

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF TYNWALD COURT

Douglas, Tuesday, 20th December 1994
at 11.30 a.m.

Present:

The President of Tynwald (the Hon Sir Charles Kerruish, OBE LLD (hc) CP). In the Council: The Lord Bishop (the Rt Rev Noël Debroy Jones), the Attorney-General (Mr J M Kerruish), Mrs C M Christian, Mr B Barton, Hon A A Callin, Mr E C Irving CBE, Hon E G Lowey, His Honour A C Luft CBE, Messrs G H Waft and J N Radcliffe, with Mr T A Bawden, Clerk of the Council.

In the Keys: The Speaker (the Hon J C Cain) (Douglas West); Mr A R Bell and Hon T R A Groves (Ramsey); Mr R E Quine OBE (Ayre); Hon H Hannan (Peel); Mr W A Gilbey (Glenfaba); Dr E J Mann (Garff); Hon D North (Middle); Messrs P Karran, R K Corkill and J R Kniveton (Onchan); Hon B May and Mr W D Corlett (Douglas North); Messrs A C Duggan and D C Cretney (Douglas South); Mr P W Kermodé (Douglas East); Mr A F Downie (Douglas West); Hon J A Brown (Castletown); Hon D J Gelling (Malew and Santon); Hon M R Walker CBE LLD (hc), Hon J Corrin and Mr N Q Cringle (Rushen); with Prof T StJ N Bates, Clerk of Tynwald.

Messrs Cannan and Delaney were absent with leave.

ENTRANCE OF H.E. THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

The President: Hon. members, His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor has graciously signified his attendance at this sitting, and I call upon the learned Clerk to accompany him to his place in the gallery.

The Clerk accompanied the Governor to his place.

THE PRAYERS

The President: Hon. members, the Lord Bishop will lead us in prayer.

The Lord Bishop: We do not use the normal form this morning as there are some special prayers for this occasion. There will be four prayers and the Lord's Prayer at the end.

Lord God, creator and father of all, you have made of one blood all races and nations. Increase in the world a spirit of sympathy and understanding, of tolerance and

good will, that the prejudices, arrogance and pride which cause divisions between those of different race, colour and creed or nationality, may be done away with and that all peoples may live together in unity and peace. We pray for the rulers and statesmen who are called to leadership among their countrymen. Give them vision to see far into the issues of their time, courage to uphold what they believe to be right and integrity in their words and motives, and may their service promote the welfare and security of all. Especially we pray for those who bear in their hands the government of the Manx people. Make them uphold honour and justice, to restrain evil and oppression, and to seek the true prosperity, peace and concord of this Island, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, you have taught us that we are members one of another and that none of us lives to himself alone. We thank you for the community of which we are part, for those who share with us in its activities, and for those who serve its various interests. Help us as we have opportunity to make our own contribution to the community, to its life and wholesome development, that by love and neighbourliness we may serve one another, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A prayer in Manx: Yee ooilley-niartal, ta shin cur booise dhyt son y cheead-blein jeh kiannoortys sheeoil, currit da'n Ellan 'sy voayl shoh, as ta shynyn dty harvaantyn geiyrt er ny kesmady n jeusyn t'er n'goll roin, dy vodmayd oo as nyn ashoon y hirveish ayns shee as craueaght 'sy traay-heet. Trooid Yeesey Creest nyn Jiarn. Amen.

And in English: Almighty God, we give you thanks for the hundred years of peaceful government which has been given to the Island in this place and we your servants pray that we, following in the footsteps of those who have gone before us, may serve you in peace and godliness in the time to come, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

And we say together the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer was said by all present.

WELCOME BY THE PRESIDENT

The President: Please be seated. Your Excellency, hon. members, ladies and gentlemen, this morning my

colleagues and I extend the warmest of welcomes to all our guests to this formal but unusual sitting of Tynwald Court.

In particular, we are delighted that Her Majesty the Queen's representative, Air Marshal Sir Lawrence Jones, our Lieutenant-Governor, has joined us today, his presence being indicative of the fact that the warm bonds that have existed between sovereign and Court remain undiminished over the years.

It also gives us great pleasure to welcome so many colleagues of former years, who by their participation in the work of the Court have made an invaluable contribution to the well-being of our Island. It is indeed propitious that you should all join with Tynwald Court on this day to commemorate the first sitting of the Court in this chamber exactly 100 years ago on 20th December 1894.

