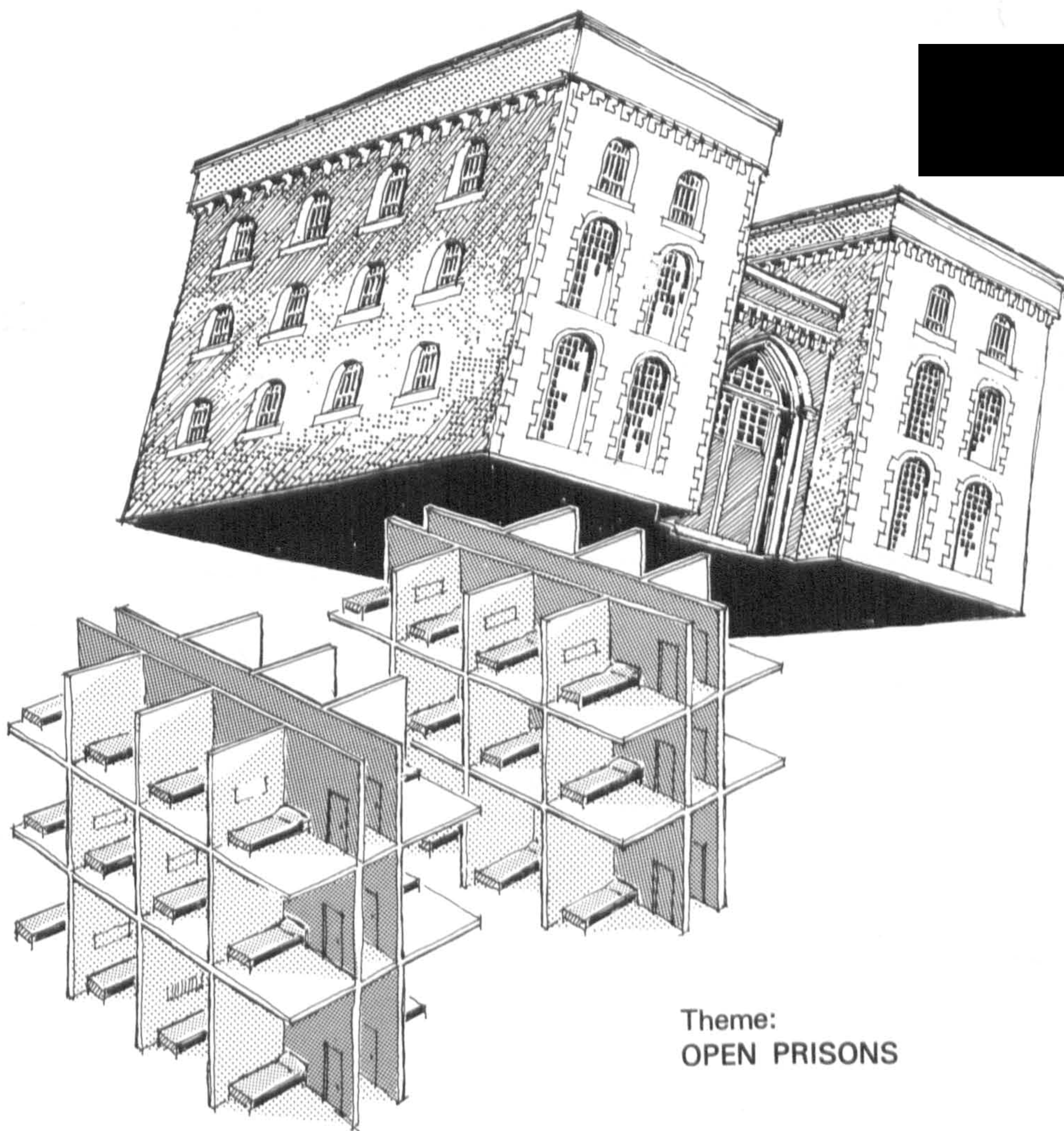


In this issue:  
**THE OPEN  
PRISON**

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**PRISON  
SERVICE**

# JOURNAL



Theme:  
OPEN PRISONS



# SERVICE JOURNAL

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*The editorial board wishes to make it clear that the views expressed by contributors are their own and do not reflect the official views or policies of the Prison Department.*

## Comment

All critics of the prison system are united in their condemnation of the evils of overcrowding. Even those who do not wish to see a reduction in the prison population do not argue for the continuation of the present situation with its attendant social evils. New prisons are very costly but so is the refurbishment and modernisation of the existing Victorian establishments. Many observers have recognized this and have argued for the creation of more open prisons as an answer to the problem.

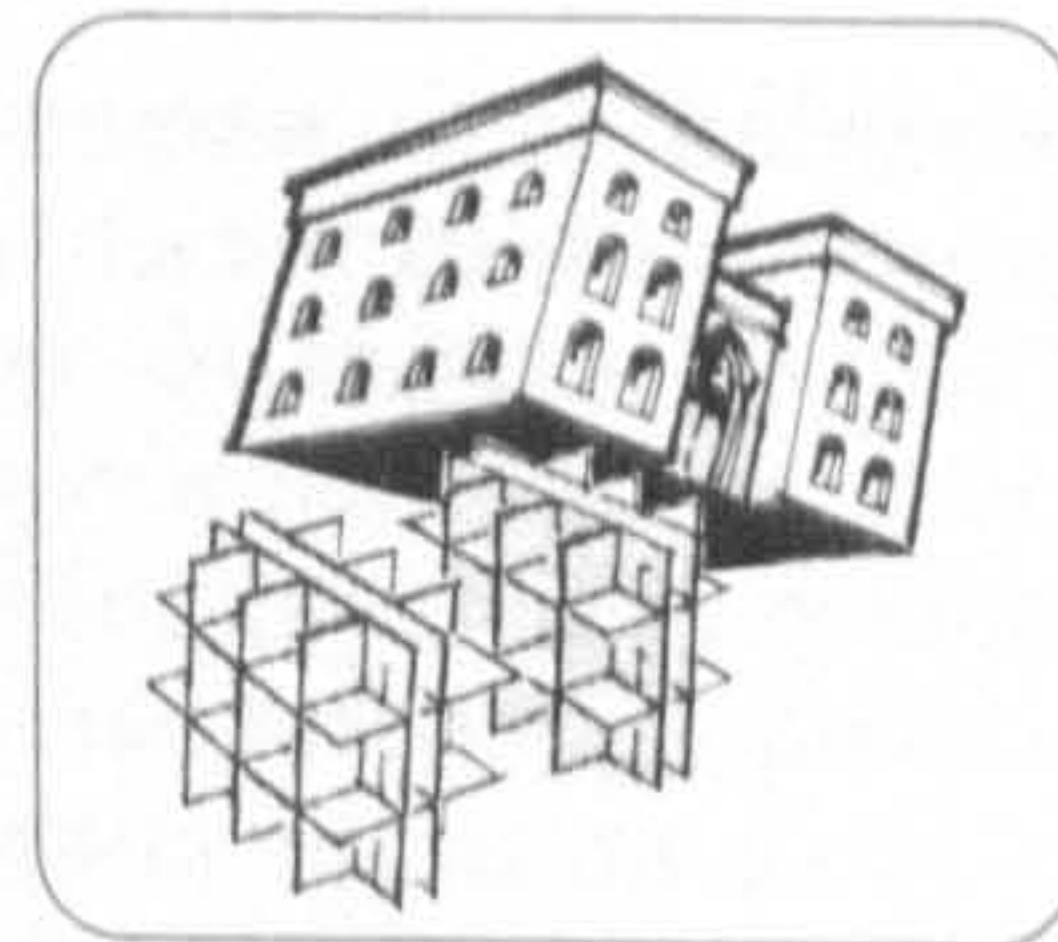
They recognize that most people sent to prison in 1980 have a long record of appearances before the courts before they actually reach prison for the first time. They agree that these offenders are too unstable or too criminally sophisticated to go immediately to an open prison. However, they argue that the last stages of all prison sentences should be spent in open conditions where prisoners can be trained to return to society. Such a programme would require us to build far more open prisons than exist at present. This would be a costly exercise and bitter experience has taught us that there are very few communities that would welcome an open prison in their parish.

The Prison Department recently set up a Working Party to look afresh at open prisons and their place in the penal system. Their report is now completed and is currently being considered by the Department. The Editorial Board thought that it was time to open up the debate and invited comment from some of its contributors who were known to feel strongly on the subject. These are personal reflections which invite personal responses and it is to be hoped that some of our readership will wish to comment in future columns of the Journal.

Since the war there has been precious little penal innovation. The main contributions to penal philosophy have been the detention centre and the dispersal prison. It is accepted that these have been a necessary response to changing social conditions but they do not fire the imagination and encourage men to give more of themselves in their administration.

Perhaps the 1980s will see a change in sentencing policy with (one hopes) a corresponding reduction in numbers throughout the penal system. Whatever happens there will always be a place for the open prison which will continue to provide staff and prisoners alike with a worthwhile challenge.





# ...NOR IRON BARS A CAGE

## *Open Prisons—Anomaly or Opportunity*

David Atkinson

I do not want to bore my readers with more brave experiments from the 1930s, nor carry them off on wistful clouds of milieu-therapy over Scandinavia; simply to ask whether this type of custody has anything to offer an overstressed judicial and penal system, at a time when "treatment" stands in the corner, and the "justice" model is in the ascendancy.

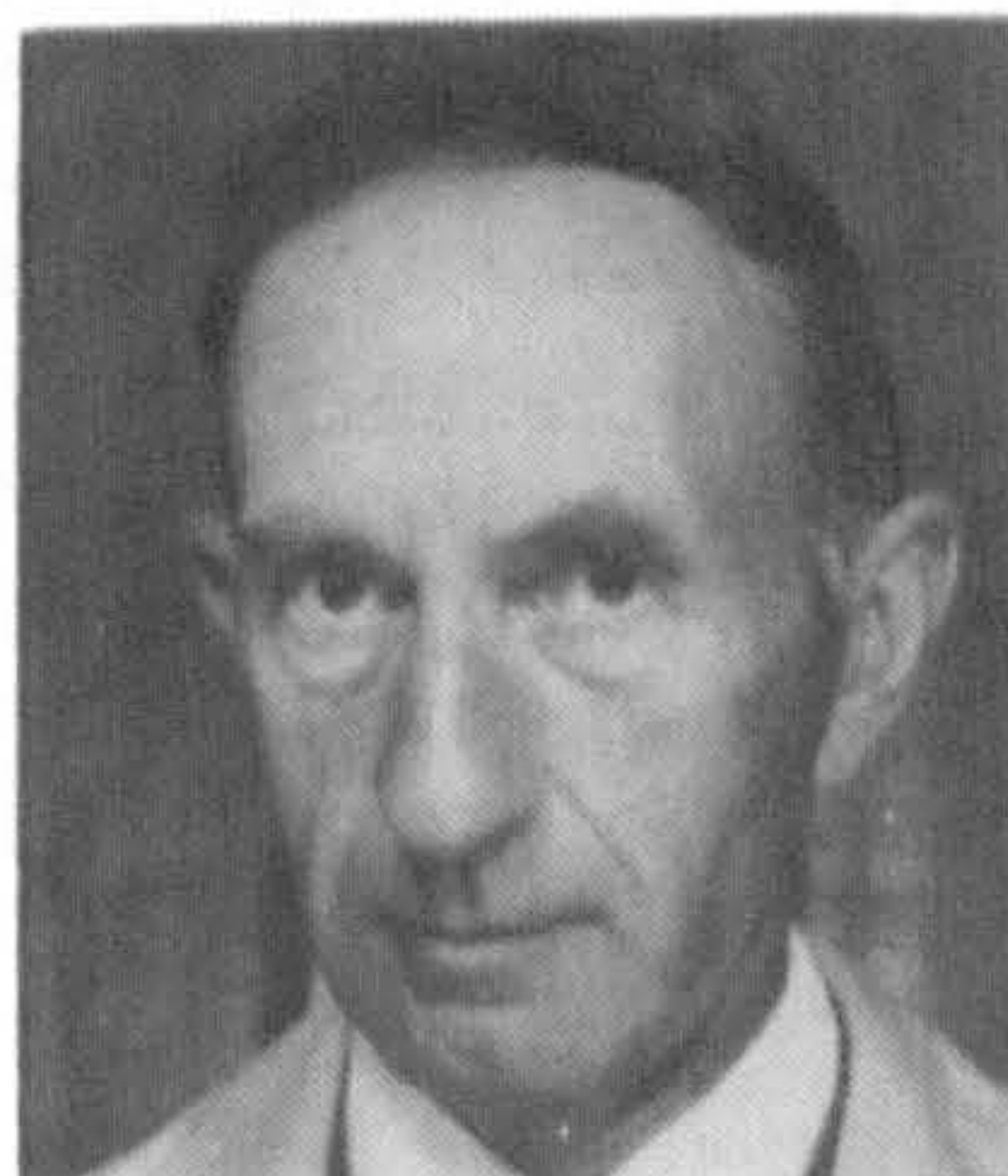
The open prison is a British invention and has, therefore, naturally been more successfully developed and exploited by other nations. We have had such places (and open borstals, but their etiology is different) for many years; at least, we have had a number of institutions going under that name, which seem to have attracted very little attention from anyone, apart from the staff who work in them and the local (normally rural) communities in which they are situated. If they were an important part of the prison system, with a unique role and character, they might be forgiven for not having been aware of it.

Criminologists Howard Jones and Paul Cornes published in 1977 a book simply entitled "Open Prisons". It was a study of three of these curiously self-effacing institutions, compared with three closed prisons taking similar types of offender and sentence length. Two major propositions emerged from it. They were, firstly, that the Prison Department (and the Prison Commission before it) seemed never to have formulated any clear philosophy or policy about open prisons; secondly, (and hardly surprising in that case) that these institutions were, with one exception, not observably different from their closed counterparts in any fundamental way, excepting in the obvious absence of a wall or fence. Indeed, the removal of that physical barrier

seemed, if anything, to have found compensation in a mentality which made the prison seem in certain ways more closed than its counterpart. The definition of open prison in the official glossary appeared to be "one without walls", no more and no less, and this wholly negative character was reflected in the philosophy and

the regime. Like hermit crabs deprived of their shells, the open prisons felt vulnerable, tended to be both over-protective of their charges and over-suspicious of the hostile world to which they stood exposed—perhaps, in fact, rather more the latter than the former. (It was certainly my own experience that keeping outsiders at bay was as much a pre-occupation of the governor and his staff as preventing prisoners from taking their leave).

This curious state of affairs is due, I believe, to the absence of any recognisably separate identity enshrined in statute or rule, thus guaranteeing a confusion of purpose and, for the staff and inmates of these places, a kind of illegitimate, half-apologetic, twilight existence. To the public and the media, it seems, a prison is a prison, and when things go wrong an "open" prison is



David Atkinson was Governor of Leyhill Prison for six years, and has also governed an open borstal. Previously he worked at Wakefield Prison and at the Prison Service College, and was a former Editor of this Journal for some years. Currently a Senior Governor in P3 Division at Headquarters, concerned with Life Sentence prisoners.



revealed as a contradiction in terms (something to which I shall return). Thus, if parties or individuals from such an establishment render all the year round (as many do) substantial and entirely voluntary service to their local communities (which their openness alone makes possible) that may be good copy for the Lower Puddleton Echo or Radio Blimpton, and looks well in the Department's Annual Report too; but when now and again one of the felonious do-gooders gets drunk on the local cider and runs off, the event, fed into the media's standard computer, is liable to come out under those so-familiar headlines ("Village that Lives in Fear" etc) accompanied by editorials which fulminate about the public's having a right to be protected. It is rarely that the sheer incongruity of anybody "escaping" from an open field seems to strike them, and this is probably the least of the anomalies in that situation. Hence, open establishments lead a rather paranoid existence, tending to do good by stealth and continually striving to be what they are not. All they have to guide them, after all, is a set of Standing Orders designed for "proper" prisons, and patently irrelevant to many of their needs—urban by-laws, when what they really want is a Country Code.

For if they have any business existing at all, open prisons clearly ought to be something different. Their clients are there voluntarily, in the sense that I go voluntarily to the dentist when I have toothache. Many, I do not doubt, find it more tolerable than, say, Winson Green or Pentonville, invisible barrier included. That is as it should be, for so long as staff, inmates and Headquarters collude in pretending that it is really just a prison like other prisons, then it cannot work effectively. Once the idea of openness is accepted in its own right, then quite remarkable things become possible. Something approaching a normal life can be lived under conditions which provide the opportunity for a controlled learning experience. If properly used, there is here a sophisticated and practical tool with which to make a prison sentence into a fairly constructive experience.

#### **A 'Let off'**

But all this is to beg a lot of fundamental questions. We do have a small number of open prisons, despite the anomalies they seem to present they exist. Is that existence

maximised? In the prison system's current state of chronic overcrowding, could we not use more? Why, a few years ago, was it necessary to close several down because of under-use? An ill-informed public, a hostile press, timid politicians, unimaginative civil servants are all legitimate Aunt Sallies, but there are very real difficulties. We live in a society which is becoming more angry and more depressed, and it is not a climate favourable to penal reforms based upon enlightened attitudes towards criminal behaviour. People are frightened by the growing personal violence and licence in everyday life, and its financial insecurity. Those very few Tory politicians who openly bay for "tougher measures" all the way back to capital punishment, do give voice to a major element in contemporary public feeling. Prisons tend to focus the national frustration—there are more people who patently deserve to be locked up, but we haven't the resources to do it. Moderate politicians walk the tight-rope, trying to placate the red-necks and at the same time persuade a sceptical magistracy and public that shorter spells in prison can be just as effective as long ones.

It is a time in which to stress practical advantages, financial savings, the hard rather than the soft data.

Open prisons are certainly cheaper to run. They use fewer staff and their up-keep is minimal. Several that I know are held together by paint, and this is no bad thing. It is those invincible electronic cell blocks costing £20,000 or so per single place that are the Draculas of the system as far as the tax-payer is concerned.

Open prisons are not an easy option, a "let off", either. The physical conditions prevailing are often basic in the extreme, and during inclement weather thoroughly miserable, the deprivation in terms of removal from family and friends, which is after all for most prisoners the major pain of incarceration, applies as much as it does anywhere else. In fact, for many families, the inconvenience occasioned by the rural location of some open prisons is barely compensated for by the longer visit in pleasanter surroundings. The "tough guy" type of offender, who likes to believe and make everyone else believe he is having a hard time of it, finds it difficult to sustain that fantasy in a situation where, to the eye of the casual observer, he appears to be living in pleasant com-

fort. Many prisoners find the invisible barrier infinitely harder to cope with than a physical wall or fence. It presents no challenge to their traditional concept of manliness, but it does present many of them with a quite unfamiliar challenge to their self-control and sense of responsibility.

But now, someone must observe, if offenders are capable of being trusted in this way, why should they be in prison at all—why not deal with them by some other form of punishment? Isn't an open prison, as we suggested before, a contradiction in terms?

Well, that is partly true, but it is also true, in our odd, inconsistent society, that many people now in prison ought to be in mental hospitals, and cannot be because a "professional" section of their fellow men refuses to nurse them. The world of the under-privileged and disadvantaged is shot through and through with examples of groups who "ought not" or "need not", but patently do and are. Less irrationally, we do not only put people in prison because they are dangerous (in an enlightened society that is perhaps exactly what we ought to do), we put them there to deter others, as we think, or for retribution, or because they are perpetual nuisances. In some cases, without acknowledging it, we put them there to grieve and to find respite from impossible situations.

#### **Costs and risks**

And so long as we continue using prisons for reasons other than sheer physical protection, we can surely justify using, wherever possible, the cheapest model available. In fact, it would be grossly unfair to the tax-payer not so to do.

Surely, then, of the 30,000 men who are in closed, expensive prisons at the moment, there must be many who could safely enough be in field camps, growing vegetables that we could all eat, or even keeping down the weeds in more old ladies' gardens, with potential moral benefit to themselves? Surely not all that number (if we extract the very dangerous and the totally unpredictable) would abscond, commit rape and pillage? Are not most bound to be released completely anyway within the next few months or years, whatever we do with them?

