

QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

NOVEMBER 2018 EDITORIAL

A couple of months ago I put out a request for materials for the newsletter. Reminding members that this is your forum to share your ideas, experiences and opinions on the criminal justice system and the projects which work within it. The response was overwhelming, so much so that we can't even print all of the stuff we got back from you all, due to lack of space. Needless to say anything we couldn't fit into this edition will be saved for the Spring edition. So once again, thank you.

Other exciting news is that we have a new Editor coming on board from the Spring edition onwards, so keep your contributions coming to make his job as painless as possible as he finds his feet in the new role.

You'll also notice that as a trial we are printing the physical and digital versions in the same style and layout. Sadly colour is restricted to the digital version, but we hope you like the new look of the physical version and your feedback is welcomed.

There's a wide range of topics and issues covered. From the difficulties experienced when visiting a prisoner to questions about how seriously the QJ System takes the role of rehabilitation. We have as always articles from a mix of practitioners, past and present and those who have experienced the criminal justice system first hand. Hoping to see you all in February at our next annual conference, details of which are inside.

Jonathan Lamb
Editor



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SOME PRISON THOUGHTS

Faith, however it is practised in prison by anyone, displays a celebration of human existence: we all matter to God. There are numerous opportunities to be 'patterns and examples' within the prison environment which create conditions for the release of the divine spark from anyone.

Over a period of years my husband and I have been supporting a wonderfully, focussed, Meeting for Worship in one of Norfolk's prisons. There are usually fifteen or twenty men in the group and half and hour, or so, of fellowship beforehand with coffee and biscuits. When the Quaker Chaplain feels it's right, we all go into the prison Chapel together. This is where it is different from our local Meetings for Worship, when people come into the room in ones or twos over a period of ten minutes; the prison Chapel Meeting for Worship is quiet, focussed and centred from the beginning, with no interruptions. Often there will be a reading from QF&P (the men know this book very well!). It's a circle of worshippers who support one another and where honesty and caring, challenges, and surprises, happen. On one occasion a regular attendee told us he was lucky to be with us that morning because his cell-mate had tried to strangle him the day before and very nearly succeeded. This is only one incident where because of officer shortage or lack of officer experience, a convicted murderer was allocated the second bunk in his cell, which should never have happened. So, he was thankful to have our company that day, as much as we were to see him still alive!



Three men from the group came into membership over a period of years and we, and the Quaker Chaplain, have kept in touch with them all, even though they moved elsewhere to finish their sentences.

One of the men is now making a life for himself ‘one the outside’; another is in a different prison but one which suits his needs and he is making great progress and looking forward to a future outside when he “can take my mum out for tea”. As far as the third man is concerned, he has now moved to a prison nearer to where we live, which is more open, enabling him to get back into the swing of everyday life ‘outside’. We are looking forward to going up to meet him shortly and, in a few months’ time, taking him out for a meal. When I have finished writing this, I will be phoning the prison to make arrangements for our first visit.

Letter writing for all three men (email correspondence for one) has enabled us to keep in touch on a regular basis. Their letters going to the Meeting House ‘drop box’ address where we pick them up. Obviously our letter contents are about local events we’re involved in (never divulging our address or local names). For their part, they have talked about their activities, their ups and downs, always honest in what has been happening to them as they manage the challenges of everyday life in prison. When we read in our newspapers and hear on radio and watch on TV, we know that surviving in prison gets more and more difficult and daily life becomes more dangerous as increasing drug supplies are bought and sold and take over many lives. There are still not enough prison officers to deal with the resulting violence on the wings.



So, although letter-writing, might seem like a very small thing to do, it has been a means for us all to exchange news about our day-to-day lives. I also do lap-top presentations about prison life to local groups who might be interested in learning more.

We have a wonderful Churches Together group in our little town who are enthusiastic about the Act of Worship which place in our Meeting each year to mark Prisons’ Week. This has been going now for five years and all denominations take part. There is usually an address by a Chaplain and a different faith group chooses the hymns each year.

The prisoners with whom I am in touch, hand me their prose or poetry, to be ‘voiced’ by someone attending the service and it is always humbling how much pride it gives the men, knowing their words will be shared by the wider community.

JOOLZ SAUNDERS

AM I HUMAN?

Every so often when I visited my Probation Officer soon after release, she had reason to scold me. It was not for the fact that I had done something wrong per say, nothing against the rules or restrictions I must live by, but purely because I had said something that seemed to imply I was excluding myself from humanity. It was the genuine guilt, shame, self-loathing, and remorse I felt that led me to say such things, but her concern was the low self-esteem these emotions were invoking, enticing me towards acceptance of a future devoid of inclusivity within society. A dangerous state for an ex-offender to be in, as it could provoke thoughts of having nothing to lose in some. I am better than I was, having analysed why I couldn't escape those feelings or consign them to the bookshelf of my past. Concisely, why I struggled to let go. After much consideration, I believe there were two things in particular at the core of my dilemma.

