

The Retired Prison Governors Newsletter

In co-operation with: The Prison Governors Association

Founded by Arthur Williamson in 1980—37 years of continuous publication



Issue No. 77

Autumn 2017



RIP William "Bill" Brister 1925-2017

Those of you on the E mail register and those of you who read The Guardian, where his obituary compiled by Michael Selby was published, will already be aware that the doyen of Prison Governors, Bill Brister, passed away recently. Those of you who did not know probably thought he was immortal, or at least indestructible.

Bob Duncan's regular column contains its' own warm tribute put together by Brendan O'Friel, ably assisted by Bob himself, and Mr Brister's surviving son and daughter. His death marks the end of an era and it is poignant that his death has occurred at a time in which the ideals he stood for have never been more traduced by government neglect.

I am grateful also to Bob for securing a contribution from Phil Wheatley, former Director General of NOMS, now renamed HMPPS, on the current state of the service. I would guess would that he found it extremely painful to write given the abandonment of the Decency agenda he did so much to promote.

Before this issue hits your letterboxes HMPPS will have implemented a service wide smoking ban from 31 August, following on from a pilot project in Wales and the South West. Smoking is a subject about which people have strong views, but many of us will have noted with concern a report from BBC correspondent Danny Shaw on 4 August, that there were only 744 spare places within the system, well short of the comfort zone of 2,000 places that HMPPS likes to have available. It does not take too many wings wrecked as a consequence of an adverse reaction to the smoking ban to throw the system into crisis. The loss of high security places would be a disaster.

This is something of a history edition with pieces on Gartree and Glen Parva as well as a personal memoir from one of our regular contributors, John Ramwell. My thanks to Frank McGilway and John Berry for these contributions which I am sure will be of great interest, particularly to those who served at those establishments. It has been necessary to hold some items over until the next edition in the interests of economy, but there is still space available in the Spring 2018 issue for fresh contributions.

Finally a brief word on the General Election. I can find no precedent for a British election under universal suffrage whereby the two largest parties obtained more than 80% of the vote between them, and a hung parliament still resulted. As a consequence Labour MP's are stuck with a leader they can't get rid of, Conservative MP's are stuck with a leader they daren't get rid of, and Liberal Democrat MP's are stuck with their leader because no-one else wanted the job.

Truly we live in strange times.

PAUL LAXTON, EDITOR

CONTENTS

- P1 Editorial - RIP William "Bill" Brister 1925-2017
- P2 RPGA E Mail register
- P3 From the Chair - Graham Smith
- P4 Your Letters - Bob Duncan
- P12 From the Treasurer - Graham Mumby-Croft
- P13 The Challenges Facing The Prison Service - Phil Wheatley
- P14 A History of Gartree Prison (part one of two) - Francis McGilway
- P22 Drugs, Society and Prisons - John Berry
- P26 Membership report - Harry Brett
- P26 Tom Cairns - Papal Award
- P28 The Memories of a Hospital Prison Officer 1961-1997 - John Ramwell
- P44 Computer Corner - Graham Mumby-Croft
- P46 A Short History of Glen Parva - John Berry
- P48 Discretionary Time - Graham Smith

RPGA: E-MAIL REGISTER

The E-Mail register has been operating for around 13 years and has proved itself to be an effective means of rapid communication between members. It offers updates on current prison service developments 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 register then please send an E-Mail from the address you wish to have registered to Harry Brett at h_brett@sky.com

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

Please remember that if you change your E-Mail address you must inform Harry Brett, otherwise you will cease to receive further updates.

A Date for you diary:

The 2018 AGM will be held on Wednesday 6 June 2018

Venue to be confirmed (The draft minutes of the 2017 AGM will be published in the Spring 2018 newsletter)



From the chair

I chaired the Retired Prison Governors Association AGM held in Hinckley on the 14th June 2017 and it was pleasing to see a number of new faces including Gordon Tweedie, Don Webb, Terry Bone and Roger Outram. There were also 14 apologies. The meeting benefitted from an update on PGA NEC current issues from Dave Hoskins and Kevin Billson along with Don Makepeace from the Civil Servants Pensioners Alliance (CSPA) who came to support the possible formal link between themselves and the RPGA, see below.

As I write the national news is headlining with stories of turmoil in the Prison Service and the comments from the PGA chair Andrea Albutt in PGA bulletin 724 show deep concerns for the safety of her members and prisoner care with a number of prisons experiencing disruption and staff assaults. For those of us who were in the Service during the 70's and 80's we can relate to the stress and anxiety that they are having to endure in these difficult times. It all sounds so familiar – policy v operational strategies, overcrowding, staff shortages, budget cuts and too many PSI's, we have been here before. David and Kevin spoke of all these things and more and they sounded very frustrated with their attempts to get any progress from those who direct HMPPS. They were able to answer questions from our members and yes I know many of our members want to leave it all behind but for those of us who maintain an interest it was very informative. I am perhaps like you glad to be out of the firing line but it doesn't stop us empathising with those who are.

Don Makepeace gave an informed overview of current initiatives by the CSPA and I was pleased that the RPGA agreed at the AGM to a formal link with them as the basis for future cooperation. Harry Brett and Paul Laxton, who are both active members of the CSPA at local level, are going to liaise and work with their CSPA counterparts on areas such as recruitment and campaigns relating to retired civil servants. CSPA already have links with retired police, BT retirees and Royal Mail etc. The RPGA now has a link with a large and powerful lobby group from which we are bound to benefit. Have a look at the CSPA website for more information about their current priorities and whilst you are at it look at ours via the PGA site.

The AGM went well and financially though we made a loss last year we are still showing cash balance of £9267 with the benevolent fund of £5578. On that subject I would remind members that the benevolent fund is available for cases of hardship and applications are via the RPGA secretary. Membership is lower by 17 at 426 and that is despite valiant efforts by Harry Brett during the year but we hope to access more through advertising through the CSPA magazine. Paul Laxton continues to edit the newsletter which is as popular as ever and one of the corner stones of the RPGA, with a big plea for articles from members to keep it relevant. I was pleased the re-election of our current committee members went through so we keep Harry Brett, Graham Mumby-Croft, Paul Laxton, Jenny Adams-Young and Dave Taylor.

As ever we discussed the format of future Reunions and AGM's as we have tried a number of approaches during the past few years including hotels, Newbold Revel and this year a smaller venue in Hinckley. Next year we propose to go to Stratford-on-Avon to see if we can encourage members with partners to attend the AGM/reunion with an overnight stay to make it more attractive as a night or 2 away, watch out or further detail in the Spring 2018 newsletter.

I want to assure members that their RPGA committee are committed to moving the association forward in the coming year and we are always open to ideas and suggestions that will improve and benefit our members. Thank you for your continued support and I hope that you will at least consider joining us in Stratford-on-Avon 6th June 2018.

Graham Smith RPGA Chairman

YOUR LETTERS

90 LINDENTHORPE ROAD BROADSTAIRS KENT CT10 1DH

01843 604314

bobduncan@hotmail.co.uk

I am keenly feeling my age at the moment as so many dear colleagues have passed away recently. My first posting was to Dover Borstal and it was very special as the work was so stimulating and I worked for, and with, some incredible governor grades. There was a special bond between us and that has lasted well into retirement. One of those was **Bill Brister** my second Governor following in the footsteps of David Gould and the other **Bernard Marchant** who was the Deputy Governor at Dover, following in the footsteps of 'down the block' **Bill Fingland**. Bernard had started his working life in insurance but knew it was not right for him and he joined the Prison Service as he believed sincerely that he could help inmates turn their life around.

His first posting was to Usk Borstal in 1959, where he apprehended an armed absconder by talking him into surrendering. He came on promotion to Dover and soon made his mark. One thing I clearly remember is at that time our absconder rate was rising. Bernard, despite a full working day, initiated an evening patrol around the whole inner perimeter of the establishment every evening. He encouraged the rest of us to join in, but put no great pressure on us, especially as we were dealing with the issues raised by our charges, as house masters worked every evening when the inmates were available if they were not on education. My office backed onto the western perimeter, and I can still recall on cold, dark, wet evenings, when I sat in a warm office, seeing Bernard doggedly passing by. I admired his commitment and dedication but only acknowledged that by an occasional cheery wave.

Bernard was always very fit and loved playing squash. As the very good gym facilities at Dover were available to staff when not in use by the inmates, he used to take his daughter Carol in to play against him. That was fine until she managed to hit him in the eye with the squash ball.

On another occasion, he also put himself at great risk by clambering down the cliffs of Dover to talk to an inmate absconder who was threatening to take his own life by jumping off the cliffs.

He left Dover for Send DC and was living initially in the 'bachelors' quarters' which abutted onto the parade ground. Morning parade for the whole institution started early and could be noisy. After a few mornings, the Orderly Officer, in respect of the Governors 'comfort' advised that from now on the noise level should be kept very quiet. Bernard on awaking heard a deep silence instead of the normal noisy bustle he had previously encountered. He rose and dressed in a panic, fearing all the inmates had absconded!

He then went as Governor of Guys Marsh, and whilst there invited the Duke of Edinburgh to visit the Borstal and stated 'it was fantastic for the boys to realise they were important enough for a member of the royal family to visit them.' Bernard was held in high respect by his staff at Guys Marsh. From there he moved to South West Regional Office, then Lewes and a brief spell in Headquarters prior to taking up his final post as Governor of Pentonville.

I am informed that for a while one of Bernard's daughters also worked at Pentonville as a teacher. The Education Centre was in one long corridor with large windows looking into each room. Bernard was not one to be confined to an office; he was out and about talking to inmates and officers and helping them.

Naturally, he passed through the Education Centre on many occasions; he would always stop and look in through the window to see how his daughter's class was behaving. One prisoner, who had been in the class for some time, eventually went up to the teacher and said 'You ought to report that 'pervert' who keeps leering at you through the window, to the Governor.' I am indebted to **Jeannette** for additional information about her father. Bernard took his work seriously, but he also had a wicked sense of humour and a sense of fun. At their home in Southgate, he took great delight in swinging off a ledge halfway down the stairs and encouraging his grand-daughter to do the same when he thought Margery was not looking. He revelled in retirement as it allowed him to spend a lot more time with his grandchildren. His grand-daughter Emma was only 9 months old when her father died, Bernard became a father-figure to her, taking her to nursery school and school every day. Whilst fathers half his age looked on, he would be charging around the playground playing games with the children. They all called him grandad, and one has been in touch recently to say how she remembers him and for her, those were some of the happiest times of school.

Bernard's one negative moment about his career was while he governed Pentonville. The prison was already overcrowded, but Head Office ordered him to take in additional prisoners: Bernard refused and was then told he would be removed from his post. He did not back down, nor was he removed from his command. Bernard had stuck to his principals of doing what he believed was best for those in his charge, but he could never forget the way he had been treated over the matter. He was a man of many talents and abundant restless energy, becoming a Methodist Lay Preacher for a period, but then turning to Catholicism. He was very involved in the local community. Each week he took communion to the elderly and stayed to chat with them. He became a Grand Knight at Vita et Pax in Cockfosters.



Bernard had met **Margery** when he was only 17 and she 16, they loved each other deeply and had been married for 64 years. Bernard had been ill for some time, and his last week he had been in great pain. He was able to remain at home until the end due to the devotion of Margery and the wonderful support they received from so many.

It was a pleasure to meet up with several colleagues at the funeral in Horsham, **Gordon** and **Ken MacGowan** were there. Walter was in America where he owns a house and spends 4 months there in the summer as he loves the life and scenery. They knew Bernard from his time at Guys Marsh where their father was Chief Officer, and they have kept in touch over the years. **John** and **Jean Childs**, looking a little older, but still enjoying life, and **Bill McEvoy**, whom I had not seen for years and still looking very sprightly, also attended.

Bill Brister's funeral was at Douai Abbey. A magnificent building, its' very height and depth lifted one's spirit just being there. Unfortunately, the acoustics were not quite as good. Bill with the aid of **Anne-Marie** had phoned me from the hospital not long, sadly, before his departure. 'Bob' he said, 'I do not care about an obituary, but someone is going to want one, so I do want it to be accurate. You do them don't you?' I replied, 'Well no Bill, I will write something in the Newsletter, but I do know someone who will write an accurate obituary'. I got in touch with Brendan, who does much less in this area now, and he agreed to take it on for the Times. So I linked Brendan up with Anne-Marie and Anthony Brister and he, as usual, wrote an accurate and splendid portrait of Bill.

William Brister was born in Cairo on 10th February 1925, the only child of Group Captain AJ Brister OBE and Velda Maria Brister. He lived in Cairo for his first 2 years, and then a variety of RAF stations in England. He began his education at Ealing Priory School and then boarded from the age of 14 at the Benedictine Douai School near Reading. He studied law at Brasenose College, the University of Oxford from 1942 – with a break for war service – he completed his BA and MA in 1949. He served in the Intelligence Corps from 1943 to 1947, having undertaken his training at Maidstone Barracks he served in Abbottabad, Delhi and Singapore. He was ‘called up’ again on the outbreak of the Korean War, but the Prison Service would not release him.

He joined the Prison Service in 1949 at Lowdham Grange Borstal as an Assistant Governor Class 2. In the same year, he married Mary, who had been an undergraduate at Oxford with him. He was then posted in 1952 to the Imperial Training School in Wakefield as a Tutor, and from there to Parkhurst Prison in 1955. In 1957 he was promoted to AG1 and transferred to Camp Hill as Deputy Governor. In 1960 he was promoted to Governor 3 and moved to Manchester Prison as Deputy Governor. In 1962 he was given his first command as Governor of Morton Hall open Borstal. Soon after taking up post, he was awarded a Council of Europe Fellowship to Switzerland and Italy to study prisons, and in 1966 a Nuffield International Fellowship to Canada and Mexico to study the treatment of prisoners addicted to alcohol and drugs.

In 1967 he was promoted to Governor 2 and took charge of Dover Borstal and then to Headquarter P1 (Buildings) Division, and from there to Ashford Remand Centre in 1971. He was promoted to Governor 1 in 1973 and was seconded to Northern Ireland Office from 1973 to 1975 as Prisons Adviser to the Northern Ireland Minister (Lord Windlesham).

Bill built an exceptional career, first as an operational Prison Governor and then in senior posts within Headquarters. He possessed great integrity and was a practising Roman Catholic throughout his life. He sought to achieve improvements for staff and prisons in whatever post he held. He was exceptionally good at working with a wide range of people, especially staff and prisoners. He attracted loyalty from the staff at many levels because of his integrity, his genuine interest in them and their families and his readiness to support those facing severe difficulties. His commitment to the Prison Dog Service continued long after his retirement through his support for the annual Dog Trials.

From all the correspondence I have received from colleagues over the last 17 years, acts of kindness and support by Bill have been mentioned so many times by so many different staff, it would be impossible to tally them up. Bill headed up P5 Division (Security and Control), charged with reducing escapes and more effectively handling disturbances and hostage situations. He brought order and proper training to meet these challenges.

In early 1979 he was promoted to Chief Inspector with a place on the Prisons Board. At the same time, Mr Justice May was undertaking an Inquiry into the growing industrial disputes in the Service. It published its Report in October 1979, and one of the recommendations was for an Independent Inspectorate, thus removing the post held by Bill. The Report created a great deal of controversy in the Home Office, but Willie Whitelaw took the bold decision to implement it. The first new Independent Chief Inspector was Mr W Pearce, former head of the London Probation Service, Bill was asked to take on the role of Deputy Chief Inspector and help establish the new organisation. Some might have bucked at what appeared a ‘step down’, but Bill undertook the role with distinction. Pearce then became terminally ill, leaving Bill again to take on the role until a replacement was found, thus much of the success of establishing the Inspectorate was down to Bill’s work.

The May Report had also recommended a new post of Deputy Director General; effectively an operational head of the Service. The first appointment, Gordon Fowler, unfortunately, had to medically retire, and Bill was appointed to the role in 1982, the post he held until his retirement in 1985.

