QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

STILL WAITING FOR PRISON REFORM

As I write this article, prison governors are holding their annual conference. This has unusually made the news because the governors, aware of the acute difficulties, are calling for an independent public inquiry into the state of prisons (in England and Wales).



The hallmarks of this deterioration are an "unprecedented" rise in violence, suicides and self-harm. Staff shortages, exacerbated by staff sickness, contribute to what the governors term “a squalid and brutal environment”. As though to testify to the “brutal”, a prisoner is murdered in HMP Pentonville, while rats in a number of prisons attest to the “squalid”. The governor’s comments echo annual reports from the Chief Inspector of prisons in which, year on year, a marked downward trend is recorded.

The current situation is a far cry from the optimism many of us felt when Michael Gove became Secretary of State in the Ministry of Justice in April 2015. He accepted what was to be Nick Hardwick’s final report as Chief Inspector of Prisons in all its damning detail. His first remarks, later echoed by David Cameron, pointed out that none of us would wish to be defined by the worst thing that we had done, that prisoners could be an asset and that promoting a culture of education ‘inside’ was the way to achieve successful rehabilitation ‘outside’. To this end, he asked Dame Sally Coates to review prison education. However, as I fed in to the consultation and attended a ‘stake-holders day’ it soon became clear to me that her report would go way beyond education, and envisaged deeper reform. So far so good –

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so what went wrong?

In a word – the referendum. Gove's championing of the 'Leave' group appeared to be more important than the 'day job' in the Ministry of Justice. We knew the Coates Review was completed – a member of the Prisoner Learning Alliance, on which I sit, was on the writing panel. But rather than the expected March launch, delays set in and we feared the review might not appear at all. In fact this has been the fate of the parallel Taylor Review of the Youth Justice System (under 18 year-olds) also initiated in 2015 and scheduled for publication at the end of June. A comment at the time summed up the experience of many: "Brexit has thrown everything into disarray!".

However the Coates Review, Unlocking Potential, did finally appear and was accepted in the Queens Speech. Then, in a series of unprecedented machinations, it appeared that Gove might become leader of the Tory party, or be promoted under Boris Johnson. Instead he was booted out from the cabinet by a new PM. So what is the fate of Unlocking Potential? How will Liz Truss, the new Secretary of State, view the proposed reforms, which were meant to be rolled out within reform legislation in October?

I met with Sally Coates in early September to resolve some of my queries regarding the implementation of her review – particularly within my professional area: prisoners with dyslexia and related conditions. It was the first time these learning needs had been highlighted in an official prison review. I also queried the funding for her recommendations and what would happen in the six 'Reform Prisons' (where the governors now have greater flexibility regarding facilities and training) when prisoners transfer between establishments.



It appears that acceptance in the Queens Speech by one set of ministers does not ensure implementation by a different batch. The overriding question is now whether there is sufficient political will to put Coates' reforms into practice?

Liz Truss's first move has been to speak on Islamic radicalisation in prisons, proposing that those promoting it should be segregated from other prisoners. Actually, if I was feeling bored and also unsafe in prison, the occupation of religious rituals and the protection of a large brotherhood would not be an unattractive prospect.

Two questions for the Secretary of State would be:

- Why is this radicalisation happening?
- How about increasing real 'purposeful activity' and employing sufficient staff to escort prisoners to these activities?

As of October 2016, very little has been heard from Sam Gyimah, our new Minister for Prisons, Probation, Rehabilitation and Sentencing. Being black, he may address the Lammy Report on the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) prisoners as his priority.

One group that can hopefully bring their influence to bear is the Justice Select Committee (JSC). Over the summer they launched their Inquiry on prison reform. The first question in the consultation (What should be the purpose/s of prison?) is very similar to the discussion framework produced by our Quaker Crime Communities & Justice Sub-Committee: WHY PRISON? The JSC Inquiry also examines the roles and responsibilities of prison staff, governors, the National Offender Management Service and the Ministry of Justice. Further questions relate to the implementation of reforms, out-sourcing, performance measures and independent monitoring.

I agree with Martin Wright, writing in the August edition of our newsletter, about the urgent need to reduce the prison population. Statistics highlight two groups who are most likely to end up in custody: people who have been in care and pupils excluded from school (among whom are high numbers with dyslexia and related conditions). So why not divert funds from coping with the astronomical costs of reoffending to tackling early intervention?

To conclude, how can we as Quakers take up this challenge? I suggest that we acquaint ourselves with the facts and figures in the Bromley Briefings, compiled by the Prison Reform Trust. Then re-read the Quaker Vision for a Criminal Justice System (circulated to all Area Meetings and discussed by many of us, with Minutes forwarded to Meeting for Sufferings). In this way we can discern our distinct Quaker voice and add to the increasingly urgent calls for prison reform.

Melanie Jameson

CICJ CONFERENCE 2017 UPDATE

"New Ways of Doing Justice and Promoting Social Harmony"

This is the theme of the national conference being organised in 2017 by the Quakers in Criminal Justice at Woodbrooke from 24-26 February.



The conference will start with two speakers from Northern Ireland making an inspirational presentation about what a restorative society would look like. They are Derick Wilson and Hugh Campbell, Emeritus Reader and Senior Lecturer respectively in Restorative Practices at the University of Ulster.

On the Saturday morning Will McMahon, Deputy Director of the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, who will be speaking on 'Justice Matters; beyond Criminal Justice'. This initiative by the Centre is motivated "by the belief that the United Kingdom's over reliance on policing, prosecution and punishment is socially harmful, economically wasteful, and prevents us from tackling the complex problems our society faces in a sustainable, socially just manner."

Our final speaker on Sunday morning will be Belinda Hopkins, Director of Transforming Conflict, a national centre for restorative approaches in youth, educational and community settings. She will draw together our thinking and help us look at future ways of working. She is an

internationally recognized expert in getting institutions to use restorative processes to resolve conflicts and to live together in harmony.

There will be a series of workshops related to the conference theme. Free time is built into the programme for networking or chatting with Ffriends old and new. On Saturday evening there will be an opportunity for people to "showcase" and share information about their particular concerns and interests.

This promises to be an exciting and forward looking conference, and in order to make sure of a place, put the date in your next year's diary and book your place NOW on the application form enclosed with this Newsletter.

Nic McGeorge

NOTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This is to give formal notification of our QICJ Annual General Meeting, which will be held during our conference next February, and will take place on Saturday, February 25th, starting at 7.15 and ending not later than 18.15.

If anyone has matters which they wish to raise (very briefly!) under Any Other Business or the short 'Updates and Concerns' part which follows after the AGM business, it would be extremely helpful if they could notify either myself or Jo Rado beforehand.

