

QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

EDITORIAL - CARMEL & JONATHAN

The 2017 conference has been hailed as “the best ever” from Ann, a notable long-term member. It has much coverage in this edition with three articles: Conference Report, an Alternative View and Gathering the Threads. But I would also like to reiterate that it follows from the success of the Leeds Conference where local Friends were invited to participate for the very first time. Please take heed that next year’s conference on the last weekend of February 2018 will be concerned with mental health and the criminal justice system.

It is thus opportune that this newsletter concludes with a short story to do with the care within mental health services. The story is symptomatic of service delivery in our age where the emphasis is on risk management, paperwork and following procedures. A book review of *Among the Hoods* gives another example of how the social care system is struggling to meet care needs irrespective of the resources expended. (Those that are aware of my recent skirmish with Social Work will no doubt suspect that perhaps I am lucky. – Carmel)

Otherwise this edition has a good mix of factual information on the recent Prison and Courts Bill, a report from Chelmsford about their seminar with the Phoenix Trust, a glimpse of a Quaker chaplains’ role and another interesting perspective from a book review on Religion, Faith and Crime.

We would like to thank Alan Russell for his continued commitment to emendations for the newsletter as well of course as our much valued production printer, Greta Mitchell. This newsletter is a virtual team effort and in recognition of his success producing the electronic version, Jonathan Lamb is now co-editor.



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QICJ CONFERENCE REPORT 2017

In 2017 the QICJ Conference took place at Woodbrooke, timed as always for the last weekend in February. The event was by all accounts a great success with speakers and audiences interacting and a strong sense of the whole being more than the sum of the parts. Now is the time to reflect on the exchanges, the learning and how to make the most of the energy that were generated. This Conference confidently built on our 2016 event at Hinkley Hall in Leeds; that was the first to invite day visitors, a practice which looks set to stay and is a form of outreach. In 2016 our Conference title was 'Poverty vs Power, Where does our Responsibility Lie?' recognising that the criminal justice system sits within a social context and that poverty is compounded through the education, health and the justice system whereas privilege frequently enables people to bypass the justice system.



This year, our Conference title attempted to answer the challenging questions we generated in 2016 by developing our understandings of current Restorative Justice and Restorative Practices. Four thematic workshops were held around: Restorative Housing, Schools, Roadsharing and one envisaging an approach to social problems without recourse to criminal justice. The Conference was introduced by two lecturers from Ulster University, who have contributed to the growth of Restorative Justice in Europe and who presented 'An Alternative: Restorative Society' with profound personal commitment. This sense of dedication reverberated through the workshops, and the reflective groups' and also characterised the work of our keynote speakers.



Derick Wilson, Emeritus Reader in Education (Restorative Practices) & Hugh Campbell, Senior Lecturer (Restorative Practices) have worked together at Ulster University for many years, their strong values and ethics underpinning a myriad of projects and initiatives from local to international. They spoke of the relevance for Restorative Practice for identity, the ways that we understand ourselves and others. They explored the potential of Restorative Practice principles for

renewing and nurturing the culture of wider society and its uses in organisational, community and family settings as a practical way of creating inclusion. Above all, they spoke of people as assets, not problems, with the potential for generating relationships of trust, doing justice to diversity and recognising rivalrous scapegoating as a trap.

Will McMahon gave a challenging and mesmerising radical rethink of the premises on which our criminal justice system rests. Will is Deputy Director of the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, and he addressed the Conference on the theme of 'Justice Matters: Beyond Criminal Justice'. He gave a workshop about Doing Justice Differently, in the face of UK imprisonment having doubled since the 1990s. He spoke of the inherent self-defeat of our current system, particularly the net-widening of increasing police involvement, the intentional blurring of lines between civil and legal codes and the consequent widening of the gateway to the criminal justice system. This was real leadership for long-term systemic change rather than amendment of a fatally flawed system.

Workshops from Marian Liebmann about a Restorative Approach to Road Sharing and from Stuart Sillett (NFS Mediation) about a Restorative Approach to Housing offered compatible insights from practical experience. The capacity to handle the demands of a local authority was demonstrated in both projects and each skilfully demonstrated the delivery of restorative services to marginalised groups against the odds. Bristol City's Road Sharing project enabled communication and problem-solving in the face of conflict between different road users. Hampshire's use of NFS Mediation, where Nick McGeorge has long been Board Chair, effectively tackles ASB (anti-social behaviour) and makes a long-term contribution to education on conflict resolution alongside fulfilment of their Council contract.



Ellis Brooks, QPSW Peace Education & Engagement Coordinator, led a workshop modelling activities that echo the different dimensions of peace in the field of education. Participants explored inner peace through a guided meditation on a peaceful school, practised restorative skills such as reflecting back without blame, then applied these ideas in role play to wider world conflicts. The group reflected on Johan Galtung's distinction between 'negative peace', the absence of violence,

and a 'positive peace' in which we find the presence of justice. What does this mean for the way we build schools and empower young people?

Our Saturday showcasing of Friends' work included the film 'Creating Restorative Cornwall – Making a Start' which features Lesley Moreland, Lionel Morrison and leadership from Ulster University. The 'Balanced Model' of Restorative Justice seeks benefits for both parties in crime or in conflict. A film and song by Tracy Chapman about the destructive effects of racist oppression was also shown.

Dr Belinda Hopkins, Director of the Transforming Conflict National Centre for Restorative Approaches in Youth Settings, led the Conference on Sunday morning about restorative values, core beliefs and principles in the schools setting. This involved experiential learning in circles and taking the time to think about participant needs. We were treated to a vivid theatrical representation of the 'school to prison pipeline,' demonstrating how simple misunderstandings can lead to labelling and how negative judgements and punishments combined with neglect can lead to Youth Offending with shocking ease.

A gifted Summing Up by Martin Wright has become an expected part of Sunday morning at QICJ Conference, and this year the threads that were drawn together felt stronger than ever. The Restorative Justice Movement is here to stay: it is ready and able to connect with many other



forms of social justice and peace-making. Building this movement is one way to address injustice and to create a real alternative to the divisive, damaging criminal justice system.

The photographs that illustrate this article are more about relationships than individuals, and reflect the essence of restorative approaches.

Deborah Mitchell

A full Report of the Conference with films, photographs and more details of the sessions will be available from May 2017. This will be widely circulated and available via the website of RJ Working.co.uk and in due course the QICJ website.

QICJ CONFERENCE 2017 - AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW

On exploring the 2017 brochure for Woodbrooke, I spotted the QICJ Annual Conference. Not being sure whether it was open to all, and more importantly, whether my restrictions would stop me from attending, I decided to make further enquiries. Yes, there understandably had to be discussions on safeguarding involving my Meeting, Woodbrooke themselves, my probation officer, and my police contact, but I was pleasantly surprised to find that the concerns were slight and the management of my residential stay was perfectly acceptable to all. It further increased my belief that I must be doing OK: trust was indeed increasing and this is humbling.

