

# **RETIRED GOVERNORS NEWSLETTER**

## **65 AUTUMN 2011**

Founded in 1980 by the late Arthur Williamson – 31 years of publication

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### **Editorial**

#### **Arthur Williamson**

It is with great regret that I record the death this summer of Arthur Williamson, the founding Editor of the Retired Governors Newsletter. The RGN was Arthur's brainchild and he had the enthusiasm and energy to turn the idea into reality. He edited the first five editions and contributed for many years as the Editor of "Your Letters". We owe him a considerable debt of gratitude as the RGN has kept countless former colleagues in touch and brought back memories to many of us of happy and amusing anecdotes from the past - as well as difficult times on hard stations.

The best tribute to Arthur – and what I am sure he would want - will be to continue to publish the Retired Governors Newsletter. To achieve that aim, the RGN needs to

change and develop as new generations of retired senior prison service people become readers. Who knows what technology may be available for printing and circulating in the years ahead? The Newsletter will go from strength to strength provided we have an active readership prepared to contribute: anything and everything from short pieces of news to longer articles.

## **Change of Editor**

Arthur's death also reminded me that I was 70 in March 2011 and that I had edited the RGN since 1985 - 26 years – far too long! So I have decided it is time to hand over the editorship after this edition; I will be prepared to continue to contribute to the content – but the work of editing and distribution I find increasingly difficult and I believe that a fresh editor is needed with new ideas – someone preferably rather closer to those currently serving and retiring. I have written to Graham Smith, our Chairman, to that effect. So thank you everyone for your support since 1985.

## **Reunion**

Readers may wish to study the minutes of the 2011 RPGA AGM for an update on the future of the reunion. I especially ask that as many readers as possible respond to the survey of members' opinion about the future of the reunion, contained with this newsletter.

## **Pensions**

The difficulties with pensions carried in previous editions continue. Readers are asked to study the reports from the Public Service Pensioners Council contained in this newsletter which give the latest news.

## **Recording Service History**

In this edition, we publish further historical accounts of members' recollections of their early years in the Service. Many thanks to Harry Brown for "My Borstal Days", his remembrances of life at Prescoed Camp from 1964 – 1970. We also publish the first of a series of extracts – courtesy of Bob Duncan – of Major George Bride's story of Lancaster Castle being reopened in 1955. I do hope that these accounts will encourage others to put pen to paper - or to sit down at their computers ! - to record what they remember. We are publishing a record of potential value to generations to come – they can read the statistics and annual reports of years gone by but dry statistics do not adequately record what it was like to work in the Service decades ago. Such recording also helps to ensure that the remarkable work staff often did with prisoners and young offenders is not totally forgotten. Who knows – there might be some lessons for our current leaders – and their political masters - about how current offenders are dealt with!

## **A Request**

If anyone has any old Governors' seniority lists – especially pre 1970 – that they no longer require, your editor would be delighted to have them. Seniority lists are of great help when writing Obits – it can be very difficult to establish accurate information about a former Governor's service career.

## **RPGA-MAIL REGISTER**

The e-mail register has now been operational for over 8 years and has proven itself to be an effective means of rapid communication between members.

Joining the RPGA does not automatically place you on the register. If you would like to join the ever growing register please send an email from the address you wish to have registered to Mick Roebuck email: [michael.roebuck2@btopenworld.com](mailto:michael.roebuck2@btopenworld.com)

E-mail addresses may not be passed to third parties without permission from the person(s) registered to that specific e-mail address.

Communications to members via the email system are sent out at a rate of at least three per month, if you are on the register and not receiving these regular updates please resubmit your details to Mick Roebuck

### **"From the Chair" - Graham Smith writes:**

"As the new Chairman of the RPGA I would like to express my thanks through the newsletter to my predecessor Dave Simons for his many years of commitment to the development of both the PGA and the RPGA and to introduce myself to those who may not know me.

I joined the "Modern Prison Service" in early 1969 at Stafford as a Prison Officer and subsequently served at Sudbury and then a special unit at Wakefield before promotion to SO at Birmingham in 1976. I was PO at Manchester 1982-1987 and then to the Staff College Wakefield as Gov.5 to 1992 when I was promoted to Gov 4 and went back to HMP Wakefield as Head of Operations for 7 years heavily involved in the implementation of Woodcock and Learmont recommendations.

I ended my career as Head of Prison Officer Training and had the dubious honour of closing Aberford Rd, [now demolished and a housing estate] and retired from the High Security Directorate where I coordinated training issues in the 8 HSE prisons until April 2009. So 40 years and 5 weeks and no regrets as I always enjoyed the work apart from a few moments I would rather not have had but hey, it is the same for everyone from time to time.

Now retired and living on the Pennines just outside Huddersfield I enjoy life to the full. Do I miss HMPS? Not a bit, like most of you I do miss a lot of the people and have no qualms about keeping up to date with what is happening in the Service after all it has been a major part of my life but probably, like you, I am glad to be out of it now and feel for those whose conditions of service are being eroded. We did well and now enjoy the benefits some of which were gained for us by our trade unions.

The RPGA committee is changing and new members like Ray London, Paul Laxton and Jenny Adams-Young want to develop the work of our predecessors and meet

the needs and expectations of the members in ways that ensure all are kept up to date with changes and that the RPGA is contributing to areas effecting members interests.

To close, I would encourage those who wish to contribute to the newsletter that they are very welcome and our membership will always to be interested to hear about all aspects of the retirement that we so richly deserve.”

## **PEOPLE – Places and Stories too!**

David John Brown 1958 – 2011 died June 2011.

David served with me for five years at Risley – and I am indebted to Les Mason for this note about an extraordinary individual (Ed):-

“I would imagine there are a thousand stories that can be told about ‘the boy’ David, many of them for decency sake not printable. My own particular favourite is his very first encounter with the new governor; the memory lingers and still brings me much enjoyment.

David didn’t much care for the formality of the governor’s morning meetings - so he didn’t bother to go. John Harrison, the new governor had heard a whisper and intended to stamp his mark from the outset - through me he ordered David to attend.

The following morning as we assembled outside the governor’s office we were all a bit edgy not knowing whether he would turn up or not. This looked like it could be a battle of wills. High Noon, Gunfight at the OK Coral that sort of thing.

The meeting was well underway when the office door swung opened. David appeared in the doorway resplendent in a Beetles’ style suit buttoned to the neck and a Boy Scout cap of the same material. His shoulder was adorned with a knee-length brown leather bag from which a red plastic dinosaur peered out of a side-pocket.

He sashayed across the office, left hand on hip, right arm raised slightly with limp wrist. John Harrison’s eyes followed him across the room his face contorted in horror. David genteelly slid into a vacant chair and proceeded to greet everyone in the room individually; it was the governor’s worst nightmare unfolding before him, he had never seen anything like this in his entire life. Poor John, he was totally bewildered and shell-shocked. Repeatedly throughout the meeting he scanned David when he thought no-one was looking as if to convince himself it was really happening. His face wore a deep frown, his brow furrowed.

Eventually the proceedings reached their conclusion as they always do and we quietly slipped away leaving the governor to his thoughts. My lasting impression was John rocking pensively in his chair in a glazed state of confusion wondering what on earth had happened. I don’t recall the meeting producing any meaningful results.

If truth be known, I don’t think the two men ever became great bosom pals enjoying the type of friendship that lasts a lifetime and no-one was too surprised when David left Risley very quickly afterwards for job in Area Office.

Sometimes, when I feel a bit fed up I re-visit the scene and the world becomes a brighter place for a just a little while.”

We regret to report the death of John Raine, who has died of a heart attack whilst on holiday in Fuerteventura. John was a former PEI serving at a number of establishments including Hull, Deerbolt and Belmarsh. After becoming a governor grade John was Deputy Governor of Morton Hall, Investigations Officer for the Women's Estate and retired from the service in 2005 as the Deputy Governor of North Sea Camp. Shortly after his retirement John developed cancer of the larynx, an illness that he managed to defeat and make an almost full recovery from following major surgery.

Derek Dean 's death was reported in July 2011

Harry Small – formerly served at Morton Hall and North Sea Camp died in April 2011

Ivor Ward reported that Roy Wolford died of cancer in April 2010. Roy has lived in France for some time and has been ill for about the last 2 years. He was a previous governor at Highpoint before joining Group4S.

Comdr. S.W. LUSHINGTON

Among the more unusual request received by the RPGA was one seeking information about Governor Lushington who served between 1933 and 1957. We were able to confirm that Lt Commander SW Lushington appears on the 1935 seniority list as a Governor Class IV at Maidstone prison. He was appointed to the service on 12.6.1933 and his appointment to G4 is given as 8.5.1935. Bill Brister was able to confirm that Lt Commander Lushington became Governor of Camp Hill Prison. He retired in 1957.

We regret to report the death of Roy Taylor, formerly principal psychologist and tutor at the PS College in the sixties who worked for both the prison and probation services. He died in May 2011 aged 85.

Another death with Prison Service connections in 2011 was that of Googie Withers, star of “Within these Walls”, a TV drama. She played Faye Boswell the liberal Governor of a High Security Women’s prison in 1974, with a male Deputy Governor, very unusual for those times.

Reggie Llewelyn died earlier this year aged 94 (Times Obit 8<sup>th</sup> July). After war service, he joined in 1946 and retired in 1976. He was Chairman of the Prison and Borstal Governor’s Branch from 1972 – 1976 - between Lynn Davies and Barry Wiggington - and was responsible for the negotiations with the Home Office about introducing a 5 day working week for Governors. He retired as Governor of Wandsworth, having been Principal of the Prison Service College, Governor of Winchester and Bedford and having served at Portland, Lowdham, Maidstone and Wormwood Scrubs. He was at Bedford when James Hanratty was executed. He retired to Winchester where he did much at the Cathedral.

We regret to report the death of Harry Brown in August 2011

We also regret to report the death of Bob Hodgson. I am indebted to his daughter Jean for sending me details of Bob’s life. I knew him as Governor 3 Deputy Governor

at Stafford – he was promoted from being a Senior Works Officer. He had joined the service in 1946, working at Usk, Cardiff, Grendon, Nottingham, Everthorpe, Sudbury, Leicester and Birmingham. He retired to Worcester and latter to Eccleshall, Staffordshire, to be near his family. Before joining the service, he had served in the army throughout the Second World War and spent some time driving tanks – apparently he always drove cars the same way, crunching through the gears!

### Arthur Williamson and the origins of the RGN

Bill Martin – first Treasurer of the RGN - writes “ The RGN was entirely Arthur’s brainchild and when nobody appeared to be sufficiently motivated, he decided to go it alone and “go it” he did! The newsletter is Arthur’s memorial.”

The First Edition of the RGN was published early in 1980 by Arthur, then Deputy Governor of Strangeways. He had discovered the contact details of 48 retired colleagues and had written to them all: 24 replied, most supporting the idea of a newsletter. So Arthur started writing and producing.

His second Edition came out in July 1980 – there was no month recorded on the first edition so we are not absolutely sure when it was published. The Second Edition included discussion of including widows of former Governors and also Administration Officers. There was also a proposal for an Association of Retired Prison Governors – so Arthur was the first to suggest what was to happen in 1998 when we set up the Retired PGA. The newsletter was a mixture of Service news and news of those retired. An extract from Arthur’s Editorial included :-

“If I may now turn my attention to events within the service, you will appreciate that at the moment the entire Civil Service is under attack from all quarters... The Press, TV, various MPs and now the Government itself are all joining in the new game of “Knock the Civil Service” whenever they want someone to be a whipping boy.”

