Happy Anniversary, Genuine Jersey

8th June 2026

As Genuine Jersey marks its 25th anniversary, this feature, originally published in *Rural* magazine in June 2026 and written by Alasdair Crosby, looks back on the organisation's journey and the impact it has had in supporting and promoting Jersey's local producers. It is a story of innovation, community and a shared commitment to keeping the Island's unique products at the heart of Jersey life.



John Garton, CEO Genuine Jersey and Jim Hopley, Chair of Genuine Jersey

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, GENUINE JERSEY

This year the Genuine Jersey Products Association celebrates a quarter of a century of promoting the best products and produce that Jersey can offer. By Alasdair Crosby

Remember the Royal visit in July 2024, when King Charles and Queen Camilla visited Jersey for an overnight stay? The visit included a Royal Court sitting in

the Royal Square and a 21-gun salute. Almost as memorable was the unseasonal heavy rain, and there must have been full airing cupboards in many homes that evening as rain-sodden uniforms were dried out.

Despite that, and in a welcome dry moment, the Royal Couple toured an exhibition in the Weighbridge / Liberation Square area, a 'Jersey Expo' of local products and producers. This was arranged by the Genuine Jersey Products Association.

Its chief executive, John Garton, said: 'We were asked to bring the countryside to town. One half of the exhibition was devoted to the

environment, climate change and the community, and the other half was run by Genuine Jersey, so as to showcase the Island's agriculture and fisheries.

'In the Genuine Jersey section were the Jersey Beekeepers Association, Jersey Royal, the marine and fisheries sector, Jersey oysters, Jersey Sea Salt, the ceramicist Claire Haithwaite, and, of course, in the Jersey cow space taken up by the RJA&HS and Jersey Dairy, were the seven Jersey heifers that were being presented to His Majesty for a herd on his Highgrove Estate.

'It was a happy occasion, and hugely significant for the Association to be chosen by the Bailiff's Office to represent the Island to their Majesties. It was a proud moment for us all to be there.'

Then, think also of the annual Genuine Jersey Christmas Markets in the Royal Square. Again, the weather might not be the best, but you expect a certain amount of cold, wind and rain in the month before Christmas. And, as you would expect, there is always mulled Jersey cider and sample glasses of locally made spirits and hot food to help keep the chill away. There is music, lots of potential Christmas gifts to purchase, lots of laughter and families enjoying themselves... all the familiar ingredients of a successful Christmas Fair.

The caterers have to sell food that is locally produced and grown, and everything, food or non-food, has to be local in some way.



And, of course, the Christmas markets are not the only markets that take place throughout the year that are organised by Genuine Jersey.

'We used to run just half a dozen markets through the year,' John said, 'but this year there will be 25 of them —so, 25 markets in our 25th year. That number excludes the new Farmers' markets that will be taking place at Le Tacheron Farm in Trinity, but in addition there are the extra 16 market trading days of the Christmas markets, which are perceived by the craft producers as their biggest sales opportunity throughout the year.'

This year, Genuine Jersey celebrates its 25th anniversary. It evolved from a government-backed 'Jersey Fresh' scheme, which was an Island brand purely for fresh produce, and which was run by what was then the States Agriculture department. It lasted throughout the late 1980s and into the 1990s, but by the late 1990s it seemed, somehow, to have run out of steam.

In 2001 the Genuine Jersey Products Association was founded by three local businessmen: Peter Tabb of the PR company 'Direct Input', Tim Crowley of La Mare Vineyards and Jonathan Jones of the Jersey Pottery. They wanted a brand initially that would help them differentiate local fudge made in Jersey, from fudge that was made in the UK using dairy milk from Jersey cows, and so was wrongly perceived by customers to be Island produce.

Ken Syvret, then a St Ouen Deputy, was the first president, followed by journalist and wine writer Hamish Marett-Crosby, and subsequently by Jim Hopley, who had recently retired as chief executive of the Jersey Co-Operative Society. Peter Tabb was vice-chairman when Ken Syvret was president, and is still involved in the annual Jersey Royal potato growing competition, organised each year by Genuine Jersey.

