

# Story of Guernsey Tom



## activity book

Guernsey is the second largest of the Channel Islands and is situated between England and France.

For many years Guernsey was famous for growing tomatoes. The 'Guernsey Tom' was sold in markets and shops throughout Great Britain.

This activity book tells the story of the 'Guernsey Tom'.

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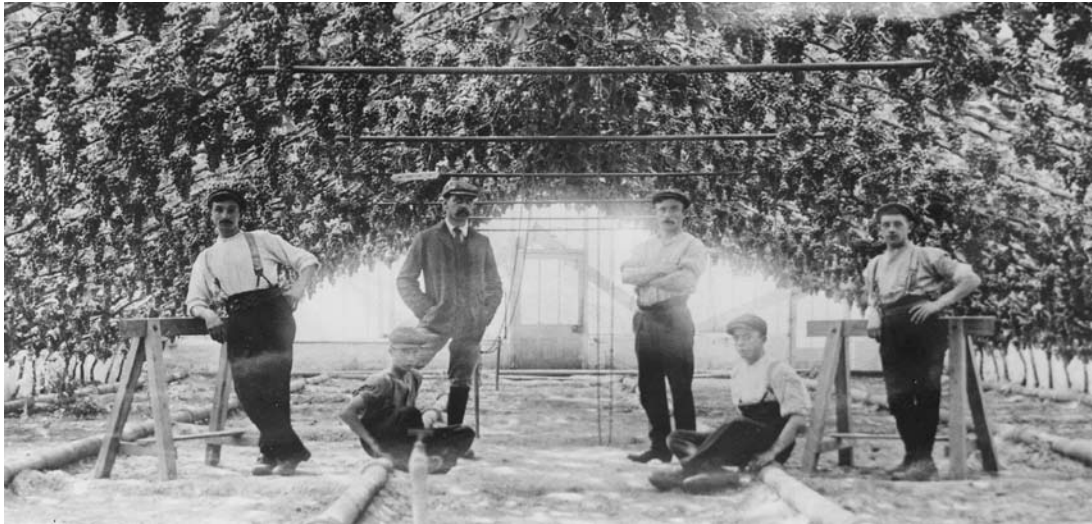
# What is a Tomato?

It is thought that the tomato originally came from South America where it grew wild. Ancient civilizations like the Aztecs and Incas cultivated it as a crop to eat.

It was brought over to Europe as a garden 'curiosity' in the 16th century, but people believed it was poisonous because it belonged to the same family as the deadly nightshade.

Then, in the 1860s, doctors decided that tomatoes were a good, healthy food.

At this time Guernsey people were growing grapes to send to Britain, but the tomato soon took over as the island's main horticultural industry and the Guernsey tomato was born.



**activity:** colour in the pictures. Which of these ancient civilisations first cultivated the wild tomato?

Aztecs



Egyptians



Incas



Greeks



**Guernsey Tom**

# Building Greenhouses (vineries)



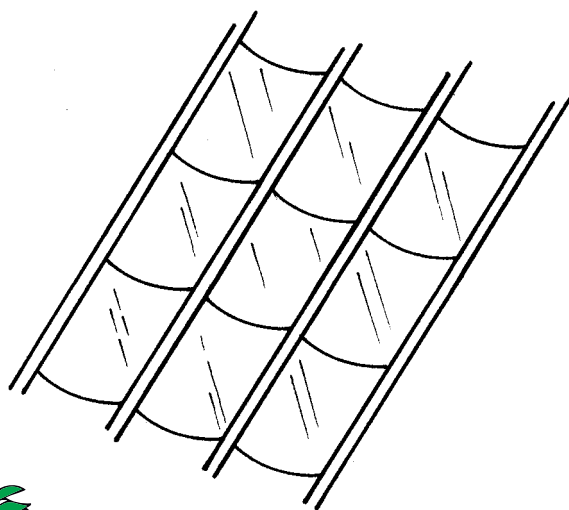
Guernsey's climate is too cold for grapes and tomatoes to grow well, so glass houses or 'green houses' were built to keep the plants warm. Originally, green houses that were built to cultivate grapes were called vineries. When tomatoes were grown instead, the name stayed and tomato vineries were built all over the Island.

The first greenhouses were strongly built out of wood and glazed with overlapping 'round and hollow' glass measuring 12 inches x 20 inches. The 'round and hollow' glass caused the rain water to run down the middle of the pane of glass, away from the wood.

