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Editorial Offices:
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Mrs. J. E. Kelley, Governor of Holloway Prison, introduces

Finding Homes for Homeless Girls

A PROBLEM FACING disturbed girls such as borstal recalls, is that when they leave borstal or approved school they either cannot go home or have no home: they long for stability, warmth of affection and the feeling of belonging.

To help solve this problem the National Association for Mental Health, with financial assistance from the City Parochial Foundation, started a scheme whereby a social worker would try to find lodgings where the landlord and landlady were prepared to accept the girl as more than a lodger, and try to help her to settle down, which could be a lengthy process.

It was hoped that this would help the girls fit into the community and lead normal lives; it was also thought that the landladies might need a good deal of support as they would be dealing with very difficult, often very disturbed girls. Arrangements were made both to insure the lodgings in case of damage, and to pay rent and retaining fees in some cases where the girls left without notice or without paying. In the main it was hoped that the girls would go out to work and be able to live independent lives, paying their own way. What follows is the report of Miss Paul, the Scheme's first social worker, who found:

(1) The girls feel there is no real substitute for home.

(2) They are often quite unable to achieve the stability and relationships for which they long.

(3) There was no difficulty in finding landladies willing to participate in this experiment. There appear to be many people willing to undertake a piece of social work in their homes but unable to go out to any sort of regular work, voluntary or paid.

(4) Although 6 of the 29 girls settled happily, surely a worthwhile achievement with these very difficult girls, Miss Paul felt more should somehow be done.

It is now proposed to set up a non-residential centre to which these girls can always return, and where very little will be demanded from them. It is hoped to establish a round-the-clock service, so that emergencies can be met. It is thought after a period of drifting, but with the support and stability of the Centre, girls may become able to accept the landladies more easily.

The report, a valuable documentation of the day-to-day problems and events in a social worker's life, as well as a description of a particular piece of work, is by MISS BERYL PAUL for The National Association for Mental Health, 39 Queen Anne Street, London.

PURPOSE

WE HOPED TO FIND suitable lodgings in London and to befriend girls, between 17 and 22, who for various reasons had no homes or were unable to return to them and found it difficult to lead a stable and independent life. It was also intended to support the landladies of the lodgings selected as they in turn give support and help to the girls.

Main Sources from which Girls would be referred

It was agreed that the main sources from which the girls should be referred would be the following:—

Fairlop House, 59-61 Fairlop Road, Leytonstone, E.11. N.A.M.H. hostel for E.S.N. school-leavers.

Duncroft Approved School, Moor Lane, Staines, Middx. Approved School administered by the N.A.M.H.

Borstal Recall Centre, H.M. Prison, Holloway.

Young Prisoners, H.M. Prison, Holloway.

National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child.

Mental Hospitals in the Home Counties.

Area of Operation

It was realized it would be better to select a definite area in which to operate. However because various London areas are so very different and a girl from one area would find it hard to settle happily in another, it was decided not to be rigid in this respect. Where the girl stated a preference for a particular area I tried to comply. Where no preference was stated, because the girl was not a London girl, I used the area in which I felt she would fit best—generally using the Putney and Fulham areas or the north-western suburbs which were well known to me. Lodgings were also found in Peckham, Lewisham and Leytonstone.

Selection of Girls

Girls have come under the scheme at their own request after interview. No girl asking to come has been refused with the exception of several unmarried mothers with a child, who presented as big a problem as any; but unmarried mothers unfortunately proved unacceptable to landladies, so, early in the scheme, it had to be acknowledged that another solution must be found for them.

Type of Lodgings Required

When talking to the girls about the lodgings they visualized it became apparent that, with one or two exceptions, no one was in favour of a 'foster home' lodging or even of being 'catered for' by the landlady. The persistent plea was "I just want a room of my own, with cooking facilities where I can

cook what I like, when I like and where I can come and go as I please." With this maxim ringing in my ears and knowing the girls generally had a history of institutional care I decided to try and find them what they wanted in a setting which I felt they needed, a room of their own but in a house where the landlady would be willing to accept and encourage them to join her family circle.

Finding of Lodgings

This on the face of things seemed a formidable task because it was thought that:

(a) practically every available and suitable type of lodging in London had been drawn into the net either by the Children's Department, Voluntary Organizations or the Health Department through advertisements in papers, talks over the wireless or recommendations.

(b) the age group I was trying to place was probably the least acceptable to the community, quite apart from the type of girl I was asking the landladies to take.

(c) as no satisfactory references could be given, one could hardly ask for references from the landlady and obviously not everyone offering lodgings to a teenage girl under these circumstances would be doing it for the reasons we desired!

There was, however, one source of finding lodgings which I had used previously when placing girls from a hostel and which had proved fruitful. I decided to explore this in greater measure. It was the advertising of 'Rooms to let' displayed on notice boards outside stationers and tobacconists all over London.

Fortunately, this proved to be a most productive source—there was certainly no lack of advertisements and with the exception of two, who were recommended by a local parson, all rooms have been found in this way.

At first I visited every address given in the area in which I was looking. This wasted an amazing amount of time and energy as I found on arrival many of the rooms had already been let. Others were unsuitable for various reasons. Many of the rooms were let by Greeks and Cypriots speaking little or no English who I felt would be unable to give the girls the support we wanted. Others were owned by West Indians and I thought should only be used for girls from the West Indies, while some had men only living in the house. Many landladies were unable or unwilling to cope with the kind of lodger I was offering.

However with time and experience I began to be more selective and to assess the advertisements, noting the following points:

(a) the date it was put in—advertisements are often left on the boards weeks after the room has been let.

(b) How it was worded— if it specially mentioned 'girl' or 'young lady' I mentally gave it a good mark as so many will not take the responsibility of young girls. If it said homely lodgings or comfortable room I also gave it a mark. If it said 'call after six' this usually indicated that the landlady was out all day.

I would then take note of the handwriting, the English and spelling which usually gave me some indication of the age, education and possible sex of the writer and often whether English or not. Having decided from the advertisement that it seemed a likely lodging I would go there, on my way noting the districts, availability of transport, shopping centre, work prospects, local entertainment and facilities such as cinemas, library and swimming baths.

At the address I would take in the street and the house. Much could be learnt from the general condition of the exterior of the house, the way the curtains were hung, the kind of curtains, the appearance of the garden if any, the washing on the line and the state of the empty milk bottles on the door step.

If the general impression was reasonable I rang the doorbell. When the door opened and I actually saw the landlady I had to make a spot decision whether to go through with it. If I decided she was a possibility I then went all out! First I asked if the room advertised on the notice board was still available, if so I asked to see it and was usually taken straight to the room. Some landladies were obviously much more experienced than others in letting rooms and as we went up the stairs would tell me all the details I wanted to know, such as the electricity was included in the rent, but each tenant had their own gas meter or whether sheets and pillow cases were supplied and laundered or only supplied, or neither, the accessibility of the bathroom, how many there were and whether they had to be shared with other tenants. What other tenants were in the house, if any, whether the house was locked up at certain hours and the ruling if any, about boy friends. By this time I would have seen the room and decided whether or not the landlady was going to be suitable. If I thought she was I would then say "I think I'd better tell you before we go any further that the room isn't for me but a young girl I am interested in." I would then wait for reaction. If good or none I would next say, "shall I tell you a bit about her?" At this point I was usually asked who I was. I explained that I was a social worker concerned with girls between 17 and 22 who for various reasons could not or did not wish to live at home and that the majority were the misfits of this world who had been in trouble of some kind or another.

I explained many of them were borstal girls or young prisoners from Holloway, others were patients from mental hospitals who no longer needed hospital care but were not really ready to take their place in society without a lot of support.

It was interesting to discover that society seemed divided—those who were horrified at the thought of taking someone into their house from Holloway but felt they could cope with someone from a mental hospital and vice versa, so a stock question became "Which horrifies you least, a girl from Holloway or one from a mental hospital?"

Although it was originally intended to build up a panel of landladies this did not in fact come to pass, partly I think because it emerged very early in the scheme that when finding landladies through this source the primary reason behind any of them taking a girl was their need for money. The room had to be let and any feeling of social responsibility or sympathy was secondary. As this was the case and the demand for rooms far exceeded the supply it was obviously impossible to offer them a retaining fee—it had to be the full rent or nothing. It seemed to me that it would have been an unnecessarily costly business to pay full rent for a dozen or so rooms with comparatively untried landladies, especially when the majority of the rooms would be empty for possibly months at a time.

Realizing this and at the same time the fact that landladies suitable for the scheme were on the whole quite prepared to take the type of girl with whom I was concerned, I decided to find lodgings as required. The landladies' attitude in general appeared to be that letting rooms was a risk anyway, several told of tenants who had done moonlights flits, taking linen and blankets with them and owing rent. Others had the police knocking them up at the dead of night after discovering that a wanted person was their tenant. They felt that, as I would be 'on call' and the scheme gives the assurance of regular rent regardless of the tenant's unreliability, it would be a better prospect than taking someone out of the blue.

The question of subsidising the landlady was not introduced at this stage. I felt from the beginning that if this was emphasized too much the whole scheme might turn into a money making racket for landladies and we might have found we were getting the wrong kind of landlady who would be willing to take a girl just for the extra rent this entailed but would be quite incapable of giving the girl the help and support she needed.

I decided, therefore to bide my time and offer to subsidise a landlady only when she had really proved her worth and was doing the job envisaged. With the agree-

ment of Sir Donald Allen and the Steering Committee the name was therefore changed from the Subsidised Lodgings Scheme to the Experimental Lodgings Scheme. At no time was a subsidy accepted. Landladies who proved worthy of it all declined when offered a subsidy, saying that they were quite satisfied with the rent they received and were only too pleased to feel they could do something more for humanity than just letting a room.

The only form of subsidy used was when the rent of a particular room was higher than the girl could afford. If I felt the landlady was of particular value, rather than lose the room I arranged, with her consent, that the girl should pay a proportion and I should pay the balance; if the rent of a room was £3.10s. a week the girl paid £2.10s. and I paid £1. This was done in the case of three rooms only.

The rent was also paid to retain a room when a girl absconded and the landlady was prepared to have her back should she "surface" or to take another girl.

As the majority of the girls had to have an address before release, lodgings were usually taken a week in advance, rent being paid from the scheme; the girl was then able to visit during that week. This gave landlady and girl a chance to meet and so relieve tension of both before the girl actually became installed.

Landladies

Twenty-six lodgings have been used during the past year. 18 of the landladies were married, five were widows and three were single women. Their ages ranged from 33 to 60 years.

Of the 18 married, 11 had children between the ages of six months and 13 years. Five had grown-up families and two had no families. Four of the widows had grown-up families.

None of the husbands were professional men, but followed various occupations such as salesmen, plumbing, carpentry or railway work. Each one was interviewed before a girl was accepted and the husband and wife then agreed together to take a girl into their home.

