

A Speech By The Converted

Annual General Meeting



In opening his address, Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Attorney-General, spoke of what he described as 'contemporary government thinking on alternatives to imprisonment'.

I am sure most of his audiences welcomed what he had to say:

- 1) Prosecution should only be instituted if it is in the public interest.
- 2) A prison population of 50,000 is too big and 20,000 young adults in custody is a disgrace.
- 3) The public must be encouraged to consider alternatives to imprisonment for those convicted of less serious crimes and should not be misled by the sensationalism of the popular press
- 4) Education of offenders and prevention of crime is better than punishment and retribution.
- 5) Magistrates and judges must be encouraged to use non-custodial methods and active steps must be taken to improve their confidence in disposals such as probation and community service orders.
- 6) Consideration is being given to a new type of order that could combine deterrents of restraint on liberty with service to the community and reparation.
- 7) Prison is as expensive as it is ineffective: Sir Patrick's statistics

show that an average place in prison is 15 times more expensive than one on probation.

Could there be any dissent to this indication of 'contemporary government thinking'?

But what about the question of resources for community alternatives? Sir Patrick rightly claimed that he has no policy-making function and that answered that there was always a difficult decision to be made about priorities. True and, to put things into perspective, I cannot recall any government that has given top priority to penal reform. Yet, a still, small voice can be heard to murmur that if you make a priority of cutting taxes, you will have less public money to divide. Let us not carp. It was indeed refreshing to be addressed by the converted.

If Sir Patrick trod carefully around not only the subject of resources, but also around that of the education of the judiciary, towards treatment in the community, we should not be too critical. It is, after all, to use the Attorney's own words 'not a tidy subject'. While accepting that he is not responsible for policy or resources in this area, let us hope, in the words of our President, that he has influence on his colleagues.

We wish him well!

Helen Grindrod QC

At the AGM, Brian Bishop, Sultana Saeed and John Wheeler were elected and Leo Abse, David Downes and Mr Greenacre were re-elected as members of Council. Dr Strigner, who retired, was thanked for his service to the Institute.

VISITS

Feltham Youth Custody and Remand Centre

From the outside, the Centre looks modern and, despite the security fencing, not too imposing. Once inside, the impression is different. The inevitable and frequent use of the large key looms large.

There seemed to be marked contrast between the lack of activity on the remand site and the general hubbub on the custody site. From talking to the staff, prison officers,

psychologists and teachers, one gains a sense of their overwhelming frustration with what they can achieve against what is expected of them. This situation seemed to have been greatly exacerbated by the prison officers' dispute, in which the only losers appeared to be the inmates.

As an example of this frustration, the psychology department told us that they accept referrals from prison officers asking them to formulate plans for inmates, but that it was only prison officers who could implement those plans. The prison officers, however, expressed the view that they did not have time to implement the plans. Again the inmates are the losers.

Labels were readily applied. Those who were mentally ill, suffered learning difficulties or did not 'fit in' to the regime were 'inadequate', those who were not white were 'coloured'. As a practitioner and manager in an Intermediate Treatment Centre, the visit confirmed for me the need for more community alternatives to custody for young people.

Harry Tuck, Project Leader, North Lambeth I.T. Centre, London

Wandsworth Prison

This visit took place in November 1988, before the dispute earlier this year.

After a tour of the prison, a discussion was chaired by the Governor in charge of Residence and the Deputy Chairman of the Board of Visitors. The main problem at Wandsworth they explained was the sheer volume of numbers. As a post sentence prison, its function was to classify prisoners from court and disperse them to other establishments. If, due to dispersal problems, prisoners could not be moved on, pressure could build up within the establishment.

Overcrowding was a central concern for the Board of Visitors which is a watchdog and advisory body. They had also suggested that improvements were needed to sanitary arrangements; now, eight cells in one wing had integral sanitation and this improvement would be extended to the whole prison by 1994. The Board also

expressed concern over 'ghosting' prisoners from one prison to another, without giving any reasons for the change or making a formal charge under prison rules.