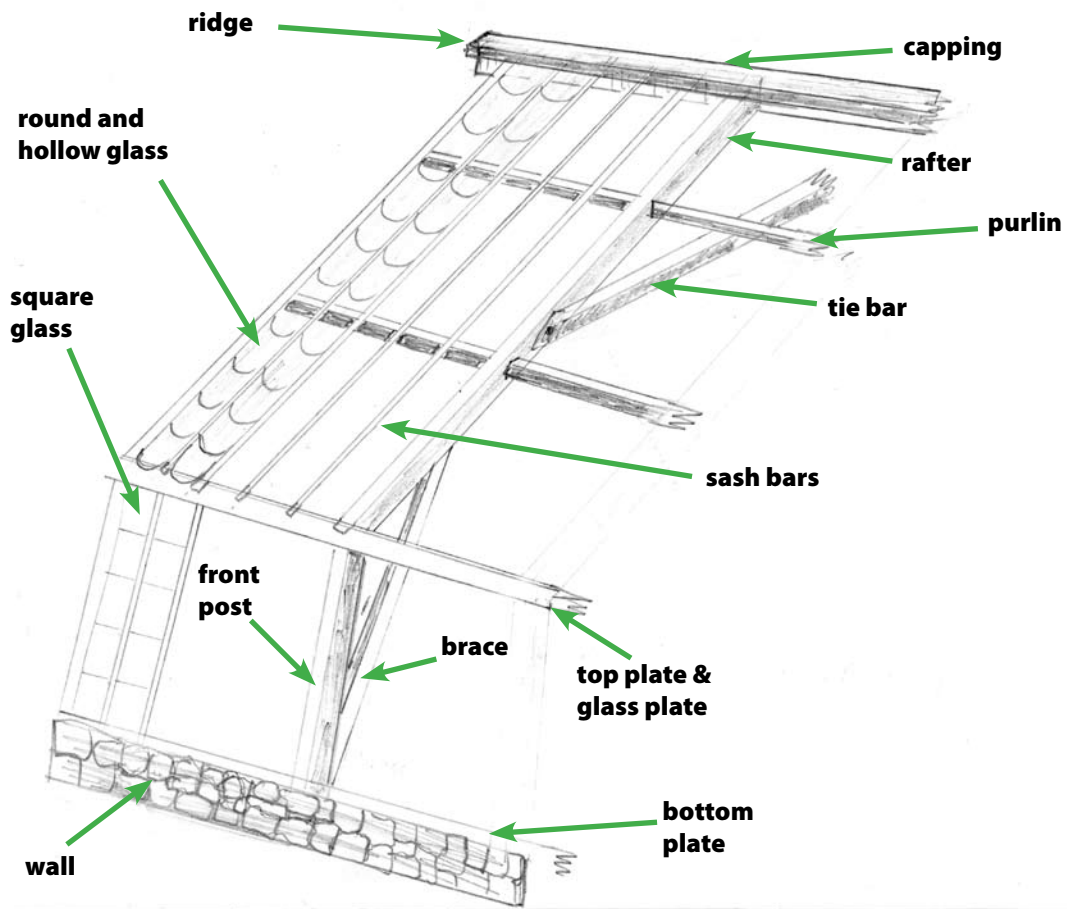


Putty and small brass nails known as 'brads' were used to keep the glass in place. By the 1950s 1,100 acres of glass covered Guernsey. This was 7% of the total land area of the Island.

**activity:** draw an arrow where the rainwater would run on these panes of glass.



**activity:** study the parts of greenhouse.



By the 1960s aluminium was being used to build the frame work of a greenhouse. It was lighter and stronger than wood so huge glasshouses could be built. The panes of glass were also larger, letting more light in so more tomatoes grew on the plants.





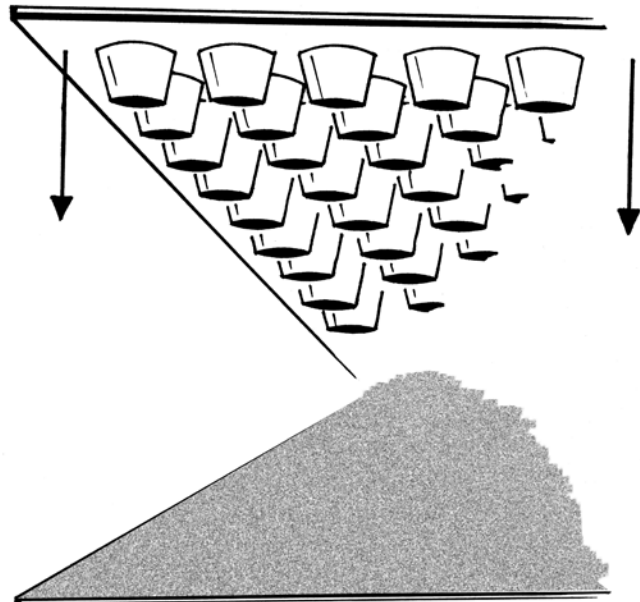
# Growing tomatoes



To grow tomatoes you first have to sow and germinate the seeds.

Traditionally, seeds were sown in wooden 'seed boxes' with 6cm of soil in them. About 250 seeds were sown in each box during the first half of November.

A board with 250 'studs' was pressed into the soil leaving 250 holes. Someone then had to drop a single seed in each hole and cover it with a little bit of soil. After being watered, the seeds were left to germinate.



A grower who grew tomato plants to sell to other growers would sow over 1,000,000 seeds.

**activity:** how many seeds would you need to fill 5 boxes?

$$250 \times 5 =$$

How many words can you make from GERMINATE?

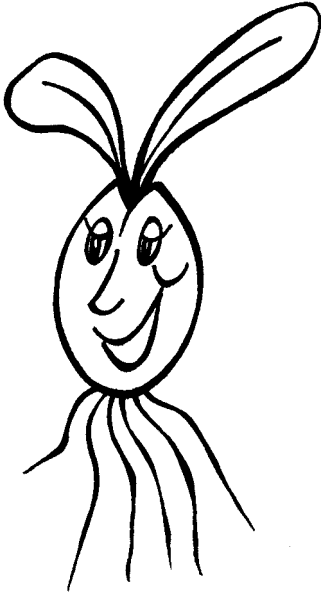
Is 1,000,000 ?

- (a) One thousand      (b) one million      (c) one billion



# A 'happy seed' and a 'sad seed'

**activity:** colour in the picture of a Happy Seed and a Sad Seed.



light  
dark  
dry  
water  
heat  
cold  
good soil  
poor soil



What makes a happy seed and a sad seed?

**activity:** draw a line from each word to the correct picture.

Once the seeds had germinated they were left to grow on as seedlings. This took about 3 weeks.

