

QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

AUTUMN 2021 EDITORIAL

It is with great excitement that I can introduce you to a bumper Autumn edition of the Quakers in Criminal Justice Newsletter. I received so many submission for this edition, I had to add an extra 4 pages to our normal print run and even at that still didn't have space for an article which I'd been collating with Marian and Richard, so that will have to wait until the Winter edition.

Currently there is some uncertainty with regard to the ongoing involvement of BYM in the field of Criminal Justice and so this has influenced the focus of some of the material. We have articles both from Melanie Jameson and from Oliver Robertson at QPSW on the topic. There is a large section highlighting the work of Quaker Prison Chaplains, who are so central to the coal face of our Quaker presence in our prisons.

I have always seen the contributions from those who have been in custody previously, or who are currently in custody, as some of the most compelling submissions I have the privilege of receiving in this role as editor. This edition contains poetry and recollections, a powerful letter and other great contributions from our members who have experienced the criminal justice system first hand.

There are a number of reviews of TV shows, talks, conferences and theatrical performances all related to criminal justice matters and contributors have helpfully provided links to further information related to their contributions for you to read later at your leisure.

I am also pleased to include a great article on police interviewing and mental health from Mark Read who you will recognise as our former co-editor at QICJ. You read this on page 21.

There are even some brief updates on our "in person".... yes I know.... it's an exciting prospect... up-coming 2022 conference at the beautiful venue of Ammerdown.

Thank you to all our fantastic contributors once again.

Jonathan Lamb Editor



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DEAR QICJ



Dear QICJ

It seems there will soon be consultation regarding community health care. I hope it will include mental as well as physical health. How could that be put on the agenda?

At a rough guess it costs about £1243 a week per prisoner in this country.(1) We accept that this cost to the public is inevitable. If, instead, that money had been spent on available advice, help and encouragement during a prisoner’s early life and schooling, would he/she have not ended up in prison? Could that expenditure be reallocated in the future to reduce antisocial behaviour and imprisonment?(2)

There seem to be positive moves at the moment but not coordinated. Kate Green (Shadow Education Secretary) spoke on the Today programme this morning of the need for learning social skills in schools. Probation services are being returned from being outsourced so could be used to offer real potential to short sentence and early release prisoners.

I think the drug treatment services were also outsourced but that needs a wholly different approach as the drugs trade is a very successful business. There seems to have been a diminution of mental health care provision: hospital, community mental health, even Surestart.

Examples that could be incorporated into a total health care system:
 assistance and advice where needed before and after birth, support for one parent

families, childcare when needed, positive support in schools for disruptive children with a wider curriculum to encourage all talents, so that everyone gains some approbation, local social activities available for all ages, which would take current pressure off neighbours and the emergency services.

In friendship,

Janet Arthur (Member of Derby Local Meeting).

(1)Total cost of prison system 4.37 billion pounds 2019/20, divided by total number of prisoners 67.6 thousand in 2020, which incidentally compares to £871 per week for a pupil resident at Repton School.

(2)This would give an opportunity to transform imprisonment on the pattern seen in Norway.

Dear QICJ

I'm attaching a link to a really interesting piece by a friend, Toby Jones, about peace-making. It makes a number of references to the work of our Friend, John Lampen and his work in Northern Ireland, and I wondered if you may be able to include a link to it in the newsletter. <https://aeon.co/essays/peacebuilding-is-an-artform-crafted-by-divided-peoples>

Best wishes

Jennifer Armstrong

(note from editor: A genuinely great read. Thank you for sharing this Jennifer)

Dear QIJC

I've been wondering....

As a society, do we spend too much time/money/energy on dealing with the consequences of poor/negative behaviour and not enough on supporting wanted/positive behaviour?

Just as we find increasingly ingenious and expensive ways of 'defending' the warlike and thus, by default, neglecting to invest in peace-building.

Behavioural psychologists have always been clear that in child-rearing and dog training, doing ones best to ignore unwanted

behaviour and on the other hand, praising to the skies the wanted behaviour wanted.

I wonder what could happen to reverse this?

in peace

Brian

JUSTICE FOR ALL THE PLANET

Martin Wright

Environmental campaigners are proposing a new crime: ecocide. It is defined as destruction of the natural environment by deliberate or negligent human action. Proponents argue that we should not be so anthropocentric: we should regard damage to the earth, animals, trees and rivers as comparable to harm to humans. But then again, dumping toxic chemicals, poisoning the water supply, shortening people's working life or their whole life, and causing them to be born with disabilities - all of these are offences against human rights as well as against the environment.

On 3-4 June 2021 a workshop was held (on Zoom) by the European Forum for Restorative Justice (Leuven, Belgium) and the International Institute for the Sociology of Law (Oñati, Spain), on Environmental Restorative Justice (ERJ): a new justice framework for preventing and addressing environmental harms. About 40 people took part, from every continent. Subjects tackled included oil spills in the Philippines and Nigeria, an environmental disaster in Italy, mercury poisoning of Minamata Bay in Japan, colonisation of the Sami people of northern Norway, wildlife conflicts in South Africa, deglaciation in the Peruvian Andes, and more. There was also discussion of methods of mediation, and how it relates to criminal justice.

One question was: if a person or a corporation were to be convicted of a crime of ecocide, what should the sentence be? it was suggested that punishments such as fines or imprisonment would not be helpful: it would be more use if the consequence were cleaning up the damage caused, paying compensation to those affected, and taking part in an inquiry to search for ways of preventing similar disasters in future, which is what many victims want. This would educate the offending corporation, and others, and show them that doing the right thing was in their own best interests, especially if they claim to operate on ESG (environmental, social and good governance) principles. It would be more effective as a preventive strategy than deterrence: the probability of being caught is the greatest deterrent, as criminologists have long understood. The same approach could be applied in conventional criminal justice: as an alternative process, or embedded after conviction and before sentence, as the basis for a re-think of sentencing and prevention policy.

My own presentation (with co-author Ulrike Tabbert) was entitled 'Bhopal 1984: the benefits of doing the right thing'. It began with a short slideshow <https://youtu.be/hh7z9KoS-qw> and



invited people who would like to help to visit the website: <https://actionforbhopal.org/send-a-letter/>

The paper focused on the world's worst industrial disaster, in India nearly four decades ago. It ended with a proposal for the forthcoming climate change conference, COP 26, in Glasgow in November 2021:

- The scope of the conference should be broadened, to include not only climate change but eliminating toxic waste, with Bhopal as the prime case.

- Not only environmental issues but human rights should be included (clean air and clean water, and therefore health) with special reference to the impact on women and the causation of birth defects.

- These principles should apply not only to the future but to remediating pollution caused by past activities.

- The proposal to create a crime of ecocide should be implemented, The sanction should be that the polluter pays, including compensation and the cost of cleaning up. Where there has been a change in the ownership of the polluter, the principle of successor liability should apply. There should be an expectation that the corporation will co-operate with an inquiry with a view to preventing future disasters.



SHADD MARUNA'S TALK

Jennifer Armstrong



During lockdown Circles SW has offered its volunteers a series of excellent online talks. The latest was by Shadd Maruna, professor of Justice and Human Development at Queen's University, Belfast. Much of his work focuses on desistance – the process of reducing, or abstaining from, crime for those with a previous pattern of offending.

In relation to most types of offending it appears that about 85% of people do desist at around 28 years of age. We generally know the reasons for this. Maturity usually brings more stable relationships and family structures, more secure housing and more motivation to find employment. These factors engender feelings of responsibility which tend to reduce the propensity to offend. By this age, people have usually separated from peers with whom they had offended. Criminal history can usually be left behind.

It is not the same for sex offenders. They too may have matured but their trajectory to a changed life is different: they have a much greater hill to climb to re-build their lives and be absorbed into society. Licence conditions/being

on the sex register mean they can face serious problems finding secure housing. Many jobs are denied to them. And whereas surveys show that a high proportion of the general public believes that most offenders can go on to lead better lives, this is not the case for sex offenders. Here, the public are far less forgiving, often taking the view that 'once an offender, always an offender' - even though statistics show that re-offending rates within this group are very significantly lower.

