

The Retired Prison Governors Newsletter

Founded by Arthur Williamson in 1980 - Now in its 41st year of continuous publication



Issue No 85

Autumn 2021

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Please remember that this edition of the Newsletter will be available to read on the RPGA Website (www.rpga.org.uk) within a few days of publication. In addition there are currently 24 back editions of the Newsletter that have been uploaded to the website by Roger Outram, who in the Site Editor and Webmaster. Roger is working hard to try to make the website somewhere that members can go to for reference if you are looking for details on a particular article as well as and other information.

The website continues to be a “Work in Progress” and with this in mind Roger is more than open to any suggestions from members about content, layout and links.

You will note that on the home page we have placed links to several websites that we feel might be a useful source of information. These include links to the main Prison Governors Association website, to allow you to keep abreast of the latest developments in all the works that they do, as well as a link to the MyCSP website for those of you who may have a problem with your pension, or again simply as a means of keeping up with the latest news. Additionally there are also links to sites that provide a wealth of information to retired people including the Civil Service Pensioners Alliance (CSPA), Age UK, The Alzheimer Society and Mind and a link to the main NHS website where you can find a wealth of information across a wide range of health-related subjects and which I can personally recommend as the first place to look if you have a medical problem.

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 will 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. If you have not yet registered your email with Harry I would urge you to do so as it makes communication with you so much easier, and quicker.

From The Editor.

It is amazing how the time rolls by so very quickly, and I find myself in the position that it is time for the Autumn 2021 edition of the Retired Prison Governor



Newsletter to be put together, and sent off for

printing and publication. So as I sit here with the days growing longer, and the temperature slowly falling, it is not hard to turn my mind to the past few months and think about all that has passed.

First of all thank you for your responses to my first outing as editor for the Spring 21 edition. As I received no correspondence demanding that I give up the role immediately, and to never darken the pages of the Newsletter again, I have decided to give it another go.

You will recall that the reason that I took over the role of editor was because Paul Laxton had, understandably, decided to stand down from the role in order to concentrate on caring for his wife Lennie, who had been diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease. Sadly, Lennie's condition deteriorated quite quickly, and she died on the 15th of June. I know that many of you, when you heard the news, have contacted Paul with your own personal messages of sympathy, and I also know that Paul is very grateful to all those who did make contact with him.

Paul has written of his experiences during this time, and the terrible effects of going through such a traumatic event, at a time when lockdown and restrictions were in force.

You will also recall that in view of the fact that our colleague John Dring had also recently died of this terrible disease, I took the step of publishing a quiz, and asking for a donation with every entry, which would be match funded from the RPGA with the total proceeds donated to the Motor Neurone Association in John's, and as it sadly turned out, Lennie's memories.

Unfortunately it would seem that the readership of the Newsletter are not particularly keen on quizzes, or maybe the questions were set at an obscure level. Whatever the reason may have been the result was

that I only received one entry, from John Rumball, and whilst John did not get all the answers correct, he was, by default, the winner. I did however receive a letter from a member informing me that whilst she did not wish to partake in the quiz she was enclosing a cheque for £100 as a donation. John was also kind enough to not only include a £10 donation with his entry, but also donated his prize as well. Mike Lewis, who set the quiz, and put up the prize money, also agreed that this should be donated to the charity. We also received an additional donation of £95 and so with match funding from the RPGA this meant that we were able to make a donation to The Motor Neurone Disease Association of £500. Their letter of thanks is produced on Page 6

To add to this, within the past week the Prison Governors Association have held their National Conference, the first for 2-years, and because of the connection with Paul Laxton, (ex NEC member and former conference chair), and the RPGA, they also nominated MNDA to be the Conference Charity. Over the 3-days of conference they raised £4450 for the charity through a combination of donations from exhibitors, a raffle, a donation from the Prison Service Charity Fund and delegates donating their T&S claims. So in all, in memory of John and Lennie, almost £5000 has been donated to help toward seeking a cure, and helping to support sufferers, and their families, of this terrible illness.

It would appear that whilst many of us who have served in Prison Establishments over the years, have at one time or another, turned our thoughts to writing a book about our experiences, some of our colleagues have got down to work, and actually written the book that we all think is in us.

Last month's Newsletter carried a comprehensive review from Paul Laxton of Brendan O'Friel's book The Prison Governor. Brendan and I have been in correspondence, and we hope to be able to publish an extract in a future edition of the Newsletter. In the meantime Brendan has graciously given permission for me to publish his introduction to the book, which you will find on Page 23.

Brendan also tells me that sales of the book are doing very well and that reviews have appeared in several publications including a very favourable one in the Howard Journal. He has also indicated that as news of the book has spread he has received correspondence from some very interesting people and that he may very well have something of interest for a future edition of the Newsletter. Also included in this

section is a picture of Brendan at the launch of the book on the Isle of Man.

In this edition we are also publishing another extract from Bob Duncan's self published auto-biography. In this extract Bob is off to university.

In the last edition I published an appeal for information from former Governor, Peter Atkinson, who was researching the events of 1986 at HMP Gloucester, when uniformed staff effectively walked out of the prison, and a group of Governor Grades were drafted in to run the establishment. Peter is grateful to those of you who provided him with information, and he has now completed, and published his piece on the subject. I am very grateful to Peter for granting permission for me to publish his work, which you will find on pages 8 to 15. The only editing that I have done to this piece is to remove the glossary of terms, as I felt the readership of this Newsletter would have a full understanding of the terminology.

Last, but by no means least, we have a short memoir from Colin Ring, as he remembers his years in the service, and some of the people he met along the way. Within the past two weeks I have had the honour of acting as the Chair for the 33rd Prison Governors Association Annual Conference held at The Radisson Blu Hotel, East Midlands Airport, where we also held the RPGA Annual General meeting. For both events this was the first opportunity since October 2019 for members to meet in person with the restrictions of Covid ensuring that the 2020 PGA Conference or the RPGA AGM were not able to take place.

As I chaired the PGA Conference I was struck by the strongest of feelings of Deja Vu, as I listened to the motions that had been put forward for debate, and I started to get the distinct feeling that it is indeed possible to travel back through time, as many of the issues raised were indeed items on the agenda at the last conference I attended as an NEC member in 2007. I was struck by the fact that it is quite clear that the Prison Service of today is a very different service to the one I retired from in 2011, which in itself was a very different service to the one I joined in 1976.

It is to be expected that issues of pay will always be at the forefront of any PGA Conference but I found it unnerving to discover that whilst the grading structure may have changed beyond my recognition, the issues of pay remain very much the same. Required Hours Allowance (RHA) is still an issue and complicated by the situation, caused by Covid, where many of the Governor Grades in Non-Prison posts had been working from home, whilst those in Prison

Establishments had not only not been able to do so, but indeed their workloads had in many cases increased. This had led to calls from some for some form of Operational Allowance, something that was being discussed back in 2007. In addition many of the issues regarding pay that were supposed to have been addressed by the Job Evaluation process, actually still remain, and this was reflected in conference motions seeking clarity about a specific allowance for Deputy Governors, and about grade management issues.

There was considerable disquiet that in 2020, yet again the Government had failed to honour the pay award recommended by the Pay Review Body, and that it seemed likely that with the government announcing that Civil Service pay would be "paused" then this year would be the same story of no pay rise, or at best some adjustments to allowances. It was also lamented that the Prison Service seems incapable of ensuring that their submission to the Pay Review Body is delivered "on time". Again, these were issues being discussed in 2007.

When I was a member of the NEC one of our constant complaints was that Prisons Ministers changed with a frequency that was both disruptive to the service, and showed how low down the list of priorities the Prison Service, and Criminal Justice in general actually sits. On the list of resolutions for debate at the 2021 conference was a motion calling on the Government to treat the Prisons Portfolio as a higher priority, and for some stability in its ministerial appointments.

As if to highlight this point for the current day, a new Prisons Minister had been appointed to post only 2-weeks prior to the conference. The minister, Victoria Atkins, had been invited to address conference, and indeed had accepted, only to call off at very short notice. She did however send a video message to conference, so brief and lacking in any content that it left the National Executive Committee, and delegates, stunned into silence. For those of you who can remember the sitcom *Are You Being Served*, it was very reminiscent of the appearance that used to be made by "Old Mr Grace" the owner in the shop, where he was wheeled through the store at a fast pace to tell everyone, "You Are All Doing A Wonderful Job" before disappearing again.

The real problem is that as well as being Prisons Minister, Victoria Atkins also has responsibility for all the issues to do with Afghan Refugees, so it is quite clear that for the foreseeable future her priorities will lie elsewhere.

Recruitment was another issue raised through conference resolutions and it was not surprising to

learn that the Prison Service is struggling to both recruit, and retain staff at all levels, but in particular at what we would know as Officer level, now I believe known as Grade 3.

What I was surprised to learn was that not only is recruitment centralised, but has also be “contracted out” with staff recruited and trained with little or no input from establishments and the first time the establishment gets to see these staff is when they turn up at the gate, to report not for training, but for duty.

I was amazed to hear stories from establishments of members of staff allocated to them, who clearly have serious mental health issues, including self harm, and that managing those members of staff is eating up valuable time and resources. One conference resolution was simply calling for it to be made part of the recruitment process that establishments get to interview candidates before they are accepted for training, and posting.

There were however some lighter moment as the old chestnut of Governors wearing uniform was raised-yet again, although everyone was thankful that the other old chestnut of governor grades carrying batons did not make it to the list of resolutions on this occasion.

What became very clear to me was that the past 18-months or so have been a very difficult and challenging time for prison service staff, and in particular for those people serving in operational posts in prison establishments. It is clear that the reason that Covid did not run rampant through our prisons, as was feared, was due almost entirely to the hard work and dedication of staff at all levels within prisons. One of the ways that this was achieved was through severe reduction in regimes, and a (not totally unexpected) bonus from this has been a significant reduction in incidents of violence, assaults and self harm.

However, I fear that the real problems are yet to come. As regimes start to open up, incidents of violence are already on the rise, and an added problem to contend with is that some junior staff, who took up post during the Covid Restriction period, and therefore have only ever worked under the restricted regime, now find that they do not like having to actually deal with the “real world” and are leaving, in quite significant numbers.

So to our colleagues who are still managing our prisons I say thank you, and good luck for the future.

As has become the norm, the RPGA held the Annual General Meeting at the same time and venue, generously supported financially by the PGA. Like them, we were meeting in person for the first time in 2-years. Unfortunately, but perhaps understandably, attendance was very poor, with only 1 member, (Eoin

McLellan-Murray) other than committee members, attending in person, and only 3-people attending via ZOOM.

With this in mind it is perhaps not surprising that the meeting was not a long one. However the business of the association was conducted as required by the constitution which included the election of committee members.

Three committee places were due for re-election including the Treasurers position. All three existing committee members agreed to serve again and as there were no other proposed candidates Graham Mumby-Croft was re-elected as Treasurer, Harry Brett as Membership Secretary and Paul Laxton as Newsletter Editor.

There was only one other resolution and it was proposed by Graham Smith and Seconded by Eoin McLellan-Murray that a list of members names be published on the RPGA website. The resolution was passed.

A full report on the AGM, and a copy of the minutes will be available on the website, and in the next edition of the newsletter.

This is the last of a very short run of The Newsletter to present to you, the membership. I do hope that you enjoy it, and please remember when reading these articles, if you think you have a better story to tell, or indeed think you are a better writer, then this is your Newsletter and the contents are in your hands. So please feel free to put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, write an article and send it to Paul. The deadline for the next edition is the beginning of March 2022, so don't be shy, start writing, you are “almost” guaranteed to be published. Paul can be contacted by email at relaxpaul@btinternet.com



The picture forming the background to the front page is of the imposing gate at HMP Leicester.

RPGA Main Quiz from Issue 84 Questions and Answers (Maximum score of 40)

1 Which English King was obsessed with witchcraft and wrote a book on the subject?

A. James I

2 Which royal personage escaped from one of our prisons?

A. Empress Matilda-Escaped from Oxford Castle in 1121.

3 Which English coins have no monarch's head on the obverse (head's) side?

A. Coins minted in the "Commonwealth period" between Charles I and Charles II

4 Which English coin has two monarchs' heads on the obverse (head's) side?

A. William and Mary Guinea (1689-1694).

5 What has South Africa to do with the Royal Tournament Display Pageant?

A. The Boar War when sailors from HMS Terror dragged their guns for several miles across very rough terrain.

6 Rope artist – Don't get tied up with this!

A. Painter. (A short rope used to tie up a small boat)

7 Why was clipping associated with executions (seems a heavy punishment for personal grooming or topiary)?

A. In the 17th century the act of cutting, or clipping the perimeter of coins for the precious metal was rife and made punishable by death.

8 Which two authors served time in our jails? (1 point for each).

A. John Bunyan (Bedford) Oscar Wilde (Reading) You could also have Geoffrey Archer (Lincoln and North Sea Camp) if you stretch the term "author"

9 In a police investigation, a peer of the realm was questioned re his association in a serious criminal act. His solicitor handed the investigator a piece of paper with the letters PAV written on it. Who, or what, was P.A.V.?

A. Prince Albert Victor, (Grandson of Queen Victoria) notorious playboy and dilettante.

10 Which English monarch parented 17 legitimate off-springs, none of whom became monarchs?

A. Queen Anne-She had 17 children but none became monarchs because none of them survived.

11 Which English monarch parented 10 illegitimate children and 2 legitimate ones, none of whom became monarchs?

A. William IV

12 It is normal practice for successive monarchs to have their obverse (head's) side pointing in different directions i.e. looking to the left, next one to the right. Who broke the mould and why?

A. Edward VIII (who abdicated). He was known to be extremely vain, and though his left side the best.

13 Why is the work of Archimedes relevant even today in the field of numismatics?

A. Archimedes principle of displacement was discovered whilst he was trying to determine how to test the purity of gold.

14 When I served on the Moor I met more 'killicks' and 'bootnecks' than one could shake a stick at. What are 'killicks' and 'bootnecks'? (1 point for each).

A. A Bootneck is a Royal Marine, called this because they used to cut the tops from their boots to go round their necks as protection against having their throats cut by sailors. A Killick is a leading seaman, named after the emblem of the rank, an anchor, called a Killick.

15 Which English penal establishment was bombed extensively during World War 2 with no casualties and no damage to buildings?

A. North Sea Camp. To protect Boston Docks lighting was erected on the extensive prison estate to lure bombers to drop their bombs well away from Boston, which many did, but no buildings on the site were damaged.

16 Which penal establishment is reputed to have the highest perimeter wall?

A. Leicester.

17 Which penal establishment has a circular perimeter wall?

A. Dartmoor

18 Which penal establishment has a curved wing block?

A. Stafford-The Crescent Wing.

19 Which English King was the last to lead his army into battle?

A. George II

20 Which penal establishment was originally built to house boy soldiers?

A. Channings Wood.

21 Which historic prison, still in use, was built to house prisoners of war?

A. Dartmoor.

22 Which former penal establishment was at one time used to house American Olympic athletes?

A. Finnermore Wood. Used as an accommodation base for the American Canoe team in the 1948 London games.

23 An Escape and an Admiral caused the Prison Service to "Go to the Dogs"-Why?

A. The escape of George Blake led to a review by Lord Mountbatten and one of his reports recommendations was the introduction of dogs.

24 The remains of the inventor of the radial system, i.e. wings radiating from a central point, to enable observation of all cells, have been under lock and key ever since his death, -Where?

A. The inventor of the Radial System is widely recognised as being Jeremy Bentham whose preserved remains are on display at University College London.

25 Who was Queen Victoria's father?

A. Prince Edward-Duke of Kent.

26 In numismatic terms, who was known as Old Copper Nose?

A. Henry VIII-He was known as this because he ordered precious metals in coins to be replaced with copper.

27 Y.O.I. that Jane Eyre was fond of!

A. Rochester.

28 Which British Isles penal establishment is the farthest North?

A. Inverness.

29 Until it closed which prison was the most Easterly in the British Isles, and which prison holds that record now? (1 point each).

A. Blundeston and when closed Hollesley Bay.

30 Which British Isles penal establishment is the farthest South?

A. Jersey

31 Which British Isles penal establishment is the most Westerly?

A. Magilligan (Northern Ireland)

32 What is the value, in old money, of the Sun, Venus and Uranus?

A. 3 farthings-Three Far Things.

33 Many prisons were formerly large houses or estates i.e. Leyhill, Askham Grange, Lowdham Grange, but which former Northern English prison was named after a watercourse, and is now a school?

A. Bela River

34 Which English Royal was lucky to avoid an overdue parking fine?

A. Richard III-Hidden under a car park in Leicester for over 600-years.

35 Many of us can remember the Prison Koestler Award (Literature and the Arts). Arthur Koestler (author, critic and anti-fascist) was incarcerated in many countries: France, Spain and Great Britain. Which prison did he describe as 'the most humane, but its' plumbing left a lot to be desired'?

A. Pentonville

36 HMS Warrior was said to be the first iron-clad warship (iron on wood protection) – not so! Which was the first of this type?

A. The French ship GLOIRE was the first real Ironclad.

37 Most Victorian prisons had a non-reeking lum) but what was its actual use?

A. Ventilation for the "plenum" heating system.

As stated earlier, the questions were set, and the answers provided, by Mike Lewis. When he set the quiz, and we discussed the questions prior to going to print we felt sure that some of the answers would be contentious and that given our readership we would no doubt have challenges to the answer. I am sure that Mike would be more than happy to argue the point with anyone who disagrees with his answers. If you do wish, (for fun only please), to challenge any of Mike's answers, then please send your challenge to me, and I will pass it on to Mike. If you are happy for Mike to contact you directly, then please include your contact details, so that Mike can contact you directly, to inform you why you are wrong, and **he is right.**



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10 September 2021

Dear Retired Prison Governors Association,

Thank you for your kind donation of £500.00, received in memory of your member Mr John Dring and Mrs Lennie Laxton, who was the wife and editor of your Newsletter. Your kind gift will help to improve life for people living with MND today, and support ground-breaking research that is at the forefront of our drive to find new treatments and hopefully one day a cure for MND.