The Third Edition was in November 1980 when Arthur was able to report there were 80 names on his circulation list. Interestingly, the results of a survey he had sent out showed that retired colleagues supported sending the newsletter to widows – but not to Administration Officers – and were happy to receive news about the service. Edition number 4 – dated April 1981 – followed and then Edition Number 5 in October 1981, marking the end of Arthur’s editorship as he retired to Harrogate.

There were difficulties in keeping the RGN going – John Powls produced editions in 1982 and 1983. In 1984, I started to produce editions and at that point Arthur kindly agreed to become “Letters Editor”, a task he fulfilled for a good number of years.

(There is more about Arthur in Your Letters)

Brendan and Barbara O’Friel celebrated their 70<sup>th</sup> Birthdays earlier this year. At a celebration in April on the Island, the Service was well represented by Alison Gomme and Francis Masserick; at a latter event in the Midlands, Alan and Margaret Rayfield together with Mgr Peter Wilkinson joined friends and family.

NB PHOTO TO BE INSERTED

Martin Narey, recently retired as Chief Executive of Barnado’s was commissioned by the Times to produce a report on Adoption. This was printed in full by the Times as a Special Supplement on July 5th 2011. Martin examined the value of adoption and advocated a substantial number of changes to the present system.

Colleagues may be interested to read that a new maximum security prison has been opened in Somalia especially to hold Somali pirates. Called Hargeisa it is a refurbished prison – the money having come from UN sources – and designed to relieve the burden on other countries that are reluctant to imprison long term Somali pirates. Is this the first time a prison has been provided just for locking up pirates?

Readers may like to know that Membership of PGA was 1321 in July 2011 – including members in Scotland and Northern Ireland – a great increase in numbers from the days when the PGA was first established.

John Berry had a letter published in the Times (as a retired Governor) on August 1<sup>st</sup> commenting on the debate over the amount of paperwork required of Probation Officers.

Ashwell and Lancaster Castle closed at the end of March 2011

**Prison Service Journal.** A “Special” edition of the PSJ appeared in July 2011 (number 196). The edition followed up the January 2011 edition entitled “Where does the prison system go from here”. The Editor found that the January edition attracted some comment from both prison staff and prisoners that they felt overlooked in the debate. The July Edition attempts to correct this and features interviews with staff and prisoners, with the relatives of prisoners and with those working in the charitable sector.

For those interested in the continuing debate about public v private prisons, there is a summary of the key findings of an evaluation by distinguished academics entitled “Values and Practice in public and private sector prisons”. This is a useful piece of work, well worth reading.

## THE PRISON SERVICES (OPERATIONAL DUTIES) LONG SERVICE AND GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL

### ROYAL WARRANT

ELIZABETH R.

**ELIZABETH THE SECOND**, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and of our other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, to all to whom these Presents shall come,

**GREETING!**

WHEREAS WE are mindful of the long and meritorious service rendered by members of the Prison Services of the United Kingdom employed on operational duties.

AND WHEREAS WE are desirous of recognising such service; We do by these Presents, for Us, Our Heirs and Successors institute and create a new Medal which shall be governed by the following rules and ordinances.

**Firstly:** It is ordained that the Medal shall be designated and styled "The Prison Services (Operational Duties) Long Service and Good Conduct Medal".

**Secondly:** It is ordained that the Medal shall be circular in form and in cupro-nickel bearing on the obverse the Crowned Effigy of the Sovereign. On the reverse there shall be a prison doorway with a crowned Royal Cypher and the inscription "For Exemplary Service".

**Thirdly:** It is ordained that the Medal shall be worn on the left side attached by means of an ornate scrolled suspension to a ribbon one-and-a-quarter inches in width, which shall be of black with on either side a white stripe on which is superimposed a narrow black stripe. It is further ordained that in the official list showing the order in which Orders, Decorations and Medals should be worn it shall be placed immediately after the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service Medal.

**Fourthly:** It is ordained that those eligible shall be those full-time and part-time members of the Prison Services of the United Kingdom employed in an operational grade who were in service on or after 29 April 2008 and who have the necessary Qualifying Service. It is further ordained that part-time service (and operational grades) shall reckon as defined in the regulations hereinafter mentioned.

**Fifthly:** It is ordained the Qualifying Service required for award of the Medal shall be twenty years' full-time or part-time operational service, or an aggregate of twenty years' such full-time and part-time service, in the Prison Services of the United Kingdom, such period of service to be completed by or after 29 April 2008, and to be reckoned in accordance with the regulations hereinafter mentioned.

**Sixthly:** It is ordained that for those previously performing operational duties who are unable to continue those duties as a result of injury received in the course of, or in connection with, their duties in the Prison Services of the United Kingdom, will continue to qualify for the Medal, providing they continue to work for one of the United Kingdom Prison Services and are otherwise eligible.

## Practical Advice about the new Medal

Chris Popple has helpfully provided the following information about the procedure for retired governors to establish if they are eligible for the medal:-



“I thought it might be useful to pass on the process I have followed to establish: 1. my eligibility and 2. my application for the PS medal.

The contact at NOMs is Jim Frazer email [jim.fraser@noms.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jim.fraser@noms.gsi.gov.uk) He will require the applicants national insurance number and the last establishment served. Jim will then check the eligibility and arrange for the medal to be ordered and then posted to the individual. The overall process will take several weeks.

Several RPGA members have been in touch with Jim but I thought it worth passing on that individuals will need to progress their own request for a medal as there is no procedure for mopping up retired staff.”

Ted Berry also sent us the criteria of eligibility provided by Jim Fraser:-

Thank you for your email. Unfortunately, you are not eligible for the new Prisons Long Service & Good Conduct Medal as in order to qualify staff must have been in an eligible operational grade on 29 April 2008. This is the date that HM The Queen initially agreed to the award of this medal for operational prison staff.

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## **Tony Wood RIP**

### **A tribute to Tony from Chris Scott at the funeral:**

“What can I say about Tony Wood? Let’s start with the funny stuff. Tony had a unique sense of humour. He saw the funny side in everything. That’s what made him such good company. He could laugh at situations, laugh at others and most of all laugh at himself. When we were last in Dublin together he made me ask the barman for a pint of Guinness with lime in it. The barman had apoplexy. It was as if I had asked him to commit a sacrilege. “Lime” he said looking incredulously at the two Irish guys behind me “Lime in Guinness: you must be joking”. With some embarrassment, I explained to him and to the Irish guys behind me that it wasn’t for me but for the little fellow grinning in the corner who was enjoying my obvious discomfort. In a vain attempt to justify this sacrilege and get them to understand, I said the first thing that came into my mind. “You see”, I said, “He comes from Yorkshire”. When I returned to him with the drink and recounted the conversation, he started laughing, and when he laughed, he really laughed. He went beetroot red and literally doubled up with mirth.

It seems so appropriate that when the time came for Tony to leave this life, he was working on a project to improve the lives of prisoners. He spent his adult life in the Prison Service, the Inspectorate, Group 4 and, since formal retirement, in contracts all around the globe attempting to do just that. He worked in Scotland, Ireland, Australia, Canada, Jordan, Poland, Rumania, the USA and finally Montenegro.

Tony was never satisfied with either his own work or that of others. He was a perfectionist. There was always room for improvement. It was just that he couldn't leave things alone and totally trust either himself or others to get it completely right. He was a workaholic and when he had a project, he worked on it until the early hours

of the morning and more often than not, all night. He often looked exhausted. He wouldn't let up until things were as right as they could be, which of course they never were.

Tony was clever, funny, exasperating, stubborn, long winded, loyal, considerate, kind and generous. He excelled at Excel, creating spread sheets like a rash. He loved anything to do with IT and occasionally when he was working he would have so many windows open on his PC or laptop, he would get totally lost.

Tony loved to travel. He loved Yorkshire, the North of England, Scotland, America and Australia, particularly Melbourne. He loved mountains and oceans. He loved hill walking, bird watching, watching Rugby, good food, great wine, parties, celebrations, dinners, meeting with friends, finding new pubs in the Good Pub Guide. He introduced me to Single Malt and to Real Ale saying that I drank gnat's p\*\*\*.

I hope that heaven is like Yorkshire and as he travels around heaven, it will be by steam train. I hope he can once again ride a motorbike, which must be a BMW. I hope that he can go fly fishing. I hope that even the best meals are (in his words) "approaching average", and afterwards that there are copious huge mugs of strong black coffee and that the company at these meals understand his sense of humour and his good natured insults.

Grief is such a terrible thing. It is deep inside and it bursts out when you least expect it as well as the times you do expect. I keep waiting for him to phone and say "I haven't been very well in Montenegro, so I've come home". I know that is irrational but it's how I really want it to be. I want to hear him say "Now then flower". I want to continue to receive all his terrible jokes that filled my email inbox every day. I want to meet him again at Hook Norton, as we arranged, at the end of this month to have a couple of pints of Old Hooky. I want to hear his laugh, a laugh from the very core of his being. I want to hear him insult my intelligence, my IT skills, the fact that I come from the Midlands. It wasn't the Midlands in particular but the fact that I didn't come from Yorkshire, God's county.

Tony was a one off. There will never be another one like him. Like everyone here, I miss him dreadfully but he wouldn't want any of us to be too sad. As Liz said in her email, after this Service we can celebrate his life in a pub. Where else could we fittingly celebrate him? You can't be sad for too long in a pub with a pint of real ale.

So we'll say goodbye for now Tony with a pint or two of good beer, perhaps Timothy Taylors or Old Speckled Hen or even perhaps Baz's Bonce Blower. (I've never had that and doubt that you have either, Tony, but CAMRA recommend it.) I hope you approve and please God when we meet again, of which, I for one, have no doubt, you can recommend the best beer in Heaven.

Au revoir. À bientôt. “

## Retired Prison Governors' Association

**Annual General Meeting held at the Hilton Hotel Bromsgrove on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2011.**

Present: G Smith Chairman

J Blakey Treasurer

G Ross Secretary

H Brett JP - Membership Secretary

R Duncan Letters Editor

M Roebuck Deputy Editor

C Smith Social Events & PSPC

The Chairman welcomed all present to the AGM and Reunion. He noted that this was his first meeting as Chairman having been voted in to the post during his absence at the 2010 AGM.

1. Apologies: Brendan O'Friel, Ron and Sue Curtis, Bernard and Margaret Marchant, Ian Windebank, Roger Dauncey, Roland Adams, Graham Johnson, Harry Brown, Bill Brister, Paul Wayland. The incoming Secretary Ray London had sent his apologies for having to leave prior to the AGM due to his attendance at a presentation.
2. Minutes of the AGM on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2010. These were approved as a true record.
3. Matters arising. There were none.
4. Treasurer's Report. Jim Blakey presented his report for the period 1st January 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010. The accounts were certified by our Auditor Mason Law on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2011. The balance of our RPGA Main Account on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011 was £8850.59, £247.67 less than the figure for last year. He noted the increase in printing costs for copying and administration. A contributory factor may be the number of pages in the Newsletter, which also add to the cost of postage. Travel costs have been kept to a minimum, although home moves by two members have unavoidably led to an increase. Postage costs are certain to rise this year. **RPGA Benevolent Fund.** The Treasurer pointed out that there had been no call on the fund in 2010. He paid tribute to the work of the committee. He noted the visits made to members by Chris Harder and Alan Rawson in their area. The Fund now stood at £5786.02. Further discussion on the fund was made later at item 8. The Treasurer's Report was approved.
5. Membership Report. Harry Brett set out the situation in respect of membership. We started the year with 452 members and now have a total of 461. In answer to a question from the floor he clarified the position in respect of paying and non-paying members.
6. Social Events. Charles Smith reported on our weekend break during the period 31<sup>st</sup> March-3<sup>rd</sup> April 2011 in Bournemouth. 19 attended and it was a very pleasant occasion. Our next weekend will be the 12<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> April 2012 at a Country House Hotel, about 7 miles from Bath. **Reunion.** No action at this stage.
7. RPGA Newsletter. Mick Roebuck gave a report on the RGN. He was also able to inform the meeting that the PGA had provided a section on their website for the RPGA to provide news and information for members. He has made an initial start and developments will continue. Letters Editor Bob Duncan welcomes letters from members, and illustrated their value in renewing contact with old friends, who have

failed to notify a change of address. A retired priest had written in as he had not received his Newsletter, it had gone to his old address.