Finding employment, often the key to that new start and to acceptance in society, can be particularly hard. Circle volunteers are only too aware of these difficulties and barriers. My own experience in different Circles makes me concerned that the boundaries regarding what work is permissible are not always applied logically or consistently. Shadd Maruna commented that people working in Circles are perhaps the most forgiving group in the criminal justice system. The danger here is that we can be seen, incorrectly, as being naïve or too soft. We are Circles of Support and Accountability, and that last word is as important as the support.

Academic research can often seem far removed from our day to day, hands-on experience. But Shadd Maruna's talk was helpful in reminding us that, in seeking to make changes to their lives, sex offenders have a different, more challenging and probably longer road to travel than other sorts of offenders.

If you are interested to learn more about Shadd Maruna's work on desistance, there are several YouTube interviews with him.

BYM & CRIMINAL JUSTICE WORK

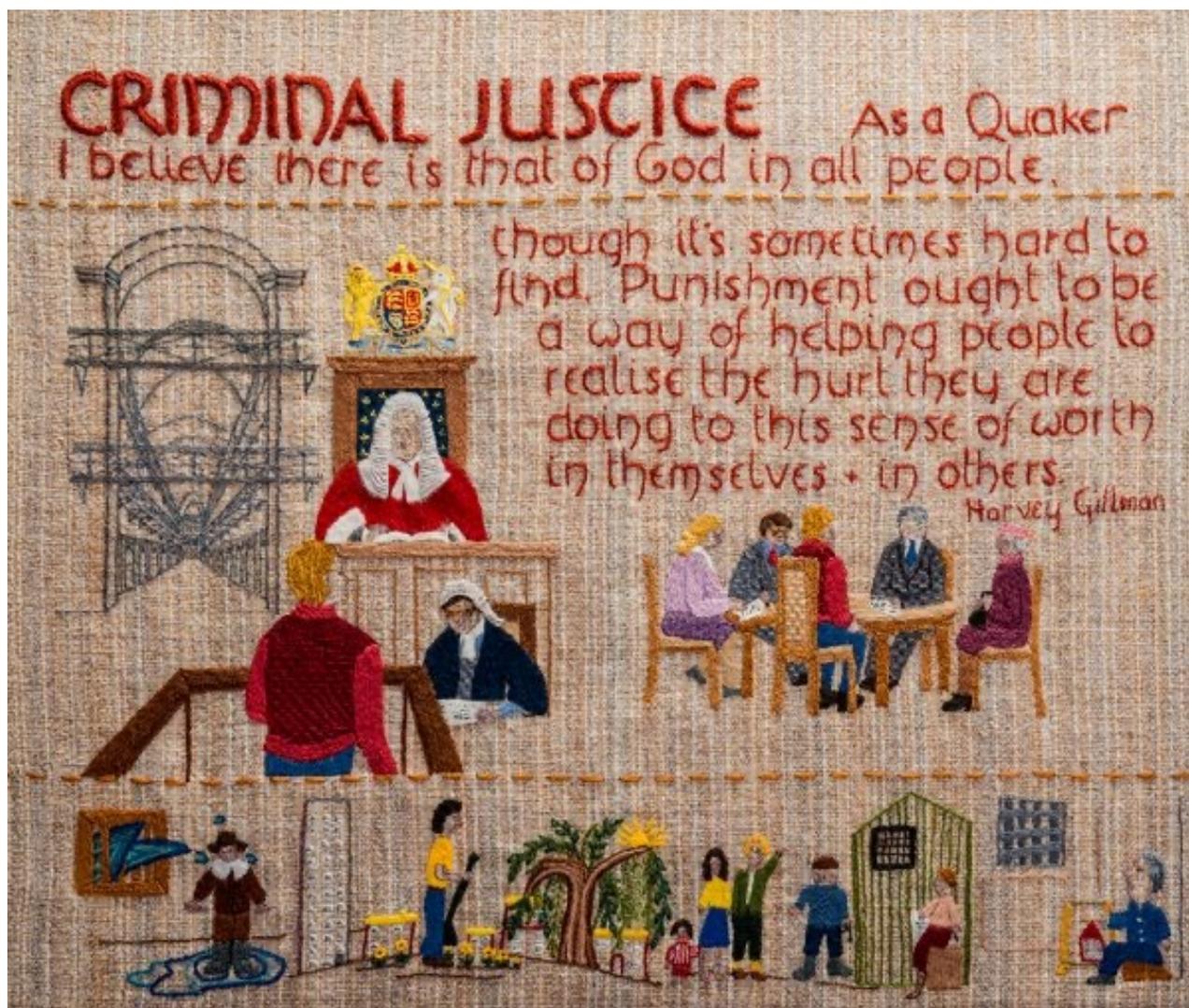
Melanie Jameson QICJ Co-Clerk

HAS BYM DROPPED ITS CENTRALLY MANAGED CRIMINAL JUSTICE WORK?

Many of you will have been wondering about the future of centrally funded criminal justice work within BYM. This has certainly taxed the QICJ Committee! Along with the various sub-committees within QPSW who work in this area and especially our much-valued staff member.

The story so far

My investigation into what was going on originated when I noticed that the ‘tree and branch’ diagram showing areas of BYM priorities (circulated as a reminder to help fund Quaker work) lacked a criminal justice ‘leaf’. It took a number of phone calls and zoom meetings with the Head of Worship & Witness, and other senior staff, together with the clerk of the Social Justice Committee, to start to get a handle on what was going on. It all links back to the QPSW



Restructuring Strategy 2021-25, which, identifies QPSW's priorities as Peace & Peacebuilding and Sustainability & Climate Change. This Strategy had already been approved by Meeting for Sufferings (MfS), along with an important document on Simpler Structures from BYM Trustees, but neither explicitly stated what would be discontinued. This would have required MfS Reps to read between the lines, which they unfortunately failed to do.

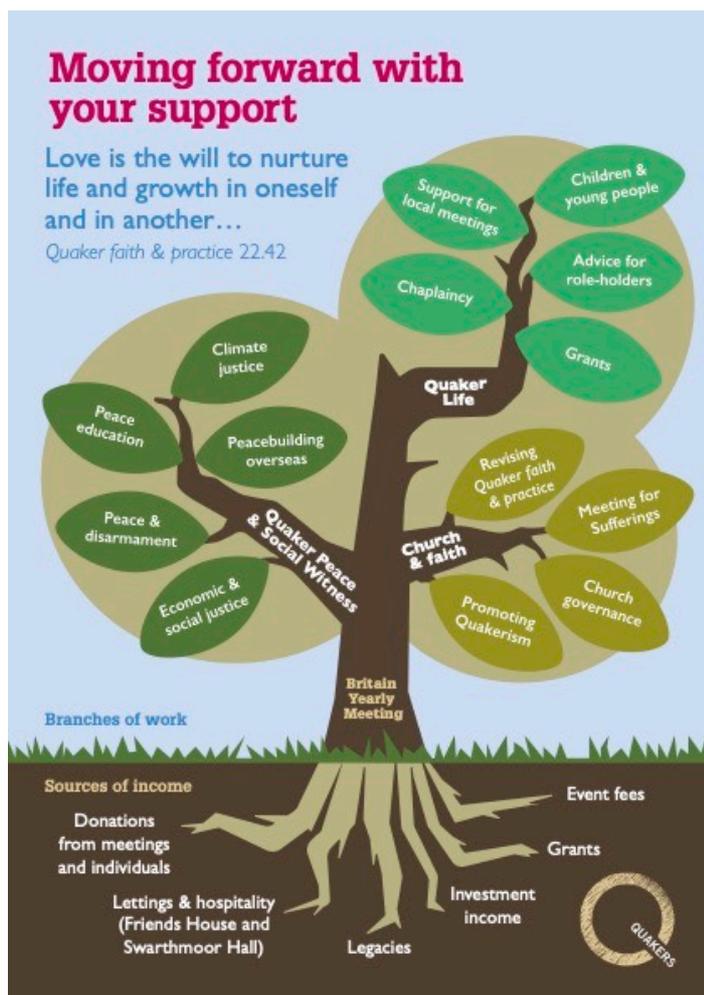
Moreover, the Social Justice Committee (which in recent years has combined criminal justice and refugee/sanctuary work) had been told it would be laid down and been given the brief of 'working out how criminal justice work can be done differently' – a phrase we were to hear many times. No programme, no staff member – and this is a major upset. In addition to the distress of possible redundancy for the individual concerned, expertise, pieces of work and networks built up over many years in criminal justice would be lost to Friends. An example this staff member's invaluable contribution to interfaith work on preventing sexual abuse in church settings and promoting Restorative Justice.