Intrinsic within the rehabilitation structure of prison is the empowerment of remorse, but it does tend to deliver this in a very concentrated way. Perhaps to ingrain it in those who are lacking in that area, and therefore a one size fits all approach is in play. I think that maybe because of this, I had just taken it beyond the bounds of reason. This sounds odd I know, as you would think that remorse is something you can't have enough of, but I started to perceive that constant retrospective guilt and shame, can be a negative factor in moving forward. It has been difficult, as a part of me struggles with the concept, due to it feeling like it is being disrespectful to those I have left in my wake. Like many things though, I believe it is a question of balance. Yes, I must feel empathy, always conscious of the damage I have done, and the lessons learnt, but not to the extent that it is all consuming and a destruction of my human condition, as this in itself can be dangerous.



The second thing that was holding me back was more problematic, as I was exposed to it on a regular basis, and that is due to the nature of my offences. Every newspaper seemed to carry an article on it. Every news report on television seemed to include it. Conversations I heard at work were full of hate for it. It is because of this, that I think we are conditioned

to see ourselves in a certain light. With so many saying what they say, they must be right, mustn't they? We must be isolated and stigmatised. We all fit a stereotype. We can never be "Cured" and therefore should never be let out of prison, or not whilst in a fully masculine form. We are nothing but evil incarnate. There is no good in us. We should not be allowed to live. Or if we are, we must live a life of discomfort, pain, loss, self-harm, or suicide contemplated, and in the end, performed. As this is what we sentenced our victims to. When I ponder the last of these statements, it is completely understandable where the hate comes from. The preceding ones though, are tainted by myth and fear, and not exclusive to the whole. The main strategy I use when faced by these entrenched stigmas, almost mirrors a point of learning from my incarceration. The original reflection was in relation to self-esteem, and read like this, "When you hear one hundred people comment on you over time, don't listen to the one bad comment and fixate on it. Listen to the ninety-nine good ones.". Within my dilemma, I felt I needed to adjust the mirror, but still hold on to that original reflection. Therefore, "When I hear one hundred comments about myself over time, I mustn't fixate on the ninety-nine bad ones, but concentrate on the one good one from someone who knows me best. Who sees the real me.". Deep down, I still feel I am "Me". Everything else is still there as it was before. I am polite. I am caring. I am generally selfless and generous. When I hold onto these "I statements", I am more able to see myself as part of humanity, rather than the anomaly within it.

My experiences of acceptance and non-judgemental attitudes have also been invaluable. Especially from within the Quakers, Samaritans, and the Newbridge Foundation. My Probation Officer, within her scolding and within other things she says, holds firm that I still have a right to life, a right not be harassed, a right not to be verbally or physically attacked, a right to a second chance. Hate and fear though, are understandably strong aphrodisiacs, stirring the desire to mistreat one such as I.

From the outset of this piece, I had struggled to see the message within. What was I writing it for? What was I trying to say? Is it that we should dismiss what I and others have done? God forbid it be so. We must never forget those negatively affected by actions such as mine, and forever hold them in our thoughts and prayers. No, I believe that beyond the need for integration, beyond giving second chances within safeguarding structures, beyond the need to keep our precious, inclusive nature intact, and reach out to those that society have excluded, there is a more personal message within the piece. We are all damaged in some way. We all have baggage or skeletons that we would prefer not to have. We are all though unique, precious, children of God. Whatever mistakes we have made, whatever lapses of judgement or sins committed, as long as learning is achieved, in the end we must let it go. We are in truth, myself included, only human after all.

STEVE

JOURNEYMAN THEATRE

I expect most Friends know the wonderful Journeymen Theatre (<http://www.journeymentheatre.com>). They dramatise a variety of Quaker concerns including torture, militarisation in schools, the problems of asylum seekers when they arrive in this country. The last of these, 'The Bundle', when shown here in Stroud raised hundreds of pounds for our local refugee charity. Has the time come for a play about the criminal justice system?

Journeymen Theatre only ask £1,000 to commission a play.



They have worked in prisons, so know much of the problems met by those we lock up. I wonder if members of QICJ might be willing to contribute towards the commissioning of such a play? Perhaps we could involve the Crime and Justice Subcommittee of QPSW. It might be possible to involve Positive Justice Gloucestershire, who have some funds which could be available, and possibly other local criminal justice groups? I am sure there would be great demand among Friends for performances of such a Journeymen play, and that it could do much to educate Friends and the wider public about the reality of the problems faced by some of the most vulnerable in our society. I would like to see this discussed at our next conference to find what support could be forthcoming. I have contacted Lynn Morris, and she says they are enthusiastic about the idea, although time scales would need to be discussed.

MARY BROWN

INVESTING IN OUR PRISONS: TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

This article refers to England and Wales. Better conditions prevail in Scotland

The focus for last month's Prisons Week borrowed from an (unusual) combination of Star Trek and the Book of Hebrews 4v16 'To boldly go' i.e. to press on, despite setbacks and challenges. Certainly making any headway in today's prisons is a massive challenge. Levels of overcrowding, violence, self-harm, and drug use, sub-standard accommodation (featuring broken windows, rats and cockroaches) along with the continuing effects of the disastrous reduction in prison officers under Chris Grayling, make a mockery of the government's emphasis on



Rehabilitation. How can anyone be rehabilitated under such circumstances?

