

The Retired Prison Governors Newsletter

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



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WELCOME TO LORD TIMPSON... BUT REMEMBER, 'IT'S THE HOPE THAT KILLS YOU'

Can any of you actually remember the names of the many Prisons Ministers over the past three decades? These are the ones I can remember; Ann Widdecombe, Baroness Scotland, Andrew Selous, Rory Stewart and Gerry Sutcliffe. No prizes for additional names, but if you can lengthen that list, then you were certainly paying attention at the back. Of those on my list, none of them made it to cabinet status. Well done to you if you can name one that did. Ann Widdecombe went on to Strictly Come Dancing and Reform UK, Baroness Scotland went on to become a rather controversial Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Rory Stewart had a rather optimistic tilt at the Tory leadership, and Gerry Sutcliffe, a most affable fellow, is largely remembered only by those who tried to keep up with him at the bar. Andrew Selous was my personal favourite. I chaired four conferences and have attended twenty-seven since my first in 1996, and I can say without hesitation that Mr Selous was the most courteous guest speaker ever to address Conference. He was a Chairman's dream; short speech and plenty of time for questions which were answered crisply.

So why should we welcome Lord Timpson to a role in which no-one seems to make an impact? To start with the family shoe firm employs ex-offenders who comprise around 10% of company employees: resettlement in action, not words. Lord Timpson understands that the upward trend of punitive sentencing over the last three decades has had little or no impact on the prevalence of crime and that recidivism amongst petty nuisance offenders is best tackled by actions in the community that give the offender an opportunity to change their lives; housing, employment and effective support and supervision. Drug treatment is most effective delivered in the community, and massively cheaper. De facto we have arrived at a situation whereby custodial sentences of less than 12 months are suspended, something forced on the government, but something they would be well advised to continue other than for civil matters such as Contempt of Court. Lord Timpson is right when he says we are addicted to punishment.

In the end a real change of direction will depend on Lord Timpson's boss, the new Justice Secretary, Shabana Mahmood. She has taken the emergency measures to reduce the population to safer levels, but remains committed to the provision of the 14,000 of the new places that the Tories failed to deliver, mainly caused by the sclerotic planning system, which Rachel Reeves has vowed to rectify. The real question is whether we should increase the size of the estate at all, and instead consider a lower population housed entirely in single cell accommodation with full access to safe and positive regimes. There is a real opportunity to end the 30 year race to the ultra-punitive bottom started by Michael Howard.

Will it happen? Like I said, 'It's the hope that kills you.'

PAUL LAXTON, EDITOR

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Newsletter quiz

- 1) Who wrote the bestselling novel “The Da Vinci Code”?
- 2) What was the currency of Italy prior to the Euro?
- 3) In which film did Elvis Presley play look alike relatives?
- 4) How many packs of cards are used in the game Canasta?
- 5) What is the name of Andy Capp’s wife?
- 6) What is the capital of Denmark?
- 7) In Roman numerals what does L represent?
- 8) From which plant does Linseed Oil come from?
- 9) Who was the only female singer to have 3 number ones in the 60’s?
- 10) Where would you find the National Library of Wales?
- 11) What nationality was poet W B Yeats?
- 12) Which 2 countries occupy the Iberian Peninsula?
- 13) Which month “comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb”?
- 14) In which stadium do the Scottish Rugby Union team play?
- 15) What colour is muscovado sugar?
- 16) What birds are associated with The Tower of London?
- 17) How many pints are there in 2 quarts?
- 18) Who was the author of the novel “Little Women”?
- 19) In which month does St. Andrews Day fall?
- 20) In which country did England win the 2003 Rugby Union World Cup?

GRAHAM SMITH

PETER QUINN - AN AFFECTIONATE TRIBUTE

Over 40 years, Peter was our colleague and friend, as he was for many people. He died in October 2023 and the family quite understandably chose to have a private funeral and cremation. It's highly likely that if there had been a public memorial service, then a great many of Peter's friends and colleagues would have attended by way of giving him a rousing send off. This short remembrance note about Peter is by way of capturing the character of this lovely, amusing, engaging man. He had a wide circle of friends, as well as being connected to many people who knew him professionally during and after his prison career.

You couldn't be acquainted with Peter for long, before he let you know about his academic period at Selwyn College Cambridge, of which he was rightly very proud. His criminological knowledge and his general academic erudition were very impressive. He loved all things legal. What would emerge quite quickly from any conversation with him, would be cricket, real ale, steam trains and folk singing, probably in that order. He loved his cricket and apart from being a proud member of Lancashire and the MCC, he became good friends with a Sri Lankan family who often invited him over to enjoy various test matches. His affection for real ale was indulged in his regular visits to the mass of pubs in York as well as an active running tally he maintained at his local pub the Golden Lion in his beloved Yorkshire village of Helperby.

Steam trains were a passion and our regular get-togethers over the years invariably involved a trip on a steam branch line with a real ale bar of course. His folk singing was another matter and he particularly loved unaccompanied Cornish ballads that seemed to last for ages involving ancient farming folk tilling the land. For the uninitiated, his talent seemed questionable until we witnessed the large number of the York folk singing community who arrived at a wake held for him one Saturday night in his local pub.

We were lucky to have been his guests at the Helperby beer festival just weeks before he died. He loved village life and the local community loved him. His death was fairly sudden in York hospital and many former prison people have lost a congenial and fun-loving friend. When next quaffing a beer (preferably real ale), or watching some cricket or hearing the strains of a folk ballad, cast a thought for a great ambassador of the Prison Service of which he was always proud.

THE LATE ADRIAN TURNER: A THANK YOU FROM HIS WIFE

I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who came to Adrian's funeral, sent me beautiful cards and flowers, donated to Treetops Hospice and e-mailed me with wonderful stories and memories. Each and every one of you made Adrian's wishes a reality for his final journey and made an incredibly sad time for me easier to bear. It has been wonderful to see the extent of love and respect for him.

He will stay in my heart forever and I hope you will all remember him and smile.

CATHY TURNER

Editor's Note: Adrian died still in harness after 36 years service. During his seven year tenure as in-charge Governor at Sudbury, he hosted a number of RPGA Committee meetings. We were grateful for his hospitality and looked forward to him joining our ranks. Sadly the grim reaper got there first. He was Vice-President of the PGA at the time of his death.

ERIC JACKSON R.I.P.

It is with great sadness that I need to inform you of the death of my father Eric Jackson.

Eric worked his way through the ranks with postings at Armley, Hollesley Bay, Grendon Underwood Springhill and Glen Parva. Whilst at Glen Parva he became Hospital Governor when the rank of Chief was assimilated into the Governor gradings. Then he moved onto to Midland Region Office before moving onto the Home Office. Eric represented HMPS at a conference in Tokyo chairing a number of meetings and speaking on the subject of AIDS. During his time at Hollesley Bay Dad was able to bring into service what I think was the first prison service ambulance. I have fond memories from childhood of him driving the ambulance with our Bassett Hound Angie riding alongside him.

Sorry to be the bearer of sad news.

Regards

Duncan Jackson

OVER THE WALL AND SOME OBSERVATIONS ON PRISON DESIGN

The opening paragraph of *Over the Wall* brought back painful memories. Brixton had to accept the role of taking Category A prisoners for which it was not designed and the mini wing from which the escape took place was designed and built as Escape Proof, I was assured!

However, more interesting to me was "Good riddance or sad loss?"

I took part in a BBC programme "Time Watch" and was the consultant on prison design. The design of Pentonville was unique in that it provided Integral sanitation for the first time. The idea failed because of material design weakness, especially with the piping of cast iron.

One evening I examined a pipe in an unauthorised search of the works rubbish and realised that, whilst the outside was smooth the inside had NOT been smoothed - so you can realise what I found. Of interest, is that the prison service intention of integral sanitation was BEFORE Buckingham Palace ! Queen Victoria it seems, preferred earth closets!

The Holloway design disaster is also interesting. When working at the Home Office I met the the architect socially, and he complained of design confusion. He had spent a morning with P4 and could make no sense of their proposals. So I invited him to supper and with John McCarthy tried to sort him out. But the end result is a disaster. There are no security provisions and the external wall is a crinkle crackle design!

Next the design of the main building is a monstrous O, with the centre becoming an intended market place of social interaction. However, within the O, one had no idea where one was! Staff and inmates circled round and round trying to find themselves.

One result of this was that Brixton was required to take female prisoners who qualified for category A status. These were fascinating but it would be indiscreet, even so long ago, to provide details.

MICHAEL SELBY

BORSTAL GOVERNORS PHOTOGRAPHED IN 1937

Can anybody help to identify these Borstal Governors from 1937?

4. is C. T. Cape - Lowdham Grange

26 is W. W. 'Bill' Llewellyn - North Sea Camp

contact jeremylodge@yahoo.co.uk



INSTINCTS AND EXPERIENCE OF 1930s BORSTAL DESIGN VALIDATED BY MODERN RESEARCH

Jeremy Lodge

In 1930, Lowdham Grange Borstal in Nottinghamshire was opened following a 10-day, 130 mile march of Officers and Lads from Feltham in Middlesex to live in tents, then huts on a hilltop site in Nottinghamshire whilst they built the Lowdham Grange Borstal Institution and adjacent Officers' houses.



Image. Marching through Lowdham village. May 1930. W. W. Llewellyn is front and centre. T. C. Cape to his right. Both are referred to later.

In January 1929, soon after the Treasury agreed to fund a new borstal institution a committee of Alexander Paterson, Colonel Rogers, Paterson Owens (Governor of Feltham) and Governor Llewellyn proposed:

A building on the lines of a large public school with 4 self-contained houses, each under a housemaster.

Houses laid out either side of an administrative block, with other buildings surrounding a large enclosed quadrangle/drill ground based on Sir Aston Webb's Christ Hospital School, Horsham.

No central dining hall – boys should live and associate within their house.

Subways connecting central kitchen to buildings (and for cabling and piping) on top of which would be a covered way for communication and to form a secure boundary for the quadrangle.

Building the borstal will be the main activity of the inmates in the early years, to provide training and reduce building cost by one-third.

Skeletal steel framed buildings, to create a template for the boys under training. Private contractor would erect the steel frames and construct the roof. The rest of the

'building work and installations would be undertaken by the lads under training supervision of local tradesmen.

Small self-contained dormitories, not the individual sleeping rooms of existing Borstal.

It should be noted that this was a bold experiment. Lowdham Grange was to be an open borstal where to quote its second Governor C.T Cape "there are locks on doors but I do not know where the keys are ..."

This was a risky venture so far as security was concerned. So, their initial proposal (4th point above) was that the buildings should be arranged so that should the experiment fail, then the establishment could be made secure.

Within a short space of time their proposals for the layout of the buildings changed as confidence in this experiment grew. However, the internal design of the houses and their outward looking layout did not. H1 to H4 in the diagram below are the Houses, the communal living areas of which all had wide ranging rural views, all faced south through Georgian style windows. All of the Houses were aligned along a ridgeline of the hilltop overlooking the valley of the Cocker Beck. And, being a two farm establishment, a Ha-ha (as found in many country houses) was built beneath the ridgeline to keep the animals out without interrupting the views or to suggest a security boundary (which it was not).



Trusting the Boys' *Sheffield Telegraph*. 1st May (1934). Deputy Governor Cape at Sheffield Rotary Club.

The contour lines can be seen to the bottom right, the main line of buildings sitting on the ridge line.

A is the administrative building above which stood a clock/water tower.

H1 – H4 are the houses, numbered in the order that they were built.

Between the houses is a covered walkway. To the left is the hospital.

