

# QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

## EDITORIAL - CARMEL SCHMID

There remains little for me to say about the conference as it is all eloquently covered in a rich foray of articles including Jennifer's report, Melanie's poem, William's intro to Meresa's poem and the 'ten point framework'. However, this latter is of note as it arose from an impromptu session scheduled as 'gathering the threads' at the end of the Ammerdown conference.

Martin Wright stepped to the fore and presented 'ten points' covering aspects of conflict resolution and criminal justice that he



has presumably been mulling over, in the course of years as well as being tenets of truth from the conference. It did occur to me that this 'blueprint' warrants compiling and being subject to rigorous Quaker methods into a minute or statement on what QICJ are about in terms of our general thinking. Of course, being as we are a support group, there is no such necessity but that does not preclude us from the possibility of having such a statement or indeed feeding into such a statement.

Also in this issue is a review of "On the receiving end". This little publication was presented to us at the conference by Wendy Rose and I must say it does punch above its weight. I had been speaking to a survivor of the mental health system about the oppression and abuse he had been subjected to in secure care on the same day that I received a copy of this publication. Ann's review does justice to the booklet and I am heartened that the NHS have taken it forward for training purposes.

Canadian Friend's have given permission to print an article from their newsletter "Torn apart or stitched together" which struck me as an artful and ingenious way of introducing the notion of RJ to the sceptically uninformed. It is important to keep an eye on what's happening in the New World as so often in the past they have given us great revelations on the way forward with social matters.

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One such potential breakthrough is Drug & Alcohol Family Courts, an adaptation from America. These have been piloted in London since 2008 and rolled out to five or six provincial towns in recent years in order to offer a therapeutic service enabling parents to turn their lives around rather than having their children placed in care. It has been noted that these may well be the way forward for domestic violence – a sort of half way house with restorative principles but coupled with the most necessary ‘agency’ that victims need for transformative resolution.

But, as usual, it is the personal stories I like best and there are a couple in this issue, so do please keep them coming. Thank you to all contributors....some who will have to wait till next issue to be printed as I’ve been told off for having the newsletter so long!

Carmel Schmid.



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## CICJ CONFERENCE REPORT - FEB 2015

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Those of you not at QICJ’s annual conference at the Ammerdown Centre missed a treat. What did we do? We discussed with friends, old and new, our involvement in the criminal justice system; we learnt about new projects and concerns; we ate good food; we sat in silence together; we walked (those of us with suitable footwear!) to the park’s 150 foot high column (apparently a near replica of the Eddystone Lighthouse); we even experimented with a social evening.

Under the conference title ‘What is the Criminal Justice System for?’ the first main session centred on the complex subject of domestic violence. Nick McGeorge, representative of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, took the view that, while the current conventional courtroom route risked “re-victimising the victim”, a restorative-based approach, leading to a contract which could be monitored, offered some hope. He pointed out that African countries have a tradition of this sort of conflict resolution, which includes a celebration of the outcome. He also drew attention to the South African requirement for decision-makers, when considering the question of custody, to take into account impact on the wider family - and I am glad to see that our Ministry of Justice is now advising courts which are contemplating such sentences and concerned about the welfare of children or vulnerable adults to seek help from the NSPCC or Carers Direct.

John Moore, lecturer in criminology at the University of the West of England, doubted whether domestic violence could be adequately dealt with under our criminal justice system. Most cases are unreported or ignored, and those that come before the courts may only do so after many previous acts of violence by the same person. This may be because of fear of publicity, or lack of evidence/witnesses but also awareness that conviction may well lead to untenable drops in household income which in turn can result in loss of housing and/or children being taken into care. John called for a return to greater non-statutory, local and individual involvement in the resolution of such offences: “putting the necessary skills back into communities”.

This was an interesting format although concrete examples of how the two approaches might operate in practice would have added clarity and perhaps encouraged a more focused debate. Certainly it is a subject we could well return to in the future: as a magistrate, I am acutely aware that current methods of helping both offender and victim of domestic violence lack vision, offering little in the way of practical help to either party.

Nicola Dalby from Derby's Safe and Sound programme gave a powerful presentation on the sexual exploitation and abuse of children, based on the true story of Sally, 16, who was befriended by a group of older boys but ended up gang raped, trafficked and sold for sex. In spite of needing hospital treatment no help was offered until she and her family

eventually found their way to Safe and Sound. Even so, the journey back to normality is hard and Sally has made suicide attempts. We know that what happened to her has happened and is still happening to large numbers of children, including boys, right across the country. Legislation is in place but the resources to apply it are inadequate; therapeutic help for such children and their families is thin on the ground and waiting lists are long. Nicola called for those working with children to be better trained to look beyond the presenting problems for sexual exploitation. Reading about such cases is not the same as hearing of them first hand and in such shocking detail. We are grateful to Nicola and Sally for helping us to be more alert to what is going on around us.



Our third main speaker was Oliver Robertson who works at Penal Reform International (PRI) on a multi-country project to limit or abolish the death penalty. Although there is a global trend towards abolition or at least a moratorium, over 50 countries still retain the death penalty, the most prolific users being China, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the USA (the latter the only country in the Americas to carry out executions). The good news is that, aside from Belarus, Europe is now an execution-free zone. Changing minds in countries where cultures and traditions are very different calls for levels of diplomacy and patience which I for one do not possess. The death penalty project is of course only one part of PRI's work in seeking to achieve a worldwide fair and effective criminal justice system. To learn more, go to [www.penalreform.org](http://www.penalreform.org).

With time to attend only two of the three workshops on offer, I did not get to 'Preparing to Challenge your MP', led by Jessica Metheringham who works on parliamentary liaison at Friends House. Others who did reported back that this was a most useful practical session, providing sound ideas on how to convey their concerns and to keep up the pressure.

Most of us active in the CJS know only too well people who have much to say but whose voices are not heard. Nigel Smith, however, has also worked with those who have no actual voice at all. His film told the enthralling story of Maresa who has cerebral palsy but learnt, with a simple letter board and helper, to communicate. She now has an MA, has published poetry and prose, and was the inspiration for Nigel's book 'Speak To Me – mute, witty and dangerous'. Once we slower folk had made the connection – there are different kinds of voicelessness – the workshop enabled us to think more deeply about communication. For myself, I want to strengthen my resolve to be more patient, for instance in Court or an RJ meeting, with those who struggle with language and with what they really mean or want to say. Thank you, Maresa, for sharing your experiences and skills with us.

