

# The Retired Prison Governors Newsletter

Founded by Arthur Williamson in 1980 - Now in its 44th year of continuous publication

**Issue No 90 Spring 2024**



## **HARD COPY OR E-COPY? - YOU CHOOSE**

Towards the end of last year the Membership Secretary on behalf of the Committee conducted an exercise to determine the demand for digital copies of the Newsletter as opposed to the traditional hard copies. If you didn't hear from Harry, there is a very simple explanation - we do not have an Email address for you, and writing to members who do not have an Email address would have been both expensive and time consuming. At a time of rising costs it made sense to consult the membership, and in particular those members who already use digital technology. Just over 40% of members who have given us their Email address responded, and an overwhelming majority of those indicated that they would be content to receive future Newsletters electronically. Harry Brett will first check with you that your decision stands, and then you can look forward to receiving your first E-copies in the Autumn.

The Committee has assumed that those who did not respond are content with the status quo, until you tell us otherwise. We would encourage members on the Email register who did not respond first time around to let Harry Brett know their preference. Equally, those of you who either do not have an Email address, or prefer not to disclose their Email address, will continue to receive a hard copy landing on your doormat twice a year. I want to stress that no member will be compelled to go digital. As long as there are members who want to receive a hard copy of the Newsletter, they will be accommodated.

Another choice we have to make this year is regarding our Member of Parliament. Collectively that will determine whether or not we change our government. Once the campaign begins the politicians will have to tell us their plans over a range of issues, like the 'Triple Lock', NHS waiting lists, and the longstanding mess that is social care, which are all key concerns for our age group. Many of us will be concerned with what they have to offer younger generations, in particular what they propose to do in order that people can get on the housing ladder, or what they might do to alleviate the burden of student debt. The Defence budget will also be an issue with threats to peace from the likes of Russia, China and Iran. All this against a backdrop of cost of living pressures that will not make it easy to persuade the electorate that the Government should spend more of their hard earned cash. 2019 seems a very long time ago.

I'm sure you will all find this an enjoyable edition. As well as Bob Duncan's regular features, there are two contributions from Peter Atkinson, the second part (of three) of his article on notorious escapers, and a fascinating piece on radial prisons. Graham Mumby-Croft's 'Computer Corner, is an invaluable guide to how to avoid being scammed. My cover photo was taken in Lanzarote in March, and I can promise you it hasn't been enhanced! There is nothing like a winter break in the sun to make your skin glow with health.

Finally, for those of you who were unable to identify the mystery men in the last two editions, they were Harry Allan and Les Stewart, the men who acted as Chief Executioners at the last two hangings carried out simultaneously at Manchester and Liverpool prisons respectively on 13 August 1964.

**PAUL LAXTON, EDITOR**

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## DISCLAIMER

**Members are reminded that the opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the contributors.**

**Publication of a piece does not imply an endorsement either by the Editor or the RPGA Committee.**

**PAUL LAXTON, editor**

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The Committee is looking to co-opt volunteers on to the committee. This is to provide cover for existing post holders and also as an aid to succession planning. Interest from new members of the RPGA is as welcome as interest from long standing members.

## **RPGA: E-MAIL REGISTER**

The E-Mail register has been operating for more than 20 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 **harry-brett@hotmail.co.uk**.

E-Mail addresses may not be passed to third parties without permission from the person(s) registered to that specific E-Mail address. Please remember that if you change your E-Mail address you must inform **HARRY BRETT**, otherwise you will cease to receive further updates



## YOUR LETTERS

### BOB DUNCAN and ROGER OUTRAM

Dear Reader

Here I am again bringing you just Bob Duncan's correspondence which for years has formed the backbone of this section of the newsletter. It is disappointing that our readers and colleagues don't find time to drop us a line. By "us" I mean all of you reading and hopefully enjoying this section. I have been an avid reader of the Newsletter since my retirement 20 years ago, and the letters section has always been the first section I have turned to when the Newsletter arrives. The only regular correspondence is from Bob and as you read his contribution, which has always been topical and interesting, this season you will read that he is running out of colleagues to report on. He is also worried about his personal capacity to continue. What the letter section needs is some input from the newer members who are not known to many of us old guys who are interested to hear what is happening to you. It appears to me that without the wonderful contributions from Bob the letter section of your letters section is doomed to be lost. I will continue to publish Bob's contributions for as long as he sends them in but I fear from his own comments that this will, sooner rather than later, be another footnote in history.

Roger O

## YOUR CORRESPONDENCE

I had a text to inform me that I had a health check up with the nurse at the Doctors. I arrived in good time and booked in but I also had a specimen and prescription to hand in. I also asked if the nurse wanted the specimen or would they take it. They took and so I went sat down to await my turn. Fortunately I had my newspaper with me. There are always a lot of us to be seen on these 'check ups'. After waiting 50 minutes I began to wonder if I had got the wrong day, so went to the desk to enquire. 'Oh,' said the receptionist, 'I thought you had gone home, so you are not booked in, I will see if they can fit you in.' They could not, but wanted to take a blood whilst I was there. Suddenly I had two nurses looking after me, they extracted the blood, and then they arranged another appointment both with them and with the Doctor. When I saw the Doctor he told me I was in good shape medically for my age. So I asked why my brain did not tell my body that. He said in reply, 'you have another 10 years to live.' I replied 'that is good but I want be in better health if that is the case.' He said he would review my prescription. He also gave me a memory test, which I failed, proving it was so.

The Reverend Kit and Kate Jarman are well, but getting more wobbly on their feet, as are so many of us.

Phil Wheatley is still travelling to various destinations and is an ardent photographer of historic buildings and scenic views which he shares on the internet. Very informative and the quality gives one a boost to the day. The same goes for Alan Scott who also shares his very good photography in and around Scotland.

News from Shelia & Jim Blakey who are well but ageing like all of us. A little quote from their card: (But though the busy weeks and months go slipping through our fingers. On days like this, we realize, time flies but friendship lingers.)

Ron & Sue Curtis write that Ron reached 80 in March .To mark the occasion, along with Brother Mick (82) and Simon & Daniel, he climbed to the top of Schiehallion. Celebrations followed in Scotland with family and later friends. Their grandsons, Joe and Matthew; Joe completed the walk from Land's End to John O'Groats, just over 1000 miles, in 55 days early in the year. Matthew followed up in the autumn by walking the Ireland Way, some 600 Miles from Cork in the South to Portrush in the north.

I remain in touch with Mike Posaly; he states the Courts are in a mess with a huge backlog of cases and no plan to tackle it. He still enjoys his role as a Defence Barrister. I am in touch with Colin Tanswell; his daughter married an American and lives there now so they are always trying to arrange flights out there to see the grand children in particular.

More dear colleagues have sadly departed this year, which results in my list of contacts diminishing; I know few of the current Governors. In addition those who recently joined RPGA would probably not know some of the colleagues I do mention. I have been contributing now for 25 years, but my memory and energy are not so good. So my role of supporting Roger is gradually going to decline considerably. So do keep contacting Roger.

There was an awful fuss when one prisoner escaped from Wandsworth Prison. To put it in perspective; at the Pademba Road Prison in Sierra Leone, a total of 1,890 prisoners, including 155 lifers, escaped on Sunday, November 26, most of who disappeared into the jungle.

News from Veronica Bird who has had a very busy year supporting Ukrainian families up and down the country. Her talks have gone down extremely well, too well when she gave 5 in one day! She has managed some holidays, including, Italy, Poland Cyprus, and Ireland. Veronica is going on a cruise around Scotland later this year.

## **BOB DUNCAN**

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. Longer specialist pieces should be sent to the editor.

**Address to use is [roger@rsoutram.co.uk](mailto:roger@rsoutram.co.uk) or Roger Outram, 12 Grove Park, Magazine Lane, Wisbech, PE13 1LF**

## **RPGA WEBSITE**

Just to remind members that the RPGA website, set up and lovingly maintained by Roger Outram, can be accessed by googling [rpga.homestead.com](http://rpga.homestead.com). There is no password required. It contains significant archive material, and thanks to Brendan O'Friel, a number of newsletters from his time as editor. If anyone is in possession of hard copy old newsletters from prior to Autumn 2012, it would be good to borrow them and let Roger work his magic and add them to the digital archive. Roger's address can be found further up this page.

Thanks. Paul Laxton.



## OVER THE WALL (PART 2) by PETER ATKINSON

We now come to the late 1970's that I remember well, having joined the Service as a junior governor grade. A renowned IRA bomber during the height of the Troubles was **Gerard Tuite**. He was best known for his escape one cold night in **December 1980** from **Brixton Prison**. At the time of his escape, this 25-year-old was awaiting trial for 18 offences connected with a range of IRA bombings in and around London over the previous two years. He had formerly been a merchant seaman but had gravitated to the IRA and became active in bombing plots on the mainland. His escape did not seem particularly difficult. With two other category A prisoners, **Jimmy Moody and Stan Thompson** the three of them broke through the suspect brick work from their cell into an empty cell next door and then breached the outer wall, which gave access into the prison yard below. Lying around were bits of scaffolding poles and planks, which helped them get over the 15-foot wall and away. Jimmy Moody, then aged 39, was a dangerous man with strong links to the London underworld, mixing with all the notorious gangsters of the day. He had previously been convicted for manslaughter, but this time was on remand for armed robbery. The third man Stan Thompson, aged 35, was described as a crook and a bungler, who ended up surrendering to the police after his spell on the loose. Jimmy Moody was no bungler but evaded capture and went on to become a hitman for the IRA in Northern Ireland. He remained at large for 12 years but was eventually shot dead in 1993 by fellow villains having paid the price for his criminal connections. Gerard Tuite was not caught for 10 years and was then interestingly convicted in the Irish Republic for his bombing activities in mainland Britain.

The Tuite escape highlighted the weak fabric of many British prisons like Brixton, that had been built in Victorian times. Gordon Fowler as the Deputy Director General undertook the official Enquiry amid much concern about old Victorian prisons holding dangerous criminals. Mike Selby was the Governor of Brixton at the time and despite the incident prompting his transfer, there was the quoted suggestion in a House of Lords debate about him being scapegoated with reference being made to his "real achievements" in a dilapidated old prison whilst he was in-charge.

\* \* \*

Perhaps the most violent and disturbing escape from a UK prison within the last 40 years, was the one by **38 IRA prisoners in 1983** from **the Maze**, often called Long Kesh. Long Kesh had been an RAF base just south of Belfast, left over from the second world war. In 1972, a prison was built on the site and in 1976, it was converted into a top security prison for paramilitaries with the construction of 8 H Blocks. From then on it was known as the Maze.

A number of escapes from prison custody in Northern Ireland preceded the 1983 escape. These included seven inmates in January 1972, from the ship HMS Maidstone, used as a prison, that was moored in Belfast docks. A bar across a porthole was cut and the men shinned down a mooring cable into the water. They swam through a gap in the barbed wire that surrounded the ship in the water, having seen a seal swim through the same gap a few days earlier. Nineteen IRA prisoners broke out from Portlaoise jail in August 1974. Three months later 33 inmates in Long Kesh escaped through a tunnel. This escape had been delayed because the old Nissen hutted camp had been badly burnt in a prison riot. Before the prison accommodation was improved, the conditions for the inmates at Long Kesh in the 1970's were appalling. One escaper was shot dead and the rest were all caught within a few hours.

The 1983 escape occurred on a Sunday, mid-afternoon in H block 7, where six handguns and various knives had been smuggled earlier into the prison. Each of the eight H blocks had four wings with 25 cells each. This gave each block 100 cells, although some of the cells would sometimes house more than one person. At one point, there were as many as 1,700 inmates in the Maze.