R is the reception block with individual lockable cells, to facilitate the acclimatisation of new arrivals. This was to be of a traditional design with 6 cells on two external sides of an oblong building (total 24) and a central gallery that we still see in many larger prisons.

P is the secure penal block with six cells and a secure yard and workshop with stone breaking boxes.

The planned arrangement of the gymnasium (between **R** and **P**) the industrial training workshops, laundry, plant rooms etc include adjoining walls to make the site secure. ---

With a swift development of confidence in the 'open' regime the layout of the support buildings, but not the accommodation, was changed and retained until the Borstal regime was closed in 1982 and the buildings demolished in the 1990s.



Image. Final layout. 1980.

S = Sports Field. W = Woodland.

[National Archives PRI COM 9/55 Treasury T161 1180](#) annotated for this dissertation



Image. Uninterrupted view from the Administration building across the valley of the Cocker Beck. This view was shared by all dormitories and communal areas of all four houses.

Photographer unknown, 1930s.



Image. Looking back at the Administrative building with tower and the full view of a completed house.

Photographer unknown, 1947



Image. A completed house. Photographer unknown, 1930s.

One impact was noted by Lowdham Grange's first Governor W. W. Llewellyn in 1933, when he wrote;

'The buildings, erected by the boys under expert guidance, stand on high ground, amidst trees and green fields, with wide views of a beautiful district of Nottinghamshire. Many visitors, arriving with preconceived ideas of a Borstal Institution, believe that they have come to the wrong place. There is an absence of any form of external constraint. There is no surrounding wall; there are no window bars; no boy is locked in. The surroundings strike the note of trust. The restraints are internal.' ¹

By internal he meant psychological as he then discusses 'new spirit and traditions ... the aim is to build upon the sense of honour and loyalty inherent in every British boy'.

There are several key design decisions from the earliest 'Paterson-Rogers-Owens-Llewellyn' discussions which aided this regime including;

the houses were based on communities of 12 in a dormitory, 5 dormitories to a house to provide small, almost family sized groups.

from the first plan, the front of the houses, the dormitories and communal areas face south to maximise natural light and optimise views.

¹ *Ibid.* 'Llewellyn. Borstal Experiment,' pp.36-39.

The Paterson led team designed the physical and psychological regime based upon their practical experiences of life and living in various communities, not least of Army life in the Great War (Paterson was an Oxford University Sociology graduate who had lived for many years in the slums of Bermondsey and had served as a Sergeant on the Western Front, Llewellyn had been a Major in Mesopotamia). All, obviously had experience gleaned from their work in and with the Prison Service. ²

I was recently struck how closely modern academic research and proposals reflected and confirmed (if unacknowledged) the collective instincts of Paterson, Rogers, Owens and Llewellyn in 1929 when they were planning their practical and successful experiment that was Lowdham Grange Borstal.

Prison Design Today

There are many recent principles that are being proposed, debated and recommended as good design practice for today's prisons that were a feature of Lowdham Grange and the Gladstone Report. For example, Al-Hosany and Elkadi identified a number of contemporary design attitudes including. ³

MODERN THOUGHT

Division into sections for small groups of 12 persons

Different premises to give space for different activities

Healthy indoor environment including light and view.

A recent project 'Creative Prisons' asked prisoners to design their own prison; more air, light and clear views featured strongly.

Humane element placed at the centre of prison design. ⁴

Lowdham Grange 1930

Houses of 60 divided into dormitories of 12.

Separate Games and Dining Halls, Library and a 'Blues' Room. Dormitories upstairs in each House. Association and House Administrative areas downstairs.

Classrooms in the Administration Block, separate Kitchen, Gymnasium, Medical etc...

The main axis of each house was southerly with prodigious opening window space. Open and distant rural views. No visually constricting fences or walls. Functional changing rooms, bathrooms, sculleries etc... on the less windowed north side.

"All the doors have locks but I don't know where the keys are" is a psychological as well as a physical and cultural statement. ⁵

Jana Söderlund and Peter Newman considered the new concepts of biophilic design in enhancing mental health in prisons which includes: ⁶

²Report from the Departmental Committee on Prisons (Gladstone Committee Report). 1895.

³ Ibid 'Al-Hosany & Elkadi.' p.464.

⁴ Aitch. I, 'Guild your own Prison.' *New Statesman*, 5 February. (2007), pp.42-43.

⁵ Ibid 'Trusting the Boys. (1934)'

⁶ Söderlund. J, Newman. P, 'Improving mental health in prisons through design.' *The Prison Journal*. Vol 96 (2017). Biophilic = human innate need for nature.

MODERN THOUGHT

Lowdham Grange 1930 (See also previous page)

Light, fresh air, airflow, light, variety of views.

Soothing sounds of nature, variance in light, colours and nature scents.

Buildings took advantage of their natural surroundings including being placed on the crestline of a hill.

However, natural sounds (e.g. nocturnal animals and birds), countryside silence or farming scents proved not be soothing for some former city dwellers.

Dominique Moran, Yvonne Jewkes and Jennifer Turner stress that spaces affect the way that people act and like Wener they consider that the design process is 'the wedge that forces the system to think' through its processes and approach.⁷ Two key elements they highlight as good design practice are:

MODERN THOUGHT

Lowdham Grange 1930 (see also previous page)

Maximum exploitation of natural light and views of nature/exterior views through vista windows without bars.

Not vista windows but Georgian paned and opening.

Human scale, connected pavilions

Units of 12 x 5 in 4 houses. Covered walkway for inclement weather.

A recent newspaper report on a forthcoming open prison included in its description that it will be 'without bars to make it more "like home" for inmates in smaller more intimate wings for just 20 inmates rather than 60 in traditional jails ...which would make it conducive to rehabilitation'.⁸ Architect Simon Henley at the 4th International Space Syntax Symposium in 2003 proposed a 21st Century Model Prison where the architecture and the resultant building would be positive enablers.⁹ He spoke of a new model, developed in conjunction with the Prison Service, which included;

- maximum size 400 prisoners.

⁷ Dominique Moran, Yvonne Jewkes and Jennifer Turner (2015). Prison Design and Carceral Space. <https://lra.le.ac.uk/bitstream/2381/31694/6/Ch_MoranJewkesTurner%2024.7.14.pdf> [accessed 27 June 2019].

Wener. R.E, The Environmental Psychology of Prisons and Jails: Creating Humane Spaces in Secure Settings. (Cambridge: University Press. 2012).

⁸ Hymas. C, 'The first British jail where there are no bars on the windows will open in 2021' The Telegraph. 1 May (2019), Politics. <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/05/01/first-british-jail-no-bars-windows-will-open-2021/>> [accessed 29 June 2019].

⁹ <<http://www.spacesyntax.net/symposia/4th-international-space-syntax-symposium/>>

Henley. S, The 21st Century Prison.

<<http://www.spacesyntax.net/symposia-archive/SSS4/fullpapers/03Henleypaper.pdf>>. (2003). [accessed 29 June 2019].

- prisoner to live in semi-autonomous unit, a house, within which he is a member of an accountable group, living close to open space. He quotes the Home Office Design Briefing (1989) advocating groups of 50-70, although he stated that there is no evidence to ratify the efficacy of this figure.
- Some prisoners working in the community during the day and returning to their cells at night, which is essentially the approach of closed and pre-Lowdham borstals. [10](#)

Elwick *et al* when considering UK and International comparisons included eleven key aspects of good practice for improving the outcomes for young offenders. Although not acknowledged eight of these were part of the Lowdham regime including; [11](#)

- custodial staff involved in education (including life and social skills) which should be placed at the heart of an institution's focus
- interventions must be personalised and targeted
- institutions must be sufficiently small in size to properly cater for their residents, split into units e.g. 40 beds divided into units of 10
- re-integration into the community must be a focus with activities in the community as a key aspect of provision

A recent US Handbook of Correctional Institution Design and Construction noted the interdependence of philosophy and design stating;

'So long as a prison resembles an impregnable fortress, the administrators therefore cannot avoid acquiring to a certain extent, a "fortress psychology," and becoming primarily absorbed in the jailing function, to the neglect of the rehabilitative ideal' which aptly reminds us that the building acts upon staff as well as their charges.' [12](#)



Ordnance Survey - edited. The Administration building and the four houses are shaded. Note the close proximity of *Woodland to the left, next to which and behind the Institution buildings were the sports fields. The righthand side of the image shows the layout of the Officer's estate.* Where the author spent 12 years of his childhood sharing the same view, across the valley of the Cocker Beck, as the Borstal lads – see an above image

[10](#) A pattern used in the 'closed' borstal system where lads were in secure conditions overnight and open borstals where they were brought back to the institution but not under lock and key.

[11](#) Elwick. A, Davis. M, Crehan. L, Clay. B. (2013) *Improving outcomes for young offenders: an international perspective.* CfBT Education Trust. pp.3,24.

[12](#) Flynn, F [review] 'Handbook of Correctional Institution design and Construction.' (US Bureau of Prisons). *Social Service Review*, Vol 24. No. 4. (1950).

We can see in the final layout (previous page) that the constituent parts remained true to their initial design principles. The initial proposed layout reflected security (potential failure of the open concept) fears thus conformed to existing practice, then with experience the layout unfurled taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the site, experience and increasing confidence.

Even historian Dennis Mills unwittingly contributes to the discussion when he highlighted the concept of community, stressing the 'importance of smallness of scale'. His proposition was that communities are face-to-face groups, residing in close proximity to each other, thus have a mutual comprehensive knowledge. [13](#)

Certainly, until the late 1960s the two communities staff and their families and the lads lived in close proximity with the lads working around both the officers' and institution estates. There were also, regular scheduled family visits for social evenings in the House that their father was assigned to. And, it was common to see children being carried aloft or in work barrows pulled by the borstal lads. There were also sports days, concerts and other communal events children roaming freely (but always allowed by the farm manager) around the woodland and fields also accompanying borstal sports teams to outside fixtures etc... For both staff and those in their care, before the common ownership of the motor car, Lowdham Grange was considered a posting of inconvenience. [14](#)

The buildings and cultural regime were aligned the resultant culture depended on the qualities of the staff, the response of the boys also, the acceptance, support and involvement of the local community; which highlights that good architecture providing impressive accommodation and environment is important but not enough. [15](#)



FOOTNOTE

Jeremy is currently compiling a companion to his 2016 book 'Lowdham Grange. Borstal!' (which is available from www.nottinghambooks.co.uk). He is also compiling a broader based book on the history of Borstals. If you have any contacts, stories, photographs or information (no matter how small) that would help with either of the above Jeremy can be contacted via the editor or at jeremylodge@yahoo.co.uk

[13](#) *Ibid.* 'Mills 'Defining Community.'

[14](#) *Ibid.* 'Iremonger. Disturbers.' pp.84,87.

[15](#) *Ibid.* 'Design and Punishment.' The Economist.

GIVE US THE TOOLS AND WE CAN DO THE WORK - John Ramwell

Watching Channel 4 News this evening has brought about this paper which is about the comments made by Andrea Albutt, the president of the Prison Governors Association, who is angry. The former army nurse, who joined the prison service as a young hospital officer in 1990, announced last week that despair was “running through the veins” of her organisation. With the highest rates of self-harm, suicide, drug use and violence ever seen and the recent scathing prison inspection reports on HMPs Liverpool, Strangeways, Bedford and Nottingham, the prison system has arguably reached the lowest point in its history.

The collapse of Carillion, the construction company responsible for prison maintenance contracts, has only added to its woes. “It’s a big deal,” says Albutt. “Governors have had to run prisons with not-fit-for-purpose contracts which failed to deliver the promised service. These contracts have failed in their entirety, leaving accommodation and maintenance in a far worse state than when governors owned their own works departments.”

