

QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

EDITORIAL - CARMEL SCHMID

Wow, Michael Gove's speech at the Prison Learning Alliance was quite a breath of fresh air and if his attitude cascades through the ranks of the prison system we are certainly in for some pleasant surprises. Maybe there is "a treasure at the heart of every government". I had been concerned about this government's election drive to outlaw human rights.



Anyone else equally concerned about the potential of annexing the Human Rights Act (1989) from UK law, will be pleased and appeased to have a well informed and politically alive article on the subject in this issue and I assure you it does make for good, summer reading. Equally interesting a friend has brought to our attention a report called "Presumption Against Imprisonment" – its content is well researched, enlightened and it is heartening to know that it was produced by the British Council.

Another report authored by members Jacqueline Hodgson and Juliet Horne "Imagining more than just a prisoner" explores the impact on prisoners of having a penfriend. The report was launched at the House of Lords in June this year and furthers academic research that ratifies the work of Friends. It is hoped to have a review of their report for the next issue of this newsletter.

Balancing these academic themes, this edition has yet another well written, reminiscent, review of a Quaker prison chaplain's life, some poems, an update from Leeds Saturday Seminars, more practical strategies to help offenders with learning disabilities and a short recollection on a member's experience at a QICJ conference ten years ago.

It is this latter "Recollections from by gone years" that

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strikes a chord with me as I had exactly the same experience as the author had some five years later. That was when, Ann Jacob, our chair and membership officer, unobtrusively ensured that I, as a newcomer, did not feel at all left out at my first QICJ conference. For that, I am truly grateful.

Jonathan Lamb who has started to produce a visually uplifting, electronic version of this newsletter would be grateful for photos or other images to be submitted with articles for the newsletter so that he can continue with this pursuit.



Carmel
Schmid

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT - WHO NEEDS IT?

One of the Conservatives' most emphatic commitments during the general election campaign earlier this year was to repeal the Human Rights Act and replace it with a "British Bill of Rights". Is this something we should welcome, or something we should be worried about? What are the implications? Do we need the Human Rights Act, in fact?

The Human Rights Act was passed in 1998 to enable British courts to give direct legal effect to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty jointly drafted and adopted by the member states of the Council of Europe – including ours - back in 1950. The Convention set out certain fundamental human rights which European governments undertook to honour and respect. These include the obvious ones such as the right to life, liberty, freedom of expression, fair trials and such like, and others which might have been less obvious, such as a right to privacy and a family life, the right to have an education, and the right to marry.

Council of Europe versus European Union

It is important to clear up any possible confusion between the Council of Europe and the European Union (or "Common Market" as we used to call it). There is no connection between the two, other than the fact that a large number of European countries belong to both organisations. The EU is run from Brussels where its European Parliament sits (to which our MEPs are elected). It was the EU which introduced the much-criticised European Arrest Warrant, for example. This had nothing to do with the Court of Human Rights. The Council of Europe on the other hand is based in Strasbourg, and its main function is to maintain the European Court of Human Rights which decides on cases involving citizens' rights under the 1950 Convention. It is admittedly confusing that both organisations set up international courts with unfortunately similar names, to resolve disputes that arise under their respective regulatory regimes. However they are very different. The court of the EU is called the European Court of Justice. It is based in Luxembourg, and decides on issues that arise under EU regulations. It was the EU court for example which recently banned insurance companies from offering reduced premiums to women drivers. Entirely separate from this is the Council of Europe's court, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. It is this which is now in the target-sights of the British government. It exists purely to safeguard the human rights and fundamental freedoms which were enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights in 1950.

Purpose of Human Rights Act

The aim of the Human Rights Act of 1998 was effectively to import the 1950 Convention into British law, so that the Courts here could apply it without the need for complaints about human rights abuses to be taken all the way to Strasbourg. The Act is relatively short: it contains just 22 Sections with 4 additional Schedules, and it is phrased in clear and straightforward language. The heart of the Act really lies in section 6 which states "It is unlawful for a public authority to act in a way which is incompatible with a Convention right". Much of the remainder of the Act is concerned with making arrangements for what happens when such an infringement has occurred.

The first thing to notice is that it is only “public authorities” who are bound by the Act. It applies, obviously, to the government (both central and local) and to bodies such as police forces, the law courts, Civil Service departments and other State agencies such as your local Health Trust or the BBC. It does not however apply to your neighbour, your local shopkeeper, those annoying people who telephone you selling things, or the idiot on the road who just cut you up!



The other particularly significant provisions of the Act are in Sections 3 and 4. These state that so far as possible legislation passed by our government “must be read and given effect in a way which is compatible with the convention rights” and that if this is not possible a Court can make a declaration that some particular legislation is incompatible with the Convention. It is important to realise however that even if such a Declaration is made, it does not affect the result of the case in which it arises, and it does not affect the validity of the legislation in question. It will be up to Parliament to do something to correct the situation.

So, in the time-honoured phrase, what has the Human Rights Act ever done for us? Well, a lot more than you might have noticed actually. It has been regularly

used by defence lawyers and campaigning organisations such as Liberty pretty well from the moment the Act came into force. Most of these cases never made headlines, they just meant that individuals or families here and there around the country were able to obtain justice. Nevertheless some cases did make the news: a prime example being Gary McKinnon, who hacked into the Pentagon’s computers from his home in London, and although he caused no damage and did no harm to American security (he was just looking for information about UFO incidents in fact) he did cause severe embarrassment to the Pentagon’s security team and basically they wanted revenge on him for making them look silly.

