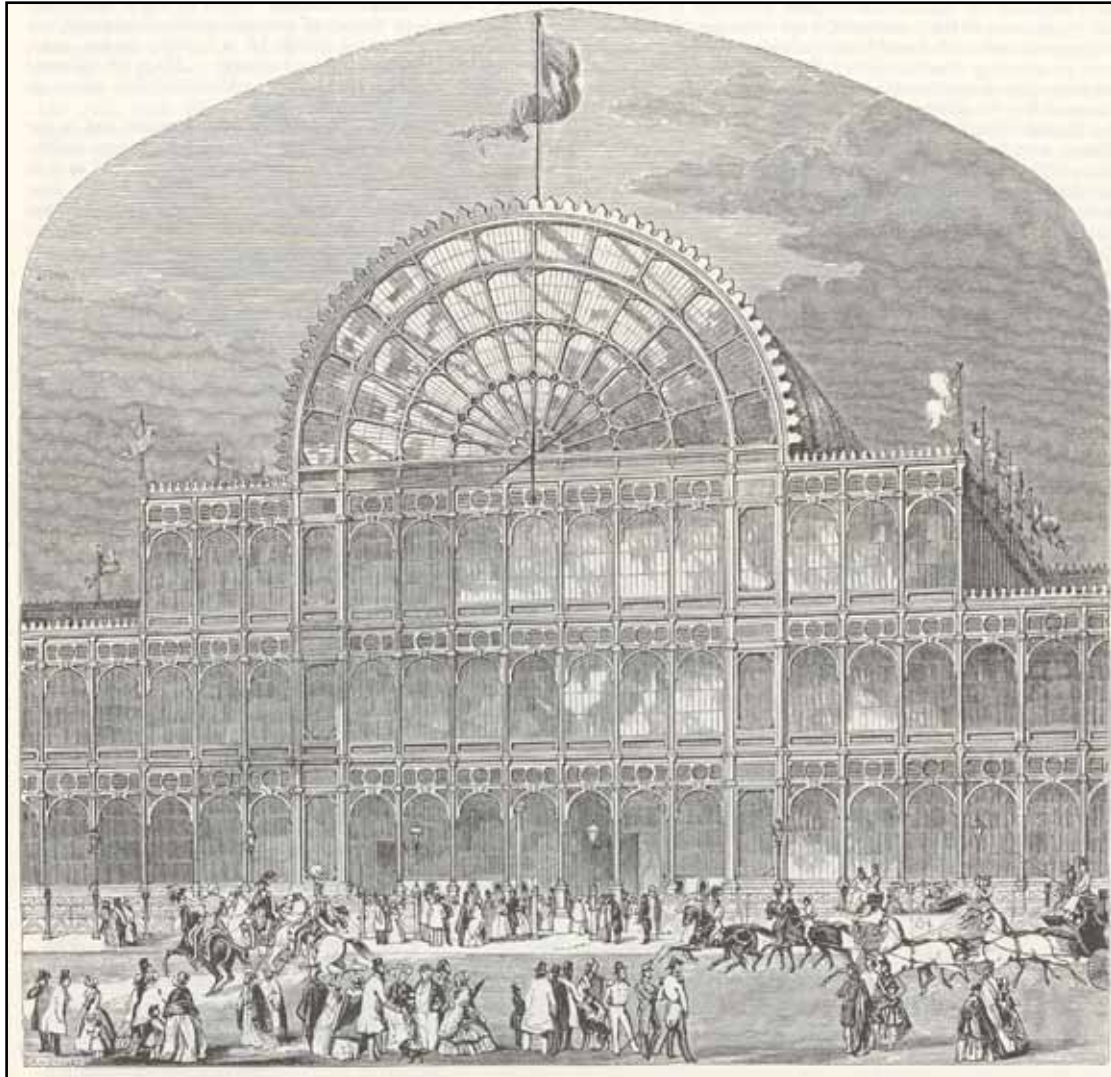
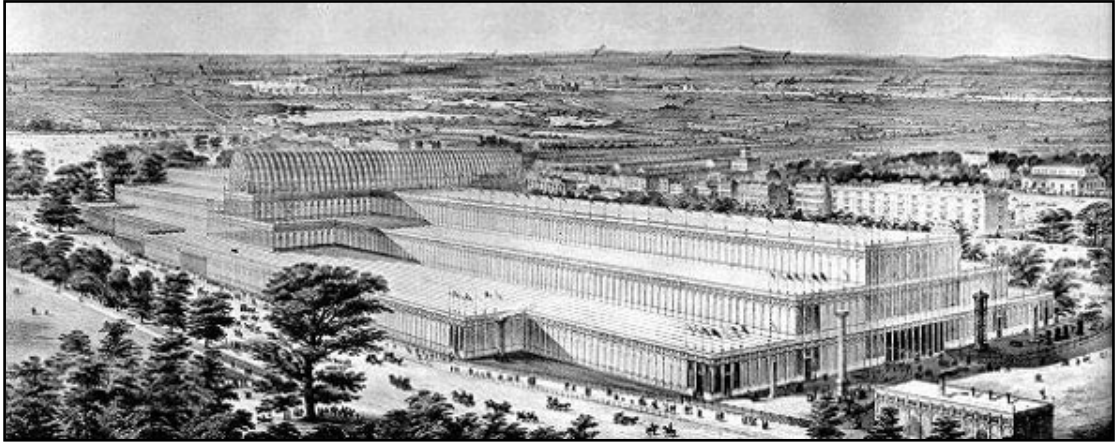


