QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

WINTER 2023 EDITORIAL

Many of you may have noticed the absence of an Autumn Edition of the Newsletter. To remedy this, we have the largest edition of the Newsletter, possibly ever, coming in at whopping 32 pages. Definitely enough to while away the Christmas break. So get on your slippers, light the fire or set the thermostat to cozy, grab a warm cuppa, put up your feet, blanket optional….. and enjoy.

Our members have been very busy attending conferences and seminars, reading books on justice matters and actively engaging within the Criminal Justice System, but have found time to share their thoughts and learning from these actives here. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed

On a practical note, I have been having difficulty identifying newsletter related emails amongst the 2000 or so arrivals that reach my inbox each month. So I've made the decision to create an email address solely for sending and receiving emails related to communications regarding the newsletter. I'll keep my old email for all other QICJ related mail.

The new email qicj.editor@gmail.com

This will hopefully prevent me missing articles that have been submitted, which appears to have been a problem of late. If you notice that your past submission was missed from publication, please resend it to this address and I will remedy that with the next edition.

Having got married this year, it is my first time editing the newsletter under my new name. Several members/readers had emailed asking for a photo of my new husband and I so….just for this edition, Erich joins me in the editorial profile photo

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a year ahead filled with blessing and opportunity.

Looking forward to seeing many of you in 2024.

Jonathan Wilgenbus-Lamb
Editor



ARTICLES

1 - Editorial

2 - Dear QICJ

2 - Membership Report

3 - Trauma Workshop

4- Seminar on The King's Speech

6 - Friendless Childhoods Explain War

7 - Howard League Penal Reform

10 - "Prisoners" A Poem

11 - From Prison To Palace

12 - Silence Inside

14 - Digital Justice & Policing In Scotland

16 - Eight Years Later

17- Imprisonment, Child Abuse & Poverty

20 - Book Review

22 - 2024 Conference

23 - The Vulnerable Accused

25 - Defying Expectations for College

26 - Crime Prevention & Criminal Justice

28 - T Edmund Harvey & Prison Reform

31 - 2024 Conference Form

32 - Contact Us

DEAR QICJ



Dear QICJ

This may be of interest to QIJC Members?
https://constructionmanagement.co.uk/prisoners-deserve-a-second-chance-construction-can-offer-it/

William

Dear QICJ

Every two months important developments are uploaded onto out QICJ website.
Do visit this to keep yourself informed so that you can counter populist news items and help expose the desperate realities of our CJS.

Melanie

MEMBERSHIP REPORT 16.12.2024

First point to mention to you all is to please check that you have paid your subs for 2023 (£10 or £20 individual members, £35 for group supporters). Ideally please have a standing order instruction with your bank for January of each year. Our constitution states that subs should be collected in that month. Cheques are acceptable, if necessary, our bank details are as follows: Quakers in Criminal Justice. sort code 08 92 99 account number 65406034. Please use your name as the reference otherwise of course we won't be able to identify the payee.

Secondly, we now have in the region of 30 supporting group members and 130 individual members. Thus, our membership figures remain strong. It would be good to see more Local and Area Meetings supporting our work however, persuasion by yourselves at the local level is the most effective way! It is with regret that Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs have decided not to renew their group support for QICJ for financial reasons.

Finally, we look forward to seeing you at our annual conference. An updated list of the membership to add as an addendum to the current membership book, available to individual members, will be published around the time of that event.

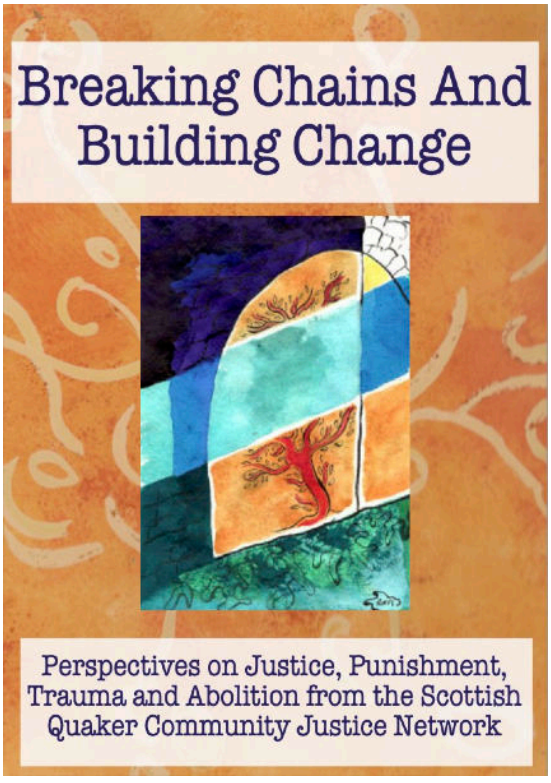
With Best wishes for the New Year,
Simon Ewart and Jonathan Ranger, QICJ membership team. qicjmembership@gmail.com

TRAUMA WORSHOP REPORT

Anneke Kraakman and Ren Wednesday
Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network

With “trauma informed practice” on many penal practitioners minds now, our Network convened a day event, open to all Scottish Quakers, to explore its more radical implications. We met in Glasgow Meeting House in March 2022; some 16 people attended, with more online. Anneke began by asking the group to consider various forms of trauma: physical, psychological and spiritual, cultural and environmental. She asked participants to consider how becoming trauma-informed now might eventually change society: would taking seriously the fear of a child change the adult that they became? She cited physician Gabor Mate, who when working with adults addicted to drugs doesn’t ask ‘What’s wrong with you?’ but rather ‘What happened to you?’ He sees his clients as people who have disconnected from their core selves in order to keep on living, and his work helps them reconnect.

James Docherty, our guest speaker, a young man with lived experience of the Scottish penal system, spoke powerfully on trauma in both a personal and professional context, using the framework of Adverse Childhood Experiences. While everyone can agree that the negative experiences shouldn’t happen, he argued that we don’t talk enough about what should be happening instead. What would make children thrive? James now works with young people in a Violence Reduction Unit, and described the challenges of young people who have to bring each other up, rather than being raised by adult caregivers. He stressed that solving domestic abuse should be one of the highest priorities for people who care about trauma, because children’s “conflict resolution skills are learned in their earliest environments.” When people experience trauma, he told us, they become cut off from kindness, compassion and love, and if they’re living with trauma in a highly stressful situation, such as a prison, science shows their neo-cortex narrows and restricts which emotions are available to access. “Prisons are warehouses for trauma,” he said. “You can’t expect people to be navigating any kind of rehabilitative processes in that kind of environment.” Too many Scottish men, he admitted, don’t talk the way he does about feelings and vulnerability, but achieving that is vital for changing the environment. It is true “hurt people hurt people”, he said, but also that “healed people heal people.” He thinks Scottish society will not change for the better unless it solves the problem of domestic violence.



Pete Clarke, a Friend who has a background of tutoring people in various ‘secure environments’, spoke about the Therapeutic Community in HMP Dovegate. He agreed with James that our current prison system takes people from traumatic backgrounds, and puts them in some of the most traumatic environments imaginable. Pete said that he’d never met a prisoner who made a fully rational choice to be a criminal. Instead he’s met people who have suffered from trauma and chaotic backgrounds, chosen badly, and then been further traumatised in prison. Therapeutic

Communities such as Dovegate offer a different framework, operating somewhat separately from mainstream prisons and requiring those accepted into them to be dedicated to self-analysis. As a penal abolitionist he doesn't believe that we can start from the perspective of reforming what we have: prisons punish people not just for their crime but also for the backgrounds that they happen to come from. Therefore being aware of trauma and its context is vital if Quakers are to start thinking about what true justice needs to look like.

Mike Nellis concluded by reaffirming the need to question penal systems that, over decades wilfully and persistently do more harm than good, and to consider abolition. He reminded us that while Elizabeth Fry is remembered today merely as a compassionate reformer, she was someone who used her social weight to oppose the fundamental premises of the prison system in her day: she was about more than being kind to prisoners, necessary as that remains. We should be the same.

The full report of the day is available here: http://bit.ly/breakingchangebuildingchange

SEMINAR ON "THE KING'S SPEECH"

Sarah Lane

Presented by Andrea Coombes, Andrew Neilson and Tim Kerr of the Howard League

We were looking at the 3 bills planned to be put before parliament in the coming session. The Sentencing Bill, the Criminal Jstice Bill and the Victims and Prisoners Bill,

The Sentencing Bill

- Covers the intention to make sentences tougher. For more serious crimes parole will not be available. The implication of this will be they will have no supervision or support once they are released. On the positive side for sentences under 12 months they will favour the sentence being suspended. Home curfews will be used more for prisoners with a four year or more sentence, at the end of their sentences.
- This bill may well be prioritised because of its effect on prison overcrowding.



The Criminal Justice Bill

- States that the accused must attend their hearings.
- For grooming gangs, they are introducing an aggravating factor at sentencing.
- Polygraph tests for terrorist or sexual offences.
- Criminalise the sharing of intimate images.
- Plan to transfer people to prisons abroad. This will not happen quickly and whose law these prisoners are held under needs to be worked on, along with loads of other issues this would bring up.
- Criminalise persistent nuisance and organised begging.
- Expand offences for encouraging suicide and self-harm.