8. RPGA Benevolent Fund. The fund has rarely been used. It was a tribute to the committee. The Chairman of the committee Nevill Joseph felt that there was value in keeping £5000 ready. John Pudney said that rather than having this money lying there we could give it to a charity, perhaps the Prison Service Charity. Treasurer Jim Blakey pointed out that it was not our money to give away, and could only be authorised by the PGA. The fund will continue to be available for our members.

9. Public Service Pensioners' Council. Gerry Ross and Charles Smith gave an update on the work of the Public Service Pensioners' Council. The PSPC working with other public service pensioner's organisations had mounted a campaign in and outside Parliament to challenge the indexation of pensions from RPI to CPI. The change was seen as an attack on our accrued rights, despite undertakings given by all parties prior to the General Election. The campaign goes on, and may end with a decision in the courts.

10. Election of Officers. The following were returned unopposed: Treasurer Jim Blakey, Membership Secretary Harry Brett, PSPC / Social Events Charles Smith. Elected to the Committee: Jenny Adams-Young, and Paul Laxton. The incoming Secretary will be Committee member Ray London.

**11. Resolutions to the AGM. The future of the RPGA.** Jim Blakey opened the discussion on this important issue. We have seen a significant reduction in the numbers attending the Reunion over the past few years. The event has been well advertised in the Newsletter and on email. We have gone from attendances of over 100 to less than 40. It was his view, shared by the members of the committee, that it was no longer feasible to continue hosting this event in the present manner. Members were invited to comment and make suggestions. An interesting and positive discussion on the issue took place. The following resolutions were proposed and carried:-

- (1) That **no** Reunion and Annual General meeting under the current format be scheduled for 2012. Proposed: Jim Blakey: Seconded Brendan O'Friel.
- (2) That the Annual General Meeting for 2012 be at the Prison Service College during the month of October on the same day as the Autumn Management Committee Meeting. Proposed: Harry Brett: Seconded Gerry Ross.
- (3) That members attending Annual General Meetings be paid a car travel rate of 10p per mile, and 2p per passenger. Travel by rail to be paid at the cheapest rate available. Proposed: Jim Blakey: Seconded: Harry Brett.
- (4) Amendment 1 to Resolution 4. That the following addendum be made to Rule 5 of the Rules and Constitution of the RPGA: The new rule to read: 5 (g) A quorum at the AGM will be the attending Management Committee Members plus any other RPGA attendees. Proposed: Michael Roebuck: Seconded: David Simons.
- (5) That Rule 5, sub-paragraph (b) of the Rules and Constitution of the RPGA. be amended to read: (b) The Management Committee will be elected at the RPGA Annual General Meeting for a period of four years. Half of the committee will retire every second year, thus providing continuity. Retiring members may seek re-election. Proposed: Harry Brett: Seconded: Brendan O'Friel.
- (6) That the membership be consulted by way of the email register and the Newsletter as to whether a formal Reunion be held during 2013, seeking suggestions as to venue and the format of such a Reunion. Proposed: Charles Smith: Seconded: Ray London.

12. Any other Business. Nevill Joseph on behalf of the RPGA presented the retiring Secretary Gerry Ross with a pair of inscribed crystal wine glasses, and a bottle of wine, in recognition of his contribution to the RPGA. In a witty and generous address he noted that Gerry had carried out the post of Secretary since the start of the RPGA in 1998. He mentioned some significant dates in Gerry's career, and recalled their time together at Winson Green Prison when Nevill was Deputy Governor, and Gerry was the Chief Officer 1. Gerry thanked the Committee and members for their support over the years. He felt that the RPGA had progressed in many areas since that first meeting with Brendan and David Simons at the PSC in 1997. He had enjoyed working with such an excellent committee. It had been a very pleasant journey.

Gerry Ross

Secretary

**ADD PHOTO OF PRESENTATION TO GERRY ROSS SENT SEPARATELY**

### **Hospital & Medical Care Association**

At the Reunion 2011 John Pudney spoke favourably about a health care scheme he was a member of. He thought other members may like to be aware of it so contacted the company concerned. The following details - from the company's reply - may be of interest to our readers :-

"We have been established for over thirty years and in providing private medical health and related plans as an additional benefit for members of associations, societies and membership groups. We currently deal with over 800 associations, covering a wide range of interests and professions, and including royal societies and charities. We offer plans similar to BUPA, AXA PPP and other providers, except that we offer added benefits such as a guaranteed transfer facility and extra health cover. Our prices are highly competitive as we deal exclusively with members and not the general public. We have built up an enviable reputation within the industry for our quality of service and excellent claims handling department, and which you have experienced yourself.

We operate in a straightforward and transparent manner by direct marketing to your members and via your publication. We take care of the necessary administration and associated costs, and provide stress and cost free benefits on your behalf.

We can also provide an extra income stream for associations as we pay a sponsorship fee for each member who subscribes to our plans. We also offer free marketing and editorial for groups in order to raise the profile and awareness of our groups. I am happy to forward a copy to your Editor if this would prove helpful.

I have discussed your potential interest with our Association Secretary, Jane Blackmore, who has suggested that we offer you a "bespoke scheme" as you are a group of 500 members. This simply means that we are prepared to offer you offer a fixed rate for your members and based on the age range of your group.

I will be happy to discuss in detail with the Chairman of your Association, or other member of the committee as appropriate."

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## **STATE PENSIONS AND PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONS - BACKGROUND**

### Pensions Act 2004

One of the changes under this act is for people approaching State Pension Age. Before 2005, it had been possible to defer drawing your state pension and earning additional state pension known as "increments" by this means. The Pensions Act 2004, however, increases the amount of additional state pension you can earn by deferral. Previously you could earn 1% addition for every 7 weeks you deferred; from 2005 this was improved to 1% for every 5 weeks that you defer drawing your state pension. Or to put it another way this is worth an additional 10.4% increase in your state pension for every year that you defer. There is also provision for accumulating a lump sum by deferring your state pension. A good source of information is the Department for Work and Pensions web site - [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk).

### State Retirement Pension Forecasts can be obtained by writing to: -

Retirement Pensions Forecasting Team

The Pensions Service

Whitley Road

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE98 1BA

Tel 0845 3000168

They also provide a booklet entitled "Understanding your State Pension Forecast"

The Pension Service also provide a new Booklet "A Guide to your Pension Options" – you can obtain a copy by phoning 0845 7 31 32 33.

### Free Guide

There is a free Guide available on the range of Government Services for people aged 60 and over. This is titled "Pensioners' Guide (PG1)" For your copy phone 0845 6065 065.

The Pension Service website is [www.thepensionerservice.gov.uk](http://www.thepensionerservice.gov.uk)

## **Rates from April 2011**

The basic State Retirement Pension was increased from £97.65 to £102.15 for a single person and from £ 156.15 to £163.35 a week for couples.

## **State and Public Service Pension Increases**

Both State and Public Service Pension Increases have been linked to the Retail Prices Index (RPI) published each month. But this has been changed from 2011.

There had been a long campaign to restore the “earnings link” for updating the state pension. This was withdrawn by the Thatcher Government decades ago and state pension increases were linked to the Retail Prices Index (RPI). The Coalition Government decided to link the basic state pension to earnings with effect from April 2011. To be exact, the decision is probably rather better than just linking basic state pension to earnings: it provides two other options in case earnings are less than the RPI. The State Pension will be increased by the best of these options.

Unfortunately, all the other news on pensions continues to be not good. The Coalition Government – on the basis that it needs to reduce the Government deficit - is making cuts to public service pensioners’ future pension entitlements. First, those entitled to more than the basic state pension – many colleagues will have accumulated some graduated pension or SERPS or State second pension. In future the increases in such additional state pension will depend on the Consumers Price Index (CPI) not the RPI. This means that in practice increases are likely to be lower as the CPI generally records lower increases in the cost of living than the RPI. Second, all existing public service pensions will in future be increased by the CPI figures not the RPI. Again in practice this means lower increases for public service pensioners.

Increases are paid in April each year but the calculation of the increase is based on the previous September’s CPI/ RPI increase – published in October. The RGN has published details of the increases in our Spring Edition for many years.

### **Questions about pension payments**

One of our members phoned asking about the address for the body that pays our Civil Service Pensions – she had a question and did not know who to write to. The address is:-

Civil Service Pensions

PO Box 215

Mowden Hall

Staindrop Road

Darlington

Co Durham DL3 9GT

If any member has difficulty getting a reply, we suggest you write to the “Customer Services Manager” at the above address. We would also welcome feedback from members about their experience of raising issues with Civil Service Pensions and whether they feel their letters and concerns have been properly dealt with.

### **Overseas Pensioners**

Colleagues in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and some other countries do not receive the increases to their State Pensions. A full list of the countries within which colleagues will receive their full increases to state pensions will be found at [www.dwp.gov.uk/international/social-security-agreements/list-of-countries](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/international/social-security-agreements/list-of-countries).

Colleagues considering moving abroad may wish to check on the implications of any move on their state pension by consulting the above website.

### **END OF THE GIRO CHEQUE**

On 3 March 2011 the DWP announced it had awarded the contract for introducing a cheque replacement system to CITIBANK through their PAYPOINT network. This will replace the giro

cheques that are currently issued to 60,000 pensioners who have chosen to receive their pensions/benefits in this way.

The new system will begin for new customers from April 2012 - and existing customers will start to receive letters/calls shortly encouraging them to take out one of the following options for future payments:

1. Use either an existing bank account or open a bank account
2. For those unable to open a bank account, use a Post Office Card Account
3. For those who are unable to use a Post Office Card Account because it is unsuitable for their circumstances, use the new payment system via PAYPOINT located in supermarkets, newsagents and local garages and shops

Whilst it is unclear exactly how the system will work, it is expected that individuals will receive a plastic card (with no monetary value) which they present at the PAYPOINT counter. This confirms they are entitled to a certain amount of pension/benefit. They then produce a form of identification and the transaction is made in cash.

For third party collections, a ticket/voucher will be available (in lieu of the plastic card) and along with the form of identification for the recipient, a carer or friend will then be able to collect the payment on someone else's behalf.

Issues raised with the DWP officials:

1. Does the move to PAYPOINT weaken the future of the Post Office network?

DWP: No, because in total there are only 200,000 cheque users - around 2.5% of the total recipients - and the loss of income from these transactions for each individual Post office would not be sufficient to make them unviable.

2. Does the move to PAYPOINT raise any security issues?

DWP: No, because PAYPOINT outlets would need to be secure anyway. No extra security would be needed to take over this contract.

3. What if there is not a PAYPOINT within 3 miles of your home?

DWP: One of the other payment options might be more suitable and/or PAYPOINT may be required to introduce a system to your area.

4. How long does the new contract last?

DWP: For 7 years until 2018.

The NPC was aware that this process was being undertaken, but no detail as to the form the cheque replacement system would take had been released. We will be invited to meetings over the coming months with the DWP to discuss the matter further.