You will recall that the U.S. government wanted to extradite Gary to the U.S. A. for a show trial which could have resulted in a prison sentence of up to 60 years in a “Supermax” jail thousands of miles from his home and family. Those who knew Gary were convinced this would be equivalent to a death sentence, since he suffered from Asperger’s syndrome and was also depressive. Expert medical evidence was produced suggesting that, given a long-term jail sentence in a far-off country, he would have been a very high suicide risk. The Home Secretary Theresa May then quashed the extradition proceedings – and although one suspects that her primary reason for doing so may have been purely humanitarian, the technical legal tag she was able to use to justify the decision was that extradition in these circumstances would have breached his rights under the European Convention. The Human Rights Act almost certainly saved Gary’s life.

“So, in the time-honoured phrase, what has the Human Rights Act ever done for us? Well, a lot more than you might have noticed actually.”

Another high-profile decision was the ruling by the European Court of Human Rights in 2008 that police are not allowed to retain DNA samples and fingerprints from innocent people forever. This was held to be a breach of their rights under Article 8 which safeguards the right to a private life. Equally important was the case where police were trying to compel a journalist to disclose her sources following an interview she had obtained with IRA members. Most of us probably

believed by now that a journalist's sources are sacrosanct – particularly in a case involving men known to be capable of extreme violence, who might well have had her killed if she had told the police what they wanted to know. Using the Human Rights Act the High Court was able to apply the Convention and ruled that the journalist's sources were protected under Article 10 – the right to freedom of expression.

So what are the objections to the Human Rights Act?

Who is against it, and why? There seems to be a clear dividing line in British politics with most political parties supporting the Act but just the Conservative Party and UKIP against it. However as UKIP no longer counts for anything now, what is the attitude of our newly elected Conservative government? There are two versions of the Conservatives' intentions regarding the Human Rights Act. One was a briefing paper published last Autumn after their party conference. The other is what appeared in their General Election manifesto earlier this year. They are rather different, as we shall see.

The Autumn statement

The Autumn statement that followed the Party Conference is the more detailed and specific of the two. It was however deeply flawed – the human rights group Liberty castigated it as being “legally illiterate” - perhaps unsurprising since Christopher Grayling, who was then the Justice Secretary, had no legal expertise or qualifications whatever. One of the policy proposals in the briefing document for example was “to end the ability of the European Court to change British laws”. As we have seen already, however, the European court has no such power in fact, and never has had.

A more sinister proposal was that a Conservative government would “limit the use of human rights laws to the most serious cases”. How “serious” would these have to be, one wonders? An injustice that feels “serious” to the victim who suffers it might not appear so “serious” to a millionaire cabinet minister who has never been arrested or held in police custody, who is rich enough to pay for private health care and education so that he will never need to rely on state education or the National health Service, and who will never have to claim State benefits in his life.

The General Election manifesto

By contrast, the Conservatives' General Election manifesto was rather less specific. Like UKIP the Conservatives say they want to repeal the Human Rights Act and introduce a British Bill of Rights in its place. It would be interesting actually to know whether it was UKIP or the Conservatives who first came up with that idea. When we ask what the Conservatives think is wrong with the Human Rights Act, there are only two specific complaints made in the Manifesto they say they need to “stop terrorists and other serious foreign criminals from using spurious human rights arguments to prevent deportation” and secondly they want to “restore common sense to the application of human rights in Britain”.

It is worth looking in more detail at both these statements. As regard the deportation of terrorists and foreign criminals, I find myself at a bit of a loss to understand the problem. Take the two recent high-profile cases which everyone has heard of: Abu Qatada was in fact successfully deported to Jordan, and Abu Hamza was in fact successfully deported to the USA. Admittedly there were delays in both cases while the European Court sought reassurances that the deportees would not be mistreated, but once the appropriate enquiries had been made and those concerns had been satisfied, off they both went. So when the Conservatives refer to “spurious human rights arguments” it seems they are talking about the Court taking steps to ensure that prisoners are not mistreated. If that is the government's attitude, then we all need to be very worried! As regards “restoring common sense” to human rights law, we are left completely in the dark as regards what they mean by this. We have to wonder whose idea of “common sense” is being referred to here? Is it going to

Peter Bolwell

RECOLLECTIONS FROM BY GONE YEARS

I have been a member and Area Meeting representative of QICJ for some time. Although I've not been a very active member, I have a dim recollection of a weekend at Glenthorne, maybe ten years ago, led by Ann Jacob. Why did I go? Maybe a suggestion made at Area Meeting although we didn't call it Area Meeting then.

My chief memory of the event is that Bob Johnson made an excellent presentation. It was good to meet Bob again as we were contemporaries at Cambridge. His message from then stays with me. He said that many murders find their origins in a childhood trauma that remains unresolved. I wonder if I still have my notes from that weekend. I wouldn't expect to knowingly bin them. Bu I don't know where they would be.

Ann Jacob is my other chief memory from that weekend. Many of those present were acquainted – but not with me – and she unobtrusively took care to see that I did not feel at all left out. I am, she must have quickly noticed, not one of the most gregarious but I remain grateful for her care and I am sure that there are many others over the years who have also received her welcoming inclusion.