John was asked whether the designation ‘Genuine Jersey’ meant nothing more than ‘originated in Jersey?’ Was there actually any additional inference about the quality of the product?

He replied: ‘The designation applies to things that are made, grown, caught or reared in the Island, and the three criteria we employ for accepting products are the amount of local ingredients (the more local ingredients used the higher the score); the manufacturing process and the skill of the producer.

‘The combination of all three scores are what the management committee look at when assessing a product to ensure it meets the criteria. There are 14 points available and the applicant has to score 8 points before the product can be approved to carry the Genuine Jersey mark.

‘If you are a Jersey Royal grower, for example, you can score maximum points on local ingredients; there is no manufacturing, but there is a high level of skill involved in the farming of Jersey Royals, and that gives them enough points to qualify.’

‘If you are someone who produces ceramics, you are importing the clay from outside the Island. So, there are zero local ingredients, but there is a maximum change from clay to final product, and the change processes take place locally, so the products score enough points as they demonstrate a high level of skill; so the producer can become a member as they can score in use of local ingredients, or in processing, or in skill.’

In this anniversary year, the number of members has passed 200 for the first time, divided almost equally between food and non-food producers.

Since 1 January, a further 15 applicants have been approved—11 food and four non-food producers.

John describes Genuine Jersey as an independent association of local producers, that owns its own trademarks and manages its own affairs. It receives a grant from Jersey Product Promotions, which now sits in Jersey Business and that grant is received from Government, with a remit to seek out and support local producers and facilitate their success.

Last year, £27,000 went to Genuine Jersey from Government, and the rest of the money was received from membership fees that last year amounted to over £33,000; so, Government funding is less than 50%.

Members also pay pitch fees for the markets, amounting to over £30,000 last year. In addition, income is received from sponsors and from Genuine Jersey's patron, Evelyn Partners, which all amounts to £150,000 last year.

There are very low office costs and no labour costs; John's salary is paid by Jersey Product Promotions, so it is an efficient scheme for members to be part of, because all the money they put in, and the income from sponsors and Government, is used for their benefit.

There is a committee of ten for the day-to-day administration: the chairman and vice-chairman (both honorary roles), three representatives each from Government and the membership, a representative of the non-food, arts and crafts membership, and one from the Jersey Farmers Union. John sits in as the C.E.O.

He continued: 'The Association's vison has never changed since it was founded. Little did the founders know then that in the future, it would be seen to be much more important to recycle the pound within the local economy, to eat seasonally, to reduce carbon footprint, and to reduce food miles. It was ahead of its time when it began, and the issues it foresaw then have become incredibly topical now.'



The present president, Jim Hopley, retired from the Co-op in 2011 and within a few months was 'enticed' (to use his own words) to become involved with Genuine Jersey; he has been its president since 2012.

'That was not much of an issue for me,' he said, 'because the Co-Op for many years had been a strong supporter of Genuine Jersey. Now, local producers

wishing to sell to the Co-Op need to be members of Genuine Jersey.'

Apart from Genuine Jersey he is chairman of the Jersey National Park, Farm Jersey, the Cheshire Home, Community Action, vice-chairman of Shopmobility.. the list seems endless — 'You name it, I get involved in it,' he said.

'When I retired, I always untended to give something back, and to make it a voluntary involvement; I wasn't interested in taking on paid opportunities.'

He does not come from a farming background; his father was a builder plasterer. 'I have got fishing in the blood; my mother's parents were fishmongers, probably if you go back far enough, they were Cornish wreckers!

'But my environmental credentials are reasonably good. For a long time, I was chairman of the Energy Forum, and all things environmental and sustainable have been part of my interest for a long time.

'I have a feeling for local produce, and not only for local food. I feel strongly that the Association is not only there to represent growers, but to encourage growers to do sensible things, and to bully retailers and restaurants and operators into engaging and supporting them. But the 100 or more craft workers are a vital element of the organisation. We are there to fight corners and defend producers' interests.

'I think our biggest problem is dealing with the number of new applicants. There is a constant flow of people wanting to join us — and that alone shows the strength and current buoyant state of Genuine Jersey, now a quarter of a century old.'