It is clear that, whilst in itself, this decision is not enough to close down the Post Office network, it is part of a long line of services which have been lost - such as TV licences and utility bill payments. There also remain concerns about third party collections and the right of pensioners to receive their pensions in the way which is most suitable to their needs.

Neil Duncan-Jordan

National Officer

National Pensioners Convention





# Clicker's corner

By Mick Roebuck

## Attachments

I am often contacted by some of you who are on our email register informing me that they cannot open some of the attachments which they have received on the system. The main reason for this is, as I have said in previous articles, that you probably do not have the appropriate software on your computer. Perhaps the most common is not having Microsoft Word or Works installed. Again as previously mentioned this is easily overcome for you who do not have Word by downloading the free software package Open Office. The programme takes approx ten minutes to install and can be found at [www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org).

Occasionally there may be a video or audio file that your system cannot manage. Should this be the case you may also like to consider downloading another free programme which should solve that issue for you. Called Free Opener it can be found at [www.freeopener.com](http://www.freeopener.com) Alas it is only available for those of you with Windows XP, Vista or 7.

You may also like to right click on some items which will not open and from the dropdown menu which now appears check to see if there is a live "Open" option there for you to access.

## Recycled Computers

You may well know someone who would like a computer but finds the thought of spending several hundred pounds on something they are unsure about a little off-putting. Indeed you might be thinking that your current machine is a little past its sell by date but you also do not wish to spend the amount of money currently being asked to update to a new system.

A national initiative was recently launched in which refurbished computers are offered at prices starting as low as £92. Further details of this offer can be found at [www.ecycleonline.co.uk](http://www.ecycleonline.co.uk) For those of you without on line facilities the company which has the Office of Fair Trading Approval can be contacted by telephone on 08450 268293 Once purchased your computer will be delivered to your home address free of charge.

Those of you without a current Internet Service Provider can also opt for one of the packages on offer which include broadband from £9 per month or a simple pay as you go option.

## ***Now a tip for Apple users***

You can password protect your computer by performing the following tasks

1. Pull down the Apple Icon in the top left corner of the screen.
2. Select the System Preferences menu item.
3. After the window opens select the Security button.

4. Check the box next to, Require password to wake this computer from sleep or screensaver.

5. Next, below the heading, For all accounts on this computer, tick the box next to Disable automatic login.

6. Don't forget to lock the padlock in order to prevent changes. Also, for good

measure, tick the box next to, Require password to unlock each secure system preference

## ***Windows 8***

Having only been launched in the UK some 2 years ago Windows 7 looks set to be replaced in the near future by Windows 8. Although no date is yet given as to when the new operating system will be rolled out, anyone thinking of updating might well be advised to hang on a little longer and watch the press for announcements

## ***Are you a book lover?***

What to find a particular book, perhaps who the publisher is, who the author is, or even is it still in print etc?

Should that be the case then type, googlebooks (all one word) into the Google search engine. Once loaded you will be presented with a list of options, capable of keeping you occupied for a very long time indeed.

## ***Card Readers***

Card readers are handy pieces of hardware which allow you to remove a memory card from your digital camera or other such device, push it straight into the card reader on your computer from which your system will then download the files.

Many laptops now come with built in card readers, but not all. Neither for some reason do many P.C.s.

Card readers are available which plug into a USB socket on your computer be it a laptop or PC. If you decide to purchase a reader, do ensure that it is of a type which will read a variety of different formats i.e. compact flash, xd etc. Prices start from as low as £8 so it should not break the bank.

**NB Will send this article with photos separately**

## **HOLIDAY IN A WAR ZONE**

When we booked our holiday in Egypt there was no inclination of problems in the Middle East so we didn't even consider the possibility of any problems. The holiday was to be 4 days cruising on the Nile followed by 3 days in Cairo

Eight weeks before our departure trouble erupted in Tunisia quickly followed by revolt in Egypt. With 6 weeks to go and the Foreign Office recommending only essential travel to Luxor, Aswan and especially Cairo we were to say the least a little worried and were quickly browsing the travel brochures for alternative venues.

The tickets arrived with 3 weeks to go and by that time the Foreign Office was saying it was Ok to go to Luxor and Aswan but Cairo should be visited with care.

The day to travel arrived and we were transported to Manchester Airport and boarded the plane to Luxor without any sign of a hitch. Immediately we landed at Luxor we noticed a difference with only one other plane, and that an internal flight from Cairo, on the tarmac. We were quickly ferried through the airport and on to the coach. There were about 4 porters (unofficial ones) for every passenger who were insistent on pulling your case the 20 or so yards to the coach for a present of course. They are not allowed in the Airport but as soon as you exit it they appear from nowhere and wrestle you for your case.

We were then taken to the Cruise Ship. Only 3 of us got off our coach for our ship, myself, Carol my wife and my sister Beryl. The remainder of the coach were all going on the Lady Mary for a full weeks cruise down the Nile. We were the only ones visiting Cairo. We did meet up with 4 other English passengers who were doing the same trip on the boat. In addition there was about 20 Germans on the ship otherwise it was empty. We were escorted to the river side were literally about 60-70 ships were tied up going nowhere. We were told by the courier that tourism was at about 15% of normal last week and it was thought about 25% this week. Our cases were taken up to our cabins for a little present of course.

The first day was spent visiting Luxor with a 6-30 start to the 'Valley of the Kings'

We were the first ones there with the coach park empty but plenty of sellers who would not leave you alone and continually mither you to buy their goods. We visited 3 tombs and then went on to Temple of Hatshepsut, Colossi of Memnon, and the Karnak and Luxor temples. With only 7 in our party (a normal tour would have 20+ for each courier); we had the undivided attention from the courier, although he continually walked a few paces in front of us allowing the sellers of goods to continually mither you. Everything that was done for you, you were expected to give a little present, even what we would think of as common courtesy. Fortunately I had taken a lot of English pounds as you couldn't get small Egyptian money. The exchange rate was about £1 for 10 Egyptian pounds. Every so often you would be approached by someone who had a handful of £1 coins which they wanted to exchange for a note as the Banks would only exchange notes. This did replenish your supply so you could give a £1 coin as a present.

We then sailed onto Edfu to see the Temple of Horus the following day. The Temples were truly magnificent sites. The food on the cruise ship was excellent and you certainly got fantastic service with so few passengers. The evening entertainment only appeared one night when we stayed at Aswan. Naturally this was in the form of a belly dancer to which I was encouraged to join in and make the normal fool of myself. My interpretation of the sand dance went down well.

We sailed on to Aswan visiting the dam (not over impressed) which was smothered with soldiers and we saw our first burnt out buildings and desecration of Mubarak posters. We also visited the Temple of Philae which would have been submerged when the Aswan dam was built had it not been moved to higher ground, an island in the middle of the man made lake. We were transported there by boat (for a little present). Although all the tours were included in the original price the presents were extra. The courier did suggest that we all give him £10 (100 Egyptian pounds) and he would tip the drivers accordingly. This we did but it didn't stop them asking for more

In the afternoon we visited the Botanical gardens, situated on an island in the middle of the Nile, which we visited by sailing on a white-sailed 'feluccas'. On the return trip a little boy who could not have been more than 10 paddled up to us on what can only be described as a tin plate and hung on to the boat. He then asked us our nationality and began to sing all the English songs he knew. On this occasion we did feel it appropriate to give him a present. I'm sure the Health and Safety people had not done a proper risk assessment.

I had my first bad experience on leaving the 'felucca' when a young boy aged about 7 asked me to change some dollars into Egyptian pounds. I looked in my wallet and informed him that I didn't have any small Egyptian currency. As quick as flash his little hand dipped into my wallet and stole a £10 note, which was expertly passed

onto another boy who quickly disappeared. So although we were able to detain the young boy the £10 note had disappeared and he proffered what amounted to half an Egyptian pound as the money taken. So sometimes they take their own presents.

The following day we were taken to Aswan airport and flown to Cairo. As we approached our hotel the Hilton Ramses situated in the centre of Cairo, we saw tanks on the street for the first time. We went in the lift with a couple of photographers who were discussing the value of different types of flak jackets. We went out on our balcony on the 23<sup>rd</sup> floor there was 3 tanks to the right, positioned under the flyover near Tahrir Square and 2 tanks to the left the entrance to what looked like a large demonstration next to the Nile. We were informed that 5 Christians had been killed there only the day before which was the reason for the demonstration.

During our visit (by this time we were down to 5 in our party), we visited the Pyramids of Giza. One of the world's most instantly recognised sights, these staggering architectural wonders were constructed from millions of massive stone blocks in around 2600BC and the stood next to the mysterious regal-looking Sphinx, another astonishing sight, .where more presents were required to gain access to the various points of interest. I went down one of the Queens Pyramid, the entrance of which was guarded but could be accessed for a present (10 Egyptian pounds). You went down as you would a ladder straight down turn at the bottom and then straight down again and eventually you come out into a burial chamber. We then continued onto the Sphinx where more presents were handed out.

We also visited the museum which was again surrounded by tanks and military and there was even what could best be described as a commando blackened with Kalashnikov at the ready continually walking around the exhibits. There had been a previous break in at the height of the demonstrations and many of the antiquities were stolen, so precautions were being taken but it did not make a very welcoming experience for us...

Our last visit was to Memphis believed to be the ancient capital of Egypt (by this time we were down to 3 tourists). We arrived at 4pm and although the site did not close until 4-30pm, more presents had to be given to the Tourist police to ensure access. The sight of limestone colossus of Ramses 11 was truly magnificent. From there we continued to Sakkara, the royal cemetery of Memphis, crowned by the Step Pyramid of King Dozer – the first pyramid to be built in Egypt.

During all our time in Cairo we were escorted by a courier, a driver and a member of the secret police who all had to be 'thanked' in the accepted Egyptian way. On the Sunday we got back from the museum early and so I had a walk down to the Nile where the 2 tanks were stationed. It was quite noticeable that I was the only European in what was a very busy street. When I arrived at the barrier I was asked for identification by the 2 soldiers but was then unceremoniously waved away by a member of the secret police. I didn't argue so I went back to the hotel and had a beer instead.

The final day had arrived, and we were not looking forward to the plane trip from Cairo back to Luxor as we were to arrive there at 0930 and the plane back to Manchester was not until 1745 hours, but what a nice surprise when we were met and escorted to one of the Nile cruise ships. We were even allocated a cabin to freshen up fed at lunch time and the escorted back to Luxor airport at 3pm in the afternoon. The only drawback was that every time your cases were moved then a present was the order of the day.

We left Egypt with some great memories, the Temples, the Pyramids, the Sphinx were all truly magnificent structures. Even more so when one considered that some had built up to 6000 years ago. A fantastic holiday but quite expensive unless you are going to be quite nasty to a people who are genuinely nice and helpful but expect a return for their kindness

## **My Borstal Days**

### **Harry Brown**

It was in March 1964 that I joined the Prison Service. After one month at Stafford I went to Leyhill Training School. (That's where all the "Gentlemen" went)

From there four of us were posted to Usk. We were told that we were going to the Detention Centre. That pleased me as it fitted in with my strict Methodist upbringing.

The Governor Bill Taylor had other ideas and put me up at Prescoed Camp.

After getting over my initial disappointment, I soon settled in to the camp activities.

Two of the things I was proud to be involved in were "THE ROOF OF WALES" and THE OXFORD/BORSTAL CAMP

ROOF OF WALES.

We started in about March with some 50/60 volunteers. We would go out on several Sundays to the Brecon Beacons. The volunteers soon dwindled, in number. Eventually we ended up with two teams of ten.