Now they were ready to be 'pricked out' and transplanted to seedling boxes, individual pots or into a soil block.

A soil block was made in a machine which compressed the soil. A hole was left for the seedling and when it was watered the soil in the block swelled up around its roots.



The seedlings were left to grow for another 8 or 9 weeks before they were 'planted out'.



# Planting out

Growers tried different methods to plant tomatoes. They wanted to find the best way to stop pests and diseases killing the plants.

They tried planting in:

- Clay pots
- 'Whale Hide' pots
- Concrete pots
- Peat bags
- and directly into the soil



The soil in a greenhouse often became infected and at first dangerous chemicals had to be used to sterilize it. Then in the 1920s the 'Dorey Patent Soil Sterilizer' was invented by Mr P Dorey and Mr J Leale.

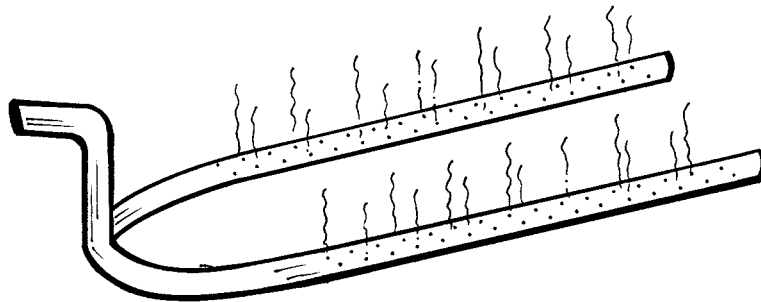


# Steaming

To get the soil in the greenhouse steam cleaned, growers had to take all the soil out of the greenhouse and put it into a chamber over a boiler. The boiler produced steam which filtered up through the soil killing the diseases. The soil then had to be put back into the greenhouse.



Later a soil grid was invented which made the job easier.



**activity:** the instructions for getting your greenhouse steamed with a grid have got muddled up. Can you put them in the right order? The first and last ones are done for you.

- (1) soil was dug out of a trench and placed on the path.
- ( ) the steam from the boiler was piped through the grid.
- ( ) after 'cooking' the soil for 45 minutes the grid was pulled out.
- ( ) the steam escaped through small holes in the grid and into the soil.
- ( ) the grid was put in the trench and the soil replaced over it.
- (6) a new trench was made and the whole process started again.



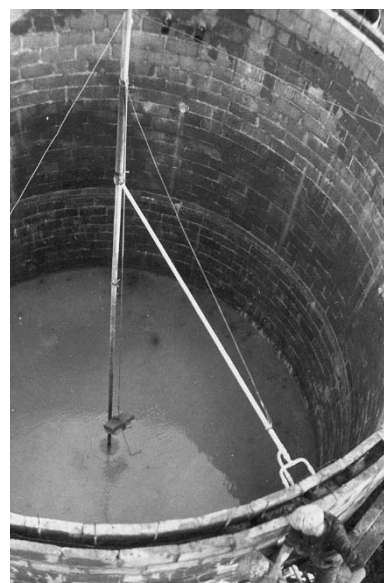


# Water

In order to produce a large crop of quality tomatoes the plants needed lots of fresh, clean water at regular times.

The early growers had to rely on wells or rainwater stored underground in 'cisterns'.

The water from a cistern was pumped up using windmill pumps. Every vinery had at least one windmill pump.



How many windmills can you see in this photograph?



You can make your own windmill on page 29.

# Heating

Growers made more money if tomatoes were ready early in the year so they heated their greenhouse to 'force' them on.

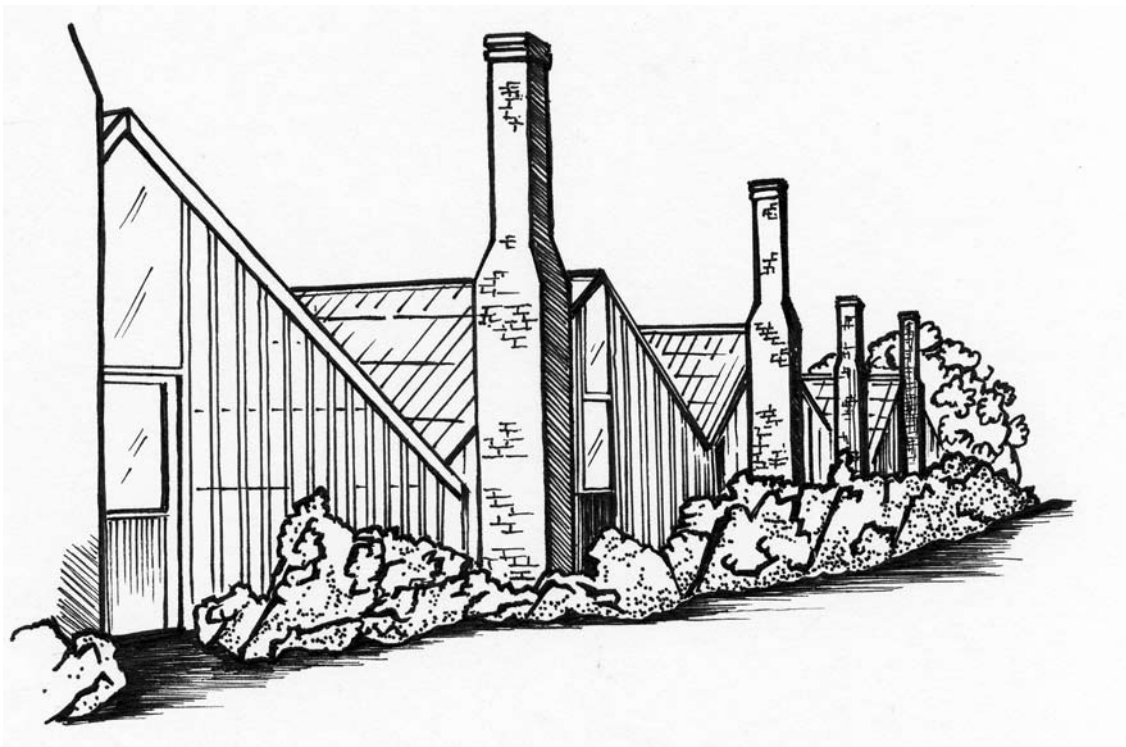
In the early days greenhouses were heated using water heated in coal fired boilers and then sent around (circulated) through cast iron pipes. Tall chimneys were built to take the smoke away.