The 24 prison officers manning H block 7 that day were overpowered with the use of firearms and held hostage at gun point in a staff room before they had a chance to raise an alarm. The inmates waited until a lorry carrying food entered H block 7 through the entrance to the block. Extreme violence had been used on the staff, with one officer stabbed, another hit over the head and a third shot in the head. With the officers having their hands tied and pillowcases over their heads, one inmate remained behind to ensure the staff were not able to raise the alarm whilst all 38 prisoners clambered aboard the lorry and headed to the Gate. On arrival at the main entrance, ten inmates in officers uniforms by this stage, and armed with guns, gained entry to the Gate. The staff were all taken hostage at gun point although one officer managed to press an alarm bell. On the threat of being shot, the officer had to tell the Control Room that the bell had been pressed in error, but by this time fresh staff were arriving in the Gate lodge to start their shift. Seeing what was happening, one officer managed to run to the pedestrian gate but was pursued by an escaper who stabbed him where he collapsed. He later died. Meanwhile a soldier in one of the watch towers saw a lot of activity in the Gate Lodge and phoned the Control Room only to be told that that an alarm had been pressed by accident. It was still not realised that a mass escape was taking place although the situation was beginning to get out of hand with such a large number of escaping prisoners trying to control an ever-increasing group of hostages held at gun point. Some of the officers began to resist. Two officers tried to escape and were stabbed as the escapers managed to open the main gate and try to drive the lorry through. Two staff cars however blocked the exit and the 38 prisoners were compelled to run for it towards the final fence. Three were captured by staff, but 35 made it away from the Maze scattering in all directions. The planned getaway cars had not materialised. Nineteen prisoners were captured within 24 hours but most of the rest managed to hide out and avoid capture. The Governor retired and the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir James Hennessy, was appointed to conduct an Enquiry.

Overall, thirteen officers were beaten, five were stabbed and one of those died. Many suffered mental health problems as a consequence. The Maze incident, involving high risk, dangerous armed inmates, illustrates what can sometimes be the precarious nature of working in a prison. Quasi military incidents involving guns, points to the fact that prison staff are neither trained nor equipped to get mixed-up in incidents of this nature. For all their training, officers do not spend a period on Salisbury Plains with the military learning to deal with armed conflict within HM Prison walls. Neither do Governors attend the military college at Sandhurst to become skilled in counteracting armed incidents. Expecting prison staff to cope with incidents that include that level of danger is unrealistic and it is misguided of the public to start glorifying the drama and derring-do of dangerous inmates trying to break out of His Majesty's prisons. The Maze closed in 2000 and the H blocks were demolished in 2006.

\* \* \*

The only escape of its kind in British prison service history took place on a Thursday afternoon in **December 1987**, when a helicopter landed and took two prisoners from the exercise yard at **HMP Gartree**. With the promise of £250,000, a London gangster friend of the two inmates took up the challenge to spring his charge and did a dummy run with a helicopter the week before the escape. On the day in question, the accomplice, 31-year-old **Andy Russell** boarded a Bell Jet Ranger helicopter ostensibly

to survey a golf course. Once in the air he drew a gun and ordered the pilot to fly to Gartree prison. During a period of no more than 30 seconds, the helicopter landed on the exercise yard before Category A prisoners **Sydney Draper and John Kendall** climbed aboard and away, whilst other prisoners impeded the officers attempts to intervene. Poor visibility prevented the two escapers from reaching their pre-arranged rendezvous where a get-away car was waiting. A few miles from the prison the helicopter was made to land and the three criminals hi-jacked a van and made off. Further hi-jacked vehicles at the point of a gun got the three to Sheffield where they disappeared.

Sydney Thomas Draper was a 39-year-old London robber who had been commissioned to go to Glasgow to rob a £10,000 payroll from a British Rail depot at Springburn. During that 1973 robbery, an employee, James Kennedy, acted with great courage and tried to prevent the crime, tragically getting shot in the process. Along with six other men, Sydney Draper received a life sentence in 1974 with a 25-year minimum term, some of which he served at Parkhurst. His helicopter escape took place 13 years after he was sentenced to life. He was captured by armed police 15 months later in a flat in Enfield and received another 4 years on top of his sentence. In 1996, Sydney Draper had his sentence reduced on appeal by five years. After release, he was suspected of living on the Costa del Sol, after it became known that his long-lost daughter Tamara Mockridge was trying to contact her father through a newspaper appeal.

John Kendall, described by police as a 'dangerous and vicious' man, was described as a gangland boss. He lived in the East End of London at King's Court. At the time of the escape, he was serving an 8-year sentence for burglary. He was 36 years old. He managed to remain on the loose for 10 days, but he was arrested by the 'Flying Squad' in Chelsea, and he too received an extra 4 years sentence. Andrew Russell, who organised the helicopter escape, was a criminal associate of Mr Kendall, having previously been involved in at least one armed robbery with him. When apprehended some 12 months after the escape, Mr Russell received a 10-year sentence which was in marked contrast to the four extra years that Mr Draper and Mr Kendall received at their trial. Andrew Russell was a prolific robber who had used a previously respectable couple in the jewellery trade to 'fence' and trade in high-end stolen jewellery to the tune of hundreds of thousands of pounds. We'll come across Mr Russell later with regard to the 1994 Whitemoor escape.

An Enquiry into the Gartree escape was carried out by Gordon Lakes who was the Prison Service Deputy Director General at the time. The escape prompted the successful construction of high wires across open spaces in secure prisons and as a consequence of the escape, Gartree was downgraded from a Category A prison to B. There were two known helicopter escape attempts in 2005 and 2009, both of which never got off the ground (sorry!). The murderer Brian Lawrence serving life at Parkhurst, tried to organise his flight (sorry) from the prison exercise yard in 2005 but prison staff noticed his outgoing letters were using some odd (coded) language, as well as the use of invisible ink that came to light as the letter was placed near heat. Mr Lawrence was in prison for having bludgeoned to death Deryck Cox and then set his house on fire. His departure from HMP would have been extremely damaging to the Service, given his dangerous behaviour. The 2009 failed helicopter escape involved nine Al-Qaeda terrorists at Full Sutton. A tip-off led to a careful series of cell searches which found a detailed map and a realistic plan that was due to unfold that very day. The inmates were subsequently dispersed to other jails.

Two years later, the most interesting aspect of the next escape was the accomplice. Not another prisoner or a gang member from the criminal fraternity, but a 38-year-old married, prison English teacher with two children. I would rather not mention her name, because it would seem that she was an unwitting, gullible lady who fell victim to a prisoners wicked manipulation.



The location was **Hull prison** and the year was **1989**. The background to this event was that Category A prisoner, **David McKenzie McAllister** was serving a 19-year sentence at Hull for armed robbery, arson and firearms offences. Early in his sentence there were sufficient concerns about the 32-year-old Mr McAllister and others, that a special unit was set up to hold 10 inmates away from the main body of the jail. This unit was relaxed in nature with the intention of trying to create a positive atmosphere. Regular staff worked in the unit that must have been claustrophobic and demanding. Given human nature, the danger always was that the special unit staff formed too strong a relationship with their charges.

Mr McAllister was raised in Banff but by the age of 15 he was expelled from school. An interesting statistic is that 80% of pupils excluded from schools end up in custody. It was reported that he developed a heroin addiction and embarked on a life of violent crime and by the age of 17 he experienced the first of his many custodial sentences. He specialised in armed robberies.

Being in the relatively relaxed atmosphere of the special unit at Hull with a range of educational classes and facilities, Mr McAllister managed to form a romantic relationship with the English teacher. This reached the point where he was able to have sex with her in the Chapel on at least one occasion. As the relationship deepened, Mr McAllister persuaded the teacher to bring in some civilian clothes and he also arranged for her to meet a friend of his in a café close to Hull prison. Over a cup of coffee in the café, a Glasgow car salesman from Falkirk, Ralph Carlin, handed over a gun and ammunition to the teacher to help Mr McAllister's escape. On a normal Friday in July, the teacher arrived as usual for her work with the civilian clothing and the gun. Around lunch time with the use of her own keys, she then escorted Mr McAllister through ten separate security gates. It's worth pausing for a moment to take in the action of a peripheral member of the special unit staff walking past prison officers and out into the street with a Category A inmate in possession of a gun. It is almost incomprehensible for anybody to believe that somebody would do that.

The teacher wasn't finished there. Once outside the prison she took him to the railway station in her car. Whilst Mr McAllister bought a train ticket the lady then made her way to a city centre supermarket to set up a hoax bomb that had been constructed for her with bits of wire and electrical equipment. It again seems incredible that a normal law-abiding citizen would do such a thing. The attention of the police to what was regarded as a major incident ensured that the supermarket diversion allowed Mr McAllister to continue his journey uninterrupted in another part of town. To many people it is staggering how a respectable 38-year-old teacher with a family could ever countenance thinking about such a thing let alone actually doing it.

Mr McAllister was caught five days later in Morden, Surrey and at his subsequent Grimsby Crown Court hearing, he was given a three-year sentence for staging a bomb hoax and five years for escaping. The teacher was arrested in the supermarket the same day and received a five-year custodial sentence for her involvement. Ralph Carlin who supplied the gun, received a five-year sentence for handling a firearm. The Governor at the time was Phil Wheatley who went on to have a distinguished seven-year stint as the Director General of the Prison Service.

Some thirteen years later, following Mr McAllister's eventual release, he was arrested again in Haverhill Suffolk for possession of two sawn-off shotguns. Serving yet another sentence at The Mount prison in Cambridgeshire, Mr McAllister developed cirrhosis of the liver and died quite quickly, aged 58 in 2013. In the end, he had spent well over half his life behind bars. I can't find out who conducted the formal Enquiry into Mr McAllister's escape from Hull, but an enquiry there must have been, given how a Category A prisoner was able to walk out of a prison with a loaded gun.

\* \* \*

It was seven years before the Belfast Agreement in the midst of the Northern Ireland Troubles when the next escape took place involving two IRA men on remand in **Brixton**. In early **July 1991**, **Pearse Gerard McAuley (sometime spelt McCauley) and Nesson Quinlivan** had it away one Sunday morning. The 26-year-old Mr McAuley from Strabane along with his colleague, 26-year-old Mr Quinlivan from Limerick were sharing a cell in Brixton's remand wing awaiting conspiracy charges for murder and planning explosions. They had been arrested the previous November at Stonehenge of all places. The background to the charges against the two men was that they entered the home of the Whitbread brewing Chairman Sir Charles Tidbury, with the intention of murdering him. Sir Charles was an ex-military man and a Conservative Party donor as well as an active party supporter. What got him on an IRA hit-list was his position as Chairman of the William and Mary Tercentenary Trust that was organising an event to celebrate 300 years from the 1688 Glorious Revolution. It is a bit obscure but to make sense of it one has to think of the link between William of Orange, the battle of the Boyne and the loyalist protestant Orange Order in Northern Ireland.

Mr McAuley and Mr Quinlivan were granted permission to attend the 09.15 Sunday Mass in the prison chapel. They were escorted by three officers and a dog handler. There were 71 other prisoners in the chapel and the Service went without a hitch. On the way back to their cell, a gun was produced and one of the officers was taken hostage. It was later discovered that the gun had been secreted in the sole of some trainers that had been sent to one of the men from the Irish Republic. The keys from one of the officers were snatched and with a number of shots fired as a deterrent to any pursuit, the men made it back into the wing and out again through a far door into a yard, with the perimeter wall beyond. It was a miracle that one of the pursuing staff was not shot in that a bullet passed through one officer's clothing without making contact with the flesh. The two men mounted a wheelbarrow on top of one of the dog kennels and managed to climb over the wall. They dropped down into the staff married quarter area behind the prison and took one of the staff's cars. The officer who was about to use his car was shot in the leg. Another car was hijacked before they evaded capture, eventually making it back to the Irish Republic.

