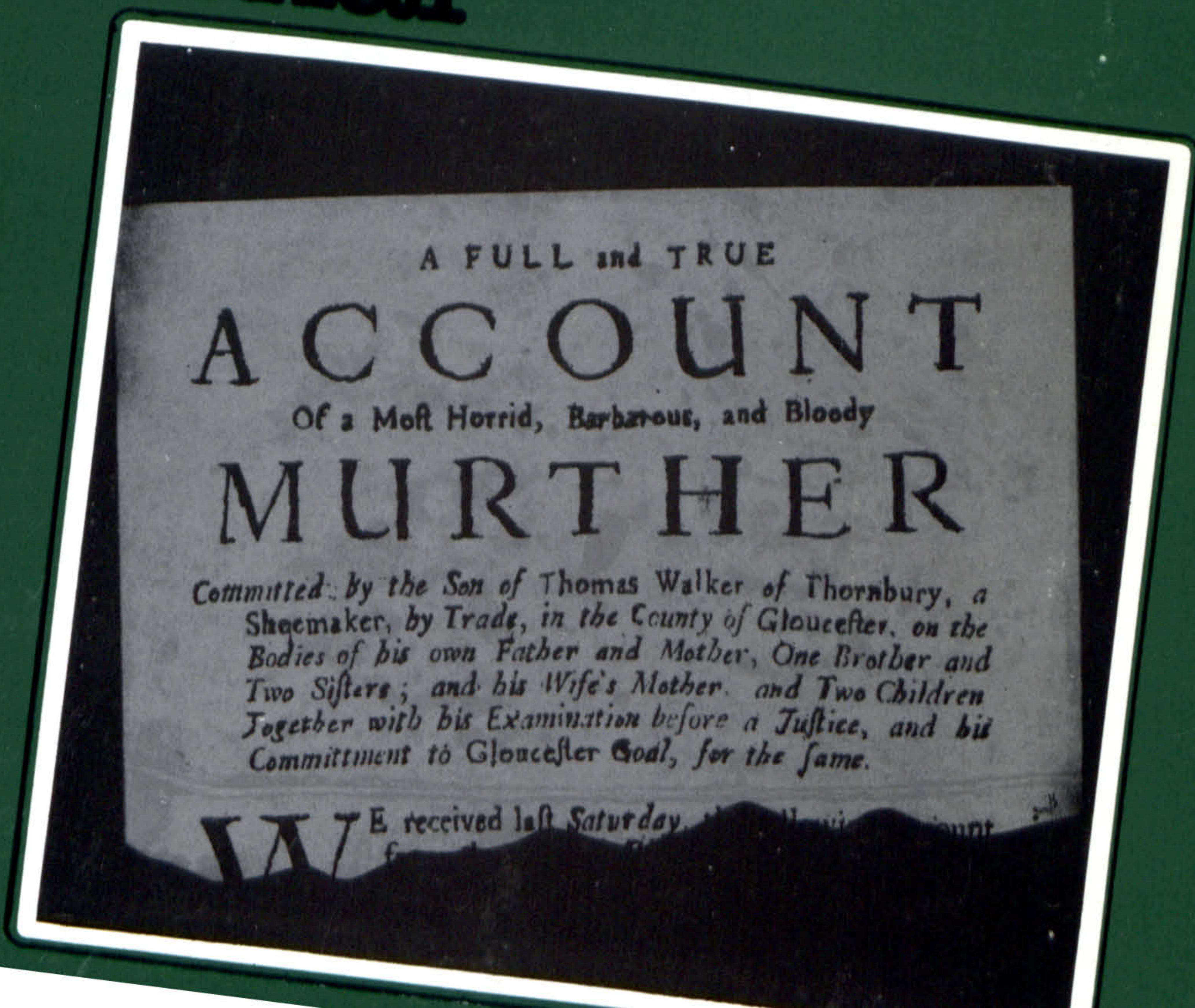


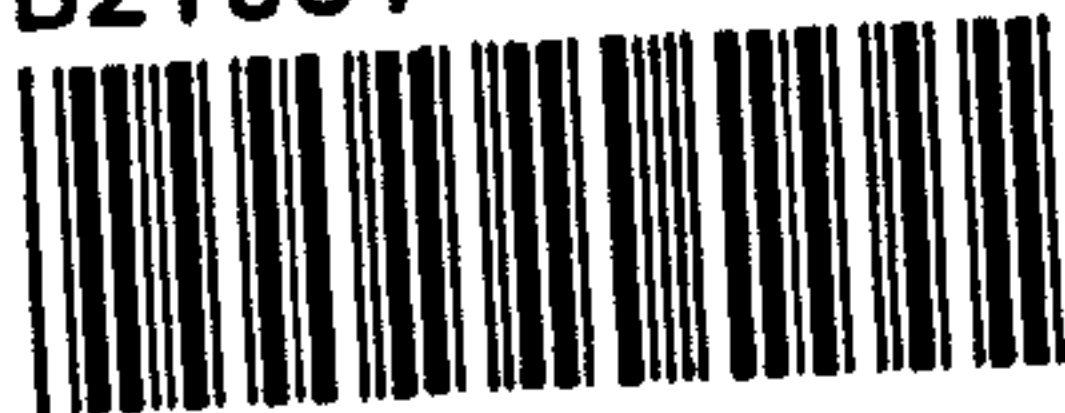
# PSJ

No. 65 New Series

## prison service journal







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# Comment

There are those who look back into the past (distant or relatively recent) and see penal philosophy as clearer, simpler, more easily understood and therefore more wholeheartedly pursued. They may look to Du Cane and applaud his punitive regime or to Gladstone, Patterson, Llewelyn and their like and take a deep, uplifting breath. Cynics will argue that neither punitiveness nor treatment reduced delinquency. Since then we have seen the 'Justice Model' which deals only in tariff and measures the relative merit of particular criminal acts; it looks backward to what has been done, not forwards, with no speculative or reparative intent. This may unburden the mind, but seems to offer little to prisoners or prison staff; 'Justice' has a cold and clinical sound.

In setting out the aims of the Prison Service in 1984, the Prison Department settled for activities rather than a coherent philosophy and one might agree that it is better to set out the tasks so that we know what we have to do (and can be approved when we do them well) than to pretend to a philosophy that is bogus. It might be tenable to prefer continuing tension between, at its simplest, punishment and treatment on the basis that neither can exist on its own. Treatment in prison can hardly deny a punitive element and punishment without something more positive quickly looks unjust. Janus would then be our patron 'saint' as he looks in both directions at once; backwards to the deed and forward, on the other side of the gate, to release. While it is best to avoid the extremism of either one or the other, the Prison Service needs a clearer ethic than this form of co-existence. And it must get away from pretence, such as our present Rule 1 — "the purpose of treatment and training" may well be that inmates may lead "a good and useful life", but what is the purpose of imprisonment? Much imprisonment has all too little treatment and training available as the Inspectorate politely but firmly tells us.

In such debates the good sense of Archbishop Temple appeals:

"Now the most fundamental requirement of any political and economic system is not that it shall express love, though that is desirable, nor that it shall express justice, though that is the first ethical demand to be made upon it, but that it shall supply some reasonable measure of security against murder, robbery and starvation."

*Christianity and Social Order, SPCK 1976 edition (p61)*

He also advises:

"Incidentally, it may be worthwhile to observe that our duty in this field is seldom to adopt one principle and see it through. Controversialists often demand this in the name of logic or of consistency. But the first requirement of sane logic is that we should consider what principles are involved and how we may do fullest justice to them all . . . the real problem is to ascertain, as far as may be, all the principles and then combine them as fully as possible."

(p78)

And Temple concludes:

"These two great principles then—love and

justice — must be rather regulative of our application of other principles than taken as immediate guides to social policy."

(pp79-80)

The British Council of Churches has been deliberating on such issues in a recent working party and has, in its report "Breaking Out" (Speller, 1986) concluded that a synthesis is possible between the apparently antithetical elements. The argument is summarised thus:

"Moreover, it can be argued from this theory that it is needless to contrast reformation with punishment, since punishment is itself the instrument for checking moral deterioration and promoting reformation. In addition, it is mistaken to contrast deterrence with retribution, because deterrence itself clearly implies a prediction of retribution. Punishment is considered to deter people from crime, precisely because it is inflicted for crime. The concepts of retribution, deterrence and reformation, therefore, are all essentially complementary, and need to be integrated in a balanced penal policy."

(pp95-6)

While wishing this attempt well, I doubt if a synthesis really convinces. I prefer Temple's concentration upon sufficient control to maximise freedom. The Queen's Peace is for everyone and probably falls more to the Home Secretary than to the Lord Chancellor to sustain it. The most effective controls are the least obvious but as controls become more public and more coercive it is vital that they are properly regulated — and lawyers are skilled at moderating any use or abuse of power. Prison as the most coercive control needs the most careful moderation and we need a philosophy of control that emphasises that, like force, no more of it than necessary is used. Prison is just at one end of a long spectrum of informal and formal control. Then the classical aims of penal action are not paramount but regulate or qualify or moderate the exercise of control; for example:

Control should be just: it should be applied deservedly, proportionately, according to standards and without caprice.

Control should identify what is alien, say so clearly and so reinforce peaceful behaviour.

Control should seek the good of the community and the offender by being informed, constructive, hopeful, humane and value for money.

We wish well the discussions that will flow from the publication of Ian Dunbar's "A Sense of Direction" and look for a new statement of purpose as we prepare for a "Fresh Start": and not for our own benefit only — we need hope but so do both community and offender. The Prison Service should renew its commitment to diverting its charges from future offending, for example, through its endorsement of "shared throughcare". Such attempts are not in vain (though the climate may be difficult) and we share a common interest — we do not wish to see the prisoner back inside and nor does he.



The "Murderers of Gloucestershire" started out as a personal project, researching part of Gloucester Prison's history. It was initially a collection of individual cases. Some of the staff found them of interest, so I expanded them into the form of a small book for those who wanted to keep one.

I am not sure from where the idea of publishing it originated, but I remember the reason well.

One of our colleagues, a Prison Officer who was serving in the North of England, was in need of financial help to have a life-saving operation performed on his son in America. Therefore a limited edition was published with the proceeds devoted to the very worthy "David Pinder Appeal".

# The Murderers of Gloucestershire

## *Hangings in Gloucester Prison (and others) 1872-1939*

Bryan White

This article is a much abbreviated version of the book, running to 65 pages, produced by Senior Officer White and printed in 1985. It has only been possible to give the flavour of the whole work, the value of which, as an historical record, is enhanced by the inclusion of a large number of contemporary photographs, one of which is used on the cover of this issue of the journal. Only a few of the executions which SO White deals with are included below, amongst these, the last hanging at Gloucester in 1939. Furthermore, it has been necessary to shorten each individual account, which has been done by omitting the details of the crimes committed. The descriptions of the executions, however, are left intact, in the belief that these form the most significant part of the historical record preserved by SO White. Crimes change little; the punishments they attract vary greatly from time to time and place to place.

Copies of this book can be obtained from —

Senior Officer White,  
H.M. Prison,  
Barrack Square,  
Gloucester.

GL1 2JN.

£2 per copy.

### Foreword

**Alasdair Morrison — County High Sheriff 1983-84**

Capital punishment, whether you are for it or against it, is a dreadful thing all the same. In earlier centuries it was the penalty for a wide range of criminal offences, including many that would appear trivial to us nowadays. And age was barely a consideration. Which is worse to contemplate — the hanging of John Evans aged 70 in 1793 or of John Baker aged 16 in 1821 both publicly above the gaol lodge in Gloucester, both for burglary?

With Public sentiment leading the way, legal practice ensured that from 1838 onwards the death penalty was given only for the two crimes of murder and treason, even though the letter of the law was only substantially changed in 1861. But still until 1868 executions continued to be carried out in public. From then on they were carried out in privacy behind prison walls.

It is the tale of the 17 executions carried out inside Gloucester Prison between 1872 and the last one in 1939 which Mr. White tells here. Those executed are all convicted murderers. It is a sombre subject, but it is a point of our History which we cannot deny

and which we should be prepared to confront.

To read the reports in detail is to experience mixed feelings. What is one to make of the executioner's expertise, at once such a dreadful specialism and yet so humanely necessary if the thing was to be done at all? What of the relative injustice of applying that one single final penalty for murders, which varied so much in their circumstances and their motives — even if there are no innocent men or women here? What of all the other cases, which did not end with the noose because a Jury or a Judge or a Home Secretary thought otherwise?

Another thing which is very clear from the contemporary newspaper reports is the extent and genuineness of the human concern which surrounded even the least sympathetic of these murderers as their lives moved towards their inexorable close.

Some of the interest, no doubt, was merely ghoulish, but much derived from a deep local feeling of involvement in what was seen as a humane if desperate situation. Executions were not common, they were special occasions, and they were never something to be taken lightly. Much of the reporting, especially



in the years before the memory of public hangings had faded, is very moving.

Nowhere is the humanity of the whole dreadful business more obvious than in the behaviour of those directly involved in it and in the effect which it had on them. Warders, Matrons, Chaplains, Prison Governors, Under-Sheriffs and Sheriffs are all seen making the best of what all agreed to be a terribly sad business. And surprisingly often the condemned respond in kind. Having recently served as County High Sheriff myself, I can personally only be grateful that I never had to make any such arrangements or attend any such ceremonies. For a ceremony it was — a desperate attempt to give human dignity to what can only be the last indignity.

### **HANGING NO.1**

**MONDAY 8th JANUARY 1872 —  
FREDERICK JONES AGED 20 YEARS**

The last scene in connection with the terrible tragedy enacted in Cheltenham a month ago was witnessed by a few persons within one of the airing yards at the County Prison at eight o'clock on Monday — almost before daylight. Frederick Jones was then executed for the murder of Emily Gardner. He was twenty years and eleven months old on the day of his execution; his victim was only eighteen.

