

RETIRED GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

EDITION NUMBER 14 - NOVEMBER 1986

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GOVERNOR,  
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EDITORIAL

OUR MAILING LIST

I am pleased to report that we now have (October 1986) 182 on our mailing list. We have 3 additional readers from among those recently retired, namely :-

John Lewis  
Dennis Vaughan  
(The Rt Reverend) Leslie Lloyd-Rees

We have also got in touch with :-

Les Welsford  
Ken Watson

Mrs Linda Yates, widow of David Yates, has also joined our mailing list.

Can I remind all our readers that you are the best source of contact with any future potential readers. I have a regular system of writing to all those whose retirement is notified to me. I think we have now exhausted our hunt through Service channels for Retired Governors. So it's over to you.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Contributions continue to come in from our readership and for these I am extremely grateful. If anyone feels the urge to write about a subject I would be delighted to hear from them.

One form of contribution that would be helpful would be if anyone is willing to come to Manchester Prison, two or three times a year, to act as Despatch Officer for the Newsletters. Ted Cowper-Johnson has kindly dealt with the despatch of the Newsletter over the last year. Do we have a volunteer living somewhere around the Manchester area?

DEATH OF RETIRED GOVERNORS

I regret to have to report the deaths of the following retired Governors.

Miss Barbara Stevens  
Jack Beaumont  
Eric Cooper  
Joe Swainston

May they rest in peace.

## PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

In past editions of the Newsletter we have reminded our readership of the existence of the Prison Service Journal. The Journal has now got a new Editor, Mike Jenkins. Mike has kindly supplied order forms for circulation with this number of the Retired Governors' Newsletter. Anyone interested in taking the Prison Service Journal should use the order form provided.

## SERVICE NEWS

I reported in the last edition briefly on the problems we experienced in the Service in April and early May 1986. A full enquiry into those events is being conducted by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons. Many serving colleagues had the worst experiences of their service over that traumatic week or so. It was particularly sad that in a number of establishments staff failed to respond to the requirement to attend for duty in an emergency. All too often Senior Management (Governor grade and Chief Officers) were left in extremely exposed positions. Many of us believe that we were extraordinarily fortunate to come out of the whole episode without dead prisoners or dead staff.

## RECENT MOVES

Among recent moves of Governors have been the following :-

M Jenkins	-	Long Lartin to DRD at Midland Region
B O'Friel	-	Midland Region to Manchester
T Abbott	-	To Onley YCC as Governor
B V Smith	-	To govern the new prison at Full Sutton
C Callaghan	-	Buckley Hall DC to Deputy Governor of Risley
Tony Smith	-	Deputy Governor Risley to P4
David Roberts	-	MRO to Full Sutton on promotion to Governor III
C Griffiths	-	Deputy Governor Bedford to Governor Buckley Hall
A Foy	-	To Feltham as Governor III
I Boon	-	Governor II MRO to PD Headquarters
J Whetton	-	Governor IV Hollesley Bay Colony to Maidstone as Governor III
M Manning	-	Governor III Maidstone to Aldington
G Gibson	-	To East Sutton Park as Governor III

## OPENING OF NEW PRISON SERVICE COLLEGE AT NEWBOLD REVEL

I was fortunate enough to be invited to be present at the Official Opening of Newbold Revel on Wednesday, 10 September. It was a pleasant day when some 500 staff and spouses assembled at Newbold Revel for the Official Opening of the new Prison Service College by the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd.

The day opened with an official opening of the Prison Service museum, in future to be known as the Heywood Collection. It was particularly pleasant to see Colonel Jim's hard work honoured in this way. The actual museum was set up in part of the teacher training college library and the display was absolutely first class.

The day continued with the official opening of the College with the usual speeches. This took place in the Training College theatre, which has seating for around 400 people. This was followed by a tree planting ceremony and then lunch in the College dining hall and a specially erected marquee. During lunch the Dartmoor Staff Band played appropriate music. I gather this was their first significant public display. It was certainly an interesting innovation seeing a Prison Staff Band on such an occasion. (older readers do write and let me know if this is not the first occasion)

After lunch there was a Service of Dedication at the College's chapel. The College had previously been a Roman Catholic Teacher Training College. When it closed in 1978 the Auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham, Bishop McCartney, officiated at the last Service. It was particularly pleasant for him, in accompaniment with the Anglican Bishop of Coventry and a Senior Representative of the Free Churches, to consecrate the chapel as an ecumenical chapel for use by the Prison Service. Indeed the presence of the Clergy from a number of Christian Denominations in such a joint service was a most encouraging end to the day's affairs.

As you would expect, displays were put on by the Prison Dog Service and displays of prison work and education were also available. Some of you may have seen the television clip of the opening, which was carried by the Midland Regional television channels.

I knew Newbold Revel when it was a Teacher Training College as my wife was a former student there. I believe that the Prison Service has acquired a remarkably valuable asset. On the one hand, following the renovation and upgrading, we have accommodation for around 200 people so that the new college can be used for both initial Officer training and for all sorts of conferences. No doubt in the future we will see Newbold Revel used more for advanced training than Wakefield. Perhaps the most important thing is that the Prison Service now has a prestigious training centre which bears reasonable comparison with the Police College in Bramshill. The setting is magnificent and its location is very good, being almost in the centre of the country. Communications are excellent along the motorway network and it is handy for the main line stations of both Coventry and Rugby. I believe it will make a great deal of difference to the Prison Service's self-image as people utilise it and are able to take advantage of its facilities. From time to time the Prisons Board meet there and the Regional Directors hold their meeting with the Deputy Director General at the College on occasions.