A qualified assent to these questions, I think, for there is a price



to be paid for any more liberal use of minimum security. The present system is not logical, it "grewed". The majority of our open prisons were born in the post-War period, and they were difficult births. The midwife in many cases was a public inquiry which sought to strike a compromise between the aspirations of the Home Office and the, at times, almost militant resistance of local authorities and local pressure groups toward the concept of such monsters at all. The result was in the main to restrict by agreement the intake to very arbitrary categories of inmate in terms of offence and length of sentence—in effect, usually to the total exclusion of "sex and violence" and/or sentences longer than 2-3 years.

It is these agreements which exert the real strangle-hold on the extended use of the economical open prison. They need to be renegotiated, but to do this would require a major political initiative from the centre, comparable perhaps with that which launched the parole system, and which is now being fought over the issue of shorter sentences all round.

The argument is fairly clear. When one is dealing with human beings, arbitrary categories of offence tell one little or nothing. To classify people as "safe" or "not safe" on the basis of a single act is meaningless, and may be positively misleading. Professional workers in the Prison and Probation Services know that "sex offender", for instance, covers an incredibly wide range of activities, from the sadistic to the frankly risible. Even some of the more serious-sounding may amount to little or nothing in public risk terms in the light of all the facts and the general character of the offender. The same applies even more so to "violence".

The public is therefore poorly served by any agreement which ostensibly protects it from a more dangerous type of offender, but in reality gives the authorities licence to send in virtually anything that breathes, provided it does not bear a forbidden label, without a requirement to be truly selective. At the same time the system ensures that many worthy, deserving and potentially co-operative prisoners are debarred, who might have been an asset to prison and community.

The public should have been told, and should have had it explained to

them with appropriate examples, that selection by label is not selection at all, that individual vetting to which the "paper" offence is only one factor, is the most reliable way of deciding who should "do his bird" in the open. The Department ought to have insisted (as they have done successfully in the rather different and special case of life sentence prisoners) on retaining the right to select, and being judged on the results over time. A comparison with parole is not, I believe, inappropriate. (*The May Report, page 133*, says "We think ..... the Home Office should actively commence a programme of reaching new local understandings about the nature of offences and where necessary numbers as soon as possible".)

There are two ways in which open prisons, given control of selection, can legitimately be used. One is for low security first offenders, mainly (but not exclusively) serving short sentences. The other is as a terminal pre-release stage for suitable more serious (and hence longer serving) prisoners. Both types, given good selection, are viable, and neither should present unacceptable risks. By unacceptable one means, simply, that if a man absconds, either the non-serious nature of his offence or the length of time he has served (and hence the proximity of his inevitable release) would make the incident defensible.

But there would be such incidents, and some of them would be controversial. Their number would increase in proportion to the increased numbers allocated to the open prisons, because the most sophisticated selection is fallible, and this is the price that would have to be paid.

Yet in theory, if it is possible to persuade judges and the public that a two year sentence of imprisonment, for example, may be as effective as one of five years for a certain offence and offender, it should be no more difficult to persuade them that placing the same offender in conditions of minimum security for at least part of that time made equal sense. If nothing else, in this new harshly expensive world, some of the fundamentalists may have to become pragmatists and face the fact that strong prejudices and intuitive retribution may be as much luxuries as seal-skin coats, and that total "protection" is an unattainable fantasy.

The "justice model" referred to

earlier and currently in fashion means, as I understand it, the awarding of simple punishment in consideration of an offence, on a scale or tariff which the average offender (and the average uninvolved citizen) might see as fair, uncluttered by any treacly stuff about "treatment, reform, rehabilitation etc". Treatment, it is said, is discredited and cannot deliver the goods anyway. Besides, it over-punishes with its tongue in cheek, and commits patent injustices in the name of the offender's "good", especially to young people who cannot answer back.

If this is true, and of course it is as much an over-correction as the philosophies it seeks to supplant, yet with a lot to commend it, then the form of imprisonment offered by open conditions seems a good compromise. Leaving highly subjective notions about individuals "reformed" to the reminiscences of ex-governors and social workers, and concentrating purely on the practically demonstrable, I hope not even the most committed advocate of justice would want to claim that a smelly, overcrowded local prison is an essential component of his plan. Deprivation of liberty, I hope he would agree, is what the game is about. Nor, surely, would he object to a little productive work as part of the contract with the inculcation of a self-reliant attitude, if that occurred, as a bonus; and, for the young especially, deprivation as well of the opportunity to look and feel tough ought not to undermine the experience.

#### Political Will - and Economic Reality

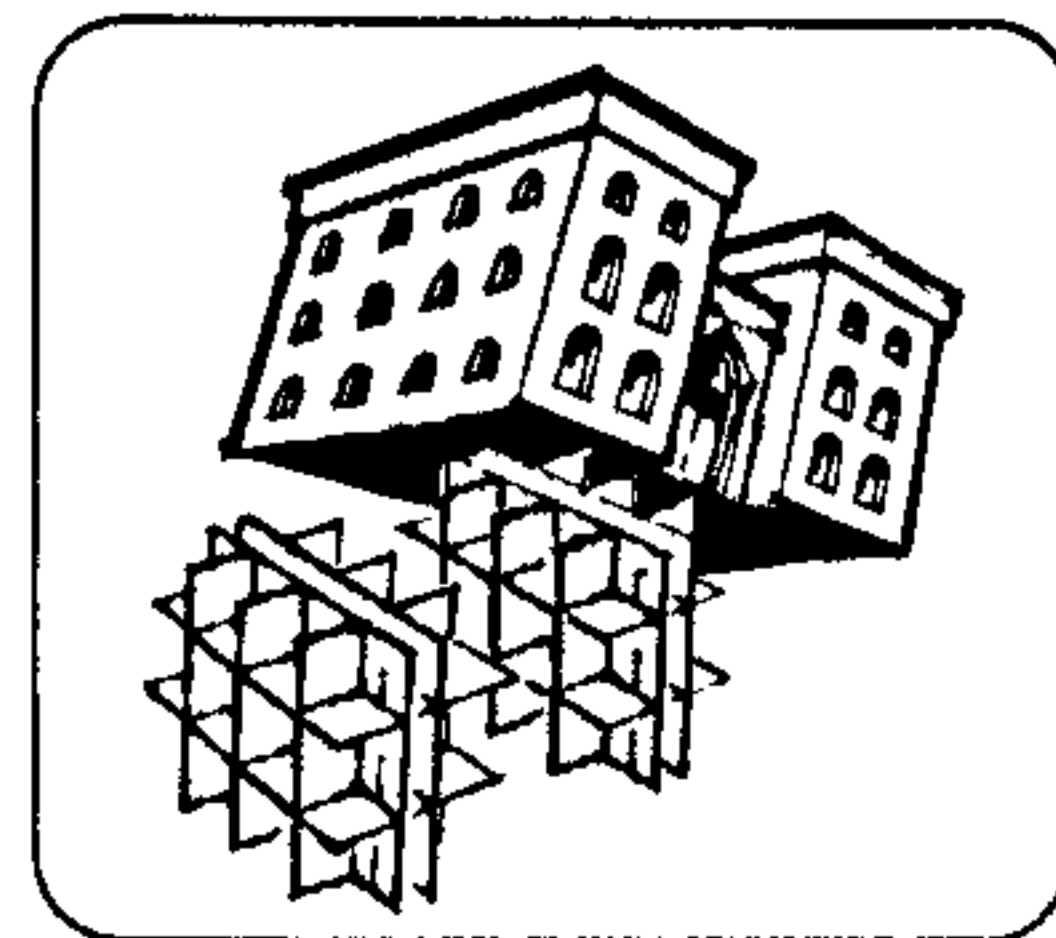
The search for alternative effective, cheap and socially acceptable penalties to prison must continue, but for those who need to go there for reasons other than the simple protection of the public, every conceivable new effort ought to be put into swinging the "norm" away from the Victorian concept of prison towards the simple, cheap and unsensational corrective of minimum security.

It should then be possible, because it will be necessary, for the prison bureaucracy to bestir itself and produce rules and precedents for this parallel form of custody. These will allow governors greatly extended discretion in areas like censorship and temporary release, more interaction with agencies and individuals from outside, and a freer hand with the media.

No one has worked in an open  
*continued on page 10*



# AN OPEN PRISON IN SWEDEN



Bo Martinssen

"In January 1977, PSJ carried an article about a controversial establishment in the Swedish penal system. The recent Departmental Report on Open Prisons prompted the following correspondence."

**THE PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL**  
Editorial Office HM PRISON LEYHILL WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE GLOS GL12 8HL  
Telephone 045-48 681

18 April 1980

Please reply to .....  
89 Eccleston Square, London SW1

National Swedish Correctional Administration  
Kriminalvardstyrelsen  
S-601 Norrköping  
SWEDEN

Dear Mr Martinsson

re: Gruvberget Prison

The Prison Department of the Home Office have recently produced a report about open prisons. In it they draw attention to the prison at Gruvberget in Sweden to which long-term prisoners can go for a holiday with their families. As I understand it there are no guards at the prison and the prisoners are free to spend their time as they wish.

It is intended to devote the January 1981 edition of the Prison Service Journal to a reappraisal of the open prison and the part it can play in the penal system. So far all the articles will be about the British system but the Editorial Board would appreciate a contribution from Sweden on the Gruvberget experiment because the Swedish approach is far different from our own and we think it has much to teach us.

We would prefer an article based upon the experiences of the staff who have to run the prison which would highlight the problems, successes and failures of the scheme. If there are any other comments that need to be made about the concept of open prisons and the philosophy behind the Swedish approach then we should be pleased to receive them.

Yours sincerely

A H RAYFIELD  
Editor



# THE GRUVBERGET EXPERIMENT

Dear Mr Rayfield

The open institution of Gruvberget is situated about 300 kilometers north west of Stockholm in a big and very beautiful forest area. The institution was formerly a village for workers employed by a big Swedish pulp company. There are 20 villas which are used by the guests during their stay in the village. There are also houses for indoor sport activities and studies. Kitchen and dining room are situated in a special building and there are also rooms for group counselling and for nursery.

The programme at the institution is so composed that in one part of the year courses are arranged for prisoners, another part of the year there are open house periods for groups which are planning their own programmes and in summer there are some weeks set aside for holidays.

The philosophy behind the programme is to create greater harmony between the prisoner and his family. Another objective is to create interest among the prisoners for sport and cultural activities in order to make it possible for them to use their leisure time.

The aim of the programmes in the courses is to give the prisoners a broad perspective of Swedish society and especially the Swedish welfare system. We find it very important that the prisoners must be informed about social benefits if they are to survive better in the community after their release.

Many courses deal with problems of ethics and co-existence; especially family problems. Sometimes the courses deal with music and sport. The prisoners are most interested in sports but we have a lot of applications for the other courses too. The courses normally last for a week

and the lessons can be 3 - 4 hours a day. The rest of the days the prisoners can use for skiing, fishing, swimming, body building etc., depending on what time of the year they are at Gruvberget.

During the open house periods our staff in other institutions or our probation officers can use Gruvberget for a special visit when the staff are responsible for the programme. The idea is that some persons from the staff follow the prisoners to Gruvberget and stay there with them during that period.

During the summer we have four holiday periods at Gruvberget when prisoners with very long sentences can stay there with their families. In summer we have no special educational programme and the prisoners and their families can spend their time in the forests and the lakes in any way they like. When we have courses and open house periods family members can follow the prisoner or the client to Gruvberget and stay there with him. It is also possible to bring children to the institution.

In your letter you supposed that there are no guards at the institution. That is not quite correct. We have a governor and two guards to manage Gruvberget. We also have a social worker responsible for education and leisure activities. A house keeper also works there and we have some workers to help the staff with the buildings and also in the kitchen. There is a very good co-operation with the local authorities in the neighbourhood and with trade unions, educational organisations and sports clubs. A lot of teachers come from outside to take part in the activities.

You also ask about control and of

course we have some rules to be able to manage the institution. The institution is situated about 40 kilometers from Bollnäs, which is a town in the neighbourhood. The guests may not go there without permission and we try to go with them and drive them there in a mini-bus. Alcohol and other drugs are forbidden and if we find such things in the area or find drunken people we have to send them back to their prison.

You ask as well about our experiences. They are mostly good but I must admit that we have had quarrels and sometimes violence amongst the prisoner and between prisoners and staff. The reason has always been that alcoholic drinks or narcotics have been smuggled into the institution. In spite of this we are very content with our work and are eager to go further.

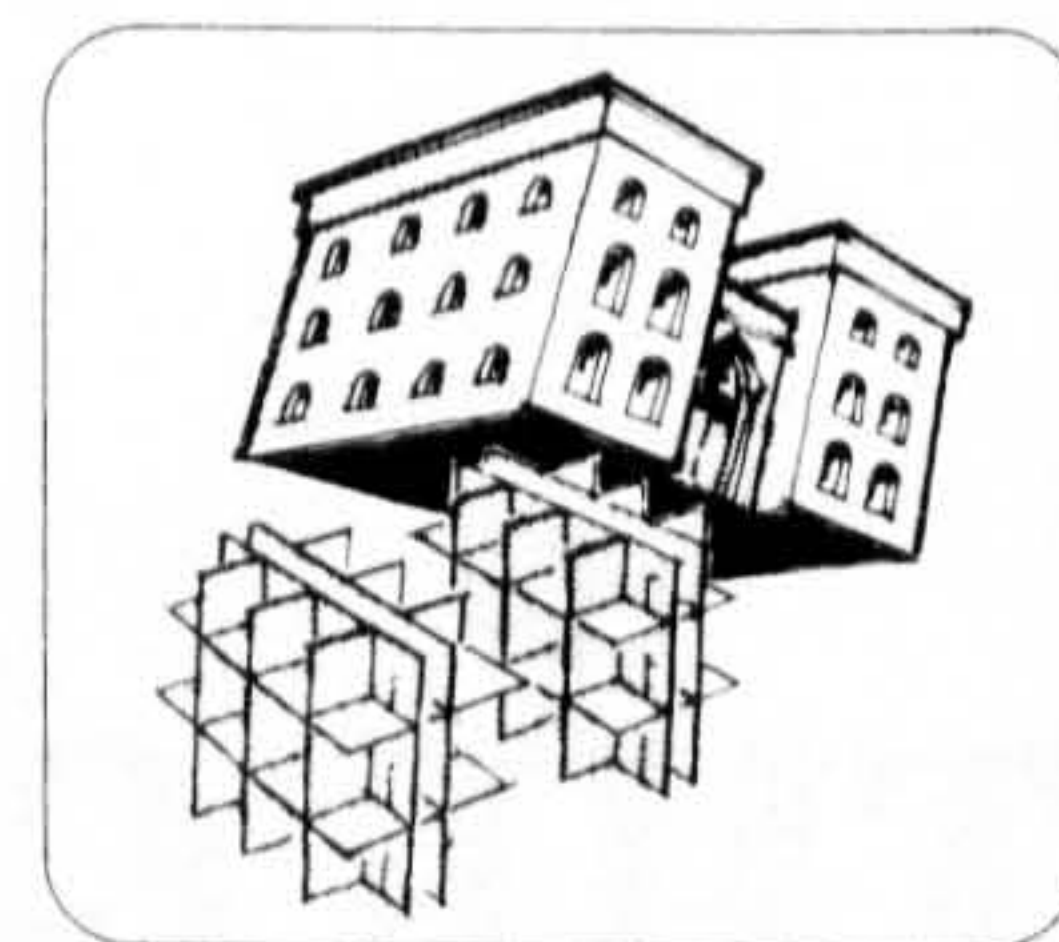
Concerning open institutions in Sweden half the number of the approximate 4,000 places we have in our institutions are in open institutions. In my opinion perhaps two thirds of the prison population in our country can be held in open institutions provided that it is always possible to put people under more closed conditions if they are not so responsible that they accept the rules in the open institutions. I want to stress that this is my own opinion for the moment. If we get more hard core criminality in our country I think we may have to change our system to some degree. There are some bad trends in that direction—one is that we have an increasing drug traffic with international connections; another is that the number of foreigners in our prisons is increasing. These two facts make our future more uncertain but for the moment I think we can control the situation.

Yours sincerely

BO MARTINSEN

*National Prison & Probation  
Administration  
Sweden*





# HOSTELS: half-way there?

Dermot Grubb

**One of the recommendations in the as yet unpublished report from a Prison Department working party is that small open prisons should be established in urban areas. This is the logical extension of recognising not only the value of open institutions but also the disadvantages, in terms of work, leisure and accessibility, of locating them in rural areas. Such a recommendation can only be viewed as very long-term: it is commendable but not immediately practicable. On the other hand, in the pre-release employment hostels which the Service runs, we have already a model and a vast amount of experience which should not be overlooked when considering urban open prisons.**

## **Bristol, Wandsworth and Pentonville**

The opening of the hostel, the first of its kind, at Bristol in 1953 is well-recorded by Duncan Fairn in the article "Another Little Jubilee" which was put together by Ken Beer in the *Prison Service Journal* for October 1978. From that bold beginning, a scheme grew. In other fields, such as group counselling, we used the experiences of other countries: but, with the hostel scheme, I think that we can claim to be the pioneer.

It is just 23 years since I first visited the hostel at Bristol Prison. I was then tutor to the Staff Course at Wakefield and had received every encouragement to visit places of interest in the Prison Service. I still have the exercise book in which I made a brief record of my visits. I little thought that in 1980 I should retire from the Service at Bristol, having been its Governor since 1976.

At the time of my visit, the hostel was inside the prison in what is now the staff tea-room. Murdo Macleod was Deputy Governor and showed me round. Eleven "preventive detainees" were in residence and all were working in jobs in Bristol. They paid £2 for board and lodging, had £1

pocket-money, and received 12/6 for lunches and bus fares (each week!). Forty-five men had been discharged (of whom 11 had been reconvicted); 10 had been returned to Parkhurst; and 6 had absconded. I was impressed. Clearly, this new scheme was proving successful.

I was not to see the hostel scheme again until I went to Wandsworth, 3 years later, as an assistant governor in G, H and K Wings. The hostel there had been started for Dartmoor men. It was in a temporary building inside but near to the gate. As the "H and K scheme" gained momentum, the hostel became an extension of these wings and was for Wandsworth men only. It was a very real

incentive for men who could qualify for a place in it.

For several years in the 1960s I was closely associated with the hostel which had a Principal Officer (Glynn Thomas, followed by Ray Lacey) as Warden. Unfortunately, I have no records but, in recollection, the hostel was successful. We had a very good relationship with employers: one accepted a man whom I had taken for interview although the smell of mothballs from his suit was almost overpowering as we sat in the small office in Battersea.