I’m a retired Prison Governor who started my career at Grendon Psychiatric Prison as a farm hand way back in 1960. I was lucky. Lucky because I worked for a Service that was proud of what it did and how it did it. It’s all about LUCK. Or is it? No, it isn’t. It is just about anything, everything and nothing in particular but a range of issues. Let me enumerate them.:

1. Resources.
2. Resources
3. Resources
4. The recruitment of good staff.
5. Leadership of these staff by sound managers.
6. Which will lead to a pride that encourages good staff to apply.
7. Pride that comes with having a job that attracts respect.

I can give you the recipe for success but it does not need me or anyone else to describe what should make up this recipe as it’s common sense. I will tell you of the opportunities I had and how they contrast with today.

1. Less than 50% of those who applied to become a Prison Officer made it. It took 15 months before you were confirmed as having made the grade. A pal who joined at Oxford Prison with me was told he was unsuitable and had to leave having spent six months on the job. I felt this to be so unfair, but one word from me and I knew I’d be following him down the road.
2. We had achieved a job that was resourced. Well paid with a good pension, a job that brought with it a pride and respect. Respect for each other and for the people we cared for.
3. I made a life beyond the Service and met with a range of people from all walks of life who were keen to know what it was like to work in a prison or a Borstal once they discovered where I worked. I was always pleased (proud) to tell them that it was like working in the Nick that featured in ‘Porridge’ where sense of humour mixed with a strong sense of reality, of loyalty and a caring attitude both towards colleagues and inmates.

4. Of course the reality was somewhat different in that we had to deal with a vast range of individuals who had huge problems as well as the occasional colleague who'd somehow got through the selection process by mistake.

How these four criteria compare with today

- 1.) Recruitment and retention of staff is a major factor.
2. Pay and conditions are poor.
3. Corruption amongst some staff means drugs and contraband are smuggled in on a regular basis.
4. There is an emphasis on surviving a prison sentence. Rehabilitation has not taken a back seat. There are no seats left at the back if there are they're struggling
5. Society has changed; not that it has necessarily changed from good to bad. None the less, it's changed.
6. Drugs have infiltrated the landings, ably assisted by the prevalent gang culture, which, we're informed has spilt out into the community and the families of prisoners as they are searched out and made to pay for drugs supposedly consumed within the prison.

So the facts are basically irrefutable . We are short of cash, funding or resources. The reasons are many; some of which I've touched on here: some such as Covid and Brexit and the war in Ukraine and the Middle East are obvious enough: others less so. There is money slushing around elsewhere in our society. Many are wealthy enough to give to their favourite charities, (including £5million to buy a peerage) but there are many families as well as individuals who are, through absolutely no fault of their own, struggling to pay mortgages, rents, energy bills, weekly shop, the list goes on. Many are concerned about their future. Will they have a roof over their heads, will they be able to simply manage financially when it's their turn to retire?

Homelessness is a particularly serious issue from which there is rarely any escape from. I often wonder whether the social attitudes have changed for the better. I'm suggesting they clearly have but there good reasons as well as some not so good why they have changed radically or far enough. It's time to consider the reason why so many reoffend post prison. Again the reason is a lack of resources. It's been this way for ever. When I retired 27 yrs ago (yes, this is the case) I volunteered to assist with helping young offenders settle back into society. My wife and used to feel obliged to help out by buying some basics for them just to help them get by. On one occasion the conditions for an early release meant that one young man was not allowed to reside in his home town nor to associate with his old friends. Truly a disaster and we watched him fail as he felt he'd no alternative but to return to prison.

We seem to have gone from riches to rags. I remember being hauled over the coals for not spending my grants for medical expenses as the financial year was drawing to its close. It was made clear that I cannot have been doing my job as well as I should have if I had not spent the grants allocated. In fact it was expected that I should be requesting additional supplementary funding in September.

Then there is our NHS, including dental services which has collapsed for the same reason as the Prison service has, because they're simply under resourced. I could rattle on but I'll cease now as I understand that I'm preaching to the converted at least, and at best, not telling you what is not obvious. The best we can hope for in 2025 is that Donald Trump can come up with some alternatives!! But do not hold your breath.



OVER THE WALL (PART 3) - PETER ATKINSON

Although separated by four months and carried out in different prisons, the next two escapes were linked. We'll come back to that linkage later. This was an extremely serious incident given the fact that two guns were used and the escapers were particularly dangerous. It was around 8 o'clock on a Sunday evening in early **September 1994**. Ten prisoners were accommodated in the **Whitemoor** special unit with seven officers on duty. Here we are again with regular staff manning a small unit that looked after some of the most troublesome inmates. Despite the darkness, six of the inmates were allowed to wander casually into the small exercise compound by pre-arrangement. They picked up a wide range of tools and equipment that were passed through the cell windows that would help them breach two fences and surmount the two walls. A lot of preparation had gone into the escape and the ensuing Enquiry report pointed to staff having been conditioned over many months that allowed the inmates far too much latitude. A hole was cut in the first fence with some bolt croppers and then ropes, poles and clamps were used to get through one more fence and over the walls. Halfway through the escape, the men were seen on CCTV and the alarm raised.

One can imagine the horror of the camera operator seeing six escaping inmates manoeuvring themselves over the walls. Staff made brave effort to try and stop them, conscious that the escapers had more than one gun. One officer who pulled on a climbing rope to try and dislodge an escaper got shot in the leg from another prisoner hanging off the top of the wall. As more shots were fired, the six men eventually made it over the final wall, although one fell heavily as a supporting guy rope was cut by staff.

The escape benefitted from some careful planning, and the mid-evening timing was designed to catch the special unit staff off guard as they anticipated the end of their shift. What the planning had not taken into account was the fact that a good number of night staff were outside the prison waiting to come on duty. As the alarm was sounded, this group of staff were able to run round the outside wall and closely follow the fleeing inmates into the dark Cambridgeshire countryside. Quickly supported by Police and a helicopter with a thermal imaging camera, all the inmates were caught within two hours. When apprehended, the prisoners had £474 in cash, but more worryingly, they had left behind a pound of Semtex explosives hidden in the bottom of a recreational paint box.

What made this escape so dangerous was that five of the men involved were active IRA members. **Patrick Joseph Magee**, born in 1948 was convicted in 1986 and given eight life sentences, having been held responsible for planting the bomb at the Grand Hotel in Brighton, killing five people at the Conservative Party conference. **Peter Sherry** born in 1955, was convicted in 1986 for being in possession of explosives and planning a bombing campaign across England. He received a life sentence. **Gilbert (Danny) MacNamee**, aged 33 at the time of the escape, was reputed to be a highly skilled bomb maker and was implicated in the 1983 Hyde Park bombing. He received a 25-year sentence for conspiracy to cause explosions. **Liam O'Dwyer**, 32 at the time of the escape, was serving his sentence for having been caught in possession of a large cache of arms and explosives hidden in the Welsh countryside. **Liam McCotter** born in 1963 was serving 17 years for plotting an extensive bombing campaign in England. Last but not least was the helicopter hi-jacker from the 1987 Gartree escape, **Andrew Russell**. For his involvement in that escape, he was serving 10 years. It was thought that he may have tagged onto the IRA escape party because he was more than willing to use firearms.

Sir John Woodcock, as a former Chief Constable of Police, was charged with leading the Enquiry. He was very critical of Whitemoor staff at various levels. The Governor was Brodie Clarke but he had only worked for a total of 30 days in command, so had not been there long. It was acknowledged that he had started work on rectifying some of the imbalance between extensive inmate privileges and staff's general laxity. This takes us to the core of what Sir John identified as at the heart of the problem; conditioning.

By way of trying to get the charge of conditioning into some kind of perspective, It is worth appreciating that the prisoners in this escape were an experienced and cohesive group of republican bombers. Some could be charming, persuasive and undoubtedly were intelligent. Based on their activities over the years however, they were clearly deceitful, cunning, devious, ruthless and hostile to British society. In addition, they were completely inured to loss of life. There could not be a starker contrast between those features and the general temperament of prison staff, who in the main were decent, law abiding, stable, family people with a desire to get on positively with their charges, given that they lived cheek by jowl with them for years on end. Looking at comparable Services, our military have an enemy on whom they can focus without ever having to think they might be reasonable people. The police mostly have a bunch of criminals to take on without any need to regard them as worthy pillars of society. Prison staff are clearly in a very different position altogether in relation to those in their long-term care.

The Report pointed to some serious conditioning going on in the special unit but there were factors at work where prison staff may well have been forgivably gullible at the hands of some very manipulative, experienced and accomplished inmates. Responding firmly to people with considerable skill at appearing wholly benign, is often easier said than done. Everybody will remember the case across large swathes of the NHS, large sections of the sporting world, many charitable bodies and media outlets, who all regarded Jimmy Savile to be a decent charity man. Many people in the film world, who gave him much regard, had no idea that Harvey Weinstein was such a prolific predator. That's conditioning. Who would have thought at the time, behind the affable façade, that Jimmy Savile was such an evil person? Which prison officer at the time would have thought that the sociable Patrick Magee, once described as, "...a formidable assassin...", and "...cunning..." was actually a man of huge manipulation? He was given a minimum term of 35 years but only served 14 on account of being released in 1999 under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement.

The escape caused a huge outcry both within the criminal justice system, the popular press and the government hierarchy. As a relatively new and clearly inexperienced Director General of the Prison Service chosen from outside its ranks, Derek Lewis came under immense pressure. The report suggested that there was much to commend his general ability as head of a large government organisation. His lack of experience in a government agency however contrasted with the relatively newly appointed Home Secretary, but vastly skilled politician, Michael Howard. Pitching Mr Lewis against Michael Howard never seemed to be a fair competition. The Home Secretary was highly critical of what had happened at Whitemoor and he made his feelings well known. An already significant fracture between the two men was to get a whole lot worse, less than six months later on account of another serious prison escape.

With a much higher public profile, **Parkhurst prison** on the Isle of Wight, built in 1888, experienced a very damaging escape in early **January 1995**. Three prisoners got out of the jail undetected late one Tuesday evening. The three men had managed to remain behind in the sports hall having quietly detached themselves from the original group of ten inmates who were returning to their wing at around eight o'clock at the end of a sports session. A lot of preparation had gone into this escape in that a pass key had been made in the Metal Fabrication shop along with a lengthy steel ladder, wire cutters, a rope, a gun,

£200 and blank ammunition. When the staff had left with their reduced group of inmates, the three men let themselves out of the sports hall with the manufactured key and unlocked a workshop close by where one of them had worked undetected in making the steel ladder, the key and the imitation gun. After gathering their equipment, they left the workshop and locked the door behind them. They cut a hole in the mesh fence and then, completely undetected, scaled the wall and away. It took three hours before a patrolling dog handler noticed a hole in the fence and raised the alarm.

Once over the wall, they walked to the nearby Island capital Newport about two miles away, where they boarded a taxi that took them to Sandown. They knew there was an airfield close to Sandown with the prospect that they could steal an aircraft given that one of them was a trained pilot. All they found was a 2-seater Cessna 105, which of course presented a problem given that there were three potential passengers not two. They tried to start the engine by poking a piece of wire into the ignition slot. The wire broke, getting wedged in the key slot and that was that. They wandered towards the coast to try and steal a boat but were unsuccessful. After four days on the run cold and hungry, they were seen by an off-duty prison officer walking on a road not far from the prison. Police were called and two of the inmates gave themselves up suffering from exhaustion. The third younger prisoner made a run for it and was caught an hour later in the water trying to swim across the river Medina near Newport that would have brought him nearer the spot from where he had escaped four days earlier.