We would like to keep you up to date about the work we are doing, to tell you about the difference you have made, and how your financial support in the future can help more people. If you would prefer not to receive such communications from us, please contact us (details above) and we will amend our records. If you have already informed us of your wishes in this regard, we will of course continue to follow them.

Once more, thank you very much for your gift and please do visit our website www.mndassociation.org for updates on our fight against this devastating disease

Yours sincerely,

Sophie Ockwell
Supporter Care

For further information on how your data is collected and used, please visit our website to view our full Privacy Policy www.mndassociation.org/privacy-policy



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From the chair.

Welcome to this autumn edition of the RPGA newsletter, I hope you are safe and well during these testing times. Your committee are grateful for the editing of this edition by Graham Mumby-Croft. Paul Laxton will return as editor for the spring 2022 edition.

At the time of writing [early September 2021] social care is the hot topic of conversation [here we go again], after a long rest and decisions on policy, funding, taxes and an appropriate mix of politics are doing the rounds yet again. Triple lock has stalled as current policy could give us an 8% increase if the maths is right, and so we now have the double lock which to be fair is more defensible.

I do not intend to get involved with the morals of these issues, but I am aware that our members may from time to time need to make use of support services, especially those of us with a lot of miles on the clock and so have a stake in the outcomes of the decisions to be made. Boris has established funding via increases in National Insurance contributions and whether you agree with that or not, the funding has to come from somewhere.

Our associates in the CSPA will no doubt be contributing to the debates that follow. Mind you, Boris has declared that he is going to fix social care “once and for all” so that’s OK isn’t it? Let’s hope throwing a load of money at it improves the current position. Do you have a view you can share via the newsletter? If so, write/contact Paul Laxton.

From Pandemic to Endemic! Covid hangs around, though nothing like the impact it originally had. The RPGA seem to have weathered the storm as far as we know. We have got used to checking for a mask when we go anywhere, and all the new terminology flows freely. Let’s hope the decline in cases continues but I guess we will always be aware of the danger and our vulnerability in future.

Some of your committee will have attended the 2021 PGA Annual conference and are also hosting the RPGA AGM in early October, trying to raise our profile and encourage recruitment. I hope some of you will have attended to improve the representation of members.

Thanks as ever to my committee for their continued work and time, which enables the RPGA to continue to deliver what we can to our valued members old and new. Thank you for your ongoing support, your views are always welcome and, in particular, items for the newsletter.

Graham Smith, RPGA chairman



Gloucester Prison Industrial Dispute – 1986. “Officers Walk out – Governors Walk in.”

By: Peter Atkinson.



The Gate-HMP Gloucester (iStock image permission)

The governor grade seven-day control of Gloucester Prison in early 1986 was a fascinating event. I will argue that it is a story that has only ever been half told. Another aspect to this highly significant industrial relations incident relates to my efforts to uncover records of the affair, but I will come back to that later.

On Monday the 28th April, following a protracted dispute between Gloucester Governor Nick Wall and the branch of his local Prison Officers' Association (POA), he was left with little option other than to take dramatic and decisive control of his prison that evening. The following day, as he already anticipated, he lost the support of all his 130 uniformed staff. With their refusal to sign an agreement to abide by their Governor's authority, staff in effect, abandoned their posts. Control of the prison routine had to be

established in some other way. With the backing of senior Prison Service Headquarters management, he eventually replaced the whole of his uniformed staff with 63 prison governors of various ranks from other jails around the country.

The dispute between management and the POA had been rumbling on for weeks prior to the 28th April, eventually coming to a head that Monday morning. By way of attempting to work within his allocated budget, the Governor sought to rearrange officers' hours, as a means of trying to reduce staff costs. Officers in-post were below complement at Gloucester, as they were in many prisons and uniformed staff worked a weekly average of 18 hours overtime, consequently earning a sizeable amount over and above their normal pay.

Two former officers who have recently recalled events from 35 years ago, remember their disgruntlement with the Governor, centred around his proposal to stop paying officers on the early 06:45 start, that included their 45 minute breakfast period between 07:30 and 0815. The 06:45 shift was known as Breakfast Before Duty (BBD) which staff liked. The BBD staff would come on duty early to unlock those inmates who worked in the kitchen and those inmates due in Court. After they attended to these duties, they would then go for breakfast when the 07:30 staff arrived. They would then have a 45 minute breakfast break for which they were paid. The Governor wanted to stop payment for the breakfast break, similar to how staff were not paid when having their hours lunch break. The dispute of course was much more than BBD and involved arranging for significant cuts to each officer's overtime schedule across the working week. It is interesting however to note how two former Gloucester officers remembered the dispute for themselves.

Looking at the Service as a whole, similar sorts of industrial relations problems were mounting in many prisons around the country, primarily centred on the question of officer shortages and uniformed staff overtime costs.

It is worth recalling that 1986 was the middle of Margaret Thatcher's premiership, marked by the miners' strike which lasted 51 weeks from March 1984 to March 1985. Following on was the 54-week Print Unions' dispute in January 1986 at Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation at Wapping. These events can be referenced very easily to this day.

Of course, Gloucester was not a dispute of anything like that magnitude, but it is nevertheless interesting how scant is the available evidence today, on this unique incident inside one of Her Majesty's prisons.

For what must have been the only time in prison history, prison officers flatly refused to accept the authority of the Governor, and hence a group of non-uniformed staff were compelled to take over.

The Chief Inspector of Prisons Sir James Hennessy used the term, 'unprecedented' and as we know, such an event has never happened since. For uniformed prison staff absenting themselves from their prison, leaving the inmates under the control of a group of suited governors, must be regarded as an extraordinary industrial relations event.

The decision by the Prisons Board headed by Chris Train, to employ a detachment of governors to run a prison for a whole week, could be seen as incredibly bold on the one hand or perhaps exceedingly

foolhardy on the other. How far up the tree the decision to show this kind of resilience towards the POA went, is not quite clear. What is known however is that Sir Brian Cubbon, as Permanent Secretary to the Home Office, did add his public support to the Gloucester Governor. If Sir Brian Cubbon was prepared to go on the record about this incident, then it is safe to assume that the Prime Minister herself must have had a say.

In 1986, Gloucester was still regarded as an old-fashioned, small jail within the Prison Service estate. It first took shape as a distinct prison in 1791, attached to the former Castle that had previously acted as a place of confinement. There followed a major rebuild in the 1840's when the Victorian prison building programme gathered pace. Still in evidence is the bold, imposing and attractive gate lodge (pictured above). Back from the Gate, was the inmate cellular accommodation. From a central point, two long wings and one short one radiated out to house individual cells on three open landings. Sadly, the lovely old Governor's house at one corner of the jail has gone.

Built in the centre of Gloucester, the prison was small, with an average capacity of 278 inmates, 81 of whom were in single cells for their own protection. In 1986, it was classed as a Category B prison for male offenders. The jail was closed in 2013, being classed as inefficient due to its limited size and complicated location right in the heart of the city. To mark somewhat of an ignominious end for this ancient jail, it currently operates as a visitor attraction and ghost hunting venue. However, planning permission has been approved for a partial demolition by a construction company, about to create a vast housing complex. Gloucester, as a renowned old prison, is about to disappear for ever. Some may argue that the plans involving the old Gloucester prison, given its historical significance, are perhaps short sighted.

The Home Secretary during the incident was Douglas Hurd, and there is a Hansard entry from 29 April 1986, of a debate in the House of Commons about the actions of the Gloucester POA. The debate included discussions on industrial relations problems across the Service, but Douglas Hurd made a point of defending the actions of the Governor at Gloucester by suggesting that the POA had reasonable compromises offered to them, which in turn they rebuffed. Hansard provides the only piece of information of the Gloucester event that can currently be found on the web.

Gloucester officers were not alone in challenging management, and disputes were emerging across the whole Service. Some would suggest that a cause of the problem was the POA's attempt to hold onto lucrative overtime systems, whilst others would say that staff shortages and poor buildings made the job of many officers extremely difficult.

In preparation at the time was a document called 'Fresh Start', which would bring huge changes to shift patterns, abolition of overtime, clarity about the Service's vision, goals and values and dispute procedure protocols. Fresh Start was eventually implemented across the whole of the Prison Service throughout 1987. Back in April 1986, officers could see that their overtime benefits were about to disappear. Which work force would not stand up and try to prevent that happening?

That Monday morning was an extremely difficult one for the Governor. A Principal Officer and a Senior Officer had been temporarily relieved from duty for refusing to publish the Governor's shift system, and many staff had left the prison early for refusing to work any overtime. Inmate activities had been curtailed and the whole prison was tense. It had been a fraught day with regular confrontations between the legal authority of the Governor and many uniformed staff. One additional governor had arrived at the prison during the afternoon to help set up an operations room, sensing that concerns were going to escalate.

Matters came to a head that evening, after day staff finished their duty and the prison was locked-up under the control of night staff. The Gloucester prison Deputy Governor, Harry Crew, left the prison around 2130 hours, ostensibly to get some fish and chips for the Governor, who had remained on duty all day. By previous arrangement, Harry arrived at the local police station where he briefed four governors from elsewhere, who were scheduled to accompany him back to the prison. On the way back, he searched for a regular fish and chip shop, but being Monday, they were all shut. He bought his fish and chips from a Chinese take-away, and with this in hand, he arrived at the Gate. As he crossed the threshold, his four colleagues were to move forward at the signal when he raised his hat. They slipped in behind him and secured the Gate. A long-standing adage had always been that those who controlled the Gate, controlled the prison. The famed Gloucester 'fish and chip take-over' was born.

The four governors who arrived at the Gate on that first night, deserve closer attention. They were from

different prisons in the South West region. They had received hardly any notice on that Monday morning other than to pack an overnight bag and get to the Gloucester police station by 1800 hours. All that these four people had been told, was that there was an industrial relations dispute. It is worth appreciating that nobody knew how long or short this incident might last, so a few brief items in a small suitcase turned out to be inappropriate. One of the governors who worked at Portland Borstal, poignantly described how he left his young family at home near his place of work and set off by train with great apprehension to Gloucester, about which he knew nothing. All the governors who were ordered to Gloucester, had similar stories, with no idea what they were yet to face and how long they might be away.

The night Gatekeeper was ordered either to leave the prison or attend to duties on the landings. He chose the latter and worked alongside the night patrols, until the end of their shift at 0700 hours the next morning. That first evening must have seemed surreal, not only for what was now seven governors present in the prison including the Governor himself, but for the six uniformed night staff on duty as well. The Governor caught wind of the fact that those uniformed staff in the prison, might barricade themselves in the Centre office (that is the central control point that looks onto the three wings). He sent one of the newly arrived governors to go to the Centre as a means of trying to establish an amicable dialogue. Contrary to what a number of people believed, no barricade was erected. The night staff had been in telephone contact with their union officials outside, and they were not in a mood to welcome any governor grade in the main body of the prison.

The Portland governor grade remembers to this day, his arrival on the Centre into a hostile situation. Working at Portland, he happened to be questioned about a newly promoted officer who had recently been transferred from Gloucester to Portland. When it was discovered that the governor and the staff shared the conclusion that the person in question was of limited capacity, the ice seemed to be broken and the night passed reasonably amicably.

In the meantime, one of the four new governor arrivals with previous catering experience in a former career, under instruction from the Governor, went to the kitchen. She found catering whites that happened to be comically too big for her and started to prepare a breakfast for the next morning. Here was a young woman, relatively inexperienced, missing a night's sleep, taking up post in a strange kitchen, in the

middle of the night and making ready for the next morning. As if this was not demanding enough, she had to go and collect the kitchen prisoner orderlies well before the normal unlock time and get them to help her finalise the meal for close on 300 prisoners. Later that day, the highly experienced Regional Catering officer Tony Frith, arrived at the prison and took over the arrangement of meals from then on.

During the early hours of Tuesday the 29th, the first wave of around twenty governors arrived at the prison to staff the landings. The normal day time staff who were now congregating around the Gate, were given an ultimatum either to work the shift system devised by the Governor or remain outside the prison. By their refusal to obey their Governor they, in effect, locked themselves out. Apart from the Chief Officer, who in fact was a Principal Officer acting up, every uniformed member of staff refused to follow the Governor's proposed shift pattern, thus giving the Governor few options.

Around the normal unlock time, inmates were making a lot of noise. As a result of some hard overnight work in the kitchen, the landings were unlocked and breakfast was served. Tensions were extremely high. During the morning, another tranche of governors arrived from around the country to support their colleagues.

For the previous two years, I had been seconded to a management tutor post at the Prison Service College in Wakefield with the rank of AG1. Working with a couple of colleagues, I was responsible for running assistant governor training courses during their two years 'apprenticeship'. We were half-way through a six-week course for about 25 junior governors holding the rank of AG2(T), - that was Assistant Governor grade two with the (T) standing for training. Early on the morning of Tuesday the 29th April, I was instructed to take this group down to Gloucester and report to the prison on arrival, as a means of adding reinforcements to those governors already there. We got to Gloucester around lunchtime and walked through a group of noisy officers before reaching the Gate. Encountering a group of uniformed officers with some throwing insults, was a strange experience that none of us had met before, given that we normally worked very amicably with staff back at our own prisons. The AG2s took up various support posts around the prison and I reported to the Governor for an update. The governor grade control of Gloucester was thus complete.

This was the start of seven days of continuous duty, beginning at around 0730 hours in the morning and

ending around 2030 hours each evening. Various bed and breakfasts around the city were organised for us and I had a room not more than quarter of a mile from the jail, with about four others sharing the same house. A number of the AG2(T)'s remembered how they 'hot bedded' with some of their colleagues. This group was located in a hotel, where those on the day shift would vacate their beds at the start of their day, and when those coming off nights arrived at the hotel, bed linen was changed and they then went to sleep in their colleagues' beds.

It was a fascinating experience at several levels, where one of my roles was to offer support and guidance to my group of young assistant governors. Another function was to take a lead with whatever wing jobs needed doing. All the governors had experienced basic landing duties before, in one form or another. Manning the landings with plenty of inmates around was a new experience for nobody. During this event, it was a credit to the young AGs who skilfully adapted to their new surroundings. When I did my four months training stint as a prison officer at the start of my governor grade career nine years previously, encountering a hundred or so inmates milling around the landings at Gloucester nine years later, did not seem particularly daunting compared to the 400 odd inmates who would wander around Durham's D wing during evening association.

It took about 36 hours to establish a comfortable relationship with the Gloucester inmates, who benefited from a relaxed regime. With only 63 governors to run the prison both day and night for seven days, meant that the normal inmate routines had to be suspended. Around 41 governors ran the prison during the day, and it was noted in one account, that eight of those were female. This group was identified as performing their duties with great skill, adding a 'softer' touch to the landing routines that had a calming effect on the inmates. Simply getting the inmates their meals and exercised was the main task in hand in the first few days, before regular routines were established.

Having arrived at around lunch time on the 29th, meant that the AGs and I had missed the demonstration by about 100 inmates on the exercise yard that morning. This was successfully resolved once the Governor intervened. If a good relationship developed with the inmates inside, that could not be said for relationships with a number of the Gloucester officers outside. One governor recalled trying to bring some groceries into the prison from a van parked outside the Gate, and encountering a small but vocal

group of officers who were trying to take photographs and shouting obscenities. This sort of behaviour was not uncommon for many of the governors who arrived for work each morning.

On the first day of the incident, about 20 inmates on the exercise yard, climbed onto a few roof tops and remained there for two days before getting fed up and coming down. They had caused significant damage which had to be rectified over the following days to weather-proof the accommodation. One report of the incident identified the fraught, dangerous and demanding period during those first 24 hours or so. Most of the inmate population were on the brink of outright rebellion, and the governors manning the landings, who quelled the atmosphere in those early stages, deserved great credit. One of the governors remembers coming into the prison to take up his post in the Operations room within the Administration block, whilst the inmates were on the roof directly above. He recalls some shouting by those on the roof and the danger of passing under a corner of one building where the prisoners were trying to prise off a huge coping stone to drop down below. This governor remembers offering a cheery good morning, and walking briskly not running, with an apprehension that a dangerous missile from above could cause him some problems.

From the group of officers outside the Gate each day, we heard the suggestion more than once, that we were going to lose control. In fact, the exact opposite occurred over the seven-day period and the inmates became more than compliant, appreciating the situation and enjoying the civility and relative freedom offered by a group of suited middle managers. These are not my conclusions, but the comments of the Chief Inspector who eventually submitted his report on the incident to Parliament in July the following year. Recorded on a running log that was kept during the incident, an entry for the evening of the 6th May stated that a contingent of inmates on association, offered a vote of thanks to the governors who had been working in the prison during that week.

Not everything was order and harmony, however. One incident early in the event involved an older inmate who became dangerously agitated in his cell and had to be removed by a three-man team of governors. They were equipped with Control and Restraint (C&R) apparatus involving helmets and shields. A forceful removal was effected with no injuries to anybody. This sort of task would normally always be done by trained uniformed staff, but on this occasion,

it was one of the governors who was a tutor on the C&R courses, who carried out the routine, to the book. Another flare-up by a young inmate, was dealt with by a reasonably sympathetic approach from a couple of governors. One of them being a bit older, gently prodded the inmate with the end of his tobacco pipe. Instead of it coming across as a friendly nudge, it inflamed the situation, causing the inmate to become agitated all over again. This inmate had probably never seen an avuncular, pipe smoking older governor before and misinterpreted it as a threat.