Ann Jacob (Co-Clerk)

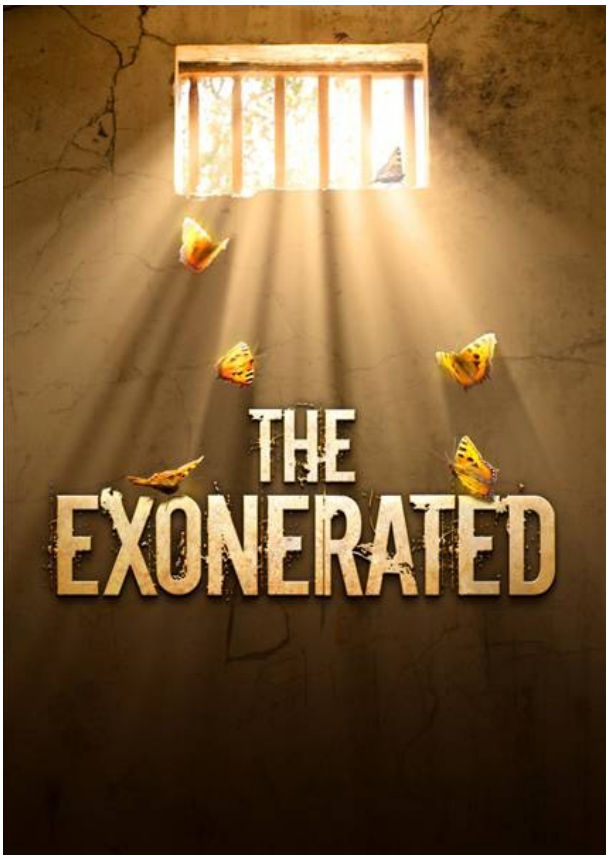
"LIFELINES" FROM A WRITER'S PERSPECTIVE

I have just been to see a production at my local theatre in Ealing of "The Exonerated", a documentary style play about the lives and experiences of six people who have eventually been exonerated from Death Row, based on actual information from their legal paperwork and their writings, etc. It is a play I have seen before and it is very powerful. The director of the play has agreed I can say a few words about LifeLines, (to which I belong), and also distribute some leaflets after a couple of the performances, as LifeLines has strong links with the topic of the play. So, although I know many of you will know about LifeLines already, for those who don't, I thought I would write a bit about it here.

LifeLines was founded by a Quaker and member of QICJ, Jan Arriens, after watching a documentary programme on television in 1987 called "Fourteen Days in May" for which a filming team from England was (very unusually) given permission to film the last 14 days in the life of Edward Earl Johnson in the maximum security Parchman Penitentiary in Missouri before he was executed.
(I had seen this programme myself when it was shown and found it very moving.) Jan Arriens has written articles about LifeLines in the past both for the Friend and for this Newsletter, which many of you may have seen. He was so moved by the grace and humanity of the other men on

Death Row there who also appeared in the film, that he wrote to three of them to tell them how he felt. He received answers from all three, from which it was clear that there was a desperate need for people on Death Row to have a positive contact with people in the outside world, especially as they were so often rejected by their families and reviled by the public.

Various friends of Jan's said they would also be willing to write to people on Death Row, and out of this has grown a very well structured organisation, the first of its kind, with over 1300 members, a quarterly Newsletter with information about related issues and also articles by both prisoners and penfriends etc; they have State Co-ordinators for each state in America to assist/inform the writers, and counsellors to offer help to the penfriends in England should it be needed. Each penfriend receives two copies of the Newsletter, one of which they send to the prisoner they write to. Two conferences a year are also held at which some very inspirational speakers who have had involvement with Death Row in one form or another, such as Sister Helen Prejean, Bryan Stevenson, (a death row attorney who founded the Equal Justice Iniative in Alabama), and Clive Stafford Smith (who was the then very young attorney who represented Edward Earl Johnson in the t.v. documentary, and is now the founder and director of Reprieve and the patron of LifeLines) among many others, and on several occasions our speakers have themselves been exonerated from Death Row (including Sunny Jacobs and Kerry Max Cook,who feature in The Exonerated). There are also Regional Groups which meet two or three times a year, when members and interested people can meet and talk over issues to do with Death Row and their correspondence with their penfriends, which are rewarding occasions. Jan Arriens himself as founder remains very involved with LifeLines also.



My own interest in LifeLines stemmed to a large extent from both my Quaker background and the fact that for a large part of my Probation career I worked in Prisons, an area which interested me very much and in which I still retain an interest. I had wanted to become involved in LifeLines since first hearing about it but waited until I retired before actually committing to writing to someone, after having initially joined as an associate member. I felt that having worked in prisons myself might to some extent offer a shared area of knowledge when writing to someone. I have now been writing to my penfriend, John, for nearly 20 years, and his appeals process is still not at an end! So it is something that generally requires long term commitment. The sort of letters you exchange will of course depend on the relationship that is built up between you and your penfriend as time goes on. It is useful of course to set clear boundaries regarding things such as requests for financial help, possible amourous approaches, etc. to avoid the difficulties that can sometimes arise (and your state co-ordinator is always there to help and advise you), and occasionally a correspondence may become difficult, but rarely so; most penfriends find that their exchange with their penfriend becomes very rewarding to them as well

as their penfriend and that they often learn as much or more from their penfriend as their penfriend does from them. Everyone I have heard speak at our conferences who has had contact with or themselves been someone on Death Row has stressed how very important this letter writing is to our Death Row penfriends.

It can sometimes happen that you don't hear from your penfriend for a long time and that perhaps they have given up, but it is important to remember that sometimes people don't write because they do not have enough money for stamps, or because they have difficulty with reading and writing, or sometimes for other reasons. I recollect someone recounting very movingly at a conference some time ago how she had written to her penfriend regularly and quite frequently, but never actually received any letters from him over all the years that she wrote. She always continued to write regardless, and finally, after he was eventually executed, a friend of his on 'The Row' wrote and told her that her penfriend had kept all the letters she ever wrote to him. I think this amply demon-strates how very important the letter writing is, even if we are not sure. Most of the men on Death Row, who have so little access to anything outside their prison cell, love to hear about the things do, where you go, what your interests are, maybe even about the things you like to eat! (My penfriend John loves food and hearing about it, even though he can't have it, and I love cooking, and send him recipes and pictures of the things I have cooked, and he sends me recipes he thinks I will like if he finds them in any magazines he has access to, or even recipes he makes up!)

I hope this gives some 'flavour' of what it is like to belong to LifeLines, which is a very warm and supportive community, and that it may encourage some of you to think of becoming a penfriend through LifeLines. If this is the case, you should contact them for further information or about how to join via their website, www.LifeLines-uk.org.uk



If you would like to read more about the American 'justice' system, there are a number of books which are helpful to read, and LifeLines has a list of suitable ones. There are also a good many autobiographical accounts by people who have been on Death Row. The ones I have read which I would especially especially recommend are: “Welcome to HELL. Letters and Writings from Death Row”, compiled and edited by Jan Arriens, with a forward by Sister Helen Prejean; “Injustice. Life and Death in the Courtrooms of America” by Clive Stafford Smith. “Just Mercy” 'A story of Justice and Redemption', by Bryan Stevenson, and”Stolen Time” (The Story of an Innocent Woman condemned to Death). These all amply demonstrate the very corrupt 'injustice' system that exists in America. Do please feel free to contact me if there is anything I have written here that you would like to ask me about, via my contact details on the front of this Newsletter.

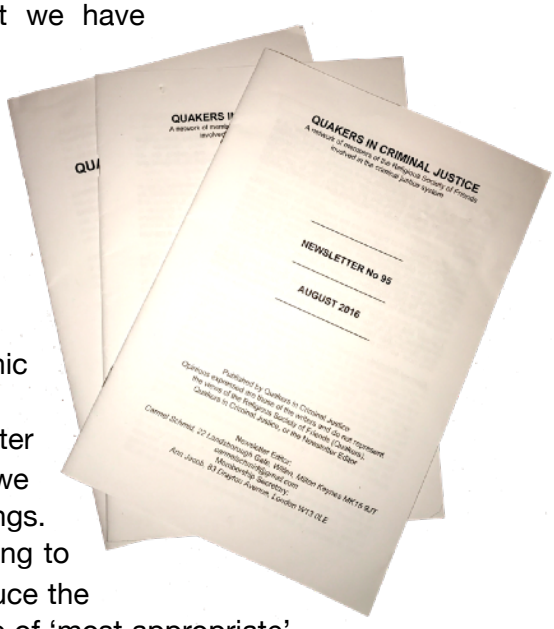
Ann Jacob

THE FATE OF OUR NEWSLETTER

Our familiar black and white newsletter has been an old friend, it has held us together, informed us, knitted us closely, united our thinking, it has celebrated our successes, prompted our actions, enabled us to reflect and appraise opposing views, it has challenged us.