There were occasions when a special landlady needed to be found as in the case of the young lesbian girl who had previously broken up two families. She was a London girl and a well known character in many districts and not too welcome. I suddenly hit upon the answer when I saw an advertisement offering 'homely lodgings to a young boy' and on investigating found the lodgings were in the home of a couple both in their late fifties who took only male lodgers. On hearing the tale they were quite prepared to accept Sylvia into their home.

Coloured girls also presented a problem, especially those who had lived in children's homes and insti-

tutions of some kind all their lives. Having grown up among white people they had no desire to live with coloured people. One in particular insisted that she wanted an English family in Peckham. Here again I was fortunate in finding lodgings where the landlady was coloured but the rest of the household white.

When girls absconded landladies were mostly prepared to accept them back or to take another girl. Unfortunately, except in one case, the question of a girl returning did not arise as she either did not surface or was re-called to the Borstal Centre. Four landladies, however, took a second, and one a third girl.

Girls Coming Under the Scheme

Selection: Although there was no selection apart from age limits and the almost complete exclusion of the unmarried mother and her child, it soon emerged with great clarity that the girls with the greatest need for help and making most demand on the scheme were those from the Borstal Recall Centre and Young Prisoners from Holloway. Perhaps it could be emphasized again here that every girl that has come under the scheme has been self selected and no regard has been given to her potential or previous background. It would indeed have been difficult to select from this particular group as their behaviour in the Recall Centre often proved quite misleading.

Getting to know them: Borstal girls and young prisoners usually approached me the month before the Licensing Board. By this time the After-Care Officer, working in Holloway, had also contacted me. This gave me about four weeks in which to make an individual contact and to interview them on their own. I was, however, able to get to know most of them in a superficial way by attending the group meetings which took place in Holloway four mornings a week, from 8.00 a.m. to 9.30 a.m.

Here I saw them in their many moods and in action within a group. They in turn grew used to me and were able to accept me more as a friend than a stranger when a more individual contact became necessary.

The individual interviews in Holloway varied very much. On the whole I did not feel the initial interviews were of great value. They usually took place in a side room on the wing of the Recall Centre, which in itself was rather formal and inhibiting and the conditions were so unlike real life that although at the time the girls may have meant what they said the picture naturally changed with the changed conditions outside. Some were out to make an impression by telling me how ashamed they were at what they had done and they definitely had

learnt their lesson and intended to go straight. Others would give a hard luck story and were obviously still carrying a chip on their shoulder. Some would talk at length about their family and early life, some were more reticent.

Occasionally I would see a girl in her room and this revealed much more. Each girl's room presented a very different picture and it was easier to make a more natural contact with them as there was a visible sign of some individual interest which could be admired or discussed and would give a lead for conversation, such as a family photo, a pin up, a particular book, drawings or even just the general appearance of their room.

The second interview was generally more useful. Knowing that the majority of the girls were against any form of officialdom, my main object was to get over to them that my function was not in any way official. I made it clear to each that she would still be responsible to an After-Care Officer and that I hoped to help her as a friend so that she would not have to go into yet another hostel on her release. Talking on these lines I would then discuss the kind of lodgings the girl wanted and whereabouts in London she would like to live. I would explain to her that some landladies were fussy about one thing and others about another, so it was as well to know from the start what type of landlady she would best fit in with. For instance, I would say, "If you are going to want to stay out till all hours of the night it is no good finding you a landlady who locks and bolts her door at 10.00 p.m! Or if you do not like children you will not want to be pestered by them running round the house at all hours. Again if you want to have boy friends in, it is no use finding you a room that has a ruling of 'no boy friends.' If the landlady has not a very high standard of cleanliness it would be no use putting you there if you had some bee in your bonnet about cleanliness."

The girls were very quick to cotton on to this line of talk and soon told me their likes and dislikes. Often it would come out why they had not settled in former lodgings.

Having established the sort of lodgings required and at the same time gleaned quite a lot of information about the girl herself I would go on to ask her how much she felt she would be able to afford. This brought us on to the topic of work and the sort she wanted; here I was able to discover if this was one of her big difficulties—the keeping of a job and why. So I was able to build up a picture of the girl and her needs and difficulties. I would then tell her that as soon as I had found lodgings I thought she would like I would ask Mrs. Kelley, the Governor of Holloway, for permission to take her to see them.

A Day Out

This always proved a red-letter day and was enjoyed by the girl and myself. They had usually been told the previous day so were able to curl their hair with special care the night before! The girls were allowed to wear their own clothes for the outing, which to them was a great thrill and to me most revealing. On the whole most of them were quite presentable and in fact looked very attractive.

Some were apologetic about the condition of their clothes saying, "I must have been picked up in a bad state," others that they'd left all their clothes at their lodgings and only had what they stood up in, which might be summer attire when it was winter and vice versa according to the time of year when they had been apprehended.

On one occasion I was greeted by a rosy cheeked little boy! She was, in fact, Sylvia, the lass who has strong lesbian tendencies, dressed completely in men's clothes. As this was her normal mode of dress it had been decided that it would be better for the landlady to see her as she would be. Sylvia was quite unabashed by it and seemed unaware of the looks she aroused on our travels.

Once we were outside the prison gates most of the girls appeared to be hit by the noise and traffic and would instinctively cling to my arm. Many, not London girls, were quite unused to the noise and rush of everyday life that Londoners accept. Even those that know London found the sudden change from the comparative calm inside too much for them at first.

From Holloway we would walk to Caledonian Road Underground Station, this gave them time to realize that they really were outside and to accustom themselves to passers-by without feeling everyone was looking at them! When we were getting near the station I would say to the girl quite casually, "You do smoke, don't you?" The answer was always "Yes." I would then say, "Well, while I get the tickets you pop into the little shop near the station and get yourself some fags," and hand her 2s.6d. This I felt did several things for her. It gave her confidence by going into the shop on her own. She was able to make a definite choice of the cigarette she liked best and was able to handle money again. The girls' choice of cigarette and comments on returning to me were interesting, some bought the cheapest make and returned the change to me with great alacrity. When asked if these were what they nomally smoked they said, "Oh no, Miss, but it's your money." Others would say "I hope you don't mind I got the expensive ones," and pass over the 1½d. change. Some came out saying they felt quite embarrassed going into a shop again, while others did not turn a hair.

After this we would catch the train. Little talk could take place on the underground because of the noise and the girls usually just sat and smoked. Each girl varied as to the attention she paid to other passengers. When we reached the end of our journey there was either a bus ride or a short walk. During this time the girls would question me again about the landlady and her family, obviously feeling a bit apprehensive. "Do you think she will like me, Miss?" "What did you tell her about me?" "What did she say?" "Do I look alright?" As we drew nearer the house they usually became very silent but the landladies always turned up trumps and made them feel welcome at once. Often there was a child or animal to break the ice and always a cup of tea. The girls naturally varied in their behaviour, some were able to talk quite chattily, others were very subdued and could only answer questions, some talked too much in their nervousness, but one and all always seemed agreeably surprised by the room offered to them and quite determined it was just what they wanted. After we had inspected everything and asked all the things we could remember that we wanted to know and met any other member of the family who was home, we would leave.

On the return journey most of the girls were much more relaxed in their conversation—the great ordeal being over. Many would talk about the room in comparison with other rooms they have lived in or their own homes. The landladies would also come in for a lot of talk on the girls' part—really thinking aloud. We would also talk about when they would be coming out and the day of their release. Would I meet them? What about jobs? Did I think it would be easy to get one? "I don't want to work in a factory" or "I've never really kept a job for more than two weeks. Will you come with me to get one?" "That's why I never got on my feet last time I came out, I couldn't get a job." "It's not easy by yourself; I never know what to say," and "What shall I do about my insurance card, I've lost it." All these questions would come out.

I would assure them that the day they were released I would devote to them and go with them to the National Assistance Board, the Employment Office and if possible for an interview for a job. I told them I felt it was better for them to get working as soon as possible as they would naturally find it strange when they were first free again and having something to do would help them and they would also meet other people with whom they could make friends.

I explained again that although they thought it was going to be wonderful in a room of their own

there would be times when they would be very lonely, especially after living in a community for the past six months. They usually replied that they had always longed for a room on their own and how now they really intended to make good and I think they honestly meant it.

Before returning to Holloway we went for a meal and I think without exception they chose sausage, egg and chips! The return journey was even more horrifying than the outward one as we usually ran into the 'rush hour' and I was clung to even more tightly! As we approached the prison the girls would often remark rather wistfully 'home again' and then add in a rather grim voice 'but not for much longer.'

When we reached the gate they would hand me any cigarettes they had not smoked which I promised to keep for them until they came out. I was always surprised how few out of the packet had gone by the time we got back.

Free at last

I usually saw a girl the day before she was coming out to assure her that I would be waiting at the gate, dead on 8.30 a.m. and to arrange to lend her a case for her few possessions if she wished. The thought of coming out with a brown paper parcel filled them all with horror as they were sure that everyone would know where they had come from. A case anyway seemed to give them status and so, even if it was practically empty, and alas in many cases this was so, we carried it proudly to the new lodgings and always stated on our arrival that we had come to leave our luggage before going to look for a job!

As the officer who had come to see them off bade them farewell and the great doors closed with finality behind them the girls instinctively seemed to catch their breath and were momentarily quite stunned. The sudden realization that the often longed-for day had actually arrived and they were once more free citizens was regarded with mixed feelings by most of them.

On one hand they were eager and keen to make a go of it and many would say as the doors closed, "That's the last you'll see of me," but the tone was usually fierce and unconvincing as they knew now they were once more on their own without the security those walls had given them for the past few months and with only the fear of the unknown future stretched out before them. Most were nothing more than frightened children.

This moment quickly passed, however, and they were once again on top of the world, free at last!

As we left the prison so early and few of the girls had ever eaten any breakfast because of the

excitement we usually made our way to a café before starting out on the day's adventures. Here we would plan our day. According to where the lodgings were in relation to the National Assistance Board we went first to whichever was the nearest. I also soon discovered that the earlier one was able to go to the National Assistance Board the better, as the girls found it very difficult to wait too long anywhere. I also discovered that Friday was a hopeless day as they were packed out at all times, so if at all possible avoided the girls being discharged on a Friday.

Thursday I found was in fact the best day for them to be released as the N.A.B. was reasonably empty. It gave the girl a chance to get fixed up with employment to start on Monday and the weekend to settle into her lodgings and become accustomed to the world outside again.

The visit to the N.A.B., though naturally difficult for the girls owing to the number of questions to be answered, was made as easy as possible by the understanding approach always shown by the officer dealing with the case. On arrival the girl handed in the letter she had been given from Holloway and we sat down. We managed to work out quite a good technique as I soon learnt the questions likely to be asked. While we were waiting to be seen I would say to the girl "I know you will find this questioning rather trying but it's one of those things that have to be done—perhaps if you can tell me some of the answers it will get it over quicker." I would then ask her the various stock questions, writing down the answers and at the same time I was able to discover quite a bit more about her early life without her realizing it. When it came for her name to be called I would go and talk to the clerk first and then we would answer all the questions together. This seemed a far less painful business for the girl and she finally came away in a very good mood. She felt rich, not having handled any money for so long, and the interview had not been the dreaded affair she thought it would be. Every girl remarked how much better it was to have someone with them.

