Alderney

Location

A part of the British Crown dependency and Bailiwick of Guernsey, Alderney is the third largest island and the most northern island of all the Channel Islands. The Channel Islands are a group of islands in the English Channel, off the French coast of Normandy, which is separate from the United Kingdom. The Island is three miles long and 1.5 miles wide, altogether a total area of 3 square miles. Located 49° 43' N. and 2° 12' W., this secluded island is a popular vacation spot for many.

Geography

Alderney is surrounded by rocks and two dangerous streams, the Swinge between Alderney and Burhou, and Le Raz between the island and the Norman mainland. The geography is similar to the other islands in the British Isle consisting of cliffs, sandy beaches and dunes. The land is flat on the southern and southwestern cliffs, where it falls abruptly to the sea. On the northern, eastern and southeastern sides, it slopes gradually towards rocky and sandy bays and quiet beaches.

Climate

The climate on the island is very temperate, consisting of warmer summers than the other islands in the channel. The hottest months are August and September averaging around 20 °C; whereas the coldest month is February with average temperatures of 6°C. Snow rarely falls and is unlikely to stay during the cold winter months. Even with the strong Artic winds, temperature rarely falls below freezing.
**History**

After claiming independence from France and pledging loyalty to the British Monarch government, the island of Alderney was almost completely isolated from the rest of the world. Along with the other Channel Islands, Alderney became an island, developing slowly during the Neolithic period while the waters in the channel were rising.

The British government took over the island in hopes to create a strategic harbor to deter attacks from France, but the harbor was never completed. German forces occupied the island during World War II, forcing many of the habitants of Alderney to leave. In place the Germans built four concentration camps. Before surrendering the Island, the Nazis burnt down all concentrations camps and any records of their existence or the life’s of the people who were forced to live there. It wasn’t until December 1945 that the native habitants of Alderney were allowed to return to their homeland.

After the war ended, the island was operated as a communal farm for two years. Money was put aside from the profits to repay the British Government for repairing and rebuilding the island. The “Government of Alderney Law of 1948” was established in protest to the local population not being able to control their own land. The law organized The States of Alderney, a justice system and also imposed taxes. Because of Alderney’s small population, Guernsey became responsible for providing many governmental functions and services by the taxes that were collected. After the building of the airport in 1930’s, the economy has gone from depending greatly on agriculture to gaining most of their income from tourism and finance industries.

**Important Dates**

*Alderney Week* is celebrated from the Saturday before the first Monday of August, during which a number of different events take place. Each year a new theme is picked by the organizers, and there is a local competition for a mascot of the week.
Day 1: Saturday begins with a parade

Day 2: Sunday is always the day of a traditional street market.

Day 3: Cavalcade Day takes place on the Monday, on which residents and organizations construct parade floats based upon a particular theme, before walking them though the high street and onto the green.

Day 4: Tuesday is always a combination of different events.

Day 5: Wednesday often includes the daft raft race

Day 6: The man-powered flight on Thursday

Day 7: Friday is given over to the sandcastle competition.

Day 8: Saturday is the torchlight procession

**Population**

The island has an estimated population of 2,400 people with population density averaging 303.8 people per square kilometer. The natives were traditionally nicknamed “vaques” after the cows or “lapins” after the many rabbits seen throughout the island.

**Currency**

The island of Alderney has its own currency, which by law must be the same as the United Kingdom, the pound. The pound sterling, is the currency of the United Kingdom, its Crown dependencies.
(the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands) and the British Overseas Territories of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and British Antarctic Territory. The pound sterling is the world's oldest currency still in circulation. Sterling is the third-largest reserve currency, after the US dollar and the euro. The pound is also the fourth most traded currency in the foreign exchange market. The currency sign is the pound sign, originally £ with two cross-bars, then later more commonly £ with a single cross-bar. Though original Alderney coins are widely available to collectors, they are no longer in general circulation.

**Education**

Alderny’s educational systems adopts England’s National Curriculum as a nationwide curriculum for primary and secondary state schools following the Education Reform Act 1988. The Education Reform Act 1988 requires that all state students be taught a Basic Curriculum of Religious Education and the National Curriculum.

**Language**

Due to the forced evacuation of the island during World War II, the native language “Auregnais” is practically extinct, with only a handful of people, known as “Rememberers”, able to speak the native language. The common language spoken now is English, with only the tourist speaking French.

**Religion**

St Anne is the main town on the Channel Island of Alderney and also the ancient parish church dedicated to the Virgin Mary. St. Anne is a Church of England. The main religions on practiced on the island today are Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational and Methodist.
**Agriculture**

Alderney agriculturally produces tomatoes, greenhouse flowers, sweet peppers, eggplants, fruit and cattle. Most of the pure-breed Alderney cattle were removed from the island to Guernsey in the summer of 1940, when the island was occupied by the Germany during World War II. On Guernsey, the cattle were interbred with local breeds creating many hybrids that are still found today. The few pure-breed cattle remaining on Alderney were killed and eaten by the Germans. The soil of Alderney is light, fertile and well cultivated.

**Trade**

Flowers and tomatoes are the main horticultural exports, along with grain, vegetables and early potatoes. Finance, tourism and light industry are the main components of Guernsey’s economy.

**Food**

The island food in the Alderney ranges anywhere from fresh seafood to barbecues and hearty pub meals.

**Landmarks**

There are many exciting things to see on the tiny island of Alderney. There’s St. Anne Church, the one and only parish on the island which is conveniently located in the capital of Alderney. There is also the Alderney railroad, the clock tower, and many lighthouses. You can also see Hitler’s Atlantic Wall, which creates the Fortress of Alderney along with other new fortifications including coastal batteries, anti-aircraft batteries and underground tunnels scattered across the island.

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