

FIRST PERSON

abiding life, to work at a job or maintain a family. He said *'It is this challenge of balancing the needs of the offender with the need to punish that is becoming increasingly urgent today. We must find ways, constructive ways, acceptable to the public, of reducing the prison population.'*

The prison service cannot simply put up 'no vacancy' signs, and must accept people sent there by the courts. The Scottish prison population is now about 5,200, having reached its all-time peak in March 1986 of 5,797. In the glorious setting of Peebles Hydro Hotel, it was sad to hear such time-worn arguments - and sadder still to realize how little progress has been made since similar inquiries recommended similar changes nearly 240 years ago.

Alison Liebling, Institute of Criminology, Cambridge

UNDERSTANDING THE PAEDOPHILE

Perceptions of the Paedophile, like those of the Rorschach blot, vary enormously. The conference, organised jointly by the Portman Clinic and ISTD, brought together speakers from different disciplines to try to find common ground. There appears to be less than one might have imagined.

Helena Kennedy, Barrister, spoke of the lawyer's obligation to minimise the culpability of their clients in the hope of acquittal or mitigated sentence whilst Ray Wyre, Director of the Gracewell Clinic assumes that the paedophiles he treats will lie and deny and that his role is to both confront and expose. The third speaker, Mervyn Glasser, Portman Clinic, considered the inner world of the paedophile. One might not have expected common ground to be established after a brief twenty four hour conference, but the event did graphically demonstrate the importance of continuing to work towards the inter-disciplinary ideal. A second joint conference is planned for 1990.

Conference Papers are available from the ISTD office, price £3 per copy

A Difficult Transition

Most of the time we relate to colleagues from behind our own professional mask. In this section we ask a professional to speak personally - in the first person. Jenny Hilton is Commander at the Metropolitan Police Training Centre at Hendon.

For the past four months I have been responsible for the training of all 8000 recruits to the Metropolitan Police, of all 200 cadets, of all our sergeants (over 400 this year) and inspectors on promotion. Before coming to Hendon, I ran Chiswick Division for ten years with its regular 'excitements' of policing Brentford football matches, was responsible at the yard for part of Kenneth Newman's revolution in our ideas and systems and dealt with Complaints, Discipline, Personnel and Community Relations in North East London. It has, in some ways, been a difficult transition.

Our pace is wholly different here - planning strategy for the next two or three years rather than the stimulus of daily problem-solving. I have had to learn new techniques. Thirty years ago police training consisted of force-feeding recruits with chunks of indigestible law and police regulations. Parrot-fashion, we learned the questions to be put at the scene of a road accident - 'What happened here, Sir, please?' (No alternative formula for women drivers was suggested) and 'Did anyone see what happened?'. As the emphasis now is on student-centred learning, all our trainers employ developmental and facilitative styles of instruction.

This style of teaching makes it much harder to judge both student performance and staff effectiveness. Recruits are still expected to learn a great deal of formal knowledge about the law, their powers and police procedures. It is in the application of this knowledge that we hope to instil sympathy, imagination and professionalism.

To my post I have inevitably brought some of the operational impatience that results from a lifetime in the police service. The Metropolitan Police is a large bureaucracy of over 40,000 people with procedures dictated by law, necessity, the Home Of-

fice and the Treasury. If one looks at the startling changes in style and structure that have taken place in the past six or seven years, we see that the Force is now more open-minded, more responsive to the community and has learned to develop long-term and realistic strategies.

My day begins at about 8.30; my first visitor of the day is usually the Training School Chief Superintendent. With 800 young men and women as his concern there are regular problems of welfare or discipline to report. These are usually trivial matters but the peccadillos of police recruits are always a matter of fascination for some sections of the media.

My personal secretary arrives. She takes dictation and helps to organise my responses to a variety of files on everything from language courses to cadets with scabies. More elaborate files and papers I put aside for reading. Some of these relate to national police training which has a complex pattern and is different in many respects to Met. training although I am encouraging greater rapprochement wherever possible.

Thereafter, my day may assume a variety of guises - Promotion Boards, Discipline Boards, meetings at the Yard to consider Equal Opportunities, or at the Home Office to contribute to national training strategy.

On other days I present trophies to the recruits finishing their five month course here - they go on to Divisional and day release training for the remainder of their two years' probation. On presentation of trophies, I am expected to deliver an inspiring speech. Moralising is counter-productive so I give them some paradoxical and counter-cultural ideas like 'Moral courage is more important than physical courage, but reaps fewer rewards', and 'Imagination as an essential quality in a police officer'. Or I might offer 'Loyalty as a hazard for the police service'. Later, I join the recruits for their final dining-out night and final parade.

At the end of the day, mine is an interesting and enjoyable post - but I do sometimes miss the daily challenge, companionship and high adventure that I met earlier in my career.