

The Retired Prison Governors

In co-operation with: The Prison Governors Association

NEWSLETTER



Founded in 1980 by Arthur Williamson – 33 years of continuous publication

ISSUE 68

EDITORIAL

SPRING 2013

CONTENTS

History of Newbold

Chairmans AGM Report

C wing Parkhurst

A Treasurers Woe

Clickers Corner

Prison Closures

Debasso School

Brendan O’Friel

Newsletter Puzzles

Is Taxation Coercion

Human Rights Act

Charity & Benevolence

Nearly 10 Years Later

When May a prisoner?

Nouveau Britonian

Weekend Break

Views On Education

Your Letters

Trekking in Bhutan

Membership Report

Financial Position

Back Page

Life After the Prison Service



News that the MOJ will be closing a further six establishments; in addition to Ashwell, Wellingborough and Lancaster, which have already closed, might well be welcome news and seen by some as an indication that imprisonable crime in the UK is falling.

One would hope this to be the case, yet a report in a national newspaper a few weeks ago suggested that in 2012 over 90,000 offenders with 10 or more serious convictions received a non custodial sentence for the offence(s) they had committed, when it was thought by some that the crimes they had committed coupled with their previous criminal history demanded an immediate custodial sentence. If like me you want to believe that crime in the UK is reducing and hope that the

current sentencing policies are not a cost cutting exercise and are indeed an indication of a fall in the amount of imprisonable offences then I very much welcome the announced closures.

But, and there is always a but, many of us well remember the introduction of the suspended prison sentence which, upon introduction in the 1970’s had a dramatic impact by substantially lowering the prison population, 12 months down the road however, we saw an explosion in the numbers coming into prison, brought about by those who had been given a suspended sentence breaching the terms and conditions and being sentenced not only for the new offences committed but also the activation of the suspended term, which in many cases were consecutive to the sentence passed on the offence for which they had been returned to court. Let us hope that we will not experience the

same scenario as we did back in the 70's with the breaches of suspended sentences.

Something new for readers in this edition of the Newsletter is the inclusion of a page designed for those of you who are regular crossword and sudoku addicts. Feedback on how well this page has been received by members is sought so as to determine whether or not to continue it in future editions.

I cannot end this editorial without making special mention to Brendan O'Friel who single handedly edited this Newsletter for so many years. Brendan has decided to take a back seat from the main thrust of his Committee, duties, but has promised that he will continue to submit his much welcomed articles for our future Newsletters.

Your editorial team are extremely grateful to those of you who have submitted items for publication in this edition. I know you as readers will find them enthralling. Do keep sending them in. The closing date for articles for the next Newsletter is **August 30th 2013**

Retired Prison Governors Management Committee

Chairman.... Graham Smith, Secretary.....Ray London, Treasurer....Jim Blakey, Membership Secretary.... Harry Brett

Newsletter Editorial Team.... Mick Roebuck, Paul Laxton, Jenny Adams – Young, Letters Editor.....Bob Duncan

Social Secretaries.... Charles Smith, PSPC Representatives....Charles Smith Paul Laxton.

Committee member Graham Mumby- Croft . Treasurer in waiting.

The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Prison Governors Association , Retired Prison Governors Association or the editor or editorial team.

.....

RPGA-MAIL REGISTER

The e-mail register has now been operational for over 10 years and has proven itself to be an effective means of rapid communication between members.

It offers updates on current prison events and allows members to keep in touch with each other.

Joining the RPGA does not automatically place you on the register. If you would like to join the ever growing numbers on the register please send an email from the address you wish to have registered to Mick Roebuck email: michael.roebuck2@btopenworld.com

E-mail addresses may not be passed to third parties without permission from the person(s) registered to that specific e-mail



A short history of the Prison Service College Site at Newbold Revel

By John Berry

Having worked at Newbold Revel for almost 6 years in the early 1990's and being an avid student of history I spent some time researching the history of the site. Having been back for the RPGA AGM in October I thought that some people might be interested in a condensed article covering the history of Newbold Revel up to the point where the Prison Service purchased the site.

In 1066 Fenny Newbold as it was then known, was owned by a wealthy Saxon nobleman called Lewin. However with the conquest came a change of ownership and the estates passed to Geoffrey de Wirce one of William the

Conquerors noblemen who had fought with him in the campaign against King Harold. Upon his death (he had no children) the manor passed into the hands of the Crown until King Henry I gave it to the Mowbray family.

In 1166 the manor was again transferred to the Wappenburys and when Thomas de Wappenbury's daughter married Robert Revell the Revells were established at Newbold, and they changed its name from Fenny Newbold to Newbold Revel.



For four generations until 1383 the manor remained in the hands of the Revel family until it was bequeathed to one of his daughters who had married Sir Stephen Malory. His great grandson Sir Thomas Malory who succeeded to the manor in 1433 has been identified as having written *Morte d'Arthur* one of the greatest books in English literature. He also accompanied the Earl of Warwick fighting in France in the Hundred Years War. He was a colourful character appearing before

the Court of Enquiry for breaches of the peace and in 1468 he was held in Newgate prison on a charge of sedition dying in 1470. The manor remained in the Mallory family until 1538 when it was sold to Thomas Pope Treasurer of the Court of Augmentations

The 16th Century brought a period of unprecedented land speculation, with the dissolution of the Monasteries and various agrarian changes. Between 1538 and 1619 no fewer than seven owners held the manor before it came to Sir Simon Clarke of Salford Priors who bought it in 1619; however he had no children and the manor passed to his niece Dorothy Parker who had married Sir Fulwar Skipwith. Newbold Revel remained in the Skipwith family for 300 years. It was Sir Fulmar

Skipwith who built the current Queen Anne style mansion replacing the Revell-Malory manor house although some elements may have been retained in the rebuilding.

After 1862 the Skipwith family sold the Manor and it passed into the hands of a number of wealthy families with the Wood family being the most notable. It was this family that added the Cricketers wing, built a large covered swimming pool and gymnasium and a squash court. In 1908 Colonel Heath the new owner added the Cuban mahogany doors and the Italianate mantelpieces, the best of which can be seen in the Blue Room. In the 1930's the Bonn family who were Austrian Bankers decided to sell the estate. The present mansion outbuildings and the gardens together with Home Farm were sold as one lot. This was purchased by the British Advent Missions and requisitioned by the RAF on the outbreak of war in 1939.

In 1945 the estate was again sold after the RAF moved out and it was bought by the Sisters of Charity of St. Paul and designated as their new Training College for Teachers.

However considerable renovation had to be undertaken and it was not until 1946 that the first students took residence. Even then more work needed to be done including the provision of a chapel, which was built upon the foundations of some nissen huts which had been installed by the RAF. The hunting stables were converted into classrooms and houses of residence for the students and renamed Our Lady. This is still used for training



and for the Prison Service Museum until it moved to Nottingham. To extend the student accommodation a new storey was also added to the Cricketers wing. This was followed by the next phases of building with St. Johns teaching block and St. Catherine Hall. A new library was also built around 1963.

A government review of teacher training was undertaken in 1976 and under the cutbacks the college was closed and in 1978 it was sold to the Post Office for £2 million. The Post office was also operating Coton House near Rugby as a training facility but with the break up of the Post Office Group Newbold Revel passed to British Telecommunications who were going to operate it as a middle management training facility. However that did not happen and instead it was purchased by the Prison Service as a management training facility designated to replace the Prison Service College at Love Lane Wakefield. The rest of the story is well known to those of us who were in the prison service at the time.

Newbold Revel has a long and distinguished history as a training facility, and if I remember correctly it was well known to some governors whose wives trained there as teachers.

In 1994 we invited back to the college the four remaining nuns who had taught there when it was St. Paul's teacher training college. Along with Sylvia Groves the receptionist who worked at Newbold Revel for over 25 years until her retirement, they enjoyed a tour, afternoon tea and told us some interesting tales about life in an all female teacher training college.

RPGA AGM Report



From the chair.

On the 16th October 2012 I was pleased to chair both the RPGA 6 monthly committee meeting and the AGM at PSC Newbold Revel.

Most of our members will have known the college as the venue for many HMPS meetings, functions and events such as the Sports day and Dog Trails . Our meetings took place in the Music Room which you may know has very large windows and the view of the grounds on a lovely autumn sunny day were spectacular to say the least.

Key issues for the committee were the resignation of Brendan O'friel and the replacement of Jim Blakey who has kindly offered to do a hand over period up to the end of the 2012 financial year. It goes without saying that they have both been cornerstones of the Association for many years and I had the privilege of working for them both in my time in uniform, Brendan at Birmingham and Manchester in the 70's and 80's and for Jim, would you believe, in 1971 at Sudbury when he was Charlie Miles' Deputy Governor, now there is a name from the past. We wish them both well and I'm pleased to say Jim remains as a committee member.



Harry Brett reported numbers of members are increasing despite 26 deaths during the year [an occupational hazard with us I'm afraid] and Charles Smith and Paul Laxton continue to monitor and report back on pension related issues affecting our members. The Newsletter and email system, which are highly valued by members, continues to be managed and edited admirably by Mick Roebuck with the assistance of Paul Laxton and Jenny Adams Young with Bob Duncan giving an entertaining overview of the letters he receives and welcomes

from anyone with something to say. Harry gave a report on the 2012 PGA conference at Buxton and although some of our members do not follow current issues facing the Governors of today, many do and it is clear that both the economy and politics continues to challenge our parent Association as it has always done in the past.

Lunch was followed by the AGM and I was pleased to see a few new faces with a total of 12 members and 7 apologies plus the committee of course.

Jim Blakey reported on our finances which, as ever, are soundly managed and continue to show a gentle increase. Charles Smith gave feedback on the Social weekend that he organises each year highlighting the 2013 event as the 11th-14th of April at Bournemouth which has been popular in the past. I have to say that the weekend is very good value and I know he would be delighted to see a few more faces so watch out for the application form later in this newsletter.



As a committee we were very interested to have the view of members on future events so following a discussion



Mitch Egan and John Dring proposed a revamped style of AGM and reunion to be held at Newbold Revel around October next year on the basis that it is a central venue familiar to most of us. I, Ray London and Paul Laxton will do some work on the viability of that and report back via the next Newsletter.

Finally I am pleased to report that, myself as chair, Ray London as secretary, Mick Roebuck and Bob Duncan were re-elected to the committee and additionally Graham Mumby-Croft [our new treasurer] and Jan Thompson were also elected to the committee the latter to replace Gerry Ross.

I look forward to the next 12 months and I and your committee will do everything we can to take our association forward. This is greatly enhanced if we receive feedback and support from yourselves so if you have something to offer the newsletter that will be very welcome and we are always interested in your views. You never know we may see you at our next social weekend or AGM.

Graham Smith, Chairman

EXTRAORDINARY ESCAPE FROM PRISON.

A few minutes after ten o'clock on Sunday morning some little excitement was caused in Clerkenwell by the appearance on the western wall of the House of Detention of a man dressed in prison garb. After a few minutes' hesitation he was seen to drop on to the pavement, a height of thirty-five feet, amidst the screams of several women. The next moment the prisoner was again on his legs, and, having first torn the badge off his arm, he ran down Waterloo-passage, disappearing amongst the adjacent courts before the crowd that had witnessed the affair had recovered from the amazement which his extraordinary leap from the prison wall had occasioned. The man in question is named J. Waters, aged thirty-eight, and was under remand on a charge of housebreaking. He is described by the police as 5ft 2i n. in height, of dark complexion, and having blue eyes. He was dressed in a blue pilot-jacket, fustian trousers, and wore a wide-awake cap. That he effected his escape during the progress to the ordinary chapel service seems certain, having climbed a water-pipe to the extremity of the wall within a few yards of Pear-tree-court. At the point indicated an addition of 6 ft. of brickwork has been added since the fatal explosion at the prison; and he was seen standing as if exhausted, for several minutes before he jumped. According to the testimony of a neighbour, a man happened to be passing just as the prisoner reached the ground, and the latter is alleged to have said, "For God's sake, let me go!" the reply being, "All right! take off your badge." It is further alleged that there being a difficulty in removing the badge, a vendor of watercresses exchanged coats with the prisoner in order to avoid detection. It is thought that the prisoner cannot have gone far from the locality, as when he fell into Rosoman street he rubbed his legs and moved towards Waterloo-passage, as if in great pain; and, finding there was no thoroughfare there, his movements in the direction of Pear-tree-court, where he was last seen, were inactive. It is said that two other prisoners made a similar attempt to escape., but this was frustrated. The prison authorities instituted an inquiry relative to the matter, and we understand that, negligence being attributed to two of the warders, they were discharged.

The Penny Illustrated Paper, 28 August, 1875

C Wing Parkhurst



POST FACTUM NULLIUM CONCILLIUM

(After the deed is done, consultation is useless.)

By John Ramwell

I was cogitating recently, as one does. In so doing I wondered what ever happened to C Wing Special Unit located at Parkhurst Prison. I was appointed as Hospital Chief Officer together with a Governor grade and a psychologist to start this unit up back in 1985.

Again, as ones does, I trawled the internet for the answer and came across a very comprehensive Home Office Research Study.

I left the Unit to take up a post at Hindley Prison in the NW of England from where I retired six years later. I admit to being rather dilatory in maintaining any interest in the Unit once I had left. Fresh Start was bedding in and several high profile escapes occurred leading to a three line whip to Governors to make security their first, second and third priority. This mandate did not prevent a successful escape bid from Parkhurst with the escapees' making it as far as a local airfield. The Governor (for whom I had enormous respect) left under a cloud; in truth, more of a raging thunder storm and Parkhurst Prison was down-graded to a Cat.B establishment. This down-grading was, in the view of many, long overdue. I recall tourists pouring from coaches to peer, often with bino's, from the adjoining hillside which provided an aerial view of the whole prison. I was tempted to 'do a moonie' but thought this could be seen as being a rather undignified thing to do whilst in HCO's uniform in the middle of a prison exercise yard!! I resisted the temptation and probably saved my job and pension.

The Home Office Study, all 150 pages of it is Research Study No. 122 entitled, 'Managing Difficult Prisoners: The Parkurst Special Unit.' I found it interesting but I give you a health warning; it is hardly bed-time reading unless you're an insomniac. It will have you nodding off in minutes. I am hoping that this contribution to this Newsletter will be less effective as a soporific. To help I will cut to the chase.

From the 150 pages of the Study I quote one small paragraph that caught my eye.

"These men are all on the verge of mental illness or have histories of psychological disturbances or failure to develop normally. They have all been subjected to the normal prison routines of punishments for dealing with their misbehavior and these haven't worked. They therefore need to be treated differently, and it is probably best to regard them as rather like over-grown children who need to be taught to grow up. It follows crucially from this that in tolerating conventionally unacceptable behavior the officer is NOT sacrificing his authority, but is exercising it in a higher form. He still has his formal powers, but he can be more effective acting as an educator than as a disciplinarian."

It occurred to me that this paragraph sums up the need for adequate staff training leading to a professionalism of staff at all grades who have to deal directly with prison inmates. My information - I have my secret sources - is that recruitment and allocation of staff to our penal institutions, both public and private, does not include sufficient training in such as the sensitive and meaningful handling of difficult prisoners. Training for security of prisons and their inmates is one thing. The evidence is that they are getting this right in that security is now pretty effective and technology, of course, has played its part.

We all know that how staff handle and relate to prisoners is also fundamental to security 'in the round' as it relates to the control and management of them. Good and fair treatment provides for a settled regime as it also provides for good intell. leading to the prevention of incidences. Forgive me if I am stating the obvious to the readers of the RPGA newsletter.

So my question is: is there sufficient staff training in the area of managing difficult and damaged prison inmates?

Answers on a post card but not to me!

PS. My title was used as an inscription above the door to the general office in C Wing.

APPEAL FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY TO RETIRED GOVERNORS.

We have had a request from the General Secretary of the PGA for volunteers from amongst the ranks of retired Governors.

Owing to the seemingly inexorable increase in the number of disciplinary investigations members can sometimes find it difficult to obtain the services of a suitable "friend," who knows their way round disciplinary procedures to sit in and provide support at the initial interview.

Retired Governors have carried out the role before and the General Secretary is looking for a pool of suitable people who can be called upon at short notice to assist serving members caught up in investigations. Additionally should the person under investigation subsequently face a disciplinary hearing there will be someone able to provide an independent brief on the significant issues to the NEC member entrusted with representing the member at such proceedings.

The intention is for there to be a pool of individuals from whom the NEC member responsible for allocating personal cases can choose. Anyone with suitable expertise is invited to send their name to Paddy Scriven by E mail paddy.scriven@hmps.gsi.gov.uk or by letter to Paddy Scriven, PGA Office, Room 1.12, 1st Floor, Clive House, 70 Petty France. LONDON SW1H9HD. or by telephone 0300 047 5781



A Treasurers Woe

By Jim Blakey

You will recall Graham joined the committee at the AGM and was appointed Treasurer from 1st January after I had completed the accounts for the year and had them audited. Soon after the AGM I visited Barclays and Lloyds to obtain the necessary documents for what you would think would be quite a simple process, i.e. to have Graham added to the list of signatories. The following is the action to date in respect of Lloyds - please stick with it. It is a good read.

I visited Lloyds, Daventry and asked for the forms. They said they did not issue the forms and gave me a telephone number to ring.

I rang the number given and received a 14 to 16 page document. One page had to be completed by Graham and his application countersigned by a member of his local Lloyds branch. Graham completed it correctly: the Lloyds clerk completed it incorrectly.

I had Graham Smith and Ray complete the parts of the document sections required to be signed by them. I sent all this off to Lloyds on 23rd November in the stamped addressed envelope supplied by Lloyds, with a covering letter giving my address, telephone numbers and email address.

On 13th December Graham emailed me to tell me Claire, from Lloyds, had telephoned his home. He was out. She wanted to speak to him as she said we had filled in the wrong paperwork. She left a contact telephone number.

On 14th Graham tried to ring Claire on the number given. He was asked the account numbers - which he did not have - and was passed "from pillar to post", getting nowhere. He eventually, after some time, hung up.

I telephoned the number given by Claire on 17th December. It was answered by Liz. She asked for the account numbers and the purpose of my call. I told her. She told me I needed a different department and transferred me to Saquib. He asked for the account numbers and the purpose of my call. I told him. He told me I needed to speak to a different department and passed me to Nick. He asked me the account numbers and the purpose of my call. I explained it all again. By this time I was running out of patience.

Nick checked his computer. He said he could deal with the query in respect of one of the accounts and confirmed that Graham had not been added to the list. He checked

the details of the other account and said there were NO SIGNATORIES other than W. Martin; that is Bill Martin, who opened the account in the 1980s. I told him I had been managing the account for the past twelve years and there were two other signatories - Graham Smith and Raymond London. His response was that when Lloyds took over TSB some of the information in respect of accounts had been lost in transit.

D'OH!

He then said - wait for it - "You need to speak to Claire".