On 17 August the Prisons Minister for England and Wales announced that he had identified ten prisons as representing a particular challenge; this required an overall £10 million intervention focusing on three areas: better detection of drugs (£6 million), staff development (£1 million), and bringing accommodation up to 'new standards of decency and cleanliness' (£3 million). In fact Rory Stewart has put his job on the line and will resign if there is no measurable improvement.

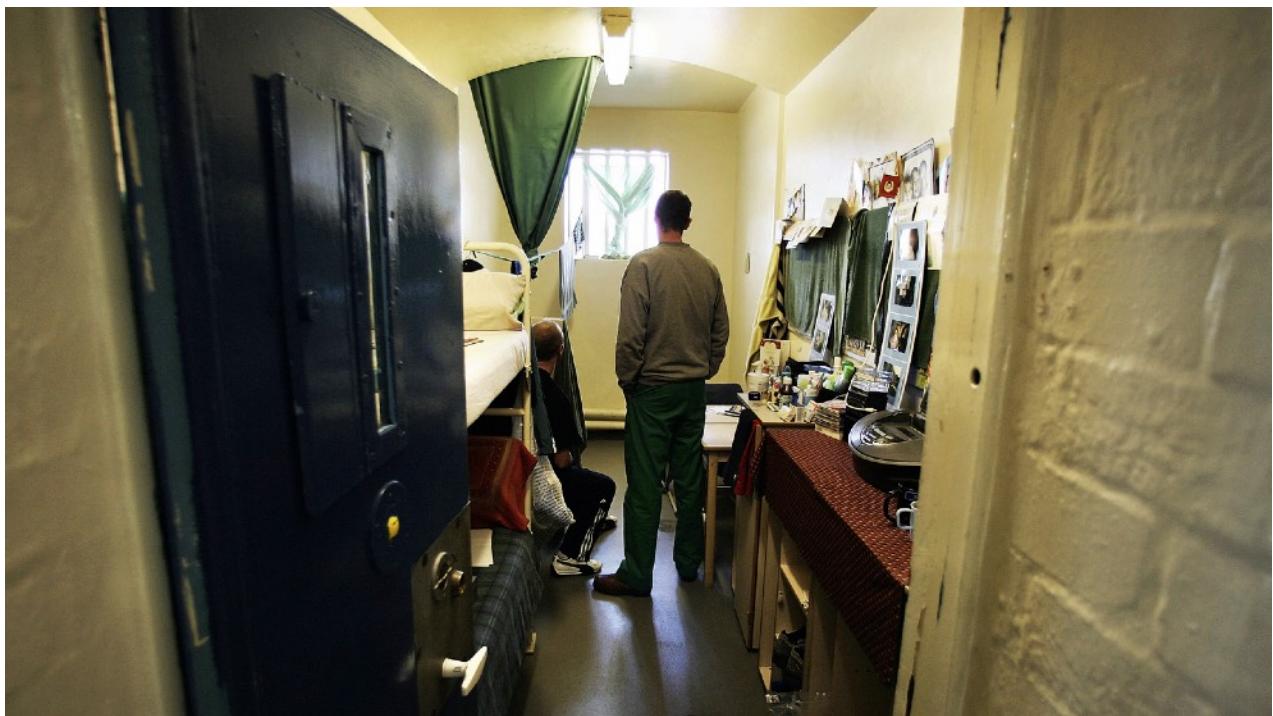
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-announces-10-prisons-project-to-develop-new-model-of-excellence>

Furthermore, four prisons are so dysfunctional that they are on 'urgent notification' (i.e. have been referred by the Chief Inspector of Prisons to the direct oversight of the Ministry of Justice – think 'special measures' in schools) – only one of these, HMP Nottingham, is on the list of the ten prisons mentioned above. The others are Bedford, Exeter (both publicly run prisons) and HMP Birmingham which was handed from the public sector to G4S after a history of poor

performance. The urgent notification protocol requires the Secretary of State, David Gawke to take over and report on planned improvements within a month.

This July, David Gawke announced a £30 million improvement package in an attempt to start to plug the gaps after decades of under-investment in the prison service combined with a rise in prisoner numbers. Half of these funds are allocated to tackling the growing dilapidation in the wake of Carillion's insolvency and abandonment of prison maintenance. As usual the tabloids got the wrong end of the stick announcing that prisoners will have phones in their cells to carry on their criminal trades. In fact these are 'secure phones' with pre-entered numbers to individual's families to bring an end to long queues by the wing phone and consequent lack of privacy.

Do better conditions prevail in the brand new public prison, HMP Berwyn near Wrexham, which opened in February 2017? This is a 'super-prison', built to house over 2,000 people when it is up to capacity, making it the largest prison in Europe. Last year the Governor was keynote speaker at the annual prison reform conference I regularly attend, explaining his policy of rewarding good behaviour and prioritising rehabilitation. But things have rapidly taken a downward turn: he has now been suspended pending investigations, drugs are rife (one man has died from an overdose), prison staff have staged a protest walk-out due to the levels of violence and inspections paint a sorry picture of decline.