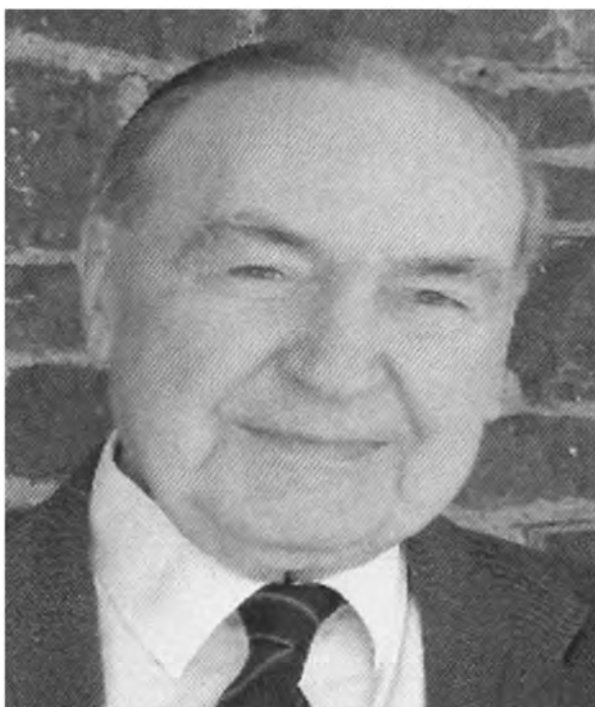
Bill's family brought him great joy, but also times of great sadness. In particular, he suffered 3 very difficult deaths in his immediate family. He lost his eldest son David in 1975 as a result of a climbing accident whilst serving in the army, and later a grandson. Bill was devoted to Mary, his loving wife for over 63 years whom he also pre-deceased, and when she developed Parkinson's disease and then also dementia, he looked after her at home for many years until she became too frail, and then visited her every day without fail when she had to go into care. He bore all this with his customary courage and good grace.

Bill was not one to 'put his feet up' in retirement and he was initially involved with the Parole Board and undertook disciplinary hearings for the Prison Service. He was involved with the Butler Trust and undertook a role as mentor, along with Terry Weiler, to the Governor 3 promotion course. He travelled several times with different groups to the European Commission in Strasbourg. He was a governor at Farnborough Hill School and New Hall School, and President of the Douai Society. He undertook voluntary work with the Chiropractic Association, the schizophrenic bookshop in Godalming and was President of Probus Godalming. Whilst Mary was with him, they loved travelling particularly to Venice and Dubrovnik: in fact, he loved all of Croatia and often stayed at a resort just along the coast from the resort where **Alan Rawson** and I often visited. He loved sharing notes on our respective visits.

As his son **Anthony** exclaimed, 'The Prison Service was an enormous part of his life – right up until death. He had an absolute commitment to it. He loved the Service and he loved all of you in it.'

In 1949 he actually became a bigamist! He married Mary Speakman – and he undoubtedly married the Prison Service in the same year.

Colleagues will recall that Bill always supported the PGA and the RPGA and he and Mary were regular attendees at the Annual Reunion for many years. Many will remember that Mary would invariably read the 'lesson' at the Church Service even so bravely when the onset of Parkinson's commenced.



Bill was the second Governor I served under and he was like a 'prison father figure' to me. I admired his ability and dedication. We kept in touch throughout his service, his high rank never a barrier. That continued for over 30 years in retirement with frequent phone calls and the odd visit when we would mull over the good days and where the Service was now heading. He always wanted news of colleagues. He delighted in the fact that he had drawn his pension longer than he had served, and was convinced that the Treasury staff were now 'sticking pins in his effigy!' I feel deeply privileged to have known Bill as a friend all these years and his passing has left a large void, but also so many happy memories.

As always an added pleasure to catch up with some colleagues on these occasions, **Richard Tilt** was there looking very well and relaxed, **John Dring** as elegant as ever, **Paul Wailen** just back from travels in Bavaria and Austria, **Walter MacGowan** looking elegantly fit and just back from the USA where he has a property and usually spends 4 months over there each summer. **Mike O'Sullivan**, whom I have not seen in ages, reminded me that we had first met at Dover over 50 years ago. Also looking well was **Joe Mullens** who served at Channings Wood amongst others and as Governor of Wormwood Scrubs before joining the other lot, and the inimitable **Steven Pryor**, there with his brother, and looking as young and full of fun as ever. **Peter** and **Jenny Kittredge** not looking a day older were there too and asking after **Danny Ozanne**. I was able to give them news and provide contact details. Danny is now 89 and says he feels his age now his daughter has retired. He smiles to himself, as he served for 27 years but has drawn his pension for 29 years. He remains in reasonable health but Joan is not very mobile these days. Danny sounds as bright as a bell on the phone and loves to reminisce about times we spent together in the service.

Sad to hear of the loss of **Bill Duff** at a relatively young age; then he always did live life to the full. I never actually served with Bill, but we met up regularly at the 'country house tests' for new governor grades. He had the ability to raise one's spirits just being in his company. Bill had a number of employments prior to joining the Service, including banking and teaching. He and his family had also lived in Australia for awhile. His first posting was Kirkham, and then Chelmsford followed by a spell in Headquarters prior to East Sutton Park, Wayland and Belmarsh, and finally as an Assistant Director in Headquarters.

I think Bill is best summed up in his own words. In an email entitled 'Morbid' that he sent to his girls in 2013, he wrote: 'Hi.'

Having cycled 20kms then cleaned the BBQ then swam 50 lengths of an admittedly small pool, not to mention making your mother's lunch and planning her dinner I was bored. Therefore the following is the music I have selected for my funeral: all of it is instrumental as no-one I know can sing and I am hardly going to get up and sing myself. It is all off 'you tube' but how you download it and get it to the crematorium is for one of you technical people to sort out. This supersedes any previous list of funeral music may have mentioned in the past and is hopefully my last word on the matter. The minister can say what he likes in between the pieces of music.'

Roger Outram advises there was a very good attendance at Bill's funeral including **Michael Spurr** and **Phil Wheatley**.

Then sadly there is my old pal **Reg Withers** who was the fittest and strongest person I knew, that is until I encountered Charles Bronson, though I expect he would have been a match for him. His laid back approach concealed a very caring and committed person. We first met when, as young sproggs, we were both selected for reasons unbeknown to us, to attend an experimental training course at the Staff college Wakefield organised by the psychologists. From memory, the selected group of about 12 had to determine our own objective and then work out how to achieve it. We were told there were no rules and the tutors were there only to monitor progress and not to answer questions. By day 2 we were both bewildered and bored. As it happened there was an important rugby match one afternoon mid-week, and it was available on TV at one of the nearby hostelries. Dwelling on the fact we had been advised there were no rules, Reg and I spent a convivial afternoon 'recharging our sanity', and devouring a few pints. Not a word was said about our absence, except by our fellow guinea pigs. From then on we were the best of mates, and though we never served together, we kept in touch. Reg served at Lowdham Grange, Northallerton, Hull, P5 Division and Norwich. He was 85, so he had a good innings.

Also departed is **John Cheetham** after a short battle with cancer. I did not know John, but I am advised he served at Lowdham Grange, Risely, Hindley, Kirkham and Training Services.

Rosamond Dauncy, widow of Roger, a colourful figure in his own right has also died. They were regular attendees at reunions until Roger was ill.

Derek Shaw's wife has sent news of his death, also at the age of 85. He joined the Service in 1962 and was posted to Wetherby in 1963, Stoke Heath on promotion followed by the Staff College Love Lane, Shrewsbury, Glen Parva, the Inspectorate and finally Stafford. She recounts how Derek enjoyed working with young offenders and was lucky enough to be in the Service at a time when you could still take the inmates out of the prison environment, which for Derek included taking a party on a canal trip from Stafford all the way to the sea via rivers and canals.

Dave Taylor writes, 'Sad news indeed. He was one of my interviewers on my first 'Country House' at the Staff College. I think it was my reticence about Capital Punishment that we disagreed on.' **John Berry** writes, 'Really sad news. I remember working with Derek when he governed Glen Parva in the early 1980s.'

We were both at the Staff College together under **Wilf Booth** as Heads of the two departments, AG Training and Development Training. Derek slightly resented the fact that Wilf regarded my department as the more senior. We remained friends however. Also at the college at that time was **Tom Abbott**, who was to feature again later in our careers. Tom had taken his family to Australia to work in their prison service. It did not work out and Tom returned and set up home on the Isle of Wight with a male friend. That left his wife Leslie Anne with the 2 children and to find her own way back. I remember going down to meet them at a hotel in Cardiff where she was staying, and Derek unstintingly displayed his real kindness and concern for others, which he often tried to conceal, as he had arranged rented accommodation for them until they could sort themselves out.

Colleagues may remember that **Bill Abbott** wrote in October 2011, 'I remain of the view that we should now wind up the RPGA Newsletter, if not now when, for it will surely happen.' Well, his crystal ball has failed so far, but I suppose if he lives long enough he could be right. Bill has begun to give up on a lot of his involvements, he has ceased his consultancy work at Ashworth Mental Hospital and his Custody Visiting and now also the RPGA. He has also moved his living accommodation 4 times over the recent years, all within a short distance of each other in the posh Merseyside dockland regeneration area. I have tracked him down and if anyone is anxious to contact Bill I can put them in touch.

Andy Barclay has also left us, but I have been in touch and he has graciously sent a note about how his life is now to share with colleagues who remember him. 'As our 3 children, their spouses and our 6 grandchildren are based in New Zealand, Yvonne's and my year is split between summer in Norwich where we have lived now for over 30 years and summer in Auckland which we have been visiting annually since 1999. We have Kiwi residents' visas so are keeping our options open whether or not we settle there eventually. I am fully retired now but Yvonne is still doing consultancy work with a group of secondary schools. I am lucky enough to be permanently on holiday – walking, cycling, visiting medieval churches, and boating on the Broads in our cruiser: visiting the family and touring in our motorhome in New Zealand and watching cricket in both countries'.

What a lovely idyllic life!

I have also heard from **Arthur de Frisching** who states he has moved on from the prison service though he keeps in touch with **Andy, Al Papps** and **Tony Pearson**. He also comments that he found Bill Brister an excellent boss when he worked under him when Bill was DDG.

I mentioned in an earlier edition how **Kate Lomax** had re-made contact with **Kit Jarman** ex- Portland. Kit now lives in Scotland and 3 years ago he developed cancer very badly. At its worst, it left him unable to wash or dress himself walk and on occasions unable to walk at all. Children learn to walk naturally: for adults who lose that ability, to re-learn is long hard stubborn graft! He was helped in this task by a whole host of fantastic carers, and is now able with difficulty to cope on his own.

So this year in May he decided he would do a charity walk of 5 miles in a day (something he had not done for over a decade) with sponsors in aid of MacMillan nurses (Oban) who were outstanding and for Oban Sea Cadets of which he was he was chaplain RNVR before cancer struck. Kit achieved his objective by completing it in about 2.40 hours and raising over £6,000. He states the community spirit was great with people cheering him on, and a colleague from his days in the Royal Marines whose life he helped to save, turned up and walked every step of the way with him. Well done.

Alan Rawson remains in the nursing home and is well looked after, but is not the old Alan so many of us remember. He is alert but his brain works slowly at times and he finds it difficult to converse. I enclose a picture of Alan in former times as I am sure we all would remember him.



I have now read the complete draft of **Veronica Bird's** soon-to-be-published book; it is a quite incredible story and a very good read, and full of praise for the prison service, and what can be achieved, unlike some books published by retired governors.

The **AGM** was held in rather different premises this year, which may have put some regulars off as we had several apologies. It remained a good chance to meet up with several colleagues not seen for a while, including **Terry Bone** looking well and slim as ever. He is still cycling but does less competitive racing now. **John Rumball** was there, a little older but still as bright as a button and giving forth on the service in his day. I can re-call when several of us were serving in Leicestershire, John at Glen Parva, and the County Council chief executive hosted all us to a splendid dinner at the Judges Residence. **Mel Dickinson** was looking as fit and well as I have ever seen him, enjoying the pleasures of retirement and especially of his garden, along with our reliable contributor **John Berry, Roger Outram** as large as life as ever, **Gordon Tweedie** and **Don Webb**.

I note in a 'Times' report on **Michael Spurr's** bonus that they claim he is only 55 years of age, I just wonder where the other 12 years have disappeared. At this rate, he could go on for another 10 years!

A special word of thanks to **Jenny Adams Young** who is the 'proof reader' for the Newsletter: she says my submission is one of the worst to deal with. I remember years ago **Peter Leonard** complaining about something in his annual report, and in desperation declared, 'You not even understand syntax'. He was right. I don't and probably still do not, it is about as crystal clear as income tax! And it still does not bother me. Just been to an Andre Rieu concert, and he always makes clear that though the head is important, what makes good music is from the heart. I believe in writing from the heart and leaving the words to make some sense.

Phil Wheatley has circulated a very erudite letter analysing of the state of our prisons. It gives a vivid picture of the current situation, I have summarised it as a separate piece as I feel it will be interesting to many.

The experts in the Ministry of Justice finally got their way and contracted out all works services. I raised this in an IMB Annual Report 2 years ago. I questioned the whole rationale, especially as the contract was with Carrillion which at the time had had the highest debt ratio of all the construction companies in the Footsie 100. Their performance has been appalling, essential maintenance not sustained, repairs such as broken showers and toilets left unrepaired for months which the previous 'in house' works departments would have achieved in 24/36 hours, and major work so overpriced it does not get done! Of course, there had to be a justification for this unwelcome development. The 'experts' had concluded, after due diligence of course, that 'the outsourcing would save £115 million, and provide an equal service'. The Ministry of Justice now states that it entered into the 5-year contract without full knowledge of the costs, and admit that no savings will be made. NOMS states, 'A contracting exercise exposed that historically the costs of maintenance and services were not clearly understood by the business and consequently planning assumptions have not held true, and savings will not be met'.

A letter from **Harold Parr**, who for many years regularly attended reunions, apologising for not joining us this year. A breakdown in health means he is now unable to travel any distance. That has also prompted a move to Northern Ireland from where his wife Anne originated and she has a sister and several cousins living there.

All the best Harold.

So it is goodbye from him and goodbye from me.

Bob Duncan

August 17



From The Treasurer.

At this year's AGM, in my Treasurers Report once again I had to report that there had been an operating deficit for the 2016 financial year of £704.86. This makes it the third year in a row that I have had to report an operating deficit: however, I am hopeful that the measures I have put into place regarding the cost of the diaries and membership subscriptions will see us return to the black if not this year, then next.

The good news is that the exercise to review subscriptions has not resulted in a significant loss of members: indeed the number taking the opportunity to increase their subscriptions and retain their membership was quite heartening.

Despite the deficit the finances still remain relatively healthy with a cash balance in the bank, (as of 31/12/16) of £9267-97p., which at current rates of running costs/income ensures that we will remain "solvent" for some time to come.

It is also worth noting that as a result of this exercise the number of diaries ordered for 2017 was 100 less than in previous years, and we will be able to reduce this further as in 2017 we allowed some spares to account for anyone we had missed, or misinterpreted their requirements. With the increase in subscription rates the diaries should now be self-financing.

As part of the exercise to tackle the subscription issue I wrote to all the members that a change in rate would affect, and this included a number of members who were still paying their subscriptions into the original Lloyds account, which is called "Retired Governors Newsletter". Whilst I did receive replies from several members who have now cancelled their payments into this account, there were a number from whom I received no response, and indeed I am still receiving some payments into this account. I have therefore proposed to the Committee that with effect from October 2017 I intend to close the old Lloyds account and transfer any funds from this account into the Barclay's current account.

If you are a member of long standing, and originally paid your subscriptions to the RPGA into a Lloyds account (reference Retired Governors Newsletter) then please check to ensure that you are not still paying into this account, and if so please cancel any standing order. Once I close the account this will mean that any standing orders still in place to pay into this account will be bounced back to the originating bank. If you still wish to remain a member, and are not already paying subscriptions of £13/year into the Barclay's account then you will need to complete a new standing order mandate. If this is the case then please let me know and I will forward the paperwork to you.