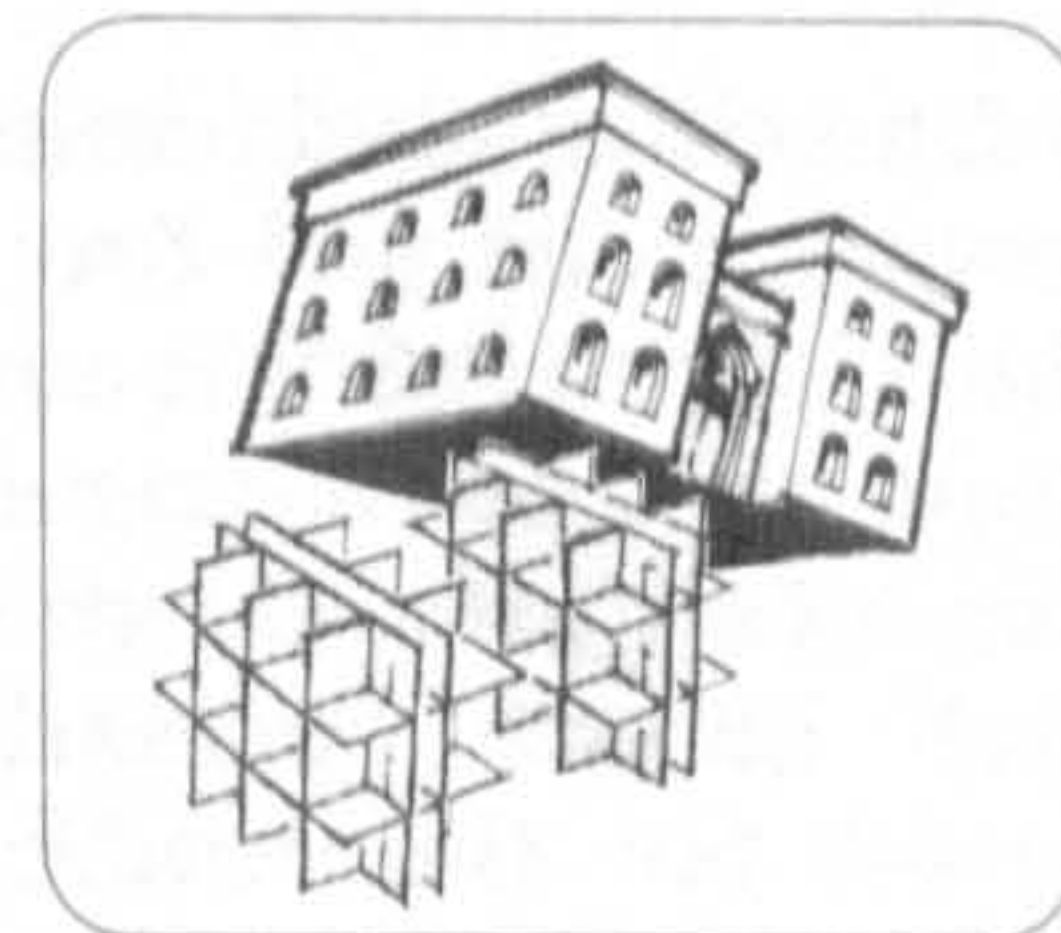
The majority of men were local or were likely to settle in the London area. Single men might manage to save £100 in 6 months: married men were able to resume family life gradually and received much help from the hostel staff. The Assistant Governor and Principal Officer were actively involved with employers and families: I recall visits to homes in South London with the hosteller and long sessions about budgeting and domestic economy with husband and wife. Of course, there were problems as in every hostel. Who could have foreseen the chances of a man being

*continued on page 10*



Dermot Grubb MA (Oxon) retired from the Prison Service in June 1980. The outbreak of hostilities in 1939 had found him an undergraduate and he worked with the Friends Relief Service during the war years. He was then appointed the Education and Training Officer of the National Association of Youth Clubs, joining Huntercombe Borstal in 1953 as an Assistant Governor. He subsequently served at the former Staff College, at Wandsworth and Pentonville Prisons and was appointed Governor of Oxford Prison in 1967. He moved to Bedford in 1973 and was promoted in 1976 to take charge of Bristol Prison.





# SOME USES OF OPEN PRISONS OVERSEAS

Adrian Arnold

Whilst it is the duty of society constantly to seek new alternatives to imprisonment and to keep the numbers in prison to the essential minimum, it is also important to consider alternative uses of imprisonment.

If it is important that prisons remain the basic deterrent or sanction toward society's morality, then it is necessary to consider how and at what stage most inmates can be given wider opportunities to contribute to, or make reparation to, society.

Finland's priorities (Inkeri Anttila) as regards penal punishment and as stated by their Penal Law Committee's report of March 1977, were as follows: "They should not be cruel, reflecting principles of proportionality and equality, directed at the offender alone, not causing needless suffering, nor causing unregulated cumulation of sanction and they should be economical from society's point of view." It is admitted that "no individual crime control system or penal practice/treatment, which has the individual offender as its focus, has had a noticeable effect on the general crime situation in any given country"; it is therefore up to the penal authorities to devise the most appropriate system with the least repression, for both economical and humanitarian reasons.

## Self-Determination or Direction

Professor Gibbens, amongst many, has often quoted a Scandinavian representative at the last U.N. congress on social defence saying "We have no right to require the prisoner to change in any way. We say to him 'you can sit in your cell and do nothing, if you want. If you want to do something, there is trade and industrial training, or education, or group therapy available. They are there, if you want, but you must ask. It is entirely up to you' ". Conversely, inmates need opportunities to influence their lives, living conditions, work opportunities, and some control over what happens to their families; they need opportunities to be responsible, if possible. Limited opportunities were built into Coldingley; these, however, can be increased considerably in open conditions, to include those areas of most dissatisfaction, i.e. "nothing to learn", locked in one's cell, often with others, with repetitive work at best, always indoors, a sluggish existence with poor rates of pay. In short, so often a futile existence from both

society's and the inmates' points of view.

## Some evidence from abroad

It has become the practice for several decades in some countries for prisoners actively to assist in research on ways to improve their opportunities; (these working parties, of course, use staff in their deliberations fully).

It may assist, therefore, to define some of those areas in other countries, where I have visited and worked.

## Canada—Community-based Residential Centres

These developed from pre-release

hostels in the 1960's; the main feature was to replace jails for a substantial proportion of those convicted and serving shorter sentences.

The purpose was for the benefit of inmates prior to parole, for those on temporary release for work or educational purposes, for parolees and for those completing their sentence, but requiring short-stay residential assistance.

The aims were to integrate men from institutions into the community, to offer a variety of vocational/educational/counselling assistance, using the community's specialist resources, and to blur the lines between institutional and community treatment toward resettlement and supervision. A Prison Department internal Working Party Report on Open Prisons notes the desirability of establishing some open prisons in urban areas and that they should take the form of small prisons for 50 to 75 prisoners, but should be prisons, not hostels, should use community resources to the greatest extent and should have only limited internal facilities.

## California's View of Open Prisons

From both society's and the inmates' point of view there was 'a double pay-off' in the use of their forty-odd open conservation camps.



Adrian Arnold MA (Cantab), Deputy Regional Director (Operations) South East Region was a member of the working party which reported on Open Prisons. He has worked in India, Africa and Cyprus and has visited prisons extensively in Western Europe and the Americas. In writing here, he has drawn on his experience as Superintendent of a Nigerian prison.

He believes the development of open prisons is inextricably linked with alternatives to imprisonment and to the criminal justice system—a subject dealt with at length at the 6th United Nations Congress on prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders which he attended in Caracas last September.



They included mountain and sea rescue, flood and fire, insect blight, the clearing of streams and canals, prevention of erosion and the protection of forests; these camps proved that national resources could be saved for the future, and indeed millions of pounds were saved in timber alone.

It showed also that there was one most valuable area for self-improvement, in learning to get on with others, itself a factor much related to anti-social conduct.

It was shown that most prisoners could become trained conservation workers, with attitudes changing at camp almost beyond belief—becoming more outgoing, gregarious and co-operative; bitterness dissolving with trust, responsibility and respect growing. Even selection of inmates in closed establishments for open camp gave cause for elation—"someone trusts me". I found a general belief that the job was important; they were not given work to keep them busy; there was a friendliness through team work and good human relations, which the best closed prison cannot duplicate. The open camp introduced a new set of values and constructive ways of living and gaining satisfaction, away from the chaotic environment of the concrete and steel closed prison jungle.

There was a need for a preliminary (six weeks) training in the closed prison, where the emphasis was on fitness, including fire-fighting training on the track in full kit, and class-work training, including the specific skills required for their area of conservation, and classification to see whether the inmate had the qualities required; surprisingly also the discipline included the need for prompt obedience to orders.

Whereas earlier there had been untrained volunteers available, there are now fully trained forces under the "Prison Department". Prisoners were seen and felt to be of use to society; there was a valuable, positive programme of activity in the closed prison also; a man certainly left the open camp fit, tanned, a hard worker and with good expectations, usually earlier than he would, via a parole board, and certainly better prepared to be a free man.

A new type of open camp officer was required, including a conservation specialist and counsellor. The camps were organised on a regional basis, one for each region.

Comments from Walter Dunbar in Sacramento were "We have learned that men and women, who learn to use their leisure time constructively, are more likely to succeed on parole; so in this area too, we encourage individual development".

This is, of course, in the wider context of citizens' volunteer help in two aspects. Citizen participation in conservation projects has been greatly expanded in the state of California; 1,000 community leaders in the fields of management and works serve on trade advisory committees—committees who help plan, organise and make training programmes more effective. The other aspect of this volunteer help was the increasing number of volunteers, helping and participating in making open prisons more purposeful.

There is no doubt that this country needs, indeed can hardly afford to do without, such conservation programmes, which could give a most valuable purpose for closed prisons in preparation training and in the contribution that they could give to both town and country preservation.

#### **Kakuri Open Prison, Nigeria**

Minimum security, e.g. the perimeter was formed by a single line of sisal plants 2 feet high.

The criteria for selection to Kakuri were long-term inmates, i.e. 3 years and over, with 6 months good conduct previously in the closed establishment and intending to use their "time" profitably. Generally fairly wide criteria.

The aims of the establishment were as follows: the prison should be run by inmates in all aspects, except disciplinary powers, with general relaxation of restrictions, but a high expectation (cf. again the Working Party report on Open Prisons—(a) to discharge the obligations of Prison Department in respect of prisoners who do not need conditions of security; (b) to provide an environment in which activities can be substantially linked with those in the community; in which those which must take place within the prison are conducted in as open a fashion as practicable; and in which the regime as a whole is designed to give prisoners an increasing sense of responsibility for managing their own affairs). The aims included the use of inmates as teachers and instructors, with an assistant governor/staff member in charge of specific activities, and minimum staff to assist the

inmate teachers/instructors and their assistants. In fact there was a total of 36 staff, including administration, hospital and stores, with 350 inmates.

There were four sections of about 85 inmates each, sub-divided into five dormitories of about 18 inmates each. Each section had an interested staff member as Section Master with a prisoner of good initiative and sense attached as leader. They met weekly together with the governor, known locally as Patron, and the assistant governor; the main area of discussion at these meetings was standards of good behaviour, hard work, vocational training, education, sport and general activities; section reports on inmates were given monthly.

Work was maintained on a 7-hour-day basis, 5 days per week; monthly reports were given by staff in charge also. Workshops included carpentry and masonry, which followed vocational trade courses; the major occupation, however, was farming African and English products, field crops, vegetables, flowers, forestry, fruit, a piggery, poultry farm and fish farm. Other workshops included tailoring, shoemaking, tinsmithing and various textiles.

There was freedom of worship encouraged, with a wide range of religions, each with a visiting pastor; proselytes were not encouraged; singing held an important place, much appreciated by Africans in general (cf. the Working Party report, "Prisoners should be free to use the church of their choice and to take part in whatever activities the church community is offering. They should be free to attend in civilian clothes and to mix with the congregation, not be segregated as a group. Effort should be made to encourage the churches to respond to the challenge which the situation would offer them. Chaplains would have a major part to play in this".)

Education was an exciting aspect of the camp, including basic literacy in several African and European languages; there were higher standards to certificate level also in a wide variety of subjects, ranging from economics to hygiene-and-safety on the one hand, and philosophy to book-keeping and shorthand on the other, depending on staff and inmate skills available, apart from a few visiting lecturers. Craft classes were also favoured, including a



variety of looms, upholstery, musical instruments, hats and sandalmaking. Both I, as governor, and the assistant governors among the other staff, would attend inmate-run classes in some subjects and vice versa. A variety of other activities stemmed from the education department, including the very popular Literary Society, tribal bands, a monthly magazine of 40 pages, which led to several freelance journalists on release, craft exhibitions and sales, guides for visitors, a bi-annual amateur dramatic production, motor mechanics, psychology, first aid, crafts, typing and the referees' course for sporting activities. The establishment was known in Nigeria as "the University in Adversity".

Sport—teams in football, hockey, tennis and athletics competed with the local colleges, industrial firms and civil service departments, including the police; other sports included volleyball, basketball and table tennis.

Social life was encouraged mainly from the school and the Literary Society, especially in the development of a wide-ranging library, with various ethnic, linguistic and cultural sections, while group discussions played a major part in spare time occupation.

A Youth Wing Open Camp was built alongside by staff and inmates to relieve the YP closed establishments. This proved to be a most valuable activity, not only as regards building trades, but in general suggestions by staff and inmates in design and opportunity. When open, the youth establishment followed similar lines as the adult, with a greater emphasis on education, vocational training, classification and group discussion, with, however, a brisk "detention centre" routine between activities.

Home Leave and assistance to the local community. After earning a special badge, inmates could gain furlough home for one week in the first instance, and/or were able to assist local charitable organisations, ranging from missionary activity, including work in a leper colony, to specific civic projects and general conservation in the community. (cf. Open Prison Working Party report, "There remain those who do not need closed conditions, but cannot respond to the full challenge of open ones ..... such prisoners should therefore share the regime of others, but be denied its full advantages until

the governor is satisfied that they can respond, if given more scope".) There were times indeed when the whole camp would arm themselves with a branch of a tree and tackle a fire 10 miles from the establishment. There were no escapes during my three-year tenure, but two failed to return from home leave.

Control was maintained by the use of awards as well as punishments, i.e. privileges, early release, more pay and responsibility with well defined criteria. Punishment, mainly loss of rewards, consisted as much of a recourse to counselling with the offender and his colleagues, consultant advice, albeit the usual final sanction of transfer "out". I am reminded in this context of Robin Griffiths' dissertation to the British Society of Criminology on 27 February 1980, on prison "mediation"; although mainly about the use of "elders" in the community to preempt much of the work in magistrates' courts, in that many offences were due to previous altercations over many years with the "victim", he had much to say about inmate grievance resolution committees in prison department establishments. In this way in Nigeria we were able to resolve many grievances by a committee of two staff representatives and two elected inmate representatives; the pressure was toward agreement and anybody could express their views; it could lead to a disciplinary report to the governor, but more often to changes in the individual's behaviour, to changes in institutional practice and occasionally recommendations passed by the Governor to Headquarters for changes in policy nationally. Minutes were formally taken and it became a very useful tool toward both control and development—supplementing and, indeed, supplanting quite often an adjudication system.

### General Conclusions

The open establishment with as normal a life as possible, including lack of mail censorship, proved of considerable help in the general direction on decarceration and détente in the conflict between gaoler and gaolee. There was re-education not only for cognitive skills, but also for work, leisure, social interaction, ethics and physical fulfilment. There was an opportunity for individuals to gain in stature in their own eyes, to develop their special skills and to

take a purposeful place in the community, three very important factors in resettlement. Control in the establishment was maintained in an equitable way with an emphasis on positive development rather than punishment. There was increasing recognition of, and programming for, ethnic groups with regard to their language, culture and specific skills.

Each of these countries have the same further recommendations, namely, that visiting arrangements should be extended, leading to living together with families; there should be good travelling allowances for frequent visits, the inmate contributing from his realistic earnings, thereby diminishing the institutionalisation of the individual and the damage to the families during imprisonment. (cf. the Open Prison report "We recommend more generous home leave scales for open prisons".) All countries seem to recommend more small open prison/hostel accommodation near conurbations for several lengths of sentence, especially the short term, so often socially the most disorganised, while long term offenders have several other problems, which can be assisted by open prison techniques. Generally most countries recommend that open prisons should become part of gradual release to the community for the majority; that the prison should not be tied to specific industrial/farm profits, but to pre-release home leave, pre-release hostels and parole on licence (R. Walmsley's "Steps from Prison" is still as appropriate as ever 10 years later viz. 10,000 a year leave prison unprepared, direct into the community). It is more than possible to introduce more elements of self-government, including wide opportunities for staff/inmate collective organisation/bargaining and sharing of clearly stated areas of legitimate power with wider liaison with local organisations, press etc. to the benefit of both the community, the staff and the inmates. The opportunities for victim compensation or offender restitution, of community service and community work, given both rural and urban open prison facilities, are immense.

Prisons are, and open prisons in particular, what we as prison administrators want to make them; I remember Prescoed Camp in the middle fifties empty during the day; many open prisons overseas are likewise empty to their great credit, rather than their embarrassment. ■



NOR A IRON BARS A CAGE *continued from page 3*

establishment without being aware of the anomalies, but few would deny, I think, the opportunities for honesty and realism, and for the celebration of relevant social values that exist in a "penal colony". It is here that the inadequacies and maladjustments of inmates (and sometimes of staff too) show up most clearly and stand some chance of being modified, because

they cannot so easily be concealed and glossed over as in the artificially proscribed and protected world of the closed institution. Nor has anyone with any perception at all failed to see (and occasionally to marvel at) the extraordinary flowerings of character and talent which the contrast afforded by these conditions can sometimes produce. Similarly, the

quality of relations with local communities is often of a different order from that presented by the media in times of crisis. The more "open" the prison, and the more export-import it permits in terms of visits and visitors, the more goodwill and understanding is generated. It is a trite but often forgotten observation that familiarity dispels fear, and it is rare indeed to meet, amongst members of the

*continued on page 12*

HOSTELS: HALF-WAY THERE? *continued from page 6*

placed in a section of a factory in which his next door neighbour worked? Some of the problems were worse because many of the men were local; but the usual hazards of hostel life should never be underestimated. Being free but still in captivity is a difficult circumstance for any man and hostel staff need special skills and sensitivity.

From Wandsworth I went to Pentonville as Deputy Governor in 1966. At that time, there was a very gloomy hostel inside the grounds. A much brighter, larger unit was the "outworker scheme" housed in a wing of the prison. It was extremely well run by a Principal Officer, Harold Vaughan, with whom I was to serve some years later when he became Chief Officer at Bedford.

### The Present Position

At the time of writing (September 1980) the hostel at Bristol is up to capacity. Fourteen men in single rooms in an unobtrusive building just outside the prison. The Principal Officer Warden tells me that the hostellers are all working in a wide range of jobs including gardening, factory canteen and hotel portering. Almost half of them are lifers and the hostel is well used by Leyhill Prison. Finding work becomes more difficult but Bristol is still relatively fortunate.

Taking the whole of England and Wales, there are still more than a dozen units which provide over 200 places for hostellers. Actual occupancy is generally around 60 per cent at any one time because of turnover and failures on the scheme but the success rate over the last 10 years is 66 per cent: that is, two-thirds of all hostellers have completed the 6 month period at the end of sentence. But won't massive unemployment be the prime factor in reducing the number of hostel places? There are hostels, particularly in the North of England, which are already affected but it is encouraging to note

the practical approach which has been a tradition in hostels. Some wardens encourage hostellers, like any other unemployed, to walk the streets, finding their own work; in other places, out-workers are permitted to travel to areas where work is still available; and, in Liverpool, work has been found in conjunction with a local NACRO scheme.

Of course, hostels do disappear: Leicester, Manchester, Appleton Thorn ..... and the number of places in the out-worker wing at Pentonville is being halved because of the pressure on prison accommodation in London and the difficulties of ensuring work placements. The problem is that, once a hostel closes, the chances of re-opening are very slender indeed.

The Service must fight to retain hostels. After more than a quarter of a century, we have gained a lot of experience in this form of rehabilitation. Hostels remain a valuable means of re-integrating prisoners into the "world outside". It can change so much in a few years that it is worth asking whether we do enough to prepare the prospective hosteller. It is estimated, for example, that 80 to 100 lifers will be released per annum from prison over the next few years. They are a priority for re-integration and about 90 per cent of them will "graduate" through a pre-release employment hostel.

### What Next?

What of the future? With the concern about the size of the prison population can we see any chance of expansion or is the economic plight of the country too acute?

In 1972, I took part in a study tour of institutions in West Germany, organised by the Penal Research Unit of Oxford University. We saw a new prison in Frankfurt named after Professor Radbruch who conceived a penal system which enabled prison-

ers to complete sentences in urban prisons and working in the community: over 100 men were working out at the time of our visit. In that prison, too, were lifers.

