

RETIRED GOVERNORS NEWSLETTER
Edition 59
Autumn 2008

Editorial

This Edition is the first to be printed in the Isle of Man. Your Editor has the advantage of having a printers business within 100 yards of where he lives in Port St Mary so we are trying out the skills of Quine and Cubbon for the benefit of our readers.

I am very grateful to Michael Roebuck for his work on editing the Spring Edition each year which brings a different perspective to alternate newsletters. I am also very grateful for the many people who contribute material to each newsletter and I remind our readers that we are also delighted to hear from those who have not contributed before. Cartoons, photographs, letters or articles are all most welcome.

John Berry has kindly pointed out that the PGA Office address was incorrect in the last RGN. Horseferry House is apparently being converted into flats. The correct address is:-

Room 217
Cleland House
Page Street
London SW1P 4LN
Tel 020 7217 8923
Email james.bryant@hmpps.gsi.gov.uk

In this edition we report on the "Prison Wildlife Award", a first for the RGN. We also carry an article on the work of the Butler Trust as well as our many regular contributions. Terry Bone has kindly contributed an article on his experiences with the prison service in Russia; Graham Smith introduces us to Mensa. Readers will note that Terry Bone became involved with the Russian project through the Retired Governors Newsletter!

As we go to press, the UK is experiencing difficult economic times. Colleagues may be grateful for public service and state pensions at such a time but we should not forget the campaign to link increases in the state pension to earnings rather than prices. I am sure that this will not be achieved unless there is substantial support from as many people as possible.

I am indebted to Alf Jennings for the following information about contacting our pension provider:

“Capita Hartshead has a 0870 premium number that they expect us poor pensioners to use for our queries. However if you go to the website www.saynoto0870.com you can find their Darlington number of 01325 745088 or 745727.”

PEOPLE

(Including events and places)

Patrick Gale, son of the late Michael Gale, who is an established novelist featured in the Times earlier this year. We reviewed one of his books some years ago; his latest publication is “Notes from an Exhibition” by HarperCollins.

I regret to report the death of Frank Davies. Frank had an interesting career in entertainment including the Val Doonigan show and the Black and White Minstrels before joining the Prison Service in the sixties. I worked with him first when he was appointed AG 2 at Onley in 1969. He was Governor of Shrewsbury before he retired and also worked on Prison Officer recruitment. He died on 20th August at Weston super Mare aged 82.

Your Editor visited the new Isle of Man Prison at Jurby in April – some of our readers may recall that Jurby was a wartime RAF base which continued to operate for several decades after the war. The prison – for around 140 – appears very well designed and will offer the prospects of hugely better conditions for prisoners and staff for the next century. The existing prison, at Victoria Road in Douglas, was a late nineteenth century build and completely inadequate for the numbers of prisoners – around 80 – it has been required to cope with in recent years. Alison Gomme has taken over as Governor of the Isle of Man prison during the summer and on 13th August successfully moved all the prisoners into the new prison.

Your Editor sees Hazel Banks – on secondment from the Prison Service to the Security Industry Authority – at meetings. Hazel has recently been on maternity leave and had a daughter in July. We don't often report on births so this was too good an opportunity to miss. Hazel joined the Prison Service in the eighties and recently was Governor of Belmarsh.

Allan Radford tells us he has a new email address; Roger Brandon has recently moved house. We have the details if anyone requires them.

Paddy Scriven was seeking contact details for Steve Guy Gibbons earlier in the year.

The annual PGA Golf Tournament took place on 24th June at Ullesthorpe Court Golf Club. Retired members are very welcome at this annual event.

We understand that Malcolm Kinkaid, a governor grade who retired from the Mount around 2000/2001 died in May 2008.

On a recent visit to Mountjoy Prison, your Editor noticed on the list of Governors that a Captain Robert Johnston VC was Deputy Governor from 1911-1913. Perhaps the only holder of the Victoria Cross to have served as a Governor?

STATE PENSIONS AND PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONS

The winter fuel payment of £200 per household – paid to everyone over 60 – is to continue for the rest of this Parliament.

Pensions Act 2004

One of the changes under this act is for people approaching State Pension Age. Before 2005, it had been possible to defer drawing your state pension and earning additional state pension known as “increments” by this means. The Pensions Act 2004, however, increases the amount of additional state pension you can earn by deferral. Previously you could earn 1% addition for every 7 weeks you deferred; from 2005 this was improved to 1% for every 5 weeks that you defer drawing your state pension. Or to put it another way this is worth an additional 10.4% increase in your state pension for every year that you defer. There is also provision for accumulating a lump sum by deferring your state pension. A good source of information is the Department for Work and Pensions web site - www.dwp.gov.uk.

State Retirement Pension Forecasts

Can be obtained by writing to: -

Retirement Pensions Forecasting Team
The Pensions Service
Whitley Road
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE98 1BA
Tel 0845 3000168

They also provide a booklet entitled “Understanding your State Pension Forecast”

The Pension Service also provide a new Booklet “A Guide to your Pension Options” – you can obtain a copy by phoning 0845 7 31 32 33.

Free Guide

There is a free Guide available on the range of Government Services for people aged 60 and over. This is titled “Pensioners’ Guide (PG1)” For your copy phone 0845 6065 065.

The Pension Service website is www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk

Rates from April 2008

The basic State Retirement Pension was increased by 3.9% from £87.30 per week to £90.70 for a single person and from £139.60 to £145.04 a week for couples.

Additional pension was also increased by 3.9%.

State and Public Service Pension Increases

Both State and Public Service Pension Increases are linked to the Retail Prices Index (RPI) published each month. Increases are paid in April each year but the calculation of the increase is based on the previous September's RPI increase – published in mid October. So last October the RPI increase was 3.9% triggering the rises in state and public service pensions applicable from April 2008. The RGN has published details of the increases in our Spring Edition for many years.

Free Travel

Free bus travel for pensioners is widely available but the rules may vary in different parts of the country. Trains, trams - and even ferries - are also free in some city areas.

Concessionary Travel by Rail

Readers should all be aware that a Senior Citizens' Rail Card - £24 – is a valuable purchase for anyone who travels much by rail as most tickets can be purchased with a third reduction.



The Butler Trust is currently seeking volunteers to act in a support and liaison role for establishments in their local areas.

The position is voluntary but out of pocket expenses are paid to the volunteers.

If you would like to know more before making any commitment telephone Veronica Bird 01423 569316

Catholic Concern for Animals - Prison Wildlife Award 2008

CCA Vice Chairman, Judy Gibbons, describes the first presentation of the award for the year's top prison wildlife project.

On 9th May 2008, an overcast summer's day with threatening rain clouds, I travelled up to Foston Hall Women's Prison, near Burton on Trent, Derbyshire, to present the first CCA prison award. A total of 12 entries had been received for this award which were judged by Dr Phil Thomas of the Ministry of Justice Sustainable Development Team and the Rev Monsignor Malachy Keegan from the Prison Service Chaplaincy. Runners-up included a prison with an admirable sanctuary for barn owls, one which cared for hedgehogs and one that bred English bees which otherwise would face extinction.

I was delighted to present the award to the prisoners who had worked so hard on their 'Wildlife Sanctuary' project, providing a refuge for parrots, goats, hamsters and rabbits, as well as a pond full of rescued Koi carp. The project was set up by Paddy Scriven, a former Governor, who came to 'dedicate' The Sanctuary as a place of reflection.

The presentation was made to the prisoner in charge of the project together with the rest of the team. On behalf of CCA, I presented a brass plaque for the prison to display and a cheque for £350 towards the costs of the project.

Fortunately, it did not rain and it was a pleasure to be shown around the project by the women prisoners who ran it. There were the most magnificent parrots displaying their fine and radiant feathers. These had all come to the project through the local Parrot Aid which was run by Candie Bradley who provided all the skilled advice on the care of parrots and other birds.

On presentation day itself there was great concern about the health of a pair of beautiful love birds, on whom expert attention was being lavished. The prisoners explained the need for great care in dealing with the birds, particularly the parrots, as, having being cruelly treated in the past, they had lost their trust in human beings. The prisoners' task was to rebuild that trust and affection so that, if possible, the birds could be re-homed. The same principles applied to the work with the other animals in their care, from the goats to the smaller creatures, like the rabbits and hamsters.

Interestingly, the prisoners also said that they identified with these creatures, as they too had experienced sad lives before coming to Foston Hall. They were all learning to trust again through each other.

So I left Foston Hall full of hope and thankfulness that this award had shown that throughout the Prison Service, there are small wildlife projects quietly working away for the good of the creatures and of the people caring for them. Hopefully, we can continue with this award and make it a joint one with Anglican Society for Animal Welfare as, possibly, an annual event.