You can either email me at graham.mumbycroft@gmail.com or you can write to me at 15 Thirsk Drive, North Hykeham, Lincoln, LN6 8SZ.

In the last issue I raised the matter of the Benevolent Fund in order to try to generate some ideas about how we can make use of this, and raise some income for what is a static account at the moment. There has been little movement on this, and I do have to say that the response has been somewhat "underwhelming". I am however happy to report that the fund is now £50 better off owing to the generous donation from a member of a subscriptions overpayment which was due. Thank you to that member for your generosity.

GRAHAM MUMBY-CROFT

PHIL WHEATLEY, FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL, ON THE STATE OF OUR PRISONS

The Government faces many challenges at the moment; the scale of these issues creates an obvious risk that the Government may lose focus on dealing with failing and dangerous prisons and weakness in community justice. It will be important that the new Justice Secretary David Lidington ensures this does not happen. Any optimism that he will do so has to be tempered by the recognition that he is the fifth Justice Secretary in the last seven years.

Each new Secretary has initiated a radical reset of policies, consuming much management time, but since 2010 none of these initiatives have lasted long enough to deliver any benefits. In a period of austerity, from 2009 to 2016, the prison and probation budget has had to find a 21% saving in its budget, whilst the prison population has remained unchanged. There has been a loss of many experienced staff, a dramatic escalation in the resignation rate and a persistent failure to staff prisons to the level required to maintain safety and decency. All informed observers including HMCIP and the Justice Committee have linked the reductions to the increased levels of suicide, murder and assaults.

That prisons are in crisis is undeniable. The Government belatedly recognised the fact and at the end of 2016 announced an extra £104 million to recruit 2,500 officers, partially reversing the previous 7,000 redundancies.

The most recent data on Safety in Prisons published in April 2017 covers the 12 months up to December 2016 and shows that the rate of self inflicted deaths has more than doubled since 2013, self harm has reached a record level of 40,161, up 7,848 prisoners on the previous year, and assaults have reached a record high of 26,022 (of which 6,884 were on staff) up 5,504 on previous year. This is a 26% rise on the previous year with the risk of serious assaults on staff having tripled since 2012. However there is some straw in the wind in that these figures may have reached a peak, as the last quarter stats. show a slight decline.

Despite the determined effort to recruit more prison officers the latest figures indicate that the overall number increased by only 75 over the previous year. On average prisons were 4.8% short of front-line staff, but nearly a quarter of prisons are more than 10% short of staff, particularly in London and the South East. These statistics are against the 'bench mark' level imposed, which many governors feel were set too low.

The leaving rate for more experienced officers has reached 9.4% and they are replaced by inexperienced staff at cheaper rates. This may have reduced costs but it means that an unprecedentedly high proportion of prison officer (24%) are inexperienced and in their first 2 years of service.

All this has led to those on duty becoming increasingly reluctant to confront and deal with misbehaviour by prisoners. When inmates are seen to get away with being aggressive and disruptive it makes it difficult not only for staff but also for those prisoners who want to keep safe and make positive use of their time inside. As a consequence good staff are increasingly looking for alternative employment opportunities that are safer, and prisoners feel more distressed and frightened, increasing the risk of suicide and self harm.

This toxic mix of problems is what the new Minister faces, he needs to ensure he sets an affordable and realistic strategy to undo the damage if he is to make prisons safe and decent and reduce reoffending. There are no quick fixes; It will take persistent hard work to sort out the mess that reckless cost cutting and a proliferation of ill thought through political initiatives have created.

A HISTORY of GAR- TREE PRISON from 1961



PRESENTED BY FRANCIS ANDREW MCGILWAY 2016

INTRODUCTION

Gartree Prison opened as a Category B male establishment in 1966, near Market Harborough, Leicestershire and remains operational today, as the largest Main Centre for life-sentenced prisoners in Europe. It had a turbulent history, with two major riots, escapes, serious disturbances, numerous serious assaults and a murder. It has seen significant changes within the Criminal Justice system and has had 17 Governing Governors in its' 49 years to date.

I was fortunate to serve 14 years here, over two periods, witnessing many events. My book was compiled using historical facts and from my own experiences at Gartree. These included the transformation from a "high security" dispersal prison with Category A prisoners, to a Category B establishment, holding life-sentenced prisoners. Gartree has held many infamous prisoners whom I have detailed in my book, together with photographs and images.

Gartree even has its' own ghost, who I had the pleasure of seeing during my night shift on A Wing in 1985! Other staff and prisoners also witnessed the "airman" in different locations around the jail.

The Prison is built on an old RAF site, which was used during the second world war.

Chapter 1

BACKGROUND and CATEGORY B DAYS

1-1-1961

Acquisition of former RAF Station, on Gallowfield Road, Market Harborough, as site for Gartree Prison.

1963

Construction work begins to build the prison.

1-6-1965

D J Chilvers appointed as 1st Governor of HMP Gartree.

8-11-1965

Death penalty abolished and Parole Board established with the first eligible prisoners being released on licence.

1-4-1966

Gartree officially opened as a category B male prison, by Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins.

5-4-1966

First 18 prisoners received from Stoke Heath Prison.

December 1966

Gartree's operational capacity was 408 prisoner places and the total prison population was 33,086.

1967-1968

Categorisation system set up following Lord Mountbatten's report into a number of escapes from prisons.

Gartree's roll on 1-1-1967 was 249 prisoners.

1-8-1967

M D Macleod appointed as 2nd Governor. He later became Regional Director.

1-1-1968

Gartree's roll: 367 prisoners.

1-1-1969

Gartree's roll: 304 prisoners.

Chapter 2

DISPERSAL DAYS

31-1-1969

32 high-mast lights, which were 80 feet high, switched on.

27-2-1969

Gartree, along with Hull and Parkhurst prisons, becomes part of the high security "Dispersal" system and the Emergency Control Room was opened. A dog section was also introduced, with 24 hour patrols of the grounds. Category A and B prisoners were integrated into a relaxed regime, within the walls.

1-1-1970

Gartree's roll: 345 prisoners.

1-2-1970

R F Owens appointed as the 3rd Governor and Mr.Macleod transfers to Long Lartin Prison.

1971

Board of Visitors appointed by the Secretary of State.

Gartree's roll on 1-1-1971 was 346 prisoners.

19-4-1971

R E Adams appointed as the 4th Governor.

1-1-1972

Gartree's roll: 369 prisoners.

26-11-1972

First major riot started when 13 prisoners attack the fence with 5 cutting through the fence but are re-captured, after a violent struggle in the staff quarter gardens. The prisoners are taken to the Hospital Wing but rumours about their mistreatment caused trouble throughout the jail. Prisoners on B and C Wings damage fixtures and fittings, costing some £150,000.

ALTHOUGH THE PRISONERS DIDN'T GET VERY FAR, IT WAS STILL GARTREE'S FIRST ESCAPES
from custody.

December 1972

Cell walls strengthened by metal meshing behind the plaster.

1-1-1973

Gartree's roll: 285 prisoners.

6-4-1973

J K Beaumont appointed as 5th Governor.

3-9-1973

Outer fence sprayed with "gunniting" to obscure vision through it. This involved spraying a cement-like substance onto the existing fence which then solidified to form a wall.

14-11-1973

Operation Exodus sees 100 prisoners transferred out with B and C Wings being closed for refurbishment, until January 1974.

1-1-1974

Gartree's roll: 179 prisoners.

The Health & Safety at Work Act is introduced to all Prisons during the year.

1-1-1975

Gartree's roll: 180 prisoners.

24-6-1975

"Parrot's beak" erected on top of the outer wall.

1-12-1975

Gordon Lakes appointed as 6th Governor. He was later appointed as Deputy Director General of the Prison Service.

Gartree's roll: 246 prisoners.

8-12-1977

Tony Pearson appointed as the 7th Governor before moving to Brixton on 28-1-1981. He later became Director of Programmes.

1-1-1978

Gartree's roll: 255 prisoners.

5-10-1978

Second major riot starts, following rumours of prisoners being ill-treated in the prison hospital. A Wing is badly damaged and staff are taken hostage. B and D Wing prisoners join in the rioting.



1979

A and D Wings are closed for refurbishment, until 1982.

Gartree's roll was 141 prisoners on 1-1-1979.

1-1-1980

Gartree's roll: 139 prisoners.

20-2-1980

Construction of new Kitchen begins between C and D wings.

25-4-1980

Construction of secondary access routes begins at the end of each main wing.

20-10-1980

Joined Gartree as an Officer, following a 12-week training period, when my weekly wage was £66.81 !!

Three landing spurs on each wing were closed off, with prisoners located on two spurs only, on each of the three landings. This would remain the case, as agreed with the Prison Officers Association, even when all four main wings were eventually reopened.

Chief Officers Parades were held in the Visits Room, every weekday morning, when Officers had to present their staves and whistles to the Chief Officer, after forming a uniformed line. Officers then had to wear their hats, ties and uniform jackets, which is not the case today.

Overtime was an everyday occurrence and was readily available to Officers, which boosted their basic wages. Those who did not have a detailed job each day would be assigned to the "Support Group" and would respond to emergency incidents within the prison.

An Officer would be detailed to collect the "Ashwell Prison Party", from Ashwell Open Prison in the prison van and bring about 8 prisoners back to work on the Gartree Farm area, outside the walls.

21-10-1980

Officers' Club opened. This club was opened from mornings until late into the evenings and Officers could use it prior to coming on duty, which would not be allowed today! The Officers' Mess was also outside the prison walls and Officer John Kelly would gladly cook your meal, while smoking his cigarette!!!

1-1-1981

Gartree's roll: 134 prisoners.

4-8-1981

Malcolm Brown appointed as the 8th Governor, replacing Tony Pearson, who was transferred to Brixton on 28th January 1981.

1-1-1982

Gartree's roll: 154 prisoners.

1-4-1982

Work begins on wing access routes, to allow staff exit and access in case of emergencies.

5-7-1982

Phil Wheatley appointed as Deputy Governor. He later became Director General of the Prison Service.

1982

Prisoner Pat Molloy (Carl Bridgewater case) dies on the sports field.

October 1982

4 main wings reopened

1-1-1983

Prison roll was 193 prisoners and Gartree later becomes a Main Centre for life sentence prisoners, within the Dispersal system.

Two female Officers were employed for the first time, as a result of the Equal Opportunities Act, enabling cross gender postings between male and female establishments.

19-4-1983

Deputy Governor Wheatley visits Workshop 5, where he is assaulted by prisoner Stevens, who threw the contents of a toilet bucket over his head. The Deputy Governor walked to his quarter outside the Prison, where he had a shower, a change of clothing, before returning to the jail and continuing with his rounds!

24-11-1983

Michael Hickey (Carl Bridgewater case) climbs on to B Wing roof, in protest about his case. He remained there for 13 weeks, ending his protest on 21-2-1984.

1-1-1984

Gartree's roll: 278 prisoners.

5-12-1984

Governor Brown retires.

1-1-1985

Gartree's roll: 302 prisoners.

28-1-1985

Richard Tilt appointed as the 9th Governor. He was later appointed as Director General of the Prison Service. The prison roll was 302.

8-2-1985

Prisoner Michael Davey assaults an Instructor in Workshop 4, by striking him over the head with a glass bottle.

19-4-1985

Six officers assaulted on A Wing, during an incident involving prisoner Alan Lord, who later became a ringleader in the Strangeways riot of 1990, after his transfer there.

1-1-1986

Gartree's roll: 308 prisoners.

3-3-1986

Prison Officers change from blue to white shirts and the prison roll was 308.

17-3-1986

Bob Perry replaces Phil Wheatley as Deputy Governor, who transferred to Hull on promotion as their Governor.

Control and Restraint techniques were now in place and Officers could deal with refractory prisoners more effectively.

30-4-1986

Fred Low murders another prisoner on C Wing, by stabbing him multiple times in the throat, using prison-issue scissors.

1987

The 32 high-mast lights replaced by cost-efficiency wall lighting and the prison roll was 306 on 1-1-1987

25-6-1987

Bob Duncan appointed as the 10th Governor.

12th/13th August 1987

Gartree staff respond to riot at nearby Ashwell open Prison, which changed its role to a closed Category C training establishment 2 months later. The non-cellular prison basically remained the same, with the only major change being the perimeter fence being erected around the jail.

1-11-1987

Fresh Start introduced for Prison Service, seeing major changes to terms and conditions for all staff.



10-12-87

Helicopter escape from sports field during afternoon exercise. L52875 John Kendall and 681843 Syd Draper escape on helicopter, hijacked by John Russell, who was later sentenced to 10 years. I was the supervising Senior Officer in charge of 39 prisoners, including 8 high risk and I recall the events well !

1-1-1988

Gartree's roll: 300 prisoners.

31-1-1988

John Kendall recaptured by Police in London, after 52 days at large.

20-4-1988

Hostage incident in Education Department, involving 2 teachers and 2 prisoners. Education Officer David Poole sustained a cut to his throat before prompt action by officers prevented the 2 prisoners making a determined bid to escape towards the Gate.

1989

Gartree prison roll was 309 prisoners on 1-1-1989.

Guildford 4 freed by Appeal Court, including Paddy Armstrong, Paul Hill and Gerry Conlan, all Gartree prisoners.

24-2-1989

Syd Draper recaptured by Police in London after 442 days at large.

9-10-1989

Roy Ivers attempts to escape en route to Appeal Court, when being escorted by Officers Thomas and Jones, who sustained an injury to his throat, after being cut by a blade concealed on the prisoner's body.

1990

Strangeways Prison riot started in their Chapel, involving ex- Gartree prisoner, Lord.

Gartree's roll was 313 prisoners on 1-1-1990.

26-3-1990

Ex-Gartree prisoner, Mick Davey, escapes from Leicester Prison. He was transferred from Gartree, following the assault on a workshop instructor.

28-3-1990

Rooftop protest by Donnelly, Richards and Galloway, in support of the "Birmingham Six".

23-7-1990

B85440 Leroy Hughes restrained in cell E7 by me and other officers after threatening behaviour. He was placed in a body belt and located in a special cell, before being transferred to Lincoln Prison the following day.

21-8-1990

Category A prisoner Graham Gillard dies in the Gymnasium.

1-1-1991

Gartree's roll: 314 prisoners.

7-3-1991

E Wing incident involving prisoners Houston, Prescott, Cameron, Augustine, Quayle and Keane, resulting in Houston removing bricks from his cell wall, gaining open access to the landing overnight.

14-3-1991

Birmingham 6 freed by Appeal Court: Paddy Hill, Gerry Hunter, Billy Power, Hugh Callaghan, Johnny Walker and Richard McIlkenny.

1-1-1992

Gartree's roll: 246 prisoners.

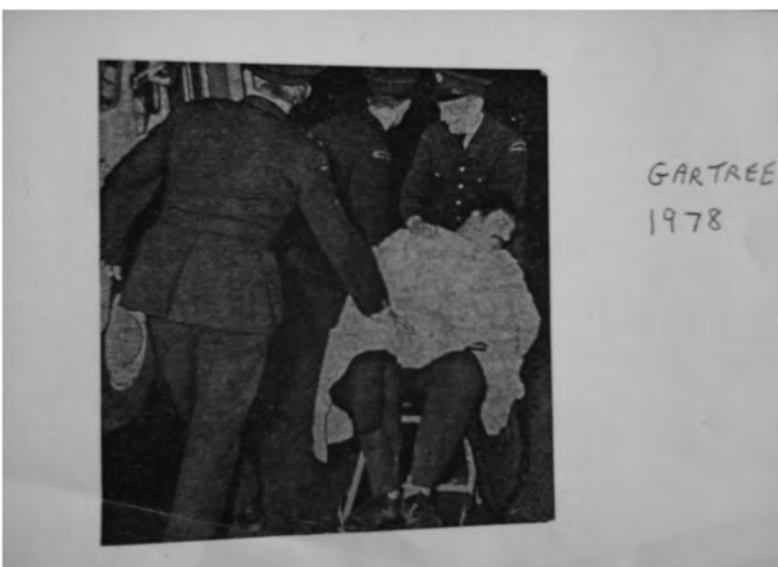
19-1-1992

I escorted Category A prisoner Keith Rose to Parkhurst Prison, following security concerns about an escape attempt. He would later escape from Parkhurst with 3 others!