In no small measure, it has enabled us individually and collectively to be heard. Our voice is in print for the annals of time. Our newsletter has been cherished, folded up and carried in handbags; it has been proudly announced at meetings and hangs on pamphlet stands in over fifty Quaker buildings including Woodbrooke and Friends House. But now Friends, is it time to let it rest and move forward with our whizzy electronic version?

The harsh reality is that we are a small organisation with a membership that fluctuates at around 150 including corporate membership. Our income is totally dependent on membership subscriptions that amounts to less than £1.5k annually. Our newsletter currentlycosts a bit over this c£1.7k (including postage). This means that we have precious no money left to pay for conference expenses. For the last four years, we have been reducing our reserves and we need now to make economies. This despite the fact that last year's conference in Leeds did make a good profit as we were lucky enough to have a line up of terrific speakers from within local reach.



The Proposal

I would propose that we continue to have three electronic newsletters every year (Spring, Summer and Autumn).
In addition, I would propose a single printed annual newsletter that would still be distributed to members but perhaps we could also increase our reach by sending it to all meetings. This would meet the needs of printed material for distributing to potential members and corporate members and would reduce the production costs. The annual version could include a range of 'most appropriate' contributions. (The editor role might become sought after!)
I would also suggest that the membership list is only issued electronically as this too forms part of the aforementioned costs.

For those without access to email or computers.

An A4 printout of the electronic newsletter and membership list could be provided at minimal cost to QICJ for those members not computer savy. This would not be photographic quality but would still carry all the articles and pictures too.

The benefits

We would have a small surplus every year to meet expected costs and to be available for discretionary spend by the committee that could for example enhance the conference

We would continue to be sustainable and maybe even find a wider audience for the QICJ newsletter.

This proposal will be put to the conference at the AGM in February 2017 and the committee (membership secretary and / or editor) would be very interested in your views prior to the conference.

Carmel Schmid

ESSEX QUAKERS FACE FORGIVENESS

On 18 October 2015, Mid-Essex Area Meeting criminal Justice Group held a day at Chelmsford Meeting House entitled "Forgiveness - What Does It Mean?" All local churches had been circulated, and of the 30 people present, a dozen were not Quakers. The opening speakers, Ray and Vi Donovan, had to live through a tragedy that nobody should be called on to face - the killing of their teenage son on a London street one night in 2001. He was not involved in a personal quarrel or gang warfare, but was stabbed by a 15-year-old who felt he needed to commit a violent act to prove himself in front of his mates. The parents' grief was compounded by the unsympathetic treatment they received from the police. They were left to wait without support, and when finally allowed to see their son's body, they were not allowed to touch it, as this would contaminate the evidence. It was declared to be 'the property of the Coroner'. 28 witnesses came forward, and a young constable's life was changed through taking down statements from neighbours. But Ray and Vi had to move house because of graffiti declaring the innocence of the three lads present when Christopher died. The trial was held at the old Bailey, lasted 6 weeks and cost the taxpayer £1 million. All three lads were found guilty of murder. Drink and drugs were involved. Ray and Vi made a good impression in court, because they showed concern for the families of the offenders, knowing all the time that whatever the outcome of the trial, the other parents would eventually get their sons back, whereas they themselves would not. In the whole sad business, there were no winners, only losers. It gave them no satisfaction to see the three lads sent down for a long time.

The Donovans stayed all day and were able to take part in discussions that followed their talk. Earlier they had been interviewed on BBC Essex. Their Christian commitment helped them through this terrible episode. They set up a trust in their son's memory, to help young people away from crime and violence. They knew what they were doing, as Ray had grown up in Brixton himself. They prayed for the young men to put their names down for the Sycamore Tree project, which teaches victim awareness to people in prison. They felt that even if one offender's life was changed, it would form a suitable memorial to Chris. They made history when they became the first murder victims to meet the offenders face to face. This happened at the request of the young man who had actually stabbed Chris. It was not easy to arrange; Vi and Ray found themselves treated by the Probation Service as if they were offenders themselves. Eventually in 2011 they were able to meet the former 15-year-old who put his arms round them, wept and apologised for what he had done. He told them he couldn't get Chris out of his head, or out of his heart. This forgiveness made him fell human again. Later after his release, he became a father, and Vi and Ray bought his baby a present. They took two of the offenders to visit their son's grave. The third they

met only last year, to urge him to forgive himself and move on. He had been abandoned by his parents and brought up by his grandmother; no wonder he looked to the gang for companionship and emotional support. Ray told us of an instance where the victim of a crime was the only person who came to visit the offender in prison: his family and former gang mates just didn't want to know. The three young men were very moved when they realised that Ray and Vi had forgiven them. The parents felt they needed to offer forgiveness, so their own lives could move on. If you cling to resentment, you end up poisoning your own soul.

A short period of silence followed this searing talk. I felt that Ray and Vi had gone not just the second, but the eighth or tenth mile in their willingness to forgive their son's killers. It was an amazing example of the redemptive power of Christ's love at work in the world today. Once an offender can take responsibility for what he has done, that is healing in itself.

More interesting points emerged during questions, and then in discussions in pairs and groups of four. Young people's values are much influenced by video games, in which the victims always get up again. It is a criminal trait not to be able to distinguish fact from fantasy. Ray and Vi have found their involvement with Sycamore Tree addictive; it has operated in over 20 prisons, but lack of funding prevented it from reaching HMP Chelmsford. Chris Macallan told us however of 'Open Door', an Ignatian course that operated at Chelmsford for over five years. Ray and Vi have visited 35 prisons to date. Ray deplored the privatisation of prisons. A more hopeful development, judges can delay sentence to allow time for victims and offender to meet, if both are willing to do this. Some of us would like to see this welcome move towards restorative justice made mandatory. Not everybody feels vengeful; I remember, at the time of the dreadful James Bulger episode 20 years ago, feeling not rage against the two ten-year-olds responsible, but a kind of wonder and pity that boys as young as that could have done something so utterly evil. I remember George Fox meeting a man on the way to the gallows saying "Friend, what has brought thee to this?"

In a final discussion, I found myself in the same group as Vi. Can you forgive with a broken heart? Yes, you can, and must. But forgiveness for her is not so much destination but an ongoing discipline. It is essential to healing and reconciliation

Adrian Smith

CCJS PROGRAMME AND PRIORITIES 2016/17

QPSW CRIME, COMMUNITY AND JUSTICE 2016-2017

“Justice should be compassionate, forgiving and healing – restorative, not retributive. We want to change attitudes and encourage the criminal justice system to move towards this vision of justice” **(Crime, Community and Justice Sub-committee)**

In September 2016 the Quaker Peace & Social Witness Crime, Community and Justice Sub-committee (CCJS)[1] undertook its annual review of work and priorities. Within the context of this vision of the criminal justice system, it was agreed that underpinning aims for the crime, community and justice programme are the increased use of restorative justice and of non-custodial alternative sentences.