Jones could neither read nor write, he had been sent to school when young, but had always avoided it and run from school duties. On the evening after his trial, feeling that he had no hope of life, he began to make to the Chaplain the confession about the murder.

He never insinuated anything reflecting upon his victim beyond the incidents which aroused his jealousy. He said he loved her passionately and again and again he protested that he desired to obtain the forgiveness of the family of the dead girl. The morning of the execution arrived; the Prisoner having slept soundly, awoke at six o'clock. As the time approached for the Prisoner to leave his cell he accepted a piece of cake from one of the Warders and asked for a little brandy which he was given. He then walked down the winding staircase to the pinioning room and resigned himself to Calcraft the Hangman. At a few minutes to eight he walked into the Courtyard. At the foot of the scaffold he halted, he then kissed the Chaplain and ascended the steps and stood erect on the platform. The few seconds which elapsed before the Hangman's preparation had been

completed seemed almost an age. The culprit stood unsupported, but the deathly pallor upon his countenance showed how great the effort he was making to meet his death with calmness. Though he stood wonderfully firm there was nothing of hardihood or bravado in his demeanour. The rope was put around his neck and in another second or two the bolt was drawn and, with a jar to the framework of the gallows as the rope tightened, the murderer was dead. There was a convulsive throe and then with the exception of a few slight convulsions all was over.

Death, as a surgeon present stated, was instantaneous. The body remained suspended for the time prescribed by law and then was taken down and a formal inquest was held upon it by Mr. Ball, acting coroner for the district. At the inquest Captain Wilson, Governor of the Prison stated that he was present at the trial and condemnation of the Prisoner — that he had witnessed the execution and the body of the man the Jury had viewed was that of the man who had been so condemned, and executed.

A singular coincidence has been noted as being connected with the day of the execution. The first evening lesson for that day presented in the new Lectionary, and as read in the Cathedral, was the chapter in Genesis wherein God says to Noah — "Who so sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed for in the image of God made he man".

Excerpts from The Gloucester Chronicle 1872

### **HANGINGS 2-3-4**

**MONDAY 12th JANUARY 1874**

#### **A TRIPLE HANGING**

**EDWIN BAILEY AGED 32 YEARS.**

**CHARLES EDWARD BUTT AGED 22 YEARS.**

**ANNE BARRY AGED 31 YEARS.**

Last Monday morning at eight o'clock Charles Edward Butt, Edwin Bailey and Anne Barry underwent the last dread sentence of the law — the former for shooting Miss Amelia Phipps: the two last named for poisoning an illegitimate child of which Bailey was adjudged to be the father. On Sunday the day before the hanging a mob of some three or four hundred well dressed people assembled at the railway station in the hope of catching a glimpse of the veteran hangman Calcraft who was expected at 3.30p.m. from London. This luxury however was to be denied the mob for Calcraft who is nearing

the verge of that bourne whence no traveller returns, is too unwell to perform the grim duties of his unenviable task and the person who was to be his deputy arrived in Gloucester on Friday. Mr. Anderson will now be the executioner; he is said to have been Medical Student and that he acts as Calcraft's Deputy solely on account of the pleasure he derives from the performance of his duty. He hands his fee to Calcraft in consideration of being allowed to indulge his taste.

The morning of January 12th arrived — a murky and gloomy morning; the prisoners were pinioned separately in their cells and all submitted to the operation with a calm fortitude which rendered the duties of Executioner free from trouble. About 50 strangers were assembled within the walls, including representatives of the Press from Gloucester, Bristol, Birmingham and Cardiff and several tradesmen and Medical men of the City. The gallows were erected in one of the airing courts, the drop being level with it, and a pit was dug beneath. Anderson the Deputy Hangman appeared; he wore a thin black coat with velvet cuffs and facings and on his head was a black skull cap of rough material. Exactly at four minutes past eight o'clock it was observed that the dread procession was approaching. First came Butt led by the hand of the Chaplain who was repeating the opening lines of the Burial service. The woman Barry attired in a light print dress next made her appearance, led by the Matron, then followed Bailey with the Governor of the Gaol, Captain Wilson, Mr. Greene the Deputy Governor, and Mr. Hicks the Surgeon and several Warders. The prisoners walked to the gallows where they knelt and said the Lords Prayer, Barry's utterances being louder and more fervent than those of her Companions. While parts of the Burial Service were being read by the Chaplain, the ropes were adjusted (with some hesitation in the case of the woman) and white caps were placed over the heads of the culprits, the woman Barry standing between Butt and Bailey. Barry several times exclaimed, "Goodbye God Bless you Miss Marshall" (the Matron) and then she added to the executioner "This is just what my dreams have told me I should come to". The Chaplain shook hands with all three as did the hangman, who then retired to the corner of the gallows and drew the bolt sustaining the drop, and the bodies disappeared behind a black screen. Butt and Bailey died almost instantaneously, but Barry being



of fragile build appeared to live about three minutes, and Anderson dispatched her by pressing the body down.

#### **HANGING No. 9**

**THURSDAY 16th MARCH 1893**

#### **ALBERT MANNING AGED 37 YEARS**

No morbid curiosity took me to the execution of Manning on Thursday morning but a stern sense of duty. Outsiders have but a poor idea of the impressiveness of an execution and for the benefit of those who have never seen the actual carrying out of the "extreme penalty of the law" I may as well say that I have not the least doubt but that, of the dozen odd spectators of the gruesome affair at early morn on Thursday, not one wishes to see another execution. I wended my way to the County Gaol shortly before eight, I could not help repeating to myself the sentence "It is a pleasant day to live, but a gloomy one to die". Once arrived at the gaol it was an easy matter, thanks to the permit courteously granted me by Mr. J.W. Coran the county under-sheriff, not before, however, clearly stating my business to the sturdy yet civil janitor stationed at the entry lodge. Inside the gaol lodge were the Deputy Chief Constable, Mr. Phillpots, Inspector Elliott and a posse of police, as well as a Warder of the prison and there we were kept waiting until close on the stroke of eight. We observed a Warder on the roof of one of the prison buildings preparing to hoist the black flag. We are informed that the black flag is some four yards by eight and whilst contemplating it we were startled by a loud cry evidently proceeding from the poor man whose terrible crime we were about to see expiated.

The crime is commonplace, detailing as it does the horrible vengeance of a man against a woman of whom he was jealous.

We are now gathered around the gallows, surely not one of the group will ever forget those few moments, Billington the Executioner and his assistant Scott — both of whom wear black silk skull caps — together with Mr. Coran and his clerk withdraw and then we hear the solemn and impressive tones of the funeral service of the Church of England being pronounced "I am the Resurrection and the Life said the Lord ..... was the first sentence we heard previous to the procession appearing. The Chaplain (the Rev. J. Hart Johnson) in full clerical attire first appeared after which

came the County Under Sheriff and his clerk, each bearing a white wand, then followed the unfortunate man, a Warder being on each side, the Executioner and his assistant bringing up the rear. His face was of an ashen hue but he walked with a firm step to the gallows and as Billington with an accustomed hand quickly fixed the noose around his neck he was heard by those standing very close to say "It's too tight". Quick as lightning Billington and his assistant strapped the unhappy man's legs, his lips at the time quivering as if in prayer and quite as quickly the white cap was adjusted. Then, stepping back, Billington drew the bolt and in a fraction of the time it takes to write this Albert Manning was no more. The silence was most impressive and after the body had been suspended for about a minute Mr. Coran, calling the three Press Representatives asked them to look into the pit. Then it was seen the body was quite stiff, the hands being clenched behind as if at the last moment the unfortunate man had struggled. Those who had seen previous executions remarked that Billington had done his work remarkably well, the affair being managed most expeditiously. The black flag was of course immediately hoisted and the aforementioned Press Representatives together with Dr. Oscar Clark, the Deputy Chief Constable, Inspector Elliott and Mr. G.H. Romans were called aside by the County Under Sheriff and asked to sign a declaration that the execution had been duly carried out.

The inquest, which was held in the Board Room afterwards, requires no attention at my hands but an act of courtesy on the part of Major Knox. Governor of the Prison, certainly deserves recognition. At the conclusion of the inquest Mr. J. Waghorne the Coroner said that Major Knox would be pleased to show any gentlemen around the gaol. With the exception of one member of the Jury, everyone accepted the invitation and for nearly an hour Major Knox succeeded in interesting those present. Every Department of the vast building was visited, a batch of prisoners were seen at work on the treadmill, the Kitchen was visited and the soup tasted, the condemned cell was peeped into, the system of oakum-picking explained, in fact the whole of the daily routine of an inmate of one, and surely one of the best managed, of Her Majesty's Prisons was described. Thus ended a day

memorable to more than one of Gloucesters Citizens.

Excerpt from The Gloucester Chronicle 1893.

#### **HANGING No. 17**

**WEDNESDAY 7th JUNE 1939**

#### **RALPH SMITH AGED 41 YEARS**

Shortly before the sentence of death was carried out at H.M. PRISON GLOUCESTER Wednesday, on Ralph Smith convicted of murder, a crowd of nearly 100 gathered outside.

When the Notices of execution were placed on the Prison at 9.07 a.m. seven minutes after the appointed time for the execution, many of the people crowded around to read them.

Ralph Smith, aged 41 years was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey for the murder of Mrs. Beatrice Delia Baxter at Swindon on March 4th 1939. The Notices outside the Prison this morning stated that Doctor Edward O'Driscoll Graham (Surgeon of the Prison) certified that Smith had been executed and also that the execution had been carried out in the presence of the Governor of the Prison (Mr. H.G.H. Evered), The Under Sheriff of Wiltshire, the Rev. C.S. Donald, (Chaplain) and Dr. Graham.

At the inquest held later at the Prison by Mr. J.D. Lane, Coroner for North Gloucestershire, formal evidence was given by Mr. Evered, who stated that the execution was carried out by Thomas William Pierpoint.

The execution was carried out expeditiously without hitch and according to law.

Doctor Graham (Medical Officer for the Prison) said that Smith had been in good health, was a normal person, and gave no trouble at all. He was present at his execution at 9.00 a.m. and had, since, in his examination, found that death was due to dislocation of the vertebrae of the neck. Death was instantaneous.

The Jury's indictment stated that judgement of death was carried into effect for the murder.

Mr. Frederick Percival Evans was Foreman of the Jury.

Excerpts from The Gloucester Journal, 1939.

#### **FOOTNOTE**

Ralph Smith was the last man to suffer "death by hanging" in Gloucester Prison.



## CONCLUSION

Throughout History there have been many different types of Capital Punishment: Crucifixion, Burning at the Stake, Stoning to death, the Gibbet and, of course, hanging.

There have been a great many reviews and committees enquiring into hangings. The first committee really to examine all aspects of this was set up in the 1860s the result was "The Capital Punishment Amendment Act, 1868" which restricted the death penalty to the crime of murder. The next enquiry was in 1949—1953 when the "Royal Commission on Capital Punishment" debated the deterrent effect on capital punishment. Its report stated there was no clear evidence that the abolition of capital punishment led to an increase in the homicide rate. During the five years of this investigation hanging was suspended and all murderers automatically reprieved. Hanging continued after the report was published but as a legal punishment its days were numbered.

Just two years later saw the last woman hanged in England; Ruth Ellis, aged 28 years, was executed on the 13th July, 1955. Executions ceased again in 1956 and murderers were given a reprieve. Then came the "Homicide Act 1957" which created separate categories for murder and listed them in five different sections. Following the publication of this report executions were again continued; obviously there was a great deal of mixed feeling in the Country as to whether hangings should continue, or not, as the ultimate punishment. The final decision was taken in December 1965 with "The Murder (Abolition of Death Penalty) Act", following the execution on the 13th August 1964 of Gwynne Evans and Peter Allen. These were the last hangings in the Country; how strange that Ruth Ellis met her fate on the 13th day of the month also. This does not mean that hanging has been completely abolished; there still remain on the statutes two crimes for which you may be hanged, "Piracy with Violence" and "Treason". The death Penalty for Arson in H.M. Dockyards or on ships was abolished in October 1971.



*The Chief Officer 1900*



*Female Warder*



Report of a fact-finding visit by a representative of the Prison Service  
Information Technology Group, 12-14 March 1986.

# COMPUTER SYSTEMS IN THE ITALIAN PRISON ADMINISTRATION

M.J.A. Prowse

*Principal, Prison Service Information Service Technology Group.*

## INTRODUCTION

By October 1986, the Italian prison administration will go totally live on a networked computer installation very similar in concept to the Central Inmate Database/Inmate Information System that will be available in England and Wales establishments in eight years time.

The Italian system developed is based on dual IBM 3083 mainframe computers linked to 61 IBM 8100 minicomputers each of which will serve a cluster of three to four establishments. There are 210 prison administrations, regional administrations and headquarters departments which will share a total of 2,000 terminals. There is no physical co-ordination with other information systems but close liaison with the judicial authorities and the police will be maintained.

The system will enhance existing facilities and additionally provide for the registration of incoming prisoners, retain committal and personal information, record details of prisoners' cash and earnings and handle all prison accounts. Terminals and associated printers are located in each establishment primarily in the Italian equivalent of our reception, administration and security areas in each establishment and in other key locations depending on the size and nature of the establishment. On average each prison admini-

stration will have some six on line terminals each with on line access to nine regional administrations, headquarters divisions and the computer centre in Rome.

## Background to the prison administration

The Prison administration in Italy has been subject to a number of structural and regime changes over the last 100 years. Significantly, in 1922 the responsibility for the Italian prison administration was transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Grace and Justice. Transfer was made because of the need to have sentencing policy and its operation run and supervised by the judiciary which administers the Ministry of Grace and Justice. This was followed by the introduction of the 'supervisory judge' a role which was re-inforced in 1975 by it assuming the responsibility of control and surveillance of prison custody independently of the executive.

