REPORT

British Irish Parliamentary Reporting Association
(BIPRA)

12th Annual Symposium

Tynwald,
Douglas, Isle of Man

Sunday 27th July to Wednesday, 30th July 2014

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Symposium Report

Symposium Welcome

The programme started with registration and a light buffet meal in the Empress Hotel, Douglas, followed by a formal welcome to BIPRA delegates by Roger Phillips, Clerk of Tynwald.

Monday, 28th July 2014

Official Opening

Ellen Callister, Tynwald Head of Hansard introduced the President of Tynwald, Hon. Clare Christian, who warmly welcomed BIPRA delegates to Tynwald and hoped they would enjoy their visit to the Isle of Man.

Session 1 –
'A Year in the Life' – Introductions and Updates from BIPRA member Assemblies
[Chaired by Alex Newton, House of Commons and reported by Colin Duncan, Northern Ireland Assembly]

Tynwald was excused from reporting during the session because its staff would go into greater detail in a later agenda item to be reported on separately.

Jersey: Peter Monamy

Jersey will have its three-yearly general election in October 2014. January to December 2013 saw an increase in meeting days from 34 in 2012 to 40, which is less than the record of 61 set in 2011. The aim is to deliver the official report of proceedings in the States of Jersey delivered within three days of the first day's proceedings, that is to have Tuesday's proceedings uploaded to the website by the following Friday afternoon. Merrill Corporation in London also does some transcripts, and, after a retendering process that went through a scrutiny panel, its work was deemed value for money. Editing is carried out by 2 + 2 part-time clerks, with scrutiny panel hearings undertaken by the officers attached to each panel. Pressure of business has seen the States of Jersey hold additional three-day sittings between those normally held in this mandate. There were two special meetings in 2013, to mark Liberation Day on 9 May and on the occasion of an official visit by His Royal Highness the Earl of Wessex. A referendum held during the 2013 BIPRA symposium approved Option 'B' — diving the island into six large areas each electing five deputies and keeping the 12 parish connétables as Members, which is the case at present. The States Assembly did not approve the move, and it is now planned to hold another referendum on the same days as the "general" election in October. There are 51 elected Members of the States of Jersey.

Scottish Parliament: Clare Maddox

The "elephant in the room" remains the upcoming independence referendum. There is intense focus on the impartiality of the Parliament and its staff. A referendum code of conduct has been drawn up that deals with issues such as social media and involvement in the campaign. Debates are getting more "shouty", with more points of order and accusations flying across the Chamber. There

have been several "mini-controversies" about political manoeuvring in Committees, given that the majority SNP convened most such meetings. In that context, Hansard is planning for the future, without knowing what it will be— [Scottish Parliament Official Report](). Regardless, it expects an increase in parliamentary business and big changes. Business is already changing. There have been more late sittings and decision times have been postponed 'til later in the evening. Changes are being dealt with ad hoc; but, if it becomes the norm, the introduction of shifts may be considered. There will be a split recess because of the referendum. Parliament will sit in August, which is new. That is working out well, although Hansard is uncertain of what the business will comprise, given restrictions on the use of Parliament for campaigning in the run-up to the referendum.

Scotland is training its reporters in how to sub edit. Editor Susan Mansfield is due to go off on maternity leave in October, creating a temporary editor post. James Galbraith moved to Lords and Rob Littlejohn took paternity leave. At the start of 2013, two previously trained reporters came back as agency staff to help out over a busy period. The idea of expanding the agency pool has been trailed and two more reporters were started this week. The agency pool is a new approach involving casual workers who are given a short training period, then come in for a few days a month when they are available and work is busy. Reine in Dublin provided some helpful advice on training.

The office is dealing with capacity issues by training reporters to sub-edit copy during busy periods, which provides an opportunity for staff training and development, because they can learn a different skill. It will be rolled out to the whole office over the next couple of years, so people get their turn. Various changes and pilots are under way as part of the digital Parliament agenda — iPads for Committee papers for Members and Hansard. Editor, Susan Mansfield, as part of Parliament moving towards a more collaborative, project-based approach, is currently in Burma, advising its Parliament on how to deal with information and data. *A couple of Hansard reporters and subs have been teaching clerks grammar and spelling.*

Parliament introduced two honey bee colonies from Kelvin Valley Honey in May. Hives were put in the garden. In June, more bees came along that were not part of the original hives. The BBC subsequently reported:

"Visitors to the Scottish Parliament were faced with a swarm of more than 15,000 bees this morning as a hive was relocated to a roof at the front of the building. Staff rushed to protect tourists after a black swarm descended on the Parliament and clustered around an overhang in the roof … A spokeswoman for the Scottish Parliament said: 'Today's visitors were not our bees. Our bees are very happy and contented in their own hives and blissfully unaware of today's excitement.'"

Northern Ireland Assembly: Bronagh Allison

Bronagh quoted stats on the millions of words produced by [NI Assembly Hansard](). She highlighted that the Official Report rendered verbatim evidence taken under oath as part of the Social Development Committee's inquiry into the 'Spotlight' programme on housing executive double-glazing contracts, referring to a Committees interim report that found Minister Nelson McCausland to have misled members. The Executive, said Bronagh, was at an impasse over financial matters, including June monitoring and the implantation of welfare reform. There had been rumours, so far groundless, of an emergency recall to deal with June monitoring.

There had been a race row, fuelled by the First Minister's remarks about not completely trusting Muslims. He later apologised and said that his remarks had been taken out of context.

Prostitutes who had given evidence to the Committee inquiry into the [Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provisions and Support for Victims) Bill]() had complained about their treatment

by members, alleging that some had more interest in discovering their real names than their evidence to the inquiry.

Patrick Marsh and Glenn Frazer had become fathers; Patrick again, and Glenn for the first time. Another member of staff was due off on maternity leave soon and a temporary replacement was being sought.

A review of staff hours and the attendance policy was nearing its consultation end. Under the reform of public administration, 11 super-councils were now operating in transition form.

The publication of the daily part will move to solely online in September, but a cross-BIPRA bound volume review group determined that the BV should continue to be produced for archival purposes until at least the mandate after next.

Esteemed and respected unionist Member turned independent, David McClarty, had died during the previous session. He was replaced by his former election agent Claire Sugden, who was co-opted as an MLA for East Londonderry.