- Expand drug testing on arrest.
- Create offence of possession of a bladed object with intent to harm.
- Increase sentence of selling dangerous weapons to children.

The Victims and prisoners Bill

- This suggests more support for victims.
- Parole board criteria for releases changed and plans to reform and increase their powers.
- Release of top tier prisoners subject to oversight by the Secretary of state for criminal Justice.
- Preventing lifers getting married.

There has been a huge increase in Criminal Justice law form 2002. We have had 23 pieces of legislation passed since then, 11 of them being in 2023 plus the 3 being proposed. This is principally why the prison population has increased so much. Criminal justice bills top any other category of bill. This hyperactivity has caused the system to run off the rails. When Labour was in power they introduced 3.000 new criminal offences.



All this is incredibly unsettling for prisoners. New laws are continually moving the goalposts.
On a positive note, encouraging progress to open prison is very welcome (A chalk) This and the suspended sentences for those a year or less will help with overcrowding in local prisons. However as these are a small proportion of overall incarceration numbers it will not have an impact over all.

- Prisoners on remand at present clog up the system especially with the delays in court hearings. More often than not they are released when their case comes up.
- The new bills will cause sentence inflation. (again).
- There was nothing about the mental health bill (which reached the draft stage in the last session) limiting time from diagnosis to transfer. Maybe they ran out of time, or the costs were too high? Also, we don't have the capacity for the number of MH patients that need to be transferred. Also as this is not a party issue it may well not be prioritised.
- No mention is made of IPP's. There are still 3,000 in prison. The government have rejected the recommendations in the White paper. They may be included as an amendment to the Sentencing bill, but details have not been decided.
- The probation service is not fit to take on all the new recommendations and demands if they become law. Home curfews might benefit 10,000prisoners.

- For women prisoners, short sentences are good news but outside support will be a problem. Inadequate now.
- Present prisoners will lose the incentive to engage in rehabilitation courses if there is no chance of early release. This also removes HOPE.
- Some of the proposals seem to have been drawn up simply as alternatives to Labour policy.
- There is no focus on rehabilitation.
- Both parties lack any clarity of vision.
- 95% of prisoners are written off and considered irredeemable. We need to move away from this discourse and these less progressive, populist measures.

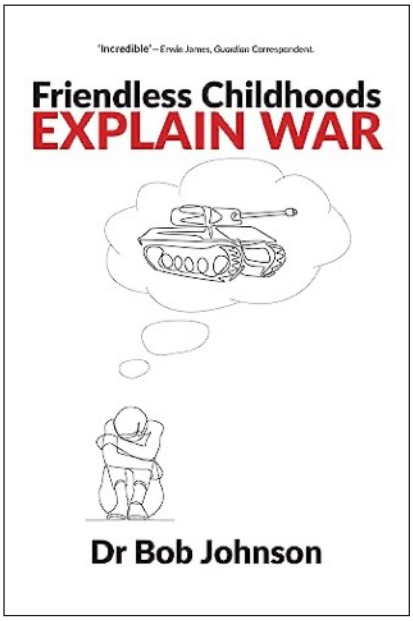
FRIENDLESS CHILDHOODS EXPLAIN WAR

Tim Newell

By Dr Bob Johnson
ISBN 978-1-914603-39-6 Waterside Press

Our friend Bob Johnson has produced a book here that delights our sensitivities and challenges our assumptions about international affairs. Making connections is what we expect from Bob and we've certainly got them here. Reading though this short book made me stop and stare and think. In the end it made so much sense that there was a feeling of elation in understanding some of the critical events in history.

Bob's remarkable work in Parkhurst Prison with the most dangerous prisoners held in custody led him to realise that this creative work could only be progressed by establishing the principles of Truth, Trust, and Consent. Through this experience Bob realised, when looking at international conflict parallels, could be drawn with the experience of the men he had worked with. The violence within international relationships, he understood, begins in childhood experiences that lead to adult anger, grievance, and revenge.



Using professional records Bob takes us through Mein Kampf, George Orwell and Shakespeare to show us how negative experiences in childhood can lead to unspeakable adult acts of violence, even war. An important insight for us today, and those with responsibility for our affairs should not be ignored. Bob warns us – no one is safe (or sane) unless we are all safe (or sane).
Examining international conflict Bob asserts that all such violence is born in a childhood of trauma. Resulting anger, grievance and revenge instil seeds of hatred that continue into adulthood. Through this he explains Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine, He describes his work with serial killers which contains clinical data and reflects a lifetime of investigation and application.
These wonderful insights challenge and surprise us. They are based on experience and compassion and a delight in life.

In the preface Bob explains why he regards war and killing as a disease. Through his unpacking of traumas on Parkhurst's C Wing he has moved to consider international conflict with an understanding of ferocious emotions His insights through extensive study is that 'friendless childhoods explain warring adults'. Hitler is shown describing his appalling childhood. He is concerned about our continued muddled thinking to survive our lethal folly, "Covid, Cancer, Climate Change, Crime, Corruption and Conflict" all contribute to the complexity and riskiness of our situation.

Bob concludes with a lovely focus on a smile a day. Analysing a smile he asks us to approach a mirror and smile at ourselves. Analysing that smile reveals a lot until the instigation is spontaneous. A real smile is instantaneous, and life changing.

Schubert's piano duets end the book beautifully. (reviewer's reference below)
https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D_CDA67665

HOWARD LEAGUE: PENAL REFORM

Jonathan Ranger

Dr Martin Wright
A torchbearer for penal reform and restorative justice

On Wednesday 12 July 2023, The Howard League for Penal Reform held a very special evening at City Law School (University of London) in Goswell Street, near King's Cross, London, generously hosted by the Criminal Justice & Human Rights Centre.

The occasion was an appreciation of Martin's long life (he's 93 – and still going pretty strong) and tremendous service as a former (and reformative) Director of the Howard League between 1971 and 1982.

But the event was as much a recognition of his being a key instigator of Restorative Justice as we now know it, especially in Britain but also in Europe. He has been and remain tireless in getting it established as an official method of dispensing and monitoring Justice, preferably (in most cases) as a sensible alternative to imprisonment.

In his time, Martin was a prison visitor, a librarian at the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge, a policy officer for Victim Support, and a founder member of the Restorative Justice Council.

Introducing the evening, Andrea Coomber KC, Chief Executive for the last 20 months, gave a brief overview of the League's new 5-year Strategy, which she and her team have been researching and compiling over the last twelve months. The Plan focuses on 'the acute crisis in prisons'.

Britain has the highest rate of imprisonment in Western Europe, with over 86,600 men, women and children behind bars. And our dubious government are going to spend another £4 Billion of taxpayers' money increasing the prison population to 106,300 by March 2027!

(Yes, that accurate! But The Prison System – which they know doesn't work, and which is already in crisis and unsafe through underfunding and understaffing – is nowadays Big Business; like supermarkets, it has to keep expanding. And someone, somewhere, is pocketing enormous profits from it.)

'Our country has become addicted to punishment and imprisonment, in spite of overwhelming evidence that prison does not cut crime, nor keep us safe. The far-reaching harms of prison can have a lasting impact on individuals, their families, and communities. The economic cost of prison expansion will squander vital resources, better invested in housing, education, employment and healthcare.' Not to mention preventing crime in the first place.

The League will 'challenge the overuse of incarceration, and the injustices and human rights violations that take place behind prison walls. We are going to put the case for a

more humane, evidence-based approach to crime and punishment.'

They will invite grass-roots involvement, combine with other organisations, and make use of people's, largely prisoners', 'direct experience of prison' to 'develop campaigns, enhance public understanding of prison, undertake strategic litigation, and engage with key stakeholders to change policy and practice.'

They will 'challenge the overuse of remand (which is more now than in the last 50 years), IPPs (abolished 10 years ago, but the weak government succumbed to media pressure not to convert these 'indefinite' sentences to equivalent determinate (fixed) sentences), the injustices of joint enterprise and racial prejudice, and the inflation of sentencing over the last 20 years.'

Their intention remains less crime, safer communities and fewer people in prison – because prison as we tend to use it is simply unnecessary for most crimes.

Mike Nellis, Emeritus Professor of Criminal and Community Justice in the Law School, University of Strathclyde, spoke about Martin's earlier career as Director of the Howard League from 1971 to 1982. He spoke of first meeting Martin at RAP (Radical Alternatives to Prison) in the late 1970s, and Martin's connections also with NACRO, PROP ('the voice of the prisoner') and other organisations supporting prison and justice reform. He produced his copy of Martin's first (1982) book, Making Good, which he recommended as still a must-read text book for everyone on this journey, as it asks, "Is the penal system the right thing at all?"

Marian Liebmann was unable to be present, but appeared on screen to give a moving tribute to Martin, having known and worked with him over a long time. Marian listed some of the many honours Martin received for his inestimable work for Restorative Justice. She made the point that it was Martin and she who pushed the authorities to allow the murderer of Lesley Moreland's daughter Ruth to meet with her and try to explain 'why', and the 2001 publication of her book An Ordinary Murder, which truly highlights Restorative Justice as a viable means of rehabilitation of both offender and victim.