The structure of the Italian prison administration is complex and partially decentralised. At the top level there is a Directorate General for preventative and correctional institutions (remand prisons). There are Departmental Inspectorates for adults and re-education centres for minors; administrative bodies falling between the Directorate General and establishments; departments and decentralised

offices and services. The Director General is appointed by the Cabinet and heads the administration. He controls directly the offices of the Directorate General which is responsible for such functional areas as staff, inspectorates, treatment and allocation of prisoners, prison labour, prison buildings, supplies and services, studies, research, documentation and computerisation.

## Types of prison establishment

Prisons for adults fall into four categories:

- a. preventative custody prisons including district and circuit prisons;
- b. prisons for the execution of custodial sentences, including short term sentences and those for long term imprisonment;
- c. prisons for the execution of security detention measures which include farms, labour colonies, hospitals, and psychiatric hospitals.
- d. observation centres.

## Staff

The prisons staff fall into two categories, civil staff and military staff of the Corps of Prison Warders. Civil staff have a similar status to Civil Servants and perform tasks of varying kinds but which exclude the custody of prisoners. Prison warders are military personnel who report to the Prison



Director (Governor) but are supervised and organised on all military matters by the Corps regional commands. The Corps of Prison Warders operates under military law and has the same judicial status as other areas of the police force. They primarily undertake the task of control, custody and security of the prisons and inmates. It is planned to convert this military corps into a Corps of Prison Police having a civilian status to enhance their professionalism. Female prison warders however are not military staff.

The total complement of civil staff in the Prison Service is 7,800 although there were at the end of 1985 nearly 2,000 vacancies. The authorised complement of Prison Warders is 22,500. Staff in post was only some 250 short of complement at the end of 1985.

Staff in the computer unit comprise 20 systems analysts, application and junior programmers (who will be increased this year to 36) and nine operators (to be increased to 15.) Administrative staff increase the total complement of the computer unit to approximately 100. The Prison Administration is having difficulties in holding specialist staff and are proposing legislation for the payment of special allowances.

Civil staff are engaged by means of public examination: only medical and nursing staff are recruited locally. Military staff are recruited by public advertisement followed by a selection procedure which ensures the necessary psychological and physical requirements. Officers of the corps are recruited by public examination restricted to candidates who have held a commissioned rank in the armed forces or the police force.

### Training

The training school for civil prison staff provides specific professional training and further training for senior administrative staff. Separate military schools provide training and updating of all military personnel. Periodically the highest level professions (administrative managers and directors, doctors, educators, accountants, experts and social service personnel) hold national conferences.

Computer staff are recruited from amongst all civil and military prison staff through aptitude tests and then trained in various activities, (analysts, system designers, programmers, computer operators) by means of specific courses organised in co-operation with the hardware suppliers or directly by

senior and existing specialist staff in the computer centre. Staff who use terminals and personal computers are also drawn from these staff categories and directly trained by the computer centre. Forty persons are trained in a week, 20 in the mornings and 20 in the afternoons on a simulated training module. A total of 2,000 terminal operators are being trained.

A training school for civil staff has been established at the Prison Service headquarters and a series of courses on basic (ADP) matters for all staff is now available. The subject of ADP is also included on all other training courses.

### Prison population

Since 1971 there have been some significant variations in the total prison population, which has varied between 26,000 in 1971 to 32,000 in 1977; 26,000 in 1978; 31,000 in 1980; and 35,000 in 1982. The reductions are a result of two acts of clemency in 1978 and 1981 and by the application in 1976 of alternative measures of release on parole. However the population has now increased to 45,000. Inmates do not enter the prison system until they have been indicted by the judiciary and at the present time only some 12,000 of the total population have actually been sentenced. Indicted prisoners can remain in the system from between two months to six years depending upon a number of factors including their offence, security status and appellant stage. Greater use however is now being made of non-custodial sentences where this is found appropriate. Juveniles between 14 and 17 are a negligible minority amounting to only three to four per cent of the total population. Many juvenile offenders are acquitted by the judges. The female population amounts to some 14% of the total.

During the period 1969 — 1970 two factors developed which had a significant impact on the population: terrorism and drugs. In the late 70's there was an additional factor of the development of the detection of organised crime. It was these factors leading to increases in the number of offenders that in turn led the Ministry to recognise the need for computerised records to provide the judicial side of the Ministry of Justice with immediate access to information about the location of particular inmates. The initiative followed legislation whereby criminal proceedings against indicted persons were declared unconstitutional where the offender could not be found, eg

when the judicial authority responsible for the proceedings did not know that the persons were already in prison for other reasons.

### Early computer developments

The first studies leading to the provision of a Prison administration ADP centre commenced in the spring of 1970 and the Centre was established in 1971. Priority was given to the creation of a central register of inmates to be used as a constantly updated information service for the judicial authorities on inmate location.

The system which went live in late 1974 and which was always regarded as experimental was based on dual IBM 4341 mainframes with a relational database providing on-line links to dumb terminals in 210 establishments over a national telecommunications network. It had three data transmission control units of which two handle the central office terminals and 22 terminals in the ADP centre, of which some are intelligent, dedicated to verification, in-putting of data and progress development.

Programs were mostly written by the Centre's own staff who attend to their running and maintenance. Application software was developed independently but without extensive support. Programs are written in COBOL and ASSEMBLER languages but use is also made of commercial software packages eg INTERPERS, STAIRS and ATMS used respectively for personnel management, automatic text search, text handling and document storage.

Software programming was undertaken following a clear identification of user needs and development generally was undertaken in close collaboration with prison staff. A functional specification was prepared jointly between IBM and Ministry staff.

Through its inmate location service the system succeeded in providing an adequate service for judicial authorities. From historical records it also provided the addresses of prisoners who had been released. Enquiries from judicial authorities about the location of prisoners number from 70,000 to 75,000 a year and about 20% of these enquiries produced successful positive replies. This service itself was enough to justify the cost of the ADP centre (including staff) by contributing considerably to the speeding up of judicial proceedings which in turn produced financial savings.

### Other benefits of the 4341 system

Other spin-off benefits included the system providing a wide range of



information about inmates for both establishment administration and by furnishing a solid basis for statistical research. Such data included marriage status, educational standard, occupation, employment and branch of activity, and judicial type information including the date of arrest, offence committed, date of release, previous records of imprisonment etc.

Apart from the centralised record of inmate information, there had been a number of other developments in which use of this centralised network has been useful. In 1978 a centralisation system for the payment of wages for prison staff was introduced incorporating the issue of all administrative and accountancy documentation required by prison Governors for making payments. Updating from establishments is undertaken by using dumb terminals. Printouts are sent to establishments by post and delivery is ensured within not more than 24 hours of despatch.

A system calculating the payment of pensions for uniformed staff and the issue of corresponding payment documents as well as the calculation and printing of National Insurance payments for those persons who leave the administration before the minimum pensionable period of service has accrued was also introduced.

The system also maintains central stores records and weapons control at central supply depots.

Automatic text search of prison law and regulations has been developed. Access to specific aspects of the current regulations can be interrogated by using a VDU terminal and one or more keywords.

#### **Small systems**

A system calculates and prints tables of earnings for working prisoners and detainees and gives full particulars of the items involved. This is based on a microcomputer at the Headquarters offices.

Using another microcomputer system and a variety of software packages statistical information produced from the mainframe can be used for further development and for the identification of specific information for operational purposes and study and research.

All these systems have made it possible to reduce the actual man-hours spent by staff in various areas of work and are providing results which would not have been possible without the computer because of the unacceptable cost in their manual

production.

In addition the administration is able to make extensive use of the terminal network for an electronic mail system to and from the peripheral sites with considerable time saving and promptness in the information process.

#### **Enhancements to the ADP facilities**

During 1981 it was recognised that the system structure required modernisation, that there should be a rationalisation of administrative procedures and that there was a need to develop a more rapid and effective information system. Although the existing system had made a considerable contribution to improving the quality of information about the prison population, the information recorded was not always accurate or as exactly required despite repeated requests of the prison administration. The system depended on a flow of complete data and this could be interrupted with the effect of the total data losing part of its validity. Neither were there clear advantages to the prisons where the recording of data caused additional work: this was not well received.

#### **The New System**

An approved national computerisation plan for prisons was authorised for the development of a totally automated information system. The new upgraded system is based on dual IBM 3083 mainframes linked to 61 x 8100 IBM minicomputers serving clusters of three or four establishments. These terminal groups normally include around 25 VDUs and printers. The 8100s are located in an office environment. Basically a similar number of terminals as at present are to be used with associated printers but the improved configuration allows for a future increase in terminals and provides greater flexibility. Almost all the terminals and printers are Olivetti although there are some IBM VDUs in use for trial and development purposes. Terminals are also located in the larger peripheral administrative offices and Headquarters. (One of IBM(UK)'s offerings for CID/IIS is the IBM model 3090 and IBM Systems 36 and 38; which are effectively similar to the 3083/8100 combination.)

#### **Additional facilities**

The new system doubles the storage capacity of the existing central system and provides increased processing power. This will additionally allow for the registration of prisoners on reception, the updating of existing data and the transmission of such

information as is required by the central computer in the required format and for local access. Currently there are some 400,000 inmate movements per year for first time receptions, discharges and transfers. Movements between prisons and courts were not readily available.

The central computer will therefore store all information it needs in real time terms so meeting administrative, statistical and research requirements at Headquarters. This will be particularly valuable in predicting the effects upon the prison population of possible legislative changes affecting prisons. Similarly the centre will be able to provide back-up for files held on the peripheral systems and if necessary provide information required for the rebuilding of lost local data. The systematic duplication of data on magnetic tape in the 8100 locations will make it possible to conserve tapes in safe and secret locations, and local systems (specialist) staff will have continual control over the application problems that may occur in each of the 61 main establishments in which minis are installed.

The centralisation of records therefore, makes it possible to know exactly at any one time (for each of the peripheral systems) the composition of each program library, the availability of data within that peripheral centre, and the configuration of the peripheral system. In turn the peripheral systems whilst provided with sufficient hardware and software capacity to meet their normal needs can call for additional resources from the centre whenever circumstances arise.

Inmate data remains on hard disk for ten months after the prisoner's release. Thereafter it is archived on tape.

#### **Costs**

Because the Prison administration has looked upon its computer development as one of evolution and experimentation it has rented both the IBM hardware and software. The Olivetti terminals however were purchased. However the administration now believes that their experimentation is coming to a close and consideration will be given to the purchase of the latest IBM hardware.

#### **Communications**

There are 13 dedicated lines linking the 3083 mainframes to 13 of the 61 x 8100 minicomputers and the remaining 8100s are networked. The dedicated network was installed by the Department of Posts and Telecom-



munications. The physical installation of cabling between the establishment modems and terminals was arranged by contract by each individual establishment locally and has been installed in separate trunking away from telephone lines and power cables. Primary line speeds on the system network architecture offer 4.8kbps whilst the secondary line speeds between the 8100s and each of the establishments amount to 2.4kbps. Terminal response times average two seconds.

The network system provides for remote diagnostic facilities which permits specialist staff facilities to identify faults either in the 8100s or within specific terminals. Fault control is maintained at the Computer Centre.

Whilst the value of encryption is recognised its provision is only considered as a desirable enhancement which may be introduced subject to appropriate funds being available.

#### **Backup**

Although one might regard as a disadvantage the clustering of establishments being served by a single minicomputer, the Ministry of Justice specialist staff are trained to provide support for the hardware. However if an 8100 does go down each of the establishments within that Group are out of action until such time as the minicomputer can be put back into operation. The network system permits constant monitoring of the 8100s via the central control area and if it is not possible to restore the 8100 system within an acceptable period, there are six additional 8100 machines held at the Computer Centre which can if necessary be taken out of commission and transported by road to replace a faulty machine. The Ministry does not currently have a formal maintenance contract with IBM but will be giving serious consideration to an appropriate arrangement in conjunction with their purchase plans once the system goes live.

Should either mainframe go down or there be a serious catastrophe the system can be switched to compatible equipment being operated by the police. Downtime for the mainframes is set at nil%. (It is interesting to note that there has not been a riot in an Italian prison since 1977 and only three Terminals have been damaged since 1972.) The Computer Centre operates at present from 7am to 8pm on all working days. These hours may have to be extended up to midnight which now happens every month for running prison warders' pay. There could however be

a future requirement to build up operations to 24 hours a day.

#### **Implications for staff**

The Italian Prison Administration has no problems as far as industrial relations are concerned. There are no Trade Unions within the prison administration as we understand them, although each working group or establishment does have its own staff representatives who are recognised by management and speak on behalf of their colleagues within their work area. Nor is there any direct requirement imposed by the Government that the total cost of implementing the computer system should be set by a saving in staff. Naturally there was some degree of apprehension on behalf of staff particularly those working in prisons when the proposals for computerisation were first made. In practically every case however as soon as the staff saw the system in operation and recognised its benefits there was a positive reaction. Certainly there will be reductions in posts in certain areas for example in the reception area, where the introduction of computers will reduce the number of manhours required compared with the original manual systems. However I understand the total complement of those affected establishments will not be reduced and such staff who can be redeployed will undertake tasks not currently being performed. The justification for the investment in the computer system is therefore one producing greater management effectiveness and creating a much more efficient organisation.

The Italian Prison Administration advises that computerised systems must totally replace manual systems and not duplicate them otherwise the system will be inefficient. It is recognised as essential that the computerised system should be really safe and advantage taken of the latest security control facilities. Computer developments must be undertaken gradually with prudence and an awareness of the requirements and of the resources available.

#### **Conclusion**

The Italian Prison Administration has developed and implemented a most attractive and effective computer configuration. Having recognised the need to enhance a mainframe system supporting dumb terminals at each of their establishments (because it had insufficient power to meet total requirements, provided little or no support to local establishments and offered difficulties in in-putting data

from large numbers of establishments seeking access to the mainframe at the same time) they now have a system which incorporates networked mini computers (linked to a central mainframe) which support dumb terminals in small clusters of establishments. The facilities the system offers are similar in many ways to our long term requirements and configured in a manner the Prison Service might seriously consider adopting.

