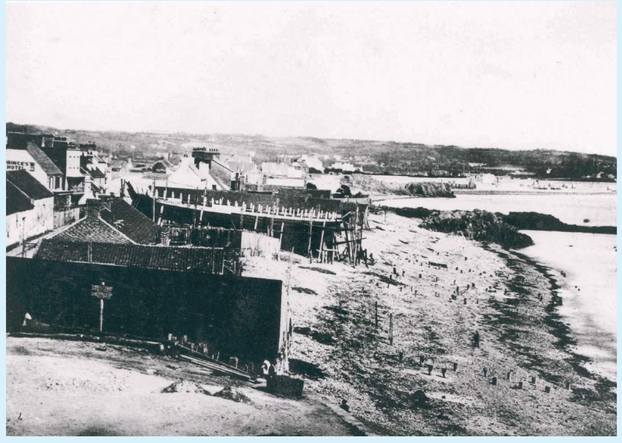
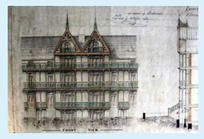
CELEBRATING 100 YEARS (1916 - 2016)



Bustling shipyards lined the Havre des Pas shore

A new purpose – as seaside resort by 1900



3–4 Ommaroo Terrace c.1886
Original drawing by renowned local architect Adolphus Curry

Pride of place was the bathing pool, built in 1895

Shipping and industry had given way to elegant buildings

HAVRE DES PAS

Today, only fragmentary glimpses of Havre des Pas' ancient past remain. The area's name partly arises from an early role as safe haven, or havre in the French language of the day, for small vessels. Among the treacherous rocks, it offered a sheltered, sandy place to land.

The remainder of the name appears to come from a small 12th century chapel that stood here until the early 1800s. The Chappelle des Pas was built over mysterious carved footsteps, reputedly left by the Virgin Mary.

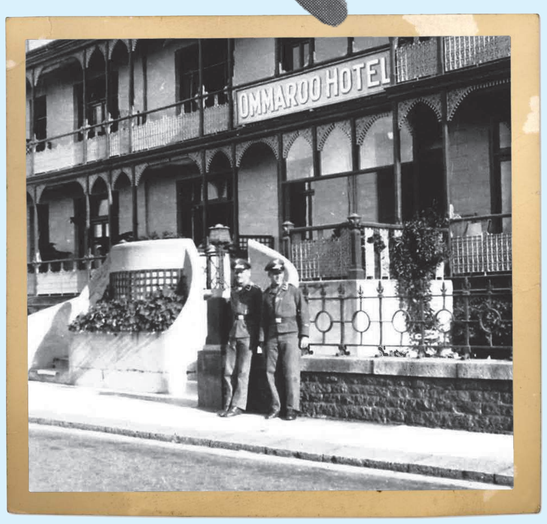
A seafaring connection continued into the 19th century. Bustling shipyards lined the Havre des Pas shore, building vessels that carried Jersey fishermen to catch cod in the rich waters off Newfoundland.

By the start of the 20th century, the shipyards – along with the cod – had disappeared. Havre des Pas found a new purpose, as a seaside resort. Pride of place was the bathing pool, built in 1895 to encourage the learning of swimming.

Shipping and industry had given way to elegant buildings and deckchairs. In 1916, during the height of the First World War, a fine terrace of those buildings became the Ommaroo Hotel.

A fine terrace of those buildings became the Ommaroo Hotel

OCCUPATION

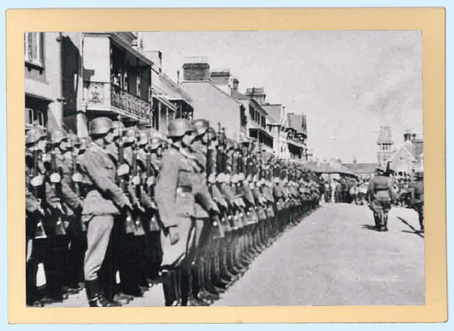


Residents now included German soldiers

At first, the Second World War seemed deceptively far from Jersey. Life at Havre des Pas continued much as before. Yet on 28 June 1940, residents watched in curious horror as German bombers swept overhead to attack St Helier. Shocked, demilitarised and abandoned, the island tumbled meekly into enemy hands.

Delighted with their prize, the invaders helped themselves to the holiday island, including its hotels. While some were completely taken over, the Ommaroo continued to offer guest accommodation, although its residents now included German soldiers, usually newly arriving troops awaiting posting around the island.

