

Submission to the Review of the Roles of the Crown Officers in Jersey

I first arrived in Jersey in 1967 and in 1969 became the P.A. of one of the then most respected Advocates in Jersey, Anthony Clyde-Smith. Under his patronage and the tutelage of Mr Ecrevain David Moon, I qualified as a Notary Public. I worked as such with Ogier & Le Cornu from 1974 until 1979 then joined Advocate (now Senator) Ian Le Marquand and his Partner, Advocate Michael Backhurst, until such time as their firm joined forces with that of Advocate Anthony Olsen and Advocate Caroline Dorey. Some years later I left what was by then Olsen, Backhurst & Dorey and set my own Notarial practice and, with others, a small Trust Company, Atticus Trust Company Limited. On several occasions I have been appointed by the Royal Court as Curator of the affairs of those no longer able to manage their own.

Whilst with Olsen Backhurst & Dorey I was elected as a Centenier in the Parish of St. Brelade and subsequently went on to become the last President of the former Jersey Centeniers' Association and subsequently the first Chairman of the Comité des Chefs de Police.

During my time thus involved on the fringes of the Jersey Legal System I was to have dealings on a fairly frequent basis with the Crown Officers, the Judicial Greffe, a series of Magistrates and Assistant Magistrates, and the several Solicitors General, Attornies General, Deputy Bailiffs, and Bailiffs in both their civil and criminal capacities.

I have to say that throughout my career in the Island (I am now retired as a Notary, have retired as a Centenier, and am in process of resigning as a Constable's Officer in St. Brelade in preparation for a move later this year to France) I have always received a courteous and entirely un-biased reception from all officers of the Courts with whom I have had dealings.

Those who have served us so well over the years in their various capacities have, in my opinion, always done so without prejudice, fear or favour. Jersey is a very special and legally "peculiar" place. No system of legislation and justice will ever be perfect but I believe that we must support the system that has, down many generations, evolved in Jersey. It may in some respects be unfamiliar to those coming from outside either to work in the Island or simply to observe and report but the fact of the matter is that it is a system that works. There can be few jurisdictions in the world where those occupying positions of authority are so approachable or readily available to their communities.

Jersey *is* different, but that does not mean that its constitution needs radical meddling in order to bring it into line with either the UK or Europe. I really do hope that Jersey may be able to retain everything that is special about the Island. It may be unusual for the President of a legislature also to be a Judge in the high court but so what? Can anyone actually prove that the holder of the office of Bailiff or Deputy Bailiff, in the last half-century at least, has ever used his position in the one function to influence his actions in the other? I think not.

I rest my case!

Geoffrey Cornwall, St. Aubin, Jersey

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