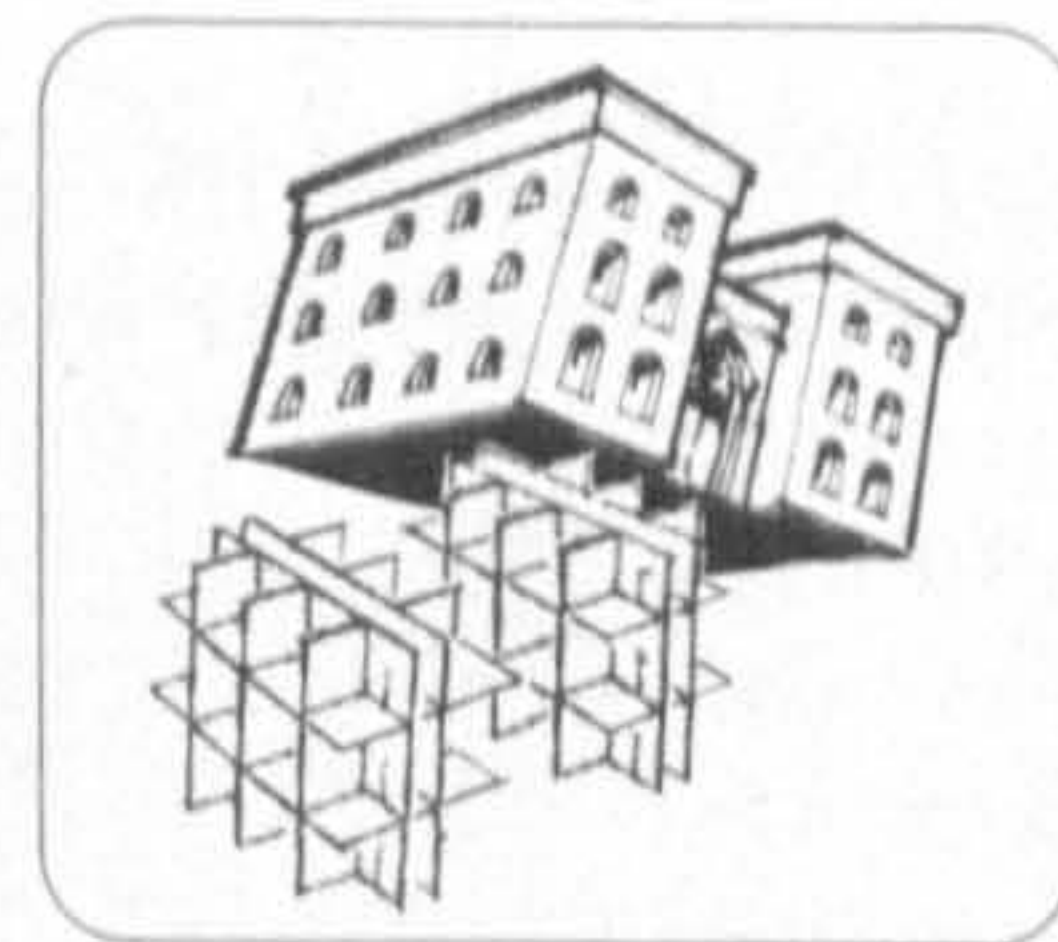
The most impressive place we saw was a hostel for 70 men situated on the outskirts of an industrial town in the Ruhr. Some of the residents went out to work; the residents we saw (and who looked like the types of men who fill our own local prisons) worked in a sheltered workshop, assembling quite simple kitchen utensils. The profits from the sale of these, added to the Social Security benefits to which the men were entitled, made the place more or less self-supporting. The house was fairly spartan but, even with 70 residents, a family atmosphere prevailed and everyone seemed to take a pride in the place.

I know only too well the difficulties of establishing hostels of any kind in urban areas. Should the Bristol hostel, for instance, be demolished to make way for redevelopment, it would be virtually impossible to find another site for it near to the prison. At Leicester, the only prison hostel to be located at a distance from the parent institution has been closed.

Perhaps the time is coming when there will be a change in attitudes. We need to demonstrate our successes, yet the hostel scheme has never received much publicity for obvious reasons. Increasingly, closed prisons are seen to have little chance of achieving any positive rehabilitation but open prisons are situated in remote areas which tend to make the regime unreal. An open urban prison/hostel? Is it, too, an unreal concept or should we not, in the 1980s, be addressing ourselves to a new development based on our experience since 1953? The problems loom large but, given political will and careful planning, the Service may yet have the skill and the stamina to take another step forward. ■



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPEN PRISONS



Veronica Tippetts

**The open prison, or so-called "prison without bars", is a relatively recent development. The first in the United Kingdom was opened in 1933 and 15 such establishments exist today, offering the most viable and economical alternative to the closed institution.**

With regard to prisons, the British public is notoriously inconsistent. On the one hand, it demands containment; on the other, it assumes that prisons ought to be about treatment and training and that prisoners, however much they may be incarcerated against their will, want to receive these things. Nevertheless, there is no reason to suppose that one "cannot train a man for freedom under conditions of captivity" (in Alexander Paterson's words) as long as certain points are met. He would have to be assured of freedom at some time; he would have to be willing to be trained; and the trainers would have to know what the training involved and possess the resources to carry it out.

## The Role of Open Prisons

Open prisons should be the test-beds for the development of ideas and methods in the training of inmates and staff. Although there are no purpose-built open prisons and, historically, they developed as an "overflow" for closed institutions rather than as training units in their own right, open establishments have the potential to constitute a liberalising and practical force for rehabilitation.

In theory, the regime of an open prison is less rigid than a closed, containment and work-orientated institution. In practice, the usual "custodial compromise" is reached. Containment functions still take precedence. Categorisation plays a more important part in inmate selec-

tion than ability or willingness to learn. There is ambivalence about how much and what kind of surveillance is necessary. There is no special training for staff. Industrial training of inmates is often limited to "work experience" and takes second place to productivity and profit. Education is usually regarded as a rewarding way to fill time. The longer the sentence the more training-orientated and the less discipline-orientated activities occur but, in the absence of research, we do not know whether a more relaxed regime leads merely to informality or whether it offers opportunities for responsibility and self-determination. Nor do we know which people are most likely to respond to which regime.

There is an essential vacuity in much of what we call training. At best, there is a benevolent "ad-hoc-ery" in which much good work goes unrecorded and useful ideas are not passed on. There is a surplus of records of another kind but no open prison as yet has devised a regime with clear aims or objectives.

With less bureaucratic intervention and more positive encouragement for local experimental projects, governors of prisons "without bars" could devise constructive regimes. The directives of the 1969 White Paper could be achieved: "The expressed aims of classification are to attempt to identify a prisoner's needs and, if possible, the factors that may have led to his criminal behaviour as an essential to any attempt to deal with him, while he is in custody. Allocation is to ensure that the great majority of convicted prisoners ..... are sent to training prisons with a regime suited to their needs".

## Ideas at Springhill

When we met in May 1980 to discuss the provision of pre-release options for the inmates of Spring Hill Open Prison, it was agreed that the prison environment itself should be geared as far as possible towards preparing men for release and that all staff would co-operate in this. Training for release should start the moment a man enters prison and the common aim should be the development of personal autonomy: helping people to make choices and decisions based on acquired knowledge and clear values and attitudes.



Veronica Tippetts, a Scot, gained her 'A' levels as a mature student and attended Southampton University. After experience as a teacher and with the WEA, she started as a remedial tutor in 1975 at Winchester. Now Deputy Education Officer at Grendon (psychiatric) and Spring Hill (open) prisons, her special interests are literature, adult education and open learning systems. The article has been abridged.



As a result, it was recommended that the prison library provide an information service with literature on careers, housing, statutory rights and voluntary assistance. An open forum was also proposed, to be convened once each educational term, to discuss matters concerning employment and the DHSS. These matters stemmed directly from the results of a questionnaire distributed in the establishment. The 80 replies demonstrated high interest in finding out more about employment, managing money, claims and benefits, and how to obtain useful information. The majority also wanted more on accommodation, family and other relationships, physical health, and adjusting to change. Pre-release courses—such as the packages devised at Ashwell, Ranby and Onley Prisons—were examined but were considered not to meet the local institutional requirements: we were impressed by the content and are looking at how the ideas can be adapted for Spring Hill. On the other hand, it was agreed that all educational classes should have a pre-release content.

### Education at Spring Hill

What the institution seems to demand is an educational programme which moves along a continuum from a set course ("teaching lessons to

prisoners") to a flexible but co-ordinated effort by teachers and others which meets the working and social needs of the offender. The basic aim must be to enable students to make conscious decisions by (a) giving relevant information; (b) allowing exploration of values and attitudes; (c) providing practice in decision-making; and (d) fostering self-esteem and autonomy. Methods and resources must be fitted to these aims so that properly planned strategies are followed within the overall process. This demands considerable involvement in discussion and decision-making, and the whole stands or falls by the support it receives from the teaching and discipline staff, the inmates, and organisations outside the prison (such as the local education authority).

At the risk of being accused of being in "cloud cuckoo land", I should like to describe some of the developments I would like to see taking place. Art and crafts could develop as a service for the community as well as the establishment. Students could run real—as against simulated—business games by raising funds for local charities: tee-shirts could be printed, calendars made. Charity items could also be produced by "clubs" (rather than "classes") in which management provides the tutor, premises and

equipment while materials are provided by the inmates. Frankly, I hanker after the appointment of an "activities officer", as in Australia, who handles the business side of selling cell hobby and craft items so that inmates are encouraged to develop skills and build up a bank balance. Generally, our facilities should be available for the whole establishment: providing not just education for inmates but also in-service training for the staff.

I would also like to see greater flexibility about students taking examination courses. Already, some day centres offer "drop in" training facilities for those who cannot attend traditional courses or only need specific components. Cut-backs in adult education have already led to the growth of self-help study groups who use libraries and BBC pamphlets and programmes.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have not yet fully examined the rehabilitative potential of the open prison for large sections of the inmate population. If we want to evaluate open prisons properly—taking into account what is acceptable to the public, the staff, and the clients—we must devise comprehensive programmes. Instead of "ad-hoc-ery", we need analysis, design, helpful intervention, then evaluation and assessment. ■

### NOR IRON BARS A CAGE

*continued from page 10*

public at grassroots level, with the kind of attitudes so illiberally ascribed to them by remote and uninvolved observers. And there is, of course, one open prison in the present system which today, as for the past 34 years, provides living and working proof of the viability of what might otherwise, in today's climate, be dismissed as politically unacceptable. Here, where individual selection is almost the only criterion, and every type of offence and offender is represented, the prison's record for high community input and low community nuisance-value is probably unique.

But it is also true that anyone who has worked at Headquarters and near the political end of the spectrum is equally aware of the crushing realities. Some of these indeed can work towards a wider use of penal options, others against. If there is enough desperation about, the political will can sometimes be found to initiate

major change. This certainly occurred in the mid-1960's with Mountbatten, and heralded the end of an era. But it would be impossible in seeking reasons for our present problems to disentangle the "over-kill" policies then introduced from the significant social changes that were beginning to take place all round. The May Report more recently grew out of a different sort of desperation. It had little directly to say about open prisons in any detail, but the following extract is positive enough:

*Page 132, para 6.59. "On the face of it it seems extraordinary that the regimes of open prisons are not more fully utilised. In conditions of severe overcrowding it would be natural to expect the maximum use to be made of every available training prison place. Many people too will probably regard open prisons as a good thing in themselves and the sort of establishment that should be expanded rather than under-used."*

The Committee also acknowledged, at some length, the problem of local agreements which forms one of the main themes of this article, and made the equally positive recommendation we have quoted elsewhere.

The May Committee's views, those of the Parliamentary Select Committee which they also quote, and indeed the Prison Department's own recent unpublished Report on Open Prisons, together present a formidable case for the kind of initiative to be launched which we have advocated—perhaps as a third prong in an overall offensive to reduce both the size and the unsatisfactory condition of the prison population, the other two being shorter sentences and non-custodial alternatives.

It is now a question whether that initiative commends itself as politically attractive enough (or inescapable enough) to Ministers trapped between inexorable financial constraints and inherent unpopularity of penal change. ■





General exterior.

# THE TRUNCATED MONSTER

A.G. Coyle and B.C.F. Kelso

In the late 1960s statistical indications were that, within 10 or 15 years, the population of Scottish penal establishments would rise to something in the region of 7,000. This would have meant a shortage of about 2,000 places on existing capacity. At the same time, the condition of some of the Victorian prisons, and in particular of Peterhead, was recognised to be most unsatisfactory. In the light of these factors, plans were drawn up for a new establishment to hold over 1,000 adult male prisoners at Shotts in Lanarkshire. The prison was to be constructed in 3 phases. Phase I was to include the administration block, the workshop complex, a hospital wing and services. Also included was a classification block with 60 cells where all long-term prisoners sentenced in Scotland would be held immediately after sentence for a 14-day assessment period. Phase II was to be a living block with cells and facilities for 500 inmates. Phase III was to be another 500 cell block, giving a final total accommodation of 1,060

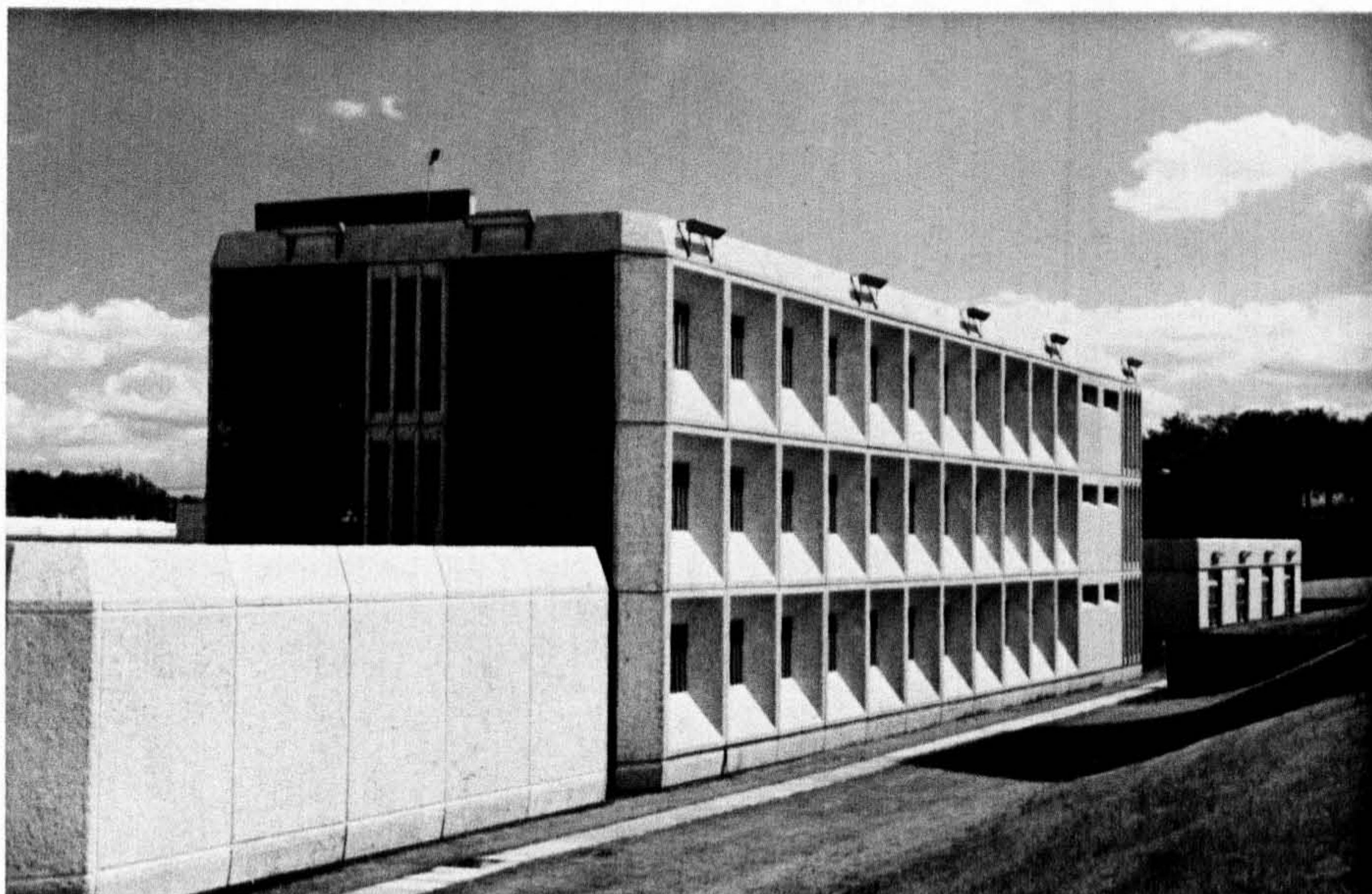


Andrew Coyle joined the Scottish Prison Service in 1973. He served as Assistant Governor at Edinburgh Prison and Polmont Borstal before being appointed Deputy Governor of Shotts Prison shortly before it opened in 1978.

A graduate, he was admitted to membership of the British Institute of Management in 1978 and is Secretary of the Scottish Governors' Committee.

Brian Kelso joined the Scottish Prison Service in 1968. He served at Edinburgh Prison until his transfer, on promotion to Senior Officer, to Shotts Prison in April 1978, where he is Staff Training Officer.





Classification unit.

The 28 acre site was enclosed with a 17 feet double wire fence and building began in the early 1970s. Within a few years, however, the plans had fallen foul of public spending cuts. By the mid 1970s, Phases II and III had disappeared from the drawing board, leaving the new prison to consist of what the May Report described as:

*"a truncated monster with all the Services, but far too few of the cells, for the inmate population for which it was designed."* (6.90)

On 15 August 1978, Shotts Prison admitted its first inmate. Even at that late stage major difficulties remained. The electronic locking system in the main cell block was unfinished and the first inmates were lodged two to a cell in the hospital block. By June 1979, the classification cell block was completed and the inmate population rose to its full complement of 60. Shotts Prison today sits in 28 acres, having cost, according to May, several million pounds, with a staff of a Governor, a Deputy Governor, over 30 uniformed officers and several civilians, all to hold 60 adult prisoners, serving sentences of between 2 years and life imprisonment.

Yet even within such a large complex, facilities are restricted. The cell block as it stands was built to hold newly sentenced men for a 14-day assessment period, not to hold long-term inmates for an extended period. All the facilities normally associated with a long-term establishment were to have been included in the later phases: classrooms, chapel, gymnasium, even the cookhouse. Impro-

visation was very much the name of the game.

The truncated edition of Shotts was a new experience for the Scottish Prison Service in that it was to all intents and purposes an industrial prison. The sole industry consisted of a large laundry complex, capable of employing up to 100 inmates and of processing 200,000 items a week. It is probably true to say that Phase I might well have gone the way of Phases II and III had a contract to carry out laundry for the Forth Valley Health Board not been already completed.

It may be gathered that the portents for the first purpose-built adult male establishment to be opened in Scotland for 50 years were not particularly auspicious. The purpose of this article, however, is not to list the problems and difficulties caused by planning and financial restrictions but to describe the manner in which the Governor and staff have worked together on a pre-conceived plan of development, acknowledging and in some cases making use of the restrictions under which they were working.

### Preparation

With the exception (as usual) of the senior staff, the vast majority of officers appointed to Shotts were volunteers. Most of them arrived in the 4 month period preceding the first transfer of prisoners. This period was used for staff training and discussion. Most of our establishments run on tradition so well entrenched that if either an officer or a prisoner is transferred to, say, Peterhead or Perth he knows pre-

cisely the nature of the prison to which he is being allocated. If he is an officer, he knows what role he will be expected to adopt, whether he will be expected to develop a relationship with prisoners or to remain aloof. The prisoner knows the extent to which he will have to co-operate with the system, the privileges which he can expect and the prison culture in which he will have to survive.

The new prison has no such tradition. If it is to succeed in its own right it has to establish its priorities and make its own local rules and by-laws accordingly. Such local by-laws and nuances of regime will inevitably be established. The question is whether they will be established by staff or by inmates. At Shotts we had the unusual luxury of a few months together before any inmate arrived. This was both necessary and useful.

There was general agreement that the key member of staff in establishing a set regime would be the gallery officer. We were very conscious of the comment of J E Thomas: "(The solemn lesson) is that no prison service can implement any kind of policy whatever, least of all a reformative kind, unless the uniformed officers are consulted, involved, and convinced that some attention will be paid to their problems. Officers know this; prisoners know this; policy-makers too must understand this".

Our staff came from the four corners of Scotland. The disadvantage of a volunteer arrangement is that some staff may not have had experience relevant to their new situation. (Granted, this is often the case when staff are transferred compulsorily.) Many of our officers on arrival were young and relatively inexperienced. In the event this was outweighed by the fact that they all wished to work in Shotts, either because the locality suited them or because they welcomed the opportunity to work in a new establishment. With hindsight, it is fair to comment that what difficulties did arise due to lack of preparation arose from the fact that no industrial staff were on hand before the prisoners arrived.

