

A NEW ORDER VIEW OF LIFE IN SARK IN 2020

The *Sark Society* initiative launched by resident Islander Swen Lorenz and endorsed by Sark's Seigneur Major Christopher Beaumont has continued to gather momentum. In doing so, it has created more positive publicity for Sark in the past 10 days than the Island has received in the past decade. Lorenz presents Sark as 'The European, English-speaking microstate where you can live free from excessive taxation and government regulation, without fear of violent crime or terrorism, but instead with beautiful scenery and people who share the same old-fashioned values.'

He lists on his website many of the benefits of being a Sark resident; an annual one-page tax declaration form, no income tax, no capital gains tax, no inheritance tax and no welfare-driven third-world immigration. It may, on the face of it, sound too good to be true. However, on Saturday morning two recent arrivals to Sark spoke to BBC Radio Guernsey's Rory O'Reilly to explain why they chose to relocate to the Island and how they have found the reality of life on Sark.



Rory O'Reilly

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Andrew Boast

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"A Berkshire couple who've moved to Sark through a new relocation service says that there is a lack of readily available information about the island. German entrepreneur Swen Lorenz has set up 'Sark Society', a website which offers personalised portfolios, with information on moving to the island, from utilities to schools. Andrew Boast who runs a conveyancing company used the service to relocate from the UK in October with his wife Claudine. He says there isn't a huge amount of information out there for people making the move by themselves."

"Originally, before asking each one of my questions, I tried Googling it. I am a fairly tech-savvy, online entrepreneur and I couldn't find it readily available and some of the websites aren't up to date, whereas having all of the information in one area, indexed with his own little Sark mini-Google; I can see a huge

value for that for someone that is going to move home.

I was based in Berkshire, in a little village called Ascot and I run an online business. We help clients to move home, offering a conveyancing service through SAM Conveyancing. It is in essence, an online business with a 'bricks and mortar' call centre to help all of our clients."

"And when did you first hear about this 'Sark Society'?"

"Well, I'm lucky, because Swen was a friend. So, the Sark Society was being built using us a guinea pigs, because he was our friend. So, the 250-page document to help people move over here, I kind of just had it on tap from Swen. But it's so invaluable to have had because none it was written down anywhere else, that I could easily find. So, it made my life super easy. I don't really have the time for all the nitty-gritty detail. Swen filled in all the gaps for us."

"And Claudine tell me, were you ambivalent or were you sceptical of the service or even the idea, of moving to a relatively unknown island in the middle of the English Channel?"

"Well, I was until I came here and saw how beautiful it was and, after we had been out here a couple of times on holiday, I could picture us being here, and the rest of it came together."



Claudine Boast

"And, Andrew, talk to me about the actual service and this 250-page binder; what's in it? What does it actually include?"

"So, I can only really comment on the knowledge that I know that Swen has, on the logistics of moving here. I actually didn't get a ring binder or pay Swen for this service. So, all I know is that, when I moved here, back in October, I had every base covered. But I had that via Swen being my friend and being able to tell me, all the different things that I needed to do when I moved into being a resident here on Sark."

"So, you were basically the free trial before he actually rolled it out?"

"Yes, I can imagine that he was busy making

notes because I'm the perfect FAQ. There are questions when you move house because I answer these questions for my clients in my business. But the logistics of moving home to an overseas, smaller island where the utilities are different, the community's different, the commute is different; having an inside track into that, is invaluable!"

"And obviously, Swen's service works because you are his first success story. When did you first move over to Sark and what were your initial impressions? Now I know you had obviously been on holiday there but what were your impressions from a standpoint that this is your move, this is your home now?"

"So, let me start with this one, because I was slower to come on board, Claudine loved the idea. The house we are in is beautiful. We overlook the sea. I've moved two or three times in my life, and I like to nest in and grow roots and get comfortable. So, the first few months for me were an adjustment. But it's like anything, and then what we see and where we are, since the beginning of March, since COVID-19; the horrific circumstances that outside our Bailiwick have been in. How lucky we've been, and how well managed it's been in the Bailiwick for our health. All that we never knew before we came to Sark. So, we feel very, very lucky, and also now, I've fallen in love with Sark. It's like my roots are well and truly dug in."

"Claudine, so what's the reception been like from the locals? I mean, it's not every day that a young couple moves across to the island. Did they welcome you with open arms? What was it like?"

"Well, initially, I think that we were perceived as visitors, because we were just visitors. Once the community realised that we were here, and here to stay, and they saw us out every day, jogging the paths and trail running, enjoying the beautiful aspects of Sark, and popping in and out of the coffee places and things like that; then they were incredibly welcoming. They were interested in why we'd moved. There's a really fantastic sense of Victorian England community here, where, once your face is known, if you don't have your purse with you that day, you can pay for your coffee tomorrow. It's just a really, really beautiful, trusting community, which I didn't feel I had back in the UK."

"No doubt; a different world entirely. Finally, what sort of advice would you have for anyone thinking of giving 'Sark Society' a go and looking into the idea of relocating to Sark?"

"Well, first of all, I'd say come and visit the place! If you don't fall in love with it, I would be surprised, but enjoy the views, come and speak to the people, have a look at Swen's website. I say that because there is so much information about what's available here and make the move! Take the leap!"



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