## FRESH START

Some of you may have heard of the initiative known as Fresh Start, particularly as it had some publicity in the National Press. Fresh Start is the name given to a series of initiatives which will make the most radical changes to staff conditions over the last few decades. Broadly there are three proposals. First the existing complex shift arrangements will be swept away and a much more flexible system introduced. It will be based on the concept of group working i.e. a number of staff will be allocated to a particular job whether it be running a wing, security area or the external commitment, and they will be expected to cover that duty for a substantial period of time from within the group.

The second element of Fresh Start is that pay structures for the uniform grades will be completely changed. Instead of being overtime driven as you will all recall they are at present, staff will be paid a quite high gross salary which would include all present allowances and premiums. It will also include an element for what is described as "contracted hours". These might amount to another 8 to 10 hours a week. In a word there will be guaranteed systems of payment.

The third element is a review of management structures that would draw together the present Assistant Governor and Governor IV grades with the two grades of Chief Officers. This would produce a united Service from Governor I down to basic grade Officer. There are also proposals that after this first move towards unification steps might be taken to bring in the Administration Staff.

At the time of writing (October '86) the details of the package are far from finalised. The aim seems to be to start implementation from April 1987. We will report progress in due course.

## THE REPRESENTATION OF GOVERNOR GRADES

Many of my readers will know that there have been times when the Governors' Branch (the representation of organisation for Prison Governors) has had an uneasy relationship with the Society of Civil and Public Servants. The link with the Society goes back to about 1950 when the Superior Officers' Representative Board was disbanded. The tensions between the Branch and the Society have grown particularly acute during 1986 and the future of the Branch as part of the Society is very much becoming an open question.

In addition to this there are some complicated questions about who will represent the new grades formed by the implementation of Fresh Start. Again we will keep you posted of development.

During the next few months the Governors' Branch Secretary, Sid Powell, will be joining the ranks of retired Governors. This will be a great loss for the Branch but we hope that Sid will be persuaded to contribute to the Newsletter from time to time.

JON HAEREM

Some of you may have seen an obituary in The Times recently for a Mr Jon Haerem. He died on 18 June at the age of 66, having apparently spent a great deal of time teaching drama at Wormwood Scrubs. Credit was given in the obituary to Gilbert Hair as being the person who asked Haerem to form a drama group in the prison.

EAVES HALL - THE COUNTRY CLUB OF THE CIVIL SERVICE MOTORING ASSOCIATION

I have no intention of doing commercials in the Retired Governors' Newsletter but, at the same time, I believe good ideas should be shared.

I am a regular user of the CSMA Country Club at Eaves Hall. I would strongly recommend it to retired members. Both the accommodation and the food are excellent and the rates are extremely reasonable. I know a number of retired members do use it but for those of you who do not know it, it is situated in North East Lancashire about 3 miles from Clitheroe. It is a good base for touring all around the district. The club is a converted country house that has previously seen service as a hotel. In addition to a wide range of bedroom accommodation it has good public rooms, including a bar, billiard room, television room and several good areas for just sitting and chatting.

Information about Eaves Hall can be obtained by writing to :-

Reception  
Eaves Hall Country Club  
Waddington  
Nr Clitheroe  
Lancs.  
BD7 3JG

Telephone: 0200 25271

F B O'Friel  
Editor.

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#### PLUS CA CHANGE

Between 1970 and 1979 the average prison population increased by 3,200 representing an average annual increase of 0.9%. Between 1980 and 1985 it increased by 4,000 representing an annual average increase of 1.8%. Projections for 1985 to 1995 are ever upward! (June)

Improved measures to prevent suicides in prison are about to be introduced. (October)

Changes in nursing care in prisons will aim at the gradual establishment of a unified nursing service and the phasing out of nursing grade staff. (August/September)

The Home Secretary has announced a firm decision to separate the disciplinary and supervisory aspects of Boards of Visitors functions. (October)

#### PRISON HISTORY

"Heritage of a Prison" - a history of Shepton Mallet by F J Disney, an Officer of the prison, has been published by the Whitstone Press and can be ordered from the author at the prison (£9 hardback and £6.95 paperback). (October)

Norwich Prison celebrates its centenary in 1987 and has commissioned the Holkham Pottery to design a 'Norwich Cup' as a memento - obtainable from the prison for £3.50. (October)



SPORT

Hatfield and Gringley are 1986 Prison Service soccer champions, defeating Wormwood Scrubs in the final of the Maunsell Trophy. (August/September)

Officer Brown of Brixton won the first Prison Service National Darts Championship held at Risley. (June)

PE SO Jack Atherton of Featherstone has broken the world record for bench presses of his own body weight and created a new world record for the number of body presses in 12 hours. (May)

Susan Norton, a CO at Whetherby, has become the 75kg Divisional Weight Lifting Champion for Yorkshire and the NE Counties. (June)

ISLAND OF BARBED WIRE BY CONNERY CHAPPELL

When on holiday on the Isle of Man your editor read a recent book by the late Connery Chappell, a well known journalist and writer, of the internment on the Isle of Man, in World War Two.