YOUR LETTERS

Bob Duncan

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I recently made my first visit to North Sea Camp; it really is in a remote spot. It also shows the threat of closure that has hung over it for the last 10 years. It currently has a lease of life for another 3 years, but it is doubtful if that will create much needed investment in the place. All that seems a pity as some very positive work is being undertaken there, and it was one of the pioneering initiatives of the Prison Department. But then what is history against the hard currency of finance.

Though fewer colleagues made contact this summer, they made up for it in volume. Terry Bone has contributed a major article on the 'Russian Project', which is printed as a separate entity. Terry had to give up his involvement when his wife's health deteriorated. Max Morrison has replaced him, and maybe we will hear from him in due course.

Also a fascinating continuation missive from Graham and Ann Lawrence telling more about their support for the school in Kenya. This was a particularly rewarding visit as due to generous donations, they were able to present the school with 100 Oxford English Dictionaries, prior to that the school only had 2 for its 1500 pupils

A friend in Cyprus was visiting her 7 year old Grandson in England, and had some pictures of the school, when he saw them he went and fetched £10 from his Christmas money to buy books, saying my school has lots of books, but they have so few.



Before we visit each time we enquire how many more children have joined the school so as to know what supplies we need. We try to purchase these in Kenya as it is cheaper and does not cause baggage problems, although Emirates very kindly allow us 30kg excess baggage free, but we need that for essentials. Each dictionary is labelled showing who donated it. In the photo the Headmaster has just addressed the whole school telling them how the dictionaries will help their education, and you can see the gratitude in his face.



We have set up a local committee to act on our behalf and administer developments when we are not there. There is some money to decorate the classrooms that have been plastered. These will be tackled one at a time, and it is hoped that parents and senior boys would carry out the work in a 'spirit of ownership'. It is hoped all the work can be done before our next visit in

November 08, before which we hope to raise sufficient funds to paint and raise the tin roofs above the walls to allow airflow through the classrooms and staff rooms. Then we hope to be able to connect them to the electricity supply so that they can use the 26-inch TV that has been donated.



We would be pleased if anyone cared to visit our web site

www.dabasoschool.com

Our best wishes to everyone.

This is clearly an ongoing inspiring and caring piece of work the Lawrence's' have taken on, and demonstrates the versatility of our retired group.



Received a surprise communication from Dick Callan at Gartree, advising me that an Australian television company were anxious to get hold of me, as they were making a programme on dramatic prison escapes, and wished to include Gartree.

He also recounted that life at Gartree was still hectic, with D wing being closed for refurbishment and due to re-open in December, bringing the total capacity to 680. He also commented that Helicopter Spotting portacabin had finally been removed from D wing roof. (It has only taken 20 years, so it must have worked as some kind of deterrent!)

Anyway the TV Company did contact me from Australia and explained they had a team over here and could they come and see me immediately, it would only take an hour. Well it took over an hour for them to completely disrupt my sitting room and to set up their equipment. We then all huddled together for the filming for an hour. I really cannot recall what I said, but it hardly matters, as it will be broadcast on some obscure ITV4. One nice touch was that they had been in touch with the pilot of the helicopter, who sent me a message to say he hoped he had not caused me too much trouble! I sent a message back praising him for his skill in landing in the prison, but stating I would have preferred it if he had managed to crash land. Anyone interested I understand the programme will be called 'Real Prison Breaks' and there will be 10 episodes commencing the week of 25 September.

Good to meet up again with all the following at the Pentonville Re-Union, Gareth Davies, Bernard and Margery Marchant, Nick Pascoe, Nick Leader, John Barton, Terry Lloyd, Barbara Longstaff, Don and Iris Drew. And Rev Brian Dodsworth. Despite the passing of years they all looked fit and well.

What is it that inspires colleagues to write in? I do not know; but it is the lifeline of the Newsletter so keep doing it. Each edition sparks someone off, thank goodness, like Brian Baldwin who has waited 18 years before writing, but all the more welcome for that. He writes 'On reading the new issue of the Newsletter, I realise it is 18 years since I retired as a G5 at Strangeways. I always wanted to go out in a blaze of glory, but I never thought that they would burn down the prison. I also realize that there are now fewer names in the Newsletter that I recognise, and more new names appearing, but I am pleased to see Brendan O'Friel is still going strong. When I retired I decided to move back to North Wales, which then provided me with a second career. At that time the Welsh Language Act was coming into force and there was an upsurge of people who wanted to learn Welsh. I did a teacher training course at Bangor University and duly became a teacher of Welsh to adults, which at the age of 78 I am still carry on doing.

In 2003 I was honoured by being made a member of the Gorsedd of Bards at the National Eisteddfod. To those about to or have just retired, my advice is don't let the years go to waste. Many retired members have carved out second careers and enjoyed their retirement, go for it.

A further piece of advice, get a bungalow, remember as you get older stairs can be a nuisance. Move near a golf course and a post office, with shops and a pub in walking distance. Anyone out there who remembers me, I would be pleased to hear from him or her.

Another example of great versatility in retirement.

Shelagh Stewart wrote saying she had missed the picture of the '3 elegant ladies' and could I help. I was able to email her a copy of the photo. So photos do generate interest, we would welcome more.

Charlie Knight's widow, Paddy, has written to advise of a change of address, but still in Wisbech. She reminds us all that Charles died some 15 years ago. She has now moved next door to where they moved to on Charles retirement from the Verne. We can provide contact details to anyone wishing to be in touch.

The War Pension Agency was so helpful, I was then involved with their welfare work and a member of the East of England Committee for some years, then decided to change direction

For the past 3 years I have been Chairperson of the Patient Participation Group of our local practice with 17,800 patients. This has meant helping with 2nd year medical students for LEA; running a workshop in Norwich with a GP and plans to run another in Cambridge. The Practise Based Commissioning Group in Wisbech and another in Peterborough are keeping me abreast with all government guidelines and improvements! In the NHS. Interviewing young doctors applying for posts locally illustrates the excellent quality of G.P's now coming out of training. All quite a change from my years in Probation and my retirement from HMP Whitemore.

I do also find time to breathe and relax and enjoy my breaks in Scotland and have recently explored Cumbria and Northumberland, with its beautiful scenery, Hadrian's Wall and not forgetting the modern art galleries.

Now back to organising the move to the house in Sandringham Avenue, and out of my bungalow, where I will feel more secure in this quiet cul-de-sac. I do enjoy reading the Newsletter and receiving news of Charlie's' colleagues and friends despite the passage of time.

Bill Brister has been in touch and regrets he was not at this years' reunion. Mary's condition has deteriorated and she has many bad days, and there is now a need for full time carers in the week as Mary cannot be left. Bill himself is keeping well and sends regards to everyone. You are both in all our thoughts.

Mentioning the re-union reminds me how well it all went again this year, and such a pleasure seeing Roger Dauncey back with us. Some may remember the news at the previous year's re-union was that Roger was very ill and at death's door, well his recovery is remarkable. Good to see also some notable regulars, including Lionel Steinhausen and looking fitter than the rest of us, and Terry Weiler back again this year. Also welcome to 2 of our newer members, Bob and Val Perry. Alan Tee was unfortunately unable to be with us at the last minute

due to his health. Nor was John Dring able to be there as his wife's health has deteriorated. We hope there will be an improvement in health in both cases and send our best wishes.

Jim Blakey sends me news of Gill and Philip Long; they are both in good health and enjoying regular holidays, and keeping generally busy. Some will remember their 'little son', Benjamin. He is now 6'3 and a barrister working in chambers in London.

Gill's father, Jackson Burford, one time Governor of Shepton Mallet, is now a resident in sheltered accommodation, is now 92, keeping well and apparently reads every word of the Newsletter. Gill says he would love to hear from friends and former colleagues. Contact details can be provided.

Gill and Philip as well as tending to the allotment, have been on holiday in the Cotswolds, on a cruise to the Baltic and Russia, and busy keeping in contact with friends.

John Childs' reports that Jean and he lead quieter lives these days, they no longer fly all over the world to see their sons and their families, now they come to them. Simon lives in Turkey where he runs a head hunting business. They have 2 sons and they all came over for a family Christmas. Youngest son, David, lives in Kingston on Thames, also in the head hunting business, and being only 10 miles away they see quite a lot of them. Daughter, Jema, lives in Southampton and has 4 boys, who are all very lively and all play rugby. John says they both have a touch of arthritis, so go slower these days.