Dr Theo Gavrielides, Founder and Director of Restorative Justice for All International Institute, spoke fascinatingly about his journey to Restorative Justice (RJ), having first argued with Martin on 28 September 2001 – a date etched in his memory, not least as it was only a few days after the birth of his son, (who was also present at the Seminar). Theo was a PhD student at that time, questioning everything, before he qualified as a Barrister. But he was more interested in the European Forum for Restorative Justice, which Martin had helped to found – and they became personal friends, still frequently arguing, until eventually he worked completely in the field of RJ and founded his own RJ For All. "RJ is a community response to us not getting a fair or proper deal from the justice system," he says. He spoke of the whole process of RJ involving pain, but this necessary pain being cathartic and cleansing for both parties – thus helping to right wrongs and work positively towards rehabilitation … in a way that mere punishment cannot achieve.

Dr Martin Wright himself then responded, asking us first to think of Kherson in Ukraine – for it was there that John Howard, who died from an infection for which he was trying to find preventative measures, was buried! Then he reminded us that the Chief Inspector of

Prisons had again said recently that prisoners still spend too long in their cells, often being allowed out for only 2 hours a day – including meal times and daily ‘exercise’, which is usually walking slowly around a small high-fenced enclosure or sitting there talking with others. He calls this ‘Purposeless Inactivity’.

Certainly, in most main prisons, there needs to be far more education, training, work, and attendance at treatment programmes to address offending behaviour. On which subject, Martin pointed out that two-thirds of prisoners use Class A drugs, have suffered exclusion from school, have experienced violence and often abuse at home … so if we want them to behave better, is locking them up and treating them as numbers or animals the right way?

“Punishment is no use without addressing the causes of offending.” he urged. I know from my own experiences how essential it is to go right back to those Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) if you’re to have even a chance of understanding your own motivations and how you can alter your thinking to adjust your behaviour. Martin stressed the need for a new criminal justice paradigm, by which wrongdoers should face not 'punishment' but 'consequences' – a wider term which could include constructive activities such as restorative justice: if you cause harm, you must make amends But in most cases, imprisonment is not the answer.

Far better that the offender has free time taken away (or put to use in other ways) without adversely affecting work and the family – rather like the Swedish method. This can be accomplished by the use of Day Centres, disqualifications from certain activities, community service, or other constructive actions. It’s good to see that Wales has recently created a Ministry of Social Justice, to address these possibilities positively.

Martin spoke persuasively about Prevention of crime being the first and foremost necessity; our police forces need the resources and funding to be able to do their job more effectively. (When I was a Met police officer, back in the seventies when we had bobbies on the beat, not rushing around in cars and vans once something’s happened, our General Orders – 3” thick – had a first line that read: “The primary object of an efficient police is the prevention of crime.” Only

secondarily were detection and prosecution mentioned if a crime has been committed. They would do well to remember this nowadays!)

Professor Fergus McNeill, Chair of the Howard League, had recently attended a Council of Europe conference for Directors of prisons etc, where Germany’s Federal Minister of Justice had warned of the growing presence of Authoritarian Systems and Governments placing an over-emphasis on penal incarceration. Once-moderate countries are at risk of becoming police states, where more and more people are being locked up, and for longer, for less serious breaches of the law.

Instead (he emphasised) Reparations, Reconciliation and Restitution – the core of Restorative Justice – must become officially considered as viable alternatives to prison … and put into practice. But in order to achieve “Less harm, more justice”, the justice system itself needs to be ‘amended’ – for which, read ‘completely overhauled’.

After Andrea and Martin had rounded off the session with thanks, there was a reception for an hour or so, for mingling, sampling wines, and discussing the issues with others. I hope transcripts of the talks will be available for those interested.

Mike notes the enduring connection between Quakers and the Howard League (although regrettably this was not mentioned at the event itself). The first two Directors of the Howard Association (as it was originally called), Tallack and Grubb, were both Friends, and Marjory Fry was a birthright Friend who left the Society but always said, quite truthfully, she kept "her Quaker conscience". There is something indelible about Quakers and penal reform, and Martin has surely done the tradition proud – and extended it. "He is literally the most prolific writer-activist I've ever met," Mike said. Praise indeed! In fact, all Martin's books and articles are still worth studying – and building on.

I was sad (and so were Mike and Martin, when we spoke later) that neither Quakers nor QICJ were mentioned once – even in connection with Mike, Marian and Martin (later in his career), or as prime movers in the fight for Justice. Yes, the Frys and John Howard were mentioned, but the word 'Quaker' was not.

Mike and I agreed that there is an issue about the kind of public profile Quakers generally and QICJ specifically have in respect of penal reform (or 'community justice'). We do now have a profile among the organisations that know us, and Melanie Jameson has done wonders raising it recently. But, even so, this is an issue which warrants further discussion …

Could we convene a meeting about this, perhaps with some preliminary zooms etc to air views and set a ball rolling …? I think it's important that we get us all discussing ways we could raise our profile further, as well as working with others to tackle government recalcitrance – and national ignorance and apathy about the injustice system!

"PRISONERS" A POEM

Judge Dennis Chaleen

We want them to have self worth, so we destroy their self worth
To be responsible, so we take away all responsibility
To be part of our community, so we isolate them from the community
To be positive and constructive, so we degrade them and make them useless
To be non violent, so we put them where there is violence all around
To be kind and loving people, so we subject them to hatred and cruelty
To quit being tough guys, so we put them where the tough guy is respected
To quit hanging around losers, so we put all the losers under one roof
To quit exploiting us, so we put them where they exploit each other
We want them to take control of their own lives own their own problems and quit being parasites, so we make them totally dependent on us

FROM PRISON TO PALACE

Selina Sasse

Thirty years ago Sue was in prison, serving a 4-year sentence for the supply of drugs. She was a heroin addict. This month she represented The Prison Phoenix Trust (The PPT) at St James's Palace at the invitation of the King.

Along with The PPT's trustee Shola Arewa, she was invited to celebrate 40 years of the Prince of Wales's Charitable Trust, which along with many Quaker Meetings, gives financial support to The PPT's rehabilitative work in prisons sharing meditation and yoga. During the event Sue was passed the microphone and spoke in front of 100 people about her experiences.



"I made contact with The Prison Phoenix Trust in prison. We communicated by letter. They inspired and supported my meditation practice throughout my time in prison, through drug rehabilitation, my first job in drug services. This communication has continued over 30 years. Over the past few years I have been fortunate to give back to The Prison Phoenix Trust in ways I never expected.

"The PPT supports nearly 5,000 individual prisoners with meditation and yoga in the UK and Ireland. And during Covid they carried on that support, sending DVDs and other resources in for people to use in their cells.

"When your sentence is over, the support and inspiration from The Prison Phoenix Trust does not end. The friendships built through letter-writing is an invaluable gift upon release.
"Restarting your life after prison is a great challenge, the shame, applying for courses, DBS checks for jobs. Meditation and Yoga are a mirror that shows you the purity inside yourself. It is never tainted, regardless of your offence, or traumas that have contributed to the offending. The simplicity of following your breath, of holding a yoga pose enables total acceptance of yourself.
"It has helped me be a person who can now give back to society, volunteering in two local charities, one preventing food waste and the other supporting creative arts for adults with poor mental health.

"I felt honoured to represent The Prison Phoenix Trust with trustee Shola Arewa at the Prince of Wales Charitable Fund. The causes that our King supports from ecological projects, preventing

food waste, young carers and The Prison Phoenix Trust are the foundations of bringing change in a world that can appear harsh and cruel. What an honour, to go from prison to St James Palace……"



Notes

· The Prison Phoenix Trust has been supporting the rehabilitation of prisoners through silence and the breath since 1988. It is currently seeking volunteers to serve on its board of trustees. Applications open until 31st July. Find out more here: https://www.theppt.org.uk/2023/07/06/we-are-recruiting-could-you-be-a-trustee/

· Many Quaker Meetings and trusts support the work of the Prison Phoenix Trust bringing hope, healing and second chances to people in prison. To find out more about how to support this valuable work, please go to: https://www.theppt.org.uk/for-supporters/donate/

Contact The Prison Phoenix Trust tel 01865 512521, all@theppt.org.uk director Selina Sasse or development lead Chris Holt

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SILENCE INSIDE

Sarah Lane

This tapestry was made by some of the men at the Quaker Meeting in HMP Long Lartin which we called 'Silence Inside'. This name was suggested by one of the men as a pun suggesting silence inside of us and also within the prison.

We were having a faith session after our Quiet Meeting and were discussing the Quaker tapestry. We decided that it would be lovely to make our own version of a Quaker panel.

The men wanted to depict what it was like to be in the Meeting. One was a talented artist and captured the ideas from the group and transferred it on to the calico lining.

We used a candle at our Meeting because as we had to wait for all the men to come up from the various wings we would sit and chat until everyone had arrived. Lighting the candle indicated the start of worship and the flame symbolised the 'Light' of God within all of us.