Of our senior staff, the Chief Officer, one of the 2 Principal Officers and 5 of the 6 Senior Officers were newly promoted and therefore on probation. One wonders whether Prisons Division made a conscious decision that this was the best arrangement or whether it was a reflection on the physical situation of





*General interior showing laundry and boilerhouse to classification unit.*

the prison. In the event, this also worked to our benefit. The Officers concerned were keen to accept responsibility and came with few preconceptions of their roles. The size and the nature of the establishment allowed senior staff to use their initiative and to a large extent the 2 Control Principal Officers had many of the responsibilities of a Divisional Chief Officer while the Senior Officers were carrying out the quality of responsibility which would have been proper to a Principal Officer in a larger establishment. It should be stressed that hand in hand with this delegation of responsibility went the acceptance of the paramount importance of good communications in both upward and downward directions.

### **Ethos**

In early staff discussions it was agreed that we would have to walk before we ran. Our primary task was to establish a staff identity and an ethos for the establishment. To a large extent this was achieved by the time the first inmates arrived. We were at pains from the outset to recognise our place in the Scottish Prison Service. It would have been very easy in a new, small establishment to have established a regime which was both comfortable and rewarding; the small number of inmates in itself gave potential for a greater reformatory impetus than would be possible in a larger establishment. We appreciated, however, that our task would be to contain trainable prisoners, some with the prospect of many years in prison, at the start of their sentences.

Only the shorter-term men would be released from Shotts; the longer-term men would be promoted to other training prisons. It was necessary therefore to create a regime such that these men would see such a transfer as promotion.

This was the first lesson which we agreed with staff. We had also heard stories of other new establishments which had opened in a flurry of optimism and goodwill and had in effect conceded too much to the inmates at too early a stage, leaving themselves with a much more difficult task in attempting to tighten up at a later stage. So our initial aim of establishing an ethos for Shotts was based on 2 premises. First, that we were to hold long-term prisoners at the start of their sentence and for that reason we would require a comparatively strict regime, both because the prisoners were more likely to be unsettled at that early stage in their sentence and also because we had a responsibility to those training prisons to which we would be upgrading inmates. Second, we were aware that the boundaries which were set in the early stages could later be extended but were unlikely to be reduced. It was therefore of prime importance to draw the early boundaries tighter than they need be so that, having established the regime according to our expectations rather than the prisoners', we would later be in a position to relax wherever appropriate. This was crucial since our first group of prisoners had already served part of their sentences in other prisons. They were sophisticated enough to realise

precisely this point and understandably pushed as hard as they could to have the boundaries extended.

Our estimation was that this initial settling in phase when limits would be set and the general tenor of the prison established would take something in the region of 12 months. This estimation proved reasonably accurate although it was extended somewhat by the physical difficulties surrounding the completion of the cell block. In the early days, the prisoners were upset at what they considered to be the unnecessarily tight regime. They could not be expected to accept that this was necessary not for their benefit but to establish the pattern for those who would follow them. Their displeasure took several forms. Petitions to the Secretary of State were numerous. Some prisoners showed their complaints through external channels. We appreciated from the start that if we had one point of weakness it was likely to be the laundry. All the prisoners, apart from those on service work, were employed in the laundry, which had a mass of sophisticated equipment. More importantly the laundry work being done was all on a Health Board contract. It was therefore imperative that the hospitals be guaranteed a quick turn-round of laundry. So there was the dual danger of sabotage and of a go-slow. Within the first few months, one awkward situation occurred in the laundry which led to a worrying 48 hours. With that exception, the laundry was always able to work as normal.



It would be fair to say that the first 12 months or so were a testing and trying period. For the most part testing was carried out by the prisoners in expected ways and was handled by a consistent approach and a determination not to be worn down. The boundaries had been agreed before-hand and ground was not conceded for the sake of short-term peace. With regard to consistency, the senior staff in particular recognised the need to speak with one voice and to have regular consultation. The Governor, the Deputy and the Chief Officer discovered on occasion that they were being sounded out on matters which had already been settled by one of the others.

### Pre-Release Courses

Most staff agree that a watershed was reached, probably some 15 months after the first prisoners were admitted. By that time the prison had an identity, the local regulations and bye-laws had been generally accepted and one got the feeling that new admissions already understood the prevailing culture. It was then decided that the next phase, that of specific training programmes for inmates, should be begun. An early decision had been taken that what May was later to describe as "positive custody" should consist in the first instance of preparation for release. Our final ambition was to design a programme which could be both meaningful and relevant to all prisoners and be run by properly trained prison officers. We recognised that in the first instance this would be impossible and that if a course was to be run with our restricted resources it would have to be guided by outsiders. Our number of liberations was no more than 10 in any 6 month period, excluding those released on parole. It was decided to mount a 6 week pre-release course, consisting of 6 sessions, each related to problems which were liable to present themselves to a newly liberated offender. The sessions were on after-care and social work, the police, employment, personal hygiene, home economics and budgeting, welfare rights. Local experts agreed to conduct separate sessions: their terms of reference were simply that they had a maximum of 2 hours in which to lecture, show a film or video, hold a discussion, or whatever, as they saw fit. They were introduced to each other beforehand and

their place in the whole course explained.

An important element in the course was the participation of 2 members of staff. This was seen as desirable on 2 counts. It was a means of staff training and a necessary step to our final ambition that staff themselves would run the course. It was also a visible method of demonstrating to inmates, staff interest in their welfare. The 2 officers provided an element of continuity and a means of extending the discussion beyond the formal sessions. The prisoners were informed that the staff would not be expected to report back to the Governor on each session, nor to note details of who said what. It should be noted that both staff were volunteers, even to the extent of attending the sessions on alternate weeks in their own time.

It was decided at the outset that the course would be compulsory for all prisoners due for release in the succeeding 6 month period. However, an undertaking was given to prisoners at the outset that a final session would be held, attended by all the contributors, and that all opinions would be taken into account.

Two specific items emerged from this debriefing. The session Personal Hygiene had been conducted by one of our part-time Medical Officers. Her session had ranged over sexual problems and diseases, drink and drug addiction. It had been wildly overloaded. It was therefore decided that future courses should include a separate session on addiction. The second item concerned the obligatory attendance; several members of the course said they would have come in a much more receptive frame of mind had the course been voluntary. Because it seemed to be important in this instance to be seen to be listening to the prisoners' point of view it was agreed that the next course would be a voluntary one. This was agreed with reluctance. In the prison setting where very few individual options are available it is only natural that a man will feel obliged to exercise such an option when offered. So it turned out to be. Almost all of the second group of prisoners said that they were not prepared to volunteer. One or two admitted privately that had the course been compulsory they would have been happy to attend but since it was voluntary they had to exercise their rights. This refusal solved another problem which had

presented itself. With the original arrangement those prisoners who were liberated on parole were not able to take part in a pre-release course. With the refusal of the first group the option was offered to all those who were being considered for parole during the same period; each of them took up the option.

### Social Work

The first pre-release course resulted in a significant change of emphasis in the attitude of inmates to staff. This course finished just before Christmas 1979 and at the staff's suggestion the inmates organised a concert party to entertain first themselves and then a group of old people. The staff were heavily involved in the arranging of the concert and this also noticeably affected relationships. This development paved the way for the next advance which once again involved putting the situation as it existed to good use. Because of the small number of inmates in Shotts there are no external "specialists" on the staff, in particular no social workers. From the outset, staff had been encouraged to take a special interest in the welfare problems of inmates and, under supervision, to contact outside agencies when appropriate. We had been considerably helped by our close liaison with the local area social work team who were sympathetic to our aims and willing to offer specialist support as required. By early 1980 it seemed appropriate to provide a more formal structure for this development. The 60 prisoners were divided into groups of 10. They were told that 3 officers would be specifically responsible for all matters relating to them and that another 3 would provide backup for periods of leave or sickness. These 3 officers would censor all mail, write all parole, long-term prisoner and upgrading reports and hold voluntary discussion meetings at regular intervals. A Senior Officer was given overall responsibility for each group and each Principal Officer was given oversight of 3 such groups. If an inmate approached his officer with a particular problem the officer was encouraged to assist to the extent, with the approval of his senior officer, of contacting an outside agency. This arrangement involved the delegation of considerable responsibility to staff and could only be based on trust and the responsible use of that delegated responsibility;

*continued on page 24*



# AS IT WAS...

## Mr H.

Earlier this year the Governor of Portland Borstal received a letter from an elderly gentleman who had left the borstal as a young man in 1932. This was the beginning of a correspondence between this gentleman (who we shall call Mr H) and Chris Edwards, an Assistant Governor at the Borstal. With the permission of both parties the following extracts are published which give a lively, human picture of life in the borstal between the wars.

"What, can I tell you about Portland, that you don't already know? You have the facilities to turn back the clock 50 years by simply delving into the archives. Every boy who ever came through the gates, has left a little of himself sleeping between the pages of dusty ledgers down there in the dark. Every room in every 'house' holds something of those who came—had their time, and went their way."

Like thousands of other boys he was sent from court to Wormwood Scrubs to be assessed and allocated to his Training borstal. There was a long wait before he left to serve his three years sentence at Portland.

"One compensation for the passing years—your memory bucks up a bit. Recollections that hitherto used to flicker in a kind of fuzzy black and white now zooms in sharply defined and in technicolour. I have little difficulty in remembering the YPs wing in Wormwood Scrubs in the year 1929.

"The draughty stinking yard where the lads, destined for the various borstals spent their weary waiting days—sitting hunched in the dirt in cold miserable rows, breaking stones into acceptable pieces with a brick hammer. Against the wall an equally miserable and bored screw who at odd intervals, and for no apparent reason, would emerge from his overcoat, yell 'Stop talking there' and then sink back into apathy. Nobody wanted to talk anyway—

talking merely brought back present realities, better by far to drift off into a kind of coma, the hammer lifting and falling on to the concrete slab between spread legs—on automatic pilot.

"Most of the lads were in a strange world, and they were anxious and unhappy—and three years was a long time.

"I accepted each day as it came. I had an edge on these blocks—I hadn't come in this place straight from civvy street. I didn't miss any home or family. I had been in an industrial school from being seven to sixteen and then boy's service in the Army.

"I remembered worse times too. The Army Detentions and the Glasshouse at Aldershot. I hadn't forgotten the beatings that left no bruises and the exhausting drill routines with a D P Rifle—a pack filled with 60 lb of assorted bricks—a gas mask that filled with sweat and brought you gasping to your knees. I remembered a lot of things and remembering made Scrubs a piece of cake. I became a Cleaner and Food Orderly, and then the Red Band of the Wing, and then cleaning the Chief's office one morning, he jangled in with the following day's list for departures and there I was, my days at the Scrubs had come to an end."

### Reception

If Wormwood Scrubs left an indelible memory then so did his reception into Portland. Sociologists and others

make much of the first vivid, dehumanising experiences of being received into prison where a man is forcibly reminded of what he is giving up for the remainder of his sentence.

"I have no recollection of the journey from London to Portland—or of the two other 'hands' who came with me, but I do remember Reception. I remember the bloke in charge of the place.

"In the dock a notice read 'Part Worn Stores'—the stone steps leading up to the Dormitories were concaved with the passage of time and the thousands of feet that had shuffled in and out. The screw sat at a desk in shirt sleeves—he was smoking a stub of a pencil, turning the pages of a thick ledger. There were no tape measures in this place, at least, I didn't see him use one—he merely asked your name, age, religion and what size shoes you took, and that was that. We dressed in resigned silence. Now I stand clad in a part worn shirt—part worn shorts that have no fly-hole. I have a part worn brown coat with two thin red strips on the upper arms—there's part worn stockings with red tops, and a pair of battered shoes that smell of fish oil, one is slightly larger than the other. I have a part worn cape affair into which I have wrapped a part worn towel. A much used hair brush that stinks of lysol, a new tooth brush and a chunk of something that bears a strong resemblance to gorgonzola cheese—but turns out to be a brand soap circa 1857, and probably left over from the Crimean War. Twenty months or so later I was to watch the boys quarry gang eat this stuff and turn a frightful shade of green.

"The thin red stripe on each arm denotes my status in the establish-



ment for the next 3 months. I am an OGI—a dog's body, a cleaner, a scrubber, a polisher—a pot washer and a waiter. I will fetch and carry, and go hither and yon, and whoever should commandeth me to do this—this will I do—and whoever shall commandeth me go there—there shall I go—I shall be respectful, obedient and keep my nose clean—or else?

"It would seem that times of trial and tribulation are at hand—dark days lie ahead—there could even be some slight gnashing of teeth, and thus brooding, I clutch my 'part worn' and tattered possessions to my bosom and shamle off up the slope to Drake House and an uncertain future.

"Twelve years hence, I was to shamle into both a Raleigh and a Drake and face another uncertain future for 6 years and there will be times when I wished most desperately that I could be once again secure in the depths of the quarry at Portland."

### Staff and Boys

He was introduced to his housemaster and the staff of Drake House and to the unrelenting grind of hard physical work in the quarry which is now the borstal football stadium.

"Where are Dutchy Holland, the Housemaster at Drake?—his meek assistant Mr Dobson—the fat and genial Mr Lockhurst—the lean and hungry Mr Taft. Jock Read the Gym instructor will be a hundred years old now, and Charles Worth blue-eyed (and a farmer's man) will be in his 90's. I wonder how Raleigh House looks now?—Raleigh is my memorial to the 2 years 7 months I spent there. I helped to shape it from a cell block. I shaped it with a sledge hammer, chisels and tons of concrete—with sweat and blisters and aching muscles. The walls I didn't knock down I plastered under the keen eye of that master builder Mr Marsh—he was in his 70's then. No. 6 party was the punishment party. We dug and laid roads throughout Portland and having laid, we were tethered to a giant roller like horses to a plough and pulled the weary days away. Most of all I remember the quarry—the quarry, that cursed hole in the ground where No. 6 party spent their winters of discontent. Where we toiled with picks and shovels and monstrous wheelbarrows

doing penal servitude in a borstal, moving thousands of tons of rock and rubble in freezing weather and howling gales—to make history they say—to make this place of misery into a sports arena. Whatever they did with it—whatever it looks like now—I'll always remember the freezing utter misery of the days down there. Self-inflicted wounds by pick and shovel, swallowing anything that would make you ill—raging murderous fights that culminated in frantic calls from Charlesworth via the alarm bell—the punishment cell were havens of rest—Shangri-la."

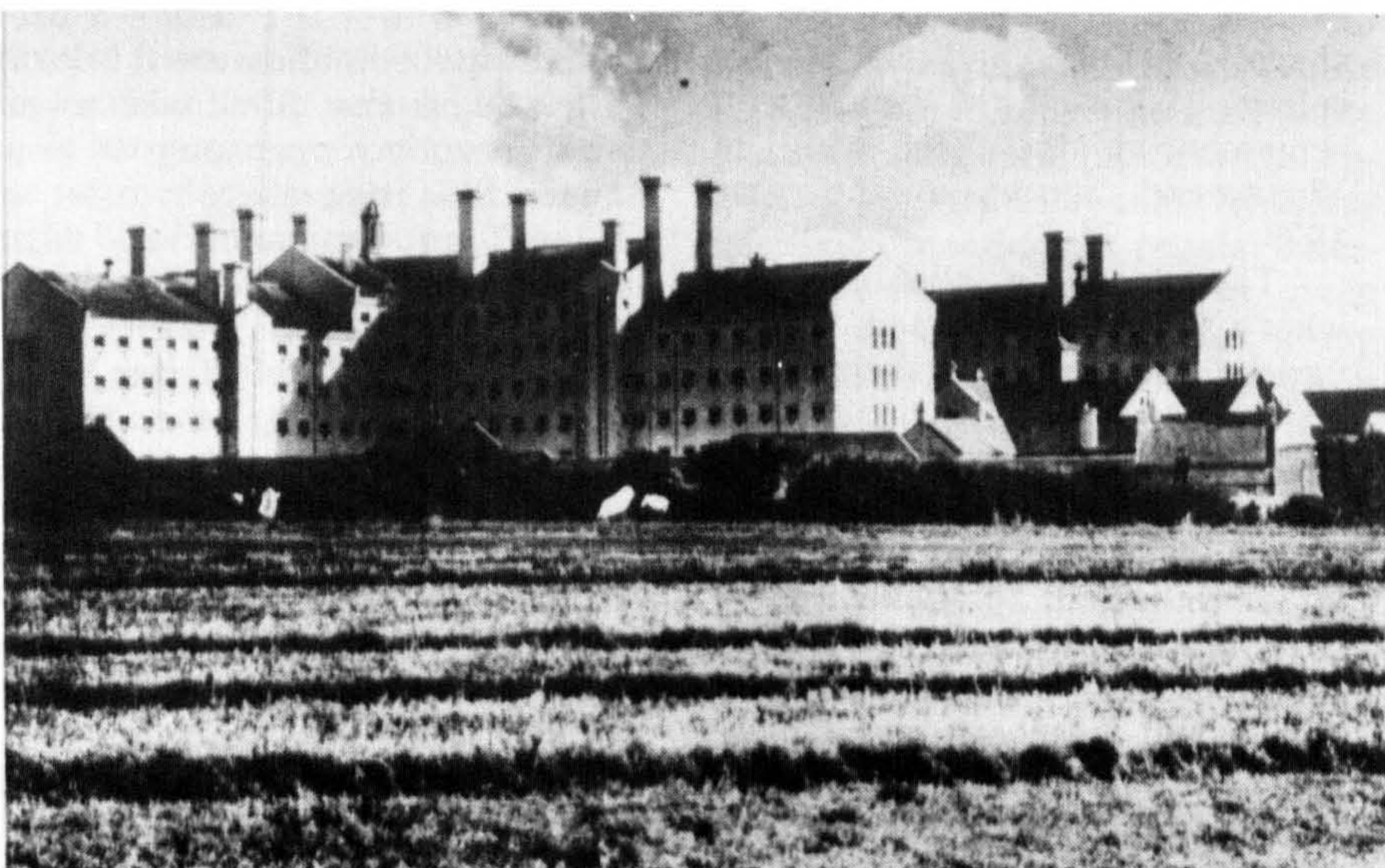
"Two of the boys of my time are sleeping in the cemetery on Reforme—there may be more now, I don't know. During my last few weeks restored once again to S.G.4. I used to amble up there with the necessary implements and tidy the place up a bit and make it



*The carpentry shop in Portland Prison circa 1900*



*Convicts working in the Quarry circa 1900  
Portland Prison circa 1900*





respectable—it was during this time that the graves of the old lags who had died in the old prison days were obliterated—so that the breakwater which they built down in the naval dockyard is their only memorial.

"In June I shall be visiting Bournemouth—should it be possible, I shall be paying a visit to Portland—I have no doubt there will have been many changes, but I hope Reforne is still there so I can pay my respects to the two lads whose graves I looked after once upon a time—but I'll remember old familiar faces. Perhaps the quarry did become a sports arena with football pitches and running tracks and flower beds and lawns with a pavilion—and perhaps it didn't—perhaps I'll find it filled in—but whatever they've done with it I'll see it as I remember it—once upon a time."

### Recreation

Life was not all hard work. Borstal was not just another sentence of hard labour or unrelenting boredom and Mr H remembers too some of the recreational activities that went on—not all of them appreciated at the time.

"I shouldn't be at all surprised to learn that in some House for retired gentlemen old Dutchy was still clinging grimly to life! He was one of those 'keep fit' fanatics you know. Oh yes. Unpredictable too. He once took a bunch of 'Blues' off to Lulworth Cove for a week under canvas; a move unprecedented,—never been done before. I remember being disturbed in the small hours by strange sounds from the field without—enquiring heads poked from various tents—disclosed 'Dutchy' in full gallop among the dew with no clothes on—a ghastly, and awe inspiring spectacle in the pale light of dawn. This to my mind made him the world's first 'jogger'—it made him the first 'streaker' too in a way. I remember the two lads who were conscripted to slosh buckets of cold water over him, as he stood panting outside his tent.

"Bill Lockhurst used to dread coming on duty on Sunday if the weather forecast didn't promise him a 'Force 10 Gale'. It meant that after lunch Dutchy would breeze in clad in tweed jacket, ammunition boots—armed with a thick walking stick, and proceed to

march Drake House round the Island. Away we'd go—Dutchy flourishing his stick up front, and Bill panting away at the rear. The afternoon was drawing in to evening, when Vaux went over the cliff just below the Blacknor Battery. I was back marker among the rocks near the sea when Vaux sailed over me with a silly fixed grin on his face, and hit the rocks below."