The Great Exhibition – 1851 Guernsey's contribution

On Thursday 1st May 1851 Her Royal Majesty Queen Victoria officially opened The Exhibition of Industry of All Nations, now better known as the Great Crystal Palace Exhibition.



The project took almost 2½ years to come to fruition and its leading light was Queen Victoria's husband, Albert, Prince Consort. In 1848 he placed a proposal before British Parliament to set up a self supporting exhibition of the products of British Industry. However, Albert cannot be credited with inventing the concept of an Industrial Exhibition as the formula had already been successfully employed in England, but most particularly in France, on many prior occasions. At the end of the 18th century the Marquis d'Aveze – Commissioner of the Royal Manufactories of the Gobelins, of Sèvres and of the Savonnerie initiated the first of what was to become a series of Expositions which culminated in the highly successful French Industrial Exposition of 1844. After the success of the 1844 Exposition proposals were put to Parliament detailing the benefits such an Exhibition held in England would have on commerce and the British economy as a whole. These initial proposals were met with absolutely no support and it was not until 1848, and the involvement of the Prince Consort, that progress began to be made towards realising the event.



The Exhibition needed a specially built venue and the Royal Commission which was set up to manage the preparation, planning and running of the event considered numerous building designs and even prepared some of their own. However the design that was finally used, which boasted a huge semicircular glass roof over the transept, is credited to Sir Joseph Paxton. He worked closely with the Royal Commission and building contractors Fox & Henderson to create a magnificent building design using cast iron and glass which was situated in Hyde Park. The final building utilised 550 tons of wrought iron, 3,500 tons of cast iron, 30 miles of gutters, 202 miles of sash bars and over 600,000 feet of wooden flooring. The building, being 1851 feet long by 456 feet at its widest point, covered approximately 19 acres and was clad in just under 900,000 feet of glass which gave rise to its name, the 'Crystal Palace'. The size of the construction required that the building had to have its own fire brigade inside to protect the exhibition items and the public. Twelve large fire engines and teams of



trained firemen were on constant station within the galleries.

Early on during the planning process it was decided that rather than restrict the Exhibition to solely British enterprise the event should be open to the entire world.

This approach instantaneously elevated the undertaking above any other that had gone before and secured the Victorians' dominant position as a global power in design, construction and industry. To this end official invitations were sent out to all Foreign Governments, States and Continents, as well as to British Colonies and possessions to submit items for the exhibition.