Despite QPSW Central Committee (CC) Minutes, QICJ was not 'engaged' and informed of these developing plans, although criminal justice is what we are all about – and we have the status of Quaker Recognised Body. When I have directly asked if it is expected that volunteers take over the many roles held by our staff member, we are told that this is not the case.

Instead, we are assured that 'a watching brief' would be maintained on criminal justice issues. But by whom? With what aim? If a concern arose, what would be the lines of communication and oversight? Who would devote time to the necessary background work and research – we cannot expect our Advocacy Manager / Parliamentary Engagement Officer to take this on.



I then started to unpick how this had come about: my conclusion is that our Recording Clerk has long advocated renewal within our Society, variously referred to as 'Whoosh' and 'Vibrancy' and finally realised by the employment of regional Local Development Workers (LDWs) for 4 days a week. This has all been carefully thought through. Although the QPSW changes, summarised by doing 'fewer things better', have been planned for some time, the loss of income from Friends House due to the pandemic was unexpected. Yet the employment of LDWs has proceeded apace while the futures of central staff are at risk – an unfortunate juxtaposition. QICJ maintains that our staff member is the essential lynch pin, strengthening, furthering, overseeing and co-ordinating Quakers' criminal justice witness.



It was at this stage that we contacted you, our membership, with the request to raise the issue of ‘de-funding’ long-standing criminal justice work without adequate communication and consultation. The resulting Area Meeting Minutes came before MfS on July 10 with an agenda item on QPSW changes; key points were made by various MfS Reps whose AM Minutes were included in the papers in advance. An additional session was arranged a few days previously with the clerks of QPSW CC, to focus on (1) the processes that had been followed and (2) the various QPSW strands of work. What did we learn from this and the following MfS?

First and foremost came confirmation that the employment of Local Development Workers has now been paused (so far 8 out of 14 are in place) until September ‘at least’. Clerks of QPSW CC Clerks and senior staff acknowledged that communication could have been better and that they want to listen to Friends. One way will be through workshops, more of which will now take place, at BYM, and in roadshows continuing into the autumn. So, it appears that ‘working out how criminal justice work can be done differently’ will be considered by a wider

circle of Friends. We can take heart in the assurance that this is a ‘developing situation’ with the detail as yet undecided. MfS was told that nothing will be discarded until a better way to do it has been determined. The need to keep new structures under review has also been recognised.

Not all of this concerns QPSW, of course. A cause very dear to QICJ is support for Quaker Prison Chaplains (QPCs), situated within ‘Quaker Life’. Most of these 62 individuals have been faithfully undertaking demanding work throughout the pandemic while their staff member was furloughed, only to find that she had reluctantly asked for voluntary redundancy when faced with compulsory redundancy in the autumn. Earlier in the process it had been suggested that a Local Development Worker could ‘pick up’ this role – but this is a highly specialised post including statutory responsibilities laid out by the Ministry of Justice and dealing with problems arising in chaplaincy work. QPCs are not ‘a self-regulating community’, working un-supported, as stated in the BYM Trustees’ Simpler Structures document! All of this has now been recognised and an appointment made, albeit someone with no experience of working in prisons.

So, where are we now?

At this stage, the onus is on the various QPSW sub-committees, Friends with long-standing expertise in criminal justice work, and QICJ, to present a viable blueprint of how Quaker criminal justice work could be undertaken in future. To my way of thinking, it will all become very fragmented or – even worse – will dry up altogether, without the co-ordinating role and expert input of our staff member – a point that my MfS Rep made during the last session (but which was not noted or addressed).

FOCUS ON PRISON CHAPLAINS

Simon Dell, Lucy & A Friend in Membership of his Local Meeting

Given the current uncertainty and confusion around the future of BYM involvement in the field of Criminal Justice and the central role which our Quaker Prison Chaplains play in the coal face of Quaker prison outreach, it seems timely to highlight their work by collating these three articles together.

“GOING INSIDE” – WOODBROOKE TRAINING FOR QUAKER PRISON CHAPLAINS

Simon Dell

The “Going Inside” Woodbrooke training this year was a wonderful start to a new phase of my life; with like-minded Friends embarking on the role of chaplaincy within prisons. Some were, like me, newly nominated and going through an induction process. Some were already engaged within their chaplaincy teams so that experience and understanding was shared by us all on the course,

which was led by Judy and Diana – both experienced Prison Chaplains in their own establishments.

‘I can now walk under ‘Dooms-Dale’ archway without trepidation’

My own nomination as Quaker Prison Chaplain came during these challenging and changing pandemic times and at the time of writing I await ‘going inside’ and all that entails. ‘Waiting’ is what we do well and my awaiting is an opportunity to reflect upon my teenage years living within sight of Launceston Castle in Cornwall and its ‘Dooms-Dale’ prison archway.

Launceston is where George Fox was imprisoned for eight months in 1656 and from where he sent out his stirring message that lives on for us today in QF&P 19.32 and includes the well-known words: "Be patterns, be examples....." I frequently walked, with a degree of trepidation, through the archway at the ‘Dooms-Dale’, aware of its history and links to the early Quaker movement.



As Friends we are all very familiar with those words of Fox but the paragraph ends, for me just one sentence too soon “.....answering that of God in everyone”. For me and I am sure for many prison chaplains, the next sentence speaks to me so vibrantly – “Whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you”.

The weeks of engagement with other Friends during the ‘Going Inside’ course was an essential opportunity to be introduced to the practical concepts of prison chaplaincy; irrespective of faith group or belief, but more so it was an opportunity to mould those practicalities with ‘Finding that of God in everyone’ whether in residents, staff or visitors. A number of really significant moments came during the discussions and interactions, as well as the reflection and study in between.

A really engaging way of sharing thoughts on the course was in the construction of a Haiku - a form of Japanese poetry made of short, unrhymed lines that conjures up natural imagery. I thought and played with words, as did we all. It was time, I decided, that the long held negative images of the ‘Dooms-Dale’ needed to be put to bed and settled for good. One of the many efforts I toyed with has done just that:



Dooms-Dale walls are grim
But Fox's words echo still
Upholding the Light

The last session of the course is the one which will remain deep within. It was the opportunity to speak with a Quaker who had served a prison sentence. She spoke articulately, clearly, with passion and great clarity. We were able to ask her questions about her time within and since. One thing I will always remember is she made us all aware that the presence of a chaplain in a prison could unknowingly mean the difference between choosing life and death for that inmate, when sometimes they have nothing else to consider.

One thing shines equally as bright – I can now look forward to strolling through Launceston Castle grounds with our grandchildren and passing through the ‘Dooms-Dale’ archway without trepidation. It has been replaced by an uplifting sense of unconditional service and non-judgmental purpose.

TRANSCRIPT OF LUCY'S TESTIMONY

Lucy

During the final session of this year's QPC training course: Going Inside participants were joined by Lucy to talk about her experience of being Quaker in prison and the support she received from chaplains there.