Such responses to a crime are likely to be constructive for both victim and offender; help to reduce the continual over-crowding in prisons; and offer a range of possibilities for community involvement in justice. Changing public attitudes is always difficult, yet there is already compassion towards people living difficult lives and we need to harness that compassion in relation to the use and experience of prison. There is a moral imperative to work for good outcomes for offenders and victims.

CCJS identified three specific areas of policy work for itself over the next 12-18 months:

- Voting Rights for Prisoners: rather than seeing the issue as giving prisoners the right to vote, we see it as not removing the franchise from them, and few other groups are still working on this issue.

- Prison and Courts Reform Bill (England & Wales)[2]: because it provides an opportunity to engage with government on the matter of the prison estate. Whilst there are still prisons, it is in society's interests to have a well-regulated, well-functioning prison service contributing to a genuinely transformative experience which will aim to reduce re-offending and the damage done to victims, offenders and families.

- Justice Reform Programme in Scotland[3]: this contains heartening proposals such as a new national strategic body to promote community justice, community-based alternatives to short term imprisonment, and community-based custodial units for women prisoners. There may well be good practice here which can be exemplars for the Westminster government.

In order to identify other opportunities for action within the purposes, aims and vision of this programme, CCJS continues to monitor government policies.

CCJS will also be:

- Suggesting ways in which Friends may wish to be involved in community justice initiatives.

- Producing an easily accessible guide for Friends on restorative justice.

- Exploring ways of working with the 'Justice Matters' programme run by the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies.

- Looking at policies affecting probation services.

- Continuing to offer to run 'Why Prison?' workshops for Friends.

Paula Harvey, Programme Manager, QPSW Crime, Community and Justice
[1]Quaker Peace & Social Witness is part of the central organisation of Quakers in Britain, and its Crime, Community and Justice Sub-Committee supports and represents Quaker concerns in the area of criminal justice. ccj@quaker.org.uk | 020 7663 1036 | www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/social-justice/crime-community-justice

[2]Prison and Courts Reform Bill (England & Wales): included in the Queen's Speech in May 2016 and still in the Government's legislative programme but at the time of writing the Bill has not yet been published or laid before Parliament.

[3]A Plan for Scotland: The Scottish Government's Programme for Scotland 2016-17. Published 6 September 2016. It sets out the actions the Government will take in the forthcoming year and beyond. www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/09/2860

Paula Harvey

CCJS - CONFERENCE REPORT

CENTRE OF CRIME & JUSTICE STUDIES

Speaking at Criminal Justice since 2015: 'What happened? What next?', the Minister said that the Northern Ireland justice system had made major progress since the devolution of justice powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2010. But there was still much to do to achieve 'transformative change' that would place prevention and problem-solving at its heart.

The Minister also said that she looked forward to the day when it was not necessary to speak about the ongoing threat of terrorism.

The Northern Ireland Justice Minister was among experts from across the four nations and regions of the United Kingdom who reviewed criminal justice developments since the 2015 General Election.

Professor Rod Morgan, former HM Chief Inspector of Probation and former Chair of the Youth Justice Board, told the conference that the Home Secretary Amber Rudd and Justice Secretary Liz Truss were 'substantially untried ministers' whose 'faltering speeches' to the Conservative Party Conference gave little basis for predictions about the future direction of policy.

> Far too many vulnerable people are being drawn into the justice system, the Northern Ireland Justice Minister, Claire Sugden, told the conference held by Centre of Crime & Justice Studies on the UK's justice systems.

Brexit, he argued, 'changed everything', making the government's finances 'highly uncertain' and the likely direction of criminal justice policy difficult to predict.

The former Scottish Justice Secretary, Kenny MacAskill, said that criminal justice policy since the Scottish independence referendum in 2014 had largely continued in the direction he had set during his period in office.

But he welcomed the decision to discontinue the development of a new prison for women at Greenock, arguing that it had become untenable to build it once Nicola Sturgeon had been elected leader of the SNP.

He also said he thought it unlikely that there would be a second referendum on Scottish independence.

Dusty Kennedy, Director of Youth Justice Board Cymru, highlighted the dramatic fall in first-time entrants into the youth justice system and the fall in the youth custodial population in Wales.

Echoing Claire Sugden's comments, he drew attention to the high proportion of young people with multiple criminal convictions who had faced trauma and neglect and had little in the way of formal qualifications.

The Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, David Strang, mounted a strong defence of the independent inspection regime. Those detained in prison, he argued, were vulnerable to mistreatment. Inspection and monitoring played a vital role in assessing both the condition of prisons, and the treatment of prisoners.

Neil Carey, Audit Manager at the National Audit Office, spoke about the role of audit in challenging criminal justice institutions to improve and deliver value for money. Although the management of cases had improved since 2010, he noted, the criminal justice system was not currently delivering value for money.

The conference formed part of the Centre's UK Justice Policy Review programme of activity. Our Director, Richard Garside, who chaired the event, emphasised the importance of assessing criminal justice developments across the United Kingdom's four nations and regions.

Extracted from website where you can sign up to receive their bulletins
www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/news/too-many-vulnerable-people-being-criminalised

Richard Garside

SOCIAL CARE OR SYSTEMATIC NEGLECT

A report from the Prison Reform Trust and Restore Support Network

From the standpoint of an interested non-professional, I found this report informative and very easy to read. From the standpoint of an old ex-prisoner, which is what I am, I found it also a fair reflection of my own experience.

Like many of my peers I was never fully aware of all that was being done on our behalf to improve prison conditions. Of course we knew something of the work of the Prison Reform Trust (PRT) and Restore Support Network (SRN), and over the last decade have seen changes for the better, but most of us spent our time coping with day-to-day life rather than keeping ourselves abreast of research and policy-making. This study, based as it is on the contributions of a small number of people is, in my view, widely representative of the views of older prisoners.

Adjustments to accommodation: allowing wheelchair access and regular monitoring by healthcare staff of prisoners over 50 are two of the recommendations in the report which I saw in practice before I left prison in 2016. At my last prison, a purpose-built palliative care unit was in



operation and a community nurse was on duty daily housing elderly and disabled prisoners. As far back as 2006, although it seemed that the Prison Service had no particular policy initiative to guide them, some disciplined staff had taken it upon themselves to try to change things for the better. So change is happening, slowly and no doubt unevenly, but I am nonetheless hopeful. Even though the recommendations of the report may not all be accepted and acted upon by our governing politicians, knowing there are people working who will continue working to effect change is heartening.

I do have reservations about the efficacy of an administrative system designed to deliver a national strategy. My concern is that a national strategy, emanating from Whitehall, could all too easily produce a system which gradually becomes subverted by its own administrative needs. If this was to happen, and it isn't stretching the imagination too far to consider the possibility, then we would have a national strategy which, though clothed in inspirational rhetoric, did little to meet perceived needs of prisoners.

Of course there must be nationally agreed aims and objectives. There is a need for fact-finding and statistics but I feel individuals would be better served if the details of delivery were worked out at local level and not imposed from above. There is already far too much box-ticking masquerading as implementation of policy in today's world. An agreed principle should be sufficient guidance for responsible people.

Mike Waters

HOPE – THE MISSING INGREDIENT IN PRISON REFORM

Report on the Parmoor Lecture

Professor Nick Hardwick from the Parole Board delivered the Howard League Parmoor lecture in October this year. He spoke about the deplorable lack of security in prisons today, the parole board and the challenges and potential solutions for Imprisoned for Public Protection IPP prisoners.