The official invitation to Guernsey inhabitants was printed in *The Star* (Gsy) newspaper on Saturday 30th March 1850. Over the next few weeks there followed numerous meetings to appoint a local Committee to promote the issue within the Island and select items to be submitted to the Royal Commission for consideration. By early May of that year the Committee was formed and it then set about announcing to the local population what categories they might submit work in for consideration.

It is believed that the items chosen locally for display at the Great Exhibition would have been put on display in Guernsey sometime around the beginning of March 1851 after which point they were transported to England.

The items sent from Guernsey to the Great Exhibition of 1851 included the following;

Specimens of Granite, Porphyry and Pot-stone from the islands of Guernsey, Herm and Sark;

1. Porphyritic gneiss, from Peinmont Cliffs.
2. Red Porphyritic gneiss, from the same.
3. Black Hornblende, from the same.
4. Hornblende schist from Castel au Roc.
5. Red Syenite, from Roc de Guet.
6. Grey Syenite, from Mont Cuet.
7. Blue Syenite, from the Vale quarries.
8. Grey Syenite, from the island of Herm.
9. Porphyry (black), from the island of Sark.
10. Steatite, from the same Island.
11. Carved specimens. The above are used for building and macadamizing. Herm Syenite was used for the steps of the Duke of York's Column, in Waterloo place.

These were supplied by Thomas Glugas (junior) of *No. 8, L'Hyvreuse Terrace, Guernsey* – Proprietor.

Raw Silk, the produce of the Island of Guernsey, being the first obtained by the Guernsey Silk Growers' Company, lately established in the Island.

Arrowroot fecula, obtained from the *Arum maculatum*, a plant indigenous to Guernsey.

These were supplied by Peter Martin, of *St. Peter Port, Guernsey* – Producer.

Model of a machine to determine the distance run by a ship, and at the same time to determine the ship's place on the chart.

This was supplied by Emanuel Allèond, *St. Peter Port, Guernsey* – Inventor.

A corking machine: improved application of the lever in driving the cork through a cone, the bottle being secured by another lever at the foot.

This was supplied by Peter George Harris – Inventor.

Tulle dress, embroidered with groups of flowers of floss silk flowers, copied from natural flowers. The novelty consists of the firmness given to the floss silk flowers on so slight a texture as tulle.

This was supplied by Sophia McDonald, *Woodland* – Inventor.

Table-top, ornamented with shells found in the Island of Herm.

Group of poultry made of shells.

These were supplied by Harriet Dobree, *de Beauvoir, Guernsey* – Inventor

Specimens illustrating the manufacture of iodine and iodide of potassium.

Specimens of fuci and algae which grow abundantly on the north and west coast of Guernsey.

Fused mass, consisting of the ashes of these marine plants, and containing salts of soda, potash lime, and magnesia.

Iodine in the rough state, as produced in the first receiver connected with the distillatory apparatus, and containing bromine and chlorine in small quantities.

Commercial iodine, prepared by steam distillation, pure, dry, of brilliant metallic appearance, and free from bromine.

Crystals of iodide of potassium, prepared from the preceding.

Residuary product, consisting of ashes of the fuci and algae, after the iodine has been extracted, and containing the salts of potash, soda lime, and magnesia, as chlorides and sulphates. Used as manure by the farmers.

These were supplied by Adolphus Arnold, *Commercial Arcade, Guernsey* – Manufacturer.

Salts, similar to those commonly called “Epsom” produced from salt or chloride of sodium.

This was supplied by Thomas Gould – Manufacturer.

Original Guernsey Frock, of Guernsey home knitting, in constant use among labourers and fishermen; worn over the shirt.

Frock of Guernsey wool and Guernsey home knitting, used instead on flannel.

Drawers, men’s and women’s stockings, nightcaps, gloves, fishermen and labourers’ cravats, and slippers of Guernsey home knitting.