The uniformed staff mostly congregated in the prison mess outside, as well of course, providing a presence at the main Gate to barrack anybody who entered. Evidence supports the opinion that two groups of about a dozen officers, stationed themselves on some erected scaffolding over-looking the prison from a building opposite. This group shouted words of encouragement to try and rouse the inmates to cause trouble. Fortunately, they failed. The Deputy Governor recalls seeing the Gloucester inmates, watching the Bristol prison riots that day on television and expressing relief they were not part of it. The main body of officers were decent, moderate prison employees who were simply wanting to protect their conditions of service. The Inspectorate Report did however identify a group of officers who showed a high degree of inflammatory irresponsibility.

Daily life amongst the inmates during the officer withdrawal of labour, became quite routine but not always smooth. I remember once being called up to a landing to help break up a fight between two inmates. Joining what was a lot of noise and flaying of arms, the well-worn and trusty words of, 'hey-up fellas, what's going on. Come on, let's just calm it down', quickly eased the situation. The point being made here is that agitated inmates treated with a lack of hostility and aggression, seemed to relax quite quickly.

Another interesting episode on the first day was the discovery of two inmates in a cell who told us that they had not been allowed out for over a week, since they had been diagnosed with AIDS. This was the early appearance of this disease and the inmates had only been handled by white coated and masked officers who seemed to think it was best to keep them well confined under lock and key. We let them out for an hour onto the exercise yard for their first bit of fresh air in weeks. I remember them being so grateful for not being treated like lepers.

An issue of some importance that has never appeared in any report I have seen whilst researching this topic,

involves a proposal from Prison Service Headquarters when only a few days into the dispute. A suggestion was put to the Governor that it might be best if the governors running the prison were sent home and staff were allowed back into the prison without implementing the Governors shift proposals, that had sparked the dispute in the first place. The majority of governors working in the prison at the time had no inclination that such a proposition had been offered. From two separate sources, I have heard that the response from at least three officials within Gloucester prison were extremely hostile to the suggestion. Such was the vehement opposition, that the idea was pursued no further. Whether the suggestion to end the governor's control of Gloucester came from Headquarters or South West Regional Office, is not clear all these years later, but it certainly must have had the Prison Boards consent at one level or another. Looking back at this matter now, it seems incomprehensible that a strategy designed to uphold the authority of the Governor, involving 63 governors from around the country, could be jeopardised by such an absurd and crass capitulation. Reference to this issue, appears neither in the Chief Inspectors Report nor in the South West Regional Offices official log.

To pick up on some of the recollections of those who were there, I was told of one AG who performed night duties for the week, recalling a point late one evening after lock-up, hearing what sounded like a hammer and chisel banging away at a wall. Whilst he criss-crossed the inmate accommodation to try and locate the source of the noise, the thought crossed his mind that an inmate may have been trying to effect an escape. After about half an hour, a police presence outside the prison discovered that it was actually a noise from a building across from the jail, where an enthusiastic DIY'er was carrying out work on his house. The Deputy Governor remembers breaking into the Physical Education Instructor's office with the Gym inmate orderly on the first day, to get some footballs for the inmates to kick around on the exercise yard. It was a gesture that contributed greatly to calming the inmate mood, but he recalls how it did not take too long for one ball after another to end up over the wall.

During one evening, the acting Chief Officer effected a search of the kitchen. He found a range of knives and implements in a drawer whilst the official shadow board was half empty. When trying to match up the outlines of the implements on the board, there was a serious mismatch. There was a surplus of eight kitchen implements, including a carving knife, blades

and a butcher's saw. The conclusion was drawn that as certain items went missing which could not be found, somebody on the staff simply brought in a replacement. One of the AGs on nights, recalls how two of them inspected all the offices and rest rooms, gathering up a whole range of prison officer uniforms lying around in various locations. Not just the odd jacket or official shirt, but complete uniforms, readily available for any enterprising prisoner to conceal as an aid to an escape. There was a cart full by the end of the operation. Part of the cache of other items found were several riot staves left unsecured as well as evidence of alcohol that had obviously been brought illegally into the prison.

An interesting find was made in the Reception Office from where inmates were discharged on their day of release. Carved into the top of the office desk, was a slot down to the drawer below. This drawer was locked and when it was prised open by the governor working there, it was found to contain quite a quantity of money. The prisoner orderly, who helped the staff in that work, described how some of the Reception Officers, 'charged' the departing inmates for their final breakfast on their release from the prison. The money was then dropped into the staff's 'piggy bank' for later use. It goes without saying that this, in effect, was theft.

A great sense of comradeship developed amongst all the people working in the prison during that period. I would not want to single out any particular governor grade, but a few individuals inevitably made their presence felt. AG1 John Aldridge manned the Gate most of the period, being very forceful and at times necessarily direct to any uniformed staff who tried, at different points, to enter the prison to see what was going on. Strict control of the Gate was paramount, of course. Another robust character was G3 Walter MacGowan. This larger than life individual was recorded as having a constant presence on the wings, offering visible leadership, particularly in the early days. For security reasons, no door should remain locked without staff knowing what was on the other side. Walter was charged with checking each locked office if there was no key. Of course it was inevitable that the POA office had to be broken into, used by POA Chairman Bryan Hughes and Secretary Ray Ward who were leading figures in directing uniformed staff in their refusal to accept the authority of the Governor. Another Governor G3, Paul Wailen, ran the prison successfully through each of the nights, with an appropriate group of fellow governors.

We saw the Governor on regular occasions moving about the prison and we were kept updated on what moves were taking place to try and resolve the dispute. The Deputy Governor worked productively on the Governor's behalf, crafting a document as a means of allowing both sides of the dispute to reach an agreement. The Governor kept up a regular dialogue each day with the inmates to address their concerns and agitations over things like visits, court appearances, canteen, medication, letters and exercise. For everybody, it was a draining experience but because of its peculiarity, it was nevertheless a very absorbing one. By the end of the seven days, once a compromise had been reached between Prison Service Headquarters, the Governor and the local branch of the POA, I was extremely glad to see the uniformed staff return, thus allowing us to go home and get some rest. It had been a gruelling period, but one that was unique in my varied service. It was stated in more than one report that a phased return by uniformed staff would have been advantageous, but as it happened, the governors left on Tuesday 6th May, to be replaced in one go by all the uniformed staff.

It is not appropriate to recall the incident at Gloucester without mentioning the problems at the same time, in a range of other prisons. Gloucester was identified as the catalyst for extremely serious trouble in Bristol, Lewes, Northeye, Erlestoke and Wymott, where significant disturbances occurred throughout the 30th April and into the next day. These lasted for between 3 hours and 18 hours, causing a huge amount of damage, and the short-term loss of around 800 inmate places. Publicity from Gloucester over their developing industrial action on the 29th, rippled around the country very quickly.

As was inevitable, the media reports inflamed tensions rapidly across the news outlets. The suggestion by the media that the ban on officers' overtime would adversely impact the inmate regime, caused great agitation, not just in the five prisons mentioned above, but in most other prisons around the country as well. Efforts by the Deputy Director General, Gordon Lakes, to de-escalate the news frenzy, did not work. A few places like Wakefield, Leeds, Stocken and Acklington suffered no trouble at all, but they were the exception.

What may be seen as curious about the incident at Gloucester all those years ago, has been my frustrating efforts to try and discover some documented evidence and official testimony of those seven days. I eventually managed to tap into a private institutional library in London that had preserved

several records about the incident in their archives. From this source, I obtained a copy of Sir James Hennessy's report by HM Inspectorate that provided the key points of the Gloucester incident. In the bundle of papers were seven newspaper cuttings from three national newspapers and a Hansard copy of a debate in the House of Commons dated 29 April.

Trying to obtain reports on the incident from more conventional sources was another matter. I would not offer the view that there has been any kind of cover-up or concealment, but more a case of an important incident, simply being shunted into a siding. When the prison closed down in 2013, I would have expected its records to be deposited either in Gloucestershire County Archives or the National Archive at Kew.

Seeking disclosure proved problematic. No record of the events described could be located at the County Archive, save for a private diary entry from a member of the public, which was subject to a 100 year embargo. Prison and Probation Service Headquarters informed me that they did not have any relevant records. Freedom of Information Act requests to the Ministry of Justice and HM Chief Inspector of Prisons came to nothing despite the latter having submitted a Report to Ministers a year after the incident.

I received no reply to my enquiries from the National Archive, the Prison Service Library or the National Justice Museum at Nottingham that holds the contents of the former Prison Service Museum.

Dampening down the Gloucester incident and removing written evidence of it, may have been part of a strategy within the Home Office to navigate a smooth path towards the implantation of Fresh Start. Of some significance was the fact that the Chief Inspectors report on the prison service troubles in the spring of 1986, were held up for a few months by a branch of government, whilst some of the more 'troublesome' elements of the narrative were toned down.

Through private files held by the former Deputy Governor of Gloucester, I was able to expand my knowledge of this event through some contemporaneous documents that laid out the saga in some detail. In this regard, I am grateful to Harry Crew for making his files available to me.

Gathered from governors working in the Operations room at the time, a sound record of events emerged from the prison all those years ago. A document from one of the leading governors in the prison following the incident, went a long way to help frame many of the details in this report. Drawing together the various strands of the incident from sources complementary to

the official Inspectorate Report, has allowed for a balanced story not fully recorded before. I am grateful to all those who contributed verbally as well as those who were able to lend me a range of useful documents. This story can now be properly placed 'on the record'.

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MORALITY; DO WE NEED MORE OR LESS OF IT.

By **John Ramwell**. (Written for his own edification and the Retired PGA Newsletter).

This piece comes in response to my thoughts on **conversion therapy** which came tumbling into my head as I enjoyed my Sunday morning lie in. In case you'd like a definition, I've placed one at the bottom, sorry, end, of this piece.

Why should I want to write about this subject? Maybe it's because this practice has marked, for me at least, and exemplified the huge shift over the last few years in social attitudes regarding human behaviour.

So where's this coming from; this urge to write about such abstract a subject early on a Sunday morning. Well, because it's Sunday and I had the radio on and a church service was in full flood I made use of the opportunity to briefly listened to the sermon.

I don't usually contradict the church and it's ministries but I often do wonder at its attempts to explain the many contradictions, as I see them, regarding philosophy and psychology. Why is the world such a cruel place? Why do we all, everyone of Gods creatures, have to rely on luck? Luck can be fickle - is fickle, and being so, is never proportionally

Western Daily Express article – 22 May.

Daily Telegraph – 2 May.

The Guardian – 30 April, 2 May, 5 May and 6 May.

Financial Times – 30 April and 7 May.

Governor grade verbal recollections – 8.

(No individual has been mentioned in this article by name or has been quoted, who has not already been referenced in either an official public report or a national newspaper article from the period. All facts have been recorded as accurately as possible to my knowledge. Any factual errors are my own for which the author apologises.)

Peter Atkinson

Former Prison Governor May 2021

dished out. One needs to be in the right place at the right time to catch any. Even then, it's often seriously rationed.

But I'm not here this morning to write about 'Lady Luck' or about my perceived theological contradictions but instead I'm wanting to cover this issue (the one that says that to be gay is wrong and requires changing) of human behaviour and attitude which I've always found both interesting and yet perplexing. I've had more than a passing interest in psychology and have read extensively on the subject but have so far failed to understand human behaviour. I believe it's possible to spend several life times studying the subject and yet not arrive at any tangible conclusions.

First to explain where I'm personally coming from on this subject. I can almost hear your brain cogs



whirling. "My goodness, he's about to come out. Taken his time. He's just turned 80, you know!"

But I'm going to disappoint. I just don't believe it's necessary to ever disclose your inner feelings unless you have the urge to do so. How I dislike it when an introduction is prefixed with, 'he/she is gay,' unless it's particularly relevant.

Some many moons ago I was a Hospital Officer at HMP Wandsworth. One of my tasks was to escort prisoners to local NHS clinics for, among many medical reasons, aversion therapy. I knew, or at least had a firm conviction, that we were all wasting our efforts and time. All we ever did was to raise unrealistic expectations whilst continuing to acknowledge that being gay was the root of many social problems such as criminality, domestic violence (which, in this case, it might well have been), and a whole raft of social mal-behaviour. Rapidly our society has become so much more tolerant.

I was watching a mainstream programme ('Granchester' if you must know.) last night. Based on the 1950's, as part of its story line, it depicted two men, one a member of the clergy, having a 'sordid, wicked affair' which was about to come before the court and blow their lives apart.

It wasn't too long ago that mainstream television viewing would never have entertained such stark material. Now, anything goes. It seems that the more obscure television channels vie with each other to attract viewers with banality, (which happens to be my own interpretation of their material); in order to encourage the sort of viewers who are keen to be sexually excited, whilst even mainstream media entertainment seem to be joining the fray.

I really don't care if I'm thought prudish or even a potential pervert. As opposed to recent eras and generations where so much was frowned upon, I've begun to wonder just how many of us today really give a damn about what others think about us. 'I am what I am and to hell.'

My recent book, 'Just Jimmy,' might provide an insight into my dark character! (Couldn't resist this opportunity to give it a nudge in your direction, the book, not my character.)

Before going further, the last thing I want to encourage here is an attitude that appears to set us up against our parents and grandparents; apart, that is, of an acceptance they were narrow minded, intolerant and bigoted. By today's standards they stand accused but not, in my view, guilty.

Are we, the current generation, guilty for the deluge of pornography that has recently blighted many lives, young ones in particular? Are we guilty for the huge betting industry that has blighted so many lives? Of course we could do more to push these genies back into the bottle... couldn't we?

Maybe Governments could do more. But experience shows little is effective other than they become labelled. 'Nanny States.'

Scotland has tried to curb excessive alcohol consumption by raising its price but this often serves to drive the addicted into acquisitive crime and/or illicit drugs whilst becoming a highly unpopular policy by those simply wanting to enjoy a 'wee dram.' There are some who will make an association with modern liberalism and with it such as pornography and other addictive self harming behaviour, and maybe this is the price that 'progress' brings. Personally I feel this is crass as results of change are often consequences rather than a price to be paid in striving to achieve a better and more equitable life for the majority.

The issue of child abuse has to rear its head in any discussion regarding perverse human behaviour. Often connected with the whole range of domestic abuse, this and rape has to be the worst of a bad bunch of crimes against humanity away from those connected with war crimes which are often terrible by their quantity as well as quality.

So maybe we should be focusing on dealing with child abusers and not on labelling simple differences between us. After all, morality has to begin somewhere.

Maybe you're right, but one thing at a time.

For the record here's a formal dictionary definition ...

"Conversion therapy is the pseudoscientific practice of trying to change an individual's sexual orientation from homosexual or bisexual to heterosexual using psychological, physical, or spiritual interventions. There is no reliable evidence that sexual orientation can be changed, and medical institutions warn that conversion therapy practices are ineffective and potentially harmful. Medical, scientific, and government organizations in the United States and the United Kingdom have expressed concern over the validity, efficacy and ethics of conversion therapy.

Various jurisdictions around the world have passed laws against conversion therapy."

MEMBERSHIP REPORT To AGM-October 2021

Harry Brett-Membership Secretary.

The headline news is that membership for the year has fallen from 403 to 399. In the year there were 10 deaths of members, almost balanced by recruiting 9 new members. However we have lost 3 members who either stopped paying their membership, or who we have simply lost contact with.



<u>Membership at the 2020 AGM</u>	346 + 57 = 403/127
Alan Pratt (Res)	345 + 57 = 402/125
Paul Wailen (Dec)	344 + 57 = 401/124
John Dring (Dec)	343 + 57 = 400
Bernard Clarke (Dec)	342 + 57 = 399/123
Ken Alderson (Dec)	341 + 57 = 398/122
John Smith (Dec)	340 + 57 = 397
Roy Robson (Dec)	339 + 57 = 396
John Lewis (Dec)	338 + 57 = 395
Fred Abbott (N/P)	337 + 57 = 394
Marie Rys-Reuton (N/P)	336 + 57 = 393/121
Eoin Lawrence	337 + 57 = 394
Danny Khan	338 + 57 = 395/122
Peter Atkinson	339 + 57 = 396
Doug Wayman (Dec)	338 + 57 = 395
Stuart Nicholson	339 + 57 = 396
Rev Eric Towlson (N/T)	338 + 57 = 395/121
Chris Walker (Dec)	337 + 57 = 394/120
Rowland Jagger	338 + 57 = 395/121
Graham Miller	339 + 57 = 396/122
Dave Kennedy (Dec)	338 + 57 = 395/121
Gerry Johns	339 + 57 = 396/122
Mrs Jan Kennedy	339 + 58 = 397
Gabrielle Lee	340 + 58 = 398
Mick Gosden	341 + 58 = 399/123

KEY

Res – Resigned – 1 Dec – Deceased – 10 N/P – Non-Payers – 2 N/T – Not There - 1

New Members – 10

We remember those members ,and former colleagues, who died 2020/2021.

Members:

Paul Wailen	John Dring	Bernard Clarke	Ken Alderson
John Smith	Roy Robson	John Lewis	Doug Wayman
Chris Walker	Dave Kennedy		

Non-Members

Phil Mortimore	Derek Twiner	Ifor Smout	Barry Dempsey
Claire Baines			

Harry can be contacted by email at h_brett@sky.com or by phone 01477 549216 or 07999 874864.

TECHNOLOGY. By Mike Selby

The request for submissions on this subject aroused my interest because, at my age, I am aware how matters have changed during my lifetime. This example occurred in 1948 when I was aged 17. My father was a Doctor practising as a medical officer in Nigeria-then a colony. It was arranged that I should join my parents for the summer holidays, journeying to what was then called British Cameroon's'-a colony, formerly German, but now attached geographically and administratively to Nigeria.