Against this background the Ministry of Justice ploughs on with the introduction of its Prison Education Reform Framework whereby the newly ‘empowered’ governors can choose the most suitable provider to deliver their core programme of English, Maths, IT and ESOL and (this is the innovative part) use the Dynamic Purchasing System to buy in services and programmes particular to the needs of their prison population. This is a complicated process that should finally be in place by April 2019. But will there be sufficient prison officers to facilitate it?

On a personal note, I am following these reforms closely to keep a careful eye on something I been flagging up since the mid-90s: the identification and support needs of prisoners with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and Dyscalculia (sometimes called Specific Learning Difficulties) who make up almost 20% of the offender population. I am extremely frustrated by the confusion between Specific Learning Difficulties and those with an intellectual disability (Learning Disabilities). The latter cohort, 7-8% of offenders, are more likely to be the focus of interventions in prisons – at least one establishment is working towards autism accreditation. The prison service conflates the two populations as LD/LD although the two groups could not be more different. Imagine someone like Richard Branson (who came very close to crossing the line with an early scheme to avoid customs duties) being banged up and shown Easy Read flashcards before being dispatched to healthcare for an assessment of his social care needs!

Although I sit on a Ministry of Justice Practice Development Group, I am still a lone voice. I have a suspicion that Specific Learning Difficulties are neglected because identifying those affected would draw on resources for support that are not available. So, they leave prison with their dyslexic/SpLD problems unaddressed - what a wasted opportunity!

Let me try and finish on a positive note. No doubt there are pockets of good practice here and there, despite the dire state of affairs. The newsletters, CDs and radio broadcasts of the Prison Phoenix Trust inspire many to transform themselves. But first and foremost dedicated people continue to make a difference at the individual level by connecting with those whom society has ‘put away’. We are especially aware of the tireless efforts of our Quaker Chaplains who have to cope with the frustrations of prison regimes while conveying the acceptance, peace and loving support that characterises the Quaker approach.

MELANIE JAMESON

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE - NOV 2018



Firstly we are very pleased to welcome Diana Luther-Powell, who is a Quaker Prison Chaplain, as a new member. Her contact details etc. will be included in the next issue of the Membership List, which should be issued with the Spring Newsletter. Meanwhile, should any of you wish or need to contact her, please do so via myself, until further notice.

This time of year is when the subscription renewal reminders for the coming year, 2019, go out and you will find one enclosed with this Newsletter; I would urge you please to renew your subscriptions for the coming year as soon as possible, or to let me know if you no longer wish to belong. (Please see under the item for Committee Business for details of likely changes in the committee.) The committee has decided not to increase subscriptions, which have remained the same for some years..

Our current numbers are reasonably stable, although gradually reducing, which is a matter of concern. Our current membership allowing for resignations, deletions and, sadly two deaths, now stands at 132, whereas at times in the past it has been around 160. Of those 132 there are 27 members who have not so far paid for this year; it is hoped this is only oversight and that they will make up these arrears when subscribing for 2019. If you are not sure if you are one of them, please check with me as soon as possible. Those who have not paid a subscription since 2016 have now been deleted from the mailing list, although they continued to be sent mailings for 12 months after payment of their last subscription.

We are very grateful for donations we have received during the year, and this includes the fact that so many of you pay a subscription at the full rate, even though entitled to subscribe at the unwaged rate. Thanks are due also to all of you who encourage other people to join QICJ, and for the contributions in other ways to QICJ's activities.

ANN JACOB

HOW A FEW PRISONERS SET THE BALL ROLLING

Most members of QICJ may well be familiar with Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) and also the distance learning course, entitled Facing up to Conflict (FUTC) which has proved to be popular amongst prisoners for whom AVP workshops are not available. What follows may be of interest for those who are less familiar.

The beauty of AVP is that its inspiration came from prisoners themselves wanting to change their lives and realising the need amongst younger prisoners whose violent behaviour meant constantly returning to prison. They asked for help from Quakers who were visiting the prison in New York. This was in the mid 1970s – a time when there was a lot of soul searching in America about the Vietnam War and nuclear arms. The Quakers themselves sought the help of a Professor of Education, Steve Levinsky who, as I understand it, put together material from the Movement for a New Society, the Children's Creative Response to Conflict Programme and the Civil Rights Movement. Each of these contributed ideas on non-violent conflict resolution. It was an inspiring combination, out of which workshops were put together, with later modifications for British prisons.