After this visit we would then make our way to the Labour Exchange—here we were expected as the Prison Welfare Officer had arranged for each girl to be interviewed before her release and her papers had been sent. The girl was also given a letter of introduction. Most of the Interviewing Officers were especially appointed to cope with this category of the community and were exceptionally helpful, although the girls were not always easy or co-operative about the type of job they wanted or could do. We usually came away with a card for an interview with a prospective employer,

which we went to later that morning or afternoon. On the whole we were very lucky about getting jobs straight away, occasionally girls had known before their release what sort of work they wanted to do and I had been able to make enquiries beforehand and enlist the help of the managers of various firms, but the majority went through the Labour Exchange.

On the way to the interview I always asked them if they wished to go into it on their own or for me to come with them. One and all voted for the latter. The great question then came up, "What am I going to tell them?" I replied "Well it's up to you, but naturally you will be asked where you last worked and most probably need a reference. You can hedge around it but if you really want my opinion I feel you would do better to spill the beans and be done with it. If he is worth having for a manager he will probably take you on and no one else in the firm need know a thing about you, if on the other hand he feels he cannot employ you then you are probably as well off to be away from that firm and find another job where you will be welcome."

The girls usually agreed to this, taking courage from the fact that I would be with them.

I have been greatly encouraged by the amount of good will amongst employers and the real encouragement and kindness they have shown to the girls. There have been comparatively few who have been unwilling to at least give them a chance. More often than not they have been at great pains to make them feel wanted and a necessary part of their team. I often have felt if they had noticed the look of both surprise and real joy which showed on a girl's face when told she can have the job, they would have been rewarded. With money in their pocket and a job fixed to start on Monday she is walking on air by this time! Many have said at this stage "I just can't believe it, my luck must be changing!" If we had not already had lunch this was definitely the time to celebrate and without more ado we would make for food! The business of where one eats is quite a thing with this type of girl. I had learnt this previously from my hostel girls. Not necessarily because of the actual food but the importance set on the type of restaurant chosen.

If you go to a coffee bar the girl at once feels you are ashamed to be out with her, if on the other hand you select quite an ordinary restaurant "It's too posh." If you go to Jo. Lyons you have no imagination, so says the girl. What is left? I solved the problem by taking them to a continental or Chinese restaurant. Here the clientele is neither too posh nor too low but just cosmopolitan. This went down well with the girls, especially as few had been to such places before. The

more adventurous ones were game to try the unusual dishes but the conventional ones were able to choose a more familiar dish. It gave them something to talk about.

Fortified with food we would then make our way to our last call, the National Insurance Office. Here more questions had to be answered and usually a form for a 'lost card' filled in and we would come away with a sigh of relief from us both and the necessary document to enable her to start work.

It is certainly a business to establish oneself in the world again. I could understand how disheartening and wearying it must be to do it by oneself and was not a bit surprised to hear from several of the girls that when they came out before they just had not gone through with it and so from the first day had started drifting.

With everything accomplished, however, I would say to the girl, "Now you can put the past behind you—you are a free woman with a place of your own, a job to start on Monday, money in your pocket, what else do you want!" Then I would say, "Food to keep you alive" and we would do the last of the tasks necessary and by far the most enjoyable for the girl and make our way to a food store to buy the groceries she would need.

I found the girls varied very much in their knowledge of shopping and their needs, but together we would remember most of the necessary items and would then make our rather weary way back to the lodgings.

Often it might be nearly four o'clock by the time we finally arrived back at the lodgings. If the landlady was in she would probably appear and ask how we had got on. The girl would then happily tell her about her job and the day's proceedings. I would usually leave at this point suggesting to the girl that she got her bits and pieces unpacked and promising to look in later in the evening if I felt she was not too settled. Otherwise I would give her my home and office telephone numbers and tell her to call me any time she needed me. I also promised to look in the next day.

From this point no settled pattern evolved. The girls varied in the demands they made on me with regards to phone calls and visits and in their length of stay in their lodgings and their jobs.

There were only five girls from sources other than Holloway. Two unmarried mothers, one of whom I knew from my previous work and was already in lodgings. The other I was able to accept because a local vicar had offered me lodgings in Putney for a mother with baby. I also accepted two girls into the scheme from the N.A.M.H. hostel for E.S.N. school-leavers, one after several interviews and the other on the recommendation

of the Warden. The fifth was known to me since she was 15 years of age when she was in the care of the L.C.C. Children's Department. She was now 19 years old and virtually on her own in the world. She was taken into the scheme mainly so that she would be financially helped, without which the strain of trying to make ends meet might have proved too much for her

What Success?

Of the 29 girls placed in lodgings only six can be regarded as likely to remain settled and two of these would have settled without my help. Reasons for the inability of so many to settle were complex and varied from girl to girl.

Nevertheless, certain factors were common to many and may be considered worthy of note when placing other girls. What struck me first and foremost was that the girls hankered after their own families. This was often so even after they had stated they never wished to see them again. As soon as they were outside or immediately before their discharge from Holloway their thoughts seemed to centre on home and family and they often wrote to them telling of their discharge and giving their address. They obviously longed for some sort of contact even if only a letter. Meantime they found it very difficult to make a relationship with anyone else. Often they would rush off to their homes unable to contain themselves any longer, just hoping that things would be different and that they would get on better with their families.

I feel if these girls could be helped to come to terms with reality regarding their families, before discharge, then this scheme is more likely to be able to help them. Until this has been accomplished I am convinced that little can be done to help a girl progress in any way. Also I feel much more should be done while a girl is in a residential setting, of whatever kind, to prepare her for the outside world in other respects.

Even those deprived of their freedom must somehow be made to face up to reality and be allowed to accept responsibility so that they are more prepared to meet the challenges presented outside. At the moment the majority are quite unable to do this.

Another difficulty is that many have tasted the way of easy money and work for them holds no attractions. Others are hindered by their inability to stick any length of time in one job, or in fact in any job at all, due to instability of one kind or another. Added to this is the fact that few are trained for any specific job, and are therefore unable to undertake much in the way of interesting work, having to accept the more repetitive jobs which they find not only

frustrating but the small wage received at the end of the week is no encouragement to them.

Finally where a girl was on statutory after-care the ultimate responsibility for her rested with her After-Care Officer who had to be kept informed of the girl's movements. Major decisions such as whether the girl was recalled or not were made by her. It was therefore impossible to take any 'calculated risks' which I feel might have paid dividends with some girls. For example, it had been my previous experience that if a girl absconded, often several times, but knew she could return of her own accord, the need to abscond would gradually die. With these girls, however, often the fear of being recalled prevented them from surfacing and returning to their lodgings. This severely limited the chance of their being helped by the scheme.

Prisoners as "Ordinary" People

Sir,

Thank you for the review of *Twelve Months, Mrs Brown* in your Spring issue.

Your reviewer is concerned about "the exaggerated description of conditions (in prison) that the book will convey to the public and which do not now exist." The recent series of documentary films on ITV convey plainly to the public that such conditions do very much still exist. The discussion between Holloway officers on the problem of young offenders showed that that remains the same, too. Nor did the comments and attitude of the prisoners seem changed.

Certainly it is good to see the modern lines of Styal and Blundeston, and no doubt as the years go by all the old establishments will be replaced by similar designs, or better. Meanwhile, however, the large majority of prisoners must be detained in the old surroundings, much as your reviewer may wish this fact away.

Your reviewer is in agreement with me in saying that "the majority of prisoners are ordinary people." Our difference is that I believe that the way to ensure that they remain ordinary people is to treat them as such, and that the Norwich Scheme, group counsellings and mod. cons. are only fringe attempts to do this. To bring the life of the lawbreaker as close as possible to that of the law-abider will require more realistic, everyday demands and responsibilities: productively organized full-time work, at full wages, with full responsibility for repaying out of effort and earnings the damage and loss caused by offending against others.

Work and payment of dues are common morality and the common lot: why your reviewer considers them "retrograded steps" when applied to prisoners is beyond me.

Whether the book portrays all but one of the characters unsympathetically and caricatures the staff are, of course, subjective opinions which must be decided by readers for themselves.

By the way, the price of the book is 18s. 0d. and not 38s. 0d.

Yours etc., KATHLEEN SMITH.

We regret the error in the price of Twelve Months, Mrs. Brown.

Miss Smith's latest book A Cure for Crime *also published by Duckworth (this time the price is 12s.6d.) introduces a proposal for "Self-determinate" sentences.*

It will be reviewed fully in a later issue. EDITOR.

After Care and the Prison Officer

J. E. THOMAS

Much has been made of the new role of the Prison, Borstal and Detention Officer envisaged in the A.C.T.O. report on the "Organization of After-care." It seems worthwhile perhaps to look more closely at this "new role" as expressed, and as implied in the report.

IN THE FIRST PLACE the principle is clearly established that After Care must begin immediately an offender enters a penal institution and that "it must be conceived as a continuing process throughout his sentence." The Report clearly postulates that the whole staff in an institution should direct its efforts to the "individual rehabilitation of each inmate." This in itself implies total revolution in the bulk of establishments. The Committee go on to point out that "in prisons the concept of teamwork by the whole staff directed to individual rehabilitation will take time to reach all individuals and levels." It could be argued from their consequent proposals that that there is not the time available to allow this idea to "reach" all individuals and so it seems to overcome this difficulty by involving people who accept, as a basic premise, the idea of constructive, sympathetic rehabilitation. They recommend the appointment of social case-workers, changing the name (and perhaps the role) of welfare officers, in all prisons. The social worker is to be the lynch-pin of the rehabilitative effort in the prison. Where then does the prison officer fit in? In this 82-page report there is one small paragraph which deals with his place in the new regime. A great deal has been read into this but its conclusions seem to be definite and limited. This section concedes that prison officers "can and must play a vital part in the work of

rehabilitation." The officer learns a lot about the men; if he observes a personal difficulty he must enlist "the aid of the social worker." Officers' training should be varied to place more stress on group work and so forth. Perhaps one of the main reasons why the Committee have not envisaged a really extended role for the prison officer is that at last the staff element which continually points out that the existence of the 'local' and its concomitant problems effectively precludes any work of this kind has managed to convince somebody. The colossal difficulties under which prison officers work were outlined to the Committee, but there seems to have been no suggestion from people giving evidence as to how these difficulties could be overcome. It seems possible that the unfortunate impression was given that these difficulties were insuperable and that the function of the prison officer had therefore to be restricted. Hence the need for a new 'grade,' a new member of the staff, and a consequent limitation of the role of the prison officer. It must seem lamentable to forward-looking members of the Service that the claim was not made that the prison officer could and would overcome the obstacles between him and the more constructive work he wants. Those who in no way subscribe to the new role of the prison officer should be content. It is interesting to note incidentally that the A.G. in the prison is never mentioned, not to say discussed.

