

Bailiff's Christmas Message 2010

To some extent 2010 has been a year of contrasting emotions. On the one hand we have experienced the joy of celebrating 65 years of freedom following the liberation of the Island from occupying forces on 9th May 1945 as well as having had the privilege of two official Royal visits in June and September when the Island received Their Royal Highnesses The Earl and Countess of Wessex, and Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal respectively. On the other hand we have continued to live in the shadow of one of the most significant global economic downturns, which has brought hardship to many on a personal level as well as having a more general impact on the financial wellbeing of our community. We have also witnessed some terrible natural disasters including the devastating earthquake, which has left the community of Haiti in ruins and the flash flooding which caused death and destruction to our friends in Madeira.

People in Jersey have always donated generously when it comes to those less fortunate than ourselves. Whether this is in the form of voluntary help or making a financial donation, the Island has a wonderful record of helping the plight of others in desperate times. This year has been no exception with successful appeals being launched for both Haiti and

Madeira. Jersey quite rightly relates closely to other island communities and shares many of the common values and qualities of fellow islanders. It is a credit to the Island that its people are so generous in supporting appeals of this nature, particularly given the current economic pressures.

It was a great privilege to host a very special reception at the RJA & HS premises, Trinity in May to mark the 65th Anniversary of the Liberation of Jersey. It brought together 1,300 people who lived through the occupation or who left to fight in the armed services or who were evacuated or deported and who had experienced the joy of having our freedoms restored in 1945. My wife and I were privileged to meet so many who had lived through those dark times and to hear of their experiences first hand.

As we come to the end of one year and look to the next, we should do so with renewed optimism and celebration for our Island way of life, our freedom to determine our own future through our elected representatives, the Island's natural scenic beauty and the strong sense of community which still exists. We can also take delight in the forthcoming Royal Wedding in April next year between His Royal Highness Prince William and Miss Catherine Middleton and remind ourselves that in Jersey we have celebrated more than 800 years of loyalty to the Crown.

May I close, Mr. Editor, by thanking you for allowing me once again the space in your columns to send this Christmas message. It is the last occasion on which I shall have the privilege of sharing greetings with His Excellency Lieutenant General Andrew Ridgway who has, together with Mrs. Ridgway, made such a tremendous contribution to Island life during his five year term of office as our Lieutenant Governor.

Christmas is a time for reflecting on those events that took place in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago and for spending time with family and friends. My wife Joan and I wish all your readers a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.