

QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

WINTER 2017 EDITORIAL

I feel very privileged in compiling this newsletter due to the depth and breadth of articles that people are willing to share. I have been outraged on reading about the recent execution of Jan Arriens' friend Mike Lambrix that was recently published in The Friend. I have subsequently been deeply moved on reading extracts published here from Mike's correspondence with Jan. It seems to me that the beauty of Mike's being shines a bright light on the depravity of capital punishment and the particular cruelty of his thirty-three-year long incarceration. I am hoping that the dawn has come and his legacy may provoke change.

Our next conference is on the theme of mental health in the criminal justice system and by coincidence or design, Mike Humphries has submitted his award-winning essay describing exacerbated difficulties of imprisonment on people with mental illness. Alison Mitchell introduces the Quaker Mental Health Forum. Deborah Mitchell writes about a recent conference addressing hate crime and Steve writes about his personal awareness of accepting his prison sentence as a retreat and a second article on the importance of seeking help while Voirrey Faragher introduces the Quaker Decriminalisation Network to QICJ members.

News headlines both in the UK and even more particularly in Ireland abound with historical cases of sex abuse. Chat shows reveal the lasting difficulties suffered by victims and society clamours for more punitive retribution. Little is heard about the secondary abuse suffered by victims when they had been disbelieved or otherwise muted by society as in such case as offences by Catholic clergy or by the rich or the famous. I am left wondering whether offenders can find the space to recover when they carry the burden of our social wounds, whether victims can recover without being empowered to condemn their offender and how or where the secondary abuse can be resolved.

Finally, thanks as usual to the newsletter team : Greta, Alan and Jonathan

Carmel Schmid
Co-editor

Carmel Schmid and Jonathan Lamb



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MIKE GOT LIFE

Jan Arriens befriended and corresponded for almost thirty-three years with Mike Lambrix, who was recently executed by the state of Florida. During his time on death row Mike declined opportunities to plea bargain with the system as he could admit to manslaughter but not murder. In that time, he built a life in death row and became a death row solicitor. He was a man of great humanity and The Friend recently published one of his letters by way of editorial that described his forgiveness towards his ex-partner. The letter below describes his experience of God on the day he was nearly executed in 1988, almost thirty years ago.

The God that I believed in as a child, the God that I was taught to never question, died the night of November 30, 1988 and yet in that death arose something far greater that remains and continues to evolve.

There I was that night, exhausted and overwhelmed, both psychologically and physically and I did not recall actually falling asleep, but in my attempt to understand what next transpired, I must assume that I did.

Nothing ever before or ever since has seemed so real as that light that completely enveloped me as I was catapulted into complete consciousness. The cell that I was in and all the tangible steel and stone that surrounded me disappeared and that light engulfed all that was. I cannot explain it, nor can I deny it.

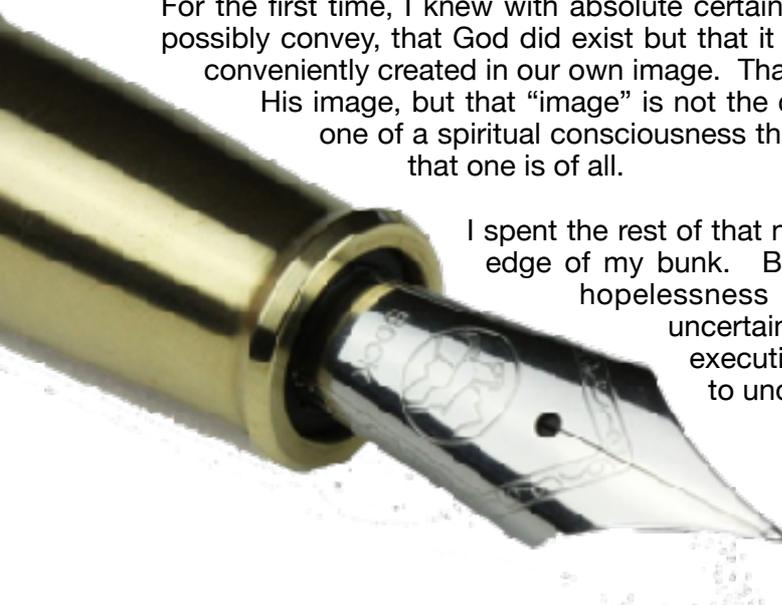
There, as I lay on that bunk, a beaten and broken man forced to confront my own mortality, that unexplainable light appeared and in that moment I felt not pain or despair, but an overwhelming and all-consuming sense of peace and tranquility. And although not an audible word was spoken, I “heard” a voice that then assured me that it would all be alright and that I was not alone; that I never would be alone.

I felt the presence of God. Not that indoctrinated image I was taught to intellectually believe in, but a spiritual presence that in that instance instilled within me the knowledge that whether I would live or die did not matter as my mortal existence was just a small step on this eternal journey and that there was something far greater awaiting me beyond this physical prison we dare to call “life!”

For the first time, I knew with absolute certainty and a spiritual clarity beyond what words can possibly convey, that God did exist but that it was not this God that man has manipulated and conveniently created in our own image. That not only I, but that all of us truly are “created” in His image, but that “image” is not the churches we build on or the idols we create; it is one of a spiritual consciousness that transcends our mortality. We are all one – and that one is of all.

I spent the rest of that night in that Death Watch cell sitting quietly at the edge of my bunk. But I no longer felt overwhelmed by despair and hopelessness and no longer tormented myself with the uncertainty of my fate. Rather, my now imminent execution became irrelevant and I sat there only trying to understand that experience.

Mike Lambrix



MIKE'S MIRROR

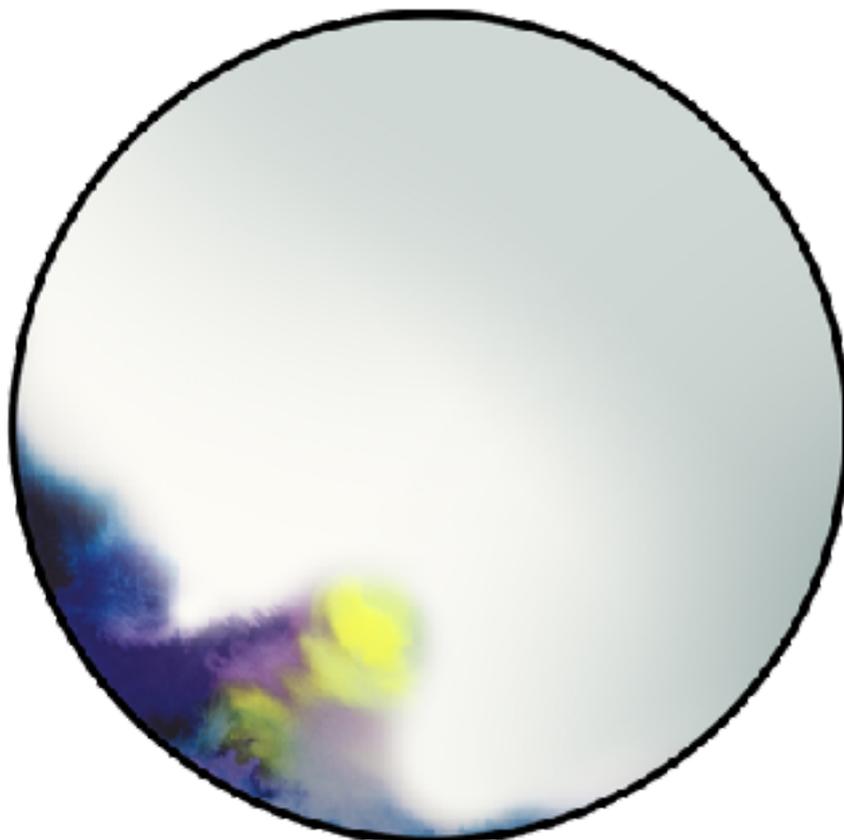
When I turned 70, one of the most valued presents I received was from Mike Lambrix, on death row in Florida then for 30 years. Years earlier he had written:

"A simple plastic mirror hangs upon the door frame of my death row cell, faded with the age of years gone by. I could easily replace it with a new one, but I don't want to. That inanimate object has become my friend. I can look within this reflection and see a person I'm still coming to know. When I first arrived, and was placed within the confines of my solitary crypt, condemned to an existence in a seemingly endless state of judicial limbo, we had no mirrors. For reasons beyond my personal comprehension, any type of reflective object was deemed to be a threat to the security of this institution.