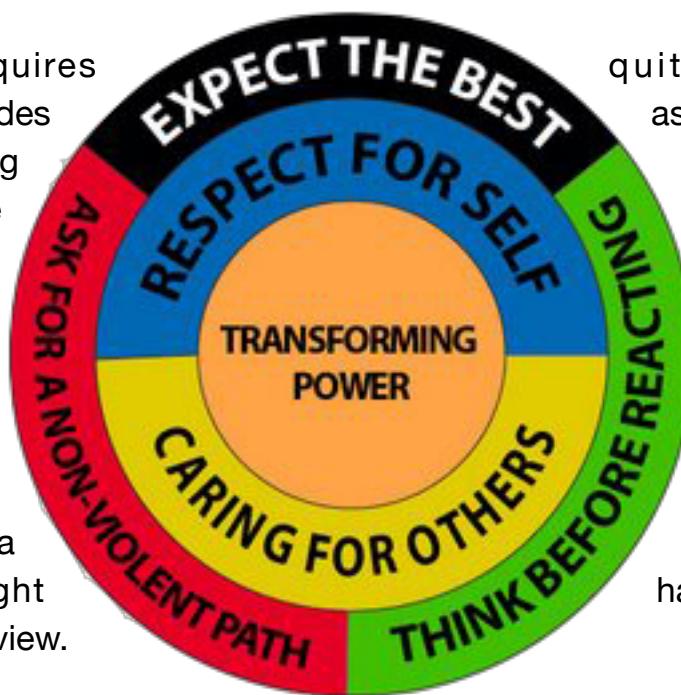
The workshops are experiential and ideally have about 12 participants and three facilitators. They run usually over a weekend for about sixteen hours and are a mixture of exercises, games, role play and discussions in small groups. There is emphasis on courtesy, good listening and respect towards one another and in this way a trusting and cohesive community is built. The facilitators have all come through participating in workshops themselves, learning the skills through their own experience. They are also volunteers who choose to come into the prison to do the workshop. This is a statement of faith which is not lost on prisoners. Over time, several prisoners themselves have become facilitators.

The FUTC distance learning course has been running in this country for about seven years. It came about because of the difficulty in reaching prisoners in a system where staff shortages and cutbacks in the prison service meant Prison Governors were reluctant to spend money unless it was absolutely necessary.

Running AVP courses at weekends meant extra prison staff would have to be available.

The weekly work sheets of the distance learning course, however can be sent to any prisoner who asks for it, after a simple application has been completed, and the cost is borne by the charity. The course has been carefully designed with colourful pictures and limited text, to take into account people whose literacy and language might be limited but, at the same time, it offers the opportunity to dig quite deeply into what makes us behave as we do and how we might behave differently. One participant commented that it had never occurred to him before that thinking about how he behaved was a choice he could make.

The course requires thought. It includes think about strong they react in the moment, it them to think qualities and the admire in others. to think about listening, how behaved in a the conflict might the other point of view.



quite considerable asking the person to emotions and how heat of the encourages about their own qualities they They are asked the value of they have conflict and how have been seen from

The course is spread over six weeks, with a worksheet each week. This means that the person can give time to consider each step of the course and as the weeks go by, each worksheet gets a little more challenging. At the end of the six weeks, the worksheets are sent back to the AVP office and an assessment is done, giving positive and encouraging responses. Where there is a clear misunderstanding or a sense that the participant has not engaged with the questions, they will be invited to think further about it. There have been occasions when a participant's responses to the course, have been quite abusive and angry. The anger may well be because the participant has never known what it is to be valued and respected and if the assessor can respond with empathy and encouragement, it can be a truly transforming moment. The great majority of participants will get a certificate on completion of the course, though

they may be invited to complete a section again if it is not clear that they have understood the exercise the first time.

All the evidence is that there is a thirst for this kind of course amongst prisoners, a real need and desire to understand themselves and their behaviour better. Even with the difficulties of language or literacy which are often apparent, the work is usually completed thoughtfully and shows how the person has developed their thinking as the weekly sections are completed.

What seems to be valued about Facing Up To Conflict is not only the content but the fact that it is not an official course which has to be done to satisfy the prison service. Official courses, however good they may be, are sometimes resented simply because they are part of the system. Completing FUTC is a choice the prisoner makes for himself.



avp
alternatives
to violence
project

While AVP now runs workshops worldwide both inside prisons and in communities, FUTC remains available only for prisoners in this country but, given its success, it is hoped that it may become available to a broader population in due course.

Thus, what began in the 1970s as a request to visiting Quakers from a few prisoners in one American prison, has become a recognised movement for understanding ourselves and each other. It may be fanciful and it may be a small

input into work with prisoners, but there is a mutual betterment, a step towards a more understanding and tolerant society in general. For most of us who have been involved, I think it has been of lasting value in our efforts to understand ourselves and those around us. I for one, am deeply grateful to those men in prison years ago, who started this particular ball rolling.

ALICE AUDSLEY

ADVICES & QUERIES 17

Do you respect that if God in everyone though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern? Each of us has a particular experience of God and each must find the way to be true to it.

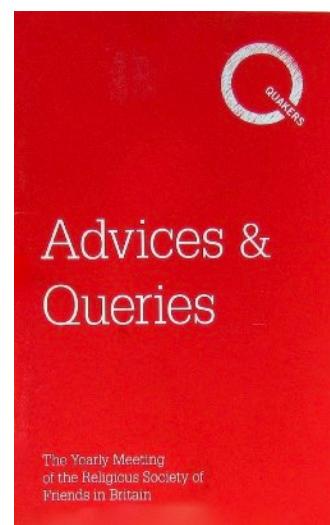
On a mercifully cool morning in July I found myself sitting in a graveyard in Bibury, one of the most photographed villages in the Cotswolds. I was sitting with about twelve friends and supporters of Ann Wetherall at her graveside in silent meditation. After the beautiful calm together, we spoke about the impact of her life on us and on others and especially on the lives of those in prison.