So in order to fly out, join at Airways House near Victoria Station and special bus to Heathrow which consisted of two large Nissan huts-painted dark green. Gathered together at noon, some 16 of us were given a polite request to walk out to join the aeroplane waiting for us on the tarmac. It was an Avro York a square bodied version of a Lancaster bomber, the four Merlin engines thundered as we slowly trundled across the grass and finally –reluctantly - took off.

We flew sedately across France at 8,000 feet, I recall peering down at the mountains of Sardinia which appeared disconcertingly close. In the evening we landed at Castel Benito in North Africa, out to dinner and back to cross the Sahara, so issued with a very small blanket for warmth. During day and night no attempt at distraction nor entertainment, except the underwhelming news, pencilled on a pad and passed around the passengers, informing us that Bruce Woodcock-boxing champion- had beaten Gus Lesnovich (USA) on points.

We landed in the early morning in Kano north Nigeria but not before the Emir's minion had blown a huge trumpet issuing a stentorian warning to clear the runway of his citizens and their cattle. Breakfast of greasy fried egg, so back to the plane and on to Lagos arriving at noon. Just 24 hours for the journey. My Father's friend and colleague met me – thank goodness-as I could not understand a word at the passport desk-and took me to his home. The journey included inching our way through the market which seemed chaotic but astonishingly vibrant.

The following day I flew in a De Havilland Dove, a neat plane with two quiet engines and a few passengers –on a feeder line along the coast. The final stop was to be Tiko airport in the Cameroon's, to reach

this we flew over vast forests. During this flight a significant conversation was taking place at Tiko. In order to test if it was safe to land, a lorry full of bricks, under the authority of the Public Works Department (PWD) was driven slowly onto the landing area. If it sank more than 6 inches, then it was unsafe –it sank 9 inches. Crisis-my father drew the man in charge of the PWD-known as Feckless Freddy-and, over a drink, mentioned to him that this would be the last flight in and that his son was arriving and if turned back his summer holiday would be ruined, could he, *please* see his way to waive the rule? So we landed safely but the pilots were not warned and had opened the side windows. As a consequence, when they emerged, they were saturated with clinging mud and were furious.

We drove to the port of Victoria and I can recall children wandering beside the road using enormous leaves from the banana plant as umbrellas. My parents' house had a glorious view and was solidly built by the Germans, BUT there were no telephones, no wireless, no electricity- just pouring, gushing, endless rain. Prominent was a stem of ripening bananas, a veritable feast compared to one per green ration book in G.B.

The only entertainment revealed was a wind up gramophone and wobbly records of the Yeomen of the Guard by G&S.

How, since there were now no flights out nor in, no roads to Nigeria, no phones, was communication with Head Quarters in Lagos achieved? My father told me-“I give the package to the Captain of the Banana Boat. He sails with it to Liverpool-which takes exactly a fortnight and he then posts it and it arrives in Lagos in the flight from London.”

Problem solved!

There was, however, an attempt to modernise. The thrusting chief of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) ordered, for his personal use, a new car – a smart glistening Buick no less, which was landed at the port with due ceremony. Alas, due to the condition of the roads, its range was only 8 miles .

Michael Selby

A CORONAVIRUS DIARY-Dave Taylor

It all started when I thought I had come into contact with someone who was infected - during one of my Santa visits (although most of them were FaceTime visits or Zoom). I play Santa every year for a firm called "More Than Just A Princess". She is a very talented performer and accompanies me as either Elsa or The Chief Elf.

That was on 23rd December and I started self-isolating then. I didn't have any symptoms but took a test on 4 January which proved positive. I was a little surprised as I still had none of the associated symptoms - cough, breathlessness and a temperature - but nevertheless obeyed the Government's advice, or rather statutory legal mandate, to isolate for 10 days. I got the result on 6 January and had already been isolating for 14 days by then.

I began to get a bit worried as I thought that, having tested positive, then the symptoms would now develop and show themselves. With an underlying illness, diabetes, I thought that if I was to be taken to hospital then there would be no coming home. As it happened the symptom I did develop were nausea and lack of appetite, which the WHO now recognise as symptoms. I sat and waited for the other symptoms to arrive - but, thankfully, they never did.

However I was in the spare room with only a DAB radio for company. My daughter did fetch the daily paper which I have on order from the local Newsagent, and between the two I kept myself entertained; but honestly I never want to hear the bloody Shipping Forecast again!! In their defence Radio 4 and Radio 4Extra have some cracking dramas on in an afternoon, and I had SkyGo on my iPad with which to watch the footy, something I only discovered late on in January.

What really surprised me was that my mental health was worsening as I retarded emotionally. I was having really bad dreams, not quite nightmares, but they contained hellish scenarios, and my waking thoughts became so dark as a result. There was a time when I contemplated easing my burden by death. This was so unlike me as I have always been a glass half-full person.

My wife was making me three meals a day and leaving them outside my door, but I was creaking under the mental weight of wondering whether this was going to worsen and how long I was going to be isolated. My wife also has an underlying illness in that she suffers from COPD, and I was frightened of giving it to her as I know she would struggle with her

breathing. Or perhaps not if she had mild symptoms like me, but I couldn't take that chance.

I took another test on 11th January which came back positive again. This deepened my depression and also worried my wife. Another 10 days of isolation were on the cards, and emotionally I was close to the edge.

I took another test on 18th January which came back positive on Wednesday 20th January. I was now at my wits end. And to put the final nail in the coffin the test I took on 25th January came back positive on Wednesday 27th January.

In between the second and third test, a guy who has recently joined a Committee I sit on, e-mailed me to say his wife was the lead Nurse at a large local hospital and the Doctor there had heard what was happening to me (I presumed she had mentioned it) and he told her to tell me not to take another test and seek advice from my GP.

He said that when members of Healthcare staff contract the disease, they isolate for 10 days and then come back to work. They know that if they took another test it would be positive, but the virus is not as transmissible after 10 days of isolation. This was music to my ears. So when on Wednesday I got notice of the positive test, I rang my G.P. at my surgery. They were very good and said that the on-call Doctor would phone me back. They did and I spoke to Dr. Perkins, a Doctor I have seen previously in the surgery and put my case to her.

She agreed that I no longer needed to isolate as I didn't have any symptoms (the nausea and loss of appetite as well as a bit of bowel trouble - not much obviously as I wasn't eating - had disappeared by 11 January). She said that I still needed to be careful around my wife (wear a mask) but I could go for a walk and exercise but stay out of shops etc.

Well, I can't tell you what that did for my morale. I said to my wife I would stay in the room for that night, as well as till after she has had her vaccination, but that I would be up and about the next day. I cooked my own boiled eggs that morning and went for a walk about midday. My back and hips were sore and I raced a snail and lost, but I wasn't worried; I was out in the fresh air. Boy did it feel good. I listened to the bird calls and stopped every now and then to take it all in.

Life is precious, and mine has been given back to me. I showered again every morning and have just got back from my walk. Still sore hips and that snail

keeps following me about, but I cannot tell you how much my mood has been lifted. Friends have phoned me and on one occasion, whilst I can't tell you exactly what I said, it was something along the lines of a canine and two appendages.

It is now nearly the end of April and I am fully recovered. But I often think about all those people who were not as fortunate as I was, and lost their battle. God Bless every one of them.

I reproduce a poem "When Just The Tide Went Out" written by that genius Welsh Comedian Max Boyce. It sums up for me the trials and tribulations we have been through and I find I cannot read it without bursting into tears.

Last night as I lay sleeping, when dreams came fast to me,

I dreamt I saw JERUSALEM beside a tide less sea.

And one dream I'll remember as the stars began to fall,

Was Banksy painting Alun Wyn on my neighbour's garage wall.

And dreams like that sustain me 'til these darkest times have passed

And chase away the shadows no caring night should cast.

But times like this can shine a light as hardship often can,

To see the best in people and the good there is in man.

And I remember Swansea with nobody about
The shops were closed like Sunday and just the tide went out.

And I remember Mumbles with the harbour in its keep,

And the fishing boats at anchor that trawl the waters deep.

And I heard the seabirds calling as the gulls all wheeled about ,

But all the town was sleeping now and just the tide went out.

And when these days are over and memories remain,

When children painted Rainbows and the sun shone through the rain

And the doctors and the nurses who stretched all the pain

And I hope the carers never see a time like this again.

And I prayed last week for Boris, who knocked on Heaven's door

And I thought of voting Tory, which I've never done before.

And though the sun is shining I've no immediate plans

So I'll write a book on 'Staying In' and 'Ways To Wash Your Hands' .

And now more days of lockdown, 3 weeks of staying in

I'm running out of vodka and I've started on the gin .

And my neighbours are complaining, I've heard them scream and shout

With the sound the bins are making when I take the empties out.

And when all this is over, and our fragile world survives,

I hope that God is caring now for the ones who gave their lives.

And I pray we'll find an answer, for my faith is cast in doubt

And God draws back the heavens and all the stars come out.

And I'll remember mornings with nobody about

When the shops were closed like Sunday, and just the tide went out.



This is the full version of an edited letter that appeared in the Daily Mail on 5 August 2021. Subsequently I was interviewed by the Daily Telegraph. Extracts from that interview appeared in the Daily Telegraph online and can be found by googling 'Paul Laxton Daily Telegraph'.

COVID AND THE SHEER CRUELTY INFLICTED ON THE TERMINALLY ILL-Paul Laxton

My late wife, Leonore, usually known as Lennie, was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease in June 2020.

MND is a death sentence, there is no reprieve. After her diagnosis the NHS swung into action. The local MND team gave us fantastic support and provided any amount of free equipment to help my wife cope with increasing disability. The only item we had to pay for out of own pockets was the stair lift. When she had deteriorated sufficiently to be eligible for Attendance Allowance, it was paid swiftly and at the higher rate. After all those years of paying in, the NHS paid out as promised.

Our problems began eleven months later when the inevitable happened and my wife was taken to Huddersfield Royal Infirmary on Saturday 15 May after a fall. Covid rules dictated that I could not accompany her in the ambulance. When I was advised that she was being kept in, I was allowed to drop off some personal effects like her I-pad and phone at the door of the acute ward. I was not allowed in to see her. By the following Thursday she was terribly distressed and I was granted a one hour visit. Denied a visit at weekend I was offered a virtual visit. I'm loathe to criticise ward staff most of whom were fantastic, but the virtual visit was a farce. The disease had reduced her voice to a husk, and she was finding it difficult to grip. The result was that she dropped the tablet several times during the visit, struggled to pick it up, and was frequently too far from the microphone to be heard.

Myself and her best friend Sharon were in despair. Where was there a nurse to hold the tablet for her? It just felt as though this was a half hour where Lennie could be safely ignored. Needless to say this was the last time we bothered with the virtual visit. It was also the last time she ever spoke to her best friend, because her only permitted visitor was me. Her son Simon, who wanted to end their estrangement, was never able to do so before his mother died.

After the weekend Lennie was transferred to Calderdale Royal at Halifax to the specialist respiratory ward. Although I knew a transfer was upcoming, no one bothered to tell me that she had gone. The plan was that she would return to Huddersfield for the day on Thursday 27 May to have the food pipe, known as a 'PEG', inserted. I rang up about visits and was told I was allowed one after 14 days. I pointed out that this was the same allowance as a convicted paedophile in one of Her Majesty's prisons.

Despite the audible embarrassment at the other end, they were unmoved. I did get to see Lennie before Saturday but only because there were complications with the PEG insertion and they thought she might die. When

Lennie was eventually found a bed in ICU, I was forced to leave. She survived but her ability to use her fingers had gone and there were no more texts and phone calls. After being transferred back to Halifax I was allowed to visit on the Saturday. At least I could then read texts from her friends and send replies on her behalf. I asked when I could next visit. The response was in 7 days time. Unimaginably cruel. My wife was being devastated by MND but had all her mental faculties. I can only guess what was going on inside her head; unable to communicate with family and friends let alone have a visit.

As it turned out I was there the next day; twice. I was called out during the day and then again during the night as they thought Lennie might not make it. Both times she rallied. Lennie had been put on a ventilator during her stay in the ICU, which I knew was a bad sign. I was forced to wear full PPE on my visits that day. With a goldfish bowl round my head and a device around my waist which noisily pumped air into the bowl I could not hear a thing when she tried to speak to me. We were reduced to getting her to point to letters on a card to find out what she wanted to say. I could get no sense as to who this was supposed to protect as both of us were double vaccinated, as were the nurses.

Not until the next Thursday was I allowed another visit. I made it clear I was not prepared to wear an outfit that rendered communication impossible. After a stand-off I threatened to contact the Daily Mail. They relented and I was allowed to wear the same kit as the nurses; airtight mask, plastic screen, gown and gloves. At least it was possible to communicate. That Thursday, 3 June, someone finally found their inner humanity, and I was allowed daily one hour visits, and a blind eye was turned to me exceeding that.

Nevertheless, the essential cruelty of the system remained. No one else was allowed to visit. After entering hospital, other than the staff, Lennie saw no one but me. She was a gregarious woman with plenty of friends. Lennie knew her time was short and wanted to say goodbye. On two occasions I suggested transfer to a hospice where at least she could have the comfort of visits. Each time I was told it was impossible because she needed periodic ventilation. Don't terminal cancer and COPD patients in hospice care need ventilation? I just felt I was being fobbed off. She grew very distressed.

In her final days Lennie was desperate to come home to die. It was always going to be difficult as her care needs were inevitably going to be very complex and would take some organising. It did not help that during her stay in hospital no assessment had been made of what mobility remained. For a few days it seemed as though Lennie might come home as she rallied, but there was a further setback on Sunday 13 June, as attempts to wean her off the non-invasive ventilator seemed to be failing. I saw the consultant on the following day. He said Lennie had no more than weeks to live, and he would get the Discharge Co-ordinator on the case.

On Tuesday 15 June I arrived for my visit and was told that the Discharge Co-ordinator was on her way to see me. I never did see the Discharge Co-ordinator. Lennie died within minutes of me entering her room. It was as though she had waited for me and that was a great consolation. My great fear was that she would die alone as so many did during the pandemic. There may be consolation for me, but none whatsoever for her son and her many friends. As for Lennie she had to endure hours alone with her thoughts and fears, utterly bereft. She was terrified and told me so. I would have happily organised visitors in relays. I would have happily paid for Covid tests if that's what it had taken. Individual doctors and nurses were magnificent. It's the inhumane, backside covering NHS bureaucracy that's rotten.

The final indignity came with the funeral. Less than 24 hours after the European Championship final was watched live by 60,000 people, just 24 mourners were allowed into Huddersfield crematorium. I had to ask some of them to attend without their spouses just to get the numbers down.

I can come to terms with my wife's death. I don't believe that I'll ever come to terms with the official cruelties that were inflicted.

PAUL LAXTON

THE DEFINITIVE PRISON SERVICE MEMOIR-Part 2.

In the last edition of The Newsletter, Paul Laxton produced an in depth review of the book that, at that time, was about to be published written by Brendan O’Friel and called “Prison Governor’s Journal”. The launch took place in April on The Isle of Man, and early indications are that the book has been very well received across a wide spectrum of reviewers. Brendan has kindly provided the following piece, “About The Book” for reproduction in The Newsletter.

You can find more information about the book at:
<https://www.prisongovernorjournal.com/>

Available to purchase from: - Lexicon Bookshop
 63 Strand Street, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 2RL
 Website: www.lexiconbookshop.co.im



Brendan at the launch of his book together with his wife, Barbara, Francis Masserick - who lives on the Island and the book designer Marion Hughston.

About the Book-Brendan O’Friel

Prisons are among our oldest human institutions. Anecdotes about prisons – often scandals or disasters – are chronicled from very early times. Despite long experience, our record of running acceptable penal institutions is at best varied and at worst disastrous.

When States authorise detention, individuals lose freedoms. But detention can result in individuals suffering poor living conditions, the threat of pain and injury through violence from fellow detainees or staff and - in very extreme circumstances - death. The Nazi Concentration Camps are a stark reminder of the

terrible depths to which humanity can sink when treating detainees.

Since 1946, many staff and many prisoners within the Prison Service in England and Wales have been through a torrid time. In 2020 the Covid 19 Pandemic added a new unprecedented challenge. Staff and prisoners face a

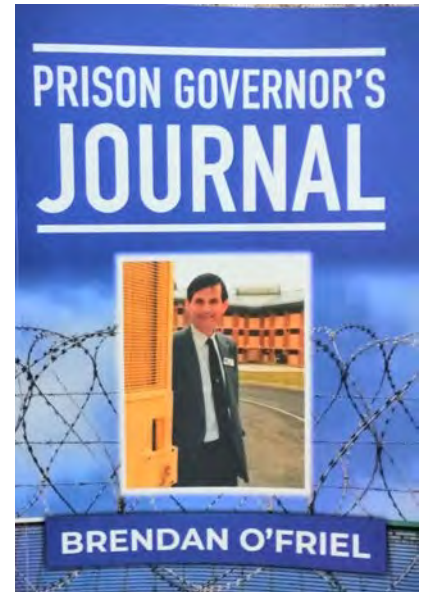
very difficult future. It was this additional threat – and possible opportunity - that spurred me to complete my book.

Since I retired, many people had encouraged me to write about my years in the Prison Service of England and Wales. So this book began as a record of my experiences to help provide a reasonably accurate account of the very troubled times the Prison Service endured since 1946. There are few accounts available written by Governors. My recollections will not give a complete picture - rather how events appeared to me at the time and after reflection.

Public ignorance about the Service is hardly surprising. Locked away behind high walls, life in prisons is largely hidden from view. What emerges through the media is frequently misleading and almost always lacks balance.

The work of the Prison Service is often caught up in wider public attitudes towards crime and offenders. Unfortunately public debate on reducing crime and making the public safer is usually woefully short on evidence and too often fuelled by dubious sound bites. Decades of prison crises have failed to enlist sufficient public support for reform.