Whilst the Prison Service has recognised the danger likely to be caused by industrial action either centrally or at a particular establishment, nevertheless the introduction of mini computers into each of our establishments may be too expensive to justify. On the other hand introducing a mini at each of our locals and remand centres and some of the large dispersal or training establishments each serving a small group of satellite establishments might be an acceptable compromise. The mini network would ensure that industrial action centrally would not in the short term adversely affect establishments operationally, whilst industrial action at a mini site may only affect that one establishment and its small cluster of satellites: this we may be able to live with.

This report provides no more than an outline of the Italian system obtained during my short visit, but should we follow their configuration there is more to be learned from them.

#### **Glossary of Terms**

ADP	Automatic data processing, more commonly referred to as Information Technology.
Assembler	A built in software program that translates a source program into binary code.
ATMS	Advanced Text Management System. A software package used for text entry and editing and document management.
COBOL	A computer language — Commercial Business Orientated Language.
Database	The entire collection of information available to a computer system.
Dedicated lines	Communication cables, lines or wires used solely for the transmission of data.
Dumb terminals	A visual display unit providing a visual record of data keyed into, or information stored on, a computer. The terminal will have no additional processing power or local data storage capacity.
Encryption	The translation of data into an unreadable code prior to transmission.

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# Women Assistant Governors in Male Prisons

## *Some observations*

Sylvia Pascoe

In the October 1980 edition of the *Prison Service Journal*, David Wickham gave a very interesting account of his rather fraught experiences as the male Deputy Governor at Bullwood Hall, a female Youth Custody Centre. He predicted that the number of male Governor grades working in female Institutions was likely to rise. This seems to have been the case: at the time of writing, six of the seven all-female establishments have male Governors and there are five other men of the Governor grades in female establishments. At the same time, there are three females governing all-male prisons and no less than 29 female Governor grades working in the male system.

I spent four interesting years as a female Assistant Governor (AG) in a male prison before returning to the female system and I am quite convinced that this was a far easier option than for the man going into the female situation.

This is a highly personalised account of my own experiences in the male system. There are no very profound thoughts or conclusions, but I hope they prove interesting.

### **Preston Prison**

Preston has a radial prison in the classic Victorian style, although some parts of the building date from the eighteenth century.

It holds about 600 adult men, most of whom are serving relatively short sentences, but including 20 lifers. The age range is wide but there is a predominance of young men in their early 20's mainly from the Liverpool,

Leeds and Manchester areas.

The majority of staff are local men and some have worked at Preston for 15 years or more — Preston is a lively town with easy access to the Yorkshire dales, the Lake District and the Fylde coast. It is easy to see why people do not like to leave the area.

I arrived at Preston on a cold winter's morning in 1981, acutely aware that I was the first female AG to have been posted to Preston and an AG under training and in her early 20's to boot! In my favour was the fact that as an "under 24" entrant I did at least have the benefit of having spent a year as a Prison Officer which perhaps alerted me to the more obvious security pitfalls which are not immediately apparent to newcomers to the system. There was also the fact that there were already female teachers and probation officers in the prison. In addition I had a degree of self-confidence which I now realise is the gift of the ignorant!

One of the most striking features of Preston was its cleanliness. It also seemed remarkably quiet after the almost constant pandemonium of a female unit. The atmosphere at Preston was good, with little of the very highly charged emotion which is often found in female prisons arising from the combination of a number of disturbed individuals and the more intense relationships between inmates. The inmates at Preston had their share of the social, family and financial problems that arise from imprisonment but on the whole they were fit and healthy young men who would "pass their

bird" without incident.

Sick parade in most male prisons is a fairly brisk, matter-of-fact affair consisting of sports injuries, coughs and flu. In female prisons, however, the medical officer will expect to see some very severe cases of physical and mental illness. At Cookham Wood, it is not unusual for the medical officer to have up to a third of our inmates waiting to see him on a Monday morning; many of these girls will need to be referred to outside consultants for treatment for serious conditions.

There were some chronic drug mis-users amongst the men at Preston and the numbers rose during my short time there. At female prisons, however, there is a disproportionate number of women suffering not only withdrawal from illicit drugs but also acute problems following withdrawal from prescribed drugs, most notably tranquilisers. Women in society at large are treated by their doctors far more often than men and the high prescribing rates in female prisons mirror this. In addition, as about six in every ten women in prison (as opposed to) only one in every ten men) has received some kind of psychiatric treatment prior to imprisonment, it should not be surprising that medication rates are so high.

I did not observe the same passionate jealousies and intense emotional relationships between the inmates at Preston as occur in female prisons. It may be rather different in male Youth Custody Centres. There was a lot of humour around to an extent that does not exist amongst female



inmates. There was sadness and often tragedy in the lives of the men but this tended to be less publicly displayed than with women.

### **Inmates & Staff**

On the whole, the inmates did not seem to find anything particularly novel in a female AG. This may be because many of them had been in trouble from a very early age and were used to female social workers and probation officers and borstal matrons and thus the idea of a female authority figure in an otherwise all male setting did not seem so unusual.

The staff at Preston were almost unfailingly courteous and helpful, although in the early days somewhat over-protective. This was an understanding reaction arising from genuine concern and I must stress that there were times when I was only too glad of the presence of several large officers when inmates became aggressive. I am quite sure the average male AG has had the same feelings of gratitude in similar situations. Women do not have a monopoly on fear and I do not feel guilty of betraying the feminist cause in admitting this. One frustrating problem though could be the tendency of some very well-meaning staff to want to remove an inmate from the office immediately he began to show any sign of aggression or hostility. I am glad to say this only happened in my very early days at Preston and it might well be that similarly young-in-service male colleagues have had the same experience.

The problem of course is that hostility and anger are often indicative of mental states such as frustration, suspicion, insecurity and fear and as such are not always a prelude to violence. One expects these reactions during interviews, especially when discussing family problems or parole prospects. My experience is that some of the most genuine relationships that people form have involved heated but straight-talking exchanges. If a man is feeling frustrated, these feelings will only be heightened if the interview is ended abruptly without (in his perception) real cause. Not only is the inmate left feeling frustrated, the potential for discussing an immediate problem gone and the relationship between inmate and interviewer damaged, but that chance of learning how to cope with those emotions (as everybody working in prisons must do) is lost.

### **Inside & Outside**

The reaction of friends outside the Service was often to ask if I was fright-

ened of the inmates and I know that many male staff, of all grades, are often asked the same question. Those of us who work in the Service are only too aware of the strange ideas (fostered by the sensation-seeking media) that the public have about prisons. They are neither holiday camps nor brutal, terror-ridden hell-holes. They can be very dangerous places — this is true of some prisons all of the time and all prisons some of the time. However, most prison staff do not spend their days in constant fear of inmates and one only has to look at the inmate/staff ratios to see that prisons would simply not be able to run without good staff/inmate relationships. The high levels of stress amongst prison staff come not from actual violence (in terms of risk of serious assault, prison officers come way down the list after taxi-drivers and traffic wardens) but from the constant awareness of the possibility of violence combined with long, often incredibly monotonous working hours in poor conditions.

Ironically, being fully aware of the type of people one is dealing with does, in itself, make for safety. The public tend to forget that, in all but the most exceptional cases, violent inmates are eventually released. A woman who is interviewing a rapist or a murderer does so with some knowledge of the man, an alarm bell by her side and a staff of fully trained prison officers to call on. The inmate in his turn is aware of the certainty of detection of any crime he may be intending to commit and the likelihood of a severe punishment, two elements which provide quite strong deterrents.

Compare this relatively safe position to that of the woman who just happens to share the same railway compartment, or to shop in the same street, as the ex-inmate the week after his release. I never felt as unsafe in Preston Prison as I did walking from the gate to the bus-stop on my way home after work.

I remember being told by an inmate once that there was "no point" in thumping me because anyone could do it — by which I suppose he meant there was no macho kudos in assaulting a mere woman. I have my doubts about this theory as I suspect few assaults are so carefully planned, but I never was assaulted at Preston!

I never pretended to be a physical match for any inmate and I doubt that very few of my male colleagues really consider this. However, there is a

difference between the particular vulnerability of women as against men which does exist and which it would be foolish to ignore and that is the risk of sexual abuse, most clearly in the hostage situation. This has to be the darkest nightmare of everyone working in prisons and I feel that women must take care not to put themselves in vulnerable situations. I made it a matter of personal policy not to talk to male prisoners in their cells save under very exceptional circumstances. I found it both more convenient and practical to conduct interviews in an office. I also believe that, as there is little enough privacy in prisons to begin with, inmates appreciate a little sanctuary of their own. In addition, I saw little point in ignoring the quite genuine concerns of staff about my safety without good reason.

Incidentally one thing female AGs do not have to worry about is that constant fear of men working in female prisons — that the inmates will make allegations of improper conduct about them. This is a very serious worry for male staff and, as a result, many male AGs also conduct interviews in offices, often in view of staff by way of protection from such allegations.

The question of "bad language" in the male prison was a source of frequent embarrassment and often amusement to me. When asked how I dealt with the swearing in the prison I often replied, "Yes, I am trying to moderate my language!" Swearing does go on in prisons male and female and, increasingly, in society generally. It is always unpleasant and usually totally unnecessary, and it was indicative of the courtesy of the male inmates at Preston that it was seldom used in front of me. The staff were most painfully careful never to swear when I was around and whilst I was very appreciative of their good manners I still feel that a visit to a ladies loo to read the graffiti, half an hour on an all-female factory floor, or 30 seconds in the average female prison might help staff understand why I didn't fall into a faint every time I overheard the odd swear word.

### **Normalisation**

By far the most important benefit a female can bring to a male prison by virtue of her sex alone, is simply to help 'normalise' the environment in some small way and thus perhaps begin to offset some of the negative aspects of institutionalisation. Unless the inmate works on a submarine or belongs to a closed religious order

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# THE NEW LEYHILL

## *—or the problems of managing a Prison Building Project and how to minimise them*

Bob Porter

*Chief Officer (Works)*

Dave Pickford

*Principal Officer (Works)*

HM PRISON LEYHILL is situated in beautiful countryside near Wotton-under-Edge in Gloucestershire. It began in the 1940s as an American Forces Hospital and was constructed in single brick (like we build garages) to last the war years out. It is still in use more than 40 years later as a well-established open prison but a purpose-built establishment is imminent.

After 24 years' experience of Works Departments in Prisons and Borstals I arrived at Leyhill in January, 1981, expecting rebuilding to begin that year. In due course 400 or so preliminary drawings arrived for inspection and comments but they received less than adequate attention through the absence of promised staff. Had the first supervisor, in those days an Engineer II, been in post sufficiently early, a proper appraisal of drawings could have been made, many faults may have been found and some delays could have been avoided.

The second post, (now a Principal Officer) was not filled until nearly 12 months after commencement and the post was covered by 'month about' detached duty during that period. The several detached duty staff between them did an excellent job in the pure Clerk of Works sense, but the lack of permanence caused many problems

and arguments with Contractors. Sometimes, detached duty staff were not available, resulting in unnecessary pressure on those staff on site.

### **The Contract**

It had been decided, probably in the 1970s, to rebuild most of the buildings. Contractors were nominated for design work and after many years of 'starting next year' it finally happened! In March 1983, the main contractor, Rush and Tomkins, arrived on site and after due consultation with the establishment, a six foot boundary fence was erected and site huts were installed: The Contract was to include:

Accommodation Units for 384 inmates.

New Kitchen and Dining Rooms.

New Officers' Club and Staff Mess.

The Contract period was to be three years. The Contractors' programme was set for completion in two-and-a-half years.

Completion is expected in July, 1986, four months behind contract period and ten months behind the Contractors' hopeful programme date. Works Staff will move in to fit locks, location signs and the many bits that, for some obscure reason, never got fitted within a contract. I think we might just occupy our new facilities

by the end of October, 1986.

But let us go back; we are about to supervise the rebuilding of Leyhill. It is to be located on the Farm Department's best carrot field and adjacent to a stream that runs into Lord Ducie's fish lake nearby. No great problems for the establishment here. After all, we are an open prison and the site would be fenced. However, the main services duct does run in and along the central road system. Can't fence that! Not to worry; a bit of co-operation from the establishment (and there was plenty of that), some re-organisation, and a temporary Gate Lodge, and the 'rear entrance' was born.

After all, the Contractors' programme for completion of the duct was six months. By August it would be all over! But no, not six months, not even twelve months; 18 months later it was basically finished except for making-good roads and retarmacing, and the tarmac looks like never getting done as the contract has apparently run out of funds.

### **The Stream**

And the stream? And the fish lake? You could have been excused for thinking perhaps we were building another Sellafeld with intentions of pumping



all waste into this stream instead of just relocating an existing prison. Meetings and explanations followed, with visits to site from our neighbour who was assured every precaution would be taken to avoid contamination of the stream by builders' rubbish, diesel fuel especially. Builders are, after all, a caring bunch, aren't they? Well first of all they managed to block off the stream (perhaps in an attempt to avoid polluting the fish lake). The neighbour wasn't amused! All hell let loose as no water was getting to the lake. Next? The ducts and excavations were full of dirty, oily water. Why not pump out into the surface water system? You've guessed it! They all run into the stream! More hell let loose!! Fortunately, the Contractor got a grip on the system, and very few other problems occurred. After all, we had to get on with our neighbour; we were going to put a series of new drains across his land to our new sewage plant!

### A Second Opinion

Dave Pickford, who has been on site from the beginning, can tell the story with more detail.