Gibraltar: Paul Martinez

All Gibraltar Parliament sittings — 10 a year —are televised live by its national broadcaster and streamed. It meets every month, bar Easter and August. Business is intense and spread over two days. The Budget meeting ran from 9.00 am until 9.00 pm for an entire week. There was the Euro-election in May and a by-election to fill a seat vacated by a Member who had passed away. Gibraltar Hansard has a service-level agreement with the Isle of Man to first-draft its report, using MP3 sound files. The working relationship is good. Gibraltar rarely publishes in written form, with the vast bulk of its material provided online. The Budget debates were televised and the last two of them are available via YouTube. There is a shift towards e-government and 2-procurement, with a view to "doing away with paper". Written answers go its central office and are uploaded onto the website. The Parliament sits for a maximum of five years, but the Chief Minister can call and election at the drop of a hat.

Guernsey: Adrian Nicolle

The Parliament of Guernsey (States of Deliberation) Hansard, said Adrian, is the newest member of the official BIPRA "club". Its Chief Minister and others resigned in February this year over a previously held stock exchange position.

Like Gibraltar, the States of Guernsey contracts out its first draft to the Isle of Man. The States' Bailiwick includes Alderney and Sark, and it meets around 30 times a year, which involves 150 – 160 hours of debate. It meets in the Royal Court Chamber, where audio is digitally recorded.

First drafts are subsequently edited by Adrian, who reckons Hansard makes up "about 10%" of his other clerking duties — he is also second Clerk assistant and Clerk of the States' Assembly & Constitution Committee. A few written reports are published for libraries and the like. The States of Deliberation comprises 54 Members and its mandate runs until 30th April 2016.

Houses of the Oireachhtas: Carl Lombard

Dublin Hansard had a successful exchange with the House of Lords, which it is keen to repeat next year. Dáil participant returned with news of a fantastic scanner that is capable of deciphering handwritten notes and even, at times, re-collating pages in their proper order. A low turn-out (30%) referendum, surprisingly for some, came down 55% to 45% in favour of retaining the Seanad. Abolishing it had been a main plank of the coalition's reform plans. The Irish exit from the post banking bail-out was remarked upon and there was some suggestion that, after repaying massive debts, the Government were doing their best to get the country back into the same mess. The

Labour Party leader's resignation had led to a reshuffle and there are signs of severe strain in the coalition, with Labour trying to portray itself as "the cuddly alternative to austerity".

An election is in the air, amid talks of tax cuts. The next scheduled election is in 2016. A panel of 30 "casuals" has been set up by Hansard, to be drawn upon in times of business need. The pool is formed by those who passed a written test and an interview "board". They include a number of Irish speakers who are increasingly needed because Sinn Féin's growing presence in the Dáil. The terms of reference of the upcoming banking inquiry are being drawn up, and the pool of casuals may be drawn upon to meet its demands because Hansard does not have the staff to do so. The inquiry will have three tranches and is due to report in some form by May 2015.

Enquiries were made of agencies, with a view to one or more of them taking up the challenge, but none could deliver what it first said it could. Hence, back to using the pool or panel of casuals and Hansard staff. That having been said, the banking inquiry is likely to be subject to court challenges and may collapse before getting off the ground. Two additional staff have been directly recruited to Oireachtas Hansard, marking the end of the moratorium on appointments.

Hansard now has complete end-to-end control of its BVs, which are published online in PDF form. The Seanad is up to date and Dáil about a year behind. Technical issues have been sorted out, saving "an awful lot of money".

Written answers are dealt with electronically, and a recent trial proved successful on uploading clean copy. On 9 July, the test dealt with 300 written answers in 52 minutes. All of them were properly formatted, although Hansard had to assign headings. It is now considering whether to move to a drop-down list to maintain consistency, as the volume of written answers is increasing "exponentially". The Dáil has caused some logistical problems for Hansard by deciding to meet at 9.30 am on a Wednesday and Thursday instead of 10.30 am as was the previous norm. The reality is that at 10.30 am, it now has an hour-long suspension at 10.30 am. Seanad staff are being used to help cover the earlier start time.

House of Lords: John Vice and Hywel Evans

With 830 Members, the Lords remains the second largest legislative body in the world, although it has some way to go to catch up with China's National People's Congress, which has around 3,000 Members. Stephen Lawrence's mother, Doreen, now sits as Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon. The Data Retention and Investigatory Powers (DRIP) Bill — now the Act 2014 — was rushed through both Houses as emergency legislation. Lord Falconer's Assisted Dying Bill had a record number of Members speak — 125.

Because of economic pressures, using TSO for printing is being looked at jointly by the Commons and Lords, with a view to bringing much of it in-house to generate savings. The Hansard reporting suite 2 saga rumbles on, with some signs of progress. The Lords Hansard has moved to Word 2013 and written answers are to be e-published. An e-logging project is also under way. There is a move towards tagging video on YouTube.

Lots of people "love" the Lords scanner and the work exchange with Ireland was "fantastic". Rotas are being streamlined so that reporters who end first on one day start first the next. The team is "isolated but happy". Requests for flexible working are being considered, as are joint away days with other departments.

For the first time, Lords Hansard was able to participate in the training course for new reporters run by Commons Hansard and validated by City University as a postgraduate diploma in parliamentary reporting. Following the retirement of one of Lords Hansard's longest serving members of staff, managing editor Glenice Hoffman, after more than 25 years' service, it now has two new managing editors. Reporter Mark Blackaby was promoted and James Galbraith rejoined us

from the Scottish Parliament shortly before Christmas. Deputy Editor, Will Humphreys-Jones, had his position confirmed as permanent last summer. For the first time in several years, Lords Hansard has a full complement of staff, with no vacant positions or temporary appointments.

The House of Lords was also affected by the recent Cabinet reshuffle. Following a couple of big name departures from the Cabinet, the media's focus was understandably very much on the Commons. But in the same reshuffle, the Lords acquired a new Leader of the House in the form of Baroness Stowell of Beeston, and, following her appointment, its own measure of reshuffle controversy. After a reshuffle that had been hyped by the Government as "female-friendly", on just her second day at the Dispatch Box, Lady Stowell found herself having to defend the Prime Minister's decision not to make her a full member of the Cabinet and to pay her slightly less than her – male – predecessor. An offer to make up the difference in pay from Tory party funds swiftly followed, but Lady Stowell turned it down.