Fascinating letter from Derrick and Glenys Dean, who are both well and still 'jogging along' despite increasing years and odd aches and pains. They had noticed in the Telegraph in July, a funeral notice for Martine Burnaby. Martine was a member of the Board of Visitors at Wormwood Scrubs, and anyone who served there in the 60's and 70's would have known her as a larger than life character. My lasting memory is that very distinctive perfume reached you well before she hove into sight, so that you knew she was heading your way! Derrick writes, 'For a number of years she and Glenys wrote articles for an American magazine called 'London Outlook', a publication for American tourists visiting the U.K. We retired and came to live in Wales, and Martine and her husband retired to Cornwall. We kept in touch over the years and her husband died a few years ago, but we had not heard from her for 4/5 years. The funeral was not until 11th July, a bit after she died, and we contacted John Morrison who said a mass for her on the day of the funeral, very appropriate as she was a Catholic.

Derrick and Glenys are now great grandparents as their eldest grand daughter presented them with a great grandson in January. Our congratulations. Like so many these days their family is scattered, eldest son, John lives in New Zealand, and he and his partner and 2 other district nurses cover an area of 500 miles north to south. Peter the youngest son is in Los Angeles, where he is the executive chef at the Intercontinental Hotel, and his wife runs Irish dancing

classes. She has been appointed to the International Judging Panel, so travels extensively in connection with that so seems not to be home very often. Their daughter is studying at Rochester University in New York State, but what is anyone's guess!

Derrick says they are not planning any trips abroad at the moment, but spent a pleasant week in Oxford, and have been to Winchester for the Cathedral Friends week. They can also easily get away to west Wales or Devon and Cornwall if the mood takes them...

Betty Dennis remains well apart from her asthma, which improved greatly when she had a week by the sea at Tenby. She keeps busy with her small garden and family duties. It was the needs of the family that meant she had to cancel her booking for the Spring Break at Tortworth Hotel. You were greatly missed.



Clickers' Corner

Mick Roebuck

For Windows XP Users

Monitor Display

Ever wondered how to change the display on your monitor? It really is a simple procedure to follow. Just right click onto any blank part of your monitor screen then left click onto Properties. You will now have a box on your screen with five tabs, Themes, Desktop, Screensaver Appearance and Settings. Select Desktop then choose from any of the options provided by Windows. If you prefer your own photograph(s) on the screen select the Browse option, then from the box which now appears find a photograph and then click OK.

Screensaver works in a similar way but also offers you the facility of having your preferred moving display on a preset timer.

Clear Type

Many of your computers will have been set to offer you the clear type facility but it's is always worth checking to ensure this is the case. Once again right click on your desk top and choose Properties, then select the Appearance tab. Click on the Effects button. You will see a dropdown menu offering two options, Standard and Clear type; do ensure you select the Clear Type then click OK.

Windows Key

Past issues of Clickers Corner has given details of some of the keyboard shortcuts which can make life a little easier. Perhaps users might find the following of use.

Look at you keyboard you should see a key which shows the Windows logo. (looks like a flag made up of four wavy squares) Holding this key down whilst pressing the f key will take you direct to the find function, whilst the same procedure pressing e will take you to the explore. If you wish to lock your computer press the Windows key and L. Should you choose the latter option you will have to re-enter your password to unlock your computer.

For Vista users

Run a Systems Check

Vista can run an in depth check for errors on your computer and produce for you a full report which highlights any problems. To use this functionality go to your Control Panel, Then to System and Maintenance, then performance Information and Tools. Click onto the Advanced Tools and then select Generate a System Health Report.

The results will appear on the screen for you to study.

Resize Desktop Icons

You can easily change the size of your desktop icons by holding down the Ctrl key and scrolling the mouse key. You will find lots of sizes to choose from.

Service Pack 1

For those not already aware Microsoft has launched a Vista update. If you cannot find it through your Windows connection just type "vista service pack 1" into any search engine and follow the on screen links.

Build a Slideshow

Vista users can quickly and easily create their own on screen slide show. Which can be just as easily copied to disc to play elsewhere?

To achieve this load Media Centre, go to Pictures and Videos and select Picture Library. Find your image folder and click Play Slide Show.

You can copy to disc by right clicking your screen and then selecting Burn from the menu. Do remember first however to put a formatted disc into your computer disc drive unit.

For use on all p.c's

Cleaning Your Mouse

If your mouse is the type which operates from a ball on its underside you will discover that after a while it develops a mind of its own and will no longer move as you direct it. The cause could be down to it only requiring a clean. Once again it's a simple procedure. Whilst your computer is turned off take your mouse and turn it upside down.

You will discover that there is a hard rubber ball held in place by a plastic disc. Twist the disc either left or right and it will become free. Remove the ball and give it a good wipe with a damp cloth. Having done this check the hole from where you removed the ball and ensure all the inside is clean especially the contact points upon which the ball rotates. They do have a tendency to collect pieces of debris. Clean if necessary by using a pair of tweezers. Once done replace the ball (ensuring that it is dry first) followed by the securing disc. You should find your mouse is much more responsive to your movements. If it's still causing problems throw it away and buy a new one they are not expensive.

Going Green

A great deal of emphasis is placed these days on saving energy, so here's a little tip on how to do your bit for the environment and save yourselves a few bob on your energy bills.

No doubt you have your computer set to go into sleep mode when left unused for a given period of time, but for those of you who leave your computers on you could also try turning off your monitor especially if you are going to be away from it for more than 15 mins.

On any system it is invariably the monitors which use the most electricity.

Email Register

If you are not already a member of our email register and would wish to join please send an email from the address you wish to have registered to :-

localinfo@harboroughonline.co.uk

For members already on the register, please do remember to resubmit your new details whenever you change to a new email address.

Email addresses may not be passed onto third parties without prior permission from the person registered at that account

Free Downloads

Regular readers will know how much I like freebies and this one really is rather special.

If you are not the owner of a full Microsoft "Word or Works" package including spreadsheets, powerpoint etc. then this is the site for you. Indeed having played around with it for a while I think it offers better functionality than my Office Suite.

Open Office really does offer you all these facilities and will not, like the aforementioned cost you any money.

Simply type open office into your search engine and once loaded click on the download button.

Another first class freebie for those of you who do not have a photo editing suite can be found at www.photoscape.org It not only offers full editing facilities but also gives a free tutorial video. Alas it only works on Vista and XP.

For those of you with a broadband connection why not try www.videojug.com

A site which contains a whole raft of helpful videos lots of which I feel sure you will find useful.



Terry Bone

In the late summer and autumn of 1999, after spending the first two years of my retirement from HM Prison Service working for an American private prisons company, I decided on a further change of direction. The International Centre for Prison Studies (ICPS), part of the School of Law at King's College, London, had advertised in the Retired Prison Governors Newsletter and I made contact with the then Director, Andrew Coyle and the Projects Director, Andy Barclay. After several meetings with them I was invited to become the Project Director for a new project in Russia then under discussion with the Department for International Development.

The essence of this project was to establish greater protection of prisoners' human rights in Russian pre-trial prisons (SIZO's in Russian terminology) and to develop the Moscow SIZO's as a centre of excellence for the observance and dissemination of International standards in human rights. In order to achieve these objectives the plan was to twin each of the Moscow SIZO's with a similar prison in the UK and the Moscow training college for prison staff with a prison service college in the UK. A commitment in principle had been received from the Russian government and the three UK Prison Services (England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland). One of my first tasks was to identify the most suitable partner prisons and a prison service college and to invite them to take part in this project over a three-year period. The partners, selected and agreed, were as follows:

SIZO 1 (Matrosskaya Tishina)	HMP Manchester
SIZO 2 (Butyrka)	HMP Liverpool
SIZO 3 (Krasnya Presna)	HMP Durham
SIZO 5 (juveniles)	NI Prison Service
SIZO 6 (women)	HMP Styal
Moscow Staff Training Centre	Prison Service College, Wakefield

As the Scottish Prison Service withdrew from any involvement in the project at a very early stage, no Scottish prison could be included

The contract with DfID required the partner prisons to exchange visits with each other in each of the three years with a seminar scheduled to take place in Moscow in the autumn of each of the three years. In the first year visits would be used to establish Action Plans. These plans would be designed to identify practical and achievable improvements in human rights for prisoners as well as to the status and professionalism of prison staff. In the short time since their creation, ICPS had published a training manual for prison staff, "Human rights in Prisons", based on all the international instruments and this was invaluable in establishing a strong foundation for the Action Plans. Copies of this manual were translated into Russian and distributed to our colleagues in Russia. In the second year of the project, implementation of the Action Plans was to be given priority with the third year continuing the work of implementation as well as disseminating the lessons learned from the project to other regions in Russia. This was acknowledged by all concerned in ICPS to be a highly ambitious programme of work.

Some key structural considerations

When I first became involved in the preparation and planning of this project I had little knowledge of the Russian prison system or about the conditions in which the prisoners lived and in which the staff worked. I was aware that it had one of the

largest of the world's prison populations but I knew little about their penal system or about the treatment of their prisoners or their living conditions.

