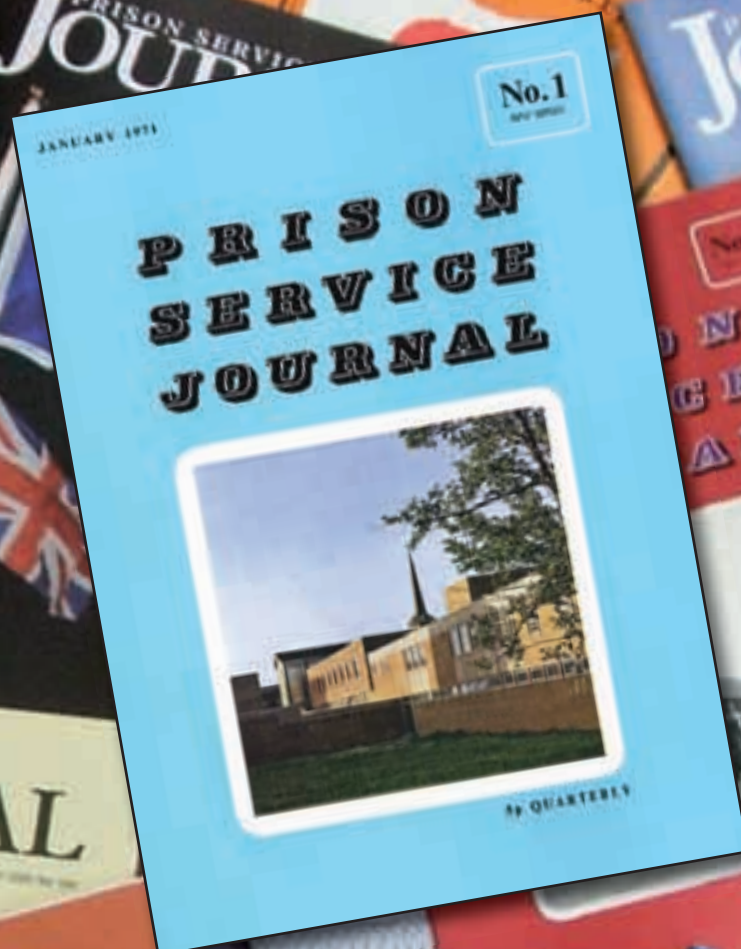


PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

March 2012 No 200



200th Edition

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At the time of writing **Andrew Rutherford** was deputy governor of Everthorpe Borstal. He is now Emeritus professor of law and criminal policy at the University of Southampton.

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The Editorial Board wishes to make clear that the views expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Prison Service.

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Editorial Comment

The *Prison Service Journal* was originally launched in 1960, edited and produced within the prison system with the aim of providing: 'an opportunity for comment and discussion in any topic relevant to the function which the Prison Service performs and the field in which it operates'. In January 1971, the 'new' *Prison Service Journal* was brought into being and this edition is the 200th in that series.

It is not only prisons that have undergone major changes over the last forty years; wider society has also been transformed. The editorial in the first edition of the 'new' *Prison Service Journal* explained that it had come into being as a result of wider developments, being as it was; 'linked with the decimilisation and metrication changes now almost upon us'. For those alarmed or confused about the effects of these changes, the editorial went on to helpfully advise that; 'Readers will observe that 5p is the new name for the old price'.

Looking back at that first edition, it is striking how much has changed in the world. There have been transformations in economics (consumerism, globalisation, insecurity of employment), family life (smaller households, diversity in family structures), information technology, transport, and the democratisation of social life (challenges to the subordination of women and minority groups, decline of deference and elitism)¹. This set of transformations are inevitably contested, imprecise and difficult to categorise, but are broadly characteristic of the contemporary period in western liberal societies, which has been termed as 'late modernity'. These changes have permeated deeply, altering the ways in which institutions act and the functions they fulfil.

In prisons, late modernity has seen a decline in the liberal elite and the welfarist rehabilitative ideal, replaced by more punitive and populist policies which have facilitated the expansion of prison populations and the ever-growing web of criminal justice². The practices of criminal justice professionals have also become increasingly shaped by globalised approaches, in particular managerialism. This is seen not only in the panoply of targets and audits that are now deployed, but also in the ways that 'offenders' are categorised and managed through actuarial approaches to assessment and interventions³.

This edition of *PSJ* attempts to explore the nature and effects of these transformations in the criminal justice system and wider society over the last four decades. Five articles from the first edition are republished here alongside specially commissioned reflective pieces by distinguished commentators. The topics addressed include: the role of prisoners, prison officers and prison governors, as well as the operation of the parole system and the representation of prisons in the media. These issues address some of the most fundamental aspects of the operation of the prison as a social institution, both internally and externally.

Together, these articles are able to capture and illuminate some of the ways in which prisons have been transformed. In his response to Andrew Rutherford's proposals for the employment of ex-prisoners in the criminal justice system, Christopher Stacey, a project manager for UNLOCK and himself an ex-prisoner, is able to illustrate how such opportunities have dramatically expanded in recent years both inside prisons, with schemes such as the Listeners, and also outside with a myriad of organisations employing released prisoners in providing rehabilitative and resettlement services. However, Stacey is alert to the ways in which this enables ex-prisoners to find quality employment whilst also reinforcing marginalisation from mainstream work. Former prison governor Shane Bryans provides a closely researched account of how the optimistic social welfarism evident in Frank Ainsworth's original publication on the training of assistant governors, appears alien in today's managerialist world. Nicola Padfield of University of Cambridge offers up to date research on parole to compare with Keith Bottomley and Alan Bilton's 1971 account. In this she is able to show how the system has become characterised by growing sentence lengths, more restrictive release and greater use of recall. The dramatic nature of social change is perhaps most acutely illustrated in Yvonne Jewkes' response to Alan Rayfield's article on the representation of prisons in print and on TV. Jewkes, of University of Leicester, rightly contrasts the limited choice of the early 1970s, with the sprawling and uncontrollable mass media of the 21st century.

The articles are not, however, all about change. In many instances they also highlight continuity and the

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1. Garland, D. and Sparks, R. (2000) *Criminology, social theory, and the challenge of our times* in Garland, D. and Sparks, R. (eds) *Criminology and social theory* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 2. Garland, D. (2001) *The culture of control: Crime and social order in contemporary society* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 3. Feeley, M. & Simon, J. (1992) *The New Penology: Notes on the Emerging Strategy of Corrections and its Implications in Criminology* Vol.30 No.4 p.449-74.

perseverance of the localised idiosyncracies of prison life. As has been noted in society generally, globalised change is filtered through local cultures and practices, so that there is a process of adaptation and accommodation⁴. In prisons, despite the changes that have taken place, many features remain ostensibly unchanged, including in many cases the architecture, routines and practices. Continuity is particularly noted in the response by Peter Bennett, recently retired Governor of Grendon and Springhill, in his response to an article by D W Manning, who in 1971 was a prison officer at Grendon. Bennett notes how the democratic therapeutic communities at Grendon have proven to be durable and resilient despite changing political and economic pressures. In other pieces, continuities are also noted, for better or worse, including the frustrations of prisoners facing parole and the antagonistic, polarised, often superficial representations of prisons in the media.

The process of reflection prompted by compiling this edition has provided a perspective on the grand narratives of social change but also illuminated a more subtle process through which features persevere. Some of those features are problematic including questions about social power and the essentially punitive nature of imprisonment. However, what also remains is the ability and desire of individuals to craft a space for progressive, moral practice.

After two hundred editions, the *Prison Service Journal* itself has to question its position in the contemporary penal landscape. Its purpose remains to provide a reflective space for practitioners, academics and other interested people to engage in dialogue about professional practice, policy development and the role of prisons in society. That purpose remains as vital today as it was forty years ago.

4. Kennedy, P. (2010) *Local lives and global transformations: Towards world society* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

New Careers for Ex-offenders

*At the time of writing **Andrew Rutherford** was deputy governor of Everthorpe Borstal. He is now Emeritus professor of law and criminal policy at the University of Southampton.*

Agencies that have as a goal the betterment of the offender have long lamented the difficulties their clients have in finding stable employment and in particular the problems in starting out on a new career. It is therefore rather surprising that these agencies have not themselves set other employers more of a lead. This is one of several arguments put forward in the United States by those who support the concept of new careers for ex-offenders within correctional agencies. Some developments in the United States over the last decade have ensured that this concept cannot be dismissed as a rather improbable innovation.

The employment of ex-offenders by official agencies can be viewed within the context of a wide social movement that encompasses the philosophies of self-help and ground level participation in decision making. In brief, solutions are sought from within the social problem rather than from external sources. Alcoholics Anonymous and Synanon are two of nearly 300 self-help groups that have sprung up. These groups demonstrate that people with similar problems can be of mutual assistance and that as a result of their involvement in the difficulties of others they are more able to master their own, a phenomena which prompted a new term for American sociology, 'retroflexive reformation'.¹

During this same period there was a growing sensitivity within the liberal establishment to the high level of paternalism in many official programmes designed to combat poverty. Governmental support was therefore forthcoming for the view that 'if the poor have a stake in their own destiny, if they have an opportunity to utilise education for personal advantage, and if they are afforded dignity in the process, then motivation to participate in the system will logically follow'.² 'New careers for the poor' and 'maximum feasible participation' were catchwords in the days when the Great Society could be mentioned without any hint of irony. Officially sponsored anti-poverty programmes employed many ex-offenders and these developed alongside non-official agencies and self-help groups.

One such non-official agency, not founded by ex-offenders, is the Vera Institute of Justice in New York

City. Vera was established with the aim of reducing the inequities of the pre-trial situation and it employs ex-offenders in several of its projects. New Careers Development Inc. in Oakland, California, is directly involved in the training and placement of new careerists in social service agencies. There are some 140 trainees and they are mostly from the ghetto with about 10 per cent having arrest records. Douglas Grant who was largely responsible for setting up the organisation is gradually withdrawing in favour of the group of highly competent ex-offenders who comprise most of the senior staff. Of the self-help societies founded by ex-offenders for ex-offenders the best known is the Seventh Step Foundation. The seven steps have much in common with those of A.A. and they were developed by the late Bill Sands and others in Kansas State Penitentiary in 1962. Although chapters do recruit people without criminal records, 'square Johns', onto their boards of directors, Seventh Step has remained very much an ex-offender's association. When 'square Johns' take over, as happened recently in Los Angeles, the chapter is likely to disintegrate. Several chapters do, however, work closely with official agencies, an example being at the Preston School of the California Youth Authority,³ and there have been only a few instances of the distrust that characterised relations between Synanon and officialdom. Seventh Step workers often stress that nothing has changed within themselves but rather that they are finding new directions to channel their energy and skills. Coming to work with Seventh Step, said one of these men, was 'starting an adventure' and for him it involved much of the unpredictable excitement that he had experienced in criminal activities over a 20-year period.

New careers programmes are concerned with ex-offenders, by which is meant people no longer on probation or incarcerated. There are, however, close links between developments and projects where the offender, whilst in custody or on probation supervision, is an active participant in strategies arising from the betterment goal. Because the ex-offender is in a stronger position to determine events, new careers programmes are more highly developed than projects within the correctional situation. There are, however, indications that the offender may not be far behind the

1. Cressey, D.R. 'Changing Criminals: The Application of the Theory of Differential Association'. *American Journal of Sociology*, LXI, 1955, 116-120.
2. Pearl, A. and Riessman, F. *New Careers for the Poor*. New York. Free Press, 1965, p. 73.
3. Fagin, B. 'The Seventh Step Programme at Preston'. *California Youth Authority Quarterly*, 21, 3, 1968, 35-42.

ex-offender in this respect. At the Washington State Penitentiary a number of men, identified as being mainly strict constructionists of the inmate code, asked permission to form their own self-help group with a focus on recidivism.⁴ More recently at the O.H. Close School, Stockton in California, several boys have founded a drug investigation group which among other activities is reviewing books and articles on drug taking. A large number of self-help groups are flourishing and receiving official support at the Colorado State Penitentiary.⁵

Prison inmates have, of course, long worked in a variety of tasks, from being armed guards to clerical assistants, that serve the stable operative goals of control and maintenance. It has been less common for inmates to be involved in tasks associated with the more precarious goal of inmate betterment. When this has happened it has generally been the result of personnel shortages. Early education programmes in federal prisons relied heavily on inmate teachers and administrators. That meaning can be given to very long sentences is demonstrated in a north-eastern state where two men serving life sentences are full-time teachers in the state's reformatory where they live in staff quarters. An inmate at the Indiana State Reformatory, who was a college graduate with computer experience, was the principal initiator of an inmate-manned tabulating department which performs work for several of the state's agencies and local universities. This inmate was transferred to the state prison to set up a data processing system for the state's six institutions and after being paroled he was appointed Assistant Director of Classification and Treatment in the Department of Corrections. The potential of inmates in research programmes has been demonstrated by Douglas Grant⁶ and Hans Toch⁷ and, in Britain, was favourably viewed by the Advisory Council on the Penal System when considering the problems of the long-term inmate of high security prisons.⁸ Hans Toch, whose

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offender-participant study of violence will probably become a classic, writes: 'Penology stands in need of new approaches in persons who are currently stored in correctional institutions. Research participation can easily and cheaply serve rehabilitative goals'.⁹

These developments within correctional agencies represent the coming together of offenders' demands to be involved in betterment, sociological theory and the application of the milieu therapy ideology to penal settings. The lead in attempting to exploit these sources in a systematic way was, for a few years, taken by the California Department of Corrections. The department's best known programme was at Pine Hall in the California Institution for Men at Chino where a high degree of blurring of inmate and staff roles took place.¹⁰ That this and other attempts at the 'therapeutic community' were

short lived in California is a reflection of the neglect of the organisational context by those involved. These projects generated enormous interest in and outside California and two notable new careers projects developed from the Pine Hall experience. Seven Pine Hall graduates, all parolees, were hired by the state of North Carolina to staff a small open penal unit. The Research and Youth Development Centre at Chapel Hill had 20 young inmates who worked with the staff in developing new state programmes to combat poverty and crime. Only

one of the parolees remained with the unit and under his direction it was showing increasing strength in weathering crises at the time it was closed due to the cessation of state funding. The parolee who had been in charge went on to become deputy director of a counselling centre for delinquent youth in Kentucky. The Pine Hall experience also gave rise to the New Careers Development Project which was set up in 1964. Inmates from the California Department of Corrections, after undergoing a selection process, were allocated to this experimental programme and to a control group. The controls continued with their regular prison routine whilst the experimentals underwent a four-month

4. Garabedian, P. 'Legitimate and Illegitimate Alternatives in the Prison Community.' *Sociological Inquiry*, 32, No. 2, 1962, 172-184.

5. Wilson, A. 'Self-help Groups: Rehabilitation or Recreation'. *A.J. Corrections*, 31, No. 6, 12-18.

6. Grant, J. 'The Use of Correctional Institutions as Self-study Communities in Social Research.' *British Journal of Delinquency*, 7, 1957, pp. 301-307.

Grant, J. and Grant, J. 'Staff and Client Participation: A New Approach to Correctional Research.' *Nebraska Law Review*, XLV, 1966, 702-716.

7. Toch, H. *Violent Men*. Chicago. Aldine, 1969.

8. *The Regime for Long-term Prisoners in Conditions of Maximum Security*. Report of the Advisory Council on the Penal System. London, 1968, at para. 188.

9. Toch, *ibid*, p. 247.

10. Briggs, D.L. 'Convicted Felons as Social Therapists'. *Corrective Psychiatry and Journal of Social Therapy*, vol. 9, 1963, 122-127.

training course just prior to their parole. There were three consecutive courses and each involved six inmates. The original plan had been that they would be trained for programme development tasks within correctional settings but it became clear that such openings would not occur. As a number of federally funded anti-poverty programmes were starting at this time the training was focussed instead on job development programmes for the poor. All 18 men were felony offenders, seven had been previously incarcerated and almost all had prior arrest records and long histories of known delinquency. After being paroled they were found social service employment and they were given considerable support in meeting the demands of their new career. Three years after the programme one of the 18 was back in prison, four had returned to semi-skilled work and a sixth had become a college student. The remaining 12 were still employed by state and federal agencies and by universities where they occupied middle management positions with salaries ranging from 10 to 15 thousand dollars. The comparative follow-up results showed that the controls did less well than was predicted from their base expectancy scores, whilst the experimentals did better than predicted. It was also found that those who had the most going for them before, amongst the experimentals, were least able to make good use of this new opportunity. The 12 new careerists came mainly from ghetto backgrounds and an important source of support for them in their new careers came from the women they became involved with who encouraged them to think in terms of changing social institutions rather than merely being against them. Although the training project was short lived, for state funding did not replace federal support, it provides a good example of the contagious quality of these new career developments. Commenting on these 12 men, Grant has drawn attention to their activities in new career associations at local and national levels and to the impressive impact that they have had through these associations and in the course of their employment on legislatures and funding agencies. In his use of the word contagion, Grant has in mind more than the passing on of information and techniques to others but also 'passing on their conviction that they and other deviants in the culture could contribute to that culture's development; that change, though difficult, could be

Three years after the programme one of the 18 was back in prison, four had returned to semi-skilled work and a sixth had become a college student.

brought about by people like themselves; that there were no absolute truths to guide social action but only approximations to the truth which must be continually tested against experience'.¹¹

In the California Youth Authority there are several projects that involve training offenders as aides in betterment programmes with the possibility of full-time employment within the authority on discharge. Most of these are federally funded and the largest is the Aide Training Project at the O.H. Close School. The trainee aides come to O.H. Close School from the Youth Training School in Ontario where they have been for at least three months. They are between two and three years older than the O.H. Close boys with whom they work as teacher and recreation aides for the final six months of their sentence. The programme started in

January 1968 and at any one time there are 25 aides in training. The aides share the same living quarters and they wear their own clothes. In response to this project a new civil service class was created in California, the Correctional Programme Assistant which is open to aides on discharge. This entry level position combines practical and academic work and can be a first step for a career within the Youth Authority. At the present time felons can be employed in Youth Authority parole units but not in

institutions. A research study comparing boys who have been in the aide programme with a control group is under way and an early report on a six-month follow-up shows that whilst there was no difference in recidivism the employment position of the experimentals was significantly better and that eight of the 26 experimentals were in jobs related to their aide training, most of them in the Youth Authority.¹²

The Los Angeles Probation Department is also undertaking several programmes with considerable new careers potential. About 100 former probationers are employed by the department in various capacities and mostly under the title of community worker. In the largest of these projects, RODEO (Reduction of Delinquency Through Expansion of Opportunity), two community workers are attached to a probation officer and in most cases they are of the same racial group as predominates in the part of the city they are based in. There is at the moment no easy upward mobility. The

11. Grant, J. and Grant, J. 'Contagion as a Principle in Behaviour Change'. In *Unique Programmes in Behaviour Readjustment*. Edited by Henry C. Rickard, Pergamon Publishing Co., New York, 1970.
12. Webb, M.P. and Seckel, J.P. 'Evaluation Summary of Compensatory Education in the California Youth Authority, 1968-9. California Youth Authority, Sacramento.

next grade up is group supervisor and that requires two years of college and the grade of probation officer requires a further two years. It seems probably, however, that a decline in applications from college graduates will lead to modification of these educational requirements. Mention should also be made of the Los Angeles Police Department which, along with the police departments of Richmond and Philadelphia employs ex-offenders in community liaison work.