If we are to have a Prison Service playing a full and constructive part in our Criminal Justice System, substantial changes are needed. The starting point for change and improvement is understanding what went wrong and why. Because the book has been written over many years, I have had time to reflect on and re-examine some recent prison history. As radical improvements are urgently needed, I include suggestions for launching a programme of change.



While many diverse issues have beset the Prison Service in England and Wales, two fundamental problems stand out throughout the last seventy years.

First, the accommodation available in prisons – especially the number of cells – has been totally inadequate to house the avalanche of prisoners committed to prison by the courts. This challenge, first emerging around 1946, has never been adequately addressed. Now a chronic disorder, overcrowding has crippled the service.

Second, and of at least equal importance, is the failure to provide adequate numbers of suitably trained and motivated staff. This omission is equally chronic and has led to decades of missed opportunities for delivering positive regimes for prisoners to reduce re-offending and better protect the public.

In my opinion, it is the combination of these two chronic failures that have led to the Prison Service in England and Wales having such a lengthy and disturbing record of successive disasters.

In this book, as well as describing life in seven establishments, I focus on a number of key concerns impacting the Service. To assist readers, I identify those chapters most relevant to each concern. To understand these concerns, considerable detail is necessary because the task of running prisons is complex.

These are:-

- Overcrowding - Chapter 14 and 35
- Staffing - Chapter 15
- Management of Prisons - Chapter 16
- Regimes - Chapters 20, 22, 26 and 31
- National Management and Leadership - Chapters 32 and 33
- Industrial Relations - Chapters 17, 24 and 36
- Contribution of the Governors Representative Organisations - Chapters 13, 25 and 34-37

The core of the book describes my experience of working with prisoners and staff in the seven establishments in which I served. This included two tours at Manchester Prison, opening the new Borstal Recall Centre at Onley; experience of Lowdham Grange, an “open” young offender Borstal; in charge of both male and female offenders at Risley Prison; working at Birmingham’s Winson Green “Local” Prison and at the “Training” Prisons at Featherstone and Preston.

I begin by painting a picture of how establishments worked fifty years ago as seen through my eyes as a junior and inexperienced assistant Governor. My career took me through several establishments as Deputy Governor – so I attempt to capture the way

different establishments worked and the varied duties and challenges faced by a Deputy Governor. Then as a senior Governor during difficult times, what was it like to be taking considerable responsibility in the thick of crises – both in establishments and when holding HQ and Regional posts?

Throughout the book, there is a focus on leadership. Senior staff in the Prison Service faced considerable ongoing challenges and some exceptionally demanding situations. I endeavour to capture the complexity of the problems of leadership and to highlight what appeared to work. This may be of interest to those currently working in prisons and perhaps in other organisations.

Being elected Chairman of the Governors Representative Organisation from 1977 to 84 (The Governors’ Branch) and from 1990 to 1995 (The Prison Governors Association), I worked closely with many senior people in the service and met many politicians who served as Home Secretary and as Prison Ministers. In particular, I had an unusual – perhaps unique - opportunity to see how politicians and their senior advisers dealt with some of the many crises that beset the Prison Service between 1963 and 1996. Very little has been recorded about the work of the Governors’ representative organisations so I shall provide some insight into how we operated and what impact – if any - we had.

There are many unanswered questions including:-

- Why has prison overcrowding lasted so long and what damage has it done?
- Why did the Prison Service suffer disaster after disaster?
- Why were acute staffing and Industrial Relations problems not tackled earlier?
- If Ministers and senior officials knew that Prison Officers did not have the right to strike, why was it kept so secret?
- Were there undisclosed factors around the decision not to try and retake Strangeways on April 2nd 1990?
- Why is the prison population in the UK so high when many of our European neighbours have much lower prison populations?

Unanswered questions are often the most interesting. Can this book shed any more light on them? Perhaps! Many of these questions require further research. Accurate analysis of past prison issues should help to provide a sound basis for developing effective and relevant future prison strategies.

“Thoughts of a Lifetime” by CA Joyce

One of the consequences of publishing a book about the Prison Service – “Prison Governor’s Journal “ - is the way it sparks off the discovery of information about the Service from unexpected sources. One of my older Manx readers – a lady in her nineties – found a copy of the above publication on her loft and – because she knew of my Prison Service connections – gave it to me.

As it so happened, I already owned a book by CA Joyce “By Courtesy of the Criminal” published in 1955. The 1955 Book had much about offenders but little about the author or about the Prison Service. I was quite unaware of the existence of a second autobiographical book and to my delight it includes interesting material about the service.

Cyril Alfred Joyce was a remarkable man. Born in June 1900, he joined the Prison and Borstal Service in 1923 as an Assistant Housemaster – he says he was the first “Assistant Housemaster” to be appointed - at Portland Borstal and also served in adult prisons. He was Governor of Camp Hill Borstal on the Isle of Wight and in 1937 opened the new Borstal at Hollesley Bay in Suffolk. In 1941 he left the service to open the Cotswold School for young offenders. He died in 1976.

“Thoughts of a Lifetime” is autobiographical. It gives much more detail than his earlier book about his own service connections and how the service was organised – material I have not seen before.

For example, his father was “Engineer” at Derby Prison so Joyce was brought up in a Prison Service family. Derby Prison was the “New County Gaol” at Vernon Street with 369 cells – closed as a local prison

in November 1916 - used as a military prison for a period and demolished around 1930. The Joyce family moved to west London in 1910 when the Prison Service opened a second borstal – Feltham – an establishment that still operates. Joyce served at Wakefield, Durham and Wormwood Scrubs prisons as well as the three borstals.

The book has considerable detail about how the borstals were organised – I was interested to find references to Governor’s “Night Visits “; to the duty days required of Governor grades - they had one day off a week and one weekend a month - which did not change until the introduction of 5 day week working in 1972; of the officer staffing, shift arrangements and duties at Portland in 1923; the introduction for the first time of payment for work done by prisoners at Wakefield. Joyce also notes – almost as an afterthought – that while at Wakefield Prison he was also responsible for the Imperial Training School – latter known as the Prison Service Staff College at Love Lane.

Joyce’s final chapter includes an account of the duties and trials of being a Governor’s wife at Camp Hill and at Hollesley Bay and reminds the reader that he was only paid £28 a month and had to run a car. He also sets out the extent to which he was involved in broadcasting including regular appearances on “Any Questions”. He was undoubtedly the first Governor to develop a media profile!

“Thoughts of a Lifetime” by CA Joyce was published in 1971 by Lakeland at a cost of 50p.

Brendan O’Friel
July 2021

Editors Note. If Brendan’s short review has wetted your appetite then a search for Thoughts of a Lifetime on Amazon will lead you to find that this book is still available priced at between £2.80p and £3.99p plus delivery.
GM-C

Prison Governor's Journal. **My Take.** By John Ramwell

Mr O’Friel and I are the same age. In fact he beat me to this world of ours by 7-months. He went to a Catholic boarding school; so did I. He has retained his Catholic Faith. I lost mine as I left school. The reasons are simple enough; I just did, as I became to believe in Darwinism rather than Creationism. He enjoyed a university education and joined the Prison Service as a Governor Grade in 1963. I left school at 16 as an underachiever and joined the Service as a Farm Hand in 1961.

So Brendan's' approach to our shared occupation was as an academic and leader: mine as a ‘hands on’ and as one of those to be led, until I climbed the ladder to become the Deputy Governor at HMYOI Hindley. We both stuck to our employer through thick and thin until retiring in 1997. I say, ‘through thick and thin.’ In my case I’m happy to claim it was mainly thin in that, apart from a few interesting moments, I had an easy tour of duty.

In Brendan’s case his interesting moments were of a more prolonged period and were certainly off the Richter Scale in comparison with anything I had to put up with. Our paths rarely crossed. I’m not sure we even met face to face but I’ve listened to several of his addresses at various conferences. He was to become a high profile figure and highly respected. I am pleased to be part of a Prison Service that not only retained his services but that also held him in such esteem.

So turning now to his book, ‘Prison Governor’s Journal.’ When reviewing any work there are three important questions.

1. Did I find it easy to read?
2. Did I enjoy reading it?
3. Did I learn from reading it?

The answer to the first two questions is, most definitely, yes. The answer to the third is an emphatic YES. A ‘YES’ to the extent it should immediately become compulsory reading by those at every level in the Prison Service who are currently serving and by those who may be contemplating this career choice. As for those who lead our Country by making choices regarding our priorities and finances, this is a book that should have far reaching consequences. This book has not been written by just another serving or ex-serving officer of the Service. The author’s credentials and experience are not, and could never be, questionable. To make a mark one often needs to

be contentious. The more so the bigger the mark. But it remains my own contention that Mr. O’Friel has done little but state the obvious which, coming from him, is going to make a huge mark on the future of the Prison Service and its role in our society. The starting position is the need to accept there is a requirement for resources in terms of energy, leadership, finances, management, priorities and organisation.

The problem we all have to face is the reality of politicians having to find and allocate these resources against the backdrop of huge demands post pandemic as we all have to adjust our expectations to this harsh reality.

Mr. O’Friel’s book should become a template for putting much right whilst accepting the need for a new and much anticipated ‘new normal;’ one that, as I write, will not become clear for years to come. There is little doubt that the courage demonstrated during two world wars and the Covid-19 Pandemic is going to have to continue to have to remain in place as Society wrestles with the all embracing requirements to fix what has been broken.

It might be that we really need to revisit such serious issues such as how are to be governed. Democracy has its benefits; we all know what Churchill said about it. But maybe the way we apply it as an overarching system to ensure we retain these benefits is going to be key. Questions like;

1. Does it need to be so expensive? Could we not, at the very least, review the House of Lords, look more closely at local government. Trim down costs without loss of representation.
2. A different way of being accountable.
3. Part Three of ‘Prison Governor’s Journal’ entitled ‘Unanswered Questions,’ although particularly specific have much wider connotations to the wider issues facing us all if we are to avoid “muddle than Machiavelli.”

A final word I leave to Brendan...

“Changing prison policy will require a very wide coalition of organisations within society to support positive politicians. Existing prison reform groups, religious leaders, trade unions, business leaders, and many more, will be needed to deliver energetic and full-hearted support for change. This presents an opportunity but also a huge challenge to us all.”

John Ramwell
BL5 2SL.
12th April, 2021

From The Treasurer.

This is my annual report presented to the AGM on the RPGA financial position for the 2020 period.

Despite being a terrible year for almost everything and everyone, 2020 was not a financial disaster for the RPGA.

The headline is that the Association made a surplus of Income over Expenditure of £960.69p for the year. Whilst this was a lower surplus than the previous year it is still a healthy sum, and allows me to safely predict that I see no reason why the current rate of basic membership subscription would need to be increased in the foreseeable future. There are indications that both the cost of producing the PGA Diary, and postage costs, will increase in the coming year and therefore I cannot make the same prediction for the subscription rate of those who chose to receive a PGA Diary as part of their membership.



However this needs to be seen in the context that our income from subscriptions reduces every year, for the simple reason that sadly, we lose more members than we gain. If costs are carefully controlled we can sustain the gradual reduction of income for the foreseeable future and I am comfortable that we have a “sufficient” cash balance in the bank to allow for this.

The fact that the committee were unable to meet in person, and instead conducted business via ZOOM meetings, meant that Travel and Subsistence costs for the year were zero. The main reason for the reduction in the surplus is entirely due to the increase in cost of producing, and distribution of the Newsletter. The management committee made a decision at the start of the year that the 40th Anniversary edition of The Newsletter would be the best one ever, and that we would place no financial restrictions on the editor, (Paul Laxton), with regard to size, or quality. There is no doubt that this was money well spent and the 40th edition was indeed “the best ever”.

This led the committee to the decision that as The Newsletter is our primary means of communication with members, and indeed in many cases, our only means of communication, we decided that we would invest in increased production values for The Newsletter including more colour photos and good quality paper.

There is no doubt that 2021 has seen a move back toward some sort of “normality” but the management committee have tried to allow for continued restrictions or disruption by continuing our subscription to the ZOOM service, thereby giving us the flexibility for future meetings to be either in person, or virtually, via ZOOM.

Below are the audited and certified accounts for the financial year 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020. Copies of the original documents are available on request, and as always, I am happy to take questions either directly, by post, Graham Mumby-Croft, 15 Thirsk Drive, Lincoln, LN6 8SZ or email graham.mumbycroft@gmail.com

Graham Mumby-Croft
Treasurer

Retired Prison Governors Association: Treasurers Report Financial Year 1/1/20 to 31/12/20**Current Accounts and Benevolent Fund Account**

Barclays Community Account (Current)	
Carried Forward on 1/1/20	£13,267.83

Income from 1/1/20 to 31/12/20	
Subscriptions	£5,432.00
Donations	£0.00
Interest	£0.00
Other	£0.00
Other	£0.00
Sub Total	£5,432.00

Expenditure From 1/1/20 to 31/12/20

Printing	£2,530.00
Stationary	£185.09
Post/Phone	£1,591.22
Travel/Subs	£0.00
Refunds	£0.00
Diaries	£0.00
Admin Costs	£0.00
Donations	£75.00
Miscellaneous	£90.00
Room Hire/Catering	£0.00
Total Expenditure 2020	£4,471.31

Totals	
Carried Forward on 1/1/20	£13,267.83
Income 1/1/20 to 31/12/20	£5,432.00
Sub Total	£18,699.83
Expenditure 1/1/20 to 31/12/20	£4,471.31
Sub Total	£14,228.52
Bank Statement Balance at 31/12/20	£14,228.52
Minus uncleared cheques	£0.00
Surplus/Deficit for financial year 2020	£960.69

Outstanding cheques	£0.00
Total	£0.00

Miscellaneous expenditure 2020

Insertion fee for Spring Newsletter.	£45.00
Insertion fee for Autumn Newsletter	£45.00

Total	£90.00
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Total Income 1/1/20 to 31/12/20

Barclays Acc	£5,432.00
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Total Income for year ended 31/12/20	£5,432.00
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Cash Balance @ 31/12/20

Barclays Account	£14,228.52
Total Current Account Cash Balance	£14,228.52

Benevolent Fund

Lloyds Benevolent Fund Account.

Carried Forward on 1/1/20	£5,703.36
Grant as approved by Committee.	£0.00
Total Balance at 4/6/20	£5,703.36
Transfer of all funds to The PGA (Cheque No 000003)	£5,703.36
Total Outgoing 2020	£5,703.36
Balance on account on 31/12/2020	£0.00

Breakdown of Costs and Year on Year Comparison.

<u>Annual Income</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>Variation</u>
Barclays Acc (Subs)	£5,432.00	£5,658.00	£0.00
Other	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total Income for year ended 31/12/18	£5,432.00	£5,658.00	-£226.00

<u>Annual Expenditure</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>Variation</u>
Printing	£2,530.00	£1,545.00	-£985.00
Stationary	£185.09	£132.00	-£53.09
Post/Phone	£1,591.22	£765.12	-£826.10
Travel/Subs	£0.00	£383.30	£383.30
Refunds	£0.00	£17.00	£17.00
Diaries	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Admin Costs	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Donations	£75.00	£125.00	£50.00
Miscellaneous	£90.00	£198.00	£108.00
Room Hire/Catering	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total	£4,471.31	£3,165.42	-£1,305.89
Balance Income/Expenditure	£960.69	£1,668.94	-£708.25

I certify that these accounts are correct and include all transactions.

Signed

G.S. Mumby-Croft Treasurer Retired Prison Governors Association.

Date 23rd February 2020

Members Letters-Edited by Roger Outram.

My thanks to all contributors and as ever please take time to write something that will be of interest to all your retired friends and colleagues and send them to me. Nice short chatty letters will be published in this section of the newsletter longer with more specific content will be considered for a separate entry in the Newsletter.

Address to use is roger@rsoutram.co.uk or Roger Outram, 12 Grove Park, Magazine Lane, Wisbech, PE13 1LF.

Roger O



An e-mail from Calvin Hart to Graham Smith.

Hello Graham,

Thanks for the condolences, I tried to contact some ex colleagues of my fathers using phone numbers he had given me, but nearly all had either moved or were unreachable, as my father was 88 its not surprising

I will try to give a brief history of my father's career as I remember it, you will have to forgive as it may time wise slightly inaccurate and much of it are the memories of a young child

Growing up I had quite of bit of time spent living in prison estates from Leyhill in Gloucestershire and Standford Hill on the isle of Sheppey, and finishing at Grendon and Springhill prisons in Buckinghamshire. OK, so my father born in 1932 came from Cornwall, he was part of the family businesses in the Cambourne and Redruth area, the family businesses were quite diverse, they were the local building firm, undertakers and pig farmers, my grandfather also the local policeman.

My father decided after a spell in the army based in Benghazi mostly he returned to England and joined the prison service. From Wakefield training I believe his first posting was Parkhurst, after this he moved to London to work in Wormwood Scrubs, Brixton and Wandsworth, during court duty he met my mother and they married.

I was born while they lived at Thornton Heath and I think he was working at Wansdworth. We moved to West London while my father was at scrubs, where I think he was promoted to chief officer and during this time he studied for a degree in sociology with the open university.

After moving around London we moved to Grendon Underwood in approximately 1980 and after a spell as acting governor he was promoted to Governor, around 1984 we moved to the Isle of Sheppey in Kent to Standford Hill prison, this has memories for me, I was 16 at the time, and my father would on Christmas eve visit the night shift and take a small drink and snack for all of them and that year (rightly or wrongly) I accompanied him.

From there he returned to Grendon and Springhill where he took charge in a siege situation in Grendon prison, one of only a few instances where this type of situation was successfully ended with the use of force. After this he transferred to Midland Region, helping to oversee several prisons. He retired around 1990.