As one might imagine I blew my top. He said "I will try and contact her". Ten minutes of music later he came back on to say she was on holiday, was back on 19th and promised, sincerely, to ring me back. From start to finish the call, on an 0845 number, had taken in excess of 40 minutes.

Are you sitting on the edge of your seat? Did he ring me back? - Of course not.

On 20th December I wrote a lengthy and very explanatory complaint to Lloyds Customer Services.

On 27th December I was contacted by a very pleasant young woman, Sarah Wilkins, who had read my complaint and asked one or two other questions. She was full of apologies.

On 3rd January Graham emailed me to tell me he had received a new package of application forms and that he would complete the parts required by him and post the remainder to me to enable them to be completed with the signatures of Graham, Ray and myself.

I received them today.

BUT- AND YOU WILL LIKE THIS -

I also received, in the same post, a letter from Sarah Wilkins, full of apologies. She also advised she had arranged for a payment of £250 to be paid into our account as compensation. However, the paperwork has yet to be completed and nearly three months after the AGM Graham is still not a signatory for Lloyds and therefore cannot yet sign cheques. Come to that, apparently neither are Graham, Ray or myself.

As regards the Barclays account there has been a deathly silence since I returned the completed forms to them. The proof of the pudding will be when Graham starts signing the cheques. Watch this space.

By the way folks, at the time of going to press with this edition of the Newsletter, the problem is still not over. Your committee are still encountering stupid bureaucracy getting the matter resolved



Clicker's Corner

Recommended Websites

Regular readers on Clickers Corner will know how much I like freebies, indeed over the past 10 years of writing this column I cannot recall ever recommending any programme that had a price tag placed on it, and this one is no different.

www.latestfreestuff.co.uk is a website offering a whole variety of freebies including food, products, samples and tickets.

You can browse by category but do ensure that you check out the daily top 20 best deals.

If you have ever wanted to attend a T.V or radio programme recording then you can browse the selections on offer and apply for the tickets.

Another useful site is the updated direct.gov url which has been replaced by www.gov.uk

The information contained is easier to access and simpler to use than the old site. This is a website that perhaps you might like to bookmark.

Over the past few months I have seen numerous additions to the free cleaning tools available for download. In the past I have always recommended C Cleaner and to some extent still believe it to be an excellent download. A new one to me is Slim Cleaner 4 which can be found at www.slimcleaner.com.

I have found it to offer more functionality than C Cleaner and have been using it on my system over the past few months.

Whenever you go on line, your ISP and websites viewed track your movements and in some cases your ISP address. If you want to browse the net without leaving traces the try

www.duckduckgo.com. This search engine allows you to search the web without storing your personal details.

WI-FI

I would presume that by now most of you are using a WI-FI connection for your home networking systems. If like me you are one of these and are suffering problems with speed or freezing you might like to try the following. Connect an Ethernet cable from the appropriate port on the back of your computer to one of the ports at the back of your router. You should find that your WI-FI connection becomes more reliable and certainly more secure. You will still be able to operate all those other WI-FI items in and around your house which you have configured to your network. You cannot make a mistake by connecting to the wrong ports as Ethernet cables are manufactured to fit into their own specially designed ports.

Create Your Own DVD Slideshow.

All of us at sometime have taken a load of photographs at a party, holiday, wedding or other such event. Why not, rather than looking at them as flat images, turn them into a DVD with additional music for accompaniment. If you are using Windows 7, if Vista the process could not be easier. First press Start, then in the box at the bottom type, windows DVD maker. In the box which now appears press add items. A panel will open on the left hand side of the screen which will give you access to the images on your computer. Click on the box then click onto the photographs you wish to have in the display. If you hold down your shift key whilst making your selections you can transfer all the images in one go. Follow the on screen links to save, burn, add music etc.

Hot Tips For Word Users

Many of you I know use Microsoft Word as your chosen word processing package and may find these hot tips of use..

Ctrl+w on your keyboard to close an open document without closing the programme.

Ctrl and Alt and Home will launch your palettes on the bottom right of your screen.

Ctrl and f will launch you find document screen.

Ctrl and o will launch you print preview screen

Ctrl and b will turn bold on and off.

Ctrl and Home will take you to the start of a document. Cntrl and End will take you to the end of the document.

Cleaning Your Flatbed Scanner

Flatbed scanners can become dirty with dust, fingerprints, grease etc. A dirty scanner will produce dirty and distorted images, so it pays to give it the occasional clean. Best method for this is to use a common window cleaner as used around the home. Spray a little onto a soft cloth or tissue and gently wipe the surface. Do not use any abrasive material as this might scratch the glass.

RPGA AGM 2013

A date for your diary

I am pleased to announce that the RPGA AGM and reunion will be hosted at Newbold Revel on the Tuesday 22nd of October 2013, so please put that date in your diary as at least an option. Although the date is subject to confirmation I don't expect it to change and your committee are determined to encourage as many members to attend as we can.

We recently met John Graham the head of the college who was very pleased to offer the college facilities to the RPGA.

Some of you will recall we held Garden Parties there for retired Governors some years ago in what are very pleasant surroundings. We hope to pursue the college to give a short brief on the day on what they are currently delivering and someone from the PGA to do the same . With a bite to eat and a chance to have a look around the place it will be an opportunity to talk to ex colleagues and, at the AGM, have your say on the future of the RPGA.

Watch out for further information over the coming months

Graham Smith

Chairman

Prison Closure Announcement

Members on the email register were sent this document in January. As editor I thought that those of you who are not receiving emails would welcome reading this hardcopy in your Newsletter.

In addition to the establishments listed below you will also recall that Ashwell, Lancaster and Wellingborough have already been closed.

Document issued January 11th 2013

Chris Grayling, the Secretary of State for Justice, has announced capacity changes designed to help modernise the prison estate and further reduce the costs of prison.

The announcement includes plans to build new and more efficient accommodation with new houseblocks at four prisons opening and plans for a large new prison.

This means that six prisons will close and parts of three other establishments will be taken out of use before the end of March 2013.

We currently have excess capacity (of 6,819 spaces) across the custodial estate. On 4 January, the prison population stood at 83,632 with useable operational capacity of 90,451 places.

The retention of this spare capacity is expensive and cannot be justified given the financial challenge we face and we need to close it down. The capacity changes will mean the closure of around 2,800 places, including the decommissioning of 200 contractually crowded places at private prisons which are no longer required, and will save £63m a year in running costs.

The establishments which will close are:

- Bullwood Hall
- Canterbury
- Gloucester
- Kingston
- Shepton Mallet
- Shrewsbury

Places will also be reduced in

- Chelmsford (132 places)
- Hull (282 places)
- Isle of Wight (595 places – at the site formally known as HMP Camp Hill)

The intention is that the four new house blocks will be built at The Mount, Parc, Peterborough and Thameside, providing an extra 1,260 places at much lower unit cost.

In a statement to Parliament, Chris Grayling said: “My intention is to have more adult male prison capacity available than we had in 2010 but at a much lower unit and overall cost. Our strategy for achieving this is to replace accommodation which is old, inefficient or has limited long-term strategic value with cheaper modern capacity which is designed to better meet the demand for prison places and supports our aim to drive down stubbornly high reoffending rates.

I am also announcing today that the Government is to start feasibility work on a new prison that could hold more than 2,000 prisoners – around a quarter more than the largest current facility.

Last year we opened a significant amount of new accommodation including 1,600 places at HMP Oakwood in the West Midlands. The average cost at Oakwood is £13,200 per place. This is a fraction of the cost of similar prisons – almost a half of the price and sets the benchmark for future costs.

The Secretary of State also announced:

- That a review of the female custodial estate will take place to explore the most effective options for managing the female prison population. This will report in the summer.
- That the Government intends to conduct a feasibility study with the aim to build a new prison. Sites in the North West, North Wales and London will be considered, in line with demand for places in these regions.
- The re-role of HMP YOI Ashfield from a YOI to an adult male category C prison.

Michael Spurr, NOMS Chief Executive Officer, said:

“The Secretary of State announced in November that we need to reduce unit costs across the prison estate. The closure of around 2,800 of our least economic places alongside significant investment in four new house blocks is part of the drive to make our operations more cost effective.

Making a decision to close any accommodation is immensely difficult and I know that staff will feel very disappointed at the establishments that are affected. I want to make clear that today’s announcements are in no way a reflection on the performance of the establishments concerned or on the considerable efforts of the staff to maintain safe and decent regimes.

The prison population has been running below the expected levels and we are currently operating with substantial headroom. Even accounting for the margin we need to maintain to safely run the estate and for any fluctuations, there is currently more capacity than we need and in the current financial environment we cannot afford to run more places than we actually need.

There are clear and compelling reasons for each of the closures. The cost location, size and state of repair of such sites are all factors which we have taken into account.

We will do everything possible to avoid compulsory redundancies as a result of these closures by seeking to redeploy staff and by using the Voluntary Early Departure Scheme where appropriate.

Work will start immediately to implement the closures and support will be provided to ensure the process is managed safely and securely.

While our focus is obviously on those sites that are closing and supporting staff and prisoners there, the effects of the capacity changes will be felt across the entire estate and this will require flexibility in other establishments as we seek to make the transition as smooth as possible.

I would like to thank all staff at these establishments for their ongoing dedication and hard work.”

DABASO SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2012

From Graham and Ann Lawrence



Since the February Newsletter, Dabaso School has continued to face some important challenges as well as enjoy some new opportunities. The school enrolment figure has remained relatively static, which demonstrates that not only are students registering for primary education but once in school they are pursuing their studies. This is a significant achievement for the community and shows how everyone at the school together with parents and carers are

working in an effective partnership.

The need for an adequate water supply continues but the high cost of water continues. It is hoped that with new water pipes the problem of insufficient pressure for some of the toilets used will prevent future health and hygiene difficulties. The spending on water compared with the government grant to schools for water is likely to mean that unless more funds can be allocated to this basic requirement the problem will continue.

The single storey 'Administration Block' which comprises of a new staff room, head and deputy head teachers' offices continues to be unoccupied. As Gideon Mungaro through the Constituency Development Fund provided the finance for this project it needs to be completed through the provision of furniture. Madam Kutto (Headmistress) hopes that this will be achieved during the Christmas holiday and as part of his re-election campaign it is hoped that Gideon will officially open the building so that it can be used with effect from the new academic year commencing January 2013.

Steady progress has been made regarding the seats/desks project. These continue to be made at the school using hard wood to make them more durable. Both students and staff really appreciate this basic furniture and continue to believe that this has a positive effect on levels of concentration which will be demonstrated in improved examination results.

Madam Kutto has been keen to report on the positive impact of a further donation of one hundred English Dictionaries. Whilst this means that the school now has two hundred dictionaries and more are needed the standard of English is improving and it is believed that this

will be evident in the examination results. All examinations are in English; hence it is vital that the students have a sound understanding of the language.



A highlight during the past eight months involved a visit by a group of thirteen students and three teachers from a school in Europe. Within forty eight hours of arriving on their first visit to Africa the students were not only looking around Dabaso School, but were participating in classes. They fully involved themselves sitting on concrete floors sharing in picture making and exchanging their pictures, speaking in a debate when the motion was ‘Technology has done more harm than

good’, painting the school which involved both groups of students and staff and some Dabaso parents working together to achieve the task as well as teaching new sports. All this was undertaken in four busy but very happy days.

In addition to the formal programme, the group had numerous opportunities which they took with open arms to interact with individuals learning about life for students of a similar age in Kenya as well as answering questions about their own lives. They gave so many gifts to Dabaso School; writing materials ready for the forthcoming examinations, coloured pencils which means that an art club has commenced, items of clothing but they also received in the form of how it is possible to be happy without material goods and the importance of making people welcome and part of their community. In addition the schools have become ‘friends’ in the true sense of the word supporting each other and having fun together. It was a ‘first’ for both schools; it was a privilege for us to be involved.



As a direct result of the significant increase in the number of children attending Dabaso School we have been acutely aware of the overcrowding in many classrooms. Despite the motivation of children to learn and teachers to teach the conditions particularly given the heat and humidity take their toll. Everyone was delighted to receive the news that Kitchen Table Charities Trust (www.kitchentablecharities.org) has donated sufficient funds to build a new classroom. This will not only benefit the school but it will also provide some much needed employment opportunities. Parents will also be involved in this project as much as possible.

The school environment is developing with the steady growth of the Ashoka trees and last month the fisheries ministry announced a programme of creating fish ponds at schools. Dabaso School

will benefit from this project, which will provide educational opportunities as well as enhancing the school grounds.

As usual during our visits to Dabaso School we received a tremendous welcome. The students enjoyed singing to us; 'we are happy to share' was particularly poignant. The smiles on their faces when they receive a pencil, a pencil sharpener and eraser gives us much to think about given the material benefits many of us take for granted.

The 'Dabaso School Story' continues to be told on the website www.dabasocharity.org.uk. Everyone is indebted to Andrew Mugoya and his colleagues at Asilia (www.weareasilia.com) for their 'in kind' contribution.

Everyone in the Dabaso School Community joins us in thanking their friends and supporters who enable improvements at the school to take place. All of us would like to wish you

*A very Happy Christmas and a Happy and
Healthy New Year*

or in Kiswahili

*Nawatakia Krismasi njema na mwaka mpya
uliojaa fanaka na afya njema*

Graham and Ann Lawrence

**Daily Life for Students at Dabaso School, Watamu,
Kenya.**

Registered UK Charity Number XT11091

Students who attend Dabaso Primary School are aged between 5 and 14 years. Some of them will not have been able to begin school at aged 5 as free primary education has only been introduced on the Kenyan coast during the past five years. A small percentage of the school population, which is 1,700, attends the Special Needs Class which has only one teacher. This is a new development and was established in response to need. These children and their families/carers face particular challenges as there is very little provision in terms of physiotherapy, occupational therapy,

special equipment and no organizational support. Add to this the general lack of understanding and awareness regarding disabilities. Children who attend this class make tremendous progress in social functioning as well as working to achieve their educational potential.

School commences at 7:30am; sometimes there is a class commencing at 6:30am which is free and has been established to meet specific needs e.g. improvement in hand writing which is essential for examination success. Many students live over one and a half hours walk away (there is no lighting along the various tracks to the school) from the school, with a parent or both parents, others stay with extended family and some live in orphanages. One fifth of the Dabaso School population are orphans. Other students live closer, however it is a rural area and very few dwellings can be seen from the area immediately surrounding the school.

Preparation for the school day involves students washing (there is no water supply to dwellings) using water which has been carried some distance usually by women to their homes. Some students will have school uniform, often this is the only clothing which they possess and some has been handed down on several/many occasions. Parents/families will in many cases have made great sacrifices to provide the uniform. If a student does not have the uniform, unlike some schools, Dabaso School will still accept a student. Many children will not possess any type of footwear. Dabaso students are actively encouraged to take a pride in their appearance. Despite the very limited facilities, children take a pride in their uniform and want to present themselves to the best standard which they can achieve.

Some children will have the 'luxury' of a drink and something to eat before they go to school; others will only have a drink and many will go to school without either. Poverty is a common characteristic; for many families this is chronic and parents/families may wish to ensure that a student's basic needs are met however this is not always achievable. Many parents and families struggle to provide their child with a pencil or pencil sharpener. In such cases students rely on donated basic materials.

Many students will arrive at school early despite the time which they will have left home. Once they get to school there are four taps on the school compound, which they will use for a drink. These serve a school population of 1,700. Lessons begin at 7:30am and the morning break is 10.30am which lasts for fifteen minutes. During this time the students are able to play in the school compound; they enjoy the usual games of football (these are homemade using whatever materials become available!)

and chase! A few local ladies visit the school at break time to sell slices of fruit; as money is required only a small minority of children can afford this 'luxury'.

Lessons continue until 12.10pm; students who live close to the school go home for lunch although depending on circumstances they may/not have anything to eat. Students who live further away will stay around school or the immediate area; some may purchase a sweet sugary ice pop which is not nutritious but cheap. Alternatively children use the school water taps for a much needed drink.

Afternoon school commences at 2:00pm until 4:00pm. This involves students in Year 4 upwards (usually aged 8 years and over). At the end of school the students walk home; some will have reading or other homework to complete before the next day. Very few dwellings have electricity so this work is done by kerosene lamp or if that is not available by moonlight. During the evening, families join together for a meal which is typically ugali the staple food; this is vital given many children will have had little or nothing to eat during the day. Vegetables, sometimes on particular occasions fish, will be added to ugali. We have been informed that children we have known have died from malnutrition. It is known that many families have been so desperate for food that they have cooked rats. Some families cannot afford food each day; many local churches have a 'bring and share' lunch at the weekend, which means those who have food share with those who do not.

Students and their families face many challenges each day; gaining access to adequate food and water, clothing, basic toiletries e.g. toothpaste as well as possessing essential school supplies e.g. pencil, pencil sharpener and eraser. Medical care is expensive and the nearest hospital is over one hour's bus ride away which again is expensive primarily due to petrol costs. Despite this, Dabaso students are happy, work hard and are determined to succeed. They fully understand that education is vital as it is the way out of poverty and lack of opportunity; it is the passport to a better life for them, their families and community.

A donation of £1 would enable 50 pencils or pencil sharpeners or erasers to be purchased in Kenya

A donation of £5 would enable 250 pencils or pencil sharpeners or erasers to be purchased in Kenya

Donations can be made via *Just Giving* (although a percentage will be taken for admin costs by that charity) or donations made direct to *Graham and Ann Lawrence* who ensure that 100% of the donation is deposited in the *Dabaso School Charity* account

in Kenya. This account is held at Hemingways Resort without charge. The account is audited annually and we receive a monthly account statement and all receipts are available for scrutiny through the finance department and our local school charity trustees who are members of the Hemingways Management Team, namely Melinda Rees and Jeff Mukolwe.

If you would like to know more about Dabaso School details can be found at www.dabasoschoolcharity.org.uk or please contact Graham or Ann as follows: graham@the-lawrences.org.uk or ann@the-lawrences.org.uk

From your editor

It's not until we read items like this that we begin to realize just what true poverty really is. I contacted the Lawrence's before committing this item to the Newsletter asking how much it costs to kit out one of the students with a school uniform, they replied as follows.....

Regarding your request for information concerning the cost of school uniform for children attending Dabaso School. Today we have checked this out and can advise you that a shirt or blouse plus a pair of shorts or skirt plus a pair of sandals costs approximately £8.

Can I suggest that anyone wishing to make a donation should ensure that it goes direct to Graham or Ann. Those of you not on the email system who wish to make a donation can contact any of the committee members or fellow members who you know have an email account.

Brendan bows out from the 'Newsletter'



What a legacy he leaves us

Arthur Williamson started the Newsletter as a solo effort in May 1980 with 48 names on the mailing list and with the intention of keeping retired colleagues in touch with each other and of developments to conditions that might affect them. Then it was virtually a 'one man band, I wrote the copy, financed it and posted it off. It would never have succeeded without the help and forbearance of **Norman Brown**, my Governor at Manchester, and the help of his secretary and later the SCPS who printed all the copy for a very nominal sum.' On retirement in early 1983 his imagination and perseverance to establish a 'newsletter' to enable

retired colleagues to keep in touch and share news was beginning to stumble. In those early embryonic days it met with patchy success and organising it from retirement proved both difficult and unpredictable. We need to remember there was no PGA at this time; we were but a twig on the branch that was the SCPS.