I found the book a good read and worth recommending to colleagues. It is published by Corgy Books at £2.50p.

It tells the story of the vast enterprise, in 1939 and 1940, for dealing with people suspected of being enemy aliens. The book concentrates on the impact on the Isle of Man of becoming the national internment camp but it also gives a much broader picture of the whole internment process. At one stage, in the early years of the war, there were 14,000 people interned on the Isle of Man. Unlike what happened during the First World War, when a large camp was constructed for detainees, the internees were very largely held in existing boarding houses and hotels enclosed within a wire perimeter security.

Readers of this article may themselves be concerned with the internment process as ordinary prisons were used for the holding of some detainees during the early stages. I was particularly interested to read about facilities provided for women in the south of the Isle of Man, at Port St Mary and Port Erin. I have strong family connections with Port St Mary and my family frequently holiday there. At one time around 4,000 women were detained in these two little towns in the south of the Island. The camp at Port St Mary had appointed as its Commandant Divisional Detective Inspector CRM Cuthbert of Scotland Yard. As his deputy he had sent across a Miss Joan D Wilson who is described in the book as being from the Prison Commission Service and came to the island from her position as Deputy Governor of Walton Prison in Liverpool. The book describes her as a strong personality and she worked in this capacity on the Isle of Man for a year before returning to the Prison Service at Liverpool Prison. After the war Miss Wilson apparently went to Germany as Controller of Womens Penal Establishments under the allied military government.

While I would commend the book to my readers I would also be interested to know of anyone who served with Miss Wilson. I imagine that she was not actually Deputy Governor of Walton Prison but was in charge of the womens unit there.

F B O'Friel  
Editor.

## DUNCAN FAIRN'S MEMORIAL SERVICE

### THE ADDRESS GIVEN BY BOB TAYLOR :

Some years ago I was walking by the Victoria Tower behind two men. One was dressed in a dark suit, wore a dark hat and carried a monogrammed brief case. The other was wearing flannel bags, a tweed jacket, no hat and had a rucksack on his back. They were both civil servants but one was a member of the Prison Service - indeed one of the Prison Commissioners. I am quite sure you know which one. I hasten to add that Duncan knew how to dress for the occasion. I have mentioned this because I shall be talking about two very different Civil Servants in relation to Duncan Fairn.

Like so many of our generation, Duncan was recruited by A.P. and he was the last to be appointed to the rank of Deputy Governor. A.P. - Sir Alexander Paterson - was a man apart; a man of vision, courage and faith in people. He was an unorthodox civil servant and served under Sir Lionel Fox who was Chairman of the Prison Commission for 11 years. Duncan Fairn bore allegiance to them both and was happy to do so. He was one of the very few people who could break through the Chairman's shyness and rather cold reserve. Indeed it was more than that because it became a friendship.

There is no doubt that both A.P. and Sir Lionel saw the worth of this outgoing man to the Service; they were aware of his shrewd judgement, his work in the field and his innate leadership.

Today's Form of Service - so well produced - mentions briefly Duncan's career. I do not propose to go into detail. However, I must say that when he became U.S.S. head of the Service, it covered a very traumatic period. I would like to make it clear how very much we who were his team regretted that a retirement rule at the age of 60 deprived us of his continuing guidance and leadership. But he was not put out to grass: he did many years of most valuable work for the Lord Chancellor's Department and was also a valuable member of the Parole Board under Sir John Hunt.

Now for some more of the man: and why I should think at once of his wit and irrepressible humour must be because I have suffered a bit from both. His wit was never barbed, but to the point. He knew so many people and had read so widely that an apposite anecdote or comment came easily to him. He worked hard, was clear in his directives and thoughtful in debate or lecture. He was a respected member of the Society of Friends - but not of the common image of Quakers. I remember Miriam telling me with a grin of Duncan's efforts to decorate the lavatory, and the unparliamentary language coming from it.

Continued...

Duncan Fairn's Memorial Service Continued....

Duncan's care and sympathy for others was very private to him. But he was implacable in his condemnation of behaviour which did nor could bring the Service and its objects into disrepute. He was not an eccentric but had a couple of habits worth mentioning. One was catching a train by the skin of his teeth. Another was arriving at a prison at the early parade of staff (about which he could be critical) and going on to the unlocking and slopping out procedure. This unpleasant period he considered part of his duty to share with staff and prisoners. I knew of his care for those who had passed through his hands; his home over the years was open to those who wanted guidance, support or who just wished to show their respect for his friendship.

This brief appreciation does less than justice to Duncan, but I can sum up by bringing to your memory the story of Abu Ben Adhem who awoke one night from a deep dream of peace and saw an angel writing in a book of gold the names of those who love the Lord. Ben Adhem's name was not there. This disturbed him. He asked the angel to write him down as one who loved his fellow men. The next night the Angel came and showed him the names whom love of God had blessed - and Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

That ladies and gentlemen, could well fit Duncan.

