

**At the States of the Island of Jersey,
in the year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty, the
thirteenth day of July.**

The States, considering that it is very difficult to obtain small change (billon coinage) and that commerce suffers great inconvenience from this, have decided, subject to the sanction of HIS MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY IN COUNCIL, to issue copper coinage, such that there shall be coins representing the thirteenth part of a shilling, others the twenty-sixth part, and others half of the latter — and this up to an amount not exceeding one thousand pounds sterling; and a Committee composed of Philippe de Ste Croix, Esq., Juror of the Venerable Man, François Jeune, Rector of St. Helier, and the Constable of St. Helier, is charged with putting the present Act into execution once it has received Royal Sanction, and with giving a denomination to the said coinage."

Aux Etats de l'île de Jersey

L'an Mil Huit cent quarante le tresieme jour de Juillet

Les Etats, considerant qu'il est tres difficile de se procurer de la monnaie de billon et que le commerce en eprouve de grands inconveniens ont decide, moyennant la sanction de SA TRES EXCELLENTE MAJESTSE EN CONSEIL, d'emettre de la monnaie au cuivre, de maniere qu'il y ait des pieces qui representent la treizieme partie d'un chelin, d'autres la vingt-sixieme et d'autres la motie de ces derniers, et ce a un montant n'excedant pas mille livres sterling; et on charge un Comite compose de Phillipe de Ste Croix, Eer., Jure de Venble Homme, Francois Jeune, Recteur de St. Helier et du Connetable de St. Helier, de mettre le present Acte a execution lorsqu'il aura recu La Sanction Royale, et de donner une denomination a la dite monnaie.

The Reply from the Privy Council

At the Court of Windsor, 11th September 1840

Whereas there was this day read at the Board a report from the Rt. Hon. The Lords of the Committee of Council for the affairs of Jersey and Guernsey dated the 31st ult. in the words following, viz.:

Your Majesty having been pleased by your Order in Council of the 10th August last to refer unto this Committee an Act passed by the States of the Island of Jersey on the 13th of July last for the issue of a Copper Coinage to the amount of £1,000 for the use of the said Island.

Their Lordships, in obedience to Your Majesty's said Order of Reference, this day took the said Act in consideration and do agree humbly to report as their opinion to Your Majesty that it may be advisable for Your Majesty to approve of, and ratify the said Act.

Her Majesty, having taken the said report into consideration, was pleased by and with the advice of her Privy Council to approve of and ratify the said Act, and to order, as it is hereby ordered, that the same (copy of hereof is hereunto annexed) together with this Order be entered upon the register of the Island of Jersey and observed accordingly.

Whereof the Governor, Lieut. Governor, or Commander-in-Chief, Bailiff and Jarats and all other Her Majesty's Officers of the said Island for the time being and all other persons whom it may concern are to take notice and govern themselves accordingly.

signed C. GREVILLE.

Key points of interest of the Act:

The document establishes three coin denominations — **1/13th of a shilling**, **1/26th**, and **1/52nd** of a shilling. Jersey's use of base-13 rather than base-12 coinage was quite unusual and reflected local custom rather than standard British denominations.

The total issue was capped at **£1,000 sterling**, suggesting this was a modest, practical measure to ease day-to-day commerce.

The committee included **François Jeune**, who was Rector of St. Helier and later became a notable figure in Oxford as Master of Pembroke College.

Royal Council approval was required before the Act could take effect, reflecting Jersey's constitutional relationship with the British Crown — self-governing, but subject to Orders in Council.

The **Royal Assent document** that completes the legislative process begun by the Jersey States Act of 13 July 1840. Together, these two documents form a complete pair.

Key observations:

The constitutional process on display is remarkably clear here. The sequence was:

1. The States of Jersey pass the Act (13 July 1840)
2. The Crown refers it to the Privy Council Committee for Jersey & Guernsey (10 August 1840)
3. The Committee considers and recommends approval (31 August 1840)

4. The Order in Council is made at Windsor, giving Royal Sanction (11 September 1840)

The whole process took just under **two months**, which was fairly efficient for the period.

"Her Majesty" is of course **Queen Victoria**, who had been on the throne only since 1837. The use of *Her* rather than *His* Majesty confirms the date — notably the Jersey Act itself had incorrectly used "*Sa Très Excellente Majesté*" in a gender-neutral construction, perhaps reflecting some drafting uncertainty at a time when a reigning queen was still a novelty.

C. Greville who signed the document was **Charles Greville**, the famous diarist and long-serving Clerk of the Privy Council — a man whose private memoirs remain one of the most candid insider accounts of early Victorian political life.

The legal effect was to direct the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Bailiff, and Jurats to register the Act and enforce it — the standard mechanism by which Orders in Council became binding law in the Crown Dependencies.

Analysis and Commentary: The Jersey Copper Coinage Documents of 1840

The Two Documents as a Constitutional Pair

These documents are a remarkably complete survival of a specific constitutional process — the exercise of Jersey's internal self-governance subject to Crown oversight. Read together, they illustrate the precise legal relationship between a Crown Dependency and Westminster at a moment when that relationship was well-established but had never been codified in a single instrument. Jersey was not part of the United Kingdom, was not represented in Parliament, yet was subject to the royal prerogative exercised through the Privy Council. These documents are a working example of that arrangement in action.

The Monetary Problem

The immediate cause of the legislation was practical and pressing. Jersey in 1840 was suffering from a **shortage of small change**. This was not unusual — the problem of inadequate small denomination coinage plagued many economies throughout the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In mainland Britain it had been severe enough during the Industrial Revolution to prompt the widespread private issue of so-called "trade tokens" by manufacturers and merchants, simply to enable wage payments and small transactions.