**“where prisons exist, they should be places of hope and transformation”**

Paula Harvey, programme manager for the Crime, Community and Justice work of QPSW took us through the questions posed in their booklet 'Why Prison?'. This came out of the Learning From Experience project which for several years collected stories from prisoners, victims, relatives, friends etc. about the prison system. Paula set us to consider in groups such matters as the purposes, benefits and disadvantages of imprisonment. We voiced our sadness, sometimes despair, at living in a society which is far removed from the Quaker vision of justice being compassionate, forgiving and healing; restorative, not retributive. Why cannot we learn from those countries which lock up far fewer offenders and have much lower re-offending rates?

While prison can safeguard communities and sometimes offer education and drug rehabilitation, it can also institutionalise and further criminalise, as well as break up and bankrupt families.

In a masterly summing up of the conference's many threads Martin Wright reminded us that 'society' is 'us' as well as 'them', that we must hold true to our belief that, through conflict resolution and positive support, offenders can change their lives and that, where prisons exist, they should be places of hope and transformation. I am going to ignore the traditional Quaker reluctance to praise one another. Most of our committee members have enough to do without organising a conference. Thanks to all of them for creating such a stimulating and enjoyable weekend. We look forward to a similar high standard next year!

**Jennifer Armstrong**

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## 10 POINTS FOR A RESTORATIVE BLUEPRINT

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**Gathering the threads from this year's conference, Martin Wright sets out a framework where he invites us and CCJS to make a statement that frames our thinking.**

1. Responsibility for preventing crime and conflict, and responding to it when it occurs, lies both with each individual as well as their community.
2. The community is to provide services for all levels conflict resolution.
3. The community is to provide support for victims of crime.
4. Whenever appropriate, and subject to the consent of both, the response to harm and conflict involves a facilitated meeting between those harmed and those responsible, in order to consider reparation.
5. A network of local organisations is established, to recruit, train, support and supervise facilitators, who work on a predominantly voluntary basis. They also educate the public in restorative (participatory) decision-making and conflict resolution.
6. When mediators/facilitators became aware of pressures towards conflict and crime, they draw these to the attention of those responsible for social policy, thereby incorporating feedback into the system.
7. The criminal justice process is for those forms of harm which the law has defined as crimes, and which are considered serious enough to warrant it.
8. Sentencing should consider rehabilitation, reparation, public disapproval and public protection separately. The purpose of sentencing is not punishment for its own sake; community sentences makes demands on offenders and there should be a presumption against prison except in the most serious cases.
9. The primary purpose of sentencing is to require the offender to undergo a programme which brings home to them why their action was wrong, and makes them less likely to repeat it, for example: for road traffic offences, a course on driving and road safety; for addiction, therapy; for violence, anger management; for lack of work skills, education and training; for financial misconduct, a course of business ethics.
10. The focus for crime reduction should be on reducing inequality and creating a culture in which there are higher expectations of law-abiding behaviour and fewer pressures towards crime.

**24.02.2015 Martin Wright**

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# FORGIVENESS AN ACT OF LOVE

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Forgiveness – what does it mean? A day conference organised by the Mid Essex Quakers' Criminal Justice Group and held at Chelmsford Quaker Meeting House.

On 18 October 30 people gathered to explore the subject of forgiveness. The opening speakers were Ray and Vi Donovan from the Chris Donovan Trust, Earlier in the day they had been interviewed on BBC Essex radio. Ray and Vi have lived through a tragedy nobody should be called upon to face – the killing of their teenage son, Christopher, on a London street one night in 2001. He was not involved in a personal quarrel or gang warfare, but nevertheless attacked and killed by a group of teenagers while out for the evening with his brother. Three young men were eventually charged and found guilty of his murder.

**“The people I met there showed me the face of God.” It was a long task to get perpetrators and survivors to sit together, and for women to get their men folk involved too”**

The Donovans told us their story of anger and heartache and how their Christian commitment helped them through this terrible episode. They set up a trust in their son's memory, to help turn young people away from crime and violence. They chose to forgive and this had a profound impact on the young men who had killed their son as well as themselves. However, the progress towards this point was over several years. Ray and Vi were amidst the first murder victims to meet offenders face to face. This was not an easy thing and only took place after much discussion and preparation on all sides. The ability of Ray and Vi to forgive those who had robbed them of their son helped the young men involved to forgive themselves and move on.

Ray and Vi continue to work in schools and prisons to promote restorative justice and warn of the human cost of violence to all involved. More information is available on their website:

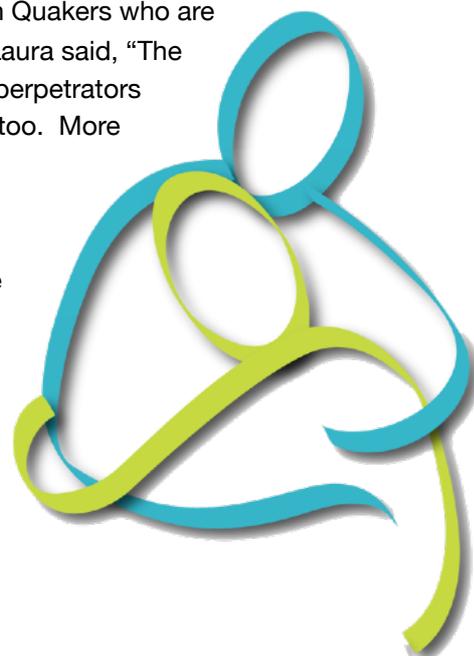
<http://www.chrisdonovantrust.org/>

The afternoon session was introduced by Laura Shipley- Chico, a member of central Quaker staff concerned with East African affairs. Laura described the work of Rwandan Quakers who are bringing together survivors of the genocide to rebuild their communities. Laura said, “The people I met there showed me the face of God.” It was a long task to get perpetrators and survivors to sit together, and for women to get their men folk involved too. More information is available at

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/africa-peacebuilders>

There was plenty of time during the day to discuss the issues raised by the speakers amongst ourselves. Several of us recognised that Christianity calls on us to forgive, although it is rarely easy. However, we were reminded forgiveness is not just for Christians. It is open to everyone, whatever their faith, or if they have no faith. Forgiveness is not a destination, so much as an on-going discipline. It is essential to healing and reconciliation. It is an act of love.

