

STATES OF JERSEY



A NATIONAL DAY FOR JERSEY (P.6/2025): AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 11th March 2025
by Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade
Earliest date for debate: 18th March 2025

STATES GREFFE

A NATIONAL DAY FOR JERSEY (P.6/2025): AMENDMENT

(a) **PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH –**

Redesignate the existing proposition as paragraph (a) and after the words ‘National Day’ insert the following –

- (b) “that alongside Liberation Day, the 28th September should be adopted as Jersey’s second National Day; and
- (c) that ‘*Man bieu p’tit Jèrri*’ should be adopted as the Island’s official anthem”.

DEPUTY M. TADIER OF ST. BRELADE

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

- (a) that Liberation Day should be adopted as Jersey’s official National Day;
- (b) “that alongside Liberation Day, the 28th September should be adopted as Jersey’s second National Day; and
- (c) that ‘*Man bieu p’tit Jèrri*’ should be adopted as the Island’s official anthem”.

REPORT

Part 1

The significance of Liberation Day to Jersey is well understood and it is unsurprising that when asked the question, *Should Liberation Day be Jersey's National Day*, those taking part in the Minister's survey answered overwhelmingly, 'yes' (81%).

However, in recent years, the prominence of the 28th of September has also started to capture the imagination of the public for its significance as a contemporary celebration of a very important and unique day in Jersey's constitutional history.

Both days are important for different reasons, and both speak to different parts of modern-day Jersey. Both are very historically significant. Liberation Day represents the end of war and occupation, the banishing of a tyrant and the restoration of liberty, peace and freedom. - all highly relevant themes today.

On the other hand, there is nothing uniquely *Jersey* about Liberation Day. Many countries also mark 9th May as a national day (if not *the* national day) in their country, and the European Union has 9th May as its 'National Day'. Meanwhile, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway also celebrate *Liberation Days*, on different days. Needless to say, Guernsey also celebrates Liberation Day on 9th May. That *our* Liberation Day is an important day, is not disputed. It cannot, however, be said to be uniquely *Jersey*. Of course, the way Jersey experienced its own occupation and therefore Liberation, is unique to the island and of personal significance to those islanders who lived through it, and their descendants.

The Corn Riots, on the other hand, does represent a uniquely Jersey day. It can be seen as a coming of age for democracy in Jersey, with ordinary people standing up for themselves, in a peaceful, but forceful manner, to demand a fairer, better system of government. These themes – of democracy, auto-determination, fairness, justice -are also highly relevant today, and highly complementary to those values of Liberation. The Corn Riots is not simply a chance for celebration, music and culture, but has also given rise to *Democracy Week*, which is all tied in with the subsequent changes, the Code Civil of 1771, *which was paramount in defining Jersey's legal and constitutional authority.*¹

The Code also played a key role in defining the relationship between Jersey's domestic institutions. It transferred legislative authority from the Royal Court to the States Assembly (the "**States**"), creating a separation of powers between the judicial and legislative arms of government. This change introduced a cornerstone of modern democratic principles to Jersey. The Code also formalised the mechanisms of legislation. Going forward, Laws were to be passed by the States, confirmed by the Sovereign in Council and then 'registered' in the Royal Court before promulgation. This process allowed for local appeal and, importantly, meant that legislation did not come into effect until it had obtained the Crown's assent.²

Background

¹ <https://www.bedellcristin.com/knowledge/briefings/fy-2526/q1/the-code-of-laws-1771-a-watershed-in-jerseys-legal-history/>

² Ibid.

On 20th November 2012, the States Assembly agree by majority [vote](#)³ to adopt part (a) of [p.107/2012](#)⁴, namely:

'to agree that 28th September should be recognised annually by the States of Jersey as Reform Day' to mark the anniversary of the events in Jersey of 28th September 1769'.

On 4th February 2020, the States Assembly further [agreed by majority](#)⁵ that

- a. *that Monday 27th September 2021 should be designated as an extra [one off] Public and Bank Holiday;*
- b. *with reference to its Act of 20th November 2012, in which it agreed that 28th September should be recognised annually by the States of Jersey as Reform Day' to mark the anniversary of the events in Jersey of 28th September 1769, to agree instead that 28th September should henceforth be recognised annually by the States of Jersey as the anniversary of the Corn Riots';*
- c. *to agree that the events of 28th September 1769 and the subsequent democratic reforms of 1771 be added to the citizenship curriculum in schools;*
- d. *that there shall be an open day of the Royal Court and States Assembly building every year, where possible, on or around this anniversary;*

With all this in mind, it is clear that there exists commitment for us as a States Assembly 'to recognise' the Corn Riots annually and 'to mark' the events of 1769 'annually'. The day now forms part of what is taught in schools, as the citizenship programme; and it is also an opportunity for us to show-case our public institutions that are Jersey's Parliamentary Assembly and its Royal Court, both of which are fundamentals of our local democracy.