18-3-1992

Bob Perry appointed as the 11th Governor, replacing Bob Duncan, who returned to Wakefield as their Governor!

Bob Perry was later appointed as an Area Manager.



Injured officer on route to hospital by ambulance during 1978 riot.

PART TWO OF THIS FASCINATING POTTED HISTORY OF HM PRISON GARTREE WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER

Drugs Society and Prisons

Opium eating and laudanum (an alcoholic solution of opiates) consumption were widespread in mid-19th century Britain. Opium, and its' derivative morphine, were available as patent medicines, in tinctures and other commercial products that were readily accessible through chemists and herbalists. The use of these products declined after the 1868 Pharmacy Act restricted opium sales to the pharmacist's shop, with the Act requiring pharmacists to keep records of the purchasers. The later 1908 Pharmacy Act moved morphine, cocaine, opium and derivatives containing more than 1 per cent morphine into part one of the poisons schedule. At this point, control was on availability and sale and was largely based on self-regulation by pharmacists, with little Government intervention. There was a small population of morphine-using addicts and some opium and cannabis smoking among artistic, mystic and bohemian circles, but the population of drug users at the beginning of the 20th century was relatively small and virtually unknown in prisons.

The 1920 Dangerous Drugs Act established that medical practitioners were allowed to prescribe morphine, cocaine and heroin, but it was not clear from either the Hague Convention or the Act whether prescribing these drugs to addicts constituted legitimate medical work. The population of opiate users at this time was small, largely middle class, addicted to morphine and in the medical and allied professions, or had become dependent in the course of medical treatment. At the suggestion of the Home Office, the Ministry of Health convened an expert committee (Departmental Committee on Morphine and Heroin Addiction) chaired by Sir Humphrey Rolleston, then President of the Royal College of Physicians, to consider and advise on the circumstances in which it was medically advisable to prescribe heroin or morphine to addicts. The report produced by the committee (usually known as the Rolleston Report), reaffirmed the doctor's freedom to prescribe regular supplies of opioid drugs to certain addicted patients in defined circumstances that the committee regarded as 'treatment' rather than the 'gratification of addiction'. While the possession of dangerous drugs without a prescription was still the subject of the criminal law, addiction to opioid drugs was recognised as the legitimate domain of medical practice (and hence prescribing). This balance of a medical approach within a penal framework became a hallmark of British drug control and has been called the 'British System' by commentators.

Until the 1960s, prescribed heroin was the main medication used for treatment of those addicted to morphine and heroin; this population was predominantly aged over 30 years and middle class. This was a settled approach, as a major addiction problem was not apparent in the British drug scene. In the early 1960s, the first reports about the activities of young heroin users began to appear in British newspapers – a phenomenon that was new to Britain. The Home Office convened an interdepartmental committee under the chairmanship of Sir Russell Brain, largely prompted by concern about whether long-term prescribing was still appropriate more than 30 years after the Rolleston Report.

The Brain Committee published its first report early in 1961, and concluded that the drug problem remained small and no changes in approach were needed. Increasing media and professional evidence of a heroin epidemic in Britain involving younger heroin users led to a Second Interdepartmental Committee on Drug Addiction, again chaired by Brain. Drug addiction was formulated as a 'socially infectious condition', for which it was appropriate to provide treatment. The committee concluded that the increase in heroin use had been fuelled by a small number of doctors who were over-prescribing heroin and that individual doctors were unable to meet the demands of the new situation. As a result, the committee recommended that restrictions should apply to the prescribing of heroin and cocaine and that new drug treatment centres should be set up within the NHS hospital system.

These recommendations were enacted in the Dangerous Drugs Act 1967, which restricted the prescribing of heroin for treatment of addiction to doctors licensed by the Home Office. The doctors who obtained licences were mostly consultant psychiatrists in charge of drug treatment centres. This limitation of doctors' clinical autonomy received some criticism from the medical profession. As this restriction of clinical freedom did not extend to prescribing heroin for medical treatment other than addiction, and GPs were generally reluctant to treat addicts, the change was accepted by the medical profession. The committee's recommendations also led to the introduction of a notification system for addiction (as with infectious diseases). The drug clinics took over the prescribing of heroin to patients who were previously prescribed by private doctors and NHS GPs. Prescription of heroin to addicts declined in the early 1970s, as doctors at the drug clinics were uncomfortable prescribing it. Methadone had recently been developed in the USA as a new treatment specifically for dependence on opioid drugs, and the clinic doctors considered oral methadone was a more suitable medication.

The 1960s and the rise of pop culture also saw widespread use of other illicit drugs by young people, notably cannabis, but also LSD and amphetamines. Concern over the use of amphetamines, or 'purple hearts' or 'pep pills' as they were commonly called, led to their control under the Drugs (Prevention of Misuse) Act 1964. While amphetamine use among young people was the first to draw political reaction, cannabis-related convictions increased steeply as use of this drug became more popular in the mid-1960s. The 1970s saw the growth of drugs in prisons and in Borstals, and glue sniffers were of significant concern along with the odd find of cannabis.

The 1980s brought new pressures on the treatment system and Britain's drug control policy, with a new epidemic of heroin use. The numbers of addicts notified to the Home Office and the amount of heroin seized rose dramatically. There was widespread media coverage of this new wave of heroin use, and drug use became an important and sustained policy issue for the first time since the 1960s. The then Conservative Government sought to encourage a coordinated response from across the range of Government departments, by setting up an interdepartmental working group of ministers and officials, which resulted in the first Government strategy document 'Tackling Drug Misuse', issued in 1985.

During the same period, new ways of tackling drug treatment were developed following the recommendations of the Treatment and Rehabilitation report from the ACMD in 1982. The focus became the broader population of 'problem drug users', seen as a heterogeneous group with a range of problems beyond the use of a drug itself, encompassing social and economic as well as medical problems. The generalist doctor was seen as key to dealing with drug-related problems, and drug use was no longer seen as the sole province of the specialist clinic psychiatrist.

The late 1980s saw HIV and AIDS become the dominant public health concern. People who injected drugs were seen as a potential route for the HIV virus to rapidly diffuse into the wider community, through the sharing of contaminated injecting equipment. In response to the widespread concern about AIDS, HIV and those who inject drugs, the ACMD set up an AIDS and Drug Misuse Working Group. The resulting report, 'AIDS and Drug Misuse Part I', provided the template and rationale for a reorientation of drug treatment practice to meet the new challenge of drug use and HIV. The report stated that 'The spread of HIV is a greater threat to individual and public health than drug misuse'. The ACMD saw that the key aims of drug treatment were to attract seropositive injecting drug users into treatment, where they could be encouraged to stop using injecting equipment and move away from injecting toward oral use.

Harm minimisation was the core principle of this policy and received support from the Government. Harm minimisation was characterised by adopting measures that sought to reduce the harm caused by continued drug use, through modification of using behaviours. 'AIDS and Drug Misuse Part I' and the complementary report 'AIDS and Drug Misuse Part 2', continued the policy aim of involving GPs and general psychiatrists more actively in the direct provision of services to address the more general healthcare needs of drug users, while the specialist clinics maintained responsibility for the more complicated needs of the more difficult drug users. Needle exchange services rapidly became main stream. Their early introduction, together with a range of other harm-reduction interventions, has been seen as critical in preventing the major spread of HIV among individuals who inject drugs that has been seen in other countries where such approaches were not adopted. Around this time, maintenance prescribing re-emerged in the form of oral medication.

Those of us who were around in prisons at this time will remember the arguments about needle exchange, provision of contraceptives to reduce HIV transmission and the genuine concern that there was going to be an AIDS epidemic in prisons. We also had the first death of a member of staff from AIDS, the Chaplain at Chelmsford prison.

In 1996, the Department of Health (DH) set up a review of drug treatment services and their effectiveness, which concluded that 'treatment works'. This conclusion underlaid the 10-year New Labour strategy, 'Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain', which stressed the use of diversion into drug treatment from the criminal justice system. An example of this new approach was the introduction of community sentences for offenders, involving drug testing and treatment components called Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs). Treatment services within prisons expanded.

The main focus of the strategy was problematic drug users, which included those who injected drugs and those using opioid drugs and crack cocaine. Spending on drug treatment rose substantially. In 1994, around 67,000 people were counted as being in treatment, rising by 26.9 per cent to 85,000 in 1998-1999 and a further 129.9 per cent to 195,400 by 2006-2007, giving an overall rise from 1994 to 2006-2007 of 191.6 per cent. The treatment and rehabilitation budget for 1994 was £61 million, while the total spend on treatment in 2005-2006 was estimated to be £508 million. In criminality surveys conducted in England and Wales in 2000 and 2002, over one-third of male prisoners and over a quarter of men serving community sentences reported experiencing problematic drug use. Men were more likely than women to say that they had problems staying off drugs in the last 12 months (43% versus 39%). The budget for drug treatment interventions in the criminal justice system in England and Wales was over £330 million in 2006-2007 and spending on drug treatment in prisons increased from £7 million in 1997-1998 to £80 million in 2007-2008. The 2002 Updated Drug Strategy concentrated on the 'most dangerous drugs', defined as Class A drugs, and again emphasised the objective of getting more of the estimated 250,000 problem drug users into treatment. The Home Office was given overall responsibility for implementation of the drug strategy, although the DH and Department for Education and Skills (DfES) had key roles.

The unprecedented growth in "legal (now illegal) highs" has led to 348 new types of synthetic drugs appearing in more than 90 countries in every region of the world. Nigel Newcomen said that between June 2013 and January 2016 there were 58 fatalities where the prisoner was known, or strongly suspected, to have been using legal highs before their death. The toll of 58 deaths in 30 months was three times higher than the previous figure of 19 legal high-related deaths, recorded over a similar length of time between April 2012 and September 2014.

In prisons in 2017 drugs are endemic. In 2016 225kg of drugs along with 13,000 mobile phones were found in prisons. This is but the tip of the iceberg given that regular searching has virtually disappeared from the detail. Reduced staffing levels have contributed to the growth in drug use in prisons as has new technology, with drones being used to bring in a variety of illegal substances alongside the usual routes for bringing in illicit items.

Some countries and individual States in the USA have decided that legalising some drugs, e.g. cannabis for personal use, is both lucrative from a taxation point of view and reduces the deployment of intervention services to deter and convict users. The latest information is that where tobacco has been banned in prisons, the price is now around £100 for 100 grams. The day of the tobacco baron may have returned to be added to the other illegal substances they now provide.

John Berry OBE JP

Membership Report October 2017

Membership continues to fall from 435 to 424 since February. We are still recruiting a few new members and so welcome to Mrs Shaw (widow of Derek), Martyn Barnsley MBE, John Ship, Kenny Primrose, Ivy Lewis (widow of Leslie) and Margery Marchant (widow of Bernard). We are sorry to report the deaths of Graham Evans, Peter Meech, Eddie King, Derek Shaw, May MacGowan, Rosamond Dauncey, Leslie Lewis, Bernard Marchant, Rev. Albert Greasley, Bill Brister and Reg Withers. Our deepest condolences go out to their family and friends. We have also heard of the deaths of ex-members of the service who will be well known to many of our members, Mary Mole, Bill Duff Jim Baxendale (died in service), Nick Wadsworth (died in service) and John Cheetham. Our condolences go out to their family and friends.

We have also had a number of resignations, Andy Barclay, Arthur de Frisching, Margaret Long and Roy Frost (who is moving back to Australia). We have had a couple of newsletters returned as members have moved without giving a forwarding address. They are Mrs B Absalom and Aidan Healey so if anyone knows of their new address and they wish to continue receiving the newsletter then please let me know their new address.

The following members - Bob Benson, Bob Isdale and George Ridley are having their Emails bounced back so if you have a new one and wish to remain on the Email list please let me know. Just to remind anyone who is not on the Email list and would like to be, then please contact me on h_brett@sky.com.

It has been mentioned by a member that sometimes when they hear of someone dying then they cannot recall for certain where they knew the name from. It has therefore been suggested that members could provide a pen picture of their career which would be used to remind other members of their time in the service. Anyone who wishes to provide information about themselves and it is purely voluntary then please send it to me via Email or post to 202 Kentmere Road Timperley Altrincham WA15 7NT.

TOM CAIRNS PAPAL AWARD

On Sunday 4th June, on the final Sunday Mass celebrated by Fr Mark Impson at St Mary's Peterhead, (prior to him taking up the role of priest in Stonehaven and Blairs), Tom Cairns stepped up to say a few words of gratitude on behalf of parishioners and the pastoral council. Much to his surprise, Fr Mark interrupted him and asked him to take a seat. Tom said: "And here was I thinking I was saying Good Bye to my parish priest."

There are not many times that ex Marine Commando Tom Cairns has been caught out by events but he was on that day. He was about to receive the award of the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Medal on behalf of Pope Francis for his voluntary work in the parish of St Mary's Peterhead, and his Chairmanship of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group. It was indeed an absolute shock and a best kept family secret for Tom.

Born in Greenock in 1950, Tom served in both 40 and 45 Royal Marine Commando from 1968 to 1973 and continued in the Reserves in Greenock from 1975 to 1983. What followed was a career as a prison officer and Governor grade until 2005. Appointed as Parish Pastoral Council Chairman to St Mary's Peterhead in 2001, the various roles Tom has undertaken is a fitting testimony to his service to the church., not least as Parish safeguarding coordinator from 2005 and in various roles for the Diocese including sitting on the Diocesan Fabric Sub-Committee 2005, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Team 2007 and Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Team Chairman since 2008.

When asked about his award Tom said "I'm extremely grateful to Fr Mark and Bishop Hugh for their nomination of me for this award. It is an immense honour to have received it."

Father Mark Impson said: "I was very pleased to be able to present the Papal award to Tom, and it is a much deserved honour. He has been a great source of support to me, in parish and diocesan roles. I consider him both a colleague and a friend. I would also like to say thank you to his wife, Georgette, who supports Tom in the various roles he undertakes."

Bishop for the Aberdeen Diocese, Hugh Gilbert OSB, said "I was delighted that Mr Tom Cairns has been honoured by the Holy Father in this way. His contribution to the life of his parish and of the diocese as a whole has been constantly generous, sensible, sensitive, reliable, effective and always combined with humour and humility. Our debt to him is great. This honour is more than deserved. We are all enriched by the presence of Tom."

FOR PRESS : Photo shows Tom with his wife and family, along with Fr Mark Impson.



THE MEMORIES OF A HOSPITAL PRISON OFFICER 1961 TO 1997

HMP GRENDON

It was a long time ago that I stepped down from the rattling old steam train full of school kids onto the little 'back of beyond' station of Calvert which has now long gone. Dr. Beeching saw to that, but my memory of that day persists. Calvert was the closest station to the small community of Grendon Underwood. I was on my way to the nearby psychiatric prison which had not long been built to take up my new job as Farms Instructor. The grounds within and around the prison had been left by the builders for the Prison Service to landscape and this is where I came in. With a working party of prisoners sent from HMP Wormwood Scrubs we eventually brought some order to chaos. I was only 20 years of age and the prisoners I was given charge of were many years older but we seemed to hit it off. They used to remind me that they had their Certificates of Sanity and I did not. And this was true. Before they would volunteer to leave the Scrubs (HMP Wormwood Scrubs, London) and work at a psychiatric prison they wanted to ensure they were never seen as patients and so labeled as mentally ill; so they had the Governor issue a note on their record to this effect.

Why did I take up this work in the first place? I knew there were prisons and bad people who went to prison but I never thought I would encounter either. Fate had other plans. I had to leave my previous employment in something of a hurry; don't ask! But I'll tell you anyway in case you think the worst. I had to get out of town and find a new job away from a vengeful father and big brother of my jilted fiancée. I was a wanted man! I applied for several jobs; I was pretty desperate. One of them was this job at Grendon. I knew I was by far the youngest applicant and didn't think I stood a chance so I was surprised when I was offered the job and told that, if still interested, I was to show up soon.