The ensuing century has seen many changes. At that time our Island was part of an empire that appeared both boundless and indestructible. Our national poet was warning against our culture being lost in the Empire's mass. Today, the Island is an active participant within the Commonwealth and beyond, and our culture, having waned, is experiencing a measure of revival.

In 1894 a predecessor of His Excellency, Sir John West Ridgeway, presided over this assembly. The composition and functions of the Legislative Council were in many respects quite different from those today. The House of Keys had been a directly elected assembly for less than 30 years. Since then, this chamber has witnessed Tynwald Court define its role in both legislative and executive terms. Even more recently, Tynwald has largely transferred its executive competence to the government of the Isle of Man. As a consequence it may well be that Tynwald Court has once again to redefine its role.

That, hon. members, is for the future, and perhaps we should leave it to our successors a hundred years hence to evaluate our achievements in so doing, recognising that today we join to celebrate the last 100 years of parliamentary endeavour in this setting by hearing something of the story of this chamber.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENDED TO ALLOW MR P KELLY TO ENTER AND ADDRESS THE COURT

The President: Now, turning to our agenda I call upon the hon. Mr Speaker to move the resolution standing in his name.

The Speaker: Mr President, item 1 on the agenda of this special sitting of Tynwald called to celebrate the centenary of the legislative use of this chamber is a motion in my name seeking the suspension of standing orders. The purpose of the motion is to enable Mr Peter Kelly to enter within the bar of the Court and to address the Court with regard to the history of this building and those concerned with its construction. It was your suggestion, Mr President, to the Tynwald Management Committee some month or two ago that the centenary of the use of

this building should not pass unrecorded and, after due deliberation, the committee supported your suggestion. However, before formally moving the motion and with a view to helping to set the scene for this celebration, I would like to advise this hon. Court of some of the issues that were discussed on this day in this Court 100 years ago, and then to introduce Mr Kelly to the hon. members.

First of all, Tynwald Court did indeed sit, as has been mentioned by you, sir, on 20th December 1894 and the then Governor opened proceedings by saying, 'My Lord Bishop, Gentlemen of the Council, Mr Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Keys, as this is the first time that we have assembled in this hall I may perhaps be allowed to congratulate the Court upon the possession of such a handsome building and to express my appreciation of the skill and ability shown by the architect and of the efficiency shown by the builder. This legislature has at length been furnished with a habitation worthy of its ancient lineage and I am sure that the dignity of debate which has always characterised its proceedings will remain unimpaired in the future.' Dare I say, Mr President, that it must be a matter of opinion as to whether these high ideals have always been attained by members of Tynwald during all the debates that have taken place in this chamber in the last hundred years. It is more than a happy coincidence that we have been able to assemble here today at this special sitting, a hundred years to the day when this chamber was first occupied by this hon. Court.

It may be of interest that on 20th December 1894 Douglas Corporation presented a petition to borrow a sum not exceeding £20,000 to defray the cost of a new main sewer. This was indeed an important matter which dealt with in those days a very considerable sum of money. I have been advised that £20,000 100 years ago would in today's terms be worth just over £1 million. I would perhaps be remiss if I did not advise the Court that, perhaps not for the first time in its history, the issue was referred to a committee, a committee of five members, so little changes!

Douglas at that time was expanding at a rapid rate and there were other motions at the same sitting dealing with borrowing powers relating to a proposed new cemetery for Douglas, the costs associated with the Douglas swingbridge and, perhaps of more particular interest to today's proceedings, a motion in the name of Deemster Drinkwater that the sum of £700 be voted from the general revenue of this Isle to defray the cost of furnishing and completing the new Tynwald Court chamber. I understand that £700 100 years ago is equivalent to about £35,000 today.

Not for the first time in my brief parliamentary career I am in danger of departing from my brief, but in trying to set the scene, for that is my purpose, I would be very remiss indeed if I did not properly introduce Mr Peter Kelly. He is no doubt well-known to you all, if not in person then by reputation, because his terrific contribution to the maintenance, preservation and indeed the spread of knowledge about the architectural beauty of this Island and in particular all matters Victorian is well-known. I have grown to know him over the last year or two since I was appointed to the Manx Heritage Foundation, to which body he acts in a consultative capacity. His contribution to that

organisation since it was created in 1982 has been substantial. In this regard I would particularly mention his very substantial contribution to Manx Heritage Year in 1986.

