QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

SPRING 2022 EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Spring edition of our newsletter. It is great to see the enthusiasm which has risen out of the embers of the 2022 QICJ Conference at Ammerdown. It feels like we are part of a growing movement and the two conference reports which are included here, make me regret further that I was unable to attend this year. But it certainly sounds like it was both challenging and enriching.

This particular issue of the Quakers in Criminal Justice Newsletter is a little different, in that many of the articles were longer than our usual submissions. Because of this I had to edit a little to make them fit the 24 page space available, but I hope that you enjoy reading the submissions as much as I did.

A big thank you goes out once again to those who took time to draft something for inclusion. It seems that each issue expands upon the conversations we are currently having within the sector. This time we continue our consideration of the failings of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) a subject which a writer in our last issue spoke so eloquently about from lived experience.

In a changing BYM environment there is further consideration of our future role as a Society within the Criminal Justice System in the very challenging “Nurturing Our Witness” article. While reading the “Elderly in Prison” piece I was reminded of the powerful performance by the Journeymen Theatre Company - “Back Door Parole” at a past QICJ conference, which shed light on the subject of an ageing prison population.

The final article “Racial Discrimination and Beyond” paints a damning statistical picture of the disparity in our society and the links to criminal behaviours and incarceration.

Once again I would invite you all to submit articles for the Summer edition. I’ve said it before but the production of this newsletter isn’t possible without the generosity and efforts of our members and it is the richness of the experiences of our membership which makes being part of this community so rewarding.



Jonathan Lamb Editor

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DEAR QICJ



Dear QICJ

After years of dedicated service our present treasurer is laying down his office. QICJ Nominations committee is seeking applications for this exciting post from members with experience in the area of handling income and expenditure.

Fringe benefits are limited if any, the hours of dedication will be rewarded in heaven! Names please to the convenor of QICJ Nominations, Simon Ewart simonewart@gmail.com or Skewjack Barn, St Levan, penzance, Cornwall. TR19 6NB.

Many thanks

Simon

A CALL FOR AN END TO IPP

Statement from the Justice Interim Group

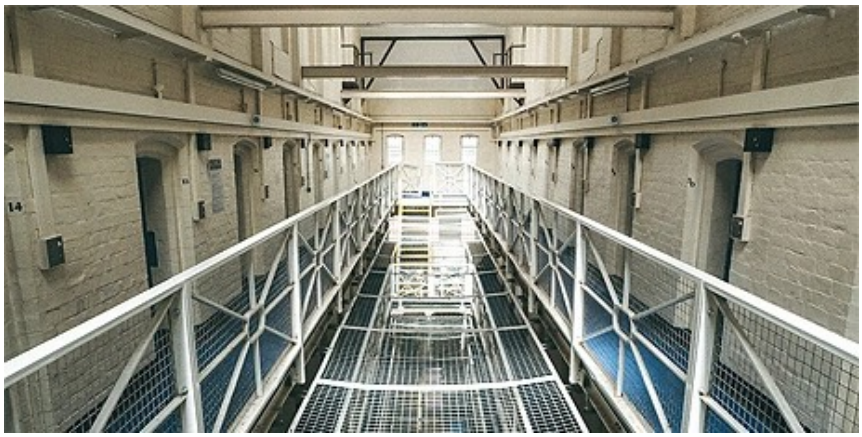
Imprisonment for Public Protection was introduced under Blair's government in 2005 following public concern over a number of violent offences committed by people who were categorised as having dangerous and severe personality disorders. It was determined that they should remain in prison indefinitely - even if their court-ordered tariff (minimum time required in custody) had expired - until their risk level had been demonstrably reduced, at which point they should be given parole.

IPP became popular with judges, who began using them extensively for less serious crimes and specifying relatively short minimum periods of custody. This led to unexpectedly high numbers of IPP prisoners – over 6000 at one point – resulting in prisons being unable to provide the rehabilitative courses that potentially enabled prisoners to prove to the Parole Board that they were no longer high risk, and safe to release.

Following heavy criticism, the sentence was abolished in 2012 by the coalition government, who called IPP 'not defensible'. However several thousand people are still serving these sentences, many of whom remain in prison well beyond the original tariff handed down by the courts [NOTE 1]. Since release is dependent on a number of factors which may, in practice, be unattainable, prisoners are left in a sort of limbo which can seriously affect their mental health. Heightened risk of suicide and self-harm has been flagged up by the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in

Custody. Cruelly, this evidence of mental illness can then become a risk indicator, lessening the chance of release [NOTE 2].

Quakers in Criminal Justice are joining others to call for an end to this misguided sentence. These include a former Supreme Court Justice who described the sentence as the 'single greatest stain on our criminal justice system' [NOTE 3]. The momentum is such that an Inquiry has been set up by the Justice (Select) Committee to examine all aspects of IPP, drawing on evidence from experts, families and IPP prisoners. The Chair, Sir Bob Neil, has said 'the large numbers of people being recalled to prison under IPP suggests there is no end in sight to the problems created by this flawed sentence'. Submissions to the Inquiry can be seen at https://www.ungripp.com/parliamentary-archive-1



Release into the community never means release from the IPP, whose provisions remain in force indefinitely. Former prisoners can be recalled even for minor breaches of their licence conditions (60% of recalls are for technical/administrative breaches), suggesting deficiencies in the welfare and support services offered to them in the community. David Blunkett, the former Minister responsible for this sentence, concedes that IPP was a mistake, and admits that recalls are a major issue. Speaking in November 2021, he said: 'Out of the 3,000 people who are still in prison on IPP, 1,300 of them are there because of recalls. That is 100% up from 2016, five years ago. If we are not careful, that trajectory will lead to more prisoners being in prison on IPP on recall than are actually in prison for the original IPP sentence applied, which is a farcical situation and a tragedy for them.'

Recent debates in the House of Lords during the passage of the Police Crime Sentencing & Courts Bill have provided an opportunity to raise the issue of IPP. Amendments were proposed within the Bill which would hasten its demise but the government would not incorporate them. At present, the only route for released IPP prisoners to have their licence terminated is on application, ten years after release.

But what is the experience of released IPP prisoners? This neglected area is of particular concern to Quakers in Criminal Justice. Rather than being subject to indefinite licence conditions which can transport them straight back to prison for a missed appointment, we advocate a specific probation programme to maximise opportunities for reintegration into society, thus minimising the risk of reoffending.