If I might digress for a moment and search my hazy memory of this earlier age; in the 70's we had regional conferences for 'junior governors' and were allowed a 'society' meeting at these. We elected 2 delegates to attend the AGM of the national committee to take any resolutions passed at the regional meeting. I knew nothing of the work of this senior and august body of senior governors, such as, **Adrian Arnold, Peter Timms, David Gould and Roger Dauncy**, who supposedly represented us. I rather felt they intended to keep it that way. We were allowed to attend this one meeting and to speak for two minutes on any resolution we had submitted. For the rest of the meeting we only listened. The imperious treasurer would reluctantly pay any expenses only after several questions and then only if he felt they were justified.

The second experience was the National Conference of the SCPS, to which I believe we had 3 delegates. Having been persuaded to attend I arrived at the large hall at the Exhibition Centre in Birmingham and found the little table we had been allocated amongst all the other tables of the 500 odd delegates. We were not even big enough to have a resolution accepted on our merits but needed others to co-support it. It was all a rather bewildering and overpowering world for a new sprog.

What relevance you ask? Well in the midst of all this new, confusing and daunting experiences one other image stands out, a certain **Brendan O'Friel**. Not only did he understand the systems and how to operate the structures, how to network and get us heard, how to influence and get results, he also cared for the other members less knowledgeable, and shared with them and gave them every encouragement and support. So it was to be with the struggling 'Newsletter'.

In October 1984 **Brendan** wrote 'This is a short edition of the Prison Governor's Newsletter to inform colleagues that I now have it under my editorship. I have always felt that the Newsletter is a particularly worthwhile venture from the time that **Arthur Williamson** first started it. Now that I have relinquished the post of Chairman of the Governor's Branch I feel I have time to devote to the editorship, especially as news and views from retired colleagues will form the bulk of future publications. So the usual plea for news and views from retired colleagues.'

In the February 1985 edition he writes 'The October edition brought in a very welcome response. It is quite clear from the volume of letters received, and the sentiments expressed, that the regular

publication would be very much welcomed by many retired governors. Importantly, Arthur Williamson has kindly volunteered to act as Letters Editor, so we are a kind of editorial Board.

Arthur wrote, ‘The re-appearance of the Newsletter after such a long absence gives me a particular pleasure and I congratulate, and indeed thank Brendan for his efforts. In retirement it had proved extremely difficult to acquire news of old colleagues but now this will be rectified. Do keep us supplied with news of yourselves, wherever you are in the globe, as you are the lifeblood that gives the vitality to the Newsletter.

Included in the letters in that edition was one sending Christmas greetings from **David Gould** and thanking Brendan for his efforts in not only getting the Newsletter off the ground again, but also for his tremendous work over many years as Chairman of the Governor’s Branch of the SCPS.

The known membership at beginning 1985 was 118, but with more joining each year. By July 1985 it had reached 136 and was expected to rise to 150 by year end. Funding was created from voluntary donations from a whole series of retired governors.

Bill Martin, the first treasurer wrote ‘I do not know why Arthur asked me to look after the Newsletter funds but over the years we had become fond friends. I have one abiding recollection of Arthur at every Governors conference getting to his feet and arguing for some means such as a newsletter to keep our retired colleagues in touch, but with no result. In the end he concluded the only thing to do was do it himself and he did and did it well. The Newsletter is his creation and we owe its existence to him. I took over the funds in 1982 and there was a total of £120 which I deposited. Since then the funds have attracted £28.23 in interest and there has been £13.42 in expenses (postage) leaving a current balance of £134.81. It does appear as though the enterprise could keep going for some years on this basis without ever needing any more money! By 1986 this had risen to £311. And Bill’s view was that there was no need to ask for general subscriptions, and they were extremely grateful for some very generous donations. Oh for the good old days hey!

Do not tell the Department, we printed it all on their equipment in those days. Well we did believe they cared for their staff young and old. Just to confirm that, it was then produced at Calthorpe House and the ‘one and only **Ted Cowper Johnson**’ kindly volunteered to come in and help with the crucial work of actually putting the Newsletter into the envelopes and arranging for their despatch.

Brendan in his wisdom predicted, as the circulation grows, so the task of circulating grows and we will need to consider carefully our future organisation

In 1987, at the time the PGA was beginning its existence, it was decided that the Newsletter needed to be put on a more sound financial footing and a subscription of £5 was introduced.

The Newsletter has continued and grown in strength. Without **Brendan’s** tenacity and passion for its continuation it possibly would not have survived. Latterly it has had the support of the PGA committee, and out of that the RPGA was founded. There have been odd teething problems along the way, but these are now resolved. So the PGA might have just celebrated its 25 the Anniversary, but the Retired Governors’ Newsletter is the elder statesman and celebrates 33 years in May 2013.

That counsellor of doom and gloom, **Bill Abbott**, says we have no future, but that does not fit with the many messages we receive. So we remain optimistic.

Brendan feels ‘he has done his bit’. He has done more than that, he has been the life blood of the whole operation, without his commitment, passion, wisdom and endurance we would not be in the hearty condition we currently are. Having said that, the Newsletter as a ‘looked forward to communication’ would not have survived without you our readers and more importantly your contributions. You make it what it is, and our new editorial team are well aware of that and wish for it to remain a vibrant communication with you at its heart that keeps you in touch. We owe it to its founder and to **Brendan** to keep alive what we have all inherited. Our current editorial team are determined to keep it alive and prove ‘soothsayer **Bill**’ wrong.

Brendan, we thank you for what you have achieved, your dedication to it for so many years, for the pleasure you have provided and the contacts you have sustained. There is, if you like an inner 'holy trinity' who created and sustained the Newsletter for over 30 years, **Arthur Williamson, Bill Martin, and Brendan O'Friel**, but perhaps the greatest of these (by a small margin) is Brendan.

Bob Duncan

On behalf of the RPGA Committee and all our Readers



Jim Blakey on behalf of The Committee of the Retired Governors' Association arranged for Francis Masserick to deliver to Brendan a selection of wine in token appreciation of all his work as Editor and member of the RPGA Committee .

That has now happened and Brendan has responded ;

'I was surprised and delighted when Francis M.. at one of our occasional meetings for morning coffee, presented me with some excellent wine on behalf of the RPGA. I was very touched and please pass on my thanks to the committee for their kindness. Francis and I enjoy putting the world right – and in particular the Island – when we meet up. I am still involved in a range of Island activities, especially the parish and Travel/Watch Isle of Man, as well as the Road Transport Licensing Committee, Employment Tribunals and being Surveillance Commissioner.

So colleagues can be assured that both Barbara and I are keeping reasonably fit and busy, even if much of what we do is now Island based.'

Clearly never a dull moment on the Island!

MILL BANK PRISON

MILLBANK PRISON. A mass of brickwork equal to a fortress, on the left bank of the Thames, close to Vauxhall Bridge; erected on ground bought in 1799 off the

Marquis of Salisbury, and established

Aug 20th, 1812. It was

designed by

Jeremy

Bentham, to

whom the fee

was conveyed,

and is said to



have cost the enormous sum of half a million pounds sterling. The external walls form an irregular octagon, and enclose upwards of sixteen acres of land. Its ground-plan resembles a wheel, the governor's house occupying a circle in the centre, from which radiate six piles of building, terminating externally in towers. The ground on which it stands is raised but little above the river, and was at one time considered unhealthy. It was first named "The Penitentiary," or "Penitentiary House for London and Middlesex," and was called "The Millbank Prison. It was the largest prison in London. Every male and female convict sentenced to transportation in Great Britain was sent to Millbank previous to the sentence being executed. Here they remained about three months under the close inspection of the three inspectors of the prison, at the end of which time the inspectors reported to the Home Secretary, and recommend the place of transportation. The number of persons in Great Britain and Ireland condemned to transportation every year amounts to about 4000. So far the accommodation of the prison permits, the separate system is adopted..

A date for your diary.

This year's PGA Conference will be hosted 15 th to 17th October

C Section Class 206 Levhill 1972

Back Row Left to Right

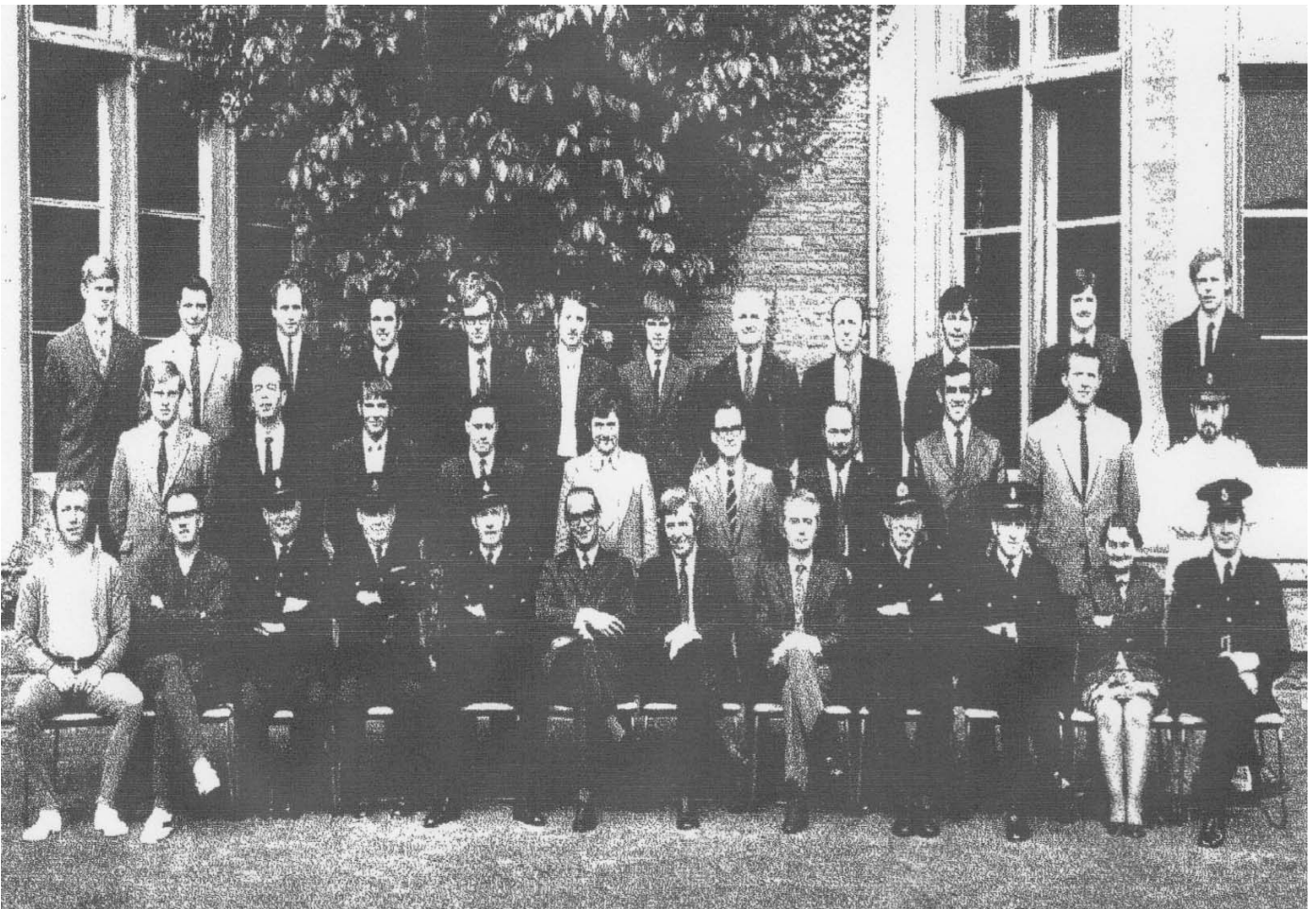
A.G. McQuillan: G. McPherson: M.L. Moon: G.P. Murcott: K.F. Pearce: G.K. Richardson: R.L. Newton: A.R.C. Mears: M.V. Mowle: D.E. Rogerson: W.J. McGuire: RNunn.

Middle Row Left to Right

DJ. Mustoe: R. Martindale: M. Pratt: C. Millington: C.W.H. Pearson: C.H. McGuire: E.R. Simons: J. Nixon: A. MacKenzie: Mr. Creese (Catering Officer),

Front Row Left to Right

Mr. Mann (P.E.S.O.): Mr. Brown (P.E. PO.): PO. Bland: PO. Stevens: PO. Lockyer (C Section PO): Mr. Brackenbrough (A.G.): Mr. Wilkinson (Deputy Principal): Mr. Crowe (A.G.): Chief Officer Woodall: PO. Jinks: Mrs. Drew (Matron): Mr. Rawlings (Hosp. Off.)



Not the clearest of images but many of you will recognise the names if not the faces.

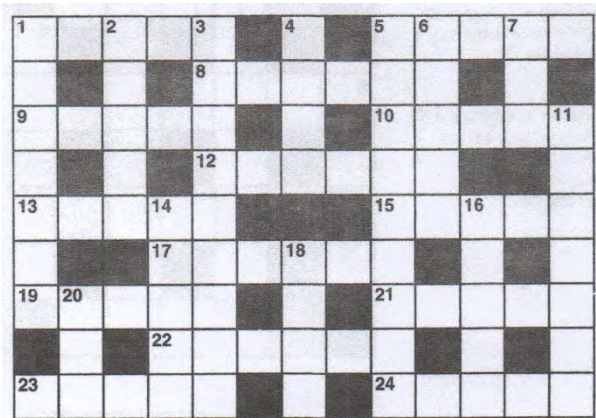
Sent in by Wally McGuire

PUZZLE PAGE

Your very own symmetrical cryptic

Crossword

Several of the answers are prison related



Clues Across

- 1 Describe fog in part to confuse (5)
- 5 Given to all of us but only once (5)
- 8 Not as pretty (6)
- 9 Sounds as though he sped past this establishment (5)
- 10 Could he be a mandatory one (5)
- 12 What 11 down do (6)
- 13 Some RPGA members might well object to this (5)
- 15 You can make a plant out of this sweeper (5)
- 17 A manic person could be one of these (6)
- 19 Better (5)
- 21 Flabberghast (5)
- 22 I salsa to attack this (5) anag.
- 23 Biblical gum? (5)
- 24 Not odds (5)

One for the SUDOKU addicts

Level moderate plus

	5					7		
				8				9
		1		3				5
							9	
1		8		5				
2		3	1		8	6		
								4
5						2	8	
	2		8		9			

Answers inside back page

Clues Down

- 1 I Ran with a bag to get this good deal (7) anag.
- 2 A death cap is one of these (5)
- 3 Mushy rags could lead you to this estab. (4, 5) anag.
- 4 Said to be a sad shade (5)
- 5 Was a measure of attendance (4,5)
- 6 Iris has a liking for this nationality (5)
- 7 Different colours of one of these were worn to indicate a level of achievement, alas no longer (3)
- 11 Some of these may well be found in 3 down (7)
- 14 Coat, daub, smudge (5)
- 16 Old Germanic term for theft (5)
- 18 Religious leader (4)
- 20 Hedra helix (3)

Work area

The very sadistic section

Can you solve the 10 anagrams shown below?

Clue: the answers are all prison related.

- 1. drab nero 2 words 3,4
- 2. glob a mishap 2 words 6,4
- 3. cut corn row 2 words 5,5
- 4. id adjust a coin 1 word
- 5. If force 1 word
- 6. iron coffee sir 2 words 6,7
- 7. lands gin 1 word
- 8. ice hanky 1 word
- 9. sponsorship work 2 words 6,9
- 10. made four ring 2 words 7,5

IS TAXATION IN PART COERCION?

By John Ramwell

Every year at this time, autumn, I visit a few local schools to promote the activities of the British Schools Exploring Society (BSES). I encourage them to consider applying for one of the expeditions laid on by this organization during the forthcoming year.

I start by giving my view on what each of us needs if we are to succeed in life. I tell them there are four important ingredients.

1. Education; 2. Commitment; 3. Opportunity; 4. Luck.

This is as far as I go as I am not meant to get into the meaning of life and the issues of morality regarding those who get luck and a full life versus those that do not.

I am interested in the whole question of achievement and how those that acquire wealth require fortune to favour them. There is also the argument that they require more than just luck. There are those still living and those in history who have benefited the society into which we have been born. The welfare state, free education, law and order, defence, health care, human rights: all these factors have allowed many to flourish who otherwise may not have done so.

These advantages have to be paid for. They have been paid for by wars and huge loss of life; they have been paid for by policies fought for by groups as well as individuals, some elected, others not. And they continue to be paid for by taxation and as well as, often, by voluntary contributions.

Luck starts with your place and circumstances of birth. We have no control as to whether we are born into poverty or born into wealth; whether we are born into a country favouring democracy or one favouring totalitarianism. Luck also starts with the talents we are born with. Some have amazing gifts allowing them to become artists, sports persons, academics and financiers. With these talents come rewards, but only if they are built upon by effort and opportunities to exploit them are available.

We can all think of examples of those who have made a success of their lives and who have gained much from so doing. Likewise we can all recall those who have not been so fortunate and have fallen on hard times.

My question is simple. Do we all have a moral and/or a practical obligation to help those less fortunate, and if we do, how do we go about fulfilling these obligations?

There are two answers that are straight forward. Yes we do and no we do not. I admit that there is quite a lot of grey area in between these two responses but for the sake of this paper I shall focus on the argument that favours one and then the other.

If we have a moral obligation to assist those less well off how should we go about it? Do we allow governments, democratically elected, to determine that first we do have such obligations and then stand by as they enforce them by taxation? In other words, is redistribution of wealth

by legislation now a compulsory payment by those better off towards those less fortunate in our society, moved from a moral obligation to one that is enforced?

How about the practical benefits of redistribution? If there are any, are they sufficient?

I shall start by pointing out the obvious practical benefits like buildings and roads that have been put in place by governments past and present, by the system of law and order, by the educational establishments, by the funding of research and development in science and beyond, by health care and welfare systems and institutions, and defence of the realm. All these benefits, most of which came along long before we populated the country and continue to mature and develop, are clearly for the gain of us all. Would anyone argue that these benefits are universally available for all to make use of, inevitably, by some more than others?

Now we come to the alternative answer, that we have no moral obligation to redistribute wealth so that the rich have to help the poor. Some say we should leave this provision to voluntary organizations such as charities and benevolent institutions. It may even be argued that such voluntary redistribution would bring in even greater revenue. Many of our super-rich are already very generous philanthropists. There is a further argument that wealth creates more wealth and that if we leave our super-rich alone they would create more business and more employment thereby spreading the wealth and so become richer and even more generous in their giving.