“From when I walked into Woodbrooke, until the moment I walked out, I was accepted with a smile, a word of reassurance and a willingness to listen”

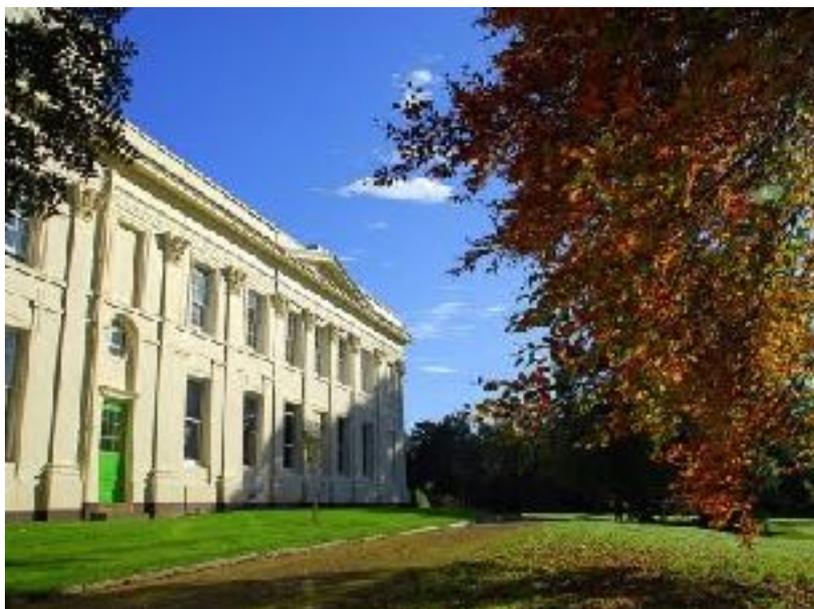
I had further concerns such as my struggle with strangers and social situations – a long-term low level social anxiety disorder. Of course, my concerns were totally unfounded, I feel ashamed, I should have known better. From when I walked into Woodbrooke, until the moment I walked out, I was accepted with a smile, a word of reassurance and a willingness to listen. Finally, an open, palpable trust that I could disclose certain aspects of my past. I was, after all just a precious child of God. - nothing more, nothing less.

Soon after a warm welcome, I was spotted by Simon, and in turn, Ann, both with reassuring smiles. Later, I was introduced to Andrew, who had kindly agreed to keep an eye on me, and periodically check I was OK. Although the whole atmosphere was leaving me less and less in need of such individualised care, it was appreciated. We chatted for a while until supper time - I hadn't known Woodbrooke's reputation for food...

The first presentation took place after supper. The theme of Restorative Justice was a primary motivation for me to choose this Woodbrooke conference but it soon became apparent that I had had a very restricted idea of Restorative Justice. I had thought it was just a victim in a room with the offender, explaining the harm they had caused allowing the victim closure. Derek

Wilson and Hugh Campbell from Ulster University spoke passionately about growing up and living in Ireland during the troubles, the peace initiative and recent times. It was their talk of community restorative processes that had me starting to question whether I had misunderstood the plot of what was about to play out over the weekend. My confusion was compounded by the choice of workshops on Peace Education, Road Sharing, Justice Matters and Housing.

I chose the Justice Matters and Housing workshops, as I live in a horse-shoe of flats, within



which we have our moments, so maybe somewhere in there would be the “room” scenario I had envisaged.

Small Group Sessions provided the chance to discuss feelings and personal perspectives. It is a confidential environment but the tone was set beautifully by one of our members being so touchingly open about the difficult place they were in. This really helped me be open within my introduction, and describing through misty eyes my feelings of being so welcome and accepted.

A word I could use to sum up the whole weekend.

It is quite personal and sensitive in a way, but I think it is important to communicate how my emotional state was lifted through the weekend.

Then the second presentation by Will McMahon, was on an alternative paradigm of justice – social justice. It was a perfect introduction to his inspiring workshop which uncovered a multiplicity of approaches to domestic violence without any recourse to a criminal justice system. With that, the focus of the weekend became clear. The workshop on ‘justice matters’ was not about our justice system, but how to get rid of it, replace it with something better. This whole weekend was not about my narrow understanding of Restorative Justice, but a much wider, all-encompassing approach from cradle to grave on a global scale.

We had free time in the afternoon but I was so keen that I neglected to relax, and started writing instead. Soon I had company, and again found myself in such an aura of care, the writing was forgotten. Time passed seamlessly and the next workshop, by Stuart Sillet, was on a restorative approach to housing. Again, the need to take the police out of the equation and have independent people doing the restorative bit. My “Room” scenario did make a brief appearance, but took the form of a wall outside somebody’s house. Remarkably, there was no victim or offender, just party one and party two, and everyone was heard.

I want to relay one more thing from that long Saturday. It is quite personal and sensitive in a way, but I think it is important to communicate how my emotional state was lifted through the weekend. It occurred after the group sessions, presentations, workshops, AGM, eulogy,...after everything was finished. I was focusing on QICJ literature when a conference attendee came and sat with me. We started chatting, and she explained her role in the system. Time passed and people left to get a nightcap or retire. Before I knew it, it was after eleven and there we were alone in the room.

It struck me later how profound a moment it was for me as I constantly have to conform to so many issues regarding risk to others. I am reminded of this fact in many different ways, and of how others have to be informed. To have someone, alone in that space totally trusting me meant so much. Many people’s thinking about my line of offending would have had them making excuses, but not her. The concept of trust and of acceptance resonated deep within me. Not seen as the dangerous anomaly, but purely a unique, precious child of God. Thank you for that.



On Sunday morning, Dr Belinda Hopkins soon achieved what caffeine couldn't, with an interactive presentation mixing small group interactions with role play. She demonstrated how critical that first exposure of restorative thinking is within our schools. It can sow the seed for generations to come. Our final Small Group Session was also uplifting, much of it reflecting Belinda's presentation.

Looking back, there are many high points. **I finally met the Quaker Chaplain who introduced me to Quakerism, and led me through the first months of darkness within prison walls. Then, the realisation that Restorative Justice isn't what I thought at all.** The love, peace, and silence that seem embedded within the walls of Woodbrooke. The weekend was a world where for a short time, I felt at home; accepted, loved and cared for without judgement. Just Quakers being Quakers. Bless you all.

Steve

GATHERING THE THREADS

Our conference programme hoped that we would be 'inspired and refreshed': I have, and I hope you have. At last year's conference, we heard about crimes of the powerful, as well as an inspiring story of how two youth workers prevented a riot. It is for example, criminal to prevent harmful activities from being defined as criminal, or even prohibited: there is pressure for 'de-regulation', because regulation is seen as a burden on business. Regulations can be excessive, of course, but they are a protection for consumers and employees, and they create a level playing field for businesses.

This year we have heard how certain activities, especially by the powerless and disadvantaged, are defined as criminal, thus widening the net of criminal justice. This echoes the point made by the Dutch criminologist Louk Hulsman, that defining an act as a crime is a choice – by parliament, by the police, or by victims who decide whether or not to report it. Similarly, there is in many cases a choice whether to invoke criminal justice or restorative justice, whether to be restorative or retributive. Advocates of restorative justice (RJ) should be careful of getting into bed with criminal justice – you never know what you might catch!

Some key words from this conference have been restorative, alternative, and transformative, and underlying them all is justice; but there are sections of our society who react against the word 'justice', because they have experienced it as oppressive – most obviously because it is associated with 'stop and search', or because of the disproportionate number of people from disadvantaged minorities who are in prison. A report in 1976 by the American Friends Service committee, entitled *Doing justice*, concluded that justice is impossible in an unjust society. It might



be better to use the word 'fairness'. (In passing, it's interesting to see what words countries have borrowed from each other: we have taken *joie de vivre* and *savoir faire* from the French, and *Angst* and *Zeitgeist* from the Germans; perhaps we can be modestly proud that the Germans have adopted the word *fairness* - not to mention *restorative justice*!).

