



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

As an ordinary Member of ISTD I am most concerned about the proposal to set up secure institutions for persistent young offenders.

As a well-respected academic forum the ISTD is ideally placed to ask fundamental questions about: the rationale for such a proposal; the evidence, if any, that such institutions will be effective; the knowledge-base which will be essential if these institutions are to offer anything worthwhile; and the costs of the exercise.

I very much hope that ISTD is taking an active role in responding to the Home Office's current consultation exercise.

There is no other body so well placed to provide a credible response and raise these critical questions.

*Yours faithfully,*  
*Winifred Tumim*

Dear Editor,

I am researching a BBC2 television series about crime in Britain between 1900 and 1950s. I am especially interested in juvenile crime at that time. I would like to speak to people who were working with juvenile offenders either in borstals, approved schools, prisons, the probation service or other schemes during the first half of the century. I would be very keen

to hear how young offenders were dealt with then and about the sorts of crimes that were common. I would also like to hear from older people who were themselves involved in crime in their youth. I am interested in hearing their experience of the justice system in those days.

If you had any involvement in juvenile delinquency, crime or the treatment of it from 1900 and the 1950s please write to me, Pamela Gordon, Testimony Films, 12 Great George Street, Bristol BS1 5RS.  
*Best wishes*

*Pamela Gordon*  
*Associate Producer, Testimony Films*



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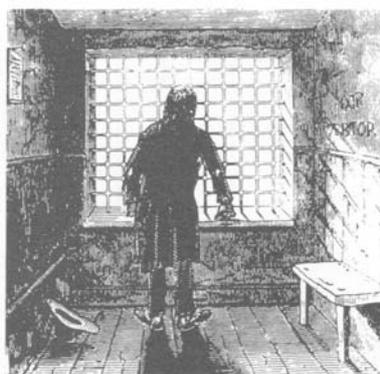
## THE MEDIA AND PRISONS: An officer's view

*Paul Ivory, an officer at HMP Grendon, presents some of the views of fellow officers gleaned from a working group at a recent conference at HMP The Mount.*

Film crews, journalists etc should only be allowed in prisons for the purpose of informing the outside world about what is happening in our prisons, both positive and negative.

If the media are to be allowed into our prisons, for the purpose of interviewing an inmate about his offence (as has happened recently on G Wing at Grendon for the '40 Minutes' documentary), a member of the prison staff should remind the inmate to consider fully the implications of such an interview on himself, his family and friends, and just as importantly his victim or victims.

Before allowing the media into prison, negotiations should take place between the Governor of that establishment or his nominated representative and the producer, director, or editor of that other agency. The object of this dialogue is to obtain for the prison a fee for allowing



any media activity to take place.

Any money donated should be used for staff training, or to purchase a new or up-grade an old staff and/or inmate facility eg. in the gymnasium - where staff and inmates would benefit.

Should an inmate be allowed to invite

a journalist for a domestic visit with a view to talking about his offence for showing on television or for publication? The inmate's point of view was that they should be allowed to do so because it is only because of their goodwill that prisons in this country run as smoothly as they do. My opinion is that prison staff need to maintain some control in this area but perhaps this could be done in conjunction with inmates. If an inmate-staff committee could be set up to monitor this very grey area their number one priority should be the feelings of victims or their families. It is, as far as I am concerned, regrettable that the high court did not fully consider the effects on victims' families when allowing Central Television permission to show an unauthorised interview with convicted mass murderer Denis Nielson.