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MEMORIAL SERVICE TO DUNCAN FAIRN

LYN DAVIES REPORTS :

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of Duncan Fairn was held in the Chapel at Wormwood Scrubs on 11 June. Some 150 friends and relatives were present to pay respect to the memory and work of this remarkable man, who rose from a Prison Visitor to become the first member of the Governor grades to be Chairman of the Prison Service.

Some members of his pre-war vintage were able to attend but the main body represented either his Prison Department colleagues or those of us who served under him and were influenced in our work by his example during the 1940's, 50's and 60's. He was a brave innovater and was always willing to take a new and possibly unusual line providing that there was benefit for prisoners. He was a great "bender" of the Prison Rules, a personal trait which did not always please the traditionalists amongst us. But no-one doubted his integrity and enduring faith in human nature, even amongst prisoners.

The Governor of the Scrubs received us all most kindly and provided hospitality after the Service. The Right Reverend Bishop of Shrewsbury (our old and dear friend Leslie Lloyd-Rees) officiated and preached on the theme "He was a good man and full of grace". The Sermon was delivered with his Lordship's usual fire and "hywel". Bob Taylor who must have served with Duncan for over 35 years, also spoke movingly on Duncan as a man. The lessons were read by Bob Taylor and Duncan's granddaughter Nicola. Both prior to, and during the Service, smiles and nods were made as old friends recognised each other and the singing brought back happy memories of conference services.

The Chapel, I thought, looked excellent - a credit to the prison and well merited its reputation as the Services cathedral.

Among those present were Sir Brian Cubbon, Mr Train, Terry Weiler, Lord Donaldson, Joanna Kelly, Gordon Fowler, Bill Brister, Sir Philip and Lady Woodfield and Messrs Heald, Adams, Davis, Pryor, Sandy, Pittam, Russel, Graham-Harrison, Hyde, de Denev, Kent, Lakes, Norris, Platt, Driscoll, Dunbar, Honey, Rev. Dodsworth, Canon Russell, Venerable K Pound, McLeod, Dadds, Martin Fairn, Taylor, Selby, Slinger, Johns, Myles, Norman, Coombes, Honigmann, Clarkson-Webb, Nursaw, Moriarty, Western, CO 1 and Mrs Haywood, Mr & Mrs Errington, Mrs Lawrence, Mrs Dufton, Mrs Lochhead, Miss J Adams, Mrs Coutts and particularly pleasant to hear was the organist, Miss Edwina Vernon.

The "get-together" after the Service was most enjoyable and the whole affair would have been greatly enjoyed by RDF.

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## RANDOM THOUGHTS ON A VISIT TO HMP LINDHOLME

Brendan asked me to visit the new prison at Lindholme and write something for the Newsletter. I did so in August. Unfortunately the Governor, Colin Lambert, was on rest day, the Deputy Governor was involved in staff training, the senior Assistant Governor was just leaving for Cyprus and Phil Morgan, the Assistant Governor who showed me round, had only just arrived from Feltham 14 days previously. However, I met a number of officers with whom I had served, including CO 1 John Lowe, recently arrived on promotion from Leeds.

I was reminded of RAF days for Lindholme, which lies just east of Doncaster, was built in 1938 and was an operational bomber station and latterly Strike Command Bombing School until it closed in 1975. The Prison Service took it over in 1985 and the 10 year gap had seen a considerable deterioration in the fabric. It was still essentially an RAF station (runways and all) and not a prison. The guard room (of blessed memory!) Station HQ, Officers' Mess, NAAFFI, Medical Centre and Barrack blocks were still obviously ex-RAF, thinly disguised as a semi-open prison with a wire mesh fence encircling the total perimeter. A new kitchen has been erected and is still suffering the usual teething troubles. Two excellent modern style gymnasias have also been provided.

One section has been fenced off from the main prison because, although essentially a Cat. C prison, there are 150 Cat. D's (Lindholme selected only from their Own Cat. C's) housed in a separate compound but dining as a total prison in the huge common dining hall. There were 617 inmates in total and the build-up to 750 should be completed shortly. Accommodation can then be extended to hold 1,000 inmates in the ex-RAF barrack block dormitories. The prison provides essential relief to the overcrowded Hull, Manchester and Leeds.

There are a Governor II, Governor IV and 2 Assistant Governors, full time Chaplain, CO 1, CO 11 but no MO, and difficulties are arising in persuading the local practice to continue involvement.

As I approached I was amazed to see the very large number of excellent RAF quarters standing empty. It was then no surprise to find the staff car park filled to overflowing. Not one of the senior staff live on site and the majority of junior staff live in their own homes up to 20 miles away. I quaked as I wondered what would happen on this 550 acre site with no staff to answer any panic button. It takes 2½ hours to complete a night visit with a large number of continually manned static posts. There is a computer controlled radio communication centre always manned. Hiking PO's have had to be provided with bicycles! Night patrols are still functioning here.

Continued...

Random Thoughts on a Visit to HMP Lindholme Continued...

