cheaper to fly to Spain than it is to Jersey.

Jackie: Um... but you do have tourists coming in the summer, what's the main attraction for tourists coming to Jersey?

Robert: The main attraction I think, and of course Jersey tourism has been plugging this, is the beauty of the island, the unspoilt nature of the island, and of course it's... all the historic... we have some marvellous castles and then, as a result of the German occupation there are all sorts of interesting German bunkers, a big underground hospital - now a major tourist centre.

Jackie: Mm, and there's something called the *Battle of Flowers*, isn't there? Can you explain what that is?

Robert: It's no longer a battle. This is a... a large procession of coloured floats made either of natural flowers, and they can be...

Jackie: Sorry, what do mean by a *float*?

Robert: Motor driven... imagine a... a big lorry and then you build a framework on it and then cover it completely in flowers...

Jackie: Right

Robert: ... or you have model animals, all sorts of things: dancing girls, music, um... and it becomes a long procession along the main front road. The *battle* name comes from the early days when originally, at the end of the procession, everybody tore the flowers and they were

mainly hydrangeas and they tore them apart and the whole thing was wrecked within a matter of an hour!

Jackie: Oh, Ok and this has developed into this... into this...

Robert: But now it is... now it is er... a beautiful procession and it is followed the next day by a t- an evening lit procession with the same floats but they're all lit up.

Jackie: Oh, that sounds nice. And I do know that um... Jersey is also famous for its zoo, am I right about that?

Robert: Yes, the emphasis is not on zoo now, um... this is Durrell's park, wildlife preservation is, is the main aim...

Jackie: And that's Gerald Durrell who... who some people might know wrote books including *My Family and Other Animals*.

Robert: And now it has its own training center and it trains people from all around the world and it's had some successes in maintaining endangered species like the parrot from St Lucia. They're very proud that Jersey has enabled them to keep their parrot and er... the same for animals in Madagascar.

Jackie: Right. Ok, um... what's your favourite part of the island, your favourite place to go to?

Robert: [laughs] There are many favourites really, um... I think because I like scuba diving I go to the north of the island and there's Bouley Bay. Um... because the north of the island is... is largely cliff form but there's this little bay there, um... ok it's only got a pebble beach but the fantastic...

Jackie: So you're saying it's not sandy there, then.

Robert: It's not sandy on that particular one, you have to go to the south or to the east and west of the island to get sandy beaches.

Jackie: So, it's a pebble beach but you like it because...

Robert: Because it is enclosed and it has a great variety of fish and crabs and things like that, all sorts of things to discover underwater and then about a mile offshore there's a famous wreck which you can dive down onto.

Jackie: Great, ok, thank you very much Robert, sounds fascinating!

Robert: Been my pleasure!