I would also be remiss if I did not mention his involvement in a very busy and active life in the following organisations: firstly, the Isle of Man Scout Association of which I understand he is chairman; secondly, his involvement with local government, particularly in the Onchan area over very many years; and thirdly, and perhaps most importantly in terms of today's events, his involvement with buildings as a practising architect for over 20 years. Today he is perhaps best known for the undoubted contribution that he continues to make to the affairs of the Victorian Society of which he was the founding chairman. He promotes its interests in a very articulate manner. It is, of course, well-known that the Island exploded, in architectural terms, in the second half of the last century and we are indeed fortunate to have a man of his calibre to address us today.

I have much pleasure in moving the motion standing in my name:

That Standing Order 106 be suspended to enable Mr Peter Kelly to enter within the Bar of the Court and that he be permitted to address the Court in commemoration of one hundred years' use of the chamber.

Dr Mann: Mr President, I beg to second and, in so doing, I think on behalf of every member of this Court I would welcome Mr Kelly to address us and, for a moment, perhaps we could put aside the politics of today and listen to the politics of yesteryear.

The President: Hon. members, I will put the resolution. Will those in favour please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

**THE ADDRESS OF MR P KELLY ON THE
CENTENARY OF THE USE OF
TYNWALD CHAMBER**

The President: I have now great pleasure in inviting Mr Kelly to come forward to address the Court.

Mr P Kelly: Mr President, the brief I was given was one of advising the hon. members as to the history of the Court in which we are today sitting. It is perhaps difficult to fill the length of time I have been allocated to talk of the sheer bricks and mortar of a room with some antechambers beneath. I think, therefore, in a similar manner to which the Speaker has introduced me by giving my background, it would be wrong for me not to start the story of the Tynwald Chamber with something similar to the Israelites travelling in the wilderness for 40 years looking for a home, because for a period similar to that Tynwald was indeed constantly looking for the promised land.

I think it fair to say that most people will be aware that the early sittings of Tynwald were held in the courthouse in Castle Rushen. The Keys we find in the early part of the

18th century looking for a home of their own. One was found; it was just outside the gates of the castle in a building which Bishop Wilson had his library on the first floor. The ground floor was therefore converted into a Keys chamber. It was not a particularly large building, nor indeed impressive in appearance and we find that by 1818 the building was in such disrepair that it necessitated rebuilding. Government purchased the building as it stood for £20 and engaged the services of Thomas Brine, an architect who had come to reside in Castletown, to design a new building. Brine had acted for the Lieutenant-Governor and acted for government in respect of public buildings. A few years later he was to design St Mary's Church in Castletown. His new building still stands. It was complete by 1821, but in the meantime the Keys had to find a new home. They chose the George Hotel in Castletown, where I am sure they were quite comfortable.

From 1821 then, the Keys met in their new chamber and Tynwald continued to meet in the courthouse at Castle Rushen. However, times were changing in this Island and Douglas, having once been a fishing village, suddenly began to expand. During the 18th century its good harbours resulted in many ships coming into the port for purposes which it is perhaps better not to discuss. The town grew. South Quay was created in the 1790s. What today we may regard as something of a backwater of the town was indeed the principal and desirable living quarters of the town. In 1810 Athol Street was laid out and this overshadowed South Quay, for at least on one side it got the sun for most of the day. By 1830 we find the town spreading, and Finch Road is laid out on its lower side for the erection of detached and semi-detached villas which, I am pleased to say, are still with us to this day. The building of the houses in Finch Road, however, caused consternation to those who were living in Athol Street for, having thought that they were indeed in the upper bracket, they suddenly found that in order to build houses in Finch Road the timbers and building materials which came from the quarry on Douglas Head had to be dragged up the hill and along Athol Street, thus causing ruts of mud in their new street during the winter months.

The town continued to develop particularly following the formation of the Steam Packet Company in 1830, for this brought more people to the Island. Derby Square and Derby Road were laid out in 1846, followed a few years later by Windsor Park in 1849; that is the area from Prospect Terrace down to Windsor Terrace. Onchan too cashed in on this boom for we find in 1852 Strathallan Park, at the far end of the bay above Derby Castle, was also laid out and advertised in the local press: 'Get away from the smoke of Douglas. Come and live in Onchan' read the advertisement. Eastfield, that area above Rosemount, was of the same date and then, in 1854, the Finch Hill building land, which stretched from the upper side of Finch Road up through Bucks Road and back down Windsor Road with a small diversion round Demesne Road, and Kensington Road was laid out for building purposes. At that time the only public buildings in Douglas were the Red Pier with the lighthouse at one end, the watchtower and the Douglas courthouse at the other. That courthouse was indeed similar to the building which still stands in Ramsey. By 1848

government were looking for a much larger building than the courthouse and several sites were considered. Ewan Christian, the ecclesiastical architect from England of Manx descent, was engaged to produce plans.