Most of the coal came in boats from South Wales.

After being unloaded from the boat it was taken to the vinery and stacked up close to the boiler.



**activity:** draw the smoke and a lorry delivering the coal onto this picture.



# Growing on

While the tomatoes were growing the grower had to make sure that the plants had the right amount of water. Too little or too much water would affect the quality and quantity of the crop.

The right amount of warmth and air (ventilation) was also important. This was done by opening and closing the 'Lights'. The 'Lights' were windows in the roof of the greenhouse and growers had 'lifting gear' to help them.

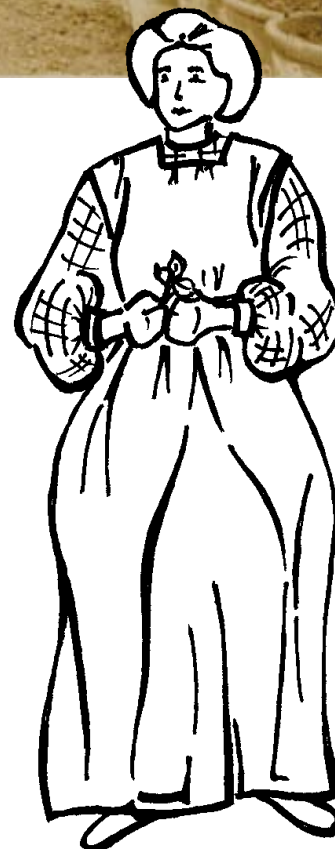


Look at the picture of the people in the greenhouse.

**activity:** this is a drawing of one of them. Colour it in.

Are the Tomato plants growing in

- (a) concrete pots?
- (b) peat bags?
- (c) soil blocks?





# Picking

Picking tomatoes was always done by hand so that the fruit did not get damaged. In earlier times (1880s-1920s) tomatoes were picked when they were very red and ripe. Later on (1930-1970s) they were picked when they were orange and less ripe so that they would reach the market in peak condition.



This is a boy picking tomatoes in the early 1900s. He is putting them in a 'wicker basket'.



**activity:** colour in the tomatoes - make sure the tomatoes are the correct colour for the date of the picture!





# Smooths and Roughs

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From 1900 -1930 tomatoes were sorted or 'graded' into 2 grades: 'Smooths' and 'Roughs'. The Smooths were the best tomatoes and would fetch the highest price at the market.



**activity:** guess which are Smooths then colour in the pink tissue paper.

The tomatoes were shipped to market in wicker baskets lined with pink tissue paper for Smooths and white for Roughs. A lid was stitched on to the basket to stop the tomatoes falling out. A destination address label was attached to the lid. These baskets would be returned later to the grower.

***This is a wicker basket.*** It would have held 12lbs of tomatoes. The handle of the basket was passed through a slot in the lid and tied on.



**activity:** this man is returning with his empty baskets. How many baskets is he carrying?



***This is a destination label.*** The grower wrote his name or number in the bottom left hand section, and the weight and grade of tomatoes in the right.

**activity:** fill in your address in the correct place on the destination label.



# 1932-1952 - Chip Baskets

15

During this time grading and packing was inspected to make sure all the tomatoes were of a high standard and the correct grade and weight.

Chip baskets made from wooden planks replaced the wicker baskets.

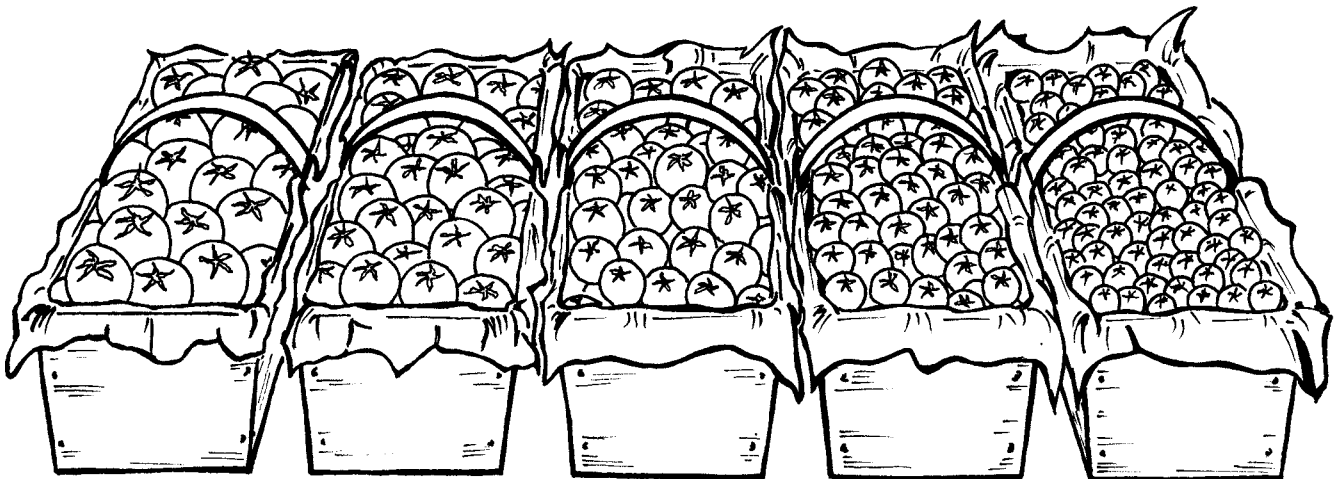
Chips came stamped with the growers initials on the side of the basket. This way the agents at the market could make sure they always bought from their favourite grower.



