

# PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

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# Editorial Comment

*Prison Service Journal* has a long and productive partnership with the Perrie Lectures Committee. Each year, articles are published based upon the annual lectures. This is a partnership of which the *Prison Service Journal* is proud.

The Perrie Lectures is an annual event which has the purpose of stimulating dialogue between criminal justice organisations, the voluntary sector and all those with an academic, legal or practical interest in offenders and their families. It is hoped that the event will contribute towards improving the care of offenders, and advancing penal policy, in its broadest sense. These are aspirations that are shared by *Prison Service Journal*. The Lectures are named in honour of Bill Perrie, who retired from the Prison Service in 1978. He worked as a prison governor for 32 years, latterly at HMPs Hull, Long Lartin, and Birmingham. He was noted for his contribution to the development of hostels, working out schemes, and regimes for long term prisoners.

The 2015 Lectures were on the subject of older prisoners. There are 12,000 prisoners aged 50 and over in England and Wales, and around 4,000 who are aged 60 and over. This is the fastest growing section of the prison population, and has risen by 164 per cent between 2002 and 2015. This edition of PSJ includes one of those lectures, by Dr. Mary Turner and Dr Marian Peacock both from Lancaster University. Their work focuses on the work of HMP Wymott in managing older prisoners including the sensitive issue of palliative and end of life care. This is also complemented by an article by Dr Nataline Mann and others examining the impact of the Social Care Act 2014. This is a timely article that draws into relief the financial and operational challenges of implementing social care in prisons.

This edition also includes a fascinating interview with the winner of the Perrie Award for 2015, Sir Martin Narey, a former Director General of the Prison Service and Chief Executive of National Offender Management Service, who moved into the charitable sector as Chief Executive of Barnados before becoming a special advisor at the Department of Education and now at the Ministry of Justice. This interview is an excellent insight into the moral challenges of working within the public services.

This edition also includes three articles that focus on the voice of prisoners and ex-prisoners. Dr. Andreas Aresti, Dr. Sacha Darke and Dr. David Manlow, set out a manifesto for British Convict Criminology, a movement that seeks to encourage education for prisoners and also their direct engagement in academia and research. David Honeywell, now an academic, provides personal reflections on returning to Durham Prison, thirty years after serving a sentence there. In a fascinating case study, Asad Ul Lah, a prisoner in the Fens Unit at HMP Whitemoor, and Jacqui Saradjian, a therapist on the unit, reveal the process of change that can take place within therapeutic environments.

The other articles in this edition include an American research project by Dr. Brian Wyant and Dr. Holly Harner on the financial stresses experienced by prisoners. This focussed on the impoverishment of prisoners within prisons as one of the pains of imprisonment. The research reveals that this can have a detrimental impact inside on individual well being and safety, but can also make transition into the community after imprisonment more difficult. The final article is a historical piece by Allan Brodie of Historic England. This places the current reorganisation of the prison system and the closure of prisons within a historical context, revealing how changing times and changing values have been reflected in the prisons that have disappeared as much as those that have been constructed.

This edition covers a wide range of subjects but returns to two central interests of PSJ. The first is providing a medium for the intersection of theory and practice, fostering the use of evidence in order to improve the experience of those who live and work in these institutions. The second is the value that is placed upon the direct and unmediated voice of those inside prisons. As those most directly affected by the prison experience, it is the voice of prisoners, staff and families that deserve a prominent place in the dialogue about criminal justice. It is through these means that PSJ attempts to encourage reflection, debate, discussion and ultimately positive action.