It was Quakers who pioneered Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA) to support former sex offenders, some of whom will have had IPP sentences. COSA has grown into a successful organisation, Circles UK, with a network of regional providers of Circles, which often have Quaker participation.

Quakers stress the need for a bespoke and properly funded welfare approach to support released IPP prisoners. Drawing on the experience of several QICJ members, [NOTE 4] we believe that no-one can fail to be damaged by the particular nature of protracted indeterminate incarceration under IPP. Recognising this, the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies has undertaken a 'Review of the Psychological Impact of IPP' (briefing due in April; full report to follow in May).



The Prison Reform Trust has called for a special commission whereas the Howard League write that they are ‘strategising with other organisations and campaigning groups who represent IPPs and their families to navigate a path to justice’.

As we wait the outcome of the Justice Committee Inquiry, Quakers aim to raise awareness of this injustice that now stretches back 17 years.

NOTES
1 Almost all (965) people in prison serving an IPP have passed their tariff expiry date. 269 people are still in prison despite being given a tariff of less than two years – most of these are still in prison over a decade after their original tariff expired (Ministry of Justice statistics, Jan-March 2021, quoted by the Prison Reform Trust).

2a Dr Dinesh Maganty, a former forensic psychiatrist for one of the country’s largest prisons, said that, when the first IPP prisoners arrived, they “were not severely mentally ill. But as the years have gone, but increasingly what we are finding is they are becoming mentally ill. Their clinical presentation is increasingly akin to those who've been wrongfully convicted.” He added: “Their mental health needs, as it were – their anxiety, depression and eventually psychosis in some cases – were used as a risk indicator. And when that occurred it led to a system of them being perpetually in prison.”

2b In 2019 the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody reported a wide range of concerning evidence about the risks of suicide and self-harm among the IPP population. It cited findings by HM Inspectorate of Prisons about the high rate of depression and suicidal thoughts at induction, among both male and female IPP prisoners, compared with lifers and prisoners on fixed term sentences.

3 Former Supreme Court Justice, Lord Brown of Eaton-Under-Heywood, speaking in the House of Lords.

4 A further document has been prepared: LIVED EXPERIENCE of IPP.

Melanie Jameson melanie-jameson@outlook.com for QICJ www.qicj.org

CONFERENCE REPORT

Lesley Chandler February 2022.

QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE (QICJ) ANNUAL CONFERENCE
AMMERDOWN FEBRUARY 25-27TH FEBRUARY 2022
Trauma, Dysfunction & Criminality

'There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in.'
Desmond Tutu

As the Russian army advanced on cities in Ukraine, Friends attending this conference arrived hearts and minds heavy with confusion, powerlessness and concern for all caught up in this tragedy. Much moving ministry arose quite spontaneously throughout the weekend.



We heard sadly that Bob Johnson would be unable to attend the conference and present his experiences and his findings as a psychiatrist who has worked with many violent and dangerous prisoners. Tricia Bradbury bravely stepped in at the last minute to hold workshops relating to prison chaplaincy.

The mood on Friday evening was understandably somber with an address by Oliver Robertson, the Head of Witness and Worship and general secretary of Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) where criminal justice campaigning was based. Friends in QICJ wanted to know the reasoning behind the dropping of criminal justice work at this level and why there was to be no central Quaker voice for QICJ. Oliver explained the ways in which BYM is helping and spoke of prison chaplains and Quaker Life support and of the 'Bake the Difference' scheme (a London ex-offender training scheme) at Friends House. He further explained the review of strategies for the next 5 years and stated that the long-term approach of seeing that of God in everyone was to be covered by focusing solely on 1) Peace and 2) Climate Justice. For most who were present and highly involved in Criminal Justice work, research and experience 'Bake the Difference' did not cut the mustard. A pall settled over Friends and was referred to throughout the weekend as having induced a sense of bereavement and loss.

Sue Penna of Penzance Meeting and Rock Pool CIC has worked with people who have experienced psychological trauma as a result of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). 67% of the population has at least 1 ACE. Having 4 or more ACEs results in being
14 times more likely to have attempted suicide
15 times more likely to have shown violence towards someone in the past twelve months
16 times more likely to have used crack cocaine or heroin
20 times more likely to have been incarcerated.
We heard that if early brain wiring is based upon fear because of the effects of abuse and neglect for example, our future ability to respond to kindness may be impaired.
Sue's very full presentation covering PTSD and complex trauma spoke also of BCEs (benevolent childhood experiences) which can counter the effects of 4+ ACEs. The personalities of Winnie-the-Pooh, Piglet Eeyore and Tigger had important starring roles in the work that Sue shared with us…



The work carried out by Caroline Mellon, an ECM (enhanced case management) senior practitioner with Bristol & S Glos Youth Offending Team dovetailed perfectly with Sue Penna's presentation. Part of her background is in Restorative Justice (RJ) and Criminal Justice and since 2019 she has been seconded to North Somerset Youth Offending Team where a pilot of ECM, a new trauma-informed approach to working with young people in the youth justice system, is making real improvements in the lives of traumatised young people caught up in that system. ECM advocates connection before correction which is the reverse of what happens in the CJ system. We heard how the lives of young people were pieced together to show how repeated traumas had impacted on their behaviour. Introducing anchor points into the lives of these young people and promoting 'play' help build effective relationships leading to the regulation of emotions.



I attended the two workshops relating to early childhood trauma and the effects of that trauma as shown in the CJ system and our prisons. Bad childhood experiences can also have a damaging effect on our health as we learnt from Hugh McMichael, retired consultant gastroenterologist and volunteer chaplain in a high security prison. In the workshop he discussed the perplexity around the causes of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and the very high ratio of women(?) suffering with this condition who also scored more than 4 ACEs. Hugh recognises the impact of multiple ACEs not only on the gut but on

the whole quality of life. As a prison chaplain he sees the effects of childhood abuse and poverty very clearly.