*A chip basket with the chip planks nailed on.*

By now there were 5 grades of tomatoes:

- Pinks (the best grade)
- Yellows
- Whites
- Blues
- Greens (the lowest grade)



**activity:** colour in the tissue paper showing the correct colour, starting with the best tomatoes.





# 1952-1961 - grading & packing

In 1952 the 'Guernsey Tomato Marketing Board' (G.T.M.B.) was set up to oversee the grading packing and marketing of Guernsey Tomatoes.

As well as the coloured tissue paper, they introduced Grade Stamps with different shapes and the grower's number in the middle. This way buyers would know that the tomatoes had been approved as well as who had grown them.

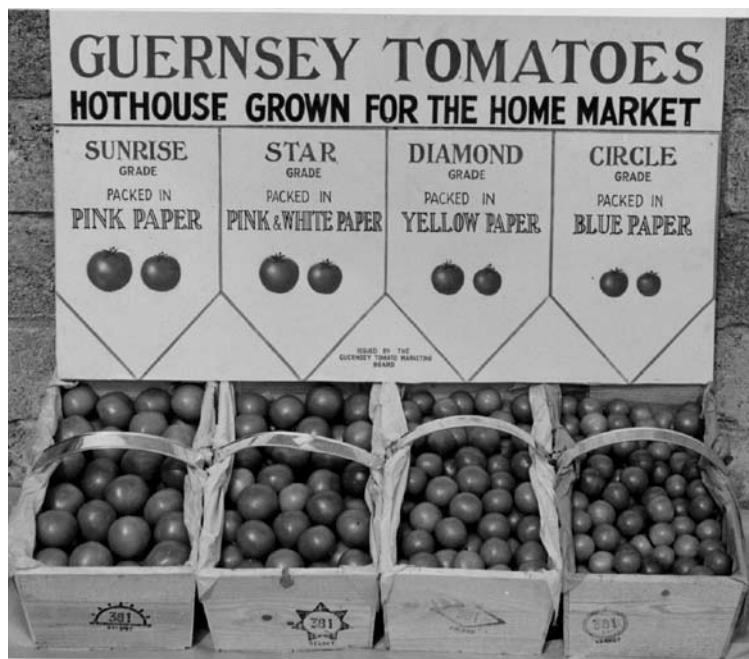


These were the grades, stamps and tissue paper colours used in 1955. *Note: the stamps are shown the wrong way around to make them easier to read.*

Grade		Colour of Paper lining
Select Sunrise		Pink
Select Star		Pink & White
Select Diamond		Yellow
Select Circle		Blue
Triangle		White
Square		Green
Smalls		Blue & White







This photograph shows how the tomatoes looked once they had been graded and packed. (Note how the tomatoes are getting smaller.)

Before the tomatoes were shipped two chip planks were nailed on top of the chip basket using a nailing machine.

Many growers were now sending their tomatoes to be 'store packed' and were no longer sorting and packing themselves. This photo shows the tomatoes being store packed using a 'Greefer' grader.

**activity:** should you colour the tomatoes red or orange?



Look at the picture, are the ladies dressed the same as those on page 11?

**activity:** draw your favourite Grade Stamp here.



# The Packing Shed

On small vineries the grower would take the tomatoes to his packing shed to be sorted and packed by his family.



**activity:** colour in the picture.



DISCARD

DISCARD

DISCARD

DISCARD

handle



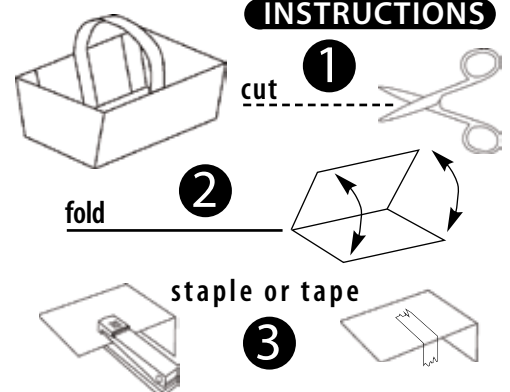
NAME

ADDRESS

AGE

address label

make your own  
**TOMATO CHIP**  
**INSTRUCTIONS**









# Advertising

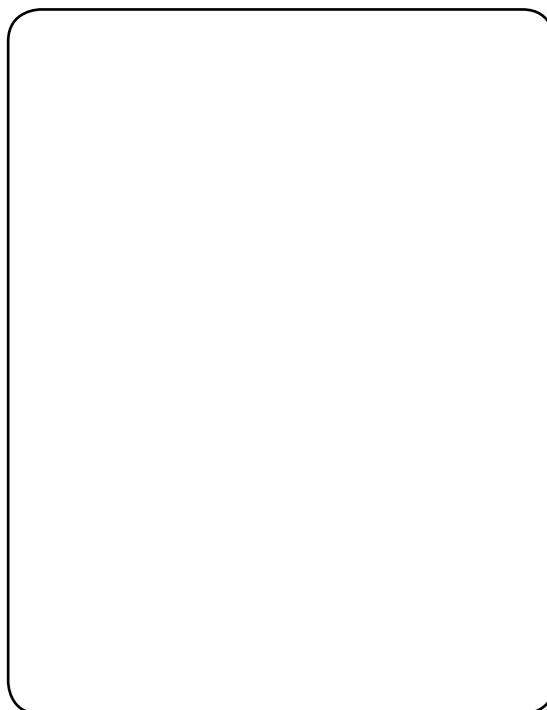


**activity:** colour in Guernsey Tom.

The 'Guernsey Tom' logo was used in the 1960s to advertise the Guernsey tomato all over England.