**Kathy South**



# RIPPED APART OR STITCHED TOGETHER

## An artistic depiction of restorative justice from Canada

Imagine for a moment that someone has harmed you—stolen from you, vandalized your property, assaulted you, lied to you, killed a loved one. List what you would need from others so you could process the harm you have experienced.

Now imagine that you have harmed someone—you've lied to them, ignored them, maligned them, stolen, vandalized, assaulted, perhaps even murdered them. List what you would need from others so you could address the harm you had caused.

Look at each list. What do you notice? Answering these questions, people are usually surprised to discover that the lists are similar. They reveal common needs.

Rarely do people identify a need to be punished or have their perpetrator punished in ways that are totally disconnected from the experience. What people who are harmed or cause harm crave is to be heard, to have time for reflection and response; to explain, to be accountable or have accountability; to apologise or hear an apology; to have an opportunity for things to be made right. This is what restorative justice looks like in action. Justice needs to be understood as honouring and working for the inherent worth of all. This is difficult for a society that has convinced its citizens that safety comes with removing people who cause harm from its inner circle.

Ripped Apart or Stitched Together, an art collaboration supported in part by CFSC and seeking to confront biases and prejudices toward those who cause or experience harm, was presented at the 2014 National Restorative Justice Symposium in Banff, Alberta.

Viewers entering the exhibit were faced with two large pieces: a collage and a quilt, each displaying a compilation of images. The collage was an 8 x 0.6 metre work full of images published in the St. John's Telegram newspaper over one year, showing people being arrested. In each image, the names and eyes of those arrested are blacked out. Though visibly present, there are no voices. Individuals are ripped away from their context and observers quickly dismiss their value.

The quilt was 2.3 x 1.4 metres, displaying 40 colourful individually designed squares surrounding an image of a tree. Each square was created and sewn by people whose lives had become entwined with crime, through being harmed or causing harm. Each square links to an audio recording of the personal story behind it, including how an opportunity for meeting and sharing brought healing. Each speaks of moving forward, of hope through reconciliation. Stitched together, the hope of reconciliation is multi-dimensional.

The two pieces juxtaposed challenge the viewer to consider personal and societal perspectives of justice. What is it? When is it accomplished?

According to those involved with the exhibit, artists Meghan O'Shea (quilt) and Gerald Vaandering (collage), Kathryn Bliss (Church Council of Justice and Corrections - commissioners of the quilt) and show curator Dorothy Vaandering, art reflects realities of life back to viewers, communicating in a way that words cannot.

**“Now imagine that you have harmed someone—you've lied to them, ignored them, maligned them, stolen, vandalised, assaulted, perhaps even murdered them. List what you would need from others so you could address the harm you had caused”**

The collage originated with Gerald Vaanderings' experience of daily bombardment by images of people who had been arrested (most pre-charge) in handcuffs or shackles. He became conscious of how, as newspaper readers, we were being coerced to think that we are safe because the justice system does its job. Collecting the images for one year and compiling them into the 8 meter collage exposed how media contributes to social distancing. Presenting those arrested without a context encourages viewers to consider them as objects, less than real people, and thus easier to punish. Such images become a means for social control. When they are separated from 'me'/'us' it is easy to support and encourage 'tough on crime' policies, as we need not feel responsible for who they are as people.

The quilt was created to visually express the essence of healing made possible through restorative justice. Scraps of material - a swatch of a kilt worn by a murdered spouse on a wedding day, the lace of a christening dress, a feather that flits about on a breath - colours, textures, voices, and stories all come together to remind viewers that those harmed and those who cause harm are living, breathing human beings with a deep need to belong. Viewers are wrapped in warmth, recognising our common humanity and brokenness. We are challenged to be in relationship, knowing that lives are fragile and in a moment each of us could be entwined in harm.

Starting at the collage and moving along its length, we see how, as consumers of media reporting, we become complicit in the dehumanisation of people. As non-objecting readers we stand ready to throw rotten tomatoes and mud at those in pillory and stocks. Then suddenly we encounter and are embraced by the quilt. We are invited to join with the rest of broken humanity to make space in society for all. The stark contrast invites us to think deeply about what justice requires of us.

For more information on the show and its components see: <http://www.ccjc.ca>

Versions of this article have appeared in Do Justice, a blog of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada, and Quaker Concern, the newsletter of the Canadian Friends Service Committee.

**Dorothy Vaandering**

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## CIRCLES OF SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

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### **Recent academic research into Circles of Support and Accountability.**

In 2012 I decided to go back to University and do a part-time Masters at Manchester University. This has been a challenging experience, I was the oldest person present at any event, and had chosen a subject that was not directly related to my work in mental health. The whole experience has been extremely rewarding both personally and in reassuring me that the cynicism of the current political climate, in respect of crime, health and social care policies, is continually being challenged and engaged with at many levels. I have seen how new research methodologies support academics and practitioners working together to develop and evaluate practice models and interventions which meet the criteria of academic rigour, engage with the actual lived experiences of people and speak to the concerns of those who hold the purse strings.

So it was through my uni experience that I came to hear about the recent academic research into Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) and how this effective, value-

based practice developed in the voluntary sector can withstand and benefit from the scrutiny of formal action research and service evaluation.

CoSA Projects offer structured support to convicted sex offenders on completion of custodial sentences. The support is provided by a group (Circle) of volunteers, coordinated and supervised by a criminal justice professional. Participation in a Circle of Support and Accountability is undertaken on a voluntary basis by the person (referred to as the Core Member) who has had a conviction for sexual offending. The criteria of voluntary participation, the Circle model of intervention and the delivery of the work by volunteers are essential principles of the model. Some projects are charities; others are in the form of partnerships between voluntary groups and statutory services. Circles UK, a registered charity, is the central co-ordinating body for this work in the UK.