Dr. Grey was the Medical Superintendent and most of his team consisted of Discipline Officers and a large percentage of Hospital Officers, all individually selected (so they told me) to work at this very first psychiatric prison in the middle of the Buckinghamshire countryside. Our geographical isolation meant we were a close-knit group and I enjoyed my time at Grendon enormously. Our Social Club was the local village hall and the relations with the local community were first-rate.

From the onset I decided I wanted to be a Hospital Officer. I took medical books from the library and asked my new colleagues just what the big words meant. The bad news was that the age for joining as an officer was 25 but then it was suddenly reduced to 21 and so my waiting time to apply was greatly reduced and soon I was being tested and interviewed at HMP Oxford.



HMP GRENDON STAFF PHOTOGRAPH 1962. AUTHOR IS IN THE SECOND ROW

HMP OXFORD

From Britain's newest prison to its' oldest; Oxford Prison was quite a revelation. Old, indeed ancient, but functional about summed it up. It started life as a Norman medieval castle. In the 14th Century the military value of the castle diminished and the site became used primarily for county administration and as a prison. Most of the castle was destroyed in the English Civil War and by the 18th century the remaining buildings had become Oxford's local prison. A new prison complex was built on the site from 1785 onwards and expanded in 1876; this became HM Prison Oxford. The prison closed in 1996 and was re-developed as a hotel. The medieval remains of the castle, including the motte and St George's Tower and crypt, are Grade I listed buildings and a Scheduled Monument. My wife and I booked to stay at the Hotel and because of my connection was given a generous rate but we never quite got round to enjoying its' comfort and luxury which would have been in stark contrast to the days when I worked there. I still hanker after a few days there. One day.

OFFICERS' TRAINING SCHOOL, WAKEFIELD

After a month as a trainee at Oxford Prison I went off to Wakefield Officers' Training School.

Three months of intensive training in law, prison rules and procedures together with such as first aid, judo and PE kept us well occupied. I learnt early on never to volunteer any previous knowledge or experience, a lesson to hold me in good stead as the judo instructor asked whether anyone had done judo before. I had acquired a couple of belts but I remained silent and another put his hand up. Well, he got thrown around the mat like a rag doll. Good decision!

Half way through our training came half term but before we could all make our way home we had to learn who had made it thus far and who had not. We were lined up in the corridor, all of us, and if your name was read out you had to walk into the library. My name was read out and into the library I marched. An anxious buzz as we were in the dark as to whether or not we had been earmarked for a pass or a failure and a trip back to the Employment Exchange as well as having to share failure with family and friends. It was a bad situation. Shortly we could see our previous compatriots walking down the drive with their suitcases in hand and we readily concluded we were alright for completing the next term when we had to go through this procedure again. So twice I survived this 'ritual' and only had to complete my year of probation at my home establishment, Oxford Prison.

During our training we were shown the film, 'Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner' with Tom Courtenay after the book by Alan Sillitoe. I remember it having quite an impact on me. It made me feel that I could make a contribution; perhaps it did, perhaps it worked.

BACK TO OXFORD PRISON

The highlight of my time at Oxford Nick was playing my small part in dealing with the infamous mail train robbers. They were all remanded to Oxford and the Governor, Mr Brophy, was under no illusion just how infamous they were to the extent HMG wanted no slip up, i.e. any escapes. Given their resources (the robbers got away with over £2.6 million, equivalent to £49.1 million today) this was no remote possibility, as subsequent events at HMP Wandsworth later proved. I remember a long cold night patrolling the landing on which they were housed.

In July 1965, Biggs escaped from Wandsworth Prison, 15 months into his sentence. Incidentally I was at Wandsworth when Biggs made his escape and I believe I was the last one to set eyes on him before he made his final getaway by car.

As a young N.E.P.O. (Newly Entrant Prison Officer) I spent quite a lot of time in the various local County Court docks. One lengthy case involving nine accused - they had to build an enlarged dock. The case was a protracted one. The accused were charged with fraud; a complicated case. which involved three prosecution exhibits; A, B and C. Each exhibit was over a thousand pages of evidence. 'If the jury would turn to page 999 of Exhibit B' One hot and humid afternoon the judge, who always appeared to be sound asleep himself, interrupted the proceedings to say, 'would the officer on the left wake up the officer on the right.' I was the offending officer and had the court reporter bothered to mention this little 'interesting' moment in his report I doubt I would be sitting here writing this!

It wasn't all boring. I recall a lady of low repute being sentenced and taking off one of her high heeled shoes and landing it right on the judge's nose! What a shot! And judges themselves could have quite the sense of humour. One young man on being sent down for a lengthy period - it was his n.th court appearance - shouted in despair, 'I'll never do it.' and as quick as a wit the judge replied, 'Well do the best you can.' Well, I found it funny.

I was in the Aylesbury Crown Court dock with the mail train robbers when they received their very lengthy sentences. HMG were not amused and this was their way of showing it.

An interesting little anecdote: quite some months later I was holidaying with my parents in Scotland. We were staying at the Murray Arms Hotel in Gatehouse-of-Fleet. Each evening I would meet with my father at the bar and each evening we would be joined by one of my dad's fellow fly- fishermen. I was sure I had seen my father's new found friend before. I later discovered he was Mr. Justice Edmund Davies who sat in judgment on the mail train robbers. He looked quite different without his wig and robes.

HMP WORMWOOD SCRUBS

Once I had completed my one year probationary period I was sent for six months' hospital training to HMP Wormwood Scrubs. A Dr. Hunt was our mentor and very effective he was too. Well, he taught me something which says a lot! I was readily persuaded that I suffered from all the ailments and diseases he described. I became quite the hypochondriac. It didn't help when he had us using stethoscopes and sounding my heart out, asked whether I felt okay. Was I sure, he insisted. He was pulling my leg but I had a nervous few moments.

There was one doctor at the Scrubs Hospital who bore a strong resemblance to the actor, James Robertson Justice. Many reading this may not remember him. Suffice to say he played the part of a small statured bombastic personality which just about summed up our doctor. Late one morning we had a young and strong psychotic Irishman kick off. He needed restraining and all available staff grabbed whatever part of his anatomy they could. Dr. 'Robertson Justice' came storming down the corridor with a syringe full of paraldehyde - a substance rarely used today but guaranteed to knock you out within moments. Finding a suitable part of the patient's anatomy was proving a challenge as arms, legs and bodies were flying in all directions. Finally the good doctor plunged in his needle and a Hospital Principal Officer went down like a buffalo shot through the head. Another attempt was required and the doctor fled down the corridor to replenish his syringe. If at first you don't succeed!

HMP WANDSWORTH

The training was thorough but compared with the nursing degrees and training required by todays nurses, it was minimal. I was going to say, 'insufficient', but it was probably just about enough given you continued to receive training on the job. I don't recall any prisoner patient dying of malpractice so the training must have been at least adequate. In my case this on-the-job training occurred at HMP Wandsworth to where I was posted on qualifying. Here I spent a satisfying couple of years whilst remaining on quite a steep learning curve.

In those days we did 'sleep-ins' which meant being on call through the night ready to attend to any incident of a medical nature. Being able to sleep through the night, unless called upon, meant you were available for duty the next day. There was an allowance of ten shillings for these 'sleep-ins' as there was for assisting the coroner with a post-mortem. You had to have one years' experience before undertaking this duty. My first night was very uncomfortable. My colleagues, God bless them, had laced my bed with itching powder. You could guarantee several call-outs to prisoners with headaches, stomach aches, tooth aches, any sort of ache to get a little attention and break the depressing monotony. Occasionally, and I'm not proud of this, we would administer a dose of asafetida which tasted awful. It is derived from a fennel-like plant that grows mainly in Iran and India. The powdered

gum resin of the asafetida imparts a very strong onion-garlic flavour and is used in small quantities in Indian dishes. This spice is not known much outside India but our pharmacist knew about it. The taste is bitter and acrid and had an offensive smell. We might even spill some in the administering which gave an equally awful aroma. Not that this made much difference as the nuisance call-outs persisted. The officers tasked with unlocking the following mornings were met with a wall of obnoxious gas!

One of the frequent pleas was, 'I can't sleep. I need something to get me off.' I'd make a big play about the strength of my treatment and, with some ritual, give them a Vitamin C tablet. You'd be surprised just how often this worked. 'Best night's sleep ever' some would say.

A death in custody could mean a visit to the local mortuary. On one occasion I was in the mortuary, when a body laid out on a slab relaxed from their rigor mortis so that their arm slipped off the body just as a young police cadet on his first day on this particular duty was passing by. He continued passing by for a few more seconds but horizontally.

Deaths in custody, some natural and some due to suicide, were always disturbing. Young males had a propensity for suicide as they continue to do to this day and they were the hardest to deal with. We had to play down the location of any death in a cell as getting it inhabited again was difficult. Later on when I became a Governor Grade I had the unenviable task of calling on the next-of-kin to inform them of the details, the police already having informed them of the death. One was often met with antagonism and mistrust, but a cup of tea was usually proffered and this lubricated the proceedings considerably. I was always sorry for those few 'lififers' (those serving long or life sentences) who died in prison and for whom there was no next-of-kin. Officers who had got to know the deceased in prison would often turn up for the funeral in their own time and expense; a side of prison staff largely unrecognised by most of us.

I had charge of the TB or tuberculosis ward at Wandsworth. Back then this was still a killer disease. Treatment of those affected was daily injections of Streptomycin and I used to pride myself on being able to often administer this injection without the patient being aware as they were completing their ablutions. Practise makes perfect!! It was at Wandsworth that I met one of my 'unforgettable characters'. Des, his name; obviously I'm not giving his full name. He was known for being into every fiddle and scheme going and was a source for a range of goods whose provenance was, to say the least, suspect. He sold watches for a fiver which, back then, was dirt cheap. Every staff member from the top down proudly wore one of Des's watches. The older readers may remember a five minute television slot broadcast on Saturday afternoons before the football entitled 'Police Five', in which the police were given the opportunity to fight crime. I was watching one Saturday in a ward full of prisoner patients all keen to see the football when up comes Police Five and a picture of the watches we had all bought from Des. 'If anyone is offered a watch of this description they are to contact Whitehall 1212 immediately.' Oooooops!

Des was the senior hospital officer (before we had such a designated rank) in charge of the VD or venereal disease clinic, today called STD clinics. He once persuaded me that he tested urine by dipping in his finger and tasting. 'Write down 1.5%' he said. 'You can't be serious,' said I. Of course he was dipping in one finger, but putting another finger to his mouth. I tried this out on the clinic 'red band', a trusted prisoner assistant, but got my fingers mixed up and spluttered everywhere! On one occasion we heard a loud stomping coming from his clinic and rushed in thinking he was under attack. Instead he was trying to perform a prostatic massage on a big and black prisoner who insisted on running around the room trying to escape, yelling for Des to desist. You'd understand the funny side of this so long as you knew how such a procedure is performed.

It wasn't until 1965 in Great Britain (1973 in Northern Ireland) that capital punishment was abolished and so we still had cells designated to those sentenced to death in use; colloquially referred to as the condemned cell. I can remember taking the daily quota of beer to a young Polish prisoner who had been sentenced to death. He seemed quite ambivalent to his fate I recall but then he had been reassured by his brief that he was not going to hang. The law was soon to change that would remove capital

punishment from the statute books, except for the crime of treason until it was completely abolished in 1998. And so I never experienced the application of the death penalty for which I am eternally grateful as older colleagues, who had, described the sobering effect it had on the whole prison.

The day in these old Victorian prisons started off by the day staff taking over from the night staff by counting and checking every prisoner in every cell. The officer in charge - determined by length of service - would yell down to the Wing Principal Officer standing in the centre of the prison, 'Sixty. All correct on the fours.' Once every landing was accounted for in this way the order was shouted out, 'Unlock' and the cells were all unlocked to allow the inmates to slop out.

I'm thinking that the sum of human knowledge is now on the internet. I looked up 'slopping out' not expecting a result but Wikipedia had it covered. This is what it said, *'Slopping out is the manual emptying of human waste when prison cells are unlocked in the morning. Inmates without a flush toilet in the cell have to use other means (formerly a chamber pot, then a bucket, now often a chemical toilet) while locked in during the night. The reason that some cells do not have toilets is that they date from the Victorian era and were therefore not designed with plumbing. As a result, there is no space in which to put a toilet, together with the expense and difficulty of installing the necessary pipes.'*

This unsavoury practice was in place up to 1996 but was, in fact, soon phased out not that long after I worked in these old prisons. None the less, I remember well the morning ritual and the smell and noise that went with it. It was said it was dehumanising and maybe it was, but there was a general acceptance of the practice. Prisoners seem to take this procedure in their stride. In fact when moved to a prison where there was integral sanitation - a flushing toilet in each cell - it was said they complained they actually missed the smell. Some said, and some Left Wing organisations agreed, that prisoners were being made to live in a toilet. All the same, I remember it as a dehumanising morning ritual. It would not be too unusual to have a pot thrown over a fellow prisoner or a member of staff. Slopping out remains a dim and distant memory and we're better off for it. Working in the hospital meant that I avoided this daily ritual.

Reception Duty as a Hospital Officer involved assisting the Medical Officer as he medically examined every new prisoner arriving at the prison. For the older recidivists it was a well-rehearsed event, but for the uninitiated it was all pretty much overwhelming. Taking men straight from the streets via the courts meant they often arrived with a host of issues. I used to feel for the old tramps who had not had their clothes off for years and years and were filthy dirty and infested with lice and vermin. They had to be put into a bath fully dressed so that their clothes would soak off them. Often they required assistance and many is the old man of the road who has almost died of heart failure from the shock. I once had the unenviable task of resuscitating one old fellow who, on getting out of the bath, collapsed in a heap. This had to be a task beyond the natural call of duty but I did my best to apply mouth to mouth and he survived for another day. One doctor I worked with was not a happy chap and lacked a sense of humour. He told one young man to drop his trousers and touch his toes as was the norm as part of the examination. I was standing at the back of the room. Suddenly I fell about laughing. He had two eyes tattooed, one on each buttock. As he bent over each eye appeared to open wide in amazement!! Fortunately the doctor shared my amusement.

Before I joined the Service I worked in the bar of my busy local. One night I refused to serve a local gang as they were drunk. The landlord gave them short shrift and they were sent packing. They were waiting to pounce as I walked home and I got a fair bruising. Revenge comes to he who waits as some years later the ring-leader of this gang came through Reception. Though some time had passed, I readily recognised him. 'Remember me?' I asked. Initially he didn't as the circumstances were so different and I was in uniform. Very quickly it clicked. Of course I just let him sweat but he must have wondered whether I might come a calling to redress the balance from those few years ago. 'What goes around comes around,' I thought and chuckled away to myself.

I am often asked what working in a prison is like. If you can remember the television sitcom, 'Porridge' with Ronnie Barker: well for me, this was a good representation of prison life. A sense of humour was essential. Often a sick and gallows humour was employed but without humour to oil the wheels I guess prison life on both sides of the fence could be pretty trying.

It was whilst at Wandsworth that I completed several tours at small establishments up and down the country who had only one Hospital Officer on the pay roll. He -it was always a 'he' back then - needed to be replaced when they went on leave or went off sick. Being single I was always up for a change of scenery which was also well remunerated. It was meant to work on a Rota system but several staff did not appreciate being away from home and I would take their turn. So I kept a small suitcase ready-packed and would find myself at establishments as varied as Holloway female Prison and rurally-situated Detention Centres like Blantyre House and Borstals like Pollington in Yorkshire. Holloway could be almost a certainty for daily 'incidents'. This was the reason why there had to be a male Hospital Officer on duty at all times. It was said that women were far more difficult to handle physically than men. I would vouch for this. Not that I had too many occasions to deal with. Even in Holloway humour came to one's relief.

One bleak and snow-driven winter's night at Blantyre House DC located in the middle of the Kent country. I was called to assist with a birth. This was definitely not within my remit. An officer's wife was bringing a baby boy into the world. This procedure was not covered by our tuition at the Scrubs. Oh Dear! Fortunately I had a rough idea as my mother was a midwife and during summer school holidays I would go along with her and one occasion in particular I needed to be more than just a bystander. Anyway, all you need is hot water, towels and a sharp knife - don't you?!!