I quickly learned that, in terms of their structural organization, they could be regarded as ahead of the UK prison services in one respect at least, as they were already part of the Ministry of Justice. This move, from the Ministry of the Interior had taken place in 1998, two years after Russia had joined the Council of Europe. It soon became clear that these changes were part of a radical reform of the Russia penal system that was underway in a vigorous attempt to establish internationally accepted standards in the operation and management of their system.

One of the other vital changes was the removal of decision making from the prosecuting and investigating authorities over whether an individual arrested should be placed in pre-trial detention or not, (akin to our remand) to the judiciary. Prior to this change taking place, virtually 100% of all arrestees went to custody with the length of period before trial often lasting a year or longer with no upper limit on their pre-trial detention. One of the reasons for this change was to achieve a significant reduction in the prison population, though the move did not take place without considerable controversy amongst interested parties. However, the move did take place and the prison population did fall from over a million to the current figure of around 850,000.

Against this background of major structural changes and an apparent desire to create major practical improvements, the climate appeared favourable for the commencement of the project. Nevertheless, as we prepared the detailed plans for the start of the visits in the first months of 2000, we were under no illusions about the immensity of the task as the SIZO prisons had been chosen because these prisoners were subject to the worst conditions and were receiving the worst treatment.

Initial impressions of the Moscow SIZO's

Before the formal contract with DfID was signed in April of 2000, Andy Barclay, Projects Director at ICPS, Anton Shelupanov, a research associate in ICPS and Russian by birth and myself visited Moscow to discuss the details of the project with our Russian colleagues. At that stage, it was planned for the main contact in Russia to be Colonel Mikhail Khalansky, one of the deputies at the regional headquarters in Moscow. Mikhail proved to be a very effective member of the team. What we found everywhere was staff of high quality, all immensely keen to improve the standards of their Service and with a strong intuitive sharing of professional standards. Many of the senior staff in the prisons were very knowledgeable not only about effectively running their own prisons but also about international standards. More than one governor referred to copies of European Standard Minimum Rules from their desks during our discussions.

This contrasted sharply with the conditions in most of the SIZO's. In the largest, SIZO1, the prison held about 6000 prisoners some 700 of them in the hospital section, about 400 of whom were suffering from TB, as it acts as the hospital SIZO for Moscow. Although conditions were noticeably better in the hospital, many cells in the main prison were holding as many as 80 or more, with the prisoners having to sleep in shifts as there were insufficient beds for everyone. Moreover, there was one shower, one washbasin and no more than two toilets for everyone incarcerated in there with all the windows encased in shutters, allowing in little or no fresh air, in a cell measuring approximately 30 feet square. Apart from daily exercise and any necessary visits from the prosecutor, virtually every activity had to take place in that cell. The building itself was in a very poor state of repair with electric wires and plumbing pipes badly in need of attention. I went inside a number of the cells to talk to the prisoners to find that most of them accepted their conditions with little or no comment. The reaction was generally much more critical and complaints much more frequent from foreign prisoners, though I met very few of these.

If anything, SIZO 2, one of the most notorious prisons in Russia, held people in even worse conditions. This prison was built in 1771 and had a normal capacity of 3,500. At the time we visited it regularly held around 6,000 prisoners of all categories of prisoner including, prior to the moratorium on the death penalty some 4 years earlier, those on death row. There was a small medical wing of 50 beds with a further 70 for psychiatric patients. Although we were told that overcrowding had been even more of a problem in previous years, one of the consequences of prisoner numbers at that time was that 2-300 sick prisoners were having to be kept in ordinary cells. The total number of staff in Butyrka was 439 with 320 of these being guards. With so many prisoners in so many categories, this sometimes meant 1 guard in some cell areas for 1000 prisoners!

Some 50 convicted prisoners were also held here as a work party, a facility that was badly needed. All the prisoners were held in cells similar to those in SIZO 1, but the fabric of the building was even worse. Physical conditions were so poor in some parts that areas had to be closed from time to time in order to carry out urgent repairs.

Sizo No 3 was much more modern in comparison, though in a very poor state of repair, having been built in 1938 and situated on the western edge of Moscow. The figure given as their normal capacity was 2,000, whilst actually holding about 4,000 at that time. Its role was to hold all newly convicted prisoners from the Moscow region where they were held for 3 months until their appeal period was exhausted. The reality was that they were held there for much longer, either because the appeal was delayed or because there was no transport available to take them to a colony, a prison for convicted prisoners in Russia. At least they did not have to walk all the way to Siberia, as had been the common practice in Communist times and earlier!

Sizo 5, built in 1995 and the most recently constructed of the Moscow SIZO's held about 1,500 prisoners, about 400 of whom were juveniles. Conditions were considerably better here, although there was little activity other than education, which was compulsory for the juveniles. Russia is particularly proud of its education system, no doubt with very good reason, with virtually every Russian I ever met proclaiming that there is no illiteracy in their country. This is difficult to credit, at least in their prisons, as on this and many other visits, there was plenty of evidence indicating that a number of the youngsters had difficulty in reading and writing.

SIZO 6 was the prison holding all the women prisoners and was a 1970,s building, converted to a prison in the 1990's. Conditions here were probably the best of all those in Moscow with more space available both in the building and outdoors for exercise within the walls. More opportunities for work were present than in any of the men's prisons ranging from tailoring staff uniforms to making forms of pottery and cultivating salad crops in the gardens and greenhouses for additions to their diet. A mother and baby unit was present with all of them kept in one large room where they did all their own cooking, washing and other domestic work. Access to the prison grounds for exercise was more frequent for the women although in some respects they were treated worse than their male counterparts. The worst examples of this were the system of internal searching which was routine for all the women prior to visits to court and on their return, and the lack of any sanitary towel provision. These were two important issues that were highlighted later in the Styal Action Plans.

The staff-training institute in Moscow was situated in the perimeter wall of SIZO 1, though separately accessible from the outside. One curious feature of their training course was that it was 9 weeks long, the same as that in the England and Wales Prison Service. In many other respects, however, it differed markedly from the basic training course for our prison officers. About half of the course was devoted to weapons training in preparation for manning the watchtowers that existed in most of their prisons. However, some information on human rights was provided in the course and this area of knowledge was tested along with all the other subjects.

Project years 1 and 2

In preparation for the exchange visits a seminar for all UK participants was held in the spring of 2000 at HMP Styal. This proved invaluable in addressing all the necessary administrative issues as well as providing a very useful opportunity to examine individual expectations and concerns.

There is no doubt that most, if not all of the staff involved from the UK, approached their first visits with considerable trepidation. It is a strong tribute to the quality of the staff of all ranks that became involved in the project that they accepted the challenges presented to them and a very strong mutual respect was established in the very first visits. The Russian staff shared the enthusiastic

commitment of our UK staff and all the staff proved very keen to learn from one another. This proved to be the major factor in the eventual successful outcomes from the project. All the exchange visits went ahead as scheduled, though, perhaps inevitably, all visiting groups experienced some cultural shocks, the Russians at least as much as their UK counterparts.

One issue that arose in the first visits, and was never fully resolved, was that of visas. Although we had a Russian national in the visiting groups to Moscow who proved invaluable to the project it took almost the whole 3 years to master the bureaucracy on the issue of visas. That administrative difficulty aside, all the visits were completed as planned and a considerable amount of work invested in preparing the Action Plans during the first year.

As knowledge of each other's services developed throughout this first two years, many assumptions and preconceptions had to be re-examined in relation to what was necessary and practical in preparing the Action Plans. One example of this was that of suicide prevention which had been regarded as an important area to be tackled. In reality, although it was often difficult to establish wholly reliable statistical information, suicide appeared to be a phenomenon that rarely, if ever, occurred. One reason for this was the fact that prisoners were never alone in the cell situation. Another relevant feature of the Moscow SIZO's was that each cell, with their far larger numbers than occurs in the UK, has a prisoner appointed as leader. This prisoner has a responsibility for all the other prisoners and has a duty to inform staff if he becomes aware of any prisoner experiencing unusual problems or being in need of particular attention. Although this system did not fit easily into our experience, with our far greater reliance on single cells for prisoners, it appeared to work effectively in their environment.

Another important consideration in considering suitable Action Plans was that of the degree of change which would be acceptable without encountering major bureaucratic or cultural hurdles. Perhaps the best example of this was that of shutters on all the cell windows. All the cell windows in all the SIZO's were covered with shutters, adversely affecting the poor ventilation in a severely overcrowded cell and making them unbearably hot in the summer months. When this issue was first raised with the general in charge of the Moscow region the reply was that the shutters were there for security reasons and legislation prevented their removal. This issue was raised in meetings with staff in the GUIN and it gradually emerged that there was no legislation requiring the installation of these shutters.