Tim Newell gave the closing reflection on Sunday morning. Tim worked in the Prison Service for 38 years and finished his career as Governor of Grendon and Spring Hill prisons. HMP Grendon is unique in that it offers a therapeutic community experience for some of the most difficult prisoners and has had remarkable results with those prisoners. He set up 'Escaping Victimhood' to help victims of serious crime overcome their victimhood and become survivors able to regain their lives and their health. He spoke personally and of his local Quaker meeting before making wider reference to the conference. He covered a wide range of reflections. Amongst his reflections were the excellence of the food at Ammerdown, the relevance of John Donne's poem 'No Man is an Island' in relation to current world events and he invited us to think particularly about Ukraine. He could not speak too highly of the Quaker leaflet 'Faith in our Future' which he feels serves us as a good anchor. He mentioned various organisations with which to work and collaborate acknowledging that many already do so. Tim reflected on Amanda Gorman's poem 'The Hill we Climb' which she read at President Biden's inauguration ceremony. After witnessing the dark events of the storming of the Capitol building in January 2021 she was inspired to write that poem of a vision of the future where we can come together and heal together ourselves and our communities. He thought that we might work on the issue of seeking to establish restorative principles within the judicial process for adults in the same way that impressively had become normal for young offenders. Much food for much thought.



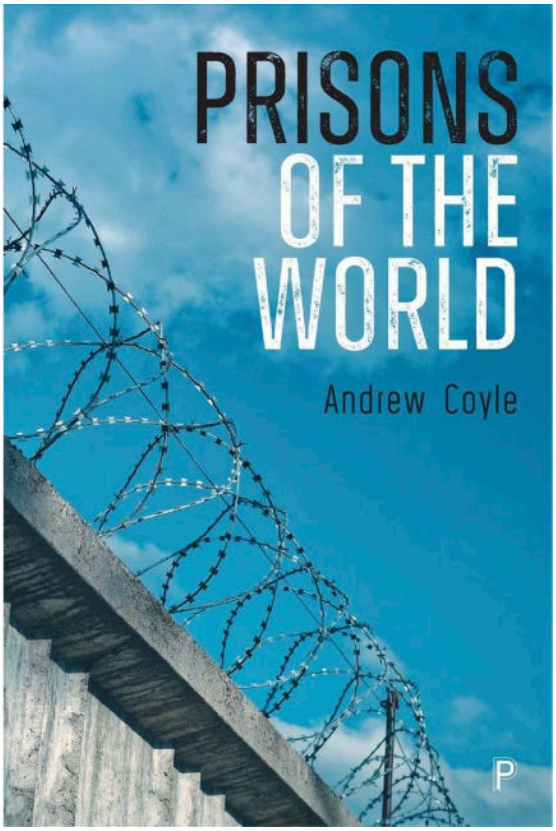
Small group reflections, chance and deliberate conversations over food and coffee with old and new acquaintances added another layer to epilogues and meetings for worship where we heard poignant ministry. Many thanks must go to the committee for organising such an informative and thought-provoking conference.

PRISONS OF THE WORLD - BOOK REVIEW

Tim Newell

Review of 'Prisons of the World' by Andrew Coyle
Policy Press
ISBM 978-1-4473-6247-0

This is a remarkable tour de force by Andrew Coyle, an enlightened experienced governor of prisons and professor of prison studies. The use of prisons to respond to underlying social, economic and political issues is explored with rigorous exposure of the moral implications for that development. He discredits the belief that by locking up offenders we are reforming them, and in asserting that prisons can damage people he calls for a second look.



This book will inform and support Friends concerned about criminal justice who are looking for another way. The ministry of Quakers in prisons and in justice matters is impressive and has touched many lives for good. But the relentless growth of prisons in our country contrasts with many other European jurisdictions, who are seeking to reduce the use of custody and altering the custodial experience in dramatically creative ways. We continue to wonder at the political will to use limited resources in this wasteful way, given the damage it does to those detained and to the health of their families and communities.

Andrew Coyle gives frightening examples of prisons whose regimes have deteriorated so much as to have lost their 'moral compass' – ignoring the impact of regulations that treat people callously and with no respect. The balance between a considerate regime and a cruel one can swing easily without informed leadership, with the pressure of overcrowding, and with the political messages prevalent through media and legislation. This is a matter of current concern to many informed practitioners with our continued emphasis of longer sentencing to resolve current hot issues.

The book concludes with positive pointers for the future and Andrew Coyle shows how there might be a better distribution of resources between criminal justice and social justice by an application of the principles of justice reinvestment. There is no discussion at this time about the potential of such community-based resources, certainly in Britain, having been subject to damaging structural changes over the past decades. This is surely a matter that we need to address in order to support healthy communities through which we learn to live together with respect for the potential within each person.

The former minister of the Interior in Uganda is quoted in a way that will resonate with recent debates among Friends –

"One day in the distant future, people will probably look back on what happens in most countries today and will wonder how we could do that to our fellow human beings in the name of justice."

FEEDBACK FOR THE QICJ

Jenny Copsey

I have been asked to tell you a little about our Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network that started after a concern was raised at our Scottish General Meeting around 2 years ago. The concern was regarding a wish to raise awareness and develop thinking and learning among Quakers in the Criminal Justice system and reinvigorate the potential for change. Around 18 interested Quakers now meet as the Network once a month on zoom. Many of us are or have been involved professionally or as volunteers in CJ work or allied organisations. We search for an alternate view of punishment and incarceration and have been inspired by the 1981 Canadian Yearly Meeting Minute 93 against imprisonment. We have a wide variety of opinions and knowledge, but our discussions have involved us in regularly returning to the fact that social injustice and trauma are main contributory factors to individuals becoming involved in crime. These same factors of course can also be obstacles to people being able to develop more effective ways of living. We therefore question the efficacy and legitimacy of imprisonment as a response to crime. In our search we have had inspiring speakers such as an employee of the Violence Reduction Unit in Glasgow who very much uses the trauma informed approach in his work with young people and ex-offenders; David Scott who wrote Against Imprisonment amongst many other publications; a representative from APEX an organisation that enables and supports ex-prisoners in finding and keeping work; the Chaplain who heads up the Scottish Prison Chaplaincy Service etc.

“We search for an alternate view of punishment and incarceration”

More recently a few members of the group formulated a really inspiring Trauma Informed Workshop that was a day of enquiry and listening to people’s experiences and expertise on the subject. It reinforced our desire to respond to our Government’s recent public consultations on criminal justice reform. In order to widen our forum amongst Quakers a few of our number are creating a publication on our work

Our learning and discussion are a driving force towards more action, enabled by the appointment by General Meeting for Scotland last year of a Working Group drawn from the Network members, who draw on the Network’s thinking to represent Quakers in Scotland on community justice matters both to other Quakers through General Meeting and externally, liaising with our Parliamentary Engagement Officer (PEO). The group has started to be in communication with the Scottish Government’s Justice Minister and the PEO has given us the names of other MSPs who are potentially helpful contacts. As I said there have been several public consultations regarding proposed changes particularly on Bail and Release guidelines to which the Working group have responded formally . Restorative Justice is being suggested as an alternative to custody along with the electronic “minder” approach. Two of the working group have recently trained in RJ but we are still waiting for the “roll out” of opportunities to use it. Vision for Justice, a paper that has just come out from the Scottish Government sets out a plan for action from now to 2026. Seeing as Quakers do have a need for transformation, We are reading this long publication in order to establish how we can best respond to it and support and hold the government to account. It is perhaps not as hard hitting as a previous cross-party report which states clearly that prison is not working for Society and it is an expensive failure.

