

# They Sold . . .



Rear (left to right)

Senior Foreman of Works Mr. P. A. Balmer (Blundeston); Dr. M. A. K. Booth, Tutor Organiser (Hollesley Bay); Assistant Governor Mr. J. Lee (Staff College); Officer (T. A.) A. W. Douglas (Blundeston); and Officer (PEI) D. Miller (Hollesley Bay)

Front (left to right)

Principal Officer P. Moyes (Staff College); Officer Miss M. Minns (Holloway); Officer J. D. Hemlin (Hollesley Bay); and Officer Gilbert (Norwich)

# . . . Cells

by THE SEA SHORE

H. F. FERGUSON

## Disgusting to Allow Recruiting on Sea Front

"THE USE OF the Sailors' Home on Marine Parade as a recruiting exhibition for H.M. Prison Service was not psychologically sound,' claimed Mr. L. B. Westgate, at last night's meeting of the Yarmouth Council.

"People on holiday don't want to see advertisements for Prison Warders along the front in a place that should be a place of gaiety and happiness', he said.

"Mr. E. Cannon thought it was disgusting that such a thing should be allowed.

"But after Mr. J. Fryer, Chairman of the Properties Committee which agreed to the application of the Home Office, had explained that there was no macabre intent the resolution to refer the matter back for further consideration was defeated."

So reported an East Anglian newspaper earlier this year.

Later . . . The golden mile at Great Yarmouth, the tang of frying onions, the heady scent of candy floss, the nasal bleat of bingo callers, the interminable ebb and flow of traffic and people. People by the thousand promenading,

laughing, jostling, eating, intelligent, moronic; wearing foolish hats, long hair, short hair, no hair, short skirts, long jeans, Sunday suits; marrieds, singles, respectables, disreputables; beats, mods, rockers. You name them they were there. And there right in the centre like a matron in a room full of models, rather woebegone and drab, stands the Shipwrecked Sailors' Home and there, with the co-operation of the Great Yarmouth Town Council a Prison Service exhibition and recruiting campaign.

Later still, from the local press:

## Prison Service Exhibition Big Hit with Holidaymakers

"Within a day of being opened at the former Shipwrecked Sailors' Home, an exhibition staged to stimulate interest in the Prison Service as a career became a big hit with holidaymakers in Yarmouth.

"On Monday after the official opening in the morning at least 3,000 people visited the exhibition and within minutes of the doors opening at 10 a.m. the next morning there was a continuous queue of people filing round the exhibits in the crowded building.

Public interest has been maintained since.

"Protests against holding such an exhibition on the sea-front were made at last week's meeting of the Town Council when Mr. L. B. Westgate asked if it was psychologically sound to hold the exhibition there. Visitors however have made it one of the most popular attractions on the Golden Mile.

### **Out-of-Rut Career**

"The exhibition sets out to publicize the various openings the Prison Service offers to men and women in search of a worthwhile, out-of-the-rut career.

"It emphasizes the fact that the modern Prison Officer is far more than a mere gaoler and that his role has undergone a considerable change in recent years because he is concerned with the training and rehabilitation of prisoners as well as with their supervision and control.

"What did the slowly-moving file of visitors see as they went round?

"The exhibition, the first of its kind organized by the Prison Service, occupies most of the three floors of the buildings and the exhibits include film shows, physical education displays by boys of Hollesley Bay Borstal Institution, exhibits of vocational training and photographs of aspects of life in prisons and borstals. A museum exhibit contrasts life in prisons in former times with conditions in present-day establishments.

"The exhibition lays strong

emphasis on the training aspect of prison life.

### **Prisoners' Work**

"The displays of work done by inmates of prisons and borstals cover an amazingly wide range of products, including domestic goods, engineering products, traffic signs, shoes, prison clothing, overalls, underwear for the Armed Forces, wireless aerials (made for a commercial firm), decorative and reproduction iron-work (including two halberd heads), joinery work, cabinet making (including such objects as church chairs and a lectern), file indexes, teapots, kettles and a whole range of domestic products. Specialized aluminium and non-ferrous products.

"Products from Blundeston Prison workshops, include prison clothing, overalls, shoes and buckets.

"Physical education for inmates of borstals includes practical instruction in such demanding pursuits as mountain work and in the physical section are tents and other gear made and used for this work in Snowdonia. Also included are canoes built in borstals for physical education and a great deal of other sports gear.

"Models of Blundeston Prison, Albany Prison (now being built on the Isle of Wight), and of Eastwood Park Detention Centre which is still in the design stage are on view, and these are supplemented by scores of photographs taken at many other prisons illustrating the

life and work of Prison Officers.