### Hazards

The most essential requirement to minimise potential problems, is a good working relationship with the Contractor and the workforce on site. The project at Leyhill with its complexity and size is no exception. Hasty words from either Contractor or supervising staff can cause ill-feeling which could linger for the rest of the contract period. Imagine a JCB excavating a foundation trench when a sudden rush of water tells you the prison main has once again been fractured, half the buildings are without water and Visits have just started..... Water, not just from mains, has been a major problem at Leyhill. The site, being situated at the bottom of a slope, makes it a natural collecting area for rain water and does it rain at Leyhill!! For a number of months a great deal of the work was below ground level. As fast as trenches were excavated they filled with water. The main service duct in the prison looks like a miniature canal on Monday mornings after wet weekends. Another problem in the ground was rock; if a trench had to be dug, rock would not be far below ground level; also foundations of old buildings long gone. Protection of the prison services is vital. Not only water mains but telephone cables, electrical supplies and so on. When these are damaged that is when you really find out who your friends are.

### Security

One of the biggest problems for the prison when Contractors are on site is security. Some Contractors cannot accept or understand our rules. We started off with all Contractors working in the prison wearing a yellow armband for identification purposes. All went well for a week or two, until bands were lost, left at home, or thrown away. The only way you could tell the difference between inmates and Contractors was the worried look that Contractors had, wondering if the job would ever get finished.

### Disruption

Because of the large amount of service duct and drainage work in the prison area it was obvious that inconvenience and disruption at times were inevitable. Buildings were cut off by trenches being excavated, so bridges were constructed to allow staff to come and go. At one time the main entrance to the prison was closed to heavy vehicles which were re-routed round the back way, via the OTS road. These situations caused many problems for staff. The only way to reduce inconvenience is to plan ahead, have meetings with all concerned, pass information well in advance, make intentions known and, above all, be as helpful as possible to the Contractor in order to get the job done. Not only are problems caused for the staff and general running of the prison, but also for local road users. With the coming and going off site of heavy lorries, mud is dropped on the roads causing investigation by the local police.

### Supervision

Because of the high standards required on prison buildings, supervision is most important, both of materials and workmanship. Getting and maintaining the standard required can be very difficult at times. On one occasion a new gang of painters arrived on site to paint the steel framework forming the kitchen and dining areas. After a few hours an inspection was made of the work, only to find more paint on the floor than on the steelwork. After a few well chosen words had been exchanged, the painting resumed. During the final inspection it was noticed that a bird's nest, which had been built on one of the beams and long abandoned, had not only been left intact, but had also been given a quick coat of grey gloss! Needless to say, new painters arrived on site soon after. Bricklayers have also come and gone, some very quickly; well over a 100 all told, some unable to attain the standard of work required, others who did not

even try. To those who stuck it out, well done! There are not many of you left.

Redevelopment projects are supervised on site by Works Officers. It is important that their trade is applicable to the main work being carried out at that time. As the work progresses other areas of work develop which means site staff are covering much more and varied work each day. Being in two places at once is impossible so it becomes a case of priorities. Contractors are not slow to use this situation to their advantage, claiming for delay time if they are held up or slowed down. It is surprising how fast you can move in wellies and a sea of mud when you have to. When site staff take leave one man is left to continue alone unless detached duty staff are available. The odd few days can be covered; the problems become greater over longer periods, in particular during the summer months when the Contractor is working flat out to make up time lost during the winter or spells of bad weather.

From time-to-time the Contractor requires additional information regarding the drawings, materials, or any discrepancy which may arise. Naturally, staff do their best to assist in this area. The problem is that information is sometimes slow to arrive on site. Decisions, it seems, take time. At the height of the work the site staff's office looks like a doctor's waiting room on a Monday morning — and no doctor!

### Weather and Morale

The unpredictable British weather is without doubt the biggest and most depressing site problem. Not only is progress affected, morale takes a nose-dive throughout the workforce. Conditions become very bad for both men and machines. Sometimes you wonder if it will ever stop raining. During one very cold spell a Contractor was allowed to remain on site during the night to maintain heaters in the buildings. This enabled work to continue during the day, which in turn allowed other trades to follow, thus keeping to progress schedules, or attempting to do so.

This is the time when assistance from the establishment is helpful in order to keep things moving. Progress is very important to both prison and Contractor. The buildings cannot be put into use until they are completed. This help could be a quick repair job to a broken water main (again), or the loan of equipment for a short time. The prison also can benefit from



the Contractor. A bit of give-and-take goes a long way.

Works Staff on site can also lose enthusiasm from time-to-time. The conditions are just as bad for them too: forgotten men bearing the brunt of the Contractors' relentless criticism of the site, design, and anything else that comes to mind. How many times has it been said, "The man who designed this wants shooting?" But he is not there to hear it.

At the end of the day, the contract will be completed (even if it is a bit late). Smiles all round, pats on the back, problems solved, got over or forgotten. The buildings become the Works Department's baby. Of course, being new, they will present no problems at all. Or will they?

### Conclusion

In reality, this contract has caused very little inconvenience to Leyhill Prison; and in fairness to the Main Contractor, his site staff have been both pleasant and co-operative to work with and they have done a good job. We have learned some good lessons and are glad to pass them on:

1. It is essential if we are to appear to Contractors as professional people that we do not start contracts without a full complement of staff in post. That when those staff are on predetermined absence that Detached Duty is properly organised and maintained.
2. It is essential that where damage occurs during construction, e.g. roads, that repairs are made, leaving areas at least as good as pre-contract.
3. It is essential that neighbours are well informed. Meeting them and taking account of their concerns goes some way towards this.
4. Keep the establishment well informed and take account of their concerns also.
5. Planning well ahead when the establishment routine is likely to be disturbed can highlight and help minimise problems.

Phase II should start within 12 months and will put Leyhill under greater pressure as it is "within" the used areas. Co-operation from the Governor and staff have resulted in a future "phasing of work" programme that gives the Contractor maximum space. This will inevitably (?) result in a shorter contract period and consequently shorten any disruption or inconvenience.

If we can all work together for a common purpose, we can succeed.

### WOMEN ASSISTANT GOVERNORS IN MALE PRISONS

*continued from page 11.*

(few do) he is very unlikely ever to spend much time in a similar all-male environment. If the only result is a moderation in the bad language, it does at least mean that perhaps the environment is slightly better for all who live and work in it.

At the risk of falling into a stereotype, I will admit that it was nice to have doors held open as I wandered round the prison, particularly when it was inmates acting in a gentlemanly fashion. There is often a distinct lack of good manners in a prison and if a female serves to remind people of the fact that, on the outside, courtesy and politeness are still respected, then I see little harm in this.

There is a danger for women who go to work in male environments, that they will either slip all too easily into an over-feminine stereotype, in order to fit into the expectations of the men around them, or conversely adopt an overtly tough posture to defy these expectations. I am sure there is the same tendency for this to happen in other fields of predominantly male work which women have entered. If either of these postures is falsely adopted it is bound to be uncomfortable, ineffective and problematical. I admit I was determined not to be shocked at some of the artwork which decorated cell walls, even when some of it was frankly pornographic; and, ironically, it was the male Governor who at last decided enough was enough and that he found these pictures offensive. With hindsight, it is obvious that the average, sensible modern woman should be just as capable as her male colleague of deciding an issue of this sort and perhaps, as we gain confidence, women will not feel under this type of pressure.

It was my experience at Preston that some men did find it easier to express their feelings with a woman than with a man because of a ridiculous notion that it is "wrong" for a man to cry — particularly in front of other men. In just the same way that there was no kudos in thumping a woman, there was not so much to lose in crying in front of her. This should not be so but male prisoners are often the victims of their own chauvinism about what is 'proper' behaviour for a 'real man' and if it gave genuine relief for a few of them to have a thoroughly good sob in privacy in front of a woman, where he wouldn't have done so with a man, then this must be useful.

There were a few occasions when I felt able to discuss family problems with an inmate from the wife's point of view which perhaps he might not have accepted from a male AG. Obviously most male AGs are capable of empathising as well if not better than their female colleagues, but the perception of the inmate about this might just be different.

There are a number of men in our prisons who are there because they have difficulties relating normally to women. It makes little sense to acknowledge this problem and then lock them away in an all-male environment where at best their problems are never confronted or investigated and, at worst, where they may well become compounded and intensified making it extremely likely that they will leave prison more dangerous than when they came in. There is a lot of work to be done by and with women staff in this very challenging area and it seems to me that the Service could do a lot more with its female staff here.

There are problems in working in an opposite sex prison, such as taking care not to be left in a vulnerable situation with a prisoner and having to ring up the gym or reception (where people are likely to be undressed) before wandering through. These are fairly minor things which can be resolved. An interesting example of this at Preston was that the wing recesses (toilets) were open to the landing so that female staff walking up the wing had to be careful not to look to the left or right for fear of embarrassing the inmates using them. This was not a particularly good way for the Governor's "eyes and ears" (as AGs have been called) to walk around the institution and was soon remedied by the building of simple screen doors. Surely, in any case, it is more desirable for the sake of ordinary decency to afford men some privacy in this area. I am aware that this has security implications but perhaps half-screens might be a compromise.

At the time of writing there are no female Governor grades working in dispersal prisons. This seems odd when one considers that female teachers, psychologists and probation officers have been doing so for years. The Prison Service has shown itself to be an enlightened employer in most issues of female equality and it is surely only a matter of time before this anomaly is rectified. (*Gartree now has a lady AG. Ed.*)



# A UNIFIED PRISON NURSING SERVICE?

Cyril Jones

*Hospital Chief Officer I*

The United Kingdom Central Council's 'Project 2000' lucidly marshals most of the arguments expressing the need to create a 'facilitative, flexible framework' for the future of nursing, nurse training, nurse education and the ability of the nursing profession to adapt to the changing needs of society with its inevitable advance in technological techniques. Most nurses believe their future role will be the care of those patients requiring very advanced technological care in the hospital setting and those requiring simple care in the community i.e., the elderly, the mentally ill and the mentally handicapped. It is argued there should be only one level of suitably trained and educated nurse with greater future accountability, assisted, not only by a second level nurse, i.e., an enrolled nurse, but by a 'care assistant' or Aide.

The Report of the Social Services Committee on the Prison Medical Service (printed 25 June 1986) recommended, amongst many other things, "the speedy introduction of a unified nursing service". The Prison Medical Directorate published a policy statement outlining the future development of the Prison Nursing services in June 1986.

- i. Movement towards a unified service in which nursing care is provided in both male and female establishments by Hospital Officers.
- ii. The phasing out of nurse grade staff, ie by natural wastage and by transfer of nursing grades to hospital officer grades.
- iii. Increasing use of the interchange of male and female hospital officers in both male and female establishments.
- iv. Increasing the proportion of male hospital officers with nursing qualifications to 30% with a policy of direct recruitment, and improving

the training opportunities for hospital officers trained by the department without nursing qualifications.

The Social Services Committee were impressed by the training methods adopted by the Scottish Prison Service and recommended that the Home Office examine the arrangements made for nurse-officer training in the Scottish Prison Service. This in effect, is an arrangement whereby staff are seconded to NHS Hospital training schools for a period of 18 months at the basic prison officer rate of pay, before returning to work in the Prison Medical Service. The qualification obtained is that of State Enrolled Nurse. Earlier in their report the committee agreed, to some extent, with Lord Glenarthur's view that there is a place in prison nursing for 'medical assistants with very basic training.' This can be compared with the UKCC's new proposals for a grade of nursing 'Aide' in the NHS.

The Prison Medical Service, in a policy statement, has clearly indicated their intention that, as and when manning levels improve, the resources will be sought for a substantial expansion of in-service training designed to develop the skills of the hospital officers presently trained by the department. Further, it is proposed to achieve the increased proportion of male hospital officer with nursing qualifications to 30% within the next two or three years. This will be done by recruitment of direct entrance qualified nurses, and by offering to existing male hospital officers of appropriate age, aptitude and educational attainment the opportunity of secondment to train for a nursing qualification with paid study leave.

It is generally accepted that, over recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of mentally ill coming into prison. There are a

number of contributory factors involved in bringing this situation about. The NHS Psychiatric hospitals adopted a policy of open wards, virtually banishing locked wards. The "Butler Committee" recommended the provision of secure units, which unfortunately have been extremely slow in coming despite Regional funding. In some areas there remains, still, no adequate provision even today. One of the consequences of this is the development of trade union involvement within the nursing grades. Nurses now insist, in many cases, on interviewing and assessing prospective patients when it is proposed that these patients are to be dealt with formally under the provisions of the Mental Health Act. Despite the recommendations of the Consultants, on occasions, patients are being refused into the care of the psychiatric hospitals as a result of the nursing assessment. This negates the doctors' recommendations and prolongs the stay of the mentally ill in prison. This fate particularly applies to those cases who have been charged with acts of violence.

The present and future policy of the NHS is to intensify community care with the closure of some psychiatric hospitals and subsequent loss of thousands of beds. Unless community care is considerably extended with improved staffing levels, the policy can only exacerbate the existing situation with even more of the mentally ill ending up in prison hospitals. It is a sad comment but it seems that yet again the soft touch of the liberal conscience in our society will not achieve what it sets out to do, but more of the mentally ill will end up living in inferior "boarding house" accommodation, not welcomed by local communities, with many offending against the law. Inevitably many will be put into the same old 'sausage machine' — back into prison.

*continued on page 20.*



# Return to **BARLINNIE SPECIAL UNIT**

*Further responses to the article by Barry Conlin and David Boag—the Prison Service Journal, Volume 62—in which they criticised an earlier piece in the Journal by Roy Light. The debate is about the Special Unit at Barlinnie Prison in Scotland—its regime, purpose and effect.*

R. Gibson David J. Cooke

*Gartree Prison*

*PhD. FBPsS. Top Grade Psychologist*

## **AN OFFICER'S VIEW**

Officer R. Gibson  
HMP Gartree

I have just read the article by Mr Conlin and Mr Boag and I am, to say the least, surprised that two such knowledgeable gentlemen should appraise the Unit in such a negative manner. If I may share my own thoughts on the Special Unit through the pages of this **Journal**, I would be most grateful. Rather than base my argument on some theoretical retort, I will argue with the benefit of my own empirical perceptive of Barlinnie Special Unit something which Mr Conlin and Mr Boag failed to do, preferring instead to base their arguments on hypothesis. I do not intend either to criticise their article or to refer to it in any great detail, but I feel that the co-authors should have at least visited the Unit before submitting their article. Had they done this, I would have appreciated their objectivity and critique: to criticise on the basis of an ideological perspective is both unprofessional and negative.