Our struggle is to explore how we can influence the status quo through some transformation of thinking, whether it be of politicians or the wider society. Some of the specific concerns include the penal response to women and the effects on their families but also the wider context of violence against women along with the very questionable imprisonment of young people. There is concern that Community Payback orders are not providing meaningful financial recompense that would enhance a sense of self respect for those in the scheme. One of the biggest frustrations that we have in Scotland is that we are prevented from accessing prisons as Quaker Chaplains unless we are invited in by a specific prisoner or in one instance the prison has a liberal minded paid Chaplain. The Scottish Prison Service and the Professional Chaplaincy Service are not keen on widening out the chaplaincy remit. A few of us are involved in the more successful Quaker AVP initiative and there are others who are using the therapeutic effect of gardening and those who are involved with running the creche for visiting families and visitor centres.

"Our struggle is to explore how we can influence the status quo through some transformation of thinking"

Our network involves a mix of sharing information; offering practical help where it is required; intellectual investigation and discursive forums. Our intention as a network and working group, replacing the damaging use of prison, is to help and transform an unnecessarily negative and undermining system to become a nurturing and creative process for individuals and a place of safety where people wherever they sit in the justice system can learn about themselves while become effective and loving in their lives.

The Scottish legal system is different from the rest of the UK and is currently offering more opportunity for change; we are all convinced that the way prison life is delivered is not working except in its' simplest form as a cell with a lock and key. There is good work going on in the community delivered mainly by the Third Sector, but our prisons are not looking at the individual as a whole person who needs help and support, perhaps our two Quaker CJ organisations can be an inspiring force for change?

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Simon Ewart Membership Secretary.

Following on from our wonderful conference at Ammerdown earlier this year, when our membership stood at around 150, I can now report that we are nearer the 160 mark. We have 133 individual members and 24 group members. Well done all of you who have been sharing your good work and convincing your group or individual Friends that they need us, and we need them too of course, to continue the job of networking on Criminal Justice matters across the Society of Friends, particularly now that the restructuring at Friends House is having its effects.

I am attempting Friends to compile an up-to-date membership directory and emailed you all to ask for your help in this task earlier this month (email from qicjmembership@gmail.com 8th April). Attached to that email was a simple form for you to complete. Unfortunately I have only

had 50 replies (including new members who have joined this year). The information I need is simply your name, contact details, interests in particular within the Criminal Justice system, and your consent. It would be really helpful to me if you could locate the attachment and fill in the blank boxes, as I am then able just to cut and paste to compile the book rather than complete 160 forms myself ! If you can't locate the form now, please let me know and I will send it afresh.

If you are not internet savvy then just let me have the information on an email and I will complete the short form for you. If you are doing this by post the address to send your details to is Simon Ewart, Skewjack Barn, Saint Levan, Penzance, Cornwall TR19 6NB. It won't be worth publishing a membership book with only one third of the total membership. I do hope you are able to respond and many thanks to those who have already done so.

YOGA IN CUSTODY

Chris Holt

Each month The Prison Phoenix Trust receives around 150 letters from people in prison asking for our help with simple breath-based meditation or yoga and often telling us of the transforming effects these practices are having for them.

It is a joy to open the post in our Oxford office to letters such as this one from Jordi in HMP Lindholm, who wrote: "I genuinely feel like a different person over the last couple of months. Since I have been practising I am a lot calmer and my moods and emotions have never been so stable, but most of all I am starting to notice other people's emotions. For the first time I'm fully aware of my surroundings and other people matter."

We've received so many letters like this since the Trust was founded in 1988 that we are in no doubt that yoga and meditation – with a simple focus on silence and the breath – has helped thousands of people to see the good within themselves, perhaps for the first time in their lives. And that this sense of self-worth is the foundation of processes of rehabilitation.



Paul wrote telling us that he'd been in and out of prison from the age of 15 to 36 until he eventually worked out his own attitudes were contributing to his suffering: "Even when I was free physically I was still imprisoned by envy, jealousy and by being judgemental," he wrote.

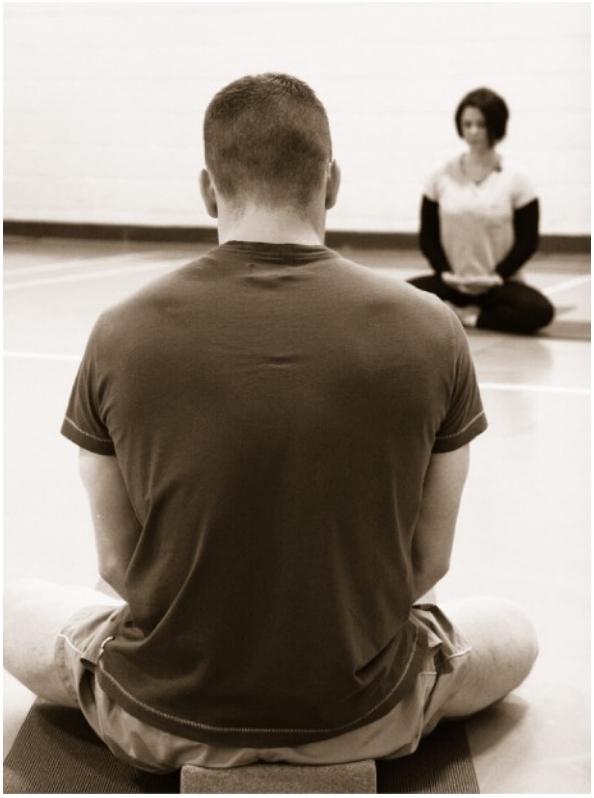
Meditation was key to that realisation: "Meditation is like most things that are good for us – we have to put some work into it, it's not an instant fix, but it certainly helps us to find some balance and most importantly for me, peace with oneself."