Around the ‘Q’ are the main Quaker testimonies and then pictures of our regular attenders, the 2 Quaker chaplains and three supporting Quaker visitors.

As the light radiates out in its myriad of ways the words are things the men felt the Meeting meant to them.

At the bottom the roundels indicate from left to right:

- The beautiful table that one of our members made in the prison woodwork shop. It has a Q carved into the middle. On it are the flowers we always had, the candle and the Quaker Faith and Practice book.
- Some hands cradling the world indicating our love and care for the planet
- The scales of Justice, which we have fought for in all sorts of areas of life since the beginning
- The peace dove. Peace being one of our principal concerns.
- The QFP our main book of discipline and inspiration.
- A man in his cell reading QFP with the ‘Light’ shining in on him through the cell window.

We had sessions learning the stitches and then some men would take it in turns to have the tapestry in their cells to stitch and then swap over at the ‘Silence Inside’.

DIGITAL JUSTICE & POLICING IN SCOTLAND

Mike Nellis

I have been attending annual "digital justice" conferences in Scotland for more than a decade. Their purpose, using a mix of government, agency and tech company speakers (and some academics), is to demonstrate the ways in which new digital technologies are impacting on the operation of the criminal justice system, and to signal what's next. They are mostly targeted on the rising generation of managers and practitioners employed in this new digital milieu, and on interested parties like myself. Although there are usually 200+ attendees, dissenting voices are not expected from the audience: they are there to familiarise themselves with upcoming alterations to their roles and skillsets.

"Digital Justice" is just one of a suite of annual conferences showcasing the high-tech future of all Scottish public services: there are other day-long events focussed on fintech, education, health and social care, cybersecurity as well as periodic "Summits" which brings all the themes together. "Transformation" and "modernisation" are the upbeat watchwords of all these gatherings, and the allure of "smart" technological innovation becomes so exclusively definitive of "the future" that considerations of social justice and moral progress are brushed aside.

England and Wales have hosted equivalent annual events over the same period, usually dubbed Modernising Justice. Between them, they have given me a strong sense of the interests that "digital justice" elevates, and those it suppresses, and on whose terms new futures are being built. What both sets of conferences have in common is commercial sponsorship by the companies already providing services, or aspiring to win contracts, and their exhibitor stands are as invariably illuminating as the lectures and workshops about what's coming next

The most recent Digital Justice event in Scotland, in November 2023, focussed specifically on policing - still the pacesetter for tech innovation in criminal justice, although courts and prosecution services are catching up. It began with an overview of current digital strategies and capabilities, and signalled the vital importance of pre-emptively applying ethics to technological innovation – something at which Scotland is not, in fact, bad – although it is everywhere easier said than done.

An Assistant Chief of Police from Miami, Florida was the event's star speaker. He entertainingly explained how and why his force had implemented public space facial recognition systems across the city, and gave examples of how it has been effective. Unlike the UK, Miami police

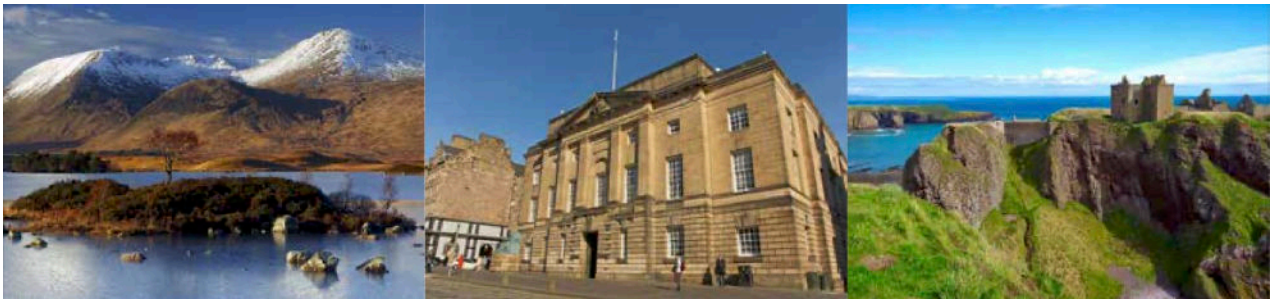


had had no external regulatory framework to consider when they opted to utilise facial recognition: it was an operational police matter whose ethics they had to work out on their own, without oversight, whilst knowing that some US city authorities had already banned this intrusive technology outright.

Scotland does not currently use facial recognition technologies. England and Wales piloted schemes some years ago in London and South Wales, but although both were severely criticised for generating too many false positives, and for significant ethical failings, other police forces are keen to deploy it, and the Home Office is insisting they do. Thus far, the government's own independent (and internationally renowned) Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner has strongly discouraged this. The Home Office, in response, plans to abolish this posts during this current Parliament, shifting some of their former responsibilities to a new Board and the already overburdened Information (data protection) Commissioner. This will stymie in-house (if not all) resistance to facial recognition technology but also, we were told at the conference, weaken the national standards hitherto applied to CCTV in England and Wales, potentially deregulating its use across its 43 police forces, thereby reducing its public and judicial legitimacy.

Advancing commercial technology in public services entails chipping away at established regulatory processes to enable cost-efficient innovation, or the early capture of regulatory endeavours by companies so they can limit anticipated future restrictions. Scotland generally fares better than England and Wales in applying precautionary principles, but doesn't buck all trends. All its Digital Justice conferences have at some point given the floor to a tech company speaker who tries to jolt policy forward, promising not only dazzling "upgrades" but "next generation" technologies which will solve even more organisational problems (including those arising from earlier technologies). Even as Police Scotland (belatedly?) adopts body-worn cameras, a messianic champion of "artificial intelligence" (AI) explained in November that the health, wellbeing and performance of sadly over-stressed police officers might well be enhanced via wearable devices monitoring their mood, heart and respiratory rates.

AI – the automation of administrative processes, swifter assessment and assisted decision-making - is everywhere in debates on digital justice now. A decade ago – when using CD Roms to supply courts with CCTV evidence was a key conference topic - AI was the remotest of pipedreams. The rolling process of digital change has no obvious endpoint but various sorts of automation will alter access and delivery in public services, without necessarily improving them on the ground, if vital human skills are allowed to atrophy. Agencies can access ethical expertise on their "digital journeys", but I'm not convinced that the personal and political implications of "invasive technification", as one sage observer has called all this, are properly appreciated.



Now that 80% of all criminal investigations in the UK have a digital element, and 90% of that element concerns mobile phones, it is reassuring that new software reduces the time taken to extract evidentiary data from accused's, victim's and witnesses phones to days or hours, rather than the weeks it took with first generation machines, which had required their confiscation by police. Furthermore, data can now be extracted selectively, with consent, according to what is relevant, rather than subjecting victims of alleged sexual offences to a full "digital strip search", downloading everything from their phone, no matter how private, because all or nothing was once the only technical option. This had deterred victims from either pressing charges or continuing cases.

Such is needful progress, but if "digital" is the preferred answer to enduring questions of crime and punishment, what was the question, who asked it - and why now?

EIGHT YEARS LATER

A person with lived experience of the CJS

Back in 2017 I wrote an article for the newsletter titled "From Prison Cell to Freedom".
It was suggested by my Probation Officer that I should write a follow up article that would show how things have gone during the eight years of freedom and how the process of rehabilitation back into society has been.

So here goes, rather than just writing this for Probation I thought I ought to allow the wider audience of QICJ members and any ex-offenders to read how the road of rehabilitation of highs and lows can be achieved by an individual who is set on a path of no more offending.

Initially after my release from prison having served 18years of a life sentence I had to reside in an approved hostel. Which meant I had rules to abide by i.e., a curfew, being checked through the night to ensure I was in my room (this reminded me of being back inside) telling hostel staff where you were going each day. My way of coping with these restrictions was to view the hostel as a step up from an open prison which had similar restrictions, so I used the hostel as an extension to an open prison and in my own mind looked upon it as a category E prison. My stay of nine months in the hostel I found very useful, the staff were helpful, my key worker worked with me along with probation and the local council housing officer, to eventually find me accommodation, which I have been living in for the past 8yrs.



At times I have found things quite frustrating, numerous changes of supervising officers, which can be rather daunting at times, not knowing how a new probation officer is going to interpret the licence conditions, having to go over past events due to the lack of information being handed over when a new probation officer takes over and the lack of consistency.

Since my release I have had my probation area changed twice, had numerous probation officers, one could get angry over the way a person's needs on licence sometimes appears to be forgotten. One has to remember that probation has been turned upside down when Chris Grayling was in charge, now probation is slowly returning to the NPS effectiveness. During my time of being back in the community I have been given the chance to have a decent crack at living life to the full within the constraints of my licence conditions.

I have been allowed to go on holiday to Scotland, Cornwall and Wales on numerous occasions. Have been an attender at a local meeting and have recently applied to become a member of Quakers. Have attended QICJ conferences. Most recently have been involved in forums attending different probation offices giving feedback on how I see probation working with their clients.