Jersey's situation was complicated by its ambiguous monetary position. The island used **pounds sterling** as its unit of account but had its own traditional system of *sous* and *deniers*, and the relationship between local custom and British coinage was never entirely clean. The difficulty in obtaining *monnaie de billon* — base metal small coinage — would have been acutely felt in everyday commerce, markets, and wage-paying.

The Denominations: A Peculiarity Worth Examining

The decision to issue coins representing **1/13th, 1/26th, and 1/52nd of a shilling** strikes any modern reader immediately. These are deeply unusual fractions. Why base-13?

This was not an eccentricity. Jersey had a long-established local accounting tradition in which **12 Jersey pence made 13 English pence**, a legacy of the island's Norman heritage and centuries of semi-independent commercial practice. The *sou* had its own value distinct from the English penny, and the base-13 relationship between local and sterling denominations was simply the numerical reality of how the two systems intersected. The coins being authorized were thus not odd in Jersey terms — they were a rational expression of the local monetary tradition rendered in copper.

This is historically significant because it represents one of the last formal institutionalizations of Jersey's pre-decimal monetary distinctiveness. The island would not fully decimalize until **1971**, alongside the United Kingdom.

The Cap of £1,000 Sterling

The limitation of the total issue to **one thousand pounds sterling** is telling in several respects. It was a modest sum — enough to provide circulating small change without creating inflationary pressure or threatening confidence in the currency. It also reflects the Privy Council's likely comfort threshold: a small, bound experiment in local coinage was easier to sanction than an open-ended monetary authority. The cap served as both a practical and a political reassurance.

The Committee and Its Members

The three men charged with execution are worth examining individually.

Philippe de Ste Croix as a Juré-Justicier (Juror) represented the ancient judicial-administrative establishment of the island. The Jurats of the Royal Court were central figures in Jersey governance — not merely judges but holders of a constitutional office with deep medieval roots.

François Jeune, Rector of St. Helier, is the most historically notable figure named. He was at this point a prominent Jersey clergyman, but he would go on to become **Master of Pembroke College, Oxford** (1843) and eventually **Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University**. His presence on this committee reflects both the established church's role in Jersey civic life and the relatively small, interconnected nature of the island's governing class.

The Constable of St. Helier represented the parish, the fundamental unit of Jersey administration. The Constables were — and remain — powerful local figures, and including the Constable of the island's principal town was a natural choice for a measure primarily affecting commercial life.

The committee's composition was therefore carefully balanced: the judiciary, the church, and the parish — the three pillars of traditional Jersey governance.

The Royal Assent Document: Constitutional Mechanics

The Privy Council document of 11 September 1840 is a model of the Order in Council procedure and rewards close reading.

The **layered structure** is notable. The Order does not simply announce approval — it recites the entire chain of reference: the States Act, the referral Order of 10 August, the Committee's report of 31 August, and then the Queen's pleasure taken *by and with the advice of her Privy Council*. This formulaic completeness was not mere verbosity. It was a legal record establishing the unbroken chain of authority, protecting the Act's validity against any future challenge.

The requirement that the Order be **entered upon the register of the Island** was the mechanism of reception into Jersey law. Until registered, the Order had no local force. This registration requirement reflected Jersey's constitutional position — Crown Orders did not automatically override local law but had to pass through the island's own institutional processes.

The direction to "**govern themselves accordingly**" addressed to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Bailiff, Jurats, and "all other persons" was standard but meaningful — it placed personal responsibility on named officeholders for compliance and enforcement.

Charles Greville's Signature

The document is signed by **Charles Cavendish Fulke Greville** (1794–1865), Clerk of the Privy Council from 1821 to 1859. He is today remembered primarily for his *Memoirs* — a multi-volume diary covering the reigns of George IV, William IV, and Victoria, considered one of the most

valuable insider accounts of early 19th century British political life. He was famously indiscreet, sharp-tongued, and well-connected.

The signature is a reminder that behind these formulaic constitutional documents were real individuals embedded in the political culture of the time. Greville would have signed dozens of such Orders in Council every year — routine business to him, but for Jersey a significant moment of monetary and constitutional history.

The Gender Question

One small but intriguing detail: the Jersey States Act of July 1840 refers to "*Sa Très Excellente Majesté EN CONSEIL*" — a construction that is grammatically feminine in French (*Sa* rather than *Son*) and therefore correctly reflects Queen Victoria. However the phrasing is sufficiently formal and archaic that it may simply be standard formula rather than a conscious gender adjustment. Victoria had acceded in 1837, and by 1840 her style was well established, but the drafters of Jersey Acts in French were working within a formulaic tradition that predated a reigning queen and may have required deliberate updating.

Broader Significance

These two documents, modest in subject matter, are a window onto several larger themes:

- The **resilience of Jersey's constitutional distinctiveness** within the British framework, with its own legislative assembly, its own monetary traditions, and its own administrative structures
- The **smoothly functioning Privy Council machinery** for managing the Crown Dependencies, operating with efficiency and procedural care

- The **transitional monetary moment** of the early Victorian period, when the rationalization of British and local coinage systems had begun but was far from complete
- The **living use of French** as a language of Jersey governance — these were not historical curiosities but working legal documents in a language that would remain official in Jersey for generations

For a numismatist, a constitutional historian, or a student of Jersey's history, these documents are primary sources of real quality.