The old airfield is to become a farm producing vegetables. Salad crops are to be grown in polythene tunnels. There will be VTC courses in Catering and Computer Studies and CIT courses in Plastering, Bricklaying and P & D and Plumbing. Since my day a Shared Work scheme has been introduced and inmates spend half of the day at work and the other half at PE or Education. I was surprised to find snooker and pool tables continuously in use as part of the education programme. I was also concerned at the introduction of a cash card for telephone calls which the Cat. D's are permitted to use as long as they are in credit. With the shared dining facilities it is not surprising that a trade has already started with calls being made on behalf of Cat. C's, for a price. Pay is still about the same but parole eligibility has been extended to consideration after serving 6 months.

There is a segregation unit - rather easier to escape from than the main prison - converted from an RAF block. The cells are so difficult to view that 3 separate Judas viewers have had to be installed. Men found to be unsuitable have to be held here against a returning National escort. No more 'Old Boy' transfers and the old cry "Taxi, Chief" has gone for ever it seems.

There are excellent facilities for education and a very good library. On reception men attend a 5 day Induction course. I was pleased to see subjects such as Information Technology, Budgeting, Communication Skills and Cooking being taught as well as the old standby classes in Arts, Crafts and Basic education.

A good innovation is the introduction of a Probation Liaison Officer in each wing. This uniformed Officer will deal with any domestic problem at the initial level. If the problem requires further help it will be referred to the Probation Officer. This allows him to be used as a consultant and the discipline Officer to become involved in the treatment and caring role.

The local police have the use of one hangar for riot containment training and the Fire Service also has use of some of the facilities. Good relationships have been established locally, especially with the neighbouring RAF station of Finningley.

There is obviously a need for such a prison in this region and the site is capable of making a real contribution in terms of food production. The inmates seemed pleased to be there (and were smarter in appearance than many staff in some places I could mention). Inmates visitors I encountered at the gate thought that the 2 hour fortnightly visit was good and they appreciated the WRVS help with their tea bar.

Continued...

Random Thoughts on a Visit to HMP Lindholme Continued...

There is much space and freedom of movement within the wire to give a feeling of being in an open prison. Such a change from my 1600 inmates at Wandsworth confined in their 12½ acres. 617 inmates spread over 550 acres must be an improvement.

It was good to have a look at new moves in the Service and I appreciated the assistance offered me by those staff I met at Lindholme. An interesting development and I am sure that Colin Lambert and his merry men will see to it that any advancement will accord with humane and modern principles.

L. A. Portch  
Ravenshead  
Notts.



YOUR LETTERS

I am typing this surrounded by packing cases, bundles of this, that and the other, and very shortly will perhaps have difficulty in locating the typewriter; the reason being we are once again 'on the move'. By the time you receive this edition we hope to have moved into a bungalow at :-

81 Green Lane  
Rossett Green  
HARROGATE  
North Yorkshire HG2 9LN  
Telephone: Harrogate 872637

As you will be aware, Brendan has also had a hectic few weeks as he has taken over as Governor at HM Prison, Manchester. This gives me particular pleasure so far as the Newsletter is concerned, as it means it will once again be published from the very place it started. I started it when I was Norman Brown's Deputy at Strangeways and I shall always be grateful to Norman for the support and encouragement he gave the venture. Manchester is as always one of the country's busiest and of course, biggest prisons, but having served in so many establishments in my service days I also found it to be a very happy station. So I would wish Brendan all the success in his new posting and he will find he has a staff second to none.

We have received a number of letters in reply to our last edition, and it is most unfortunate that there is inevitably such a delay before we can publish them. This cannot be avoided, but I do hope you will all try to let us have something for future editions.

W. A. Williamson.

Letters received include:

Bathurst Basin  
Bristol

It was kind of you to write with a message of sympathy and goodwill.

Yours sincerely  
Alan Bainton.

\*\*\*\*\*

Wonastow  
Monmouth  
Gwent

Lynn Davies has shown me the 'Retired Governors' Newsletter' re Duncan Fairn and the service arrangements. But shame upon shame, my name is not on the list - you probably think I am too young to have known him. In fact he ran the Staff Course I attended in 1948 and we had met on several occasions since he retired.

I hope things have quietened down again after the disgraceful scenes of staff action.

Both Stella and I are well and enjoying retirement. We are both very busy with various activities. I am now Chairman of the local Conservatives and a Scout Camp Site Committee Member, plus Vicar's Warden of our little church - this seems to include cutting grass, ringing bells and reading lessons.

Love to Barbara and the family.

Yours  
Roland (Adams)

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Bamford  
Rochdale

Thanks for letting me know of the Memorial Service for Duncan Fairn. The news of his death is very sad. However, I shall be abroad on the 11 June and will be unable to attend.

Yours sincerely  
Arthur Keanns

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Pagham  
Bognor Regis

Many thanks for the notice of Duncan Fairn's Memorial Service - and for the other helpful letters.

I have written to Dadds.

Yours sincerely  
H Taylor (Bob Taylor)

\*\*\*\*\*

Yarmouth  
Isle of Wight

It was good of you to let me know about the Memorial Service for Duncan Fairn. Unfortunately I shall be in Wales on the 11 June so will not be able to be with you all - except in spirit.

Duncan had a very considerable influence on my life as a Governor and let me do a number of useful things at Parkhurst and elsewhere and which I tried to summarise in a note to the 'Times' after their obituary. They cut it down a bit, but I enclose a copy which you may have seen.

Many thanks for the job you are doing for the Retired Governors and greetings to Arthur Williamson, whom I first met at Armley in 1948.