Following extensions to the courthouse within Castle Rushen itself, the Lieutenant-Governor found himself with cramped living accommodation and so a lease was taken of Lorne House. Thus the governors continued to live in Castletown, the capital, up until 1860, when the lease ran out. Governor Francis Piggot, on arriving in 1861, took up residence in the Castle Mona Hotel. He then took a lease on the Villa Marina and it was there that Government House was created and when Lord Loch, his successor, arrived a lease was taken of Bemahague, the site and house which currently serves as Government House. Thus there was a direction towards Douglas and the ill-health of Francis Piggot resulted in meetings of the Keys, and indeed Tynwald, being held in Douglas for his convenience.

In Athol Street during the period 1840-1841, a very large building was erected. It was built for the Order of Oddfellows; it was a large building which now serves as the Douglas Courthouse. It was designed by John Robinson, the local architect, and was intended in a similar way that building societies today invest their funds in bricks and mortar. The building comprised several large rooms which were let out and on the lower floors were a series of shops and offices which were also intended to provide an income. We find that by March 1856 government had abandoned its ideas of building a new courthouse, for it took a lease of this building and only a year later purchased it for £2,300. Alterations were carried out in 1859 with the courthouse coming into full use in 1860, at the same time being used for sittings of Tynwald.

The year 1866 saw a change in the constitution of this Island for the British Government made concession whereby Tynwald would have greater control over its own finances if in return the Keys was popularly elected. The first election took place on 1st April 1867 and soon we find may of the Keys sitting taking place in the Douglas Courthouse. The members for Castletown, of course, and for the south objected greatly and a last-ditch stance was held until finally the last sitting of the Keys in Castletown took place on 26th November 1874, 120 years ago.

Having utilised the courthouse, Tynwald was not in itself satisfied that this was indeed to be its final resting place, for we find in July 1868 Tynwald resolving to set aside a sum of £500 for the purchase of a site for a new building, a further £150 for the plans and £6,500 maximum for the erection of a building. The building was to comprise Tynwald Court and chambers for both the Keys and Council together with offices for His Excellency. The site chosen was Woodbourne Square. This had been laid out in 1860 as part of the Woodbourne development from Woodbourne House, once the home of the Harrison family. On three sides of the square building had commenced but the far side, the one officially known as East View, lay vacant. Negotiations were entered into by government for the purchase of this site and upon which the Tynwald Court and two chambers would be erected. At the December sitting of Tynwald in that year, His Excellency reminded members that a decision had not yet been taken that the

Tynwald Court should find a permanent home in Douglas rather than Castletown. It would appear par for the course that items were adjourned not from one meeting to another but from one meeting to several beyond, and so we find in February Tynwald deciding that Douglas should indeed be the permanent home for itself but the new building should now comprise a Tynwald chamber, a courthouse, a rolls office and a registry. Thus the Woodbourne Square site was no longer large enough or suitable.

A new site had been found on the Hills estate. It was opposite Mona Street. A competition was launched, an architectural competition, and eight architects from the United Kingdom were invited to submit schemes. Five of them submitted schemes although two architects combined to produce one scheme between them. The owners of Hills estate promptly renamed the road upon which this building was to face and it does to this day still bear testimony to that fact because it became Tynwald Street. The prizewinner was John Burnett of Glasgow; He won a £150 premium. His scheme was for a mediaeval-looking building with towers and gothic arches on the front, in fact so gothic that had it been built it would no doubt have been demolished in the 1950s when such buildings were swept away elsewhere. Second premium went to Gustavus Hamilton from Liverpool who received £75. The winning scheme, however, was estimated to cost £17,000, well beyond the brief that had been set. Negotiations were held with Mr Burnett and the scheme was reduced to £14,567. In July of 1870 the Court considered that expenditure but were warned that changes in the UK had resulted in revenue from taxes on tea and sugar being diminished, and therefore the revenue of the Island was unlikely to be able to sustain the cost involved. The scheme was, therefore, held over and the architect, in addition to his £150, was allowed £63 2s 10d expenses. However, in 1871 government did buy the site which it kept for many years. In 1881, ten years later, having had this vacant site and paying interest on the charges, government found itself having to pay a contribution towards the paving of the street and the laying of sewers. In that year it was agreed that a new school be erected upon the site.