My first night in prison I arrived after everyone else had been locked up. I'd always feared hearing that door clang behind me but actually it was a real comfort. The cell was totally grim and I don't think I stopped crying. I was quite certain that I wouldn't come out again. I felt too terrified to face anybody.

I was very badly bullied and abused by other residents so I spent a lot of time in fear. There are hierarchies in prison and if you happen to be judged at the bottom, some see you as fair game. I was nervous right up to my last day. So it can be a very frightening place and I recognised the fear that others had. They feel there's no-one on their side and this is where the chaplaincy is so, so important because anything that's said is confidential except if there's a safeguarding or security issue. After I'd been there about two weeks the baptist chaplain came to my cell and sat down with me and at that point I poured out my heart to him. It was the first time I felt that I was speaking and being believed. It was a huge relief to be able to unburden myself to a chaplain.

I registered Quaker but it took a few months to organise a Quaker chaplain and in the meantime I attended the weekly Christian service in the chapel. I realised the chapel was a sanctuary and the chaplains were a

benign presence with the time to sit down and listen. As the only Quaker, I know that I was so privileged to be able to talk on an almost weekly basis with the Quaker chaplain. And during lockdown chaplains went round the prison visiting everyone twice a week. Those few minutes with them were so important during 23 hours of lockdown.



They also supported us in bereavement. I had two bereavements during the lockdown. My parents-in-law died within a few months of each other. I wasn't able to attend my mother-in-law's funeral but they did make it possible to watch my father-in-law's online which is absolutely incredible. Prisoners have no online access whatsoever. It was very important to me.

While I was there, tragically there was a suicide and the chaplains immediately gave incredible support to everyone all over the prison because something like that doesn't just affect next-door neighbours; it affects everybody, including the staff. The chaplains also held a service in remembrance of that person. And when anniversaries came round [of birthdays or deaths], it was possible to ask for a candle-lighting in the chapel and spend a few minutes in private to hold that person in the Light.

In prison it is very hard to maintain a sense of self-worth because of the way the system functions. The fact that you go to hospital hand-cuffed to an officer and go to the toilet in front of them, it seems to suppress you and put you in your place. But a chaplain sees you as a human being, capable of good (because there was so much good amongst residents in prison amid the horrendous stuff), and the more they were valued and respected, the better they behaved!

Thank You in advance for all that I know you'll be doing. I really can't convey how much difference it will make to people's lives. Sometimes you won't realise it but it can make the difference to surviving that night. I mean that. Just the fact that you've had that conversation with someone can make that difference.

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QUAKER CHAPLAIN INSIDE

A Friend in Membership of his Local Meeting

Three years ago I was drawn to join a small team of Quaker Prison Chaplaincy Supporters. On completion of security checks I began visiting a prison where I met the Quaker chaplains. In the chaplains' office I encountered chaplains of all faiths and was impressed by the fellowship shared. On one occasion I was invited to attend Muslim Friday Prayers and meet the worshippers afterwards.

The Quaker Meetings I join are attended by men who've found an expression of faith they are able to relate to, their encounter with Quakerism being through the ministry of the Quaker Chaplains.

Robert was a regular attender in Membership. He brought with him his much-thumbed copy of “Quaker Faith and Practice”, stuffed with bookmarks and notes indicating the relevance he found in its pages.

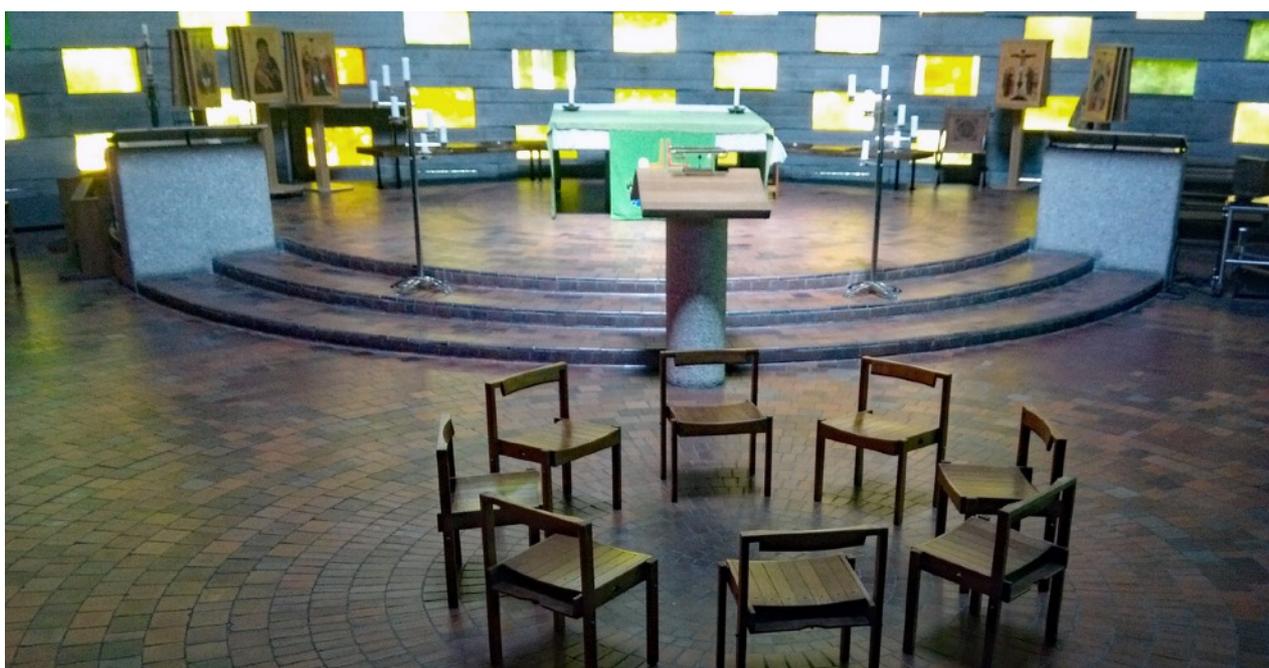
Despite the certainty he had committed a serious crime many years before, in the many conversations I had with Robert my respect for him increased as well as my admiration for his contribution to the daily life of his fellow residents. Along the way I also saw examples of his creative talents, ranging from embroidery to graphics and delightful objects made from card.

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prison

In my conversations with many of the men, the truth of the Quaker belief “There is that of God in everyone” was confirmed for me. I learned not to define them by what had brought them to prison, but to understand that a man who had killed someone, for instance, is not a ‘murderer’, but someone who had once killed another, possibly in a unique and certainly tragic circumstance.

After I’d started visiting the prison Robert was diagnosed with a terminal illness. Throughout his decline he refused to allow his illness to dominate his days. Conversations during his decline heightened my respect for him. As he readied himself for death, through his spoken ministry in our meetings, he made peace with his past and those he had hurt. Robert continued to be supported by the Quaker Chaplains right up to the end of his life with the main chaplain sang gently to him as he died in hospital.

Robert’s Funeral Meeting took place in the nearby QMH where Friends had welcomed him into membership. At the funeral I joined an assembly of folk in the Meeting House including Robert’s closest relatives, other Friends, a few prison staff and the chaplains. Robert’s coffin arrived and was placed in the circle of those present. A potent sight was Robert’s stuffed copy of “Quaker Faith and Practice” placed on top of his coffin. There



followed a warm and gentle Meeting, during which Robert's relatives, with others, offered spoken ministry.

To mark Robert's death in the prison the chaplain arranged a Memorial Meeting and many took the opportunity to offer spoken Ministry. When all fell quiet and the Meeting might be concluded, one of Robert's oldest friends unexpectedly stood and offered his in affectionate and moving terms. It was my privilege to conclude the Memorial Meeting with words that had ended Robert's funeral:

**Into the darkness and warmth of the earth
We lay you down
Into the sadness and smiles of our memories
We lay you down
Into the cycle of living and dying and rising again
We lay you down
May you rest in peace, in fulfilment, in love
Into the freedom of wind and sunshine
We let you go
Into the dance of the stars and the planets
We let you go
Into the wind's breath and the hands of the star maker
We let you go**

Robert's ashes are buried in the Meeting House Peace Garden.