He returned to Cornwall not long after this where he fulfilled a lifelong desire to have shire horses, but in 2008 he followed me and my family to Cumbria where we lived on the edge of the lake district, mainly to be close to his two grandsons Aaron and Kai who he doted on and spoiled shamelessly right up to his passing on the 1st October I've attached two pictures one from Wakefield but the other I'm not sure where or when this was taken, my father in the Wakefield picture is the furthest to the left standing back row, also is a picture with his two grandsons taken not long ago The prison service was for me a huge part of my life also as growing up around the prison officers clubs and on occasions arranging and playing rugby against some of the prison sides

I hope this gives some insight into my father's life, he loved his time in the prison service and the many friends he had there, there were countless stories that he would tell, my friends would love listening to these and sit late into the evening, my father protesting "that's enough now I don't want to bore you all" mostly told with some single malt

Can I ask if this is in the magazine if its possible I can get a copy? I can supply an address in the UK if it is possible, as I live in the middle east

Thank you Graham for your interest and kind words.

Calvin Hart



Letter from Luke Serjeant

Dear Roger,

I am prompted to write having read Bob Duncan's contribution to the Spring 2021 edition of the Newsletter, in which he suggests that having retired, I am now a keen and successful gardener. My wife wanted me to make it clear that I am just a labourer in 'her' garden, and that I do not know my delphiniums from my hollyhocks!

I was interested to read that Bob has written a book and I very much look forward to reading some more extracts from this in future editions. There is one story which I doubt he has included however.

In 1983, I was looking for my first job after four years at Manchester University studying Town Planning. I came across a pamphlet advertising opportunities for Assistant Prison Governors. I recall Trevor Williams was the 'poster boy' on this pamphlet describing his role as a borstal house master. This did not put me off however and I applied.

I was not surprised when I received a rejection letter (which I still have to this day). The letter informed me that although I came up to the required standard others came higher in order of preference. I was surprised however, when a few weeks later I received a telephone call from the Civil Service Commissioners. They told me that there had been one or two 'drop-outs' from the interview process and they were inviting me to 'make up the numbers'.

I accepted the invitation and two days later I made my way to the College in Wakefield, to take part in the 'country house tests'. This is where Bob comes in as he was an assessor on these interviews. We were duly split into our groups of six candidates, and we met each other and the three people who would be grilling us over the next couple of days. Bob was one of those three and at our initial settling in meeting we all chatted and got to know each other over a cup of tea. I found myself looking up at Bob (I always seemed to be looking up to people during my time in the service – except Nick Pascoe of course).

I was terrified. It was my first ever job interview and here I was in a room alongside naval officers experienced teachers, and people that knew something of life. My teacup rattled on its saucer. I started speaking gibberish about roundabouts in Milton Keynes, my hand circling dangerously close to the teacup as I did so. Then disaster! My finger clipped the teaspoon on the saucer. It flipped off, span through the air and hit Bob in his midriff before falling to the floor.

'Sorry!' I exclaimed, my face turning scarlet. 'Don't worry about it!' Bob replied. I bent down to pick up the spoon, he bent down to pick up the spoon and our heads banged together on the way down.

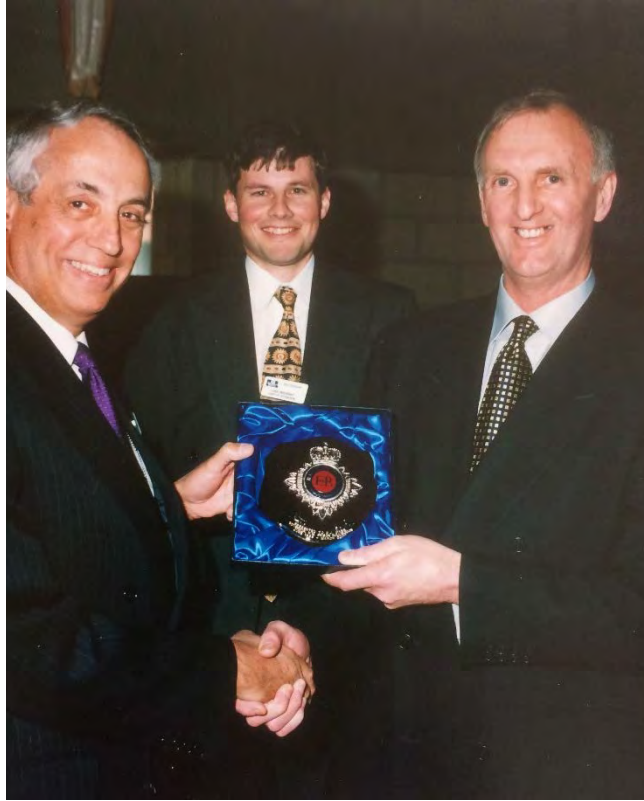
My prison career was over. I didn't care how the rest of the interview process went I just wanted to go home. How strange therefore, that I was successful!

When I spoke to Bob about this many years later, he claimed to have no recollection of the incident. I expect he had no recollection of the next couple of days as concussion could be the only explanation for why anyone would have appointed me.

I am pleased to report that I am fit and happy. I have three grandchildren, two boys in Hong Kong, and a granddaughter in London.

Luke Serjeant

This is a photograph of the late John Dring together with John Cann and me at John Cann's retirement from HMP Bullingdon in 2000.



John Dring was the Midlands Area Manager and I succeeded John Cann as Governor at Bullingdon. John mentored me for a number of years. I remember him with fondness and admiration.

Below is this months letter from Bob Duncan to who I am eternally grateful not just for his wonderful correspondence but for his enduring friendship. (R.O.)

Several of you will know how deeply I was saddened by the death of Derek Twiner. We had joined the Service together on the 24 Staff Course at Love Lane in September 1964. We were of the same age and shared many other tributes. He had retired to Canterbury and I had made contact by phone and we had talked about our shared experiences and had planned to meet up in Canterbury; the virus had delayed making any arrangements, so it never took place.

I was both moved and cheered by the kindness of fellow Independent Monitoring Board member, (Leicester in his case) and ardent supporter of the RPGA, John Berry OBE, who wrote a poem in honour of Derek. He has graciously agreed that I can share it.

For Derek

Do you remember the seniority list?
And Governors who kept one on their desk?
Striking off names as colleagues departed,
Some, smiled even though they were' broken hearted'
Well, that's a loss, what another three.

Bad news, yet suddenly some vacancies
Shall I apply, it certainly feels odd
But one cannot argue with God
So off we go to Portland place
And join again in the promotion race
We all want to sit in the 'big chair'

Not thinking of what we will find when we sat there
 We never had an easy time not like those we left behind
 And in retrospect we see, a
 Golden Age of prison history
 We are part of that, we changed the way
 that prisons are operated today.
 We may not think we were a winner
 But certainly had one in Derek Twiner

I am also grateful to Francis Masserick for getting in touch reference the funeral details and an update on Derek, saying he was sorry to hear of Derek's death. He was never ill in his memory and never smoked nor carried excess weight. Francis is now residing on the Isle of Man, and explained it was not possible for him to attend the funeral as he would need to quarantine for 21 days on return to the Isle. I had considered Derek as a confirmed bachelor; I was both surprised and delighted to discover that in the later years there was a young lady who enhanced his life.

21st Staff course 1964



Back: Barry Smith, George Shore, Bob Duncan, Dave Sherwood, Derek Twiner, Kit Jarman
 Steve Pryor, Paul Clairmont, Dave Alderson, Norman Lewington, Joe Witty, Kelvin Wyatt, Bob Mole, E Dunton,
 Hamilton Smith, J Miller, John Williams, Kate Warburton, Howard Jones, Teg Davies, Colin Scott,
 Ted Williams, Wilf Booth, David Hewlings, Brian Emes, Bill Driscoll,

I attended Derek's funeral at Barham Crematorium in April, the only other Governor grade there was David Chapman from Leeds. We were able to have a chat prior to the Service, and it was clear how much he both respected and admired Derek as a friend. He gave a formal tribute:

Derek, our friend of 45 years was firstly a man of utter integrity and loyalty. His quiet manner belied his strong principles and he was never afraid to stand up what he knew to be right. He first came into our lives in 1976 when I was the most Junior Governor grade at Leeds. We soon discovered that he was a man for whom possessions and comfort seemed of very low priority. Even his hobby of collecting postcards, then just a £ or so

each, reinforced this perception. His eye for ephemera was remarkable; he saw design and significance in the most humble of items.

Derek and I worked together on alternate weekends and, amongst other things, I discovered his appetite for theology and religious practice was as prodigious as his appreciation for fruit cake. It was these discussions that occupied us for many hours whilst Kay was waiting outside in the car park with our three children who were desperate for their tea. For the sake of domestic harmony I invited him home. It was on the very first visit, whilst Kay was carrying a tray of food, Derek simply asked Kay "how would you define redemption by grace". This began years of debate between us all. He knew much about many religions. There were many, many, subsequent Saturday discussions.

Our children grew to love Uncle Derek as he revelled in playing board games with them, although his babysitting skills weren't up to much. As they have grown up, he has been at all their weddings, christenings, and the wedding of one of our grandchildren. My daughter remarked that Derek was a lovely man, and she was so glad he had been in her life. He never rushed or could be rushed. He was just there being interested in us.

After retirement we enjoyed many holidays together. He spent six weeks with us while I was studying in Jerusalem for a year, three weeks in Mexico with its gruesome iconography. As three middle aged backpackers, we spent six weeks off the tourist trail in India, fascinated by its many religions. Derek and I also completed the 500 mile El Camino de Santiago with its sun, snow and sore feet for our 70th birthdays. Each location raising new theological discussions.

Of all the people that Derek made friends with, none gave us more joy than when Patricia came into his life. Their mutual love of Art, Music and especially opera supported a relationship that was so loving and caring.

Derek, we miss you

Video Tribute-Francis Masserick

People who have never come across Prison Governors might be forgiven for imagining that they are perhaps very similar to each other in the way that senior Army Officers or Bishops in the Church of England or Consultant Surgeons often seem to be almost clones.

In fact, Governors were very different to each other; some very liberal, some academic, some hands on practical, some bearded leftists and some highly authoritarian.

*But even accounting for this range one can only say, *and then there was Derek".*

In my 35 years in the Prison service, I never came across anybody like him. His capacity to be (or seek to be) fully conversant with every item of paper issuing from Headquarters, his need to understand every point raised in discussion, his capacity to work late to clear papers. and his irritation with himself if he failed to achieve these ends was, in my experience, unique.

I briefly knew Derek at Prison Service College in the early 70's (I was a new Assistant Governor he was the tutorial staff,) but I got to know him much more working as his Deputy in Castington Young Offenders Institution in Northumberland. He transferred therefrom New Hall Detention Centre in West Yorkshire which had been designated as one of the establishments to trial a programme for young offenders (when Willie Whitelaw was Home Secretary) entitled "The Short, Sharp; Shock". I have sometimes wondered whether was deliberate policy to have Derek in charge of something so entirely opposite to his own outlook so as to guarantee its doom. I can imagine Derek's cross examination of the authors of the policy on exactly how sharp the shock should be and how it should be applied.

I subsequently worked with Derek in Prison Service Headquarters dealing with what was then quaintly called Manpower Planning. At the head of the Division was a Senior Civil Servant with a total lack of interpersonal skills. Derek however spoke in his favour; "He's the only person I ever met who makes feel like a wild extrovert.

The Service was composed with the family's approval by Susan Flipping MICF- Life Celebrant. It was beautifully put together and very moving, and every word was clear. She was personable and I am grateful for her kindness in providing some of the information.

A missive from the far east from **John Ship**, he has recently had cataracts dealt with, so it is limiting his reading and computer use. He states all is well here in Hua Hin where the Covid bug isn't proving too problematic, apart from many restaurants closing and a lack of tourists. Looking at the number of photos he posts of the delicious meals he consumes, that does not seem to be too much of a problem.

He enquires after **Paul Wailen's** funeral, and hoped it went as well as could be expected in these difficult times. He was far too young to be taken, but it was a release from the pain. He asked after Max Morrison and Ivor Ward, as he had believed they passed away several years ago. I re-assured him that was not the case.

John Ship spent his first 14 years in Thailand never missing his traditional Sunday Roast. He was then asked why he ate that every week, 'because it is an English tradition' he said, Somebody then said, 'you not like Thai food I cook, no good! From that day gave up my traditional roast. That made someone very happy. From the many photos of meals John has sent over time he would appear to have taken to Thai cuisine with a vengeance. I must say they look very appetising.

John also asked, 'who on earth chose the time of the European Football Cup matches?' They were of course broadcast live in Thailand at 2am.

I've lived in Thailand for fourteen years, so I'm out of touch with the cost of living in the UK, so as we enter another period of lockdown and curfew here, I thought I'd try and compare prices between the two countries, at least from my own perspective. We don't have Council Tax as such, but we pay a monthly fee to the managers of our gated estate of about E49.70 per month, that covers the security guards, maintenance, gardening and lighting of the common areas, trash collection and upkeep of and running the communal pool. Our monthly water bill this month was E 7.85 and the electricity €80.00.

We pay €43.60 for our pool to be cleaned twice a week and f-32.70 for the gardener. Food prices are very cheap when Ice goes to the local fresh market. but the cost of Western Foods is quite high, yesterdays Supermarket monthly spend was 8,645 Baht, E1 90, higher than usual but because of the lockdown I was allowed some treats, a pack of Crunchie Bars and a Bounty Bar at €7, with a tad over 25% of the spend on wine and beer. Petrol is about 50p a litre, MOT three quid and annual car tax about the same. Fibre Internet is E 16,50 a month, and access to LIK TV channels is E 38 per annum. So probably there's little between us cost wise, but it's usually warmer here, though I do have to pay for my own healthcare.

I do not have health insurance as it is not available of somebody of my age at realistic price. I see a heart specialist in Bangkok every four months that costs about E1 3, the most expensive thing I've had was having my cataracts removed and prescription fitted, that cost a tad under 52,900. For anything else I use the VIP section of the public hospital which costs E1 1, plus the cost of treatment. If I need treatment at a NHS Hospital when visiting the UK 2 I would be charged 150% of the actual cost, despite the fact I'm still a UK taxpayer, and paid NI for forty years. My State Pension is frozen, but there is no clawback on my CSP, so I get full increase.

Red Cross Parcels are always welcome!

Colleagues will be sad to hear that Ice lost her brother, he had been ill with diabetes for some time. His demise was very sudden and we certainly did not see it coming. I think he'd just had enough and gave up on life. The thing that hit Ice hardest was that she could not be with him at the end, or with her family.

An insight into the differences faced in taking up retirement in another country, as always there are pluses and minuses, but healthcare is always a dominant concern.

- Now for something different:

- **Phil Wheatley** was recently sent a 1982 documentary about prisons yesterday. To his surprise he found a picture of the gate at Leeds Prison with his first proper car, a bright yellow 2CV parked outside. It was an unexpected reminder of the past.
- Asked if he was the Governor, he responded : “No it was the Governor’s designated parking place but on a weekend when I was Governor in charge I got to use it. My 2CV wasn’t really grand enough for such an exalted parking space, particularly as it had a large decorative dragon transfer on the boot and flames on the rear wheel arches”.
- Oh happy days when common sense prevailed, it could not happen now!
- Phil appears very fit and well and enjoys travel, and is a keen photographer, and he shares some very intriguing and clever photos.
- Colleagues were curious to know when the photo was taken, Phil felt it was probably 1979 or 1980. Out of interest I include a list of the senior staff at Leeds Prison for 1980. It is an interesting mix of colleagues who will be well know to most of you.



Senior Staff Leeds Prison 1980

The Governor	Mr Ward
Deputy Governor	Mr Twiner
Assistant Governor I	Mr Wheatley
Assistant Governor II	Mr Whetton (OCA Unit) & D Wing
Assistant Governor II	Mr D A England (B Wing)
Assistant Governor II	Mr Chapman (C Wing)
Assistant Governor II	Mr Nichol (A Wing)
Senior Medical Officer	Dr SASIEMI
Chaplain	Rev ASHFORD REV. BUNTLE.
Roman Catholic Priest	Father LAWN.
Administration Officer	Mr A O Lloyd
Senior Foreman of Works	Mr Campion
Industrial Manager	Mr Holbrook
Senior Welfare Officers	Mr Smith
	Mr T Balance
Chief Officer I	Mr Hayes
Chief Officer II	Mr May
Chief Officer II	Mr Foster
Hospital Chief Officer	Mr Smalley
Chief Caterer	Mr R Shakesby
Education Officer	Mr J E Sheard
Cashier	Mr W R Brown
Training Officer	Mr B Stanhope

- **Alan Scott** has been visiting Scotland including the Isle of Arran where he happened to visit 2 whiskey Distilleries. He admitted he could not resist the free sample. He made a purchase, but hopefully it was not all the barrels in his photo.



- I can recall when my children were younger that we decided to visit Scotland. We based ourselves in Edinburgh but drove to Glasgow for the day. It was a wet and windy day, so after visiting all the traditional attraction we rather cold and wet. I am not much of a spirit drinker, but when we spotted the sign at a distillery of a free tour, decided to enter to get dry. It was nice and warm in in there and looking at the bubbling vats was intriguing, but most of all it was the warm, balmy exquisite smell emanating from vats; it almost enticed me to purchase a bottle. I even turned down the free sample! Well I did have to drive back to Edinburg with 2 children!
- As lockdown deepened **Phil Wheatley** decided he would try something different, and he baked his first ever loaf of bread. He placed a photo of it on social media, it looked delicious.
- **Walter McGowan** responded, 'Welcome to the bakery. I have baked all our bread now for around 5 years. **Peter Earnshaw** is the master baker though. He has been at it for 40 years.



- Jane used to bake her own bread and it created a beautiful ambiance whilst baking and that first warm slice was delicious. I should have taken more interest than I could have joined the bakery group. It was a bit of a shock to revert to shop bread! Do share your own pursuits with your colleagues.
- **Bill Abbott** still enjoys living in Liverpool; he was delighted when it was awarded a 'city of culture' status that has now been taken away, I understand due to all the luxury flats developed along the old docks. Bill lives in

one of those! You might remember when it was awarded, Bill quipped, 'Criminals in Liverpool no longer steal cars, they steal 'books'. I wonder what he might quip now!