The lack of security in prisons has been discussed elsewhere so I will omit repeating that in this report.

Initially, I was jolted from my position as I do generally think that prisoners are a product of their background but Hardwick challenged this concept and said:

"For one thing, in my experience, prisoners themselves think you are ridiculous if you believe that. We know all the statistics about the disadvantage many prisoners have suffered. But despite that they have made choices. To portray them as simply the powerless products of circumstances beyond their control dehumanises them. Worse than that, denying their possibility to choose, denies them the possibility of deciding to change. They simply become the recipients of processes done to them rather than agents in their own destiny".

He spoke of prisoners who had given up on hope, referring to a man in Pentonville who told him he was going to get himself put in the 'seg' and go on hunger strike in protest.

Equally, speaking about his experience of victims he said they have not been demanding vengeance:

"They may find the prospect of parole distressing but they have dealt with the process with real grace. What they do legitimately expect, and too often do not get in all parts of the criminal justice system, is to be treated with courtesy and empathy, and to receive the practical and emotional support that those who have suffered a sudden and awful loss require."

He said "I do not think the interests of those concerned about prison reform and parole, and those concerned about the victims of crime, are in fact very different." He went on to describe the role of parole in the reform process in two words: 'space and hope'

He argued for sufficient administrative resources in order to ensure that people were not detained for longer than necessary. (This after all would only make economic sense given the cost of keeping people in prison)

Hope

He spoke of prisoners who had given up on hope, referring to a man in Pentonville who told him he was going to get himself put in the 'seg' and go on hunger strike in protest.

He said that 'the ability to hope is part of what makes us human', quoting Judge Power-Forde at the European Court of Human Rights, in 2013:

"Hope is an important and constitutive aspect of the human person. Those who commit the most abhorrent and egregious of acts and who inflict untold suffering upon others, nevertheless retain their fundamental humanity and carry within themselves the capacity to change. Long and deserved though their prison sentences may be, they retain the right to hope that, some day, they may have atoned for the wrongs which they have committed."

He said that a prison in which prisoners feel they have some hope for the future, of a different life, is likely to be safer than one in which people feel hopeless.

Role of the Parole Board

The parole board was established by the Criminal Justice Act 1967 although its role and the scale of its work has changed enormously. In 2015, The board held over 7,000 oral hearings and dealt with the paperwork of some 16,000 cases. It currently releases about 40% of the prisoners who come before it. It has the following remit:

1. Deciding whether to release indeterminate sentence prisoners, including life sentence prisoners and prisoners given indeterminate sentences for public

protection (IPPs) after their minimum term of imprisonment has expired
2. Deciding whether to release some categories of prisoners with determinate sentences.
3. Deciding whether some prisoners who have been recalled to prison can be re-released.
4. Advising the Secretary of State whether indeterminate prisoners can be moved from closed to open conditions.
5. Advising the Secretary of State on any release or recall matters referred to it.

In deciding whether to release a prisoner, the Board has to decide whether it is 'satisfied that it is no longer necessary for the protection of the public' that the prisoner should remain detained.

In effect, the prisoner has to demonstrate that releasing him or her would not create a risk of a serious further offences rather than those opposing release being required to demonstrate it would do so. The problem for the prisoners is: how do they prove a negative?

He said the case of 'Osborn and others' required the Board to hold more intensive oral hearings, and as the Board did not have necessary resources, this led to an increase in the Board's backlog of outstanding cases.

"Hope is an important and constitutive aspect of the human person"

The Board's five-point strategy

- Safely eliminate the backlog of outstanding cases that are delayed.
- Ensure the Board's remit is focussed on those cases where its expertise is of most value.
- Work with others to ensure that by the end of 2017 the majority of IPP prisoners have been safely released or have clear plans in place that will enable them to progress.
- Ensure that the Board's cultural and procedural approach to risk is appropriate.
- Members and staff working together to continuously improve.

IPP prisoners.

The IPP sentence was in two parts. The tariff, or punishment part of the sentence, which is the minimum period that the judge says the prisoner must serve. Post-tariff, the risk test applies and the prisoner can only be released if the Parole Board is satisfied he or she no longer poses a risk of committing a serious further offence.

The sentence was used much more widely than had been anticipated, and was subject to widespread criticism by the courts, parliament and sections of the media.

The prison service struggled to put the offender management processes and programmes in place to help prisoners reduce their risk. The Parole Board struggled to keep up with its increased work load.

Before the sentence was curtailed in 2008, judges had very little discretion about the use of IPP sentences and up to that point it was available for relatively minor offences. There was no minimum tariff so some IPPs were imposed with extremely short tariffs (infamously the lowest period to be served was just 28 days).

The release rate was low. In 2010-11 the Board released just 140 IPPs.

At the point of abolition in December 2012, there were 6,080 IPPs in prison. Since that date the number of IPP prisoners has fallen by about a third (according to last published data there were 3,998). Hardwick admits that although progress is being made formidable problems remain.

82% of the IPP population are still in prison despite being post-tariff. There are still 667 IPP prisoners in prison who had a minimum tariff of less than two years. There are also 730 who have not yet served their minimum tariffs, some of whom might have received a discretionary life sentence if the IPP sentence had not been available.

Hardwick reported that co-ordination between the Parole Board, Probations Service and prisons needs to be improved further and sometimes inadequate co-ordination leads to unnecessary deferrals and adjournments.

Restrictions on the use of Release on Temporary License (ROTL) creates significant problems such that it makes it much more difficult to assess a prisoner's risk by seeing how they behave away from the prison environment.

The Parole Board aims to reduce IPP prisoners down to about 2,000 by 2020. (Personally, I find it distressing that progress is so slow)

Recalls
Hardwick said that the IPP license period is too long, the bar to get recalled is too low and the recall process needs greater procedural safeguards.

Policy change
He said reform by means of legislative or policy changes would be needed in order to end the IPP sentence once the Parole Board had decided on release.

Carmel Schmid paraphrased Nick Hardwick's Parmoor lecture of the Howard League.

HOW DOES QUAKER FAITH & PRACTICE SPEAK TO YOU?



Paul is a lifer. As I write he has been in prison for over twenty five years and is still waiting for a successful Reading Quaker faith & practice is a national programme of study and discourse about our Book of Discipline. There are passages throughout the book which might help to shape our approach to criminal justice. For example, the following statement found at 23.94:

"The terrible sufferings of our forebears in the prisons of the seventeenth century have given us as a people a special interest in the management of prisons and the treatment of crime".

"George Fox protested to the judges of his day 'concerning their putting men to death for cattle and money and small matters'; and laid before them 'what a hurtful thing it was that prisoners should lie so long in jail'; showing how 'they learned wickedness from one

another in talking of their bad deeds'".

There is, however, much work still to be done, in creating a right understanding of the nature and causes of crime, and in emphasising the need for redemptive treatment rather than retributive punishment. Society is in measure responsible for the criminal, a fact which emphasises the duty of meeting moral failure by redemptive care. Evil can only be finally overcome by good.

How do these sections of Quaker faith & practice speak to you? Why not share your responses with others by writing or talking about them?

This would also be a perfect opportunity to engage members of your meeting by 'organising' a study group on these chapters. There is a choice of free study resources for groups and individuals to download and print at: together.woodbrooke.org.uk
For more information and the full reading calendar see: qfp.quaker.org.uk/reading
or find us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/readingqfp

Rhiannon Grant

TIPPING THE SCALES

I have just re-read a wonderful, if altruistic article, which Bernard Levin wrote for the Times. It must have been written in the mid-eighties, and he states that British trials are deliberately and rightly weighted in favour of the accused. The article itself was written to oppose so-called reforms intended to make convictions easier.