Alan Russell

A PRESUMPTION AGAINST IMPRISONMENT

A review of the report by the British Academy on “A presumption against imprisonment: social order and social values”

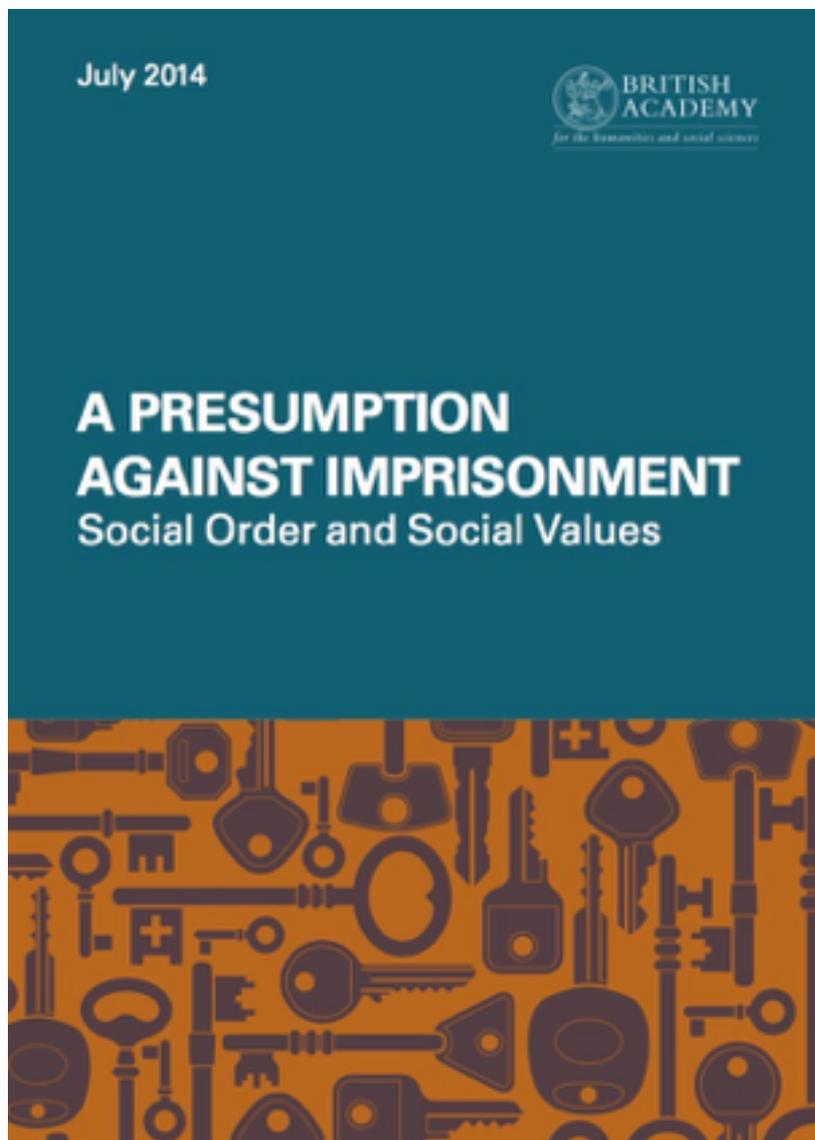
Alan Russell remarks on how empathetic this report is to Quakerly values and how welcome it is at this time.

This study, published last year by the British Council is written by eight expert authors, and has a foreword by Lord Woolf, Lord Chief Justice 2000 – 2005. The British Council is an expert institute focusing on educational and cultural concerns of international importance.

My remarks are extremely brief. I would find it impossible to attempt any detail of the document's important and wide-ranging arguments. All I can do is try to convey to those who may be interested an idea of its potential importance. I am copying a few brief extracts, with my own emendations, from these

In part 1 entitled 'Where we are now and how we got here', the authors describe the changes in public attitude towards crime and punishment. They state: "Imprisonment regimes in this country have changed considerably since 1992. Policies have moved away from the view that prison can be an expensive way of making bad people worse to the belief that 'prison works.' In this period numbers in prison have doubled, despite decreasing crime levels. There has been a

change of focus from proportionate sentencing to public safety.



Following on, in a section on 'Why our imprisonment policies should change', the authors set out a series of theoretical, moral and political arguments that, when combined, present a compelling case that we should seek to reduce our reliance on imprisonment as a form of criminal punishment.

The report goes on to describe strategies for reducing the prison population stating that: "Changes to the sentencing system are unlikely to be enough. Policy-making needs to be in a longer-term context, with greater separation of sentencing policy from the political process; respect for criminal justice expertise needs to be rebuilt; changes must cover the whole of the criminal justice system."

The report concludes that a range of strategies could be applied to reduce reliance on imprisonment and put a presumption against it into force. Six key strategies are considered, as follows: using diversion from the courts more extensively; promoting greater use of alternative forms of sentence; prohibiting or restricting the imposition of short custodial sentences; removing or restricting the sanction of imprisonment for certain offences; reviewing sentence lengths and finally removing mentally disordered and addicted persons from prison.

Alan Russell

DOWNLOAD THE FULL REPORT AT

http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/presumption_against_imprisonment.cfm

A CHAPLAIN'S EXPERIENCE

These are familiar conversations for chaplains working in Her Majesty's 'Hospitality Suites', as prisons have been described to me recently!

Each time I go on the wings I am asked similar questions. Prisoners are waiting for IMB staff (Independent Monitoring Board) or Probation and are desperate to talk to someone other than officers. Boredom is a problem for many especially those who are dyslexic etc. because they are unable to read the wing notices or any available literature. TV, if they have one, doesn't quite make up for loss of conversation with family and friends.

When I was first given the bunch of large, heavy keys, I was instructed to make sure they did not reach the ground once attached to the chain and to make sure no prisoner saw them. It felt very strange: on the one hand I could now go anywhere on the prison estate but on the other I didn't know my way around and, naturally, there are no notices on any doors to say what lies behind. So it was a bit like a computer game where you have to work out and remember which door leads to where. One naïve Quaker asked me if a plan of the prison was available!