Other notable additions to the Red Benches in the past year include: Lord Palumbo of Southwark, co-founder of the Ministry of Sound, who joined the Liberal Democrat Benches and was indirectly responsible for the phrase "bangin' drum 'n' bass" finding its way into Hansard; and two former London mayoral candidates, Baroness Jones of Moulescoomb, the first Green Party Peer, and Lord Paddick, former deputy assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

There were media rumours of a further tranche of some 20 new Peers heading our way before the end of the session, which would doubtless add to Hansard's insecurities about Member recognition. However, in the interests of balancing the scales somewhat, a – fairly modest – chapter has recently been added to the history of House of Lords reform, following the passage of a Private Member's Bill that means Peers can now retire or resign, or be disqualified for non-attendance or conviction of a serious criminal offence.

House of Commons: Alex Newton

Like Scotland, the Commons are using casuals to deal with Committee spikes. However, Speaker, John Bercow, caused difficulties by publicly stating that no zero-hours contracts were in place in the Commons. That led to a move to design minimum-hours contracts, as a result of which six people are on one-day contracts. The Commons had to ensure that they are paid the minimum London living wage. Merrill is one of three suppliers used by the Commons Hansard.

The coalition, said Alex, is "running out of steam". There has been a change of approach to IT, with a move from the "visionary" to "evolutionary" because systems set up by IT collapsed and failed. The move to Word 2013 had massively improved the ability to display material online, such as tables etc. However, the daily part site remains "miserably embarrassing". Ironically, the Canadian IT developers are easier to get hold of than the Commons in-house team.

From the autumn, written answers were no longer the Commons responsibility, so if Departments cock them up it will be their own fault. The entire team that was dismantled went voluntarily. There is a general feeling that the Table Office should be tougher about accepting questions, the answers to which Members' researchers should be able to find for themselves.

National Assembly for Wales: Shôn Williams

Interim director of the Record of Proceedings, Craig Stephenson, was attending BIPRA, and it was hoped that he would gain an insight into parliamentary reporting. The Welsh Assembly had a few late sittings and a record 121 amendments were tabled at Report Stage to its Health and Social Services (Wales) Bill. Hansard coped with that with the support of other members of the service who divide their time between translating and Record of Proceedings work, which showed the value of

having a flexible and skilled workforce. With further Bills planned, late sittings were expected to become more commonplace.

A quiet year with regard to reshuffles changed dramatically at the start of June, when the First Minister admitted that the then Minister for Natural Resources and Food, Alun Davies, had breached the ministerial code by attempting to influence a planning decision about a racecourse to be built in his constituency. First Minister, Carwyn Jones, sacked him.

Technological developments include the increasing use of machine translation to produce a "base draft" of the fully bilingual Record of Proceedings that is published on the website within five days. The move has led to cost efficiencies. Over the year, staff built on their translation work in partnership with Microsoft. The launch of the global Welsh model for Microsoft translator, which enables users to translate into and from Welsh, took place in the Senedd in February. Publicity around the launch is said to have had a global reach of up to 5 million people, promoting not only Welsh but the National Assembly.

The National Assembly for Wales hosted BIPRA's Futures Forum in October 2013. Many of the presentations remain available on YouTube.

In March, the Assembly Commission instigated a full review of the producing of the Record of Proceedings. The Commission agreed that the Record is a significant aspect of the Assembly's work and its availability bilingually on the Assembly's website will continue to be important. Led by the strategic transformation service, the review will examine new opportunities to increase interest, engagement and understanding of the assembly's work in a world of rapid technological change. A few staff have shifted on secondments. Lisa Griffiths' secondment as deputy clerk and translator at the Table Office has strengthened the Record's bilingual offer. Having an in-house clerk-translator in the Table Office has led to less reliance on external translators and a quicker turnaround times for publication of Table Office business. That chimes with the noting, in the last plenary of the term, of the official languages scheme's first annual report.

Session 2 –
"-[Interruption.]" –
Presentation by John Vice and Simon Guerrier, House of Lords
[Chaired by Peter Monamy, States of Jersey and reported by Claire Hall, Scottish Parliament]

The purpose of this session was to discuss the use of "—[Interruption.]" as a device to deal with anything that occurs or is said in the chamber that is not part of plenary business. Sudden or unexpected events are common to all official reports but all have slightly different ways of dealing with them. Some, for example Westminster, take a strict and non-descriptive approach; others, such as the French Parliament, tackle unexpected events in a looser, more descriptive style.

The approach has changed over time, too, as John and Simon's presentation demonstrated.

They wondered which was the right approach—tight and non-descriptive, or loose and descriptive? At the root of that question is the issue of the purpose of an official report. Is it simply to report official business or is it to reflect what happens in the chamber, which might in turn reflect events outside the chamber?

John introduced the topic by talking about Michael Heseltine seizing the mace in 1976. The BBC describes it as follows:

> Michael Heseltine famously seized the mace after a particularly heated debate in 1976.
>
> The evening of 27 May proved to be a particularly eventful one for the House of Commons.
>
> The government was attempting to steer its Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill through the Commons.
>
> The Bill was hotly contested, with Michael Heseltine leading the Conservative opposition. The vote on an amendment had been tied, and was lost on the Speaker's vote. The vote on the main government motion - which one would have expected also to be tied - was in fact carried by the Labour Government.
>
> At this, some of the Welsh Labour MPs began to sing 'The Red Flag'. Heseltine, infuriated by the traditional Labour Party anthem, grabbed the mace and held it over his head.
>
> He was restrained by Jim Prior, replaced the mace and left the Chamber. The Speaker suspended the sitting until the following day.
>
> The next morning Michael Heseltine apologised unreservedly for his behaviour.

The incident, however, was represented in Hansard as a suspension and

"Grave disorder having arisen in the House … "

Simon described the invasion of the BBC news studio during "The Six O'Clock News" on 23 May 1988. YouTube clip here.

Later, the episode was referred to in the news by Michael Buerk; in other words, the news reporting on the news. YouTube clip here. Reports in the papers were not about the protestors—lesbians protesting over clause 28 in the Local Government Bill, which was at that point being discussed in the Lords—but about the BBC's response to the incident.

Simon pointed out that

"the clip doesn't name the protesters. Neither did the BBC report. They're not what the story's about. The interest is not in the cause of the interruption of the news report, but that there was an interruption at all and how it was dealt with."

On 2 February 1988, demonstrators had interrupted proceedings in the House of Lords by abseiling into the chamber. Column 1023 represents the incident thus:

Robson of Kiddington, B.	Wilson of Rievaulx, L.
Rochester, Bp.	York, Abp.
Seear, B.	Zuckerman, L.
Serota, B.	