Like Borstals, Detention Centres, designed to provide a short sharp shock, have entered the history books. The Criminal Justice Act 1982 officially abolished the borstal system in the UK, introducing youth custody centres instead. As society had changed the system was then already outdated, especially since the late-1960s and early-1970s, with many borstals being closed and replaced with institutions called Detention Centres (not to be confused with the early Centres mentioned above) and, from 1972, also with Community Service Order sentences. I worked in a few old-style Detention Centres which were established to inflict a 'short sharp shock' on those convicted of fairly serious offences, but with no previous history of incarceration. Seeing young thugs from inner cities reduced to having to mend their own socks and rise by 0530 for early physical exercise consisting of running around the sports field carrying a huge medicine ball; well, it was quite a revelation. Pity of it is that after a few weeks they became as fit as butcher's dogs and loved it. The food was better than many ever ate at home and they had companionship of fellow 'sufferers!'

I felt somewhat exposed at these small institutions as being on one's own meant that you had to rely much more on your own resources. Of course there was always the local GP who was contracted to be on call as well as make regular and routine visits, but they were busy people and you got on with it. There was, after all, French's Index of Medical Diagnosis and MIMS or Monthly Index of Medical Specialties available to refer to. I even bought my own copy of French's and it wasn't cheap. Anyway, I never actually killed anyone and may even have cured the occasional patient. I remember at one open Borstal in Yorkshire being approached by a member of the admin. staff who suffered from chronic ulceration of the legs and would not, under any circumstances, visit a doctor. Before I returned to my home establishment I had her almost cured with the use of daily Eusol (Edinburgh University Solution of Lime) dressings and after this, at least at this particular establishment, my rep. went before me. Playing at doctors was possible back in the '60s and '70s as even with such inadequate training and qualification there was little else to fall back on. We were just allowed to get on with it. The war had left the country desperately short of qualified personnel and compromise was the only way. I, for one, was appreciative of the opportunity to work on the fringes of medicine. Today the training and qualifications demanded are marathon. I am not saying that I might not have coped with these demands; the point is, I didn't have to.

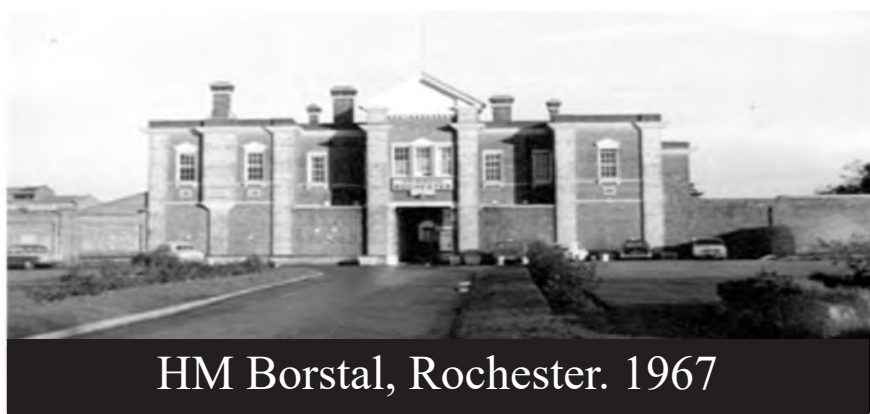
I recall a colleague showing round a party of Members of the Board Of Visitors (rather like a board of governors) and being asked what qualifications he had. Without hesitation he said, 'QBE.' They pursued the matter no further. Later I asked him, 'What's with this QBE?' 'Qualified by Experience,' he replied: very apt.

HM BORSTAL ROCHESTER

I was still pretty young myself, having joined up at the minimum age, so was keen to work full-time in Young Offender establishments and was lucky enough to get myself posted to HM Borstal Rochester in March 1966. I enjoyed my almost-four years at Rochester. Cross-country running and rugby were the only two activities I took away from my school days at St Bede's College in Manchester and I was able to employ both at Rochester Borstal. It was here that the Tutor Organiser, Peter Antwiss, asked whether I might be interested in taking part in the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race. If I'd known then what I know now, I would certainly have declined. As it is, I took up the challenge that went on to provide me with an abiding interest and involvement in kayaking that has lasted to the present day. But this is another story all together.

There were five Hospital Officers at Rochester Borstal, one of whom was a Hospital Principal Officer who was also our pharmacist. We had a full-time doctor and part-time dentist. The hospital consisted of a large ward and several single rooms. We had a part-time psychiatrist and he was kept busy. Rochester was a secure Borstal, well, as secure as any other establishment was in those days, which does not amount to being very secure by today's standards, 'though, as I write (Nov. 2016), two have just escaped from Pentonville Prison. As such, we cared for a proportionally large number of mentally ill young men. I doubt very much has changed today, but at least our present society is starting to understand the extent and the complexity of mental illness, certainly with a long way still to go.

Whilst touching on the issue of security I am reminded about one New Year's Day. I'd been on duty for an hour to help with the 'sick parade' and with seeing inpatients receiving breakfast and medication and completing their ablutions. I was back in my ground-floor flat just outside the Borstal cooking breakfast, when a borstal boy ran past my window followed by another and another; five in all. Turning off the gas cooker I chased after them and by chance got them cornered in the back of the woods where the local gamekeeper had erected some high galvanised sheeting to keep his pheasants from escaping. Faced by five lads intent on escaping I had two choices, viz. let them go or face them up. If I'd had the chance to think it through I'd have taken the former action but instead I persuaded them that escaping was an offence but assaulting an officer whilst so doing magnified the offence a hundred fold. The ring leader understood this and they capitulated and I walked them back to the road where we were met by a stampede of officers out to recapture them. I handed them over and went back to finish cooking my breakfast. Now I didn't want a fuss but I did expect someone in authority to at least say thanks for my risking life and limb. Not a word was ever mentioned, not a mutter of commendation, not a 'kiss your backside.' 'Well, I thought, 'should this event ever repeat itself I would just keep cooking breakfast, nay, I'd probably offer the escapees their bus fare!!



HM Borstal, Rochester. 1967

HM BORSTAL GAYNES HALL

The Deputy Governor of Rochester, Martin Burnett, was promoted to Governor of an open Borstal in the middle of the Cambridgeshire countryside called Gaynes Hall. He soon took one of the Rochester Principal Officers along with him, also on promotion, Chief Officer Tom Whiteman; a man for whom I had a great deal of respect. When the Hospital Officer at Gaynes moved on leaving a vacancy - it was a single hospital officer posting - I was asked by Mr. Whiteman whether I would be interested in joining them. I suspect this invitation was largely down to my enthusiasm for sport. Thus' ensued the best eight years of my service life.

Gaynes was an open borstal; no locks, walls or fences. If a lad wanted to 'abscond' he just chose his moment and walked or ran away. This option was not chosen too often. They were soon apprehended and then were denied the opportunity of open conditions - so there was a high price. The heart of the borstal was the 'Big House' - pictured - used for Governors Residence and the Administration Department

I worked with and to the local GP practice at Kimbolton and the senior partner, Dr. Grainger used to visit a couple of times a week and, of course, was on call in any emergency. I very rarely called upon the practice as I developed a good working relationship with the local hospital, Huntingdon County Hospital and with the famous hospital at Cambridge, Addenbrookes. I was able to refer my patients directly for such as X-rays and blood tests as well as appointments. The important rule was to ensure that the Kimbolton Practice were always fully aware of every decision and action I took and never to exceed my remit as a Hospital Officer. Suffice to say this was not ever clearly stated and the boundaries were, to say the least, somewhat ragged. Consequently within this rule I was given a lot of licence and tried to make best use of it. The local chemist in Kimbolton supplied our drugs and ordering and taking delivery was formally done under the auspices of the GP practice, but in reality I was given a free hand to spend our drugs grant as I saw fit.

On the subject of spending my medical grant it is worth touching on the whole issue of funding all those years ago. I received the various grants each April at the start of the financial year. Dental grants, drugs grants, etc. By September it was expected that I would have spent my annual allowance and I would receive supplementary budgets. It appeared that the attitude from the Medical Directorate was that if you had not run out of your funding you had either asked for far too much in the first place or were not doing your job to capacity. Money, it seemed, was no object. Then it all changed as funding and tight accountability came together in close partnership. It has to be said, it was good whilst it lasted. Unofficially it was accepted that I was to be the front line for any member of staff and their families injured or taken suddenly sick. On top of this I was often asked to attend to domestic pets and injured wild life (usually birds with broken wings brought to me by local children) in need of some first aid. In short, I felt I had a lot of responsibility and consciously attempted to measure up.

The lads sent to Gaynes Hall were meant to have been medically assessed and passed fit for our regime, 'though several slipped the net and had to be returned to Wormwood Scrubs for re-allocation. So up to a point I ruled over my own small empire of an open ward and a couple of side rooms together with a surgery-cum-office, a dark room - I used to take and develop teeth X-rays on new arrivals as part of the reception procedure at 11 pence per film - and a dental surgery. The dentist, Jeff Turner from Cambridge, turned up every Wednesday. We became good friends and I used to crew for him on his yacht off the east coast. So it was a happy ship and a good billet for me. I managed the cross-country running team, played with the Borstal rugby team and built up a small flotilla of kayaks to form the Gaynes Hall Canoe Club.

The Chief Officer, Tom Whiteman, insisted I take the Senior Officers' exam. My reluctance was due to the fact I might be posted on to another establishment should I pass. An 'insistence' from Mr. Whiteman could not be ignored and so I took the exam and passed it. In the event I was really fortunate in being posted as a Hospital Senior Officer to Gaynes Hall.

At the last minute I had received a reprieve. A decision was taken in high places that all singleton postings should be manned by a HSO; very timely in my case and I carried on at Gaynes for another four years before making Hospital Principal Officer and being posted to HMP Strangeways, Manchester in August, 1976. Actually my move to Manchester was very timely as Borstals as such were being relegated to history and Gaynes was scheduled for demolition and replacement by HMP Littlehey shortly after I had left.

HMP STRANGEWAYS

I had been culturally and professionally protected at Gaynes Hall and found myself thrown into the deep as I struggled to learn the ropes. I was not able to practice any nursing. Now I was to be an administrator and I was none too happy with the prospect. Making out staff details and managing staff rather than borstal boys was not my preferred option but needs must and I made the most of it. I was ably supported by a well-experienced fellow Hospital Principal Officer who, far from resenting the fact I was still pretty young for the post and he was fairly long in the tooth, took me under his wing. Both he and his wife were lovely people. Working with staff and trying to get them to perform to standard could prove a challenge but, by and large, with few exceptions, I coped. This is my account and I'm sticking to it!

I wish I can remember the name of the Hospital Principal Officer I worked with at Strangeways as it is worth recounting his circumstances on retirement. We all lived in homes provided by the Prison Service strategically located in close proximity to the prison itself. In many cases houses were equipped with a bell that could be triggered from the prison in an emergency. Today this is no longer the case as official accommodation no longer exists; staff all live in their own homes. But back then, living in tied accommodation meant that you and your family had to find alternative accommodation on retirement. This could be a tall order as, like today, housing was not in ready supply. Half pay pension was based on the best of your last three years of service and with a totally inadequate 'final lump sum' finding somewhere to live on retirement was proving difficult or well nigh impossible for many. So it was for my retiring colleague and he and his wife endured a nightmare before the local council was able to house them. I remember a Chief Officer retiring from one of my previous establishments having to take a job as a cemetery superintendent as a house came with the job.

I am certainly not short of anecdotes from Manchester. It was an interesting nick to work at with almost-daily challenges. Across the corridor from my office were the two protected rooms or padded cells that were infrequently used and when they were there were many checks and balances to ensure they were never abused. One very unpredictable patient was so located and I discovered the visiting psychiatrist had entered alone; she had a cell key. Of course I made a fuss and threatened to have her cell key confiscated. This threat was insufficient to stop a reoccurrence but this time she paid a heavy price and had to be hospitalised: a quite unnecessary event and, I have to say, a very rare one. We had some difficult patients to care for at Strangeways and, in my experience, they received quality care.

'Scar Face' was our Governor; so-called because he had been badly burnt in his tank during WW2. His name was Norman Brown; highly respected and popular, he was a regular in the Officers' Club and ran a tight ship. Fortunately he had retired by the time of the infamous riot in 1990 and I had left at my own request to take up the post of Hospital Principal Officer at HMP Bedford.

There was a riot at Hull Prison during my time at Strangeways and many of those involved were dispatched to us. Staff had been hurt at Hull and so the culprits were given a rough time, being made to run the gauntlet down in the Segregation Unit. It was my job to escort the doctor on his daily rounds of the prison and we had to put a stop to this staff retaliation before it got out of hand. I knew there was one prisoner kept in his cell and out of sight of both Governor and doctor and that the situation was getting out of control. I sought out the officer in charge and suggested the doctor be allowed to treat this prisoner and in return for the doctor's compliance/silence the violence ceased forthwith. Fortunately this strategy worked and worse was avoided.

It wasn't always quite so easy to manage these affairs and there were several occasions when staff and prisoner confrontation led to assaults requiring medical attention. It was evident from the enquiry following the Strangeways Riot that circumstances prevailing led to the riot; simple cause and effect. Yes, my time at Strangeways and at Gaynes Hall remained in total contrast. Not that I didn't enjoy my time at Manchester. The prison staff were, very cohesive and supportive; one felt part of a family. In fact I met my wife-to-be whilst at Strangeways. I recall an officer and his family having all their Christmas shopping robbed from their car. In no time at all a collection was made and their shopping and doubtless more besides was replaced. Yes, they were all a great bunch of colleagues.

HMP BEDFORD

But I missed the south of England. Even though I was brought up and educated in Manchester, my inclination to live and work in the south was strong. So I applied for a posting to Bedford Prison and was told it was mine, but the move itself was to be at my own expense. Having trundled down the M6 with all I possessed and deposited the same in my new home, I took up the job as Hospital Principal Officer which included responsibility for the pharmacy as dispenser, a new role for which my time at Gaynes Hall was of some assistance. Bedford Prison was a busy local serving the courts. We took remand prisoners straight from the street and many were drug addicted and/or mentally ill, As an example of the sort of case we dealt with I'll tell you about one particular prisoner; we'll call him Jimmy, a large black man accused of assaulting two young girls. The assault was not at all serious but had the potential to be so. Consequently there was an issue of public safety. He was clearly very disturbed; disturbed enough to have to be located in our protected room (colloquially - 'padded cell') for his own safety and be very carefully managed. There was really only one disposal and this was to a Special Hospital, but the 1959 Mental Health Act stated that a doctor from this hospital had to agree and this agreement was not forthcoming on the grounds Jimmy was not treatable. We were stuck with Jimmy and the judge was becoming frustrated in having little in the way of sentencing options other than sectioning him under the Mental Health Act. The judge called me to his chambers to demand an explanation. I decided to contact the Home Office to raise this particular issue and got myself into strife with authority on high. Fortunately my Governor at the time was sympathetic and I was told 'not do it again,' 'it' being embarrassing senior civil servants with questions and demands they could not handle! Eventually we managed to get Jimmy into an alternative Special Hospital, so ended a difficult case. Sadly Jimmy's case was not that unusual.

Many of the remand prisoners we received were drug addicts, usually young men. I could never understand a severe drug addict enduring drug withdrawal or 'cold turkey' and then ever going back to their habit. Acute withdrawal was not a procedure one would inflict on the devil. The suffering was immense, even with such as methadone to ease the process. Eventually the drug addict would be clear of drugs only to be released to then return to prison on other charges as badly addicted as before and have to go through the living hell of withdrawal all over again.