Yours  
Alan Packham

(Alan's note to 'The Times' was as follows :-

"Many of us who joined the Prison Service at the end of the war attended the first Assistant Governors' course at Wakefield Staff College in 1946, conducted by Duncan Fairn.

He imbued us with a spirit of adventure and to regard those in our charge, wherever possible, as individuals who could be given opportunities during their sentences to retain or regain their self-respect by fair and constructive treatment.

Not only did Fairn play, as you say, a leading part in the creation of the prison hostel scheme: with his far-seeing support, he afforded a number of prison governors the opportunity to exercise some quite unorthodox temporary releases on parole of men serving long sentences, who, by their subsequent behaviour, proved the value this element of trust afforded them.

Fairn was never a man to hide behind the safety of the book of prison standing orders, and governors could rely on him to give authority and support for adventurous decisions, untrammelled by Civil Service caution."

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You are correct Alan when you said we first met at Armley in '48. I remember you arriving as the first Deputy Governor and moving into your quarter at Hill Top Road. I can also recall you managed to obtain a gas cooker from somewhere (a very rare piece of household furniture in those days) and I fitted it for you one Saturday afternoon. WAW)

\*\*\*\*\*

Yeovil  
Somerset

Whilst clearing out my father's home I came across a back number of your Newsletter and felt I ought to write to you.

My father, Capt. W D Dewer (David Dewer) died at Dorchester Hospital on the 25 May 1986 after a short illness. Sadly my mother, Dora Dewer, had died only 3 months before. They both had a long and active retirement and are sadly missed by myself, my wife and their two grandchildren, Andrew and Timothy.

Dad had started his career at North Sea Camp in 1947 and I had the dubious distinction of being the first baby born at the camp. Latchmere; Wandsworth; Walton; Strangeways; Usk and Werrington all served as home. He came to Dorchester in 1967 and decided to make this his retirement home, buying a house at Cerne Abbas. He had one more posting, this time to Ford, but returned to Dorset on retirement.

In retirement they both became involved with Citizens Advice Bureau, Meals on Wheels and he continued to be active within the Dorchester Rotary Club. To the end his abiding love was the Church, where he served many years as Church Warden. He will be sadly missed.

Yours sincerely  
Graham Dewer

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Wotton-under-Edge  
Gloucestershire

Thank you for the copy of the Newsletter. You had no reason to apologise as I did not formally retire until the 7 September and your letter reached me a good week before that date.

I am not sure if congratulations on your move are in order as I know your family are firmly based in Sutton Coldfield.

I am just getting the hang of this retirement business and find I will need to get a job for some rest. All the best for the future and I look forward to future copies of the Newsletter.

Yours sincerely  
Dennis Vaughan

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Thornton  
Lancashire

It has taken me a long time to put pen to paper to thank you and all the friends who remember myself and family in our great loss; the friends of the past and present who came such distances to be there at the funeral to say goodbye to Jack. He would have been so proud to have been remembered by so many. It is hard to accept that he has gone from us, his health was failing and only those close to him knew. Whenever friends asked him "how are you keeping" he would always answer "Fine", and then change the subject.

He had been in his Greenhouse and true to the habit of a lifetime made a cup of tea, sat in his favourite armchair, complained of a sudden headache and became unconscious. He had a cerebral haemorrhage, aged 64. He died the same day, 10 June. The shock was so great. I am lucky to have Stuart, Dawn and families and I have so many happy memories. We had been together since we were 15 years of age.

My regards to all, be happy and enjoy your retirement - don't wait till next year to put plans into action, do them now.

Sincerely  
Vera E Beaumont

P.S. Please may I carry on with the Newsletter. It keeps me in touch with the memories of a lifetime.

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(It is always sad to us who are left to learn of the passing of an old colleague, but to me personally, Jack's loss was particularly depressing. We were old friends going back to our days in the uniform staff. Jack at Strangeways and myself at Leeds. We never served together in the Governor grades but saw each other frequently and Jack was always the most supportive of colleagues. During my several 'knockbacks' he was always the first to ring me and suggest methods to deal with the situation. On my retirement he wrote me a most charming and genuine letter, one which I have filed amongst my many mementoes of the Service. Farewell Jack, we shall all miss you. And Vera - you can be certain you will get further copies of the Newsletter. WAW)

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Taverham  
Norwich

I have just read and enjoyed the June edition of the Newsletter. So glad Arthur is back to his usual good health.

I haven't written to you for some 18 months but I keep well and busy. Whilst I can't pretend to compete with the social activities of some of your correspondents, my business connections keep me more or less fully occupied and I still travel the length and breadth of England and Wales, and a fair slice of the Continent in addition.

I particularly enjoyed Ron Cooper's letter. One of my happiest recollections of Service days were the several visits I used to make to Ron at Acklington when I was doing the 'lifer' job at Headquarters. Ron and I had previously been together at Wandsworth and we always had a host of reminiscences to recall over a pint in the village pub. In fact I think it is the humorous things of the Service that I remember most today. Like returning from a course at Wakefield circa 1972 with the late Mike Terry, a great character if ever there was one. Mike was Governor of Canterbury and I of Norwich. We reached Kings Cross at about 6.00 pm to go our respective ways, he to Charing Cross and I to Liverpool Street. "We've just got time to have a coffee before we part Mike" I said. Mike looked at the station clock. "B..... the coffee Peter" he replied "they're open and mine's a double brandy!!"