Probation is getting me ready so I can apply to come off supervision in about two years' time.

IMPRISONMENT, CHILD ABUSE & POVERTY - FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Hugh McMichael

Hugh is a retired physician who also trained as a person-centred counsellor. He has a long-standing interest in working with damaged and stressed people, including 10 years in hospices and latterly worked as a Samaritan and as a volunteer chaplain in a high security prison. He has matched these experiences with researching data showing links of imprisonment rates to both child abuse and poverty.

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Let's look firstly at when parents are unable to give 'due attention' to the needs of their child - for whatever reason. Differences in a baby's behaviour are demonstrable at 6 weeks of age and their brains develop differently anatomically. A baby whose crying is 'always' responded to by receiving attention will have experience that 'society' is caring and will respond to their needs whereas the baby 'left to cry' will come to regard 'society' as unsupportive and relatively hostile. If we consider criminal behaviour to be 'anti-social', then this sequence could be highly relevant.

There are many ways of bringing up children but, since 1998, 10 factors in child-rearing have been identified as defining 'abuse'. These are the so-called ACE studies, Adverse Childhood Experiences. This is a questionnaire which depends on yes/no answers to 10 'simple' questions. (For details, see Wikipedia!). People who answer 'yes' to 4 or more of the questions are the so-

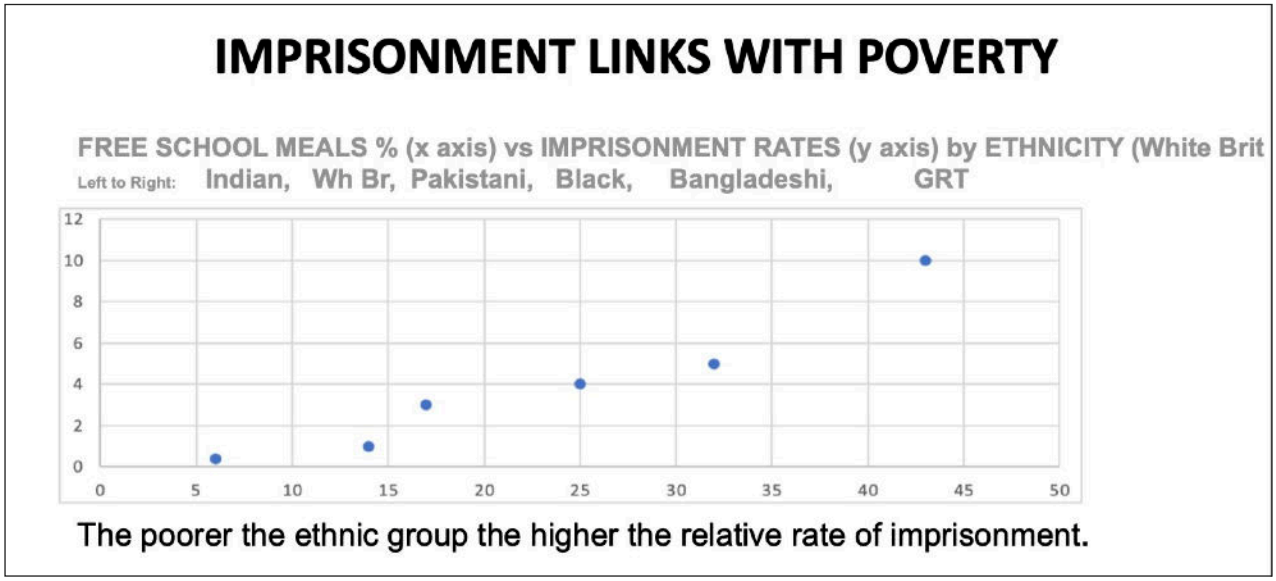
called ACE4+ group and this group has been subject to extensive studies on the influence of these factors on future life patterns. These were summarised by the esteemed medical journal The Lancer (2016). The ACE4+ group were compared to their peers who reported no ACEs. For example, ACE4+ people are 4 times more likely to become teenage parents, 4 times more likely to suffer from anxiety and/or depression, and 8 times more likely to be perpetrators and/or victims of violence (almost always associated with violence in their own homes) They are 10 times more likely to suffer problematic drug use. And they are 37 times more likely to attempt suicide. Is their drug addiction their way of coping with life – staying alive?

49% of all imprisoned people in one prison had 4 or more ACEs.

Should ACE4+ people be regarded as being seriously damaged people in need of active support and treatment to help them overcome their disadvantaged starts in life?

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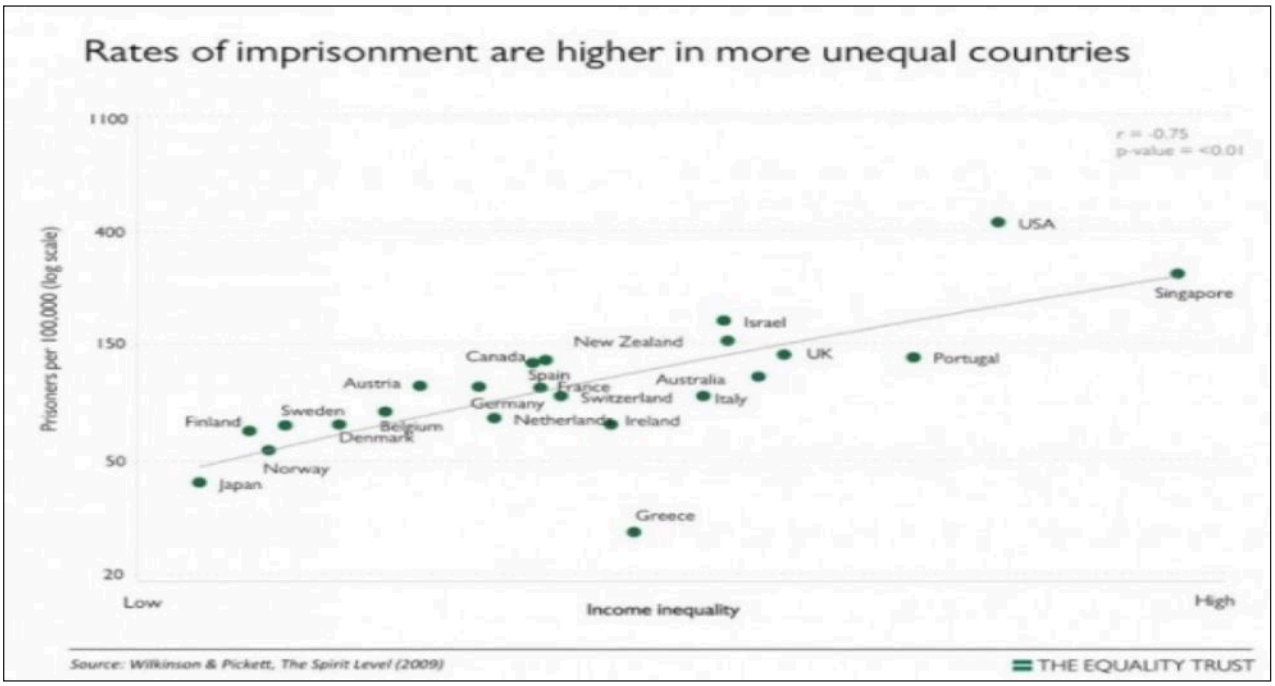
Children in the 4+ group are around 10 times more likely to come from poor backgrounds. The government does not publish data on incarceration, ethnic background and poverty but it does publish religious affiliations which are likely to reflect ethnic groups and poverty rates in such ethnic groups are reflected in published rates of Free School Meals. The attached graph shows an extremely strong correlation between poverty and incarceration rate.



Note that the least imprisoned group documented are those of Indian origin – brown people, with a lower rate of Free School Meals than white British, and the highest rate of imprisonment is the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller group (white people) who have by far the highest rate of Free School Meals. Moslem groups are in the middle.

There is also a striking relationship in international rates of incarceration linked with wealth inequality in the named country.

(For the technically minded, note that the rate of imprisonment per head of population is on a log scale – so that the rate of imprisonment in the USA is 8 times the rate of Norway.)



It would appear that, if we are all poor together, jealousy, envy or resentment of others' wealth is minimal but when the rich are very rich and the poor very poor, presumably there is less communal bonding , more resentment and (therefore) crime, with increasing imprisonment rates.

Note that the wealth gap in the UK has increased by some 50% since 1977, as judged by the so-called Palma ratio (which measures wealth of the top 10% compared to the wealth of the bottom 40%). Just one indicator of wealth inequality. The rate of defined child poverty has increased from 14% to 31% in the same period. (Sorry to be technical!)

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47% of people released from prison re-offend within 1 year at an estimated cost of £37billion. Is that 'prison working'? And the government is building yet more prisons!

Very many of the people I met in a high security prison had blatantly abusive childhoods. By listening to and respecting them, it often took only a few minutes for 'that of God' to show itself.

IS IT TIME FOR RADICAL CHANGES IN OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICIES?

