such lessons could equally apply in this country. Recent Secretaries of State for Justice, including Michael Gove, David Liddington and Elizabeth Truss all stated that reducing the prison population was desirable, but wanted this to be achieved through incremental and informed practice, including better community interventions, rather than through a dramatic change in sentencing policy. Recent years have seen a decline in the UK prison population from its height of over 88,000 in 2011 to under 85,000. This has at largely been the result of reduced criminal court cases being processed, lower numbers of remand and recalled prisoners, as well as increased use of early release under the home detention curfew scheme. This modest but important change has therefore resulted from changing practice rather than policy.

A more dramatic transformation has taken place in the youth criminal justice system. The number of children entering the criminal justice system for the first time has fallen 85 per cent in the decade to 2016-17, from 110,817 in 2007 to 16,541 in 2017. Similarly, the average youth custody population has declined from almost 2,914 in 2007 to 868 in 2017, a reduction of 70 per cent. This quiet revolution has been supported by successive governments, albeit without significant fanfare, informed by influential inquiries and reports, and driven by practitioners in the streets, police stations, local authorities, youth clubs and schools of local communities.

The argument of Berman and Adler's book is that change is possible, indeed that change is happening in local jurisdictions across America. There are also examples internationally, not least of which is the youth justice system in England and Wales. These real-life examples illustrate that reducing the use of imprisonment is not only possible, but also that it does not undermine public safety and in fact can ameliorate social harms.

***Dr Jamie Bennett,*** *Governor of HMP Long Lartin*

Book Review

***Unconscious Incarceration: How to break out, be free and unlock your potential***

By Gethin Jones
Publisher: Dot Dot Dot Logo (2018)
ISBN: 978-1-907282-86-7
Price: £10.99

Gethin Jones presents a book that proposes to change lives, support the most vulnerable and '*bring people back from the gates of hell'*(p.92), in 93 small pages of clear and concise language. It combines personal drug addiction and professional psychology experience: alongside the extended metaphor of A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens. The classic is effectively retold in an instructive self-development style to help people overcome addiction and negative thinking patterns.

It starts with the chapter *'The End Begins',* which is a vivid account of a drug addict in dire living conditions where *'desperation is the only thing driving your mind'* (p. 5). The authenticity of the author's hardship shown on the synopsis, 'a childhood spent in the care-system' and 'years in prison', allows trust to be developed in his programme. He has been *'there' himself.* It gives readers a chance to connect with their own suffering and can spark the thought 'if he can grow out of that … then maybe I can too'.

Gethin then declares 'I will introduce you to your Scrooge'. We find Scrooge is symbolic of the part of the mind fuelling life-destroying addictions to: drugs, alcohol, gambling, food, sex, etc (p. 1). The Scrooge behaviours *'fear, disconnecting from others, close-mindedness, suppressing trauma, denial, head in the sand'* are described as preventing happiness (p. 9-16). The programme on how to change these behaviours is then presented.

The absence of academic jargon and the direct tone allow this journey to feel accessible to many. Complex theories are not to be found as the reader simply describes psychological concepts of reflection. Like Scrooge, we are able to meet Marley: the inner voice saying *'something must change',* connecting us to *'harsh truths' and 'love'* (p. 18-21). He brings the selflessness you need to undertake this journey.

Gethin's aim is to facilitate readers to improve analytical thinking, rational judgement and emotional management. He asks you to look back at your experience and use this as hindsight. The character that does this is named the 'Cabbie'. He is symbolic of the 'Ghost of Christmas Past' in *A Christmas Tale* (p. 27-36). The imagery of sitting in a chair self-reflecting ignites emotions through the interweaved anecdotes of a fictional 'you' on a rehabilitative journey. After learning from the past, visualisation techniques are used which encourage you to analyse your present realities with the character the 'Tour Guide' (p. 37-46) then your future goes under analysis with the 'Time Traveller'

(p. 47-56): both are easily understandable and relatable concepts.

From holding this mirror up and seeing the ugliness, as well as the good, it is easy to imagine feelings of emptiness and loneliness with the daunting task of change: 'I can't do this on my own… no one cares' *Scrooge thinking'*. However, Gethin seems aware of this and shifts focus from modern mind-set strategies to practical tools. Because the rehabilitative journey may be too difficult to complete alone, readers are introduced to the 'Singing Nightingales': family, friends, support services, people who are there with honesty, compassion and empathy (p. 64). Gethin's plea is for you to accept the support that your Scrooge ignored. The 'magic of the programme' is described as disempowering the values and beliefs that feed Scrooge (p. 91).

The author's hopeful voice asks you (once you have gained and practiced this knowledge) to become a Singing Nightingale and help the vulnerable in society who he refers to as 'the hobblers'. This brings the journey full circle for one to be more forgiving and compassionate: 'life now being a blank canvas' ready to be painted colourfully (p. 84).

To conclude, this book uses modern mind-set techniques with practical advice to help one create a pro-social identity. Gethin could capture readers further by being more explicit of his own experience of overcoming his Scrooge. The thought provoking and memorable stories could have been extended with more descriptions of internal battles which Gethin faced for others to link to on their journey of change.

This book will be valuable to anyone looking for insight into ways to break free from addiction: especially current or former drug addicts, offenders and professionals who provide services for such individuals. This is an easy read that could also be useful for non-professionals whom are looking for ways to support friends and family.

***Muzzaker Mathias**, resident at HMP Grendon*

Book Review

**Deserved Criminal Sentences: An Overview**

by Andreas von Hirsch

Publisher: Hart Publishing (2017)
ISBN: 9781509902668 (hardback)
Price: £50.00 (hardback)

In this compact book Professor von Hirsch summarises with great clarity the fruits of a main theme in his research and in his approach to questions of criminal justice. In a long and distinguished career across three continents, since the publication of Doing Justice in 1976, he has developed and refined an account of 'desert' as the core principle for deciding what punishment should be given to a particular person for a particular offence.

By 'desert' he means that the severity of the punishment should be proportionate to the seriousness of the offence. He holds that punishment is 'a blaming institution' (p.4), and his theory of proportionality is based on seeing censure as the primary element in punishment. The person committing the offence is seen as a moral agent: 'that is, as a person capable of reflecting upon the appropriateness of [their] action' (p.12). This centrality of censure arose from pre-1976 moral philosophers, notable H.H.A. Hart and Joel Feinberg. Throughout this book Hirsch contrasts this 'desert' view with various instrumental (or consequentialist) understandings of punishment, such as deterrence, rehabilitation and treatment.

His argument is rooted in the movements of penal thinking in the last 70 years, and benefits from the fact that he has lived through the whole period. Desert thinking emerged in the 1970s as a reaction to the previous strong emphasis on sentencing for rehabilitation or treatment. 'Doing Justice' challenged this primarily on grounds of fairness: that, more or less broadly, similar offences should attract similar punishments, rather than one person being treated more harshly than another because of factors not directly inhering in the offence itself. Rehabilitative approaches to sentencing returned to some extent during the period of high optimism about psychological treatment programmes in the 1990s and beyond; but increasingly, the 'punitive turn', what Hirsch calls 'penal populism' carried the field, so that punishment simply became incrementally harsher, without reference to careful principles of proportionality and the like.

Hirsch emphasises that 'desert' is not the same as retribution, in the sense of pay-back, or making the offender suffer in order to balance up the damage they have caused to the social fabric; nor is it a return to the 'classical' understanding typified by Bentham, which was based in deterrence. Rather, it is all about scales of proportionality. Some scholars have argued that proportionality is a purely negative principle: i.e., that its only application is to limit the severity of leniency of sentences, so that