Imagine you are a new prisoner: you are given a brief orientation by officers and then taken to a cell which might be single or two person. You have just been deprived of your own belongings, clothes, and mobile phone. It suddenly dawns on you that you can't contact family or friends, some of whom might not know where you are, because your phone with all its addresses and numbers stored, has been taken away. Unless you wrote these down before you came in then you are really stuck. Your only way to contact those on the outside is by letter, if you know the postal address but even then, letters from

“Who are you Miss?”
 “The Quaker Chaplain”.
 “What's Quaker, Miss?”
 “Another religion with Christian roots and 350 years old!”.
 “Oh”.... “Are you Amish?”
 “No”, most Amish live in America.
 “Oh”.
 “Are Catholics Christian, Miss?”.
 “Yes they are”.
 “Oh.”
 “Can I go to the Chapel services?”
 “I am sure you can. Do you remember how you registered when you came in? Otherwise, I'll have a look on the chaplaincy list to find out?”
 “Can't remember, Miss. But I used to go to church with my Nan when I was little”.
 “Well, let me check and we can decide together which of the services you might be able to attend. The Catholic services are on Saturdays and the Anglican services are on Sundays and there are bible study classes during the week as well.
 “What's Anglican, Miss?”
 “Sorry, I should have said Church of England, C of E.”
 “Oh”, ... think that's the one.....”
 “Can you phone my girl-friend, for me please, Miss?”
 “Are you not able to do this yourself? Don't you have pin credit?”
 “I've no money on there now”.
 “Why's that then?”
 “Spent it all on burn (cigarettes) and I owe money to other blokes on the wing as well.”
 “Well, unfortunately, chaplains aren't allowed to make personal phone calls for prisoners – otherwise we'd be making them for every single person in here. Why don't you ask a friend or family member to send you some money to put on pin credit?”
 “I didn't know they could do that.”
 “Yes they can, very easily, here's how.....”

HMPs take a long time to emerge into the general postage system. Transfers from one HMP to another happen at short notice so the prisoner can't contact family to inform them of the move. Inevitably this means the family or friend on an arranged visit will have made the journey, only to discover the prisoner has been moved to another HMP. Prisoners are not informed about whether or not they can attend the funeral of a close relative until very late the previous day or the morning of the day itself.

As well as coping with these frustrations, you find yourself 'banged up' with another prisoner who might snore, smoke, or watch TV at all hours of the day and night or talk incessantly. HMPs are short of single cells so the chances are that you will be in a two person cell for quite a while and it suddenly dawns on you that it's not going to be very easy from now on.



The first 24 hours are the most crucial hours for a prisoner, especially if it's their first time; the strangeness and stress of the experience, together with all that has gone before to bring them there, can be enough to cause suicidal tendencies. This might be indicated during their 'induction' and so officers will place this individual on an ACCT, (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork): a care plan. As almost 1 in 5 self-inflicted deaths occur within two days of reception and nearly 2 in 5 happen in the first week. It's a time when everyone working in HMP has to keep an eye out for those most vulnerable. The rule is "talking to prisoners saves lives". And those who are very quiet should not be ignored because 'they are no trouble'. Those at risk might include someone with mental health issues; substance abusers; victims of violence or sexual abuse; first time and remand prisoners; anyone just back from court or anyone with a recently broken relationship.

To help alleviate stress, there are trained (by Samaritans) prisoners called "listeners" who can be called on day or night to stay with a vulnerable person. There is usually one "Listener" on each wing but often if that Listener leaves the prison, it results in fewer Listeners to deal with the many demands on their time. I have seen Listeners red-eyed during the day because they've been up all night with someone and yet they still have to go to work or their own education commitment.

It's noticeable that severe financial constraints mean there are fewer officers on the wings, and it can be a struggle to maintain the level of prisoner support and discipline which officers are expected to provide.

Medication can be an issue because HMPs don't have access to individual health records.

A prisoner may say what medication he's been taking but this will not necessarily be available 'inside'. One man I met recently said he had brought his special bedding and pillow with him because of his allergies. He also needed a particular non-allergenic soap and toiletries. He had been in the prison 2 weeks and not been given these items yet and his skin was becoming very red and sore. A consultant I met a few months ago said he gets prisoner patients brought into hospital in an emergency because of the incorrect medication they had been given by a prison doctor/nurse.

The prison I worked in has a print shop and sewing centre which provides work. The print shop provides all the pro-formas and administrative paper work required while the sewing shop's machines make prisoners' curtains, bedspreads and bags. This work is only for VPs (vulnerable prisoners) who have to remain segregated from the other prisoners. On one of my regular visits the men were reading papers or books or doing crosswords. When I asked the supervisor why there was no work she informed me that the delivery of materials had not arrived and was not expected for another week or so. I asked what about other sewing activities as all the machines were idle. This led to her encouraging some of the men to explore collage. An Area Meeting member kindly donated a book on collage and during the next few weeks various items began to emerge, with one man making shoulder bags with different designs on each side. He was so enthusiastic and keen that I wondered whether or not his work might be displayed somewhere. I had heard of the Koestler Trust and got in touch with them asking if he might submit one of his bags for exhibition. They sent application forms which the prisoner and I, as his sponsor, filled in. The

only stumbling block was I had to think how I could get his accumulating display of bags photographed, given that there are no electronic devices allowed in HMPs! Weeks went by before I managed to find someone in the education department who had a camera and was willing to take photos. These were eventually signed off and sent together with the entry form. I heard no more until just before the prisoner was released when he told me he was submitting his 'best' bag for the exhibition. So I knew the process was moving along, though it had taken four months of negotiation!