"For years I did not see myself, with the exception of a few opportunities stolen along the passage of time. But it was just as well, as even when confronted with the reflection of my own being, I couldn't recognise the person who looked back. It was a stranger I did not know, and could not understand. And, this stranger scared me.

"My true friend, the mirror, is a patient being. Willingly, it has given me the time to look deep within myself, grasping in almost maniacal desperation for the person I knew existed beyond that shell of emotional void."

**Jan Arriens shares extracts from his friend,
Mike Lambrix, who was executed on the 6th of October, 2017.**



MENTAL HEALTH IN PRISONS

Imprisonment is a cultural encounter that this writer would not want many people to experience. The laws of our land however, allow for the imprisonment of people who transgress them and that includes people with mental health issues. It has been reported extensively that the incidences of mental illness are far higher per capita in prison than in the general community. People who enter the prison system find a microcosm of life at its most brutal and for people suffering the torment of mental illness, this will be particularly difficult.

Her Majesty's Prison Service is charged with the care of the most vulnerable. Thus, the service with a main objective of punishment for those who fall foul of the law is at the same time the care-giver to those who are the most vulnerable in society.

With the premise that prisoners with a mental health issue should receive the same quality of care as they would expect to find in the community, I undertook some research of my own on the 'inside'. In doing so, I spoke to prison-based professionals and inmates. Two recommendations emerged: firstly, the need for an enhanced mental health awareness in the prison and secondly, a multidisciplinary care programme. However, more importunately, a stark realisation came to light about the very impact of imprisonment on a person with mental illness.

Arriving in prison can be a daunting and confusing experience for anyone. But the sense of bewilderment on taking the short step from prison van to alien environment will be worse for people also dealing with a mental illness. This will, of course, be worsened for first-timers in custody when their only reference point of what to expect is television and film portrayals.

The whole process of crossing the threshold is dehumanising at the best of times, but even more so if the illness gets in the way of social interactions. The prisoner is likely to have had a daunting experience in the lead up to imprisonment. They may have spent some time in the strangeness of police custody with all of the investigation process going on around them. Then they would have been in court with people talking about them. Now they face more questions, and this time they are alone. There is no appropriate adult to reassure them, the solicitor is not there to make sure their client's rights are not being abused. There is no-one that can stand in the gap for the prisoner with mental health disorders.

Mental illness impacts on every aspect of the patient's life and equally every aspect of life impacts on the person's mental health. Hence social, educational and work interactions, time out of the cell, décor, access to fresh air and contact with family and friends outside prison are all important to a person's mental health.

Prison management should have policy, procedure and processes in place for treating mentally ill prisoners. I have come across a prisoner who has been waiting nineteen months to have a needs assessment carried out; an assessment that would ensure that this prisoner can participate fully with the prison regime. In response to another application for a mental health assessment, a prisoner was told he should know his

capabilities and that he should not have further needs. Sir, there are times when some people with mental disorders will have further needs in order to participate in activities.

I have been informed that 'needs assessments' are being missed and postponed because of the needs of the general population. If there is a greater demand for healthcare services from the general population, other aspects of that department's work are being deprioritised. This is something that the Prison Service managers currently leave to the private healthcare contractors to manage.

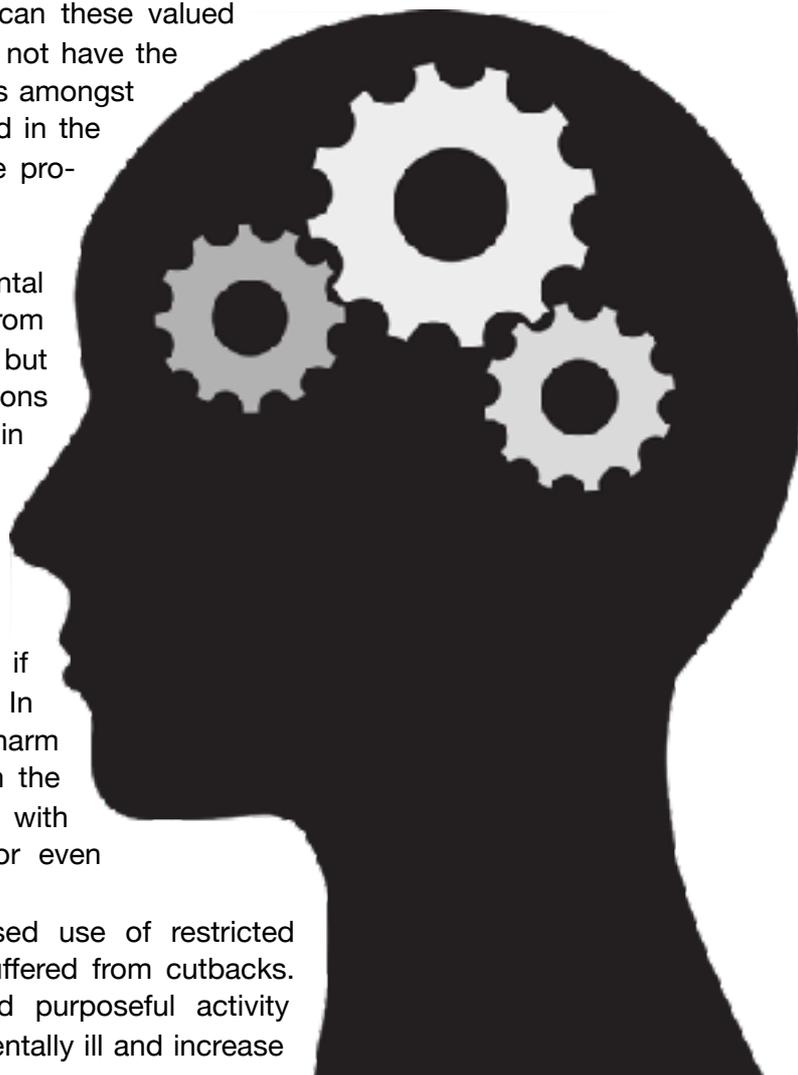
One prison that has come to my attention is pro-active in helping people with mental health issues. Wing staff are encouraged to take men who suffer from mental disorders out into the fresh air - not at exercise times but on other times as well. There is also a charity, 'Greener Growth', that runs a garden project involving people with mental health difficulties. This charity is changing lives. Men are being encouraged to work as part of a team, have a voice and have a direct impact on the garden. Such initiatives are changing lives and should be rolled out across the whole estate. There is evidence too of the effectiveness of this project. One participant has come off anti-depressants, with the approval of his GP, as a result of his involvement in this activity.

Governors and Prison Service officials need to ask themselves how serious they are in changing lives when it comes to prisoners with mental health issues. Mental health improvement must be a prison-wide, multidisciplinary effort. The reality is that everyone has a responsibility, directly or indirectly for the welfare of their community. Chaplains, probation officers, wing staff, teachers, workshop instructors and library staff should all have continued mental health awareness training. How can these valued members of staff be able to help if they do not have the necessary awareness? Increased awareness amongst staff could enable prisoners to feel accepted in the community, and in turn would lead to more pro-active participation within prison life.