Resolved in the affirmative, and Clause 28, as amended, agreed to accordingly.	§
[Interruption.]	§
5.8 p.m.	§
Clause 29 agreed to.	§
The Earl of Caithness moved Amendment No. 120BA: "After Clause 29. insert the following new clause:"	§

A single word was used to describe an event that would elsewhere have been newsworthy. Simon again:

"Square brackets, interruption. A single word. No lesbians. No abseiling. If your only source was the Official Report, you wouldn't know there'd been a protest. Maybe that's the point: by not recording protests, we don't encourage more. But maybe the effect of that is the Official Report taking a political stand. And maybe we do a disservice to those who want to follow events in the Chambers by not reporting what actually happened.
I don't know. But I am interested in what gets lost when we use square brackets interruption. And whether what actually happened can be recovered."

However, there are occasions on which an interruption has merited more than a single word, and Simon used the example of Baroness Trumpington interrupting Lord West during a debate on the first world war on 25 June 2014. In this case, the interruption—non-sequitur though it may have been—was not just spoken but was spoken by a member and was referred to by the member who was interrupted.
The following is how it appeared in *Hansard*:

horrendous. Think of the sheer number of mental injuries; if we think of post-traumatic stress now, we can see that we must have been talking about 1 million or so at the time.

Baroness Trumpington (Con): My Lords—

Lord West of Spithead: I am sorry, did the noble Baroness want to speak?

Baroness Trumpington: Yes, I want to say something. Hurry up and say what you are going to say.

Lord West of Spithead: I shall give way.

Baroness Trumpington: I have a question for the Minister. My father served as a regular soldier in the 9th Bengal Lancers. As such, he fought, and won an MC, in Mesopotamia. What is Mesopotamia these days? Is it involved in future commemoration events? Will the commemorative events go further to include India, which sent a great many people?

Lord West of Spithead: Yes; Mesopotamia, Iraq—it is all still in a mess, isn't it? The best ever intelligence on Mesopotamia was the Naval Intelligence Division notes, which were actually jolly useful and I wish that we had read them better before we decided to go into that bloody place.

On the other hand, on 10 November 2011, when the redoubtable baroness flicked the Vs at Lord King when he referred to her age, the gesture wasn't reported because: it wasn't spoken; Trumpington wasn't on her feet; and Lord King didn't respond.

Policy in official reports—certainly in the House of Lords and the Scottish Parliament—is that if a member responds to a sedentary intervention, we try to find out who said what and put that in. However, there are occasions when nothing is said and we[1] have no mechanism other than "—[Interruption.]" to deal with that.

Simon went on to explain the challenges associated with obtaining chamber footage from the parliamentary recording unit. He did say, though, that as a freelancer he had access to BBC archives, but that obtaining the relevant clips was a complicated process by that route, too.

Without footage, and first-hand recollections, the context for "—[Interruption.]" has to be deduced. Any comments that follow the interruption can—oddly and, sometimes, amusingly—lack any frame of reference. For example, from col 641 on 17/1/06, we have Lord Thomas of Gresford:

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[1] In the Scottish Parliament. As Simon described, in the Lords, "Noble Lords: Oh!" is used in preference to "—[Interruption.]" and he was able to find only 14 occurrences of "—[Interruption.]" since 2006.

> I never endorsed this. I never knew about it. I never examined it". But once that has happened [*Interruption*]. I shall burst into song in a moment, I can see, and it would probably be better for your Lordships if I did.
>
> **Lord Elton:** My Lords, it is such a pleasure to have two speakers from the Liberal Democrat Front Bench. They obviously cannot perform a duet but it is good to have an accompanist instead.
>
> **Lord Thomas of Gresford:** My Lords, I shall have a word with the accompanist later.

We can only infer from this that the interruption was caused by a mobile phone ringtone. Simon offered other, similar examples[2]. One that will particularly appeal to colleagues in the Scottish Parliament is Lord Foulkes of Drumlean, on 24/1/14 [col 918].

> **Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** My Lords, from listening to the noble Lord it is obvious that the purpose of his amendments is to give him an opportunity to make a long speech. For example, Amendment 13 suggests that we should have the referendum on 22 May of this year. The Bill will have hardly received Royal Assent. How can that possibly be a realistic expectation? This is a good old-fashioned filibuster for which he is famous.
>
> **Lord Foulkes of Cumnock:** That is an absolute calumny. [*Interruption.*] The noble Lord, Lord Trimble, is known for his acerbity on these matters. I have been going for six minutes; when did we last take six minutes on a filibuster? In my main speech earlier in the day I was less than 10 minutes whereas the noble and learned Lord, Lord Mackay, rambled on for nearly 30 minutes. He was the one doing the filibustering, not me.

Foulkes's use of the word calumny gets a response from the whole chamber.

John gave a brief history of the evolution of the stage direction in parliamentary reporting and made various international comparisons.

Here is an example from the Commons during the 1844 state of Ireland debates:

> Mr Ross: Sir, I have heard much vaunting language about the victory just gained over the conspirators. [At this moment the hon. Member was interrupted by Mr. O'Connell entering the House, and by his entrance haling been welcomed with cheers by the Opposition. When die cheering had ceased, he proceeded]: Let the House judge by the reception which the head conspirator has just met, whether there be much cause for triumph. You may put that man in gaol—but what will you gain? What security will that afford for the preservation of peace in Ireland. Suppose Louis Philippe were to declare war 'Cries of "Oh! oh!" from the Ministerial Side of the House.]: Would it not be acknowledged to be unwise thus to have alienated the affections of a people so well able to contribute to our defence? Gentlemen may cry "Oh! oh!" but I have a right to treat this as a ffreat political question—and to take into account all possible chances—and I tell you, your Irish policy is fraught with danger. Sir, the unhappy change I have spoken of, is not the consequence of levity and fickleness of disposition. (15/2/1844, col. 929.)¶

[2] Simon used many more examples than I've been able to include here.