Anybody suffering from the delusion that these were swashbuckling heroes who had carried out an audacious and daring break for freedom, need to take account of who these men were. **Keith Rose**, born in 1939, was the trained pilot of the group. In 1991 he was given a life sentence for a murder he had committed ten years previously, of the wife of a supermarket manager who he was trying to kidnap. The lady had been shot in the head six times. He was classified Category A and continuously denied the murder despite all the evidence to the contrary. **Andrew Rodger** aged 46 at the time of the escape, was from Scotland. He was serving life for having bludgeoned a swimming pool attendant to death in 1987. He had been diagnosed with significant mental health problems. **Matthew Williams** who was the youngest of the three aged 31, was given five life sentences in 1989 for bombing, arson and administering a poison. He had placed a quantity of explosives under a bench in Liverpool city centre and in his possession was some stolen cyanide, enough to kill 300 people. He was reported to have had previous mental health problems. After his release from Parc prison in 2014, he was cornered having just carried out a particularly gruesome and sensational murder of a young woman. Resisting arrest and covered in the victim's blood, he was tasered three times as a means of trying to subdue him and died at the scene. He was regarded as a highly dangerous man and had repeatedly suffered from schizophrenia. These were not nice people and there was nothing romantic or heroic about the Parkhurst escape.

Two escapes so close together from prisons holding Category A prisoners were seen as highly damaging for "law and order". General Sir John Larmont was called in to carry out the Enquiry, helped along by the author of the Whitemoor escape report Sir John Woodcock. Long before the report was published, the metaphorical nasty stuff hit the fan. An escape from Whitemoor prison that most people had not heard of, did not have the same resonance as Parkhurst. The notorious Island jail caught the public and political imagination and questions were asked in both Houses of Parliament whilst newspapers had a field day. The Director General, Derek Lewis was in the spotlight again and some Ministers were asking for his resignation. The prison was severely criticised and it was suggested at the time by some political commentators that the Home Secretary ordered the suspension of the Governor John Marriott, so that Michael Howard could appear tough and, "...save his own political skin..."

He famously denied any pressure he might have put on Derek Lewis to dismiss John Marriott in a legendary BBC Newsnight interview with Jeremy Paxman. When the question of Mr Howard's possible operational interference was put to him 14 times, he inexplicably would not answer. A more thoughtful examination of the issues arrived at the conclusion that the systems within the Prison Service rather than any one operational manager was at fault, but this did not stop Mr Marriott losing his job, despite having successfully governed Parkhurst, with all its security shortcomings, for the previous five years. When the Learmont report was published, following on the heels of the Whitemoor Woodcock report, Michael Howard insisted that the Director General himself had to go and Derek Lewis duly lost his job. The Learmont report interestingly emphasised that no disciplinary charges ought to be levelled at any Parkhurst staff, which of course raised the question of why Governor Marriott had paid such a high price himself by being removed from his post and transferred to H/Q.

Two interesting little side issues emerged from Sir John's report. There was the strange suggestion that all Governors should wear uniforms. More importantly, there was the question of whether some kind of 'Supermax' prison should be built to house all the dangerous and difficult prisoners under one roof. Each of these proposals are in place in the American system where the Wardens (Governor equivalent) are in uniform, and one large federal supermax prison exists in Colorado with several other smaller ones run by a few States. Both suggestions were met with some misgiving in the UK and to many people's relief, neither proposal went any further.

* * *

I'd left the service by the time of the next escape, so don't really recall it. Possibly it might not quite belong with those of a more 'notorious' reputation, but having said that, **John Massey's** escape from **Pentonville in 2012** had three features that gave it some prominence. When 26 years old, Mr Massey from Kentish town, shot dead a pub doorman, Charlie Higgins with a sawn-off shot gun at the Cricketers Arms in Clapton in 1975, he received a 20-year sentence at the Old Bailey the following year. He went on to become one of the longest serving prisoners in the country in that he was 'inside' for close on 43 years. That is the first sliver of notoriety. The next is the fact that he had managed to slip away from formal custody, four times, although two of those were from an open prison and one was from an escort. The third feature was that at the age of 64, he escaped from Pentonville by hiding in the gym after the rest of his group had been returned to their wing at around 18.30 hours one Wednesday evening in June. In what would have been broad daylight, he was then reputed to have climbed over the high Pentonville outer wall. It was never clear whether he used some discarded netting from the sports hall or knotted sheets. Many people regarded such a feat as highly implausible for a man one year short of his old age pension. An interesting suggestion, but never proved, was that he had some significant inside or outside help of some sort. If he had managed to sling a rope or knotted sheets over the wall, how was it anchored if nobody was on the other side to secure it? He was eventually released from Warren Hill Category C prison in Suffolk in 2018 and went, still on parole, to a hostel placement in London.

We stay at **Pentonville** for the next escape involving the 28-year-old **Matthew Baker** and the 31-year-old **James Anthony Whitlock** on the 6 November **2016**. Both prisoners from East London, were on remand awaiting sentencing, sharing a cell on G wing. Mr Baker had been found guilty of attempted murder whilst Mr Whitlock had been charged with 19 counts of stealing from ATM machines. Both inmates had pre-convictions and Mr Baker was described as the more dangerous of the two. A previous offence involved assaulting a policeman. His current crime was that he nearly killed a man by attacking him with a knife inflicting 26 stab wounds.

During the early part of Sunday evening, the men had put dummies in their beds to make it look like they were asleep. With a diamond tipped saw, they cut through one of the window bars which allowed them to squeeze through the narrow gap. Where the diamond tipped cutter came from was never discovered. With some knotted sheets, they dropped from their window onto a roof. Slingshotting the makeshift rope onto a tall CCTV camera pole, this allowed them to swing over to the top of the outer wall at the front of the jail. If this had actually happened, the suggestion was that both men would have been accomplished trapeze artists. There was the suspicion that the men had some help during the escape from a colleague on the outside. With the help of a mobile phone, contact may have been made to the accomplice who might have managed to get a rope over the wall where the escapers were standing. It's feasible that Mr Baker and Mr Whitlock wanted to keep quiet about an accomplice to avoid any police investigation into one of their friends on the outside.

Because the men were not needed for work the next day following their escape, their absence was not discovered until halfway through Monday. The staff had obviously looked into the cell and concluded that they were asleep in bed. After two days on the loose, Mr Baker was found under the bed of his sister's house, 10 miles from the prison in Ilford. He had dyed his ginger hair black as an attempt at disguise. Mr Whitlock was found in Hackney six days after the escape. At the ensuing Court hearing, Mr Baker received life with a 10-year recommendation, and an extra 30 months for his escape. Mr Whitlock received a 54-month sentence with 24 months added due to the escape.

All the facts and details described above are freely available on the internet or accessible in published literature, so I can safely confirm that I haven't breached my signing of the Official Secrets Act. The range of names are available on the world wide web and mention of individuals has merely been drawn from records that are available to anyone. Some names and dates and accounts do differ from one article to another, but by cross checking I have tried to arrive at an account that is likely to be the truth. It was a matter of weaving together all the strands of information into a coherent narrative. Writing an article like this inevitably results in some mistakes and/or the omission of important detail, and for that I apologise unreservedly. I regret also, if I have raised a few unpleasant memories for some of the staff concerned. I would argue however that it is important for the prison staff's point of view of these escapes, to be accurately recorded.

THE NEXT AGM OF THE RETIRED PRISON GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION WILL BE HELD ON: THURSDAY 07 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 13.30 HOURS.

THE AGM WILL BE CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS. Below are the details of the meeting that anyone who wishes to join will need. Instructions for use are:

Click on the link (this starts with https:) or Cut/Copy and Paste the Link into your browser and when prompted to do so enter the Meeting ID and Passcode.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7105430365?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7105430365?pwd=cUxZUWd1Y1E4RkV1YmYrRVVocz09&omn=85287048173)

[pwd=cUxZUWd1Y1E4RkV1YmYrRVVocz09&omn=85287048173](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7105430365?pwd=cUxZUWd1Y1E4RkV1YmYrRVVocz09&omn=85287048173)

Meeting ID: 710 543 0365

Passcode: 0mphV2

ANY MEMBER WISHING TO PUT A RESOLUTION BEFORE THE AGM SHOULD E-MAIL IT TO JAN THOMPSON AT: janthompson370@gmail.com by 24 OCTOBER 2024 to enable the agenda to be Emailed out in good time. PLEASE ENSURE YOU GET A SECONDER.



FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the autumn edition of the RPGA newsletter edited as ever by Paul Laxton and thank you for the contributions from members to this edition. Items are always welcome from members especially with photos covering past memories, “trip” recommendations, hobbies and anything else that may be of interest. I have written a review of a visit with my wife to HMP Shrewsbury now a museum and film set, I do spoil that woman, but no expense was spared.

The RPGA AGM is late this year [7th November] as I was not available for the PGA conference date so it is a ZOOM meeting details of which are on the previous page. It would be appreciated if some members could respond and you can do so from the comfort of your arm chair so help us out if you can.

It is breezy on the Pennines today and we are due the tail end of a hurricane this week so that’s something to look forward to. Going to Morecambe this week taking my wife for our 8th wedding anniversary, there I go spoiling her yet again.

On the news today “nowhere to place rioting offenders”, nothing changes and the POA have been high profile nothing from the PGA so far. Not fun for staff.

My usual plea to you all for new committee members and if you would like to join us 07788430702. graham.smith646@hotmail.co.uk you would be most welcome.

My grateful thanks to the current RPGA committee for their work this year.

Have fun, keep safe and enjoy your retirement.

Graham Smith JP

RPGA Chairman

James (Jim) Blakey, Prison Governor and Area Manager Born 02.04.1938 Died 10.05.2024

From the end of the Second World War, the Prison Service in England and Wales faced exceptional challenges and pressures. The prison population rose from some 15,000 in 1945 to around 50,000 in thirty years causing serious overcrowding of cells and deplorable conditions for both prisoners and staff.

During the 1960s, high profile escapes, especially that of the spy George Blake from Wormwood Scrubs Prison, forced the Government to set up an inquiry – the resulting highly critical Mountbatten Report recommended fundamental changes to the Service.

From 1969, destructive riots by prisoners and industrial action by the Prison Officers Association added to the misery within prisons.

This was the very difficult background against which Jim Blakey set out to forge a significant career in the Service. From being selected as a very young officer in 1959, he rose through the ranks to become a Governor and then to Area Manager responsible for supervising a group of challenging establishments. He served with young offenders for his first 12 years and then worked with both adults and young offenders for the rest of his Service.

Jim was a hardworking, reliable Governor and was much respected by colleagues. He radiated common sense and had an ability to help staff reach workable conclusions by injecting a dose of reality into discussions. He was sympathetic towards prisoners and staff but also expected good standards of behaviour and positive responses – especially when improved opportunities were provided. Committed to treating people with fairness, he was above all a man of integrity. He had a deep commitment to the Service, although one that did not blind him to the many flaws and weaknesses he had to confront. A firm believer in the importance of representative organisations, he was a strong supporter - and a Committee Member - of the Prison Governors representative organisations – including the one for Retired Governors. It was especially fitting that he was appointed a Distinguished Life Member of the Prison Governors Association when he retired in 1998.

Jim Blakey was born in 1938 in Seaham, County Durham to James and Mary Blakey. He was the second of three brothers; the oldest John survives him. His early years were impacted by the six years of the Second World War. Educated at Ryhope Grammar School, he went on to serve with the RAF for his two years National Service.