Gym staff also have a vital role to play in mental health management. The benefits gained from physical exercise have been widely reported but for inmates with a mental illness, gym sessions should be structured towards participation in team sports and group activities as well as personal fitness; although with due recognition that participation may be a well-nigh impossible feat.

Prison regimes will continue to deteriorate if there is a lack of action on mental health. In 2015, over thirty thousand incidents of self-harm were reported. Each incident impacts on the regime as officers are deployed to assist with escorting healthcare staff, keeping order or even requiring external involvement.

We are currently hearing news of increased use of restricted regimes because the Prison Service has suffered from cutbacks. Restrictions on education, association and purposeful activity naturally impacts disproportionately on the mentally ill and increase



self-harm and suicide. In addition, the possibilities for rehabilitation, recovery and an end of recidivism are reduced under restricted regimes.

I have written elsewhere in support of the mentally ill being able to name a trusted friend, a prisoner to whom they could turn when they needed to talk. The Listener scheme does help, but prison governors and the Samaritans will not allow the request of a named Listener. I argued for such a scheme whereby the named 'friend' would be assessed and, if appropriate, receive mental health training as the Listeners do. The importance of developing trust in this way cannot be underestimated.

Mental Health Affects One in Four People according to World Health Organisation. With the UK prison population at around eighty-six thousand, the incidence of mental difficulties in prison is stark. Recent headlines have shown an ever-increasing number of suicides within the prisons. If the suicide figures are rising year by year in the prison population, it would seem logical to provide an increase in care-takers for mental disorder in the system - surely?

All mental health issues can be challenged so that people can strive towards recovery. Institution needs a determined, progressive and multi-disciplinary approach. Her Majesty's Prison Service was not set up as a care-giver, but it needs to meet the demands set by a progressive society. What are we going to do to ensure this happens???

Mark Humphries
Essayist winner, 2016.

A RETREAT

In articles I have read, films I have viewed, and in the great book of Christianity, mention has been made regarding the benefits of a retreat. Getting away from it all, stepping back from the busyness and pressures of the daily grind, a sense of withdrawing from life itself for a time. On occasion, especially at very intense, stressful times during my life, I had wondered whether I could do with a retreat. In hindsight however, I suspect it wouldn't have been a real retreat, it would have been running away from my problems, rather than addressing them. It is a paradox though, as a retreat in the correct format, correctly timed, might have circumvented those issues, problems, and stresses before they manifested themselves. In the end, it turned out to be too late, and I was quite rightly plucked from society into retreat in prison. Although that decision was out of my control, I know it to have been right and proper. A retreat in everything but name was forced upon me, but nonetheless, a chance to cultivate positives, akin to any spiritual retreat. But it came when I was ready for it and that has made the difference.

At first this insight was very much absent. Every molecule of my body drenched with negative emotions. But then, whilst sitting in my cell pondering on what positives I could glean from such despicable actions on my part, I had that light-bulb moment. I started to assess my emotions, feelings, and thinking at that point, compared to the person I had known for literally decades before. I suddenly realised I was not the same. A change had taken place somewhere along the road, my thoughts changed and so too my emotions and my behaviour. Shock, shame, guilt,

fear, and loss; a wrenching experience, and a viewing of another world. A severe reality check, through exposure to so many people with inner and outer demons of their own. In that moment, things became clear, bringing my whole life into focus. The perspective of how blessed I had been, where I had gone wrong, and more importantly, where I had to go in the future. The positives of my time inside were illuminated before me. Prison, a gift, and not so negative after all. The finding of oneself in so many ways. The discovery of so much inner strength, and abilities never exposed to the light of day. The perspective gleaned from loss. Thinking changed, and empathy rediscovered. I started to write vigorously. Living simply, without luxury in the prison environment was fruitful. My body and soul had a break from fast food, fast living, and the grind of modern life. I discovered the joy of human interaction. I embraced human kindness such that I could dispense it myself. Time, time to do so much that I had never done before. Time to reflect, time for others, time to pray, time to find faith, time to heal, time to let go, time to move on, time to change, a time of retreat.

I knew others were not graced with my positive experience, most inmates experienced prison as the complete opposite. For them, it was evil personified; darkness beyond anything they had experienced before. Please don't get me wrong, some of my "moments" were dark, but now as I look back, the experience has been enlightening for me. Although I do still experience self-pity, I recognise these emotions as my human frailty. To see things with such clarity, to embrace the experience, I had to let it all go. I had to accept why I was there. Accept fully that I deserved to be there. Accept the possible loss of family and friends as a consequence of my actions. Accept there may be no going back to the good parts of my life, but embracing the fact that at last, I had a new perspective. This can be so understandably hard for many, a bridge too far maybe but Grace has seen me through.

All this positivity and perspective is tinged and sullied by a deep, dark sadness. People have been damaged for life by my actions. I can be angry with myself for not spotting the signs earlier. That I didn't have the courage to retreat earlier is still a challenge that I have to reconcile. Perhaps I should have retreated irrespective of the consequence to my job and marriage; however, my struggle helps me now understand when other people cannot let go. When I was embroiled in the responsibilities and stresses of life, I too had been unable to truly retreat to save my family and others from such pain.

In conclusion, this is purely my experience, my thoughts exposed. It is an unacceptable tragedy that people die in prison. People wither away in body, mind, and spirit. It is a flawed, and broken system, and one we must replace. But for me, it meant a fresh start. Returning new-born into a society albeit with a stigma, I am now a better member of society for the experience. This positive outcome required a letting go, a space for the light to overcome the dark.

Steve



ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2018

Our Annual Conference 2018 is to be held on the last weekend in February, (23rd - 25th) at our very popular venue, The Ammerdown Conference Centre, near Radstock and Bath.

The theme of the conference is “Mental Health and the Criminal Justice System”, and we have some excellent speakers and workshop leaders. Our keynote speaker will be Sir David Latham, a former High Court Judge, Chairman of the Parole Board and Chair of a Justice Working Party on Mental Health in the Criminal Justice System, due to report in November this year. We also have as speakers Tristram Cox, from Fromeside Secure Unit, who is the lead for Arts Psychotherapies, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, and Kimmitt Edgar, Head of Research at the Prison Reform Trust. Additionally there will be the usual workshops related to our theme and also some free time on Saturday afternoon for relaxing, going for a walk in the lovely environs, or socialising and ‘networking’.

Our conferences are one of the most interesting and useful aspects of QICJ, and this conference is likely to be very popular and pertinent. A booking form is enclosed with this Newsletter, so book as soon as possible, and no later than Wednesday, January 31st 2018.

QUAKER DECRIMINALISATION NETWORK

As Quakers we believe in moderation or abstinence. We recognise the harm that substances can cause. We know that drug use can be dangerous, can cause suffering and even death. We are minded to be non-judgmental and accepting of those harmed by substance use. As Quakers we might also think in terms of a sociological perspective of drug policy in the context of social control, social exclusion, inequality and suffering.

Drugs have been used for pleasure and for avoidance throughout history. For a small minority, drug use is problematic in the sense that dependency develops - whether psychological or physical. There are approximately three hundred thousand opiate and cocaine dependent users in England. The key determinants of problematic drug use are deprivation, trauma and abuse.

Drug use is prohibited under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Maximum penalties for possession of a controlled drug under the act are: 7 years and a fine for a Class A drug; 5 years and a fine for a Class B drug; 2 years and a fine for a Class C drug. In 2017 crime statistics show that in England and Wales there were 141,714 drug offences. Of these, 25,175 offences were trafficking, and 116,539 were for the possession of a controlled drug. There were 36,300

cannabis and khat warnings. More than 1,000 people are imprisoned each year for possession of an illegal drug.