Ann was working in 1986 on a research project with Sir Alister Hardy at the Religious Experience Research Centre investigating spiritual experiences arising from imprisonment. Her role involved writing to prisoners. She found a spiritual hunger among prisoners that was not being met. She felt if prisoners were introduced to disciplines like meditation and yoga, and were supported in their efforts, they might feel differently about themselves.

Ann had advertised in the papers asking prisoners to be in touch which is where my friend Geoff comes in. I told him I had been invited to this occasion of respect and he told me about how he had met Ann when he was doing time in Leicester Prison, having recalled himself on his life licence (but that is another story). This is what he told me.

I responded to an advert in Leicester prison in 1986 concerning a researcher who wanted to contact prisoners who have had spiritual experiences in prison. I answered this ad and Ann Wetherall visited me. At this point I had only just wangled my way back into prison and I was resisting any effort to release me and I was the first prisoner she had ever met. I was firing on all cylinders.

Ann told me she was researching spiritual experiences of people who had been or still were incarcerated. She was particularly interested in how humans can sometimes use



captivity as a monastic ashram to develop spiritually. She wanted to establish relationships with as many prisoners as possible and asked for the names of all the prisons so she could contact the governors of each! Believing this to be a more than naive way of going about things, I strongly advised her to get in touch with the chaplain general and make inroads into prison via the chaplaincy and not prison management.

She did this and she visited regularly until the Chaplain General endorsed her idea. She was so excited! Like a school girl who had 10 Christmases at once. We discussed what name this spiritual community should have. She came up with the name The Ashram Project and I provided the logo. After a month or two Ann started contacting other prisoners and I sent a few her way too. After about 4 months of contact with Ann I was moved to Maidstone and lost touch with her believing that the chances of pulling this off successfully were slim or not at all.



Years later I heard about the Phoenix Trust and realised that she had actually, against all the odds, set up a spiritual development community in the prison system...a true legacy to Ann's quiet but dogged determination.

Ann was a very special person who I will always hold with the utmost respect. I am proud to be able to say I met her and was there with her at the birth of the Phoenix Trust project. The Phoenix Trust was registered as a charity in July 1988 and the work continues to be funded solely by donations. The first regular classes were established at YOIs Campsfield House, Hollesley Bay and Aylesbury. The trust now supports over 140 weekly classes in about 80 secure establishments around the UK and Ireland meeting the needs of those inside.

TIM NEWELL

QUAKERS CRIME & THE U.N.

Did you know that Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) has the highest level consultative status at the United Nations sessions through the FWCC World Office? This means we have the right to send a delegation to UN sessions. Every year since 1992 FWCC has sent a small delegation to the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (UN CCPCJ), which meets every year for one week in Vienna.

Every five years there is a larger Congress in a different city. In 2020 it will be in Kyoto, Japan. Nick McGeorge and Kimmett Edgar have been the leaders of this work, and I have been part of the team for ten years. The team usually includes mostly Quakers from the UK (for cost reasons), but occasionally we have a North American delegate.

The Commission is the main policy-making body of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. The UN plays an important role globally as a forum in which governments can cooperate on matters of cross-border interest. The CCPCJ also publishes a range of international guidance on best practice, helping to promote humane standards in criminal justice.

Cybercrime

This year the Crime Commission met between 14-18 May. There is usually a set theme for the year. Last year it was ‘community participation’ and this year it was ‘cybercrime’. As Quakers we tend to focus on promoting humanitarian practices in criminal justice, so ‘cybercrime’ did not have an instant appeal, but it turned out to offer us a useful opportunity. The delegation comprised Kimmett Edgar, Ben Jarman and me.

The main sessions include statements from different countries and the passing of resolutions, this year numbering eleven. Resolutions are sponsored by named countries and then amended by a process of negotiation in the Committee of the Whole (commonly known as the COW). Sometimes opposing views need to be thrashed out informally outside the main meetings of the COW. Often this process means a watering down of a resolution so that dissident countries have less to comply with! For instance, ‘implement’ might be altered to ‘give consideration to’.

This year’s session was a productive one for FWCC. There was a restorative

justice resolution, which finally got adopted in a reduced form. It included such things as:

Encourages member states, where appropriate, to consider facilitating restorative justice processes at relevant stages in the criminal justice process, to the extent possible and in accordance with applicable law, including by considering applying the basic principles on the use of restorative justice programs in criminal matters.

Further invites member states to assist one another in the exchange of experiences on restorative justice and in the development and

implementation of research, training or other programmes and activities to stimulate discussion, including through relevant regional initiatives;



these seemed a bit bizarre, but they had definitely heard the message that restorative justice was important to implement.

Restorative justice

We were also able to make a statement to the plenary session in support of restorative justice and the resolution. To do this, we needed to draft our statement and send it to the FWCC World Office and the Quaker United Nations Offices (QUNO) in New York and Geneva to get it approved, so that we could speak on behalf of FWCC.

This is where e-mail is really essential! Then we had to ask the administration team where it could fit in the Plenary Session agenda, and be ready to be called. Afterwards one of the country representatives sponsoring the restorative justice resolution commented on it favourably. Here is our concluding paragraph:

Restorative justice is an inclusive response, which gives voice to the concerns of victims, people who have offended, and the wider community. It

is adaptable and varied – every culture has within it wisdom about how to remedy harms that fits with restorative approaches. We commend the expert group report [which was the basis of the restorative justice resolution] and support the draft resolution submitted to this session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

There were also Side Events, mainly organised by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which we attended to inform ourselves about matters of interest to Quakers. We contributed a side event on ‘A restorative approach to social media in schools’ (to fit in with the cybercrime theme), facilitated by Charlotte Calkin of the Restorative Engagement Forum.