JOURNEYMEN - BACK ON THE ROAD

Lynn Morris & William Waddilove

Here we have collated two articles on the Journeyman Theatre who many of you may remember from their powerful and challenging performance at our previous conference in Woodbrooke. The first is an article from Lynn Morris (one of the duo who make up the company) and the second is a review by William Waddilove of "The Bundle", one of two productions Journeyman Theatre are currently touring with.

JOURNEYMAN ARE BACK ON THE ROAD

Lynn Morris

For those of you that know nothing about us, Dave and I are Journeyman Theatre. We're a professional small scale company, specialising in human rights theatre, and we're frequently called upon by organisations to develop dramas based on real life stories which help raise

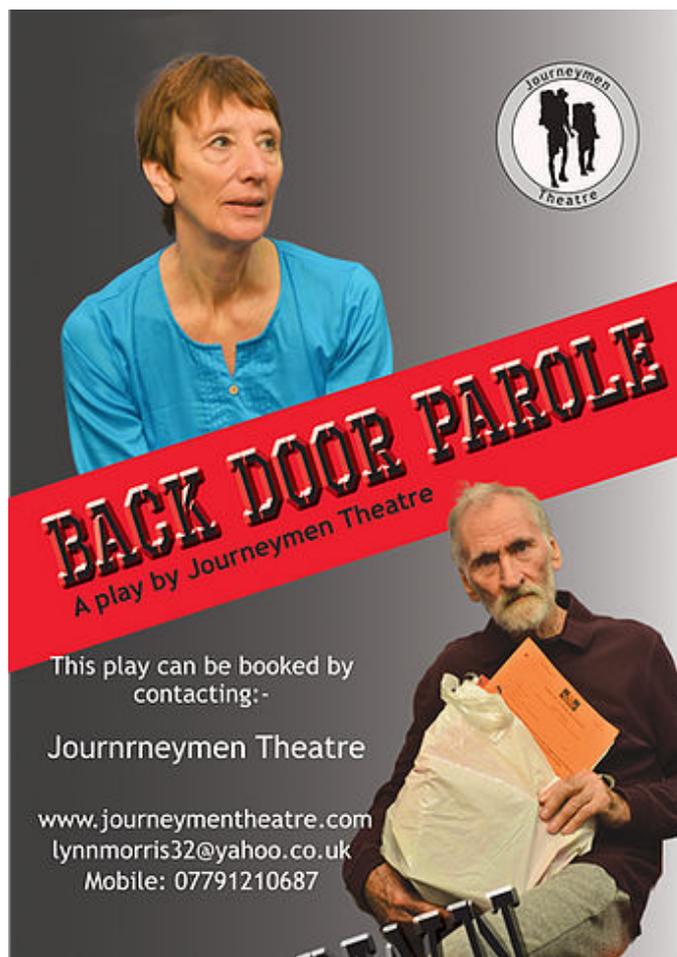
awareness and stimulate conversation about difficult issues. As we're also West Midlands-based Quakers, we regard our work as central to our Quaker beliefs.

We've been in existence for over a decade now and tour our work nationally throughout the UK. We'll travel anywhere within reason, play in any space provided (it certainly doesn't need to be a theatre) and to any number of people, large or small. Because of the generous support given to us by our local Quaker Meeting, we're able to offer our productions free of charge, with any ticket money or donations going to uphold the work of relevant charitable causes.

The two productions currently touring are *The Bundle* (the true story of a Chechen woman fleeing with her three children to safety in the UK and here, experiencing the hostile environment of Home Office immigration policy) and *Back Door Parole*. The latter production, launched only months before the first lock down, explores the closed world of the ageing prison population in the UK's jails. As with all of our work, it is based on extensive research and first hand accounts, and, in particular, it highlights the importance of the chaplaincy service within the prison system.

Details of all of our available plays, along with reviews, images and links to filmed versions available on Vimeo, are to be found on our brand new website. Please take a look as there may well be a production there that you would like to bring to your own village, town or city, and help raise valuable funds at the same time.

www.journeymen theatre.com



"THE BUNDLE" - A REVIEW

William Waddilove

At the invitation of the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, The Journeymen Theatre was invited to put on the play 'The Bundle'. It was advertised as being part of the City of Culture as well as being during Refugee Week. The Bundle is the large file of evidence and reports that need to be collected in order to make an application for leave to remain.

The play is about a Chechen woman who gets married, has children and finds herself in a very restricted and abusive domestic circumstance. She gains a degree in law and starts to practice in Russia. The husband demands she returns to his home town. The abuse and restriction increase.



By planning she sees a way out. If she is allowed to return to Russia and practice law she can earn good money and send it back to the family.

She sees this as her escape plan and manages to get a flight to the UK with her three children. At first she is welcomed but then the 'Hostile Environment' comes on the scene and the problems increase. The play tells the

story from the inside with the full permission of the central character but with a different name. You see the problems encountered and the setup and also an insight into how some government hostile management thinking is developing.

As someone involved in refugee support it just emphasises the issues that the people we are supporting have to struggle with. It also emphasises the absolute waste of talent by a group of people who have qualifications and skills and would love to work. And of course contribute to the economy and yet are forbidden to work and are punished if they do.

It certainly touched my hearts strings.

It could be performed with any community and help develop an understanding of the difficulties and stresses on individuals and to get individuals to put pressure on the government to stop making things so hard.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN QPSW?

Oliver Robertson

There's been a lot said and written about the new QPSW strategy and what it means. Here are the headlines of what's actually happened and happening, which we hope will help and be clear. We realise that we haven't communicated as much as Friends want, and could still have engaged earlier to test some ideas on new ways of working. That work, thinking how to put the strategy into practice, is ongoing and we welcome input on this.

So, the headlines:

QPSW Central Committee has agreed a new strategy. It seeks to make our work more effective by giving greater focus to fewer things, to be more flexible and responsive to a changing world, and to do more to support Friends in their witness.

All of QPSW's subcommittees and groups, including the Social Justice Subcommittee, which focuses on criminal justice and migration, were regularly engaged throughout the strategy development. They're now working together with Central Committee to plan how to best implement the strategy.

QPSWCC has minuted that work on criminal justice should be laid down in its current form. Quakers are not abandoning our historic concern for criminal justice, which we expect will continue centrally through limited advocacy, prison chaplain support and the Bake the Difference scheme, and locally through the actions of individual Quakers. But we don't expect to have a standalone programme in QPSW looking exclusively at criminal justice.



To date, nobody's been made redundant because of the new strategy. There will likely be a restructure of QPSW so that the staff can best deliver the new strategy, be less siloed and more integrated. This hasn't happened yet and has been delayed at the request of QPSW staff and the recognised union. The timing of any formal restructure consultation and implementing its decisions will be decided by Management Meeting (senior staff) following discussions with the union. BYM is committed to avoiding compulsory redundancies wherever possible.

Decisions on the shape of QPSW will be guided by the new strategy. Decisions on the size of QPSW will be guided by BYM's finances, which have suffered during the pandemic.

More detail about the process of developing the strategy is in this blog by QPSW Central Committee co-clerk Robert Almond. The strategy and minutes giving more detail can be read by following their respective links. If you want to be in touch, email Oliver Robertson at oliverr@quaker.org.uk.

In Friendship

Oliver

Oliver Robertson
Head of Witness and Worship

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Simon Ewart

Our membership secretary reports that membership remains stable at around 140 but unfortunately 40 of you have not yet paid their subscription for 2021. So some of you will find requests for your cash in the next month or so. As this means each year a great deal of time in checking bank statements, records etc to make sure that your membership secretary has not overlooked your sub and then writing to the alleged miscreants, sometimes many times before eliciting the desired response, the QICJ committee does request in future please pay by standing order. The suggested amount is £10 per individual member, £15 2 members at the same address, and £25 for group membership.