On the 29th August 2008 the same newspaper printed banner headlines proclaiming that restrictions on questioning suspects would be eased to increase convictions. I mention this news item because it is so typical of establishment propaganda intended to convince the readers that the accused holds all the cards in criminal proceedings, and that the balance needs redressing. That means fairer to the prosecution. Such propaganda has become blatant enough to speak openly about increasing the number of convictions. (When did you hear a politician telling us that there are too many convictions). Their campaign has worked: I meet intelligent people who are genuinely surprised when I tell them that the truth is quite the reverse, as the dice have always been loaded against the accused, and that he has absolutely none of the advantages claimed by the authorities.

I am not some embittered anti-police defence solicitor, who cannot win any cases. I am a solicitor who both prosecutes and defends for a living, and I have no objection to representing either side, because I believe that representing both prosecution and defence preserves my integrity, objectivity, and independence.

I regret to say that Bernard Levin's optimistic stance was wrong when he wrote that article all those years ago, and that his altruistic principles have no place at all in the criminal justice system today after many decades of repressive reactionary and authoritarian legislation by governments of both main parties.

I could not examine every one of the thousands of legislative advantages given to the prosecution in recent times, so I thought I would approach the subject by considering the few measures passed which were intended to benefit the accused, and my regrettable conclusion is that such measures remain in force only because they have been so whittled down as to be valueless and illusory or because, ironically, they are of equal benefit to the prosecution.

The death penalty was abolished in 1965 and its abolition is confirmed by ECHR which is incorporated into The Human Rights Act of 1998. Certainly that is of benefit to the accused, but what a priceless gift it is to the prosecution when somebody is involved in a miscarriage of justice. There have been too many of these to mention but a topical and worrying case is that of Eddie Gilfoyle who still stands convicted of murder but who is at least still alive.

Legal aid was established by statute in 1949, and for the moment is still with us, though in a greatly reduced form. Criminal legal aid can cover not only Court proceedings but also advice at a police station, although the latter has been so watered down that it is financially self-defeating for solicitors to participate. The great advantage to the prosecution is that when some questionable conduct of theirs emerges, the first thing always pointed out is that the accused was represented at Court or in a police station, as if the mere involvement or presence of a defence solicitor can justify any dubious tactics by the State. In practice, most prosecutors hate to deal with the accused in person. I cannot think why but it happens to be the case. The prosecutor's job is so much easier when talking to the defendant's solicitor, so, for the moment, legal aid stays in place to help the prosecution.

Recorded interviews in a police station have been of great common benefit to both prosecution and defence. Prior to these, the system employed was comical. Nothing was recorded, and the interviewing officers went away and together pooled their collective recollection of the interview and reduced it to a written question and answer format for use in Court. Thirty odd years ago a great deal of time was wasted, especially in the Crown Court where the collective recollection of the police was invariably challenged by the defence. Now, the police prepare the edited highlights of the interview on paper, and if the defence does not accept it, the recording can be played verbatim to the Court. The new system is of great benefit to the suspect, but equally to the prosecution who no longer have to put up with false allegations about the conduct of police officers during an interview. As a prosecutor I felt enormous relief when this system started because of the time it saved. This procedure is likely to be here to stay, but only because it helps the prosecution as much as the defence.

Readers will know that most so-called miscarriages of justice are caused by the prosecution concealing or failing to reveal relevant evidence that could be of material help to the defence. The current case of Eddie Gilfoyle is a typical example. One hundred percent of criminal cases start in the Magistrates' Court and about ninety seven percent end there. Where cases go to the Crown Court for trial there has always been a duty on the prosecution to provide, at least, evidence to support a prima face case. However there was no such requirement in the Magistrates' Court until 1985, when a form of disclosure known as advance information required the prosecution to give the defence a précis of, if not all, the evidence that would be used against the accused in the summary trial of an either-way offence. This reform was of great benefit to the defence, but was equally useful to the prosecution since many people could now be persuaded to consent to summary trial, because no longer did they have to go to the Crown Court just to see the evidence against them and the prosecution was then batting on its home ground in the Magistrates' Court. These rules on disclosure are here to stay because they are of equal or greater benefit to the prosecution.

The four measures above are the only ones I could easily think of which were intended to benefit the accused. Against them there are many thousands of legal and procedural benefits to help the prosecution and to increase convictions by any fashionable means. I mention just a few, including majority verdicts, abolition of the defence's right of peremptory challenge (the prosecution still retains its right to exclude a juror), jury vetting, police officers on juries, virtual abolition of the right of silence in the police station and Court, generous admission of hearsay,

admissibility of previous convictions as a routine practice, new easy terms for prosecution witnesses to give their evidence and to be given help whilst giving such evidence, secret trials, the watering down and subsequent abolition of committal proceedings, the new right to the prosecution of a closing speech in the Magistrates' Court and the prosecution's new right to appeal against sentences it considers to be too lenient. These are just a few of the government handouts to the prosecution to increase the number of convictions by strategic manoeuvring rather than by the quality of the evidence.

The latest establishment propaganda is to put victims (currently known also as "survivors") at the heart of the system. Space prevents a full discussion, but the most tragic aspect of this is the new right for complainants to challenge the decision of the CPS, when it takes no further action against a suspect. The CPS was set up to be the independent prosecutor, but now it has surrendered its independence to the mob and the gutter press. There is, of course, no corresponding right to challenge or to have reviewed a CPS decision to prosecute or to continue with the case, showing that the service is little more than the conscious or unconscious servant of one section of society only. Cliff Richard was told he would not be prosecuted, but can no longer rest easy because that decision is now the subject of such a review.

The simple fact is that despite its claimed neutrality in criminal proceedings the State is 100 per cent behind the prosecution because every acquittal, whether for murder or for speeding, is a blow to the establishment, and it is this view which the State seeks undeserving public support via its propaganda.

To complete the picture, you must add the creation of thousands of new offences, an explosive increase of police powers, plus ever increasing powers of punishment given to the Courts and you might begin to disbelieve the establishment propaganda and realise that there is now so much putty under the scales of justice that acquittals are an endangered species.

Chris Hart

THE WICKED BOY - BOOK REVIEW

The Wicked Boy, by Kate Summerscale (Bloomsbury 2016, ISBN 978140885114-2)