While many prison interventions deal with single aspects of

behaviour, such as addiction, literacy, or anger management, meditation and yoga cultivate an inner sense of self-worth. With that comes hope, empowering people to engage in other interventions and to achieve sustainable, positive change.

During the pandemic when for many months at a time group activities ceased, meditation and yoga were practised almost entirely by people in prison individually in their cells. But through our letters and newsletters, they were not alone; a community of yoga and meditation practitioners were supporting them from the outside.

At The Prison Phoenix Trust we meditate together in solidarity with people inside every day at 8.30am, with Tuesday mornings shared online. And in May we are a special celebration of all that meditation and yoga brings.



Inspired by one of our trustees, Suzy, who is running a double marathon – 52 miles – we have set the community a 52 Challenge. In the run-up to the weekend of 14-15 May, people inside prison and on the outside are doing activities based on the number 52 : it might be 52 minutes of meditation or silent walking; five sun salutations twice a day; or twice a day taking five mindful breaths.

Whatever the activity, the intention is the same: to look after our spiritual lives as a community and to nourish the self-worth and hope that transforms troubled lives.

All welcome to join us:

- Set your own 52 Challenge: bit.ly/PPT52Challenge
- Join us online for 52 minutes of silent meditation 6-7pm Friday 13th May: bit.ly/52meditation
- Make a donation: justgiving.com/campaign/yoga

IMPRISONMENT OF ELDERLY MEN

Extracts from a longer article by Jonathan Ranger

Ralph Clarke was jailed in 2016 for ‘historic sex offences’. At 101.

This is consistent with the current police enthusiasm for digging out, prosecuting and jailing every ‘historic sex offender’ they can discover.

And this is possible – and easy for them – because in 2005 the Government, pressured by the gutter press and public reaction to the Jimmy Saville revelations (stirred up and exacerbated by

the media flurry), decided to do away with the centuries-old need for evidence and proof, and the entire basis of British Law and Fair Trials, by bringing in new legislation stating that in sex cases only – that's sex cases only – there is no longer any need for Evidence and Proof, because it's now sufficient for the police and courts to accept any allegation as 'true'.

They say that this is because most sex offences are between two people in private, with no witnesses, and so they claimed that "too many guilty people were getting away with it because of lack of corroborative evidence."

The police and the courts and the Government even stated that "It's better to convict and imprison many innocent people than for one guilty person to go free."

Ralph was 101 years old at this point, in 2016. 101 years old!

I ask you: What on Earth is the point of imprisoning a man of 101 years old? For something that he was supposed to have done maybe sixty or seventy years ago?



OK. He admitted what he had done. And so the evidence was not needed in this case. But 16 years? At age 101? He was sentenced to die in prison, and in February 2021, after only just over 4 years, he died – in prison. He wasn't allowed out to die at home. Oh no. He was a criminal, so he should die in prison and his body could be shoved out for his family to collect – if they still wanted it. His death was only admitted and announced by the Prisons & Probation Ombudsman in the second week of February 2022, more than a year after it had happened.

So is this right?

What purpose did imprisonment serve for Ralph Clarke – an ex-RAF Serviceman who had fought for his country and his people, and no doubt suffered from PTSD for the rest of his life, like so many others?

Wouldn't he have been better admitting his errors of judgement – yes, as he did, and being prosecuted and convicted – but then having some sort of Community Punishment, like restricted movement, house-arrest at weekends, or a hefty fine to be taken from his savings and paid to those he had abused?

But wait – taking his money is actually not taking it from him at all, but taking it from his children and grandchildren or whoever he was going to leave it to. They should not suffer for anything he did wrong.

So this country thinks it's best still to send someone like him to prison, where it costs the country and the taxpayer – that's you and me and our families and friends, as well as his family and friends – nearly £60,000 a year to keep him there. In his case, that's £ ¼ million or more – and would have been almost £1million for anyone younger who stayed inside for the full term, plus all the legal fees, probation and police expenses and so on …



Wouldn't it have been better for this country to have given that vast amount of money to the victims? They were going to waste it anyway, waiting for him to die, so why not give it away where it might actually be needed and valued?

I know the prisons are still filling up steadily with men in their seventies, eighties and even nineties, many of them already incapacitated – and they've even been constructing several 'Super Prisons' to hold thousands of men, in dangerous conditions because of lack of prison staff, in anticipation of this bonanza of evidence-less convictions – because the police are having a heyday rounding up men who are supposed to have done something they didn't ought to have done decades earlier … when no-one, but no-one, has complained or said anything ever since then … even with all the publicity over the last two decades about historic offences.

The big question, though, is …

What do we do with such people instead of prison ?

In parts of Scandinavia, and maybe other more enlightened countries, offenders (unless they are actually and demonstrably dangerous) are put under close supervision, but allowed to continue working and looking after their families (so that it's not their families who suffer rather than them – after all, the offender is fed, watered and looked after in prison, while his family struggles to survive, along with the stigma and the public's disapprobation).



The offender is then locked up – or put under 'house arrest' at weekends so that he can't go out and enjoy himself, but he can still support his family and spend quality time with his wife and children who need him!

The offender, while still within the community, is put through various therapies and treatment programmes to help him understand why he offended, how his early experiences –ACEs – will undoubtedly have contributed to his behaviour, and thus how he can understand this and avoid offending in future.

It's hoped that he will also then be enabled to teach his children the errors of his ways, and better ways of thinking, thus enabling them to avoid similar behaviour themselves.

Isn't this a better way of treating fellow human beings – who have made mistakes and errors of judgement just like we all do … not necessarily entirely through their own fault … but have happened to have been caught out, whereas most of us get away with most of the wrong things we do … ?

What think you, Friends?

QICJ CONFERENCE REPORT

William Waddilove

This was held at Ammerdown Conference centre over the weekend of 25 to 27 February 2022

The theme was Trauma, Dysfunction and Criminality although other related subjects were covered. The Quakers in Criminal Justice group is an open group of people involve in, or interested in the general subject area of criminal and community justice. Some 40 people attended.

The first session started off with a talk from Oliver Robertson (Head of Witness & Worship for Quakers in Britain) about the new arrangements for support for this area of concern from Friends House. Whilst we agreed it is best for the Society of Friends to concentrate on areas where we have a distinctive witness we were left rather despondent about what he said. I think we all understood that BYM had to restructure activities from spring 2019. However, we were not expecting this cut on support for QICJ as many of us saw community justice issues as being one of our key contributions to society. As one person said it felt like a 'Wake'.



The Labyrinth in the back garden just outside the chapel.