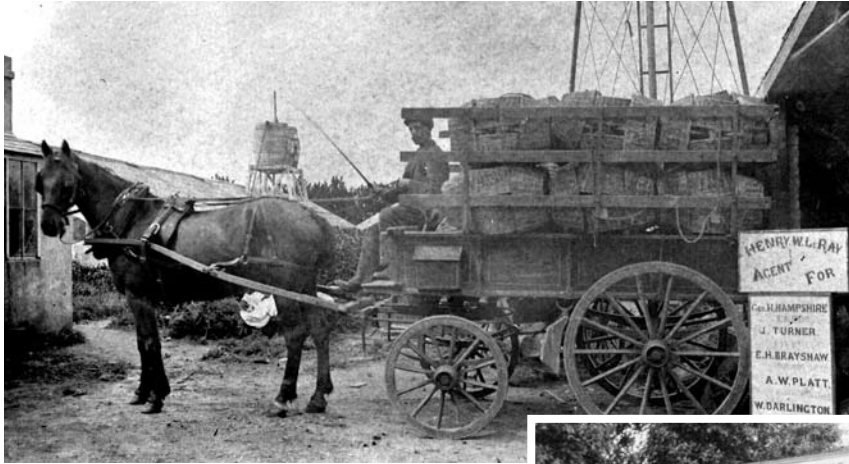


**activity:** can you design a better one?



# Off to market

Over the years there have been many forms of transport to get the tomatoes to the White Rock in St Peter Port.



1900s

1920s



1950s



1970s





Once at the White Rock the tomatoes were loaded into the holds of boats before being shipped to England.

*Wicker baskets in the hold in the early 1900s.*



*Chips being loaded in the 1950s.*



*Trays being loaded in the 1970s.*



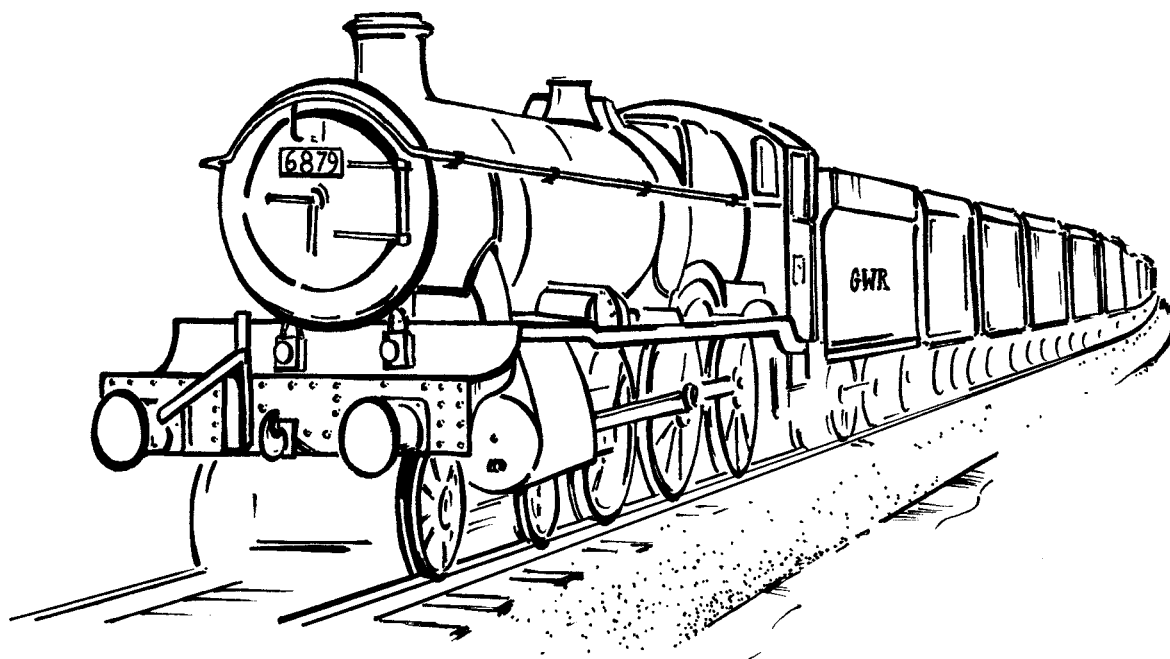
# To market by Rail

The tomatoes were delivered to the wholesale markets on special trains which were nicknamed 'Perpots' by the Great Western Railway Company. (*Perpot was short for perishables and potatoes*).

The trains were built to travel quickly and smoothly so that the cargo would arrive in tip top condition and command the best prices.



