

Elve's Rest revisited

On the beautiful coast of Jersey, on Five Mile Rd, L'Etacq Hill in St Ouen, stand the unimpressive ruin of Elves Rest, the home built by my grandparents in 1932. A keen observer will have noticed recently a historical marker now attached to the main part of the ruin. Its purpose is to preserve the memory of a poignant aspect of my family's history, a grave injustice caused by World War II but perpetuated by Jersey's draconian planning regulations.



In 1932, my grand parents Wilfred and May Taylor built “Elves Rest” their main residence and dream home on the beach. In 1936 they moved to England but hoping to return to Jersey, they left their property in the care of real estate agents. During WWII the property was destroyed by the occupying German forces. As soon as travel became possible again after the war, my grandparents visited Jersey only to find out the death of several relatives, the terrible condition of the survivors and the complete destruction of their property.

£450 offered by the Rehabilitation Committee was insufficient to rebuild the house valued in excess of £2000 so my grandparents had to drop their plans to move back to Jersey. With help from Ogier & Le Cornu, their family lawyers, they started a very long effort to rebuild their property. In 1960, very reluctantly, they decided to sell the land but because of new building restrictions in the St Ouen bay area the sale did not go through. Attempts to appeal the decision were unsuccessful. With all their living relatives in Jersey now deceased, Wilfred and May with a heavy heart renounced their

plans to move back to Jersey. From 1965 until 1990, further attempts were made and after their death by my mother Pauline to obtain compensation for this wrong.

The decision to ban the rebuilding of Elves Rest is very difficult to understand given the many structures that have been allowed in the area, such as Jersey Pearl only a few yards on the other side of Route des Laveurs. Jersey, has recognized all victims of World War II except its own citizens who did not have the resources to rebuild their property, destroyed by the occupying forces, thus recognized as an early enabler of Jersey's draconian new planning strategy. Had the War not happened, the home would still be standing and available for my mother and her family!



My mother, Pauline Wersinger, née Taylor, sole survivor of a family with multi-secular roots in Jersey is now living in a retirement home in Brittany. As children, she would tell us wonderful stories about the land of her birth and her ancestors. Pauline is not a distant relative of an owner long departed. She is a living victim of this injustice. A 95 year old widow, she fondly remembers her childhood in Jersey but the love for the country of her birth is mixed with sadness because her property is worthless in an island with a proud history that has become so remarkably prosperous.

A last attempt to reach a just settlement with the States of Jersey was unsuccessful but we were happy that Jersey planning approved our project to erect this memorial. We thus hope to preserve our family's connection to Jersey in a spirit of reconciliation.

Thierry Wersinger is the son of Pauline Wersinger. After an international business career, he retired in South Carolina.



Pauline's childhood. St Ouen 1932-1936