Time went by and towards the end of the year I received a letter with an invitation to the exhibition opening. It was to be held in the Royal Festival Hall with a whole days' events and opening speech by Lord Ramsbottom, Honorary President of the Koestler Trust. There was an amazing collection of art, collage, pottery, poems, wood-carving, papier mache, prints, matchstick models, ceramics and photography, and much more from all over the prison estate. The artifacts on display were so inventive, not simply by their design but the use and selection of raw materials. It proved that the imagination is wonderfully creative in prison.

The whole RFH basement floor had been taken over for this exhibition: walls covered from floor to ceiling and tables set out all down the middle. During the months it was open (I went twice) it became very popular with concert-goers who popped down to have a look before performances.

Imagine my surprise and sheer delight when, on my initial visit, I reached the bottom of the stairs and saw immediately in front of me one of the now familiar bags, making a strong 'statement' on the wall and "highly commended"! I hope the prisoner himself was able to see it displayed. At least his newly discovered skill would stand him in good stead and provide with a means to start his own business. I feel very happy that I had a hand in this.



It's often been said that prison is a parallel world, existing alongside the 'normal' world outside and I wanted to bring these two worlds together. A way to do this was using the annual Prisons' Week in November to highlight the prison system: prisoners, prisoners' families; also officers and staff who are all locked up and 'out of sight, out of mind'. The local Churches Together group were supportive of this and we have held a Prisons' Week Act of Worship for the last two years in our local Meeting House. The prisoners I knew best were glad to offer their own poems and prose which we interspersed with hymns, Taize chants and readings from the Bible. The men were each given a copy of the Act of Worship programme which we used one morning instead of the usual Meeting for Worship. They were so proud to see their writing 'in print', it gave them a sense self worth, that they mattered to at least some people 'on the outside' and that their words had been heard.

There are times when I have been called to assist with a memorial service. These vary according to the prisoner's personal need. It could be an anniversary of a family event which needs to be acknowledged and remembered – death of a relative is the most common. I meet with the prisoner in his cell, in another room on the landing or in the Chapel. I ask for the name of the person we will be remembering. The prisoner writes this on a piece of paper which we put under a lit candle (nightlight). I often have to do this as the prisoner cannot write. We spend a few minutes in quiet worship and when I ask the man what he remembers about the deceased it usually brings some memories back. We spend more time quietly with our thoughts focussed on the person. If the prisoner brought a poem or something to read we will read it together and then perhaps say the Lord's Prayer. On one occasion I had to do nothing at all because the prisoner had a very well-used Bible which he'd inherited from his father who had been a minister of the church in Barbados; he simply needed me there to witness his well rehearsed and structured memorial service! He was surprised, though, when I joined in singing one of the hymns!



The Quaker Meeting for Worship usually takes place in the Chapel one morning in the week but because of the shortage of officers to bring men over from the wings many of them can't join in. So the rest of my day is spent going around the wings, finding these individuals, who could be anywhere, and spending as much quality time with them as is practicable. The VPs (vulnerable prisoners) can't be included in Meeting for Worship for their own safety, so they, too, need individual pastoral visits.

Initially I had only two copies of QF&P but some local Meetings generously gave me more copies and last year the Managing Chaplain bought twelve out of his budget. The prisoners like this book because it looks different and more interesting with its geranium coloured cover. One man who is a regular attender loves to open it at random and miraculously it always seems to open at the right page for a passage to be read which we all find 'spot on'. Someone asked me whether or not the book opens at a Quaker procedural section but it never has!

The 'time inside' has taught me so much about living adventurously as well providing a valuable insight into how other chaplains manage their own faith/belief system in a prison environment. Most services with large numbers of prisoners will have officers in attendance but for smaller groups like the weekly Meeting for Worship which was usually under double figures, officers are not required. However, because I felt it unwise to be on my own with prisoners for more than an hour, I arranged for local Quakers to come in on a rota basis. This proved very successful and beneficial for everyone. The prisoners appreciated meeting different people each week and found it stimulating, with conversations being wide and varied during post-worship coffee time.

My husband was also on the rota and his visit was a great hit because he played the piano and brought the words of songs along so everyone could join in. And they surely did! It was the best male voice choir I have ever heard! The downside is that the chapel services provide excellent opportunities for prisoners to pass drugs, so from time to time dog handlers bring spaniels to have a sniff around.

Not every prisoner wants a TV. There are pleas for radios, too. Several years ago I thought I would try to obtain some and asked the Governor if this might be OK. He emailed back to say as long as the prison was not expected to pay for them and they were for mains supply and not battery then he could see no reason why not. Having searched and found a Catholic charity which was prepared to fund four radios,

they had to be marked by security which all took six weeks before they arrived in the chaplaincy department. I numbered them from one to four and designed a form which the prisoner had to sign when he received the radio and sign again, once he no longer required it. I guess it is no surprise to anyone that they lasted six months, before going AWOL. I still get asked for a radio but at least I can now give the reply that I did indeed have a supply but “your predecessors walked off with them all.”

Smoking is a big issue in HMPs. During the last seven years the prison officers’ association achieved legislation to ban smoking on the wings but prisoners can still smoke inside their cells. There is now proposal that this, too, should be banned. As the cell is the only place a prisoner can smoke this proposed ban would not go down well at all....enough is enough. Not being able to vote is an issue, too, for some.

“Can’t do nofin’ in ‘ere, Miss.”

I hope that more Quakers will feel able to take on prison chaplaincy work. It’s challenging right enough but if you like a challenge it’s most rewarding work. I recommend strong shoes; a level of fitness which allows you to walk miles and climb up to three levels of landing and an openness and flexibility for ‘doing Quaker’ inside.