The conference was opened by Hugh Campbell and Derick Wilson, from Ulster, who spoke about peacemaking in Northern Ireland emphasising the importance of listening to prisoners' stories. They were clear that we should involve civil society and not leave RJ to professionals. Transformative structures should be built in: start with pilot projects, and repeat them until they become a pattern. John-Paul Flintoff suggests *How to change the world* (2012, available in Friends' House bookshop) in less than 150 pages! There is a need for advocacy: not demonising those who think differently, but opening the discussion. It is important to remember that people are assets, not problems – and that includes offenders and immigrants. We are not born to be violent, but to have relationships. This brings to mind the book by the Russian writer Piotr Kropotkin, *Mutual aid: a factor of evolution* (1902), which gives numerous examples of how co-operation is the norm for both animals and humans.



Will McMahon, of the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (CCJS), explored the possibility of going beyond criminal justice. This is in line with the parallel drawn by Flintoff (op. cit.) with the slave trade: some nineteenth-century reformers argued for making it more humane, but it would still be slavery: radical reform required abolition. He gave us an exercise: to think how society could respond to a given crime (domestic violence, for example)

without involving police. With this in mind the CCJS is undertaking a project, called 'Justice matters', with the Crime, Community and Justice Sub-Committee of Quaker Peace and Social Witness. As an example of how events are inappropriately referred to police, he said that 84 per cent of calls to police command and control centres are not about lawbreaking. The government professes to support localism, but local authority budgets have been reduced by 35 per cent (with more cuts to come), forcing councils to cut services such as meals on wheels, social care, libraries and youth services, all of which are important for people's quality of life, and some impact directly on crime prevention. This makes me want to misquote St Paul's letter to the Philippians (4:8):

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report – cut their funding!

What he did say (verse 9) was:

These things, which you have both learned, and received, and heard, ... do.

Inevitably I was not able to attend every workshop. In one of them Stuart Sillett took a restorative approach to housing. This included anti-social behaviour and crime; an independent mediation service is often trusted more than statutory agencies. Marian Liebmann described a restorative approach to road-sharing in Bristol: an interesting extension of restorative practices.

Ellis Brooks's workshop was on peace education: he asked us to use our imaginations to think what a peaceful school would be like, and then to run a role-play of peer mediation.

In the final plenary session, Belinda Hopkins, who has recently edited a book called *Restorative theory in practice*, spoke of the 'ripple effect' of using restorative methods: 'it's up to all of us'. She used members of the audience to present a tableau vivant illustrating the 'school to prison pipeline' through which a boy fell when he was repeatedly not listened to. This showed how things can turn out differently.

The conference was in tune with Ted Wachtel's book *Dreaming of a new reality* (2013) which is subtitled 'How restorative practices reduce crime and violence, improve relationships and strengthen civil society.' He points out that restorative conferences cannot be the whole answer: they need the back-up of well resourced core services. A video is available of how his own organisation, the International Institute for Restorative Practices, put this into practice. He claims that this 'new reality' should appeal to people both on the Left, whose instinct is to help people in need, and on the Right, who encourage everyone to take responsibility for their own problems. In contrast to the hierarchical model of management he sums up the restorative approach:

People are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them.

Martin Wright

MY EXPERIENCE OF AN OLDER PRISONERS' WING

Our prison was split into two halves: the older part being built in the eighties, holding around 600 adult prisoners, and the newer part, completed in 2010, holding 480 young offenders (YO). Then in early 2014, a rumour started that they were going to close the YO side and use it exclusively for the adult population. This caused some excitement, as word of mouth was that the cells had showers over there, a luxury only found on 'enhanced wings' in most establishments. A lesser thought of advantage at the time was, that being a more recent build, it would be more disability-friendly. This advantage was to prove crucial for its allocation as an older prisoner's wing.

I felt blessed to have found a niche working in this older prisoners' wing. It started one morning when I stumbled on the weekly social gathering known as the OAP Coffee Morning. A chance for the scattered OAP's around the prison to congregate for a chat, some snooker, a bit of bingo and, most importantly, toast. The latter being described as older prisoner's cocaine (a truth in jest). I found a role within the kitchen washing up, and this led to helping set up and prepare every Wednesday morning, as well as chatting to those who seemed a bit isolated. Although I did not belong to this age group, my role in the breakfast club, coupled with my Listener role, led to my post as Older Prisoner and Disability Officer.

A significant disadvantage with the YO wing soon became apparent: the rationing of water in cells, as young offenders had had a reputation for flooding the place. I presumed wrongly, that this rationing would be lifted for the older prisoners' wing, but it turned out to be the first of many battles. Our expectation for the refitted 'older prisoners' wing was a fully fitted-out wing, adapted to suit those of an infirm disposition, but the reality was a pretty much standard wing, with many promises of things to follow. As always, the main sticking point was money.



There was also an issue with fairness across the site. There is a thin line between giving older prisoners the practical and emotional tools to cope, and giving them what can be perceived as preferential treatment and luxuries not available to others. There was already ongoing disquiet that the prison rules state that anyone over sixty-five has an open-door policy during the day, whether working or not. This luxury was not of course available to others. So a wing where everybody was out all day from eight till seven was going to be an issue, especially in the summer, apart from an hour or so's lunch for the officers. It all had to be taken into account, and I can see how the Governor was caught between a rock and a hard place to an extent.

On a practical level, the initial issues were obvious. We only had three wheelchairs, and none of them were the XL versions for the heavier prisoners. The promise that all healthcare appointments would be at the healthcare unit next door to the wing, the whole reason it was chosen, soon became a distant dream. This meant a long walk in the elements for some prisoners battling with breathing issues, diabetes-affected legs etc. Hence the need for the chairs, and of course someone to push them. It fell on the three or four younger members of the wing such as myself to complete this exercise. The wing slowly filled and the reality of what we had let ourselves in for dawned on us.

It seemed at times that if it hadn't been for Alan^[1] the whole thing would have collapsed into an unsafe nightmare. He was originally the Older Prisoner 'rep' on the induction wing, but had agreed to take on the Care Coordinator role of this new venture. He was tough as nails, and not squeamish about taking on the establishment - pushing, pushing, and pushing a bit more in fighting for what was needed. A role, maybe in a cowardly way, I felt I could not embrace (with my IPP status, I had to be careful not to make waves). Alan worked tirelessly at night, putting in and developing structures and plans to facilitate the smooth running of the wing from a care

point of view. Teams and rotas evolved for every duty, care plans developed for those with the most critical need, wheelchair journeys planned with military precision, over a hundred a week at the height. It all started to work, and as with many things, looking back later we couldn't believe how we had coped in the beginning.

It took on a life of its own, and this was due in no small way to the voluntary involvement of the older prisoners themselves. It is important to emphasise how the older prisoners craved to be involved. You have to understand the general way of things in most prison wings. The youngest and fittest tend to get all the on-wing jobs. The oldest are left to while away the days in boredom and non-activity. Suddenly there is a place for them, a job to do, most importantly, a purpose. Something we all need, and they took it all on with relish.

Whether it was in the servery, pushing wheelchairs, cleaning cells, fire evacuation buddies, carer roles or simply organising activities. Yes, there were the normal personality clashes, but the one thing everybody agreed on was that you could walk out of your cell every morning with no fear, leaving that cell door open and knowing everything would be there when you return. From personal experience, I can testify that this changes everything, helping you avoid the hazy malaise of depression and uncertainty that can make your time so hard. It would never be home, but the environment that ensued may be as close to it as could ever be attained for older prisoners.