It was, therefore, 10 years before any further development took place in finding a new home for either the Keys, the Council or Tynwald. The Isle of Man Commercial Banking Company had set up on the Island in a building on Prospect Hill. Regrettably, in 1848 it found itself in financial difficulty and the bank was suspended. Shortly afterwards, the City of Glasgow Bank seized upon the opportunity, purchased the premises and opened up a branch under the title of the 'Bank of Mona'. The bank flourished and by May 1854 we find them purchasing seven plots on the newly laid out Finch Hill estate for the purpose of erecting a banking hall. The architect chosen was John Robinson and the building which he designed is in fact the building commonly referred to as the 'Wedding Cake' section of Government Office or, as one government employee suggested to me the other day, the 'Christmas Cake' section of Government Office. It comprised a banking hall on the ground floor for which the entrance led off from Prospect Hill and accommodation for the manager of which the entrance was on Finch Road and



still exists. Permission was granted by the estate developers that the building could be connected to the cesspool which was placed immediately behind the building.

Robinson the architect is a man who should perhaps at this juncture be described to you. His father had come to the Island in 1793 for the purpose of erecting the Nunnery Mill, for he was indeed a millwright. He quickly took up house building and was responsible for the erection of Ballabrooie House and nearby Thornton, which was demolished but a few weeks ago. His son John and his son Henry followed him into the building profession although John branched out and also became an architect. His designs on this Island include the Douglas Courthouse, Clarence Terrace, the Esplanade, Derby Terrace, Castle Terrace and the very fine Windsor Terrace, overlooking the back of the Gaiety. In Victoria Road and Victoria Terrace he produced houses as indeed he designed Eaglehurst, the Priory and several houses on the Finch Hill estate. His gothic buildings included St. Andrew's Church, the Dalrymple Memorial Chapel, Falcon Cliff, Ravens' Cliff on Douglas Head and both Greeba Castle and Tower.

Reverting back to the bank, its success grew and grew, and we find by 1868 the necessity to build a further banking chamber and so Robinson's plans were advertised for tender. The building which was erected now in fact serves for both the Keys and Council chambers. Its appearance, of course, was classical, as was the original building, and we find the owners of the bank writing to Douglas Corporation offering, at their own expense, to lay granite kerbs and scottish paving flags in front of the building so as to provide a clear pathway for its customers. Regrettably the parent company, the City of Glasgow Bank, failed in 1878, and whilst the Bank of Mona was in itself flourishing, it had to close. In December of 1879 government purchased the building with the express intent of converting it into Government Office, Keys and Council chambers.

At that time public buildings came under the auspices of the Board of Works in the United Kingdom. They sent four tracings of alternative schemes for the conversion of the building with a specific request that, once one was chosen, all four be returned. Regrettably therefore no copy of those plans exists on the Island. It was intended, according to the letter which accompanied the plans, that the outside walls and part of the roof would remain whilst the interior would be totally gutted and rebuilt, an early example of what is now known as façade retention, the estimated cost being £1,500.

In June of 1880, again a further change took place, for the Public Works in England inspector realised that the buildings in the Island were suffering badly through lack of periodic inspection and lack of proper maintenance and expenditure thereon and so it was agreed that the inspector from the United Kingdom would come to the Island twice a year, once to authorise works and once to sanction payment. In the meantime a local architect would be engaged to supervise the works. As far as this conversion was concerned into the two chambers, His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor was placed in charge and given instructions to direct the works. In September of 1880 work had progressed sufficiently that Government Office was able to move from the building adjoining the Douglas

Courthouse into its new premises. But delays took place in altering the Keys Chamber; the ceiling had to be raised and in July 1881 we find questions in Tynwald as to when the building was going to be finished. The first sitting of the Keys took place on 2nd December 1881, 113 years ago.

It has been very difficult to find any reference to this building work in the local newspapers. It obviously did not excite the press sufficiently to give great detail of the work that was undertaken. Indeed, more excitement was raised by operations at the other end of Hill Street where Charlie Keith's circus was being prepared for the forthcoming summer season. Once the building was in use the press indicated their dissatisfaction with the accommodation that had been provided for them in the Keys chamber, which was somewhat smaller than it is today. Indeed, two years later, in July 1883 the members themselves expressed concern as to the lack of facilities that were available. George Kay, a local architect, was requested to produce plans for an extension to provide committee rooms, lavatories and offices for the MHKs. Also, the rear wall was to be removed and extended backwards in a curve so as to provide a gallery suitable for the Legislative Council to sit upon for meetings of Tynwald, thus relieving the Douglas Courthouse from that task. Mr Robert Swan Stephen, a member, objected strongly and said that the Keys should have their own room and it should not be shared with Tynwald. He felt a Tynwald Chamber should be built in the garden to the rear at a cost which he felt could be undertaken for somewhere between £1,000 and £1,500. That building could also double up as a second courthouse.