We did have our own psychiatrist on staff, Dr Newton, known affectionately as 'Bugsy Newton' after his reputation as an amateur entomologist. He was quite a colourful character and had completed a career as a Prison Medical Officer and was a much respected member of our Bedford team. Dr. Smith was our Medical Officer. He was into Osmology, or the science of smell research. It was determined that men and women are attracted to each other via selective chemical messengers called pheromones. He told me about one of his experiments conducted in a nunnery which consisted of spreading pheromones around and measuring the menstruation activities of the nuns. It's whatever 'runs your motor.' So Bedford Prison Hospital had its' fair share of interesting personalities.

Bedford Prison dates back to 1801 and, like Oxford Prison, is situated in the town centre. I certainly enjoyed my time there; almost four years. I planned a long-term stay, perhaps up to my retirement. We were in the middle of buying a new house in a great location. My wife was working with the builder to choose tiles when, out of the blue, I was called for a promotion interview. Unfortunately Bedford Nick is going through a rough time as I write this - November, 2016. NOMS or the National Offender Management System is, like most our public services, suffering from financial restraints and the results of the current disturbances are said to be caused by reduced staffing levels and resources. I shall have something more to say about the need for effective rehabilitation and this always comes at a cost; a cost that is paid back down the road many times over. But then I know it is not that easy as we all need to cut our cloth etc. etc ...

HMP WAKEFIELD

The promotion interview worked out in my favour and I was posted to HMP Wakefield in Yorkshire. Back up north again. At forty, I was told I was among the youngest Hospital Chief Officers in the Service. Maybe this was because they had a problem filling the post. Staff morale and staff management was poor. My predecessor opted out; content to see out his time towards retirement by keeping to his office and letting his senior staff make the most of a bad job. Excessive overtime was being manipulated, staff were taking liberties and when I tried to effect changes I was given little or no support from my Principals. It was a case of, 'It's your problem, get on with it.' I either quit or I coped. I decided on the latter and sought out a meeting with the Director of Medical Services, Dr. Rosemary Wool. I have to say her attitude was similar to those of my Governor and Principal Medical Officer back at base and all I really received was a bunch of platitudes. I had little choice but to place a couple of officers on a disciplinary charge known as a 'Half Sheet.' Don't ask me why! Though, obviously in my estimation, the evidence was pretty good, the power of the Prison Officers Association was even stronger and the cases were lost. I had to soldier on. But certain members of staff, particularly my two Senior Officers, were sympathetic to my efforts and they were keen to see change and with their support I believe I did make some improvements, even though it was rather like pushing treacle uphill.

The Irish Republican Army was very active both in Ireland and in England. We had in our care an IRA prisoner who was 'on the blanket'; that is, he refused to wear prison clothing and insisted he was a POW. Because he had been sent down the London Underground to defuse the bomb he had planted there and because it exploded taking off his arm he was one of our patients. He complained to me one morning when on my rounds that he was being antagonised by a particular member of staff. As this was one of the few occasions he ever spoke to me I did have a word with the officer concerned who claimed, 'All I ever do is sing under my breath.' He failed to say he sang anti-IRA tunes. I warned him he was being stupid and sure enough, a week later he failed to show up for work. In fact he never showed up for work again either at Wakefield Prison or any other prison as far as I know. Officials from the IRA had called on him at his home and 'advised him' on his ways and on what retaliatory methods were open to them. The power of the IRA was not to be underestimated.

The whole HIV and AIDS issue hit the fan during my time at Wakefield. We were dealing with the unknown. Society in general, the Government specifically, the medical fraternity in general were all dealing with the unknown and there is nothing like the unknown, particularly when this ignorance is dealing in serious disease and death, to cause fear and over-reaction. Prisons, mainly local prisons, were in the front line in dealing with this outbreak and Wakefield was no exception. The POA and staff in general, even the doctors, were unsure about how to deal with it. White boiler suits and rubber gloves and boots became 'de rigueur'. It was to our credit that, by and large, we all maintained a level of professionalism as common sense prevailed and information replaced ignorance. It all happened very fast and the whole issue was exacerbated by the outdated attitude towards gays and lesbians back then. We have moved a long way in a short time. Indeed I recall as a young Hospital Officer, escorting prisoners to clinics beyond the prison for Aversion Therapy to treat the 'illness' of homosexuality.

Sometimes the courts would make such treatment a condition of early release. Doctors and psychiatrists all believed (or most did) that homosexuality could be treated. How times and attitudes have changed in such a short period. The impact of AIDS and HIV on society was reflected within the prison community. It all seemed to happen very quickly. Suddenly there were public information sheets, posters and leaflets everywhere. The media went into overdrive. Society was being forced to address what had always previously been a taboo subject. Overnight we saw open and frank discussions about homosexuality. When one considers just how we approached this issue only a short time previously by locking up anyone who dared to search out a homosexual partner in such as public toilets, it is just amazing how the attitudes of society - though to this day, not all of them - have changed. Whoever would have thought back in the late 20th Century that today we would accept same-sex marriages as the norm!!

We cared for some notorious inmates at Wakefield, including one on long term hunger strike. By all accounts he should have starved to death several times over but somehow kept lingering on. Occasionally he had to be force-fed and this was a procedure that was so de-humanising for both the recipient and the administrators. There were some implications regarding his incarceration and to say he was a difficult, manipulative, evil individual is understating his personality. He had to be handled with circumspection, as there was clearly more to his background than we, or at least I, were ever made privy. The media persisted in their interest in his welfare and I was always very wary of any involvement with him. One officer did get the sack for talking to the press about him. He was located in a side room of the hospital when I arrived and he was still there when I eventually left. I have no idea what happened to him but he survived many years of refusing food during my time.

I am sometimes asked about notorious prisoners with whom I have been acquainted over the years. Many were true psychopaths and, as such, were considered untreatable. The discussions regarding causes continue. Here the 'nature v nurture' debate really kicks in. Whatever the aetiology, the Prison Service usually ends up with the job of caring for them. As my illustration regarding Jimmy above, the Special Hospitals would rather leave it this way. In my limited experience not all of them were overtly evil. This may be one of their problems, as it seems they are often able to display a side of their personality which can be quite engaging. An experiment consisting of concentrating very difficult and disturbed prisoners together and concentrating resources towards their 'treatment' and care was a brave attempt to follow the example of the Netherlands Prison Service and I am very proud to have been part of this experiment, of which more later. One of the arguments I came across quite often was that if the prisons were expected to care for such unpredictable people should they not be resourced and staff trained to so do. Were we looking after prisoners or patients or, even more perplexing, were some of them simultaneously realistically both?!!

I will return to life at Wakefield. I was in the Officers' Club one evening, not far off closing time. Officers' Clubs featured large and every establishment had one. They were a source of entertainment as well as of staff unity. It's a pity they have been relegated to history. Anyway, I was enjoying a last drink when we had the call to attend a disturbance in the nick. A prisoner had set fire to his mattress and the whole wing was filled with smoke. The matter was quickly dealt with and we all went home. The 'fun' started the next day when the inmates of the wing discovered that affected staff were to have chest X-rays and so insisted on the same treatment. The Governor of the day was not the easiest individual to get on with and he and our PMO did not always see eye to eye. I had to act as intermediary which was all nonsense but.... The Governor asked me whether we had plans to examine the inmates. The PMO said no, that there was no clinical indication. A riot appeared to be looming. Inmates affected by smoke inhalation were becoming agitated, even revolting! It was getting serious. I am not saying that the PMO was relishing the discomfort of the Governor but ... Somehow I had to get the doctor to change his mind. Requests from me that he do so were fruitless. Even suggesting he reconsider was tantamount to disloyalty. I did not have too much sympathy with the Gov. but a riot would mean trouble and likely injuries to those involved. I hit upon a ruse. This is the first time I have shared this tale; after so many

years I guess I am beyond any reproach from my boss. I had initiated the call from St James Hospital. More ways of killing a cat than drowning it in cream!

I spoke with a senior consultant at St James Hospital in Leeds who I knew quite well and described the problem. 'What can I do about it?' he demanded. I suggested he might make a call to my PMO (they were well known to each other) on some pretext or another and persuade him it might be a good idea should he back off a little. He did me this favour and a compromise was reached. The PMO came through to my office. 'I have thought on the matter,' he said. 'We'll medically examine the prisoners in the affected wing.' And that afternoon we checked them all out with stethoscopes. A riot was averted and to this day the good doctor had no idea I had initiated the call from St James Hospital. More ways of killing a cat than drowning it in cream! I played my very last game of rugby whist at Wakefield - against RAF Finningley at the age of 42; it ended with me being drunk in charge of a push bike as I tried to find my way home but this is another story all together.



HMP PARKHURST AND C WING SPECIAL UNIT

Dr. Geoffrey Pollitt was my Principal Medical Officer at Wakefield and he had some advisory input into the concept and eventual introduction of a Special Unit for particularly difficult inmates (as briefly mentioned above) which was due to be installed at HMP Parkhurst on the Isle of Wight. 'Sort of role that would suit you,' he told me and so with his support (he was likely wanting to get rid of me!) I got the job. It suited me fine and, with my family, we moved to the Isle of Wight and took up Island Life which suited us admirably I but I had asked that this posting contained a caveat that, after four years, I would have an expenses-paid transfer back to the mainland. We did not want to retire on the Island and moving off at one's own expense would not be cheap. This was agreed upon and, in the event, I completed six years, the last two as Hospital Chief Officer Class 1 in the Parkhurst Prison Hospital where Dr. David Cooper was my Principal Medical Officer. He was a well-respected psychiatrist and he, like the rest of the hospital staff, had their time cut out caring for the range of medical and psychiatric cases that presented.

The Special Unit was to be a prison within a prison. We took over one of the complete wings, C Wing, and became known as the 'C Wing Special Unit.' The relationship between the Prison and the Unit was crucial and was not always an easy one. We were blamed for foisting our prisoners on to the main prison which was very true as the Unit Doctor and I visited the prisoner who had been submitted as a possible candidate in his home establishment to ensure he fitted our criteria. It was said that it was easier to get into Eton College. The problem came when occasionally we had to make use of the main prison's Segregation Unit. One of our more notorious inmates was Charles Bronson - not his real name. Bronson was a real handful though initially he behaved himself and it was some weeks before we had to move him out to the main prisons' Segregation Unit. Here he continued to play up and he even managed to climb on to an adjacent roof. The Governor at the time was John Marriott. 'You brought him into this prison, you can go and sort him out.' Not one of my easiest assignments! Fortunately - or maybe unfortunately - I had known Bronson since my time at Oxford. As a young man he was in the throes of robbing Burtons the Tailors when he set off the alarm. Police arrived in quick time but found no trace of him until they brought in the dogs that sniffed him out. He was standing in the window posing as a mannequin. He had even come prepared by being dressed in his suit - part of his escape strategy. I knew him under his original name. I haven't read his book but have it in my library and scanning through it I see no reference to his name-change. He was certainly a 'colourful' character.

C Wing Special Unit came from the recommendations of the Control Review Committee which considered the management of the long-term prison population. One of their considerations was that of long-term

prisoners who present serious control problems. It was clear that these inmates took up a large amount of management and staff time that could be better employed looking after the majority of their population and so the strategy of placing 'all bad eggs in the one basket' took hold. As I mentioned earlier, this concept was being successfully applied in the Dutch Prison Service and Chris Gibbard, the designated Governor, Sue Evershed, our psychologist and I made a visit to Holland as part of our preparation prior to opening. It was forward-thinking and educational and we came away determined to use many of their ideas.

Our first 'client' was from Parkhurst Prison itself, Eddie Wilkinson or 'Unsteady Eddie.' He was crippled from polio as a child. We were excited about actually opening the Special Unit to its' first 'customer' when I got the message he was refusing to budge. He had no intention of being transferred to a 'nutters' unit.' After some bribery and cajoling he agreed to give us a try: not a very auspicious beginning. Eddie had a very depressing history as did most of our inmates. My office was located in the inner sanctum of the unit and out of bounds to prisoners. On one occasion I looked up from my desk and there stood Eddie. I could have pushed the panic button but instead I invited him to sit down and have a chat. Of course boredom is the ever-present condition in prisons and I was doubtless bored myself and welcomed a chat. What followed was a most distressing story told in a very matter-of-fact way. I knew Eddie's story. It was part of my job to know the story of every prisoner we had in the Unit, but to hear the sad and horrendous tale of child abuse endured during his young life as described to me by Eddie was memorable to say the least, made more so by his story being totally believable and without any attempt to gain sympathy or understanding.

The success of this Special Unit was important to the Home Office and we had frequent visits from their officials. One such was Tony Butler, a man for whom I had the greatest regard and who became one of our major advocates. We also had to attend frequent meetings in London and so we remained under the spot light being fairly tightly scrutinised. Several formal reports were produced, the first major one being submitted covering the first two years of our existence, which consisted of three papers focusing on different aspects of the Parkhurst Unit's work: a detailed descriptive account by the prison psychologist who was part of the Unit's management team; a psychiatric study of inmates which was commissioned from the Institute of Psychiatry; and an evaluation of the unit by a leading criminologist. Writing this Memoire prompted me to look up the C Wing Special Unit on the internet. Here you will find the Home Office Study, all 150 pages of it: it is Research Study No. 122 entitled, 'Managing Difficult Prisoners: The Parkhurst 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. 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 misbehaviour 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 behaviour 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 - which is public knowledge - 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 intelligence leading to the prevention of incidents.

Which all begs the questions: is there sufficient staff training in the area of managing difficult and damaged prison inmates in today's prison service and are there sufficient staff to even take up this training?

I admit to being rather dilatory in maintaining any interest in the Unit once I had left to take up the post of Deputy Governor at a northern Young offenders institute in 1992. At this time 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.. The then Home Secretary, Michael Howard, had a distinct sense of humour failure. 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 binoculars, from the adjoining hillside which provided an aerial view of the whole prison. I was tempted to 'do a moony' 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.

HMYOI HINDLEY

I left the Unit to take up a post at Hindley Prison in the NW of England from where I retired six years later. My Governor here was David Roberts. Over my years in the service I worked with many Governors and the best for a host of reasons was Mr. Roberts; a real gentleman. It was not until the start of the policy to privatise prisons that the Prison Officers Association became malleable. Up till this time they could be a real pain, obstructing so many projects and improvements to our system and routine. David Roberts was expert in handling (I was going to say, manipulating) the POA and I was fascinated by his ability to circumvent their less than cooperative stance.

Initially on quite a steep learning curve, I soon picked up the role at this remand prison for young offenders. One of my tasks was to check the accuracy of release dates. We were liable to huge compensation awards if we were late discharging a prisoner; even worse repercussions if we were too early. My other role was that of adjudicator on prisoners who misbehaved. Most mornings I would attend the Segregation Unit to hear the case against the miscreants who had fallen foul of the prison rules. Most of the cases that came before me were fairly innocuous but occasionally they could be serious and then we would bring in the local police and further charges might well be forthcoming. Violence and serious assaults were fairly rare, but all the same did happen. I admit to rather enjoying this role as judge and jury but, unless the case before me involved violence and injury, I did not take it all too seriously. I sat at the end of a long table and the accused was brought in to stand at the other end whilst the charge and evidence was put before us. 'Now, you little tinker, what have to say for yourself?' Some of the excuses were ingenious. Some were in total denial. 'Not me, Gov.' One Governor famously told a prisoner in denial that if his staff told him he had been riding around the landing on a motorbike he'd want to know where he got the petrol. The important element here was that the officers felt supported by the adjudicating Governor so, in truth, denials were never going anywhere and it was our job to see that the punishment fitted the crime. The alternative might well be that a lad would get a 'thick ear' rather than being placed on report for misbehaviour. Not the way to go, 'though I am not that naive to believe it might have occurred from time to time, but Officers were aware that their job was at stake and circumspection prevailed.

We looked after young men from both Manchester and Liverpool and, until Lancaster Farms Prison came on-stream in 1993 which took those from Liverpool, we had a wicked job keeping them apart. Any chance at all and they would be at each other's throats and this extended to their families and friends who visited. I was Duty Governor one weekend when all hell broke loose in the open visits area as the two sides battled it out with furniture and handbags flying in all direction. Police back-up was necessary which included the police helicopter overhead. 'Oh, me nerves!'