Some of the concern about the escape centred around Category A prisoners attending chapel services with large numbers of other prisoners. There were uncomfortable echoes of the Strangeways riot that had begun in the Manchester Strangeways chapel not 15 months previously. The other concern was the ease with which a gun had been posted into the prison. The third concern was the number of staff on Sunday duty. With over a thousand inmates which was 230 prisoners more than the official CNA, there were only 140 staff on duty. At an ensuing House of Lords debate, a serious question was asked as to whether staff should be armed.

Four years after the escape, Mr McAuley went on to commit serious offences in the Republic by killing a Garda officer during a robbery. For this he served a further term of imprisonment but because of the Good Friday Agreement, he was never extradited to England to face charges related to his escape. Likewise, Mr Quinlivan went on to serve a term of 4 years imprisonment for owning an AK47 and on his release from Portlaoise prison, he too avoided extradition to the mainland as well. Judge Stephen Tumim as the Prison Service Chief Inspector conducted the official Enquiry, but most of his Report was withheld for security reasons. The experienced and well regarded Governor Reg Withers, was very close to retirement and decided to leave the Service, being replaced by Dr Andrew Coyle.

**THE FINAL PART WILL APPEAR IN THE AUTUMN 2024 NEWSLETTER, ISSUE No 91**

## MY TAKE ON LUCY LETBY

From an old colleague, a retired Doctor,...



“This Lucy Letby case is very odd. She seems so ordinary with no reason to do these things. It was not as though she was aiming to get 'credit' for saving these babies. I suspect it looks less surprising to you with your experience of offenders. I do feel the managers were plain stupid to ignore the concerns of all the paediatric consultants.”

My reply...

“Good Morning,

In reply to your observation that Lucy Letby is odd.

I did a 3 yr Criminology course a long time ago. Wasn't able to qualify as was promoted and had to move. Nonetheless I've a view on what makes us all tick. (I was the Governor of the Special Unit based at Parkhurst.) I have a BBC videotape of our work there. The concept was based on a Dutch idea about the way to deal with problematic prisoners who took up much of the staff time to the detriment of the average prisoner - if there is any such creature - were to be based in a single unit where staff to inmate resources could be increased. 'Putting the bad eggs in one basket.' This was the brain child of a senior civil servant at the Home Office, a guy called Tony Butler. He took a keen interest and used to pay fairly frequent visits. He was vital to our survival as he was responsible for our funding as well as the ultimate success of this project. I was dispatched to the embryonic special unit in Amsterdam where I spent two weeks watching and learning.

We, my Governor & I, used to be invited to interview potential candidates from prisons and long term psychiatric hospitals from the length and breadth of the U.K. It was exciting times. Jen & I moved from Wakefield Nick down to the Isle of Wight where we spent 6 years. We enjoyed the Island. I had agreed to take on the job on an understanding that after 4 years I would be posted to the NW of England where Jen & I had decided we wished to retire. In the event I did an extra two years at Parkhurst- a long story - before jumping up & down and being rewarded by my final posting up here, to the NW; Hindley Prison from where I retired 6 years later at the age of 55 and 1/2. The extra six months I completed as a favour as they wanted to appoint a particular Governor who was not going to be immediately available.

Goodness knows why I've told you all this. I set out to describe my credentials for having a view on the likes of Lucy Letby - who was not the first nurse to kill several of her patients- and got carried away. Not far away enough, I hear you say! The point is, I used to work with several pre-eminent psychiatrists who were appointed to provide their services and one of my functions was to discuss each prisoner/patient. In so doing I learnt quite a lot about the subject of mental health.

So returning to the matter in hand. The mental state of Lucy. It's my 'umble opinion that no one has the answer to this. Our knowledge of other aspects of medicine (I hear that they've recently transplanted a womb to allow a woman to bear her own child, for example) is amazing. Our knowledge of things scientific, mechanical, etc., means we're bordering on the possibility of being taken over by robots with A.I.

And yet, when it comes to the brain, in particular the mind. Well, we've a long way to go. If you're still awake you deserve a medal.

Cheers,  
John.”

**JOHN RAMWELL**



## DOVER BORSTAL (Continued...)

1966 was the 900th anniversary of the battle of Hastings and the Bayeux Tapestry was vividly on display everywhere. Guinness used it as a drink's advertisement with a huge poster. The recreation room in my house was a rectangle of bare walls just painted white. So I wrote to Guinness to ask if I could have a copy and explained why. They dutifully sent me a full poster, I selected the most appropriate section and asked the works department to cut it to size and cover the end wall, so it struck you the moment you walked in. It looked good, made the room cosier, and I hoped the occasional lad might ask what it was all about.

I had my own caseload and had given myself one of the most difficult young men in my house. Michael was 20.5 years of age and had a string of over 100 burglaries to his name already. He did not want to be in Borstal as he considered himself as a major criminal and thought he ought to be in an adult prison. At our first meeting to discuss his background and criminal record, I began with something like 'Now Michael', he immediately said 'NO, you cannot use my Christian name as that implies we have a personal relationship, we don't, you can use my surname name or my number.' A sobering truth that one should not presume that one has the right to decide and one I have never forgotten. What progress we made I was never sure. But he was fortunate that he had a very good aftercare officer, and that the North Sea oil exploration was expanding fast. As he lived in Great Yarmouth, he was able to accept the offer to work on one. Whilst on the rig he had to learn to get on with his fellow workers, and when he came ashore, he had a bundle of money he did not need to resort to crime. I know he succeeded as he was gracious enough to write to me and wrote:

"I was thinking about myself sometime back about 10 years ago when I would not work at all, now I am working an average of 72 hours a week, my how things change. I reckon Linda and me will have to start thinking about a family soon. It seems like there is not enough give and take in this world and too much violence. A lot of world leaders act like spoilt school kids and then a lot of people get hurt, but the leaders just get away with it."

This letter was at the period when petrol was rationed so he asked how I was getting on during the shortage and then he said 'being as I know a few people down here I can get petrol through the trade.' I was never sure whether he was just stating the fact or trying to offer me a kind of inducement. More important, more than just hearing good news, it heartened me considerably to know that the efforts we had all put in had paid off, doubtful as I was at the time. He was probably the last person I would have expected to take the trouble to write. It is a vivid reminder that respect and concern for another individual may in its own way pay dividends, even though we might never know. It is a principle I have tried to uphold throughout my career.

The research was eventually fully written up as, 'Criminals Coming of Age' by F.H McClintock and A.E. Bottoms and published by Heinemann Educational Books for The Institute of Criminology, Cambridge.

By coincidence, the Ministry of Justice, to whom the prison and probation services now report, has just come up with a scheme identical to that undertaken at Dover in the 60s but was not continued after the research came to an end. I do not deny the scheme has merit; I have always thought that. It will be interesting to observe how well it is supported in its new form; so far no training is on offer other than

whatever each establishment itself organizes, and there does not appear to be that any research or feedback is built in. Again, it does appear to include any change in its approach to aftercare provision, and this is a major concern in respect of re-conviction rates. They do say there are few new inventions, just a rehash of old ones.

The education centre at Dover was rated to be of a high standard, this was based on (as usual) exam results. A fair number of trainees from other houses undertook what was known then as GCE 'O' level exams, with a high percentage of good passes. My house holding the more sophisticated offenders and school failures were not clamouring for education but were more orientated to undertake trade training in such skills as painting and decorating, plastering, bricklaying or woodwork, though some of these did need remedial education even to embark on the trade training. This was viewed more as a 'necessary drain' on education resources and clearly not a priority. The Head of Education, Derek, was held in high regard by the Governor for the quality of the exam work, and they were close friends and often dined together. Derek had little time for me as I contributed nothing to 'his empire'. Such was his hold over the Governor, he requested a Deputy Head of Education be added to the department. The Governor sought and was granted funding for the new post, and recruitment was arranged.

Eventually, it was announced that a certain Miss Jane Morcom-Harneis had been appointed. She had undertaken full teaching training and then went on to Durham University and obtained a First-Class Degree in Social Sciences. Jane had taught in a London school in the East End with a very mixed group of children, situated near West Ham football stadium. She had persuaded some of the players to come to the school and help with both physical education and to impress others on the need for a good basic education. The players from West Ham had given generously of their time.

So she was a breath of fresh air and much more orientated to the more socially disadvantaged, but not to the pleasure of most of her colleagues in education. She decided that she would develop a remedial class for the underachievers which would use techniques that emphasized their unique qualities, and not their weaknesses of the past, lessons that engaged their attention. Whether it was my charm or perhaps more so that Hythe House had a high proportion of lads who needed that kind of class, it soon was a Hythe only class. So, suddenly I was much more involved with education, I had on an earlier contact with them been told that they were the experts, they knew best and to leave it to them, and basically not come over and raise issues or ask why certain lads could not get education!

After several months it was clear that the lads on this class were not only enjoying it but were making sound progress with their education; they had also developed a special bond with Jane. It is a known fact that prisoners do not 'grass on their mates' whenever 'misbehaviour' is being investigated. The Borstal also had regular attempts to abscond. One Friday a lad on the 'outside paints party' downed tools and scarpered before it was time to march back inside. I received a telephone call from Jane to advise that she had not returned one lad to Hythe as he wanted to speak to me but did not want others to know. So I went over and asked him what it was about, and he told me where the lad who had absconded was hiding up until nightfall. I said it was not usual for someone to tell me such information. (I suspected he wanted to impress Jane for one, as I knew how much he was both admiring but also learning from her class) but what he said was that the lad who legged it was his allocated week to clean all the paintbrushes, but now he would have to do it.

As mentioned, the Governor and the Head of Education were very close, so he was allowed to take all the lads who were taking 'O-Levels' exams to go to his house for a party before sitting their exams. This was claimed that it relaxed them before the ordeal ahead. On this occasion, Jane went to the locked cabinet

to check all the necessary papers had arrived and were in place. No packages of exam papers are allowed to be opened prior to the day of the exam; she discovered that all the packets had been opened! She came to me to ask what she should do; clearly the suspicion was that this had been done so that the candidates could be advised in advance of the questions, and so arm themselves with the appropriate answers. I said there was no choice other than to inform the Governor of the facts and our suspicions. The Governor was clearly shocked and almost in disbelief, he asked if it could be left with him and to say nothing to anybody.

The next time Derek arrived at the establishment he was immediately directed to the Governor's office and after that was never seen again. All exams were cancelled, which was a shame for the lads who had made a genuine effort. Jane took over the running of education, not without some resentment from those tutors who were favourites of Derek and had been given a lot of latitude. Eventually, a new Head of Education was appointed, a man with an impeccable background, but a little lazy, but he and Jane got on well and she was allowed to put her stamp on the direction and priorities in education.

The previous year I had made a journey to Berlin with the Anglo-Jewish Society. The group travelled there by train and as soon as we entered Germany, East German Guards boarded the train and proceeded to check everyone's credentials. Some of us thought it was quite amusing, but Berliners travelling took it very seriously as they could have been removed from the train if the paperwork was not satisfactory. The hotel we were using was in the suburb of Spandau, which is set by a lovely lake, but it also has a prison where some of the war criminals, including Rudolf Hess, were held.