*Chips being loaded into freight train carriages.*



**activity:** using red, green and black, colour in the 'perpot' train.



# The travels of Guernsey Tom

25



**activity 1:** draw in the railway line from Southampton to Newcastle via London and York.

**activity 2:** draw in the railway line from Weymouth to Glasgow.

You can find a rail map of Britain at this web address:

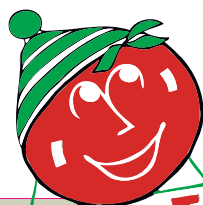
[www.nationalrail.co.uk/system/galleries/download/print\\_maps/uk.pdf](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/system/galleries/download/print_maps/uk.pdf)



# Market Stall 1960s

This is a typical market stall from the 1960s. All the prices are in old money (before decimalisation). 1 shilling = 12d (old pence) or 5p in today's money. A price marked 1/5 is 1 shilling plus 5d.

**activity:** can you convert the prices to today's money?



Guernsey Tom



# Guernsey Speak

In Guernsey many of the old growers spoke in the local language Guernsey French.

## English

- |                         |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Origins of the Tomato | 7 Steaming                     |
| 2 Building Greenhouses  | 8 Water and Irrigation         |
| 3 Sowing the Seeds      | 9 Heating                      |
| 4 Pricking Out          | 10 Growing on                  |
| 5 Planting Out          | 11 To Market                   |
| 6 Pests and Diseases    | 12 The decline of the Industry |

## Guernsey French

- |                             |                                       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (a) L'origine d'la Tomate   | (g) Lé cauffage                       |
| (b) Ès Marchands            | (h) Lé coummerce sé moli              |
| (c) La seumerie d'la graine | (i) La Picoterie                      |
| (d) Lé soucin des Plantes   | (j) L'Isou et L'Érouserie             |
| (e) La Bâtirie des spans    | (k) La Planterie                      |
| (f) À stîmmair              | (l) Les P'tites Bêtes et Les Maladies |

**activity:** this game shows some of the stages used to grow tomatoes in Guernsey. Can you match the Guernsey French words to the English translation?



# Tomato Soup

In 1969, the record year, 9,596,533 trays of tomatoes were exported. Each tray held 12lbs (pounds) of tomatoes. Therefore 115,158,396 lbs of tomatoes were exported.

## ***NOW THAT'S A LOT OF TOMATO SOUP!!***

**activity:** if there was an average of 6 tomatoes to each 1lb, how many tomatoes were exported in that year?

Work out how many kilograms of tomatoes were exported in 1969.

## **Recipe: Cream of Tomato Soup**

Wash & halve tomatoes to fill a pan. Add salt & pepper, plus mixed herbs. 2 rashers bacon cut finely & 2 medium onions sliced. Bring to the boil & simmer slowly for about 30 minutes. Put through a sieve retaining only the puree. Return the puree to a pan & add 2 oz of butter & a teaspoon of sugar. Thicken with a dessertspoon of cornflour which has been stirred into a small cup of warmed milk.

Serve with a pinch of chopped parsley.

## **And in Guernsey French!**

## **Soupe dé Tamate à la Crême**

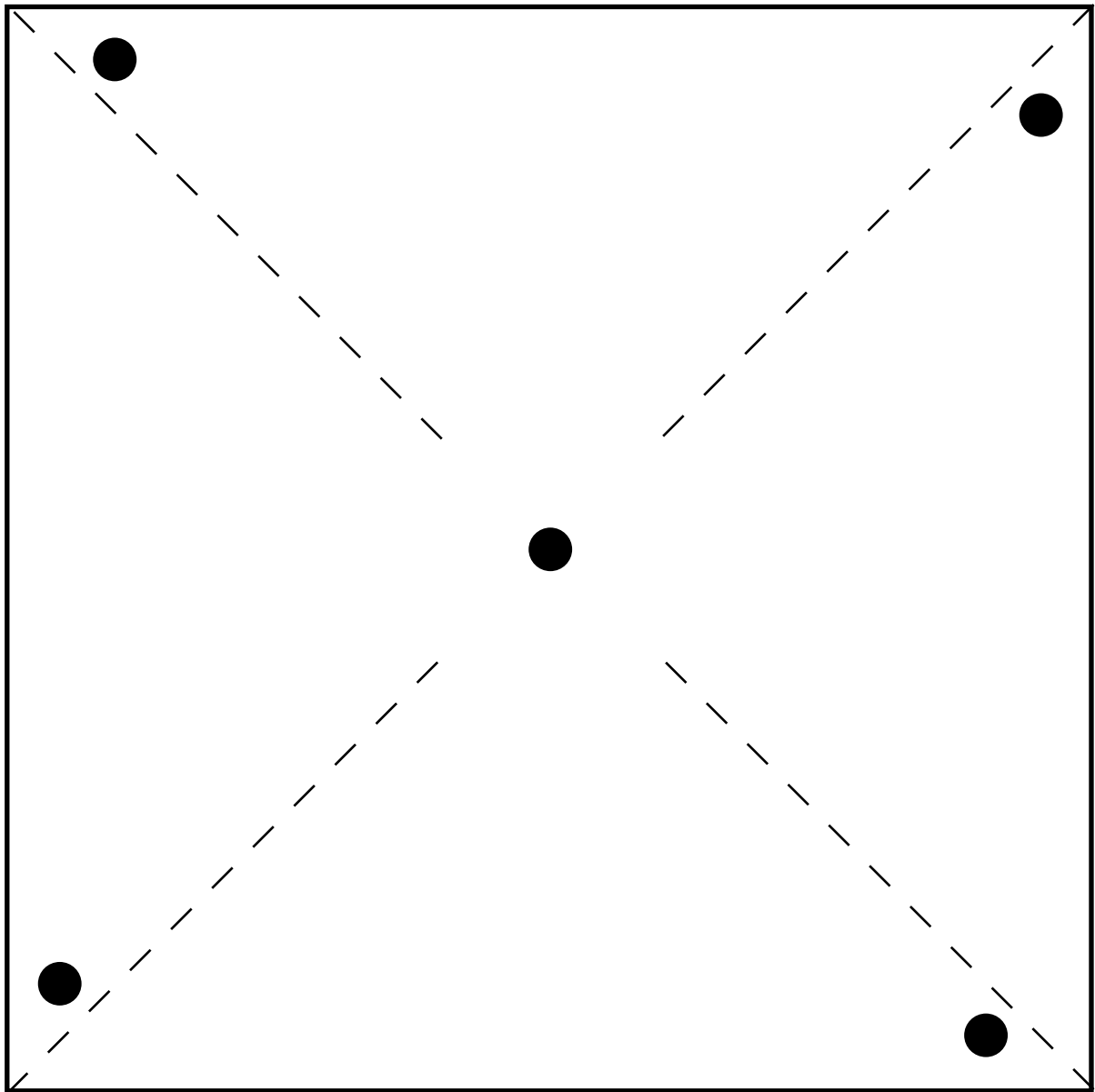
Lavaïr et divisaïr les tamates pour emplir lé sacepàn, ajoutaïr du saïl et du pêvre et des herbes mêlaïes. 2 slaches dé lard copaïes en p'tits morciaux, 2 moyens ougniaons, copaïes en slaches. Faire buidre et mitounnaïr à peu près 30 minutes. Pâssaïr dans aen criblle et gardaïr riocque lé coolànt.