Criminalising people who use drugs intensifies the social exclusion of vulnerable individuals and communities. Most of those criminalised are young, Black and poor. Decriminalising drug use would remove a significant pathway into the criminal justice system for these populations. The Lammy Review into the treatment of and outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals in the Criminal Justice System was published recently. The review states that those who are charged, tried and punished are still disproportionately likely to come from minority communities. Data from 2015, shows that at Crown Court

BAME defendants are more likely to receive prison sentences for drug offences, even when factors such as past convictions are taken into account.

Lammy's biggest concern is with the youth justice system. Over 40% of young people in custody are from BAME backgrounds. The BAME proportion of youth offending and re-offending has been rising significantly. Lammy argues that our criminal record regime does the opposite of helping young offenders start new lives. Over the past five years 22,000 BAME children have



had their names added to the Police National Database due to the system of cautions which have had the effect of widening the net. Dr. Michael Shiner, Associate Professor of the London School of Economics argues that the initial reclassification of cannabis led to an intensification of police efforts targeting minor possession because the police were given new powers to issue formal on-the-spot street warnings and penalty warnings (which remain on the criminal record). This resulted in a sharp increase in the number of people given sanctions for minor possession offences. The study concludes that many young people are being criminalised to the detriment of their future.

A range of international studies conclude there is little or no relationship between the legal status of drug use of a country and the rate of drug use within it. Removing penalties for drug use does not result in an increase in overall drug use. It is accepted by many analysts that the prevalence of drug use tends to rise and fall in line with broader cultural, social or economic trends.

Portugal is perhaps the clearest and most relevant demonstration that decriminalisation has significant benefits.

Hughes and Stevens conducted a study of evidence regarding the decriminalisation of the possession of all drugs in Portugal and concluded that evidence from Portugal shows:

- Small increases in reported illicit drug use among adults
- Reduced illicit drug use among problematic drug users and adolescents (since 2003)

- Reduced burden of drug offenders on the criminal justice system
- Increased uptake of drug treatment
- Reduction in opiate-related deaths and infectious diseases
- Increases in the amount of drugs seized by the authorities
- Reductions in the retail prices of drugs
- No signs of a mass expansion of the drug market



Those people who use drugs problematically need treatment services together with health and social care and harm reduction services such as needle exchange, education and information services. Decriminalisation works best in parallel with well-resourced services.

Currently treatment services are under resourced due to cuts to the public health grants. Over the past four years councils in 85% of areas that have a higher than average drug mortality rate have reduced the amount they spend on drug treatment. Drug related deaths are at an all-time high: 3,744 last year compared to 2,640 in 2006. Professor Alex Stephens states, “The government is fully aware that drug deaths are highest in places with the highest levels of deprivation and that they are cutting budgets the deepest in areas with the deepest deprivation.”

We suggest that drug policy should be based on evidence of what works best to reduce overall harm. It is our view that, as Quakers, we might adopt a humanitarian and compassionate approach towards problematic drug use. Focusing on policy serves to enhance our concern for the individual.

“Compassion, to be effective, requires detailed knowledge and understanding of how society works. Any social system in turn requires men and women in it of imagination and goodwill. What would be fatal would be for those with exceptional human insight and concern to concentrate on ministering to individuals, while those accepting responsibility for the design and management of organisations were left to become technocrats. What is important is that institutions and their administration be constantly tested against human values, and that those who are concerned about these values be prepared to grapple with the complex realities of modern society as it is.”

Quaker Faith and Practice (23.47)

Voirrey Faragher
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BILL MCWILLIAMS LECTURE 2017

On June the 27th I attended the twentieth Bill McWilliams lecture, delivered as for several previous years in the Law Department at Cambridge. Bill McWilliams was a gifted probation officer, and the lecture was instituted to honour his memory. The one hundred plus people who attended were mostly connected in some way to the probation service. Arriving early, I enjoyed a buffet lunch in the company of a probation officer who works in HMP Brixton, and the director of the Griffins Society, which does research into the involvement of women in the criminal justice system.

The lecturer, Fergus McNeill, is a professor of Criminology and Social Work at the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, University of Glasgow. He took as his title “Helping, Holding and Hurting”. He used a novel form of presentation, speaking only briefly himself and then getting three other people to speak, one of them ‘a service user’ (i.e. former offender). Then the four of them formed a panel and led a discussion, before going to answer a torrent of questions. Fergus McNeill claimed that probation was at its best combining research with diligent social service, both central to the work of Bill McWilliams. He spoke of the extra power of compassion, which achieves more than managerialism.

Too often, the criminal justice system is seen as faceless. Probation has a key role in reducing reoffending. If the service user is prepared to engage with the supervisor, then the process will work. But not if the contact is limited to fifteen minutes, once a fortnight – increasing caseloads menace the effectiveness of the service, and too many changes have been introduced too quickly. Such factors mitigate against success as does an emphasis on hopeful statistics rather than real progress in people’s lives. The panellists spoke of their personal experience of the probation service. Not everyone wants progress – the Daily Mail called for a probation officer to



be sacked after she had suggested that service users should be asked to propose ways in which the service could be improved. Yet everyone has strengths as well as shortcomings; all have something to offer, a belief close to the Quaker insistence on ‘that of God in every person.’ All of us, offenders or no, have a role to play in building a more equal society, one in which all have a meaningful say in how resources are distributed. Consultation processes which result in no visible change breed cynicism. (The disastrous fire at Grenfell Tower a few days before the lecture gave this point an extra reference.)

Too often, former offenders are left unsupported, and feel they are being set up to fail. I was astonished, after my release from prison, to hear an official at the jobcentre say, “there is nothing we can do to help you find work” but then issue a veiled threat about the pressure that would be put on me if I nevertheless failed to find work. When I did find a humble job, a third of my income of £42 a week was taken in tax, and the rest went on my mortgage, rates and the season ticket to get to work, leaving me nothing to live on. An appeal to a tax official and a probation officer got me nowhere; people are locked into their own little empires, and systems will not allow them to work otherwise. I left the job cynically determined to milk the system for all I could get.



Buildings such as job centres are designed to intimidate and one probation office was actually situated in a police station. On the other hand, an office at Bromley, Kent resembled a well - designed library, with no glass screen separating reception staff from service users.

There is a need to nurture the confidence of the judiciary in the effectiveness of probation orders. It is no good just saying ‘Probation is cheaper than prison’. But confidence is not improved by the revelation that two fifths of a probation budget was taken up with deciding what to do, rather than actually doing it. Then there is the question of language: the service must use appropriate terms, and not take refuge in gobbledegook. It is important to see that the two aims – to manage risk and achieve rehabilitation – do not become polarised. Seeking first for ‘the causes of crime’ is in practice a negative approach and objectivises people. ‘People are an end in themselves’ – so said Kant, and Quakers would agree.

Adrian Smith

LIFE AFTER NOMS

(National Offender Management Service)

Last April it was decided that a centralised National Offender Management Service was no longer the appropriate way to deliver decentralising prison reforms.

Such reforms had been outlined a year earlier in Unlocking Potential (2016), often known as the Coates Review, after its author Dame Sally Coates. Michael Gove decided that this former colleague was the best person to call on when he became Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice in 2015.

It was clear that the downward spiral in the findings of the Chief Inspector of Prisons' reports had to be checked – somehow. Gove, being a fervent believer in education, directed the Review not only to consider education but to go beyond it. And this is exactly what it did. One of the most ground-breaking recommendations was that prison governors should be 'autonomous' and commission the services most appropriate to their establishments.