Saturday morning we concentrated on the themes of the conference with two speakers giving different aspects of the same subject area.

The message that really sunk home is related to the long lasting effect of early childhood traumas' or as it is described as 'Adverse Childhood Experiences' (ACE). Effectively that includes severe stress and hurts in childhood and not being able to build normal social bonds and behaviours. This can have an effect throughout life and this ACE can result in an individual not knowing appropriate social behaviours which leads to

criminal behaviour or mental health issues. Certainly, we all received a lesson in parenthood in that we should pick up and show love and care to children and most certainly avoid abusive behaviours!

We had been expecting Bob Johnson to come and he would have complimented the subject areas by his approach that we are all born 'innocent and loving' and that if we showed other traits later then they have been learnt and there is a need to revisit the problem areas and introduce healing. Bob's paper on "Emotional Dwarfism" had been circulated. Tricia Bradbury was asked step in and talk about Prison Ministry during Covid. She gave us an insight into how she had got on working in two different prisons (one large – over 2,000 and one smaller 1,100 - one private and one public owned) throughout the lockdown. Was it really safe having to whisper though a crack of a cell door when 'mixing' was not permitted?

We had small groups to help us share and develop our learning experiences as well as small groups where we could explore with the speakers in greater detail. As is often the case the challenge was which two of three did we wish to attend!



Friends stretching their legs to walk up to the monument above the centre.

Ammerdown is a lovely peaceful place. We use the chapel for worship, timing our meeting to be with friends in Ukraine and it was available for private use at other times. The organisers were aware that we may be touching on difficult subject areas for some people and had appointed an 'safeguarding' officer to help anyone troubled by the subject matter.

Just outside the chapel was a labyrinth, a recommended path for meditation and, for me, took just over 3 minutes to walk to the centre. The monument up the hill was an attraction for a more extensive walk in the free time on Saturday afternoon.

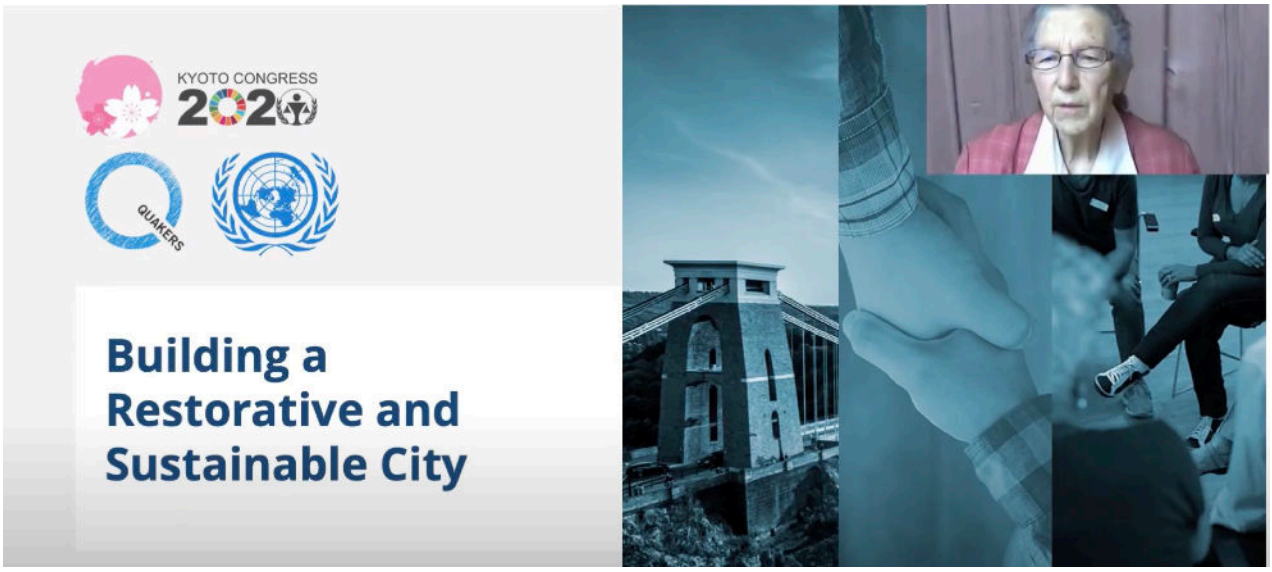


Accommodation and food was excellent and supported by lovely staff. This provides an excellent situation for a conference on this serious subject area. If I was to try to select one single point it would be difficult as I enjoyed the whole conference as well as being among the other delegates. As I said in my comment form 'the staff was almost lovely enough to be the main reason for the visit'.

BUILDING A RESTORATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CITY

Marian Liebmann and Nick McGeorge

Made on behalf of FWCC (Friends World Committee for Consultation), this video is based on a presentation to the United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Kyoto, Japan in May 2021. It is available on YouTube for anyone to view. The link is: https://youtu.be/SKjSdtMtNyg



The video aims to show:

- the benefits of using restorative solutions and having restorative cities,
- practical examples showing the effectiveness these processed from around the world,
- how and why Quakers have been involved locally, nationally and internationally in publicising and using restorative justice processes and solutions.
- how restorative cities link with the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030
- The steps towards becoming a Restorative City include how to:
- identify common underlying principles of restorative process;
- bring people together to be inspired by what everyone is doing;
- create an ongoing restorative justice forum for the city;
- identify a common vision and find more ways to work together collaboratively;
- make the city truly a ‘Restorative City’.

The video defines restorative justice, summarises processes and their advantages. These include neighbour conflict mediation, restorative conferencing and circles for classroom use, rehabilitation and court sentencing. A highlight on RJ in schools brings this work to life (courtesy of Belinda Hopkins, Transforming Conflict).

Countries with restorative cities include the UK, US, Belgium, Italy, Albania, Poland, Australia and New Zealand. Case studies include Bristol, Southampton and Cumbria in the UK, Raleigh in North Carolina, US; Canberra and Newcastle in Australia; and Whanganui in New Zealand. They show the efficacy of restorative approaches in a wide variety of situations, such as schools, criminal justice, courts, social housing,, drug addiction and sexual offending. The results include cost savings, improved relationships and better social cohesion.



The examples from Australia and New Zealand include work with Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander people and a National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse.

The video finishes with a list of challenges and concerns, followed by recommendations and resources. It encourages Quakers around the world to get their cities to embrace restorative approaches.

The Quaker presenters in the video are: Marian Liebmann (UK), Nicholas McGeorge (UK and US), Brydget Barker-Hudson (Australia) and David Purnell (Australia).