### The Present

Although social conditions have changed and one cannot turn back the clock Mr H can perhaps be forgiven for looking askance at some of the current popular misconceptions of borstal life.

"A certain suspicion begins to take shape—a shadow in the mind that lifts a warning finger and reminds you that strange people govern the gentry and peasantry of this realm these days.

"The 'Smite 'em hip and thigh' brigade have been replaced by the Holiday Camp complex. The villain no longer breakfasts off a 6 oz cob and a coin sized pat of margarine—he has porridge with milk and sugar, and ham and eggs. He goes to the cinema—watches television and listens to Radio 2 on his transistor. He can even have the weekend off to visit the little woman and to make sure that nothing is being erected over the spot where he buried the loot.

"Could I come on a nostalgic trip to Portland, and find a kind of male St Trinians in full blast? Would there be carbon copies of Alistair Sim running Drake, Raleigh, Nelson, Grenville and Rodney, with a Will Hay turning Benbow into the Dept for 'Japes and Wheezes'? Midnight 'nosh ups' on muffins and bangers in the dorm. Jolly hockey sticks and stiff collars—Boat races in the dockyard and the Chief i/c the tuckshop—why a chap could even get expelled from the place!—Sent down? The mind boggles, makes a chap look askance at the passing days."

### Reflections

Mr H ends his correspondence in a reflective mood as he looks back on his life which seemed to start under enormous handicaps but which turned out well in the end. As he says "You do your best and on that you will be judged".

"That which is going to happen—

will happen'. This is Murphy's law. If you can accept this, and live each day as it comes—you will probably survive to die in your own bed, with a modicum of dignity and be surrounded by your loved ones—"sufficient unto the day". The war was on then ... Have you ever thought what would happen if the priests—the bishops and the Cardinals were successful in converting humanity to live by the 10 commandments? The world would become a difficult, if not impossible, place to live in.

"If you are among those able to look back upon a mis-spent life—you come to realise through experience, that there is nothing haphazard in the fact—or the act of being born—that the kind of parents you inherit has nothing at all to do with the luck of the draw. For good or ill—there is a blueprint to follow in each one's life, but each one of us is a masterpiece that has not, and never will have, a counterpart on this planet. We strut and fret our hour and then we are gone—our audition at an end. You can't alter anything—Murphy's Law? You do your best and on that you will be judged."

"Just this little bit more.

"When I was leaving Portland in 1932 I asked the then Governor a favour. I wanted his permission to keep in touch with one named Bernard Higgins. Bernard was in the Industrial School with me for years and we were friends—his name was Bernard Skerrit then, and he was a thin delicate lad, and I used to look after him. However he turned up at Portland at the end of '31 and went to Raleigh, and I didn't see much of him, hence my last request to the Governor—it was refused, and I've searched for 40 years for trace of this bloke—never found him. I had no starting point you see—it's all in Portland in the Archives.

"Who is the better man to talk to or befriend—give advice to a Borstal boy, than an ex-Borstal boy, especially like me who has seen it all—not only seen it but lived it and experienced it the hard way?

"How many boys there in Portland receive a friendly letter from people like me? Not many I bet, and yet we could do more good than these so-called 'Visitors' and all the Probation Officers put together."



# Violence in a Moral Vacuum

H. Entwistle

**When Roy Jenkins was Home Secretary he said that if the prison population reached 42,000, the system would collapse. The population figure exceeded 43,000 just before Christmas 1979, and while the Service has not collapsed, there is no doubt that it is under very great strain. In a direct response to these and other difficulties in 1978 the Government set up the May Committee to inquire into the state of the Prison Service in the United Kingdom and to make recommendations on certain specific questions.**

As was to be expected, the recommendations regarding pay and conditions for staff have provoked the initial response, but there are other issues which need consideration. While looking at the question of the objectives of the prison system, the Committee made the following observations:-

"Prison staff cannot be asked to operate in a moral vacuum and the absence of real objectives can in the end lead only to the routine brutalisation of all participants" (Chapter 4 : 28).

## Prison Dynamics

Prisons are total institutions with a historical tradition of recruiting their staff from the disciplined background of the armed forces. While this is not so true now, the Prison Service still purports to be a disciplined service and its staff subject to a discipline code. But the climate is changing and the May Committee suggests that these changes be encouraged by deliberately leading the Prison Service away from the demands of this code. Some Governors bemoan such a change, for they see their control being diminished, while other staff look back nostalgically to the 'good old days' where 'everyone knew their place and orders were orders'. Others welcome the change, for they view military type discipline with its demand of unquestioning obedience as something to be challenged if not actively resisted.

This question of blind obedience to

a legitimate authority figure has led some American sociologists to examine the issues involved and their implications. The practices in Nazi concentration camps, the Eichmann trial and the My Lai massacre are seen as examples of this obedience carried to extremes.

Haney, Banks and Zimbardo conducted a simulated prison experiment in which prison conditions were faithfully reproduced. The selection of 'guards' and 'prisoners' was arbitrarily made from volunteers who were healthy, normal middle class students recruited through an advertisement. Their behaviour pattern in the 'prison' was closely monitored.

The experimenters reported that the experience was so alarming that the 'prisoners' opted to terminate the experiment before the stipulated time. The 'guards' were distressed by this decision because they had quickly come to enjoy the extreme control which power brought them. Some guards were observed as being 'tough, but fair', some were passive and poor at exercising control, while

others went beyond their brief and became cruel and harrasing. This latter group appeared to derive pleasure from insulting, threatening, humiliating and dehumanising the 'prisoners'.\* On the other hand, the 'prisoners' soon became passive, dependent, depressed and helpless. It seems that many became resigned to their treatment while others actually precipitated the treatment which the 'guards' meted out to them.

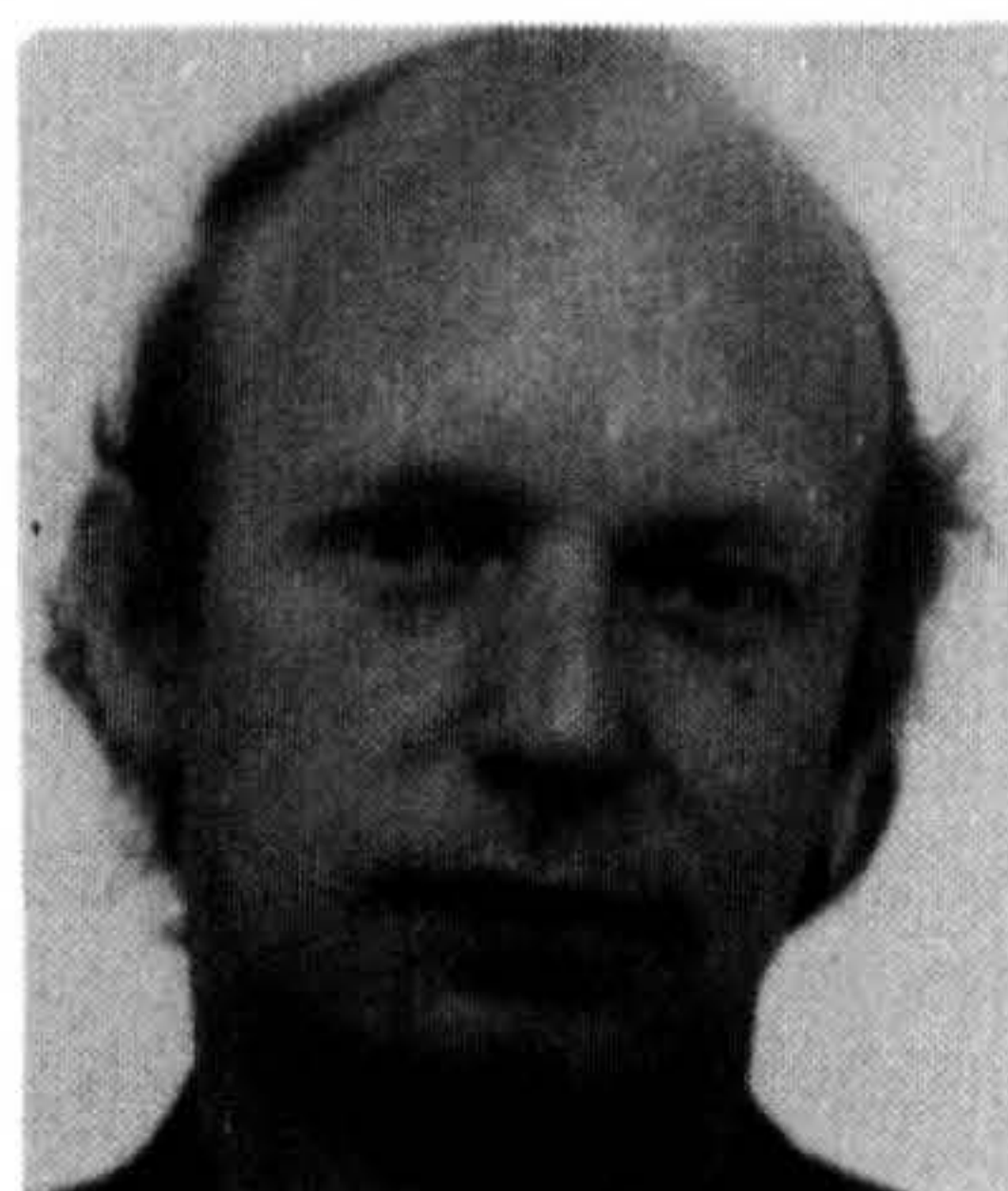
Despite the obvious limits of an experiment of this nature, the behaviour patterns exhibited by the two groups deeply disturbed the experimenters. They concluded that it is very easy to elicit sadistic behaviour in individuals who were not particularly sadistic by nature. They also saw how easy it was to create emotional chaos within an individual; even to the point of precipitating a total nervous breakdown.†

The salutary warning which Haney, Banks and Zimbardo made at the conclusion of their experiment was that 'since prisoners and guards are locked in a dynamic, symbiotic relationship which is destructive to

## FOOTNOTES

\* 'Acting authoritatively can be fun. Power can be a great pleasure'.—Prison 'guard'.

† "I learned that people can easily forget that others are human".—'Prisoner'.



Harry Entwistle graduated from St Chad's, Durham in 1961, being ordained in 1963. He served in Fleetwood until 1969 when he moved south to become vicar of several villages as well as part time Chaplain to HM Prison, Aylesbury. He continued his trek south in 1974 on appointment as full time Chaplain at Lewes but his advance was halted when he transferred to Risley in 1976. Married, with 2 children, he enjoys reading and growing food.



their human nature, guards are also society's prisoners'.

Similar conclusions were drawn by Milgram who studied the totally obedient response of human beings to instructions given by a legitimised authority figure. He found that his subjects were quite willing to give others severe electric shocks causing intense pain once they accepted the authority of the experimenter issuing the instructions. The subjects were not concerned with the effects of the 'pain' which they inflicted, nor did they stop to consider the morality of their actions.

Milgram found that evil acts are not necessarily the deeds of evil men, but may be attributable to the operation of powerful social forces. He concluded that human beings will commit immoral acts when they become part of an organisation which they would not commit as individuals. This seems to be true whether the organisation in question purports to operate within or outside the law.

It was because of the behaviour exhibited by 'ordinary' people that Milgram and others have realised that human beings are capable of committing the most extreme acts of calculated, clinical obscenities such as torture and massacre. It is to the great credit of all concerned that the staff of our penal institutions do not act in this way. On the contrary, in view of the ease with which brutal behaviour can be brought to the surface in human beings, it is a sign of the professionalism of staff and resilience of the inmates that the nation's prisons are as stable as they are. Yet this should not be an excuse for complacency, there are real lessons to be learned, so one must ask under what conditions are the moral inhibitions against violence and inhuman behaviour weakened, and are these conditions emerging in our present difficulties?

In a lecture entitled, 'Violence without Moral Restraint', Kelman argued that the conditions so required are those which can be described as *authorisation*, *routinisation* and *dehumanisation*.

### Authorisation

He sees the principle of authorisation being effective when the given circumstances are such that the normal moral principles no longer apply. As the defendants argued at Nuremberg and following My Lai, anyone who unquestioningly obeys the

orders of a superior officer should not be held culpable for any offences he commits. Those concerned were content to recognise the legitimacy of their superiors, so felt no need to question the morality of their orders. It is easy to condemn such an attitude, but do not most of us obey standing orders, circular instructions, trade union instructions etc., without seriously questioning the moral thinking behind them?

Authorisation is encouraged in many ways. The turning of the proverbial 'blind-eye' to the immoral actions of others is as dangerous as if the violence committed were actually ordered. For this reason the Governors are right to fear any change that will lessen the moral control of those in authority over their subordinates. If this control in prisons is lost by the accountable official leadership, then other more dangerous and less morally responsible leaders are likely to emerge and be legitimised by the staff.

It would be naive to say that the situation is simple, for there is no clear division between loyalty and blind obedience, and by using such issues as promotion prospects, or accusations of 'rocking the boat', those in authority can use this confusion to manipulate staff.

Authorisation also operates because the very element of loyalty, which is necessary for the efficient functioning of the organisation, is elevated by the authority in question to be a supreme virtue. Whichever group demands and receives this loyalty the main factor is that any moral scruples which subordinates may have are over-ridden. Yet this loyalty is expected to be a reciprocal process. If the subordinates are not to be held personally responsible for the consequences of their obedient actions, they expect the authority to support them if these actions are challenged by an outside force, for they regard themselves as extensions of that authority. When it was ruled that prisoners could take litigious action against staff, much anxiety was expressed until the Department reassured staff that they would be supported in the event of such action.

Another ploy used is to convince staff that they are involved in shaping a future which is far greater than any individual. For a soldier this could be the 'defence of liberty' or the 'security of the state' and I wonder whether at times 'protection of the public' is one such ploy used by the

Prison Service. There are times when the level of security imposed is excessive in relation to the risks involved, and at times its imposition comes very close to denying even the basic human rights of the prisoners concerned, a point which was taken and re-iterated by the May Committee in Para 4 : 2 of their report.

### Routinisation

Once a person has taken the initial step into the area of unquestioned obedience to authority, then an entirely new set of factors come into operation. His tasks are performed mechanically, and any addition or variation in the task is resisted or rejected. It is the slide into this automaton-like behaviour that the May Committee feared and the POA wish to resist. However, in the overcrowded, under-facilitated local prisons and remand centres where the daily requirements of bathing, supervising visits, exercise, feeding and sleeping prisoners constitute virtually the whole of the staff task, it is extremely difficult for routinisation to be prevented.

### Function

The process seems to fulfil two functions. Because the tasks which staff perform are carried out without much thought there is no need for them to consider the moral implications involved. In consequence there are a few occasions when a moral issue arises, and if one is 'thrown up' it can be by-passed. This is much easier for those who busy themselves with administration without human contact with those for whom you are responsible, moral issues do not have a practical edge to them. When routinisation takes hold at the organisational level the process is extremely frustrating for those who are awaiting decisions. The issue in hand is divided between different departments each with its own small slice of responsibility. Euphemistically worded memoranda are shunted from one office to the next, thus reinforcing the belief that due processes are being followed and normal progress is being achieved. In practice the result tends to be that after 'due consultation and deliberation' only immediate operational decisions are made. The moral implications of the issues involved are avoided and any attempt to consider them is frustrated.



## Dehumanisation

Dehumanisation is the natural consequence of authorisation and routinisation, and is the process by which one human being denies the humanity of another. To a leopard another leopard can never be anything else. Human beings however, possess the unique ability of endowing another object or person with a character, value or meaning which it does not intrinsically possess. While this ability is the food source of poets, musicians, artists and philosophers, it contains the seeds of annihilation. By using this psychological transfer mechanism a human being can strip another person of his human qualities and treat him accordingly. Once this switch has been made, the normal principles of morality, which prevent us from killing or seriously hurting another human, are considerably weakened and thus more easily overcome.

If we are to perceive other persons as being fully human like ourselves, we must accept that we are all governed by the same moral principles. For a Christian, love gives each human an unconditional right to life. This does not depend on his wealth, intelligence or usefulness, but is his birth-right. Love asserts that each human being is unique and is granted the gift of free-will, through which he is able to exercise choice. Through this gift, God has given us the chance to live our lives according to the principles and aims we select. Yet this freedom carries with it the principle that we must accept responsibility for our own actions no matter what influences and pressures are brought to bear on us.

Love, of course, insists that we see other human beings not only as unique individuals precious in themselves, but as vital parts of the global network which has a responsibility towards each constituent member. Part of this caring is to ensure that every person is accorded his rights as a human being, for it is love's nature to see a person as an end in himself and not the means to an end. It follows, therefore, that if we accord a person identity then his death must be individualised.

This truism was negated in the sanctioned massacres carried out against the Jews by the Nazi SS, for the psychological switch operated by the guards reduced the victims to the level of vermin which demanded obliteration. It is accepted that the

destruction of vermin is of no consequence so the holocaust produced few moral repercussions among its instigators.

This ability to symbolically endow other humans with values other than their own should be constantly at the forefront of the minds of all grades of prison staff. With the number of inmates in custody, with the peculiar pressures within the dispersal system, and the excessive overcrowding in locals and remand centres, it is easy for over-stretched staff to lose sight of the humanity of prisoners and reduce them all to the level of animals. In this case such rights of the inmates as exercise, association periods, bathing facilities, frequent changes of clothes, speedy passage

*Prison staff cannot be asked to operate in a moral vacuum and the absence of real objectives can in the end lead only to the routine brutalisation of all participants.*

Chapter 4 : 28 May Report

of mail, adequate visits etc., may be diminished or turned into arbitrarily awarded privileges.

The *May Committee* saw the responsibilities of the staff towards their charges as:-

- a) to create an environment which can assist them to respond and contribute to society as positively as possible.
- b) to preserve and promote their self-respect.
- c) to minimise to the degree of security necessary in each particular case, the harmful effects of their removal from normal life.

- d) to prepare them for and assist them on discharge.

*Para 4 : 26*

It is clear that the achievement of these goals does not simply lie in solving the overcrowding problem. The malaise is more serious than that, and before any improvement can be achieved, the root causes of authorisation and routinisation will have to be eliminated or seriously reduced. It is a mistake to believe that the adverse effects of these processes are limited to the prisoners. As Zimbardo pointed out, the officers are as much victims as their charges due to the symbiotic relationship between them. Their brutalisation occurs both on a personal and community level.

## Effects on Staff

On a *personal level* the 'guards' found themselves becoming less of an individual who consistently makes moral judgements according to his own individual standards. Rather they found themselves becoming helpless pawns in a game played by external forces. They found themselves becoming more and more alienated within the task, and because of this began to lose their own value as a person. They didn't seem to be able to stem the descent towards becoming robots who performed a task without thought. They tended to withdraw from any involvement with 'prisoners', often performing only those duties which they were specifically ordered to do by a superior officer. Their own personal standards declined, affecting their attitudes and relationships beyond the prison complex.

It would follow that because of low job satisfaction, high expectations would be demanded from family life and leisure activities. If these expectations were not fulfilled then this would place an unacceptable and unbearable strain upon the staff's private life as well as their working life. Perhaps these processes go some way to explaining the upsurge of more militant industrial action within our Prison Service and contribute to family breakdowns amongst staff.

## Community Level

Once a guard has made the psychological switch whereby he regards another human being as an animal, he loses any compassion, sensitivity or understanding towards those in his charge. He becomes psychologically



detached, treating them as non-beings. A certain professional detachment is essential if the tasks of any total institution are to be carried out, but *in extremis* it is spiritual murder. Because the 'guard' is excluding a whole group of people from his network of concern for others, he himself has become less than whole. Consequently his own involvement in mankind declines, and like a cancerous growth this decline will spread until other sections of the community are so regarded.

The stark warning of Kelman is that as any victimiser discards his personal responsibility towards his victim as a result of authorisation, routinisation and dehumanisation, he himself loses his capacity to act as a moral being, and thus becomes less than fully human.

### Prevention

But the message is not entirely of doom; there is a ray of hope and that ray is occasioned by the very humanity we so often deny. As children of God we possess the gift of free-will and this ability to choose enables us to change the course of events. We need not be helpless victims of the uncontrollable forces under discussion. We can counteract their effects and thus raise humanity to a new level.