After many delays, a referendum, and two Secretaries of State later, one might well ask: where are we up to now? Well, another factor came into play: the White Paper known as The Prisons and Courts Bill (see my report in a previous newsletter). Security rather than reform was to the fore; the violence in prisons and the availability of the drug 'spice', together with the availability of mobile phones, were making prisons unsafe for both staff and prisoners. Other features of the White Paper included greater powers for the Inspectorate and Ombudsmen. Governors were now made accountable for rehabilitation – unrealistic in my view, since so many factors affecting resettlement are outside their control.

To my dismay, the prison component of this potential legislation never made it through the most recent Queen's Speech following the snap election in June. However the latest Secretary of State, David Lidington, has declared that he is committed to the process of reform.

“SUICIDES (113 THIS YEAR SO FAR), SELF-HARMING (40,000 INCIDENTS LOGGED) AND VIOLENCE (AROUND 25,000 EPISODES) ARE ALL AT RECORD LEVELS – UP BY 20% ANNUALLY WITH NO SIGN OF THE SITUATION IMPROVING”

This brings us back to the demise of NOMS. Within freed-up prison provision there is a much smaller role for a centralised service. NOMS staff have therefore been split into two teams: 'policy' - directly under the Ministry of Justice - and 'operational' in the new Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS); the latter is really NOMS under another name. It is even headed by Michael Spurr, as before.

So what has happened so far to facilitate reform? What are now known as 'empowered governors' within 'reform prisons' have been trialled before all public prisons adopted this model. Funding streams have been extended so that additional provision can be financed, which includes my area of special interest: screening and support for (Specific) Learning Difficulties and Learning Disabilities; other areas are 'enablers of learning' i.e. soft skills and progression courses.

But has anything actually improved on the ground? Well, sniffer dogs have been trained to locate synthetic drugs and negotiations have taken place with mobile phone networks to block signals round prisons. Some education providers are starting to offer non-accredited 'life skills' courses. Unfortunately, a core requirement for success is lagging well behind: sufficient prison officers to run our prisons. Despite repeated statements of government intent and additional funding, it is proving hard to replace those officers who are leaving the service - let alone to increase numbers to anything like previous levels.

OUR PRISONS HAVE BEEN CHARACTERISED AS 'INSANITARY, DEGRADING AND FULL TO BURSTING'. THIS IS NOT HELPED BY THE HIGH RATE OF RECALLS TO PRISON.

Suicides (113 this year so far), self-harming (40,000 incidents logged) and violence (around 25,000 episodes) are all at record levels – up by 20% annually with no sign of the situation improving, according to the Chief Inspector of Prisons. As I write, the high security prison which I visit monthly is experiencing an 'incident' on one of the wings, necessitating intervention by the elite 'Tornado Teams'.

Our prisons have been characterised as 'insanitary, degrading and full to bursting'. This is not helped by the high rate of recalls to prison. Some men live in what has been described as 'a shared toilet'. Thirty-one percent of inmates are locked in cells at least 22 hours a day.

Boredom and frustration are an inevitable outcome of this lack of 'purposeful activity'. Education is generally unavailable above GCSE level, unless you can get support for a distance learning course through a charity like the Prisoners' Education Trust. Open University can be accessed towards the end of the sentence, dependent upon loans.

Although the civil service is busy laying down the complicated groundwork for the Coates reforms (via a staged tendering process), contracts are not due to be awarded/re-awarded till August 2018. Meanwhile many 'empowered' governors are not prepared nor (I suspect) well-suited to their change of role from operational manager to business commissioner of services. Prison officers, prevented by injunctions from working to rule or walking out, are demoralised.

So, life after NOMS is on a slippery slope. Expect more 'incidents'.

**Melanie Jameson,
Member of the Prisoner Learning Alliance.**

NEW BRIDGE FOUNDATION



When the inclination comes upon me to put pen to paper, or mouse to keyboard, sharing experiences of prison time done, and a dream realised; so much is about the people I met on my journey. This is to say that my journey was in essence, the people I met. At times, I chose to try and struggle through alone - possibly because of pride, stubbornness, not wanting to appear weak, an aversion to burdening others as well as despair; but ultimately, I learned that all that was folly. No one can come through such a life changing (and indeed, sometimes life affirming

experience) whilst alone and isolated. I learned that I needed others to survive and thrive. I learned that help was at hand once I buried my pride and sought it out. Help was forthcoming from within and also from out with the prison walls. In fact, I had a perfect trinity of support working for me during my time inside. The Quakers laid the foundations, then both the Samaritans and New Bridge joined the battle, nurturing me towards a beautiful sunrise.

New Bridge is special in so many ways, but I believe that a mix of supportive organisations was key to my recovery. New Bridge, like the Samaritans, work in confidence (restricted only by the need to safeguard). Like the Quakers, non-judgement and empathy are given. It seems that all New Bridge Befrienders are blessed with these qualities that are critical for people wishing to off-load emotional issues. Looking back at my time inside, it seemed as if the prison walls were within my mind. What I most needed was exactly what I received from my befriender and that was her personal warmth, as despite there having to be firm personal boundaries, I felt I was not only talking to an advisor, a confident, and a guide, but a friend. It seems to me that these qualities abound throughout the whole organisation. It appears that the sole remit, ambition, and goal, is to bring offenders through the darkness and back into the light.

For those teetering on the edge, who have long lost hope of seeing a brighter dawn, free of isolation and fear, with the golden hue of a future dream, take it from one who has been there. I had an IPP, I had lost my wife, children, family, and friends. I lost my job, my home, my life as I knew it. I felt like the lowest of the low, but I was "Befriended" in hope, and now I am embracing the future. Two years on from release, I am not alone; I still have New bridge beside me for however long it takes.

I have now had forgiveness from a daughter I never expected to see again. I want people who are now struggling like I struggled to know, that they don't have to struggle through on their own. My advice is to reach out and take that initial step, a step that may well lead you to realise your dreams. Much is gone and lost forever, but through the New Bridge Foundation, I have found hope and that has made my dreams come through.

And if perchance you are reading this as a member of society who may or may not have been affected by crime, might I simply add that whatever your inclination towards the perpetrators of crime - it is apparent to me that the more isolated a person is, the harder it is for them to reform. It is important to embrace the frog in order to find the prince. Society needs boundaries in order to be safe but it is an illusion that prison walls can keep society safe. Only reformed people can make society safe. Reform is the way to the future: New Bridge Foundation and other like-minded organisations are the conduit through which our hope must flow.

Steve

TREASURER'S ADVERT

Very sadly, our Treasurer, David Hoare, has unexpectedly had to stand down from this role because of serious and rapidly declining health issues which have arisen. Our thoughts are very much with David and we will all want to uphold him at this very difficult time. We also thank him for the excellent work he has done as our Treasurer, for which we are extremely grateful

**URGENT &
IMPORTANT**

This does however mean that QICJ is now without a Treasurer, although I am a co-signatory on our bank account and will therefore be able to pay necessary bills and expenses in the meantime. However, I do not have any accounting skills (and already have two roles on the committee) and it is critical that we find someone to replace him as soon as possible, and this is therefore AN URGENT PLEA for any member who could and would offer their service in this way to contact me quickly, and I will give them further information. David has sent me the up-to-date accounts and information ready to hand over.

In hope and peace,

Ann Jacob, Co-Clerk and Membership Secretary,
annj83@googlemail.com; 0208 991 0158

TACKLING HATE CRIME IN POST-BREXIT BRITAIN

Protecting Vulnerable Groups and Promoting a Culture of Tolerance and Inclusivity

On Tuesday 27th June 2017 I was pleased to contribute to this conference. It was clear that eight months after the decision to leave the European Union (EU), taking action to tackle and reduce hate crime was as important as ever.