- Congratulations to **Brodie Clark** who has recently been appointed Chair of Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust.
- I have not been quite so well of late, but keep plodding along and have more than enough to fill each day. News of colleagues always cheers me up, especially as I do not travel as much now, I hope it is the same for many of you.
- Perhaps of no interest to anyone except me, it was reported in today's newspaper that in Kibworth Beauchamp in Leicestershire, hailstones the size of golf balls damaged cars and smashed windows. One families 2 cars had to be written off after being covered in large dents by the hailstorm. When I was at Gartree we lived in Kibworth Beauchamp, as did my wife's elderly parents as we bought them a bungalow there, so Jane could be on hand. At least retirement meant I missed all that!

Bob Duncan

Looking Back-By Colin Ring.

I always wanted to be a Policeman, like both my brothers, but unfortunately I failed the Police on my eye sight, so I then opted for the Prison Service. Having failed the Police due to a lazy left eye, I was a bit apprehensive when it came to having my eyesight checked. It didn't turn out to be a problem though, as the chap testing my eyes had his back to me writing on my notes. He asked me to cover one of my eyes and read the chart, so I covered my left eye and read the chart to the last letter. He then turned round and asked which I had covered, so I told him it was my right.....he then asked me to cover my left eye and read the chart with my right eye, so I had 20/20 vision in both eyes!

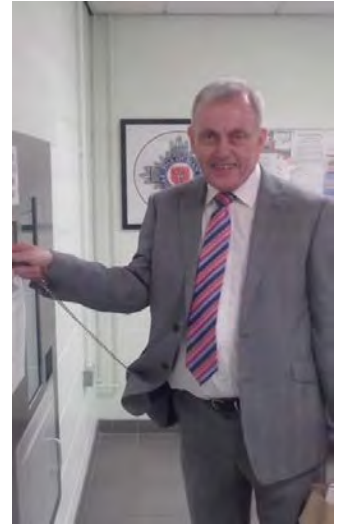
After 4 weeks as a POUT at Liverpool, I was sent to Leyhill for my Prison Officer training, where after just



5 weeks I became fully fledged Prison Officer at the age of 23 years of age. At the training School I asked for a posting to either Bristol, Cardiff or Swansea, but instead I received a posting to Stoke Heath Borstal. After moving there, Governor Ritson invited me and my wife along for a cup of tea in his Office, and AG Mick Knight was also there, I found this to be a very civilised introduction to the Prison Service, although this only ever happened once in nearly 39 years. After a couple of years I applied to become a Hospital Officer, and was then sent to Liverpool Prison Hospital Officer Training Centre under the care of HPO Harry Roberts. My training was uneventful, but after 3 months I returned to Stoke Heath to await my new Posting as Hospital Officer.....on this occasion I requested a posting to Leeds, but was sent to Wormwood Scrubs in June 1977.

Wormwood Scrubs was an eye opener to me after moving from a Borstal, including having to wear a

uniform! I did enjoy my time at Scrubs, unfortunately I can't remember the Hospital Chief Officer at the time, but he was a pleasant chap, as was the Hospital Chief 2. One Hospital Senior Officer (as he was then!) was Don Strong who went on to much greater things.



During Late 1978 I was informed that the Isle of Man Prison Service was looking for the very first Hospital Officer, so as my wife was from the Isle of Man, I applied and was successful.

On arriving at the Isle of Man Prison for my first duty in November 1978 there was just 19 prisoners and after Scrubs it was a bit weird! However on speaking to Chief Gaoler Tom Reilly (as it was then) he gave me a free hand to set up a Hospital Treatment Room, including fitting the room out and purchasing appropriate medical equipment. This wasn't bad for a young Birkenhead lad who left school at 15 with no qualifications at all! The room eventually was exactly the same as the Out Patients Room at Wormwood Scrubs and was in use up to 2008. I eventually became hungry for promotion, but there was only two Discipline Senior Officers, both in their early 40's, and no prospects of there ever being a Hospital Senior Officer position on the Isle of Man, so I applied to come back to HMP.

I was the first to ever go from the Isle of Man Prison Service to HMP, and I applied for HMP Leeds again, but was posted to Liverpool in 1986.

Working at Liverpool was probably one of my best times, great staff with such a great sense of humour. Governor Nevill Joseph was at Liverpool when I arrived and he was also a good Governor to work for. I was also able to take the promotion exam at Liverpool, and was successful and eventually had the opportunity to act up to HSO at Liverpool. In 1990 I was promoted to HSO and asked for HMP Leeds again, but was posted to Whitemoor Prison and was there just after the opening. The Governor then was Brodie Clark.

I have to say that I disliked working at Whitemoor from day one! I couldn't really settle, and it wasn't because of the staff as they were great. I was working for HPO Billy Walker there, and he was great boss to work for. Also, my wife and children hated living in Wisbech. Eventually I applied for a Hospital PO board, and was granted an Interview. However, the evening prior to my board I was at the Prison until late at night due to an incident, and so after travelling to London I was extremely tired! I failed the board, but someone suggested I appeal on the grounds I was involved with a serious incident the previous evening. I did appeal and was granted a second Board! I passed this Board, and due to wanting to get out of Whitemoor, I asked for HMP Brixton, who I knew wanted an Hospital P.O.....but I received a posting to HMYO near Doncaster. We went for a prelim visit, and I accepted the post. Whilst back working at Whitemoor Prison waiting for a date to move, I received a phone call from Hospital Governor Tommy Ross at Leeds (who had been on my Board) he asked if I would like to go to Leeds! I advised him I had already accepted a posting, but he said he would change the posting if I wanted. We went up to Leeds the next day for a prelim visit, and accepted the posting straight away and we moved there in 1992.

Leeds Prison was also a good Prison to work at, under Governor Fitzpatrick, although my Hospital Governor was Tommy Ross. After about 12 months Tommy was called to Governors Office and was moved to take over Operation Container and this left Leeds Hospital without it's own Governor. A day or so later Governor Tommy Ross was in emptying his desk and he advised me Governor Fitzpatrick wanted to see me.....wondering what I had done wrong I went along to his office and gently knocked, and he replied "Enter". I went in and he looked up from his desk and asked me if I would like to be temporary promoted to Hospital Governor 5, I just couldn't believe my luck! He then told me to come in in my suit the following day, but I advised him I didn't have one! He gave me the afternoon off in order that I could go and buy one! This was the beginning of a dream come true for me, a lad without any qualifications! I acted up to G5 for an 8 month period, but when the job was advertised, I knew there would be plenty of applications from far more experienced people than me, and so I didn't apply.

However, I then noticed the Isle of Man Prison was looking for a Discipline Principal Officer and so in

1994 I again applied and was successful and worked for Governor Rosie Crosby, another great Governor.



Old Victorian Isle of Man Prison

I had a lot of opportunity to act up to Deputy Governor, and the experience I gained at Leeds Prison put me in a good place. There was lots to do in a small Prison, which was now running at around a 100 prisoners. The prison had Convicted, Remands, non payment of fines, Vulnerable Prisoners, Young Offenders and female prisoners and we were in a cramped 100 year old Victorian Prison. Governor Rosie Crosby worked for a number of years trying to get a new Prison on the Isle of Man, we even had the support of HMI of Prisons who said the Prison was outdated. Unfortunately Rosie retired before work on the new Prison Started. Rosie held workshops for the design of the new Prison which included members of staff as well as Governor grades, and she brought over Governor Bob McColm to facilitate the meetings. Construction started on the new Prison at Jurby, Isle of Man around 2005 and was built at a price of around £41.7 million. It was built on time and in budget thanks to our Head of Works Barry Clark.



New Jurby Isle of Man Prison

After Rosie retired there was a lot more acting up, and for various reasons I ended up acting to Prison Governor, even though my official rank was Principal Officer, and I did this for 7 months. My biggest challenge during this period was the introduction of a complete smoke free Prison from 1st April 2008. This was a success, although obviously prisoners did smuggle in tobacco! Eventually Governor Allison Gomme came over to take charge of the Isle of Man Prison and to ensure a smooth transfer of 86 prisoners on 14th August 2008? I was lucky enough to take charge of the old Prison on the day of the move, and with our own staff and the help of 10 Prison Officers from HMP Liverpool, the move was done successfully by lunch time.

I had a great time working in a new Prison, with another great Governor; Alison Gomme! Alison

eventually promoted me to Deputy Governor Head of Security & Operations, and I eventually retired in 2013 after nearly 39 years.

Allison Gomme retired around 2016 and the new Governor was Bob McColm, who was able to work in the Prison that he had a hand in, during the design stage.....another great Governor. Bob also retired earlier this year. The current Isle of Man Prison Governor is Leroy Bonnick.

I loved my time in the Prison Service and have no regrets about not becoming a Police Officer, but would I want to go back?

No thank you.

Colin Ring
September 2021

Despite the fact that the quiz that I published in the Spring Edition was a resounding failure, in terms of entries, being an Ex-Works man I do not give up easily. Therefore below is a short 20 question quiz, this time set by our Chair, Mr Graham Smith. This one really is “just for fun” and the answers appear later in this issue. Enjoy.

General Knowledge 1 {No googling}

1. The Eurovision Song Contest started in 1956, how many countries took part?
2. The ‘wisest fool in Christendom’ refers to which Stuart King?
3. What is the collective noun for a group of crows?
4. What was the name of the dog in Enid Blyton’s Famous Five series?
5. What did Hannibal Lecter eat and drink with liver?
6. Which Labour politician was PM from 1976-1979?
7. What was the first greeting sent by SMS message on December 3rd 1992?
8. Which inert gas atomic number 10 is used in electric signs and fluorescent lights?
9. Dating back to 1706 which tea company's flagship store occupies 216 Strand, London?
10. What is a baby llama called?
11. Which country has won the highest number of football World Cups?
12. Which is the 3rd oldest university in the UK?
13. Which is the largest internal organ in the human body?
14. What is the boiling point of water in Fahrenheit?
15. What is the only planet in our solar system not named after a Greek or Roman deity?
16. Opened in 1796, Kilmainham Jail is a former prison located in which European capital city?
17. Which mythical creature with the features of a lion and an eagle is seen in the Vauxhall Motors logo?
18. Opened in 1923, the Yamazaki distillery was Japan's first distillery for which drink?
19. Which Englishman won world championships on both 2 and 4 wheels, the only driver ever to have done so?
20. What was the name of the 3rd man to walk on the moon?

Bob Duncan Serialised Book Continued from the 2021 Spring Edition.

Our friend and former committee member Bob Duncan has spent his time usefully during the Covid Lockdown writing an autobiography, primarily for his grandchildren to enjoy when they become mature enough to be interested in their own family history. The inspiration for this piece of work came from his brother Leonard who pestered him to write and also to show how their Mother, who raised them on her own following the premature passing of their Father and was their inspiration to do well. At the end of the first extract Bob had joined the Civil Service and was about to go to university.

Part 2

I had great help from my church; there was a Congregational Theological Training College (New College) on Finchley Road, London (near Hampstead Heath) which had made half its study/bedrooms available to other students from Christian background studying at other colleges in London. Its charges were reasonable, facilities good, a positive atmosphere, and once accepted you were guaranteed residence for the totality of your stay at university. With a letter of support from our Minister, I was granted a room there. We also for some reason had an old trunk in the house, which meant I could pack sufficient clothes etc. for my stay there. We also lived within half a mile of Ramsgate station. You could have your trunk collected and delivered at each end, this cost two shillings and sixpence (12.5pence) each end. Quite a lot when you realize Mum was only earning £3 for a week's work. I knew the station had porter's trolleys, so I went to ask if I could borrow one, to which they obliged, saving me half the costs involved. Those were the days! so on the 5th of October 1959, I went up to London to commence my 3 years at the London School of Economics.

My anxiety over the whole issue of going to University and what it all meant was greatly eased by the atmosphere at New College, and by the fact, there was another student who was also taking the same degree at the London School of Economics and agreed we should travel and enrol together. Peter was my saviour he was more self-assured and coped well with the hustle and bustle of fresher's day, including collecting ones grant and paying any fees. He also introduced me to the complexity of the vast library and enrolled us both for use. We travelled in together by tube for the first week and attended the relevant lectures to our syllabus. Peter hated the travel even more than I. So, over the weekend, he said, I noted how diligently you took copious notes, I now have a feel for the lecturers' so if I may borrow your notes I



do not need to come into the LSE very often. So that was how we operated, I went in for necessary lectures, and to use the library; Peter borrowed notes and advised on what books to read. I then arranged to take my ancient bike to London so that I could cycle to the LSE. That was a joy as well as exercise, my route took me around the Outer Circle Road on the north side of Regents Park which went through London Zoo and could see the elephant and giraffe pens from there and could observe the animals which always gave a positive boost to the morning. I always padlocked my bike to the cycle rack at college, then one day when I returned it was still there, but minus one wheel. It was very inconvenient as well as costly, so I bought a second lock and managed from then on to lock both wheels to the rack.

The public image of the LSE seemed to be that it was a hotbed of left-wing and communist sympathizer students. This could not be further from the truth, there was one known declared communist enthusiast, but try as he did, he never managed to enrol any followers. There were students like Mick Jagger, but that was before he really hit the pop scene.

The lecture theatre at the LSE was large and could probably hold up to 500 at a push, the BSc (Econ) syllabus covered a range of economic subjects, and therefore students from various subjects attended some common lectures. The Professor of Local Government was called Smellie, and all new students were intrigued to see what he was like in the flesh. He always commenced his first lecture by saying, those who have come to see what this odd character looks like have now done so and can now leave, my main six lectures are summarized on the blackboard there, copy it down and then you can leave, those of you of a stiffer constitution and want all my wisdom, get ready as I talk very fast!

From a packed lecture theatre, by the third lecture, it was down to about 100 stalwarts.

Dr Himmilweit, who lectured on social psychology, and was very good, except she always arrived late, then spent 10 minutes apologizing and explaining why she was late, which meant her lectures were always rushed. In contrast, the lecturer on statistics spoke slowly, precisely and at the same pitch throughout. He walked to the podium, never moved an inch once there, concluded, and walked straight off. On one occasion, I assume to see what re-action it achieved, a student threw a banger firework onto the stage. It created no reaction whatsoever, no movement, no hesitation no sign that anything had happened.

The LSE had some world-class staff, but for undergraduates, there was little personal contact; there may have been more contact for the many postgraduate students. We were placed in groups of about 20-25 and allocated a tutor, who conducted tutorials every so often, in our case it was always Friday about 10 am. The large room that was used looked directly into a rehearsal room of the ITV studios in Kingsway, and at that time on a Friday, the equivalent of the 'tiller girls' were practising their dance routine. If you sat on the right side of the conference table in the room, you had a much more entertaining hour, but little of the tutorial was absorbed!

I did not always have to attend college on a Friday, so instead of the cheese on toast we normally had for lunch when I remained at New College, Peter and I would treat ourselves to an Indian meal at a little restaurant near the college which reduced its prices on Friday lunchtime. This was not all that Peter and I would share.

The Congregationalist Student Society met on a Sunday afternoon at Whitfield's Church in Tottenham Court Road, and we both joined. A rather attractive nurse, Hilary from Hammersmith Hospital was also a member, and I became quite attracted to her bubbly personality. We began to see each other, and both go to the pictures (South Pacific at the Dominion Theatre was the first) and then theatre matinees as nurses were allocated free tickets when these were not selling well. All was very well for quite a while, and then it emerged that she was also seeing Peter. As we were mates, we agreed to draw up a Rota of visits to see her. I honoured the list as far as it went, but as Peter rarely went into the LSE, and I knew Hilary's days off, I arranged to meet her every so often at the

National Gallery, which was free and warm and only a short walk from the LSE along the Strand. This arrangement seemed to work quite amicably and there was no animosity between Peter and me. After some months Hilary invited me to come with her for the weekend to Ottery St Mary in East Devon and meet her parents, which I accepted. We travelled down by train and were met at the station by her father who drove us to their house. They were ex missionaries who had spent a lot of time in Africa, on retirement they bought a house with large grounds and grew vegetables and kept a few pigs. I spent a delightful weekend there and the conversation never stopped, until someone suddenly said, 'what time is that last train back to London?' Oh, we have cut it very fine, we must go immediately; can you throw your stuff together. Her father for his age drove as fast as he could on the narrow country lanes to Yeovil, despite which we saw the train pulling out of the station as we pulled in. Hilary was due back on duty at the hospital the next morning. It was quickly decided to make a dash for Salisbury, but that also failed so we were driven to Southampton to stay the night with family friends of the Abel's so we could get up very early the next morning to get to the station to catch the very first train, traditionally known in those days as the milk train. I think after that adventure Peter's interest began to wane, and he started seeing Anne from the Domestic Science College, just down the road from New College. I continued seeing Hilary even after I had left university, and her letters remained quite passionate, but the relationship was beginning to drift. It was my first week in the Prison Service when I received a letter from Hilary formally ending it and admitting there was somebody else she had been waiting for him to finish his medical degree, and then they were going together as missionaries to Africa. So, both Peter and I had been duped! I did miss her but looking back I now know it was very much the right decision. All was not lost; there was another nurse, also called Hilary who rather fancied me, which I did not discourage as free theatre tickets were at stake! I had also discovered that the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in Gower Street put on live plays and wanted an audience, so entry was free, but you could buy a program as a way of a donation. A number of the productions were from the classics such as Henrik Ibsen's, 'The Dolls House', Marlow's, 'Duchess of Malfi', and Shakespeare.