Official new career programmes for ex-offenders are not confined to the west coast. Examples could be cited from among others, such diverse states as Minnesota, Alabama, New Jersey, Kansas and South Carolina. A recent survey showed that some 40 states have statutory or administrative prohibitions against the employment of probationers or parolees and that many of these have prohibitions against ex-offenders who are completely free of supervision. In many states people with felony convictions are deprived of the right to vote and the official ventures into new careers in a nation where civil death can still be a reality are all the more impressive. Possibly the most committed agency to the new careers idea is the New York State Division for Youth.¹³ This agency was created in 1960 to provide flexible alternatives to the existing options available to the courts for the 15 to 17-year old offender. It has remained remarkably free from bureaucratic restraint and would have a strong claim to be amongst the most innovative penal agencies in the world. Its new careers programme was initiated in 1963 and has made steady growth and a comprehensive evaluative study has recently been initiated. Twenty-five young men new careerists are employed by the division at present and they comprise about 10 per cent of the total staff. They include immediate graduates, past graduates and adults who are under the supervision of the New York State Division of Parole. Milton Luger, until recently the director, says that the goal has been 'to preserve the original sensitivity and empathy of the new careerist, while urging him to prepare himself realistically for movement up the civil service ladder'.¹⁴

The accumulated results of recent research projects should provide some pointers to the many unanswered

questions concerning selection, training and on tasks with the greatest potential. These research findings will probably do little, however, to reduce the wide differences in philosophy that separate some new career practitioners. The New York State Division for Youth has, for example, remained more selective than some other agencies. Luger stresses that he is looking for people with something to offer whilst others view the new careerist as the main gainer or lay stress on the need to change social institutions. As an aspect of the selection issue it would appear, that with a few exceptions, most of the programmes largely involve minority racial groups. These groups are generally under-represented on official agency staffs and over-represented amongst the clientele. To see the new careers movement, merely in terms of achieving a racial

balance would miss its more fundamental significance as a claim by the socially disadvantaged and dishonoured to have an important say in the determination of their plight in their relationship with official agencies.

Among the groups most resistant to the new careers concept are correctional workers. Luger has commented on the feelings of staff in his division who had not been directly associated with new careerists that 'their own professionalism was being threatened by the new-found

feelings of heightened pride and self-worth slowly being inculcated through the new careerists' important roles in our facilities'.¹⁵ It is not only notions of professionalism that are challenged by the very core of the caste-like relationship that staff and offenders conventionally share. The new careerist in fact crosses caste lines and, as one observer puts it, he finds a 'rite of passage' back from criminal to non-criminal status.¹⁶ A recent Louis Harris poll (conducted for the Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training) found that 50 per cent of correctional workers rejected that new careers approach and a further 15 per cent were not sure. Workers in juvenile settings were on the whole in favour whilst those in adult settings, especially those in institutions, were largely against. One-third of administrators and specialists were in favour of hiring ex-offenders in their agencies whilst only one-seventh of line workers felt this

The new careerist in fact crosses caste lines and, as one observer puts it, he finds a 'rite of passage' back from criminal to non-criminal status.

13. Luger, M. 'Innovations in the Treatment of Juvenile Offenders.' *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 381, 1969, 60-70.

14. Luger, M. 'Utilising the Ex-offender as a Staff Member: Community Attitude and Acceptance.' In *Offenders as a Correctional Manpower Resource*. Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training, Washington, 1968, 50-59 at p.56.

15. Luger, M., *ibid*, p.53.

16. Empey, L.T. 'Offender Participation in the Correctional Process: General Theoretical Issues.' In *Offenders as a Correctional Manpower Resource*. Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training, Washington, 1968, 5-21.

way. The greater the education of the staff member the more accepting of the new careerist, although even in the higher reaches this was far from complete. More than half of all staff thought that hiring ex-offenders would lower the standards of the profession and this view was especially strong amongst line workers. Those who were in favour cited the ex-offender's ability to empathise as his main contribution. Those against pointed to bad character, unreliability, maladjustment and security risks involved as his main defects. The Manpower Commission commenting on these findings, which were part of a general survey of staff views, state: 'Perhaps more than anywhere else in the survey correctional personnel expressed dissatisfaction with their own accomplishment in their negative reaction to the employment of ex-offenders. Rehabilitation they seemed to be saying has not been successful. We do not turn out the whole man. The ex-offender may be the next offender and we cannot trust him as we do another'.¹⁷ The findings underline the point that alterations to the caste relationship cannot be achieved by changes in the role of the offender alone. Equally important is the role definition of correctional staff and it is vital to ensure that changes do not reduce their security and satisfaction. Hans Toch writes: 'If programme development is likely to involve shifts in staff functions and roles — and it inevitably will — then it is important not only that staff be involved in the direction of the new programming but also that new career development opportunities be opened for them as well as for the offender group'.¹⁸ Grant has pointed out that other sources of resistance can be reduced by avoiding inadequate preparation and by building the new career concept into the organisation rather than having it tacked on as an optional extra.

There is a danger of the ex-offender's contribution in general being romanticised, and even amongst

those who have a contribution to make there is no reason for supposing that large numbers of them would wish to make a career in this direction. New careerists in the United States, however small a proportion of the total staff they remain, seem likely to make a significant impact on the agencies they work for, and for the offenders they come in contact with they provide continual and dramatic examples of breaks with recidivism. These attempts by official agencies to develop new careers for ex-offenders may, furthermore, be amongst the first clues of an emerging and radically new orientation to offenders. The offender is less likely to be seen as a passive recipient and preconceptions about what is best for him will give way to joint decisions by offenders and staff which will be determined by what seems relevant to them. These new career developments may then represent an early step in acknowledging that offenders, as the largest group in the correctional process, should have an important say in the shape and direction of decisions concerning how their time will be spent. Developments in Britain have still to reach this initial stage but it seems probable that considerably more notice than has been the case up to now will be given to the potential that some ex-offenders have as new careerists. Once these new career openings have been created for the ex-offender, further and more fundamental organisational adjustments can be expected by the official agencies in relation to the offender as distinct from the ex-offender. Adjustments to present arrangements may in fact be insufficient and increasing interest may be given to the task of developing new organisational models that will take into account and support increasingly high levels of participation by both offenders and lower level staff within agencies that have, as one of their goals, the betterment of offenders.

17. *Corrections 1968: A Climate for Change*. Report of a survey made by Louis Harris and associates for the Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training, Washington, 1968, 24-26.

18. Toch, H. *ibid*, p.238.

Reflections on 'New Careers for Ex-offenders'

Christopher Stacey is Head of Projects and Services for UNLOCK, the National Association of Reformed Offenders.

A deputy governor of Everthorpe Borstal at the time of writing, Rutherford had spent nearly two years in America and had observed how the US had developed the concept of 'new careers for ex-offenders' within 'correctional agencies'. These agencies may be better known in the UK as criminal justice agencies, rehabilitation agencies, or law-enforcement agencies.

Rutherford identified how many of these agencies had for a long time observed how their clients had difficulties in finding stable employment, and in particular when starting out a new career. The employment of former prisoners by official agencies was, in the US at the time, seen as part of a wider movement which encompassed the principles of self-help and ground level participation in decision making.

Self-help / Peer support

Rutherford identified numerous examples that he had come across in America of solutions that were, in his words, 'from within the social problem rather from external sources'. Of particular interest was the Seventh Step Foundation, which was founded by former prisoners, for former prisoners. Although they did also recruit what they called 'square Johns' (people without a criminal record) onto their board of directors, they remained very much a former prisoners association. Rutherford warned that when 'square Johns' took control, the chapter was likely to disintegrate, and interestingly, having looked at their current work on their website,¹ this appears to be a continuing concern. Indeed, of their current officers and directors, whilst their Treasurer is a former prisoner, their President appears to be a 'square John'. Sadly, the 1960's (the period that Rutherford was reflecting on) seems to have been the heyday for the Foundation, as once the founder, Bill Sands, passed away in 1967, the number of chapters gradually fell away, with only one now remaining to this day, which provides support, friendship and encouragement to those released from Oregon State Penitentiary. There are similar examples of organisations that exist in the UK.

Firstly, there is UNLOCK, the National Association of Reformed Offenders², which I am an employee of. It is a well-established 'ex-offender-led' organisation, having been formed by a group of prisoners in 1999 and becoming a registered charity in 2000. It was formed by a group of people who were frustrated at having to rely on experts and professionals. Instead, together, as a group, they felt they could support others in leaving crime behind. Its aim is equality of opportunities, rights and responsibilities of reformed offenders by seeking to overcome the obstacles that reformed offenders face. It is essentially an advocacy organisation, mixing its work between client-centred advocacy and high-level policy change /campaigning. The majority of its trustees are reformed offenders, and its Chief Executive, Bobby Cummines, served 13 years in prison. He was awarded an OBE in 2011 for services to reformed offenders. Its website is the most comprehensive source of information for people living with a criminal record and attracts approximately 130,000 visits per year, with 6,500 new visitors every month. Of particular relevance to this article is that it has a unique online discussion forum for reformed offenders. This enables this group to be able to provide support to one another, share experiences and ask questions. It performs a critical peer support self-help function, providing a space whereby 24/7, reformed offenders can seek the advice and assistance of others who have been in a similar situation.

Secondly, there is User Voice.³ User Voice was founded in 2009 and is also led by ex-offenders. Their prisoner council work is discussed elsewhere in this paper, but in addition to this, they work with clients (which are usually organisations) to gain the insights of prisoners, ex-offenders and those at risk of crime. User Voice state on their website that they will always be majority staffed and led by people who have experienced the criminal justice system. They were founded Mark Johnson, an ex-offender and former drug abuser, best-selling author of *Wasted* and social commentator. Mark's experiences of prison, and later as an employer of ex-offenders and consultant, left him convinced of the need to create a model of

1. www.7thstep.org

2. More information available at www.unlock.org.uk

3. More information available at www.uservice.org

engagement that is fair and incentive led. His aim was to foster dialogue between service providers and users that is mutually beneficial and results in better and more cost-effective services.

On the face of it, the two organisations appear remarkably similar. However, whilst they are both led by, and employ, former offenders, they are somewhat different in the work that they undertake. User Voice essentially deliver services (primarily engagement⁴) that organisations can take advantage of, as they have established themselves as being known to be able to positively engage with clients in ways that organisations themselves are unable to, partly because they have personal experience themselves. On the other hand, UNLOCK are an advocacy organisation which work to benefit a specific group of people; they are the only organisation in the UK dedicated to supporting reformed offenders.

It is also important to discuss a more recent dramatic attempt to foster self-help between UK prisoners through the attempts to establish the Association of Prisoners. In 2010, Ben Gunn, a renowned prisoner, wrote to numerous organisations enclosing a bundle of papers relating to the Association of Prisoners. Described as 'this generation's attempt to give prisoners the voice we have long attempted to have heard', he was calling on everybody who has an interest in prison reform to support them. Unfortunately, little has been heard of the association since this time, and it is unclear whether the prison authorities managed to suppress any attempts to establish a union; the prison service has long tried to block any attempts to form a national association.

Turning to looking at more established, larger, service delivery organisations, an organisation in the UK began shortly before Rutherford wrote his piece was St Giles Trust,⁵ which began in 1962. It has gradually developed over the years, and is now a highly-respected service delivery organisation with a proven track record of employing former prisoners. One example of this is in their SOS Gangs Project, which was the brainchild of

Junior Smart, who is the Team Leader of the project. He developed the idea whilst he was in custody, and since project started running in October 2006, it has helped many individuals break free from gang crime and less than 10 per cent have re-offended, against a national re-offending rate of around 75 per cent for this age group. The key focus of the project is empowerment, providing credible mentors who are properly trained and passionate about what they do. The success of the SOS project has now led to preventative work with young people at risk of gang crime, with the aim of preventing them becoming caught up in this lifestyle. Former prisoners are working with schools in London to inform students on the dangers of getting caught up in gang crime, particularly with regard to weapons.

However, St Giles Trust is just one example. The number of opportunities for former prisoners to get involved in some form of peer support or mentoring role has significantly increased over the last decade. This is perhaps a consequence of squeezed budgets, but also because of a general increase in mentoring more broadly across the criminal justice system as an effective intervention, and a particular business case for using people in these roles who have personal experience. For example, a Princes Trust survey in

2008⁶ revealed that 65 per cent of young offenders under the age of 25 felt that a mentor would help them stop offending, and 76 per cent would rather have a mentor who was a former offender. In addition, there has been recognition by Government of the value that such support service can add. Recently, a Ministry of Justice news feature online⁷ recognised research that offenders are most influenced to change by those whose advice they respect and whose support they value.⁸

One of the more established peer mentor schemes in the UK is the *Listeners* scheme.⁹ Prisoners are six times more likely to take their lives than an average person in the UK. The first 48 hours spent inside a prison are when people are the most vulnerable. The Listener Scheme is a peer support scheme whereby

... a Ministry of
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4. The term 'engagement' is intended to encompass various activities, including prisoner councils, consultations, surveys and research.

5. More information available at www.stgilestrust.org.uk.

6. Princes Trust (2008) *Making the case for one to one support for young offenders*.

7. 2nd June 2011, *Information mentoring to help offenders with rehabilitation*, available online at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/features/feature020611a.htm>

8. McNeill, F. & Weaver, B. (2010) *Changing Lives? Desistance Research and Offender Management*, Report No.03/2010, available online at http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/documents/Report%202010_03%20-%20Changing%20Lives.pdf.

9. More information available online at http://www.samaritans.org/our_services/our_work_in_prisons/the_listener_scheme.aspx.

selected prisoners are trained and supported by Samaritans, using their same guidelines, to listen in complete confidence to their fellow prisoners who may be experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide. The objectives of the scheme are to assist in reducing the number of self-inflicted deaths, reduce self-harm and help to alleviate the feelings of those in distress. The first Listener scheme started in HMP Swansea in 1991. Nearly every prison in England, Scotland and Wales now has a Listener scheme with well over 1200 active Listeners across the estate. In 2009, 776 volunteers in Samaritans branches in the UK provided support to 168 prison establishments. Listener statistics collated for the Home Office in 2009 reveal that approximately 1,750 Listeners were trained in 144 establishments in England and Wales. The Listeners responded to approximately 85,000 contacts.¹⁰

In a similar way, the St Giles Trust *Peer Advice Project* trains serving prisoners to NVQ level 3 in Advice, Information and Guidance and these provide an advice service to other prisoners, usually on housing related matters. Across a 12 month period (between April 2008 — March 2009), 145 prisoners, spanning 18 prisons, obtained this qualification.¹¹ Following their qualification, they were deployed into voluntary positions in the prison and in the community. One of the main outcomes was how those receiving the advice 'especially appreciate receiving help from someone who has 'walked in their shoes''.

A further example of peer support is the *Insiders* scheme, which is a support scheme for the first 24 hours in custody. The *Insiders* scheme involves trained selected prisoner / trainee volunteers providing basic information and reassurance to new receptions shortly after their arrival in prison and /or during their early period in custody. The first 24 hours in custody are particularly distressing for many prisoners, particularly those new to prison, and the *Insiders* scheme should help reduce the anxiety they experience. This early period is high risk in terms of suicide: providing a peer support scheme where prisoners are trained to help others during this high-risk period will contribute to the

Prison Service's wider suicide prevention strategy. The *Insiders* initiative has two key aims; to offer reassurance to new prisoners and to provide them with key information which will be useful to them in their first few days in custody and beyond.¹²

The above examples primarily look at the use of *prisoners* rather than *former prisoners*. There are certainly many prisoners that gain experience of undertaking roles in peer support that go onto looking at developing a career in the sector. However, Rutherford's article detailed the concerns that some professionals had in the sector of employing former prisoners. These findings underlined how an offender

becoming a professional is not enough; work also had to be done to ensure that professionals do not see these developments as in some way giving preferential treatment to former prisoners over existing professionals. Of course, there has always been (and always will be) opposition to the involvement of former prisoners for a number of reasons. Rutherford himself discussed how it was workers themselves were the most resistant. It's unclear to what extent these concerns are present in the UK today; indeed. However, it's certainly the case that roles undertaken by former prisoners can be seen as challenging the professionalism

or ability of the existing workforce.

Interestingly, the example given by Rutherford of the Los Angeles Probation Department, which was employing about 100 former probationers at the time, mainly as community workers, is relevant to certain tensions that still exist in the UK today. It was pointed out by Rutherford that there was no easy upward mobility. Whilst there is little quantitative evidence to support this assertion in this applying in the UK today, I have come across plenty of qualitative examples whereby former prisoners are employed as workers in the sector but, because of their criminal record, they struggle to move upwards with their career, either internally or externally. The reasons for this can only be subjective at this stage, without any reliable evidence to support them, but it is asserted that their past criminal record plays a part, not least because that is what their employers see as being what qualifies them to do that

The first 24 hours in custody are particularly distressing for many prisoners, particularly those new to prison, and the *Insiders* scheme should help reduce the anxiety they experience.

10. Samaritans (2010) *Information resource pack 2010*, available online at <http://www.samaritans.org/PDF/Samaritans%20Information%20Resource%20Pack%202010.pdf>.

11. Boyce, I., Huner, G., and Hough, M. (2009) *St Giles Trust Peer Advice Project: An Evaluation*, Kings College: London

12. PSI 42/2003 — Guidance on the 'Insiders' Peer Support Scheme.

job, and not the one above. Certainly, I have had to advocate for a number of former prisoners who have been refused permission to work in prisons simply because of their criminal record, where there is no clear justification for the decision. Whilst these situations may not be representative of the wider situation, there is certainly an element, particularly in the Prison Service, that are not 100 per cent supportive of the role of former prisoners.

That takes us onto a separate but related point, which is examining the reasons why former prisoners choose a career in the sector. Is it because they see it as their best option in terms of turning what would ordinarily be a negative (a criminal record) into a positive? Rutherford cautioned against the possibility that the contribution of former prisoners is somewhat romanticised, and felt that there was no reason to suppose that large numbers of former prisoners would wish to make a career in the sector. However, as the UK has begun to slowly develop the role of former prisoners in the delivery of services in the sector, it is clear that there is a danger that their role either becomes tokenistic (whereby organisations involve former prisoners simply because they feel it is what they feel they have to be seen to be doing) or becomes a replacement for professionals who have something to offer which isn't based on personal experience.

Service User Involvement

Having looked at the role of prisoners and former prisoners in peer support and self-help capacities, the role of these groups in seeking improvement to the system will be discussed.

In his original article, Rutherford cited an example of Washington State Penitentiary, where a number of men had asked permission to form their own self-help group with a focus on recidivism.¹³ Of course, prisoners at both sides of the Atlantic have long been used within prisons to undertake various mundane and menial roles, not only to save resources, but also to maintain

control and discipline. However, rarely in those days was it common for prisoners to be involved in their own betterment, either in the US or in the UK.

There is, however, limited evidence on the impact, outcomes and efficacy of approaches that involve prisoners, despite a lot of work being done to review the progress of service user involvement.¹⁴ Some examples are, however, discussed below, including details of their effectiveness.

Perhaps the recent work of User Voice in prisoner councils is the most rigorous in terms of ascertaining effectiveness.¹⁵ Some of the most interesting findings include the fact that, since the User Voice Council was set up at HMP Isle of Wight, there has been a 37 per cent reduction in the number of complaints made within the estate and the average time prisoners spend in segregation units has significantly declined from 160 to 47 days, which they conclude is as a result of a reduction in conflict and prisoner satisfaction. The work of User Voice in setting up prisoner councils in the way that they have is perhaps one of the more innovative approaches to the issue of prisoner councils, which have historically been found to lack in decision-making ability.¹⁶ However, due to their success, the User Voice model has been extended to HMP Maidstone, HMP Rye Hill and HMP Wolds. Furthermore, despite a general historical lack of community-based

councils, they are currently piloting the model in four London boroughs. The success behind their model is in enabling participants to have ownership, and for them to be involved in actually making a difference; their personal experience can serve to improve the system for the future.

An example of existing community-based councils is in West Yorkshire Probation Service. They have three separate groups helping to achieve effective offender involvement in their service development, including a Service User Representative Forum, where offenders are votes as representatives to meet with probation staff and treatment agencies. They are represented at a joint commissioning level and can help to influence real changes in offender treatment programmes.