I was unlucky with my weekends as Duty Governor. Once we had a bad fire and the Fire Brigade had to attend. It was all getting very tense as the situation was being used to also fire up the animosity between the Liverpool lads, the 'scousers', and the Manchester lads. An official from the Fire Service, a small man in mufti and wearing a cloth cap, strode across the yard in a very determined fashion and with one voice from the wing housing the scousers came, 'Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right.' It was all downhill from then on and the situation calmed right down.

So the foregoing just about sums up my 36 years in the British Prison Service. If I was 21 again (I wish!) then would I do it all again? An emphatic 'yes' is the answer

NB

Just as I am giving this piece of mine a little light polish (Tuesday 29th November, 2016) sadly my last establishment, Hindley Young Offenders Prison is at the butt end of a seriously bad report from the Prison Inspectorate. Apparently they say it is easier to get hold of drugs than it is clean bedding and a shower. It appears to be quite the catalogue of depressing issues and problems. The only light is the note that, 'A new and energetic Governor has recently taken up post.' To say he is in need of fair wind and good fortune is far from sufficient. He needs adequate resources and then he needs to prioritise his objectives going forward, many of them having to be achieved simultaneously.

The National Offender Management System (NOMS) is having bad press on a daily basis. Suicides are at the highest level since statistics were first kept. Drugs are being ferried in by the load. Drones or 'unmanned aerial vehicles' are being employed to assist with this ferrying; the audacity is stunning. Easy enough for me, retired now for twenty years, to sit here and put it all right but it is not high science. The power of John Howard's representation of prisons and prison life in '**The State of the Prisons in England and Wales**' published in 1777 led to a one-dimensional view of Hanoverian prisons grounded in their filth, petty corruption and insecurity and as places of contagious moral degeneration. I would be very surprised if corruption was a present-day issue but the other factors certainly, by all accounts, are. I believe the Prison Service I left in 1997 bore some reasonable resemblance to the Service I joined in the early 1960s. From all the evidence currently forthcoming the Service bears very little resemblance to these bygone times. Okay, so I'm sounding off, 'Everything was better in my day.' Then just perhaps it really was.

John Ramwell

5, Osprey Ave, Westhoughton
Bolton. BL5 2SL

November 2016



Computer Corner.

In my last article I highlighted some of the potential hazards from people who attempt to part the unwary and unsuspecting from their money with online and telephone scams. Within days of writing the article the world was hit by the “WANNA-CRY” hacking scam that brought several large organisations to a halt, including several NHS trusts.

The cause of the problem was a RANSOMWARE attack where hackers gained access to computer systems and encrypted the memory contents, then demanded payment to provide access to unlock the files. It would now appear that the source of this attack was North Korea and that it was likely just the first of many which will hit the world. What made the whole thing even worse was that it transpires that the programme code used in the hack was actually developed by the CIA and leaked by someone within the organisation, and promptly fell into the hands of hackers. You really could not make this stuff up.....

However at the time it was believed that the attack was aimed at computers running Windows XP as it was thought that these units were particularly vulnerable, as Microsoft stopped supporting this version of Windows when it introduced Windows 10. It is not entirely true that the attack was aimed at XP as it is now believed that more Windows 7 machines were affected than any others, and that Windows 10 machines were not affected.

All the professional advice is that if you have not yet upgraded to Windows 10 then you should consider doing so as soon as possible. If however you do decide to stay with Windows XP or Windows 7 then you should go the Microsoft website and download the latest security updates for your software. Microsoft considered the threat to be so great that they have issued a “one-off” security upgrade for Windows XP, and they will continue to support Windows 7 until 2020.

If you are running a version of Windows from 7 onwards then you should go to the SETTINGS MENU and enable AUTOMATIC UPDATES. By doing this you will ensure that your operating system is always up to date with the latest SECURITY PATCHES which are the best way to prevent viruses getting into your computer by the back door. However, please remember that the WANNA-CRY virus was spread in an email and that in order to remain protected you should not open an email attachment from an unknown source, and have a really good ANTI-VIRUS programme installed.

If you have upgraded to Windows 10 you will probably have received at least one system upgrade from Microsoft, as the basic principle behind the programme is that rather than a major new release every few years, the programme is subject to a series of incremental updates. The last update is called the Creators Update and was rolled out from April of this year, (2017), and you might not be surprised to learn that some people have experienced problems with it. One of the good things is that with this update Microsoft has stopped the update loading and installing automatically, as did previous updates, but have introduced the option to defer the installation to a later time and date. If or when you do install the update, some of the problems that people have encountered have been to do with some of the computer settings being restored to their Microsoft defaults. In particular some users have encountered problems with Windows turning off their ANTI-VIRUS in favour of Microsoft DEFENDER, the default application. Most experts agree that DEFENDER is not the best anti-virus available and if you have been using and are happy with a third party application, then you will need to change this default. What you need to do is reset this in the SETTINGS application. To find this you can either LEFT CLICK on the WINDOWS icon in the very bottom left hand corner of your screen, and then LEFT CLICK again on the small COGWHEEL icon on the left (it will say SETTINGS if you hover the cursor over it), or RIGHT CLICK on the WINDOWS icon and then choose SETTINGS from the menu. Once into SETTING choose SECURITY and UPDATES and then choose WINDOWS DEFENDER from the left-hand menu. If Windows DEFENDER is ON then turn it off and then run your chosen ANTI-VIRUS programme.

Once you are sure it is working go back to the SETTINGS and check WINDOWS DEFENDER which should still be turned off.

It is not advisable to try to run two different ANTI-VIRUS applications at the same time, so if your chosen application is working OK, then leave DEFENDER turned off. Most third-party anti-virus programmes will run with, and take over control of DEFENDER: however, for safety reasons, if your chosen anti-virus does not work then turn DEFENDER back on so at least you are not left totally unprotected.

Whilst you are in the SETTINGS application it is advisable to check through all the settings as some of the defaults may have been changed. Many of these are not needed, and in some cases are used to send information back to Microsoft to allow them to target you with advertising. Most have an On/Off switch next to them and if you do not feel that you need a particular function, or are not happy with the default setting, turn it off. In addition if you use a particular application such as FIREFOX as your WEB BROWSER then you may need to reset this in settings otherwise WINDOWS will set its own browser (EDGE) as the default. It is also well worth opening the PRIVACY application and making sure that you are happy with all the settings, as these determine what level of access applications on your computer have to your information stored on the computer, and in many cases with whom this information gets shared .

Many people complain that over the course of time their computer appears to be getting slower and slower, especially when starting up. Quite often the cause of this can be the number of applications that automatically start up with Windows, and worse still, keep running while the computer is switched on. The source of many of these rogue items is from programmes or applications that you may have downloaded and which by default automatically load and run when your computer starts up, and if you have lots of these then your computer may well slow to a crawl as it struggles to cope with the workload. In reality there are very few applications that need to run at start-up and therefore you need to have a good clean-up of your START-UP menu.

The way to do this is to RIGHT CLICK on the WINDOWS icon at the bottom left of your screen. This will bring up a menu of items and you should LEFT CLICK on TASK MANAGER. When this opens click on the TAB-START-UP. This lists all the programmes that either do or would like to start automatically. If you look down the list and the vast majority of what is listed there is ENABLED then it is likely that these will be causing your computer to slow down and you need to consider if you can disable them. On the right is a column that shows the impact on your resources of each of the items and any that have a high or medium impact probably need to be disabled.

If you have any doubt about what each of these applications does, if you HIGHLIGHT one by placing your cursor over it, and then RIGHT CLICK on it, you will see a SUB MENU of actions one of which is SEARCH ONLINE. If you click on this it will take you directly into a WEB PAGE of searches on that specific item, and from here you can get a good idea if you can safely disable the feature or not. The only applications that are critical are those directly to do with WINDOWS or your ANTI-VIRUS: nearly all the others can be DISABLED.

Remember that if you do disable something and have problems you can easily go back into TASK MANAGER and ENABLE that application again. You will need to REBOOT your computer before any changes in TASK MANAGER are applied.

GRAHAM MUMBY-CROFT

GLEN PARVA

HM Borstal Glen Parva was built on the site of the old Wigston Army Barracks. Their creation took place as part of the Cardwell Reforms, which encouraged the localisation of British military forces. The barracks became the depot for the two battalions of the 17th Leicestershire Regiment of Foot and the 45th Nottinghamshire Regiment of Foot. Following the Childers Reforms of 1881 the barracks became the depot of the Leicestershire Regiment. Tens of thousands of recruits and conscripts were trained there for deployment during the First World War. The barracks went on to become the regional centre for infantry training as the Forester Brigade Depot in 1960. They were closed in the late 1960s and most of the buildings were sold off.

In the 1970s a decision was made to build a Borstal on the site and prisoners from Ashwell open prison (now closed) were deployed along with Trades officers and contractors to build the establishment. However a unit of the Royal Army Pay Corps occupied a building at the front of the site until 1997.

Peter Timms was appointed as the first Governor and developed a progressive regime for borstal boys. Glen Parva also had a large hospital complex built on the site, which contained an operating theatre in the basement (never commissioned).

In 1980 I was posted from HM Borstal Feltham to Glen Parva because a decision had been taken to convert the establishment into a psychiatrically supported borstal along the lines of Feltham. At the time I think there were also plans to do the same to HM Borstal Hindley, although to my knowledge that decision was never implemented. The idea was that borstal boys with complex mental/physical health/personality problems would not have to be sent far away from home (to Feltham) to receive treatment and that local(ish) Borstals would be developed to meet their needs. The hospital at Glen Parva was also going to be able to offer 'in-house' operations for borstal boys, an interesting if unworkable concept but in line with the 'in-house' operating theatres at some of the adult prisons.

When I arrived at Glen Parva the site was being operated on a non-traditional management model. The Borstal was run by Ian Boon, a Governor 3, reporting to the ARD Young Offenders, one Cowper-Johnson who was a real character for those who do not know of him; the whole site was under the control of a Governor 2 Derek Shaw (who died recently). As you can imagine this was an uncomfortable management model, which was latterly compounded when the Remand centre was opened and another independent Governor 3 arrived. Eventually this model was changed and the whole site put under a Governor 1 with the two G3s running the North and South ends but under the control of the Governor 1 (Ted Williams).

Glen Parva had a history of community work with up to 20 boys a day going into the community to work on a variety of projects from old people's homes to a children's home for severely disturbed children. We also expanded the use of Community Service Volunteers (CSV) work with the borstal boys and before I left we were sending out around 100 boys a year on 1-month projects and had just started the first 3-month project. We also ran a significant number of camps, both those arranged by the PE staff and others via the Acorn Trust and a range of other voluntary organisations.

We had our failures – very few and no spectacular ones!! The best ones include the boy, who went on a PE canoeing camp in winter, spent all week with the group then absconded on the last evening. When asked why he said, "Well I did not want to spoil it for the rest of the lads". Then there was the borstal boy who went out every day on his bike to a children's home. Returning one evening the staff escorted him and his bike to the unit. The officer 'dinged' the bell just to see if it worked and nothing happened. Upon opening the bell he found it stuffed with cannabis – "Fair cop Gov" said the lad.

Assistant Governors in those days did the allocation of boys to the various units. When I went down for the first time to do the allocation, an officer handed me a small wooden mirror type of frame. 'What is

this for?’ I asked, awaiting the usual response!! It’s for lads with small heads he said. Asking for a bit more explanation he gave me the history of the cell windows at Glen Parva which, if you had a small head you could get out of and so some cells had ‘stops’ in the window frame so that the window could not open fully – hence the frame for establishing who had a small head!! Apparently one of the Principal Officers was going home when a boy leaned out of the window and waved goodnight to him. He had got to the gate before realising what he had seen. Still, it stopped the shopping trips by borstal boys who were going to the local shops to buy a range of items for their friends. We also had the only canteen, which regularly took in more money than we paid out in wages. As those of you who remember Borstal will know, many of the lads were paid in cash and so money flowed into the borstal on a regular basis to be spent in the canteen - amongst other things.

In 1983, the Borstal system ended and the Young Offender sentence was introduced which also put the borstal staff into uniform. Did it change the young offender system? – Yes, it did. Gradually increasing security concerns started to impact on the freedoms Borstal governors had. We forgot that young men make mistakes as they grow up and whilst we did not suffer the same security concerns as exist today, it did have some impact on our thinking and ability to maximise the flexible use of young offender sentences. In 1984 I moved to Gartree and I was told that it would be a very different experience from working at Feltham and Glen Parva. Whilst that was true, one of the first prisoners I met had been a lad I knew at Feltham. The techniques you learned in dealing with difficult borstal boys were equally useful in dealing with difficult prisoners.

By the time you read this, Glen Parva will be closed and probably demolished. The new prison will be a Cat C adult establishment with up to 1800+ prisoners. The new design will take note of the concerns of the local residents and so the cells will all face inwards to minimise noise. The latest plan of the building is attached but as with all things it may change as we move forward to starting the build. Windows will be toughened glass without bars (at the moment) and a range of educational and vocational classes and courses are planned. The biggest question is will it be private or publically operated?

At least it won’t suffer from the problems of the old North end at Glen Parva which had trouble with the drains etc. I did however find out what caused that, when a prisoner at HMP Stocken who had been working on Glen Parva when he was serving a sentence at HMP Ashwell, told me he managed to put concrete down some of the drains. We also had the only prison hospital, which had inter-floor communication. Half of the hospital was built on a concrete raft, the other half on piles so it split down the middle. When I was there the crack was noticeable, later on it opened up and notes could be passed between the floors.

I enjoyed my time both at Feltham and Glen Parva and sadly, both have now been demolished and rebuilt.

John Berry OBE JP

Below - the new design for Glen Parva



Discretionary time

There was a point in my so called charmed career when I was a tutor at the Prison Service College Love Lane Wakefield and one of the many courses that I delivered was on aspects of management and in particular time management

A key issue with time management was the ability to create discretionary time this was to allow managers to actually sit and think about what they were doing and how they were going to achieve it rather than constantly getting caught up in the operational task. Anyone remember the “monkey “?

There were numerous other theories including the 80/20 rule where 20% of your time produced 80% of the results and vice versa and also that work will always expand to fill available time.

During one of my moments of now increased discretionary time it occurred to me that members of the Association must have many examples of what they now do with their discretionary time during their retirement.

On my list I would include singing in a male voice choir, invigilating exams at university, sitting as a magistrate, chairman of the Retired Prison Governors Association , secretary of my local PROBUS club interspersed with numerous holidays etc.

I would like to share with you a particular pastime of mine which is as a Victim Support Volunteer. I would expect that many of our members would fit the criteria as a volunteer because we do understand the judicial process and there is an irony in reversing our role of managing offenders and then helping and supporting victims of crime. Anyone can apply for the role through the national victim support website and there is a training requirement of around one week on a daily basis. The skills required easily overlap to those that we used in our governor role and having been a volunteer for around five years I think the higher level of maturity of the volunteer the easier it is to offer appropriate support with confidence. I usually have around four cases running at a time but you can easily reduce or increase numbers as you wish with your local coordinator. Cases are allocated to you and generally speaking you would visit the victims in their home usually a short time after the incident. There are occasions when, following a risk assessment ,it is deemed not safe to visit at the victim’s home and the visit will then take place at an independent location, in West Yorkshire that is often in a local library. There is also an option to assist with fundraising as victim support is a registered charity although partly funded by the Ministry of Justice. If you have created discretionary time that you can use to help others then why not? Your skills and experience for those in need is appropriate and I assure you that your past career will be of high benefit when dealing with crime victims. Having said that I do not share with my victims the fact that I was in the Prison Service or a JP makes as it makes things too complicated.

Very often the victim will simply want to talk to someone independent about what happened and the impact it has had on them. The support I generally offer is for advice on criminal injuries compensation, court processes, dealing with the police, health, insurance claims and I generally remain in contact with the victim for just a few weeks mostly by phone.

Whilst reflecting on my volunteering for Victim Support I wondered how many others in our membership contribute through volunteering and I know that our editor would be delighted to hear from anyone with a hobby, pastime or other options of filling discretionary time in retirement.

Graham Smith