"Stress is laid on the fact that there are many openings for trained tradesmen and one section exhibits the range of tools and equipment provided free for the use of them in Prison Service. Information about pay, promotion and pensions is given.

"The main exhibition hall on the ground floor has been decorated by boys at Hollesley Bay Borstal and all the main notices about the exhibition have been painted and prepared by them. Many paintings and drawings by the inmates of Hollesley Bay, Norwich and Blundeston are on the walls.

"The exhibition has been organised by the Governor of Hollesley Bay Borstal, Mr. John Gilder, and was officially opened on Monday when members of Yarmouth Town Council and representatives of the Police and Magistrates were received by the Governors of Hollesley Bay Borstal and Norwich and Blundeston prisons; and the Assistant Director in charge of staff training at the Home Office, Lt. Col. J. S. Haywood.

"Staff from Hollesley, Norwich and Blundeston, and from Wakefield Staff College, where Prison Officers are trained, and a woman officer are on hand to give information about careers in the Prison Service."

A gymnastic display was given on part of the central beach on each Wednesday and Sunday afternoon during the period of the campaign. This was previously

announced by the erection of placards on the front directing the public's attention to the exhibition at the Shipwrecked Sailors' Home and giving details of the gymnastic display. The object of this particular exercise was to capture public interest on the beach and indeed it proved very effective in that after each display there was a rush on the exhibition building. The display drew an average audience of 2,000 on each occasion.

It is likely to be a long time before the success of this campaign can be measured in terms of recruitment. It may well be that the information given and the seed sown at Yarmouth will not bear fruit for some considerable time in the case of men who are satisfied in their present employment, but in the future if perhaps they become dissatisfied with their employment, their thoughts will turn to the Prison Service because of the visual impact of the exhibition. In addition there were a great many serious enquiries from young men of 18, 19 and 20, often accompanied by their fiancées, and also from parents on behalf of their adult children who were not with them on holiday.

It could well be that from a recruitment viewpoint *proportionately* more could be achieved from a smaller exhibition so long as a sufficiently dramatic publicity medium could be devised to capture the interest of the general public. The real recruitment value at Yarmouth lay with those men

and women who, once inside the building, wanted to talk with the staff rather than rubberneck at the exhibits.

Comments from visitors, as might be expected, ranged from the "Cor, it doesn't seem much like punishment to me", and "No wonder there is a crime wave" to, in terms of uplifted surprise, "I didn't know a Prison Officer's job was like that" (probably carrying a preconceived notion of two horns neatly concealed under the headgear and a tightly rolled tail!) and from a Police Sergeant on duty on Marine Parade: "In the whole of my experience in Yarmouth I have never seen an exhibition that has attracted so many people and which has been so genuinely enjoyed as this one".

Primarily this building was hired for the purpose of recruitment and the exhibits set up were intended

to induce the public to come in so that staff could deal out literature and propaganda. And of course it worked. But also the vast majority of visitors had not either the equipment for a Service career or the remotest intention of joining, and consequently, certainly in terms of numbers, the primary effect moved from persuading men and women to join the Service to presenting a true picture of the Prison Service to the public at large. In public relations jargon "improving the image". Here we were tremendously successful and perhaps this sort of exhibition is a means of helping society to accept their responsibilities for the criminal. Certainly it generates a fresh wind to blow away the usually nebulous misconceptions of prison, borstal and detention centres held by the vast majority.

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SOME PEOPLE are violent or otherwise anti-social because they suffer from mental disorder. But by no means all mentally disordered people commit crimes. Understanding and tolerance of those who behave badly because they are sick in mind must not mislead us into believing that mental disorder is necessarily inseparable from anti-social behaviour. The vast majority of the mentally ill and of the mentally handicapped are no more dangerous to the community than are the vast majority of the population as a whole.

The complex relationship between crime and mental disorder is discussed in a recent issue of *Mental Health*. Contributors included Dr. T. C. N. Gibbens on "Age and Crime"; Dr. H. R. Rollin on "The Law and the Mentally Abnormal Offender"; James Tinn, M.P. for Cleveland, North Riding of Yorkshire, on "Detention Centres—the First Phase"; Oliver Stott on the work of the Langley Homes for ex-prisoners; Valerie McLean on "Delinquents and their Families"; and Dr. Northage J. de V. Mather on "Criminal Responsibility".

*Mental Health* is published six times a year by the National Association for Mental Health.