NURTURING OUR WITNESS

Melanie Jameson

Nurturing our Witness - the JIG* goes on

* Justice Interim Group (the background to JIG is covered in the two previous editions)

Yes, JIG is still in action, having now met virtually four times. Since I last wrote my Co-Clerk and I submitted a document to QPSW Central Committee in readiness for their meeting at

the end of November. One of the outcomes was confirmation that the paid central post, admirably developed under Teresa Parker, has gone (fortunately Teresa has been redeployed). Again we heard that QPSW CC will 'maintain a watching brief' and 'periodically look at Quaker concerns that are not QPSW key themes' (of climate justice and peace/militarism) 'to consider whether our focus should shift'; this would depend on staff capacity. So, JIG moves forward in the knowledge that it depends on us and supportive Friends to cherish the flame of Quaker witness in criminal justice (CJ). We reject the proposal that this should be 'mainly responsive eg signing other people's statements.'

The next stage of our work is determining those key issues where there is a distinctive Quaker voice, rooted in our values, principles and experience. The first of these is Imprisonment for Public Protection better known as 'IPP'. Drawing on input from QICJ members with lived experience, groundwork from/conversations with CJ charities and a number of pronouncements condemning IPP in the House of Lords, a draft statement has been prepared. The 'distinctive Quaker voice' is focusing on the welfare needs of released IPP prisoners. Once agreed, the document will be uploaded to the JUSTICE UPDATE section of the QICJ website (check if it's already arrived).

The next stage of our work is determining those key issues where there is a distinctive Quaker voice, rooted in our values, principles and experience

Please note that JUSTICE UPDATE on the www.qicj.org home page will be the repository of key information already circulated to QICJ members. It will also be the home of a bi-monthly digest of important CJ matters. In this way you, our members, will be well enough informed to act as CJ representatives playing your part in nurturing this precious flame; this may entail identifying and extracting what you feel can go into local and area meetings newsletters or taking it further through local alliances.

At the recent QICJ conference Oliver Robertson, Head of Worship & Witness, reassured us that assistance will be available to promote our messages. Details of how this will happen are currently under consideration in conversation with Oliver. Further statements/briefings from JIG are expected to include current punitive sentencing measures, the availability of Restorative Justice for adult prisoners and the situation of children of imprisoned parents.

The focus of the QICJ conference brought out the indisputable need for trauma-informed approaches across the CJ system in order to effect healing and successful rehabilitation. This message was further emphasised during the one-day conference by the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network on April 2nd. Projects which explore the damage of Adverse Childhood Experiences crop up in various sections of the CJ system but not in a consistent way, drawing on established good practice The intention is that this topic will crystalise into another JIG statement, as we again seek to draw out the 'distinctive Quaker voice'.

But the most fundamental issue of all relates to the failure of the UK prison system by any standard of measurement. Many of you will be aware of the Canada Minute [link at the

But the most fundamental issue of all relates to the failure of the UK prison system by any standard of measurement.

bottom of this article] which calls for prison abolition for all but the very few, who would be treated in a therapeutic setting. Quakers need to develop a UK Minute on Imprisonment which will doubtless include our belief that prison is a costly waste of time, lives and money, achieving none of its rehabilitative aims. Our Scottish Friends have already done some work on this; their participation in JIG ensures that we are moving forward together and benefiting from shared insights.

Finally, support for our frontline workers, Prison Chaplains, is important to QICJ. Being unable to speak out, it is useful for them to have the link into QICJ and JIG to bring forward issues that concern them – such as provisions for aging prisoners - while ensuring confidentiality. Fortunately, the Chaplaincy HQ Adviser in Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service is currently a Quaker. We hope that by putting her in touch with the clerk of the Scottish Quaker CJ Network, mutual contacts many be found to unlock the long-standing issue of Quakers being kept out of the chaplaincy in Sottish prisons. We await developments.

Rewinding back to July 2021, the Minutes forwarded to Meeting for Sufferings showed that Quaker involvement in CJ really matters to you. The JIG goes on, please dance with us!

https://quakerservice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/CYM-Minute-on-Prison-Abolition.pdf

To comment, make suggestions or to receive further info, please contact Melanie Jameson on melanie-jameson@outlook.com

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION & BEYOND

Hugh McMichael

This paper was offered by Quakers in Criminal Justice at the recent YMG fringe sessions.

My interest in Criminal Justice goes back to my teens when I aspired to become a probation officer to support those feeling unfairly blamed. After a career as a hospital doctor and in hospices, I started going into prisons 10 years ago. For the last 4 years, I have been a volunteer chaplain in a high security prison. There I have had the privilege of meeting a few of the real people behind their often violent offences. I have heard the pain of many of their life experiences.

Hearing their stories has encouraged me to explore in some depth factors which lead to imprisonment. As we are all aware, ethnicity is one important factor but I will be linking this in

with poverty, and to bad experiences in their upbringing – call it child abuse. I will offer lots of facts and figures but I trust these will illustrate the connections between ethnicity, poverty, child-rearing and imprisonment.



Let me tell you about Ben – not his real name of course! He is a man who came across to me as a gentle giant. Aged 37. Very tall and strong man of black and white parents. He was repeatedly teased at school and responded by fighting which eventually led to his exclusion. He left school with no qualifications and was unemployed. He drifted and had multiple convictions for shop-lifting. At the age of 22, having taught himself to read and write, he did a higher education course and passed with multiple credits but chose not to go to university. He became a casual drug user then became drug-dependent. He had a rehabilitation course but there was no follow-up and he still had no job. He then slept rough for 7 years, thieving to maintain his drug habit.
He acknowledges he has a short temper, especially if he witnesses injustice. He has been in prison for 2 years, is deemed dangerous and this means he cannot get work or attend courses in prison which might help him. He weeps often

Here are some background statistics which are relevant to Ben. All the comparative figures I quote are incidences in racial groups compared with white British people.