The Social Care Bill came into existence, many assessments were done, but sadly the promised investment was at a very low level. A hand rail here and there in cell, a stair lift being the biggest outlay. No special mattresses for the many back issues, thus consigned to piling two or three of them up to try and relieve discomfort. The water rationing was foregone in exceptional cases, but the much-discussed need for professional carers in some instances was not tackled by the time of my release. We



were just prisoners at the end of the day, but simply felt it more important to bend the rules in the pursuit of humane behaviour than leave someone to lose what little dignity they had left. We had exceptional nurses on hand who did their best with empathy and care, and a Wing Custody Officer of the same ilk. The consequences of incontinence and dementia are easy to clear up, but the daily patience needed with the infirm, the lonely, the lost, the innocent, those fearing the future or death, those who have lost everything, takes a special breed of person. I did my best, but as always look back feeling I should have done more.

Do I think the whole thing was a success? Absolutely. I hope more and more prisons adopt similar approaches in the care of the elderly within our penal system. I have however a concluding concern. Being admitted to an older persons' wing must be voluntary. Not all elderly people want to be lumped into what they see as a retirement home. Some want to mix with younger people, not in their view be brought down by being surrounded by reminders of encroaching health issues and the end of their mortal lives. For others, rightly or wrongly thrust into a decaying prison system, some solace, peace, and most of all, purpose, can be found within the walls of an Older Prisoner Unit.

Steve

[1] Anonymised

THE PRISONS AND COURTS BILL

The long-awaited Prisons & Courts Bill appeared on Thurs 23 February 2016, just in time for me to prepare the following quick summary for our Quakers in Criminal Justice conference.

Firstly, there is little prison content within the Bill itself as it mostly concerns the courts, tribunals and judicial appointments. However, a lot is packed inside the four-part 'purpose of prison' section. A section termed 'reform and rehabilitate offenders' is anticipated to be achieved through 'empowered' governors, increasing from six pilot prisons to the whole estate from April 2017. The 'empowerment' means that governors will commission what they regard as relevant services, rather than the present arrangement whereby this is done centrally via NOMS.

The PRISON content of the Bill is as follows, numbered as in the document

[1] Purpose of prisons: protect the public, reform and rehabilitate offenders, prepare prisoners for life outside prison and to maintain a safe secure environment.

[2] The expanded role of the Prison Inspectorate (now includes inspecting 'leadership').

[4-19] The extension of the Prison & Probation Ombudsman role (what probation?).

[21-22] Prison security: interference with wireless telegraphy (mobile phones) and testing for psycho-active substances, such as Spice (which are wreaking such havoc in prisons).

The 2nd reading took place on Mon 20 March when I was actually at a meeting in Westminster and could see from the screen in the corner the names of the many MPs called to speak. Checking later, I see that reaction



was largely favourable – except that two key points were made: it must be properly funded, and the prison population must decrease. Next come the Committee and Report stages, then we'll see what the Lords have to say.

Another important change is that NOMS' days are numbered. This is going to be replaced by Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS), which has responsibility for 'rolling out the reform programme', operational matters and tackling extremism. However Michael Spurr, who headed up NOMS, is in charge of HMPPS, so maybe this will be a case of 'plus ca change.' (meaning that significant change is unlikely). The Ministry of Justice will be in charge of policy, setting standards, an accountability framework and scrutinising prison performance.

Melanie Jameson

THE VALUE OF SILENCE

A Report from Chelmsford Meeting House on 22 October 2016

This was the third event that Mid Essex Area Meeting's Criminal Justice Group has organised. In 2012 we had a day when we focused on Restorative Justice with outside speakers. In 2014 we considered Forgiveness and this year we learned more about the prison Phoenix Trust and their work in prisons with meditation and yoga. Sam Settle came to talk to us about the Trust, which was set up in 1988 as a charity. He told us that there are three places where prisoners can get help and relief from the intensity of prison life: the gym, chapel and yoga classes. Many prisoners do want to change and yoga and meditation classes help them to do this within the prison setting. The Prison Phoenix Trust supports prisoners and staff in their spiritual lives with yoga and meditation, the use of silence and controlled breath. Silence can help reduce the need for medication, help with anxiety and help prisoners control their emotions, enabling them to move forward. PPT gets no money from the government but they do get money from various trusts and from Quaker Meetings. There are 130 yoga classes in prisons in this country; there are also 21 classes for prison staff whose jobs are very stressful.

Prison Phoenix Trust publishes a quarterly newsletter which goes to prisoners giving them inspiration and practical advice on sustaining yoga and meditation practice. They also train yoga and meditation teachers and they continue to support them. Sam read out excerpts from letters from prisoners about how much yoga and meditation have helped them which were very inspiring. We finished with some practical chair yoga exercises and a short meditation.

I'd like to quote 2 short passages from the current Phoenix Trust newsletter. The first is from Andy about the yoga and meditation he did while in prison before he was released: "Totally non-religious yet spiritual, gentle yet pleasantly tiring and physically challenging. Ultimately rewarding – a breath of fresh air."

"When you own your own breath, nobody can steal your peace." Author unknown

It was disappointing that there were only 12 people this year at the conference and no non-Quakers. At previous CJG events we have had more people and some non-Quakers. But there were Friends from all 4 local Meetings and we enjoyed the fellowship over lunch which we shared with Sam. For more information about The Prison Phoenix Trust see www.theppt.org.uk

Kathy South



“MISS - WHAT’S A QUAKER”

In August, at HMP Leeds we were invited to re-locate our Quaker Prison Chaplaincy to the Vulnerable Prisoner wing. In order to make ourselves known to the prisoners, we obtained some bright blue ‘hoodies’ and had them printed on the front with the Quaker logo and on the back with the statement: Quakers believe in that of Good in everyone.

Feeling a bit self-conscious we strolled through the wing on a Friday afternoon and men soon gathered to talk to us. While standing outside a cell chatting, a young man inside the cell started banging on his door shouting “Miss, miss, what’s a Quaker?” The man I was talking to at the time said “Miss - tell him, tell him - you’ll have to shout really loud or he won’t be able to hear you”

Thankfully, I didn’t have to shout, as one of the men found an officer to unlock the young man and then it felt quite simple to explain that “Quakers believe in that of Good in everyone” and we would be organising a monthly contemplation group that was open to all. The young man looked satisfied and happy with that and said he would join us.

Since August we have started the contemplation group and, with the help of the faith rep on the wing, have been joined by approximately a dozen men, about half who consider themselves Christians and the other half Muslims. It will be interesting to see how it all develops.