Ben Grew, Governor at the 'Scrubs' in the early fifties kept an unused cell in D Wing to show off to important visitors as "standard accommodation". The Mayor and Mayoress of Hammersmith were visiting. Ben personally conducted them around the prison. "I will just show you an ordinary cell" he told them on entering D Wing and making for the showpiece cell. He shot the bolt and threw open the door and there to the surprise of the visitors - and astonishment of all - was an Officer, who shall remain nameless, sprawled on the bed, fast asleep and snoring!

In Singapore, we were instructed to appoint a civilian executioner - hitherto we had done 'it' ourselves. We duly trained a member of the public and in due course required his services. 48 hours before the "event" he had failed to report for the preliminaries. A visit to his home proved negative - his wife said she had not seen him recently. Where did we find him? - serving a sentence for debts in one of our prisons!

I could go on but obviously your space is limited. However, I think I had a laugh a day throughout my time and when I read of some of the difficulties the current vintage of Governors have to face - I wonder if it is still the same, I very much doubt if it can be.

Yours  
Peter James

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(Very happy to hear from you again Peter and as usual your letter was full of interest and humour. However, we can assure you that we shall never be limited in space when letters such as yours are received, so please, don't make us wait another 18 months to get your next one.

Continued...

I know you - and indeed most other Governors - have a fund of stories to tell and these are the very subjects we all love to read about. I hope your letter to Peter will encourage others to follow suit. Oh, and incidentally I must congratulate you on the standard of typing efficiency. It is perfect and I must mention this to Brendan in case he requires someone to type his next edition. Many thanks. WAW)

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Moretonhampstead  
Newton Abbot  
Devon

I wonder how many readers of the Newsletter have, like me, a constant reminder in their homes of the Prison Service? Indeed, in my case of the family's service, for both my father and grandfather were on the staff, and my nephew is now following in their footsteps. The reminder is a night watchman's pegging clock. It is a long-case type pendulum clock with a revolving face, the time being indicated by a pointer at the top. The quarter hours are marked by pegs around the edge of the face, and when a string at the side is pulled the pointer lever depresses one of these pegs so that the time of the watchman's visit is recorded. The peg drops out in due course as the face revolves.

Such clocks were in use in prisons around the country around the turn of the century. When they became obsolete they were consigned to "STORES" and later sold to staff. My father acquired the one I have in about 1920 when he was Assistant Steward at Dartmoor. He gave 5/- (25p) for it. Some were chopped up for firewood but father renovated his, removing layers of black varnish and revealing a beautiful oak case with fine brass face and hinges. He got it going and it has kept excellent time ever since.

I wrote to the manufacturers (Thwaites & Reed) for information about it, but all they could tell me was they had made large numbers of such clocks in the late 19th century for Prisons, Mental Institutions and Factories. They were now obsolete and of little value. They said there should be a number on it between 14,000 and 16,500. It was not for some years I found a number, when a new gut was fitted. This number was 11,115 which made me think the clock might be older than the makers had said. But on reporting this to Thwaites & Reed I had no answer from them. My feeling that it was older was reinforced by an amateur antiquarian, who said the tapering shape of the case was typical of much Eighteenth century work in Exeter - remember the clock was found on nearby Dartmoor - so I wonder whether the works might have been made in London but given a case by local craftsmen.

If anyone knows of a similar clock I would be happy to exchange photographs/information with them.

Thank you for your chatty and informative letter.

Yours sincerely  
Barbara M Stevens

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(Miss Stevens dates her letter 15 July 1986 and sadly we received the following letter from her brother, dated 27 August 1986)

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Exeter  
Devon

I have to tell you with profound regret that my sister, Barbara Mary Stevens, died very suddenly on 7 August. So there will be no point in sending the Newsletter any more. The family's 100 year connection with the Prison Service, however, still continues in its way for one of my sons is on the Clerical Staff at Usk.

yours sincerely  
P Alan Stevens

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(Since we made contact with Miss Stevens she has written us regularly and contributed some very interesting reading to our magazine. Unfortunately this will no longer be so. One hundred years service continuously by one family must surely be unbeatable - the only other family I know of with that length of service is that of Norman Brown. Norman's grandfather joined the Service as an Officer over 100 years ago, retiring eventually as the Chief Officer at Birmingham - meanwhile his son had joined (Norman's father) and retired as the Governor of Cardiff. Norman stayed just long enough for the family to 'score a century' - and his son-in-law is currently serving, I believe, at Brixton. Are there any other families with such records? Between us, my brother and I 'clocked up' 70 years, but this is 'chicken feed' compared with the Stevens and the Browns. Please let us know if anyone can beat their records. WAW)

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Seaton  
Devon

Thank you for the information about Duncan Fairn's Memorial Service. I shall be unable to be there on the 11 June but am glad to know about it.