If it is true that our penal system is a microcosm of the society to which it belongs, then the forces which operate within the institutions are reflections of the standards and values of that society. It must follow that if any radical change is to be generated within the penal system, the motivating force must generally come from outside. If it comes from within the system, the changes initiated must be acceptable to the wider society. In my view we in the Prison Service should not be content to sit back and let outside forces make the running. If we reflect the values of society in a rather concentrated form then we have a duty not only to inform society where its standards are leading, but also to be an agent of counter-measure.

We must all become more personally involved in the decision making progress of our society and shape the course of events along the way by uplifting the values of humanity. The silent majority must come out of hiding and refuse to accept blindly the dictates of others who happen to have gained positions of authority.

We must not leave decision making to others, rather we should examine the issues involved for ourselves and act according to the dictates of our conscience without fear or favour. As prison personnel we should examine the moral implications of our tasks and be more sensitive to the effects that they have on other people. We should equally examine and weigh in the balance the policies of our staff associations, particularly when these involve ethical practices.

In the end we and we alone are responsible for our own actions, and if we fully accept that responsibility and clearly distinguish between loyalty and blind obedience, authorisation cannot occur. That being so only a more understanding, caring Service can emerge.

### Society's Values

In our modern western society, many violent and inhuman acts are treated quite casually, or even encouraged. With the constant threat of terrorism, the constant presence of demonstrations, marches, picket lines and hooliganism it is accepted and expected that the military and forces of law and order will respond with equal amounts of violence. The general effect over a period of time is that the general level of accepted violence will rise. There is no simple answer to this escalation, but there is no doubt that we have become desensitised to violence by the over-exposure to which we are submitted via the media.

I don't believe that the entertainment world can escape blameless, for to argue that their programmes are violent because they are realistic is merely adding fuel to the ascending spiral. Often they portray human life as being valueless, inject violence as an essential ingredient and portray killing as an art form. They expose minority groups as being legitimate targets for police harassment, criminal persecution or political oppression. Hero figures are often cold, insensitive and walking agents of destruction who are playing out understandable fantasies of self-expression.

In both the real world and the world of the video screen there are those who believe that violent activity is the only way in which events can be changed. Others consider it, along with delinquent behaviour, to be a response to the dehumanisation which the perpetrators have experienced at the hands of an uncaring

society. Violence offers an illusion of power, an illusion of being in control of the situation, thus being the only way in which an identity can be asserted and noticed. For some it is even evidence of aggression, toughness and thus masculinity, so the powerless may resort to its use in order to bolster a flagging self-opinion.

The various strands in the escalating violence are not easy to unravel, but we should not be surprised by it. The society which is suffering this phenomena is one which condones the hunting and killing of wild life in the name of sport or progress, one which slaughters unborn children and calls it abortion, and one which takes an increasingly liberal view towards those who kill another human being by euthanasia or manslaughter.

While we as a nation place so little value on human life and continue to be desensitised to the rising tide of violence, there will be no inclination to deal with our law-breakers in any way other than incarcerating them for long periods of time, providing little more than basic humane containment.

These disturbing trends can be reversed by the re-affirmation of our traditional moral values and by facing the issues concerning the purpose and sanctity of life, together with our responsibilities to each other and our stewardship of the world's resources. Within the Prison Service we should all play a responsible part in ensuring that the onset of authorisation, routinisation and dehumanisation are prevented. We should look outwards to the community for inspiration and encouragement, for the more individual prison personnel become integrated with those outside the Service the sooner will the Prison Department take its rightful place as a valuable social agency working for the growth and well-being of all.

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# READERS Write

## THE EDITOR

*The Prison Service Journal*

Dear Sir

Thank you for the excellent articles on "Inside Treatment" in the July issue of the 'Prison Service Journal'. These articles were most informative, stimulating and thought provoking.

I would like to bring to attention the fact that in your concern to explore the avenues of psychiatric, welfare, occupational and custodial treatment, no mention was made of the reformation and renewal that takes place through a genuine spiritual conversion.

The Prison Chaplain is a powerful agency for good. He is the point of contact between the inmate and God, who alone can change the human heart. Where inmates are willing to co-operate, i.e. through repentance and faith, then "The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin." (1. John 1.7). The result of this is that a man is 'born again'—"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come. All this is from God ....." (2. Cor. 5.17). This treatment goes right to the heart of the matter, to the very nature of man, his offences and sinfulness, and to the consequences of his offences. In dealing with a man's past it also gives him hope and support for the future. Support groups for those who are 'born again' are to be found in every city, town

and village, in the form of their local church or chapel.

Through the column of our 'journal' and on behalf of my colleagues in the Prison Chaplaincy Service, I wish to testify to the effectiveness of a personal faith in Jesus Christ to clear a man's record of all sin, and to set his life straight for the future.

Yours faithfully

ALAN SMITH (Rev)  
*Chaplain H.M.B. Wellingborough*

## THE EDITOR

*Prison Service Journal*

Dear Sir

Robert Hazell's article, "Treatment fails, patient survives", although it may have earned him a prize as an administrator will not win him any prizes for comprehension of penal problems—at least not from this quarter.

He outlines the "justice" argument succinctly; since there is no evidence that custodial treatment reforms people, criminals should not be incarcerated for the purposes of treatment. From there he argues the need for greater attention to be paid to the prevention of crime through other means, e.g. policing, studying opportunities for crime.

He suggests as a measure of performance for a prison regime:

"a criterion of no deterioration, i.e. that an offender should be in no

worse condition when he leaves prison than when he entered ..... rehabilitative programmes of some sort will in any event still be necessary in order to prevent deterioration".

The point I want to make is that the programmes designed to prevent deterioration would in many ways resemble the ones designed to promote rehabilitation.

The purpose of much 'treatment' in the Prison Service is the containment and well being of inmates while inside the system.

Experience in many total institutions (Mental hospitals, Old people's homes as well as prisons and borstals) shows that where goals are limited, the standard of care may deteriorate and the risk of abuse becomes acute. Staff see their charges as being hopeless and this affects their own behaviour. It is important for institutional life that longer term goals exist for both staff and inmates.

Those of us who support including 'treatment' in the regimes of prison and borstals may do so, not through a clinging to outdated beliefs of complete subsequent rehabilitation, but because we are aware of the dangers of "abandoning hope" and because of a commitment to the safety, well being and future of both staff and inmates in prison.

Yours faithfully

FELICITY CLARKSON  
*Senior Psychologist*

## THE TRUNCATED MONSTER

*continued from page 16*

each man had to accept when it became appropriate to refer the matter up the line. This development was cautiously welcomed by the prisoners; it was warmly welcomed by staff. It was seen not as something exceptional but simply as a proper expression of the role of the gallery officer.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nothing of what is going on in Shotts is new. For many readers what has

been described will have been a repetition of schemes which are being followed much more scientifically elsewhere. It did however seem to us to be a worthwhile exercise to describe the birth of the community of a prison, a birth which took place in the inauspicious setting of a "truncated monster", with what at times seemed the reluctant co-operation of the Scottish Home and Health Department in the role of mid-

wife; but the birth nonetheless of what seems to have become a healthy enough youngster. We do not consider that what we have achieved in one long-term secure adult prison is exceptional. We are convinced that our present success is due in no small measure to the positive commitment of staff at all levels, to a lack of preconceived prejudice and to a willingness and ability to delegate and accept responsibility. ■



# BOOK REVIEWS

## Reviews Committee:

PETER ATHERTON *Prison Service College, Wakefield*

RICK EVANS *HMP Bristol*

MARK BEESON *Leeds University*

# COMMONS SENSE

## 'Too Many Prisoners'

### The examination of ways of reducing prison population

PARLIAMENTARY ALL-PARTY PENAL AFFAIRS GROUP

Barry Rose, 1980, £4.00

It is difficult to know if the ballyhoo surrounding the public presentation of this rag-bag of ideas has hindered or aided the prison cause. My impression remains that it probably has done neither and that may be considered by some to be a severe criticism of the work of such a dedicated group of parliamentarians. The report, which might more adequately be described as a pamphlet (for it fails in any realistic way to be a report of substance), falls I believe between two stools: it is neither a political statement about the treatment of crime and criminals, nor does it achieve a serious academic level in appraising the substantial problems facing a bewildered prison system. On reflection, however, it may be that any all-party group meeting on so few occasions over such a major topic could produce little more.

At first sight, the title itself implies the possibility of containing new ideas and insights for solving some of the most troublesome, if not intractable, problems of accommodation and how prisoners ought to be treated in modern society. However, in the reading of the report, I suspect it is bound to leave the informed reader with an undisguised conviction

that the authors have produced little new and, it might be said, have failed to re-state existing arguments in any more convincing a way. The contents of the report are, however, a proper re-statement of many of the known handicaps and shortcomings of the penal system and, because of its brevity and method of presentation, it could have a value as a working document for those seriously concerned with the issues it raises. Another and more difficult impression I was left with was the feeling that in some way the authors had shown undue haste in formulating and publishing their ideas and that, as a result, they may have missed a singularly unique opportunity to impress Parliament not only of the seriousness and indeed potential dangerousness of the present situation but also to point the way to solutions that could have found support across the party lines. Such a distinguished group of people should, I believe, have been able to present in a document arguments so compelling by their political, economic and social implications that Parliament found them irresistible but, alas, I believe they have failed to do this and (as one who has been involved for a long time in the penal scene and seen so many political figures fail to produce results that really matter) I had hoped that this particular group, all of whom I admire, might have achieved a better result.

Having been so critical, I am bound to draw attention to their courage in coming down on

the side of giving clear and unmistakable legal backing for a change in the sentencing system. Their argument that this is the only practical way forward will commend itself to a significant number of people in both the academic and practical worlds of penology. Persuasion and argument, directed towards judges and magistrates, do appear to have been tried over the last thirty or so years with the aim of reducing the prison population: the failure is particularly galling when one considers the small shift that is required in sentence length to make a significant decrease in the prison population without seriously affecting the deterrence criteria. They may have been wiser to have spent all their energy arguing this cause rather than going into a rehash of well-known arguments spreading over such a diffuse area.

One last point that did cause me concern in a committee of this kind (and I mention it simply because I believe it may affect the value placed upon its work by the more informed readership) was the decision to use a secretariat based on an established pressure group. All in all, I am disappointed with this first attempt by the all-party group to comment upon penal affairs in this way, and the price of £4 for what is a very 'limited edition' is hardly likely to encourage a wide readership.

P TIMMS  
Governor  
Maidstone Prison

## The survivors—A study of homeless young newcomers to London and the responses made to them

D BRANDON, K WELLS, C FRANCIS AND E RAMSAY

Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1980, £6.50

Anyone working with young offenders is only too aware that many have been homeless for one reason or another. It may be that they have fouled up family relationships, or sought some kind of independence, or been attracted by the adventure and bright lights of a big city, or perhaps they have simply run away from an environment they cannot understand or explain. It is hardly surprising that we, as an involuntary helping organisation (remember we still have a statutory obligation and cannot discharge borstal trainees to the streets), find it difficult to understand the views and experiences of some of our charges. How do these youngsters survive homelessness in both a material and psychological sense?

*The Survivors* offers us a very interesting, but limited, glimpse of this twilight world in a study of the experiences of 107 homeless young newcomers to London. These young-

sters—all under 26 years of age—were selected during 1974/75 at 3 emergency accommodation projects in London. They describe their backgrounds and circumstances (often greatly exaggerated) in the same way they have done to various agencies. Validation and in-depth follow up was not possible but this does not detract from this work, as the major interest has been the consumer and his perspective on the world. Instead of standardizing the order and wording of questions, the researchers aimed at a style that was 'chatty', 'flexible', and personally involved.

This gave the subjects scope to provide their own dimensions and the authors opportunity to "probe beneath appearances and use their capacity for empathy and intuition". I believe they have succeeded, although the results do not necessarily help us to understand the problems and policies of the centres involved or of the policy makers.

This research challenges the popular trend of modern pornographic fairy-tales like *Cathy Come Home* or *Johnny Go Home*. It sees homelessness among young people as revolving around four major elements: housing, employment, mobility and social processing. The last includes the Prison Service.

We know full well the result of prolonged unemployment can be an excursion into crimi-

nality—or at least a contributory factor to it—and that, if in an economic recession, stable youngsters find difficulty finding suitable local employment, then what chance have these? This link between unemployment and homelessness, however, is sometimes oversimplified. Unemployment, although a major motive, is usually mixed with others: so it is argued that there is a future for schemes like that of the Manpower Services Commission which combines work and accommodation.

For the academic, this book will be unsatisfying as it offers so little in the way of reliable recent evidence to support its bold conclusions. This work also has many serious limitations that the authors openly acknowledge. For the practitioner who seeks solutions to a particular problem, or is searching for a 'survival kit', he too will find this a fruitless exercise. However, for those of us who want to make sense of the tangled network of homeless provision and wish to understand the ideological models of agencies and observers of the homeless scene, then this book is excellent. It is uncomplicated, and worthy of recommendation to anyone working with young people at risk.

D W WICKHAM  
AGI Tutor  
Prison Service College, Wakefield



## "Perceiving Others: The psychology of Interpersonal Perception"

MARK COOK  
Methven, 1979, £3.25

The author examines three aspects of "person perception"—the processes involved, the nature and use of information, and the accuracy of the impressions obtained.

Fascinating in parts but, on occasion, rather heavy-going; a book which could well be included in a required reading list for all good judges of character.

Quotations from the research and theoretical accounts of psychologists litter the pages of the earlier chapters, the bibliography extending to 23½ pages. Some sections could be tedious for those, like myself, whose reading of social psychology has been rather sparse of late.

My attention was particularly held by the later chapters which I felt to be particularly relevant to those whose responsibilities include the preparation of reports to court, allocation and parole dossiers, life sentence documentation, and staff reports. In such accounts, prison perception operates in the guise of professional judgement with the implication of objective accuracy. Cook seeks to show that the much prized ability to judge and predict is, to say the least, suspect. It is even suggested that in certain processes of selection by interview the pin has greater value as a predictor than a group of professional assessors. (There is no indication however that Cook's findings are valid grounds for appeal if unsuccessful in a selection interview!)

Chapter 9—"The Interview—I found especially interesting. Although the majority of research has been concerned with selection interviewing and psychiatric diagnosis (on whose accuracy Cook is evidently singularly unimpressed), many of its conclusions are equally relevant to prison interviews and written assessments. To the anxiety of the interviewee is added the fallibility of the interviewer attempting an uncertain or suspect criteria, during a limited encounter, to predict future behaviour in a different environment.

Cook's validation, "virtually every decision made about someone else that is acted upon... has consequences that cannot be undone" is a maxim worthy of note.

R S RADCLIFFE

Assistant Governor

HM Remand Centre, Ashford, Middlesex

## Behind Bars - the story of prison reform

J R S WHITING

Focal Point Audio Visual, 1980

This publication comprises 20 slides and a booklet containing notes relating to each one. The slides are of plans, drawings and photographs covering aspects of English prison history between the late 18th Century and the end of the 19th Century. The author is a well-known, Gloucestershire historian whose works include *Prison Reform in Gloucestershire 1776-1820*.

The slides are of good quality and carefully selected and, in conjunction with the notes, help to bring home the details and reality of prison life. I was interested to learn about the concern to design airy prisons in a mis-conceived attempt to stem the spread of typhus, which was in fact transmitted by lice. It was also revealing to discover the extent to which the "Separate System" and radial prisons were pioneered in Gloucestershire and only later developed in Pennsylvania and then at Pentonville.

The booklet does not contain an over-view of "the story of prison reform", being confined to comments on the individual slides. I believe

that the author could have done more to disentangle the various purposes—humanitarianism, economic efficiency, deterrence etc—underlying "prison reform" and to explain changes in fashion over the years. Such issues are touched on but the overall account does not hang together well, especially as the slides are not numbered chronologically. There is also a tendency to over-simplify. For example, it is implied that reformers were so shaken by the fact that the Pentonville system of isolation resulted in many prisoners going insane that "the idea that a criminal had caught his wickedness from society gave way to the belief that wickedness was inborn".

This publication does not attempt to include the reforms of the 20th Century, including the borstal system, which followed in the wake of the *Gladstone Report*.

It is tempting to suggest that the wheel may now have turned full circle in that the current pre-occupations seem to be to reduce overcrowding, to improve sanitary arrangements and other aspects of humane containment. It is a sobering thought that, as one of the slides illustrates, cells in Pentonville, harsh though the regime was, were originally equipped with toilets and piped water.

Visual aids are indispensable to educationalists and this set of slides would prove valuable to anyone involved in teaching about the history of English prisons in schools and elsewhere. They would also be of interest to any member of the Prison Service with a liking for history. Several of the prisons depicted are still in use!

DAVID WILSON

Assistant Governor,

Prison Service College, Wakefield

## The Year Book of Social Policy in Britain 1978

M BROWN AND S BALDWIN

Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1979, £11.95

If you want to feel up to date with English literature without the bother of reading books you read the *Times Literary Supplement*. If you want to keep up to date with social administration without the bother of reading official publications you read the *Year Book of Social Policy in Britain*. Each year it provides a review of, and commentary on, social policy developments before the dust has settled and the historian can pass a verdict, and with the knowledge of what the policy in fact achieved. This makes a contributor a brave individual whose commentary may be proved misguided while the *Year Book* still lies in boxes with the printer. Some contributors to earlier volumes should have the decency to blush when reminded of their informed judgements.

The 1978 volume includes chapters on a wide range of topics from "Requiem for planned development; the case of the Community Development Project", through "The development of special programmes for the unemployed", to "Policy implications of the Seebom Report". Clearly, it is helpful for prison staff and Home Office Administrators to be acquainted with general trends in social policy and this series, not least the 1978 volume, serves that purpose well. However, what makes the volume particularly worth reviewing for this *Journal* is the contribution by Tony Fowles "To reduce the prison population". This is the first time in the *Year Book* that a chapter has been commissioned dealing with the criminal justice system for adults, although there have been two chapters in earlier years dealing with aspects of juvenile justice.

How does Tony Fowles characterise 1978? "The outstanding features of the year was industrial action taken by the prison officers." Fowles describes the setting up of the May

Inquiry consequent upon that action but concludes, Cassandra-like, "It is not clear what this new inquiry will be able to do, apart from providing a formula for settling prison officers' pay claims ..... there is a vast amount of recent information available to Government. It is extremely unlikely that this inquiry will produce new solutions which no one has noticed previously." He sees the omission of sentencing policy from the May Inquiry's terms of reference as a critical defect. Even after the publication of May, this remains an entirely tenable position. Fowles reviews the two major relevant reports published in 1978. The first is the Advisory Council on the Penal System's review of maximum sentences. (Was that 1978? It seems a decade ago!) He concludes, "there do seem to be some gross defects inherent in these proposals ..... there is a real risk that a new sentencing system of the type proposed would be inequitable in its handling of offenders and ineffective in reducing the prison population". These conclusions echo those of other criminologists who have commented on the *Report*.

The second major publication in 1978 which Fowles summarises (brilliantly) and comments on is the report on the House of Commons Expenditure Committee *The Reduction of Pressure on the Prison System*. He takes note of advantages in this type of Committee over Sub-Committees of the Advisory Council on the Penal System, noticeably fluidity of terms of reference and independence of the Home Office, and has flattering things to say about the Committee's conclusions. Nonetheless, he seems to suggest that the Expenditure Committee attracted a large measure of ministerial indifference and neglect. Fowles cuttingly remarks "discussion of penal policy seems to be governed by instincts of political survival".

Tony Fowles's chapter is a succinct summary of initiatives whose major importance is even now historical (except for the May Committee whose report may soon justify the same judgement). His mood, it seems, is as appropriate now as when he wrote his chapter. It seems that what is publicly (politically?) acceptable will not reduce the prison population much. What will reduce the prison population significantly is not publicly (politically?) acceptable.

DR KEN PEASE

Senior Lecturer in Social Administration  
University of Manchester

## Psychiatric Probation Orders

PETER LEWIS

University of Cambridge, 1980, £2.50

This is a study of all psychiatric probation orders current in Nottinghamshire on 1st April, 1978. The paper is subtitled "Roles and expectations of probation officers and psychiatrists" and this gives a clear indication of the main force of the study. Since the author is a senior probation officer, the book has more authority in looking at the role and expectations of the former than of psychiatrists and, at times, he appears to be writing for probation officers rather than for a more general readership.