Detention Centres, it is also recommended, should also have a social worker. This is becoming a reality. Of the new role of the prison officer, it is said, in this type of establishment, that he should be "specially alert."

Borstal is dealt with in more detail, and the discussion here centres around the question as to whether there is need for social workers in view of the presence of housemasters (Assistant Governors). The Committee claim that the training of A.G.s is mainly concerned with the "administration of Penal Institutions." Peter Nokes points out in P.S.J. No. 13 that this shows a surprising lack of awareness of the substance of the Staff Course. On the whole they conclude that there is only an occasional need for "specialist" social workers, and that the housemaster can fulfil the function of an after-care organizer. This will need training they point out. The effect that this will have on the work of the borstal officer (not mentioned) is purely speculative. One or two things are clear. Firstly, that if the borstal housemaster is to be more closely concerned with after-care, someone is going to have to help with the institutional routine administration which occupies most of his time at the moment. Principal Officers in some establishments help substantially with this, but this is by no means

universal. Secondly, if the housemasters are to be "after-care orientated," the staff in his house will have to be so too, and there must be less emphasis on sterile institutional training than is the custom now. The problem of sports teams and aniseed balls will rate low in the scale of priorities. Thirdly, how far the borstal officer is to be concerned in the preparation for after-care is very much dependent on the Governor in general and the housemaster in particular. It is possible that it will be in borstal, more than in prison, that these new concepts will take "time to reach all individuals and levels."

The Joint Working Party on the Role of the Prison Officer reported in April 1964, in an interim report, that they could not "enter into any commitment in respect of the future welfare structure." They were unable to do this because of the A.C.T.O. report and its implications. It is true that the J.W.P. were in support of advanced training for officers, but this is really marginal if the whole emphasis of "training" in penal institutions is going to be "training for release,"which it will be if the spirit of the A.C.T.O. report is acted upon. Two conclusions seem to be drawn from this report.

The first is that the prison officer, whilst he will be encouraged to take part in rehabilitative programmes, will not, as a matter of statutory function, be involved *very* deeply in this programme. This is partly because of the gloomy picture (and it is gloomy) painted by some staff members of their present limitations, and because of their apparent lack of determination to overcome these. It is also partly true that there are prison officers who do not wish to be involved in any way with the new 'role' and so create difficulties, which may have, in part, been effective in preventing these roles being evolved. They have, because of the highly authoritative (though perhaps not representative) nature of their arguments, in a sense left the A.C.T.O. with no alternative than to solve the problem in other ways.

The second factor is that the extent to which officers are involved in rehabilitation training is entirely dependent upon the opinions of the members of the staff who will have statutory responsibilities for after-care, that is the social worker (in prisons and D.C.s) and the A.G. (in borstal) and the Governor in all of them.

This situation has come about not because of any pressure from outsiders, and certainly not because of pressure from the Welfare Officers, but because of pressure from members of the Service who do not want involvement of this kind, and overdraw the difficulties facing colleagues who want to do more constructive work, whilst giving lip service to the ideals of these more enlightened colleagues. This "reactionary" element is always more vociferous because

their view of a prison officer's job has an historical, firm foundation. Supporters of a proposed new role are not usually very vociferous, even though they may welcome it, because it is untried and *could* therefore prove unworkable or disastrous. It seems that the committee have been given, in their generalized contact with the Service, the impression (correctly) that there are considerable obstacles which prevent a prison officer engaging in a more constructive task, but they have also been given the impression (incorrectly) that these obstacles are insurmountable. Perhaps the time has come for prison officers who are anxious to extend their professional life to provide solutions to some of the difficulties, and thus not allow less anxious colleagues to misrepresent or under-estimate their intentions, wishes, or abilities to do so.

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WINSTON MARTIN was Deputy Governor at Maidstone in John Vidler's Governorship. He left the service in 1950 to become Headmaster of a boys' approved school, rejoining in 1958 to serve at Wandsworth where he has been associated with community development work with Mr. Richard Hauser. He is now at Risley Remand Centre.

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After Care and the Blackfriars Settlement

Dr. H. M. HOLDEN

Why After Care?

THERE ARE SEVERAL possible attitudes which we can take about prisoners who have completed their sentence and are about to be discharged, and to some extent these will depend on the view which we have had of them when they were still in prison and of the function of prison itself.

Some for example hold that the aim of prison is punishment, that criminals having offended against society have to pay the cost, and that unless they are made to suffer there will be no deterrent effect and hence little to prevent them offending again. Others view the problem as one of reform—of re-education towards a more socially acceptable mode of life.

Others again may feel that while the primary role of prison is to protect society from the depredations of the criminal population some latitude may be shown in their treatment in prison and that a humane approach is likely to show better dividends afterwards than one of rigid discipline.

All would, I think agree that ideally a man's experience of imprisonment should be aimed at preventing him offending again and thus keeping him out of prison in future.

Unfortunately we all know only too well that this is far from the case and that while the majority of men undergoing a prison sentence are first offenders with whom their first sentence is also their last, there remains a very large minority who offend repeatedly, often in apparently the most stupid and pointless ways, and who return to prison again and again. It is this 'hard core' who of course make up the population of our maximum security prisons.

What is to be done to prevent these men from returning, to try to break into this vicious circle? To many people it seems that the more often the man offends the more difficult it becomes for him to adapt himself to life outside the prison walls. Of course, it is often hard to distinguish between cause and effect. Is this inability to survive outside prison due to some

inherent character problem or could it be that each experience of imprisonment itself renders it harder for the individual to survive in a free society? There are some men whose whole lives have been spent in prison-like institutions, whose childhood was spent in childrens' homes or orphanages under strict surveillance and who have never learned how to cope with any other kind of existence. Such people may become very anxious indeed when thrown into a competitive "free" world. Lacking the basic experience of family life in childhood they find close personal relationships difficult and usually lack friends. The only kind of life they are familiar with is life in an institution, hence they may welcome the security and anonymity which they find inside a prison and find it impossible to cope with the world outside. It is hard here to distinguish between cause and effect, all that one can say is that for such people each experience of imprisonment confirms and solidifies a pre-established pattern of behaviour.

In recent years there has been a movement to try to give more support to ex-prisoners on their discharge. It has been recognized by all who have studied the problem that the most difficult period for a discharged prisoner is the first few weeks after his discharge. Some of these difficulties are very real and material ones, others are internal, that is, problems of adjustment for the man himself. All of us know how anxious any sudden change in our surroundings and our way of life makes us, for instance the anxiety of the first few days after joining the armed services until one gets used to the atmosphere and the routine and finds one's own place in the army structure.

But for the returning ex-prisoner there are additional difficulties. He finds himself, rightly or wrongly, to be a marked man, to bear the shame and disgrace of being an 'ex-con'. After all, few employers will willingly employ an ex-convict with a record of dishonesty if others are available. Many, having no families will have no homes to go to, no friends to turn to and no means of support, often they are suspicious of authority and in any case are afraid to ask for help. It is hardly surprising that so many fail to make the grade and land themselves back in prison.

It was to assist such men that the D.P.As. and the Prison Welfare Service were started up and they of course provide invaluable help in such material matters as finding lodgings and jobs for ex-prisoners who apply for them.

The shortcomings of these organizations are however very considerable. Firstly they lack funds and staff, especially trained staff. Secondly, although they received financial support from the Treasury, the State assumes no responsibility for their organization

and running and thirdly, the majority of ex-prisoners feel so disillusioned about "Welfare" that few will go to them for help. The D.P.As. attempt to deal only with ex-prisoners' material welfare—with the immediate practical necessities. The men and women whom I am talking about need more than this. Many are utterly demoralized by life outside the security of prison, they need support, guidance and above all friendship

The recent report on after-care drawn up by a Home Office Committee fully recognizes these problems and has attempted to solve them by proposing that in future all prison after-care should come under the wings of a greatly expanded Probation and After-care Service.

All discharged prisoners will be entitled to help under this scheme and their problems will be dealt with by trained case-workers who will be prepared to help not only with the purely material welfare of their clients but also to support and guide them through the very difficult period of readaptation to life in a free society, using for this purpose all the skills they have already learned as "Case Workers."

Most people will I think welcome these proposals in principle at least, although there is disagreement as to how effective this new body will be. But is it enough? Perhaps the most important feature of imprisonment is the sense of isolation from society that is experienced by the prisoner. This of course is intended. The criminal by his own acts is said to have forfeited his right to citizenship. As a result the community excludes him and hands him over body and soul to the prison authorities. He loses not only his rights as a citizen but also so many of the attributes that mark him out as an individual with a role in the world. It is hardly possible for him while in a prison to feel any sense of purpose; he is cut off from his family if he has one, and can do nothing whatever to help them. If he was the breadwinner then he can do nothing to stop them starving. If he had a useful job then he will have lost it. Not only this but the whole emphasis inside prison is to strip the individual of his indentity. He now becomes one of the herd, a name, a number indistinguishable from hundreds of others going through identical routines. If he had initiative and enterprise outside prison he will not find that they are welcome attributes inside it, indeed his best chance of "getting by" will be to make himself inconspicuous, to conform to the imposed pattern—"to do his bird easy" and as far as possible to lose his sense of personal identity. In other words the qualities that are needed by a prisoner to "keep his nose clean" and avoid trouble are exactly the opposite to those required by a free man in a free society. In prison there is no point in worry-

ing about your life outside, even if you know that your family is broken up, that your wife is living with another man and that your children are being neglected as there is absolutely nothing that you can do about it so what is the point of worrying! Under circumstances like these worry becomes intolerable, so your only way out if you are to remain sane is to avoid thinking about it.

Now on discharge all this is abruptly changed, the ex-prisoner has to quickly unlearn all these patterns of behaviour. In prison he has learned that as an individual he is of very little importance. This is not an easy lesson to unlearn. After all it is true, whilst he was in prison the community had lost all interest in him and all responsibility for him. Very few of the general public have any knowledge of life inside prison or any wish to know. They are content to "leave it to the experts".

This of course, applies not only to prisoners but to the prison administration and the prison staff. They are set an impossible task in old fashioned dilapidated buildings under conditions of gross overcrowding. The prisons are understaffed and the officers poorly paid considering the responsibility of their work, and there are few rewards in the work itself. They cannot often expect thanks from the prisoners themselves while the general public remain on the whole completely apathetic and indifferent provided that their pockets are not touched.

How is our ex-prisoner going to adapt himself to his new conditions? Suddenly faced with overwhelming responsibilities which when in prison he had avoided because there was no point in doing otherwise, who is going to help him to unlearn these prison lessons and help him to face these responsibilities and above all who is going to represent the community to show him that he is indeed an accepted member once more with a role to play and with an identity of his own?