A Home Office report published a year ago, in October 2016, revealed a sharp increase (41% compared to the same month the year before) in the number of racially or religiously aggravated crimes recorded by police in England and Wales following the EU referendum. Moreover, there has been a general upward trend, as other strands relating to sexual orientation, disability, transgender identity also saw increases in recorded crime between 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Specifically, 33 out of 44 forces recorded the highest quarterly number of hate crimes since comparable records began in April 2012. Three forces each recorded more than 1,000 hate crimes: the Metropolitan Police (3,356), Greater Manchester (1,033) and West Yorkshire (1,013). In the fortnight immediately after the referendum, the number increased from 1,546 to 2,241. Significantly, the violence seen after the Brexit vote was not restricted to racial or

religious hostility. Gallup, which supports victims of homophobic violence, said homophobic attacks rose by 147 per cent in the three months following the Brexit vote. In response to the increase in hate crime, the Government published 'Action Against Hate' in July 2016. The document outlines official plans in order to respond to the situation. These involve:

- preventing and responding to hate crime
- increase reporting of hate crime incidents
- improving support for victims
- building an understanding of hate crime

The day was structured around two panels involving academics, practitioners, police and leading charities. The first panel focussed on action against hate crime post Brexit. The second panel considered vulnerable groups and in particular promoting a culture of tolerance and inclusivity.

Delegates discussed the increase in hate crime since Brexit and strategies that can be implemented to respond effectively and ensure Britain remains open and inclusive. The conference considered the Government's plan to tackle hate crime, evaluate its impact and effectiveness, and identify gaps. Significant space was given to the prevalence of hate crime online and particularly on social media. Specifically, the panels were asked how to challenge hate crime in the public sphere and examined the role of the media in encouraging tolerance and openness.

Ways to protect all vulnerable groups were considered and making a safe space for victims to come forward to ensure better reporting and recording was highlighted. Delegates gained insights into strategies to promote and maintain a culture of tolerance and inclusivity in post-Brexit society. The conference was geared to understand the benefits of partnership working in taking action against hate crime at both national and local levels so



that best practice on ways to support victims and discuss the support services available within local communities could be shared.

As a Quaker, this Conference encouraged me to think about how we live out our equality testimony. As might be expected, the event raised far more questions than answers. The well-

attended day created a sense of community, however temporary, across a very diverse range of organisations. There is clearly a need to talk about these issues and strong potential to progress them. However, without co-ordination this potential cannot be fulfilled. Friends will see the links with the social justice we are seeking, and the campaigns and movements to recognise the failings of the system we call 'criminal justice'.

A valuable source of information on the topic is the International Network for Hate Studies <http://www.internationalhatestudies.com>. Much of the information above was circulated during the conference rather than being on my own account.

Deborah Mitchell

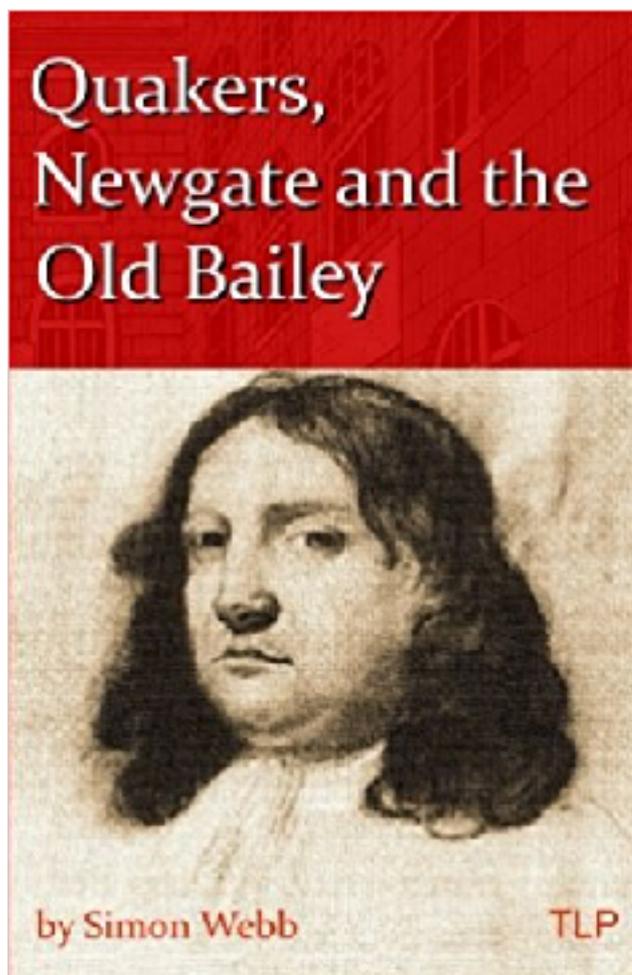
NEWGATE UNDER REVIEWS

Stephen Halliday's *Newgate* (2006) and Simon Webb's *Quakers, Newgate and the Old Bailey* (2016)

I have to say that both these sagas of human misery make a most compelling read. Halliday's book is a respectable history of Newgate gaol, subtitled "London's Prototype of Hell" Webb's book is a slighter book of more specialist interest. Halliday eschews a strictly chronological account for a more analytical approach, and breaks up the text at intervals with biographical vignettes: we are introduced to Thomas Coram the philanthropist and John Wilkes the libertarian, but also to George Crabbe the poet, John Julius Angerstein the insurance pioneer and art collector, and John Bright the Quaker politician. We also meet less savoury characters such as Moll Cutpurse and Titus Oates. William Blackstone is introduced as the author of 'the most influential law book ever written.'

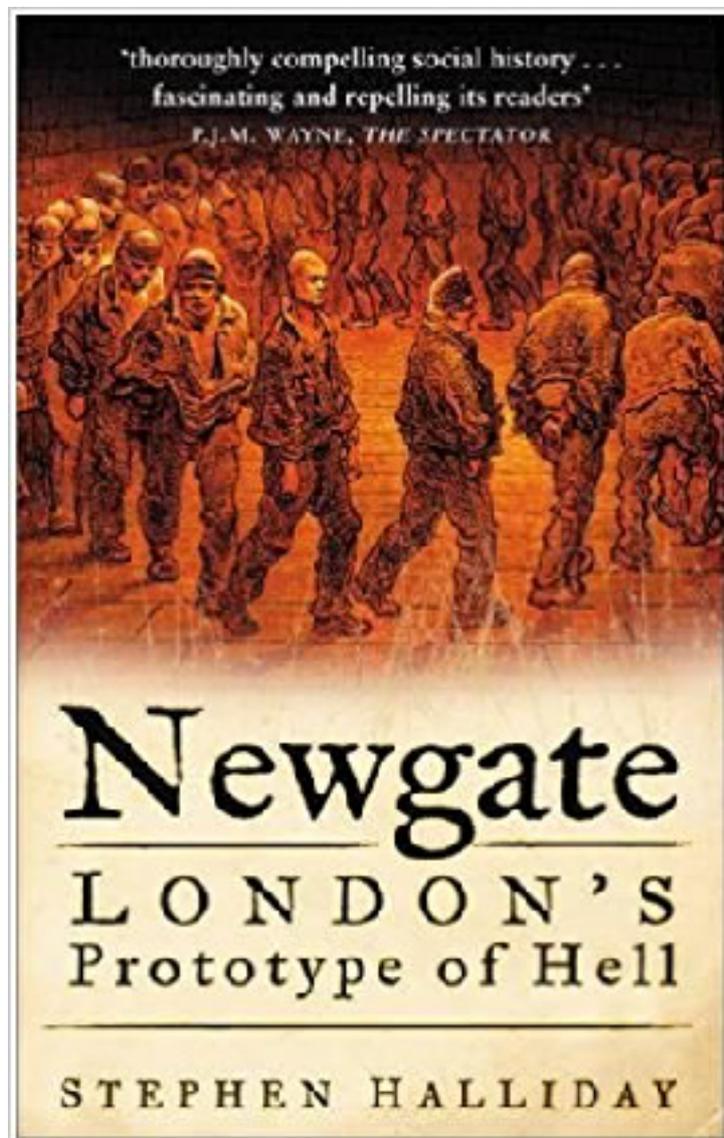
Newgate as a point of entry to the city dates from Roman times. The gatehouse was used as a prison from the time of Henry the second. Prisons then were remand centres for those awaiting trial; there was no concept then of periods of imprisonment being imposed as a punishment. Newgate early acquired an evil reputation, hence the popular saying "As black as Newgate's knocker." Gaol fever was typhus, spread by lice in insanitary conditions, and it spread from prisoners to court officials and jurors. Justice