I hope you are well and bearing up under what must be quite a strain if the press and media reports are anything to go by. With best wishes.

yours sincerely  
David Hewlings

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Chard  
Somerset

My sincere thanks for the June edition of the Retired Governors' Newsletter, which I found to be most interesting and enjoyable. Also the enclosure of the Prison Service News, July edition. I was also sent the June edition of the newspaper in which "Jerry" my late husband was mentioned, as I had written to the editor and sent him a brief but detailed account of Jerry's Army and Prison Service. It was so nice of the editor to print it and I felt old friends of Gerald's in the Officer Grades, whom he never forgot, as he served as an Officer too as you know, would have appreciated the gesture.

Letters and cards from all our friends brought great joy. I thank them all, and my family also pass on their thanks.

Thank you once again for your kindness and may I wish the best of everything in the future for you and yours.

Yours sincerely  
Creena Cavill

P.S. I would like to send a donation, if this is in order. To whom do I send it?

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(Many thanks for your kind letter Mrs Cavill. I know Brendan has already written you and you can be certain we shall keep in touch with old friends by continuing to send you future copies of our Newsletter. WAW)

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Bradford-on-Avon  
Wiltshire

I read a letter in the Governors Newsletter from Tom Hayes. I would be very grateful if you would forward the enclosed letter to him in reply.

I will just add my thanks for the Newsletter. I do enjoy reading it.

Chris Capes  
(now Mrs Chris Warner)

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(We are always happy to oblige Mrs Warner, and hope you are now in touch with Tom. Whilst we do not normally publish the private addresses of our readers, we are always happy to forward letters any of you would wish to send to your old colleagues and their families. WAW)

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Usk  
Gwent

Thank you so much for your letter. Yes, I would certainly like to have further copies of the Retired Governors' Newsletter.

Yours sincerely  
L G Welsford

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Mitcheldean  
Gloucestershire

I promised to inform the Editor of the Retired Governors' Newsletter of my new address. Don't remember doing so, it is at the head of this letter.

Enclosed are a couple of leaflets. They refer to Mountbatten Training, of which I am Vice Chairman. On 2 October the new Centre at Gyde House, near Stroud, will be opened by the Countess Mountbatten. The event will commence at 3.00 pm but guests will be able to tour the house at any time beforehand.

If you, or anyone else 'treading the corridors of power' would like to attend then just give me a call. You will be welcome.

Jim Absolum.

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(Once again "our Jim" is in the forefront of much hard work. There is no holding him down. The leaflets he sent about Mountbatten Training at Gyde House shows he must have put a great deal of time and effort into the project. The Centre is a Christian Organisation welcoming young people from all backgrounds. It is a Caring and Disciplined Centre, aiming to create a rich and rewarding environment through community living. There are facilities for Respite Care Family Holidays and short to medium term Residential Care. In addition the Centre gives the opportunity to develop a Counselling Resource and Social Skills training.

A glance at their illustrated leaflet shows the activities include:- Art, Drama, Music, Communication Skills, Ball Games, Adventure Playground, and Archery - whilst in the 'Great Outdoors' such activities as Pony Trekking, Canoeing, Rock Climbing, Orienteering, Farm and Agricultural Visits and other excursions to local places of interest.

Clearly there is much to be seen and enjoyed at the Centre. Should any of you wish to obtain more information, you could write to Jim (or indeed the Centre Manager) at :-

Mountbatten Training  
Gyde House  
Painswick  
Stroud  
Gloucestershire  
GL6 6RB (tel: 0452 812241

WAW)

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John Wheeler MP  
Member of Parliament for  
Westminster North  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

I was fascinated to learn of the Retired Governors' Newsletter and I would indeed be interested in being included on the mailing list.

As to the point that Governors have skills to offer in the market place, I can but observe that as various countries think about private prison systems there might well be considerable scope for Governors in the future. Regrettably I think the Security Industry is not suitable since this sector has been effectively taken up by retired Senior Police Officers.

I am delighted to have your personal news and you are indeed one of the 'big ones'. I wish you every success.

I am particularly interested in your news about SPCS. I think this is long overdue. I am afraid the Prison Service world is in turmoil at the minute.

Yours  
J W

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(We are delighted to have heard from Mr Wheeler, who perhaps unknown to some of our older retired colleagues was an Assistant Governor for some time before he left the Service to go into full-time politics. As Bruce Forsyth would have said, "Didn't he do well?" It is gratifying to think that our modest magazine may soon be read in the real 'corridors of power' and I do hope he enjoys reading subsequent editions.

When I started our magazine it was not intended to become in anyway a political publication, and I feel certain you all would wish this to continue. Nevertheless our colleagues comment about "private prisons might well offer considerable scope for Governors" makes me wonder if some of you may wish to comment upon this subject. Of course it is not Government policy in this country (yet) and much serious thought needs to be given the subject. I would have much to contribute if ever there was public debate; after having completed 35 years in various penal establishments up and down the land, the thought of sending people to prison, thus taking away their freedom, is bad enough, but to do so, and have a body of shareholders of a private prison making profit out of the misery of their inmates, would seem to me to be totally immoral - even in a capitalist country. What do you think about it?? WAW)

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Finally, I apologise to those of you who find their letters have been condensed. This was necessary if we were to get all contributions in this edition. Having said that, please continue to let us have your news and views. Remember, around 180 old friends and their families are waiting to hear from you.

W. A. Williamson.