Annual QICJ Conference and AGM 2022.

Plans are well established to hold our 2022 conference '**Trauma, Dysfunction & Criminality**' at the Ammerdown centre near Radstock, Somerset from Friday evening 25th-Sunday afternoon 27th of 2nd month 2022. Click this link for details of the venue, Ammerdown - <https://www.ammerdown.org>. This will be on the theme anticipated for 2021 before the event had to be postponed, due to the CoronaVirus pandemic. Be sure to put this date in your diary! Booking forms will be sent out to all members later this year.

Message from the Clerks

We thank those members who responded to our request to raise the matter of changes to criminal justice work at their Area Meetings.

This ensured that this became an agenda item at July's Meeting for Sufferings (see article)

We must urge you to attend any Workshops on the future of CJ work and feedback to the Committee.

NO ROOM FOR TEARS

Simon Ewart

An Account Of Bereavement In Prisons

A knock on the cell door. A clunk of the key. A kindly face of a Prison Officer and a request that I go with him to see the duty Chaplain. This establishment of grey and gruel had been my home for just a couple of weeks as I progressed through the system from holding to long term gaol after receiving a 4 year sentence some months previous. I wondered at the request. Was something special in store for me? Had I already been singled out as a potential chapel orderly or maybe this was all part of my new home's induction programme for the new guest. We walked from the wing out into the sparkling fresh air and across the emerald green of the playing field to the Citadel's Victorian Chapel.

Whatever were my preconceptions of the purposes for this visit I was wrong, oh so totally wrong. We entered the chapel and my guide showed me to the office of the Methodist minister. I was invited to take a seat the opposite side of his desk and the officer discreetly left. One minute later my life was turned further upside down more than even when that phrase was used in court "Take him down." "There's no easy way to say this" said the Chaplain, "Your mother died last night." My body took me over. A guttural sound exploded from my mouth. My stomach had given way to an eruption from the very pit of my being. Life had been extinguished. The final blow had been struck. My freedom had been taken from me and now my life could be nothing but ashes.



There was a man present however who had the faith and wit to help put me back together. In a calm and disciplined way, with no paraphernalia of the religious cloak, the minister took charge. Not with sympathy, not with sweet tea, not with understanding or soft compassion but with a clear and simple practical strategy of what I needed to do next. I had to be strong and in control of myself for the sake of those who cared for me outside the razor jewelled walls of my captivity. I had to draw on the deepest of my inner resources and survive. My role became clear, to rise

above my present suffering and show that I was able to cope in bereavement with my physically isolated position. I had to remain receptive to the love and light being sent to me from my family, my friends and my family of Friends the other side of the prison gates. I am returned to the wing by my escort. Curiosity on why I should have been singled out for such a visit was evident. My fellow resident of the little space I inhabit, years hardened by many years of institutional life was sympathetic but as firm and as practical as that aforementioned man of the cloth. "There's no room for tears in prison." Yes, so true. Shed those tears in silence, in secret, but no outward show of grief allowed in the little restricted world of the captive.

Time soon comes for the funeral. The Prison authorities acquiesce to the request that I should be allowed, albeit suitably manacled, to the crematorium service. I arrive on the appointed day to be processed by security. 2 officers are to accompany me by taxi to the 50-mile journey. I wait. The minutes go by. I wait. The quarter hour passes, the half. The hour goes by. We are very late. I know that we are not going to get in time to the service. Two officers have to accompany me to the event, but one has gone to lunch. Eventually we proceed. We arrive at the little chapel as the coffin drops down to the furnace and my heart burns away with it.

In the days following, representations of complaint from various quarters outside the prison bring an apology to me from the governor. No excuses, human beings all make mistakes. My consolation was to be permitted to attend a memorial meeting organised by my parent's local meeting. This time still those handcuffs, but no worries over lunch breaks or other delaying factors. A relaxed day to truly celebrate the life of my dear loved one. The poor officer chained to me may have experienced some surprise when I discovered the need to rise and minister during that wonderful and loving occasion amongst Friends. I was indeed fortunate. I had been offered and received the food of the human spirit from so many. I was on the mend.



POLICE INTERVIEWING & MENTAL HEALTH

Mark Read

In April, I attended an online presentation by Dr Laura Farrugia of the University of Sunderland based upon her research into police interviews of mentally disordered suspects. As an appropriate adult, this presentation was of direct interest to my work with vulnerable detainees in police custody. Not all detained persons with whom I work are mentally disordered. I work with young people, for example, or adults who are illiterate or dyslexic. However, everyone I try to help in custody has a particular vulnerability in the eyes of custody staff and the working assumption will be that they need some exceptional level of support. This presentation was, therefore, of particular relevance and turned out to be very informative and thought provoking.

Laura outlined the origins of Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 and suggested that police interviews of suspects was a crucial stage of any criminal investigation. This stage had historically also proved to be point of vulnerability for many people under arrest. I have heard tales in my own work from longer serving officers who remember leaving their police station on Friday evening and returning to work on Monday morning only to find the same individuals still detained in police cells. This apparently used to be common practice. Laura Farrugia outlined the injustices of these kinds of practices and how some more vulnerable individuals have paid a heavy price for the police - if I can generalise - making some very wrong assumptions.

Luckily, according to Laura, these kinds of practices are now outlawed by PACE but vulnerabilities remain particularly with regard to the interview process. From my reading I understand that our standard detention procedures in this country have advanced considerably over the years. For example, it is apparently still legal in US states for police interviewers to mislead - i.e. tell lies to - detainees in respect of their evidence gathering, a point perhaps worth noting in our current social media-inspired climate which tends to conflate these legally quite different English-speaking countries. In my experience, police officers at all levels, from custody detention officers, to custody sergeants, interviewing officers and inspectors, treat detainees with respect and equally respect due process. However, as Laura suggested, appropriate adults are safeguards for the rights of vulnerable people and her qualitative research would of course be expected show this kind of legal rectitude. Her findings were, however, heavily nuanced.

Interviewing itself is a specialist skill. Seeking to obtain evidence through questioning, especially for crimes which carry a high tariff, is laden with theory-informed practice. Laura detailed open, probing and encouraging question styles as well as the less appropriate closed, forced, leading, opinionated and echoing approaches. One of the most interesting points she made was that assumed best practice questioning might not be best practice when it comes to interviewing the more vulnerable suspects. Whilst open and encouraging

questions, or even silences and pregnant pauses, are promoted as neutral and to be emulated by interviewing officers, Laura made a counter-intuitive suggestion. She stated that many mentally disordered suspects have conditions that do not fit this ideal best practice model. Detainees who have autistic conditions and severe mental illnesses are quite likely to prefer certainties and some form of affirmation. Closed questions, for example, carefully framed might be more helpful in some instances than the possibly intimidating uncertainties of open questions and silences waiting for the detainee to independently make sense of their unknowns.

Laura argued that vulnerabilities often imply suggestibility. This aspect of vulnerability is the central concern of PACE. I believe cases in court are themselves vulnerable from attack by barristers on this very point. Vulnerable individuals are more likely to be compliant, to go along with what they might see as instructions in the interview situation. Detainees might want to avoid conflict and not to be seen as a challenge to authority. They might also be acquiescent, becoming passive in interviews and echoing what they see as the expectations in authority. I have seen this myself occur in interview on more than one occasion when vulnerable detainees have deferred to perceived authority - the 'halo effect' in action. Laura mentioned that detained with autistic spectrum disorder in particular have better, more accurate recall if guided rather than being allowed free space to drift and inexpertly set the parameters of their own recollections.