Over the last two years, I have had the good fortune to visit Barlinnie Special Unit on four occasions and — although I would be the first to agree that it is difficult to formulate a com-

prehensive picture over a period of some twenty hours — it permits me the right to comment on the subject. As well as visiting Barlinnie Special Unit, I have known one of its inmates for over three years, a man once described as "Scotland's most dangerous prisoner". No matter what views or pre-conceived ideas individuals may bear against this man, he gives the Unit both credence and credibility. But for Barlinnie Special Unit giving him and others like him a second chance at life, I dread to think of the problems men of their violent persuasion would have caused for our Scottish colleagues.

To say that Barlinnie Special Unit is a shock to the system is an understatement. I always believed that I held fairly liberal views about the rights of inmates and about regimes and policy, but my initial impression of the Unit was one of total disbelief. I, like many others no doubt, felt that the Scottish Prison Service had gone overboard. Here was a prison where most of the easily identifiable restrictions did not apply, where inmates to a large degree were allowed to follow their own path, where security appeared very relaxed and yet these men were classified as extremely violent and disruptive. It soon became evident that, without my conscious

knowledge, Gartree had trained me to react to stimuli and situations without question. I was standing in a different prison looking for the positions of the alarm bells.

The second shock came when I was introduced to these "men of violence". There was no intimidation or distrust; they relish the challenge an officer from another prison brings, they expect to be put to the test — they are after all part of an experiment. Once introduced, it was time for the "official tour". My guide for the day was an inmate. I was invited to comment freely (both staff and inmates demanded my honesty). My opinion: Barlinnie Special Unit reaches parts other prisons do not. Why? The policy of the unit is based not on rehabilitation but on resocialisation. Rehabilitation is a myth, because in practice it is undefinable. It was born out of the perceived needs and deficiencies of prisoners and around what society has built up as an inmate of acceptable conduct and behaviour. How can you "rehabilitate" someone who sees violence as normal behaviour?

What does Barlinnie Special Unit offer the people involved and society in general that other prisons do not? They share a common function — removal from society for members



deemed unfit to live freely within that society. What the Unit offers is a policy of treatment and training that is both morally and socially effective. It has taken Rule 1 and implemented it. It is positive custody. Barlinnie Special Unit is a place where men have to discover what they are and, more importantly, what they can be. The Unit offers them a last chance of a new life. That chance is founded on the two fundamental principles of trust and accountability: each and every individual is accountable for his actions to himself and other members of the Unit. Any breach of trust is an indictment upon himself and the unit.

A common argument I hear levelled against the Unit is perhaps the most obvious. Why do these men of violence get everything while the "good con" is left to muddle through his sentence? From my own viewpoint, the answer is axiomatic. If you wish to operate a radical and potentially controversial programme of treatment and training, select a group of "good cons" who will fall in with your every wish, show them the errors of their ways, tell the media how wonderful this elixir is and pray they don't come back. Alternatively, select the most disruptive and violent element, test your magic elixir on them and, if it works, patent it. Barlinnie Special Unit takes these men and, with hard work and endurance on both sides, hopefully turns out useful members of society.

As to whether the Unit is a success is a matter of debate. If by it we mean how many re-offend, then the answer is simple: I do not know. How long does a man have to be out before he can be regarded as a success? I believe the people in the Unit view success as taking a violent man and redirecting that energy to constructive use. These men are intelligent, articulate men who will not be bought by a more comfortable life. They need mental stimulation — something that is generally lacking in prisons. Barlinnie Special Unit may still imprison their bodies, but it frees their minds; to use the words of an ex-inmate, it gives them "a sense of freedom".

Throughout this article I may have given the impression that the staff and inmates of the Unit carry out relationships by mutual consent, but with all the benefits going to the inmate. The Unit is as much for the prison officer as the inmate; it is a two-way learning process. There are no sides, the staff and inmates are Barlinnie Special Unit.

## FACT AND FANTASY

David J Cooke, PhD, FBPsS, Top Grade Psychologist,  
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### Introduction

Reading Conlin and Boag's critique of Light's article on the Barlinnie Special Unit, I was incensed at the number of factual errors in the letter and dismayed by its emotional tone. Terms such as "wishy-washy", "illogical" and "ill-considered" have little place in serious discourse. In this paper, an attempt will be made to return the debate to a more objective plane and to displace fantasy with fact.

#### a. "Inmates choose to be in the Unit."

Inmates do not choose to be in the Unit. Transfer to the Unit occurs after a lengthy and laborious assessment of the appropriateness of potential inmates. A detailed account of this assessment procedure is provided by Whatmore\*. In brief, the assessment not only entails the detailed assessment of the case by officials of the Scottish Home and Health Department but also protracted interviews of the potential inmate and the staff of the referring prison. Forty-nine individuals have been assessed for their suitability for the Unit, some on more than one occasion. Only 25 have been accepted. Inmates do not choose to be in the Unit: they can only achieve transfer to the Unit after they have surmounted the multiple hurdles of the assessment procedure.

#### b. "If they break the rules they are expelled."

Prisoners can be expelled from the Unit if they breach the rules, but this breach must be severe. Of the 25 inmates admitted to the Unit, four have been removed for breach of the rules: two were guilty of drug abuse and one inmate was removed, after four months, for committing the only assault which has ever occurred. A fourth inmate was removed following a gross breach of parole licence. It should be clear, therefore, that the breach must be extremely severe before expulsion is considered. Means of control other than expulsion can be used more effectively.

c. "Any competent chief officer or governor could produce excellent staff/inmate relationships anywhere, with any inmates, if all inmates were volunteers, if inmate numbers were very small, the staffing levels were very high, if staff could be specially selected, and if special training

#### were to be available."

Here are two misconceptions. First, the notion that a high staff/inmate ratio perforce leads to excellent relationships and, second, the notion that the Unit is manned by highly trained and highly selected officers.

What are the facts as regards to staff levels? The complement of 17 uniformed staff comprises one chief officer, two principal officers, two senior officers and 12 basic grade staff. These staff provide round-the-clock cover, and cover for rest days and annual leave. Does this lead to a high staff/inmate ratio? I would argue that it does not. When other Scottish units for comparable inmates are considered, staff/inmate ratios are higher.

While the ratio of staff to prisoners is not comparable to that achieved in local prisons or some long-term prisons, I would argue that neither are the prisoners comparable. Many of the present and past inmates of the Unit had commanded greater staff attention in other penal settings.

Staff working in the Unit are volunteers and are selected. Selection is desirable because the pressures of the Unit, while not necessarily greater than other parts of the system, are different. Staff are selected but they do not receive any special training. The training of all basic grade officers in Scotland consists of a six-week training course at the Prison Service College. Informal training — while officers are on duty within the Unit — does occur.

The absence of training does not mean that we consider that training is not desirable, indeed, it is the view of the Unit Management Team that officers asked to deal with prisoners in a novel way should be given considerably more training.

#### d. "... give them everything they want and hope they will behave and be quiet."

Conlin and Boag state a dozen examples in an attempt to prove this thesis. Each of these points is at best irrelevant and, at worst, totally inaccurate.

1. "Inmates wear their own clothes." This is not peculiar to the Special Unit. Prisoners in establishments such as Dungavel and Penninghame have the opportunity to wear their own clothes. This may represent Scottish parsimony in that it saves the State money!

2. "They do not work unless they want to."

It is true that there is no formal work routine and no workshops within the Special Unit. This should not be taken



to imply that inmates do not work or that they are not pressurised to work.

The reasons why there is no formal work schedule has been clearly stated by the then Home Secretary: "Because of the limited space and the lack of facilities it has not been possible to introduce a work routine of the type which would be found in a large establishment, and each prisoner has, in effect, been made responsible for his own daily programme" (Mr Leon Brittan: Hansard, 1980; p1498).

The absence of a work programme does not reflect the fact that inmates exist in an over-resourced paradise, "... the easiest, plushest, prison unit that ever existed", but rather it reflects their cramped conditions of confinement. The important point is that inmates do work and their work is often of a high quality. The Scottish Home and Health Department indicated that "Inmates are, so far as the physical limitations of the Unit allow, encouraged to devise their own work programme and their own hours of work. This has resulted in their working longer hours than usual and in a higher standard of work" (SHHD, 1975). This despite a maximum weekly wage of only £2.40.

3. *"There is very little 'banging up'."* During the week inmates are unlocked from 6.30 a.m. until 9.00 p.m. except for the patrol period between 5.00 and 6.00 p.m. On Saturday and Sunday they are unlocked from 6.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. The arrangement has evolved because it is possible within the regime to achieve this; it suits staff as well as inmates.

The lack of 'banging up' should be seen in the context of the Special Unit; the Special Unit is an extremely small establishment within the confines of Barlinnie Prison. Prisoners there and indeed prisoners in other long-term establishments generally leave the confines of their cell block to go to work, recreation, education, or to use sports facilities. The inmates in the Special Unit do not have access to these facilities within the confines of the Unit and its small yard.

4. *"They have TVs, etc in their rooms."*

They do indeed have televisions in their rooms, paid for by their relatives. The Scottish Office may be considering introducing such facilities in other penal establishments. The principal constraint appears to be difficulties in administration rather than difficulties in principle: the small size of the Special Unit overcomes the

administrative difficulties.

5. *"There is no censorship."*

Censorship is imposed for the first three months that any inmate spends within the Unit. After that time, censorship may be removed if the community as a whole feels that the inmate will deal with this responsibly. Censorship can be and is frequently reimposed when an individual is placed on sanctions. The absence of censorship is not peculiar to the Special Unit: in other Scottish establishments, such as Penninghame, there is no censorship.

6. *"They have unlimited private cash."*

It is not the case that inmates have access to unlimited cash. Money which comes into the Unit is declared and recorded. During escorted visits to the shops, officers are responsible for determining how much each individual spends and for maintaining a careful, if unobtrusive, account of all monies spent.

7. *"Facilities are extensive — everything from weights rooms to pool tables, pottery rooms to aviaries."*

This comment is reminiscent of the views of the tabloid press: "Why not Butlins for the prison toughies?" (Sunday Mail, 7 March 1976); "Porridge with cream. A life of luxury behind bars" (Daily Express, 29 September 1981). Facilities are not extensive and are cramped.

Co-operative working is the other fundamental plank of the regime — I would have thought that this was self-evident. Perhaps the most powerful demonstration of co-operation, at least in the early days of the Special Unit, was the fact that inherently anti-authority inmates were willing to take part in what has been described as a 'bizarre experiment' in penal policy.

The most obvious vehicle for co-operation is the community meeting. During weekly meetings, at which attendance is mandatory, inmates and staff try to formulate the general policy of the Unit. On a more practical level, current difficulties are discussed and a problem-solving approach is used to achieve the resolution of these problems. Decisions may be made about the suitability of particular visitors, whether the community should respond to particular criticisms in the press, whether an open day should be held or whether a member of the community should be reprimanded for inappropriate behaviour. In conclusion, therefore, I would argue that there is significant evidence of co-

operative working and that a sense of responsibility is engendered in the inmates of the Special Unit.

Most long-term prisoners within the Scottish penal system have access to weight rooms and televisions, while potteries and aviaries are work substitutes used to fill the day constructively in the absence of other alternative work activities.

8. *"There are no searches of inmates or visitors, except occasionally at the main gate of the prison."*

Searches are made — when necessary — of visitors and cells. This criterion applies where long-term prisoners receive open visits (eg Peterhead, Aberdeen, Perth and Edinburgh prisons). Visitors are not routinely searched in these establishments. If there is the slightest suspicion that individual inmates are hiding contraband, then a search of the cells and of the Unit will ensue. In order to reduce the possibility of accusations of 'planting', cells are searched by an officer and an inmate.

9. *"Visiting is virtually unlimited, visitors are allowed in inmates' 'rooms' and staff knock before entering. In other words they are effectively allowed conjugal visits and unlimited access to alcohol and drugs."*

Staff have access to all cells at all times in common with any other penal establishment in Scotland. It is true that alcohol has been abused in the past, here and in all penal establishments in Scotland. Discovery leads to severe sanctions because it is considered that such behaviour puts the whole community at risk.

There is no objective evidence of conjugal visits or drugtaking within the Unit at the moment. In the past, drugtaking has occurred and this has led to expulsion from the Unit.

10. *"Inmates can use telephones."* This is true for many long-term prisoners within penal establishments in Scotland: SHHD Circular No 74/1985 (Criminal) establishes access to phones by B, C and D security category inmates. Inmates within the Special Unit fall within these categories.

11. *"They cook their own food."* Inmates within the Special Unit do cook their own food, using prison rations and food which they buy using their own money. This is a desirable trend as it aids them to develop skills which they will require when they are released. It should also be noted that if they do not cook, they do not eat. To some inmates this could be a pressure rather than a privilege.



12. *"The trips out including visits to pubs"*

To suggest that they are allowed visits to public houses is preposterous. Inmates of the Special Unit are allowed outside visits on conditions similar to those enjoyed by other long-term prisoners within the Scottish penal system. Security arrangements are similar to those which apply in other prisons and do not allow visits to public houses.

9. *"... it is difficult to see where the co-operative working and sense of responsibility comes in."*

Fundamental to all imprisonment is the loss of autonomy; with this comes a loss of responsibility for self and others. With certain individuals this leads to a failure to co-operate or to co-exist peacefully with the authorities. Within the limits allowed — by resources and political factors — the regime of the Special Unit attempts to enhance the inmate's sense of responsibility and thus engender greater co-operation.

