The Barriers of the Town.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Guernsey was attacked by the French and the King of England, Edward III commanded the island to build a wall around the town of St. Peter Port to protect it. The French had destroyed the town, and St. Sampson's too, three times – in 1294, 1336 and1338. It was going to be very costly therefore it was not built for some years. In 1339 the king sent some letters to the Guardian of the Isles (John, Baron Mautravers), and insisted that "our town of St. Peter Port ... be enclosed by a wall which is very strong". Three hundred years later, in accordance with an Ordinance of the Royal Court, the Constables of the Town ordered that six barriers be put in place around the town. We can still see some – there is one at Smith Street beside the old Post Office. Nowadays there is a plaque which explains that the stone was put up by the Royal Court in 1700 to mark the gates of the town when it was enclosed for its defence.

For many years, there were those who said that there was no wall around the town, but some steps and the ends of some walls which were found at different times provided evidence about the past. In June 1975 a length of old wall held together with clay was discovered whilst work was being done in the Pollet. In 1980, John McCormack wrote in his magnificent book *The Guernsey House* that there was a great difference between the houses on one side of this supposed wall from the other; it was much more than just a legal difference. He followed the probable line of the wall from the Town Church along the cliff to the south between Cornet Street and as far as the place where there used to be a tower, La Tour Beauregard, before some steps go down to Fountain Street where we can see another barrier, (opposite the market). He continued his route through Berthelot Street to Smith Street to the barrier there. After having gone up Smith Street he went down Forest Lane until he arrived where the "Thomas de la Rue" pub is today. Near there, some time ago, there was another tower, La Tour Gand, and further on there was the foreshore.

A year later he found, in the kitchen of a house he was renovating in Cliff Street, a ditch from mediaeval times. There were pieces of pottery from the fourteenth century which seemed to be the proof that there was a wall there. It is certain that there were two towers but we cannot be sure that there was a wall all round the town. Perhaps during the work of demolishing and redeveloping buildings in and around the town, someone will find the proof which is missing at the moment and we will be sure that St. Peter Port was a fortified town a long time ago.

According to Edith F. Carey, in her article of 1950, there were six barriers which marked the gates to the town. They were to be found at; the Town Church, La Tour Beauregard at the top of Cornet Street, in Fountain Street, at Berthelot Street, in Smith Street (beside the old Post Office) and at La Tour Gand (near Moore's Hotel). The stone in Berthelot Street has disappeared.