I am doubtful if the probation service alone can do this. They are bound to be regarded by the ex-prisoner as belonging to the same camp as the prison staff. Furthermore they are not truly representative of the general public; they are another set of "experts" and are regarded as such by the ordinary man-in-the-street as well as by the prisoner.

The A.C.T.O. report recognizing this stresses the importance of work being done by voluntary organizations with ex-prisoners and hopes it will be possible to integrate these into the After-Care Service. One of these is the Blackfriars Settlement Scheme.

The Blackfriars Settlement

The work with prisoners at the Blackfriars Settlement grew up spontaneously. The Settlement was and is involved in numerous social activities in the region of South-

wark using for these purposes almost entirely voluntary helpers, laymen from all walks of life who had a desire to help their fellow men. The Warden of the Settlement soon appreciated the special problems of discharged prisoners and with the aid of a generous grant from the Nuffield Foundation, a special project was set going to help and support selected ex-prisoners on discharge from three London prisons, Pentonville Wandsworth and Holloway.

Our aim from the beginning was to try to help the ex-prisoners feel that they had a place in society and to offer friendship and support rather than material comforts. Since those with the greatest needs are likely to be repeated offenders who have spent much of their lives in prison we decided to concentrate our efforts on recidivists rather than first offenders. We recognized that this would not be an easy task and that many, if not most, of our clients would be embittered men who were highly suspicious of our motives and might tend to regard offers of help in the first place as a "soft touch." Few of our clients have had much experience of disinterested friendship and we did not expect them to respond with gratitude to such offers.

Our voluntary helpers or "associates" are drawn from many different walks of life. We have recruited them largely through advertisements in weekly magazines. Their motives for wanting to become associates are mixed but most have, I think, a feeling that had their own circumstances been different, they could very easily have become criminals themselves.

Before they are accepted as fully-fledged associates they are asked to attend a course of evening and weekend lectures and discussions. Some come to this course expecting to be taught a technique for dealing with ex-prisoners and feel that what they are being asked to do is akin to "social case work." These will be disappointed. The training that we offer is quite informal and in spite of some pressure from the associates themselves no attempt is made to turn them into professional social workers. No one as yet knows just what makes a good associate and there is no blueprint available to model them on. They come to us with greatly varied experiences of life and with widely differing gifts. All we do is to give them some indication of the kind of problems that men leaving prison may have to face, some ideas as to the kind of personality difficulties that many recidivists suffer under and allow them the opportunity of meeting and talking to qualified associates who have had experience with ex-prisoners and who are willing to share this experience.

Our aim is to allow new associates to act as freely as they are able to within the limits imposed by their own personal and family commitments with whatever skills they have at their disposal. We try

to help them see that they are dealing with human beings rather than cases. In our view this is essential to the success of the enterprise. Our associates do not pose as "experts in after-care" because they are not. The relationship that grows between them and the men they are trying to help is within certain limits a spontaneous one. There are no rules or regulations as to how they are to behave, they are ordinary people, members of the community *wanting* to help those who have been cut off to feel accepted once more and prepared to shoulder some of the responsibility for doing so.

During the training course there are always a number of drop-outs, chiefly I think from those who feel such freedom to be intolerable. This is inevitable and may perhaps be the best method of selection available. Those that survive the course are asked to attend a selection panel before they are finally accepted. Our aim here is to prevent either the prisoner or his associate from getting badly hurt. Although we have no blueprint for an associate there are some people who enter upon this work for reasons—which they may not themselves be aware of, which are likely to prove unhelpful. Men or women for example who are more concerned with their own gratification than with benefitting ex-prisoners, or those who undertake it merely out of a sense of guilt. We try to prevent such people from becoming associates. Approximately one half of the original applicants are turned down for one reason or another.

There are, of course, certain limits which are imposed by the Settlement on Associates for the protection of themselves and of their ex-prisoners and of the project itself. We insist that no associate should be actively involved with more than one ex-prisoner at any one time. This is a very necessary restriction. Our associates often feel inclined to break it but our experience is that ex-prisoners can at moments of crisis be very demanding on their associates' time and energy and that it is unfair to the associate and his family if he is overburdened by the relationship. He cannot give of his best under these conditions.

Another rule we work is that the organizer of the scheme should be kept informed of all major events. It is he who coordinates the whole project and his role is a vital one. Associates are obliged to submit written progress reports to him every three months and he is always available to give support and practical advice to associates in difficulties. He has wide experience of other social organizations which may be able to assist a man in difficulties and on occasions he can provide material help from the resources of the settlement. It is important in our view to maintain a balance between allowing the associate freedom to act as he feels best

while exercising some control over the whole scheme.

The organizer also is responsible for the selection of ex-prisoners. The actual method of selection varies in each prison, all proposals are made through the Prison Welfare Officers and the prisoner is then interviewed by the organizer who explains the idea of the scheme to him. If he seems interested and is judged suitable the organizer then selects an associate from the 'pool' of those waiting and introduces both to each other. Ideally the prisoner and his associate should meet well in advance of his discharge and get a chance to know each other. In practice this often proves difficult. However, the aim is that the associate should at least be available to meet his prisoner at the prison gates on the day of his discharge. From then on they are on their own and no one can forecast how things will go. It may happen sometimes that in spite of apparently sincere intentions, contact with the ex-prisoner is lost after their first meeting. This can be a bitter blow to an inexperienced associate and repeated experiences of this kind tend to make him feel cynical about the whole project. For this reason we are careful when selecting prisoners to choose only those that seem to have a genuine wish for help and to exclude those who are so unstable that even if they seem to want help now one can be reasonably certain that their views will be quite different tomorrow. Selection is no easy matter since we do not want to exclude those who need help most and accept only those who can really manage without it.

At the Settlement itself there is a short-stay hostel which can take up to six men. This acts as a half way house for a selected few who have nowhere to go on discharge and who are felt unlikely to survive in a free community without this intermediate step.

What happens next is a matter for the individual. No two cases are alike and nobody can predict what is likely to happen. Each associate will act in different ways according to his own nature and each ex-prisoner is also an individual. In some apparently successful cases the relationship is a short lived one; after finding his feet in society the ex-prisoner may want to manage on his own and contact may cease after a few weeks by mutual agreement. In other cases a much deeper relationship develops and some remain actively involved with each other for several years. The role taken by associates is equally varied. A few adopt a rather authoritarian role as if they were probation officers but more often the relationship is an informal one much on level terms. Some pairs meet only on neutral territory such as a café or a "pub"; some associates open the doors of their homes for their new-found friends and a few have them to stay in their homes for long periods. As

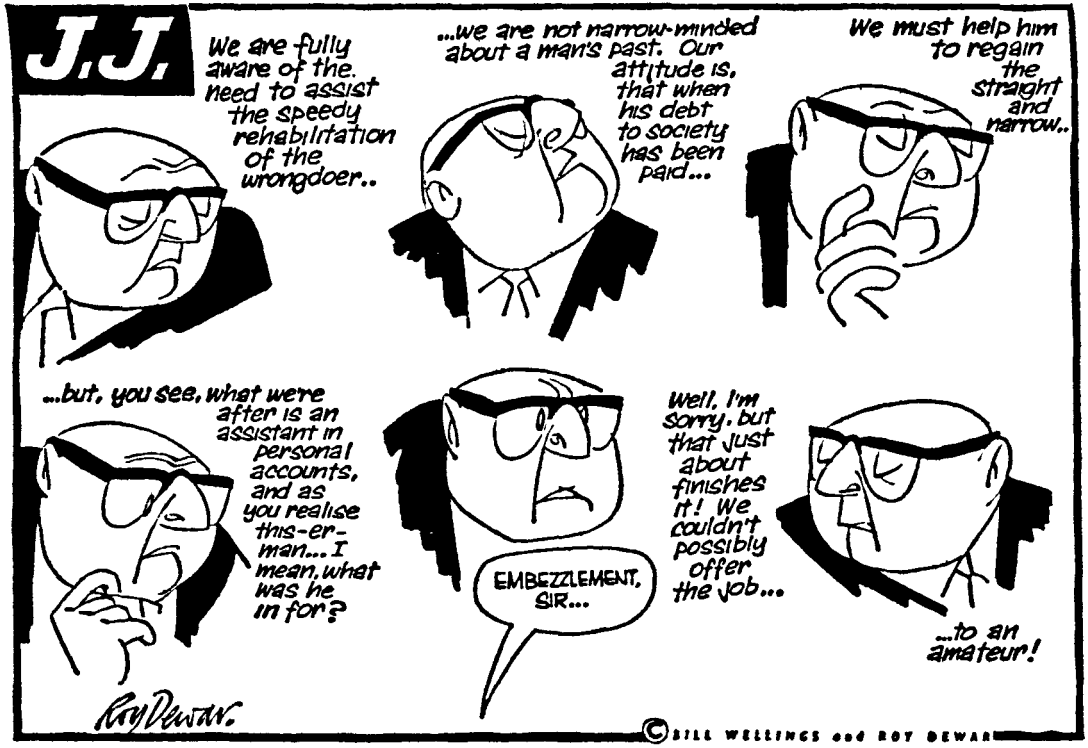
in any other friendship there are no rules, and any limitations on the degree of intensity of a friendship are imposed by the individual concerned.

Having explained our intentions and something of the way the scheme operates it is necessary to say something about the results. We make no startling claims, indeed I am doubtful whether our project in itself has any noticeable effect on the statistics of crime. There are two great difficulties when one comes to assess results; firstly the question of what criteria one uses, what yard-stick one measures success by, and secondly the difficulty in making comparisions with a similar group of men who have *not* had associate after-care.

On the first of these difficulties it might be said that the obvious measure of success is whether or not the man is sentenced again. Really it is not so simple. The fact that a man does not get reconvicted might simply mean that he has become more careful and expert in his 'profession' of burglary and thus avoids detection. Conversely, the one who is convicted more often may not necessarily be more dishonest but merely less careful or perhaps more guilty. In any case few of our associates are *primarily* interested in reducing the country's crime rate or even in the moral reform of their clients. They are concerned to offer friendship to someone whose life has until now been a misery both to himself and to others, to try to bring some happiness through the possibility of friendship and to show him that there may be more satisfactory ways of dealing with life than the one he has chosen until now. It is very difficult to estimate success or failure when one is dealing with such vague ideas as these.

The second difficulty is a technical one. Even if it were possible to construct a yard stick for measuring success it would be useless until the results could be compared with an exactly similar group of ex-prisoners who have not undergone prison after-care. This is very difficult, firstly because our ex-prisoners are themselves a specially selected group and secondly because the average prisoner who does not receive after-care has no wish to be reminded of his prison experience and would not take kindly to enquiries about his way of life after his discharge.

We cannot, therefore, make any claims that our project is going to empty the prisons. All we can do is to suggest that on humanitarian grounds alone it is worth while and that it seems also to be a reasonable hope that if a man who has been heretofore an outcast from society can be helped to restore his self respect and to feel that he has after all a useful place in the world, he will be less likely to offend again.