For added clarity, this amendment does not seek to make 28th either a public or bank holiday, simply an additional national day, with continued cultural and constitutional significance. Neither does it in anyway seek to detract from Liberation Day, rather to complement it.

The Case for Two National Days

Jersey's history is interesting enough and our current society is sophisticated enough for us to merit two national days. The obvious country that springs to mind for me, in our British family of nations, which already has two national days, is Scotland.

³ <https://statesassembly.je/vote-detail?id=17783>

⁴ [https://statesassembly.je/publications/propositions/2012/p-107-2012\(re-issue\)](https://statesassembly.je/publications/propositions/2012/p-107-2012(re-issue))

⁵ <https://statesassembly.je/vote-detail?id=14564>

St Andrews Day

30 November

Scotland's official national day, and is thought to originate from the reign of Malcolm III (1058–1093)



The **Saltire** or St Andrews Cross

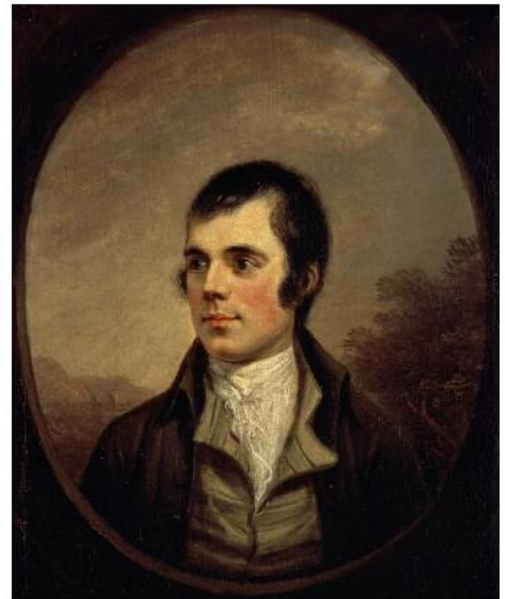
St. Andrew, also called Saint Andrew the Apostle, was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus and is the patron saint of Scotland.

St Andrew was named as the patron saint of Scotland for several reasons:

Burns Night

25 January

Burns Night is considered the second national day in Scotland, is celebrated on Burns's birthday, and is more widely observed in Scotland than the official national day, St. Andrew's Day.



Portrait of **Robert Burns** by Alexander Nasmyth, 1787

<https://www.theclanbuchanan.com/scotland-day>

St Andrew's Day and Burns Night perhaps speak to different, but complementary parts of Scottish Culture and the two exists side-by-side.

For Scotland, the importance of Burns Night cannot be underestimated. In 2020, it was [widely reported](#) that Haggis exports had risen by 136% in the space of a decade. For one day a year, everyone wants to be Scottish! Just as on St Patick's Day, many people become Irish, and Guinness is served all over the world. Just imagine what Jersey's own cultural day could do for the exports of *Pais au Fou* and *Mervelles* (Bean Crock and Jersey Wonders) and Jersey Royal Potatoes.

More seriously, the Corn Riots has already become established in the cultural calendar and, importantly, in the collective consciousness of modern islanders.

The Government [website](#) from 2022 says *The Corn Riots Festival, is Jersey's annual celebration of our cultural and historical identity through live music and arts.*⁶

⁶ <https://www.gov.je/News/2022/pages/cornriotsfestival.aspx>

In 2022, The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, Deputy Kirsten Morel, said: *“I believe that the Corn Riots Festival is becoming established as a celebration of Jersey’s modern cultural identity. It is an opportunity for the different parts of our community to come together and to enjoy both the modern multicultural society that we are, and our links to the Jèrriais language and Normandy.*

“Last year was a fantastic start, this year, we have increased the educational elements, with children getting involved in lessons which have helped them to get a greater understanding of Jersey’s history and culture, and I hope that continues to develop.” For me, the great thing about 28th September and the related festival, is that it attracts a demographic which does not necessarily engage with the story of Occupation and Liberation. I fully believe that by having two national days, *the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts*, when it comes to Jersey’s modern cultural offering. We are likely to see benefits for both residents and tourists around these two important days for our *island identity*.