One team would do the trip up and the other the trip down. Each team would be led by two members of staff.

The “up” trip started in the Brecon Beacons and went up through central and north Wales to end up on the coast at Llanferfechan. The down trip went in reverse.

In five years I did four trips , two up and two down.

If I take you through one of my down trips, it will give you some idea of the “FUN” we had.

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We were taken by a 3ton truck to our starting point at Llanferfechan. There we met the up team. They were taken back to Prescoed by the truck

Each member of the team carried a large canvas haversack. In the bottom was a plastic bag containing, clean socks, shirt, jeans, pants, pullover and towel. It was essential to keep these dry Also there would be tents, cooking pots, some food like, cheese bacon sausage and oats for porridge.

From our starting point we had an eight mile climb to the top of our first mountain. “Cardnedd Llywelyn”. Usually you get a brilliant view from the top of the Conway valley. On this day it was raining and there was a heavy mist.

We dropped down the other side and picked up the road to Capel Curig. There we turned past Plas-y-Brenin heading towards Snowdon.

About two miles down that road there was a farm where we stayed on the first night. The farmer let us use the barn, so we didn’t have to pitch the tents. He also gave us eggs and milk.

It had rained solidly all day.

After a good night’s sleep and breakfast, it was time to prepare for the road. Now came one of the most difficult bits. We had to make sure that they put the wet clothes on that they had worn yesterday, as it was still raining, and it was essential to keep one set of clothes dry to change into at night.

The next mountain was Snowdon. The climb to the top is not too difficult but it is a bit disappointing to find a shop, a train station and lots of children running around.

Coming off Snowdon we headed towards Penrhndeudreth. Just before there we found a farm to pitch our tents. It was still raining. Once we had got our tents up

we cooked as best we could, then put our dry clothes on and settled down for the night.

Next morning it was the same routine with the wet clothes and still raining.

There was no mountain to climb, just road work. We were heading for a farm close to Cader Idris.

There was no barn at the farm either, so we would be pitching tents and cooking in the rain. With this in mind we decided to spend the money we had saved on camping fees and have a fish and chip meal.

Next morning it was time to tackle Cader Idris. "Foxes Path" was the way we went up. The path is all shale so it is a slip sliding affair. From the top you should be able to see a lot of the west coast of Wales but once again it was wet and misty

Dropping off Cader we headed towards the A487. At the bottom of the Cader was a farm with a good barn" Cooking and sleeping was much better and there was no charge.

.

Next morning we proceeded down the A487 to Machynlleth. This is where the Welsh parliament used to sit in the old days.

From there it was on to Plynlimon. This is a horrible mountain. It has about six grassy peaks and is a wet bog all of the time. Seven rivers start on this mountain, including the Wye and Severn,

The rain continued and there was a heavy mist. So we were wet through and were walking in water.

Because of the mist we couldn't find the top, which we needed to be able to find the path off. Eventually we had to admit we were lost.

Looking at the map we saw that the road we wanted was south of us. Following the compass south we finally hit the road but we were two miles from our rendezvous point.

It was the halfway point and there we were being met by the hospital officer and kitchen staff. They had been quite worried over our lateness



The hospital officer inspected the feet and did running repairs. The cook fed us a lovely hot meal. There was also an exchange of clothing for every one.

All of the boys had, at one time or another, said that they would be going back on the van. However when asked all of them wanted to carry on.

Next morning, when clearing up the barn, I realised that my dirty wet gear had been left behind. I carried it to Devils Bridge. There I acquired a cardboard box. and some string from a shop, made a parcel and posted it to my wife. It arrived two days later and she said it stank. I don't think she has ever forgiven me!

From Devils Bridge we proceed down through Ysbyty Ystwyth. I always used to ring in from there. A few miles down the road was Pontrhydfendigaid. There was a grocery shop where we bought quite a few items for the next few days as we would be away from any shops or farms so we had to carry everything. We had hard boiled all the eggs we had and we bought tins of Carnation milk, porridge oats, all stuff that was easy to carry. The shopkeeper always remembered us.

The weather had turned and it was bright sunny and warm.

The next two days was basically driving on. There were hills which we mostly went round. Streams that had to be crossed. It was so peaceful. The only sounds were the water rushing along and the sheep calling to one another. The weather was glorious.

When we camped a lot of the boys slept out in the open. Which was a good idea, when your mate has been eating hard boiled eggs for two days.

After two days and two nights camping we came out on the road leading to Senny Bridge. Past the Army Barracks. Now we were on the last leg.

Peny Fan was our last climb. At 502mtrs it was easy. Down the other side to our finishing point .Taly Bont reservor.

That is where the photo is taken.

The idea behind the exercise, I think, was to present them with a physical challenge, that they could not get out of and build their confidence. A bit like the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme.

**“The Oxford Borstal”** camp.

The OXFORD/BORSTAL CAMP was run mainly by one of the Professors from the university. They also provided all the equipment, tents, and a large marquee, that acted as the kitchen/ dining room.

The Governor, was now Roger Dauncey, Bill Taylor having died.

Sometime in the spring Roger and I would go to the university on a Friday night and stay overnight.

It was an opportunity for the students to ask us any questions about things that may be concerning them.

My first trip was a nervy experience for me. On arrival I was shown to my bedroom. It was a small room and by today’s standards it was quite sparse.

The bed was comfortable and the room was warm, on the wall were about eight portraits of ex- students who had become High Court Judges some dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thinking back it was a bit like Hogwarts in Harry Potter.

Later I joined the Professors to go to the evening meal.

We went into the dining hall where all the students were sitting at long wooden tables on wooden forms. They all stood up as we made our way to a table, at the end, on a raised platform.

When we sat down I realised that I was sitting between a Professor of Greek Methodically and a professor of Mathematics.” Panic” - I had left school at 15 with no qualifications,

What am I going to talk about?

I need not have worried. They asked me why I was there, and were most interested in the Borstal system. So I ended up leading the conversation.

My next problem was the starter - Steamed Conger Eel, I thought what do I do with this? I kept talking, watched them, then followed their example. It was very tasty. The rest of the meal went alright.

Later we retired to the rooms of the professor who was organising the camp and lots of students dropped in and we were able to answer their questions and address their concerns.

The venue for the camp was at Church Stretton, just south of Shrewsbury.

On arrival they were paired off, one student and one boy. They would do every thing together over the next two weeks. One week at the camp and one week at Prescoed.

Their first job was to erect their own tents. The boys were usually better at this as they had done it before. Some students had not.

One particular student was hopeless. Using a hammer to drive pegs in, out of six strikes it would be one hit and five misses.

When he was on kitchen duty He ended up with plasters on all his fingers. He was a likable and very clever young man. A couple of years later we saw him on University Challenge.

At the first meeting the agenda for the week and the rules and regulations were explained. I also told them that on the last day at Prescoed there would be a camp supper and they were expected to put on a concert.

Next day people from the village came to take, mainly groups of four, for them to do work in the village. Clearing the church yard, digging old peoples gardens and generally tidying the village.

This was the form for the week. I wandered round the village chatting to villagers and observing the work the groups were doing.

One afternoon we were invited to a garden party at a very large house. It had a tennis court, archery lawn and fantastic rooms. The food was excellent.

In the evenings there were songs and monologues round the camp table.

When we all returned to the Borstal at Prescoed, the students did everything the boys did. Whatever job the boy had the student did. If the boy worked on the farm so did the student. The only problem that came up was if the boy was on "Remedial Education" some of the students found it difficult to deal with, others responded and tried to help.

The camp supper was always a great success. Most of the staff, with their wives, attended. Some of the sketches and monologues picked out staff which was fun for the boys.

Whether much contact was maintained afterwards I don't know but it was a learning experience for both sides. Certainly it was for me..

I left Prescoed in 1970.

**HMP Usk/Prescoed is the amalgamation of HMP Usk and HMP Prescoed.**

Usk has a long and varied history as a penal establishment, opening in 1844 as a House of Correction. In 1870 after the addition of other buildings, it became the County Gaol for Monmouthshire. It remained in that role until 1922 when it closed, reopening in 1939 as a Closed Borstal and continued in that role until 1964 when it became a Detention Centre. In 1983 Usk became a Youth Custody Centre and from 1988 to 1990 a YOI. In May 1990 it became an Adult Cat C establishment for Vulnerable Prisoners and continues in that role today.

## **NETWORK**

One of the objectives of this column is to encourage exchange of information about work opportunities post retirement with a special emphasis on keeping in touch via email. Contributions to this column from readers with information about post retirement work activities would be very welcome.

Please note my email address which is: -

Email: [brendan@ofriel.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:brendan@ofriel.fsnet.co.uk)

### **PGA OFFICE Change of address**

The PGA Office new address is:-

**1<sup>st</sup> Floor in Clive House, 70 Petty France, London, SW1H 9HD.**

Their email address is

[office@prisongovernors.org.uk](mailto:office@prisongovernors.org.uk)

The PGA website is <http://www.prisongovernors.org.uk>

Telephone **0300 047 5781**

Fax

Voice bank 0762 695 2576

### **Web Site Information**

We welcome exchange of helpful website information from readers so let us know if you have an interesting site

### **The International Centre for Prison Studies -**

International Centre for Prison Studies

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Andy Barclay writes:-

“The International Centre for Prison studies has moved from King’s College London to the University of Essex where it will link up with its highly respected Centre for Human Rights. Andrew Coyle has returned as Director of ICPS. Andy Barclay continues as Projects Director.

Andy will be very happy to hear from any colleague who would be interested in working with the Centre.

### Public Service work opportunities

Readers may find it worth consulting the public appointments website – [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/pau](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/pau)

For those interested in overseas work, there is a new website for the Cabinet Office Stabilisation Unit which identifies expertise required for some posts abroad. Inevitably this tends to be in conflict areas. Consult [www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk](http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk).

The Retired Governors Association receives approaches from time to time from organisations seeking persons with prisons expertise. **Anyone interested in such work should ensure they are on the Retired Governors email network as this is the only way to ensure you hear about such opportunities.**

A recent – August 2011 - example is set out below:-

### **Vacancy for the post of ICPS Director**

The Board of Trustees of the International Centre for Prison Studies (ICPS) invites applications for the post of Director of ICPS.

ICPS was set up in 1997 as an academic centre within the Law School at King's College London. In November 2010 the Centre left King's College and is now an independent charitable company registered by guarantee, in academic partnership with the University of Essex and its Human Rights Centre.

During its 14 years of operation ICPS has established itself internationally as a leading research and policy centre on prison studies within a comparative and human rights context. ICPS works with intergovernmental organisations, governments and other bodies:

- To develop a comparative body of knowledge based on international covenants and instruments, about the principles on which the use of imprisonment should be based and its role in the formation of criminal policy.
- To build up a resource network for the spread of best practice in prison management worldwide to which prison administrators can turn for practical advice on how to manage prison systems which are just, decent, humane and cost effective

The Director will be responsible to the Board of ICPS Trustees for:

- Managing the work of the Centre and its staff
- Taking forward the development of ICPS as an independent charity in partnership with the University of Essex
- Maintaining close relationships with the range of international and UK bodies with which ICPS works

The Board of Trustees is seeking a person with:

- A good knowledge of and commitment to the international human rights framework and practice
- Extensive international experience of prison systems
- Evidence of a commitment to high quality research in the justice field
- A capacity to relate to a wide range of cultures and political systems

The appointment will commence on 1 November 2011 or later by agreement. The annual salary for the post will be within a range between £64,000 and £70,000, dependent on qualifications and experience.