I suspect there are few, if any that argue there are not over riding and practical needs to tax and redistribute. We need law and order; we need home land security and education, transport systems, administration and a military. There are obvious needs but are some of the other needs less obvious? Should we also pay for the welfare of the poor, the sick, disabled and the seriously disadvantaged? In other words should philanthropy also be paid for from the public purse?

The use of taxation goes further than described in the paragraph above. It is argued that taxation forms a vital part in ensuring our rights to property protection and allows us all to go about our lawful (in some cases, unlawful) business to the clear advantage of us all collectively. Our basic human rights which are made much of these days are in need of protection, probably more so than ever with the increasingly invasive technology that surrounds us all.

The over-riding question is whether or not you believe that redistribution involves coercion and if it does, does it impinge on our basic freedom; our freedom to choose who, when and where we distribute taxes to. Apparently we give a lot of our taxes to help countries like India that has a space programme equal to or even better than ours. We give a lot of tax towards social welfare. With the advent of Universal Credits we have been hearing many cases of some injustice to this distribution with some taking unfair and immoral advantage of it.

I will turn to the issue of entitlement and responsibilities. Speculate on just how much each of us in our contemporary society is really entitled to. The world around us has changed since 2008 as the global financial situation has deteriorated. There are clear generational advantages

which are not favouring the young. Pensions, a home, higher education and employment are a few of the benefits my (older) generation, to some extent, took for granted.

Are these 'benefits' also entitlements? Just what are we entitled to and, when we have determined this, just how does society and government ensure we achieve them? In other words, how do we define our responsibilities in this particular direction? Is tax revenue that is being used for the welfare of the disadvantaged being taken freely or by coercion from those that (supposedly) can afford it?

History has a huge part to play. We are where we are because of the world around us made possible by those who have gone before us. We have the vote. The government we choose by our democratic process also changes our world and our society. Public attitudes change over time, assisted by the media. What was considered an abomination only a relatively short time ago is now seen as acceptable and even the norm. Being born out of wedlock, being gay, being irreligious, being outspoken and just different is okay. It occurs to me that the guiding principal, more and more, is do what you like. The important caveat is that in doing so, you should not hurt others along the way. This principal leads us into the maze of the huge issue of free speech whilst not being offensive; an issue for debate some other time as much depends on how 'offence' is defined.

If you believe that an important part of your tax is being used for philanthropic measures and therefore being taken from you by coercion, could you be persuaded that society is a better place and therefore more conducive to a state of security and therefore to even more wealth creation? Should we take this case a step forward and argue that the cost of nuclear armaments is unwarranted and therefore we should save money to either benefit less tax or pay for improved public services. Arguments like this can go on and on. There are more such views and opinions than a stick could be waved at. Consequently do we not agree that the only way these issues and decisions can be made is by a democratically and freely elected government? Can we further agree that whatever our government determines is best for the country, there will always be a significant number who disagrees with it?

Finally there is the issue of inequality. All research shows that those born into poverty rarely move out of it. Once poor, always poor. The top 1% of the population owns more than 90% of that owned by the bottom end. We have yet to achieve true social mobility; maybe we never will as different values, expectations and culture divide our society. It is likely that a huge number of those in the bottom end of our society have no real ambition to move on and up. Do these attitudes not only explain but also justify this situation?

Two people work equally hard. One has luck on side and the other never sees success. Take a look at the number of businesses that succeed against those that fold. A folding business usually comes with heavy financial losses. Maybe it is only fair to penalise the lucky ones once they start making money. Is it penalising or is it fair redistribution?

Then there are two people: one works hard and the other opts for taking government welfare. The former is often worse off. He/she has to pay his/her way and just manages to keep a

mortgage and rates paid for whilst putting food on the table. This family realise they cannot afford more than one child. The latter has not such concerns as the state picks up the tab.

Finally, finally can we claim that a democratically elected welfare state as seen by the vision of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in his 'New Deal' in 1933 which brought relief for the unemployed and poor, or the vision as seen by the government of Clement Attlee's which developed and implemented the "cradle to grave" welfare state conceived by the economist William Beveridge and introduced under health minister Aneurin Bevan, to be anything else than proud achievements and a blessing for us all?

Answers on a postcard.

English Executioners

Thomas Askern of York (1816-1878).

Period in office 1856-1877.

Thomas Askern was initially the hangman for Yorkshire. Askern, like all of York's hangmen up till then, was drawn from the inmate population - he was in prison for debt at the time. He officiated at 20 public hangings and four private ones, working at York, Leeds, Lincoln and Durham. His first job was the hanging of 28 year old William Dove at York Castle for the murder of his wife on the 9th of August 1856. He hanged a total of eight prisoners at York, the last being William Jackson on the 18th of August 1874.

He also officiated at Armley prison, Leeds where he carried out the only double public execution there. These took place on the 10th of September 1864, when Joseph Myers and James Sargisson, were hanged side by side for separate murders. Askern was responsible for two more private executions at Armley. The availability of a good rail network enabled Askern to work further a field and allowed him to travel to Durham where he carried out all five public hangings between 1859 and 1865. The last of these was of Matthew Atkinson on the 16th of March 1865. The rope broke and Atkinson had to be hanged again. Askern was not selected again by the Sheriff of Co. Durham and was replaced by Calcraft.

Askern carried out the last public hanging at Lincoln Castle on the 5th of August 1859 when William Pickett & Henry Carey were hanged side by side for the murder of one William Stevenson. George Bryce, the "Ratho murderer" was the last person to hang in public in Edinburgh on the 21st of June 1864 for the murder of Jane Seaton. Askern also officiated at the last public hanging in Scotland, that of 19 year old Robert Smith on the 12th of May 1868 at Dumfries, for the murder of a young girl.

Askern carried out Britain's first private female hanging, that of Pricilla Biggadyke at Lincoln in 1868. She was later found to have been innocent and was pardoned. Askern got two jobs in Ireland, executing Thomas Montgomery at Omagh on the 26th of August 1873 and John Daly at Belfast on the 26th of April 1876. He hanged James Dalgleish at Carlisle on the 19th of December 1876. His final act as hangman was at the execution of 37 year old John Henry Johnson at Armley on Wednesday the 3rd of April 1877 for the murder of Amos Waite. Once again the rope broke and Johnson had to be recovered from the pit and was hanged again 10 minutes later. The Yorkshire Post newspaper reported that Johnson struggled for 4 minutes. After this fiasco he was not hired again in Yorkshire.

Askern died in Maltby, at the age of 62, on the 6th of December 1878. In all he carried out 21 public and eight private hangings

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE CULTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS



By Paul Laxton

When I put the proposition to a former colleague and friend of many years that there was no such thing as human rights the look on his face suggested that I had gone absolutely barking mad. A swift but vital qualification was necessary to make it clear that I had not taken leave of my senses. The point I am making is that there is no such thing as intrinsic human rights i.e. that we self evidently possess rights by the very nature of our humanity. Our own politicians and indeed President Obama essentially take the opposite view. Our legal profession and the legally aided litigants it represents at our expense don't care whether their rights are intrinsic or not, they just want to hop on the gravy train. The intellectual position of human rights proponents derives chiefly from the work of the 17th century philosopher, John Locke (1632-1704). His arguments in favour of the concepts of natural law and natural rights profoundly influenced thinkers like Voltaire, Rousseau and Thomas Paine and those who drafted the constitution of the USA after the war of independence. A later thinker, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), best known for the philosophy of Utilitarianism, rejected this as "nonsense on stilts."

I am with Bentham on this issue. Human Rights as we chose to call them have been argued for, fought for, and legislated for, not handed down on tablets of stone. Essentially the belief in the intrinsic nature of human rights is like belief in God. It is a matter of faith. We cannot prove the existence of God and if we cannot prove that our creation derives from some higher force as opposed to the millennia of evolution then we cannot prove human beings are somehow vested with rights that can be ordered and numbered and placed above the power structures and systems of governance under which we live. So how did we get rights? The answer lies in the history books which tell a story of how men (until the 20th century it was mainly men) sought to restrict the power of those who ruled their lives and having restricted and taken a share of that power, then sought to restrict that power to themselves rather than share it with those below them, thus precipitating further struggles. Domestic History is essentially the study of the ebb and flow of power at all levels in society which manifests itself in the laws passed to regulate that society and the customs handed down. A quick trip down the chronological cinder track of our own history illustrates. Over eight centuries we have moved from an absolute monarch being forced to grant Magna Carta to the barons via Cromwell and his regicides to the parliamentary democracy and rule of law we know today. However, one factor is constant, the presence of a political class. In our own time the modern political class which dominates parliament and the key extra parliamentary institutions, i.e. the Civil Service, the Universities, the BBC, the Church of England, the Judiciary, the senior ranks of the Police and some Trade Unions, denies power to the people in the same way that Cromwell denied power to the Levellers and early Victorian politicians denied power to the Chartists. The human rights culture is a key weapon in maintaining this power.

Our modern human rights culture is inextricably linked to World War 2 which claimed around 60 million lives. Not unreasonably those charged with post war reconstruction were determined that nation states should be constrained. In Europe where the war had begun those constraints were to be European integration that would mesh together the nation states of Europe, and in particular Germany and France, so that war would be unthinkable. The European Coal and Steel Community of 6 nations founded in 1951 was the forerunner of the bureaucratic leviathan that we now know as the European Union composed of 27 nations. The second constraint was the European Convention on Human Rights which the UK signed in 1951, but did not accede to the jurisdiction of its court until 1966. In 2000 the Human Rights Act incorporated the Convention into British law. For idealists supranational institutions are the manifestation of a power self evidently and intrinsically superior to that of nation states regardless of whether or not they are fully functioning democracies. The memory of the holocaust both reinforces this faith and protects it from challenge. They perceive human rights as a politically neutral concept, all the more pure and uplifting as a consequence. On the other hand for the

ideologue the soaring rhetoric of this faith provides the perfect screen for an ideology that is striving to transform our society almost by stealth as opposed to the violent revolution favoured by old school Marxists.

The truth is that human rights have been appropriated for an insidious creed which makes the competing totalitarian ideologies of the 20th century appear crude and unsophisticated. It is difficult to give it a party label since its adherents sit in all three main political parties in England, totally dominating the Labour and Liberal Parties and controlling the head if not the body of the Conservative party. It is probably easier to list the core beliefs of the elite; multiculturalism, global warming as fact, unlimited immigration as national boundaries are irrelevant, the primacy of the European Court of Human Rights, the superiority of international institutions in particular the EU, the politics of identity manifested in holding correct positions on feminism, racism and gay rights, and the inherent evil of what are perceived to be white, heterosexist and patriarchal societies and institutions, which include the Police, Prison Service and Armed Forces. From being champions of the working class, the modern left now despises them as wilfully ignorant and reactionary. Instead they champion politically correct minority groups and treat them as victims. How dare you defend your home, family and property against a burglar who has been deprived of his rights by people like you who didn't take drugs, dared to earn an honest living and not depend on the state? Along with gays, travellers and other ethnic minorities, prisoners are clients of the new elite. Hence the support for the right of prisoners to vote and the condemnation of a parliament that rather surprisingly has chosen this as a line in the sand. ECHR has in fact no jurisdiction to make a ruling that serving convicted prisoners as a bloc cannot be denied the franchise. What has occurred is judicial activism pure and simple. Firstly the Convention specifically excluded the franchise. Secondly amendments to the Convention to include the franchise are a matter for the nation states who signed the treaty. As international law is made by sovereign states they are its custodians. Like human rights it is erroneous to regard international law as somehow sitting on a different plane, able only to be interpreted by those who presume to know what is good for us.

The most compelling evidence of the hollowness of the universal self evident human rights argument as practised by our political class is the doctrine of multiculturalism which holds that all cultures are not only of equal value (apart from that which is white, heterosexist and patriarchal) but also that criticism of others' cultures amounts to cultural imperialism. This is why British feminists have nothing to say about the de facto operation of Sharia Law, forced marriage and so called female circumcision. It is why there has been a stunning almost total hypocritical silence from British parliamentarians about the gang rape and murder of a medical student in India. In being silent, in abjuring public moral indignation, and in taking no action, multiculturalists are indulging in what I can only describe as Liberal apartheid.

What has happened is that human rights have been abrogated by a political class which although forced to pay lip service to democratic institutions, actively hates and undermines them. This class has long abandoned Marx in favour of gurus such as Antonio Gramsci and Herbert Marcuse, sometimes referred to as Post Marxists. In brief Gramsci preached the infiltration of major social institutions and Marcuse advocated control of language so that political discourse was contained within ideologically acceptable boundaries. It is clear that these things have largely come to pass. Article 19, the right to free expression is permitted only within these boundaries if you are in any way dependent on the state for your livelihood. Sinister proposals for all your private E mails to be retained by internet companies for perusal by government agencies are clear evidence of the desire to enlarge the surveillance state. In the UK you will not have electrodes attached to your genitals, but you can expect to lose your job or at least be demoted with the dire consequences that entails.

It seems to me that the more our Government preaches human rights, the less we actually have of them...



Remembrance, Charity and Benevolence

John Berry OBE, JP

I suspect most, if not all of us bought a poppy in November for Remembrance Day? Some will have gone to their place of worship; others will have watched the Remembrance Sunday parade on their TV. Many of us work as volunteers for a variety of organisations and we will all at some point in our lives have given a donation to a charity.

Governor grades, and especially those who retired post Fresh Start when salaries were significantly increased, probably thought that their pensions would enable them to have a relatively comfortable retirement. However with inflation, changes in personal circumstances, the crash of the stock markets (twice), bereavements and increasingly the cost of Care home fees this comfortable retirement we envisaged may not be a reality for all.

Having been the last Governor to head the Staff Care and Welfare Service, before it was eventually dismantled and incorporated into the Field based teams, I was acutely aware of the significant number of staff of all grades who were offered support. At any one time there were around 500 - 700 prison staff and their families being offered help by the welfare service. This help varied from advice about debt, bereavement and family problems, to supporting and paying for treatment for staff who were diagnosed as suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Some of these staff had served in the Army in Northern Ireland, the Falklands or latterly the First Gulf War, but for others the gradual build up of incidents, usually suicides in the Prison Service, acted as the trigger for the onset of depression and, in a few cases, PTSD.

In cases of debt, *The Charity for Civil Servants* (formerly the *Civil Service Benevolent Fund*) would often provide financial help, either in the form of a loan or as an outright gift to help staff get back on their feet. The Charity can also help former and retired civil servants and there may be some colleagues or their dependents that might not be aware of this fact. I have advised a number of people about the existence of this charity in the last few years: some of them had not realised that they were eligible to ask for help.

However for those of us who are Ex-forces (Veterans) the options for support are wider. Veterans have at last been recognised as a group that warrant special attention and for those who do not know, a Veteran can be somebody who has only spent one day in the Forces, although some Charities stretch this to those who served for at least a week in the armed forces, including the territorial army and reserves. As some will be aware the main Armed Forces charities are:

- **The Royal British Legion** which provides help and welfare to the serving and ex-Service community and their families, is one of the UK's largest charities.
- **BLESMA** The British Limbless Ex Service Men's Association, the national charity for limbless (including those who had lost an eye) serving and ex-service men and women and their dependants.
- **SSAFFA** The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) Forces.
- **ABF The Soldiers' Charity** providing support to serving soldiers, former soldiers and their families in times of need. The people they support include those with disabilities or mental illness, people experiencing homelessness or unemployment, and older people.
- **RAF Benevolent Fund (RAFBF)** is the RAF's leading welfare charity. They offer support and assistance to the men, women and children of the RAF family.
- **Royal Naval Benevolent Trust** supports Men and Women in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines who served their country, often at times of national crisis.

There may also be a range of locally-based charitable institutions that offer financial assistance to people who live within their catchment area. We have two local charities operating in my village, which will only give hardship grants to people living in the immediate locality. Some of these local charities have significant funds at their disposal and they may have to spend a certain amount each year, so it is worth exploring these options if you are looking for hardship grants for local people.

For others there may be help available, which is linked directly to a particular industry or profession e.g. the Lighthouse Club is the construction industry charity to help support construction workers and their families in times of hardship.

BEN is the UK's dedicated charity for those who work, or have worked, in the automotive and related industries, as well as their dependants. BEN also provides day nursing and residential across the country for older people in our communities.

The RPGA also has some charitable funds the administration of which is overseen by a committee headed by Neville Joseph.

There are also around 65 charitable trusts, which give grants to people with *long-term disability and ill-health*. For people with these conditions it is worth looking at ***The Guide to Grants for Individuals in Need***. This lists detailed information, including eligibility criteria, exclusions, application guidelines, contact details and the amount and type of grants offered and can be accessed on-line.

For those who have access to the web you can search via a website called **Turn2us**. This is a charitable service which helps people access the money available to them – through welfare benefits, grants and other help. It is a free, accessible website which has been designed to help people find appropriate sources of financial support quickly and easily based on an individual's particular needs and circumstances.

Finally, for those who are overawed by some of the form-filling required to access some funding, then there is usually somebody available who can help, whether you contact one of the armed forces charities, or go into your local Citizens Advice Bureau, you can usually find somebody with the necessary skills.

Hopefully members of the RPGA will not need financial support or advice, but there may be some people around you who do.

'Give and it will be given to you. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.'

Luke 6:38

In addition to this article from John I copy readers into this email I received from Nevill Joseph regarding our own Benevolent Fund.

Dear Mick,

I recently had an email from Graham Smith, asking me to contact you with an update of the RPGA Benevolent Fund. The fund is still in existence, but I think it can best be described as somnolent. The Bank account shows a balance of £5,900 and is in the tight hands of one Jim Blakey. The funds originated from the goodwill of RPGA members - and any further monies would have to come from the same source. We HAVE given assistance to our members, but nothing recently. The last application was sent to us on behalf of a serving Governor-grade, but it was clearly inappropriate and we were unable to offer help. Applications are dealt-with by a small sub-committee and our recommendations are passed to the full RPGA Committee, for decision.

As you may be aware, I still chair the committee of the Prison Service Charity Fund (PSCF). I only mention it, because it could just possibly provide funding for one of our members, if he or she is the subject of fundraising at a prison. It seems rather unlikely, but let me know if you think it is worth a mention. Regards, Nevill.

NEARLY TEN YEARS LATER



By Chris Scott

As I approach my seventieth birthday, it is almost ten years since I left HM Prison Service. I don't feel all that older; perhaps more creaky, perhaps a little slower, perhaps harder of hearing, certainly more rotund and bald but I still have an active life as a Chairman of the Governors of a large school, Chairman of the Village Community Association and

being heavily involved in my local church. For five years until his early death I worked with Tony Wood on penal matters across Europe. We had some success but regrettably Tony died while working for better conditions in Eastern Europe. I led a local campaign against the building of HMP Oakwood representing the Parish Council before the District Planning Committee where we had some partial success but failed to overturn a done deal between the Government and Staffordshire District Council.