The book gives the background to these orders, describes previous research, and contains an extract from the law and from the *Butler Report*; but the major part of the book relates to the study itself. Peter Lewis looked at 118 cases and particularly "at the frequency, quantity and quality of the contact between doctor and probation officer, how far they involved others in the treatment team and whether they were agreed about objectives".



Unfortunately, the number of questionnaire responses by doctors was not as high as it might be, but the results are nevertheless of value.

The sample of 118 cases contained 48 offenders with at least five previous convictions and a third with at least one previous custodial sentence. It is clear that this is an order which has value as an alternative to a prison sentence and this adds further concern to the belief confirmed by this study that those on bail are more likely to be considered for psychiatric probation orders than those in custody.

Lewis looks at the roles, the problems tackled, and the levels of team-work and communication: in these areas the study inevitably relies on some subjective judgements and anecdotal evidence but is of considerable interest. There are some salutary comments, such as, "there was rarely anything to suggest two professionals working together". There are also a number of examples of the type of order and work done and, as someone whose experience of these orders is limited and not very encouraging, I was pleased to see the positive use that they can be.

Lewis's conclusions are, in general, predictable. His comments on the need for the medical and probation services to work together echo many earlier recommendations from research and Government reports; nevertheless, perhaps sadly, they need re-stating, "Psychiatric probation orders represent a meeting point of very different disciplines—social work, the law and medicine. Dissatisfaction with the system may be in part an inevitable product of the unrewarding nature of the work, but is also partly the result of misunderstandings between the three disciplines, a problem which will not be solved by each one retreating rigidly into its own categories and definitions".

Unfortunately, this paper is expensive for its size and presentation. Although it does not say much that is new, it highlights in a readable way some important issues about a disposal which could be of more value in diverting from prison some mentally disordered offenders. I hope that it will be read widely, particularly by the probation and medical services and by sentencers.

JOHN PATRICK  
Senior Probation Officer  
Grendon Prison

## Opening the Gates: The Rise of the Prisoners' Movement

RONALD BERKMAN

Lexington Books, 1979, £12.00

Ronald Berkman is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at New York's Brooklyn College, and this book reflects his discipline rather than a more general penological interest. He is concerned with "the birth and maturation of a political movement—a movement that grew within the milieu of America's maximum security prisons". Thus, unlike the comparable polemic provided by Mike Fitzgerald on the origins of P.R.O.P. in England, Berkman provides an analysis of American inmate organisation couched within the pluralist approach of the American political scientist. He does, however, share with Fitzgerald a deep sympathy for the prisoners' movement's objections.

The first chapter provides a brief and occasionally cursory introduction to what is termed the "Prison Governance System", as well as to

the two unnamed maximum security prisons (one in California and one in New Jersey) at which Berkman conducted his analysis. Included amongst this, and central to his theme, is a rather unsatisfactory and apparently purely impressionistic rejection of the well-known findings of Sykes and others, that inmates generally accept the political legitimacy of prison authorities. It is unfortunate that Berkman did not see fit to provide a clearer empirical basis for claims such as, "it is true that there are prisoners who accept the right of custodians to govern, although their number is diminishing". Admittedly, the degree of political awareness and organisation he appears to have found does add some credibility to the suggestion.

The three subsequent chapters provide an interesting, if selective, political history of American prisons, prison industry, and the prisoners' movement.

Prisoner politicization, he argues, has had three primary sources: legal activism and a somewhat inconsistent judicial response; the Black Muslims and the Civil Rights Movement, and the New Left. Some readers may wonder whether Berkman takes enough notice of his own warning of the inherent difficulties in analysing "microscopic political activity", namely that "it is not always clear whether a particular change or event is the product of an external or internal spark". Yet, he is willing to attribute the decline of the "treatment ideology" in large part simply to the political power of the Black Muslims over the thinking of black and white prisoners.

The political histories do make interesting reading, although there is one irritating flaw for which the author is presumably not responsible: numerous references are made to an apparently influential paper, by a Californian Prison Superintendent named James A. Park, which appears to have been instrumental in introducing experiments in legitimate inmate organisation, and which should have been included as an appendix. Unfortunately, this paper dealing with prisoner unrest and Park's progressive response has mysteriously disappeared.

Having touched upon attempts at political organisation among inmates, and the generally negative response of administrators, Berkman's final chapter, "Prisons and Pluralism", moves on to discuss in detail the creation of legitimate inmate interest groups, notably in California. Some inmate groups have been legitimately engaged in limited self-government since the mid-sixties: bodies such as "Men's Advisory Councils" and "Trade Advisory Councils" had been introduced into various American penal institutions. Berkman concurs with the conclusion of Murton and Baunach that this involvement has been generally superficial and has ultimately proved a useful management tool, utilising the mirage of shared responsibility. Continued prison unrest, despite these fairly radical departures, led to even greater experimentation, notably under the guidance of James A. Park. A wide, regulated range of inmate groups was allowed, some admittedly legitimated by Court rulings, in the hope that the group structure would be seen as an arena for prisoners participation, consequently decreasing insurgent activity. According to Berkman, the previous pattern of assimilation (not change) has re-emerged and with it, he claims, inmate apathy and cynicism. The evidence again appears somewhat impressionistic and no doubt reflects Berkman's personal political disappointment at the faltering of the prisoners' movement. However, this

chapter and the book itself are stimulating, although not the best introduction to the area for those unfamiliar with it. Moreover, many readers will wish for a good deal more analysis of just what political rights a society ought to provide for its prison population.

NIGEL T NEWCOMEN

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## Radical Issues in Criminology

Edited by PAT CARLEN AND  
MIKE COLLISON

Martin Robertson, 1980, £2.95

The ideal reader for this collection would have three heads.

The sensible head in the middle would learn a lot from two chapters. Laurie Taylor contributes a vigorous and admirable article on the aftermath of the judgements of the Hull Board of Visitors on the prisoners alleged to have taken part in the notorious riot. He takes Peter Rajah's report to the NCCL and shows how close the Home Office came to thwarting justice in this case. There are scarcely words strong enough to describe the appalling record of the Home Office in its accounts of crucial events in prisons in the last few years. For the sake of staff and prisoners alike, it is time the Home Office became more responsible in this respect generally and for it to adopt a more positive attitude toward justice 'inside'. While Taylor does not go into the problems of operating prisons justly, he lays an excellent basis for the issue from the single case he presents. Donald Thompson, Professor of Law at Keele, has a slightly longer article on civil liberties and public order. He writes plainly and effectively, showing how dicey it is to quibble with police requests, whether they have the backing of the letter of the law or not. The chapter serves to demonstrate how unenactable civil liberties are in the present state of law and its use.

The rest of the book requires the other two heads. Excepting the two chapters mentioned and perhaps the last (which is fairly 'straight', but political, explanation of the present state of social work), the book attempts to come to terms with challenge to criminology thrown down by *The New Criminology* and *Critical Criminology* (reviewed in *Prison Service Journal* Nos. 11 and 20). That pair of books, ingrained with Marxism, produced a stunned silence in criminology while the mainstream deviance theorists took stock. They are now doing so in books like *Deviant Interpretations* and *The Coming Penal Crisis*, with David Downes' excellent article "Abolition: Possibilities and Pitfalls" about the implications of Mathiesen's *The Politics of Abolition*. Marxist criminology has not wrought socialism and working class offenders are still 'going down' like ninepins, so it looks as if we'll need a criminology for the interregnum after all.

Most of the book, then, proves to be as much about socialism as it is about criminology. The weightiest chapter is by Paul Hirst who makes a sometimes brilliant, sometimes tedious, job of showing how idiotic it is to pretend that the need to regulate how people behave will disappear under socialism and applies his argument to abortion. It is really about rights and about how rights tie in with law. There is a chapter about feminism and one about violence in "party political criminology". This might sound silly, but Frank Burton demonstrates that it is sensible to talk in these terms. There are chapters about juvenile justice and about



social work, while Carlen herself provides the first, introductory chapter.

The reader needs a couple of spare heads because the presentation makes the most of exposing the contradictions of present and future criminal justice. It requires the appreciation that 'right' and 'left' may back the same campaigns (e.g. a return to 'justice'), if for different reasons, or that what the left is asking for may result in what the right wants and vice versa. This reader made heavy weather of the arguments; his single mind boggled at the authors' invention of new words (e.g. "carceral") and he was often bewildered by the obscurity of the writing.

Hardened souls could be forgiven for assuming that socialists in the prison service are as rare as pork chops in Jerusalem and that this book will be dismissed. It is a shame that anyone who might rise to the challenge should be faced with such a tortured text.

MARK BEESON  
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### Britain in Agony - The Growth of Political Violence

RICHARD CLUTTERBUCK  
*Penguin, 1980, £1.95*

When books are extremely expensive and one has to be very selective about new books one purchases, I still feel confident enough to recommend this book as likely to be of interest and useful to people working in the Prison Service and similar fields.

Dr Clutterbuck is described as "A soldier turned expert in political violence turned academic". *Britain in Agony* is a book which seeks to set out the evidence to support the hypothesis that the 1970's were a decade of alarming civil disorder in Britain and undermined Britain's reputation as the least politically violent society in the world. On the surface, the evidence is certainly impressive: Dr Clutterbuck highlights violent picketing, demonstrations, terrorism, and bombings which occurred during the 1970's and focuses in more detail on issues such as the Saltley Coke Depot Picket, the "Shrewsbury Two", the IRA bombing in Birmingham, "Grunwick" and various extreme right and left wing confrontations.

For me Dr Clutterbuck failed to prove his hypothesis and I personally found that reassuring. His own objectivity and balanced analysis aids this as he takes great care to present both sides in the picture.

Public sympathy and public opinion generally are issues Dr Clutterbuck refers to throughout his book. In his account of the picketing at Grunwick, he shows the key event was the strikers losing sympathy due to the much publicised injuries received by a policeman when a bottle was thrown at him. Even during the more alarming events of 1974, when there was an unprecedented spate of IRA bombing in Britain, the issue of public sympathy and the sensitive nature of reaction and over-reaction is admirably highlighted: following the bombings at Birmingham, one of the major concerns was the backlash which might fall upon the Irish community there.

Dr Clutterbuck identifies the role of the press and of television in particular as being a factor of considerable importance throughout the events of the 1970's. That media have the capacity to influence public sympathy and provoke or modify subsequent reactions is no mean lesson to take on board.

There is much also of merit in this book. A useful list of abbreviations of various political

groups and unions. A brief analysis of various extreme groups and, particularly relevant to all managers, there is a very simple account of that *bête-noir*, the "Shop Steward", and how he gains his power. There is nothing sinister about it, it is a human and understandable process and Dr Clutterbuck concludes that, in many cases, the extremist gains his power despite his extreme views rather than because of them.

This book is all about "social equilibrium". But it goes beyond that; it goes deep into specific incidents, their growth, dynamic and consequences. It allows human beings on all sides to show through. Even though, in his analysis of the industrial situation, Dr Clutterbuck concludes that "The biggest lessons for Britain lie in Germany", he has the good grace in his introduction to include the following quote from Ralf Dahrendorf: "..... it sounds a terrible thing to say for a German who lives in Britain—that the British version of somewhat lower economic performance and individual income, but higher social equilibrium, as you call it, may well be preferable". It also needs to be said that no one could possibly read this book objectively without developing a greater respect for the police force of Britain; that in itself is reassuring, given the worry that today's problems could propel Britain into real agony in the 1980's.

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### Community Service by Order

Edited by KEN PEASE AND  
WILLIAM MCWILLIAMS

*Scottish Academic Press, 1980, £6.75*

You might assume that community service orders are a widely supported innovation that are working well. They are certainly here to stay after an almost universal welcome, despite some misgivings about whether the Probation Service was the best choice for administration. Fears about work availability for offenders have not been borne out; concern about the conduct of the convicted has been generally misplaced; and the basic idea of the sentence itself seems to fit neatly into the espoused aims of reducing the prison population.

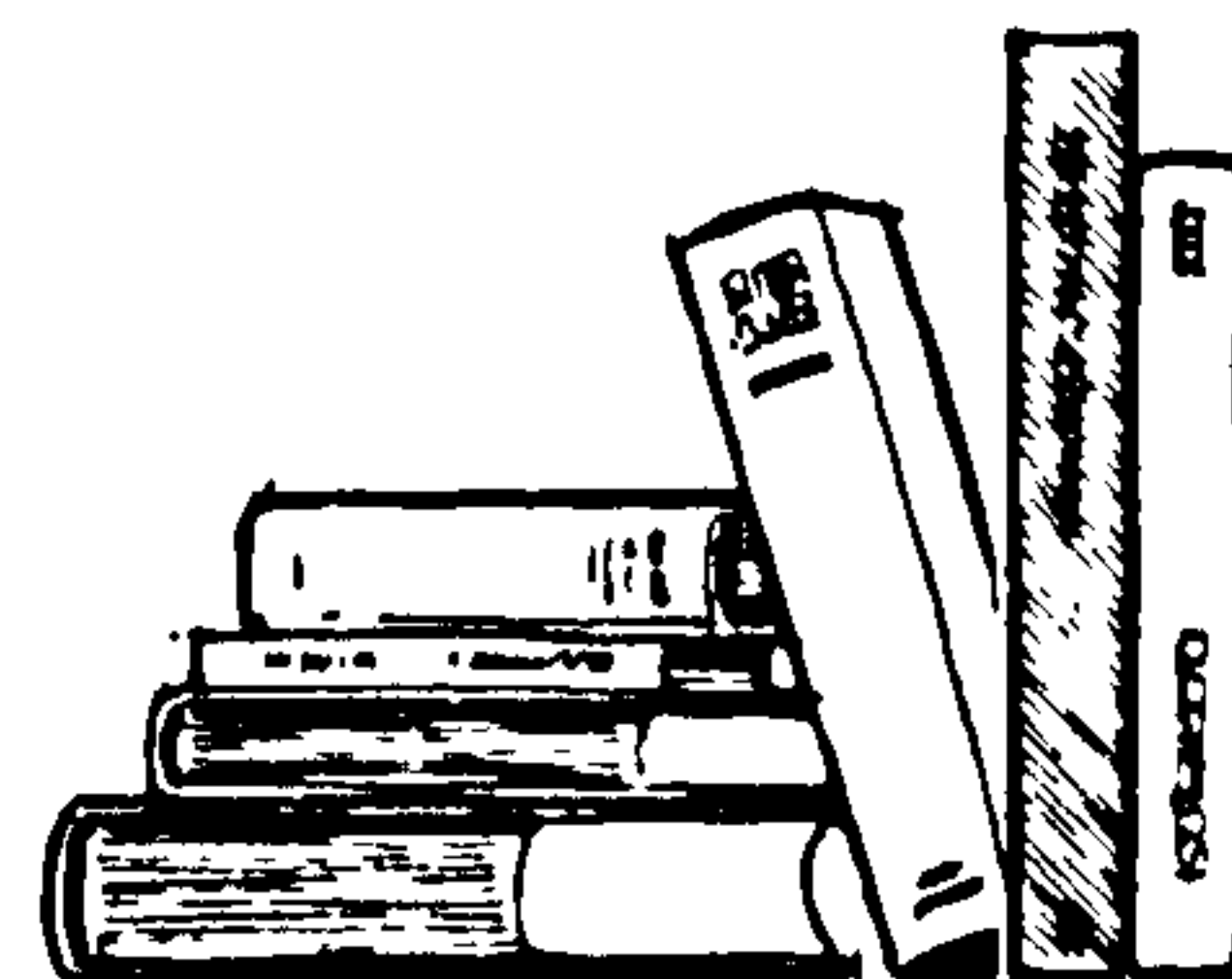
Nevertheless, this collection of 9 papers (written by researchers and practitioners) questions the present operation of community service. Far from welcoming the "benign neglect" that would allow community service orders to get stuck in a rut, the editors say that there "may still be time to make important changes". The general message is that the order is all things to all men (perhaps explaining its popularity): there remain inequalities in the type of work supplied; in crediting time served; in the extent to which orders are an alternative to custody; and in what constitutes a breach of the order. There are even fundamental differences about the basic ethos of the sentence.

The first paper—by Ken Pease—is an excellent though brief history of the community service order, a sentence coined by the Wootton Report in 1970. The first orders were made in Nottingham, London and Shropshire in January 1973, followed by South West Lancashire, County Durham and Kent later that Spring: these experiments heralded in a sentence which is likely to become the bulk of the work for the Probation Service in the 1990s. In a later paper, Ken Pease assesses whether

community service orders have been, in fact, an alternative to custodial sentences over the past 8 years. This sort of emphasis was never intended by the Wootton Committee and, not surprisingly, the orders have not usually been awarded instead of prison sentences. Despite the difficulties of establishing a definite figure, Pease estimates that between 45 and 50 per cent of community service offenders have been diverted from custodial sentences.

The final paper in the collection is built around 4 "cameos" of what could conceivably happen to community service orders as a sentence. They are the sort of "crystal ball gazing" exercises that Pease proved so entertaining and thought-provoking in his series of articles in *Prison Service Journal* numbers 37 and 38 (January and April 1980): a handful of trends taken to their logical conclusions. Again, the lack of common standards in ethos, selection, operation, breach, and even success, is highlighted. The booklet presents a useful stocktaking of a sentence which is apparently far from equitable and which lies in the hands of the Probation Service, whose experience is of individualised treatment.

RICK EVANS  
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## wanted

Citations of research on CRIMINAL VIOLENCE: If you have done, are now doing, or soon expect to be doing research on CRIMINAL VIOLENCE in any of the medical, behavioural or social sciences, please contact Drs Marvin E. Wolfgang and Neil A. Weiner, University of Pennsylvania, Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law, 3718 Locust Walk/CR, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104. This project, sponsored by the National Institute of Justice, involves compiling a comprehensive list of research on criminal violence which will be made available to researchers as part of an information clearing-house. Any related research is requested, regardless of size, design or purpose. Please send your name, address and descriptive materials or reprints.



# TWO OPEN PRISON MYSTERIES

Acting as Medical Officer in my open prison in Nigeria (with my degree in history and modern languages and diploma in psychology), I had four main remedies for minor sick daily; four types of "podge", black, brown, pink and blue, ("podge" is the local derivative of purgative). I was most successful, until one day an inmate came and said that he had "worms in my bones, Sir"; I gave him the black podge: back four days later, he stated the same symptoms; with all my authority I offered him the brown podge, saying that this would no doubt cure the ailment, although there was no such illness as 'worms in your bones'. The next week he arrived back in the sick bay almost in tears; "this podge, Sir, no kill my worms, Sir; you be no good doctor, Sir". A bit exasperated, I say once again, "There be no such thing as 'worms in the bones', son; I have long experience in being a doctor and I know". He pulled up his shirt and down his trousers and showed me worms coming from his midriff. With express speed, more as

Superintendent than Acting Medical Officer now, I order the Staff car to take him to the British Medical Hospital in Kaduna. After clinical diagnosis there by "a proper doctor", (was it onchosomiasis or filariasis?), he was returned straight-way for the "Acting Medical Officer" to draw out each worm further, carefully and daily over the next few weeks. The "Acting Medical Officer" could not have prevented the damage to the liver anymore than the Superintendent could have cleared the snails from the brook, but he was a little wiser and I am glad to say the inmate became a very good farm worker.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Senior Warder (the correct terminology) at the same open prison had been bedridden for 8 months and was nigh comatose. The BMH diagnosis was cancer of the gut with three weeks to live. His wife came to me as Superintendent to request a warrant to Lagos, 700 miles away, "to see the

juju at the bottom of our garden at home. This will cure him, Sir". I regretted, but European medicine had come to stay in Nigeria. Twice the next week she returned more plaintively each time. In the end I telephoned Headquarters at Lagos to gain the necessary permission for unusual warrants of this kind; my credibility in their eyes became even more in doubt; the invective was considerable. As is my humanitarian wont, in the end I agreed to the warrant on my own initiative. It turned out to be a warrant for 14 people, husband and wife, two step-daughters, five children, four half-children and one aunt. They were away one month, returning with great jubilation, our Senior Warder apparently as fit as a fiddle. He was on normal, full-time duties for a year almost to the day, when he collapsed and died the same night. What price "Juju" or was it faith?

ADRIAN ARNOLD

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