This is a much abbreviated version of the full article prepared by Alison Gordon JP

'CRIME IN EUROPE'

This conference, held at the University of York from 11 to 15 September, provided academics, policy makers and practitioners from a wide range of European countries an opportunity to exchange knowledge and expertise. Issues ranged from the involvement of ethnic minorities in crime and their treatment by the criminal justice agencies to the possible implications for the incidence and control of crime, of introducing the Single European Act in 1992. Some papers were well and truly European wide, while others focussed on one or several.

Sadly the conference had only one contribution on Eastern Europe, from Dr. Ewa Bienkowska of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, but it is at least encouraging to know that we are beginning to exchange views with criminologists from the Eastern bloc. Sadder still, we learnt that since the introduction of a special law in 1985, offenders in Poland can be tried and sentenced within 48 hours; this has led to a more than threefold increase in the prison population within three years to approximately 100,000 inmates — one in every 370 persons living in Poland. With up to ten people in a cell in some Polish prisons, this depressing situation puts our prison overcrowding crisis into a different perspective.

The conference started off with a somewhat speculative talk from David Faulkner, Head of the Home Office's criminal justice and criminal policy departments, on the possible implications of the greater economic freedom between European countries in 1992. He spoke of the specific problems and opportunities this development might open up —

particularly with respect to terrorism, drug trafficking and large scale fraud. The overall impression given was that while there may be fears with respect to law enforcement, 1992 was unlikely to have an immediate effect on administration of justice in Britain. More likely is the gradual harmonisation of certain areas of criminal law and practice over a longer period of time as European co-operation improves and Britain increasingly adapts its procedures to accommodate continental practice.

David Faulkner's paper was followed by a general over-view of crime and criminal justice systems in Europe from Dr. van Dijk from the Dutch Ministry of Justice. He told us that the West Germans have more police and judges per capita than any other European country and, not surprisingly, spend the most on the administration of criminal justice. He said that the Swedes involve trade unions and private security companies in crime prevention and that the corner stone of the Dutch crime prevention programme is to focus resources on improving informal social control — they have, for example, introduced some 2,000 'occupational surveillance' projects, that encourage concierges on high crime estates and bus conductors to actively participate in the prevention of crime. France was singled out as the country with the most elaborate organisational structure for preventing crime, particularly at the local level, while West Germany, despite all its resources, was labelled 'part of the third world' as far as crime prevention was concerned. Britain was described as somewhere in the middle — plenty of good intentions but not much organisation and very few resources.

During the next four days, conference participants heard papers presented in plenary session on probation across Europe from Geoffrey Cartledge, Vice President of the Standing Conference on Probation in Europe, on police co-operation in Europe from Professor Cyrille Fijnaut of Erasmus University in Rotterdam, on crime in Eastern Europe, on the media and crime in

Britain, Italy and Holland from Simon Buxton, a Producer from Channel 4 television and finally on European co-operation in crime from Dr. Hans-Jurgen Bartsch from the Council of Europe.

The afternoons and evenings were taken up by workshops and visits to a number of local criminal justice agencies. The workshop I attended on 'European Terrorism as a form of Delinquency' was perhaps my only disappointment. Focussing on the Baader-Meinhoff phenomenon, Jillian Becker, Director of the Institute for the Study of Terrorism, provided a colourful description of the events leading up to their deaths, but failed to explain how such a phenomenon arose and, more importantly, why. By depoliticising their actions, the speaker was unable to make any connection between their behaviour and their socio-historical position as members of the post-holocaust generation.

Nigel South from the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependency, London, spoke about the importance of focussing on the various channels of drug distribution and speculated that the move towards a single European market will either make virtually no difference — barriers to free movement of drugs are minimal and movement between countries is already very high — or a profound difference — it will enhance the free movement of profits from drug trafficking thus avoiding seizure.

John Graham, Home Office Research and Planning Unit

Abstracts of papers are available from the ISTD office at cost. We are also negotiating to publish full conference papers later in the year.

LECTURES

Co-operation in Juvenile Justice in Essex

Peter Jones (Essex Probation) and Dick Knight (Essex Social Services) explained that from the early 1980s, Essex County Council had been trying to stem the rising numbers of juveniles being placed in custody or residential care.