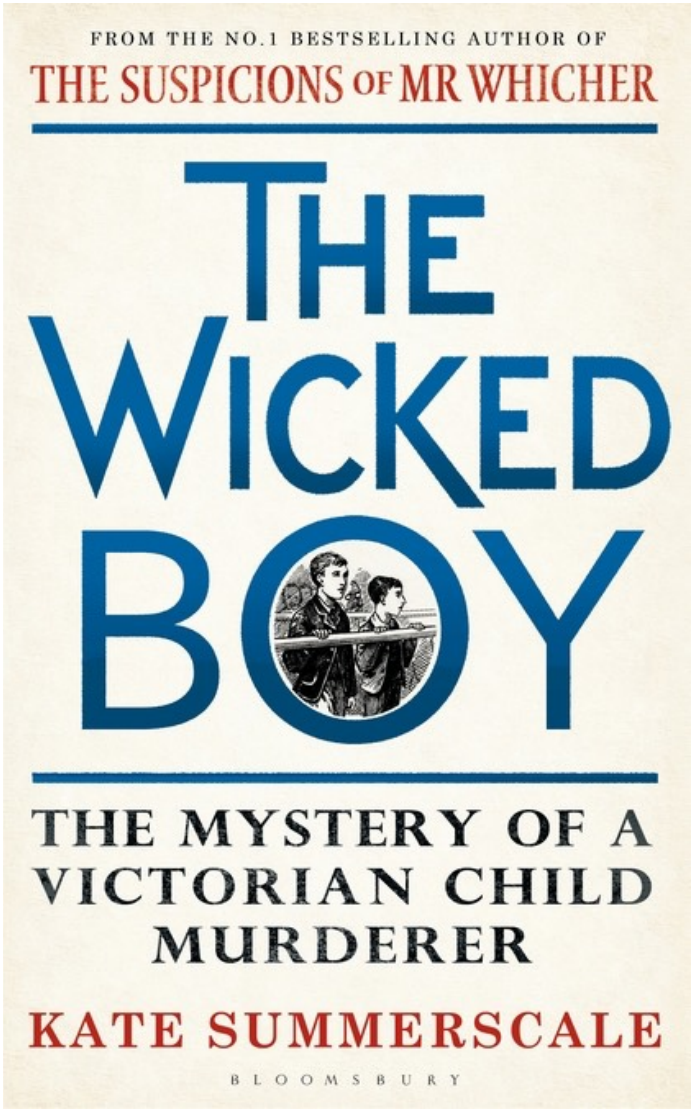
On arrival at Church Stretton to lead a week's walking I made a beeline for Burway Books, one of those small but enterprising bookshops that survive in some country towns, and deserve our support. And it was there that my eye was caught sight of this very remarkable account of a Victorian murder.

The opening chapter of the story made me feel so uneasy, it was an effort to continue. It went against all human instinct to read of the casual way that in 1895 a London boy of thirteen, Robert Coombes, had savagely killed his own mother, and then helped himself from her purse and calmly set out with his younger brother Nattie to Lords for the day, to see W.G.Grace in action.

Robert's family was poor but respectable and lived in Plaistow, East London. The school Robert attended is still there. He had been a model student and had left school and gone to work at an ironworks, but left after a fortnight, 'because he couldn't stand the noise'.

Robert made no effort to dispose of the corpse or to deny what he had done. Significantly, the crime was committed while his father was away at sea. He showed a puzzling degree of self-

possession: he had clearly planned the deed beforehand, and carried it out in the small hours when his victim was unlikely to resist. He seemed unaware of the seriousness of what he had done, and stood up in court smartly dressed and cheerful of mien. His brother, a year younger, emerges as guilty of no more than collusion, and was not charged, so that he could be used as a prosecution witness.



Robert exhibited the familiar criminal trait of not being able to distinguish between fact and fantasy. He claimed he wanted to go to India, or 'to go and live on islands'. Haven't we all had fantasies like this when young? He was an avid reader of Penny Dreadfuls, which were blamed at the time for their corrupting effect on youth. (One of my suspicions after the killing of James Bulger in 1993 was that the boys responsible had been taken over by images from so-called 'Snuff Movies' which allegedly show people being killed for fun; but this did not prove to be the case).

Robert could have been hanged, but the court found him 'Guilty but Insane', and he was consigned to Broadmoor. There was no previous history of disturbed behaviour, and no investigation was made into events in his family which could explain why he had suddenly behaved so irresponsibly.

In the book 'Trial by Medicine' by my brother Roger Smith (1981, Edinburgh University Press, ISBN 085224407X), Robert Coombes provides another example of the type of crime discussed in this book. It is about murder where the accused showed none of the commonly accepted signs of mental illness, yet had committed acts so dreadful that people felt they must have been insane to have committed them. The book appeared around the time of the trial of Peter Sutcliffe 'the Yorkshire Ripper', who provided a case in point. I was puzzled at the time of the Ripper trial that no reference was made to the relationship he had had with his mother, who had died by then. What was it that made a boy grow up with a compulsion to exact endless revenge on women? I really do believe, 'In the lost boyhood of Judas/Was Jesus betrayed'. It is the experiences of our earliest years, and of our parents' and carers' earliest years, which inform the people we grow up to become. Yet cultural assumptions will place emphasis on certain facts in a judicial case, while ignoring others.

Can a person guilty of so serious an offence so early in life ever be redeemed? Robert Coombes emerges as one of the successes of Broadmoor. Inmates were given single rooms, a privilege for a growing boy in the 1890s. Broadmoor provided the period of respite and training for adult life that his home life had been unable to do. He developed both musical and sporting skills. After a time he moved to the Salvation Army colony at Hadleigh in Essex, and later he emigrated to Australia. During the First World War he enlisted as a stretcher bearer and served with distinction at Gallipoli. He died in 1949. As an older man he took in a boy, Harry Smith, who had been treated badly by his own family. All the evidence suggests this was an entirely

responsible relationship, which provided a home for the boy, and made up for Robert's lack of wife and children. Robert and Nattie did meet again as adults, and Nattie was re-introduced to Harry.

In the light of later events, people tend to look to Victorian times as an era of confidence and certainty. They were not seen like this at the time; in fact the 1890s were years of particular strain. Fenians and anarchists threatened violence. Oscar Wilde had just been sent to prison. The 'Daily Mail' was founded, and the ears of the sensitive were endlessly assaulted by a pop song entitled 'Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-de-ay.' In 1898, the term 'Hooligan' came into use following a riot in the Old Kent Road. And then there were the Boers... Britain's destiny as an imperial power was in question. The case of Robert Coombes may reflect some of the tensions evident in the society to which he was born.

Adrian Smith

A LOOK AT THE FUTURE PRISON PROJECT

It was on reading the Parmoor paper that I came upon the scoping paper for the Future Prison Project being undertaken by the RSA who in conjunction with 'Transition Spaces' are aiming for a visionary blueprint on prisons worthy of the 21st century. The scoping paper in itself makes interesting reading and I thought I would share a few snippets with readers. Their work involves expert seminars, research papers, fieldwork and case studies.

The RSA are primarily focused on how a core purpose of 'rehabilitation' could drive change. They are exploring concepts such as 'not for profit' models of prison provision, how to incorporate successes from academy schools and foundations hospitals, how to give governors more freedom and how to incorporate local community and how to transform rehabilitation. Key themes include: risk, decency, safety, autonomous leadership, devolution, education, employment and well being.

The following quote from the scoping paper while impinged on my mind because it is so obvious: "A key part of safeguarding public safety and lowering likelihood of reoffending is meeting their (prisoners') needs." The paper explored the current context of how the prison population has doubled since the early 1990's to a population of c86,000 today. Then the reality of public sector cuts - the staffing figures from NOMs (June 2015) were 43,000 (including probation). But this figure represents a decrease of 23% in staffing levels by comparison to 5 years previously.

The scoping paper went on to describe that current prospective prison officers do not require 5 GCSEs and receive only six weeks generic training prior to taking up posts. Apparently, this is amidst the lowest levels of training in the world. The paper does describe the many officers who see their work as vocational and who are passionate about the role that prison can play in transforming people's lives. However, many feel that changes in recent years along with fewer staff ratios has led to a deskilling of prison officers' roles.

Themes that prevail their work include:

- the role that language and communication play in reframing the debate about prison
- ethics that underpin future prison reform work
- financial models needed to drive change and investment

- a new centre of excellence to drive change, incubate new approaches and facilitate workforce development

Interestingly, the report highlights stark reminders of the current pressures: threat of strike action, a high profile attack on a prison officer in HMP Wormwood Scrubs, the BBC investigation into psychoactive substances smuggled into prisons.