And from the Lords the same year:

- → In a speech by the Marquess of Normanby:¶

[Here the Lord Chancellor re-entered the House, and took his seat on the Woolsack amidst a little confusion, which rendered the noble Marquess inaudible. After a short pause the noble Marquess continued with much emphasis].—¶

[Cries of 'No, no!" 'Yes, yes!" from both sides of the House.] I waited patiently until I found that no one else rose to speak, and the noble puke opposite will bear me witness that I have evinced no desire to intrude upon your Lordships. Yet now, when I rise under these circumstances to reply, I hear, "How can I get in a word now?" Why, I tell the noble Lord that he cannot—I say he cannot speak after me. *[Cries of 'Yes, yes!" and some confusion.]* If the noble Lord does so, I say it is contrary to all order and all precedent. *['Hear, hear," and 'No, no.']*¶

- → In Lord Monteagle's speech:¶

- → *['Hear," from the Duke of Wellington.]*¶

- → *[The Earl of Haddington was understood to say that it was never intended to do so.]* He was obliged to the noble Earl; but certainly he was rather surprised to hear the admission.¶

- → Lord Campbell: "yet my noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack has not opened his mouth. He has spoken neither by himself nor by his counsel. *[Loud laughter, arising from the circumstance that Lord Brougbum was sitting on the Woolsack and conversing with the Lord •-- Chancellor at the time.]*¶

As John says, the reporting style is to use "loose, subjective and imprecise stage directions".

In the 19th century, in the *Mirror of Parliament*—one of Hansard's competitors, which ran from 1828 to 1843—there was less evidence of the reporter.

In the 20th century, Hansard moved towards a much tighter style of reporting. John talked about the subjectivity of early official reports compared to the objectivity of today's Hansard, and speculated about the theory of meaning, and Hansard's Anglo-Saxon approach to words. In France, for example, where stage directions are still included in the official report, the objective is to help the reader, whereas at Westminster the approach is dictated by parliamentary rules.

John also gave examples from around the world, including video clips of interruptions to parliamentary proceedings in the Dutch, Spanish, Indian and French Parliaments. In the Spanish Parliament, when the chamber was invaded by 200 officers of the Guardia Civil in a coup d'état, cameras managed to record half an hour of events. John told us about the blog "parliamentfights", which provides clips of brawls in Parliaments around the world. There should be something for everyone there—it's worth a look at the categories of fight, which include "Running like mad" and "Using chairs and furniture".

Here—pour votre amusement—are some examples of stage directions used in France:

"M. le secretaire d'Etat manifeste qu'il en doute"
"Mme le ministre le confirme d'un sourire"
"M. Descours Desacres approuve vivement"
"M. Schwint marque quelque etonnement"
"M. le secretaire d'Etat rit ironiquement"
"Sourires entendus"

Finally, we were asked to consider whether interruptions were encouraged by reporting on them. On the other hand, by reducing newsworthy events to "—[Interruption.]", are we taking a political stance? These days, it's easy to find out, via the media—social or otherwise—what happened in Parliament. Might we no longer be considered the authority on what happened in Parliament? Now that proceedings are so easily and speedily accessible, do we risk accusations of over-zealous

editing? Or is our role not so much to report what happened as to report what was relevant to the debate? Do we need to find a balance and, if so, how?

I thought I'd finish with an example from my own experience. On 6 April 2000, I was reporting First Minister's question time. The late Sam Galbraith MSP, who at the time was The Minister for Children and Education, had a coughing fit during the late[3] David McLetchie's question. His comment, which I've highlighted in the extract below, would, to the reader, have appeared slightly callous. I asked one of the sub-editors what to do and he suggested adding the words, "who I see is now coughing". However, this was picked up on by one of the newspapers, and there was an accusation that the official report had been nobbled by the Conservatives. Karen Gillon's point of order might have obviated the need for us to add anything; on the other hand, it could be argued that it made it more important to provide some context. I'll leave you to decide whether we should have left what McLetchie said alone.

"**David McLetchie:** Of course, the direct funding of schools is welcomed on these benches. The very fact that the First Minister is contemplating that measure, in line with Gordon Brown's announcement, is a massive vote of no confidence in the management of schools by Labour local authorities. What he is in effect doing is introducing partial direct grant funding of schools in Scotland, similar to the manner in which St Mary's Episcopal Primary School in Dunblane and Jordanhill are currently fully funded. Why will the First Minister not go the whole hog and extend the benefits of full direct grant funding to all schools? Instead, he is perversely using the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Bill—if Mr Galbraith, who I see is now coughing, survives long enough to see it through—to force an excellent school—

Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab): Point of order, Presiding Officer. For members to make statements about other members' health in the chamber is totally out of order. You need to take charge of the chamber and Mr McLetchie's ungentlemanly conduct."—[*Official Report, Scottish Parliament*, 6 April 2000; c 1455-6.]

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[3] There are a lot of "lates" in this example, I'm sad to say.

Session 3 –
Voice Recognition in Tynwald and the Branches –
A presentation *by the Tynwald Hansard Team*
[Chaired by Tynwald and reported by House of Commons]

The Tynwald team took the delegates on a tour of the Chambers, focusing on the Hansard systems and technology used. It started in the House of Keys, the lower branch of the Tynwald. Catherine Groom (CG) explained how the House of Keys worked and how the Members were seated. Deborah Smith (DS) gave a summary of the usual order of business and explained that she was the one who usually carried out the Hansard recording in the House of Keys. Audio was recorded via the voice recognition system, with a digital recorder as back-up, and the audio was streamed live on the Tynwald website with a listen again facility. She also operated a Kindle tablet during the sitting to send out tweets, which also appeared on the listen live web page.

The group moved on to the Legislative Council Chamber, where the upper branch of Tynwald sits. Pat Blackburn (PB) summarised the usual order of business and showed as where she sat to operate the voice technician system and the backup digital recorder. She also sends out real-time tweets from the Chamber.

Lottie Ray (LR) explained that the Chamber was also used for oral evidence hearings for Select and Standing Committees. Extra microphones were used to record the hearings for Hansard and the team shared recording responsibilities, as committees can be held any time outside the main sittings of Tynwald and its branches. Voice recognition is used to record public oral evidence, which is also available live and in listen again format. Occasionally, Hansard records private meetings and a formal transcript is created that remains confidential to the Committee.

Delegates were then led to the Tynwald Chamber, where Ellen Callister (EC) explained how both Branches met in the Chamber once a month. Deborah Pilkington (DP) talked delegates through the layout on the Hansard PC. Every Member would be asked to sit in the President's chair at the beginning of their term of office and read a text to create a voice profile, which was then linked to a label on the seating plan. LR explained that delegates' names had been added to the seating plan and each had been allocated a generic voice profile, which is how Tynwald Hansard deals with unknown witnesses. CG described how DS would use the name label to tell the computer which voice profile to use and the speech would be queued for automatic transcription. Delegates were shown the queue and how the transcription system worked. PB and DP explained a little more about how Tynwald works and where the various press and officials sat. EC then asked for questions from the floor, which would be transcribed using the Hansard system.