So Tynwald continued to look for a new home. In October of 1885 a report was prepared regarding the new chambers and the necessity for providing a new rolls office and registry which were to be sited in Finch Road. In April of 1887 a further site was looked at for a Tynwald chamber. It was close by in Hill Street, the site now occupied by the Athol Garage. Negotiations commenced with the trustees of the Hills estate but by July minds had been changed and a new site on the junction of Westmoreland Road and Circular Road was considered to be more favourable, so much so that £5,737 was expended in its purchase.

Deemster Drinkwater was very much against the building of a new Tynwald Chamber away from the Keys and the Legislative Council for it was customary for Tynwald to break off while the two Houses sat separately, and the inconvenience during rainy days of walking from here to the Douglas Courthouse was not regarded, by him anyway, as being suitable. He suggested that if the small tobacconist shop on the top side of the House of Keys building was purchased and the Weights and Measures Department were moved from their converted stable at the rear, then there would be sufficient space to build a chamber. He referred to the new site on Circular Road, and having given his own estimated of cost for building on the existing site, commented 'If you have a new site you will then find yourself going to any expense to provide a building which you think proper.' Here we find, through his words, the reasons why perhaps Tynwald was not in favour of extending the Keys chamber to provide space

for the Council for sittings of Tynwald, for he referred to the indignity of the Legislative Council having to descend from their chamber into that of Tynwald. He also commented, 'Where are the public buildings in the rising town of Douglas? Surely Douglas has the dimensions of a town but the institutions of a village.'

Progress was slow. In the meantime, the Keys complained again about their accommodation. They were fed up with jugs and bowls for washing and wanted proper lavatories with basins and taps and wastepipes. Heavy curtains were acquired for the door to stop the draft and perhaps a carpet could be provided for the whole floor instead of part of it. Another decision taken was to remove the castors from the seats. Complaint was made over the table at which they sat: it had no drawers and was of plain basic, deal timber, and indeed reference was made to the honourable and learned member from Peel who sat at a table which was described as having been borrowed from an adjoining school.

Tynwald, however, decided that the erection of a new rolls office with fireproof accommodation was far more important, as indeed was the erection of a new courthouse at Peel, for the one in which the deemsters had to sit was regarded as nothing better than a stable, and therefore those works proceeded first. In November 1889, Mr Cowell produced a plan to extend the Keys building with a classical building of which a design appears in the exhibition below. This was to provide a retiring room, lavatories and an entrance to the Keys, separate from that of the Legislative Council. Finally Tynwald agreed to buy the shop and house next door from Mr Ring's estate and, having demolished them, the way was clear for the creation of a new Tynwald chamber on this site. On the 27th September 1891 plans were produced for this chamber, and by May 1892 the works were estimated to cost £3,500 for which provision was made. Deemster Drinkwater, who had long suggested that this site should be the site, commented, 'I think we have succeeded now in getting a building place on the very best site the Island can afford.'

In the meantime it is interesting to look at the accounts for the year to see what was expended on Government Office: indeed very little, but we find at that period the steps at the entrance to the Keys were re-cemented, the Council Chamber had new linoleum and matting installed whilst the Keys could only afford a new cushion for the Speaker! (*Laughter*) I hasten to add that the following year he was provided with a new seat at a cost of £12 6s 0d. The contract for this building then was awarded to Mr R F Douglas, a local builder who was entrepreneurial in his development in Cronkbourne Road and Brunswick Road and who also afterwards was to build the Isle of Man Bank and subsequently become one of its directors. This building was described as being in renaissance style and, unlike its classical neighbours, was built in red Ruabon brick from North Wales and the fenestrations and mouldings were executed in Bath stone under the chisel of Mr R W Creer, the monumental mason. The local papers described the crest above the door as being the Viking ship, the ancient armorial bearings of the Island, but indeed a look at it would suggest it is perhaps nearer to the *Bounty* or the *Marie Celeste*.