Unsuccessful attempts to join the police service – there were no vacancies at the time he applied - led him to consider joining the Prison Service as soon as he met the entry age requirement of 21 for prison officers. He was ambitious: while being assessed for the Service at Durham Prison, he told the interviewing Governor that he hoped to occupy the Governor's Chair one day! He was accepted and joined the Service on 13th May 1959. Initial training took place at the Prison Officers Training School at Wakefield. From there he was posted to the open Borstal at Hatfield, near Doncaster.

Perhaps the most important part of Jim's life began when, walking to Secondary School, he met Sheila Fulton who was also at school in the area. Their relationship developed and surviving the separation caused by Jim's National Service, they married on 19th December 1959. In 1959, the Service provided quarters to house many of its staff. Jim and Sheila benefited from having a home but standards of accommodation were very variable in size, location and amenities. Sheila became expert in making homes out of quarters and in arranging – frequently - to move the family around the country as Jim's career developed involving many transfers.

Following his ambition to build a career in the Service, Jim applied to become an Assistant Governor and was selected to attend the 23rd Staff Course at Wakefield Staff College in September 1966. On successful

completion of the course, he was posted to the open Borstal at Lowdham Grange Nottingham as an Assistant Governor Class Two. In 1970, he was transferred to Swinfen Hall Young Offenders Institution, Lichfield, as Deputy Governor giving him greater responsibility and broadening his experience. The following year, he was successful at a promotion board for Assistant Governor Class One and was transferred to Sudbury Open Prison, Derbyshire in 1972 to be Deputy Governor.

The pressure of the rising prison population led to the urgent conversion and opening of Highpoint prison, a former military camp in Suffolk, also briefly used to house Ugandan refugees. In 1977, he was transferred to Highpoint as Deputy Governor. This was a demanding task: establishing a new prison at speed and in far from ideal conditions. Promotion to Governor Class Three followed in 1980 and a move to Durham prison as the Deputy Governor. He was closing in on his early ambition of being a Governing Governor. Durham also gave him valuable experience in a large very overcrowded Victorian prison. His first command was to be Governor of Guy's Marsh Borstal, near Shaftesbury in 1983. He was further promoted to Governor Class Two in 1985 and transferred to Midland Region Office to supervise all the young offender establishments in the Midland Region. This was a time of great change and challenge with particularly difficult industrial relations as work began on the changes to staff terms and conditions to be known as "Fresh Start" which were introduced in 1987.

Promotion to Governor Class One soon followed in 1988 and he was appointed to take charge of Parkhurst Maximum Security Prison on the Isle of Wight. This was another very challenging posting: both implementing "Fresh Start" as well as preventing disasters especially escapes. This was a real threat. Some years later at Parkhurst an escape led to the removal of the Governor and the sacking of the Director General of Prisons. In 1990 following a review, the Regional Offices were abolished and replaced by Area Managers. He was appointed Area Manager for the Central Area - as a Governor Class One. In 1992 he took over as Area Manager at Transpenine on promotion to Assistant Director. He retired from the Service around his sixtieth birthday with almost 40 years' service in 1998.

He continued to be active in retirement in a number of local activities and became President of the West Haddon Bowls Association. He was a long serving Treasurer of the Retired Governors Association. He leaves his widow Sheila and their only child Paul.

BRENDAN O'FRIEL

COMPLETING THE LONDON MARATHON - STACEY TASKER

Dear All,

- > Just wanted to give an update on the London Marathon which I completed on 21 April 2024.
- > It was an absolute privilege to take part. The support from the crowd was truly amazing (people shouting my name for 26 miles and the children high-fiving me as I ran along, just fantastic).
- > I was also thrilled with my good-for-age time (4.44), the icing on the cake. Just shows what one can achieve when you have time through retirement, certainly couldn't have done it whilst working, and huge respect for people that do!
- > Can't thank you enough for all your generous sponsorship (over £2000) this will really make a difference, and British Blind Sport are such a wonderful committed hard-working group of people.
- > Knowing everyone was cheering me on/tracking me both on the course or at home, meant so much.
- > Thank you from the bottom of my heart,
- > Stacey x

Funeral Service
for
James (Jim) Blakey



At Rainsbrook Crematorium
Rugby

14:00

Monday 10th June 2024

Service led By: Graham Mumby-Croft

James Blakey

Entry Music – Somewhere Over The Rainbow-Israel Kamakawiwo'ole

Good Afternoon, welcome and thank you all for joining with us here today as we come together with a mixture of emotions to honour and pay tribute for the life of James Blakey, whose time here in this world came to its end on the 10th of May, at the age of 86. Welcome also to those of you unable to be here in person but who are joining us via the Webcast,

Although given the name James at his birth he was known throughout his life, and to the many people who knew him, as Jim, and with his families permission that is the name I will use for him today.

My name is Graham and I am a funeral celebrant and my service for Jim today is, in accordance with his own wishes, one that contains no religious element. Instead it is a Humanist service, based entirely on Jim, about the man that he was, all that he achieved, and about what knowing him meant to you, his loved ones, family and friends.

As a professional funeral celebrant I have officiated at many funeral services, but today is very different for me because not only did I know Jim, through our mutual connection with both the Prison Service and the Retired Prison Governors Association, but because Jim himself contacted me in January of this year, when he knew that his time was limited, and asked me if, when the time came, I would officiate at his funeral.

I told him that when in the past I had been asked by someone, usually immediately after conducting a service, if I would be available to do their service, I usually told them yes, and I can fit you in on Tuesday of next week. However in his case I was happy to say 'yes,' on the basis that the service would be a long time in the future. Sadly, as it turned out, not long enough.

All of us here today knew Jim, and it goes without saying that when someone you know, whether as a loved one, a family member, or as a

friend, dies, it is a time of mixed emotions ranging from shock, if their death was unexpected, through to a sense of relief if they had been unwell, or had suffered.

However, Jim was a man who loved life, and who, while he could, lived it to the fullest. He was also a man who during his lifetime was a much respected public servant who through his 40-years in the Prison Service, served at many different establishments advancing from being a Prison Officer to a position of Area Manager and a member of the Senior Civil Service, no mean feat for a boy born in a Pit Village in County Durham.

Sadly for Jim and his family, his life had, since his diagnosis of COPD, and the discovery of significant scarring of his lungs, become increasingly difficult. Despite the poor prognosis Jim found the strength to prepare as well as he could for this time and this service today is hopefully exactly as he would want it with his family, friends and former colleagues here to wish him farewell.

So we meet now to say our farewells to Jim and to take some time to reflect on what knowing him meant to each of us, and in doing so to offer support and comfort to his family as they try to come to terms with the fact that his passing from their lives leaves a space that will be impossible to fill.

Eulogy

When I am asked to undertake a funeral service one of the first things that I do is to sit down with the family and agree what they want the service to be. Of course it was slightly different for this service for Jim as I had a clear understanding that he wanted his service to be a simple affair, without any religious element.

It was also a little different in that Jim had done a fair bit of preparation work himself, and in particular had produced a document that he had called, Reflections on My Life. This covered the time from his birth up to joining

what was then Her Majesty's Prison Service. In addition Sheila had written down some of her thoughts, and when we met, son Paul and his wife Lynn also had their stories to tell. They gave me free access to all this material.

My biggest problem today is that the time available to us is not, and never could be, enough to cover all that Jim did and achieved, in what was a very full and varied lifetime. Add to that the fact that many of you here have your own stories and memories of what knowing Jim meant to you, indeed I know that many of you have written to Sheila expressing your respect and admiration for Jim, and your sorrow at his passing.

So in preparing this eulogy for Jim today I have incorporated the words and sentiments from Jim himself, Sheila, the family and some of those people who knew and worked with Jim for many years in the Prison Service.

Jim was born on the 2nd of April 1938 at Seaham, County Durham, the second son of James and Mary Blakey. He is survived by his older brother John, who has made the journey up from his home on the Isle of Wight to be here today. In 1947 another brother, Michael was born, but sadly he only survived for seven weeks.

1938 was not a particularly good year to be born, as the country was beginning to come to the realisation that another war was inevitable and when it did break out in late 1939 Jim was a mere 17 months old. He would be seven, and at school before it ended, and during this time the area around Seaham was particularly hard hit by air raids with many people killed, and hundreds of homes destroyed.

Even at his tender age Jim could not fail to notice the hardship around him. His father was a miner, and at the beginning of the war, when exports of coal from Seaham dropped dramatically, the pits were put onto short time working. During and after the war he recalled food rationing, and the need to queue for almost everything. He also recalled how the family grew with his two cousins coming to stay with them, having been evacuated from London.

But children are resilient and Jim had many happy memories of his childhood. His early schooling was at Dawdon Infants, and Dawdon Junior Boys, a single school about a mile and a half up the road from home, and he walked each way, every day, whatever the weather. He had good memories of school and recalls that the infant school had a big rocking horse used by the teachers to soothe any child that was upset, and that he had at least one go on it.

In his reflections Jim remembers winning half a crown, that's twelve and a half pence for those of you under the age of the age of about 50, for winning the 3-legged race, and giving the money to Mum and Dad for them to go to the pictures. However one story from this time stood out for me and I will tell it in Jim's own words. *"We had a dog, a spaniel called Spot. Sadly it had to be put down because it bit our neighbour, Billy Robinson. Good choice really. If I had been a dog I would have bitten Billy Robinson"*.

Jim did well at school, well enough to pass his 11 plus and go to the local Ryhope Grammar school. However while he was there his father had to give up working in the pit due to ill health and this meant that money was tight, so Jim had a number of after school and holiday jobs. However, he still found time to be an active member of his local Boy Scout Troop and represented them at the 1951 Festival of Britain which involved his first ever overnight stay in London.

In his memoir Jim recalls some of the significant events that occurred during his lifetime. These included the tragic events when 81 miners were killed in an explosion at Easington Colliery, made all the more poignant as Dad had worked there at one time, and of hearing the news in May 1953 that Hilary and Tenzing had reached the summit of Mt Everest and the death of President Kennedy.

However, and I will use Jim's own words for this:

"The most significant and definitive event of my life was the initial befriending of Sheila Fulton who lived in Cedar Crescent in Parkside, my walking her to Grammar School, close to where I caught my bus to school, the growth of that friendship into a boy/girlfriend relationship, and our subsequent engagement and marriage, all of which clearly shaped the rest of my life".

When the time came to leave school Jim was keen to join the Police as a Cadet, but at that time Durham Police were not recruiting. His Dad offered to get him a job in "The Shops" at the pit, effectively a trade apprenticeship, but thinking this meant working in something like the colliery sweetshop, Jim declined.

His first job application was for a clerks position at Vaux Brewery but he recalls that answering the question why he wanted the job with the answer that it is was to have something to do while he waited to join the police was not a good answer, and he didn't get the job. So instead he found work as a junior salesman with Smiths Furnishers at their store in West Sunderland where he would work for the next two years, and as he says, he enjoyed his time there as he started to learn some of the complexities of human nature.

However as for many young men in those days, the spectre of National Service hung over him and in February 1957 his call up papers arrived and off he went to serve his two years in the RAF. Although it wasn't something that he had looked forward to, Jim found that he enjoyed his time in the RAF, and he was of the view that it was something that every young man should experience. So I have no doubt he would be pleased to see the subject of National Service is once more at the forefront of political thinking.

For Jim, his National Service was by no means an easy ride and he discovered the joys of being shouted at and abused by those senior to him in rank, but as he wrote, *"It was during National Service that I started to adopt a facial expression which people soon became aware of and that meant "Back Off"*. He goes on to say that it has certainly been used a great deal since, with good effect, something that I think many of us in the room today can attest too, especially those of us who at some time may have been on the wrong end of it.