The work of User Voice in setting up prisoner councils in the way that they have is perhaps one of the more innovative approaches to the issue of prisoner councils, which have historically been found to lack in decision-making ability.

13. Garabedian, P. (1962) "Legitimate and Illegitimate Alternatives in the Prison Community," *Sociological Inquiry*, 32, No. 2, 172-184.

14. For example, Clinks (2011) *A review of service user involvement in prisons and probation trusts*, London: Clinks.

15. User Voice (2010) *The Power Inside: The role of prison councils*, London: User Voice.

16. Kimmett E and Solomon E. (2004) *Having Their Say: The work of prison councils*, London: Prison Reform Trust.

Rutherford concluded in his article that the UK had done little at that time to look at the role of prisoners in particular in being involved in their own betterment, but felt that if progress was made in former prisoner employment in the sector, more fundamental adjustments could be expected by official agencies in relation to prisoners. Indeed, Rutherford foresaw the need to go further than just adjustments, with perhaps new organisational models needed to take into account, and support, increasingly high levels of participation by prisoners. There is little evidence to show such significant transformations to the ways organisations operate, but there has certainly been a knock-on effect to the recent buzz-words around 'service user involvement'. Offenders, as the largest group in the criminal justice system, should have an important say in the shape and direction of decisions concerning how their time will be spent. Indeed, the basis of the work of User Voice has been that only offenders can stop re-offending, and that by giving them a say in how the system is run, you not only improve the system, but you reduce the risk of them re-offending.

The requirement for service user involvement arises because it is often unclear whether the services being funded are needed. Understanding this need has always been the strength of the voluntary sector in particular, but the criminal justice system more formally has struggled to recognise offenders as customers. However, a competitive — even combative — relationship has developed within the sector in recent years, particularly due to the growing dominance of the commissioner/service-provider model. As a result, there is an increasing pressure to filter the feedback of service users when communicating with commissioners. The danger is that service user involvement becomes nothing more than a way of looking better, rather than actually making things better. It can easily become something that has to be done, without a real understanding of why.

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A recent Guardian article by former prisoner Eric Allison demonstrates the damage of service user involvement implemented for the wrong reasons — damage not to the organisation, but to the individual.¹⁷ Eric cites the example of reformed offenders involved with government-funded rehabilitation agencies. They felt they were 'trundled out as tame ex-cons'. Others felt like the 'token ex-offenders', allowed to work as volunteers but ceaselessly leap-frogged for a promised place on the payroll.

However, increased services user involvement has its dangers. For many reformed offenders, faced with discrimination in society, it can be seen as the only way to turn a negative history into a positive future identity. For some, working in the Criminal Justice System is a genuine choice but the danger is that it is seen as the only way people with convictions can gain recognition, respect and success. Service user involvement has come a long way but must be prevented from becoming no more than another tick in the box. There is a gulf between genuinely involving customers and the tokenism that can pass for it.

Why is all this important?

Engaging prisoners, whether serving or former, in voluntary or paid employment has been found to support their civil reintegration.¹⁸ Furthermore, in helping others, it has been found to support offenders in the process of desistance, because it makes a difference to others, promotes pro-social responsibility, and contributes to a sense of community and belonging.¹⁹ It could also be seen as a way for an offender to 'give something back' and help to develop new social networks which are founded on more positive attitudes.²⁰

Throughout this paper, whether it be through self-help, mentoring, or prisoner councils, the examples that have been discussed have involved the sharing of experience and expertise from those who have offended, so as to inform and improve the criminal

17. Allison, E., "Not all new starts for ex-offenders are what they seem", *The Guardian*, 10th March 2010 (available at www.guardian.co.uk/society/joepublic/2010/mar/10/prisoner-rehabilitation-failures).

18. Uggen, C., Manza, J. & Behrens, A. (2004) "Less Than the Average Citizen: Stigma, Role Transition and the Civic Reintegration of Convicted Felons" in Maruna, S. and Immarigeon, R. (Eds) *After Crime and Punishment: Pathways to Offender Reintegration*, Willan Publishing: Cullompton, Devon.

19. Edgar, K., Jacobson, J., and Biggar, K. (2011) *Time Well Spent*, Prison Reform Trust: London.

20. Maruna, S. (2001) *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild their Lives*, American Psychological Association Books: Washington DC. at http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/documents/Report%202010_03%20-%20Changing%20Lives.pdf

justice system, either on a client-level of at a systemic level. This can help to add credibility and legitimacy²¹ and hopefully, by having services or interventions co-created by those who have been, or currently are being, supported by them, they may be more likely to be effective.²²

Returning to the question that Rutherford posed in his original article in 1971 — Can (or should) ex-prisoners expect to get work in ‘correctional agencies’? — to what extent has this been realised? At the time Rutherford was writing, it was probably true to say former prisoners couldn’t, nor was there a general acceptance that they should be able to, get work in the criminal justice sector, or at least if they did it wasn’t formally recognised that this had happened. However, as this article has demonstrated, there has been significant progress towards former prisoners becoming an integral part in the services that are delivered to prisoners. Indeed, some organisations use the fact that they use former offenders as an argument for why they are most effective. Whether it be in peer support, mentoring, self-help groups or just in the general delivering of services to prisoners, their involvement has certainly increased significantly, perhaps more so in the voluntary sector than in the statutory sector.

However, Rutherford’s question wasn’t just whether they should or shouldn’t. He also asked whether former prisoners should expect to? The

answer at the time he wrote was certainly no, and in my view it should remain that way. If asking whether former prisoners should be allowed, the answer would clearly be yes, subject to the ordinary proviso’s around risk assessments. But should they expect to? In my opinion, they shouldn’t. It would be a perverse outcome of the criminal justice system that a convicted criminal were to expect paid employment at the end of it, especially being involved in the very system that they have just been forced through by the criminal records. Furthermore, there is already a fear, that has been borne out in examples that I’ve come across, where former prisoners have felt that going back and working in the sector is the only option open to them. Certainly, they have value to add, and not only can they achieve more positive outcomes, but they can benefit personally also. However, the system has to remain cautious not to drag people back into a system because of their personal experience, when in fact they would have been able to fulfil their own goals and ambitions through mainstream careers. Nevertheless, the positive fact remains that many former prisoners are now involved in self-help and peer support roles, however small a proportion of the staff they represent, and they continue to make a significant impact in the agencies they work for, and for the offenders they come in contact with they continue to achieve dramatic results.

21. Clinks (2011) *A review of service user involvement in prisons and probation trusts*, London: Clinks.

22. McNeill, F. & Weaver, B. (2010) *Changing Lives? Desistance Research and Offender Management*, Report No.03/2010, available online

About Parole

*At the time of writing **Alan Bilton** was a former member of the Probation and After-care Service who was reading for a social studies degree at the University of Hull. **Keith Bottomley** was a lecturer in criminology and penal policy at University of Hull and is now an Emeritus Professor of criminology at University of Hull.*

Interviewed by the Hull Prison magazine *Contact*, Lord Hunt, chairman of the Parole Board, is quoted as saying: 'I am concerned about your contention that the average prisoner feels that he does not have enough 'say', and is therefore apathetic about parole. It may be that we should try to get a wider survey of prisoners' opinions on this point'. This article summarises the findings of a small survey carried out in Hull Prison during March-April 1970, with such an aim in mind. Any survey of this kind is bound to be more or less 'unrepresentative' of a wider population, and it is not claimed that these attitudes are necessarily typical of all eligible prisoners in the country as a whole; however, this is a representative group of prisoners at Hull, and therefore the attitudes are only likely to be as typical as Hull itself is a typical prison.

At the time of the survey, Hull was a maximum security prison with an average daily population of 260 inmates, serving sentences of a minimum of five years; there was a small minority of men serving over 10 years, but the average length of sentence was six years. Over 40 per cent were serving sentences for offences of violence against the person, and a further 10 per cent for sexual offences; about 30 per cent had been convicted of breaking and entering offences, and the only other significantly large group of offenders was that of those convicted of fraud and false pretences (9 per cent).

Twenty-five per cent of the men had been sentenced for violence as their main offence; the proportion of 'breaking and entering' offenders was uncharacteristically high at 45 per cent (compared to 30 per cent in the prison), as was that of sex offenders at 17 per cent (compared to 10 per cent in the prison as a whole), although this was largely due to the inclusion by chance of four men serving sentences for living on immoral earnings.

Only three men had been granted parole and were approaching their date of release on licence; of the remainder, two had declined to be considered, and 35 had been refused parole. However, a fifth of the sample (eight men) had been recommended for parole by the Local Review Committee, which represents the average proportion recommended at this particular prison in the year ending March 1970. The 35 men who had been refused parole were asked what they thought were the likely reasons for their

rejection, and more than a third (13) said they had no idea; the largest group giving a definite answer to this question were those nine who believed that their past criminal record was mainly responsible. Almost all expressed the view that they should be given some explanation of the refusal, as most felt this would help them, where practicable, to try to 'put it right' for their next review.

Who decides and how

Many men held rather cynical views on the 'real reasons' why parole was introduced. Almost half (19) said at once that the purpose was to empty the prisons. A further eight men believed the system was brought in to justify the longer sentences which they were convinced were a conscious policy within the penal system. Only one respondent gave as the sole reason 'to give men a chance', and his view was perhaps offset by the man who saw it all as a manoeuvre to 'employ more civil servants'!

Disappointment with the working of the system so far was common — perhaps understandably so among a group of prisoners of whom so many had been rejected. Twenty-five felt it had not operated as they had hoped it might and of the 13 who said their expectations had been borne out, six indicated that this was simply due to having hoped for little or nothing from the system as a whole. As at present operated, men were unable to detect any clear aim or principle — 24 said they had no idea what these were and many mentioned particular examples which seemed to them entirely contradictory. Only four (10 per cent) felt that the main aim was to benefit the prisoner.

When asked what ought to be the main aims or principles, respondents were seldom specific; the largest single group suggested 'to give a *real* chance to *all*', with the implication that the present scheme was offering largely false hopes and appeared to be only for the few. There was similar difficulty in pinpointing what were the main factors determining the parole decision in a given case. Once again, 12 (30 per cent) felt that their experience to date had been so conflicting as to prevent any reliable assessment of the various factors involved; but nine believed past record to be the main factor, a further nine thought reports from the police and prison staff, eight mentioned the domestic situation and only two work prospects.

Review procedures

There were many suggestions put forward to improve parole review procedures, of which the main one was the promotion of greater involvement of the prisoners concerned. Fifteen men felt that decisions were taken by people remote from the prisoner who, under present arrangements, was 'excluded'. Five men thought the system should be 'more independent', and four that they should appear in person before whatever body made the *final* decision. Thirty-five felt very strongly that they should have the right to a personal appearance before the Local Review Committee, although five more believed this would be unhelpful.

The preparatory interview with a member of the Local Review Committee was seen in sharply differing ways. Nineteen men saw no purpose in it, whilst 16 found it helpful — mainly 'to put your case'. Opinion on the value of written representations was similarly divided; 14 described it as useless, seven felt it inadequate, three positively unfair on those of limited literacy, but 16 (some with reservations) considered it worthwhile 'to have your say'.

The system of each prison having its own Local Review Committee was generally favoured, with 27 supporting and only nine opposed to it.

Effects on prison organisation

The majority view was that the introduction of parole had had no noticeable effects on other aspects of prison life and administration. Although 10 believed it had made no appreciable difference, yet 25 men felt that it had had a valuable effect in reducing 'trouble' in general and violence in particular. Perhaps rather contradictorily, a greater majority (31 men) thought that its introduction had not altered prisoners' attitudes and conduct towards staff, with many referring specifically to Hull where, they said, 'things have always been good here'.

None had noticed any change with regard to labour allocation and most felt similarly about the effect on the hostel scheme; however, on this aspect, six men expressed the view that the policy of sending men selected for parole to hostel, prior to release on licence, in some way took places from others not so favoured with parole.

Parole Supervision

The value of supervision on licence divided opinion fairly evenly; 16 considered it would be of no help, 14 took the opposite view, and 10 felt it might, in the right circumstances, be of assistance. There was more agreement as to the form which 'help' should take. Apart from 10 who stated that neither material nor non-material help would be worthwhile ('If I can't sort these things out for myself, I shouldn't be given parole'), 14 men saw only the material form of help as relevant and only three mentioned 'personal problem' help as most important.

A number of men described previous adverse experience of the Probation and After-care Service, but there was no broad area of agreement when

respondents were asked to suggest improvements in the supervision arrangements. Thirteen had no suggestions, and five recommended its total abolition, but seven saw no need for alteration. In particular, four said they would prefer to report to the police and five others wanted more flexible conditions. Overall, there seemed to be an expectation that the requirements of licence might be too rigidly enforced, although this view does not seem as yet to have been confirmed in view of the small number of parolees

recalled simply for breach of requirement without committing further offences.

In terms of parole, during the year immediately before the survey the proportion of men who declined to be considered for parole at Hull was almost double the national average, and of those who wished to be considered, the proportion who were granted was slightly over half the national average. These figures must be kept in mind when considering the results of this survey and they may perhaps explain some of the rather pessimistic and cynical attitudes expressed by these men, of whom the majority had been *rejected* for parole. It would be invaluable to make a comparative study of attitudes in a prison where many more are granted parole.

In view of the fact that a larger study of all parole review cases in the year ending March 1970, was being carried out in the same prison, by one of the authors, it was decided to select for interview from this main sample those prisoners who were reviewed for parole in September and December 1969. In the event, a few prisoners were also interviewed who were reviewed in October 1969 and December 1969.

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A total of 42 prisoners were approached, of whom only two declined to be interviewed, when the purpose was explained to them. The interviews were conducted in private and assurances of confidentiality and the independence of the interviewer from prison and parole authorities appeared to be readily accepted by all respondents. The interviews lasted usually for about an hour each and were based on a structural but 'open-ended' schedule of questions.

The sample

Of the 40 men interviewed, 21 (52 per cent) were serving a sentence of five years, six (15 per cent) were serving six years, seven (17 per cent) seven years and six were serving eight years or more. These proportions are almost exactly the same as were found in a census of the prison's population taken in March 1969. Two-thirds of the sample interviewed were aged between 26-35 years, and only five over 45 years. Exactly half the men were separated or divorced, 11 were single, and nine married.

Conclusions

It was notable that many men, even when expressing a decidedly minority view, believed that theirs was the generally held opinion. There was a widespread view that far too much emphasis was laid on written reports ('those bits of paper'), and that not enough was done to discover 'the man behind the forms'. Despite its wide ventilation as a topic of discussion among prisoners, some of whom were very well informed, there was also considerable confusion as to the actual practice of procedure, and a few were convinced that their application for parole 'never left the prison'. In a sample so heavily weighted with men who had been refused parole, some disappointment is readily understandable, but many tried to be objective and yet still found the system unjust and, more particularly, 'too secret'. The great majority believed that there was still an over-cautious policy of selection, and that until this was relaxed the scheme would continue to be regarded with, at least suspicion, if not cynicism.

Reflections on 'About Parole'

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It is fascinating to read Alan Bilton and Keith Bottomley's article about parole. It seems so topical — and yet it also seems to come from another age! Bilton and Bottomley had interviewed 40 men in March-April 1970 about their experiences of the newly introduced parole process. Many of their findings — the prisoners' lack of understanding of the system, their cynicism about 'those bits of paper'— resonate today. In this article, I shall briefly trace the history of parole, and then contrast Bottomley and Bilton's findings with a comparable small study I carried out this summer, also interviewing prisoners about the parole (and recall) process.

The history of parole

Early executive release has long been a feature of the English prison system, of course: remission of a third had become the norm long before the Parole Board was created, by the Criminal Justice Act 1967. There were two main justifications for the creation of the Board. First, somewhat pragmatically, was a belief that early release would reduce the prison population. Secondly, there was a belief that the rehabilitation of offenders would be encouraged by releasing them into the community at the 'right' time in their sentence under the supervision of a probation officer to whom they were required to report regularly. At the time of Bilton and Bottomley's research, prisoners were eligible to apply for parole after they had served one third of their sentence, or 12 months, whichever was longer. They applied to a local review committee, which then made a recommendation to the Parole Board. Over the first few years there were numerous changes, perhaps most importantly with the Home Office soon taking back more of the decision-making from the advisory Parole Board, in order to increase the low release rate². As Bilton and Bottomley's article makes clear, some prisoners in 1970 declined to be considered for parole. This seems unsurprising, since the system was perceived to be unfair and uncertain, and parole was granted relatively rarely.

There have been frequent changes to the parole or early release process since then. Leon Brittan announced at the Conservative Party conference in October 1983

restrictions on the release of offenders convicted of offences of violence and of drug trafficking, whilst reducing the minimum eligibility period to six months. Further major reforms were implemented in the Criminal Justice Act 1991, largely as a result of the recommendations of the Carlisle Committee (1988) which had been asked to review the parole process (though only at the process for determinate sentence prisoners, not lifers). The Carlisle review had recommended that a discretionary or selective system of release for shorter-term prisoners was both undesirable and impractical. In Bottomley's words, the review 'challenged a number of cherished principles and practical achievements of the parole system over the previous two decades'³. The Committee was concerned that any release system should not undermine the proportionality of sentences passed by the courts: as they saw it, it should not be for the Parole Board to assess whether a prisoner had served sufficient time to satisfy desert criteria. Yet they acknowledged the positive value in ensuring that few prisoners should emerge from prison without any period of supervision by a probation officer. This therefore resulted in the parole scheme which survived from 1991-2005. Local Review Committees were abolished. The relevant process depended on the length of a prisoner's sentence:

- ❑ Those sentenced up to 12 months: these prisoners were released automatically at half time on Automatic Unconditional Release (AUR)
- ❑ Those serving 12 months and up to 4 years: these prisoners were also released at half time, but on license conditions, that is on Automatic Conditional Release (ACR)
- ❑ Those serving 4 years or more: these prisoners were eligible for Discretionary Conditional Release (DCR). They were eligible to apply for parole from the half way point in the sentence, and would be released even without parole at the two thirds point. They were supervised by the probation service until the $\frac{3}{4}$ point, and liable to return to custody if they re-offended up to end (which meant there was a 'parole window' between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ rd, decided by Parole Board, with supervision continuing to the $\frac{3}{4}$ point).

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1. I am very grateful to Professor Bottomley for his comments on a draft of this article.
 2. Once the Home Office realised how cautious the Parole Board was, they decided to release many prisoners automatically on the recommendation of the Local Review Committee. See Morgan, N. 'The shaping of parole in England and Wales' [1983] *Crim. L.R.* 137-151 for a review of those early years.
 3. Bottomley A K (1990) *Parole in Transition: a comparative study of origins, developments and prospects for the 1990s* in M. Tonry and N. Morris (eds) *Crime and Justice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), at page 357.

- ❑ Those serving indeterminate sentences (lifers): as a result of a number of critical decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, the Criminal Justice Act 1991, sections 32-34, created for the first time the right of lifers to an oral hearing before a Discretionary Lifer Panel (DLPs) of the Parole Board. A panel of three members, chaired by a judge or other legally qualified member, goes to the prison where the prisoner is held, with a member of the administrative staff of the Board, to hear the case⁴.

The next major changes to early release were those of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, sections 99-100, which saw the introduction of Home Detention Curfew, earlier than half time release on electronically monitored curfew. Originally this could be release for two months earlier than half time, for those sentenced to less than four years, and there was a cautious policy of release⁵. In 2002, presumptive HDC was introduced and the length extended to 90 days. In 2003 it was extended further to up to 135 days. The rules have been amended several times since, and there may well still be worrying variations in practice⁶.