Tricia Keith

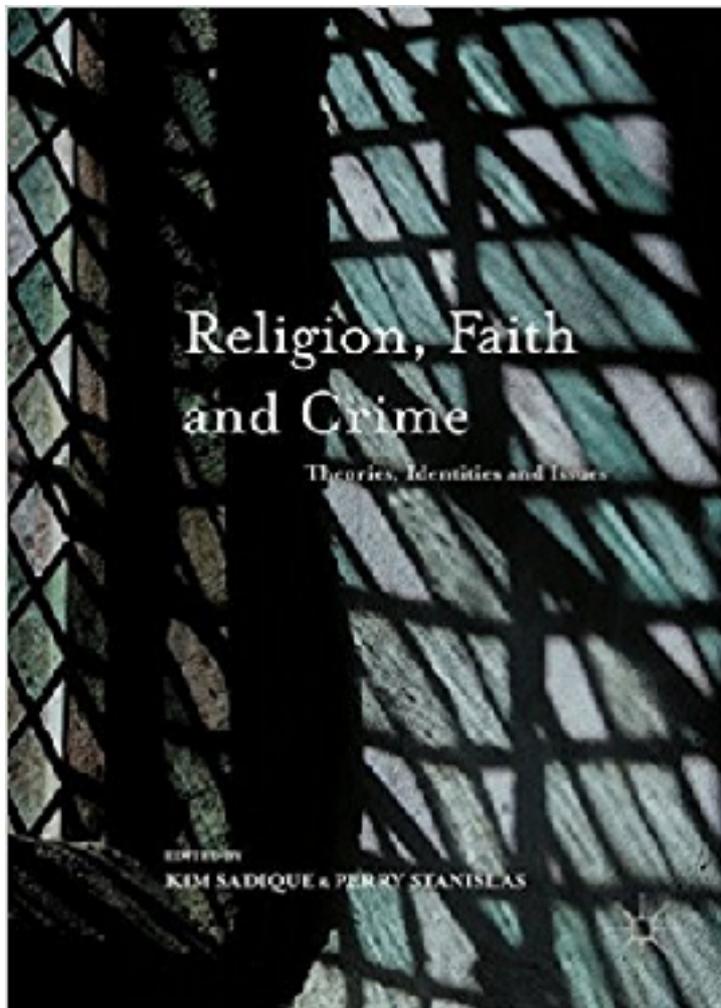
RELIGION, FAITH & CRIME

**Religion, Faith and Crime by Kim Sadique and Perry Stanislas (eds).
Published by Palgrave Macmillan 2016. ISBN: 978-1-137-45619-9**

I commend this book to the more academically minded Friends. It consists of sixteen essays and is roughly divided between historical theories and identity issues. There are a wide variety of somewhat startling subjects such as: “Hellfire in the 21st Century”, “A new interpretation of disablist hate”, “Witchcraft in South Africa”, “Polygamy in the USA” but also highly topical subjects including the validity of punishment, homophobia and islamophobia. There is even a chapter on righteous slaughter which tries to make sense of the mass murder committed by Anders Breivik in Norway.

The opening section gives prominence to the connection between crime and mental illness. Years ago, I read another book “The Manufacture of Madness” by Szasz who maintained that the mentally ill and other minorities are subjected to the attitudes once shown to heretics and witches. The history of medicine is besmirched with supposed healers with extreme irrational views that backed up an order of society seen as ‘right and proper’ such as ascribing an illness to black Afro-American in order to deny them equal rights or the case of Alan Turing, who in 1952 was subjected to chemical castration in order to treat his homosexuality.

Religion is one means by which we identify with a larger group – though many people prefer to let a football team, a pop singer or a railway preservation scheme dominate their lives. Religion stands in an ambivalent position, for although most faiths spread a message of peace and forgiveness, they can inflame conflicts. Mental troubles have often been attributed to a person's religiosity. Historically, the punishment of offenders was seen as necessary to divert the wrath of



God from the whole community. Seventeenth and eighteenth century wisdom demanded the segregation of deviants, lest they infect the rest of society. It is an Old Testament view that disability is the reward of sin – a view explicitly rejected by Jesus (John, 9). Islam is more tolerant – Mohammed took care to ensure that disabled believers could attend prayer.

Nineteenth-century prisons sowed the idea of perpetual surveillance of lifers, who though discharged from prison remain liable to lifelong recall. A paradigm shift since the 1980's has been reflected in a doubling of the UK prison population. The author condemns the Labour government of 1997 – 2010 for knowingly adopting policies that were demonstrably ineffective. The current scene is characterised by a deplorable absence of debate on what should be the moral foundations of criminal justice.

In our own time, the closure of asylums has led to the mentally ill being confined to prison instead. There was a recent tragic case of a remand prisoner – Saunders who took his own life in HMP Chelmsford although his family warned the prison authorities about his severe mental state.

Witchcraft is not confined to South Africa. I had a friend in Gloucestershire who lived alone. He became convinced that his neighbours were injuring him by means of evil rays directed through the walls of his house. Only a hundred years ago, 'cunning men' in rural Essex were much feared.

Jamaica and Uganda are the most homophobic countries in the world. It is not true that 'homophobia' is a Western perversion dating only from colonial times. The author doesn't mention the Martyrs of Uganda, a troupe of young men executed after they became Christians in the 1880's and refused to offer the services expected of them by their King. It makes sense that the most homophobic group of all are the unemployed men whose masculinity is under threat because they are denied the traditional male role of working for a living.

The chapter on child sex abuse considers the record of the Roman Catholic Church in the USA, Ireland and Australia. I was interested to read too of the existence of primary and secondary abuse; a perpetrator of the later was the mother who denied the allegation when her daughter complained of being gang-raped. It is interesting to note that the more attention that is paid to a problem, the more widespread it is found to be. This happened with the moral panic over witchcraft in George Fox's time; it happened with the Victorian campaign to round up the

mentally ill. It is happening now with historic child sex abuse. However, although the Catholic church has been identified as a secondary abuser by turning a blind eye on the problem, there is as yet no rush to incriminate them on the grounds of significant harm caused to children.

Women suffer more islamophobic abuse than men because of their distinctive dress. There will be prolonged disaccord in oriental families when young women continue to submit to arranged marriage while seeing their friends choose their own husbands. The requirement to observe the Ramadan fast through long hours of the northern summer is simply cruel – it was not envisaged by the prophet when he formulated the rules.

This review gives only glimpses of the ramified arguments of a most impressive book, plus some observations of my own prompted when reading it.

Adrian Smith

AMONG THE HOODS

Book Review: Among The Hoods, by Harriet Sergeant (Faber 2012, ISBN 978-0-571-28918-9)

I ordered this book from the library, but it proved of such riveting interest, I had to buy my own copy. One episode tumbled over into the next, reflecting the lives of the disaffected young men who form the subject of the book. The author is a Research Fellow for the Centre for Policy Studies, a right-wing think tank and a journalist who writes for the “Daily Mail”. So I was inclined to see her as a hostile witness. How wrong I was: she emerges as a person of compassion and imagination and presents an eloquent account of gang culture and the almost total failure of both statutory and voluntary services to do anything effective to better the lives of the alienated youths she befriends. She got involved because she wondered why it is that so many working class and black Caribbean boys fail to make the transition to successful adult life, but remain in a limbo of semi-criminal prolonged adolescence.