Part 2 – An anthem for Jersey

I was surprised to see that the Minister was not making a recommendation for the Assembly to adopt Beautiful Jersey/Man bieu p’tit Jèrri as Jersey’s anthem. This appears to be because, with only 50% of respondents to the survey saying *yes*.

It seems that this debate would be missing an opportunity if it did not also consider the matter of the anthem and it seems desirable to at least give the Assembly the opportunity to debate this, and perhaps finally put the matter to bed.

And I, for one, would like to make the case both for an anthem for Jersey, and why it should be *Man bieu p’tit Jèrri*. Firstly, if you are not familiar with the song ... where have you been?! But if that is the case, you can listen to it [here](#)⁷ (other versions are available, but they may not be as good).

And our survey said...

The first point may seem pedantic, but it is not. Beautiful Jersey *did* ‘win’ in the survey responses. It is not technically correct to say that it was a 50/50 split. Those responding ‘yes’, were 1237. Those voting ‘no’ or ‘unsure’ totalled 1229. So, there *was* a majority in favour of Beautiful Jersey, albeit 50.16% vs 49.83%. If this had been a referendum, the ayes would have it.

Total Responses (2,466)			
	Yes	No	Unsure
Liberation Day	2007	203	256
Beautiful Jersey	1237	870	359

Moreover, those responding ‘no’ or ‘unsure’ would have included some people who did not think that Jersey should have an anthem of its own.

⁷ <https://badlabecques.bandcamp.com/track/man-bieu-ptit-je-rrri>

Endgèrbéthie

So, why have an anthem at all? Writing an extended [article](#) for *Island Voices* on Island Identity website, 2021, Dr Kit Ashton asked the question, *How's your endgèrbéthie?*⁸ Pronounced /on-JAIR-beh-thee/, the word can be translated as 'togetherness'. The word is actually a *neologism*, Kit explains, invented by himself and native Jèrriais speaker, François Le Maistre 'Eune dgèrbe' is a sheaf of wheat that is bound together, and 'dgèrbéthie' is the binding process. So, can mean 'that which binds us together all around'.

In her main proposition, the Minister for International Development also recognises that *an Island Anthem could provide a unifying way for Islanders to connect with 'Jerseyness' in a manner that is welcoming, accessible and inclusive. In turn, this could foster longer term social benefits, such as a stronger sense of community and belonging.*

These are good arguments for an anthem.

Why Beautiful Jersey?

In his thesis, *Can Music save a Language?* Kit Ashton explains the history of Beautiful Jersey.

Originally written in English by Lindsay Lennox (sometime before his death in 1906), the song became popular and was translated into Jèrriais prior to World War II by Frank Le Maistre. Since then, it has achieved cultural significance in Jersey partly because it is publicly performed every year on 9th May - 'Liberation day' - which celebrates the long-awaited official surrender of the occupying Nazi forces in 1945. Liberation day - a public holiday - is perhaps the most important annual festival on the local calendar.

The song 'Beautiful Jersey/ Man Bieau P'tit Jèrri' gained increased poignancy during the war years, 199 with its romantic and patriotic lyrics sung in a rousing, overtly emotive and nostalgic vocal style typical of an early 1900s 'music hall' ballad (passionate, extroverted, and employing a certain amount of vibrato).

He goes on to make the case for it as an anthem for Jersey, in somewhat esoteric terms: *'Beautiful Jersey' started life as a pop song, and has always been a 'people's anthem' so it has never been designated as the official anthem by the States of Jersey; but... it has musical features consistent with anthems that emerge during periods of moderate or even low sociopolitical control, relating to a socially diverse public. This is characterized by the use of variable, dynamic, and embellished symbolic codes, with the idea being that where the "national audience subscribes to multiple foci" the characteristics of such an embellished code "will be more effective at generating audience attention."*

In other words, it is a catchy tune, that sprung up naturally, has popular support and speaks to a wide cross section of people, on many different levels. The kind of song that makes an ideal anthem, perhaps?

As a tune, Beautiful Jersey is highly suitable for a popular anthem for Jersey. It has words in both English and Jèrriais; it has variation between verse and chorus; it can be played classically or more rhythmically; a shortened version (chorus only) can be played

⁸ [Island Voices: How's your endgèrbéthie? | Island Identity](#)

as an abridged anthem, and singing is optional. The tune itself is strong enough to be evocative, with or without the words.

In reality, Beautiful Jersey *already is* Jersey's anthem.

This amendment seeks to put that question beyond doubt.

Financial and staffing implications

As the Corn Riots Festival is already established, there would be no financial and staffing implications for this amendment as it is only seeking to recognise this as a national day for Jersey. Adopting the anthem will also have no financial or staffing implications.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

A Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website.