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 saw another revolution in parole law and practice, introduced from April 2005⁷. AUR, ACR, and DCR were all abolished. Instead, all determinate sentence prisoners are now released automatically at half time. Many remain eligible for HDC, which means that they leave prison electronically monitored, and on complex licenses. Now the workload of the Parole Board is focused almost entirely on decisions in relation to lifers and in relation to the growing number of people recalled to prison having been previously automatically released at half time. So a study of parole today is likely to focus on the release of the hugely increased number of life sentence prisoners, and on the recall process.

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Bilton and Bottomley's research⁸

Bilton and Bottomley article is reproduced here so I draw only a brief summary. They interviewed 40 men in Hull prison early in 1970. Three had been granted parole and were approaching their release date, 2 had not applied for parole, and 35 had been declined. Interestingly, eight of the sample had been recommended for release by the Local Review Committee. The authors mention the prisoners' 'disappointment' with the working of the system. Shockingly, more than a third said they had no idea why

they had been refused. Several had deeply skeptical and cynical comments to make about the process. Bilton and Bottomley comment that 'the present scheme was offering largely false hopes and appeared to be only for the few'. The vast majority of prisoners felt strongly that they should have the right to a personal appearance before the Local Review Committee. Yet their opinion of the value of a preparatory interview with a member of the LRC and of written representations were divided. They felt there was too much emphasis on written reports ('those bits of paper').

It is interesting, too, that Bilton and Bottomley sought the prisoners' opinions on the effects of the introduction on prison organization. It seems that they did not think it had had much effect. Perhaps this is a message which should have been picked up on in more detail: the parole system was grafted on to an existing prison 'organization' without any real attempt to allow prisoners to manage or plan their sentence in a way which meaningfully prepared them for a successful application. How true that remains today.

Bilton and Bottomley's prisoners were ambivalent about the value of supervision. They were concerned about license conditions, and their enforcement. Some

4. For a history of these DLPs, see Padfield, N. (2002) *Beyond the Tariff: Human rights and the release of life sentence prisoners* Willan. See also Padfield and Liebling, HO Research Study No. 213, 2000; Padfield and Liebling, HO Research Findings No 132, 2000.
5. Dodgson, K et al, *Electronic monitoring of released prisoners* (Home Office Research Study No 222, 2001).
6. See Dodgson, K. et al (2001) *Electronic Monitoring of Released Prisoners*, Home Office Research Study No. 222; Marie, O, Moreton, K, and Goncalves, M (2011) *The effect of early release of prisoners on Home Detention Curfew (HDC) on recidivism* Ministry of Justice Research Summary 1/11. Meanwhile an extra early release mechanism, designed simply to cut the prison population, End of Custody Licence, came and went (2007-2010). The deportation or removal of foreign prisoners remains fraught with difficulties.
7. The system saw significant changes in the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008. The best practical guide is Arnott, H. and Creighton, S. (2010) *Parole Board Hearings Law and Practice*, 2nd edition, LAG; see also Padfield, N. (2009) 'Parole and early release: the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 changes in context', *Criminal Law Review* 166.
8. The research is analysed more fully at Bottomley A K (1973) Parole Decisions in a long-term closed prison' 13 *British Journal of Criminology* 26.

would have preferred to report to the police. Bilton and Bottomley have a key regard for procedural fairness, and the prisoners themselves wanted to be more involved in the process.

A comparison with a project 40 years on⁹

I recently carried out a not dissimilar project interviewing forty-six prisoners (36 men and 10 women) in two local prisons about their experience of being recalled to prison. The primary aim of this small project was to increase understanding of the recall process. The two specific research questions were

- ❑ Are the reasons for recall clearly understood (both by prisoners and those who work in the criminal justice system)?
- ❑ What can be done to reduce the number of prisoners recalled to prison?

These prisoners were serving a wide variety of sentences, from life (3), extended sentences (9), to less than 2 years (10). At the same time, a wider 'snap-shot' of recall was obtained by a review of 129 prisoners' files, and context-setting interviews were held with a number of probation and NOMS staff.

In interview, several prisoners felt that they had been 'set up to fail' by unreasonable licence conditions, which had been inadequately discussed with them. Their relationship with their probation officers varied, and some prisoners showed real sympathy with their officers for the difficult decisions they had to make. However, many felt 'let down'. They told powerful stories about the difficulties of building law-abiding lives when on licence. Some accepted the reasons why they had been recalled, but could not understand why it was taking so long for them to be re-released. Most seemed to think that their probation officer had far too much power, and many argued for a more judicialised process.

Thirty-three of the 46 prisoners (including the 7 fixed term recalls) interviewed had been recalled for allegations of fresh offences. For some this was a 'fair cop', but many strenuously denied the offences, some suggesting (sometimes very convincingly) that they had been 'stitched—up'. Several were not subsequently charged, or the charges were later dropped. Others were acquitted at court. None of these prisoners could

understand why they remained in prison as recalled offenders. Even those who had pleaded guilty, or intended to do so, were angry at some of the perceived injustices of the process: for example, the fact they did not have remand prisoner status, or that, although they had completed a short fresh sentence, their period of recall continued.

Thirteen of the 46 had been recalled for breaching conditions of their licence, not for allegations of further offending. These 'unacceptable failures' included being expelled from Approved Premises, failing to demonstrate motivation to deal with drug addiction, associating with known offenders, using a computer, and not making contact or losing contact with their probation officers. It is interesting to note that recall was not really an issue in 1970 — or perhaps it was

simply not the focus of Bilton and Bottomley's research. Today recall has become a glaring issue: the numbers of recall cases considered by the Parole Board reached 14,669 in 2006/7, an increase of 58 per cent which the Parole Board (2007) itself called 'staggering', only to see it increase by another 30 per cent to 19,060 the following year. In 2009-10, a total of 13,900 determinate sentenced offenders were recalled to custody, up 18 per cent from 2008-09 (11,800). The totals have since decreased, the latest figure available being 14,159 in 2010/11¹⁰. The number of people on life licence who are

recalled to custody in some years approaches (or even exceeds) the number of those released.

It is depressing to note that Bilton and Bottomley's comments on the unfairness of the parole process ring so true even today. Why does the recall process today appear so unfair? All recalled prisoners receive a 'recall pack' or 'recall dossier' after they had been returned to prison. For many, this is too complicated, and many are irritated by the negative and outdated account of them given in the dossier, and by the reliance on risk predictors, which seem impossible to challenge. The overwhelming impression given by the prisoners in the 2011 study was that they had little knowledge or understanding of what was being done to progress their case. This is what resonates most closely with Bottomley and Bilton's article. The invisibility of those empowered to make the decision to release them, and the uncertainty

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9. A copy of the research report is available from the author, at nmp21@cam.ac.uk

10. See Parole Board Annual Report, 2011.

which surrounds the release process are both enormously debilitating. Parole Board panels are perceived as part of a distant bureaucracy which takes unreasonable and uncertain time to reach decisions: nothing has changed. The different roles of the Ministry of Justice's Public Protection Unit and of the Parole Board are not understood. Prisoners feel that they are not given reliable information. Prison staff are seen as uninformed, or at worst, deliberately unhelpful. There is widespread misunderstanding of the process, now as then: for example, the criteria for the somewhat rare 'fixed term' recall; or whether a 'standard' recall is for a fixed or indefinite term. Even those who understood the process were deeply frustrated by it.

Many of the prisoners in my study felt that they had had little support whilst on licence. Back in prison, they could pass weeks, or months, wondering what was happening to their 'case'. Prisoners described a level of support in prison which often seemed almost non-existent. This could appear inhumane, unfair and counter-productive. It was also a wasted opportunity. What this small study would suggest is that, if the 'system' of recall is to be perceived as fair and legitimate, prisoners deserve more information, more advice, more certainty and much less delay. My survey, like that of Bilton and Bottomley, was of course unrepresentative. Bilton and Bottomley pointed out, 'this is a representative group of prisoners at Hull, and therefore the attitudes are only likely to be as typical as Hull itself is a typical prison'. HMP Hull had just been brought into the new dispersal system, following the Mountbatten *Report into Prison Escapes and Security* (1966) and the Advisory Council on the Penal System's *Report on The Regime for Long-Term Prisoners in Conditions of Maximum Security* (1968). Perhaps all researchers working in prisons in recent decades have felt that they are working in a period, or a moment, of immense change? My 'snap shots' of the perceptions of recalled prisoners were taken at two local prisons, one in the private and one in the public sector, at one moment in the on-going history of English prisons. It is salutary to pick up lessons from 1970.

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Implications to be drawn from Bilton and Bottomley's study today

Bilton and Bottomley started their article with a quotation from Lord Hunt, then Chairman of the Parole Board. It seems just as apt today. Prisoners still do not have enough 'say'. This is important for a number of reasons. First, we know from the literature on desistance that it is very difficult to maintain a decision to abandon crime, and that for probation supervision to 'work', offenders must feel engaged and committed to the release and supervisory process. They face huge hurdles and what often feel like endless setbacks in their attempts to go 'straight'¹¹.

Secondly, prisoners can only have trust in the parole process if they have some understanding of how it works. What was particularly difficult for prisoners in both studies, it would appear, was the lack of information. In my study, several believed that their case was being considered on a certain date, although there was no evidence of this on the file. One prisoner interviewed in June 2011 firmly believed that she had had a parole review on 22 March and that she had simply to wait patiently for the outcome:

The officers say they ask custody, I've put in apps and complained to the IMB — everyday I ask my personal officer and he says he's heard nothing and I'll be the

first to hear when he does. I'm not getting anywhere with them, I feel they just can't be bothered.

This prisoner's file gave no evidence which suggested a March review, only that the PPU would be reconsidering the case and wanted prison reports by a date in June. It was not at all clear where she had got this apparently false information from, yet she was convinced. The overwhelming impression given by recalled prisoners was that they had little knowledge or understanding of what was being done to progress their case. Some recognised that they would get no clue of the timetable:

11. See for example Maruna, S. (2001) *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives* American Psychological Association Books.

I'll just get a white envelope under the door, which will tell me if I'm getting out. I should be told the exact date when they are going to meet, and I should get the paperwork, which they are going to get, but I don't. I don't know if my solicitor does.

The process is also painfully slow. There is much confusion about who actually makes key decisions. It would appear that even though the PPU has the right to refer cases back to the Parole Board at any stage, there was no obvious mechanism to ensure that all cases were reviewed as swiftly as possible. Prisoners deserve better general advice on both release and recall (perhaps, leaflets, video etc), as well as better individual advice (oral practical advice on the wings, as well as confidential legal advice, perhaps by way of 'champions' on the wings¹²); they should receive reliable and regular updates on the progress of their applications for release and re-release.

Bilton and Bottomley's prisoners were skeptical of the value of probation supervision. The complexity of parole licenses must be worse today than it was then: many prisoners have a bewildering number of (sometimes contradictory) conditions with which to comply, particularly if they are also on HDC and/or living in Approved Premises. Prisoners in my study were clear that many licence conditions were inappropriate and unnecessary. What's more, there was an immense sense of frustration at the fact that they had no input, and were not consulted. Their sense of powerlessness shone through discussions:

Plans were made for me without anyone telling me.

*She wasn't having any of it. She just wanted to be **herself**. Do what **she's** got to do. Do what **she** thinks is best. But it wasn't the best thing for me.*

[My probation officer] blocked my path.

The person who sets the conditions should actually meet the person to get the feeling for what conditions are going to work.

To me, Bilton and Bottomley's discussion of the value of probation supervision in the early 1970s is particularly fascinating. I would not have guessed that prisoners would have been quite so vocal in pointing out their 'adverse experience' of probation supervision or that several would have preferred to be reporting to the police than to a probation officer. The role of probation officer as both licence enforcer and sympathetic supporter of released offenders was clearly a problem, in theory and in practice, then as it is now. And we are no nearer developing effective 'beginning to end' sentence management, which should include the transition of offenders from prison to the community (and, if necessary and appropriate, back to prison).

What of the prisoners' comments heard both in 1971 and in 2011 on the organization of prisons? Perhaps it is the probation service which should be the focus of our attention at the moment. It suffers from what Raynor and Maguire identified back in 2006 as 'the potential fragmentation of the system, together with poor staff morale in the face of contestability, confusion over officers' roles and a continuing focus on organizational change rather

than the necessary staff skills development'. They concluded that these factors made the establishment of close supportive relationships an unlikely prospect in the near future at least¹³. A more recent and even more hard-hitting analysis is to be found in the recent report by House of Commons' Justice Committee:

There needs to be a better, more seamless, approach to managing offenders. Prisoners are shunted between one establishment and another, in an attempt to avoid overcrowding, and the need to ensure continuity of their sentence plan is not a priority. This is unacceptable. The MoJ and NOMS need to devise and implement a strategy to ensure

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12. Not a new idea: what happened to the Carlisle Committee's recommendation of local voluntary parole counsellors in every prison?

13. Maguire, M. and Raynor, P. (2006) 'How the resettlement of prisoners promotes desistance from crime: or does it?' 6 *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 19.

that the end-to-end management of offenders is a reality and not just an unachieved aspiration.

If NOMS is to work effectively through the two services, there does need to be an enhancement in prison of offender management skills. This could be achieved through better training for prison officers or the appointment of probation officers or probation service officers to work in prisons on sentence management and to follow the prisoner 'through the gate'. Unfortunately, neither of these scenarios is likely given the current prison population and funding restraints.¹⁴

Of course, Bilton and Bottomley's article is interesting for what it does not discuss as well as for what is there. They are not concerned by race or gender issues, for example, and barely mention lifers. At that time, there were relatively few lifers: it was not until the creation of Imprisonment for Public Protection in 2003 (brought into force from April 2005) that we saw the real explosion in the number of prisoners serving indeterminate sentences. Mental health issues and the problem of long-term drug addiction may be more obvious today than they were in 1970.

Conclusions

The role and work of the Parole Board has transformed almost out of all recognition in the last 40 years. Then the Parole Board was an advisory body, focusing on the decision whether to release prisoners serving any sentence longer than 12 months. Now the Board focuses its attention on the release (or not) of lifers and of those who have been recalled. Yet much has not changed. Their decisions remain cautious. They continue to act under directions issued by the Secretary of State, and both staff and prisoners find it well nigh impossible to disentangle the relative roles of the Ministry of Justice and the Parole Board. Prisoners

remain confused and cynical. Worse than that, many remain full of despair¹⁵. Comments such as these were not uncommon in 2011:

I hate prison but I can't cope outside. I feel I'm lost between two places. I want to succeed but it's overwhelming. ... It's like they are leaving me here to rot.

I am just on hold. I have been on hold for nine months now.

This despair can be fuelled by the prisoner's realisation that they had been doing so well (for them, by their standards). Bilton and Bottomley's prisoners would sympathise with the view expressed in 2011 that

There are a lot of ways of dealing with a problem, but locking them up doesn't help, it's like sweeping them under the carpet.

Bilton and Bottomley were perhaps the first to research prisoners' perceptions of the parole process. Bottomley was later to become a member of the Parole Board (from 1980 to 1982) and continued to write about release and parole. But the subject remains massively under-researched (swept under the carpet?). In 1984, again writing in the *Prison Service Journal*, Bottomley seemed amazingly optimistic when he wrote 'even if parole cannot easily be justified (criminologically speaking) in terms of its proven effectiveness in reducing the crime rate or as consolidating the rehabilitative work of imprisonment, it can nevertheless contribute significantly towards reducing the unintended inhumanity of our penal system and even potentially promote a sense of fairness in the way we treat those who we imprison'¹⁶. This assessment seems today somewhat and curiously up-beat: to what extent do prisons, in particular prison release and recall procedures, today really seek to promote a sense of fairness? Research into prisoners' perceptions remains as important as ever.

14. House of Commons, Justice Committee (2011) *The role of the Probation Service*, HC 519-1, paras 110-111.

15. 29 (14%) of the 208 prisoners who killed themselves in prison investigated by the PPO between 2007-9 were recalled prisoners: see Prison and Probation Ombudsman (2011) *Learning from PPO investigations: self-inflicted deaths in prison custody 2007-9*, at page 9.

16. in 'Questioning Parole: Whose discretion? What principles?' (1984) 56 *Prison Service Journal* 21, at page 23.

Making of Assistant Governors

*At the time of writing, **Frank Ainsworth** had worked with offenders in the community and in prisons. He left to take up a post as lecturer in Applied Social Studies at Dundee University.*

THE role of the assistant governor in the Prison Service and the appropriate training for someone appointed to this position is a subject which has been discussed on many occasions. I make no apology for returning to this subject for there still appears to be much confusion and need for clarification about these two areas. Experience of training for probation officers and residential child care staff now seems increasingly relevant yet the Prison Service remains largely unaffected by the lessons learnt in these situations. To utilise this experience would require major reorganisation of our training programme but this is exactly what I suggest needs doing if professional development both at an individual level and as a Service is to occur.

Anyone expressing interest in becoming an assistant governor receives the following job description from the recruiting body: 'An assistant governor is responsible for the oversight of a group of men or boys during the period of their sentence. There are two main aspects of this work. He is concerned with each individual member of the group, with assessing the cause of his delinquency and with his needs in terms of training, and of personal advice and counsel. He is also concerned with the group life of the house or wing where they live An assistant governor will also have responsibilities for the supervision and training of staff. His precise duties will vary with the approach to training of the particular establishment in which he is serving'.

This job description clearly gives the assistant governor three areas of responsibility: to the individual, to the group and to the total community. To be competent in these areas demands a knowledge of general theories relating to human growth and development (the individual), group dynamics and role theory (the group) and the sociology of institutions (the community). It is exactly the same area as needed by residential child care staff and which are being developed in the syllabuses of courses designed to train staff for work in all areas of residential care.

Normal and abnormal development

A specific knowledge of delinquency or prisons is in many respects the least necessary initial knowledge for this will arise from experience gained in the practical day to day situation. A knowledge of delinquency or faulty personality development will also arise from the study of normal rather than abnormal development and should be related to our general theoretical framework rather than be regarded as a special subject. For I would suggest that our primary task is to run residential institutions for the care of delinquents who

need secure conditions. Our focus must be on normality not on pathological development. For to concentrate on areas of faulty development can only be sterile and produce a feeling of frustration and hopelessness which is already too familiar in the Prison Service.

Nor should we assume that our situation is unique which is what we do if we place too much emphasis on our clients' delinquency. Institutions for social deviants are common enough and all must embody the essential components of residential care, namely care, comfort and control. The fact that in our instance control is emphasised merely highlights an order of priorities, but an institution which fails to care and to comfort as well as to control can only reinforce and not alleviate delinquency. For it is the experience of these three components, correctly ordered, which provides the basis for further emotional development so essential to the individual in his struggle towards a non-delinquent image.

Such a view of the penal institution may be radical in so far that it shifts the emphasis of our thinking away from the areas in which our clients are different from ourselves to the areas in which they are the same. It allows us to see our clients not as delinquents but as people firstly and delinquents secondly. Our approach in training can then be towards developing our clients' good parts rather than on concentrating on his bad parts. To reinforce our clients' good feelings about themselves seems, in many instances, to be our best hope of rehabilitation. This must be particularly true of adolescents where our aim must always be to prevent further reinforcement of the delinquent image which once it is confirmed will be very difficult to change. It also allows opportunities for those in our care to seek new roles for themselves other than that of 'delinquent'. In many respects our concentration on our clients' delinquency must be a defence against anxiety and having to admit that our clients are just like us.

The present training of assistant governors must, as a result of this view be questioned, for it seems to concentrate very much on 'delinquency' and 'prison' rather than on providing the general theoretical background which I have outlined. It falls into many errors and reinforces defences. A redesigned course ought to begin by regarding the entire two-year probationary period as training. The initial period would be in the central training organisation, being a theoretical course in the subject of human growth and development, role theory and group dynamics and the sociology of institutions. This period would be shorter than the present staff course and would be followed by postings to selected institutions. At institutional level, newly recruited assistant governors would not immediately be immersed in managerial duties but would be appointed to the role of

'acting' assistant governor. Practices of this kind are already well established in the field of probation and child care. To immerse newly recruited assistant governors, many of whom may never have had any institutional experience, immediately in the responsibility of running a borstal house or wing of a prison as happens at present can only create enormous anxiety and impede learning which must necessarily be accomplished at this time if professional development is to occur.

