

In May 1971, Sir Geoffrey Howe, then addressed the House of Commons as the Solicitor-General for England and Wales, addressed the Second Reading Committee of the House of Commons on the Land Registration and Land Charges Bill: over forty years ago. He stated<sup>1</sup>: ***"A trade has grown up in recent years in order to please tourists mainly from North America and sometimes to please those North Americans who still live over there, whereby they are able to purchase a 'square foot of Old England' for a comparatively modest sum<sup>2</sup>. This trade has been developing over the last four or five years, and some enterprising people have been disposing of these square feet of old England for a price which seems to range between about 4 dollars and 10 dollars per square foot."*** He had little problem praised the potential benefits of selling souvenir plots for fundraising in principle with this development and mused that "[o]n a modest scale, I suppose the following terms ***"it helps the balance of payments and it gladdens the hearts of our continental cousins and enables them to obtain a splendidly medieval looking deed of title, which, no doubt, they display at some appropriate place in their homes."*** He did have a concern, however, brought out the lighthearted nature of the sale by explaining that people might use their plots for "pole squatting" or flying an American flag. However he also expressed concerns about the burden that registering these titles would impose on the Land Registry. He anticipated more than 1 million that many millions of plots would might be sold and it would require a large amount of resources to register all these plots. registering them might in turn impose a considerable burden on the registration process.

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<sup>1</sup> Hansard: HC Debate 19 May 1971, cols 1466-1467, available at <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1971/may/19/land-registration-and-land-charges-bill>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* col 1467.