

Speech by John Passmore Edwards

One hundred and fifteen years ago this Institute was opened by my wife. While in Hayle, I was asked by some, why do you build Institutes like this? *Cui Bono?* [Those who know me perhaps know of my fondness for peppering my addresses with quotes and foreign phrases.]

Cui Bono means 'who benefits'. The answer then, and the answer still, is: Everyone! Not just the working man, but by exporting our skills and products, we benefit the whole country and need not be afraid to compete with 'Yankees and Germans'.

By diligent hard work [and a bit of good luck], I had become the custodian of a certain number of gold sovereigns which came mostly from the labour of working-men. My desire was that these sovereigns, or most of them, should flow back to the fount from whence they came.

"Knowledge without tools, or tools without knowledge are of little use." So it was the mission of this Institute to diffuse practical knowledge by practical means and thus improve the lot of the working man. Oh, and the working woman! I was way ahead of my time in treating women equally and my Institute had toilets for both men and women long before it was normal to do so.

I also had my Institute built of Cornish granite – to guarantee it would last for many years - as it so obviously has. And I am delighted to have been reincarnated to see how this fine building is continuing to serve the community for which it was built.

Now, I am sure you are all eagerly waiting to celebrate this occasion with food and drink so I must briefly admonish the members of the Teetotal Movement - as I said well over a century ago.

“If you get Londoners down here, you must give them every liberty you possibly can. If they want to be teetotallers let them be teetotallers; if they want to drink champagne let them drink champagne ... If you will not give them that freedom here they, will go elsewhere.”

Now, to quote my dear wife as she said in 1896, “I have great pleasure in declaring this Institute open!”