

# Funding the Future

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I watched the [BBC 4 Storyville documentary](#) on the Haut de la Garenne childrens' home scandal in Jersey last night. [The FT has a write up on the issue here.](#)

The documentary was new. What it revealed was a damning picture of an island more concerned with financial services than it was with clear evidence of child abuse, even if there was less certain evidence that children died as a result.

I had no involvement in this story, but knew, and in some cases still know many of those involved in it, at least from the political side. That was because of my intense involvement, with John Christensen (who appeared in the documentary), in challenging the Jersey tax haven, which work was at a peak when this scandal was also happening. More [than 700 links on this blog](#) to Jersey are evidence of that engagement, which saw both of us appear on a regular basis in the Jersey press, and even in person in Jersey at the time.

Frank Walker, who was Jersey's first minister and leading tax haven apologist from 2004 to 2008 came out badly in the documentary. He also happened to own the island's only newspaper. I am not surprised he appeared so slippery on the issue of child abuse. He was as slippery on the issue of tackling tax abuse. Several times he refused to debate that issue with me, including once in the States itself when I was an adviser to a committee of that parliament. Accountability was not Walker's forte. Making excuses for finance was.

The documentary did something else. It highlighted the role of the Crown appointees in this process, and how the facade of democracy is just that, behind which there is a Crown appointed fiefdom intended to protect a select social hierarchy. The damning film of the Crown appointed Bailiff, and so the speaker of the parliament, [Sir Philip Bailhache](#), first closing down comment from Senator Stuart Syvret in that parliament, and then excusing the priority placed on financial services over child protection was well chosen, and appropriate. This was a corruption in priorities that said all that needed to be known about the Jersey that I fought back then, and which continues almost entirely unreformed now.

Jersey was, and is, a rotten place. It is also a beautiful island, a charmed place, and the

community where I have friends. What it really reveals is how corrupting finance is. Money matters more to the Jersey elite than anything else. No questions asked money was once the trade. The tax justice movement's work to tackle tax haven abuse has undoubtedly changed that to some degree. The effort I and others expended was not wasted. But it still remains a secrecy jurisdiction, which I defined at the time as places that intentionally create regulation for the primary benefit and use of those not resident in their geographical domain with that regulation being designed to undermine the legislation or regulation of another jurisdiction and with the secrecy jurisdictions also creating a deliberate, legally backed veil of secrecy that ensures that those from outside the jurisdiction making use of its regulation cannot be identified to be doing so.

Jersey remains a secrecy jurisdiction.

Its democracy remains a sham.

It is still run by a financial services elite who exist to service hot money that would rather not declare its true location.

And as such it remains a blot, in itself, on the UK that shields it, and the Crown that facilitates it.

The need for reform remains. Jersey still exists to undermine the rule of law in other countries. And that is why they still need to stop its abuse, in all its forms and with all its consequences.