The prison environment is a community of “all sorts of ordinary people” (Geo.F): where there is care, kindness and thoughtfulness from prisoners, officers and other staff and it is very humbling work.

Faith, however it is practised in prison by anyone, displays a celebration of human existence: we all matter to God and our spiritual duty is to make sure we all fulfil our potential. The ‘doing Quaker’ in prison can bring the invisible into the light and by ‘doing’, chaplains are part of a creative force teasing out individual talents and gifts answering ‘that of God’ in everyone. There are numerous opportunities to be ‘patterns and examples’ within the prison environment which create conditions for the release of the divine spark from anyone.

“We know what we’ve done wrong. No loved ones here. Feel isolated. No mates/friends. It’s intimidating. That’s why it’s important to do church.”

Jools Saunders

HOPE FROM CANADA

Stories of Hope Behind Bars-From the newsletter of Friends in Canada

Ruth Martin and former inmate Mo Korchinski are co-editors on the new book, Arresting Hope.

From the newsletter of Friends in Canada

Arresting Hope, published last month by Inanna Publications, is a collection of poetry, stories, letters, interviews, fragments of conversations, reflections, memories, quotations, journal entries, creative nonfiction, and scholarly research. The book tells the story of one provincial prison in Canada where creative leadership fostered opportunities for transformation, and where research and writing contributed to healing. It focuses on five women—a prison doctor (Dr. Martin), a prison warden, a prison recreation therapist, a prison

educator, and a prison inmate — and their stories of grief, desire, and hope.

Dr. Martin, who worked part-time as a physician for 16 years in B.C. Correctional Centre medical clinics, is the Director of UBC's Collaborating Centre for Prison Health and Education (CCPHE).

Dr. Martin's collaborators on the book were Mo Korchinski, a former inmate who recently completed a bachelor's degree in social work and works as a research assistant with the CCPHE peer health mentoring program; Carl Leggo, a poet and Professor in UBC's Department of Language and Literacy Education; and Lynn Fels, an Associate Professor in Arts Education at Simon Fraser University.

At the CCPHE, Dr. Martin and Korchinski have recruited formerly incarcerated women to be peer health mentors for women coming out of provincial correctional centres and have carefully vetted resources to address their most urgent health and social needs during the first 72 hours after release — a critical period of time where women are most at risk of returning to their previous life.

The book includes some of Dr. Martin's journal entries from her time as a prison physician, and her exploration of, 'What is health?' for incarcerated women;

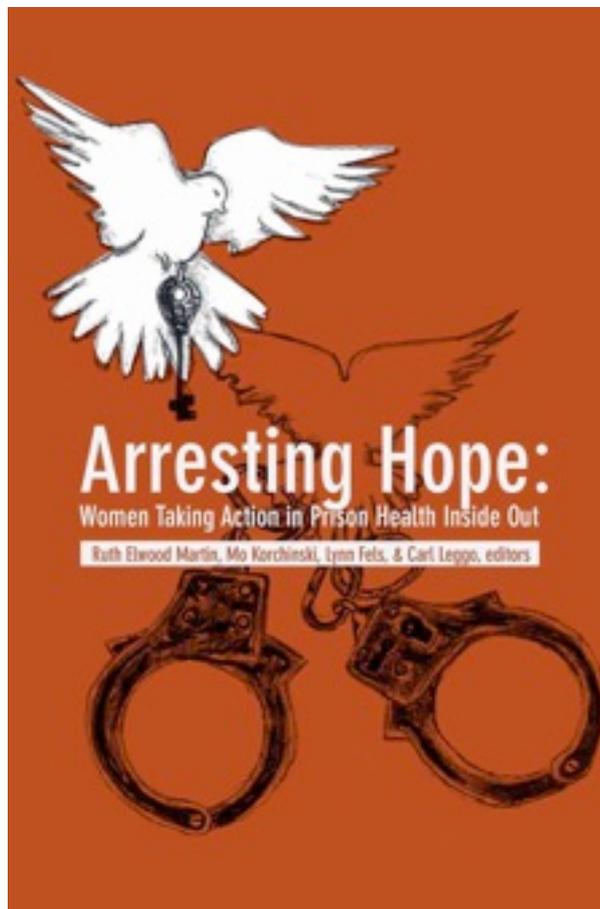
descriptions of how babies can live in prison; an explanation of the role of a prison recreation therapist; a discussion of the significance of indigenous education in Canadian prisons; and narratives of some incarcerated women, including Korchinski, and the transformations that they have undergone.

Arresting Hope conveys that prisons are not only places of punishment, marginalization, and trauma, but also places where people with difficult experiences can begin to compose stories full of healing, anticipation, communication, education, connection, and community.

"The prison warden encouraged people to work together to create a place of hope and repair," Dr. Martin says. Net proceeds from sales of Arresting Hope will support educational bursaries for women with incarceration experience and their children, and peer health mentoring for women as they transition out of custody.

This article was posted on the University of British Columbia, Faculty of Medicine website. It was brought to the editor's attention by Canadian Friends CFSC. CFSC and QUNO were involved with Arresting Hope in the drafting of new guidelines for the reinstated Mothers and Babies in Prison program in British Columbia.

Uni of British Columbia



THE POETRY PAGE

At The Centre - Victor Lodomoz

A single candle burned brightly, its flame flickering –
 innocence – pervaded the serenity of the place I had entered.
 Could it have been the incense from the flowers – freshly picked
 at the centre of the meeting the candle burning
 All sounds faded, insignificance
 Some seated, silent observing the sanctity, closed eyes, heads bowed, concentrated purpose,
 arriving at different times different spaces but open hearts and minds common to all
 Gathered together joining the worship of Cane who promised to come again.
 And so He Will. Promises fulfilled. Time is present. We pray for now.
 Faith is not timetabled. But we wait, willing, wanting – we are ready, gathered.
 Waiting for the hour, patient and penitent.
 Waiting for God's time.