A job description and details of how to apply can be downloaded [here](#)

An overview of ICPS and its work can be downloaded [here](#)

The closing date for applications is **19 September 2011**.

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

## **RPGA-MAIL REGISTER**

The e-mail register has now been operational for over 8 years and has proven itself to be an effective means of rapid communication between members.

Joining the RPGA does not automatically place you on the register. If you would like to join the ever growing register please send an email from the address you wish to have registered to Mick Roebuck email: [michael.roebuck2@btopenworld.com](mailto:michael.roebuck2@btopenworld.com)

E-mail addresses may not be passed to third parties without permission from the person(s) registered to that specific e-mail address.

Communications to members via the email system are sent out at a rate of at least three per month, if you are on the register and not receiving these regular updates please resubmit your details to Mick Roebuck

## YOUR LETTERS

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For reasons unknown with increasing age the years seem to pass by even quicker, here we are in September again, summer did not arrive, and now Christmas looms, we should not be surprised, as in some places Christmas cards have been on sale since June. The last 2 years have not been good in the sense we have lost too many dear colleagues, each one special and sadly missed. Inevitable one accepts with a retirement association, but regrettable all the same. A recent death is perhaps that bit sadder than all the others, that of **Arthur Williamson**, for without his initiative, there would not have been a retirement association or a newsletter. His son, Ian, has advised us that Arthur died on Sunday morning 24 July at Harrogate hospital, where he had been for 8 weeks with infected lungs that lead to pneumonia and other complication. He had responded to treatment on two occasions but a third infection was simply too much and his body was unable to cope. Throughout he remained quite cheerful and positive but he last 2 days were quite difficult as he became confused and was unaware of his surrounding.

Arthur joined the service as an officer but joined the Staff Course in 1956 and was posted to Wakefield prison. He was promoted to AG1 in 1964 and served at Leeds, Acklington, Durham and Wetherby. He was promoted to Governor 3 in 1977 and posted to Manchester as deputy governor, the post he retired from in 1981. Prior to retirement, in 1980 he initiated the introduction of a Retired Governors Newsletter, leading to the formation of the RPGA. He remained an avid supporter of the RPGA and was always at the re-unions, and took a great interest in the Newsletter.

His funeral took place at Stonefall Cemetery, Harrogate on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> August. Ian states 'For those of you not blessed with the privilege of being born in the County of Yorkshire, you might like to know that it was Yorkshire Day. Dad would have appreciated the timing of his funeral.' Arthur would have reached the fine age of 90 had he survived a further 2 weeks. Alan Rawson and Veronica Bird were able to attend his funeral. Though we never served together, as the one who was persuaded to take over Arthur's role, I feel I have lost a close friend.

I suspect that Arthur would not have been too delighted with developments at this year's AGM in June. Due to falling attendance, we used to get over a hundred and are now down to less than forty, it was decided a debate should be opened re the future of the re-union. It was noticeable that a number of stalwarts were unable to make it this year, for a variety of reasons, but travel being one of them. A series of



alternative resolutions were put forward. The outcome briefly was that there will be NO re-union in 2012. The AGM will be held at the October Committee Meeting at Newbold Revel, and members would be encouraged to attend and would be paid 10p a mile for travel and 2p for passengers. Further to that members would be consulted as to whether there should be a re-union in 2013, and suggestions sought as to location and format. This would be undertaken via the E-mail register and the Newsletter.

Though low in numbers, this year's re-union was as successful as ever. Good to see **Derek Shaw** again, and looking so well, must be all that gardening he claims he packs in. He remains in touch with **Leslie Anne Abbott**, who is well and has taken a degree in psychology and now works for the Health Service. Amongst the new faces attending, three of them managed to get themselves elected to the committee, **Ray London** (who takes over from **Gerry Ross** as Secretary) **Paul Laxton** and **Jenny Adams-Young**. Good to have some new talent on our committee. Sad that Gerry Ross has decided it is time to retire, he has served loyally for so many years, that one can hardly envisage the committee without him. He was presented with a crystal .....by **Keith Joseph** on behalf of the committee as a small token of our appreciation.

**As Brendan O'Friel** has also indicated that this might be last Newsletter that he will edit; we really have reached 'the passing of the Old Guard.' The future now lies very much with the next generation of retirees. I feel my time also should be coming to an end, so will be looking for someone to take over!

We know we have an active readership out there, but it lacks a little in involved participation. It is surprising though, what provokes colleagues to respond. A piece sent in on pensions which compared their fate against immigrants, and was meant to be somewhat light-hearted, sparked a good response from including **Tony Hassle**, **Peter Leonard**, **John Dring**, **Chris Duffin**, and **Max Morrison**. So we know you are all there, just like to hear from you a little more often.

Always good to hear from that old faithful, **Mike Selby**, he writes 'I found the generous and excellent Obit for **Reggie Llewellyn** whilst staying with a friend who takes the Times, he regards my Guardian reading as dangerously subversive. My only criticism is the photograph. My recollection was Reggie's smile, which always lit up his face with a mischievous glint in his eye.

We will not see his like again, old-fashioned in the best sense, with kindly. Thoughtful manners and a gracious attitude to life. As you can realize I was very fond of him and look back to our contacts with warmth and affection

Otherwise all well here, I am basking in the pleasure of my granddaughter's progress at Bristol University – a 'first' in philosophy, and without any help from me! But I have kept my brain cells active and I am reading my research paper to the Evelyn Waugh International Conference next month.

Mike says he could even send me a copy; it has to last 20 minutes and initiate discussion. Trouble is most of our readers would not even know who Evelyn Waugh is let alone understand your thesis.

Congratulations to you on such an achievement and we all hope it goes well. Do send me a copy it would raise the standard of the Newsletter and be something completely different.

An intriguing letter from **John Hone**, for those struggling to remember him, he reminds us that he served at Winchester, Lowdham Grange, Whatton, Leicester, Deerbolt, Durham, Head Office, Manchester, Channings Wood, and Aldington in Kent, retiring on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1991 at the age of 60 and 3 months. For those who cannot work it out he will be 80 this year, his wife in April and John in October. Our congratulations to you both. He says they had hoped to be at the re-union in Bournemouth this year, as they had spent their Honeymoon there in December 1954, and also to meet up with old colleagues. Unfortunately family commitments prevented attendance, but thinking about it brought back so many memories of colleagues, in particular, **Gerry Ross, Harry Brett, Andy Barclay, Ron Curtis, Mary and Joe Witty, Jim Blakey, Muriel Allen, Bill Abbott, and the 'Ozannes'**

John keeps busy as a welfare officer for the R, B, L. and he is president of the Westham Pevensey Branch. I also lead a team who restored Stone Cross

Windmill. A very special landmark when ships went up and down the channel. I swim and work out most days, but know that at 79 + it is time to steady down. He also mentions that he retired from Mountain Climbing with Deerbolt Greg Creepers when he was 72, but they still exchange cards.

He sends their best wishes to everyone, especially for the weekend break and the re-union.

**Danny and Joan Ozanne** are both well, and Danny is now 83 and just needs regular hospital check ups, but he no longer drives however. He also has a grandson in academia, who has just completed a history degree and is now taking his masters. Danny recently went with his teacher daughter's school trip to the war graves in France and Belgium, whilst there they invented 'Danny Drink' – hot chocolate with double cognac, well it was chilly weather!

We were notified by her nephew, Trevor, who is a Detective in the Metropolitan police, too late for the Spring Edition, of the death of **Ms Myfanwy 'Molly' Morgan**, who passed away peacefully at home on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2011. She was prior to retirement Governor of Styal Prison. In retirement, Molly was actively involved in a number of diverse charitable activities, both in the UK and abroad. She was passionate about ecological matters and forestry conservation. She was a life long member of the Woodland Trust. She is also survived by her younger sister Ann who resides in the Bahamas.

**Muriel Allen** has written to say she was away in Portugal when Molly died and did not return until mid March, so was unable to attend the funeral. I was in touch with

her just before she died as we talked about **dear Hildergard**. So with **Sue McCormack** and Molly now gone, that is all my connections of my service at Holloway. I will talk to others I am still in touch with about the possibility of a memorial for them which would also serve as a reunion for us, and will plant a rose for Molly anyway.

What a lovely idea!

Very sad also, to hear of the death of **Ray Mitchell**, who was over in England from Spain where they live. Max Morrison informs us that he died at the end of June in Blackpool. Ray had been N.E Area Manager prior to retirement in 2003, and prior to that at Durham. He and Pat had flown over from Spain to babysit the Grandchildren in Preston. He felt unwell on arrival in England and was admitted to hospital, where after a short illness he died. The funeral was at Preston Crematorium on the 8<sup>th</sup> July, and Alan Rawson was able to attend. Ray and I were at the staff college together, and later we shared an exchange trip to the Chinese Prison Service, where we had a memorable time. I remember his bargaining skills with the local traders on the way down from the Great Wall, but also with the traders in Hong Kong.

**Clive Clifford** has sent a short message to advise us of a change of address to Bristol. Also **Ron Feeney** has moved house and is now in Walsall. We can put any colleague in touch if they have not caught up with the moves by forwarding any mail.

Ron further writes, 'You suggested that many old colleagues would be interested in what I am doing these days, though I doubt it. I lead a fairly mundane life occupied mainly with attending the gym 3 times a week. playing golf, and gardening(a necessary evil), walking the dog and going over to Spain a few times a year where I have a small apartment overlooking the Med.

After I retired I did a few jobs for Group4 including 6 months in Australia and 4 months in Canada during which time I came into contact with few old friends including Jim Blakey and the late Tony Wood. I meet up with **Chris Scott** occasionally as he lives only about 12 miles away and we have a pub lunch, a pint or two and reminisce about the good old days; did they ever exist? I met **John Aldridge** at Tony's funeral in Winchester last month; he is looking well considering the problems he's had. Be lucky, Ron

The very courageous **Betty Dennis** is still full of 'get up and go' despite all her set backs and having reached the golden age of 90. Having faced the trauma of moving house, she had to face up to the death of her middle son, Douglas (61) on May 14<sup>th</sup> two days before she was looking forward to celebrating her 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday. So the family gathered for a funeral instead, but a bit of a party was held. I must say, Betty writes a full and informative letter of the 'old fashion type' which is a joy to receive and read. She makes it clear that the majority is not for general circulation, so I am the privileged one!

It has been announced that Lancaster Castle is to close as a Prison, so I thought it might be apposite to start a serialisation of the re-opening of the Castle as a Prison by Major **George Bride**, Governor of Liverpool when he retired. George was putting a book together on his career, but it was never published, probably because some of it appears to have been written in 'scouse!' I have acquired several chapters, and updated where appropriate. It is too long for one Newsletter, so you will have to wait for the rest.

Sept. 2011.

## **LANCASTER 1955 – 1959**

by

**Major George Bride**

May seems to have been a month of some significance in my life. I joined the Territorial Army in May; I was commissioned in a May and obtained my majority in a May I eventually rejoined the TA in a May and finally resigned from the Force in a May. I joined the Prison Service in a May and became a Governor in a May and a governing Governor in the May three years later. This was Governor of H. M. Prison Lancaster which was, and still is the major part of a former fortress - The Castle.

In the early evening of that first Sunday in May, 1955, I drove up the steep and cobbled roadway leading to the castle gateway prior to taking charge of the prison on the following morning. It had been a long drive from Wormwood Scrubs through Sunday traffic - there being no motorways then - and it had been particularly slow moving from Preston. But any tiredness fell away from me when I got out of my car and gazed upwards and looked at the massive, towering and imposing gateway. I felt a little overawed at the thought that here I was, its first Governor since 1915 and that gateway had stood there for some 700 years. Who had passed through before me? I felt a pioneer but quickly brushed that thought away as the first thing that progress gets rid of are pioneers!