Visiting the various churches and holocaust memorials and museums with our Jewish companions was very moving. It was arranged that we had a day in East Germany so had to queue at Check Point Charlie, where we had to empty all our pockets so whatever was in them could be checked. I happened to have 2 postcards from West Berlin which I had written and already stamped ready to send home. These were confiscated with no explanation from the East German guards. We then entered East Germany by the underground and ascended at the station designated by the East Germans, so saw nothing of East Germany except the shopping square where we had been allowed to alight from the underground. An additional requirement was that you had to change the equivalent of £10 of West German marks into East German marks. We entered a large multi-store which was in that square and looked to see how to spend our marks. The shelves were virtually bare, I found a gramophone record stand and pulled one out, and within seconds I had a store assistant shouting at me and snatching the record out of my hand, babbling loudly in German. I got the drift of it and called shopping to a close. The problem was that West Germany had no use for East's marks, so exchanging them gave a very poor rate of return.

The Berlin Opera House had been completely restored after the war and had only opened again that year. A member of the group obtained tickets for those who wished to attend the opera being performed. I joined the group; it was a delightful experience to just sit in this beautiful new theatre and being entertained by uplifting music.

Amongst the group were a few from a kibbutz in Israel, and they kept insisting we ought to come to Israel and visit one, and they offered their address. Another young man who lived in Camberwell was enthusiastic, so we made plans to meet up and develop the idea. As we wanted to fill a car I mentioned the proposal to Jane, as I knew she had been to Israel. She did not show much enthusiasm for the idea, just as well as the plan did not actually materialize. However, as a spinoff of all this Jane and I began meeting up for a meal out every so often, we enjoyed each other's company and it continued to develop from there.

A trip did materialize but it was to Athens, not Israel; and was a holiday adventure with two friends, one of whom had access to a large tent which allegedly could sleep four. There we planned to find a suitable campsite and relax by the sea. As the boot on my little Renault was not large, I had to fit a roof rack for some of the luggage. I was the only driver, but we made good time through Belgium and Germany. Austria was a bit slower as there were no motorways then but was very scenic. Having crossed out of Austria on the only non-toll route, which was very steep, we entered Yugoslavia and set off on the alleged Belgrade motorway. This was fine to start with, but the surface of the road turned into the equivalent of a cobbled street, and one could feel the constant vibration. After several miles of this, I noticed in the side mirror that some of the luggage from the crowded roof rack was beginning to slide down the side of the car, so we had to stop and rearrange it all.

On reaching Belgrade I realized that one tyre had started to puncture. Fortunately, we were near the accommodation we had booked for the night. Next morning two local lads arranged for the puncture to be fixed and we set off to reach Greece. We camped on a beach near Mt. Olympus. In the morning, I awoke to behold a shepherd moving a large flock of sheep along the water's edge obviously to some new pasture. The sleeping arrangements were fine until I awoke another morning to find a snake crawling around my part of the tent. I removed it, and we crowded into a smaller space. We then moved on to Athens and saw the sights. Also, whilst there a partial eclipse of the sun took place, which was interesting, but driving became even more hazardous as the locals all continued driving whilst watching the eclipse through darkened glass whilst still driving. We then crossed the Corinth Canal and found a desolate camp site with virtually no facilities other than toilets and a dripping tap, but near the sea. The journey home was less eventful but rather tedious.

## **BOB DUNCAN**

**(Part eight of Bob's memoirs will feature in the Autumn 2024 edition of the newsletter.)**

### **Some snippets from Brendan O'Friel**



Something that might be of interest to colleagues is a future RGN Butler Trust Winter symposium for Governors at Keeble College Oxford. This is reported on the internet under "Butler Trust" - and it sounds interesting and sensible about the difficulties that Governors are currently facing.

On 29th February, the MoJ released their projections for the prison population for the next 5 years - the projected rise is startling - with a low of 95,000, a median of 105,000 and a high of 115,000. God help the Service! The figures are on the MoJ website.

HMP Lowdham Grange is returning to the public sector following a poor inspection.

POST (Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology) which provides impartial briefs for MP's and the public has produced Brief 58 'Prison Population Growth: Drivers, Implications and Policy Considerations.' It is a good summary of how bad things are for the service

**Regards, Brendan**



## **FROM THE CHAIR**

Hello and welcome to the RPGA Spring Newsletter and our thanks to Paul Laxton, our editor, and to those who have made a contribution- always welcome. I particularly enjoyed the “Over the Wall “article by Peter Atkinson in the last edition.

I write this on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, the first day of meteorological spring and yes it is snowing on the Pennines and a tad chilly, but bearable.

Just back from a cruise around Cape Horn, a visit to the Falklands and all points south, highly recommended if you can do it. 14 hour flight from Paris,yucks!

At the AGM we retained the current committee which I am pleased about as they serve us well and I make my usual request to join us on the committee if you can as new blood is always welcome. Call me on 07788 430702.

Membership continues to fall slightly and though do we lose members we do have new ones too. We continue to maintain a stable financial position and we are always looking for ways to keep it that way. With that in mind we have surveyed members asking if they would like to receive the newsletter electronically as hard copies are the biggest expense and we did get a positive response from some members. Hard copies will always be an option.

Have a look on the RPGA website where there is a list of members’ names as I looked at it recently and enjoyed some of the memories that the list prompted.

The next RPGA AGM is in Nottingham 7th October 2024 [subject to confirmation] we would love to see you there in person or via ZOOM.

I end with thanks to Andrea Albutt who retires as PGA President this month. She has allowed us access to the PGA conference venues for our AGM’s and it is appreciated. Good luck and let’s hope she joins the RPGA soon.

**Graham Smith**

**RPGA Chairman**



## QUIZ TIME with Graham Smith (answers on the back page)

### ANIMALS

- 1, What type of animals are flying foxes?
- 2, In which island are the Thylacine native?
- 3, If Aardvark are the first animals in the dictionary what would come second?
- 4, To which continent is the Jaguar native?
- 5, What does a monkey have that an ape does not?
- 6, What type of animal is an Argalis?
- 7, Which is the largest living species of lizard?
- 8, Where on its body are a cricket's ears?
- 9, Found in manure and used for fishing what colour is a branding worm?
- 10, What name is given to a North American elk?
- 11, What is the off-spring of a female donkey and a male horse?
- 12, To what continent are Bactrian camels native?
- 13, Which animal is also known as an ounce?
- 14, What name is given to an animal that chews the cud?
- 15, Which animal is also known as a colugo?
- 16, Which animal's name means "man of the woods" in Malay language?
- 17, Which is the fastest animal on 2 legs?
- 18, Which squirrel is native to the British Isles?
- 19, Which animal lives in a formicary?
- 20, Which small animal was a prized food by the Romans?



## Computer Corner

I realise that in previous editions of Computer Corner I have covered the subject of fraud before, but sadly it is something that just keeps getting more widespread, and there isn't a day goes by without not one, but several stories in the media about someone being scammed out of their hard earned money. I understand that in the National Crime Survey, carried out each year, the only type of crime that is increasing in both amount and intensity, is FRAUD.

In the not too distant past when you heard of someone being scammed it was hard to believe that anyone with common sense would allow themselves to fall for what were often very unsophisticated attempts to part someone from their money. We all heard about the scam involving a Nigerian Prince with a vast fortune, who needed someone in the UK to allow the money to be lodged in their bank account as a way of avoiding death duty or tax or whatever. A simple scam to see through, but there is clear evidence that some people fell for it, usually gullible people who thought it was an easy way to make some money, and of course the very thing that these scams played on was, peoples greed.

However, fast forward a few years and we can now all laugh at such a simple, and unbelievable scam. Criminals have moved on, and the frightening thing is that they have moved, and continue to move on at a faster rate than the authorities can ever hope to keep up with. As a consequence fraud has become by far the biggest criminal activity in the UK, and accounts for a staggering £38-billion lost as a result. Of course this is not all scams against individuals, and in fact by far the biggest loss to fraud is Public Sector money lost through things such as benefit scams, and the billions of pounds lost during the pandemic in procurement of items such as PPE many of which were not usable, or indeed safe to use. However figures from 2023 indicate that the level of personal fraud in the UK is running at a rate of loss of £2,300/minute or £1.2 billion per year. These are frauds where ordinary people are losing money to criminals who deliberately target them and, using a variety of different tricks and subterfuge, look to part them from their money. As I said before, criminals are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their methods, what hasn't changed is their ruthlessness and determination to part you from your money, and they don't care how they do it, or for the financial impact on their victims. They want the luxuries of life, and they want your money in order to get them.

As a demonstration of how sophisticated these criminals can be, they are very adept at using technology, and misusing it, to help them to fool people. For example, it is possible with the right equipment to clone telephone numbers. This allows criminals to call you and to generate a number on your phone that matches that of your bank, credit card company, or whoever they wish to appear to be. This means that if you receive a call claiming to be from your bank, and to verify it you check the phone number, there is no longer a certainty that because the numbers match, the call is genuinely from your bank. Faced with this risk the golden rule is "NEVER give anyone your personal bank details on the phone unless you are absolutely clear that it is your bank you are speaking to". This includes being aware that if the person calling you invites you to hang up and call the bank on the number you have for them, and know to be legitimate, if you do not ensure that you have a dialling tone before entering the

number, you may very well end up talking to the criminal again, because if they do not hang up at their end, the line actually remains open. So, if you get a call from your bank, you need to be 100% certain that the call does originate from them.

All banks make it clear that they will never call you and ask you for personal information, so you should be suspicious straight away if the caller starts asking for information that the bank will already hold. Do not be fooled simply because the caller has the correct long (16 digit) number from your debit or credit card. These numbers are easy to obtain and on their own are worthless, what a criminal needs is either your PIN, or the 3-digit security code on the back of the card. If you are called by someone stating they are from your bank, and even if the number on your phone matches your bank's number, do not give out your PIN or the 3-digit security number. If a criminal has these then they have all they need to be able to use your card to spend your money.

Many banks, and card providers, now have what is known as 2-factor Authentication. If your bank or card company, and indeed any website that you use, offers 2-Factor Authentication then please sign up to it, it is a very useful additional layer of security. Should you be unlucky enough to be called by a criminal trying to get to your money, and they either have, or you have given them your card number, and security code, the 2-Factor Authentication should prevent them from going any further. However, during the call, once they have the information they need they will try to spend your money, usually while you are still on the phone. If they hit the problem of 2-Factor Authentication, that code will come to you, either as an email, or text. In order to proceed the criminal needs that code, and will usually then try to tell you that the message that you have just received is from them, and for security purposes they need you to tell them the code. This is then absolute proof that you are being scammed, and you should hang up, and report the call. **Remember you need that dialling tone before you dial a number.**

I read a story recently where a lady unfortunately fell for just such a trick as this one, and once the criminal had got her money, he was still on the phone, and then proceeded to berate and humiliate her by revealing himself as a criminal and tormenting her with what he had just done, and telling her how stupid she was and how easy it had been to take her money. There really are some very evil people in the world, please don't let yourself be one of their victims.