Another downside to National Service was that after his training Jim's permanent posting was to Gloucestershire, a long way from home and on his initial pay of just seven and six a week, (that's thirty-seven and a half pence) he could ill afford to travel home to see his family, and especially Sheila. He writes that he would always remain immensely grateful to her for sticking with him during those two years, which can't always have been easy for her. In December 1959, a few months after his discharge from the RAF Jim and Sheila were married.

Let me refer to Sheila's words:

"I first met Jim when I was 16 years old and he was 17. He and his brother John used to walk past our home on their way for the bus to take them to the boy's grammar school. My mother used to say "don't they look nice boys?" Four years later Jim and I were married, but in the meantime we had stood the test of time coping with Jim's national service in the Royal Air Force. We had 65 happy years of married life".

Before his National Service came to an end Jim started to think about what he wanted to do in the future, and he still had thoughts of being a police officer, so he applied to the Metropolitan Police, but as with his earlier attempt at joining Durham Constabulary they were not recruiting, and so he initially returned to his job at Smiths Furnishers.

After some discussion with Sheila he decided to apply for the Prison Service and Sheila writes of this time:

"When Jim was 21 he joined the Prison Service at Durham Prison, he was interviewed by the then governor Lionel Steinhausen who was a real character in the service. One of his questions was to ask Jim where he saw his future in the prison service and Jim replied "to sit in your chair". Jim did that, and continued to go even higher. It was a job he loved, and even I enjoyed him being in the Prison Service. He said it was like having a new job every two or three years, meeting new people and seeing new places".

In typical Prison Service fashion, when he had completed his initial training at the training school in Wakefield, Jim requested a posting to either Durham, Leeds or Preston, but this was ignored, and he found himself posted instead to Hatfield near Doncaster.

Jim writes:

"This was the start of a very enjoyable and rewarding career which took me from a basic grade Prison Officer to, and through the governor grades to the highest rank of Governing Governor, and from there through the two grades of Area Manager, culminating in a request that I accept the post of Director of the High Security Prison Estate, which for personal reasons I declined".

I think that I can speak on behalf of everyone here today who knew and served with Jim in HMPS when I say that he was a man highly respected by everyone he dealt with. He was renowned for his integrity, his fairness and his dedication to the service, and as someone who left a positive mark in every position that he held.

Of course there as many of us will know there are some downsides to life in the Prison Service, especially for those who, like Jim, make their way up through the ranks. Almost every promotion involved a move of house for Jim, Sheila and of course after he was born, Paul. Sheila told me that she believes that they moved on at least 14 or 15 occasions and the routine was always that Jim would move and take up his new post, and she would sort out everything with the old house and moving to the new one. As Paul told me, they were very popular with Pickford's.

Interestingly Sheila did say that after Jim retired the moving houses didn't stop, as between them they couldn't make up their minds whether they wanted to live back up in the North East, or in the Midlands, where Jim had ended his career. So they moved up to the North East, then back down again, then back up once more before finally deciding that Northamptonshire was the place for them, close to Paul and his family.

Whilst he was in the Prison Service Jim was an active member of the Prison Governor's Association and on his retirement with The Retired Prison Governor's Association, of which for several years he was the treasurer, before handing that role over to me in 2012, after which he devoted more of his time to supporting Paul in his Prestige Car Transportation business.

Always one to keep himself involved in what was going on around him Jim took up Bowls, and joined the West Haddon Bowls Club, later becoming the club President. During his tenure in this role his skills in negotiating and finance were to be called upon when a severe storm tore the roof from the club building.

As Sheila writes:

“Jim liked to say that he was a people person and that was proved by his enjoyment when he joined West Haddon Bowls Club, and he even enjoyed the frustration that went along with becoming their president. The frustration was because storms tore the club roof off and Jim pulled out all of the stops to raise funds to repair it. He made a good enough case to obtain the sum of money required from local charities and even though it involved burning the midnight oil, and pulling his hair out on occasions, once his goal was achieved he said he actually enjoyed the challenge. Skills learnt in the Prison Service helped him achieve it all”.

Anyone who knew Jim would know that his role in the Prison Service was secondary to his role as a husband, a father, and later a grandfather and once again Sheila writes: *“Jim took great pleasure in his family especially our son Paul, his daughter in law Lynn and two amazing grandson’s James, Tom and Tom’s wife Aisha”.*

Two years ago Jim developed COPD and a scan revealed scarring of his lungs and the prognosis was that he had between two and five years of life. Typically for Jim he decided to use the time to make sure that his affairs were in order, including contacting me to ask me to lead this service. Despite numerous hospital visits and stays he continued to live at home, cared for by Sheila and assisted by Paul, Lynn and his grandsons.

Growing increasingly weak and short of breath Jim collapsed and died at the home he shared with the love of his life, Sheila.

So that is my very brief glimpse into the life of Jim Blakey, a life lived well and a life that touched on the lives of so many others.

A good time I think to stop and reflect on all that we have just heard, and to watch some moments from Jim’s life as we listen to a piece of music by Nat King Cole, chosen by Sheila because of her sentiments about Jim:

“Unforgettable.”

Committal

And so as the music of Nat King Cole fades, and the last photo of Jim remains on the screen we come to the moment in our service where we must sadly, and reluctantly, say our final farewells to him.

In the service today you have heard from me as I have spoken of Jim as a man who spent much of his working life in public service, and who, even in retirement continued to work for others with his involvement in the Retired Prison Governors Association, and his Presidency of the West Haddon Bowls Club. But I also said that above all Jim was a family man.

So it is to Jim's family that I now ask you to turn your thoughts, for it is they who will miss him so very much, as they come to terms with the fact that he is no longer a part of their daily lives. So I ask that you will always remember Jim as a loving and devoted husband of 65 years to Sheila, the woman he met when they were still at school.

Remember him as a proud and supportive father to Paul and father in law to Lynn, unstinting in his love and support to them both. Think of him as a proud "grandpa" to grandsons James and Tom, and of welcoming Tom's wife Aisha into the family. And of course Jim was little brother to John. He was such an integral part of all their lives, and they will miss him so very much.

But of course it is not just Jim's family who will miss him, all those people who knew Jim in life, either as friends, or colleagues, will miss him and will always remember him with fondness and with pride that they knew him in their lives. I count myself among those people.

Congregation to Stand

Jim, as we now bid you farewell, all those people whose lives you have touched, family, friends, former colleagues, stand now as a mark of their love and respect for you, and of their sorrow at your death.

We are all thankful to have known you, and to have walked the many and varied paths of life with you.

We will particularly treasure the memory of your words and works, your character and quality, and the knowledge that our own lives have been forever enriched for having spent some time in this life with you.

And so your kind and generous nature we now commit, to be a warm and lasting memory.

Your love, humour and friendship we commit to our hearts forever.

Your spirit we release to be free.

Thank you for all that you were.

Thank you for all that you gave.

Thank you for the memories that you leave as your legacy to us all.

James Blakey, your time in this world began with your birth on the 2nd of April 1938 and the days of your life ran their course with your death on the 10th of May 2024:

Our thoughts are of you as you begin your final journey, into the arms of Mother Nature.

The love and good wishes of all who are gathered here go with you as you leave us now for the last time to Rest In Eternal Peace.

Please be seated.

Final Words of Comfort and Thanks

On behalf of Jim's family thank you all for attending and helping to make today a true celebration of his life. They would like to thank you all for your many messages of condolence and support, they are all very much appreciated, and I know that Sheila has been overwhelmed by all the contact that she has had from people that they both knew over the years.

They would also like to thank all those people who provided support, care and friendship to Jim throughout his life and in particular the staff at Long Buckby Surgery, especially Dr Dean and Dr Rookledge.

Should you wish to make a charitable donation in Jim's name it is the families wish that these should go to Asthma and Lung UK to support the wonderful work that they do in research into this debilitating disease. You can give today as you leave, or directly through the website set up by the funeral directors. The details are on your Order of Service. you are all cordially invited to join the family for refreshments, and to continue to share your memories of Jim, at the Pytchley Inn, West Haddon. Once again the details are on your order of service.

Before we leave the chapel there is a final piece of music to play, and it is a track that Sheila has chosen, as she knew that Jim would want us to leave with a smile on our faces, and because it is the soundtrack for life of her good friend Faye: 'Always Look on the Bright Side of Life.'

I leave you with these final words for Jim:

May the roads rise up to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
May the rains fall soft upon fields
And until we meet again
May Mother Nature hold you in the palm of her hand.

BOB DUNCAN

Readers will have noticed that Bob Duncan's long running '**Your Letters**' column does not appear in this issue. Out of respect for his privacy, I shall say nothing more than Bob has been indisposed. However, he has been well enough to respond to a letter from me, and I'm sure that he will be able to respond to letters/Emails from his friends and former colleagues, which would be very welcome.

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. There is no password required. It contains significant archive material, and thanks to Brendan O'Friel, a number of newsletters and articles 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. Addresses to use are:
roger@rsoutram.co.uk or Roger Outram, 12 Grove Park, Magazine Lane, Wisbech, PE13 1LF



DOVER BORSTAL (continued...)

Alan, an assistant governor who was more senior than me was posted to Dover from Usk Borstal where he had already served several years. He was also a keen rugby player and as I was already playing with the lad's team, I cleared it with the Physical Education Department that Alan could also play. This was the start of a very long and strong friendship. Alan himself never mentioned it, but I learn't almost by accident from a colleague 40 years later after Alan and I first met how brave he had been whilst at Usk. A Borstal lad who was allowed out during the week as a gardener for a local solicitor managed when the house was empty to steal two revolvers and seven rounds of ammunition. Usk Borstal was an 'open Borstal' so when it was opportune two of them absconded. Alan and another housemaster, Bernard (who also came to Dover later on promotion) were dispatched to see if they could be traced. Clearly no one knew they were armed. They were spotted in town and a pursuit commenced, whereby the two lads split up and so did the staff. The lad Alan was pursuing suddenly stopped and pointed the gun at him and said 'stop there or I will shoot' with no hesitation Alan continued and grappled with the lad who then threw the gun into a nearby stream. In Bernard's case he chased the lad who then dived over a steel gate into a field, Bernard climbed over the gate and continued the pursuit until the lad stopped pointed the gun at him and warned him the gun was loaded, Bernard was unclear at first that it was a gun, and he made it clear that he was not retreating and said 'Do not use that on me' eventually the lad lowered his arm and threw the gun aside. The Governor of the Borstal received a communication from Headquarters in July 1964 stating: 'Would you please convey to Assistant Governors Marchant and Rawson the Secretary of State's commendation for the courage and devotion to duty they displayed in apprehending two absconders both of whom were armed with loaded pistols and threatened to use them. An appropriate entry is being made in their personal files held at this office. Establishment Division 3.'

It was a tradition at Dover that when there was a proven escape all Housemasters and any other staff who could be spared were sent out to what were called 'fixed posts', they covered the main known exit routes out of Dover. On occasions, they were successful in apprehending some. We went in pairs as we could be there for several hours, and it was usually late afternoon or evening when these occurred. Another Housemaster, Ron always asked to team up with me and take on a particular post in the Lea Valley. Every so often Ron would disappear; I just assumed he had gone into the nearby woods for a leak as we there for hours at times. Bill would always have his supper at home at 7 pm sharp. After that, he would drive to each live post for an update and would offer hot coffee laced with brandy. He asked where Ron was, I replied he has gone to relieve himself believing that to be correct. Bill stayed for a bit and then said I better move on others are waiting. When he returned, 'I said you took your time over that, Bill was enquiring where you were.' Ron replied 'thanks, but I better tell you where I really go, my girlfriend lives in the end house down there and I take the opportunity to pay her a visit.' It clearly paid off as they married and are still enjoying life together after all these years. I was to work with Ron again later in my career, and we are still in touch after all this time.