After the question and answer session, the delegates returned to the conference room for a presentation on reporting the Tynwald. EC explained how unedited "utterances" were streamed directly to editors along with the video while sittings took place. Both the audio and the transcript are time stamped and the transcript can be locked for editing to prevent duplication of work. The "Create transcript" button could then be used to produce a plain text file with time stamps, for use in allocating work and editing the audio, and an RTF file for use in producing an edited *Hansard* transcript. The transcripts produced from the digital audio vary in accuracy from 90% to virtually zero, in which case the editors usually delete the text and re-type it. EC explained the various factors that could improve or worsen the quality of the transcript.

When EC took over as Head of *Hansard* in 2013, she began to ask where to go next with VR. The Tynwald staff take on work on behalf of Gibraltar, Guernsey and Alderney and it was felt that the experience could feed back into work at home. For example, Express Scribe and foot pedals had first been used to transcribe the Gibraltar work. RSI problems in the team had also led to all staff being given access to Dragon Naturally Speaking from Nuance. The options available for Tynwald editing

were to continue with the VR transcript, to revoice turns with Dragon, to type the work manually while using a footpedal and to use the other tools offered by Word 2010. The editing team found that a combination gave the best results. EC then talked delegates through the process of producing rolling *Hansard* for accessibility on the web as well as the use of the website.

In the future, the Tynwald team need to replace old and obsolete equipment and to improve delivery times and efficiency while reducing their budgets. They want to improve the accuracy of the transcription by rebuilding the VR dictionary and offering voice profile training. There are also options to improve the search facility and formatting options when producing the work.

In conclusion, the experience in the Isle of Man suggests that VR is not a complete solution for producing an official report but it can be used as a powerful tool as part of a more complex process. They plan to improve the software as the original company is in liquidation. They are always looking to innovate and changing approaches have led to their being able to produce Question Time by the end of the sitting day by splitting the transcript into 10-minute chunks.

Delegates then shared our experiences of using VR in the various legislatures. Revoicing is often used in larger legislatures as the number of members makes building voice profiles prohibitive, so it was helpful to be able to discuss the challenges we face in making it work to suit our needs.

Session 4 –
A Lesson in Manx
[Chaired by Patrick O'Hanlon Northern Ireland Assembly and reported by Oireachtas]

The final session of the day was a lesson in Manx given by Mr. Adrian Cain, Manx language development officer, Culture Vannin, followed by a question and answer session.

Led by Adrian, the delegates repeated short phrases and sentences in Manx until they mastered their pronunciation to his satisfaction. Then they were prompted by him to construct a few new sentences from those they had learned, with the help of a few simple additional words and phrases. The lesson was all about pronunciation and repetition, and was good fun. It lasted 20 minutes by which time our pronunciation was *mie dy liooar* or good enough.

Beginning the question and answer session, **Ms Bronagh Allison (NIA)** asked was there much connection between Manx language development and Celtic language development elsewhere. Mr. Cain said there was not much knowledge elsewhere of Manx. Ms Allison mentioned that her Celtic language studies at Queen's University included Manx but Mr. Cain said they were not interested in academia. When Bronagh referred to a Manx poem about a dog and the Manx translation of the Bible she studied at Queen's, Mr. Cain emphasised the strong community-based learning on the Isle of Man.

Mr. Craig Stephenson (NAW) asked the percentage of population who are Manx speaking. Mr. Cain told the symposium the census did not provide such data. He spoke of how the bilingual street signs raised public awareness. Craig asked whether Manx language use was growing and Adrian confirmed it was, citing, for example, teenagers to whom he had never spoken in English.

Ms Tracy Boyle (SP) asked where one would hear Manx spoken. Mr. Cain replied that one would not hear it spoken on the streets of Douglas, but it was in use and visible on Twitter and Facebook, and the Manx App had registered 5,000 downloads.

Mr. Alex Newton (HoC) asked were there those who saw investment in Manx as a waste of resources. Mr. Cain said there were and in referring to the TT races signage, acknowledged there were naysayers.

Mr. Shôn Williams (NAW) asked of the state of Manx literature. Mr. Cain said there were good Manx writers. He highlighted translations of the children's story "The Gruffalo" and "Murder on the Orient Express", and the support of writers such as Mr. Allan Guthrie of Scotland.

When **Mr. Patrick O'Hanlon (NIA)** asked did the language receive funding, Mr. Cain explained that the Isle of Man was in neither the United Kingdom nor the European Union and therefore did not receive funding from them.

Mr. Carl Lombard (Oir) asked was there a Manx body of standards. Mr. Cain replied that there was *Coonceil ny Gaelgey*, the Manx Gaelic Advisory Council. Adrian agreed with Carl that Manx was very similar to Irish.

Ms Anna Gruffudd (NAW) asked what caused the decline in the Manx language. Mr. Cain said it was due to emigration, mainly to the United States, mass tourism and negative attitudes, but that there was a new generation of Manx speakers.

Ms Meinir Harris (NAW) asked of older literature. Mr. Cain cited the translation in the 18th century of the Bible and religious hymns. **Mr. Shôn Williams (NAW)** asked was there a standardised dialect and Mr. Cain said there was. He said that for a population of 30,000, the Bible translation was remarkable. He added that *Bunscoill Ghaelgagh* should not have happened, but there was a new and growing cohort of Manx language speakers and musicians.

The chairman, **Mr. O'Hanlon (NIA)**, thanked Adrian

Symposium Supper

Hosted by the Clerk of Tynwald and his wife, Roger & Sarah Phillips at their home in Bride in the north of the Isle of Man, it was generally agreed that this event was a real highlight.

Session 5 –
Technology in a small parliament –
Presentation by Jo Corkish, Head of Tynwald Chamber and Information Service (followed by Q&A session)
[Chaired by Gibraltar Parliament and reported by National Assembly for Wales]

Joann has 21 staff working in six teams, supporting 35 Members.

There are six full-time equivalents working in Chamber and Information Services – known as 'the team that does everything else' i.e. anything that is not clerking or Hansard.

This includes a parliamentary and legal library, which has been merged with that of the Law Society. The library is open 9 to 5 and the public can and do ask for anything—mostly directions! Two hours a week are designated for pre-booked and school tours, led by internal staff. There is also a gift shop and a small exhibition space.

Joann's role is managing the information that comes in and what goes out, what to keep and what to discard, and the last five years has been an ongoing review of how the information that they do keep can be shared better.