The other big scam at the moment involves someone calling and claiming to be either from your bank, or the police. The basic story is that they tell you that fraudulent activity has been detected on your account, and you therefore need to move all of your money from that account into a safe account that they have created specifically for that purpose. The bottom line here is that this situation would never happen. Both the police and banks make it very clear that they would never ask anyone to do this. Therefore, if you are ever asked to transfer money from your account into another, no matter who you think is asking, it is not legitimate, and if you comply you will lose your money, and probably have a long and difficult fight to get any of it back. So Please remember: Unless you called the company yourself for help-NEVER:

- ◆ **Log on to your computer or Internet Banking for a random caller.**
- ◆ **Visit any website address they provide on a call.**
- ◆ **Download anything they suggest to your computer.**
- ◆ **Tell them what's on your computer screen at any given time.**

The other popular attempt (at least with criminals) to get your personal details, and hence a chance at getting at your money, is based around parcel deliveries. Many of us now buy online regularly, and this in turn means that many of us are at any given time expecting a parcel to be delivered. Criminals have quickly jumped onto this and there are several variations of scams around the theme of sending out emails to people claiming that there has been a problem delivering your parcel, and either, asking you to click on the link and confirm your details, or that there is a payment to be made before delivery can be completed, and to click on the link to go to a site on which you can make the payment. The criminal is planning on the fact that many people will be expecting something, and that their curiosity will lead them click on the link to find out what has happened.

In many case that simple click is all that is needed. You will then either be asked to make a payment, or to give your card details, or by clicking on the link you may download a piece of rogue software that will infect you computer. In many ways the latter may be the worst option as you could end up having your whole system infected and your data either held to ransom, or worse still, destroyed.

I realise that all of this sounds like scaremongering, but it is certainly not my aim to scare people, or indeed to put you off using your computer. You are safe, if you take appropriate precautions. The following is the current advice from Action Fraud and the national Cyber Security Centre.

#### **What should you do if you've received a scam email?**

- ◆ Do not click on any links in an email if you are not 100% certain where it has come from.
- ◆ Do not reply to the email or contact the senders in any way.
- ◆ If you have clicked on a link in the email, do not supply any information on the website that may open.
- ◆ Do not open any attachments that arrive with the email.
- ◆ If you think you may have compromised the safety of your bank details and/or have lost money due to fraudulent misuse of your cards, you should immediately contact your bank.

#### **Fake emails often (but not always) display some of the following characteristics:**

- ◆ The sender's email address doesn't tally with the trusted organisation's website address.
- ◆ The email is sent from a completely different address or a free web mail address.
- ◆ The email does not use your proper name, but uses a non-specific greeting like "dear customer".
- ◆ A sense of urgency; for example the threat that unless you act immediately your account may be closed.
- ◆ A prominent website link. These can be forged or seem very similar to the proper address, but even a single character's difference in a web address means a different website.
- ◆ A request for personal information such as user name, password or bank details.
- ◆ The email contains spelling and grammatical errors.
- ◆ You weren't expecting to get an email from the company that appears to have sent it.
- ◆ The entire text of the email is contained within an image rather than the usual text format.
- ◆ The image contains an embedded hyperlink to a bogus site.

**If you think you may have been the victim of fraud or cybercrime and incurred a financial loss or have been hacked as a result of responding to a phishing message, you should report this to Action Fraud.**

### **Have you spotted a suspicious email?**

If you have received an email which you're not quite sure about, forward it to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS): [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk) The message might be from a company you don't normally receive communications from, or someone you do not know. You may just have a hunch. If you are suspicious, you should report it. Your report of a phishing email will help us to act quickly, protecting many more people from being affected.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) will analyse the suspect email and any websites it links to. They'll use any additional information you've provided to look for and monitor suspicious activity.

If they discover activity that they believe is malicious, they may:

- ◆ seek to block the address the email came from, so it can no longer send emails
- ◆ work with hosting companies to remove links to malicious websites
- ◆ raise awareness of commonly reported suspicious emails and methods used (via partners)

Whilst the NCSC is unable to inform you of the outcome of its review, they can confirm that they do act upon every message received.

On the subject of fraud it has recently been revealed that 71m logins have been stolen with many of them being offered for sale in the murky region that is often referred to as "The Dark Net". Unfortunately your details may be amongst those stolen, and now being made available for sale. If you wish to check if your details have been hacked and put up for sale there is a site called Have I Been Pwned where you can search to see if your details are at risk. To search if your email address has been compromised visit <https://haveibeenpwned.com> and click enter. **If you wish to search to determine if any of your passwords have been compromised enter: <https://haveibeenpwned.com/Passwords>**

Follow the instructions on the site to see if your data is at risk. If it is, then the suggestion is that you change your passwords immediately. It is not so easy to change your email address, and in fact as email addresses are readily available, the fact that someone has yours is not in itself a security risk, after all we give out our email address to many different people and organisations. However, as an added security measure it is wise to use end-to end encryption for emails, for that added piece of mind. Also, if you do not use specialist password protection then you really should consider doing so as all the good ones provide password protection with a password generator that will produce complex passwords

### **Windows.**

The vast majority of users of personal computers (PC'S) run a version of windows as their operating system. Depending on how long you have been using computers you will have probably used a number of different versions of Windows with many peoples first encounter with the operating system beginning with Windows 95, often referred to as the first really user friendly version. The current version of Windows is Windows 11, and there is talk that Windows 12 will be launched later this year, (2024).

There is a great deal of confusion about Windows, and just which versions Microsoft provide support to, and are therefore safe to use. The reality is the Microsoft are a business, and they exist to make money, so they are not only constantly updating all their software programmes, but reducing the period of time that they provide support to specific versions. The most important element of their support package is the issuing of security updates which help to keep the systems safe from hackers, and unauthorised use.

Once Microsoft stop supporting a specific version of their software, it does not immediately become unsafe, but over time the risks to those people who continue to use the software increases, but only if you use your computer to connect to the internet. If you use a computer that is not connected in any way to the internet then unless you plug in memory sticks that may be contaminated, then you are safe. If however, you do use the internet and if you are running an unsupported operating system then you really are at risk, and that risk increases over time.

Research, and Microsoft's own figures, indicate that there are many millions of computers running Windows around the world and the main versions being run now are Windows 7, Windows 10 and Windows 11. Microsoft had stated that they would cease to support Windows 7 in 2021, but they later relented, due to the fact that there were still millions of computers running the system, but the support for Windows 7 is not free, and is really only available to large companies who have not upgraded to a later system. If you are using anything before Windows 10, (Windows Vista/XP/ 7/8/8.1 then these are not considered to be safe as they have not received any security updates for several years and are vulnerable to viruses and malware. Remember, this only applies if your computer is connected to the internet.

Microsoft now operate what they call their "Modern Lifecycle Policy" which effectively means that they will only support versions for a fixed period of time, after which they will not provide security, or system updates.

Windows 11 has not been as popular as Microsoft hoped, mainly it is believed because many older computers cannot run the system, and as a result Windows 10 is the most widely used operating system. However there are various versions of Windows 10, as it has been updated several times, and the only way to ensure that your system is fully protected is to make sure that you are running the latest version. The most up to date version of **Windows 10** is **Version 22H2** To find out which version you are running go to START-SETTINGS-SYSTEM-ABOUT the resulting page should show your version number. If it is not **22H2** then you should update it-it is free to do so. Go to START-SETTINGS-WINDOWS UPDATE-CHECK FOR UPDATES and follow the instructions. The system will tell you what version your are updating to.

Version 22H2 of Windows 10 will be supported by Microsoft until October 2025. If your are running Windows 10 and your computer will not upgrade to Windows 11, then it is likely that after October 2025, if you wish to remain safe online, then you may need to replace your computer with one that does run Windows 11, and in all likelihood by then, Windows 12.

There is an alternative to Windows. It is called LINUX and it is free. It will run on many older computers, and it is almost constantly being updated to keep it safe.

In my Autumn "Computer Corner" I will give more information on how to use download and use the LINUX Operating System.

**GRAHAM MUMBY-CROFT**  
**graham.mumbycroft@gmail.com**





## ON MAN, ON NATURE, ON HUMAN LIFE, MUSING IN SOLITUDE

On 30 Sep 2023, at 06:16, John C., a long term kayaking buddy, wrote:

"John,

For your possible interest: here is something I originally published in the MCC Newsletter back in 1972, then republished (and added to) in 2001. Note, when the original article was first published, the world's population was 3.5bn, but now it's well over 8bn.

Best. John C."

My email reply to John...

"Hi John, I've taken your original article and have added to it. Not by any intellectual means. I wouldn't be so audacious. More of a 'stating of the obvious' means. "

You wrote as follows...

"I believe that mankind is well aware of the fact that there is a delicate equilibrium of physical and biological phenomena on and around earth which cannot be thoughtlessly disturbed as we race along the road of technological development ... This global concern in the face of a grave common danger, which **carries the seeds of extinction for the human species**, may well prove to be the elusive force which can bind men together. The battle for human survival can only be won by all nations joining together in a concerted drive to preserve life on this planet."

The Message is clear. It describes the issues in terms of causes: viz:

- Environmental deterioration
- Depletion of natural resources
- Population overcrowding
- Food distribution
- War

So, what's to be done?

Some will say we must have more research.

This, in my opinion, will not buy us more time but simply speed the whole devastating process of our - almost - total elimination, or as some have labelled, it, our 'Extinction.'

Who shouts from the back, " this is no more than we deserve?"

I don't believe we **deserve** any retribution. We're all innocents. I believe that we're, as a species, work in progress.

The problem is that, long before we've got anywhere close to securing our long term and therefore equitable future, we'll have vanished from the face of the Earth, leaving no traces other than the exception of the evidence of us having been here, just as has the prehistoric mammals.

None the less we cannot afford to sit on our hands.

The best we must hope for is...

- ◆ A moratorium on technological innovations the effects of which we cannot foretell and which are not essential to human survival. This would include new weapons systems, luxury transport, new and untested pesticides, the manufacture of new plastics, the establishment of vast new nuclear power projects, etc. It would also include ecologically unresearched engineering projects – the damming of great rivers, "reclamation" of jungle land, undersea mining projects etc.
- ◆ The application of existing pollution-control technology to the generation of energy and to industry generally, large scale recycling of materials in order to slow down the exhaustion of resources, and the rapid establishment of international agreements on environmental quality, subject to review as environmental needs become more fully known.

- ◆ Intensified programmes in all regions of the world to curb population growth, with full regard for the necessity of accomplishing this without abrogation of civil rights. It is important that these programmes should be accompanied by a decrease in the level of consumption by privileged classes, and that a more equitable distribution of food and other goods among all people be developed.
- ◆ Regardless of the difficulty of achieving agreements, nations must find a way to abolish war, to defuse their nuclear armaments, and to destroy their chemical and biological weapons. The consequences of a global war would be immediate and irreversible, and it is therefore also the responsibility of individuals and groups to refuse to participate in research or processes that might, if used, result in the extermination of the human species.
- ◆ **Earth, which has seemed so large, must now be seen in its smallness. We live in a closed system, absolutely dependent on Earth and on each other for our lives and those of succeeding generations. The many things that divide us are therefore of infinitely less importance than the interdependence and danger that unites us.**
- ◆ **We believe that it is literally true that only by transcending our divisions will men be able to keep Earth as their home. Solutions to the actual problems of pollution, hunger, over-population and war may be simpler to find than the formula for the common effort through which the search for solutions must occur, but we must make a beginning.'**

If our environment is to be preserved, sociologists, scientists, economists and each member of the public will have to spend a little more time, like Wordsworth, "On Man, on Nature, on Human Life, Musing in Solitude."

Or, to put it another way;  
**'Owing to lack of interest, tomorrow has been cancelled.'**

Written on the 30th. September, 2023. I replied...

Hi John.

Your timing in bringing this to my attention is disappointing.

Why?

Because it's too late.

In your defence, (not that I'm lining up an attack. The very opposite is the case.)... I'm aware you re-published this in the latter part of the last Century.

And of course, John, I'm not accusing you nor anyone else of mal-performance.

Why?