Several important events took place in Moscow during 2001 that affected a decision on this and many other issues. Whilst responsibility for the overall project was gradually moving from the regional structure in Moscow to the GUIN or Headquarters structure, a rare incident occurred in one of the SIZO's. An escape took place from SIZO 2, which we were told was the first escape ever to take place from within the walls. A direct consequence of this was that all the

key personnel were removed, from the General in charge of all the SIZO's in Russia, (holding some 280,000 prisoners) to the General in charge of the Moscow region and several of his deputies as well as the governor of the prison and several of his deputies. We were particularly sorry to see the governor of this prison removed, as he was an excellent governor who was particularly keen to improve conditions. In the earlier part of 2001, he had agreed to remove some of the shutters on cells that were being refurbished and this had worked very well, as expected, with no effect on security. (The escapees had gone through the floor and out via the sewers.) One beneficial consequence of this escape was that money was made available for a major refurbishment of the prison. Many millions of roubles were spent on improvements and all the shutters were removed gradually across all the Moscow SIZO's.

Project year 3 - 2003

2003 was scheduled as the final year of the project but by the middle of 2002 most of the participants in the project were keen to see if the project could be extended and what form it might take. DfID had made it clear that they would not fund any extension to the existing project as their country priorities for funding had changed. However, they were prepared to allow any surplus funding from the original project to be spent on disseminating the results across the 80 plus regions of Russia. Contact was also made with the Ford foundation and they also agreed to provide some funding to ensure that the lessons learnt from the project were spread right throughout Russia.

Our first presentation of the results of the project was at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The principal improvements we listed, in no particular order, were as follows:

New staff training course introduced incorporating Human Rights

New programmes for prisoners introduced

Training for trainers course devised and completed

Induction programmes introduced for juveniles

Sentence plans extended and developed

Identification and development of basic skills (both staff and prisoners)

New TB diagnostic laboratory in SIZO 1

Implementation of Unit Management (producing more efficient use of staff)
Improvements to Punishment cell conditions

Removal of shutters from windows

Colour coded cleaning schedules introduced producing major hygiene improvements

Building maintenance schedules introduced

Abolition of internal body searches for females

Increase in activity for prisoners

Improved relationships between prisoners and staff

In addition to these improvements in the Moscow SIZO's, I believe UK Prison Services benefited considerably through the provision of this exchange experience. The staffs of all ranks involved in the project were able to see at first hand how another prison system operated. Undoubtedly this stimulated their existing interest and commitment to their own service. Furthermore, the visits by our Russian colleagues were always welcome and aroused widespread interest.

Similar presentations were made to the Council of Baltic Sea States, to a Russian regional conference on the outskirts of St Peterburg and to a final seminar in Moscow attended by General Semenuik, Head of all the Russian SIZO's and representatives of regions across Russia. Although I had to withdraw from further involvement in the extension project, the plans made for dissemination of the project across Russia went ahead in 2004 with Max Morrison taking on responsibility for the work.

The Butler Trust

Anne Fragniere the Director for The Butler Trust has moved onto pastures new and those of us who have been actively involved with The Butler Trust will certainly miss her. I first met Anne seven years ago and in 2003 when I moved into Headquarters my team had policy responsibility for the HQ liaison role with The Butler Trust. In 2006 I had the pleasure of organising the 21st birthday party for The Butler Trust at Newbold Revel. When I retired from the Service my first port of call for undertaking voluntary work was to The Butler Trust.

In 2007 I sat on the Assessment panel for the first time and I was amazed to see the number of nominations we received – 340 from 138 different locations! Some it must be said needed further work

but many were well-crafted documents which made our job all the harder. The second sift was even more difficult. In September we spent two days going through all the surviving nominations trying to decide which should go through for interview. Eventually we sorted out the required number and then sat back to see if we had made the right selections. It is always great fun to look at the successful nominations and identify those you thought might receive an award.

The ceremony at Buckingham Palace was wonderful with criminal justice staff from many different parts of the United Kingdom receiving their awards. It is difficult to single out individual award winners but seeing Jinnie Jeffries receive the Terry Waite award was an uplifting experience. I worked with Jinnie at Feltham in the 1970's and learned a great deal from her about how to work with disturbed adolescents. Ewan Easton's work at HMYOI Thorn Cross was inspirational and deserved to be awarded the Helen Hamlyn Trust Award. There were many other wonderful pieces of work, which, could be mentioned along with the well-deserved individual development awards. What was evident at the Ceremony was the pride staff and their families felt at being selected as a Butler Trust award winner.

We are just about to start the next round, with nominations coming out to the panel members in July. I am looking forward to seeing what inspirational work is being carried out this year even though the Service is overcrowded and underfunded.

Undoubtedly staff are the Service's greatest asset and it is wonderful to see what they are achieving and through The Butler Trust how their achievements are being recognised.

I know a number of retired governors have been involved with The Butler Trust for many years but if you are newly retired and want to do some voluntary work – why not consider working for the Trust, you can make contact via the website <http://www.thebutlertrust.org.uk/>

John Berry OBE
Assessment Panel member

Annual General Meeting of the Retired Prison Governors' Association on Saturday 7th June 2008.

Present:

D Simons Chairman
J Blakey Treasurer
G Ross Secretary/PSPC
H Brett Membership Secretary
R Duncan Letters Editor
M Roebuck Deputy Editor
C Smith Social events/PSPC
G Smith Social Events

The Chairman welcomed all present to the AGM and the Reunion.

1. **Apologies:** B O'Friel, Barbara Dean, Arthur and Peggy Williamson, Bill and Mary Brister, Alan and Margaret Tee, John Dring.
2. **Minutes of the AGM 2nd June 2007.** These were accepted as a true record.
3. **Matters arising.** There were none.
4. **Treasurer's Report.** The Treasurer presented his report for the period 1st January 2007 – 31 December 2007. Income in excess of expenditure was £660.50. The balance of our funds on the 1st January 2008 was £8507.00. He noted that we have still to pay for the 2008 diaries. Last year these cost £747.50. There had been no call on the Benevolent Fund which now stands at £5300.45. Jim Blakey received a vote of thanks for his work as our Treasurer.
5. **Membership Report.** Harry Brett gave a detailed report on our membership situation. Our total membership is 435, and this comprises 346 paying members, and 89 honorary members.
6. **Social Events.** Charles Smith reported on the success of our weekend at Tortworth Court 17-20 April 2008. The weekend break in 2009 will be 26-29 April at the Hinton Firs Hotel Bournemouth. Graham Smith and Charles are satisfied that the best rate and value for our AGM and Reunion remains the Hilton Hotel at Bromsgrove. This view is also shared by the rest of the committee.
7. **Retired Governors' Newsletter.** The Treasurer dealt with the rising cost of printing the Newsletter. He noted that we are on the lookout for a better printer. Brendan, who now lives in the Isle of Man, is doing the next edition. He will be using the services of a printer who lives a short

distance from him. Mick Roebuck explained the procedure for the operation of the Email Register. He also welcomed contributions to the RGN from our members. Following concern from a member regarding the details of the "Prison Governors' Association" printed on the envelope used to send the RGN, the meeting agreed to remove this from the envelope. In future if the item cannot be delivered the instruction on the envelope will show the address of Harry Brett for the return of the Newsletter. The Chairman referred to the amount of work involved in producing the RGN. A vote of thanks was recorded for this work.

8. **RPGA Benevolent Fund.** Neville Joseph confirmed that there had been no call on the Benevolent Fund. Neville is also Chairman of the PGA Charity Fund. In that role he has contact with the Charity Commission, and he would be happy to deal with any issues raised by the RPGA, or their members on matters that are relevant to the administration of charities.
9. **Public Service Pensioners' Council.** Gerry Ross and Charles Smith had attended the AGM of the PSPC in May. At the AGM in 2007 the Council had received a mandate to pursue campaign to change the mind of the Government in respect of the abolition of the 10 per cent Tax Band, and in particular to seek action in reducing the effect of this change on pensioners in the 60-64 age group. This was particularly important for low income pensioners, who would not benefit from the increase in age-related personal allowances, but would lose income following the removal of the 10 per cent Tax Band. Gerry Ross made the point that the sudden change in attitude on this issue by the Government this year had much to do with the pressure from pensioners groups. Our subscription to the PSPC is now £69 per annum. Following the publication of the Pensions Act in 2007 it was accepted that the state pension would be indexed to earnings from 2012. However, as a result of a press release from the DWP in January this year, a statement by Peter Hain gave cause for concern. He stated that the intention was to restore the link to earnings from 2012, or the end of the next Parliament. The Council saw this as a possible delay until 2015. The Council wrote to the Chancellor and sought a commitment to restore the link to earnings by 2012.
10. **Election of Officers.** There were no nominations for the posts of, Chairman, Treasurer, and 3 committee members. David Simons, Jim Blakey, Bob Duncan, Charles Smith, and Alan Tee, all were prepared to continue, and were returned to loud applause from the meeting.
11. **Proceeds of the draw.** The members were in full support of the proposal to donate the proceeds of the draw to the Macmillan Nurses. The draw raised £127.

