

# PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

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# Editorial Comment

Three articles in this edition focus on HMP Pentonville, the iconic London prison. Built by Joshua Jebb in 1840-42, it is the oldest built prison in the country, created at the time of the birth of the modern prison system. The first article is a version of a lecture delivered by Professor Alison Liebling, revisiting the groundbreaking sociological study of Pentonville conducted by Terence Morris and Pauline Morris in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Liebling describes the Morris's work as 'both the first English sociological study of a prison, and an important historical record of a very significant period in penal affairs as well as in prison sociology'. She draws upon key aspects of the Morris's work and contrasts this with her own contemporary observations of Pentonville and prison more generally. The contours she observes reveal both continuity and change, and this in itself speaks of the nature of prisons and late modern society. The second article is by Terence Morris, who brings vividly to life his inspiration for the research, the process of conducting it and the reality of prison conditions at the time. He also discusses the responses he received and his subsequent attempts to work with the Prison Service in order to achieve change. He closes with reflections on the continuing relevance of the study to contemporary challenges in prison management. The final article is an interview with the current Governor of HMP Pentonville, Gary Monaghan, who reveals the challenges of managing a transient population characterised by high levels of mental illness, drug dependency and social exclusion. By focussing on a single establishment over a period of half a century, these articles reveal the contemporary challenges of prisons, but also the ways that they have been reshaped by the conditions of late modernity, whilst also continuing to reflect deeply embedded aspects of wider society.

Another articles focussing on a specific prison is the interview with Andy Lattimore, Governor of HMP Isle of Wight, in which he discusses the closure of Camp Hill. This account reveals the process of managing such a major organisational change, but is also a poignant evocation of what for many staff and prisoners may have been a life changing event.

The other articles in this edition focus on aspects of prison regimes and services and attempt to promote

positive developments in policy and practice. Gwen Lewis and Rosie Meek offer a detailed analysis of physical education for young offenders in thirty four establishments. Their analysis suggest that provision is varied but they are clear that its potential is immense, suggesting that, 'Sport in particular then offers a unique means to address issues of health, offending behaviour and rehabilitation in a population which can be difficult to engage and motivate through traditional means'. Bethany Schmidt from University of Cambridge provides the key results from an ethnographic study of prisoner councils at three prisons operated under the auspices of User Voice. This research is effusive about the benefits not only in terms of the internal prison environment but also in helping prisoners to make changes in their own sense of identity which are the foundation for building a life outside of crime. Schmidt concludes that, 'Treating prisoners as citizens — people with value, worth, and purpose that can productively contribute to their communities has already been shown to reduce recidivism and improve prison functioning without the need to compromise security or custodial obligations, the User Voice council an make a significant contribution to this process'.

Two further articles in this edition focus on prisoners and their families. Martin Manby, Leanne Monchuk and Kathryn Sharratt provide an evaluation of a family support project at HMP New Hall, working with women in a range of circumstances, from those maintaining family contacts, to those whose children are in care. A further article by Helen O'Keeffe from Edge Hill University is based on a study of how school and head teachers support pupils whose parents are in prison. These articles aim to reveal the sometimes hidden pains and collateral effects of imprisonment and also suggest ways in which these can be ameliorated through good practice.

This edition, as with many, reflects the aims of *Prison Service Journal* to reflect upon imprisonment and society, and to promote progressive approaches in policy and practice. Sadly, Terence Morris died from Motor Neurone Disease in July 2013 between writing and publication. This edition is dedicated to his pioneering and principled work on prisons.