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Keeping Crime Down . . . Down Under

DAVID ATKINSON

CRIME AND THE COMMUNITY,* a Survey of Penal Policy in New Zealand, with foreword by the Hon. J. R. Hanan, Minister of Justice.

It is a great pity that the subtitle of this immensely readable little book will inevitably put some people off, because it is a non-parochial work, contains hardly any statistics (my four-star recommendation for any book) and for a government publication it is an object lesson to all bureaucrats.

"What we do today, Britain will do tomorrow," used to be one of the proud boasts of New Zealand politicians, and we all believed it. There may have been something in this assertion of the little man standing on tip-toe to make himself taller, for New Zealand then was a tiny, fiercely British community, flexing its sinews in a determination to preserve what was best in the British way of life whilst eradicating the injustices which still burned in the memory of its early settlers, and with a glorious new playground of a country in which to do it. It held some truth, though, for we had comprehensive social security years before the ordinary Englishman had become familiar with the phrase "Welfare State." We were also proud of being a truly classless society, and of having no real poverty. We did have prisons, though, and I have no doubt we assumed (if we thought about it at all) that we were equally *avant-garde* in this field.

It seems we were mistaken. Official whitewash is conspicuous by its absence in this honest book, and there are no vain apologies for a penal past which is as inglorious as that of most civilized countries. Prisoners at Mt. Eden, New Zealand's hoariest old security "nick," are still locked up for 17 hours a day. And as recently as 1958 the country's top open prison for trusted inmates had two lavatories for 100 men, and was so cold that boiling water had to be thrown over the padlocks before inmates could be let out in the morning. (Why padlocks at all, one wonders, in an "open" prison?)

New Zealand's problem in

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numerical terms is tiny (less than 2,000 people altogether in penal institutions) but her resources are smaller too, and her geographical condition, with 2½ million inhabitants spread over a thousand miles of territory, awkward. There is also the Maori question; for though this friendly, unambitious minority is in many directions quite successfully integrated (I myself attended a village school with one teacher where half the pupils were Maoris) there are still serious ethnic and social difficulties. Anyone who believes racial integration to be simply a matter of legislation and goodwill ought to study this. Finally, I suspect that the puritanical philosophy of "rough justice" for wrongdoers dies hard in a land with a strong and comparatively recent pioneer tradition, and this attitude is by no means incompatible with socialist prosperity.

The anonymous authors of *Crime and the Community* analyze public attitudes to crime, past and present, with humane but non-sentimental logic. They spare none of the well-known fallacies and prejudices, and offer no crumbs of comfort to those who still believe in the virtues of punishment *per se*. Present efforts and future intentions are expressed as unequivocally based on treatment and training—with as little of this to be done in institutions as possible. It is especially notable that the whole emphasis is on *prevention* throughout, with the crime problem firmly fixed where it belongs—in the community, not on the perimeter. Offenders have failed society because society has failed them; for the vast majority, prison, borstal, detention, all the other panaceas involving removal, merely rub the spot and make it sorer. Young offenders under 17 are already the responsibility of a department which is closely linked, not with the Department of Justice, but that for Education. Ultimately, the authors say (and they obviously mean within the foreseeable future), every primary school will have its psychiatric team whose job will be to pick out the maladjusted and thus where possible, nip delinquency in the bud. Along with this realistic, if not entirely original aim, goes an ambitious government-sponsored programme of Marriage Guidance.

It is not that New Zealand has discovered any revolutionary new idea—about the best on offer is that of Periodic Detention, whereby young tearaways spend their evenings and weekends at special hostels. There is also pre-release employment for some categories of prisoner (as distinct from pre-release hostel) and compulsory probation for all prisoners serving 12 months sentences and over. Again, it is interesting that not only are women social workers employed in prisons, but it is stated quite categorically that they *should* be women. Otherwise, the

mixture is familar to any worker in the British field of penology, as too are the problems. What is really remarkable here (and not a little enviable) is the clear, authoritative manner in which this government has declined to compromise with outworn ideas, and hence the invaluable lead—one might almost say inspiration—which it is able to give to all progressive forces at work in the social field. One has to turn up the introductory blurb now and then to remind oneself that this is indeed an official statement of policy and not another ivory-tower product doomed to gather departmental dust.

To sum up, I would recommend this book to any fellow-struggler in the penal field who may be suffering from occupational frustration, myopia or indigestion. It makes an ideal short refresher course in aims and principles for the general reader, and contains very little that is of such purely local interest as to bore him.

Holland

A New Look at Crime

The second pamphlet in the I.S.T.D *New Look at Crime* series is now available. As in the case of Denmark, there is scarcely any literature in English on the Dutch penal system and child welfare services; this report gives for the first time a concise and comprehensive assessment of preventive, punitive and therapeutic measures in the Netherlands. The pamphlet includes sections on criminal law and procedure; child welfare services; probation and after-care; with a detailed account of the wide range of institutions visited.

Dr. Keith Wardrop has considerable experience of comparative penal systems both in Europe and America, and is particularly well qualified to sum up the impressions of the I.S.T.D. Summer School. It is fitting, too, that a forensic psychiatrist should write this report on a country which is doing so much pioneer work in the treatment of abnormal offenders.

K. WARDROP, I.S.T.D 32pp. 3s.0d.

John Vidler and after

THE POPULARITY OF prison reminiscences is, no doubt, due to the fact that most men feel that they will never themselves achieve first hand knowledge of "life inside." They long to learn and they are generally disappointed. The prison official, armed with a good memory and with Civil Service discretion, may give a factual, even piquant, account, but he has not suffered and so does not know. The prisoner may attempt this exercise (and how many prisoners who can write have not so tried?) but to the respectable his feelings are suspect. He is not one of "us". Oscar Wilde came near to achievment but he was a poet speaking to poets. The C.N.D. prisoner's position is too neutral. He is a martyr and imprisonment is a tool of his trade. He has suffered inconvenience, even gross inconvenience, but he has not known pain.

John Vidler's book does not belong to the normal "retired prison governor" genre. The reader will seek in vain for the coy reference of the "prisoners I have known" variety and there is a refreshing freedom from the normal governor cliché ("Be fair but firm, etc."). It is not lacking in colour. He was, he tells us, born to the sound of the Rye Town Brass Band and no prisoner over the age of 40 who has known or known of Maidstone Prison during his governorship will be surprised to hear this news. He was assured by his headmaster that he would never become "a Christian gentleman." He taught women tea pluckers to play hockey in Ceylon and then contemplated taking Holy Orders. By page 10, through the influence and the persuasion of Sir Alec Paterson he has become deputy governor of a borstal institution without knowing he had joined the prison service. "I did not intend to become a gaoler."

Nor, in the event, did he become one. Although he was, in spirit, one of the last pupils of Dr. Arnold, Puck, as well as the Rye Brass Band, had been present at his birth. He had an overt regard for the establishment but neither public school nor the Church of England—not even Cricket could mask the non-conformist. This non-conformity was not a pose. It was not that he appeared quirkish or "different" while in fact behaving exactly like his peers. John Vidler

sought first principles and it was by asking "why" continually that he converted a pedestrian English prison into a place of kindliness and hope.

He arrived at Maidstone Prison in 1944 and it has to be said that up to this time English prisons at their best were concerned with little but humane containment. Vidler, like his great examplar, Alec Paterson, wanted men to be good and to be happy—not in prison but in their lives. "The most important end in view," he writes, "is to try to instil into the recidivist prisoner a feeling of hope. Institutional training has many defects, not the least of them that a man having undergone this sort of training has ceased on discharge both to think for himself or to be in a state of mind to face up to the problems which he is bound to meet in the outside world. Because of this a man is never discharged as a 'complete entity.' It was the recognition of the harm done by the institutional machine that led him to alter or discontinue many of the time-honoured prison procedures. He was remarkable for the personal care bestowed on the newcomer, for his interest in the work and recreation of individuals, and for the minute attention given to the affairs and future movements of men about to leave. This sort of concern is, of course, much more common today though it is rarely manifested with such buoyancy and zeal.

Sir Lionel Fox has said "Try as we may to 'normalize' prison life, the fact remains that a prison is a wholly artificial community, in which the economic conditions of outside life can no more easily be reproduced than its social conditions." It is perhaps for his great attempt to 'normalize' that John Vidler will be remembered. He himself records "I dare say many a prison governor has told his staff that they are at least as important as he is. But I was determined to use the helpful atmosphere of the Training Prison to show the staff I really meant it." "... rigidity had no place in my concept of a training prison." "... the officer should be accepted as a responsible human being . . he should be used as a full member of the training staff not only in his normal duty hours but also by being allowed to take hobby classes and discussion groups." He tried to abolish the prison officer's uniform but "I entirely failed to touch the minds or hearts of the Prison Commission."

Sir John Barry, in his life of the great hearted Alexander Maconochie of Norfolk Island, quotes the Rev. E. Clay on the subject of the enlightened penal administrator. "He has to inspire complete confidence in his integrity, to win respect and enthusiastic affection, to make each prisoner feel his influence and infuse his own spirit into all his officers—in fine, not by force but by power of his own heart, will and brain, he has to

rule." "Such men are rare," comments Sir John Barry, and goes on to quote Clay. "Prisons must make what shift they can with the systems instead of men like Maconochie." John Vidler shared these qualities of heart and mind with Maconochie and it can be said that Maidstone Prison in his time did not have to make shift with a system.

Although a hundred years separates the two men, the resemblances between their thought and work are striking. Maconochie lived in an age that was more consciously punitive but even in Vidler's time "reformation" as opposed to punishment was more a pious wish than a reality.

Maconochie thought of prison as a "moral hospital". The object of (Penal Science) should always be benevolent—always the speedy discharge of a cured patient. Vidler constantly spoke of "therapy" by which he meant the knitting-up of relationships with other people which had been damaged or destroyed.

Maconochie was more articulate and his plan of work better formulated. His famous "Marks System" by which he strove to engage the will of a prisoner in striving for an objective (i.e. his freedom) was peculiarly his own. The fact that a prisoner after release from Norfolk Island would be doing the same sort of work on the mainland was of great help to him. Vidler, too, was greatly concerned with the quality of work done by prisoners and with training in crafts but it was his misfortune that a much greater gap existed in his time between prison work and the standard required by industrial society in the 20th century. Both men saw themselves as helpers of others; both tried to give prisoners courage and hope for the future.

Maconochie and Vidler may be considered as prototypes of the humane, kindly, paternal Governor who turns his back on violence and thinks in terms of re-education. How do their ideas and ideals appear to us today? Freud was four years old when Maconochie died and even within the few years since John Vidler retired the extent and depth of thinking in prison has greatly increased. As evidence of this it is only necessary to reflect that social scientists have been invited by the Prison Department to conduct an investigation into a large local prison and to publish their bleak and dispiriting findings: that prison officers so long regarded as the obstacle to progress should through their official organization seek to work more purposefully; that prisoners themselves, while serving a sentence, should work together and make proposals for constructive change. The mere fact that a Royal Commission should be appointed is suggestive of a general disquiet.