12. **Any other business.** Charles Smith paid tribute to the Reverend Sheila Nall, Chaplain at Blakenhurst, who had stepped in to take our Church Service, in place of the Reverend Wendy Carey. Wendy, a retired Prison Chaplain, now has her own Parish.

The next AGM and Reunion will be on Saturday 6th June 2009.

Gerry Ross
Secretary

“Any Mensa members out there?”

I was sat reading the paper one day around 15 years ago, [not at the prison of course] and noticed this numbers puzzle set by Mensa in the corner of a page. I have always enjoyed trying to solve logic problems and the like so had a go and got it right!

The advert then suggested applying to Mensa for a home test pack which I did and duly sent back to them for marking. Blow me if I didn't pass and was invited to take a supervised test at a school just outside Wakefield.

You will perceive that I was somewhat surprised by this as my past achievements in the academic world were limited to some certificates or other [that I can't even remember now] at Secondary Modern in 1961 and have never been of use since then.

However, thinking along the lines that they had mistaken me for some other very clever George Smith elsewhere, I attended the test which lasted around 3 hours. It consisted of a series of timed tests based on numbers, shapes, sequences and logic problems designed to not only assess thinking and processing but the ability to do that within strict time constraints. My "IQ" was assessed as 152 [in the top 2 percent of the country] which allowed me entry to Mensa if I wished. If I wished? It was the first success I had ever had that gave any recognition apart from the HMPS intelligence test at Stafford in 1968.

IQ, or Intelligence Quotient, is a means of measuring intelligence which can mean many things to many people, but generally the attribute refers to quickness of mental apprehension. It is not to be confused with knowledge, wisdom, information or talent and has a variety of meanings depending on the context in which the term is used.

Mensa was founded in 1946 by two barristers Rolland Berrill and Dr. Lance Ware and the current HQ is in Wolverhampton. There are many famous members such as Jimmy Savile, Carol Vorderman, Sir Clive Sinclair, Garry Bushell and the like. Mensa is an international society and aims to identify and foster human intelligence, encourage research into the nature the nature of intelligence and encourage members to interact socially.

I am the local secretary for the Wakefield area and host a monthly meeting at a local pub to chat and discuss almost anything really and most members are just ordinary working and retired people. I understand that the name Mensa means round table and this reflects the fact that at our meetings we all have an equal standing and entitlement to a view.

I could go on but I was wondering if there are any other Mensa members in the RPGA?

If there are I would be pleased to communicate with them or talk to anyone with an interest. I only know of one other member in HMPS but she is still operational as we say and many members are very careful who they tell about their IQ. Not me of course!

Graham.smith646@hotmail.co.uk. 01484 851390

PRISON POPULATION & ACCOMMODATION BRIEFING FOR – 30th May 2008

Population

	Male	78,184
	Female	4,471
No. of prisoners in police cells under Operation Safeguard and in court cells.		0
	TOTAL	82,655

	Useable Operational Capacity	83,087
Spaces available under Operation Safeguard*		400
	TOTAL	83,487

	Number under Home Detention Curfew supervision	2,448
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- These vary from night to night and up to a 400 place ceiling.

INSIDE OUT

A brief look at a selection of items, which have appeared in the Prison Service News and other publications since the last issue of the Newsletter.

by Mick Roebuck

Review of Staff associations

An independent review of the Prison Service's staff associations has been announced to ensure that all staff groups have appropriate provision and that existing networks continue to provide value for money.

The Prison Service currently has two staff associations GALIPS (for Gay, Lesbian and Bi- sexual Transgender staff) and RESPECT (the Minority Ethnic Staff Support Network).

There is currently no similar provision for staff who are disabled or other staff groups.

The review will look at if existing arrangements are adequate, and if changes are needed to meet the requirements of the newly restructured National Offender Management Service working within the wider Ministry of Justice.

Titan Consultation

A consultation on the development of up to three 2,500 place Titan prisons has been launched by prisons Minister David Hanson.

Plans to build the prisons were announced last year as part of the further 10,500 places recommended in Lord Carter's review of prisons.

The current building programme aims to bring overall capacity of the prison estate to over 96,000 by 2014.

The consultation on Titan prisons will end on August 28. The results will be published before the end of the year.

CRE Action Plan

Almost five years since the Commission for racial Equality (CRE) published its investigation into race equality in the Prison Service, the Race Equality Action Group (REAG) has commissioned a major review of progress. Teams made up of independent external partners will visit a number of establishments over the next few months in order to review what has been achieved and what remains to be done. The report will be published in December 2008 to coincide with the end of the five year plan.

Corruption Prevention Unit

On 1st June 2008 the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) changed its name to the Corruption Prevention Unit (CPU) to reflect a new role leading to a significant five year change programme to improve the ability of the Prison Service to the threat posed by the small minority of corrupt staff.

A revised PSO 1215 entitled Corruption prevention is currently being consulted on to reflect fundamental changes and to provide clearer guidance to all staff on what is corruption, how they can report it and how the organisation will manage the threat.

The aim is to implement a revised order during August 2008.

HMP Hewell

HMP Hewell the establishment created by the merger of Brockhill, Hewell Grange and Blakenhurst was due to begin operation on 25th June 2008 with Alison Perry as its Governor.

The prison will have the capacity to hold 1,428 prisoners and will perform the same functions as the former three establishments.

Michael Spurr said "The merging of the three prisons not only saves money by realising economies of scale - eliminating duplication of operational and

administrative functions but also maximises the opportunities to deliver end to end offender management and effective partnership working”

Building A Bigger Estate

It's one of the biggest building programmes in Europe, probably beaten only by Crossrail and the Olympic development in Britain. And by the time that great sporting event kicks off in 2012, the Prison Service will have more than 10,000 extra places.

A total of 3,012 new places have been delivered to date and an extra 1,206 are on target to open before the end of 2008.

RPGA E-MAIL REGISTER

The e-mail register has now been in operation for almost 2 years and is proving to be a fast and effective means of communicating information to members between newsletter issues.

If you are not on the register and would like to join, please send an email to Mick Roebuck at localinfo@harboroughonline.co.uk from the email address you would wish to have registered on the system.






For members already on the register please do remember to resubmit your new details whenever you change to a new email address

E-mail addresses may not be passed onto third parties without permission from the person registered to that specific email address

CPU – THE TRANSFORMATIONAL PROGRAMME

On May 27 2007 in the House of Lords the Minister for Justice announced the launch of a transformation programme designed to improve the ability to combat staff corruption in the Prison Service.

The programme has five steps:

-  Identifying the extent of the threat
-  Improving intelligence on matters of corruption
-  Implementing common standards across the prison estate
-  Working to establish a culture where corruption is not tolerated
-  Working closely with the police and other interested agencies.

The CPU is taking the lead in delivering the transformation by developing policies and procedures that align working practices to these five steps.

NETWORK

One of the objectives of this column is to encourage exchange of information about work opportunities post retirement with a special emphasis on keeping in touch via email. Contributions to this column from readers with information about post retirement work activities would be very welcome.

Please note my email address which is: -

Email: brendan@ofriel.fsnet.co.uk

PGA OFFICE

The PGA Office address is **Room 217**

Cleland House

Page Street

London SW1P 4LN

Tel 020 7217 8923

Email james.bryant@hmps.gsi.gov.uk

Web Site Information

We welcome exchange of helpful website information from readers so let us know if you have an interesting site

The International Centre for Prison Studies can be found at -

The International Centre for Prison Studies

King's College London

School of Law

26-29 Drury Lane

London WC2B 5RL

020 7848 1922

Website _ <http://www.prisonstudies.org>

Email : icps@kcl.ac.uk

Public Service work opportunities

Readers may find it worth consulting the public appointments website –

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/pau

Part time work opportunities

The work is with the Office for National Statistics - Social Survey Interviews. They are currently offering part time contracts of 21-28 hours per week with retirement at 65. The full time salary is £14k for Inner London - £11k outside London - pro rata.

The job gives 30.5 days paid holiday - pro rata - sick pay - pays 38.5p per mile, paid travel time and a daily meal allowance.
The contact number is 020 7533 6368.

As part of the re-organisation of Police Complaints, Police Authorities have been seeking applications for lay people to sit as Independent Members of Staff Misconduct panels. While many of these recruitment exercises may have been complete, it may be worth asking for details of the positions from your local Police Authorities. The time commitment is small and the positions carry a daily fee.