CoSA delivery involves frontline work with the most stigmatised and problematic group of offenders. For the intervention model to have credibility with all involved in delivery, including offenders, the community and the state, it is important that it is rigorously managed and evaluated for its effectiveness, governance and efficiency. The first pilot in Ontario was thoroughly evaluated and this set a standard that has continued over the past two decades.



The research team from the University of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University and the University of Nottingham conducted an in-depth study of Circles UK across England and Wales. It was a 3 year project, commenced in 2010 and funded by the Wates Foundation. A full report and executive summary were published in 2014. The information in this article has mostly been drawn from the Executive Summary. The aim of the study was to assess the extent to which the Circles Projects contribute towards the reintegration of adult sex offenders into the community. CoSA Projects in were a rich resource where researchers could learn about and evaluate the model, the systems and practices in a wide range of settings. The research data included interviews with 70 research participants (30 Core Members, 20 volunteers, and 20 key stakeholders from Police, Probation, MAPPA and Project Coordinators).

The Executive Summary presents a synopsis of CoSA history and delivery, the current context of sex offender management in England and Wales and some discussion of the anticipated Transforming Rehabilitation Agenda before launching into a discussion of how the CoSA model fits with current discourses in offender rehabilitation.

There are four key areas in the research findings: Volunteers, Stakeholders, Communication, Collaboration and Information Exchange and Core Members. A key theme explored throughout the report was the challenge or juxtapositioning of the practices and responsibilities of “support” and “accountability” for everyone involved including Core Members.

The research findings identified that Circles UK had developed a very credible approach to the delivery of the CoSA model in relation to the experience of Core members, volunteers and stakeholders. It was suggested that Circles UK and CoSA projects were well positioned to be part of developments in the Transforming Rehabilitation Strategy.

“CoSA Projects offer structured support to convicted sex offenders on completion of custodial sentences”

The recommendations engaged in some detail with the benefits and challenges of having volunteers working together with professionals who have statutory responsibility for public safety. This included some different interpretations of the role and function of a Circle in the management and rehabilitation of the Core Member. Recommendations covered the recruitment, training and support of volunteers, suggestions for clarification about the delivery and maintenance of a Circle and ensuring all Circle participants (Core member, volunteers and project coordinator) are clear about roles, responsibilities and the lines of

communication with other stakeholders. It was identified that for the ongoing development of good governance of CoSA Circles it was vital that both the principles and the practices involved in relation to “support” and “accountability” were transparently addressed and managed. Additionally boundaries and responsibilities in relation to disclosures, risk management and the sharing of information were identified as an area for continuing development.

I haven't had an opportunity to find out how Circles UK have responded to the research. I attended a seminar in which two of the researchers presented the report and found them both sympathetic to the work and appreciative of the difficult social and political climate in which it is taking place. I am sure that the delivery of CoSA Circles can benefit from this evaluative process and the its recommendations.

**Frances McCann**

Further information can be found at:

<http://www.circles-uk.org.uk/>

<http://www.law.leeds.ac.uk/research/projects/assessing-impact-cosa>

# TODAY I OPENED THE CURTAINS

## Report on the most recent Leeds Saturday Seminar.

*"Today I opened the curtains for the first time since I came out of prison" was what Jim\* told his support circle almost one year into his 'Circle of Support and Accountability'(CoSA). Nothing could seem more mundane to you or I but for Jim it was a huge step forward because until a year after his release, he had been too scared to do so. He was a convicted sex offender who, on being released from prison, was convinced that the people in the community would attack him. So he hid as much as possible which neither helped him nor his propensity to offend.*

*Fortunately for Jim he had opted to join a Circle of Support and Accountability to help him reintegrate into the community, to learn how to conduct normal relationships and so to NOT re-offend. And like all the other core members of Circles across the county he was successful.*

*This is an astonishing one hundred percent success rate because should the 'core member' show any signs of re-offending behaviour then the volunteers who support him (and occasionally her) will report this to the Police and Probation with whom they are linked and if they have broken their licence they will be taken back into prison.*

*How does this work? Amii Hough, Operations Manager of the Yorkshire and Humberside Circles of Support and Accountability and Denise Cann, an experienced volunteer in Circles, explained this to the Saturday Seminar of the Leeds Quaker Criminal Justice Group. The idea began almost by chance, in Canada in 1994 when a serious sex offender was released back into his community with no support and with photos of him put up on lampposts explaining how dangerous he was. The local Mennonite Church undertook to support him and reintegrated him into his community so both he and they became safe.*



*This emphasis on community is very, very important and volunteers are selected to reflect the community, so that the risk is shared with the community. There are generally four to six volunteers per Circle, they receive training, support and supervision from the permanent staff. They and the core member are all equal – hence the term Circle. And they meet once a week for approximately a year, focusing on both practical issues and on behaviour. Both Denise and Amii emphasised that there is no magic wand, no prescription, the volunteers help the core member to write their own prescription. But it really does work. Almost all sex offenders are eventually released from prison back in the community, hence ANYTHING which prevents more victims of sex offenders is to be welcomed.*

*Volunteers are needed throughout West Yorkshire, especially in the Kirklees, Wakefield and Calderdale Areas. If you would like to know more please look at the website [www.yhcosa.org.uk](http://www.yhcosa.org.uk)*

**Philomena O'Hare**

\*Not his real name

## COULD BRITAIN HALF ITS REMAND PRISONERS?

Too many people are imprisoned whilst awaiting trial. Almost 14,000 people are currently in pre-trial detention in British prisons, often known as 'remand'. This is twice as many as Slovenia, Finland or Ireland, per head of the population. Britain's use of pre-trial detention is also much higher than in Germany, Romania and Sweden.

If we learned to use pre-trial detention at the same rate as some of our European neighbours there would be up to 7,000 fewer prison places needed in Britain. During 2013, British magistrates remanded 36,000 people in custody, of whom 71% were later given non-custodial sentences or completely acquitted. Crown Court's remanded a similar number in custody, of whom 27% were not sentenced to prison at trial. Women are particularly affected, with 41% held in remand before eventually being release at trial.