Quaker Friends - Philip Ratcliffe

They are always there
 No matter what we do
 They support and try to understand
 But stick by through and through

They accept us with our faults
 They know we try to hide
 the worries and the troubles
 that we try to keep inside

They bring the meaning into life
 for with them we can share
 the ups and downs of prison life
 to which nothing can compare

We ask them for advice
 When we don't know what to do
 And they can turn the darkest skies
 To those of purest blue

So, you see friend these words
 Are written here for you
 Not to say you make miracles
 Just something that you do.



WHAT ABOUT THE 20%?

The figure of 20% refers to prisoners with Dyslexia and related conditions. The study that came up with this percentage was government-funded and covered a range of custodial establishments. It was carried out by the Learning & Skills Council and Dyslexia Action in 2005.

The 'related conditions' are Dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Disorder and Dyscalculia, known collectively as Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs). And the study concluded that just under 20% of prisoners had SpLDs to the extent that they were unable to take advantage of available education and employment opportunities.

This is a huge cohort and one for which NOMS has failed to cater. I have always maintained that, with the right kind of help, this disadvantaged population can succeed and that their difficulties should be addressed when they have time on their hands – 'inside'. At our 2014 QICJ conference I launched *Releasing Potential*, a guide which incorporated five key stages which, together, could release the potential of prisoners with SpLDs. The stages are outlined below.

Identify: identify SpLDs through screening – and assess them both for problem areas and for strengths, leading to the drawing up of a 'learner profile' document

Encourage: raise self-esteem and encourage self-expression through access to the Arts and by positive personal interactions

Support: fund and deliver appropriate support, based on an understanding of SpLDs in all areas of training, education and work preparation

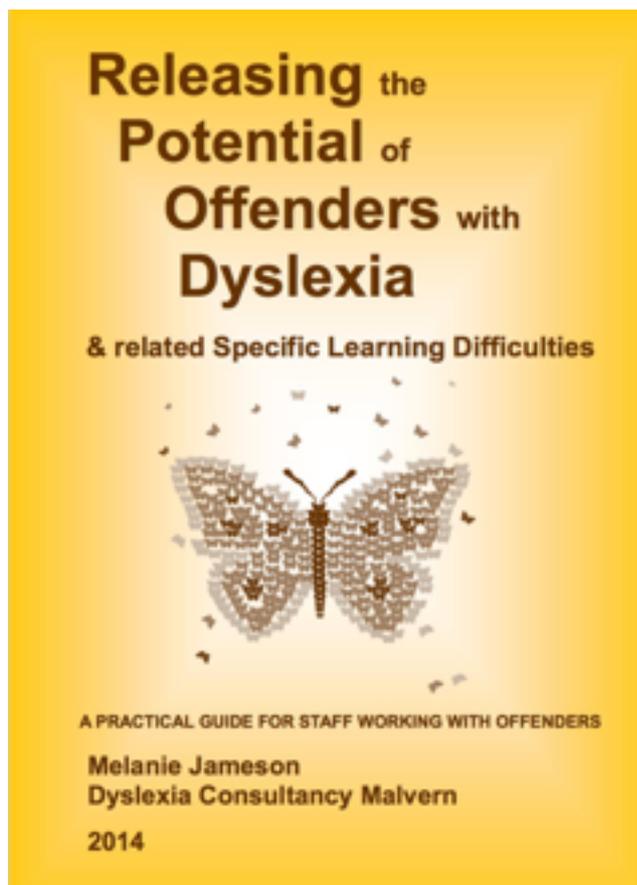
Promote: promote an SpLD-friendly environment and disseminate good practice

Enable: enable prisoners with SpLDs to take advantage of compensation through technology and disability-related entitlements. Signpost them to appropriate specialists (such as opticians trained in Visual Stress) on release.

I am finally making some inroads in the UK through membership of the Prisoner Learning Alliance which works with the Offender Learning & Skills Service (OLASS) but feel that I may find more fertile ground abroad at the conference of the European Prison Education Association. This will give me the chance to talk to colleagues from various prison education services who, like OLASS, need to show better results for rehabilitation.

A strong argument is that an approach based on good practice for people with SpLDs can





also be successful with others who have not benefited from conventional education and training. In both cases, raising self-esteem is an essential precursor to engagement – and the reason why the Arts must never be cut out of prison provision.

Releasing the Potential of Offenders with Dyslexia & related Specific Learning Difficulties (2014) is a practical tool for staff working with offenders in custody or the community. It will enable staff and management to maximise their engagement with this diverse population, by supporting them to tackle their difficulties, value their abilities and develop coping strategies.

It is one of a series of resources, listed below, which can be downloaded freely from my website www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk or purchased as hard copies.

A much shorter read is KIWIs, which provide a quick overview of each Specific Learning Difficulty together with a few general points about terminology and Visual Stress. The acronym KIWI stands for Key Facts, Impact of the Specific Learning Difficulty, Ways of Working and Information & Links. There is also a version for staff working with young people.

The final two resources on SpLDs relate principally to courts and justice processes, the first is for justice staff, the second for users of the justice system.

1. Coping with Courts & Tribunals: A Guide for People with Specific Learning Differences (M Jameson, fully revised 2014)

Chapters include police custody, legal aid and sources of advice, bankruptcy proceedings, jury service and alternative approaches to resolving disputes. This guide incorporates all the recent changes to legal aid, tribunal fees and sources of support.