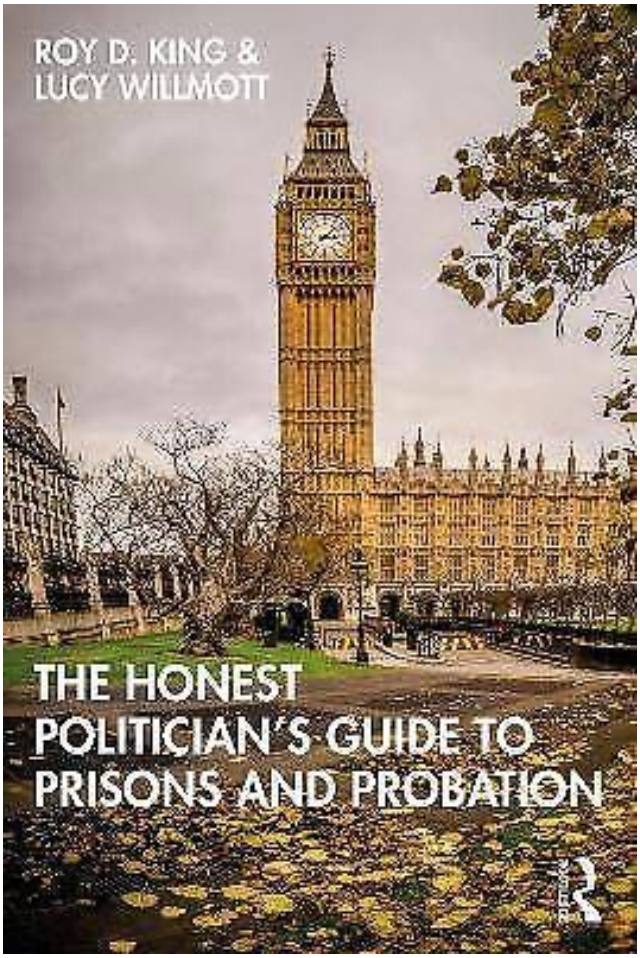


BOOK REVIEW

Mike Nellis

Roy King and Lucy Willmott (2021). The Honest Politician's Guide to Prisons and Probation. London: Routledge. Pbk £38.99

A short, casual conversation with Emeritus Professor Roy King in the corridors of the Cambridge Institute of Criminology, not quite a decade ago, prompted me to begin reconsidering what love requires of us in penal affairs. "I honestly thought", he said wistfully (forgive me, Roy, if I don't get your words exactly right), "that when I first started getting involved in prison reform, in the nineteen seventies, that we would be further along now than we have actually got". Me too. Things are worse now than they were a decade ago, and the discerned truth of why that is so should guide what we do next. I would place a different interpretation from Roy and Lucy on what went wrong, but their book is essential reading, all the same.



The immediate post-war penal system in England and Wales had its difficulties, but King and Willmott focus here on the fateful thirty year period, from the 1990 Woolf Report – hailed at the time as a blueprint for penal decency - to the Covid pandemic, during which "prisons and probation were reduced to a level of crisis never previously seen" (p1, my italics). To illuminate this sorry story they conducted lengthy interviews with almost all senior and junior ministers and civil servants who served in this period, in the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Judiciary, the Inspectorates, heads of prison, probation and parole services, and of Independent Monitoring Boards, plus authors of relevant reviews and incident reports, as well as some civil society organisations operating in this field. The research task was huge and the accomplishment is considerable.

The book offers accounts of why particular ministers and officials made the penal decisions they did (or not) in the context of a) assumed political mandates, b) perceived public opinion, c) internal party politics, d) Treasury settlements and, eventually, e) the overarching policy of austerity and cuts to public services. Much detail is new, and many quotes are illuminating, if sombre. Rather too charitably, with some reservations, King and Willmott claim ministers (and officials even more so) did what they did for the best, according to their lights, in difficult

circumstances. They are still too kind, in my view, to Chris Grayling - a man with “few regrets and no apologies” (p136) - for the lasting damage he did to the probation service by part-privatising it in the face of all contrary evidence and professional opinion. I was unconsoled by learning that in some instances policies and events could have turned out even worse than they actually did.

The argument is pitched at the informed general reader and – of course, given the title - at any upcoming honest politicians who might rescue prisons and probation from the “dire straits” (p8) they are now in. For them, King and Willmott sketch an “agenda for action”, focussed on proposals for sentencing reform; problem-solving courts; judicial independence; the tone of penal debate in the media; feasible reductions in prison numbers; rational, evidence-based release and recall procedures; and probation’s need for ties to local communities – much of it in the lost “spirit of Woolf”. All these proposals echo the longstanding agendas of existing justice and penal reform groups, on which tireless energy has been expended, and which the authors clearly wish to re-invigorate. Beyond their policy concerns, King and Willmott are well aware that sustained organisational stability, adequate resources and practical skill are vital to turning around the lives of often impoverished, troubled people who offend, and lament their palpable diminishment over the past thirty years. And then they write, piercingly and urgently:

Ministers should understand that hoping for rehabilitation by putting offenders in a situation expressly designed to de-habilitate them – as in prisons – is not a reasonable expectation (p234 my italics)

Quite. Coming at the end of a narrative exposing blunders, rogue ambitions, missteps and false starts in penal policy-making, that phrase “expressly designed” was jarring. It seemingly points to a way of thinking about penal realities that King and Willmott do not directly address. There is no actual conspiracy, no design in that sense, but there is a broad economic and political logic to the rolling expansion of the prison estate in England and Wales, and the steady intensification of punitiveness within it. These are inextricably tied to the growth of social inequality, material precarity and psychological insecurity, and the unsettling of cultural restraints on aggression and violence, sometimes of an extreme kind. In the thirty or so years covered by this book, England and Wales has become less of a welfare state oriented (imperfectly!) towards prevention and human flourishing, and more of a penal state oriented towards exclusion and inhumanity. Exceptions exist among institutions and individuals, of course they do, but the ideals of public (and penal) service in a modern democracy should not need to be kept alive by the goodwill of virtuous people hanging on in broken systems.

What was aptly called the “the new punitiveness” in the nineteen nineties is now “the old punitiveness”, with added surveillance technology. Faced with this, I’m not convinced that King and Willmott’s robust affirmation of familiar liberal demands is sufficient for the task of shrinking prison use and enabling decent regimes. I am happy that secular organisations assiduously pursue them, but if they had had political traction in the recent past – and none of them are new - we would not be where we are now. I hope that Quakers will find within their own spiritual and theological tradition the resources to do more than merely mimic or echo liberal demands, as they have so often done in the past. They are honourable, but they are not enough. “What politics have done”, King and Willmott write, “honest politicians can undo”(p233). Perhaps. But what can honest Quakers say and do that might help them get there?

2024 QICJ CONFERENCE

2024 Conference 'Gateways to Rehabilitation', 22-24 March 2024 at Launde Abbey, Leics.

Our 2024 conference is well in hand, picking up on the theme of rehabilitation, requested at last year's event. Please note the much later date and new venue.

Entitled 'Gateways to Rehabilitation', we shall take the opportunity to explore this theme from various angles. Central to this process is the 'gateway' of the Parole Board, who have agreed to provide a speaker. We shall also hear a probation perspective.

As we all know, rehabilitation depends on many practical and psychological supports being in place. Services are overstretched and poorly funded but well-established charities continue to play an important role. Two of these will provide workshops: the Prison Phoenix Trust, and the Shannon Trust which runs a reading scheme using trained prison mentors across most prisons. Addiction issues often loom large, so we shall hear from someone with lived experience and expertise in this area.

One of the most crucial factors for successful resettlement is accommodation, an issue we shall also touch on.

We shall take the opportunity to discuss a query that has arisen over the year: what is the best to proceed when former prisoners ask to join our Quaker Meetings? This will take the form of a panel, so if you have experience in this area, please contact me (mj@dyslexia-malvern.co.uk).
It is with deep regret that we had to cancel our booking at Woodbrooke, but in Laude Abbey we have found a beautiful and fitting venue https://www.laundeabbey.org.uk/



THE VULNERABLE ACCUSED

Melanie Jameson

I was delighted to hear that a largely academic network focusing on vulnerable suspects and defendants was convening at Birmingham University for their first conference. My paper on Disadvantage, Neurodivergence and Disability was accepted, and I was looking forward to meeting new colleagues concerned about the vulnerability of people caught up in the CJS, which has long exercised me.

Some of the speakers were Registered Intermediaries, who can be called in if communication is a problem; this should always apply if a suspect/defendant has impaired intelligence – but this tends to equate to an IQ of <70, which is very low indeed. I am sure many who would not fit this category still struggle to comprehend what is going on around them. This is certainly true of my specialist area: adults with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyscalculia and high functioning autism, but I have never yet come across one of them getting Intermediary support. It was not that long ago that this service was referred to as 'Witness Intermediaries' with no concept of them being available to defendants.

My presentation included a memorable experience, when a member of my Lancaster Adult Dyslexic / Dyspraxic group was arrested. CJ's difficulties combined dyslexia and ADHD. He was caught speeding and asked to blow into a breathalyser but found himself physically unable to do so. He had now committed the additional, and more serious, offense of obstructing the police. Strongly advised to plead guilty, JS reluctantly accepted that he would gain a police record. After we discussed what had happened, it became clear that there had been no wilful obstruction on JS's part; on the contrary, he had been struggling to comply with the officer's request.