2010 saw the first hyperlinked order paper, and other advancements include reducing the annual printing volume by 0.5 million papers, a more stable and cost-effective change from Mac to PC and changing the IT infrastructure.

Members are still on a separate IT system, as most have Government posts and are therefore on a Government network. This can sometimes pose difficulties for accessing committee information.

SharePoint 3.0 has been introduced for use by all administration staff, which has been helpful for sharing information internally, and the website is SharePoint 10. Tynwald have their own licence and are not tied to any corporate package. Tynwald Hansard is searchable from 1887 onwards and there are filter option on the type of content that can be searched for. It can also search within a topic or area and a more refined search tool has been available since 2008 e.g. it can search per Member name. Previously, there was no official repository of secondary legislation, but this has now been scanned and made text-searchable.

Members now have iPads, using the BoardPads app.

Since January 2014 a 'live and listen again' system has been introduced. A voice recognition system in the Chamber captures audio which is streamlined onto the web – the sound is split up by item.

The Hansard team tweet when each item in a public meeting has started – it informs the public of where the sitting currently is, question numbers, and who is giving evidence in committee procedures. This represents another free way to deliver the service.

A bespoke e-voting system has been introduced in the Chamber since March 2014 that produces different outputs of votes, one of which is ready to be pasted into Hansard.

Session 6 –
Open Data –
Presentation by Ben Woodhams, House of Lords (followed by Q&A session)
  [Chaired by Scottish Parliament and reported by House of Commons]

The presentation began with a short film on "How to Make a Law" and challenged the proposition, "technology is boring".

The question was posed: "'Open data' sounds like a good thing—why?" On camera, Ben interviewed Tom Steinberg from mySociety "an international non-profit group that exists to build and popularise digital tools that give power over institutions", a member of the House of Commons IT staff and Jeni Tennison of the Open Data Institute, run "by people using computers" to find the answer. Also interviewed, among others, were Lord Knight of Weymouth, formerly MP Jim Knight, and Chi Onwurah MP. Both said that they received a huge amount of data, which can be a problem. They agreed that the more widely available the data, the better, but they felt that they needed to tailor data to their needs. The Open Government Licence for public sector information was discussed.

The participants in the film believed that the benefits of open data included accountability and transparency—and being seen to be transparent—and that more people accessing data could improve engagement.

The Parliament website was discussed. Lord Knight said that Parliament was not agile. It was agreed that more refinement and efficiency was needed because in big organisations such as Government, Parliament and the NHS, one part doesn't know what the other part is doing. Not collecting the same data twice would help. Improving searchability, reducing unpredictability and increasing reach were also recommended.

For Parliament, it was suggested that filters could be added, and it was pointed out that formats were not the best. Tom Steinberg said that there was a need to produce data differently. It was underlined that those working on the structure of producing parliamentary data should ally themselves with what Parliament wants. It was believed that the technical barriers were low, but that there was some fear. Lord Knight said that there would always be people who were suspicious of openness. Chi Onwurah mentioned the concept of "need to know". She hoped that Parliament would embrace openness. It was said that pressure is simply exerted differently if conversations happen in private.

People also feared errors—all datasets have errors—and the reputational risk involved. Tom Steinberg said that this was bad because misinterpretation of what goes on in Parliament already happens. Accurate information was vital, but producing it as open data could mean that people did novel and surprising things in different formats. However, it was accepted that change is challenging.

Overcoming technical hurdles as well as psychological barriers was discussed. For example, it was asked why the parliamentary iPads had no Division bell app. It was said that Parliament has a long way to go on producing documents and is definitely not ahead of the curve. The best use is not made of data. It was suggested that Bills could be produced in open data format; that, "If we have it, put it out there", but that there were priorities.

Some participants in the film said that the public had an intrinsic right to parliamentary data; that Parliament was of the people for the people and that there was therefore a duty to make data available. An "open Parliament licence" was discussed. Lord Knight said that technology had redefined the role of parliamentarians, and also admitted to being nerdy about reading *Hansard*! Tom Steinberg believes that the legitimacy of Parliament is connected to the digital challenge and that it was good that Parliament was taking open data seriously.

The technical community did not regard themselves as being ahead of the curve, but "on the curve". It was not smug, but frustrated.

Why does *Hansard* care? Is open data just an IT issue? We create data, even when we're just setting up a Member. Should we take responsibility for raising awareness? It was pointed out that XML was a good tool: not perfect but better than flat PDFs with no information. Two suggestions were made: we could build systems from scratch so that, for example, metadata were embedded in clauses and amendments printed in *Hansard.* This would be difficult and expensive. Alternatively, we could release data that we already have. Simply doing turns in HRS creates data. Details about Members could be included. This would be low cost. However, there were constraints on resources and we should consider who was best at using data. It was suggested that our job was simply to produce *Hansard* and put it out. That was as far as we should go. After discussion, there was general agreement about this.

A case was made for apps that let you look at *Hansard*. It was said that we don't need a business case for the "positivity" of open data and that people in Wales, for example, Sam Knight of MySenedd, were already doing that.

The morning ended with a presentation about Pepper *v.* Hart, the 1992 ruling that provided that a judge could base an interpretation of the law on what a Minister said at the Dispatch Box, and how this had affected *Hansard* reporting.

Session 7 –
Networking afternoon, St John's and Peel

Delegates were able to spend time in conversation with colleagues while enjoying a coach visit to the west of the Isle of Man, taking in the sights of Tynwald Hill in St John's, and Peel Castle and the House of Mannanan in Peel.

<u>**Wednesday, 30th July 2014**</u>

Session 8 –
Perspectives from a Hansard 'customer' –
Presentation by Jonathan King, Deputy Clerk of Tynwald
[Chaired by States of Guernsey and reported by House of Lords]

Jonathan King gave a PowerPoint presentation, looking at Hansard from the wider perspective of its relevance and use. He explored questions such as what the legislature meant when making its decisions; the historical record; actions members or ministers promise to take in the Chamber and then need to follow up in Hansard; the use of Hansard by Committee Clerks; and the record of who said what in debates and questions.

Session 9 –
Futures Discussion
[Chaired by the National Assembly for Wales and reported by Tynwald]

Mair Parry Jones opened the discussion with a brief recap of the Futures Forum which NAW had hosted in October/November 2013, based on an original idea from Susan Mansfield of the Scottish Parliament. It was felt better to discuss and prepare for the development and inclusion of Information Technology, since it would inevitably be imposed on the Official Report soon anyway.