Acting assistant governors would be allotted to a student role in the receiving institutions and be given limited duties such as those given to student caseworkers in fieldwork training situations. This would involve supervision of a small group of trainees for whom they would be responsible during the period of their sentence and who they would see very frequently on a casework basis. Given careful selection of suitable cases this would allow the acting assistant governor to learn about the type of individuals he has to deal with in considerable depth as well as about the institution and the practical problems of management of individual training programmes. Whilst occupying such a role the acting assistant governor would not have administrative responsibilities other than in relation to those cases he was working with nor would he be a member of the senior management group or be responsible for staff supervision or training.

Allied to such a development would be the need for professional supervision at institution level and each institution to which acting assistant governors were posted would need facilities and an appropriate experienced and qualified member of staff allocated to the role of supervisor. The objective of this supervision would be to support the acting assistant governor whilst he is learning about his clients and the institution, to facilitate learning and to keep his anxiety at a manageable level so that this does not interfere with learning. Only by organising ourselves in this way are we likely to improve the integration between theory and practice which in so many situations in the Service appear to be completely divorced.

As acting assistant governors would not, in this plan, have institutional responsibilities it would be possible to recall them to the central training organisation for further periods of training during the remaining probationary period. No longer would this be difficult because the assistant governor was too immersed in his institution to be spared. Indeed his role specifically is designed to allow this to take place. Nor would it be necessary to cram into the initial

training period all the knowledge for someone becoming an assistant governor. Some knowledge more appropriate to a latter stage in an assistant governor's career could be left for these recall periods, when it would be of more meaningful and direct value. Here I think criminology, penology, management studies and staff and student supervision could best be introduced, some of them probably in the final recall session as the probationary period was concluding and the acting assistant governor was about to assume responsibility for a unit of an institution.

Caseworkers or managers

This type of scheme demands that we train all newly joined assistant governors as caseworkers firstly and managers secondly and no doubt the plea will be made that this is not necessary for all our institutions and is only really applicable to borstals. Such a view does not seem tenable for to manage an effective institution demands understanding of individual behaviour in the context of the group and the community which can best be acquired by casework training. Management training can then be built on a very firm foundation and it is the depth and quality of these studies which will need to be varied according to the size and type of institution in which we work.

To implement a model of this kind demands resources in terms of teaching staff for the central organisation, supervisors for the field and recruits to train. It would probably mean using a limited number of institutions as training units and posting people away from them following the end of the probationary period. A claim will be made that at present we cannot afford to do all of these things but I suspect that a redistribution of existing resources would go a long way to covering the demands that a scheme of this kind would make.

As I watch the recruitment of assistant governors and see how many of them fail to become effective leaders of institution staff because of inadequate training rather than because of personal defects, I ask if we can continue to abuse our scarce resources any longer. Instead of helping to develop the Service many assistant governors simply become encapsulated in a role which fails to provide them with any satisfaction or have any impact on either the staff or inmates they are supposed to support and train. The ethos of the institution in which they serve remains unaltered and this must reflect the inadequacy of our present training methods.

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Reflections on 'Making of Assistant Governors'

Dr Shane Bryans is a former prison governor, author of a number of books about prison governance, and currently Director of Operations for the Identity and Passport Service (Home Office). He maintains his interest in prisons in his capacity as a UN and EU Expert on the Rule of Law and Human Rights in places of detention, and has visited more than 16 countries in that capacity.¹

The role and training of the assistant governor has changed beyond recognition in the 40 years since Frank Ainsworth outlined his reforms on the subject.² Ainsworth would neither recognise the current incarnation of the assistant governor, nor approve of their role or the training that they receive.

Assistant governors had their origins in the borstal system, where their role was to run a house, very much modelled on the public school housemaster. The Borstal Rules defined the task as:

A housemaster shall, with the assistance of a matron and such other staff as may be appointed, be responsible to the governor for the administration of each house, and for the personal training of the inmates in it.³

With the implementation of the 1967 Parole Act, from the early 1970s, assistant governors also increasingly came to be found working in adult prisons. There was no comparable definition of the task of the assistant governor in the Prison Rules, and the work was much more linked to the type of prison in which the assistant governor worked. At a local prison, the assistant governor tended to have more general administrative functions and a junior managerial job. Training prisons gave the assistant governor some general responsibilities but also a more specific focus on the treatment of inmates, casework, assessment and parole report writing.

In 1967, advertisements for the job of assistant governor suggested that the '*duties demand a lively interest in social problems, and a good understanding of*

modern methods of handling them'. Ainsworth described the work as providing 'oversight of a group of men or boys' and having three areas of responsibility: to the individual, to the group and to the community. At an individual level, this involved getting to know the prisoner, assessing the causes of their delinquency and their training needs, and providing personal advice and counsel. Fundamental to this philosophical approach was, in Ainsworth's view, that the assistant governor should focus less on 'our clients' delinquency' and more on 'developing our clients' good parts'. Reinforcing these 'good feelings about themselves' was viewed as the best way of rehabilitating prisoners, a fundamental aspect of the assistant governor's job. The Prison Service College made clear to new assistant governors, at that time, that there was 'both a statutory and traditional expectation that the assistant governor will have a primary concern for the treatment of inmates'.⁴ Assistant governors also had their own flock to care for: the residents of the wing or house on which they were located. Group dynamics and interpersonal relationships were their key concerns. They were expected to shape the ethos of their unit and act as a role model to their group of prisoners and staff. They had some responsibilities for the supervision and training of staff but this was primarily undertaken by the principal and chief officers, with assistant governors in a supporting role.

Ainsworth makes a strong argument that, in order to fulfil their role in relation to the individual, group and community, the training of assistant governors should replicate the training available in other professions which provided 'care, comfort and control' in a secure setting. He placed particular emphasis on adopting the training provision for probation and residential care

1. My thanks to a number of former governors who kindly gathered in October 2011 to discuss Ainsworth's article. Colin Allen, Andy Barclay, and Arthur de Frisching provided valuable insights into the governance of prisons over the last four decades, and the training they underwent as assistant governors in the 1960s and 1970s. Professor Alison Liebling, as ever, brought academic rigour to our conversation and challenged our 'romantic' reflections on the past and our idealistic 'liberal humanitarian' perspectives and whose previous work inspired much of what is written here. They also kindly provided comments on an earlier draft of this article. The author is writing in a personal capacity and his views do not necessarily represent those of the Home Office.
2. There have been very few articles or books written about the assistant governor and their training. Notable exceptions include: Conrad, P. (1959-60) The Assistant Governor in the English Prison, 10 British Journal of Delinquency. 245; and Waddington, P. (1983) *The Training of Prison Governors — Role Ambiguity and Socialisation*.
3. Borstal Rules (1964), Rule 4(2).
4. Training Manual- 26th Assistant Governor Course (1969).

staff, and proposed a two year training programme based on a 'sandwich' model, with training periods alternating between theory at the training college and practical application within the prison. Newly appointed assistant governors should, according to Ainsworth, be trained as 'caseworkers firstly and managers secondly'.

A number of prison officers, and occasionally other members of the Prison Service, became assistant governors but, in the main, successful candidates at the time came from outside the Service. Some joined the Service direct from universities, others after experience in a wide variety of occupations. Successful candidates under the age of 24 years old were required to serve as a prison officer for up to one year⁵. By the 1970s, the two year training provision for these new assistant governors was very similar to the model outlined in Ainsworth's article. The initial training course involved a theoretical course on: human growth and development; role theory and group dynamics; the sociology of institutions; social psychology; and criminology. Trainee assistant governors spent one day each week on attachment to a local probation office, learning offender casework practice. It was not until the end of the training period that 'modern' disciplines like management studies were taught. Periods spent in institutions were in a supernumerary capacity, which allowed the trainee assistant governor ample time to undertake limited routine duties alongside practising their casework skills on a group of prisoners. During their two year probationary period they were closely monitored and supported by an experienced 'supervisor'.

The role of the assistant governor began to change in the 1970s, not long after Ainsworth left the Prison Service to teach residential care at Dundee University. In 1972, advertisements began to give greater emphasis to the managerial aspects of the role and described it as 'Management with a social purpose... you are primarily a manager'⁶. There continued to be a genuine

commitment to casework and rehabilitation in Borstals and some training prisons. However, the context in which assistant governors worked elsewhere often involved poor prison conditions and regimes, unenthusiastic staff and an obviously disgruntled prisoner population⁷. The work of assistant governors in local prisons was overshadowed by the deterioration in regime conditions, including time out of cell, time spent in work, and access to facilities.⁸ So while they may have joined the Prison Service with a desire to 'change people' and make a difference, some assistant governors ended up being posted to decrepit local prisons.

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'Fresh Start'⁹ saw the assistant governor role, in 1987, merged with that of the chief officer and the grade rebranded as 'governor 5' (more recently renamed as prison service manager or operational manager).¹⁰ Along with the name change, came a fundamental shift in their role, responsibilities and training. Assistant governors were, in the main, taken off the wing and located centrally. The transformation of the role of the assistant governor continued in the 1980s and early 1990s, as a consequence of the wider process of public sector transformation under successive Conservative governments¹¹. For the Prison Service, this manifested itself in exerting

control of organisational costs and resources; exercising greater management over prison staff and their union; regulating staff practices; and driving up standards and conditions for prisoners. As a consequence, assistant governors took on greater managerial responsibilities, replicating the changes to the role of the governing governor during the same period.¹²

Assistant governors moved away from prisoners physically, operationally and emotionally. The assistant governor described by Ainsworth had their office on the wing or house, which enabled them to get close to both staff and prisoners. They were regarded as part of

5. Home Office (1972) *Report of the Working Party on the Recruitment of Prison Governors*, para.120.

6. Waddington, P. (1983) *The Training of Prison Governors — Role Ambiguity and Socialisation*, p16.

7. Liebling, A. (2010) 'Governmentality' and Governing Corrections: Do Senior Managers Resist?' in L. Cheliotis (ed.) *Roots, Rites and Sites of Resistance: The Banality of Good*. Pp. 220-245.

8. Fitzgerald, M. and Sim, J. (1979) *British Prisons*; King, R. and McDermott, K. (1989), *British Prisons 1970-1987*, British Journal of Criminology 29(2): 1-7-128.

9. 'Fresh Start' was the name given to a major change programme in 1987 that fundamentally changed the attendance system, working hours, pay rates, and management structures in the Prison Service.

10. For the purposes of this paper, the term assistant governor is used throughout.

11. Pollitt, C. (1991) *Managerialism and the Public Services: The Anglo-American Experience*.

12. See: Bryans, S. (2007) *Prison Governors: Managing Prisons in a Time of Change*; Barclay, A. (1988) 'Initial thinking on the role of the Governor under Fresh Start', *Prison Service Journal*, July: 5-6.

the small community and were able to shape its ethos and influence events on a daily basis. Their physical presence on the wing was both symbolic and acted as a control mechanism against staff excess. The paradigm shift in criminal justice in the 1990s, referred to as the 'new penology'¹³, with its emphasis on moving away from the individual, and their transformation, to greater emphasis on managing groups and aggregate risk management, led to further changes to the work of assistant governors. The number of assistant governors responsible for direct prisoner casework and staff management reduced. The wing based assistant governor was replaced with a single Head of Residence, who was expected to manage all accommodation areas. Other assistant governors moved to specialist functions such as security, audit, regimes, or planning. Day-to-day management of each wing fell initially to a principal officer and, following the implementation of further cost saving and flatter structures, to a senior officer.

The recruitment advertisements for today's middle manager (NOMS graduate programme) focuses on management and measurement; *'Could you work effectively with people from all walks of life, stay calm under pressure, meet targets, manage budgets, and make sure hundreds of people get their meals on time, can access education, and are kept safe?'* and describes one of the personality traits needed as *'someone who loves being set and beating targets'* and *'organising and maximising performance'*¹⁴. There is only a passing reference to respecting and caring for others. New recruits, on the two-to three-year graduate programme, attend a six week training course which aims to develop the skills that they will need for their first role on the programme: Prison Officer. Over the next 12 to 18 months, they gain further experience and responsibility as they progress from Prison Officer to Senior Officer. In the final year of the programme, they move into a middle management role as an Operational Manager.

The focus of the programme is on developing managerial skills and technical competence. Social work, organisational dynamics and casework have long ago been removed from the training curriculum. Lacking in the current training of middle managers is also any recognition of the broader international human rights

framework in which they should operate. The core curriculum for the training of middle managers in many prison systems throughout the world involves in-depth discussion of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, European Prison Rules, various treaty obligations (such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention against Torture and Other Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment), and the moral foundations of a prison system. Such a framework provides practitioners with a moral compass for navigating the complex waters of prison management. It reminds managers of the need to have normalisation, humanity and decency as the bedrock of any prison system.

There is no contemporary role similar to that of the assistant governor described by Ainsworth. There has been a slow but relentless transition in prison middle management from a focus on casework, to an emphasis on management and, more recently, to a concentration on measurement. Less emphasis is given by today's practitioners to 'harmony values' (human dignity, respect, relationships, cooperation, equality, opportunity and progress) than to 'security values' (order, stability, security procedures, and the rule of rules')¹⁵. Many assistant governors in Ainsworth's time joined the prison service from a background in social work, or with degrees in social science,

and had explicitly reformist career motivations. In contrast, many of today's managerialist middle managers were attracted and recruited to the service primarily because it offered interesting opportunities to manage in a complex environment.

The liberal-humanitarian values that the direct entrant assistant governor of the past, on the whole, exemplified are less visible in today's middle managers. While no doubt today's middle managers are more liberal than many of their predecessors in terms of their espoused views about equal opportunities, sexuality and race relations, if only because the organisation expects them to be so, they are less articulate when it comes to concepts of care, welfare, compassion and social justice. It has been suggested that these managerialists are by no means indifferent to the plight of the prisoners but are more concerned with the general art of management than with the lot of the individual.¹⁶

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decency as the
bedrock of any
prison system.

13. Feeley, M. and Simon, J. (1994) 'Actuarial Justice: The Emerging New Criminal Law', in D. Nelken (ed.), *The Futures of Criminology*.

14. <http://www.justice.gov.uk/jobs/prisons/on-offer/graduate-programme/index.htm>

15. Crewe, B. and Liebling, A. (2011) 'Are liberal humanitarian penal values and practices exceptional?' in J. Dullam and T. Ugelvik (eds) *Penal Exceptionalism? Nordic Prison Policy and Practice*.

16. Ibid.

Some would argue that such a shift has been of benefit to both staff and prisoners. There is no doubt that the quality of life in prison has improved since the late 1960s and that dishonest staff practices and physical abuse of prisoners has been largely eradicated. Prisons are today better managed, and conditions for prisoners are more humane.

However, it should not be forgotten that extraordinary financial resources were ploughed in to make this a reality. There was significant frustration from governors over many years that successive Governments refused to countenance the financial implications of putting an end to 'slopping out' or to provide the physical improvements to security that would make escape extremely unlikely. The riots and high profile escapes of the Nineties were a watershed — although not, perhaps, in the way that Lord Woolfe foresaw or indeed hoped. The growth of managerialism within the Prison Service did not bring about the dramatic changes that we now see but it certainly has been instrumental in maintaining and developing them. For example, it was impossible before the Strangeways market testing to create a competitive managerial environment within the Prison Service, because prisons were often insanitary and inadequate in the challenge of preventing determined escapes. For their part, middle managers often did not have the tools to make prisons either efficient or morally acceptable; therefore they were expected to do their best with resources and conditions that politicians and senior officials recognised were severely lacking. Once resources were made available, escapes and episodes of serious disorder had largely been designed out of prisons, and the decency standards established, politicians expected prison managers to deliver on these, and rightly so. There were no more excuses.

Even where physical conditions were poor, it was often the assistant governor, physically located on the wing, and with an embedded commitment to humanitarian concerns, that provided the moral

Even where physical conditions were poor, it was often the assistant governor, physically located on the wing, and with an embedded commitment to humanitarian concerns, that provided the moral framework for the daily operation of the prison.

framework for the daily operation of the prison. In many cases, brutality and indecency were either deterred by the assistant governor's presence (both physical and ethereal) or quickly detected. Where assistant governors were not present (local prisons) prison officers were under-policed by their managers, allowing them to assault and abuse prisoners¹⁷. On the whole, assistant governors had an optimistic view of prisoners, saw them as redeemable, demonstrated sympathy, compassion, kindness and humanity, and flexed the rules to do the right thing. Today's middle managers can be criticised for sometimes being too compliant and unquestioning and for not being especially exercised by moral and humanitarian questions.

The romantic liberal idealist assistant governors of Ainsworth's era were intellectually thoughtful, value driven and well-intentioned. They demonstrated and infused moral qualities and acted as the moral compass for their wing or house. While the Governor set the tone, ethos and direction of the prison, it was the assistant governors who ensured that it became a reality, as they had the relationships and day-to-day contact with staff and prisoners. They defined what interpersonal aspects of decency meant in practice. Their liberal paternalism, use of benign authority¹⁸, changing people by 'good example' or through social work techniques, and focus on individual casework and

'treatment', undoubtedly had a great impact on the lives of individual prisoners and member of staff.

Today's middle managers are recruited primarily for their skills and capabilities rather than their values, and have a clear focus on managerial issues such as neutralising risk, minimising prison incidents, and efficiency systems management, rather than wider social goals. They are able to have an impact on larger numbers of prisoners by managing in better conditions and managing out disorder. However, it has been suggested that they have little conception of prisoners as human beings, with complex needs and frustrations¹⁹.

17. Ibid.

18. De Frisching, A. (1975) 'The Prison Service — 10 years on', *Prison Service Journal*, 18, pp. 2-7.

19. Liebling, A and Crewe, B (2012, forthcoming) 'Prisons beyond the new penology: the shifting moral foundations of prison management', in J. Simon and R. Sparks (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Punishment and Society*, p20.

Prison is a *sui generis* institution, uniquely liable to abuses and distortions of power²⁰. It can lead those who wield it to do terrible things to those who do not, almost regardless of personality attributes or decent moral convictions.²¹ The trend to larger prisons, the removal of middle managers from wings, and the changed role of assistant governors, has created distance between middle managers, and their staff and prisoners. Contemporary middle managers know less than their predecessors about prisoners, what makes them tick, how to change them, and what is important to them. By focusing instead on aggregate risk management, tight regulation and 'sigma-type' values (efficiency) rather than 'theta-type' values (of fairness and due process),²² there is a danger that prisons will, as a result, become places of greater moral and emotional austerity and, as a consequence, less effective at caring for, and changing, prisoners. Middle managers should be wary of a preoccupation with management and efficiency that brings in its wake, moral indifference.²³

So far, managerialism, and particularly competition, has been the key to establishing efficiency, not least because it has entirely neutered the Prison Officers Association as a barrier to change. The jury is out as to whether competition can also be the author of a treatment culture that provides the degree of respect, attention and assistance that fellow human beings, who are often difficult, dangerous, with special needs, lacking in confidence and support, who can be vulnerable, volatile, dysfunctional and disordered, need in order to counter the intrinsic ill effects of imprisonment.