JS's performance in court demonstrated how a normally garrulous individual can be rendered almost speechless by the experience. A slight delay between hearing something and understanding it led to long pauses. Sometimes JS missed the point, stumbled over words or produced spoonerisms. Being aware that he was making a poor impression, his stress worsened until he was barely audible. Having a short attention span, JS found it increasingly difficult to concentrate, soon reaching complete mental overload. Afterwards, although JS won his case (being just charged with speeding) his only comment was: "I went completely to pot there!"

This was the start of my efforts, that continue to this day, of aiming to provide guidance on this family of 'specific' neurological conditions across the CJS. I had a lucky break with the judiciary early on, but other sectors have been much more of a challenge.

My paper opened as follows: Any exploration of the Vulnerable Accused in the criminal justice system (CJS) should consider whether the majority of suspects, defendants and prisoners are vulnerable, often in multiple ways. In recent years a growing understanding of the nature of

Adverse Childhood Experiences, and the ensuing maladaptive coping strategies that these give rise to, are now more widely discussed and have started to inform various initiatives. However we still lack a coherent policy across all sectors of the CJS that takes this fundamental issue into account. This submission will appear as a blog at some stage, along with others, on https://defendingvulnerability.wordpress.com/ Another outcome is a compendium entitled Vulnerability, the Accused and the CJS, ed. Dehaghani, Fairclough & Mergaets, pub Routledge.



Speakers at the conference approached Vulnerability from all angles. Professor Penny Cooper said 'many miscarriages of justice are likely due to failure to mitigate against the vulnerability of defendants'. There was much talk of 'Access to Justice' and 'Effective Participation' in CJ processes and the lack of professional training. The Appropriate Adult Network had produced short videos for the police, explaining the effects of mental distress and of communication problems during questioning, but the resource the police had accessed the most was the one explaining their own revised codes of practice on which they had had no training.

There is a perceived hierarchy of support need, we learned, with child witnesses at the top, followed by vulnerable adult witnesses, and, at the bottom (if at all) considerations of vulnerable adult defendants. Barriers to participation went beyond communication problems, comprising CJ policy, a challenging environment and an unhelpful attitude from some police and court professionals.

In conclusion, we were asked to focus on one of two areas a) how to define/identify vulnerability and b) appropriate responses to vulnerability. Sitting in the first group it suddenly became clear to me that this situation was the equivalent of providing a gentle slope so that wheelchair users can access a building - a provision which is essential to those who rely on it but is also used by the rest of us. How about a justice system where suspects and court users are not rendered vulnerable by arcane processes and procedures, in particular the 'robust' adversarial drama at the heart of our legal system? The continent offers examples of a less intimidating inquisitorial approach.

It will be a step in the right direction if this conference, and the growing number of professionals involved in the Vulnerable Accused network, can further an understanding of multiple disadvantage in police, court and parole settings, and how to remedy its worst effects.

DEFYING EXPECTATIONS FOR COLLEGE

Ruth McFarlane

I recently returned from an amazing two week Summer Residency hosted by the Bard Prison Initiative (https://bpi.bard.edu/bpi-holds-fifth-annual-summer-residency/) in the beautiful Hudson Valley and I want to share some of my thoughts and ideas. I have learned so much that I have decided to break it down into chunks, based on my daily voice note journal. I have also written a similar article for InsideTime.

So I am starting by considering paradoxes. Statements that are apparently contradictory but where both parts are actually true. This formed the starting point of our discussions and resonated with me throughout the 2 weeks.

For example, the US is renowned for its mass incarceration, imprisoning people at a rate of 629 per 100,00 people, compared with 136 for the UK and 56 for Norway, according to the World Population Review stats of 2023. However, it also has the most well established and successful college-in-prison programmes that have been running for over 25 years. One of these programmes is run by Bard College, a private liberal arts college with a rural campus in the Hudson Valley, upstate New York. It runs radically inclusive college programmes via the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) in 6 prisons across New York state, with almost 400 registered students working towards undergraduate degrees.

And DWRM Consultants (www.dwrm.org.uk) have been privileged to learn the secrets of this success and to join the BPI family. DWRM is proud to reflect and enshrine the working practices of BPI and to bring some exciting developments to our work in the UK and I'd like to share a few of the paradoxes that define how we will continue to bring higher education opportunities to more people in prison :

1. Demand and Empathy: We challenge our students, expecting nothing less than their best. We recognize the extraordinary hurdles they face by studying in prison and are convinced of the enormous benefits to those who meet this challenge.
2. Equitable Courses, Unique Constraints: We extend the same courses to prison students as to those offered on mainstream campuses, despite the inherent differences. Our materials adapt to constraints on technology and content, recognising that the prison's environment shapes learning dynamics in ways distinct from the outside world.
3. Employment and Education: Our programme equips students for meaningful careers while emphasising the broader significance of education. It nurtures critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, and a lifelong love for learning.
4. Success Defined Beyond Recidivism: While reduced re-offending rates are vital, we measure success beyond recidivism. We focus instead on expanded knowledge, skill acquisition, and personal growth - all essential elements of successful reintegration.

We believe these paradoxes are not hindrances but opportunities to effect profound change. To be continued ...

CRIME PREVENTION & CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Penny Peters

In May five of us attended the 32nd CCPCJ in Vienna, on behalf of Friends World Committee for Consultation. Two of us, Marian Liebmann (RJ consultant and QICJ member) and Nick McGeorge (retired Prison Psychologist) had been many times before. For Logan Graddy (Chief Prison Psychiatrist in the US), his daughter, Mia (a student) and myself, it was our first time there.

By way of background, Quakers have been present at every UN Congress and every UN Commission meeting concerned with crime since 1985. FWCC have consultative status as an NGO (non-governmental organisation), which means that delegates can attend and speak at the Commission. Much good work has been achieved over the years by Nick McGeorge, Marian Liebmann and Kimmett Edgar in particular, enabling input into new and modified conventions,



codes, norms and reports. This has focussed on improving standards for women prisoners, life imprisonment (use and purpose), promoting Restorative Justice and developing basic principles for RJ amongst other things. Additionally, attendance at the Commission focusses on the need to monitor that human rights remain central to criminal justice and are not downplayed or removed. This is done, in part, through reading all the draft resolutions presented at plenary sessions and on occasions pointing out and challenging if this is happening.

My first attendance at the CCPCJ was in 2022, online. Tuning in to the 'UN speak' and how sessions are conducted was a bit bewildering at first as there are a lot of formalities and references which I found difficult to follow. Completing e-learning on the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) website helped me to follow what was happening. There are daily sessions of the Conference of the Whole (which tends to act as a debating chamber) and Plenary sessions (where usually Resolutions are returned and signed off following discussion and any amendments). It is sometimes slow going with country representatives at odds over the wording or meaning of a Resolution. In addition there are about 27 'Side Events' each day, presented by NGOs, IGOs, UN staff, country representatives and others. These side

events are on a whole host of subjects, connected to the theme of the Commission for that year or pertinent to current CJ concerns.

As a practitioner, a retired probation officer, and not being an academic, I was concerned about what I might be able to contribute. However, as a group we all contributed to the planning (many zoom meetings), drawing on each other's strengths, areas of knowledge and ideas. In this way the sum of the whole felt greater than the parts! The older members of the group are not very confident with technology so we were very grateful for the input of Mia, which enabled us to present our side event in person and on zoom. (Plus additional help from Michael Tuckwell - Redland Meeting, Bristol).

The theme of the Commission this year was Access to Justice. On the first day, I felt quite excited and privileged to be there and enjoyed having my photo taken by the fountain in front of the UN building with the flags of all the nations. However, I was soon reminded of the serious nature of our task when listening to Csaba Karosi, President of the UN General Assembly in New York, who addressed an opening event for NGOs. He told delegates that the world and the UN were 'way off track' in achieving the progress they had hoped to make on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and that there was a need to do something 'very different'. He asked NGOs to contribute as much as they could as 'game changers' were needed. He said Access to Justice and the Rule of Law (SDG 16) is embedded in all the other SDGs so was crucial. The Director of UNODC followed this up by saying that whilst there had been some progress, many institutions were falling short and there was an increase in concern in many areas such as the fields of human trafficking, cyber crime and sexual exploitation.

Throughout the week the main points that struck me were: the importance of civil society and NGOs who carry out a valuable role in the face of weak, ineffective or corrupt government and international organisations; the need to reform the UN institutions to make them more effective and maintain impartiality; and the importance of empowering youth to have a voice and a role in achieving the SDGs (this ties in with the UN General Assembly Resolution in 2022 to establish a UN Youth Office).