Christmas was a busy time in Borstal, firstly as every lad was allowed one parcel from their family of 'Goodies' for Christmas mainly of food and chocolate. All these had to be stored and recorded as they were not allowed to be opened other than on Christmas Day, and an estimate had to be made as those who might not receive one. We then purchased sufficient items to make up a parcel so that no went without. The other aspect was the emotional element of being away from home over Christmas.

I explained there were the normal monthly reports on every lad to assess his progress against his sentence plan. As the housemaster, I had to collate all these, reach a consensus amongst my staff as to whether any were fitted for the next grade. Once these had been approved by the Governor, I had to feedback the position to each lad. In my office, I sat behind a large, solid wood desk. I also had the billiard cues as these were only issued at recreation periods. Each lad was summoned individually and given an update in private (in reality most had a good inkling about what the formal report would say.

This was the December Review, so emotions were already at a high level.

One of my lads was an ex-marine who had served in Aden. Dunham stood quietly as I read his report which was rather negative. I still had my head down reading the last sentence when the next thing I knew was that I was on the floor with my wooden desk on top of me, and Dunham charging across the room with a billiard cue which he used as a weapon and cascaded several strong blows to my body. I could only shout for help, it was three other lads who rushed in and rescued me, two holding firmly on to Dunham and third helping me up. Staff then arrived and escorted Dunham to the punishment block. As this was only three days before Christmas, and Governor insisted I take three days sick leave, despite my protestations I had Christmas off duty. I was more shaken than hurt, though my back was sore, and I still have a faint scar from one of the blows.

The Prison Department had a set of procedures which prisoners could use to make a request or make a complaint. It started with a verbal request to the lowest manager grade, if not satisfied it could then proceed to the Governor and the next step was a Petition to the Secretary of State. In my first 7 years working in Borstals, I can only recall one such petition, and it was from the most unlikely of sources. Clegg was a local lad from Dover, and from a back-dormitory window of Hythe House, he could actually see his parents' house, not that they took any interest in him as they never visited and did not want him back home on discharge. He was a petty criminal, hardly able to read or write and was probably assessed as Educationally Subnormal.

Every month there was an arranged trip to a local indoor swimming pool which lads could be selected to go on if found suitable. Clegg had applied, but it was known that he was telling everyone he had applied so that he could abscond. Naturally, the Governor upheld my decision not to allow him to go. Whether he wrote the Petition itself is doubtful, but he had signed it, and it said, 'I wish to complain about not being selected to go on the outside swimming party just because I said I was going to abscond.' You can guess the reply he received. As his parents had rejected having him back, I asked his local probation officer if he could meet him on the day of discharge and help him find accommodation, as he would struggle on his own. To my amazement, he declined advising me that he did not see it as his role! so I told Clegg I would go with him to town to get him sorted. We went to the local Labour Exchange to sign on, after queuing we were seen but told he needed a home address before he could register. So we found what looked like reasonable accommodation, but they wanted money up front before they would allow him to book a room, his discharge grant did not meet the cost.

How do you solve that? I do not fully recall, but I think I lent him some money to get on his feet. I was fairly safe as in those days once registered for employment, they paid out the first installment in cash. So aftercare has never been all it should be, so it is no wonder so many do not cope and ended up back inside. I never heard any more about Clegg so perhaps he did survive.

All prisoners had to declare their religious faith on arrival, including young offenders, and as religious services were still compulsory (a hangover from the Victorian era) attendances were good. It also appeared a tradition that Bishops of the Anglican Church conducted the Christmas service. By now 'Down the Block Jock' had been promoted and moved on to his new establishment. He had been replaced by Bernard on his promotion from Usk Borstal. He seemed very assured and was in charge on the day of the Bishops visit. The Bishop had been allowed to drive his car to the chapel which was adjacent to my house. Whilst the Bishop was still saying his farewells, Bernard approached me and 'I do not know how you say farewell to a Bishop, so will you do it.' and walked away. When the Bishop was ready, I just thanked him and said farewell, and advised I would walk ahead and ensure the gate staff were ready to let him out. He thanked in return and said 'you must come and have dinner with me, I will be in touch.' Accordingly, the invitation arrived and went to the Bishop's residence in Canterbury. I had not realized he was a bachelor, but with a very good housekeeper, and that he liked a tippie or two. He made me very welcome and said I understand you like a gin and tonic. I did not know why he believed that, as I never drank spirits other than a cherry brandy at Christmas time, but did not want to appear ungrateful as imagined it would be one drink before we ate. It turned out to be three, then a whole bottle of wine between us over dinner.

It was an excellent meal and very convivial. I had decided as I was in the outskirts of Canterbury, I would drive home in Whitstable after the meal. I set off and was gaily driving along feeling very pleased with myself, when suddenly after about four miles, my brain suggested that I should be driving on the other side of the road. Fortunately, it was rather late at night and traffic was much lighter in those days. It did, however, drive home a clear message about drink and driving.

I cannot remember the connection, but as members of the public could attend the chapel service on Sunday, that might have been it. However, an elderly lady in town had written to the Governor to offer to have one of the lads to afternoon tea. The Governor had passed it to me and said choose one of your lads. Eagleton was over 6 feet, generally well built, Afro-Caribbean and loud. He was not a bully as such; his sheer presence ensured he got what he wanted. If it was a meal he liked he would indicate and get a portion from lesser lads' plates. For some reason I chose him, and he said he would like to go. When he came back, I asked how it went and he just said fine. Later I was in contact with the lady concerned and asked her, she said it went well but he did not eat a lot, 'I thought you said he had a good appetite.' So I approached Eagleton and said 'I understand you did not eat a lot when you went out, normally you have a big appetite.' 'Yes,' he said, 'but she was an old lady and did not have a lot of money, so I decided she needed the food more than me, she was very kind and nice.' I now saw Eagleton in a very different light and felt there was more hope that he could make something of his life.

By now the Governor had been promoted and posted to a new top security prison, Albany on the Isle of Wight to set up an experimental regime. He was replaced by Bill a very different kind of Governor. Every Sunday there was dormitory inspection in every House, the beds had to be made up army fashion and all kit clearly displayed in the locker or on the bed. This was inspected by the housemasters on duty, and any deficiencies noted. Once a month the Governor worked a weekend and carried out this inspection in every House. David's had been rather cursory. Bill who had been a major in the army was more diligent and used his walking stick to prod into the lockers. A lad called Mustafa did not have his black plimsoles on display, and Bill pointed that out. Further down the line poking into another lad's locker he espied two pairs of plimsoles, 'are these yours?' he called out to Mustafa. As Bill left Mustafa called out to me 'Governor very clever man, he found my plimsoles.'

In the summer of 1967 Wormwood Scrubs Prison was short of governor grades, and the Borstal Allocation Centre was in a mess, partly because of the incompetence of the governor grade in post. So each of the housemasters at Dover was now required to do a month's 'detached duty' at Scrubs to provide better cover. I booked my bed and breakfast for the month and reported to Scrubs. I was made welcome and given a quick tour of the prison.

BOB DUNCAN

PART NINE OF BOB'S MEMOIRS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN ISSUE No 92, SPRING 2025



THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

It is Saturday, the 10th August, 2024. Before breakfast.

I have just heard on our news that King Charles has thanked the police for working to control the recent riots: the ones that have kicked off this week as a result of an ignition caused by the terrible incident of the murder of three young girls here in Southport. I say 'here' as Southport is only a few miles west of us who live in Westthoughton. That the 'establishment', represented by our Monarch, has rallied round to congratulate the police and them selves for so adequately protecting the peace and controlling the worst of the violence seen during these riots is to be expected, indeed, up to a point, welcomed.

BUT, I've been thinking about those who ardently believe they've something to protest about. They'll be, in the main, believing it is futile to protest. Whether it's protesting in legitimate groups in the streets or causing mass inconvenience by stopping motorway traffic, by writing to their MPs, to the press. Whatever their means, they'll be considering themselves to be largely unheard by the majority. And yet they're often right in their concerns and campaigns. Whilst most of us are prepared to live in the current times and 'to hell with tomorrow' there are a significant number who genuinely believe that we must act and that unless we do we're going to be well and truly stuffed. 'Off to Hell in a handcart' as the saying goes. I'm referring to the protests about lack of urgency in dealing with global warming, about the state of the nation, about clean rivers, about the refugee situation, about the effects of Brexit and Covid, the Governments inability to deal with these issues.

The list goes on and on. The lies perpetrated by certain politicians in the not so recent past have been so culpable that it left many speechless and the rest of us sinking deeper into apathy and complacency. So, I'm asking where does one go to try and change the things we have to face up to. Where do our grandkids go to protest about the unaffordability of housing, of an education system that, like our NHS, is crumbling around our ears? They must wonder about their future. To come from poverty to plenty, or at least sufficiency, is one thing. To see yourself going in the opposite direction is quite another. It must appear to them that the only time anyone appears to be interested in their concerns is during an election campaign. That once in power the politicians simply don't care.

I do not believe this to be the case. I believe that the majority of politicians and councillors do genuinely care but, once in power, are left with insoluble problems such as funding for social care, for keeping up with the legitimate demands for a living wage for their civil servants, for farmers, for teachers, for nurses and doctors. I heard on our news yesterday that Cornwall County Council are selling off their assets and letting up to a thousand of their workforce go to simply stay financially stable. It's a difficult time as we live with the real fear of a WW3 breaking out with the use of nuclear arms, of a world racked by fires and flooding, by the inequality of the sharing of our resources, of the mishandling -as they see it - of the national economy. My generation may have started from a low base after the last WW but most could see an improving future. We were, in the main, justified in this forecast. This is not the case today.

As I said in a piece wot I recently rote ...

"Here's a thought...it is possible, probably likely, that I could well have been among those 'thugs' creating mayhem over these past few days had I been (quite) a few years younger."

Or I could vote for Donald Trump or even for a return of Boris or Paterson.

If you can't beat 'em .. then join 'em.

JOHN RAMWELL



Where did you go for your holidays this year, guess where we went to?

No, we didn't stay at the now abandoned Shrewsbury Prison, which is now a museum and film set, we went to Ludlow a lovely Shropshire town and a thirty minute train ride from Shrewsbury.

We like to have a UK holiday each year and before you ask the weather (and the beer) was excellent so we do day trips from our base usually making good use of our National Trust membership. One of our trips was by train to Shrewsbury and when we walked out of the station there was a sign directing folk to the jail so I thought how impressed my wife would be if I showed her a prison albeit now closed. Oddly she didn't seem that excited but then hey ho, time would tell.



The first sight to greet you on entry (not through the main gate) is a constantly revolving screen address by **Gerry Hendry (pictured left)** the last Governor, then to book the tour in the visitors centre. When I was an SO at Winson Green in the 70's I used to do the odd call in on my Sunday rest day to take an overcrowding draft of 20 ish to HMP Shrewsbury, all shop lifters of course, then leg it from reception before they realised what we had delivered.

There was a group of around 20 of us on the 90 minute tour including several teenagers and some senior citizens. Having been retired for 15 years I wondered how it would feel to go into a Victorian prison again as they were the only type of prison I worked in. It did feel odd and generated lots of memories good and not so good if you get my drift. Our guide was Donna who I don't think was ever in the Prison Service though she did wear a uniform and she had lots of stories to tell as we progressed through the reception and wings. She recalled the prison history and in reception the way searching was aimed at preventing illicit items entering the prison. On the wings she placed some of the younger ones in a cell so they could experience what being locked up was like, they loved it. She recalled ghost stories recalling both good and evil spooks roaming the prison at night.