Our village is on the very southern edge of Staffordshire with, to the north, the largest prison complex in the United Kingdom and towards the south, Wolverhampton and the West Midlands industrial conurbation. We are ignored and we are the part of the County that can be ignored or made to take what no-one else wants. The I54 Jaguar factory is being built a mile away and so our village is best described as a small green oasis between the I54 and three prisons. That is no mean boast because for the past two years we have entered Staffordshire Best Kept Village Competition and last year we were awarded the title of Best Kept Village in South Staffordshire. We have a vibrant community spirit and, with a population of just three hundred, we had to be community minded to win the title. We have monthly village meetings in HMP Visitors' Centre. We planted a Jubilee Wood, erected new parish notice boards and planters and created a Wildlife Pathway. We applied for and were awarded one of the nation's official Jubilee Beacons to celebrate the climax of a super day of Jubilee celebrations. We renamed our two roads, the Jubilee Way and the Olympic Way. I wrote monthly newsletters for the village delivering them to every villager, encouraging active participation and I printed leaflets and posters for every house. The whole village celebrated the Jubilee and we were all filled with patriotic fervour. So for me retirement is good. George Thomas, when he retired as Speaker of the House of Commons was asked what he thought was the secret of a happy retirement. He replied "Activity, activity, activity." Certainly I have been very active over the last ten years and I can honestly say that retirement is the best thing that has ever happened to me. Mary and I have been blessed with good health and have been able to do many things which before we could

never dream about. When you read this we will have travelled to Abu Dhabi to visit our daughter but over the past ten years, we have been on numerous holidays to Italy, where I climbed to the summit of Vesuvius, and to France. I have been going to French classes every week for the past two years, to keep the old grey matter working. I think it is still working but my French isn't all that improved but I love my weekly French class and the homework we are set every week. "La Belle Erica", our French teacher, makes us work hard!

Perhaps I am even more cynical about behind the scenes machinations than I used to be even with my PGA experience but we never had a chance to stop the building of Oakwood which is a Titan Prison in all but name. It is now managed by G4S and by all accounts is a disaster. Every week, staff leave in droves and it has failed to reach its targeted capacity. Twenty years ago I understood how people such as Charlie Erickson saw the private sector as a means to improve the standard of penal policy and practice but that dream has been destroyed not only by private sector management but mainly by the Government and the Prisons Board. The Prison Service as I knew it has disappeared. Care and Service are dirty words, with the only acceptable phrase to be used being "Value for money". Oakwood will eventually have 1600 inmates with the capacity for 2000 but no workshops and little education facilities. The Government proudly proclaim it to be the most cost effective prison in the UK but it is simple a warehouse. What has happened to our Service? What has happened that our belief that no-one should be discarded but that our task, was at the end of the line, to offer chance and redemption to those that wanted it? I am glad that I no longer belong to HM Prison Service. I am sad that our efforts, our aspirations have been so easily discarded by successive governments and a weak and complicit Prisons Board. Martin Narey saw the future and sensibly got out while the going was good and has been recently awarded with a knighthood for good service to the underprivileged since those times. Phil Wheatley however joined the Dark Side. I say no more but leave you to draw your own conclusions. Governors no longer have the ability to set the way forward for their own establishments. Lackey civil servants rule the roost. I fear for inmate protestations. Surely they will come. Lord Woolf called for smaller prisons with the emphasis on finding, jobs, accommodation and supportive backgrounds to which prisoners could return but that has been forgotten and discarded. How long before another Strangeways? Small prisons are closing and new larger warehouses are being built. Money is the only thing that matters.

I look back in fondness and pride with my time in HM Prison Service and as Chairman of the PGA. We had a vision and we worked hard to achieve it. Perhaps we were able to do some good. I hope so. Who knows today's? Prison Service might one day find that Vision but I doubt it.

WHEN MAY A PRISONER HAVE WINE WITH HIS MEALS?

By Roger Brandon



In the last edition of this august journal I posed the question “*When may a prisoner have beer with his meals?*” as an introduction to my 1930s copy of Prison Standing Orders. This time I offer a few more titbits before coming to the purpose of the articles - the ‘readers’ free offer’ at the end.

The answer that I gave to the beer question (when he is a condemned man) was only partially correct. There are circumstances when a prisoner may not only have beer, but cider and wine. I am sure that the ‘old lags’ among the readers will know the answer.

Leaving aside instructions on hanging or flogging a prisoner, or not leaving carbolic soap in the bath, there is much in the 1930s orders that is the same as those that I remember before our ‘bibles’ were superseded by Prison Instructions. They do, however, go into some detail over minor matters, clearly concerned at the ability of the reader to interpret orders sensibly: The issue of plate cloths, for example. This cloth, for the cleaning of plates and utensils, has to be between 20” and 24” inches square, and may not be hung on the same peg as the prisoner’s towel, nor on the wash stand, nor near the chamber pot, or on the floor. And that’s before we get on to the procedure for changing it weekly.

How big should a moustache be? Something happened between the 1930s and the 1950s with regard to moustaches, but not the relaxation that you might expect. The order dated 1937 states “*moustaches will be allowed, subject to being neatly trimmed.*” An amendment dated 1951 is pasted in, and this adds the words “*...and the moustache must cover the lip.*” The same amendment forbids the growing or retaining of side-whiskers. Perhaps that was something to do with fear of Teddy Boys?

How long is a working day? In 1933 the prisoners’ working day was 10 hours, but only 8 on a Saturday. The day consisted of 8 hours associated labour, followed by 2 hours work in cell. Picking coconut yarn was widespread, but prisoners were not permitted to pick coconut *fibre* in cell. Extensive research (an hour on Google) has failed to establish the reason for this. Those on education still had to finish the balance of the 10 hours with work. Cleaning was reserved for those who could not be taught a skill, and old offenders were precluded from the cleaning parties (c.f.: our days when *only* old offenders got onto the party.)

Cleanliness was important and workers were given the opportunity to wash after work, especially as they were likely to be exposed to lead paints on the Works or poisonous solder in the tinsmiths (for which reason suicidal prisoners were banned from this work). The reason for this facility, however, was not to protect the prisoner, but because “*lead compounds may be encountered when rubbing down*”. Women had additional needs and were permitted an extra pail of water in the evenings for their ablutions, and if the *M.O. deemed it necessary*, this could even be warmed. Men and women were also given a last minute opportunity to empty their ‘cell chambers’ in the sluice: “*The best time for this will probably be found shortly before the lights are put out, when the night patrols have come on duty and the Orderly Officer is present in the hall.*” No doubt Governors swiftly pointed out the small flaw in this arrangement as an amendment dated 1934 changed it to before the final cell

check of the day, and a further amendment laid down the arrangements for unlocking a prisoner after lock-up that we are familiar with.

When would you use a 40" birch rod, and when a 48"? The answer is the longer one for offenders over 16, the short one for those aged 10 – 16. The specifications for the rods is spelt out in detail, as also the canvas screen erected by the offenders head to prevent him identifying his flogger, and the flogging triangle. In a humanitarian gesture, however, offenders are not told that the Secretary of State has confirmed the sentence of flogging until immediately before it is administered.

A section of Standing Orders concerns staff/prisoner relationships and there are dire warnings concerning trafficking (6 months imprisonment and/or £20) or engaging in inappropriate conversations with their charges. Rehabilitation, however, lurks under the surface:

"Familiarity between officers and prisoner is prohibited, but an officer will never be blamed for addressing, at proper opportunities, a few kindly and sensible words of advice and help to a prisoner."

On the whole, life as a member of staff was pretty restrictive, and life in quarters was barely your own. There were restrictions placed on your hobbies, pets, and certainly on anything that might be construed as a money-earner. You may not have a radio – even a portable – without the Governor's permission. Your quarter would not have an electric or gas cooker, nor was it likely to have the wiring or plumbing for one; if you obtained permission to supply your own cooker you had to arrange the services to it. You may not install lino, and decoration consisted of what the works had to hand. Mind you, many of us will remember that. Your quarter was, of course, subject to inspection, and if you were a probationer in bachelor quarters the Governor had a key so that he could subject you to unannounced weekly inspections. It was even the Governor's responsibility to ensure that you had your baby vaccinated.

Governors suffered their hardships as well. On transfer a Governor's family could travel first class, but the department would only pay for two servants who had to travel third class – unless nanny was required in first to control the children.

How did you do on the wine? Division 1 prisoners were allowed alcohol (apart from spirits) with their meals at their own expense (the condemned man had his beer supplied). Division 1 related primarily to debtors, but the class covered certain other privileged prisoners, who were exempt from work and could exercise and associate separately to other prisoners. They could even (at a price) have a specially furnished cell and hire another prisoner to clean it. These regulations could be extended to include offenders of previous good character and not convicted of crimes of violence, cruelty, indecency, or dishonesty. Stumped on that one? Well, Division 1 could be extended to those sentenced for sedition, contempt, contravention of the vaccination acts, non payment of maintenance of wife or children, and non-payment of costs, damages, and certain fines. Although the division system was scrapped much of this order survived into our times.

I liberated my 1930s Orders from a confidential waste bag at Parkhurst in my Assistant Governor days. Over the years it has been of great use in my historical researches but the time has come to pass it on to someone who can make better use of it. If you can promise it a useful future you may have it for the postage (under £9 2nd class) or collect from South Devon. Contact me via the e-mail list.

NOTES FROM A NOUVEAU BRIGHTONIAN

BY Mitch Egan



I've spent a lot of my life living in the North East, but I'm basically a southerner and when the opportunity presented itself to move to sunnier climes (or at least places where temperatures were above zero for significant portions of the year) I grabbed it and ran... all the way to Brighton.

Brighton is so much fun there ought to be a health warning. I've been blogging in a fairly unsystematic way since I got here, and these are some extracts.

26 May 2012: I've started my preparations to move, which involves moving random items from one place to another and then back again. In fact the movers are going to do it all, so none of it is necessary - but the spirit is moving me and I'm moving stuff, oh well. I'm being moved by Bishops's Move, hopefully pain-free, but at least I know they have a current calendar, unlike Mr Pickford who discovered just yesterday that the agreed date of 1 June was a Friday - *quelle horreur!* Their surprise seemed genuine: as was mine when they said that left them unable to move me. I was in fact so surprised I may have cursed a little. Ok, a lot. But I'll make up for it with a little gift, I'll send them a 2012 calendar, so they can look up the bloody date when they agree it rather than a week before the move. Only the euphoria of the exchange of contracts with my buyers, Mr & Mrs Grasping-Robbers, carried me through. Euphoria, mmmm... - now, if only Gordon's would bottle that!



The view from my window on my first day in Brighton. Protesters are behind the horses.

6 June 2011: Well I'm here - if only the utilities and services were with me! Keeping in touch is tricky when all you have is the tiny screen of your mobile to do postings like this. It's the same reason I don't get HD telly - I just don't have HD eyes (or ears for that matter). I'm still waiting for a broadband connection. Oh, and a phone. And a domestic electricity supply, maybe a dustbin, and possibly a council tax band. But Brighton is brilliant, with a demo outside the house on day one - attended by most of East Sussex constabulary who well outnumbered the rather timid English Defence League demonstrators. It was an unusual sight to open curtains on, first day in a new house and all. And then an Anarchists Tea Party (instead of a Jubilee celebration) on day two. On the positive side all boxes are empty, and several patches of floor have emerged from the layer of 'stuff'. I realise that I have much more stuff than a) I realised, b) I need and c) will fit in this house. But, hey, I live at the seaside, in the same city as my sister, so I can deal with this!

1 July 2011: So I've moved house, and the new place is lovely (like a vertical flat with fitness tests - the many stairs, accessing the boiler etc) and Brighton is delightful. The experience of moving has been traumatic, nothing to do with upheaval and relocation of self and goods, but just the aggravation of

changing address and dealing with service providers. Twitter has been a godsend, with big companies apparently investing more in their social media teams than in their poor old call centre staff. Tweets are actually answered by people who seem to be able to get things done: astonishing! Not that tweeting is easy without a phone or broadband connection (as I have been for almost a month). It was hurtful when my bank denied my credentials after more than 30 years of banking, but I think I managed to explain this successfully to everyone within earshot - many of whom worked for the bank. I don't know how money launderers and fraudsters manage, but I wish they'd share their secrets, maybe write a manual for those of us simply trying to hang onto our own money - I couldn't even access my own accounts let alone other people's. See, I'm already showing early signs of mouth-froth, so maybe I should do this later...

4 August 2012

Events abound here: there's always something on. Peoples' Day was good, the town was full of stalls representing all the groups serving the community in Brighton. I think it's fair to say that Brighton has at least one of everything. there's no way you can't fit in here, no matter how strange, eccentric, unique and different you think you are - you'll probably find some sort of community and a like-minded group or two. Live music as well, and not the great UK traditional Andean music, but other more exotic stuff as well. Peoples Day offerings included formal stuff on stages, and a few buskers, the Spanish chaps from the University took the prize: good music, and always nice when buskers make a bit of an effort on the costume.



18 August 2011

I really want a trike. I thought Brighton was flat before I moved here and I now realize my mistake. In fact, I realised it quite abruptly on my first cycle ride when I freewheeled all the way to the pier: this is never a good thing. Coming back was a very different (and longer) experience and involved putting the chain back on twice when, fooled by the gradient, I was obliged to apply dramatic force to the pedals (actually, I had to stand up and pedal like, um... fury in order to stay in motion) which dislodged the chain. I can now see that this place is like a bowl, with a chunk missing where the sea comes in, Cycling up the sides of the bowl is proving challenging. The offers of help are plentiful, either demonstrating that people in Brighton are truly friendlier than elsewhere, or that I look incompetent enough to arouse sympathy. But I'm touched by the many offers to roll up vintage and designer sleeves and muck in. I don't think I really do look incompetent, because I've graduated from the Basic Cycle Maintenance course run by Mr Getafix the Brighton bike mechanic. I was a little disappointed when he didn't look like the Asterix character, but I can fix a puncture without a bucket of water to drown the inner tube. Next week I go on the Advanced Cycle Maintenance course when I learn how to calibrate gears. Wow! But the hill issue remains and I think a trike might be the answer since it would at least stay upright when going very, very slowly. I've seen one in Hove, so I'm cycling over for a test drive...

26 August 2011

Well, the trike experiment failed, I really couldn't manage it - front end stable, back end like sitting sideways on a see-saw. Like riding a bucking bronco, which is fun for about three seconds and then parts of your body start objecting. Soft parts. Undoubtedly good exercise, but not something I was prepared to stick at. It's a bit of a pity, because my sister and I could have relived an exciting part of our youth, in which a trike, which may have been cream with a blue boot or vice versa, played a significant part. Oh, that trike, that boot with the little catch!

The door is not totally locked against a trike - but it's wedged shut with the latest addition to the perambulatory stable (quite a big drum roll, about now) which you will see in the picture below. Yes, a

scooter (push, not motorised)! Now my original childhood version was painted red with yellow wheels, and I'm not sure if it was a shared vehicle or not - but my sis has dibs on a turn on this new one. (It's a good job I got it, as my bike has been unrideable since I did Advanced Cycle Maintenance and learned how to calibrate gears.) I've had a lot of scooting fun already:- rode it back from the shop UPHILL which I thought impossible but well, modern technology - what can I tell you? I'm a bit more dodgy going downhill, especially as you brake by standing on the rear wheel. I've kicked myself once or twice, but my spare foot (in a manner of speaking) has yet to land on any suitable braking bit. And I have ridden it around the house, which involved some rather tight turns and an unexpected stair, but had to be done. I'm glad to say the vendor had no noticeably broken bones, but I may wear my cycle helmet. I'd worry about whether or not this is a good idea, but I'm too busy scooting down the road going 'Wheeeee!' to bother. I'll never sleep tonight...



25 August 2011

Brighton Station is a wonderful place with enough ticket machines (minor miracle), the statutory W H Smith, a little M&S Food, a cash machine, a florists (I want to have a florists stall near the station, called 'The Oh Bugger, I Forgot About It' florist, a name I think would look well on the wrapping paper and would

at least be honest), a mass of travelling humanity and so on - including the Cornish Pasty Company, Upper Crust, and a lot of life. The portico is fabulous, there's a fairly large forecourt and there is an entirely authentic lack of seating.

I was impressed when I moved down to Brighton to see that the forecourt had a fruit stall - even more impressed that it was a GREAT fruit stall, with luscious fresh produce and doing good trade. Then a coffee stall selling excellent and fragrant brews came along. Then a bakery stall, with morning goods in the, um, morning - fresh croissants and *pain au chocolat* - and lovely breads later in the day, including an irresistible rye sourdough. Then this week, blow me down (although with all this great food in Brighton that's the LAST thing you'll be able to do), this appeared - and I'm pointing to the photo now - a brilliant new stall stocked with the most wonderful selection of cheeses, saucissons sec, hams and salamis. With the addition of a little tent, you could totally live on the station forecourt now, snacking on rye sourdough with a sliver of Parma ham and maybe some Reblochon, watching the world (polyglot world, so you could acquire language skills as well) go by or reading Metro, Big Issue, Brighton Visitor and the bus timetable (all of which would make excellent winter insulation).

Oh, and you can also catch trains...

Why not listen to “Chatterbox” with Mitch Egan on Coastway Hospital Radio? And don't forget folks if you don't reside close enough to Brighton to get reception on your radio you can always access her broadcasts via the internet.

Listen Live every Friday from 5pm to 7pm

at www.coastway.org.uk

WEEKEND AT BOURNEMOUTH 2013
THURSDAY 11th April TO SUNDAY 14th APRIL 2013
at
THE HINTON FIRS HOTEL.
9 MANOR ROAD,
BOURNEMOUTH
DORSET,
BH13ET



Favourable rates for RPGA members have been obtained from the hotel of £170 per person for Dinner,

Bed and Breakfast.

This includes

Tea, coffee and pastry on reception.

Sunday lunch on departure.

The event has been held at this venue on alternate years for some time and consistently retains its popularity. 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 either sit with friends in the lounge or bar, or take a stroll along the adjacent sea front.

Whilst the hotel is set in a rather tranquil environment the attractions of the vibrant nightlife of Bournemouth are just a 15 minute walk down to the sea front.

Bournemouth offers plenty of places to visit within a short drive or by the use of public transport, all of which will provide sufficient interest for the three days. One can of course have a walk around the shops and other retail outlets 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

If you would like join your fellow colleagues at the hotel on this weekend, please send the completed the booking form with a cheque for £50 per person made payable to the HINTON FIRS HOTEL and post to

Charles Smith,
21 Bowness Avenue,
Ainsdale,
Southport, PR8 3PQ
telephone 01704 575 266.
smithpr8@btinternet.com

RETIRED GOVERNORS WEEKEND 2013

The retired Governors Weekend break will take place between Thursday 11th April and Sunday 14th April 2013 at :-

***Hinton Firs Hotel
9 Manor Road, Bournemouth.***

The cost for three nights dinner, bed and breakfast is £170 per person this includes tea /coffee on arrival, and Sunday Lunch.