The side event we presented was titled 'The Impact of Misogynistic and Aggressive Social Media on Children'. This highlighted our group's concern about the toxic but highly successful model used by social influencer Andrew Tate (and others) to encourage boys and young men to adopt abusive and derogatory attitudes and behaviour to women and girls. We talked about the excellent 'Peace at the Heart' report about Peace Education in UK schools, written by David Gee (through BYM) and also gave details of the sex and relationships education courses for teenagers carried out at Durham Quaker Meeting (US). The side event was well received with 21 delegates attending from a range of countries (and five online). Very importantly we didn't have any technical hitches! After the side

event, the five of us had our picture taken with the Chair of the CCPCJ, HE Mary Wangui Mugwana.

We attended many side events and swapped notes: topics included trafficking and migrant issues, gender and femicide, gender and imprisonment, probation in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan, AI (Artificial Intelligence), suicide in prisons and more. An impressive side event gave examples of truth and reconciliation in post-conflict and post-atrocity situations. We were able to use our different strengths and experiences to connect with other delegates at these.

In-between sessions there was the opportunity for informal dialogue with other delegates. This has resulted in Marian, in particular, becoming involved in ongoing contact with others in Uganda and Namibia about promoting Restorative Justice.



We all gained much by spending a week together with four of us sharing the same air bnb and in the evenings eating together and discussing the day's events. It felt very different to other conferences I have attended for work purposes with a much more Quakerly spirit. Marian and I attended the Quaker Meeting in Vienna on the Sunday before the Commission. We worked hard during the week with early starts and having to remain focussed on our task all day. On the Tuesday evening we had a relaxing break by way of an evening trip to the State Opera which we all thought was terrific.

I was inspired by the knowledge and dedication of the others in our party and the sheer hard work that Nick and Marian have put into the task of representing Quakers at the Commission over many years. Having returned home I feel energised by having a better understanding of the relevance of Quaker work in the wider world and the important part that 'civil society' has in achieving change.

T EDMUND HARVEY & PRISON REFORM

Mike Nellis

Thomas Edmund Harvey (1875-1955) was born into a wealthy Quaker family in Leeds. He was educated at Bootham School, and at the Universities of Oxford and Berlin, and the Sorbonne. After briefly working in the Settlement movement, and becoming convinced that the alleviation

of poverty required more than relief work, he served as a Liberal MP in two Northern constituencies – Leeds between 1910-18 and Dewsbury between 1923-24 - and as an Independent Progressive between 1937-45. He and fellow Liberal/Quaker MP Arnold Rowntree were instrumental in securing the "conscientious objection to conscription" clause in the Military Service Act of 1916. Deeply respectful of leadings of conscience, Harvey favoured war-objectors doing constructive "work of national importance" rather than choosing imprisonment, but acknowledged that the absolutists in all denominations would opt for the latter.



During the war he himself was officially involved in determining what "work of national importance" was, channelling people into ambulance and relief work, and later into Home Office work schemes, as well as working personally in war victim relief in France, and with the Friends Ambulance Unit (who were not formally COs). He and Rowntree's pacifist stance had been unpopular with fellow Liberal parliamentarians (not to mention Conservatives!) and he did not stand in the 1918 election, freeing him up, among other things, for service on the Prison System Enquiry committee (PSEC), and delivering the Swarthmore Lecture in 1921.

This strikingly erudite lecture, anchored deeply – for all Harvey's worldly concerns - in the holiness tradition, explored what the Renaissance and Enlightenment's reason-based concept of "human progress" might mean in the grim aftermath of WW1 – even whether it was any longer a viable guide to politics . It was addressed ecumenically, to all Christians, not solely to the Society of Friends alone, and while he expected some Christians to participate in party politics, as he did, his understanding of "a true conception of progress" was a primarily spiritual one: at best politics might enable this, but they could never achieve it alone. Harvey (quaintly, as it must seem to us now) argued that creating a better society in post-(First)war Britain, and by implication elsewhere, would be best pursued by an ever-expanding "community of disciples", men and women, akin to Franciscan Tertiaries, who would steadily infuse Christian ideals of goodness into all walks of social, economic and political life (including prisons).

Doubtless with his service on the Prison Service Enquiry fresh in his mind, and possibly in anticipation of its upcoming report in 1922, he castigated "those responsible for our prison system [who] deny or doubt whether the law intends that their chief aim should be to help to make the criminal a better man". This desirable objective, he believed, was still being hindered by the harsh, regimented way that imprisonment was organised, as imprisoned CO's had

testified before the Enquiry. Legal change alone, he knew, would not reform criminals, but exposure to prison visitors (and staff) of good character "may be the means of opening them up to a new way of life". He summed up:

Thus, as the Christian ideal becomes our guide our present penal laws and administration will be remodelled; the semi-pagan elements which still so often mar what men miscall justice must disappear; the old system will not be merely modified but transformed (my emphasis)

It is significant that in 1921 – the same year as his Swarthmore lecture – Harvey himself became a prison visitor in HMP Armley, in Leeds, remaining one until 1951, practicing what he preached every Sunday whenever he was at home in the city. Twenty years later, in the midst of WW2 – at which point he was again officially engaged in work with conscientious objectors - he gave the prestigious Social Services lecture in 1941. He celebrated the progress that had been made in practical penal reform, especially the shift towards rehabilitation during the 1930s – in significant part as a consequence of the PSEC's 700-page report - and he commended his own particular calling of prison visiting to others. But just occasionally, with twenty years of going through Leeds' prison gates behind him, his tone became more sombre:

We must recognise that the very existence of a prison is in a sense a confession of social failure. Prison life is artificial and unnatural. Very short sentences are often worse than useless. Very long ones must almost always have a harmful effect.

His lecture does not really follow through on this insight. He grasped the need "to remove the social causes that lie behind many of the wrong acts which bring men to prison" (p73), but despite his pre-parliamentary work in the Settlement movement and interest in social investigation, said little about how that might be done, beyond inspiring young people to "nobler and better" lives. He never doubted the existence of a dangerous few from whom society required protection, but who, once in gaol or internment camp, deserved no less ministry from concerned Christians than anyone else. He toyed again with the Sydney and Beatrice Webb's earlier idea of experimenting with prisons run by religious organisations. He encouraged Christians to pursue careers in the penal system, to establish farm colonies for ex-prisoners seeking employment training, and to support prisoners and ex-prisoners in all their churches. One of his more straightforwardly secular proposals seemingly drew again on older, deeper insight:

Magistrates can render the greatest service by making far fuller use of the probation service, for adults as well as for juveniles, and by combining it in every suitable case with provisions for restitution, in the interest of the offender as well as of the community and of the person who has been wronged (p74 emphasis added)

Calls for restitution to crime victims were not common in this era, but it is likely that Harvey knew his Quaker penal history, and knew that William Tallack had spoken of this (drawing on the New Zealand/Maori example a century before it illuminated modern thinking on "restorative justice") in the 19th century. Margery Fry, a great champion of probation, was later to make something of restitution too. Harvey concluded his lecture with a droll story about one Lord Morley who, whilst passing one of "the great gaols of London" asked himself, 'Why are they in? Why are we out', pertinently suggesting that if all Christians pondered this question, "a new chapter in the history of penal reform might be opened". Quite.

Quakers in Criminal Justice
Conference 22 – 24 March 2024

Gateways to Rehabilitation

Our annual conference 2024 commences after supper on Friday evening and concludes after lunch on Sunday. Throughout the weekend you will hear about the roles of the Parole Board, Probation and Addiction Services. Workshops will explore accommodation, literacy support (Shannon Trust) and the excellent work of the Prison Phoenix Trust in helping to turn lives around.
On the Sunday morning we shall take the opportunity to discuss how we welcome ex-prisoners into Quaker Meetings and the range of issues that are involved.
Launde Abbey is a retreat setting in Leicestershire. The nearest station is Oakham. We will do our best to coordinate taxis for those arriving by train. https://www.laundeabbey.org.uk/

The cost of the weekend (Friday evening to Sunday Lunch time) is £320 (resident) or £140 (non-resident includes all meals apart from breakfast). Single rooms are available for all.

Please complete the slip below and post or email to: - **Simon Ewart, QICJ Conference, Skewjack Barn, St. Levan, Cornwall TR19 6NB.** Email **qicjmembership@gmail.com**

Cheques to be made out to **Quakers in Criminal Justice** and sent to the above address. Please pay by BACS if possible: sort code **08 92 99** account number **65406034.** Using your name as reference. Bursary help may be available in certain circumstances, please ask for support through application to your Local or Area Meeting first.

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Name	Address	Email/phone	Dietary requirements, Any other accom needs:

I agree to my contact details being circulated (*Yes or no as applicable in the box !!*)	

I have paid by BACS/ sent a cheque made out to Quakers in Criminal Justice.
Details of expertise or interests in Criminal Justice: - This isn't compulsory! You may just have a general interest in upholding our witness to Criminal Justice. Please say if you are attending as a rep of your Local or Area Meeting. Also please mention here if you need bursary assistance.

Your Committee Members for 2022 are: Simon Ewart (Membership Secretary), Rodney Mahon (Treasurer), Alice Audsley (co-clerk), Sinead Bailey, Melanie Jameson (co-clerk), Sue Barrance, Jonathan Lamb (newsletter editor) Hugh McMichael and Jennifer Copsey

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