The tour ended with a visit to the gallows and stories of a number of folk hanged and the process itself which was received with fascination by the group and as you know was always the case in our older jails when we had visitors.



I have to say it was an interesting experience and I know lots of you would say you would not want to set foot in another jail as long as you lived but it reminded me of what we did and I gave 40 years and 5 weeks to the Prison Service most of which was rewarding and yes a bit scary at times. Did my wife enjoy it? Well she said she did and I paid, so nothing lost there then.

GRAHAM SMITH



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE CLASS OF '64?



The picture is of the 21st Staff Course 1964.

How many can you identify?

ROD JACQUES R.I.P.

After a short service commission in the army of 3 years' duration as a Second Lieutenant with the Second East Anglian Regiment, & then going on to attend the University of Wales Trinity St. David, Lampeter where he read Philosophy & History, Rod joined the Prison Service in 1966

He had a long & successful career, working at Leyhill, PSC Love Lane, was Deputy Governor at Featherstone & Albany, then became a G2 at South East Regional Office, Governing Governor of Lewes & Liverpool & finally was Deputy to Sir David Ramsbotham, then-Chief Inspector of Prisons, before his retirement. He was an extremely well-read man, devout, & the son of a Church of England vicar. He was also a talented watercolour artist & cartoonist with an excellent sense of humour.

Rod spent his last 10 months in a care home, after his wife had died some months prior to that.

His funeral was held at 01.30 pm on Monday, 23 September at St. Egwins Church, Norton Lenchwick, Worcester, WR11 4TL followed at 2 pm by a cremation service at Vale Crematorium, Evesham Road, Fladbury, Pershore WR10 2QR.

As ever,

JENNY ADAMS-YOUNG

From The Treasurer

There are many wonderful things about being retired, but I have found one big drawback, and that is the fact that in my later years, time seems to fly by so quickly, and this is often brought home by the fact that the deadline for submitting my piece for The Newsletter seems to suddenly jump up on me in what seems an ever decreasing timescale. However don't get me wrong, after all these years the alternative to retirement does not look attractive at all.

You may recall in my last "From The Treasurer" I shared with you the trials and tribulations of being a treasurer, and trying to deal with the bank, and in particular Barclays, and trying to convince them that I am indeed who I claim to be, and that The Retired Prison Governor's Association is actually just what it claims to be, an organisation that exists to allow retired Prison Governors to keep in touch with each other. Well the good news is that the long debacle is now over, (or at least until the next time) and Barclays have now accepted all the evidence that I was required to provide in order for them to accept that the RPGA is not a very low level money laundering operation, and to allow the organisation to continue to bank with them.

As well as that, I have actually managed to have both Jan Thompson and Kevin Bilson added to the account so that they now have full access and rights to the account. This is part of a bit of contingency planning on my behalf, the aim of which was to ensure that in the event of my being incapacitated the finances of the association would not be inaccessible. So the last few months have been quite successful in terms of sorting out some long standing banking issues. Unfortunately my delight at this success was tempered by the news of the death of my predecessor in the role of Treasurer, Jim Blakey.

I remember when Jim handed everything over to me with a stark warning that the most difficult part of the job would be dealing with Barclays. How true those words, and I know that Jim followed my travails in the newsletter, no doubt with a smile on his face as he thought, "rather you than me". As well as being treasurer, Jim was also a founding member of both the PGA and RPGA, and he was also my boss when I was a junior Governor Grade and so it was an honour when Jim contacted me and asked me if, when the time came, I would officiate at his funeral service. Jim's death and his Obituary, written by Brendan O'Friel, is covered elsewhere in The Newsletter so I will just say that it was an honour to know him, and to help say goodbye to him.

As it is soon to be AGM time the concentration of my report this month is the end of year accounts. These of course come with the usual reminder that in order to remain in line with the PGA accounting year these accounts cover the period 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023. The Auditors have now signed off the accounts, which is a much simpler process nowadays as the majority of payments are now made by Direct Bank Transfer.

As well as my well documented contacts with the bank regarding confirmation of identity I have also undertaken the work required to bring our banking up to date, with a move to electronic and internet banking. As part of this process I have now been issued with a Debit Card for the account so that I can make payments online. This will be particularly useful in making donations to charities in memory of deceased members, as I can now do this directly to the charity through their website. The first payment of this type was made to the British Heart Foundation in memory of Roy Smith.

The result of this is that it is several months since I last wrote a cheque against the account as I now make payments either on the card, or by BACS transfer. I am also able to bank any cheques that I receive without the need to visit a branch, which is a good thing as there is no not a branch of Barclays within 5 miles of my home. Technology, and an App on my phone allows me to take a photo of a cheque, upload it to the bank, and have it credited to the account.

The headline figures for the accounts for 2023 are as follows:

At the beginning of the 2023 financial year (Jan 23 to Dec 23) the current account stood at a balance of £15,541.93 and at the end of the period it stood at £14,981.57 - a deficit of £559.96 for the year.

The full accounts for the year are attached as Appendix 1.

The headline figures are that the deficit of outgoing over income is due almost entirely to a drop in income from subscriptions of £427.00 and an increase in our outgoings of £456.13. However, these figures are slightly complicated by the fact that when carrying out checks on the account I discovered that we had members whose standing order was being paid monthly rather than annually and therefore the cost of refunding them at £367.00 actually accounts for just over 80% of the increase in our outgoings for the year.

Our other costs have remained fairly static, although as expected the cost of the Newsletter, both printing and distribution, has increased, and is only likely to continue this upward trend.

The cost of diaries, as always, remains a tricky one. My dilemma here is that we do not always receive an invoice from the PGA for the diaries in the actual, year we take delivery, and the result of this is that the in some years we show the cost of two lots of diaries, and in other years, no cost at all.

Membership.

I believe that as an organisation, and as a committee we have got a tight control on our finances. Surprisingly the membership numbers seem to be holding reasonably steady although this years audit of the figures carried out between myself, Harry, Kevin and Roger show a number of members who have simply stopped paying, and we have not been informed of why. We have met by ZOOM to discuss this and I am sure that Harry will want to cover this in his Membership Report.

Newsletter.

Over the year we have had a great deal of discussion at committee level regarding the cost of The Newsletter. There were two starting points for this conversation; the first was the sharp increase in costs that came as the inflation rate increased in what quickly became known as "the cost of living crisis", and everyone pushed up their prices. The second was the absolute commitment of the committee that The Newsletter is the fundamental foundation that the RPGA was built upon, and that whatever else we do to keep the costs of running the association under control, we do not want to compromise on the quality or frequency of publication.

As a committee, (and as treasurer) I believe we have stripped out all possible cost savings from the running of the association leaving us with the outlay on printing and distribution of The Newsletter being the primary cost. As with all price rises caused by inflation, the increased costs for producing The Newsletter in the past year will be a one-way street, and in reality these costs will continue to rise, with the only question being, at what rate they will go up. In particular postage costs are a real concern.

The main thing to remember is that the finances of The Association are currently in good health, and this discussion is not taking place against a background of the need to save money, but as part of long-term planning and forecasting with the intention of trying to plan for the future. My primary aim is to try to maintain the Subscription Rates at their current levels, for as long as possible. This will inevitably mean that as the costs go up, and if we hold subscriptions at their current levels, the deficit between income and expenditure will increase, and the balance of funds in our account will over time gradually decrease.

As you will hopefully be aware, following a membership consultation we have decided to distribute The Newsletter electronically to those who indicated that they would be happy to receive their copy by this method. We will continue to produce a printed version, and post this out to those members who either expressed an opinion that they wished to continue to receive a printed version, and to all those who did not respond. If you are reading this, and did not respond to our initial enquiry regarding your preference for receiving your copy of The Newsletter, and are happy to receive future copies of The Newsletter electronically.

The certified accounts for the year (2023) are shown on the next two pages. If any member wishes to raise a question or seek clarification on these figures then please do not hesitate to contact me either by email on graham.mumbycroft@gmail.com or by post at 15 Thirsk Drive, North Hykeham, Lincoln, LN6 8SZ.

Graham Mumby-Croft
Treasurer
September 2024

RETIRED PRISON GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

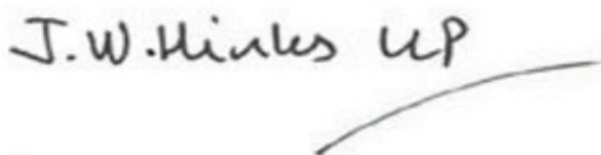
ACCOUNTANTS REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

**CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS' REPORT TO THE RETIRED PRISON GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION
ON THE UNAUDITED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

In accordance with our terms of engagement we have compiled the Income and Expenditure Account of the business for the year ended 31 December 2023 from the accounting records and information and explanations you have given to us.

This report is made to you, in accordance with the terms of our engagement. Our work has been undertaken so that we might prepare the Income and Expenditure Account that we have been engaged to compile, report to you that we have done so, and state those matters that we have agreed to state to you in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than you, for our work or for this report.

We have carried out this engagement in accordance with technical guidance issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales and have complied with the relevant ethical guidance laid down by the Institute relating to members.



JW Hinks LLP
Chartered Accountants
19, Highfield Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 3BH
28 February 2024

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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

MEMBERSHIP REPORT – OCTOBER 2024



Membership currently stands at 362, with 308 paying members and 54 non-paying associate members, who in the main are widows of ex-members, this is an increase of 2 since the last report. Apologies to Rev James Anderson, who we were informed had deceased, only to find later that he was alive and well, apologies James.

On the positive side, we can welcome new members – Tim Coghlan, Helen Clayton-Hoar, Rosie Crosby (an error occurred in checking Rosie's subscription, so again apologies for removing her earlier in the year), Elizabeth Williams (widow of Michael), Ann Simmonds (widow of Ian), Sheila Blakey (widow of Jim), Rev James Anderson (apologies already given), Neil Duggan, Mark Harris, and Dave Bowden. We are sorry to announce the deaths of Eric Jackson, Michael Williams, Ian Simmonds, Jim Blakey, Margaret Brookes and Derek Myers, 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 – Adrian Turner, Ernie Foster, Viv Bushell (formerly Viv Hart), John Forster, Rod Jacques and Danny McAllister, again our condolences and best wishes go out to their family and friends. We have had two resignations, Tracey Goddard (widow of Steve) and Betty Greenhalgh (widow of Jack).

I will be attending the PGA Conference again this year, missed last years due to cruising to Canada, and I will be putting up a stand both for the Retired PGA and the Civil Service Pensioners Alliance. I am currently on the EC of the CSPA as the Regional Representative for the Northwest. The CSPA AGM immediately follows the PGA conference on the Wednesday and Thursday, so I make a week of it, obviously working very hard for no pay.

Anybody interested in joining the CSPA, please let me know, they offer many benefits which more than offset the £3 per month subscription charge as well as keeping you up to date with pensioner issues and representing your interests both through the National Pensioners Convention and with Government, working with other pensioner groups. Anyone interested in knowing more then please email at harry-brett@hotmail.co.uk



WELCOME TO TOM WHEATLEY

In March of this year Tom Wheatley, son of former Director General Phil Wheatley, succeeded Andrea Albutt as President of the Prison Governors Association. It has been a busy and testing introduction to his new role with the overcrowding crisis that has overwhelmed the Prison Service. Tom will be addressing his first conference in October, and it may well be that more attention and publicity will be given to PGA Conference than in a normal year.

I'm sure you will all join me in wishing Tom all the best in his endeavours.

PAUL LAXTON

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