RETIRED GOVERNORS WEEKEND BREAK HINTON FIRS, BOURNEMOUTH

11th April to 14th APRIL 2013

I would like to reserve _____ places for the above weekend.

I enclose a deposit of £ _____ which is £ 50 per person

Accounts to be settled before 1000 hrs on the day of departure.

Cheques and deposits to be made payable to HINTON FIRS HOTEL and sent to Charles Smith at the address below.

Your Name and Address _____ Double Room _____

_____ Twin Room

_____ Single Room

_____ **Please Return to :-
Charles Smith,
21 Bowness Avenue,
Ainsdale,
Southport,
PR8 3QP**

Tel _____

email _____ tel 01704 575 266



Unrealistic School Reports Do Not Always Help

by John Ramwell

The most difficult part of writing a piece is getting started. Chewing the end of my pencil and wondering how to get my thoughts down can be a real time waster.

So I am going to let my pencil run over the page and see what results.

Like many of my thoughts, they originate from reading my Sunday paper. I enjoy other people's take on issues that have wandered around my own mind from time to time and Dominic Lawson's piece in today's Sunday newspaper about education and school reports resonated.

He rails at the current effort to make every child a winner. Teachers should do nothing that will deflate and undermine the confidence and self esteem of a young pupil. They must all be winners.

Clearly the pendulum has swung across the divide since I was at school. Back then ridiculing pupils who did less well than the average was fair sport and indulged in by the majority of teachers who would assist a hapless pupil even deeper into the mire of collapsing self esteem and self confidence. My school shepherded every class en masse into the main hall at the end of every term. Each class stood in turn. Starting from the first in the class, names were read out and you sat down. The 'last man standing' was not meant to feel comfortable, nor was it!

Today students are made to feel good about themselves whatever their lack of achievements. No teacher would dare criticise one of his class, at least not in the public sector of educational institutions. Benchmarking students is not allowed though many crave to know where they fit into their school academic league.

History is littered with successful figures who did badly at school and received damning reports for their efforts, or lack of efforts.

I am certainly not claiming success as a figure or otherwise but I do fit half the criteria in that my school reports were less than good.

In my own case my Father came home from a parent/teachers meeting with a 'temper fit to burst'. "The only thing they can say about you", he said, "is you're the boy who won't wear his cap". School caps were compulsory in these days. If only this was as bad as it got. Damning by faint praise was one thing; I had the 'full monty'. "Has not learnt to concentrate his attention on anything yet". "Has no idea how to behave and the thought of work seems to allude him".

Whilst serving at Bedford Prison quite some years ago a colleague used to turn his nose up at a comment he found distasteful by saying, "Oh! how secondary modern". This made me smile. If, Peter, you read this, the memory of it will perhaps make you smile. Of course I always supposed you were 'tongue in cheek'. My brothers subsequently went to such schools and did well in life.

My school was not secondary modern. It was, and perhaps still is, one of Manchester's 'better schools'. This made the scorn harder to live with. I left school eventually, thank goodness, with little in the way of academic or athletic achievement.

But here comes my point. I had very low expectations. Everything that subsequently came my way was an absolute bonus. I expected nothing and therefore failed to search out opportunities. I was happy to bumble along at the bottom, content with whatever life threw my way.

This attitude made it easy to become enthusiastic about any small crumb that came my way. I took up running as the local athletic club was just around the corner from my 'digs'. I was no Usain Bolt but our bin man was a scout for Preston Grasshoppers rugby club and, unlike my school rugby, I found it fun and did well enough. I was being told that maybe I had some playing ability. This was a first.

I was encouraged to go to night school by my land lord. He and I used to discuss the right and left of politics and he thought I should further my education. So I did and came across a teacher who changed everything. Sadly I do not remember his name: big built with a huge smile partially hidden by an even bigger ginger beard, he certainly enthused me with a liking for literature and reading. The WEA (Workers Education Association) was a godsend for me back then.

I still did not think that the world owed me a living and was pleasantly surprised whenever I got any encouragement from whatever source. It was reputedly Mark Twain who famously said, "Do not let schooling spoil your education". Appropriate in my case as I fought to shake off the effect of my school years.

The late 1950s and early 1960s were good years to leave school as opportunities were aplenty. It was often said that should you not like your job, just cross the road and get another.

Being in the right era and getting over the effects of poor to bad school reports as opportunities seemed to slip my way, I found that, to my surprise, my self-confidence improved.

At 19 years of age I joined the Prison Service. Okay, I was almost 20. I was recruited to Grendon Psychiatric Prison as a 'Farms and Gardens Instructor'. I was the only one among my working party of prisoners who did not have a 'certificate of sanity'. The others, all trusted inmates from Wormwood Scrubs, insisted on such before agreeing to come to a psychiatric prison as a working party!

The Service had just lowered the recruiting age of Prison Officers from 25 to 21 and immediately I hit the minimum age I joined. Not that this was a walk in the park. Few governors in those days believed that 21 was old enough. Mr Brophy certainly did not. If he had not had his hands full with his prison housing the infamous mail-train robbers, I may never have sneaked through under his radar!

The relevance of this potted history is that it helps to make my point about having reduced expectancies together with increased opportunities.

It is unfortunate that today young people have high expectancies but with very much reduced opportunities.

Maybe schools should do more to prepare their students for the big wide world by simply telling them 'as it is'.

It is a very competitive world with many coming forward and few being chosen. Teachers should level with kids and reduce expectations to a more realistic level. It need not be a world of disappointments but, instead, a world of opportunities. Much of this depends on attitude as well as a better understanding of self.

What do you think?

YOUR LETTERS



Bob Duncan
28 Dumpton Park Drive
Broadstairs
Kent
CT10 1RQ
bobduncan@hotmail.co.uk

01843 579808

The PGA celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2012, with the annual conference recognising that by the presence of **Richard Tilt, Martin Narey, Phil Wheatley and Michael Spurr** at the formal dinner. I must say I did enjoy an early breakfast with Richard, Phil and Michael continuing our conversation and reminisces from the previous evening. They were all in good health and busy as ever. They made up for what was a rather sober event with something called 'Fair and Sustainable' dominating the agenda, it appears to be a disguise for more management changes and of course budget cuts. The only other notable event was when **Duncan Scales** (a well built young man on the Executive) tipped his chair too far backwards and disappeared through the backcloth curtain and completely off the stage. We all congratulate the PGA on its successful history, and feel it is most fitting that **Paddy (Patricia) Scriven**, its erstwhile Treasurer and latterly General Secretary, should be recognised with the award of an OBE in the New Years Honours.

Just to keep our end up, I remind you that The Newsletter pre-dates the PGA, but not the RPGA. As you are all aware we did not hold our normal one day re-union last year, but there was an open invitation to the AGM which followed the autumn Executive Meeting. This was reasonably well attended, and good to see **Mike Bolton, Mitch Egan** (now living in Brighton,) and **Gordon Steel** on I think, their first attendance, which is encouraging, and there still appeared a will for a re-union, so watch this space. Your committee was enhanced by election of **Jan Thompson and Graham Mumby-Croft** to cover vacancies. We welcome them and look forward to the additional experience and wisdom they bring. One of the likely vacancies is likely to be that of Treasurer, as **Jim Blakey** has decided it is time to put the 'old boy' out to pasture. Come off it Jim, you are only a young 70+ year old. He will be with us for a bit offering an extended hand over of our precious pennies. So more of that anon. **Jim** reminds me that he has now been at his current house for 7 years, the longest they have lived in one place in their 53 years of marriage, and not likely to change as they love the house and village. (I suspect the real reason is that Jim is fed up with having to create a new garden every time they move). Gardens reminds me that **Dave Simons** is downsizing, but not in the conventional way, he is removing all the fruit trees and vegetable plots and grassing it all over and being allowed a 'sit on mover' to keep it tidy. I suspect the real reason is that gardening was getting in the way of golf!

Met up with **Mel Dickinson's daughter, Helen** at conference and she put me in contact again. **Mel** is well and enjoying life, he took over running a Salvation Army charity shop which was not doing well and ran it for 9 years and turned it round so it had a turnover of £100,000 a year. He has now moved from Yorkshire and is very involved in his village management committee and is the lead bingo caller. I was moved and excited to hear from **Bill Keast**, who reminded me we first met at Dover Borstal in 1965, 48 years ago, I cannot believe where all those years have gone. **Bill** is now in his 80's has taken his time to write but it is all the more vintage champagne for that. He writes, 'I have never been keen on re-unions nor of reliving the past, but now at 84, I feel the need!

Anyhow you can edit it or bin it! (No way Bill your views are so important and I know so many will be so glad to hear news from you.) I did fully enjoy my service, I met and served with so many interesting people/colleagues and learnt a lot.

I enjoyed the journey so here goes.

The Journey of an Old Screw

I cannot claim to have been highly motivated about 'Reform or do-gooders' I applied because a house went with the job, but once in I never looked back. I commenced officer training at Kingston in April 1950 and completed it at what was then Camp Hill Borstal. On completion of my OTS training I was posted to Portland Borstal in October 1950. The inmate population then was mainly 'runners from National Service', a group of very fit and vigorous young men, and 2 riots before Christmas. I was but 22 years old myself! I took on the role of official photographer which attracted a little extra cash as did sleep in at 2 shillings and 6pence. It all helped.

I also spent 6 weeks on 'condemned cell duty, 8 hour shifts, in which you really got to know the person. He had given himself up straight away, pleaded guilty, no previous. A real gutsy man, his last words to **Governor Llewellyn** was to thank us for the support and comfort we had given to help him through his ordeal. Amazing!

I was then posted to Dover Borstal where in addition to routine discipline duties I took a games course and an Adventure Training Course at Hollesley Bay (a watered down Duke of Edinburgh Scheme). We took lads rock climbing, canoeing, and camp hiking over 5 day period.

I moved to Gaynes Hall on promotion to Principal Officer (no senior officers then) and then took the Staff Course and was made A.G.2 and posted to Hatfield Borstal, an open camp and a very different experience. Then a brief period at Wakefield Prison, **John Watson** was the Governor who welcomed me on board saying 'I am putting you in charge of D wing, it is known as the 'nutters wing' and we are expecting a riot. What a real change for me, a very new experience, and quite a welcome!

I then found myself posted to Risely Remand centre and the Y.P. wing, **Major Oldfield** was the Governor; a great leader. Then out of the blue I was offered a tutors position at what was then The Staff College, to develop management training for Principal Officers and Chief Officers. In addition to that I was involved with the training senior staff from overseas, taking subjects like Learning Theory, Teaching Practise, and Management Skills. Over a period of time we catered for 42 different countries from South Pacific, Mid and Far East, Africa and the West Indies. This in itself was a wonderful learning curve, and at the same time I scraped a pass in the Diploma Certificate in Adult Education at Leeds University. Also whilst at the College, the British Council sponsored a trip to Ghana, Gambia and Sierra Leone.

From the Staff College I was selected to support **Tom Carnegie** as his Deputy, when he was on a two year contract as Commissioner of Prisons in Bermuda. This was quite a unique experience: two executions of two very dangerous men who had assassinated the Governor, the Commissioner of Police, and the Manager and his assistant of a super market; in addition to civil disorder, arson, riots, and three Americans killed.

In 1978 I returned to the UK and a degree of normality, and a posting to Channings Wood to convert what was an ex military camp into a Cat C prison. I was so fortunate to have a great team of uniform staff, works staff, instructors and admin, who directed the redevelopment which was mainly undertaken by inmate labour. Once established we developed a very positive regime and reached out into the community to work with the handicapped and old age pensioners. As Channings Wood developed and grew it attracted Governor 2 status, so I moved sideways to Haslar and retired from there in 1988.

Looking back I have been both fortunate and lucky in my service. It was not always easy, but that is life and you have to take your chances. I clearly enjoyed my service and it saddens me when the media denigrates the efforts of so many dedicated staff as a failure. Not helped by the lack of support from

politicians. How do we measure failure? All our 'customers' are the product of our society, their families, and the education system and in many cases the variety of non-custodial penalties.

We hear little about the many young men and women who have benefitted from vocational training up to City and Guild level, nor about education both remedial and up to degree level. The Service accepts without question whoever the courts send. Against the odds I consider the Prison Service makes a very good best in difficult circumstances and severe restraints.

So many thanks to all my old colleagues in all the various disciplines for all your friendship and support over the years. I am 84 years young and have enjoyed the journey, the love and care of my **wife Jean**, and 4 wonderful children, 9 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Best wishes and good luck to you all.

A word to the next generation, you have never failed, you only fail when you stop trying.'

What a fantastic letter, such a varied career and sound advice. It reminds me of all the tremendous people we meet in our careers, and the opportunities that arise for all of us as long as you seize them and make the most of them. I am not sure that is so today. Ours was a glorious time so serve. I am sure Bill's recollections will remind colleagues of their own experiences, of events and people, we would love to hear them.

Good to hear from **Harold Parr**, though he has been through a rough period. In 2010 he had an operation for a collapsed spine and badly trapped nerve; it was pioneering surgery, and left him seriously ill for a period. He is now in reasonable health but has limited mobility. He is still preaching, but as he is unable to stand for too long, his sermons are therefore much shorter. There you go they say there is always a silver lining! He is in touch with **Pat Lynch** who remains very active and in good health. Harold has been trying to make contact with **Adrian Arnold**, but gets no replies to letters. He says he was the Deputy Governor at Risely when Harold arrived there from the 23rd AG's course, and he became his deputy some years later at Hollesley Bay (1976-78). We met up again some 7-8 years later when he came up to north Norfolk to visit an outward bound type project in which his daughter and son in law (an Anglican Minister) were involved. If my memory serves me correctly, Adrian was a Cambridge 'blue' in both boxing and tennis. He was certainly one of the characters of his generation. We continued to exchange Christmas greetings for several years but of late there has been no reply to correspondence. Can anyone let us know if they have any contact or news of Adrian.

Al and Marion Papps remind us that they have both reached the three score and ten milestone, and will celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary this year. Well done, not long now to the free TV licence, probably be means tested by then!

Good to hear from **Danny Ozanne** who is well and continues to take the pills, don't we all, he does have a problem with his aorta but has refused surgery as the risk is too high, Joan is more troubled with arthritis. His grandson is still at university taking a Masters and then is contemplating joining the police. **John and Jean Childs** are both well but send no other news. **Don and Iris Drew** are well but 'feeling older' and do not drive so far these days, but are hoping to be at the weekend in Bournemouth in the spring. **Tom Johns** has finally almost retired, only 'on duty' on Sundays and midweek, and in happily settled in Bishop Waltham near Southampton.

Tim Turner writes, 'Retirement for us is good, fully recommend to anyone. The days are filled with a variety of activities: from golf, walking, gardening, horse racing and messing around with classic cars. In between we manage to travel, anywhere Russia to New Zealand, we prefer the latter. We are well settled in Dorset and have no plans to move.

Brief news of **John Morrison**, now formally retired but still doing his bit. John still enjoys his food but is now troubled with sciatica and currently has a nasty bout of cellulitis. We hope a recovery will soon take effect

Paul Wailen writes, ‘This year was a massive improvement on last year, no major house problems, but some work still to be done in 2013. When that is all done I have a couple of rooms to decorate, a pile of hoarded material to get rid of, and then I will probably put the house on the market with a view to downsizing and moving into a flat in London. I started to make progress in the garden but the appalling weather brought that to a halt though I have managed to keep the weeds down, and to plant some nice roses and other flowers. I am enjoying retirement and although I miss my colleagues I do not miss the work or responsibility. I have remained fit and well and by regular attendance at the gym have shed some 24 kgs (about3.8st. in old speak) with the help of my brilliant trainer who has guided my diet. So now I feel very healthy indeed and can even run again, which I could not do beforehand. Having met up with Paul in late December I can verify that, he is back to his old slim self.

He says after all the expense of late, he has had to forego his beloved trips to the Far East. However he still gets away, and in March discovered the delights of Cyprus, and plans to return this year. He was also in Paris and the then Norway where he helped some friends decorate an extension to their Nordic Cabin, and spent much of the time on the roof or up a ladder,(just as well you slimmed down then!). We did manage a bit of mountain trekking, walking and fishing for the day’s evening meal. Norway is a really beautiful country but oh so expensive, a round of 5 pints in Trondheim cost over £45 and box of Australian red wine over £35.

Those other ardent travellers, **Sue and Ron Curtis** continue in like vein, first to celebrate a good friend’s



50th birthday in the tiny hamlet of Le Jariel in Brie; and then visiting the sites and memorials of World War 1. They have also made regular visits to Simon and Laura in Eindhoven, where they have helped with the redecoration of the house, and tackling the overgrown garden. They endured removing huge growths of ivy in sub zero temperatures last winter, pressure hosing patios and clearing borders. They were back pre Christmas and were taken to experience a Christmas market in Dusseldorf, complete with real snow, and had a very good weekend as there was always plenty of gluhwein to keep us warm. Our church activities keep us busy, we make a good team as preacher and worship leader in our Oakham Methodist Church and around. We recently arranged services with speakers focusing on Christian organisations, and Kainos, which runs a therapeutic community at my old prison, Stocken was one of them. It is one of our church’s charities and seems to catch peoples’ interest and imagination.

Above “ *Are the Curtis’ trying their hands in a new business venture*”?

We both remain in good health, although Sue damaged her knee recently, torn cartilage, she now walks slowly and often painfully and resorts to a stick on occasions. Our GP was, to put it kindly, slow off the mark, but she has now seen a consultant and awaits an MRI scan. She has not been able to cycle much, which is a great deprivation. My Achilles’ tendon problems are a thing of the past and walking remains my great love. This year I camped in the Forest of Bowland in Lancashire, a beautiful area. Next year to celebrate my 70th Birthday, my brother Mick (72) and I plan to canoe across Rannoch Moor in Scotland!

Isn't fascinating hearing about what others get up to, so inspiring. Well me, if we get a good summer I will be content to sit on the beach by the lapping sea with a good book. That's the dream, but I suspect the grandchildren might be there and sandcastles might be the order of the day!

Talking of beaches, **Steve and Lesley Metcalfe** have moved back to the Isle of Wight from Oxfordshire. Steve has recently undergone hip replacement and only left hospital on Christmas Eve. **Alan Brown** has confirmed this and writes that his friends and colleagues will be pleased to hear he is making a steady recovery and hopes to be back on his boat in the Solent by the summer. **Steve** is asking if anybody knows contact details for **Mike Posalay** as he appears to have disappeared off the radar. And from one island to another, **Dick Crowson** writes from Guernsey, (what an international set these retired folk are!) I left the UK in August 2110 (probably tax avoidance!) to return home to Guernsey. I had after retirement in Guernsey in 1993 returned to live in Devon, where like **Harry**; I became a magistrate until having to retire at the age of 70. Shortly before retirement I had a defibrillator pacemaker installed because of a dicky ticker, which dumfounded a lot of people who thought me heartless (particularly all those you sent down at court) . Thank you for renewing my membership, pleased to be a new member it makes me feel a lot younger. Could you give my regards to **Brendan** when you see him, he was responsible for training me to become a governor grade when I was an S.O. and POA Chair at Onley. For the first and only time, I believe, three of us passed the exam and were selected; **Howard Jones**, and **Jim Walters** were my two accomplices, well do tell Brendan that we have forgiven him.