Because we're all responsible; everyone one of us. And for this reason alone, nobody is responsible. We might line up politicians, scientists, etc. but I'm convinced that, short of taking the world along with us, nothing would have changed. A world dictatorship! God! We can't agree on most crucial aspects that threaten us. Take trade, land borders, religion, human behaviour, etc.

Here is a prime example (amongst many others) of just one aspect of serious environmental degradation, that of water pollution, which has to be of particular interest to everyone of us. The answer is to first determine its priority in the scheme of things. (I T S O T)

Having determined this we then need to spend money, taxes, borrowed or stolen cash. It matters not I T S O T from where we get the funds. If it's a case of neighbours against neighbours or nations against nations, so be it.

The bottom line is clear ; we shall see such suffering that Armageddon will seem small fry unless we act. Personally I believe it's too late to reverse our perilous situation.



Should we collectively decide to act NOW, according to our scientific experts (and pl don't knock 'experts who for decades have been trying to tell us we're all in deep poops and should have spent vastly more than our current budgets.)

Here I endeth the last lesson by quoting from you, John.

*"If our environment is to be preserved, sociologists, scientists, economists and each member of the public will have to spend a little more time, like Wordsworth, "On Man, on Nature, on Human Life, Musing in Solitude."*

*Or, to put it another way, 'Owing to lack of interest, tomorrow has been cancelled'*

Needless to say there's much interest in this subject.

Hardly surprising given its topical media focus and the obvious effects on humanity.

I'll be sending out some less personalised transcripts of the text to a small group who share our interest.

LP&S

John.

## **JOHN RAMWELL**

THE NEXT AGM OF THE RETIRED PRISON GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION WILL BE HELD ON: MONDAY 07 OCTOBER 2024 AT 13.30 HOURS. ANY MEMBER WISHING TO PUT A RESOLUTION BEFORE THE AGM SHOULD E-MAIL IT TO JAN THOMPSON AT:

[janthompson370@gmail.com](mailto:janthompson370@gmail.com). PLEASE ENSURE YOU GET A SECONDER.

THE VENUE WILL BE THE DELTA HOTELS NOTTINGHAM BELFRY NG8 6PY

AS USUAL OUR AGM WILL BE HELD USING A FACILITY BOOKED BY THE PGA FOR THEIR ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DATE AND VENUE ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE PRISON GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION WHEN HMPPS HAS FORMALLY APPROVED THEIR FACILITY TIME

YOU CAN ALSO ATTEND THE AGM via ZOOM AND DETAILS OF THE LINK WILL BE GIVEN BY GRAHAM MUMBY-CROFT TO THOSE MEMBERS WHO ARE ON THE E MAIL REGISTER NEARER THE TIME

ANY MEMBER PLANNING TO ATTEND IN PERSON FEEL FREE TO E-MAIL ME NEARER THE TIME AT [relaxpaul@btinternet.com](mailto:relaxpaul@btinternet.com) SO I CAN CONFIRM ARRANGEMENTS.

Paul Laxton



## GOOD RIDDANCE OR SAD LOSS?

### The passing of the 19<sup>th</sup> century radial prisons

By Peter Atkinson August 2023

*Demolition of Northallerton prison (reproduced at the foot of the page) by kind permission of Daniel Kitching Photography*

Those of us who've had a lengthy career in the Prison Service may have at one time or another, served in one of the classic old radial prisons. This type of inmate living area with the cell blocks radiating out from a central hub (the Centre), was regarded at one time as the bedrock of good prisoner accommodation. Staff today may have mixed feelings about these types of jail, with some feeling comfort from the order, safety and visibility whilst others perhaps see them as a design that is seriously outdated. Many of the old radials are coming up to being over 200 years old and that does seem to pose a question about their suitability in a modern Service. Perhaps some old ideas never die in that the privately run Peterborough prison, that was built in 2005, has two radial living blocks.

Having worked for varying periods in five of these types of prison (Durham, Stafford, Wakefield, Birmingham and Gloucester) at one time or another during a thirty-year period, I can understand their appeal. But what has prompted this article now? Well, it stemmed from a recent casual conversation I had with an old friend and former Governor colleague Peter Quinn, over the question of why some major cities didn't seem to have any prisons while other small places like Gloucester or Winchester for example did. I happened to mention to Peter that I believed Newcastle had never had a 19<sup>th</sup> century prison although its next-door neighbour Durham did, whilst York had no prison yet its near neighbour Wakefield did. A little research revealed that in fact Newcastle did have a prison opened in 1828 right in the heart of the city. Peter sent me a picture of Clifford's Tower in York, attached to which was a radial prison next to the Castle Museum. I found myself drawn into exploring the whole topic of radials and hence this article.



I don't intend to get bogged down in too much historical detail, but in broad terms a number of historians point to Millbank as being the early 19<sup>th</sup> century inspiration for the radial prison, with Jeremy Bentham supplying the philosophical and architectural vision. Although Bentham's original design of the panopticon (central observation tower totally surrounded by tiers of cells facing the tower where staff could see all the inmates without being seen themselves) was not widely adopted, his ideas did however morph into the radial system that is recognisable today. Despite Millbank's disastrous construction saga involving marshy unstable ground, collapsing walls, disease and exploding windows, the prison eventually took its first inmates in 1816. The layout was actually hexagonal in shape, but this was generally recognised as the precursor to the later radial designs that became commonplace. The prison got quite a lengthy mention by Charles Dickens in 'Bleak House', and we're told by Conan Doyle in 'The Sign of Four' that Holmes and Watson crossed the Thames next to the prison. Millbank however was expensive and ill-conceived and it was eventually replaced by Pentonville. I'll come back to Pentonville but just to clear up a little quirk, Pentonville prison is not actually in Pentonville but is on the Caledonian Road in the Borough of Islington. Before moving on, it is worth a brief reference to Clerkenwell's Cold Baths Fields prison, built in modern day Islington. Although a prison of some antiquity, it did have a radial structure added to its accommodation as early as 1816 before it too fell out of favour like Millbank and was closed in 1885.

Accepted wisdom suggests that the guiding light for the radial prisons that mutated out of Millbank, was Pentonville, with its four cell blocks of four landings each. An alternative suggestion has been offered that the small, old Fosse Way prison at Northleach in Gloucestershire was the inspiration, (not to be mixed up with the £286 million new prison called Fosse Way on the old Glen Parva site), but hard evidence to support this idea is difficult to find. What was it that stimulated the huge prison building boom from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, that resulted in 54 radial prisons constructed across the country in a six-year period following Pentonville, with another 36 before the last quarter of the century? In simple terms, a layman would probably point to six factors: the end of transportation, the end of capital punishment for a range of offences, John Howard's tireless work in pointing out the appalling state of English prisons, the influence of the great prison reformer Elizabeth Fry, the growth of large industrial cities and rising crime, and last but not least, the Victorian era belief that reasonable prison accommodation plus hard work and religion, could change offending behaviour. The state of county jails across the country up to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century had been truly disgraceful, and this undoubtedly led to a radical political rethink, leading up to what in effect became the establishment of a nationalised prison system in 1877 with the introduction of the Prison Commission.

I won't list all the new radial prisons opened between 1816 and 1877, but I will come back to some of them later. Between 1918 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, thirty-six old prisons closed, but then thirteen of those were re-opened after the War. I'll look at some of those that have closed more recently, but first let me reference a few little-known prisons that quietly disappeared into obscurity towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The long lost, little-known radials that I've chosen are Newcastle, York and Derby. Within the city walls but on a piece of green land, the location and construction of Newcastle Gaol caused not a stir within the local community. It was built by the famed local architect John Dobson on a two-acre site at a cost of £33,000 in an area called Carliol Croft. The 25-foot-high walls enclosed five wings with four landings, each radiating out from the elliptical (circular dome) building in the middle. Made with high quality materials, it accommodated a hundred cells, eventually taking its first prisoners in 1828 after a 5-year construction period. The ethos of the prison was to, "improve health and morals". The Town Council had funded it

and organised its operation, but they were relieved to hand it over to the newly formed Prison Commission in 1877. It began to earn a fairly bad reputation and by the turn of the century, there was talk of closing the place. Businesses and dwellings had grown up around this large, dominating, dirty structure and the surrounding land was becoming very valuable. It staggered on until 1925 when the lack of local adult male offenders due to the carnage of the First World War made it untenable, and it was pulled down.

If Newcastle Gaol had been built in an uncontroversial part of the city, York's new prison in 1835 was extraordinary, in that it was built right in the city's heart, overshadowing the historic Clifford's Tower. It took ten years to complete and was regarded as the most remarkable and largest building in the surrounding area, competing for prominence with York Minster. There were four radial wings meeting in the middle, part of which formed the Governor's house. The dark millstone perimeter wall was all encompassing, enclosing Clifford's Tower. A legitimate comment might be, "what were they thinking?" It only held offenders until 1900 when it was turned into a military detention centre, eventually being closed and then demolished in 1934. Old aerial pictures of it emphasise what many historians and town planners would regard as a crazy, inappropriate, misguided architectural misadventure. On-line there is an impressive photograph from 1934 of the skeletal brick-built prison half demolished, swaddled in rubble with parts of the galleries still visible, and Clifford's Tower in the background.

Last on the list of the three old radial prisons is Derby. There had been a few prisons in Derby over the centuries, but the New Derby Gaol covering three acres on Vernon Street was a classic radial structure with six wings, each of two storeys that met at a hub which, amongst other things, housed the Governor's quarters. It had a 25-foot-high perimeter wall made up of 15 courses of brick. Officially known as Vernon Street Prison, it was designed by London architect Francis Goodwin and completed in 1827 at an astonishing cost of £66,212. Francis Goodwin located the prison within an elegant street scape creating the grand Vernon Street looking much like a good example of Regency planning. Despite the prominent title of 'Vernon Gate' carved into the stonework above the main prison entrance, the 250-cell gaol was renamed Derby Prison in 1886. The 1881 census shows 303 prisoners living in Derby Gaol, of whom 25 were women. It ran out of prisoners by the end of the First World War and was part demolished in 1919. What buildings remained, served as a military prison for another 10 years before being completely demolished, save for the fine Doric columned gate entrance with its wide façade, which remains to this day. Interestingly enough, there was an abortive plan in the 1990's to incorporate the façade into the new build Prison Service Headquarters. After its partial demolition, the prison site accommodated Derby Greyhound stadium for many years until that in turn was dismantled to make way for an office complex and apartments.

The three radial prisons above were far from alone in experiencing demolition or abandonment. Before presenting a list of others that met a similar fate, it is important to emphasise that some of the gaols that I'll name, began life long before the radial design became popular. All of them however had radial extensions added at later dates. I guess that the following list includes prisons of which many people have never heard. I'll start with Belle Vue gaol in Gorton, Manchester, which was built in 1848 accommodating 329 males and 119 females. It suffered from serious subsidence due to coal mines underneath and was closed in 1888, being demolished in 1892. The land was used as Belle Vue Pleasure Gardens, zoo and greyhound track. Subsequently an extensive housing estate was built on the plot. Carmarthen Gaol began life in 1789 but had a radial extension in 1869. It closed in 1922 and was demolished in 1938 with the site used for Carmarthen council offices. The 210 cell Devizes County House

of Corrections was designed by Richard Ingleman in 1811. It closed in 1925 and was demolished in 1927. Fisherton Anger New gaol in Salisbury was built in 1822 with 96 cells for £28,000 and closed in 1870. New Bailey Gaol in Salford with an octagonal four wing formation was built in 1816 but closed in 1868. It was an extremely unhealthy place and was demolished to make way for a railway yard after the inmates were transferred to the new prison at Strangeways.