One older man, Swagger, filled the same role towards Harriet as Virgil did to Dante on his visit to the underworld. He had already spent six years inside at least fifteen prisons. The author won the boys’ confidence by buying them meals; we all know the way to a boy’s heart is through his belly. The gang members were always hungry, and got no regular meals. The author was known as ‘Harry’; the police were the ‘Feds’, and gang members were known by a range of nicknames – Swagger, Lips, Smalls, Jiggers – such as have always formed part of criminal subculture. She mentions their flamboyant clothes; fashions may have changed since “A Child of the Jago” but the urge to display is the same. ‘Harry’ first knew the gang when they were aged 15-16. She kept in touch with them

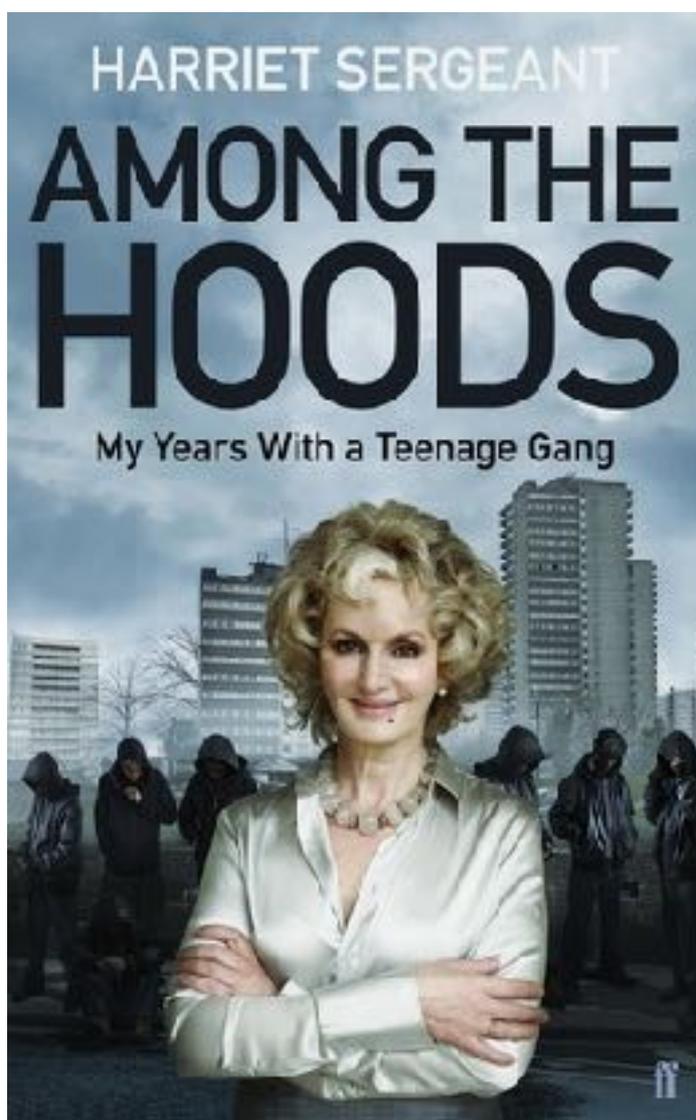
Bulldog, the only white boy in the gang, was also the most disturbed. But it is Tuggy Tub who dominates the book. He was one of five children, all of whom grew up in care. At sixteen he looked eleven, but he had committed over one hundred robberies and was well adjusted to a criminal career.

for three years, and left a detailed diary. At times the argot grows wearisome; she accurately reproduces the boys' blistering jargon, obscenities and all.

Bulldog, the only white boy in the gang, was also the most disturbed. But it is Tuggy Tub who dominates the book. He was one of five children, all of whom grew up in care. At sixteen he looked eleven, but he had committed over one hundred robberies and was well adjusted to a criminal career. 'Harry' met with puzzlement when she appeared in court to support TT, and on another occasion was ordered out of the courtroom by an all-female Bench, although TT had no family member or social worker to stand by him. Till he knew 'Harry', TT had only ever known adults who were paid to care for him. Boys recalled angrily an occasion when they were given parts in a school play, but no foster-parents or social workers came to see it, because it was outside the hours they were paid to do. The boys experienced nothing of what we would recognise as family life. There was an almost total absence of fathers; the lads had no male role models apart from their peer group. Sunshine was the only one who mentioned his father, who was dead. He was shot in the street and the police kept the ambulance away 'till the area was secure'. Many of the boys did know who their fathers were, but the mothers refuse to allow contact till too late, and will call police, alleging abuse, if the fathers try to challenge this. Swagger had an infant son he loved but was allowed only two hours of contact time each fortnight. The boy's mother invited him to move back in once he got a paid job, but when he lost it she kicked him out again. Tuggy Tub was turned out of the street at eighteen, when his foster mother's allowance from the council stopped. His social worker has never met him. It is difficult to talk a young man out of crime, when the friends on the street are all the support he has.

All the youths in the gang had had to face situations they were too young to cope with: neglect, abuse, bereavement, behind a macho front; they were all hungry for love, and protective toward 'Harry'.

Schools were a total failure, and blamed by the boys themselves for failing to instil discipline. 'The teachers don't even try. They only care about the wage.' (This enraged me, remembering the 70-hour week I regularly worked, and that did not include voluntary activities I provided during weekends and holidays.) TT had ceased attending school and could barely read or write.



Progression from school was not to University, but to prison (for boys) and pregnancy (for girls). Motherhood was the only way a girl could make an independent life for herself. Sunshine had been born to a single mother at sixteen; she had three sons by different fathers, 'all well known criminals in the area.' A girl who agreed to an abortion was derided as 'Cemetery Belly'. Dimples, a friend of TT, got pregnant at fifteen. He begged her to keep the baby, which she agreed to do, if all the young men agreed to support her. This they did, going on to beat up the baby's father when he refused.

The boys regularly travelled on buses and Underground without paying, though it was risky for them to stray off their manor, and even on their own turf it was unwise to walk alone.

The author deplores the catastrophic failure of the care system, despite expenditure of £60,000 pa on each child - twice the cost of Eton. Half of all young prisoners are ex-care children. The aggressiveness of youth is valued in time of war, but traditional peacetime restraints - home, school and church - have all lost ground.

The boys regularly travelled on buses and Underground without paying, though it was risky for them to stray off their manor, and even on their own turf it was unwise to walk alone. 'Over the water'(i.e. north of the Thames) was seen as

another land. The boys were culturally starved. Bulldog had never heard of the Battle of Britain, and came away from a visit to the Imperial War Museum fascinated by boat-building. TT's great ambition was to acquire property in the suburbs, live off the rents and play golf all day. In practice he was unemployable. He could not complete a CV without help, and when granted an interview he lacked both suitable clothes and money for the fare. Money registered success: on a visit to Tate Modern, what really interested the boys was what each picture was worth. Minor robberies to get money for the next meal were routine.

TT saw 'Signing On' as the mark of a loser. He was declared ineligible for income support 'as he hadn't completed the paperwork.' (He couldn't.) I was shocked to read that Jobcentres are not required to keep a record of the number of applicants they successfully place in paid work: their real work is in administering benefits. They are part of the culture of hopelessness that dogs British society in the twenty-first century. Prison is seen as a normal part of life. It is the default agency for the marginalised, because prisons have no say at all in who gets sent to them.

During the course of the book, Swagger predicts that within two years, one of the gang members will be in prison, one will be in a mental hospital, and one will be dead. This prediction proved only too accurate. TT, Lips, Smalls and Jiggers are all in prison; TT has attempted suicide. Bulldog is likely to be sectioned, and it is Swagger himself who is dead, of septicaemia in Jamaica.

"I didn't want this life. It just happened." Many of us could say that.

Adrian Smith

QICJ - AGM MINTES

QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE WOODBROOKE QUAKER STUDY CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, ON FEBRUARY 25, 2017

1. **Present and prevented**

There were 29 members (including committee members) and 4 non-members present. No apologies for absence were received.

2. **Committee Meetings held during the year**

Two committee meetings have been held since the last conference.