Delegates watched a video clip of part of the presentation given by the Head of IT at the National Assembly for Wales, Dave Tosh, at that Futures Forum, entitled "RIP – ROP". [The entire Session 2 video Gweithle Digidol y Dyfodol/The Digital Workplace of the Future can be seen here on YouTube.] This was intended to be a provocative review of the Record of Proceedings in its traditional form, to engender discussion on the way technology could be used to enhance Hansard production processes and final publication.

Three questions were posed: (1) whether Hansard should be more engaged with the wider public, particularly through provision of Open Data; (2) what types of innovation affecting Hansard might be available in the near future; and (3) what general learning points could be gained from such discussion of IT? The point was made that people should be driving IT forward, rather than IT driving what people do.

Dave Tosh had suggested in the video that the traditional method of Hansard production involves a costly, labour-intensive and time-consuming process with people carrying out the audio recording, transcribing text, translation where necessary, editing and publishing the finished report. Potentially IT could transform this process to digitally record the audio, transcribe text using speech recognition software and machine translation software to produce the translation. People could then edit at this stage, before final publication to the website, thereby increasing efficiency and reducing the cost and labour throughout the process.

After viewing the video clip, delegates split up into five smaller groups in separate rooms to discuss these issues further, to identify particular points learned or highlighted throughout the symposium. Groups were given about half an hour, before returning to the Barrool Suite to feed back on their discussions.

To summarise the main points, Open Data and voice recognition software appeared to be main areas for consideration by the groups, with a cautious approach to both. It was generally agreed that whatever technology is employed to aid production or make data more accessible to the wider audience, the machine can never completely replace the human element. It would be undemocratic

to create a system which suited only one particularly vocal group within the community, therefore it was felt important not to be unduly swayed in one direction to the exclusion of others.

Changing systems for real reasons is fine, but not just for change's sake. It is important to remember the importance of Hansard and its value as a historical record, which is quite different from the instant but transitory information distributed on social media. Highly trained and skilled staff cannot be simply replaced by machines. It is therefore important that as software or apps are being developed, we work with the developers to ensure that they enhance and improve our jobs.

There was some discussion on 'how verbatim is verbatim?' and the differing levels of editing in different jurisdictions. Comment was made on the earlier presentation on the perspectives of a Hansard 'customer' and the need to remember we do not operate in a vacuum. It was also pointed out that smaller assemblies probably have an advantage over larger ones in being able to change and adapt more easily

Review of Symposium and close
[Chaired by House of Lords and reported by House of Commons]

Hywel Evans opened the discussion by asking what delegates felt had been the highlights of the conference. He felt that it been a terrific few days and it had been great to meet so many new people and to hear about how different Parliaments work and how they cope with new technologies.

Ben said that he would take away a more realistic perspective on VR. He had been at a BIPRA conference many years before in Cardiff where VR had been described as the future. But VR is not what people thought it would be. It is great at what it does but it is limited. He confessed to being slightly disappointed. He had thought that Tynwald had it all wrapped up. Impressive as the Tynwald system is, it is a bit like the Lords' scanner and not a panacea.

Alex felt that there had not been enough time to debate professional issues such as what kind of reporting we do and the problems we have with technology. It is always helpful to discuss those matters with fellow professionals who you do not meet every day in the office.

There was general agreement that it was good to hear from parliamentary colleagues and that it was easier to talk openly to people who do broadly the same job. Everyone found that the discussions on the effect of technology on our work had been useful.

It was felt that a realistic perspective had been brought to voice recognition: it is a tool with great potential, but currently limited and perhaps not quite what people had expected it to be; it will not replace us in the short or medium term. It was agreed that this was a good message.

It was said that perhaps there had not been enough time to discuss professional issues; talking about what we do. It is always useful to have such discussions with fellow professionals. It was suggested that perhaps that could be a topic for the first day next time and that we could then build on it throughout the conference. It was also underlined that, similar as our jobs are, they are different and that it was good to discuss that, too. Learning about how people train to do the job was another suggested topic. It was stressed that it was also useful to interact with people who don't know what we do.

It was asked whether there was a danger of the conference becoming a bit too cosy, and whether we should invite a challenging speaker to the next BIPRA.

There was general agreement that the group discussions had been very helpful. When it was suggested that having a group discussion on the first day would have been preferable, Ellen explained that she thought it was better to wait until the ice was broken and there was more to talk about. Clare Maddox said she found it very useful to talk to people who understand the job, to get

feedback and compare notes with other legislatures. It is helpful to get a balanced perspective. Colin Duncan pointed out that as similar as our jobs might seem, they can be completely different. He was convinced that VR would not work in Northern Ireland, which for him was a good message to take back home.

Hywel was interested in the different relationships the various legislatures have with their Members. For example, some are wary about sending for notes but they do it all the time in the Lords.

Mair suggested inviting a challenging speaker to the next BIPRA. As we tend to be in general agreement it might be a good idea to have someone with the opposite view, although they might have to be escorted out of the building afterwards. Ellen wondered whether there was enough to have a session at a future conference on our relations with Members and on how we can educate them so that we get as much help and information from them as possible. It would be a good idea to involve a clerk. "Relationships with Members" was suggested as a topic for the next conference.

Everyone was urged to watch the "Futures Forum" video that Mair would send, featuring Sam Knight of MySenedd and to consider whether people were looking for something, through the use of technology, that was unachievable.

Simon described a Lords away day where a clerk gave a talk. He did not want to tell them anything but simply wanted the gossip from Hansard. When it was suggested that a Member be invited to BIPRA, Alex recommended inviting an ex-Member as they are a lot cheaper. Simon pointed out the problem for the Lords in that ex-Members are either dead or in prison.

Carl recommended that people look at the report of the Futures Forum which was a very interesting session. Users have different views; we should ask what people want and when they want it. Are we doing it right? Sometimes people seem to want something that is unachievable.

Finally, Hywel said that the session on open data had given people a lot to think about.

He then thanked Ellen and the whole team for doing a fantastic job. Everyone agreed that it had been another thoroughly enjoyable BIPRA conference. Warm and sincere thanks were given on behalf of all delegates to Ellen and her team—Deborah P, Deborah S Catherine, Lottie and Pat—for brilliant hosting. All agreed that they had done a fantastic job and that we had thoroughly enjoyed what for many delegates was their first visit to the Isle of Man.

Ellen then closed the session by thanking everyone for attending. Her team had all enjoyed it and it had been a privilege to host the event.

At Tynwald Hill, St John's – Photo by Paul Dougherty, Tynwald Seneschal