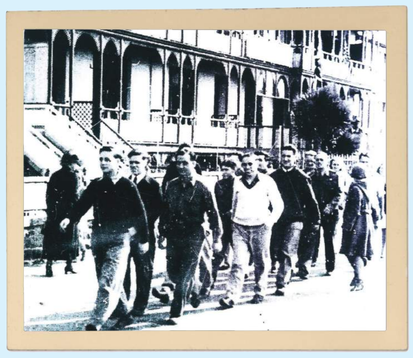
They were part of a force turning Jersey into an impregnable fortress, which included defending the Havre des Pas seafront with soldiers, machine guns and barbed wire.



The intention was to turn Jersey into an impregnable fortress

German soldiers training on Havre des Pas Beach

LIBERATION



Americans ex-POWs checked in for a few days of rest and relaxation

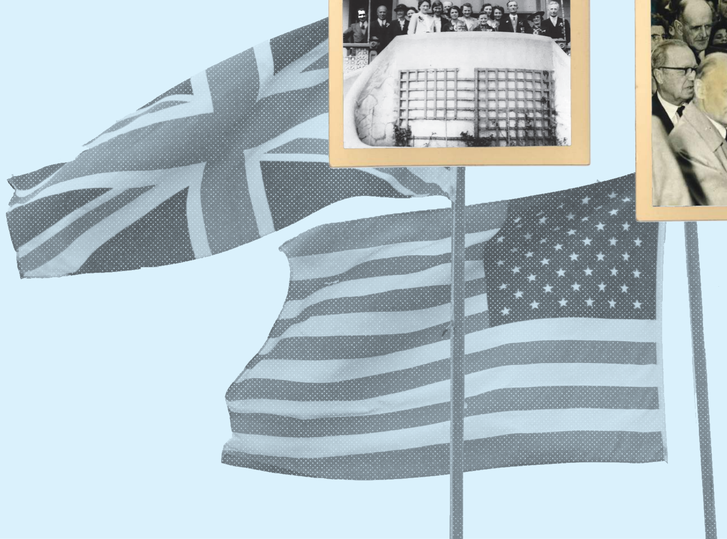
> "Our dear Channel Islands are also to be freed today..."

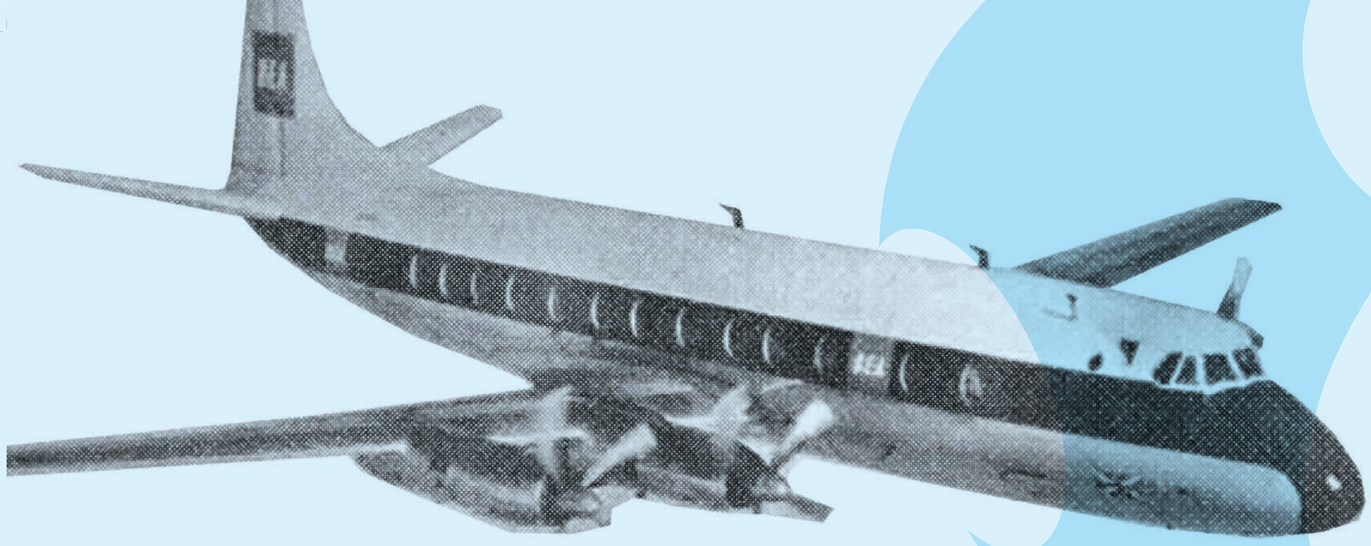
After hearing Churchill's famous radio announcement, thousands of joyous islanders gathered in St Helier on 9 May 1945 to welcome the liberating forces. Almost five dark years of Occupation was over.