I notice now that the recruitment literature offers very generous pay. When I joined in 1960 I was on £8-6-3p a week, supplemented by the Morrison Hour when I got to Wormwood Scrubs. He would be happy to receive mail from any of his old partners in crime.

Spoke to **Mary Witty**, **Joe** remains 'comfortable' at the rest home but is unable to do anything for himself physically; he is alert mentally but tires very quickly. Mary used to visit most days to help with feeding Joe, and whilst on one of those visits, whilst dashing to the kitchen to heat up some milk slipped and damaged her ankle. She thought nothing of it at the time and carried on. Only after driving home, when she got up stood did the ankle collapse, she had to be ambulated to hospital where they diagnosed the ankle was broken in 2 places. She had to remain in hospital for awhile as there was no one at home to care for her as she cannot put any weight on the ankle. Nothing was done to assist her and as it was bordering on Christmas it was difficult to make any arrangements privately. With her usual determination she got herself home and resides downstairs and hops around. She has even been to see Joe with the help of neighbours. She will not be able to drive for 2 months. This is clearly a very difficult period for her, but she remarkably remains cheerful and resolute. Our thoughts are with you and best wishes for a complete recovery.

There have been a number of sad losses during the last period: **Mark Dauncy** wrote to advise that his father **Roger**, who has suffered from prostate cancer for some years, had a bad re-occurrence in the spring and it did not respond to radio therapy. At the end of September he became immobile and was confined to bed at home. We have had carers in several times a day to help keep in comfortable and with medication he has been pain free. In early November he weakened rapidly and within a week slipped away peacefully. He remained pain free until the end which is a blessing. The funeral and thanksgiving service was at St. Peter's Church Minsterworth on 23rd November 2012. Our thoughts are with **Rosamond**.

Mike Jones has advised us of the death of his father, **Raymond Harry Jones**, former Governor at Oxford and Bullingdon. He died on 20 November of a heart attack (his third). **Martin Webley** has advised that his father Jim died on the 13 November. **Jim** served in the Royal Navy during the Second World War, and when he finally left the Navy in the early fifties he joined the prison service at Dartmoor. He was selected as an assistant governor, taking the Staff Course in the mid fifties. As an assistant governor he served at Wormwood Scrubs, Hatfield Borstal, Portsmouth Recall Centre and the Verne. Later he was Governor in charge at Guys Marsh, Leyhill Officers Training School, South East

Selection Board and Hindley Borstal from where he retired in 1985. As a Gloucester man he was pleased to retire there and remain close to his many siblings.

About a year ago he was diagnosed as having cancer. He accepted all the treatment offered him by the local NHS Oncology Unit and was grateful to the staff for their concern and care. During the last year **Jim Blakey** and I have kept in regular touch with Jim. We had many laughs together, especially when reminiscing about our time together at Hatfield.

I met an acquaintance of **Adrian Mills** recently who said he is well and enjoying life in the West Country and sends his regards.

John Berry has advised us that an obituary in the Times announced that **Dr Robin Ilbert** aged 84 and ex SMO at Winchester died in the 26th January. Any colleague who served at Winchester would have known him.

Sadly on 27th December **Mary Brister** died peacefully at the rest home where she had resided for the last 3 years. Mary had bravely faced the ravages of Parkinson's for many years. The funeral Mass was held on the 11th January 2013 in the Chapel at Farnborough Hill School, where Mary had taught for many years and was extremely happy there, and then at Guilford crematorium. **John and ... Sandy** were there as were **Ron and Sue Curtis, Max and Caryl Morrison, and myself (Bernard and Margery Marchant** would have been had their car not broken down 'the Dover Borstal lot') and **Paul Wailen**. I received an email from **John Ship** in Thailand to say that Bill had been his first Governor when he was posted to Dover from the OTS in 1967, I remember him well, and he was well respected. I met him again with Mary at the opening of The Mount, where one of the residential units is named after him. He told me he intended to draw his pension for as long as he was in the service, he must be well on his way. A lovely man.

Mary was born in Liverpool in 1923 and went to the Notre Dame School, and despite evacuation for a while due to the Blitz, and then having to study under the stairs, won a State Scholarship to Oxford University in 1941. She loved her time at Oxford despite the war, which did not seem to curtail her social life; she entered into it fully including fire watching! She made many life long friends, and then 'someone more suspect' a younger man whom she met at the Catholic Chaplaincy, and who in the best Catholic tradition proceeded to ply her with gin and limes. Eventually the gin worked its magic; after 3 or 4 on off engagements, then a 3 year gap whilst Bill went off to war, Bill and Mary were married in August 1949. She gained great happiness from her marriage over 63 years and delighted in Bill's success. Her marriage also meant marrying the Prison Service –she was a fine and much loved Prison Service wife. She moved around the country as required-9 different homes from Wakefield to the IoW, Manchester to Dover, before settling at Godalming. She showed a great interest in everyone, and entertained with great gusto. The esteem in which she was held by the service was captured in a Special Award presented to her by The Dog Section in 2008. The award was only given for special events or special people;

'**Mary Brister** was one of those special people as far as the dog handlers were concerned. She has been for many, many years our most devoted supporter. She has been an ardent attendee at dog trials over the years, no matter where the location or whatever the weather: she stood out in blazing sunshine or torrential rain and wind. At times when the budget was tight she even offered to help fund the trials. We would like this award to recognise a very special relationship between HM Dogs and a very special lady.

Mary was also a fine teacher, due to Bill's career she taught at a number of schools including Sleaford Grammar School where she was Head of Modern Languages and where she taught herself Russian in order to be able to teach it to the pupils. She was English 6|th Form Tutor at Dover Grammar School for Girls, and then Head of English at Farnborough Hill School twice, firstly from 1971 -1974 and then again from 1976 to her retirement aged 70 in 1993. She loved that school in particular, and in addition to being Head of English also led the debating society, Le Procope and edited the School Magazine. She inspired a love of English Language and English literature in all her pupils.

Mary developed Parkinson's disease but never let that stand in her way, she faced it head on and battled on. Talking about her own ultimate future, she said 'If anyone thinks I'm going to spend eternity sitting on a cloud playing a harp then they have another think coming!'

As well as all that, she was a loving, caring and devoted mother to their 3 children and 4 grandchildren, and they all in turn loved her greatly.

For those of us who had the privilege to serve with Bill, they will recognise what a loss Mary is, whilst holding down so successfully her own career she was at the same time totally committed to the prison service. My wife and **Marjorie Marchant** worked with her at Dover Grammar School and can vouch for all that has been said.

With Bill, she was an ardent supporter of the retired governors' reunions, and we will all remember how she would always volunteer to read the lesson at the Service, not even Parkinson's shakes deterred her.

A brave, energetic, talented and well loved lady, whom so many of us were privileged to get to know. Our deepest thoughts are with **Bill**.

John Sandy had expressed a wish to join the RPGA email contact list, so we were in contact. He met up with Bill after the funeral when they were both shopping in Waitrose, he says, shopping waited while we had a good chat. Bill looked fine and was smiling and joking in between putting the service right and remembering the good days we served together in P 1 Division.

John goes on to mention that he has had 2 very enjoyable days of late. The first was helping to develop the Sandhurst Foundation with the new Director. I am a tour Guide and much enjoy meeting so many people from all walks of life. The second was attending a conversation between Kofi Annon and William Shawcross; what a man. Total integrity, determination and a concern for people. It was totally fascinating to a man who has been at the coal face of the World's problems. He was so good I even bought his book. (Well there's a first!)

With the same sadness we are sorry to advise that **Jenny Dring** died on Sunday 13th January after a long illness. The funeral service was held on 30th January at St Mary's Church in Thame. Our thoughts are with **John**.

And finally, just arrived from across the seas a note from **Graham Evans**

Notes from New Zealand

Greetings from this little town of Katikati in the North Island of New Zealand which seems to remain more British than parts of the U K.

While our near neighbour, Australia, gets richer and an increasing number of N Zealanders go there to work every year. The pundits say it raises the IQ of both countries (such is the relationship)

The US continues to build up its military footprint in the Pacific and now has bases in Australia. The Yanks are still held at arms length, here and won't allow any American ship near unless they are declared nuclear free, which they won't do of course. So there is a stand off.

It was a major blow to the economy here when Britain decided to join the E. U. But some 40 years on the national identity and the sense of being part of the mother country is still strong.

The current economic problems in Europe seem to have not delivered the expected economic benefits

David Cameron might well be thinking, are the colonies the way to go?

N Z revelled in all the expertise and pageantry as seen all over the world. Flags were flown and celebrations held, and when the NZ Olympians were shown to have punched well over their weight, when added to the All Black performances. We basked in reflected glory!

We were of course saddened by the appalling news from the US and still learn of the mind boggling

actions of so called “Peace officers“

We have been here over nine years now and are still enjoying the fine wines and cheeses.
But saying that kippers are hard to come by and expensive.
Today the sun is shining and the fish are jumping.

It was a demanding privilege to have worked with you.

Fond wishes. **Graham Evans.**

Just prior to going to press we learn that **Barbara Longstaff** had a health scare when she woke up one morning with a very red and swollen leg. The local hospital diagnosed a blood clot which had travelled up her leg to the groin area. She is undergoing treatment which is expected to last about 3 months. Hope all goes well for you and do keep us informed of your progress.

Our thoughts are with all those who have lost someone during this last period, but each one conjures up so many past happy memories for many colleagues, as we always say it is the people who make the Service, a Service so many of us enjoyed, due to the wonderful people we worked with, and so many characters.

Do keep letting us know about yourselves. If **Bill Keast** can write after 25 years, then so can you all, but there is no need to wait so long.

Here’s to a warm and long summer and then we will be in touch again

Bob
Feb 2013

GAY FRIENDLY PRISON RULES

Doubtless you will have read that the new Justice Secretary, Chris Grayling, wishes to make prisons tougher. Apparently he also intends to clamp down on gay prisoners conducting their relationships openly on prison wings. He may just find that a little more difficult than he thinks.

Firstly, Prison Rule 51, the prisoner disciplinary code, no longer contains the paragraph “Is indecent in language, act or gesture.” If my memory serves me well this disappeared about 10 years ago when the common law offence of gross indecency was abolished. There is therefore no proscription of gay sex in prisons unless the Governor makes a specific rule forbidding it which allows a charge of “Disobeys any rule or regulation...” No Governor who valued his job would have dared make such a rule.

Secondly, back in 2006 when the smoking ban in public places was introduced, Phil Wheatley persuaded ministers to exempt prison cells on the basis that for prisoners they are home. What we don’t know because it has not been tested in court, is whether unwittingly prison cells have become private places under the meaning of the 1967 Act which legalised homosexuality between consenting adults in private. This opens up the potential for legally aided litigation under Article 8 of ECHR, the right to a private and family life.

I can’t help but wonder if Mr Grayling’s brief from NOMS civil servants covered these issues.

PAUL LAXTON

A TRAVELLER'S TALE - TREKKING IN BHUTAN

By Peter Earnshaw

Putting pen to paper is something I do not do often these days but recently Jim Blakey asked if I would submit a traveller's tale to the magazine since he knows that in retirement my wife, Christine, and myself have trekked and cycled in different parts of the world. A persuasive chap is Jim, he once persuaded me to acknowledge and return when Walter Mowbray had given a million pounds too much in my budget, but that is a wholly different set of buried bones.

Retirement gives the time to allow the mind to wander down the byways of life. I was musing the other day on the motivation older people have for maintaining fitness. For some it may be a Peter Pan complex or a misguided belief that lycra will enhance the silhouette of an ancient torso, for others it may be just a desire for a healthy old age or a parsimonious wish not to purchase a new wardrobe to encompass an increasing girth. In the case of my wife and I we have walked and cycled all our life to a greater or lesser extent as circumstances have allowed and hope to do so for some years to come so the trip to Bhutan to follow the Chomolhari Laya Trek in 2011 was one of several active holidays we have taken.

Bhutan is still not an often visited country, isolated by its position in the Himalayas and protected from incorporation in the Indian Empire by its heavy forestation. Nowadays it is on a path to full Parliamentary Democracy under the guidance of a benevolent young monarch who takes his role seriously and seeks to foster what he calls Gross Domestic Happiness. He still treks the hills himself to maintain contact with the scattered population and acts on what he sees and hears. Even today access to the country is not easy as there is one airport in the country at Paro over 7000 feet up with a handful of pilots ticketed to fly in and out of the mountain range and a small number of land crossing points. The government sets the minimum daily charge for tourists and from this is funded a programme of setting up Medical Centres and Schools in remote areas and these could be seen on our travels, a refreshing demonstration of intent and practice coinciding. Unashamedly they want more affluent tourists but in limited numbers as they do not want to become a backpacker destination like Nepal. India is both the main trading partner and political ally as Bhutan is a useful buffer state between India and China and Indian Army Patrols can be found in remote areas. It is a strongly Buddhist country and has given refuge to numbers of Tibetans over the years and ancient monasteries are scattered across the land still acting as focal points for local communities.

The trek we went on forms lasts about a fortnight in the hills over passes at close to 17,000 feet and in that time we only passed through three villages and saw isolated monasteries and temples. There are no roads or motor vehicles after the trek departure point and everything is carried by horse trains or yak along narrow paths, everything includes building materials to household goods. You quickly learn to



take up a position on the inside of the path away from the edge so a careless swing of the hindquarters doesn't sweep you down the hillside.



One of the isolated monasteries we passed the guide informed us contained a facility for holding high security prisoners but seldom used; closer interrogation revealed it did not simply rely on isolation for security but poor unfortunates were "housed" in a dungeon shaft with their food and necessities lowered to them once the planks had been removed. On treks such as

this the merits of vegetarianism have an appeal. In a Buddhist country yak meat becomes available when they happen to fall off a cliff or they are sent to slaughterhouse in India, possibly not returned in a refrigerated vehicle.

There are no flies above 12,000feet and although I tried to persuade my wife that the meat hung on a rope outside the tent would be similar to air dried prosciutto ham the reality was something more chewy.

I suppose it depends on how you interpret fortunate but we did get the opportunity to experience life as lived in a mountain village whilst on this trek. We had just come over one of the 17,000ft passes when a mountain storm broke with Wagnerian thunder and lightning and a hailstorm that in twenty minutes almost obscured the trail. Fortunately we were a short distance from the village where it was planned we would camp for two nights but since the field was awash the guide negotiated for us to sleep in a local house with a leading family of the village whose relative wealth was based on the ownership of several horse trains and a contentious policy of buying up any land that became available in the village. Up a steep ladder to the living accommodation, animals underneath, was like going back in time in this wooden house. No running water or electricity, a cooking surface and initially meagre light from a single bulb powered by a small government provided solar panel, available only if the radio was off. We didn't know if we were drying out or

being kippered. The son of the family, a man in his early thirties, was there and spoke a little English having been in the capital for a couple of years. He had previously and at an exceptionally early age been Mayor of the Village and had returned our guide informed us from the local gossip with every intention of running it again. All he needed was the sheepskin jacket and he could have been a friend of Arthur Daley. As we sat there in the smoky gloom an offer was made of rice wine in a manner that suggested to refuse would be to offend so I nodded weakly. Mother then ladled an opaque milky liquid from an earthenware jar into a pan on the stove and subsequently dispensed it in cups to myself and the other males. My wife stopped smiling at her escape when it became obvious she was expected to join the women of the household in a cup of refreshing yak tea. Can I say neither beverage will be a challenge to Chablis and Yorkshire Tea but were drunk with smiles whilst being careful not to show effusive enthusiasm which could be interpreted as a request for a refill. Satting in silence round the

stove in the darkness relieved by a single yak butter candle whilst the family tolled their Buddhist beads was a step back in time. Despite the fact the windows had no glass in them we were not cold overnight despite the altitude as we were provided with thick and luxurious wool



blankets. They were kept in large wooden chests in the house and were treated as heirlooms in the manner of Shakespeare's second best bed, reflecting the standing of the family with whom we were stopping.

A downside of where we were sleeping was the need to visit the toilet in the dark or small hours. We were used to squat toilets but these were something else. The "facilities" were

primitive, familiar to those who have seen Slumdog Millionaire and approached over a muddy paddock via a makeshift causeway of mud and slippy randomly placed planks. To do this in the light of a headtorch was no mean feat. We spent two days in the village under closer observation than a fifteen minute watch, wherever we went we sensed or saw people standing in the shadows of their houses watching. There was a new show in town and we were it as the following of small children testified once out of school. It was a village of a few hundred and the only concentration of population for miles and watching the daily life was fascinating. In one of the buildings a 48 hour Buddhist chantathon was going on, in the fields young girls were stonepicking and the effect of this repetitive and heavy labour could be seen in the worn figures of the older women; the effort to achieve more than survival was a visible constant strive. We moved on with the thought that if this was summer, life must be really rough in winter.

This fascinating trek took us through some wild places in the shadows of the Himalayan peaks, past glaciers and views that humbled us with the realisation we were ants in a landscape which was unchanged from thousands of years ago. On lower paths rhododendron forests displayed blooms that even the rain could not detract from and we had a rare bath in thermal pools. The communal support of life in the mountains was

brought home on another night when a torrential storm broke but we were fortunately due to stop in a stone building rather than camp. Theoretically you had to book to stop in one of the bare rooms but the storm was so severe that no one was turned away and a party of travelling officials and their



entourage, horse train drivers, pedlars and travellers all came in out of the waterfall of rain to dry off around a communal fire in the middle of the room and then sit in a huge circle with all contributing from what they had to the evening meal.

The following morning the sun shone and all departed on their different ways.

The adventure of the trek did not finish as we anticipated. Arriving in Punakha and looking forward to the delights of a hotel bed and a session in the sauna and massage we went for lunch in a local cafe which had Indian TV news showing. On the runway at Heathrow planes were lined up and I assumed a strike but the pictures were followed by similar scenes from Schippol and Frankfurt. The guide gave us the news there had been an eruption in Iceland so we went to the hotel to find BBC World and further news about the close down of the airways, a bit of a shock as we had been expecting to go home. We flew back to Singapore where we fortunately had a room booked as a stopover for our now non-existent flight and the following morning Emirates told me they couldn't put me on a plane for ten days, the hotel said my room rate would be double and other guests were being flown back to Australia to await a flight. Leaving my son who lives in Singapore as a contact point and being unwilling to mill around the city I found the cheapest budget flight to somewhere hospitable and we went to the island of Langkawi and chilled out on the beach to await the cloud dispersal. Emirates did phone my son later in the week to say they could get me on a flight earlier than ten days but he told them I wouldn't be interested. So returning to an earlier theme. It is important to keep fit and healthy so you can have adventures but it is equally important to recharge your batteries somewhere warm and pleasant when you've had them.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT FEBRUARY 2013

By Harry Brett

Membership currently stands at 467, an increase of 5 from my last report. We welcome new members Bruce Thompson, Stephen Tilly OBE, Peter Mate, Barbara Yates (widow of John Yates), Paul Warne, Alan Craig, Joanna Kozubska (re-joined),

Joan Pye (widow of Peter Pye), Michael Philips, Robin Clarke, Gordon Steel, Kieran Scanlon, Paddy O'Rourke, Alan Hamilton, Jill Alvey, Stephanie Martin-Wilson, Barbara Treen, Daphne Jones (widow of Raymond Jones) and Rosamond Dauncey (widow of Roger Dauncey).