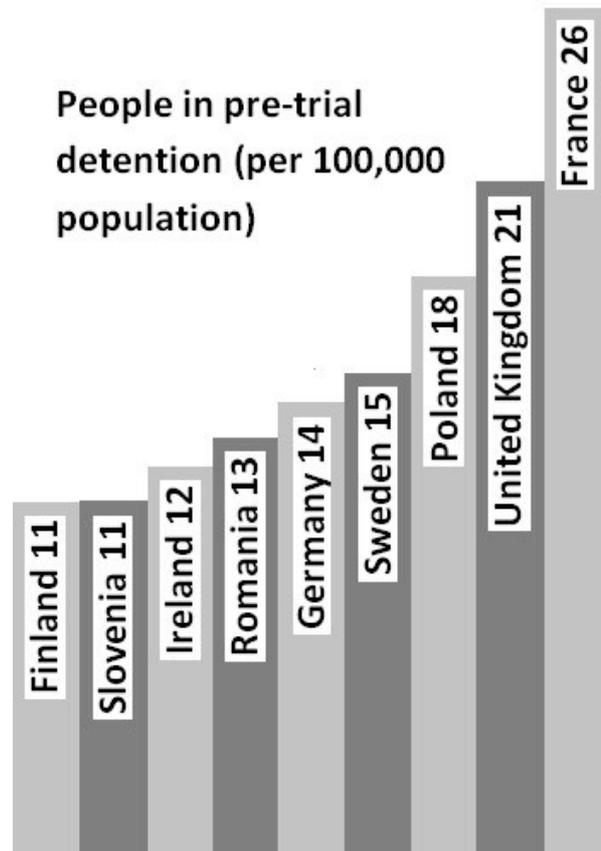
The Howard League for Penal Reform has calculated that the money spent on unnecessary prison places for remand prisoners is enough to reverse the government's cuts to the criminal legal aid budget. Finding alternatives to remand could also open the door to more radical change in prisons the criminal justice system.

The widely varying use of pre-trial detention by different EU countries reveals its arbitrary use in many criminal justice systems. The Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) has recently produced a report highlighting the harm experienced by some of the 120,000 people in pre-trial detention across the EU. The report found that pre-trial detention causes harm to individuals and is unlikely to contribute to reducing crime. Pre-trial detainees were found to be less likely than sentenced prisoners to receive support services or to have contact with family members and the community. Despite having needs that are equally or more complex, prisons know that remand prisoners are in their care for a shorter period and provide a poorer regime, less support and little preparation for release. A detainee's innocent status should not be a barrier to them receiving alcohol, drugs, mental health or other support whilst awaiting trial.

The QCEA report looked at a range of changes that could be made. Many countries, such as Italy, would benefit from special diligence policies that would speed up investigations in cases where pre-trial detention was continuing for years. Other countries, such as Greece, are in need of independent oversight of cases involving foreign nationals who are much more likely to be remanded in custody and are impacted more severely whilst in prison.

The full report can be read at: [www.qcea.org/2014/11/background-paper-pre-trial-detention](http://www.qcea.org/2014/11/background-paper-pre-trial-detention), or by contacting the Quaker Council for European Affairs, Quaker House, Square Ambiorix 50, B-1000, Brussels, Belgium.

**Andrew Lane**



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## STICK WITH IT NIGEL. YOU'LL BE ALRIGHT

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### A moving account of how a trainee probation office changed for the better at HMP Grendon

Part of my training to become a Probation officer took place over a three month placement at HMP Grendon about twenty-five years ago. Many of the prisoners were serving life sentences. The expectation at Grendon was that everyone - including psychopaths and those with severe personality disorders. can change.

Grendon aims to help prisoners develop more positive relationships, to change how they relate to others and to reduce their risk of re-offending. This is to be achieved through “therapeutic dialogue” in which which prisoners gain greater understanding of their behaviour. Grendon is relatively costly to run but its results are very impressive. In December 2011, Francis Crook CEO of The Howard league for Penal Reform wrote in her blog “The prison has been extensively evaluated and the proven reduction in re-offending is between one fifth and one quarter.”

**“Prisoners were expected to challenge each other and were uniquely equipped by their own experiences to recognise attempts to avoid issues or deny the impact of their behaviour on their victims and other people.”**

The distinctive characteristics of the regime at Grendon became quickly apparent to me while on 'D wing'. During the day, prisoners moved freely on the wings and were on first name terms with staff. They had all undergone a lengthy assessment following their application to Grendon. They had shown they were suitable for therapy and motivated to change. Unsurprisingly, it does not work perfectly. Some prisoners “play the therapy game”, use drugs and commit other offences. One prisoner was murdered. I was seriously scared for my safety, briefly, on only one occasion.

I was assigned to work with 'my' therapy group. My first session began with introductions which took the form “ I'm Ken and I'm doing nine years for armed robbery.” A group member wrote up the minutes and read them out at the wing meeting. Wing meetings took place immediately after each therapy session. These were attended by all staff and prisoners who were “in therapy” and chaired by a prisoner. Consequently there was nowhere to hide and this may explain why the drop out rate from therapy is high.

New group members would soon share their life story with their group and begin exploring issues relevant to their lives, offending behaviour and their future plans. Prisoners were expected to challenge each other and were uniquely equipped by their own experiences to recognise attempts to avoid issues or deny the impact of their behaviour on their victims and other people. They also raised any concerns they had about the behaviour of staff.

During wing meetings any prisoner who was not working hard enough in the therapy sessions or had committed a crime could be nominated for 'the vote'. The result of such a vote could affect whether or not a prisoner would be returned to a conventional prison regime. If you were a staff member who had mishandled a situation which had been raised in a group, the details would be read out for all to hear.

This was what I faced when I found myself confronted by the alarming prospect of being held to account by Alan, (a member of my group) for my inept handling of a situation. He let me know that he was going to 'use the group' to raise his concerns at the next session. I felt stressed and worried because I knew I had messed up. The session began and I waited in suspense. Eventually, he voiced his criticisms. They were calmly delivered and factually accurate.

I was given a chance to respond. I admitted that I had handled the situation ineptly and apologised unreservedly. In the wing meeting which followed I listened uncomfortably while the account of my mistakes and apology were read out. After the meeting, feeling very subdued, I walked back to the Probation Office. Before I could open the door, I felt a hand on my shoulder. It belonged to James, a member of 'my' group who was serving a long sentence for armed robbery. He said quietly and gently, "Stick with it Nigel. You'll be alright".