These were supplied by D. Dobree, **Forest Rectory, Guernsey** – Proprietor.

Guernsey farm saddle: local name of material “han” in constant use on every farm for riding, and for carrying bags and panniers. **Mat and footstool of “han”** in common use. **Bullock’s and horse’s collar of “han”**. **Coil of “han” rope**, used by fishermen; this does not harden in salt water. **Shackles of “han”**, used for cattle; these do not cut the feet. **“Han” – a hank of the raw material**, common in Guernsey; it grows in the meadows.

These were supplied by N. Le Beir, *St. Peter Port, Guernsey* – Proprietor.

Guernsey Osier crab-pot; to be sunk in deep water. Baited inside to catch lobsters, conger etc. **Osier fish-basket**. **Large osier bait-pot**, intended for a few days’ consumption, left as sea to keep the bait alive. **Small bait-pot**, for one days’ use, towed after the boat.

These were supplied by D. Dorey, *St. Mary de Castro, Guernsey* – Proprietor.

Guernsey home knitting work by cottagers.

Model of a life-boat.

This was supplied by J. Goodridge (junior) – Inventor.

Model of a patent truss for the yards of ships, of Muntz.

This was supplied by P. Marquard, Blacksmith, *North Pier, St. Sampsons, Guernsey* – Inventor and Producer.

Specimens of fine workmanship in leather, shown in a pier-glass frame and stand, with brackets.

These were supplied by Miss Ellis – Proprietor.

Two mats worked in wool.

These were supplied by Miss Randell, *Guernsey* – Producer.

Stand of wax fruit.

This was supplied by Mrs B.A. Stafford, *Guernsey* – Producer.

Reports written for the Times and other English newspapers were transcribed in the local newspaper The Star (Gsy) in the weeks and months leading up to the grand opening of the exhibition. Excitement mounted as the opening day approached with



exhibitors putting the finishing touches to their displays and final preparations being made in advance of the inauguration. The huge numbers of water powered exhibits and items of steam machinery, as well as the Palace's fire brigade, required an extensive and powerful water supply which was in itself a great feat of engineering. The steam engines were run and tested in the last few days before the opening.

On Saturday 1st May 1851 the inauguration of the Palace of Industry was graced by Her Majesty Queen Victoria. Tens of thousands of people packed Hyde Park, Oxford Street, Picadilly, Parliament Street and Kensington Road to see the Queen and the Prince Consort visit the exhibition. It was estimated that the Crystal Palace could hold

between 40,000 and 60,000 standing visitors on the ground floor alone and on the opening day 25,000 people paid for seats inside to witness the opening ceremony. A dais had been erected in the centre of the transept on which Prince Albert made an address and then presented a copy of the

illustrated catalogue of the items in the exhibition to Queen Victoria. The Queen, Prince Albert and their entourage then made a circuit of the whole building to view the huge variety of exhibits before returning to the dais and officially announcing the Exhibition open to the public. Such were the vast numbers of people that it was generally acknowledged that most visitors queuing outside the building had to wait 4 hours before getting inside.



The price of admission on this day was £4 per person.



On Wednesday 7th May 1851, after being open for 1 week, the admission price was dropped to 5 shillings – with this drop in prices the exhibition became accessible to the middle-classes and there was a surge in numbers with thousands more coming to visit. Such was the cross-section of industry illustrated within the walls of the Palace that on 10th May Professor Cowper of King's College started a series of lecture

tours through the exhibition halls for his students. Entrance to the exhibition could be made with a season ticket which was purchased in advance or through the purchase of a single ticket at the entrance. It was noted that on the 24th May over 30,000 season ticket holders alone visited and only 3 days later over 13,000 people made their way through the various entrances in the space of 2½ hours. On the 29th May the entrance price was further reduced to 1 shilling which opened the exhibition up to the lower classes with 47,581 tickets being bought the following day as well as just over 7,000 season ticket holders visiting.