The new building, then, in which we are today, was somewhat different when first erected, for on the ground floor, whilst there was a large entrance lobby, there was no interconnection with the Keys building. There was, however, a doorway for the Council to gain access into this chamber. The Keys members, if they had been in their old building, had to go out into the street and back in. The Council were provided with a very narrow and steep staircase from their chamber to a doorway which was behind Mr Downie. Thus, having decided years earlier that they would not descend into the Tynwald chamber, they were indeed now compelled to do so.

Again, the local newspapers carry very little, if any, reference to the building - no description of what it was like; in fact, at the time of its opening items of greater interest were the gangs of Douglas, youths, known in one case as 'the forty thieves of Chester Street'. The swingbridge and the ill-fated Eiffel Tower scheme to gain access to Douglas Head were of more importance.

The building was complete and, as has been mentioned earlier, was used for the first time exactly one hundred years ago today, although I must admit that in my research I almost had heart failure, when reading the *Manx Sun* newspaper, to read that 'the Tynwald Chamber was used for the first time two days ago.' Looking to the top of the paper, it was dated 15th December 1894, thus suggesting that this chamber was used on the 13th and not the 20th. However, in turning the pages of that newspaper, I find that for some reason the *Manx Sun* had not changed the date on that one page, but all other pages in that edition bore the correct date!

Accounts for the year published the next year indicated an overspend on public buildings not on this building, but on public buildings in general, by £117 19s 0d, which was accounted for in that the whole of Government Office, the classical bit adjoining us, was painted for the first time - indeed a coincidence that it should have been just finished recently in being repainted, no doubt at a slightly greater cost. Tynwald then occupied its chambers.

The Keys became further dissatisfied with their own and in 1895 complained of its cramped conditions and lack of ventilation. Mr Cowle, the architect, explained that the room was far too small for the number of people that sat in it, but one member made reference to the fact that there were now firms who specialised in such matters as ventilation, perhaps an early suggestion of the engagement of specialists. Proposals were put forward to connect the Keys with the Tynwald building at the lobby by putting a doorway through the party wall. This found favour but it took 13 years before it was carried out. In 1897 members complained within the Tynwald chamber itself that there were constant drafts, and one poor member - no doubt with a hairstyle similar to my own - felt so affected that he had to leave the meeting and go home. It appeared that there was no lobby at the top of the stairs to the public gallery and, with the front door left open, the winds just howled straight up and into the building. In 1908 Mr Cowle appeared again and was now asked to prepare a scheme for both a public record office adjoining the Rolls Office and to extend the Tynwald chambers to provide the accommodation that had been requested many years before.



The Keys building was altered by extending the chamber to the rear and providing a gallery, this time not for the Legislative Council but for the press. One of its elaborate doorways leading to the hall in Government Office was removed and placed within the Tynwald lobby. The Speaker's room was moved, and the Speaker's room that existed was amalgamated with the Members' Room to form a committee room which has now reverted back to being the Members' Room. The Council link was moved from that position to its present one by extending the building and putting in a much easier staircase for members. A back staircase was created in this corner to lead down to the extension and to the new lavatory accommodation with urinals, WCs and washbasins including marble tops! The extension was also built facing the road in Ruabon brick, but instead of Bath stone the architect changed to Bolton Bridge, Yorkshire stone. Mr Douglas was again the builder and Mr Thomas Quayle, the monumental mason, this time, undertook the stonework. It is remarkable that when Central Government Offices, as we know them, were built that these extensions were demolished and at that time the Yorkshire stone was in perfect condition whilst the Bath stone in this building was crumbling.

Mr President, I shall finish by just advising as to some of the background on Mr James Cowle, a gentleman involved over many years as government architect. His father was also James. He was born in the Island, trained as a joiner, became a ship's carpenter and moved to Liverpool, where James Cowle was born. He was born on Tynwald Day 1838. At the age of 13 he came to the Island to reside with his uncle Richard, to be both adopted by him and to become an apprentice joiner with him. Richard Cowle had turned from joiner to builder. He had finished off St. Thomas' Church, built Cronkbourne School and chapel and that great, impressive building, Ballamona Lunatic Asylum. Richard died in 1874 leaving James, at the age of 36, to take over one of the largest building firms in Douglas. He, like Robinson, turned to architecture and was producing plans at least from 1876, being responsible for Crogga House, several hotels on the Loch Promenade, shops in Victoria Street, putting the decorative finish to the Victoria Street Methodist Chapel, the unique Swiss Chalet at Glen Helen, St. Paul's Church in Foxdale, the chapel at King William's, St Catherine's Church in Port Erin, the Douglas Railway Station, the prison and the Rolls Office. In fact, when this building was being built, on 11th September 1893 he suffered an accident. Coming up the stairs to inspect the building, he missed his footing and fell some 15 feet to the floor below. At that time the building was only under construction; there was no handrail. Fortunately for Mr Cowle, he was of stout build and therefore, whilst shaken and bruised, no bones were broken. He died in August 1901 when preparing to go away to visit an exhibition in Glasgow. His obituary tells us that he was exemplary in his life, honest, straightforward, he had true kindness, never any pretensions, never a sham, a friend of friends and a foe to no man.