At the risk of over simplifying it may be said that since 1945 the major objective has been to

'normalize' prison—to bring conditions as near as possible to those in the outside world. In 1958 prisoners in Wandsworth were better fed, better dressed and had better communications with the outside world than the prisoners in Maidstone in 1948. The idea of the "therapeutic community" took hold and an attempt was made to humanize relationships between prisoners and between prisoners and officers. This attempt is perhaps best exemplified in the Group Counselling experiment which was introduced into prisons and borstals of differing types and which, however it may finally be assessed, most observers would regard as at least a check on the more gross manifestations of ill will which have always been the bane of prison life. It is needless here to do more than refer to the expansion of the educational and psychological services which, however limited in application in many cases, continue to point the way to 'normalize' and humanize confinement.

In bringing this about the prison administration itself has set the pace but it is probable that most reasonable people would applaud what they have done. The question still remains "of what value or relevance is such imprisonment under the social conditions of today?" Discussions with prisoners and prison officers reveal that men leave prisons with their outlook unchanged. Apart from the committed criminal group, the size of which is variously assessed but which an overwhelming body of opinion does not put at more than 10 per cent of the prison population, most men came to prison in response to a social stress or stresses which they are unable to withstand. How are they better able to withstand them after a retreat from the world during which tensions are reduced, stresses are removed and positive thinking is non-existent?

Neither in John Vidler's account nor in the life of Alexander Maconochie by Sir John Barry is there any mention of the introduction of new thinking or rethinking for men who were then and are now social outcasts.

After leaving Norfolk Island men were deemed to have "made progress" through the Marks System; after Maidstone which was designed to inflict as little injury as possible, some classes of prisoner received the attention of an after-care system which was designed to find a job and lodgings and little else.

What a man thinks about himself and about society must be the ultimate determinant of how he behaves. Against this, Ovid's tag is sometimes quoted "I see the better course and I approve of it, but I follow the worse"; but it is well to remember how limited the opportunity is for the group in a stress or breakdown situation to even see the better course and how little support is given by our society to a man

attempting not to follow the worse. Men cannot be *taught* morality in a prison setting but they can in groups be given the opportunity to make new assessments and to apply new knowledge. One London prison has already had experience of this and the results for prisoners and prison officers alike were inspiriting. With the help of a new handbook which prisoners helped to write, new ideas were introduced into peer groups, a rough tool for making social judgements enabled men to analyse and comment, the idea of "identification with others" and its corollaries was brought in. But above all, the issue was raised "how, as a result of these conclusions, can we as a group change conditions here and after leaving prison?" This led to the formation of a peer group of ex-prisoners whose concern was with those about to leave prison, those who had left and were enmeshed in one of the innumerable post-prison crises, and those who had gone to prison again. No one who has listened to an ex-prisoner talking to another ex-prisoner in difficulties can fail to be struck by the strength of his influence. Adolescents may be persuaded by other adolescents; dons will listen to other dons. The peer group is all powerful and its value should be remembered by the statutory bodies which deal with after-care in the immediate future.

Prisoners (apart from some recidivists with many convictions) have wives and families like the rest of us. For Maconochie the absence of these must have appeared as an irremediable disaster. There was little that could be done. For John Vidler, since he was a good and humane man, letters and visits were things to be encouraged. But, for most of society, are prisoners' wives and families anything more than inoffensive adjuncts to a body held in custody, for whom the Statutory Services will do all that is Statutory? "Being done good to" is a painful experience and yet it is still a matter of wonder to many good and persevering social workers that their efforts are resented and that they are viewed with suspicion and dislike.

When a prisoners' 'wives' group was formed as a result of the thought and action of a group of prisoners who had done some social thinking it was found that the sharing of thoughts was easy and natural, advice was not resented and help (searching for a flat, offers of practical services) was accepted without shame. Why should not such groups abound and be of service to others beyond the narrow bounds of the prisoners' wives group?

What are the resistances to the development of such helpful groups as those of ex-prisoners, prisoners' wives and others as yet unthought of? They are, perhaps, the old ones of institutionalization, apathy, fear of change, a society that is, as a whole poorly developed socially. When we are

dealing with minority groups which cause us pain, embarrassment or fear there is a strong urge to isolate individuals and deliver them to the care of the administrative machine. This action calms us because we are hiding the problems away and are also avoiding the worst excesses of destitution which would also cause us pain.

Imprisonment, in essence, is the act of hiding away. National Assistance for prisoners' relatives avoids the worst excesses of destitution. But the warm support needed by all sections of society if they are not to sink back further into breakdown situations is missing.

The crises which occur for most of us in ordinary living are usually met and weathered because we are carried forward on a powerful stream of habit. We may falter at some point but we are, nevertheless, carried. The "breakdown groups" of society whether they be ex-mental patients, ex-prisoners, prisoners' families or depressed school leavers have no such support. And neither the goodwill and friendliness of the socially secure nor the temperate intervention of approved societies in any way substitute for the solidarity of the group in which the members think and behave as peers.

John Vidler has called his book *If Freedom Fail*. But the issues today are not those of freedom or captivity but of social prevention using the forces that lie in society itself.

W.M.

If Freedom Fail,
JOHN VIDLER with MICHAEL WOLFF,
Macmillan. 21s. 0d.

* * *

Writing in the *Sydney Bulletin*, Mr. Gordon Hawkins, lecturer in Criminology at Sydney University, a former member of the Editorial Board of this Journal, says:

It is no less an achievement to have helped repair broken lives than to have commanded great armies, made fine speeches or acquired large property. But the world thinks it is lesser; and those who devote themselves to the most intractable problems that beset mankind are rarely accorded much recognition. John Vidler whose autobiography this is, served in a sphere which is notoriously unrewarding. When he retired in 1956 he had been an English prison governor for a quarter of a century.

In that time he broke all the rules governing the administration of prisons, initiated a revolution in the English prison system and helped countless men who were regarded as irredeemable to reshape their lives. The publishers say that "today nearly half the governors in English prisons have served under him at some time". I did so myself.

Those who read this book hoping for a clear statement of the ideas which governed his practice will be disappointed. Like Thomas Mott Osborne, the reforming warden of Sing Sing, and Anton Makarenko, the great Russian pioneer in the treatment of delinquents, Vidler's approach was largely empirical and intuitive; and he frequently contradicted himself with blithe indifference. So, despite Michael Wolff's assistance, there is no careful enunciation of principles. Instead we get an untidy, racy, entertaining narrative interspersed with humorous and sometimes moving anecdotes.

Perhaps the clue to Vidler's success can be found in the all too brief first chapter entitled "A Stormy Beginning," which outlines his career prior to becoming a prison governor. He continually rebelled against authority: at his private school, at Oxford, in the Army and as a tea planter in Ceylon. So when the time came for him to handle those who were rebellious and intransigent he knew instinctively what to do. To him all prisoners were individuals, never names and numbers on an official list. Perhaps his most remarkable quality was his gift for being able to walk straight into intimacy with men who had been rejected by society and deeply resented all authority: and his powers to command their respect and affection. And he exemplified the truth of Pasternak's contention in *Doctor Zhivago*: that in order to do good to others one needs "an unprincipled heart—the kind of heart that knows of no general cases, but only of particular ones".

Casework and the Prison Service

E.V.H.W.

NOEL TIMMS HAS recently published the first comprehensive English attempt at a textbook on Casework.[1] The only reference in it to the penal system is a passing remark at the opening of the final chapter to the effect that casework in this setting has not been touched.

There are probably two main reasons for this. One is that the Service employs a mere handful of professionally trained caseworkers, all of whom have been seconded for such training rather than recruited because of it. We are somewhat in the position of explorers in virtually unknown territory and have been generally too concerned with investigating ways of applying a casework approach and re-assessing our own roles to engage in public debate. Now that urgent consideration is being given to the ways of implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Council for the Treatment of Offenders' Report on the Organization of After-Care, it is perhaps appropriate to consider the question more widely.

The second reason for leaving our Service out of such a book is that the prison system is not generally seen as a social work agency. How far this is feasible is discussed later; certainly the origins of casework practice in voluntary social work organizations, and its development (even within statutory agencies such as Child Care and Probation) around the idea of a person in social difficulty recognizing his need for help and coming for it himself, have not led naturally to the inclusion of an authoritarian, total institutional system in the field of most people's thinking on the subject.

What is casework all about? The term is being increasingly met with and as Timms points out, "Casework has rarely been defined to anyone's satisfaction. It remains elusive and even its sympathizers are forced to admit that attempts to describe it often reveal—to borrow a phrase of Oscar Wilde's—'all the utility of error and all the tediousness of an old friend!'" And later, "the present state of social work literature reveals mainly an ac-

cumulation of unassorted ideas. This seems particularly so for casework. In writing and in professional discussion casework can be 'case-work' or 'casework'; it can be 'scientific', preventive, therapeutic, deep or intensive. Yet beneath these variations it is possible to discover variations on a number of key themes."[2]

Timms does not do much to clarify the concept of casework. He quotes Bowers' widely used definition only to pull it to pieces as being "deeply entangled in the art/science controversy," containing some "heavily persuasive" terms and claiming too much. His own definition[4] "work on cases guided by certain principles and the use of knowledge and human relation skills with the object of fulfilling the function of a particular agency," seems much vaguer and is heavily loaded to support his contention that the 'function of the agency' is one of the definitive aspects.

Is it unreasonable to suggest that any science needs art to apply it and that there is no real controversial point here at all? Casework, as an approach to the task of assisting people in trouble to cope with it, is rooted in scientific method. It follows this method in seeking to observe and record facts accurately, to formulate hypotheses on the bases of these facts to attempt to explain how the present state of affairs has arisen (or to predict how it will develop), and to test the hypotheses out and reject those which are unhelpful and use the remainder.

The art of using scientific method in an approach to human beings is no different from that in using it to solve problems of bridge building in civil engineering. Care must be taken to observe and record accurately; judgment, intuition, inspiration, sensitivity are all involved in interviewing technique, in choosing how to construct a hypothesis (or in casework terms 'diagnosis'), and in devising methods of evaluating results (i.e. 'treatment' in casework terms, because it is the person's subsequent behaviour which will indicate whether anything has been gained from the contact).

The facts in dealing with human beings, of course, include not only objective details of age, height, income, etc., but the feelings people have about these things; these mould their attitudes towards the objective details and affect their behaviour accordingly. Thus it is that caseworkers are trained to look for emotional rather than rational logic in the behaviour of those with whom they deal.

Casework is different from other forms of work with people in that it rests upon scientific method, extensive psychological[5] and sociological knowledge, on a set of principles and on carefully supervised training in applying these elements.