was seen by many as class war, and the prison was attacked in 1381 during the Peasant's Revolt. Henry Fielding's novel "Aurelia" includes a tour of Newgate, rather like the tour of Hell given by Virgil in Dantes "Inferno". The procession of condemned men (and women) to the gallows of Tyburn (Marble Arch) became a public holiday. Fielding was one of the first to doubt the effectiveness of capital punishment – he favoured transportation instead. Public executions took place outside Newgate Prison (1783-1868). The very last public hanging took place in 1871, in Clerkenwell, outside the gaol which occupied the site where the late lamented Friend's school, Saffron Walden had opened its doors in 1702. From 1861 there were only four capital crimes: murder, treason, piracy and setting fire to Her Majesty's dockyards. Elizebeth Fry was successful in ending the public whipping of women. Her house in the Poultry was equally convenient for Newgate and for Devonshire House, the predecessor of Friends House in Bishopsgate.



From 1850, Newgate was used only for remands and convicted prisoners awaiting execution. It was demolished in 1902, and money from the sale of the site was used to extend Brixton. The press attended executions till 1934. 'Hard Labour' was not abolished till 1948: Sidney Greaves, a Maldon Friend who served time as a 'Conchie' in the second world war, once told me that 'hard labour' meant sleeping without a pillow for the first two weeks of his sentence.

Quaker imprisonments began with James Nayler, Thomas Ellwood and William Penn. Fox and Penn were unusual among early Friends in surviving imprisonments to die of old age. Bushell's



case (1665) made legal history as the last occasion a judge tried to dictate to a jury the verdict he expected them to bring. William Penn and William Meade were arrested while engaged in Quaker outreach in Gracechurch street. The jury refused to declare a Quaker meeting 'a riot', and the Recorder who tried the case alienated onlookers by a favourable reference to the Spanish Inquisition. This was equivalent to a judge nowadays calling for the return of concentration camps. (Mind you. They have returned under the name of detention centres.) The trial ended with the jury, led by their chairman Bushell, going to prison alongside the two defendants.

The 1662 Quaker Act was specifically aimed at Quaker refusal to take oaths. This refusal made it impossible for Friends to gain justice even when victims of crime. I enjoyed the story of the Quaker confronted with a highwayman, who threw the bag of money over a hedge, and while the highwayman was retrieving it, rode away on the highwayman's horse, which was much more valuable. I was relieved to hear of some Quakers who really did commit crimes. There is no mention in Webb's book of William Tawell, a lapsed Friend who in 1842 murdered his mistress in Slough, and thought to escape by train, unaware of the newly installed railway telegraph which enabled the police to recognise

Tawell 'in the dress of a Quaker' as soon

as he arrived in Paddington. Jane Gribbs, a prostitute masqueraded as a Quaker but was exposed in court because she did take the oath.

George Fox, no stranger to gaols himself, noted that prisons seemed to be full of poor men. Our Friend, Marian Liebmann has noted in our own time that 'prisons are increasingly the social agency that deals with the poor'. As Webb observes in his summing up, 'time and again, the record shows that although lip-service was paid to the rule of law, significant numbers of people were effectively excluded' – they were seen as a threat to society. Seventeenth century Quakers were seen as subversives. Nowadays non-white and Roma people can expect to meet similar discrimination, and asylum seekers too.

Adrian Smith

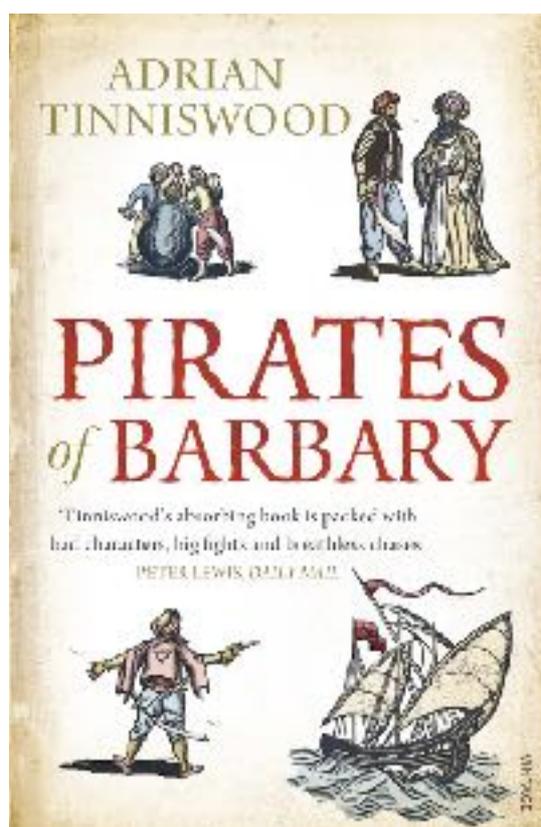
ADRIAN TINNISWOOD: PIRATES OF BARBARY (2010) - A REVIEW

The idea of a fund set up to redeem the Christian captives of Barbary corsairs sounds picturesque, until we learn that during the seventeenth century one million Europeans were enslaved. In 1631, pirates raided Baltimore (Ireland) and captured 109 people, including 54 children. Only one was ransomed. In 1636, pirates were seen to be in operation in the Severn estuary. In a countermove, Charles the first of England made a treaty with the Sultan of Morocco. In 1642, when people's attention in England was mostly given to the political crisis at home, an Act for the Relief of Captives was set up – a 1% tax on imports and exports. The capture of fishermen left wives and children unsupported, and despite the unfortunate situation of wives, only one-sixth of the money raised actually went to redeem their missing husbands.

The centre of pirate activity was Algiers, with other North African states playing a part. Some corsairs saw their activities as Jihad. Most were concerned only with the main chance, and to be fair, there were plenty of English pirates too – they began semi-officially as privateers, i.e. operating independently during wartime, and then continuing to capture other ships even when the war was over. The point where patriotism became crime was always hard to decide:

people changed sides when it suited them and nobody's hands were clean. Particularly, fear was expressed over the fate of cabin boys, who on capture were liable to be maltreated. Some captives had the wit to convert to Islam and make a new life for themselves in the Mediterranean world. Four boys from Bristol once outwitted a pirate captain and managed to recapture their ships. William Okeley, though technically a slave, was allowed to move about and trade on his own account, though he had to pay his owner a fee of two dollars a month. He got acclimatised to the Algerian scene, and was amazed to discover that in Islam, 'every man may be saved in that religion he professes, whether he was a Jew, a Christian or a Moslem, and that at the last, all will march over a fair bridge, into I know not what Paradise.' Eventually, homesick, he and four companions escaped to Majorca, rowing for six days in a canvas boat. They were lucky to survive the voyage. Others stayed in Muslim countries, took Arabic names and did well there.