This used a workshop approach, much appreciated by participants as a more interactive alternative to other events. We also attended Side Events organised by other governments and NGOs, on varied topics, such as global prison trends, efforts to abolish the death penalty, life imprisonment, mental health in prisons, non-custodial measures for drug offenders, and dangers of cyberspace for young people.

Building relationships

We also spent time building relationships with other NGO delegations, including Penal Reform International (PRI), who are trying to build a coalition to place new international standards for life sentences on the agenda of next year’s CCPCJ. These would replace the current guidelines, substantially written by Nick McGeorge, which were adopted by the UN in 1994. PRI presented research at one of their side events that supported the case for new guidance, given the growing prevalence of life sentences worldwide.

It is a strange kind of work, and we sometimes wonder what effect we have. But a statement we made in 2003 on the Plight of Women Prisoners, to counteract the male bias, resulted in a spate of interest and research on women in prison and their children (see QUNO website). And Kimmitt’s work on the Nelson Mandela Rules (UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners) has helped to provide a leading document setting out humane conditions in prison.

It is sometimes frustrating to see good resolutions watered down, or nations squabbling over the precise wording of one line, and it can seem to outsiders that progress is painfully slow and sometimes goes backwards. However, the small steps forward are magnified by their international acceptance and sometimes implementation. It is a privilege to represent Quakers in this work.

MARIAN LIEBMAN

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

Our Conference next year will be held as usual on the last weekend in February (22nd – 24th) at Hinsley Hall Conference Centre in Leeds, where we have previously held a conference. The topic for the conference is “The Decriminalisation of Drugs”

and we have been very strongly supported and assisted in organising this by Voirrey and Tony Faragher, members of the Quaker Decriminalisation Network, a Quaker Recognised Body, for which we are extremely grateful.



We have three very well informed speakers, about whom you will find information on the booking form enclosed with this Newsletter, and there will be the usual programme of workshops and time for networking and renewing or making new contacts with others involved (or just interested in) different areas of the criminal justice system, as well as some time for just relaxing! Our conferences are a very valuable part of QICJ and this conference is likely to be well attended, so early booking is advised. Booking forms should be

returned to our bookings clerk, Simon Ewart as soon as possible, and please no later than January 31st.

ANN JACOB

VISITATION DIFFICULTIES

In July I visited a f/Friend in HMP Dartmoor. It was good to see him but the business of gaining access as a visitor, which took an hour, was not so good. And how much worse it must have been for those I spoke to (women with small children) who had not, like me, arrived by car but had got themselves to the middle of Dartmoor after lengthy journeys on public transport.

Without making concessions to security but assuming that visitors are not there for punishment, it seemed to me that the entry procedure could be streamlined and made more coherent. I wrote the following letter to the governor:

"I visited a prisoner in Dartmoor last week and wanted to give some feedback on the experience which I hope may be of use. Although I have visited various prisons in the past, this was my first time at Dartmoor.

Having found the visitors' car park, which is not signed off the road until you are right at it, it is not at all clear where to go next. Luckily, there were other people about who had been before and we followed them. Arriving in the sort of courtyard, there is no information as to where to go next and again we had to be directed by other visitors. Although I had made the bookings online we still had to queue up to write out our names, ethnicity etc by hand

on a slip of paper. After this, we were sent across the courtyard to the main building to have our identity checked. We then had to go back to the first place to put stuff in a locker. Then we had to wait outside (the waiting room was full) until we were called to return to the main building to wait again

to be searched in two other rooms (in person and then by dogs) before entering the prison visitors' room.

It is always a daunting and emotional experience to visit someone in prison and any measures to make it a little easier are worth considering. Some



simple signage as to where to go and what the stages are would be helpful. And would it not be possible to have identity documents checked at the same time/in the same place to avoid going back and forth across the courtyard? The weather was good when we were there but how horrid that must be when, as happens a lot on Dartmoor, it is cold and wet. I am thinking particularly of the many women I saw there with babies in arms and/or with buggies.

I appreciate that conditions are not ideal in an old prison but I do feel that some relatively small changes could improve and speed up the visitor experience at Dartmoor without in any way affecting security.”

Several months later, I have not had a reply and do not expect one now. My experience at other prisons has been better than at Dartmoor but I wonder if others have felt similar concerns elsewhere? Is there a prison which does it really well and which others could learn from?