We are sorry to announce the deaths of the following members, George Taylor, Joyce Parsons, Mr W R Booth, Mr D L Tacey, John Yates, Robert Temple, Peter Pye, Keith Gibson, Mr E M Booth, Peter Withers, Raymond Jones, Roger Dauncey and John Oliver. Our deepest condolences go out to family and friends. We have also heard of deaths of non-members, who will be known to many. They are Peter Pope, Paul Manders, Tom Boulstridge, Ray Ellerington, Jim Webley, Jenny Dring and Mary Brister, again our condolences go out to family and friends.

We have lost track (i.e. newsletters returned) of Dorothy Thomas and Anita Shulman. We have 2 resignations, Mac McGregor and Norma Whitehouse.

We have also had a number of members who are ex-governors but for some reason (and this in some cases has been for a number of years) have never paid any subscription. They have all now been written to and given the opportunity to join. Very few have answered and we therefore suspect they now live elsewhere and we have just not been informed.

Brendan as many of you know has decided to take something of a back seat and whilst he will continue with updates from old colleagues he has surrendered the Network Column which advises of job opportunities to retired governors, so if anyone is aware of any job opportunities out there then please let me know. My Email address is h_brett@sky.com.

I personally continue to be active in my local Branch of the CSPA, having attended the Labour Party Conference to issue leaflets on the reduction of civil service pensions by using CPI as opposed to RPI. The latest attack on our 'earnings' is the possibility of means testing universal benefits, i.e. bus pass and winter weather payments, although I'm pleased to see that they are talking it effecting people earning in excess of £100,000 per year.

I also attended the PGA Conference (as a distinguished life member) in Buxton and the CSPA's Conference in Coventry as one of the Manchester delegates. One thing is certain we can all be grateful that we are no longer in the Service. This continuous thrust towards efficiency whether that's through Market Testing, fair and sustainable or now bench marking is resulting in a very uncomfortable time for those still in the service. The recent announcement of the closure of a number of prisons just adds to the morale in the service. We also heard the Francis Maude from the cabinet office is also attacking PGA facility time making it even harder for staff that could be made redundant get appropriate representation. The CSPA's Conference covered all the areas which concern pensioners generally in term of pensions, both state and public, health care, taxation, transport, the Post Office, age discrimination, financial, social and digital exclusion the dignity our generation seems no longer entitled to. Anyone interested in joining the CSPA please let me know and I will send you an information pack. The monthly cost has just risen to £1-50 for single membership or £2-10 for joint membership. The CSPA is an organisation that does all it can to protect pensioners in all matters affecting them.

I have some 25 year commemoration pens and badges from the PGA. Anyone who would like a set, please send me £3 to 202 Kentmere Road Timperley Altrincham WA15 8NT and making the cheque out to me.

And finally some members may be aware that the RPGA has a Benevolent Fund which is run for the benefit of retired members or their dependants, assessed to be in need of financial assistance. Anyone who believes they may have a claim which would be deemed acceptable to the Fund Committee should first right to Neville Joseph at Neville.joseph@homecall.co.uk or by the PGA office who will direct their enquiry/request to the committee.

=====

A Mature Thought

God grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference.



LIFE AFTER THE PRISON SERVICE

By Louise Taylor

“In 100 days, more than 1,000,000 people were murdered in Rwanda, but the genocidaires did not kill a million people. They killed one, then another, then another..... day after day, hour after hour, minute by minute. Every minute of the day, someone, somewhere, was being murdered, screaming for mercy. And receiving none.” Dr Stephen D Smith, Founder of the Holocaust Memorial, Nottinghamshire

I was introduced to Aegis Trust as a result of attending diversity training at the Holocaust Centre in Nottinghamshire. After unsuccessfully trying to negotiate a secondment from the Prison Service, I then took the opportunity of VEDS to enable me to volunteer for Aegis in Rwanda. The Kigali Genocide Memorial opened there in 2004, 10 years after the genocide. Despite containing mass graves of over 250,000 people and containing heart-rending exhibits, it is not a sombre place. The staff, most of whom are survivors of the genocide 18 years ago, are friendly and keen to encourage my pathetic attempts at Kinyarwanda, the local language.

The Kigali Genocide Memorial was established by Aegis Trust, a charity dedicated to the prediction, prevention and ultimately the elimination of genocide. In partnership with Kigali City Council and having been awarded a 10 year contract by the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG), they constructed a beautiful building surrounded by gardens.



The memorial contains an exhibition, which details the history of Rwanda leading up to the genocide and catalogues details of the 1994 genocide through personal testimonies, photographs, videos and artefacts. There is also the genocide archive of

Rwanda, where staff undertake the harrowing work of collecting, transcribing and translating testimonies as well as logging photographs, weapons and documents. Most important to the rebuilding of Rwanda, is the education programme that combines genocide education and social cohesion education. An independent report, issued last year, documents how the programme is empowering students to explain the history to their peers and family members and contribute to building a more united Rwanda.

Rwanda contains many other memorials. The most difficult was Murambi, where many of the bodies, preserved in lime, are kept on open display in room after room. 50,000 people lost their lives there.

It is odd to be the ethnic minority, particularly when you are followed by small children shouting Muzungu (white person). It is not an insulting term and can be used quite affectionately. Walking around certainly creates some interest, at times feeling like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, being followed by groups of giggling children. Riding on a bus, I have frequently had my hair stroked by inquisitive children.

I first came here a year ago for 3 months to set up management systems that will enable the memorial to work more effectively. There is so much good here – real commitment and passion that is far more important than many of our Western management systems: unfortunately that does not always satisfy donors, so I wanted to achieve the latter without losing their values.

To start with, I spent a lot of time with members of staff, listening to their hopes, dreams, frustrations and ideas for improvement. I also met with managers and worked on a one to one basis on implementing management systems to help in decision making and in developing a system for motivating, supporting and assessing staff. My experience has been useful – sometime by designing policies that deliberately are the direct opposite of what we used to deal with in HMPS – for example my sick leave policy fits on a sheet of A4. However the irony of me helping someone to be more systematic and keep a clean and tidy desk will not be lost on anyone that ever worked with me! As with many organisations, it is too easy for managers to be caught up in dealing with issues, leaving them little time to plan and develop

strategies for the future. In a small charity, considerable work has to go into raising the funds to exist from day to day.

Some staff have incredibly difficult jobs. Imagine a day spent at a computer seeing harrowing pictures of what



happened during the genocide, listening to survivors giving their testimony or the excuses of a perpetrator, all this unfolding on a screen a few inches away and reminding you of the awful things that happened to your family and friends just by being in the wrong ethnic group.

During my last few weeks in Rwanda, I took the opportunity of the arrival of husband David to take a long weekend outside of Kigali, initially relaxing by Lake Kivu followed by probably the most intense and exhausting experiences of my life.

Rwanda's biggest tourist attraction is the mountain gorillas, studied by the conservationist Dian Fossey and made famous in the film, "Gorillas in the Mist". We had hoped that we would be put in groups according to our fitness and being much older than most of the backpackers that we would get allocated to some gorillas closer to the trail head. As it was, we were in one of the mid range groups and the slope up the volcano was incredibly steep and slippery. After what seemed like an eternity, we were so pleased when we saw the trackers as that meant that we were



then very close. Local rules are that you must stay at least 7 metres away from the gorillas, but this is difficult to enforce when the gorillas are blissfully unaware of this and at times we found ourselves less than 3 metres away from these magnificent creatures.

There had been considerable build up to Genocide Memorial Day on 7th April, not least at the memorial due to the planned visit of President Kagame. We were told to get to the memorial by 7 am then waited outside for over an hour to be checked through security. Men wore dark suits and women changed into the traditional dress, not unlike a sari. We all sat down in a tent whilst various dignitaries arrive. President Kagame then arrived and placed a wreath on the mass graves, then lit the commemorative flame which burns for 100 days. We had moved to observe this and I

was lucky, being small, that I was in the front and had the opportunity to be introduced.

There was a separate commemoration event in the stadium but we had been told that we could not attend both events as Presidential Protocol states that no one can arrive after the President or leave before him. Surprisingly on the day, the President intervened and stayed back so that all Aegis Trust staff could travel to the stadium. We then raced across the city along roads that had been closed to the public, driving a battered RAV 4 that was already dirty from exposure to mountain roads over the weekend and is probably the tattiest vehicle that was ever in a Presidential convoy. The Genocide Memorial Day marks the start of 1 week of official mourning, when the nightlife of Kigali is curtailed and music is not played publicly. 18 years after the genocide, many people still experience hallucinations and trauma, which are frequently brought to a head during commemoration events. As a result, counsellors and mental health specialists are on hand.

However, last year's theme, "Learning from our history to build a bright future" is forward looking. Rwanda is a success story in putting aside the past and it is difficult to comprehend that people are living in the same neighbourhood as individuals that they suspect have murdered their family members. Today, Rwandans are working together to build a strong, stable and peaceful society for the future. We can learn from them. For the sake of the future, we should also learn from their past.

The economy is growing, but what strikes you as you walk around the city are not only the existence of wonderful houses next door to slums, but the helpfulness and contentment of those in the slums. Children carrying water from the standpipes to their homes are invariably smiling; women tending a small plot of vegetables will stop and greet you and the types of games that would have been a common sight in this country 50 years ago, such as pushing a tyre with a stick, are still prevalent.

During my first few days, I had noticed that most taps were leaking and toilets running constantly so I had asked David to bring out some plumbing equipment and he set to work on plumbing, mending leaks. Africa has considerable problems with plumbing and it is unusual to find taps that work perfectly. However with his effort, he has saved considerable ongoing loss of water and trained the Head of Maintenance in repairs. On our return home, we set up the Rwanda Project, seeking support to



replace poor quality fittings. We raised money from family and friends and via our website, www.RwandaProject.homestead.com.

Both David and I have now returned to volunteer for another 3 months. This time our luggage was overweight with plumbing equipment. My role this time is preparation for an audit that, if passed, will increase the education programme and sustain Aegis in Rwanda for the next few years. David is supporting the Maintenance

Programme, fitting the equipment that we brought and dealing with other issues.

I remember Martin Narey describing the Prison Service as "curiously addictive" and it was for me for over 30 years. Now I can say the same for Rwanda - beautiful, complex and equally addictive.

=====

FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 12th JANUARY, 2013

Dear All,

I have completed the statements of account for the Main Account and the Benevolent Fund for the period 1st January to 31st December 2012 and posted them to the accountants for examination. We remain in a healthy position.

In respect of the Main Account we carried forward a total of £10,272.43 on 1st January, 2013. Since then, however, I have signed cheques totalling £1,774.50 for the 2012 and 2013 diaries and £25 to Keech Hospice on behalf of Mrs Oliver, widow of John Oliver. The current position is we have funds of £8,472.93 available to us.

We have, to the best of my knowledge, only one invoice outstanding, i.e. for the lunches at Newbold on the day of the AGM.

In respect of the Benevolent Fund we carried forward a total of £5,944.47.

The statements of account will be circulated once they have been approved by the accountants but I have prepared, as shown below, a comparison of the major items of income and expenditure for the past two financial years

COMPARISON OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2011 AND 2012

	2011	2012	PLUS/MINUS
<u>INCOME</u>			
Subscriptions - Barclays	£5419.29	£5720.00	+£300.71
Subscriptions - Lloyds	£296.00	£291.00	-£5.00
Reunion	£528.00	Nil	-£528.00
Interest - Halifax	£129.50	£128.76	-74p
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			
Printing/Stationery	£2712.67	£2200.78	-£511.89
Copying	£36.52	£40.78	+£4.26
Admin/Sec	£226.00	Nil	-£226.00
Postage/Phone	£1189.61	£1173.01	-£16.60
Travel/Subs	£1258.62	£995.03	-£263.59
Reunion	£837.90	Nil	-£837.90
Miscellaneous	£250.05	£125.00	-£125.05

ANALYSIS OF INCOME

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The increased income from subscriptions to the Barclay's Account is the result of an increase in membership resulting from early retirement packages.

Members paying in to the Lloyds/TSB account are the members who joined in the early days of the RPGA and tend to be our older members.

REUNION

We did not hold a reunion in 2012

ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE

PRINTING/STATIONERY/COPYING/ADMIN/SEC

I group these together as the majority of this expenditure is for the printing of the two Newsletters each year. In the past we used two different printers who placed their costs under different headings. The cost of each Newsletter depends on the number of pages printed. During 2012 we used the cheaper printer and the editor provided 'copy' in a format which did not require any alteration by the printer, thereby saving admin/secretarial costs.

TRAVEL/SUBS

The reduction in costs is significant and surprising.

MISCELLANEOUS

Miscellaneous expenditure includes donations to charities in lieu of funeral flowers for deceased members. The charities are nominated by the deceased's wife/partner.

STOP PRESS

To prepare for me handing over the accounts to Graham I sent the books to the auditor who have just returned them to me. I can confirm that the auditors have given them a clean bill of health. A full set of accounts will be published in the "Autumn Newsletter"

Jim Blakey
Treasurer

=====

Answers to the crossword etc.

Across

1 befog, 5 birth,8 uglier,9, Ranby, 10 lifer, 12 steals, 13 agism, 15 shrub, 17 maniac,19 nicer, 21 amaze, 22 assail, 23 myrrh, 24 evens

Down

1 bargain, 2 fungi, 3 Guys Marsh, 4 blue, 5 bell scale, 6 Irish, 7 tie, 11 robbers, 14 smear, 16 reave,18 Imam, 20 ivy.

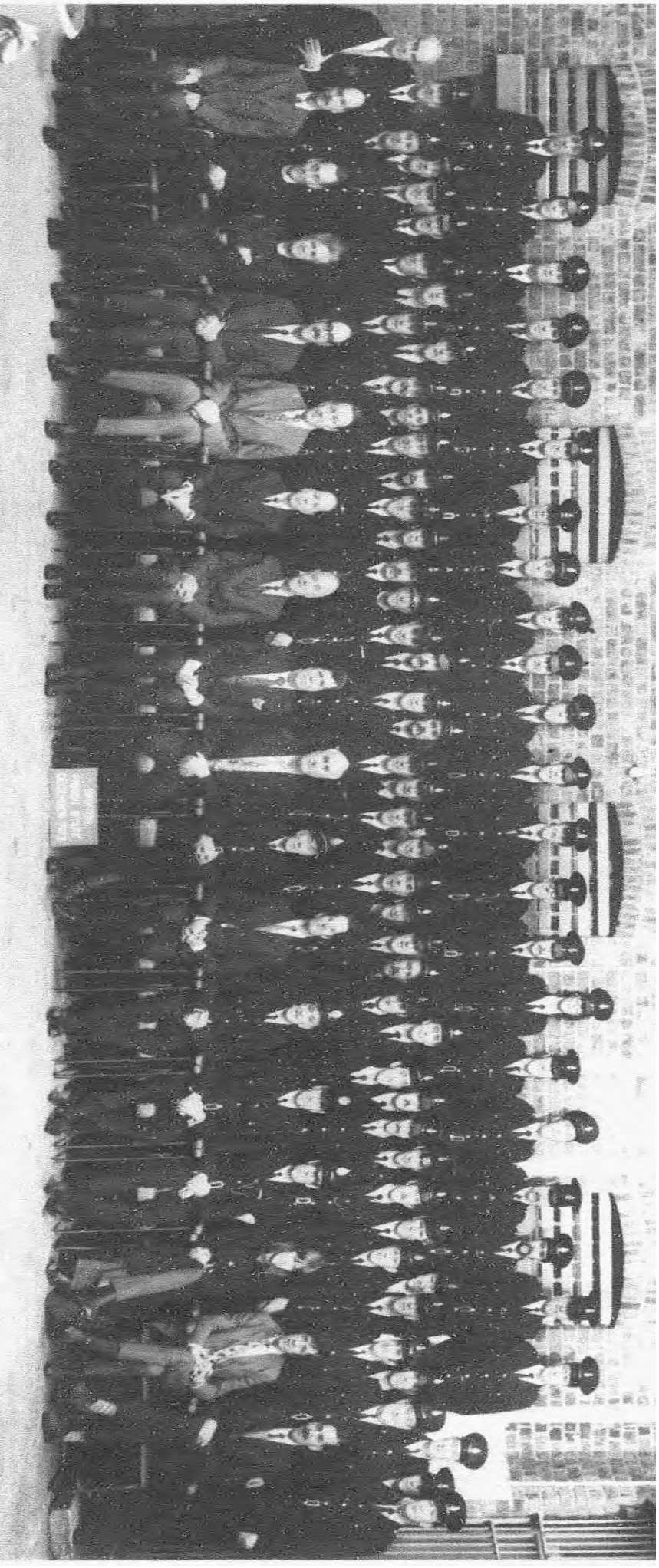
SUDOKU

9	5	2	4	6	1	7	3	8
4	3	7	5	8	2	1	6	9
6	8	1	9	3	7	4	2	5
7	6	5	2	4	3	8	9	1
1	9	8	7	5	6	3	4	2
2	4	3	1	9	8	6	5	7
8	7	6	3	2	5	9	1	4
5	1	9	6	7	4	2	8	3
3	2	4	8	1	9	5	7	6

The very sadistic section

1.Red band, 2. Mailbag Shop, 3. Crown Court, 4..Adjudication, 5. Officer, 6. Senior Officer, 7. Landings, 8. Keychain, 9. Prison Workshops, 10. Uniform Grade

Staff of HMP Brixton 1973



The photograph we sent to me by Wally Mc Guire and shows just a small selection of the staff from Brixton. I well remember serving there myself in the 70s and whilst the image is not the clearest there are many of my former colleagues I can recognise and remember working with. I seem to recall that just under 200 officers was all that was required to run the prison but with the Brixtons daily court commitment almost 1,000 reported for duty

Monday to Fridays, the shortfall of staff being made up by detached duty officers. No doubt many of you will recall those heady days when you were called in on your restdays, unlocked at 7am worked upwards of 60 hours per week, were not allowed to refuse to work overtime, received an half sheet from the Chief Officer for the most minor of misdemeanours. We called each other "sir" or "Mr" in front of prisoners, would not dare not to wear tie or hat, carried our warrant cards, Prison/Borstal/DC rule books, whistles and staves. Governors told Head Office how they were going to run their prisons and not vice versa. They tell me it's not like that now????????????????