I will never forget his act of kindness and reassurance. It was a massive help in getting me through a very uncomfortable experience. My supervisor's support (Anne) was brilliant too - and there was more to come. In the next therapy session I think Alan was the first to 'use the group' and directed his comments to me. "The lads have had a word and it's my turn to apologise to you. They said I had a point but I made too much of it". It was soon apparent that we were back on good terms.

In Meetings for Worship I have heard the word "upheld" used. That describes how I felt then. Moreover I believe that I too was able to change for the better. "My" group and the prisoners on D wing deserve credit and my thanks for the huge part they played in making that possible.

**Nigel Walker**

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## PAUL AND THE GOLDEN BUDDHA

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Paul is a lifer. As I write he has been in prison for over twenty five years and is still waiting for a successful parole. He is also an immensely talented man: playwright, winner of the Arthur Koestler awards, artist, set designer, costume maker; a ceramicist...the list goes on. Paul is a practising Buddhist.

I have been visiting Paul now for eight years. I first met him when I was an official prison visitor (OPV). We got on famously and when he was moved to a prison 70 miles from my home I didn't want to give up seeing him so I renounced my OPV status and resolved to carry on visiting him as a friend. The rules for being an OPV are prison specific and a reapplication would have been through a process of Byzantine complexity, I no longer needed the officialdom.

In the spring 2008, I told Paul that I was going to Japan on an exciting mission. My 90 year old father-in-law, Sam Falle, had been invited by a grateful Japanese government to come as an honoured guest to celebrate the life of the naval captain whose ship had rescued him, and 420 other British sailors, from the Java Sea in early 1942. Sam had written an article praising the humanity and courage of this naval captain, rather than dwelling on the subsequent wretchedness of the POW camps he had to suffer for three and a half years afterwards. His article was good news for a government eager to counter the tales of woe still emanating from aged POW survivors and their equally bitter families. I was to go with Sam as his companion and minder.

When I told Paul of this VIP visit to Tokyo, Paul was delighted because he speaks a little of the language and is interested in the Japanese form of Buddhism.

"Could you possibly find me a Japanese Zen Buddha?" he asked. "I've got an Indian one, but I much prefer the less ornate Japanese version."

I knew Paul had no access to a Buddhist chaplain as there wasn't one in the area at the time. So I replied: "No promises, Paul, but I'll see what I can do. It will depend on the time I have available to go shopping... and of course whether the prison authorities will allow it to be brought in."

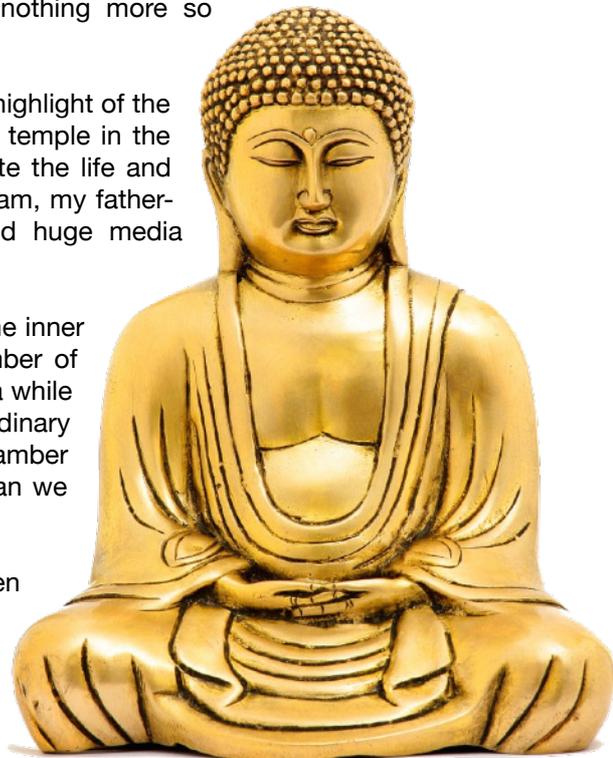
A month or two later, in an email to the Japanese official who was organising our stay in Tokyo, I happened to mention that a Buddhist friend of mine was looking for a Buddha; could he recommend a shop in Tokyo where I could buy one. I heard nothing more so assumed he didn't know and had better things to do than find out.

December came and our momentous red-carpet trip to Tokyo. The highlight of the week was to be a magnificent ceremony at the Yakurinji Buddhist temple in the outskirts of Tokyo. Here there would be a service to commemorate the life and valour of Commander Kudo, the naval captain who had rescued Sam, my father-in-law. Afterwards we would kneel and pray at his grave, amid huge media attention, followed by a reception and press conference with Sam.

On arrival we were politely ushered into a large ante-room before the inner sanctum of the temple itself. Here we sat, Sam and I and a number of Japanese and British dignitaries, and were offered cups of green tea while journalists took photos. During this ceremony, two extraordinary presentations took place. The first was a gift to Sam of a pair of amber cufflinks which had belonged to Commander Kudo himself, the man we were here to honour.

The second presentation was to me. It was a beautiful golden Buddha in an opening shrine, about five inches tall, which had been consecrated by the Chief Priest of the temple himself. It took me a nano-second to realise what this was. I'd expected to have to go shopping for Paul's Zen Buddha, not to have it presented to me by Japan's equivalent of the Archbishop of Canterbury!

Needless to say, when we returned home I couldn't wait to see Paul and hand over the golden Buddha. We were lucky at Paul's prison to have a kind and open-minded Chaplain whom I knew quite well. I passed the Buddha to him and he in turn presented it to Paul. The result was one very contented lifer!



**Des Harris**

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## ON THE RECEIVING END - BOOK REVIEW

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### **Personal recounts of emotional and psychological trauma from mental health sectioning**

Our Friend Wendy Rose, at our conference in February, introduced this book, written by her daughter, Deb Rose, together with Catherine Ingram and Aidan Shingler, and with contributions by both survivors and professionals on the effects of compulsion and forced treatment in psychiatry.