The outer gate was flanked by two octagonal towers, more than 60 feet high and pierced for defence and daylight. Behind the portcullis (which on later inspection was found to be unsafe and likely to crash down at any moment and would have kept us in or out for a long, long time!!) was a massive wooden gate. Inside the outer gate was a vaulted chamber leading to the inner gate. The gateway and the towers had been built in the reign of Henry III. The next floor comprised of three lofty chambers, the centre one being used as a chapel. Those on either side were parts of the towers and had been built during the time of John of Gaunt (or Ghent). The remainder of the gateway and towers with their corbels and machicolations were completed in the reigns of Henry IV, V and VI. Enormous flagstones covered each floor and so firm and solid were the supporting timbers that there was not even a tremor when jumped upon. All the floor and the roof

were reached by a narrow, winding staircase and on the wall of a passage leading to the stairs I recall the inscription cut in the stone

*' John Bailey, committed ye April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1741 by ye Brindle for kissing'*  
presumably done by the love sick John.

The keep also known as the Lungess Tower, was much older. The ground floor was Saxon but when we were excavating inside in order to install the central heating system we found traces of Roman occupation. We also found parts of a human skeleton which terrified the prisoners working there. This we put into two sandbags and handed over to the Coroner's Officer. The bones were examined at the forensic laboratory and we were later told that they were believed to be between 200 and 300 years old of an unusually tall male (for those days). 1955? Could they have been the bones of a Scot, hundreds of whom were locked away in the Keep after the rebellions of '15 and '45? The Keep was of typical Norman design - square, more than 80 feet high. A dividing wall reached down from the roof to ground level and made up of three floors. At the base the walls 14 feet thick tapering at each floor level and from John O'Gaunt's Seat in the North West corner we could see far into the Lakeland Fells, across Morecambe Bay to Barrow and beyond. We had distant views up the Lune Valley and swing southwards views across Wyresdale and Bowland into Yorkshire, across the Fylde to Fleetwood and Blackpool.

There also remained further evidence of the Saxon period in a tower to the right of the inner gate, known as the Well Tower. Many, many feet below the ground was a dungeon which still contained the iron ring, chains and neck fetters of a bygone age by which its occupants had been fettered to the floor and walls. It was absolutely without light or even shades of deepening black. It just was pitch black and one could literally not see the hand in front. The only time air entered was when the two great iron gates were opened. It was dank and terribly, terribly cold. At one time there had been a well on the side of the steps leading to this dungeon but we failed to find a trace, though we did discover another well in a small room leading from an inner court yard. An Officer was lowered into this (by prisoners!!) and descended more than 30 foot where he found a stream of crystal clear, running water which flowed from the Well Tower. The opening was sealed up and it later became the Chief Officer's office! Like the city, the castle had suffered through the centuries at the hands of marauding Vikings and Scots and the rest of the castle had been rebuilt so many times that the remainder was no later than the very late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

This was not just a monument. It had been occupied by monarchs. King John held court in the Gateway towers where he received Ambassadors and where Alexander of Scotland came and paid homage. Henry IV held court and when Edward IV was defeated by the Earl of Warwick at York, the king fled to Lancaster Castle. On his return to Scotland James I rested and stayed in the castle, as did Charles II after his defeat at Worcester. The latter was quite a

decent fellow - he released all the prisoners. Perhaps he found their company over-powering.

It must be the oldest prison in the country - if not in Europe, and there is a list of Governors going back to 1199 - the first of whom was Warinus Janitor. One governor, a Mr John Dane, committed suicide in the Judges Lodgings in 1769. And during the 19<sup>th</sup> century it must be of some considerable amusement to the modern Civil Servant to learn that Governorships were passed on from father to son, and all for £345 per annum, plus free quarters, free heating and lighting, plus an allowance to maintain a horse and pair, and to provide food for the Governor's dog - as it said *'for his protection'*. I once looked through some of the accounts of the middle of that century and noted that the Governor received slightly more than £2000 per annum to pay for everything concerning the prison - wages, prisoners' food, bedding, maintenance of buildings, etc, etc. As the prison population was often in excess of 300 there could not have been much left over at the end of the year!

But over it all brooded an air which, though hard to define, smelt of fear, and even the prisoners who were then working hard to destroy the visual remains of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and to clear away the darkness of previous centuries told me of places where they did not like to be left alone. They nearly had me seeing ghosts. Perhaps something of the past did linger on.

During the 1800s 228 men and women were executed within its walls, and heaven alone knows how many were executed outside before the abolition of public executions in 1800. In the 1850s a babe of two years was imprisoned in one of the public wards. In 1817 a father, his two sons and a son-in-law were hanged together for a robbery, and 25 years later another, on his death bed, confessed to the crime. In 1825 a girl of 16 years was so weak that she had to be wheeled to the drop. In 1840 another 9 men were all hanged together at one time. As already mentioned, hundreds of Scots were imprisoned in the Keep following the two Scottish Rebellions, and those not executed were transported to the American colonies. In 1772 a Mary Hilton was taken outside to be hanged in public. She was cut down after 15 minutes and then lowered into a fire to be burnt to death. She was still alive when lowered.

In 1915 it closed as a prison and became a POW cage for German Officers, the last of whom left in 1919. From then on it seems to have been in the hands of everyone and no-one. For a time it was a training school for Lancaster City Police. It later became a Civil Defence School, then an operations centre for the Royal Observer Corps who were still in occupation when I arrived.

That first Sunday evening I walked down the hill to The Royal King's Arms for a pint. There was one other at the opposite end of the bar. We eyed each other and merely said:

*'Good evening.'*

A long silence, then the gentleman spoke to me as abrupt as I now write: *'What are you doing up here - on holiday?'*

I was more than a little wary. I resented his attitude, so was equally abrupt:

*'No'*

*'Oh, you're not aren't you? Well what are you doing? Staying overnight?'* *'No'*

*'Oh, aren't you? Have you come looking for work?'*

*'No. I don't need to look'*

*'Oh aye. You got a job with Williamsons or Storeys?'*

*'No'*

*'Oh I get it. You're up the hill (i.e. the castle)?'*

*'Yes'*

*'Are you the new Governor we're be hearing about?'*

I admitted it.

*'Well I'm right pleased to meet you. My name is George Parkinson - what's yours?'*

I told him, and the atmosphere mellowed. He continued:

*'I tell you what, George. I'll pick you up tomorrow about ten and take you round and introduce you to those you should know. How's that?'*

*'That's kind enough but **I'm** not so sure. There'll be plenty for me to do '*

*'There's bugger all to do up there for you. They get a party of prisoners each day from Preston and there's enough warders to look after that lot.'*

He refused to listen to any reasons and the following morning my office telephone rang:

*'The Gate here ,Sir. There's a Mr Parkinson to see you .....*' And

I could overhear:

*'Not so much of the Mr Parkinson. Tell him it's George and I've got those appointments fixed up.'*

The Officer told. Off we went. First call was the Town Hall where he barged into the Mayor's Parlour:

*'Morning, Tom. I've brought the new prison Governor round to meet you. George Bride - Tom Hully.'*

And so it went on - Town Clerk, Chairman of the Magistrates, Magistrate's Clerk, City Engineer, City Treasurer, Chief of Police, etc, etc From then on I was a citizen of Lancaster.

A small part of the Works Officers had moved in during 1954 and had been supplied with labour from Preston Prison to commence the work of restoration and modernisation. In the May of 1955 one wing was ready for occupation with kitchen, dining facilities, stores of every conceivable need, offices and adequate bathing facilities. We then received our first twenty prisoners collected from Durham, Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool, all of whom were to be employed on the work, less a few manning the kitchen and cleaning. The prisoners from Preston ceased coming. There were no supervisory officers as such. Supervision as there was, concerned itself with the quality of the work. The staff worked with the prisoners who were not skilled men and the prisoners learnt from the staff with whom they worked. And they learnt quickly - bricklayers, stonemasons, plasterers, fitters, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, whose mistakes were then covered up by the painters.

As for me, I was on my own. There were no Welfare Officers, there was no Tutor Organiser, there was no Chaplain and there was no Deputy or Assistant Governors. It was not until much later as our population increased that more prison officers arrived and there followed the Principal Officers and the Chief Officer. What welfare problems arose I dealt with. There was no work for a Tutor Organiser because there were no educational classes - it was all work from 8am until 9pm, seven days a week except on Sunday when work commenced after midday; there were two meal breaks.

Each Sunday morning I took a short service, though the Bishop of Lancaster gave regular Holy Communion and took an odd service until a part-time Chaplain was appointed when numbers were increased. We were a happy crowd and it was difficult for visitors to distinguish who was supposed to be looking after whom. There was a camaraderie which flourished because of the competitive spirit that existed between the staff and the prisoners. There was no Officer standing around, arms folded, trying to pretend he knew all that was going on. These Officers took their jackets off, rolled up their sleeves and proved that they knew more than the prisoners. It was hard work, it was interesting work in that the prisoners could see the results of their efforts and this prodded them into doing better and gave them an eagerness to meet the following day and to face the future. But it was clear that as more cells and wings became available, so would our numbers increase and this would entail more staff. And with this increase **in** both staff and prisoners we could expect to get that odd character bent on disturbing the existing atmosphere - to exploit any situation **to his** own advantage.

Long ago I had realised that if my approach to prisoner's problems was cold or impersonal, or couched in the computerised jargon of the 'expert' I would achieve nothing. But if I could get their trust and they, in their turn, felt that I was willing to serve their best interests, the impossible might be possible. This attitude also applied to the staff, coupled with absolute loyalty and fairness. Unfortunately, with the passage of years there has been increasing pressure to govern by



committees and as a result these qualities are less likely to be found. Nor is the prisoner convinced that his interests are being served when he sees the importance being given to the hours of duty and weekends off.

Once again I found that the censorship of prisoners' mail entering directly into my duties, though only as far as an Officer did the censoring, the confidentiality of which he only shared with me when the occasion arose. For years a lot has been written about this 'infringement of liberty' by those without practical experience and, therefore, miss the obvious whilst making loud noises about wrongs that never occur. When my letters were censored I never found any inhibitions in expressing my feelings nor did I have any fear that a confidence might be abused. Then I came to censor mail myself and it was so impersonal as to meaning little unless it called upon any action from me. With the great majority of prisoners' letters the writer and the recipient of the letter were so well known to the censor that he was aware of the contents of the letter as soon as he saw the writing on the envelope and was all too well aware that nothing further need be read. He was equally aware of the writers of dangerous letters - letters threatening violence to others, organising further crime, blackmailing a former prisoner and others in the same vein. But censorship was also the instrument which enabled prisoners to be cushioned against the shock of domestic upheaval - the 'Dear John' letter which informs a husband that his wife has had enough of him and has found consolation in the arms of another; the news of serious illness, accident or death within the family. It was these letters that arrived on my desk.

In one the wife blithely explained that she was the club again'. A quick check on the **date of his** reception into prison revealed that he could not be the father. So, rather than see him at work he was sent for and the gist of the letter was tactfully explained:

.....and now you had better read it yourself. And whilst you're in my office as I don't want you to start blowing your top or doing anything else daft.'

He read the letter quietly and dispassionately:

'Thank you very much, Sir. Can I keep the letter now? I'll be having a visit at the end of the week and we'll have to talk this over.'

'Yes. That's alright. But don't get doing anything stupid. You can't blame your wife entirely. We don't all get the same temptations all the time and in the same place, and if you had been out the chances are that this wouldn't have happened.' or some such pearls of wisdom.