Middle managers today therefore need to be strong, both managerially and morally. They need to

have a sufficiently close relationship to staff and prisoners to act as role models, making clear what is, and is not, morally (as well as legally) acceptable behaviour and, where necessary, see 'resistance and limit-setting' as part of their professional role²⁴. In the words of the 1969 training manual for assistant governors:

*In fact, the main elements of the dual nature of penal establishments, that is custody and treatment, are always reflected in the work of the assistant governor. He [sic] can never be simply a social caseworker or a groupworker, but must think in terms of treatment management, staff supervision and the effects of institutional factors. Nor can he devote all his attention to simple custodial requirements, but must again consider staff management and the needs of rehabilitation. In an obviously reduced way, the assistant governor's role is relatively as complex as that of the governor.*²⁵

It is not unreasonable to expect today's assistant governors (middle managers) to adopt what Liebling refers to as 'moral dualism'²⁶, an equal commitment to 'soft values' like care and harmony, and to 'hard values' like safety, order, good power and efficiency. If performed well, the middle management role can make a key contribution to ensuring that our prisons are not only cost effective and secure, but also just, decent, caring and successful at rehabilitating our prisoners.

20. Sykes, G. (1958) *The Society of Captives*.

21. Liebling and Crewe (2012).

22. Liebling, A. (2010) "'Governmentality' and Governing Corrections: Do Senior Managers Resist?" in L. Cheliotis (ed.) *Roots, Rites and Sites of Resistance: The Banality of Good*. Pp. 220-245.

23. Liebling, A. (2012, forthcoming) 'Imprisonment and its values: The cost of cuts to prison legitimacy', Prison Service Journal Special Issue: the Perrie lectures.

24. Ibid.

25. Training manual — 26th Assistant Governor Course (1969).

26. Ibid. Liebling, A. (2012)

Future Role of the Prison Officer

At the time of writing, D.W. Mannering was an officer at Grendon Prison.

OUR prison population, in 1970, rose to over 40,000. Most of these prisoners are still housed in 19th century buildings which were designed for correction by oppressive means.

Today, in a more enlightened world, there is much said and written on freeing the minds of our law-breakers from their delinquent habits. This is a splendid ideal, but is rarely supported by realistic suggestions on how it would be realised, especially at a time when we in the Prison Service are constantly reminded that the Chancellor's purse strings control the rate of our progress.

During the past 50 years, prisons have offered convenient employment to men leaving the armed forces. These men have given the Prison Service a distinct military character; a character whose rigidity is still very much in evidence in local prisons throughout the country today.

Prison officers who are so closely connected with the running of penal establishments, can help seek solutions to the problems involved by examining their experiences and analysing themselves. In the past, and to some extent still, we have been suspicious and defensive towards outside criticism, this is both unfortunate and unnecessary. Liberal minorities alone brought about a change of attitude towards delinquents after fully understanding their role, men serving today could have considerable influence on any future changes.

Reduction of 'authority'

Although an authoritarian regime might be necessary for the day to day running of our overcrowded prisons, it is, I think, totally undesirable in a system where treatment is the first essential. It is in this area where great difficulties arise. Can a man, for instance, whose whole background and training has been based on implementing strict rules, be considered suitable to staff a clinic for delinquents where therapeutic knowledge is needed? Are such men fitted for a treatment role? An officer from a discipline prison seeks authority through a rule book and uniform and is dependent upon these things to carry out his job. But surely, in attempting to rehabilitate offenders it is necessary to reduce this kind of authority to as low a level as possible. A quiet self-assurance is needed, certainly, but one based on different assumptions altogether.

Self-discipline

What is the alternative to reduced discipline? It would be essential for staff to attempt to induce self-discipline in their charges, a discipline I can only liken to that which good parents endow on their children. Criticism should be reasoned, effort and talent looked for and encouraged; but equally vital is the need to show that abuse of persons, and the property of others will not be tolerated. The officer is well placed in his daily contact with prisoners to explain certain socio-economic facts, or anything else which might awaken interest or a social conscience. For example, to describe how living in an advanced society demands that we conform to certain rules; the more complex society is, the more rules there are to adhere to, and increasingly, we rely upon each other to enjoy life. I have found that many borstal boys who confess to having had little or no interest during their school years, listen intently when some historical or general topic is explained. I would suggest that here is an area where more could be done to reduce suspicion of authority.

In an attempt to reduce the 'them and us' syndrome, which serves as a constant reminder of institutional authority, it has been suggested in Grendon staff-room discussions, that prison officers in a treatment role should wear civilian clothes instead of uniform. As the prime objective of all officers (according to prison rules), is to encourage 'a better and useful life', all officers play a part in treatment, therefore, all uniforms should be discarded. Opposing argument gives the ease of identification as a good reason for the retention of uniforms. At present, this point is valueless owing to prisoners being dressed according to their category. This argument seems to point to the question before of the use of uniforms to assert authority, which has proven largely unsuccessful in reducing prison tensions. Abolishing all prison dress must surely be inevitable, for it is incompatible with enlightened practice.

How often is it suggested that prison security stands in the way of rehabilitative training. Surely security consciousness need not be divorced from the modern prison officer's work? If he follows the behaviour pattern of those he is responsible for closely, he will be aware of the atmosphere which hints at a breach in security. But also the question of security can be overstated, as happened when panicky action brought about by public alarm at newsworthy escapes,

resulting in some unfortunate recommendations in the Mountbatten Report, being implemented. Vast sums of public money have been spent on containing the inmates of our closed prisons. Television cameras are a very expensive way to watch a man escape. Is it really necessary to use so much of our limited resources to keep petty criminals from running home when we urgently need a more constructive programme of community responsibility? Security risk prisoners are quite another matter, with a lifting of blanket restriction covering most men in prison, special attention could be given to men considered dangerous.

Recently, the Association of Probation Officers declared they would like to see after-care hostels and community work projects replace traditional methods of imprisonment. If such a scheme were to be implemented, it could very well widen the possibilities for prison officers to extend their modest start in the after-care of offenders; a start which has produced encouraging results. However, there exists a situation in the Probation Service where officers admit to not being able to do justice to their clients owing to more pressing duties. Prison officers could very well be helping here in carrying out specific tasks in co-ordination with the Probation Service.

Staff training

Staff training needs to be looked at in the knowledge that officers must be better equipped for the specialised work envisaged. Perhaps a two-tier training programme might have advantages over the present 'Introduction Course'; the first could retain much of the present syllabus, but include subjects with social implication, in order that an enlightened attitude be encouraged towards difficult and sensitive topics. Social and economic history could be an appropriate additional subject offered by the training schools. On successfully completing the probationary period, a more academic course, dealing with the aspects of social work a prison officer would be likely to encounter could be arranged either through the Staff College or by an officer's secondment to diploma courses at technical colleges.

As a hospital officer, I have personal interest in seeing nursing training for us extended. Although the hospital officer's course gives a good general outline of the basic concepts in caring for the general and psychologically ill, three months' study in a prison hospital does not equip a man to undertake the

responsibility at times placed upon him. It is not uncommon for officers to undertake work normally done by a casualty officer in accident departments. The initial handling of a mentally disturbed person often falls to the 'sleep-in officer', a situation demanding a man's best. In the large establishments this night duty also entrusts us with assessing special sick complaints, in order that the duty medical officer is not disturbed for trivial complaints. These are some of the realities of our job, whatever the official manual states! Many of the smaller institutions of the Service have only one hospital officer on its staff complement, and men in these posts need to be medically aware, and sound in judgement, as the isolated situation of such places demands; part-time medical officers are not always available when required in an emergency. Such responsibility is readily accepted by most officers and indeed enjoyed, there are hospital officers only too willing to extend their knowledge and satisfy State registration standards.

Here again I feel that change needs to be brought about by education. Without this stimulus, the hospital officer will find it difficult to acquire a professional place in tomorrow's Prison Service, a Service geared increasingly to medical care, ever seeking to improve prognosis of delinquent behaviour.

The ball has been set in motion, today I read of an advisory council on the Penal System which is to urge Mr. Maudling to extend types of punishment other than imprisonment for certain categories of offenders. Lady Wootton's team is known to have looked at weekend prisons in Holland and Belgium. The sub-committee may recommend similar establishments in Britain. The Howard League for Penal Reform plans to hold a major conference entitled 'Penal Policy at the Crossroads', partly to stimulate public debate on penology. It has been forecast that our prison population will rise to 50,000 by 1980, prison officers must be trained now to play a major role in preventing such a rise, these alarming figures emphasise that the problem is reaching crisis proportions; the day of the uniform clad ostrich is over!

The Prison Service needs to keep in line with the rapidly changing world, the whole philosophy of life is altering, and it is in this context that we need to adjust our attitudes. Unsuccessfully, human beings have been asked to adapt themselves to the prison system, when what is required is for the system to be adapted to the needs of men.

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Reflections on 'Future Role of the Prison Officer'

Dr. Peter Bennett is Director of the International Centre for Prison Studies and former Governor of HMPs Grendon and Spring Hill, 2002-2011.

Writing in the first edition of the Prison Service Journal in 1971, Hospital Officer D W Mannering did not intend his views on the future role of the prison officer to apply to officers working in all prisons. Overcrowded local prisons necessarily required more 'authoritarian regimes'. Rather his preferred model for the most part reflects his ideal of officers working in treatment regimes, particularly those of his uniformed colleagues at Grendon and even more particularly of his fellow Hospital Officers who were at the time employed in the delivery of therapy. For me, his comments have a special relevance precisely because they confront issues of authority, discipline, security and training which remain to this day pertinent to the prison officer's dual role as discipline officer and rehabilitative therapist in Grendon's therapeutic communities.

Having recently retired after nine years of governing Grendon, I have inevitably spent time reflecting on the developments and trends underpinning Grendon's therapeutic tradition. There is much on which to focus my attention for, besides drawing on personal experience, there is a vast literature on Grendon covering half a century. Grendon would appear to be the most researched prison in the UK. Its unique status, along with its highly distinctive regime, articulated by democratic principles of openness, trust, individualism, tolerance, challenge, respect, humanity and decency, attracts a wide range of comment and debate. Its effectiveness in the positive engagement of prisoners with personality disorders and histories of disruptive behavior, along with its low levels of bullying, self-harm, drug use and resort to the use of force as a means of control, have earned the prison consistently good reports from Her Majesty's inspectors. Relationships between staff and prisoners are highlighted as being exceptionally positive. The latest unannounced report on an inspection conducted in the summer of 2011 comments again on the prevailing climate of respect, decency and humanity.

Judging by Mannering's opening comments it would appear that some trends never change. 'Our prison population, in 1970, rose to over 40,000', and with an eye on the latest forecast, 'will rise to 50,000 by

1980... the problem is reaching crisis proportions'. What is more, in an 'enlightened world' ideas of 'freeing the minds of our law-breakers from their delinquent habits... is a splendid ideal... rarely supported by realistic suggestions on how it could be realized, especially at a time when we... are constantly reminded that the Chancellor's purse strings control the rate of our progress'.

And yet despite overcrowding and financial constraint, Mannering finds reason to be optimistic. By analyzing themselves and their work, prison officers can help seek solutions to current problems. They could work with probation officers in providing alternatives to custody such as hostels, community work projects and even weekend imprisonment (as in Holland and Belgium). Prison officers could be trained to develop such projects thereby preventing a further rise in population — 'the day of the uniform clad ostrich is over!' Somewhat surprisingly, he misses the opportunity to argue that good professional training in preparation for the treatment role which he advocates could also lead to a reduction in reoffending and a halt to the ever rising population.

Mannering was writing when the rehabilitative dimension of imprisonment had held sway for some time. He describes how borstal boys can be encouraged to develop self-discipline and to overcome their suspicion of authority. Moreover, Grendon had, as it does now, an enviable reputation for its rehabilitative ethos and regime. It held a special place in the Prison Service's strategy to treat difficult prisoners, including those with personality disorders. Less than a decade old, Mannering's Grendon had opened in 1962 accompanied by a fanfare of optimism as a 'unique experiment in the psychological treatment of offenders whose mental disorder did not qualify them for transfer to a hospital under Section 72 of the Mental Health Act 1959¹.

Grendon's inception had deep roots. A report by Drs Norwood East and Hubert in 1939 had recommended that 'the most satisfactory method of dealing with abnormal and unusual types of criminal would be by the creation of a penal institution of a special kind'. Meanwhile, in the twenty years or so which followed, the therapeutic community philosophy and methods of

1. Genders, E. and Player, E (1995) *Grendon: A Study of a Therapeutic Prison*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, p. 5.

practice were developed, notably by Wilfred Bion, and subsequently by Tom Main, at Northfield psychiatric military hospital, and also by Maxwell Jones at Mill Hill in north London. Jones led a social rehabilitation unit for the treatment of personality and psychopathic disorders. Three years of independent research by a team of social anthropologists, encouraged by Jones and led by Robert Rapoport at the Henderson Hospital 'identified four complementary and independent principles... intended to realize the inherent therapeutic and rehabilitative potential residing within the community' including democratization, communalism, permissiveness and reality confrontation.² But the outbreak of World War II and other bureaucratic delays meant that Grendon did not finally open until 1962.

Although Mannering and his contemporaries were still enjoying strong official support, he might also have sensed that rehabilitative philosophy in the wider Prison Service was already on the wane. Genders and Player paint a bleak picture of the two decades which followed, populated by prison staff engaged in a desperate and relentless task of damage limitation in the face of successive waves of industrial action, rising population and the mutinous activities of prisoners, culminating in 1990 with the disturbance at HMP Strangeways in Manchester: 'the Prison Department became preoccupied by issues of security and control'.³

Grendon was not untouched by rumblings in the wider estate. In January 1984 the Guardian cited a report by the National Association of Probation Officers pointing out that Grendon was overcrowded and 'so seriously understaffed that it can no longer offer the kind of therapy that has earned it international acclaim since it was established 21 years ago'. Open Mind⁴ reported on the threat to Grendon: 'There are few constructive initiatives within the British prison system and Grendon appeared to be an island of care, compassion and help in a sea of indifference, decay and squalor'. A therapist at

Grendon had complained that a response to an escape in 1981 had led to restriction of access to areas outside the therapy units contributing to 'an atmosphere more closely resembling a conventional prison'.⁵

The time was ripe for rethinking Grendon. In March of the same year the Home Secretary responded by setting up an advisory committee (ACTRAG) to review the therapeutic regime. Grendon had until this time treated less serious offenders mainly serving sentences for acquisitive as opposed to violent offences. For some critics of Grendon the therapy was excessively focused on the welfare of the patient more than the need to reduce prisoners' likelihood of reoffending.

Senior Prison Service managers became concerned for Grendon's inflexibility and lack of response to the needs of mainstream prisons to manage difficult and disruptive prisoners.⁶ The final report included recommendations which would require Grendon to provide for the treatment of sociopaths, sexual offenders and long-term and lifer prisoners.

Along with these recommendations came a decision which would establish a fundamental change to the Grendon management structure. The Medical Superintendent, hitherto in charge of the prison, would be replaced by a non-medical governing Governor. This decision only served to exacerbate fears for Grendon's survival as a unique treatment facility; and there was the ever present threat that it would

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become a mainstream prison. It also stirred concerns for the authority of the medical or clinical line, a tension which exists to this day. But these fears were not new. They were in circulation when Mannering wrote his piece for the Prison Service Journal. Tim Newell, my predecessor at Grendon, recalls the early days when he undertook a shadowing placement as a young governor grade at Grendon in 1970. He mentions a major conflict 'between health matters and therapy issues on the one hand, and safe custody and security on the other'.⁷

2. Stevens, A. (2010) Introducing Forensic Democratic Therapeutic Communities. In Sullivan E and Shuker R *Grendon and the emergence of therapeutic communities: Developments in research and practice*. London: Wiley, p. 10.

3. Genders, E. and Player, E. 1995: 1-2.

4. OPENMIND. (April/May 1984) No. 8.

5. Ibid.

6. Cullen, E. (1998) *Grendon and Future Therapeutic Communities in Prison*. London: Prison Reform Trust.

7. Smartt, U. (2001) *Grendon Tales: Stories from a Therapeutic Community*. Winchester: Waterside Press, p. 98.

This then is the context in which D W Mannering set out his vision for the future role of the prison officer and these are some of the themes which have continued to have lasting relevance at Grendon. The ambiguous structure of Grendon as a therapeutic community within a prison, as well as within an encapsulating Prison Service, generates a play of power relationships which are both internal to Grendon and extend beyond Grendon. It is this context that helps us to understand more fully how Mannering's views on the role of the prison officer reflect, and indeed are shaped by, the complex dynamics, tensions and conflicts that are integral to the life of a therapeutic community prison.

For Mannering, then, the kind of authority exercised by Prison Officers in mainstream prisons is unsuitable for prisons like Grendon 'where treatment is the first essential'. For the rehabilitation of 'delinquents' he advocates not the authority of the 'rule book and uniform', but a 'reduced authority' which removes the 'them' and 'us' syndrome and expects the prison officer to employ his day-to-day contacts with prisoners in encouraging self-discipline through reasoned discussion and good example. He takes particular issue with the influx and influence of prison officers from the armed forces. He considers them to be too rigid and military in character, totally unfitted to a treatment role. Although I can understand Mannering's concerns about the possible adverse effects of importing a strong military influence, I should also add that my experience of former armed forces personnel working in Grendon is generally one of highly successful adaptation to the principles of therapy.

In his wish to reduce authority, Mannering also confronts the issue of uniforms. Because all officers should ideally be involved in treatment as a means of encouraging a 'better and useful life', all uniforms should be discarded. For Mannering, the argument which supports the wearing of uniforms as assisting in asserting authority does not hold water. Uniforms have been unsuccessful in reducing tensions in prisons. He concludes: 'abolishing all prison dress must surely be inevitable, for it is incompatible with enlightened practice.'

That Mannering's prediction has not come true is perhaps largely due to Grendon's integration within the

mainstream Service dating from 1985 with the appointment of a Governor in charge. Although I was aware of the occasional Grendon officer who would have preferred to wear civilian clothes, most seem to be perfectly comfortable in uniform. Prisoners seldom complain. Rather the prevailing view is that prisoners who are accustomed to feel wary of authority figures learn that officers can be trusting and trusted in spite of the conspicuous display of their authority. What is important is that an officer's individual personality shines through and the prisoner begins to see that authority need not be oppressive or threatening and can be warm and respectful. Besides, prison officers at Grendon, although dedicated to their therapy duties, also tend to value their official identity as part of a wider public service and would not be prepared to give

up a fundamental symbol of their status, especially when it seems to be unnecessary. A similar justification was voiced a few years ago in a debate at Grendon on the Prison Service requirement for all officers to wear batons. Most were in favour even though I cannot recall a single incident when batons have been drawn.

Mannering reflects another longstanding debate when he complains about excessively high levels of security. As he saw it, over-reaction to an escape led to unfortunate recommendations being implemented following the Mountbatten Report. While special attention should be given to men considered to be

dangerous, the overuse of limited resources in containing petty criminals is unnecessary. Mannering's idea of good security is unobtrusive security; more like the dynamic security described by Ian Dunbar some years later.⁸ It arises inevitably from a prison officer's close engagement with prisoners, or as Mannering explains, 'if he follows the behavior pattern of those he is responsible for closely, he will be aware of the atmosphere which hints at a breach of security'.

Physical and procedural security arrangements are much tighter nowadays; escapes and their ensuing political repercussions are less tolerable. We have already mentioned that most Grendon prisoners in Mannering's day were serving sentences for less serious offences. But there has been a recurring theme in the approach to security at Grendon which values dynamic or therapeutic security and the intelligence which emerges from close prisoner-staff relationships over and

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8. Dunbar, I. (1985) *A Sense of Direction*. HMSO.

above excessive measures of control, surveillance and containment. An over-rigorous approach can damage relationships of trust painstakingly built up in therapy. That effective security is essential is not in question, rather it should be exercised subtly and unobtrusively. I have discussed these issues at length elsewhere, along with the need to ensure that staff maintain a balance between the potentially opposing interests of security and therapy.⁹ There are of course times when rigorous interventions are necessary, a full search of prisoner accommodation, for example. But unless undertaken with due care and sensitivity, such actions are likely to hinder the therapeutic process. I was to learn this lesson the hard way soon after arriving at Grendon in 2002. The loss of an electric drill had necessitated a full search. The insensitive way in which the search had been conducted enraged many staff and prisoners alike, revealing ancient fault lines which I later described as 'a playing out of the stereotypical conflicts between therapy and security and more specifically of where authority and power should ultimately lie, in the therapeutic or operational line'.¹⁰ Maintaining a balance is a constant preoccupation. No doubt Mannering would have insisted that officers should pay due regard to both aspects of their role.