As Laura concluded, one size does not fit all when it comes to interviewing vulnerable detainees in police custody. Consideration should be given to different questioning styles not just different questions. We are all individual and it is the role of appropriate adults like myself to be mindful of this when supporting and safeguarding vulnerable people detained in the care of the state.

PROBATION REVIEW UPDATE (BRIEF)

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PROBATION SERVICE

June 26 was the date the new arrangements for a reformed Probation Service went live. Now back within the public sector, management of people on probation will be delivered by the Probation Service, across 12 probation areas, each led by a Regional Probation Director.

See the presentation by Nigel Byford on the Unification of Probation at our 2021 Conference for how this operates. <http://www.qicj.org/conferences/2021.html>

When contacted by our Clerk, Nigel responded:

Thank you for your good wishes, As you can imagine a flurry of activity at the moment but so far the system changes seem to be working.

Early days and probably 12 months before it truly settles!

TIME

Don Nichols

Recently I was asked by a Quaker Friend to give my opinion with regards to the BBC program called "TIME".

Being an ex-prisoner, I have tended not to watch stuff dealing with prisons especially films, as I find most prison-based films or documentaries are either overrated or downright inaccurate.

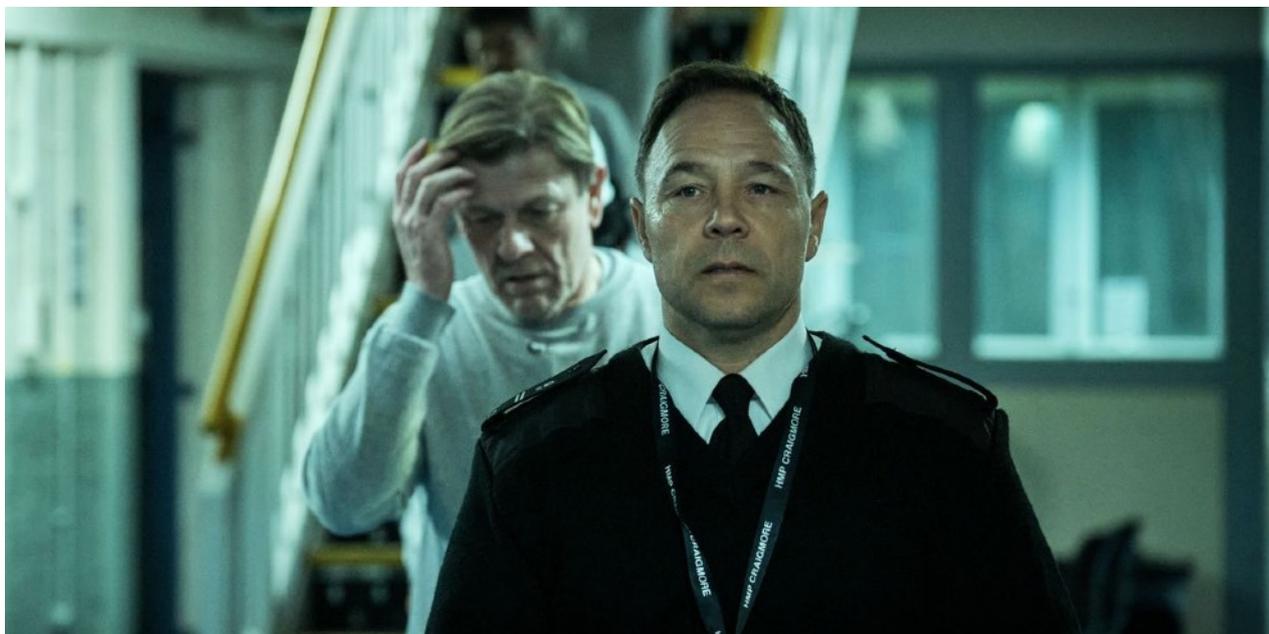
As my friend was really interested in my view from knowing me as an ex-prisoner, I promised her that I would watch the film and give her my views.

Since writing my thoughts down for my friend I was wondering how many other people may be wondering whether the film was realistic or whether it was just another over the top film.

May I suggest for anyone who has not seen the film and may believe that our prison system is a cushy place for prisoners that you try and find the time to watch this well put together film..

The scene inside the van conveying prisoners from the courthouse to the prison brought back very vivid memories for me, throughout the journey you listen to other inmates screaming obscenities towards another prisoner who they perceive as a "bad egg" and who think they have the right to judge others.

The first night cell is a new concept within the prison system, this has now been upgraded to wings dedicated to 2weeks induction to learn about prison life, its rules and what is expected of the prisoner.



During the film you see systematic bullying this has always happened in prisons, and it was rife when I left prison in 2015.

The scene that concentrated on an inmate self-harming was very realistic, you hear a cell bell ringing then it is turned off not by the prisoner but from outside the cell on the landing, you see an officer come to the cell door, but he is not allowed to enter on his own even though he may see a prisoner bleeding profusely. Was this scene the norm unfortunately it was, as a prisoner I was privileged to be a "Listener" and I have witnessed bells being turned off, I have also had to listen to staff saying, "he is only seeking attention" and then you hear that that person "seeking attention" committed suicide that night.

We see a prisoner run into a cell with a jug of water and throws it into the face of another prisoner the hot water has sugar in it, so it sticks to the skin, this is a regular form of assault, upon another prisoner. In regards to the prison officer being blackmailed, although it is not out in the open like in the film there is always the potential for a prisoner to blackmail a member of staff. There is always someone who will succumb to temptation of money to do a prisoner a favour or look the other way. Thankfully, it is in the minority.

My overall view of this film is that it was well put together and all the actors played their roles well.

THE PRISON POLICY NETWORK (BRIEF)

Melanie Jameson

QICJ has been made aware of The Prisoner Policy Network, which is convened by the Prison Reform Trust.

Launched in 2018, the Network aims to give (ex-)prisoners, their families and supporting organisations a stronger voice on policy matters.

Contributions are welcome, either sharing experiences or floating ideas.
A newsletter is available.

Write to Prisoner Policy Network, c/o Prison Reform Trust, FREEPOST ND 6125, London EC18 1PN.
Email ppn@prisonreformtrust.org.uk

DENZIL

Julia Richardson

I have known Denzil since around 2003 when I became Quaker Chaplain at one of our prisons. He is a lifer who has been in prison for many years and I remember one of the first things he said to me was that prison had taught him everything – from reading and writing to avidly perusing all the stock of the prison's library pertaining to philosophy and spirituality. I was pleased that my husband, Norman accompanied me there and have fond memories of them both engaged in deep conversation about Osho or some other deep thinker.

Denzil is such a kind man. I remember him buying biscuits to go with our after Meeting coffee and when he moved to another prison where the facilities were available, I am told he baked

delicious goodies to share. Denzil was enthusiastic about our weekly Quaker Meeting and this spread so that our small group increased in numbers – and not just for the biscuits!

For a few weeks he would appear with a big grin on his face when he was secretly making 'something' but couldn't tell us what as it was a secret! When the mysterious object appeared it turned out to be a colourful wooden box to keep our Quaker books and leaflets in. He embroidered 'QUAKERS' on fabric which he then turned into a tea tray for us to use. These things are so special because they are still there as a reminder of the hours spent not just in creating something useful, but of the loving thought and care with which they were made.

When Denzil moved to another prison I sometimes heard news of him through the Quaker chaplains' network. Then when Norman died I sent him one of his books by Krishnamurti which had been something of a favourite. I was planning to move house and realised that Denzil was in a prison local to me. He shortly transferred to the open prison where he is now and before Covid restrictions I was able to visit him there.

There was joy when Denzil was granted his release on parole and plans started to be made towards a move to a hostel in his former home area. Soon, however, this joy was marred by Denzil's persistent cough being diagnosed as lung cancer which has appeared to have spread around his body.