JENNIFER ARMSTRONG

COMMITTEE MATTERS

1) Appointment of new co-Clerk

We will be looking to appoint a new co-Clerk (to join Jo Rado) at the AGM in February, as it is really time I handed over. Could you all please give consideration to offering yourself for service in such a role on the committee (especially if you have at some time been on the committee before, so are familiar with what is involved)

2) Appointment of new Newsletter Editor

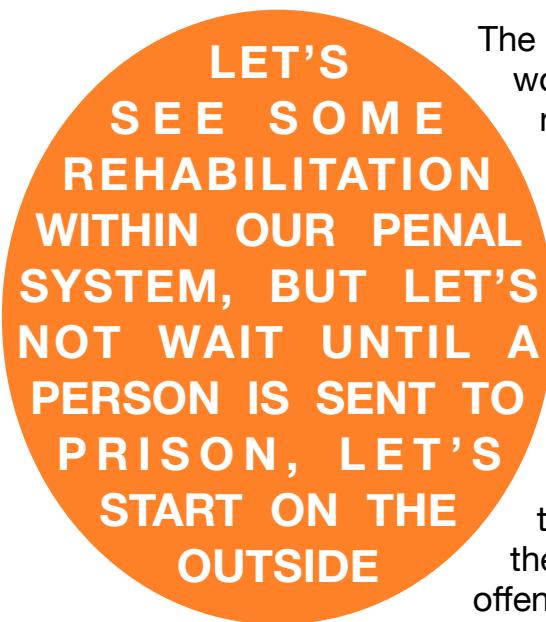
Following Carmel Schmid's resignation as Newsletter Editor earlier this year, the committee has received an offer to take on this role which we are accepting, and hope to co-opt Mark Humphries until the AGM, and make an appointment then. In the meantime we are extremely grateful to Jonathan Lamb, who having co-edited with Carmel to present the electronic version for some time, undertook to edit the printed version of the August Newsletter and this one. However he is not in a position, because of other commitments, to take on the formal role himself. We are hugely appreciative of his help during this time, which has made sure the Newsletter has been able to be produced during this interim period.

ANN JACOB

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE “REHABILITATION REVOLUTION”

When I was a serving prisoner I found it very hard to see any rehabilitation going on around me and now as an ex-offender in the community I still don't see or hear much of the so called “Rehabilitation Revolution”, initially some small steps of this agenda were taken, but there appears to have been little significant progress to date.

As I look back over the years that I have spent within the penal system, which started as a Borstal boy going onto many sentences of imprisonment (which I am not proud of), I recall that at the borstal I attended there was a structured work and education system, the borstal had a farm, painting and decorating, building, stone walling, and laundering courses, all designed to help and rehabilitate offenders so at the end of their sentences they could return to society and hopefully never return to offending.



The prisons I've attended initially had worthwhile work that helped you to gain qualifications that may help to resettle back into society as an honest and decent person. Over the years I have seen workshops decline throughout the prison estate, prison farms that used to provide many of the vegetables to our prisons were shut down due we were told, to lack of funding and staff shortage.

Part of the Rehabilitation in prisons was putting prisoners onto Offender Behaviour Programmes, then these have gradually been withdrawn, as they were seen to be ineffective in relation to stop offenders from reoffending.

Unfortunately, over the years subsequent governments have cut the budgets made available to prison governors to be able to run their establishments properly, this has in turn led to staff shortages which in turn has led to less time for staff to interact with a prisoner, so one the best forms of rehabilitation has been lost. We now have prisoners spending more time in their cells than I did back in the 80's. this I believe is due to the government bowing down to the media and “lock them up brigades”.

Rehabilitation of an offender isn't only the responsibility of the prison service, but it should be doing a lot more than it is to start the process of rehabilitation once an offender is in the prison system. It is also down to the offender to rehabilitate his or herself.

I am a firm believer that rehabilitation must come from the individual. However, we can't expect this from an offender who is so entrenched in their offending that they don't or won't see how much damage they cause to others by their offending.

Until an offender accepts within themselves what they are doing is wrong and see the hurt they cause to others they won't and can't begin the process of rehabilitation.

During my time as a prisoner I heard many speeches made by successive Conservative Justice Secretaries advocating offender rehabilitation, Kenneth Clarke (2010 - 2012), Chris Grayling(2012-15) all he wanted to do was deny prisoners from having books sent in to them, Michael Gove (2015-2016) and Liz Truss (2016-17). I listened to the speech by David Cameron in February 2016, which was the first speech by a Prime Minister on prison and rehabilitative reform for some twenty years and yet there is little tangible progress which in my view is very depressing.

So, come on you government ministers, let's see some rehabilitation within our penal system, but let's not wait until a person is sent to prison, let's start on the outside, we need more rehabilitation work from the probation service towards their clients. Instead of this, the probation service have withdrawn all funding from Circles of Support and Accountability, one of the most effective rehabilitation schemes.

I am one of the lucky ones my rehabilitation started at HMP Grendon, and have been fortunate to have been to a couple of prisons where governors have been pro-active in their prison rehabilitation agenda but not all prisons are like minded. So let's have this "Rehabilitation Revolution" in action not just words.

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DON an ex prisoner

Your Committee Members for 2018 are: Simon Ewart, Rodney Mahon (Treasurer), Ann Jacob (Co-Clerk & Membership Sec.), Alice Audsley, Marian Liebmann, Nick McGeorge, Jo Rado (Co-Clerk), Carmel Schmid. Jonathan Lamb is newsletter editor although he is not available to attend committee meetings outside of the conference. Jonathan produces the illustrated electronic newsletter.

Published by Quakers in Criminal Justice

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

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