3. **Treasurer's Report**

David Hoare introduced himself as the new Treasurer, although not yet accredited with the bank, and his co-option to the appointment was formally approved. We thank Janet Lynch for her time as Treasurer and Ann Jacob who has carried the Treasurership during the year since Janet's ill health led to her resignation. David encourages us to use on-line payments.

The accounts are attached and include figures for 2015/16 as well as 2016/17. We accept the accounts and thank David for them. The committee will review the dates of the financial year at their next meeting.

4. **Membership Secretary's Report**

The Membership Secretary's Report is attached.

We request that all local Quaker Meetings should be asked to join QICJ and we agree that the committee will decide how this might be achieved.

It is proposed that the name of our organisation could be changed to Quakers and Criminal Justice. We agree that the committee will look further at the implications of this proposal and others that have been put forward. We could also adapt the leaflet to make it more inclusive.

We hope to maintain the number of members by encouraging people to pay by standing order or bank transfer.

5. **Newsletter Editor's Report**

Carmel Schmid has considered only producing an electronic newsletter, but there are some people who would like the print edition and we agree to continue this. There is also an electronic edition, for which we thank Jonathan Lamb.

6. **Committee appointments**

We release Andrew Lane at the end of his triennium, and thank him for his service. We

welcome David Hoare as our Treasurer and appoint him until 28th February, 2020. In the absence of a nomination or offer of service to replace Andrew Lane, we authorise the committee to co-opt a new member when possible. (Please see addendum at the end of these Minutes¹.)

7. **Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering**

Warwick, July 29 – August 5, 2017

An Information Stall has been booked for the Wednesday evening.

The Special Interest Meeting, led by CCJG in conjunction with QICJ, will we hope be on

Cont/....

- 2 -

the Thursday afternoon, when the BYMG theme is 'Working with Others to Make A Difference'. The title will be 'Is there a new way of doing justice?'

8. **Future Conferences**

2018 Ammerdown, February 23 – 25, 2018 provisionally booked. To be confirmed.

2019 We think Hinsley Hall in Leeds, but will need to check the lift access for people with mobility problems. If Hinsley Hall is not suitable, the committee will seek somewhere else in the North.

9. **Any Other Business**

1) The Website

Rodney Mahon has told us that it now costs money and he feels unable to continue with it. Paula is referring people to it and others have used it. We agree to continue to have a website. We have had several offers of website people to assist and our Treasurer says we are able to afford up to £100 p.a. We ask Melanie Jameson to speak to her son and send a quote and Rita Solanke to speak to her contact similarly. We ask the committee to progress this matter, and we thank Rodney for his work.

2) New arrangements for Listed Informal Groups

Ann will circulate the information about this in the Newsletter and ask for comments from our members.

3) Reports

We are grateful to Richard Heslop (Report for the Friend) and Deborah Mitchell (Report for the Newsletter.)

10. **Date of next Meeting**

Our next AGM will take place on February 24, 2018, at our conference.

UPDATES AND CONCERNS

1. Martin Wright has told us about a 'crime of the powerful' (relevant to last year's conference topic) at Bhopal, where people have been dreadfully damaged by a chemical spill in 1984. Union Carbide (now Dow Chemicals) were responsible but have never accepted the fact or done anything to help the people who are still suffering. Martin asks that Friends make themselves aware of all the difficulties and make others aware too.
2. Melanie has told us about the new Prisons Bill and the new responsibilities for Prison Governors.
3. Paula updated us about activities of the CCJ Group.
 - a) The sub-committee will pilot a 'Justice Matters' workshop at their September meeting.
 - b) They are issuing new briefings: (1) an update on "What can I do?" and (2) a short guide to Restorative Justice.As Paula is shortly handing over her role with CCJG, which is being taken over by Teresa Parker, we would like to express our thanks to Paula for all her helpful involvement with
Cont/...

- 3 -

QICJ, and a welcome to Teresa; we look forward to her joining us as a co-opted member of our committee.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Last year our numbers dropped at one point to a very worrying 127, and it is good to report that at the present time they have risen to 140 and we are very pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined since the November Newsletter was issued:

Anne Dunton, Polly Lowe, Richard Montague, Peter Moore, Stockport Quaker Meeting, Wirrall and Chester Area Meeting. Their contact details will go into the next update of the Membership List, and meanwhile anyone wishing to contact any of them should do so via me.

Please also note that Rita Remi-Judah's name is now Rita Solanke.



FRIENDS,
PLEASE BE SURE
TO READ THIS
UPDATE - IT IS
IMPORTANT

HOWEVER the less good news is that of these improved numbers, only 85 have so far paid their subs for the current year, plus 6 who have paid in advance. There are thus still 28 who last paid in 2016, and worse there were over 20 who had not paid since 2015 and stood to be deleted from the list. Of these, all of whom were contacted individually to warn them, I have received 7 positive responses so far and it looks therefore as if we will shortly lose 15 from the list, which would put us right back to unacceptably low numbers.

This perennial problem of people not paying their subs. at the beginning of the year despite being reminded in good time, and those who are remiss about paying for the current year until they are reminded they are in arrears, is of great concern, as it does impact on our financial situation. As I have stressed in so many of these updates, QICJ has no independent funding and depends entirely on the income from subscriptions, whatever small surplus we may make from the annual conference and whatever donations we receive (and I am very aware that many people pay more than their required subscription, for which we are very grateful.) This slackness about paying subscriptions promptly does not seem like responsible Quakerly membership, particularly if you value QICJ and wish it to survive and be able to offer what it does, including our excellent conferences. Our printed Newsletter is expensive to produce and the conferences fees are kept as low as possible

The committee have given and continue to give thought to how we can improve the situation, which is often through forgetfulness rather than deliberate, and we wish to encourage members to pay by standing order, so a standing order form was enclosed with the subscription reminder form in November, which indicated that standing order was the preferred method of payment. This has resulted in about 35 standing orders having been set up so far, and it is hoped this will increase.

But for others for whom this is not practical or possible, I urge you please to be prompt in paying your subscriptions. I really do not wish to have to keep stressing this situation in my membership updates - it gets very boring for everybody!

For your information, your committee members for this year are:

Simon Ewart, David Hoare (Treasurer), Ann Jacob (Co-Clerk & Membership Sec.), Marian Liebmann, Nick McGeorge, Deborah Mitchell, Jo Rado (Co-Clerk), Rita Solanke. Carmel Schmid and Jonathan Lamb are joint newsletter co-editors although Jonathan is not available to attend committee meetings outside of the conference. Jonathan produces the illustrated electronic newsletter.

Finally, it was good to see so many familiar faces and so many new ones at the Conference in February, which was a truly inspiring occasion - probably one of the best we have ever had.

Ann Jacob.

SHORT STORY: A DANGER TO OTHERS

The patient's view

An account to her psychiatrist on admission to Hospital, 9th June

"On the whole I've lived a good life, doctor. I'm a good woman, whatever they say. I just want to live in peace.

"You want to know what happened? Well, Frank died in '59, or was it 1960? Either way it was about twelve years ago. I remember his funeral, doctor - I remember it like it was yesterday. Oh the colours! It was April-one of those lovely warm springs we get sometimes. Tulips, daffodils - although the daffs were fading. Frank loved flowers. And the people! Frank was popular, you see....