This book is small in size but large in impact and was produced to "raise awareness of the emotional and psychological impact" of much such treatment in psychiatry - methods such as "Involuntary Drugging, Control and Restraint, Pain Compliance Techniques and Compulsory Electric Shock Treatment." The book is intended to "inform debate and generate dialogue" and it is hoped it will encourage re-evaluation of such practices and "highlight the effect Forced Treatment has on both those subjected to it and those who implement it". The contributors all write from their own experience of or involvement in such

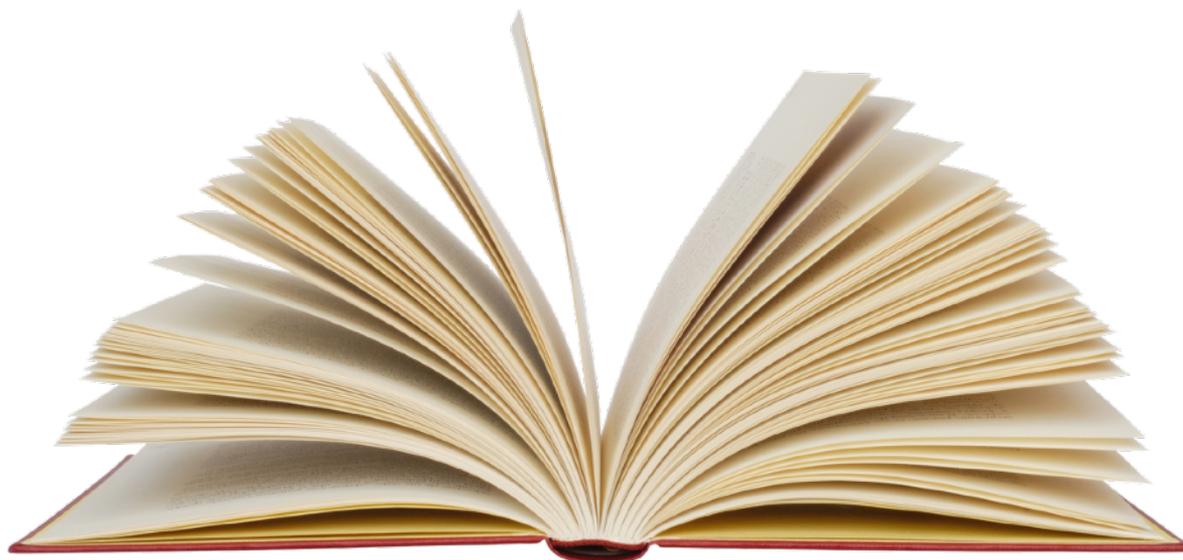
imposed treatments in the context of psychiatric admission as a result of 'sectioning', i.e. compulsory admission under the Mental Health Act.

Descriptions of their experiences are graphic and very hard hitting and underline serious failings in the appropriateness of the way admission and treatment is handled in some/many psychiatric institutions in the system. Quite apart from the harrowing descriptions of how patients under 'section' may be dealt with and the effects both on them and on those implementing the 'treatment', this book brought home to me very strongly the stress and guilt that must be felt by parents or partners especially, who have to commit a loved one to admission to hospital or elsewhere under 'section', in the knowledge of how that person may or will be dealt with (and this can include being held in police custody) - a way which is insensitive and inappropriate for people who are very distressed and not actually being badly behaved or criminal. The book highlights all the areas in which such treatments produce negative effects rather than positive ones, both on patients and staff, and are largely unaccountable and contravene the Human Rights Act.

This book is very timely when official questions about serious deficiencies in mental health provision are beginning to emerge. An aspect that did not emerge in the book, but from my discussion with Wendy Rose, is the extreme resistance experienced by her from the local Mental Health providers when she tried to make arrangements for her daughter to be transferred outside the region to the Quaker hospital, The Retreat in York, who were very helpful and where she described the treatment as based on love and caring. (Agreement was in fact finally obtained, although in the event admission there did not need to take place.) The good news is that the NHS have requested 700 copies of the book for use in their training.

This is rather a lengthy review for a small book, but I feel it's message is very important and the book very readable, and I recommend it. It is published by Derbyshire Voice and costs £5.00 including postage, and to obtain a copy, contact [info@derbyshire-voice.co.uk](mailto:info@derbyshire-voice.co.uk) or on 01773 774537

**Ann Jacob**



## IMPRINT OF THE RAJ - BOOK REVIEW

I find some surprising things in Chelmsford Market, one being this excellent book marked down from £16 to £2. It describes the history of the fingerprinting technique to identify criminals. Not everyone knows this originated in British India, and had initially, nothing to do with criminals. The book is a model for writing such monographs: it offers a clear exposition of the technical subject as well as colourful human anecdotes making it very readable. When I read the dedication to Roy Porter, I knew it would be both entertaining and reformative.

Fingerprinting was one of the gifts India made to Britain, others being the bungalow, curries and Worcester sauce. In the other direction, was the wonderful network of railways, the British built to serve the Raj. Initially, fingerprinting was adopted to prevent impersonation. Indian pensioners appeared to never die, claiming pensions til they were 150. Sham corpses appeared at funerals and convicts could serve their sentence by proxy. Disputed titles to land were very common.

The Hindus saw criminals as a separate caste, rather as some people refer to "a criminal underclass" in Britain today. The difference in nineteenth century India was that criminals were seen as born to their calling.

Meanwhile the growth of cities crowded society. The image of New mind, where this amount is spent problems but merely to contain Act of 1871 brought all nomads travellers in Britain today. (A fellow jury member say "If he's a figure in India is William James discovered Uranus, whose work is The grandson is an admirable European planters and humble with respect in India although is ignored.



favoured crime. India was always a York 'Million Dollar Blocks' comes to each year not to solve peoples' them. In India, the Criminal Tribes under suspicion rather like Friend was shocked to hear a gypsy, then he's guilty".) A key Hershel, grandson of the man who celebrated in the museum in Bath. figure, a magistrate who treated ryots as equals. He is remembered fingerprinting, his greatest innovation,

The distinctive nature of fingerprints has long been known, but hitherto was used only as a signature. Burgeoning populations created an urgent need for identifying people. The first proposal as Bertillon's using anthropometry – the measurement of ears. This proved too complicated, fingerprints were simpler. Unlike palmistry, the prints were not claimed to distinguish race, character or shortcomings, but without a system to classify them, they could not be used. Edward Henry, Inspector of Bengal Police, eventually came up with a system. All male members (over 12 years of age) of the criminal tribes were fingerprinted. The method was an immediate success although it was criticised both in India and in Britain as a threat to liberty.