60% of all male prisoners were excluded from school. Exclusion is 6 x commoner for black compared to white students. Ben was excluded from school. Imprisoned black people are 5 times more likely to be labelled violent. That includes Ben. Unemployment in the community is 2 ½ times commoner for black people. Ben has never had a proper job. If ex-prisoners have a job, they are less than half as likely to re-offend (Reoffending rate for men who found no job - 55% and for men who had a job - 25%)

And his racial appearance would almost certainly have contributed to his teasing at school.
Here are some other statistics about black people in the criminal justice system. Black compared to white people

9 x more likely to be stopped and searched
3 x more likely to be arrested
4 x more likely to be imprisoned
1.5 x longer sentences
8 x more likely to be in Youth custody

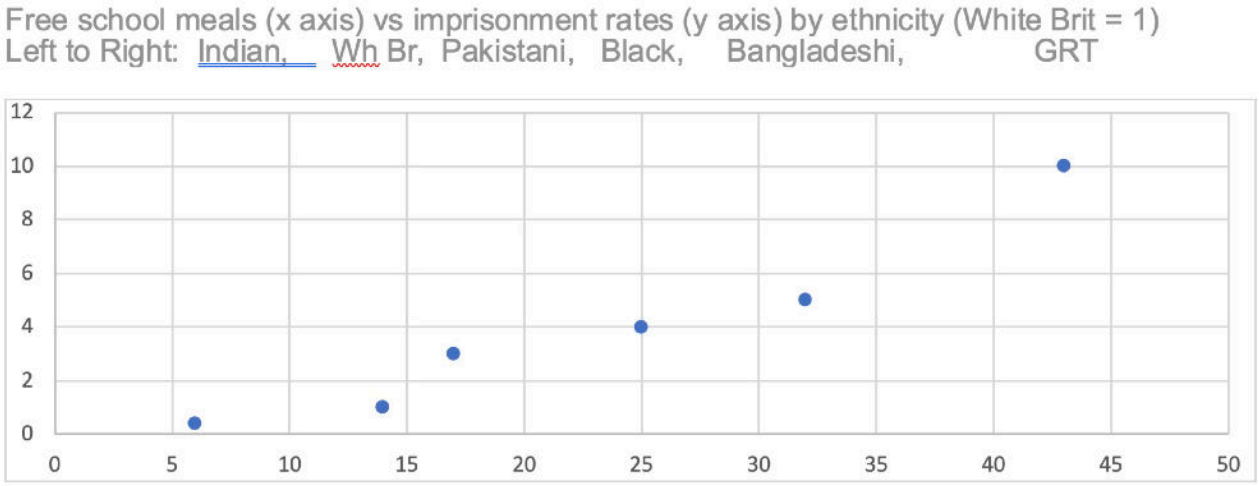
But is it all about skin colour? When we look in more detail, skin colour of itself appears to be only one factor influencing the major variations observed in our criminal justice system. There are two groups which buck the ‘colour’ presumption

- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller group are 10 times over-represented in prison compared with white British and this is yet 2 ½ times more than black people (and they are white)
- And the sizeable group with less than half as many people imprisoned as white British is the Indians – coloured people. Yet people originating from Pakistan and Bangladesh are imprisoned as much as or even more than black people – up to 5 times the rate of white British population.

So I have explored 2 factors which may contribute for these findings, namely poverty and childhood experiences. Let's look firstly at poverty. I use Free School Meals as a marker of poverty: here are the % of various racial groups qualifying for Free School Meals

% of each racial group qualifying for Free School Meals
GRT 42%, Bangladeshi 32%, Black 25%, Pakistani 17%, White British 14%, Indian 6%

You will note that the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller group are by far the poorest with 42% of their children qualifying for free school meals followed by Bangladeshis while, by contrast, Indians at the bottom of the list are by far the least impoverished, with only 6% qualifying.
Below is a graph of free school meals vs imprisonment rates by ethnicity.



The poorer the ethnic group the higher the relative rate of imprisonment. While thinking about poverty, note that 30% of all female prosecutions are for debt. For the statisticians amongst you, you will be clear that this does not necessarily mean direct cause and effect, but it surely raises a question of why there is such a correlation between poverty and imprisonment.

A simple statistic: 72% of prisoners received benefits prior to imprisonment. So poverty has been real for very many prisoners

I now turn to the influence of early life experiences. 25% of male prisoners were brought up in care (compared to 0.7% of general population). So care experience or what led them to go into care makes them 35 times more likely to be imprisoned. The impact on female prisoners is double this. 50% of female prisoners were brought up in care.

I remind you that 60% of male prisoners were excluded from school compared to 4% in the general population – so those excluded are 15 times more likely to be imprisoned. Violent

children come from violent homes. This has been carefully documented. Also 67% of sons whose fathers are in prison will themselves be imprisoned.

There is an established academic measure of child abuse called Adverse Childhood Experiences – so called ACE studies – which gives a numerical 'score' out of 10. The higher the score, the worse the child has been abused. People with an ACE score of 4 or more have many increased life risks, for example: 4 x Anxiety and/or depression, 6 x illicit drug or XS alcohol usage, 37 x more suicide attempts and 8 x More likely to be perpetrators and victims of violence.

50% OF MALE PRISONERS HAVE AN ACE SCORE OF 4 or more, 7 – 10 times commoner than the general population. This accounts for much of the high incidence of poor mental health in prisoners. Linking this study with poverty, the poorer the background, the higher the average ACE score. Figures quoted for this effect are between 2- and 10-fold. But whatever the magnitude of the effect, people brought up in poverty are undoubtedly more likely to have been seriously abused.



Concluding Commentary

The majority of the people imprisoned are poor and/or have suffered serious abuse as children.
How might society help them to become better citizens? Punishment? Support? Norway, with its emphasis on rehabilitation? How do these observations fit with the Government's current Crime Reduction Strategies? More police, more prison places and longer sentences?

UK has extreme wealth inequality. The poorest 50% of the population – 30 million people - own just 9% of the nation's wealth while the richest 60 thousand – 0.1% - also own 9% of the nation's wealth – a 500-fold gap. If we put this in income terms, then £70/week for half the nation would turn into £35,000/week for the richest few. 25% of children and 15% of working age adults in UK live in serious poverty. Are the links between poverty, abuse and imprisonment related to this extreme inequality? Can we influence our nation's financial priorities? Might generations of enslavement or other economic abuse contribute to present inequalities in our Criminal Justice System?

Do 'civilisations' always have an underclass? Is lack of Trust in authority figures relevant within our ethnic communities?

Your Committee Members for 2022 are: Simon Ewart (Membership Secretary), Rodney Mahon (Treasurer), Alice Audsley (co-clerk), Sinead Bailey, Melanie Jameson (co-clerk), Teresa Parker (co-opted from QPSW Social Justice Group), Sue Barrance, Jonathan Lamb (newsletter editor) Hugh McMichael and Polly Lowe

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