Short
Story

"Sorry, I get carried away sometimes. What? Yes, I live alone. Yes, the house is very big but I don't mind that. For the first few years Pat did for me. Pat? She lived in that big estate across St Peters Road. Nice woman though - I wish I could say the same for her family. Those terrible boys took no more notice of her than if she'd been that wall over there.

"Yes, sorry. Well Harry and Jemima stopped visiting. Yes, my son and daughter. They're both married now with children

I'm never allowed to see. Never allowed to see...

"What? Sorry, I was miles away. As you say I was on my own. After Pat left I was really on my own – except for my cats of course. Did you say "why did she leave?" Oh, some silly row about her money. I've always been careful with money – well you have to be, don't you? People nowadays don't remember what it was like – although I'm sure you do, doctor. But I would have given her more. I didn't expect her to flounce off like that after my first refusal. Poor Pat had no patience - I think it's through dealing with those boys all the time...

"Yes, yes. Wait. I'm getting there. Then those children started. Horrible, horrible children. I think they must come from the estate. At first they got into the garden and chased the cats. After a time they started knocking on my door and running away. One particularly nasty boy fell in the pond and his father came around shouting at me. I could see why the boy was so awful – chip off the old block if I ever saw one. I told him that I hadn't got time to keep the garden up and I'd forgotten the pond was there what with all those bushes – but anyway what was HIS boy doing in MY garden?

The Social Worker's view

A Referral to Mental Health on 7th June

We have received a referral from Dr Sampson. He wishes to admit Mrs Nora Edgely of Seaview Cottage, under Section 29 of the Mental Health Act. The signed papers are at the surgery awaiting collection. Mrs Edgeley is 68 and lives alone. Her house is apparently in very poor repair and her garden is neglected. She is described as extremely aggressive. Mrs Edgely was referred after she had pursued passing children, shouting and throwing faeces at them. Police visited and ascertained that they were cat faeces. They consider it to be a mental health matter. When Dr Sampson visited Mrs Edgely refused to answer the door and eventually threw a bucket of unidentified liquid over him from the upper windows. Dr Sampson refuses to attend the house again on the grounds of personal safety.

I would be grateful if you could collect the section papers and do what is necessary. You might like to take Phil, the student, with you as he will have to do an admission eventually.

Senior Social Worker

The Mental Health Officer's view

An account in the pub

"OK Bob, mine's a pint of red barrel please. Gawd'n Bennett, that's good. Now, you bugger, I'll tell you what you let me in for. I won't forget it in a hurry, not if I live to be a hundred. Which I definitely won't, not if you send me out on more like this".

"Typical me, is it? Well this is the first time one of them 's ever pulled a gun on me. Yeah. An army revolver – officer property. I saw loads of them at Anzio but wouldn't have expected to be staring up the barrel at an old dear in a house in Broadstairs. Police said it was cleaned and greased with a bullet up the spout, so by rights you should have been talking to me through a medium like nutty Nancy at the Tarter Frigate. Safety catch was on

though I found out when I got the gun off her”.

“Phil? Yeah he’s got something to tell that university of his, by God he has. Ha, ha. Actually he did all right, but he was pretty shaken up. Yeah, Bob, of course I invited him but you know what these God-botherers are like. I expect he’s in church now pouring on the holy water and singing psalms of deliverance, or whatever they do. I know where I’d rather be”.

The Police view

A report from the presiding officer

Sir

PC Roberts and I attended Seaview Cottage on 7th June at 16.30. The alert was sent by Philip Saunders, a social work student. HQ said he called from a phone box and sounded very agitated. He said that he and his colleague, a mental welfare officer, had been assaulted and threatened with a firearm by Mrs Edgely whom they were going to section. It sounds like she was none too keen to go.

When we arrived the ambulance crew were waiting outside. Raymond Brock (Mental Health) and Philip Saunders were inside the house with Nora Edgely. The garden can only be described as a jungle and the house was worse. There were cat faeces and flies all over the place and the smell was disgusting. I don’t know how the council could allow the woman to live like that. Mrs Edgely was unkempt, dirty and almost certainly infested with fleas. There was no electricity – just candles all over the place. The fire hazard is appalling.

The gun is a Webley army revolver, unlicensed that was apparently the property of the deceased husband. Mr Brock had managed to remove it from Mrs Edgely’s hands. We examined the revolver and found it to be cleaned and oiled. There was a shooting range in the cellar and an extensive store of well over five hundred bullets that seem to have been war issue.

We ensured the old lady was moved safely into the ambulance, retained the revolver and ammunition and secured the property. Mr Brock and Philip Saunders escorted Mrs Edgely in the ambulance.

PC 457 Richard Baker

The university view

Philip’s supervision session with his tutor

“Yes, I’ve certainly learnt a lot. In my own words, eh? OK. I wasn’t sure about Ray Brock at first. His main concern was to collect the papers and stick the client in hospital as quickly as possible. He was expected at the pub by 6.30 and wanted his dinner first. When I asked if he always signed the section papers without question he just smiled and said “the world is full of nutters, Phil. Most of them are ay OK, the rest need putting away, if you know what I mean. Our job is to prevent them from being a danger to themselves and others. We’re doing them a favour, though mostly they’re too crazy to see that.” He didn’t

really answer my question.

Mrs Edgely refused to answer the door and Ray banged so hard the knocker came off in his hand. Then she opened the upstairs window and Ray stepped right back, shoving me with him. She shouted, “go away or I’ll shoot you,” and leant out to throw something.

“I never knew Ray had it in him. He suddenly became very gentle and asked Mrs Edgely to let us in. He lied though – saying he had some information about her husband. I didn’t like that, but it got her to the door and soon we were inside that stink heap. Blimey, what a place. Candles, heaps of paper, cat turds and shoes sticking to the carpet as you walked. Fortunately, it was too dark to see much.

“Ray really came into his own. He talked to the client like she was his mother and told her that she had to go into hospital for her own good. To my surprise, she calmed down then and said she needed to get some things together. So, she rummaged around in the drawer while I checked that the ambulance was waiting outside. When I got back I couldn’t see clearly as my eyes hadn’t adjusted, and Ray pushed me back against the wall. The old lady was pointing a gun at us! “I told you I’d shoot you. It’s all your fault,” she said. Blimey her hands shook. I think mine did too.

“Then Ray did his wild-west stuff. He seemed calm as a beetroot and whispered “talk to her.” I talked – I talked and talked, believe me. Before I knew it Ray had the gun and Mrs Edgely was on the floor crying. My God, he was brave.

“No. He didn’t invite me. He seems to think I’m too religious although actually I could have sunk a good few pints that evening.”

The Psychiatrist’s view
A letter to the patient’s next of kin 14th June

Dear Mr Edgely

I regret to inform you that your mother is suffering from astrocytic glioma, a tumour of the brain. The condition is inoperable and terminal. Mrs Edgely is comfortable and able to hold a rational conversation. It would be extremely helpful if you and your sister could visit at your earliest convenience. I would be willing to see you at any time. I stress the urgency of the situation.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jane Rogers,
Consultant Psychiatrist

Richard Solly
April 2014

Your Committee Members for 2017 are: Simon Ewart, David Hoare (Treasurer), Ann Jacob (Co-Clerk & Membership Sec.), Marian Liebmann, Nick McGeorge, Deborah Mitchell, Jo Rado (Co-Clerk) and Rita Solanke. Carmel Schmid and Jonathan Lamb are joint newsletter co-editors although Jonathan is not available to attend committee meetings outside of the conference. Jonathan produces the illustrated electronic newsletter.

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