Yusuf Karamahli of Tripoli was the first head of state to declare war on the USA (1801). Captured US soldiers cheerfully converted to Islam. After the Napoleonic wars, Britain and France cooperated in ending the forays of the Corsairs, and the declaration of Paris (1856) ended privateering. Future unhappiness was ensured by the French takeover of Algiers in 1830, a move to try and buttress the unpopular government of Charles the tenth. Compared to the grand thefts by government, the skulduggery of pirates seems a much less significant crime.



Adrian Smith

MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

We live in turbulent times – and mental health issues can be part of this. We live in a society with increasing levels of mental distress identified, diagnosed and discussed. Friends are worried about their own mental well-being and worried about that of people they love. There are Friends experiencing mental distress and Friends caring for people experiencing mental distress. There are people in our Meetings who need support. Friends look at the news, look at services in their area and see how difficult things are.

What should Quakers be doing about mental health? Is there a Quaker approach to mental health? Should mental health be a concern of Quakers? Should we be speaking out?

The Retreat, one of the leading independent mental health hospitals, offering high quality care to people who have complex needs. It was founded by Quakers and still holds to Quaker values. Are there other things that Friends, collectively or as individuals or Meetings, could or should be doing?

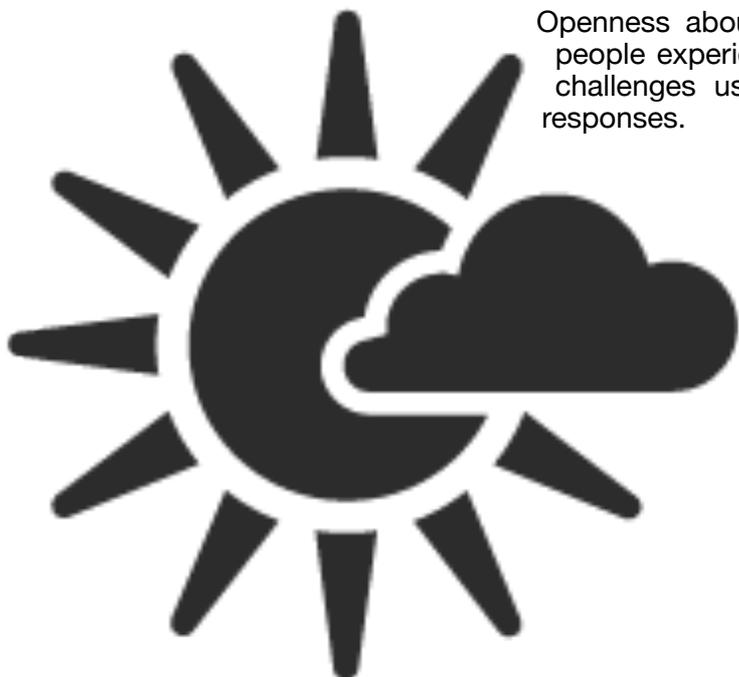
There are two new initiatives which may help us to explore some of the issues, both supported by the Retreat Benevolent Fund.

There will soon be the first meeting of a Quaker Mental Health Forum, on December 9th in Friargate Meeting House, York. It will be exploring 'Dementia: our shared journey'. It will be an opportunity to hear the experiences of Friends and about some of the work done at the Retreat; to share, reflect and worship together. We hope the Forum will become an annual gathering, an opportunity for Friends engaged in any way with mental health to meet. We will be looking at different topics and meeting in different locations. We hope every Area Meeting can send and support a representative, but all Friends are invited. We suggest a £5 donation to cover lunch – no other charge. To book, please contact Shirley Torrens on shirleytorrens1@gmail.com

The other initiative is the appointment of a Mental Health Development Officer. This role is aimed at providing Friends with the information and the inspiration to discern our way forward. The job will develop – but I am starting to reflect on how best to raise awareness and to raise issues. I hope to visit Area Meetings and talk to very many Friends in the months ahead. Please contact me on alisonmitchellmhdo@theretreatyork.org.uk or 07483028490.

Openness about our feelings links to truth: our response to people experiencing distress links to equality. Mental health challenges us all. Let us come together to discern our responses.

Alison Mitchell
Mental Health Development Officer



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Firstly we are pleased to welcome the following new or rejoined members to add to your Membership List: Mark Humphries, Naomi Iliff, Alison Mitchell, Jane Muers, North Wales Area Meeting, Jill Page and Barbara Pensom. Their names and contact details, etc, will be included in the next updated Membership List, and in the meantime anyone wishing to contact any of them should do so via myself.

However, this small surge in numbers is counteracted by the necessary deletion of the following 11 names: Richard Aitken, Jo Arthur, Denys & Heather Barron, Joyce Crosfield, Daphne Glazer, Des Harris, Lewes Local Meeting, Lesley Morland, Nigel Smith and William Waddilove, so please delete them from your Membership List.

This leaves our membership numbers at only 134. Of these there are 19 people who have still not paid for the current year. They, (and those who have paid ahead and do not need to pay a subscription for the coming year) will receive separate notification from me by email or the post, and it is hoped that these arrears will be made up when their subscriptions are paid for 2018. I must again stress that QICJ has no outside funding and is entirely financially dependent on our subscriptions, some donations (mainly in the form of members continuing to pay at the full rate even when eligible to pay at the unwaged rate, and grateful thanks to those to whom it applies), plus any small surplus we may make from the conference. Which brings me to the fact that subscriptions for 2018 are due on January 1st, and you will find a subscription reminder form enclosed with this Newsletter. So please take heed of the foregoing comments and send in your subscriptions as soon as possible (or let me know if you no longer wish to belong). Last year we did send a Standing Order form out with the subscription reminder, which resulted in quite a number of people setting up payment by standing order. If you no longer can find yours, and would like to pay by standing order, please let me know and I will let you have another.

I am aware that the Membership List is now becoming somewhat out of date, and it is hoped to issue an updated one with the Spring Newsletter. Meanwhile, I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the conference at Ammerdown in February.

Ann Jacob



NOTICES

QICJ Conference: Our next annual conference will be held from the 23rd to the 25th of February 2018 in Ammerdown on the topic of Mental Health and the Criminal Justice System. Please see inset for more details.

Centre for Crime and Justice Studies: a recent bulletin promotes a documentary about the criminal injustice inherent in our criminal justice system much along the lines of our conference in Leeds. The documentary is available for screening and the details of public screening at various locations throughout the country are available on their site.

Centre for Crime and Justice Studies are holding an event on 'The Lammy Review: Less than half the picture' on the 29th November from 12.30 to 4pm at their centre on Langley Lane, London. See their website for further details.

Mental Health Forum: The first meeting of a Quaker Mental Health Forum will take place on December 9th at Friargate Meeting House, York. See Alison Mitchell's article.

Housing Project in Thames Valley: Thames Valley Partnership in association with Chiltern Area Quakers are developing a housing hub for released prisoners along the lines of Emmaus or other such charities. Anyone with expertise who might be able to assist please contact Tim Newell.

Ways to Witness and Restorative Justice: Quaker Peace & Social Witness have recently produced two booklets, the former identifies some ways that people can get involved volunteering in the criminal justice system and the latter is a self-explanatory brief introduction.

Koestler: An exhibition 'Inside' will showing until 15th November at the Royal Festival Hall Southbank Centre, London. The Koestler Scotland exhibition will take place from 10th November to the 22nd December at Tramway, Glasgow.

Mike Lambrix: Jan Arriens has provided a link to some of Mike's writing from his long incarceration prior to being executed in Florida in October 2017. It is available at <http://deathrowjournals.blogspot.co.uk/>.

Justice: David Latham's committee on mental health and Fair Trial will be distributing a preliminary report at the end of November. Your input to this report would be welcome.



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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