'I'm not blaming her, Sir.' And away he went.

Admiring his broadmindedness and his hitherto unsuspected generosity I felt relieved that another crisis had been, more or less settled. Some two years go by when, lo and behold, another such letter from the same woman was placed before me. In view of his previous reaction it was passed on to him with neither

explanation or advice. The following morning the Chief Officer made his daily report on the state of the prison and added;

*'.....and there's one on report.'*

*'Oh?'*

It was the recipient of the previous day's letter.

*'What has he been up to?'*

*'A right old smash up, Sir - everything.'*

Damn and blast - I had slipped up and to ease my nagging conscience I hastened to deal with this matter in that part of the prison known as 'Under the Spreading Christmas Tree' where I dispensed 'Justice and Wisdom' to those prisoners who had misbehaved. He was marched in -  
left right left right left right - name and number to the Governor -  
and address the Governor as 'Sir'.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES PENSIONERS COUNCIL AGM 2011**

The AGM was held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> |May 2011 at Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD and was attended by Gerry Ross and Charles Smith as representatives for the RPGA

### **EVENTS OF 2010/11**

The work of the Council last year has been dominated by the Coalition Government's decision in the June 2010 emergency Budget to change the indexation method for public service pensions from RPI to CPI.

The PSPC was initially established to fight for indexation of public service pensions and secured this via the 1971 Pensions Increase Act. The change in indexation, which the Government has introduced without amending the 1971 Act due to its exploitation of various loopholes in legislation, represents both a threat to public service pensions and a breach of pre-election promises to protect accrued pension rights and maintain existing indexation.

The PSPC worked closely over the year with organisations such as the National Pensioners' Convention (NPC), the Occupational Pensioners' Alliance (OPA), Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance (CSPA), and AGE UK to oppose the Government's proposal. It was nevertheless implemented from April 2011 for public service pensions and also for State second pensions and some private occupational pensions. The CPI will also be used as part of the "triple lock" indexation method for the basic State pension from April 2012, significantly undermining its worth as price inflation is expected to exceed wage inflation for the next couple of years.

The culmination of the campaign was the national Pensioners' Lobby of Parliament on 1 March 2011 when almost 200 public service pensioners rallied at the House of Commons before putting their case to MPs. It was attended on behalf of the RPGA by Gerry Ross. The rally was addressed by representatives of the various organisations supporting the lobby and by MPs including Shadow Pensions Minister Rachel Reeves MP. A considerable amount of media coverage was secured

including in the Guardian, Times and Daily Telegraph and widespread regional media coverage

The PSPC also played a large part in publicising and supporting two Early Day Motions (EDMs) tabled against the relevant statutory Orders, with the efforts of the PSPC and constituent organisations securing a high number of MPs 'praying against' the Order. This did not unfortunately secure its objective of a parliamentary debate on the subject.

Other campaigning work included correspondence with Government Ministers (in particular Danny Alexander MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury), raising the issue with the Hutton Commission and the publication of a letter from the PSPC General Secretary in The Times.

The PSPC also supported a successful half day conference, held jointly with CSPA and others, on the issue of indexation in November 2010. Speakers at the event included Angela Eagle MP, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury and representatives of the Royal Statistical Society and the Government's own statistical service.

All of this work - despite being ultimately unsuccessful for the moment - has helped to raise the profile of the issue and of the PSPC. Who will continue to work to secure reversal of the proposal despite its implementation this year.

### **PSPC Submissions**

Shortly after being elected, the Coalition Government set up the Independent Public Service Pensions Commission chaired by Lord John Hutton. This produced two reports in October 2010 and in March 2011. The purpose of the Commission was to examine public service pensions and make recommendations for cost savings. The PSPC, while sceptical about the case for the Commission, nevertheless submitted responses to both calls for evidence. The RPGA also submitted a response which supported that of the PSPC. The responses concentrated primarily on highlighting the weaknesses of CPI as an indexation method and asked Hutton to comment on the merits and propriety of the change. Lord Hutton chose to duck the issue and has presented the switch to CPI as a 'given' in his final report. The PSPC still does not accept this reasoning.

The submissions were circulated to constituent organisations and are available on the PSPC website. The final report's proposals, which the Government is now pursuing, threaten most public service pension schemes with increases in normal pension age, contribution increases and changes to scheme design. While these will mainly affect current public service workers, they are of course the PSPC members of the future. The PSPC will continue to fight for fair pensions for all.

The PSPC has also submitted responses to the call for evidence for the State Pension Age increase to 66 and the NAPF Workplace Retirement Income Commission call for evidence.

### **Parliamentary Work**

PSPC representatives have also met separately with Dame Anne Begg MP, Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee; Angela Eagle MP, Shadow Treasury Chief Secretary; and Rachel Reeves MP, Shadow Pensions Minister. Efforts to meet

Professor Steve Webb MP, formerly Lib Democrat spokesperson on pensions and now Pensions Minister in the Coalition Government, have not yet been successful.

### **TUC March for the Alternative**

The PSPC had a presence at the very successful TUC organised March for the Alternative on 26 March as did many of the constituent organisations. A PSPC banner and a number of flags were obtained for the march and the Parliamentary Lobby and will be used again at other future events.

### **Matters under discussion**

The meeting was informed by the CPSA delegate that on behalf of the Police Federation (PF), the National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO), Prospect, FDA, GMB and the Alliance, Russell, Jones & Walker on Monday 18 April 2011 issued the necessary Claim Form and Grounds for an application for a Judicial Review at the High Court in London, challenging the Government's decision to switch the indexation of certain Public Service Pensions from RPI to CPI; the papers were also served on the solicitors acting for both the DWP and HM Treasury on 19 April 2011, under cover of a letter requesting their urgent views so that the Claim could be expedited.

In essence, the legal basis for the challenge is that, in selecting CPI as the index upon which increases in certain Public Service Pensions would be linked, the Secretary of State for Work & Pensions has gone beyond his statutory authority, as CPI does **not** measure only annual increases in the general level of prices (as required under Section 150(2) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992), but also consumer behaviour/reactions to rising prices! If the High Court accepts the arguments of our legal advisors, the remedy being sought is that the increases from April 2011 be revalorised in accordance with the September 2010 RPI figure of 4.6%.

The next step in the judicial process is for the High Court to consider whether permission will be granted for the application to be given a full hearing; depending upon the response of the solicitors for the DWP & HM Treasury (still awaited at the time of compiling this Group Circular), the application for permission and the full hearing itself may be heard together.

The Alliance has also been advised that PCS (together with a number of other trade unions) may also be issuing proceedings against the RPI/CPI switch, in the very near future, based on different legal grounds and advice. It may be the case that the Court will decide to join the two sets of proceedings. The legal teams for both groups of organisations are liaising to ensure that neither side acts in any way that could prejudice the case/prospects of the other. All of these factors make it a little difficult to assess the likely timetable and deadline for the duration of the judicial procedures, although it is expected that they should be completed within three months.

### **Actions taken by constituent organisations**

Members of the RPGA along with other member organisations had been active in writing to their MPs for their assistance in reinstating the RPI up rating of pensions and it was apparent that the responses from MPs followed a similar line to those received by our

members, as a) standard drafted response b) Questions asked not answered and c) an apparent misunderstanding of the issues involved.

A Delegate gave an example of the up rating percentage of their pensions being capped i.e. if inflation rises to 7% CPI they will get the 7% up rate, but if the CPI rate is over 7% they will only get an additional ½ %

Example CPI @ 7% up rate is 7%

CPI @ 10% up rate is 7 1/2%

It was also said that when the state pension up rate changes from RPI to CPI the wider public will be hit.

Election of officers for 2011/12

The holders of the Offices of Chairman, Vice Chairman and General Secretary were returned unopposed

## MOTIONS

MOTION 1 This Annual General Meeting (AGM) places on record its appreciation of the very effective campaigning work of the Officers and General Purposes Committee (GPC) on the Issue of the RPI/CPI switch

This AGM further agrees that this campaign must continue until an acceptable outcome for the future indexation of Public Service Pensions is secured and instructs the Officers and CPC to ensure that this issue remains a top priority for the PSPC

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

The subscriptions for 2011/12 have been increased in line with CPI at 3.1%

Which brings the RPGA subscription to £74

Appreciation of Gerry Ross

Gerry Ross will not be seeking re-election as Secretary to the RPGA Committee at the 2011 AGM and accordingly thereafter he will not be representing the RPGA to the PSPC. The meeting warmly thanked him for his contributions over the years to the Work of the PSPC and wished him well for the future.

## EVENTS SINCE THE AGM

RPI/CPR SWITCH LEGAL CHALLENGE (CPSA NEWSLETTER No 70)

On Monday 18 April 2011, on behalf of the Police Federation (PF), the National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO), Prospect, POA, GMB and the Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance, our solicitors, Russell, Jones & Walker, issued the necessary Claim Form and Grounds for an application for a Judicial Review at the High Court in London, challenging the Government's decision to switch the indexation of Public Service Pensions from RPI to CPI. On 19 April 2011 the papers were also served on the solicitors acting for both the OWP and HM Treasury, under cover of a letter requesting their urgent views, so that the Claim could be expedited.

Subsequently, the National Federation of Occupational Pensioners (NFOP) [formerly, the National Federation of Royal Mail & BT Pensioners] has joined our consortium and has agreed to contribute to our legal expenses.

However, the underlying purpose of the legislation is to maintain the purchasing power of pensions. If the High Court accepts our arguments, the remedy which we seek is that the increases from April 2011 be revalorised in accordance with the September 2010 RPI figure of 4.6%.

On 26 May 2011, Russell, Jones & Walker received the response to our application from the Treasury Solicitor, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Work & Pensions and HM Treasury. In that response, the Treasury Solicitor contested the arguments set out in our application for Judicial Review and sought to persuade the High Court to refuse permission for the challenge to proceed.

On 27 May 2011, despite the Treasury Solicitor's arguments, the High Court notified all parties involved with the legal challenge that our application for Judicial Review had been granted and that it would be expedited to be heard in the week commencing 4 July 2011, with three days listed for the hearing. However, in the light of the Treasury Solicitor's response, the Judge who granted the review expressed some personal scepticism about the merits of our challenge.

On 09 June 2011, the Treasury Solicitor sought and was granted a delay in proceedings on the grounds of their counsel's unavailability and, in their view, the tight timetable. So, it now seems unlikely that our case will be heard before September or October 2011

## **WEEKEND BREAK 2011**

### **31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 to 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2011**

The break was held at The Hinton Firs Hotel, Bournemouth. This is a popular venue for this event among the members of the RPGA and it proved to be so again this year with the 19 persons who attended. The food was good as was the evening entertainment in the Ballroom and the stimulating conversations held later over drinks in the bar.

Within Bournemouth and the surrounding area there are many pleasant and interesting places to visit and the weather for early April being quite good, people took the opportunity to travel around during the day either by car or bus pass or on foot by the more active ones among us. We set off to walk along the banks of the river Bourne which is the rather grand name given to the stream which runs through the middle of the Town Centre Park, but gave up at a place called Koy Pond which was a very pleasant place and worth the walk.

The weekend was rounded off with an excellent Sunday lunch and the Date being Mothering Sunday the dining room had a gathering off family groups composed of

ladies (obviously mothers) being solicitously shown to their seats by a selection of adults (obviously children) and smaller children (obviously grandchildren)

The tables were festively decorated with pink balloons and all ladies present including our party were presented with a small gift by the hotel.

We would like to send our best wishes to our friends who were unable to attend this year.