On transfer to the Special Unit, inmates quickly learn they are responsible for the behaviour of themselves, their visitors and the other inmates. They learn that failure to exercise responsibility can affect their own progress, the progress of their peers, or indeed, the future of the Unit.

If an inmate fails to comply with the norms of the Unit then he may find that the community will remove privileges such as access to telephone or open visits. Further, he may find that the community will not support his application for a change of security category or a special visit.

If one inmate suspects that another is making undesirable contacts with the outside criminal culture, then he must publicly challenge him on this point. This action is taken because of the responsibility to other inmates and the responsibility to the Unit as a whole. Similarly, if tension is developing between inmates — a not surprising occurrence when seven difficult inmates are held in close proximity — there is a responsibility to defuse tension by calling a community meeting. Tension can be defused through discussion and argument rather than through less desirable means such as physical violence.

On the positive side, the community collectively takes responsibility for recommending that an individual should be considered for a release programme or given a special

training programme in the outside community. Each inmate knows that if he misjudges an individual's readiness and the programme goes wrong, then this can adversely affect his own progress. This sense of responsibility, or what might be termed "a sense of freedom", is a fundamental plank of the regime of the Special Unit.

f. *"... there is no evidence to show that the Unit is successful in absorbing difficult inmates, in improving the control records of the inmates of the Unit, or of producing better behaviour after leaving the Unit."*

I would agree that there is no sufficient evidence on these issues: nonetheless, I do not agree that there is no evidence. Others, with more detailed information than Conlin and Boag, have argued that the evidence for the Unit absorbing difficult inmates and improving the control record of inmates is praiseworthy. "It is generally felt in the Scottish Prison Service that since the Unit was opened there has been less serious violence and a reduction of tension elsewhere in the prison system in Scotland. Whilst this is hard to quantify, since the opening of the Unit, there have been very few serious assaults on staff involving the use of a weapon. The number of minor and technical assaults has remained at much the same level. "This is a remarkable achievement." (Mr Leon Brittan: Hansard, 1980, p1499).

The statistics that Conlin and Boag present are open to several interpretations. I would contend that if Conlin and Boag are serious in their attempt to clarify the records of the Special Unit then they should take a longer look at the statistical pattern rather than select two years on an apparently arbitrary basis. It should be pointed out that Conlin and Boag use rates of assault which include Young Offender institutions and fail to adjust the rate for the rising prison population in Scotland. Indeed, if they had used 1983-84 rather than 1982-83 as their basis for comparison, they would have discovered a 23% decrease in the rate of assaults in Scottish penal establishments. This highlights the need to take a long-term view.

With regard to the control record of the Unit, there has been one serious assault in its 13 year history. "We are reluctant to make extravagant claims for the success of the Unit. The main claim to success is that the Special Unit has succeeded in containing,

with only one real incident of violence, a number of prisoners many of whom have an appalling record of violence directed at staff and prisoners" (SHHD, 1985). I concur.

With regard to the quality of behaviour displayed after inmates are discharged, nine inmates have been released after serving in the Special Unit. Of this nine, two have been recalled to custody. One has subsequently been re-released on licence; the second has been convicted of another crime. It must be argued that this is an acceptable record given the history of offending of most of the inmates of the Special Unit.

Before leaving the issue, I would repeat the view that the evidence is as yet inadequate. I am undertaking a research project, supported by a Cropwood Fellowship, to examine the psychological and criminal justice outcome of serving time in the Special Unit. In addition, Mr Edward Wozniak of the Scottish Home and Health Department will be carrying out an evaluation of the Barlinnie Unit with other "special units" in the Scottish prison system.

g. *The Special Unit is "... the easiest, plushiest, prison that ever existed."*

This is perhaps one of the most misleading statements provided by Conlin and Boag. I would contend that the Unit is neither plush nor easy. Conditions are cramped and confined; there are no workrooms and physical training equipment is in the cell area. Conditions are not easy. Problems must be confronted and new ways of handling emotions must be developed. This is both painful and threatening. Periods of depression and anxiety are not uncommon because the psychological pressures on both inmates and staff are considerable. Inmates cannot run away from other inmates. They must attend meetings. There is nothing easy about being in the Special Unit.

It is difficult to characterise the atmosphere of the community meetings; it should be noted that verbal aggression may be intense and prolonged. While these meetings serve to reduce tension they may also generate and maintain tension for some time. During meetings poor or anti-social behaviour and poor progress is considered. Many find the unrestrained evaluation of their peers to be painful. Sanctions are imposed by the community, and indeed some of the sanctions are more severe than those



RETURN TO BARLINNIE SPECIAL UNIT  
*continued from previous page.*

which would be imposed in other penal settings. Thus, there is nothing easy about being in the Special Unit.

In conclusion, Conlin and Boag's critique of the Special Unit is based on fantasy rather than fact. I hope that I have reassured colleagues in the Prison Service that the approach adopted within the Special Unit, while being novel, has significant benefits. Finally, the community of the Barlinnie Special Unit would be most happy to invite Mr Conlin and Mr Boag to visit the Special Unit in order that they may obtain a more accurate picture of the Unit and its approach. In addition, we would invite them to discuss their fears and concerns with members of the community.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and they do not necessarily represent the views of the Prison Department or the Scottish Home and Health Department.

\* WHATMORE P B "Barlinnie Special Unit: An insider's view". In *Problems of Long-Term Imprisonment*, edited by P E Bottoms and R Light (Gower, 1987).

A UNIFIED PRISON NURSING SERVICE? *continued from page 15.*

In the present decade the Prison Service has seen a growing number of drug addicts in its midst. The related problem of 'hepatitis B' is also increasing. The new phenomenon of AIDS and HIV positive cases, likewise, has established itself and, if we are to judge by the American prison experience, we must recognise the necessity for increased facilities to cope with this condition within the next year or two as a matter of some urgency.

For all these reasons the need for a better trained and unified prison nursing service is paramount and the vast majority of prison hospital staff will welcome improved training arrangements which are long overdue. What is a matter of concern to many is the extremely limited capacity for training within the Prison Nursing Service. Much more will have to be done to cope with the ever increasing demands, the natural wastage of staff through age and retirement, and the sheer volume of increase in the prison population.

Registration courses on secondment with pay and improved training for existing hospital officers, can only come about if there are sufficient hospital staff. The first priority must be, then, to recruit and train sufficient staff, not only for the new proposed

group working systems but to allow for the new improved standards of training to take place.

The traditional age of recruiting young people into careers is 18 years onwards; might not there be some merit in the Prison Department devising a scheme of recruitment of 18 year old staff to spend their first three years on nurse registration courses, ie Registered General Nurse training or Registered Mental Nurse training, and, on successful completion of their training at 21 years, to commence their training as prison hospital officers in much the same way that industry does with graduate trainees by sponsorship etc?

A unified prison nursing service can be achieved if the nettle is grasped. It will require finance, ingenuity and tenacity to get it off on the right start. The need for such a service has been recognised, at long last, by parliamentarians. It is now up to the prison nursing service itself to stimulate the powers that be into prompt action. Let us hope too that other organisations like the Prison Officers' Association, the Royal College of Nurses, COHSE, together with the UKCC for Nurses and Midwives, will add their weight and support to its fruition.

COMPUTER SYSTEMS IN THE ITALIAN PRISON ADMINISTRATION:  
*continued from page 9.*

Hard disk	A recording device in a computer system which stores data and programs.	Operator	One who controls the computer, tending to its needs.	Software	A set of programs and procedures held within the computer concerned with the running of a data processing system.
Hardware	Physical equipment making up a computer system.	Primary line speeds	The rate at which data may be transmitted at any given instant from a terminal to an intermediate or secondary computer or station.	STAIRS	Storage and Information Retrieval System. A software package for automatic text search using keywords.
Hierarchical database	That which allows access to computer files but within a designed structural sequence.	Printer	A machine for producing in printed form on paper (hard copy) data contained within the computer.	Systems Analyst	One who studies manual operations and draws up proposals for computerisation.
Intelligent terminals	Visual display units which have limited memory or processing capability.	Printout	Computer held information reproduced on paper by a printer — often referred to as "hard copy".	Systems Designer	One who converts proposals prepared by a systems analyst to a computer designed system.
INTERPERS	Interactive Personnel System. A commercially available software package used for personnel administration and management.	Programmer	One who prepares a set of instructions (expressed in computer language) for particular processes.	Terminals	Visual display units with or without a computer processor; a printer remotely controlled by a computer processor.
Keywords	A facility which finds text with common characteristics in a computer file.	Real time	Real time system — one that processes transactions as they are input.	Verification	A facility which permits comparison with pre-determined criteria and rejects incompatible data.
Mainframe	A large powerful computer usually providing a central resource for many users.	Relational database	One which offers direct easy access to any mix of a variety of computer files holding related data.	VDU terminal	Visual display unit which provides a visual record of data keyed into, or information stored on a computer in a remote location.
Minicomputer Network	Medium size computer. An interconnected group of terminals and computers by means of cable (line or wire).	Secondary line speeds	The rate at which data may be transmitted at any given instant from secondary computer (or station) to the central (mainframe) computer.	kbps	Kilobites per second. A unit of measurement showing the number of binary digits (0 or 1) that can be transmitted in a given time.
On-line	Terminal or computer linked by cable (or wire) to another (usually) larger computer.				



# 'Unaccustomed as I am...'

Peter Quinn

This article is reprinted from Justice of the Peace Magazine, July 1986, by kind permission of its editor.

A cold wet and moonless night. The solitary figure, well wrapped against the winter cold, feels his way around the exterior of a wooden hut in a remote village. He finds a locked door and realizes that the safety device of leaving work early to be in good time may not have been the wisest course. Shivering the next 20 minutes away (the nearest pub is far distant) he awaits the arrival of the be-scarved stranger. "Yew the man?" is the unenthusiastic introduction from the caretaker — the first indication that you have got the right date for the Young Mothers' Club. In your daily role you are the prison governor, the potential autocrat dealing at the one moment with ministerial questions and at the next with London gangsters and terrorists of various persuasions. But just now you are "this month's speaker" — equal in importance to last month's flower arranger and next month's spiritualist. At present you only have novelty value to the caretaker who sees you as somewhat dim-witted for turning up early. "It's the boiler. It takes a good hour to get a heat up. Still, hold you hard and grab a shovel. That'll warm yew up no end". Your *pro tem* host narrows your options to nil. So you do it — and by the time the first young mother arrives to assemble the sponge cakes for you to judge later, you are besmirched with soot, sweat and the residue of rust from the pipes that you have tried to brush from your lapels — only to smear it generously across

the front of your jacket.

But, in time, the group has gathered, and you begin to register that its name simply implies that all have been young mothers at one time or another and not necessarily in the present or recent past. Your notes about the nature of crime, interpretation of criminal statistics, deprivation of inner city areas and so on appear less and less relevant in the face of questions like "Do they still wear their smart flannels to play cricket like they did when Mr. Adnam (a war-time Governor) was in charge?" "I'd cut off their hands" says another, before you've dealt with the cricketing question. You are at the fulcrum of a debate between those who would incarcerate muggers (a daily threat in a tiny village) for life and those who think it's all the fault of "society". "television" or even "the diet". Attempts, at both extremes, are made either to seduce you to their camp or to perceive you in the other. By now you are simply anxious for the inevitable raffle to rescue you from the conflict. Judging the sponge cakes seems simple in comparison.

Talks to sixth forms also fall to prison staff. There rank and role do tend to impress since many, usually those in the back row, will have friends (or like to say that they have friends) inside. That you see prison as really something quite awful is met with naive scepticism as they rehearse a list of pop stars and sportsmen who have been our involuntary guests from

time to time. "So and so in our street's been inside and he says it's dead easy" posits one. A teacher joins the chorus — "they have colour teles" he avows as if that is a symbol of the good life. And, of course, "everybody knows about the Christmas menu", he adds.

Schoolchildren, you discover, are devoid of the social niceties. This means that, however sparkling your presentation they will seldom sit in wrapt attention. They yawn, pass gigglesome notes and break wind without compunction. Once such a group has established that the Rippers, Panthers, Foxes and other folk-devils of the tabloid press are not in your prison, interest diminishes. Unless you have had a recent escape and, for reasons that I have yet to fathom, they think that's great. The merit of a school talk is that it is not open ended. Eventually a bell will sound and, however convoluted is the argument in which you are engaged, your audience will actually disappear.

Then there are the Rotarians, the Country Landowners, the Local Law Societies etc. These, indeed, are prize bookings for the Governor since, not only does he meet with fellow professionals with whom he may share a common language and set of values, but he also gets treated to lunch. It is one of those strange paradoxes that, whereas reported crime is a largely working class phenomenon, it is amongst such patrician gatherings that the most objective understanding of issues often



exists — apart from in the case of the castrators who seem universally present. At least with these groups the content of what you say doesn't seem to matter all that much. By the third gin and tonic and the second glass of wine we all have the answers to everything and those answers — whatever they are — seem very clear. "Another glass of wine, Peter?". "Well, since you ask . . ."

Governors also give radio and television interviews. Now for some reason, however much in command of your subject you believe you are, the prospect of a microphone or camera in your vicinity produces stutters, mispronunciations and clichés that make you cringe when you see or hear the finished product. And there is no logical reason for this — other than the fear of being misquoted or over-edited. Thus one colleague who advocated a, now fashionable, return to Victorian values was headlined as "Box their ears says jail boss". "Jail jam hits supermarket shelves" was another headline which inaccurately paraphrased a Governor's off the cuff remark to a Journalist who had visited his institution ostensibly to report on horse breeding there. But all media coverage is not as threatening. Local radio and "down the line" interviews are, on occasion conducted in conditions of squalor that make the average cell appear preferable. The phone-in is a delight since, if one is not in control oneself, the presenter usually is, with his battery of records, jingles and commercials to silence the anticipated abusive caller. One colleague had the experience of being the guest on a late night phone-in when nobody called the station and he was left for an hour and a half helping the disc-jockey to pad out his material. "That sounds like some cool jail house you run out there, Jack. Now let's hear from the Sex Pistols . . ."

