

The Alex Picot story

Alex Picot Trust has been a part of the Jersey community for 140 years and has an important place in the Island's rich local heritage

Happy anniversary – 140 years of heritage and still going strong.

The story of Alex Picot Trust starts in a very different era in Jersey's business history. A time of gas lighting in the streets of town, when the rumble of traffic was caused by horse-drawn vehicles, and professional men wore top hats as they walked to and from work.

In that year, Karl Benz produced the first 'Motorwagen'; John Kemp Starley demonstrated the Rover safety bicycle, regarded as the first practical modern bicycle; Gladstone was defeated in a general election, British troops in the Sudan defeated 'the Mad Mahdi' ... and in Jersey, a firm of agents for commission was founded, which would evolve into the accountancy firm and the trust company of Alex Picot.

It was at 12 Hill Street that we first hear about this company; two years later the name Charles G Roberts was cited at this address, and in 1891 his business address was shown as 24 Hill Street. It was not until 1898, in fact, that the description 'accountant' was added to his professional heading.

Its history took shape when Alex Ewart Picot joined as a trainee in 1901. He proved himself to be not only industrious but particularly capable, taking 11th place in the 1913 finals examination of the Society of Incorporated Accountants and winning a Certificate of Merit.

The then principal of the company, Charles Brockhurst, soon took his able employee into partnership, and in 1915 and 1916 respectively the firm of Brockhurst & Picot was appointed auditors by both Ann Street Brewery and Le Riches Stores Ltd.



Brockhurst eventually retired on 31 May 1926, when Alexander Picot continued as a sole practitioner, practising as Alex E Picot & Co. The first trust work was undertaken in 1932, for a family who are still clients of the trust company today!

The late 1920s and early 1930s saw a significant growth in the practice. Alex also introduced two of his sons into the business, Donald and Leslie.

Leslie, who was to become a Jurat, recalled that when he joined the company in 1931, the total number of staff was 12, and he earned 10 shillings (50p) a week. Work was carried out at high desks, with stools. The single telephone in the office had the number 150. All writing was in ink... A different world!

Alex Picot's reputation was that of a strict disciplinarian who tolerated no talking in the office and he was often known to be waiting at the top of the stairs with his stopwatch at 9 o'clock in the morning.

As strict as he was, however, he was also known as a good employer, and one who was compassionate and caring. It was said of him that he was 'the cleverest man in Hill Street – and the worst dressed!'

In June 1940, the German Occupation of Jersey disrupted the Island's way of life, forcing many local businesses to close. Sensing the increasing threat, Alex Picot paid his employees, urging them to 'do what you think best'.

The following morning, only two employees remained in Jersey, although others were recruited later.

Refusing to accept defeat, Alex Picot decided to brave it out and keep the firm afloat, joined by colleague Lilian du Feu, who became the longest serving team member, dedicating almost 50 years to the company before retiring.

In the months that followed, while other local businesses unfortunately closed, they made the best of the situation.

One notable aspect of the work done during the Occupation was the formation of the Jersey Insurance Pool, in which Alex and Hedley Luce played a prominent part. Local insurance policyholders were maintained, and premiums collected, resulting in a sizeable insurance pool ready to be turned over to the appropriate insurance companies. This preserved a feeling of normality on the Island and enhanced the firm's reputation for trust and reliability.

The Liberation of 1945 brought a very welcome end to the Island's occupation and set in motion the healing process of Jersey, and of the Picot firm. Alex's sons, Donald and Leslie, returned home and took over the firm when Alex died in 1948.

Directors (L to R): Chris Cottillard, Hannah Roynon-Jones, Steve Gully, Sarah McBrearty, Jean-Luc Piazza, Solange Rebourts, Paul Rondel



After 31 years there, and after their formal split, Alex Picot Chartered Accountants moved to Le Gallais Chambers whilst Alex Picot Trust moved to 6 Esplanade in 2021.

Alex Picot Trust currently has some 55 staff and seven directors and still prides itself on the longevity of its staff. Board Directors Solange Rebourts and Chris Cottillard mark major milestones with the firm: Solange celebrates her 40th work anniversary this year, while Chris will celebrate 20 years at the firm next year.

In the words of David Picot: "The word we value above all else is "integrity"."

And director Hannah Roynon-Jones adds: "We want to build on the hard work of our predecessors and, we hope, by 2085 there will be a celebration to mark the bicentenary of what is still a Jersey firm, continuing to serve the local community. We look forward to continuing a dedicated service to our clients for generations to come."

With deep respect for our predecessors, we proudly celebrate 140 years of history, and we are excited to carry this heritage forward and look forward to celebrating 100 years of providing trust services in 2032!

The firm continued to grow as a family-oriented business, with more members of the Picot family joining over the years. Donald's second eldest son, Anthony, joined in, followed by his third eldest son, Rodney. Rodney recalled that even then ballpoint pens were banned, and high stools and inkpots were still in evidence. Anthony and Rodney became partners in 1967, and their cousin, David Picot, became part of the practice in 1976.

The firm's evolution beyond its family roots began in 1973, when Rod Amy became the first non-Picot partner helping to shape the growth of the trust company.

This was followed by Andrew Le Cheminant joining in 1980 and becoming a partner in 1990.

In 1992, the last remaining descendant of Alex Picot, Rodney Picot, retired. That same year Derek Rhodes joined the firm and became a partner in 1997.

In 1983, after 98 years in Hill Street, the company recognised that it had outgrown its accommodation, and moved first to Broad Street, then seven years later, to Paragon House in Halkett Place.



Partners in 1990 (L to R): David Picot, Steve Gough, Rodney Picot, Andrew Le Cheminant, Rod Amy