Mannering's vision of the ideal prison officer is therefore one of the consummate professional. As such he, for he is invariably male, must be better equipped for the specialized work envisaged. He suggests a two-tier training programme beginning with an induction course and followed by a more academic course once the probationary period has been completed, dealing with 'aspects of social work a prison officer would be

likely to encounter'. Syllabuses should include 'subjects with social implication', with additional courses in social and economic history. These would help to encourage an 'enlightened attitude'.

He was acutely aware of the need for qualifications and training, particularly in his position as a hospital officer. Therapy at Grendon was largely the preserve of hospital officers in association with other specialists. He was also aware that as a hospital officer he was often required to undertake work which required medical knowhow. It is unsurprising that he encourages hospital officers to 'extend their knowledge and satisfy State registration standards'. I think he sensed that the writing was already on the wall for hospital officers; perhaps he thought that professional qualifications might well secure their future in prisons.

Hospital Officer Mannering emerges as a dedicated, compassionate and skilled professional who gave a great deal of thought to the development of the prison officer's role. He was prepared to pursue the necessary qualifications for his clinical work. He was also keen to acquire a broader knowledge of social issues. In his spare time he helped out at the local hospital casualty department. As such he belongs deservedly to the well-established Grendon tradition in which prison officers work alongside specialist staff in delivering high quality therapy and demonstrating over and over again that prison officers can make a deep and lasting difference in treating and rehabilitating offenders with complex needs. If D W Mannering could see his officer successors at Grendon today he would be justifiably proud of their attitudes and achievements.

9. Bennett, P. (2010) Security and the maintenance of therapeutic space: a Grendon Debate. In *PSJ* no. 187.

10. Bennett, P. (2007) Governing Grendon Prison's Therapeutic Communities: the Big Spin. In Parker, M (ed) *Dynamic Security: The Democratic Therapeutic Community in Prison*. Jessica Kingsley: London and Philadelphia, p. 211.

The Media and the Message

*At the time of writing, **Alan Rayfield** was an assistant governor. He went on to be Governor of HMP Long Lartin.*

Seasonal pressures

THE late summer months are usually described as the 'silly' season by exasperated news editors faced with a nation on holiday and determined to ignore the world. It is in August that the Loch Ness monster takes up its traditional place in the sporting calendar and newspaper headlines compete to report her (?) non activities. Failing this, the weather and holidays are a good standby. 'Phew, it's warm!' ('Ugh, it's cold!') says the popular Press, or 'Traffic Nightmare on Bypass'.

This may have been the case in previous years but this year Ulster and the Middle East situation have taken care of the headlines whilst, in our own sphere, the Parkhurst trial and its aftermath provided a rich feast for the newspaper and magazine world. Strangely enough, the television companies did not seize this opportunity even though 'Panorama' was still alive and well amid a welter of repeats.

T.V. coverage disappointing

The main B.B.C. TV contribution this summer has been the 'Man Alive' team's reporting to the nation on its borstal system. This programme summed up all the strengths and weaknesses of television as a communication medium. On the one hand it was able to present a wealth of material in a very short time but on the other hand it showed it in such a subjective way that I found myself mentally shouting: 'Yes, but ...' at the box for much of the time. For this viewer it demonstrated the danger of accepting what one sees and hears on television as the factual truth and left me feeling uneasy about all these other truth-revealing crusades that regularly appear on all channels.

Tale of two borstals

Briefly, the programme contrasted the workings of Portland and Hatfield borstals and discussed whether borstal training can cope with today's needs. Whatever may have been the original intention Portland was shown as an oppressive, doom-laden place, forever shrouded in mist against a visual backcloth that would have done credit to a Hammer Films production. One shot showed James Astor interviewing some boys digging a trench with the foghorn booming out at

regular intervals. The only missing ingredients were the baying of hounds and the clank of chains. Hatfield was seen as a *cleaner* place with a relaxed regime. It was interesting to note that the Portland boys were shown in their working clothes whilst the Hatfield boys wore their evening clothes and generally seemed to be more civilised. However, the attitudes of both sets of boys were basically similar and both complained of being treated like children. The boys' subjective criticism was not balanced by objective reporting even though some staff were given a lot of screen time. Skilful editing of film and leading questions by the interviewer created a subtle feeling of disquiet after staff had spoken. At no time did one feel that society had any responsibility for the way our borstal system operates.

After this experience one faced the second programme with some pessimism. It opened with a filmed report of the discharge of one Hatfield boy and his contact with his after-care officer and erstwhile family. The usual pious 'What can we do?' type of question was put to the after-care officer but he gave some very uncompromising replies which was cheering. The programme then became a live discussion in the Hatfield Chapel between an ex-tutor organiser, Geoffrey Parkinson, wearing his crusading, anti-institution probation officer hat, Desmond Wilcox, the producer, and James Astor versus (or so it seemed) Tom Hayes on the platform with the governors and deputy governors of the two institutions plus Frank Foster sitting in the body of the hall. The whole tableau made one think of a Christians and lions production with Desmond Wilcox as Caesar and the Hatfield Boys as the dutiful plebeians.

As is usual on these occasions the discussion was bitty and disjointed but the high spots were Tom Carnegie's refusal to become lion fodder and the obvious discomfiture of Desmond Wilcox when the Hatfield boys loudly supported their governor over his reply to the compulsory church attendance chestnut. On balance the programme was not too bad but it suffered from the usual 'Man Alive' complaint in that a great deal of emotion was spent over the plight of the supposed underdog against their oppressors coupled with a steadfast refusal to admit that society is responsible for the actions of its agents. If the programme sought to inform then it did not: if it sought to reform then its targets were the wrong ones.

Tough or tender

On 24th August, the 'Late Night Line-up' team created a discussion group to look at T. Murton and J. Hyams' book about the Arkansas prison farms scandal. The group consisted of Douglas Gibson, C.H. Rolph and Ian Scarlett but they soon left the subject of the book to look at the English prison system. All three of them made very sympathetic noises with C.H. Rolph saying that 'We don't deserve the Prison Service we have', Ian Scarlett attacking the implementation of the Mountbatten Report and how it stopped prison officers seeing themselves as social workers and Douglas Gibson remarking that the public has a need to punish its offenders and has an emotional investment in keeping prisoners down and in. He also commented that prison staff get bad publicity regardless of what they do and will always be criticised by one section of the community as being too harsh and by another as being too soft. The discussion was low keyed, reasonable and helpful but it was noticeable that they made a distinction between prison and borstal staff, who were praised for doing so well in spite of their difficulties and the Prison Department of the Home Office who were given very poor publicity. It would seem that the price of promotion is infamy.

'New Society' looks at Parkhurst

New Society for 18th June has an interesting article by Stuart Hall called 'A World at One With Itself' in which he examines the concepts that underlie news presentation on radio. He looks at the way in which the Great British Public is treated by those that know best and asks: 'Do the media help us to understand the significant real events in the real world?' The instant judgemental style of many of the news programmes is called into doubt and Hall criticises the media for reporting 'violent' events like Ulster or Stop-the-Seventies-Tour without going into the background detail which makes these events understandable. At the moment they are presented as a 'meaningless explosion of meaningless and violent acts' in a style which can only be compared to a *Daily Express* front page. The B.B.C. will say that these events are covered in depth at the weekend by their foreign or local correspondents, but as Hall says, this is like telling a *Daily Sketch* reader to take *The Times* should he wish to be better informed. In view of this, what hope has the prison officer of losing his 'warder' label?

The issue for 4th June gave us a piece by Michael De-la-Noy about a transvestite homosexual written in a style which owes a lot to Tony Parker and the edition for

11th June has an article by Moses Laufer which examines the problem of severe mental stress amongst adolescents. He pleads for earlier recognition of stress amongst youngsters since if their symptoms are ignored when they first appear it will be much harder to help them later on.

An important article

The irrepressible Geoffrey Parkinson appeared twice in July: on the 2nd July when he mentioned the existence of Recidivists Anonymous at Pentonville and on the 30th July where he pointed out the obvious implications of the N.A.C.R.O. report concerning the visits of prisoners' families. However, an important article by Professor T.C.N. Gibbens appeared in the edition of 3rd September in which he asked: 'How should we treat violent offenders?' Having made the point that we are all potentially violent, Gibbens partly answered his own question by saying that we must consider violent situations not people. For example a potentially violent man may present no problem until he is drunk or in love (the juxtaposition is unintentional). Evidence shows that it is a myth to think that there is a small group of individuals who are responsible for the great majority of serious aggressive offences although it is difficult to convince the general public of this. It is sometimes difficult to convince prison staff of this as well and one wonders how often we fail to see a potentially violent situation arising because we need the explosion to take place just as much as the inmates do. In these cases can we be sure that we, and the other prisoners, do not subconsciously fix certain inmates with a label marked 'violent' and expect them to act out their violence for the therapeutic good of the rest of the prison? Gibbens gives credit to the prison and medical authorities for their treatment of violent offenders and concedes that this is not appreciated by the public. But we are only just beginning to understand the real nature of the problem. Read the article.

Depressing

For me, and I suppose for most members of the Service, the most depressing item of news during the summer was the Parkhurst trial and its aftermath. Its day to day proceedings were covered in detail by radio, television and the Press and its implications were discussed in magazines and newspapers long after the judge had passed his sentences. The best analysis of the background to this riot was by the 'Insight' team in the *Sunday Times* for 2nd August, although James Morton's article 'Parkhurst and After' in *New Society* on 6th August was also very good. Both articles looked at the details leading up to the disturbances and traced

the source of the trouble to the implementation of the 1966 Mountbatten Report and the subsequent growth of the siege mentality at the Home Office. The failure of the administrative headquarters to understand the reality of the operational situation makes almost classic reading and one hopes that its implications will not be lost to the training field. However, throughout all the Press comments runs the implication that it is the administrators who failed whilst the men on the spot did their best in a hopeless situation. Of course it is not that simple and the question 'What should the Home Office do with its violent offenders?' remains unanswered especially when one appreciates that at least three of the riot ring leaders should have been in a mental hospital. Professor Gibbens' article takes on a new urgency in the light of the Parkhurst affair.

But when all the talking and writing was done there came another question. For years conditions in our prisons have been known and deplored yet society

does not feel that the urgent necessary actions should be taken to cope with these problems. To blame the Home Office rather than the prison staff is just as pointless because it is clear that the Home Office can do little without money and resources. The real question is: 'Does society want its Prison Service to succeed in its given task?' and the answer seems to be that it does not. The sociological and psychological reasons for this are deep and well hidden but surely Douglas Gibson has a point when he talks of the public's need to punish. However, not only must criminals be punished but so must those who deal with them since these are the agents of the punishment. When these agents refuse to accept their role it forces society to examine the darker side of its nature. If the Parkhurst riot can help us move towards a healthier and saner society then all the suffering and squalor will not have been in vain. I wonder if this point was made after the Dartmoor riot of 1932?



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Reflections on 'The Media and the Message'

Yvonne Jewkes is Professor of Criminology at the University of Leicester. Among her publications are: *Media and Crime* (2nd edition, 2011, Sage), *Handbook on Prisons* (2007, Willan) and *Captive Audience: Media, Masculinity and Power in Prisons* (2002, Willan).

A black-and-white world

In many ways this is a curious little piece. While it draws on a fairly eclectic bunch of media outputs — the BBC's popular *Man Alive* documentary series, *Late Night Line-up*, the *Sunday Times* and *New Society* — it is the television broadcasts mentioned in the article that most dramatically underline how parochial, authoritarian and small the media landscape was in the early 1970s. Written at a time when there were just three television channels — BBC1, BBC2 and ITV — Alan Rayfield might justifiably have assumed that most people who were sufficiently interested to read an article in *Prison Service Journal* on 'The Media and the Message' would actually have watched the TV programmes he is writing about; an assumption that could not be made in today's 24-hour, timeshifting, technologically advanced, commercially driven, global and fragmented media marketplace. But back in 1971, despite many people watching in black and white (it would be another four years until colour TVs outnumbered monochrome sets in Britain), audience share regularly nudged 20 million — a figure now reserved for royal weddings and the *X Factor* final. Furthermore, in those pre-VCR (video cassette recorder) years, many of the programmes mentioned in the *PSJ* article might have been regarded by the author as literally 'unmissable'. At a distance of forty years, however, Rayfield's commentary is frustratingly short on detail.

The similarities between then and now are nonetheless apparent. Summer is still the 'silly season' and, while the Loch Ness monster may make fewer appearances than in former years, the weather, traffic and sport are still staples of the summer TV schedules and newspaper pages. But then, as now, there were events of significant and enduring political and social importance that punctuated the months between Wimbledon fortnight and the *Morecambe and Wise Christmas Special*. Rayfield makes only brief reference to the story unfolding in Northern Ireland; his article

was published in *PSJ* the month before the first British soldier to die in the Troubles was shot by the IRA on New Lodge Road, Belfast, and exactly one year before 27 unarmed civilians were shot by the British Army during a civil rights march in Derry in a massacre that became known as Bloody Sunday. Amid the escalating violence in 1971, British Prime Minister Edward Heath faced criticism, just as leaders still do today, for leaving London in times of crisis. Specifically, Heath came under fire for his participation in the Admiral's Cup on board his yacht *Morning Cloud*. An article in the August 1971 American magazine *Sports Illustrated* (a publication that was probably not among Alan Rayfield's media subscriptions) described the problem facing Heath:

All the way out from Cowes, on the Isle of Wight, to the forlorn pile of the Fastnet Rock off the southwestern extremity of Ireland, the highly sophisticated radio equipment aboard Morning Cloud had fed into her austere cabin a kind of information no racing yacht before her had ever received. On the return to Plymouth, the messages coming through from London were more frequent, their substance more momentarily gloomy. Time and again Mr Edward Heath was obliged to detach himself from the problems besetting his 30-foot sloop and forget that he was captain of the British team that was on its way to defeating Australia and the US in the Admiral's Cup. He was forced to assume his working identity as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and as he absorbed more and more detail of the murderous violence in Ulster, to admit that the very title of that kingdom had yet again emerged as one of the sadder jokes of the 20th century'.

The *Sports Illustrated* article goes on to detail the events of summer 1971 when 1,000 extra British troops were deployed to Ulster to round up and intern hundreds of individuals believed to be involved in

1. McIlvanney, H. (1971) 'Steering the ship of state', *Sports Illustrated* 23 August 1971: p. 48.

terrorist activities. As the article's writer Hugh McIlvanney notes, this 'tightly coordinated dragnet was coordinated for a time when *Morning Cloud* would be far out in the Atlantic'², a move defended by the government who argued that it was imperative that the PM was on board so that suspects in Ulster would not guess something was up and go into hiding. Twelve people died violently in Ulster on the first day of the emergency internment measures, prompting the *Daily Mail* (10 Aug 1971) to demand that a helicopter airlift Heath from the deck of the *Morning Cloud* to Downing Street. Ironically juxtaposing the Prime Minister's progress in the yacht race with events unfolding in Northern Ireland, the *Mail* commented 'hundreds of homes in Belfast burnt out. A Roman Catholic priest shot dead while administering the last rites. And *Morning Cloud* was lying sixth on corrected time. When will someone start to correct the times in Northern Ireland?'³

Counter arguments and dissenting voices

Despite the heavy condemnation that Heath endured for 'adopting his sporting persona at a time when political demands on his energies remained undiminished by the imminence of the Parliament's summer recess'⁴ he was prompted to return to London only once for a meeting with Bernard Faulkner, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, and he was back at the helm of his yacht to steer it to victory in the Admiral's Cup. In the current era of populism in all law-and-order issues, the Prime Minister may have to interrupt his leisure time more frequently to come home and address the nation (in the riot-hit summer of 2011 David Cameron returned from his vacation no less than five times) but Stuart Hall's comment, quoted by Rayfield, that acts of public disorder are presented by politicians and the media as a 'meaningless explosion of meaningless and violent acts' is arguably as true today as it was in 1971.

What *has* changed is that in a deregulated media environment with a proliferation of newspapers, magazines, broadcasting outlets and the Internet, it is

What *has* changed is that in a deregulated media environment with a proliferation of newspapers, magazines, broadcasting outlets and the Internet, it is no longer possible to talk about the 'mass media' . . .

no longer possible to talk about the 'mass media', and one can find more dissenting voices even within mainstream channels and news titles. For example, several editorials in newspapers such as the *Independent* and the *Guardian* took issue with the framing of violence in August 2011 as 'mindless', arguing, for example that looting was 'fuelled by social exclusion'⁵ and resentment of heavy-handed police tactics. An editorial by Peter Beaumont in the *Guardian* also noted that, while it would be easy to characterize Tottenham (where the riots started following the shooting of a 29-year-old man by police) as a 'bad place full of bad people', it would be more accurate to describe it as 'a poor place', with few amenities, especially for young people since the closure of 75 per cent of the borough's youth clubs, but also 'a good place, a vibrant mixed community within earshot of Spurs' White Hart Lane stadium'.⁶ Today's mediascape may thus not be as black-and-white — in either sense — as it was forty years ago.

Behind bars

Rayfield's comments about the BBC's documentary/current affairs programme *Man Alive* illustrate that the series, which began in 1965 and ran until 1981, was continuing its fine tradition of showing the viewing public what life in custody was like. Other programmes broadcast in the series at around this time included 'The Prisoner', about a petty criminal who had been in and out of prison since the age of 18 and managed to go straight for five years — marrying and starting a family — before ending up back inside prison (broadcast 14 July 1971); and the two-parter, *Women in Prison* (shown on 3 and 10 March 1971), in which women serving sentences in Holloway prison talked to camera about life behind bars, their attitudes to crime, their relationships inside and plans to pull down the old Holloway prison and build a new one⁷. The episode that caught Rayfield's attention, however, was titled 'Tale of Two Borstals' and his commentary on it provides an

2. Ibid: p. 50.

3. Cited *ibid*.

4. Ibid.

5. *Guardian* 8 August 2011.

6. *Guardian* 7 August 2011.

7. <http://ftvdb.bfi.org.uk/sift/series/438>

interesting insight into youth justice 1970s style. He notes that Portland was depicted as an 'oppressive, doom-laden place, forever shrouded in mist against a visual backcloth that would have done credit to a Hammer [Horror] Films production'. As the camera panned across a line of boys digging a trench, all that was missing to complete this bleak and, Rayfield intimates, slightly sinister, scene was 'the baying of hounds and the clank of chains'.

Again, comparisons are inevitable; I was left wondering what Rayfield would make of Rex Bloomstein's gritty documentary *Kids Behind Bars* or the BBC3 three-part series of the same name, broadcast in June 2011. The latter took cameras to Vinney Green Secure Unit and the first programme opened with several clips from CCTV footage showing 13-year-old boys fighting, throwing furniture, hurling pool balls at each other and making obscene gestures to the television camera. The 200 CCTV cameras situated around the Unit were one obvious difference with 1970s borstals, as were the privileges and punishments meted out for good and bad behaviour, many of which now revolve around television, radios, CD players and play stations. The tone of the programme was reasonably non-judgmental and ultimately optimistic as it showed a boy, Kalem, who was the longest resident of the Special Unit, go from being a troublesome and insecure boy who was frequently 'red carded' with loss of privileges such as television and vocational training for 48 hour periods to become a mature member of the Vinney Green community, a representative of the children's views in staff meetings and enjoying 'Platinum' level privileges (the highest attainable) for good behaviour. Another 13-year-old with severe anger problems (which he directed with terrifying ferocity at fellow YPs and staff alike) was nonetheless portrayed as having immensely likeable qualities. As he showed the camera crew around Vinney Green he pointed at the staffroom and said with refreshing frankness: 'That's where the staff talk shit to each other and eat biscuits'.