Meanwhile, the Troup Committee of 1894 was set up in Britain to investigate the identification of criminals. Antropologist Francis Galton proved crucial to overcoming the scepticism of Scotland Yard. The first murder case to be solved in Bengal by use of fingerprints was in 1987. The trial of Henry Jackson at the Old Bailey in 1902 was the first in Britain where fingerprints were presented as corroborative evidence.

Soon they were valued as a way of keeping track of repeat offenders, a better proposal that branding which was proffered by Henry Smith (no relative of mine I am sure). In Britain, fingerprinting has only ever been used in criminal investigation. Identity cards, attacked as 'too Prussian' did not carry prints. Asians in South Africa refused to carry passes bearing prints, because of the taint of criminality. Ominously, asylum seekers arriving in Britain have been fingerprinted since 1993.

**Adrain Smith**

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# AMMERDOWN POEM

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Our conference venue this year lends  
 Itself, to simple needs of Friends  
 The peaceful ambience in the air  
 The wholesome vegetarian fare.  
 The spaciousness of the estate  
 The delicate spring flowers that us await  
 To greet us as we saunter past  
 Admiring relics of the past  
 We did not come here to relax  
 And meditate, but to face facts  
 And as we try and contemplate  
 The justice system, all the weight  
 Of past injustice is displayed  
 And we are left distressed, dismayed  
 What can we do? We are so few.  
 So many chops and changes, new  
 NOMS directives, legislation  
 Wholesale destruction of Probation  
 Transforming Rehabilitation?  
 Roll out, roll out, Privatisation!  
 Or could there be another way?  
 As Quaker Light comes into play  
 And goes against the current fashion  
 With 'Restoration' & 'Compassion'  
 Each prisoner a child of God  
 Someone of worth, so spare the rod.  
 In QICJ we do not find  
 That out of sight is out of mind.

**Melanie Jameson**




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## SPEAKING AND VOICELESS

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“Speaking for the Voiceless” was the name of a workshop at the QICJ conference, and many of us arrived expecting some sort of talk about how those with poor communication skills or some organisational handicap get their voices heard within the criminal justice system. However we were informed instead about the voiceless speaking....

What we had was a fascinating story by Nigel Smith who had been a doctor within the NHS specialising in ‘Stroke’ and the problems it causes for communication. This expanded onto a detailed description of Meresa: her disabilities and her aptitude. She was born with no speech and with poor muscle control and was adopted at age three. It was assumed that she had no educational ability at the age of eight or nine but subsequently it was discovered that not only could she communicate, but with the help of an assistant she could already read! Without further taught input she had observed writing and combined with what she had heard started to read words. She now has an MA in English Literature.

We were shown a film of her means of communicating with the aid of a personal assistant and a letter board. She has a published book of poems and prose. One of the photos we were shown was her presenting a poem at a festival.

Nigel is fascinated by her abilities and has taken a great interest in her. She helped him put together his presentation to QICJ sending us a personal greeting. At the Saturday evening social session he read one of her poems. Members were duly moved and somehow hoping our greetings are returned to Maresa.

**William Waddilove**

## Childhood

Playing in water  
With sunshine on our backs  
Sledging in snow  
Gloved hands and rosy cheeks.;  
Stories round the fire  
Or cuddled up in bed.  
Childhood, do remember you  
Or are you a figment of my imagination

How many remember this?  
Boy Soldiers  
Refugees of war  
The institutionalised cripple.  
Do they remember this time of harmony?  
I doubt it.  
Where do you hide your illusive childhood,  
Where is your home  
Is your existence a reality,  
Or do you hide in the top branches of life's trees  
For no-one to find?

Searching for meaning in the king's nursery,  
The royal child on his poverty of isolation.  
Hidden in the laboratory of specialness,  
The dumb mute,  
An interesting specimen who nobody wants to play with.

Childhood, they search for you too.  
Why do you hide,  
Why are you so afraid to show yourself?  
You glorious wondrous being?

The splendour of wonder, of Questioning,  
Of water rippling,  
Of shouts of laughter,  
Of long days of companionship.  
Never ending snoozes to wake up  
When we want, for more happiness.

How long was that time?  
The eluding memory hides truthfulness.  
Childhood, are you time or state?

Maresa MacKeith  
February 2004

[Read by Nigel Smith at the QIJC Conference, February 2015]

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE - APRIL 2015

Firstly welcome to the following new members who have joined (or re-joined) QICJ since my last updates in November and at the AGM: Des Harris; Jonathan Lamb; Quaker Prisons Chaplains' Committee (Quaker Life) via Marleen Schepers; Kathleen Russell (jointly with Alan Russell, who is already a member); Nigel Smith. Their names will be included in the next updated Membership List, and meanwhile anyone wishing to contact any of them should do so via myself.

Please note the following members have now resigned and should be crossed off your Membership List: Debbie Abel; Rodney Brunt; Jennifer Kavanagh; Beatrice & Fabian Lance; Mary Pelly; Bernice & Terry Taylor. This means our numbers at present stand at 147, of whom over 40 have not yet paid for the current year, which is almost a third of our membership. If you are not sure if you are one of them, please check with me so that you can quickly remedy the situation! There are also 8 members who last paid in 2013 and have not responded to two consecutive annual reminders, and sadly will therefore have to be crossed off the list very soon unless they respond to this final reminder. (Again, check with me if you are not sure). We will be sorry to lose you, but have to assume you are no longer interested. This would reduce our numbers to 139, the lowest for a long time, which is of concern, so please keep up your much appreciated efforts to encourage new members to join.

I have received notice of changes of address for Susan Morton and Maxine Ryks, and an impending change of address for Alan and Kathleen Russell, as well as a new email address for Mark Bitel, so please contact me for details of these if you need them before the next Membership List is issued.

**Ann Jacob**

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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