The modern Governor is a man or woman of many parts. A manager, a social worker, an accountant, economist and lawyer. But he carries a wider public relations role in his locality. He accepts, or delegates, a wide variety of invitations to speak (those with lunch or dinner thrown in are seldom delegated). We are asked to speak to almost anybody about anything and we do not accept payment. Perhaps that is why we are in demand. Some of us have remarkable skills, for instance one Governor is presently training, in his spare time, as a clown at a circus school. Now, somewhere, there must be a group simply longing to book a penologist who can juggle.

## cynics' corner

I recently went on holiday musing that the United Kingdom has become the Liverpool or Everton of the imprisonment league, holding a considerable lead at the top of Division One in Europe for the number of people incarcerated.

The musing became a vision and I share it with you (with apologies to Aesop):

Mr Rabbit was taking a Sunday walk in the park with his children and was feeling about as inconspicuous as Liberace at a dockers' picnic because, whilst other parents had families of a reasonable size, his was of the magnitude often described in the Bible as a multitude. After taking a roll check he herded them all home to his warren in the lettuce belt and sat down to read his Sunday papers in peace.

Within seconds the harmony was shattered by arguments from the bedroom area. Mr Rabbit firmly located his earplugs but his relief was short-lived because Mrs Rabbit, flushed of face, soon entered and demanded his attention. I have no wish to embarrass the reader by revealing the detail of her tirade but after questioning Mr Rabbit's qualifications as a father and husband, comparing him to her own

dearly-departed father, casting aspersions on his abilities as a lettuce-earner and generally bemoaning her lot, she finally reached the point of her discourse which was that three young rabbits to each bedroom was not acceptable and that an extension to the warren was urgently required. Mr Rabbit, after giving a full three-second consideration to arguing the point, agreed that he would call in the Rabbit Wimpey and arrange for sufficient new bedrooms to be created so as to ensure that each of the young rabbits had a single room.

The great day arrived when the extension was complete and all the little rabbits were tucked up in bed in their own, individual rooms. Mr and Mrs Rabbit sat quietly by the fire and peace reigned in the Rabbit household. "By the way, dear" said Mrs Rabbit quietly, "I have some news for you, I'm expecting some additions to our household". It was obvious that Mr Rabbit was delighted with the news because he had to bury his head in his hands to hide his tears of joy. Finally he recovered enough to speak and he uttered the immortal words, "If only I knew what was causing it!"

## BOOK REVIEW

### Prison Library Services in Devon — A Review

In response to a Home Office request this review has been produced by the Devon Library Services based on comparisons with prison libraries in other counties, and in close liaison with those concerned in the three Devon prison libraries. It is intended to consider the conditions existing in each, the present and future needs, and to offer recommendations so that these needs may be more satisfactorily fulfilled.

Each prison is separately described in relation to its category, inmates, educational provision and of course the organisation and use of the library within the prison system. The range in

quality of the provision of these three prison libraries is considerable. This is reflected in the recommendations, which are farsighted yet practicable. They will be of particular interest to those prisons not finding themselves in the fortunate position of Channings Wood, one of the three selected.

The recommendations clearly indicate how to encourage those involved, inmates and prison staff alike, to use and enjoy a facility in a way which ought to be a normal feature of prison life.

BETTY YATES  
Deputy Education Officer  
H.M.P. Bedford



# LOCAL FINANCIAL BUDGETS

## *A Governor's view*

*Ron Curtis of Ashwell, reflects*

From time to time Governors have personal crises in their professional lives. One asks "Was this why I joined the Prison Service?" or, if the crisis is more serious, "Why did I join the Prison Service?" From the Mountbatten Report onwards there have been many occasions when Governors have asked these questions. The introduction of Local Financial Budgets qualified as such a crisis; it was new and required knowledge and skills previously undeveloped. Governors, of course, had already had experience of the Costing System, the quality of which depended very much on their assiduity in pursuing it - and also of "shadow budgets" - but the shadow is not the substance, and this time it was the real thing. Not the complete "real thing", maybe, but the message was clear - if the budget covered wages and staff-related costs then it covered the greater percentage of total expenditure.

In many ways the budget of overtime for Prison Officers, introduced the previous year, had been a better preparation for the financial budget than the Costing System. The overtime budget had been "for real", it had the imperative that it must be met, had required a long, hard, detailed look at how money was spent, had exposed uneconomic practices, had led to unpopular decisions and cut back in areas of activity that were desirable but not affordable. It had also, at times, carried the uneasy feeling that comes from having to control something that had grown a life of its own, and seemed at times not easily controllable.

The budget of overtime hours had come late, illogically, well into the financial year. My own prison learned that it was already "in the red" because of a MUFTI training programme undertaken earlier on the

directions of Regional Office. The financial budget at least was on time; but the training, the explanation, the understanding, lagged well behind that - delayed even more by the P.O.A. national industrial action, which served to illustrate what we already knew; that we all have to be competent jugglers these days.

My own personal crisis, as I saw it, was compounded by having "volunteered" as a Regional Trainer, and having not only therefore to master the subject and the skills myself, but also to pass them on to others and, perhaps worse, "sell" the concepts to sceptical colleagues.

But the "selling" of it was, in the event, not a problem. I heard not one complaint about the concept itself, about the training trailing too far behind the introduction of the budget, or much complaint at all. Since the introduction of the Costing System, there had been a "sea-change" in attitudes.

First, sound financial management was no longer a new concept. Costing System courses three years before had been marked by outright rejection - the Prison Service was in the "People Business", human relationships, concern for welfare and humanity did not fit easily with the Accountant and the balance sheet; in any case it was well known that the Prison Service was "demand led", the Courts proposed, we disposed; so the Accountant had better go and talk to someone else about the problem. The Governor had regime commitments and, above all, an Essential Task List to meet. (But even then Governors were realising that meeting the Essential Task List had become an entirely separate exercise from creating a positive regime and indeed could be inimical to it;

further the concentration on Manpower Management at that time, was another of those points of potential crisis I mentioned earlier.

Now Governors were more attuned to financial matters, they knew the cost of their prisons, they knew in detail how these costs were incurred. They had direct experience of abuses in the system, let alone ideas on more economic methods of management. "Horror Stories" were legion, arising partly from the experience of the Costing System, more particularly from the budget of overtime hours. I learned of the visiting psychiatrist who was writing his thesis in our time - the cost involved in a hospital officer collecting drugs personally from his parent establishment - escorts from open prisons with Category D prisoners that apparently required two officers when taken to closed prisons, and one officer when taken to another open prison. In short, Governors accepted not just the inevitability of local budgets, but their necessity.

Second, there was the motivation of us all in any new situation, the will to survive. If as Governors we were going to be accountable for budgets then we had better know what we were about. But it went further than that. Professionally there had been a cost, perhaps a considerable cost, because of the failure of Governors (and other senior staff including Chief Officers) to master the intricacies of the manpower systems, and Governors were keen that this should not be repeated. This led to considerable discussion on one training course as to how far the Governor should, or could, be involved in the detailed analysis and day-to-day control of his budget, as well as the decision-making arising from it, and how far he could afford to delegate



this to his Financial Sub-Committee. The discussion did not end in consensus, but it was agreed that whatever the method adopted, Governors did not intend to hand over the reins on this occasion.

Third, to control spending, to eradicate waste, to account for the spending of taxpayers' money was right, so whatever disagreement there might be as to the best way to achieve this, or as to how far it could go, in principle the local financial budget was seen as "right".

Finally, and importantly, Governors realised, imperfectly maybe, that in delegating financial responsibility to them, the Department, and/or Region, were also delegating greater authority over control of resources, over staff, and indeed were giving greater power to Governors in their dealings with the Department over demands it might place upon them in future. There was even a faint promise, long term, already implicit in the Costing System, that by switching funds from one area to another (the technical term now revealed to all was "virement") the Governor might be able to determine certain priorities and enhance his regime in ways that at present were impossible.

The local budget was presented and accepted as being in the context of the Financial Management Initiative, the Government's policy to introduce into the Public Service management disciplines such as objectives, measures of performance, value for money, accountability for use of resources including financial. Budget Memorandum 1/86 stressed that the introduction of local budgets was not a discrete management initiative in its own right but part of the "framework of accountability" which Circular Instruction 55/84 had started to construct, in particular with statements of functions and targets linked closely in due course to the availability of resources. As Budget Memorandum 1 stated "obtaining, spending, and accounting for finance are after all not ends in themselves. They are, rather, at the most basic level an important means by which an organisation sets about achieving (and measuring for cash is a convenient common denominator) the aim or objectives it has set itself. A financial decision is an operational decision and vice versa".

All this is not to say that there was nothing but optimism about budgets, no doubts, concerns or criticisms - there was scepticism as to how far it could be sustained, how far

it would settle into a routine, manageable, predictable system, eliminating as it promised, the stop/go approach in the allocation of resources. And, behind any scepticism Governors and other senior staff might have, lay a greater scepticism on the part of many other staff who might feel that there was no advantage in budgets for them - on the contrary, severe disadvantages, and who were likely to discuss budgets, along with overtime budgets and other reforms in the Prison Service simplistically as another "cost-cutting exercise". (Such criticisms and feelings go deep. They are linked to the traditional suspicions of Headquarters, and nowadays also to attitudes and opinions about the policies of the present Government. Never before, I think, have the affairs of the Prison Service, as perceived at Prison level, been attributed so directly to Government policy.)

As the Prison Service approaches the mid-way point in the financial year, I have had little opportunity to discuss the budget experiences of my colleagues. I suspect the feeling may be that the six months have been shortened first by the fact that many Governors and senior staff received training about the mid-way point of that period and so, in a sense, started to master the detail rather late in the process, and second, in the nature of things, the BMI reports (as amended by Acc 87 expenditure, of course) although usually appearing on time, have revealed the secrets of the trend of spending only slowly, and then only after some detailed analysis of precisely what the information might be saying. And all of this only makes sense if considerable time has been spent on the original budget allocation so that Governors had a clear understanding where they were when they started. I, myself, tried to put aside simple feelings of what was "fair" or "unfair". (For instance, a budget allocation based on forecast expenditure to the end of financial year 1985-86, when the actual expenditure was well in excess of this) and accept an element (more than an element!) of arbitrariness. I wait to see if this tolerant, open-minded approach on my part is reciprocated at the end of the financial year! The budget process may, in due course, be seen as a logical, slow-moving one. At the moment it appears more slow-moving than logical, and, as the picture emerges, it appears, in those areas where the budget is in difficulty, to be the problem of stopping, or turning round

the proverbial super-tanker. I think that the command from the Captain to the Engine Rooms to "reverse engines" takes some time to communicate, and I think the resulting action will then take some time to produce the desired effect, ending finally with a waiting period, when nothing more can be done, to see whether, at the end of the financial year, the "super-tanker" has stopped, or collided.

I perhaps should not prolong the nautical metaphor but "uncharted waters" is appropriate. Everyone involved is learning all the time. We are questioning why is this, or that, routine followed? Is it efficient? Is there a better, more economical way of achieving the same results? Are present structures adequate to process the budget? As I see similar uncertainties and questioning at Regional Office level, in response to queries raised by myself, I take some comfort that, as I have said, we are all learning.

A colleague said, "We are all Managing Directors now". He referred not to the power supposedly enjoyed by a Managing Director, but to the remoteness implied by his position, bound to his top executive office, or the boardroom. Traditionally, we have rightly been sensitive about a Governor being thought of, or becoming, aloof, isolated, "office-bound" - and yet the struggle to break free of the office, meetings, the telephone, has become increasingly fierce, and the budget, with all its ramifications, adds significantly to this.

## READERS Write

The Civil Service Ice Skating Association exists for Civil Servants, employees of certain government 'fringe bodies' and their families. Membership fees are reasonable - each member may nominate one person as an associate member.

Early evening sessions are held at Queens, Richmond, and Streatham Ice Rinks. Private tuition is free of charge for beginners. Competitions are organised each year, we hold a Christmas Party and an Annual Gala, members receive free of charge Newsletters and two Magazines a year. We welcome all grades of skaters and will be pleased to see you at any of our sessions. For further details please phone

Mike Smith, CSISA Secretary,  
11a Mandeville Road,  
Shepperton, Middx. TW17 0AL.

Tel: 0932 228089.



# any

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Please send them to the Editor or:  
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## Canoeing

It is the intention of the Civil Service Sports Council to introduce canoeing to its sporting activities this year. It is hoped to establish a club in the London area providing sufficient interest is expressed.

Initially the club would cater for the touring aspect and not the specialist areas of racing and slalom canoeing. The term touring need not, however, necessarily apply only to placid water. Many rivers provide lively, testing waters throughout the year. Sea touring provides another interesting and often demanding aspect of canoeing.

Canoe training courses would follow those recommended by the British Canoe Union. Club leaders would be qualified BCU instructors. Potential canoeists must be capable of swimming at least 50 metres in light clothing.

Providing a strong nucleus of CSSC members and spouses wish to form a canoe club it is the intention to eventually extend the membership to include children and make this a family sport.

Should interest be expressed in Canadian Canoeing this aspect may be included when initially setting up the club. Unlike the Eskimo Kayak design one normally associates with canoeing, Canadian canoes follow the North American craft design and are propelled with a single bladed paddle.

In replying please state if you have any previous experience or indeed if you have any qualifications in canoeing. If any member has experience or qualifications and would wish to volunteer his or her services we would be delighted to hear from them.

Please write stating interest to Mr J Stirling, CSSC, Minster House,  
272/274 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1BW —  
01 834 6644 Ext 519