Knutsford House of Corrections on London Road was more a panopticon than a classic radial, but it was built by the leading English prison designer George Money Penny behind the splendid looking Court House in 1847. Money Penny had a hand in the construction of Durham prison where a splendid courthouse eclipses the original prison entrance next door. Knutsford held 700 prisoners in four wings of three stories. It closed in 1914 and was demolished in 1934. St Mary's prison on St Mary's island in Chatham was huge with 1135 cells. It was designed by the Surveyor General of Convict prisons Joshua Jebb, and its three wings with four galleries were completed in 1856. It closed in 1892 and was demolished in 1895 with the site today partly occupied by Greenwich University. The four-storey radial Warwick prison on Cape Road was built quite late in 1880 and was closed during the First World War in 1916. It was demolished just over 50 years after it was built. The governor's house was preserved and became a pub called, funnily enough, the Governor's House, run by Leslie Rose before it too fell victim to the wrecker's ball. Worcester Gaol on the renamed Castle Street was built in 1813 and in 1838 had 90 cells added in a radial extension of four wings with three storeys, designed by Francis Sandys. It was closed in 1922 having been considered uneconomic by the Prison Commissioners and demolished in the 1930's.

Before picking up on those more well-known Victorian era radials that have closed recently, it is interesting to reflect on how one fairly narrow type of design more or less dominated the prison landscape, despite the fact that there were dozens of designers who built prisons right across the country. The radial design that we are familiar with does seem to have many advantages for incarcerating large numbers of people in one place. But when thinking about the variety of prison designs that could have been created during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, all failed to gain traction as the radial unquestionably cornered the market. Part of the explanation lies in good observation and keen staffing levels. However, during the Victorian era, churches, railway stations, town halls, hospitals, country houses, schools and waterworks didn't follow any kind of uniform design, so why was prison design relatively harmonised? The architecturally appealing four storey, 400 cell, 1834 Crescent wing at Stafford was an interesting departure from the classic radial, but this building is unique.



*Permission from Historic England*

If we've been talking about classic radials in England, it is important to realise that these type of prisons were built all over the Empire as part of colonial rule. I read an article that suggested 100 Victorian radials were constructed by the British across their colonies, but I can't check whether that's true. I am however, familiar with four examples and I can begin with the 5,000-inmate capacity panopticon type prison with six spurs that was built in Myanmar in 1887. Called Insein, this prison is in use to this day. Malta had a Pentonville type prison built in 1842 called Corradino just outside Valetta. It was designed by the Superintendent of Public Works, William Lamb Arrowsmith, with a little help from Joshua Jebb and is still working with a population of around 500. With an inmate capacity of 2,000, the strikingly bright red brick Alipore New Gaol in Kolkata was opened around the 1850's. The wings radiated out from a central watch tower. Being sited on valuable land, it shut down in February 2019, but part of it is preserved to this day as a prison museum.

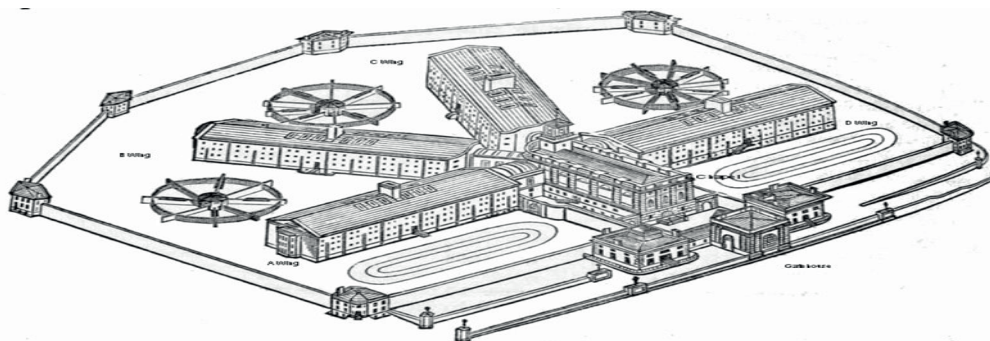
My final example is perhaps the most interesting. It's illustrative of the history of transportation to Van Diemen's land, becoming known as Tasmania in 1856. More than 70,000 convicts were transported to Tasmania between 1804 and 1853, compared to 162,000 to the whole of Australia in the same period. That is a phenomenal number of people to look after in one small corner of the Antipodes. The convicts were put to work for a living, grinding corn on the prison treadwheels, building roads, mining, farming and tree felling. Port Arthur had long been the location for convict labour involved in producing flour in the huge mill on the Tasman Peninsula. It was on this site that the famous Port Arthur convict gaol was built, over three years in the early 1850's, just as deportation was ending. This radial prison with its design based on Pentonville, was built with four landings on each of the six spurs. It took hardened criminal recidivists who had re-offended after earlier experiences of deportation. Transportation ended in 1853 and this resulted in a steady reduction in the gaol's population from the high of 1000 inmates in 1853 down to 700 by 1870. It was a question of the convicts becoming old men, which then made the place unsustainable, resulting in its closure in 1880. The buildings that weren't destroyed by salvage hunters, were further pillaged by bush fires, but remnants of the gutted, old cell blocks did survive and have become a tourist attraction today. An interesting little story relates to this Port Arthur Penal Colony, that is sited at the tip of the narrow Tasman peninsular. It was regarded as virtually escape proof, with high jagged cliffs and three sides protected by the allegedly shark infested waters. Norfolk Bay on one side, Fredrick Henry Bay on another and Storm Bay on the other. At the narrow 30-metre-wide sandy neck of the isthmus called Eaglehawk Neck, there was what was called the "dog line". The authorities tethered a line of nine vicious dogs on long chains across the narrow strip. Over the loud noise of the sea, the dogs barking not only alerted the guards to the approach of any escaping convict, but they were also a fearful deterrent to the would-be escaper.

Before looking at more recent radial prison closures, a few examples from the past are worth mentioning. Oxford prison was, at one time, quite famous, with a subsequent radial design addition by George Money Penny in the early 1800's. It shut down in 1996, remaining empty for 20 years before being turned into a Malmaison hotel. Poor living conditions for the inmates with three to a cell, slopping out and one shower and change of clothes a week, made it a miserable place before closure. Although not wholly a classic radial prison, it did experience Victorian alterations between 1845 and 1877. Lancaster Castle prison had been a gaol for centuries but changed its use in 1916 to holding German prisoners of war. It re-opened as a full prison in 1955 but it too eventually closed for good in 2011.

A slew of closures of some older Victorian/radial prisons took place in 2013 as Michael Gove selected seven prisons to cease trading, calling them, "...old and uneconomic". Bullwood Hall (not a radial), Camp Hill (not a radial), Canterbury (not strictly speaking a radial), Gloucester, Kingston, the ancient Shepton Mallet and Shrewsbury, all closed their doors for the final time as part of Mr Gove's decision. Dorchester, Reading and Blundeston (not a radial), happened to close as well in 2013 with Northallerton following suit in 2017. Some of them have become tourist attractions including ghost tours. Others have turned into housing developments. One is an Arts Centre and one has become student accommodation. From the list above, Northallerton seems to be the only prison to have had all its accommodation blocks completely demolished, making way for a Lidl store.

Another fascinating story involves the Victorian prison of Holloway with the once striking and architecturally impressive Gate complex, now gone. It was a classic radial, built in 1852 on Parkhurst Road for male offenders but changed to being a women's prison in 1903. It developed a very progressive regime under an inspiring and progressive Governor called Joanna Kelley. Important to her ethos was a demolition of the original radial structure that she felt was unsuitable to a non-violent group of female prisoners. Over a ten-year period that started in 1967, the prison was transformed into a more sympathetic set of buildings that softened some of the hard lines. Despite all this, the prison closed in 2016 and is still empty.

Pentonville is another interesting case in its own right. It has always been regarded as the template on which most of the Victorian gaols in England and abroad were based. After some condemnatory reports from various sources, Pentonville was scheduled to close in 2015. Squalid conditions, understaffing, overcrowding, vermin and a notorious escape were all factors outside the control of the staff. Quite simply, the old fabric of the buildings and alleged funding starvation over years, turned a once pioneering prison into a liability. All these things almost condemned the prison beyond reprieve, but it was thrown one last lifeline and a refurbishment programme was arranged following considerable protest from those who thought the prison should be preserved. All the windows were renewed along with other security measures and the prison survives to this day. It is argued that its proposed closure rested as much on the saleable value of the land on which it stood, as it did on all its problems. Many well-known prisons like Pentonville, with the exception of Dartmoor, were originally sited on the edge of the cities to which they belonged. As populations spread, these prisons found themselves in prominent positions as very valuable plots of real estate. Land values as well as crumbling structures, put great pressure on these infamous prisons to be replaced.



*Original Design of Pentonville Prison by Joshua Jebb in 1840.*

Not having had a mention so far are 18 mid-sized Victorian prisons that are still part of the Prison Service estate today. I won't name them all, but they include recognisable names like Bristol, Maidstone, Leicester, Nottingham, Lincoln and Exeter (designed by George Money Penny). They all have their own interesting stories, but just as a little aside, Leicester's interest lies in its exceptionally high walls that are the highest in England, reaching a height of 30 feet. The Welford Road prison was designed by county surveyor William Parsons in 1825 and cost £20,000.

To conclude, reference has to be made to the major, large radials, chiefly sited in our large cities. Included in this list are Birmingham, Leeds, Durham, Strangeways, Liverpool, Brixton, Wandsworth, Wakefield and Hull, with Dartmoor and Parkhurst as outliers. Not on this list is Wormwood Scrubs on Du Cane Road, that is not actually a radial. With its distinctive entrance, its progressive design was fashioned by Major General Sir Edmund Frederick Du Cane, and mostly built by inmate labour. Eventually opened in 1875 with the inmate accommodation in four-sided blocks, it had an unusual layout. It got its name from the scrubland of felled trees and poor soil quality on which it was built. It was reportedly scheduled by Michael Gove for closure, but pressure on places resulted in a reprieve.

It seems not unreasonable to suggest that all the old, large prisons will probably close before the end of 2040, being regarded as defective, vulnerable to escape, weary, and no longer suitable. Replacing them will cost a huge amount of money and cause havoc to the rising inmate population during the transition. The desire by successive governments to get rid of them seems to be high but the practicalities are daunting. With future closures highly likely with most of these prisons, there may be enough old radials consigned to the museum circuit, so that once they have gone as places of incarceration, people will still be able to see for generations to come, what they were like.

## PETER ATKINSON



### FROM THE TREASURER

A belated Happy New Year to you all.

As the old year ends, and a new one begins, my workload as Treasurer increases substantially, although admittedly only on a temporary basis, as I begin the work to balance of the books and send them off for audit. However in 2023 my workload increased much earlier in the year when I received notification from our bank, BARCLAYS plc, that I was required to provide them with evidence that as an organisation we actually existed, that as an individual I existed, and that all the other officers of the association existed, and that we were all genuine law abiding citizens, living where we said we lived. It was pointed out in bold red letters that failure to provide this information would result in the RPGA account being restricted. The rationale for this request for information was based around the responsibility placed on banks by the UK Government, and The Bank of England, requiring banks to demonstrate that they were not allowing accounts to be used for money laundering purposes.

You may be aware, even if you take the most cursory of interest in the financial news, that in recent years several large banks around the world, including Barclays, HSBC in the UK, and a couple of the big Swiss banks have been heavily fined for knowingly allowing accounts in their banks to be used for money laundering. The amounts involved that were flowing through these accounts was in the billions of pounds, and the fines to the banks were also in the hundreds of millions of pounds. In addition Barclays was also heavily fined for allowing, and indeed being actively involved in, the fixing of foreign exchange rates, resulting in another multi-million pound fine.