2. Good Practice Guide for Justice Professionals. Guidelines for supporting users of the Justice System who have Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties (M Jameson & the British Dyslexia Association, revised 2013)

This Guide presents the challenges arising out of SpLDs in justice settings and outlines good practice in accommodating them. There is an emphasis on interview situations such as court / tribunal hearings and police custody.

I hope Friends can help spread awareness of these resources in order to help dismantle the barriers to justice and understanding experienced by people with Specific Learning Difficulties.

Melanie Jameson

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE - JULY 2015

This has been a quiet period in terms of membership activity, with no new members and no resignations since my last update. However, the following names should now be deleted from the Membership List: Matthew Biggs, Michael Langford, Margaret Mortimer, Sue Myers and Anthony Wilson.

**“Friends,
please
remember that
QICJ has no
independent
income: our
finances
depend on
your
subscriptions”**

This leaves us with a total membership now reduced to 140, of whom 35 (i.e. a quarter of our members) have yet to pay their subs. for the current year. Please contact me if you are not sure if you are one of them, and Friends, please remember that QICJ has no independent income: our finances depend on your subscriptions, plus any small surplus we may (but do not always) make at our conferences, and any donations we may receive. (Regarding the latter, I am very aware that a number of you do pay more than your suggested subscription, which is very much appreciated, and thank you). I hope this reminder will stir the consciences of those to whom it applies and produce speedy results!

For your information, Mid Essex Area Quaker Meeting has taken over as the subscribing corporate member for their local Criminal Justice Group, from Chelmsford Local Meeting (which is itself a part of Mid Essex A.M.) Contact is via Chris Macallen, Clerk to their CJ Group (contact details from myself until the next updated issue of the Membership List)

Finally, please do keep up all your efforts to encourage other members or Quaker groups/Meetings to join QICJ, especially in the light of our currently somewhat reduced membership.

Ann Jacob

YES, LOOKING IN THEIR EARS IS IMPORTANT

A Saturday Seminar from Leeds looks at child sexual exploitation

I couldn't think why a paediatrician would be examining the ears of a child possibly subjected to neglect. But apparently ears are often damaged by blows – perforated eardrums, infections are all signs of neglect. This fact was only one of the many amazing things the audience learned from the speakers at the Saturday Seminar on Child Sexual Exploitation.

Most importantly we were told that such exploitation is widespread throughout the whole of the UK and what we know currently is the tip of a very large iceberg, Significantly the children and young people – both male as well as female - are generally from ordinary, stable homes, not, as the media tend to portray them, youngsters who have been in care or from certain deprived communities.

Nicola, our speaker from the charity 'Just Whistle: Safe and Sound Derby', illustrated her talk by telling us the true story of Sally (not her real name of course) who at twelve was allowed to spend time with her girlfriends in the local Shopping Mall as a way of giving her a taste of independence. There they were befriended by some 'cool' boys (older but all under 20). Initially they all chatted together and stayed together until one asked to be her boyfriend. Their relationship developed very, very slowly and Sally showed no signs of misbehaviour or truanting. By the time she was 13 her boyfriend had begun to press her for sex and although she said no he started to dominate and manipulate her and her behaviour did begin to deteriorate - staying out late, missing school, arguing. At 14 she had run away from home and was living with him in a horrible flat where other men came and went. There she was raped by him and then by others both there and in various hotels and flats across the Midlands. Sally was full of shame and guilt and was in fear of her life. She felt she could tell no-one, added to that her phone had been taken away.



What did she do? She took to wearing one shoe, even outdoors. Why? Because she wanted someone, anyone, to ask her why she was just wearing one shoe. No-one did until she was taken to A and E after a gang rape and there an insightful trainee nurse asked her why she was wearing one shoe. Sally told her. The safeguarding protocol was put in place and Sally was eventually referred to Nicola's charity. She is now 16 and gradually getting better but has dark, dark days. Her education was disrupted but she is now on an access course. Her family's life was ruined. They spent time, money and energy trying to find her, no-one would listen. Her mother lost her job from having so much time off and ended up with depression. The repercussions go on and on.

Sally had been to A and E and various sexual health clinics four times before anyone asked her pertinent questions. This is where the story of dealing with sexually exploited victims was taken up by our second speaker, Ruth, a paediatrician specialising in child protection.

Ruth's emphasis was on challenging such responses to an injury as 'I walked into a door'; GPs not asking a fourteen year old how she came to have a urinary infection; Pharmacists not asking why a young girl needs the morning after pill; school nurses not asking why a child's nits are so prolific their hair can't be combed. This questioning attitude can only come with training and as Ruth pointed out doctors have a huge amount of mandatory training per year – child abuse recognition is low on the list. Never-the-less symptoms are picked up and criminal proceedings do happen. There is however still a need to improve the awareness of child sexual exploitation amongst the judiciary; the adversarial system can be very hard on victims.

There is an increasing amount of cooperation and sharing of knowledge between the police

and the health and social work agencies – not enough but it all helps. Yet the most significant question asked at the seminar was (and is) “Why do the perpetrators do it?” That must be for a future seminar. In the meantime we can all be more aware, can alert others in our families, communities and religious bodies. “So far” said Nicola “we are failing to safeguard our children and young people”.

Philomena O’Hare

Your Committee Members for 2015 are: Simon Ewart; Ann Jacob (Clerk and Membership Sec.); Judy Kessler; Andrew Lane; Janet Lynch (Treasurer); Marian Liebmann; Deborah Mitchell; Wendy Rose; Carmel Schmid (Newsletter Editor) and Paula Harvey (CCJS - co-opted member).

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