Mr President, James Cowle should be remembered

today as well as the chamber he designed and I would say, rather like Sir Christopher Wren's tomb in St Paul's, his epitaph should read 'If you would see his memorial, then look around.' Thank you.

The President: Hon. members, I now call upon the hon. member for Council, Mr Irving, to express our thanks to Mr Kelly.

Mr Irving: Your Excellency, Mr President, we are delighted to have right in our midst this morning our renowned Manx architectural historian, Mr Peter Kelly, and what a remarkable lecture he has given us this morning on Tynwald Court! I am sure he will sense the enjoyment we have had in listening to him this morning. I must say that hon. members, if they will speak in this Court, and former hon. members who have spoken in the past in this Court will perhaps with a touch of envy observe the markedly attentive way in which everybody has listened to you, sir! (**Members:** Hear, hear.) Your knowledge of Manx history is quite unrivalled, and we must hope that this great store of fascinating information you have will be recorded somewhere. We know, of course, we are going to have the pleasure of a recording, a Hansard, this morning of this splendid lecture you have given us.

You have mentioned Mr Cowle - and I hope Mr President is feeling tolerant this morning because I have an unfortunate reputation of saying the wrong thing at the wrong time and digressing in remarks made to this hon. Court - but a Mr Cowell was a Member of the House of Keys and he is recorded in Hansard, in the year 1892 as saying, 'The Council chamber is a very ordinary looking room but I have seen some extraordinary miracles performed there.' (*Laughter*) Now, sir, I have not noticed any over-production of miracles in the Legislative Council since I have been there, but when one considers miracles in political activity - of course, sir, it was not part of your brief this morning to discuss the activity in this chamber - I must say that if there were not miracles in the Council chamber and if there were not miracles in this chamber, this chamber in its hundred years has served us well because there certainly were near miracles, and I know I am going beyond my brief but I cannot resist, Mr President, saying that I regard the hundred years in this chamber as being the most important century in all the centuries of Tynwald Court. (**Members:** Hear, hear.) I feel, when one considers the situation here in the year 1894 and then looks at 1994 - the marvellous strides forward in constitutional relationship changes, constitutional development here, the reforming of electoral law to make the Island more democratic - in 1894 we had a small inward-looking population and then, as Mr President has reminded us, now we have the Isle of Man as a dependency, as part of the worldwide international community, and I am proud of that. I am proud, too, that this Court has over the years extended and improved the services of government to an enormous extent, and I think we must celebrate that, that so much has been achieved in this hundred years.

To you, Mr Kelly, I would say, we thank you today and we salute you. We thank you for your outstanding lecture on this building this morning, delivered with such charm and with a flavour of the times of 1894; we thank you for

that, sir, and we thank you too for being with us this morning and the amount of time that you must have spent in researching this particular area of Manx history. We salute you for your knowledge of our architectural history and we salute you too, as Mr Speaker has said, for your activity on so many organisations in this Island, organisations devoted to keeping from decay or change or even destruction all that is best in our national heritage. I would assure you, sir, that in these endeavours in which you take part with such dedication we truly wish you well.

Members: Hear, hear. (*Applause*)

The President: Hon. members, before drawing our proceedings to a close, I should like to extend to all present a seasonal greeting, Nollick Ghennal as Blein feer Vie erriu, a Good Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Hon. members, the Lieutenant-Governor will now withdraw from the chamber and I call upon the learned Clerk to escort His Excellency to the Millennium Conference Room.

The Clerk escorted the Governor from the chamber.

That concludes the business before the Court, hon. members. The Council will now withdraw and leave the House of Keys to transact such business as Mr Speaker may place before them. Thank you.

The Council withdrew.

HOUSE OF KEYS

The Speaker: Hon. members, the House will now adjourn to the sitting of Tynwald in this chamber at 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 17th January 1995. Thank you.

The House adjourned at 12.32 a.m.