Naturally this has led to thoughts and questions about the end of life and we have been discussing this in our precious half-hour on line visits. I suggested that he might like to write something about his life and he sent me this

" I can't say I've had much of a life when for the last 40 years I have been in prison. I suppose like most people I hoped I would have a nice life, family and friends, but not understanding myself I made too many mistakes and also put myself down too much. The older I got I started to put the pieces together, meeting the right people, reading the right books, feeling better. I found I was capable of seeing the truth and this has changed my life. I found I was freed from the past by understanding my thought processes.

Have you ever tried to find out who you are? Are you your thoughts, or your actions? Could it be what you believe, or is it something else? The Bible says if we want life, we first need to lose it. What does that mean? To give up everything, everything I knew, everything I believed, everything I have ever thought. If you do this, you're left with nothing - nothing is what we are, because we can't be seen. We are like the space that is all around us, without form and yet at the same time we are everything and everywhere.



People have asked the question, where do we go after death? Well, the simple answer is we don't know - but what we see is another matter. Take matter, physical substance, like our bodies. After death it all gets returned to the earth, and what we call our spirit/soul returns to 'space'. The Bible tells us that God made us from the earth and then breathed the breath of life into us. He also said we would return back to where we had come from. We have all heard the stories. God is with us, God is everywhere, God is in us.

Well I don't know about you but the only thing I see that comes close to what God is, is space, space is everywhere, in our bodies, our lungs, heart and blood cells, it's everywhere. We can't see anything in 'space'. We can't see anything between two planets or two people. All we see is space and yet we know in this space we have radio waves, frequencies for all sorts of activities, people talking on phones, using the internet, watching TV, the list just keeps going. Everything that is in the world is also in space, because everything has its own frequency. So where do we go after death?

Thought for the Day, " If God was the internet, he could zoom us and bring us all together "
Denzel

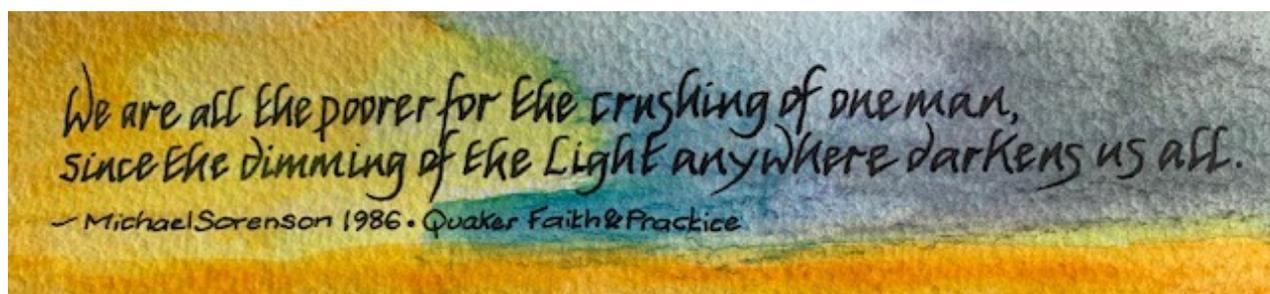
Denzil passed away on the 18th of April, 2021. A Quaker Funeral in celebration of his life was held on the 10th of May 2021.

A SPIRIT MOVING

Foreword by Angela Cheetham Wilkinson, Poem by John Denham

In March 2020 I began a Quaker meeting called 'Apart Together' for Abergavenny Quakers. The meeting involves each participant sitting at home, with a given Reading and upholding others, the planet etc whilst in quiet contemplation. This happens without any physical togetherness or technology eg Zoom.

At the outset I wrote to John Denham in HMP Usk to see if he would like to be part of it. I knew John through some Meetings for Worship I'd attended with (former) chaplain Hilary Beynon, current chaplain Anne Dunton and a few 'Drawing in the Spirit' art sessions I'd led at the prison. John was keen to be involved. John has sat in silence for each of the 66 Apart Together meetings to date. This has involved writing to him weekly. Every Monday I send the Reading for the coming Friday and the Reflections on the Reading of the previous week. We have certainly become very good F/friends (John has been a Quaker for about two years). I've invited John to provide Readings and Reflections for the Friday meeting and John has provided his own poetry on a few occasions. His work can be very moving and I've been delighted to provide a little encouragement.



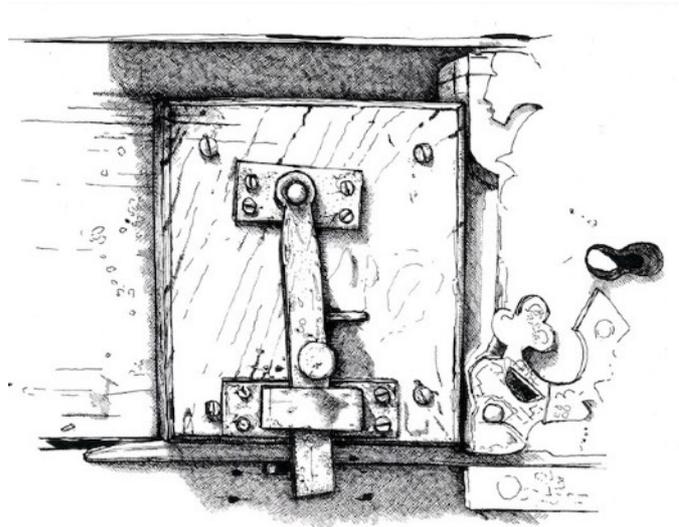
In a letter of March this year John asked me if I might possibly arrange a meeting to uphold prisoners and staff. I was keen to do this. To cut a long story short we held a Meeting to Uphold Prisoners and Prison Staff on 21 May this year which was attended by 46 people via Zoom and Apart Together style. I asked John if he would write a poem especially for the meeting. The poem was read at the meeting by Quaker poet Stevie Kray. My F/friend Anne Dunton, chaplain to Usk, was part of the meeting and I was pleased to hear from her a couple of days ago that she's been able to visit John.

So the wonderful poem is attached below. I asked John if he would like me to forward it to you for possible publication. Yes, John is keen to see it in print - as I am, and chaplain Anne Dunton and former Usk chaplain Julia Richardson. Needless to say I'm very much hoping that it meets with your wishes and that you have space. **(editor's comment - a wonderful poem which we are delighted to have an opportunity to publish for our readers/members to enjoy and ponder)**

A Spirit Moving

There is a spirit here,
 moving silently between
 the barred and gated
 walls of fear and doubt.
 Where hope can be found
 illuminating the trimmed
 portals of suffering and shame,
 calming the chaos and chorus
 of self-imposed exile.
 There is a spirit here,
 cracked in the wall
 that gives way to the nesting
 comfort of newly-wed
 blue tits as they fuss fleetingly
 in and out of the guarded
 walls that hold firm
 the restless and the weary.
 And grounded beneath, the silver
 ruffed crows polish and strut
 their daily routine. Carrion
 cocked, side by side
 in expectation of passing reward.
 There is a spirit here,
 working beyond the forced
 flinted walls. The cuckoo, distant
 thief to the outside world,
 stealing her song from afar,
 repeating and rising to greet
 the whistling swifts as they dance
 and tumble from high
 in celebration of the light,
 dazzling the grey slated
 roofs that await in retreat.
 There is a spirit here.
 Moving patiently on the air,
 whispering forgiveness to the blind
 labouring buds as they pause
 and leaf new life
 to the heavy laden
 wings of solitude and hope.

John Denham / 2021



“So ,I have written a poem - oddly it’s about the space and beauty around us, in prison, which offers hope to those in search of it.” J.D.

Your Committee Members for 2021 are: Simon Ewart (Membership Secretary), Rodney Mahon (Treasurer), Alice Audsley (co-clerk), Sinead Bailey, Melanie Jameson (co-clerk), Teresa Parker (co-opted from QPSW Social Justice Group), Sue Barrance, Jonathan Lamb (newsletter editor) Hugh McMichael and Polly Lowe

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Opinions expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Quakers in Criminal Justice or the Newsletter Editor

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