The Ommaroo said goodbye to its German visitors, destined for POW camps in the UK. In their place, a new group of military personnel arrived. Americans held as prisoners of war in a camp at nearby South Hill, celebrated their liberation by checking in for a few days of rest and relaxation.

Our dear Channel Islands celebrating Liberation

Field Marshal Montgomery of Alamein was among the post-war visitors



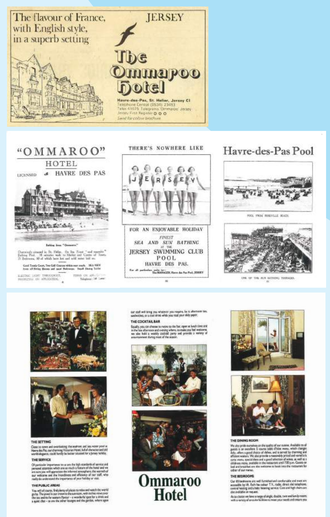


TOURISM BOOM

Jersey worked hard in the early post-war years to shake off the iron trappings of Occupation. Swiftly spruced and polished, the island's hotels stood ready in 1946 for the visitor seasons to come.

Air travel presented new opportunities. Easily accessible for holidaymakers, Jersey offered a Continental atmosphere coupled with firm British familiarity. Warm weather, sandy beaches and low prices proved a heady lure. Visitor numbers grew as the nation's economy recovered.

The Ommaroo, with its "cocktail bar, dancing and recreation room", readily took advantage of this booming summer tourism market. Winter visitors were also welcome. For just nine guineas, they could take up residence for the off-season – almost half that charged in the peak summer months.

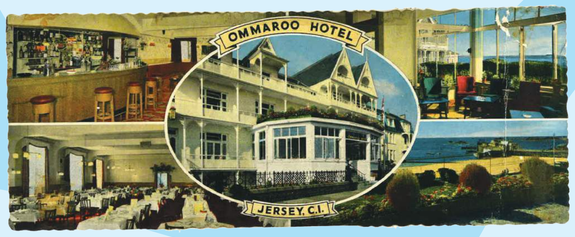


Jersey and the Ommaroo offered a continental atmosphere coupled with firm British familiarity

The island's hotels stood ready in the post-war years

In good weather, it was a short walk to the beach and pool

Fine dining options proved enduringly popular alongside the traditional family-run atmosphere

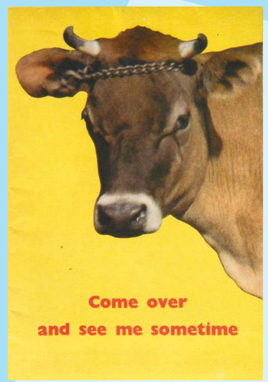


Investment continued to ensure visitors enjoyed a first class stay

CHANGING FACE OF TOURISM

While visitor numbers continued soaring in the 1970s and 1980s, challenges arose for Jersey's tourism industry. Low-cost travel, package holidays and broadening horizons opened up new exotic destinations. By the end of the 20th century, lower returns and pressure for living accommodation had closed many of the island's formerly popular hotels.

The distinctive Ommaroo continued on course, however, welcoming visitors, many familiar faces from the honeymoon years. And investment continued to ensure they enjoyed a first class stay. En-suite rooms, a heated swimming pool and fine dining options proved enduringly popular alongside the traditional family-run atmosphere.



HONEYMOON ISLAND

British couples who had put off marrying while the war lasted were offered a Government tax incentive to tie the knot. For some, the saving was quickly spent on a holiday, and Jersey was a popular destination. It was the start of a honeymoon period for island hotels.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Ommaroo became a favourite location for newlyweds. Some even arriving courtesy of winning UK newspaper competitions. In good weather, it was a short walk to the beach and pool. In poor, the newly constructed hotel conservatory offered relaxing warmth. In the evenings, Havre des Pas filled with nightlife. What more could you want from a holiday destination?

THE OMMAROO TODAY

From a proud history, the hotel, Havre des Pas and Jersey look forward with optimism into the future. One hundred years is an important milestone to mark. A century of change – for better, for worse – has taken place since the Ommaroo Hotel opened its doors on 16 December 1916. From residence, through enemy occupation, to honeymooners and today, it really has been interesting times. Some things have certainly remained the same however: the charm of Jersey, the lap of sea on a sheltered beach and warmth of the Ommaroo welcome.

> "From a proud history, the hotel, Havre des Pas and Jersey look forward with optimism into the future"

CELEBRATING 100 years 1916 - 2016

OMMAROO HOTEL