



The official opening of the new Devil's Hole viewing platform Pictures: DAVID FERGUSON (00970266)



John Clarke, Emma Bennett and Tony Clarke of the family who donated the headland to the National Trust in memory of former St Helier Constable Fred Clarke (00970256)

National Trust unveil results of 18 months' work Devil's Hole reopens after major makeover

SPECTACULAR views of the Island's north coast have become more accessible to the public following major refurbishment at Devil's Hole in St Mary.

Early on Thursday evening, the National Trust unveiled the results of the work carried out over

By Diane Simon

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the past 18 months to make access to this key coastal site safer, more comfortable and in harmony with the dramatic environment.

Wooden steps, which have replaced the tarmac slope, lead to a viewing platform with a telescope offering views of Sark and the Paternosters and an outstanding sweep of the surrounding cliffs including those at Plémont.

Breathtaking

There are benches to sit on to enjoy the breathtaking view, and a further decked platform offering sight of the Devil's Hole.

In March 2006, the Creux du Vis headland at the Devil's Hole was donated to the trust by the Clarke

family in memory of former St Helier Constable Fred Clarke.

This donation marked the start of the trust's Coastline Campaign to safeguard the Island's coastline for future generations.

The first phase of the work was carried out for the trust by army personnel from the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers.

Over a two-week period, the team removed the concrete block walls, fencing and tarmac covering the path, erected new handrails, and laid the foundations for one of the viewing platforms.

Trust chief executive Charles Alluto said that it was estimated that the value of the work they had carried out for the trust had been around £65,000.

"There is no doubt that without their contribution we would have

been unable to start this project which they carried out in a very steep area," he said.

The rest of the work was completed by the trust's lands and property teams, with the charity's architectural adviser Robert Le Mottée assisting the project.

New to the area, are a series of interpretation panels including one outlining the history of how the headland was given its name.

Asked if the final touch to the site would be the creation of a new devil figurehead as the hole's guardian, Mr Alluto said that this was possible.

"We are considering applying for funds for a new devil from the Percentage for Art project, as well as other options," he said.

Members of the Clarke family officially opened the new access facilities.

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DEVIL'S HOLE

On a stormy night in 1851 the French cutter La Josephine was wrecked on rocks off the north coast. Constant Pétibon, the son of the vessel's owner, was drowned, and Jerseyman Nicolas Arthur rescued the others.

The broken figurehead of their vessel was washed up through an opening in Le Creux de Vis rocks, which later became known as the Devil's Hole.

Local sculptor Captain John Giffard added arms and legs to the figurehead, giving it the appearance of the devil. The sculpture was erected in the hole, and the site became a popular visitor attraction.

The devil's position was later moved from within the hole, to looking down into it, to the German sentry

enclosure, and finally to the pond outside the Priory Inn. In the early days, tourists reached the hole down precarious ladders, but the increasing risk of rockfalls led to the hole becoming inaccessible to the public. When the tourism industry was at its peak, and the public paid to walk down to the site from the Priory Inn, a number of replicas of the devil were stolen or moved elsewhere as a prank. A devil statue, the latest version of which was created in the 1990s, is a feature in the pond near the Priory Inn.

The name Devil's Hole could also have come from the previous name Le Creux de Vis being changed by English speaking visitors pronouncing 'de vis' as devil.



A new devil is carried into place in 1957