But subsequently Hardwick revealed stats showing the deplorable advent of homicide in UK prisons. In the years 2007 to 2014, there were very few but in 2015 there were 7 and in 2016 there were 5 up to October. The volume of suicides, self-harms and assaults in prison is also dramatically increasing and has given rise to the Prison Governors Association cry for a public enquiry into the state of prisons.

I was impressed by the following quote and wanted to share it with Friends:

“Rehabilitation is not something that can be done to people and prison reform cannot be done by ministers or prison leaders alone. It requires a collaborative approach that gives voice to the staff and service users who live and work in prisons, a measure of idealism and ambition, coupled with knowledge that transformative change will take years to achieve”

Carmel Schmid
A report on The Future Prison: scoping paper by Rachel O’Brien and Jack Robson

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Firstly, we are very pleased to welcome four new members to QICJ, namely: Clare Devereux, Debby Flack, Ruth Moore Williams and North Wales Area Meeting. Their contact details, etc. will go into the next updated Membership List, and in the meantime, if you wish to contact any of them, please do so via myself.

In my report for the August Newsletter, I expressed concern at our numbers having sunk to an alarming 'low' of 127. However, the position has begun to improve again since, with some new members joining and no losses through resignations, deaths or deletions, and our membership now stands at 133, which is better news. However, there are still 28 members who have not yet paid for the current year. I must remind you that QICJ has no independent income and relies entirely on income from subscriptions, any small surplus we may make from our conferences and any donations that we may receive (a significant number of these being from members who pay at the full rate when eligible to pay the unwaged rate, to whom many thanks). Thus timely subscription payment is especially important to us. In this context, we recognise that this subscription 'slippage' is often due to oversight rather than intent, and the committee would like, and hope, to move to subscriptions normally being paid by standing order as far as possible You will therefore find a standing order form enclosed with the subscription renewal form to encourage this method of payment and prevent loss of members who get deleted from the list for failing to maintain subscriptions. We hope as many of you as possible will move to this method of payment.

There are some corrections and some amendments which need to be made to the updated Membership List issued in August, as follows:

Corrections: Jo Rado's email address should end with 'co.uk' and not '.com'
William Finley's email address should begin with 'uk...' and not 'ur...'
Charles Axford's telephone no. is incorrect.

Amendments: Janet Lynch has changed her address
Don McQueen has a new email address
Robert Forrest is no longer at the work address or work email given
Carmel Schmid has changed her telephone numbers
Alice Audsley has a new email address

As we don't give personal contact information in the Newsletter because it is not data protected, would any member needing details of the above changes please contact me. The 'corrections' required are almost certainly my fault! However, while some of the 'amendments' have come about since the new Membership List was published, most of them are because people have not let me know of changes in their contact details when they have taken place. It would therefore be extremely helpful if members would let me know at the time when their details change, so that my records are up to date when I update the Membership List, (which after all makes it more useful.)

N.B. If you would prefer to receive your Newsletter in electronic form only (in a much more stylish and colourful form!) please let our Newsletter Editor, Carmel Schmid, know.

You will find details about our annual conference next February elsewhere in this Newsletter, and a booking form enclosed with it, as well as a subscription reminder form and a standing order form. I look forward to meeting up with as many of you as possible at the conference.

Ann Jacob
Membership Secretary

NOTICES

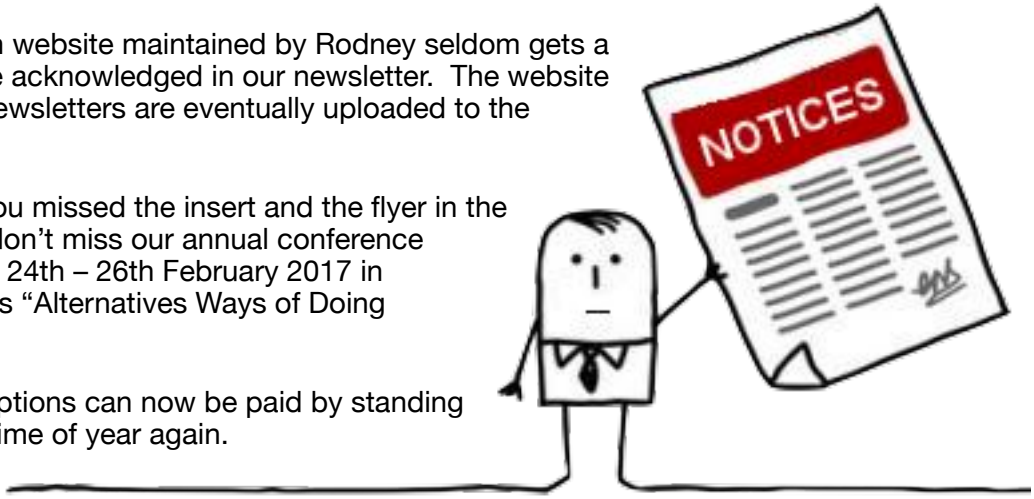
Sentencing is the key to unlocking the prison crisis: This article from Martin Wright was published in our August newsletter without an acknowledgment to Church Times whose website is www.churchtimes.co.uk and who first published the article.

Apology for the (herein) belated printing of 'Quakers Face Forgiveness', which reports on Mid Essex seminar last October 2015. I look forward to hearing of their seminar this October which concerned the Phoenix Trust.

QICJ Website: Our own website maintained by Rodney seldom gets a mention but ought to be acknowledged in our newsletter. The website is: www.qicj.org. The newsletters are eventually uploaded to the website.

QICJ Conference: If you missed the insert and the flyer in the current edition, please don't miss our annual conference which will take place on 24th – 26th February 2017 in Woodbrooke. The title is "Alternatives Ways of Doing Justice".

Subscriptions: Subscriptions can now be paid by standing order and yes it is that time of year again.



Getting involved in criminal justice: For those who are not professionally involved in criminal justice or Quaker chaplaincy, there are many ways of getting involved but all these organisations do require significant commitment. Lifelines are an organisation who allocate volunteers to write to a prisoner on death row and are looking for writers, see more at www.lifelines-uk.org.uk. There are constantly calls for 'official prison visitors' (OPVs) at HMP Woodhill and I imagine that this call is echoed throughout the country where there is an OPV branch in operation. (www.NAOPV.com) They offer a one to one befriending service totally separate to Prison Inspectors who carry out independent inspections and report on the state of the prison estate today (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk). Equally, Prisoner Penfriends are also constantly seeking new volunteers to become a penfriend to someone in prison in the UK. (www.prisonerspenfriends.org).

Prison reform programme: In advance of the 'Prison and Courts Reform Bill', the Justice Select Committee held an enquiry to which CCJS have responded on behalf of Friends. This is available from Paula Harvey at Friends House. CCJS have also compiled some additional notes to go with 'Vision Statement' that has been brought to the attention of Friends widely by Meeting for Sufferings.

Thanks: to Jonathan Lamb for his electronic version of the newsletter and Alan Russell for emendations.

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Opinions expressed are those of the writers and do not represent the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Quakers in Criminal Justice or the Newsletter Editor

Your Committee Members for 2016 are: Nick George; Simon Ewart; Ann Jacob (Clerk and Membership Sec.); Andrew Lane; Marian Liebmann; Deborah Mitchell; Carmel Schmid (Newsletter Editor) and Paula Harvey (CCJS - co-opted member). David Hoare (Co-opted Treasurer); Jo Rado

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