So taking all this into account they were certainly going to put all their effort and corporate might into determining if the £5,500 annual income of the RPGA was indeed subscriptions from retired Prison Governors, looking to keep in touch via the odd email, and the publication of a twice yearly Newsletter, or if instead the RPGA is really a front organisation for an international cartel of drug smugglers, who were using the account to launder their ill gotten gains by turning cocaine contaminated twenty pound notes into clean money, to be invested into legitimate businesses. Of course it would need to be a pretty small scale international drug cartel that only turned over £5,500 a year, and seemed to be investing heavily in a guy called Harry Brett, whose main vice seemed to be that he likes to buy a lot of stamps. But regulations are regulations, and it seems that no one is exempt.

Therefore, I was required to provide Barclays with evidence that, 1.-The RPGA it is a bone-fide association, and that it exists for the purpose stated. I was also required to provide evidence of when the organisation came into being, and the controlling authority. 2. I was required to provide proof of who I was, and that I too was a bone-fide person. In addition I would be required to provide the same information for all the officials of the association, who were signatories to the account. The evidence required photo ID that also confirmed the holders home address, and this could be a certified copy of our passports, driving licences plus or a letter from a bank or local authority sent to the same address that appeared on the photo ID.

At this point I decided to use the bank's telephone helpline to help sort out some questions to which the guidance that had been given did not seem to make very clear. When I eventually got through to someone, and that is two and a half hours of my life I will not get back, the help that I got was limited. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it seems the bank has not latched on to the idea that if you employ someone to answer calls to a HELPLINE, it might just be useful if that person had the skills and knowledge to actually be able to offer some help. The call ended when I stumped the young man on the other end with the question, "as part of my evidence to you that I exist, and as proof of my address, can I use your own letter that you sent to me, in my name, and to my home address, to prove to you that I am indeed who I claim to be"? I never did get an answer to that one.

Now I am sure that many of you will think that only a fool would look to take a situation such as this, and deliberately add into the mix several additional complications. Well, never one to back off I decided that that was exactly what I would do. As you will be aware Ray London was unwell earlier in the year, and leading up to the AGM had indicated that he would stand down from the role of Secretary, and Jan Thompson had volunteered to take over the position of Secretary. Ray was a signatory to the Barclays account, so I needed to have his name removed, and at the same time I needed to have Jan's name and details added. Also, a new committee member, Kevin Billson, had joined us, and had volunteered to be included on the bank account, so that he could shadow my role, because, like all of us, I am not getting any younger, and it would be good to have someone else with full access to the banking. So as part of the process of providing the bank with the evidence they needed regarding anti-money laundering, I also looked to include details for Jan and Kevin, as well as for myself and Graham Smith,, and to have Ray taken off the records.

What I didn't realise then, but certainly do now, is that this would involve two very different parts of the banks organisational set-up, that whilst they may share a common telephone number, and for all I know, actually sit next to each other, they do not share information, and they certainly do not work on the basis of "that's okay, I can sort all of that out for you". So it transpired that in order to deal with the process of proving that the RPGA was not a front account for a County Lines drug gang, I needed to deal with the department titled "Know Your Customer" and to sort out the process of adding and subtracting individuals from the account I needed to deal with "The Mandate Change Team". The interesting thing is that the information required to prove that we, as individuals, were all bone-fide, was exactly the same information required to change the mandate and have Jan and Kevin added to the account.

Initially this process started in August 2023 when the bank first contacted me about the need to provide the corporate evidence required under law to prove we are a legitimate organisation. As you can imagine, all those involved on the committee live many miles apart, and nowadays we usually communicate via email, and meet on Zoom. So I had to ask everyone to send me an electronic copy of the required documents. However, before I could pass these on to the bank they needed to be independently certified by either a JP, a Doctor or a Certified Accountant. Not an easy thing if you are doing everything by email, so I hit on the idea of getting the Certified Accountant who audits the PGA accounts, and to who I also send the RPGA accounts, to act as the certifying authority. The one drawback was that he has never met, or indeed seen any of us before, so it was arranged that when the committee did actually get together, for the AGM in October 2023, we would set up a Zoom meeting with the accountant, introduce ourselves to him, and then I would email over to him all the documents that were needed for certification.

Once this was completed, and I had a signed letter of certification from the accountant verifying all the information and ID's, I sent these off to the "Know Your Customer Team" at Barclays and waited. After about 6 weeks I heard from the team that everything I had sent them had been accepted and that the account could now operate as normal. At the same time I had sent all the information required by the "Mandate Change Team" off to them and called their helpline to check that they had received everything, and to check what they needed from me with regard to removing Ray London's name from the account. The good news was that the process of removing Ray's name was a very simple one, and could be done over the phone, and indeed in less than a minute that was done. Sadly, it was not so straight forward with the adding of new names as they decided that the information for Jan was not sufficient and could I send it all through again, and freshly certified by both Jan and the accountant.

This all went off to them and I again spoke to them on the phone and confirmed that they had everything, and that it was all okay. I was assured that it was, and that it could take up to 14 days for the changes to be applied to the account. With that in mind I had intended to let the new year get started and to get the books up to date and sent off to the auditor before I tackled the next part, which was to have Jan and Kevin authorised for On-Line banking. This would allow them both to have the same level of access to the account as me, and in the event of me being incapacitated, or simply away on holiday, either of them could make payments and manage the account.

Imagine then my surprise, and I have to say, disappointment, to receive a call from the bank asking me if they could discuss a problem with the account. Now I am very wary of unexpected calls purporting to be from the bank, (see my Computer Corner article in this edition) so I told them to contact me online, via the account. This they did, and backed it up in early February with a letter. This was to inform me that my request to add Jan and Kevin to the account had not been actioned because as the authorising person they did not accept my signature as it differed substantially from the one they had on record from 2011, submitted to them when I took over as treasurer. Once again I called the Helpline. I explained to the young man what the situation was and explained that whilst the original signature that they held on record was from 2011, I did not feel that it had changed significantly, but as an alternative, as part of the process to prove our identity to the bank I had provided a sample signature less than six months previously. His response was that I had provided this to the "Know Your Customer Team" and he was speaking from the "Mandate Change Team". When I asked him if he could not simply contact them and obtain the information his response was to transfer me to them, and to add insult to injury I went back into a queue where I was told, "we are receiving a high volume of calls, you may have to wait some time before we can speak to you." I hung up.

So; I am now 7-months into the process of getting two new names added to the account, and I have yet to begin the process of getting them registered for On-Line Banking. A long slog, but hey, I am retired, what else am I going to do? You may ask why I persist with this and why not just change banks? The answer is that it is far from simple, and the reality is that the banks really don't want little accounts like the RPGA, accounts that are free to run and therefore do not make them any money, and they would

get rid of them if they could. I suspect very strongly that had I failed to provide all the correctly certified information required to the Barclays "Know Your Customer Team", they would have very quickly closed the account. The reality of that would be that if the account was closed, either by the bank, or by me, the income for the association would cease immediately, as every standing order for subscriptions would become void. As a member your standing order is only valid for payment to our specific Barclays account. Were we to change banks, then we would need to write to every single member and ask them to complete a new standing order mandate, and the chances are that not every member would do so. And so, no matter what they throw at us, we are sticking with Barclays for as long as we possibly can.

So I share this story with you, not as a gripe, or even to illicit sympathy from you for your hard working treasurer, but simply to demonstrate how things are changing, and how the days of being able to go into a branch of any bank and sort out a problem with your account are now long gone. There are however some interesting developments that I find do help to make the current situation a little better. As banks have closed branches, and pushed people into banking online they have at least put some thought into developing ways to make the process easier. As well as using my computer at home for banking I also now use the Barclays App on my phone. This is secure, as it is protected by both a PIN and my fingerprint, and it gives me the ability to check the account at any time, and literally from anywhere. One interesting development is that I can now use the phone app to pay cheques into the account. All I need to do is open the app and go to the "Make a Payment" section, which activates the camera function on the phone. I then simply take a photo of the cheque, and within hours the money is credited to the account.

As I mentioned earlier in my piece I have completed the balancing of the books for the 2023 financial year, and they are currently with the auditors. I will report the full audited figures to the AGM in October, and as always publish a full report in the Autumn newsletter. However the headlines for 2023 are that income from subscriptions in the year were down on the previous year by about £500 and our outgoings have also increased, specifically with increased costs for the production and distribution of the Newsletter. Therefore in 2023 we had a deficit of income over expenditure of around £850. However we retain a healthy cash balance in the account and I am happy to be able to report that the association remains financially viable, and liquid.

As part of the end of year process Harry and I compare figures for membership based on my record of those who have paid their subscriptions in the year, and his list of members. Unfortunately there is always a difference between the two sets of figures, but as we do this each year to difference does get less and less marked. The true figure for membership is always complicated by the fact that in any given year there are always the odd glitches with payments. For example, I have a couple of members who seem to be paying twice, at different rates, and I have the problem that the information that I receive from the bank does not always clearly identify the member from who the payment originated.

One of the mysteries that we have to deal with are where we receive a payment in one year, but not the next, and we have no idea what has happened to cause this. In the past when this has happened we have written to the last address we had for that person, to check what has happened. However, this can be embarrassing especially in cases where the member had died. With this in mind we are in the process of reconsidering if, in future we will actively check when subscription payments simply cease, or simply remove that person from the membership list. On the other hand, despite our best efforts, we are still receiving payments from people who we know are no longer members, and as treasurer I am unable to stop these. So, as always I ask you to check your standing order, and remember that if you resign from the association, please remember to cancel your payment.

Best Wishes to you all

**GRAHAM MUMBY-CROFT**

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT – MARCH 2024

Membership currently stands at 360, with 307 paying members and 53 non-paying associate members, who in the main are widows of ex-members. We have unfortunately had to remove 10 members who did not make a payment in 2023 and have been written or emailed to, and have either confirmed their resignation, or not responded at all. The full list is - Mr W E Cole, Alan Creighton, Rosie Crosby, Alan Hamilton, Rev John Morrison, Martin Nikolay, Trevor Peel, John Peters, Joanne Simms and Alan Williams. Of course, if anyone is in touch with them and can persuade them to re-join, we would be delighted to hear from them.

On the positive side, we can welcome new members – Mr D A Johnson, Mark Scott, Neil Tayles, and John Robinson. We are sorry to announce the deaths of Peter Quinn, William Thompson, Douglas Moon, Stuart Millikin and Rev James Anderson, our condolences and best wishes go out to their family and friends. We are also sorry to announce the deaths of several people, who although not members were sometimes well known to members. They are - Norman Halliday, Keith Lawson and Gary Pavey, again our condolences and best wishes go out to their family and friends. We have had several resignations, Steve Spratling, Arthur Wallace and Paddy O'Rourke. We have also had Newsletters returned as members have moved away, so if anyone knows of their whereabouts, then please let us know, they are Catherine Hayden, Mrs Powell and Mick Gosden.

### HARRY BRETT

### QUIZ ANSWERS

**01 Bats**

**02 Tasmania**

**03 Aardwolf**

**04 North and South America**

**05 A tail**

**06 A large Asian sheep**

**07 Komodo dragon**

**08 On its front legs**

**09 Red**

**10 Moose**

**11 A Hinny**

**12 Central Asia**

**13 A Snow Leopard**

**14 Ruminant**

**15 Flying Lemur**

**16 Orang-utan**

**17 Ostrich**

**18 Red Squirrel**

**19 Ants**

**20 Dormouse**