The Ministry of Justice advertises from time to time for Members of "Courts Boards". The time commitment is around 9 days a year, 11 for Chairs. A small fee is payable.

Lay Members of the 42 Area Probation Boards are required from time to time. The time commitment varies but averages 2/3 days a month. The posts are remunerated. Probation Areas may be turned into "Probation Trusts" in future years and this may offer further opportunities for interested readers to apply for Board positions in these new Trusts.

Lay members of the Employment Tribunals are sought every 3 years. The time commitment has been 15 days a year minimum and a fee is payable. However, a major review of all Tribunals is currently in progress as the Ministry of Justice is taking responsibility for the many Tribunals that exist.

The Home Office advertises for members of the Parole Board from time to time – recent advert in February 2007.

Even if there are no vacancies at present in any of the above positions, anyone interested should consider exploring what the work entails in order to decide whether to apply. Most public Boards sit in public so it is reasonably easy to observe the work of the Boards.

Travelling within the UK?

There is an advice/information service including all rail services; buses and road information on www.traveldirect.info

Complaints about Rail travel – try Passenger Focus www.passengerfocus.org.uk or 08453022022

Complaints about Air Travel – try the Air Transport Users Council
Tel 0207240 6061.

Something worth Reading?

As a change from conventional book reviews, I thought it might interest some of our readers to have an occasional column about books and periodicals.

Robin Oake – former Chief Constable of the Isle of Man – has written a book entitled “**Father Forgive**” published by Authentic of Milton Keynes. Robin writes of his traumatic experience of coping with the death of Stephen, his son, killed on operational duty in the police service. This is a moving account of how Robin was able to forgive and how he has seen good come out of evil.

A much more demanding book came to the RGN from the publishers – “**Imprisoning Resistance**” Life and death in an Australian Supermax. By Bree Carlton published by the Sydney Institute of Criminology. It is a grim book about a very grim topic that many of us may not wish to remember. Supermax are perhaps the successors of the Dispersal system in England and Wales. What is interesting about the book is that it deals with an apparent complete lack of transparency by the authorities following the death of prisoners in Jika Jika. Compared with the Woolf Inquiry after the Strangeways riots, it makes a very sad contrast.

The **Prison Service Journal** continues to publish and – so far as I can judge – to flourish. Given that many retired governors will have read, written and even edited the RGN in days gone by, I thought that you might like to know a little of a recent edition. Number 179 was published in September 2008. The Editor is Jamie Bennett, currently Governor of Morton Hall. It is still printed at HMP Leyhill.

The Editorial includes some comments on prison clothes starting with the classic image from van Gough’s painting of shabbily dressed prisoners in ill fitting clothes. Woolf moved the service towards allowing prisoners to wear their own clothes and this became part of the incentive and privileges regime. Apparently in the USA, notably in the state of Arizona, there have been changes to make prison harsher. Clothing has been used as a deliberate attempt to degrade and humiliate – one prison apparently introduced pink underwear to humiliate and emasculate prisoners.

Articles include an interesting mix from “Countering Terror: Violent radicalisation and situational intelligence” ; “Getting Healthcare, Housing Support and Community care set up for prisoners who will need it on release” to an interview with Tony Benn. The PSJ continues to carry book reviews. It depends heavily on academic sources to write articles – but I suspect it was ever thus.

“**Prison Voices**” is research by Dr Helen Rodgers a senior lecturer in Cultural History, at John Moores University. Dr Rodgers writes about the work of Sarah Martin, a seamstress from Caister-on-Sea. Sarah began visiting Yarmouth Gaol in 1818 and worked there as a voluntary visitor until her death in 1843. Unlike

many of the prison reformers, Sarah was a single working woman and her years of effort resulted in better conditions for prisoners. A prison Inspector visiting in 1835 cited Martin as being wholly responsible for all the improvements in the living conditions for prisoners.

RETIRED PRISON GOVERNORS REUNION 2008

Held at the Hilton Hotel Bromsgrove on Saturday 7th June 2008

This was the sixth time that the Reunion has been held at this venue and it proved to be equally as good as on previous occasions. The spacious entrance lounge and reception area were ideal for the purpose of meeting people on arrival and was agreeable as a place where members could sit and talk, or generally relax between items listed on the programme.

Two private areas had been set aside for tea, coffee and pastries in the morning and afternoon. The church service, which has become something of a tradition at the Reunion, was held in the Bromsgrove Suite. We were most appreciative of The Reverend Sheila Nall, Chaplain at H M P Blakenhurst. who conducted the service.

There was some lively participation at the AGM held in the Bromsgrove Suite. The members present expressed general satisfaction with the venue and that we should return there on 6th June for the Reunion of 2009.

The raffle raised £127 which was donated to the Macmillan Nurses.

Lunch was served on group tables set aside in the dining room and for this year the buffet was chosen as:-

- Assorted Sandwiches
- Toasted Ham and Pineapple Baguette
- Smoked salmon and Sour Cream Vol-au-vents
- Breaded Camembert Pieces.
- Chicken and Mushroom Sate
- Hunters Pie
- Vegetable Skewer
- Jalopeno Poppers
- (All served with a selection of dips and sauces)
- Fresh Fruit Basket
- Tarte au Citron
- Cheese Biscuits and Grapes.
- Tea, coffee .

The bar was open throughout the day where drinks could be obtained and for those who felt the need for a stroll, the patio led to a pleasant well laid out garden area.

Several people took the opportunity to stay over at the hotel where favourable rates had been obtained when making the original booking.

Among those who attended were:-

Revd Sheila Nall Chaplain H M P Blakenhurst

Roger and Rosamond Dauncey
Roland Adams
Ann and Pat Lynch
Graham Smith
David Taylor
Terry and Teresa (daughter) Weiler
Geoff and Grace Lister
Don and Iris Drew
Bernard and Margery Marchant
Mick and Mary Roebuck
Gerry Ross
Dave Simmonds
Jim and Sheila Blakey
Martin and Elizabeth Kealy
LWF and SA Steinhausen
Harry and Sylvia Brown
Neville and Mrs Joseph
Ron and Sue Curtis
Bob and Val Perry
Marylyn Parkin
Harry and Carol Brett
Olwen Spiers
Charles and Kath Smith
Bob Duncan
Barbara Longstaffe
Alan Rawson
Ron Hart

Apologies
Barbara Dean
Arthur and Peggy Williamson
Brendan and Barbara O'Friel
Bill and Mary Brister
Alan and Margaret Tee
John Dring

RPGA REUNION 2009

Due to the favourable comments received and suitable costs agreed, arrangements have been made to for the reunion to be held at the same venue on Saturday 6th June 2009

The programme will be :-

1100	Arrival - Tea & Coffee available
1200	Opportunity to mingle
1230	Lunch served in the Dining Room
1400	Church Service in the Bromsgrove Suite
1445	Annual General Meeting
1545	Photographs
1600	Tea and pastries
1700	Departure

For those wishing to purchase their own drinks The bar will be open from arrival to departure.

The price for the event is £16 per person.

To reserve places please complete the booking form as published with this newsletter and send with a cheque payable to RPGA.

To - Charles Smith,
21 Bowness Avenue,
Ainsdale,
Southport,
PR8 3QP

telephone - 01704 575 266

OVERNIGHT ACOMMODATION

A preferential rate has been agreed for those who would like stay overnight at the hotel on the Friday and / or Saturday. The price for dinner bed and breakfast being £110 per room, per night, based upon two sharing and £75 per room, single occupancy. The price for Bed and Breakfast only is £82 per room per night based upon two sharing and £57.5 per room for single occupancy.

Bookings must be made direct with the Hilton Bromsgrove on 0121 447 7888 and quote The Retired Prison Governors Reunion.

Another option for accommodation, would be, that The Hilton Hotel Group have in the past advertised in various newspapers and periodicals, a special Spring/ Summer offer of reduced rates for a two night stay at hotels within their group. This tends to be after Christmas and was around February of last year. But please bear in mind that that previously, there has been quite a demand for accommodation in June, due to various functions being held at the hotel.

HOW TO GET THERE.

BY ROAD - The Hotel is located along Birmingham Road (A38) which runs between the M5 Junction 4 and M42 Junction 1. Approximately 1.3 Km north of the M42 and 1.5 Km south of the M5.

BY RAIL - From Birmingham New Street Station catch a connecting train to Bromsgrove Station. 30 Minutes by car from Birmingham International Station.

BUS ROUTES - From Birmingham city centre and the City bus station, catch either the No 143 or 144 to Bromsgrove - both services travel down Birmingham Road.

PUBLIC SERVICES PENSIONERS COUNCIL AGM 2008

HELD ON 13TH MAY 2008 at HAMILTON HOUSE, MABLEDON PLACE LONDON.

