



Q&A

TRACEY RADFORD, BLUE BADGE TOURIST GUIDE, JERSEY UNCOVERED

INTERVIEW BY Katie McGonagle

Q. What brought you to Jersey?

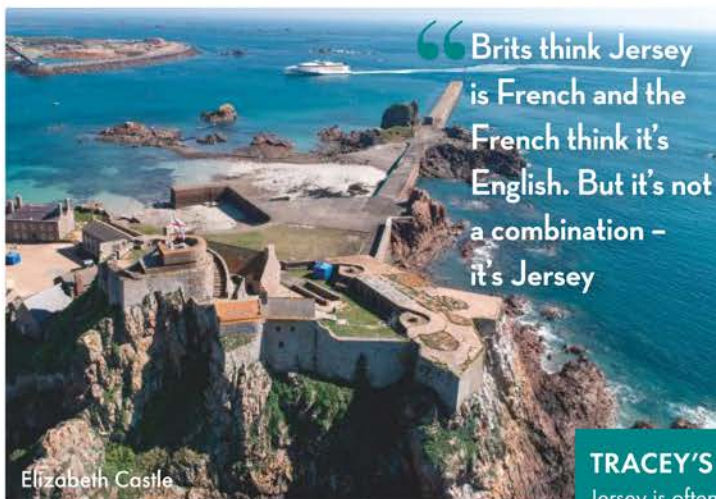
A. My grandparents are Jersey French and my parents are from the island, but my father was in the Royal Navy so my sister and I were brought up in Hampshire. We would spend our summer holidays in Jersey. Then, when I was 18, I moved over and never left. It's beautiful, there's a real community and a surprise around every corner, even after all these years.

Q. How did you qualify as a professional tour guide?

A. I've always loved history but never did anything about it until 2007, when I signed up to the Open University for a history degree and, six years later, got it. While studying, I started volunteering as a tour guide for Jersey Heritage at Elizabeth Castle which, 13 seasons on, I still do. That led to a professional guiding course, where a group of us met and went on to form Jersey Uncovered. We work a lot with the German, American, Australian and Canadian markets, but we would like to get more of a UK foothold.

Q. You specialise in historical tours – do you have a favourite period of Jersey history?

A. The occupation is an incredibly interesting five years of Jersey's history. Jersey and the other islands were the only parts of the British Isles to be occupied by Germany, until they were liberated on May 9, 1945, the day after VE Day. It was a benign occupation to begin with; however, things became darker,



Elizabeth Castle

“ Brits think Jersey is French and the French think it's English. But it's not a combination – it's Jersey ”



PICTURES: Visit Jersey; Barney De La Cloche

particularly after D-Day when supplies became very low. For military history, Jersey is incredible. Where else can you see complete German fortifications and defences, because the island wasn't bombed? But that's not the whole Jersey story.

Q. Where are your other favourite spots on the island?

A. I love guiding around Elizabeth Castle. During the English Civil War, Charles I sent his sons to Jersey and they lived here. When the monarchy was restored, Charles II was grateful to the people of Jersey and presented them with a silver mace. I also like taking people around our main town, St Helier. It has the first Chamber of Commerce in the English-speaking world, the first public lending library – but it was only for the well-to-do and certainly not for women – though tourists mostly love the bronze herd of Jersey cows in the centre of town.

Q. How have your tours changed in light of Covid?

A. Currently, we take a maximum of 10 people to encourage social distancing. We prefer them to wear masks, but our tours are generally outdoor so it's a safe environment. I started back at Elizabeth Castle recently and there's a one-way system in place. Jersey's borders will be opening up from April 26, and restrictions will gradually ease.

Q. What insider tips do you have for clients visiting Jersey?

A. In normal times, we can go to France for lunch. It's one-and-a-half hours by ferry direct to St Malo, and from the east coast, you can see France quite clearly. We have a new scheme to rent bikes as well as electric cars, which some people do. Beauport is a lovely bay just

TRACEY'S TOP TIP

Jersey is often marketed as a short-break destination, but more people are coming for longer and enjoying our countryside, cliffs and coast. It's perfect for travel agents trying to sell a full package.

round the corner from us – any beach that requires descending a number of steps is a good one. The perfect evening in the summer, when the tide is high, is to take a barbecue and go out to the west coast to watch the sunset – it's magical.

Q. What kind of visitors come to Jersey from the UK?

A. A big portion of our clients are of a certain age, but we are getting younger people – university friends and families with teenagers. I've been on kayaking tours and gone coasteering, which is really exciting. I have also done tours for partially-sighted people, and we get high-net-worth clients because Jersey is a finance centre. We see an interesting cross-section of society! A lot of people think Jersey is nice and pretty, but don't really understand it. Brits think it's French and the French think it's English. But it's not a combination – it's Jersey. **TW**