R'maette lé coolànt au sacepàn, ajoutaïr du burre et du chucre. Mêlaïr éne tchullier à soupe dé fleur dé bllaï dans éne p'tite coupaïe dé lait caoud pour l'épaissir.

Deurchier dauve éne pinchie dé persi tchoppaï.



**Guernsey Tom**



**activity:** make your own Windmill.

- 1 cut out the square
- 2 decorate the square on this side
- 3 cut along the dotted lines
- 4 make a hole on each of the large black dots
- 5 put a paper fastener through all the corner holes and then the centre and close
- 6 check the windmill can turn
- 7 wrap the ends of the paper fastener around a stick and fix with tape







**activity:** could you write a story about Guernsey Tom and his friends?

You can include some Guernsey French if you like.

If you do, email it to: [Lynne.Ashton@cultureleisure.gov.gg](mailto:Lynne.Ashton@cultureleisure.gov.gg) and we may put it on our website. [www.museums.gov.gg](http://www.museums.gov.gg)

# Wordsearch

31

G	L	A	S	S	O	P	I	C	K	I	N	G	X
Y	D	W	I	N	T	G	R	O	W	E	R	Q	Z
O	G	C	P	G	R	E	E	N	H	O	U	S	E
D	E	W	I	P	T	W	A	E	X	P	O	R	T
O	R	I	N	E	C	Z	O	M	U	Q	B	A	R
K	M	N	K	R	K	V	X	O	E	V	Q	E	S
R	I	D	S	P	A	Z	T	E	C	R	T	H	E
A	N	M	R	O	V	A	X	I	S	A	T	G	E
F	A	I	R	T	M	Q	V	H	W	U	K	R	D
T	T	L	S	O	I	L	T	I	O	N	X	E	C
E	E	L	T	O	U	O	I	M	N	Z	O	E	F
R	E	O	C	F	O	G	Y	R	R	E	Q	N	K
B	A	U	G	M	T	E	H	T	I	U	R	S	A
J	N	E	S	I	W	Z	X	S	I	H	Y	Y	Z

TOMATO  
GREENHOUSE  
WINDMILL  
EXPORT  
WEYMOUTH  
PERPOT

GROWER  
VINERY  
PINKS  
GREENS  
SMOOTHS  
ROUGHS

STEAMER  
SEED  
GERMINATE  
SOIL  
GLASS  
RAFTER

AZTEC  
WATER  
PICKING

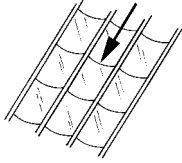


**Guernsey Tom**

# Answers

p2 Aztecs & Incas

p3



p4 1,250 seeds

p5 one million

p8 steaming

1,5,2,4,3,6

p9 4

p11 concrete pots

p14 at least 18

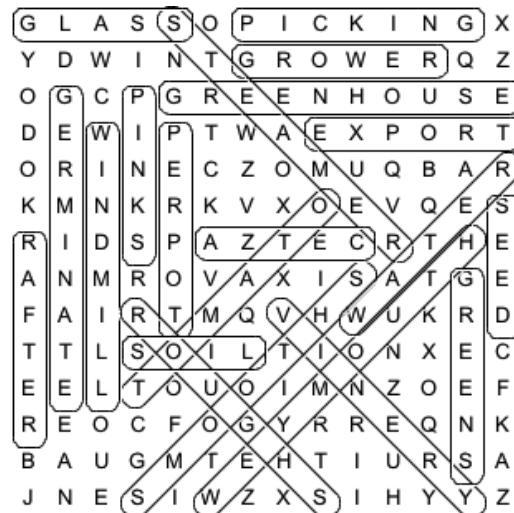
p17 No

p27 1A, 2E, 3C, 4I, 5D, 6L, 7F, 8J, 9G, 10K, 11B, 12H

p28 690,950,376 tomatoes

115,158,396 pounds = 52,234,970 Kg

p31



## Acknowledgements

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A display based on the Guernsey Tomato Exhibition is planned for The National Trust of Guernsey Folk Museum.



Guernsey Tom