Although the first programme about some of the youngest children in the Unit was reasonably upbeat about their chances of turning their lives around, by the

third instalment of the series the tone was less hopeful. The programme followed three older boys as they prepared to leave Vinney Green, but emphasized that the inability of some residents to change during their time in the Unit meant that they face the prospect of beginning their adult life behind bars. Rex Bloomstein's film offers a similarly bleak message, albeit in a rather more complex and subtle package. As Jamie Bennett notes in one of several academic papers he has written about the celebrated director, Bloomstein's *Kids Behind Bars* does not offer any sort of rose-tinted view of custody for children. Instead the film suggests a regressive spiral as it moves from local authority care to prison, showing individual stories involving escalating levels of social dysfunction, crime and violence⁸.

Rayfield notes that in the *Man Alive* programmes, the boys in both Portland and Hatfield (the latter being the cleaner and more civilized of the two borstals shown, according to the author) complained about being treated like children. I suspect that a similar sentiment underpins the statement of one of the boys in Bloomstein's film; 'We might be locked up, but we're not thick'. But, of course, the impression left on the audience is largely determined by editing and presentation. I was slightly surprised that BBC3 chose to subtitle their three programmes: 'I'm in Here for a Reason';

'Crying Cos I Can't Hit No-one' and 'It's Just My Life — Trouble', all of which are, at best, ambiguous. Rayfield's complaints about skilful editing, subjectivity and bias in 'Tale of Two Borstals' will be familiar to many who have watched television programmes on subjects they have experience of (in fact, his confession that he was *mentally* shouting at the box for much of the programme reveal him to be a master of self-restraint!) But his exasperation is clear in the comment that programmes such as this refuse to 'admit that society is responsible for the actions of its agents' and that 'If the programme sought to inform then it did not: if it sought to reform then its targets were the wrong ones'.

My suspicion is that this remains the case. Even Bloomstein, who has arguably done more than any other film-maker to reveal the experience of imprisonment and its harmful effects, and who has

As the camera
panned across a line
of boys digging a
trench, all that was
missing to complete
this bleak and,
Rayfield intimates,
slightly sinister, scene
was 'the baying of
hounds and the clank
of chains'.

8. Bennett, J. (2006) "'We might be locked up, but we're not thick": Rex Bloomstein's *Kids Behind Bars*', *Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal* 2(3): 268-285. p. 274.

also influenced those who have worked within the Prison Service (former Director General of the Prison Service, Martin Narey, has cited Bloomstein's *Strangeways* as the primary inspiration for his decision to join the service) may be effective only when, as it were, leaning against an open door. In other words, the empathy inherent in the documentary process may only be felt by those viewers who already share the narrative's perspective and have pre-existing sympathies with its subjects. While prison documentaries such as *Man Alive's* 'Tale of Two Borstals' and both versions of *Kids Behind Bars* undoubtedly create a profoundly important media space for more considered and thoughtful reflection than is usually to be found in other parts of the media⁹, the audience may inevitably view them — like any other media text — through the lens of their pre-existing cultural resources, experiences and prejudices.

At least in the early 1970s there were frequent television documentaries and current affairs programmes which gave voice to the lives, opinions and experiences of prisoners and did not rely on sensationalism, gimmicks or *faux-naïf* (as the *Guardian* always describes him) Louis Theroux, as much of today's 'reality' driven TV schedules seem to. Five years after the death penalty was abolished in this country, there was perhaps a particular curiosity about the penal system in 1971 (although the current situation of the highest ever prison population in England and Wales — partly as a result of harsh sentencing measures post-riots — does not seem to have piqued much interest in the media beyond the inevitable themes associated with populist punitiveness; dangerousness, risk, prisons-as-holiday-camps, and so on).

***New Society*: same old themes**

Of all the media that Alan Rayfield watched, listened to or read in the early 1970s, *New Society* strikes me as the most unusual and interesting. A weekly magazine devoted to social inquiry and cultural comment, and published between 1962 and 1987 (when it was subsumed into *New Statesman*), *New Society* was the social sciences version of the *New*

Scientist and has been described by one critic as 'a forum for the new intelligentsia'¹⁰. Drawing on the emergent disciplines of sociology, anthropology, psychology, human geography, social history and social policy, it was notable not only for its wide-ranging social reportage but for providing a platform for academics in these disciplines who were benefitting from the expansion of Higher Education in Britain from the early 1960s (for example, the University of Sussex was established in 1961 and the University of Essex was founded in 1964). Contributors to the publication included Angela Carter, Noam Chomsky, Stan Cohen, Eric Hobsbawm, George Melly and Dennis Potter, as well as Stuart Hall who is mentioned here. In an article published in the *Times Higher Education* supplement in 1995, Simon Frith reminisces about the unique appeal of *New Society*, which he read from cover to cover as a schoolboy:

Of all the media
that Alan Rayfield
watched, listened to
or read in the early
1970s, *New Society*
strikes me as the
most unusual and
interesting.

*Under the influence of the TV series, Probation Officer, I had already decided I wanted to do something 'social', and New Society became my handbook of the possibilities. I was most taken (I have still got the clipping) by Ray Gosling's 'The Tough and the Tender' (fourth in a series on adolescent morals) which appeared in issue 29, an account of a working-class teen values that to a sixth-form pop obsessive was at once completely familiar and quite strange*¹¹.

Alas, the appeal of a career in the Probation Service waned as Frith embarked on a career in academia although, given that he has held Chairs in English (at Strathclyde University), Sociology (at Warwick University), Film and Media (at Stirling University) and Music (at the University of Edinburgh), the eclectic reach of *New Society*, which embraced popular culture and the arts as well as policy, politics and social issues, may have had a lasting influence.

The absence of context in the reporting of news stories, noted by Stuart Hall in his *New Society* article and reiterated in Rayfield's *PSJ* contribution, is no less true in 2012, despite the proliferation of media channels and the 24/7 rolling nature of news production. One of Hall's complaints was that:

9. Bennett, *ibid*.

10. Hewison, R. (1986) *Too Much: Art and Society in the Sixties*, London: Methuen.

11. 27 January 1995. Available at <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=162372§ioncode=26>

In the arena of news and foreign affairs, popular journalism does not permit systematic exploration in depth. In the quality press some measure of interpretation and background is more regularly provided...[but] for the populars, 'The Great British public is not interested in foreign news', though how the regular reader of the Mirror, the Express or the News of the World (Britain's circulation forerunners) could develop an intelligent interest in foreign affairs is a matter for speculation.

Rayfield shares Hall's pessimism about the potential for the masses to become properly informed, given their daily diet of manufactured, populist and parochial news, but he brings it back to the world he knows best: 'In view of this, what hope has the prison officer of losing his 'warder' label?' Little could he know that 40 years later media institutions, including the British Broadcasting Corporation, still routinely use the term 'warder' and, equally shockingly, still refer to prisoners using the highly loaded word 'convicts'. Such discourses only serve to perpetuate the feelings of separation and moral distancing by society at large that are still keenly felt by prisoners and some prison officers.

The *PSJ* article suggests that two landmark events were shaping media coverage of penal matters in the early seventies. Unsurprisingly the Parkhurst riot and subsequent trial dominated the media-penal agenda and Rayfield's particular interest in the events at the Isle of Wight prison were prescient, given that he went on to govern the prison and, indeed, was Governor during the 1983 siege when his Deputy, Gerry Schofield, was held hostage and eventually released unharmed. Slightly more surprising is that, five years after it was initiated, Lord Mountbatten's report on security categorisation was still a hot topic of debate. Rayfield's reference to the subsequent growth of a siege mentality at the Home Office, and the ongoing angst

over what should be done with the most violent offenders, are problems that have never really gone away. But the comments in the final paragraph of the article, although slightly obscure, hint at Rayfield's own siege mentality as an employee of the Prison Service:

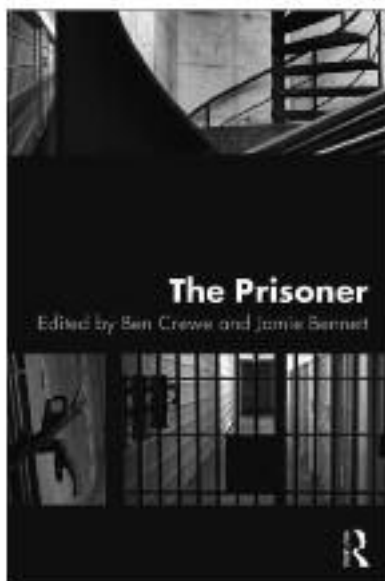
The real question is: 'Does society want its Prison Service to succeed in its given task?' and the answer seems to be that it does not...not only must criminals be punished but so must those who deal with them since these are the agents of punishment. When these agents refuse to accept their role it forces society to examine the darker side of its nature'¹².

Overall, the article 'The Media and the Message' is a rather gloomy summary of six months' media coverage of crime and punishment in the second half of 1970 but it provides a fascinating glimpse of a time when so much was different and yet so much was the same. I wonder what Alan Rayfield makes of today's media and message(s). According to MediaUK¹³ there are currently 512 television channels, 738 radio stations, 1,594 newspapers and 1,970 magazine titles available in this country and programmes about American jails, supermax facilities and Death Row compete in the schedules with home-grown offerings about grisly 'true crimes', police car chases and prison-based variations on a theme (*Kids Behind Bars*, *Women Behind Bars*, *Babies Behind Bars* and so on). All of these might be interpreted as appealing to what the first Director General of the BBC, John Reith, referred to as the 'lowest common denominator' of public taste and today's media certainly fails to engage much with issues such as mental illness, self-harm and suicide within prisons. What Alan Rayfield's article indisputable demonstrates is that penal philosophies and policies may have changed but the underlying issues remain largely the same.

12. Hall, S. (1970) 'A World at One With Itself', *New Society* 18 June: 1056-8. P. 1058.

13. <http://www.mediauk.com/>

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Reviews

Book Review

The Prison Officer (Second Edition)

By Alison Liebling, David Price and Guy Shefer

Publisher: Willan Publishing in association with *Prison Service Journal* (2011)

ISBN: 978 1 84392 269 8

(paperback) 978 1 84392 270 4 (hardback)

Price: £18.99 (paperback) £50.00 (hardback)

The original publication of *The Prison Officer* in 2000 was greeted with wide acclaim throughout the Prison Service. Its 'appreciative inquiry' approach, focussing on the best examples of prison officer work revealed a sophistication and skill that had largely been overlooked in previous research and the sympathetic and detailed description of prison work presented was also welcomed as being in contrast to glib media stereotypes. In the wake of this publication, Liebling has carved a creative working partnership with the Prison Service, yielding most importantly, the Measuring the Quality of Life (MQPL) survey¹.

The second edition comes over a decade later, a period in which a range of issues have come to have an altered, intensified or different significance in prison work, including; the prison population, decency, reducing reoffending, diversity, competition, and efficiency. In the introduction and conclusion, the authors acknowledge that changing times and context have raised a new series of questions and have highlighted different pressures on the working lives of prison officers, which would justify an entirely new study.

However, time has also allowed the fundamental nature of important parts of the original study to become more apparent, including the role model characteristics of prison

officers, their use of power, and the importance of relationships. The original research powerfully explored the nature of prison officer work, revealing it with all of its diversity and complexity. For example, the authors excavated role model characteristics including: having known and consistent boundaries; 'moral fibre'; awareness of the effects of their own power, understanding of the painfulness of prison; 'professional orientation'; and optimistic but realistic outlook. Those characteristics have a timeless and essential quality to them. There are other aspects of prison work that are revealed in this work, including how prison officers use their power. Although often depicted in the media as brutal and over zealous, here the authors reveal the craft-like way in which prison staff use and under-use their power so as to create a sense of legitimacy and secure compliance from those in their charge. This skilful use of professional discretion is central to understanding prison work. The role of staff-prisoner relationships are also explored, illustrating how they are the 'oil' that helps make the day run smoothly. They are a means through which the prison is made to work as a logistical and bureaucratic operation, but also a means through which the prison is humanised and is sensitive to the experience of those in custody. Together, the use of power and the nature of relationships are the processes through which prison officers realise their 'peacekeeping' function of maintaining safety and order.

The work is particularly distinguished by its ability to bring the emotional texture of prison work into the light. Prison officers are shown to be thinking feeling agents, who experience joy, sadness, dejection, satisfaction, fear and excitement. This rounded and humane portrait has

been too rarely part of academic or popular representations. The affective nature of the work is also illuminated, showing how relationships, sensitivity and human interaction are all central. It is this connection with people and the intimacy of their lived experience where this book comes most vibrantly to life.

The decade between the first and second edition of this book has helped to place this work into context. Inevitably, some aspects feel to be of their time and new questions have emerged that were not originally addressed. However, that time has also placed into clear relief those fundamental aspects of prison work that the original work revealed. It is on the basis of these insights that this book deserves to be considered a timeless classic.

Jamie Bennett is Governor of HMP Grendon and Springhill.

Book Review

A Community-Based Approach to the Reduction of Sexual Offending. Circles of Support and Accountability

By Stephen Hanvey, Terry Philpot and Chris Wilson

Publisher: Jessica Kingsley Publishers (2011)

ISBN: 978 1 84905 198 9

(paperback)

Price: £19.99 (paperback)

Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA), while originating in Canada in 1994, have existed in England since 2001. As stated in the Introduction to this book, there were 32 Circles running in 2007, 48 in 2008, 60 in 2009 and by the end of January 2011, 64. Bearing in mind that Circles end, it is

1. Liebling, A. assisted by Arnold, H. (2004) *Prisons & Their Moral Performance: A Study of Values, Quality and Prison Life* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

thought that since the first Circle in Guildford in 2001 there have been over 160 Circles in existence (p. 13). For the uninitiated a Circle is a community-based approach to working with sex offenders, often those who have recently been released from prison and who are finding the isolation of community living especially hard to deal with. This (ex)offender is known as the 'Core Member' and as the name suggests he/she is encircled by support and importantly accountability from both an inner circle of 4-6 volunteers and an outer circle of professionals such as probation staff, the police and Circle co-ordinators. Volunteers come from all walks of life including students and new graduates, retired people and everyone else in between, including myself. The main aim of the initiative is to reduce reoffending and as the strap-line of Circles UK states ensure that there are 'no more victims'.

This book is written by three authors perfectly placed to comment on this important contribution to the risk management of sex offenders: Stephen Harvey (Chief Executive of Circles UK), Terry Philpot (a journalist and writer) and Chris Wilson (the National Development Manager of Circles UK). It is based on interviews with both volunteers and core members and is written not as an academic piece but as a resource for criminal justice professionals, other professionals whose work may bring them into contact with sex offenders and all other lay people who have an interest in this area. The book is divided into seven chapters with the first concentrating on the history and development of COSA in England. This is then followed by an interesting chapter by Philpot which describes the heterogeneous nature of sex offenders; the fact that they are all ages, come from a variety of backgrounds, work in a number of different jobs and professions and may be gay or straight, married or single. The chapter attempts to

explain why men (and the book only deals with men) offend in this way and looks at the effectiveness of some of the treatment options currently available in England and Wales. Whilst the seasoned academic or practitioner may not learn very much from this chapter, it is written in a readable way and would be of interest to those who may not know that much about sex offenders or who are considering becoming involved either with Circles or with some other interaction with this group of offenders.

Wilson, in chapter 3, then looks at working with those people who have been convicted of sexual offences. This, like chapter 1, is quite historical and developmental in that it traces a number of legislative changes and strategies which have been put in place over the last two decades to deal with those who sexually offend. This includes the use of multi-agency working and community based sex offender treatment programmes. This is then followed by more in depth information about Circles, including the theory behind the model, how volunteers are recruited and trained and how Circles work in practice.

For me, the most interesting part of the book starts with chapter 5 which details the results of the interviews conducted with both core members and volunteers. Whilst the preceding chapters provide context and information for those who have little knowledge about the management of sex offenders, it is this chapter which truly sets this book apart. Chapter 5 is also by far the largest, being 69 pages, whilst the other chapters in the book range from 13-16 pages. The chapter is divided into two sections: The Men's Stories and The Volunteers Stories, with each consisting of data from four interviews. Whilst it is impossible to summarise this chapter, suffice to say it is extremely interesting and offers great insight into the core member's life stories, why they offended and how Circles have

helped them. The only criticism I have of this section of the book is that three out of the four core members present themselves as having been sexually abused as children. This is disappointing in the sense that it perhaps leads to the assumption that the vast majority of offenders were abused themselves, that is that the cycle of abuse argument is valid. When we know that the vast majority of abusers are men and the vast majority of victims are female, this cycle cannot therefore be true. When the book is aimed at those who may not have a great knowledge of sex offenders, it is a shame that these interviews have the potential to substantiate this myth. The interviews with the volunteers however are very interesting. Not only do they give an insight into what Circles are and how they work on a practical basis, some of the interviews also cover how the volunteers deal with working with sex offenders and also their personal motivations for doing so.

The final two chapters of the book deal with the question of whether Circles work and the affect of the media on sex offenders living within communities. As with the earlier chapters both offer the layman interesting information on effectiveness studies, internal evaluation, naming and shaming and the affect the media have had on public attitudes towards sexual abusers. Both are written in a readable style and offer a good summary of these issues.

Overall I think this is a good book, although as stated by the authors it is not an academic book and probably better served as a resource for those who either know very little about sex offenders or who particularly want to know more about Circles. Certainly, if you are pondering whether or not to become a Circles volunteer then this should be core reading.

Dr Karen Harrison is a Lecturer in Law, University of Hull.

The Little Book Of Prison

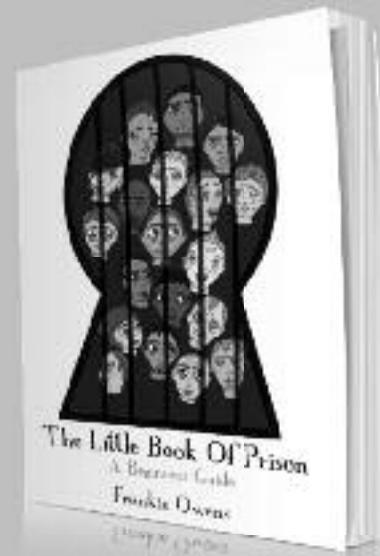
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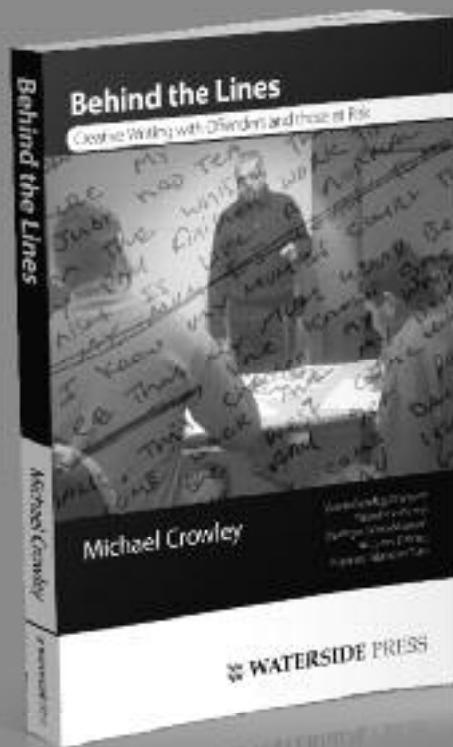
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