It was attended by Gerry Ross and Charles Smith as representatives of the RPGA

10 PER CENT TAX BAND

- 1 The major task in the past year arose from the decision at the 2007 AGM, where the PSPC was mandated 'to campaign to persuade the Government to take steps to offset the effects of the tax changes in order that pensioners in the age group 60-64 will not be disadvantaged' .
- 2 This resolution was framed in the light of the changes announced in the 2007 Budget, to be introduced in April 2008, that abolished the 10 per cent tax band, cut the basic rate of income tax from 22 per cent to 20 per cent, and increased the age-related tax allowances for the over-65s and over 75s.
- 3 The effect of these changes was an income loss for low-income pensioners in the 60 to 64 age bracket, who would not benefit from the increase in age-related personal allowances, but who would lose out from the abolition of the 10 per cent tax band. A disproportionate number of those affected would be women, who generally suffer lower incomes in retirement.
- 4 The AGM of 30 May 2007 agreed to write to the Chancellor outlining

that this step was not consistent with government policy and asking the government to take appropriate measures to put it right. The reply received from Jane Kennedy MP, Financial Secretary to the Treasury evaded the issue, concentrating on the benefits of the package as a whole, rather than the specific loss to the 60-64 age group

5 The General Purposes Committee meeting of 12 November 2007 agreed to send a reply to this letter, where we reiterated our points, and stressed that, at a time when the Government is not enjoying the greatest popularity, it seemed counter-intuitive to target lower-income pensioners including public service pensioners for an income reduction.

6 In our letter to the Chancellor of 29 February in advance of the budget, we continued to urge the government to take steps to offset the effect of the tax changes in order that pensioners in the 60-64 age bracket would not be affected.

7 Pressure from many organisations along similar lines has forced the government into a u-turn although the nature and extent of any changes is not clear yet, but it seems that pensioners aged 60-64 will be compensated to some degree through the winter fuel payment mechanism.

8 Representatives at the meeting were concerned that compensatory measures may not apply equally to all those who have been disadvantaged, or come in the form of handouts, ie Winter Fuel Payment Changes, and that these measures will need to be studied carefully.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS - FUTURE POLICY TOWARDS PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONS

At a meeting between the PSPC General Secretary and Mr Danny Alexander, Liberal Democrats MP, it became apparent that there was a lack of understanding of The Public Services Pensions Forum Agreement. In particular the point that public services pensions are managed in single schemes, without separate schemes for executives, as is found in the private sector, where there can be a sudden increase in the members' accrual rate. Public Service Pensions are deferred pay based upon the members' salary during working life. Our position is that the majority of public servants are being paid modest pensions. Where a member has a high pension, this has been based salary during working life and has therefore been earned. the next step is to produce a paper on the true facts of public service provision, which will be sent to Mr Alexander.

STATE PENSION INDEXATION

It had been assumed that as a result of the PENSIONS ACT 2007 the re-

indexation of the basic state pension would take place in 2012. Press releases in January indicated that there is a possibility of a delay in restoring the earnings link until 2015. Therefore a letter was sent to the Chancellor on 29th January to urge him to give a firm unequivocal commitment to all pensioners to restore the earnings link in 2012.

MOTIONS

The following motions were proposed by The Civil Service Pensioners Alliance

1 Tax Changes

This AGM is concerned that despite vigorous campaigning by a large number of organisations, including the PSPC, the Government's proposal to double the 10% tax rate has not been amended. This means that pensioners in the age group 60 - 64, with modest pensions, mainly women, will be significantly worse off on average about £2 per week.

This AGM therefore agrees to continue to campaign to persuade the Government to bring in measures to offset this tax increase as soon as possible.

Passed

2 General Election.

This AGM is aware that the next General Election could take place in 2009. Therefore this AGM agrees to shortly after the pre budget report has been published, submit proposal in line with PSPC policy to influence the 2009 pre-election budget. Then use the response of the Government in campaigning material to be drawn up by the PSPC and circulated to constituent organisations in good time for the next election.

Passed

3 Ceiling of the Age Related Tax Allowance

This AGM notes that in this year's budget, the Age Related Personal Allowances were significantly increased to more than offset the negative effects of the doubling of the 10% tax band. This means that pensioners aged 65 and over earning up to the ceiling of £21,800 will be better off.

This AGM agrees that the ceiling is too low and needs to be significantly increased in order that those with reasonable occupational pensions benefit from the Age Related Personal Allowances. This AGM therefore agrees to campaign to achieve this objective.

Passed, but agreed that this has to be carried forward with sensitivity, in order to make the point that the better off should be rewarded.

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2008 - 2009

The subscription for organisations with less than 1000 members will be £69

Weekend Break 2008

The event was held at Tortworth Court Hotel, at Wotton-Under-Edge in Gloucester. From Thursday 17th April until 20th April 2008.

It will be remembered by many of our members as the Leyhill Prison Officers Training School and before that as H M P Leyhill. It was interesting to see how much of the old place had changed, during the forty years or so since I was last there and I must say "Quite a lot" Not least of all in the décor, furnishings, catering and general appearance. But then again it did not have a four star rating in those days.

Among those who had served there or had previous links with the place were Don Drew, Bill McEvoy and Malcolm and Ivy Brown, who not quite by coincidence, paid a visit on the same day as the Her Majesty Queen.

There are documents available at the Reception, which gives the reader quite a detailed History of the House and Manor starting with Sir Nicholas Kingston who held the Manor during the Reign of Edward the First. Much later on we read of the building of the house for the 2nd Earl of Ducie from 1849 - 1853 and of its use during the second world war when it was a Hospital for American Servicemen. The narrative continues until 1952 when "the 6th Earl found the estate in a parlous financial condition". There is then a curious gap and we are speedily transported to 1991 with a paragraph commencing:-

"During the next four decades, the 6th Earl achieved his goals". and "In 1991 the property was bought by entrepreneur Phillip Stubbs who started to convert Tortworth Court into luxury flats and houses."

Any guest of the hotel and no doubt some of the staff, after reading this very descriptive history of the house would probably be most surprised to be told that it had formerly been Prisoner accommodation for some years as one of Her Majesty's Prisons. I wonder why there is no mention!!

The long weekend was considered enjoyable by those who attended, the food, accommodation and facilities were very good and there were plenty of places of interest in the surrounding countryside worth a visit and this year, as an alternative to driving, we could use our travel passes on the public transport and proceed to whatever destination that we fancied, of just enjoy the ride through the country lanes, subject of course to the time table.

Those who attended were:-

Margaret and Brenda Brooks
Barbara Longstaff
Pat and Ann Lynch
John and Liz Towers
Jack and Shirley Northway
Don and Iris Drew
Harry and Janet Walsh
John and Barbara Yates
Malcolm and Ivy Brown

Charles and Kath Smith
Joe and Mary Whitty
Bill and Mrs McEvoy
Keith and Sheila French
Maurice and Molly Eccles

WEEKEND BREAK 2009

By popular demand, the Spring Weekend Break is to be held again, at the Hinton Firs Hotel Bournemouth for three days from Thursday 26th March until Sunday 29th March 2009.

The event has been held at this venue on alternate years for some time and consistently retains its popularity with members. The reasons for this are I believe, due in no small way to several aspects such as, the comfortable en-suite bedrooms and the various hotel facilities available. The restaurant has in the past provided a varied selection of good meals and the service has been friendly and helpful. The bar or lounges provide a pleasant venue for people to gather and socialise before dinner or to quietly unwind after the day. There is a pool spa complex with a sauna for those who like to maintain their exercise levels, although to use the outside pool in March one has to be of the more hardy variety, even with the effects of global warming.

During the evening one can be entertained in the ballroom followed by music to dance to, or follow ones inclination either to sit with friends in the lounge or bar, or take a stroll along the adjacent sea front and while the hotel is set in a rather tranquil environment the attractions of the vibrant nightlife of Bournemouth are just a 15 minute walk down the sea front.

In and around Bournemouth there are plenty of places to visit within a short drive or by the use of public transport, which provide sufficient interest for the three days. One can of course have a walk around the shops and stores in the town centre.

The hotel has been under private ownership for 50 years has 52 bedrooms and is located at 9 Manor Road, Bournemouth. BH1 3ET. Website: hintonfirshotel.co.uk

The cost for three nights dinner bed and breakfast is £160 per person; this includes tea/coffee on arrival, a Bucks Fizz Reception at 6.30pm on Thursday and Sunday lunch.

There are only a set number of places available so it would be prudent to book early. To do so send the completed booking form, as included with this publication, with cheques for deposits of £25 per person made payable to HINTON FIRS HOTEL.

To Charles Smith,
21 Bowness Avenue,
Ainsdale,
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telephone 01704 575 266.