Peter and I remained friends to the end and I was honoured to be asked to be his best man at his wedding to Anne at St Mary's Church Seven Sisters

on the 17th August 1963. Anne's parents lived in a coal mining village near Neath, South Wales and I remained with them the next day. The reception was held at the local pony gymkhana, so we had entertainment as well as good food. The next morning a Sunday, Anne's father took me to the local mine, which was 'a shallow one' and still used pit ponies to haul the coal tubs up from the drilling areas. It was a thrill to see them all having a rest and munching hay. They appeared well looked after and enjoyed human attention. We walked a good way along the mine shaft, it was peaceful as it was non-operational on a Sunday, but not an arena I would have wished to work in.

The other benefit of having worked before going to University was that I had some time savings to fall back on. I had looked for weekend work since the age of fourteen, paper rounds were like gold dust, and you virtually had to have connections to the newsagent. There was a small local general store opposite the school that was looking for a delivery boy for Saturday mornings, so I enrolled and was paid 2/6 shillings for the morning. It was not a well-organized business, and when I arrived, they were invariably still putting the orders together, and I would be sent to the wholesalers for a couple of tins of baked beans and possibly a bottle of squash. It was quite embarrassing as everyone else was buying in bulk, but to give them their due they always helped out. Of course, the people who wished for their order to be delivered lived some distance away. I was provided with a heavy and old delivery bike with no gears to deliver a heavy load of vegetables and tinned items. By coincidence, one delivery to the western part of Ramsgate was to the school biology teacher, Mr. Bateman whom I did not particularly like. His son also went to the school and became a friend to my brother, Leonard, who would be invited to their house to play with his son. So he was inside in the warm, playing, while I was peddling the streets and then standing on their doorstep whilst Mr. Bateman took the delivery inside to check that the order was all there. I did not even get a thank you let alone a tip. On the other hand, I made another delivery to the Newington Council Estate to a lady of Caribbean origin who always gave me a 6d. In their way, the shop was very good to me. I was in my school 'house rugby team.' We played inter-house competitive matches at 10.30 am on the school sports field which was about 2 miles away. If I had not finished the deliveries, they would let me dash off to play in the match, and after a quick shower, I would return to

finish off. The real summer job I really wanted was working on the deck chairs, you were out in the fresh air and I could go for a swim at lunchtime, but it was very popular, and I only secured it one year. Those who hired deck chairs had to pay a small deposit which they got back when they returned the chairs. When it rained heavily their priority would be to seek shelter. We would be sent out by the superintendent to collect in every chair standing empty so that they would all lose their deposit, and then if the sun re-shone and they returned they would have to re-hire!

Other summers I worked in the large Harrison's Restaurant near the beach in Ramsgate, as did my friend Pinckney. We had to be there by 11 am and usually worked straight through until it closed at about 23.30. It was run by two sisters who were as hard as iron, and you certainly did want to be in their bad books. Our task was to clear tables as soon as plates were empty, place them all into the washing machine, and then dry everything individually. There was a large turnover at lunchtime and again at teatime. Being young and foolish instead of just gradually clearing tables, we had a competition to see who could pile their 'clear away tray' the highest. You still had to be cautious to a degree as anything dropped and broken had to be paid for out of your wages.

Next year I also secured another job of affixing beer label to lacquered beer mats. This was piece work and could be done at home. There was also a job vacancy at the factory. I still had my other two jobs, so I persuaded Leonard to take the factory job, which he did. As bad luck would have it, within a few days of starting, the factory inspectors came round and said he was under-age, so the firm had to sack him.

Now I was at university I knew I could get a summer job on East Kent buses which paid well, it was a thriving company in those days as Thanet was a popular seaside town, and most of the visitors came by public transport. The first year you undertook the job it was tough as after two hours of the general information you were handed a complete route and fares manual (there must have been over 20 routes in all, and the longest circled the whole of Thanet with about 50 bus stops) and it passed all three railway stations. Each stop had a number and had a different fare to the previous stop; the number and the fare had to appear on the ticket which you had to reel off by hand. You were not allocated the same route each day but were given a weekly allocation of routes,

which meant you probably had a different driver each day and a different bus.

The many tourists to Thanet not only expected you to know the correct fare to their desired destination, but also the nearest stop to their particular guest house. The first year was a steep learning curve but made it easier to be taken on again the next year and to be more confident in the job. The large double-decker buses could hold up to 60 -70 passengers with some standing, but there was no provision for luggage. So, on Saturdays, in particular, you tried to get passed Ramsgate station before a train had unloaded, otherwise, you were swamped with visitors either trying to get all their luggage stashes in the bus whilst other were clamouring to know if you went to their particular guest house. The whole process could take up to 10 minutes without a ticket being issued, and if an inspector got on later questions about why not everyone had a ticket, and why were you running late.

Butlins's had established themselves in Cliftonville, East of Margate and had five large hotels there. The guests all appeared to have breakfast at the same time, and they congregated in great groups wanting a cheap 'taxi ride to the beach and Dreamland. The Irish Universities ceased their summer term a week ahead of England, and number enrolled on the buses. They coped in their own way with so many fares to collect on a very short journey. The issued tickets to those downstairs, but never endeavoured to go upstairs, they just held their cap out as the tourists streamed down, and most of them threw some coins into the cap. No tickets were issued so at the end of the shift none of this money was handed over. I recall, three other events; East Kent Buses had some older vehicles and older drivers which were used mainly on the short housing estate runs. That morning we were allocated the Dane Valley run, the driver was a bit late arriving and was being pressurized to get the bus on its route. As a consequence, he failed to top up the water level before setting off. After about a couple of runs up and down the valley, steam was belching out of the engine and obliterating all the windows. Eventually, he had to find a resident who would provide a watering can of water and top up the water once the engine had cooled down. We ran late all day, but no Inspector appeared on the scene.

The longest route all around the Isle of Thanet took over an hour and ended up in Birchington where we took a short break for coffee. One dear old lady got on at Ramsgate but wanted to sit upstairs so she could have a good view. She wanted to get off somewhere

just past Broadstairs but was unsure she would recognize it, I assured her I would let her know when we are nearing her stop. We got busy and I forgot her. Next time I went upstairs she asked if we were there yet, I realized we were past her stop. I told her not to worry, as we had taken a bit of a diversion, and she would have a longer ride and I would let her know when we were there. Of course, she had no valid ticket having passed her stop, so I crossed my fingers that no Inspector would board the bus, fortunately, none did. The lady appeared to enjoy her extra ride and thanked me for warning her early so she could clamber down the stairs and leave at her stop!

Nobody wanted to be the last bus at night that went to all the hotels. The late-night drinkers and revellers always left it to the last minute; consequently, there was always a queue of rather raucous tourists waiting. There were strict limits on the number of standing passengers. That did not impress them, they all clambered on regardless. When I pointed out that the bus would not move until X number got off. All that generated was abuse and threats. One particular night this went on for 20 minutes until the other passengers realized they were not getting anywhere and came to my assistance to remove the excess. You had to balance the cash in your money bag to that displayed on the ticket machine. Most of us did this whilst on the last run so that you could drop everything off straight away when you were back at the depot and could get straight home. You always carried some of your own loose change to balance the books if you had made an error

The worst routes money wise were the housing estates, as the well-meaning customers always tried to give you the right money, which in their case was usually pennies and halfpennies. Well before the end of a shift, one endeavoured to count and bag all the takings and balance it against the ticket sales, as these were heavy coins, your money bag was a good weight. You hoped passenger wise it would then be quiet, as you wanted to ditch everything once back at the depot so you could get straight home.

Mum took on any work she could find, the first I remember was a cleaning job in a big house in the East cliff area and we sometimes went with her. They had a television, and we were allowed to turn it on, but there was never much of interest of an early afternoon. Other jobs I remember her taking on included washing the football kit of Ramsgate Football Team after a match. They must have fallen

over a lot as the white shorts were always full of green scorch marks. I remember them all lying in the bath for days, but they still would not come perfectly clean, so mother packed that in. Another task she took on was knitting elbow-length mittens for the war office, every spare moment not on some other task she was knitting. The local police station was very good when they had a new member of staff who required digs, they gave Mum the choice of taking them in. They had the small front bedroom and use of the front lounge which we rarely used. They were all very nice but very different. One if he heard a squeaky pram go by, would leap up, grab his oil can and rush and accost the owner to stop whilst he oiled every moving part on the pram. Another was a sergeant and rather laid back; he arrived back from his shift one day in a very grumpy mood. When asked what was up, he said he had to arrest somebody. He was in Harrison's having a cup of tea and sitting by the window, and someone started to steal the bike of a customer also in Harrison's, so he had no option. I suggested I thought that was his job. He responded, 'Do you know how much paperwork is involved, then you have to go to court and be questioned, I can do without all that hassle. There are enough constables to do all the spadework, so I have managed to not get involved for ages! Another was a very quiet person who loved classical music. He had a portable wind-up gramophone and bought classical recordings and played them in the front room. That is where I obtained my interest, and he was quite happy to talk to me about them. In addition to that mother had her regular paying bed and breakfast seaside guests in the season. Later on, in the summer months she worked in the ice cream and soft drinks huts on the beach, which I believe she was only, paid £3 a week. I used to help out when I could. On a very hot busy high season day one could handle over 1,000 items, and virtually all had to be opened or unwrapped. On a cold wet day, it was boring, and time dragged. It all helped the many bills that had to be paid.

In our youth, Thanet was a thriving summer holiday resort, so Butlins Holidays took over five hotels in Cliftonville, the posh part of Margate in those days. Mum at some point obtained a post there as a room cleaner. Running up to Christmas one year, they asked the staff if they would put in extra hours, among others Mum volunteered, the expectation being they would be paid for those hours. She arrived home one evening near Christmas, sat down, and started to cry. I asked what the matter was, she

replied, 'You know I have been working extra hours, as I wanted to be able to buy you extra special presents this year, well Butlins's have just told us we are not being paid, they claim it was all voluntary. I vowed I would never say a good word about Butlins, nor ever would I stay at any of its outlets. I claim that is still the position some 60 years later, it is, however, a little more difficult as they have merged with other companies, so I could have erred unknowingly. That evening is still vivid in my mind 65 years later.

My first summer on the buses was 1960. Mum had always wanted to go and see the 'Passion Play' at Oberammergau in Germany. I now had money in my pocket; also, whilst employed by East Kent I had a bus pass for free local trips and a discount on excursions. East Kent then did European tours and had a trip to Oberammergau. I decided if I booked whilst still employed, I could probably swing the discount. The booking clerk did give it to me. Several days later one of the Superintendents' came up to me and said, I believe you have booked a trip the Oberammergau and been given a discount, unfortunately, you will not be employed by us at the time of the trip, so you will need to re-book at the full price. Well, it was worth a try. On the Saturday I had visited Marks and Spencer's in Ramsgate High Street that afternoon for some last-minute purchase. Later that evening I suddenly realized I had left my wallet on the counter where I had been served. No shops opened on Sundays in those days. So, I phoned the police to enquire if there was anybody to do with Marks that I could contact. They said there was a named night supervisor, but they suspected that was only for store emergencies. However, they gave me the telephone number. I phoned and a pleasant lady responded but said it could not have been left on a counter as they are all carefully checked before they shut up shop. I persisted that it was there, and I could visualize where I had left it. Somehow, she either felt sorry for me or gave in under pressure, both probably. She said she would not go that night as it was now late but would go in early the morning. She did, it was there where I had left it, and she came to the house with it, such relief! She had been so kind I rewarded her; she replied, 'it has been a useful lesson, I will remind all counter staff to be more vigilant with their 'close of store checks.'

On Sunday 11th September 1960 we set off along with mother's friend Mrs. Cook and her son John, I was the odd number as the other four sat together, two and two. I had a young blond lady next to me;

she had the window seat. She was not very chatty and kept falling asleep on my shoulder which meant I could hardly move until she woke up again. Leonard would recount that one of our service stations stops for drinks, I again left my wallet in the premises, and had to stop the coach leaving whilst I dashed back in to retrieve it. I had not realized Alzheimer's set in that young!

We eventually arrived at the picturesque village, Mum was in a hotel room, and I was lodged in a farmhouse, which actually housed their few cattle in the winter in an annex to the house, so it had a real

farm smell about it. Leonard is not sure where he was accommodated.

The Passion Play at Oberammergau in the Bavarian Alps is scheduled to take place every 10 years. This year (2020) it has had to be cancelled due to the coronavirus and will not take place until 2022. It has been held there every 10 years, give or take wars, since 1634. Ironically, it owes its beginnings to a pandemic as bubonic plague spread from Italy in 1629 the locals promised they would stage a Passion in perpetuity if they were spared.

To be Continued

My Mate Mike-A Cautionary Tale.

I have maintained contact with several colleagues from my days in the service, and on the NEC of the PGA. One of these is a former governing governor, and NEC member, who, for the sake of having a name, lets just call "North Sea Mike".

Now Mike is a real "character" and is the sort of person that "things just happen to" and who always has a good story to fit every situation. One such story involves something that happened to him, as a direct result of "Lockdown and the Covid Restrictions".

This is a true story and the details of "Mike" have been blurred just enough so that any of you who do know him will take at least 5-minutes to work out just who he is.

Living on his own means that Mike has to do most of his own housework, although prior to lockdown he did employ a cleaner. However, visits from the cleaner had to cease once we went into lockdown, and as he is not that keen on cleaning himself, Mike decided that, as he was not going to be having any visitors for the foreseeable future, then there really was no need to clean. So he didn't.

Restrictions on social interaction, continued for far longer than anyone could ever have imagined, but Mike is nothing but resolute, and having decided to not clean his house whilst restrictions stayed in place, he was going to stick to his principles, no matter what. You could say that it was his way of peaceful protest against the restrictions, but one that did not involve taking to the streets of London demanding the freedom to infect and be infected, but rather the much more laid back approach of simply living in an ever growing mess, and one of his own making.

As restrictions eased, and at long last we were told that it was once more OK to visit family, Mike's daughter announced that she intended to visit. This of course put Mike into something of a quandary, as he did not really wish his daughter to see how he had been living, made worse by the fact that she would be bringing friends too. This proved to be the case and on seeing how Mike was living his daughter told him in no uncertain terms to "get his act together and get the place cleaned up".

So the big clean-up began, and as it was exhausting work, so, as he went along shifting the weeks of built up detritus, Mike opened a bottle of something smooth and red to help lubricate the work, and to help make the task just that little more pleasurable. Sadly it would seem that he may very well have lubricated the process a little too much as, while sitting on a chair taking a breather, he managed to fall off and knock himself completely unconscious on a wooden box, one that he himself had previously conveniently located, just where his head could give it a good whack on the way down. A dive into the penalty box for which any self respecting

Premier league striker would have been proud, although sadly, no V.A.R. to record the event. The result: One very unconscious Mike, laid in a heap on the kitchen floor. This is how his daughter found him, and of course immediately called for an ambulance.

First responders arrived at his home, and it would appear that whilst carrying out an initial assessment of him, Mike was able to emerge from the depths of his unconscious state for just long enough to ask of the First Responder, “Who The F*!k Are You” before sinking again into the level of unconsciousness that only a combination of a good bottle of Red, and a whack on the head from a wooden box, can truly achieve.

Cut to the casualty department of the general hospital in a well known Suffolk town, and Mike is being examined by a doctor, who he would later describe as being about the same age as Adrian Mole, (13 and $\frac{3}{4}$). Mike finally began to emerge from his unconscious state after at least 30 minutes, of which probably 5 minutes was due to the blow to the head, and 25 minutes was due to the rather good red wine sedative that he had “self administered”. Dr. Mole confirmed that they had carried out a brain scan, (insert own joke here) and there seemed to be no lasting damage, and once he had rested he was free to go home.

The moral of this tale? Well there isn't one really, except to say that if you do decide to give up cleaning for any period of time, it might be best if when you do get round to tackling the mess, you try to stay sober, at least until you have cleared away anything that is likely to cause you injury, should you, for some completely random reason, decide to take a dive off a perfectly stable chair.

GM-C

General Knowledge Quiz-With Answers

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. The Eurovision Song Contest started in 1956, how many countries took part? | 7 |
| 2. The ‘wisest fool in Christendom’ refers to which Stuart King? | James 1 st . |
| 3. What is the collective noun for a group of crows? | A Murder |
| 4. What was the name of the dog in Enid Blyton’s Famous Five series? | Timothy (Timmy) |
| 5. What did Hannibal Lecter eat and drink with liver? | Fava Beans and A Nice Bottle of Chianti |
| 6. Which Labour politician was PM from 1976-1979? | James Callahan |
| 7. What was the first greeting sent by SMS message on December 3 rd 1992? | Merry Christmas |
| 8. Which inert gas atomic number 10 is used in electric signs and fluorescent lights? | Neon |
| 9. Dating back to 1706 which tea company's flagship store occupies 216 Strand, London? | Twinings |
| 10. What is a baby llama called? | A Cria |
| 11. Which country has won the highest number of football World Cups? | Brazil |
| 12. Which is the 3 rd oldest university in the UK? | St Andrews |
| 13. Which is the largest internal organ in the human body? | The Liver |
| 14. What is the boiling point of water in Fahrenheit? | 212 degrees |
| 15. What is the only planet in our solar system not named after a Greek or Roman deity? | Earth |
| 16. Opened in 1796, Kilmainham Jail is a former prison located in which European capital city? | Dublin |
| 17. Which mythical creature with the features of a lion and an eagle is seen in the Vauxhall Motors logo? | A Griffin |
| 18. Opened in 1923, the Yamazaki distillery was Japan's first distillery for which drink? | Whiskey |
| 19. Which Englishman won world championships on both 2 and 4 wheels, the only driver ever to have done so? | John Surtees |
| 20. What was the name of the 3 rd man to walk on the moon? | Charles (Pete) Conrad |

I hope that you have all enjoyed this edition of the Newsletter and may I be the first to wish you, and your families a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.