Timms looks at the elements in

some detail in the first part of his two-part book where he has chapters on "Psychological and Social Knowledge", "The Principles of Casework" and "Skill in Human Relationship". Parts of this are difficult reading, particularly the first chapter quoted, not because of the style which is usually most lucid but because so much theoretical ground is covered in a short space as to leave even people acquainted with this field gasping for air. Used as a kind of outline road map, however, (and this applies to the whole book in some measure) it is very useful in indicating areas to explore. The references at the end of each chapter form a most comprehensive reading list. Incidentally the book is well indexed too, so it is easy to find one's way about in looking for specific topics, although I would not recommend it as first reading for students utterly unfamiliar with casework ideas.

Timms' first chapter of all, "The Caseworker and the Agency," is perhaps the most important in the book for our purposes. This is where he elaborates his idea that the scope of casework is defined by the function of the agency employing the caseworker. Whether one accepts that this affects the theory (i.e. the scientifically based approach), as Timms argues, or not, it undoubtedly is most important for practice. For instance, the question of 'authority' is discussed at length. Timms maintains the distinction between people coming for help and people upon whom it is, in a sense, thrust when they openly fail in their social living by offending against the law or in other ways. His argument offers clear guidance to questions about the caseworker's right to take action when a person's conduct breaks the law or the agency's rules. But it seems to confuse the examination of the client's attitudes to the casework situation and the nature of 'treatment'. Do people coming voluntarily to a welfare service feel any less under pressure than people up in court? Do they face more easily the fact that it is their reaction to situations (or even their manufacturing of situations) that needs examining if a solution is to be found? The burden of a vast amount of social work literature is the futility of the idea that things must be done *to* or *for* a person rather than *by* him; it suggests that clients bring very much the same demands to agencies of all kinds. This is certainly true of prisons where the demand for a 'cure' is a well known means of defence. There would seem to be a strong case for arguing that there is a positive advantage in the question of authority being clear in the penal setting. The inmate does not have to pretend he wants to be inside, he knows that we know this and we are then in a position to face and work through his hostility straight away instead of delaying or avoiding it.[6]

An important issue arises, however, in connection with agency function. Timms, in discussing principles, says two things; that the agency must allow the minimum conditions for a casework approach to operate and that caseworkers demonstrate their values as regards their work the moment they choose to join a particular agency. This implies that the Prison Service must be very clear about its aims, and its staff very aware of their own motives. Casework can only be really useful if the reformative treatment of inmates is important, otherwise it is limited to helping people to adjust to their sentences and this is a meaningless exercise if the sentence itself is meaningless.

To say this is not to imply a sentimental, sloppy attitude to inmates. It is necessary to demonstrate to some determined, professional criminals that the forces of law and order are strong enough to contain them and to prevent their friends getting them out. If they are to change at all they too must see the futility of maintaining their old attitudes. But we recognize that the large majority of our clientele are considerably less determinedly anti-social than that, many even positively motivated right from the start. If the principles of respect for human dignity and individualisation of treatment mean anything therefore, treatment methods must include regimes which allow for the making of relationships, for the trying out of new attitudes and behaviour, for the exercise of initiative; and which can tolerate the testing out involved and, more particularly, failure *en route* to increased capacity. Such regimes cannot insist on uniformity of behaviour and meticulously high standards in the material environment.

It is possible to argue that caseworkers could function in a penal system which was devoted (apart from them) simply to custody or positively to deterrence or punishment. In some degree this is the position of welfare officers in prisons and social workers in detention centres as against housemasters in borstals. The Advisory Council for the Treatment of Offenders' recommendations are to perpetuate this distinction. If other staff were able to remain relatively immune from feeling, it would be practicable to run such a system. But in practice this is far from true. The pressure for greater involvement in treatment grows as involvement increases.

Greater involvement requires improved training at all levels, and proof that the need has been at least partially recognized is evident in the proliferation of courses both centrally and in separate establishments during the last year or so. These are gradually including elements of the basic psychological and sociological knowledge required of caseworkers and it seems logical to expect that

the development will continue to the point where all basic grade officers who are capable of it (in this author's view, the large majority) reach a standard akin to that of welfare assistants in the Younghusband Report scheme.[7]

Improved treatment also implies redefinition of criteria for selection and allocation of inmates. The scope given by the Prison Rules, 1964 allows now for allocation by personality type rather than length or kind of sentence. Specialized regimes have thus become a practical possibility. Regional grouping obviously has a part to play in this too, making possible the supply of professional assistance to governors from a central pool, for ease of transfer for inmates needing different facilities at different times, and for closer contact with families, either direct or via the probation and after-care service.

Much of the discussion in the last few paragraphs has been concerned with the wider aspects of casework as a method of operation rather than as an approach to operating. What of the details of method? The classical casework method is the office interview with one person and there is sometimes a tendency to assume that this is the 'purest' form. Timms in the second part of his book (five chapters on work in the main casework agencies, that is almoning, probation, child care, family welfare and mental health) explodes this fallacy clearly. He uses a number of illustrative extracts from case records, demonstrating work with small groups, in a busy hospital ward, and even in a car outside a railway station.

The penal establishment setting is clearly one of multiple relationships. The possibility of one close relationship being the core of the work is comparatively slight although it does happen. What does seem to be important is that everyone who is significantly concerned with any given individual is able to communicate with someone acting as a co-ordinating focus, and that this person is able to make a relationship with the inmate in which the diverse contacts of the establishment are integrated—that is, in which the person and his problems are seen as a whole. Traditionally in borstals this has been the housemaster. Increasingly it is becoming the group or landing officer, with senior staff as either professional advisers, community organizers, or communication channels.

Machinery is often already in existence waiting to be used in the way described. For example, house and wing boards, reception boards, staff study groups. What is lacking are sufficient numbers of trained senior staff, and, largely in consequence, appropriate staff training schemes within establishments. The Prison Service is not alone in those things; Timms says "Caseworkers should respond to the challenge of the complexity of the human and theoretical prob-

lems they encounter... they can explore much more fully the nature of the institutions in which casework is practised, so that in particular cases and also in general terms they come to appreciate the impact of the institution on their personnel and on those coming for help. Caseworkers should also endeavour to find new ways of working in view of the serious shortage of trained staff, whch is likely to be a permanent feature of the social services. The place of a consultative service for untrained and inexperienced staff and of short-contact casework are two problems which merit serious attention."[8]

Treatment itself has been variously classified. Timms gives a number of examples in the section on treatment, chapter 4. Briefly it can be said to take place through the relationship the worker has with a person in difficulty in which they, as it were, stand side by side and look at the problem together. A fairly general view is that treatment within this relationship may consist of four things—(1) environmental modification (in which institutions have far greater immediate power than community agencies), (2) support to the client to enable him to solve his difficulties by himself, (3) clarification of the underlying emotional attitudes which are inhibiting the client solving his difficulties himself (which may involve looking at the flow of feeling between the worker and the client when in the interview or other contact situation), or (4) insight giving, a process nearer to psychotherapy, when the roots of inhibiting emotions are looked at in an attempt to demonstrate their inappropriateness to the current situation of difficulty and to reduce thereby their power to inhibit solutions.

Such levels can easily be identified in work done within our establishments. Despite a frequently used argument (often a cover for defeatism) that the institutional setting is unreal and therefore "outside" methods are inappropriate, it is real enough in everyday terms to inmates and staff. The whole range of human emotion is encountered; maybe it is in exaggerated or distorted form but it is there and can be utilised in examining and modifying patterns of response. What is really required is not to attempt to make our establishments more like the outside world, an attempt foredoomed to failure, but a type of training directed to producing a common understanding. This could enable all ranks and specialisms to work together as a team, attempting to solve problems of organization and individual handling on the objective basis of the inmate's needs.

There is need for detailed research into aspects of theory and modes of application. Again we are not alone; Timms says, of the whole field, "We are still ignorant about the relationship

between knowledge and the effective practice of casework in each setting . . . we know very little about the results of social work, or about ways in which a casework service is regarded by actual and potential clients."[9]

It seems quite clear from a consideration of the foregoing that in the Prison Service we are all in a casework setting whether we like it or not; it seems only sensible to make the best of it.

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[1] *Social Casework: Principles and Practice*: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964, 25s.0d.

[2] Page 3, line 4 to end of paragraph, and page 3, paragraph 2, line 4.

[3] "An art in which the knowledge of the science of human relations and skill in relationship are used to mobilise capacities in the individual and resources in the community appropriate for better adjustment between the client and all or any part of his total environment." BOWERS, S. "The Nature and Definition of Social Casework" from *Social Casework*, October, November, December, 1949.

[4] page 7.

[5] Psychological knowledge in this sphere is based on a study of human growth and development, aimed at teaching all that is known about influences on the formation of adult personality in normal and abnormal ways.

[6] TIMMS, page 45. "People may feel that in coming to a social service they are in the power of others considered to be their superiors and the applicant's power can be exercised only in explicit or implicit refusal of the service."

See H. PRIMNS: *Authority and the Casework Relationship*: Social Work April 1962, Vol. 19, No. 2, for a useful examination of this topic which is not included among Timms' references.

[7] See *Report of the Working Party on Social Workers in the Local Authority Health and Welfare Services* (Younghusband Report) H.M.S.O. 1959.

[8] Page 238, para. 1.

[9] Page 239, lines 6-8 and 14-16.

Circle Trust

A CENTRE for discharged prisoners has been set up at 16, Moreton Street, London, S.W.1. It is a new venture in after-care based on the needs which a two-year survey of the long-term prisoner has revealed.

Habitual offenders and society are 'incompatible.' The chairman, Mr. D. C. Gibson, writes: – "We intend, therefore, setting up a 'society in miniature' where the men will feel that the standards are not too high and where they will understand the rules and regulations which they themselves have helped to formulate. We are convinced that the rehabilitation of the long-term prisoner, if at all possible, depends on a settled and secure background. We expect the club to provide this."

Aims of the Club

To awaken in the men an awareness of their responsibilities towards society and through voluntary work integrate them slowly into the community. To ask the men to make some restitution to society by helping others.

To interest and educate members of society in the problems of these men through the formation of an active group of sympathetic landlords and landladies.

We hope that a sufficient number of men will attend the club to allow specialists an opportunity in free surroundings to help and support them in their needs. We are persuaded that this kind of help is best conducted in the atmosphere of a voluntary club rather than in a clinic

Words, *plain* Words, Please

Sir,

In the April issue of the Journal under the heading 'What is a Housemaster' there was an interesting and entertaining article. As a Prison Officer who has had no dealings with Housemasters it was enlightening to find just how much there is in common between the Modern Prison Officer and Housemasters.

However this is not my main point in this little note. I wish to make a heartfelt, spontaneous appeal to B.A.M. and any other contributor to the Journal. *Please* when writing an article which will be read by others, not specialists in *your* job, do not use words, compound words or words not in general use. I spent a considerable time, as did some of my fellow Officers, in tracking down words like 'mesomorphic' 'ectomorphic' and 'encopresis'.

Had I felt that B.A.M. was attempting to baffle me with science my comments would have been much more to the point and couched in stronger language.

I am, etc.,

T. B. HANNIGAN, H.M. Prison, Aylesbury.