Diversion from prosecution by

cautioning young people not only for first but also for second and third offences was a good start. Changes were also made in relation to Social Enquiry Reports. Research had shown these often to contain prejudicial or irrelevant information so that, when made available to the court resulted in a tougher sentence than would have been the case had no report been presented. It was decided to dispense with Reports for those appearing before the court for the first time, save in exceptional cases. The reports that continued to be prepared were now subject to monitoring by a Court Report Panel.

For those perceived to be most at risk of custody, eight juvenile justice centres were set up throughout Essex. Staffed by social workers and probation officers and receiving guidance from multi-disciplinary steering groups, each Centre offers to assess young people for a place on its 'supervised activity programme' which operates as part of a Supervision Order imposed by the

Court. Programmes are tailored to individual needs and may consist of reparation, analysis of offending behaviour, life skills and traditional social work support.

The scheme has proved successful: the juvenile court population has fallen by over a third and the rate of removal of young offenders from the community under is one half of the national average.

Heather Kingsley, Articled Clerk

Priority Estates Project

The second lecture was presented by **Tricia Zipfel, Director of PEP and Leonardo Leon, Broadwater Farm Estate Tenants Association.**

The lecture focussed on the problems faced in public and private sector housing estates nation-wide and the dire consequences of failing to deal with the many social problems they contain. The PEP offers an imaginative and resourceful response.

Priority Estates Projects'

philosophy is best explained by an over-simplified first aid maxim: if you can't remove the patient from the cause, remove the cause from the patient.

PEP tries to involve tenants and recommends on-site estate offices (which are more accessible), estate-based repair teams, individual estate budgets, co-ordinated council services and employment of residents by contractors on the estates. Realizing these objectives, would do much to placate the unrest on many of Britain's housing estates and may also reduce crime. Some of the bonuses outlined, already operate effectively on the Broadwater Farm Estate.

PEP tries to get all groups including tenants, police, social services and housing to work together. Leonardo Leon gave a rather more favourable impression of 'street level' community police relations than one gets from the popular press.

Hubert Smith

BRANCHES

The North East

The **ISTD in the North East has formed a study group recently to examine methods of crime prevention.**

By forming the group we hope to strengthen the unique multi-disciplinary and inter-professional role of the ISTD.

To date, meetings have been attended by representatives of the police, the probation service, the judiciary, the prison service, the Citizens' Advice Bureaux, the youth service, the educational welfare service, a security firm, a retail company, the planning department of the local authority, a victim support scheme, the NSPCC, lecturers from the University of Leeds and members of ISTD. Each member of the group has undertaken to give an account of their organisation's crime prevention role and, where possible, to organise a visit by the group to their organisation.

The group has been addressed by Chief Inspector Dryden of the West

Yorkshire police, Greg Andrews, Assistant Chief Probation Officer for West Yorkshire and has visited a community centre in York.

We hope that in addition to achieving a greater degree of mutual understanding, the work of the group will culminate in an occasional ISTD paper on the role played by participating agencies in preventing or anticipating crime.

Martin Roberts (0904 656771)

The South West

The Branch's autumn meeting, 'Young Offenders: sentencing in the 1990s' was, held on 22 October 1988 at H.M. Young Offenders Institution Eastwood Park. The discussion, led by Alan Rawson (lately working at the Home Office on juvenile offender policy, now governor of Her Majesty's Prison Cardiff) and Maureen Barrington JP covered Fresh start, educational facilities at HMYOIs, supervision of probation orders, severity of sentencing, reparation,

compensation crime prevention and the effects of the new single sentence for young offenders. We have said goodbye to our chairman, Tim Newell who has just become governor of HMP Winchester and welcome Vivian Budd (probation) and John Capel (HM Prison Service, S.W. Region) to the committee.

Dermot Grubb (0272 742736)

North West

On the 30th January 1989 the second Branch AGM took place at the Pankhurst Centre, Manchester, an appropriate venue in view of our guest speaker, Dr Raine Roberts, who is Director of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre at St. Mary's Hospital, Manchester.

His Hon. Judge Hammond was re-elected as President and Jean Taylor was re-elected as Chair. Jan Cottam, who has moved south, was thanked for her work as Secretary to the Branch during the year.

Jean Taylor (061 434 0665)